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Report for 1939-45

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Retirement of Sir John Russell

Rothamsted Research

Rothamsted Research (1946) *Retirement of Sir John Russell* ; Report For 1939-45, pp 18 - 18 - DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23637/ERADOC-1-87>

Viscount and Viscountess Bledisloe, and Sir Henry Dale, President of the Royal Society.

In the morning the guests were taken in small parties round the laboratories and had an opportunity of inspecting the new south block, the remodelled sections of the main block, and the new pot-culture houses.

After a luncheon in the Public Hall, addresses were given by the Earl of Radnor, Chairman of the Lawes Trust Committee, Mr. R. S. Hudson and Sir John Russell.

Many messages of congratulation were received from overseas and from well-wishers in this country.

In the afternoon the guests were taken round the farm and inspected some of the more important experiments including the 100th successive wheat crop on the Broadbalk field.

Parallel meetings to commemorate the Centenary of Rothamsted were held in Moscow by the agricultural scientists of the U.S.S.R., in Cincinnati by the Soil Science Society of America, and commendations of Rothamsted's work were made at meetings in Spain and Portugal.

RETIREMENT OF SIR JOHN RUSSELL

On 30th September, 1943, Sir John Russell retired from the directorship of Rothamsted. Dr. W. G. Ogg, formerly director of the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, Aberdeen, was invited to succeed him.

Sir John joined the Rothamsted staff in 1907 and was appointed director when Sir Daniel Hall left in 1912. During his long tenure of office, Sir John completely reorganised and greatly expanded the Station, and, what was still more important, gathered round him a first-class staff. He built up what is now one of the finest agricultural libraries in the world, and raised large sums of money for the rebuilding of the laboratories, pot-culture houses and farm buildings and for the purchase of Rothamsted farm and Manor House. In this summary it is impossible to deal adequately with Sir John's great services to Rothamsted and to the agriculture of the Empire. He travelled widely and did much to make the work of the Station known in other countries. Besides serving on numerous committees set up by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Research Council and the Colonial Office, he took an active part in the work of the Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau and UNRRA. During the war he also served part-time with the Soviet Relations Division of the Ministry of Information which entailed making extensive lecture tours in many parts of the country.

When he retired the staff and former workers presented him with his portrait painted by Francis E. Hodge.

IMPROVEMENTS TO LABORATORIES AND FARM BUILDINGS

In 1938 a Centenary Fund was inaugurated for the purpose of reconstructing some of the old laboratories and erecting new ones : also for setting up pot-culture houses and extending and improving the farm buildings. There was a ready and generous response from many friends and supporters of Rothamsted and, had it not been