

# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Winter 2019



The SSBA has sent each of its members a complimentary calendar for 2020. The Council sends Season's Greetings to all, and best wishes for a successful lambing!

## Have you completed your Flock Return and paid your annual subs yet?

Even though the 30th November deadline has passed, it's still not too late. Membership renewals are accepted up to 31st January - although late payment fees will apply.

Please remember you MUST be a paid-up member of the SSBA in order to register your sheep and lambs.

If you need assistance with completing the paperwork, our Registrar Alison Schofield, is very happy to help and advise. Please contact her by phone on 01477 533256.

## NEWS FROM THE AGM AND NOVEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

**THE Society's Annual General Meeting took place on 30th November at Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich. Twenty Shropshire breeders attended.**

President Barry Hodson was in the Chair for the last time, before stepping down at the end of his term of office. Three Council members also completed their three-year terms: Yvette Openshaw, Rosie Lee and Monique Hustinx.

Summing up the past 12 months, Barry said the society was doing well thanks to a lot of help from different members all pulling together. He thanked Sue Farquhar and Claire Jakeman for organising the SSBA's export sales. Whilst overseas members now have the potential to join the society and register sheep, Brexit seems to be holding them back by causing uncertainty.

### JUNIOR MEMBERS

Barry went on to highlight the number of young members who are actively involved in showing sheep and learning sheep industry skills. Two teams had been sent to the National Young Stars Competition, guided by Rosie Lee our Youth Coordinator.

Signet recording is supported by a number of flocks who are finding clear progress in terms of growth rate, carcass composition and maternal traits. As a result of participating in Signet we have been invited to join the national RamCompare trial. This will allow

the performance of our breed to be compared with other terminal sires in a commercial farming scenario.

Pippa Geddes was thanked for managing the breed improvement scheme and supporting Signet recorded flocks, and also for producing the *ShropTalk* newsletter.

Marion Webb was thanked for dealing with the Society's finances and working on the annual accounts, and Simon Mackay for his efforts as Secretary - a demanding role that is a focal point for the whole society.

Barry paid tribute to all members who work behind the scenes at the Society's show and sale. Without these volunteers the society would be floundering. He urged all society members to get involved and support the SSBA's activities and events.

### DECLINE IN REGISTRATIONS

In her presentation, Registrar Alison Schofield revealed that after a couple of years where sheep registrations showed signs of levelling off, they are now actually falling.

"Registrations usually rise during the Winter with the flock returns, but last year this did not happen and the level of female registration was below 2016 levels. Male

registrations were on a par with 2016 and the three year trends are now below 2014/15 levels.

"With lower prices achieved at the Show and Sale, do we need a change in direction with promotion?" she asked. The subject will be discussed as a priority by the Council, but she urged members with ideas for promoting the breed to contact her.

She reminded members that she can run an in-breeding report for individual flocks, if requested. So far only four flocks have used the service but she hoped more would follow.

A new process for registration payment has been introduced - the registration is processed as it comes in and this allows the invoice to be raised and emailed out. The animal's status is moved to "other" on Grassroots until the money has been received. At this point, the animal is moved to "alive" and becomes part of the flock. Invoices cannot be raised until the animal is registered.

### SOCIETY ACCOUNTS

The draft accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting. Treasurer Marion Webb pointed out that whilst the Society had made a small profit of £176, income from membership and registrations was down for the second year running, which was a worrying trend.

Gift Aid was also down, and we need to  
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## NEWS FROM THE AGM AND COUNCIL MEETING

*Continued...*

encourage anyone that can claim to do so.

Looking at expenses, she pointed out that printing, postage, stationery and travel were all slightly higher this year. So was the flock book printing, although it was a larger publication than the year before. We also invested in some new exhibition banners for shows and sent two teams of Junior Members to the Young Stars competition.

Marion highlighted that the Society still has a healthy bank balance and the SSBA's Council is always open to suggestions about how this should be utilised.

She thanked members who had sent in their membership renewals on time, however with one day to go until the official deadline, just under half had not yet been received by the Registrations Clerk. She hoped Ruth's mailbox would be full for the rest of the week!

### NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Harvey Clay (Showle Flock) and Adrian Norton (Blackstairs Flock) were voted onto Council. Rosie Lee was coopted onto Council as Youth Coordinator (a non voting officer position).

### INCREASE IN ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Those attending the AGM were asked to vote on the proposed increases in annual subscription rates for some categories of membership, which had been circulated to members before the meeting.

