



White Park Cattle Society

Summer Newsletter

August 2016

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Dear Member

This edition of our newsletter is a bumper one and includes four additional pages on the important subject of “breeding better cattle”. Council would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has some comments on this issue.

We quite often get enquiries about where people can buy a small quantity of White Park beef. We would like to draw up a list of suppliers and would be grateful if you could forward me details of any butchers or farm shops that you supply, who may also sell by mail order, together with contact information if you sell butchered meat directly from your farm.

Our AGM and Open Day in June was a fantastic event graced by stunning Peak District scenery and lovely weather. We were also pleased to welcome several new members who were attending their first Open Day.

Our sale at Worcester on 24 September had to be cancelled due to unprecedented entries from other breeds which took up all of the available pens, but White Park stock will be sold at Chelford Market in Cheshire on the same day, as part of a traditional rare breeds sale. We will be in attendance on the day with our display and hope to see some of you there.

Jane

Jane Hampson
Breed Secretary

AGM and Open Day for 2016

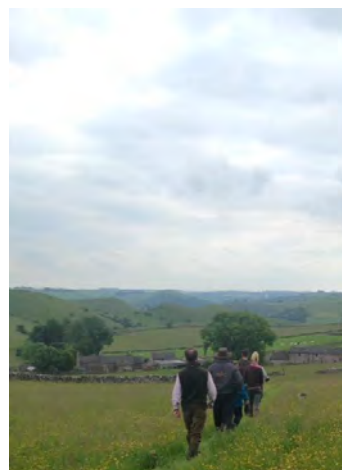


The stunning scenery of the Peak District was the setting for our AGM and Open Day for 2016. Our hosts were Julie and Henry Rusch of Broadecton Farm, Wetton, Staffordshire.

The event started with our Annual General Meeting at the George in Alstonefield. The Treasurer James Gill reported that the Society had made a profit of £2990 in 2015, although the vast majority of this figure could be attributed to the auction of donated items that took place at the 2015 AGM, along with other donations. Our trading profit had been £270. However, it was pleasing to note that there had been a £3000 increase in income from female registrations.

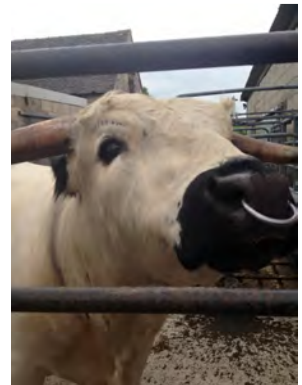
Following the independently verified postal vote for new Council members it was announced that John Barker, Guy Myddelton and Henry Rusch had been appointed. David Graveston had retired from Council due to health reasons and David Appleyard had sadly passed away at the end of 2015.

After the formal AGM business had taken place we held our usual Open Forum where members present are invited to bring forward any item for discussion. WPCS Chairman asked for members' opinions on the recent show and sale and there was a lively discussion on the presentation of the cattle present. After a vote it was agreed to hold another Show and Sale in the autumn of 2016. The remainder of the forum comprised a discussion about the marketing of the benefits of owning White Park cattle and how we could better promote the fantastic quality of the beef. A copy of the full minutes of the AGM is enclosed with this mailing.



Following lunch the members present then drove to Broadecton Farm in Wetton, home to Julie and Henry Rusch. Henry explained how he and Julie had changed careers from that of a financial director and nurse to buy Broadecton and start a new life as farmers. As well as being home to White Park cattle Broadecton also has a flock of Swaledale sheep. Both cattle and sheep are bred and finished for meat on the farm.

We started the visit to Broadecton by watching a bull inspection of Broadecton Clayton, who had been put forward as a breeding bull. Society Inspectors, Lawrence Alderson and Alistair Black, explained the process of inspecting a bull in the flesh before an analysis of a hair sample of the bull and his dam confirms whether their DNA falls within the accepted range for a White Park.



