

Spot Press



Volume 20 No.1 WINTER 2010

Happy Birthday To Us!

The Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club celebrates 20 years of helping and supporting the breed and its keepers this year and we have a new celebratory logo to remind everyone (see above).

Reference to the Autumn edition gives the story of how the Club came into being. There will be celebrations this year and we invite as many members as possible to join in.

Inside you will find an article listing the milestones of the Club since it began and charting how active and effective it has been in protecting and promoting the breed.

This is YOUR Club set up to help YOUR breed so do join in Club activities now and in the future. The first of these is the Club's AGM & Members' Day in Shropshire. See inside for details—you are cordially invited!



Desperately Seeking Primrose

The Primrose bloodline has been among the rarest for the past 30 years. The Club's Committee became concerned in 2009 that it was in danger of dying out. The reason for its unpopularity was that George Styles recommended strongly that no boars out of a Primrose female should ever be bred from since he found in his herd that pigs bred from such boars had a genetic fault that caused split skulls—an extreme form of cleft palate.

With only probably 3 or 4 registered Primrose females remaining at most, it was decided that the Club would purchase just such a boar and mate it to four females and study the offspring. Judith Sims and Dave Overton volunteered to be the guinea pigs and a young boar was selected from John & Helen Lightfoot's herd near Gloucester. He was transported down to Clevedon where he was mated to a gilt and sow in the Winterwood herd before being transferred to Surrey where similar matings took place at the Exfold herd. We await the outcome.

Anecdotally, two such matings have taken place over the last 20 years and neither reported any problems so the danger may be a thing of the past. However, if these experimental matings are in order, the committee may decide to conduct an additional inbreeding mating just to make sure. The results will be published in a future edition of *Spot Press*. If all the results are negative, then members will be encouraged to keep Primrose sows which have a reputation for being excellent mothers.

Through the website, we have located members with Primrose stock which is either registered or birth notified in Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Cheshire, Lancashire and Worcestershire. These should provide the means for a revival of the line. Does anyone know of any others?

Please advise the Secretary of details.

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Committee Contacts

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- **President—Judith Sims** (Somerset) tel 01275 858699 e-mail: judithsims@btconnect.com
- **Chairman—Andrew Robinson** (Derbyshire) tel 01283 815635 e-mail: argyspot@aol.com
- **Vice-Chairman—Dave Overton** (Surrey) tel: 01306 627201 e-mail: exspots@btinternet.com
- **Treasurer—Stephen Booth** (Cheshire) tel 0161 928 2143 e-mail: broadoakfarm@lineone.net
- **Committee—Eric Freeman** (Glos) tel 01452 790272
- **Committee—Mandy Garbutt** (North Yorkshire) tel: 01609 882773 e-mail: fowgillfarm@hotmail.com
- **Committee—Malcolm Hicks** (West Midlands) tel 01676 533368 e-mail: windmillherd@aol.com
- **Committee—Anne Nicholls** (Surrey) tel 01483 271764
- **Committee—Marlene Renshaw** (Lincs) tel 01507 533209 e-mail: marlene.renshaw@homecall.co.uk

Club News

Birthday Celebrations



There will be a 20th birthday party celebration in the form of a Club dinner at the Three Counties Show on the evening of Friday 18th June.

A three course meal will be accompanied by entertainment and a couple of speakers (nothing too long or heavy). You don't even have to attend the show to gain admission. Special arrangements can be made for anyone not coming to the show to gain entrance during the evening without further charge. Tickets are £25 each and there will be a cash bar available.

COME & JOIN US!

This is the first time that the Club has held a dinner for its members and we hope to get a good proportion of you along. You will see elsewhere how active and effective the Club has been in promoting and conserving the GOS breed and we want you to come along and help us to celebrate that. For tickets see the enclosed application form.

Fundraising—Grand Draw

Plans are in place to hold a **Grand Draw** this year to help to replenish the coffers. We have some GREAT prizes on offer which should ensure that tickets can be readily sold to both pig enthusiasts and the general public. The first prize is a week's stay (BB + evening meal) at the St Mary's Hall Hotel on the Scilly Isles (see enclosed brochure) which is worth around £1500! Travel to and from the Scillies is not included.

There's a tremendous list of other prizes too (see below) with very many thanks to all those - members and others - who have so generously offered such a wonderful selection. The draw will be launched at the AGM and every member will be sent 2 books of tickets (£1/ticket £5/book) to buy or sell **and we really need you to go out there and sell as many as you can**. More can be provided on request. We will be selling hard at many of the shows and the draw will be made in July or August. If you can help at any of the shows, please do contact the Secretary.

Prizes on offer (no cash alternative unless stated)

- * A week's stay at St Mary's Hall Hotel, Scilly Isles—travel not included—offered by Mr Clifford Freeman
- * A week in a holiday cottage on the Isle of Islay - travel not included (Dunlossit Estates)
- * An in-pig pedigree GOS gilt or £250 (Mrs Judith Sims & Mr Andrew Robinson)
- * Dinner for 2 at Hix Restaurant, Soho, London (Mr Mark Hix)
- * Lunch for 2 with food critic and writer, Charles Campion, at a London restaurant (Mr Charles Campion)
- * Ludlow Food Centre Hamper (Earl of Plymouth Estates)
- * Hamper of GOS salamis and chorizo (Donna Lucking & Clive Counsell)
- * Three cheeses (David Fenton)
- * Painting of a pig (Liz Andreozzi)
- * Beswick model of a GOS sow (Stephen Booth)
- * 2 x Family tickets to Surrey County Show 2011 (Surrey County Agricultural Society)
- * 2 x Family tickets to Cotswold Farm Park (Joe and Adam Henson)
- * One Stinking Bishop cheese (Charles Martell)
- * 1 x Bottle Sheep Dip Malt Whisky and 1 x bottle Pig's Nose whisky (Ken & Fran Thomas)
- * Signed copy of each of Pig Keeping & Higgledy Piggledy (Richard Lutwyche)



St Mary's Hall Hotel 3*** Family Luxury



***** If anyone else would like to offer a prize please do contact the Secretary ASAP as we will be printing tickets shortly. *****

GOSPBC Annual Report

GOSPBC Annual Report for 2008-9

Much of the year was again occupied by the Club endeavouring to protect the integrity of GOS and their produce which was both time-consuming and expensive but the combined work has served to demonstrate to major retailers and others that exploitation of the breed's name is not worth the hassle and it is hoped that the next year will see the culmination of the Club's efforts in this regard.

LACORS

The LACORS definition of how meat could be described in terms of the breed it is derived from was published finally on 30th January and is a ruling affecting all breeds of livestock except cattle and will make the protection of such breeds much easier in the future.

The Club initiated these changes and led the moves towards a new, acceptable set of definitions for the benefits of all pig and sheep breeds. These definitions are now reportedly being used by the Food Standards Agency as a template as they endeavour to improve food labelling in terms of origin and provenance.

Bramley Old Spot Pork

A great deal of work has been put in to objecting to the Trade Mark applications made by this company. Our Patent Lawyers, Withers & Rogers, put together a detailed case and after a number of submissions and counter claims, a hearing was scheduled for August. Your Chairman and Secretary both attended at Withers and Rogers' offices in Leamington Spa and the hearing was conducted by video link with the plaintiff in London and the Hearing Officer in Newport, Gwent. After detailed questioning of both sides, the Hearing Officer undertook to issue his findings which he did on 13th October. We won the case and Bramley Old Spot had to withdraw their Trade Mark for live pigs. However, that left two remaining marks for pork and pork products and the Club is continuing to object to these in an effort to get them overturned.

Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

It would appear that the long-running episode intended by the Club's Committee in 1999 to help protect the integrity of pure-bred GOS pigs and their produce, may finally be coming to a conclusion. The EU Commission finally accepted the latest version in August and the wording was then translated into all European languages before being published in the official journal on 3rd October. Member states then have six months to raise queries or objections without which, the TSG for Traditionally Farmed Gloucestershire Old Spots Pork will become law with huge implications for pedigree breeders everywhere in the EU.

Administration

At the year end the Club's membership had increased by around 10% to 357 paid-up members. There is still a lot of churning with large numbers not renewing on time each year but these are more than made up for by new members joining during the year, mainly via the website.