A modest increase of £5/year was proposed for each of the following categories: Full Membership, Overseas Membership and Registering Overseas Membership. Life Membership would also increase from £350 to £400.

The increases were needed to offset the loss of income after transfer fees and the ram levy had been abolished. Council also pointed out that the SSBA's subscription rate had not been increased since 2007 and would still remain lower than that of many other breed societies.

The proposed increases were voted though by all but one of the members attending the AGM. They will come into effect in November 2020, when the next Annual Flock Return and Membership Renewal is due.

### NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

At the Council Meeting following the AGM, Alison Schofield was voted in as the new President of the SSBA with Rob Kerby as Vice President.

### COUNCIL MEETING DATES

The following dates were selected for Council meetings: 14th March, 16th May, 25th July and 10th October. If breed society members would like Council to discuss any particular issues at these meetings, please contact the Secretary, Simon Mackay.

## WINNERS OF TROPHIES AND AWARDS



*President Barry Hodson presented the Farquhar Trophy for most points won in Shropshire Sheep Showing Classes to Anne Harvey (Roydon Flock).*

*The Novice Showing Trophy for those with the most points in Shropshire showing classes during their first five years of showing was won by Glynys Llewellyn (Harvest Flock).*



*Ellie Russell had a great year in the show and sale ring with her Tushbrook Flock, winning the President's Trophy (most points won in any other breed classes), the Junior Members' Hornpipe Quaich and the Halls' Trophy for the highest priced Shropshire sold through the ring from a small flock at the SSBA's National Show and Sale.*

### LONG SERVICE AWARDS

*Claire Jakeman (Morley Flock - KD) received the Silver Award for 25 years as a Shropshire Sheep breeder.*

*Bronze awards (20 years as Shropshire breeders) went to Peter and Pippa Geddes (Alderton Flock - LU) and Liz Bowles and Mike Bray (Hayne Oak Flock - LX).*



*The Hardwicke Trophy (above) which is presented for the annual Sansaw Sidedowns Most Prolific Ewe Award, was won jointly by Mrs C & Miss A Field (Karimba Flock) owners of ewe 03DH06 and Mark and Yvette Openshaw (Holtridge Flock) owners of ewe 07LU024. The winning ewes have each produced 12 registered progeny to date.*



## INTRODUCING THE SOCIETY'S NEW PRESIDENT

**THE SSBA has a new President - Alison Schofield. She took over the important role of heading up our breed society when Barry Hodson completed his term of office at the November Council meeting.**

Alison and her husband, Paul, farm 30 acres near Holmes Chapel in Cheshire. They are two of the SSBA's longest serving members, having established their Hornpipe flock (flock letters FN) in 1988. They started with six ewe lambs from the Sidedowns Flock of John and Pauline Bowles. They have bought only four additional ewes since then - two more from Sidedowns and two from the Grafton flock, both flocks now dispersed. All succeeding generations have been entirely home-bred.

Alongside the flock of Shropshires, the Schofields have also run Dexter and Angus beef suckler cows, although they now concentrate on the sheep flock, which currently numbers 40 ewes.



### FIRST REGISTRAR

It wasn't long after the Hornpipe flock was established that Alison took on a key task for the breed society - that of Registrar: "At the AGM in 1993, I asked why the SSBA only published the pedigrees of rams, but the dams of the rams were not even mentioned in the flock book. I was concerned that the ewe pedigrees depended solely on breeders' own records and any purchases depended solely on the vendor giving the buyer the relevant card," explains Alison.

"The answer was that it was hard enough keeping track of the rams and no-one would have time to record the ewes as well. I then volunteered to create a computerised system and run it. This was agreed by Council and I became the SSBA's first - and so far only - Registrar."

Alison's pedigree records program went live in January 1994. All sheep registration work was carried out by Alison for 21 years, and she somehow managed to find time to run this as well as her full-time "day job" as IT Manager for BAe Systems, working on the Nimrod Aircraft at Woodford.

As well as issuing the pedigree cards and the society's flock returns, Alison also began producing the SSBA's Annual Flock Book. This year's edition will be her 25th.

In 2004, the breed society acknowledged Alison's vital input by awarding her a Life Membership of the SSBA.

