



**WILTSHIRE
HORN** THE WOOLLESS
MEAT SHEEP

Newsletter No 58 Autumn 2009

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November 2009

Newsletter No 58

Dear Members

It is good to report on a successful year for the Society and the sheep industry in general. In this issue you will find reports on the major shows and the show and sales, the latest news from the Signet recording programme and other items of news and interest.

First of all you are reminded that registrations for this year's lambs must be received by **30th November**. Subscriptions are now overdue, if you have not yet paid please send your cheque by return so you may continue your membership of the Society and receive the 2009 flock book.

Annual General Meeting

This year the AGM was held in Falfield, Gloucestershire on Saturday 31st October. There were 40 people present and it was good to see so many faces from the South West. The meeting was followed by a sit down lunch.

A minutes silence was held in memory of **Mr B. Dearnley** and **Mrs Anita Ling**. Mrs Ling passed away in October after a long illness. We send our condolences to Richard and our thoughts are with him at this sad time.

Richard Ling retired from the Council this year after serving 21 years, the last five as our Chairman. Richard was made a life member in recognition of his service to the Society and has been chosen as this year's Vice President. Lyn Davies continues as our President and Trevor Brown continues as Treasurer.

Three new members have joined the Council. Jim Stone has returned after a year as Vice President and Ruhi Hamilton has joined as our youngest member. The third member is Adrian Bell who brings valuable marketing experience to the Council. He has been appointed as our new Publicity Officer. Teresa Hodgkinson takes over Richard Ling's role as Chairman of Council.

A warm welcome goes to all members who have joined this year. The Society was formed in 1923 and in 2009 has reached the milestone of recruiting it's 1000th member who is Mr Jan Stanek of Chipping Norton, Oxon. His farm manager Christine Morris gives their reasons for choosing the Wiltshire Horn:-

We currently have 430 acres, mainly grass but around 65 acres is arable. Of the grassland we have 100 acres of SSSI – the largest area of SSSI in Oxfordshire. A proportion of the land is managed under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme with the rest being in the Entry Level Scheme.

Because we have such a large area of SSSI we are restricted in terms of how we manage that portion of our land. It may only be grazed by cattle and only grazed between March and October. This has led us to set up a herd of pedigree Dexter cattle because we felt that they would cause less potential damage to the delicate swards during the grazing season because of their size. There is also the added benefit of the delicious beef that they produce! A good, old fashioned tasty beef which is purely grass fed and slow maturing. We have begun supplying farm shops and butchers and we are currently investigating supplying our wonderful, flavoursome beef directly to the consumer.



Society President Lyn Davies presenting a bottle of bubbly to our 1000th member. Christine Morris collects on behalf of J Stanek

And that is where our new flock of Wiltshire Horns enter the picture. A traditional native breed of sheep with the added benefit of hardiness, easy lambing, and no need to shear! Because the price of wool is so low these days the only advantage to shearing sheep is for the welfare of the animal. Having carried out some research it seemed that the Wiltshire Horn was the ideal sheep for us to buy because it fulfilled our requirements as a native breed, producing tasty lamb off grass within a fairly commercial timescale. Well suited to the market outlets that we hope to exploit with our Dexter beef as well. They are ideal for our outdoor lambing system and there is no need for time consuming tasks like shearing, dagging, and dipping. Low maintenance and low input! A wonderful hardy native sheep breed – what more could we want!

Update on the Signet Recording Programme

In autumn 2006 a group of Wiltshire Horn sheep breeders got together to obtain funding from South West Rural Enterprise Gateway to start flock recording with Signet Breeding Services. The Group, 13 flocks strong and spread throughout the greater south west, began recording for the first time during the 2007 lambing season. On this first occasion, data included that from 522 ewes, 40 stock rams and 737 lambs. Three lambing seasons on, data have been collected from 15 flocks nationally broken down as follows:

- SW Group - eventually 11 flocks including 2 long established recorded flocks;
- Other established recorded flocks outside the SW - 3 flocks;
- New entrants taking up WHSS funding offer - 1 flock outside SW.

Data from all the flocks are amalgamated to produce both individual flock and overall results. Performance figures from previous years are incorporated by the programme further enhancing and improving the accuracy of the findings year on year.

