



# *Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter*

Registered Charity No. 1013326  
June 2013

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Mr. S. Parkes, Mrs. M. Pursch, Mrs. S. Robinson, and Ms E. Turner

## **Editor**

Mr. J. Flanders

This Newsletter is independently edited and readers should be aware that the views expressed within its pages do not necessarily reflect the views held by Council.



*Knitters in action at "The Woolly Event"*

## **EDITORIAL**

**John Flanders**

This edition of the Newsletter has a number of articles relating to different aspects of sheep keeping, including vaccines and the new members of the Society's judging panel.

Members are also reminded that I would really like to receive articles on using Cotswolds for crossing so that the next Newsletter can concentrate upon this aspect of the breed. Although the closing date for the October edition is mid-September, it would be helpful if I could have any articles earlier.

Finally, new members are reminded that the Flock Competition is an opportunity to get some free advice from two very experienced judges namely Robert Boodle who has had a lifetime working with Cotswold sheep, and Kate Kay who has been very successful in the show ring.

## **THE VIEW FROM HERE**

**West Wales**

**John Flanders**

I am sure that some members must think that I am obsessed by the weather, but, up to a couple of weeks ago, it really has been appalling. Thankfully, in this part of Wales, we did not suffer the heavy snow, which occurred further North where some members experienced five feet snow drifts. Instead, just as we had started lambing, we had a cold, penetrating East wind that cut through the lambing shed with the precision of a surgeon's scalpel. Locally, there were cases of lambs being born outside and freezing before the umbilical cord had broken. As we lamb indoors we were spared that misfortune; in fact the reverse happened, and lambing went very well with, to date, no lambs dying. I keep expecting a problem, and I am sure something will happen and I shall regret writing this.

Against this euphoric background lambing was followed by a prolonged cold spell, albeit not as bad as earlier, with the grass having difficulty to get out of bed and do something useful like growing and letting the sheep eat it - most inconsiderate! The impact of this has been for concentrates and haylage to be in short supply, in some cases big bales of the latter have cost upwards of £30. Thankfully we had sufficient and we even managed to sell a few bales, whether this will be enough to pay for the

additional concentrate is a mute point. However, the weather has now improved and the grass is growing nicely – as the rear end of the sheep testifies!!!

## **HEALTH PLANNING**

**John Flanders**

This brief article is based upon my experiences when applying for Farm Assured Welsh Lamb status and one of the requirements was, and still is, to have a Health Plan in place; up to that point I was quite content to treat the stock as I had done during the previous fifteen years. However, the need to have it prepared by my local vet and to have it written down concentrated the mind. At that time the preparation of a Health Plan was subsidised.

The areas looked at were:

- 1 Disease risk prevention in terms of an assessment of risk to the health of stock and the biosecurity of incoming or outgoing stock.
- 2 Livestock management, which involved a monthly list of routine procedures e.g. worming etc.
- 3 The sheep enterprise, which involved a performance analysis (scanning percentage, lambing percentage, losses, percentage of singlers, doublers and triplets etc.); nutrition status (feed quality, condition score, trace elements/minerals); sheep housing and handling facilities.
- 4 Diseases/problems on farm identified by the vet and myself.
- 5 Priorities, solutions and targets.

All these points were addressed and a couple of years later the Health Plan was reviewed by another vet from the same practice who noted that the suggestions made in the initial assessment had been implemented and that quality and performance of the flock had improved significantly.

Irrespective of whether one wants the flock to be Farm Assured, I think there are considerable benefits in having a Health Plan prepared by a vet - particularly as they have the professional expertise needed, and are aware of what is happening in the area which could impact upon your flock.

## **COTSWOLD TOURISM AWARDS**

**John Flanders**

Alison Garne drew to my attention the logo for the 2013 Cotswold Tourism Awards which rightfully now features a trendy Cotswold sheep instead of the previous Blue Face Leicester.



