

Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter

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John Flanders, The Hon. Mrs. Angela Reid



Rosie Wyatt, Adam Henson, Sarah Mitchell and "The Jumper"

EDITORIAL

In this edition, Richard Mumford, whose has owned Cotswold sheep for many years and this is reflected in his Flock Number 009, explains how he became involved with them; it really makes fascinating reading.

Perhaps the highlight of the past few months has been the International Back to Back competition which was held at Alison Garne's farm in Meysey Hampton. As many will be aware BBC's Countryfile were there filming the event and when broadcast it was a really delightful programme. Whether this will resulting an increased interest in Cotswold sheep remains to be seen. The event was a considerable success with many members travelling considerable distances to support the Society, those that did not attend missed a most enjoyable day. It was particularly interesting watching the film crew and, later, noting the amount of footage that was excluded from the Countryfile. One wonders if it would be possible for the Society to try to obtain the out-takes to show at some future stage. Later in this Newsletter there is a fuller report, but at this point Jan and I would like to express our thanks to all those who worked hard to put on such a magnificent day; it really was excellent and we thoroughly enjoyed it.

It is understood that sale of raffle tickets to supplement Society funds has been very slow and very few members have asked for extra books. The purpose of the raffle is to help Society funds, and the chance of being able to win a £100 Countrywide voucher (even though I do not use Countrywide products) or boxed lamb or a print of painting by Pam Ayres for the cost of £1 is most appealing. Members are therefore urged to sell as many as they can.

I was recently speaking to a new member and he was unaware of the long history of the Cotswold sheep and it got me thinking that there could be others who were in the same position, thus a short article on the history of the breed has been included.

Finally, may all those of you who show do well in whatever class you enter whether it is a major agricultural show or the local village show; and for those of you who do not just enjoy having your sheep.

John Flanders

THE VIEW FROM HERE

West Wales

What a change since in the weather I last penned this piece! Instead of the cold the weather here has been fairly mild, but not particularly hot apart from the occasional days; however we have had rain, which has been lacking elsewhere in the country. Having said that the water from drain outfall that serves the 4 acres field I mentioned in the last Newsletter did reduce to a trickle, but the recent rain has increased its flow.

Lambing got off to a good start with the AI ewes producing good, large, healthy lambs and surprisingly of the seven born, six were rams with only one ewe. Later the balance reverted to its normal ratio, at least for us, and we had slightly more females to males (53% and 47% respectively). The Shepherdess, which we bought for the pet lambs, was a great help and the few lambs that were using it grew steadily. The benefit of having the unit is that the lambs have warm milk all the time and thus are more inclined to drink whenever they want to rather than relying on us taking the milk over at different times of the day. The down side is that the milk powder is rather more expensive and some of the lambs, whose mothers may have limited milk, also drink from it.

Another field was ploughed this Spring and chicory was sown. Unfortunately the colder weather and lack of rain at the time of sowing lengthened the germination period, but it is now coming on apace and within the next few weeks the lambs will be moved on to it for fattening. It will be interesting to compare the rate of growth of the lambs that last year were fed on rape and this year's ones that will be fed on chicory.

A couple of weeks ago we decided to cut one field for big bale haylage and although the quantity was not great, a bit of fertiliser and the recent rain has meant the grass is growing again and we should get a good second cut.

Usually, I Vetrazin the ewes in April, which gives them some protection against flystrike until they are shorn in early June. This year I omitted to do so and three were struck, thankfully not badly. Next year they will be sprayed.

The first batch of lambs, together with a few cull ewes, went to market in late June. Although the prices had fallen from a few weeks earlier, I was reasonably happy when the cheque arrived two days after the sale. At least the accountant will be

happy for a while – I hope!

Finally, our straw merchant warned a neighbouring farmer that straw this year could reach £60 for a half heston, assuming that it is obtainable.

John Flanders

Gloucestershire

The weather seems to have been the main topic of conversation as we have had so many extremes this year. Lambing in April is late for me, but with increased daylight hours it is a very different task to lambing earlier. Lambing earlier is necessary if you plan to show your sheep or are aiming for the early market for your lambs.

The lambing was disappointing this year with my grand daughter's bottle fed shearling producing a single a few days early which died within the hour. She is the first cade lamb I have ever had from my Cotswolds but with only ten ewes the chance of fostering is much reduced. She is very friendly and can cause constant demands for attention. Orphan lambs can be a great joy but it is better to bung a bottle in a rack and not to handle them too much unless you are prepared to have a huge ewe that has no respect for humans or have the heartbreak of selling them when you know them too well.

Another ewe had two lambs, which looked good but she was clumsy and lost them both despite being in a large pen. In a large flock that would be bad, but in our small flocks it is a very depressing result. I remember when I still had a few commercial ewes and only a couple of Cotswolds how devastating it was if the Cotswolds lambing was not as hoped.

One of my old ewes who, at nine years old, should perhaps have gone, but is still sound in udder and teeth had an unusual problem this year. She has always had a small lump where her ear tag tore out when she was young. On the night it was minus ten the lump froze off and bled, but it healed over and looked as if the problem was solved.

As we approached lambing it started to grow rapidly and formed a cauliflower like growth the size of a golf ball. This started to bleed and my vet came to see her. As the ewe was only three weeks off lambing it was decided to use antibiotics to clear the now smelly infection and wait and see. She lambed a large single and when the

lamb was the days old the vet came back and amputated the ear and stitched it up very neatly. The lamb suffered no check and the ewe is still well.