The Recording group meet annually to discuss the year's results and to plan the way

forward with Signet consultants Sam Boon and Carol Davis. This year, high on the agenda was discussion about the development of a dual purpose Wiltshire Horn Breeding Index. This index developed by Signet specifically for the breed has been designed to meet the objectives of the Group as follows:

- increase the weight of lean tissue in the carcase whilst minimising any associated rise in carcase fatness;
- enhance the maternal ability and prolificacy of ewes retained for breeding purposes.

Data submitted to Signet for 2009 lambing season included that from 15 flocks. This enabled approximately 500 ewes, 25 stock rams and their progeny, comprising 793 lambs, to be recorded and evaluated. So numbers of recorded stock remain stable year on year to date. For the first time the results included data for the top five ram lambs and the top five shearling rams produced by each recorded flock.

A methodology for scoring shedding has been developed and used in 2008 and 2009 to collect information from shearling ewes as they shed in the spring. Once sufficient detail is available, it will be linked to pedigree information already in the

system and used to develop a stand alone Estimated Breeding Value (EBV) for shedding to add to the Wiltshire Horn data set.

The recording exercise has highlighted strong linkage between a number of flocks and weaker linkage between others. The Group will be focusing on encouraging improved linkage between flocks during the coming year with the aim of improving the accuracy of between flock comparison of results for the Group as a whole.

At the time of writing it appears unlikely that further funding from SWREG will be available to the SW Group members. However all those present at the recent meeting expressed thanks for the support received in getting things started and voted to continue recording into the future. The Group gratefully acknowledge support from Signet Breeding Services in meeting the full costs of their annual meetings and providing valued time and expertise.

If you are interested to find out more a full list of recorded flocks and contact details can be accessed in the Breed Enhancement section of the WHSS website.

Jean Burke

Funding for New Members

The Society fully supports the Signet Recording Programme and is keen to encourage members to join the scheme.

To this end the Society is now able to offer funding to members who wish to join. The offer is open to the first ten members who apply to join the programme, who will each receive £120 towards cost of performance recording.

In order to qualify for the funding the following conditions will apply:-

- Flocks must consist of a minimum of 30 females.
- A minimum of two rams must be used in any one season.
- Claimants must sign up for at least three lambing seasons.
- Claimants have to complete one lambing season of Signet recording before they receive the funding.
- Withdrawal prior to the completion of three seasons recording would render the claimant liable to repay the full funding to the Society.
- Scanning would be optional.

For further information about the recording programme contact any of the participating members, details can be found on the Breed Enhancement page of the WHSS website, or contact Sam Boon of Signet on 01908 844 195.

“ Do you need

advice on aspects

of keeping and

breeding

Wiltshire Horns?”

Help for New Members

In the last newsletter we announced a new service for those members who may need advice on aspects of keeping and breeding Wiltshire Horns. This service may also be of interest to those

members who are keen to show Wiltshire Horns but who would like some help in getting started. Should you feel you may benefit from advice from a more experienced member of

the Society then contact the Secretary and she will put you in touch with a local member.

Online Newsletter

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It is the Society's intention, where possible, to send future newsletters via an emailed link to the website. From this issue newsletters will be available to download from the website from the Downloads page. Should you wish to receive your newsletters in this way please email the secretary with your preferred email address. Those members who wish to continue to receive their newsletters by post need take no further action. Should you have suggestions for future newsletters or wish to contribute articles yourself then please contact the secretary.

EID

The electronic tagging of sheep will come into force on 1st January 2010. Enclosed you will find a copy of the Eblex leaflet "A Farmer's Guide to EID" which you should find helpful. Information packs from Defra will be sent to all sheep keepers in December. **The Society's requirements for the Wiltshire Horn eartag will remain unchanged.**

The NSA and Livestock Auctioneers Association have jointly organised meetings around the country where sheep keepers can find out more. Details of meetings were posted on the WHSS website last month. Remaining meetings are as follows:-

17 Nov	Tues	Bakewell Market	7.30 pm
18 Nov	Weds	Chelford	7.00 pm
19 Nov	Thurs	Bishop Burton College	2.30 pm
19 Nov	Thurs	Newark	7.30 pm
30 Nov	Mon	Bentham Auction Market	7.00 pm
1 Dec	Tues	Skipton	2.30 pm
1 Dec	Tues	Thirsk	7.00 pm
2 Dec	Weds	Westmorland Showground	2.30 pm
2 Dec	Weds	Carlisle	7.00 pm
7 Dec	Mon	Penrith	2.30 pm
8 Dec	Tues	Wooler	2.30 pm
8 Dec	Tues	Hexham	7.00 pm

"The Electronic tagging of sheep will come into force on 1st January 2010"

Shows

The Show season this year has been uninterrupted by disease or bad weather however we have unfortunately lost Wiltshire Horn classes at some major agricultural shows due to insufficient entries. Two of the highlights this year have been the last Royal Show and the Royal Welsh. Full results of classes at all shows will be published in the 2009 flock book.

