

# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Spring 2021

## SPRING UPDATE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi everybody,

Welcome to another packed edition of *ShropTalk*!

We have finished lambing for the year, and have achieved a good lambing percentage of nearly 200%. We've been pleasantly surprised at how our old ladies (two aged 11 and a 12 year old) are managing to rear their lambs. Shropshires really are good mothers. I hope everyone's lambings have been, or are, successful.

We are still in the grips of Coronavirus but hopefully a way out to a new kind of normal is on the horizon. Unfortunately though, more agricultural events have taken a hit. At the time of writing, Wonderwool Wales, Sheep SouthWest, WelshSheep, and ScotSheep have been cancelled plus an increasing number of shows. The best advice is to keep an eye on the press and websites for the latest information.

The Society is planning two sales this year, Covid permitting. The first - the Annual Show and Sale at Shrewsbury - is on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup> July. The second is a sale only at Worcester alongside the Zwartbles' S&S and a general store lamb and cattle sale. At both sales sheep will be inspected by a Society inspector to the breed standard.

The official breed description has been recently reviewed by a subcommittee and the revised standard was adopted by Council. It is now available on the SSBA's website.

The latest flock book will be with you sometime in April. You will notice there are a few changes and additions to the usual contents: The new breed description is there, plus the new rules on birth notification. Don't forget you need to birth notify before the 30th June, otherwise there is a charge.

The flock book pictures are a bit different too, because we had no sheep shows in 2020. We have added, this year, a list of all the rams registered in alphabetical order along with the normal list in order of registration number. There is also a list of all flock letters and prefixes registered from 1960 up until the present day, which makes very interesting reading. I would love to know how some people come up with their flock names. Ours has nothing to do with where we live now, but hails from Hornpipe Cottage, where I grew up. I had pedigree goats there with the Hornpipe prefix, so it seemed only natural for our sheep, cattle and pigs to have the same prefix.

We are always interested in how your sheep are kept, for what purpose and what help we, as a Society, can give you. The results of the recent members' survey that many of you have

completed will make very interesting reading. There will be a report on the findings in the next edition of *ShropTalk*.

### EUROPEAN SHEEP REGISTRATIONS

Following Brexit, the SSBA can no longer register Shropshire sheep from flocks in EU Member States. The SSBA, along with numerous other British breed societies, is working with our EU members and government departments to come up with a solution. At the last Council meeting we agreed in principle to assist our EU members in forming a European Shropshire Sheep Society, based in the Republic of Ireland, to enable our EU members to carry on registering their Shropshires. The Council has set up a subcommittee chaired by Adrian Norton to get a fully costed proposal for consideration by Council. I will update members in due course.

On a personal note, Leeds United should have accumulated enough points to remain in the premiership so, even though I couldn't go and support them this season, there is always next season. My dog Jet is now a grandma, as her daughter gave birth to four beautiful puppies in Wales on St David's day so, guess what, one is to be called Daffodil.

Look after yourselves, your family and your sheep.

Alison Schofield



*Ewes and lambs from Alison's Hornpipe Flock enjoying the spring sunshine in Cheshire.*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**The SSBA's National Show and Sale**  
at Shrewsbury Market  
Saturday 24th July

**New SSBA Sale of Shropshires**  
at Worcester Market  
Saturday 14th August

## BIRTH NOTIFICATION RULE CHANGE

DON'T forget that the SSBA has changed its rules for lamb Birth Notifications.

Under the new rules, BNs made on or before 30th June each year for the current season's lamb crop will remain FREE OF CHARGE. However, there will now be a charge of £6/head for late BNs made from 1st July until 31st December.

Very late BNs, applied for after the 31st December of the year in which the lambs were born, will be allowed only at the Registrar's discretion. They will be considered individually on a case-by-case basis. If allowed, they will be charged at £20/head. Only sheep that have been Birth Notified can be fully Pedigree Registered.

## SPRING 100 CLUB WINNERS

THE first draw of the year for the 100 Club was made at the Spring Council Meeting. The winners are:

J&R Davies (ALW) who win £59.70 and Mr B Kirk (RM) who wins £39.80.

## APPROVAL OF THIRD COUNTRY LISTING

THE European Commission has accepted DEFRA's application for third country listing of the UK's breeding bodies. This means that SSBA members can continue to trade with EU breed societies or breeding operations, on the same equivalent terms as they had under the Zootech regime before Brexit.

