



The Portland Sheep Breeders Group



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008

www.portlandsheep.org.uk



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Portland Sheep Breeder's Group newsletter is published three times a year.

Any Portland Sheep related articles and photos welcomed e.g. history, spinning, dyeing, weaving, meat production etc.

Closing date for contributions for the Spring Edition is 31st July 2008

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER FEBRUARY 2008

By the time you read this, we will have brought the in-lamb ewes into the barn, and I hope and expect that our first lambs will have arrived. We don't rattle our tup, nor do we scan our ewes, so we don't know exactly what to expect. But at least with everything under cover we don't have the weather to contend with. Last year we also treated ourselves to the luxury of a closed circuit TV, so that we can watch the ewes and the in-calf cows at any time of the night without leaving the house until something needs attention. Last night we sat by the fire keeping a close eye on our favourite old cow, who finally produced her 17th calf at about 10.00 p.m.

Of course, our great concern for the coming year is the likely spread of Bluetongue. We have put ourselves on the vet's waiting list for the vaccine, and we can only hope that it arrives in time to avoid the worst of any problems we can expect. It is one more cost, but a comparatively small one compared with the risk of facing vet's bills and losing stock, not to mention the distress of a very unpleasant disease (both for livestock and owners).

Double tagging is now with us! I know this is widely regarded as an unnecessary imposition, though it is not something I can get myself worked up about. The cost of ordering two tags instead of one is only a few pence, and it seems that a great many sheep are already double-tagged for various reasons so that welfare considerations don't seem significant. Unlike our cattle, which lose one or other of their ear tags regularly, our sheep seem much less liable to lose theirs. Furthermore, my reading of the regulations is that a lost tag can be replaced with one of a different number – a much cheaper alternative to replacing a cattle tag with an identical number. I am much more concerned about Electronic tagging, due to be introduced uncomfortably soon, since I have yet to be convinced that it will be effective and I fear that the cost will be significant.

As I write, I am awaiting the result of the test I took last week to assess my competence to transport sheep and cattle over a distance greater than 65 km. I don't do this very often, and I sympathise with those who regard the cost of certification as prohibitive. Having taken the test, I am far from convinced that the questions tested my understanding of the needs of animals being loaded and transported; perhaps it is too cynical to suggest that the test is another example of a 'stealth tax' specifically aimed at further damaging the rural economy. I am shocked to hear what some organisations are charging to conduct the test. The NFU charged me £30 plus VAT, which was plenty, but not so much as to break the bank.

Your Committee started the year by co-opting Steve Gould and Esther Perks on to the Committee. They are a welcome addition, and we look forward to their continuing contribution to our work.

I wish you joy with the coming lambing season, and hope that the grass grows well in the spring.

John Garratt

ANNUAL SUMMER EVENT

It is planned to hold the annual Portland event on 9th and 10th August at Hogchester Farm, Wootton Fitzpaine, Nr. Charmouth, Dorset, DT6 6BY. Put the dates in your diary now, or better still fill in the reply slip at the end of this newsletter.



WEB SITE NEWS

Visit the new website which is now up and running! You may notice the occasional tweak in the next few months as Jo Jones (who is a PSBG member and fortunately for us a professional software expert too!) puts the finishing touches in place. Jo has worked hard on producing a bright and fresh look to the site with the emphasis on ease of use. Fiona MacKenzie has acted as editor and Tessa Hucklesby has supplied up to date committee information and down loadable forms.

You can now advertise sheep for sale, etc. directly to the website just by filling in our online classified form. You can also download an order form for the Breed History book by Norman Jones and a membership form is also available for downloading by potential new members.

We hope you like the new experience, and any constructive comments can be sent to the Webmaster. Photos of events, shows, sheep related items and also sheep! are always welcome for the newsletter and the gallery on the new website.



Xm... Time!

DECEMBER

CALANDAR QUIZ PUZZLE

You will recall from the last Newsletter that Norman Jones offered £5 prize for the first person to fill in the three blank letters in the caption for the December calendar picture. In the event no one provided the answer that was 'Xmoor Time'. The significance was that it portrayed an Exmoor Horn ram, which from the following article had similar characteristics and possible origin to the Portland, which is reputed to be a descendant of the "South West tan faced sheep".

THE PORTLAND'S FORBEARS (or should it be forsheep?)

