

# JANE MYCOCK WINS 2021 NEWCOMER'S AWARD

Jane Mycock and her husband Stuart farm near Buxton, Derbyshire. They have British Blondes, commercial beef cattle and in 2020 Jane established her Sycamore Longhorn herd.

*Jane caught the showing bug last year at some of the few shows that were held, and did so well that she was awarded the Society's Paul Lockett Newcomers Award, for members in their first year of showing in their own right. Here's Jane's take on her first year showing Longhorns.*

## When did you buy your first cattle?

I purchased my first Longhorn as a weaned calf from the Saxby family of the Litton herd in December 2019 in the form of Litton Tangerine. I then joined the Society the following year.

## What made you decide to start showing?

My husband! Before I met him I'd never even heard of cattle showing. I thought it sounded ludicrously dangerous! Back in 2017 he gave me a Blonde bull calf as my own little project to train and show. Our first ever show was Nantwich in Cheshire and my little bull calf Ninja took a championship rosette. I think that taste of glory ignited my passion for showing.



## Did you halter break your own cattle, or did you buy them 'ready for action'?

I've always trained my own cattle. Once I'd gained confidence showing the Blondes I wanted to prove to myself I could do it. This is why I prefer to buy weaned calves so that I can bond with them while they're young and impressionable (and because they're easier to hang on to when training!)

## How did you decide on the shows you wanted to go to?

I've always worked full time alongside the farm, so I generally pick shows which fit around work. I like to do a mixture of small, local one day shows and larger, more competitive multi day shows. Every show is so different, with the atmosphere, cattle facilities, classes and exhibitors varying wherever you go. The planning chaos of 2021 was a blessing in disguise, as we ended up doing four shows we'd never done before, some of which we'd definitely do again in 2022.

## Did you get help from other members either before you started showing or at the shows?

Seeing as I started with the breed on the eve of the pandemic, it was a long time before I ever got to properly meet other breeders. At our first show of 2021, Shropshire Show, I was anxious whether the other exhibitors would be super competitive and cliquey. I needn't have worried. The Longhorn exhibitors were incredibly welcoming, inviting us to join them for drinks, complimenting my animals and giving me loads of advice and tips. When it came to showtime, I seriously could not have got through the day without the Llewellyn family and Thea Woollatt.

## Did you have to buy a lot of expensive kit to get going?

I was very fortunate to meet the Nelson family of the Hambleton herd in Rutland who kindly gifted me their showing equipment. They wished to give a helping hand to somebody new to the breed and I feel honoured to be showing my cattle wearing the same halters which the Nelson's sensational cows have worn. I treated my girls to pink lead ropes which cost £5 each and I got my showbox (wheely toolbox) from B&M for £20. Smaller, local shows basically only cost your fuel to get there, as class entries can be relatively cheap and you usually end up winning back what you paid to enter, well that's the plan anyway!

## What was the highlight of your 2021 season?

Definitely Tango winning the Penistone People's choice award. There was a big line up and I thought she had no chance next to the fluffy Highland and chunky Limousin, but the people of South Yorkshire voted for my girl as their favourite. She also won the native championship, which took a while for the judges to find the trophy for, as she (I swear deliberately) knocked the trophies off the table, I guess she was simply choosing which one she'd like!

## Are you going to carry on with a show team in 2022?

Definitely I won't stop now! I have two new members to the team which I plan on competing around the show circuit. My only limit is how many Longhorns I can fit in the trailer.

## Would you recommend it to other members thinking of having a go at showing?

I work with all varieties of breeds in my day job and I feel it's such a shame when people have fantastic animals at home on the farm which nobody else gets to see. There's such an immense feeling of pride when other breeders and judges compliment your stock and I love it when the general public are in awe of your animals and ask questions about them. I think there can be quite a divide between the farming community and general public, so bringing our beautiful, impressive creatures out for people to admire, ask (often daft, but funny) questions and take selfies with, is worth the effort. Bringing home some glorious rosettes and trophies is also an added bonus. Showing is also a fantastic marketing tool for your stock. We've sold more bulls and had more enquiries through shows than ever. Life on the farm is always busy and can get lonely, so it's such good fun to meet up with showing friends throughout the season.

## What's the one piece of advice you'd pass on to anyone starting out in the show ring for the first time?

Showing cattle is incredibly rewarding, addictive and a great advertisement for your herd, but don't be afraid to ask for help and make some connections with other people who are in the exact same boat as you. Showing friends are like no other friends!

Anyone thinking of showing Longhorn cattle this year should look at the exhibitor support grant information on page 6

