

# SHROPTALK



The Newsletter of the Shropshire Sheep Breeders' Association

Autumn 2013

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Breed Society's AGM will be held on Saturday 9th November at Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich

(just off junction 1 of the M5)

All members are welcome and there will be a free buffet lunch for everyone who attends

Please come along to support your breed society!

See page 2 for more details



## ROYAL SHROPSHIRE!

SHROPSHIRE ram Sidedowns Nimrod (pictured above) bred by John and Pauline Bowles, was secured on behalf of HRH The Prince of Wales from the SSBA's Western Show and Sale at Shrewsbury.

The ram goes to join a new flock of Shropshires that has been established at Duchy Home Farm on the Prince's Highgrove Estate. Here, the sheep will be used to graze amongst parkland trees and fruit orchards, and will also produce organic lamb alongside the farm's resident flock of Lleyns.

High health status Shropshire shearling ewes from four breeders have been purchased for this exciting new venture. These animals were supplied by Liz Bowles and Mike Bray, Hayne Oak Flock, Cullompton, Devon; Alan Oliver, Sprotbrough Flock, Doncaster, Yorkshire; Paul and Diana Redgate, Moorgreen Flock, Newthorpe, Nottinghamshire; and Peter and Jan Richards, Canalside Flock, Oswestry in Shropshire. The sheep were kindly collected and delivered by our Sales Officer, Claire Jakeman, who assisted David Wilson, manager of Duchy Home Farm, to select a well matched group. The Prince became aware of the unique "tree-friendly" nature of Shropshires at the RBST's 40th Anniversary Celebrations earlier this year, when our breed regained Traditional Breed status (see over-page for more pictures).

## STONEGROVE RAM AND SPROTBROUGH EWE LAMB ARE NATIONAL SHOW & SALE CHAMPIONS

National Show & Sale (West) at Shrewsbury on 27th July CHAMPION of our first National Show and Sale in 2013 was shearling ram, Stonegrove Archie, bred by Stonegrove Livestock of Shrawley, in Worcestershire. Archie went on to compete against the other sheep champions from the Longwool, Shortwool and Primitive show sections and was voted Interbreed Champion by the panel of judges. This is the first time a Shropshire has won the overall championship at this event, staged by Halls at their auction centre just north of Shrewsbury.

Show champion Archie is a son of the high genetic merit sire, Ushers Sunrise, purchased as a ram lamb by Richard and Dick Dorrell of Stonegrove Livestock at the SSBA's National Show and Sale (West) in 2011. Classes in the pre-sale Shropshire show were hotly contested this year, with many more sheep forward than in 2012. Judge Mike Hackling had the added complication of judging sheep in two rings and in the sheep lines for some classes, because MV Accredited, MV Qualifying and non-MV sheep were entered.

Class winners included the senior ram Westwood Crusader from the flock of R T Davies and Co, from Mable, Worcestershire; a ram lamb from the Brereton Flock of Sue and Mark Shimwell, Congleton, Cheshire; a breeding ewe from the same breeders, and a shearling ewe and ewe lamb from the Hayne Oak Flock of Liz Bowles and Mike Bray from Cullompton, Devon.

Having selected the shearling ram as breed champion, Mr Hackling chose the Hayne Oak ewe lamb as the reserve champion. This animal was bred by AI and is a daughter of the American Shropshire ram Groverman 5429, bred by Fred Groverman of Petaluma, California. Fred attended the SSBA's show and sale in 2011 and helped judge the Interbreed Sheep section. The reserve champion has high genetic merit, with a score of 184 for Terminal Sire Index that puts her within the top 10% of the breed for growth and carcass traits.



Above: Shrewsbury Champion Stonegrove Archie, pictured with his breeder, Richard Dorrell (centre), and judge Mike Hackling. The ram was shown by Marion Webb. Below right to left: Melton Champion Sprotbrough ewe lamb with breeder Alan Oliver, judge Les Newman and Mark Shimwell with the Reserve.



## Another record price set

In the sale following the Shropshire show, Stonegrove Archie was purchased for 650gns by Alan Oliver, owner of the Sprotbrough Flock, Doncaster. Archie was the highest priced shearling ram. The senior ram making the

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## ROYAL SHROPSHIRE ARRIVE AT THEIR NEW HOME



Above: David Wilson, Manager of Duchy Home Farm, watches the ewes unload. Below: Some of the new Duchy Flock getting to know their royal home.



### THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OUR AGM on 9th November will start at 10am, with complimentary tea and coffee available from 9.30am. The venue is Sandwell Park Farm, West Bromwich B71 4BG. Maps are available from the Secretary, if required. Sandwell is a restored working Victorian Farm with its own flock of Shropshires. It is well worth a look around after the AGM has finished. The formal part of the AGM will include reports from President, Secretary, Registrar and Treasurer. Other officers' reports will be available in written format, but will not be read out at the meeting.

### ONLINE SHEEP REGISTRATION

Our Registrar, Alison Schofield, has written a computer program that will enable members to register their sheep online. The breed society hopes to introduce this in the near future to run alongside paper registrations. Alison will demonstrate the online system at the AGM

### RAFFLE PRIZES NEEDED PLEASE

A raffle will be held at the AGM to raise money for our breed stand displays and other marketing materials. Please bring a prize if you are able to attend.

### NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS REQUIRED

Four members of the Council complete their terms of office at the AGM, so breed society members are needed to fill these positions. You do not have to be a sheep expert to become a Council Member - the SSBA has need of people with all sorts of skills. We are still looking for a new Publicity Officer. Please get in touch with our Secretary Simon Mackay (01744 811124) or President Liz Bowles (01884 32983) if interested in joining Council or helping with the SSBA's publicity.

## SHOW AND SALE REPORTS *continued*

best price was Sidedowns Nimrod at 480gns. The highest price paid for a breeding ewe was 180gns achieved by two animals - Lot 41 from the Brereton Flock, sired by Brereton Eager Beaver, and Lot 104 from the Canalside Flock of Peter Richards, Oswestry, sired by homebred tup, Canalside Anthony.

Topping the shearling ewe sales was lot 59 from J and S Ballard by Piddington Kendrick, sold for 290gns.

A Millenheath ewe lamb, sired by Alderton Special Agent, that was second in the show class earlier in the day sold for 440gns to M A Brooksbank of Wem, Shropshire. The reserve champion ewe lamb sold to Adrian Morgan, Castle Bytham, Lincolnshire for 410gns.

A new breed record price for a ram lamb was also achieved - 820gns was paid for the ram lamb (335DB13) that won his class in the show. From the Brereton Flock of Sue and Mark Shimwell, this lamb was sired by Morley Macho. He was purchased by Sue Farquhar, Canon Frome, near Ledbury in Herefordshire (Piddington Flock).



### SHREWSBURY SHOW RESULTS

#### Adult Ram

1. R T Davies & Co
2. S Farquhar
3. J H & P A Bowles

#### Shearling Ram

1. Stonegrove Livestock
2. E Bowles & M Bray
3. R T Davies & Co

#### Ram Lamb

1. M&S Shimwell
2. J H & P A Bowles
3. E Bowles & M Bray

#### Adult Ewe

1. M & S Shimwell
2. S Farquhar
3. J H & P A Bowles

#### Shearling Ewe

1. E Bowles & M Bray
2. M & S Shimwell
3. A Oliver

#### Ewe Lamb

1. E Bowles & M Bray
2. J Hares
3. J Hares

#### Breed Champion & Interbreed Champion

Stonegrove Livestock's Shearling Ram  
Stonegrove Archie XP0812

#### Reserve & Best opposite sex to Champion:

E Bowles and M Bray's Ewe Lamb  
Hayne Oak LX13462

**Sale Prices:** Senior Rams: Top 480gns, Av £493; Shearling Rams: Top 650gns, Av £357; Ram Lambs: Top 820gns, Av £412; Adult Ewes: Top 180gns, Av £150; Shearling Ewes: Top 290gns, Av £190, Ewe Lambs: Top 440gns, Av £236.