Will the statue in the Woolmarket shopping complex, Cirencester be changed from a Dorset Horn to a Cotswold?

## **NEW VACCINES**

**John Flanders**

### **Foot and Mouth**

Scientists have announced that the first synthetic vaccine for foot and mouth disease is undergoing trials, and could be used as an alternative to culling livestock in future. However, it is likely to be 6 – 8 years before it is available.

Whilst vaccines have previously been available they rely upon using a live vaccine to enable the animal to develop immunity. The problem with a live vaccine is that there is a danger of it being released into the wild – I am sure we all remember 2007. Also, it is difficult to tell from blood tests which animals have been infected and

which have been vaccinated against the disease.

The new synthetic vaccine mimics an “empty shell” of the virus to trigger an immune response without posing any risk of release. The vaccine would cause the animals to develop different anti-bodies, which only target the virus’s protein shell, making it easy to tell which animal has been infected.

### **Schmallenberg**

A vaccine to prevent the impact of Schmallenberg virus (SBV) will be available for use before this year’s breeding season commences in earnest. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate have issued the licence and it is understood that only one injection is necessary. The manufacturing company MSD Animal Health have said that no side effects have been reported and studies are currently underway to assess how long the immunity will last.

Members should seek the advice of their vet before embarking upon a vaccination programme for SBV.

## **RBST YOUNG HANDLERS**

**Richard Broad – RBST**

One of the major new initiatives the RBST has taken over the last two years is the Young Shepherd Competition. Peter Titley, the RBST President has been involved with young handler classes at the many shows he commentates at, and it was only natural that he would move onto organizing a national final for the youngster to compete at. The Competition is in its third year now, with the grand final moving to the Royal Berkshire Show (aka Newbury Show) this year after the sad demise of the Hatfield Show.

The two age classes of 8 to 12, and 13 to 16 years old, have qualifying heats at shows all over the UK. Right from Royal Cornwall in the South West, The Spring Festival at Bulth Wells, to the Great Yorkshire, Scottish Smallholder Show and the East Of England Autumn Exhibition. The RBST and other groups involved in rare breeds feel that encouraging the youngster to have sheep and show them can only be good for the them and rare breeds.

At one of the qualifying shows I saw, the judge had put a Cotswold ram in the corner of the pen, and asked the young shepherds to take off its halter and put it back on, as well as asking each competitor what breed the sheep was. The judge said afterwards that the sheep was too quiet and so proved too easy to put its halter back on. As for

guessing the breed, that went well until, in the middle of the competition, the commentator thanked the sheep owner for allowing his Cotswold to be used in the class! I think this made it a bit easier for the rest of the young handlers!

## **COTSWOLD SHOW AT CIRENCESTER**

**Kate Kay**

Once again we have been invited by the Earl and Countess of Bathurst to bring our Cotswold sheep to the Show on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July. Thousands of local people come to the Show, and so this is our chance to introduce Cotswold sheep to the public.

This has become an important part of our showing calendar, and an entry form is available from our Secretary, Sam Furlong, or downloadable from the website, or via e-mail from me, Kate Kay, at [kateberry1@live.co.uk](mailto:kateberry1@live.co.uk)

We always encourage a friendly and informal atmosphere at this Show, and to encourage members of the Society who have not shown successfully before to 'have a go'. We should very much welcome you, so do take this opportunity.

See you there!

## **THE WOOLLY EVENT CHALLENGE**

**Angela Reid**

The Woolly Event Challenge took place on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June at Villars Farm, Meysey Hampton, in Alison Garne's wonderfully refurbished barn. There was an early start for the three teams taking part in the challenge. Each team was made up of six people, all of whom could spin or knit as they wished. Unlike the 'Back to Back Challenge' of a few years ago, when they had to work with unwashed fleece, this time the teams would be using washed fleece, but it was all from the same Cotswold sheep. The winning team would be the first to spin, knit and sew up a complete child's jumper using an identical pattern.

