

The Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association

Looking Ahead



The Next Generation!

2017 - Edition No 38



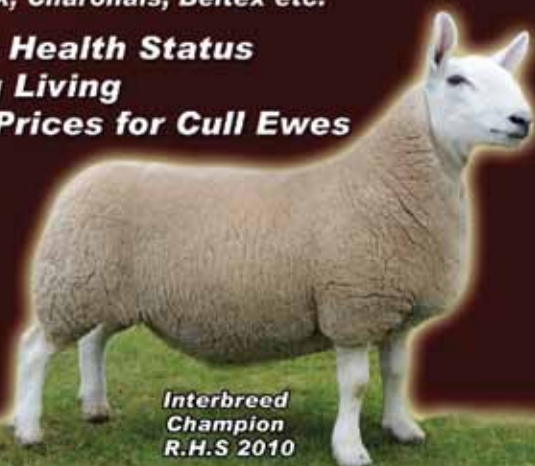
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Welcome

To the 2017 edition of the
Looking Ahead Magazine

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Front Cover -
Holly Blaney with
one of this year's
crop of lambs -
sired by 3920/H1
Tievebuaile Farm
out of Duhonw
Ewe 1411/E056

Chairman's Message

The Association has exceptional members that give up their time, and valuable experience which benefits the Association and all its members.



Richard Thomas

Two years on and my time as your Association Chairman of the Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association is coming to an end, and it's not because of Brexit.

In the last Looking Ahead magazine, we had just voted to leave the EU. Since then a few truths have emerged, and to be frank, neither side is coming out well.

The Out vote will now take some pretty nifty negotiations to get the deals that we need. Europe needs us more than we need them. Remember we have a Euro trade deficit which means we buy more from them. In 2015, UK food exports to the EU were worth £11 billion, while UK food imports from the EU were worth £28 billion, which is roughly 70% of the UK food and farming imports coming from the EU.

April 1st was the date for triggering Article 50, and there is a strong likelihood of another collapse of the pound. The pound now has dropped about 20% against the Dollar and the Euro and is now as low as it was back in 1985.

So let us import less and make more here, and have more UK production in all sectors and have a better deal for a UK agriculture - more home production and less imported food.

We can and should remain confident that one day, many years after Brexit, a more productive and competitive agricultural sector will develop. So now is the time to roll up our sleeves and shape that future.

As my term of office ends in June, I can say I have really enjoyed being your Chairman, but it all becomes that much easier (and a special thanks must go to Helen and Rachael). The Association has exceptional members that give up their time and valuable experience, which benefits the Association and all its members.

Best wishes to all members.

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Bluefaced Leicester Sheep Breeders' Association Secretary - Helen Carr-Smith
Riverside View, Warwick Road, Carlisle CA1 2BS Tel: 01228 598022 / Fax: 01228 598021
Email: info@blueleicester.co.uk / Charity Number: 252714

www.blueleicester.co.uk



News From The Office

2017 Subscriptions / Members Details

The annual subscription for the Association remains at £25, and Southern Ireland members can pay their annual subscription fee by Euro cheque. If you have not paid your membership, you still have time to do so, but please be aware non paid up members are automatically excluded from our mailing list. If you would like to set up a standing order to make sure your payment is received on time, then please contact the office for an application form. If you move house and/or your contact details change, please notify the office as soon as you can so that we can keep our database as up to date as possible.

Office News Page

The secretary now has an office news page on the website. This page will be a place where not only will we put on relevant information for members regarding National and regional events, a gallery page will also be created so members can send in photographs from local shows and events. If you would like any regional events advertised on the secretary's office news page, or any photographs from local shows and events, please e-mail through the details to info@blueleicester.co.uk.

2016 Flock Book

The 2016 flock book was posted out to all members on the 5th April. Thank you to all members who sent in their completed forms on time for inclusion in the 2016 edition. If you have not yet returned your 2016 registration form to the Association office then please do so, as you will not be able to order Association tags for 2017 until the form is received. If you have lost your 2016 form and require another copy, then please contact the office.

2017 Ear Tags

Members will be supplied again this year with a pair of ear tags, The price of the tags has been held at £7 per pair + VAT. This charge covers

the cost of your pair of tags and your registration/administration fee. The tags are made up of a yellow electronic button tag and this year the visual tag is a blue button tag. Both tags are marked with your UK flock mark and individual number, together with your Bluefaced Leicester pedigree number and individual number. The Association letter this year is 'K'.

Replacement Tags

If you need to order replacement Bluefaced Leicester ear tags this must be done through the Association office and not direct from the tag company. The following details are required:

Bluefaced Leicester side of the tag details; UK flock number with individual number; your CPH number. If it is a bought in animal and not your own breeding, we require proof of purchase – either by supply of the original tag you are replacing or an Auctioneers invoice (this will be returned to you once the order is placed). If all this information can be supplied at the time of ordering then it will allow us to improve the service to you the members. There is normally a five day turn around on replacement tag orders from the date of order, and there is no charge for supply of replacement Bluefaced Leicester tags for 2017.

Grassroots Online Database

Members have free access to the online database system – Grassroots. This can be found through a link on the website www.blueleicester.co.uk and access is through a unique passcode individual to each member. Once you have gained access to the site you can 'manage' your flock on line.

The following tasks can be done by members:

- **Lamb registrations.**
- **Transfer sheep off your holding which have either been sold, or have died.**



WELSH MULES

2017 OFFICIAL SALES

The following tasks can not be done by members:

- Animal details cannot be amended.
- Any additional stock purchased cannot be added to your flock.

For any of these tasks to be done, you will need to contact the office with the details to be added/corrected and the office will make the changes for you. If you have forgotten your Grassroots password, please contact the office and we will be happy to send you a reminder.

Export Register

If you would like to be included on the export register, please contact the office with your flock number, prefix and a valid e-mail address and you will be added to the register. This is when enquiries come in from abroad from people looking to import Bluefaced Leicester Genetics you will be notified of their request.



WELSHPOOL

(01938) 553438

13th September (Yearlings)

14th September (Ewe lambs)

12th October (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

BUILTH WELLS

(01982) 553614

15th September (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

17th October (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

RUTHIN

(01824) 702025 & (01745) 583260

16th September (Yearlings & ewe lambs)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Welsh Mules Tel: 01970 636688 • Field Officer Tel: 07768 816919 • www.welshmules.co.uk

Performance Recording

There is an opportunity for members who Performance Record to claim back monies to assist with Performance Recording costs. If you are a Performance recording member and wish to make a claim, please send a copy of your AHDB invoices for membership and scanning (this invoice must show the number of Bluefaced Leicester lambs scanned), and the 50% refund will be arranged for you from the Association office. The monies available are on a 'first come first served' basis.