Norman Jones's book of the history of Portland Sheep, published in the early 21st century, quotes the widely held opinion that the Portland is a descendant of the "South West tan faced horn sheep" and so related to the Exmoor Horn; thus justifying the inclusion of the December photograph in the 2008 calendar!

In the late 19th century, a pleasing description of the Exmoor sheep was published by Ward & Lock in their "Book of Farm Management and Country Life. A Complete Cyclopaedia of Rural Occupations", (with a total of 1370 pages).

"Exmoor and Dartmoor sheep, generally, are considered to be the representatives of the old forest breeds of English sheep. At one time they were divided into distinct classes, but they are gradually disappearing, and making way for the more profitable races. Originally the denizens of forests, subsisting in the open glades, the true forest sheep were small in size, and defective in bodily form, as sheep now are looked upon with the breeder's eye; though admirably adapted by the Wise Creator to pick up their living where it was to be found, being naturally wild, restless, and difficult to fatten, partaking more in their nature of the wild beasts of the forest, perhaps, than of the usually regarded tame and domesticated sheep, accustomed to the voice of the shepherd.

The faces and legs of the old forest sheep were of a russet brown, dun, or grey colour, though sometimes white, both ewes and rams being horned, and the fleece small in weight, often not exceeding two pounds."

There are several of those characteristics to be seen in our sheep today.

*Article courtesy of Kate Kershaw,
and in the meantime Norman is enjoying his bonus £5!*

RBST SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

I attended this for the Gloucestershire support group but thought a few items were of interest to Portland sheep breeders.

Janet Todhunter reported that there have been 108 premises with confirmed cases of Blue Tongue. Vaccine is expected to be available in May for the protection zone to start with. Vets are starting to put in their orders now, so make sure your vet knows how many sheep or cattle you have. 50ml are expected to cost £30, 20 ml £20, cattle will need 2 doses.

RBST has been strongly lobbying DEFRA to include all breeding, rare breed animals in the Breeds at Risk Register, not only flocks and herds over the threshold number.

They are also campaigning for a whole country compulsory vaccination programme, rather than trying to catch up with the midges as they move across the country. However this will rely on enough vaccine being available quickly.

Now is a good time to update your Breeds at Risk Register entry following lambing. Although you may not be keeping your lambs for long, their numbers may take you over the threshold. They do however need to be birth notified. RBST are urging everyone to fill in the forms even if you only have a couple of animals, as that adds weight to their lobbying of DEFRA for the prioritising of rare breed vaccinations. The form can be found on the RBST web site.

On the DEFRA's website you can sign up to receive disease alert information by text or e-mail.

RBST have been working with food producers such as Waitrose to be sure that the term 'rare breeds' is used correctly.

The Shetland Sheep Group have produced a recipe book with lots of ideas for using mutton, they will be on sale at RBST stands at shows.

Rams are still needed for the semen collection. This project was disrupted last year by the FM restrictions.

The BBC's Countryfile programme will cover the Brinkworth Rare Breeds day. Smallholder magazine are the media partner. There will be camping and caravanning available. A cookery and butchery demonstration will use rare breed meat.

Sheila Wellman

RAM INSPECTIONS



One of the Committee's roles is to work to maintain the genetic diversity of our breed and to improve the overall quality of the national flock as measured against the breed standard. We have been discussing whether some form of ram inspections could help achieve these objectives given the old adage that 'the ram is half of your flock' and bearing in mind that 40% of the 490 Portlands registered in 2007 were sired from rams bred by only three members.

At the last Committee meeting, we agreed to carry out a pilot study on about 20 shearling rams to learn more about the benefits and potential problems of a ram inspection scheme. Accordingly, some of the committee have agreed to contact members who may have shearling rams which they are planning to register this year, and will offer to visit and inspect the rams.

I would like to stress that there is no suggestion that this inspection will prohibit any breeder from registering their rams. The objective would be to provide an opportunity for members to discuss with other breeders the principles they use for ram selection, and whether some voluntary inspection procedure (perhaps leading to the award of some recognition of quality) might enhance the value of a ram. A possible benefit of a successful scheme might be to encourage more interchange of breeding lines between flocks.

The inspection procedure would involve using the Assessment Sheet which has been used at Melton Mowbray for the last two years. Effectively, this is intended to judge the animal against the breed standard. Ram owners will be given a copy of the Assessment sheet to keep. For this pilot scheme, inspectors will wish to discuss with breeders whether they favour a scheme which gives a pass/fail result or which puts rams into one of three or four categories.

