

Official Society Newsletter

Ryeland FBS Spring 2023



Photo courtesy of Raby Ryelands.

Ryeland FBS Contact - TC & AJ Tyne, Administrator, Ty'n y Mynydd Farm, Boduan, Pwllheli, Gwynedd, LL53 8PZ . Telephone - 01758 721739 Email - admin@ryelandfbs.com

Opinions expressed by authors and services offered by advertisers are not specifically endorsed by the Ryeland FBS. Advertisers must warrant that copy does not contravene, the Trades Description Act 1968. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 or The Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order 1977

Editor's Note Spring 2023



Apologies if this edition is a little late being distributed. It's taken me a while to get my copy to Dot.

I received a call from my hospital asking if I was free in a week to have my knee replaced! Er, yes, eek. It didn't leave me much time to organise things but I was confident once I'd had the op I would be able to continue my correspondence and Zoom meetings from my chair. How hard could it be 🤖? I was such an innocent! Three weeks later, with the morphine finally out of my system I can now look for my va va voom which I seem to have misplaced.

Details of the AGM and President's Dinner in Hereford are enclosed and it would be good to see you there.

The deadline for the summer edition is 20 May and do let me know if you would like to add an article.

I hope you have all had a good lambing.

Lin Whittall

Ryeland Editor

lin.whittall@gmail.com

From the Chair

Well we have finally officially started lambing. As I have seen many pictures of new born lambs in the past couple of months, I realise that within the Society we are probably regarded as late lambers. In our geographic region though we are still classed as early lambers with many commercial farmers lambing late March and April here.

As with every year we have many challenges at lambing like so many of you. Spectrum, which has been widely used by farmers and smallholders over many years is now like trying to purchase the winning lottery ticket. We have not had access to this for a couple of years now and have therefore sort more healthy alternatives and reviewed our processes. We have used Provita probiotics and Tithebarn Thermovite Plus along with striving to encourage good colostrum in our ewes by careful feed management and making sure all lambs receive within the 1st hour. Obviously for those ewes with poor or no colostrum we do use the powdered which is ready on hand. Not as good as mums but something is better then nothing. In addition we

use hydrated lime in the pens and these are cleaned and littered regularly. We are continuing to keep our fingers crossed as thankfully watery mouth has not been a problem. Long may that continue.

For those of you who have finished lambing I do hope it went smoothly with minimal loss and few caesareans. I have heard that it's a very male dominant year. I have had ten lambs to date and you've guessed it all boys!

It's great to see that the agricultural shows are full steam ahead for 2023 with requests coming in for judges and awards. A list of the shows will be placed on the society website/Facebook pages along with appointed judges. Please note that these are subject to change though....

The first council meeting of 2023 was held in Malvern and was well attended and a number of topics of an urgent nature were discussed including the acknowledgment by council members that there was concern about the logo approved by council at the end of 2022. It was agreed that a selection of logos approved by council would be sent to members for voting before the AGM. These will be sent along with your AGM papers. The most popular logo voted by the membership will be announced at the AGM.

The society has also released the new website in January which is now more

Council Members

President - Alun & Eleanor Parry

Vice President - Pa Bateman

Chairman - Caz Bateman

CRC Representative

Caz Bateman

Ryeland Committee Representative

Zoe Unwin

Councillors: retire 2024

Joanne Fisher (Northern England)

Stephen Hipps (Yorkshire)

Matthew Pink (Yorkshire)

Pam Bateman (North Wales & Mercia)

Jack Williams (Hereford' & T. Marches)

Susan Quigley (Hereford' & T. Marches)

John Donovan - Vice Chair,

(Mid, W. & S. Wales)

Andy McVicar - Deputy Vice-Chair

(Mid, W. & S Wales)

Vacant (Eastern England)

Annette Reid (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

modern looking with hopefully a significantly improved user interface. The old website software was no longer supported and it was time to move to the latest offering from Wix. Alongside the new website you may note that a Instagram page has also been set up. Visit the society page at ryelandfbs.com And follow the Instagram page which is @ryelandfbs

This year's AGM is being held at the Green Dragon hotel in Hereford. It was in 1903 at this very same venue where the RFBS was formed. This year's presidents dinner organised by Mr John Reed (President for 2023) and the Hereford and the Marches region will be held on the evening of the AGM at the same venue. I look forward to seeing you all there at the first social event of the RFBS calendar year.

For those who have finished lambing I hope your lambs continue to grow and flourish and for those like me just about to start I wish you good luck and I hope you have stocked your cupboards with plenty of snacks and hot drinks, and match sticks, because who doesn't love endless 3am lambings.

Caz Bateman
Chair

Eastern England Regional Report

I hope everyone's lambing is going well, or to those who haven't yet started good luck.

We have vacancies on the regional committee for anyone who would like to get involved, if you would like to meet the current committee or have a chat about the region please make contact and we can organize an open zoom meeting, with such a large region I appreciate it is difficult to meet face to face.

A reminder of the shows in our region with Coloured Ryeland classes for this year.

Suffolk show Wednesday 31st May – Thursday 1st June
Royal Norfolk Wednesday 28th June – Thursday 29th June
Tendring Saturday 8th July
Wayland Sunday 6th August

We currently have no Ryeland classes in our region and need support from people showing their Ryelands to get these going. We would love to see more breeders on the show scene, help and support always given.

Jenny Hughes
jennyec@hotmail.co.uk

Herefordshire and the Marches Regional Report

The Committee have been planning what will be a busy year. Firstly the AGM which more information will appear in the Newsletter. We are delighted that this will be held at the Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford which was the location for the very FIRST meeting of the Ryeland Flock Book Society in 1903.

The President, John Reed of Strathore Ryelands, is holding the President's Dinner at the Green Dragon on the evening of the AGM, 29th April and he would love to see as many members attending as possible. For those of us that have been involved with the breed for many years will remember that the Centenary Dinner in 2003 was also held here. If interested then contact John direct to book john.reed56@btinternet.com

We are also looking at organising a Webinar Workshop one evening in July details of which will be sent to members when dates are confirmed. Flock Competition this year will be judged by our President John Reed and this will be in August.

Lamb Show – 9 September 2023 to be held in conjunction with Kington Show. It was a great success last year and look forward to seeing you all with your lambs.

Butchery Demonstration – October, date to be confirmed. This will be held at the home of Sue Quigley Michaelchurch Ryelands.

If members have any suggestions for future workshops/learning days then do please get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

David Duggan
Regional Chair

South West England Regional Report

Christmas seems so long ago now, but we had a convivial gathering of Southwest members at a pub near Exeter in early December. The atmosphere and food were excellent and it was lovely to catch up with friends at the start of the Christmas season. We had a fun Ryeland photo competition to encourage members who do not normally show to get involved. Awards were presented for the 2022 Points cups; The Ryeland winner was John Mills with his Ramsbury Flock, Reserve went to Paula Mills' Coast Flock. The Coloured Ryeland winner was Thomas Nash's Windsor Flock, Reserve to Bettina Addington-Smith's Milltown Flock. Young handlers point cups were awarded to Carla Mynott's Ryeland flock and Thomas Nash's Coloured flock.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Richard Wear, while Margaret Wear and Sue Lake were presented with gifts for their services to the SW Group over the years.