Simon Mounteney and Viv Coates both stepped down from the Club's Committee with thanks for their valuable contributions and were replaced by Mandy Garbutt and Viki Mills, both of whom had been previously co-opted.

George Styles

George, the Club's Patron and the grandfather of the breed, died aged 83 on 30th June. The Club was fully represented at his funeral. The Autumn 2009 edition of Spot Press included much information on George and his work; suffice to say that without George, we probably would not have the Gloucestershire Old Spots breed today.

Publicity

The Club published a brand new, all-colour, breed leaflet which is available to all members to give to prospective buyers or the general public at events. The previous leaflet had been modified and reprinted after it came into existence when the Club began and was really in need of replacing. The new leaflet is well-designed and appealing and a large number are being picked up at shows. We thank the RBST for their sponsorship of this.

The Club's website continues to be widely used and has been expanded and improved over the year. The Forum's older questions have been grouped under headings to create an archive of useful information readily accessible to anyone. Mandy Garbutt's articles giving advice to first-time pig keepers are also a very useful tool which should expand over the coming year.

Shows

The year 2009 will be remembered primarily as the year of the last Royal Show. The Royal was not just an emotional experience; historically it has been the most important show in the calendar for pedigree livestock people for more than 150 years. Historically, the only important champion was the Royal Show Champion.

Club News

Annual Report Continued

It was also the venue for a number of years for the GOS Champion of Champions, the qualifiers being the Breed Champions from the leading shows before then. With no Royal Show in 2010, the Club's Committee have rescheduled the event to the Three Counties Show at Malvern in June.

Generally, there was a presence at most shows of GOS but they were still relatively poorly represented compared to most of the other traditional breeds. Thanks to this being the year of the last RASE, there was a better entry at the Royal show and it even tempted Andrew Robinson back out of retirement and his pigs took many of the prizes including the Breed Champion. The Champion of Champions too was better supported with eight grand pigs in the ring competing for the Elwes Memorial Cup.

We welcome Mandy Garbutt back to the world of showing after a disagreeable initial experience. She attended a number of local shows in the north and is now a firm convert. We just need a few more like her to get the show rings buzzing again.

Congratulations to:-

Andrew Robinson and Maggie Wilson for winning the **Champion of Champions** award for **Foston Ellen 83** as judged by Dave Overton.

Stephen and Mandy Booth for winning the **Northern Championships** with **Chapel Dolly 21** under Paul Waddington.

Judith Sims took the **Southern Championships** as judged by Guy Kiddy with **Winterwood Princess 161**.

GOS Pig of the Year for 2008-9 was Peggy Darvill's gilt, **Toller Muriel 540**.

Show & Sale

The Club's Show & Sale took place at Cirencester Livestock Market in August with an entry of just 10 lots, unsurprising in a year when there was a strong demand for GOS. All sold with some very good prices achieved and the quality was generally better this year. The Breed Champion, **Hillmist Dolly 123**, a gilt from Liz Best from near Tetbury, took the top price of the day at 400gns.

The BPA Show & Sale for all breeds took place at Ross-on-Wye in October and the Supreme Champion was Stephen Booth's **Chapel Patrick 11** who also topped the prices at 580gns when he was sold to Charles Martell.

Workshop

The Club held a workshop to educate newcomers in terms of selection and to encourage showing. Held in Cheshire at Stephen Booth's farm, there was a relatively low turnout but a lot of enthusiasm and as a result at least one new GOS exhibitor (see above) and another in the world of Saddlebacks. Our thanks to all the Booth family for a very well organised and enjoyable day.

Conservation

The Club's Committee became concerned during the year at the dwindling numbers of the Primrose line. This was an unpopular line since historically, boars bred from Primrose sows produced pigs with split skulls when bred to other lines. With some anecdotal evidence that this was no longer the case, a planned breeding programme has been put in place using such a boar purchased from John & Helen Lightfoot in Gloucestershire. Results of the trials will be reported in **Spot Press** in due course.

BPA

The breed will in future be better represented at the BPA. Andrew Robinson and Dave Overton are the two GOS Breed Representatives (to whom all BPA-related queries should be addressed). Andrew Robinson and Stephen Booth were both elected to the BPA Council. Club member, Guy Kiddy is also on Council and is Chairman of the Conservation Committee. Club members, Sally Lugg, Andrew Emsley, Sharon Barnfield and Richard Lutwyche are all serving on different BPA committees. Viki Mills was elected as a Vice-President.

..... Andrew Robinson, Chairman

..... Richard Lutwyche, Secretary

..... Date



A chuffed-looking Foston Ellen 83. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

DIARY NOTE

The Breeds of Gloucestershire Show & Sale will take place on Sat 7th August at Cirencester Livestock Market.

Schedules from Voyce Pullin, Auctioneers tel: 01454 269485

Club News

Annual General Meeting

Ludlow Food Centre

Bromfield, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 2JR

By kind invitation of The Earl of Plymouth Estates

Sunday 11th April 2010 at 11.00am

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of the new President
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 2009 AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Annual Report
6. Accounts to 31st October, 2009
7. Election of Officers*
8. Election of Hon Auditor
9. Any Other Business



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Lutwyche". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Richard Lutwyche

Secretary

*Any member wishing to stand for office must request a nomination form from the Secretary and be nominated and seconded by paid-up Club members. Please phone 01285 860229 or email mail@oldspots.org.uk for a form.

The AGM will be followed by a hot lunch and guided tour of the Ludlow Food Centre. There will also be presentations on the pig unit which currently has the largest herd of GOS pigs in the world and on the TSG by Simon Johnson from Defra. The charge for the lunch will be £12.00/head. An application form is enclosed.



Ludlow Food Centre lies on the main A49 road between Ludlow and Craven Arms and is easily reached by car.

Club News

Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club
Annual General Meeting
Daylesford Organic Farms, Daylesford, Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire
By kind invitation of Lady Bamford
Sunday 5th April 2009 at 11.00am

MINUTES

Eighteen Club members and family guests were in attendance. The President, Mrs Judith Sims, took the Chair.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Mesdames Carole Barr, Viv Coates, Jane Fox, Judy Hancox, Gillian Herbert, Sally Lugg, Sarah Marsden, Viki Mills, Helen Orchard, Marlene Renshaw, Pamela Tradgold,

Messrs Jonathan Crump, Nick Davies, Simon Mounteney, George Nash, Julian Newth, Nick Paterson, Chris Penrice, George Styles,

And Mr & Mrs Rod Ducker, Mr & Mrs Guy Kiddy and Miss Donna Lucking & Mr Clive Counsell.

2. Minutes of the 2008 AGM

These were accepted as a true record of proceedings and were signed by the President.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report

This was read by the Chairman, Mr Andrew Robinson, who proposed its adoption. Carried. The report will be published in **Spot Press**.

5. Accounts to 31st October, 2008

The Treasurer, Mr Stephen Booth, took members through the accounts for the period. These showed a loss during the year of £1,836 mainly due to legal costs occurred in challenging the Bramley Old Spot Trade Marks. The meeting voted to continue the action in order to protect the breed name. It was agreed that the sum of £500 should be transferred to a fund set up for the breed's centenary in 2013. The accounts were passed unanimously.

The Treasurer reported current balances as follows:

Bond £5,000.00

President's Fund £643.34

Current a/c £636.02

Deposit a/c £4,326.98

6. Election of Officers

Mrs Viv Coates had not sought re-election and her place on Committee was taken by Miss Mandy Garbutt.

Mr Simon Mounteney also had not sought re-election and Mrs Viki Mills was co-opted onto Committee to take his place.

Other Committee Members were re-elected *en bloc*.

7. Election of Hon Auditor

Mr Frear was re-elected unanimously.

8. Any Other Business

Mr Finlay asked about training opportunities especially in relation to understanding breed standards. The Chairman responded that a

Club News - AGM Minutes (cont.)

workshop was planned to take place in Cheshire on 25th April and if this was well supported others would follow. The Treasurer pointed out that anyone would be welcome to mentor existing showmen at shows in order to gain experience.

