



WSAG Newsletter

WEST SHIRES ALPACA GROUP



December 2018

AGM

24th February 2019—1:15 for 1:45pm.

A light lunch will be available at 1:15pm ready to start the AGM at 1:45pm. It will be followed by a talk from MacArthur Barstow and Gibbs on Alpaca Health and Husbandry. We hope as many of you as possible will attend so that we can decide how we want the group to move forward.

We also have vacancies on the committee so if you would like to take a more active part in running your group then please let us know. We hold committee meetings every 2-3 months as needed—you don't have to be present as we have phone in facilities.

Your committee has also worked hard over the last year organising two large shows, The Royal Three Counties and Midlands Championship Halter shows—these provide us with the funds to subsidise all our other activities for members. But we can't expect the same few people to do all the work every year so the rest of us can benefit from other group activities. So the more people we have on the committee the less work there is for all of us and you can learn how these shows and activities are organised. You can also contribute new ideas and activities that the group could participate in.

Please don't be shy—WE NEED YOU.

Upcoming Events



Your committee are working hard to put together a program of events. These will be updated and publicised on the WSAG website and Facebook as soon as we have the details.

So far we have:

13-Jan-19 **All about the fibre—1 'Collecting'**

1-4pm

Stoke Bliss Village Hall, WR15 8RR

24-Feb-19 **AGM 2019**

1:15 for light lunch, AGM start at 1:45

Followed by Alpaca Health and Husbandry

By MacArthur Barstow and Gibbs

Abberley Village Hall, WR6 6AZ

March

All about the fibre—2 'Processing/Selling'

April

All about the fibre—3 'Using'

TBA

Talk: Pasture Management

TBA

Visit: Mill Tour

TBA

Sharing: Basic Husbandry

TBA

Sharing: Basic Handling

TBA

Social: BBQ

If there is anything else you would like to see, please let us know.





Midlands Championship Halter Show

It looks as if we made a real success of this show last year as entries were full well before the closure date. We had 167 entries from 28 breeders including some of the top herds in the country. Friday was set up day, constructing the pens for the exhibitors and setting up the show ring, as well as welcoming most of the breeders and their animals later in the afternoon. The animals were checked in against the entries list and any animals not present and any changes in classes noted ready for the judging on Saturday. We left all the animals tucked up in the dry for the night.



Saturday started bright and early to check in the last few exhibitors before the briefing for all the competitors from Jay and commencement of judging. Our judge, Jo Bridge, did a sterling job keeping well on track to get through all the classes ably assisted by Iain who was ring steward. Anne and Adam were kept busy making sure the animals were ready in the collecting ring for the next class.



By 5pm all the animals had been judged in their classes, all champions decided for each sex and colour and finally the supreme champions were selected from the most amazing line up of champions. Our congratulations go to the Supreme Champion Huacaya—Ashwood Lanson and the Supreme Champion Suri—Evolution Assailant.



Both alpacas and exhibitors were tired by the end of the day, some with long journeys home, but the competitors busied themselves loading their animals, taking down their pens and clearing the waste into the skips. A final clear through and packing up all the ancillary equipment and by 7:30pm the hall was back to an empty space. Thanks go to those that put in all the hard work—Jay Holland, Iain Sharp, Anne Cheston, Pauline Key,



Harry Edwards, Roger Mount, Adam and Julia Berry.

Our thanks also go to the sponsors of the show: Pure Alpacas, Avonside Alpacas, Snowhill Alpacas, Alpaca Evolution, Armitage in-Livestock Ltd, Ashwood Alpacas, JG Animal Health, Latton Alpacas Ltd, MacArthur Barstow & Gibbs (Vets), Patou Alpacas, Pinkney Alpacas, The Alpaca Farm Ltd,.



