



# Winter Newsletter

December 2019

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Welcome to your winter newsletter – we hope you will find lots of interesting things to read – maybe over a sherry and a mince pie! Please let us know what you'd like to read in the next issue and do feel free to send contributions. *Thanks!*

## Message from our Chairman

*Now firmly into autumn and we have had to move into our winter mode with the alpacas. Feeding haylage in the shed by night to get them out of the persistent rain we have been enduring. Vitamin shots have been done and I'm determined to keep the herd in top condition this year.*

*We have been trying to move our spare boys on, as we have too many, with some degree of success, but with lots of people wanting to get alpacas for nothing. There is lots of interest in keeping alpacas until people realise the cost to buy and run them as with TB testing and VAT it mounts up.*

*Does anyone have a good solution to the male issue? If so, please feel free to share it.*

*It was a real shame the vet day was postponed but at least we have the knowledge that the day it was meant to be on was appalling weather so perhaps it was a blessing in disguise.*

*We made Linda Ainsworth a life member a few weeks back on committee as she has done so much for the group. It was thought to be a nice way to say thank you to a lovely lady. She patiently records the results at our shows and put in a long stint as your treasurer. Linda we are very grateful.*

*The way our committee works has evolved a bit recently with less physical meetings and more done via the Facebook committee page.*

*Please consider looking at the idea of the national show trip that is potentially being run by Sandra and Liz. It is a great experience to visit.*

*May I wish you all a great festive season.*

*Warmest regards,*

*Nigel*



## The Somerset County Show, 21-22 September

### Wendy Scott, Dark Sky Alpacas



September seems such a long time ago now – the new Somerset County Show, held for the first time at Taunton Racecourse, certainly made the most of the sun on the first day ☺

Alpacas were the only livestock at the show and it was great to have such an expansive area so the public could come to watch classes being judged and be able to see and buy the wonderful products on display.

Our alpaca ‘village’ included two large marquees for the alpacas taking part in the Halter Show plus two further tents housing the Fleece Show and the Innovation & Craft Show plus, of course, the show ring – and not forgetting our very own loo! Di Davies and the SWAG did a great job with the set up and running of the show – although it was the first at the new show and venue, it was Di’s 25<sup>th</sup> – what an achievement / endurance feat!!

Tim Hey was the chief steward and Judges for the event were:

Rob Bettinson, assisted by Julia Corrigan Stuart – Halter Show

Jay Holland – Fleece Show

Jean Field – Innovation & Craft Show



As always, CCA members were out in force and between us we picked up a good haul of rosettes – although it has to be said that there were some comedy moments and ‘interesting’ comments from the judges on a number of occasions!! Shall I gloss over fleece compared to ‘nostril hairs’ and our alleged ‘non grey’ grey suri? I think I will ...☺

So on to the Cornish victories...

Felicia and Gary from Popham were particularly pleased to win the Sires Progeny class with Havengore’s offspring being described as like ‘peas in a pod’. They were also awarded white champion female suri and reserve champion white Huacaya and a cluster of rosettes!

With our team of 3 suris, Tom and I were delighted that Dark Sky was awarded ‘Most Successful Small Breeder’ at the show with 2 reserve champions and 3 x 2<sup>nd</sup> places

Sandra from Alpacas of Cornwall had great results in the fleece show – she entered 4 fleeces achieving 3 x 1sts (Junior Black Huacaya, Senior White Huacaya and Black Intermediate Suri), a 2nd and a Reserve Champion sash.

The standard of entries in the Craft and Innovation Show was really high with some wonderful alpaca products on display. Sandra’s woven scarf (natural black, dyed blue 4ply) achieved a 2nd place and her necklace/bangle (natural 4ply) also achieved 2nd in the ‘Gift’ class. In the photo you’ll see the overall winner Donna Stalker of Honeyfield Alpacas with her absolutely stunning teddy bears.

Overall, I think everyone agreed the new show was a success and I would encourage you to come along in 2020 – minimum entry to the halter show is 3 alpacas and of course the fleece and innovation / craft shows are open to all. Failing that, just come along and enjoy a great day out!



## Fleece Showing – After the Show

### Sandra Muriel - Alpacas of Cornwall, the Crewenna Herd

So, the show has happened. You may have attended the show to see how well your entries did; a good opportunity to see the other entrants and compare positions. You are also allowed to remove your exhibits after a designated time on the last day of the show, so it would save cost having your entry returned.