Both John Mills and Jeanne Charlton, long time Ryeland breeders and active members of the SW Group, have recently stood down. Stephen Ramsden takes over as Chair of the Southwest Group, Bettina Addington Smith as Vice Chair, I remain as secretary, and at the time of writing, we have a vacancy for treasurer and 3 other seats on the SW Committee that we are looking to fill in the near future.

On a personal note, I am relieved to have finished lambing our early group of ewes last night. We had a greater proportion of singles than I would have liked, perhaps owing to the dry conditions at tupping time last summer, but the weather has been kind, they are all growing well and most are out on grass already. We wish our region's members all the best with their lambing, some sensibly waiting until more favourable conditions in April! The SW group newsletter will be sent out soon and has a lambing focus.

Gillian Dixon
SW Group Secretary

News from Scotland

RFBS members in Scotland held a get-together in November last year for the annual winter lunch, back on the agenda after a two-year gap due to the pandemic.

The event took place in the Birds and Bees restaurant in Stirling and attracted a healthy turnout of members,

After the lunch, the winners of the show points competition received their awards, presented by the organiser and sponsor of the competition, Pat Maddock.

Champion this year was the Fetternear flock of Raymond and Beth Aitken who unfortunately could not be at the lunch but many congratulations were sent to them and the trophy was kindly delivered to Raymond by Diana Milligan.

Full results were:

1. Fetternear, Raymond and Beth Aitken, 317pts
2. Broomwell/Damson Brae, Susan Bryden 303pts
3. Wellhill, David and Annette Mitchell 284pts
4. Barony, Chris and Ricky Smyth 184 pts

5. Keirhead, Janice Milne 128 pts
 6. Ochiltree, Douglas Stainton 125 pts
 7. Gormack, Eilidh Garrett, 101 pts
 8. Landriggs, Eddie and Janice Henderson 47 pts
 9. Ruthven, Eilidh Simmons 41 pts
 10. Monks Acre, James Dodds and Natalie Walker 13pt
- Newcomers Award Clydeview, Paige Graham 12pts
- Winners of the fleece competition: Barony, Chris and Ricky Smyth.
- Our picture shows the award winners.

Ahead of the new show season in Scotland, a show preparation and ringcraft day is



being planned, date to be confirmed. First show in Scotland with Ryeland classes will be Ayr County show on May 13.

Susan Bryden

Northern Regional Report

We are pleased to announce that the Northern Regional group has recently been approved by the RFBS Council being formed by 4 Committee members. The new Committee over the coming weeks will be introducing ourselves, holding Committee meetings and starting to put together a programme of events. Look out

for these updates on the Northern Region Facebook page (or let us know if you would prefer this by email if you are a member from our area).

We welcome your thoughts on events, talks and visits you may like to attend and/or assist us in arranging.

We actively seek more members to join the new committee from the region especially any Ryeland breeders or dual flock owners. Please get in touch.

We hope lambing is going well and look forward to the forthcoming show season where you can catch up with us all at many of the shows throughout the region.

Philip Holmes

Regional Chair

North Wales & Mercia Regional Report

It's the time of year when we are looking forward to warmer weather & hopefully plenty of grass in the fields for our lambs. We are also looking forward to the show season which will be here in no time.

We have several events planned for this year so watch out for details on our website, www.ryelandnwam.org There will be a 'pre-tupping' workshop which will include presentations on ram selection, condition scoring of ewes and advice on ways to synchronise mating as well as other associated topics.

We will also be holding a butchery day later in the year.

This year we are not holding a 'show preparation' workshop but anyone wanting to learn more about this is encouraged to contact any of the committee who will be willing for you to visit them when they are getting their own sheep ready, or they can put you in touch with someone local to you. I am certainly happy for anyone who wants help to come and visit me in Cheshire!

In this region we are lucky to have plenty of shows with classes for both Ryelands & Coloured Ryelands and several people worked hard in the past to get these classes established so it would be a great shame if they don't continue through lack of support. Our first show is Stafford County which is always well attended but, pre-Covid, shows such as Royal Cheshire & Nantwich had tremendous support with members travelling

from other areas of the country to attend, but with rising fuel costs this is understandably more difficult. I urge anyone thinking of showing their sheep to enter Royal Cheshire, as

the facilities are superb and you only need to go on judging day (21st June) rather than for the 2 days of the show. Access is easy, just off the M6 and the sheep have a lovely airy

marquee. Plenty of advice and encouragement will be available there so it's a great place

to start. Entries do close early so have a look on our website for the schedule. Nantwich is later in July and is a much smaller show but one that is hoping to rebuild after Covid, and there are more shows in August too which will also be on our website.

If you get to the AGM in Hereford or any of the shows do come and introduce yourself to me and any of the committee as we would love to meet our members and listen to any of their ideas as to what they would like us to do for the region, or send an email or message through our website.

Michele Varmen

Regional Chair

South, Mid and West Wales Regional Report

2022 was not a very productive year for the region. We were only able to hold two events in the year, the first being an open day in Pembrokeshire at the home of the Jenkins family, which was well supported and enjoyed by all.

The open day at Sue and Andy McVicar's home unfortunately had to be cancelled, due to lack of numbers.

We did hold a Christmas lunch at The Castle hotel Llandovery which was well supported, but unfortunately the food was very poor and many were disappointed. The hotel has now changed hands and the new owners are now receiving good reviews. We are hoping to hold an open day later in the year, details to follow when known. We urgently need additional committee members and volunteers to help with future events, if you are interested, please contact me

Andy McVicar

andrewmcvicar245@btinternet.com

Regional Chair

Fleece & Yarn Committee Report

Buxton Show is first on our Agenda this year and is being organised by our newest member, Judith Waldron, who is also taking care of the Bakewell Wool Gathering. Somewhat of a worry for us is manning Wonderwool Wales in Builth Wells on 22/23 April. The Committee has been hit by illness and injury recently, meaning our manpower for the show is somewhat depleted. We have 3 definite volunteers but ideally need 4 so that we can all have breaks, especially as it's a 2 day show, plus set up on the Friday. A volunteer to lend us 1/2 Ryelands/Coloured Ryelands would be great too. You could drop them off or stay for the show with free tickets. If you can

RFBS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and THE PRESIDENT'S DINNER

Saturday 29th April 2023

The Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford

Arranged by the Herefordshire and the Marches Regional Group

This is an historic venue for Ryeland Breeders as, on the 2nd December 1903 nine founder members held a meeting at the Green Dragon Hotel at which a resolution was passed. The forming of an association of Ryeland Breeders to be called 'The Ryeland Flock Book Society'.

The Programme for 2023 will be as follows

- Arrival 10.15 onwards
- Speaker 11.15

Mr Clive Davies who is a great supporter of the Ryeland. Clive has been showing and judging for four decades. He is a renowned breeder of Hereford Cattle and Shropshire Sheep. Many of you will have heard Clive's commentaries at many Royal Shows. His knowledge of livestock history and breeding is without equal.

