

Southdown News

Newsletter of The Southdown Sheep Society

Issue 23

Spring 2017

Well deserved award for David Burden

Long-standing Southdown Sheep Society member David Burden has been awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition of many years of voluntary service to the local farming community and local government in West Sussex.

On February 20th 2017 friends and family members came together at the South Downs National Park Centre in Midhurst, West Sussex, to attend the investiture by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Mrs Susan Pyper, of the British Empire Medal to David Burden.

David's association with Southdown sheep goes back many years, his Duncton flock (No. 205) was founded in 1980 and is one of the oldest flocks still in existence today. A past President of The Southdown Sheep Society and for many years a member of Council, as a member of the South Downs Conservation Board

David has represented the breed within the South Down National Park, lending his expertise and support to the long-running campaign to establish the South Downs National Park. He played a key role in the small group of members and officers that

worked to establish the new organisation and shape its unique partnership-led culture. David has been an active member of the National Farmers Union and the West Sussex Federation of Young Farmers Clubs since his youth and he has worked tirelessly to support campaigns to reduce the burden of red tape on farmers, to increase the efficiency of farming and to build the sector's reputation. He has been active in the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution for much of his life, providing support to farmers experiencing financial pressure or other medical or personal issues. A keen historian, David is an active member of the Petworth History Society.



President Lindsay Dane with Judy and David Burden

He remains our point of contact for all archive and historical matters relating to the Southdown sheep. The Southdown Sheep Society extends hearty Congratulations to David Burden BEM on this well-deserved award.

SOUTHDOWN PEOPLE – PRESIDENT ELECT – JANE ING

“Of course it is an honour and a great ego boost to be asked to be the Honorary President of a society you really enjoy being part of. It gives Chris and myself the excuse to take mini breaks to visit places, people and events outside Shropshire. The Three Counties Show and Malvern are planned for June.

I have already been to two society meetings at Stoneleigh and realised it takes a lot of hard work and hours to keep a society running smoothly.

We became shepherds by accident rather than design in the spring of 1975. In December 1974 we moved to Chelsea Cottage, Weston Lullingfields, a small village north west of Shrewsbury. We now had a house with all mod cons and three small fields on the edge of a former glacial lake. The soil varies from sand to clay or peat with our own mini esker plus flower rich meadows.

Our first sheep were castoffs from sewage works grazing duty thanks to Severn Trent Water Authority. With no sheep husbandry background we had failures as well as successes but we kept extensive records of ewe performance and lamb weights and learnt fast. In 1982 we decided Southdowns were the sheep for us and started a small flock.

In 1983 we moved down the road to Yew Tree Farm with a further three acres of acid grassland, and Ings senior lived in Chelsea Cottage.

In the autumn of 2015, four acres of land 400m away on the edge of the lake were bought. The land also has the remains of a canal, awash with primroses in the Spring, running through the middle.

In the 41 years of keeping sheep we have also learnt ways of making our own hay from scything to our own equipment to make small bales as contractors proved unreliable. We have learnt to look after flowery grassland successfully so species are not lost which means the land has not been limed or fertilized or reseeded in our tenure. There has been one case of swayback in all the years and no other trace element problems.

From the start we were very strict about grazing and resting land to minimise parasite build up (microbiology course at university gave me respect for the workings of bugs and beasties!)

In 2010, the flock numbers were reduced as cross grazing by the grandchildren's ponies was introduced. This is also a good parasite control.

The flock is bred along traditional lines with great care in breeding a medium rather than large size sheep with a generous but not over large head. We rarely keep ram lambs as land up until now has been short and we have aimed to improve the female lines by rigorous culling. Surplus stock is butchered locally for ourselves and friends.

We now keep six to eight breeding ewes and any promising female lambs. The lambs are then assessed after their first shear and the ewes before the next tupping. Replacement ewes are selected for good conformation and easy going temperament. Only ewes with good lambing and mothering ability and lean carcass production are then kept long term. This is where extensive record keeping helps.

We have shown sheep locally in recent years. The grandchildren, who now live in Chelsea Cottage, help do the training and preparing and then do the showing in breed and handling classes. It is a wonderful way for them to learn to cope with all sorts of people and failure as well as success, and there is a family day out as well.

Chris and I have taken part in the West Midlands Southdown Group since it started in 2005. We only meet once or twice a year but it is a good way of learning, even for the more experienced shepherds as every year is different. The food and social chat as well as demos and talks always seem to be really good in our group. Between meetings you know you can contact fellow members and have a chat about any problem or good news”.



MPs and Peers hear how Police and community are joining forces to tackle dog attacks on sheep

On March 21st 2017 MPs and Peers heard about the scourge of dog attacks in livestock and what is being done to address the problem. Dog attacks of livestock, and particularly sheep, have been a problem for years and farming organisations have long been working to address this issue. But the problem is getting worse; earlier this year SheepWatch UK released its findings in a report that an estimated 15,000 sheep were killed yearly across the UK, together with hundreds of dogs.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare, at a meeting co-organised by Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) heard how police, farming, rural and dog organisations are working together nationally to tackle the issue of dogs attacking sheep. The AHWBE recently brought together Defra's experts in the area, Sheepwatch UK and the police.

