



# Highland Cattle club of Wales Newsletter

Editor Annie May - Issue 42

The cow



Eddie age 7

This Issue is illustrated by the children who attended the Handling Event at Great House Farm on March 29th

## Editorial

### Comment

Liz McCombe

I have been Chair of HCCW since last Christmas and have thoroughly enjoyed myself. The club has grown over the three years since we joined, and continues to expand, attracting new members all the time. I would like to meet all of you eventually, and hopefully see your folds as well, to discuss what the club can do for you and how you would like to see it develop.

The current trend towards low input, low cost cattle favours the Highlander and commercial farmers are expressing more interest in the breed. The Highlander is ideally suited to the Welsh landscape and thrives, both on the uplands and the richer grazing of the lower areas. On lower pastures they can attain good weights by 30 months. Many people prefer to slaughter their animals when they are fully mature, having grown slowly and as naturally as possible. I hope that as awareness of native breeds and their strengths increases slaughter regulations will change to reflect this. Whether young or mature, the meat is difficult to beat for flavour and texture, and this has to be a major selling point in the current climate.

If you have a computer, please go to [hccw.org.uk](http://hccw.org.uk) and test our new website. It's a work in progress, but we are learning all the time, and a members section is planned, amongst other things. There's an email form to send in queries, adverts etc, and we would like feedback on the site itself.

Finally, a huge thank you to Annie and Geoff, who have done so much to build up and maintain the club from the day they started it. A hard act to follow!

### A warm welcome to the following new members:

Emma and Ivor Simpkins, and their daughters Imogen and Edie, from Caio in Carmarthenshire.

Mrs Judy Gardner, Jackie Phillpotts and Matthew Stoker from the Eckington Fold, Worcestershire.

Mr Charlie Edwards from Tewkesbury, also of the Eckington Fold.

Lynda and Will Jones from Cynghordy in Carmarthenshire.

Paul, Owen and Dawn Webber from the Llwyntew Fold in Llanddeusant, Carmarthenshire.

Lorraine Taylor and Andrew Rowe, and their small sons Iolo and Ioan, from Meidrim in Carmarthenshire

### Inside this Newsletter

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### Highland Cattle Club of Wales Summer Events

#### Cancelled - HCCW Novice Show

After much consideration, the Novice Show scheduled for 6th June has had to be cancelled. Animal Health regulations make it very complicated to organise an event for cattle owners to bring their beasts and we have had to accept that it is now too late to make all the necessary arrangements. We do however plan to organise our own Novice Show for 2010.

#### 20th to 23rd July - Royal Welsh Show

Several club members will be competing in the Highland Cattle classes this year, so do go along and give them your support. Don't forget to visit the Highland Cattle Society stand, supported by HCCW!

#### NEW - Saturday 22nd August - Fold Visit to the Celyn Fold

Pentrecelyn, Llanbrynmair, Powys, SY19 7DZ  
(by kind invitation of Becky Russell and Huw Rowlands)  
Arrive at 11am. Refreshments will be provided. Please bring your own picnic lunch.

**Directions:** In Llanbrynmair turn by pub, for 1? miles, passing through Pandy village. Big farm up hill, turn left before converted barn, keeping right. Please contact Becky Russell on 07971 638727 or [becky@silverlinning.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:becky@silverlinning.orangehome.co.uk)

Mo Morgan



## GREAT DAY AT GREAT HOUSE FOLD

The HCCW year began with a Handling Event at Great House Fold. The success of last year's event was repeated at popular request.

The weather was perfect and the circular handling pen at Great house enabled us to watch everything with ease. Once again Liz Shaw came down and gave another virtuoso performance. The evening before one of the Great House cows had given birth and Liz was able to demonstrate the theory and practice of tagging a calf. She also used the crush to demonstrate how to put the calf on to suck without interference from the cow.

Great House is in Chepstow, on the border between England and Wales. This meant that HCCW was joined by members of the Midland and Southern Club which bodes well for future events in both Clubs.

Liz McCombe and Mo Morgan provided a wonderful lunch helped by Marie Carson. There were some very experienced Highland Cattle men and women at this event; but we all agreed that you're never too old to learn new things about Highland Cattle.

With grateful thanks to Liz and Mike for their hospitality and efficiency in setting up and hosting such a superb event. Also thanks to the ever entertaining Liz Shaw who has become a firm favourite with HCCW. I will leave you with a comprehensive pictorial comment from Imogen; who did not add her second name, but was observed creating countless wonderful drawings and paintings of the day.



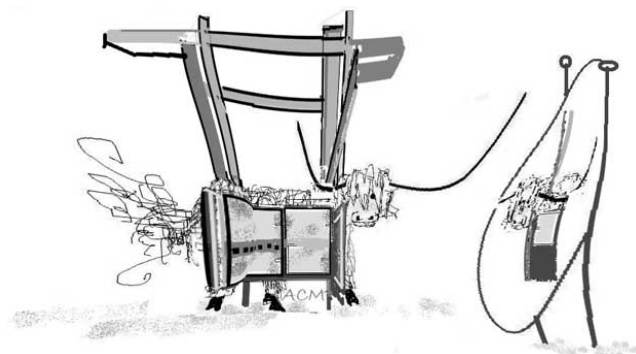
## Restraining Cattle for TB Testing

The advent of the badger cull and tighter TB testing regulations means that people whose beasts haven't been handled much and who do not have a crush are looking around for methods of restraining cattle whilst they are tested. There are several types of crush around. The "full body" is expensive to buy and not very portable without a tractor and trailer. The head crush is smaller and less expensive but does not contain the actively resistant kicker unless reinforced with gates, hurdles etc.

