

SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Winter 2011



Shropshires and Christmas trees in the snow. Picture kindly supplied by Uwe Rutzen, an overseas member of the SSBA based in Norway.

TEN THOUSANDTH SHROPSHIRE FEMALE REGISTERED BY THE SSBA

THIS autumn, the SSBA passed a very significant milestone - the registration of its 10,000th Shropshire female. The news was announced by the SSBA's Registrar, Alison Schofield, at the Annual General Meeting on 12th November.

Alison explained that although the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association was formed in 1882, it was not until well over 100 years later in January 1994 that the breed society began to register females. Up until then, only rams were registered.

When Alison was elected to the SSBA's Council in 1993, she asked why only the pedigrees of males were recorded, because dams contribute 50% to every bloodline. The Council then asked her to introduce a ewe registration scheme, putting her IT skills to good use on behalf of the society and introducing the registration program that the SSBA uses to this day.

Alison became the SSBA's first and, to date, its only Registrar. She has been responsible for registering each and every one of the 10,000 Shropshire females recognised by the breed society.

"The first ewe registered was born in 1983 in the Sidedowns Flock of John and Pauline

Bowles," Alison recalls. "She had the ear tag BBW174 and was given the pedigree number F00001." This animal was purchased in 1987 by Alison and her husband Paul, as one of six foundation ewes for their Hornpipe Flock, based near Holmes Chapel in Cheshire.

The 10,000th female registered was bred by Mark and Sue Shimwell in their Brereton Flock, based at Astbury near Congleton, also in Cheshire. See page 2 for more details of this animal.

47 NEW FLOCKS

Alison also announced to the AGM that 42 new Shropshire flocks had been formed in 2011. Since the meeting, another five membership applications have been received, so the total number of new flocks formed this year will be an impressive 47.

The trend for ram registrations has now been steady for the past seven years at around 90 males per year. The ewe numbers however continue to rise and over 1,000 were registered in 2011.

"The population of Shropshires as calculated by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust is up again at 2,800," said Alison. "But this calculation is based on the number of registrations and be-

cause we register our females later than most breeds it does not give a true reflection of the real Shropshire population. The actual number of Shropshires in members' flocks stands at 3,800."

Alison now registers three times more sheep than she did ten years ago. To help ensure that registrations run smoothly, she requested that all members should use the correct forms and adhere to the society's rules.

MORE NEWS FROM THE AGM

THE attendance at the AGM was excellent again this year, with 41 SSBA members congregating at Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich for the breed society's most important annual get-together.

The President, Pippa Geddes, welcomed everyone and reviewed the excellent progress made by the breed society over the past 12 months. She paid tribute to the breed society's Council and Officers, who had given up their valuable spare time to help the SSBA. She also gave special thanks to those Council Members who had just completed their terms of office: Tony Baldwin (a past President from 2005 to 2007), Adrian Morgan, Peter Tavemor and Barry Hodson.

Jean Jones, who had recently stood down as the SSBA's Coordinator in Northern Ireland, was commended for all the work she had done to promote the breed in the Province.

Every Officer of the SSBA presented a report, and although the Society's Irish Coordinator, Pat Delaney, was unable to attend the AGM this year, he had submitted a positive summary of the promotion of Shropshires in the Irish Republic and this was read out to the meeting by Les Newman.

Moving on to the Society's accounts, the Society's Treasurer, Marion Webb, was thanked for handling the finances so efficiently. It was noted that the SSBA's bank

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2012 DIARY DATES FOR SSBA MEMBERS

31st January

Deadline for Flock Returns to be completed and sent to the Registrar

30th June

National Show and Sale (West) at Shrewsbury

7th & 8th September

National Show and Sale (East) at Melton Mowbray

10th November

**Annual General Meeting 2012
Sandwell Park Farm,
West Bromwich**

THE 10,000TH REGISTERED FEMALE

A ewe lamb (pictured right) with the ear tag number 165DB11 from the Brereton Flock of Sue and Mark Shimwell is the 10,000th female to be registered by the breed society. She is a twin from the first crop of lambs sired by Hayne Oak Kendall, a ram that the Shimwells purchased at the SSBA's National Show and Sale (West) in 2010.