As a result five police forces are now working together through the Police Chief's Council (NPCC) on this issue. Police forces taking part are North Wales Police, North Yorkshire (who lead on Rural Crime for the NPCC), Devon and Cornwall, Hertfordshire, and Sussex. These Police forces are looking at their current methods of reporting and recording this crime, looking at how effective the law is when used to prevent or address dogs attacking sheep, and updating their first response call handling. Chief Constable Dave Jones of North Yorkshire Police (national policing lead for rural and wildlife crime), also said: "Through the initiative we have launched this week, five rural Forces will start to gather more details about dog attacks on livestock so that, if the evidence supports it, we can present a clear case for a change in the law."

Sheepwatch UK has launched a new advice website for farmers and dog walkers (www.sheepwatch.co.uk), an advice leaflet for farmers on prevention and what to do if an attack occur. Police and Sheepwatch UK have worked together to ensure this advice is appropriate. Terena Plowright from SheepWatch UK said: "Hundreds of frustrated farmers from across the

UK sent in reports about dog attacks to SheepWatch. This has prompted the police to get involved and investigate the number of sheep worrying incidents that pass through their system. We now need every incident reported, however small, and our new guide shows farmers how to do this."

Farming organisations, including the National Farmers Union, Farming Union of Wales, and the National Sheep Association, together with the Farmers Guardian, described what they have been doing to address this problem, and the massive animal welfare, economic and emotional impacts of dog attack for the affected farmers. Farming organisations emphasised how vital it is to report every incident of sheep disturbance, worry and attack to Police and Sheepwatch UK.

A range of canine related groups, including the Kennel Club and Battersea Cats and Dogs Home, shared their experience of addressing irresponsible dog ownership, and how this experience may help reduce dog attacks on livestock.

Professor Tim Morris from the AHWBE, and Southdown Sheep Society Council member said: "This is a longstanding and serious problem, the Police service have recognised they can do more, now farmers must report all incidents to the Police, and dog walkers on the ground must take collective responsibility to prevent attacks, and understand the serious consequences for livestock, themselves, and their pets if they do not."

To report a dog attacking sheep dial 999 or 101 and fill out the report form on the Sheepwatch website www.sheepwatch.co.uk

A copy of the leaflet is enclosed with this newsletter. Download further copies of advice leaflet for farmers on prevention and what to do if an attack occur at:

www.sheepwatch.co.uk/uploads/2/5/5/9/25596304/livestock_worrying_leaflet_v3.pdf

Free collection service for post mortems for farmers outside the catchment area of post mortem examination facilities

As of 3rd January 2017, more farmers can benefit from free carcass collection services across England where a vet has recommended a post mortem should be carried out for disease surveillance purposes. There are no changes to the existing arrangements in Wales.

Within the catchment area of these post mortem examination facilities, usually around an hour's drive time from the centre, farmers are asked to transport carcass for post mortem by their own means. Outside this areas The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) offers a free collection service for fallen stock that require post mortems.

Whilst there is a charge for the post mortem service, any carcass collection is provided free of charge to

farmers, although only where a post mortem is agreed to be of surveillance value – the services are not provided for the purposes of general carcass disposal.

Further information is available on the Vet Gateway where you can look up the available surveillance services in your area (post mortem examination centres or carcass collection services), use the postcode search tool and view the map showing the scanning surveillance network across England and Wales.

<http://ahvla.defra.gov.uk/vet-gateway/>

APHA also publishes surveillance reports on the monitoring of diseases in livestock and poultry available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/animal-disease-surveillance-reports>.

Be kind to the shepherd and have a better lambing



I know lambing will be over for everyone by the time you read this, but I wanted to share it, while the thoughts are still fresh in my mind, and I am - mostly exuberant - post a better lambing. I think my cheerfulness is in part weather-related (remember last year's ghastly spring), but in part also because I "looked after myself" at lambing and that helped me do a better job and enjoy it more.

In the run up to lambing, one tends to put all one's efforts in to the sheep: with checklists for hygiene, medicines, right rations, lambing boxes, hot boxes, stomach tubes, iodine dips and endless sheep-watching; no wonder one rarely gives any thought to the poor bloody shepherd.

Now, some of you may have been lambing for many years, and I have on-and-off done about 20 seasons of lambing. As a result I have developed certain habits of self-neglect acquired in student days - (nightshift lambing two 500 ewe flocks of oh-so-easy-to-lamb Greyfaces)... Resulting in lambing trousers that stand upright on their own and pong to high heaven, not shaving for 6 days and panda eyes after no sleep - you get the scary picture.

So following some thought provoking questions from my partner, who works in performance and health, I endeavoured to make some changes which she (and I) thought might make my shepherd's life more

comfortable. This year the following changes have made all the difference.

- A shower every day – usually at the start of the day or after breakfast
- Fresh clothes every day
- Wonderful winter-lined Craghopper Kiwi style trousers; I have 4 pairs so now there are always some ready and clean.
- Porridge for breakfast – those oats aren't just for horses, the Scots and healthy hearts - they are a slow burning energy source that keep me going for up to 6 hours or so
- One good evening meal – with lots of vegetables
- A thermal vest – invaluable in the middle of the night.
- Loose fitting rugby shirts - ideal for lambing as you can pull the sleeve right up to the elbow
- Getting enough sleep. I aim for 7 hours in 24, I coped by having 3-hour bursts; I did have a sheep watcher who came from lunch time until 4pm for 3 days – interesting how nothing lambed while she was here!
- Great soap – I was given some wonderful smelling Eucalyptus soap for Christmas, that was really invigorating and fresh – ideal for a bedtime wash up.
- Lots of fresh - room temperature - water... it is the body's oil, and on its own can be more invigorating and much better for you than a Mars bar.
- A neck warmer – a great Christmas present. Wear a hat, it keeps you warm and stops hair and pillow smelling of sheep.
- Call the vet early – it does cost but if the vet is called early it is cheaper in the long run as you are more likely to end up with a live ewe and lambs, and less tired yourself.

