

SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Autumn 2022



A group of ewes from Helen Carroll and Laurence Power's Adelaide Flock, based in Snelston, Ashbourne, Derbyshire. 58 ewes are going to the tup this year: 20 to lamb in January and 38 in April. The lush grassland is treated with sulphur in the autumn, then sprayed with multi trace elements in the spring, followed by two applications of cattle slurry. Weeds are treated only by spot spraying and the soil is sampled every autumn.

PRESIDENT'S AUTUMN UPDATE

In the last *ShropTalk* I was optimistic for rain. It did come, of course, but the little we did have barely wet the surface. In August, we had 30% of the long-term average, in September 60%, and so far in October, which should be one of our wettest months, we are at about 35% of average. And you thought Wales was wet! Clearly - looking at the Adelaide Flock's photo above - other areas have not been so badly affected.

We decided not to drill our winter forage crops for fear of creating a desert and the 44 big bales of hay we made in May, and that we were sure we didn't need, are beginning to look like a really good decision. Both the quantity and quality of grass have suffered and that is bound to have an impact on tupping, which for our Shropshires is nearly through. This year we put 45 to the tup in four different groups. We are trying a little experiment this year, using CIDRs and PMSG on a group of 20 ewes that have consistently only ever produced single lambs. Time will tell if this leads to an increase in their prolificacy.

The shed is currently full of Dorsets due to lamb from 1st November. They scanned at a very creditable 160% but, in common with

neighbouring flocks, we have since lost three ewes to acorn poisoning. This year we have a small number of Shropshire X NZ Romney lambs which have grown on noticeably better than the pure Romneys. We will be doing more of this in 2023.

The SSBA's 140th year is coming to a close but it isn't done yet! Some of our Scottish breeders were at the Scottish Smallholders Festival in Forfar on 22nd October and I know that some members are planning to exhibit fat stock at the English Winter Fair.

I hope that as many members as possible will support the EWF and our AGM at the Stafford County Show-ground on 19th November. As with last year, the SSBA will contribute £10/flock to your admission price for the Winter Fair.

By the time you read this the breed society's new membership renewal process will be in place. You will receive an invoice for your subscription, and once that is paid you will have re-joined. This will be followed by a request for flock data which will be easily answered if your flock is up-to-date on Grassroots. If you have already

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This year we're changing the SSBA's Membership Renewal process to make it much easier!

Membership Renewals are due **by 30th November 2022**

Watch out for your Renewal Documents that will arrive by post during November

You'll receive an invoice for any Renewal Fees due - **just pay the fees and that's it - you've renewed!**

Other Actions:

We're also asking you, **by mid-December**, to audit and update all your personal data and flock records on the Grassroots on-line system. Details of what to do will be included with your renewal documents. If you prefer, you can request a paper copy of the information to check. Members not on email will automatically be sent paper copies.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SSBA

**Saturday 19th Nov
in the YFC Pavilion at
the Stafford County
Show-ground
at 10am**

This is the same day as the English Winter Fair prime stock show, so why not enjoy an afternoon at the Winter Fair after attending the AGM in the morning? The breed society will refund £10/flock for members who attend (in order to claim, you need to show that you have purchased a ticket to the EWF)

Please support your breed society by attending the AGM

President's Autumn Update

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tupped, please complete "ewes to ram" (on Grassroots) for your entry in the Flock Book.

We continue to enrol good numbers of new members each year and we are determined to offer every support to them.

Your Council has concluded that the current arrangements for helping new members are not working as well as we would wish, and so we've decided to create a new officer. **The Membership Secretary**, will focus on enrolling and supporting new members – some of whom are new to sheep too – as they start their journey with Shropshires and particularly through their first breeding season. If you have time to spare, are good with people and think you have something to offer then please look out for the advert on page 4 and put your name forward.

