

Official Society Newsletter

Ryeland FBS Spring 2024



Photo: Margaret Bedford.

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Editor's Note



Spring is on the way and I don't know about you but I'm getting heartily sick of glooping my way down the fields in the mud. Hopefully by the time this edition reaches you the weather will be a little drier.

If anyone has a regular feature they would like including in the newsletter please do let us know. We do try to vary the contents but ideas are always appreciated.

Hoping your sheep have all produced lovely show worthy lambs.

Please let me have any articles for the next edition by 20th May (coincidentally my 52nd wedding anniversary!). Where have the years gone. Not sure I ever looked like the secretary above!!!!

Lin Whittall
Ryeland Editor
lin.whittall@googlemail.com

From the Chair

As I write this report the sun is shining. A very rare moment and with the sunshine we have started lambing. Schmallenberg has been a particular worry across the agricultural sector and this has affected many society members who lamb early on in the year with the midges prevalent at their time of tupping last year. A particularly upsetting situation where no heads up is given until the time of lambing. In positive cases where a set of twins are born, one may have suffered Schmallenberg and the other is totally fine. Other cases all lambs are lost and in the worst possible scenario the ewe also. If you have sadly experienced this during your lambing this year, I hope that you have managed to have some healthy lambs which are happily skipping around the sheds or fields giving you a positive spin in amongst the darker moments.

Agricultural shows are already requesting entries for the 2024 showing season. A list of the shows most commonly attended by members has been placed on the society website, along with appointed judges for the Ryelands and Coloured Ryelands. Please note that these are subject to change though....

The first council meeting of 2024 was held in Malvern on the 6th of January and was well attended and a number of topics were discussed including the shows and sales for 2024. The main society sale will continue at Ludlow on the 17th of August and the Carlisle sale will move to the 31st of August 2024. The literature sub committee has developed a new promotional leaflet which has been printed and will be circulated to the regional committees for them to distribute around the various agricultural events across the UK. A new sub committee was formed to push forward the Youth Program and they have already kicked into action with a video diary competition for the younger members to submit footage of their day to day animal tasks from assisting with lambing to shearing and other husbandry skills.

This year's AGM is being held at the Metropole in Llandrindod Wells on the 27th of April. The AGM is being organised by the Mid, South & West Wales region this year. I look forward to seeing you all there at the first social event of the RFBS calendar year.

For the next four weeks I will suffer like you all with sleep deprivation, aching limbs, soaking clothes (always raining here) and simplistic meal options all in the hope of having some nice lambs to breed and possibly show. I'm sure those who have already finished are eagerly walking the fields picking out their best ewe/tup lambs for the showing season.

Council Members

President - John Reed

Vice President - Alun & Eleanor Parry

Chairman - Caz Bateman

CRC Representative

Caz Bateman

Ryeland Committee Representative

Zoe Unwin

Councillors: retire 2024

Joanne Fisher (Northern England)

Stephen Hipps (Yorkshire)

Julie Ellis (Yorkshire)

Pam Bateman (North Wales & Mercia)

Jack Williams- Deputy Vice Chair

(Hereford' & T. Marches)

Susan Quigley (Hereford' & T. Marches)

John Donovan - Vice Chair,

(Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Andy McVicar (Mid, W. & S Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Vacant (South East England)

Gillian Dixon (South West England)

David Mitchell (Scotland)

Regional Representatives:

Retire April 2025

Philippa Atkins (Northern England)

Jill Gray (Yorkshire)

Jane Pinches (North Wales & Mercia)

Jonathan Webb (Hereford' & T Marches)

Carol Bateman (Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Stephen Ramsden (South West England)

RFBS Office Hours:

Tuesdays - Thursdays

9.30am - 5pm

As always I look forward to seeing you all whether on the show circuit, general sales or the local mart. Finally, for those of you attending the various meetings or tractor protests in relation to the proposed Sustainability Farming Scheme for Wales. Thank you for standing up to the Welsh Government and for acting on behalf of livestock owners across Wales. Will we succeed that is the question??

Caz Bateman

RFBS Chair

Herefordshire & the Marches Regional Report

I hope everyone's lambing is going well for those who have started, and for those yet to start good luck, I'll look forward to seeing all the photos of your lambs. This year lambing has been increasingly difficult for many, with the dreaded Schmallenberg affecting so many within our region. If you have been affected by this, please don't feel alone and you are able to contact one of your regional group, even if it is just to offload.

Your current Regional Group is; Dominic Dickson, Jonathan Webb, Sue Quigley, Zoe Unwin, Ann Swankie and Jack Deakins. Sadly, David Duggan, Viv Gumble, Cathy Whapham and Anne Watson have made the decision to resign from their position with the Hereford and The Marches Committee. I would like to thank them for all their hard work for the committee and regional members over the years. This means we have a number of vacancies so if you are interested in joining the regional group, please do apply.

We have been organising events for 2024

There will be a Hereford and the Marches RFBS Conference educational day held on 2nd June 2024, with topics including:

- A veterinary health flock management talk from James & Sophie Wright
- Grass Management talk
- Trimming demonstration
- Photography demonstration (on how to get those great photos to market your sheep)

The regional committee will also be on hand to support with anything grassroots related/demonstration of the grassroots system. It's set to be a very informative day so would be great to see lots of you there.