I think that's about it, so my simple message is: looking after the shepherd can make a big difference to energy, stamina and awareness and helps him or her do a better job. I hope you keep this list and look at it yourself (and/or give it to your partner) about 10 weeks before lambing next year.

For the record, I lambed 57 Southdowns solo over 7 days and no it was not a perfect lambing, but it was a better lambing.

Patrick Goldsworthy

Graham Langford (Nepcote Flock) recently came across an archive film . . .

Graham says "I thought the Society would be interested in this 1980's film of a Findon Sheep fair which has been passed to me. It's 30 minutes long. It not only covers the Fair but also Southdown sheep in a big way and also shepherding through the ages. There is I am fairly certain, a young Stephen Humphrey showing a ram at Findon. See if

you can spot him. There may also be other people that can be recognised."

To view the film, and to spot possibly other young-looking Southdown members, click on the link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cB_DYKEZMs

SOUTHADOWNS HEAD TO HUNGARY

Sean Bird of Shamley Green, Surrey, has successfully exported a number of ewes and rams to start a flock in Pecsvarad, Hungary. In total, 21 ewes and rams headed out to Hungary in late 2016 and Sean is pleased to report that the new owner is delighted with her flock.

The ultimate success of any export depends upon careful attention to detail since intra trade regulations are rigorous and demanding.

Sean explains: "It was all touch and go, waiting for results to come back and the intra trade certificate to arrive. The amount of hours invested was astonishing, which I had not really comprehended. You live and learn. It would of course be easier a second time around."

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the Society's new members:

Jessica Stanger	Newark, Notts
T, L & S M Williams	Stroud, Gloucestershire
Cwmcaddon Flock	Newport, Gwent
Daniel Hitchcock	Meopham, Kent
Simon James Kelsall	Burton-on-Trent, Staffs
James Freeman	Stafford
Cadi Murray	Narbeth, Carms
Stuart Bellwood	Hassocks, East Sussex
James Saunders	Eye, Suffolk
Sally Hayes	Horton, Leighton Buzzard
Mrs Sue Savage &	
Miss Ros Shute	Benenden, Kent
Marcus Fincham	Hook, Hants
Max Welton	Ledbury, Herefordshire
Dr Bryn C Hughes	Alton, Hants
Dr M L & Mrs H A Warnes	Lowestoft, Suffolk
Messrs Ervine & Toal	Loughbrickland, Co Down
Mrs Helen Champion	Heathfield, East Sussex
Rosemary Drewery	Felmersham, Bedford
Emma Johnson-Coombes	Whitchurch, Shropshire
Annabel Halcrow	Kettering, Northants
N T Shugborough	Park Farm, Milford, Staffs
Steven & Ellen Fowler	Bromsgrove, Worcs
Miss Megan Doyle	Warminster, Wiltshire
Beatrix Vinten	Stowmarket, Suffolk
Ieuan Price	Builth Wells, Powys
Molly Fosgate	Orpington, Kent
Scott & Josephine Stone	Pulborough, West Sussex
Mr C Claringbould	Canterbury, Kent
Elisabeth Pierce	Tiverton, Devon
Freddy Bethley	Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
Tracey Hayes-Burt	Colchester, Essex
James Jarrett	Burgess Hill, West Sussex
Carolyn Hughes	Stockport, Cheshire

Social Media

It's great to see more and more members using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to promote both their flocks and the breed as a whole, with these platforms providing a great way to reach a wide audience of potential customers.

However, while in general social media can play a hugely positive role, there is also a need for users to apply some common sense when posting and consider all possible audiences.

Social media is a relatively recent arrival in the world and as such many organisations and individuals are still grappling with how best to engage with it in a positive manner. It is important to remember that perception is reality and in online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional, are blurred and as such everything you post is a reflection of this.

As a Society integrity is our most important commodity. We would ask members to please avoid writing or posting anything that would embarrass the Society or compromise the Society in any way.

And, even if you use privacy tools (determining who can view your page or profile, for instance), assume that everything you write, exchange or receive on a social media site is public.

The golden rule when posting or commenting on social media or online forums, etc., is not to publish something you wouldn't say in a public place. Once published that comment can live on forever on the internet and can be republished in any other media provided it is attributed appropriately. While you may be able to delete comments etc..it may be too late if they have been seen and/or saved by another user.

Consider that anything you publish online can, therefore, be used in mainstream published media as direct comment from you. Should you inadvertently publish/post something which isn't true, rectify it immediately and make it clear you're aware of and have corrected your mistake.

There should never be a need for Society issues to be discussed via social media and as such it is to be avoided at all costs. Posting confidential or non-public information is only going to end badly for all involved, likewise responding to negative posts by other members/breeders.

Common sense is a huge factor here. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review it carefully before publishing. If you are still unsure and it is related to the Society contact the Society office or simply don't comment.

Overall social media is a useful tool in promoting the breed/Society, but there will always be times when it can also be a negative tool for some. Use your experience and judgement in all instances.

And crucially, consider how potential breeders or customers may view your comments and, or, photos and the reflection this makes on the breed as a whole.

