

# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Summer 2018

## UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well the summer is upon us again with some great days for making hay. It's a little too warm for the sheep as well as for me, although they have their favourite oaks to laze under.

One blessing perhaps is that I haven't seen many flies this year which can only be good. Shearing's all done for most of us and so there's time to sit back and enjoy the summer whilst planning the next lambing rota.

The new website has finally appeared. We know that it has been a long while in coming but there has been so much content that was useful to be put onto the new site. This hasn't come without a few hiccups along the way. We still have a few problems and so it isn't 100% finished but is still being worked on in the background.

Bear with us please. We thought it better to have something fresh to show that there has been progress even with a few little niggles. Once these have been ironed out fresh content

will start appearing. The map portion is the worst affected area but will be resolved soon.

Many thanks must go to Simon Mackay for the hours of patient work that has gone on to get us to this stage, and for the rest still to come.

We are now well into the show season and fast approaching our two National Shows and Sales. I hope to see many of you at the first of these at Shrewsbury at the end of July. This is a great opportunity to bring some new bloodlines into your flocks, as well as being an enjoyable social gathering.

Council member Rosie Lee has been working on a new breed stand display, which will be more easily portable than the old-style exhibition boards. One of the first outings for this will be at the Shrewsbury sale - so do let us know what you think, as this is just a first step in updating our displays.

*Barry Hodson*

## DIARY DATES

THE Society's AGM will be held on 24th November, and the remaining two Council meetings for 2018 will be held on 13th October and 24th November (following the AGM). If you would like any matters to be raised at the Council meetings please contact the SSBA's Secretary.

## SHREWSBURY SHOW AND SALE

A total of 77 Shropshires - 28 Males and 49 Females - have been entered in the National Show and Sale (West) at Shrewsbury Market on Sunday 29th July. This is our main show and sale and likely to be the largest for Shropshires anywhere in the UK this year.



The show classes commence at 9am, judged by Clive Davies, and the sale of Shropshires through the ring will begin at 12.30pm. Pictured above, last year's Champion, a shearling ewe from the Hansnett Flock owned by Ellie Butcher from Canon Frome, Herefordshire.

## MELTON MOWBRAY SHOW AND SALE

OUR National Show and Sale (East) takes place at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th September. It is part of the larger National Show and Sale of Traditional and Native Breeds.

Schedules are available from Grassroots Ltd ([www.grassroots.co.uk](http://www.grassroots.co.uk)). Entries close on 29th July (paper) and 5th August (on-line). The judge is Carol Watson. The sale commences at 10.30am for females (off boards) and rams at noon through the ring.

## BLESSED BE THE SHROPSHIRE IN DIAMOND YEAR CELEBRATION



The Dorrell family (Stonegrove Livestock) took a pair of top quality Shropshires and two Ruby Red Devons to Worcester Cathedral at the end of May to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Royal Three Counties Show being held at Malvern. This year, Worcester adopted the role of host county for the show and the event at the Cathedral paid homage to the Three Counties' Worcestershire heritage. Agricultural representatives from the county and BBC CountryFile's presenter, Adam Henson, were among the guests. The prize livestock provided by the Dorrells, were all former champions at the Three Counties. See page 3 for an update of this year's winners in the Shropshire showing classes.

## SUCCESSFUL SHOW STAND OUTINGS



SHROPSHIRE sheep have been promoted at two events already this year: Wonderwool Wales at the end of April and the Spring Festival in mid-May, both at the Royal Welsh Showground. Thanks to Pippa Geddes and Rob Kerby for taking their sheep and manning the stands. Both reported a good level of enquiries for Shropshires - and these have been passed on to our Secretary Simon Mackay so he can keep in contact with these potential buyers and encourage them to take the next step of purchasing some sheep. Pippa's stand at Wonderwool also won the award for "Best Trade Stand With Livestock".

### NSA EVENTS

LATER in the year, the SSBA's exhibition stand, will be going to events organised by the National Sheep Association: the NSA Sheep Event at the Three Counties Showground on 18th July and NSA South Sheep at the South of England Showground on 8th September.

Please help on the breed stand if you are able - contact Barry Hodson (hodsonbarry @btinternet.com) to make arrangements. You will receive free entry tickets if you assist on the stand

### BEST PEN OF LAMBS

CONGRATULATIONS Jeanette and Robert Hares (Millenheath Flock) for winning the prize for the best pen of new season lambs (over 38kg) at Shrewsbury Market in March this year.



### NEW BREED STAND DISPLAYS

COUNCIL member Rosie Lee has been working for the past few months to produce some new display materials for the breed society. The first of the new displays, featuring Shropshire lamb, has now been produced (see above and below) and is ready to go out to events to promote our breed.

Instead of heavy exhibition boards, the new displays are "pull up" banners that slot neatly back into lightweight cassettes when not in use. This makes them much easier to carry and put up at the shows. There is one large banner and a narrower one which can be used together or separately. Additional banners promoting other important aspects of the breed, such as "prolific, easy care ewes" and "tree safe grazers" will shortly be under production.