The farm tour gave us the opportunity to take in stunning views of the peak district scenery that surrounds the farm before we returned to base for a delicious afternoon tea. The Open Day was rounded off with an evening meal back at The George. On the Sunday several members took part in a visit to a local copper mine, the workings of which are on and under Broadecton Farm, organised by Henry and led by local volunteers.

Everyone present agreed that the event had been a great success and we would like to pass on our thanks to Julie and Henry for their wonderful hospitality.

Farewell from David Graveston



It is with regret that I had to announce my departure as a council member after three years. It was a pleasure and honour to be nominated and approved on to Council back in 2012. But my health has taken priority in the last few months and I feel it is necessary to stand aside for now and allow a more capable person take my place to allow me time to recuperate. I have made some great friends within the membership and enjoyed some fantastic herd visits which I hope to continue enjoy in the future as a member through the Society AGM and other events.

Thank you once again, David.

WELCOME TO NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Following the independently verified postal vote we welcomed three members to Council.

John Barker may be a familiar name to many of you, as he has been a Council member for 9 years and has been a member of WPCS for over 20 years. John developed the respected Collegewood herd of White Park cattle that was dispersed in 2013. A book on how John developed the herd is now available for sale (see Page 7). Whilst on Council John has contributed his considerable knowledge on cattle genetics and breeding. John was also the judge for the recent White Park show at Worcester in April 2016. John was nominated by fellow Council member, Anthony Milner.

Our first newly elected Council member is Henry Rusch, our host for the 2016 AGM. Henry started to keep White Park Cattle in 2009. Since that date he has attended every AGM and Open Day and has contributed interesting comments and observations that have instigated many lively debates. Henry is one of the few members who keeps complete records of all his cattle breeding activities along with precise records of his beef animals. James Gill nominated Henry to Council because he felt that Henry had a great deal to offer to the Society and the wellbeing and preservation of the White Park breed.



Guy Myddelton



Henry Rusch

Finally, our second new Council member is Guy Myddelton. Guy farms in partnership with his wife Emma on Myddelton Estate and at Higher Barnes, Malpas. The Myddelton's hosted the 2015 AGM at their home. The farming operation currently includes a White Park herd of 30 breeding females. Guy also operates a small leisure company and is involved with the day to day management of Chirk Castle with the National Trust. Guy previously worked with Eddie Stobart as their Rail Director. Guy was nominated by retiring Council Member, David Graveston.

AUTUMN SHOW AND SALE

Our Autumn show and sale planned for **24 September** at Worcester had to be cancelled due to unprecedented entries for that day from other breeds which have taken up all of the available pens. After discussion Council decided to offer our vendors the opportunity of selling their White Park cattle on the same day at **Chelford Market in Cheshire**, which is holding a rare breeds sale with Highland, Dexter and Longhorn cattle to name a few. Council members will be in attendance with our display stand and we hope to see some of you there.



Champion bull makes top price at White Park Spring Sale.

Pantgwyn Victor, a bull bred by Jessica Bryne Daniel and owned by David Graveston, was named the Champion White Park at the White Park Cattle Society Spring Show and Sale at Worcester in April 2016. Council member John Barker was the Show Judge.

Twenty-three month old Pantgwyn Victor achieved the top price at the Sale of 2.200 gns. He had an impressive daily live weight gain of 1.27 kg to weigh 930 kg at the Sale. Pantgwyn Victor is a son of Dynevor Calibre, which has sired a number of high quality sons, out of a daughter of Smoile Rufus 2, whose progeny are noted for size.

Pantgwyn Victor was purchased by member James Woodward.

White Park Cattle Society stand wins award at Beef Expo

Council members John Carrick and Jessica Bryne-Daniel, with the support of Jean Wright, hosted the White Park Cattle Society stand at Beef Expo on Friday 20 May and were delighted to accept the award for “Best Small Breed Society Stand”. The stand had been designed and mounted by Jessica Bryne-Daniel.

