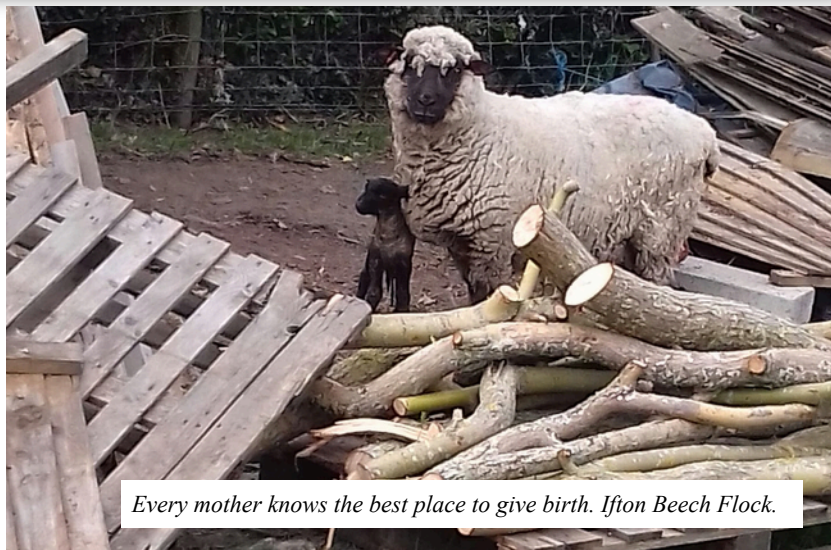


# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Spring 2020



Every mother knows the best place to give birth. Ifton Beech Flock.

WE



**LAMBS:** Above left: Mairead White from County Sligo, Rep. of Ireland, with her first ewe lamb of the season, pictured on New Year's Day.

## SPRING MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi Everybody,

Hope I find you all well, safe and coping in these very strange and scary times. My own rosette business is on hold as it is totally reliant on public gatherings, from dog and horse shows through to car meets. The house has never been cleaner and the garden never tidier. The lack of traffic on the lanes around here has enabled me to take the dogs for long walks without the risk of being run over.

We have all had to adapt to a new way of life for the time being and this has also affected the Society. We are now holding council meetings via telephone and video conferencing and have had to postpone the young members' meetings and training days - but these will be rearranged.

Most shows and events have been cancelled including Wonderwool Wales and the Smallholders' Spring Fair, where we had planned to promote the breed. On a slightly brighter note, the NSA's Sheep 2020 may still go ahead at a date in October.

As many of you know, livestock markets have adapted to social distancing with a "drop and go" system and this leads to uncertainty about our own National Show and Sale at the

end of July. The Council is planning another virtual meeting at the end of May and a decision on the event will be made then. We might have to make it a sale only or cancel it altogether. You will be informed via email and the website.

I hope you will all agree with me that the website is looking fantastic, and at the recent council meeting the "next steps" were discussed so, look out for it to get even better! I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the content and especially Peter Geddes for project managing. The members' pages are live with links to them from the Map.

If you have a website make sure the website details are added to your membership info on Grassroots and then there will be a link against your name from the SSBA's website to yours. Also, if you have an advert in the flock book, a link to the advert will soon be against your details as well. In this newsletter there is more detailed article about other selling options.

Look after yourselves, your family and your sheep!

Alison Schofield



Which one is mine? Apiary Flock.



There were some complaints about breakfast this morning! Yarramatong Flock.



Cefn-Carnau Shropshires



## SSBA EMAIL ADDRESSES

The SSBA has new email addresses for certain Officers and Council members. Forms and documents are being updated and if you do use the old email address by mistake, it will be picked up. The new addresses are:

President, Alison Schofield – [president@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:president@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Secretary, Simon Mackay – [secretary@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:secretary@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Treasurer, Marion Webb – [treasurer@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Sales Officer, Claire Jakeman – [salesofficer@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:salesofficer@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Registrar, Alison Schofield – [registrar@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:registrar@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Registrations Clerk, Ruth Mawer – [registrationsclerk@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:registrationsclerk@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

Other Officers and Council members continue to use their existing addresses for any SSBA related work.

## FLOCK BOOK UPDATE

THE 2019 Flock Book was sent to the printers just before the Covid 19 outbreak. The print company then shut down for a few weeks, but has now reopened with just two members of staff working due to social distancing requirements. This has meant an inevitable delay in the production of our Flock Book but we expect it to be published soon and will be distributed to members as soon as possible.

## FLOCK BOOK ADVERTS ON THE WEBSITE

SSBA Members who paid for adverts in the 2019 edition of the Flock Book will also have links to these adverts via the SSBA's website.

Click through links will be placed next to Members' Contact details, accessed via the Regional Maps, to help members market their stock. The Society would like to thank everyone who purchased a Flock Book advert - the revenue from this helps us keep down the cost of the publication for all SSBA Members.

## NSA SHEEP 2020

THE National Sheep Association's biennial event has been moved back from July to Monday 19th October. It will take place at the Three Counties Show-ground, Malvern.

