

HERITAGE SHEEP AUSTRALIA

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



NEWSLETTER NO 14
March 2009

The Cheviot

It is understandable that the introduction of Cheviots to Australia is credited to J. Walsh and Sons of Mt Barker, South Australia, for their importations from New Zealand in 1938 as the Cheviot had dropped out of sight in this country for the previous 60 years.

However, Cheviots were amongst the first British sheep in Australia when they were brought to North West Tasmania by Van Diemens Land Company in 1832.

Financed by British wool merchants, the van Diemens Land Company was one of the first big corporate ventures into Australia agriculture. Granted 250,000 acres in the North West corner of Tasmania, it soon found that the quality Merinos which it imported in 1826 could not thrive in the damp environment and several British breeds were introduced, among them Cheviots, in 1832.

It is no wonder that the Cheviot and its crosses were successful in this situation for it brought with it generations of adaptation to the cold rugged hills along the Scottish

border. As with many other breeds, the Cheviot underwent a program of improvement in the late 18th Century when New Leicester infusions increased size and early maturity.

If the Leicester can be said to have influenced all England, it was the Cheviot which spread north over all Scotland. The breed was given its name in 1792 by the great Scottish agriculturalist Sir John Sinclair, but it was farmer John Robson of Bowmont Water who led a group of breeders in the improvement of the breed.

When joined with the Border Leicester it produced the renowned Scotch half-bred which for well over 100 years has been the most popular and profitable prime lamb mother in Britain.

In the 1880's the Van Diemens Land Company established ram depots in Victoria and South Australia and there is no doubt that Cheviot genes were spread from them. There was a further well documented importation in 1856 when a Launceston medic, Dr. Grant, landed a consignment which had been selected from the purest flocks on the Cheviot Hills.

The presence of Cheviots in Victoria is recorded in a report of the 1868 Ballarat Show which said that "in the section for



Cheviot Ram bred by John Armstrong and Neil Hopkins, Greyoaks Cheviot Stud, Metung, Victoria



Cheviots grazing, Longford Tasmania 1911.

Downs or Black-faced sheep, only one Southdown was exhibited against the Cheviots”, inferring that Cheviots were present in some numbers. The final appearance of the breed in the 19th Century may have been when pure Cheviots were exhibited at the 1875 Launceston Show.

The Cheviot is an alert, superbly mobile sheep with a tough constitution, yet good fleshing qualities. Its dense fleece is the most valuable of all hill breeds. In Australia it became popular in the 1950's as a sire of half-Merino prime lamb mothers, especially in marginal areas where its natural resilience could be exploited. That 1950's surge of popularity was fed entirely from New Zealand. In fact, it is safe to say that no imports came direct from England in the 20th Century. It is a parent, along with the Romney, of the Perrendale, a breed developed in New Zealand in the 1950's



CC Heazlewood Champion Cheviot Ewe c. 1960

Tasmanian Lambs Won At Smithfield, England

The 1960-61 Tasmanian Fat Lamb Carcase Championship was won by Mr. John Lyne of Eskdale, Powranna with five lambs from Cheviot-Merino cross ewes. These lambs were then sent on to Smithfield and the judge there again selected the lambs from the Cheviot-Merino cross ewes as the top pen of the 23 enteries. They won what the judge described as the best consignment of lambs that he had seen from Tasmania.

His comment was: “ Five very good even lambs of very good make and shape being full of meat and with no waste fat.”

Mr. Lyne also won the fat lamb section at 1961 Hobart Royal with lambs from Cheviot-Merino cross ewes. Every lamb in this Eskdale winning pen was a twin. Mr. Lyne said he had selected the pen from 220 sets of twins. He had won this competition also in 1960 with lambs from Cheviot-Merino cross ewes. The outstanding mothering and milking qualities of the Cheviot-Merino cross ewe were well demonstrated in these twin lambs.



Lambs from Cheviot-cross ewes which won Tasmanian championships and at Smithfield in 1961.

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 Jim McConnell on 03 9373 2500

Heritage Sheep Australia members that bred Cheviots

David Wilkinson

Spion Kop Cheviot Stud
 Founded 1974
 Phone 03 5567 1037

John Armstrong & Neil Hopkins

Grayoaks Cheviot Stud
 Founded 1980
 Phone 03 5156 2668

Janice Duff

Spring Grove Cheviot Stud
 Founded 2005
 Phone 03 5433 3236



Historical Snippets

Launceston Weekly Courier 19 Jan. 1907 p7

From a report in "The American Sheepbreeder"
 The sale of the "Norton Heath" stud owned by Messers Wright of Lincolnshire England to Mr Miller of Argentine, for the sum of 42,000, averaging 80 per head including rams, ewes and lambs. The goodwill of the owner goes with the sale for 4 years.

This sale is a record for British Sheep. The same purchaser gave Mr Dudding 1000 for a ram in two successive seasons and gave 1400 and 1600 for other Lincoln rams.

