



Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter

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*Lynne and Steve Parkes with the breeds of Gloucestershire
taken outside Gloucester Cathedral*

EDITORIAL

John Flanders

Following the departure of John and Sherry Webb to Devon it was urgently necessary to appoint a replacement Secretary and Louise Millard has accepted the position; while she does not have sheep she has an interest in wool and is keen to promote the breed. As well as a having a new Secretary, Marie Louise French has kindly offered to become the new Editor of the Newsletter. Both ladies have supplied brief resumes of themselves.

Also included is a fascinating article by Kate Elliott in which she compares different breeds of sheep and interestingly the bleat of our Cotswolds is different to that of our Teeswaters; also the Teeswaters are far more inquisitive and people friendly than the Cotswolds even though we have had the Cotswolds for nearly 25 years.

We are indebted to John Hemmingway of Shropshire Farm Vets for kindly penning an article on the value of regular faecal egg counts. It is a while since we had one carried out and its value is something that cannot be underestimated. Whilst mentioning animal health, new members may find it helpful to liaise with their vet and put in place a Health Plan; if nothing else it is a useful reminder of what to do and when.

Finally, I am signing off, for the second time as Editor, and I am sure that Marie Louise French will do a superb job.

NEW SECRETARY

Louise Millard

Originally from Lancashire, I grew up in Chedworth near Northleach from the age of ten and attended local schools. I graduated with a BA Honours in Multimedia in 2002 and worked as an administrator for various companies until having my first child; I then trained to work in primary schools as a specialist teaching assistant, which I did until my youngest was born ten years later. Through this role I moved to Winchcombe and met, and then married my husband Nicholas, who restores pre-war Rolls Royce cars for a living; recently we have moved to Lechlade

Having been taught to knit by my grandmother, I took up knitting again whilst on maternity leave and living back in Chedworth. After falling in love with all things woolly and sheep related, I was dismayed to be unable to find, anywhere in the Cotswolds, wool yarn made from the fleece of Cotswolds Lions, hence The

Cotswold Wool Company was born.

I'm excited and looking forward to taking up the role of Secretary for The Cotswold Sheep Society.



Louise Millard – the Society's new Secretary

YEW TREE FLOCK

Marie Louise French

After many years of wanting sheep in 2012 I was given five Oxford Down sheep as a Christmas present, one older ewe with twin lambs and two shearing ewes.

Oxford Downs originated in our neighbouring village of Stanton Harcourt so was an obvious choice to start the Yew Tree Flock at Yew Tree Farm, which is situated next door to the Oxford Downs Cricket Club in Standlake on the edge of the Cotswolds.

The following Summer I bought two Cotswold lambs, which soon became favourites and as Oxford Downs originated with Cotswold and Hampshire Downs blood the Cotswold was also an obvious choice.

Over the next few years I added other rare breeds to the flock including Kerry Hill, Border Leicester and for luck, Black Welsh Mountain sheep.

The sheep are kept alongside our horses which were a full time occupation competing in various disciplines each weekend, now we visit a lot of the same County and Country shows but show the sheep instead of the horses, experiencing a different perspective to some of our favourite calendar events.

With the help of my two sisters I currently keep around 50 sheep and show homebred stock in all five breeds.

We sell pedigree stock alongside meat, wool and raw fleece in tradition with the associated breeds.



A contented member of the Yew Tree flock

HEALTH PLANNING

John Flanders

Some years ago I applied 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 and new members may find it helpful to consider the points raised with a view to enhancing their flock. 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 that 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.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAECAL EGG COUNTING

John Hemmingway – Shropshire Farm Vets

Now that the weather has become milder, we once again find ourselves entering ‘the worm season’. Broadly speaking, this encompasses the period during which the weather is warm enough for sheep and cattle parasites to resume their life cycles on the pasture, after overwintering either encysted inside livestock or as eggs lying on the land. Grazing animals typically see the highest worm burdens at the end of August and beginning of September, although we have already encountered very high numbers of worm eggs in samples from a few farms this year.