Judy Wilkie

INTERNATIONAL 'BACK TO BACK' WOOL CHALLENGE 2011

At 9.00 sharp on Sunday 8th May, in Alison Garne's beautifully restored barn in Meysey Hampton, Paul Verney took the first snip at the fleece on the Cotswold sheep in front of him, and the Cotswold Sheep Society's 2011 Challenge was underway.

The origins of the Challenge lie in Newbury when, in 1811, a one thousand pound wager was made to make a coat from the sheep's back to a man's back in one day. Watched by 5,000 people, the coat was completed in thirteen hours. The sheep was then eaten, with much quaffing of beer to celebrate. Following the Cotswold Sheep Society's recent attempt at the Challenge however, the sheep was in no danger of becoming dinner, and was no doubt very much relieved to be released from its heavy winter coat.



Selecting the fleece

Today's Challenge began in 1992 when Richard Snow, a keen young spinner at the Scottish Wool Centre, developed thyroid cancer. It was his desire to raise funds for research into the causes of cancer that sparked their reincarnation of the 'Back to Back' Wool Challenge, a competition based on the one run one hundred and eighty one years before.

The Society's team *The Cotswold Woollies*, knew they had a daunting task ahead of them. The team consisted of the shearer, armed with several pairs of freshly sharpened blades, along with seven noble hand-spinners and knitters. Kate Elliot had volunteered to take on the Challenge, as had six members of The Oxfordshire Guild of Spinners and Weavers, kindly organized by Rosie Wyatt. Not a moment was to be wasted, and as soon the first clumps of wool were free of the sheep, the spinners were in action and yarn was soon being twisted into balls. Then it was time to start knitting and the first rows were being completed. Throughout the day the spinners spun, and the knitters knitted with great enthusiasm. It was however, a daunting task. Handling the unwashed wool meant that that the yarn was harder to manage than washed wool, consequently progress was slower than originally hoped. The Challenge was eventually completed in a total time of 14 hours 23 minutes 7 seconds (Sunday 9 hours 43 minutes and 51 seconds; Monday 4 hours 39 minutes and 16 seconds). The weight of the jumper before washing was 755 gms. So, although no records were broken, in the end there was a completed jersey. While the team must have suffered aching muscles and sore fingers, it is to be hoped that they



The first blow

felt a great sense of achievement at completing the Challenge – they certainly deserve a huge thank you from the Society for all their hard work.

However the day was about more than completing the Challenge. The weather was perfect: sunny with a cooling breeze. This brought in a steady stream of visitors throughout the day. They had plenty to see. There were demonstrations of a variety of country skills from the use of a pole-lathe (Bob Field), to the weaving of bee skeps (David Chubb). There was a whole range of wonderful hand-crafted goods for sale, and for the hungry and thirsty, there was a delicious barbecue, and an apparently endless supply of delicious cakes and biscuits kindly provided by members. The prize for the most memorable of these, however, must go to the Robinsons for their fantastic ‘sheep’ decorated cake.



The spinners hard at work

Amidst all this Adam Henson and the BBC Countryfile crew mingled with great good humour. They joined in with whatever was going on, and answered a wide variety of questions. There was no doubt they contributed immensely to everyone’s enjoyment of the day. The resulting programme, which was broadcast on the 29th May, was a lovely portrayal of the day, and an excellent boost for Cotswold sheep.

There was a serious side to all this. Not only were the Society raising much needed funds, they were also raising funds for Cancer Research. As a result of the hard work put in by so many people, each charity raised around £500. It is hoped that further funds will be raised when the ‘Back to Back’ jersey is auctioned at the Winter Social

on 26th November 2011, at Condicote Village Hall.

Shepherds' Hut

The reality of the dreadful effects of cancer was brought home to all those present who took the time to visit the old shepherd's hut perched on the edge of the farmyard. It was purchased by the Berry family, during the First World War, to house a German prisoner of war who worked on the farm. Over the years it has fallen into



disrepair, but will now be restored at Meysey Hampton, and eventually brought back into use at the farm in Coleshill. The reason it is particularly fitting to mention it, is that that we were raising funds for Cancer Research, and very sadly Richard Berry lost his fight with cancer just a few months ago, at the tragically young age of 35.

The Barn

The barn in which the shearing took place is listed as early Jacobean (early 17th Century) and is constructed of local stone under a Cotswold stone roof. It has two bays and a length of about 70ft, with a height of around 25ft to the ridge. Each bay has a pair of doors, about 12 ft high opposite each other, making it a very effective threshing barn. The quoins of the door openings are dressed stone and still show the stonemasons' markings.

The building originally formed an important role in the running of Villars Farm, but gradually as farming practices changed its function altered and it slowly deteriorated. However in 2004, rather than convert it to a house, Alison Garne took the bold

decision, with the help of a DEFRA grant, to restore the barn to its former glory. The walls were re-pointed, the roof re-tiled, and new doors made, but wherever possible the old materials were retained and replacement wooden beams were obtained from wood on the farm.



Interior of the Barn

It is a credit to Alison that she had the courage and foresight to restore the barn to its former condition for the benefit of future generations. She was very fortunate to find two excellent craftsmen, Derrick and Nigel Parmenter (a father and son team), to restore the building. Nigel came to support the back-to-back with his wife and children and they were very pleased to see the barn “in action”. The building was a

magnificent setting for the Back to Back.

Vote of Thanks

So many people worked extremely hard to make the day a success that it is very hard to name everyone. But special thanks must go to Alison Garne for letting us use her wonderful barn, to Margaret Pursch and Frances Whiteman for all their hard work on the day (and in Margaret's case – maybe sowing the seeds for a TV career?) and, of course, to Thomas Jackson for volunteering to shear all Steve Parkes' handsome sheep (a very clever move, Steve!) with wheel powered blades, driven largely by Henson power (thank you, Adam!). Also to be particularly thanked are Derek Cross and Edna Powell who did a sterling job selling over 200 raffle tickets, and Judy Lincoln from the Nova Scotia team who helped enormously with spinning demonstrations throughout the day, as well as with the clearing up. Almost finally, it must be remembered that without the tireless efforts of Lynne Parkes, and Lucinda Foster, there would not have been a Challenge at all.