Usually the top 3 places are on display, with Champions and Reserve Champions sashes on display, Supremes and judge Choices are normally displayed on a prominent table. The score cards are pinned to the fleeces/boxes so you can see what you have scored.

If you are unable to attend the show and are relying on your exhibit being returned to you via courier, then make sure you have placed a return address label with your exhibit. It is quite exciting to receive your entry back, with score card and hopefully a rosette.

### Awards, Rosettes & Sashes – Fleece Classes

Rosettes and prize cards may be awarded to entrants up to 6th place, A first placed rosette should not be awarded unless a fleece has achieved at least **60** points. A champion award should not be awarded unless the fleece is awarded at least **70** points or more. Sashes are awarded to all Age or Colour Champions and Reserve Champions.

At some shows, they will do fleece testing within the judging process, this will give pin point accuracy for the fineness score. The fleece testing record is an important assessment tool, giving not just a measurement of fineness, but sd, curvature, length and comfort factor expressed as a percentage of 100.

### Judges Score Cards

To the left is a judge's score card, the 2 columns show the amount of points available in each category, then how many points were awarded. The comments section at the bottom gives the Judges an opportunity to remark, positively hopefully, but usually it is advice re skirting, whether more or less is needed.

HUACAYA FLEECE JUDGING CARD		
Hoe Autumn Fleece Show		
Class	300	
Entry Number	72	
Judge(s)	ROB BETTINSON	
Date	October 2019	
	Max points	Points Awarded
Fineness & Handle	20.00	20.00
Uniformity of micron	10.00	9.00
Uniformity of Length	10.00	9.00
Uniformity of Colour	5.00	5.00
Character & Style	10.00	9.50
Staple type / Density	5.00	4.50
Brightness	10.00	9.50
Lack of Guard Hair	10.00	8.00
Lack of Impurities	5.00	4.50
Clean fleece weight	15.00	9.00
TOTAL	100	88.00
	Position	2
Comments: Beautifully skirted		

1. Fineness and handle (20 points) This reflects the degrees of actual fineness of fibre displayed, expressed in microns, as well as taking into consideration various levels of softness. When assessing fineness and handle, consideration should be given to the age of the alpaca or class in which the fleece is entered.

2. Uniformity of micron (10 points) The evenness of fineness/softness throughout the entire fleece.

3. Brightness (Huacaya)/Lustre (Suri) (10 points) The light refraction of the alpaca fibre taking into account breed type.

4. Uniformity of colour (5 points) The evenness and regularity of colour throughout the entire fleece.

5. Character and Style(Huacaya) (10 points) The wave/crimp and crinkle within the lock relevant to Huacaya breed type.(Suri)The twist/wave within the lock relevant to the Suri breed type.

6. Uniformity of length (10 points) The uniformity of length throughout the fleece, taking into consideration commercial lengths for processing over 12 month's growth period.

7. Density (5 points) The density of the individual staple or lock formation throughout the entire fleece.

8. Lack of impurities/tip damage (5 points) Penalties are applied for excessive vegetable matter, staining within the fleece and/or any excessive tip damage. Tender fleece is also penalised.

9. Lack of Guard hair (10 points) The fleece should be as free as possible from broad, continuous coarser fibres (guard hairs). Note: Age and class should be considered.

10. Clean fleece weight (15 points) The annualised weight of the clean fleece. (When you enter, you are required to detail the last and most recent shearing dates - the weight of the fleece is then divided by the number of months of growth x 12)

TOTAL POINTS – 100

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**Example of an amazing  
91.5 pt fleece from Beck  
Brow Alpacas**

