



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

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News letter 117 – January 2021

From the Chairman...

Well, here we are in January and in lockdown yet again. Things don't look too bright at the moment; we can only hope that the vaccine improves them. Anyway, we did get a Brexit deal and trade continues much as before. Going forward, I have always thought there is a very good chance to grow the export of sheepmeat worldwide.

Looking to the Whitefaced Woodland Society and our own breed, I think it is time we took our future into our own hands. We are big enough as a breed and anyone wanting to keep Whitefaced Woodlands should be coming to us for registration and **advice**.

As I said in my previous notes, the more sheep we can get registered the better. Therefore I think we should do more to promote and advertise our breed wherever possible. I look forward to your comments on what I have written.

Before Christmas, I was invited to judge the competition to pick new photos for the Facebook page. I had twenty eight to choose from and I was very impressed with the winner.

As we move into the new year, I hope you all have a successful lambing time and that the weather is kind to you. Also that, come the summer, things will be moving towards being more normal. Take care of yourselves, and I hope to see you all later in the year.

Neville

Secretary's Report

The 2020 AGM was the least well-attended in our history! Only a few people showed the slightest interest in the Society, our aims and objectives.

The Committee works extremely hard, not just to register sheep, but to take EVERY person's views into account – whether that person has a lot of sheep, or only a few, and wheresoever they may live. We care: about you, and about the breed. The AGM is a time for all members to have a voice, and I thought that being able to submit a view without having to air that view in front of others might give us a good insight into the needs (perhaps unappreciated) of our members. In any event, there was no opposition to Neville Belfield and John Jones continuing in the role of Chair and Vice-Chair for the next year. No-one except Peter Harkness (historically) and Rob Ford wishes to host an Inspection Day, and no-one has indicated that they would like their stock inspected this way. Last year's minutes and the accounts were accepted.

Notwithstanding this, I know there are a number of people who (COVID willing) would welcome Inspection days, a chance to register stock, talk to people and see other sheep. We will be arranging this as soon as conditions allow. We are incredibly restricted at the moment, not only in terms of distance of travel, but because Inspectors cannot travel with each other.

The biggest problem for me however, at the moment, is still having two stock registers. It is incredibly confusing for new breeders, however much they are prepared in advance. Every year I get tens of people who have bought stock and either don't realise they can't register them with RBST or can't have them inspected until they are a year old. If anyone has suggestions for moving forward in a sensible fashion, please let me know!

Anyway – scanning figures look good, and hopefully the rain will cease before lambing. I wish to everyone the lambing of their dreams, and a Happy New Year!

Rachel

Welcome to our new members

Rob Cohen is based in Staveley, Cumbria, at the south end of Lake Windemere. He writes “Our flock is currently small. My brother-in-law keeps Rough Fell commercially and he and I jointly run a small flock of Gotlands (we are trying to make something of their wool). We were at a rare breed sale (looking for Gotlands) and saw some Woodlands which I thought looked fantastic. I bought a couple and have just arranged for them to run with a Woodland tup owned by Ruth Dalton. Separately we have been offered five more Woodland ewes which we plan to buy when they are in lamb. The Woodlands and the Rough Fell complement each other pretty well. All in all I seem to have caught the Woodland bug!”

Ashley and Alice Malia joined as life members at Christmas. I asked about the unusual flock name, which prompted this reply from Ashley: “The HuRuCo flock was born when myself and my wife then pregnant with my 1st born (Alice’s 3rd, I have two step sons) wanted to get a flock of sheep together that we could slowly grow over the next 10 -18 years as something for our boys to have as a start in agriculture. Neither of us being from farming stock, we agreed that we would have loved to have had a kickstart in agriculture, so provided it for the boys (HUGO RUBEN CORIN).

We started with a mish mash of some old broken mouthed in-lamb Herdwicks and then after a few years decided we needed some sheep that made a bit more money to cover the costs of the rest so we dipped our toe into Valais Blacknose sheep. By and by we both decided we’d prefer to further the growth of and support native rare breeds, so we sold up the Valais and now focus on our native breeds: Whitefaced Woodlands, Greyfaced Dartmoors and Wensleydale Longwools.

My wife makes felted ornaments and rugs etc using our own wool; this came about after me chuntering one evening about the price of wool and the fact the native breeds we keep tend to have a lot of it !

We live on and manage the farm for Whirlow Hall Farm Trust [in Sheffield]. Myself as farm manager and Alice in the finance department when she’s not being assistant shepherdess. We both share a passion for local produce and bringing agriculture and rare breeds to the forefront and Whirlow is a great platform for educating children and adults of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. We also have a grazing agreement for our own stock at the farm.

We actually started with the woodlands when I bought Alice an in-lamb ewe from Chareen at Clitheroe auction, as a Valentine’s Day gift. Then we made a connection with Judith Hawkhead and when she sold up her flock of Woodlands we ended up buying them in their entirety.