- Lunch. 12.15
- AGM 1.15

Please contact Sue Quigley on susan@hotmail.co.uk for further information

The President's Dinner 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

John Reed invites you to join him for The President's Dinner at the Green Dragon on the evening of 29th April at 7.00pm for 7.30pm. The dinner will consist of three courses at a cost of £45.00 per person. Booking is essential.

The cost is £45.00. Please contact John Reed on John.reed56@btinternet.com for details. It must be paid by the 14th April, two weeks before the dinner.

There is limited parking at The Green Dragon Hotel. Below are two car parks that are within a short walk of the hotel and are reasonably priced

- Wye Street Car Park HR2 7RB. Price £7.00 for 24 hours
- Greyfriars Car Park HR2 0BE. Price £7.00 for 24 hours
- Alternatives to staying at The Green Dragon are listed below
- The Three Counties Hotel. HR2 7BP a short drive / taxi ride from The Green Dragon
- Premier Inn HR4 9HS. Hereford City Centre (Old Market) walking distance

assist please email Lin or Jenny.

Oh and fleeces sell very well at this fair. If you'd like to bring some for us to sell on your behalf they need to be delivered to the showground bagged, preferably in paper bags. Any not sold must be collected at the end of Sunday. They don't have to be complete fleeces, sometimes smaller bags sell just as well.

jennyec@hotmail.co.uk or lin.whittall@googlemail.com

The Percy Wear & Richard Wear Trophies

As day light hours increase and the summer show season draws closer, it seems appropriate to highlight The Percy and Richard Wear Trophies. The Percy Wear trophy was first awarded in 1965 and is presented to the most successful exhibitor competing at qualifying shows. The Richard Wear Shearling Ram of the Year Trophy is a more recent award and was first presented in 2022.

Rules were updated in 2014 for the Percy Wear Trophy at the request of Richard Wear. The objective was to maintain coverage of shows across all regions, further encourage local participation and to incentivise showing at county shows & the national show. Only three shows are counted towards the competitors season total. As shows have a different number of entries, points are normalised to reflect the number of exhibitors. This ensures members accumulating points at relatively poorly attended shows are not disproportionately benefited against those members exhibiting at shows with large attendances where it could be more difficult to achieve placings.

The qualifying shows for the Percy Wear Trophy and Richard Wear Trophy are as follows:

- Devon County
- Royal Bath and West
- Stafford County Show
- Royal Three Counties
- Royal Cornwall
- Cumberland
- Royal Highland
- Great Yorkshire
- Royal Welsh
- Tenbury (National Show)
- Pembrokeshire

If you would like further information on the trophies, how the points are calculated, or help accessing any of the show's details please contact a member of the Ryeland Committee.

The Shepherd's Examination

Rectal temperature

Normal for a lamb is 39-40°C

37-39°C = moderate hypothermia

<37°C = Severe hypothermia, loss of suck reflex is likely.

Observations from a distance

Unwell or hypothermic lambs will be lethargic with a hunched stance. They may be unable to follow the ewe or suckle. Lambs who are not drinking will appear hollow at the flanks.

Healthy lambs will stretch after standing up.

Scour

Young nursing lambs often have sticky 'toffee-like' faeces if the ewe's milk is rich. This is normal.

Profuse watery diarrhoea may be a sign of bacterial, viral or cryptosporidium infection. The cause can be diagnosed by faecal sample.

Older lambs may be affected by coccidiosis (>2-3 weeks old) or worms. Submit faecal samples and follow the SCOPS forecast during at risk periods.

Tail

Check for signs of infection around tail-docking bands.



Constipation

Check that the lamb has a fully developed anus.

Constipation at <48 hours old may be a sign of watery mouth disease.

Older, typically housed lambs at >2-3 weeks old who strain but pass dark (sometimes bloody) diarrhoea may have coccidiosis. Diagnose by faecal sample.

Navel

'Navel ill' is infection of the lamb's umbilicus. Dip/Spray the lamb's navel cord with 10% iodine (or suitable alternative) after birth and repeat at least once to dry the umbilical cord. Affected lambs are dull and depressed. An infected navel will appear wet, often with surrounding pus discharge. This may lead to internal abscesses and spread of infection to the liver.

A very v
hypoth

Other c
Swayba
Shakers
lambs n

Joint ill
lamb wi
painful

Examination of a Young Lamb

Chest

Heavy or rapid breathing may be a sign of pneumonia.

A traumatic lambing can result in broken ribs for the lamb (flail chest). The rib cage will move excessively with breathing.

Eyes

Check eyes for entropion (rolled in eyelids – most commonly lower lids). The lamb's face is wet from watering eyes and eventually the eye may become cloudy or red from ulceration.

Ears

Drooped ears can be a sign of pain or illness.

Check for infection around newly placed ear-tags.

Nose

Thick or green nasal discharge is likely a sign of pneumonia/respiratory infection.

Mouth

Check lambs for undershot or overshot lower jaw malformations. Extreme cases could struggle to suckle efficiently or may struggle later with grazing.

Check for a cleft palate (a hole in the roof of the mouth) if the lamb seems to be regurgitating milk, or milk is coming from its nose.

Excess salivation (causing a wet chin) is a sign of 'watery mouth disease'. This is an E-coli infection that causes severe illness at <48 hours old. Prompt attention is needed to save the lamb.

Mobility

A weak young lamb may be suffering from septicemia and starvation. Check rectal temperature.

Causes of wobbliness in young lambs include copper deficiency, Border's Disease (Hairy shaker), meningitis or a spinal abscess. Older, growing lambs may suffer from CCN (thiamine deficiency).

Septic arthritis is a bacterial infection of one or more joints. The lamb will be lame, lethargic and have a warm, swollen, joint(s).



Show Results and Photos

At times our email boxes are often full and important messages can be missed or end up in spam folders. Wanting to improve the administrative process for receiving & publishing results and photos, the Ryeland Committee has set up a dedicated email address. ryelandresults@gmail.com

The inbox will be checked once a week during the show season and at times when results and photos have been requested. An automated reply has been set up so you will know your email has been delivered.

Zoe Unwin

Forty years of Broomwell Ryelands

Back in the summer of 1982, my dad (Drew Taylor) and I decided we would like to start a pedigree flock of our own. Previously we had looked after a motley crew of crossbred rejects from my uncle's farm.

On a visit to the Highland Show, we decided that Ryelands were the breed for us and we got talking to Richard Wear. Later that year, Dad agreed to buy four ewes from Richard and on January 5, 1983 the four ewes arrived with us and the Broomwell flock was started. The following year we bought a ram bred by John Taylor of the Fenman flock and this was the basis of our fledgling flock.

Forty years on, my passion for the breed has not waned and I am proud with what we have achieved with what essentially is a pretty small flock. We generally only lamb around 12 or 14 ewes. There have been so many highs throughout the years - and one massive low when the flock was wiped out in the 2001 Foot and Mouth cull. I can't truly describe how devastating that was. It was hard to rebuild, but we did it with the help of so many kind people helping us to buy Broomwell-sired stock back in and the story continued.

