

Spot Press



Showing—Our Shop Window

One of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig breeders' Club's yearly objectives is to get more members and their pigs into the show ring. The best way to promote the breed is to let people see the pig in the flesh. Shows provide an ideal environment to see pigs and to allow breeders to promote their herds and the breed. It also allows breeders the opportunity to engage and educate the general public about the virtues of the breed. The Club also encourages members to exhibit their pigs at local events and can help you with banners and posters to promote our breed.

The Club provides its members with a comprehensive UK wide show list at the beginning of every show season so there is bound to be a show near you. The Club also runs a number of showing competitions for its members; The Champion of Champions and the Northern and Southern Championships and a GOS Pig of the Year Award.

Inside this special issue of Spot Press there are articles from previous issues by renowned showmen some of whom are sadly no longer with us but their words of wisdom are still as valid today as when they were first written.

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Throughout this issue we have used articles from the Spot Press Issues of years gone by. Comments in red have been added for guidance and remember some of the rules and regulations may have changed. You can find up to date information on the Club website and also the BPA website.

We hope you find at least some of the pages within useful.

Mandy Ed

GETTING STARTED

From Spot Press 2009 by Mandy Garbutt Our First Show

We tried showing in 2005 and had not enjoyed it at all so when at a club committee meeting the subject of the lack of GOS winning interbreeds at shows came up and the lack of new people coming forward to show their pigs made us have a rethink. About only 8% (probably not even that now) of the club membership show their GOS and numbers are declining. People aren't prepared to go showing for various reasons; making a fool of themselves with an out of control pig, the costs involved, time off work issues, logistics, lack of guidance and support; the list goes on but such was the lack of pigs on show particularly up here in the north where we are based we decided to give it another go. In 2009 the Club held a showing workshop at Steve Booth's in Cheshire which we attended and then Steve and his daughter Mandy kindly allowed me to join them at Nottinghamshire show to help them show their GOS.

At the start of 2009 we had no intention of showing our pigs so our three gilts (Dotty, Dolly and Polly) were destined for bacon. We decided we would reprieve one of them to show. This would be a hard decision. A process of elimination was begun using the techniques we had seen at the workshop. Polly had the least spots and was a squat, chunky pig with a nice temperament and a cute little face. Polly won the reprieve. Then training began. Having spent the first five months of her life free range in the field, she wasn't too keen on learning and although they're named they don't know their names so first of all every time we went to feed her or visit her pen we would say her name and make a fuss of her. She decided that the stick was for chewing and took great pleasure in head butting the board. We started off with short fifteen minute sessions just playing around her with the board and stick; these gradually built up to half an hour where she was coaxed to follow me around a makeshift show ring clockwise. After deciding which of the local shows had pig classes we decided to take the plunge and enter. This would now allow for three more weeks intensive training, sometimes we just wandered together with the board and stick, others we meticulously paraded clockwise under tight control. We even had a practice going in the trailer and being bathed. Not only Polly had to be prepared for the show but all the stuff we needed to take with us, it's like planning a military expedition. "But its only one day" was exclaimed when I showed Paul the list. A waterproof sheet to act as sunshade or rain cover, two buckets for water and washing, feed and piggy treats (apples in our case), white coat, stick and board, picnic hamper, deckchairs, kit box containing sponge, brush, damp flannel, baby oil, information sheets, string, scissors, sun cream and movement licenses. Finally; as straw isn't always provided as some of the smaller shows a builder's tonne bag full of straw. We don't have small bales so this was how we managed.

The evening before Ryedale show we bathed Polly with gallons of warm water carted from the garage by poor Paul and Johnson's No more Tears baby bath wash. We scrubbed her legs and feet with a brush and her soft underbody with a softer brush. We kept the water away from her face and ears. It was a warm evening so Polly seemed to enjoy her bath right up to the moment I scrubbed her face with a damp flannel. She was toweled off with three of the largest bath sheets I could find as we had been unable to get any wood flour. With a little baby oil on some cotton wool the final touch was to wipe around the inside of her ears. She looked like a piggy princess!

Getting Started

The next morning we loaded up with our kit and Polly who after a coaxing with a few pig nuts



went up the ramp of the trailer as she had no breakfast as we didn't want her to be travelsick. We arrived at the showground nice and early (9am) I felt so nervous, it didn't help when I spotted a show ring on the way in that was just rope and sticks! Paul told me to stop stressing and to go and find out where we were to go. With a great sigh of relief I discovered that the pig pens actually enclosed an inner show ring especially for the pigs as there had been an escape a couple of years previous by a large Black pig, the other ring I'd seen was for collecting horses! We got Polly in a pen cosy with some of the straw we had brought with us. I gave Polly a final brush and dabbed her black spots

with baby oil to make them shiny and glossy and donned my white coat, board and stick. I also wore my GOS club cap. You have to be as smart as your pig, it's a team effort. Polly looked the part but would she remember her training, we watched the other classes eager to pick up any last minute tips and then before we knew it we were on.