We will also be holding the "Herefordshire and The Marches & South, West & Mid Wales" Grand Autumn Lamb Show, held in conjunction with Kington Show on 14th

September 2024, after the success of last years show. Your regional committees will be on hand to support and help, so this is the ideal opportunity for novice breeders to venture into the show ring, along with experienced breeders to bring your lambs along to a great show.

Full details of all the events for 2024 will be available on our regional website, <https://hmryelandgroup.co.uk/> . The website also includes all the shows within the region, with the first being Shropshire County Show on Saturday 25th May 2024. It would be great to see lots of you there, it is a lovely little one day show, and also counts towards the regional points trophy (along with all the shows in our region).

Please get in touch with any of the committee members if you have any advice or suggestions for future events or things you would like to see in the region.

Dominic Dickson

Regional Chair

South, Mid & West Wales Regional Report

In September together with Hereford and Marches region, we jointly hosted the Lamb Show, at Kington Show. Entries were very good with members from both regions in attendance. Despite the very hot weather we all had a wonderful day followed by food and refreshments. A big thank you for everyone who came along, definitely a date for next year's showing Calendar.

Our Regional Christmas lunch was on Sunday 10th December at The Plough, Llan-deilo. It was good to meet up with old friends and make new ones. It was well supported with 35 people attending.

As a regional group we currently have only five committee members, we urgently need additional committee members and volunteers to help with future events. If you are interested, please contact me - andrewmcvicar245@btinternet.com .

Andy McVicar

Regional Chair

North Wales & Mercia Regional Report

Hopefully by the time you read this the weather has improved and your stock are no longer splashing about in the mud...it certainly has been a difficult winter here in the NWAM region!

We have had quite a lot of new members in the area over the last year so I would like to remind anyone interested in learning how to prepare their sheep for show or sale that they can get in touch with me or any members of our committee for help and advice. I am happy for anyone to visit me near Macclesfield and there are several members in the Midlands area and North Wales who would help you too. The first of our regions shows is Stafford at the end of May, followed by Royal Cheshire & Derby County in June. Our region's website www.ryelandnwam.org has all the show dates and information. Closing dates for the bigger shows can be as early as March so don't delay! The shows are a great place to meet other members and talk sheep so hopefully some of you will go along to say hello without having to compete.

We are hoping to hold a workshop focusing on tupping time - ram selection, fertility testing, inoculation, synchronising lambing and care of the ewe being just some of the topics we will cover. If this is of interest please drop me an email (michele@snelsoncolouredryelands.co.uk) or message 07885 482640 as we need to know if we have enough support to organise this. The event would be free of charge & probably held on a Sunday early in the Summer. If there are any other topics you would like to see covered in a workshop please let me have your ideas – we need feedback! We would also like to hear from any of our members in North Wales who may be able to host a regional event, the main requirements are a covered area in case of bad weather and a selection of stock, as well as reasonable parking space.

Hopefully some of you will be attending the National AGM in April, and if so please come & say Hello!

Michele Varmen

Regional Chair

News from Scotland

Stock Judging Day

A new event for Scottish Ryeland enthusiasts was held at the beginning of December and took the form of a Christmas social and stock judging competition. The



event was organised by two friends Eilidh Garrett and Eilidh Simmons and was hosted at Eilidh Garrett’s family home in Drumoak, Aberdeenshire, home of Gormack Ryelands. Participants got the opportunity to learn more about the qualities of a good Ryeland sheep and then have a go at a competitive stock judging.

Eilidh Garret said after the event: “What a lovely day and brilliant turnout with 20 people showing face, some from as far away as Ayrshire and quite a few new faces, which was very appreciated. “Well done to our prize winners, results were very close and spirits kept high even though it was freezing and even a little snowy.”



This was a fantastic effort by the two Eilidhs and grateful thanks go to them and the Garrett family for hosting the event and providing very welcoming warming food for the participants.

Winter lunch

The previous week, Scottish Ryeland members met up for the annual winter lunch held in the Birds and Bees restaurant in Stirling. As part of the event, the annual show points competition, with the top six receiving their awards as follows:

- 1 Chris & Ricky Smyth 185pts;
- 2 Susan Bryden 166pts;
- 3 Douglas Stainton 143pts;
- 4 Raymond Aitken 136pts; 5 David & Annette Mitchell 134 pts;
- 6 Andrew Hunter-Blair 126pts.

The fleece award was also won by Chris and Ricky Smyth.

The 2024 show season will kick off with Ryeland classes at Ayr Show on May 11 followed by shows throughout the summer from as far apart as Aberdeenshire in the north to Wigtownshire in the south.

Northern England Regional Report



FREE PARKING
Country Fest
CROOKLANDS
KITE DISPLAYS
A treat for all ages
Sat 1 & Sun 2
June 2024
Sat 10am - 5pm & Sun 10am - 4pm
COUNTY SHOWGROUND, CROOKLANDS




Our Northern England regional members have requested trimming demonstration days.

In response to these requests we will be working with the organisers of Countryfest, an event held on 1st & 2nd of June 2024 at Westmorland show ground.

Countryfest is a country show that is one of the Northern region qualifiers for the RBST Young Shepherd of the Year competition. All young shepherds can sign up for the event & take part in the classes, demonstrations and workshops across the weekend.



We are working with Countryfest & the RBST Cumbria Support Group to arrange to open the trimming demonstration, classes & workshops on Saturday 1st June to all our members, not just young members (under 23).



This is a really exciting opportunity and we hope members will support the event.



