

Southdown News

Newsletter of The Southdown Sheep Society

Issue 36

Winter 2023



Southdown
SS
Sheep Society

NOTES FROM THE SOUTHDOWN OFFICE

The Council of the Southdown Sheep Society meets at least twice a year and the Notes from the Office aim to keep members updated on some of the important issues raised and discussed within Council meetings.

LAMB REGISTRATIONS

More and more members are choosing to register their lambs online using the Pedeweb system. Please email the office if you need a reminder of your Pedeweb password.

There is a User Guide available to download from the Southdown Sheep Society website, together with some FAQs. To access the online Flock Book simply follow the link from the Society website.

Lamb registrations

Members should make every effort to register lambs as soon as possible to avoid omission from the next edition of the Flock Book. Please note that all late registrations (ie after the year of birth) remain eligible for registration, but at the late fee charge of £30 per registration.

While every effort is made to turn around registrations promptly, there may be a delay in processing registrations at busy times in the Society office.

The Southdown Office is closed for all but emergency enquiries for two weeks over Christmas and New Year.

Please note that registrations cannot be processed until payment has been received and subscription is paid up to date.

2023 REGISTRATION CHARGES

on line registration fee per ewe lamb	£5
on line registration fee per ram lamb	£12
paper registration fee per ewe lamb	£7
paper registration fee per ram lamb	£18
late registration fee on line and/or on paper	£30 per animal
pedigree print-outs at time of registration	cost 50p each, print-outs requested later are charged at £1 per copy.

Imports and Exports

Members are reminded that the Office must be notified of any exports and imports. The rules as published in the current Flock Book state that:

'All sheep sold for export must have a Zootechnical Certificate in accordance with current legislation. The Zootechnical Certificate must be obtained from the Office, at a cost set by the Council.' The current fee is £20/head.

This zootechnical (export) certificate for pure-bred breeding sheep, their semen, ova and embryos certificate should accompany the animal (or germinal product) where they are traded or entered into the European Union to allow an entry or registration of those animals in other breeding books or breeding registers.

The Southdown Sheep Society, therefore, fulfils its obligations as a Defra recognised breed society by issuing the export pedigree certificate to allow entering of pure-bred breeding sheep in flock-books.

A registration fee per head as notified to members will be charged for all sheep imported into the UK. This charge is currently £25 per animal.

A three-generation pedigree must be provided to the Society for all imported sheep.

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Stock for sale

Members may use the Society website to advertise stock for sale at any time. Simply email the office with details. The basic charge for a brief advert on the website for three months is £10, see the more detailed article in this newsletter for further website sales options.

Getting it right

Do we have your correct information? Please try and update the Office with any changes of address or contact details. If you spot any errors or inaccuracies in the information included for you in this year's publications please let the Office know.

Email

If your email address changes, please remember to inform the office, this can be done via Pedeweb.

All members for whom the Society has an email address receive Southdown eNewsletters throughout the year. Society eNewsletters give the office a chance to share information with members on a more regular basis in between paper newsletters in Spring and Autumn. If you would prefer not to receive our eNewsletters please inform the office.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Many thanks to all those members whose subscriptions are already paid up to date. **PLEASE NOTE – The annual membership subscription is £45. If you pay by standing order please check that you have instructed your bank to pay the correct amount.**

Standing Order instruction forms are available to download from the website or from the Office. Please ensure that when making a BACS payment, or setting up a Standing Order for subscription payment, that you include your name as a reference with the payment. Just occasionally it is impossible to trace the source of a payment!

BACS payment details

Account name: Southdown Sheep Society
Sort Code: 60-02-13
Account Number: 51501376

GIFT AID

Are you registered with the Southdown Sheep Society for Gift Aid? If you are a tax payer then you membership contribution is worth 25% more to the Society as Gift Aid can be claimed on your subscription payment. You can download a Gift Aid form from the website, or simply call to request one from the Southdown office.

UPDATE YOUR FLOCK RECORD

Now is an ideal time to check all the records for your flock are correct. There is now a facility to confirm whether you are MV Accredited for example, or a member of the Signet Recording Scheme, or the scrapie monitoring scheme.

The Flock Book includes details of the number of ewes members put to the ram each year, and details of those rams – but if you would like that information included - you have to tell the office!

From the Chairman

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Society's newsletter. This year has been another successful one for the Society and members, with the breed faring well in the show ring and sales seeing strong demand.

The Society's Premier Sale, Worcester, saw average prices rise across the board, with high clearance rates in all sections and new centre records set. Meanwhile, averages also climbed at the Melton Mowbray sale, with both pedigree and commercial buyers active at both sales.

Lincolnshire Show was the venue for this year's National Show, with a great turnout in every class making it a testing morning's work for the judge, Stephen Humphrey. Congratulations to all prize winners at this and other shows across the country.

Next year's National Show takes place at the Royal Bath and West Show, Shepton Mallet, on 30th May to 1st June, with Southdown judging taking place on Thursday 30th May. I hope it will attract another good turnout of exhibitors and spectators.

It continues to vex me that some members seek to divide our breed by use of terms to define their flocks. Our breed is not large enough to be divided and I would urge all members to promote the breed as a whole, rather than use terms which inevitably create division.

By all means, promote your stock and the genetics they carry, but please do so in a way which does not infer negativity on other members' stock.

We should all be proud of the breed as a whole and the qualities it offers. The various bloodlines within it are a strength not a weakness.

On a lighter note, it has been great to see new members joining the Society over the last 12 months and to see the newly formed Young Breeders Group begin to flourish and host its first workshop earlier this autumn, following on from the inaugural Young Breeders' championships at both the National Show and the Society sales.

The enthusiasm, energy and ambition these younger breeders bring to everything they do around the breed is great to see and is to be applauded and encouraged. I look forward to seeing this group progress and develop in the coming years.

