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Chairman's Message

Here we are in the last month of 2020 and it's still quite hard to believe that 2020 has turned out as it has. Whilst it's been a different year for us all in terms of Society events and shows, it is a difficult year for many members and fellow organisations as the devastating realities of Covid-19 will be felt for many, many years to come.

On a personal note it hasn't been the easiest of years as Chairman of the Society – both myself and the committee have had to adopt a new way of working and it has been sad for me not to be able to meet up with fellow members at various events. However, as I reflect on 2020 I am proud that as a Society we managed to hold our Annual Society Sale. It was a successful sale and we are grateful to McCartneys for supporting us and enabling us to have a sale.

It is unclear at the moment what 2021 will look like in terms of gatherings and events. As some of you may be aware some shows have already cancelled for 2021 whilst others have announced that they are going ahead in a slightly different format. I would encourage you all to keep up to date via social media or indeed contact the individual shows that are of interest to you.

We will not know until next year if and how we will be able to hold some Society events including the Spring Meeting. I will be in touch again during the first quarter of 2021 to update you as a membership.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support during the year and I look forward to hopefully seeing as many of you as possible next year. Although Christmas this year may be very different for many of you, I hope that you are all able to have a restful Christmas.

Diolch i chi gyd am bob cymorth a chefnogaeth yn 2020.

Cofion Cynnes / Kind Regards

Malcolm Evans
Cadeirydd / Chairman

FLOCK FOCUS - LLWYN-ON FLOCK

My mother first spotted the Badger Face breed in a tent at the NSA Ram Sale, where she purchased two Torddu ewes and said “there you are, you will know which are yours now”! The Flock was established in 1982, when I was living on a small farm “Llwyn-on”, in the Llanthony Valley, near Abergavenny. It is interesting now, to look back at the early Flock Books to see just how much the Breed has improved over the years – those two ewes were quite different to the sheep we see today.

The Breed is so easy to keep with such character, they are also the maternal breed of choice for my commercial enterprise and the total flock now numbers 100 ewes. Forty of these are bred pure, whilst the remainder are crossed with a Suffolk ram. Each year, 15–20 purebred ewe lambs are kept, to go into the flock. The Suffolk X ewe lambs are sold at an annual breeding sale at Monmouthshire Livestock Market whilst the wether/tup lambs are fattened and sold through local markets. We are extremely lucky, having a good choice of ten markets within 35 miles.

Whilst we enjoy breeding the pure sheep, we feel the use of the Badger Face as a commercial ewe is very much under-rated by many. Due to the land the flock graze during the spring and summer, the fat lambs are not sold until after weaning, when they are brought home and finished on grass, supplemented with a mixture of home-grown corn and a maize-blend mix purchased from Whistance Feeds. Lambs are sold at weights varying between 40 – 48kg.

I moved over the border, into Herefordshire, 35 years ago and am lucky that my partner, Alan and both children, Will and Ellie, help with the sheep. Conveniently for me, Will is part of a contract shearing business, so I get my sheep shorn to a high standard at a very reasonable cost!

Ellie has taken a big interest in the Badgers and we make flock decisions together. We enjoy the social aspect of the summer shows and a highlight was when Ellie won the Young Handler class at The Royal Welsh Show. Another memorable time at this Show, was after one of our neighbours came looking for a tiddler lamb in the spring. The only spare lamb we had was a Torddu ram lamb. I very reluctantly gave him to the neighbour, saying that I might like to see the lamb at weaning in case he could be kept for a breeding tup. The farmer, Cliff, remembered this and asked me over to see the lamb. I really liked him and said that I would like him back, entered him for The Royal Welsh and was over the moon when the lamb, (named Cliff) won his class under DC Lewis.

However, it is the Winter Fairs and local market Fatstock Shows which we really look forward to. Again, this is an opportunity to highlight the fantastic versatility of our breed. We have won the Hill Breed class at Raglan Market, The English Winter Fair and The Royal Welsh Winter Fair on three separate occasions with Torddu lambs. Of course, there was also the time in 2013 when we sold a pair of Torddu wethers to Brian and Eric Price, which won the class, beating the pair which we kept to show for ourselves. However, we are extremely proud that our stock has consistently been placed at this Show; it reinforces our decision to keep the breed on a commercial basis, which is at the forefront of the flock. The cross bred's have also been very successful, with the greatest result when we were placed second in the native cross

class in the WWF and going on to be given reserve champion in the Section, beating the Continental crosses on that occasion.

I tend to run ram lambs round to yearlings before registering them, to see how they turn out. Last year, one of the yearlings had no horns, due to knocking them off when younger. However, I decided to use him, as he was a good-bodied sheep and thought he wouldn't sell too well with no horns. He produced some nice lambs, but as there are only a limited number of ewes he can serve, due to being related, I decided to enter him for the Official Sale at Brecon this year. I was so pleased when he sold for 1050gns, claiming top price Torddu, especially as both his buyer and under-bidders are some of the most respected Breeders in the Society. I was delighted that Timothy Evans mentioned in the report the conformation of our 2 year old. I strongly believe, that whilst the markings are of high importance, like any other breed, teeth, toes, testicles and a solid body are needed to keep the breed to a high standard.