Thankyou to Ivan Heazelewood for supplying this interesting snippet.

A Ram, a Ewe or a Wedder?

By Megg Miller

If you think you have a lot to remember and become irritated when little things slip your mind consider what the agriculturist – we would call them farmers now – had to grapple with in past centuries.

William Yovatt in the 1862 edition of 'Sheep, their Breeds, Management, and Diseases' mentions the different names applied to sheep according to age and sex.

'The male is called a ram or a tup. While he is with his mother he is denominated a tup or ram-lamb or a heeder; and in some parts of the west of England, a pur-lamb. From the time of his weaning and until he is shorn, he has a variety of names: he is called a hog, a hogget, a hoggerel, a lamb-hog, a tup-hog, or a teg and if castrated, a wether-hog. After shearing when probably he is a year and a half old, he is called a shearing, a shearing, a shear-hog, a diamond or dinmont ram or a tup, and a shearing-wether, etc, when castrated. After the second shearing he is a two-shear ram, a tup or wether. At the expiration of another year he is a three-shear ram, etc, the name always taking its date from the time of shearing.

'In many parts of the north of England and Scotland he is a tup-lamb after he is salvaged and until he is shorn, and then a tup-hog and after that, a tup or if castrated, a dinmont or a wedder.

'The female is a ewe or gimmer lamb until weaned, and then a gimmer-hog or ewe-hog or teg or sheeder ewe. After being shorn she is a shearing ewe or gimmer, sometimes a theave or double-toothed ewe or teg, and afterwards, a two-shear, or three-shear or a four or six-tooth ewe or theave. In some of the northern districts, ewes that are barren or that have weaned their lambs, are called eild or yeld ewes.'

Note that at that time the age of a sheep was not taken from when they were dropped but from the first shearing so the first year could have included fifteen or sixteen months or even more.

All this makes the terminology we use today to describe the age or stage of development of sheep seem very simple. Just as well too, the complexity of modern life requires many many more details to remember than the mid nineteenth century farmer ever encountered.

Heritage Sheep Australia Wool Rugby Jumpers

A small number of rugby jumpers are still available
 Priced at \$80 plus postage
 Telephone Jacque Carr 03 98204172

George Andrew Brown (Bruni)

Except taken from "A Centenary of Purity & Pedigree"
By Ivan Heazlewood

George Andrew Brown (1834-1909) bestrides the modest world of Australia's late 19th century rural journalism like a colossus. On rural topics, in particular those related to sheep and cattle he wrote much and often.

He was for 30 years attached to the "Yeoman" rural department of "The Australasia", a weekly paper which informed many readers in the eastern colonies/states on a full range of subject from sports to politics and social gossip. It was particularly informative on matters of interest to rural folk and it kept them abreast of the latest market trends of wool, meat and grains as well as describing and illustrating, with drawings the latest innovations in farm implements and gadgets.

Brown's articles, however were far less mundane for he wrote with inspiration and enthusiasm. He wrote with inspiration for the improving livestock husbandry of his time and applause for the achievements of the hundreds of Australian studmasters, in particular those engaged in the Merino industry, whose properties he visited in his long career. It should be remembered that his career spanned the great wool boom and some exuberance was justified.

Brown was born in Tasmania and took his pen-name "Bruni" from Bruni (now spelled Bruny) Island, a favourite haunt of his youth. As a young man he took, with his brothers, the occupancy of Mount Emu Station in Victoria's western district. However, as that was only held as pastoral lease (squatting) it was lost when the Land Grant Act of 1864 gave right of possession to selectors within certain distance of a gold field.

Bad luck followed him when drought forced him off another holding near Boort. Well perhaps it was in fact good fortune, for journalism proved to be his true and fulfilling vocation.

He first became a reporter for "The Argus" but then joined "The Australasian" where his weekly articles reflected his broad and studious knowledge of the pastoral industry and his natural ability to convey his message through print. He took up the study of the French language when a reporter and ever afterward was a wide reader in French literature.

G.A. brown is best known for his book "Sheepbreeding in Australia" which was first published in 1880. It is now regarded as the authoritative work on sheep in Australia up to that date. Copies are now rare and expensive. His second book "Studies in Stock-breeding" is less well known but indicates the scientific trend of his mind. There is no doubt that Brown was dedicated to the cause of recorded pedigrees. In his article "British Sheep in Victoria" which accompanied the "Preface" to Vol. 1 (of the Flock Book for British Breeds of Sheep in Victoria) he said "A record of pedigree is necessary to the maintenance of any variety of domestic animals at a high standard of excellence. In mating two animals it is not only the sire and the dam that must be considered: their ancestors for several generations must be taken into account".