The question of encouraging more people to start showing was raised and it was suggested by Mrs Dronfield that a special prize for a Novice Never Having a First Prize should be offered. Mrs Nicholls felt that more people would be encouraged to show if judges made more effort and commented on their decisions at the end of each class.

The Chairman reminded members that the BPA were attending the World Pork Expo in the USA and that anyone interested in going should see him after the meeting. He also pointed out the BPA had agreed to modify the Breed Standard to read that: Black colouration should not predominate. This was only for pigs born on or after 1st July 2009.

The Club's publication 'Rare Breed Pig Keeping' was discussed and it was felt that it should be revised and republished if it was affordable for the Club to do so.

The Treasurer felt that other pig breed clubs and sheep flock societies needed to be aware of the LACORS ruling and the Club's efforts to protect all such breed produce from exploitation. Donations from any such bodies would be most welcome.

Mrs Dronfield asked if the Club would consider setting up a chain of Field Advisors to help more novice pig keepers/breeders. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Club's committee would look into it.

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm followed by lunch and a tour of Daylesford Farm.

The accounts for the year which form part of these Minutes appear overleaf.



Some of the delegates at the 2009 AGM at Daylesford. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

Some Photos from the 2009 Show Season



Clockwise from above -

Foston Ellen 92 in the ring at the last Royal Show

Windmill Rufus 17 was Reserve Breed Champion at the Royal for Malcolm & Su Hicks

Peter White with Carol Knight's Breed Champion at Hatfield House Country Show, Alsa Princess 1045.

Photos by Richard Lutwyche

Club News - AGM Minutes (cont).

**Gloucester Old Spot Big Breeders' Club
STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
For the year ending 31st October 2008**

	<u>2007/08</u>	<u>2006/07</u>
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	6,224.73	6,595.00
Donations and Fundraising (including grant)	20.28	3,246.05
Workshop	0.00	276.00
Show & Sale	240.00	240.00
Interest received	349.39	318.39
TOTAL INCOME	6,834.40	10,675.44
MERCHANDISE SALES		
Sales	41.00	22.00
Less: Cost of Sales		
Opening Stock	0.00	388.00
Purchases	0.00	0.00
Stock written off	0.00	-388.00
Closing Stock	0.00	-388.00
(Loss)/ Profit on Merchandise	41.00	-366.00
BOOK SALES		
Sales	0.00	0.00
Less: Cost of Sales		
Opening Stock	0.00	2.00
Closing Stock	0.00	-2.00
(LOSS) /PROFIT ON BOOKS	0.00	-2.00
PAYMENTS		
Printing, post and stationery (including newsletter)	3,669.65	3,040.90
Room Rental	128.76	70.00
Show and sale costs	682.15	0.00
Insurance	330.00	330.00
Secretarial Honorarium	850.00	700.00
Advertising	210.96	177.23
Meat taste trials	0.00	4,112.50
Sundry expenditure	2,428.53	188.81
Computer and website costs	11.70	707.00
Rosettes	159.80	200.75
Donations	240.00	0.00
Total Expenditure	8,711.55	9,527.19
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	-1,836.15	780.25
BALANCE OF FUNDS AT START OF YEAR	9,948.25	9,168.00
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	-1,836.15	780.25
BALANCE OF FUNDS C/FWD AT END YEAR	8,112.10	9,948.25
Represented by:		
Bank accounts	10,219.04	10,356.87
President's fund	633.66	618.38
Stocks Held	0.00	0.00
Creditors	-455.60	-477.00
Subscriptions in advance	-2,285.00	-550.00
	8,112.10	9,948.25

N. Freer 22/12/08
AccA

Showing News - Having changed the Champion of Champions finals to take place at the Three Counties Show at Malvern on 19th June, two new qualifiers have been designated—Royal Welsh Smallholders and South of England. These need supporting in order to validate the qualifiers so please do consider entering pigs at these shows.

Merchandise - Support GOS - Wear the Logo!

Now is the time to order your GOS bespoke clothing. You can order using the enclosed order form or via the website where you have the added advantage of being able to pay by Credit or Debit card using *PayPal*. The bespoke range with the Club logo embroidered on every item is high quality clothing that should last and last so go for it!

Bespoke Range All Including The Club Logo Embroidered Onto the Garment

Photos Show Garments Without the Logo.
All Garments Suitable for Both Sexes.

ADULTS PREMIUM FULL ZIP FLEECE

Sizes Available: XS 36" / S 38" / M 40" / L 42-44" / XL 46" / 2XL 48" / 3XL 50-52" / 4XL 54"

Colours Available: BLACK / NAVY / ROYAL / RED / BOTTLE GREEN / CHARCOAL / MAROON

Members' Price: £30.50 each



PREMIUM SWEATSHIRT

Sizes Available: XS 36" / S 38" / M 40" / L 42-44" / XL 46" / 2XL 48" / 3XL 50-52" / 4XL 54"

Colours Available: BLACK / NAVY / ROYAL / RED / BOTTLE GREEN / HEATHER GREY / MAROON

Members' Price: £18.85 each



PREMIUM PIQUE POLO SHIRT

Sizes Available: XS 36" / S 38" / M 40" / L 42-44" / XL 46" / 2XL 48" / 3XL 50-52" / 4XL 54"

Colours Available: BLACK / NAVY / ROYAL / RED / BOTTLE

GREEN / HEATHER GREY / MAROON / WHITE / SKY BLUE / YELLOW

Members' Price: £16.50 each



CLASSIC PIQUE POLO SHIRT

Sizes Available: XS 36" / S 38" / M 40" / L 42-44" / XL 46" / 2XL 48" / 3XL 50-52" / 4XL 54"

Colours Available: BLACK / NAVY / ROYAL / RED / BOTTLE GREEN / HEATHER GREY / MAROON / WHITE / SKY BLUE / YELLOW / KELLY GREEN / ORANGE / PURPLE / CHARCOAL

Members' Price: £13.99 each

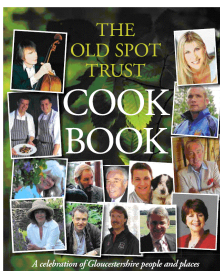
Availability on all above items: Normally 14-28 days from order. . Note P&P charges applicable on order form.



POLYESTER CLUB TIES

The ALL NEW Club Tie available **now**. Order now and be among the smart set for 2010!

Members' Price: £12.75 each



The Old Spot Trust Cookbook

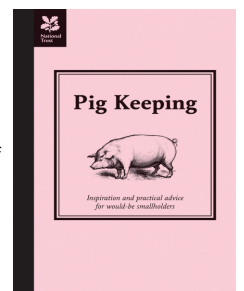
Over 100 recipes from celebrities and others in Glos (including many GOS recipes) - sold in aid of good causes - an ideal gift. In stock. Softback 94pp.

Members' Price: £7.50 each

Pig Keeping

Published by the NT - practical advice on small-scale pig keeping and breeding including sales and promotion of meat. Hardback 96pp available March 2010. Members' Price £7.99 each

Check out our online Shop where there are further items including SALE lines offering great value for money.



Making The Most Of Your Website by Fran Thomas

Many members now have, or plan to have soon, their own website to help them promote and market their herds and/or their produce. Club Member Fran Thomas, who kept GOS in Lincolnshire before pioneering a successful new business in Wiltshire some years ago, provides useful, proven tips and guidance about how to get the most from your website.

Spot the Website – or How to help Boost your Website Traffic

Nowadays, most businesses and organisations recognise the importance of having a website to showcase themselves and/or their product. However, this is just the first step on the way to fame and fortune - as if no-one visits your site then it may as well not be there! So, if you are one of those who've taken your first tentative steps into getting a website up and running how do you get people 'visiting' you to buy your product or to read the fascinating articles you have on there or find out about whatever it is you are promoting? There are thousands of sites worldwide all competing for the attention (and money) of the ever growing online audience so what can you do to get people to make your site the one they choose to visit and return to?

Four or five years ago now, Ken and I decided to set up www.whiskyandwines.com in order to be able to reach a global audience from our specialist whisky shop in Wiltshire, and in that time we've learnt that the ways to boost website traffic are many and varied, with some being more useful than others. This article cannot hope to cover in any depth a subject like this but whatever your product or area of interest there are certain principals that we've learnt you will need to consider when trying to drive traffic to your site.