## RAMCOMPARE TO CONTINUE

THE national RamCompare trial has just announced funding for phase III. After the initial five years of research, funding has now been confirmed to allow the third phase of the project to get underway this year. This will widen the scope of the project and enable greater use to be made of abattoir data within genetic evaluations.

Ram Nominations are now open, and breeders with high genetic merit, Signet Recorded Shropshires are encouraged to put forward rams. For information about criteria and nomination forms, contact Bridget Lloyd by email: Bridget.Lloyd@ahdb.org.uk

## SHROPTALK

is edited by Pippa Geddes

[pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk](mailto:pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk)

and printed by Simon Mackay

[secretary@shropshire-sheep.co.uk](mailto:secretary@shropshire-sheep.co.uk)

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

For individual flock news, check out our Facebook



page: "Friends of Shropshire Sheep"

# OFFICIAL BREED SOCIETY SALES

AT the time of writing, the breed society plans to hold its National Show and Sale at Shrewsbury market on Saturday 24th July. This is a major event in the Shropshire sheep calendar, although it was sadly unable to go ahead in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

Hopefully this year a show will be possible, albeit with social distancing measures. This will be followed by a catalogued sale of sheep. All animals will be inspected prior to the sale by breed society inspectors to ensure they meet the official breed description.

Schedules and entry forms for Shrewsbury will be available from the auctioneers, Halls, from 26th April. The closing date for entries is 25th June. No late entries will be accepted. A social evening for members may take place the evening before the show and sale as long as this is within the Covid rules in place at the time.

## NEW SALE AT WORCESTER

The Society has introduced a new sale this year at Worcester Livestock Market, which is well positioned just off the M5 and easily accessible to the east and west. The auctioneers, McCartneys, are well known, with plenty of expertise of pedigree livestock sales. The sale will be held on Saturday 14th August, when an official breed society



The 2019 breed champion at Shrewsbury S&S - a ewe lamb from the Brereton flock - with breeder Sue Shimwell, judge Les Newman and sponsor Claire Jakeman.

sale of Zwartbles is also taking place, as well as a general store lamb and cattle sale. There will be no show of Shropshires, but all sheep will be inspected prior to the sale by breed society inspectors. Usual Shropshire sale rules will apply.

For more information, please contact Sue Farquhar 01531 670439 [hansnett@talktalk.net](mailto:hansnett@talktalk.net).

## IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE BREED STANDARD

THE Breed Society's breed standards committee held a virtual meeting in December to discuss the official breed description for Shropshires. As a result, a few additions and amendments to the list of Undesirable Traits were proposed at the Spring Council Meeting and approved. The official breed standard has been amended accordingly.

All breeders should now be aware of these changes and sheep which vary significantly from the Breed Description should be carefully considered before registration.

### Amendments to the list of Undesirable Traits

- White patches or mottling on the face, ears and/or legs
- Receding wool above the eyes
- Lack of wool around the base of the ears
- Excessive black wool or patches of dark skin with no wool on the head, either in front of or between the ears\*
- Throatiness - being loose skin below the neck

\*Council agreed that Shropshire rams' heads do get darker with age, through fighting and rubbing. So the new undesirable trait concerning black on the head should be applied only to animals assessed at 18 months or younger.

These revised standards will be applied by the breed society's inspectors carrying out pre sale assessments this year at the SSBA's two official sales.

The Critical Selection Booklet will be updated to illustrate these undesirable traits and, if necessary, pictures will also be included in future editions of *ShropTalk*.



An example of a head showing receding wool above the eyes.

## HOW TO CREATE SUCCESSFUL SALES ADVERTS

Last year, the SSBA worked with the website Sell My Livestock ([www.sellmylivestock.com](http://www.sellmylivestock.com)), to establish an exclusive portal for Shropshire sheep adverts. This portal is also linked to the Sheep For Sale page of the SSBA's own website, and has proved a very effective way for members to sell their sheep. Here are some tips on how to create adverts with maximum impact - based on a presentation given at last year's AGM by Alison Schofield and Claire Jakeman.

### When should you advertise your sheep?

Rams are best sold prior to the breeding season. People can start looking as early as April. Ensure males are up to weight and able to do the job for which they are being purchased.

Lambs are best sold in the summer when grass is plentiful and they can be run on.

Ewes can be sold anytime, however give them time to recover from rearing their lambs, so they are looking their best.

Shearlings - again can be sold anytime, but show themselves best when wool has grown a back bit after shearing.

