



# Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

Web site: [www.whitefacedwoodland.co.uk](http://www.whitefacedwoodland.co.uk)

## Newsletter 93– February 2015

### From the Chairman...

Hello all,

Time goes by so fast. Last time I wrote this report we were turning out tups, now it's getting very close to seeing our next crop of lambs. As most of you will know I've got my left arm in pot and have had since New Year's eve. Note to everyone - don't fight with cows - you will lose eventually, but I guess I've not done too badly as this is my first real injury in over 40 years. Getting kicked by a cow happened lots of times but when cow kicks gate and traps your arm between gate and metal post, the result is a loud crunch followed by lots of pain!

Anyway back to business. We have a busy year ahead with lots going on with the new flock book which Philip will explain in due course. A stand is booked at North Sheep on 3 June. Will any volunteers to help on the stand please talk to Rachel. Most show judges are sorted. Last year was a great showing season, so let's hope for even better this year and keep raising entry numbers and make judges earn their keep in the members' tent afterwards. Personally, I find it easier to judge a big row of sheep rather than just a few – maybe I just need to get a life!

Can and Sam Hodgson very kindly offered to hold this year's AGM and farm visit at Glencoyne, above Ullswater. Date to be agreed, but probably a Sunday in October.

So that's it from me. Thanks again to everyone who keeps the ship afloat. I think for a small society we're doing a professional job and heading forward all the way.

So happy lambing and I look forward to seeing you all at the shows.

Take care, Paul

### Flock Book Review Committee

Every journey starts with the first step. Sometimes the only way to see how far we have travelled is to look back to where we started; and we have come so far already, we must not forget that when we started we faced great uncertainty with the whole future of this breed. Over the years we have taken many steps to get to where we are today, and yet our journey has barely started in some respects and we are only just on the verge of a great new future for the breed. This would not have been possible without the patience and support of so many people who are trying so hard to sort out these many complications and difficulties with registering Woodlands and I thank you all. Without you, we couldn't do any of this. We hope you can continue to support our mission to unify the breed.

The next step has been that the committee of the Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society has agreed to buy a license to use the Grassroots computer programme called Breed Society Record. This means that we will be able to keep detailed pedigree information on a compatible database to the CFB. This is what we've been working for since the beginning because it means that we can manage our records alongside the RBST records and it should make it possible to easily transfer (using the rules that we have already negotiated) eligible pedigree records from one register to the other. This was the "holy grail" if you like of our mission. It means in short that for the first time, we should be able to start the process of unifying the breed and while we will still have two main registers, they will be alongside each other, side by side, working together to help you manage your Woodlands in a way that will help you achieve what you want from the breed.

I would also like to add that the same programme has many other features and possibilities that will make the management of the breed so much

easier for all of us. It also gives us access to a great support structure offered by Grassroots and we really shouldn't underestimate the importance of that, not only for us, but for the generations that I hope will follow on behind us. Furthermore not only is this good for breeders, this also gives distinct advantages to both the RBST and WWSS since a closer working relationship will be of great value to both groups as well as all Woodland breeders. Everyone benefits, the breed grows and is able to fully utilise its substantial roots with the past, while looking squarely into a bright future.

Well that's the good news; the bad news is that it is going to cost £1,850 in the first place. Now that gives us a license to use the program and allows us to transfer the current data from the program that we've been using into their system. Then we will have an annual fee of nearly £300 a year to maintain the database, on top of which we will have costs of our own in managing the same database; this we think important because it will allow us to reduce costs to our members.

The license is going to substantially deplete our reserves in the first place, but we can do it. The on going costs are going to have to be met by registration fees and the committee agreed that we will have to put up registration fees to cover our costs, but we all agree that these will still be as cheap as we can make for the membership and certainly cheaper than some other breeds. At the moment, and this is still not finalised as we may still need to take into account other things, we're thinking along the lines of £2 per ewe and perhaps £10 for a tup. I will confirm this when we have taken everything else into account. Please be patient, we shouldn't jump the gun just yet and make you a promise that we may not be able to keep, but we are doing our best to hold costs down to you the members at or as close as we can, to these prices.