The SSBA plans to have a breed stand there to promote Shropshires. Additionally, the National Young Stars Contest may also take place at the event.

# WEBSITE REFRESHED

The SSBA's newly improved website was launched in March. The site has been substantially updated and now works well on both computers and mobile phones.

## Membership Pages

The revised membership pages (which you will find under the Breed Society main menu heading) allow you see the contact details of SSBA members in the UK and Ireland. However, under the new GDPR rules, only members who have given express permission to share their details are included.

Members are listed by Region, and lists are accessed by clicking on each region of the British Isles on the map.



The Council would like to see all SSBA members agree to be listed. So if you are not listed but would like to be, please email Ruth Mawer on [registrationsclerk@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:registrationsclerk@shropshire-sheep.co.uk) and she will send you the required authorisation form. The membership pages are updated quarterly.

## Content

A Website sub-committee of the Council (Peter Geddes, Alison Schofield, Rob Kerby and Adrian Norton) will decide on content changes and updates to the website. Immediate or important Society news will be updated as required.

Any member who has an interesting article or input for the website, or any other comments about the content, should send it to Peter Geddes ([pngeddes@aol.com](mailto:pngeddes@aol.com)). He will collate input and comments and the sub-committee will meet at least quarterly to review and agree updates.

## Photo Gallery

The photo gallery on the website was the one area not updated in the newly released version.

It needs to be refreshed and plans have already been approved by Council for doing this. We are looking for good quality photos of Shropshires in all situations – at home, at shows, in fields, grazing in tree plantations, with or without people. If members have photos that they think would be suitable for inclusion, please email Peter Geddes ([pngeddes@aol.com](mailto:pngeddes@aol.com)) saying that you have image(s) for the website.



Above: a screen shot of how the new website homepage appears on smart phones - including welcome message, news and links to our Facebook page.

Peter will then send you a link to allow you to upload them to him - and you will be asked to agree that the SSBA can have rights to use your photo.

Please do not email photos direct to Peter. Photo files will need to be a minimum of 1.5MB in size in a jpeg format. This means a good, well-lit shot taken on a mobile phone can be OK as well as digital camera photos.

Please do have a look at the new site and let us know what you think!

**[www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk](http://www.shropshire-sheep.co.uk)**

# MARKETING YOUR PEDIGREE STOCK

**This year is going to be more challenging than usual, when it comes to buying and selling pedigree breeding stock. Most shows and pedigree breeding sales have been cancelled, but there are other ways that stock can be marketed. We take a look at some of the options available to SSBA Members:**

## **The SSBA's National Show and Sale**

This may still go ahead on 26th July at Shrewsbury Livestock Market. A final decision will be taken at the end of May by Council, and members will be informed of the decision straight afterwards by email.

## **The SSBA's Website and Breeders' Own Websites**

Our newly updated website lists Shropshire breeders by region. So to find breeders in your area, all you need to do is click on the appropriate region of the map that appears under the Breed Society Main Menu heading. Breeders' phone numbers and emails are listed so it should be easy for potential buyers to get in touch.

Quite a few members now have their own farm websites and you can simply click through to these from the regional breeder listings on the SSBA's website.

If you have your own farm/flock website, make sure you keep the stock for sale section up-to-date.

If you have a website, but it is not currently listed on the SSBA's site, you can rectify this by adding the website address to your Breeder's Details section on Grassroots. The next website update of this section will be at the end of June - so make sure you get your website info onto Grassroots before then.

## **Sell My Livestock**

This website ([www.sellmylivestock.co.uk](http://www.sellmylivestock.co.uk)) is highly recommended by our Sales Officer, Claire Jakeman, as a way of buying and selling stock.

The basic type of advert is free, or you can pay a bit extra (£10) for a premium listing. Please ensure when placing an advert that you state your flock letters - this will enable the SSBA's logo to be placed on your advert, which distinguishes pedigree animals from non-pedigree.

Claire advises anyone placing an ad on this website to also email Rosie Hetherington of Sell My Livestock to ensure that the logo goes on your advert. Rosie can be contacted by phone on 07730 133840 or you can email her on: [rosie.hetherington@hectare.farm](mailto:rosie.hetherington@hectare.farm).

A good photo of the sheep you are selling will also help to attract buyers, so take

your time and get a good shot with the animal(s) on hard standing, if you can. If you are selling a few, get them together not just dotted around the field in the distance. Imagine you are the purchaser and take the sort of photo that you would want to see. If you need more help, Claire is happy to have a chat and assist you: her phone number is 07766 238346.

## **New Sales Section for Performance Recorded Stock on the Signet Website**

This year, Signet has added a sales page to its website, where breeders who are recording with Signet can place adverts for their animals free of charge. The website address is: [www.signetdata.com](http://www.signetdata.com). Select "Sheep Search" from the top menu bar and then "Search Sheep For Sale" from the drop down box.

There are already about 20 Shropshires listed for sale and more are likely to be added as the 2020 evaluations become available.