And finally, may I wish you all well for the winter months and your lambing whenever that is. Thank you for supporting the Society and the breed over the last year and for continuing to do so in future.



Jonathan Long
Chairman of Council



Meet the new Southdown Sheep Society President, Graham Ryves-Webb

Graham was installed as President of the Society at the recent AGM. A long-standing breeder of Southdown sheep, Graham admits that he was staggered to be invited to take on the role of President.

"It was early April 2022 when the Chairman first contacted me and I have to admit I thought it was an April Fool's trick. I am extremely honoured and proud to be to have been offered the position for the year, I consider it a huge privilege.

I had wanted to be a farmer since I was a small child and I am proud to have achieved this lifelong ambition, I consider myself to be a very fortunate man.

Growing up in South London, my careers master sneered when I said I wanted to go to agricultural college, there were not many farms in London in the 1960s.

With the support of family and friends I graduated from agricultural college and have spent my whole life living my dream. My first 20 years were spent in the dairy industry, but my love of sheep prevailed.

In 1995 when I returned from working in New Zealand I purchased my first five Southdown ewes from Ron Piddock in West Sussex. I decided on Southdowns as I was inspired by the author Barclay Wills, hence the choice of 'Barclay' as my flock prefix.

I have been very fortunate over the past 30 years in that my employers have always allowed me to keep my flock when I have moved jobs. I am now a full time shepherd on the Chiltern hills, managing a flock of 450-500 ewes NZ Romneys. My boss thoroughly approves of the use of Southdown tups on some of the flock, and he's pleased with the results.

The Southdowns make a 'cracking good cross' and it is one of the reasons I am such a huge fan of the breed as they can make flesh from nothing. As the old shepherds correctly said – 'if the wool is right, the sheep is right'. I believe that in prime-stock shows the breed can beat anything on the market, including the Continental breeds.

I hope that while in this role I can support those who attend shows around the country and support and promote the Southdown as a terminal sire. In my opinion we need to be looking at marketing the Southdown as a more commercial tup".



THE SOUTHDOWN SHEEP SOCIETY FLOCK COMPETITION 2023

Judge: Mr Roland Williams

Class A Flock of 40 ewes or over

Winner is awarded the **Berkhampstead Rose Bowl and £25**

1st Elizabeth Sargent

Class B Flock of 10 – 39 ewes

Winner is awarded the **Gaddesden Trophy and £25**

1st Maria Cork

2nd Amy Readhead-Higgins

3rd Howard Wood

4th Lorraine Levell

Class C **NOVICE** Competition, not to have won a first prize

Winner is awarded the **Frank Grantham Trophy and £25**

1st Harry Wood

2nd Robert & Lorna Pheasant

Tuften Beamish Trophy to the Champion Flock

Maria Cork

Reserve: Elizabeth Sargent

Hobgen Salver for the best intake of shearling ewes

Maria Cork

Miller Hallett Trophy for the best ewe lambs

Maria Cork

Paynter Wool Trophy for the flock with the best wool

Maria Cork

Noakes Trophy for the best three lambs of each sex,

sired by a named ram, present and shown

Lorraine Levell

The Jim Cresswell Trophy for the best ram or group of rams

Elizabeth Sargent

The Beryl Marsh Trophy for the best newcomer

Robert & Lorna Pheasant

All trophies to be awarded at the Southdown Sheep Society Field Day 2024

Trophies to be held for one year

DNA profiles required for AI sires

To ensure compliance with the UK's zootechnical legislation and safeguard the Southdown Sheep Society's status as a zootechnical registered breed society, the Society's Council has introduced a new rule about rams which have semen collected for use in artificial insemination.

Under the new rule, which will apply to all rams which have semen collected after 1st January 2024, all rams from which semen is collected will have to have a DNA profile registered with the Society.

Final details of the practicalities of how DNA profiles should be obtained and submitted to the Society office will be made available to members in the New Year.

Advertise your flock

As a member of the Southdown Sheep Society there are a number of ways in which your flock, or individual animals, may be advertised:

2024 SPRING PUBLICATION

The Society's Spring 2024 publication is an ideal opportunity to advertise your flock.

This full colour, A4 publication, is sent to all Society members.

Please note that all adverts included in this publication will also be included on the website.

Advertising rates for members are as follows:

Full page £80
Half page £40

Other advert sizes may be available on request, please contact the office for further details.

The deadline for copy is January 31st 2024

THE BURCH DARE PERPETUAL CHALLENGE TROPHY



Throughout the year, points are accumulated by members by their participation in shows. Points are awarded too for the Flock Competition. The principle behind the allocation of points remains true to the wishes of the Burch Dare family's wishes as set out in 1934.

The 2023 results are as follows:

Winner: Gordon Sparke (311 points)
Runner-up: Elizabeth Sargent (230 points)
Third place: Jonathan Long (111 points)

An innovative way to advertise the breed

The Southdown Publicity & Communications Committee is always keen to seek new and innovative ways of promoting and advertising the breed.

So, if you are visiting Worcester or Melton Mowbray markets and feel the need to pop into the gents' toilets, you will see this advert for the breed!



SELL YOUR STOCK ON THE SOCIETY WEBSITE WEBSITE ADVERTS

The cost of placing an advert on the website is £10 per advert. All adverts will include the flock name, breeder's contact details including telephone numbers and email, and a brief outline, totalling no more than 475 characters, including spaces, of what is available for sale.

Descriptions may include pedigree information or other relevant details, including show results and one photograph is included within the £10 charge. Additional lines of text (no more than 125 characters including spaces) may be purchased for £3/line and additional photographs can be added for £/photograph.

Where breeders wish, they may also submit a private catalogue of their animals for sale in pdf format to be included with their advert at a cost of £25. All catalogues must include wording which indemnifies the Society.

Adverts remain on the website for three months. These may be added at any time. Please email the office with details.