165DB11 is the daughter of 359DB09 (by Roydon Rory) and granddaughter of 118DB07 (Brereton Hello Moto) both of whom as shearlings achieved major show-ring successes at the Cheshire County Show. "This lamb may not have inherited quite the exhibition qualities of her dam," comments Sue, "But who knows, there might be a late developer hiding under the wool?"



AWARD WINNERS AT THE AGM



Pictured left: Marion Webb (Ushers Flock) receives the Farquhar Trophy for the most points gained by showing sheep in Shropshire breed classes from the SSBA's President, Pippa Geddes. The Webbs' show team gained 124 points and Anne Harvey (Roydon Flock) was the runner-up with 99 points. **Pictured right:** Clive Davies (Westwood Flock) receives the Novice Trophy for points gained in Shropshire breed classes by a new exhibitor. The winner of the President's Trophy for the most points gained in Any Other Breed classes was Sally Evans (Heath End Flock), who was unable to attend the AGM to receive her trophy. Sally accrued 69 points and the runner-up was Clive Davies with 62 points.



Pictured left: Sue Farquhar collects the Junior Members' Hornpipe Quaich on behalf of her granddaughter, Ellie Butcher. Ellie achieved a total of 193 points and Efa Jones was the runner-up with 171 points. Alice Clay was third with 162 points, and George Clay was fourth with 106 points. **Pictured right:** Claire Jakeman receives an Honorary Lifetime Membership of the breed society, in recognition of the outstanding contribution she has made to promoting Shropshires over many years. The Spring ShropTalk will include more about Claire and her contributions to the SSBA.

SHROPTALK is edited by Pippa Geddes and printed by Simon Mackay (shropshire_sheep@hotmail.com)

MORE NEWS FROM THE AGM



THE SSBA WISHES ALL ITS MEMBERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A SUCCESSFUL LAMBING!

EXPORT PRICES 2012

THE SSBA's Council has set the following sale prices for export sheep in 2012:

Shearling Rams (ARR/ARR genotype specified by the buyer) £610/head; Shearling Rams (unspecified genotype) £480/head; **Ram Lambs** (ARR/ARR genotype) £460/head; Ram Lambs (unspecified genotype) £380/head; **Shearling Ewes** £280/head; **Ewe Lambs** £180/head; **Two-Shear Breeding Ewes** £220/head.

Breeders wishing to be considered for Society-led exports must tick the export box on their Annual Flock Return and make sure this is completed and sent to the Registrar by 31st January 2012. Export sheep must be Scrapie Monitored or of the ARR/ARR scrapie genotype, confirmed by a blood test taken by a vet and a test certificate provided by a DEFRA-approved laboratory. Sheep for society-led exports must also be MV accredited. For more information, please contact the SSBA's Export Officer, Sue Farquhar 01531 670439 or the Sales Officer, Claire Jakeman 01244 301546.

PICTURES NEEDED FOR THE NEXT FLOCK BOOK

IF you have any good quality pictures of Shropshires that you would like to have included in the next Flock Book, please send them to the Registrar, Alison Schofield (alisonschofield@hotmail.com) or the Publicity Officer Pippa Geddes (psellwood@aol.com).

BREED IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

THE Annual Results Summary for the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme (SBIS) is included with this edition of *ShropTalk*. It contains a full list of all Shropshire breeders who recorded their sheep with Signet in 2011, a list of the Top Stock Sires and the Top Five Ram Lambs from each flock. At the most recent Council Meeting, Pippa Geddes stood down as the SBIS Coordinator, and the post will now be held by Sue Shimwell.

Sue can be contacted on 01260 270061 or by email: s.shimwell@btinternet.com.

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balance was currently in a very healthy position. Vice President, Sue Shimwell, pointed out that some members of the SSBA were not claiming expenses for items such as their mileage and accommodation when they represented the breed society at agricultural events. This was very generous of them, but the position should be recorded with the accounts for future reference.

