South West Regional Show & Sale
Dexters, Sheep, Goats, Pigs, Horses, Ponies & Poultry
Thursday 22nd September 2016
Sedgemoor Auction Centre, North Petherton, TA6 6DF
Junction 24, M5
For further information please contact:
Jess Maynard 01278 410278 or
jess.maynard@gth.net
RBST South West
–
Richard Broad 07772 007399
Sula Gibbard 07818 431548

The Shetland Sheep Society will be holding their Regional Show & Sale

Rare Breeds Survival Trust
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Help RBST help turkeys

All 10 of our native turkey breeds have been identified by the Poultry Working Group as priority for action. RBST has launched a fundraising drive to raise money to encourage new breeders, improve genetic diversity and increase turkey numbers. Read about the appeal on page 20.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 42nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust will be held at the Council Chamber of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ on Thursday 18th August 2016 at noon. For the full AGM notice and accounts summary, see pages 35 and 36.
Marriage’s quality animal feeds, fully balanced for health and performance, providing optimum nutrition for every life stage.

Non-GM and organic compound feeds, coarse mixes, straights and mill co-products, milled using local cereals and pulses.

Please contact us on 01245 612019 www.marriages.co.uk
A time to celebrate - and educate

Let’s raise awareness

The work of monitoring, saving and promoting our native breeds and the work of the Trust.

This year’s AGM will see three members join the Board of Trustees; we will welcome back Sandra Mansell, and welcome newly appointed members Tom Davies and Dameon Layt. Continuity is important within the Board, but equally vital are keen new trustees who bring with them fresh and additional dimensions which strengthen and stretch the scope of the Board. 2016 saw the start of structured, quarterly Board meetings with all committee meetings feeding into these Board meetings, enabling us to operate in a smarter, more time and resource-efficient manner.

Retiring at the AGM will be Martin Anderson, Jeff Clarke and Guy Kiddy. Martin has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of our poultry breeds, in addition to taking on the roles of treasurer and chairman during his years on the Board; Jeff has juggled the role of Vice Chairman with the challenges of farming rare breeds commercially, and Guy during his trusteeship has ensured that pig breeds especially remain firmly on the agenda. We are grateful to all three retiring trustees for their considerable and valued input, and as committed members we know that they remain a source of willing and pertinent advice in the future.

The AGM takes place at Stoneleigh on August 18th, I would encourage members to consider joining us, it is an ideal opportunity to get up to date on current RBST activities, and catch up with existing trustees, and, more importantly, to meet our new trustees.

One of the key messages we continue to emphasize is the fact that our native livestock breeds must have a purpose, that there is a “point” to their existence. Never has the “use it or lose it” strapline been so relevant. For us as keepers and breeders of native breeds, it is vital that market options exist for our products, be that meat, fibre, or breeding stock. In July, RBST has hosted, an exclusive cross-sector conference for key stakeholders to consider ways of increasing the commercial uses of our native farm livestock breeds in order to ensure the future genetic sustainability of the breeds. The outcomes of the conference should be tangible and of relevance. The Summer show season is upon us, and with it the opportunity for us all to get out and about to raise the profile of RBST and our rare and native breeds of UK farm livestock. As breeders and exhibitors of livestock, as volunteers with our local Support Group, or simply as members and supporters of the Trust, we have an opportunity to reach out to so many people to highlight the work of monitoring, saving and promoting our native breeds and the work of the Trust.

Gail Sprake
Chairman

Tom Beeston
CEO

When much of the country is looking to the summer as a time to take a break and relax, for those of us in the rare breeds world it marks a time when everything steps up a gear as the show season roars into action. Shows are a great way to celebrate the diversity of our native rare breeds and the show scene can do two things: enable visitors to see some of these wonderful animals for themselves and enable us to educate them about the importance of their heritage to UK farming. It also gives us the opportunity to talk about the things you can do with rare breeds. Of course, a lot of visitors come to shows with an interest in keeping and breeding livestock and it is important that we never forget how vital it is to extend the numbers and geographical spread of breeders. It is equally important, however, that we talk to the non-livestock keeping visitor about all of the brilliant things that rare breed livestock give us, whether that’s food produce, fibre or an important contribution to the conservation of natural landscapes.

As RBST moves forward, we will be spending more time and effort encouraging people to use rare and native breeds, for which our audience includes chefs and restaurateurs, retailers and the everyday food enthusiast. If you sell native breeds produce, you can take part in this promotional work by signing the RBST Pledge – please do go online and sign it. And if you want to use rare breed produce, you can find your closest outlets there. This is just one of the things that RBST would like to do. We are a small team, covering a lot of ground, and we would like to be able to do more. Fundraising is one issue and given the economic climate, it’s tough raising money these days, but we have to keep up our efforts if we want to increase our impact and keep our native breeds safe. Increasingly, we find ourselves raising funds for specific projects and the Turkey Appeal is an example. It’s a new one for us, but we have been asked to help because there is a big risk that we could lose a breed if we don’t get more people breeding – and eating – native breeds of turkeys. You can read about the Turkey Appeal on page 20 and please, if you can, support us in this work.

Finally, after a number of years, we have recently said goodbye to Denise Chillcott, who has been very much part of the team at Stoneleigh, and we send her every good wish for the future. Joining us is Rachel Foley, who will be an important link between the RBST head office team and the membership. I am sure I will see many of you at events over the rest of the summer and would like to wish all of you a very successful, celebratory and educational show season.

The Summer show season is upon us, and with it the opportunity for us all to get out and about to raise the profile of RBST and our rare and native breeds of UK farm livestock. As breeders and exhibitors of livestock, as volunteers with our local Support Group, or simply as members and supporters of the Trust, we have an opportunity to reach out to so many people to highlight the work of monitoring, saving and promoting our native breeds and the work of the Trust.

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So, let’s do all we can to raise awareness, not just of the invaluable work of the Trust, but let’s engage with our local butchers and restaurateurs and encourage them to give our native breeds the best chance of a sustainable future.

Gail Sprake
Chairman

Tom Beeston
CEO
New Trustees on board

As nominations this year did not exceed the number of vacant Board places, RBST is able to announce the names of new Trustees ahead of the AGM. From August, Dameon Layt and Tom Davies will join the Board, with Sandra Mansell returning for a further term.

Speaking of the new appointments, Chairman Gail Sprake says: “Firstly, I am delighted that Sandra decided to accept the nomination for a further three-year term on the Board. I know that I speak for my colleagues when I say how much Sandra’s contribution has been valued over the years that she has served as Trustee and how much we look forward to her continuing work, particularly in the cause of our native equine breeds.

Having worked alongside Dameon in the East Anglia Support Group, I know how enthusiastic he is about rare breeds and how much experience he brings us, while Tom will bring an important new perspective to our work, coming as he does from a city farm background.

“One of the things that was highlighted by our governance review was the importance of maintaining a balanced skill set on the Board and ensuring that we have new people coming through to maintain that balance. Although we do not have the need for an election, all three candidates were reviewed by the Nominations Committee, which felt that their commitment to the Trust’s future would ensure that they will be making very positive contributions to our work.”

Dameon Layt - a huge passion for the heritage of rare breeds

Dameon Layt joined RBST in 2004 and joined the East Anglia Support Group Committee in 2006, the same year that he acquired his first Norfolk Horn sheep. Dameon has played a very active role in the group and is currently in his second term as Vice Chairman.

Having spent several years milking and running a beef suckler herd, Dameon is currently employed as an area sales manager for a tractor dealership. When he started with rare breeds, he ran a large flock of Norfolk Horns, wholesaling the meat through twice-weekly farmers’ markets in London. He now has 25 ewes and is looking to increase that number. He also recently acquired some Herdwicks from the Cumbrian fells and admits to a hankering for some Whitebred Shorthorns “because there are none in this part of the country, and they would make a great addition to our stands at shows”.

Dameon once had a 7-and-a-half year break from the agricultural industry, retraining as a thatcher, but gave that up as he missed agriculture too much. In fact, he admits that his aim is to get back into the livestock side of farming.

Speaking of his decision to accept the nomination for Board member, Dameon says: “I have a huge passion for the heritage of rare breeds and how they can work alongside modern farming systems. Becoming a Board member gives me the opportunity to take part in RBST’s decision making and to help promote the benefits of farming with native and rare breeds. Some aspects of farming have become very industrialised and we need to remind people of the value of the breeds that have played, and can still play, an important part in our farming.”

Another area of interest for Dameon is conservation grazing, and he has recently taken over grazing a 17-acre disused RAF airfield which had become badly overgrown. He says: “The stock have done such a lovely job for the land – and done well on it themselves.”

To complete the picture, he adds: “I am also very keen on promoting the final product, which is something that RBST is becoming more actively involved in. When I was selling my hogget, I frequently found myself explaining that this was what sheep meat should be like!”

Rachel Foley has joined the RBST headquarters team as Customer Services Officer (Facilities and Book Keeping).

No stranger to RBST, for the past three-and-a-half years, Rachel has been working as Beef Administrator for the Shorthorn Cattle Society and prior to that spent 6 years with the British Blonde Society.

Rachel says: “I am really excited to be joining the team at the RBST and am looking forward to getting to know the members. I thoroughly enjoy working in this industry and am sure that my skills and experience will help me in my new role.”

New team member at HQ

Dameon Layt

Nomination for Board member Dianne Layt

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Tom Davis - empowering young people

Living in London and having no family links to farming did not deter Tom Davis from pursuing a career based on livestock management and, although still London-based, he has become a great advocate of rare breeds.

Tom started volunteering at his local city farm at the age of 8 and continued right through to leaving school and during his college days, when he chose to study animal management. Once qualified, Tom became farm manager at Mudchute Park and Farm, a 32-acre city farm in the heart of East London. There he changed the entire livestock list to native rare breeds of sheep, goats, pigs and poultry, including the first Irish Moiled cattle on a London City farm.

He has also been farm manager of Vauxhall City Farm and at a behavioural unit that had a farm for children who had been, or were in danger of being, excluded from school. Tom was also the founding manager of a farm park in Hertfordshire and is currently teaching animal management at Capel Manor College’s Crystal Palace Centre in East London.

Tom says: “In all of my roles, I have been involved in empowering young people and I feel that it is so very important to encourage and educate the youth of today, not only in food and farming, but also to make them aware of the plight of our native rare breeds. After all, young people are the rare breed farmers and keepers of the future.”

A familiar face to many members, Tom has been seen at shows up and down the country competing with some of his city farm young farmers with rare breed cattle, sheep and poultry. Having kept, bred and shown many rare breeds, Tom now keeps a flock of Whitefaced Woodland, Portland and Southdown sheep as well as flocks of Indian Game chickens and exhibition waterfowl, including Rouen and Exhibition Aylesbury ducks. In his spare time, he is a rare breed sheep, poultry and waterfowl judge, the education representative on the British Waterfowl Association’s National Council and was a founder member of RBST Chilterns Support Group.

As well as bringing a valuable youth and education perspective to the RBST Board, Tom hopes to improve its influence in the south east. He says: “I feel that the south east is a somewhat under-represented area for RBST and I would like to work towards making more of a rare breed footprint in the region, as well as in the capital itself, which has 16 city farms all keeping at least two rare breeds.”

A continuing role for Sandra

A member of RBST for 30 years, Sandra Mansell’s involvement in the Trust’s governance goes back to the year 2000 when she first became a Council member. She has served on both Conservation and Finance Committees and was a member of the inspection team for farm parks.

While her commitment to the conservation of rare breeds remains undiminished, Sandra freely admits that, with a raft of other commitments, she gave very careful consideration to stepping forward for a further term as a Board member. But, she says: “I feel there is still a lot to do.”

Sandra’s rare breed interests are wide ranging; she is a trustee for Chillingham cattle, a past breeder of Wensleydale sheep and has been secretary of the Dexter Cattle Society, a breed that represents an RBST success story. However, it is specifically her equine perspective that has the greatest impact on her work with RBST and she is RBST’s representative on the National Equine Welfare Council as well as being a member of the Defra working group on zootechnical legislation. A breeder of Exmoor and Highland ponies herself, she has been secretary of the British Connemara Pony Society and is currently Treasurer and Projects Officer for the Exmoor Pony Society.

Sandra says: “I feel that it is important that RBST has a strong equine voice. There are 14 breeds of horse and pony native to the UK and 12 appear on the Watchlist, some in very real danger of becoming extinct. At the same time, as we have discussed previously in The Ark, there is a major welfare issue in the equine world caused by indiscriminate over-breeding which has left the market flooded and had the effect of devaluing all breeds.”