Miller Hallett: A Coincidence, a Lucky Man and Three Trophies

by Lindsay Dane (with thanks to Gail Sprake for help with the research)

I have attended quite a few Southdown AGMs over the years, and seen a lot of trophies presented. The Miller Hallett trophy is presented for the best ewe lambs in the Flock Competition, and there is a second Miller Hallett trophy (the Perpetual Challenge Cup) originally given for the best group of four sheep at the Royal Show and nowadays awarded at the National Show. The name of the donor must have stuck in my mind as it rang a bell when I came across it in entirely different circumstances.

I was born and brought up in Orpington, a place in Kent which is nowadays the outermost of the south east London suburbs. My parents bought their house, a new built semi, in 1954 and lived there for the rest of their lives. I am co-executor of my late mother's estate and in the course of selling the house we had to confirm that we have not breached covenants in a conveyance from 1930. When we located the Abstract of Title documents I noticed that it started in 1892 with the sale of an estate of over 300 acres of farmland with a large house, entrance lodges, gardens and parkland. The vendor in 1930 was Alexander Miller Hallett. (Incidentally the covenant was to not sell alcohol, nor operate as a public house or a club, so we had no difficulty confirming that we complied.)

My curiosity was aroused, so I rang Gail to see whether she had information about the Miller Hallett who donated the trophies. A quick scan of old Flock Books revealed that Mr A Miller Hallett founded the Goddington flock in 1895. As it was the Goddington estate being sold in our document I was sure that they were one and the same and decided to find out more about him.

Alexander was obviously a major figure in the Southdown world. His flock, number 179, was in existence from 1895 to 1939, initially at Goddington and later at Havant and at Funtingdon in Sussex. Around 200 ewes were put to the tup each year. He served as President of the Society twice, in 1923 and 1934, and served for many years on the Advertising and Trade Marking Committee including a spell as Chairman. In those days the Society had enough business to require several committees in addition to the Council.

But it was his private life that was fascinating. He was born plain Alexander Miller in London in 1856, the son of a physician. He married in 1882 and had four children. At some point in his early adult life he was befriended by Emily Hallett, a wealthy spinster with no living relatives. The nature of their relationship is not at all clear, but essentially she agreed to give him her entire fortune if he changed his surname to Miller Hallett. He did so at some time before his marriage, as his surname is Miller-Hallett in the 1881 census. (The hyphen seems to come and go in different documents.) In 1881 he was living with his parents in Kensington and working as an antimony refiner. Part of the gift from Emily was her share in Hallett and Fry, a partnership running an antimony refining business in Rotherhithe, London. It is not clear whether they met through his work at her firm but it seems likely. The partnership with Mr Fry continued until it was dissolved in 1911 and Alexander became sole owner of the business.

The Goddington estate was transferred from Emily to Alexander in 1892. We have an extract of the conveyance which describes the circumstances as "the said E C Hallett adopted the said A Miller Hallett as her nephew and she entertained a very strong affection for him." Her lawyers were obviously doubtful about the wisdom of the transaction as the conveyance goes on to say that as no money was changing hands she had been advised to reserve the power to revoke the transfer, but had chosen to make it irrevocable "in consideration of her affection for the said A M Hallett and for diverse other good causes and considerations".

Goddington did not remain an agricultural estate for long. The relentless march of the suburbs made it prime development land. The estate was severed in the 1920s by the sale of land to Kent County Council for the Orpington By Pass (now the A224), which opened up the area for development. Alexander sold Goddington House and 326 acres of land in 1930 for £50,000, and housebuilding continued until the 1950s. Goddington House was converted into flats in the 1930s and is now a listed building. The park was sold to the local Council. We played there as children and could creep through the boundary hedge to view the house and grounds.

It appears that Alexander did not live and farm at Goddington for very long. The Flock Books up to 1924 show his address as Goddington, but for the next 10 years he gives his business address in Rotherhithe. From 1936 he lived at 1 Richmond Terrace in Brighton, a grand Victorian house which is now a Listed Building. In 1925 the flock had been moved to Havant in Hampshire, but in 1930 it was at Funtingdon, Sussex, initially at Rookery Farm and later at Lynch Farm. The flock was dispersed in 1939 and Alexander died in Brighton in 1953.

The Southdown Society was not the only beneficiary of Alexander's desire to keep the Miller Hallett name alive. The third trophy bearing his name is in the sport of fencing. He was described as a stalwart of the Epée Club and in 1928 he presented a cup for an international competition. The London International Open, better known as the Miller-Hallett, was held for the 85th time in 2022.

Although the family name died out with Alexander's children, the Miller Hallett name lives on in two different worlds.



Obituary

Peter Ballard - the Cooden Flock

The Society was saddened to learn in September of the passing of long-standing member Peter Ballard at the age of 84.

Peter was a keen supporter of the breed for many years. Looking back through the paper records stored in the office, a brief history of Peter's flock came to light, written in his own handwriting, most likely included a number of years ago in a Southdown publication. It is reproduced here in its entirety, in Peter's own words:

"I first purchased 18 Southdown ewes in 1965 at the Findon Sheep Fair, from St Leonards Forest Farm, and one ram from Mr. Goodger. From these original sheep I built the flock up to 100 ewes by 1980 – all home bred.

I started showing them, with a lot of help from John Randall, in 1970 at the Kent County Show. The climax of my showing came in 1987 at the South of England Show when I won the Reserve Supreme Champion with a ram.

When I first had my sheep I had the rough grazing of 60 acres at the Cooden Beach golf course. I reduced the number of ewes when the rent got too high, now I have 14 ewes on a few free acres of grass. They have been such a big part of my life that I would be lost without them. They make a good excuse to leave family gatherings and when I get bored I just tell everyone "I must go to feed the sheep". Looking back I even got away with that on my wedding day 38 years ago, in those days it was a mixed flock of mostly Kents. My wife realised then where my priorities lay, but we are still together."

