

Mid West Longhorn Breeders' Group Herd visit

On the 5 June 25 members and friends visited the How Caple herd in Herefordshire, by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Roger Lee.

Back in 2001 Roger saw some Longhorns on a friends farm in Oxfordshire and was immediately hooked. Eight heifers were purchased from Pat Quinn to form the foundation of the herd which currently stands at about 175 head.

The Group walked down through the parkland to a waiting tractor and trailer. The first group of cows was in a hidden valley with beech trees on the high banks. These cows were running with Wanlip Juggernaut who had been purchased at the Society sale at Worcester. A lot of comments were made as to how well they looked after an appalling winter and how quiet they were.

We then went to see the next group which were in fields running down to the River Wye, which flows through the 1000 acre estate. The cows were running with Cwrt Henllys Alright Buddy, bought from Chris and Ceri Morgan at their dispersal sale.

Then it was off to the top end of the Estate to see the feeding steers and heifers. All of these would be going through a butcher's shop near Ross on Wye. Roger is paid a flat rate per kilo deadweight and the butcher will take all the Roger can supply. Roger is planning to bring calving forward so the 30 month limit is reached in the Autumn rather than nearer Christmas.

Roger lets out some 160 acres to the nearby Cobrey Farms for asparagus growing. We were given a most informative talk by the owner, Henry Chinn. He said that asparagus prefers sand soil, and the roots can go down to a depth of three metres. When planted the corms weigh around 80 grams and by the time they are 10 years old (the normal lifespan) they will weigh some eight kilos. Spears are picked once they get to 12cm or more and a field is harvested every 2-3 days. Cobrey Farms employ some 800 seasonal workers which are in the main Eastern European. After Mr Chinn had been thanked he invited everyone to help themselves to some asparagus, so there were some members who had asparagus for supper that night.

In the adjoining field were last year's calves, steers and heifers, after which went back to the Courtyard for tea. Roger and his wife were thanked for their effort in putting on the visit and the lovely settings in which we saw the cattle. Mrs Lee was presented with a bouquet by Wendy Preece as a thank you from the Club.

Peter Guest, Chairman, Midland Longhorn Breeders' Group