But the final 'thank you' must go to all those members who made such an effort to come and support the event, some traveling hundreds of miles. Without doubt, your presence made the day the wonderful, and memorable, occasion it was.

Angela Reid and John Flanders

PENSHAM FLOCK

by

Richard Mumford

In 1969 two clients of mine bought, separately, parts of a farm at Manor Farm and Pensham Fields Farm at Pensham, lying to the south east of the market town of Pershore, in a great loop of the River Avon where highly fertile river terraces intermingled with heavy clay. Another client who bought Pensham Fields was a land speculator who bought farms and split them up, selling the house and land in lots. I helped farm this land the first year with the help of a local contractor.

The other farm was bought by a gravel company, and I started a long term arrangement, initially on an informal basis, to farm their land myself. There were river meadows and other small parts of grassland that could not be ploughed. There was also arable land – a total of 180 acres.

Having met an old school pal, whom I found was farming in the area (his parents being farmers in Herefordshire), he sold me three Jacob ewes in lamb. That was in spring 1975 and in 1976 was the first rare breeds animal auction at the Royal Showground, Stoneleigh. A friend and I thought it would be fun to buy a couple of Cotswold sheep, being within sight of the Cotswolds. We came back that day with 7 ewes and 1 ram. It took us most of one day to trim their feet and most of another day to dip them, which was compulsory in those days. I already had a few store cattle.

The flock grew, so that by the early 1980s I had about 80 breeding ewes, not all Cotswolds. I experimented with crossing the Cotswold with a Scottish Blackface ram. I went up in my Citroen Safari to north of Glasgow, Dumfriesshire, and brought a very nice Scottish Blackface ram home in the back, with his horns tied to each door handle each side. He produced some very lean and lengthy lambs, which I then selected the ewe lambs and crossed them with a Texel ram. This Texel ram, I acquired by bartering two Cotswold rams with ABRO (Animal Breeding Research Organisation) at Stone in Staffordshire, who were doing experiments on breeding large sheep. This was a time when Texel rams were making silly money, so I felt I had a good deal.

The Texel on the Cotswold Blackface ewes was very successful, producing a very lean and good sized carcass, which surprised the slaughterman. I then had the chance of adding Merino ewes in order to try to get fine wool. Mr. Bowaz, who used to be a lecturer at Leeds University, who had acquired some Merinos, had retired from the University and taken this Merino flock to Hanley Castle, nr. Malvern. Then when on holiday on the island of Islay in the Inner Hebrides, I met up with the owner of the island's woollen mill, who had been taught his craft by Richard Martin of Cotswold Woollen Weavers. He was weaving the most gorgeous tweed cloth, and he had two Shetland ewe lambs, which he wanted to get rid of and they came back in the back of the car, with 4 dogs and 3 young children.

For a number of years, therefore, I had an interesting selection of Blackface Texel, Shetland and Merino crosses. Both the Shetland and the Merino did produce very good fine wool, which won prizes at the Royal Show and elsewhere. I also continued for some time the use of the Jacobs. I still have Shetland and Merino crosses, the fleece of which is incredibly lighter than pure Cotswolds.

However, in 1983 the gravel company wanted the farm back and I was having difficulty finding suitable fields to put my flock on, which, therefore, had to reduce. However, I did buy some 2½ acres and put a building up on that, and then fairly

soon after that was able to take, under the "Evesham Custom", an orchard in Haselor Lane, and ran the sheep under the plum trees, and fairly soon was able to expand that area, renting both the original Evesham Custom land and the additional adjoining land from Mr. George Swift, who owned the Haselor Estate and for whom I acted as land agent. It was not until 1993 that I had the opportunity of purchasing Upper Haselor Farm from George Swift's nephew.

This then gave me 30 acres of grassland orchard, or grass fields, most of it fairly close to where I lived.



Part of Richard's flock

I am now farming about 20 ewes on about 18 acres, most of it under plum trees, which is not ideal. I also still run a few South Devon cattle.

In the initial 8 Cotswold sheep that I bought, four of these were from Cotswold Farm Park and the remainder from the Royal Agricultural Society of England, being part of the original stock that the RASE took on from Reading University. One of these ewes had successfully reared one year 6 lambs of her own, and all together had at least 13 lambs in four years.

In 1977 I bought 6 shearling ewes from Frank Williams, 6 more from Cotswold Farm Park, and 6 more from Tony Foster.

The first ram I used was a Cotswold Farm Park one, Bemborough Dingley, and

since then have had a series of rams, including championship ram from the Rare Breed Show and Sale (Drointon Dougal), and a Royal Show winner from Pat Quinn, and others both bought and home bred, including Oakhill Jester and Crickley Hazleton. Pat Quinn, in fact, bought one of the rams I had let ABRO have for the start of her prize-winning flock.

In about 1977 it became clear that we had a very limited blood line in the Cotswolds and it was Council's opinion, supported by Frank Houlton, that we should introduce some English Leicester blood. Frank Houlton, Tony Foster, Joe Henson and I visited the Great Yorkshire Show and bought the champion English Leicester ram, which Joe was able to arrange to get delivered to Gloucestershire. The move was not popular with all members, although Tony Foster and I and a few others used him quite widely. A system of grading up from these crossbreds was arranged and some of my ewes date back to those English Leicester crosses.

