

# HERITAGE SHEEP AUSTRALIA

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



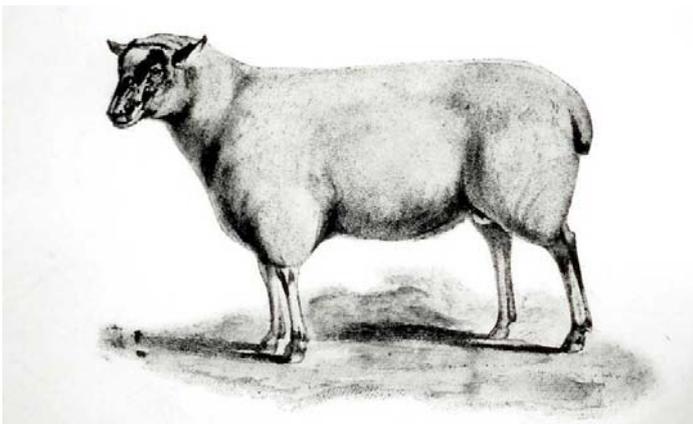
## NEWSLETTER NO 16 September 2009

### The Southdown

*By Ivan Heazlewood*

It can be safely assumed that the Southdown was the first recognised breed of the British Sheep to be introduced into Australia. It is certainly the first documented. Major George Johnstone reported, in official correspondence, the importation of a pure ram before 1800, and in a sheep census of 1804 the Rev. Samuel Marsden reported that he favoured the had used the Southdown.

In its relatively unimproved state prior to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the polled, grey-faced sheep which had grazed the Downs of Southern England for centuries possessed several qualities which were combined in no other breed in England. It produced a relatively good fleece of fine, high priced wool, its hindquarters were heavier than the front and it could thrive on low nutritional heathland.

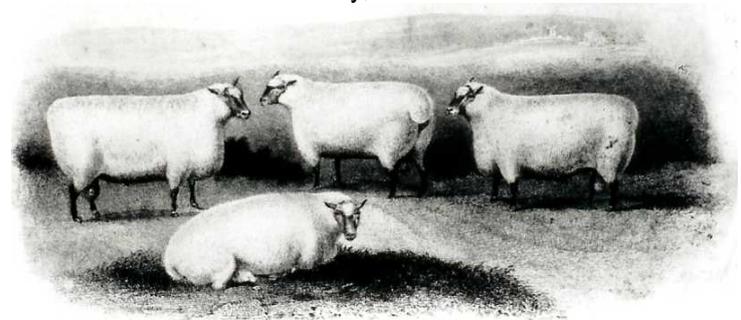


*Two Shear Ram, Bred and Exhibited by Mr. John Ellman, 1798. This is one of the earliest known illustrations of a Southdown, showing the speckled face of the original heath breed. (reproduced from the "Proceedings of the Sussex Agricultural Society")*

Its early presence in the new colony of New South Wales can be understood because the Southdown had recently come into prominence in Britain. John Ellman, a Sussex farmer who in a sense was a successor to Robert Bakewell had, by 1800, brought the Southdown to new heights of meat productivity and early maturity which claimed the attention of sheep men throughout Britain. Where Downs wethers were previously not fit for the butcher till 3 or 4 years old, they were now ready at 18 months. The Southdown was infused with every meat bred in Britain and found favour in Europe and the New World.

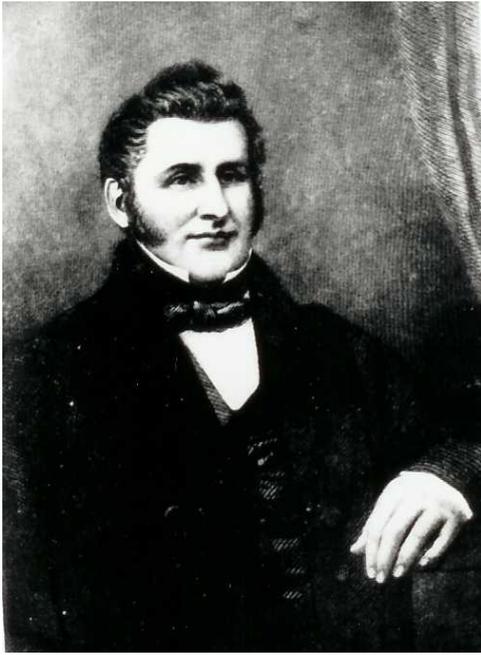
Thomas Coke (later Lord Leicester) and the Duke of Bedford who both organised the famous agricultural gathering known as "Shearings" on their estates at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were Southdown enthusiasts. In 1802 the Duke of Bedford paid Ellman the astronomical sum of 300 guineas for the use of one ram for the season.