We hope that lambing is going well for everyone and if you have not started yet good luck! We have had a couple of productive online meetings over the winter months to plan a schedule of events for 2024. In the pipe line is a visit to Rycroft rare breeds for a butchery demonstration on the 8th of September.

We will be planning for the Cumbrian wool gathering on the 22nd and 23rd of June at Junction 36 auction centre including a RFBS stand and sheep!

Several requests have been received from our regional members to hold a judges training day. This is definitely something we would like to do. We hope to hold an event possibly in con-

NEW FOR 2024
ONLINE
'WOOL SCHOOL'

Dates to follow
Organised by the
Northern England Region



GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDE
CLAIRE WEEDALL
RHIAN ROCHFORD
DAVID DUGGAN
RUTH ASHTON-SHAW
JAYNE CARTER &
JO FARROW
ALONG WITH THE
BRITISH WOOL
MARKETING BOARD

junction with the Scottish region in the near future.

The winner of the Autumn photo competition was Tom and Emma Redmayne of Red Sewel Ryelands and the winner of the Winter photo competition was Simon Archer of Archer Ryelands. They both received a travel mug with their winning photo. A reminder that our points shows are: Cumberland Show, Skelton Show, Penrith Show, Westmorland County Show, Royal Lancashire Show, Plus two new shows this year: Bury Show and Dalston Show.

We look forward to seeing everyone out and about.

Philip Holmes
Regional Chair

From the Vet - Schmallenburg Virus

There has been a sharp rise in farms affected by Schmallenburg Virus (SBV) this lambing season, especially in parts of Southern England, the Midlands, and Wales. In early January the National Sheep Association (NSA) reported a spike of confirmed Schmallenburg cases. This virus affects sheep, cattle, goats and possibly camelids. SBV was first noted in the UK during the 2012-2013 lambing season. The last significant wave of SBV occurred in 2017-2018, when cases were reported on 141 sheep farms and 76 cattle holdings in the UK. A wave of cases is usually predicted every 3-5 years; when the majority of the breeding flock have not previously been exposed to the virus and have poor immunity.

Spread of SBV:

The virus is spread from infected sheep/cattle by midges. It is therefore very hard to control spread of infection. Sheep are only thought to be infectious for 2-7 days. Early lambing flocks are most likely to be affected. This is because they will have started tupping during the warmer weather when the midge population is at its highest, typically in August and September. Unfortunately, last year it is suspected that the warm autumn and early winter weather is likely to have extended the active midge period and so more cases may still be seen in later heading into the spring.

The effect of SBV:

Unlike in cattle (where symptoms include acute fever, diarrhoea and milk drop), adult sheep do not normally show signs of illness upon infection. The greatest impact is when ewes are infected during pregnancy because the virus is able to cross the placenta to affect the growing foetus. On average affected flocks report an extra 3% lamb mortality, but some farms have suffered up to 50-60% losses. Lambs may be aborted, stillborn or born alive but with deformities. Typically lamb deformities include fixed joints, abnormally bent legs, incorrect limb orientation, a domed skull, a shortened lower jaw and a classic S-bend to the neck or spine. Some lambs are born with a normal appearance but with nervous issues such as blindness, lack of coordination, inability to suck or convulsions. The most vulnerable stage of pregnancy for foetal deformities to occur is if the ewe is infected on day 25-50 of pregnancy. Infection before this stage may cause early embryonic death and present as increased numbers of barren ewes.

Action to take:

Deformed lambs may be difficult or impossible for the ewe to birth naturally. It is advisable to call your vet promptly if you are experiencing difficulties. A caesarean may be needed to prevent injury to the ewe. Lambs that are born alive with severe

deformities should be humanly euthanised for welfare reasons. SBV is not a notifiable disease in the UK but the Animal Plant and Health Agency (**APHA**) is **currently offering free surveillance testing for SBV** on deformed lambs. Blood testing can also be performed on the ewe to show exposure to the virus. It is important to note that not all cases of deformities or abortion will be caused by SBV. Enzootic Abortion and Toxoplasmosis can cause abortions, still-births and mummified lambs. Border's disease (hairy shakers) can cause neurological issues. Bluetongue Virus (notifiable in the UK) causes similar brain lesions to SBV in lambs and calves. There have recently been cases of Bluetongue in the UK so it is advisable that potential cases of SBV are treated with caution and discussed with your vet.

Prevention:

There is not currently a vaccine for SBV in the UK. The general advice for reducing the risk is to consider moving lambing dates later. This is an attempt to avoid the high population of midges during tupping in the summer. However warmer weather, like that seen this year, could continue the risk further into the autumn and early winter. If possible, avoid choosing fields for pregnant ewes with stagnant water that may attract higher number of midges. Application of anti-parasitic may be helpful but is unfortunately not fully protective against large numbers of midges. It is not necessary to cull ewes that have been infected. Sheep and cattle rapidly form a strong immunity to the virus after infection, providing protection against SBV for future lambing seasons.

