The Historians meeting of 30 October welcomed the speaker Catherine Baxter who came to talk on the topic “A Passion for Food and Farming: 125 years of Harper Adams University”. As the Historian for the university, she gave a gave a very interesting account of the background of Harper Adams University near Newport in Shropshire, which now has around 4000 students from 30 different countries and is the largest provider of agricultural education in the UK. It was founded in 1901 by Thomas Harper Adams who, having no direct heirs, left a legacy worth around £5m in today’s money together with his estate to establish a land-based educational institution including a working farm. The first students were mainly male, but during the two World Wars many women came to study as Land Army trainees. Courses include raising poultry, pigs, cows and sheep, growing crops, agricultural engineering and technology, veterinary science and business management.

There will be an Open Day “The Homecoming” at Harper Adams University on 12 June 2027 when people are invited to have a look around the university and join in the annual celebrations.

Catherine’s passion for Harper Adams University was evident, and she was thanked for her lively talk.