Web design and hosting

Your website is a 'virtual' showroom/shop window for whatever you are promoting and should be treated as such. You need to be prepared to spend time on it, to look upon it as requiring maintenance in just the same way that any display and selling space does.

This means that your first priority is making sure that the web site you have in place is reliable, well designed and easy to use. It's no good attracting people to your site if when they get there it is either a) not working; b) doesn't look inviting or interesting; c) is difficult to navigate; or (worst of all) d) a combination of all these things. You need a good working relationship with both your web designer and whoever takes care of your website hosting (i.e. the person or company who looks after the connectivity of your site and all its files to the internet). Achieving a popular website is an ongoing process and your 'team' should be proactive in suggesting ways of improving both its look and functionality, and be prepared to do the work necessary to keep the site running smoothly in a timely way. If you don't have sufficient confidence in any, or all, of your team then ask around for recommendations for alternatives from people you know and trust. In this, and all other areas of website promotion, it is always worth remembering that you get what you pay for – cheap is not necessarily best.

If you are doing your own web design the same principles apply – always be looking for ways to improve and update your site, as you can be sure that your competitors will be doing that with their sites and you want to get there first! If at all possible, even if you don't do your own web design then try and learn at least some of the basics of how a website works so that you can do some of the everyday updating of the content yourself. Knowledge is power! No-one is ever going to be as motivated as you are yourself to make this the very best website ever, plus you need to know and understand what potential problems are in the pipeline.

Think what your site is about

In order to attract a higher volume of visitors to your site you will need to be easily picked up by search engines such as Google. However, before you start to look at ways of optimising your site so that it is easily found I would advise you take a long, hard look at what the purpose of your site is. Are you trying to sell products? Are you promoting your farm shop and/or visitor attraction? Are you trying to educate people about some aspect of pigs and pig keeping? Or perhaps you are aiming to do a mix of all these things. Whatever your aim it helps to have a really clear idea of what you hope to achieve, and some thoughts on the likely profile of the people you hope to attract to your site.

One very important aspect of this exercise is identifying the unique selling points of whatever your web site is promoting. What are they and how can you capitalise on them? For example, if you are selling a niche product like GOS meat then there are numerous benefits that you can use to draw in customers – the high welfare standards that come with less intensive farming, great tasting and high quality meat, the personal touch that comes with a customer dealing direct with the producer etc. If you are promoting a visitor attraction is it easily accessible from major roads and public transport? Is it ideal for both children and adults, plus suitable for school/group visits? Does it provide a haven of tranquillity? You know how good your product is and now your task is to let the general public know just how good it is!

Search Engine Optimisation

Right, so you know the audience you are aiming to attract and what you want them to pay attention to. Now you need to look at ways to make sure your site comes up near the top of the online searches this type of audience makes when trying to find sites like yours by keying in a relevant word or phrase. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is a whole 'science' of its own but the basic principal is to try and achieve the best ranking you can for your site in relation to the 'key' words that you have identified as being relevant. However, one of the major problems with this is that the algorithm used by the search engines to rank sites is varied and ever changing. Sure, there are some aspects that it is always worth paying attention to – not just to get a good ranking but also to produce a good site – but there is no 'one solution fits all' when it comes to getting on page one of the search engines. Optimisation is not a one off task – it is something you should always be considering whenever you are doing work on the site and you should also be watching and learning from what your competitors do.



Some of the things that you should definitely check you are doing include:

Make sure your title tag (i.e. the page title that appears in the blue bar at the very top of the computer screen) contains the key words for that particular page of your site. For example, on the product page for GOS sausages your page title could be – 'Sausages, Gloucester Old Spot – buy at ...'

Use these key words at the start of the product description or article as well, and if it is possible to repeat them again within the text without it reading badly then do so. One thing search engines look for is relevance and if the key word or phrase appears several times then that page should be classed as relevant. But beware – over repetition is penalised rather than rewarded!

Include relevant, interesting and original articles. Ecommerce sites need these just as much as general interest/educational sites or those promoting visitor attractions. They give credibility to your site (so make sure they are well written) and will draw visitors back to see what new articles you have put on plus encourage them to recommend your site to others. Obviously, this is also another opportunity to include your key words!

Include photos on your site – they add interest and visitors can feel they are getting to know you if they can see pictures of your pigs, farm etc. Don't forget to include 'alt' tags (a name for the photo that can be seen if you hover your mouse over it) as whilst pictures can't be read by the robots that scan your site for the search engines words can be.

Links from other websites not only increase the direct traffic to your site but also indirectly help by improving your page ranking with the search engines. Ask others that you know with similar but non competing websites to link in to your site and in return provide a reciprocal link to theirs. Hopefully, as your site grows in popularity and reputation then the links in to your site will increase without you even knowing (quite why a link to our site has been put in from Glasgow Rangers site I don't know but it all helps!). The best links are where people think your site is great and want to recommend it. N.B Link farming i.e. paying a company in India to provide you with thousands of links from irrelevant websites is not a good idea!

Make sure you have a site map so that Google and other search engines know about all the relevant bits of your site, and sign up for Google analytics to be able to analyse all sorts of useful stats relating to your site.

Keep up to date on what the latest tips and tricks are by looking at SEO articles from reputable sites on the web.

Your website designer should be able to do all the 'techie' bits of this for you and the rest is down to plain hard work.

Advertising

Advertising your site – whether on or offline – is something that can prove very expensive and the results are variable at best. One of the most commonly used methods of advertising online is pay per click e.g. something like Google adwords. This basically involves deciding on keywords relevant to your site, bidding against other advertisers to have your ad/link appear prominently when a 'surfer's' query matches one of those keywords, and then paying the bid amount if they click through to your site. One of the concerns with this type of advertising is the possibility of malicious clicks from competitors (or others), which can soon use up your budget. The search engines claim they have systems in place to stop this, and pay per click can be a fruitful source for attracting visitors, but this type of advertising should be approached with suitable caution.

Another variation on this theme is to have an advertising banner on a website that already attracts the type of audience you want to reach. This normally involves paying for a set number of impressions (page views) and each time a webpage is viewed by someone and it has your banner on then this counts as one of these impressions (whether or not they then actually click on to your site). If you can negotiate a good rate, and you choose very carefully the website and the particular page on that website, this is worth considering but monitor your results very carefully before committing to another campaign.



Making The Most Of Your Website (cont.)

Online directories can be useful as chosen carefully they provide not just another means of visitors finding your site but also another link in. Depending on the quality of the directory (as rated by the search engines, that is) then the value of this link can be quite high and therefore lift your own ranking. For ecommerce sites, a directory such as ShopSafe also has the added bonus of allowing you to add their logo to your site which will increase the consumers trust and confidence when considering a purchase.

Blogs (weblog – a type of online diary), Twittering, and social network sites like Facebook are currently being hailed as the new, 'in' way to get people to your site. Certainly a good, regularly updated blog which captures people's interest will draw them back and also be a good medium for links to areas of the site you want them to visit. Twitter is still a relatively new phenomenon and seems to inspire either love or hate but, as with social networking sites, if you can target the right audience they will hopefully do some of your job for you by spreading the word round to their various followers about your site and don't forget that this is networking done on a global scale so is not to be ignored.

Don't dismiss the good old fashioned printed advert. An attractive, creative ad in the sort of publications that your target audience are likely to read can be very successful. Not everyone spends all their day surfing the net, nor is it necessarily the first place they turn to when looking for whatever it is that your site sells or promotes, but they may well be happy to go online having once seen your web address in a magazine plus, as an added bonus, an ad in a trusted publication can also help inspire trust in you and your site. Adverts don't have to be confined to national publications – our experience with Cotswold Life magazine has shown us that an ad in a local/regional publication can be very useful to remind or inform people in your area of both your 'virtual' and real existence.

A few final thoughts ...

When you are selling or promoting a niche product online then good customer service and building a trustworthy reputation is a very important part of your strategy for boosting traffic to your site. Developing a good relationship with existing visitors will not only lead to them giving personal recommendations to people they know directly but also to good comments on any internet forums they use – often a widely used and trusted resource for people with similar interests. Many of our best customers have come to us in this way, and these are the sort of visitor you are looking for as they are truly interested not just idle browsers.

