

Defra Director General joins Reaseheath in championing green technology

Reaseheath will actively assist farmers to harvest green energy, promised Principal Meredydd David at a high level conference on anaerobic digestion.

The conference, organised on campus by the Reaseheath Enterprise Delivery Hub, attracted influential speakers including Katrina Williams, Director General of Food and Farming at Defra; Lord Redesdale, Chair of the Anaerobic Digestion and Biogas Association; Lucy Hopwood, Land and Agriculture Manager of the National Non-Food Crops Centre and Dr. Nina Sweet, organics technical specialist for the Waste and Resources Action Programme.

The event, which was attended by farmers and agricultural specialists, covered technical developments and the potential use and commercial value of biogas generated through anaerobic digestion. It also gave delegates a valuable insight into government policies and into the grants and incentives available.

In his opening address, Meredydd underlined the potential of using anaerobic digestion to enhance farming systems and increase income. He also called on technology providers to work closely with the farming industry to develop solutions which would serve



Meredydd David and Margaret Bardsley, Director of Business and Marketing, join Katrina Williams (3rd left) and other delegates

livestock farmers.

He revealed that Reaseheath is taking a practical role in the provision of green energy by building its own anaerobic digestion plant which will demonstrate a range of different solutions for farmers. The college has also been commissioned to map the potential for anaerobic biogas production across Cheshire - a study which hopefully will provide evidence at government level to influence future tariff settings.

Meredydd emphasised that Reaseheath was taking the sustainability agenda very seriously and that the college would do all in its power to support rural business through the Reaseheath Enterprise Delivery Hub, which receives funding from the North West

Regional Development Agency.

He pledged that the Hub will:

- Continue to create forums to ensure open and transparent discussion
- Identify skills gaps where technology and knowledge transfer is required
- Show students and the industry how anaerobic digestion can be integrated into farming systems
- Use the college's commercial farm as a test bed for new technologies and developments which would inform farmers and influence policy makers
- Showcase new solutions and give farmers access to the anaerobic plant and opportunities to discuss live operational issues

Reaseheath Enterprise Delivery Hub 01270 613195

Reaseheath showcases Olympic training



▲ William Whitaker jumps in Reaseheath's new arena

Our Equine Unit celebrated the completion of the first phase of its multi million pound upgrade with an Olympic masterclass featuring some of Britain's top riders.

The unique event starred British dressage team captain Richard Davison and his son Joe, a Reaseheath equine student who is current British Under 18 Showjumping Champion. They were joined by international showjumper and Olympic 2012 contender William Whitaker and his father Ian, both members of the country's most famous showjumping family. Richard's wife Gillian, a Grand Prix dressage rider, also took part.

See page 3 for more....

Reaseheath's Rob is a top dairy student

Progressive young farmer and Reaseheath student Rob Cooke was one of four national finalists competing for the prestigious Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers / Dairy Crest 'Dairy Student of the Year' title.

Rob, 18, was the youngest

contestant to reach the final, which culminated at the Farmers Club in London. Although he was narrowly pipped at the post for the title, Rob impressed the panel of experts with his business acumen and understanding of the dairy industry.

Read more on page 4....



Another year of success

As we approach the end of the academic year, thoughts naturally turn to our Presentation of Awards and Graduation ceremonies. For our students, families and friends, this is the culmination of months and often years of hard work and commitment. For us, the events celebrate what we are all about: supporting, encouraging and helping people of all ages to achieve their full potential so they can enter their chosen career and also contribute positively to society.

The achievements of our students and my colleagues are littered throughout this edition of Grass Roots and clearly illustrate the vast range and scope of our work. This ranges from our partnerships with schools, industry, Higher Education institutions and the Regional Development Agency to the great work done in helping re-train and re-skill many of those affected by the recession.

We have also achieved very successful outcomes during our Ofsted Inspection and an IQER assessment of the quality of our higher education provision. Many outstanding areas and areas of good practice were identified (see this page).

Several building projects are close to completion, with a new Animal Management Centre due to open in July and the first phase of our Food Centre of Excellence being officially opened in June. This will bring our recent investment in specialist resources and facilities to around £30m, with more planned over the next 18 months. This will include the development of new social, recreational and dining facilities. Our continuing success, growth and development is due to the ambition and vision of our Governors and staff and also, in no small way, to the achievements of our students of all ages. I thank them all for making Reaseheath such a wonderful and successful College.

Meredydd David OBE
Principal

Reaseheath stays ahead of the curve

Reaseheath continues to raise its teaching standards - and it's a great hit with students, a recent Ofsted inspection has proved.

Our college, regarded as one of the leading specialist colleges in the country, has been awarded Outstanding or Good in all the subject areas inspected under a new, more rigorous, Common Inspection Framework.

At the same time, we underwent an inspection from the Care Standards Commission which is responsible for ensuring the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.

The inspectors found numerous outstanding features and concluded that students' achievements and the quality of education and training was continuing to rise.

The inspection report reveals Reaseheath's outstanding performance in key areas:

- Outcomes for Learners: learner achievement and enjoyment is outstanding
 - Quality of Provision: Outstanding partnership work with schools, employers and community groups leads to substantial benefits for students
 - Leadership and Management: The quality of leadership in raising expectations and ambition is outstanding, as is the Board of Governors in providing leadership, direction and challenge
- Inspectors went on to say:



▲ Another year of success for Reaseheath

- "Learners are well prepared for employment; teaching and learning are good, particularly practical teaching."
- "This is a good college, with outstanding partnership work with employers, schools and other stakeholders."
- "Learners have good access to cross college activities and they value the Reaseheath Experience."
- "Reaseheath provides a safe, welcoming and nurturing environment much valued by learners. Residential learners are well

looked after and learners' contribution to college life and the local community is very strong. The college is very much at the heart of the local community."

- "Physical resources are good and many are outstanding."
- "Learners feel safe" and "they demonstrate great pride in being a member of the Reaseheath community and are delighted with the college and their courses."
- "Employers rate the provision provided by the college very highly."
- "The strong, challenging and inspirational leadership of the governors and principalship, outstanding partnerships and the commitment and enthusiasm of staff, place the college in a strong position."

Principal Meredydd David, commented:

"I am delighted that the Ofsted Inspectors were so positive about the tremendous work going on at Reaseheath across all areas. In particular, the Lead Inspector noted that outcomes for learners and the quality of provision have improved since the last inspection visit.

"This is very significant for Reaseheath as we were deemed outstanding last time. The new inspection framework has definitely raised the bar and we will continue to bring in new ways of meeting and exceeding requirements."

Higher Education standards continue to rise

Reaseheath's degree level students receive an excellent experience, the equivalent of an 'HE Ofsted inspection' has confirmed. A positive report from the Quality Assurance Agency Integrated Quality Enhancement Review (IQER) Summative Review shows our college meets or exceeds standards in all the areas inspected.

Eight areas of good practice were recognised :

- Standards are robustly managed through the college quality assurance arrangements which include the new HE academic board, supported by close and responsive arrangements with both Harper Adams University College and the University of Chester
- Good engagement with employers resulting in vocational flexible programmes meeting employer needs

- Careful assessment
- Commercial enterprises and facilities which support the delivery of the curriculum, providing outstanding resources to students
- Extensive academic and pastoral care delivered by enthusiastic staff
- Well resourced HE Centre which contributes to a distinct sense of identity for HE students
- High quality information and publicity materials
- Partner quality assurance information

Said Peter Green, Director of Quality Learning and Support: "This positive outcome is great news for the college and recognises the hard work and enthusiasm that staff put into Higher Education activity. It is vital that we continue to offer and improve a first class experience to students."

Reaseheath Equine showcases Olympic training

Our Equine Unit celebrated the completion of the first phase of its multi million pound upgrade with an Olympic masterclass featuring some of Britain's top riders.

The unique event starred British dressage team captain Richard Davison and his son Joe, a Reaseheath equine student who is current British Under 18 Showjumping Champion. They were joined by international showjumper and Olympic 2012 contender William Whitaker and his father Ian, both members of the country's most famous showjumping family. Richard's wife Gillian, a Grand Prix dressage rider, also took part.

Our new indoor arena was crammed with spectators for the lecture demonstration - the first of an exciting series of public events planned for the equine unit. The evening was sponsored by the world class equestrian surface supplier Martin Collins Enterprises, who supplied and installed our synthetic Ecotrack Competition surface from its northern manufacturing plant in Cheshire.

The event concentrated on training techniques for both the dressage and show jumping enthusiast and featured young and more experienced horses. The programme was led by Richard Davison, who has been the British number one international dressage rider

for six years and is himself a contender for the 2012 Olympics. He has won two European medals and represented Britain at three Olympics and two World Championships. He currently trains the equestrian world class squad, of which Willliam Whitaker is a member.

William, 18, who had won a major class at the British Open Showjumping Championships the weekend before, was put through his paces by his father, who came into the arena as a 'mystery guest'.

Talented showjumper Joe Davison took part in the jumping exercises while Gillian Davison demonstrated the training required for advanced dressage movements on one of the family's future top prospects. Joe is a student on Reaseheath's Foundation Degree in Equine Science, Complementary Therapy and Natural Horsemanship and is a hopeful for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Spectators were encouraged to take part in a lively question and answer session and the event concluded with several minutes of applause.