MV Testing

There is an opportunity for members who MV test their flock of Bluefaced Leicesters to claim back monies to help towards the cost of testing. If you wish to make a claim, please send a copy of your invoice from your vet clearly stating the number of Bluefaced Leicesters tested and the £2

per sheep refund will be arranged for you from the Association office. The monies available are on a 'first come first served' basis.

Gift Aid

This is of no additional cost to members, and provides a very useful financial input into the Association funds. If you have not already signed up to Gift Aid or would like more information, then please contact the office for an application form.

Twitter/Facebook - Find us on Facebook and on twitter @Bluefaced.

And Finally

Wishing everyone a successful lambing and look forward to catching up with you all throughout the Summer shows.

President's Message

James Porter

My first realisation on becoming President was that I was a bit long in the tooth (unlike Ridding's Leicesters) to be able to attend all events throughout the year, however, those that I have attended, have been very enjoyable and memorable. I would like to thank Helen at this point, for her hard work.

Having been a Council member for 30 years; as President a little reminiscing can be allowed. In the early days of breeding, I was one of the 'Band of Brothers' who the hierarchy wanted to expel from the Association, because we refused to conform to the rules in place at the time. Joining up was the only way forward, better than arguing over an auction mart gate. After much discussion a relaxation on the rule for appearance was passed, albeit only allowing a small amount of colour, but as clearly demonstrated, much more is acceptable now. My argument has always been that we cannot afford to discard a good sheep with outstanding traits.

Going back a little further, and remembering a few life defining moments, like attending my first Swaledale tup sale at 12 years old. There was only a scattering of onlookers around the ring, and either there wasn't much money around, or £1 was worth a lot! Most of the tups sold for £15 to £25 each, and then a prize tup entered the ring and made £750, enough to buy a new tractor back then, if only that was the case now! Buying our first Leicester tup was certainly life changing as was marrying a very patient sheep understanding wife!

The Association is in the hands of some very level headed Trustees, however, only a few stalwarts attend the meetings now, and after years of bias and prejudice judging at shows, there has finally been a decision made to accept two distinct types of sheep. These are to be called 'Crossing' and 'Traditional' and will be split into separate classes at some events, when there are significant entries of both types forward.



To date, this has been a great success with a high standard from both camps; congratulations to all who exhibited.

Our future is going to be a challenging task because of the 'B' word, Brexit. The forthcoming negotiations will be like a game of chess, with politicians huffing and puffing for at least three years, and still not being able to say 'check mate' at the end. The EU is a comfortable place to be in with a protected market for our produce and an Agricultural policy in place. We will have to accept any changes that come along, but as long as we, as breeders, breed the best and hope for the best, there is little more we can do.

As lambing is looming quite quickly, you will all be starting to get excited to see how fresh tups have performed. I won't waste anymore of your time with reading this article, the shows are on the horizon, it's all to do again, so drink up, shoulders back, let's go, and let's rock and roll!

Dates For Your Diary

MAY

10 - 13	Balmoral Show
16	NSA Welsh Sheep
	Llwyn Bedw, Talybont -on -Usk, Brecon, Powys
31	NSA Highland Sheep
	Kinnahaird Farm, Contin, Strathpeffer

JUNE

7	NSA North Sheep
	West Shields Farm, Tow Law, County Durham
20	NSA Sheep South West
	Ayshford, Westleigh, Tiverton, Devon
22-25	Royal Highland Show

JULY

3	NSA NI - Ballymena Mart, Co Antrim
11 - 13	Great Yorkshire Show
24 - 27	Royal Welsh Show

Sale Date Changes

SEPTEMBER

8	Kelso Ram Sale
20	Hexham Ram Sale
21	Ruthin Ram Sale
22	Castle Douglas Ram Sale
	**New start Times
	Judging 9am, Sale at 11am
23	Ballymena Ram Sale
25	Builth Wells Ram Sale
26	Tavistock Ram Sale
28	Hawes Ram Sale
28	Welsh Ram Sale

OCTOBER

5	Penrith Ram Sale
6	Carlisle Ram Sale
7	Armoy Ram Sale

Myfyrian

Golden Fleece Competition Winners

Photos courtesy of
British Wool



**Jayne and Myrfyn and the
prizewinning fleece**

A Bluefaced Leicester fleece has been awarded the title of 'Champion Golden Fleece' in a re-launch of the UK competition organised by British Wool and sponsored by J G Animal Health.

The winning fleece was entered for the competition by Jayne, Myrfyn and Gareth Roberts from the Myfyrian Flock, Anglesey. The family farms 70 Bluefaced Leicesters along with a 1000 commercial ewes. The Beulahs and Welsh Mountain ewes produce the Welsh Mules which are the main stay of the commercial flock, and the Suffolk and Texel cross Mules crossed with Texel and Beltex tups produce the majority of the finished lambs. They also run a herd of pedigree Limousin cattle and a beef suckler herd. Jayne said "It had been an honour to reach the final let alone win the competition. We really didn't expect to even get this far. We take pride in the wool we produce, but didn't think we'd have a chance of winning such a prestigious national competition".

The Roberts' prize winning fleece beat strong competition from across the United Kingdom to be named the Golden Fleece, and was one of eight fleeces in the final. The competition consisted of two fleeces from each home nation, one traditional carpet type and one speciality/knitwear type.

Mark Powell, BWMB Chief Operating Officer who was the judge of the final said "the winning fleece displayed everything I was looking for in terms of style of wool, uniformity of quality, strength of staple, colour and presentation. It was an outstanding entry and clearly from a producer who takes pride in their wool crop,"

Mr Ian Buchanan who is the Current Chairman of British Wool explained "This is a competition which was open to all producers marketing their

wool through British Wool and members were able to leave their fleeces at any of the depots across the United Kingdom. Champion fleeces from twelve regional agricultural shows were also automatically entered to the four Country finals"

Mr Buchanan added with more than 12 million fleeces being presented at British Wool depots every year, the winner was to be congratulated on their success, "The quality of the fleeces and presentation was exceptional with all finalists earning their place and congratulated for getting as far as they have. However, there can only be one winner and my congratulations goes to the Roberts' family on their success this year."

