



# Newsletter No 66

## Summer 2014

### Dear Members

Along with this newsletter are your registration forms and entry forms for the show and sales along with your annual subscription renewal, please make a note of the closing dates and return your forms on time.

The Society will again be holding three show and sales this year.

### Council Vacancies

Three members of council, Stuart Brodie, Teresa Hodgkinson and Jonathan Jeyes are due to retire at the 2014 AGM in September and are eligible for re-election, however, for personal reasons, Teresa Hodgkinson has decided not to stand for re-election this year. There is one vacancy that was not filled last year, thus making four council vacancies this year.

### Annual General Meeting

This years Annual General Meeting will be held in Stoneleigh, Warwickshire in conjunction with the Society National Show and Sale on Saturday 13th September 2014.

There would be a get together and BBQ on the Friday evening, the show would be at 9.30 am followed by the AGM at 12 noon and the sale would commence at 1pm.

Full details will be sent to the membership next month.

## Official WHSS Merchandise

Ties, Polo Shirts, Car Stickers and History of the Breed Booklet

To order any of these items, please contact the Secretary Christina on 0844 800 1029 or email on [info@wiltshirehorn.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirehorn.org.uk)



## Around the Shows

### ***Royal Welsh***

Champion B & H Thomas

Reserve Champion B & H Thomas

### ***Kenilworth Show***

Champion J Jeyes

Reserve Champion N & C Williams

### ***Three Counties Show***

Champion W Roberts

Reserve Champion N & C Williams

### ***Three Counties—National Rare & Minority Breeds Show***

Champion W Roberts

Reserve Champion W Roberts



Judging of the Rare & Minority Breeds Show at the Three Counties

# Council Meetings

## *Council Meeting held on 26th April 2014*

4 new members were approved and welcomed to the Society

**Accounts:** Draft accounts had been produced by the accountants and would be presented to the membership at the AGM.

**Promotion:** New leaflets were to be printed

New trellis and raised sheep pen would be made for the stand at the NSA Sheep Event

A competition would be run on the stand 'guess the weight of the ewe and lambs'

An advert would be placed at the end of August in the Farmers Guardian advertising the sales.

**AGM:** The AGM would take place at the National Show and Sale at Stoneleigh. The format would be a BBQ the night before and the show to start at 9.30 am followed by the AGM at 12 noon and the Sale at 1pm

**Society Sales:** Judges for the sales were confirmed as Ruthin J Jeyes, Stoneleigh R Hamilton and Exeter J W Brigg.

**Trophies:** The daughters of Lyn Davies will be donating a memorial cup to the Society to be used at Blakesley show for the best female. The trophy was to be called the Lyn Davies Memorial Trophy.

If you have any matters that you would like brought up at the Council meeting in November then please forward them to the secretary by 21st September.

# Bowland Flock Wins most improved flock award



Simon Temple with some of his ewes

The Bowland flock, owned by Simon Temple of Quernmore, Lancashire, has been recognised by EBLEX as the Most Improved Flock of Wiltshire Horn sheep in England for 2014.

The award is presented by the EBLEX Better Returns Programme (BRP) to the recorded flock that shows the greatest genetic gain for commercial characteristics over a 12-month period. There is a separate award for each of 10 UK breeds.

Simon lives at Stockabank Farm at Quernmore, which is managed together with the neighbouring farm at Yealand Redmayne, previously ran by his parents. Yealand Redmayne is a larger farm of about 300

acres, providing 150 acres of moss land and permanent pasture, the remainder being scrub and woodland. Simon was raised at Yealand and by profession was a barrister, but after a change in direction due to ill health he decided to go back to farming.

Simon feels privileged to live in, and farm, two areas of outstanding natural beauty. The farm at Yealand is recognised and supported by the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme, dictating low inputs and providing a premium for stocking with native breeds.

He has two native breeds on the farm, both with the Bowland prefix and both performance recorded; a herd of 40 pedigree Red Poll cattle and a flock of 25 Wiltshire Horn sheep. In addition to these native breeds, he has a small pedigree Bluefaced Leicester flock to produce rams to cross with 50 purebred Cheviots, producing a Mule ewe, and a small flock of Texels providing rams for these Mules. The Cheviots and Mules, together with the Bluefaced Leicester and Texel flocks are run commercially.

His wife, Sally, works full time with young people, but she is enthusiastic about sheep dog trialling. She has two small flocks of Torddu Badgerface and Balwen Welsh Mountains which she uses, along with some of the Wiltshire Horns, to train her dogs.

## Establishing native breeds to manage grassland

He came across the Wiltshire Horn many years ago, when he used Wiltshire Horn rams on another flock to promote easy care. In 2008, when entering into the HLS agreement with a supplement for using native breeds, he decided to build up a flock of Wiltshire Horns.

They are kept at Yealand Redmayne, which has Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status and, therefore, various management restrictions. There are areas with a lot of scrub and brambles in need of clearing; the Wiltshire Horn, being very good at browsing, is an ideal candidate with the advantage of having no fleece so they cannot get snagged and caught in the vegetation.

He bought his first ewes after seeing them advertised in the Farmers Guardian and has built numbers through keeping female replacements. Last autumn he bought three more ewes from Nick Ashwin and now has around 25 ewes.