In the early days of the flock, I showed and sold at the Rare Breeds Sale, also winning a number of first prizes at the Three Counties Show and Champion Cotswold Sheep at the Rare Breed Sale. In those days, the sheep were shown in the long wool, which is a great deal of work to prepare them, but they did not have very much extra food. Show sheep now seem to be extremely well fleshed and not to say in many cases, fat. They are also now, of course, shown shorn.



Richard with one of his trophies

I have also had considerable success with the wool with Tony Foster and I was in

the final of the National Golden Fleece competition at Royal Smithfield. I then won the overall championship fleece at the Three Counties Show, and many placings at both the Three Counties Show and the Royal Show.

There is no doubt that the Cotswold sheep have greatly improved over the years, it would be interesting to research the extent of the blood lines and the overlapping of many progeny further back in current pedigrees. (*Richard – perhaps you would like to write another article on this subject later on? – Ed*).

It has been most interesting over the last 35 years to be involved with Cotswold sheep and probably for at least half the time, to be on the breed Council, and to be discussing the breeding, showing, etc., of Cotswold sheep with many flock owners.

The Evesham Custom, whilst not unique to Evesham, is unusual in any other part of the country. It enables a market gardening tenant to nominate his successor, which is of help not only to the outgoing tenant who gets paid for his improvements and often, in the past, a premium in order to acquire the lease of some good market gardening land. It also relieves the landlord from having to find some fairly hefty payments for permanent market garden crops and glasshouses and buildings.

Richard Mumford

AFTER DEATH THERE IS LIFE!!

Using Artificial Insemination in my flock was not something I had ever contemplated. When Shaun and Lynne Gibbings however, offered members the opportunity to use some of Holy Brook Hector's semen, currently stored at Innovis, the chance of adding some new high quality genes into my flock proved irresistible. I was not alone as John Flanders also decided to take advantage of the opportunity; he tells his own story later in this article.

One of the most interesting tasks was trying to choose the eight ewes that should it work would give me a spread of bloodlines. I chose eight nice looking ewes, which were a mix of second and third time lambers, and a couple of shearlings. The first task was to make sure all the ewes had been vaccinated, as recommended, against enzootic abortion and toxoplasmosis. They also had the vitamin and selenium injections as suggested. I thought if I was going to all this trouble I had to do it properly!

The second, and most vital step, was to synchronise their seasons, and to do that I had to get them sponged – the vet came and inserted the sponges as I was going to be away on the day, and the timing was vital. This was Day 0.

On Day 12 the sponges had to be removed at precisely 13.00 – and PMSG hormone injected to stimulate ovulation – all during Sunday lunchtime! The following day was Day 13 and it was, in my view, the most stressful day for any Cotswold sheep - they had to starve from noon! On Day 14, I had an appointment at Innovis, Malvern at 3.00, and again timing was vital. When it came to load my ‘in wool’ ewes, I just couldn’t fit in the 8th ewe – so in the end I only took 7.

Much to my relief I arrived at Malvern on time. The sheep were soon unloaded, given an injection of mild sedative and allowed to rest for twenty minutes. They were then, one by one, heaved onto a trolley and tilted head down (hence the need for starvation!) legs in the air – it looked so undignified – I did feel for them - however because of the sedative they had been given, the ewes all seemed relatively relaxed.



Laparoscopic insemination

It was then time for the laparoscopic insemination. Owing to the structure of a ewe’s cervix it is almost impossible to place semen directly inside the uterus, so the semen would normally have to be deposited on, or just in the mouth of the cervix, this

means that conception rates are low. However with laparoscopic insemination the abdominal cavity is penetrated and the freshly thawed semen is deposited directly into the uterus. It was quickly and neatly done, then the ewe was back on her feet, and ready to go home. In my case the eight straws of semen I had bought were divided amongst the 7 ewes.

The aftercare instructions were very simple – keep the sheep completely calm for the next three weeks, no handling, moving to fresh pasture, or any change in food – in other words, NO EXCITEMENT at all. These instructions I followed exactly.

The Results

Angela Reid - It seemed a very long time until the day came to have the sheep scanned. If it had worked the ewes should all be 60 days in lamb. By this point I was convinced that, although the normal success rate is around 65% - 80%, none of my ewes would be in lamb. In fact every single one of them was found to be 60 days in lamb, and if all went well, I should end up with a remarkable 12 lambs. This was incredibly exciting news. However I was all too aware that scanned lambs do not always appear, so as the ewes' due date approached the tension mounted. In the end the lambing went easily enough, though one lamb had been reabsorbed, and another, a triplet, was very small. So the total was 2 ram lambs and 8, very good to reasonable, ewe lambs. The small lamb will obviously never be registered, but she is still going strong, and while small in body she is very large in voice!

John Flanders – From my perspective the use of Holy Brook Hector was brought about by the fact that four of my rams had been killed in an attack by local dogs (the owners have now moved to England!) and it seemed an ideal opportunity to reappraise the bloodlines in the flock and improve upon them. As Holy Brook Hector was closely related to Bromham Parker, a ram that I particularly admire, it was an opportunity too good to miss. The procedure used was the same as has been described above, but my ewes were served at Aberystwyth instead of Malvern.

It is interesting to compare the results with those of Angela Reid. We had 70% success rate, which is slightly better than average. However all our lambs were heavy singles, averaging around 7.2 kgs (nearly 16 lbs), but there was only one female, the rest were all males. Of the six ram lambs, one was not suitable to register, but the others are all good specimens and three are particularly good.

As far as the exercise was concerned, it was, from my point of view, a success in that I have now got at least three very good rams and two spare ones of which one is out of a totally unrelated shearling ewe which I bought at the Breed Sale last year.