Last year, Sandra was joined on the Board by equine specialist Prof Tim Morris. Both share a strong interest in issues relating to equine welfare and Tim’s scientific perspective is complemented by Sandra’s own experience as a breeder and her involvement in breed societies – as well as having a role in the Exmoor Pony Society, she is also vice chair of the Scottish Equine Breeders’ Association.

Describing a key role for RBST in terms of equines, Sandra says: “RBST has to help explain the importance of the control of breeding. We have emphasised, and will continue to do so, that equine breeding has to be reduced on welfare and economic grounds. However, control doesn’t mean a complete halt and we need to explain the importance of maintaining the genetic pool of native equines, in the form of live animals as well as in the Gene Bank. To enable this, breeders must look to the rare bloodlines and make sure that they breed from these. With the Exmoors, for example, there are one or two herds breeding on the moors that could reduce numbers and only breed from the least represented bloodlines. RBST needs to work with breed societies to ensure that this sort of situation is fully understood and that action is taken to rectify it. I look forward to being part of that work over my next three years as a Board member.”
Royal raceday at Ascot for RBST

RBST was invited again this year to attend the Prince’s Countryside Fund Raceday held at Ascot Racecourse on Sunday April 3.

This was one of the first events for the newly-established Chilterns Support Group, who helped on the stand throughout the day. Following this Royal debut, the Group has a number of other events planned for the rest of the year.

Field Officer Tom Blunt, who covers the region that Ascot falls in, commented: “We were given a large stand and with the help of some great volunteers we put on a fantastic display. The stand consisted of a wool display, courtesy of Griffith’s Mill, and included a number of sheep breeds plus a Red Poll cow and calf and a Hackney pony.”

During the day there were visits from many of the racegoers, with lots of children of all ages. Also visiting the stand were Prince’s Countryside Fund Trustee and RBST Vice President Elizabeth Buchanan, and Adam Henson, who arrived with cheesemaker – and Blur bassist - Alex James.

RBST Trustee Tim Morris, who was also there, said: “Over 18,000 people came to the race day, so it was a great showcase for the Trust enabling us to talk to a different and wider audience. It’s a great tribute to the work of the new Support Group and recently appointed Field Officer Tom Blunt that we attracted such interest at such a prestigious event and location.”

Conservation Grazing in Practice

A second two-day course organised jointly by GAP and RBST is scheduled for October 12 and 13 and will be held at Ebworth in Gloucestershire.

The course addresses extensive/conservation grazing and the use of livestock to achieve environmental objectives. Topics include grazing systems, animal health, welfare and behaviour, key legislation and safe livestock handling techniques.

The course is accredited by Lantra Awards and attendees will receive a certificate confirming their completion of the course. They will also receive a detailed workbook and a CD containing welfare codes, fact sheets, contact and additional information.

The course costs £310 plus VAT per delegate and for further information or to make a booking, contact Richard Broad on 07772 007399 or r.broad@rbst.org.uk.

Key RBST Calendar Dates 2016

- Young Shepherd Qualifiers and Final, Garstang Show, Preston
- Aylsham Show, Norwich
- Hope Show, High Peak
- Royal County of Berkshire Show, Newbury
- Final: Countryside Live, Great Yorkshire Showground
- The Rare Breed of the Year Horse Show

Note: RBST will also be represented by Support Groups at shows around the country – look out for details in the Support Group section.

Claire’s pictures in print

In the last issue of The Ark we reported on Claire Watson’s project to photograph rare breed animals as part of the final year of her BA degree in photography. The stunning images have now been published in a book that is available to purchase online and Claire has generously promised to donate a percentage of each sale to RBST.

The 62-page book is available in soft cover, hardback with dust jacket or hardback with image wrap and starts from £24.29 and 10% of each sale will be donated to RBST. To purchase, visit www.blurb.co.uk/b/7154296-preservation.

New editorial email for the Ark

A new email address is now active for Ark editorial. Please send all Ark correspondence and editorial submissions to editor@rbst.org.uk.

Photographer Claire Watson who will donate a percentage of the proceeds of her new book to RBST.
Can you help Alice with her survey?

Alice Lennox of Doonies is currently combining helping her parents run their RBST Approved Conservation Farm Park with studying for a Master’s degree in land economy at the University of Aberdeen and would welcome help from RBST members so that she can complete her dissertation.

Alice explains: “I am currently conducting research into the resurgence in popularity of traditional and rare breed livestock of Britain for my Master’s. Part of the dissertation will feature a lengthy case study on traditional and rare breed livestock and the work of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. I have formulated a survey, which will take no longer than ten minutes to complete, and I would be really grateful if RBST members would help by taking part.”

With RBST’s help, the survey will be emailed to members but if you would like to help Alice and don’t receive a copy, you can contact her direct on alice.lennox.11@aberdeen.ac.uk to request a copy. Surveys need to be completed and returned by August 11.

Alice adds: “I would greatly appreciate it if as many members as possible would complete the survey as it is key to my dissertation. If anyone has any questions or queries, or would like to give an interview instead of filling in a survey, they can call me on 01224 875 879 / 07436818045.”

Dawn Duce 1942 – 2016

Dawn Duce had her roots in the East End of London but after meeting her future husband Maurice while he was at art college, the couple made a life-changing move to farm in Berkshire. They had a shared interest in rare breeds and their attendance at the first-ever RBST Show and Sale at Stoneleigh signalled a life-long commitment to its cause.

Dawn was always very much in evidence at shows which supported RBST listed breeds and she had a special love of North Ronaldsay sheep. Maurice served a term as North Ronaldsay Sheep Fellowship (NRSF) President and the couple founded the Roughland flock, a bloodline which has strongly influenced the breed in mainland UK. They were significant figures in the organisation of the Lambourne Show and the promotion of rare breeds classes at Berkshire County Show. Maurice’s artistic talent provided the prize for the inaugural ‘Champion of Champions’ at Newbury last year.

She was also respected as a Cub Scout leader and famous for riding around the district on her moped with her Jack Russell on board. Dawn’s encouragement of young people extended beyond the Cubs and was very much part of her life around the show circuit.

Dawn’s funeral was attended by hundreds of friends and family who heard moving tributes to her, notably from her son and granddaughter. One of the letters quoted at the funeral said: “We loved Dawn for what she was to us – larger than life, noisy, blunt, bossy and, most of all, sincere in letting us know what she really thought about things. The place will be sadly quieter without her and the Ronaldsay rings will never quite be the same.”

Exactly!

Stella Lambert, NRSF President
EU looks at Genetics Resources

In 2014 the European Commission Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development launched a “Preparatory action on EU plant and animal genetic resources”. In June 2016, after two years’ study, case studies and 7 workshops, 300 experts from across all of Europe, including from countries inside the EU and its neighbours, met in Brussels to hear the findings from this project which covered a very broad range of genetic resources for crops, animals, forestry and microorganisms. Trustee Tim Morris attended the conference on behalf of RBST and reports here:

The objectives of this ‘preparatory action’ were to better understand how to improve communication, knowledge exchange and networking among all interested in activities related to the conservation of these genetic resources in agriculture and to find ways towards a sustainable and economically viable use of these resources.

Although this project covered crops, animals, forestry and microorganisms, it was apparent that farm animal genetic resources were relatively underrepresented, with only one of 21 case studies on animals, although several of the others were on gene banks and use of animal products in food. This may be, in part, due to less engagement from and with groups such as RBST, and similar groups around Europe.

The lessons to be learnt from the stronger input by the plant sector was that the relatively high use of ‘ex-situ’ genetic conservation (such as reference collections and plant gene banks) should be better balanced and coordinated with ‘in-situ’ genetic conservation (using genetically distinct plant species in small and large scale farming). There was also agreement for the need for better quality control and data management in plant and animal gene banks.

These themes were echoed in discussions on genetic conservation in animals, in that gene banks are very important, but also in a complementary way there should be more focus on sustainable, commercially viable use of rare and native breeds.

The overall key findings of this project were that we need to:

- Better define and understand what is agricultural biodiversity and its relational to wider genetic resources.
- Better coordinate our genetic resources within the EU and beyond, supporting partnerships, research and focusing on sustainable commercial outputs that add value.
- Reduce excessive regulatory burdens and conflicts between different regulations that inhibit the development of smaller sustainable developments of breeds.

As a benchmarking exercise, this conference was useful to help RBST trustees understand how the Trust is prioritising its work in comparison to others:

- RBST has recognised the need to combine ‘in-situ’ and ‘ex-situ’ genetic conservation and development.
- RBST has good technical knowledge of ‘in-situ’ and ‘ex-situ’ genetic conservation and is actively reviewing and updating its Gene Bank quality and data management.
- RBST has recognised the potential of utilising technologies including genomics, and has started to use them, but there is still more to do.
- RBST has good networks within UK, but less good networks across Europe and should assess how it should engage in current European initiatives including the European Gene Bank Network for Animal Genetic Resources (EUGENA) and Innovative Management of Animal Genetic Resources (IMAGE).
- RBST should explore how to promote and better focus the utilisation of the UK agricultural support funding to support sustainable and commercially viable use of rare and native breeds of livestock.
Working with Category 6 breeds

While the majority of RBST’s work is focused on Watchlist categories 1 to 5, it is important to remember that Category 6 — Other Native Breeds — should not be regarded as a safe haven. Although having a breed move into Category 6 is always a cause for celebration, as we are always being warned with investments, movement can be both up and down.

To address this situation, RBST has set up a Cattle Working Group to look at the status of the numerous native breeds of cattle listed in Category 6. Its aim is to review and report on individual breeds and, using a risk matrix, consider any work that needs to be done for those breeds.

As this comes on top of the work already being carried out with Category 1 to 5 breeds, any projects undertaken will call for additional funding, so ways are being considered of generating the necessary extra revenue.

Field Officer Richard Broad, who is a member of the Working Group, says: “We have two main issues with native breed cattle. Firstly, there is the situation in the dairy industry caused by a prolonged run of poor milk prices. We are seeing some farmers leaving dairy and this could mean the loss of native herds. We need to safeguard the genetics of these breeds at a time when others may not be able to afford to. The second issue relates to breeds that have undergone breed improvement programmes, using genetics from different breeds. RBST understands that this will happen as it is an option used by many breeders and breed societies to protect their breeds. In both scenarios, we would like to maintain pure genetics from Category 6 breeds in the RBST Gene Bank to have available for use in the future if they are required.

“Another area we are looking at is specific sections of breeds, such as island populations, or populations which have imported genetics. Under EU law, UK breed societies have to accept animals which are bred overseas and registered in a sister breed society, although they could be of a significantly different type or look to the UK breeds. We can have a situation where a 87.5% pure animal can be classed as pure in the United States and so would also have to be accepted as pure by the UK breed society. This type of issue is best exemplified by the example of the Native and the modern Angus, as bred in the US, with the modern being about a foot taller and a couple of hundred kilos heavier in weight – and any colour that the breeder might choose.”

Collection of genetic material, whether in the form of semen or embryos, will call for additional funding if RBST is to continue building the essential Gene Bank stocks for the Category 1 to 5 breeds. The Trust is also asking breeders of Category 6 cattle to consider donating AI straws or embryos, particularly of the dairy breeds, to the Gene Bank.

Richard adds: “RBST already has many Category 6 breeds in the Gene Bank and for some breeds we are looking at re-introducing historic genetics back into today’s population. In return, we would like to ‘bank’ more genetics of current breed populations to ensure that we have a good representation of breeds over time.”

Major boost for Category 6 cattle

Thanks to the generosity of the breed society, the Red Poll is one breed of cattle that is already well represented in the RBST Gene Bank archive.

Following on from generous donations of stored semen from four bulls in 2014, and a further 11 in March of this year, the Red Poll Cattle Society agreed in May to donate a further 5 bulls to the RBST archive.

This section of the Gene Bank exists in case of dire emergency in the future, and the aim is to have 25 unrelated bulls of each breed to enable a breed to be restored should all animals be lost.

Although the Red Poll is no longer a rare breed, these significant donations are great news for conservation, boosting the total number of Red Poll bulls in the archive to 26, which means that the target for the archive for this breed has now been reached. RBST is very grateful to the Red Poll Cattle Society, and hopes that by storing these straws now, if the need arises, the Trust may be able to assist the breed in the future.

Plans underway for National Sheep Gene Bank

RBST is currently involved in plans to establish a National Sheep Gene Bank. The Trust is working with the National Sheep Association (NSA), Farm Animals Genetic Resources Committee and other partners.

