



Cotswold Sheep Society Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1013326
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Council Officers

Chairman – The Hon. Mrs A. Reid Vice-Chairman – Miss D. Stanhope
Secretary - Mrs. S. Webb Treasurer - Mrs. L. Parkes

Council Members

Mr. D. Cross, Mrs. C. Cunningham,
Mr. S. Parkes, Mrs. M. Pursch, and Mr. J. Webb

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.



Many hands make light work at Andoversford

EDITORIAL

John Flanders

After over five years as editor of the Newsletter, I have decided to stand down and pass the baton to Mark Pettit, who, although he has only recently joined the Society, is keen to contribute to its running. Mark has a number of new ideas and I am sure that under his guidance and direction the newsletter will prosper and provide important information to members. The Newsletter is a conduit for discussion and I would hope that members use this facility to raise issues, which are of interest to others in the Society.

In this respect I should like to thank everyone who, when asked, has very kindly written articles, often at short notice, on a variety of subjects and not necessarily related to Cotswold sheep. They have all been interesting and informative. I would also like to thank my wife, Jan, who endured many hours of me writing articles as well as our son, Barry, who patiently told me how to turn on the computer and explained the vagaries of computers to me; if it was not for him there would not have been a Newsletter.

With the huge “thank you” out of the way, this edition of the Newsletter introduces the new Secretary, Mrs Sherry Webb, and the new Editor, Mr Mark Pettitt, both of whom have written articles about themselves and their flocks.

With that short Editorial, I will take my leave of you and wish you all a successful lambing.

KEFRAN FLOCK

Mark Pettitt

Barbara Good has got a lot to answer for!

We had never kept animals before, except for a few chickens, but had always liked the idea of having a smallholding. So in preparation, I enrolled on a smallholding course about six years ago.

When a five acre field came up for sale near our house in Kenilworth, we bought it with much excitement and a bit of uncertainty. By the time it was ours, the whole field was covered 5ft high with thistles. We found a very helpful farmer who topped,

sprayed, ploughed and seeded it with grass. He showed me how to put up stock fencing and he lent me his fencing tools. Then after adding a water supply, an old grey Fergie and some sheds and pig arcs and we were ready to go.

We bought a few Tamworth pigs to fatten up and, after putting a sign up on the gate, we quickly sold out of joints and sausages.

We then started to look into getting some sheep. We liked the idea of 'rare breeds' and 'local' so, after looking at lots of books and websites, we plumped for Cotswolds.

By coincidence, our first contact with the society was with John Flanders, in response to his advert, selling some shearlings. John was most helpful on the phone, answering our array of questions and, although we were prepared to have a trip out to Wales, John, very kindly, suggested calling Steve Parkes.

So our first shearlings were purchased from Steve, who has acted as my mentor ever since. I'm not sure he realised what he was letting himself in for, with my numerous phone calls whenever I have been unsure of something – especially at lambing time.

We also had a foray into another breed, when a local sheep dealer wanted to offload 20 Soays. They are rare breed but not quite so local, being from the Western Highlands of Scotland. I think I heard him laughing as he unloaded and drove away. It was enjoyable having them, being the complete opposite of the Cotswolds, they played Grandmother's footsteps with us, following us around and then scarpering when you turned to look at them. We had to catch them by putting food in a pen and hiding behind a Landrover then jumping out to shut them in.

We then rented one of Steve's rams and ended up with eight lambs. By this time we had accumulated a good customer base from having monthly pork and sausages sales, so it wasn't too difficult to sell a few whole and half lambs from our door.

The thought of showing sheep was quite daunting, but on entering a shearling and lamb at the Cotswold Summer Show, we found it to be very relaxed with everyone being very supportive and welcoming. The 'Bring-and-Share' lunch idea is brilliant and always a wonderful affair.

On our smallholding, we now have ten ewes in lamb, one of Steve's rams, nine lambs, ten Tamworth pigs, 55 Kelly Bronze Turkeys and eight bee hives (not sure what breed).

REDWICK FLOCK

Sherry Webb

We first became involved with Cotswold Sheep about 4 years ago having seen them at Berkeley Show. John, already involved in farming with commercial sheep and cattle, already knew of the breed but wanted to find out more about them. At the time we had a small flock of commercial sheep of our own but we both wanted to support a rare breed. The long fleeces and the dreadlock forelocks made them look very appealing and they have such wonderful temperaments.

We have a smallholding of about 17 acres divided between 3 fields, an orchard and the use of 4 other smaller paddocks within a mile or two of where we live, these are owned by the local GP who I work for and a friend. The land is also shared with our 3 horses, who tolerate the sheep from a distance!