The Cooden flock continues and is now owned and managed by Peter's daughter Judy Blackman. Judy comments that as Peter's health began to deteriorate she asked him to teach her everything he knew about the flock and sheep keeping. His answer came back that that was impossible as he was still learning!

Southdown exhibitors at the 2024 Findon Sheep Fair will be able to compete for the PJ Ballard Memorial Trophy, to be presented in Peter's name for the best Southdown ram.

Our thoughts and condolences go to Judy and the family.



Meet the new Council member

Hello! My name is Jess Middleditch and I am delighted to be joining the Southdown Society Council. Having established my flock some 10 years ago with what started as three ewes and a tup from Maidstone Market, it has now grown into a heartfelt passion.

I've been fortunate to grow up on our family farm, where my parents keep Hampshire Downs and have worked within the agricultural industry (more particularly with sheep) for some time now as a shepherd, alongside being Breed Secretary for another downland breed.

As a breed society, we must continue to keep pushing forwards with what I believe has a terrific opportunity for the native terminal sire breeds and I look forward to being a part of the journey.



Baa..rilliant Young Breeders shine through

Over the 2022-23 season, young breeders travelled across the country to display their stock to the highest of standards. Looking back on late 2022, young breeder Freddy Bethley, High Green flock, took the win in the Novice Class of the Flock Competition before going on to clinch the overall championship, judged by Antony Glaves.

The 2023 National Show at Lincolnshire Show, saw a strong turnout and Harry Wood of the Windrush flock, produced some strong males, taking first in the aged rams, with this ram going on to win the male and overall championships.

The newly introduced 'Young Breeders Championship' made its first appearance at the National Show. This consists of the highest placed young breeder's animal in each class being judged in a special championship class, prior to the overall championship. The Young Breeder's champion at Lincoln was Harry Wood with his aged ram, followed by Tom Chester in reserve with his aged ewe.

Later in the season came the Southdown National Premier Show and Sale at Worcester. A trio of new centre records were established with new marks set for shearling rams, ram lambs and shearling ewes, with a number of relatively new and young breeders making their mark.

Emily Yates, Fulfen, with her shearling ewe Fulfen Echo took both the Young Breeder's championship and overall championship, taking home the Chichester Trophy. Annabel Halcrow, Calley Castle, took both reserve Young Breeder and reserve overall champion with her ram lamb, Calley Castle 'Firestarter'. Closely following Calley Castle was the reserve male, a ram lamb from Louise and James Trumper.

Fulfen Echo went on to be purchased for 1200gns by fellow young breeder, Tom Chester for his Chapel House flock, after a frenzy of bids by well-established flocks and Calley Castle 'Firestarter' was purchased by the judge, Jonathan Long, and his daughter, Sophie for their Chaileybrook and Littlebrook flocks for 850gns.



Harry Wood and Tom Chester at The National Show, Lincoln.

Sophie Long then set a new centre record and breed ram lamb record with Littlebrook Eddie The Eagle selling for 1200gns. Taking this cocky ram lamb home was Nick Page on behalf of the Goodwood Estate. Not only did the young breeders exhibiting stock do well, those young breeders investing in new genetics played a vital part around the ring. Third top priced male of the day was Presoed Monet from Howard Wood, Usk, falling at 1000gns to young breeders Louise and James Trumper of the Beilliau flock, with the same buyers taking Chaileybrook 23/01753 at 580gns. Another male from the Prescoed flock fell to Sophie Davies, Revesby flock, for 500gns.

It was also a competitive day for females with plenty of strong gimmers and ewe lambs up for grabs. Grace Denning, Somerset took home shearling ewe, Beilliau Sparkle for 520gns.

The Southdown Young Breeders team is working hard to set up events for next year. We would like to invite our fellow young breeders to a workshop to be held in May 2024, further details to follow.

In other news, young breeders have had a significant presence on the show circuit this year, with Tom Chester placing reserve overall champion with his aged ewe at both Ashby and Nottingham Show, meanwhile, Freddy Bethley took both overall and reserve champion with his shearling ewe and aged ram at the Royal Norfolk Show, matching his placings at Suffolk Show earlier in the season.

Annabel Halcrow's Calley Castle flock placed well, taking reserve breed champion at the Royal Three Counties with her shearling ewe and grabbing first place with her group of three at the Royal Bath and West.

Also enjoying a good season was Sophie Long, who's shearling ewe took reserve overall champion at Hanbury show, while her ram lamb, Littlebrook Eddie The Eagle, placed first at both the Royal Three Counties and Royal Bath and West, taking the reserve breed championship here.

A plethora of tickets were achieved by the growing number of young members, all contributing to the competitiveness at the local and regional shows and providing excellent promotion for the breed across the country.



Emily Yates - overall champion at Southdown Premier Sale, Worcester

CENTRE SPREAD

CENTRE SPREAD

The 2023 Herts Show

Long-standing breeder and keen exhibitor Lesley Mead shares her thoughts on one of her favourite shows:

This show is a two-day show and we went early Saturday morning for those two days. As the ground was wet I loaded at home in my wellies and took my leather boots to change into. It's a pity I didn't do so before I left as after unloading the sheep I changed boots and found I had packed two left feet. (I love the boots so bought two pairs). So it was the joke of the show as you can imagine and usually there is a boot stall, there but not when I really wanted one. I coped in wellies, but I was really foot sore by the end of the second day!

There is a Southdown section on the Saturday and Northumbria, White Horse and Hollybar flocks all did very well. On the Sunday the sections cover all breeds and the Southdowns were in the shortwool classes. A White Horse ewe won the championship and a Holly Bar ram was reserve. Later in the interbreed championship eight champion sheep were asked into the ring too. And the reserve champions too. The White Horse ewe was Supreme Champion and the Hollybar ram was Reserve Supreme Champion. What a lovely result for the Southdown breed.