The National Sheep Gene Bank will follow the same objectives as the RBST Gene Bank:
• To safeguard particular breeds
• To enable a breed to be recreated
• Produce new breeding lines (conservation breeding)
• Storage of genetics that may otherwise be lost

A large proportion of the semen in the Gene Bank will be from that collected in the National Scrapie Plan Scheme. This semen is now property of the RBST and NSA and will form a substantial contribution to the National Sheep Gene Bank. The RBST collection will also be included and by combining individual archive collections it is hoped to establish a National Sheep Gene Bank full of diverse genetics.

To find out more, contact RBST Field Officer Tom Blunt.
Following successful collections carried out at Deerpark, two new boars have been added to the Gene Bank, with both being available for AI.

Liskeard Ben 17 is a British Lop and a superb example of the breed. He was bred in Cornwall by Julian Collings, who has many years’ experience with the breed and is a respected judge. Known as the Cornish Lop by some breeders from its origins in the West Country, the British Lop is the only native breed not represented by the British Pig Association (BPA), and while the RBST and BPA jointly fund collections of all other Watchlist breeds, collections from the British Lop are funded solely by RBST.

RBST collects for long-term storage in the Gene Bank and BPA collects for its own Heritage Semen Tank, with Deerpark making fresh straws available for breeding from the boars which are listed in the semen for sale advertisement carried in The Ark.

The collection from the second boar to join the Gene Bank was from an Oxford Sandy & Black and this was carried out for RBST and BPA jointly, with the Oxford Sandy & Black Society funding the collection on behalf of the BPA. The addition of Hopecottage Clarence 337 means that there are now three of the four OSB bloodlines in the Heritage Semen Tank. With the Alistair, Jack and Clarence lines now collected, only the Alexander line remains to be added and the breed society hopes to source a suitable boar during 2017, being keen to have all four lines collected.

Hopecottage Clarence 337 was one of 10 piglets born to Hopecottage Dandy 187 and Hillhead Clarence 199 and was bred by Jane Mathews who is an Oxford Sandy & Black Breed Representative with the British Pig Association and chairs their Pork and Education Committee as well as being Chair of the Oxford Sandy and Black Pig Society.

Based just outside Chester, Jane has been keeping pigs since 2006 and breeding OSB since 2008. Jane grew up on the family dairy farm where her family still milks 200 organic Ayrshire cattle. Along with the cattle there were Large White and Landrace pigs, a handful of sheep and a range of poultry.

In 2006 Jane had the opportunity to have pigs again and spent some considerable time researching rare and traditional breeds, settling on the Oxford Sandy & Black. She sourced pigs from Devon, Dorset and Aberdeen and has gradually expanded the herd which now has three of the four male bloodlines (Alexander, Alistair and Clarence) and six sow lines (Clarissa, Dandy, Gertrude, Gloria, Iris and Lady), with a plan to introduce two further lines later this year.

The Oxford Sandy and Black remains Jane’s favourite although she has also added Large Blacks and a Middle White to her herd.

As Chair of the Pork and Education Committee, Jane is keen to promote the importance of pedigree breeding and herdbook registration of suitable pigs, as well as educating the public as to how they can help with the conservation of our traditional and modern pig breeds. An important part of this is the task of setting BPA Pedigree Pork apart from other pork available from pigs outside the herdbook which are not contributing to the conservation of native breeds of pigs.
The RBST British Landrace herd has now increased with the arrival of the first litter of piglets.

The gilt Dennett Skyliner 16C had a litter on April 4 and out of the ten born, nine have been reared to weaning, looked after for RBST by pig breeder Ken Austin. Sired by the AI Boar Deerpark Hamster 437N, owned and bred by the Overends of Deerpark, the three gilts and six boars have been birth notified and are all growing well.

With everything going to plan, at the time of reading, two gilts will have moved home to live with BPA Junior members and will also make an appearance at the Great Yorkshire Show.

Semen from the following breeds and bulls are available from Genus by calling 0870 162 2000 or cs@genusbreeding.co.uk. Straws cost £10.00 inc VAT plus the Genus consignment fee (POA). Further details are also available on the RBST website under the Marketplace.

Aberdeen Angus
Brackenbury of Winwick
Emperor of Newark
Dunlouise Celtic Brew

Beef Shorthorn
Pennan Winchester
Stornour Thunder Cloud

British White
Kelmarsh Premier

Gloucester
Newbrook Perry
Noent Colour Sargent
Noent Soul

Hereford (Trad.)
Bodenham Energy
Freeby Laird
Gwastad Fergus
Llandinabo Mackie
Llandinabo Pop
Llandinabo Quirk
Westlake Leo
Westlake Lysander

Irish Moiled
Argory Edward
Aughnakealle Jammy
Glassdrummond Defender 2nd
Neaton Lochlan
Kerry
Audumla Samuel
Ballyconnel Jim Bob
Bemborough Murphy
Oro Andy

Northern Dairy Shorthorn
Lords Just Right
Phlipott Samson
Rushleye JR
Winbrook Atom 2nd
Cannsmill Snowball

Original Population Dairy Shorthorn
Tregear Grand Royal
Tregear Poynings
Calstonian 2nd
Tregear Poynings
Trumpeter 12th
Trellis Moss Trooper 10th

Red Poll
Chalkhill Buzzard
Datchworth Concorde
Knepp Fantastic
Sandilands Romeo
Underhills Horatio
Wheatfield Duke Nigel
Shetland
Garris Adonis
Hengae Fearsome
Randolph Fergus
St Trinians Mansie
Stanemore Odin

Whitebred Shorthorn
Corrie Reiver
Longley Tallisman
Murtholm Parry
Spoutbank Gay Gordon
Torr Cornet
Burnedge Michael 2nd

White Park
Dynevor Calibre
Dynevor Rampant
Nemea Albion
Smole Albert
Smole Butler
Todddingon Adam

Landrace
Dorangher Malcolm 61 KBB 61
Dorangher Super 93 KBB 93

Middle White
Greenan Revival EXE119

Oxford Sandy & Black
Dukes Jack 3rd NME 595
Hopecottage Clarence 337

Tamworth
Beechwood Golden Bell 5 MLF 546

Welsh
Burry Imperial ANX 6466
Lincoln Reds  
— the story of a herd

The RBST Gene Bank Lincoln Red account is now better off by 1,000 straws thanks to a successful collection from St Fort Squire, who made the journey to the collection centre courtesy of breeder Andrew Mylius. Andrew established his herd of Original Population Lincoln Reds in 1963 and here tells some of its story.

Having completed my National Service in the Royal Navy, I attended Edinburgh University to study agriculture and then spent a year as a mud student at Picstone Hill Farm, outside Perth. During the war it was my mother's decision to put the farm at St Fort, which had been in her family for many generations, into trust for me, until I reached the age of 25. It had been in her family for many generations, and in fact had been run by a succession of females for the previous 70 years. Taking over the farm in 1960 I decided to find someone who could help me run the place and after a very short morning of interviewing a few people, engaged a young ex-national service cavalry man, David Evans.

St Fort has always been a mixed arable and livestock farm and in the days after the war the cattle were mostly blue/grey crossed with an Aberdeen Angus bull. I recall discussing with David the way forward for our cattle and he suggested we should get several Lincoln Reds. This was a breed of cattle I had only dimly heard of and I certainly had not seen any Lincoln Reds. We discussed how these animals were bigger than most other breeds, had a better food conversion rate and a better daily liveweight gain than all other native breeds, so it came to pass that David set off to buy half a dozen of these cows to see how we got on.

In fact, the first cows were not registered but they did so well that another expedition to purchase a number of registered females and a bull took place. Who were they and can we still trace our lines back to them some 65 years on? Tracing them is no problem as we still have all their pedigree certificates and these show that Messrs G W Halgarth of Driby Manor at Alford and C L Bembridge Ltd, Anwick House, Timberland, were prominent in the formation of our herd as was Russell Taylor of Moncur in Perthshire who sold us Moncur Empress, Moncur Vanity, Moncur Brilliance and Moncur Elspeth. Many of the current names in our herd and female lines are directly descended from these splendid cows with names such as Anwick Mary, Hannah and Hetty, all still in our herd.

The sire of the Moncur females were mostly Moncur Edwin, although Moncur Empress was sired by Whitehouse Donald. Russell Taylor's herd of Lincoln Reds was quite well established before we purchased the first ones and his females were largely descended from the Saltmarsh, Spridcliffe and Nocturn herds, but it was a bull named Moncur Punch that features in our herd today.

By 1965 all cross breeding had come to a halt and the herd was now fully formed and entered into the Lincoln Red Cattle Society's Herd Book. I remember driving to Alford for the show and sale in November 1966 and purchasing a bull that was to have a big effect on the herd, Cockerington Jonathan. Bred by JW & BS Needham, his sire was Cockerington Earl and his dam was Cockerington V84. She was descended from the Nocton herd. What was it that was so special about Jonathan? He had been Champion at the Lincolnshire Show in 1966 and 1st in weight for age at the Royal Show. He was a powerful young bull with presence, length and depth, and a tremendous dark red curly coat. We took him to the Royal Highland Show in 1971 where he became Breed Champion. This may have been a golden age for the breed as the continentals were just beginning to influence the cattle market. Bulls such as St Fort Upstart were exported to Argentina in 1980. We bred a bull named St Fort Xmoor, son of Market Stainton Paul. Xmoor had had tremendous success in the showing where he was Champion at the Royal Highland Show 3 years in succession and

At the recent Fife Show, in the foreground 14-month old pedigree bull St Fort Upstart, with, behind him, young heifer St Fort Missy with a Lincoln Red cross, St Fort Anne, in the background.

St Fort Squire with cows and calves born this spring.
2 years at the Royal Show. He sired many of our notable bulls and had a big impact on the females in our herd too. The Cockerington Herd once again had a story to tell when we purchased “Tyler” who not only bred tremendous offspring but was Champion at the Highland and the Royal Show twice running. We have a fine photograph of “Tyler” on our farm office wall, so it perhaps wasn’t too surprising that in 2000 we purchased a son of his, a bull named Benton Beau. Bred by Messrs Metcalf and Butcher, this came about as they had the last available straw from Cockerington Tyler and used it on their wonderful cow, Panworth Bashful, who in turn produced Benton Beau.

The two things which then affected the herd were the suckler cow quota scheme, and my decision to start a herd of pedigree Aberdeen Angus to run alongside the Lincoln Reds. The Lincoln Reds had to be reduced in numbers as our total quota was only 84 cows. In the late 1980s and early ‘90s our main stock bulls were St Fort Atlas and Hemingby Paramount. Atlas bred several notable bulls, St Fort Dickens and St Fort Essex. We also purchased a fine stock bull Hemingby Paramount and, later, a fine bull bred by David Evans, who had moved back to Lincolnshire in 1988, Limestone Clansman, who was Champion at the Highland that year.

Around this time, the breed society introduced the notion of upgrading the breed, now known as breed development. It was also around this time that my wife Hilary pointed out to me that we had very few P (original population) cows in the herd, and asked what was I going to do about it. The only solution was to re-introduce some new female lines by buying some from elsewhere. This was done by purchasing a 9-year-old P cow, Brooks Thora 119th with an online bid securing her at a record price of £3800. However, not only was she a tremendous cow, she had a fine heifer calf at foot and was also carrying a calf to Cowbridge Ambassador. The unbred calf turned out to be a great bull, which we named Harry and used as a stock bull and sold some of his progeny at Newark. What we liked about Harry was his tremendous easy and smooth fleshing qualities, aligned with excellent liveweight gain figure. A year later we added more Ps with the purchase of two heifers from the Norton herd and two from Harrington herd and a heifer called Lucky from the Rumford herd.

Looking at the photographs of bulls from an earlier time, the best ones displayed nearly all the traits that one could want for in a modern Lincoln Red. Could it be that crossing our pedigree or XP cows with a good P bull or vice versa would produce what we want today? To this end we have used a mixture of ET and AI to move in a direction that will hopefully give us enough P registered males and females to select from, so we can choose to either breed original population (P) Lincoln Reds or Pedigree (XP) stock.

Now, in 2016, there is no sucker cow quota so our numbers are up, and since we no longer have a flock of North Country Cheviots we have more grass. My eldest son Caspar joined the farm as a partner a few years ago and he and our tractorman/stockman Billy Walker look after the cattle. We have around 70 Aberdeen Angus cows and two bulls, half spring calvers and half autumn calving. The Lincoln Reds are basically split into two groups of autumn calvers, of roughly 30 cows each. The bull calves from both breeds are finished together at 11 to 13 months and go to Scotbeef and a few bulls are selected and retained for breeding at about this time.

