

Highland Cattle Club of Wales Newsletter

Issue 51 – Winter 2012



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*A forum for sharing your
Highland Cattle experiences,
questions, comments, photos, etc.*

Christmas Dinner 2012

The Christmas Dinner will be at the Castle Hotel in Llandovery on Saturday 1st December, with the Annual Meeting at 6.30 pm, followed by dinner 7.30 for 8 pm. If you book accommodation, please quote "Christmas Rate".

Please see separate sheets for menus and booking forms.

The Castle Hotel is in the centre of Llandovery at the point where the A40 narrows to one lane, and is adjacent to a large public carpark. Approaching from the east, it is the black and white building on the left, just after the carpark entrance.

Entering the town from the north or west, it is the pink building on the right, opposite the Castle Garage.

Rooms at the hotel range from £60 upwards (special Christmas rate). There are other B&Bs available nearby in the town (contact Llandovery Tourist Information Centre on 01550 720693).

People occasionally use the public carpark to park caravans and camper vans overnight.

Cover photo: Mrs. Beverly Evans with Jarc Ola Barabal II of Gilden Vale at this year's Royal Welsh Show.

A Word from the Chair

Hello again after a break during which Mo and I have been exceedingly busy and searching for a new newsletter editor. Mo has been absolutely stalwart, working as secretary and editor magnificently for several years, but she ran out of time to do both jobs unless she gave up sleep altogether! However, fortune continues to smile on HCCW, and Gareth Davies not only wanted to join the club, he also offered to take over as newsletter editor. I am extremely grateful to have a professional on board as it takes much of the strain off the rest of us: we can concentrate on getting hands to keyboard and pens to paper to get articles written. Many, many thanks to Mo for her efforts over the last few years, and to Gareth for volunteering.

NB Reminder: If you have been to a show or event with Highlands, if you have news you think may interest members, or if your children like drawing cows etc, please send them to me for inclusion in the newsletter.

The club has had a fairly good year. Several new members have tried out showing with an amazing degree of success, notably Bev Evans at the Royal Welsh (see below).

Gilden Vale kicked off the season with a showing day for new and inexperienced members who wanted to “have a go”. Held a couple of weeks before the Spring show at Builth, it provided confidence for at least one new member to attend Builth before going on to show successfully at the Royal Welsh.

The Smallholders and Garden Festival at Builth, now known as the Spring Festival, marked the start of the show season. Gilden Vale and The May had a good show: reports are elsewhere. The club had a most informative stand, organised and manned by Olwen, Llinos and Julian Ford throughout the weekend, with a little help from the rest of us. Thanks to them for a superb effort, and thank you everyone who came to see it.

In July the Royal Welsh Show was warm and dry. It was the first week of the school holidays, and attendance was good. Highlands were well represented, with one or two novice showers keen to exhibit their new skills in the ring. Again Gilden Vale performed well, and Angela and Duncan were awarded the new Cefn Gwrhyd Perpetual Trophy for the overall Champion.

In September The May held an Open Day which was well attended, with two other breed judges assessing the cattle. It was fascinating to hear the views of experts in other cattle talking about Highlands – they are very different from other breeds, from the obvious horns and hair to udders and longevity.

The Christmas Dinner will be at the Castle Hotel in Llandovery on Saturday 1st December, with the Annual Meeting at 6.30 pm, followed by dinner 7.30 for 8 pm. If you book accommodation, please quote “Christmas Rate”.

Thank you all for your continued support through the year. It has been, as ever, delightful to meet new and old members and chat about our favourite subject – Highlands!

Liz McCombe

TB and Showing

A major problem at the Smallholders and garden Festival at Builth in May show was the housing of llamas and alpacas in the same shed as the cattle. Despite being capable of contracting TB, camelids (and goats) are not TB tested **at all** unless they show signs of illness, and to have animals known for their spitting ability close to premovement tested pedigree cattle was in direct contradiction of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society’s aim as stated on their website:

“To promote the improvement of livestock and the prevention and eradication of diseases in animals”

The letter of complaint signed by 50 exhibitors/attendees was due to be discussed by the committee on 4th September 2012 A response from the Society following its deliberations is still awaited as I write this.

Liz McCombe

SPRING SHOW

at Builth Wells

We have had a busy few months but the highlight was the Spring Show.

Two weeks before we held a show preparation day and would like to thank those who came and we hope took some ideas home with you. Note: the day was very useful indeed with lots of hints and tips from highly experienced and successful show veterans Angie and Duncan.