Council works hard to promote the breed in a positive light to a wide audience, including both potential breeders and commercial customers, we would ask that breeders bear this in mind in all social media use and avoid posting anything which could be seen as detrimental to the breed.

Scott and Jo Stone purchase record ram



Scott and Jo Stone of Pulborough, West Sussex have made an impressive start as Southdown flock owners and are excited to be new members of the Southdown Sheep Society with their Stones Throw Flock (number 01337).

They have recently purchased their starter flock of Southdown sheep from Stephen and Paul Humphrey of East Dean, and are now the proud owners of 35 shearling ewes and 7 rams including the 2015 top signet recorded ram (15/02402) that was sold for £3000 pounds with the top breed index score of 292.

This year Scott and Jo put Southdown rams to their flock of New Zealand Romney shearlings and will be keeping a close record of how the lambs do with the hope of showing the results to promote the breed.

Scott and Jo say “We are really happy to have made a substantial investment in Southdown sheep as they have many qualities that we wish to explore with our pure breed lambs and also crossed on to the Romneys.

In particular we hope to achieve through Signet recording and close management of the flock, ewes that are independent outdoor lambers with potential for higher stocking rates than our Romneys.

The Romneys are fantastic but they are big girls and love to munch through lots of grass, whereas the Southdowns are smaller and holds their condition on less grub, whilst still giving us strong lambs that are finished at the weight and time we would like! Watch this space!”



Scott Stone with record priced ram East Dean 15/024042 and breeder Paul Humphrey

Southdown Sheep Society approved sales in 2017

**Saturday August 12th - The Premier
Breeders Show & Sale at Worcester Market
www.mccartneys.co.uk**

**September 8th – 9th Traditional Native Breeds
National Show and Sale at Melton Mowbray
www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk**

For more details or to request a paper catalogue please
contact the auctioneers or the Southdown Office.

Catalogues will be available on line.
www.southdownsheepsociety.co.uk

**Check out the Southdown Sheep Society website for details of sheep for sale
throughout the year from Society members**

2016 FATSTOCK SHOWS

Southdowns dominated the native breed sections at most of the Winter Fairs in 2016.

The Goodwood team led by Nick Page swept the board at the East of England Smithfield Show, winning the native pairs championship and the ewe lamb championship. The trimmed Southdown lamb class was won by Nick's daughter, Amy Page.

In the carcass classes it was Stephen Cobbald, Acton Hall, Acton, Suffolk, who took top honours with his Southdown sired carcass.

At the South East Primestock Winter Fayre Nick Page repeated his success with a pair of Goodwood Southdowns taking the supreme championship. The champion native carcass class was won by Messrs Wakeham-Dawson and Harmer from Lewes, East Sussex.

At the Royal Welsh Winter Fair Dylan Williams, Ciliau Aeron, Ceridigion, and his Coedlan Flock took top honours in the native carcass classes with a pair of Southdown lambs.

In the live section the winner of the pair of Southdown lambs class was Neil Dillon, Brecon, Powys, with a pair of lambs bred by Dylan Williams. Dylan Williams completed his hat trick of wins by achieving the highest place in the pair of lambs in the butchers weights section with a pair sired by a Southdown ram.

Long-standing Southdown breeders D, S and P Humphrey, East Dean, West Sussex, were the highest placed in the class for a single carcass sired by a Southdown ram.

At the English Winter Fair, Stafford, Southdowns excelled again with Megan Chilcott taking the native breeds championship in the live lamb section with a pair of lambs from the Huntspill flock. Meanwhile, regular supporter Robert Cox achieving the highest placed carcass sired by a Southdown ram.



Goodwood Native Pairs champions at East of England Smithfield.



Southdown Sheep, past, present and future?

Southdown Sheep Society Council member Tim Morris offers some personal views to stimulate a debate:

The 2016 National Show, held in the 125th Anniversary year of the Society was memorable for its great collection and diversity of Southdown sheep, coming from all over the country. The beautiful, and very appropriate, location was on the Downs themselves at Goodwood. We were blessed by beautiful weather and it was a wonderful social meeting with time to chat and celebrate 125 years of the Southdown Sheep Society.



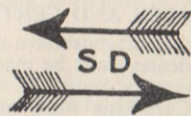
Almost a century before, a similar scene was played out at the 1920 Southdown Sheep Show and Sale, just a few miles away in Chichester. This was at the start of a period of change. The First World War had led to great changes in agriculture, with the loss of the rural workforce, the need to feed a blockaded country from home resources, and the start of mechanisation and intensification.

Since that time the Southdown Sheep has been through a decline seen by many of the UK native breeds of sheep, but has emerged out of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust Watchlist to a native breed with, on average over the last decade, up to 400 ram registrations, up to 1,500 ewe registrations, and more sold for meat.



What is the future for the breed, because considering and acting on that should be one of the primary roles of the breed society. The Southdown Sheep Society is recognised in law because we register “a population of animals sufficiently uniform to be considered to be distinct from other animals of the same species by one or more groups of breeders which have agreed to enter those animals in breeding books with details of their known ascendants for the purpose of reproducing their inherited characteristics by way of reproduction, exchange and selection within the framework of a breeding programme”.

8. (a) The Official Trade Mark of the Society shall be :—



There is nothing in that definition that says a breed has to stay the same, indeed breeds always have evolved to meet changing needs and tastes...in every sense of the word!

There has been an ongoing debate with the Society and its members on the future for the breed. Examples include increasing size and introducing of French bloodlines. Such debates are common across breed societies, although the subject matter will vary.