What is Faecal Egg Counting?

Faecal egg counting is a quick and simple test by which we are able to determine the approximate number of adult worms within an animal or group of animals. It allows us to make an informed decision about when to worm lambs or calves, and in many situations, identify the most appropriate worming product to use. Most often we run ‘pooled’ faecal egg counts on a group of (individually submitted) faecal samples, to produce an average figure for the group.

How often do you do it?

For lambs aged 6 weeks+, running pooled faecal egg counts every 3-4 weeks from now until September/October is usually the most sensible course of action. The life cycle of most of the common worms we encounter takes about 3 weeks, so testing at 3 week intervals allows us to identify a potential problem before worm numbers multiply so high that chronic damage to the gut takes place. In calves, testing at 4-6 week intervals is usually sufficient.

Why should I be making use of this test?

We are living in an era of unprecedented levels of drug resistance. This includes the much-publicised *antibiotic resistance* (bacteria no longer susceptible to treatment with conventional antibiotics), but also *anthelmintic resistance* (livestock parasites no longer sensitive to our worming products). While antibiotic resistance poses a greater immediate risk to human health, anthelmintic resistance is steadily on the increase, and has already shown its ability to render large areas of farmland commercially unviable for rearing sheep.

Both antibiotic and anthelmintic resistance have come about by the same basic mechanism, the process of which has been hugely accelerated by the *overuse* of our wormers and antibiotics. In using faecal egg count testing to identify when livestock truly *need* worming treatment, we generally find ourselves reducing the amount of wormer we use, as well as targeting its use to times where it will work to its best effect. For sheep farmers, this usually means less labour time spent treating animals, less money spent on wormers, and reduced pressure on the selection of drug-resistant worms.

In identifying the number of worms in your stock, we can also identify when a *healthy* worm burden is present- i.e. a low to medium worm burden, which will stimulate the animals to develop a strong, natural immunity to worms without causing a noticeable effect on growth rates.

Am I likely to have wormer resistance on my farm?

Almost every livestock farm in the country has some degree of resistance to at least one of the types of wormer. If you would like to test the efficacy of the three main wormer groups on your farm, then this is easily and cheaply achieved using faecal egg counting to conduct a ‘reduction test’. Knowing which wormers do and don’t work on your farm is valuable information, as it will help you make well informed choices on which products to use in the future, and can help you avoid spending money on wormers which are likely to be ineffective.

Are there any other benefits?

Daily liveweight gain in lambs will be reduced by about 50% before the animals begin to look ‘wormy’. Looking for worm eggs using regular faecal egg counting will, in most circumstances, identify an imminent problem before animals begin to show clinical signs of being infested with worms. With this information, we have the ability to intervene earlier and treat animals before liveweight gains are too badly affected. This is especially true with the *Haemonchus* (*‘barber’s pole’*) worm, which seldom causes the classic symptoms of worms (scouring, ill thrift etc), and is often

not identified until irreparable damage to the lining of the gut has already taken place.

Further to this, in calves and young lambs, faecal egg counting can also identify when high levels of cocci are present, and as such can differentiate whether the clinical signs you see are being caused by worms or coccidiosis (or both!).

Can I check how my animals have fared through the grazing season?

One of the easiest ways to monitor whether worms are being kept in check during the season is to record growth rates. Taking weights on a few pre-calculated dates throughout the year and calculating daily liveweight gain will give you an indication of whether something has been holding back your animals' growth and productivity.

Further to this, blood samples can be taken from a representative number of animals to test for *pepsinogen*. *Pepsinogen* levels are an indicator of the condition of the gut wall, and can be used to determine whether first-season grazers (calves *or* lambs) have been exposed to enough, or too much, of a worm burden. Very high results indicate that long-term damage to the gut wall has taken place as a result of a high worm burden, which has gone unaddressed. We often find this when sampling lambs in the autumn that 'just won't grow'!

There is a lot to talk about when considering how to control parasites on your farm, and even faecal egg counting has its limitations. However, if you are not currently making use of this test, then you should strongly consider talking to your vet about how using it could benefit you and your youngstock this year.