Classes at the Spring Show are combined with all native breeds, although this year the traditional Herefords were judged on their own. Our own Furan Froach of Gilden Vale was placed first in the cow with calf at foot class: Annie and Geoff were third with Barravalla Oighreage of The May. Geoff's bull, Orag Samhach of The May had a first as well.

The two year olds and the yearlings were judged together. There were eight in the class and our yearling Jarc-Ola Dubh of Gilden Vale was placed first on her first time shown! We went forward for the Championship and Jarc-Ola was pulled out as Champion with Furan Froach and her calf as Reserve.



Jarc-Ola Dubh III of Gilden Vale

Jarc-Ola then beat the Hereford Champion, a cow, to become Supreme Show Champion. Our cow was overall Reserve Champion, completing a wonderful day for Gilden Vale and the breed as a whole.

I had been travelling home during the show to check a cow that was due to calve. We put her in a pen on the Friday to keep an eye on her, and she waited until we were home on Monday before producing triplets. Sadly the first one died: it was coming tail first and could not take a deep breath after a difficult birth. However, Mum also produced a healthy bull and heifer calf, and we are delighted they are doing really well.



Jarc-Ola Dubh II of Gilden Vale with two of her triplets.

Angela Handley

GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL SHOW SUCCESS



Una Dubh III of Gilden Vale. Glasgow International Show Yearling & Reserve Champion.

Highland Show Report

Duncan and I had a super day at the Highland Show, although it was an early start, 3am. We flew from Bristol to Edinburgh arriving at the show by 8am and managed to get into the shed to have a look around the eighty plus cattle forward before judging started at 9am.

William Thomson was in charge: he has judged all over the country and internationally, but this was his first time at the Highland. There were wonderful heifers and the cows were also very impressive. William's champion was a lovely two year old red heifer from Alan and Mary Anne Blackburn's Roisbheinn Fold, and the reserve was Michael Poland's two year old bull, shown by Willie Maclean.

The weather just held for judging and then it bucketed down, thank goodness for the warm welcome and hot drinks in the Society tent.

There was a good turnout of livestock although the show itself is much smaller than the Royal Welsh, but it is still well worth a visit.



Breed Champion, Highland Show 2012



Michael Poland's Champion Bull and Overall Reserve Champion, Highland Show 2012

OSWESTRY SHOW

There was a very good turn out again this year with 20 beasts even though we didn't have the northern competitors. Mrs S Hill of the Walton Fold bought a lorry load – well done getting them all ready. We met the Cim Fold (J2 Farming) new stock man, and Geraint and Eleri Hughes came with their two heifers, which have matured beautifully since last year. James Williamson and Jackie Harrison of Reilth Top Fold came with their lovely cow and very nice heifer calf. We also ventured out with our gang The Celen Fold. This year it's been fun introducing our little girl Eirian, now 4 months old, to the world of showing and she's been a star.

The weather varied from bright hot sunshine to torrential rain wind and hail ending with a flooding thunder storm. I've never seen such a storm. Luckily it was at the end of day just as we were packing up.

It's a good job the Highlands are tough. They stood there chewing their cud while others were hunched backed against the weather. *Becky Rowlands*

Results

Bull

- 1st. Mrs S Hill. Alisdair Ruadh of Auchtenny.
- 2nd. Mrs S Hill. Dark Prince of Walton.
- 3rd. Mrs S Hill, Julian 1st of Walton.

Cow in calf/milk

- 1st. Williamson & Harrison. Princess Ruadh of Killochries
- 2nd. Mrs S Hill. Margaret Faye Shaw of Ardbhan
- 3rd. B & H Rowlands. Cairistonia Ruadh of Cladich

Heifer born 2009

- 1st. Mrs S Hill. Gelbhan 4th of Cim
- 2nd. Hughes G&E. Magdalena of Gartchonize.
- 3rd. Mrs S Hill. Lady Juliette of Walton.
- 4th. B & H Rowlands. Frangag Dubh 1st The May



James relaxing in the sun ...

Heifer born 2010

- 1st. Mrs S Hill. Sweet Princess of Walton
- 2nd. Mrs S Hill. Ursula 34th of Walton
- 3rd. J 2 Farming. VNR Ruadh 3rd of Cim
- 4th. Mrs S Hill. Lady Juliette 2nd of Walton
- 5th. Hughes G&E. Anneg 1st of Glenkinglass

Heifer born 2011

- 1st. J2 Farming. Jess Dubh 1st of West Edmondsley
- 2nd. Rowlands H&B. Patsy Foss 2nd of Cladich
- 3rd. J2 Farming. Beadorach Ruadh 2nd of Cim
- 4th. Mrs S Hill. VNA Ruade 45th of Pollock

Champion: Mrs S Hill



... then the storm

LAMPETER SHOW

It was a lovely day, the sun was out on one of the rare heat wave days this year.