Sponsor Jonathan Guy of J G Animal Health said he'd been delighted to support the Golden Fleece competition and was impressed by the standard in the final. "This competition is a great way to showcase the exceptional quality of British wool which is a truly versatile and remarkable fibre. A good quality fleece is a clear sign of a healthy, well managed flock and that's something all sheep farmers should be striving for whatever their system or breed."

British Wool have confirmed the competition will be running again in 2017 due to the encouraging response for the 2016 competition.

The Roberts' family have decided to auction the prize winning fleece. The 'sealed bid' auction took place in February with £250 being raised and divided equally between two charities Cancer Research UK and the Children's Hospice Ty Gobaith, Conwy.

Lawrie & Symington Limited
Lanark Agricultural Centre



Dates For 2017

Kelso Ram Sales
Friday 8th September

Rams & Females Of All Classes
Wednesday 27th September
Thursday 2nd November

For further details please contact
Lawrie & Symington Limited
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The Importance Of Health

Written by Emma Steele, Signet Breeding Services

Performance recording and EBVs are proven to improve the genetic potential of your flock, and hence buyers pay premium prices for Bluefaced Leicester rams with the best figures. However, if your ram becomes ill or his fitness becomes compromised in anyway, his fertility may suffer, limiting genetic progress for that year. With this in mind, Signet thought it would be beneficial to remind Bluefaced Leicester breeders about the importance of using rams with EBVs but, most importantly, that are fit for purpose.

Ram MOT

Do not wait until you pregnancy scan your ewes to find out if your ram has worked – ensure your ram has a full MOT as detailed on the AHDB Beef and Lamb website (www.beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk) at least ten weeks before tupping to ensure you have time to correct the issue or make alternative arrangements, if necessary.

Nutrition

Rams in poor body condition are unlikely to work effectively. Ten weeks before tupping, rams should be fed a high protein diet to improve semen quality and quantity. Rams which are over-conditioned (body condition score (BCS) four or above) are likely to have a poor libido, and be more prone to heat stress. Ensure you monitor body condition score in your rams regularly, but especially in the two months pre-tupping, before tupping starts they should be BCS 3.5.

Purchase Protocols

It is best to purchase rams well in advance of the breeding season so they have had sufficient time to acclimatise to your system, and allow appropriate time for quarantine (minimum 21 days) to avoid disease spreading to your flock. This applies to borrowed and purchased rams. It will take at least three weeks for the rumen to adjust to a diet change before a ram will be fully fit to work. When selecting your rams, use a combination of EBVs, health and looks. They need to have the genetics to influence your flock, the health to be able to serve ewes and longevity, but you need to like the look of the stock in the field.

Testicular Issues

Testicular degeneration causes poor fertility in rams, and is often seen throughout July and August due to heat stress. Overfed rams will lie down in hot conditions, effectively 'cooking' their testicles, resulting in soft testicles and poor quality semen. Rams should be shorn, have adequate shade, plenty of water, and should not be over-fed with a BCS four or below. Rams which have been around the show circuit could have often been heat stressed in marquees if it has been a hot summer.

It pays to take full advantage of a ram's genetic potential, but the ram has to work and remain healthy. Look after the health and nutritional requirements of your ram to ensure he has a long and productive life.



Signet recording costs reduced



Signet recording will be cheaper in 2017

Signet has a new fee structure for Bluefaced Leicester breeders to encourage online data entry. Fees will be £50 lower for a 50-ewe flock and £100 lower for a 100-ewe flock.

New Bluefaced Leicester information in 2017

- Guidelines for scanning have changed. Bluefaced Leicester breeders can now scan younger, well grown lambs
- Online data entry means breeders can update lambing, 8 week weights, shearing weights and census information
- Inbreeding values and inbreeding software are available online.



Contact Emma for a quote to get started Tel: 0247 647 8826 Email: emma.steele@ahdb.org.uk

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The Future Looks Bright For The Derwenlas Flock

Nestled in the peaceful village of Four Crosses, on the border between Wales and Shropshire, you will find the home of Phil May and the Derwenlas flock of Bluefaced Leicesters.

As a youngster, from the age of eight up until his mid twenties, Phil helped out at a neighbouring farm where breeding Welsh Mules was part of the farming structure. This sparked an interest in livestock, particularly sheep and the Bluefaced Leicesters.

Phil was married to his late wife Jackie for 32 years and have two children Clair and Katie. Clair is married to Jon and they have two children Sennen and Albi, and Katie is married to David and they also have two children Dougie and Annie.

In 1999, Phil started work as an Area AI Technician for Genus ABS working mainly with the dairy side of the industry which he has now been doing as his full time job for the past 18 years.

It was in the year 2000 that with Jackie's encouragement Phil decided to start breeding Bluefaced Leicesters. Phil bought his first females from his sister Chris and her husband Dave who had five ewe lambs which were bred by Mr & Mrs John Pryce, and their daughter Helen, Prenafal flock. These were duly purchased and run with a stock tup bred from the Weaver family at Perrinpit, and the progeny were the foundation stock for the Derwenlas flock which first registered lambs in 2001.

Phil's second, and he feels one of his most important purchases to improve his newly established flock, was the half share he bought into - his friend and neighbour's stock ram - Gornal Goliath bred by Phil and Sue Davies. This half share was bought when Goliath was a lamb, and he went on to produce show winning progeny which have given Phil so much success over the past 12 years. Other rams which have had considerable impact within the flock were from fellow breeders Terry Owen, Elfyn Owen and Jacqui McLeod.

It was on a visit with Jackie to Oswestry Show in 2003 where Phil first took a fancy to showing his sheep, and so the next year he entered some of the show classes at the Royal Show and came away with a blue rosette at his first attempt. Since then, the Derwenlas flock has been shown around Wales and the South of England winning Champion at the Royal Bath & West in 2005.

In 2008 at the Royal Welsh Show, Phil gained one of his greatest achievements in the show ring alongside his friend Myrfyn Roberts,



Phil with his family and Bluefaced Leicesters

Myfyrion flock who had the breed champion with a yearling ewe. Phil showed his homebred yearling tup Derwenlas Velvet Price, and together they were awarded the Interbreed Pairs title.