Providing a professional looking, easy to use site (with suitable data protection assurances and a privacy statement) conveys the impression that you are worth dealing with, as does a quick response to any enquiries and a personalised email or phone call that lets people know they are not just a number. This is an area that small businesses and organisations can excel at, and that will build a loyal following for you. Often, it is these loyal followers who will provide you with new visitors and the ripples will slowly but surely spread outwards.

Building a successful online presence is not going to happen overnight but be patient and persevere and you could be very pleasantly surprised at (and proud of) the results you achieve.

www.whiskyandwines.com www.arkwrightshomebrew.com

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders Club. At the top, it says "Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders Club" and "Page 1 of 1". There is a navigation menu with links: HOME | NEWS | GALLERY | THE BREED | KEEPING PIGS & BREEDING | SHOW & SALE | THE CLUB | FORUM & ADVERTISING. A central banner promotes joining the club and features a PayPal logo. Below this, there are several sections: "Our latest news is now available to view here." with a link to learn more; "Quick Facts" listing breed characteristics; "Find a Member" with a link to the member directory; and a copyright notice at the bottom.

Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders Club

Page 1 of 1

Welcome to the
**Gloucestershire Old Spots
Pig Breeders Club**

HOME | NEWS | GALLERY | THE BREED | KEEPING PIGS & BREEDING | SHOW & SALE | THE CLUB | FORUM & ADVERTISING

JOIN THE CLUB: Join online now and enjoy all the benefits of membership.
LATEST IN THE SHOP: New design ties available now!
Also, save 25% on club logo ties and nearly 20% on sweatshirts.

The GOSPEC was established in 1990 to promote the breed and help breeders. With members in the UK, Ireland, France, America and Poland, it is very proactive in fulfilling its objectives. The club is managed by an elected committee (click here for details) and has a full constitution with regular AGMs.

Our latest news is now available to view here.
Learn more about the club here.
Visit our online shop... new ties available now!

Quick Facts:

- Old Spots are the oldest spotted pedigree breed in the world
- The most expensive British pig was an Old Spot
- Old Spots are placid and easily managed - the most laid back pig
- Old Spots are an ideal outdoor breed - tough and hardy
- Some of the best tasting pork and bacon is from Old Spots
- Old Spots make excellent and prolific dams

Find a Member:
Use our directory of members to find other breeders in your area. If your details are wrong or you'd prefer not to be listed, please get in touch.

Click here to see our member directory

Copyright - the logo, photographs, illustrations and copy on this website may NOT be reproduced elsewhere without the express written permission of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club.
10599 visitors since this website was launched on 28th February 2007
Website Information and Privacy Policy
Contact Details

The front or 'Home' page of the Club website www.oldspots.org.uk. Fran avoids making any direct comment about the site in this otherwise informative article.

GOSPBC 20 Years On - The Milestones

1990 In 1990 there was in existence the Berkshire Breeders' Club but no other. The NPBA (now BPA) at that time were somewhat indifferent towards the rare/traditional breeds and thus Richard Lutwyche called a meeting of the leading breeders of GOS at Gloucester Cattle Market in 1990. About 10 people attended including George Styles, Andrew Robinson, Geoffrey Cloke, Gordon Cullimore, Gabriel Dudley and Charles Russell. It was agreed to form a GOS Club to promote the breed (see constitution for the full remit) and a committee was formed to establish it. Debra Lang was elected Secretary, George Styles, President, Andrew Robinson, Chairman, Ray Sims, Vice-Chairman, Richard Lutwyche as Treasurer, Charles Russell as Newsletter editor. Committee members included Geoffrey Cloke and Gordon Cullimore.

A quick count up at the meeting resulted in an estimate of a potential membership of 36 people! It was agreed that those joining in 1990 would be known as Founder Members and we actually recruited 70 of them. Quite a few are still members today. A Constitution was put together and agreed.

1991 Within a year, Debra Lang had resigned through ill health and Richard Lutwyche took over as Secretary and Gabriel Dudley became Treasurer. Charles Russell produced one newsletter (March 1991) after which it became the Secretary's job to produce them on a regular basis.

1992 One of the first 'initiatives' was to offer Club Best of Breed rosettes to all shows willing to stage classes for pedigree GOS pigs. The Club also took on responsibility for organising the Champion of Champions which is officially a BPA competition. By March 1992 we had introduced the promotional breed leaflet made available to all members who had by then reached 92.

1993 In 1993, the Club began card grading all entries at the RBST Show & Sale at Stoneleigh, the first pig breed to do so. In April that year it organised its first workshop on showing at Clevedon, Bristol. Later that year, Princess Anne who keeps a small herd of GOS at Gatcombe Park, agreed to become an Honorary Member. At the end of the year, the Club published a leaflet explaining the breed's Cyclic Breeding System which was circulated to all members.

1994 In 1994 Geoffrey Cloke took over as Chairman. A workshop was held at Clevedon on Marketing the End Product which coincided with the beginnings of the RBST's Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme. Indeed, the first Accredited Butcher was recruited at the workshop where he was a speaker. In April, Andrew Robinson held a major reduction sale of his herd during a period of economic hardship in the industry. The Club issued a press release about the dangers to the breed and it was picked up and published in Country Living magazine among others. A charitable foundation contacted the RBST and offered a sizeable donation (several thousand pounds) for the purpose of buying some of the pigs and placing them in existing herds. This meant that Geoffrey Cloke, on behalf of the RBST, was able to bid for a number of pigs which were then placed on agistment agreements with various herds around the country.



A terrific turnout for the Club's first workshop at Ray & Judith Sim's farm at Clevedon. George Styles, leaning on the pen, discusses a point with Geoffrey Cloke.



Foston Sambo 21 whose sale nearly caused a diplomatic incident.

A few days before the sale, a phone call was received from Gatcombe Park stating that the Princess Royal was interested in buying Andrew's boar, Foston Sambo 21 which was Royal Show champion and Champion of Champions in 1993 and asked that the Club bid on her behalf. Geoffrey Cloke agreed and Richard Lutwyche went back to the Secretary to clarify what expenditure limits might prevail. She didn't know and couldn't reach the Princess. Lutwyche explained that normally such a boar might sell for 200gns but if several buyers were interested, bidding could go as high as 600gns. She had been given no ceiling and somewhat nervously told him to go ahead. The bidding was lively and it soon became apparent that Geoffrey Cloke and one other were vying to buy the boar. The price

quickly went over 200gns and the 600gns and then over 1000. Two thousand and then three thousand were reached and surpassed and Richard Lutwyche started signalling to Geoffrey Cloke to stop. Eventually he did and the boar sold to the Prison Service for 4000 guineas, a British record acknowledged in the Guinness Book of Records. Geoffrey Cloke bought another nice boar – a Patrick – for the Princess for 600gns.

In the summer, the Club organised its first breed show at Hartpury, Glos.



Looking for inspiration... the judges of the Country Living competition. L-r A representative from the magazine, RWF Poole, Geoffrey Cloke and Lord Barber.

1995 In 1995 the Club organised a competition through the pages of Country Living magazine to come up with a new pig-related saying. Country

GOSPBC 20 Years On - The Milestones (cont.)

Living told us that we might get 250 entries but as it was a creative competition, it might only be 100. In the end 377 had to be judged by RWF (Willy) Poole, the writer, Lord Barber of Tewkesbury, President of the RBST and Geoffrey Cloke. The winner was adjudged to be 'Beauty is in the Sty of the Beholder'. Ten runners-up also won prizes and the Club achieved considerable publicity.

The Club organised a show and workshop at the Cotswold Farm Park.

1996 In 1996 the Club organised two major breed displays at museums in Gloucestershire – 25 May-21 July at Northleach Countryside Collection and 27 July-8 September at Gloucester Folk Museum. It also organised a shipment of 20 unrelated pigs from 3 herds in Devon (the Uglow family), Gloucestershire (Jonathan Crump) and Worcestershire (George Styles) to America to re-establish the breed there. Geoffrey Cloke and Richard Lutwyche selected the pigs and helped the breeders to establish isolation units for the period of several months whilst the pigs underwent various veterinary tests before being shipped across the Atlantic from Heathrow with much help from Tim Harris.