Looking at EBV figures, there is no doubt that the P Lincoln Reds have better female traits, producing more milk with their offspring doing better, at least to start with. I am certain that we are correct in returning to some of the genetics from earlier times in the Lincoln Red herd book, particularly in view of the renewed interest in native breeds with the growing demand for cattle that finish with less input and calve easily.

I am heartened by a renewed interest in the Lincoln Red, both as a pedigree animal and as a terminal sire for commercial use. Here in Scotland several very large commercial stockmen are now using Lincoln Reds, mostly crossing with Simmental X or Bluegrey cows. I believe there is a large untapped market in the north of England and up here in Scotland too which needs to be promoted not only by individual breeders but by the breed society as well – in fact, the Society’s stand at the Scottish “Beef from the Hills” cattle event last May indicated a high interest.

The Lincoln Red was the only cattle breed to move down a category in the Watchlist this year, going from Category 4 – at risk, to Category 3 – Vulnerable. St Fort Squire, now represented by 1,000 straws, was considered to be genetically very suitable for the Gene Bank and RBST is very grateful to breeder Andrew Mylius for agreeing to put the bull in for collection.

New Shetland semen bank

Shetland cattle semen is now available for purchase from the Shetland Cattle Herd Book Society (SCHBS) semen store and bank. Semen is available from seven bulls, with four more currently in the stud for collection.

There is a low level of relatedness between the bulls so SCBA members who wish to use AI on an ongoing basis will be able to plan long-term breeding programmes without the risk of inbreeding. All but one of the bulls is still living, so information about them is readily available and breeders will be able to consider such things as type, size, conformation, temperament, colour and milkiness. As most of the bulls are still alive, numbers of existing progeny will be considered, and sales of some straws may be restricted in this generation.

Straws are available at £10 each plus transport charge and enquiries should go to Evelyn Leask, Secretary at semenstoreschbs@aol.co.uk or by text message to Evelyn at 07957 936850.
A Life Member’s commitment to British Whites

When RBST Life Member Mick Wright began with British Whites there were only around 150 cows and 6 bulls remaining of the breed. Today, although having dipped back into Category 5 of the Watchlist, the breed’s numbers are far healthier and Mick is one of those dedicated breeders who have contributed to its survival.

Mick and his son David farm at Tretower in Powys, in a unique setting with Tretower Castle forming part of their holding. From a farming background in South Wales, Mick started his working life with the Meat & Livestock Commission (MLC), initially working in the newly emerging Milton Keynes as an economist, in an office environment not much to his taste, and then out in the field recording pedigree livestock in Brecon and Monmouthshire – “a brilliant job – paid to drive around my home patch!”

Mick finished at MLC in 1975 to join his father in farming. Unfortunately, with the M4 “due to be built all over the farm” the land in South Wales was lost and the family moved to Warwickshire, where they farmed for the next 10 years and where Mick and his wife Jodi’s sons David and William were born. The move back to South Wales, where daughter Elizabeth was born, came in 1985 when the family responded to an advertisement to farm 1,000 acres near Abergavenny on a contract basis.

When suckler herds first came into vogue, Mick’s father, who had been in semi-intensive beef, decided to go into Welsh Blacks. Mick, on the other hand, had a burgeoning interest in “white” cattle, as he explains: “I was at Wye College, where I had a brilliant time but hadn’t over-indulged in study, and had gone to the library to do some revision. I came across Storer’s Wild White Cattle of Britain and was absolutely fascinated. About the time my father decided to go into Welsh Blacks, I read a letter in Farmer’s Weekly from Dan Craig in Lanarkshire talking about the growth rates in British White sucklers. I had been saving some money to buy shares, but shortly after I had read Dan’s article, my father saw an advertisement for British Whites and said to me ‘here’s what to do with that money’. I rang up and it was Dan Craig who was advertising and he agreed to sell me two in-calf cows. This transaction led to a lifelong friendship.”

Unfortunately for Mick, the shares he had planned to buy might have provided a better return than the cows. One proved not to be in calf and the other produced one bull calf and then went barren. His next purchases were three Faygate cows, one of the oldest established herds, bought from another RBST founder member, Michael Ann. Mick also acquired Woodbastwick Statesman, a bull which could be said to be the founder of the modern line, from former British White Cattle Society Chairman and President, John Cator.

Mick’s early experiences of breeding might have put lesser spirits off – of the first 42 calves born, 40 were bull calves and, as he says: “The cows were dying of old age before I could afford to buy new heifers.” Happily, the farm still had the Welsh Blacks and, by then, a thriving flock of Lleyn sheep. On the plus side, some of the bulls were performance tested at Holme Lacy and Stoneleigh and performed better than many of the other native breeds being tested, including Herefords.

Having moved to Warwickshire with around 10 British Whites, the return to Wales, with more land, meant the opportunity to increase the breeding herd. At the same time, it gave the Wrights the opportunity to increase their flock of pure-bred Lleyn sheep, a breed that the family first got involved with when grading up Texels. Mick says: “When I was with MLC, we couldn’t find 1,000 Lleyns to record, the numbers were so low. We got involved because my father came back from the Royal Show one year enthusing about Texels but they were so expensive that we decided to grade up and an MLC contact suggested we use Lleyns. We were at one point going to sell the Lleyn ewes, but someone working for me said I should keep them so we bought a Lleyn ram to breed pure. We eventually built up to a flock of 1,400 which I believe was one of the biggest and most prolific flocks recorded.”

While still in Warwickshire and finding the best way to make money on 230 acres was to sell pedigree stock, Mick had a call from John Cator who wanted to bring some American buyers to see him. Mick explains what happened: “One of the visitors saw Statesman and asked ‘how much?’ I had paid £250 for him and didn’t really want to sell so I asked for £1,250 and the American buyer accepted. He was a 7-year old bull and we had taken semen from him on farm, so I agreed to sell.

“Tried to sell a bull at auction but the bidding didn’t reach the £1,250. I contacted the Guys at Stoneleigh and they bought the bull for £1,250. I wanted to keep the bull, but the American buyer had his heart set on it.”

This was in the late 70s and the transport company due to fly him to the States was called the Flying Tigers, run by a group of US Army Vietnam veterans. The
plane was still in Germany, so Statesman had to spend the night tied up next to some heifers in some pretty run-down old farm buildings which were used for holding stock. When the plane arrived, the body was just one big empty space. The flight was due to carry Statesman plus several other sorts of cattle and some Thoroughbred horses and there was only one stockman to deal with them. We had to help build the pens in the plane with hurdles and string and then to load Statesman, I had to lead him onto a pallet on a forklift truck, and we were lifted up to the plane doors. He walked in quite happily on what was only his sixth or seventh time being halter led. He arrived safely in America and went on to be a great success there.”

In 1990, “to fill in my spare time”, Mick decided to go into dairying and sold half of his British Whites on what he describes as “one of the best days of my farming career”. Around 30 cattle fetched £32,000, paying for about half of the dairy herd. Between 1990 and 1999, he held a sale of British White cows every three years, just selling bulls in between, then with a break because of FMD, a sale in 2010 achieved “brilliant results” with a total clearance.

A change in fortunes and direction came in 2013 when, after having converted from contract farming to tenancies, the Wrights were faced with an attempt to double their rent. Having already bought the land at Tretower, adjacent to that which they rented, they gave up the tenancies. Mick says: “We were the victims of land agents. My son David had given up his job as an investment analyst to join me on the farm and he came home to 1,300 acres, but after 5 years that came down to 150 because of the loss of the tenancy. We held two reduction sales, one of the British Whites and the other, which was a wonderful sale, where 899 Lleyns were sold mostly to people we knew, which I found very touching.”

Although with reduced numbers, both Mick and David remain committed to pedigree breeding. With their current bull, Castleton Kerfuffle, they are hoping to collect semen and having joined the Cattle Health Scheme, will be open to buyers from around the world. In past years, Mick has taken semen from several bulls for export to Ireland, the USA, Australia and Colombia. With smaller numbers, the Wrights are unlikely to hold sales in the future, concentrating instead on dealing in individual animals. Having taken over a lot of the work on the farm, David is looking to add value to the stock and find other ways to diversify. With the castle providing a picturesque backdrop, they offer a venue for wedding receptions and shortly to be added to the farm is a top-of-the-range shepherd’s hut for holiday lets. David, like his father, however, remains committed to raising quality pedigree British Whites.

Commenting on the future for the breed, Mick, who is a Vice President of the British White Cattle Society, says: “We need to improve the quality of the bulls as we still see some animals that are not up to scratch. However, the Society has introduced an inspection scheme which is excellent and it tries in general to be more than just a registration facility by doing things like offering a ‘friendly ear’ when members encounter problems. The Society management committee is very active and I would like to get more involved personally, now that David is doing more of the physical stuff on the farm.

“For the breed itself, the key is to eat them. They make very good meat – we had a British White heifer for my daughter Lizzie’s wedding last year, and it was excellent. The value of the breed is ultimately in the quality of the meat we produce and if the breed is to have a future, we must ensure that this is understood.”

Mick, who recalls the legendary hospitality of Michael Rosenberg’s caravan, and his father Charles were both founder members of RBST and with son William also joining as a Life Member, the Trust had enjoyed three generations of Wright support. When the RBST Show and Sale was held at Stoneleigh, the family always made a point to attend.

Recently, the family has added the generous donation of a number of British White embryos, which had been in store after their export to the US fell through, plus a number of semen straws. These now form part of RBST’s Gene Bank and the Trust is extremely grateful to the Wrights for their continuing interest and support.
Lennoxlove Estate hosts rare breed enthusiasts from Germany

Lennoxlove Estate in Haddington, East Lothian, the home of his Grace the Duke of Hamilton, was the first stop on a tour of Scotland recently undertaken by approximately 70 members of the German Association for the Conservation of Rare Breeds who had flown over for their annual study tour.

Lennoxlove Estate is home to the Cadzow herd of White Park Cattle, which is one of three heritage herds. The visitors had expressed a special interest in the White Park breed and drove straight from the airport to Lennoxlove in order to spend an afternoon viewing the cattle. White Park Cattle Society President, Lawrence Alderson, and Chairman, Alistair Black, were present to welcome the visitors and Farm Manager Keith Stuart led the tour of the cattle. RBST’s Ruth Dalton was also present to speak to the visitors.

Alistair Black said “We were delighted the Association contacted the White Park Cattle Society to say how keen they were to include a visit to one of our herds during their study tour. There is strong support in Germany for White Park cattle and the visitors were excited to view one of our heritage herds.”
Preserving the pedigree ponies of Dartmoor

Dartmoor National Park is a dramatic landscape of granite tors, deep wooded valleys, rugged wide open spaces – and ponies. While there are ponies of no known breeding of various types and colours which graze the moor, only the pedigree Dartmoor pony is its true native breed. Today the Dartmoor Pony Society exists in part to preserve the pedigree pony on the Moor and help the moorland farmers improve their stock. Here Viv Brown, Secretary of the Society, explains some of its work.

Ponies have been recorded living on the wild and inhospitable moors of Dartmoor since the Middle Ages. They have the metabolism to prosper in its tough and uncompromising climate yet have an exceptional temperament making them suitable as children’s ponies and able to succeed in all spheres of competition.

Because the Moor is grazed by a variety of hill ponies, there has always been a need to ensure that the true pedigree Dartmoor bloodlines are preserved. Someone who understood this back in the 1980s was Dartmoor farmer and Duchy tenant John Coaker, who believed that something should be done to preserve the pedigree pony on the Moor and help moorland farmers improve their stock.

Working with the then Duchy of Cornwall’s deputy land steward, Colin Sturmer, and John Pugsley, who was on the Duchy of Cornwall’s Prince’s Council, Mr Coaker developed the idea of an upgrading scheme. The Duchy of Cornwall agreed to allow several of their tenant farmers to use land on which to run the scheme and, in 1988, the Dartmoor Pony Society Moorland Scheme began. To begin with it involved just a few ponies, but it gradually grew in numbers and it is still run today in conjunction with the Duchy of Cornwall.

Ponies involved in the scheme are of the true whole coloured Dartmoor type, which, for various reasons, have never been registered in the Society’s stud book. To be eligible, they must be bred on Dartmoor, within the National Park, and be owned by a member of the Dartmoor Pony Society who has a holding number. The scheme consists of four stages and at each stage the ponies are inspected when they are collected at Drift time by two Dartmoor Pony Society judges, before owners take the ponies back to their farms for the winter.