### National Show and Sale (East), Melton Mowbray on 13th and 14th September

**SHROPSHIRE numbers had increased from the previous year at the 2013 "East" Show and Sale in Leicestershire.** The late replacement judge, Les Newman, chose the ewe lamb from Alan Oliver's Sprotbrough Flock as Champion with the second placed ewe lamb from Mark and Sue Shimwell's Brereton Flock as Reserve. Other first prize winners were the shearling ram from Robert

*Pictured at Shrewsbury: (Top) Liz Bowles with a ewe lamb that was Reserve Champion, and judge Mike Hackling. (Middle): Sue and Mark Shimwell, winners of the Halls Trophy for the highest priced animal from a small flock sold through the auction ring. (Bottom): Jeanette Hares, winner of the Southworth Trophy for the best prepared pen of two or more sheep, with the judge for this award, Barry Hodson.*

Webb's Clipston Flock, a ram lamb from Mark and Sue Shimwell and a shearling ewe from Marion and Aubrey Webb's Ushers Flock.

At Saturday's sale, there was interest for females with 25 of the 27 sheep put forward being sold, whereas only one of the eight males on offer found a new owner. For members lambing in December and January, this sale is too late in the season.

The show champion, by Alderton Bonzo, did not meet her reserve, while the reserve champion, by Brereton Thomas, sold for 200 gns to new member Paul Day, who also took home the winning shearling ewe for the same price.

A dispersal of ewes from the Haunchwood Flock of J & JN Brindley saw all ewes cleared. The winning ram lamb from Mark and Sue Shimwell was the only male sold for the top price achieved by Shropshires at this sale. He was sold for 210gns, but unfortunately there was little interest in the other males.

## MELTON MOWBRAY SHOW RESULTS

### Shearling Ram

1. Robert Webb
2. Alan Oliver
3. Mark Carus

### Ram Lamb

1. Mark and Sue Shimwell
2. Aubrey and Marion Webb

### Shearling Ewe

1. Aubrey and Marion Webb
2. Mark Carus
3. Mark Carus

### Ewe Lamb

1. Alan Oliver
2. Mark and Sue Shimwell
3. Mark and Sue Shimwell

**Champion:** Alan Oliver's ewe lamb

**Reserve:** Mark and Sue Shimwell's ewe lamb

**Sale Prices:** Shearling Rams: (none sold);

Ram Lambs: Top 210gns (only one sold);

Older Ewes: Top 145gns, Av £91; Shearling

Ewes: Top 200gns, Average £171; Ewe

Lambs: Top 200gns Average £135.

## THE NEXT GENERATION'S LOOKING GOOD

Pictured below at the Newport Show in July are Luke Pierson (centre) with Chloe and Peter Wilkinson (whose mother Joanne owns the Ashmagna Flock of Shropshires). They were showing lambs from the Millenheath Flock of Jeanette and Robert Hares in the Young Handlers Classes.



## FIRST SHOW - FIRST WIN!



**PAUL and Wendy Crocker from the Isle of Man had a very successful outing in August, when they exhibited some of their sheep for the first time ever.**

Their shearling ram, Alderton Ashley, known as "Alders" (pictured left with Paul), took the red rosette in the Any Other Native Breed ram class at the Royal Manx Show.

Alders then did even better, winning Reserve Champion in the Close Wool Sheep section. In this, the Shropshire ram was competing against breeds such as Suffolk, Texel, and Charollais.

The Crockers bought their Shropshires from SSBA members last Autumn (see *ShropTalk* Winter 2012). They are the first farmers to keep our breed on the Isle of Man and the purchase was treated as an "export" for livestock movement purposes.

Barry Hodson and Simon Mackay went across to the IOM at their own expense to help Paul and Wendy prepare the sheep for the show. Paul commented afterwards: "A big thank you to Barry and Simon. They really helped make the day and ensure we have the hunger to do it all again!"

## EBAY SALE RAISES NEARLY £200

THE two framed prints and the antique agricultural certificate that were auctioned on Ebay (see the summer *ShropTalk*) raised a total of £197.63, after costs and post and packing charges were deducted. All three items were donated by Emma Stewart, President of the SSBA in 2000 and 2001. The breed society is very grateful to Emma for her continued support.

At Emma's request, £80 from the sale proceeds will be sent to Care International UK, which offers micro-loans to overseas entrepreneurs in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ecuador and the Philippines, helping them to expand their small business (see [www.lendwithcare.org](http://www.lendwithcare.org)). The remainder of the proceeds will go to our breed society.