Richard said: "Reaseheath's facilities are fantastic. The indoor school and the surface are both first class. Very well done to the teams of staff and students who have been involved in the preparation for this event."

William said: "The surface



▲ Gillian Davison demonstrates advanced dressage techniques advised by husband Richard

rode well, both for flatwork and jumping. It offered stability and security to both my young, nervous horse and to my more experienced horse, who was able to respond when I asked more of him."

Reaseheath's 60m x 30m indoor arena, which is for hire outside college hours, can seat several hundred spectators and has an integrated public address system, two mirrored walls, a sound system for dressage to music and a judges box.

The indoor arena is part of a £2.3 million investment which has also included a purpose built round pen for natural horsemanship, American barn-style stabling, solarium and expanded car parking. The unit has two further outdoor arenas with synthetic surfaces and grassed riding and cross country areas.

Further details:

Equine courses: 01270 613242; email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

Martin Collins Enterprises: 01488 71100 (head office) or 07951 529615 (northern office) www.mceltd.com

Celebrity botanist to celebrate new build



Internationally acclaimed botanist and natural historian David Bellamy OBE is to lay a commemorative foundation stone for our new animal management centre later this summer.

The global environmental campaigner and television personality will also plant a rare tree in our grounds and give a talk on the biodiversity of Britain and how it has been influenced by agriculture and horticulture.

The latest £4 million investment into our animal centre is on schedule for completion in July. The new build will result in specialist rooms for reptiles, amphibians and fish, accommodation for domestic mammals, teaching and meeting rooms and an impressive entrance to our zoo. This is the second phase of a major refurbishment which has already provided the department with a 21st century dog grooming parlour, laboratories and training facilities.

Zoo opens in summer (see back page)



▲ Reaseheath equine students with Ian and William Whitaker, Richard Davison and Joe Davison (mounted)

World class upgrade for food halls

Work on the first phase of a £6 million upgrade which will bring world class facilities to our food and dairy processing plant is almost complete.

State-of-the-art technical equipment is installed and the newly extended building is ready for its scheduled handover.

Considerable investment into the external and internal refurbishment has been financially supported by the North West Regional Development Agency.

The facilities will be available to the region's food and drink manufacturers for product development and diversification. The industry level resources will also be used by Reaseheath's full time food manufacture students and by students on Project Eden, a new training programme which delivers a globally recognised degree level qualification in dairy technology to those already working in the industry.

The first cohort of students - twenty-six trainee dairy technologists who work for Robert Wiseman Dairies, Dairy Crest, Arla Foods, Muller Dairies, First Milk and Milk Link - are currently carrying out their second block release course with us before returning to their workplace.

Reaseheath was selected as training provider for Project Eden because the college is recognised as an international centre of excellence for dairy training and is a dairy champion within the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacture.

Said Principal Meredydd David: "We are very much looking forward to enhancing our specialist support and technology and knowledge transfer within the food and drink industry. The investment will give our students and the industry access to world class facilities and should boost productivity and lead to new enterprise and increased employment in the region."

► Our state-of-the-art food halls

▼ Project Eden students



Reaseheath's Rob is a top dairy student

Progressive young farmer and Reaseheath student Rob Cooke was one of four national finalists competing for the prestigious Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers / Dairy Crest 'Dairy Student of the Year' title.

Rob, 18, was the youngest contestant to reach the final, which culminated at the Farmers Club in London. Although he was narrowly pipped at the post for the title, Rob impressed the panel of experts with his business acumen and understanding of the dairy industry.

A part-time student on our Foundation Degree in Dairy Herd Management, Rob also manages an expanding, commercial herd of dairy cows at his family farm at Clotton Hall, Tarporley.

Unfazed by the 12 hour days, Rob is currently expanding his herd to 150 cows and plans to take on a second farm within the next ten years. He is supported by his parents, who run their own catering equipment rental business

'Corkscrew Hire' from the farm.

Rob completed his Advanced National Certificate in Agriculture with us before moving onto his foundation degree. Last year he carried off the college prize for the best business exercise, which involves drawing up a business plan and presenting it to a bank manager.

Rob said: "I've always wanted to be a farmer. I can see great potential within the dairy industry, particularly with the growing need for food in the future."

Said tutor Natalie Gascoyne: "Rob has big aspirations and very extensive knowledge. He is exactly the sort of young person who will take dairying forward into the next generation. This was a great opportunity for him to prove that he understands the business side of the industry."

Reaseheath Agriculture has a national reputation for providing top class education and training. This year a record 250 students joined



▲ Farming for the future: Rob Cooke

us on full time and part time courses, ranging from introductory to degree level, or on apprenticeships.

Further details contact our Courses Hotline on 01270 613242; email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

Turning back the clock

Food Project Manager Damien Murphy demonstrated the traditional process of turning curds and whey into cheese by hand at the Tractor World Show, Malvern. He was invited to appear on a Cheshire farming themed stand occupied by the Cheshire Vintage Tractor and Engine Club. Damien caught up with a number of past students and also handed out samples of Cheshire cheese to an eager audience.

Food experts get a taste of The One show

Reaseheath's food manufacturing and farming specialists starred on the BBC's popular topical magazine programme 'The One Show'.

Our experts were interviewed by tv presenter and food critic Jay Rayner for three films investigating the manufacturing processes which are carried out on food and drink before it reaches the supermarket shelf.

A film crew spent two days with us looking at advanced technical processes in our milking parlour and food manufacturing halls.

Farm Manager Sam Grundy

described the daily routine of milking the onsite Genus dairy herd and the effort taken to maintain the highest levels of health and welfare. In comparison, agricultural lecturer Mark Walton demonstrated the skills required to hand milk a cow and explained why milk producers these days need to be licensed to ensure the optimum standards of hygiene and food safety.

Food and Dairy Curriculum Manager Chris Edwards used high tech equipment to show the processes which milk and



▲ Mark Walton and Pepper the cow are interviewed by Jay Rayner

juice need to go through before packaging. He also described the positive impact the mass production of food has had on a fast growing population.

Horticulture lecturer Harry Delaney talked of the history and health values of orange juice and the biological processes which fruit goes through while ripening, while

Dr Basma Ellahi, Acting Head of Biological Sciences from the University of Chester, carried out an analysis of reformed meat, orange juice and milk drinks in our laboratories.

The film crew also joined Miranda Shufflebotham, whose family runs Cheerbrook Farm

◀ Chris Edwards explains the juicing process to Jay Rayner

food shop, to watch her cook a traditional ham joint.

Producer / Director Halina Kierkuc explained: "We wanted Jay to look at industrial processing and whether these processes affect the nutritional value of food. Many viewers were very surprised at the different stages our food goes through before it gets to their plates. I am really grateful to Reaseheath for giving us a fascinating insight into what happens to our food behind the scenes."

Jay Rayner, who is also restaurant critic for The Observer, said: "As a journalist I rely on expert sources of information and the skilled staff at Reaseheath performed that role brilliantly. I and the team are extremely grateful to the college for all the help they gave us."



Cheshire cheese facepack - the next beauty product?

A prototype face pack developed by Food Project Manager Damien Murphy has set the beauty product industry alight.

The face pack, made from a mixture of Cheshire cheese and cream, is being hailed by beauty journalists as the hottest new skincare product. Further evaluation of the facepack will follow if there is sufficient interest from industry.

Explained Damien: "During our cheese-making course, my students noticed that their hands were incredibly soft after being submerged in the vats of curds and whey.

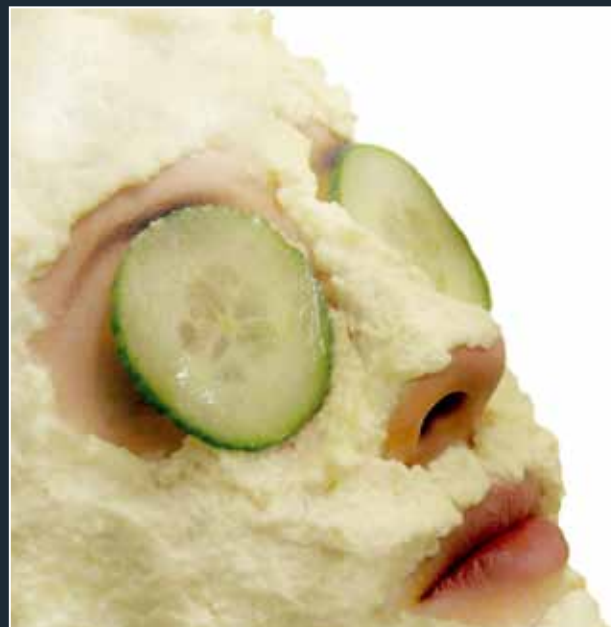
"A colleague and I decided to investigate. We used Cheshire cheese as the main ingredient because it crumbles easily and added cream, which is currently used extensively in the

pharmaceutical industry."

Damien suggests that the success of the product is because the cream draws moisture to the skins surface, lanolin acts as a natural moisturiser and the texture of the cheese and its lactic acid acts as an exfoliator.

Because the face pack has to be refrigerated, the chill factor reduces puffiness around the eyes.