This was followed a couple of years later in 2010, again at the Royal Welsh Show, on one of the wettest show days of the year where Phil swept the board winning Male Champion, Female Champion, Overall Champion and Champion Group of Three, a feat not achieved by many breeders.

To add to Derwenlas' success in the show rings, the reputation of the flock also spreads across the county of Montgomeryshire with the flock being awarded the prestigious title of Best Pedigree Flock of Sheep in the whole of the county winning in 2016 for the fourth occasion having also picked up the title in 2009, 2011 and 2013. Phil is also a long time supporter of the Welsh Region Progeny Show which is held annually in August at Welshpool Market, where over the years the Derwenlas flock have come home with numerous rosettes and trophies. Phil is also more than happy to lend his sheep to help encourage the young handlers, and breeders of the future and often to be found with one of Phil's sheep is his friend and neighbour Stuart Lane's daughter Miss Lexi Lane who has had her own success winning young handler competitions with the help of the Derwenlas flock.

The flock is kept around the village and surrounding area on eight different areas of rented ground, and has been built up to now consist



Phil with his show awards



Ewe with her February born lambs

of 25 breeding ewes, 10 ewe hoggs, 7 shearling rams and a 2 year old stock ram which was bought from the Peart Family, Woodcroft at the Carlisle sale in 2015. All 25 ewes are in lamb to this tremendous stock ram and are scanned with triplets and pairs. The pairs lambed on the 1st of February and the triplets were due to lamb in the middle of March.

The 10 ewe hoggs will be retained for breeding the next generation for the Derwenlas flock. The shearling rams and some of this year's crop of ram lambs will be sold at the Association sales in September at the NSA main sale at Builth Wells and at Welshpool, with some lambs also heading north to the Carlisle Sale. Phil sells to repeat buyers who come back year on year, as they know the stock they are buying from the Derwenlas flock breeds the sheep that meet their farming requirements.

One selling highlight for the flock was when Phil sold his homebred tup lamb 3822/F10 at the NSA main sale at Builth Wells for 1700 guineas in 2014. He was sired by 3822/D3 'Derwenlas Powerhouse' who has consistently produced prize winning progeny over the past few years, and is now with Mrs Mary Turners' Kildalloig Flock in Campbeltown. His prized stock ram Derwenlas 'Velvet Prince' was sold as an aged ram for £1100.

The qualities that Phil looks for when buying new stock rams are good skin, sharp head with a good mouth and bright eyes, strong conformation and good legs. On the female side milkiness is a major factor in choice of bringing a new female into the flock

Over the last few years, Phil has been involved with some of the Association display stands at NSA events, and at the Royal Welsh Show and Phil says "it is a privilege and an honour to be asked to help promote and represent the breed in this way".

Phil stated during his 16 years of being a member of the Bluefaced Leicester Association, he has built up a fantastic friendship with fellow breeders who have helped him over the years preparing the sheep for the shows, so a few thank yous are in order to Stuart Lane, Elfyn Owen, Aled Jones, Jacqui McLeod, Myrfyn and Jayne Roberts, Phil and Sue Davies, Colin and Carol Jones, Paul and Sandra Wilkes, James Williams and of course there are many others who have helped along the way.

Phil has one more thank you to someone whose help has been invaluable since the loss of his beloved wife Jackie, and that goes to Alan and Sheila Gittens for without their help, and support the past two years would have been a lot more difficult.

The future looks bright for the Derwenlas flock and the hope is, it will continue to build its' reputation for producing the high quality rams to meet modern farming requirements.



HARRISON & HETHERINGTON
Farmstock Auctioneers, Brokers & Valuers

**Annual noted shows and sales of
2000 BLUEFACED LEICESTER SHEEP**

<p>CARLISLE</p> <p>Friday 6th October 2017 Autumn show and sale of registered rams and females</p> <p>Monday 16th October 2017 Sale for all classes of rams and females</p> <p>Monday 22nd January 2018 Show and Sale of in-lamb registered females</p>	<p>KIRKBY STEPHEN</p> <p>Saturday 30th September 2017 Show and Sale of rams and females</p> <p>LAZONBY</p> <p>Saturday 7th October 2017 Show and Sale of rams and females</p>
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For all other up to date sales and information visit our website - harrisonandhetherington.co.uk

01228 406200
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A positive future for the Kirkstead Flock

"A proper hill farm" is probably the best way to describe Kirkstead. Set in the hills between Selkirk and Moffat, it is real Blackface country, with some wide open hills as well as lochs and glens. Alan McClymont was born at Kirkstead, where his parents were tenants on the farm. The farm runs to over 5000 acres now after taking in the neighbouring Dry Hope Farm under contract. It runs from around 1000 feet topping to around 2250 feet. The weather feeds the lochs generously, with over 100 inches of rain per annum, proving this is a place for hardy livestock. Alan farms with his wife Hilary and encouraged by Sam, 13, and Oliver, 10, who are both keen to follow in their fathers' footsteps. They run 1800 Blackie ewes, which are looking to be increased over the next few years to over 2000, with tups being sold at Lanark and Stirling. They also run a herd of 45 pure Galloway cattle which are wintered out on the hill too. Last year they hosted a day for the World Galloway Conference, and this saw over 400 delegates visiting to their picturesque farm on the shores of St Marys Loch.



Alan McClymont

Alongside this, they run a flock of 30 Bluefaced Leicester ewes, which was started by his mother over 40 years ago. The Kirkstead prefix has enjoyed a strong following at the Kelso sale where they sell shearlings, usually offering between 10 and 12 each year. "We find we get plenty



Kirkstead Bluefaced Leicesters



Kirkstead Bluefaced Leicesters

of repeat customers as the tups go and do well, thriving once they get away from this hard place” he quips. Unusually for having such a large Blackface flock, Alan doesn’t cross any of the Blackie ewes, and they have remained to the true type with their Leicesters, bringing out the traditional type of tup, which suits the Cheviot breeders down to the ground. Alan feels there is a growing market as Cheviot Mules have started to gain a growing momentum within the industry, and certainly he has a market with his tups averaging consistently over the £1000 mark for the last few years. His top price came in 2008 when Z007 Kirkstead, a son of the Teviot V1, took the championship at the pre-sale show, where it was the first time he had shown despite selling there for many years, and went on to sell for £3100. They repeated the success last year with H14 Glamis, a tup shearling that son Sam picked out at a sale as having potential, and so it proved, scooping the championship and making £2500 through the ring, giving a bit of pocket money for the boys.