All about the Fibre

We mentioned in the last newsletter about running a series of informal sessions focusing on fibre. Well our plans are more concrete now and we are going to run these sessions in the new year. The first session in January will be focused on 'obtaining' your fleece. We will talk about what you can do before shearing, the shearing process and how to skirt and store your fleece. The second session will look at what you can do with the fibre including selling it, having it processed or using it yourself. And the final session will focus on all the

different things you can do yourself with alpaca fleece—spinning, weaving, knitting and crochet, wet felting, needle felting, rug making etc.

These are really intended to be information sharing events rather than structured talks. But we hope that we can all learn from each other - even simple little tips that make everything easier. By talking together we can either structure more formal sessions that are of interest, advise on courses already available or we may be able to talk about co-operative ideas that would be of benefit to us all. For example, analysis of fleece samples gets cheaper with volume so maybe we could combine our samples to benefit from reduced costs.

We hope you will come and join us for a cup of tea and cake and a chat about alpacas and their fibre. The cost will be £5 for members .

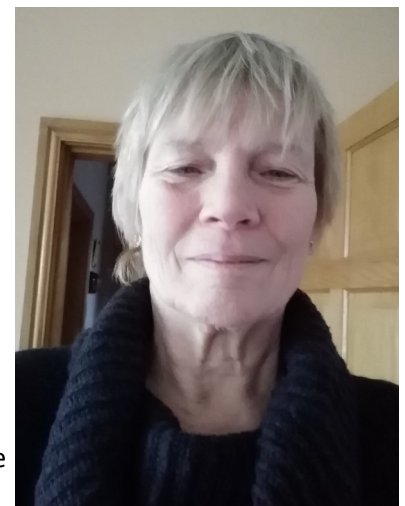
Pauline Key

The dream of keeping alpacas grew steadily for 4 years. My husband and I lived near Haywards Heath and had friends with alpacas, reindeer and goats. On visiting them, I was hooked.

We decided to move to the Midlands in 2010. The house had to have land. We found a place in Cotheridge just outside Worcester with 5 acres, 3.5 of which was orchard. Chickens were a definite but we needed something to keep the grass down between the trees that did not take too much looking after.

Kim and Andy Perry were advertising alpacas for sale. They were delightful and recommended a group of 7 boys to start us off. Kim encouraged me to visit her twice a week to learn how to look after them and to get to know the group. She has supported me ever since.

We took delivery of the boys in April 2011 and haven't looked back. We do not show but I have become involved with the West Shires Alpaca Group who organise the Three Counties Alpaca Show and the Midlands Championship Halter Show. It is a fantastic group to be involved with. One minute we are erecting hurdles and the next announcing the next class and the next meeting some of the extraordinary people who show their animals. I love it and all those involved in the alpaca world.





Jay Holland



My wife Hilary and I have been keeping alpacas for nearly 15 years, the last 11 of them full time.

We started with 4 huacaya, 3 pregnant females and a castrated male on roughly 4 acres of land having been introduced to alpacas by my mother who, whilst house hunting in Devon, came across these “genetically modified Exmoor sheep” who were, apparently, specially bred to look over Devon hedges?!

Having come from an office based background we embarked on an educational odyssey about alpacas and simply fell in love with them culminating in our herd of currently some 91 equally split between huacaya and suri.

Along the way, helping at various shows and educational events, attending the available BAS courses and travelling to the States to learn specific alpaca handling techniques, I found myself privileged to be offered a chance of becoming a BAS Judge. So, with the decision made, I attended further learning opportunities and apprenticed under several judges culminating in my obtaining my first judges badge in 2011. I have retained my judges qualification twice through recertification and am now a qualified BAS Tutor and am the current Chair of Judges.


I have also had the honour of being invited to sit on the Board of the BAS 3 times, having done so twice, and am currently supporting the BAS by being a member of the Judges Committee, Education Committee, Welfare Committee and advisor to the Show Rules Committee.

We have a passion for alpaca and in sharing that through education, advice and general help.



Find us on:

 : www.westshiresalpacagroup.org.uk

 : West Shires Alpaca Group