



## **WHITE PARK CATTLE SOCIETY LTD SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER**

### **Message from the Secretary**

Dear Member

The summer period for the Society was dominated by the organisation of our celebratory evening meal and Open Day on 21 and 22 July - and what fantastic events they turned out to be. For our meal on the Friday evening we firstly assembled in the school library for pre-dinner drinks and canapes (it being too wet to meet on the lawn) before moving through to the dining hall for the meal. "Wow, are we in Hogwarts?" was mentioned by several guests as we took in the gothic architecture that surrounded us. The Hix Events team had worked tirelessly during the afternoon to prepare our meal and after we left for the evening at 11.00pm they still had to clear up before driving from Dorset back to London that night. Luckily, it was a much shorter drive to our accommodation!

Best wishes, Jane

### **Anniversary Dinner**

2017 is an anniversary year for White Park beef. Tradition states that in 1617 King James I knighted a particularly tasty loin of White Park beef during a meal at Hoghton Tower, near Preston, Lancashire. According to the Lancashire tradition, James I drew his short sword and told the Hoghton Tower pages to bring the beef to him. They went down on their knees and the king said "Arise, Sir Loin!"

To mark this momentous event we held a celebratory meal on Friday 21 July, the evening before our AGM and Open Day.

The location for the meal was Hanford School, part of Hanford Estate, near Blandford Forum in Dorset. We are grateful to Mark and Charlotte Pearson who spoke to the Headmaster Rory Johnston and Chair of Governors Lucinda Sunnocks about the Society using the school dining hall for our dinner.

Although the weather did not allow us to start the evening with drinks on the school lawn Mark Pearson saved a few wet hairdos by providing all guests with an umbrella for the walk from the car park to the school.

Our chef for the evening was Mark Hix MBE, a celebrated restaurateur and food writer who owns several restaurants in London and Dorset. Mark's team cooked the White Park beef, which was supplied by John Lean from his Bickleigh herd, to perfection and sixty guests filled the hall to capacity to enjoy an evening of fine dining, excellent wine and enjoyable company.

At the end of the evening there was an auction of donated items, which was hosted by guest auctioneer Clive Roads, who just happens to be an experienced rare breeds livestock auctioneer of 25 years standing. With Clive's masterful handling of the auction we raised £1280 from 7 lots, 2 of which were donated on the night. Henry and Julie Rusch donated one week's stay at their holiday cottages at Broadecton Farm, which raised the top price of the evening of £500, and the bone from the White Park beef carved on the night fetched £60 after being won by Mark Pearson. Other lots comprised a John Deere mower donated by Frank Sutton (£260), a signed novel and jubilee herd book donated by Lawrence Alderson (£200), 4 entrance tickets and a teapot donated by the James Herriot Museum (£80) and an original painting of a White Park bull donated by Jane Hampson (£200).

Thanks must go to Fortnum and Mason who supported the evening and provided complimentary wine for the event and to John Lean who made all the arrangements with Hix Events and our sponsors.

(The Dining Hall at Hanford School)





(Dynevor Torpedo)

## **2017 - a year of anniversaries for White Park cattle**

### **Beef-on-the-bone**

2017 marks twenty years since the Society hosted a banquet in 1997 in Butchers Hall, headquarters of The Worshipful Company of Butchers in the historic Smithfield area. The White Park beef-on-the-bone piped around the Great Hall marked the last occasion before the ban of beef-on-the-bone came into effect. However, that anniversary was somewhat fortuitous.

### **Dynevor**

The original purpose of the banquet was to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rhys ap Gruffydd, the famous ruler of the kingdom of Deheubarth in southern Wales who died in 1197. Rhys owned the colour-pointed white cattle which we now know as White Park, and he was a ninth-generation descendant of Rhodri Mawr, who built Dynevor castle as a defence against the Vikings and first brought the white cattle to our attention in 856 AD. His grandson, Hywel Dda, formulated the Welsh Laws in the Venedotian and Dimetian codes in which the cattle appeared as payment of fines for infringement of the ruler's prerogative.

### **Tawe cows**

Therefore, Dynevor cattle, which now are kept on Salisbury Plain, demonstrate a provenance tracing back more than 1,000 years which other British breeds of cattle have not been able to record. But one family in the Dynevor herd can claim an even more remarkably ancient provenance. A paper by Ludwig, Alderson et al has added a new dimension to the history of the breed. It shows that those cows belonging to the Tawe family possess a mitochondrial haplotype which has been passed down the female line from a cow that lived ten thousand years ago.