Book Review

'Shepherds of Sussex'

by Barclay Wills

Our President Graham Ryves-Webb recommends the writings of Barclay Wills to all Southdown enthusiasts. 'Shepherds of Sussex' is a most interesting read, possibly long out-of-print, but worth pursuing from the local library.

The excerpt below is taken from the flysheet of a very old and precious copy:

"This is undoubtedly a most fascinating subject, and I have nothing but admiration for Mr. Wills's amazing industry. A clear portrait emerges of the old shepherd, brusque in manner, but kindly at heart, who deplores the advent of the new age with its machines and speed and pines for the 'good old days' and the leisurely pursuit of his age-old calling.

Thus writes our literary adviser after reading the manuscript of *Shepherds of Sussex*, and we feel that such an authoritative, careful and accurate study of Sussex shepherds will undoubtedly take an honoured place in the already bountiful supply

of literature on Sussex. Mr Wills has compiled this valuable record over a number of years, and has spent much time in interviewing famous shepherds in order to obtain first-hand knowledge of this ancient craft.

Not only does he give much valuable information about the shepherds themselves, but he also describes and outlines the uses of the various accessories connected with the shepherd's work. He discourses of dewponds and their uses to the shepherd; of shepherds on the marshes around Rye, and the difference in the methods of sheep tending in these parts in comparison to the more familiar downs.

A remarkable fund of anecdote, amusingly written in intelligible dialect, enlivens the narrative, and makes the reader feel at one with these grand old men who pursue a calling now fast dying out.

So thoroughly has Mr Wills completed his task that the publishers confidently commend *Shepherds of Sussex* to all lovers of Sussex, believing that it will be enjoyed alike by the general reader and the earnest student of Sussex lore, who will find in it fresh sources for study as a result of the author's painstaking researches"

Pee staining, why does it matter?

As breeders we all have our red lines when it comes to selecting replacement stock or placing animals in classes at shows.

I'm not afraid to say mine is pee staining in females. By that I mean urine staining the fleece on the gigot of an animal.

Over the years I've heard a plethora of reasons as to why it happens and had many breeders trying to excuse it away as nothing to be concerned with and of no consequence.

For me it is one of the biggest faults a female sheep can have. It is unsightly, devalues the fleece and causes management issues which you just don't need.

I can, without fail, guarantee that a pee staining animal will, without preventative treatment, suffer fly strike at some time in the shepherding year. That leads to management intervention and means that particular animal is both costing you time and money, but also failing to thrive, for a period during the year.

Pee staining may seem like a minor issue, but when you're managing a flock of any significant size it becomes a major issue if your ectoparasite control isn't up to scratch or the maggot season catches you out by being earlier or later than you expect.

Of course, in the 21st century when ectoparasite control has been made simple by the likes of Clik and Crovect, it is easy to shrug and say: 'I'll make sure that ewe gets an extra spray there'. However, all that does is mask the issue and, potentially, lead to it being perpetuated in future generations.

So, what causes it? As mentioned above some breeders will trot out a myriad of reasons for it, with the most common being 'It only happens when the ewe gets too fat to squat properly'. I have a simple answer to that, if she's that fat that she can't squat properly then you need to review your flock management. Every ewe should be fit and functional and that means being able pee without staining.

Ultimately, in my experience the problem is caused by abnormalities of the vulva. This generally presents as a twist at the end of vulva, meaning urine is directed sideways rather than straight backwards. The urine then lands on the fleece, leading to staining.

In other instances, there can be a deep groove in its centre causing urine to spray rather than travel in a single stream.

Both of these abnormalities tend to be genetic and thus, ewes which pee stain generally produce offspring which do the same.

The biggest challenge in eliminating the issue is when purchasing rams. Obviously, you cannot tell if a ram's daughters will pee stain by looking at the ram, meaning it is a question of either seeing the dam of the ram or asking the breeder if the dam is a pee stainer or not.

First and foremost, I would urge every breeder, no matter their flock size or type, to take a careful look at their ewes and ewe lambs and assess how many, if any pee staining females they have.

If you have them what you want to do with them is, naturally, entirely up to you. I would suggest you identify them and then work back through their pedigree and identify those females in their back lines which also pee stain.

You may decide it isn't an issue you want to prioritise or you may feel it is something you want to breed away from. That is, of course, personal choice.

All I would say is take time to consider your options. Without a doubt pee staining is a fault and not one any breeder should be aiming to perpetuate.

Jonathan Long

The perfect antidote

The Office has a quantity of past flock books from various years, for sale at £5 per copy (+ postage and packing).

Some date back to the 1950s and could be the perfect antidote to our digital age.

They make interesting reading and are an informative historical record. Contact the office for further details of exactly which years are still available.

Southdown centre records tumble at Worcester Premier Sale

A trio of new centre records were established at the Southdown Sheep Society's Premier Sale, Worcester, in early August, with new marks set for shearling rams, ram lambs and shearling ewes, with a number of relatively new and young breeders making their mark.

The sale saw strong demand, with clearance rates of 89% in the shearling ewes, 79% in the shearling rams and 66% and 60% in the ram lambs and ewe lambs, respectively. Averages rose in all sections too, with increased numbers of shearling ewes and shearling rams finding new homes.

Leading the sale and setting a new shearling ram, male centre record and breed auction sale record at 2800gns was Preen Bank 22/03965 from the Robinson family, Church Stretton. This son of the imported sire Dartagnan is out of Brant-bred dam, herself by another imported sire, Percheron, and was subject to fierce ringside bidding before falling to Maria Cork for the Yeaside flock, Ashbourne.



Sale topper Preen Bank 22/03965 made 2800gns.

