

Portland Sheep Breeders' Group

Newsletter



Winter 2019 - 2020



Welcome...

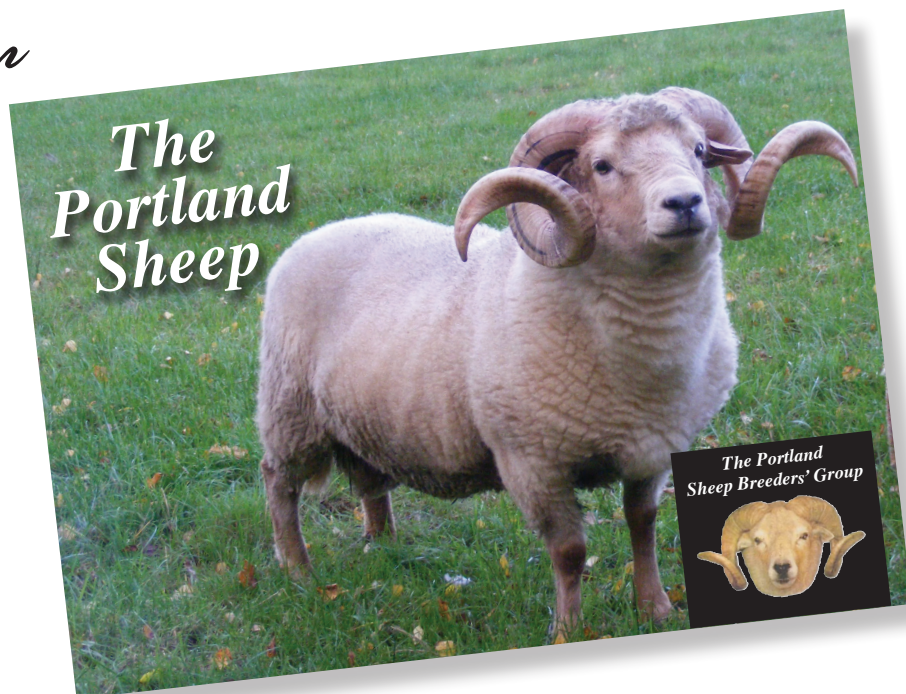
Welcome all to this edition of the newsletter as we enter the lambing season. As with most of you this one of my favourite times of year as these bundles of joy enter our world. I look forward to seeing your photographs and remember to pop them on facebook or forward them to committee members to be used in our calendars and the like.

This year we will be looking to provide assistance to the commercial activities of our members and as discussed at the AGM the first in a range of information booklets has now been added to our web site for you to download and give to prospective interested parties and more will follow.

In this edition we have highlighted some of the many shows carried out in 2019, the most Portland shows we have had to-date. In our next edition we look forward to providing you with more information on this year's events.

Wishing you a happy and successful lambing season.

Shaun



Editor's notes...

It is a pleasure to edit another edition of the newsletter along with Sarah Rashley, who has worked on the show results and reports. Many thanks to Sarah and all our contributors for reminding us how good it is to keep, breed and show Portlands.

For many breeders the highlight of the year will be lambing time, but to secure the future of the national flock, we need to birth notify the lambs and register them within the first 18 months. Karen Wilson's article on bringing unregistered Portland flocks back into the fold via the supplementary register demonstrates the importance of keeping registrations up to date.

Only a small proportion of breeders show their Portlands, but the enthusiasm of beginners and experienced exhibitors shines out of the reports from the shows. It is a great way to meet other breeders and members of the public who may be interested in keeping rare breeds. If you are unsure about showing, your Area Representative or any Committee member can provide guidance. Give it a go in 2020.

The health of our sheep must remain a priority at all times. We have included an update on OPA, which remains a significant cloud on the horizon. Good biosecurity and husbandry is essential if we are to protect our own flocks and the national flock.

On a personal note, my wife, Sarah, and I were delighted to host the Portland Open Day in October. We had a good mix of experienced and new breeders, plenty of hands-on participation and the weather was kind to us. Tim Morris (vice-chair of RBST) gave a useful talk on the current work of RBST and how the government needs to

recognise the importance of rare-breeds in any post-Brexit legislation. I was particularly pleased to present the PSBG Breeders Medal to Karen Wilson in recognition of her work with unregistered Portlands as described in her article. Without the dedication of breeders such as Karen over the past 40 years, the national Portland flock would not be as strong as it is today.

