

Tractors For Cash



Bill Vellacott, BOAT chairman, Barry Coleman of Firestone, Mary Sims and Nick Lee of Vapormatic, Mary won the 2010 tractor.

Some 20 years ago Joy Spiers MBE, a retired veterinary surgeon working for VSO in Thailand arranged for Eckachai Krodsuwan, a lecturer in dairying, to come to the UK with the aim of improving his practical husbandry and training skills. Steve Merritt, who was working in the London office of VSO, had a brother Mick who, together with his wife Heather and young son Tom, had just taken the tenancy on his first Devon County Council farm in East Devon. The 50 acre dairy smallholding was in Plymtree near Cullompton, and so it was that Eckachai came to Weaver Mill Farm.

Impressed by Eckachai's insatiable appetite for knowledge, Mick and Heather and a neighbour Bill Vellacott approached Malcolm Florey who was Principal of Bicton College at that time

and arranged for Eckachai to attend a dairy technology course there to widen his skills, including those of a trainer.

Eck, as he became known at college, completed a year at Bicton, leaving a wife and two little girls to fulfil this dream. He was a star pupil and is still teaching today and his hard work and enhanced abilities have been recognised in Thailand where he is now a College Principal.

With the success of the exercise came the realisation that this was a sustainable form of aid in which Devon and Bicton College could play a part.

So it was that Devon farming organizations came together to form the charity Bicton Overseas Agricultural Trust (BOAT) to develop the 'train the trainer' programmes which have now been delivered to more than 100 trainers in the UK and abroad.

Men and women from Tanzania,

BOAT raffle sponsors to date

Tractor and Machinery
Vapormatic Ltd, (Exeter):
www.vapormatic.com, tel: 01392 684000

Mole Valley Farmers

Bicton College: www.bicton.ac.uk

Farm machinery Haulage Ltd:
tel, 01327 311484

Bridgestone Firestone tyres:
www.bridgestone-firestone.com

Oakham Treasures:
www.oakhamtreasures.co.uk

Denleys, agricultural machinery parts:
www.agricultural-parts.co.uk

Ray Pile and Nick Jakeman

Tim Langabeer (Devon branch of the David Brown Tractor Club)

Kenya, The Gambia, Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and India have benefited from the work of this registered charity. Participants spend part of their time on family farms to widen their knowledge and also attend specifically designed courses at Bicton College. In-country support has also been provided to Tengeru Training Institute in Tanzania and BOAT has formed a very beneficial link between Tengeru and Bicton College.

Fundraising, as for any charity, has always been an issue and in 2002 BOAT's Bicton College representative Chris Jaworski, who is the course manager there for land-based engineering, suggested that a redundant 1972 MF 135 yard tractor would make a good 24-hour restoration challenge for the students. Thus the tractor rebuilds started - and the annual raffling off of the finished tractor which has so far raised £110,000.

BOAT chairman Bill Vellacott MBE said: "This has been achieved by a dedicated group of volunteers who depend upon the generosity of particularly the UK and Irish people who so generously support the tractor raffles. Without our very generous sponsors and the superb work of Chris Jaworski and the Bicton team this vital piece of fundraising would not happen".

2002

The MF 135 was purchased second-hand from the Dorset area in 1980, originally with a fore-end loader. It was used on the college farm and estate for training over two decades and was eventually promoted to life as a very hard-working beef unit yardscraper tractor with generations of unsympathetic trainee operators. After being restored it was won by Linda Brough from Throwleigh near Okehampton, Devon, and raised more than £6,500.



2005

This was a raffle-free year but BOAT still made £500 from a tractor.

Peter and Pam Gibbins, dairy farmers and agricultural and haulage contractors from Clyst Hydon near Cullompton, provided a redundant Massey Ferguson 35, which had a cracked engine block for the project.

Farm machinery breakers Ron Greet, of Ipplepen donated a replacement engine and Vapormatic provided all the engine components for a complete rebuild, which was undertaken by Bicton College students Dan Cottey and Chris Beare with Chris Jaworski during a *Tractor and Machinery* National Vintage Rally weekend as a workshop demonstration. Pam Gibbins then made a £500 donation to BOAT.