Next best in the males at 1200gns and setting a new centre and breed ram lamb record was another Dartagnan son, this time from young breeder Sophie Long's Littlebrook flock, Herefordshire. Taking this price was Littlebrook Eddie The Eagle, a ram lamb out of a dam by Chaileybrook 18/00297. Unshown in the pre-sale show due to Sophie's father, Jonathan, judging, this one had picked up a fistful of red tickets on the summer show circuit and was again well bid for before being knocked down to Nick Page on behalf of Goodwood Estate, Chichester, for the Goodwood flock.

Third in line at 1000gns was Prescoed Monet from Howard Wood, Usk. This son of Brant 19/00638 is out of a dam by East Dean 17/03198 and had been male champion and reserve overall champion at this year's Royal Welsh Show. He sold to join the Trumper family's Beilliau flock, Abergavenny.

Following that in the males came a brace of 850gns bids, with the first coming for the day's male, reserve overall champion and reserve young breeders' champion from the pre-sale show, Calley Castle 23/00348 from another young breeder, Annabel Halcrow, Kettering. He is by the privately purchased Chaileybrook Diablo and out of a dam by De Pibac Max and was taken by the judge, Jonathan Long and daughter, Sophie, for the Chaileybrook and Littlebrook flocks.



Sophie Long's "Littlebrook Eddie the Eagle" made 1200gns.

Also at this money was a shearling ram from the Humphrey family's East Dean flock, East Dean 22/05767. Sired by Goodwood Ebor, he is out of an East Dean 18/3797-sired dam and was the pick of Roland Williams for the Greenlands flock, Aberystwyth, having stood first in the pre-sale show.

Young Sophie Long then took 675gns for her shearling ram Littlebrook 22/01604. This son of Chaileybrook 18/00277 is out of a dam by Chaileybrook 18/00297, a previous Premier Sale topper, and sold to Huw and Kate Williams, Llandeilo, Carmarthen.

It was back to the ram lambs for the next best call when Jonathan Long sold Chaileybrook 23/00153 at 580gns. This son of imported sire Ibanez is out of a dam by another imported sire, Macron, and had previously been reserve male champion at the breed's National Show. He was another bought by the Trumper family, Beilliau.

And Annabel Halcrow then sold Calley Castle 23/00359 at 550gns, with this ram lamb being by Chaileybrook 23/01033 and out of a dam by Brant 12/00124. He sold to join Robert Cox's Port Hill flock, Leics.

Howard Wood followed with Prescoed Merlot at 500gns, with this one being another by Brant 19/00638 and this time out of a dam by Ridings 15/03077. He sold to join Sophie Davies' Revesby flock, Lincs.

Females

Setting the sale's third centre record was the top priced female, a shearling ewe from Elizabeth Sargent's Offham flock. Selling at 1850gns was Offham 22/09033. Sired by the imported sire Napoleon, she is out of a dam by Ridings Performer and was knocked down to Roland Williams, Greenlands.

Second best in the females was the female, young breeders' champion and overall champion from the pre-sale show, Fulfen Echo from Emily Yates, Staffs. Sired by Ibanez, she is out of a dam by Breton and after competitive bidding fell to Tom Chester for the Chapel House flock, Staffs.



Top priced female at 1800gns was Offham 22/09033



The day's male champion Calley Castle 23/00348 made 850gns

Elizabeth Sargent then sold another at 780gns, with this being Offham 22/09051. She is by Ridings Acrobat and out of a dam by Ridings 11/00701 and is full sister to the female and reserve breed champion at the breed's National Show this year. Buying her was Megan Chilcott for her Huntspill flock, Somerset.

The best of the ewe lambs then followed at 620gns, with this being Jonathan Long's Chaileybrook 23/01776. Another by the imported Dartagnan, she is out of a dam by the homebred Chaileybrook 19/00560 and was taken by Stephen Cobbald for his Lavenham flock, Suffolk.

Back with the shearling ewes and Howard Wood sold Prescoed 22/00576 at 580gns to Roland Williams, Greenlands. She's by Brant 19/00638 and out of a dam by the homebred Prescoed Griff.

Messrs Humphrey then sold their best at the same money, with this one being East Dean 22/005735, a Goodwood Ebor daughter out of a dam by East Dean 14/001652. She headed back to Surrey with Joshua Farell for the Nightingale flock.

And the Trumper family then took 520gns for Beilieu Sparkle, a De Pibrac 18/00299 daughter out of a Chaileybrook-bred dam by Percheron. She found a new home with Grace Denning, Somerset.

Elizabeth Sargent was back in action then, selling a brace of ET sisters to her female topper at 500gns to previous buyer Joshua Farrell. These were by Napoleon and out of a dam by Ridings Performer.

And the same money secured Jonathan Long's second ewe lamb of the day, Chaileybrook 23/01782, a daughter of Chaileybrook 18/00277 out of a dam by Chaileybrook 12/00011. She found a new home with Scarlet Hale's Sacombe flock, Herts.

**Averages; 39 shearling ewes £389.58 (+£47),
three ewe lambs £479.50 (+£154),
15 shearling rams £640.15 (+£46),
10 ram lambs £457.80 (+£60) (McCartneys).**

Southdowns sell to 1000gns at Melton Mowbray

The second Southdown Society sale of the season held in early September at Melton Mowbray saw Dave and Chris Rhead sell their champion from the pre-sale show at 1000gns.

The Rhead's sale topper and show leader was shearling ewe Light Oaks Tess, a Whitegate Borage daughter out of a dam by the homebred Light Oaks Bertram. She sold locally to Lorraine Levell, Normanton-On-Wolds.

Second best at 620gns was another shearling ewe from the same home, Light Oaks Tiffany. This one is a twin sister to the sale leader and headed away to Kent with Emma Merricks, Nonnington, for the Copperfield flock.