Sorry for the lengthy response - I normally to prefer to speak to people in person. (If COVID will ever allow that again). Thank you for your welcome email and we look forward to being helpful and active members of the Society”

Debbie Bell also lives in Sheffield

When she joined, she had just one Woodland in-lamb ewe, scanned with twins. In the time it took us to get back to her, she had bought another – again in lamb – and is on the lookout for more. The forthcoming Clitheroe Auction, perhaps? Debbie adds that she has loved Woodlands for years and had a few when she was in her teens.

Robert Helliwell is well known in sheep circles, but I think new to Woodlands. I first met him as the very helpful and understanding Livestock Secretary of the Hope Show. That was in the days when I used to bring my few sheep up from Hertfordshire on the Sunday, leave them in splendid isolation on the Show Field and take myself off to sample the culinary delights of Castleton and its Youth Hostel. Robert farms at Dingbank Farm, just north of the Ladybower Viaduct, so in real Woodland territory. He has kindly offered help: “I would be willing to do my bit in this area. I am not sure what that would entail, or how big the district might be, but if assistance is needed with inspections or whatever, I will do my best to help out. My email is rahelliwell@me.com and phone number 07703 890212”.

Gary Longden on Snake Road, Bamford would be a neighbour of Robert’s and is a new Woodland owner. He bought eight of our shearling ewes at Holmfirth, and then three more ewes from Alex and Lucy Bywaters.

Jack Norris, Grazing and Farm Manager for **Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust**, first contacted us before the 2019 Holmfirth sale, wanting to buy around 30 Woodland ewes for conservation grazing. The ewes needed to be registered for their Countryside Stewardship Scheme and because of the distance, he needed a full trailer load. This didn’t happen – possibly

because we couldn't offer enough suitable ewes, or because of confusion over the CFB and Hill registrations. The Trust has since bought a ram and a few ewes, and has this year become a member of the Society. We should love to have a report on their conservation grazing with Woodlands and to know if they need more!

A special Thank You

to Laura and Anne Brown for all their hard work in organising the Society's clothing and getting it ordered and distributed. Quite a mammoth task, I don't doubt. I'm enjoying my Christmas present fleece; it's smart and very snug **and it's got my name on it!**

Photographs

Karen has been organising photo competitions to enliven Facebook. In October, Jeff Dowey chose:
1st: Michelle Clayton's grand tup in B&W
2nd: Edward & Laura Sutcliffe's tups at the trough
3rd: Douglas Willman's ewe and lambs by the tree
In December, as Neville mentioned, he selected:
1st: Adam Short's ewes posing
2nd: Dale Smith's running tup
3rd: Anita Beaumont's tup lamb in the snow
You can see them all at the head of the Facebook photos, with Adam's ewes as the banner. Karen is just running a further competition.

We occasionally get requests for good quality photographs of Woodlands for use in magazine articles or publicity. These need to be high resolution, usually taken by camera, rather than with your phone. We have a few photos of sheep at shows, since professional photographers are often on hand. However, we need some of Woodlands in a more natural setting, perhaps with lambs, or of the whole flock. If you have anything suitable or could take some pictures, please get in touch with Rachel.

North Sheep

NSA is still hopeful that North Sheep will go ahead on Wednesday 2 June at Bradford House Farm, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 0HA. We have a stand tentatively booked, should we ever get out of lockdown.

Slow cooked spiced lamb

An alternative to the traditional way of roasting a leg of lamb. This recipe is from John Bland's booklet *Whitefaced Woodlands: my favourite recipes for lamb and hogget*.

Timings

Preparation: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 3 hours 30 minutes

Ingredients

Leg of lamb
Salt and pepper
125g curry paste (or harissa paste)
2 tbsp tomato puree
1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
1 x 400g can chick peas
1 pint lamb, beef or vegetable stock
Fresh chopped mint and coriander to garnish

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F (170°C)
2. Put the curry paste, tomato puree, chopped tomatoes and stock in a large non-stick roasting tin. Stir well
3. Place the lamb on a chopping board and make several slits over the surface with a sharp knife. Season all over and then transfer to the roasting tin. Spoon over the curry mixture.
4. Cover with foil and roast for 3½ hours, turning occasionally. 20 minutes before the end, add the chick peas and remove the cover.

With the combination of covering and slow cooking, this recipe should work well for hogget.

A reminder to the few who haven't yet paid their annual subscription – due on 1 September last – still only £10.

Please send in details of any sheep that are inspected but still need registering.

Flock Book Volume 6 is available, as are some previous ones. Volumes 2 and 3 are out of print, but more can be printed on request.

Show and Sale of Rare and Traditional in-lamb Ewes

Following last year's success, Clitheroe Auction Mart will be holding the sale this year on Saturday 20th February, with the support of the Derbyshire Gritstone Sheep Society, Lonk Sheep Breeders Association and the RBST.

Judging will be at 10am, Sale at 11. Contact the Mart Office for entry forms: phone 01200 423325 or info@auctionmart.co.uk. Entries close at 12 noon on Monday 8 February

Once entries for this sale are received, a catalogue will be produced indicating the sale order and will be circulated with the mailing list created over previous years, so a good coverage of potential purchasers is anticipated.

Sheep will be scanned on the sale day to increase buyer confidence. All sheep will be sold in guineas on an individual basis.

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