Having done some research and sourced a contact number of a breeder of Cotswold sheep we arranged a visit to potentially purchase two shearling ewes! We drove to Wyck Rissington where we met Derek and Maggie Cross of the Westcote Flock who showed us around. I have to say it was one of the most interesting afternoons I have ever had! Derek had corralled a few shearlings and asked John to pick out the two that we were interested in and said that afterwards he would tell us if we had made the right choice as some were not correct!! We learned a lot that afternoon and we are still continuing to learn about the breed.

The following year we attempted our first show which we both really enjoyed and only having the two we brought the previous autumn for the show, it gave us the chance to watch and learn from the other classes. From then on, once we had increased our flock over the years, we have done many shows and have had entries in every class. One of our proudest moments was at Moreton Show this year when we came 4th with our home bred senior ram 'Archie'. We still have yet to master the brilliant white fleece!!

The social side to the Society is second to none, from the start we were made to feel very welcome and everyone has been so helpful. I would encourage anyone who is new to the Society to come along to our social get togethers, it is a chance to make new friends, learn and enjoy yourself.

Last year John was asked if he would like to become a member of Council by Derek Cross and Davina Stanhope and a few months later I was also asked.

As the tuppung season is with us, we are all hoping that maybe in the lambs that are born next year that there will be a champion among them!!

RBST GENE BANK

Richard Broad - RBST

The RBST has a Genebank of frozen AI straws for most if not all the rare breeds of Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, Goats and Equines. Over the last few months we have been looking at the Genebank to see if it fulfils the need we have for it.

It was established to collect semen from 25 males as unrelated as possible within each breed and to store it for future use. At present we have only 10 Cotswold rams in the Genebank, and it is highly likely they could be related to each other to some extent. This is not a problem but obviously we need to increase the numbers of males represented in this Semen Archive. This year for our Christmas appeal we are raising money to continue the AI collections of sheep breeds.

The RBST with the NSA also co owns the Scrapie Ram Semen Archive, and this contains a large number more of many breeds. Some of these might be unregistered and some from data we have are likely to be untraceable to find a pedigree. However over the next few months we will be asking the breed societies to help identify the rams in this archive. This will allow us to keep, use and preserve the registered males (Total annual archive cost around £10,000) for future use.

We also are looking at setting up another store location for the Genebank. At present most is stored at one site, and this has its risks. So other locations are being looked at.

Please support the RBST Christmas Appeal if you can.

THE SOCIETY SUMMER SHOW

Angela Reid

This was the first year for some time that the Society Show took place in the morning and the AGM in the afternoon. It all started well with weather that was fairly grey, but dry. Our position under a beautiful avenue of towering trees in full leaf, meant that had it been hot, we would have been well shaded – but possibly had it rained we could have been well... dripped upon... but it stayed dry!

The evening before, a strong team of helpers had turned up to put up the Society stand and marquee. There was a certain amount of discussion as to where everything was to go. Decisions eventually made, one group went to put up the stand, which went up in record time, while the second group took on Steve and Lynne Parkes's new marquee, which they were kindly allowing us to use,

This was its 'maiden raising' – and proved a bit of a challenge. Anyone who has ever tried putting together flat pack furniture can easily picture the scene as Steve read out the instructions as to how pole A slotted into pole B and then into pole C – while the rest of us tried desperately to identify poles A, B and C. They all seemed remarkably similar. When one pole A was lost, it took some tracking down as it had disguised itself as a pole B. However thanks to everyone's hard work, patience and good humour, eventually the marquee, stand and pens were all ready for the following day.

There was an excellent turn out of sheep at the show. All classes had good entries, with a particularly strong class of shearling ewes. Steve Parkes was judging and he had quite a job on his hands. It was particularly encouraging to see several new members showing for the first time, and doing very well. It was also good to have the opportunity to have Novice as well the Junior Handler classes.

This is the wonderful thing about the Society Show – it really is the perfect place to have a go at showing. Even if your sheep don't do well, you can see how they compare to sheep from other flocks. If you want advice as to how improve your flock, there are immensely knowledgeable people all around you, who will be very happy to answer any questions you might have about Cotswolds in particular, or sheep in general.

It is certainly quite daunting to find that the huge lamb you have in your field at home is actually rather small when you get it into the show ring. It is however

wonderful when you find that special sheep – really is rather special and you get your first red rosette.