And talking of dedicated breeders, we also include a letter from Tony Wicks recording the 32 years in which he kept Portlands.

Also, many thanks to all those who have supported PSBG as Committee Members and Area Representatives. You will also find a note on changes to the Committee and the Area Representatives towards the end of the Newsletter, plus a list of contact details.

2020 subscriptions are now due and remain good value at £15. If you don't pay by Standing Order please post a cheque payable to PSBG to Jo Stover, Lower Brimley Coombe Farm, Stoke Abbott, Beaminster, Dorset. DT8 3JZ

If you prefer to pay by BACS, please use the following account but don't forget to include your name as the reference so we know who has paid.

Portland Sheep Breeders Group. Sort code 09 01 55. Account no. 01136703 Reference [Member's name].

You can keep up to date on all Portland matters by using the website and Facebook page. Enjoy your Portlands and best wishes for 2020.

Stephen

Show Reports & Results

Countryside Live 2019

Countryside Live, run by the York RBST group, is in my opinion one of the best shows of the season! - The show is also held indoors which is great for the October weather. The atmosphere is always friendly and everyone is willing to help each other out.

Over the last few years the show has grown a lot in popularity. This year there were six different exhibitors of Portlands entered, which is by far the greatest number of Portlands in one place when 'up north'. The classes are split into Hill and Heath, Down, Longwool and Primitive, although this year with more than 25 entries in each Hill & Heath class, the decision was made to split it into Rare and Native. My tup took 2nd in the ram any age class. 2nd to a lovey Derbyshire Gritstone shearling who went on to win Reserve Champion Hill and Heath. My 5 year old ewe then went and won her class, which I was thrilled about, she has had such a good season and I was very proud. Both my gimmer shearling and gimmer lamb also took 2nd in their classes- what a fantastic result. Other Portlands exhibited were also placed very well in their classes and were a credit to all the owners and breeders at the show.

Championship time. I didn't even have time to think in-between classes and before I knew it all the 1st place Hill and Heath sheep were lining up to go into the ring. After a tense wait, unbelievably my Portland ewe was pulled as Champion Hill and Heath rare breed sheep and received a beautiful 'best Portland' rosette - a moment I will always remember.

The Saturday night always ends with all exhibitors getting together for fish and chips. It's a time to catch up with friends and chat about the days events.

Sunday brought the group of three classes (which saw me take 5th place). Then later Overall Championship between all champion Hill and Heath Rare and Native, Down, Longwool and Primitive sheep. There were some exceptional sheep presented for the overall Championship, I was so proud of what my ewe had achieved already, that I was not expect-

ing what came next. After much deliberation by the combined judges Richard Broad and Tessa Wigham, the decision was made. We all waited patiently for celebrities Julia Bradbury and 'The Yorkshire Vet' Julian Norton to present the winner with the trophy. Introductions were made to the judges and then to my absolute shock, my little Portland ewe got given Overall Champion of Champions.

The photographers rushed in as Julia presented me with the trophy. I of course had a little cry, I was in so much shock. It is a moment I will treasure forever, I'm pretty sure my lovely ewe can now retire from showing after achieving this prestigious award.



I think it's important to not get disheartened when showing Portlands against other breeds. It can be daunting when you're in a line up with Kerry Hill's Wensleydales, Gritstones and many other bigger sheep. But remember: Portlands are little, but my gosh they are mighty!

Hannah Rogerson, Rosgill Portlands

Westmorland County Show September 2019

Mixed rare and Minority breeds

A very veryvery wet day at Westmorland County show. The sheep (and myself) were soaked and thoroughly fed up by time the judging began.

Westmorland always has a fantastic show of strong sheep and this year was no different.

First up my aged tup took 1st in his class, then the tup lambs were up; all 9 of them (!) Rosgill Captain managed to hold his own to 3rd place with a Whiteface Woodland and an Oxford Down pipping him to the post. My ewe lamb Rosgill Cinders also took 3rd place in her class. This ewe lamb has got better and better as the show season has gone on and I have high hopes for her future. My wonderful breeding ewe took first in her class too which meant we had a tup and ewe in the Championship.

The Championship took some judging, with my tup being awarded reserve Champion for the 2nd year in a row and a beautiful Wensleydale shearling ewe getting champion. It was great to see some other Portlands in the classes too!

