



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

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Newsletter 97 – January 2016

From the Chairman...

Hello everyone and happy new year to you all. Let's hope it's a little drier than the last month of last year, I know our Society is country wide but I don't think anyone has escaped the wet although some are a little worse than others. From one extreme to another as always – when we got home tonight from electric fencing (which is what we seem to do every afternoon this time of year) it was raining ice. I managed the first half of the lane but the last corner beat me, so had to unload bike and trailer and get on the grass up the side of the lane. Jill looked quite cold when she got up home with the bike and trailer!

Feeding is a nightmare as it is for everyone I talk to, with hard dry rough ground just as bad as everywhere else. No matter how old the person you talk to, they've never known it so wet. Anyway enough about the weather we can't do anything about it.

On the upside, lamb prices have hardened a bit – not enough, but be thankful for small mercies. The 'Fundraising and Thank God Lambing is Over' dinner is set for the end of May so I hope as many as possible will try and attend – details are on the enclosed flyer. There are plenty of raffle prizes promised and maybe a small auction if we can find an auctioneer! This should be a relaxing and fun afternoon among friends after three months of lambing. I look forward to seeing you there – look after yourselves till then.

Paul

Editor's bleat

Our next big event will be the Sunday Lunch at Meltham Golf Club on 29th May. A flyer is enclosed, so please buy your tickets and get your friends organised now. Raise funds for the Society by enjoying yourselves! Even with Neville Belfield's exceedingly generous donation of his prizewinning tup, we still need to top up

our reserves after buying the registration program last year. If you would like further copies of the flyer to use as posters, please contact Robert.

For once, we are posting this Newsletter to everyone, rather than relying on e-mail, just to make sure you all know about the lunch. Also enclosed are the draft minutes of the AGM and, if you haven't paid your subscription yet, there will be a renewal reminder too.

The Committee has finally codified the Rules for Registration in what has now become known as the **Hill Register**. These are detailed on page 4. Now that I have [just about] mastered registration and printing certificates, I need to investigate the further potential of Breed Society Record, including producing a Flock Book.

I persuaded one of our newer members, Rupert Arnold, from High Braythorne Farn near Otley, to write something about his flock and what brought him to Woodlands. We should love to hear from any members, new or old, about their flocks and their experiences.

In addition to the shows listed on page 3, Halifax Show may run Woodland classes this year. Date is Saturday 13 August, more details from their website www.halifaxagriculturalshow.co.uk or contact Mrs E Greenwood on 01422 825325. We will let you all know if this goes ahead. If it does, it will be included as a qualifying show for the Champion of Champions at Hope.

To encourage members to show, we should like to create a cumulative points system for the winners of all Woodland show classes. This could include Penistone and Hayfield, which are too late in the year to qualify for the Championship. Suggestions were 4 points for Champion, 3 for 1st etc., with a trophy awarded at the AGM for the member who had accumulated the most points. The details need a bit of sorting out (!) and perhaps we could do a trial year to see how well it works.

Annual Woodland Sale



[Photo: P J Onions]

Paul Dixon reports:

Ewes: £152 and £150 from A Crampton, sold to Denton and Bramwell; £138 from E & J Lees, sold to C Campbell.

Shearlings: £118 from P Thorp, sold to Denton and Bramwell; £107 and £106 from N Belfield.

Rams: 3 rams from N. Belfield: £1950 (Champion of Champions) sold to R Howard; £1500 (winner of Ken Wild Trophy) sold to C Campbell; £1050 sold to H Smith. Also £480 from E & J Lees, sold to C Hodgson; £480 from J T & T A Wigham sold to N Belfield; £400 from S Burford sold to J Jones.



Mrs Wild presents the trophy to Neville Belfield. [Photo P J Onions]

Ram lambs: £200 and £170 from A Crampton, both sold to C Mitchell.

In general, there was a large show of rams, but very selective purchasing. Five shearlings from N Belfield averaged £1020 each. Only the pen of ram lambs from the Crampton family were bid strongly, with a high of £200. Average for five was £135. There was a disappointing supply of females.

