



White Park Cattle Society

Winter Newsletter

February 2015

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Dear Member

The winter period has been a busy one for the Society as we planned our events for the coming year. We are pleased to announce that our third pedigree breed sale is being held on **Saturday 16 May**, at Worcester Livestock Market. And our AGM and Open Day is just three weeks later on **Saturday 6 June**, this time in the beautiful surroundings of Chirk Castle. More information on both events is in the newsletter.

An exciting first for the Society is the launch of a Border Arts White Park cow and calf figurine. This beautiful piece of sculpture was made following several visits to David Graveston's farm to photograph his White Park cattle and consultation with Border Arts on several mock ups. Details on how to order a figurine have already been sent to you and we hope that many members will be interested in purchasing one.

January was the time of year when membership subscriptions were due and a reminder has been forwarded to you. If you need an invoice for your subs then please contact me. A herd list (for members with cattle) has also been posted to you I would be grateful if you could either confirm the list or forward any amendments to me by the end of March. As you will read in the newsletter the Survey can also be completed via Pedeweb which will save you the cost of a stamp. Best wishes.

Jane Hampson
Breed Secretary

Jane



John Barker

FROM SMALL ACORNS ...

Developing a thriving herd of White Park cattle takes many years of hard work, a little trial and error and being in the right place at the right time. Council member John Barker owned the Collegewood herd of White Parks for 25 years before deciding to retire in 2013. In our Autumn newsletter John told us how, as a non-farmer, he started owning cattle and discovered the White Park Breed. In the second of his articles John talks about how he established his White Park herd . .

Having decided to start a White Park herd I approached the White Park Cattle Society in the spring of 1988. Lawrence Alderson was good enough to send me a herd book. In April I wrote to all the herds south of Leeds and received thirteen replies – no member had any cattle for sale – which was not a great start! However, Tony and Pat Milner, Adrian Crocker, the manager at Chartley, Stephen Basset at RASE and the Hamiltons at Enstone all invited me to visit their herds. So my wife Mo and I spent an enjoyable weekend doing just that.

Despite the 'no cattle for sale' problem, a start had been made. Stephen Basset at RASE had used the bull Shugborough Premier on his females and he had thrown some black calves. Fortunately for me they had made the decision not to bring his offspring into the herd to breed and so I was able to purchase two white heifers at basically meat price. They came with unregistered heifer calves at foot, and not in calf. So it had to be AI. Being White Parks they were of good temperament and with just a fence and a couple of gates they were synchronised and AI'd. One heifer got in calf straight away and the other heifer at the second attempt. But... as I purchased more heifers and the herd expanded we needed a bull.

When attending the 1988 the White Park Cattle Society Open day at Wimpole, courtesy of Bernard and Shirley Hartshorn who in my opinion managed the best White Park Herd in the country at that time, I spotted a nice bull calf on a big cow. I asked Bernard if he would leave him entire and I would collect him when he was weaned. And so in February 1989, with a borrowed horse-box on the back of the faithful old Maxi, we collected him from Wimpole. I am not sure to this day whether the bull I got was the one I chose. I suspect that Bernard, with his superior knowledge and experience may have chosen me a better bull – he certainly turned out to be big, gentle, trouble-free and fertile.

And then came the next bit of luck.

A field in the village which I had previously tried to rent, changed hands. The new owner was a Swiss billionaire and the field went with the house which was his 'hotel room' when he was in England on business. The village 'grape-vine' let me know they were having difficulty keeping it tidy – time to make an approach to the owners with the Collegewood White Park team. But try as I might I couldn't convince the owner that the cows and I were just what he needed. At a further meeting when seeming to be making no headway, the owner said – "Will the bells disturb the neighbours"?

"English cows, unlike Swiss cows, don't have bells", said I.

"Bring them in as soon as you like", came the reply.

And for twenty five years the Collegewood White Parks were much loved residents of his land.

And then a second piece of luck came my way. The land adjoining the field I was renting had been a dairy farm and the owner had just retired. It was about thirty acres. Having seen my activities 'over the hedge' he must have approved as the retired farmer invited me to take on the hay crop, graze the aftermaths and manage it as I saw fit. The deal was sealed. At the end of the first year I asked if there was anything I was doing that I shouldn't, or anything I wasn't doing that I should. Now the ex-farmer's main income was from boat moorings along the Thames and his reply was, "You get on well with the boat people, them horns keep the buggers out of my fields, so you are doing just fine"!



"Will the bells
disturb the
neighbours?"



ANNUAL SPRING BREED SALE AND SHOW

Our third **annual breed sale** will take place on **Saturday 16 May 2015** at **Worcester Livestock market**. Our auctioneer will once again be **Clive Roads FLAA** of **McCartney's**, who has an unrivalled reputation for selling rare breed stock.

The entry forms for the sale will be posted to all members direct from McCartney's and we hope that you will support the sale by either selling high quality, well-presented animals or coming along to purchase new stock.

New to this year is a pre-sale show with rosettes and small trophies being awarded to the winners of the classes. Further details will follow in due course, so keep your eye on the website and Facebook page.

The annual breed sale and show is still a fairly new event for the Society and as such we are still working to raise its profile amongst non members. To this end we advertised the sale in the January edition of "The Ark" and we also placed our contact details in the Farmers Guardian breed director. We would be grateful if you could also give us some coverage on your own website, if you have one.

The Council has agreed to review carefully the outcomes of this third breed sale so we hope that we can build on the momentum of the first two sales and organise a well supported event that showcases White Park cattle at their best. If you do have any suggestions of how we can encourage more non-members to the sale please get in touch.