Hannah Rogerson



Champion of Champions

This year we held two premier shows, one in the South at Dorset County Show and one further north at Staffordshire County Show. We also decided to introduce two new trophies for the “Champion of Champions”, one for the best ewe and one for the best ram from those two shows. Jim Gardner kindly agreed to act as judge for these trophies.

At Dorset County Show the Champion Ewe was from Sharon and George Poulton, and the Champion Ram was from Darren Rashley. The Champion Ewe at Stafford was from Caroline Hurdley and the Champion Ram was from Patricia Robarts.

Jim Gardner then visited each of the breeders and judged these Portlands on their home ground. The two ewes against each other with the two rams also against each other.

As Jim himself said, it was somewhat strange to be judging away from the showground and not being able to compare the contestants head-to-head. But Jim has extensive experience of judging Portlands and he knows the Portland Breed Standard as well as any of us.

Jim awarded the Overall Champion Ewe to Caroline Hurdley with Nabb Valley Gerie and the Overall Champion Ram to Darren Rashley with Valentine Scooby Doo.

Many congratulations to them all, and thank you Jim Gardner.



Champion Ewe and friend

Sherborne Castle County Fair

The Fair was started by a small group of volunteers, in 1996, with the aim of raising money for local charities. To date the committee, still run by volunteers, has raised £1,331,770. The rare, minority and native breeds show includes Sheep, Cattle, Pigs, Goats, Horses, Ponies and Poultry, with commentary about the stock and their history. It is one of the largest stand-alone rare breeds shows in the country with some 50 different breeds of animals. The fair offers a wonderful opportunity to meet and learn about a wide variety of our native rare and traditional breeds. The rare breed marquee offers a fleece competition, displays, crafts, demonstration's and information about the RBST.

Results of 2019 - Portland Classes

Ram born before 2018. 1st – Darren Rashley, 2nd – M C Johnston, 3rd – M C Johnston, 4th – Sharon Stagg.

Ram lamb. 1st – Jo Stover, 2nd – Darren Rashley, 3rd – Fiona MacKenzie, 4th – M C Johnston.

Ewe and lamb. 1st – Fiona MacKenzie, 2nd – Darren Rashley, 3rd – Jo Stover, 4th – Sharon Stagg.

Ewe. 1st – Darren Rashley, 2nd – Fiona MacKenzie, 3rd – Sharon Stagg, 4th – Jo Stover.

Family Group. 1st – Darren Rashley, 2nd – Fiona MacKenzie, 3rd – M C Johnston, 4th – Jo Stover.

Champion - Darren Rashley. Reserve Champion - Darren Rashley.

Supreme Interbreed Champion - Darren Rashley.

Royal Welsh Agriculture Show

The Smallholding and Countryside Festival is a weekend-long event, with smallholders and those who have a love of the outdoors at its heart. With the emphasis on celebrating smallholding and rural life, the festival was packed full of interesting things to see, delicious food and drink, live music, country sports, demonstration, fun and educational activities and many different types of livestock.

Ewe. 1st – Foldsdon, and Reserve Champion

Group of 3. 1st – Foldsdon, and Champion. Foldsdon also received 1st for Best Pen display

Royal Three Counties Show

Portland Classes

Ram. 1st – L and H Butler, 2nd – M O'Regan, 3rd – L and H Butler.

Shearling Ram. 1st and 2nd – M O'Regan

Ram Lamb. 1st – L and H Butler, 2nd – M O'Regan,

Ewe. 1st – L and H Butler, 2nd and 3rd – M O'Regan,

Shearling Ewe. 1st and 2nd – L and H Butler, 3rd – M O'Regan,

Ewe Lamb. 1st – L and H Butler, 2nd – M O'Regan.

Group of three. 1st – L and H Butler, 2nd – M O'Regan.

Champion L and H Butler and Reserve Champion L and H Butler.

Staffordshire County Show

Portland Classes

Ram. 1st – C Hurdley, 2nd – M O'Regan, 3rd – C Hurdley, 4th – M O'Regan.

Ewe. 1st – P Robarts, 2nd – M O'Regan, 3rd – C Hurdley, 4th – M O'Regan.

Shearling Ewe. 1st – C Hurdley, 2nd – P Robarts, 3rd – D Howe, 4th – D Howe.