It is the enthusiasm that Alan’s sons have for the breed that has seen the flock take its first steps into showing their Leicesters. Last year when the classes at the Highland were split they decided to enter, after some persuasion from Sam and Oliver. They went on to take the championship with an aged tup bought from the Burndale flock, which was noted by many people, not just from within the breed, for its power and style. The sheep which really fired everyone up for showing, though it wasn’t the champion tup, but a ewe which has won the progeny show at Peebles for the last two years. This is a once in a lifetime ewe, combining style and presence and having a bit of that “Something Extra” needed to win shows. She is by Shrewbridge D17 bought out of Builth Wells when Alan was judging and after placing him champion, he splashed the cash on him, buying him in partnership with Alan Cowans for 6,800 gns. The showing side of things is enjoyed by all the family, and Alan feels it’s a good way for everyone to meet up and see the social side of things.

When looking for a new stock ram, the main priority for Alan has to be the mouth. “No good having a great sheep, if he can’t eat grass. Sheep here have to be able to thrive properly” he explains. He also places a great deal of emphasis on sheep being correct on their legs as well as having a good skin. Due to the harsh environment on the farm, the sheep

at Kirkstead have to be able to do well, and any sheep that present problems at lambing time have their names and numbers noted down in his notebook, and this usually means they don’t get to see another lambing time up at Kirkstead!

With the growth in demand for the Cheviot Mule, Alan is quietly confident of the future of the traditional type of Leicester. “It’s certainly a growing market, and the Leicester tup, either traditional or crossing types have always been used to cross with other sheep, and it’s looking positive for the traditional types being used over the Cheviot”.



The Blaney Family See A Bright Future Ahead

Brendan Blaney and sons, John and Brendan, farm Tievebuaile Hill outside the village of Cushendall along the Antrim Coast. With unspoilt views across the North Channel to the Mull of Kintyre and Ailsa Craig, Tievebuaile is classified as an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB). Steeped in history, Tievebuaile is famous amongst archaeologists as an 'Area of Special Scientific Interest' (ASSI) as it hosts the first neolithic stone axe factory to be known in the British Isles.

The Blaney's farm is 800 acres of inbye and hill land running up to 1800ft, with approximately a further 250 acres of winter grazing. Sons, John and Brendan, left their day jobs and now work full time on the farm to pursue their passion for Bluefaced Leicesters and Scotch Mules.

They currently run a flock of 700 Lanark Blackface ewes which are crossed with the Bluefaced Leicester, with a small flock run pure to breed replacements. A further 120 Lanark hogs are purchased annually, mostly sourced from the Loughash on-farm sale. As well as the ewes, a herd of suckler cows run with the Charolais bull.

The first Leicesters to arrive at Tievebuaile were imported by the late John Blaney. While purchasing Blackface ewes in Scotland in 1948, a

Leicester ram was recommended as a crossing sire. Believed to be one of the first to introduce Leicesters into Ireland, the first Irish registered flock was born (prefix 'Bridge House-01211') and Leicesters have never left the farm, apart from a short spell in 2001 when all stock was lost to the FMD cull.

Following restocking and keen to stay at the top of the game breeding Mule ewe lambs, the Tievebuaile flock was founded to help re-establish



John Blaney, his daughter Holly, his Dad Brendan Blaney and his Brother Brendan



This Year's Stock Gimmers



John & Brendan Blaney with Holly and two of this year's crop of lambs (the lambs pictured are sired by a home bred ram 3920/H1 Tievebuaile Farm and bred from the two time Balmoral Show Champion (pictured above) – a ewe bred by Michael James, Duhonw 1411/E056

a flock of crossing tups and maintain bloodlines. The foundation of the current flock is based on the purchase of in-lamb females from Midlock over the years, with further purchases of females from the noted Hewgill, Duhonw and Kirkby Redgate flocks. Consisting of 30 breeding females, the ewes are artificially inseminated using fresh and frozen semen. A few of the best females are flushed and the embryos are implanted into Mule ewes. Proven Mule and Leicester breeder, 'H1 Tievebuaile' (G2 Marriforth son), was heavily used on AI day having bred several first prize Leicester ewe lambs at summer shows, the Reserve Champion Leicester at Balmoral 2016, as well as breeding several show Mule ewe lambs in their top pen.

Noted sires used in the past have been W25 Midlock Controversy, B4 Tanhouse Farm, E21 Hewgill and H1 Tievebuaile.

The Blaneys have been very successful in the show ring with the Bluefaced Leicester flock and Mule ewe lambs. The icing on the cake was winning three championships and a reserve championship at Balmoral in three successive years 2014, 15 and 16. Numerous other championships have been won at local summer shows.

The main income for the farm is from the commercial flock of Blackface ewes. Renowned for breeding quality Mule ewe lambs and their enthusiasm to show sheep, the Blaneys have won numerous championships at local summer shows and five championships in the past six years at their annual club Mule ewe lamb show and sale. Lambs have peaked at £168/head with last year's first draw of 250 lambs averaging £109/head.

The Blaneys work closely with Parkland Vets to optimise the full potential of their ewes to increase scanning percentages. Likewise rams are fertility tested each year prior to use. The flock is given a full health check in September with cast ewes sold locally. The Blaneys are selective on purchasing replacement ewes demanding plenty of character, silky hair and bare skins. Eager to maintain biosecurity and minimise disease, purchased gimmers remain isolated from the main flock before joining them post lambing. Ewes are vaccinated against enzo and toxo abortion; regularly fluked and wormed and bolused prior to tupping.

The brothers are equally selective when purchasing proven shearlings with good breed characteristics and crossing bloodlines. Macqueston



and Firth rams are coupled with Tievebuaile proven bred rams and ram lambs to sire the flock of Mules. Always keen to try out new bloodlines, they have high hopes for this year's ram lamb purchases from the noted Midlock, Kirkby Redgate and Marriforth flocks.

Indeed, with continued investment in bloodlines and a desire to ensure successful pedigree breeding, the Blaneys see a bright future for both breeds. Their passion and the breeds' suitability to their farming system, suggests that the Bluefaced Leicester will remain at Tievebuaile Hill Farm for many more decades to come.



