



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

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Newsletter 99 – July 2016

From the Chairman...

Hello again everyone

I'm pleased to report it's warmed up from last time I wrote this message in fact it's gone mad! It's just after midnight and I'm just in from baling and wrapping - had two good days at it and making progress at last. I just checked the forecast and it now looks like Wednesday's thunder could hit by dinner time tomorrow. That's going to leave a lot of disappointed people because no matter how good I am, I can only bale one field at a time!

It was good to catch up with so many last week at the Great Yorks Show. What a turnout of sheep - 18 in a class, two and a half rows of pens. It's a far cry from ten years since when two or three breeders would enter two each into every class just to keep entries up and keep Woodland classes at the Show, so that's a pat on the back for everyone who made the effort to enter. Plenty of new faces this year with youngsters coming in as well. It can only be good for the breed to get more breeders and more sheep. We just need to get them to Holmfirth now to buy some tups! Well that's it from me, it will soon be 5.30 in the morning - again. There must be easier ways to lose money than this very addictive drug of farming life.

Take care till next time, Paul

Annual General Meeting

Jeff and Helen Dowey and family have very kindly offered to host this year's AGM at Pikenaze Farm. The farm rises steeply above the Woodhead Reservoir, and they are suggesting a farm walk (if the weather permits!) Then, perhaps, a general get-together and natter... The proposed date is Sunday 4 September – a little earlier than usual. Any views??

Following Philip Onions' resignation, the Secretary would be delighted to receive suggestions for the post of Vice Chairman.

Woodland Annual Sale

The Show and Sale will be held at Holmfirth Mart again this year, but we are offered a choice of dates: either Sunday 25 September or **Friday 30 September.**

If you have any views either way, please talk to Paul Dixon (contact details on back page).

As agreed at the last AGM, the Committee will be putting coloured tape on tups' horns. The colour will indicate whether the tup is Society inspected and registered or RBST (Combined Flock Book) registered – or both. Each tup will also be given a number to help potential buyers identify it when animals are moved from the pens to the ring.

Fundraising Lunch

This was a great success; a most enjoyable event which raised £1040 for Society funds. Nearly 100 people were there, including a few children, some from as far afield as South Wales and Cumbria. There were lots of raffle prizes and donations from companies and individuals, including £100 from Philip Onions. Lisa Headley sang for us and recited *Noah's Ark*.

We are very grateful to Ashley and Hayley Crampton for their generous hosting, to Robert and Angela and the rest of their family for excellent organisation and to Ros Warburton who was a whizz at selling tickets and obtaining raffle prizes. Many people said it was a great venue with excellent food and have asked for a repeat event, and a few farmers also felt that the Golf Course would make good sheep grazing.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread

(or, *a reminder of what it is like starting from scratch...*)

My interest in sheep started around 1995 when I first went to the Hope Show and was amused to hear my name being announced over the Tannoy as the winner of the Derbyshire Gritstone category! In 2002, when we moved from Sheffield to live in the Hope Valley, we became regular attenders at Hope Show with a particular interest in the sheep sections.

Over the last 5 years, as retirement has begun to loom, I decided I wanted to keep sheep myself. So I began talking to various local farmers about shepherding, and to a man the response was “what on earth do you want to do that for”. But what was equally clear was that every one of them wouldn’t give it up for the world.

As my job has always been a desk job in management and I have nil experience of animals (I’ve never had any pets) I decided it was essential to try out shepherding first – to see if I would like it – before taking the plunge and getting my own flock. So with all the horror stories in my ears (“It’s a full time job; it’s a thankless task; there’s no money in it; you can’t take any holidays if you’ve got sheep; the government and its red tape is a disaster; thanks to my sheep I’ve got a bad back/knee/hand/elbow”) I started to put the word about in the hope of borrowing a field and some sheep.



*My very first Lamb, 15 hours old,
born appropriately on 1 April*

After three months without success in 2014 I was determined to do something, so enrolled on a British Wool Board shearing course! I can’t tell you how nervous I was when I turned up as I had

never even touched a sheep before and had to be instructed completely from scratch including in how to turn them over. But thanks to the heroic support of tutor Richard Schofield, over the following two days I managed to earn a blue certificate in sheep shearing. And more importantly I realised that I enjoyed the physicality of handling them (I used to be a very keen sportsman) and had come to like their smell too.