Stage 1: Approved mares are given the status of Supplementary Register (SR) and go into a Newtake (a term that refers to an enclosed area of land) to run with a registered and licenced pure-bred Dartmoor stallion.

Stage 2: The progeny of the SR mares, if approved, become Supplementary Register 1 (SR1)

Stage 3: The progeny of an SR1 mare, if approved, become Supplementary Register 2 (SR2)

Stage 4: The progeny of an SR2 mare become fully registered which entitles it to be entered into the main body of the Dartmoor Pony Society’s Stud Book.

The scheme allows for SR1 and SR2 mares to return to a Newtake when old enough to run with a registered licensed Pure Bred Dartmoor stallion. In fact, owners are offered a financial incentive when they return the SR1 and SR2 mares for the first time to the Newtake as the third generation progeny becomes fully registered in the main body of the stud book. Male progeny are usually gelded and become good children’s ponies.

A Supplementary Register colt may not be used to sire registered pedigree stock nor may it be used as a stallion in the Newtakes, nor is a fully registered colt out of a SR2 registered mare allowed to sire stock in one of the recognized Newtakes, as it does not have full breeding on both sides. Only fully registered stallions not bred up through the Scheme may be used in the Newtake Scheme.

These days up to two Newtakes take place with a pedigree stallion each year, with maximum of fifteen mares in each. In recognition of the fact that not all farmers may wish to breed from their mares every year, particularly in view of the economic problem caused by over breeding, a Newtake has also been opened without a stallion. This has proved very popular and had 24 barren mares running in it in 2015.

The scheme has been in existence now for 28 years and been a great success, improving the pony on the Moor by using good quality stallions. Many of the ponies born in the Newtakes, as part of the upgrading scheme, have gone on to successful careers in the show ring and under saddle. However, the main aim of the scheme has been achieved by improving the true to type Dartmoor on the Moor, and those who first thought of the idea should be congratulated on their forward thinking.

www.dartmoorponysociety.com
The RBST annual Watchlist helps monitor numbers of the UK’s rare and native breeds of livestock but while numbers of registered breeding females can be calculated using data from breed societies for sheep, cattle, pigs, goats and equines, poultry is not registered in the same way. This means there is insufficient data on numbers of chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys to monitor their breeds to the same extent.

To make sure that the poultry breeds are safe from extinction, RBST set up the Poultry Working Group (PWG), made up of important poultry organisations and experts who work together to help monitor breeds, organise conservation work and support breeding programmes. By working with a range of organisations the PWG has prioritised breeds for each species which they consider to be the rarest or most at risk, largely based on known numbers of breeders, locations and specialist poultry knowledge.

**Why are turkeys important?**

There are 10 breeds of turkey native to the UK and, worryingly, all are classed as ‘priority’ by the PWG and there is a very real danger that, if any are lost, with them would go important genetics.

Genetic diversity is essential to make it possible for us to deal with a range of potential issues, such as climate change or disease outbreaks, that could occur in the future. Our breeds of turkey may not seem important today, but it is vital that we have a breadth of genetics available to us in the future.

**How is RBST helping rare breed turkeys?**

It is RBST’s aim to raise money to provide grants to individuals to purchase necessary equipment and any other associated set up costs that are needed. It is hoped that by providing appropriate training, on-going support and a grant for equipment this will encourage new keepers, improve genetic diversity and increase numbers of the UK’s rare breeds of turkey.

Although turkeys are relatively easy to keep, they do need specific enclosures and equipment which can put people off choosing to keep them and they can seem quite daunting to a new keeper. RBST and Turkey Club United Kingdom (TCUK), with the support of the Poultry Club of Great Britain (PCGB), will be running a training event to introduce interested individuals to keeping turkeys (date and location to be confirmed).

To obtain more accurate numbers, there are also plans to work with the TCUK and PCGB to take a census to identify all birds in the UK. This will help us identify those in need of help, for example to increase numbers or establish breeding groups throughout the UK.

**A Gene Bank for turkeys**

DNA/genome analysis is becoming recognised as the most accurate way to gather genetic data for a breed and collection of genetic material will make it possible to recreate a breed in the future. This has been done with success in larger mammals but it is still very early days with poultry. With funding, RBST hopes to help support research into this area for our rarest breeds of turkey.

**We need your help**

RBST relies on donations to fund our conservation work, so if you can, please make a donation to help fund this important work. You can send a cheque to RBST at Stoneleigh, pay over the phone by debit or credit card or via the RBST website using the reference ‘Turkey Work’.

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**FUNDRAISING**

In April, RBST East Anglia Support Group Chairman Carl Warren and committee member Rosy Darling visited the Waitrose store in Eaton, Norwich – not to spend money, but to pick up a cheque for £368 for RBST.

Rosy explains: “The company runs a Community Matters scheme through their stores which enables customers to choose a local cause to support. I put forward RBST for funding for the Norfolk Horn sheep and we were chosen alongside two other animal-related causes. The store notifies you when your application has been successful so you can rally people to visit and pledge their support.”

“It is really easy to apply and it’s something other Support Groups could think about doing – it’s just a matter of picking up a form at the store and filling it in. The Support Group was delighted by the response and we would like to thank Melanie Spillman, the Eaton store’s Community Matters Champion, for the great interest she showed in the work RBST is doing.”

Grants are available for local causes, including schools and charities plus local branches of national charities. Each month, individual stores share £1,000 between three organisations.

Anyone can nominate an organization and the final decision is made by a Waitrose PartnerVoice forum. Each branch has a Community Matters Champion who finds out about potential beneficiaries.

Customers are given a green token every time they shop and they can drop the token into a perspex tube for their chosen charity. Each month, tokens for each cause are weighed and each charity receives an equivalent proportion of the cash.

To apply, simply visit your local Waitrose store and fill in a ‘Community Matters’ nomination form.
A new role in teaching for RBST Devon & Cornwall Longwools

Although the RBST Devon & Cornwall Longwools are no longer at Bicton College, they are continuing to play a role in education by helping a younger generation of students at Kingsmead School in Wiveliscombe to learn animal husbandry skills as part of a BTEC course in agriculture.

By coincidence, Paul Hickman, who has been responsible for establishing the Kingsmead School farm, is himself ex-Bicton, although he was involved in the machinery and cropping side of studies rather than livestock during his time at the college. Paul’s involvement with the school began after he was sent by Bicton to talk to year 11 students about land-based careers and the courses offered by the college.

During his visit to the school, Paul met the school’s leader of careers, Charlie Pierce, who told him that the school was looking to establish a smallholding. Paul explains: “Kingsmead takes students from year 7 to 11 (11 to 16 years old) and offers a number of vocational courses. The school was offering horticulture as an option but as the majority of students come from a rural background, Charlie was keen to have more of an agricultural bias in its land-based offering, something the school had done many years ago.”

Originally from Warwickshire, Paul has always been involved in agriculture and when at college was advised by one of his lecturers that he should work either in farming or teaching and on that advice took a post-graduate certificate in teaching to become a lecturer in land-based studies. Having previously been involved in setting up a smallholding for a school in Yeovil, Paul agreed to do the same for Kingsmead. In terms of facilities, he had pretty much a blank canvas – “a large shed in a field”. He explains: “The land we had available hadn’t been touched in years but this has meant that the students have had a real hands-on involvement in getting the farm up and running. We have had to put in paths and fencing and generally get the land ready for livestock.”

Knowing that the Devon & Cornwall Longwools had become surplus to requirements at Bicton, Paul was able, through contact with Sula Gibbard of RBST Somerset Support Group, to arrange for...
them to be moved from Bicton to Kingsmead and the school took delivery of 7 ewes, six of which were in lamb, and a ram lamb. Kingsmead has also added a British Saddleback gilt, which Paul plans to AI with semen from Deepark, plus some Ixworth hens and a cockerel.

To date, some 47 students have been involved in the BTEC course offered by Kingsmead, one Year 10 group and three Year 9 groups. When lambing time came round, Year 9 students helped with the delivery and care of the lambs and some were allowed to take time off from an art lesson to watch a Caesarean being performed. Activities include putting together flock health plans, scheduling vaccinations, and foot trimming and dagging.

As was reported in the school newsletter: “Students are involved with every aspect of animal husbandry from birth to weaning and finally the plate – the only way rare breeds can be assured of avoiding extinction.”

With a full timetable teaching agriculture and business studies, Paul can find himself moving from an hour’s lesson foot trimming to an hour of business studies – “and no time in between” – so the students have an important part to play in the day-to-day running of the school farm. As well as animal husbandry, the students have to learn all of the associated estate skills, such as fencing, gate hanging and building stiles. Some have expressed an interest in showing, which Paul is keen to encourage to help raise the profile of the school farm and get more students involved.

Looking to the future, Paul says: “In terms of livestock, 11 sheep is realistically the maximum number we can keep on the land we have as we are trying to keep the operation financially viable. Any surplus, we are looking to sell as registered stock. We have yet to see how many students take up the agriculture option, which has now absorbed the horticultural studies, and the farm is still in its early days but it is slowly coming together. One thing that works to our advantage is that being in such a rural location, we can use what’s going on in the surrounding fields as part of our studies.”

Back to school for Barry

RBST Dorset Support Group member Barry Graham has found himself back in the classroom after retiring from a career that included around 20 years as a college lecturer. Barry is putting his experience and knowledge to use as a STEM Ambassador, encouraging school pupils to think about how the science subjects they are studying now could lead them into a career in the future.

STEMNET (the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network) aims to promote those subjects to young people and open their eyes to the career opportunities that they can bring. The organisation has a network of over 30,000 STEM Ambassadors who, like Barry, promote STEM subjects to young learners and support teachers in the classroom.

Barry originally came into education through farming, having, amongst other things, managed a 6,000-acre estate near Marlborough. He spent 20 or so years at Lackham, part of Wiltshire College, covering a wide range of subjects – livestock, crops, animal health and welfare and more – and whilst there also did an HND in business management.

It was at Lackham that he first became involved in rare breeds, as he explains: “Lackham has a large commercial farm but for visiting schoolchildren, particularly those with disabilities, we needed to have an environment where it would be easier and more practical for them to get involved with animals. Creating a separate area, with small groups of rare breeds, seemed the way to go but we had no real budget to do this. I became a professional scrourger, getting funding and support so that we could set up a rare breed area. We ended up with a good selection and we usually got two schools a day who came in small groups with their helpers. It involved quite a high input but the children all seemed to get something from it. I even had a lad in a wheelchair helping to shear a sheep and he thought it was fantastic.”

After Lackham, Barry spent two to three years consulting for Genus and then, in semi-retirement was asked by a friend to help part-time in his butcher’s shop and ended up managing a delicatessen. Now, supposedly fully retired but with plenty to fill his time, Barry has become a STEM Ambassador.

He explains: Barry Lewis, who is already a STEM Ambassador, approached me last November and suggested that I should have a go. I didn’t know much about it until the conversation with Barry, but I went onto the website to find out more and decided to put in my application. It was all very straightforward and my approval came through in April. From that point, as an Ambassador, you receive details of opportunities in your area and it is up to you to decide on your level of commitment. You aren’t forced to do anything – you get to choose the opportunities you feel you would be comfortable with.”

One of Barry’s first experiences was talking to a group of around 125 Year 9 students from three schools in the Bridport area. He talked about his career in farming and education and how science subjects come into play. He says: “At that age, pupils don’t always see the connection between science subjects and a career. I talked about understanding things like the importance of soil quality and made them think about the amount of land you need to feed people. I tried to convey what farmers have to produce to keep the world from starving and the knowledge needed to do that. The students raised some good questions and it was very rewarding – there’s nothing better than getting people to click onto what is happening in the environment.”

So far, Barry hasn’t explored the possibility of taking animals into schools and feels that farm visits would be the way forward. He says: “I need to research the possibilities, but organising something like mini-open days would be the answer.”

With the summer break in front of him, Barry is now looking forward to the next academic year and the opportunity to further his STEM Ambassadorship, something he feels more RBST members could become involved in: “I know Support Group volunteers in particular don’t always have a lot of spare time, but this offers a wonderful opportunity to get more young people thinking about what we do. Anyone with a passion for something has the capacity to pass on that enthusiasm to the next generation. As a STEM Ambassador, you could be talking to pupils from the age of 5 to 19, but if you have experience to pass on, you can relate to either end of the age scale.”