Ewe Lamb. 1st and 2nd – P Robarts

Ram Lamb. 1st – P Robarts.

Group of Three. 1st – P Robarts, 2nd – C Hurdley, 3rd – M O'Regan.

Champion - C Hurdley, Shearling ewe. Reserve Champion - P Robarts, Ram Lamb.

Cheshire County Show

Hill and Heath class

Ram. 4th – P Robarts

Ewe. 1st – Debra Northing, 3rd – P Robarts, 4th – D Northing.

Ram Lamb. 2nd – P Robarts

Ewe Lamb. 1st – P Robarts

Best Portland – D Northing

Reserve Champion – D Northing

Findon Fair

Portland Classes

Ram. 1st- H and L Butler, 2nd and 3rd P Gibson, 4th C Brewer.

Ram Lamb. 1st – H and L Butler, 2nd P Gibson, 3rd C Brewer, 4th C Dodd

Ewe. 1st – H and L Butler, 2nd – S Adams, 3rd and 4th – H and L Butler, 5th – Merrist Wood, 6th – C Dodd.

Ewe Lamb. 1st – C Brewer, 2nd and 3rd – H and L Butler, 4th – Merrist Wood.

Group of Three. 1st – H and L Butler, 2nd- C Brewer, 3rd – H and L Butler.

Wool on the Hoof. Short Wool – C Brewer.

Best Farm. H and L Butler (Hawthorn Tree Farm)

New Forest Show

Portland Classes

Ewe Lamb. 1st - Emily Moorhouse, 2nd - D Rashley, 3rd - Merrist Wood College, 4th - D Rashley, 5th - Oaklands Animals, 6th - H Butler.

Shearling Ewe. 1st and 2nd - D Rashley, 3rd - C Brewer, 4th - E Moorhouse, 5th and 6th - H Butler.

Older Ewe. 1st - D Rashley, 2nd - Oakland Animals, 3rd - D Rashley, 4th - E Moorhouse, 5th - Merrist Wood, 6th - C Brewer

Ram Lamb. 1st - Oakland Animals, 2nd and 3rd - D Rashley, 4th - H Butler, 5th - E Moorhouse, 6th - C Brewer.

Ram. 1st - D Rashley, 2nd - Merristwood, 3rd and 4th - H Butler, 5th - C Brewer, 6th - D Rashley.

Group of Three. 1st - D Rashley, 2nd - Merrist Wood, 3rd - H Butler, 4th - E Moorhouse, 5th - C Brewer.

Champion - D Rashley, Ewe. Reserve Champion - D Rashley, Ram.

Wool on the Hoof Portland. 1st - D Rashley, 2nd - C Brewer, 3rd - Merristwood, 4th - D Rashley, 5th - Oaklands Animals, 6th H Butler.

Open Fleece. 1st and 2nd - C Brewer, 3rd - D Rashley.

Westmorland Show

Non-Primitive

Ram. 1st Hannah Rogerson,

Shearling Ram. 4th Robin Murry,

Ram Lamb. 3rd H Rogerson,

Ewe. 1st H Rogerson, 3rd R Murry,

Ewe Lamb. 3rd H Rogerson,

1 male and 2 females. 2nd H Rogerson, 5th R Murry,

Reserve Champion. H Rogerson

Hecklington Show

Mixed Classes

Best Portland. Karen Wilson

Best Short Wool. K Wilson

Best non-Primitive. Reserve Champion K Wilson

Turriff Show

Mixed Classes (small and horned Minority)

