

# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Spring 2018



*Ewes and lambs from the Holtridge Flock, Shropshire - pleased to see the grass emerging again!*

## DIARY DATES

### NATIONAL SHOW AND SALE DATES 2018

THE date of our main national Show and Sale (West) at Shrewsbury Market this year is Sunday 29th July.

The dates for our Eastern Show and Sale at Melton Mowbray are 7th and 8th September (show on the first day and sale on the next). See page 4 for more details.

### COUNCIL MEETINGS AND AGM

THE Society's AGM will be held on 24th November, and Council meetings will be held on 12th May, 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.

## NEWS FROM THE MARCH COUNCIL MEETING

**THE SSBA'S Council met in March for the first time this year and, as usual, many different topics were discussed.**

### Flock Returns and Lapsed Members

The deadline for the payment of annual subscriptions and flock returns to be sent back to the Registrations Clerk was 30th November last year. We have received subscriptions from 229 members, but there are still quite a few breeders who have not renewed or sent in the information requested about their breeding flock, despite attempts to contact them by phone.

Some phone numbers and email addresses appear to be incorrect because we cannot make contact. If you have changed any of your contact details please make sure you inform the SSBA.

### Registrations

A number of members also owe the society money for registrations. Our Registrations Clerk will be sending out invoices to all those concerned. Please pay promptly or your access to the on-line flock book (Grassroots) will be frozen. You will not be allowed to register any stock until your debts are cleared. Going forward, pedigree registrations will be accepted only if payment is made at the time of application.

### Stock Transfers

Even though there is now no transfer fee payable to the Society when an animal changes hands, the new owner still needs to

complete and return the "Transfer of Ownership" section at the bottom of the pedigree certificate so that the SSBA can keep its records up to date.

### "Kill off" your dead!

Please keep your flock records up-to-date online via Grassroots PedWeb. Please "kill off" any animals that have died or been sold for slaughter. If you have lost your log on details, please contact the Registrar or Registrations Clerk and they will assist you.

### Shows and Exhibitions

The Breed Society's exhibition stand will be going to two shows at the Royal Welsh show-ground this spring: Wonderwool Wales on 28th and 29th April and the Spring Festival on 19th and 20th May. If you would like to help at either of these events, please contact Pippa Geddes for Wonderwool ([psellwood@aol.com](mailto:psellwood@aol.com)) and Rob Kerby for the Spring Festival ([robert@cefn-carnau.com](mailto:robert@cefn-carnau.com)). Later in the year, the stand will be going to the NSA Sheep Event at the Three Counties Show-ground on 18th July and NSA South Sheep at the South of England Show-ground on 8th September. If you would like to help man the stand at either of these, please contact Barry Hodson ([hodsonbarry@btinternet.com](mailto:hodsonbarry@btinternet.com)).

### New Exhibition Stand

Council Member, Rosie Lee, is assessing the options for a new SSBA exhibition stand with new posters and banners. These new marketing materials should be available for use later this year.

*Continued overpage/...*



*A Tushbrook ewe with twins Chilli and Crackers, owned by Ellie Russell.*



### New Website

The Society's website has been given a fresh, new design and all the useful information has been transferred over

from the old site, which proved to be a very complicated task. A sample page is shown on the left, with one of the drop down boxes open. The anticipated "go live" date for the new site is 9th April. A huge vote of thanks goes to Simon Mackay for seeing this difficult project through to completion.

### First SSBA Member in Belgium

As reported in the Winter issue of *ShropTalk*, it was agreed at the AGM that the Society will offer registration services to breeders in European countries where no breed society for Shropshires exists - or where there's no other means of registering pedigree Shropshire stock. This is in accordance with current EU laws.

The first application for this type of Registering Overseas Membership has been received and, with the approval of DEFRA and the Belgian equivalent, we can now register sheep in the Walloon region of Belgium. We offer a warm welcome to our first Belgian member - Michael (Mika) Rood from Jalhay, Belgium, who joined the SSBA in February.

### Flock Book 2017

The Flock Book for 2017 has been compiled by Alison Schofield and members should receive their copies by the end of April.

## AGRICULTURAL SHOWS WITH CLASSES FOR SHROPSHIRE SHEEP

Shropshire County Show  
26th May

Staffordshire County Show  
30th and 31st May

Royal Three Counties Show  
15th to 17th June

Royal Cheshire County Show  
19th and 20th June

Monmouthshire Show  
7th July

Newport Show (Shropshire)  
July 14th

Royal Welsh Show  
23rd to 26th July

Nantwich Show  
25th July

Burwarton Show  
2nd August

Oswestry Show  
4th August

Tenbury Show  
4th August

Okehampton Show  
9th August

Flint and Denbigh Show  
16th August

Minsterley Show  
18th August

Poynton Show  
26th August

*New classes for Shropshires are highlighted in red*



# GET READY FOR SHOW TIME!

*The ewe lamb class at Oswestry show 2017, judged by Mr S Johnson*

**THERE'S good news for SSBA members who like to show their sheep! The breed society has secured Shropshire classes at three more shows this season: Monmouthshire, Newport and Nantwich. There are now 15 agricultural shows running Shropshire sections (see left).**

Of course, Shropshires can also be shown in Any Other Breed classes and Rare Breed Classes at shows where there is no section specifically for our breed.