It was the first time that the Society has attended Beef Expo and we were pleased to welcome a steady stream of visitors to the stand during the show.



John Carrick (left) and Jean Wright accept the award for Best Small Breed Society Stand at Beef Expo.

BORDER ARTS LAUNCH A WHITE PARK BULL FIGURINE

Following the success of the White Park cow and calf Border Fine Arts has just launched a limited edition figurine of a White Park bull.

Sculpted by Ray Ayres the White Park bull figurine is a composite of several bulls viewed by Ray during his on-farm research. Limited to just 350 figurines the White Park bull is priced at £245. The figure can be viewed and purchased on the Grays Country Gifts website www.grayscountrygifts.com

Border Fine Arts figurines are well sought after by collectors for their high quality workmanship and hand painted detail. Each figurine is made to order.



NEW BOOK ON COLLEGEWOOD HERD OF WHITE PARK CATTLE

Until its dispersal in 2013 following the retirement of John Barker, the highly respected Collegewood herd of White Park cattle grazed beautiful parkland in the Chilterns. As a non-farmer with no land and no prospect of buying any John's start in life as a cattle owner looked precarious. But with a lot of hard work, help from friends and neighbours and his devoted wife Mo, John acquired more and more acres and gradually developed his beloved White Park herd.

Now retired from owning cattle John has written a 53 page A4 book, illustrated by many beautiful photographs, which details how he started out his cattle-owning career with two acres and a Charolais x Welsh Black calf and finished with a herd of White Park cattle that enjoyed a visit from Her Majesty the Queen. John's book "Collegewood" is now available from the White Park Cattle Society priced at £8. To order your copy please telephone 01926 632560 or email whiteparks@aol.com

BEAUDESERT MAXIMUS IS A STAR IN THE MAKING!

Beaudesert Maximus, a young bull owned and bred by council member Amy Cope and her family from Beaudesert Park Farm in Staffordshire, is looking to have a promising future. At Staffordshire County Show in June he attained 3rd prize in the Bull of any Age (Rare and Native breed class) and had some fantastic feedback from the judge, who commented that he is one of the best White Park bulls he had seen. Spurred on by this success and Max's outstanding behaviour Amy attended the Leek and District Show in July, entering him into the Junior Rare and Native breed Bull class, which he won. He then went on to win the overall champion Rare and Native Breed animal and the Prestwood cup, beating the Longhorn and Red Poll cattle.

Amy says that Maximus is a true star with a very placid temperament who gets plenty of attention from both children and adults wanting to stroke him and have their picture taken with such a beautiful and striking animal, which he is more than happy to do if it means he gets extra fuss.

Here's hoping for a successful showing season next year Amy!



Breeding Better Cattle

The objective of members of WPCS is to enjoy White Park cattle. Enjoyment for some is enhanced by the appearance of their animals, while others appreciate more the productive ability of White Park cattle. Whatever our motivation we share the desire to improve our herds in the qualities that give us most enjoyment. Advice on breeding and improving White Park cattle has appeared from time to time in the newsletter and on the website. This article attempts to draw together some of the thoughts expressed and illustrate them with examples from the breed.

Objectives

The first step is to decide where you want to go. Are you a hobby breeder, or a commercial farmer? Both play an important role in our Society. Do you wish to derive your predominant enjoyment from the appearance of your cattle or from their productivity? It may seem more straightforward if your objectives are simply aesthetic, but that would be a mistake! It is necessary to ensure functional efficiency whatever type of cattle you keep. That point must be made at the beginning as most of our members are hobby farmers.

The colour pattern of the White Park is a basic priority for many of our members and now strength of colour is shown on the website for bulls that are inspected for registration. We now understand more clearly the genes controlling inheritance of colour in White Park cattle and therefore can give better advice. For those who enjoy strong markings on their cattle there is a downside. Such animals have the likelihood of siring black progeny, whereas paler animals are more likely to breed true for the colour pattern.