## Performance recording to promote enhanced carcass traits

He immediately joined the Wiltshire Horn group of breeders which performance record their stock. Each year a selection day is organised and each breeder takes their best rams along to assess breed characteristics and compare figures on individual rams. As a group, they nominate a ram to use as a common link sire between the groups and each member is able to use him on up to 10 ewes within their own flock. This provides connectivity between each flock in the group and to date is working well. Three rams are used each year, two stock rams and the link loaned from another breeder.

Simon has been recording his flock since they were established six years ago. He already recorded the performance of his Red Poll cattle and the Bluefaced Leicester flock, so it seemed natural to continue with the Wiltshire Horns. Ultrasound scanning at 21 weeks gives actual measurements of muscle and fat depths across the loin, providing Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) on growth and muscle depth, which are then monitored to develop the flock.

Focusing on traits such as eight-week and 21-week weights and muscle depth, he is able to ensure his flock continues to make progress. Over the years, he has enjoyed the challenge of lifting his flock from the bottom 10 per cent and it now sits comfortably in the top 25 per cent for the breed.

“This progress started slowly, but as more new genetically-superior females join the base flock, through replacement ewe lambs, improvements are starting to accelerate,” he said. “This is further helped as ewes at the lower end of the index are culled out.”

The Wiltshire Horns have a proactive group of breeders involved who can interpret the breeding values of individual traits well, so it is relatively easy to find a ram with figures to complement your ewes. “Ultrasound scanning is useful for determining muscle depth and greater accuracy is provided with such equipment,” Simon said. “However, I do feel the flock has suffered slightly in concentrating on these traits alone, to the detriment of mature size which has reduced. With the rams used recently I’m hoping to boost mature size while continuing to move the index and EBVs the right way, or at least holding them at the level they already are.”

Wiltshire Horn sheep are easy keepers. Lambing outside in early April, they achieve a lambing percentage of 150 per cent, which Simon hopes to be able to increase over time through selection for the maternal traits.

He aims to wean lambs around 12 weeks, but this is dependant on the weather and environmental challenges they have had to face in their earlier weeks.

Main lamb selections take place at the time of the 21-week weight and scan, by which time lambs are showing potential and certain animals are standing out from the crowd. He keeps around five ram lambs and retains ewe lambs for flock replacements, depending on how they develop and the EBV and Index data received from Signet after scanning. Quite a high proportion of ewe lambs are kept, with the view that daughters naturally supersede their mothers in terms of their genetic potential and will therefore continue to improve his baseline of the flock.

Currently, females are selected mainly on their carcass trait EBVs. Any ram lambs with the EBVs, pedigree and structure to develop into a high-index stock ram are kept entire.



Most wethers are sold as stores through their local market. While he has been building his flock there haven't been many females available for sale, but now that numbers and quality are getting to a point that he's happy with, surplus sound breeding ewes will start to become available. These will be taken to the society sale at Stoneleigh in September. To date he hasn't sold vast quantities of breeding stock, despite being approached by producers.

"The problem we face is that the Wiltshire Horn is not seen as a crossing sire," Simon said. "Most producers are interested in them for their easy-care attributes. If the Wiltshire Horn is to be used in the place of a Terminal Sire, a commercially-viable lamb needs to be produced which displays the correct size, weight and an ability to finish quickly. In order to market our breed effectively, we need to be able to promote these carcass traits."

He likes showing the Red Poll cattle and the Wiltshire Horns as it gives the public an opportunity to see these traditional native breeds. Enjoying the social aspect, they go to the Three Counties, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Westmorland County shows, but finds there are limited classes for the native breeds.

"With positive show experience you naturally build a good reputation for the breed," Simon said. "I hope this will have a knock-on effect, boding well for the breed in general, not just our own flock!"

Commenting on the win, Signet Breeding Services Manager Sam Boon said: "Rates of genetic improvement in Signet-recorded flocks are at an all-time high. The difference between the best high-EBV breeding stock and average animals is increasing year on year.

"This means commercial producers have more to gain when investing in rams with superior genetics. Pedigree breeders can capitalise on these differences too and this is exactly what Simon has done. The improvement in the genetic merit of their flock is clear and he is to be congratulated on his achievement."

## NSA Events

The Society will be represented at the NSA Sheep 2014 Event.

### ***NSA Sheep 2014***

***Wednesday 30th July 2014***

The Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire

# Official Society Show and Sales 2014

## Ruthin

### Welsh Border Region Show and Sale

Closing date for Entries is 15th August 2014

Livestock Market, Parc Glasdir, Ruthin LL15 1PB Tel: 01824 705 000

**Thursday 4th September 2014**

## Stoneleigh

### National Show and Sale

Closing date for Entries is 15th August 2014

Rugby Farmers Mart, Stoneleigh Park, Warks CV8 2RG Tel: 02476 697 731

**Saturday 13th September 2014**

## Exeter

### South West Region Show and Sale

Closing date for Entries is 19th September 2014

Exeter Livestock Centre, Matford Park Rd, Exeter EX2 8FD Tel: 01392 276 668

**Friday 3rd October 2014**

*Please note there will be no entry fees for females entered in the Ruthin Show and Sale*

## 2 % LEVY

Please note that a Society levy of 2% will be charged on the hammer price at all three Society sales this year.

## UPSET PRICES

No upset prices will be set at the Ruthin, Stoneleigh and Exeter sales. Vendors may set their own reserves with the auctioneers at all three sales.

## PENNING FEE

A penning fee of £1.00 per head will be implemented at the National Show and Sale at Stoneleigh.



## Society Website

Have you looked at the Society website lately?

Are you looking for some new stock?

Then take a look at the Stock For Sale section

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