Members at the AGM then debated the Council's proposal to introduce a new clause to the SSBA's Memorandum and Articles of Association regarding the Removal of a Member of the breed society. This had previously been approved by the Charities Commission and had been circulated to SSBA members along with the notification of the Society's AGM. No comments had been received from members unable to attend the meeting. Concerns were, however, raised by one member at the AGM. He pointed out in particular that the proposal lacked an appeals process. After further discussion, an amendment to the proposal was redrafted as follows: *A Member removed from the Association under this rule has the right to appeal in writing against the SSBA Council decision within seven days of receiving the removal notification. Appeals are to be sent to the SSBA Secretary. In the event of a notice to appeal being lodged, the "removed" Member would be invited to attend an extraordinary and quorate Council meeting within 28 days of their appeal having been lodged. At this meet*

-ing they would be invited to attend (with a supporter if they wished) and present evidence to support their appeal. An independent Chairman with a casting vote would be appointed for this meeting (a respected member of the agricultural community). For the appeal to be successful a majority of at least 75% of Council members present and the Chairman would be required to vote in favour of the appeal.

A vote was then taken. The proposal with the above amendment was almost unanimously approved with only one person voting against. As this proposal does not conform exactly to the wording previously agreed by the Charities Commission, the Council will need to seek approval from that body before the amendment can be added to the SSBA's Memorandum and Articles of Association. Members will of be informed of the ruling as soon as this is known.

Following the main business of the AGM, members enjoyed a complimentary buffet provided with sponsorship obtained by the SSBA's Secretary from Novartis Animal Health. Afterwards a presentation of the potential for grazing Shropshires in orchards was given and an EBLEX film was shown to alert breeders to the problems of producing over-fat lambs.

The second draw was made for this year's 100 Club. The first prize was won by Paul Redgate, while the second prize went to Pat Delaney. A raffle was also held and this raised £96 for the breed society.

SUCCESSFUL MEETING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A VERY productive meeting with Shropshire breeders from NI and Ireland was held on 26th November at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim. Four members of the SSBA's Council flew over from Liverpool the night before, and Irish Coordinator, Pat Delaney, drove from Co. Wexford to meet with seven of the breed society's Irish members. Discussions at the meeting covered a number of topics including sheep-in-trees developments; marketing materials available to all SSBA members; challenges for NI and Irish Shropshire breeders and promotion of the breed in 2012. The SSBA will be taking a breed stand to the Balmoral Show in Belfast next May and also aims to attend at least one County show in the Republic of Ireland. The meeting was a useful opportunity to talk about the way forward for the breed and the SSBA's Council will now consider whether to hold an annual meeting for its Irish members.



From left to right around the table: Simon Mackay, Barry Hodson, Michael Palframan, Dolway McCorry, Giles McCorry, Dessy Henry, Brendon Kirk, John Boyd, Pat Delaney and Pippa Geddes (Photo by Claire Jakeman, who also attended the meeting).

ENJOYABLE TOUR FOR SWISS BREEDERS

A GROUP of six Shropshire breeders from Switzerland recently visited flocks in the Midlands, Cheshire and Norfolk on a four day tour organized by the breed society. The SSBA's Secretary, Simon Mackay, and Council Member, Barry Hodson, drove the tour minibus, ensuring that the visitors arrived safely at every destination. Barry Hodson reports.

Our Swiss visitors arrived on time from Zurich on Thursday 13th October. We set off from Birmingham airport and drove straight to James Thomson's flock based at Hadnall, near Shrewsbury.

A refreshing cup of tea awaited us before we viewed the Sansaw Flock. They were grazing in a fantastic setting in the parkland alongside the Estate's traditional Hereford cattle. The Swiss were impressed with the flock and the Herefords, so the tour got off to a really good start.

As we were viewing the sheep, our visitors revealed that they were particularly keen to find Shropshires with short, strong pasterns to cope with the steep and mountainous terrain in Switzerland. We explained that in the UK, Shropshire sheep are marked down by breed inspectors if they have long, weak pasterns, so SSBA members are encouraged to breed for the type of pasterns they were looking for.



At the conclusion of the visit we headed off for Chester city centre to the hotel. A swift check-in and the Swiss were left to their own devices to explore the historic city.