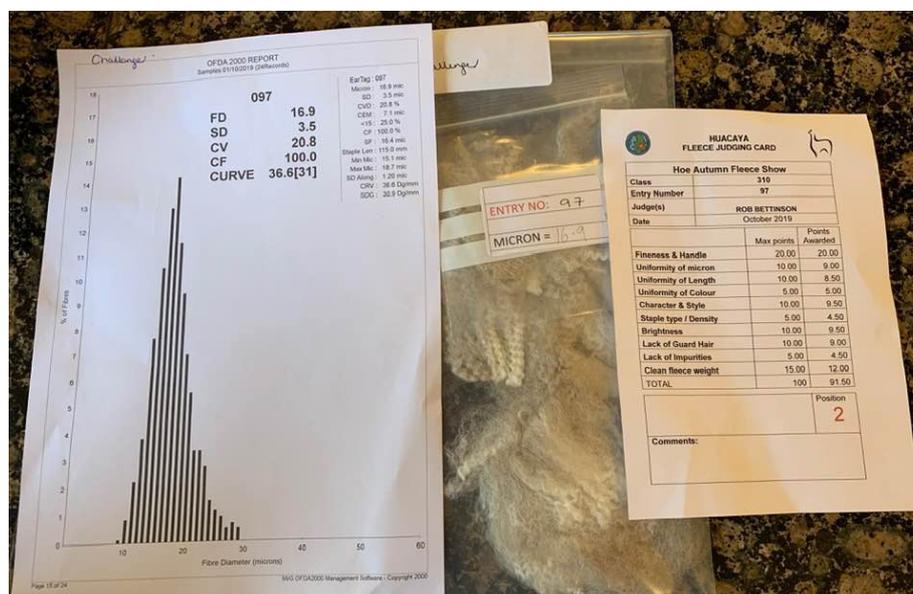
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Below is an interesting fleece judging card, from Barbara at Beck Brow who agreed I could use it for this article.

It has scored an 'amazing' 91.50 points, full marks on fineness and handle and almost full marks on other traits, but a comparatively low 12/15 on weight. The fineness of the fleece meant the weight of the fleece was less, so lost marks on weight. It struck me as incredible that a score of over 90 points only warranted a 2<sup>nd</sup> place - at another show that score could have won Supreme. Also shown is the Fleece test report and in the bag, the Judges samples.

These would be returned to you in your bag of fleece with your rosette.

The score card with the test results are all important tools for your fleece and potential show and breeding decisions.



## Interview with Roger & Elaine Clarke of Amberly Alpacas Wendy Scott, Dark Sky Alpacas

I'm sure Roger and Elaine Clarke will be familiar names to many of you – Roger assisted at our Cornwall Show last year and has since formally qualified as a halter and fleece judge and both he and Elaine are BAS affiliate trainers and very active in both the Alpaca Association of Ireland and the BAS. They were one of the very first breeders in Ireland – the first to import and breed suris in addition to their huacayas- and have worked tirelessly to continually develop and improve their herd.

I took the chance to find out a bit more about them and their alpacas when they visited Cornwall recently.

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### *Amberly Alpacas is in Northern Ireland's Clogher Valley*

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#### ***You started Amberly Alpacas at your home in 2006, why?***

2006 was an incredibly busy and exciting year for Elaine and I. Not only was it the year that we got married and completed building our new home, it was also the year that Amberly Alpacas was born. Alpacas were always something that had interested us, and having a few acres of pasture adjacent to the house, our initial intention was to keep a few pets...something a little bit different that would eat the grass. Little did we realise that our quest for these glamorous lawnmowers would result in what now may be described as an all consuming addiction!

#### ***Where does the name come from?***

Amberly is the name of our house and so, when considering a name for our herd we really liked the personal connection. Also, if I'm truly honest, the teacher in me really liked the alliteration!

#### ***You both have other jobs, Roger as principal of a local school and Elaine, running your own Chiropractic practice – how do you manage to combine all your jobs?***

Having two demanding careers does pose a challenge where time management is concerned. That being said, I think the key to our success is the fact that we are both equally interested in the alpacas and so take a 'team' approach to everything that we do. Similarly, the alpacas offer a complete contrast to our 'day jobs' and so, there is nothing more pleasurable than coming home, pulling on our wellies and heading out onto the farm.

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### *Roger recently qualified as a BAS halter & fleece judge*

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#### ***Congratulations!! What made you want to be a judge?***

Elaine and I initially embarked on the BAS alpaca training courses together as a means of improving our knowledge base and with an ultimate goal of helping to develop our herd.

As things progressed however, I became increasingly interested in the art and science of judging and so, made the commitment to journey down that path.

It has been a long, challenging but very enjoyable quest and one that I'm very proud to have achieved.

#### ***What would be your worst nightmare as a judge?***

For me, one of the worst things would be being prevented from getting to a show to be able to judge it! That's why I always travel the day before!

***If you could give one tip to owners showing their alpacas, what would it be?***

One of the main things for consideration in the halter world is handling. Exhibiting and handling with confidence and control, truly helps to show the alpacas off to their best.