### SHOW SUBSIDY

Showing generates a lot of interest in our breed, which is of benefit to all members. The SSBA therefore offers a show subsidy to encourage Shropshire exhibitors to attend the high profile shows that last two or more days.

The subsidy rate is £5/head for two-day shows and £10/head for longer shows. Subsidy claim forms can be downloaded from the SSBA's website. Forms must be completed and returned to the SSBA's Treasurer, Marion Webb, by 31st August 2018.

### SHOW POINTS TROPHIES

AT the end of each show season, the Society runs a show points competition and awards trophies to the most successful exhibitors. Details of the allocation of points are given on the Show Point Entry Forms, which can be downloaded from the SSBA's website.

**The Farquhar Trophy** is awarded to the breeder who has gained the most points in Shropshire Breed Classes;

**The President's Trophy** is awarded to the breeder who has gained most points showing in Any Other Breed or Rare Breed Classes, at shows where no Shropshire classes are available;

**The Novice Trophy** is awarded for the highest number of points gained by novice exhibitors showing in Shropshire Breed Classes. Exhibitors are considered novices in their first five years of showing or until they have won the Novice Trophy three times;

**The Hornpipe Quail** is for young members of the breed society showing in Shropshire classes, Any Other Breed classes and Young Handlers' classes.

For AOB Classes and Young Handlers', points are awarded from 1st to 4th place only (1st - 10 points; 2nd - 8 points; 3rd - 6 points; 4th - 4 points). For Shropshire breed classes, points are 1st (10 points) down to 10th (1 point). Breed Champion: 10 points, Reserve Champion: 5 points.

The closing date for all competitions is 30th September and forms must be sent to the Awards Officer, Anne Harvey, by this date.

# LIVING THE HIGH LIFE IN FRANCE

Ivan Bouvet and Mathilde Chopin are Overseas Members of the Breed Society, based in south central France. Here they tell us about their farm and why they chose to keep Shropshire sheep.

We are Mathilde and Ivan, Shropshire sheep breeders at the Ferme du Repaire in Rochepeule, Ardèche.

We settled in Ardèche in 2011 and we started farming in 2014. Everything is new for us and we learn as we go! We now maintain almost 60ha (148 acres) of land, most of it being upland, moor and difficult land. To help us, we have two mares, three donkeys, three Highland cows, four anglo-nubian goats and an anglo-nubian billy - and of course, Shropshire sheep!

We have a little flock of around 50 Shropshires, including 39 ewes, 36 of which were born in Great Britain and three born here. We also have two Shropshire rams born in France. All our Shropshire sheep are registered with the SSBA. We also have other ewes with no specific breed or mixed Shropshire.

When we decided to create our sheep farm, we did not want to offer dairy produce or to breed animals for their meat. We were attracted by the Shropshire breed because it offers an ecological alternative to herbicides in tree plantations, and that suited our objectives very well. It corresponds to our vision of agriculture, as even though we are not accredited with the "organic" label, we try to operate as simply and naturally as possible.

We do not own plantations. We only breed Shropshire sheep to sell them to professionals or individuals who wish to use them to maintain their land.

In 2014, we purchased our first six ewes which were already three to four years old, and we hired a ram. In the summer 2016, the flock grew significantly with the importation of 25

female lambs and five ewes from Great Britain. It is this year that we are going to have for the first time a lot of lambs born, with more than 30 ewes having been put to the ram last autumn.

It is very important for us to only have Shropshire sheep registered with the SSBA so as to guarantee to the buyers a pure breed in



order to keep all the Shropshire characteristics.

We have decided to have the lambing season between the end of February and mid-April so that the lambs can quickly be put outside with their mothers without fearing the cold weather. We might keep some female lambs to replace a few of the mothers.

We regularly have requests in France, in all regions, from professionals for their crops or orchards or individuals to maintain their land. It's often the price of this breed which stops potential buyers, but those who are convinced by their choice will still go ahead.

Our next project is to buy a ram lamb registered with the SSBA to have fresh blood in the flock and also to be able to offer lambs of different lineage.

We do not wish to have a bigger flock, 50 ewes is enough for us to be of a reasonable size and stay close to our animals.

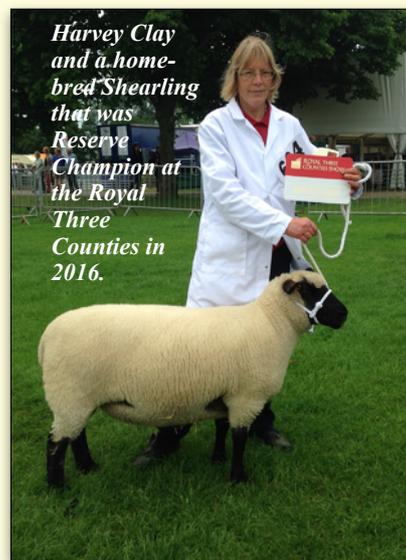


## FLOCK VISITS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

**BREED Society members are invited to visit three Shropshire flocks on two different farms near Ledbury in Herefordshire on Sunday 1st July.**

The visit programme will start at 10am at Hansnett Farm, Canon Frome, home of the Piddington and Hansnett Flocks owned by Sue Farquhar and her granddaughter Ellie Butcher. Tea, coffee and cake will be provided, but please bring your own packed lunch.