Melton Mowbray sale champion Light Oaks Tess sold for 1000gns

Following that in the females was a 420gns call for an aged ewe from Will Morton's Blackfriar flock. This was Blackfriar 17/00067, a daughter of the imported sire Sarkozy and out of a dam by Great Fen 08/0089. She sold having run with Calley Castle Bramble and was taken by Tom Chester for the Chapel House flock, Staffs.

Then at 360gns was a ewe lamb from the same home, Blackfriar 23/01023. She's by Calley Castle Bramble and out of a dam by Sarkozy and was knocked down to previous buyer Emma Merricks.

The same buyer also paid 340gns for shearling ewe Montecristo Nellie from Lorraine Levell. She's by Wattisfield 20/00415 and out of a dam by Offham Prince Caspian.

Also heading away to Kent with Emma Merricks at 290gns was Glandore 22/00286, a shearling ewe from Basil Cooper. This one is by Offham Orion and out of a Ridings dam by an East Dean Sire.

And Messrs Watton then took 260gns for their ewe lamb White Horse Dahlia. This White Horse Ace daughter is

out of a dam by Avenue Farm Kingsley and was bought by David Bellfield, Buxton.

Males

Topping the ram prices at 480gns was a shearling ram from Jonathan Long's Chaileybrook flock, Chaileybrook 22/01372. Sired by the homebred Chaileybrook The Stag, he's out of an imported French dam and had picked up a fistful of red tickets earlier in the summer. Buying him was Will Morton for the Blackfriar flock, Lincoln.

Following him at 450gns was the first prize shearling ram and reserve overall champion from the pre-sale show, Chaileybrook 22/01378 from the same home. This one is again by Chaileybrook The Stag and is out of a dam by Chaileybrook Tadpole. He was taken by Angela Tarry-Smith, Brackley.

The same buyer then paid 400gns for Blackfriar 22/00777, a son of East Dean 17/03178 from Will Morton. He's out of a Sarkozy-sired dam and had been successful on the show circuit as a lamb.



Melton sale reserve champion Chaileybrook 22/01378

Then at 350gns was the first prize ram lamb from the pre-sale show, Chaileybrook 23/01754. Sired by the top priced shearling, Chaileybrook 22/01372, he is out of a dam by the homebred Chaileybrook 19/00560 and sold to previous buyer David Bellfield.

And at the same money was another ram lamb heading way with Mr Bellfield, Northumbria Oberon from Gordon and Matthew Sparke. This son of the homebred Northumbria Taranis is out of a Ridings dam by East Dean Distinction and was another to have been successful on the summer show circuit.

Averages;
five shearling rams £396.90,
three ram lambs £336,
one aged ewe £441,
six shearling ewes £465.50
15 ewe lambs £202.30
(Melton Mowbray Market).

Windrush Lancelot sets new £4000 Southdown breed record

Southdown breeder Harry Wood, Usk, set a new £4000 breed record when selling his two-shear ram Windrush Lancelot in a private deal to Goodwood Estate, Chichester, for the Goodwood flock.

Champion at this year's Southdown National Show, held at Lincolnshire Show, Lancelot had also been first prize shearling and reserve male champion at the 2022 National Show. AI-bred, he is by imported sire Percheron, with semen having been purchased from the Long family's Chaileybrook flock following Percheron's own National Show championship win in 2018.

Lancelot is out of an East Dean-bred dam and goes back New Zealand breeding via the Southern Cross flock.

Goodwood Estate flock manager Nick Page said he had been keen to secure Lancelot for several months for both his combination of breeding, size and carcass. "He's a great, modern Southdown ram and the genetics he carries will be an excellent match for those already within the Goodwood flock."

Breeder Harry Wood said he was delighted to have secured the breed record with Lancelot. "He has always been an exceptional ram, right from birth and while reluctant to sell him, he has been used at home for the last two years, so his genetics will remain within the flock for some time to come."



NSA Sheep Events in 2024

The Southdown Sheep Society will be attending both the National NSA event at Malvern and Scotsheep in 2024. Both events are of interest to all sheep keepers and it's well worth getting the dates in your diary.

June 5th 2024

NSA SCOTSHOEP 2024 will be held at Aikengall Farm, Innerwick, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1SG courtesy of the Hamilton family.

NSA Scotsheep is a biennial event organised by NSA Scotland and will be the most important specialist event in the calendar for sheep producers in Scotland and the North of England next year. In 2022 the event was held near Dundee with an attendance of 8000.

The 2024 event will follow the successful format developed over recent years and will include an extensive trade stand area with approximately 160 commercial and educational trade stands, 40 sheep breed societies, trade stands/demonstrations; farm tour; comprehensive seminar and workshop programme; educational and working demonstrations; sheep dog trial; show and sale of pairs of ewe hogs; fencing, stockjudging and NSA Next Generation Shepherd of The Year competitions as well as inviting schoolchildren from local schools in the East Lothian area to attend through the Royal Highland Educational Trust.

July 30th 2024

The NSA Sheep Event is a biennial one-day show held at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire. It is the flagship event of the National Sheep Association.

As well as finding out about the latest innovations and products available, sheep farmers can strengthen their technical knowledge by attending the seminars and workshops on the day. A series of competitions is also run throughout the day, providing entertainment and encouraging the next generation of sheep farmers. The sheep dog sale is always a big draw for visitors.