We started showing in the second half of the 80s and the pinnacle of our season was competing at the Royal Highland Show. Each year we managed to improve on our results and took a couple of reserve championships before finally making it on to the top step of the podium in 1998 with the homebred shearling ram Broomwell Trojan, a feat he managed to repeat again the following year. This was not our first championship having enjoyed success at the Royal Lancashire previously but to win the Highland was just a very special moment. We have been fortunate to take the title on six occasions at Ingliston and we have also been excited to win the breed title several times at the Great Yorkshire show.



Above Left: Broomwell Trojan and right, Broomwell Johnny Depp.

My dad died in 2015 but he had still been involved as much as his health allowed right up to his death and I like to think that he would be happy with how we have carried on.

Out of all the champions we have bred over the years, it's probably fair to say that there have been three standout tups along the way.

The first was the aforementioned Broomwell Trojan, a very prolific winner in the three years we showed him. Then there was Broomwell Johnny Depp, a Highland and Great Yorkshire champion amongst others, followed by the sadly recently departed Broomwell Wallander, a 10-time championship winner including two Highland Show titles as well as Scottish National Champion. All very special boys.

Broomwell, home of the flock, is a smallholding in Dumfriesshire with small stone buildings dating back to the early 1800s so our indoor facilities are a bit limited so

the ewes only come in briefly to lamb. Then, weather permitting, the ewes and lambs are out pretty quickly, albeit they come in to the yard and sheds at night for a while as there are quite a few foxes about! We do also now run a very small Coloured flock (Damson Brae) mostly devolved from the Broom-



Above: Susan Bryden with Broomwell Wallander.

well lines,

No article on the Broomwell flock would be complete without mention of some very important people. Obviously my dad was hugely instrumental in the origins of the flock with support from my mum, Grace. My husband Robin not only gives unconditional help and support at home, but he is also happy to stay behind and look after everything when I head off the shows. Lastly my daughter Lucy who has been by my side when showing from when she was a very small child. I couldn't do without her invaluable help, her showing skills and, of course, as a drinking companion! However, all that will be put on hold this year as she is expecting her first child very soon.

Throughout the 40 years of Ryeland ownership, I have strived to help promote the breed. I have organised or helped to organise many promotional events such as Scotsheep and Scottish Smallholders and open days at our local agricultural college. I have also served two terms on the RFBS council and was honoured to be president in 1994. I also became a judge and while even now I am still apprehensive every time I take up an appointment, it is a great privilege to handle other people's sheep.

Finally, one of the most enriching aspects of keeping Ryeland sheep is the many, many friends we have made up and down the country throughout the years. One of the first people we met at the Highland Show all those years ago was Pat Maddock (Wellside) who was starting out on her Ryeland journey too and we became lifelong friends even though, at that time, we lived at opposite ends of Scotland.

So 40 years done, and here's hoping for a few more yet!

Susan Bryden

Ryeland Shows and Judges 2023

Judge	Show	Show Dates
John Reed	*Devon County	18th-20th May
Simon Gilbert	Spring Festival	20th-21st May
Jack Williams	Shropshire	27th May
Phillipa Gray	*Stafford	31st May-1st June
Angela Howell	*Bath & West	1st-3rd June

Jack Williams	*Royal Cornwall	9th-11th June
William Laurie	*Cumberland	10th June
Doreen Smillie-Gray	*Three Counties	16th-18th June
Jim Arthur	3C Rare Breed	18th June
Pam Bateman	Royal Cheshire County	20th-21st June
Brian Davies	*Royal Highland	22nd-25th June
Anne Watson	Cranleigh	TBC
Rebecca Bate	Derbyshire County	25th June
CANCELLED	Monmouth	CANCELLED
Phillipa Gray	Skelton Show, Penrith	1st July
Brenda Wear	Liskeard	8th July
Julian Wright	*Great Yorkshire	11th-14th July
Susan Bryden	Penrith	15th July
Doreen Smillie-Gray	Royal Lancashire	1st-23rd July
Jonathan Webb	Mid Devon	22nd-23rd July
Ifan Lloyd	Yeovil	TBC
Matthew Pink	*Royal Welsh	24th-27th July
Andrew Hunter-Blair	Ryedale	25th July
Chris Smyth	Nantwich Show	26th July
Aled Morgan	Burwarton	3rd August
Margaret Wear	Honiton	3rd August
Stephen Rowe	Brecon	5th August
Randall Lewis	Cardigan	5th August
Show's own judge	Dumfries	5th August
Rob Morgan	*Tenbury Nat Show	5th August
Nick Webb	Gower	6th August
Ferdinand Newall	Okehampton, Devon	10th August
Stephen Unwin	Ripley	11th August

Andrew Hunter-Blair	S & S Ewes	TBC
Sue Lake	Moreton	2nd September
John Donovan	Dorset County	2nd-3rd September
CANCELLED	Frome Agricultural	9th September
Ferdinand Newall	Kington	9th September
Stephen Hipps	Westmoreland	1th-14th September
Ann Davies	Carlisle S&S	16th September
Zoe Unwin	Anglesey	15th-16th August
Ifan Lloyd	*Pembrokeshire	16th-17th August
John Reed	Gillingham	16th-17th August
CANCELLED	Ashbourne	19th August
Rob Morgan	Llyswen	19th August
Anne Watson	Mid Somerset	20th August
CANCELLED	Mottram	CANCELLED
Neville Morgan	S & S Rams	TBC

It's lambing time down at Ryecroft!

I'm writing this whilst watching a group of ewes, waiting (definitely not patiently) for something to happen. Two ewes lambed last week, and then nothing!! Unfortunately this year my lambing dates are spread over 5 weeks, which for a tiny flock of 25, is ridiculously spread out. Last year we used a teaser ram for the first time and had a lovely tight lambing time, but this year something definitely didn't work but we think we have figured out the problem and will do things slightly differently this September.

Lambing time certainly is a special time in the shepherding calendar, it's a roller coaster ride of emotions for sure; excitement for it to start, the anticipation of new life, the lows when things, as they inevitably do, go wrong, the exhaustion, the longing for it to end. It challenges us in lots of ways and I think it's a mark of a shepherd's resilience when they emerge on the other side relatively unscathed and ready for the next stage in their flock's life cycle.

So far this year things have gone well for us on the farm; people are beginning to use our butchery services and have been very happy with the result, and our farm shop seems to be gaining a regular clientele with shoppers spreading the word of

our farm to fork unique selling point. I think more and more of the public are realising that buying produce direct from producers is a much better way to guarantee a quality product. Yes we are more expensive than the supermarkets but we can assure our customers of the provenance of the food they are buying. With climate change on all of our minds, I also think more and more consumers are understanding the need to shop local and seasonal. They love the fact that we also butcher everything ourselves on site; nothing makes me happier than when a customer who doesn't usually like sausages comes back for more saying they are the best they have ever tasted. It certainly makes the repetitive strain on my wrists from hand linking them all worthwhile. Speaking of which, we were delighted to have been voted the Oxford Sandy & Black Pig Group Charity Pork Producers Award in January, so now our sausages are also award winning. And for those of you that know me personally or have seen me at the shows, yes I did cry when it was announced. Furthermore, news of our top quality produce has travelled to a local bistro who has been putting our coloured Ryeland mutton and lamb, and our award winning pork on the menu for the past few weeks. So our focus for the next 12 months is to continue to improve our grassland management using regenerative practices so that we can comfortably increase our stocking density in order to fulfil the demand in a sustainable way. Well if that doesn't sound like a mission statement I don't know what does!!

