



# **Whitebred** *Newsletter* *September* *2015*

# **Shorthorn**

## ***DATES FOR THE DIARY***

***AT H&H CARLISE***  
***30TH OCTOBER 2015 AGRI EXPO***  
***6TH NOVEMBER 2015 SHOW & SALE***

Thanks to Gerald Babcock (Cornwall) for this wonderful photograph of Pendeen Guinevere and new calf.

## **PLEASE NOTE THE CHAIRMAN HAS MOVED, NEW ADDRESS**

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## **SUMMER 2015 ACTIVITIES.**

**Scottish Beef Association Event** This event was held at Mains of Mause, Blairgowrie, Perthshire on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 and advertised as a “Beef from the hills” event. Janice and Adrian Wheelwright supplied the bull and put together an excellent stand which ensured a good steady flow of interest throughout the day. Many thanks to them for all their efforts both in stand preparation and time on the stand. In addition many thanks to John Whitfield who travelled up from Northumberland and spent the day on the stand.

We had a good number of visitors to the stand but many of them were “the converted” as is common at these broad brush events. However, as is usual with these events, a lot of the interest was targeted at the terminal sire breeds. The resident “hill cows” were Limousin’s and I think a lot of the event visitors were there to see them and to view/participate in the dispersal sale that took place at the event.



*Bull kindly loaned by Janice & Adrian Wheelwright.*

As with previous similar events I came away feeling that running our own events targeting the real “beef from the hills” is the way forward.

### **Great Yorkshire Show**

One of our newer breeders, Helen Marginson, supplied a young cow (first calver) and her calf on the RBST stand at the Great Yorkshire Show on the 14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> of July. The cow is bred from Lochdochart Snowfall 14<sup>th</sup> and is by Burnedge Arnold. She had a bull calf sired by Ben Ledi Joe 2<sup>nd</sup> at foot. Their good conformation, abundant maternal traits and superb temperament drew a huge amount of interest. I am very hopeful this will lead to more enquiries for breeding stock. The RBST tent was very well located and the footfall was huge. Many thanks to Helen Marginson, ably assisted by her husband Philip, and also to Ruth Dalton for providing the opportunity to promote our breed further.

In my view there is considerable merit in putting female/calf combinations forward at these events as opposed to bulls. We are a maternal breed and the excellent maternal characteristics of a good cow and calf combination certainly seem to attract more interest. Our main target customers are suckled calf producers who are looking for a cow



displaying the superb maternal traits of our Whitebred Shorthorn cows. Perhaps this could be a topic of discussion at our November Council meeting.

Helen provided the following report.

**“The Great Yorkshire show 2015 - Flying the flag for the Whitebred Association.**

*With much trepidation, having never considered showing cattle in my life and being a complete novice, this July I agreed to take a Whitebred Shorthorn cow and calf as part of the RBST display at The Great Yorkshire Show. This show is a huge shop window for both agriculture and the general population interested in country life. Every breed of commercial cattle seems to have a class, but as far as I'm aware it's never seen a Whitebred Shorthorn on its grounds.*

*Having never been in a trailer, let alone to a show, Northwood Elizabeth (06388) with her bull calf by Ben Ledi Joe 2nd (12269) was installed in the RBST tent for the next 4 days. True to breed she took the whole process of this very noisy and busy event in her stride. Accompanied by the Association chairman Donald Hendry and RBST field officer Ruth Dalton, we had a very busy 3 days of being on display to vast numbers of the general public.*



*The young cow and calf attracted much interest from farmers, and generated many enquiries about the feasibility of cross breeding the Whitebred Shorthorn on*

*different breeds; many farmers seem to be looking towards low input, sustainable suckler cows, that calve easily and milk their calves well, all traits that the Whitebred Shorthorn breed display in abundance.. I am so pleased to report the event has generated at least 2 new breeders for the society. Although a tiring week I felt it was well worth the effort.*

***Helen Marginson  
Northwood farm, Lancashire.”***

### **Herd Census**

I have been reviewing the details we have on Grassroots regarding animals alive and dead. I have found quite a number of animals shown as alive on Grassroots but dead on BCMS (Some of them for quite some time). I have asked our secretary to include a census form with this newsletter and would ask that you take a few minutes to complete and send it back to us ASAP. It would also be VERY helpful if breeders could report animal deaths and return the blue pedigree certificate to allow the database to be quickly updated.

I am hoping to roll out an accurate assessment of our current status later in the year. Could I also request you to register any calves born this year ASAP. Thank you.

### **White Heifer Syndrome.**

We have accumulated nine blood and hair samples from animals with White Heifer Syndrome links (animals with the syndrome and parents of known WHS offspring. These have been sent to Paul Flynn, of Weatherby's in Ireland to look at the causes of this disorder in the hope that we could perhaps eliminate or breed out the condition in the future. Paul stated that his first stage would be to run a "freemartin" test. I am currently awaiting an update on Paul's findings and I hope to be able to report on his conclusions shortly.