### Initial Checklist

All stock needs to be fit for function - so check teeth, feet, testes etc;

Animals should conform to breed standard. Refer to the booklet *Critical Selection of Shropshire Sheep*;

They need to be Registered or Birth Notified; Photographs will sell your sheep. You need at least one good photograph;

Make a note of specific selling points - e.g. health status, pedigree info, show results, scrapie genotype, performance figures, weight etc;

Remember that SML is the shop window on the breed *and your own flock* - so only advertise good quality animals. Ask the Society for advice if unsure.

### Photographs

Pick a nice day and allow sufficient time to photograph your animals;

Stage them - think what you would like to see if you were looking to buy sheep;

Think about the background so the sheep can

be seen clearly;

Take photographs where feet and pasterns can be clearly seen;

Present your sheep with clean back ends;

If you get your photos right from the beginning, it will save you time later. Poor photos will not create interest, or may just generate a lot more questions.

### Advert Wording

You can present the wording either as a list of bullet points, or in short sentences.

Write down what you want to say before you start to create the advert on the website - include all the selling points you can think of.

Check your spelling and punctuation.

Read the advert out loud to yourself to check that commas and full stops are in the right place and that it all reads well.

### Now create your advert on Sell My Livestock

Follow the instructions;

Cut and paste your final wording;

Load your photos - make sure they're loaded in the order of what you would like the potential customers to see first;

Think about uploading a copy of the pedigree from Grassroots, especially for rams;

Make sure what you say in the advert is correct and truthful - including any mention of particular health status or health treatments given;

Check the advert preview carefully before you upload your advert;

When you sell your sheep - make sure you mark your advert "SOLD" - this looks good for both your flock and the breed.

## GOOD EXAMPLE

Birth notified ewe lambs sired by high maternal index tup.

Very well grown averaging 44kg, would go to the tup this year. 6 twins 4 singles.

Grass reared and all born unassisted. Used to being worked with a dog.

Covered by Click until mid October. Shorn at weaning.



## LAUNCH OF THE NEW GRASSROOTS ON-LINE REGISTRY

A new look Grassroots Online Registry has been launched to replace the old Pedeweb. The registry went live in March and can be accessed via the SSBA's website or direct at: [www.grassroots.co.uk/shropshire.html](http://www.grassroots.co.uk/shropshire.html).

Previous individual log-in details (flock letters and password) are still valid, allowing all SSBA Members to access the whole Society database and manage their animal records.

The system opens with a list of all the animals in your registered ownership: Click on an animal to view its details, pedigree and progeny list; Click the magnifying glass icon (top left) to search the whole database; Click on the Menu icon (top right) to make changes.

If you have animals for sale, please go to the Menu and flag them "For Sale". This information will not have come across from the old system.

If you want to add images, please download the Mobile App and upload images from your phone.

The Registry is very straightforward to use. A "step by step" guide is available on the Grassroots' website: [home.grassroots.co.uk](http://home.grassroots.co.uk)

### NEW GRASSROOTS MOBILE APP

At the same time as the launch of the new Registry, Grassroots is also offering breeders a new Mobile App. This allows users to access all their own animal details from their smartphones, even when there is no internet or mobile access.

The App is free for the first month and then available at a charge of £1.99/month, or £14.99 for the year.

You can download the Grassroots Systems' Mobile App from the Appstore or Google Playstore. Create an App User Name (must be a least 8 characters) and your own password. Then sync the details of all animals you own using your normal breed society flock letters and password. If you keep other Grassroots breeds, they can be added to the same copy of the App.

Grassroots says it is straightforward to use and, once again, a user-guide is available on the Grassroots website. From within the App you can:

Add images for your own use or to appear in the online registry;

Add notes - for individual animals or groups, including mating records, or reminders;

Report changes direct to the Registry "on the go";

Sales - and keep a list of all your buyers;

Births - and apply to Notify or Register;

Deaths - and sales for meat;

Flag Animals For Sale - to appear in the Registry; and

Link Photos - for your own use or to appear in the Online Registry.



# SHROPSHIRES AND SEA BUCKTHORN



**Seth Pascoe had never heard of Seaberries (the fruit of the Sea Buckthorn) until he went trekking with a friend in the Himalayas.**

Having reached the Everest base camp, some 5,300m above sea level, Seth and his pal started to suffer from altitude sickness. Their Sherpa gave them each a glassful of a hot, bright orange liquid - delicious to taste and, it turned out, with many beneficial properties. The altitude sickness soon cleared up. And from that moment on, Seth was keen to learn more about the nutritional properties of the Nepali "super fruit".