Conclusion

Altogether it has been a most interesting experience and we are really pleased with the resulting lambs. It will be fascinating to see how they grow on, and the standard of lambs they produce in their turn in the future. But we do truly find it a miracle that a lovely ram that died years ago, can live again in his lambs.

Angela Reid and John Flanders

A BRIEF HISTORY OF COTSWOLD SHEEP

The Cotswold sheep is a large, hornless, longwool breed with a white face, a well-developed forelock, which is generally retained at shearing, and a high lustre wool. They are one of the largest British sheep breeds with an average ram weighing 140 kg (22 stones) and a ewe 85 kg (13 stones); and the fleece of a shearling could weigh over 5 kg.

As a breed the Cotswold sheep have survived the highs and lows of agriculture, but today they are regarded as rare with only about 1,300 breeding ewes; however it was not always like this.

As the name implies, they are descended from flocks that grazed the Cotswold Hills and their existence can be traced back to Roman times. It is believed that they were introduced in this country by the Romans who wanted a larger longwool sheep to provide more suitable clothing for the mercenary soldiers more accustomed to South European climate, rather than the short woolled native breeds. After the Romans left in 410 AD, the sheep continued to thrive on the Cotswold Hills where the limestone enabled them to produce good bone and the open nature of the Hills favoured the large longwool breed.

During the Middle Ages the export of wool to Europe, particularly Flanders and Italy, was a major contributor to the national economy and the wool trade accounted for almost half of England's total income. It is said that Flemish weavers, who produced the finest cloth in Europe considered English wool to be the best, and the

best English wool was Cotswold. The continental weavers paid high prices for their Cotswold wool – often buying up whole clips for several years ahead and paying in advance. The wool merchants grew rich and the towns we admire today, such as Burford, Northleach, Cirencester, and Stow are a lasting reminder of that trade. The abbeys of Gloucester and Winchcombe had flocks of 10,000 and 8,000 respectively.

It is interesting to note that, by the 15th Century the export of sheep and wool were prohibited without the king's licence. Such was the prestige of Cotswold wool that in 1437 the King of Portugal applied to Henry VI for permission to export sixty sacks for the manufacture of cloth for court ceremonial dress.

The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries witnessed considerable changes in England, with increasing taxation on wool sold to foreign buyers. The growing population required clothing and feeding, which the Cotswolds, because of their size, were able to satisfy. The advent of machinery at this time that produced fabric from short woolled sheep, which previously was the domain of the longwools, led to a contraction in the number of Cotswold sheep because there was now more wool available.

Whilst its pre-eminence as a wool producer may have declined by the 19th Century, its value as a mutton producer was on the increase and this lasted until the early 20th Century. The demand for Cotswold rams grew, both at home and abroad, and they were much sought after to produce fat lambs especially when crossed on to a Suffolk ewe. Interest in breed improvement led to experiments by crossing Cotswold rams with Hampshire and Southdown ewes which resulted in the creation of the Oxford Down breed of sheep.

Some of the Cotswolds of this time had impressive weights, for example, a ram killed at 2 years and 3 months weighed almost 41 kg per quarter and in 1892 a record weight of 328 kg at the Smithfield Show for a pen of three 9 months old ewes.

Towards the end of the 19th Century the demand for Cotswolds began to wane (4,000 in 1910). The reason for the decline was manifold including the agricultural depression of the 1930's and the preference for smaller carcasses to suit smaller families; it was not unusual for a leg of mutton to weigh in the region of 40 lbs.

The breed hit an all-time low in the 1960's, when there were about 200 sheep in Britain, all within a few miles of Northleach but nearly all in one large flock at Aldsworth. In 1966 the Cotswold Sheep Society had been reformed prior to the

dispersal of the one large flock remaining in the Cotswolds. With the continued existence of the breed becoming increasingly threatened, by the 1970's a group of enthusiasts had become active within the Cotswold Sheep Society to prevent the breed from becoming extinct. Today there are about 1,300 breeding ewes in the country and Cotswold classes at agricultural shows have gradually emerged. The majority of registered flocks are small averaging between 5 and 10 sheep and they tend to be concentrated in the Gloucestershire area, but they can also be found in Shropshire and West Wales with large individual flocks of 150 and 50 ewes respectively.

A number of breeders market the wool and meat and by so doing are having a positive impact in securing the future of this ancient breed albeit it not on the scale previously experienced.

A more detailed history of the breed can be found in the Societies book "Cotswold Sheep" available from Lucinda.

John Flanders

SHOW DATES FOR 2011

DATES	SHOW	TEL NO	CLOSING DATE	JUDGE	QUALIFYING SHOWS
July					
16th July	Stroud Show	01453 883646	1st July	Davina Stanhope	Frank Houlton/Fleece
18th - 21st July	The Royal Welsh	01982 553683	about 5th May		
August					
6th August TBC	Cirencester Show and Sale	01291 680068	about 1st July	Alan Lyons	Frank Houlton
21st August	Cotswold Farmers, Andoversford		6th August	Bob Palmer	Frank Houlton
25th August	Monmouthshire Show	01291 691160	23rd July		
29th August	Berkeley Show	01453 543335	about 10th August	Thomas Jackson	Frank Houlton
29th August	Ilmington Show	01608 682605			
September					
3rd September	Moreton-in-Marsh Show	01608 651908	13th July	Richard Mumford	Frank Houlton
11th September	Frampton Show	01452 740698			

SHOWS

Many members compete at local shows and some do very well, but they do not get mentioned in the Newsletter because we are not made aware of their success.

It is the intention to include in future Newsletters a list of members' successes, and we would be very pleased if those of you who compete, even if is just once in your village show, would let us know, so that recognition can be given to your achievements.