The day began as The Windrush Spinners, The Roves Farm Spinners, and the Oxford Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, took their seats behind their spinning wheels. At nine o'clock precisely they were off and the barn was silent except for the whir of the spinning wheels. There was just one official half hour break for lunch and by half past one it was apparent that tension was rising (in every sense of the

word!) and that the teams were nearing the end of the challenge. The first team to finish was the Oxford Guild when they handed the assessor their completed jumper at 14.04, which meant the entire process had taken them just 4hrs 34mins. Roves Farm were next to finish at 14.21 giving them a time of 4hrs 53mins. Last, but by no means least, the Windrush Spinners completed their task at 14.44, which gave them a time of 5hrs 14mins.

All the teams seemed to enjoy their day, particularly the victorious Oxford Guild who had organised their team so skilfully – they were very deserving winners. Each of the winning team was presented with a beautiful hand painted mug by Caroline Hill, generously donated by Lyn Banagan. All other competitors were given a wonderful ‘*Keep Calm, Carry on Knitting*’ mug, very kindly donated by Deb Richardson of Three Sheep Wools, Cirencester, and by Margaret Pursch.

Meanwhile the farmyard was home to a wonderful variety of classic cars, courtesy of the Fairford Classic Car Club. There was plenty going on all day from hurdle making to basket weaving, from bee skip making to wool dyeing and sheep shearing. There were also plenty of craft stalls selling everything from cushions and bags, to olive oil and truffles. The Gloucestershire Archives also had a stall, which proved very popular, introducing some people for the first time to a few of the fascinating documents they hold. Hendra Veau Cotswolds had come all the way from Wales to support the day, with their range of Cotswold woollen goods. The Society’s 2013 Grand Raffle also got off to a great start as Alison Garne took charge of selling book after book of tickets.



*The winning team with the jumper*

Should anyone feel a pang of hunger then a visit to Lynne Parkes’ refreshment tent was a must. There was a non-stop barbecue on the go, along with an apparently

endless supply of delicious cakes. For those needing a bit of additional fortification, there was always the wonderful Pimms stall.

It was just a shame that the cold grey start to the day did not encourage people to come along in great numbers, but there was a steady flow, and it was a day enjoyed by all who attended.

Our thanks must, of course, go to Margaret Pursch who worked so incredibly hard to make the event such a success, and to Alison Garne for allowing us to use Villars Farm. But I must mention those members of the Society who put up the refreshment marquee and the Society stand (not an easy job!) on Friday, and also all those who manned them, and generally helped out on the day – to you all, thank you!

## **CROSSING COTSWOLD SHEEP**

**John Flanders**

As mentioned in the last edition of the Newsletter it is intended that, in the Autumn edition of the Newsletter, it is planned to run a number of articles by members on their experiences of crossing Cotswold sheep. In fact one member has already contacted me and I look forward to receiving his article and assessment.

If anyone would like to contribute please free to do so. Ideally articles should be about 500 words in length and provide an indication of whether the cross was successful e.g. did the lambs finish earlier or was the wool better. Any contribution whether handwritten or sent by e-mail would be welcome.

## **THE JUDGING PANEL**

**Angela Reid**

Having lost one of our judges when Thomas Jackson moved to Scotland, Council decided the time had come to include some new blood on the Judges' Panel, adding to the excellent and experienced judges we have already. We have sought out four well respected sheep judges from outside the Society, and invited them to join our panel this year. We believe that having some fresh eyes on our sheep is a positive step. It also raises the profile of the Cotswold, making us more 'main stream' and a breed worth talking about!

We were aware that while our new judges have considerable experience of judging sheep, they needed to be certain of the finer points of the Cotswold. In April, Pat Quinn very kindly hosted a Judges' Seminar at Lower Harford Farm. The session was led by Robert Boodle, and a selection of sheep were carefully inspected, and the various breed points fully discussed.