As the breed society grew in size, the registration workload did too. In 2015, when ewe registrations were exceeding 1000/year, the breed society took the decision to transfer

registrations to Grassroots System's Pedweb - a well established on-line system of pedigree recording used by many other breed societies. Alison oversaw the transfer of all the data from her system to Grassroots and helped the new Registrations Clerk, Ruth Mawer, familiarise herself with the Shropshire database. Alison continues to work closely with Ruth.

Since taking early retirement and voluntary redundancy when the government scrapped the Nimrod project at BAe Systems, Alison started a rosette business, also producing small scale promotion material and printed active clothing for the dog agility community, along with hosting dog events at the farm.

She can claim to have supplied rosettes for Olympia and the Royal Windsor Horse Show. Even the Queen has one of her rosettes, making a point of telling the organisers of that section at Windsor that it was one of the nicest rosettes she has! Alison also has competitors at Crufts wearing her printed clothes.

"Since 'retiring' I have also bred three litters of Border Collies with three dogs now competing at Championship, the highest level in agility, and one having competed at Crufts in Obedience. My aim is to get a dog I compete with myself up to Championship level. Jet is not far off," says Alison. "Apart from regularly competing at Agility and showing sheep, I have a season ticket at Leeds United, love heavy metal music and myself and Paul have a small collection of classic cars.

"I want to really push the Shropshire's versatility along with being 'Tree Friendly'. Shropshires are a low input breed, not only in terms of the ratio of corn in to meat out, but also the easy lambing, milkiness and good mothering instinct of the ewes; the 'get up and go' of the lambs, and with the ever busier lifestyles we live, the lack of need to be forever trimming feet has to be a huge asset."



### COULD YOU BE OUR NEW PUBLICITY OFFICER?

THE SSBA is looking for someone to take over the role of Publicity Officer. The job involves:

- Putting together a fully costed publicity and promotions budget once a year;
- Booking advertising space and designing adverts;
- Overseeing the production of leaflets required by the breed society;
- Handling press and media enquiries; and
- Writing articles and press releases to actively promote Shropshire sheep.

If you would like apply or wish to know more, please contact our new President, Alison Schofield on 01477 533256.

### BOOSTING THE BREED SOCIETY'S MEMBERSHIP

IF you sell sheep to someone who has never kept Shropshires before, please do all you can to encourage the purchaser to join the SSBA.

Membership forms can be easily downloaded from the SSBA's website, or obtained from the Secretary. The most effective way to sign up a new member is to simply add the price of the first year's annual subscription for the SSBA to the price of the sheep - and recruit them automatically. It is in every member's interest for the society to grow, to ensure a secure future for our breed.

### NEW SCHEME TO PROMOTE THE FLAVOUR OF BRITISH SHEEP

THE National Sheep Association has launched the British Heritage Sheep Project to introduce the public to different eating experiences from the 60 breeds of British sheep. The SSBA plans to be closely involved to maximise the potential benefits for Shropshires.

At the launch in November, the NSA's chief executive, Phil Stocker, said: "Each breed has its own niche and purpose, and each has its own flavour. The scheme will open up this treasure trove of different flavours and textures."

Consumers will be given an "ABC of sheep meat" relating to age, breed and the areas of the countryside where it has been farmed. Age is in three categories - lamb (up to 12 months); hogget (12 to 24 months) and mutton (24 months +). Labels will inform consumers about these different aspects, and others will be accessed by consumers via an app and barcode. Council members Sue Farquhar and Rob Kerby will be representing the SSBA and working closely with the NSA to make older sheep meat more widely available. It is hoped that the new scheme will bring some extra excitement and enjoyment to eating sheep meat, triggering greater demand.

## EXPORT PRICES 2020

TAKING account of the value of the £ and the rising cost of vets' fees for exporting flocks, the following prices have been agreed for next year:

**Shearling ram:** £570,

£700 for an R1 (if requested)

**Ram lamb:** £450,

£550 for an R1 (if requested)

**Ewe lamb:** £240,

£300 for an R1 (if requested)

**Shearling ewe:** £330,

£380 for an R1 (if requested)

In order to export, flocks must be MV Accredited and either Scrapie Monitored or supply animals with the ARR/ARR Scrapie Genotype (blood collected by a vet and tested by SAC). For more information, please contact our export officer, Sue Farquhar on 01531 670439.

## PHOTOS FOR THE ANNUAL FLOCK BOOK

IF anyone has good quality photos of Shropshire sheep that they think would be suitable for inclusion in the next Flock Book, please send these to Alison Schofield by email:

alisonschofield@hotmail.com. The deadline is 31st January.