The product has been cautiously welcomed by cosmetic dermatologist Mervyn Patterson. He said: "When you compare this to the huge amount of expensive nonsense on the shelves, it may well have some merit. It's well known that lactic acid is an exfoliator and that the top layers of skin will be re-hydrated by the milk products".



Winning score for Crewe Alex apprentices

This year's crop of graduating Crewe Alexandra Football Club apprentices have gained such high grades that all have been offered university places.

This achievement, unprecedented in both the history of Reaseheath and of the club, guarantees that the young athletes can opt to study for a sports linked degree if they are released at the end of their football apprenticeship.

The apprentices spend most of their time focussing on football but attend college for one and a half days a week to study for a level 2 or level 3 BTEC qualification in Sport (Performance and Excellence).

The programme is managed and funded by the League Football Education and currently supports 18 apprentices - 13 who are studying towards a BTEC Certificate (equivalent to two 'A' Levels) and five who are hoping to achieve a BTEC Diploma (equivalent to three 'A' levels). There are more Crewe Alex apprentices aiming for this higher level diploma than at any other League club on the apprenticeship programme.

Explained Course Manager Dave Whiteside: "Although the apprentices are very talented, a future as a professional



▲ High scoring: Crewe Alex apprentices

footballer is far from being guaranteed. It is important that these young athletes continue with their education so they can keep their options open.

"To be offered a university place, apprentices need a course distinction at level 3 and a good sporting profile and the graduating students have performed exceptionally well to achieve this."

Crewe Alex coach Neil Critchley said: "The club is delighted with the achievements of our apprentices

and I would like to thank the course managers for all the hard work they have put in on behalf of the boys."

All apprentices were commended at an awards ceremony, with six being selected for special mention:

Group A: Jay Oswell (Student of the Year); Chyenenne Dunkley (Runner up); Joe O'Sullivan (Most improved student)

Group B: Olly Turton (Student of the Year); Chris Rowntree (Runner up); Matt Freeman (Most improved student)

Students assess top pitch

Foundation Degree sports turf students have been carrying out a detailed assessment of the playing surface at the Racecourse Ground, home of Wrexham Football Club and Celtic Crusaders Rugby Club.

Celtic Crusaders play in the top level rugby superleague so the pitch has to be in first class condition in summer as well as for the winter football matches.

Students Iestyn John and Simon Wilgose identified the grass species to ascertain whether they were suitable for both sports. They also looked for evidence of disease and weeds. Soil profiles were examined on site and in our science laboratories to determine soil pH, nutrient and particle distribution.



After careful data analysis the students produced a report explaining the current condition of the pitch, with detailed short and long term plans for maintenance and renovation. They then gave a presentation to officials and grounds staff, which was much appreciated.

Said Head Groundsman Paul Chaloner: "The project has been very worthwhile and useful to the club. We would like to sincerely thank the students for their hard work and enthusiasm in

▲ Iestyn John takes a soil sample watched by Gareth Phillips, Simon Wilgose, head groundsman Paul Chaloner and two staff members

producing such a detailed report."

Explained Senior Sports Turf Lecturer Gareth Phillips: "It is vital that we expose our sports turf students to interesting real life situations. They have greatly benefited from the experience and will be able to apply their new knowledge throughout their studies."

New partnerships could kick off global sports links



▲ Iain Clarke, Mr Kadam, Steve Bellis and Gareth Phillips prepare for a helicopter ride to the university in Pune

Potential global partnerships with sports turf institutions could lead to our sports turf department setting up an international outreach centre in India.

Horticulture curriculum leader Iain Clarke and Senior sports turf lecturer Gareth Phillips have recently visited the country for meaningful discussions as to how Reaseheath staff could deliver vocational education and training to support aspiring sports students.

Our potential partner is Kickworldwide, a company which works with academic institutions, the English Football Association and English Premier League Football Clubs to support football in developing countries.

Iain, Gareth and Steve Bellis, Director of Kickworldwide, visited the Bharati Vidyapeeth University in Pune, south of Mumbai, for initial discussions. Representatives of the university paid us a return visit and were deeply impressed by the quality of our facilities and staff.

It is possible that Gareth could visit the university on a monthly basis to deliver a BTEC National Award in Sports Turf. Indian students could be offered the opportunity to study with us in the UK for a second year to gain further qualifications, take part in study tours and visit major sports venues. Liverpool Football Club is another potential partner in the scheme.

Said Gareth: "This could be a tremendous opportunity for Reaseheath. We want to encourage the playing of football in India and to add recognised qualifications so that students who do not make the grade as a professional footballer have an alternative career within the industry."

www.kickworldwide.com

Zoo benefits from supermarket scheme



▲ Keeper Emma Hunt and Olwyn Payton give our lemurs a tasty snack

Our animal centre has forged a beneficial partnership which is helping to reduce feeding bills and allowing Sainsbury's to cut down on food waste.

Our local supermarket is donating its surplus fruit, vegetable and flowers to help feed our exotic collection of animals – and needless to say our tapirs, lemurs, monkeys and rodents are delighted! Our animal keepers make a daily trip to the supermarket and return with food such as bananas, grapes and salad which are still in good condition but approaching their sell-by date.

The project is part of Sainsbury's national food donation scheme, which is aimed at reducing the eight million tonnes of food waste generated by UK households each year.

Olwyn Payton, Sainsbury's PR Assistant, who visited our animal centre to meet some of the lucky recipients, said: "By donating our surplus food to Reaseheath we are supporting a worthy local cause and reducing the amount of food wasted. It's a privilege to be able to see the effects of our donations first hand and to know that we are making a positive difference to food waste."

New arrivals...

Our cotton top tamarins - two adult males and one female called Roland, Max and Jasmine - have produced two babies. They are the first primates to breed at our animal centre.

Other recent births include muntjac, Kashmir and angora goats and wallabies. We also have hatchlings of bearded dragons, corn snakes and pancake tortoises.

New additions to the collection include a Bengal Eagle owl and an African spotted owl. Our Harris hawk is successfully continuing with its free flying training programme.

.....and departures

One of our home bred capybara has been moved to Belfast Zoo. The



young male was born here last year and has been cared for by students. He is part of a national captive breeding programme and will be used to introduce a new genetic mix into the zoo's resident group. Many of our other exotic species also breed successfully and we regularly supply zoos nationwide.

College partnership boosts in-store training for Pets at Home

Leading retailer Pets at Home is using our bespoke training to increase the expertise of its in-store aquatics, reptile and dog specialists.

Initially Pets at Home approached us to provide tailored training to improve pre-sale welfare and after-sale advice for ornamental fish. This course was so successful that it was followed by another concentrating on the care and handling of reptiles such as tortoises, leopard geckos and bearded dragons - all of which are becoming increasingly popular as domestic pets.

The partnership then expanded to include dog grooming, and we now provide an introductory course plus further training on the

coat care of specific popular breeds.

Commented Kathy Toft, Head of Training for Pets at Home: "The welfare of all our store pets, and giving great pet advice, remains our top priority and colleague training such as this helps us to achieve this goal. It is also an exciting opportunity for us to encourage continuing professional development within our store teams."

"Reaseheath has an expert team of lecturers and modern facilities and this has allowed us to ensure that our teams are fully trained and up-to-date with current practices."



Rare newt rescue

Reaseheath's herpetologist Ben Baker was a key speaker at an annual scientific meeting, held by the Herpetofauna Conservation Trust at Bournemouth Natural History Centre.

Ben described our successful, college based crocodile newt breeding programme and the projects he is developing in partnership with Zoological Survey India and with the Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling.

The international delegates were particularly interested in the opportunities for field research.

Ben manages the research project linked to six conservation sites in India where the rare Himalayan crocodile newts are being monitored. Reaseheath is funding surveys on the capture and release of females while Zoological Survey India is collecting genetic data and monitoring water temperature and quality to see how this affects breeding cycle and behaviour.

Another area of research is to see whether loss of plant life affects the newts' breeding cycle. Vegetation at the edge of ponds is being destroyed by cattle - a problem which could be solved through fencing and an alternative drinking supply.

Scientists are warning that one in three species of amphibians face extinction from disease, pollution, habitat destruction and climate change.



▲ Ben Baker with one of our Cane Toads

Explained Ben: "It is very important that we do something now to preserve these endangered species before they are lost forever."

- **NEW** Reaseheath's animal centre has received one of just four collections worldwide of the Sardinian brook salamander. This species is threatened by a deadly fungus and is limited to three sites in Sardinia. We hope to breed and reintroduce the salamanders when dangers from the disease have passed.

Students experience gardening on a grand scale

Two students experienced how the horticulture business operates at its highest level when they spent a day with Mark Camley, Chief Executive of the Royal Parks.

Susanna Hinton and Beverley Moon, who are studying for their National Certificate in Horticulture, won the unique opportunity to shadow Mark Camley when a video they made during national Colleges Week scooped one of the major prizes. They were selected after coming up with innovative ideas of how they would encourage London's diverse nationalities to visit the capital's green spaces.

The friends were invited to join a senior team discussing the management of The Royal Parks which include Hyde Park, Richmond Park, St. James's Park, The Green Park and Kensington Gardens. They were also asked for their input during a review of The Royal Parks' website.

The students enjoyed a restaurant lunch by The Serpentine and later received a behind-the-scenes tour of Kensington Gardens and its plant nursery with Mark Camley and Park Manager Tom Jarvis.