Jonas Webb succeeded Ellman as the premier breeder of England and some sheep from his Babraham stud came to Australia in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Southdowns attracted the attention of British Royalty. George III started the Goodwood flock in 1787. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century several Australian breeders were using rams from the Sandringham flock which was founded in 1866 by Edward VII, then Prince of Wales. Sir Richard Dry, Australia's first native born knight, purchased sheep from the Duke of Richmond in the 1850's for his stud at Quamby, Tasmania.



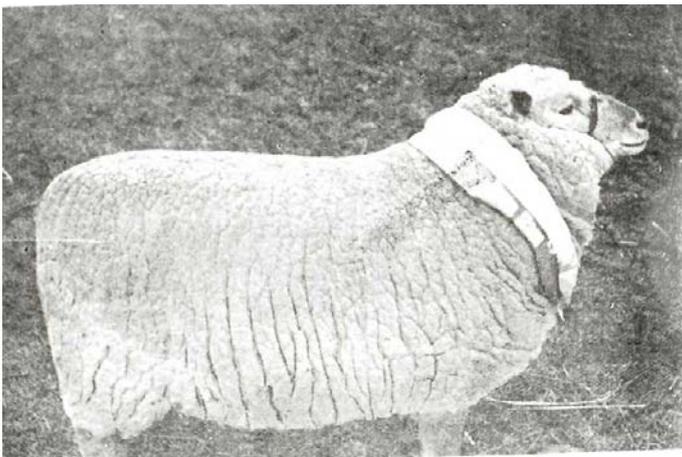
SOUTHDOWN RAMS.  
BRED AND EXHIBITED BY MR. JONAS WEBB 1857.

*Southdown Rams, bred and exhibited by Jonas Webb 1857*



*Jonas Webb English Southdown breeder of 1850's*

In the hungry prison colony of New South Wales, meat was of infinitely more importance than wool and it is not surprising that the few people interested in sheep sought the leading meat breed known to agricultural experts of the period. The Southdown is frequently mentioned in 1820 commentaries on Van Diemens Land and many of Australia's registered flocks can be traced back to an importation to there of sheep from Ellman's flock by a partnership known as the "New South Wales and Van Diemens Land Establishment" in 1826.

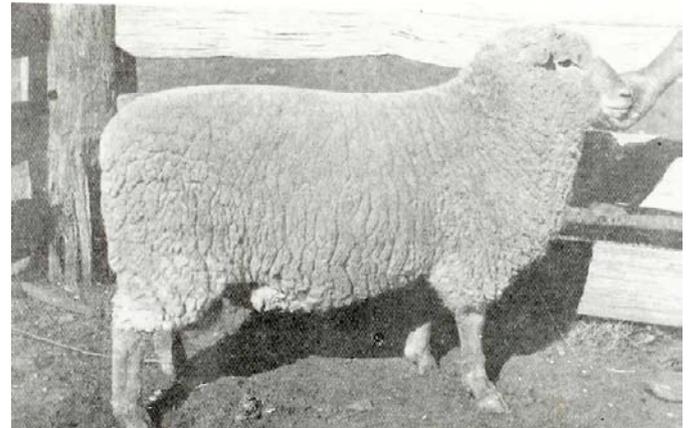


*Mr Percy Harts Imported Southdown Ram, Hobart 1907*

James Toosey who was manager of "The Establishment" or "The Cressy Company", as it was commonly known, must be credited with consolidating the breed in Australia. He returned to England in 1836 and bought more sheep from the Ellman flock. In 1835 he showed Southdowns at the

Cornwall (Launceston) Show and continued to exhibit, import and promote Southdowns till his death in 1883. Many flocks were established in Tasmania from 1870 on, and representatives of these regularly went to show and sales on the mainland. Brumby, Boucher and Hogarth being the leading breeders.