A bunch of happy exporters celebrate at Heathrow on a very cold February morning as the consignment of 20 pedigree GOS pigs takes off for the USA. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

Another show & workshop was organised at the Cotswold Farm Park. The Club was involved in selecting a GOS gilt for Joanna Trollope the novelist to give to the Prince of Wales as a birthday present. However, it sadly did not lead to the establishment of a GOS herd at Highgrove where they prefer Tamworths and Large Blacks.

1997 April 1997 saw the first breed sale organised by the Club at Ledbury cattle market in Herefordshire. All 44 pigs entered sold with a top price of 300gns. Another show and workshop was held at the Cotswold Farm Park.

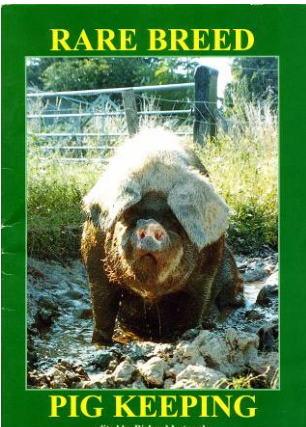
1998 In 1998 the sale was repeated with a larger entry and whilst not every lot entered sold, some very good prices were achieved with a top price of 330gns. A show and workshop were again organised at the Cotswold Farm Park.

1999 1999 saw the launch of the GOS Pig of the Year competition based on an accumulation of points from shows throughout the season with a cup given by Judith Sims in memory of her late husband, Ray. Also North of England and South of England Championships with trophies presented by George Styles and Jim Sherriff respectively. The show and workshop moved to the Autumn Exhibition at the East of England showground. The Club launched its own website. A third Spring Show & Sale was organised at Ledbury but prices were disappointing with a top price of just 105gns.

The Club sponsored a boar at AI at Masterbreeders to ensure that the facility was always available since the RBST had cut back on the service they offered. The Club commenced a programme to secure protection for GOS pork and bacon throughout Europe by employing a consultant to put together a proposal.

2000 In 2000, Masterbreeders went into liquidation and the Club transferred the boar to JSR at Selby. The Club sponsored an initiative to export a group of pigs to Northern Ireland to help re-establish the breed there with some fresh blood. The last Show & Sale took place at Ledbury before the market was redeveloped. All pigs forward sold well with a top price of 400gns. Some later shows were disrupted by an outbreak of Swine Fever in East Anglia.

2001 2001 was dominated by the Foot & Mouth epidemic which curtailed all activities. A small number of Club members had their herds slaughtered.



2002 In 2002, once movements were resumed, the Club removed the boar from JSR where charges for feed and management had been maintained throughout the outbreak with no possibility of semen being distributed. Richard Lutwyche resigned as Secretary and was replaced by Carol Knights. In September, a farm visit was organised at Wick Court, Glos.

2003 2003 saw the publication of Rare Breed Pig Keeping, a 68 page book featuring a number of essays taken from Spot Press. Sales of the book quickly took off. Geoffrey Cloke was replaced by Dave Overton as Chairman and took over as President while George Styles became the Club's Patron. The Club held a breed show within Stroud Show. A second social event was held in Lincolnshire.

2004 In 2004, Geoffrey Cloke retired due to ill health and Judith Sims was elected President. A second breed show took place at Stroud Show. Geoffrey Cloke died in August.

2005 In 2005 the Club introduced free public liability cover for members whilst showing in the UK. A Forum section was introduced onto the website to encourage members to converse on line and advertise pigs for sale.

2006 In 2006 the Club joined with Cotswold Sheep and Gloucester Cattle to hold a successful breed sale at Cirencester under the Breeds of Gloucestershire banner.

2007 In 2007 Carol Knights resigned as Secretary and Richard Lutwyche returned to the role. Dave Overton gave way to Andrew Robinson who also came back for a second term of being Chairman of the Club. Stephen Booth was elected Treasurer. The Club held a successful Workshop at Shuttleworth College in Bedfordshire by kind invitation of Guy Kiddy. The second Breeds of Gloucestershire Show & Sale was rudely interrupted by the Foot & Mouth outbreak in Surrey which also disrupted the later shows. Following a much overdue response from the EU Commission on the Club's ongoing application for Traditional Speciality Guaranteed status for GOS pigmeat throughout Europe, the Club secured sponsorship of £10,000 and then arranged for Bristol University to undertake scientific analysis of GOS and commercial pork in an effort to finally secure some protection.



Guy Kiddy (right) addressing delegates at the workshop at Shuttleworth College. Photo by Richard Lutwyche



2008 2008 kicked off with a report that one of the major supermarkets – Waitrose – was selling GOS bacon. Investigation – including DNA analysis at a laboratory in Ireland and covert photography of the pigs in question - soon revealed that the product was the result of using AI from GOS boars on commercial females. A meeting with Waitrose management followed but failed to persuade them to label the produce more honestly. The Club involved other bodies and got the support of two MPs – Tony Baldry, a member, and Geoffrey Clifton-Brown and with their advice, approached the body that advised Trading Standards Officers on what was acceptable. We also got favourable publicity in *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* and on *Farming Today*. After some protracted negotiations, LACORS eventually changed their guidance to cover the situation and it was published in January 2009. Waitrose changed their packaging no fewer than four times during the period to a version that was much more acceptable

to the Club since it was obvious that it was not purporting to be purebred GOS.

In May we were alerted to a company registering Trade Marks for Bramley Old Spot pigs and pork. The Club engaged the services of specialist patent lawyers in an effort to get the TMs rejected.

In August, the third Show & Sale took place at Cirencester with a strong demand and good prices achieved, 580gns being the top bid.

2009 The Bramley Old Spot situation continued but later in the year, the Trade Mark for Bramley Old Spot pigs was rejected after a hearing. Efforts continue to have the other marks overturned.

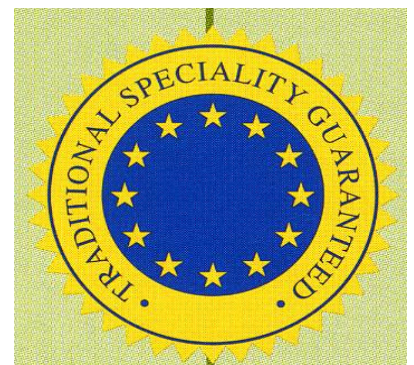
In April the Club changed its policy of simply holding an AGM at Stoneleigh to incorporating a farm visit as a Members' Day and the first was held at Daylesford Organic Farm in Gloucestershire. Later that month, Stephen and Steph Booth hosted a successful workshop at their farm in Cheshire aimed at informing breeders how to interpret and implement standards and encouraging showing.

In June, the Club's Patron, George Styles, died aged 83. The Club invited HRH The Princess Royal to become its new Patron and she agreed.

The last Royal Show was held at Stoneleigh with a better turnout of GOS pigs. Andrew Robinson was tempted out of showing retirement and won both the Breed Championship and the GOS Champion of Champions with Foston Ellen 83.

In October, the EU Commission eventually accepted the TSG application for Traditionally Farmed Gloucestershire Old Spots Pork and it was published in the Official Journal for a period of six months while other member states have the opportunity to raise queries or objections.

After 11 years, could it really be about to happen in 2010?



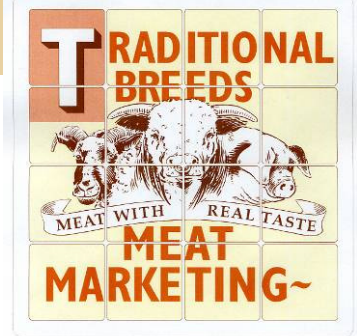
Producing Quality Meat by Richard Lutwyche

The Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Company evolved from the TBMM Scheme operated by the RBST until 2002 and was first established as a means of conserving rare breeds by creating a market for them in 1993. Since that time, literally thousands of GOS have been processed by butchers from Northumberland to Cornwall and we have built up a large database of information relating to the breed.