Holly with one of this year's crop of lambs – sired by 3920/H1 Tievebuaile Farm and out of Duhonw Ewe 1411/E056

Booth Family

Takes Top Honours At Hawes

Report and photos by
Wayne Hutchinson



Champion from the Booth family, Feizor - £10,200

On a sharp, cold, winter morning, the ringside action at the annual Hawes female sale provided plenty of heat, with a strong demand for some top quality females. With a catalogue of nearly 100 sheep, including the dispersal of the noted Bull and Cave flock, there was always going to be plenty of interest in the sale, and indeed, buyers came from all over the UK to have a nosey at some of the best crossing bloodlines available in the breed.

The champion, a gimmer shearling, came from the Booth family, Feizor, near Settle in North Yorkshire. It was an easy choice by judge Alan Pye. J47 Smearsett was sired by the "Black Tag", B13 Smearsett, the tup behind many of the flock's best Mule gimmers, and out of the same ewe as "G11 Smearsett, or "Ted" as he is more affectionally known as. Her mother is by the prolific Z4 Hundith, which has set the breed standards for the past few years, which was run

at Highberries, and Robin kept a full brother to use on his Swales this year and is looking forward to seeing his progeny. The bidding was brisk, setting off at £2000 in a packed ring in which there was standing room only....and only at a push at that! Bidding rose fast and the final bid of £10,200 saw Jack Lawson from the Hundith flock and Richard Harker, Grayrigg get her.

The Smearsett flock enjoyed a great day out, taking all the first prize places in the Tithebarn sponsored pre sale show. It was their ewe, F50 Smearsett, which took the reserve champion place. She is by the C1 Shafthill, bought out of Carlisle for



**The Swaledale Sheep
Breeders' Association**



For further information and sale dates please contact the secretary John Stephenson

01833 650516

jstephenson@swaledale-sheep.com

**Auctioneers:
Hawes Auction Mart**

7800 gns a few years back, out of the same ewe which bred "Black Tag", and has also bred the E1 and G1 Smearsett tups which are breeding well in other flocks, and she herself has bred tup lambs selling for £4500 and £3500 already. She sold for £6000 to the Keer flock run by Kevin Barker, who will be hoping for something similar from her three lambs she is carrying to D15 Smearsett. The gimmer shearing they won with sold for £2600 to David & Val Hill, Great Asby. They also sold a couple more gimmer shearlings for £2800, completing a great day for the family.

Hewgill always attract a good following at these sales, and this sale was no different as they had a great packet on offer. Their first lamb was full of power and style and some top bloodlines. It goes back to the E1 and D17 Hewgill lines which have proved themselves so well over the years, and the Lords have used his full brother on 85 Swale ewes this last backend. She sold for £6000, selling into Northern Ireland to the Glenshane flock run by Michael McKenna.

The Bull & Cave flock have always been noted for their quality and there was a lot of interest in the dispersal of 31 sheep. Topping their trade was a two crop ewe, E23 Bull and Cave, by the B3 Barley and out of a ewe by Y30 Lunesdale, carrying twins to the G35 Midlock, which was bought at Hawes a couple of years back for £11,000. The buyer was Richard Hargreaves from the Barley flock, who was buying back in some of his bloodlines. He had to fork out £5200 for the privilege. The Bull & Cave flock ended the day with an average of £1103 for their 31 sheep, a very nice send off as it were!



Reserve Champion from the Booth family - £6000



Gimmer hogg from M/s Lord - £6000



J56 Skeughdale - £3400



H21 Blackburn - £1000

Skeughdale

Tops Carlisle Female Sale

Report and photos by
Wayne Hutchinson

Once again there was a packed ring at the Carlisle female sale for the Bluefaced Leicester sale, which always draws a big crowd of interested onlookers. Whilst the heights of last year weren't reached, there was a good solid trade all round, with strong demand for all types of sheep, which saw averages up on the whole by £87.87.

Leading the way was George Shields who runs 40 pure ewes alongside his flock of Swaledales with Dad Gerry and brother Josh at Tarn House, Ravenstonedale near Kirkby Stephen. His J58 Skeughdale is the full sister to the H1 Skeughdale, sold to Kirkby Redgate for £14,000 a couple of years back. By the homebred G18 Skeughdale which has done well in the flock, sire to a lot of his top pen lambs, which have sold up to £470 and out of a ewe by A3 Hewgill. It sold for 6800 gns, the top price for a female from this flock with a growing reputation, and was bought by Keith Ireland as a 60th birthday present for himself!



J58 Skeughdale - 6800 gns

The day's overall champion once again came from the Kirkby Redgate consignment, with J51 Kirkby Redgate, a lovely sharp, stylish lamb out of a Hewgill bred ewe bought for £5000 at Hawes by the B41 Hewgill, and by the G17 Marriforth, which was also the sire to the record breaking tup lamb sold two years ago in Hawes. She is the full sister to the flock's "Green Tag" and they have retained eight full sisters in the flock. It sold for 6500 gns to Lee Beacom, from Lakeview Blues, Co. Tyrone. Kirkby Redgate also saw a bid of 5800 gns for their third lamb, a daughter of the £14,000 Skeughdale, which was a very tall, long sheep with good clean colour. It was out of a ewe A1 Hewgill, which has already bred tups to £7500. It was sold in a two way split into Northern Ireland with Graham & Julie Loughrey and Michael Smyth, both from Limavady, Co. Londonderry. The Loughery's also took another from the Kirkby Redgate flock for 2200 gns, leaving the flock with a great average of £3000 for seven sheep sold.

The reserve champion came from the Penhill flock run by Tom Willoughby. It was a powerful gimmer hogg, which was admired by many for its sheer size alone, before its bloodlines were taken into consideration. J29 Penhill is by the E29 Midlock, bought for £5000, which has put the flock on the map, with sons selling to £16,000, and out of a daughter of the old Smearsett show ewe they bought many years ago, by the B4 Hundith X-Factor which they sold to Hewgill for £9000 as an aged ram. The anticipation for this hogg was clear and the ring was jam packed with watchers as it came under the hammer. The hammer landed at 5500 gns, selling to Andrew Campbell, Drimsynie.

Midlock were once again selling a top notch batch of gimmers, with 22 forward, full of good bloodlines and as always, they were well turned out and in demand from the punters. Topping their sale was a strong, smart, gimmer by the E1 Hewgill and out of the mother of E29 Midlock, which was the breeding behind the Penhill hogg. She is carrying three lambs to the E1 Bull & Cave, and is one of the favourite sheep in the flock, with its twin sister taking first prize in her class at Peebles last year. Once again it was heading over the water into Northern Ireland, with Lee Beacom once again splashing the cash, helping the Midlock pen average out at £2066, making it another good day at the office for the Midlock team.