Said Susanna: "The Royal Parks is a very complex organisation and faces the same concerns as many other



▲ Susanna Hinton and Beverley Moon join Mark Camley (right) and Tom Jarvis in Kensington Gardens

large companies, with efficiency and budgeting being of the utmost importance. There is a lot of rejuvenation going ahead in preparation for the London 2012 Olympics and it was very interesting to see some of what is being planned."

Added Beverley: "It was fascinating to see the detail of how the Royal Parks operate as a business. We were asked to contribute during several discussions and the management team genuinely seemed to appreciate our comments. The whole day was a great opportunity and gave us

some useful tips for the future."

Both Susanna and Beverley have returned to studying and are planning to launch new careers in horticulture after they graduate this summer.

Mark Camley said: "I hope the day illustrated what a diverse and stimulating industry the management of parks and open spaces is. We were very pleased to provide the opportunity for the students to gain a taste of top management in operation. Their own input was very useful and they showed both the knowledge and the enthusiasm to become future leaders."

The power of plants

The therapeutic power of gardening will be the main theme for our latest garden, to be unveiled to the public at the RHS Show Tatton Park (July 21 - 25).

The wheelchair friendly, sensory garden is being designed and built by our garden design students for BBC North West, which will use it as a base for filming the prestigious show.

This is the third year running that we have produced a show garden in partnership with the BBC, and, as usual, the public will be invited to meet their favourite presenters on the stand.

Designed by Advanced Certificate in Garden Design and Foundation Degree in Garden and Landscape Design students, the garden cleverly shows how plants can aid rehabilitation by encouraging reaching and stretching.

The modern, colourful design features raised beds, columns and a dramatic water feature and the planting takes the eye through a colour wheel. The plants have been chosen for their perfume, touch or food value.

We will also be running an action packed activity marquee for visitors.

Show manager Kris Hulewicz said: "Reaseheath nurtures some of the best talent in the north west and the college's gardens always make a big impression at the show."

Our florists are also exhibiting as usual in the floral art marquee.

National Trust trainee trounces opposition

National Trust careership trainee Kathryn Owen proved her outstanding knowledge by winning the regional final of the Institute of Horticulture (IOH) 'Young Horticulturalist of the Year'.

Kathryn trounced the opposition, beating seven other students to first place and a place at the national final at Kew Gardens, London. The national winner will receive a £2000 travel bursary.

Both Kathryn and another National Trust careership student, Tim Turner, were invited to the regional final after gaining equal points in a college heat which was open to all horticulture students under 30. However, Tim is out of the country on the date of the



▲ Kathryn Owen receives her prize from sponsor John Hacker, MD of North West Professional Sports Turf

national final, so declined the opportunity to compete.

Kathryn battled it out for ten nail-biting rounds and took the lead in the final buzzer round of twenty questions, eventually winning by five points. She said: "I was thrilled to get through to the final. My thanks go to all of my Reaseheath tutors for their teaching and support."

Course manager Ken Higginbotham said: "The competition was very exciting and had the audience on the edge of their seats right until the end. Kathryn especially deserves our praise because she only began her career in horticulture two years ago!"

Kathryn is based at Hanbury Hall, a National Trust property in Worcestershire. She is

tutored at her workplace by head gardener Neil Cook, who gives regular lectures at Reaseheath, and former Reaseheath careership trainee Caroline Beacall.

Caroline, who graduated from Reaseheath in 2007, was a City and Guilds medal winner for the quality of her work and also took the award for the best trainee gardener on her course.

Reaseheath partners the National Trust in its careership programme. Trainee gardeners and wardens, who work at the charity's historic sites nationwide, attend college on block release and are monitored in their workplace by Reaseheath assessors.

RAG raises funds for children's charity

Reaseheath students and staff take their RAG (Raising and Giving) activities very seriously – and this means having lots of fun as well as fund raising.

Our charity appeal this year goes to The Children's Adventure Farm Trust www.caft.co.uk and we are aiming to pass the record breaking £12,076 which we raised for charity last year. The total of funds raised by Reaseheath students and staff over the past 19 years is over £141,000 – all benefiting local charities.

Julie Gray, CAFT Community Fundraiser, said: "We are absolutely over the moon that we have been chosen as the 2010 charity.

"We're so impressed at the lengths everyone is going to in order to raise money and I can guarantee that their efforts will make a huge difference in the lives of terminally ill, disabled and disadvantaged children from all over the North West. We're a small charity but we do big things for so many kids. We can only continue to change lives thanks to our amazing supporters."

Here are just some of the ways we have been raising funds this year:

Student Services Co-Ordinator Mark Hardy completed the gruelling 26.2 mile Rome Marathon in a personal best time of six hours three minutes. His efforts raised an awesome £950 in sponsorship from friends and colleagues which has been added to the charity fund.



▲ Nearly there - Mark Hardy

Our action packed RAG week also included an attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro (on our indoor climbing wall), rowing the English Channel (on our rowing machine), a raft race on our lake, a foam party, BBQ and disco, five a side World Cup, a beer barrow race and several other themed events.

We also plan to take part in the dragon boat race in Chester and a sponsored walk of the Sandstone Trail.



▲ Rowing the Channel



▲ On the ball - 5 a side football



▲ Heave-ho - tractor pull



▲ Splashing time - raft race

Aiming for the top



▲ Top of the world - construction team

Our construction staff are always scaling new heights – but their next challenge could be their most taxing yet.

Andy Capper, Steve Wainwright, Danny Collins, James Spooner, Andy Gould and Dave Morgan are planning to climb the three tallest mountains in Great Britain in just 24 hours. They will take on the three peaks challenge of Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in a sponsored climb for our RAG funds on June 3.

To build up for the big challenge, our team climbed Scafell at Easter and Snowdon in May.

Explained Steve: "We agreed to take our second and third year students climbing in Snowdon for RAG and this encouraged us to think of doing something separate. It's going to be a real challenge as the 24 hour time allowance includes travel and we'll start and finish in the dark, but it'll be worth it if we can raise funds for such a worthy cause."

And if that isn't enough, Steve and Dave are also planning to tackle Mont Blanc in July.



▲ Braving the dunk-tank

Close encounters in South Africa

Animal management students had close encounters with some of the world's most exciting wildlife during a study trip to South Africa.

Lion, elephant, rhino and buffalo were regularly spotted by the 14 students, who stayed in a rustic bush camp on the banks of the Olifants River in the Greater Kruger National Park.

During their two week African ecosystems course our students learned how to track wild animals, went on bush walks and game drives with experienced wildlife guides and gained a deeper understanding of habitat management in the area. They also carried out practical conservation work and detailed research into animal behaviour. They all received certificates on completion of the course.

Another highlight was a guided tour round the Moholoholo Wildlife Care and Rehabilitation Centre where the students, who are studying for degrees in animal behaviour and welfare or zoo management, handled vultures and cheetahs.

Megan Parkin said: "The experiences we had were awesome. We learned such a lot in a short time."

The group also helped staff and pupils at the nearby Matikinya Primary School to assemble newly delivered desks, part of a plan to develop closer relationships between tourists and local people.

Their support was much appreciated by Zani Kunz, Head of Children's Eco Training, who said: "Thank you for volunteering your help, skills and positive attitude to better the desk situation at the school. You managed to put smiles on the faces of the children and teachers!"

Reaseheath students have enjoyed study tours run by African Conservation Experience in South Africa for the past three years. There are already plans for trips to Botswana and Namibia next year.

Courses hotline: 01270 613242 or email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

► Helen Downie, Louise Graham and Bethany Stonier join pupils at a South African school



▲ Students watch elephants during their study tour



America trip is an eye opener

A high action study tour to the USA gave our agricultural students a practical insight into the world market

The 18 students and two staff joined colleagues in the agricultural department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which plays a leading role in research and development.

Impressed by the sheer size of the university - it has a total of 41,000 students and the agricultural department alone has 2,500 students - the group attended a high level dairy conference and joined lectures by agronomists on the latest developments in wheat and soya production. They also joined in a debate questioning the need to grow food crops for energy production when alternative green energy sources were available.

The students toured the university's farms and onsite facilities. This was the third time Reaseheath students had visited

the University of Wisconsin-Madison, thanks to links between the two education establishments.

The group went on to visit a number of dairy units with herds ranging in size from 8,000 to 50 cows. One of the larger farms had its own cheese factory and an anaerobic digester fuelled by manure and waste whey. The students were impressed with the high welfare and management standards which kept the animals in prime condition despite extreme differences in heat and humidity. The sheer scale of US agriculture - with some fields greater than a single farm in the UK - was also an eye opener.

National Diploma in Agriculture student Matt Ashley said: "It was really interesting to see the large scale of the farms and the fact that so few had fencing of any sort. The method of growing crops was also very different than at home, with most farms sowing direct and tillage



▲ Agriculture students admire farming on a grand scale in the US

being kept to a minimum.

"We also noticed that agriculture is still the number one industry in Wisconsin and the general public is less distant and has a better understanding of what it takes to produce milk."

• Reaseheath College is continuing to invest in its training

farm and facilities, ensuring that the college remains at the cutting edge of technology and knowledge transfer. Its agriculture department has a national reputation for providing top class education and training.