SARSDEN GLEBE SHEEP WASH POOL

Marie Louise French

On the 20th May 2017 the Churchill and Sarsden Heritage Centre celebrated the completion of work on the newly restored Sarsden Glebe Sheep Wash Pool with an Open Day kindly hosted by the Ponsonby family, who had restored the wash.

An expert on sheep wash pools was on hand to explain the history of the pool. Its origins lie the 19th century, however 'sheep washing' would have taken place in various places throughout the Cotswolds, the practice dating back to middle Saxon times. This wash pool is constructed across the Sars Brook in a quiet spot just outside the village of Churchill. It is marked by a stone bridge, tall trees lining the riverbank, and a stone step drop into the wash with a cobbled slope leading out of the wash to pastures beyond. A crowd had gathered, to the casual observer they

could have been playing Pooh Sticks or watching a Duck Race but a much more significant and historical replay was in motion.



Sheep being washed

The wool was the most valuable of the commodities provided by the noble Cotswold sheep and it was important that a clean fleece was removed at shearing time from the animals for very practical reasons. The clean wool was lighter in weight to transport, especially important when sacks were carried by a pack horse or wagon, and wool was exported overseas by boat where weight and space were at a premium. Also after a wash the fleece was shorn more easily as the excess grease and lanolin had been removed; an important factor when only hand shears were available.

The prolific sheep farming that once took place throughout the Cotswold region resulted in there being thousands of fine, long woolled Cotswold sheep with beautiful fleeces in need of a wash. The sheep were pushed down the step into the wash one at a time, sometimes to a second man waiting in the pool. They were then submersed in the water with the aid of dipping crooks and then allowed to walk out up a ramp and back to the flock. The water levels were regulated by gates on the river.

With flocks of several hundred sheep to deal with, the work of the shepherds was hard, dirty and wet. However, the flock wash was a social event with villagers and friends all at hand; a real social gathering to mark another point in the rural calendar.

The Open Day was a successful social occasion with people young and old, chattering, laughing, eating and drinking while they watched the washing of Steve

and Lynne Parkes's stunning sheep from the Kespar flock. Steve and Lynne expertly passed the sheep in a quiet and sympathetic manner through the wash; a wonderful sight from times past. This was a special Cotswold event that took place once again, thanks to the hard work and participation of both sheep and people.

SOME SHEEPY THOUGHTS

Kate Elliot

The longer my close association with sheep gets, the more intrigued I become about their intelligence, their powers of reasoning and their characters, and the sorrier I become for large-scale sheep farmers, many of whom are still convinced that sheep are stupid. In fact, partly because pigs think like us and so we don't find them difficult, sheep are the most complex of the domesticated farm animals – far more so, and brighter than, cows.

What is currently intriguing me is sheep's breed character traits and whether these have to do with the type of relationship they had with Man in their early days of formation. I shall say very little about the Primitives, most of which were originally wild and which still exhibit many characteristics of wild sheep (Soays even spread out and run in different directions rather than flocking, which is clearly an original prey behaviour when attacked by a predator). The Hebrideans, Manx and, to a certain extent, Shetlands still exhibit a number of traits which show their basic distrust of humans. The only Primitive that has been 'tamed', so to speak, is the North Ronaldsay, and that is presumably because it has been in such close proximity with Man for so long that it has learned at least not to fear him as a predator. Ronny rams have the ability to look you straight in the eye from the level of your kneecaps.