## MARILYN WINS HISTORIC PRINT

MARILYN Mangione from Victoria in Australia has won the prize draw for all who completed the online Members Survey earlier this year. She will receive a copy of Chris Everall's oil painting showing some of the early breeders of Shropshire sheep. Framed and unframed copies of the painting will soon be added to the breed society's range of merchandise. These will be on display at the AGM, with a few also available to purchase.

The breed society would like to thank all members who completed the survey. A summary of the results will be included in the Winter edition of *ShropTalk*.

## THE SSBA KEEPS ON GROWING

AS of September 2013, the SSBA has 206 members. This includes 29 new flocks formed in 2013. The Society also has overseas members in the following countries: Australia, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the USA. In the past 12 months, 1,200 Shropshire females have been registered, which is a new record for the breed society.

## PEDIGREE SHEEP EXPORTS 2013

OUR export sales team of Sue Farquhar and Claire Jakeman has been very busy this year: Several society-led exports have been organised, and by the end of October sheep will have been sent to France, the Isle of Man, Ireland and Germany. In total 118 females and 5 males have been supplied via Society-led exports.

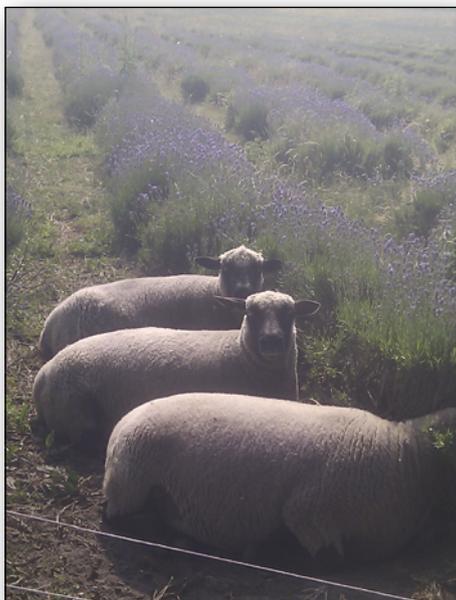
Two new flocks have been started in Brittany in France to graze in orchards. The owners, Thierry Le Gal and Marc L'Hermitte, have joined our society as full members. That means they will be able to register their sheep with us in the future and keep them pedigree.

A private export order has also been sent to Germany and Luxembourg, supplied by five breeders, and a further consignment has gone to the Channel Island of Guernsey supplied by Liz Bowles. Here the sheep have been purchased by the owners of Rocquette Cider and are being used to graze in their organic cider orchards

## SHROPTALK

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Contributions are always welcome!

# LATEST SHROPSHIRE BREED IMPROVEMENT SCHEME RESULTS



## SHROPSHIRE "LADIES IN LAVENDER"

SSBA member Barry Hodson has been involved in an interesting trial to see if Shropshire sheep can be used to graze the herbage between lavender bushes on a farm at Rainford, near St Helens.

A few sheep from Barry's Southworth Flock were allowed to roam in a five-acre field of lavender from mid spring until mid July. The perimeter of the land was secured with an electric fence and the sheep were provided with water but no feed, other than what they could get by grazing.

According to the farmer, Steve, the sheep did a good job and did not eat or damage the lavender, although he could have done with more sheep in the field because he still needed to do a bit of strimming here and there to keep it tidy. The sheep were particularly good at removing grass from under the lavender bushes, which was otherwise difficult to get rid of.

The farm grows chamomile as well as lavender, and flowers from both are distilled and bottled on-site and used to create essential oils. Barry plans to continue with the grazing trial over the coming year and the sheep have already been invited back, which is a very positive sign!

**FOUR** new Shropshire flocks have joined the breed improvement scheme this season and there are now 19 breeders recording the performance of their stock with Signet. Full evaluations for these performance recorded animals are available online.

Data from 1,011 lambs and 647 ewes was collected this year. The Shropshire breed average scores for all recorded traits have increased substantially over the past 12 months. The breed average for the First Index (Carcass Plus Maternal Traits) has risen from 103 in 2012 to a score of 121. The average score for the Terminal Sire Index has also gone up from 104 to 120.

This season, nine different Signet-Recorded Flocks have bred animals that were ranked in the top 5% of the breed for the Carcass Plus Index - that is, they have bred lambs with an index score of 195 or above. This is a tremendous achievement. One of these flocks, Timberline, owned by Paul Stead and Val Tew, is a new member of the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme (SBIS).