Members may be approached directly by inspectors. However, if you would like to be offered the opportunity to participate in the pilot scheme please contact the Secretary, Tessa Hucklesby.

John Garratt

BEWARE YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS

from Norman Jones' church magazine

HOWLERS FROM CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS (not ours, of course!)

1. The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
2. The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."
3. Ladies, don't forget the Jumble sale.. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands.
4. The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
5. Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
6. Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again" giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
7. Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
8. Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of pastor Jack's sermons.
9. The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."
10. A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
11. Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
12. Potluck supper Sunday at 5.0pm - prayer and medication to follow.
13. The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.
14. This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church, Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
15. The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
16. Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
17. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
18. The church's new tithing campaign slogan, unveiled last Sunday; "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours"

**PORTLAND SHEEP SWEATSHIRTS AND POLO SHIRTS
WITH LOGO**

£15 for sweatshirt

£9.50 for polo shirt

ring Michelle Jones on 01297 561072



BRINKWORTH FESTIVAL

Festival of Native and Traditional Breeds – 30th August 2008

You will remember that I first wrote to you on the 26th November 2007 with regard to your involvement in the above event, to be held at Brinkworth, Near Cirencester on 30th August 2008.

At the time of writing, and introducing this new event, which will run back to back with the already established Brinkworth Show which will be held at the same venue as the Festival on Sunday 31st August, 2008, we were unsure of your response. We are now delighted to say that response has been extremely encouraging. For those of you who have not responded or felt it was too late to get involved, we will still be delighted to accommodate you – so please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience in order that we may involve you in what looks likely to be a most educational and high profile event.

As previously advised the infrastructure for the Brinkworth Show on the following day will already be in place and we are in the advantageous position of working on the back of an already established local show. Furthermore 86% of the stands from the Brinkworth Show have indicated their desire to join us on the Saturday, thus already giving additional unexpected 'beef' to the structure of the Festival.

I know a number of you will shortly be requiring more detailed information on your specific breed requirements and it is my intention to contact you within a month to give you a more definitive update on the way forward. I felt, at this time, it was important to keep you abreast of the encouraging response we have had and assure you that your interest is important to us. If you know of anyone, or associated activity, which might like to get involved, please feel free to contact them or advise me of their contact details and I will do the necessary.

Again, many thanks for your enthusiasm and interest –I will be contacting you soon with further details.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Chambers

Secretary, Festival of Native and Traditional Breeds

BUTTON MAKING IN DORSET,

taken from www.thedorsetpage.com/history/Button_Making/button_making.htm

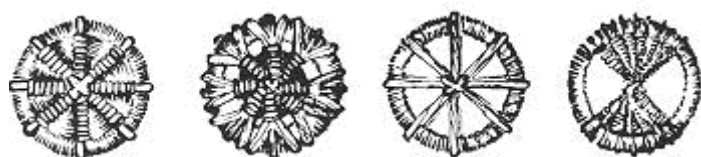
Button making had been practiced in Dorset cottages for centuries but can only really be described as an industry after Abraham Case of Shaftsbury placed it on a more business like footing during the reign of Queen Anne. The cottage industry reached its peak during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Initially the buttons were made from a disc of the horn of Dorset Sheep, which as you can see from the picture of the Portland sheep provided a plentiful source of raw materials. The disk was covered with a piece of cloth and then overworked with a fine tracery of linen thread. The diameter of the buttons ranging from half an inch down to an unbelievable eighth of an inch.



Twenty years later there was a revolution in the button making industry when Abraham Case's grandson started importing metal rings from Birmingham to use as the base for the buttons instead of horn. They were far easier to work with - and cheaper. Combined with the ready supply of labour the industry now spread out in all directions, reaching as far south as Bere Regis.

The centre of the button making industry was to move from Shaftsbury to Blandford Forum, when, after the fire of 1731, a Mr. Robert Fisher opened a Button Depot at his drapers shop in Market Place, Blandford. The out-workers could bring or send their completed buttons at any time; and the depot was regularly visited by travellers who bought them in bulk.



Examples of designs for Blandford buttons

Cloth covered buttons were sold at between eight-pence and three shillings a dozen, while the women workers averaged about two shillings a day for making approximately six or seven dozen buttons, compared with the nine-pence a day they might expect from farm-work, the only real alternative for these women.