John and Mandy Smith-Jackson run the noted Shafthill flock near Haltwhistle and their bloodlines have gained quite a reputation over the years for being full of quality and producing the goods for new owners. Their pen of three this year certainly drew the crowds and their first hogg, a really smart daughter of the homebred C2 Shafthill, by the noted Z4 Hundith, which won the Penrith Mule progeny three years in a row and is out of a ewe by A3 Scarrowmanwick, the first female out of this ewe to ever be offered for sale, with full brothers selling to Walkers at Brennand Farm, Neil Marston, Highberries and Julie Lee, Agar Hill and another to John White, Rigg Farm, as well as the F2 "Green Tag" which he kept to use at home. This gimmer headed up over the Border to the Thornborrows at Dawyck flock. A daughter of the £6000 E28 Midlock from the flock sold for £3000 to Jamie Pirie, Blarnavaid, taking the Shafthill flock average to £3220 for their three lambs.



J51 Kirkby Redgate - Champion (Crossing) - 6500 gns



H112 Eliau - Champion (Traditional)

Michael and Ella James had a long trip from Wales, with 18 sheep from this well noted flock, and their first hogg into the ring made 3000 gns. This cracking hogg is the same way bred as the Champion from Hawes last year, by the £8000 G1 Midlock and out of a ewe by E1 Swathburn. With great colour and style, it showed itself a dream in the ring, persuading the Porters from Riddings to dig into their pockets and take her home. The Duhonw flock saw another bid of 3200 gns for a gimmer shearing by the E1 Swathburn carrying twins to the G1 Midlock, this one selling to R Gornall, Dent, helping to take the flock average to a very respectable £1391 for all 18 sold.

Judging the traditional section were the Father and Daughter team of Alex and Claire Bisset, Middle Dukesfield. On the day, the Overall Champion and Reserve both came from the Eliau flock of Dewi Williams. The Champion was a stylish gimmer 2832/H112 sired by 4439/G1 Watchhill, and out of a homebred ewe sired by 2832/Z3 Eliau. The Reserve was another classy gimmer 2832/H125 again sired by the 4439/G1 Watchhill, and out of another homebred ewe, but this time sired by 281/A1 Carry House. This was cashed for 600 gns. Top price of 900 gns was paid by Stuart Nelson, Medwyn for a sharp stylish ewe (scanned 3) from the Espley flock of M & N Gray 4024/E20 sired by 2188/C15 Grugoer, and out of a home bred ewe sired by 281/B6 Carry House.

Averages: 21 Ewes £690.00 (minus £529.37), 75 Ewe Lambs £1228.69 (plus £168.68), 87 Gimmers £1211.97 (plus £240.33). Auctioneer - Harrison & Hetherington.



J87 Kirkby Redgate - 5800 gns



J29 Penhill - 5500 gns



H80 Midlock - 4800 gns

Council News



Report by Helen Carr-Smith

The Upset Price for Association sales in England, Scotland and Wales is set at: Males £200 and Females £150.

For sales in Northern Ireland the Upset is set at £200 on both males and females.

Black Wool

The A5 size equivalent of black wool ruling has been rescinded at the 2016 November council meeting.

The wording in the Conditions of Sale relating to black wool has changed – The Council have agreed to refer to it now as coloured wool and not black wool, and black lambs are still not eligible for Registration.

The wording in the Conditions of Sale will now be:

Coloured Wool must be declared by the vendor at the time of sale, but inspectors still have the right to reject sheep for coloured wool, so extensive as to seem not true to breed type. If coloured wool is not declared, and found by the purchaser before it leaves the market, the sheep can be returned on that day.

Association Tag – Ordering Procedure

This year for the first time, the bank account details will be included on the tag order form for members wishing to pay for their tags direct into the bank. This will speed up the ordering process. For those still wishing to pay by cheque, you can still do so, but please be aware your tag order will not be processed until the funds have cleared. Southern Ireland members who wish to pay by direct payment can do so by making contact with the office for the Euro Bank Account details.

Sale Commission

There will be no Association Commission taken from members selling at Association Ram Sales in 2017.

Sale Inspections

The inspection standard for lambs is to be tightened up on for the 2017 sales, and the standard will be if you can scrape the teeth then the lamb will be red spotted – bad mouthed lambs will still be rejected.

At the point of inspection, the vendor or their representatives are to be available at the pen, but not in the pen.

Mule Book

After feedback from members, the Council have agreed to continue with the Mule Book site.

Annual General Meeting

The date for the 2017 Annual General Meeting is Monday 22nd May to be held within the meeting rooms above the Auctioneer, Rosehill, Carlisle, Cumbria at 7.30 pm.



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News From Your Bluefaced Leicester Regions

North East

The ring was packed all day at the Hawes Female Sale, and Alan Pye had a hard job, doing the judging due to the quality of the stock on offer. It was the Booth family, Smearsett who took the top honours in every class. Their first prize ewe made £6,000, and the second prize came from the noted Nelson Family's Bull and Cave dispersal sale which made £2,800. W & C Dent, Greenriggs made £600 with their third prize ewe.

Leading the gimmer shearlings with their first prize at £2,600 were the Booths. J Thorpe, Blackburn took second prize which made £2,600 and the third prize came from Bull and Cave which made £1000.

Shearling averages were up by £215 on the year, but it was the gimmer hogg class where the quality was making the judging very hard. The Booth's again stood first and were placed as overall champion. She was later sold for £10,200 to R Harker and J Lawson. The Booths also stood second and she later sold for £2,600. Third prize was awarded to the Lord family, Hewgill which made £6,000 selling to Irish breeder M McKenna of Derry.

Also at this same sale was an auction of a gimmer hogg from the Metcalfe Family, Silver Hill in aid of the Air Ambulance, and it realised £700 for this well deserving charity.

This year the North Sheep event is to be held at Tow Law on Wednesday 7th June. In addition, the Hawes Mule Association are holding an open day at Riddings Farm, Reeth on the Sunday 20th August.


Bluefaced Leicesters are proving yet again, that good stock quality continues to be reflected in the prices obtained.

Laurence Allison - Chairman

North West

As I write my report (late), the nights are drawing out, and things are looking like Spring has finally arrived!