There is one thing that all members can do to help the enrolment process. Whenever you sell Shropshires to a non-member please get their full name and contact details and put that information on the transfer form on Grassroots. The Registrations Clerk and the new Membership Secretary will take it from there

It may seem a little early but, with the next newsletter coming out in January, this is my chance to wish you a merry and peaceful Christmas, and a prosperous New Year!

Rob Kerby



OFFICIAL BREED SOCIETY SALE AT WORCESTER MARKET ON 8TH OCTOBER

A nice entry of Shropshire Sheep at Worcester met a slightly selective trade, perhaps mirroring the current climate that we find ourselves in. That being said, the best end of the entry sold well, with purchasers keen to add new bloodlines to their flocks.

Top of the day was a Shearling Ram from the Piddington Flock of Mrs S Farquhar (pictured on the right) The ram, sired by Roydon Rogan, found a new home at 420gns with Mr Gay, Tetbury, Gloucester.

Next behind at 300gns was an aged ram from Mrs R A Lee. The proven ram, this time sired by Piddington Seth, sold to Messrs Morris, Ditton Priors. Females topped at 200gns on three separate occasions. Firstly a ewe lamb from Mrs R A Lee, a yearling ewe from Mrs C



Randall and finally a ewe lamb from Mr & Mrs N J Durnford. **Sale Price Summary:** Rams 1/1 sold avg £315; Yearling Rams 3/4 sold avg £294; Ram Lambs 1/4 sold avg £189; Ewes 2/2 sold avg £157; Yearling Ewes 2/4 sold avg £199; Ewe Lambs 10/21 sold avg £179.

SHROPSHIRE RAM SEMEN EXPORTS

Two private Shropshire ram semen exports have taken place this year.

Sue Farquhar & Ellie Butcher supplied an order to New Zealand for semen from two rams, Hansnett Winstone (Reserve Champion at both the Royal Three Counties Show and the Royal Welsh Show in 2022), and Roydon Rogan, stock tup at the Piddington Flock for several seasons. This is the first Shropshire semen exported to NZ for a very long time.

Marion & Aubrey Webb and Pippa & Peter Geddes supplied semen from three rams to Robert & Jeanne Parker, based in Ontario, Canada. The Parkers requested semen from high genetic merit, performance recorded sires for their "heritage type" Shropshire flock, currently 49 ewes. Ushers Finley (see page 3) and Ushers HarryBob were selected from the Ushers Flock, and Alderton Hallmark was selected from the Alderton Flock. Finley is ranked in the top 10% of the breed for Maternal Index (measuring maternal traits such as prolificacy and rearing ability) and the top 25% of the breed for Terminal Sire Index (the ability to breed profitable slaughter lambs). HarryBob and Hallmark are ranked within in the top 5% of the breed for both Terminal Sire Index and Maternal Index.



SBIS REPORT 2022

NEW high genetic merit rams have come to the fore this season, as we complete the 16th year of the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme. Seven out of the top ten rams are debutant sires.

The top stock sires' list, comparing tups that have sired the 2022 lamb crop, has a new leader: Sansaw Duke, from the Sansaw Flock in north Shropshire, owned by James Thompson. Duke was sired by Hayne Oak Algy and he also has Alderton and Ushers bloodlines prominently in his pedigree. These three flocks are the longest standing members of the SBIS, being amongst the founder members that started performance recording in 2006/7.

Duke was purchased as a ram lamb by Peter and Pippa Geddes (Alderton) and used as a shearling ram, producing his first crop of lambs in January 2022. Duke's Terminal Sire index (a measure of his ability to produce profitable slaughter lambs) stands at 295, putting him in the top 1% of the breed. His lambs exhibit exceptionally high growth rates.

In second position is newcomer, Ushers Izar, by Ushers Gravity. Izar was purchased by Frazer Colley, a new member of the SBIS, for his Nobsquinton Flock, based near Evesham, Worcestershire. The ram is also ranked in the top 5% of the breed for Terminal Sire index and has the highest Maternal Index within the breed. His outstanding MI score of 297 is a measure of the ability to produce profitable flock replacements.