The Hogarth flock was founded in 1884, is still in existence. It supplied foundation stock for numerous studs including those of King and (indirectly) Metcalf which dominated the Victorian scene for much of this century.



*A prize winning 1 year old Kirdale (Hogarth) Southdown Ram 1906.*

Over a period of 150 years there were many importations of Southdowns from Britain, but in the last 40 years great benefits have come from sheep sourced in New Zealand.

The Southdown remained Australia's premier terminal sire from colonisation through till 1950.



*Courier, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1931  
Launceston Southdown line-up*

## A Southdown Lament

By Ivan Heazlewood, June 2009

I now find it difficult to come to terms with the fact that the longterm dominant terminal sire breed, the Southdown is included in our Heritage List and now requires special attention to ensure its survival.

It certainly the oldest surviving British Breed in Australia. Its presence before 1800 is documented and there were Southdowns in the flock of the Rev. Samuel Mardsen who was the first person to send wool from Australia to England in 1804.

In Tasmania several new settlers brought quality Southdown Southdown from England in the 1820's. The most notable of these, the Cressy Company which arrived with quality horses, cattle and sheep in 1826. In addition to Merino's and Leicesters they had Southdowns from the flock of the great improver and proponent, John Ellman of Glynde, Sussex, thus providing the pioneers, in what would soon become Australia's most important industry, with the best genetic material available.

Although the great need for prime lamb breeds would not come till after 1880 when the first successful shipment of frozen meat to Britain occurred the Southdown was unchanged as Australia's leading prime lamb sire, with the exception of a brief period in the early 1900's for 140 years, (1800 to 1940).



*Tasmanian Mail, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1925  
 Vern Launceston  
 Champion Southdown Ewe and Ram*

When, in 1855 the Cressy Company decided to liquidate all its Tasmanian assets advertisements which appeared in Launceston newspapers listed, in addition to 80 farms, horses Hereford cattle and Merino sheep, Southdowns in the form below

**THE SHEEP,**  
 (Of two classes)

1st.  
**SOUTHDOWN.**  
 Comprehending from twelve to twenty pure rams  
 Two hundred to three hundred pure ewes  
 And a quantity of fat heavy wethers  
*Their character is that of the true Sussex Down, derived from Mr. Ellman's and Mr. Jonas Webb's Flocks.*

2nd.  
**SAXON AND MERINO.**  
 Consisting of two hundred rams  
 Two thousand young ewes  
 Twelve to fifteen hundred lambs  
 Eight hundred fat wethers  
 Fourteen hundred store wethers.

*The rams and pure sheep will be sold in their fleeces, which are worthy of inspection.*

— — —

*Amongst the above will be sold the Company's Pure Flock of about 250 (which are very beautiful) and their lambs; these lambs are the produce of eight merino rams, (included in the above list for the hammer) imported in November, 1854, and descended as per certificate furnished, without cross or stain, direct from the pure flock of his late Majesty George the Third.*

**THE PURE HEREFORD CATTLE.**  
 Comprising from 8 to 10 promising young bulls,  
 Ditto 40 to 50 cows and heifers  
 Ditto 8 to 10 pairs working bullocks  
 Under this classification will be found some of the handsomest and best dairy cows in the island.  
 The Pedigrees of the whole, which will be stated, and furnished to purchasers, have been preserved in their purity, uninterruptedly so far back as the year 1825, thus affording a very rare opportunity indeed to gentlemen of securing to themselves a select breed, from whence to improve their bush herds.

James Toosey, the company's manager had toured Europe in 1836 and purchased further Southdowns from Ellman's flock in addition to quality Merino's which he personally selected in Saxony. No doubt many other graziers imported Southdowns but amongst those recorded were Bryant brothers who in 1841 had 200 Southdown ewes for sale at their property Kingston near Launceston and Sir Richard Dry, Australia's first native born Knight, who visited England

in the 1850's and returned with 5 domestic servants, 5 pheasants, 5 dogs and 5 Southdown sheep.