Congratulations Dolway McCorry (Ballinderry Flock, flock letters LC) from Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland for achieving your Bronze Long Service award, recognising 20 years of breeding Shropshire sheep!

### SHROPTALK

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 which is called  
 "Friends of Shropshire Sheep"

# RESULTS FROM THE EARLY COUNTY SHOWS



SHROPSHIRE COUNTY



STAFFORD COUNTY



ROYAL CHESHIRE COUNTY



ROYAL THREE COUNTIES

**Shropshire County:** Ram: 1. A Harvey, 2. R&J Hares, 3. Coleman Family. Shearling Ewe: 1. J&R Hares. Breeding Ewe: 1. S Farquhar. Ram Lamb: 1. J&R Hares, 2. A Harvey, 3. J&R Hares. Ewe Lamb: 1. J&R Hares, 2. J&R Hares. Group of Three: 1. A Harvey, 2. C&J Morris. Best Male: J&R Hares' ram lamb. Best Female: J&R Hares' ewe lamb. Overall Champion: J&R Hares' ewe lamb; Reserve Champion S Farquhar's breeding ewe. Judge Y Clinton Palmer. *(Apologies for some missing results - the show society was unable to provide them).*

**Stafford County:** Ram: 1. A Harvey, 2. Coleman Family, 3. P&A Schofield. Shearling Ewe: 1. J&R Hares, 2. Coleman Family, 3. Coleman Family. Breeding Ewe: 1. J&R Hares, 2. A Harvey, 3. P&A Schofield. Ram Lamb: 1. J&R Hares, 2. J&R Hares, 3. C&J Morris. Ewe Lamb Class: 1. J&R Hares, 2. C&J Morris, 3. J&R Hares. Group of Three: 1. J&R Hares, 2. A Harvey, 3. Coleman Family. Champion A Harvey's ram, Reserve J&R Hares' ram lamb. Judge: C Harding.

**Royal Three Counties:** Ram 2-Shear and older: 1. G Clay, 2. Coleman family, 3. J&R Hares. Sh. Ram: 1. Stonegrove Livestock, 2. Coleman Family, 3. E Butcher. Sh. Ewe: 1. E Russell, 2. E Russell, 3. S Farquhar. Breeding Ewe: 1. S Farquhar, 2. E Russell, 3. E Russell. Ram Lamb: 1. J&R Hares, 2. J&R Hares, 3. S Farquhar. Ewe Lamb: 1. J&R Hares, 2. J&R Hares, 3. G Clay. Untrimmed Lamb: 1. G Clay, 2. J&R Hares, 3. E Russell. Pair: 1. J&R Hares, 2. E Russell, 3. Stonegrove Livestock. Group of three lambs progeny of any sire, bred by exhibitor 1. G Clay, 2. J&R Hares, 3. Coleman Family. Group of Three: 1. E Russell, 2. J&R Hares, 3. Stonegrove Livestock. Champion Stonegrove Livestock's shearling ram, Res Champion Ellie Russell's shearling ewe. Judge: A Jones

**Royal Cheshire County:** Aged Ram: 1. Coleman Family, 2. P&A Schofield. Sh Ram: 1. A Harvey, 2. Coleman Family, 3. A Harvey. Sh Ewe: 1. A Harvey, 2. Coleman Family, 3. A Harvey. Breeding ewe: 1. P&A Schofield, 2. A Harvey, 3. P&A Schofield. Ram Lamb: 1. A Harvey, 2. Coleman Family. Untrimmed Lamb: 1. G Llewellyn, 2. G Llewellyn, 3. P&A Schofield. Ewe Lamb: 1. Coleman Family, 2. A Harvey, 3. P&A Schofield. Group of Three: 1. A Harvey, 2. Coleman Family, 3. P&A Schofield. Champion: A Harvey's Shearling Ram, Res Champion: Coleman Family's Aged Ram. Judge: L Newman.

## COLOURING OR DIPPING OF FLEECE

IT has been brought to the Council's attention that we had some information missing from our general rules for showing at our annual Show and Sales.

Looking back we encountered a problem in 2007 whereby sheep had been coloured and this was discussed by the then Council. The decision from that date onwards was that no sheep were to be allowed to be shown or sold at any event for Shropshires after having received this treatment. The reasoning behind the decision was one of fairness. Dying or colour dipping of sheep could disguise the true colouring of the skin and fleece of the animal. Faults such as grey fibres and dark skin are undesirable traits and colouring could disguise this.

This ruling unfortunately has slipped from the rules published in the schedules for entering the shows. It has been too late to include in the Schedule for this year's show and sales but will be in the catalogue for Shrewsbury and also for Melton Mowbray. The same is also to be followed at all shows where Shropshire Sheep are shown. We hope this has cleared up the matter and it will be incorporated into the Society's official showing rules in due course.

