



Whitefaced Woodland Sheep Society

Web site: www.whitefacedwoodland.co.uk

Newsletter 78 - February 2012

Chairman's Message

Dear All,

It is always difficult to write your first report especially when you have been elected whilst absent sailing the seven seas.

I thank all who attended the AGM. I believe matters between us and them got a bit acrimonious. It is not my intention to take sides, as all sheep, whether registered or not, were all bred from the same beginnings. My main intention is to keep everybody together. I would like to thank Paul and Jill for their hospitality on the day of the AGM and wish them both well for the future.

For the people who do not know me, I am the auctioneer who set up the sale at the Dog and Partridge which has moved to Dunford Bridge, Hade Edge, Penistone Market, Bretton Mill, one year at Holmfirth Market and back to Bretton Mill. I own a limited amount of stock but have sold many thousands over the years.

My first memory of White Faced Woodlands was lambs from Ken Wild and tups from Mr Stanley Kaye at Meltham Sheep Fair approximately 50 years ago. In those days most horned tups were tied to stakes round the edge of the field and it was common for a woodland tup to lift the stake and run round the field with it attached, causing many sore ankles!

No more rambling. Thank you all for making me Chairman. I am available to talk to you at anytime.

Happy New Year and successful lambing
Yours, Paul

2011 AGM minutes

Attached to this Newsletter is a copy of the draft minutes of the AGM held last October.

We sadly have to report that Jim Thornley of Edale died at the end of January. He was a long established breeder of Whitefaced Woodlands, and judged Woodland classes at many shows.

Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Saturday 25 February at the Dog and Partridge on the A628 – at 11am for an 11.30 start. Details will be circulated to all committee members shortly.

View from the Hill

Yes! It's true... View from the Hill is back! With a new Chairman in the shapely form of Paul Dixon it falls to me as Vice Chair to impart pearls of wisdom via this now traditional column - which is open to anyone to write by the way.

So where am I? Oh yes, still reeling under the misapprehension that we were to expect lambs in mid April and not, as happened, three lots so far in January



I can't make my mind up as to whether they are very early or very late. It's just not happened to me before. Must be a Dorset Horn gene lurking there I guess, but no outward signs ie: horns leaving the head sideways or woolly foreheads. They are all shearling ewes though. Has anyone else experienced this?

Size matters! I have been dimly aware for some time now that the larger tups engage a lot more interest in the sale ring. Not just strong bone and shoulders and broad head, but height. I have taken to measuring a few at the shoulder and note that the favoured ones are achieving some 32 inches. Something else which seems to be largely overlooked is a decent backside. I know the Woodland is a hill sheep but we do get the occasional animal with well muscled leg and I feel this should be selected for, if all other desirable attributes are present. I see that the Portland breeders are a little exercised at the moment over this size point (meaning height). They are concerned that the breed is becoming too big. I have quite often heard Woodland commentators suggest that our breed has lost size over the years and this is something I think we should address. So at the risk of ridicule, look out for me with my measuring tape this coming season. (I should say further ridicule: I was observed measuring a tup's shoulder height at Bretton last year by a Mr. Cottrill who was heard to shout across the lines *did I realise that tup is standing in a hole?!*)

Rob Ford

Shows with Woodland classes

9 June - Honley Show, Honley, West Yorks. Contact: Paul Sykes 01484 680731. Judge proposed: Karen Dowey

17 June - Rare Breeds Day at Three Counties Show – *may* offer Woodland classes. Contact Fiona Parker on 01684 584901 or e-mail: fionap@threecounties.co.uk

24 June - Harden Moss Sheep Show and Sheepdog Trials, Holmfirth. Contact: Christine Smith 01484 680823. Judge: John Jones

27-28 June - Royal Norfolk Show, Norwich. . Schedule from mary@royalnorfolkshow.co.uk or phone 01603 731965. Judge: Tessa Wigham

10-12 July - Great Yorkshire Show, Harrogate. Contact: Amanda West on 01423 546231 or amandaw@yas.co.uk. Judge: Neville Belfield

31 July - Ryedale Show, Kirkbymoorside. Contact: Mrs A Welham 01652 697820 or download entry form at www.ryedaleshow.org.uk Judge proposed: Jeff Dowey.