The photo below (from a publication, reporting on British stud stock for the year 1910) depicts some of the descendants of Ellman's flock in that year. The flock was then owned by C Adeane Esq but was managed by FN Webb a descendant of Jonas Webb who had acquired most of the original Ellman flock and had taken it to greater heights in the mid 1800's.

## THE BABRAHAM SOUTHDOWN FLOCK.

THE PROPERTY OF  
**C. ADEANE, Esq., Babraham Hall, Cambridge, England.**



**GROUP OF PRIZE WINNING RAMS AT THE ROYAL SHOW, 1910.**  
 Reading from left to right the group comprises the First and Third Prize Two Shear Rams, the Third, Second and Reserve Champion, and Fourth Prize Shearling Rams, and the First Prize pen of Shearling Rams.

Flock No. 55 in Southdown Sheep Society's Flock Book. A full record of pedigrees on both Sire's and Dam's side kept. A large number of the foremost Southdown breeders in Great Britain have sheep from the Babraham Flock, and in addition buyers from the Argent in Republic, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tasmania, and the United States purchase from Babraham, and have won many prizes with Babraham Sheep.

### PRINCIPAL PRIZES WON AT THE SUMMER SHOWS FOR BREEDING STOCK, 1900 to 1910.

	Royal Agricultural Society of England Shows.	Royal Counties Shows.	Other Large Shows.	Totals.
Champion Prizes .....	3	8	19	30
Reserve for Champion Prizes .....	1	0	15	16
RAMS—First Prizes .....	12	0	24	36
Second .....	7	9	20	36
Third .....	1	1	10	12
RAM LAMBS—First Prizes .....	2	9	15	26
Second Prizes .....	2	9	10	21
Third .....	2	0	10	12
EWE LAMBS—First Prizes .....	2	0	10	12
Second Prizes .....	2	1	5	8
Third .....	0	0	0	0
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>151</b>

*Ewes are not exhibited.*

In recent years Prizes have been given at the Royal Show for Pens of Three Shearling Rams. The Babraham Flock have won in this Class as follows:— In 1906, First and Fourth Prizes; In 1907, Second and Fourth Prizes; In 1908, First and Third Prizes; In 1909, First and Second Prizes; In 1910, First Prize.  
 In 1904, 1905, and 1906, the Champion Prizes for the best 2000 in the Southdown Class at the Royal Counties Show was won by a Babraham Ram.  
 Great success has been achieved with Babraham Southdowns at the leading Fat Stock Shows. In 1907, at the Southfield Club Show, in London, a pen of Wethers Larks won First Prize in their Class, a Silver Cup, as best of their Breed; in Champion Race for the Best Pen of Short-woolled Sheep, and the Prince of Wales Challenge Cup for the Best Pen of Sheep in the Show.

Sheep of all ages for Sale. WRITE FOR CATALOGUE OF FLOCK.

Apply—**F. N. WEBB, BABRAHAM, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.**

Telegraphic Address—"WEBB, BABRAHAM."  
 Stations—Farnsford, 12 miles; Whittlesford, 21 miles; Cambridge, 5 miles. (All G.E.R.)  
**BABRAHAM IS 80 MILES FROM LONDON.**



*Launceston 1905, Arthur Harts Southdown Champions Launceston and Longford. Southdowns great illustration of the advancement made in the next 100 years.*

## Heritage Sheep Australia members that bred Southdowns

### Southdown Australia Inc.

Secretary Andrew Sellars-Jones  
 0419 414 100 andrewvet@hotmail.com

### Graeme Hooper

Clear Hills Stud  
 Founded 1934  
 Phone 03 57622996

### Geoff Baker

Southern Pastures Stud  
 Founded 1960  
 Phone 03 55951585

### Ian Ireland

Romale Stud  
 Founded 1997  
 Phone 03 53681658

### Cottie's Run Partnership

Ross Wilson and Jeannette Webster  
 Cottie's Run Stud  
 Founded 2004  
 Phone 02 63321860

### Pauline and Iven Affleck

Rothbury Stud  
 Founded 2005  
 Phone 03 53345330

### Brad Harland

Craigneuk Stud  
 Founded 2007  
 Phone 02 69541225

I am old enough to have witnessed the era when the Southdown was at its numerical peak. In 1940 Southdowns provided 155 of the total 250 flocks of all breeds registered in Tasmania and the 11,000 ewes mated represented 3/4 of the total ewes mated. A further irony, which we are all aware, is that in the ensuing years our skilful breeders have modified and adapted the Southdown to suit both markets and environment in a remarkable way. Sadly we have to accept declining numbers but we should applaud and encourage those dedicated breeders who continue to breed Southdowns in a commercial operation.