**John Brigg** began showing sheep in 1956 when he was a pupil of Mr Stilgoe, going to the Royal Show with his shepherd, and the renowned Oxford Down sheep from Adderbury. He went on to farm on his own account breeding Longhorn cattle, Oxford Down, and Wiltshire Horn sheep. Over the years John has judged Oxford Down sheep at all the major shows as well as 'Other Breeds,' 'Rare Breeds' and 'Any Other Breeds'. He has also judged Inter Breed Championship classes at the Royal and Royal Welsh shows, as well as many other shows. He has been a key member of the Longhorn Cattle Society, and the Oxford Down Sheep Breeders Association as well as finding time to serve on the Council of the National Sheep Association for more than thirty years. John will be judging for us next year.

**Tim Ward** lives in Shropshire where he has a smallholding. He breeds Dorset Down and Kerry Hill sheep and works for Shropshire County Council. Tim has extensive experience of judging sheep. He is on the judging panels for the Kerry Hill Flock Book Society, The Dorset Down Sheep Breeders Association, the Hebridean Sheep Society and the RBST. He judges six or seven shows each year, both breed specific and mixed classes, including longwools, as well as exhibiting his own sheep. He has also in the past judged in Ireland and in Holland. Tim will be judging at Monmouthshire Show this year.

**Jon King** has worked with sheep for the last 28 years, contract shepherding, shearing, and mobile dipping. He studied at Hartpury College and returned later as a livestock instructor. Jon has spent time in New Zealand learning about sheep and grassland. He returned from New Zealand to take up a job at The Cotswold Farm Park where he remained for 8 years. While there he gained considerable knowledge of over 20 breeds of sheep, including the Cotswold for which he has 'a great fondness for her ability to rear lambs and produce such a wonderful fleece on some open rough ground.' He now keeps Romneys, Lleyns, Texels and various crosses of the above! He has considerable experience of judging throughout the country, and has judged many rare breed classes. Jon is looking forward to his first Cotswold classes at Berkeley Show this year!

**Edward Albutt** has an extensive knowledge of sheep and runs a large commercial flock. He has judged Cotswold classes before, at Andoversford Show. He is a

widely respected judge, and was the Interbreed judge at the Moreton-in-Marsh Show last year. We hope Edward will be judging Cotswold classes next year.

## OLD PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Members are reminded that old printer cartridges can be recycled and in return valuable funds flow back to the Society. Lynne Parkes is co-ordinating this and if members have disused cartridges please send them to Lynne.

## COUNCIL CORNER

**Shows and Showing:** The show season is here – do come along and support the Society - we would really like to see you. If you haven't shown your sheep before, then maybe consider doing so. Showing is not only a great way to get to know other members, it also enables you to see how your sheep shape up against the very best. The Cotswold Show would be the perfect place to start!

**The Cotswold Show: Please note - the closing date for entries is now 28<sup>th</sup> June.**

We would urge members to consider showing a fleece at the show - it is a great opportunity to 'have a go!' This year there will be a rosette and a prize for the highest placed junior member. There will also be a rosette for the highest placed novice. Members are welcome to bring fleeces to display at the show; however only two fleeces per member can be put forward for judging.

**Cirencester Show and Sale:** Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>/Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. The show takes place on the Friday evening at Cirencester Market, while the sale is on Saturday morning. It has now become a tradition to have a barbeque on the Friday evening following the show – you are very welcome to join us for what has become a relaxed social evening. So do bring a bottle, and maybe a sausage or two, and come along.

**Flock Book:** Council have made a small change under 'Undesirable Characteristics – Undergrown Animals'. This now reads as 'ram lambs should be at least 45kg (100lb) and ewe lambs at least 36kg (80lb) **by six months of age**' rather than '**by September in their first year**' as previously. This is simply to take into account the fact that members lamb at different times.