Course details: 01270 613242 or email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

Food students caught up in flight delays

Food technology students and staff were forced to lengthen their study tour in America because of the flight delays caused by the eruption of an Icelandic volcano.

The group of seven students, accompanied by lecturers Julie Bent and Nick Blakemore, remained on a ranch in Nashville, Tennessee, until flights resumed from New York airport.

The students, who are studying for their Level 3 Diploma in Food Manufacture, had completed a nine day tour sponsored by Battersea Pies of Covent Garden. The trip included lectures at the Middle Tennessee State University and visits to food manufacturing plants including a brewery, vineyard and meat processing unit.

The group stayed at a horse ranch owned by the parents of food student Ben Lloyd, whose father Bernard operates national contracts for Battersea Pies while his mother, Marie, runs the family ranch.



▲ Food students get a taste for America

An exciting spin-off from the partnership is that our students have now been asked by Battersea Pies to develop a new vegetarian pie suitable for selling at music festivals.

Julie Bent said: "We had a fantastic tour which really opened the students' eyes to the many opportunities in the food industry. We are now looking forward to working with Battersea Pies and to come up

with a fantastic new product. "We were also very grateful to Ben's family for putting us up while we were waiting for our return flights to be confirmed - it would have been awful to be stuck at New York airport for days.

"The students continued with their studies and their behaviour, attitude and support to each other was exemplary. It was great to see them sitting round the dining table writing their assignments."

Students build on skills

Our Level 3 Diploma brickwork students were impressed with the latest trends in environmental awareness when they toured the Ecobuild exhibition at Earls Court in London.

The group took the opportunity to update themselves in the ways the construction industry is adopting systems

such as rainwater harvesting and material recycling.

A group of 26 Level 2 brickwork and woodwork students visited the Home Builders and Renovation Show at the NEC Birmingham, where they gained an insight into dealing with the planning regulations required for new build and renovation projects. They also looked at the range and pricing of materials available to the trade.

Snow's no problem

Over 40 adventure sports students and staff spent a week at Serre Chevalier in the French Alps, improving their skiing and snowboarding skills.

Both novice and experienced students from all our courses benefited from concentrated coaching at the local ski school. They also gained an insight into the full time and seasonal jobs available in the industry through a presentation set up specially by a ski management company.

One of the group to enjoy the experience, adventure sport graduate trainee Greg Houghton



▲ Snow skills for adventure sports

said: "It was a very good trip. The snow conditions were excellent and we had a great chance to progress our snowboarding and skiing skills. We also gained a lot of experience of resort life - the après ski was amazing!"

* Earlier in the year, students on our Foundation Degree in Adventure Sports Management and in the second year of our National Diploma or Certificate in Adventure Sports travelled to the Cairngorm

mountains to develop their snow skills and gain mountaineering experience in winter conditions.

A trip to Everest Base Camp is also proposed for later in the year.

Reaseheath offers a range of adventure sports courses which prepare young people and career changers for the many opportunities offered within the fast expanding outdoor leisure industry. Phone 01270 613242 or email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

Engineers gain experience of European excellence



▲ CLAAS visit for engineers

Test driving top-of-the-range tractors worth £millions was a highlight for our engineering students during their annual study tour to European manufacturing centres of excellence.

A group of 34 students from our National Diploma and First Diploma in Land Based Technology visited the CLAAS global headquarters and technoparc in Harsewinkel, where they were able to see the latest in engineering technology and processes.

Eberhard Weller, CLAAS Head of Customer Care, said: "We were delighted to welcome Reaseheath's students back to the factory for the third time. It is always a pleasure to meet such enthusiastic and knowledgeable young people."

The students also enjoyed a new attraction while in Germany - a trip to a private collection of vintage agricultural machinery including over 100 tractors.

The group then moved on to the Netherlands for three days where their first stop was at the Caterpillar Mitsubishi forklift truck manufacturing hub. This was of particular relevance as one of the forklift trucks used daily at college was manufactured there.

The students also paid a visit to the Museum de Cruquius, a historical water pumping station, and to agricultural machinery importer and exporter Koop van der Wal.

First Diploma student Tom Kynaston, 17, said: "This was the best tour ever! Trying out the new models and seeing them made from scratch at the Claas factory was really impressive. Visiting the museum and learning about the history of German tractors was good too."

Footballers reign in Spain

Reaseheath's second men's football team has followed in the victorious steps of our first team by winning a football tournament in Salou, Spain.

The trophy has been added to our 2009 awards, when our newly formed first team brought home a cup double by winning both the British Colleges Sport North West league and an inter-college competition in Spain.

This year's second team, which currently sits top of The British Colleges North West Division 1 league, won their competition by winning two of three games and narrowly losing one.

Delighted tour leader and first team manager Kevin Cunningham said: "Yet again the lads have produced some good football and worked very hard to bring more silverware back to Reaseheath.

"Most of our players have only been in the same team since September and were playing against some teams who have played together since the age of seven. They showed great character and determination to bring the cup home with them. I'm extremely proud to have led



▲ Victorious - Our second men's football team

this tour with such a great group of students"

The tour was funded by our students, who organised fundraising events such as a racenight and bag packing in local supermarkets. Apart from their matches, the team enjoyed a tour of Barcelona FC and spent a day at the Spanish version of Alton Towers, Port Aventura.

The Men's first team will return to Spain in late May to defend

their trophy from last season. Our third men's football team are also on their way to success, having secured the British Colleges Sport (BCS) North West Division 2 league. Our ladies' football team compete in the BCS North West Division 2 (7 a side league) and are preparing for a tournament in Newquay.

Further details of sports courses: 01270 613242; email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

Eventer Polly takes showjumping clinic



▲ Polly Stockton (left) chats to our equine students

Staff and clients enjoyed a showjumping clinic in our new arena with international event rider Polly Stockton.

Polly is a member of the British World Class performance squad and has represented GB at young riders and senior level. She was ranked 12th in the British Event Riders listing last year and finished second in the Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials.

Polly's retired advanced event horse Tangleman is with us, following a second career as a schoolmaster for our more experienced students.

Athlete with an eye on the Olympics

To say wheelchair athlete David Latham is ambitious would be an understatement.

Six months ago, at the age of 16, he became the youngest international rugby player in the world when he played in Brazil for the GB wheelchair rugby squad. It was his debut match and he scored the first try, helping his team bring home the gold medal.

Now 17 and a student on our First Diploma in Sports Performance, David is so committed that he trains the equivalent of five miles a night in a gym despite rising at 6am to get to college from Cheadle Hulme.

"My ambition to be one of the best paralympic athletes ever," says David, who has been unable to walk since birth. "If you want to be the best you have to train hard and play hard."

David, who is also a member of the North Wales Dragons rugby team, plays tournaments in Britain

and Europe and is hopefully going to Chicago later this year with the GB squad. Additionally he plays for the Manchester Mavericks and North West of England basketball teams.

He has set his sights on the 2012 Paralympics and, later, possibly a career in politics raising awareness of disabilities.

"I live for sport and I've the drive and passion to do well," he says. "I want to be an ambassador for wheelchair sports, I want to give something back."

In the meantime he's enjoying his time at Reaseheath and particularly praises the way the teaching staff in our sports department have adapted the course for him. He's tried rounders and short tennis and has been particularly keen on learning about nutrition and how the human body works.

"I'll come away with huge knowledge which will help me in the future", he says.



▲ Dedicated athlete David Latham

Julie is flying high after dream job offer

Keen bird watcher Julie Rogers is focussing on a dream career with the RSPB, thanks to knowledge she gained from our Higher National Certificate in Countryside, Conservation and Recreation Management.

Julie fought off strong competition to become a seasonal People Engagement Officer with Britain's leading wildlife conservation charity. She is helping to run projects for the RSPB's 'Date with Nature' scheme, which put a spotlight on amazing wildlife in unusual places. Her first engagements included showing the public nesting peregrine falcons and leading dawn time walks to see the breeding display of rare black grouse.

Julie believes it was her new knowledge in ecology, habitat management and woodland management which tipped the balance in her favour.

She said: "I'm sure that my studies at Reaseheath made a big difference to my job prospects. I had to prepare



▲ Julie Rogers

a guided walk and I certainly could not have done this without what I learned on my course."

"I've always been interested in birds and conservation. Although I had lots of practical experience, I felt I needed paper qualifications to help me take my new career forward. Reaseheath's part-time course was perfect."

Julie, a former speech therapist who already has two degrees,

is considering topping up her qualification to a full degree in the future - if time allows.

Our HNC in Countryside, Conservation and Recreation Management is offered on one evening a week plus ten Saturday field trips. Details phone 01270 613242 email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

For Dates with Nature see www.rspb.org.uk

Steven enjoys the high life



▲ Free runner Steven Powell

Student bricklayer Steven Powell is hoping to build an official park for followers of the extreme sport of free running.

Steven, 17, a Construction Award Level 2 student with us, is Chairman of The Nantwich Free Runners and spends his spare time climbing over local walls and buildings. The trend for these urban acrobatics is growing and the club has over 40 members, but no permanent outdoor site.

Now, thanks to the work of Steven and his committee, negotiations are likely to result in a dedicated site on Nantwich's Barony Park where young people can practice in a safe environment.