Iolo Owen Points Prize

The Iolo Owen points trophy is awarded to the exhibitor who has accumulated the most points over the show season and has been won, for the second year running, by Jenny Grant Parkes.

Jenny has enjoyed a successful show season this year highlights being winning supreme champion at the Stoneleigh show and sale and finishing the year by taking the interbreed championship at Newbury with her ram lamb.

Royal Show

The 2009 Royal Show saw the finest display of Wiltshire Horn sheep at Stoneleigh for many years with keen competition in all classes. The honour of judging the last Royal Show went to our President Lyn Davies.

After a wet start the skies cleared in time for the judging to start and Lyn quickly got down to the job in hand awarding 1st place in the Ram and Ram Lamb classes to J. Jeyes with Iolo Owen tak-



Judging the ram lamb class

ing the red rosette in the very strong Shearling Ram class. Then it was on to the females. The line up of shearling ewes was a magnificent sight with 12 entries forward. After due deliberation Lyn awarded both 1st and 2nd places to W. Roberts of Anglesey who then went on to win the ewe lamb class as well.

The Brockhall cup for the Supreme Champion was awarded to W. Roberts's shearling ewe with Iolo Owen taking the reserve for his shearling ram. Iolo then went on to win the Group of Three class and, with W. Roberts winning the Phillip Smith points trophy, it was a very successful day for the men from Anglesey after a closely fought contest.

The sheep on show were a credit to the breed and our thanks go to all exhibitors and our judge for making the Wiltshire Horn classes at the last Royal Show a successful and memorable occasion for all concerned.

Teresa Hodgkinson, Steward



Royal Show Supreme Champion 2009
Bred and Exhibited by W Roberts

Royal Welsh Show

There was a very strong entry of sheep for The Royal Welsh, both in terms of numbers and also quality. A total 52 entries competed in five classes with the judge, Trevor Brown, advising that his task was most challenging. Judging started at noon and it was not until two hours later that the breed championship was awarded.

The Senior Ram class was won by Iolo Owen with a home bred two year old ram, which then went on to win The Breed Championship. The Shearling Ram class was taken by William Roberts, also a home bred sheep. The Ram Lamb class, was won by R J Thomas & Sons.

The strongest class of the day was the Shearling Ewe, with ten ewes forward, and the judge having difficulty in placing the top of the line. After the show Trevor commented that in several classes,



Royal Welsh Supreme Champion 2009
Exhibited by Iolo Owen



The Shearling Ewe Class

but particularly the shearing ewes, there was very strong competition for the first three places. The Ewe lamb class was also taken by R J Thomas & Son, with the judge stating that this home bred lamb was the best ewe lamb he had encountered all season.

The team of three was won by W Roberts with his shearling ram, a shearling ewe and a ewe lamb. The same shearling ewe then went on to win the Best Female of Show.

Trevor Brown Judge

Stoneleigh Show and Sale

Saturday 19th September 2009

Judge: Roger Elliott, Kislingbury, Northants



Supreme Champion 2009 Newland Dodge

The first Stoneleigh show and sale held on Saturday 19th 2009 saw a bumper trade for the sheep on sale with buyers coming from all over the country to choose their sheep at this prestigious event.

In the show the ewes were first to be judged with Lyn Davies winning all the ewe classes with his homebred sheep, his shearling ewe taking the champion ewe cup and his ewe lamb the reserve. Then it was on the rams with R J Thomas of Anglesey winning the ram lamb and shearling ram classes and Stuart Brodie taking the cup for the group of three ram lambs. Jenny Grant Parkes won the ram class and then went on to take both the male champion cup and the rosette for the supreme champion in the show.