If you click on the ear-tag number of listed stock, you can access each animal's full Estimated Breeding Values for a range of traits in an easy-to-read bar chart, as well as their full pedigrees.

There is also a facility for adding a photo, which is a very good idea. Breeders are advised to follow the same photo guidelines given already for Sell My Livestock users.

If you need a hand getting animals listed on the Signet site, then drop an email to the Signet bureau team - who will be happy to help.

## **Facebook**

A lot of us are now using Facebook, either as individuals or to promote our farm businesses and flocks. The official Facebook Advertising Policy does not permit the advertising of animals. If such adverts are detected, then the page concerned can be shut down. For this reason, we will not be permitting any livestock adverts on our "Friends of Shropshire Sheep" community page - so please do not send them.

Advertising in a stealthy way on your own page may get "under the radar" - for instance you could post a picture of an animal with the caption "looking for a new home" - and you may be lucky enough to get away with it. Just posting pictures of your stock could also be enough to attract buyers. After all, if someone posts half a dozen pictures of ram lambs, they are unlikely to be keeping them all!

## **Farmers Guardian's FGBuyandSell**

This is a new on-line market place launched by FG, which it says has in excess of 1500 weekly listings for breeding stock, machinery and property. Various ad packages are available including free 30-day online listings and others that include adverts in the journal as well as online. Members of the SSBA can claim £5 off their next advert on [www.fgbuyandsell.com](http://www.fgbuyandsell.com) with the code LAUNCH5 at the checkout. For more information contact Katie Robinson on 01722 799500.

## **SIGN UP NEW MEMBERS IF YOU SELL SHEEP!**

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.

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 (£40) 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.

To help you, we have included **two membership forms** with this *ShropTalk* and an envelope for them to be returned to the Registrations Clerk. Extra membership forms can also be downloaded from the SSBA's website, or obtained from the Secretary.



## **CHECK THE PAPERWORK BEFORE YOU BUY**

It's vitally important when buying new stock - or hiring/borrowing a ram - that you make sure the animal(s) have the correct pedigree paperwork before you seal the transaction. The Breed Society advises all its members to actually see copies of the pedigree certificates and make sure these match ear tags on the animal(s).

If the animals concerned are young and that is given as the reason why they aren't registered, please check with the Registrations Clerk to make sure that the animals are eligible for registration before you buy. Unfortunately we have had a number of cases where stock has been marketed as "pedigree" but it is in fact ineligible for registration.

## **REGISTRATION REMINDERS**

MEMBERS are reminded that ewes and lambs over four months old being sold privately **MUST** be registered by the breeder even if sold to an unregistered or non-Shropshire flock. Ewe lambs under four months of age need only be Birth Notified.

Pedigree Certificates for stock will not be issued until payment has been received by the Breed Society.



More lamb pictures from our Members, posted on Facebook



Checkley Flock



Holtridge Flock



Stonegrove Flock



Uwe Rutzen's flock, Overseas Member in Norway.

## SHROPTALK

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Facebook page:  
"Friends of Shropshire Sheep"

## CAN SHROPSHIRE SHEEP AND TREES HELP TO MAKE THIS FARM CARBON NEUTRAL?

A new flock of Shropshires has been started by Woodland Trust Ambassador Farmer, David Rose, who is based in the village of Screveton, Nottinghamshire.

Fifteen females and a ram were purchased last autumn from the Showle Flock in Herefordshire. They lambed in April this year and will be used to graze the farm's woodland plantations, including oak and other native deciduous species. David says they have made a good start in the plantations - and we look forward to further updates on this project.



## SHROPSHIRE SHEEP ON RAMCOMPARE

AS reported last year in *ShropTalk*, two Shropshire rams are now participating in the RamCompare trial at Dupath Farm, Callington, Cornwall, alongside other terminal sire breeds.

The farm, owned by Adrian and Lyn Coombe, runs a flock of 380 North of England Mules and 120 ewe lambs. This March/April lambing flock is part of a mixed farm rotationally grazing permanent pasture and improved leys. In the two years that Adrian has been part of RamCompare he has recorded over 1,100 lambs (the picture below is from 2019).

The 2020 lambing has gone well with over 700 live birth notifications. Over 100 Shropshire sired lambs are now on test: 29 live

lambs from Ushers Alexander (bred by AI) and 77 live lambs from the natural service sire 1343LX17, supplied from the Hayne Oak Flock. Lamb eight week weights have been taken but not yet submitted for analysis. Twelve week weights will be taken in early June, when Adrian submits his first batch of lambs for slaughter.

An open-day had been planned on the farm in July this year, but sadly due to Covid 19, this has been cancelled. RamCompare plans to hold an open-day next year around mid-July, when interested breeders will be able to see the farm and discuss the results of the RamCompare trial. Dupath is also an AHDB Strategic Farm, which has been using rams with high EBVs for Scan weight and Muscle Depth for two years. This has lifted lamb values by £4/head whilst simultaneously getting lambs finished more quickly.

