

# SHROPTALK

The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association



Autumn 2011

## MELTON CHAMPION SETS NEW BREED RECORD PRICE FOR A EWE LAMB

**THIS** year's National Show and Sale (East) took place on 9 and 10<sup>th</sup> September at Melton Mowbray market, Leicestershire. Eighteen Shropshire sheep were forward. Whilst there was only a limited number of buyers, one new record price was achieved.

The showing commenced at 2pm on Friday with Peter Bird from Weston-on-Trent, Derbyshire, as the judge. The senior sheep classes (ram, breeding ewe and shearling ewe) were all won by sheep from Aubrey and Marion Webb's Ushers flock based near Lutterworth in Leicestershire. The winning ram was Ushers Tyson, a high genetic merit sire with a Signet Index for growth, carcass and maternal traits of 175, by Ushers Sam. The successful Ushers breeding ewe, born in 2007, was sired by Benfield Enigma and the winning shearling ewe was by Ushers Striker.

Peter chose a ram lamb, Crown Boris, from Charles Saffell and Lorie Newman's flock at Great Ellingham in Norfolk as the winning ram lamb. The animal was sired by Hayne Oak Young Joseph, the 2010 show and sale champion at Shrewsbury. A well-grown ewe lamb sired by Alderton Bonzo from Alan Oliver's Sprotbrough Flock based near Doncaster took the red rosette in the ewe lamb class. This lamb went on to become overall Shropshire champion, with Crown Boris as reserve.

On Saturday morning the Shropshire ewes were sold before the males with eight of the eleven on offer being knocked down with an average price of £218.

The best prices were for the Sprotbrough ewe lamb champion from Alan Oliver, which set a new breed record at 400 guineas and the shearling ewe from Aubrey and Marion Webb. The ewe had been running with Ushers Tiger, the highest Signet recorded ram in the breed, and was sold for 250 guineas. The respective buyers were Linda Brawn (Meadowswood Flock) based in Northamptonshire and the Jones family from Porthmadog in Gwynedd. There was little interest in the males given the timing of the sale, with only two of the ram lambs selling at an average of £152.

### NEW FLOCKS

Four of the five buyers were either from new flocks or flocks set up over the last two years, as flock numbers continue to grow.

The SSBA's Council would like to thank Peter Bird for Judging and the breed inspectors and those who assisted with the pre-sale inspections and stewarding – Les Newman, Claire Jakeman, Marion Webb, Simon Mackay and Barry Hodson.

## NATIONAL SHOW & SALE (EAST) SHOW RESULTS

### Ram

1. AL & ME Webb

### Ram Lamb

1. C Saffell & L Newman
2. AL & ME Webb
3. L & P Newman

### Breeding Ewe

1. AL & ME Webb
2. R Webb

### Shearling Ewe

1. AL & ME Webb
2. R Webb

### Ewe Lamb

1. A Oliver
2. AL & ME Webb
3. L & P Newman

### Champion

A Oliver (ewe lamb)

### Reserve Champion

C Saffell and L Newman (ram lamb)

## NEARLY A VIKING WARRIOR!

A cautionary tale from SSBA member John Bradshaw

**FEW** rams have a journey to their new owner like Fortune Xavier's. Nicknamed Lewis, after the great Lewis Moody, Xavier briefly faced going out like a Viking warrior rather than the sainted founder of the Jesuits.

The trip to Melton Mowbray started well enough, though perhaps I should have investigated when my car's temperature gauge headed north. With ten miles to go I smelt hot oil and, within seconds, smoke was coming through the heater vents. Time for action, I decided, though not to fight the engine fire that had already taken hold.