He and founder members Morrison Thelwell and Joel Howells, with the backing of their families, local police and Cheshire East councillor Arthur Moran, are hoping to create obstacle courses which will include walls, drops, mazes and rails. They are looking for financial backing to take the plan forward.

The group is being advised on site choice, park design and administration by Urban FREEFLOW, the UK's leading free running group, and is working with other local clubs.

The sport, which originated in France, encourages those taking part to find new ways of travelling by crossing, vaulting over or rolling round street objects. As well as being a discipline, it is also viewed as an art form and particularly appeals to the younger generation.

Steven, a free runner for five years, said: "You get a real adrenalin rush and it's fun to do with your mates. We're really pleased that we have this support."

Toby takes on a lambing challenge

Former agriculture student Toby Lawton put his skills to good use in our lambing sheds.

His application and determination to succeed so impressed tutors that he was asked to become the college's relief shepherd during the busy lambing season. Toby, aged 20, led the student team on night duty in the lambing sheds, ensuring that our commercial ewes produced healthy offspring.

Reaseheath Sheep Unit Manager Matt Bagley explained: "We chose to offer Toby this responsible job because of his eagerness to learn and his maturity to deal with the situations which can arise when you are dealing with livestock. He also understands the college system and appreciates the high standards we expect. It has been a great pleasure to see him develop his management skills."

Once Toby's duties at Reaseheath were completed



▲ Toby Lawton and Matt Bagley on duty in the lambing sheds

he moved on to manage his own flock of 110 breeding ewes in Newport, then to a further month's contract as a full time shepherd before turning his hand to shearing.

A former National Diploma in Agriculture student, Toby spent the middle year of his three year course working on a dairy farm locally. Since graduating last year he has continued to broaden his farming skills in

New Zealand in a job set up through links with Reaseheath. Three fellow students, Simon Baskerville, Will Durose and Stephen Shelley, also took advantage of the opportunity to work in New Zealand.

Said Toby: "My time at Reaseheath was the best three years of my life. I've had fantastic experiences and I'm looking forward to a great future in farming."

Fayre for brides to be



▲ Wedding experience for event management students

A successful wedding fayre and bridal fashion show organised by our events management students attracted brides-to-be and their families from all over the county.

The event was held in a marquee on the college lawn for the second year running and featured two live catwalk shows and a variety of wedding services and products. All brides-to-be received a goody bag.

Student Jordan Jones said: "It was a really good experience which will come in very useful on my CV when I apply for work."

Four weddings and a St Bernard

Sculpting a life size model of a St Bernard dog out of foam and flowers may be far from traditional - but it proves that to be a successful modern florist you have to be a creative thinker.

Level 3 floristry student Adrian Thomas is both creative and a good businessman. He is a partner in a successful web based business 'Verdure Floral Design', specialising in floral design for weddings and corporate events.

The business is blooming. Adrian has created table tops for prestigious events such as the Grand National at Aintree and the What Car Magazine Awards in London, has made bouquets for Lady Gaga, Kylie Minogue and members of Take That and then there are the more quirky requests such as floral representations of the family dog, a Mustang car and a chainsaw.

The business provided a floristry service for over 150 weddings and special events last year, including a wedding at Hampton Court. Adrian employs three permanent florists and uses additional freelancers at busy periods.

"A big part of being a successful florist is listening to customers and being able to create something which fills that brief," says Adrian, who studies at our floristry



▲ Creative - Adrian Thomas

▼ St Bernard - a floral tribute

department one day a week. "The days can be long and demanding but they're very rewarding when your client is happy with your work.

"I came to Reaseheath because I wanted to further my qualifications. I believe they will help to take my business forwards. It's also nice to be around other florists and refresh your ideas."

Reaseheath's floristry department offers courses from full time to one day workshops, for professionals to those with leisure interest. Contact 01270 613242; email joannas@reaseheath.ac.uk

For Adrian's business see www.verdure.co.uk



Gareth aims high

Ambitious e-business student Gareth Stanford has two main ambitions - to represent Great Britain in the 2016 Olympics and to be a millionaire by the time he's 20.

Although he's only 16 he's well on the way to achieving both. As well as being a Reaseheath student, Gareth is Managing Director of Rib-i.com, a web based business selling quality accessories for the clay pigeon shooter. His most lucrative product is a gun attachment called the Rib-i shooting system, which helps shooters focus on the target more effectively.

Gareth drew up plans for the attachment himself and

his mum Jane, who has an engineering business, made up the prototype. In just six months the Rib-i shooting system has sparked off strong global interest with on-line sales as far as America and Australia.

Gareth is in charge of advertising, sales, marketing and the upkeep of the company website, which he designed himself. He is planning to open a shop to extend his product range and his mum has just designed a new range of luxury luggage bags for female shooters.

Fitting his college work round his business interests isn't a problem, he says, and the help and advice from staff in our business department has been



▲ Aiming for the top - Gareth Stanford

invaluable.

"I've learned a lot of business skills at Reaseheath, like how to promote products and how to sort out accounts. It's perfect for what I need to be successful," says Gareth..

As for the Olympics - Gareth's already well on way to achieving that ambition too.

Although he's only been clay pigeon shooting competitively for six months he's already winning at national level.

Adventure Sports students show environmental awareness

Adventure Sports students volunteered to help conserve an area of unimproved grassland - a rare habitat in Cheshire and the subject of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

The project, which was organised by BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), involved clearing brambles and ditches at Swettenham Meadows, a Cheshire Wildlife Trust site.

Our students learned how to use a range of tools and methods of land management to return the site into a wildflower meadow. They also helped clear out blocked ditches.

Since 1939 Cheshire has lost 99% of its unimproved grassland, which provides a wildlife rich habitat. Swettenham Meadows is home to dragonflies, frogs, toads and newts, including the protected great crested newt, and many species of birds.

The students, from our National Diploma in Outdoor Adventure course, study units in environmental education and sustainability.

Explained course manager Dan Bean: "This work gave our students an opportunity to learn more about our valuable resource - the outdoors - in a practical and inspiring way while



▲ Helping to conserve Swettenham Meadows

helping the local community at the same time. They represented Reaseheath and all its values superbly."

For site information see:
www.cheshirewildlifetrust.co.uk/res_swettenham.htm

- Nearly two skipfulls of rubbish was cleared from a North Wales beauty spot by our adventure sports students during a snow skills session.

The National Certificate in Adventure Sports students visited the Horseshoe Pass and Llantysilio Mountain area to gain first hand experience of winter navigation and avalanche awareness.

The students spent part



▲ What a lot of rubbish!

of their session clearing the mountainside of broken and improvised sledges, plastic sacks, discarded wood and even a surf board.

Mountaineering Instructor Simon Wells said: "People come to these beautiful places to enjoy themselves. The students could not understand why they would

Fund benefits hearing dogs

Our animal management students enjoyed a day in fancy dress to raise money for one of their favourite charities.

The students raised £336 for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, which is also the chosen charity for the current mayor of Nantwich, Edith Williams. The students, who are studying for their National Diploma in Animal Management, contacted the mayor beforehand because they wanted to choose a charity which would benefit the local community.

They now plan to hand over a cheque to representatives of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People at a special presentation at the college.

Said National Diploma Course Manager Lisa Bird: "The students contacted the mayor to see which charity she had chosen for her time in office. They were obviously very keen when they heard how they could support the training of hearing dogs. They raised the money through sponsorship and had a lot of fun at the same time."

leave so much rubbish behind."

Despite white out conditions and freezing temperatures, our students rose to the challenge and carried on to learn snow skills using state of the art winter mountaineering boots, crampons, axes and snow probes.

Construction students rise to the challenge

Construction students rose to the challenge when users of a busy church community centre had problems with their building entrance.

Paving slabs leading to St Andrews Church in Weston Coiney, Stoke, had become uneven and loose, presenting a potential hazard.

The problem was solved by a group of Level 3 Advanced Construction Diploma in Bricklaying students, who took up and relaid all 223 slabs. The group brought their professional skills into play - discussing the outcome with the client, ordering materials and cordoning off the site in line with health and safety rules.

The job was completed in about four months, with the group visiting weekly.

Brickwork instructor Andy Gould, who led the team, said: "This was a really good practical task which was typical of the type of work the students may take on when they are employed. They took the lead in organising the job and worked as a team. They also learned a lot about working with clients and overcoming poor weather conditions."

Student Jon Clarke said: "We got a lot out of it. Laying the flags was good experience. It was also nice knowing that it was a good cause and that we were helping people who needed it."



▲ Our construction team take on a challenge

The community centre, which shares the same entrance as the church, is used by hundreds of people attending a daily pre-school playgroup, youth groups and community groups.

Church Warden Christine Lomax said: "We are very grateful to

Reaseheath's students. The paving slabs had become very uneven and it would have cost us a lot of money and disruption to have them relaid. Now the whole area looks excellent."

Our team also fitted extra shelving in the storeroom and raised two grids in the car park.

Students address internet safety

Reaseath students proved their awareness of internet safety by taking part in a poster competition.

The competition was organised by our college as part of European Safer Internet Day 2010, an annual event to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones.

Explained IT lecturer Bill Pearson: "This is a hugely important issue and we aim to make sure that all students are aware of the importance of internet safety. Sadly, some young people are still putting personal data online without thinking of the consequences.

"The competition helped our students think about relevant issues and we had some very good entries."