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***Elaine has developed a range of products that they sell and is active on a number of committees***

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***You have an amazing range of alpaca products that you sell, how do you decide that to stock and sell?***

Most of the time I choose to create and stock the products that I am attracted to. I figure that if no one else wants to buy them, I can wear them myself! 😊 However I am aware that my taste isn't the same as everyone else's, so each year I try a few new products and see how they sell. I think it's important to vary the stock as much as possible.

***Do you get involved in the production?***

Yes, absolutely, when I can. I try to be involved as much as possible, but to have the volume and variety that is required I sometimes have to call in the cavalry to help out! My hardworking team range from my mother helping to skirt fleeces, to local knitters making the final products. I am excited when I find local crafters that do my yarn justice! The biggest buzz is when I sell something that I worked on myself from start to finish, using my very own alpaca fleece.

***Do you have a favourite item in your store right now?***

Of course! I always have favourites (plural!). Unfortunately I don't get to wear my favourites as they are usually special one off pieces. 😞 At the moment my favourite items are alpaca and silk scarves! The combination of alpaca and silk work beautifully together, creating pure indulgent luxury!

***You're on a number of the BAS and Northern Ireland committees, what have you achieved that you're really proud of?***

I am particularly excited about the changes that were made during my time as Secretary of the Northern Ireland Alpaca Group. Our Regional Alpaca Group work tirelessly to promote alpacas and support owners throughout the North of Ireland.

***What are you fed up with?***

Unscrupulous dealers that buy and sell alpacas, offering no back up, training or support, all simply for financial gain.

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***Roger & Elaine are Ireland's first BAS affiliate training couple***

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***You're both qualified affiliate trainers, how have you publicised your courses and do you enjoy training?***

**Roger:** We both really enjoy the training side of things. As an educator, I personally love delivering the courses, imparting knowledge and helping others on their learning journey.

This year, we established The Alpaca Education Centre of Ireland at Amberly and look forward to what the future will bring in terms of education and practical learning.

**Elaine:** For the most part our training days are advertised via social media and are great fun for everyone involved. We have wonderful, friendly, loyal and funny alpaca owners that attend the courses we run. In some ways we have become part of an alpaca family and use any excuse to get together and share our experiences.

***Who is your cutest cria this year?***

**Roger:** Amberly Prohibition gets my vote!



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## Quick Fire Round!

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	<b>Roger</b>	<b>Elaine</b>
<i>Suri or Huacaya?</i>	BOTH!	Suri
<i>Dawn or Sunset?</i>	Sunset	Dawn
<i>Poo picking or Toe nail clipping?</i>	Toe nails all day long!	Poo picking... Roger chose toe nails because he restrains the alpaca while I trim.. he has the easy job!!!!
<i>Judging or Showing</i>	Judging	
<i>Wearing or Selling?</i>		Selling!
<i>Favourite thing about Cornwall?</i>	Not only is Cornwall breathtakingly beautiful, it is also home to some of the friendliest people I've had the pleasure of meeting.	Well alpacas of course!!!

A big 'thank you' to Roger and Elaine for taking the time and sharing with us. You can follow them on Instagram and Facebook or take a look at their website [www.amberlyalpacas.com](http://www.amberlyalpacas.com).  
***If you'd like to see another interview in our Spring newsletter, let us know who you'd like to place in the spotlight and we'll try to track them down!***

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## Top 4 Winter Welfare Tips

– *Felicia Sanders, Popham Alpacas*

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### ADE

Give on a regular basis through the winter – particularly for the young and old to prevent rickets & also as a general pick me up for the immune system

1

### Mites

Always be on the lookout for mites – particularly in the armpits and under the tail. There are several treatments available – if unsure you should speak to your vet

2

### Feet

Check regularly – particularly in the wet months – watch out for infection on the bottom of the pad and between the toes – if they are infected you will often notice the smell and a discharge. If this occurs talk to your vet as antibiotics may be required

3

### Body Scoring

If you can, do once a week – take a check point now, before the really cold weather. Over winter it's normal to lose a bit of weight and condition (particularly with lactating females) but watch out for any sudden drops in body score – this could indicate health issues

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## BAS Registration Fee changes 2020 & DNA Testing

Sandra Muriel - Alpacas of Cornwall, the Crewenna Herd

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***New Registration Fees from 2020 include optional DNA testing for males becoming compulsory from 2022***