Shearling Ewe. 5th Neil and Zoe Robson

Reserve Champion. Neil and Zoe Robson

Moreton Show

Hill and Heath Classes

Ram – 2nd Deborah Williams, 6th D Williams

Ram Lamb – 5th D Williams

Ewe – 3rd D Williams

Ewe Lamb – D Williams

Ashby Show

Portland Classes

Ewe – 1st M O'Regan, 2nd P Robarts, 3rd M O'Regan,

Shearling Ewe – 1st P Robarts, 2nd M O'Regan,

Ewe Lamb – 1st M O'Regan, 2nd P Robarts,

Rams – 1st P Robarts, 2nd and 3rd M O'Regan

Ram Lamb – 1st M O'Regan, 2nd P Robarts,

Group of Three – 1st P Robarts, 2nd M O'Regan,

Champion P Robarts, Reserve M O'Regan

Fillongley Show

Primitive Classes

Ram. 1st M O'Regan

Ewe. 1st M O'Regan

Senior showmanship. Kate O'Regan

Bucks County Show

Mixed Rare-Breed Classes

Ram. 1st Stephen Tricks,

Champion Rare-Breed. Stephen Tricks

Melplash Show

Portland Classes

Ram. 1st and 2nd D Rashley, 3rd Jo Stover,

Ewe. 1st D Rashley, 2nd J Stover, 3rd D Rashley, 4th Kate Odey,

Shearling Ewe. 1st D Rashley, 2nd A Rashley, 3rd D Rashley, 4th J Stover,

Ram Lamb. 1st and 2nd D Rashley, 3rd K Odey,

Ewe Lamb. 1st and 2nd D Rashley, 3rd J Stover, 4th K Odey,

Group of Three. 1st D Rashley, 2nd J Stover, 3rd K Odey,

Champion and Reserve Champion. D Rashley.

Dorset County Show

Portland Classes

Ewe – 1st Sharon and George Poulton, 2nd and 3rd D Rashley, 4th S and G Poulton,

Ewe Lamb – 1st and 2nd D Rashley,

Ram – 1st D Rashley, 2nd S and G Poulton, 3rd D Rashley, 4th Tracey Jarvis,

Ram Lamb – 1st S and G Poulton, 2nd D Rashley, 3rd S and G Poulton, 4th D Rashley,

Group of Three – 1st D Rashley, 2nd S and G Poulton,

Champion – S and G Poulton Ewe, Reserve Champion – D Rashley Ram, Interbreed non-commercial – Sharon and George Poulton.

Aberystwyth and Ceredigion County Show

Any other breed classes

Reserve Champion – Lewis Robertson

Melton Mowbray Show and Sale

Portlands – Show Results

Ewe – 1st Fiona Mackenzie, 2nd Sue Stennett, 3rd Sue Stennett, 4th Fiona Mackenzie,

Ram – 1st Darren Rashley, 2nd Darren Rashley, 3rd Sue Stennett, 4th Fiona Mackenzie,

Champion – Fiona Mackenzie, Ewe. Reserve Champion – Darren Rashley, Ram.

Sale results

Ewes

Sue Stennett – both ewes made £80 each

Fiona Mackenzie – 4 ewes made £80 each

Lewis Robertson – the auctioneer took £30 for the ones which only had bids of £15, 2 ewes made £30 each and 2 ewes made £40 each, 3 ewes made £45 each.

Suzanne Taylor – 2 ewes made £60 each.

Ewe Lambs

Lewis Robertson - 2 ewe lambs made £50 each, 2 ewe lambs at £60 each.

Rams

Caroline Hurdley – 1 at £250, 1 at £170.

Fiona Mackenzie – 1 at £180.

Darren Cassie – 1 at £150.

Henson and Andrews Ltd 1 at £160.

Darren Rashley – 1 at £185, 1 at £80.

D Williams – 2 at £60 each.

Sue Stennett – 1 at £70.

From Spectator into the Show Ring.

Our love of Portlands began in October 2018 at Countryside Live in Harrogate where we met a wonderful young couple, Kelsey and Nathan. They were so enthusiastic in talking about their sheep and took time to tell us all about how they got into owning and showing Portlands. We kept in touch with them, asked lots of questions and visited them when they were showing their sheep. My husband, Brooke, and I finally took the plunge with our very own Portland lambs in December 2018. I wanted to show our sheep at future agricultural shows, the only problem being that we didn't have transport to get them there. By chance, some neighbours offered to put our Portlands in their trailer for the next show they were going to. I jumped at the chance when given the opportunity to go to Penistone, the home-town of my husband, where I knew we would have plenty of family support.

I had read many books and googled lots for help and advice. I was pleased when some really helpful information appeared on the PSBG website. I went on the Penistone Show website to enter on line and was unsure which class I should be entering. Following discussions with Shaun Smith, the show secretary and another Portland owner, we went for Upland and AOB.