The Wool Board reckons that the Ryeland – or at least the Ryeland up to about 20 years ago – is one of the two oldest improved breeds in this country. The Board reckons that it is 800 years old. It is – or should be – a small breed, always the second smallest after the Southdown, which was originally much the same size as the French Ouessant. Ryelands give their age away in that they are browsers rather than grazers – give one grass or asparagus fern and it will eat the asparagus fern, thorns and all. I kept them for 30 years and they fascinated me because they not only liked people but seemed to think they had a close bond with them. They come to see you rather than running away and they are very quick at learning what you want of them. While not openly cuddly, they like having a conversation with you and will often learn and respond to their names. They also like to know what you are doing – at one point I lived in a cottage in the middle of an open farm. Somebody must have left my garden gate open, and my back door was open. I was working in my study

upstairs when I looked up to find three of my favourite ewes standing in the doorway, having climbed the stairs to see where mum worked. My rams (once those of them that were going to go through the silly teenage stage had done so and been walloped) also always treated me as a member of the flock. I would walk into the field and almost at once feel the nose of senior ram in the back of my knee, just telling me he was looking out for me. The boys would talk to me as if I were a lamb, and they were also very well aware of the flock dynamics and knew which were their lambs and which belonged to the other rams. Ryelands are also extremely kind little sheep. When my last Cotswold went blind, the Ryelands knew and looked out for her. If she got too close to the rhyne they would call to her or get up and head her back to safety. Was this behaviour the result of spending many centuries in small flocks with a peripatetic shepherd? Portlands share many of the Ryeland character traits, and they certainly roamed the south of England with their shepherds.

Cotswolds – another ancient and largely unimproved breed – didn't seem to me to have any of these traits. They didn't come for cuddles or show any particular interest in humans and didn't really seem to care who owned them. Why should this be? Were Cotswolds more static in the Middle Ages, perhaps remaining in fields rather than wandering as most flocks did then? Were they perhaps a status symbol rather than a truly working breed?

Of all the Leicester family (English Leicester, Leicester Longwool, Bluefaced Leicester, Border Leicester, Roscommon, Galway), the original, the Leicester Longwool, is again a very human-oriented sheep. It doesn't have the kindness of the Ryeland, but it does love a cuddle and a scratch and is loyal to its shepherd. The rams can be silly, but can also form a very close bond with a human. Alne Bank Lucifer, for example, at least once knocked everybody on the farm down - except me. We showed together and neither of us knew what we were doing and a close bond resulted. He never showed me any sign of aggression.

Then there are Wiltshire Horns, which presumably had much less to do with humans than other breeds as they didn't grow wool and were therefore a meat sheep only. To this day they are not that keen on small fields and living at close quarters with humans. On the other hand there is the Herdwick, the antecedents of which are lost in the mists of time, but which even now is a semi-wild sheep that has to look after itself and do a lot of its own shepherding. Despite all that, Herdwicks really love humans. They love being noticed by humans and wear great smiles when they know they are appreciated.

How did Romneys learn not to flock but to spread themselves evenly over the

pasture? Why are Wensleydales and Teeswaters, so close in breeding, so completely different in character? Wensleys are slow in everything they do – most lambs need swinging at birth and often need a heat lamp, and the adults seem to have precious little character, while the Teeswaters and another of their close relations, the Scots Mule, are possibly the most intelligent as well as funny sheep there are. They have a real sense of humour and know how to put it across.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE ROYAL THREE COUNTIES SHOW 2017

Angela Reid

Sometimes showing seems a daunting prospect, especially when it involves three days away from home, however in many ways it doesn't make any difference if you enter your sheep for a one or a three day show; you still have to put in the same amount of work to get the sheep in good condition, and as well practised on the halter as you can manage.

If you are showing on the Saturday, and on the Rare Breeds Day, which is Sunday – then your sheep have to arrive on Thursday. I duly delivered my sheep into their pens at lunch time on Thursday; because I couldn't stay that night, other members very kindly offered to feed and check my sheep until I could return the next day – the endless support of other Society members, and exhibitors in general, is one of the many good things about taking sheep to Malvern.

While far braver members than Ian and I settled down to life camping in the trailer park, we headed for a local B&B, thinking that two nights under canvas was a step too far. As it was unbelievably hot, with temperatures expected to reach 30C by Sunday midday, and with little drop in the temperature as night fell, we sweltered in our B&B and thought rather enviously of those able to enjoy the fresher, cooler air in the trailer park.