Although it was a major factor, it wasn't just the money that attracted so many women to this cottage based industry. There were many other advantages. Working indoors was always preferable to being out in the fields in all weathers. It enabled women to be at home to look after the family whilst still retaining an income. Apart from the direct benefits, there was at least one indirect benefit that was very important when money was tight. Their clothes and particularly their shoes, didn't wear out at anything like the rate they did when worn in the fields in all weathers. It was therefore no surprise that poorer women flocked to join in this new cottage industry.

The industry thrived throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, still run primarily by the Fisher family of Blandford. Many families lived in relative comfort, and were able to survive the loss of the male breadwinner, something that had been very difficult in previous times.

Nothing could last forever, and at the Great Exhibition of 1851, a Mr. John Ashton



demonstrated a button making machine. It was a disaster for the cottage industry of Dorset, buttons could now be made at a fraction of the cost and at a far more rapid and reliable rate, all identical.

Near starvation hit most families, especially those with widowed breadwinners who had depended totally on their earnings from button making. Combined with the introduction of more mechanization on farms, which was happening at the same time meant that there was little requirement for unskilled labour.

Many hundreds of families were forced to emigrate to America or Australia, whilst for others, especially the elderly, it was the workhouse, a sad end to the lives these women who had known better days with the button-making industry.

THE ECOLOGY OF LIMESTONE GRASSLAND ON PORTLAND BY BOB FORD *taken from www.iq.learningstone.net*



Portland from the north

The island of Portland is a wedge-shaped mass of limestone projecting out into the English Channel. The island's maritime location excludes much of the wildlife to be found in more sheltered parts of the county. Many species of trees that are common elsewhere in Dorset, such as Oak, Field Maple and Hazel are not found on the island and there are few wild mammal species present. The alkaline nature of the island's limestone soil excludes any of Dorset's famous heath land flora from growing, with associated birds such as Dartford Warbler and Nightjar only occurring on migration. However, this same thin, alkaline soil is also the source of Portland's limestone grassland habitat which today supports such a huge diversity of flowers and insects.

History

In prehistoric times Portland would presumably have had far more tree cover than today, although probably not the continuous Oak-dominated woodland that would have covered the rest of Dorset. Whatever tree cover there was

would have been removed by the earliest inhabitants, leaving the landscape open and suitable for cultivation. By the time of the Norman Conquest sheep farming had become the most important form of agriculture, as recorded in the Domesday Book. The continuous grazing of herbivores since then has given rise to the short, herb-rich turf that still dominates much of the island today, although the herbivores are now smaller and have longer ears!

The importance of low fertility

Sheep-grazing on Portland and other areas of limestone grassland, such as the South Downs, resulted in a lowering of the fertility of the underlying soil. This was due to the constant removal of nitrogen as the sheep ate the grasses and the proteins contained in them. The traditional practice of penning the sheep in at night would have increased this effect by reducing the amount of nitrogen returned to the soil in the sheep's excrement. The result was a soil high in minerals (from the limestone below) but low in the nitrates necessary for rapid plant growth. A wide variety of small, low-growing plant species were able to grow in these conditions, providing the sheep with sufficient nutrients as long as the sheep were kept at a relatively low density. In these conditions low-growing plants were able to flower and set seed, the most successful doing so in a short space of time thus reducing the risk of being eaten by a sheep. This allowed a large number of species to grow together and gave rise to the high level of plant diversity that is found today in the grassland around Portland's cliffs and quarries.

GOT A NEW CAMERA OR MOBILE FOR CHRISTMAS?

Now's the time to take **amusing or seasonal** photos of your sheep. Michelle Jones would like photographs for the 2009 calendar.

Something out of the ordinary would be most welcome. She sends a big thank you to everyone who has contributed in the past.

