

SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Winter 2017/18



"Help, I'm a show sheep, get me out of here!" 2017's Oswestry Show breed champion knee deep in snow at Alderton Farm.

NEWS FROM THE AGM AND COUNCIL MEETING

THE SSBA's Annual General Meeting on 25th November was well attended by 37 Members of the breed society. Reports were given by the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar.

The SSBA has enjoyed another good year with 35 new flocks formed, bringing the total number of members to 257. However, only 80 membership renewals had been received by the date of the AGM - with just five days to go before the deadline. Members were urged to complete and return the forms as soon as possible and by 31st Jan at the latest. Penalties are now applied for late returns.

Sheep registrations grew in 2017, but the three year trend is levelling off in Registrar Alison Schofield's opinion. She stressed the need to include on the flock return all males retained for breeding even if they are as yet unregistered. These data are important to the society in order to accurately assess the national breeding population. It is also vital to keep your on-line flock book up to date (ie remove animals killed, died or sold).

Financially, the society made a profit of £3,354 during the year, compared with £4,891 the year before. The total bank balance is very healthy and in excess of £44,000. All members were sent a summary of the accounts with their AGM invitations.

Registering Overseas Sheep

Following requests from overseas breeders, Council proposed that flock owners in certain European countries should be permitted to register their sheep with the SSBA, albeit in a separate European Flock Book.

Restrictions will apply in order to conform with EU laws affecting breed societies, and a new membership category "Registering Overseas Member" will need to be introduced by the SSBA. The main restrictions for this new category of member are:

- RO membership is open only to countries where breeders have no other option for registering their Shropshires (to comply with EU laws);
- The breeders concerned must join the SSBA first and put their request for registration services in writing before a formal application will be made to their country of residence, via DEFRA;
- All forms and rules that apply to ROMs will be written in English and it will be the responsibility of the breeders concerned to understand and comply with the SSBA's requirements, or Registration Services will be withdrawn.
- Sheep belonging to existing French members of the SSBA will be moved to the new European Shropshire Flock Book.

These proposals were put to a vote at the AGM and agreed by the members present. There will now be a change to the society's Memorandum and Articles of Association to reflect the decision.

Changes to Council

Four new members were elected to Council: Liz Bowles (Hayne Oak Flock), Rob Kerby (Cefn-Carnau Flock), Trevor Lightfoot (Fairfields Flock) and Peter Tavernor (Shebdon Flock).

Stepping down as voting Council members were Sue Farquhar and Pippa Geddes, who had both completed their three year terms of office. They will remain as Society Officers. Paul Stead has also resigned from Council.

At the Council Meeting following the AGM, Barry Hodson was elected as the new President of the Breed Society and Alison Schofield is the new Vice President. All other officers agreed to remain in their posts for the coming year

FLOCK RETURNS

PLEASE remember to complete and return your Annual Membership Renewal and your Annual Flock Return. **Penalties for late payments and renewals will be applied at the following rates: £10 fine for those received after 30th November, rising to a £20 fine for those received after the 31st December 2017. Returns and Renewals received after 31st January 2018 will not be accepted.**

NATIONAL SHOW AND SALE DATES 2018

THE date of our main national Show and Sale at Shrewsbury Market next year is Sunday 29th July.

The dates for our Eastern Show and Sale at Melton Mowbray are 7th and 8th September.

BREED STAND OUTINGS

OUR Shropshire Sheep exhibition stands will be going to the following events in 2018 to help to promote our breed:

Wonderwool Wales at the Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells on April 28th and 29th;

NSA Sheep Event, on Weds 12th July at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern; and

NSA South Sheep on Sat 8th Sept at the South of England Showground.

If you would be willing to help on the stands at these events, please get in touch with Simon Mackay.



AWARD WINNERS AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Pictured above left: Winner of both the Farquhar Trophy and the President's Trophy, Anne Harvey (Roydon Flock) with the SSBA's new President, Barry Hodson. Pictured above right: Owen Powell, representing the Coleman Family (Goblindale Flock) - winner of both the Novice



The Shropshire Young Shepherds team received some special awards including trimming shears (donated by Barry Hodson), hoodies (donated by Sue and Mark Shimwell, Brereton Flock) and framed photographs. Pictured above (left to right) Sue Farquhar (team coach), George Clay, Giles Russell (standing in for daughter Ellie), Owen Powell and team manager, Rosie Lee.

Points Trophy Winners 2017

Farquhar Trophy

1. ANNE HARVEY
115 points
2. JEANETTE HARES
97 points

President's Trophy

1. ANNE HARVEY
20 Points
2. COLEMAN FAMILY
10 Points

Novice Trophy

1. COLEMAN FAMILY
50 Points
2. CA & JE MORRIS
9 Points

Hornpipe Quach

1. COLEMAN FAMILY
265 Points
2. GEORGE CLAY



Liz Bowles receives the Hardwicke Trophy for the most prolific ewe (see below).

