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Chairman's Message

I hope that you are all keeping well in what is proving to be another different year. Many of you will either have finished lambing or be in the thick of it by now and despite some changeable and challenging weather so far this year I wish you all the very best. Hopefully Spring is around the corner and with it some hope that every day life will slowly return to normal.

The committee has already met once this year – we will continue to meet online for the foreseeable future. The main discussion point at the meeting was this year's Society Sale. Currently the NSA is hoping it will be able to hold the annual NSA ram sale at Builth Wells in September, however this depends if regulations allow. The committee will meet again in April to discuss this further. The committee also discussed holding an AGM in the Spring. The committee members unanimously agreed that the AGM will be held in Autumn 2021 and that hopefully by then regulations will allow us to meet in person.

2020 registrations are again of a very good number: Torddu Ewe Lambs – 1556; Torddu Ram Lambs – 167; Torwen Ewe Lambs – 491 and Torwen Ram Lambs – 56.

Some other points that the committee discussed at the meeting include:

- Should membership fee be increased?
- Should the Society become a Charity or a CIO?
- Glyn Hawker Annual Shepherd Award
- 2021 online show
- The possibility of establishing a Youth Forum

Further information regarding these can be found within the newsletter or on the Society's closed Facebook group. Please keep an eye out on the closed facebook group for members only and also the next newsletter for an update regarding the Society Sale.

Don't forget the committee and its officers are here to support the membership so please do not hesitate to contact any of us with any question or query.

Cofion Cynnes / Kind Regards

Malcolm Evans
Cadeirydd / Chairman

FLOCK FOCUS - GHJ FLOCK

It all started in early Autumn 2008, where I was looking for some hardy sheep to graze a stretch of hill land. I mentioned this to my dear and late friend Dai Lewis, who many of us best knew him as 'Dai Sheep'.

'Gareth' he said 'You don't need to go far, I have just the right sheep for you at home'. He then presents me with 3 Torwen ewes and so the journey began.

We were so pleased with those ewes, that it soon followed with us visiting Llandovery Coloured Breed Sale the following year. We bought 10 Torddu and 10 Torwen ewes.

We've named our flock GHJ, which stands for Gareth and Heini Jones (my wife wished to be involved so I gave in and added the letter H!). We live in Felingwm, near Carmarthen and have 2 wonderful children, Mared 6 and Dion 4. We keep several breeds, but have a profound interest in keeping Badger Face Sheep for various reasons, but particularly because of the family ethos that this breed and society provides.

By now we run a flock of 120 Badger Face ewes, all are kept pure, this is made up of 70 Torddu's and 50 Torwen's. These run alongside 900 other ewes of different breeds.

Our Badger lambing season starts around the 15th of March and all our ewes lamb outdoors. Our Badger ewes are separated into 2 groups, singles and twins. They all receive a vitamin dose 4 weeks pre-lambing. Ewes carrying twins will receive concentrates 3 weeks pre-lambing. Ewes carrying singles will only receive feed blocks. Over the years, we've rarely had any issues or trouble with lambing Badger ewes and this suits our very busy lifestyles.

Approximately, 30 ewe lambs are kept on every year as replacements. All ram lambs are sold to abattoir as soon as they reach 30-35kg, except for a selected few. These we keep on and sell in Society Sales. We aim that our fat lambs have gone, if possible, by 10th of August.

Following this, it then allows us time to concentrate and focus on getting our stock ready for Autumn breeding sales.

During the summer months, we don't always have an opportunity to show our sheep, however, we do enjoy visiting the Royal Welsh and have made it our annual family holiday.

The Royal Welsh Show is a fantastic opportunity to promote our flock and breed. After being awarded reserve champion several times, our dream came true in 2017 where our aged Torddu ram won champion. In recent years, it's encouraging to see

the turn out and increasing numbers shown by our members. The future looks promising for our younger generation.

The Autumn sales are our highlight of the year. This is where our hard work and dedication pays off. We've been very fortunate from the beginning and have had several successful sales over the years. However, the most memorable one for us has to be last year's Society Sale in Brecon, where we broke the breed record with our Torwen yearling tup, selling for £1450 to 2 very well-known and successful breeders.

My family and I love the breed's character, they are a very determined breed, bringing about also their mischievous side. Believe you me! My advice to any new breeders, is to ensure you have strong fencing - especially during tugging season!

Both our children enjoy helping out on the farm and my son Dion is already trying to convince me that the breed belongs to him, he has a keen interest in the Torddu's. My daughter Mared on the other hand, amusingly, is only interested in the profit margins.

Our future aim is to maintain our flock size and to continue producing high quality stock. We then hope this leads to us being part of preserving this breed and safeguarding the breed's future.

As previously mentioned, the society's family ethos. We've gained so many new friends and enjoy the friendly banter. Regardless of the very tough year we've all experienced, we're looking forward to hopefully catching up and meeting you all again soon.