Barry concludes: “We have 30,000 STEM Ambassadors nationally – but we still need more. If you are interested in finding out more, visit www.stemnet.org.uk or contact barry.lewis@stemnet.org.uk.
Although it is with some regret that we see the end of project to establish an RBST rare breed college, it has been an experience that has given us some pointers for the future and has resulted in a collection of excellent rare breed livestock, which are now finding new homes and will form the foundation of future flocks and herds.

The Bicton sheep have been dispersed with the Devon and Cornwall Longwools going to start a new flock based at Kingsmead School (see page 21). The prize-winning Berkshire pig herd has been sold to a number of keepers, both existing and new, with the majority going into registered herds. For this, and all her work with the pig herd, thanks must go to Viki Mills who has worked tirelessly for RBST and the college, not only with the pigs but with so much more. I would like to add my personal thanks to her for all the help she has given me.

Some of the Berkshires were bought by Caroline Williams, who lives near Exeter and has kept the breed for a while. She entered some Bicton-bred animals at the Devon County Show this year and came away with all the main breed prizes. The young gilt Araucaria Royal Lustre 6th was Female and Breed Champion, while Araucaria Farewell 5th was Reserve Female and Reserve Breed Champion. It was great to see the stock bred at Bicton College going on and doing very well for their new owner.

Over the past couple of years, the college has had some success at the Devon County Show with their birds and eggs and Peter Hayford, the RBST Poultry Ambassador, is still working with Bicton on a couple of poultry projects.

For the cattle, we have had to make special arrangements as Bicton has been under TB restriction for the past couple of years. In fact, because bTB has become ever-more prevalent in the south west and because of the situation at Bicton, RBST had already been looking into the possibility of establishing an isolation unit for cattle under restriction.

Thanks to Sula Gibbard of the Somerset Support Group, RBST was put in touch with John and Lizzy Ridout who farm mainly arable in Goathurst near Bridgwater. In addition to their home farm, they have a 40-acre block of land three miles away which is used only for arable production. Happily for RBST, the land also houses a new grain store and cattle building and RBST has been able, with help from Defra and, especially, Somerset-based vet Geoff Singleton, to get the building approved as a TB isolation unit. Thanks must go to Sula and Peter Gibbard for all their help and hard work in finding the unit, helping with outfitting the shed and much more and to Ben Gibbard for all his work welding and making up the pens within the shed.

In the middle of arable land with no other livestock nearby and having been wildlife-fenced, the site is ideal for the purpose. The cattle from Bicton were moved to the new unit in April and Field Officer Tom Blunt was there to help unload and confirmed that they looked very happy in their new home. They will now have to undergo at least two TB tests 60 days apart then if both are clear we can move the animals out of the unit. The majority will, however, remain with the Ridouts to form a new herd of OP Dairy Shorthorns, a new beginning which will be a very successful outcome for RBST.

This Spring saw the link between RBST and Bicton College come to an end following the decision by the college that rare breeds will not form part of their future farming system. This has meant the relocation of Bicton’s rare breed livestock but the good news is that it marks some new beginnings as Field Officer Richard Broad reports:

An end and some new beginnings

The new isolation unit. A young calf happily settled in to the isolation unit.
“My Grandfather called them the Flowers of the Fellside” explains Alison O’Neill. She is talking about Rough Fell sheep, the hill breed native to the South Eastern Fells of Cumbria and one which her family has owned and bred for generations. Although she was born and grew up on traditional hill farms near Sedbergh, Alison’s journey to her own tenanted farm at Shacklabank has been anything but conventional.

Shacklabank is known locally as “the poor farm” as it is a condition of the lease that the farm goes to individuals who would otherwise be without the assets to farm in their own right. Alison was working for the Yorkshire Dales National Park surveying footpaths and bridleways (from the back of a Fell pony) and had recently returned home to the Sedbergh area after almost 20 years working away in Europe when the lease came up in 1999. Her plans for the farm chimed with those of the owners and soon she was running a mixed flock of ewes, later to become purely Rough Fells, a few hill cattle, and a couple of Fell ponies for shepherding and farm work.

Fast forward to 2016 and Alison is talking to me from her sunny yard overlooking the Howgill Fells, describing how her passion for hill walking and native breeds, coupled with a chance meeting in the Hebrides, has led to her designing and marketing a very special kind of cloth. “I met Donald John Mackay MBE, Master Weaver at Harris Tweed, whilst walking on Harris and he showed me his amazing tweed cloth, including the Luskentyre Castle tweed, which he described as ‘The Queen of Cloth,’” she says. “I’ve always loved tweed, having been given a tweed riding jacket when I was young, and was often asked by visitors where they could buy tweed skirts like mine. Donald John let me use his cloth to make up some designs, which proved really popular and got me thinking - ‘We have Harris tweed, and Donegal tweed, why not Cumbrian tweed?’”

Keen to keep the breed provenance foremost in the tweed design, Alison was helped by a gift of 3m of Herdwick tweed by Amanda Carson, the Secretary of the Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association. Two bolts of bespoke Herdwick tweed, made from wool clipped within 30 miles of Shacklabank and woven at nearby Farfield Mill, soon followed. The resulting designs are classic, and Alison’s focus is on elegant yet functional bags and clothing, encompassing a range of evocatively named jackets such as the Crofter and the Shepherdess, styled on her original riding jacket.

Alison claims she has done very little to market her products, but has taken a small studio at Farfield Mill, and is constantly involved with a range of collaborative projects, including the Kendal Wool Gathering festival, work with an acclaimed photographer and a recent exhibition at the Rheged Centre near Penrith. She frequently hosts visitors at Shacklabank so that they can see the full journey of the cloth from sheep to sewn design, and one of her first commissions was for HRH the Prince of Wales, who met Alison at the Herdwick Exhibition in 2015. His parting request was that Alison extend her range to cover all three Cumbrian hill breeds – adding Swaledale and Rough Fell to the Herdwick tweed, an invitation Alison was only too happy to take up.

When I visited, Alison was busy preparing to launch her full range of “Shepherdess” tweeds at Woolfest near Cockermouth in June, and was planning to take three rather special guests with her. “In training” for their big event was a shy Herdwick gimmer stationed next to a striking young Rough Fell in a picturesque lambing shed. A Swaledale was expected to join them in the following weeks and the trio will travel the county this summer to help tell the story of the tweed, an authentically Cumbrian product.

Alison was also hoping to join the RBST team at the Three Counties Show British Wool fashion show, masterminded by David and Karen Griffiths of the Griffiths Mill, and was relishing expanding the already wide clientele she has for her clothing and bags. She describes the many letters she receives from satisfied customers, who are delighted to have made a real connection with the sheep flocks and landscapes that shape the tweed. One fashionable London lady recently penned “I took the skirt for a walk in Hyde Park today, she was very well behaved…”

To find out more about Alison O’Neill and the Shepherdess range of tweed clothing and bags visit her website at www.shepherdess.co.uk

A tweed for Cumbria to showcase county breeds

This Spring, Field Officer Ruth Dalton visited a hill farm where she met Alison O’Neill who hopes to rival Harris and Donegal with her very own Cumbrian tweed. Ruth reports on her visit.
Kingston Maurward College staff and Animal Conservation and Welfare students took 14 animals to the Sherborne Country Fair and came away with a raft of prizes.

Showing Portland and Manx Loaghtan sheep, Saddleback pigs and Bagot goats, the total tally was three firsts, four seconds, one third, four fourths, with Reserve Champion for Bagot goat Ezra and Champion for the College’s Saddleback gilt.

Head animal technician Barbara Holden says: “It was a massive learning curve for the students, and the animals too, but they all rose to the occasion and improved as the day went on. I was so pleased to be at the show as it has been my wish for at least three years to show our stock, and for our first show I thought everyone did extremely well.”
Busy days at Doonies

2016 has been a great success so far at Doonies, with new arrivals enjoying the rare days of sunshine in Aberdeen!

Alice Lennox of Doonies reports: “All of our eight rare breeds of sheep have lambed successfully and thankfully we are only bottle feeding two pet lambs this year, which our visitors are helping with. We recently purchased twelve weaners at our local rare breeds’ sale and these have gone on to become the local celebrities on the farm due to their paddling pool and football antics. Also bought at the rare breeds’ sale were some chicken eggs which hatched at the beginning of June. The chicks will be in the public eye as soon as they are big enough to endure the ‘four seasons’ that we experience at Doonies on a daily basis. Lastly, our Eriskay foal, Niall, has been receiving some etiquette lessons since being haltered and is no longer in the habit of stealing hats from those who are feeding him carrots!”

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New look cattle shed at Wimpole

Following careful consideration, Wimpole Home Farm now has new cattle handling facilities which will have an important impact on the care and breeding programmes for its rare breed cattle. Farm Manager Richard Morris explains the work that has been carried out.

It had become obvious over the past few years that we needed to do something about our cattle shed. Not only were there animal welfare issues as the structure of the building had decayed, but there were also health and safety concerns for staff and volunteers, particularly with regard to handling cattle around loading. There were also business risks such as dirty water containment and pollution control. We did, however, face one major constraint, since under current planning law for a heritage site, we could not expand the foundations of the existing building.

Our long term aims for the farm are to deliver a transformational change in the way we present farming to our visitors. In the short term, there is a backlog of projects to deal with as there has been no investment in buildings for some time. The cattle shed project could not be carried out well without a lot of money being spent, and, as various plans were discussed with consultants, it became clear that we had to concentrate on a sound solution with well targeted spending.

A team was put together to design the facility, which included an architect and a structural engineer together with the farm's staff and Keith Preston, an old friend of Home Farm's from Savills. Once the design principles were established, IAE Ltd (manufacturers of livestock handling equipment and shelters) was brought in to work with the team on specific details. Fitting new equipment around an old building is potentially difficult but the professionalism and experience that IAE brought to the project has provided a very successful outcome.

The project was designed around the principles pioneered by Dr Mary Temple Grandin, a leading American designer for livestock handling equipment. We now have cattle penning and an appropriate feed fence for our breeding herds and fattening stock plus cattle handling and loading facilities that make working with animals both a pleasurable and safe occupation. Additional welfare improvements have been made through the provision of weaning gates, calving aids and protected/tipping water troughs fitted with fast fill valves and we are able to clean the housing adjacent to the feed fence on a regular basis.

The new livestock handling facility gives us the opportunity to tailor the care of our cattle to the individual animal and this will allow us to change the way we plan the future of our breeding programmes for the rare breed cattle we keep. A single person can move an animal anywhere around the building on their own, safely and securely and while we will always use bulls as a backstop, we can now seriously look at the opportunities that AI or even embryo transfer may offer for improving the genetic base of our herds.

Another major benefit is that the project has given us the opportunity to extend the area our visitors can access safely within the farm yard of what is, after all, a working organic livestock and arable farm.

Another project which will be started this year is a yard devoted to our heavy horses. Modern stabling facilities will be constructed in harmony with Sir John Soane’s original design, built in 1794.

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PLEASE COME ALONG AND SUPPORT US!
A breeder for the future

Pig enthusiast Grace Bretherton has accumulated some 12 years’ experience of handling, showing and now breeding – which is quite an achievement for someone who is 15 years old. Totally committed, Grace provides an excellent example of the type of young person needed to ensure the future of our rare breeds.

Grace and her mother Tracey and father Ian, from Westby in Lancashire, are well-known faces on the show scene and, as well as being a respected breeder and judge, Tracey is heavily involved in running the BPA Junior Pig Club. Although she had always worked with animals, Tracey’s involvement with pigs only began when she married and her husband Ian, a cattle farmer, bought her a pig. Grace, on the other hand, says that she “grew up with pigs”.

Tracey has kept pigs for well over 20 years but it wasn’t until 2002 that the family went into pedigree pig breeding, forming the Gracebank Herd of Middle Whites and just a couple of years later, daughter Grace made her showing debut at the age of 3.

Talking about some of the pigs she has been responsible for, Grace says: “My first pig was Daffney, a Middle White gilt; then, when I was about 6, Mum went into Berkshires and I trained two of them – Joanne, a gilt, and a boar I called Vinnie. He was a real sweetie and went to Deeppark AI centre. For my 9th birthday I got my own prefix – Hedgerow – and bought Finnington Fairly 66 from Janice Wood and Steve Richardson with my birthday money.”

As well as showing the family’s own pigs, Grace has built her handling experience and ringcraft by showing pigs for other breeders, including Janice and Steve. She says: “I love being round the pigs, training them and taking part in shows. I just enjoy everything about showing.”