The third new name on the list is Alderton Major, by Alderton Maxwell. Lying in 3rd place with a TI score just 2 points below Izar, Major was used last season on Aberfield ewes on one of the RamCompare trial farms in Powys. The performance of the cross-bred lambs has boosted his own performance figures, which now have an accuracy of 90%. The ram has recently been purchased from RamCompare by Peter Greenow for his Hackford Flock, based in Herefordshire.

In joint 4th place we have Kingfisher Earl and Ushers Igor. Earl, bred by Steve and

Caroline Dewey, is a senior stock ram within the Ushers Flock. He featured in the top stock sires list last year at number 5, and has climbed higher this year with a slight increase in his estimated breeding values. Igor is a son of Earl and now resides in the Marlpit Flock of Stephen Perrins, based near Uttoxetter, Staffs.

Placed 6th is last year's leader, Ushers Hector - the first of two sons of Stonegrove Archie to make the list. Hector still ranks in the top 5% of the breed for TI and has the second highest

score for Maternal Index.

Lying in 7th position with a TI just one point lower than Hector's is Holloway George, who also makes it onto the list for the first time. Bred by Andy Heath, of Baldwins Gate, Staffs, George is a 2020-born son of Holloway Fred, with performance figures showing high growth and high muscle depth.

In 8th and 9th we have the remaining new rams - Ushers HarryBob and Alderton

Hercules. The former is a son of Stonegrove Archie, while Hercules is a son of Ushers Hector, and thus a grandson of Archie. Hercules was purchased by Sarah Thomas for the Redlands Flock in Devon. Finally in 10th place is Alderton Mitchell, full brother to Major and a ram that won in the show ring before being purchased first by Andy Heath and then by Rob and Alison Kerby (Cefn-Carnau Flock) in Monmouthshire.

Moving on briefly to the Top Ram Lambs - the two leaders, by Holloway George and Sansaw Duke, show that year-on-year progress is being made. Signet's in-breeding calculator is an invaluable tool that helps breeders draw up suitable mating plans, and bring in new bloodlines when required.

TOP STOCK SIRES 2022

Ranked on Terminal Sire Index
(Terminal Sire Index scores followed by
Maternal Index scores shown in brackets)

1. Sansaw Duke (295/190)
2. Ushers Izar (282/297)
3. Alderton Major (280/259)
- 4.= Kingfisher Earl (268/241)
- 4.= Ushers Igor (268/244)
6. Ushers Hector (267/292)
7. Holloway George (266/199)
8. Ushers HarryBob (263/289)
9. Alderton Hercules (255/262)
10. Alderton Mitchell (245/175)



TOP RAM LAMBS 2022

Ranked on Terminal Sire Index

1. Holloway TRT2200812 (312/201)
2. Alderton LU2201061 (311/244)
- 3.= Alderton LU2201040 (296/276)
- 3.= Ushers KX2201162 (296/294)
- 3.= Alderton LU2201045 (296/246)
6. Holloway TR2200834 (289/224)
7. Alderton LU2201080 (286/179)
- 8.= Ushers KX2201149 (277/269)
- 8.= Ushers KX2201144 (277/263)
10. Cefn Carnau ABB2200768 (277/197)



NEW HIGH GENETIC MERIT RAM FOR WALFORD FLOCK

Ushers Finley (top 10% of the breed for Maternal Index, top 25% for Terminal Sire Index) joined the Shropshire flock at Walford College earlier this year. He's pictured here with his breeder, Aubrey Webb, arriving at the college campus, near Baschurch.

Walford is home to North Shropshire College's land-based courses. The college farms 220-hectares of arable and pasture land, alongside its herd of 300 dairy cows and the flock of around 40 Shropshires. There are plans to expand the flock significantly. The flock has also joined the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme and students will now be able to learn at first hand about Signet Recording.