## ENGLISH WINTER FAIR

Congratulations Anne Harvey (Roydon Flock) and Jeanette Hares (Millenheath Flock) for their Shropshire lamb carcasses that came 2nd and 3rd, respectively, in the Native Breeds Class at the English Winter Fair.

Anne also won the Shropshire butchers' lambs class with a pair of ewe lambs. The breed society would like to thank all SSBA members that exhibited stock at this primestock event.

## SHROPTALK

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Check out the latest news on our

Facebook page:

"Friends of Shropshire Sheep"

## EXCELLENT FEEDBACK FROM OVERSEAS BUYERS



*"Dear Sue, the first thing I want to tell you is that I am in love with the sheep, they are very beautiful."*

Well, emails from overseas buyers don't get much better than this one received by Export Officer Sue Farquhar! Sue and Sales Officer Claire Jakeman worked hard this year to win export orders for the society, despite Brexit uncertainty. 25 ewe lambs and 2 Shearling rams went to France in August. Later in the year a further consignment went to Spain (Asturia) and Menorca - the first time Shropshires have been exported there. A total of 20 Shearling ewes and three males were supplied. Thanks to the following for providing excellent sheep: Alderton, Apiary, Clipston, Hansnett, Hayne Oak, Hornpipe, Millenheath, Morley, Piddington, Roydon and Ushers flocks.

The society would like to thank Sue and Claire for all their efforts and Alison Schofield for keeping track of the export rotation lists.

*Pictured: Some of the animals that were exported to Spain, settling into their new home.*



## INSPECTOR'S REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL SHOW & SALE

I would like to thank all Breeders who took part in this year's annual Show & Sale at Shrewsbury.

The Society introduced breed standard inspections due to a number of concerns that had been reported of faults against our breed standard starting to creep in which need highlighting to breeders and subsequently eradicating. All breeders should be aware of our breed description and adhere to this at all times (page 5 in current flock book). Also which is helpful is our *Critical Selection* booklet with photographs which aids selection.

Some of you may have recognised Alan Potter who is a well know Inspector who was assisting in the inspections. Alan's remit was fit for function, teeth, testicles/teats, feet, locomotion.

It was a pleasure to be asked to do the breed inspection at this year's sale to ensure breed standards were met.

I am happy to report that no white mottling on face or under chin were found which has been one of the main concerns. Unfortunately, a number of animals failed inspection on dark

skin (not pink) and dark/black wool on top of head, also lack of wool. Faults were found in feet, pasterns falling in/out or dropped, not walking correctly.

These concerns were discussed with the breeders who understood why the animals had failed inspection and could not be entered in the sale.

Whilst this is extremely hard for everyone including Alan and myself, in the main it was accepted by the breeders and hopefully we all learned from this exercise.

Help and assistance/advice was offered which has already been taken up from some breeders.

We have a number of Breed Society Inspectors who would only be too happy to advise if you are in any doubt or just need a chat about an issue you are not sure about. These are: Alison Schofield, Sue Farquhar, Anne Harvey, Les Newman, Pippa Geddes, Claire Jakeman and Liz Bowles.

Thank you. **Claire Jakeman**

## LEADING STOCK SIREs 2019

### Terminal Sire Index

1. Stonegrove Archie (295)
  2. Ushers Duke (287)
  3. Ushers Austin (279)
  4. Ushers Erasmus (278)
  5. Hayne Oak Nelson (261)
  6. Alderton Telstar (255)
  - = 7. Alderton Morgan (253)
  - = 7. Alderton Mitchell (253)
  - = 9. Hayne Oak Sterling (241)
  - = 9. Alderton Maxwell (241)
- (Terminal Sire index scores shown in brackets)

### Maternal Index

- = 1. Hornpipe Douglas (235)
- = 1. Hornpipe Tristar (235)
3. Ushers Endeavour (225)
  - = 4. Ushers Duke (224)
  - = 4. Alderton Telstar (224)
  6. Ushers Alexander (222)
  7. Hayne Oak Randall (221)
  - = 8. Hayne Oak Nelson (211)
  - = 8. Hayne Oak Samson (211)
  10. Hayne Oak Osiris (203)
- (Maternal Index scores shown in brackets)

### LEADING RAM LAMBS

(Ranked on Terminal Sire Index)