Sophie Wright MRCVS

Ryeland Show Results & Photographs

Thank you to everyone who sent in show results and photographs for 2023. I hope you enjoyed reading the annual show supplement. The same email address will be used again this year.

ryelandresults@gmail.com

Ryeland Shearling Ewe of The Year

Regionally nominated qualifying shows, where points can be collected for The Shearling Ewe of the Year Shepherd's Crook Award

Skelton	Penrith
Great Yorkshire	Ripley
Stafford	Derbyshire
Royal Welsh	Aberystwyth and Ceredigion
Royal Cornwall	Mid Devon
Royal Highland	Scottish National
Three Counties	Tenbury

Percy Wear Trophy & Richard Wear Shearling Ram of The Year

Qualifying shows for the Percy and Richard Wear points trophies are

Devon County Royal	Bath and West
Stafford County Royal	Cornwall
Royal Three Counties	Cumberland
Royal Highland	Great Yorkshire
Royal Welsh	Tenbury
Pembrokeshire	

Tribute to Dominic McEwen -King

Robin and Margaret McEwen-King would like to thank all the Members who sent us cards and letters from the length and breadth of the UK after Dominic's death telling us about their chats with him about sheep, shearing, Showing, the universe and everything! Many of these members he only saw once a year, but from all the tributes we received he clearly made a great impact on them.

Dom had lived with a variety of medical issues for many years, but his mind was always active and when he was unable to sleep at night he would research academic papers into his various medical problems and often get in touch with the authors to discuss their findings. He was well respected and was able to come up with papers which his Consultants hadn't seen.

Early last year he was diagnosed with advanced Pulmonary Fibrosis in his lungs and was told he had six to eighteen months to live.

He never gave up and did everything he could to keep going, but in the end he died at home overnight in June just weeks after his 53rd Birthday. We think that his heart just couldn't cope.

We were so thankful that he died at home.

The Galtress Ryeland flock continues with lambing about to start as I write.

PRESIDENT'S DINNER 2024

Note for your diary

The President's Dinner will be held on Saturday Oct 5th 2024

at the Burton Hotel Kington.

Rooms are available there and other options locally.

Robert Morgan



Judges Training Day

SUNDAY 12TH MAY 2024

A Judging development & training workshop, will be held at Bachebrook Farm, Norton Canon, HR4 7BP on 12/05/24.

A-List Judges with extensive experience at Major Shows, will be offering training and assessment for those wishing to be considered for the Society B-List. Those considering training to be a judge, or those interested in the process, please express your interest to the email below, so that we can gauge numbers.

Email Jack on: Bachebrook@Gmail.com



Video Tutorials

Many of you have asked for Video Tutorials, on how to use Grassroots and its functions.

The Office & Admin Sub-Committee have put together a new section on the Society Website for these, and thanks to Caz Bateman for the production of the videos.

If there are anymore things you would like to see then please let us know.

Email Jack on:
Bachebrook@Gmail.com



RFBS Annual General Meeting 2024

Saturday 27th April at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells.LD1 5DY

10.30am - Arrival - tea/coffee & Biscuits

11.00am - Guest speaker Kate Hovers MRCVS - Specialist Sheep Vet, NSA Wales Chairman, former President of the Sheep Veterinary Society.

12.30pm - Lunch in restaurant

Choice of Meals following:

- Free range chicken with Green peppercorn sauce
- Salmon fillet with herb cream sauce
- Mediterranean Vegetable Lasagne
- All come with a selection of vegetables
- Selection of sweets, tea & coffee.

2.00 pm- Presentation of Honorary Life Membership to the School of Biosciences Cardiff University in memory of Professor Michael Bruford.

2.15 pm - Annual General Meeting

After AGM tea/coffee & Welsh Cakes

Members wishing to book accommodation are advised to contact the hotel (email: salesmanager@metropole.co.uk) as soon as possible. In order to take advantage of specially discounted rates negotiated by RFBS, please inform the receptionist that you are attending our AGM.

Shows & Judges 2024 - May be subject to change.

Show	Dates	Ryeland Judge	C Ryeland Judge
Devon County	16 - 18 May	Rob Morgan	Chris Smyth
Spring Festival	18 - 19 May	Ann Swankie	Joanne Fisher
Shropshire	25-May	Steve Briggs	Steve Briggs
Bath & West	30 May - 1	Simon Donovan	Ifan Lloyd
Stafford	29 & 30 May	Brian Davies	Susan Bryden
Royal Cornwall	6 - 8 June	Stephen Rowe	Angela Howell
Three Counties	14-Jun	Jane Pinches	Simon Gilbert
Cumberland	08-Jun	Jack Williams	Beth Aitken
Royal Cheshire County	18 & 19 June	Steve Bradbury	John Reed
Royal Highland	20 - 23 June	Rob Morgan	
Cranleigh	14-Jul	Stephen Ramsden	Sue Lake
Derbyshire County	23-Jun	Nigel Cook	David Robinson
Royal Norfolk	26 & 27 June		Carol Bateman
Skelton Show, Penrith	06-Jul	Susan Bryden	Matthew Pink
Great Yorkshire	9 - 12 July	William Laurie	Russell Howell
Liskeard	13-Jul	Nick Webb	Nick Webb
Royal Lancashire	19 - 21 July	Chris Smyth	Matthew Pink
Penrith	20-Jul	Andrew Hunter-Blair	Annabelle Burton
Ryedale	30-Jul	Raymond Aitken	Jonathan Webb
Royal Welsh	22 - 25 July	David Duggan	John Donovan
Nantwich Show	31-Jul	Gill Glover	Gill Glover
Mid Devon	27-Jul	John Reed	Anne Watson
Burwarton	01-Aug	Hannah Bradbury	Zoe Unwin
Honiton	01-Aug	Tom Wright	Tom Evans