Polly went into the ring sniffing cautiously and then broke out into a trot across the ring. I don't really remember much about the class as I was so busy keeping Polly under control as she had taken a fancy to a Lop boar in a nearby pen! Then to our utter astonishment we were suddenly being handed a rosette for second place, we were flabbergasted. We hadn't expected to get anything on our first outing. Polly got a big hug and an apple. After making sure Polly had a drink we had a look around the show and spent some time answering piggy questions from the public. One lady asked if it was difficult getting Polly in the bath! I did not dispel this thought! At 4pm we were allowed to leave to go home and after mucking out the trailer we sat down to a well earned glass of wine. Our first show a success and a thoroughly enjoyable experience compared to our last outing in 2005.

One of the reasons I think I enjoyed showing at Ryedale is down to security. At the smaller shows the pig rings are within or next to the pens and when pigs are moved the general public is excluded to the outer edge of the pens. They still get a good view but pigs can be moved safely and without fear of escape. This is the one aspect of showing at the big shows that had put me off showing my pigs. Some of the big shows pigs are moved often through huge crowds of people which is very nerve wracking and off putting.

We had a lovely time and enjoyed the show and would recommend all beginners start this way. Our tips are to be prepared, not to get too stressed (easier said than done believe me!) have a 4x4 for getting off muddy show fields and an ever suffering helper around. Whether or not you will see us at the big county shows remains to be seen but we will certainly be around our local circuit again and look forward to some of you joining us in 2010.

The rest as they say is history as we go into our 15th year showing in 2024 Mandy

A Beginners Guide to Showing by Nick Hunkin

At most shows with GOS pigs, there are usually the following classes:-

1. July boar born between 1 July and previous December 31.
2. January boar from same year as shown.
3. Sow born before previous 1 July in pig.
4. Gilt born between previous 1 July and 31 August.
5. Gilt born between the previous 1 September and 31 December.
6. Gilt born after January same year.

Prepare your farrowing times in advance to coincide with these classes.

Older boars are not recommended for absolute beginners but you will soon be only too keen to bring them out when you get used to showing.

July litters

From your litter, keep as many good underlined weaners as you can afford to (you can always sell off any extras for either breeding or pork later on). Make sure the weaners have at least 14 sound teats (7 a side) and more is even better. Make sure there are no inverted teats and be ruthless in your selection process if there are.

At about 4 to 5 months old make your final selection. Look for good hams, straight back and generally smart alert appearance. You may have relatively local show pig people who I'm sure would come and help you at this stage if you're not sure. Make sure you feed your show pigs well; 6 lbs of proprietary pig feed per day is recommended for all show pigs but when they are first weaned, ad lib them with grower pellets if you can for the first 3 months. If this proves too expensive, we are very lucky with Old Spots that they grow well on almost any food and you can supplement your pig feed with vegetables (roots or greens), potatoes* or maybe sugar beet making sure it is pre-mixed with water and soaked overnight.

Get them used to board and bat as early as you can and you can always walk them round their pens inside. As soon as possible walk your pigs outside if you can set up some kind of dummy show ring, so much the better. They will get used to it. If they tend to rush about on initially going outside, wait a few moments. They will soon settle down and quieten.

At around 8 months take them out on any quiet country roads you may have nearby, always make sure there are at least 2 people to help control the pigs and warn the traffic. In my experience, drivers are usually fairly laid back and often delighted to see the pigs walking about. Try to do this at least 3 times a week up until the season begins.

A week before the first show, gently wash the pigs with tepid water and a mild shampoo (Johnsons baby shampoo, certain horse shampoos, Lux etc are all quite adequate and recommended for pigs). Avoid detergents which are okay for some of the white breeds but can sometimes cause hair loss. Use a medium powered hose to remove stubborn dirt from the bottom of feet and noses. Be careful not to get shampoo inside the pig's ear as it will cause them to become lopsided.



Nick Hunkin providing one of his entertaining commentaries.



Smaller shows such as Stroud are a good place for beginners to start (although Guy Kiddy pictured here is one of the 'old hands').

