

## NUFFIELD FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE – TASMANIA 2014

Have you heard of William Morris? He died some years ago,  
Yet each of you is here because of him, for do you know  
He was the one who first designed and built the Morris cars  
Right back in nineteen-twelve-thirteen, and that is why you are  
Sitting here and quietly listening to a poem here tonight  
Of what has been discussed and learnt at this delightful site.

The cars that William Morris made were popular indeed!  
Most popular of British cars from what I hear and read.  
So many cars he built and sold at such a rapid rate,  
That he was made a British viscount in nineteen thirty-eight.  
So he became Lord Nuffield, and his Foundation pays  
For many scholarships worldwide, and deserves a bit of praise!

So I've told a bit of history of how this came to be,  
And that's why you're quietly listening to verses writ by me.  
I drove up here just yesterday, arriving here for lunch,  
And chatted to some well-dressed folk from this distinguished bunch.  
Cattle, sheep and oyster farmers from the mainland and beyond,  
And quite a few from my State here – of which I'm very fond!

For over forty years I taught in many rural schools,  
And very early found, of course, that farmers are no fools!  
But, looking round the Hall last night, I can't resist to say  
Your clothing and demeanour weren't your normal 'every day'!  
Where were your boots and freebie caps? Your dealer shirts, as well?  
And, very noticeably not here, your farming clothing smell?

I've not seen crowds of suits and ties, and fancy dresses, too,  
On farming folk for many years; you scrub up well, you do!  
A gracious audience you are, each speaker that we've heard  
Has had an audience polite; we haven't missed a word!  
Anne McGrath – her talk was good! – But best was when her dream  
Was fulfilled at Flemington – her reaction was a scream!

Supply chain strategies were told of John Deere operations,  
Best known to me through tractors seen on farms across our nation.  
A somewhat complicated chain, but necessary, too,  
For the machinery they make, and which they sell to you.  
Their machinery range I know is great, I've seen it in the toys  
Which often came to schools I taught by farmers' little boys!

The first Global Focus lads report was a lively twenty minutes,  
Presented energetically, their hearts were surely in it!  
But I'll admit I'd find it hard for what they told to us –

One hundred hours in the air! I'd rather take a bus!  
And, regardless of distractions that seemed to be around,  
The Ashgrove cows and calves behaved – they didn't make a sound!  
Then the Conference Dinner in the marvellous Albert Hall;  
An ideal place to complement the scholars, one and all.  
One could only be impressed at how the evening went,  
And the huge amount of energy MC Jane Bennett spent!  
The food was quite exceptional, the company supreme,  
And this year's group of scholars are, for now, the 'crème de crème'!

The nights up here at 'Lonnie' are very short, I find,  
Where I live south of Hobart the nights are far more kind!  
My body woke this morning – my mind stayed long in bed,  
The first part of the AGM completely missed my head!  
No! I found it quite inspiring once my mind clicked into gear,  
It was Jim who got it started by his questioning, I fear!

Don McGauchie was most interesting, he talked of scale and size  
Of Australian corporate farming; it opened up my eyes!  
The numbers and the costings were extraordinary, indeed!  
Such as targetting one hundred million wealthy with best meat on which to feed!  
The million pounds he mentioned raised in eighteen twenty-four,  
Would be today two billion dollars, or, perhaps, a little more!

Today another Global Focus group told of their trip away  
To China, Philippines and France, and others, by the way!  
It seems they had a lively time with Irish people, too,  
Which I guess for Irish visitors, I hardly think is new!  
Today I heard of bullet vests each made from fibre waste;  
And of tobacco plants removed and by kenaf replaced!

The final Global Focus Group reported just today,  
Telling of the million things they saw when far away.  
They took half a million photos from here to everywhere,  
And tried, I think, to let us know they weren't in chaos there!  
I'm not sure that we believed them, but it brooks no debate  
That their trip was wonderful, and they daily checked their weight!

I've enjoyed the conversations I've held with some of you,  
Finding out just where you live, and discover what you do.  
I've felt the camaraderie this Nuffield Conference brings,  
And, unlike so many 'gigs' I do, I've learnt a lot of things!  
I trust these rambling verses somewhat cover what you've done,  
And I thank you most sincerely – for it's been a lot of fun!