After many sleepless nights, finally the big day arrived... It was also my birthday but my cards and presents had to wait. My Portlands, Angela and Harriet were more important, this was their big day! This was only the second time they'd been in a trailer so they were really nervous when we loaded and unloaded them. At the showground there were stewards on hand to direct me to the pen with my girls. We had a smashing spot on the edge of the pens so that a lot of the visitors could see the back ends of our beautiful sheep! They hid their heads in the corner of the pen most of the day. I had printed off and laminated information sheets which I fixed

to the pen. A lot of the information I took from the PSBG and the RBST website and was a bit nervous myself when being asked questions by the public. I felt sure some of these visitors were sheep experts and were trying to catch me out.

One of my family came to the pen and started singing "Happy birthday to you" and another one surprised me with a wonderful birthday present. My very own Shepherds crook tied up with ribbon. I couldn't have asked for a better birthday present on this special day.

After a bit of messing about with changing of the show rings, finally it was my class. Thankfully, one of the stewards shouted over to me, "Karen, you're on now, this is your class" so I quickly put the halter on Harriet and proudly walked out into the judging area wearing my new, crisp, white show coat. Well, poor Harriet was tiny in comparison to the other breeds, Derbyshire Gritstone, Greyfaced Dartmoor, Cheviot, Blacknose Valais and a certain Bluefaced Leicester who was jumping up and down next to me while I was trying to keep Harriet facing front and to attention while answering questions from the judge as to what interested me in owning Portland sheep. We didn't get a place but I was as proud as punch to be there with my Portland and can't wait for next year. Hopefully, I will have some lambs to take too! After I'd taken Harriet back to her pen and removed her halter I gave her a quick kiss and cuddle and told her what a good girl she had been before hastily making my way to the nearest beer tent. I slept very well that night!

Karen Leung

Membership

We extend a very warm welcome to our new members including:

*Robin Murray,
Frizington, Cumbria*

*Julie Diana Baber,
Pensford, Somerset*

*Kathryn Paterson,
Hose, Leicestershire*

*Liane Webb, Lancing,
West Sussex*

We hope they enjoy being custodians of our pretty breed of sheep and are grateful to them for helping to sustain them for the future.

Thinking of keeping Portland sheep or just have an interest in the breed without owning stock?

For a mere £15 per year and by completing the following form you will be made very welcome in our group. Please return your details to our membership secretary; jostover@aol.com

| Portland Sheep Breeders Group Membership Application Form | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| Full Name: | | |
| Address: | | |
| Postcode: | | |
| Telephone: | | |
| Email: | | |
| You do not need sheep to join, but if you currently own Portland Sheep we would greatly appreciate it if you could complete the following: | | |
| Flock Name: | | |
| Flock Number: | | |
| UK No.: | | |
| Flock Size | Breeding Ewes: | |
| | Breeding Rams: | |
| | Other: | |
| Thank you | | |
| Membership Fee: £15.00 Send completed form, along with payment to: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> Jo Stover Lower Brimley Coombe Farm Stoke Abbott Beaminster Dorset DT8 3JZ 01308 867449 07876 560702 jostover@aol.com </div> <div> For BACS payment: Sort code: 09 01 55 Account number: 01136713 Account name: Portland Sheep Breeders Group Reference: your name CHEQUES payable to The Portland Sheep Breeders Group </div> </div> | | |

Membership News

31st September 2019.

Dear Libby,

Sadly my last Mottishill Pastlund died earlier this year, this brings to an end my thirty two years with Pastlund sheep in Lascombe.

In 1987 we purchased three of only seven fatwold at the Stoneleigh Show and Sale, these were from the Frank Bailey flock and made the start of our Mottishill flock. which produced 377 Pastlund lambs over the years.

Jan developed Alzheimer's and died in 2016, it is not possible for me to keep sheep and lamb now but I still like to see the Pastlunds as shows etc.

Thank you for your service and help over the years.

Regards

Tony Wicks.

Flock 902.

Flock Advice

Unregistered Portlands and the Supplementary Register

Writing this article to members of a breeders group should be preaching to the converted but the importance of registering your stock is always worthy of a reminder. It is not unusual to browse some of the common websites where rare breed stock are advertised and find unregistered animals for sale. It is a particular pitfall for those new to sheep and pedigree stock, to unwittingly find they have bought unregistered animals.