Back in his home county of Cornwall, it seemed like fate when he discovered native Sea Buckthorn bushes bearing their golden berries, whilst walking his dog along a cliff path.

One thing led to another, and Seth decided to try out Sea Buckthorn in the UK, planting 100 trees in a Cornish orchard. They grew well, which was very encouraging. Seth wanted to develop a really commercial enterprise and, with the help of a Nuffield Scholarship, he was able to visit growers across Europe, China and the Indian Himalayas to further his knowledge.

Full of enthusiasm, he returned home and established a farm tenancy on land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. Here he planted a larger orchard of over 2,000 Sea Buckthorn trees. This has now expanded to around 3,000 trees. He grows named/bred varieties, not the wild cultivar. His orchards are based mainly on German varieties with a few Latvian varieties mixed in too. Seth is also an agronomist and continues to advise arable growers alongside his Cornish Seaberry Company business.

### **Briefly describe your holding:**

We rent around five acres of orchards in mid-Cornwall plus an acre of wildflower meadow and a further acre of grass. I also have another acre of grass-keep locally. The land has heavier soils than are ideal, but that was the only land available at the time.

### **Were you the first in the UK to look at Sea Buckthorn as a commercial proposition?**

There are a handful of other growers and a

few foragers who harvest the wild crop. We all keep in touch and cooperate where possible. I wasn't the first to establish a commercial orchard, but I may be the second!

### **What are your main markets?**

We sell berries or juice to third parties - distilleries, breweries, chocolatiers, chefs, ice-cream makers, jam makers, cosmetic companies etc. We are developing our own native juice, which we are hoping to launch later this year. We are also looking into selling powdered Sea Buckthorn, which is great for sprinkling onto porridge, smoothies, yogurts etc.

### **When did you start using Shropshires?**

I attended an Innovative Farmers Field Lab specifically looking at Shropshires in orchards. I met breeder Liz Bowles at that event and

I later bought some in-lamb ewes from her Hayne Oak flock. I've just completed my 4th lambing.

### **How do you manage the Shropshires in your Sea Buckthorn orchards?**

I use electric fences and give them a number of alleyways at a time to "mob graze". How many alleys and how long they stay there depends on grass growth. During July and August I try to avoid having them in the orchard in case they develop a taste for the berries. I use alternative grazing for them at this time.

I lamb the ewes indoors in February. My fields sit quite wet in winter so the sheep are outdoors for as long as they aren't making a mess. February gets the lambing over before the agronomy season gets stupidly busy.

They do nibble on the trees and if I replant a young tree in an existing row of older trees the young tree tends to get picked on and really defoliated. Once trees get bigger, I take the view that they should

Seth, pictured with his partner Laura and daughter Emily.



be able to handle some nibbling of leaves. Ideally I would cull the culprits, but it doesn't really work with such a small flock. The bushes are very thorny so I'm surprised they do eat them. The other issue I have is that the sheep sometimes get foot problems from standing on prunings.

### **Are Shropshires cost effective and are you pleased with them?**

The Sea Buckthorn trees fix nitrogen so I get a lot of grass growth at times. The Shropshires convert this grass to meat - and it means I don't have to use diesel mowing grass all the time. They have really helped to improve the soil quality by recycling nutrients and feeding soil biology - the "golden hoof"!

The sheep don't make me a fortune by any means, but as part of my overall orchard management strategy and business they have an important role and are also part of the marketing story too.

### **Future plans?**

Our Two Trees flock (AGW) currently numbers 5 or 6 ewes. I would like to increase flock size, but haven't got enough land at present. My daughter Emily is three and already really enjoys helping with "sheepy jobs". I'd love to start showing our sheep and so I want to learn more about that. I'd like to learn how to shear as well. Flystrike is always a concern in a sheltered orchard. As a small flock we are never high up the pecking order for shearers. So if I could shear them myself it would overcome this issue.



For more information about The Cornish Seaberry Company, see the website: [www.cornishseaberry.co.uk](http://www.cornishseaberry.co.uk)

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT: **Worm Control**

**In the first of a series of articles covering sheep husbandry and veterinary topics, Rob Kerby (Cefn-Carnau Flock) looks at the most important aspects of gut worm control.**

- All sheep carry parasitic gut worms. Older animals develop immunity and (if in good health) are generally tolerant of worms, whereas lambs have little immunity and are susceptible.