## How To Access The Reports

The latest Signet evaluations can be viewed and downloaded from the Signet Farm Business Consultancy's website: [www.signetfbc.co.uk](http://www.signetfbc.co.uk). To find them on the site, click the "Sheepbreeder" button on the website's homepage, then select "Latest Reports" and finally "Shropshire" from the list of sheep breeds. These are the full and final Signet evaluations for our breed in 2013.

Three separate reports are available:

1. **Top Ram Lambs** born after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012, ranked on the Carcass Plus index;
2. **Top Stock Sires**, ranked on Carcass Plus Index and based on all rams used to sire progeny in recorded flocks this year; and
3. **"High Five" Ram Lambs** - the five highest scoring male lambs bred by each flock.

You can also download the 2013 Breed Benchmark Table, which gives the breed average figures and threshold scores for the top and bottom 1%, 5%, 10% and 25% for each of the recorded performance traits.

## Top Stock Sires

Heading the table of Top Stock Sires is Ushers Victor, owned by James Thompson of Sansaw Farms, near Hadnall in Shropshire. Victor, sired by Ushers Tiger, has the highest Carcass Plus index score of 302 and the highest Terminal Sire Index of 303.

## Top Stock Sires 2013 (Carcass Plus Index/Terminal Sire Index)

1. Ushers Victor (302/303)
2. Ushers Vulcan (270/242)
3. Sansaw Valiant (242/249)
4. Hilltop Hamish (235/261)
5. Shebdon Albert(224/212)
6. Ushers Tiger (221/225)
7. Ushers Winston (215/211)
8. Ushers Upton (203/197)
9. Hayne Oak Nelson (199/243)
10. Westwood Challenger (197/187)

Ushers rams figure prominently in the table, taking five of the top ten positions. Furthermore, Sansaw Valiant (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>) and Shebdon Albert (5<sup>th</sup>) were both sired by rams from the Ushers flock of Marion and Aubrey Webb, based near Lutterworth in Leicestershire.

In 4<sup>th</sup> place and with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Terminal Sire Index score is Hilltop Hamish from Anne Tordoff's flock in the Scottish borders. He was sired by Alderton Jenson. Hayne Oak Nelson, in 9<sup>th</sup> position, is by the American ram Groverman 5429, used over two seasons as an AI sire in the Hayne Oak and Sidedowns Flocks. The Groverman ram is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> on the list of top stock sires in his own right. He has a Terminal Sire Index score of 242, with outstanding EBVs for growth rate. In 10<sup>th</sup> place is Westwood Challenger bred by Clive Davies, Mable, Worcestershire. This ram was sired by Trenton Woodman and purchased by the Webbs at the National Show and Sale in 2012. Morley Malik, the first Shropshire ram to join the EBLEX ram linkage programme (*ShropTalk* autumn 2011), has increased his index scores to 184/159. Malik, by Roydon Rufus, was used this season via AI in Iain MacKirdy's Pot House Flock (another new member of SBIS).

## Top Ram Lamb

The highest indexing ram lamb of 2013 is Ushers Alexander by Westwood Challenger. He has a Carcass Plus Index of 290 and a Terminal Sire Index of 261. He was successful in the ring at all three shows he went to this season: 1<sup>st</sup> in the ram lamb class at Denbigh and Flint Show; 2<sup>nd</sup> at Burwarton Show; and 1<sup>st</sup> at East of England Show.

The SBIS reports are based data submitted by 19 flocks: Sidedowns, Piddington, Hornpipe, Morley, Ushers, Alderton, Hayne Oak, Southworth, Shebdon, Hilltop, Pot House, Showle, Madeley, Sansaw, Swallows, Millenheath, Westwood, Broad Oak and Timberline. Paper copies summarizing these reports will no longer be circulated to all SSBA members, but if you are unable to access the reports online and would like a copy, please contact the SBIS Coordinator, Pippa Geddes ([pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk](mailto:pippa@aldertonfarm.co.uk)).



*Ushers Tiger, one of the Top Stock Sires on the Shropshire Breed Improvement Scheme, pictured with a group of ewes. He is also the sire of Ushers Victor, who tops this year's rankings.*