11 Aug - Manifold Show, Ilam, Staffs. Schedule from www.manifoldshow.co.uk or contact: David Belfield: 01538 308362

19 Aug - Mottram Show, Mottram, near Glossop. Contact: Angela Oldham 0161 351 1263. Judge proposed: Tessa Wigham

Mon 27 Aug - Hope Show. Champion of Champions follows regular WFW classes. Contact: jane.dalton@lineone.net or Mrs H Morris: 01663 750318 hope.morris1@btinternet.com Judges: Rider Howard; Martin Warburton (Championship)

8 Sept - Penistone Show. Contact: Mrs Earnshaw 01484 605805. Judge proposed: Paul Dixon.

16 Sept - Hayfield Country Show, High Peak. Contact: Sarah Mellor 01663 746580 or sarah.mellor4@btopenworld.com. Judge proposed: Rob Ford

Sales in 2012

Spring Rare Breeds Sale, York. Sat 28 Apr 2012
York Livestock Centre: 01904 489731
www.ylcc.co.uk Entries close 30 Mar 2012

1 Sept - Rare Breeds Show & Sale at Skipton.
Craven Cattle Marts: 01756 792375.
www.ccmauctions.com

8 Sept - National (RBST) Show & Sale. Sale on Saturday for CFB registered stock. Melton Mowbray Market: 01664 562971.
www.meltonmowbraymarkets.co.uk

22 Sept - Show & Sale of Rare & Minority Breeds at Carlisle. Entries close 13 August.
Harrison & Hetherington : 01228 640924
www.livestock-sales.co.uk

29 Sept - Annual Whitefaced Woodland Show and Sale at Bretton Mill, near Barnsley. Contact Paul Dixon at William Sykes 01484 683543.

5-6 Oct - Show & Sale of Rare & Minority Breeds York Livestock Centre 01904 489731
www.ylcc.co.uk

Stott Hall Open Day

This year, we held our AGM at Stott Hall, the guests of Paul Thorp and his fiancée Jill Falkingham who laid on a heart-warming meal and hot drinks after the AGM, followed by a judging training session in Paul's spotless sheep shed. I just enjoy being with so many good friends and fellow Woodland keepers and that would have been enough for me, but it is even better to be able to discuss the merits of some of Paul's great sheep too!



Ric and Deirdre Halsall enjoy a mug of tea

With no desire to be a show judge myself, I did not feel it necessary to get too involved in the serious business of judging, but one could tell by the earnest faces of those doing so, that this was important stuff!



Paul, Jeff, Helen and Chareen (out of shot) held sheep for us to inspect

Paul, Chareen, Jeff and Helen Dowey and James Gill had set up some pens of sheep – no doubt with help from others (apologies if I have missed anyone out, it wasn't intentional) – and these were brought out in groups and lined up for us to judge as if in the show ring, one class at a time. When everyone who wanted to had made enough notes we moved on to the next class and so on.

Then we all got together and Paul, Jeff and James discussed the order that they had ranked these sheep. No one had to reveal the order of their own selections and no one was humiliated with us all picking fault in their reasoning, but for those who wanted to, we were able to discuss their own

judgements and the three of them had set some very carefully baited traps for us to fall into! Cunning devils! Didn't fool me though, he lied proficiently!



A gimmer lamb with a broad head

Okay, so how do you judge a sheep then? Well everyone, it seems, has a very slightly different hierarchy of characteristics that they are looking for. One should also note, that even when faced with such magnificent sheep to judge, no sheep is perfect. However, in my mind, we should start with the basics; is this, a fit healthy specimen?

So we must address issues such as mouth, legs, feet, back and so on. A slight physical deformity in any of these could be passed on to the animal's offspring. Only when we have physically fit sheep, can we go on to discuss conformation, wool, size and shape and breed features such as face colour and shape of the horns (provided that the horns are not causing a welfare issue of course).



Each sheep must be assessed from every angle; Chareen holding one of the ewes

Our gracious host judges were open to the opinions of others when we got down to the nitty-gritty of whether this sheep was better than that one at the end of the day and once or twice they were out voted, it seemed, by the group at large, but they also spotted details that many others had missed, such as a slightly bent leg or a black spot on the eyelid of another. This is very enlightening, if you yourself failed to notice the fault – especially if it is as potentially important as a deformed leg! I assume (he lied again). Even if, like me, you don't intend to show sheep or judge show sheep yourself, a judging day like this is a great way to brush up on your knowledge of the breed in the hope that you can breed better sheep in the future. And it is worth it, if for no other reason than seeing the look on Jeff's face when he catches you out!

“Oh didn't you spot that one Philip?” he asks all innocently, with a big smirk! As if!



Jeff Dowey with one of the tup lambs

Philip Onions

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