The pre-show routine that day was back to the show ground by 8.00 to feed the sheep. As I approached the pens it was clear that some serious tidying up would be needed as the lambs looked like walking haystacks, and one of the shearling rams' back end was definitely going to be a challenge. However, with quite a bit of help from Davina and Andrew, they were all soon looking as good as we could get them.

Thomas Jackson was judging and as we weren't timetabled to start until 11.00 we guessed a hot couple of hours lay ahead of us. We were right. The sun blazed down while we and the sheep sweltered in the shadeless ring. We were of course not going

to be beaten by the heat and we progressed steadily through the classes. As always when I am showing, there were downs, and luckily a few ups.

Showing really is not however, all about winning – it is about producing the best sheep you can, and learning to show it to its best advantage, and I certainly have a great deal to learn! The great thing about the Three Counties is that you have two shows back to back, so that when you are given some advice, you can put it into practise the following day. A particularly good example of this occurred in the Shearling Ram class. On Saturday my ram was bottom of the line – though he was pronounced good breeding stock, he was not thought to be anything special in a strong class. Having been told that I needed to lead him with more determination, and be much more assertive at getting him to stand ‘square with a leg at each corner’, the following day I did as I had been advised. The result was that my ram went from last to second place, and for a while was even a possible contender for first place. It was the same sheep, with the same opposition, but with better handling he looked far more like a winner! Of course, different judges prioritise different qualities, but there’s no doubt to give your sheep the best chance of catching the judge’s eye, you need to learn how to present your sheep properly.

Once showing was over each day, there was the whole show to explore and so much to see. One of my favourites moments was an exhibition of Falconry, where the star of the show was an endangered species of falcon, a *Striated Caracara* from the Falkland Islands, called Sparky; he rarely flies and instead he pounded around the ring in tremendous style to the audience’s great amusement, then there was the Red Devils Free Fall display, not to mention endless opportunities for shopping. A particular highlight was a demonstration of blade shearing. The victim was one of Steve Parkes’s ewes. This was done with amazing speed and efficiency, and no doubt the sheep was relieved to be rid of its massive fleece; the only disaster being when the shearer with one flash of his blades snipped off the ewe’s magnificent forelock, which Steve had unfortunately forgotten to remind him to leave!

I think my favourite time is when the public have gone home and the livestock tents and sheds grow quiet. The animals all settle down and voices of their handlers are lowered as they quietly and efficiently feed, water and groom their stock. It is wonderfully peaceful after all the drama of the show ring.

On Saturday evening members, their families and friends gathered in the trailer park for a sociable BBQ, with Alex Field as the star chef. It was the perfect end to an exhausting day. When we checked the sheep for the last time on our way to bed, they were all lying down in the dim light, peacefully chewing their cud or dozing, no

doubt dreaming of green fields and endless mouthfuls of long, lush grass.



Peace and quiet in the livestock tent

There was no time for a Sunday lie in; the classes began at 8.00 sharp so we were back in the sheep pens by 7.00. Sunday was going to be even hotter than the day before, so we were all happy to be starting early. Jon King was judging and to our relief managed to get through the classes before the worst of the heat struck. The one worry we all had was how we were going to get our sheep home without becoming stuck in traffic jams, and the stock in our trailers being cooked alive. It was however all managed with great efficiency, and once we had loaded our trailer at about 5.00 we managed to drive the whole way home without stopping.

It was an exhausting few days, but well worth doing. Having classes of smart Cotswolds doing their bit to keep the breed in the public eye is vital for their future existence. Whether anyone wins or loses personally, the breed is undoubtedly the stronger because they and their sheep have taken part.

WOOLLY FASHION SHOW AT THE ROYAL THREE COUNTIES

Angela Reid

The show website invited visitors to enjoy ‘*The quirky fashion show celebrating the story of wool.*’ And the fashion show certainly was quirky, and indeed a wonderful celebration of British wool. It was organised by the RBST to showcase the wide diversity of the 22,000 tons of wool produced by the 60 breeds of sheep currently in the UK, some gravely endangered.