Other Sales

Skipton Sale on 5 September had a good entry of decent sheep, but disappointing prices. Julie Beardwell sold shearling ewes to 90gn, but not all 10 reached their reserve. Shearling tups reached £170 and two ram lambs from Sarah and Jimmy

Seed made £75 and £72. Judith Hawkhead reported: "Saturday was an extremely poor and disappointing sale. I needed my ewes to go due to lack of space, so my top price was £89, the bottom being £74. There were few buyers and many sheep throughout the day went unsold."

At the **Bakewell Hill Sheep Sale** on 10 October, Christian Ayres sold 19 shearling ewes to £128.

About a dozen Woodlands, mainly from Ric Halsall's Beckermond flock, were sold at the **York Sale** in early October, but I have no further details to hand.

Visit to Glencoyne Farm

Our AGM in October was held at Sam and Can Hodgson's Glencoyne Farm, which rises dramatically above Patterdale. The meeting was well attended and a number of topics either resolved or referred to the Committee - draft minutes are enclosed.

After an excellent lunch in their traditional Lakes farmhouse, members adjourned to the farm to look at the sheep. Whilst the dog went off on his own to round us up a flock of Woodlands, members had a go at judging the pens of sheep which Sam had gathered for us. Then followed a visit to the tups, in a circular pen which is part of their robust handling system, where the merits of each animal were discussed at length. We also looked at some of their Swale and Herdwick tups



Glencoyne tups [Photo: P J Onions]

Our thanks to Can and Sam for hosting this event and making us so welcome, and for providing a window of fine weather! Can reports that, apart from landslides, lack of phones and power, and being cut off by road, they have survived the recent storms reasonably well, and have been able to get about and to their stock on quad bikes.

Shows in 2016 offering Woodland classes

Honley Show, Honley, West Yorks. Sat 11 June.
Contact: Sally Hampshire 07809 619649
www.honleyshow.co.uk General enquiries:
01484 661072.

Judge proposed: Clive Mitchell

Royal Three Counties Show - Rare Breeds Day
on Sun 19 June. Contact Fiona Parker on 01684
584901 or e-mail: fionap@threecounties.co.uk

Judge proposed: Rob Ford

North Yorkshire County Show, Northallerton.
Sun 19 June. Contact: Len Cragg 01609 773577.
Schedule and entry forms on line at
www.northyorkshireshow.co.uk

Judge proposed: Neville Belfield

Harden Moss Sheep Show and Sheepdog Trials,
Holmfirth. Sun 19 June. Contact: Christine
Smith 01484 680823.

Judge proposed: Tessa Wigham

Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate. Tues 12 to
Thurs 14 July. Contact: Amanda Stoddart-West
on 01423 546231 or amandaw@yas.co.uk.
www.greatyorkshireshow.com

Judge proposed: Tony Redfern

Ryedale Show, Kirkbymoorside. Tues 26 July.
Contact: Mrs A Welham 07967 198011
ann.welham@cundalls.co.uk or download entry
form at www.ryedaleshow.org.uk

Judge proposed: Chareen Kaye

Mottram Show, Mottram, near Glossop. Sun 21
Aug Contact: Angela Oldham 0161 351 1263.
www.mottramshow.co.uk

Judge proposed: Sam Hodgson

Hope Show. Mon 29 August Champion of
Champions follows regular WFW classes.

Contact: Elise Priestley:

livestock@hopeshow.co.uk.

www.hopeshow.co.uk

Judge proposed: James Gill;

Championship: Craig Bradbury

Penistone Show. Sat 10 Sept
www.penistoneshow.com. Contact: Mrs
Earnshaw 01484 766542. E-mail:
elaine.29@hotmail.co.uk

Judge proposed: Richard Cottrill

Hayfield Country Show, High Peak. Sun 18 Sept
www.hayfieldshow.co.uk Contact: Sarah Mellor
01663 746580 or
sarah.mellor4@btopenworld.com.

Judge proposed: John Jones

Sales in 2016

Sat 3 Sep – date still to be confirmed, Rare
Breeds Show & Sale at Skipton. Craven Cattle
Marts: 01756 792375. www.ccmauctions.com

9-10 Sep Traditional and Native Breeds Show
and Sale at Melton Mowbray.
www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk

Sat 17 Sep - Show & Sale of Rare & Minority
Breeds at Carlisle. Harrison & Hetherington :
01228 640924 www.livestock-sales.co.uk

Sun 25 Sept - Annual Whitefaced Woodland
Show and Sale. Contact Paul Dixon at William
Sykes 01484 683543.