1. Ushers 850KX19 (335)
2. Hayne Oak 1589LX19 (324)
3. Hayne Oak 1588LX19 (285)
4. Hayne Oak 1638LX19 (284)
5. Checkley 357AEX19 (283)
6. Checkley 353AEX19 (279)
7. Checkley 354AEX19 (270)
8. Cefn-Carnau 349ABB19 (265)
9. Hodghurst 822XN19 (262)
10. Hayne Oak 157619 (259)

## SOME ANIMALS RE-RANKED FOLLOWING LAUNCH OF NEW SIGNET EVALUATIONS

**THIS** year saw the launch of Signet's long awaited enhancements to its performance recording scheme.

The biggest change was a move to all the carcase traits being weight-adjusted (rather than age-adjusted). This means the updated Estimated Breeding Values will be a better prediction of carcase composition (muscling/fatness) at a given weight. As lambs are selected for market on a combination of weight and finish, rather than age, the new evaluations bring a much more commercial focus to the scheme.

There are also new traits for carcase composition based on CT (whole body) scanning and some new maternal traits - so breeders can now get EBVs for lamb birth weight, lambing ease and litter size reared.

Finally, the composition of the two indices and the emphasis put on different traits within them has also changed - see the pie charts for an "at a glance" explanation.

As expected, the new evaluations have led to some changes in the ranking of Shropshires. At the top of the Terminal Sire Index, we now have Stonegrove Archie, a ram bred by Stonegrove Livestock which had show ring success before going on to breeding duties. His sire was Ushers Sunrise.

Greater changes in the rankings are to be seen in the Maternal Index table, where two rams from the Hornpipe Flock are now at the top. Hornpipe Douglas, by Roydon Raiden Jack, has excellent EBVs for muscle depth, lambing ease, birth weight and litter size. Hornpipe Tristar, by Brereton Nimrod, achieves exactly the same Maternal Index Score through a phenomenal Litter Size EBV, and good scores for lamb birth weight and lambing ease. Ushers Duke, Alderton Telstar and Hayne Oak Nelson are highly ranked for both the Terminal Sire and the Maternal Index.

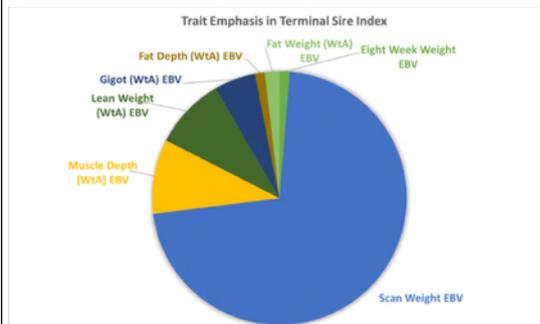


Stonegrove Archie (pictured above) is currently ranked as the top stock sire for Terminal Sire Index. He was also the Breed Champion at the SSBA's National Show and Sale in 2013 (bred by Stonegrove Livestock, shown by Marion Webb).

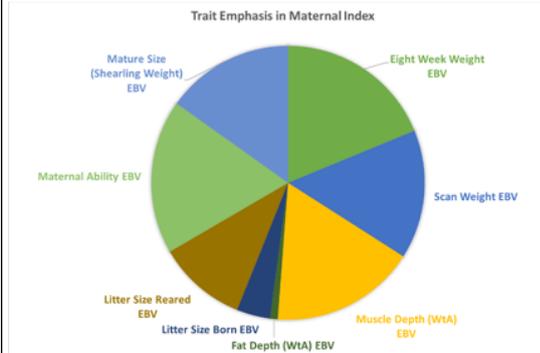


Winners of the Signet Performance awards at Burwarton Show: Ram Ushers Finley with breeder Aubrey Webb and Ram Lamb Alderton Magnus, with breeder Peter Geddes.

### Composition of new Signet Indices



Aim: Sheep to breed fast growing, well fleshed lambs that finish quickly.



Aim: Sheep to breed prolific, milky female replacements and produce fast growing, well fleshed lambs that finish quickly.

## SELL MY LIVESTOCK

AS you already know, we are using the website called Sell My Livestock and breeders are doing very well selling from there.

We have hit a couple of problems where adverts that are being placed are stating "pedigree Shropshire Sheep", yet these are placed by people that are not members of the society and the sheep are not registered. There is nothing we can do about this as it's a website that's open to everyone.