Next morning Simon joined me and we picked up our guests for the day's first visit to the Morley Flock at Thornton le Moors, just a few miles from Chester. Flock-owners Claire and Graham Jakeman made everyone welcome and had their sheep penned for close examination. The Swiss visitors were impressed with the record-breaking ram Morley Malik, who was still with the Jakemans whilst waiting to go to the AI centre. Claire gave an interesting presentation of her particular breed lines and pedigrees, then Graham gave us an excellent demonstration of working his dog rounding up the sheep.

The visitors were drawn to animals with good back-ends. They also asked our thoughts on the differences between sheep with woolly faces and those with cleaner, less woolly heads. Claire explained that the woollier-headed sheep tend to have more bone, but that doesn't count against the clean-headed sheep, as people want the two different types equally.

It was then northwards to Alison Schofield's Hornpipe Flock based near Holmes Chapel,

where we were joined by the SSBA's President, Pippa Geddes, and Claire Jakeman.

An excellent lunch was provided and enjoyed by all. Alison was able to show the visitors some very old books and documents dating back to the formation of the breed society in 1882. There was a lot of interest in the Society's first Minutes book and many of the old photographs. Then came the viewing of the Hornpipe flock. The Swiss were very interested in a bloodline that showed excellent gigots. A couple of Alison's ewes were 12 years old, and that also impressed the tour group. We then set off for Kettering to the hotel for the night.

After a shower and brush-up it was over to the restaurant for dinner. Steak and Ale pie was popular as this appeared to be a novelty for the Swiss. The next morning we left early for the two hour drive over to Norwich to see Charles Saffell and Lorie Newman's Crown Flock.

On arrival, we were all made most welcome with tea and cake - just what we needed. Charles, who farms a large arable acreage, gave us a guided tour around his magnificent grain and machinery stores, which again were a novelty for the Swiss. Then it was off to another part of the estate to see the ram lambs and ewes. Although a show-winning ram lamb, Crown Boris, caught their eye I think it was the hall and clock tower that the visitors photographed the most. To round off the visit we were treated to homemade cottage pie and home-grown walnuts too - what class!

Les and Tricia Newman then guided us to their farm to see the Rode Flock. On the way we were treated to a sneak preview of the walled garden at Eccles Hall, which is under the control of head gardener - Tricia. Back at Les and Tricia's farm we had a close look at their ram lambs, and also the Newmans' Southdowns - a breed that the Swiss hadn't

come across before. It was then time to leave and head back to Kettering.

After another great meal and good conversation, it was soon time for bed in order to be ready for an early rise the next day for our last flock visit.

We arrived at Marion and Aubrey Webb's Usher Farm near Lutterworth bright and early and went straight out to look at the rams. Many questions were asked and the Swiss remarked upon the good long backs and chunky back ends. They were also interested in the flock's Signet figures. We then went on to look at the Ushers ewe lambs in their gated paradise (a lovely paddock next to one of the neighbour's houses). We returned to the farm to view the Ushers ewes, taking a look at the bullocks in their new building on the way.

A quick brew and specially made Mars Bar crispy cakes ended our visit before hurrying to the airport to wave off our guests.

To sum up the visit, our Swiss friends really enjoyed themselves and wished to thank everyone for the great hospitality. They loved seeing everything, not just sheep. However, the flock visits gave them plenty to think about with regard to the quality of our sheep and comparing them with their own. I think most of the group had flocks of around 25 ewes, kept primarily for grazing tree plantations. They told us that they have an annual sheep show on the last Saturday in August where, on average, they show around 180 Shropshires. It seems that they have to show sheep over there to gather points before they can register them as Pedigree Shropshire Sheep. Perhaps we should go over and see their system? They said that we would be made most welcome.

On behalf of the breed society, I would like to thank everyone involved for helping to make this tour possible. The days were long and tiring - but very rewarding!



Pictured in Norfolk (from left to right): Les Newman, Beatrice and Franz Hidber, Regula and Gottfried Bossi-Mori, Lorie Newman, Charles Saffell, Ruth and Ruedi Gerber (President of Swiss Shropshire Sheep breed society) and Tricia Newman.