

John Lycett's blog – September 2025

First of all, this month John Gittins and I spent an enjoyable afternoon at the Cruckton & District Ploughing Society Competition. This was held at Lythwood Farm, Bayston Hill, where I grew up. The view from the site is spectacular, panning round from the Wrekin to Llanymynech Hill and all in between.



There were quite a few horse teams and the standard of ploughing, both with tractors and horses, was outstanding. Before we left for home, we had a tour of the farm buildings and I commented how much things had changed since I was a boy.

Last Sunday morning, I bumped into Steve Smith (Farm Manager) in the local shop. I commented that I hadn't seen him recently. He agreed but said "It's been busy, busy, busy since 1st July!" The grain harvest was a fortnight sooner than normal. The maize harvest was up to three weeks early and since those harvests have finished, liquid digestate lagoons have been emptied ready for the winter. Two drills have been sowing autumn crops, rape, rye, barley and wheat. All have been rolled and sprayed.

In September, I had an invite from Lincoln University to attend an event. It was focussed on working robots for agricultural tasks. I wasn't able to go but I began to think how modern technology is affecting the farmers in our local area.

For a long time, we have had robotic pallet bag stackers. We have had robotic milking machines. We have had robotic silage feed rail pushers. Robots are now picking strawberries and apples and packing eggs.



Going on from that, automotive tractors are beginning to appear. We have solar panel driven seed drills and weeders, not forgetting the GPS systems which increase output and save fuel. Drones also have their place in farming and there are more and more vending machines selling eggs, milk, yogourts and sometimes meat.

Not forgetting our robotic lawnmowers!

The rape and the early sown crops have emerged and appear to be doing well.

Next up – finishing drilling and beginning to lift some energy beet.