The last article from his pen appeared in "The Australasian" on the first week of 1909. On the 21st of August of the same year the paper announced the death of its faithful correspondent and its tribute stated "The whole history of pastoral progress and of the advance of livestock breeding in Australia is contained in the articles he has written for the Yeoman pages of 'The Australasian' during the last thirty years".

The publication of a flock book for British sheep was an event which intrigued and fascinated George Andrew Brown. On the eve of its release (January 1898) he wrote "The establishment of the flock book marks an era in sheep-breeding in the colony and the (show) society is to be congratulated on the success that has rewarded its efforts".

After 100 years we can safely say that his enthusiasm was justified.



Westbury Show December 22nd 1902
Scene near machinery section

Letter to the Editor

Dear Jacque,

It was with great pleasure that I read in Newsletter 13. Des Stevens report of the Heritage Sheep Display at the 2008 Royal Melbourne Show and I would like to convey hearty congratulations to all who were involved.

It was obviously a success in concept, planning and execution and that was undoubtedly achieved by the sacrificial efforts of a few members.

From the preparing and mounting of the display, to the supply of suitable animals by breeders to the shepherding, caretaking and interpreting for the public twelve hours per day, for the duration of the show, it must have been a marathon effort indeed.

Des Steven's statement that after more than 40 years of showing experience "I have never seen a group of sheep cause so much public interest" indicates that he got satisfaction from his great contribution. I trust that others who gave time and talents were rewarded in the same way. And we who only read - can not read Des' account without feeling something of the glow of its success.

Congratulations and thanks to all involved.

Ivan Heazlewood



2008 Melbourne Royal Show Heritage Sheep Display

Ryeland News

A new flock has been formed in Victoria, one that will bring the Ryeland before the public and hopefully encourage more people to develop an interest in the breed,

Paul Jamieson of Spring Hill has begun his new stud with the purchase of rams and ewes from Denise Humphries' Peartree Stud, Robert Mitchell's Ronobri, Patrician and Burnwood flocks and also the Edendale Community Farm flock.

Paul and his wife Marie are very interested in the conservation of the rare breeds with Marie being the Secretary of Rare Breeds Trust Australia. They also run the NAB Animal Nursery Discovery Farm at the Royal Melbourne Show where it is intended to have the Ryeland ewes and lambs on view, accompanied by two other Heritage breeds - English Leicester and Cheviot. The Royal Melbourne Show attracts over 500,000 visitors and the Animal Nursery is one of the most visited attractions – what wonderful exposure for Ryelands.

Denise Humphries



RC Allwright with his Champion Ryeland Ram, October 18th 1934

Display Boards and Banners

Display boards and banners are available for local shows, expo's and field days.

Contact Jacque Carr on 03 9820 4172 to locate them.

**Heritage Sheep Feature
 October 15-18th ,2009**

Heritage Sheep Australia is currently working with the Royal Geelong Agricultural Society organising a Heritage Sheep Feature.

Geelong is the largest Victorian Show out side of Melbourne and a very good opportunity to showcase our special heritage breeds.

The **Heritage Sheep Feature will be on Saturday 17th October 2009.**

Individual breed classes and special interbred classes with good sponsorship should encourage breeders to exhibit their sheep.

If any members have any ideas or sponsorship leads please contact me.

Cataloges will be sent out at a later date to members however Jodie Friesch is the Sheep Coordinator and can be contacted on 03 52661198.

www.heritagesheep.org.au

Heritage Sheep Australia now has a website

If you would like your contact details included on the site for your breed(s) please fill in the form below and return by post to: Jacque Carr

11 Mona Place
 South Yarra, 3141

Please Note: It is not necessary for you to have an internet connection for us to publish your details on the website. For security we will not publish your street address.

Name.....

Stud Name.....

Breed(s).....

State.....

Phone.....

Fax.....

Email.....

Website.....

I agree to the details as supplied above being published on the www.heritagesheep.org.au Website

Signed.....

Date.....

22nd Annual Strong Wool Sheep & Wool Fair
Sunday, 3rd May 2009
Benalla Showgrounds
 Entries Close:Friday 17th April 2009
 Show Entry Secretary: Ms Wendy Beer 03 5768 2619

Holbrook Sheep & Wool Fair
June 17-19th 2009
Featuring Dorset Downs
 Secretary: Rita Bowler 02 6036 3727
 Entries Close:10th May 2009

Australian Sheep and Wool Show
July 15th –17th 2009
 A Heritage Sheep Australia General Meeting will be held on 17th July 2009, Sunday at 12 noon in the Committee Room, Prince of Wales Showgrounds, Bendigo.
 All Heritage Sheep Australia members as welcome and encouraged to come.

Heritage Sheep Australia Magnets
 They look fantastic and make terrific gifts.
 Magnets are priced at \$1 each
 Order from Ethel Stephenson, 03 5764 1298.

June 2009 Newsletter No 15
 Thankyou to all those members who have contributed to this issue.
 The next deadline is 15th May 2009. 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.