As it is the responsibility of the owner to ensure that their cattle are restrained properly, members will probably find that they require their own crush. To avoid the added expense of constructing a race (and if you have them) the crush could be sited at the door of a building where the cattle are able to be gathered. As cattle will make for the light, they should go through the crush without too much fuss.

I am sure that amongst us some members have designed and constructed their own facilities for restraining their cattle: if yours works for you and your vet uses it willingly, please tell us about it.

I am indebted to Geoff Spawton and other members of the committee for their experience and ideas for this article



*Talking about restraining cattle for TB testing; does my bum look big in this*

## You may or may not agree

You may or may not agree with this but it could be that Elin Jones has done a courageous thing. She has sanctioned a badger cull in Pembrokeshire to combat TB. We may not know for 20 years if this was the right thing to do. There is no political capital to made out of the move and she will be a target for animals rights activists. She will get all the brickbats and few of the bouquets.

No one would advocate wholesale slaughter of badgers, they are as much part of the planet as we are. But to actively maintain a population of sick badgers and kill healthy cattle seems a little illogical, not to mention heartrending for the breeders.

Every species has the right to survive but we have seen sick badgers in the countryside for a while now. They are a protected species and are outgrowing their space. The question has always been: Do they pass their sickness on to the cattle? TB is able to jump species. Wild boar and mink, both introduced animals carry bovine TB. There has been an increased incidence of TB in urban environments. It is possible that we may never discover which animal, or human for that matter, is responsible for initiating the disease.

It seems to me that this is now irrelevant. We have once again tried to play god and over protected one species at the expense of another. Nevertheless, since it has been pointed out that Elin Jones' initiative won't succeed in killing off all the badgers, this doesn't mean that areas of Pembroke will be free of them. But perhaps what is left will be stronger and more resilient. There seems little point in maintaining sick animals just because they are a protected species. Meanwhile, Farmers once more are going out of business, demoralised, bullied by bureaucracy.

There is already a shortage of experienced farmers. It's an aging profession, the average age is 60. As they retire there is no-one to hand the work on to; very few of the young want to be tied into the relentless day in day out work on a farm in all weathers. If we're lucky the farm is sold to someone who is interested in continuing to produce food for the rest of the population. People who are not farmers buy farms to benefit from the subsidy cheque: the Church, a supermarket, financial institutions. In that case it is not agriculture that happens here and food is the last thing on their minds.

As our oil runs out the first thing to suffer will be food production. Highland cattle, more than any other cattle, could be at the centre of this. As the original house cow, they offered beef, milk, hide, were beasts of burden and pulled the plough and the buggy.

We are already contemplating the notion of being self sufficient in food in this country. It seems to me that it wouldn't hurt us to contemplate a future with farming at its centre. Highland Cattle as a vital part of it in all respects.

*Annie May*

## SMALLHOLDER AND GARDEN FESTIVAL

One of the worst weekends of the year saw HCCW drenched but triumphant exhibiting at the Smallholders' and Garden Festival.

This year's line-up included Becky Russell with her Celyn Fold cattle. The Stand display was set up by Charles and Mo Morgan and Liz and Mike McCombe ; Judith Holland; Mike Redwick Jones all pitched up help talk to the public.

In spite of the weather over 22,000 people visited the Show over the two days. This not a record but it is a tribute to the Show itself that has grown enormously over the past five years.

HCCW got third prize in the competition. It is never an easy job to create an informative stand that has eye appeal, emotional appeal and fulfils the judges criteria. That is, if they have any criteria. It has been said before in these Newsletters that there is a certain confusion amongst competitors when a stand with an obviously ill prepared animal and unremarkable display wins every year. Wining these competitions lifts the profile of the breed. If the competition is skewed in any way it is not just a rosette that is being withheld; it is the reputation of a whole breed. Needless to say the Welsh Black won the competition followed by the Ancient Cattle of Wales.

The HCCW stand was busy from the moment the gates opened to shutting out time at five o'clock. Old friends visited for a chat and new friends came to find out about Highland Cattle; and the new HCCW jute shopping bags proved a popular buy. Becky Russell's cow and calf were in show condition, sleek and beautifully groomed. They behaved beautifully and were greatly admired by adults and children alike. The stand display was exceptional: the message was clear and bi-lingual and the pictures, chosen for their impact, were superb. The proof of success was in the crowds who, as usual, inundated the stand.

Congratulations to the organising team for such an impeccable display of information and thanks to Becky Russell who brought out two immaculate beasts



Liz McComb receives third prize on behalf of HCCW



# Some pictures of the Great House Fold Event



## Committee Address Book

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## CLASSIFIEDS

Next copy date  
September 16th 2009  
Jpegs 300X300px max  
Files 400mb max please

### Cattle for Sale

#### WATERWYNCH

Home of

#### The Rowston Fold

**Stock include Torloisk, Killochries,  
The May**

Naturally reared on 250 acres at Marros  
Mountain, West Wales

SA Accredited, IBR, BVD, Lepto and Johnes  
accredited.

**Enquiries: Dai Ormond: 07831111896**

**[www.waterwynch.co.uk](http://www.waterwynch.co.uk)**

### For Sale

3 year old in calf heifer **Coreaman 2nd of  
The May**

Some rare bloodlines on Dam's side. In calf  
to Gille Dubh of Killochries—Breeding from  
the famous Rigg Fold. Quiet animal,  
haltered and used to being handled. Will  
P.D her before sale.

Contact: Annie or Geoff

Telephone: 01570 423 080

Email: [geoff@themay.co.uk](mailto:geoff@themay.co.uk)