In the meantime, we all feel that we need to go on a major fund raising drive to pay this money for the license back into our funds and we'd like to organise events that will help with this and hopefully allow us to get together and have a bit of fun too. We would welcome any help or ideas that you can offer with this please. Perhaps we could arrange a social event, a barn dance or evening ball or something, any interest, just let me know?

We already have one very kind offer of support from Neville Belfield, who has very generously offered to donate a shearling tup to the cause.

This tup will be sold at the Bretton Mill auction next year and Paul Dixon has kindly offered to waive his usual fees in selling this tup. This is so kind of both gentlemen and will, I hope, make a big difference; please support us and come to the sale, although I'm sure Paul will take bids from people who can't make it on the day if transport can be arranged for the tup, should they win. Now obviously I haven't seen this tup yet, Neville hasn't even chosen it as far as I know, but I do know that he intends it to be as good as he can get and Neville has bred so many great champion sheep over the years that you can bet it will be well worth bidding! Good luck! And not only let us hope that the best man (or woman) will win a great tup, but that the Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society will all be winners too! Thank you Neville; you are a true gentleman!

Philip Onions

## **Shows in 2015 offering Woodland classes**

Honley Show, Honley, West Yorks. Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Jun  
Contact: Sally Hampshire 07775 898647  
[www.honleyshow.co.uk](http://www.honleyshow.co.uk) **Judge: David Shirt**

Royal Three Counties Show - Rare Breeds Day  
on Sun 14<sup>th</sup> Jun *may offer Woodland classes.*  
Contact Fiona Parker on 01684 584901 or e-mail:  
[fionap@threecounties.co.uk](mailto:fionap@threecounties.co.uk)

North Yorkshire County Show, Northallerton.  
Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Jun Contact: Len Cragg 01609 773577.  
Schedule and entry forms on line at  
[www.northyorkshireshow.co.uk](http://www.northyorkshireshow.co.uk)  
**Judge: Karen Dowey**

Harden Moss Sheep Show and Sheepdog Trials,  
Holmfirth. Sun 21st Jun Contact: Christine  
Smith 01484 680823. **Judge: Paul Dixon**

Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate. 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Jul  
Contact: Amanda Stoddart-West on 01423  
546231 or [amandaw@yas.co.uk](mailto:amandaw@yas.co.uk). [www.greatyorkshireshow.com](http://www.greatyorkshireshow.com) **Judge: Chris Sully**

Ryedale Show, Kirkbymoorside. Tues 28<sup>th</sup> Jul  
Contact: Mrs A Welham 07967 198011 Down-  
load entry form at [www.ryedaleshow.org.uk](http://www.ryedaleshow.org.uk)  
**Judge: Paul Dixon**

Mottram Show, Mottram, near Glossop. Sun 16<sup>th</sup>  
Aug Contact: Angela Oldham 0161 351 1263.  
[www.mottramshow.co.uk](http://www.mottramshow.co.uk)  
**Judge: Neville Belfield**

Hope Show. Mon 31<sup>st</sup> Aug Champion of Champions follows regular WFW classes. Contact: [jane.dalton@lineone.net](mailto:jane.dalton@lineone.net) or Mrs H Morris: 01663 750318. [www.hopeshow.co.uk](http://www.hopeshow.co.uk)  
**Judges proposed: Tony Redfern;**  
**Championship: Paul Dixon**

Penistone Show. Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Sep  
[www.penistoneshow.com](http://www.penistoneshow.com). Contact: Mrs Earnshaw 01484 766542. e-mail: [elaine.29@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:elaine.29@hotmail.co.uk) **Judge: John Jones**

Hayfield Country Show, High Peak. Sun 20<sup>th</sup> Sep  
[www.hayfieldshow.co.uk](http://www.hayfieldshow.co.uk) Contact: Sarah Mellor 01663 746580, [sarah.mellor4@btopenworld.com](mailto:sarah.mellor4@btopenworld.com).  
**Judge proposed: Clive Mitchell**

## Sales in 2015

Sat 5 Sep, Rare Breeds Show & Sale at Skipton. Craven Cattle Marts: 01756 792375.  
[www.ccmauctions.com](http://www.ccmauctions.com)

11-12 Sep Traditional and Native Breeds Show and Sale at Melton Mowbray. 01664 652971  
[www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk](http://www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk)

Sat 19 Sep - Show & Sale of Rare & Minority Breeds at Carlisle. Harrison & Hetherington : 01228 640924 [www.livestock-sales.co.uk](http://www.livestock-sales.co.uk)

Sat 26 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](http://www.ylc.co.uk)

## The Oldest Flock?

In the hills above Hope nestles the quiet valley of Edale, in the southern foothills of Kinder Scout, David Shirt and four generations of his family have been keeping Woodlands since at the very least 1920! If you know of any older Woodland flocks then let us know; I'd love to meet them!