There were four exhibitors, Glyn and Guto Jones, Annie and Geoff Spawton , Geraint and Eleri Hughes and a new comer to highlands, Doug Rowbottom whose son wanted to show. It was lovely to see the youngsters handling them so well.

It was a brilliant show for all, well done! Huw and I had a cow free time as we were heading back to do the silage.

Lampeter is a lovely show, a nice day out and for those who fancy showing it's enter on the day... always useful.



Results

Bull

Geoff & Annie Spawton

Cow in milk

1st. Geoff & Annie Spawton

2nd. Doug Rowbottom

3rd. Glyn and Guto Jones

Heifer 2009

Geraint & Eleri Hughes

Heifer

Geraint & Eleri Hughes

Glyn & Guto Jones

Geoff & Annie Spawton

Best calf Doug Rowbottom

Best local Geoff & Annie Spawton

Champion Geoff & Annie Spawton

Reserve Geraint & Eleri Hughes



HCS SHOW AND SALE

Oban 2012

Oban saw a good representation from Wales last weekend, and several animals were brought back to the Principality this week. With over a hundred beasts forward there was lively interest and a good attendance. A question and answer session with the President and members of Council in the sale ring was quiet: this was a trail in response to members' requests.

The task of judging the show next day fell to Rich Thomson. With five classes of three year old heifer, with three each of two year old heifers and yearlings, as well as the bulls and calves, it was a challenge. Llinos Ford took part in the young handler's competition, borrowing a calf with kind permission of Mrs Strickland (Cladich Fold) and acquitting herself very well among a growing group of young people interested in showing. Supreme Champion was Casair 6th of Craigowmill, a lovely red three year old heifer from Mr and Mrs K Brown. Reserve Champion was Alice 13th of Tordarroch, sold by Tordarroch Estates.

On Monday the prices were generally better than and not as variable as in recent years. The Supreme Champion made 2000 guineas, as did the Reserve Champion. Iona 3rd of Bien Esk, a two year old red heifer from Patricia Smith & Paul Burns, made 3000 guineas.

Liz McCombe



Cattle Assessment Day at The May

September 9th 2012

I received this email from Glenys Brick after the Cattle Assessment Day at The May.

Hi Annie and Geoff

It was lovely to see you both again yesterday.

Thank you so much for inviting us to your fantastic open day; it was very kind of you.

We thought you both worked so hard getting things organised – from invitations, getting 'judges', directions, tea/coffee, lunch and tea supplies, seating, cattle to 'find', gather and display appropriately, etc. etc. The weather stayed fine for you – not too hot or cold! Thank you for the borrowing of the coat, just the ticket. The food just as amazing, even served in a barn! You have inspired me yet again to make something different to my usual and to be more adventurous!!

We thoroughly enjoyed our day seeing your marvellous stock again; there were many comments made during the day by several people about the ongoing excellent quality, husbandry and your passion for your stock. We loved meeting and chatting with your friends/colleagues in the society. The friendly couple in the little black 4x4 were very kind to us by taking us around in their vehicle and telling us about their small herd and her travelling adventures on cruises whilst he stayed at home and looked after the stock!!*

*Well Jesus!!** what can we say, we were so pleased to see him looking so great. We knew that he would have grown but you never know how they will turn out after just been weaned when we brought him down! You have done a fantastic job and glad he looked good for your open day. We can't wait to see photos of his girls and their calves!!*

Thank you once again both for a wonderful day and hope to see you at the Winter Fair maybe?!

All the best.

Glen & Alan

xx

* Paul & Marie Carson?
** the beef shorthorn bull

We bought our little beef shorthorn bull from Glen and husband Alan last November and thought they'd like to come and see how he was doing and meet some Highland Breeders.

As Glen said the weather was good for us and she was not the only one who turned up in summer clothes. The East was still in the grip of the glorious weather we'd been having. But here, at the May, things were beginning to look rather grumpy. There was a cold wind and the clouds were gathering. We'd been a bit worried that car parking would be a problem since there seemed to be so many people coming. But as usual HCCW managed to cram more cars onto the forecourt of our yard than I ever thought possible. And to cap it all managed to extricate themselves with the maximum of general jolliness.