John Flanders

2011 SHOW RESULTS

THREE COUNTIES SHOW

SHEEP CLASSES

Nominated Show for the Frank Houlton Trophy

17th - 18th June 2011

Judge: Mr Robert Boodle

Senior Ram (5 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr D Cross

Shearling Ram (7 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr D Cross
3rd Mr D Cross

Ram Lamb (6 Entries)

1st Mr D Cross
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr D Cross

Senior Ewe (6 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr D Cross
3rd Mr D Cross

Shearling Ewe (6 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr R Jones

Ewe Lamb (6 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr D Cross
3rd Mr D Cross

Group Of Three (2 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope

2nd Mr D Cross

Champion:

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ram – C11886 Tingewick Corrigan

Reserve Champion:

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ewe – C11875 Tingewick Elkie

Brain Challenge Trophy (Champion)

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ram – C11886 Tingewick Corrigan

FLEECE CLASSES

Nominated Show for Golden Fleece Trophy

17th - 18th June 2011

Judge: Mr S Spencer

Lustre (7 Entries)

1st Mr R Harvey Long

2nd Mr D Cross

3rd Mr R Harvey Long

INTERBREED RESERVE CHAMPION FLEECE:

Mr R Harvey Long

Attendance point also awarded to:

Mr R Mumford, Miss D Stanhope

NATIONAL RARE & MINORITY BREED SHOW

SHEEP CLASSES

Nominated Show for the Frank Houlton Trophy

19th June 2011

Judge: Mrs C.Cunningham

Senior Ram (6 Entries)

1st Mr S Parkes

Shearling Ram (5 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope

2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr D Cross

2nd Mr S Parkes
3rd Miss S Furlong &
Mr N Hatch

Ram Lamb (6 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss A Field
3rd Mr S Parkes

Senior Ewe (5 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr D Cross
3rd Mr S Parkes

Shearling Ewe (7 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr S Parkes

Ewe Lamb (6 Entries)

1st Mr R Jones
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr D Cross

Group Of Three (3 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr S Parkes
3rd Miss A Field

Champion:

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ram – C11886 Tingewick Corrigan

Reserve Champion:

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ewe – C11875 Tingewick Elkie

The Bramble Trophy:

Miss D Stanhope - Shearling Ram – C11886 Tingewick Corrigan

FLEECE CLASSES

Nominated Show for Golden Fleece Trophy

19th June 2011

Judge: Mr S Spencer

Longwool - White Class (9 entries)

1st Mr R Harvey Long
2nd Mr R Harvey Long

Reserve Interbreed Champion Fleece:

Mr R Harvey Long

Attendance point also awarded to:

Mr D Cross, Miss A Field, Mr R Mumford, Mr S Parkes

COTSWOLD SHEEP SOCIETY SHOW

SHEEP CLASSES

Nominated Show for the Frank Houlton Trophy

3rd July 2011

Judge: Mr Thomas Jackson

Senior Ram (5 Entries)

1st Mr S Parkes
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr & Mrs N Kay

Shearling Ram (7 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss S Furlong & Mr N Hatch
3rd Mr S Parkes

Ram Lamb (9 Entries)

1st Mr D Cross
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr R Harvey Long

Senior Ewe (9 Entries)

1st Mr S Parkes
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr D Cross

Shearling Ewe (11 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr S Parkes

Ewe Lamb (9 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr R Jones
3rd Mr S Parkes

Group Of Three (6 Entries)

1st Miss D Stanhope
2nd Mr S Parkes
3rd Miss S Furlong & Mr N Hatch

Wool On Hoof (14 Entries)

1st Mr R Harvey Long
2nd Miss D Stanhope
3rd Mr S Parkes

Novice (3 Entries)

1st Mr R Jones

Champion:

Mr S Parkes - Senior Ram - C10497 Kespar Finn

Reserve Champion:

Miss D Stanhope – Shearling Ewe - C11875 Tingewick Elkie

Calcot Shield (Champion):

Mr S Parkes – Senior Ram - C10497 Kespar Finn

Pensham Trophy (Best Opposite Sex):

Miss D Stanhope – Shearling Ewe - C11875 Tingewick Elkie

Millenium Rose Bowl (Best Senior):

Mr S Parkes – Senior Ram - C10497 Kespar Finn

Millenium Cup (Best Shearling):

Miss D Stanhope – Shearling Ewe - C11875 Tingewick Elkie

Millenium Salver (Best Lamb):

Mr D Cross – Ram Lamb – C12005 Westcote Izod

Merlins Trophy (Champion Wool On The Hoof):

Mr R Harvey Long - Shearling Ewe – C11669 Pickwick Imaculada

FLEECE CLASSES

Nominated Show for Golden Fleece Trophy

3rd July 2011

Judge: Miss K Elliott

Fleece (12 Entries)

1st Mr R Harvey - Long

2nd Ms D Stanhope

3rd Mr R Harvey - Long

Attendance point awarded to:

Mr D Cross, Miss S Furlong & Mr N Hatch, Mr S Parkes

COUNCIL CORNER

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE DIARY

FLOCK WALK & AGM ON SUNDAY 24th JULY 2011

To be held at

Lower Harford Farm, Naunton GL54 3AG

By kind permission of Pat Quinn

10.45am: Welcome tea/coffee

11.00am: Flock walk

12.30pm: Lunch (bring your own picnic)

2.00pm: AGM

Please let Lucinda know as soon as possible if you are able to come to give us a rough idea of numbers. We would be very grateful if members could bring some cakes or biscuits to share at refreshment time!