The winner, David Ambridge, received an iPod shuffle for his bold and striking poster. The second and striking poster was awarded to Jon Glasby, a First Diploma in Horticulture student.

David, 17, is a first year National Certificate in Environmental Conservation student and advises scout groups on internet safety in his spare time.

He said: "Internet misuse is a very important issue. Some users are not aware how easily their personal details can be hacked into. Everyone, and particularly young people, need to realise the problems and need to know how to avoid them."

For further advice on internet safety visit www.ceop.gov.uk www.thinkuknow.co.uk and www.getsafeonline.org



▲ David Ambridge with IT Manager Rob Brown and his winning poster

Green champions rewarded

Young environmentalists from Wistaston Church Lane Primary School, Crewe, scooped £3,000 at an awards ceremony hosted by Reaseath.

The awards were sponsored by Go Green Car and Van Rental, who invited 250 schools from Cheshire and surrounding counties to compete for cash to help with environmental projects. Reaseath's Head of Horticulture Iain Clarke helped to judge the six schools in the final.

Wistaston Church Lane School took the top prize in the primary school category and plans to invest in food recycling and new developments in its outdoor environmental education and leisure areas. Second place went to Vernon Primary School, Poynton, with Bridgemere CE Primary School, Nantwich, taking third place.

The winner in the secondary school category was Malbank School, Nantwich, who wants to use its prize on more recycling equipment and on developing home grown produce. Second place went to Sir John Talbot Technology College of Whitchurch, which is implementing a host of energy saving measures, and third was James Brindley Science

College, Chell, commended for making great strides in the use of bio-diesel fuel.

David Blackhurst, managing director of Go Green Car and



▲ Green champions: Wistaston Church Lane Primary School with Edward Timpson

Van Rental, said: "I am delighted to see so much fresh and positive thinking in this area and find the enthusiasm of all taking part very inspiring. I thank Reaseath College and Dovey's Office Solutions for their support in this project."

Crewe and Nantwich Conservative Parliamentary candidate Edward Timpson, who presented the prizes, added: "All the entrants have shown innovative and thoughtful approaches to reducing their carbon footprint.

"It is also a delight to see schools and businesses coming together to think creatively about everyday solutions to the environmental problems that we all face."

Outdoor classroom brings wildlife closer to pupils

National Diploma in Horticulture students have transformed an overgrown area at Wistaston Green Primary School, Crewe, into an outdoor classroom where pupils can learn about the environment.

Our students cleared a pond and its surrounds, dug and planted new beds and borders, extended a decked area and constructed new tiered bench seating. They also helped the school's pupils to plant 150 young native trees which will benefit wildlife by providing flowers and berries.

The project received its final touches during an environmental day run by the school.

Our students take an ecology module as part of their second year studies and found that their work at the school increased their knowledge as well as benefited the schoolchildren.

Explained course manager Chard Spicer: "The group found they had learned a lot about how correct land management and planting can increase wildlife diversity. They also really enjoyed seeing the project come to fruition and working with the pupils."

Head Teacher Linda Davis said: "Our children have been astonished by the transformation

in the pond area and are keen to spend time there working on environmental projects. It is very important that they learn about the wildlife on their doorstep and how to look after it for the future. We are delighted that Reaseath's students were able to help us with this project."



▲ Mark Wood and Adam Fitzsimmons plant up a border

Farmers and students flock to MUCK event

Hundreds of farmers and contractors and many of our students watched live demonstrations of sophisticated machinery at a major event focusing on manure and soil management.

Muck North West was aimed at helping farmers improve their slurry and muck utilisation and comply with Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) regulations.

The event, hosted for the third consecutive year by our college farm, attracted more than 45 trade stands and offered a wide range of live machinery demonstrations including slurry handling and incorporation equipment. The latest soil conditioners were trialed and spectators were also encouraged to take part in interactive workshops.

The event was organised by Harvey Hughes Ltd., independent rural consultants.



▲ Agriculture students discuss top range equipment

- Reaseheath also hosted a National Cattle Mobility Event. Professor Nigel Cook, a prominent vet in the UK before taking up his current position in the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, presented a detailed appraisal

of aspects of modern cow housing and management that he felt were contributing to lameness. Visitors also attended a programme of workshops in our modern dairy unit, which is home to the world famous MOET Holstein herd.

Conservation work commended



▲ Foundation students hard at work

Foundation students who carried out conservation work on ponds on the site of the Cheshire Show have been rewarded with free tickets to the popular two day event (June 22/23).

The results of their efforts to clear overgrowth around two big ponds will be the subject of a photographic display in the show's environmental area. The students have also been invited to appear on the stand to talk to the public about the project.

The work by the group of 20, who are studying agricultural and countryside skills, has improved the habitat around the ponds, making them more attractive to wildlife. Their hard work and commitment has been so appreciated by the chairman and board of directors at the Cheshire Agricultural Society that they have been invited back in the autumn to continue with the project.

Said Cheshire Show Executive Director Nigel Evans: "We have been delighted with the tremendous efforts made by the students to benefit the wildlife on our showground. We are looking forwards to welcoming the group to the show and are sure that our many visitors will find the photographic display interesting."

"We have many other ponds on the site and hope that the group will be able to improve these in a similar way."

Student Oliver Estcourt, 17, said: "We had a lot of fun clearing brambles and overgrown trees. It was really satisfying when we finished because we could see what we had achieved."

The Cheshire Show is the largest two-day agricultural event in the north west. Reaseheath has been supporting the show for many years and is a regular exhibitor."

Further details: www.cheshirecountyshow.org.uk

Cattle prepared for showing success

Our agriculture students are busy preparing traditional beef cattle for their showing debut at three major agricultural events.

Our students will exhibit the Longhorn cattle at Cheshire Show, the Three Counties Show and the Royal Welsh Show.

The cattle belong to the Cheshire Wildlife Trust's pedigree Gowy herd. The partnership works successfully on both sides - allowing our students to gain valuable practical experience in preparing and exhibiting cattle and the non profit making organisation to promote both its work and its herd.

The Cheshire Wildlife Trust is based at Bickley Hall, a 200 acre farm near Malpas where the cattle form part of a conservation grazing programme. The prime role of the livestock is to maintain and improve plant and wildlife habitats. The herd has just reached a point where there are a few cattle for sale, both for breeding and for beef.

Reaseheath has a long record of showing cattle and the students have been keen to be involved



▲ Showing lessons for longhorns

in the whole process, which has included selecting the cattle, teaching them to lead on a halter and clipping and bathing them.

Explained lecturer Natalie Gascoyne: "As well as giving our students the responsibility of looking after and showing stock, this project will give them experience in communicating with fellow exhibitors and with the public.

Cheshire Wildlife Trust's Director of Development, Sarah Jones said: "The link with Reaseheath makes perfect sense. The show project will promote our conservation work and show that we are doing a realistic job with our cattle. It is also good for us to be involved with young people who will be involved with the farming industry of the future."

Full steam ahead for trainees

Reaseheath engineering department is helping 20 young trainees to steam ahead into future careers as railway heritage engineers.

The trainees, who were all previously unemployed, are the first group to take part in a new training scheme to learn the traditional skills required to restore steam locomotives. They spend one day a week learning fundamental engineering skills such as welding and fabricating in our engineering workshops and the rest of the week at Crewe Heritage Centre, where the historic locomotives are being restored.

The project was launched by pop mogul and rail enthusiast Pete Waterman, whose Waterman Railway Heritage Trust is based at Crewe Heritage Centre. It aims to take young people who are not in employment and give them the specialist training they need to overhaul the locomotives before these skills are lost.

Their progress and achievements will form a central part of a television documentary to be filmed by the BBC in 2011.

Welcoming the partnership, Head of Engineering Melvin Johnson said: "This is an exciting new venture for Reaseheath and we are delighted to have been



▲ Railway heritage trainees and staff

chosen as the preferred trainer by the Heritage Trust. We hope that it will lead to a sustainable relationship with the London and North Western Railway Company, which is the training arm of the Waterman Railway Heritage Trust.

The recruits, all of whom had been unemployed for at least six months and are aged between 18 and 24, began their training with Reaseheath in January. They have been using their new skills to refurbish a Beyer-Garratt locomotive which was originally built in Manchester but saw many years of service in South Africa. Once returned to its former glory,

the locomotive is destined to become a working tourist attraction.

One of the trainees relishing the challenge is Helen Lucas, 23, a former vehicle mechanic who lost her job in the recession. She said: "I love being in work and learning new skills. It's fun working on these historic locomotives and it'll be great for the public when they go into service."

Jamie Meredith, also 23, who had been out of work for eight months, said: "I've really enjoyed learning to weld and make new parts for the locomotives. It gives you a real reason to get out of bed in the mornings."

Monitor farms launched to help livestock farmers

Two monitor farms have been launched in the region to help livestock farmers improve the performance and efficiency of their businesses.

Reaseheath is supporting the three year initiative, which is part of the Rural Development Plan for England (RDPE) Northwest Livestock Programme.

We are helping to deliver farm run demonstration events and other projects such as animal health and nutrient management plans.

At the launch of the dairy monitor farm, Clive Hall in Winsford, farmers heard that industrial style business planning methods of process mapping and lean manufacturing systems will be used as key tools to secure greater efficiencies and ultimately reduce costs by 15 per cent.