## JUNIOR MEMBERS RISE TO THE TOP



CONGRATULATIONS Ellie Russell and Owen Powell for doing so well in Young Handler classes. Ellie won the her class at the Royal Three Counties Show which qualifies her for the Young Stock-person of the Year final at the East of England Winter Stock Festival. And Owen has qualified for the final of the Young Shepherd of the Year Competition at Countryside Live, held at the Great Yorkshire Show-ground. Good luck to both of them in the finals!



Photos courtesy of the Royal Three Counties Show (photographer Nigel Byde).

## SUBSIDY AVAILABLE FOR NEW FLOCKS TO JOIN THE SBIS

**THE SSBA's Council has agreed to offer a fifth phase of financial support to encourage new breeders to start recording the performance of their sheep with Signet.**

The Society is now inviting applications from flocks based in the UK to join the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme (SBIS). Up to eight breeders will be offered an annual subsidy, provided they meet the criteria set out below and they haven't received the subsidy before.

If accepted onto the scheme, these flocks will each receive a payment of £125/year for three years to help cover the cost of recording.

### CRITERIA FOR THE SUBSIDY

To be eligible for the subsidy, each breeder must commit to recording continuously for three seasons (2019, 2020 & 2021) and also:

1. Provide timely and accurate pedigree information and weight records to Signet;
2. Use an approved Signet technician to scan at least a proportion of their lamb crop each year to determine muscle and fat depth in the live animals;
3. Agree to make their Signet evaluations public and available to the breed society, so that genetically superior animals can be identified;
4. Be a flock of sufficient size to breed at least 25 lambs from at least one stock sire over two seasons. Exceptions to this rule may be made if the stock rams concerned have strong genetic links with other previously recorded animals or flocks. This rule has been introduced on the advice of Signet to ensure that results are meaningful and with a reasonable accuracy.

Signet Breeding Services provides genetic evaluations to livestock producers to help them identify sheep and cattle with superior breeding potential. Signet is part of AHDB Beef and Lamb, the industry body for beef and lamb levy payers in England. Financial support for the production of evaluations is provided by AHDB Beef and Lamb in England, HCC in Wales and QMS in Scotland.

There are currently 36 breeds of sheep that are recording with Signet, and this includes all the main meat producing terminal sire breeds.

Shropshires established a breed improvement scheme based on Signet recording in 2007. The SBIS has now been running for eleven years and there are currently 16 flocks participating.

Thousands of Shropshires have now been evaluated and great progress has been made in terms of improving traits such as growth rate of lambs (see graph on right), and desirable carcass traits - increasing muscle depth and decreasing fat. The important Maternal Traits of Shropshires, such as prolificacy and ability to rear lambs well are also measured by the recording scheme and incorporated into the genetic evaluations.

### COSTS OF SIGNET RECORDING

Signet has recently undergone a fee structure change where flocks that choose to provide data electronically or online are rewarded with cheaper fees. See the table on the right.

Application forms for the new SBIS subsidy are available from Pippa Geddes on 01743 741689, or [psellwood@aol.com](mailto:psellwood@aol.com). The

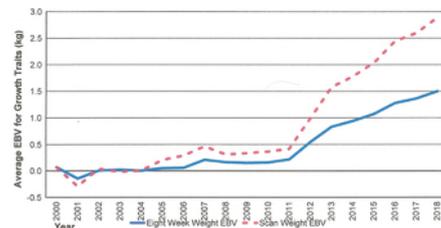
## HAYNE OAK SUCCESS

THE Hayne Oak Flock owned by Liz Bowles and Mike Bray, has been awarded Signet's Most Improved Flock Award. This year, the accolade was given to the flock that has made the greatest genetic progress over the past decade, whilst recording with Signet.

Pictured below is a high genetic merit Hayne Oak Shearling ram, ranked in the top 10% of the breed for Terminal Sire Index. He was exhibited at the Devon County Show in May, placed 2nd in a class against Continental terminal sire breeds and beaten only by the animal that went on to be Supreme Champion at the event.



deadline for applications is 30th September 2018. If more than eight flocks apply and all meet the criteria set out, the subsidy will be awarded on a "first come, first served" basis. For more information about SBIS, visit the SBIS page on the SSBA's website or the Signet Website: [www.signetfbc.co.uk](http://www.signetfbc.co.uk).



### Shropshire Genetic Trends 2018

Graph showing improvements made in average growth rates of SBIS lambs. Eight week weight (red line) and scan weight - approx 17 to 21 weeks old - (blue line).

### Annual Costs of Signet Recording

Data provided:	On paper	Online or Electronically
Flock Fee:	£120	£95
Additional cost per ewe:		
First 50 ewes	£3	£2.50
51 - 150 ewes	£3	£2.00
151 - 400 ewes	£3	£1.00

Ultrasonic scanning is charged separately with a minimum visit fee of £175 for up to 100 lambs, and extra animals at £1.75/hd. Scanning visits can be shared if you live near another Signet recorded flock that scans at the same time of year.