When loading your trailer to go to the show, use plenty of straw especially on the tailgate and leave no room for possible escape between the back of the trailer and the shed door. Try and keep the pigs as calm as possible. We are lucky with GOS as they are usually amongst the best and easiest loaders providing the preparation is good AND ABSOLUTELY NO ESCAPE ROUTES AVAILABLE!



Hatfield House Show always attracts good entries and would be a good place to visit to talk to exhibitors and watch how they do things.

Once at the shows, ensure pigs are walked a few times before judging (especially the night before so they get used to their surroundings and being around strange pigs).

If possible watch experienced pig showmen show their pigs. You will learn more from this than anything. But be patient - it takes time to do the job well.

When in the ring, don't get worried if the pigs do a runner and start some of the other pigs off as well. Just go along with it. If you stay calm and collected and keep as close as you possibly can, chances are the pig will calm down fairly quickly. If you get wound up and harassed, chances are so will the pig. They pick up their owner's moods almost psychically!

The judge will want to see firstly all pigs walking around against each other clockwise if possible. He/she will then inspect the pigs individually with particular attention to underlines (good to get someone to practice doing this on the pig at home). They will then often walk the pig individually and finally walk all pigs again against each other.

They will then make their selection and the rosettes will be doled out usually first prize first. From the first prize winners of all the individual classes, the judge will finally select a breed champion, reserve champion and sometimes male and female champions individually as well. If you go out to some of the larger shows, you will almost inevitably get quite a decent prize as at many of them there have only been a few exhibitors in recent years.

For older sows, again it is always more difficult to teach an old dog new tricks but road walking and regular handling will help. If you can purchase an older show sow from a regular exhibitor, so much the better as they invariably will be used to things and quiet.

As your young pigs get older, so they become easier to show and it seems to get in the blood so after 4 or 5 years you will find everything very much easier than when you started.

Finally with January pigs just get them in the ring and try and keep up!!!!
- That's what everybody else will be doing.

Come on, get out there and have a go. All us oldies will be there to cheer you on and help in any way we can. Don't be scared!!!

*Ensure you comply with the law and only feed vegetable matter that has never been in a kitchen, domestic or commercial (not even from a vegetarian restaurant!). If you want chapter and verse on what can or cannot be fed, go to www.defra.gov.uk and in the search box on the opening page, type in 'A Guide for New Keepers Pigs' which takes you to a short brochure full of useful information.



The ultimate to aim for is probably the Royal Show at Stoneleigh although being over four days it takes a lot of commitment so perhaps it is best to work up to the RASE via the other shows first.

Sadly Nick Hunkin passed away in 2012 but his words here are still valid today.

(This article was first published in Tamworth Trumpet. Nick Hunkin is not only a Tamworth breeder but can be found at some of the leading shows giving an erudite commentary in the pig rings). Photos by Richard Lutyche



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SELECTING FOR SHOW

G. H. Styles

So, you would like to Show your Gloucesters'. Excellent. The Breed urgently needs more exhibitors and there is nothing quite so satisfying as receiving the Championship Rosette from the Judge. But before that can happen you must have chosen the right pig to do it.

Having decided which Show you want to go to first study the Schedule and make sure you have a pig of the right age. This is especially important with younger pigs otherwise you can find your pig competing with older and larger ones to your disadvantage. Most Shows these days have what are popularly known as July and January Classes. That is pigs born after the first of July in the year preceding the Show and after the first of January in the year of the Show. There are also classes or pigs born BEFORE first of July; usually referred to as Sow or Old Boar Classes. It is only fair to say that Champions usually come from these Classes but not invariably.

January pigs should be born as near to the first as possible, and in any case in the first fortnight, otherwise they will not be big enough on Show day. July pigs likewise should be born as early in July as possible and in any case by early August. Older Boars and Sows need to be fully grown and mature, at least two years old and preferably three. Sows for Show must have a breeding programme which fits the Show date. A Sow looks her best when heavy in-pig, but do not be tempted to get her too close. It is very embarrassing to have your sow farrow at the Show. About a fortnight off farrowing is ideal.

A Show pig must be a good specimen of the breed, long and level back with light shoulders and good hams but above all MUST have strong straight legs and sound feet; a good underline of at least twelve teats, preferably fourteen or more. These must all be functional, not inverted or blind and of an even size. They should start as near the front legs as possible and be regularly and evenly spaced; like beads on a string. It is just as important for boars to have good underlines as their daughters are likely to follow them.