"We would be grateful if you could give our spring breed sale some publicity on your own website, if you have one".



Annual General Meeting for 2015

Chirk Castle near Wrexham is the location for our AGM and Open Day in 2015. The date to reserve in your diary is **Saturday 6 June**.

Our host for the day will be Guy Myddelton, whose family has historic links with the castle. We would like to pass on our thanks to Guy who has liaised with the National Trust, who own the Castle, and made all the arrangements for our visit. After the AGM and lunch Guy will give us a tour of the castle before we visit the 40 strong White Park herd which reside in the surrounding parkland. We will then travel to Guy's family farm to view in-calf cows and 2015 calves. An evening meal will be arranged in a local restaurant.

A stark symbol of power, Chirk Castle was completed in 1310 during the reign of the conquering Edward 1. With over 700 years of history, and as the last castle from this period still lived in today, Chirk Castle's many occupants have left behind lavish interiors. The award-winning gardens cover 5.5 acres. Chirk Castle has over 480 acres of estate parkland for you to explore, with wild ponies, sheep, veteran trees, and a beautifully preserved section of Offa's Dyke. The estate is located within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has also been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest as an important habitat for rare invertebrates, bats, fungi, and wild flowers.



I hope you agree that we have been lucky to secure yet another stunning location for our Open Day and we look forward to welcoming as many members as possible to the event. Confirmed details and a booking form will follow in due course.



RESEARCH ON ORIGINS OF WHITE PARK CATTLE

Comparative breed studies which have been undertaken in the last couple of year indicate that the White Park is very distinct genetically from other breeds and that they retain many 'primitive' traits especially in their grazing behaviour and preferences. These traits may indicate that our breed has a unique history of artificial selection and inbreeding in a small population. The outcome of chromosomal studies produced no evidence that the White Park is a descendant of a particular North or West European branch of cattle and consequently the roots of the genetic lineages of White Park cattle are most likely in the Middle East. These founder lineages migrated together with first farmers to southern Europe, and sometime in the past they spread to the British Isles. If you would like to read the full paper please contact the Secretary on whiteparks@aol.com for a copy.

WHITE PARK COW IS A CALENDAR GIRL FOR 2015

A photograph of a White Park cow with her calf was one of the winners of a photographic competition run by Cogent. The twelve selected photographs are now appearing in the Cogent calendar for 2015.

The fantastic photo was taken by Roy Critchlow and Karen Ballington who own the Heathylee herd in Buxton, Derbyshire. The calf is now registered bull Heathylee Gladiator. Well done Roy and Karen!

Do any other members have some lovely photos of their White Park cattle? If you do, please forward a copy to the office so that we can create a photo library for use on our website, Facebook page and other promotional literature.



THE WPCS COUNCIL

As a limited company the WPCS has a Board of Directors, also known as Council members, who meet 5 times per year to agree the strategic direction of the company. Council meetings take place on a Saturday in south Warwickshire and several members travel for many hours from such far-flung locations as Norfolk, Devon and Lancashire to attend meetings in their own time and with no reimbursement of expenses. In 2014 we were joined by a new Council member, Amy Cope, who attended her first meeting in November and her second meeting in February 2015, along with her three-week old son Elliot! The Board has also been joined this year by co-opted member Jessica Byrne-Daniel.

After the November meeting had taken place the Council members present gathered in the winter sunshine for a group photograph which appears below. Contact details for all members appear on the website on the "About us" page.



USING PEDEWEB FOR YOUR HERD AMENDMENTS

Although we are still happy to accept registrations and other notifications of changes via the paper format, you may find it easier to notify us of your herd amendments via Pedeweb, the on-line system.

The link to Pedeweb can be accessed on the home page of our website www.whiteparkcattlesociety.ltd.uk You will need your membership number and password to access the site and if you need a reminder of these please contact Jane at the office. Pedeweb is very user-friendly but there is an instruction manual available which can also be requested from Jane. An invoice (if due) will be sent to you once the changes have been made and certificates will be posted once the invoice has been paid. Payment can either be made direct into our bank or by posting a cheque to the office.

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Catfield Ivan

BULLS FOR SALE

Somerset

Sharphampark Leon, born July 2012. Leon is a Pass bull. His sire is Sharphampark Kelly and his dam is Sharphampark Monty. For further information please telephone 01458 844080 or email rachel@sharphampark.com

Dorset

A bull which sold for a record price of £4000 at a dispersal sale in 2013 is now available for purchase, or preferably for a swap with another excellent bull. Catfield Ivan was born in March 2008 by Catfield David out of Catfield Daisy. Ivan is an extremely quiet bull who is easy to handle. For more details please contact Mark Leatham on 07973 664524

Wiltshire

Stock bull Strelley Pendragon born March 2004. Sire is Smoile Izak and Dam is Bemborough Amp. For further information please contact Paul Dovey on 07789 668447

Sussex

Templeson Alderman born May 2004. Sire is Dinefwr Ivan and Dam is Templeson Alibi. For further information please contact Luke Smith on 07976 044610

Carmarthenshire

Pass plus stock bull Gelli Coed Milo born March 2008. He has been with his current owners for nearly 4 years and has sired some excellent calves. Milo is very quiet and love attention – he stands at the gate and loves a good scratch. Milo is currently indoors and will be TB tested on 25 November. All enquiries to Jeff Thomas on 07545 011130 or email jetcon.2002@btinternet.com

And Finally . . .

Our website is now mobile device friendly. And our Facebook page now has 496 Likes – can we make 500 by March? If you have a Facebook account please ask your Friends to Like Us!