Show	Dates	Ryeland Judge	C Ryeland Judge
Brecon	03-Aug	Pam Bateman	*Arranged By Show
Cardigan	03-Aug	Nick Webb	Nick Webb
Dumfries	03-Aug	Matthew Pink	Steve Briggs
Tenbury Nat Show	03-Aug	Stephen Hipps	Simon Donovan
Gower	04-Aug	*Arranged By Show	*Arranged By Show
Okehampton, Devon	08-Aug	Hannah Bradbury	Sue Lake
Ripley	11-Aug	Rhys Morgan	Andrew Hunter-Blair
Pembrokeshire	14-Aug	Jonathan Webb	Rhys Morgan
Gillingham	14-Aug	Tom Wright	Brenda Wear
Llyswen	TBC		Rob Morgan
Mid Somerset	18-Aug	Jonathan Webb	Paula Wills
Ludlow S & S Rams	17-Aug	John Donovan	Stephen Unwin
Ludlow S & S Ewes	17-Aug	Simon Donovan	William Laurie
Moreton	07-Sep	Nick Webb	Steve Bradbury
Dorset County	7 & 8 Sep	Julian Wright	Ann Swankie
Westmoreland	11 & 12 Sep	Tom Redmayne	William Laurie
Kington	14-Sep	Adam Retter	Rob Morgan
Carlisle S&S	31-Aug	Aled Morgan	Stephen Hipps
Aberystwyth & Ceredigion	08-Jun	Steve Bradbury	Steve Bradbury
Sennybridge	07-Sep		Simon Donovan

Ryeland Flock Book Society Youth Development Programme

Young Shepherd of the Year Video Diary

Don't Forget to register your interest if you are planning to take part, more information can be found on the society website!



Facebook & Members Area



Look out for the Official Society Facebook and Members area on the website, specifically for members of the Youth Programme.

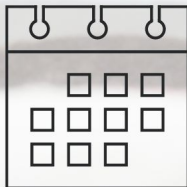
Invite Letter

Look out in the post for your invite letter to welcome you to the Youth Development Programme, this will be sent to all members under the age of 28.



Event

We are in the process of planning our first event, which will be a day of learning and developing, looking at all aspects of the breed and also Flock Health and wellbeing too.



Email: youthdp@ryelandfbs.com

Coloured Ryeland News

Editor's note

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Coloured Ryeland newsletter.

Many of you will be busy lambing at the moment which is an absolute joy when all is going well. We are fortunate that our breed tends to produce excellent mothers needing very little assistance but it can also be an exhausting and stressful time especially with the added worry of Schmallenberg this year. I noticed a lovely post on the Herefordshire & the Marches Regional page earlier this year from Zoe Unwin reaching out to anyone struggling. Don't be afraid to ask for help, either email your regional rep or private message a member on Facebook. Best of luck with your new arrivals.

Also, show season will soon here.... Yippee.... so I have included a copy of the show etiquette for those new to showing sheep.

If you would like to feature in the next edition of the newsletter please do contact me. claireweedall095@btinternet.com the deadline for submissions for the next edition is 20th May.

**For all Coloured Ryeland show results please send to
colouredryelandresults@gmail.com**

Coloured Ryeland Committee			
Chairperson		Vice Chairman	
Carol Bateman	01874 636549	Andy McVicar	01686 621977
Committee Members			
Steve Bradbury	01437 563312	Sue McVicar (Treasurer)	01686 621977
Joanne Fisher	07899 076651	Jordan Stone	01953 851943
Paula Wills	01736 786173	Claire Weedall	07539 195580
Jenny Hughes	01245 223288		
Coloured Ryeland Newsletter Editor			
Claire Weedall	07539 195580	claireweedall095@btinternet.com	

A Beginner's guide to showing sheep and Showing Etiquette

John & Suzanne Donovan - Dolwen Ryelands

Our interest in showing began over 25 years ago, at that time we had no idea what was involved and how to get started, let alone the finer points of the 'showing etiquette' - the manner, protocol and custom of showing. What we found was from the very first show we attended, with a small Coloured Ryeland ram lamb, was that other exhibitors were so welcoming and willing to help.

Over the years experienced exhibitors from other sheep breeds have also helped, giving their valuable advice and passing on their 'showing tips'. The point being is that we all need help and advice no matter how experienced and there are lots of members who would be willing to help, so don't be afraid to ask, just don't do it as they are about to enter the show ring!

If you are interested in showing, (and you have the time) our suggestion would be to visit a show, local or further afield, it does not need to have a Ryeland class. Have a good look around the sheep pens and take note of what the exhibitors are doing, especially in the time leading up to the judging. Pick a good vantage point at the ring side and watch the classes being judged, observe the judge as he or she goes about the task, (do you think the judge is doing a good job?) and how well are the exhibitors handling the sheep? At the bigger county shows with a good turn out of exhibitors this can sometimes take up to several hours. After all the individual sheep breed classes have finished, later in the day for the one day shows, the judging of the Sheep Interbreed will commence; here all the individual breed champions go forward to compete for the interbreed Supreme Champion sheep of the show, possibly taking in another hour or two. Shows vary and can have slightly different and sometimes additional classes, e.g. Best pair of ewes, Wool on the hoof, so consult the show schedule for the exact details. For junior exhibitors there might be chance to enter the increasing and popular class for the sheep Young Handler.

