

2018 Wiltshire Horn Sheep Society Members' Weekend, 27th & 28th May

This year's members' weekend was held over a gloriously sunny bank holiday in Buckinghamshire where we were privileged to see two of the oldest flocks of Wiltshire Horns. Members, including some very welcome new members, met at George and Elaine Morris's lovely old farm, the home of the Hoggston flock. George's grandfather John Morris was one of the founding members of the Society when it was formed in 1923 and also one of the Society's first Council members.

We were taken on a trailer ride around the LEAF accredited farm to see the flock of 350 sheep, which includes 150 pure Wiltshire Horn ewes and 200 Wiltshire cross ewes, and the herd of 95 suckler cows including 15 pure Herefords. Caroline, George and Elaine's daughter, is keen to take the flock forward and has seen significant improvement since recording with the WHSS Signet recording group. After viewing the pigs in the farmyard we enjoyed an excellent lunch back at the farmhouse.

After lunch many of us drove to Waddesdon Manor, a beautiful chateau style house built by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the late 19th century to display his vast collection of arts. Of the many beautiful treasures in the house the highlight for many, especially for Annabelle Gibson and me, was the famous elephant automaton timepiece which is only occasionally shown working and sadly not when we were visiting.

The final visit of the day was to High Hedges by kind invitation of Steve and Sarah Cowle who, despite celebrating their 26th wedding anniversary with a party for their friends and family, welcomed us all with food and drink and a trailer tour of their farm where we could see their flock of Wiltshire Horn ewes with pure bred and Hampshire cross lambs and their herd of Hereford cattle.

Later that evening we enjoyed a carvery dinner at the Bell Hotel in Winslow which is well known locally not only for its good roasts but as a great supporter of the farming community.

On Monday morning we visited the Natural History Museum in nearby Tring. The collection of animals and insects was in another house built by the Rothschild family, this time to house the growing collection of specimens amassed by the young Walter Rothschild whose parents gave him the house as a 21st birthday present. The museum was bequeathed to the Natural History Museum on his death in 1937 and the galleries have changed very little since that time. The museum was an unexpected delight and well worth another visit.

Our final visit was to Hill Farm to see Tom and Susan Nash's Slapton flock. This old established flock was first registered with the Society in 1925 when owned by Tom's great great uncle George T Vasey and soon became a successful showing flock. It was interesting to see several of his show certificates from the twenties and thirties.

The farm is situated in beautiful countryside next to the Grand Union canal and in recent years Tom and Susan have taken advantage of the lovely setting by successfully diversifying

into glamping with their four Wigwam holiday chalets in the orchard adjacent to the towpath of the canal. They also have a Friesian dairy herd on another farm in the village.

The weekend ended on a high note with a barbeque lunch in the sunshine overlooking the Wiltshire Horn flock, a fitting end to a very entertaining and enjoyable weekend. Thanks go to all our hosts George, Elaine and Caroline Morris, Steve and Sarah Cowle and Tom and Susan Nash for their kindness and generosity and especially to George for his work behind the scenes which ensured the weekend was a total success.

Teresa Hodgkinson