## Wanstead Park Wool - exclusive to Tasmanian Wool Suppliers



According to the Wanstead park English Leicester Wool Shepherdess, Phillipa Baird, the particular English Leicester flock used in Wanstead Park's 100% Semi Worsted natural undyed DK fibres was established in 1997 when Tasmania's Belmont Lodge flock (originally established 1981 in Richmond, Tasmania) was dispersed.

But this was not the end of the work of the Belmont flock's late E.B. Gray. The tradition was to be continued with the sheep of this heritage flock. Wanstead Park's English Leicester flock is a rare breed, indeed. Their ancestors not only provided with food, clothing and strings for the ancient Romans, but the sheep played a huge role in the development of the productive and vigorous breeds of sheep used today. In fact, when authentic sheep of the time were needed in Williamsburg, Virginia, USA, some were provided from Tasmania's Belmont flock to form a shipment that was to travel to the other side of the world.

The English Leicester flock at Wanstead is run in conjunction with, but separate from the Merino flock, which is not all that difficult, as the two breeds largely keep to themselves. This is due to their temperaments being very much mismatched. The English Leicesters are shorn so that the staple length is 100 millimetres. The fleeces are skirted, all vegetable matter is removed by hand and the remaining fleece is then sent to be scoured by the CSIRO facility in Geelong, Victoria. Finally, the scoured fibre is return to Kyneton, Victoria, for spinning by Meskills.

On return to Tasmania, the wool is then presented for sale by Tasmanian Wool Suppliers as a premium Tasmanian product whose production history is fully documented. That is very rare in this day and age where maximum output and homogeneity are the only goals.

Wanstead Park was settled in 1823 by Richard Willis whose wife and family of 18 children flourished in the new colony of Van Diemen's Land. After the Willis family retired to Britain in the 1850s, the property was owned by Mrs Baird's family who, in 1989 invited her and her family to run and develop it.

The house and property are now being restored, and the

English Leicester flock continue to play their part in preserving Tasmania's rich heritage of agriculture. The work of Robert Bakewell (1725-95) radically improved livestock breeding and is now a constant reminder to Wanstead Park of the need to treasure our history whilst acting boldly to ensure improvement in everything we do in today's world.

The exclusive quality of Wanstead Park's 100% Semi Worsted natural undyed DK wool is evidence of our success.



<http://www.wool suppliers.com.au>

### Heritage Sheep Australia members that bred Ryelands

#### Marilyn & Des Stevens

Hallylulya Stud  
 Founded 1956  
 Phone 03 55782311

#### Andrew Wilkens

Malung Stud  
 Founded 1958  
 Phone 03 52613373

#### Denise Humphries

Peartree Stud  
 Founded 2004  
 Phone 03 53420601

## Royal Melbourne Show 2009

With only two weeks to go the organization of our Heritage Sheep Australia display at the Royal Melbourne Show is well under way.

Following last years success the display will be set up for the entire show. A ram and ewe, some with lambs, from each our nine heritage breeds will be the main attraction. This year we are working on enlarging the fleece display and more signage to enhance the visual appeal and interest.

Guild Insurance have generously agreed to sponsor our display again, the proceeds being ear marked for more signage that will be used at feature shows and displays.

**The AGM of Heritage Sheep Australia will be held at the Royal Melbourne Show on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009, at 10am, in the Sheep Pavilion.**

### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Dorset Horn and Ryeland judging 1pm

### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Southdown judging 9am

English Leicester and Lincoln judging 1pm

### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009

AGM Heritage Sheep Australia 10am.

ASSBA Interbred judging 1pm.

### Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Interbred Judging 9am.