The process was an assessment of the Highland Females on display as productive suckler cows. We still have a lot to learn about the development of the Highland breed and its market value, even old, experienced hands; and this event to our mind was good for every single breeder of whatever level of experience. Stars of the day were two independent judges John Hall from Carlisle and Howard Patrick from Pembroke: John is a commercial breeder crossing Limousins with British Blues for Tesco and Howard has a renowned herd of Pedigree Charolais. We wanted very experienced judges who had a track record judging Any Native Beef Breed classes to come and give us an independent assessment of the various aspects of Highland Cows.

As usual, I had managed to paint myself into a corner by providing food that was not able to altogether look after itself so I wasn't always present at the deliberations. However, when I finally got a chance to get to the side of the show pen I was amazed at the care with which both men assessed our cattle. They used a points system for each important element and illustrated the importance of feet, locomotion, conformation, udders and teats, skeletal view and type. I noticed Liz and Robin our two HCS Council members paying close attention and conferring – no doubt about what can be gleaned to add to the mix for the Society's forthcoming workshop days. Over the past few years a number of us have been experimenting, crossing our less favoured cows with Beef Shorthorn and Whitebred Shorthorn bulls and all these elements are a help in assessing the success of the project.

It was lovely to see so many HCCW people; old chums and new, including a few people who had dropped in to see what Highlanders were all about. Geoff had put forward 6 cows with their calves and 1 three year old heifer. They were amazingly quiet considering that they had to face lots of new faces; be separated from their calves to be assessed and that some of them had not been haltered for years

It must have been hungry work because no sooner had the assessment finished than people fell ravenously once more upon the tea table.

Geoff and I would like to thank John and Howard for coming so far and such a splendid lesson in cattle assessment.

Annie May

CHADWICH FOLD

Open Day

We had a lovely day out, with the sun shining. We were treated to tea and biscuits on the lawn when we arrived.

John showed us round the sheds. They used to be a milking farm but now he buys some Friesian bull calves from a neighbouring farm which he turns round in 18 months. They were on at lib feed eating approx 2 tonne each. John also produces most of his own feed which makes the bull rearing a better job than buying everything like we'd have to.

We walked out round the Highlands who were very interested in their visitors. It was lovely meeting other Highlands,

and there were some lovely calves. John fell in love with the breed after seeing some in a field then calling to see the owner.... then the first highlands arrived.

We went on a trailer ride to see the Limousin herd there were a couple of hairy headed Highland crosses there too. A lovely ride up by some lakes and a field full of big bale hay lucky John this year mind you John did say everything was running a month behind so it's not just Welsh who have suffered from the stunning weather we've had this year. Another side line were varies rare breeds of chickens.

We had a lovely buffet lunch with pudding and were well spoilt.

Liz Monk showed us round the pottery showing us the whole process from start to finish, which was very interesting. Liz does lessons, parties, and courses for any us who fancy learning something new. Also there was a shop selling local pottery and the farm shop so there was plenty to look round.

All in all a very enjoyable day with lovely homemade cakes and tea before heading off.

Thanks very much John, Val and Liz – a perfect day out.



Becky Rowlands



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Dai Ormond: **07831 111896**

www.waterwynch.co.uk

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Tel: 01550 740206

email: mo@phonecoop.coop or visit www.wenallt.com



FOR SALE

FROM THE MAY FOLD

Philip 6th of Aughtenny

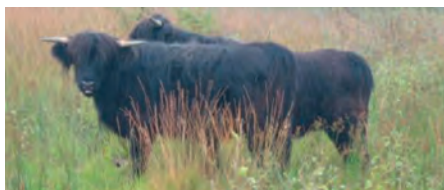
A stretchy boy with a lovely head and quiet temperament



Orag Samhach 1st of The May DoB 24-04-10

A handsome and powerful young bull who throws feminine heifers. He's son of Champion bull Orag Mhor 1st of the May and is unfortunately related to too many of our girls or we would keep him. As you can see he has inherited his father's docile temperament.

2 black well grown yearling heifers. They are currently grazing Cors Caron and we couldn't get close to them as the water would have gone over our wellies! How they got there we don't know!



Also a selection of tough, thrifty steers who have been used to very rough grazing indeed on Cors Fochno and 1500 feet up on our mountain

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Remember to check the club website

www.hccw.org.uk

for the latest news, updates on events,
show diary, adverts and more!

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of HCCW