Methods:

Dealing specifically with the problem outlined in the last sentence of the previous paragraph, the best advice would be to alternate strong-marked bulls and paler bulls in the selection of herd sires. That gives the best chance of well-marked calves while minimising the possibility of black calves.



But in more general terms, how do you get where you wish to go in your breeding programme? The simplest method is to use the best cows you can find and mate them to the best bulls. There are several refinements that can be applied but many breeders may prefer to keep it simple.

First, identify which cows in your herd are fit to be dam of a bull. They should be regular breeders, rear calves well, demonstrate longevity and be the type you prefer. They will be probably at least 7 or 8 years old before they are 'proven'. Then select a herd sire which has the qualities you require – length, muscling, colour, high rating. Use the bull evaluation page on the website (linear assessment tables). These tables are an essential aid to breeders, but there is limited evidence that they are used effectively. Please do use them! Then apply a planned breeding programme. Superior sires mated to 'elite' cows give you a better chance of raising the quality of your herd in the first generations. You can achieve results quickly, but you are depending on others to breed those superior foundation animals.

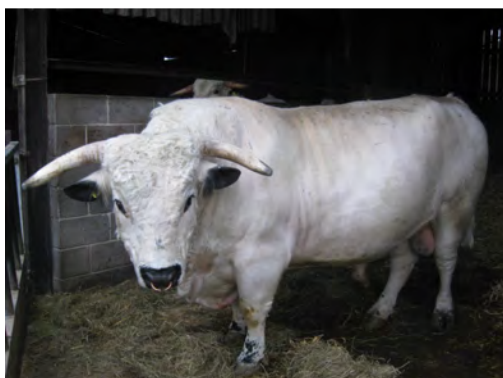


Always look through the pedigree of a young bull to ensure there is a depth of good quality animals in his ancestry. Too often there are weak links in recent generations. Sometimes he is the progeny of a good PASS PLUS sire but out of a cow which is not bull-dam quality (an example was Ash Bernard 471 which was by Ash Michael out of Garrowby Barley). Or maybe the reverse where a top quality cow is put to a below average bull (Toddington Audrey 848 was a good example, by Rase Brutus out of Appleby Alena). In either case it is a likely waste of good genetics and the decision should have been castration in the case of a bull! There are some very ordinary bulls presented for inspection, and their pedigree betrays a lack of either selection of breeding stock or a planned breeding programme. These bulls increasingly risk failing inspection as the benchmark for registration continues to rise. The Society progressively raises standards and we hope to see more good bulls and less marginal animals.

At the same time it has been encouraging already to see some very good bulls coming through the system. Crane Majestic is a prime example. He had a high rating when inspected and, having confirmed his quality with excellent progeny on the ground, the Society selected him as a semen donor. Smoile Wilfred and Bickleigh Hobson are other examples. So how are these superior animals bred? Experienced breeders have their own methods, but some factors are mentioned regularly and deserve evaluation. They include **'proven breeding quality'** which requires a breeding animal to have demonstrated his/her merit through performance; **'progeny testing'** requires the merit to be demonstrated through the performance of progeny; **'nicking'** occurs when the combination (mating) of two animals produces offspring that regularly exceed expectations; **'compensatory mating'** where a herd sire is specifically selected to correct the short-comings of his predecessor (see the first item in 'Methods' above on colour in bulls). Another is **linebreeding**, which is the acceptable application of inbreeding.