CIRENCESTER SHOW (FRIDAY 5TH AUGUST) AND SALE (SATURDAY 6TH AUGUST)

Please do come and support this Show and Sale

Timetable for both days:

- **Friday 5th August** - Members need to arrive by 12.30pm
- 1pm - Card grading starts (closes at 4.45pm)
- 3pm – last entry time for members showing
- 5pm – judging begins
- Only RED carded sheep are eligible for the show.
- Show on Friday 5th August – Alan Lyons is judging and Caroline Cunningham is stewarding.

- Two card graders for the Show – Richard Mumford and Robert Boodle with Margaret Pursch and another member as stewards.
- **Sale on Saturday 6th August** - Richard Mumford and Robert Boodle are both card grading with Margaret Pursch and another member stewarding. Sheep for sale must arrive by 9am.

For more information or an entry form please contact Chris Voyce on chris.voyce@btconnect.com or 01285 869911 or 01291 680068.

WINTER SOCIAL ON SATURDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2011

**At Condicote Village Hall,
Nr Stow-on-the-Wold, Cheltenham GL54 1ES**

This will take the usual format but further details will be available in the next Newsletter.

The famous “Back to Back” jumper will be auctioned at the dinner. It’s hoped that the “Cotswold Woollies” team will be able to join us at the Winter Social and perhaps we might be able to share a few ideas with them of what we may be able to do together in the future.

If you missed Countryfile on 29th May – don’t worry there will be a chance to see it again at the dinner!

It’s always a great opportunity to meet members both new and old in a relaxed atmosphere.

OTHER MATTERS

The Income and Expenditure Accounts for 2010 are included within this newsletter mailing. Full sets of accounts will be available at the AGM and members can also either download a copy from the CSS website or ask Lucinda for a full set of accounts to be either emailed or posted to them.

CSS Dos and Don’ts of Showing notes – there are some very comprehensive CSS tips on the Dos and Don’ts of showing, which might be of particular interest to new members. A copy of these notes can be downloaded from our website or please let Lucinda know if you’d like a copy emailed or posted to you.

CSS member survey: Council are always keen to provide events and support to all our members and to help with this we would be most grateful if you could kindly complete and return the enclosed survey form to Lucinda.

Frank Williams Nomination Form: The Frank Williams Trophy is presented to anyone who has given outstanding service to the Society. If you would like to nominate some-one for the trophy this year please kindly complete and return the enclosed nomination form to Lucinda by 31st September 2011.

IMPORTANT FORTHCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS

Please do come along and support the Society at **The Cotswold Farmers Show at Andoversford on 21st August** which is a new “Frank Houlton” show on our calendar. Closing date for sheep entries is the beginning of August. Further details can be found on their website (www.cotswoldhunt.co.uk) or via Lynne Parkes (lynne_parkes@msn.com or 01451 830461)

Moreton Show, GL56 0NA is on 3rd September and is always one of the highlights of our CSS year so please do come and support this show. Closing dates for sheep entries is 13th July. For entry forms and further information please go to their website (www.moretonshow.co.uk) or telephone the Moreton office on 0870 877 7409.

RBST Show (30 September) and Sale (1st October) at Stoneleigh. For further information or entry forms for this event please contact Mr S Draper on 07774 723758 or rfm@rugbyfarmersmart.com Members are encouraged to support this RBST event but the Society “official” show and sale will remain in Cirencester in August.

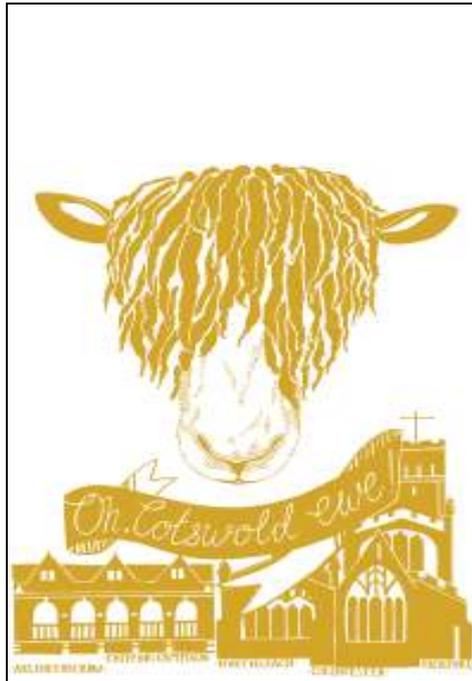
CSS MERCHANDISE

Notelets: Some excellent new notelets and postcards have been produced to raise money for the Society. These can be ordered directly from Lucinda as well as being available at CSS shows/events. A pack of notelets are £4.99 and postcards are 50p each. Members can purchase 10 cards at a discounted rate of £2.50 (plus 50p p & p).

CSS Ties: Please note that the price of the Society ties has been reduced to £10 each with a special price for new members of £8. Please contact either Lynne or Lucinda if you'd like to buy one.

Tea Towels: Stephanie Cole, an inspiring young artist from near Cirencester has

kindly designed the tea towel below, which will be available to buy from either Lucinda or at CSS shows/events. The tea towels cost £10 each and are of a very high quality and beautifully presented. They will make excellent Christmas presents particularly to family and friends abroad. Stephanie has also produced a limited edition of 26 of the print in Cotswold green, all signed, dated and numbered in a natural beech 40x50cm frame at a cost of £60 each. For further information on these prints or her other work please visit <http://bystephaniecole.blogspot.com>.



WINTER SOCIAL

A number of members have expressed the view that the Winter Social should be a lunchtime meal instead of an evening one, which it has been for the past 15 years or more. The advantage of a lunchtime meal is that it enables members to attend without having to drive in the dark and the past couple of years have been particularly cold and icy which makes driving more hazardous. The advantage of an evening meal is that those members who are working during the day are able to attend, which they may not otherwise be able to do.