After the showing classes had finished members settled down to the ‘Bring and Share’ lunch organised, as usual, with enormous efficiency by Margaret Pursch and Frances Whiteman. Members had produced a wonderful selection of salads and puddings of every description, and accompanied by a glass or two of Pimms, courtesy of Ian (Reid), it was a great opportunity to relax after the busy morning. There was also time for some members to check out the rest of the show ground, before the AGM began at 2.30 (see below)

Following the AGM the day finished with a much appreciated cup of tea, and a huge selection of delicious cakes. The work parties then leapt into action again, and there was no doubt that dismantling Steve’s marquee was a great deal easier than erecting it the night before had been – and many hands did make light work!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13th July 2014

The AGM began promptly, with the official business being concluded speedily. Robert Boodle retired as President and was thanked by the Chairman for all his years of service to the Society, and Judy Wilkie was then elected President. Richard Mumford had retired from Council, and he was duly elected Vice-President. Angela Reid and Davina Stanhope were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. Derek Cross and Caroline Cunningham were re-elected onto Council, while Sherry and John Webb were elected for the first time.

The Chairman thanked everyone who had helped set up and run the Society Summer Show and AGM. She particularly thanked Adrian Loker for stewarding the show, and Kate Elliott for judging both the Fleece and the ‘Wool on the Hoof’ classes. However a particular thank you went to Lynne and Steve Parkes – for all their help with organising and setting up the day. She also mentioned that Council were keen to encourage anyone who wanted to support the Society, but did not want to keep sheep, to become Associate Members.

AT HOME WITH RICHARD MUMFORD

The weather was perfect for the barbecue, and there was in the end a good turn out of members. Everyone who did attend was in for a treat. Derek (Cross) and Richard got the barbecue fired up and started cooking while everyone enjoyed their glass of Pimms. Lunch was eaten outside and we all set about consuming the wide range of salads, followed by an amazing selection of puddings, many of them brought by the guests.

After lunch members relaxed, or explored the beautiful garden with its ponds and secret corners. Across the *ha-ha* Richard's flock of Cotswolds could be spotted grazing contentedly amongst the fruit trees, or lying in the shade ruminating quietly on life. A small raffle took place and the day did raise several hundred pounds for the Society. It was altogether a wonderful afternoon, and the Society is most grateful to Richard and Margaret for their generous hospitality.

CIRENCESTER SHOW & SALE

The Breed Sale took place at Cirencester Market as part of Voyce Pullins's Rare Breeds Sale on 2nd August 2014. The previous night most of the Cotswolds had arrived ready for card grading. One of the great benefits of buying sheep at the sale is that the sheep are graded and that a buyer can be confident of what he is buying. This year the card graders were Robert Boodle and Derek Cross. The sheep forward were of good quality and there were 36 red cards awarded, 10 blue cards, and no yellow or white cards. There was just one shearling ram and three ram lambs forward. There were sadly no senior rams.

Richard Mumford was the judge for the show, which followed later that evening. Davina Stanhope was awarded the Championship and the beautiful Peter Walwin Perpetual Trophy for her shearling ewe Tingewick Cordelia.

The barbecue, which followed the show was a most relaxing and sociable affair, and a great way to finish an exhausting day.

The sale the following day was well attended and bidding got off to a good start with the shearling ram selling for £360. The top price paid for a female was £330 for a shearling ewe, with the average price being a healthy £157. The lambs sold well with the average price paid for a ewe lamb being £104 and £150 for a ram lamb.

COUNCIL CORNER

Resignations – With regret Council has to announce Sam Furlong's resignation as Secretary. Sam has worked hard for the Society over the two years she has been in office, and we are grateful to her for her efforts on our behalf.

We regret too that Neil Hatch (Woody) has resigned from Council. During his time on Council he has spent a considerable amount of time working on Trademark issues, particularly the development of a simplified recording system designed to make the Trademark more attractive to members. We will miss his valuable input into Council discussions.

Secretary - As a consequence of the above, Sherry Webb has kindly agreed to step down from Council in order to take on the role of Secretary. She can be contacted by email at info@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk or Mob: 07974 042445. Her address is 54 Redwick Road, Pilning, Bristol, BS35 4LU.

Flock Book - Council would like to apologise for the printing and production problems connected with the 2013 Flock Book. We would like to reassure all members that the 2014 Flock Book is already being assembled with a view to publishing it in the New Year. Owing to the delayed publication of the 2013 Flock Book the adverts taken out in that edition will be published in the 2014 Flock Book free of charge. If anyone else would like to advertise their flocks, or businesses, in the 2014 edition, please would they contact the Secretary for further information at info@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk or on Tel: 07974 042445.

The Winter Social with Guest Speaker - will take place on 29th November at the Westwood Centre, Northleach.(6.45 for 7.00) Please do come along, this is always an excellent evening giving everyone a chance to relax and chat with old and new friends - and this year we have an additional treat in store.

We are extremely pleased to be able to announce that BBC Radio Gloucestershire's **Vernon Harwood**, a great supporter of the rare breeds of the area, has kindly agreed to give us a short talk after dinner.