Rather than focus on one or two topics I would like to broaden the debate and suggest a few questions to encourage a healthily ongoing debate with the society:

Accept change will happen. Breeds should evolve to meet changing needs and tastes. What is more important is that change is open and transparent, and done for the long term benefit of the breed, as we are its custodians. Do members think we are having an open and transparent debate as the breed evolves?

Beware of unintended consequences. The genetic make-up of animals interact in very complex ways. Selection of one trait can inadvertently lead to selection of other traits, some not always welcome. Are we using good records and modern technologies to monitor this (genomics) and ensuring storage of the existing genetics (genebanking)?



The appearance of an animal (its form) is driven in nature by external pressure (to deliver its function). Have we got the right balance in form (such as a small number of 'top' examples in the show ring) as in function (most of the breed out in the field)?

Consider the commercial implications of particular approaches to perceived success. Is breeding a 'top' sheep that depend on a lot of supplementary feed a good long term plan for the breed as post-brexit agriculture competition bites?

What about wider implications of more intensive production. Is it perceived by the public, (who we hope will buy at a premium price) as good welfare if sheep are housed long term and fed to a maximum?



So as we move from one century to another, as long term custodians let's continue talking openly about where we want the breed to be at the next anniversary!

Tim Morris

Mrs Brionie Ballard

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Mrs Brionie Ballard on April 10th. The Southdown Sheep Society offers sincere condolences to Peter and the family.

John Randall 1923 – 2017

The Southdown Sheep Society, and the wider sheep breeding industry, has lost an elder statesman with the death of John Randall.

Born in January 1923, in Beckington, Somerset, John's father was a carpenter and wheelright, and his mother was from a renowned cheese making family. John's elder brother continued in the family business, but on leaving Frome Grammar School at the age of fifteen, John went to work for an uncle on his mixed farm, in Salway Ash, near Bridport, Dorset.

John married Dorothy Louise Gurd, in 1951. David Richard was born the following year, followed by brother Russell Edward in 1955.

John held several shepherding posts: from 1956 he shepherded Dorset Downs for Charlie Burrough, of Hales Manor Farm, Halse, Somerset; and then for Bill Hooper, of Newburgh, Wool, in Dorset.

In 1967 he moved all of the family in order to manage Camber Castle Farm in Rye, East Sussex, where he started a flock with Dorothy.

The flock comprised 5 in-lamb ewes, in lamb to a Parkgate ram out of a Ford Ram, bought from the Estate

of Charles Goodger, Thoney Island, The rest of those sheep went to kill.

In 1979 John went back to Dorset Downs, shepherding for Rex Lovelace, of Piddle Hinton, Dorset, where he remained until 1974.

From there he moved to Dorchester College of Agriculture at Kingston Maurwood, Dorchester. In 1977 the flock went down with scrapie and was dissolved.

This prompted John to go freelance and he was kept busy shepherding, and helping with heavy horses for a few years.

In the early 1980s he started his own flock of Dorset Downs, and the Charity Southdown Flock.

Over the years he judged and showed at all the major shows, winning many of the breed prizes, and Interbreed titles.

A long standing member, and for many years an Honorary Life Member, John served on Council and as a judge for many years and in 1986 was the President of the Southdown Sheep Society.

We extend our condolences to the Randall family.

ADDENDUM

Following the publication of a photograph in Issue 22 of Southdown News, taken at the 2016 Lincolnshire Show, the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society has requested the following statement be included in this newsletter: "The Lincolnshire Agricultural Society does not condone the actions of Holly Lutkin in the Grand Parade at the 2016 Lincolnshire Show, anyone found to be taking part in similar irresponsible and potentially dangerous behaviour at future Shows will be severely reprimanded by the Lincolnshire Show Committee."

The Southdown Sheep Society Flock Competition

The annual Flock Competition is an ideal opportunity to gain an appraisal of your flock, on a one-to-one basis with the Flock Competition judge.

The judge for this year's competition is Stephen Humphrey. Stephen, together with his brother Paul, owns the East Dean Flock in West Sussex, one of the oldest flocks still in existence. Whilst the judge has to compare all flocks and select the winners in the respective classes, at the same time the judge is able to offer an informed opinion and answer any questions you may have. The Flock Competition judge is always an experienced sheep keeper and the experience of taking part in a Flock Competition should be an enjoyable and educational experience.

It should be pointed out that the competition judges the whole flock, and therefore breeders with individual, different groups of sheep within their one flock will necessarily be disadvantaged. The judge is looking to see a flock, rather than a collection of different animals.

Council has reviewed the allocation of points awarded across the various sections since it was felt that in the past the marking scheme has been too heavily weighted towards rams. The revised marking scheme which will be used in this year's competition, is listed below.

A	quality of flock ewes	/35
B	intake of shearling ewes	/35
C	uniformity	/35
D	ewe lambs	/20
F	rams	/60
E	wool	/15
Total		/200

Noakes Trophy: Three ewe lambs & three ram lambs sire by a named ram and shown /100

Flock Competition entry forms and rules can be downloaded from the Society website, or email or call the Office if you would like a paper copy sent to you. The entry fee is £25 per flock, and the closing date for entries is September 1st 2017.

AROUND THE REGIONS

There is a regional Southdown Group within easy reach of most members of the Southdown Sheep Society. All members are welcome to attend any of the regional meetings. For more information about what is going on in your region, feel free to make contact with the breeders listed below.