PREPERATION Showing starts at home with breeding, selection and preparation but this is a topic for another day. That said in terms of etiquette, this also starts at home in the preparation, remember that the judge will handle your sheep, so it is important to ensure



that they are clean. The preparation should also include some halter training so that you can successfully show your sheep off to their potential. It helps the judge and you if the sheep can walk well and also stand, then hopefully the exhibitor will not have to drag the sheep around the ring, even so the best trained sheep can have their bad days!

Unfortunately, there is paperwork associated with showing, most shows these days publish and make available a schedule that lists the different classes that you may enter, the show rules and entry fees. Normally there will be a closing date typically two to six weeks before show day, you must return your entries and fees in time or your entry will be rejected. Therefore it is very important to get yourself on the list to receive a schedule for the shows you have selected, it is normal to ring the show office or the show secretary and they will be very willing to help you.

You will need to consider which classes you would like to enter, typically there will be a class for the senior rams being over two years old, yearling rams and ewes, ram and ewe lambs born after 1st January, occasionally you will find classes for a breeding ewe - two years or over having raised a lamb that year. There will also be classes for a group of three sheep, typically being a male and two females, occasionally the group must contain a lamb. Over the years we find the most popular group to be a yearling or senior ram, a yearling ewe and ewe lamb or a ram with two shearling ewes, but a group of lambs could also be entered if an older sheep is not a requirement for the class.

The nominated judge will normally be listed in the show schedule, please note when entering show classes animals should not have been bred by the judge. Occasionally specific rules apply when exhibiting purchased stock, these if applicable, will be listed in the show schedule.

On the morning of the show you must complete a movement license to move your sheep from home to the show and the show must complete and provide you with a license for your return journey home. When planning your attendance at a show, remember that unless you have approved isolation facilities, your holding will be on a standstill for the mandatory number of days after the show. Ensure the ear tags are correct and match the movement license, movement licenses accompany the stock, and you have transporters certificates if needed. For more information on animal movements and isolation facilities contact your local authority animal health office.

You will need showing essentials to take with you on the day, including buckets for water and feed, feed and hay, white coats for showing, white halters, some wet or hot weather protection for the sheep and you. Take a tarpaulin, we always do, this can be popped over the pens and with a little imagination and creativeness used to

provide shelter for the sheep if it rains and shade if it gets too hot. The larger County shows normally provide under cover accommodation for the sheep.

SHOW DAY The big day arrives, allow plenty of time, it never ceases to surprise us how quickly the time goes in the morning, getting ourselves ready and the sheep loaded to set off up the lane. Remember your movement license, vehicle pass and entry tickets, we always put them in the vehicle the night before. When you arrive at the showground you will need to book your stock in by handing in your movement license, once you locate your pens which will normally be labelled with your name, unload the sheep. Provide water for the sheep, we tend not to feed until judging is complete so as to avoid hay and feed getting into the fleece, particularly around the head. You may also need some straw for the pens even if the sheep are on grass. Once the sheep are secure in the pens and you have moved your vehicle to the designated parking area you can display any promotional material that you have, although this is not a necessity for your first showing ventures.

SHOWING SHEEP Showing is about subjective assessment against a standard; your sheep will be assessed by the judge against the breed standard and the judge's opinion as to the finer breed points. Before we consider the sheep, we do need to say a few words about the exhibitor who in our opinion needs to be sensibly and smartly dressed. You

will need a clean white coat and do keep it buttoned up. You will also need clean stout shoes or boots possibly wellington boots in wet weather, smart trousers or skirt, shirt and tie is welcome and remember sun hats in hot weather or wet weather coats and hats should you be unfortunate to exhibit in the rain.



Normally the order of judging will start with the ram class, if there are separate classes for senior ram (over two years) and yearling ram, they will usually start judging with the senior ram. The yearling ram class will follow and then the ram lambs. After the ram classes the ewes are judged, the breeding ewe will normally start if there is

a class, followed by yearling ewes and then the ewe lambs. Very occasionally the older ewe and yearling class may be mixed and the schedule will say, ewe of any age but must be one year or older, not a favourite class of ours as we prefer the older ewes in a class of their own.

Once the individual classes are over, the judging normally progresses with the group of three, here the judge will be looking for the three most correct animals that match together well and, in his opinion, make a deserving group.

Following the completion of the above-mentioned classes, the breed champion and reserve breed champion will then be selected. The first placed animals from each class, excluding the group of three, will be invited back into the ring and the judge will carefully select the animal that in his or her opinion is the most correct and the best example of the breed; this could be any of the first placed prize winners but typically a ram, sometimes the ewe if she outshines the ram and on rarer occasions a lamb! Once the judge has selected the breed champion the second placed animal from that class will be invited back into the ring, the judge will then also consider this animal when selecting the reserve breed champion.

There will be a steward to help organise and keep you informed about the judging, the steward should come and let you know the judge has arrived and an idea of how much time you have left before the first class is called- frantic last minute, check the sheep looks its best, is the halter on correct! If you are not sure about anything ask the steward for assistance and help.

JUDGING The exhibitors will gather outside the show ring with their animals, the judge will be in the ring waiting and watching, very often the judge's eye will be drawn to the animals that walk well into the ring. Typically the judge will ask the exhibitors to walk the sheep around the ring, often the judge will stand in one corner to watch each individual animal walk towards and then away. The judge will be assessing how well the animal moves checking for any obvious problems with the legs and feet – this is where all of that halter training pays off!