LONG SERVICE AWARDS



GOLD: Alison Schofield (Hornpipe Flock - FN - established 1987) received the SSBA's Gold Award for thirty years of breeding Shropshires.

BRONZE: E D McCorry (Balinderry Flock - LC - established 1997) received the Bronze Award for twenty years of breeding Shropshires. Congratulations to both!

SANSAW SIDEDOWNS MOST PROLIFIC EWE CONTEST



THIS year's winner of the Sansaw Sidedowns award for the greatest number of registered progeny from a ewe that is still actively breeding is ear tag BB158C (pictured left) from the Hayne Oak Flock of Liz Bowles and Mike Bray.

Now aged 15, this is the third time in four years that this ewe has won the award. Over her lifetime to date, BB158C has bred 11 registered ewes and 2 registered males, including Hayne Oak Nelson (pictured below) one of the highest genetic merit rams in the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme. Nelson was Champion Male at the Devon County Show in 2014 and breed champion at Holsworthy show in 2015 and 2016.

Owners, Liz and Mike report that this amazing ewe is also due to lamb again in 2018! As winners of the award, the couple receive a cheque for £25 and get to keep the impressive Hardwicke Trophy for 12 months.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT

BARRY HODSON, owner of the Southworth Flock, based near Warrington in Cheshire, is the new President of the SSBA.

Barry has been a Council member for many years and also the breed stand officer, responsible for maintaining our exhibition stands and making sure they get to the various shows we attend to promote Shropshire sheep.

For the past couple of years he has taken on the additional responsibility for Northern Ireland, keeping in touch with breeders there and visiting the Province a number of times to assist at shows etc.

Many SSBA Members will have met Barry through sheep trimming workshops and demonstrations. He has encouraged lots of people to start trimming their sheep for showing and, indeed, enjoys showing his own stock, when time allows.

To encourage the professional turnout of our sheep, Barry generously donated the Southworth Trophy for the best prepared pen of Shropshires, which is awarded each year at the National Show and Sale (West) at Shrewsbury.

Following his appointment as President, Barry commented: "Well, another change of President! Something that normally happens only every two years. I'm grateful that your Council have put faith in me.

"I owe my interest in Shropshires to the Brereton Flock (of Sue and Mark Shimwell). It was these sheep that got me started when I was looking for a breed to keep.

"I used to raise cade lambs but decided that I wanted a pedigree breed to mow my microlight runways. I was fed up with buying increasing sizes of mower to do the job.

"I must admit that it was the sheep in fully trimmed condition that took my eye and since then I have always liked show-ready sheep.



We have helped show my basic knowledge to other members to encourage more showing flocks. I have had a little showing success - but you do need a decent sheep underneath first. If anyone ever wants any help, then give me a shout. I'm no expert, but willing to help.

"I have two places at Warrington in Cheshire - Croft and Burtonwood. I don't have time for a large flock at the moment, but do occasionally sell pedigree animals and manage to sell all my surplus stock as meat. I have had a dabble with cattle and poultry in the past, but the sheep now take up most of my spare time.

I'm only a part time farmer sharing my time with a full time job as a Design Engineer. Hopefully, this has given you a bit of an insight into me but please come and say "hello", I don't bite! Any questions then don't be afraid to ask, if I can help then I will."



A ram lamb from Barry's Southworth Flock that was the Shropshire Breed Champion and Reserve Interbreed Champion at Chelford Market's rare breeds show and sale.

BREEDERS "FLYING THE FLAG" AT THE ENGLISH WINTER FAIR

TWO Shropshire flocks exhibited finished lambs at the English Winter Fair primestock show at Stafford County Showground in late November.

Anne Harvey (Roydon Flock) took the red ribbons with a pair of ewe lambs in the class for Any Other Native Breed, with Glynis Llewellyn (Harvest Flock) coming second with a pair of wethers.

There is no MV Accredited section at the event, so unless you have a non-MV flock, you have to sell the exhibited stock for meat after the show. Anne's April born lambs weighed a combined total of 92kg. She sold one privately for breeding and the other was sold through the ring for £70. Lambs sold singly tend to be penalised slightly price-wise. Glynis's lambs weighed a total of 86kg combined and also sold for £70/head.

The breed society would like to encourage more members to exhibit sheep at primestock shows. Whilst there are no individual classes for Shropshire lambs at these events, the SSBA offers a special prize of £25 for Shropshire lambs if they win the Any Other Native Breed section at both the



English Winter Fair (17th and 18th November 2018) and the Welsh Winter Fair at the Royal Welsh Show-ground (November 26th and 27th 2018). There are also prizes for cross-bred Shropshires that win classes.