So it was, with temperatures soaring to 30 C and above, a number of brave souls had

volunteered to parade along the catwalk wearing a range of woollen garments, many of which had been designed, spun, and woven or knitted by themselves. The show opened with a description of the remarkable properties of wool; a completely natural product, insulating, endlessly renewable and biodegradable. The particular qualities that make wool so important to the fashion industry are its resilience, strength and its crimped structure which gives it natural elasticity. It is also highly absorbent enabling it to absorb and retain dyes, making it naturally colourfast.



On the right the shrug by Hendra Vean Cotswolds

The range of wools was impressive. There was the dark jacket, hand spun and hand-dyed, provided by the Blue Faced Leicester, an elegant, brown shift dress woven from pure Manx Loaghtan, an intricate lacy shawl crocheted from the extremely rare Devon Closewool and a swirling, rich brown evening dress spun from pure Wensleydale. Ryeland wool produced a smart grey tweed, flat cap and waistcoat, and a stunning ankle length coat that will shortly be featuring in Vogue. Some of the most striking pieces were a cream wedding dress, and a three-piece suit, spun from the fine, lustrous wool of the Lincoln Longwool. Other breeds represented were the seaweed loving North Ronaldsay, the multi-coloured Jacob and the Romney, the wool from which blends beautifully with many other wools. Perhaps one of the most striking jackets was designed using all thirteen natural colours provided by the remarkable Shetland.

Needless to say, the high point of the fashion show for Society members was the appearance of an exquisite jacket spun from Cotswold wool, and a luxurious shrug provided by Hendra Vean Cotswolds. There was little doubt that lustrous, Cotswold wool was one of the most impressive wools on display in the very woolly fashion show.

FLEECE PRESENTATION

Davina Stanhope

Showing your fleece is not as daunting as you may think, all that is needed is a clean fleece, patience and practice. If you do not want to show your sheep then it is a good way to show off your flock – and it does not need a trailer or a very early start, re-cleaning and loading sheep for the show!

STAGE 1

Check the schedule. Some shows stipulate the age of the sheep and the sex. It is unusual for ram fleeces to be shown; however, some shows give no mention of age or sex of sheep so it is up to you.

Choose your fleece. It needs to be pleasing to the eye and typical of the Cotswold with plenty of lustre and as clean as possible. You may notice when looking at other people's sheep that they vary in colour. The ground that your sheep live on will dictate this (apart from any dirt or grease that is). I live in Shropshire, which produces quite white fleeces, those on the Cotswolds are slightly creamier, Herefordshire produces pink fleeces and so on. Artificial colouring is not permitted i.e. bloom dips.

The fleece must be as even as possible in that it should have the same crimp (curl) from the front to the back and it should be a good length for the age of the sheep. Shearling fleeces are longer and are, in general, the best fleeces to show as the sheep will not have had a lamb, therefore reducing the problem of stress marks. This is a weakness in the fleece caused by lambing, or, if the sheep has been ill, then a weakness will occur. Those of you who have horses will already know that if a horse has been ill it will show in the hoof, with sheep it shows in the wool. If you look at an older sheep then the wool is not quite such good quality as a shearling fleece.

The fleece must be as clean as you can get it, make sure that you remove all the bits of hay, cotty wool (usually around the neck and chest where it has become wet and felted together), just pull this away and discard it, also any bits of hedge or foreign objects.

STAGE 2

Roll the fleece. You may like to practice this, (on any old fleece rather than your lovely clean fleece as they never roll up well after the first time) until you are happy to that you are ready to roll your show fleece.

Lay the fleece out flat on a table. The side that was attached to the sheep's skin should be on the bottom and the outside of the fleece on top looking at you. There are two options:

Fleece intact along the backbone. If this is the case then you can roll it as follows
Make sure that the fleece is not stretched out

Fold the sides to meet the middle so that there are no straggly ends sticking out

Start from the tail and proceed to roll the fleece towards the neck, keeping it as tight in the roll as you can

Once you have almost reached the end you need to twist the neck end to form a loose rope

Whilst keeping the "rope roll" tight it should be tucked into the "fleece roll". This should be central and not to the side as it will make the roll go lop sided.