In October 2013 I bought 12 unregistered ewes from Worcestershire. There was something of a paper trail which identified them as coming from the 'Sherwood' flock and two registered rams had been used, Newbrook Eagle (who I saw) and Rustic Victa. None had been birth notified or registered. I felt this was a worthy project to get what were in fact very good sheep and their offspring back into the flock book. There is a process whereby unregistered sheep, following an inspection by the RBST, can be put onto the Supplementary Register which is run alongside the main 'A' register. I followed the application system and began a three generation breeding programme to get this flock's bloodlines back into the flock book properly. The original ewes are given an 'SRP' number as opposed to the usual 'P' number on their certificate. After the first lambing any ewe lambs are registered as SRP*. These ewes' female offspring are given an SRP** number. Finally, these ewes female offspring are given a fully registered status. Phew, a long job! It has to be this way because if something other than a Portland had got involved it would show itself in that time. Ram lambs are not kept, as to put a Supplementary Register ram to a fully registered ewe, for example, would downgrade their offspring to an SRP** status.

In July 2015, Steve Gould, Dawn Sprake and I rescued an old flock of over 100 Portlands from Abbotsbury, Dorset, known as the 'Strangways' flock. Steve took the cull ewes and Dawn the wethers. Back to Lincolnshire came 40 ewes and 27 ewe lambs and the process started all over again. This flock had

started around 1983 when 3 ewes and a ram had been bought from the late Frank Bailey. Since that early time mainly Southover rams had been used. Sadly, since 2001 nothing else was birth notified or registered and the flock continued only due to the efforts of the then shepherd of the estate, Mr Richard Pullin.

The Strangways flock were not in great shape and foot rot was rife. So bad in fact I eventually had to surrender and have 3 ewes put down. 3 other ewes did not appear to me to be full Portlands and so were not taken any further. The lambs were still at foot and we were able to identify 19 of them to ewes I had brought home, which was a bonus as they would be immediately registered as SRP*, whose sire was Christmas Hill Knight. To say these sheep were feral is not an understatement! I wish I had had my dog then, many hours catching them would have been saved and I quickly discovered what good showjumpers they were.

Winding the clock on to 2019. This lambing season has seen our first fully registered ewes from both flocks, 10 in all and I couldn't be more pleased. The Sherwoods have taken forever to get this far as they kept producing rams (well they would wouldn't they) and the Strangways are still good showjumpers! I currently have 44 SRP** and 22 SRP* ewes from both flocks to move forward with and I would anticipate another 4 years of lambing to get the numbers back in the flock book I started with.

Whilst, for me this is incredibly satisfying, the message from this saga is simple. Please register your sheep and encourage other breeders to do the same. It is a tragedy that so many lovely Portlands are lost because we don't do the paperwork. As a final touch, it will be great one day to see the Abbotsbury Portlands back in Dorset. They are referred to as Longhills Pullin on their certificates in recognition of Richards work keeping them going for so long, so easy to spot!

I do have fully registered Portlands as well, around 40 at the moment, in case anyone wondered!

Karen Wilson

Committee News

At the AGM Helen Butler and Dawn Sprake stood down from the Committee having completed their three-year term of office. Joe Joseph and Catherine Brewer were elected in their place. Sharon Stagg and Dan Stover stood down following the AGM. Joe Joseph kindly agreed to take on the role of secretary. Many thanks to all of them for their time and work. The Committee currently comprises Shaun Smith, Jo Stover, Joe Joseph, Sarah Rashley, Stephen Tricks, Penny Gibson and Catherine Brewer.

Meanwhile, Kelly Richards has taken on the role of South West Area Representative.