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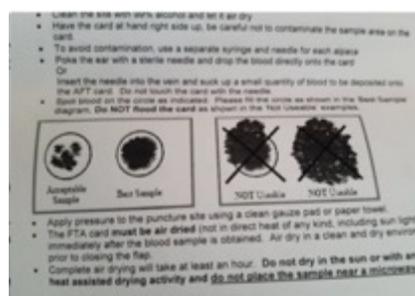
The changes from 1 January 2020 are:

- Introduction of a notification fee of £5.
- Introduction of an increased full male registration fee of £50 to include a DNA test - with the DNA optional for 2 years but compulsory from 1 January 2022. *The fee is £50 from 1 January 2020 regardless of whether the DNA option is taken.*
- Increase in the female registration fee to £20 from £15 (which it has been since 2003)

There were several concerns voiced on BAS Members Chat Forum in respect of the DNA testing and how much it would cost. Currently DNA testing is done from a blood sample, the kit being available to order from Grassroots. Each kit costs £20 each, only payable when the testing is done. Included are:

- Instructions
- Return sheet
- DNA sampling card, which has the blotting page inside

You receive full instructions and the blood cards are very easy to use.



Several BAS members expressed concerns about the cost to do the blood sampling, requiring a Vet. I had already decided to DNA test 2 of my own bred stud males, as my imported males all were DNA tested during the quarantine/screening process. It seemed sensible to me to be able to offer all my males as DNA tested, to reassure clients.

I am quite pleased that I managed to take the blood samples from my 2 selected males single handed, not even needing a handler. The group came in as usual, the 2 selected were penned and haltered calmly.

Armed with septicleanse, gloves a clean needle each and the cards ready, I pricked behind the ear, squeezed as instructed and put the blotting paper to the blood. These cards are folded down to be sent off.

I did septicleanse the area after and off the boys went.

This is easier than micro chipping and I do believe most owners used to doing their own husbandry would find it easy. I wonder if trying to do a nasal swab might be more difficult if the alpaca objects. Both males are used to being handled for showing and stud work, but I was exceptionally proud of how calm they were throughout.

The card kits are returned to BAS and apparently, when there is sufficient to send away, they are sent to a laboratory for the screening, so there is a time delay, do not expect the results back quickly.

As stated this DNA testing is only required for prospective stud males, so the cost will be limited to your selections, it is not a blanket requirement for males.



## And finally .....Dates for your Diary

### **Northern Fleece Show.**

**Date: Sunday 8th December 2019**

Venue: Old Felton Alpacas, Old Felton Alpacas, Acton Home Farm, Felton, Morpeth, NE65 9NU

Judge: Mr Tim Hey.

Fleeces to be delivered to Rivenherd Alpacas, Rivenherd Alpacas, Rivendell, Leamington Lane, Felton, Morpeth, NE65 9NZ. To arrive between the 1st and 31st October. Prize winning fleeces will be on display at Old Felton Alpacas from 11am on Sunday 8th December.

### **BAS Winter Fleece Show c/o West Wales Alpaca Group**

**Show Date : 08/02/2020**

**Entries Open : 25/11/2019**

**Entries Close : 16/12/2019**

Fee : £24.00

Fleeces delivered to : Michael Henderson, Brooklyn, Lancaster Rd., Cockerham, Lancaster, Lancashire. LA2 0DZ. To arrive no later than : Friday 31st January 2020.

### **CCA AGM, Dinner & Quiz.**

**1<sup>st</sup> February 2020** 7pm – 10:30pm,

The Victoria Inn, Roche PL26 8LQ

### **BAS National Show - Telford**

**28th & 29th March 2020**

### **HoEAG Spring Alpaca Fiesta 2020**

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

### **The Scottish Alpaca Championships**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020.** Barbara Hetherington is our judge

### **South of England Spring Show Ardingly 2020**

**Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd May.**

### **CCA Show**

**9<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

MA Griggs Pendennis, Lower Sticker, Saint Austell PL26 7JH

### **Northumberland County Show Alpaca Championship**

Date: **Monday 25TH MAY 2020**

Judge: **TIM HEY**

Entries open: **2ND MARCH 2020**

Entries close: **30TH APRIL 2020**

Fees : **£19.00 + VAT PER ENTRY**

### **EAG Fleece Show 2020**

**15/16th August 2020**

### **EAG Halter Show 2020**

**18th October 2020**

### **Welsh Alpaca Show**

**10th Oct 2020**