As usual there will be a raffle – the top prize so far is another Family Ticket for Burghley House, Stamford, home to one of our newest flocks. This includes access to Burghley House, the Garden of Surprises and the Sculpture Garden (see www.burghley.co.uk). The prize also includes cream tea for 4 people in the Orangery

Restaurant. More prizes will, as always, be gratefully received on the night.

The Winter Social form is enclosed with this newsletter; it will also be available for download from the website.

The Frank Williams Trophy Nomination Form: This is included in this Newsletter and will also be 'Downloadable' from the website! Please do consider sending in a nomination, as this trophy is an excellent way of thanking a member, or non-member, for their hard work on behalf of the Society.

Newsletter – This is John Flanders final newsletter, and Mark Pettitt is the brave man who has offered to take on the role of Editor. Please see the article elsewhere in the Newsletter for further information.

Postage and Printing: We are always trying to reduce our postage and printing costs, so please let the Secretary know if you are happy to have the Newsletter by email, and that you will download any relevant forms off the website.

Associate Membership: Council would like to remind members that if they know of anyone who would like to support the Society, but have no desire to keep a flock themselves, that they can become Associate Members. They will have all the benefits of full membership, except voting rights, for a reduced fee. For further information please contact the Secretary.

Website – Carol Bateman is very keen to have any photos or snippets of Cotswold related news to add to the website or Facebook. Please contact her via web@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk

WORKSHOPS

In the last Newsletter we wrote that Council was considering running a '**Cotswold Care**' workshop, and asked for expressions of interest from members.

All sheep breeds have some significant differences from each other, and this day would give anyone attending a chance to understand what makes our Cotswolds 'special', as well as looking at the essentials of caring for any sheep. Topics covered could include feeding the pregnant ewe, how to handle larger sheep, foot trimming, lambing, basic Cotswold management, as well as advice on choosing lambs to register, and how to select and prepare your best sheep for showing.

If anyone who didn't get in touch before, would now be interested in such a workshop, then please do contact the Secretary at info@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk or Mob: 07974 042445.

SHEARING SMALL FLOCKS

As mentioned in the previous Newsletter, Council is aware that it can be difficult, and expensive, to find shearers prepared to come to you and shear very small flocks of Cotswolds. We are still investigating whether it would be possible to have a day, probably during May, at some central venue where members with small flocks could bring their sheep to be shorn.

The venue would be undercover, so that the day would not be weather dependent – anyone bringing sheep would just have to ensure they arrived dry.

We will only be able to set this up if there is enough interest to make it viable. If you would like more information, or would just like to express an interest please contact the Secretary at info@cotswoldsheepsociety.co.uk or Mob: 07974 042445.

THE NEWSLETTER

John Flanders is about to hang up his Editor's hat and retire from the challenges of the Newsletter. Council would like to take this opportunity to thank John very much for all his hard work over the years. From the furthest corner of Wales he has kept us in touch with each other, informed and entertained – a great achievement for which the whole Society is grateful.

Council is very pleased to inform you that one of the Society's newest members has agreed to take on the Editorship of the Newsletter. Mark Pettitt will be known to those of you who attended the Winter Social last year; his Kefran flock won a special award for being the best New Flock.

Mark runs a small holding in Kenilworth where he has Kelly Bronze turkeys, Tamworth pigs, Cotswold sheep and as if that's not enough, he has bees too. He will be taking over from John in the New Year.

If you have any suggestions as to things you would like to see in future newsletters, want to place an advert, or maybe write an article, Mark would love to hear from you at home@markpettitt.co.uk, or Tel: 01926 855000.

SHEEP FOR SALE

This is a free service for buyers and sellers.

The list is constantly being updated, so please do contact the Secretary or check the web site if you wish to buy.

FOR SALE

Mrs R Snape, 3 Manor Road, Brize Norton, Oxon OX18 3NA

Tel.: 07443 437014

HAS FOR SALE

Cottage Silver Comet - C11532 - DOB: 20.3.2010

Turley Boy - C11634 - DOB: 15.02.2010

Cottage Cagger - C12044 - DOB: 01.03.2011

Mr A Porter, Clare Park Farm, Crondall, Hampshire, GU10 5DT

Tel.: 01252 850387

HAS FOR SALE, owing to the unsuitability of some of their grassland for sheep, the following:

15 ewes born in 2012. These were all bought in as ewe lambs from the Tingewick Flock. The sires are Tingewick Titan (C10929), Tingewick Nomad (C10930) and Tingewick Hogan (C8634).

Chipping Campden School, Cider Mill Lane, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire GL55 6HU

TEL. 01386 840216 (Geoff Carr)

E-MAIL GC@chippingcampden.gloucs.sch.uk

HAS FOR SALE a number of ewes of various ages

WANTED:

None

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.