### **Sir-Loin**

The main purpose of the dinner in July 2017 was an important anniversary

celebration for another reason. Although history was an integral factor, it was concerned more with meat quality. In 1617 James I was travelling through Lancashire and in early August was hosted by Sir Richard Hoghton at Hoghton Tower, which was home to a herd of White Park cattle. The obligatory banquet after a day of hunting included beef from the resident herd. The king declared “Finer beef nae man ever put his teeth into. What joint do ye ca’ it, Sir Richard?”. “The dish, sire, is a loin of beef” replied his host. “A loin! By my faith that is not a title honourable enough for a joint sae worthy. It wants a dignity, and it shall hae it. Henceforth it shall be Sir-Loin, an’ see ye ca’ it sae”. Thereby the excellence of White Park meat was written into the history of quality beef.

The quality of White Park beef remains notable in the twenty-first century for its marbling and flavour. It is marketed as a speciality product which commands a premium with outlets in London and in several provincial centres.

**Lawrence Alderson CBE  
President**



## **Annual General Meeting and Open Day for 2017**

The day following our celebratory meal, Saturday 22 July, we held our 2017 AGM and Open Day, hosted by Mark and Charlotte Pearson of Hanford Farm, Dorset ably assisted by their daughter Lucy and farm staff. The farm is over 1700 acres and produces beef, sheep and milk. Hanford Farm is also a haven for wildlife and has a wide diversity of flora and fauna present on the land.

It was with great regret that our Chairman, Alistair Black, and his wife Ella had to send their apologies for this year's AGM due to Alistair's recovery from surgery. This is the first AGM that Alistair has missed since becoming Chairman of Council and thanks were expressed during the meeting for all the hours that Alistair donates to the Society alongside his day job.

Unfortunately our President, Lawrence Alderson, was also indisposed after the beginning of the meeting so Vice Chairman John Lean stepped into the Chair at very short notice and admirably led the members present through the agenda, with the assistance of Treasurer James Gill.

After the accounts for 2016 had been approved and Accountants for 2017 had been appointed, it was announced that Council members David Bradley, Frank Sutton and Anthony Milner had agreed to stand for re-election and had been re-appointed unopposed. Roy Critchlow, who has been a Council member for 2 terms, had decided not to stand for re-election as his Saturday's are becoming increasingly busy with attendance at sales and shows. Thanks were given to Roy's input on Council and for bringing the perspective of a commercial farmer to discussions.

The draft amendments to the Articles of Association, which had been circulated to all members, were approved unanimously. The discussion on the updated Rules and Regulations brought up a couple of queries which will be discussed at the next Council meeting. Once the final text is agreed the new Rules will appear on our website.

Following the AGM we held our usual Open Forum. The topic of a High Health herd was the first subject that was aired with all members present who had moved in this direction recommending the route to others. The cost of late registrations, an update on our recent embryo collection, the promotion of White Park beef and how to cook it to perfection and social media activity were all raised during the meeting. The full minutes of the AGM and Open Forum will be circulated in due course.

Following lunch we then undertook a tour of Hanford Farm. We firstly visited the Hanford herd of White Park cattle which were grazing in front of Hanford School. Next, we visited the state of the art dairy before viewing the herd of pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle. Finally, the tractor pulled the group up Hambleton hill where we took in the fantastic view and joined the grazing horses to enjoy the wildflower meadows and scheduled monuments. Afternoon tea back in the farmyard rounded off another successful AGM.

Thanks must go to Mark and Charlotte Pearson for acting as our generous hosts, and to their daughter Lucy who was instrumental in helping us organise the event.

**The date of our 2018 AGM and Open Day is  
Saturday 30 June.**

Next year we will be travelling north to Northumberland to visit Blagdon Estate. We look forward to visiting another beautiful part of the country for our open day. Please save the date!

## High Health

At the 2017 AGM there was a discussion during the Open Forum about high health. Council member Henry Rusch and his wife Julie, who hosted the 2016 AGM, have achieved Elite High Health Status with their Broadecton herd. Henry has provided the article below about the journey to achieve this.

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Following on from the 2013 AGM held at Wytch Farm in Dorset, the presentation given by vet David Coombes and Richard Pitmans commitment to being in a High Health scheme, both Julie and I considered that we should take disease risk and control seriously for our herd. Finding out more was easy, online and discussing with our own vet. So, why do it? To quote the scheme itself

*'Economic losses due to disease can be dramatically cut. Healthier animals mean less money spent on drugs and the animals will grow faster. There is no checking of growth due to pneumonia or diarrhoea. This will provide you with a higher quantity of better quality animals, which will help your bottom line whether you are a breeder or commercial beef or dairy farmer.'*

We were interested in our cows' welfare and wanted to do the best for them, with the consideration that a known health status for the animals would be a differentiating factor when selling breeding heifers. So what is involved?

