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HERITAGE SHEEP AUSTRALIA

"Saving the breeds that were the foundation of our sheep and wool industry"



NEWSLETTER NO 22 March 2011

Meeting the sheep

The Wool & Sheep Roundup which was held on the Melton Park property on December 29, 2010 was a great success. The event was organised due to the visit of Lisa Westervelt from Massachusetts, USA, an English Leicester breeder and craft worker.

About 200 people attended the day, including spinners, felters, weavers, knitters, fashion designers, marketers of woollen goods, sheep breeders and interested general public. Lisa gave talks and presented a slide show on her enterprise in the USA.

There were English Leicester and Border Leicester sheep on display with the English Leicesters receiving a lot of interest due to the length and lustre of their wool. One of the positive feed backs from the participants was how much they enjoyed working in the rural setting with the sheep near them, as some had limited experience or exposure to sheep. It was also good for crafters to be able to distinguish between the leicester breeds.

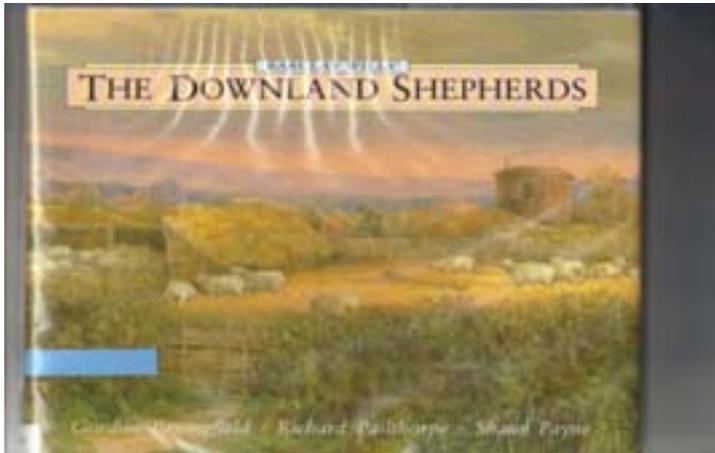
Due to the success of this inaugural day, requests have been made for it to become an annual event.

Anne Heazlewood



"The Downland Shepherds".

Ivan Heazlewood



My knowledge of sheep bells is abysmal. In fact I had never thought much about them till I read a delightful little book on the sheep and shepherds of the Essex Downs.

However, I have a deep suspicion that if I had lived a couple of generations earlier, I would have come into contact with sheep bells in local situation. That suspicion is triggered because I have recollection of seeing one amongst a collection (more correctly a heap) of old farm tools and domestic appliances, declared a few decades ago to be obsolete and thrown on the tip. I further believe that bells may have been in reasonably common use in large scale Australian grazing situations up till recent times.

(Can any readers enlighten me?)

The book to which I refer was published in 1989 but it features the writings of Barclay Wills 1887-1962. Wills was a Londoner, who from an early age developed a passion for the English countryside.

An intense observer, skilful artist and competent author he did not escape the confines of London to live on England's south coast till between the two world wars, when he was in his early forties. Till then his passion had been restricted to brief daily excursions where his artistic talent was directed to detailed drawings and paintings of birds and flowers.

Once in Sussex, despite frequent moves in unsuccessful grocery businesses, his imagination, passion and interest in all things sheep and shepherds took full flight. It was triggered by, in his own words, "the music of old sheep bells" and found expression in his third book "The Downland Shepherds".

If your only interest in Southdowns or any other sheep is in pedigree, performance at shows, sale prices, lambing percentages, wool weights, carcase yields, exports to other countries etc, this little book is not for you, for those things are not mentioned.

I was rather surprised to see that it paints a picture of sheep husbandry practices which were essential in Australia's squatting era of a century earlier, when wandering flocks in the constant 24 hour care of shepherds, led the occupation of inland Australia, but was abandoned in the latter 1800s when wire fencing became available.

The subjects of Will's attention were all largely swept away by progress in the next decade and if nostalgia, sentiment and an interest in matters rural are for you, you will be thankful that they were observed and then recorded by the skilful pen of this enthralled, humble, amateur naturalist.

His subjects are shepherds, shepherds clothing, shepherds crooks, shepherds huts, shepherds umbrellas, sheepdogs, sheep folds, shearing, sheep washes, and sheep fairs with generous detail of nine varieties of sheep bells.

I must confess to having found his idyllic meanderings into the world of nature a bit tedious, but that is richly compensated for by the beautiful, descriptive prose which he devotes to sheep.

An excellent second hand hard copy was procured for me via the internet for around \$50 AUD.

"The Downland Shepherds". By Barkley Wills
 Published 1986 by Sutton in Gloucester
 ISBN, 0-86299-408-X



Frank Badcock Senior with Fairburn Southdown Ewes, Tasmania 1928

Thomas Paterson

Thomas Paterson's name does not appear in connection with the ASBBS flock book till after the concept was launched and action was required.

How wrong it would be to assume that he had no part in the vision. Thomas Patterson's period as Secretary of the RASV 1880-1910 coincides almost exactly with Thomas Skene's term as Councillor and we can assume that they shared the same aspirations for involving the society in the advancement of every aspect of agriculture. We must remember that the Department of Agriculture had only been established by the Government in 1872 and that agricultural shows were still the effective venues for agricultural education and demonstrations.