The Whitefaced Woodland is an amalgamation of two earlier breeds, the Penistone, from the north east of the High Peak and the Woodlands of Hope. The Shirt's flock is clearly from the hills above Hope, so how fitting would it be for this to be the oldest Woodland flock?

It was a glorious, sunny 5<sup>th</sup> of November when my wife Heather and I made our way down the Snake Pass, past Lady Bower reservoir on our way to visit the Shirt family. The lake was magically calm, reflecting the steep hill sides and a magnificent blue sky above and so far the autumn of 2014 has been wonderful and warm and the grass at home is still lush and green, which is most unusual for the time of year and as we drove up the hill above Hope, it was clear that here too, the grass was still growing lush and green despite the lateness of the season.

I was glad to visit David because he wanted to add this great flock to our new Hill Register and I was happy to inspect them for him and take the opportunity to visit this beautiful part of the

country again. This is not a difficult procedure for either party and the WWSS inspectors are glad to do it at their own expense to support our breed, with only a minimal charge to cover the administration costs. I really hope that we can keep this up and it is a great service to our group! David and his son, also called David were extremely well organised and we followed them to their field where they were keeping the Woodlands back down the hill, for tupping and watched as they quickly erected a catching pen and gathered the flock for inspection, running them through a mobile race so that I could get a good look at each one

I hope that David doesn't mind me using his as an example, but I'd like you all to know that we have to have tight rules for inspecting sheep, because we as a society need to only register the very best Woodlands if we are to make this whole thing work. So consequently not every sheep passed. This is always difficult, so I took the time to show David what the problem was and in every case he was good enough to agree with my decision, without question. What a gentleman! But let's be honest, David does not need me, a relative newcomer, to tell him what's what and the vast majority of his sheep passed with no problems at all! We're glad to welcome them into our Hill Register, thank you David and David.





### Flock Profile

**Date of Profile:** 05/11/14

### Contact Details

**Name of Flock:** LadyBooth Hall Woodlands

**Flock Prefix:** LadyBooth Hall

**Name of Breeder:** Mr David Shirt

**Address:** Lady Booth Hall Farm, Edale, Hope S33 7ZH

**Telephone:** 01433 670282

**Size of Woodland Flock:** Medium

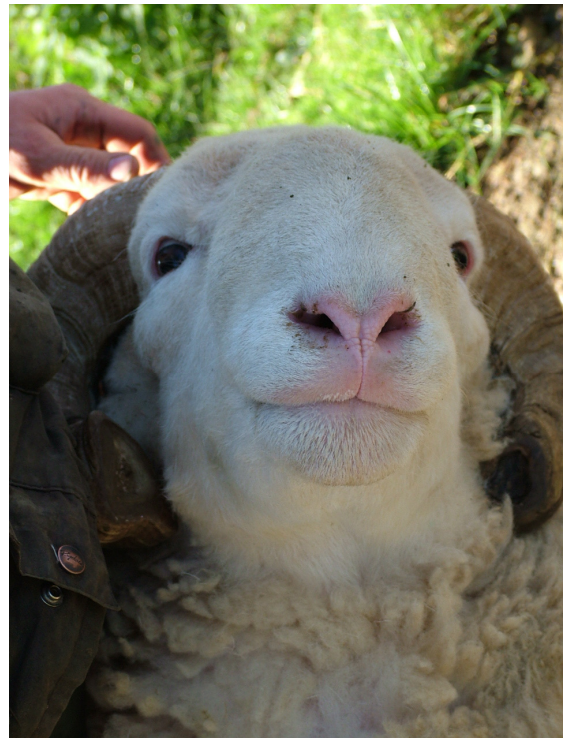
Small 1-20, Medium 21-50, Large 51-100, Major 101+

### Breeding Policy

The tup was turned out on 5<sup>th</sup> of November this year, which is usual for the Woodlands, for lambing at the start of April. They are looking for one good lamb per ewe, they sometimes get more, but David would prefer one strong lamb to two dead ones. Because they only have a few (compared to their other flocks) they keep the Woodlands down on the “green land” rather than the fell.