South West Group

Co-ordinators: **Nicole Peart**
01209 861356
ellieandbaileypeart@aol.co.uk
Adam & Caroline Brown
01398 361245
adamandcaroline@googlemail.com

West Midlands Group

Co-ordinator: **Miriam Parker**
01743 884483
miriam@livestockwise.co.uk

Wales Group

Co-ordinators: **Gareth Lloyd Hughes**
01970 880804
garethlloydhughes@
btinternet.com
Dylan Williams
07771 542578
Del2880@yahoo.co.uk

East Midlands Group

Co-ordinator: **Sophie Arlott**
07899 833157
sophie.arlott@btinternet.com

East Anglia Group

Co-ordinator: **Lindsay Dane**
01353 721216
lindsay.dane@icloud.com

Beds, Bucks, Herts Group

Co-ordinator: **Lesley Mead**
01525 270135
lesleyhollybar@btinternet.com

South of England Group

Co-ordinator: **Paul Humphrey**
01243 811518
nhfcamping@gmail.com

2017 Southdown Sheep Society Annual General Meeting and Field Day

Saturday October 7th 2017

to be held at Neuaddlwyd Uchaf, Ciliau Aeron, Lampeter, Ceridigion, SA48 7RE

by kind invitation of Dylan & Delyth Williams

In addition to the Southdown flock, Dylan runs flocks of a number of other breeds, putting predominantly Southdown rams across them all to produce a variety of butcher's lambs; breeds include Lleys, Dorsets, Llanwenogs, Balwens and Texels. For those members wishing to make a weekend of their visit to Wales, there will be an outing to the local vineyard & winery on the Sunday morning, and an informal pub supper on the Saturday evening.

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.

2017 LAMB REGISTRATIONS

More and more members are choosing to register their lambs online using the Pedeweb system. All paid up members should have received details of their password and information held on line. There is a User Guide available to download from the Southdown Sheep Society website, together with some FAQs. To access the on line Flock Book simply follow the link from the Society website.

UPDATED REGISTRATION CHARGES

on line registration fee per ewe lamb	£4
on line registration fee per ram lamb	£10
paper registration fee per ewe lamb	£5
paper registration fee per ram lamb	£15
late registration fee on line and/or on paper	£20 per animal

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 £20 per registration.

All lamb registrations should be with the office by November 30th 2017

The Southdown Office is always 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 membership subscription is up to date.

Imports and Exports

Members are reminded that the Office must be notified of any intended exports and imports. The rules as published in the current Flock Book state that "an export certificate must be obtained from the Secretary at a cost of £10 per Southdown and the sum of 5p in every pound of the sale price shall be paid within six months of the sale".

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-breed breeding sheep in flock-books.

Advertise your flock

Please note that the "fiver" advert facility on the website has been updated and the charge for a brief advert on the website for 3 months is now £10.

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 do let the Office know by the end of the year as the Flock Book goes to print in January.

Email

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

All members for whom we have an email address receive the Southdown Enewsletter throughout the year. The Enewsletter gives the Office a chance to share information with members on a more regular basis in between paper newsletter.

Annual Subscription

Many thanks to all those members whose subscriptions are already paid up to date. Just a reminder that the 2017 subscription (£35) was due from January 1st 2017.

PLEASE NOTE: the membership subscription for 2018 is £40.

Please update your standing order instruction with your bank.

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
Address: NatWest, 81, High Street, Bedford
Sort Code: 60-02-13
Account Number: 51501376

ERRATUM

Please note that the incorrect email address for President Elect Mrs Jane Ing was included in the 2017 Flock Book.
The correct email address is
cgf.ing121@outlook.com

PRESIDENT ELECT

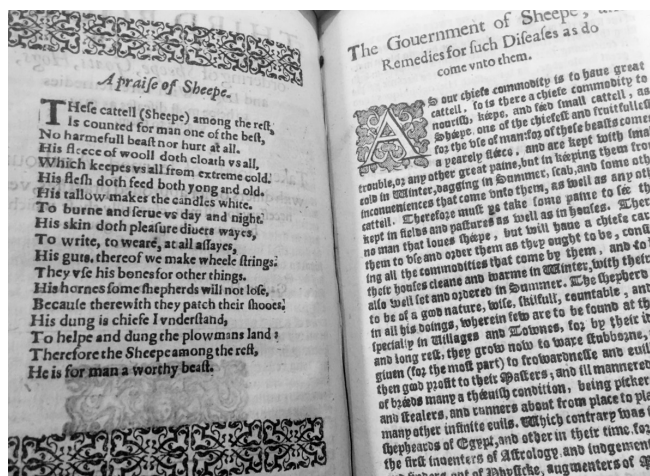
The Council is pleased to announce that the President Elect for 2017-18 is Mrs Lesley Mead. Lesley founded the Holly Bar Flock with her late husband Terry in 2000 and is a staunch supporter of the breed.

Miriam Parker

(The Buckland Flock in Shropshire)

I came across an interesting book recently, and offers the following excerpt from the sheep section:

From "The Government of Cattell.....Divided into three Books"



The third book deals with aspects of husbandry and remedies of sheep.

Written By Leonard Mascall in 1587

The chapter starts

These sheep amongst the rest is counted for man one of the best

No harmful beast nor hurt at all, his fleece of wool doth cloath us all

Which keeps us all from extreme cold, his flesh doth feed both young and old.

His tallow makes the candles white, to burne and serue vs day and night.