If you are interested in exhibiting your lambs at these events, but would like some advice about how to select and prepare your stock, please contact the SSBA's Secretary, Simon Mackay. If there is sufficient interest, the breed society will organise a workshop during the year.

SHROPTALK

is edited by Pippa Geddes
pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk
and printed by Simon Mackay
shropshire_sheep@hotmail.com
www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk

HOLTRIDGE FLOCK: THE BUILDING OF A BRAND NEW "SHEEP PALACE"

Not many flock owners get the chance to design their own sheep accommodation, but Mark and Yvette Openshaw (Holtridge Flock) jumped at the chance when they moved from Cheshire to Shropshire in April last year. Mark explains how they proceeded.

The move was all about a better lifestyle for us with more land and having a better setup for the sheep with purpose built facilities. As the new house did not provide this, we had pretty much a blank canvas to design and build something that would satisfy our requirements.

We looked around and considered many designs that we could adapt if our needs changed or grew. We also spoke to many of our friends within the society to see where we could cherry pick the good ideas and improve on areas where they had had problems with their buildings.

We decided upon a 60 x 30ft building with 1.2m concrete wall and a 5ft roof overhang, Yorkshire boarding up to a cement fibre roof with as much ventilation as we could achieve up to a 16ft high apex. All materials were selected to minimise condensation and provide good air flow.

We learned where the prevailing wind and weather came from and made front bay one of four to be solid to match the remainder of the building, rather than gated, to house our lambing areas. We had three purpose built solid gates hung low enough to prevent too much draught under them and also prevent lamb escapes. We procured green tennis court mesh to hang over the doors when the weather is really bad.

We also had a thick cement floor profiled to drain to the front of the building, when we need to wash down. Our son, Wayne, did the calculation of roof size (195sq m) vs drainage required and 60m of perforated drainage was installed to drain captured rainwater to our field ditch. Based on our roof size, even 25mm of rain will produce over 1000 gallons of water, which needs to go somewhere. Just draining this onto the ground by the building would flood the area!

We also ran mains electricity and network cables to the building to support mains power, lighting (two 80 watt LED floodlights) and CCTV.

We then considered how best to divide up the internal space of the building. We considered dropping fixed divides into the concrete but this would have been too permanent. We got a great idea from Peter and Pippa Geddes to use the Modulamb walk-through hay feeders which slot together and are pretty mobile if you go for

the 6 foot units. We felt the 9 foot units were too big to heave around. We bought 8 of the 6 foot racks and these allow us to allocate a different size area as the % of ewes to give birth decreases, therefore slowly reducing the maternity wing of pregnant ewes and giving more areas to the new mums and lambs.

SHEEP PENS

We have used the recycled plastic lambing pens for many years now and this has proved to be more successful than normal sheep hurdles. There are no escapees and no danger of heavy hurdles falling onto young lambs. They all clip easily together and have many useful accessories such as adaptor fronts/anti-escape rings so lambs can move right around the mums easily, infrared heat tubes which provide heat at the right height and stop mums from standing under them and getting burned or knocking them, and also purpose built hayracks and feeding/water buckets. They are also quite private for the ewe and in our opinion allow better bonding between mum and lambs.

We go the extra mile and put a new clean sheet of plastic under each pen for every sheep that goes in them. We then put a rubber field mat down and put straw over this. The pen is emptied and re-bedded for every new ewe. This gives a thermal barrier for the new lamb from the concrete floor and also prevents the transfer of fluids and bacteria between pens. Once lambing is complete the plastic pens are dismantled and jetwashed, scrubbed and disinfected ready for next year.

When the pens are not completely full we put two heat tubes into the same pen to provide a "lamb lounge" on colder nights, which works really well.

WATER

We ran blue pipes into the building prior to

pouring cement which we will utilise with the captured rainwater later in the project to provide a watering system to support the thirsty flock. We will devise a means of keeping the water drinkers frost free during cold spells. This first winter means humping buckets of water in, but that's not too difficult as there are outside taps and the building is close to the house if the taps are frozen.

CCTV

We have had CCTV for all the 10 years we have been lambing. Technology improves and so does the ability to monitor our flock. We have been testing a new High Definition camera that pans, tilts and zooms around the whole of the building. It also has infrared lighting which means we can see the sheep even in total darkness. We can monitor the sheep in every corner of the building even through the night, with the ability to overview the flock, identify any ewe that's showing signs of lambing and zoom in - even close enough to read the ear tag - and closely watch without the need to go in with a head torch on and disturb them. We just choose the right time to check that all is well or when to assist a ewe. We can do this from anywhere (bed!) using phones or tablets and it makes such a difference to provide round the clock monitoring.



Lambs keeping warm in the "lamb lounge"



Yvette with one of this season's lambs.



Finished the day before the snow!