Unfortunately people are buying these animals thinking they are registered and are only finding out when they wish to join the society.

So to try and help make it clear for purchasers I am in the process of agreeing with the website hosts a method of identifying our registered sheep.

At the top of the page there will be a key stating:

*Adverts with the Society logo depicts the breeders are members of the Shropshire Sheep Society. This enables sheep to be registered. All ewes will be registered by the breeder before sale. It will also have my contact details for further advice or assistance.*

There will also be our Purchasers Guide for all to view.



Please ensure when placing an advert you must state your flock letters - this will enable our Society logo to be placed on your advert. As a safety net would you also please email Rosie Hetherington (SML) who will make sure our logo goes on your advert: rosie.hetherington@hectare.farm or 07730 133840. If you have already placed an advert on the site would you please contact Rosie so she can make the amendment.

The other problem I've highlighted is when you search the breed of sheep 'Shropshire' from the drop down menu ALL sheep in Shropshire come up. Rosie is looking at this for us as well.

A good photo will stand out so take time and get your animals on hand standing if you can. If you are selling a few get them together not just dotted around the field with a distance shot. Imagine you are the purchaser, what would you want to see.

If I can help please contact me I'm more than happy to chat.

**Claire Jakeman**  
Sales Officer

## REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL YOUNG STARS CONTEST

At the AGM, Young Members Ellie Russell and George Clay were invited to present their experiences and explain what was expected of them and their teams during and leading up to the National Young Stars competition

This year we took two teams to the NYS competition. Ellie and George as experienced participants headed up the two teams: The "Trimmed Team Shropie" with Owen Powell and Lily Davies, and "Untrimmed team Orchard Graziers" with Ben Clay and Emily Hinks.

The NYS competition was originally devised to test and demonstrate the individual skills, knowledge, handling and presentation ability of all young livestock handlers.

Upon arrival at the Three Counties Show Ground the teams have to do everything on their own. There is no adult intervention or assistance. Scrutinisers are watching all the time.

### Day One

- Submit the movement documentation within 20 minutes of arrival
- Unload the sheep
- Prepare the penned area
- Set up and put together the competition themed marketing boards. They must not go beyond the boarded area and they must not do anything that might be declared a health and safety issue.

At Night: Social BBQ and Rounders competition

### Day Two

- Attend to livestock feed and bedding requirements
- Begin to prepare and trim sheep if in the trimmed competition (3 hours allowed). Untrimmed also prepare their sheep for the show ring.
- Participate in a stock judging session as a team with one selected spokesperson, who presents the selection order, reasons and justification
- Answer questions in the Skillathon. Topics include other breeds, medicines, diseases, and other industry related knowledge
- Untrimmed have to answer questions about sheep carcasses and the product cooking usages
- Answer questions from the judges about presentation of sheep and the products and techniques used to make them show ring fit.
- The Marketing Boards are judged



- The competition climax is the show ring etiquette demonstration where two team members show the prepared sheep whilst the nominated speaker is interviewed in the ring.

### SHEEP CAMP

Before the competition, a lot of work and preparation is done. This is where the idea for "Sheep Camp" evolved: Anyone who was interested in learning more about the NYS or just showing sheep was invited to join us for a weekend. Sheep Camp has been held prior to the competition for the past three years - the first year at the Clays' family farm, the 2nd year at the Russell family's and this year at Weaver Dairy House (Rosaline Flock). It has to be acknowledged that all of the team members are dependent on the massive support from their parents.

Ellie and George described how much the experience has helped them develop their personal skills, not only with the sheep showing but also the presentation and interview tests. They are very grateful to the Society for sponsoring the teams and offering all additional support.

They are keen to continue being involved and hopefully mentor other interested new Junior Members. It is the enthusiasm and commitment that all of the Junior Members have shown that has now moved the Society to try and develop a calendar of events for young members throughout the year: Each session with its own sheep, breed, and industry related topics. Not forgetting the chance to catch up and meet other society members.

The first of these events will be held Saturday 26th April 2020 at Hansnett farm, Canon Frome, Ledbury, Herefordshire, by kind permission of Mrs Sue Farquhar. During the workshop, Industry Professional, Steve Grey, who is also a National Young Stars scrutineer, will develop showing and stock judging skills.

**If anyone is interested and would like to book on, or would like to know more please contact: Rosie Lee**  
Email: 01606301503@talktalk.net  
Phone : 07966761910 /01606 301503