Gareth Jones



Torwen placed on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust watchlist

The Society is pleased to report that the Rare Breeds Survival Trust has accepted the Societies application to have the Torwen classed as a separate breed of Badger Face Welsh Mountain sheep and has now placed the Torwen on their Watchlist. The Society is extremely grateful to former chairman, Mr Brian Eagles in his tireless effort in making this a reality. Brian had to demonstrate that the Torwen has unique genetic characteristics particularly in relation to their colour coat pattern as well as providing information from the last 40 years of flock books.

It is hoped that rare breed status will help members who show, as they will now be eligible for rare breed classes especially when there are no specific breed classes, which in itself will help to promote them to a wider audience. The fact that they also now have BAR list status also protects them from compulsive slaughter if there was an outbreak of infectious disease. It is to be hoped that more members might keep Torwens and the latest estimate is that approximately 71 members have them.

Some of you may have seen that this news has had good coverage on social media and Welsh Language Radio and TV. This can only be positive in the promotion of our breed.

2021 On-line Show

Many of this year's shows have already been cancelled and whilst some in England are still planning to go ahead, there is still some uncertainty around these. Therefore, during the coming months we would like to invite you to compete again in an online show.

We will post the competition in the closed Facebook group, on the 1st of every month, starting in May. Closing date is 10th of every month. You can only enter by either sending photos via messenger to the Badger Face Sheep Society or by email to webadmin@badgerfacesheep.co.uk

Rules:

- The committee will nominate a judge for each class
- Judge will be announced after the closing date
- Entries must consist of this years' stock only (no previous show pictures to be used)
- Only one breed entry per flock (1 Torddu / 1 Torwen)
- Take at least two photos – front and back.)
- Not necessary for the animal to be held by handler. If animal is being held the handler shouldn't be in the photo
- Judges choice is final

Classes as follows:

May – Ram any age
June – Aged ewe

July – Yearling ewe
August – Ram Lamb & Ewe Lamb

TAGS

The busy time of year is upon us once again with lambing well under way and identification management being paramount to record bloodlines, it's always important to select the best suitable tag for your breed.

Dalton tags is the preferred tag of Badger Face Society available online or by telephone. The EID loop tag is one of the most popular tag used within our breed, together with the visual rototag. The male piece is supplied by our registration secretary on registration of the lambs, and the matching female part ordered through Daltons by yourself.

Tagging Practice

1. When selecting your preferred tag make sure that you are using the correct applicator.
2. Minimise infection, fit in cool weather. Hygiene is of utmost importance, ensuring tags and applicator are always clean.
3. Secure the animals head to prevent movement during tagging.
4. Start with the EID tag. It is to be applied in the left ear if possible.
5. All tags should be placed through the ear- avoiding the main blood vessels and always allow for ear growth when using any loop tags.
6. It is advised to apply the tag in the first half of the ear nearest the head, to avoid any drooping ears in young lambs.
7. When fitting the rototag (2 piece) ensure the male and female parts are lined up correctly: male part is fitted from the back of the ear and female part on the inside.

Details for purchase

EID Yellow- UK number + individual number



Rototag Visual (female part) Uk number + matching individual number (Prefix is optional)



Male part as mentioned above will be supplied by the society.

There is also an option of using EID and matching visual plus adding the society tag at a later date. Obviously, this means 3 tags!

Update on the bank

As you are all aware, we have had some issues with the bank account. HSBC shut the account by mistake and, having spoken with various members, it seems that it is a bit of a common problem with HSBC at the minute. The bank has now reinstated both of our accounts and the bank details remain unchanged.

The bank is unable to clarify which members standing orders have been cancelled and which remain, but from the research it appears those members with HSBC accounts have had their standing orders cancelled, whereby others are still standing and coming into the account as normal. Huw, the societies membership officer, is in the process of sending an email to those who usually pay by standing order if they have not yet been received.

During a recent committee meeting it was discussed whether membership fees should be increased? This is obviously something that will be discussed further during the AGM giving all members a chance to comment. If this is passed, it is advised that it would be better for the society to go over to Direct Debit as opposed to Standing Order.

The benefits to a Direct Debit would be that should the membership amount be changed we can apply to your bank to request the varied amount where as currently if the standing order amount is changed you will each need to contact your own bank to have the amount amended. If members requested it we would also be able to request a direct debit for amounts for registrations etc going forward.

Another benefit would be that most members would be able to go over to direct debit as Kate, our treasurer, would do all the hard work of setting it up for you. Members would obviously receive notification from us that a direct debit was due and 30 days notice before payment would be applied to your account.

Would you all consider this prior to the AGM please? The committee welcomes any comments or questions you may have and all efforts will be made to try and get the answers for you prior to the AGM.