- Signs of worm infestations are “ill thrift”, loss of weight, scouring and occasionally death

- There are broadly three species of round worm we have to contend with. In all of these the life cycle of the worm involves the eggs being deposited in the grass via the animal’s faeces, and then re-ingested by a grazing sheep

- NEMATODIRUS is a parasite that predominantly affects lambs, spreading from one year’s lamb crop to the next via very resistant eggs deposited on the soil.

These will survive through summer and winter, and require a rise in temperature to hatch, usually seen in Spring as lambs start to graze. Immature larvae cause damage to the guts, causing weight loss and scour which can be fatal if left untreated.

Faecal egg counts are not as reliable as with other gut worms, and so best practice is to follow the SCOPS forecast which predicts when conditions will favour the hatch, and to use a Class 1 white drench to treat lambs which are old enough from this point onwards.

You can find this on the SCOPS website: [www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk).

- STRONGYLES, such as Teladorsagia, are present in the grass and when ingested in sufficient numbers will cause scouring and loss of weight. Best practice is to move sheep regularly to avoid too high an infestation. Strongyle worms are not generally persistent from year to year, and their cycle can be broken by grazing cattle or by shutting up a pasture for hay.

- HAEMONCHUS or Barbers Pole worm causes anaemia and can lead to sudden death. One symptom is ‘bottle jaw’. Sometimes only properly detected by post mortem.

- COCCIDIOSIS (“Cocci”) can cause problems similar to roundworms but is a protozoal parasite, rather than a worm. We will cover Cocci and how to avoid and treat it in a future article.

The impact of worms can be minimised by good grazing management. Lambs should be moved regularly (“never hear the church bells twice in the same paddock”) and, if rotational grazing, leave a reasonable residual. If the grass is grazed tightly lambs will pick up more worms (and the sward will take longer to

recover). Also use a different paddock each year for turn-out, if you can.

The only reliable way to detect worms and then make sound decisions on treatment is a regular FAECAL EGG COUNT usually arranged via your vet, who will advise on the severity of infection and on a suitable wormer if one is required.

The cost and time involved is easily recouped – if the count is low you can avoid drenching, if high you will know exactly what treatment is required, and you may be able to take action to prevent or minimise re-infection

Wormers for sheep are Classified 1-5: White, Yellow, Clear, Orange and Purple. See the AHDB parasite control guide or the SCOPS website: [www.scops.org.uk/about/scops-know-your-anthelmintics-guide/](http://www.scops.org.uk/about/scops-know-your-anthelmintics-guide/)

When drenching sheep with wormers it is essential that the dose is sufficient DO NOT UNDER-DOSE. This can be avoided by dosing accurately to weight, usually achieved by dosing to the heaviest in the group, and ensuring your dosing equipment is correctly calibrated and therefore dispensing as much wormer as it should be!

After worming it is important to yard the animals or keep them in the same paddock for a few days before moving to clean ground, to avoid contamination of fresh pasture with resistant worms.

ANTHELMINTIC RESISTANCE is a growing problem, some older wormers now have limited efficacy which can vary from



flock to flock. If wormers are used indiscriminately or inaccurately the problem is exacerbated. Care should be taken to practice responsible use of wormers to avoid a problem occurring.

You can BUY IN a worm problem – it can come with the sheep you purchase regardless of their origin. Your QUARANTINE protocol should include a Class 4 or 5 wormer for all incoming animals and keep them off grazing until this has been given and had time to be effective.

Your FLOCK HEALTH PLAN should identify the risks from gut worms (and other parasites such as fluke and scab) and the appropriate responses.

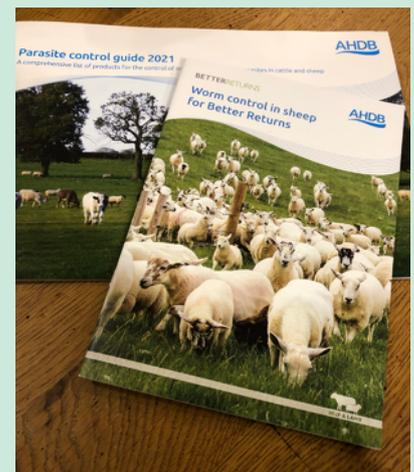
There are excellent on-line resources at SCOPS [www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk) and from AHDB and HCC. If in any doubt CONSULT YOUR VET.