Linebreeding

We hear quite a bit about inbreeding and, while the dangers often are over-emphasised, it can be dangerous if you don't know what you are doing. Therefore, probably it should be kept at a low level unless there are mitigating circumstances. The Society provides a service at minimal cost to calculate and interpret inbreeding in any prospective mating, and this is valuable to breeders wishing to restrict inbreeding. The exception is when you practice linebreeding. It is a form of inbreeding that concentrates the influence of chosen animal. It can be beneficial, but only when you have identified a superior breeding animal, and it is not a short-term programme. Both the outstanding bulls which were selected as donors for the Society A.I. stud are linebred. Crane Majestic's great-grandsire is Taoiseach, which also is the sire of his dam. Dynevor Talisman's grandsire is Torpedo on both sides of his pedigree. Other high quality young bulls have been bred on similar lines. For example, Smoile Wilfred's grandsire is Hembury Inca on both sides and both his grand-dams are by Smoile Ivan.



Compensatory mating, hybrid vigour and nicking

There is variation in type within the White Park breed and this diversity is valuable because it provides the opportunity to select the most suitable animal for a particular circumstance. You would choose a long, stretchy bull if your cows are tending to be compact and rather small, or you might choose a strong-bodied bull if your cows are narrow and shelly. Those are examples of compensatory mating. Hybrid vigour occurs when you mate two animals that are unrelated as far as possible and the progeny perform better than expected. It is the opposite of inbreeding depression where performance and vitality deteriorate with excessive inbreeding. Nicking has similarities to both compensatory mating and hybrid vigour, but is not so easily explained. It occurs when the mating of two animals (or lines) regularly produce progeny that exceed expectations.



Performance

The performance of bulls can be measured in two ways. Official performance tests, or the Society's linear assessment procedure, are attempts to measure the merit of a bull at a young age, but the ultimate measure of their merit is a progeny test. Detailed recording carried out from time to time in some herds (Hembury, Smoile, Dynevor, Leighton, Sharphampark) has shown comparative test results for several bulls including (in order of merit):

- 1) Dynevor Taoiseach (by Torpedo out of Ash Lucien daughter)
- 2) Tilgate Hector (Dynevor Troubadour sire line)
- 3) Ash Larry (by Toddington Daniel – poor Rase Brutus sire line but good dam)
- 4) Grays Conrad (linebred; Chartley Saracen sire line; good dam)
- 5) Cadzow Oronsay (poor Rase Taurus sire line)
- 6) Broom Augustus (poor Rase Brutus sire line, but dam daughter of Troubadour)
- 7) Smoile Albert (Chartley Saracen sire line)
- 8) Smoile Gilbert (Dynevor Troubadour sire line, but dam daughter of Rase Brutus)
- 9) Bemborough Victor (by inbred Appleby Richard; poor dam line)

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There was a huge difference between the top and bottom bull. The results demonstrate that a bull's genetic merit may be influenced as much by his dam's pedigree as by his sire line. Females rarely are subjected to performance test, but when a cow consistently produces very good progeny she is classed as an animal of 'proven breeding quality' (i.e. she is progeny-tested) and is fit to be the dam of a bull.

It would be interesting to know how far members have used these breeding systems and aids, and how successful or unsuccessful they have been.

If you have any comments on your own breeding of White Park cattle please forward these to whiteparks@aol.com or write to the Society address (left). Council would be very interested to hear from members to inform their own discussions on the issue.

HERD BOOK – VOLUME 14 – 2012 TO 2015

The Society produces a Herd Book every four years and Volume 14 is enclosed with this mailing.

The Herd Book contains a list of all of the male and female registrations that were processed on Grassroots during 2012 - 2015, as well as all transfers of cattle. Birth Notified and Unregistered cattle are not included in the lists. The final pages of the book list all of the White Park herd prefixes that have ever been registered. Many of these herds have now been dispersed but the prefix cannot be used by another breeder without the permission of the original owner. Please note that as well as Prefixes needing to be restricted to one word of no more than 12 letters, the names of cattle must also meet this rule. A few cattle names have slipped through the net in this edition but we will be checking that all future names meet the criteria.

If you do spot any errors in the Herd Book please contact Jane at the office so she can amend the information on Grassroots. We hope that you enjoy browsing through the Herd Book.