**Would any member with a heifer that proves to be a non-breeder please contact the chairman if you would be willing to provide sample for analysis. Thank you.**

### **Proposed Countryfile feature on Whitebred Shorthorns.**

Gerald Babcock, Pendeen Herd in Cornwall has been keeping me informed of an approach by the Countryfile team regarding doing a Countryfile slot on the use of our breed in moorland conservation grazing. We are awaiting confirmation of a date for the filming of this. The original date was for July but this was cancelled by BBC at short notice. This will be a wonderful opportunity for exposure to a wide captive audience.

### **Morrison's Funding**

The biggest disappointment to report is the withdrawal of funding in April by Morrison's. We had worked hard last year to develop a health screening and promotional programme with them as I outlined at the AGM in February. A new CEO, tough trading conditions and a wide ranging review of all expenditure for Morrison's led to the reluctant withdrawal of our promised support. Given the timing of this and the financial commitment to the SBA event and Agri- Expo in Carlisle I reluctantly decided to postpone the proposed promotional event in West Perthshire until next year. However following

the success of our event in New Luce last year I am continuing to try and attract other sponsorship for a similar event next year. I would like to discuss this in depth at the next Council meeting.

### **Bull for AI**

Following the success of the renowned Lochdochart Nemo and his progeny I am making arrangements to have semen taken from Blackburn Grafter, a Lochdochart Nemo son out of a Milnholm bred cow. Blackburn Grafter is a full brother to the 7000gns heifer sold in Carlisle in November 2012. Blackburn Grafter is owned by Forestry Commission Scotland and has bred extremely well for 4 seasons now. He consistently breeds lengthy, growthy progeny with excellent conformation, character, and super temperament. I feel it is important to retain semen from a Lochdochart Nemo son. Semen will be available for sale through RBST who will bank semen for long term retention as well. (This will be privately funded and will not be a drain on Whitebred Shorthorn Association funds).

### **Borderway Agri-Expo - Carlisle Borderway Market, Friday 30<sup>th</sup> of October.**

I have asked the secretary to reserve a small stand at the above event and would appreciate some help from members in manning the stand.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the Agri-Expo and at our show and sale the first Friday in November. I am hopeful of a good trade, particularly for females, at our autumn sale. I hope a number of members will have animals forward for the sale.

### **Private sales of bulls.**

Overall it would appear that sales of bulls showed a slightly different trend to previous years with very slow early sales and a bit of a late rush saving the day. There is no doubt that difficult times with low suckler profitability, significantly reduced Single Farm Payments in 2014 and worries over the 2015 payments have left many producers desperately trying to delay purchases until virtually the day they need the bull. Perhaps some thought that they might squeeze another year out of an old bull only to panic at the last minute and come looking. Anyway it is disconcerting and expensive for us bull breeders keeping bulls fit and growing on not knowing if a buyer will emerge.

What I am about to say is a personal view after having watched several somewhat disappointing spring bull sales at Carlisle and comparing it with the trends I note among my bull sale customers. The majority of our buyers don't want to buy a bull in late February that they don't need until late May or June. Margins are tight and feeding a young and still growing bull to keep him fit for task three months later is not a cheap job. It may not be feasible to change but perhaps we could have a chat about this at the next committee meeting.

**Donald Hendry (Chairman)**  
**01236 593863 or 07939 630730**  
**26/8/2015**



## Spring 2015 Show - 27 February 2015

### Class 1

#### Bull (3/4 forward)

	<b>Owner</b>
1st Longley Benjamin (12274) Sire: Blackburn Hill Billy (12127) Dam: Longley Beauty 6th (06111)	Mr A Wheelwright
2nd Parton Squire (12297) Sire: Torr Comet (11963) Dam: Parton Penelope 44 (06102)	Messrs Hewson
3rd Hottbank Daystar (12323) Sire: Blackburn Marshall (12033) Dam: Hottbank Lucinda 4th (06189)	Mr John R F Pattinson

### Class 2

#### Bull (3/4 forward)

1st Northwood George (12307) Sire: Burnedge Arnold (12047) Dam: Lochdochart Snowfall 13th (06056)	Messrs Hewson
2nd Milnholm Gordon (12353) Sire: Spoutbank Gay Gordon (11621) Dam: Raeburnfoot White Lady (05945)	A & A Hogg & Son
3rd Corrie Chromium (12329) Sire: Murtholm Parky (11592) Dam: Corrie Lulu 2nd (06246)	Mr Keith Laurie

### Class 3

#### Female (2/2 forward)

1st Hottbank Lucinda 10th (06472) Sire: Blackburn Marshall (12033) Dam: Hottbank Lucinda 3rd (05988)	Mr John R F Pattinson
2nd Hole-Of-Lyne Shona 6th (06475) Sire: Hole-Of-Lyne Tommy 2nd (11771) Dam: Hole-Of-Lyne Shona 2nd (06121)	Messrs R & D Telford

#### Supreme Champion

Longley Benjamin (12274)

#### Reserve Champion

Northwood George (12307)

#### Best Opposite

Hottbank Lucinda 10th (06472)

## **Spring 2015 Sale Report Friday 27th February 2015**

### *Auctioneers Report*

The spring show and sale of Whitebred Shorthorn cattle on behalf of members of the Whitebred Shorthorn Association achieved a top price of 3500gns.