In the meantime for clarity the bank account details are:

HSBC Bank

Sort Code: 40-30-05

Account Number: 01475533

Charity / Limited company / Remain as we are

Currently we as the Badger Face Welsh Mountain Sheep Society are not regulated by any official body. We are affiliated with the National Sheep Association (NSA) but we are not a limited company or Charity or Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The Society Treasurer has researched a little into the situation and the main problem she has discovered with this is that if anyone were to make a claim against the society, which was not covered by our insurance, the fault and liability (potentially thousands of pounds) would fall on committee members and officials. Obviously, this is not fair on any of these individuals and probably something they did not realise in accepting the role. We hope that this situation would never occur, however, it is becoming more common these days that insurers find a way of not accepting liability, and this is a cause for concern to the committee.

So our options are:-

- 1 Remain as we are and hope that no one ever makes a claim against the society. This also prohibits the society from making grant applications.
- 2 We could become a limited company - this would prevent the liability falling on the committee members and officials. This would cost somewhere in the region of £30 to register and we would need to have accounts prepared by an accountant and these would then be submitted to Companies House.
- 3 We could apply to register as a Charity or Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This is not an easy process and we may well be turned down but we can only try. The main advantage of this would be that we would be able to claim gift aid on all membership fees and donations from any member who is a UK taxpayer. This would equate to 25% of fees and donations received and would therefore boost the societies' income. Let's assume 200 of the 365 members are UK taxpayers paying £15 each. This would lead to an additional income each year of £750. We would also be able to apply for various lottery grants and funding which could in turn fund the Grassroots programme or anything else the membership wishes to pursue, maybe even Open Days and Educational trips for members.

We as a society would need to demonstrate our charitable purpose and objectives but this can be done through advancing the breed and continuing to hold open days to educate the younger generation about the breed. This is just one example.

Having looked at other sheep societies it appears that most are registered charities - Black Welsh Mountain, Southdown, Hampshire Down, Jacob, Blue Texel, Beltex just to name a few.

This would be a big decision for the society and therefore it needs a lot of thought and discussion. If anyone has any comments and/or questions then please do not hesitate to email Kate, Society Treasurer and she will be more than happy to research the answers for you. Kate can be contacted by email

treasurer@badgerfacesheep.co.uk

FLOCK FOCUS – Westmoor Flock

West Moor House Farm, our home, is situated on the border between North and West Yorkshire; on the hem of the Nidderdale AONB, but geographically within Wharfedale. Rob and I run the farm together, Rob having taken over the reign from his father many years ago. His mother and father still live here, but are elderly and retired, or past it, as they would say. Well, actually Dad has another word to describe the rigours of old age but I won't repeat it here. By way of diversification, I took up photography a few years ago and have an online shop (<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/1309Design>) selling greeting cards and prints, largely of the flora and fauna that surrounds West Moor. Since the number of visitors to the countryside increased exponentially in 2020, I plan on doing a bit of strategic fencing around the public footpaths so as to enable an 'exit through the gift shop' policy! Only joking. You can't get fence posts for love nor money at the moment...

The farm buildings sit in the bottom right hand corner of our land, which can be a bit of a nuisance in terms of animal handling; the puzzle of moving groups of animals around in order to form a clear passage for others can be headache inducing at times, but fortunately our animals are relatively co-operative, which is useful as we have no dogs, only two ponies of the Shank's variety and a quad bike that looks much older than it's years. The land is a combination of heather moorland and in-bye ground; the latter lies at 750ft and is grazed by 220 Texel cross mules, 71 Torddu, 29 Greyface Dartmoor and 20 Beef Shorthorn cows plus followers. For a large part of the year, the moor is grazed by our 126 Swaledale ewes. The Badgers would love life on the moor, but we fear their inquisitive and rather adventurous nature would lead to most of the SFP being spent on running shoes. And when you need shoes, you don't want to be kept waiting for months on end for the bank transfer to snake its way into your account from the dingy depths of the RPA's.

We have reduced overall stock numbers these last few years, for a number of reasons. Mostly in preparedness for losing two separate bits of nearby rented land and buildings, but also because the bones are starting to creak for longer, and more regularly. Our Texel X's have got rather big over time and in an attempt to lessen the physical burden of dealing with them and to improve efficiency, we have decided to up Badger numbers. They are such low maintenance creatures, with the added bonus of being a sensible size, and most importantly, productive, efficient and a joy to look at. With no younger generation following in our footsteps, sadly, keeping animals that are lower maintenance just makes good sense. The Shorthorns are also a fantastic example of this; their docility is matched squarely by their functionality.