A warm welcome to our New Members

Mr Neil Campbell	Grimsby, Lincolnshire	Joanna Smyth-Osbourne	Banbury, Oxon
Miles Cartwright & Karen Whitesmith	Southrey, Lincolnshire	Southwick Estate	Fareham, Hampshire
Andy Ellis	Llanymynech, Powys	L Staves	Market Rasen, Lincolnshire
Ricky & Lisa Frampton	Bridport, Dorset	Tarver Brothers (James & Matthew)	Ely, Cambridgeshire
Nicola Gilford	Crewe, Cheshire	The National Trust	Woolbeding, West Sussex
Hayley Green	Reading, Berkshire	Jason & Debby Timms	Lutterworth, Leicestershire
Miss Zoe Hull	Southminster, Essex	Mrs Nicole Tinton	Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire
Master Harry Lucas	Maidstone, Kent		
Wyn & Aby Price	Llandovery, Carmarthenshire	George Turnham	Brackley, Northamptonshire
Tim Roberts	Whitwell, Hertfordshire	Trevor Wayborn	Barnstaple, Devon
		R J & J Williams	Chepstow, Monmouthshire

DATES FOR THE DIARY 2024

April 1st

Closing date for receipt of 2024 Council nominations

May 30th - June 1st

National Southdown Show

at the Royal Bath & West Show,
The Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset,
BA4 6QN.

Full details will be published on the Southdown Sheep Society website as soon as they are available.

Alternatively, contact The Royal Bath & West of England Society, Competitions Executive,
naomi.guiver@bathandwest.co.uk
www.bathandwest.com

June 5th

NSA Scotsheep

at Aikengall Farm, Innerwick, Dunbar, East Lothian,
EH42 1SG

July 30th

NSA Sheep Event

at the Three Counties Showground, Malvern,
Worcestershire.

August 3rd

The Southdown Sheep Society Premier Breeders Show & Sale

at Worcester Market
worcester@mccartneys.co.uk

September

Traditional Native Breeds National Show and Sale at Melton Mowbray
info@meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk (date to be confirmed)

Southdowns well represented at Winter Fairs

The English Winter Fair, Stafford, saw a strong turnout of Southdown prime lambs, with the red ticket going to I T Davies and Son, Brecon, with second taken by Jonathan Long and third, fourth and fifth going to Nick Page.

Messrs Davies' lambs then went on to claim the native breed championship on the second day of the show under judge Antony Graves, Yorkshire.

In the event's carcass classes, Southdowns claimed the top four spots in the native section, with Robert Cox taking first and second, with Sally Booth in third and Jonathan Long fourth.

The Royal Welsh Winter Fair saw a tremendous turnout of Southdown lambs in the live classes, with nine pairs forward for judging. Taking the top spot were Katherine Price and Lindsay Parry, with second going to the same exhibitor and third to Harry Wood. Fourth and fifth here were both taken by Messrs Wakeham-Dawson and Harmer.

Southdowns were well represented in the carcass classes too, taking the red tickets in all three of the event's native lamb classes.

Top spot in the pairs class here was Harry Wood, with Robin and Jo Ransome in second and Phil Houldey in third.

The single carcass class was split in two on weight, with the lightweight class won by Katherine Price and Lindsay Parry and the heavyweight class going to Phil Houldey.

Southdown Sheep Society Council members 2023 - 2024

Chairman of Council: Jonathan Long

Vice Chairman: Howard Wood

Honorary Treasurer: Neil Stainthorpe

President: Graham Ryves-Webb

President Elect: Roland Williams

Members of Council

Retire 2024

Lindsay Dane
Patrick Goldsworthy MBE
Tim Morris
Neil Stainthorpe

Retire 2025

Sidney Cook
Stephen Humphrey
Jonathan Long
Will Morton
Les Newman
Mark Robertson

Retire 2026

Brian Alderson
Jessica Middleditch
Sarah Mitchell
Michael Sprake
Howard Wood

Successful first Young Breeders Group event

The fledgling Southdown Young Breeders Group staged its first event at the end of October, with young people from across the midlands and southern England gathering in Lincolnshire to learn the art of preparing Southdowns for show and sale and also the fundamentals of judging sheep.

Kindly hosted by Will Morton's Blackfriar flock, the event was led by experienced breeders Nick Page of the Goodwood and Pilly Green flocks and Jonathan Long, Chaileybrook.

The event brought together young breeders with varying levels of experience, with everyone getting actively involved with all the activities on offer and also making great connections for the future.

The day commenced with a warm welcome from Young Breeders Group coordinators Emily Yates and Tom Chester, with this followed by trimming demonstrations from Nick and Jonathan, each showcasing different ways to approach the task.

The different styles of trimming led to much detailed questioning, with the main message being that there is no right or wrong way to trim, so long as the end result is what you were aiming for.

Subsequently, the participants formed small groups to begin what they'd seen and learnt, with Nick and Jonathan generously sharing invaluable tips and tricks that will undoubtedly support these young breeders in their future endeavours.

After a brief interlude for refreshments, the attendees were led through the fundamentals of sheep judging, with this experience also proving helpful for all present, with further questions following on breed type, show ring etiquette and stock selection for shows and sales.

The event was rounded off with a flock walk of the Blackfriar ewes, with Will Morton explaining his breeding strategy and aims and aspirations for the future of the flock.

The Group thanks both Nick and Jonathan for giving up their time to help, along with Will for hosting and also Chrissie Long for taking the time to assist in supporting some of the younger breeders and taking some great photos to document the day.

Commenting on the event Nick Page said it had been a great event to be part of. "It was good to see such enthusiasm and interest in so many young breeders. It looks like the breed has a great future with these young shepherds and shepherdesses."

Overall, the day was a great success, all attendees left enthusiastic and looking forward to the next event in late Spring 2024.

Looking ahead, the Southdown Young Breeders team is busy planning events for 2024 and welcomes suggestions for future events and activities you would like to see happen.

If you have any ideas for future events, please do not hesitate in contacting Emily (emilyates02@gmail.com) or Tom (tom@chesterfamily.org.uk).



Successful first Young Breeders Group event



Trophies won by members who take part in the annual Flock Competition are traditionally awarded at the AGM the following year.

Freddy Bethley's High Green flock was the champion flock in 2022, but since Freddy was unable to attend the AGM, chairman Jonathan Long presented the trophies to Freddy when he attended the Young Breeders day instead.

Southdown Sheep Society

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