The show was judged by Mr Stuart Hendry, Katrine, Aberfoyle.

The overall male and supreme champion secured the leading price from Adrian Wheelwright, Sunnyside Farm, Cleish, Kinross with his single entry Longley Benjamin, a March 2013 son by Blackburn Hill Billy and out of Longley Beauty 6th. He was highly sought after but it was GT, J & A Medland, Wilminstone Hall, Tavistock, Devon who secured him for 3,500gns.

Messrs Hewson, Burgh Head Farm, Burgh by Sands took the reserve male & reserve overall championship with their May 2013 born bull Northwood George. He is a son of Burnedge Arnold and out of Lochdochart Snowfall 13th. George was bred by Mrs M Marginson and was sold for 2,000gns to MG & J Taylor, Dippenhead Farm, Largie-meanoch, Isle of Arran.

Two bulls sold for 1700gns, the first through the ring was the 3rd prize winning senior bull consigned by John Pattinson, Hottbank, Bardon Mill. His homebred entry Hottbank Daystar, sired by Blackburn Marshall and out of the homebred cow Lucinda 4th sold to J McCurdy, Broughshane, Ballymena, Co. Antrim.

Next through the ring on 1,700gns was Corrie Chromium from Keith Laurie of Gilsland, Brampton. Chromium, sired by Murtholm Parky and out of Corrie Lulu 2nd stood 3rd in his class. He caught the attention of buyers AC Dent & EO Nixon, Peghorn Lodge, Harwood, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham.

The female champion Hottbank Lucinda 10th, bred and exhibited by John Pattinson, Hottbank sold for 1,500gns to TD & M Moore & Son, Softley Farm, Slaggyford. Lucinda 10th, an April 2013 daughter of Blackburn Marshall out of a homebred cow Lucinda 3rd.

Averages: 5 bulls £2184.00, 1 female £1575.00

**Auctioneers: Harrison & Hetherington**

## **Securing Whitebred Shorthorn Genetics for the Future.**

Earlier this year, Helen and Philip Marginson of the Northwood herd of Whitebred Shorthorns contacted me to ask whether RBST would be interested in flushing one of their cows, Lochdochart Snowfall 15<sup>th</sup>, for embryos. Although embryo transfer in cattle is a technique that has been carried out for decades, it is something that RBST has only just started to employ, as previously the costs have made semen collection from bulls a much more viable option.

Although some of the semen we collect is made available for sale, the primary purpose is to create an archive of genetic material that would be available in case of dire emergency in the future. To this end, we always maintain a stock of 90 straws that are not sold or used for any other purpose. However, this does only represent part of the genetic material of an animal, some of which is only held in female DNA, so we have been investigating the possibilities of a large fund raising effort to extend our collections to embryos as well as semen.

Snowfall 15<sup>th</sup> is one of the first cows we have flushed in this way, and we were very grateful to the Marginsons for offering her, and fortunate to be able to use a little funding remaining from the Prince of Wales, who kindly donated money to allow us to purchase the RBST herds of Whitebreds at Dumfries House and in West Wales.

Helen and Philip prepared the cow using a series of hormone injections, which caused the cow to “super-ovulate”, she was then inseminated at a precise time in the cycle, as with normal AI, but we used three different AI bulls - Corrie Riever, Longley Talisman and Spoutbank Gay Gordon. The bulls were chosen as they were considered to be the best genetic match to the cow, and we used three bulls because this has been shown to increase the success rate owing to a phenomenon known as “sperm competition”. Five days after insemination, the embryos were flushed out of the cow by gently washing the uterus with a saline solution. They were then frozen for storage. We were lucky to have the experience of the specialist ET team at veterinary practice Lambert, Leonard and May, who were able to make the journey to Lancashire to carry out this final part of the process.

Helen and I were at the Great Yorkshire Show with one of their other cows, Northwood Elizabeth, who was star of the show on the RBST stand, so there was an anxious wait as we had left Philip “holding the baby” at home. It was a great relief and a real milestone for RBST’s new embryo “bank” when Philip rang to tell us that 5 embryos had been collected of high enough quality for freezing. RBST is hugely indebted to the Marginsons for the time and effort they put in to making this possible, and we are delighted to have some Whitebred Shorthorn embryos safely in storage in case they should ever be needed in the future.

**Ruth Dalton.**  
**Rare Breeds Survival Trust Field Officer (North).**