*This article was prepared with assistance from Constance Lesnianski, Farm First Vets.*

**Enclosed with this ShropTalk, you will find your complimentary copies of two very useful guides produced by the AHDB: “Worm Control in sheep for Better Returns” And “Parasite control guide 2021” which explains all the different types of wormers and their uses.**

*The SSBA would like to thank Mark and Sue Shimwell (Brereton Flock) for obtaining these guides for members.*

*AHDB Beef & Lamb have many resources which are available to order. You can find an order form on their website: <https://forms.ahdbdigital.org.uk/ahdb-beef-lamb-order-form>*



## JUNIOR MEMBERS NEWS: INTRODUCING ELLIOTTS FLOCK

I started my flock in 2017 when my grandparents bought me my first four ewes. I have been lucky that I can use my parents' Shropshire ram at tugging time and don't need to invest in my own for now.

This season I put six ewes to Roydon Rudi and have been very happy with this year's lambs. We lamb fairly early with my first lamb being born on New Year's Day.

One of my favourite lambs this year is a single ram lamb out of a home bred ewe and he is growing really well and hope to retain him; his name is Jonathan.

At lambing time I try to be as involved as possible. I help with feeding, filling the hay cratches and water for the individual pens.

When I'm not at school, I assist with difficult lambings and my small arms are really helpful when a ewe is a bit tight.

I'd really like to get out to some shows this year. In 2018 I enjoyed entering young handlers' competitions and have helped showing my parents' Shropshires (Checkley Flock) and my own ram lamb at the breed society's National Show and Sale at Shrewsbury market.

My next challenge is to start trimming my own sheep ready for shows/sales.

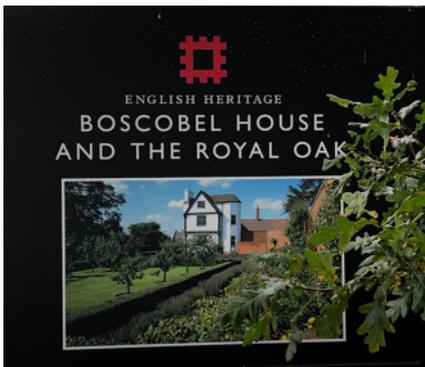
Alongside my pedigrees I keep a small flock of commercial sheep.

Elliott Weaver, Elliotts Flock, Woore, Shropshire



*Elliott, aged 8, assisting with the lambing and (right) "Jonathan", his favourite ram lamb from this year's crop.*

## FIRST ENGLISH HERITAGE FLOCK AT BOSCOBEL HOUSE



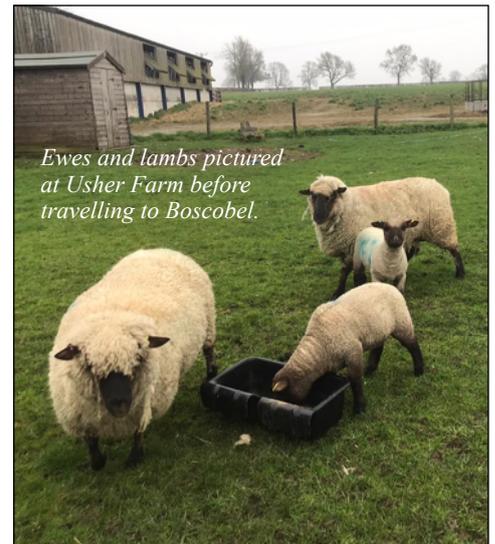
**HISTORIC Boscobel House in Shropshire received a very special delivery in March: Two Shropshire ewes with ewe lambs at foot. These joined three Shropshire Shearlings purchased last autumn - the foundation animals for the brand new Boscobel Flock, owned by English Heritage!**

Boscobel House and its Royal Oak tree became famous hiding places for King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Following Charles's clandestine visit, Boscobel remained a working farm until it was eventually taken over by English Heritage to ensure its preservation.

Over the Covid lockdown, extensive renovations have taken place. English Heritage will re-open Boscobel House this April. On show will be its new heritage livestock, Victorian farmyard, walled garden, living willow tunnel and, of course, the Royal Oak.

The Shropshires were supplied from the Ushers Flock of Marion and Aubrey Webb from Gilmorton in Leicestershire. Boscobel has also recently added Ryeland sheep, Tamworth pigs and rare breed poultry.

It's great to see Shropshires in a high profile role at this fascinating English Heritage property.



*Ewes and lambs pictured at Usher Farm before travelling to Boscobel.*