One of the joys of keeping pedigree animals is having the opportunity to show them. We are relatively new to showing, having only been involved for maybe 5 or 6 years, and time will only allow us to do 2 annually. So, we chose Ripley, for their specific Badger and Dartmoor classes, and Malham because it's a small, local show, one that stays true to its agricultural roots and is a real farming community affair. Both provide the opportunity to spread news of the many benefits of Badger, (and Dartmoor), husbandry. There is always keen interest in Badgers and it is good to see they are increasing in popularity in the north of England and with it, increased class sizes. Every judge needs choice!

Lambing starts this year on 20th March; we pushed it back a little this year in an attempt to condense it, however, the Dartmoor and Blue Texel tups adopted a slowly-slowly approach to their job, leaving us with the same, if not longer, lambing period. Best laid plans and all that. This year we have new Badger blood coming in, courtesy of a tup from the Skirrd Fawr flock. The ewes scanned at 180% so lots of bouncing lambs are expected and the new running shoes will doubtless be worn through by June. The majority of the ewes are bred pure with the rest put to a Blue Texel tup. It's a cross that produces a well framed lamb with excellent hybrid vigour; these generally go for meat, being more lucrative than pure-bred wethers but they have impressed, so a few females have been kept as replacements. Having a bit of Texel weight also reduces the bounciness; reduces, not eliminates, they are not just as sharp off the starting block!

Like everyone else, we look forward to the return of some social occasions, to once again meet fellow breeders and watch them tussle in the show ring with their uncooperative sheep. Living on a hill or in a rural location means Internet connectivity problems for most of us, making the virtual world sometimes hard to access and, in any case, it is no substitute for actually being stood next to someone chatting easily and amiably about the vagaries of sheep breeding, rather than typing with one finger and being so frustrated with the computer that you regularly threaten to chuck it in the muckspreader. So, with this in mind, we look forward to seeing and chatting with you soon, visitors to our farm are always welcome. Until these things are possible, you can see what we're up to on social media @westmoorhousefarm.



A Blue Texel x Torddu fat lamb, this cross produces shapely lambs, ideal for the prime market.



Blue Texel x Torddu gimmer lamb alongside a purebred Torddu gimmer. Both born March 2020 and kept as replacements.



Torddu gimmer lamb with darker markings. Am rather fond of the darker, more gingery markings, along with a lovely wide stripe.



Homebred Torddu tup, sold as a shearling in 2020.



Homebred Torddu ewe with twins.



This Greyface Dartmoor lamb was a triplet. We adopted him onto a Torddu ewe and the other lamb in the picture is his new sibling!



'Grouse in Heather'. Available as a card and a print in my online shop.

Letter for Glastir

Please contact the secretary if you need a letter for the Glastir element. Please note that the letter the Society provides confirms membership only. It is your responsibility as members to provide evidence of sheep owned e.g. copies of registration forms, copies of flockbooks or invoices of sheep purchased.

Correction Page 142 Flockbook 2019

The committee would like to apologise for the incorrect photograph in the 2019 flockbook. The 1st prize ewe lamb at the 2019 Royal Welsh Show was owned by David & Chloe Wood and is pictured below.



Glyn Hawker Young Shepherd Award 2021

We are really pleased to launch the annual Glyn Hawker Young Shepherd of the Year Award for this year. This is your chance to show us your enthusiasm and passion for the breed along with showing off your best husbandry skills. There are a few simple rules:

- All entries to be in the form of a video diary to cover lambing through to the end of September
- All video clips and pictures should be from 2021
- Time/length of video diary - no less than 10 minutes no more than 40 minutes
- Competition open to any junior member
- Video can be presented in Welsh or English or both
- Closing date for submitting the video to the secretary 10th October 2021
- The winner will be announced at the 2021 AGM.

Congratulations – Emlyn Roberts

Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, has announced the appointment of two new directors to the Board of Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales, the statutory levy body responsible for promoting and developing the lamb, beef and pork sectors.

Emlyn Roberts is the fourth generation of his family to farm at Esgairgawr near Dolgellau, an upland sheep and suckler beef enterprise. He has been a member of several agricultural organisations in Wales, as well as taking part in a number of farm improvement projects – looking at breeding, animal health and measuring carbon footprints – and diversifying into renewable energy generation.

Emlyn has been a valid member of the Badger Face Sheep Society for many years and the Society wishes him well during his term as a Hybu Cig Cymru Board member.

Social Media

Just a quick reminder that the Society has a public Facebook page and all members are welcome to tag the Society in your photos. The Society also has a closed facebook page 'Badger Face Welsh Mountain Sheep Society (Members only group)'. It's been wonderful to see an increase of many members engaging in discussion on this group. The Society also has an Instagram account – please tag us in your posts and stories. Please note that if your account is private we are unable to share your posts/stories.

Newsletter

Please send any relevant news that you wish to be included in the next newsletter to the Secretary before 6 July. The committee is always looking for members who are doing something to promote the breed across the UK – please send us your good news and/or interesting stories.