**Email Addresses:** Council would like to include e-mail addresses in the Flock Book next year - so please can you make sure we have your current address. **Please let us know if you do NOT want your email address added to future Flock Books.**

**Recipes:** We would like to include a 'Recipes' page on our website – please send us your favourite mutton and lamb recipes, and if you have a photo of the resulting dish – do send us that too!

**\*Photo Competition:** We are going to run a Photo Competition at this year's AGM - the winning photo will be our 2013 Christmas card. So please bring along any photos that you have taken of your Cotswold sheep in snow. The Competition will be judged at the AGM.

**\*Photo Archive:** We are often being asked for good photos of Cotswolds for use in articles or promotional material, etc. We would like to build up an archive of photos we can send out on request. If you have any photos you would be happy for us to use, forward them to the Secretary as a 'high quality JPEG'.

**Trademarks:** Use them or lose them!! The Society has both Wool and Meat Trademarks and it will assist in raising the profile of our Cotswold sheep, and help to safeguard our position in the market place, if as many members as possible use them. Contact Neil Hatch (Woody) for more details – Tel: 01386 593663. It is also important to be vigilant when shopping. If you see lamb packaged as Cotswold Lamb, (rather than 'Lamb from the Cotswolds') then please let us know, and if you buy it, then please let us have the outer packaging/labels – or you could send/email us a photo, and tell us when and where it was taken!

**Andoversford Show:** Never say never!!! It was previously believed that Andoversford Show had been cancelled permanently. We understand now however, that it will take place, although on a smaller scale this year, and that **next year** there should again be an opportunity for us to return to the show. We will keep you posted!

**Flock Competition:** Entries for this year's Flock Competition are still more than welcome. If you haven't already entered, do consider doing so - it really is a perfect opportunity to show off your flock and talk 'sheep' to Robert Boodle and Kate Kay, both experts on Cotswolds!!!

**Downloadable Forms:** The cost of postage and printing continue to escalate. Council are very keen to minimise these costs so that our finances can be directed more usefully. One way of doing this is to reduce the number of inserted forms included with the newsletters. **In future all forms will be available for download from the website.** If you wish to continue to receive your forms through the post as before, please let the Secretary know.

**Fleeces at the AGM:** The AGM notice is included with this newsletter. There is one addition to the timetable because we would very much like to encourage members to enter fleeces into shows. After the Flock Walk, Davina Stanhope is kindly going to demonstrate how to select, and prepare, a fleece for a show. There will be opportunities for 'hands on practice'!

**Grand Raffle:** We launched our 2013 'Grand Raffle' at the Woolly Event at Meysey Hampton, and tickets will be on sale throughout the summer at all our shows. There will be a book of tickets included with this newsletter. If you would like further books to sell to your friends and family, please contact the Secretary. 1<sup>st</sup> prize is 2

places on any mid week cookery course, kindly donated by *Thyme at Southrop Manor*. 2<sup>nd</sup> prize is a night in a luxury Shepherd's Hut, while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> prizes are some wonderful woollen items donated by *Cotswold Woollen Weavers*, and *Hendra Vean Cotswolds*. There are many other prizes including a dozen 50gm balls of dyed Cotswold wool donated by *The Natural Fibre Company*, a lambskin rug, a knitting bag, a print of Cotswold sheep, a 'freezer ready' lamb, Argos vouchers, and hampers.

**Help always wanted:** The summer is the Society's busiest time. We always welcome your support at shows and other events. If you can lend a hand on the stand, help set things up, bring along a cake, or just come and see us, it would be much appreciated. It is fun, and extremely satisfying, being involved with the Society's activities and thus helping to preserve our wonderful sheep.

**Future Events:** Don't forget two very important Society dates for your diary. Firstly our National Show of Cotswold Sheep, and Grand Raffle draw, at the Moreton-in-Marsh Show on 7<sup>th</sup> September, and secondly the Winter Social at the Westwood Centre, Northleach on 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

\* By offering a photo to the Society, you are granting the Society the right to use it as it sees fit.