CELEBRATING 140 YEARS

At the beginning of the year, the President encouraged all SSBA members to celebrate the SSBA's 140th Anniversary by showing their Shropshires. Everyone who showed their sheep will be rewarded with these gorgeous rosettes produced for the Society by our Registrar Alison Schofield. You don't have to have been "in the ribbons" at the show, you just need to have taken your sheep into the ring. Well done to all the following for joining the "140th Club"!

Lyn Arrowsmith, Sunbeck Flock, Yorkshire
Charlotte Attwell, Bramble Flock, Somerset
Janice Blakiston, Lecha Flock, Pembrokeshire
Ellie Butcher, Hansnett Flock, Herefordshire
The Clay Family, Showle Flock, Herefordshire
The Coleman Family, Gobbindale Flock, Shropshire
Tom David, Dowror Valley Flock, Cheshire
The Dorrell Family, Stonegrove Flock, Wores
Sue Farquhar, Piddington Flock, Herefordshire
Beni Garri, Draco Flock, Ceredigion
Peter Greenow, Hackford Flock, Herefordshire
Jeanette Hares, Millenheath Flock, Shropshire
Peter Harris, Ellerdine Flock, Shropshire
Anne Harvey, Roydon Flock, Cheshire
Monique Hustinx, Silver Flock, Dorset
Rob Kerby, Cefn-Carnau Flock, Monmouthshire
Rosie Lee, Rosaline Flock, Cheshire
Meg Mackie, Balhall Flock, Angus
Janet Morris, Apiary Flock, Shropshire
Andrea Morris, Outrack Flock, Shropshire
Les Newman, Rode Flock, Norfolk
Laurence Power, Adelaide Flock, Derbyshire
Ellie Roberts, Bridgefield Flock, Cheshire
Steph Roscoe, Trefnanney Flock, Powys
Sophie Royle, Stone Circle Flock, Lancashire
Ellie Russell, Tushbrook Flock, Warwickshire
Alison Schofield, Hornpipe Flock, Cheshire
Tom Sellers, Sascott Flock, Powys
Luke Squire, Langdale Flock, Devon
The Elms School Flock, Worcestershire
Debbie Wardell, Ryedale Flock, North Yorkshire
Marion Webb, Ushers Flock, Leicestershire
Robert Webb, Clipston Flock, Northamptonshire

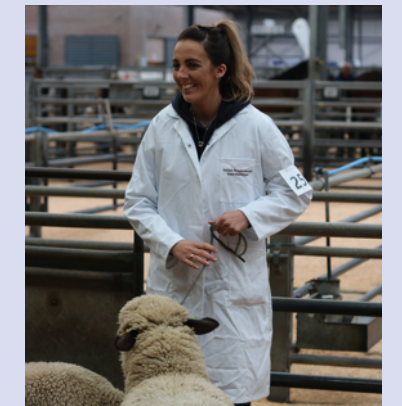


And don't worry if you have shown your sheep but are not on this list - you have until the end of November to contact the President (president@shropshire-sheep.co.uk) with details of when and where you showed with, if possible, a photograph.

SCOTTISH SMALLHOLDER FESTIVAL

Shropshires were on show for the first time at the Festival, held in Forfar on 22nd October.

New members Meg Mackie (Ballhall Flock) and Carol and Douglas Collie (Lamington Flock) showed lambs successfully, with Meg taking 2nd and 3rd and the Collies placed 4th. Our Registrations Clerk, Gail Beattie, entered the Sausage Making competition, coming 3rd with her lamb, rosemary and garlic sausages. Well done everyone - hopefully we will be able to do more to promote the breed in Scotland next year.



SSBA Membership Secretary



Are you a good communicator, well organised and knowledgeable about the Shropshire breed?

Do you have time available to help the breed society enrol new members and retain existing members?

Remuneration and expenses for this new job are to be confirmed. If you would like to know more, or if you would like to be considered for the role, please contact the President, Rob Kerby on 07831 221114, president@shropshire-sheep.co.uk

SHROPTALK

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