Davina demonstrating how to present a fleece

Fleece is open or parting along the backbone. Do not worry if the fleece is parting; you have to adopt a slightly different method, but the final outcome is the same.

- 1 Presuming the fleece has parted or almost parted; pull it apart so that you have two "sides"
- 2 Put one "side" on the table with the part that was next to the sheep's skin bottom
- 3 The next "side" place on top of the first "side" with both neck ends facing the same way, again with the part that was next to the skin facing down.

The next bit is the same as before, just turn in the edges of the fleece, although not

so far as with the first method, just enough to prevent the wispy bits falling out.

As before you need to start rolling the fleece from the tail end keeping the roll as tight as you can, again just before you get to the end, twist a length and tuck it in the fleece in a nice tight roll.

STAGE 3

You may like to use an old sheet to wrap your fleece in once it is finished to prevent any damage and stop any dirt getting onto the fleece. Do not keep fleeces in a plastic bag as they will sweat, however some people do put the fleece in a bin bag to enable easy transport to the show, and to ensure that you get to the fleece then in one piece.

If anyone would like to ask me about showing fleeces, please feel free to contact me on 07968 218470, please leave a message if I am unable to answer and I will call you back when I am free.

THE ANNUAL BREED SHOW AND SALE **(4TH and 5TH AUGUST 2017)**

The Breed Show and Sale will be held under the auspices of Voyce Pullin's Rare, Traditional and Minority Breed Sale at Cirencester Market, near Driffield, on Friday 4th/ Saturday 5th August 2017. This is the 'shop window' for our breed and it is important that there are 'good breeding' sheep entered in order to achieve the best possible average prices in the various categories; these then provide a useful guide for private sales throughout the year.

It would be wonderful to have more breeders selling stock. If you would like to sell some sheep. but are worried about what to enter, then any Council member will be happy to offer help and advice, but below are some things to think about in the first instance.

Firstly, ask yourself the question - are the sheep you want to sell, good enough to keep in your flock, if you had the space for them? If not, why would they be good enough for anyone else's flock?

When you set about choosing your sheep for the sale, make sure you have read 'The Breed Standard' in the Flock Book, and are aware of the 'Points of Disqualification,' and the list of 'Undesirable Characteristics.'

Council have agreed the following upset prices so that good breeding sheep do not

go for slaughter. It is also possible to put a higher Reserve on your sheep if you wish.

Upset Prices:

Senior Rams - £150

Shearling Rams - £150

Ram Lambs - £100

Senior Ewes - £100

Shearling Ewes - £100

Ewe Lambs - £85

In addition there are 'recommended minimum weights' to ensure that sheep in the sale are in good condition and are of sufficient size – Cotswolds are after all 'a large breed'! A weigh bridge will be available at the market should there be any concerns over weight:

Shearling Rams - minimum of 85 - 90kgs

Shearling Ewes - minimum of 80kgs

Lambs - minimum weight of 45kgs, but that does depend on how old they are.

As a rough guide a 5 month old lamb should have reached at least this weight.

On the Friday, sheep to be offered for sale are Card Graded. (If you cannot bring your sheep on the Friday, they can be card graded before the sale on Saturday morning.) The two card graders are extremely experienced and every sheep is checked to see if it is a good sheep and that it has the right Cotswold traits. A Red card will be awarded to a correct sheep, Blue to a sheep with a minor fault, and Yellow to a sheep with a more serious fault.

The show follows the completion of card grading - only Red carded sheep are allowed to enter. Everyone relaxes after the show with a sociable 'Bring and Share' barbecue - all members are welcome to join in, even if you are not buying or selling!

Some members camp on site, and if you have brought sheep to sell, and don't want to join them, then please make sure you have asked one of the campers to check your sheep's water and hay overnight.

It is important that sheep are properly prepared. There is a useful article in the May 2016 Newsletter covering this in some detail: if you have not got a copy, it is available via the website. Please note however, there is an error in the article – it states that Blue carded sheep cannot be sold – this is not correct - Red, Blue and Yellow carded sheep can all be sold – however the grade may affect the price –

generally Red carded sheep will achieve higher prices than Blue or Yellow carded sheep!