His skin doth pleasure diverse ways, to write, to wear, at all assays,

His guts thereof we make wheel strings, they love his bones for other things.

His horns some shepherds will not lose, because therewith they patch their shoes.

His dung is chief I understand, to help and dung the plowmans land.

Therefore sheep among the rest, he is for man a worthy beast.

Southdown wool making its contribution to growing interest in British wool



It has been an exciting start to 2017 for South Downs Yarn. The company has been chosen to feature in a new knitting book called **WOODS**, due to be published in November. The book matches independent knitwear designers with female run, provenance-based yarn companies from across Europe. We can reveal a sneak peek at the beautiful stranded colour work mitten designed by Claire Walls (see photograph) that uses our wool.

In February, we were delighted to attend the Investiture of David Burden. It was a privilege to be asked take along some of the wool we produced from the Duncton flock to be part of a display celebrating his contribution to the local community, and lovely to hear all the positive comments from those attending. David and Judy were the first people to recognise and champion the value of South Downs Yarn's work, and continue to be a source of support, enthusiasm, and joy.

We will be featuring some wool from a new flock later in the year, and look forward to returning to the East Sussex Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers biennial exhibition and sale in October. There are some other exciting projects in the pipeline that I cannot reveal just yet, but look forward to sharing with you as soon as I can.

In the meantime, if members are interested in finding out more about how we are promoting Southdown wool from the South Downs they can subscribe to our e-newsletter via our website:

www.southdownyarn.co.uk

PLEASE REMEMBER

The annual membership subscription increases to £40 for 2018. If you pay your subscription by Standing Order, please do not forget to tell your bank that the amount has increased.

This picture was taken at the National Show. Judge Jim Cresswell and steward Les Newman are deep in conversation. The best suggestions of what these two gentlemen might have been saying, will be printed.



Sutherland Flock scoops top Signet award

The 2017 winner of the AHDB Beef & Lamb Better Returns Programme Improved Flock Award for the Southdown sheep is the Sutherland flock owned by Amy Readhead-Higgins, House Farm, Leiston, Suffolk. This award is presented to the English Signet performance recorded flock that makes the greatest improvement in the breeding potential of the lamb crop during the previous year.



Amy with some of her shearling ewes from 2017

The AHDB Better Returns Programme aims to highlight the financial impact that improved breeding and better lamb selection strategies can have on commercial flock profitability.

This award seeks to reward those breeders that are using Estimated Breeding Values to enhance the performance of their flocks and assist them to promote their achievement. The impact of performance recorded stock is significant and is increasing every year because of the activities of progressive farmers.

Amy lives on her family farm in Leiston, Suffolk which has been in her family since the late 1930s. She currently manages the farm with her father Tony Readhead and her youngest brother Neill Readhead.

It is a 2000 acre arable farm where they farm mainly combinable crops; winter wheat, winter oilseed rape and winter barley to name a few.

Amy bought her first Southdown in 2005 as the start of a hobby. She was looking for a good looking sheep that would finish lambs quickly and efficiently whilst being manageable at the same time. She now has 30 breeding ewes that have “taken over” her life. At Sutherland Southdowns they aim to breed their own replacements however they have recently bought in some high EBV ewes. They do sell some lambs for breeding and are just starting out in selling rams, Amy is keeping the high performance sheep for her own use to improve the flock. Those lambs that are sent to slaughter are all sent directly off farm with Amy dropping them off at the local Abattoir herself.

Amy was slightly reluctant at first to begin recording as she feared it would jeopardise the appearance of her flock. However a couple of friends who recorded with Signet managed to persuade her that would not be the case and she agrees. Amy likes to concentrate on the overall index and not just individual traits, she looks for good muscled and lean sheep. Moving forward the importance of maternal traits will play a large part in selection criteria as she wants sheep that are easy lambing with good levels of milk production, as this will make life easier and can only be a positive aspect and improve the flock.

When asked about winning the award, she is delighted and believes it is from improving her sire selection. For 2016 Amy had bought in two new tups; Ridings Roly (218:142126) and East Dean Ed (165:11146) – both of which are in the top 25% of the breed. She chose these rams due to their performance scores obtained through Signet and this is something that she will continue to do.

Looking forward Amy aims to keep improving her flock overall, she wants to breed true Southdowns that still look great but also improve their EBVs at the same time. The ultimate aim – the perfect Southdown!

Lincolnshire Show and East Midlands Group Get-together

There are Southdown sheep classes for the first time at his year's Lincolnshire Show on June 21st-22nd. Regional group co-ordinator Sophie Arlott is planning a get-together at the Show with a BBQ and drinks on Wednesday June 21st. Sophie's contact details are listed in the newsletter in Around the Regions. If you are planning to go along, please let Sophie know.

For more information about the Show contact
achamberlin@lincs-events.co.uk

TENBURY SHOW

The Tenbury Show on August 5th also has Southdown sheep classes for the first time so local members are encouraged to go along and support the Show.