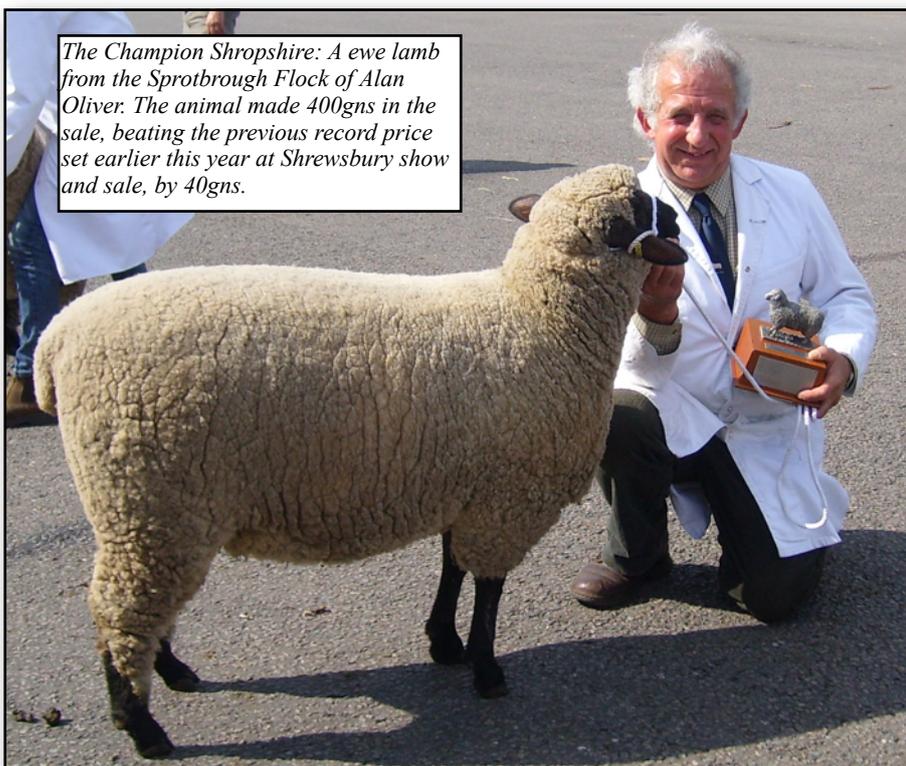
### INCINERATED

With a decent sheep in my well-strawed trailer, the most important task was pushing it clear. But now the poor Suzuki was well alight, and I could only watch car and countless personal possessions being incinerated.

Leicestershire Fire Brigade finally arrived to put out the fire, though by then everything except my set of competition boules and my

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*The Champion Shropshire: A ewe lamb from the Sprotbrough Flock of Alan Oliver. The animal made 400gns in the sale, beating the previous record price set earlier this year at Shrewsbury show and sale, by 40gns.*



## NEARLY A VIKING WARRIOR!

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trimming yoke had evaporated, melted or burned to cinders. The smell is still in my nostrils...

Jon Thornton, the ram's new owner, had planned to collect him from Melton and was able to pick up Lewis/Xavier. The sheep was soon at Holmfirth recovering from the excitement.

A kind local towed my trailer home, and I started the tedious job of chasing insurance companies and finding a replacement towing car. Dear old Suzuki K523TFV, RIP.

*Pictured on the right is John's blazing Suzuki and one of the Leicestershire fire fighters. It seems miraculous that no one was hurt and the ram was also unharmed!*



## MALIK IS THE FIRST SHROPSHIRE SELECTED FOR THE EBLEX RAM LINKAGE PROGRAMME

**MORLEY MALIK**, the shearling ram that achieved a record price at this year's National Show and Sale (West) is the first Shropshire male to be accepted for the Ram Linkage Programme, run by EBLEX.

This scheme aims to promote the use of elite genetics in English flocks and also to raise awareness of the value of Signet's performance recording, which identifies animals with superior genetic merit.

### FREE SEMEN

Following his acceptance onto the EBLEX RLP, Malik will go forward for semen collection. His semen will then be available free of charge to any breeder in England wishing to use it for artificial insemination, whether or not their flock is recorded with Signet. Malik's semen will be made available for up to three seasons, while stocks last. Details of how to apply for his semen will be published in a future edition of *ShropTalk*.

Malik was bred by Claire and Graham Jakeman and he was sired by Roydon Rufus, the Reserve Champion Shropshire at the Three Counties Show in 2007 (the SSBA's World Congress Show). The Jakemans joined the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme in 2009 and Malik was born in their first crop of recorded lambs. He achieved very good Estimated Breeding Values for growth and carcass traits, based on his own performance and that of his close relatives.