As mentioned earlier, the social aspect of showing and meeting with other breeders plays a big part in the enjoyment of keeping the flock. I count many of the Members of the Society, as close friends and always look forward to the events when we can meet up. The times I have spent on the Society Committee have been rewarding and I am also fortunate to sit on the NSA Ram Sale Committee. It is interesting to understand the management of these organisations and to have the opportunity to put our Members views forward. This, together with the experience of both exhibiting and judging at shows is an enjoyable way to meet up and learn more about the Breed.

Lucy Levinge



Appointment of new e-communications officer

My name is Katy Davies, I'm a farmers' daughter living with my partner and son in Conwy, North Wales. We run a flock of 450 breeding sheep most being commercial ewes, we also have pedigree flocks of Beltex, North Country Cheviots and a small flock of Hill Radnors which we show all over the country.

I grew up on the family beef & sheep farm in Carmarthenshire. My passion and love for sheep started at the age of 11 when myself and my sister started a small flock of Balwen Welsh mountains which over the years won us many prizes. As a family we're well known for our North Country Cheviot flocks having won numerous shows over the years with highlights including winning the Reserve Interbreed Championship group of three at the RWAS in 2012 the same year we also won the breed championship. In 2019 we also won the breed championship at the RWAS in the Pedigree Welsh sheep section.



Alongside working on the farm I'm a contract shepherdess working on farms all over the UK – mainly lambing and preparing sheep for shows and sales. I'm also a regional champion for the mental health in agriculture charity The DPJ Foundation. I'm looking forward to working alongside the society and you as members to help promote this iconic Welsh breed. If anyone has any questions/suggestions on what they'd like to see on the website/social media pages then don't be afraid to get in touch.

OFFICERS – CONTACT DETAILS

- **Treasurer** – Mrs Kate Williams
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- **Membership Officer** – Mr Huw Williams
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- **E-communications Officer** – Miss Katy Davies
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- **Registrations Officer** – Mr Aeron Edwards
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- **General Secretary & Flockbook Administrator** – Mrs Enfyf Williams
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Dog worrying and dog attacks

Whether you have one sheep or a thousand sheep dog worrying and dog attacks are something that has the potential to affect all Society members. In fact it is something that has affected two Carmarthenshire members during the last two months. The devastation of losing sheep in such a cruel way is horrendous for all concerned and is something that can leave a lasting effect on the flock.

The National Sheep Association has useful information and resources available to all our members. The NFU and FUW also have support and information in place for our members who are also members of their organisation.

You will find the following useful links available on the National Sheep Association website. It covers your rights as a farmer

<https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners/advice-for-farmers/2488/legal-advice-for-farmers/>

It also refers to the law regarding destroying dogs that are attacking sheep <https://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners/advice-for-farmers/2486/destroying-dogs-that-attack/> and has a lot of other useful information relating to this subject

The NSA can also offer to send out signs to your farm, free of charge whether you are an NSA members or not. There are two types of signs that we can offer, one with NSA branding if you are a member and one without if you are not a member. They display very clearly 'keep your livestock under control' statements. Have a look at their website and if you require any please contact the NSA.

Diolch / Thank you

As you are all aware, Mrs Lynda Hawker and Mrs Rebecca Haf Lloyd – Cox retired from their officer roles on 31 December 2019. As a committee we had hoped to thank them and present them with a small gift to show our appreciation, but unfortunately this has not been possible. Therefore, we have posted the gifts and we hope to see both to thank them face to face in 2021.

Debbie Kingsley is also standing down as our website administrator after being in the role for 7 years. I'm sure everyone is grateful for the hard work Debbie and her husband Andrew have done over the years. We hope to be able to catch up with Debbie in 2021.

FLOCK FOCUS - CMJ FLOCK

I am 27 years old and live at Carregcynffyrdd farm in the heart of the Brecon Beacons national park. Carregcynffyrdd is a 350 acre upland/hill farm to which I returned to farm after graduating from Harper Adams university in 2015 with a BSc (Hons) Agriculture with Animal Science.

My main hobby is playing hockey for Gowerton ladies 1st XV in the South Wales Womens Prem 2 division. We usually train every Thursday evening and play most Saturdays from September through to April. Hockey and farming complement each other well, both requiring a good level of fitness and strength.

I have a small flock of 22 torddu ewes, 9 replacement ewe lambs and 1 ram. The CMJ flock was established in 2009 when my grandfather bought 11 aged ewes and 1 ram. I have kept my own replacements since then and sold any surplus ewe lambs for breeding. The torddu flock is run commercially alongside our main flock of 550 improved welsh ewes and 45 stabiliser suckler cows.