2-3 Oct - Show & Sale of Rare & Minority
Breeds York Livestock Centre 01904 489731
www.ylc.co.uk

Rupert Arnold writes from High Braythorne Farm:

We are new to farming, though I have spent a lifetime with horses. We own 136 acres of mixed grassland, which has been let in various forms of tenure to a local dairy farmer. We decided to take back just under 12 acres close the house to start our own sheep enterprise and use some of the old farm buildings. The land, which slopes gently to the south west, is situated at the lower end of Wharfedale at around 600 ft and is all permanent pasture.

We researched various breeds and chose Whitefaced Woodlands for their (reasonably) local origin, hardiness, temperament and looks. We wanted a traditional breed and something to differentiate our flock from the numerous commercial sheep farmers that surround us. We were also attracted by the potential to find some value in their fleece. Our flock numbers 16. I bought three ewes with twin lambs direct from Ric Halsall at Kettlewell. Two of the ewes are registered, one not. Then I bought seven gimmer shearlings from Neville Belfield at the Holmfirth sale last autumn. I look forward to participating in the Society's events and learning more.

Registering Whitefaced Woodlands

Introduction

The Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society (WWSS) is an organisation run by Whitefaced Woodland (WW) breeders for Whitefaced Woodland breeders. Our aim as a Society is to improve the quality of the breed and to promote it. Although there are thousands of unregistered WW sheep kept pure, only a fraction are currently being registered. It is the purpose of the **Hill Register** to offer any WW owner or breeder the opportunity to register good quality WW sheep within an affordable flock book. In conjunction with the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, we have negotiated a mechanism whereby WW sheep with three generations of fully registered ancestors can be entered into the Combined Flock Book (CFB), should the owner or breeder wish to do so. However, if preferred, all future generations of their WW sheep may be kept in the Hill Register.

If you wish to register sheep, please contact one of the Society's officers.

Rules for Registration

Foundation Stock and Rams

1. An application to register an animal should be made by the owner of the animal to the Registrar.
2. Any animal for which registration is applied for must conform to the breed standard published from time to time by the Society.
3. An animal may be entered into the Register subject to the animal being inspected by two Inspectors (or one inspector for ewe inspections at the discretion of an officer). Inspectors are appointed by the Society and a list is available. Both inspectors must agree that the animal presented for registration conforms to the breed standard and is fit to be registered.
4. We ask the owner of the animal to provide:
 - a) tag number
 - b) date of birth
 - c) as much pedigree information as is available.
5. Animals will be eligible for registration from 12 months of age.

Progeny

6. An application may be made to enter a ewe into the Register without inspection providing that its sire and dam are registered with the Society. Animals thus registered shall be marked in the Register as progeny stock. **NB** Rams cannot be entered as progeny, and must be inspected.

Procedure

7. An animal entered into the Register is identified by its unique UK tag no. If replaced, the Registrar should be informed.
8. An animal entered into the Register receives a paper certificate which should accompany the animal when sold.
9. Owners must inform the Registrar of the death of any registered animal.
10. Vendors must inform the Registrar of any sales of registered stock, and purchasers may apply to the Registrar for a replacement certificate.
11. All persons applying to register an animal must be members of the WWSS. A fee shall be paid to the Society by the owner of any animal being registered and this shall be in accordance with the scale of fees published from time to time.
12. Current fees (payable upon registration) are:
 - Rams £5.00
 - Ewes (foundation) £1.00
 - Ewes (progeny) £1.00
 - Replacement certificate £1.00

*Adopted at the WWSS Committee meeting on 28 November 2015, to start from 1 January 2016.
The current Registrar is Ann Godschalk*