It was showing for Janice and Steve that first raised Grace’s interest in the Landrace breed. The British Landrace came onto the RBST Watchlist in 2015. Despite the fact that over 90% of the hybrid gilt production in Western Europe and North America uses Landrace bloodlines, the pedigree British Landrace features in Category 2 of the Watchlist and is classified as an endangered breed. Grace showed Sunrise Vega, a gilt that Janice and Steve had bought from leading breeder and judge Steve Loveless in 2011 and became so enthusiastic about the breed that she asked to have her own. Her father Ian bought Sunrise Elegance (pet name Ellie) from Steve Loveless, followed a year later by Sunrise Inga (Lizzie). Grace says: “Steve Loveless and his daughter Hayley have been a great inspiration to me. These two Sunrise gilts have been the best – Ellie was supreme champion at the Stoneleigh Show in 2013. This year I have a gilt from the Guri line that I have bred myself. I love the British Landrace – it is ideal, a fantastic breed. The sows make good mothers and they produce really good quality meat.”

When asked what someone of her age can get out of an involvement with livestock, Grace, who wants to become a farmer, responds: “You develop a sense of responsibility when you have livestock to look after. None of my close school friends are into farming and a lot of them would think walking the dogs was a massive responsibility. I enjoy looking after the animals and I feel I get a lot out of it.”

School work, of course, has to be fitted round the pigs but Grace admits that the pigs get done before the homework! She also enjoys dancing, sport and horse riding but it is quite obvious that her first love is her pigs – particularly now her British Landrace. And as well as enjoyment, Grace has achieved an impressive degree of success. As a member of the Junior Pig Club, she went to the World Pork Expo and won Reserve Novice Handler and her list of UK show successes continues to grow. Taking Hedgerow Guri to Stafford in June she won Reserve British Landrace, plus Champion Young Handler, and the family’s Gracebank Woodland Lady 34 took Champion Middle White plus a qualifier for the BPA Pig of the Year Competition. And with more shows to come, it’s a safe bet that the tally will rise even further this season.

Grace showing Sunrise Vega (Lily), bred by Steve Loveless, for Janice Wood and Steve Richardson.
Farmyard Jokes

Q: What do you get if a sheep walks under a cloud?
A: A sheep that's under the weather!

Q: What do you get if you cross a chicken with a cement mixer?
A: A brick-layer!

Q: Why does a rooster watch TV?
A: For hentertainment!

Q: How do you fit more pigs on your farm?
A: Build a sty-scrapers!

Q: Where do sheep get shorn?
A: At the baa baas!

Q: What would happen if bulls could fly?
A: You would have to carry an umbrella all the time and beef would go up!

Q: What did the farmer call the cow that would not give him any milk?
A: An udder failure!

Q: What do you call a crate of ducks?
A: A box of quackers!

What breed am I?

See if you can identify these rare breeds. To help, you can go to www.rbst.org.uk and click on the Rare and Native Breeds tab to find pictures of all our rare breeds – see if you can find which these are:

1. Bourbon Red turkey
2. Chillingham cattle
3. Eriskay pony
4. Golden Guernsey goats
5. Greyface Dartmoor sheep
6. Large White pig
7. Marsh Daisy cockerel
8. West of England geese

Answers:
1. Bourbon Red turkey
2. Chillingham cattle
3. Eriskay pony
4. Golden Guernsey goats
5. Greyface Dartmoor sheep
6. Large White pig
7. Marsh Daisy cockerel
8. West of England geese
In Cornwall, the 2016 season began with a children’s educational event at the Royal Cornwall Showground, with teachers from schools all over Cornwall bringing classes to learn where their food comes from. Pupils were able to grind corn and make bread, plant seeds, crush fruit for juice, crush seeds for oil and many other things. The butcher was especially popular with his show of raw meat and offal.

The Cornwall Group had a display of sheep to illustrate the progression from primitives to today’s breeds and the children were amazed at the difference in weight of fleece between my little North Ronaldsay and another member’s Devon and Cornwall Longwools. Another member brought her Exmoor pony and explained how versatile the breed is, not just for riding but also in harness and she explained that she has even used one for ploughing.

Almost 2,000 children and teachers went through the Showground over the two days and it was a very full-on, but brilliant, event with so many interesting questions being asked. The children were all going to do work at school on what they had learned and to help we were able to give out information packs supplied by RBST. A good start, surely, to encouraging our next generation of members.

Cornwall has since done two one-day shows, a two-day show and two three-day shows – and it feels a long way to our last show in mid-November.

We have also had several group meetings, the first being a talk by a new member who is a vet, about antibiotic use and resistance. It is really scary to contemplate the future if antibiotic resistance continues to increase. Barry Graham came from Dorset to host a cheese-tasting evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It was nice to have a different sort of meeting and we learnt lots about different cheeses. We tasted twelve different cheeses of all types, although we thought better of following Barry’s suggestion of drinking cider with them – no helpers at shows if no driving licence!

We also paid a visit to Simon James, a very knowledgeable poultry breeder and judge, to see his amazing collection of breeding birds and we had a good attendance of about forty people.

In July last year we filled a large marquee with animals for the Padstow Vintage Rally, a three-day event. When money raised at the rally was distributed to local charities afterwards, it was announced that a bursary fund had been set up and I was invited to apply. Applications had to be for something of benefit to a local group or project and we decided to ask for a chick brooder to take to shows. I promptly wrote my begging letter and received a phone call to say that it had been successful. We are awaiting delivery and looking forward to using the brooder at shows.

Busy months for Warks & Northants

The beginning of the year has been a busy time for many Warwickshire and Northamptonshire members filling their time with lambing and calving, with many pictures of the new arrivals being shared.

As a group we have had an enjoyable start to the year with alternated events and meetings. February saw us supporting at The Northants Poultry show, which is always enjoyable and I would like to thank Dawn, Mary and Ruth for manning the stand.

In March we had an informative talk from James Fanshawe on Beef Shorthorn cattle and supported Head Office for 3 days at the Edible Garden Show. It was great to meet other members who attended the show and the Support Group meeting on the Saturday. We were also supported by our two recruiters, Melanie and Debs, who secured several new members over the weekend.

April saw us back indoors having an interactive group meeting, trialling activities we could take to the shows, such as felting and origin of the species games. It was a fun night and challenged many of our creative skills.

Then in May we celebrated the start of National Heritage breed week, with a visit to two members’ farms. We started off on the small scale at my own place, Millholme Parc Farm, looking at Gloucester and Shetland cattle, and of course Percy and his Teeswater flock.

Moving onto a larger scale, we had a trailer ride around Jeff Clarke’s Woodbine Farm, seeing his 1000 acres with many different rare breeds including Manx Loaghtan and Norfolk Horn sheep, Dexter and Beef Shorthorn cattle and Marsh Daisy chickens. This was finished off with some fine Tamworth and Manx hot rolls, so a big thank you goes to Jeff.

The end of the month saw us joining several charities for a Plant Festival just outside Stoneleigh. The weather was excellent and we raised over £50 for the Trust and secured one joint membership.

We now look forward to show season taking off in full swing with Kenilworth in June and Hanbury, Hollowell, Birdingbury, Weak & Downland, and our own Sale and Show in July. A busy Summer!

Angela Kingsnorth
RBST Cornwall
Help wanted in the East of England

At the AGM in January most of the outgoing committee was re-elected but Pearl Smith retired as Secretary and no replacement was found. The duties are being shared among the committee, and the contact for the group is the Chairman Lindsay Dane (01353 721216).

Our major events this year are the Gransden Show on Saturday 24 September and the Autumn Food and Country Fair at the East of England Showground on Sunday 9 October. We would welcome help at those shows, either from members bringing livestock or doing a stint manning the stand. Please contact me if you would like to know more.

Lindsay Dane
RBST East of England

Thanks for Sherborne support

Thank you to everyone who exhibited and helped at this year’s Sherborne Country Fair. We had a record number of sheep entered and are pleased to say the overall shows. We have a stand at the Royal Norfolk, Wayland and Aylsham Shows. September is always “outing” month – this year we are off to Shorelands Conservation Centre & Wildlife Gardens in Dickleburgh, Norfolk, IP21 4QA. November 11 at Easton College, Norwich, is the date of a talk by a local veterinary surgeon, and on December 10 we meet up at The Park Hotel in Diss for our Christmas supper.

All members and friends of RBST are most welcome at all events, come and see what we get up to!

Contact Gail Sprake gail@meensfarm.fsnet.co.uk 01986 782416 / 07885 777921.

Gail Sprake
RBST East Anglia

Norfolk Spring Fling

The Spring Fling kick starts events for the East Anglia Support Group and always ranks as one of the most looked-forward-to events in our calendar. 5500 children and their parents and a wide selection of rare breeds make for a busy and worthwhile day.

This year the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association had brought the rare breeds together under the Mr Mawkin’s Farm banner, linking the summer show with the spring event. Mr Mawkin is the friendly East Anglian scarecrow and our Vice Chairman Dameon Layt accepted the invitation to wear the Mr Mawkin’s costume for the very first time. He proved to be even more popular than our livestock, with an endless queue of small children wanting to shake his hand and have their photograph taken with him.

This year we included our annual Young Handlers training in the event and gave many youngsters the opportunity to get up close to a well-behaved sheep and have a go at walking an animal on a halter. We also organized a craft activity where children were able to design their own rare breed sheep; a combination of templates, wool and glue kept many children occupied, and equally importantly, gave us an opportunity to talk to the parents about the work of RBST.

Our loyal band of spinners joined us for the occasion and together we were able to offer a “hands-on” explanation of the wool process.

The East Anglia Support Group has an active committee and an exciting programme of events. We would love to meet more of our local RBST members, so please come and say hello if you are visiting our local

Surprise Llanwenog sale at Shrewsbury

At our last Support Group committee meeting one of our members, Sylvia Henson, amazed us by announcing that she was retiring, going to live by the coast and had sold her smallholding within 10 days of putting it on the market. This means that all of her 170 Llanwenog sheep – the Brithdir flock – including ewes, lambs, shearlings and rams will be on sale at Shrewsbury.

Happily, Sylvia is staying on the committee, which we were very relieved to hear, and we wish her all the best in her new home.

The seventh Shrewsbury Traditional & Native Rare Breeds Show & Sale will be held on Sunday July 24, with a BBQ and quiz on the evening of Saturday 23. Tickets £10.00 per head need to be purchased in advance from Halls at www.hallsgb.com/auctions.

Other forthcoming events include the Oswestry Show on Saturday August 6. Although the rare breed cattle and sheep numbers have risen in the past few years, pig entries have been down, and we hope that there will be more this year.

In September, we have Melton Mowbray Show & Sale on Friday and Saturday September 9 and 10, with the fleece and craft competition and fleece sales on Friday and fleece sales on Saturday. Schedules are available from www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk.
**Good decision by Chilterns Group**

The decision by the Chilterns Support Group to attend this year’s Hertfordshire County Show with an RBST stand turned out to be a very good one! Not only did it generate a lot of interest and bring in new members, the stand also won a prize.

The stand comprised the RBST branded gazebo with two tables of literature, the easel “cow” with its udder bucket, and a pen of poultry. The poultry were donated by Tom Davis, Chilterns Support Group Committee member, and were really appreciated by the public. In particular, the Rouen drake and duck in their mallard coloured plumage were showstoppers. Chilterns member Sally Anne Oultram brought a wicker basket full of her Ted the Clydesdale books, with all book profits going to RBST.

Phil Pennington of Chilterns Support Group and RBST Field Officer Tom Blunt manned the stand with the help of recruiter Melanie Prince. Bryan Coventry of Chilterns Support Group was the official commentator at the sheep competitions and gave RBST plenty of airtime which guided people to the stand.

There was a great deal of interest in RBST with seven new members joining at the show and a number taking away the forms to complete and the collection boxes attracted around £60 in donations.

The icing on the cake was that stand won the Best Charity Stand competition with the £150 first prize being donated to RBST funds.

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DARTMOOR SHEEP BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

President: Miss Valerie Pratt

93rd ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE

of REGISTRED GREYFACE DARTMOOR SHEEP

at EXETER LIVESTOCK MARKET

Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon, EX22 7FA

on Saturday 20th August 2016
judging starting at 10am and sale to follow

Please see website for further details and catalogue.

This sale is the premier breed sale for registered Greyface Dartmoor sheep. All sheep are inspected prior to sale.