Remember to keep your animal between you and the judge, the judge wants a good look at the sheep; it is surprising to see how often experienced exhibitors place themselves between the sheep and the judge especially when turning. Do not walk too fast and never drag your sheep along by its halter, if your sheep is slow to lead or stubborn, drop behind another sheep so it can follow and gently squeeze its tail to make it move along. If you are not confident how well your animal will lead always try to follow on behind one of the other exhibitors.

The judge will ask each exhibitor to line their animal up, if you are new keep an eye on the other exhibitors and take their lead – you don't want to line your animal up



with its head facing one way when all of the others are facing in the opposite direction! With the animals in line the judge will normally take a couple of minutes to walk up and down, both from behind and in front, the judge will be closely observing the sheep consid-

ering the merits of one with another, so it is important to make sure you have them standing good and square with a leg set in each corner. You want to avoid the feet being tucked in under the sheep as it will then look hunched, or the legs spread wide, resembling the unforgettable 'Bambi on ice'. The aim is to have your sheep standing square with its head held up, looking forward and alert. Keep your eye on the judge so you know where he / she is, because that is where the judge is looking at you from, for us this is the golden rule; avoid letting yourself get between the judge's eye and your sheep, move to the side if you are in the way, so the judge always has a clear view.

The judge will then start the detailed examination of each animal, beginning from one end of the line and systematically working their way through. A good judge will always let you and your animal know he is coming – no sudden movements or unexpected handling of the sheep, especially the



lambs, as they can take off like a 'rocket' with you and the judge left spread eagle on the floor and sheep at the furthest point of the ring! Remember you have your part to play by ensuring as the judge approaches that you have a firm but steady grip of the halter and sheep. Some judges will be quite chatty and it is in order to respond but keep it appropriate and remember it is the animal that counts and not you. Avoid entering into conversations with the exhibitors next to you or spectators outside the show ring; keep your attention on the judge ensuring your animal is presented well.

The judge will normally start with the head of the sheep, inspecting the teeth, some judges will do this by using a thumb in the sheep's mouth gently rubbing the teeth and checking they are correct, not forward or back to the pad, the judge will also be checking the teeth in relation to the animal's age. Some judges will part the lips of the sheep again to visually check the teeth and correctness of the mouth. Some judges may ask you to part the sheep's lips and display the teeth.

The judge will inspect the eyes to check that they are healthy, clear and bright with no redness or discharge; this could indicate a contagious condition. The judge will feel the top of the head ensuring with the Ryeland being a polled breed that there is no evidence of horn. Quite often particularly with the ram lambs you will find hard horny buds, these should not be present, so check for them yourself, they are quite easy to remove.

The judge will look for a firm straight back and assess the condition of the animal by feeling and handling the animals back, loins, back end and tail. The judge will handle the sheep firmly and therefore particularly with the lambs keep a reasonable hold of the animal, as it is not unusual to see lambs jump into the air. For this reason it is also important that you keep a reasonable distance from your fellow exhibitors as it can be annoying for their sheep to be upset by the lively animal next to it. The judge will inspect the testicles in the males to ensure they are both fully dropped and of even size and with the females the teats, for a breeding ewe the teats and also the udder to check for any sign of hardness or lumps.

The judge, will pay particular attention to the feet so during your preparation at home make sure they are trimmed correctly and also check the animal is not down on its pasterns. The legs should be straight, certainly below the knee, but we prefer to see a good straight leg, with some width between them.

Ryelands have significant heritage concerning the wool which should be deep in staple, free of coarse kempy fibres especially on the legs and for the Ryeland there should be no black or ginger fibres anywhere in the fleece. The coloured Ryeland fleece can be any natural colour or combination of colours. Some judges will place more emphasis on the wool than others so opinion will vary.

The judge may ask you to walk your animal again from your position in the line and occasionally the judge may also ask two or more exhibitors to do this together. When the judge has completed his individual assessments he / she will begin to pull the animals forward in order of merit and usually continue to place them all the way down the line, however some will only place the animals to the number of rosettes awarded for the class.

Different judges will have different preferences when it comes to the finer points of the breed and that for us is what makes showing interesting. With the Coloured Ryeland there are few finer breed points just the evidence of a tear drop of lighter fleece in the corner of each eye. Looking at the finer points of the Ryeland sheep requires attention to detail and is occasionally controversial, this includes the ear colour – ranging from dark (coffee colour to blue and almost black) through to pink and sometimes with spots. The nose pigment - brownish to black with some showing a hint of pink, fully fleeced on the head to that of a cleaner open faced sheep and the ears - the size, position and shape of the ears with presence or absence of wool on the back. The Ryeland sheep was originally bred for its fine wool as well as for meat; a dual-purpose breed so it is important that the judge also considers the quality of the fleece.

Once the judge has finalised the line up rosettes and cards will be handed out, take time to congratulate the winners of each class, it is custom to shake hands, applaud and to thank the judge for his / her endeavours.

The judge's task is a difficult one, remember it's the judge's own subjective opinion particularly when it comes to the finer breed points, so don't be too disappointed if you don't get a rosette. It is quite in order to discuss the judging afterwards, back in the pens but not in the show ring. It is customary for the judge to visit the exhibitors after judging and that is the best place to have an informal chat about the day and it is in order to enquire of the judge how he felt your sheep competed in the class. Remember that the show ring is the shop window for the breed and your flock and that the show ring and sheep pens are an invaluable place of learning, companionship, and enjoyment.

Once judging is over remember to make the sheep comfortable and provide some well earned food before you go off for a look around the show.