David keeps the best forty Woodlands pure bred, but any not so good he keeps back and puts to a Suffolk or Charolais tup. The sheep are given feed blocks through winter but receive no extra feed before lambing apart from hay in late winter when the grass is gone. Sometimes the ewes go away for winter to the Staffordshire area.

The Woodlands are lambed in doors, after the mules. The last tup that David used was a James Gill tup, but before that he used Harold Hodgson tups for a lot of years. This year they are using a tup from Clive Mitchell.



Apart from the odd problem with their feet, the Woodlands don't really have any problems. “Jim Thorn used to tell me years ago, that if they have a bit of black on their feet, they're a bit harder and hardier sheep, less prone to foot problems.”

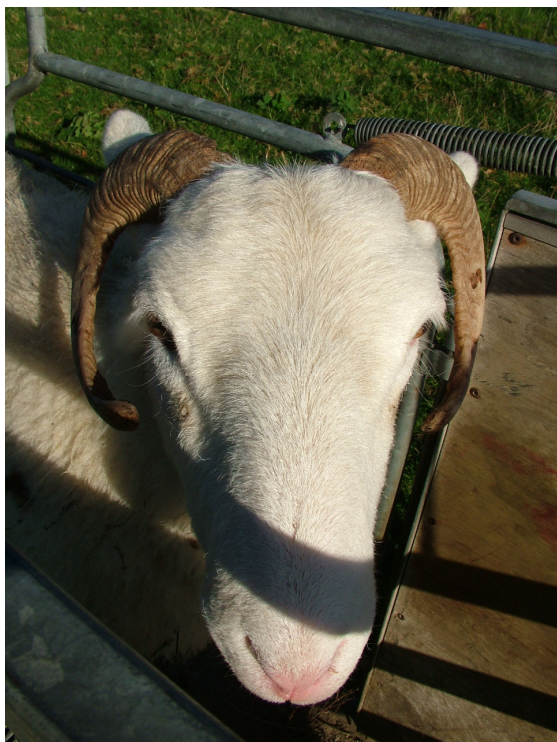
When picking out breeding stock, David looks for, “Ones that train, with a leg at each corner, plenty of width between their front legs and plenty of length.” Size matters then. “Square. a bit of depth, top to bottom and a good head.”



“And the wool?”

“I like it a bit tighter really, snod coated, tight coated.” They like horns to be nice and round and tight to the head, not too wide so that they get the backs of your legs in the race.





David prefers them without a tuft on their head, but as he says, you do get them don't you. As for eye colour, he's not bothered if they have blue eyes, for example, because he can't see what difference it makes. I only point this out to those who get bogged down in such detail; the importance for David is in a good square sheep, not the small details like tufts on the head or eye colour.

All the sheep are in the Heptavac system and apart from worming and an annual liver fluke treatment, they don't really need any other treatments.

On the moor the Woodlands do very well. David's family have kept Woodlands for years and years and he just wants to keep the breed going.

### **Farm Details**

Year Farm started: 1920

Size of Farm: d

Group a 1-20ha, b 21-50ha, c 51-100ha, d 101- 500ha, e 501-1000ha, f 1001+ha

### **Land Classification: LFA**

Other Breeds: Herdwicks, Swaledales, Mules

### **Description of farm:**

Lady Booth Hall Farm is a traditional High Peak hill farm with hill land and In-Bye or "green land" on the flatter lower ground. The higher ground is steep and poor with a lot of coarse grasses and other tough vegetation, but the lower ground is rich and well tended grassland with drystone walls higher up and hedges further down the dale towards the lush lands around Hope. Down here trees offer more shelter and the meadows are intermixed with woods and forest and babbling brooks.



Philip Onions

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## **C O N T A C T   D E T A I L S**

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