He was used as a sire last season and his EBVs improved slightly, based on the performance of his lambs. Malik is currently ranked in 6th place on the SBIS Top Stock Sires list for all rams used by recorded flocks in 2010. His Primary Index (based on maternal, carcass and growth traits) stands at 175 (breed average = 106) putting him in the top 10% of the breed for genetic merit. The ram was purchased by Richard Spencer in July, and Richard has generously allowed Malik's semen to be collected before he joins the Benfield Flock, thus retaining the animal's MV Accredited status as an AI sire.



*Morley Malik was sold to Richard Spencer (Benfield Flock) for a breed record price of 800gns.*

### SBIS FIGURES ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON-LINE

UP-TO-DATE Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for all animals recorded by Signet under the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme are now available on-line through the Signet website: [www.signetfbc.co.uk](http://www.signetfbc.co.uk). To access the figures, click on "EBV Search" in the Sheepbreeder section of the homepage. Then click on the "Quick Search" option and select "Shropshire" from the breed drop-down box. The latest figures for individual animals can then be viewed if you know the ear tag number of the animal: enter the two flock letters first, then the year of birth (eg 09 for 2009), followed by the animal's unique number.

## MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE FROM THE SSBA



Enamel badges (approx 4cm x 2.5cm):  
£3 plus P&P.



Car stickers (10cm diameter):  
£2.50 plus P&P



Notecards in packs of four with envelopes, featuring 19th Century prints of Shropshire sheep. Blank inside. Each card contains four different pictures. £2.50 per pack plus P&P



Shropshire sheep branded clothing: Flock names can be added free of charge if ordered in advance. Adult polo shirts (£15) as pictured above, sweat shirts (£20), fleeces (£27), beanie hats as pictured above (£6), baseball caps (£6). Various colours available in all sizes. Children's sizes also available.

Please order all merchandise through the SSBA's Merchandise Officer, Anne Harvey, by email: [anneharv@02.co.uk](mailto:anneharv@02.co.uk).

## SHROPSHIRES "DOWN UNDER"

MARILYN Mangione, an overseas member of the SSBA based in Doveton, Victoria, Australia, exhibited her Shropshires at the Bendigo Sheep and Wool Show in July this year. The event is reputedly one of the largest sheep shows in the world, with around 2,300 animals exhibited.



There are only a handful of Shropshire flocks in Australia, where the breed is consequently categorised as "rare". Marilyn's Shropshires were the only representatives of the breed at Bendigo. The event included a heritage sheep wool display, to which she donated a Shropshire lamb's fleece. Marilyn is a keen spinner and knitter and says that working with Shropshire wool is a joy because it is so light.

Marilyn's property is in the Strathogie Highlands, which is usually a high rainfall area. This is now resuming after a very long drought lasting about ten years.

"My Shropshire breeding programme is slowly showing success, with less wool on the faces. Due to Australian grass seeds, this is a high priority," she explains. "I also look for very good feet and teeth in my breeding stock."

Currently the flock numbers around 20 ewes, with foundation stock coming from the South Windrest, Merriyong and Bletherdale Stud. One of the current stock rams, Louvain (pictured above left) came from the Fernleigh Flock belonging to Fiona and Katrina Chambers, who are also overseas members of the SSBA. "Shropshires are very easy to manage and do well on Australian native grass," adds Marilyn. "They survive the cold well, but the hot summers can be difficult for them, so shade is essential. I rarely have to offer them any supplementary feed - only during the drought."