John and Suzanne Donovan

Fleece & Yarn Report

I would like to introduce the newly formed Fleece & Yarn Sub-Committee

Judith Waldron NW&M	Pamela Bateman NW&M
Rhian Rochford SWE	Nicola Treadgold EE
Julie Comins Scotland	Rachel Kemp MW&SW
Val Grainger SW	Claire Weedall H&M

We had our first meeting in January which was great, full of ideas and enthusiasm. We have started by setting up a new Facebook page which will allow you to advertise your Ryeland/Coloured Ryeland wool and crafts. It is a public page but is being managed by the F&Y committee, it has over 350 members already in the first month so please do take a look and spread the word: **Ryeland and Coloured Ryeland wool and craft sales.**

We will also be introducing a new Wool on the Hoof overall points trophy as well as a FLEECE trophy. It will include all shows that have either a breed or interbreed Wool on the Hoof class and any shows that have a Fleece competition. Just send your results in to the F&Y committee who will collate your points throughout the year.

If there are not many shows in your area that have these classes on the schedule already, now is the perfect time to contact the show and ask if it would be possible to add the class, giving members further opportunities to show off and promote their and our lovely wool.

With this in mind I have included the recent article again on how to prepare a fleece for shows.

The online Handicraft Competition will be held on the 30th November this year so let's get started on those entries please!

Together with the new Fibre award, 2024 is all about the wool.



If you would like to get involved or have any woolly ideas or if any Regions have any events planned this year and would like to add a woolly craft stand, please do contact any of above members.

F&Y Sub-Committee.

Preparation of sheep fleeces

Notes taken from the British wool marketing board.

If you have suitable buildings, it's always worthwhile keeping sheep under cover the night before shearing as sheep should never be shorn when the fleece is wet.

Always shear on a clean wooden surface so your fleeces do not become contaminated. If you must shear outside, use a canvas or tarpaulin sheet.

Avoid double cuts or the tearing of the fleece and remove all claggs and daggings.

Keep your coloured wool separate from white wool and your hog wool separate from the ewes and wethers.

Roll fleeces on a clean surface and pack them into the British Wool sheets provided by your dept. Immediate packing ensures the wool is kept clean and safe from vermin.

Step 1

After shearing, throw the fleece onto a



clean surface, flesh side down.

Include only clean, dry belly wool with the fleece before folding the flanks towards the centre.

Step 2

Turn in the britch end and roll the fleece firmly and neatly towards the neck.

Step 3

After rolling, part the fleece.



Step 4

Without twisting, tuck the neck wool firmly into the body of the fleece.

Step 5

The finished fleece is firm and secure. Place the tucked fleece firmly into the wool sheet.



RFBS ANNUAL HANDICRAFT SHOW

30TH NOVEMBER 2024

ENTRIES CLOSE

23rd NOVEMBER 2024

JUDGE: RACHEL KEMP

Entries open to all members of the RFBS only.

1 entry per person per class – maximum of 2 good clear images per entry please.

Photographs to be emailed to claire no later than 23rd November.

Claireweedall095@btinternet.com

ALL HANDICRAFT ITEMS TO BE MADE USING RYELAND OR COLOURED RYELAND WOOL ONLY.

Class 1 Any knitted item.

Class 2 Any needle felted item.

Class 3 Any crocheted item.

Class 4 Any woven item.

Class 5 Any other wooly crafted item not listed above.

Prize vouchers for classes 1-5

1st £20 2nd £15 3rd £10 4th £5

Overall Champion from classes 1-5 will be awarded.

The Handicraft Championship Trophy

Class 6 Under 16's - please include age.

Rosettes and prizes for all entries in class 6

Class 7 Any sheep related DIY item.

Class 8 Any Artwork of a Ryeland or Coloured Ryeland.

**ALL EXHIBITS MUST BE EXHIBITORS OWN WORK
NOT PREVIOUSLY ENTERED IN COMPETITION**



2024 SALE DATES

17th August, McCartneys Ludlow
31st August, H&H Carlisle



RFBS Notices

- **2024 Subscriptions:** Annual fees for 2024 fall due on the 1st January. Please ensure that you have paid your annual fees. If not, you will drop off the RFBS mailing list at the end of March.
- **Year Letters:** Please note that the year letter for lambs born in 2024 will be E. This needs to be included on pedigree ear tags and must also form the first letter of ram's names. The letter for 2023 born animals was D.
- **2024 Sheep Survey:** The 2024 Sheep Survey can be completed online and will be available until the 30th April 2024. Please take the time to complete the survey, especially if you did not do so last year as the whole process of online registrations is much easier if your flock lists are reasonably up to date.
- **Flock Books by Email:** With significant increase in postage and printing costs, RFBS has agreed to give members the option to choose to receive their Annual Flock Books by email. These would be sent as PDF documents. This is entirely voluntary so if you want to carry on receiving hard copies, that's absolutely fine. If you want an electronic copy, please let us know by contacting the office.
- **RFBS Council:** The next meeting of the RFBS Council takes place on 20th April. If you have any issues you would like to raise, please contact the office by Thursday 4th April
- **RFBS Sale Dates:** Please make a note of this year's RFBS Sale dates. The main sale will take place at Ludlow Market on Saturday the 17th August. In response to feedback from breeders in the north of England, the northern sale will move to a new date, Saturday 31st August. The venue will remain the same, Borderway Mart, Carlisle.