OPA UPDATE

Ovine Pulmonary Adenocarcinoma

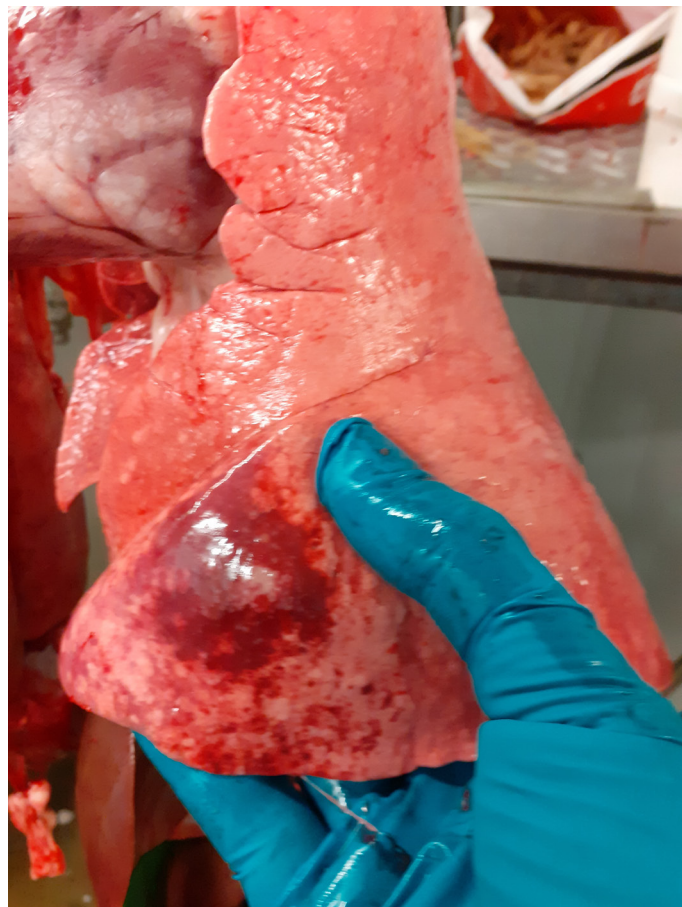
(Also known as Jaagsiekte Sheep Retrovirus)

We are sorry to report that Sharon Stagg has decided to close her Merrymoor flock following further cases of OPA earlier this year. As discussed in an article on this topic in the newsletter in summer 2018, OPA is an infectious lung cancer specific to sheep, for which there is currently no treatment. Although OPA is seen in some commercial flocks, particularly in Scotland, this is the first reported incidence of OPA in a Portland flock. To date, there is no positive indication that the disease is present in other Portland flocks but clinical signs of OPA may take at least six months and possibly several years to develop after initial infection.

OPA is spread by inhalation of infectious virus present in respiratory secretions or by direct contact with infected secretions. There is no reliable diagnostic test for early stages of OPA. At first sight, OPA can appear similar to pneumonia, but it does not respond to antibiotics. Typical symptoms of OPA are difficulty in breathing, often with a significant loss of condition, even if the animal continues to feed. There is an over-production of fluid in the lungs, which may appear as a watery discharge from the nose. We therefore recommend that you keep a watch for any unusual health problems and deaths in your flock and that you discuss the position with your vet.

RBST has been liaising with the Moredun Foundation in Scotland regarding the best response to OPA. Further information on OPA can be found on the Moredun website at <https://www.moredun.org.uk/research/diseases/opa-jaagsiekte>

The PSBG Committee, in conjunction with RBST, will continue to monitor the position of Portlands across the UK so that we may help with looking at options for action on any affected flock. Meanwhile, good biosecurity and animal husbandry remain as important as ever both on your own land and at shows.



A Shepherd's Life

Sir, I am a true labourer:

*I earn that I eat, get that I wear;
owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness;
glad of othermen's good,
content with my harm;
and the greatest of my pride is
to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.*

W. Shakespeare

As You Like It. (Act 3, Scene 2.)

PSBG Merchandise

Notelets £4.50

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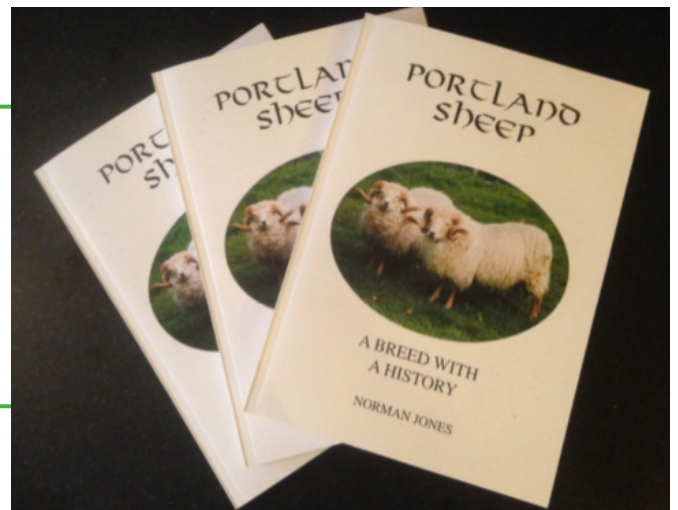


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