On that note, I'm off to check my ewes to see if any of them want to lamb, you know, at a reasonable hour. By the time you read this you will have probably finished lambing or at least be coming to the end. I hope it all went well for you, your newly enlarged flock are doing well, and your dried up iodine stained hands healed quickly.

Speak soon

Jayne Carter

Team Ryecroft

If you want to know more about the OSB pig group charity and all they do for the breed and their breeders you can find them at www.oxfordsandyblackpiggroup.org instagram @osbpiggroup

facebook @Oxford Sandy and Black Pig Group

Obituary Richard Wear

The passing of Richard Wear in October 2022 marks the loss of a great champion of the Ryeland breed. Richard had been associated with Ryelands since his father Percy established the Ruslin flock in 1934. Together with Margaret who he married in 1959, he built the Ruslin flock to some 60 ewes and dominance in the show ring throughout the proceeding half century. It is probably fair to say that he has done

more for the breed than any other individual in his life time. You might never have met Richard, but the chances are that your flock is filled with Ruslin genetics. In fact, the very traits that you take pleasure from within your own flock may very well have been selected for and bred-in through Richards own development of the Ruslin flock.

The Ruslin flock was initially founded with 20 ewes at a total cost of 100 Guineas, and a champion ram for 32 Guineas! Richard never bought a female from that day on, instead he introduced new genetics only through the male line; patiently developing his flock and the 'Ruslin look'. He did much to develop the breed on to a more commercial footing with a focus on hardiness, vigour, conformation and worm resistance amongst other things. Richard advocated for powerful upright sheep with presence and was less concerned with traits that might today be considered 'traditional'. It was his desire to develop the breed that led Richard to import Ryeland genetics from Australia and New Zealand in early '90's following one of several trips to judge Ryelands 'down under'.



Richard and Margaret judging September 1984 – Melbourne Royal Show. Ram born August '83 "closely and evenly shorn class"

Richard was well known throughout the country, not just within cattle and sheep societies but amongst commercial farmers too. His knowledge in all aspects of livestock breeding was universally acknowledged; so much so that he was asked to train the English beef judging team of 1966. He was incredibly astute and sharp, always

identifying the best market or place to sell a particular animal. Stephen recounts “His memory was amazing. I remember bringing back a ram to sell at the Show and Sale (that we had bought from him several years before), and Richard coming up to me after the sale to remind us that we had sold him for £20 more than we had originally paid for him!”

Richard’s ability to turn out well-prepared, athletic -never fat- sheep was legendary. His sheep stood out by their red colour taken from the ochre-coloured soil of the farm. His success at shows was outstanding; with 16 consecutive Championships at the Royal Highland from 1980, more than 30 Royal show champions and winning the Percy Wear Memorial Trophy -for most successful exhibitor- 18 years in succession. Will remembers visiting Rusland farm on one occasion to look through the sheep and recalls thinking ‘nah there’s nothing much to grow-on here’. Of course the following year at the Royal show, Richard attended with a team of sheep that Will could only dream of! It is perhaps the consistency with which Richard produced outstanding sheep over many decades that marks him out from other successful breeders.

Richard was not only a consummate showman, but an excellent judge. He judged all of the major British shows on several occasions but was also invited to the Melbourne Royal Show, and New Zealand to judge Ryelands, as well as the interbreed championships - quite an honour! In Australia, he was presented with a specially designed red sweater to commemorate his visit, which he happened to wear at the annual Show and Sale in Worcester last August (2022).

Richard was always happy to help others, Stephen recounts - “40 years ago, buying his champion ram and for the kind, warm and supportive advice he gave us; and in fact for some years after that, lending us his rams because in those days there were only a handful of flocks in North Yorkshire. I have fond memories (talking to him after a sale), when out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a potential buyer and then he was off, almost in mid-sentence - always looking for the next sale, but he would laugh about it.”

Richard leaves a great legacy in his children Brenda and Andrew, and in the Ruslin flock which he built alongside Margaret. No doubt the Wear family will continue the Ruslin flock long into the future.

Many of us will miss Richards regular phone calls and wise words.

Stephen Higgs & William Laurie

Richard Percy Wear – Mr Ryeland – King Ryeland

The Ryeland Flock Book Society has lost one of its most renowned sheep breeders and ambassadors of the Flock Book in Richard Percy Wear, who sadly passed away in October in his 89th year.

The owner of the oldest flock of Ryeland's in the world – the Ruslin flock, established in 1931 by his father, Percy Wear. The Ruslin flock which was formed at the Ryeland Show and Sale at Hereford in 1931 with the purchase of 20 Ryeland ewes at the grand price of 100gns and the champion ram for 32gns, grew to 60 ewes in the 1980s, with up to 32 rams sold per year.

Born and brought up at Ruslin Farm, Bristol, in 1934, Richard was the second son of Percy and Mary Wear, and a little brother to Frank. The family lived on the farm milking a few cows by hand, keeping a small flock of sheep, fattening pigs and a few chickens for eggs. Horses were used to do the bulk of the work with the first tractor bought when Richard was a young boy.

He went to Butcombe Primary school and on passing his 11+ went to Bristol Grammar school where he showed great academic accomplishments, finishing in 1950 'with credits and very goods' across all subjects studied. Potential was seen to study further but as it was post-war years, work was needed to be done on the farm.

Outside of work, Young Farmers formed a strong social draw and Wrington YFC was the local club, and one of the most prominent in the county at that time.

Stock judging predominantly, plus other club activities, and inter-club socials saw Richard's eye drawn to a young lady from Keynsham YFC, Margaret Lovell, a farmer's daughter, and keen hockey player, whom he married in the spring of 1959.

They set up home at Rusland Farm, and soon after daughter Brenda and son Andrew were born, where they had about 20 Jersey and Shorthorns to milk. Saddle-back sows were also kept and their expanding flock of Ryelands.

A family milk round was a useful way of making some extra income in their early years, but as the economics of farming changed, the milking herd was cut back and multi-suckling of calves on cows was carried out.

Richard and Margaret had quite a social life, dinner-dances, shows and farming trips, while at home and locally, sport was an important thing – tennis played in the yard, and watching Andrew play football and helping to coach. This progressed into having a pitch on one of the farm fields. In the latter years Richard enjoyed going to watch Bristol City, "The Robins" play with fellow farmers.

It was nevertheless his attention to detail with his flock of Ryeland sheep that paid obvious dividends with family holidays to various events with Richard and Margaret sleeping in the Austin Maxi and the kids' Brenda and Andrew in the trailer.