Before 1993, the rare breeds were effectively unsaleable into the commercial meat market. Buyers at cattle markets would scoff at primitive or longwool sheep, horned cattle or small breeds such as Dexters or any pigs other than pink commercial types. Whilst the rare breeds movement flourished, many keepers did not stay long when they experienced the humiliation and financial hardship of trying to sell their surplus stock. No breeds had become extinct but nearly all were bumping along without any real growth, maintained by enthusiasts and farm parks as living museum pieces.

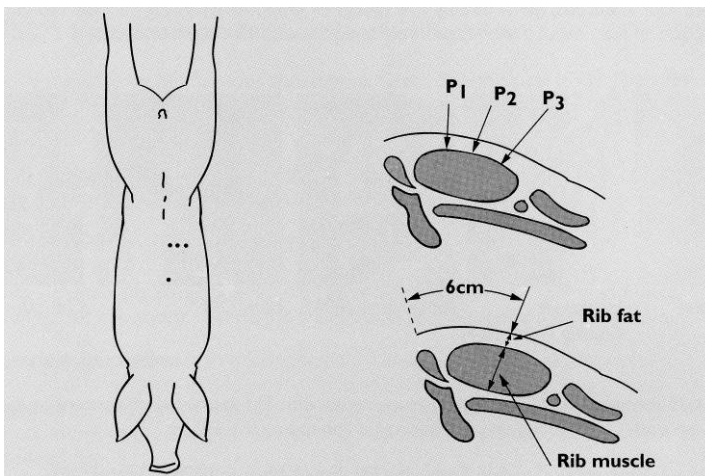
The concept of creating a specialist market for them grew out of the hugely enhanced eating quality of the meat derived from them. As the commercial market, driven by the supermarkets, had pursued consistent, lean carcasses that were easy to butcher and sell, so the eating quality had fallen to the point where such meat was effectively tasteless - little better than cardboard. The scheme/company deliberately spurned the supermarkets who were all far too big to accept terms that suited the producer and instead targeted small, independent quality butchers - a rare breed in their own right. A pricing structure was created based on the quality of the finished carcass that paid a considerable premium over commercial prices. Finishing Units were established to take in weaned stock from small producers to provide butchers with a consistent supply to meet their requirements in terms of weight and finish.

So, what do the statistics tell us? We work on averages which with 1000+ GOS a year means that the occasional poorer animal does not hugely alter the figures.



Ave Liveweight kgs	Ave Deadweight kgs	Age in Days	Daily l/w Gain
76	57	177	0.45

Whilst all the rare/traditional breeds have the capacity to put down fat, it is not necessary to produce fat pigs or pigs with poor conformation. Commercial breeds/hybrids are idiot-proof (almost) as they have been bred for leanness. The TBMM operation pays top price for good conformation pigs with a backfat level measured at P2 of 10-15mm. This is around 1/2" of backfat, much more than would be seen in a supermarket but this gives a good level of flavour and succulence and is generally acceptable to a discerning customer looking for quality. Higher levels than this and the meat/fat ratio looks out of balance. There are almost everywhere backwoodsmen who will come to the butchers to buy fatter than normal meat but they are few and far between and you cannot base a business on attracting such customers only. Higher levels of fat have to be trimmed by the butcher. This is extra labour cost and he ends up with a product that just doesn't look as good and incurs extra costs in the disposal of the extra fat which is why there is a price penalty for such meat.



The diagram shows where the P2 measurement is taken from at larger abattoirs, smaller ones tend not to grade this way. If you picture the diagram as a loin chop or rasher of bacon you can envisage what you should be aiming for.

Leaner gradings also incur a price penalty because we are trying not to produce coloured Landrace-type pigs but pigs that will offer the best eating experience.

Sometimes we see carcasses with hugely more fat and the butchers have the right to reject such poor quality stock as it becomes almost unsaleable. This is always down to poor husbandry/management usually associated with bad feed practices.

Good conformation is best described as having a good, large piece of meat as the eye-muscle in the chop. If through poor management this is under-sized, then the fat, even within the 10-15mm parameter looks out of proportion to the lean and again there is a price penalty.

Pigs have a digestive system similar to ours. They are naturally omnivores as opposed to herbivores such as cattle, sheep and horses. As such, they require a balanced diet and if you try and mess around with this premise, then the quality of the carcass deteriorates.

Whilst you must try and keep the economics of feeding your finishing pigs under control, there is no point in achieving this at the cost of not having a high quality product to sell at the end of the exercise.

The following notes were prepared by Rex Montgomery of Gilt Edged Recording & Analysis specifically for keepers of rare breed pigs.

Quality of the Food

Source from reliable compounders giving an 'open declaration' of the raw materials included. Try to select suppliers using good quality ingredients—not a lot of by-products.

Don't dilute the quality of the diet.

Minimum daily requirement—700gm of protein and 30gm of lysine.

Compound diets designed to be fed at the recommended daily amount will provide the required level of nutrients, minerals and vitamins. Pigs are not ruminants so they cannot make as much use of grass as other species. Sows can benefit from a good supply of fresh, young grass which can replace up to 0.5kg of sow nuts in early pregnancy. A well-grown pig will not eat much more than 5kg grass/day so don't reduce nuts too much.



GOS finishers in an open barn system. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

Feed Requirements

Weaners ad lib up to 40kg l/w. Try to calculate the pig's daily intake just prior to change and then don't cut back too quickly if you are going to restrict feed to 2.5kg/day.

Finishers About 2.5kg/day. Feed twice daily once ad lib regime is finished.

The TBMM Co is looking for someone to operate a small finishing unit supplying ca four pork pigs/week in the Staffs/Derbys area. Ready supply of weaners. Phone 01285 869666 for more details.

Water - 3 pints a day at 15kg l/w to 1 gallon/day at 90kg l/w.

To put some of these comments into context, many newly-established keepers, look to cut costs by sourcing vegetable/fruit or bakery waste to take the place of part of the compound feed. Doing this to a level more than just giving the pigs a few apples or the occasional cabbage as a treat can upset the balance of nutrients and result in more fat/less lean and thus a less desirable carcass. **And let us just add a reminder here that it is illegal and dangerous to feed pigs anything that has been in a kitchen (of any sort) or that may have been close to meat or meat products of any kind.**



Chops need a good quality eye muscle to carry off the greater levels of fat cover compared with meat in the supermarket. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

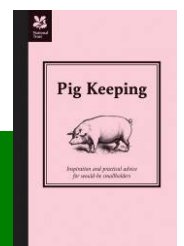
If growing pigs are still hungry after being fed, you can supplement with sugar beet pulp. This has the reputation of reducing the incidence of skatole, one of the causes of boar taint in entire (uncastrated) boars. It also, whilst filling the pigs' appetites, does not lay down excessive backfat. Rate of feed is 1/4 to 1/2 lb per pig daily in the final six weeks of finishing.



Although the fat levels on these loin chops are just about acceptable, the poor eye muscle development makes them much less appealing to the shopper. Photo by Richard Lutwyche

Compound feeds of higher than 16-18% protein are generally suited for more commercial type pigs and GOS and other rare breeds are best kept on the lower levels which are generally sold as Sow & Weaner rations. Try to aim for 1.1% lysine in the compound. Lysine is one of the amino acids that forms the protein molecule and has been identified as one that pigs utilise most rapidly.

Richard Lutwyche was commissioned by the National Trust to write a small guide 'Pig Keeping' including advice about finishing pigs and marketing meat. It is due for publication shortly.



Recipe Corner—Make The Most Of Your Wonderful GOS Produce

This is a new feature where members can submit favourite recipes to share with others.

Pork Meatballs with Savoury Potato Purée (Enzo de Prà)

Serves 4-6

For the meatballs: 300g/11oz minced lean pork shoulder	For the purée: 1kg/2.2lb floury potatoes
300g/11oz minced pork fat	100g/4oz pancetta or streaky bacon
Salt, pepper	100g/4oz pork fat
Fennel seeds (optional)	Salt,pepper
2 tsp vinegar	Olive oil
1 knob of butter	

Method - 1 Mix the meat and fat and shape into small balls, seasoning lightly with salt and pepper and adding a few fennel seeds. Brown in a frying pan, then deglaze the pan with a little vinegar. Add a little butter and melt slowly to create a sauce to serve with the meatballs.