A packed sale ring saw keen bidding for all the ewes on sale with a top price of 250gns for Jenny Grant Parkes' shearling ewe selling to M Adams of Market Harbourough. Average prices for ewe lambs were 110gns, shearling ewes 174gns and older ewes 152gns. The first male to be sold was the supreme champion Newland Dodge selling for a Society record price of 1200gns to T J & J Watsham of West Hoathly, Sussex. Bidding then went on to a top price of 650gns for R J Thomas' ram lamb selling to Havard & Co of Droitwich, the remainder of the lambs averaging 204gns. A good result followed for Roger Elliott with a shearling ram topping the class at 800gns selling to EA & CC Girvan of Invernesshire, and another selling at 600gns. The rest of the shearing rams averaged 333gns and the older rams £348gns.

Thanks go to the judge Roger Elliott, the vendors and the buyers for making the sale such a resounding success and to Simon Draper of Rugby Farmer's Mart and his team for their help in organizing and promoting the event.



Judge Roger Elliott presenting the Hope cup to Lyn Davies

	Topped	Averaged
5 Senior Rams	£1260.00	£365.40
25 Shearling Rams	£840.00	£349.69
19 Ram Lambs	£682.50	£214.46
13 Ewes	£178.60	£160.32
82 Shearling Ewes	£262.50	£182.48
37 Ewe Lambs	£173.25	£115.24

Teresa Hodgkinson,
Steward

Gaerwen Show and Sale
Monday 14th September 2009
Judge: Miss A Elliott

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An entry of 62 sheep which included the dispersal of the TREGARN Flock (395) the property of the late George Thomas.

The preceding show classes were judged by Miss Ann Elliott, Northamptonshire with the following results:-

Ewe lamb (8 forward 5 sold) to 115 gns (average £96.60)

1. WD Edwards Lot 6 115 gns
2. Exors. Of the late GA Thomas Lot 5 100 gns
Richard Owen Lot 7 Not sold

Shearling ewe (1 forward)

Exors. Of the late GAThomas Lot 9 155 gns (£162.75)

Flock Ewe (13 forward 13 sold) to 115gns (average £99.75)

1. Exors. Of the late GA Thomas Lot 16 110gns
2. Exors. Of the late GA Thomas Lot 20 115gns
3. Exors. Of the late GA Thomas Lot 15 90gns
Exors. Of the late GA Thomas Lot 10 105gns

Ram Lambs (25 forward 20 sold) to 510gns (average £163.28)

1. RJ Thomas Lot 45 510gns
2. GM Edwards Lot 34 305 gns
3. GM Edwards Lot 35 270gns
B & H Thomas and Sons Lot 33 155gns

Shearling Rams (11 forward 10 sold) to 190gns (average £162.23)

1. Richard Owen Lot 47 185 gns
2. WD Edwards Lot 52 115gns
3. Richard Owen Lot 48 190gns
Richard Owen Lot 55 160gns

Stud Ram (2 forward 1 sold)

WD Edwards Lot 62 170gns (£178.5)

Group of 3 ram lambs

1. GM Edwards (Lots 34, 35 & 36)
Exors. Of the late GAThomas (Lots 24, 27 & 42)

Female champion Lot 9 Reserve Lot 6

Male champion Lot 45 Reserve Lot 47

Overall Champion Lot 9 Reserve Lot 45



Choosing the Supreme Champion



Judge Ann Elliott with R J Thomas and his
home bred Supreme Champion

A good entry met a consistent trade throughout with the shearling and ram lambs in demand from local commercial buyers. Only two established breeders from England were buying, Jenny Grant Parkes taking the Male champion, a ram lamb from RJ Thomas at 510gns and Veronica and Joshua Brigg claiming three ram lambs. The judge, Ann Elliott, and another young couple from Shropshire bought females to establish new flocks which is always encouraging at a breed sale.

Joshua Brigg, Steward

2009 Flock Book

The 2009 Flock book will be out in February.

Why not advertise your flock

Full page £60

Half page £30

Email or post your details to the Secretary by 31st December.

Wiltshire Horn Sheep Society Ltd

Christina Cormack
Little Bache House Farm
Hurleston
Nantwich
Cheshire. CW5 6BU

Phone: 0844 800 1029
Fax: 01270 627505

E-mail:
info@wiltshirehorn.org.uk

NSA Events

There will be three events next year hosted by the NSA and they are listed below:

Malvern Sheep Event—Tuesday 3rd August

Scotsheep (Blairdrummond, Stirling) Wednesday 2nd June

South Sheep (Hampshire) Wednesday 16th June

Show and Sales 2010

Please make a note in your dairies now of the show and sale dates for next year.

Gaerwen

Monday 13th September

Stoneleigh

Saturday 18th September

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