You can send your photos direct to her as photos or on a disc, to Hogchester Farm, Wootton Fitzpaine, Nr. Charmouth, Dorset, DT6 6BY

or e-mail them to me at
Sheila@wellman.org.uk

This could be your last newsletter! 2008 memberships are now due

send cheques payable to 'Portland Sheep Breeders Group' for £10 or £8 by standing order to:-

PSBG Treasurer

Jim Gardner
The Dove Close
Whilton
Near Daventry
Northants
NN11 5NN

tel.01327 842324

**If you sell Portlands to a non-member of the PSBG,
please do all you can, to encourage them to join PSBG.**



LAMBING NOTES 2008 FROM THE THE MARSDEN & WATERMAN FLOCKS

This year we're lambing a few weeks later than normal due to the rams being unable to join the ewes in September because of FMD transport restrictions. I'm quite pleased that they're all still inside during these gales (not to mention Verity and I), and hope that the grass will be growing nicely for them soon.

After last year's trouble with oversize lambs I decided to modify our feeding regime, and used Beetlik and LifeLine (in the last 6 weeks) feed buckets instead of my usual 16% ewe nuts with beet pellets. It has the advantage that my larger crossbreeds can (and do!) help themselves to more whilst shy feeders can wait for their turn in peace without the frenzy of feeding time. So far the Portland lambs have been born mostly unaided, though I'll wait for the other 50% before making a final judgement. I'm hoping that I'll also be able to reduce the feed intake a little to keep costs down now feed prices are so high. Another benefit of lambing later.

I also omitted my usual tugging time feeding, relying instead on the good grass we had in the late Summer & Autumn to flush the Portlands (though the Bluefaced Leicesters still got their ration to encourage twinning). It seems to have worked well, all are in lamb and looking fit and healthy. Portlands are after all a thrifty breed – maybe we feed them too well sometimes for their own good. I also seem to be getting a good proportion of ewe lambs (not always the case in recent years) and wonder if there may be some truth in an old shepherd's saying that if the keep very good you get more ram lambs.

It's been a busy year so far, and I wonder what the rest of 2008 will hold. I have already put in my request for Bluetongue vaccine with my vet, and will be using insecticides in the Spring & Summer if the risk seems high.

Fiona MacKenzie

MUTTON RENAISSANCE

The Mutton Renaissance campaign was launched in 2004 by the Prince of Wales to support British sheep farmers who were struggling to sell their older animals, and to get this delicious meat back on the nation's plates.

Renaissance mutton is the meat from a traceable farm assured sheep that is at least two years of age has been finished on a forage based diet and matured for at least two weeks post slaughter. See www.muttonrenaissance.org.uk for recipes.