At the beef and sheep monitor launch at Langford Farm, Northwich, control of liver fluke is to be the first priority in developing a farm animal health strategy.

A discussion group is attached to each farm. For more details contact Lesley Innes, Facilitator, RDPE Livestock Northwest, at Reaseheath College on 01270 625131 or email Lesleyi@reaseheath.ac.uk

THE JOHN PLATT TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship brings inspiration for business diversification

Company director Jonny Hewitt has brought back useful ideas for business diversification after visiting Pennsylvania, USA, on a travel scholarship.

Jonny, who is Director of Fun and Chaos at Red House Farm, Dunham Massey, was one of two young Cheshire farmers to receive the £2,000 John Platt Travel Scholarship last year.

His company offers public attractions including a maze, cookery demonstrations, tea rooms and an ice cream parlour and Jonny chose to spend a week visiting similar farm based businesses in the county of Pennsylvania.

He said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for me to see great farm attractions and farm

destinations in an area which is heavily rural. It has broadened my ideas in terms of what it is possible to do on farms and during a conference I was able to learn new skills in terms of social networking and making new video clips. It was a truly inspirational trip and I look forward to implementing what I learnt back on the farm."

Jonny, who is also current Cheshire county chairman of the National Farmers Union, chose to visit Pennsylvania state because of the high quality of the farms and the wide range of businesses which they offer.

Ian McGrath of Parkgate Farm, Tabley, Knutsford, the other recipient, is still to take his prize. He intends to visit Holland and

Sweden to look at technological advancements in dairy farming.

A former winner, dairy farmer Richard Beck of Whitening House Farm, Bradwall, Sandbach, spent over a month visiting similar businesses in New Zealand and Australia.

The travel scholarship was launched by the Cheshire Agricultural Society to honour the retirement of former chair John Platt OBE. John remains chair of Reaseheath governors and we organise the scholarship. John has always been a great believer in education and passionate about the way that travel can broaden experience and knowledge.

• The John Platt Scholarship is open to anyone aged between

18 and 35 who lives or works in Cheshire and is employed in agriculture or related industries.

• Applicants must show that they want to improve their education and experience through travel by putting forward a project focused on new technology, new or alternative farming methods, diversification, use of natural resources or improved profitability.

Details: Dave Kynaston, Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DF

T: 01270 613243, website www.reaseheath.ac.uk or www.cheshirecountyshow.org.uk

For further details of Red House Farm see www.redhousefarm.co.uk

Celebration for greyhound rescue

A party celebrating the anniversary of the rescue of 29 mistreated greyhounds was held in our new indoor riding arena.

MP for Crewe and Nantwich Edward Timpson was guest of honour at the event, staged by Greyhound Rescue West of England (GRWE), a charity dedicated to the rescue and rehoming of greyhounds.

A year ago, GRWE worked with Wirral Council to co-ordinate the rescue of the greyhounds, which were being kept in horrifying conditions. The dogs' owner was successfully prosecuted.

The greyhounds have been successfully re-homed nationwide and the majority travelled to the reunion, which included a parade,



▲ Party time for greyhounds

a search and rescue display, agility classes and health and care advice.

Lisa Webb, GRWE Regional Homing Officer, said: "Our volunteer team have done a fantastic job

putting together a fun line-up to celebrate the anniversary of the Wirral rescue. Our thanks go to Reaseheath College for providing such wonderful facilities."

On the buses

Students with learning difficulties are using public transport for the first time thanks to a successful pilot scheme being supported by Reaseheath.

Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) and Cheshire East Councils approached us because of our knowledge of the needs of foundation level students.

The aim of the scheme is to identify individuals who could be trained to use independent travel services throughout the region and beyond. Entry Level Team Leader Chris Loret and tutor Cath Pilsbury welcomed the opportunity, feeling that their learners would benefit by developing greater confidence and independence.

Our tutors have been working with David Coleman and Kathy Reynolds, Independent Travel Trainers for Cheshire Shared Services, who carry out research to see which journeys are practical and tailor them to suit the needs of the individual student.

Explained Cath: "This programme has allowed us to put into practice the skills we teach here on a daily basis, such as reading and understanding timetables and time management. Giving our learners a goal, such as getting from A to B, gives them a sense of purpose and our teaching much more meaning. "We are committed to



▲ Mark Droogan and Thomas Mathers

encouraging as many opportunities as possible for our learners and were delighted to be approached for input into this pilot scheme. Because of our intimate knowledge of our students' needs and learning disabilities we have been able to give an insight into barriers to the day to day skills most of

us take for granted."

Two students who have already benefited from the scheme are Mark Droogan, 18, from Frodsham and Thomas Mathers, also 18, who lives in Little Sutton.

Mark is planning his first solo train journey to visit his sister in Edinburgh while Thomas is looking forward to a trip to Chester to meet friends.

REASEHEATH AT A GLANCE

- Outstanding College (Ofsted)
- Beacon College (QIA)
- Dairy Champion National Skills Academy for Food and Drink Manufacture
- Engineering Academy
- 14 years - 19 years
- Training Quality Standard

Subject areas:

Further and Higher Education

- Adventure Sports
- Agriculture
- Animal Management
- Business and IT
- Construction
- Countryside and Conservation
- Engineering
- Entry and Foundation Programme
- Equine
- Floristry
- Horticulture
- Food Technology
- Greenkeeping and Sports Turf
- Motor Vehicle
- Sports Performance and Excellence
- Leisure and Community Studies

Associate College of:



Total students:

- Full time Further Education: 1,800
- Higher Education: 600
- Part-time inc. adult leisure: 4,000
- Schools partnerships, work based learning and Train to Gain 1,400

Estate

- College grounds: 21 hectares
- Owned and rented farm land: 330 hectares
- Land leased to Crewe Alexandra Football Club: 6 hectares

Turnover

- Academic year 2008-09: £18.2 million

Facilities

- On-site accommodation for 400;
- five catering outlets; student lounge/bar; learning resource centre; HE study area; sports hall; climbing wall; multi gym; sports pitches (rugby, football, crown green bowling, cricket); commercial nine-hole golf course; indoor riding arena

Staff

- 500 (including agency)

Further details - please ask for a prospectus

Reaseheath College, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 6DF

Full house at lambing event



▲ Young visitors meet our lambs...



▲ ...and our guinea pigs

Record breaking crowds flocked to Reaseheath to meet the first lambs of the season.

Over 4,200 visitors packed the lambing sheds over two weekends to watch lambs being born and cared for. Our experts were on hand to demonstrate the special care required for a few of the lambs, such as bottle feeding and fostering. A big screen showed video clips of earlier action and some lucky children, many of whom had no previous experience of sheep, were able to cuddle the new arrivals.

Other stars of the event, which has been running for 21 years and gets more popular each year, included ferrets, chickens, rabbits and reptiles from the our animal centre. We also had a display of tractors, a children's quiz, face painting and a garden plant sale.

Our agricultural students worked around the clock to make sure our flock of 500 sheep gave birth safely.

Said Steve Roach, Section Manager for Agriculture: "These lambing events give us a fantastic opportunity to show off the type of work we do and the outstanding calibre of our students. We have had lots of positive comments from

the public. Everyone learned something and had a really good day out, which is what Reaseheath is all about."

Diary Dates...

Come and see us!

May 2010

- 15 - 21 Adult Learners Week
- 16 Reaseheath Festival Open Day
- 23 Cheshire Young Farmers Club annual rally, Reaseheath
- 30 Burland Hall Country Fair
- 31 Warrington Horse Show

June 2010

- 2 - 3 Stafford Show
- 4 Animal Management open afternoon
- 17 Courses information event (evening)
- 22 - 23 Cheshire Show
- 26 - 27 Arley Garden Festival

July 2010

- 1 Graduation and awards ceremony, Reaseheath
- 10 Newport Show
- 15 - 18 Bowsworth Show Jumping Classic
- 17 Zoo maze opens
- 19 - 22 Royal Welsh Show
- 21 - 25 RHS Tatton Park Show
- 28 Nantwich Show

August 2010

- 4 - 5 Bakewell Show
- 13 - 14 Shrewsbury Flower Show
- 15 Peover Game Fair

September 2010

- 6 Zoo maze closes
- 7 - 8 Dairy Event NEC Birmingham
- 9 Westmorland County Show
- 29 Cheshire Ploughing Match

October 2010

- 16 - 17 Apple Festival, Reaseheath

Fun at the double

We are offering two exciting activities for family fun this summer.

Our zoo, which has just undergone a multi million pound renovation, is open

throughout the school holidays.

Our extensive collection of mammals, reptiles, birds and fish, including rare and endangered species, are on show and there are even opportunities to feed lemurs and meerkats. Other attractions include keeper talks, face painting and child friendly quizzes.

For a full day out, we also offer a maize maze which this year, appropriately, has a zoo theme. There are two mazes to explore - a giant one covering an area of about three football pitches and a smaller puzzle for young children and visitors who are less mobile.

Reaseheath Zoo and Maze

Open daily from Saturday 17 July to Monday 6 September 2010
Combination ticket:



Adult £9.00, child under 16/ senior citizens £7, children under 3 free, family ticket £25. Single attraction tickets are also available.
Contact: 01270 625131