When Patterson took over the administration of the society it was the National Agricultural Society of Victoria and its shows were held at a site on St Kilda Road. He had the task of overseeing the transfer to Ascot Vale in 1883. In 1884 he proposed the establishment of a periodical, the Journal of the N.A.S.V. which he edited. In 1885 he was appointed secretary to an organisation which we would now call the Show Council but which then had the lengthy name of "The Victorian Board for Federation of Agricultural Societies". In 1886 he organised a committee to undertake the publication of a draught horse stud book but its realisation was delayed for many years.

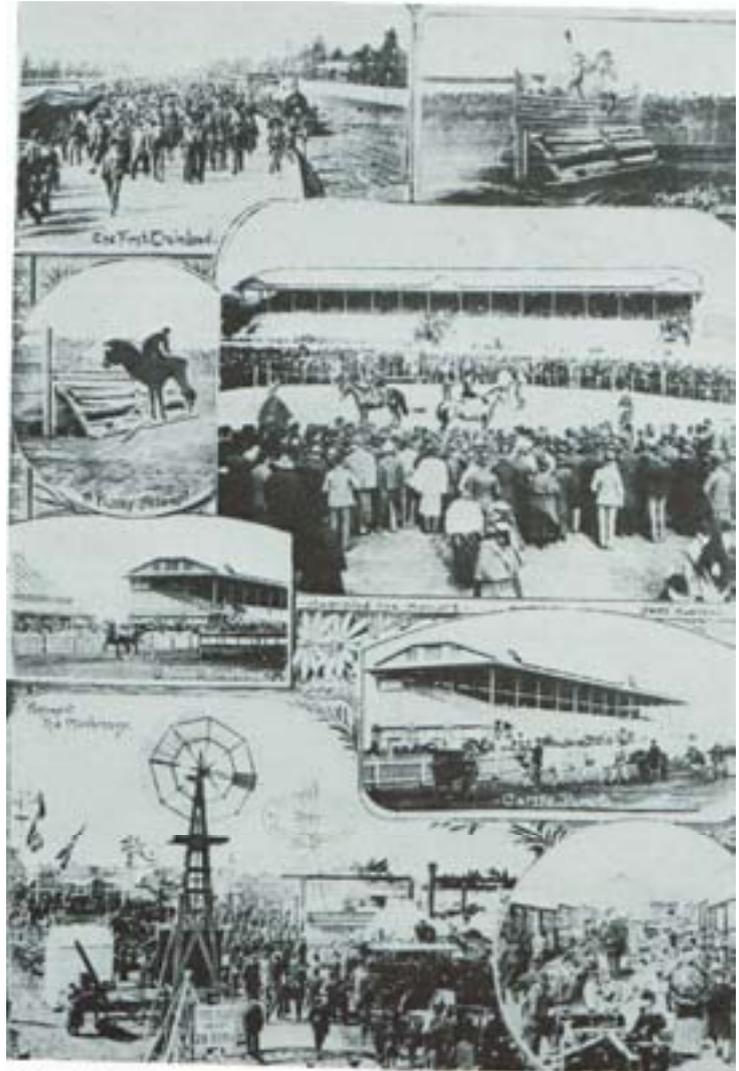
He saw the showgrounds used for the accommodation of Boer War troops in 1900 and the first Grand Parade in 1910. The introduction in 1903 of District Exhibits was further evidence of his determination to involve the widest possible community interests in the RASV.

We can be confident that Thomas Patterson would have regarded the initiation and editing of a Flock Book for British Breeds of Sheep in Victoria/Australia as one of his most rewarding achievements.

When he retired the RASV granted him an honorarium of 300, 10 for each year of service – proof that the Council regarded him as "a good and faithful servant".

So should we!

Reprinted from "A Centenary of Purity and Pedigree," A short history of the Australian Society of Breeders of British Sheep Flock Book by Ivan Heazlewood.



The Royal Show 1895.

Photo Courtesy RASV, Speed the Plough, FH Noble and R Morgan.



Lincoln Ewe Exhibits, Royal Show 1897.

Photo Courtesy RASV, Speed the Plough, FH Noble and R Morgan.



Annual Membership Fees

Annual membership fees are now due for 2010-2011
Please complete the attached membership form
then mail or email along with your membership fees. If using
direct debit please notify me of your payment.

Guild Insurance

Guild Insurance sponsor Heritage Sheep Australia.
We are grateful for their continued support and encourage members to
think of them when renewing your insurance.
They are very pleased to quote on any of your Insurance requirements.

Call Rod Crook on 03 9373 2500

July 2011 Newsletter No 23

Thankyou to all those members who have
contributed to this issue.
The next deadline is **1st July 2011**. I would be delighted for any
contributions from members, either email or post.
Email: **Jacque @ mcarchitect.com.au**
Mail: 11 Mona Place, South Yarra 3141

CHEVIOT SHEEP FOR SALE

Ewes from 2008 and 2009 and 2010 ram lambs
Brucellosis accredited flock and Johnes vaccinates.
Flock founded in 1966.

Contact: Jan Duff,
SPRING GROVE CHEVIOTS
HEATHCOTE. Tel (03) 54 333 236
email janduff@activ8.net.au

Heritage Sheep Feature

Sheepvention, Hamilton

1st - 2nd August, 2011

Heritage Sheep Australia is very
pleased to announce that Heritage
Sheep will be the feature at the 2011
Sheepvention.

We are currently working with the
Sheepvention organizers to make this
a very successful event however we do
ask members to put these dates in
your diaries and support the show with
our heritage breeds.

For more information contact
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Sheepvention

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Websites: www.sheepvention.com