- 2 Boil the potatoes then peel and purée them.
- 3 Cut the pancetta and pork fat into thin strips, brown in the frying pan then stir into the potato purée. Season with salt and pepper and add a little extra olive oil to create a softer texture to the purée.
- 4 Arrange the purée in an attractive shape on each plate and serve with the meat balls and buttery sauce.

An Italian recipe taken from 'Pigs & Pork'

Cheese, Ham & Potato Bake

Serves 4-6

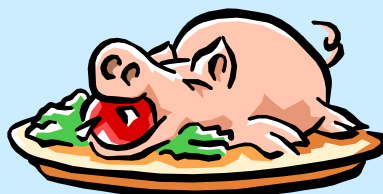
900g/2lb new potatoes	3 x onions	2 x tbsp oil
1 x red pepper	225g/8oz sliced, cooked ham	400g/14oz tinned tomatoes
5 x small gherkins	350g/12oz Red Leicester cheese	150ml/1/4 pint soured cream
2 x egg yolks	Salt & pepper	1/4 tsp grated nutmeg
50g/2oz butter		

Method - 1 Preheat oven to 200C/400F/gas mk6

- 2 Scrub potatoes and cook in boiling water for 30 minutes
- 3 Peel and thinly slice the onions. Fry in oil for 5 minutes. Deseed and slice the pepper add to the onion and fry for a further 5 minutes. Shred the ham and add it to the frying pan together with the tomatoes, sliced gherkins and seasoning.
- 4 Drain the potatoes and cool. Slice thickly. Slice the cheese. Layer the potatoes, cheese and tomato mixture in an ovenproof dish. Mix together the soured cream, egg yolks, seasoning and nutmeg and pour over the top. Dot with butter. Bake for 20 minutes.

Taken from 'A Taste of Pork'

Please send any recipes you have to Richard Lutwyche, GOSPBC, Freepost (GL442), Cirencester, Glos., GL7 5BR or email to mail@oldspots.org.uk. If taken from a published source, please state the name of the book. If you have a photo of the dish, so much the better!



Advertisements

FOR SALE

Two registered 12 week old boars. They are Sambo bloodline, mum is a Princess. Good strong stocky boys, not too many spots. Very friendly. Will be wormed. Non registered also available. Some boys are 16 weeks old but these are non - registered so would be good meat pigs.

If these are of any interest, please call 07971294568

Charlotte (North Notts)

Nearly New Butchery Equipt

We ran a farm shop and decided to take the plunge and buy butchery equipment a couple of months before Xmas. We used it only once a week for about 8 weeks. My recurring sore back started to give me too much bother at Xmas and we decided not to reopen the shop and down size our herd. We therefore have really good, hardly used, equipment for sale.

Manica electric sausage filler
Table top vac packer
Mincer (Torrey)
Slicer (this was bought second hand)
Berkel stainless steel model

As well as stainless steel tables (only used 8 times too!), glass fronted fridges and freezers (approx 1 year old, had them before we started doing the butchery)

Just wondered if anyone would be interested. They will all still have the guarentees on them apart from the slicer. We are in Aberdeenshire, It all arrived on pallets so I think it would be possible to do the same to get it to anyone who were interested.

Please call Ruth (01330 830078)

FOR SALE

Princess/Patrick birth notified weaners £50 each. Near Ely Cambridgeshire. Call Jonny - 07803 132561 or email jonny@spinneyabbey.com

Princess Ann/ Sambo notified weaners for sale. Ready week commencing 14th March boars & gilts. Fatteners £50.00 Breeding £75.00. Worcestershire/Warwickshire border. roughhillrarebreeds@dsl.pipex.com

Telephone; Jack 07976385047

9 birth notified weaners available at the end of February (gilts and boars)- email us for more details. we are located near Lampeter in West Wales.

Martin Baldwin
martin.baldwin@tryalfarm.co.uk

Chapel Dolly 18 served 2/1/10 and scanned in pig . Shown with success last year. Breed Champion Cheshire and high placed in classes at Devon ,Newark and Yorkshire. In pig to her second litter and a proven good mother. Based North Cheshire close to motorway networks. Stephen Booth 07778345958

12 lovely birth notified weaners (suitable for pork) born 15/12/09 & 16/12/09 will be ready to go 27th February @ 11wks old. Please contact me for more information. Delivery possible

Julie Dronfield gospigs@yahoo.co.uk
01840 250261

WANTED

2/3 weaners (or slightly older) for fattening. ideally in West Sussex. Can anyone help?
david@bridgefootmeadows.co.uk

Two in pig gilts or maiden gilts. Must have good pedigree and preferably not to far from Warwickshire. 01789 471523 after 7pm please.

GOS pedigree boar required preferably mature and docile.

Please contact Charles on 01342 850526

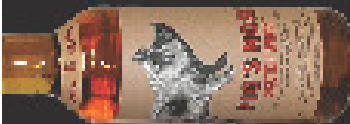
Registered proven sow or well grown gilt from Bluebell, Countess, Dolly or Princess Joan lines to go with a Sambo boar.

Becky 07811 443264

A Rufus boar to bring on to replace my current working boar. To be between weaning age and up to a year old and of course up to the breed standards. We are on the Somerset/Devon border but would consider travelling. Donna Lucking 01823 680814

Any young boar except Sambo, preferably 3-4 months old to live with two Star Antoinettes. We're in Poole, Dorset but will travel if need be to get ideal partner for them, email andy@laheat.co.uk or tel 07836 730353

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Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Breeders' Club

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Gloucestershire, GL7 5BR

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E-mail: mail@oldspots.org.uk

We're on the web—
www.oldspots.org.uk

GOSPBC Fighting Fund

In our effort to maintain the integrity of genuine pork from pedigree Gloucestershire Old Spots, we are undertaking considerable work to protect the real thing for the benefit of breeders everywhere. In response to this appeal please send **any donation** to GOSPBC c/o Mr S Booth, Broadoak Farm, Chapel Lane, Warburton, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9TY.

All donors will be acknowledged in **SPOT PRESS**.

SPOT PRESS

The Spring edition will be published in April/May and we invite contributions and suggestions as to what you would like to be included.

Edited by Richard Lutwyche

We thank all those contributors listed within these pages.

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This painting was commissioned for a Bibby & Co calendar in the 1920s when the GOS was the most populous breed in the UK.

Member in Devon Organising Pig Keeping Courses

Sarah Thatcher from Chumleigh in Devon is organising two courses for beginners in pig keeping. Dates are **Sat March 20th 10am–3pm** and **Sat April 17th 10am–3pm**. More dates will follow in May and June.

“Our courses were started due to our customers requests and we saw a need and thought, why not pass on some knowledge? I was a large animal veterinary nurse for 10 years working with both outdoor and indoor pig units before getting my own free range pigs.

“We will be covering rules and regulations, feed, health, bio-security, breeds and the importance of pedigree pigs and rare breeds, housing, fencing, slaughter and will touch on breeding and farrowing and selecting pedigree breeding stock.

“The course will be run on the farm in North Devon, all our details are available on our website www.highlandshogs.co.uk”

You can contact Sarah to find out more or book a place on 01769 581752

New Webmaster Needed

The club is currently looking to hear from anyone who may be interested in taking on the upkeep and development of our website. Richard Carter (who built and maintains the site) has other growing commitments that are limiting the time he can spend working on the site at the moment. The sites are written in standard (but basic) HTML, Javascript and ASP. Richard C will hand over all the content. He is also happy to continue providing server space with full FTP access. The club covers these costs so there will be no financial commitment required.

Much of the content is updated directly by Richard L using a very simple "back end" interface to an Access database. There are times when static pages needs to be refreshed too and in the past Richard C has tried to respond to such requests within about a week. Bigger updates, for example a new page or database-driven function, can wait longer. Richard C estimates that he spends only a few hours a month on the site in total so the job really isn't too onerous. Richard C will remain in touch with the club and his successor to ensure a smooth handover. He has offered to help with ongoing questions or problems if necessary and is more than happy to discuss things in more detail if you may be interested.

So - if you're in a position to be able to help, get in touch! Please email Richard Lutwyche (the club Secretary) and/or Richard Carter.

mail@oldspots.org.uk

richard@rjcarter.net