*Champion Ryeland Group 2006 Royal Melbourne Show exhibited by Des and Marilyn Stevens Hallylulya Ryeland Stud, Victoria..*

## Heritage Sheep Feature at the Royal Geelong Show 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 shortwool judge is renoun sheep and cattle judge Graham Day from Bordertown, South Australia. Mr Day has judged all breeds of sheep and cattle at every Royal Show in Australia and also shows in New Zealand and South Africa. The Day family have been breeding Suffolk stud sheep since 1931 as well as Poll Dorsets, White Suffolks and Poll Hereford Cattle.

Our longwool judge is Heather Stoney from Inverleigh, Victoria. Mrs Stoney is a highly regarded Border Leicester breeder who has judged at Royal shows and many special breed shows.

### The Heritage Sheep Classes will be judged on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

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

Entries close on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009

For more information and cataloges contact Jodie Friesch the Sheep Coordinator on 03 52661198.

**Following judging and a day at the show Heritage Sheep Australia members and friends are invited to come along to the Geelong Football Club Dining Room for a casual dinner and get together at 7.30pm.**

Not often do we have the time and opportunity to relax and reminisce over the history of our wonderful Sheep industry so please come along.

### 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**

## New English Leicester Breeder

Congratulations to Jim Heard and Paul Jamieson.....  
To Jim for maintaining his English Leicester stud from 1943 and Paul for his for sight in purchasing the genetics and transferring Registration Flock No 200.  
We welcome Paul and his wife Marie, who are committed to the preservation of Heritage Breeds and are organizing the Animal Nursery at the 2009 Royal Melbourne Show.  
We may even see some 'Heritage' lambs arriving at the Show.

## 150<sup>th</sup> Whittlesea Show

Whittlesea Agricultural Society Inc. is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> Show on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009.  
With dwindling sheep entries the committee asked Heritage Sheep Australia to put on a display to help celebrate the history of agriculture and in particular our sheep breeds.  
The Governor will be in attendance on the day and hopefully take in our display with the associated media entourage.

Stewards are happy to help with unloading/loading and meal tickets will be given to breeders who provide sheep for the display. If any breeder can provide sheep for this display could you please let me know as soon as possible, before I start phoning with HELP!! I am happy to set the display up on the Friday but if any one wishes to help please let know. Jacque 03 98204172

## 150<sup>th</sup> Bendigo Show

Bendigo Agricultural Show Society is also celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> Show and invited Heritage Sheep Australia breeders to showcase their sheep.  
The sheep are required to be penned on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October and will be judged on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009.  
Entries close on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009.  
Contact Rod Bowles on 5444 4646 or [bendigoshow@bigpond.com](mailto:bendigoshow@bigpond.com)

## Heritage Sheep Australia Magnets

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

## December 2009 Newsletter No 17

Thankyou to all those members who have contributed to this issue.

The next deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> November 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.

## Display Boards and Banners

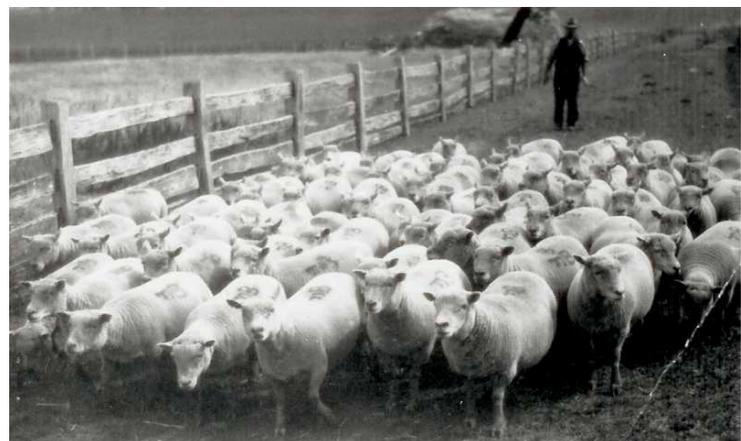
Display boards and banners are available for local shows, expo's and field days.  
Contact Jacque Carr on 03 9820 4172 to locate them.

## Heritage Sheep Australia Wool Rugby Jumpers

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

## AGM

The **Heritage Sheep Australia Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009, at 10am, Sheep Pavilion, Royal Melbourne Showgrounds.**  
All Heritage Sheep Australia members are welcome and encouraged to come.



*Frank Badcock Senior with Fairbank Southdown ewes just weaned 1928*