**Biosecurity measures** (in addition to those required by the Animal Health regulations):-

- Farm boundaries must be secure and prevent straying on or off the property
  - Nose to nose contact over fences should be minimised
  - Double fencing with a 3m gap is required
  - Prevent access to water from that has flowed through another farm
- Quarantining measures:-
- Minimum of 28 days in isolation and then blood tests undertaken
  - All animals brought onto the premises. (Unless purchased from a herd of similar health status)
  - Any animals that have strayed or come into contact with other animals
  - Any animals that are returning from a show or sale
- Testing regime
- Annual blood testing co-ordinated by the health scheme provider and your vet
  - Tailored to your disease status. (Infectious diseases prevalent in the UK are, Bovine Virus Diarrhoea (BVD), Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR), Leptospirosis, Johne's disease and Neospora)
- Accreditation

- Certificated herd status for each disease
- Individual animals if required
- Expert advice just a phone call/email away
- Option to advertise herd disease status online
- Option to be included in the BVD national database scheme

## **Costs**

- Annual membership fee
- Each laboratory blood test
- Vets time and analysis (Tests co-ordinated with annual TB testing requirement)
- Culling diseased animals (If applicable)
- Vaccinations (If applicable)

We have now undergone three years of testing and have achieved Elite Status accreditation, meaning we are free from BVD, IBR, Lepto and Johne's. This has provided some significant benefits to us as well as the peace of mind knowing that our cow's health and welfare is up there with the best. We have been able to present our bull, Broad Ecton Clayton, to stud for AI semen collection, with the knowledge that he would not be rejected on health/disease grounds. We have been able to select 2 heifers for Embryo Transfers with the knowledge that their health status will meet the strict requirements for Export controls. We have the ability to present animals for sale that have been cleared of the main infectious diseases prevalent in UK herds.

We are also aware that the risk associated with our herd health status is that it is naive and therefore susceptible to any exposure to disease threats through either not having inbuilt immunity or not being vaccinated. This just makes us more determined to maintain our health status by being fully aware of the implications when undertaking transactions involving movements on and off the farm and constantly increasing our knowledge base on how certain diseases can be transmitted.

Future indications are that Defra will reduce or eliminate the funding currently in place for TB testing. Some food for thought, with pre and post movement testing already at your own expense, will you undertake your own annual testing for this disease? If so, why not introduce a multiple testing regime for a High Health scheme.

*Below - Broadecton Clayton*



Two bulls being sold by David Graveston on 9 September

## **Sale at Melton Mowbray Livestock Market on 9 September**

We have nine White Park cattle going through the ring at the Rare Breeds Sale at Melton Mowbray Livestock Market on Saturday 9 September 2017 – three bulls and six heifers.

Two of the males are recently registered Pass Plus bulls being sold by David Graveston (both born in 2015) and the third bull is a 5 year old Pass bull being sold by MD Hamilton Farms Ltd.

All of the heifers are being presented by John Carrick of the Pennyspot herd.

The sale catalogue pages that relate to these cattle are available on our website and include details of sires, dams and grand-sires and grand-dams of all of the cattle being sold. If you would like a copy please contact the Secretary.



## **Maximus is the star of the show!**

Council member Amy Cope and her White Park bull Beaudesert Maximus were placed First in the Rare Breed bull class at the Leek Show on 29 July and were then awarded the overall Rare Breed champion. Congratulations Amy and Maximus!

## **Suppliers of White Park Beef**

Do you regularly supply a farm shop or butcher with White Park beef? Or perhaps you sell it directly from your farm. Our Secretary is often asked for a list of outlets for our delicious beef and we would like to draw up a document that we can put on our website. Please contact Jane on [whiteparks@aol.com](mailto:whiteparks@aol.com) with details if you can help.

Also, it was discussed during the AGM Open Forum that cooking White Park beef to perfection takes great skill, as demonstrated by the Mark Hix team during our celebratory evening meal. The idea of some White Park beef recipes was suggested, which could result in a White Park cook book! So, if any of the chefs amongst us have a favourite recipe for their White Park beef please forward this to Jane and we will publish these on the website in the first instance, with the possibility of our own special cook book making an appearance next year.



## White Park Horns Wanted

Do you have any White Park horns? We have been contacted by Lancashire based gentleman who has said "I am trying to replicate a pair of grease and grit horns as were used prior to the 20th century for the sharpening of sickles and scythes in the field. I do not require a matched pair or even very large horns as the examples in museums I've seen are all less than a foot long and were carried tied to the belt of the labourer. However, I would really like to make them as authentic as possible and that means a native type that has been around for a long time and I can think of no more suitable breed than the White Park".

The enquirer is in receipt of an AB117 Registration number from Defra to be able to be in receipt of horns.

If you are able to help please get in contact with Jane and she will pass on his details.



## **Heifers for sale**

There are two White Park heifers in Worcestershire who are looking for a new home.

Courtfarm Rosie was born in July 2015. Her sire is Pass Plus bull Crane Majestic and her dam is Broadecton Isobelle.

Courtfarm Sparkle was born in November 2014. She was also sired by Crane Majestic and her dam is Lionheart Sophie.

The heifers are for sale for £1000 each.

Please telephone Kate Jones on 07968597830 for further information.

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