2003

Kit James, of Witheridge Garage, had a 1969 Ford 3000 and he agreed to deliver it to Bicton College for a full restoration which would be an integral part of the engineering students' curriculum and would be featured in *T&M* for the first time. The tractor was stripped to the last nut and bolt (literally) during the rebuild and was the main prize in the raffle drawn at Skipton Auction Mart during the National Tractor Show weekend. It was won by Ruth Price from Hartland and raised over £13,665.



2006

A late 1970s MF 135, which had been partially restored by the late Richard Purser from mid-Devon, was donated by his wife Jill for completion by the Bicton College engineering faculty. The tractor which Richard had been restoring for Jill was seen at many shows throughout the year and the raffle, which was held in his memory, raised nearly £14,000 for BOAT. The winner was Arthur Bennett from Stockland Hill, near Honiton, who decided with his wife to sell the little red tractor. It was put up for tender in *T&M* and once again the winning tender of £5,432 came from Keith Sherrell so this is the second BOAT tractor in Oakham Treasures. Arthur and Anne then donated £1,432 to BOAT.



2004

This year's tractor, a 1953 Ferguson TE-F20, was won by octogenarian Margaret Smyth, from Blackheath in London. Deciding not to join the 'Chelsea tractor set' Margaret asked to have her photograph taken with her prize and took the cash alternative before the tractor was put up in *T&M* as a sealed bid tender on behalf of BOAT. This was won by Keith Sherrell of Oakham Treasures for the sum of £2,555, taking the total raised to £13,555, and is one of two BOAT tractors in Oakham Treasures. The tractor was donated by Robert Beard, of Kingston on the South Hams.



2007

This year's tractor, a Fordson Super Dexta, was the first to travel abroad to Ireland and, because of the renowned generosity of the Irish, it raised over £3,000 in five days at the national ploughing match in Southern Ireland. Peter Brennan, Managing Director of Vapormatic, purchased the Super Dexta from one of the firm's main stockists Ron Greet of Broadhempston, and £17,200 had been raised by it when Steve Wright, Managing Director of Kelsey Publishing, drew the winning ticket belonging to retired farmer John Tocque, from Gwernymynydd, Mold North Wales.



2008

A 1959 four-cylinder MF 35 was the prize this year. The college's first job was to start the engine to drive it off the trailer: this proved more difficult than anticipated and even after flattening three good tractor batteries it still refused to fire up. Typical of a tired four-cylinder version of the Massey Ferguson 35! As it turned out, number 4 piston had broken its piston rings and they had found their way on to the piston crown. The cylinder head has received some damage



from the broken rings and also showed evidence of the head gasket blowing.

When rebuilding the engine, the fuel injection pump was accidentally fitted 180 degrees out of position. Amazingly the engine still managed



to start but showed white smoke badly and the fault was easily rectified.

Lucky winner in 2008 was Roger Nutt, who lives in Cheadle, Staffordshire, and the raffle raised nearly £20,000.

2009

This year's prize, a David Brown 880 Selectamatic, was purchased for BOAT by *Tractor and Machinery* from Tim Langabeer, an active member of the Devon branch of the David Brown Tractor Club.

The David Brown colour scheme proved popular with the ladies and resulted in increased ticket sales during the year. A very delighted Les Perkins from Worcester arrived at Bicton College to collect the first prize and the raffle raised £20,000. It has been great to see the tractor at this and last year's Tractor World Show at Malvern.



2011

This year's BOAT raffle features an IH 434 tractor donated by Andrew Baughan of ECO Baughan 2000 Ltd, Daventry. It will be rebuilt by Bicton students at Devon's county show near Exeter on May 19 - 21. Follow it in *T&M* as the students delve into the little tractor's parts and uncover what is required to

bring it back to full working order.

Tickets cost £1 each (£5 for a book of five) and are already available. Send your cheque made out to BOAT and an sae to Bill Vellacott, Middle Woodbeer farm, Plymtree, Cullompton, Devon EX15 2LN. Please enclose your phone number in case of queries. You can also contact him at bv@woodbeer.eclipse.co.uk or tel: 01884 277329