The first event of 2017 was the Carlisle Female Sale with 183 sheep sold, with averages up by £87.87. The Champion crossing Leicester came



Scotch Mules

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Photo taken by
Eilidh MacPherson

Scotch Mule Association Contact George Allan - Tel: 01290 702964 / 07840 537811
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from M/s Hutchinson & Son, Kirkby Redgate with a gimmer hogg (J51). Reserve was awarded to T Willoughby, Penhill, again with a gimmer hogg (J29). The Champion and Reserve in the traditional Leicester awards both went to D Williams, Elian flock with (H112 - Champion) and (H125 - Reserve). The sale ring was packed all day with both types selling well.

The Progeny Show will be held at Penrith Show on Saturday 22nd July, and hopefully it will be well supported as in previous years. As Chairman, I look forward to seeing you all there.

I would like to thank my regional committee for their advice and support, and many thanks must go to Jim German (regional secretary) for being my right hand man.

With Spring here and Summer on its way, I look forward to seeing everyone at the up and coming shows/sales throughout the year.

Scott Thomason - Chairman

Northern Ireland

Our year began with the annual female sale which was held on the 30th January 2017 at Ballymena Mart. Judge for the pre sale show was Mr John Holden, Blairmount flock who awarded his overall champion to G & J Loughery, Temain and reserve went to W Adams, Holmview. Averages for the sale were £311.

Our Club AGM was held the next night on the 31st January at the Adair Arms in Ballymena where we welcomed Association Trustee Clark Lamont and Association Secretary Helen Carr-Smith to our meeting. The decision has been taken to dissolve the Northern Ireland Bluefaced Leicester Club and return to being a region. I will remain as your regional Chairman with Eoin Loughran as your vice Chairman.

The Northern Ireland region will be having a promotional stand again this year within the NSA marquee at the Balmoral Show and at the NSA NI event being held within Ballymena Mart on Monday 3rd July 2017. All members are welcome to come and visit the stand at these events.

To conclude, I would like to thank everyone who has helped me in this past year to help make my job a little bit easier, with a special mention to my Vice Chairman Eoin Loughran.

Hugh Henry - Chairman



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Further information on all events is available on Facebook and the web site **www.scottish-blackface.co.uk**

Scotland

As I sit down to write this report, spring is definitely here as the lambs are skipping about in the sunshine (today at least before the rain is back tonight).

The Scottish AGM was held on 9th February 2017 on a very cold night at Abington as there was no heating in the hotel. Jim Ross and Sandy McIntyre were re-elected back on to the council, and we have a good council covering the region, and I'm sure the members in the north will be a great help with Highland Sheep this year. Judges were elected for the sales at Kelso and Castle Douglas. At this year's Castle Douglas sale judging will be at 9 am with the sale starting at 11 am.

Dates to look forward to this year are:-

NSA Highland Sheep - 31st May 2017 - at Kinnahaird Farm, Contin, Strathpeffer, Ross-shire.

Royal Highland Show - 22nd - 25th June 2017 - we hope that all of the Bluefaced Leicesters will be penned in the same tent. The members party on the Friday afternoon at 5 pm will be by ticket only and these will be available from the BFL stand in the NSA tent or myself.

Turiff Agricultural Show - 30th - 31st July 2017 - will host the Scottish Progeny Show, so please support this event. Schedules will be available for this event from the BFL stand at the Highland Show.

I hope that everyone's new investments in stock tups has been successful and we all have some good lambs to sell at the autumn sales.

Kate Smith - Chairman

Wales

Lambing is now well under way and hopefully the weather is going to behave itself this year for everyone.

The AGM will be held on Saturday 6th May at Cwmliliw Farm, Trallong, Brecon, LD3 8HP by kind permission of Mr Stephen Abberley at 3pm, followed by a casual farm walk. All members are welcome to attend.

2017 sees the return of the NSA Wales event this year to be hosted at Llwyn Bedw, Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, the home of Stephen and Lisa Williams on Tuesday 16th May. The Association stand will be in

attendance at this major event on the calendar and all members are welcome to come along on the day.

The Association stand will also be in the NSA building during the Royal Welsh Show again this year with refreshments available after the judging for all members.

The Annual Progeny Show will be held in August. This year's date and venue will be confirmed shortly - please check the Association website for further details.

I hope everyone has a successful lambing and look forward to catching up with everyone around the shows and events this summer.

Stephen Abberley - Chairman

British Wool Update

Written by Gareth W Jones, Producer Communications Manager

As we enter another year and shearing season, British Wool continues to be active at every stage of the wool supply chain providing an effective and reliable service and promoting the benefits of our unique quality fibre to a global audience.

In 2016 we relaunched the 'British Wool Golden Fleece' competition in association with JG Animal Health which achieved support from across the UK. The competition was open to all producers who could enter at any of our network of depots with the champion fleeces from 12 regional agricultural shows also automatically entered to the four country finals.

In December, a Bluefaced Leicester fleece entered by Jayne Roberts on behalf of M Roberts & Son based in Gaerwen, Anglesey, North Wales was named the best fleece in the UK, the Golden Fleece.

The winning fleece beat strong competition to be named the Golden Fleece and was one of eight fleeces in the final - two from each home nation, one traditional carpet type and one speciality/knitwear type.

The winning fleece displayed everything in terms of style of wool, uniformity of quality, strength of staple, colour and presentation.

Following the response to the competition in 2016 British Wool looks forward to working with wool producers and agricultural shows to build on that with this year's competition launched in April.

Once again this year a number of shearing courses will be held across the UK - the high quality training provided by British Wool instructors in training a new generation of shearers has been invaluable in improving the quality of shearing on our farms.

What many people forget is good shearing technique is essential in ensuring fleeces are of the highest possible value to producers, with second blows, patchy fleeces and poorly presented fleeces all resulting in reduced clip values - fleeces should also be delivered free from any contamination or excessive paint marks in order to maximise the value.

Building on its success last year, the Wool Floor Show, an exciting event aimed at showcasing the versatility and adaptability of wool as a flooring material will take place once again in London this year.

This high profile trade event will demonstrate the many ways in which wool can form part of a flooring solution with a series of inspirational wool showcase installations.

In terms of social media, British Wool continues to develop this important area and

has active Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram accounts - regular updates and information is available through all these accounts. We welcome any active followers:



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We wish you all a successful year and to those exhibiting, we look forward to seeing you at the shows and competitions during the year.




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