Finally in the spring of 2015 a neighbour (who has shown Suffolks at the Hope Show for many years but for whom a couple of recent joint replacements has meant taking a break from keeping sheep) kindly lent me about 1/3 acre of land and a different friend lent me 2 Jacobs, each with 2 texel cross lambs. I was on my way.

As I looked after these sheep, my interest and confidence grew and confirmed that this is what I really wanted to do, so I started to look for land of my own, and in early March 2016, I completed the purchase of a 4.5 acre field at 800ft above sea level, with no shelter at all, but really good pasture.

And of course at the same time that the purchase was going through, the question was – which sheep to get?

I clearly needed something that could look after itself. It was going to have to lamb outdoors and it could only rely on me to make mistakes and mess up (for the first few years at least). I wanted something “bigish”, and something that can cope in the open throughout the year. And because I will never farm commercially, I wanted a pedigree breed that I could enjoy breeding from, something rare so that I would be helping maintain a breed, and finally I wanted to get a breed local to the area where I live.

For me that narrowed it down to the Lonk, Derbyshire Grit and Whitefaced Woodland.

The advice from my South Pennine farmer friends (who have been incredibly kind and helpful) was in the Yorkshire vein (i.e. negative and accompanied by a shake of the head) – “I’d never get a horned breed they’ll just get stuck in your fences – have some of my Rylands”. “Those Woodlands will be off. You’ll never keep them in a field. You want to get some dumb Suffolks”. “They’re too big you should get my

Portlands” “Rare breeds are rare for a reason you know, you should get some mules”

But I was determined to get sheep that I liked – and that is very personal and emotional thing – and very simply I fell in love with Whitefaced Woodlands.

And then when I typed “Woodlands Valley” into my search engine it came up with the valley on the Snake Pass road which is the same valley I live in. Plus I was given Richard Cottrill’s name as someone who had a flock and who farms on that very road, so my mind was made up. I bought 5 ewes in lamb from Richard in March and the fun started! During April each had a

single – but all tups! And conditions were terrible.

Not the most auspicious start, but now I’m inundated with grass so have split the field in two and bought a few more ewes with ewe lambs at foot. So I now have 9 ewes, 5 wethers (for slaughter later in the year) and 4 ewe lambs which I will rear for breeding from the year after next. And one of my next tasks is to register them on the society’s flock book.

And that’s basically it! I’ve still little idea where it will end up or what problems or mistakes I’ll make. I’m still a complete novice, so if you meet someone at a show who is asking lots of really basic questions it’ll be me, so please be patient!

John Bland



My Field the day after two lambs were born in the open without any shelter. They both did fine!

A new show for Woodlands

Halifax Show, on Saturday 13 August, has introduced classes for Whitefaced Woodlands. A brand new Memorial Trophy has been donated, in memory of the late Ken Wild of Stott Hall Farm, who kept Woodlands all his life. It will be presented to the Champion Woodland on the day by the donor, Ken’s widow, Beth Wild.

Entries close on 31 July. Forms are on the website www.halifaxagriculturalshow.co.uk or contact Mrs E Greenwood on 01422 825325, e-mail: e.greenwood324@btinternet.com

Karen Dowey has agreed to judge, and this will be included as a qualifying show for the Champion of Champions at Hope.

Show results

Honley Show – Judge: Clive Mitchell

Aged tup: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton, 2. Casey Campbell, 3. Chareen Kaye

Shearling tup: 1. Karen Dowey, 2. Robert & Angela Crampton, 3. Casey Campbell

Tup lamb: 1. Karen Dowey, 2. Laura Brown, 3. Sarah Seed

Aged ewe: 1. Casey Campbell, 2. Karen Dowey, 3. Thomas Thackeray

Shearling ewe: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton, 2. Robert Smith, 3. Karen Dowey

Ewe lamb: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton, 2. Thomas Thackeray, 3. Casey Campbell,

Group of 3: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton, 2. Casey Campbell, 3. Karen Dowey

The Champion was Robert and Angela's ewe lamb, with Casey's aged ewe as Reserve.