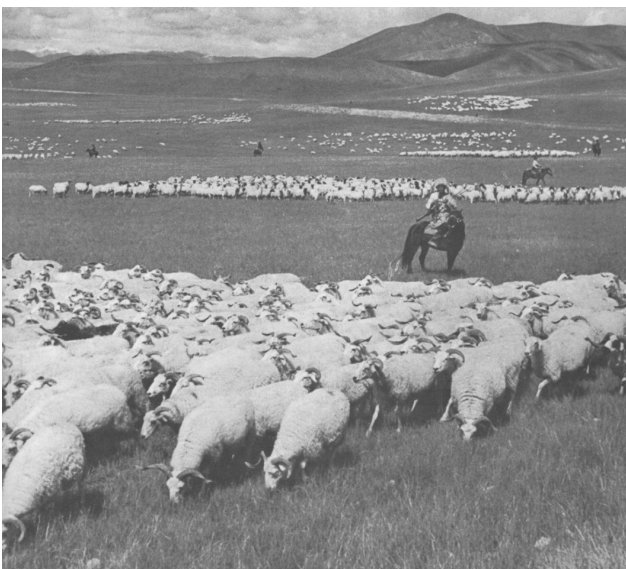
The Pastoralists

They came out of the east, four, five, six thousand years ago; no one knows quite when for sure.

They were more than just hunter gatherers because they brought some of their favourite quarry with them, sheep, cattle, horses, pigs, even reindeer (which were actually one of the first domesticated species). They lived a nomadic lifestyle, moving with the grass and the seasons and almost everything they had was organic in origin, gathered from the environment. But don't, for one second, think that these people were cave men. No, these were the earliest civilised people that we know of in the UK. They had weapons and tools so delicate and skilfully made that they must have been very skilled craftsmen and women and perhaps, most significant of all, they had the basis of farming in the palm of their hands.

It may, on first appearance, seem that these people were nothing like us; distant relatives, in another world and another time. However nothing is further from the truth, because you, especially if you are a hill farmer, owe everything to the Pastoralists. Though their bodies have long since turned to dust and everything that they owned is but a distant, forgotten memory, echoes of their lives surround us all. Your dog, for example: the Pastoralists employed dogs for hunting, herding, guarding their property. Your vehicle: for the ancient Pastoralist this would have been horses or reindeer perhaps, and instead of trailer, a drag made from poles. Their homes may have been tents or caves, at first, but these became round houses or long houses.

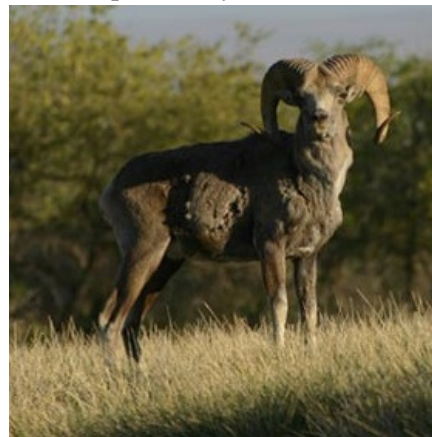
In this picture Mongolian tribesmen were herding flocks of white faced horned sheep back in the 1960s. But thousands of years ago the sheep were very different.



Everything, and I mean everything, that we have now as a civilisation, is due to these people and the one new innovation that lifted mankind from

an opportunist into a civilisation, started with, and is due to that one innovation the Pastoralists brought with them... farming!

Echoes of the Pastoralists remain to this day. These people, were the first Hill farmers! They would have grazed the hills in summer and moved their stock to the low lands in winter. They would have used dogs to gather their flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in much the same way that we do. They would have understood lambing and calving. They knew about breeding and stock selection and they would have understood the economy of using every part of a dead sheep that they could!



*The wild sheep
Ovis ammon,
the Argali*

When first they arrived in the UK the Pastoralists would have had brown sheep, with horns and short, kempy wool. These sheep have, like their owners, long since turned to dust, and yet, as with everything else they left behind, there are still echoes of the sheep too.



*Jupiter: an
American
bred Soay*

Pastoralists travelling from Mongolia and into northern Europe during a journey of many centuries, would have brought wild sheep like *Ovis ammon* and through selective breeding, reduced horn size and body size, improved the temperament and today we have the breed known as the Soay. Actually, with more selection and perhaps the introduction of other, more sophisticated breeding, we get to all modern sheep breeds – but that's a long story and we haven't even started down that path yet!

Sheep Wanted

Sally Newing asks:

I was wondering if you are aware of any registered sheep for sale. I am wanting to establish a small flock of Woodlands. We are looking for ewe lambs, tegs or ewes with lambs at foot, anything up to ten in total. We are based in Kent. My telephone is 01233 642067, e-mail: newing67@hotmail.com.

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