Before making a decision Council would welcome the thoughts of members and it is to be discussed at the AGM under Any Other Business, but if members are unable to get to the AGM could they let Lucinda know their thoughts beforehand.

John Flanders

COTSWOLD SHEEP SOCIETY

NEW DESIGNS

POSTCARDS (Pastels)



Cotswold Studies



Cotswold Ewe



Cotswold Lambs



Cotswolds by the Tree

NOTELETS



Postcards (Pastels) - 50p per card (Members 10 cards for £3.00) + (50p p&p)

Notelets are in packs of 10 (5 of each design) + envelopes

£4.99 per pack + (£1.00 p&p)

or free collection at shows by previous arrangement.

Please send your order and payment to:

Lucinda Foster, Hampton Rise, 1 High Street, Meysey Hampton, GL7 5JW

(Cheques payable to 'The Cotswold Sheep Society')

ORIGINAL PHOTO POSTCARDS STILL AVAILABLE

JOE HENSON MBE

In the Queen's Birthday Honours Joe Henson has been awarded the MBE in recognition of his services to conservation and in particular as founder of the Rare Breed Survival Trust and Cotswold Farm Park. At various times since joining the Society in the 1970's Joe has been Chairman, President, Vice President and for many years a member of Council.

In addition, at the Three Counties Showground, Joe was also presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award together with a glass goblet from the Chairman of the Rare Breed Survival Trust, Tim Brigstocke.

I am sure that members will agree that the awards are richly deserved.

John Flanders

RAFFLE

Members will be aware that raffle tickets were sent to each member in April, but to date only about 280 counterfoils have been returned to Lucinda. It may be that some members, and I am guilty of this, have not returned them in the hope that further sales will be made. Could members please therefore return the counterfoils they have sold as soon as possible together with a cheque made payable to the Cotswold Sheep Society. If you need any more books please contact Lucinda and she will willingly send you some. It is important that as many raffle tickets as possible are sold since this will help the Society's funds considerably – as the saying goes “every penny (in this case pound) helps”.

So, go forth and sell!!

John Flanders

OLD PRINTER CARTRIDGES

Members are reminded that old printer cartridges, except those for Epson printers, 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.

John Flanders

VETRAZIN POUR ON

Members should be aware that the meat withdrawal period for Vetrazin has been extended from 3 days to 28 days. This could have considerable management implications for those marketing stock for meat.

John Flanders

MORE PHOTOS OF THE BACK TO BACK



The crew



*Thomas Jackson offering advice
(courtesy of Davina Clift)*



Adam Henson learning the finer points of wool selection



How many more sheep to shear?



Margaret Pursch teaching Adam Henson how to knit



Thomas Jackson and Adam Henson trying to beat Paul Verney



The venue – Alison Garne's magnificent barn

DIRECTORY

This directory gives a list of members' products derived from pedigree Cotswold sheep and useful e-mail addresses/phone numbers. If anyone wants to be added to the list please let me know on 01545 590438. Cotswold cross products will be shown only in the Miscellaneous Section.

Meat

Boxed lamb, mutton, and BBQ packs – **Jonathan Brunyee** – 01451 844342;
www.conygreefarm.co.uk

Skins

Lamb skins - **Steve Parkes** – 01451 830461
Lamb skins – **John Flanders** – 01545 590438
Lamb and sheep skins – **Angela Reid** – 01865 343133

Woollen Goods

Knitting wool, body warmers, throws, scarves, cushions - **John Flanders** – 01545 590438; www.hendraveancotswolds.co.uk
Knitting wool – **Edna Powell** – 01453 883646

Miscellaneous

Sticks, crooks – **John Flanders** – 01545 590438
Sewing machine repairs, knitting wool – **Edna Powell** – 01453 883646
Coloured lamb skins – **Angela Reid** – 01865 343133
Rare breed pork – **Fiona Park** – 01558 669160

E-mail Addresses/Phone Numbers

National Sheep Association – 01684 892661; www.nationalsheep.org.uk
Farming Connect Service Centre – 08456 000 813
www.wales.gov.uk/environmentandcountryside (Wales only)

SHEEP FOR SALE/WANTED

This is a free service for buyers and sellers

If you wish to advertise in the next Newsletter, please contact me by 15th October.

FOR SALE

Would members please supply details of sheep that are for sale.

Mrs. Angela Reid, Queenford Farm, Dorchester on Thames, Wallingford, OX10 7PH.

Tel: 01865 343133 Email: amreid343@msn.com

HAS FOR SALE a variety of pedigree stock of all ages from her prizewinning QUEENFORD flock.

Mr Ben Brown, Turley Farm, Hailey, Witney, Oxon OX29 9XA

Tel: 01993 868537 or 07881 820415

HAS FOR SALE 8 ewes, 3 ewe lambs, and 1 ram lamb

WANTED

Would members please supply details of sheep that are wanted

RAMS FOR HIRE

Mr Steve Parkes, 47 King George's Field, Stow On The Wold, Gloucestershire

Tel. 01451 830461

HIRES OUT RAMS and members should contact him for further details.

Mr Jon Shaw, Clapsgate House, Arlingham, Gloucestershire

Tel 01452 740597

HAS A RAM for hire

SHEEP RELATED EQUIPMENT

Mr John Flanders, Glyn Yr Eryr, Talgarreg, Llandysul, Ceredigion

Tel. 01545 590438

E-mail info@hendraveancotswolds.co.uk

HAS FOR SALE a round bale cradle, and a heat lamp