Ewes are given a Mineral bolus about a month pre lambing in order to cover the ewes vitamin and mineral requirement throughout pregnancy and at lambing time to prevent conditions such as swayback in the lambs. They then receive a mineral



drench 2 weeks pre tupping in order to give them a final flush before we introduce the ram. Ewes are mated on the 20th of October for 2 cycles and ewe lambs are mated 2 weeks later for 1 cycle. Ewes are scanned in January and any empty ewes are culled. We expect the ewes to scan around the 160% mark. The ewes get a Heptavac P booster 6 weeks pre lambing and are housed a couple of weeks before lambing. The single twins and triplets are all fed separately according to their requirements. All lambs are EID tagged at birth and linked to their dam. Ewes and lambs are usually turned out to grass within 48hours of lambing. Lambs are reared on a 100% grass diet and are weaned at around 12-18 weeks depending on grass availability. We weigh all the lambs at 8 weeks and at weaning in order to identify any poor performing

ewes. We aim to sell a few ram lambs for breeding or run on to sell as yearlings.

Any surplus ram lambs are sold fat at 36-40kg. We select ewe lamb replacements in August with surplus lambs sold for breeding.

After some persuasion from fellow YFC and Badger face sheep society members, in 2019, which was meant to be my final year in Llangadog YFC (Covid has extended this for a year), I decided to enter the YFC Prime Lamb producer competition at the Winter Fair in Builth wells. This was the first time I had done anything of this nature. I am not usually fond of the showing scene. After entering came the task of finding lambs suitable for showing. I narrowed it down to 5 ewe lambs to be part of the show training schedule. I picked my best pair and a reserve pair and 1 lamb for the carcass element of the competition. The lambs had been run commercially with the main ewe flock up until this point. I had some work to do to get them to eat concentrates and get them used to being handled. After plenty of roly-polies on the halters, tipping their feed, charging to the far end of the shed and listening to the radio, we got there! I was dreading show day, but thankfully all my hard work and patience finally paid off and they stood still and showed themselves well. After a full day of being judged on animal husbandry and handling I was delighted the lambs were placed 1st in the hill section, winning against the continental lamb pair to be overall champion and win overall YFC prime lamb producer in all the different elements.

In recent years we have made several changes to our farming policy in order to be more efficient and sustainable for future market pressures. The improved welsh ewe flock is now fully performance recorded as part of Hybu Cig Cymru's hill ram scheme. We place strong emphasis on lamb survival, growth, maternal ability and prolificacy, all of which we think are key traits to improve efficiency of the ewe flock. All ewes are single sire mated, all lambs are tagged at birth and linked to dam and sire. Any lambing issues or problems suckling etc are recorded and are used to make future breeding decisions. All lambs are weighed at 8weeks, weaning and 20weeks and data is submitted to Signet. The replacement ewe lambs and ram lambs selected for breeding are back fat and muscle depth scanned. This enables us to select for improved carcass traits and ewes that carry more fat which is a desirable trait for hill ewes. Performance recorded yearling rams are sold at the annual Hill ram scheme sale at Peithyll, Aberystwyth.

Our cattle herd has seen some major changes since 2015 after purchasing our first stabiliser bull and 10 pedigree heifers. We have moved away from the traditional dairy x suckler cow and a charollais bull due to disease issues associated with buying in replacements, calving problems, lameness and temperament. Having a stabiliser bull enables us to have a closed herd, breeding our own replacements to reduce disease risk. Stabilisers are very docile, easy calving, feed efficient and have excellent maternal ability. We are now multipliers for the Stabiliser cattle company, enabling us to sell breeding stock. The herd is now fully performance recorded and is part of the premium cattle health scheme.

Carys Jones

Standing Order Form

Some of you may or may not be aware that there has been an error at the bank. Unfortunately, the bank closed the Society's bank account in error and all Standing Orders have been cancelled. Membership subscriptions are usually due 1st January. If you are able to pay by BACS in January 2021 we would be very grateful – please use your prefix as reference. The Society will let you know early in 2021 how it will move forward with Standing Order / Direct Debit payments. No doubt this will mean quite a bit of work and therefore we ask that you are patient whilst we work to rectify this.

Planning ahead for 2021

When the time comes for the Society to be able to safely hold an AGM the Society will be looking for four new committee members, a vice-chairman and a vice-president. Please send all nominations in writing either by email or post to the secretary before 31 January 2021. All nominations will need a proposer and a seconder.

The role of a committee member:

Committee members are elected by the society at the Official Society AGM and remain in the role for three years. Members must give sufficient notice to the Society of their intention to resign or stand down.

Committee members are required to attend all Society Meetings or under extenuating circumstances send apologies in advance and relay any comments to the secretary before the meeting in writing.

The committee role is to aid the Chair and President in running the society.

The Role of committee members is an unpaid role with no compensation for mileage or expenses unless agreed in certain circumstances by the society.

The Chairperson can delegate members of the committee to undertake certain tasks on behalf of the committee such as creating sub groups or delegating committee members to investigate certain issues that may arise in order to report back to the committee.