

LONGHORN CATTLE SOCIETY AGM, 15 & 16 OCTOBER 2016

This year's AGM saw around 100 members of the Society head to Wales for the weekend. Each year the number of members coming to all or part of the AGM weekend grows which is testament to the pleasure members get out of meeting up, even if it's just once a year.

Saturday 15 October

The weekend started with a visit to Bernard and Margaret Llewellyn's Carreg Herd at Carreg Cennen Castle, Llandeilo. Bernard and Margaret established the Carreg herd in 1981 with two cows from Fishwick, alongside Welsh Blacks, White Park and Highland Cattle to dress the land surrounding the iconic attraction of Carreg Cennen Castle— by the early 1990's with the exception of providing animals for film sets they turned solely to breeding Longhorns.

The basis of the herd, with the exception of a cow called Tottiskay Juliet, has female lines confined to Fishwick, Rousham and Linton cattle. Bulls of various types have been used over the years in attempt to breed milky cattle with good locomotion. It's Bernard's policy to buy bulls in bits in an attempt to overcome any herd weaknesses. Particular success has been achieved with Fishwick Kinsman and Bulford Freddy. Freddy sired several animals of note including Carreg Cennen who still holds the breed record for a Longhorn sold at public auction. In recent years a limited amount of line breeding has been practiced in an attempt to retain the herd's position in the show ring. Cattle not required for breeding are slaughtered locally and sold to a database of regular customers from as far afield as Bristol and Norfolk

The day started with a discussion around the launch of the Society's Type Classification scheme, with Bernard demonstrating how the classifier would be assessing the cattle and what traits they would be looking for. Bernard also wanted to highlight the importance of female lines within his herd.

This was then followed by a look around the majority of the breeding herd which was situated next to the farm, with the castle a constant presence, overlooking the proceedings.

After a hog-roast lunch the formal AGM business was conducted, with new Council members being elected and outgoing Chairman David Blockley being presented with a memento from Council.

After the AGM Council member David McVeigh gave a presentation on the Society's trademarked Beef logo and and the proposed new Certified Longhorn Beef scheme.

A number of hardy members braved the wind and rain which had set in during the AGM to accompany Bernard to visit the castle. A bracing end to an excellent day.

In the evening we were back at Carreg Cennen Castle for a roast Longhorn beef dinner and we were entertained first by 'Encore' a local stage school (yes, the Welsh can sing!) and then our President Dr Phil Cleland who regaled us with tales of his years as a country GP.



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Sunday 16 October

On Sunday members travelled just 30 minutes away from the Carreg herd to visit Andrew Williams' Rhyfel herd. Having seen Longhorn Cattle on the Rare Breeds stand at the Royal Welsh Show back in the 1970's Andrew started his herd in 2011 with foundation stock coming from the Glasnant herd at Llanelli when that herd dispersed. These bloodlines were mainly Carreg and School Green. Subsequent purchases have been from the Fishwick, Blackbrook and Southfield herds with a strong emphasis on maternal lines. Stockbulls have included Carreg Knight, Southfield Kobra, Southfield Otto and the current bull is Southfield Granite.

The 100 acre farm has been in Andrew's family since the 1880's and much of it sits on the estuary of the River Loughor which has its source at Black Mountain in the Brecon Beacons (just above Carreg Cennen Castle!). Andrew used to rear calves and sheep as well as grow green crops and arable but the combination of BSE and heavy winter storms meant a career change as Andrew went into tree surgery, sawmilling and joinery. This business expanded and has continued until the present day. Alongside his timber business Andrew has now found time to start showing his cattle and in 2015 he won the Paul Lockett Novice's Award.

After Andrew introduced us to his farm we saw his magnificent purpose build cattle sheds as well as his cattle. The views from the farm across the estuary were as spectacular as they were different to the views we had seen the day before. Refreshments followed the visit before everyone departed for home.