North Yorkshire County Show – Judge: Neville Belfield

Ram any age: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton

Ram lamb: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton

Aged ewe: 1. Pam Crosby

Shearling ewe: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton

Ewe lamb: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton

Group of 3: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton

Robert and Angela took the Championship with their aged ram; Pam Crosby's ewe was Reserve. *(We are still awaiting 2nd and 3rd place results.)*

Harden Moss Sheep Show – Judge: Rachel Godschalk

Aged tup: 1. Karen Dowey, 2 & 3 Paul Thorp

Shearling tup: 1. Karen Dowey, 2. Casey Campbell, 3. Paul Thorp

Tup lamb: 1. Laura Brown, 2. Karen Dowey, 3. Paul Thorp

Aged ewe: 1. Thomas Thackeray, 2. Casey Campbell, 3. Chareen Kaye

Shearling ewe: 1. Casey Campbell, 2. Paul Thorp, 3. Chareen Kaye

Ewe lamb: 1. Karen Dowey, 2. Casey Campbell, 3. Thomas Thackeray

Breed Champion was Karen's shearling tup and Reserve was Casey's shearling ewe. Thomas' aged ewe won the Best Ewe trophy.

Royal Three Counties; Rare & Minority Breeds

Judge: Mr A Lyons. Five competitors

Ram: 1st: Windrush, 2nd Sonia Hendrie

Ram lamb: Robert and Jean Price

Ewe: 1st Robert and Jean Price, 2nd Windrush, 3rd Stephen and Francine Burns

Ewe lamb: 1st Robert & Jean Price, 2nd Chris Sully

Group of 3: 1st Robert and Jean Price, 2nd Stephen and Francine Burns

Champion was Windrush Partners' Wharfedale Titan, who went on to win Reserve Champion in the Hill Section of the Interbreed. Reserve was Robert and Jean Price's ewe.



Wharfedale Titan

Great Yorkshire Show – Judge: Tony Redfern

A huge and impressive turnout: 12 exhibitors, with 17 sheep forward in all the ewe classes and at least 10 in the tup classes.

Aged ram: 1. Richard Smith, 2. Dave & Debbie Wardell, 3. Robert & Angela Crampton

Shearling ram: 1 & 2. Paul Thorp, 3. Chareen Kaye

Ram lamb: 1 & 2. Robert & Angela Crampton, 3. Laura Brown

Aged ewe: 1. Robert & Angela Crampton, 2. Paul Thorp, 3. Thomas Thackeray

Shearling ewe: 1 & 2. Paul Thorp, 3. Casey Campbell

Ewe lamb: 1. Thomas Thackeray, 2. Robert & Angela Crampton, 3. Chareen Kaye

The Male Champion was Richard's aged ram, which went on to take the Breed Championship.

The Female Champion was the Crampton's aged ewe, which was also Reserve Breed Champion, with Thomas Thackeray taking the Reserve Female Championship with his ewe lamb.

Dave and Debbie Wardell took the honours in the Fleece Competition.

Points Cup / Shows Trophy

Purpose: unlike the Champion of Champions and the Ken Wild Trophy, the winner will not necessarily have the best individual animal. This trophy is designed to reward an exhibitor who has shown at many venues with consistently good results.

Points: awarded for winners in each class at all shows with specific Woodland classes

Sheep for Sale

3 points for 1st place
2 points for 2nd place
1 point for 3rd place
Plus: 2 points for Champion
1 point for Reserve

Recording: exhibitors to keep a record and liaise with Ann to publish in the Newsletter

Cup: to be presented at the AGM

John and Tessa Wigham have a few shearling rams for sale again this time. All are pedigree, fertility and DNA tested. Tessa's contact details below – or mobile: 07769 586907

Siobhan Coates will have one or two shearlings and two or three gimmer lambs a bit later in the year. She is based in the Yorkshire Dales, near Hawes. E-mail: siobhan822@hotmail.com. Phone: 07921 503773, mobile: 07921 503773

Godschalk Partners have a few Woodland x Teeswater or x Wensleydale shearling ewes for sale. Attractive sheep and good mothers. Contact Rachel – details below

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