It was Young Farmers and showing his Ryelands that Richard lived for in the early years. In 1951, the Ruslin flock showed four sheep at the local Blagdon Show and secured six awards to include the championship and reserve. A true stockman through and through, Richard also made his presence felt in various YFC events, judging for England in the 1955 Beef stock judging and the dairy in 1958.

Such was his ability to point out the best and worst in individual animals of various breeds that Richard trained the England beef team in 1966 and in 2020 was steward to his daughter Brenda for the first ever virtual National Beef Stock judging competition.

Showing the Ryelands was a special treat up until the 70's when the Ruslin flock hit the ground running. In 1972 Goodford Pilot was purchased for 50gns and the following year Pilot won six breed championships at the six events exhibited at.

One of Richard's greatest showing achievements was winning at the Royal Highland Show from the start of the Ryeland classes in 1982 for 16 consecutive years, and all with home-bred stock. The other was winning the Percy Wear Memorial Trophy for the most successful exhibitor – 18 years in succession. Richard was known as Mr Ryeland in England and King Ryeland in Scotland, having secured numerous breed championships at the Royal Highland Show and the old Royal Show.

Richard didn't just breed prize winning pedigree breeding stock but also fatstock winners landing the award for the best pair of Ryelands in 1958 at the Royal Smithfield. They weighed in at 217lbs and sold for £12.

A keen showman right up until the end, the Ruslin flock picked up numerous inter-breed championships at the Devon County, Bath and West, and Three Counties to name just a few with the last in 2021 at Devon County, ably shown by grand-son Kyle.

On return home that day he said: "I'll retire now and let the younger generation carry on!" It was therefore such a joy for him to watch Kyle win the Ryeland championship at Bath and West, last year 2022.

Judging and training was his enjoyment, whether it was Young Farmers stock judging or being the judge travelling throughout the UK and the World, Australia and New Zealand to mention a few. Semen was purchased and used from Australia, Hallylulya Ferrari and Hallylulya Muscles and New Zealand.

It can be seen in volume 42 flock book that Richard judged at the 1959 Ryeland Show and Sale, Hereford Market.

Richard was Chairman of The Ryeland Flock Book in the years 1990 to 1995 and President in 1979. Richard joined the Council in 1962, following in his fathers' footsteps, Percy who was President in 1958



A Young Lady's lasting impression of Richard was his first conversation with her – It was about Ryeland ears they should be 10 and 2 on a 12 hour clock, and Light Ears live lambs, Dark Ears dead lambs!

Richard would often say to breeders never worry about pink ears they will always get darker!

His knowledge was broad and inciteful, he studied the news, farming subjects and had an in-depth knowledge and memory of Ryeland pedigrees. His memory was incredible even until he died.

There was little if anything that Richard failed to achieve in the show ring, and his sheep were equally successful in the sale ring, having sold some of the top priced lots in previous years. In 2011, he sold a shearling ram for 1000gns, while in 2015 he

received 1650gns for a ram lamb. Females from the Ruslin flock have been sold to 1600gns. This compares to 20gns for a ram sold from the flock at the Priddy Fair in 1958.

Sheep sales were not just in the UK but to more than 10 different counties and the night before he died, he received a phone call from Jordan Stone one of his bearers to confirm that Ruslin Chef was on his way to Germany.

Richard's family would like to thank those that attended from around the globe, the service of Celebration and those that gave and sent donation for his nominated charities, Congresbury Church, where his parents, uncles and aunts are buried and Congresbury Memorial Hall which Richard's father helped build after the 1st World war in memorial of his brothers and brother-in-law.

Richard is survived by his wife Margaret daughter Brenda, son Andrew and his partner Jen, and their two sons, Kyle and Seth.

A few memories from Richard's, Ruslin Ryelands very detailed flock register

Ryeland Show & Sale

Stock Sold

1954 Ruslin females 12.5 gns each to CRL Perkins Esp. 3rd price – 12 entries

Yearling Ram to Mr Howe £26.5.0

1955 5 Ruslin Females 16.5 gns each Highest price of the Day. 2nd in the class and winner of the Henwood Challenge Cup.

Yearling Ram "Ruslin Percy" to Phil Cole 25gns

1956 5 Ruslin females 9gns to General Gohem – 5th price 13 entries

1957 5 Yearling Ewes, Reserve Champion Pen of Females - 12gns to Earl Balfour

1958 5 Yearling Ewes 12gns to L Kenning & Sons – Wappenbury flock

1965 Ram Lamb 15gns to Croby – Yearling Ram 22gns to Tully

1966 Ram Lamb Ruslin Andy 20gns to Downham – top price Ram lamb of the day

1967 Ram Lamb 24gns to J Price & Son, Sennybridge – top price on the day

1969 Ram Lamb 50gns Tunncliffe – 1st prize and reserve champion & Grist award

1976 Ram £105 to G Roberts – Shearling Ram £60 to J Dent

Other Sales

1953 Ewe Lambs to Earl Balfour £12 each and a Ram Lamb £12

Pedigree Purchases

1953 Champion Ram at Ryeland Show and Sale Thomas Nickel 4355

1961 Toft Ranger 32gns

1965 Yearling Ram Overton Pride 20gns bred by EG Stevens – Ram Lamb 15gns

Tweedhills Roger bred by Mes Croby

1968 Champion Ram Wappenbury Bruce 42gns – bred by L Kenning & Sons. Wappenbury Bruce was show successfully winning many championships for several years.

1971 – Broyndd Brutus £7.5.0 bred by I Keeble – Webeg Newlyn £30.0.0 bred by Mrs Hoskins

1973 – Wappenbury Don £60 from L Kenning & sons

1974 - Cardigan Leader £30.00 from R Richards

1975 – Wappenbury Maestro £80 from L Kenning & Sons

1976 – Newland Usher £40 – 1st prize ram lamb at Show & Sale

Royal Smithfield Show

1957 Wether lambs 302 lbs £10.10.0 – Ewe Lambs 296 lbs £9.10.0

1958 1st price Ewe Lambs 217 lbs £12.0.0 – Wether Lambs 254 lbs £10.0.0

1974 1st price Ewe lambs £14.50

Royal Smithfield Show 1980

1st prize Carcase all breeds, and it was black!!

Ruslin prize Winners to name just a few.

Ruslin Rival, Ruslin Sebastian, Ruslin Thrivon, Ruslin Umpire, Ruslin Perfection, Ruslin Keith, Ruslin Frankie, Ruslin Australian Jay

Prefixes and Breeders of the past can be found.

Berrington, Thomas, Barleywood, Breeders Earl Balfour, CRL Perkins, Captain Wills, L Kenning & Sons



CRAFT COMPETITION 2023

This years Craft Competition will be on the 4th November and closing date for entries will be 28th October 2023.

Claire Weedall will be our judge this year and I will be organising it.

Hope you'll find some inspiration and will soon start on a crafty project using the beautiful Ryeland Wool.