Please also be aware there is a special condition attached to the sale of shearling rams and ram lambs. You can sell senior rams without any conditions, you can also enter a younger male without condition, but if you wish to enter further younger males (in any combination of shearlings/lambs), you must also put forward for sale two females for each additional male. This condition is in place to encourage everyone to be very selective about the rams they grow on to sell. After all, a ram with even a minor fault can spread it quickly throughout a flock.

Voyce Pullin's Conditions of Sale, and the Entry form, are available for download from the Society website. Entries close on 14th July at 5.30 pm.

COUNCIL CORNER

Angela Reid

Secretary - Following Sherry and John Webb's decision to move to Devon, Council would like to warmly welcome on board our new Secretary, Louise Millard. She has written a brief biography introducing herself to you, elsewhere in this newsletter.

Newsletter Editor Update – John Flanders is hanging up his Editor's hat for the second time. We would like to thank him very much for all his hard work on the newsletter over the past few years. We are pleased to inform you that Marie French has very kindly offered to take on the role of Editor. She has written a short biography about herself in this newsletter. If you have any suggestions as to what you would like to see in future newsletters, please do contact Marie by email at marielouisefrench@hotmail.co.uk.

The Annual Breed Show and Sale – The sale is on **Saturday 5th August** at Cirencester Market. Card grading, show and barbecue will take place on **Friday 4th August**. Please see article elsewhere in this newsletter for further information. However, please note that the closing date for entries is 5.30pm on 14th July. Please also note that while there are no conditions regarding the entry of Senior rams into the sale, there are conditions for younger males – you can enter a younger male without condition, but if you want to enter further younger males (in any combination of shearlings/lambs), you must also put forward for sale two females for each additional male.

The Society Summer Show & AGM – Sunday 23rd July - Burghfield House, Bourton-on-the- Water:

Show - If you haven't done so before, then this really is the best possible place to dip your toe into the showing water! This year there are several additional classes, including a Mother and Daughter class for sheep of any age – the only criteria being they are... mother and daughter! There is also a Veterans class for sheep of either sex which are six years old or older; mouths will not be inspected! Please do also enter the Fleece Competition. Ian Brooksbank from the Wool Board is judging the competition; we need as many fleeces as possible for him to assess. Each member can enter up to two fleeces. Please read Davina's excellent article elsewhere in the newsletter as to how to prepare a fleece for a show. The Summer Show Entry Form is included with this Newsletter.

Picnic Lunch - It has been agreed in order to lessen the workload for some very busy helpers and members of Council, that instead of the 'Bring and Share' lunch originally planned, please would members bring their own picnics. There will be soft drinks, tea, and coffee available. There will also be cakes for tea after the AGM, and we would be happy and grateful to receive 'Cakes to Share'!!

Raffle – During the afternoon there will be a fund-raising raffle – we will be extremely grateful for any donations of prizes. (We will also be running a raffle at Moreton Show and so will be very grateful to receive prizes in advance for that as well!)

The Annual General Meeting - This will begin at 2.30 following lunch. The Notice is included with this Newsletter.

Future Events – There are numerous shows during the summer including Berkeley, Monmouth, Stroud, and most importantly Moreton. If you can support any of these, either by showing your sheep, or going to watch the Cotswold classes, it will be much appreciated (dates of the above are on the website and in the previous newsletter). If you can't take sheep or fleeces to shows with Cotswold classes, then do consider entering other local shows – the more people see our Cotswolds in the show ring, the better.

Helpers – We would be extremely grateful for helpers at the Summer Show, and at Moreton Show (Saturday 2nd September). If you can assist at either event please contact Margaret Pursch on Tel: 01285 851526 or email her at margaretpursch@btinternet.com. If you can assist with the pre-show set up (hurdles, marquee, Society stand, etc) - contact Steve Parkes on Mob: 07776 143643.