For more details contact the show office:

tenbury.show@btopenworld.com

ADDENDUM

The following result was omitted from the Show Champions Round Up in the Autumn 2016 Southdown News:

New Forest Show: Interbreed Champion – Mrs Lesley Mead, with her shearling ewe

Southdowns head to Mudchute City Farm

Southdowns from the Kitwell Flock of Tim & Lynn Morris are settling in to their new home at Mudchute City Farm, where they are fast becoming firm favourites with visitors. Tim and Lynn kindly donated the shearling ewes to Mudchute and they form the basis of the new flock. The sheep are used to train members of the local Young Farmers Club with handling skills, and outings to local shows are planned in the coming months. Farm Manager Tom Davis, the youngest ever trustee of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, believes passionately that people must connect with the food they eat: "We live in a very throw-away society where we go to the supermarket and everything is there. But if you are going to eat something it needs to be valued, as whether it is a vegetable or an animal, work has gone in to producing it. It is very important to teach young people that eggs don't just come in a box from the supermarket. We have to teach the responsibility of caring for animals and taking them out and showing them keeps those old skills alive. That is the way forward".

For more details of Mudchute City Farm visit
www.mudchute.org



Mudchute Southdowns settling in to their new home with the backdrop of Canary Wharf

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 as set out in 1934.

The 2016 results are as follows:

- Winners: Messrs Wakeham-Dawson & Harmer (340 points)
- Runner-up: Mrs Amy Readhead-Higgins (231 points)
- Third place: The Goodwood Estate Co. Ltd (147 points)



We welcome Southdown Breeders

The Small Shepherds Club was founded in 1977 to help shepherds in Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire with all aspects of keeping sheep from good husbandry to legal issues. Today with almost 300 members we provide free training as well as a great forum for small scale sheep keepers to exchange ideas and for help and advice.

If you want to know more
Visit www.smallshepherdsclub.org.uk

REPORT FOR THE SOUTH WEST REGION

The South West Region held its annual Christmas lunch on 15th January 2017 at the Kings Arms in Tedburn St Mary. The lunch was well attended by members and gave everyone an opportunity to meet up with old friends and get to know new Southdown owners.

Caroline, the Treasurer for the region, gave a financial update for the region followed by an update from Adam on general information for the Society as well as the plan for future events for our area.

A raffle was held to raise funds for our region with two prizes - a bottle of bubbly and a carrot cake specially decorated for the occasion!



DATES FOR 2017 SHOWS

DATE	SHOW	JUDGE
May 13-14	Nottinghamshire	S J Cook
May 20	Hadleigh	E J Cresswell
May 20-21	Royal Welsh Spring Festival	S Humphrey
May 18-20	Devon County	G L Hughes
May 27	Heathfield, Sussex	E J Cresswell
May 27	Shropshire	J R Williams
May 27-28	Herts County	N Turner
May 29	Surrey County	A Brown
May 31-June 1	NATIONAL SHOW at Suffolk County	A Long
May 31-June 1	Staffordshire	J R Williams
June 8-10	Royal Cornwall	H Turner
June 8-10	South of England	S Smith
June 10	Aberystwyth	
June 16-18	Three Counties	G Sprake
June 21-22	Lincolnshire	N Stainthorpe
July 2	Cranleigh, Surrey	
June 20-21	Cheshire Show	A Lambert
June 28-29	Royal Norfolk	C Brown
July 7-9	Kent County	S Humphrey
July 8	Tendring	P Humphrey
July 16	Singleton, Sussex	M Littmoden
July 24-27	Royal Welsh	N Stainthorpe
August 5	Tenbury	G L Hughes
August 6	Wayland, Norfolk	G Watson
August 15-16	Anglesey	E J Cresswell
August 27-28	Edenbridge & Oxted, Surrey	
August 28	Aylsham, Norfolk	D Jenkins
August 31	Bucks County Show	
Sept 2	Moreton-in-Marsh	
Sept 16-17	Royal County of Berkshire	S J Cook
August 12	Worcester Premier Sale	P Humphrey
September 8-9	Melton Mowbray Premier Sale	A Brown

Need some information about a specific show?

Log on to www.asao.co.uk

This is the website of the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations and it lists every show in GB, with website information and contact numbers.

Jack's flock helps with Domesday Celebrations

Young flock owner Jack Bowles is currently taking part in the Lincoln Castle Domesday celebrations.

Jack explains: "We were invited to take some Southies due to actual heritage of the breed and it helps that my favourite subject is history. The historical Great Count established the estimated wealth of the country and the farmers and others were taxed accordingly. Me and my Mum are dressed here as poor Norman Farmers."

William the Conqueror had the first Castle at Lincoln to be built in 1068 and celebrations are now taking place in readiness for Domesday's arrival to the Magna Carta Vault in May.

Domesday is an icon of English history, giving a fascinating insight into life over 900 years ago. Commissioned in 1086 by William the Conqueror, it gave the king a picture of his realm by recording the taxable value and resources of all the boroughs and manors in the land.



YOUNG HANDLERS' PEN

Reg Gamble

Breeder Stu Gamble (The Hopesay Flock in Shropshire) has a keen young shepherd. Reg is seven years old and helps out with all aspects of the flock.

Dad Stu says Reg "helps out when moving the sheep (as my two legged sheep dog) and he is really good at lambing time as he has assisted a few births and is a dab hand with a bottle if required. He has a keen interest in how the lambs develop as he does really enjoy a juicy lamb chop".

Reg has set himself a high standard in young handlers' classes. He entered at the Tenbury Show last year for the first time, won his class, then went on to be awarded the Reserve Champion Young Handler title. This year there are Southdown classes at Tenbury Show for the first time, and Reg will be there competing with hopefully many other Southdown breeders in support of the new classes.



Find us – like us - and follow us - on facebook!

The Southdown Sheep Society can be found on Facebook -

<http://www.facebook.com/SouthdownSheepSociety>



Southdown Sheep Society

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