Ricky Smyth

e-mail: chris.rsmyth@yahoo.co.uk

Coloured Ryeland News

Welcome to the spring edition of Coloured Ryeland News. It's been lovely to see all the lamb photos that have been posted on the RFBS Facebook page. Our Hollyheath Ryeland flock isn't due to start lambing until April this year, so it's been nice to see everyone's photos and videos in the interim.



I would like to put out another plea to members for articles for inclusion in the newsletter. If you would like to feature in one in the future, please let me know. Have you created something fabulous with

your Coloured Ryeland fleeces? ...If so, I would love to hear from you (contact details below). Please be aware that the deadline for submissions for the next edition will be 20.05.2023.

Photo: Rycroft Rare Breeds

Holly Price

Coloured Ryeland Sub Committee			
Chairperson		Vice Chairman	
Carol Bateman	01874 636549	Andy McVicar	01686 621977
Committee Members			
Steve Bradbury	01437 563312	Sue McVicar	01686 621977
Joanne Fisher	07899 076651	Jordan Stone	01953 851943
Val Howells	01268 961260	Claire Weedall	07539 195580
Jenny Hughes	01245 223288	Paula Wills	01736 786173
Coloured Ryeland Newsletter Editor			
Holly Price	07543424805	hollyprice127@gmail.com	

It's Almost Showtime!

Here is a list of 2023 shows and their judges. **PLEASE NOTE**, the judges are subject to change without prior approval. Please contact Caz Bateman for any Coloured Ryeland judging queries.

Devon County	Z Unwin
Spring Festival	S Bradbury
Shropshire	J Reed
Stafford	T Evans
Bath and West	J Mills
Royal Cornwall	S Gray
Cumberland	S Hipps
Three Counties	A Watson
Three C's Rare Breeds	S Unwin
Royal Cheshire	P Bateman
Royal Norfolk	D Robinson
Skelton	TBC
Great Yorkshire	S Donovan
Penrith	N Burton
Royal Lancashire	J Williams
Mid Devon	J Mills
Royal Welsh	W Laurie
Ryedale	J Webb
Nantwich	D Smillie-Gray
Burwarton	A McVicar
Honiton	C Jones
Dumfries	A Burton
Tenbury (National)	S Bradbury
Okehampton	R Morgan

Ripley	S Gilbert
Anglesey	J Fisher
Pembrokeshire	J Fisher
Llyswen	TBC
Mid Somerset	D Duggan
Dorset County	Ifan Lloyd
Kington	T Evans
Westmorland	C Bateman
Carlisle Sale	R Howell
Cranleigh	A Watson
Show and Sale Rams	S Hipps
Show and Sale Ewes	L Howell
Suffolk	S Bryden
Tendring	J Webb
Newport	J Pinches
Nevern	Angela Howell
Findon	J Reed
Stafford Winter Fair	TBC
Martletwy	S Unwin
Scottish National	A Hunter-Blair
Sennybridge	J Williams
Wayland	TBC
Honley	R Bates

Tales from the Lambing Shed with Team Ryecroft

The Ryecroft Flock belongs to Jayne, Mike, Lucy and Ben, and are based in Wig-an. In 2021, some of their 'tales from the lambing shed' were featured in the newsletter and now we're heading to back to the farm for more (starring some of the lambs who were born in the previous feature!)..

14/02/2023

We have lambs!!!!

Xantha, our first ewe to lamb this year, has been very kind to me and had her lambs at an incredibly civilised time of midday!

She isn't new to motherhood, and her experience shone through today. Her labour was uncomplicated, straightforward, some might say text book! I spotted the early signs around 10am, and she lambed two beautiful ewe lambs unassisted at 12.05 and 12.08.

Coloured ryelands are renowned for being easy lambers with good maternal instincts, and Xantha is certainly both of those things.

It's worth noting that these two lambs were sired by our new ram on the block, Siandy Benedict, who becomes a dad for the first time!

So now comes the incredibly important job of choosing names!!!! The letter this year is D!!!

15/02/2023

Well after a text book start to lambing with Xantha at midday, fast forward 12 hours to midnight and things didn't go as well for Britannia.

Britannia is a shearling, and she was scanned for twins. Usually you want twins but when it comes to first time mums often a single is best. First time mums can often be overwhelmed with motherhood and have no idea what to do with one lamb, let alone two!

Britannia's first lamb was born superman style, so a head and one front leg, not ideal but with a little assistance to cross the finish line, Britannia did it with no problem. Not a huge lamb but clearly raring to go, and it was a ewe lamb. Unfortunately her second lamb was tiny, Britannia lambed her easily (yes another ewe lamb) but despite my best efforts to clear her airway she swallowed some mucus and took a while before taking her first breath.

Clearly the weaker twin, Britannia didn't know what to do with her. Her

first was up and already trying to find the teat but the second just lay there and so Britannia kept accidentally standing on her.

We put them in a mothering up pen with a heat lamp and while the first lamb found her feet, the second lamb was given some vitamins and probiotics, some colostrum which we milked off Britannia, and was dried and heated up. She was then put back with mum.

All we can do now is hope and pray. Her breathing is quite laboured and she is still weak, hopefully the colostrum will work it's magic together with the heat from the lamp and she will get stronger.

22/02/2023

At last a ewe has lambed! It was Bobbie who ended the long wait, a first time mum scanned for twins.

She started showing signs around midnight, and an hour later the familiar up down, circle circle, pawing the ground began, a dance that is the same in every ewe, a sign that things are definitely progressing. Another hour and she began to lay down and push, very gently at first, slowly getting more intense.

Now up until this point I had stayed well out of the way, giving her space so as not to worry her. After all sheep are a prey animal and they are never more vulnerable to attack than when they are lambing. Bobbie was a first time mum, as I have said, so she needed space to feel safe.

Around 3am I could see a foot, I had a quick check for the other foot and a nose....yep there they were! Bobbie finally managed to lamb her first, a ewe lamb, half an hour later with a little help but not much! And then there was the expression!!! The 'oh my word what the heck is that and what am I supposed to do with it' expression. It's common amongst first timers, hence why I like them to just have the one! Bobbie, though, had another one to lamb!

And unfortunately the second lamb was not going to be so easy! A quick check revealed just a head...not good. I was going to have to push the lamb back into the uterus to find the front legs and pull them forwards.

Not easy when all Bobbie wanted to do was push. I decided to give her some pain relief and then tried again. Time was against me as I didn't know if the lambs umbilical cord had snapped; I needed to get the lamb out before it drowned.

Just 8 minutes after the first, Bobbie's tup lamb entered the world...and Bobbie froze!!! So I bundled the lambs into a pen, persuaded Bobbie in to the pen too and then used all the tricks I'd learned over the years to get Bobbie to get over it. I also gave her an energy drink and some food whilst I stuck the lambs on a teat each to make sure they'd be full and warm.

And then the bleating came, Bobbie finally began to talk to her lambs and lick them....yay!!!!