## EXPORTS TO FRANCE AND AUSTRIA

A TOTAL of 145 Shropshires were exported to France and Austria in early September. The French consignment of 100 ewe lambs and four ram lambs with the ARR/ARR Scrapie Genotype, was purchased by SSBA member, Benoit Gille, who resides in Lorraine. This was a society-led export order open to all members of the breed society with the required export health status. Sheep for the French export order were supplied from the following flocks: Alderton, Clipston, Hayne Oak, Hornpipe, Morley, Sansaw, Southworth, Threemoor and Ushers. The Austrian consignment of four shearling rams, four ram lambs, 22 shearling ewes and 11 ewe lambs was a private export order selected by the buyer, Johann Fischer. His stock was supplied by the Piddington, Sidedowns, Morley, Sansaw and Hayne Oak Flocks. The sheep for both consignments, pictured below on Sue Farquhar's farm (an export gathering centre), travelled to the Continent in the same lorry.



## NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS NEEDED

FOUR of the SSBA's Council are due to complete their three-year terms of office at the AGM. New members are required to fill these vacancies. Council members are required to attend three or four meetings a year, to discuss the running of the breed society and direct its future activities. Meetings are usually held at Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich (the same venue as where the AGM takes place).

If you would like to join the SSBA's Council, please find another member of the breed society to nominate you and send your signed nomination to the SSBA's Secretary, Simon Mackay, by Friday 4th November 2011. If you would like more information about what's involved, please contact any of the SSBA's current Council Members who will be happy to explain the role in more detail. Their contact details are to be found in the most recent (2010) Flock Book.

### SPECIAL MEETING FOR BREEDERS IN NI & IRELAND

**Saturday 26th November 2011**  
**The Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim**  
**Commencing at 10am**

This meeting is open to all Shropshire breeders in NI and Ireland. It is being held to discuss the promotion of the breed and sales opportunities for Irish breeders.

For more information, please contact  
Simon Mackay 01744 811124  
146 Chandlers Way, Sutton Manor,  
St Helens WA9 4TG

## PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**SATURDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2011**

THE AGM will be held at Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B71 4BG, commencing at 10.30am.

A full programme and formal invitation is included with this edition of *ShropTalk*. As well as essential breed society business and the annual reports from all the breed society's officers, there will be:

A presentation from EBLEX about how to select lambs for slaughter  
(including grading of carcasses)  
and

An update on the use of Shropshire sheep for orchard grazing

A complimentary buffet lunch has generously been sponsored. This will be available on a ticket only basis. Tickets are available free in advance by completing and returning the acknowledgement slip at the end of the enclosed AGM letter. This is to ensure that sufficient food is available.

### IMPORTANT REMINDERS

The SSBA would like to remind its members of the following breed society rules and health scheme regulations:

Breeders must renew their membership of the SSBA annually in order to be able to register their lambs as pedigree Shropshires;

It is the vendor's responsibility to pay the SSBA's transfer fee (£3/animal) except when sheep are sold through one of our National Show and Sale Events;

Scrapie Monitored flocks can buy males only from other Scrapie Monitored flocks, unless the males have the ARR/ARR (most resistant) Scrapie genotype.

## PAT NAMED "TREE GROWER OF THE YEAR" FOR THE SECOND TIME



THE Irish Christmas Tree Growers' Association's field day and annual Christmas tree competition were held on 1st October at Lisnaveagh Estate, Lisnaveagh, County Carlow. The Estate has a large plantation of Nordmann Firs.

The field day included presentations on Pesticides and EU regulations by Dr Colin Palmer from Herefordshire and Dr Daragh O'Shea, from the Department of Agriculture, Ireland. A large number of tree growers attended, despite torrential rainfall throughout the day.

Several trade stands were present, and the use of Shropshire sheep in tree plantations was promoted by our Irish Coordinator, Pat Delaney (pictured left). Pat transported some of his own sheep to the venue, and also made good use of the SSBA's banners to create an interesting display. Due to the weather, the sheep had to remain in the trailer, but they were viewed by many tree growers who were particularly taken with the idea of using sheep to control grass and weeds in their plantations.

Pat has received good number of firm enquiries for sheep, and his efforts as a tree grower were also rewarded: Pat was named the Nordmann Fir Christmas Tree Grower of the Year for 2011, a repeat of his success in 2010. Congratulations Pat!

**SHROPTALK** is edited by Pippa Geddes and printed by Simon Mackay (shropshire\_sheep@hotmail.com)