In the afternoon, the open-day continues at Showle Court, Monkhide, home to the Clay family and their Showle Flock. These Shropshires graze in the farm's standard and bush orchards. All three flocks have enjoyed considerable show ring success.



## SHROPTALK

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"Friends of Shropshire Sheep"

# ALL'S SET FOR OUR TWO NATIONAL SHOWS AND SALES



*Last year's breed and interbreed sheep Champion at Shrewsbury - a shearling ewe from the Hansnett Flock of Ellie Butcher.*

**ENTRIES** from Shropshire flocks around the Britain are expected at our two National Shows and Sales. The first of these events takes place at Shrewsbury Livestock Market on Sunday 29th July. A few weeks later the second show and sale will be held at the more easterly venue of Melton Mowbray Market on September 7th and 8th.

Both are held in conjunction with larger Native and Rare Breed sales for all species of farm livestock, which helps to bring in buyers and create an up-beat atmosphere.

## SOCIAL EVENINGS

Once again, the very popular "hog roast" and pub quiz will be held at Shrewsbury the night before the sale, giving buyers and breeders a chance to mingle in an informal atmosphere. Tickets must be purchased in advance via the Livestock Entry Forms, from Halls or from the SSBA's Secretary, Simon Mackay. There is a Travelodge adjacent to the market plus numerous hotels and B&Bs in Shrewsbury a

short drive away for anyone wishing to stay overnight. Campers can stay in their vehicles parked at the market itself.

There is also a social evening and buffet at Melton Mowbray held on the Friday evening after the show but before the sale. Details of how to purchase tickets are given in the schedule available from Grassroots Systems in June.

Schedules and entry forms for the Shrewsbury S&S will be available from 1st May. Please be aware that if you are selling sheep at the event there are a number of rules and regulations that you must adhere to. Details of these are given in the schedule, please read it carefully. The closing date for entries is 24th June. Late entries will not be accepted.



# A FLYING START FOR THE SUNBECK FLOCK

A new flock from Raskelf near York had an amazing show-ring debut at the Countryside Live Event held at the Great Yorkshire Showground. As reported in the RBST's magazine *The Ark*, Shropshire ram Welwick Bonzo, owned by the Sunbeck Flock, took the Sheep Interbreed Championship. Sunbeck sheep also won the Downland ewe lamb class and the Group of Three, going on to be runners-up in a hotly contested interbreed group class with a large entry from 17 different breeds. Bonzo was shown by 12 year old Tom Arrowsmith - his first time in the show-ring with Shropshires. Proud mum, Lyn Arrowsmith, tells us more about her flock and the other rare breeds she keeps.

"I run a smallholding in North Yorkshire on my own with help from my parents and my two boys. As well as sheep, I keep Irish Moiled Cattle and British Saddleback pigs, along with chickens, turkeys and geese. My Shropshires are the Sunbeck Flock formed in 2016. I have kept Manx Loaghtan sheep for 30 years now and the other four breeds have been added over the past 15 years. My sons have claimed two of the breeds: Jack (aged 11) shows the very rare Borerays, which are extremely lively. Thomas has a flock of Devon and Cornwall Longwools - as rare as the Borerays but completely opposite in character. Our fourth breed are Badgerface Welsh Mountains, which we call 'Granny's Flock'. So Grandpa Gerry has claimed the Shropshires and has helped me buy the flock and get started.



## PURCHASED FROM MELTON MOWBRAY

"Thomas usually shows his Longwools and has had a lot of success including winning the final of the RBST Young Shepherd Competition at the Royal Berkshire Show a couple of years ago. Countryside Live was his first outing with the Shropshires, and it was also that ram's first time in a show-ring."

The Arrowsmith's foundation Shropshires were purchased at the SSBA's National Show and Sale (East) at Melton Mowbray. They came from several flocks: Sprotbrough, Clipston, Flamville, Rode and Lountwood. The ram, Bonzo, was bred by the Welwick Flock and is by Hayne Oak Mansa out of a Sprotbrough ewe by Alderton Bonzo. Lyn's original ram was Rode Nimble. She swapped him with a local breeder so that both flocks could benefit from new bloodlines.

"I originally bought the Shropshires to graze an orchard that is adjacent to a paddock we use, and now I also loan them out to a local Christmas tree plantation," she adds.

"The RBST York Group runs the Native Breed Classes at Countryside Live, which is going from strength to strength. We are again hosting the RBST Young Shepherd final this year."

*Above: Tom Arrowsmith with Welwick Bonzo, and (main picture) Tom and Lyn with some of their winning show team.*