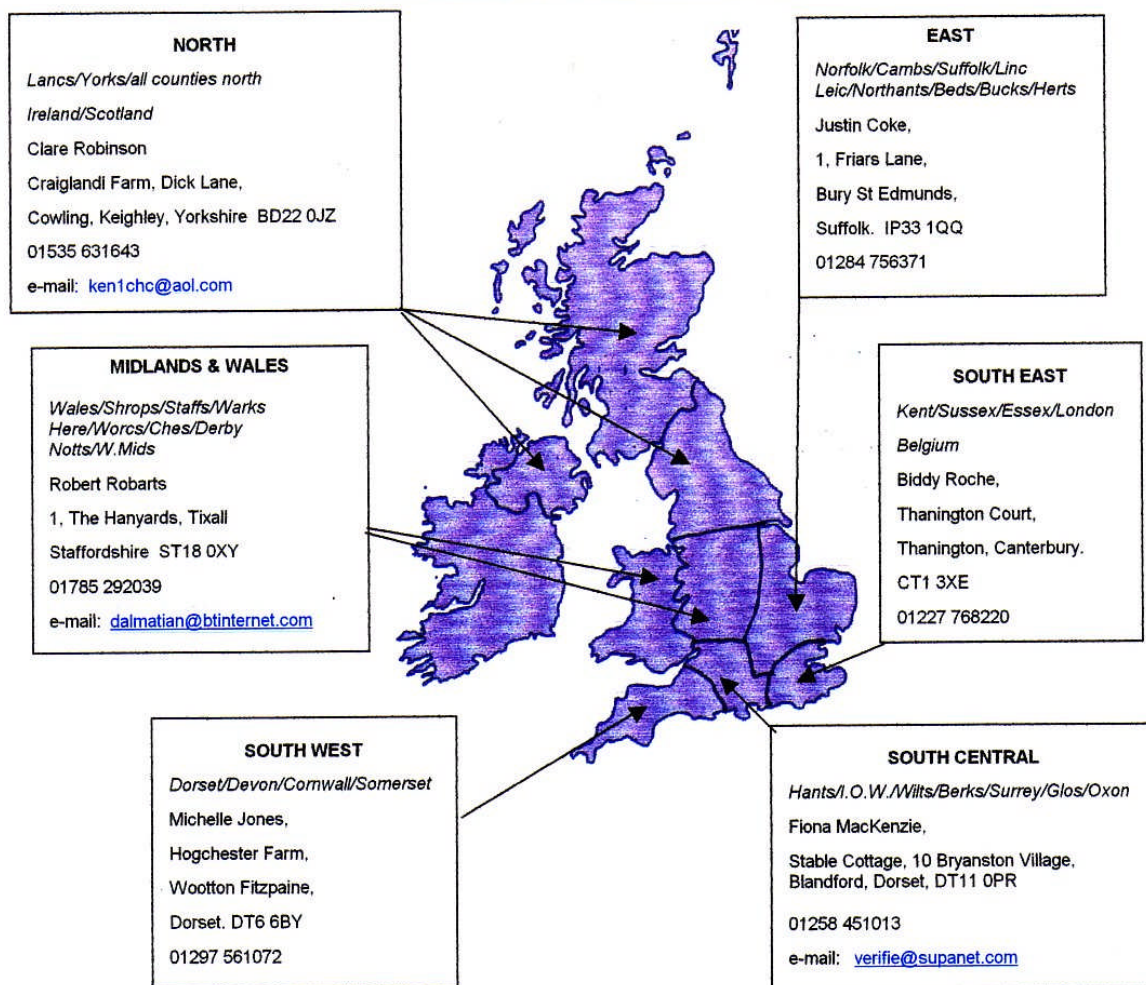
MORE ABOUT SLOW FOOD

In case you are not aware, Portlands were accepted onto the Slow Food movement's "Ark of Taste" in 2006. This is a register of endangered food products which aims to rediscover, catalogue, describe and publicise excellent gastronomic products.



Michelle Jones

YOUR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES



The Committee

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Norman Jones (breed historian)	01297 561072	
Newsletter Editor		
Sheila Wellman	01453 546519 Maple Lodge, 43, May Lane, Dursley, Glos GL11 4JN	sheila@wellman.org.uk

AGRICULTURAL SHOWS AND EVENTS FOR 2008

Events shown in bold lettering have Portland Sheep Classes
'M' identifies mixed Primitive/Minority Breed Classes only

	APRIL 26 – 27	WONDERWOOL WALES, BUILTH WELLS, POWYS A FESTIVAL OF WOOL AND NATURAL FIBRES	01982 552224
M	MAY 15 – 17	THE DEVON COUNTY SHOW, EXETER	01392 446000
#	MAY 26	RBST DORSET SUPPORT GROUP SHOW, SHERBORNE	01935 891466
M	MAY 26	THE SURREY COUNTY SHOW	01483 890810
#	MAY 28 – 31	ROYAL BATH AND WEST	01749 822200
#	MAY 28 – 29	STAFFORD COUNTY SHOW	01785 258060
M	JUNE 5 – 7	ROYAL CORNWALL SHOW	01208 812183
#	JUNE 13 – 15 JUNE 15	THREE COUNTIES SHOW MALVERN RARE BREED DAY – PORTLAND PREMIER SHOW	01684 584900
M	JUNE 13 – 15	EAST OF ENGLAND SHOW, PETERBOROUGH	01733 234451
M	JUNE 17 – 18	CHESHIRE COUNTY SHOW	01565 722050
M	JUNE 21 – 22	SHROPSHIRE AND WEST MIDLANDS SHOW	08709 576444
	JUNE 27 – 29	WOOLFEST , CUMBRIA A CELEBRATION OF NATURE'S FINEST FIBRES	01539 624732
M	JULY 11 – 13	KENT SHOW, MAIDSTONE, KENT	01622 630975
M	JULY 15 – 17	HATFIELD SHOW, HERTFORDSHIRE	01451 822640
M	JULY 20	MALTON SHOW, NORTH YORKSHIRE	01653 699910
#	JULY 20	SINGLETON SHOW FOR RARE & TRADITIONAL BREEDS	01243 811363
#	JULY 31	NEW FOREST AND HAMPSHIRE SHOW	01590 622400
	JULY 30	NSA SHEEP 2008, THREE COUNTIES SHOWGROUND (we hope to have a representative there)	01388 664496
M	AUG 3	CRANLEIGH SHOW, SURREY	01306 712050
M	AUG 20	GILLINGHAM AND SHAFTESBURY SHOW	01747 82395
#	AUG 21	MELPASH AGRICULTURAL SHOW, BRIDPORT	01308 423337
#	AUG 30	FESTIVAL OF NATIVE & TRADITIONAL BREEDS NEAR CIRENCESTER	01225 859543
	AUG 30-31	FIBERFEST AT COLDHARBOUR MILL, UFFCULME	07926 170389
M	SEPT 6	ALRESFORD, HAMPSHIRE	01962 738748
#	SEPT 6 – 7	DORCHESTER SHOW, DORSET	01305 264249
#	SEPT 12 – 13	TRADITIONAL NATIVE BREEDS NATIONAL SHOW AND SALE (INCLUDING WOOL) , MELTON MOWBRAY	01664 562971

PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITES OF ABOVE SHOWS AND EVENTS FOR MORE DETAILED
INFORMATION, THEY ARE EASILY ACCESSED THROUGH GOOGLE ETC.

TOPICAL TIPS –DOUBLE TAGGING

The subject of double tagging of sheep must be very much in breeders minds at this time. It has been suggested that this would result in the end of the breed tag, unless three tags were used (God forbid). However, this need not be the case. Our solution to the problem is to tag new born lambs with a metal tag containing our UK flock number and identification number. At registration we receive the female blue tag with the Portland registration number. To this we add the male blue tag with our UK flock number and subsequent identity number that matches the metal tag number. Result two tags.

Michelle and Norman Jones

FOR SALE

From the **Southover Flock**, traditional breeding stock, good clean fleeces.
Meat of exceptional flavour. All usually available.
Tel. Michelle Jones in Dorset on 01297 561072

Christmas Hill Flock

Portland rams, good, solid shearlings:- Christmas Hill Gunshot DOB 25/4/06
Christmas Hill Gunner DOB 4/5/06
2 shearling ewes:- Christmas Hill Grettle DOB 19/4/06, due to lamb April 08
Christmas Hill Goldilocks DOB 14/5/06.
contact Jo Taylor Tel: 01842 862702, or email: christmashill@btconnect.com
website: www.christmashill.co.uk

For sale, young Portland ewes from the **Southacre flock**, in West Kent,
including in-lamb or with lamb-at-foot. Contact Kate Kershaw on 01622 831636.

During the season, shearling rams, and ewes of various ages will be available for sale from their prize
winning **Tonford Flock** in Kent. Scrapie test results available
Tel. Bidy Roach on 01227 768220

The Waterman & Marsden Flocks

have a selection of quality breeding stock & teaser rams Scrapie genotyped.
Sheepskin cushions and rugs, clean fleece, mutton, hoggett & sausages, rams horns
Fiona MacKenzie tel. 01258 451013 verifie@supanet.com

EWE ARE NEVER TOO OLD

Chris Earl put Marsden Kelly (P5503) with his young ram (XP2294) last year to keep him company and prevent him wrecking his paddock gate and fences. I had thought that at 12 years old Kelly was past having lambs, but did suspect that she might lamb this Spring.

In February she became very large, so I brought her back to my field nearer home, where upon my remaining flock attacked her, so I had to fence off part of the field for her and I did suspect that if she had a lamb that it would not survive.

Late afternoon on 29th February, she looked close to lambing and by mid evening she had produced twins unaided.

I managed to get the ram lamb to suckle ok, but the ewe lamb would not suckle and did not seem to want to live. I think poor Kelly was exhausted and did not clean the lambs up very well, so I brought the ewe lamb home, washed her off, dried and warmed her with an electric fan heater. On returning her to Kelly I did get her to suckle and left them at 1 am. in my old trailer.

The ewe lamb is still quite small but is doing ok. I am hoping to move to France to live this year, so unfortunately will have to sell my flock (or give them to a good home).



(Editor's note: for those who receive this by post, the lambs plastic jackets are orange)

Welcome to the following new members:-

Mr Sealey of Bridport, Dorset, Mrs Green of Kidderminster, Mr and Mrs Howill of Etchingham, Lulworth Leisure near Wareham, Dorset, Mr Leatham of Sherborne, Dorset and a special welcome to Amelia and Hetty from By Belvoir, Lincolnshire, who each have a Portland ewe.