Breed Information:
Web: www.greyface-dartmoor.org.uk
Email: secretary@greyface-dartmoor.org.uk
Telephone: Ann Willcocks 01752 892312
Registered Charity No. 266083

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30th Autumn Rare Breeds Show and Sale

Including Rare, Minority, Native & Unusual Breeds of Cattle, Pigs, Sheep, Poultry & Waterfowl

Friday 7 & Saturday 8 October

Entries Close:
Friday 16 September - Registered Rare Breeds
Friday 23 September - Unregistered & Poultry

For schedules, entry forms and catalogues please see our website or call 01904 489731

Murton York YO19 5GF
www.ylc.co.uk 01904 489731
Lambing in Cumbria

In Cumbria, we were looking forward to having a lambing day in spring when we felt sure the weather would be sunny and warm. We wanted to make the day useful and practical with the opportunity for people to ask questions and get lots of hands on experience and learning.

With that in mind we planned the day for March 26 - Easter Saturday - at Ellonby, near Penrith, home of Cumbria committee member Mark Bennett. It turned out to be a day of freezing cold winds and wintry showers but still some intrepid novice shepherds braved the inclement weather to learn a bit more about the practical side of lambing.

We began the day with introductions and refreshments and looked at pre-lambing care of the ewe and possible diseases, then discussed what to keep in your lambing box. We looked at a normal lambing and then the difficulties that can be encountered like mal-presentations. Then we moved on to lamb hypothermia, including how to administer a glucose injection and use a stomach tube, stressing the importance of the lamb’s temperature and age in treatment.

A very welcome lunch of hot soup, sandwiches, and a delicious Pavlova (made by Mark’s daughter Lydia) followed. Then, warmed and full, how lucky were we to be able to watch, on cue, a ewe give birth to twins. This gave everyone a really good view of a normal birth so that they could see what should happen, and in what order. Other practical tasks undertaken during the day included fitting an impromptu prolapse harness and castrating and tailing lambs. The remainder of the afternoon was reserved to cover common lamb ailments. Coffee and cake were served to end the day and everyone went away eager for their lambs to arrive and looking forward to putting their new skills into practice.

The next event attended by the group was Countryfest. This was again very successful, with the Lancashire group (and Ruth of course) putting on what is turning out to be a really excellent regular event. Those helping from Cumbria thoroughly enjoyed the day – and some can’t wait until next year.

Our next scheduled events are the Westmorland show on Thursday September 8 and the Harrison & Hetherington sale at Carlisle on Saturday September 17, so don’t forget to come and see us – or even enter your livestock.

It really is good to see so many doing so well at the shows and giving rare breeds such a high profile. It would be great to get rare and any other native breed classes at all the shows – after all there is such a diverse range of cattle, sheep, horses, goats, pigs and poultry out there and the general public are really missing out if they don’t get to see them or benefit from what they have to offer.

We have additional events in the pipeline so please keep checking the RBST website pages, RBST Cumbria facebook page and the Cumbria newsletter for more information. We look forward to seeing you.

Kathryn Mills
RBST Cumbria

Alastair Clarke
4 October 1962 to 14 March 2016

It was with deep regret that the members of Sperrins & Lakelands Support Group learned of the death of their esteemed member Alastair Clarke on March 14 after a short illness.

Alastair was always a very willing and enthusiastic member and distance was no object to him, travelling many miles with a trailer full of stock for displays at events.

His passion for animals was very apparent as he chatted to members of the public at displays, especially about his beloved Galloways.

He will be very sorely missed especially at our annual display at the Ulster American Folk Park.

Sperrins & Lakelands Support Group have lost a great supporter, friend and colleague.

Grace Blair
RBST Sperrins & Lakelands
Notice is hereby given that the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust will be held at the Council Chamber of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 2LZ on Thursday 18th August 2016 at noon for the following purposes:

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. To approve the Minutes of the 41st AGM held on 20 August 2015. (Minutes available on RBST website)
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
6. To receive the names of newly elected Members of the Board
7. To receive the name of the President and Vice Presidents
8. To re appoint the Independent Examiner and authorise RBST Board to fix their remuneration
9. Members’ Questions (these must be submitted in writing to enquiries@rbst.org by Monday 8 August 2016)

A member is entitled to attend and vote at the above meeting or is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. To be effective, forms of proxy must be duly completed and returned so as to reach the Electoral Reform Service, The Election Centre, 33 Clarendon Road, London, N8 0NW, not less than 48 working hours (by reference to working days) before the time appointed for the meeting, or adjourned meeting, as the case may be. A proxy voting form is included in The Ark.

A buffet lunch will be available after the meeting at 1.00pm. The following report and financial statements are extracts from the Independent Examiner’s annual Board Report and the financial statements:

**Objectives, Activities, Achievements and Performance**

RBST has the overarching aim to secure the future of rare and native UK livestock breeds. This is achieved, on an on-going basis, through the realisation of three primary objectives:

**We monitor the numbers of rare and native breeds.** Each year RBST collects data from breed societies and the FAnGR breed inventory and uses the number of animals registered in a year to calculate the effective population, to produce the annual Watchlist. We monitor threats to breeds. Other factors, such as inbreeding and geographical concentration, can threaten our breeds. We monitor and act to try to reduce these threats.

**We save genetics in our National Gene Bank.** We collect and store genetic materials from animals, in the form of semen from males and, where practical, embryos from females. This is our insurance policy. If a breed were to become extinct, we can use this store to reinstate a breed. In emergencies RBST will buy genetically important stock and place it in approved breeding centres.

**We promote the breeding and registration of rare and native breeds.** Together our staff, members and Support Groups provide a network of knowledge to support and encourage breeders. We promote the use of rare and native breeds for food, fibre, conservation grazing and to represent our cultural heritage.

**Activities, Achievements and Performance:** It is the proud boast that since the formation of RBST in 1973, the UK has lost no breed of native livestock. However, that does not mean that all is well. To put our situation in context, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation approximately 20% of livestock breeds are at risk globally but in the UK, we believe the percentage is higher. In 2013, RBST classified 57 breeds of sheep, cattle, goats and equines as rare. By 2015, that number had risen to 62. In addition, the numbers of utility native breeds of poultry are critically low.

While there are glimmers of light for some individual breeds, overall the situation for the UK’s rare breeds continues to be a cause of major concern. Two years ago, RBST reported that the Watchlist figures were a wake-up call and last year’s figures did not make comfortable reading. Sadly, the latest Watchlist continues to highlight the critical situation that RBST is working to help resolve. In particular, pig and equine breeds overall are in significant decline with the number of pedigree registrations having halved since they reached their peak a few years ago. Populations of native sheep are stable, but the number of breeds categorised as rare is growing and the numbers of our only two native breeds of goat remain critically low. Cattle numbers are currently stable; however, RBST has convened a Task Group to study the situation across the cattle breeds because of concerns over genetic diversity. RBST believes genetic diversity within all of the Watchlist breeds is in decline.

Whilst RBST can be proud of having lost no native breed of livestock in over 40 years, we are aware of how much the environment in which we operate has changed over that period. While the founders of the Trust recognised the importance of ensuring that the genetics of our native breeds were preserved, they may not have realised just how much more significant that could be for future generations of food producers. Issues such as climate change, the impact of rising incomes in the developing world and a surging demand for animal products had yet to be raised. It is now predicted that by 2050, demand for animal protein will be 50 to 100 per cent higher than it is today and that demand has to be satisfied against a background of major environmental changes. Meeting this increased demand is a major sustainability challenge and society will need to have every tool available at its disposal to meet it, which includes having as large and diverse a livestock gene pool as possible.

The RBST National Gene Bank is a vital resource in maintaining genetic diversity and we are looking to build partnerships across all stakeholders, including the farming industry, government, civic society and academia, which will help us to deliver a completed Gene Bank. We also have to acknowledge that science is continuously moving forward, so we will regularly review our Gene Bank policy to ensure that it keeps pace with current knowledge and best practice.

The news for goats is positive in that both of the UK’s native goat breeds have shown an increase in numbers, with the RBST 2015 Christmas appeal targeting goats.

The Watchlist carries mixed news for cattle, the Vaynol, Original Population Dairy Shorthorn and White Park have seen a decrease in numbers. Four breeds showed positive movements, Native Aberdeen Angus, Gloucester, Irish Moiled and Shetland.

Every Watchlist pig breed showed a decrease of more than 5%, with the exception of the Welsh.
Although five sheep breeds have shown a 5% or greater decrease in numbers, better news is that five breeds have moved up a category. The only way to describe the equine rare and native breeds is to say that they are all still in “free fall”. The Poultry Breeds at Risk list contains 74 breeds, with 45 of those highlighted by the RBST to be breeds of particular priority within their species.

The National Gene Bank: through the hard work of our Field Officers and Fundraiser, 2015 was one of our best years for the Gene Bank to date, with significant funds raised, and 60 animals added.

With the help of our 27 volunteer Support Groups we attended over 100 shows, sales and countryside events in 2015, reaching an estimated 1,000,000 people, and informing them of our work monitoring, saving and promoting rare and native breeds.

During 2016 we have plans to significantly increase the promotion of rare and native breeds, not least promoting wool, when dining out, for conservation grazing and a focus on buying rare and native ponies for riding.

Our Conservation Plans: In 2016, we are working towards developing a long term plan for the Gene Bank that will allow us to work with a wide range of organisations and ensure the sustainability and future of our Gene Bank.

In the past, we have monitored and assessed breeds by their physical production characteristics, pedigree analysis and parentage analysis by DNA or other biological markers such as blood groups. But there is always an element of ‘nurture’ as well as ‘nature’, fundamental characteristics of an animal are defined by its complete genetic makeup known as its genome. We are keen to explore how we can use this technology in the future.

Strategies for Achieving Objectives: At the end of 2015 we launched our 2016-2050 Strategic Plan, finalised the revamp of our back office systems, membership and Gene Bank databases, reviewed and published all our health and safety procedures, and commenced the final steps of our financial processes review. We will continue to implement plans to secure the financial future of RBST.

Financial Summary: The trustees recognise the lower deficit than the previous year and are targeting further significant reductions in subsequent years.

2015 saw RBST realise a deficit of £126,444, including:

- £11,181 loss on revaluation of conservation breeding stock (agisted)
- £10,163 loss on investments

Resulting in an operating loss of £105,100, including:

- £4,423 exceptional Gift Aid interest repayment
- £7,430 on cattle semen splitting and North Ronaldsay sheep projects
- £12,586 planned Gene Bank project spend down from restricted funds.

The underlying trading loss was £80,661 compared to £158,434 in 2014.

**RBST Income 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Income 2015</th>
<th>Income 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>165,128</td>
<td>148,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacies</td>
<td>67,092</td>
<td>19,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Donations</td>
<td>120,845</td>
<td>114,763</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>100,736</td>
<td>107,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation &amp; Support Groups</td>
<td>42,416</td>
<td>42,823</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>13,076</td>
<td>12,717</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>509,302</strong></td>
<td><strong>445,683</strong></td>
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**RBST Expenditure 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Expenditure 2015</th>
<th>Expenditure 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charitable Activities</td>
<td>424,674</td>
<td>412,142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Generating Funds</td>
<td>132,434</td>
<td>150,859</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>52,871</td>
<td>45,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional Item (Gift Aid)</td>
<td>4,423</td>
<td>57,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>614,402</strong></td>
<td><strong>665,929</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Investment Policy:** A medium-risk approach describes the investment policy. Assets are held in the RBST Portfolio which is managed by Smith and Williamson, which invests in a combination of segregated equities and collective funds. The new portfolio targets are an initial income yield of 4%; in 2015 we achieved 3.81%, which was acceptable given market conditions. The Investment aim is to achieve this income target without detriment to the growth and without incurring unnecessary risk. The Trustees believe that the RBST portfolio will continue to perform close to its benchmark in the coming 12 months as well as in the longer term. The value of the RBST portfolio as at 31st December 2015 was £2,809,613, £81,029 down from the £2,890,642 at the start of the year.

This summary of the Independent Examiner’s financial information is intended to provide an overview. For a full understanding of the results and the state of affairs of RBST, members should refer to the full Annual Report of Board and Financial Statements available from the RBST website, full hard copies being available on request from enquiries@rbst.org.uk or 02476 696 551.
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Kelso Ram Sales                    Friday 9th September
Melton Mowbray Show & Sale        Saturday 10th September
Carlisle Native Breeds Sale       Saturday 17th September
NSA Builth Wells Ram Sale         Monday 19th September

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Websites
Southdown Sheep Society
www.southdownsheep.co.uk
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rj hodgsonbooks@clar a.co.uk

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