Well done Bobbie! Sometimes we all just need a minute don't we?

~~~~~

It was all hands on deck for a couple of hours this morning!

The low pressure and the rain certainly stirred up the ewes that were holding onto their lambs. After Bobbie lambed in the early hours, three more ewes decided it was their turn this morning, all at once!

Everything was quiet at 5.55am. At 6am it was not! Zinnia and Agatha were competing for the crown of who could bleat the loudest whilst Abigail decided that slap bang in the middle of all the ewes was the place to begin pushing!

And so the hilarity began! Abigail relatively quietly pushing away whilst Agatha and Zinnia fought over who was going to get the lamb! I immediately started to pen them all up to separate them with the help of my two apprentice shepherds! Zinnia started to try and climb over the hurdles to get to Abigail's lambs, meanwhile Agatha was going round and round screaming trying to find an escape route. Lucy had a quick check on Zinnia's progress but couldn't feel a thing, meanwhile Abigail managed to lamb her first lamb, a tup, quite easily but then forgot she had another one to lamb. Not that she was paying much attention to the first one, she was looking quizzically at Zinnia who was now digging her way under the hurdles to get at it. Finally the second lamb was helped



into the world, a ewe lamb, and as far as Abigail was concerned her work was done!! She was rather shocked when she got put into a pen with them!! A little worrying, she just wasn't engaging with them at all! All sorted now but it took all day!

Agatha finally realised she needed to push and managed it all by herself, we were obviously all well aware as the deafening bleats just got louder!!

And that left Zinnia! She was actually nowhere near, she just had a case of FOMO [fear of missing out]. Finally at 11.15 she started to actually push, her body had finally caught up with her crazy mind, and within 40 mins she had a rather large ewe lamb! She was up in seconds defending that lamb from any other living thing!!! It had a full belly within minutes and Zinnia finally stopped shouting!

Phew what a morning! Spent the afternoon weighing, checking, milking, feeding, cleaning, all ready to go again!

01/03/2023

Over half way through lambing now, and after a busy week with the kids off for half term, and our lambing barn tours, I haven't had chance to write a post! So as I sit here patiently waiting for Veronica to crack on I thought I'd give an update!

First up from today, Becky and her lamb Dafydd, a nod to it being St David's Day, are doing grand now after a shaky start! A first time mum went into shock and refused to acknowledge the lamb she had been screaming for the past 3 hours! A few little tricks and all is well. She now realises she loves him and is very protective of him...phew!!

Yolanda, who lambed a few days ago, is sporting a very fetching sling around her udders, affectionately known as 'The Sports Bra'. Unfortunately the ligament that holds up the udders has caved under the weight, due to her age I suspect (comes to us all) and they were causing her pain with the potential to develop into mastitis. Her lambs are more than happy with the arrangement (as is Yolanda now her boobs aren't dragging along the floor!).

The big news of the day is that Queen Cadbury has finally had her three Princes!

Yes three tup lambs, Decker, Dime and the soon to be fostered on with a bit of luck, Doyle. Don't worry he will be forever a Prince!! Like the pro that she is, all three were lambed unaided, no fuss or faff! Perfect!!

To give all three of Cadburys triplets the best chance, the plan is to adopt the largest, Doyle, onto Veronica, an experienced ewe who is only having a single. This will mean that both Cadbury and Veronica will effectively have twins, the perfect scenario! A wet adoption, like the one we are planning, has to be timed to perfection so it's going to be an anxious few hours waiting for Veronica to start labouring as we can't miss it!!

All the other ewes and lambs are doing grand! We have a very even number of ewe lambs to tup lambs, here is the tally so far....

15 ewes lambed, 27 lambs in total; 14 ewe lambs, 13 tup lambs.

I'll keep you posted on how we get on, keep your fingers crossed the adoption goes well!!

02/03/2023

Well that was a productive morning!

After watching Veronica all night, she finally started lambing at 4am. Coffee was definitely running through my veins at this point! The plan was to adopt one of Cadburys lambs onto Veronica so timing was crucial hence why I was watching her like a hawk!

However as I started to make preparations Valerie decided she'd quite like to join in the early morning fun and have her lambs too! So I called on my team mate, Mike!

Valerie is usually a little bit bonkers, however when it comes to lambing she's so laid back she often forgets where she's up to and this morning was no exception so while I was gently giving Valerie reminders, Mike set to work preparing the chosen triplet to meet his new mum.

Mike tied the lamb's legs together (so he would act like a newborn at the

right time) and hid him in a bucket out of sight of Veronica. Once Valerie was sorted out and happy with her two lovely ewe lambs, Mike passed me the lamb as I controlled Veronica's lambing so that I could ensure, Doyle, the triplet, was completely soaked in the amniotic fluid, blood and contents of the water bag as Veronica's own lamb was born. Once coated, Doyle was given to Veronica first to encourage her to lick him, which she did, and then her own lamb, a big tup lamb, was plonked unceremoniously on top of his new smaller brother!

And now to wait...would she lick him too?

Of course she did!! She's an experienced coloured ryeland!

So now we have two happy ewes, Cadbury and Veronica, each with two tups to look after....Perfect!! And the names? Cadburys Double Decker, and Dime, and Veronica has Doyle and Declan.

10/03/2023

After Zabella started lambing very, very quietly at 5am on Tuesday morning (so quietly in fact that I nearly missed it!!), Zadie decided she was having her lambs too whether they were ready to come out or not!!!

In fact she actually convinced herself that Zabella's lambs were hers and I was the bad woman who stole them from her to give them to Zabella!!! And boy did she scream about it!! Zadie kept on screaming all morning until she finally stopped just after lunch.

Anyway all seemed quiet, whether she could still feel her lambs having a party in her uterus or what, she seemed to come to the conclusion that her lambs in fact were still with her! Excellent! Until teatime came. First job was to check to see if anything was happening....nope all quietly chewing the cud, or eating, nothing happening at all.

Mike and I went through the routine of feeding up, filling hay racks, cleaning and topping water, and just as we were about to bob home for tea I spot something out the corner of my eye. Zadie pottering about with Zamira's nose under her tail!! But why?

Holy moly there was a lambs head protruding from Zadie's rear!!

ACTION STATIONS!!! Just a lambs head is NOT good....AT ALL!! How long had it been like that?? Couldn't have been long but we needed to get it out fast! Unfortunately the lamb felt cold, I feared the worst. I couldn't get the lamb back in to then correct the presentation and I felt time was against me for the life of the second lamb! So this one had to come out as it was! Luckily Zadie is an experienced ewe so was 'stretched'. I managed to pull out the first lamb. Miraculously it was alive!!!!!! Quickly to get the second, also alive wahoo!!!!!! BIG RELIEF!!

But what was Zamira doing!!! The exact same thing Zadie did that very morning! Luckily Zamira quickly quietened and did actually start to labour. Within an hour of Zadie's lambs being born, out came Zamira's!

All three ewes are happy and healthy; 5 ewe lambs and one tup lamb also happy and healthy!!

Tally so far: 21 ewes lambed, 21 ewe lambs/17 tup lambs.



You can follow along with the rest of the lambing tales from Ryecroft on Facebook (Ryecroft Rare Breeds) or Instagram (ryecroft\_rare\_breeds).