Select your July pigs in January or early February, they will then be mature enough to give a good indication of their likely potential. January pigs however should be selected at three weeks of age. After this they go, like children, through various stages and can look awful but they usually come back to what they were at three weeks. When selecting your show pigs be sure to choose some reserves just in case.

Once you have chosen your pigs house them somewhere where you can easily take them out for exercise. Show pigs need plenty of exercise. Do not however be tempted to just turn them out in a field or orchard. They enjoy sunbathing and will get tanned. This causes their skin to develop blue blotches which spoil their looks and can make the difference between a first and a third or less.

They should now be fed to appetite twice a day at regular times. It does not matter if you feed nuts with separate water, dry meal with water on top or a mixed wet feed. As long as you use a good, well balanced ration it matters not which method you use, do not however at this stage use a self-feeder. They may get too fat and it may over-develop their shoulders. As mentioned above, give them regular exercise and most important get to know them. Gloucesters' are very sociable pigs and appreciate a bit of fuss and conversation. It will repay you handsomely as they will become much easier to handle.

This also applies to Sows and Old Boars, in fact all these points are equally important with these older pigs and here again size is a Vital Consideration. "A good big 'un will always beat a good little 'un". They must also be fully developed and mature. This usually means about three years old. Old Boars must have their tusks cut (a job for the Vet) in the year of the Show. A boar's tusks are dangerous weapons and can cause horrific injuries to other pigs, other people or more frequently to their handler. So be warned and get them cut.

Selecting the right pigs to show at an early stage will give you a flying start to a successful Show season. I wish you this and hope you will enjoy it as much as your pigs will. In my experience they love Shows.

George Styles passed away in 2009 and was considered the founder of the GOS breed as we know it today. You can find out more about him on the website www.gosbbc.co.uk

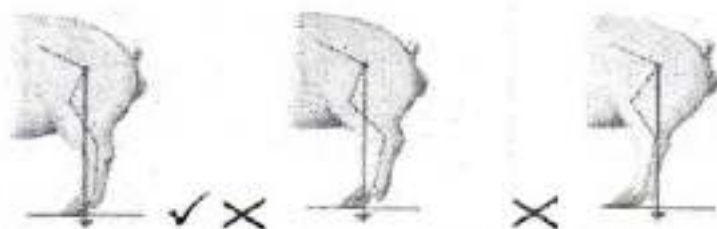
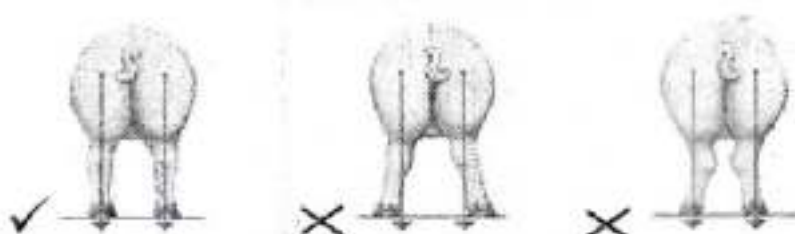
From Spot Press Autumn 2015. You can find the GOS breed standard on the website



Selection of Breeding Stock - Legs, Feet and Teats

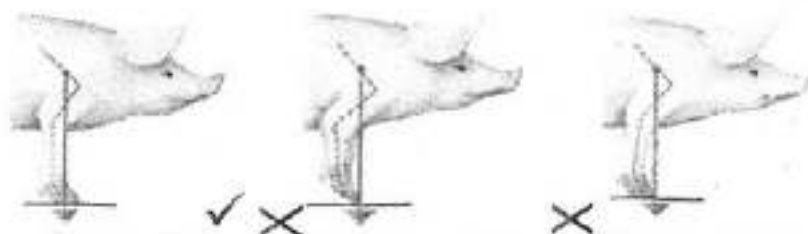
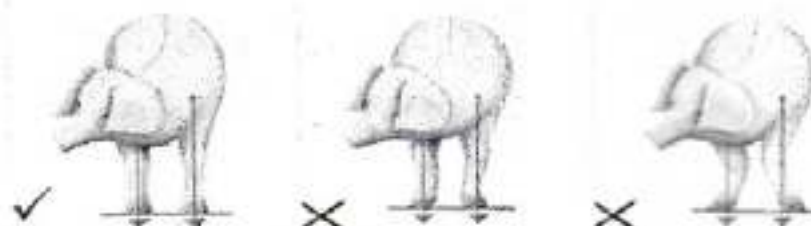


Look at your pigs legs from the back. They should be straight and parallel with the feet placed flat on the floor. They should not be splayed or knock kneed



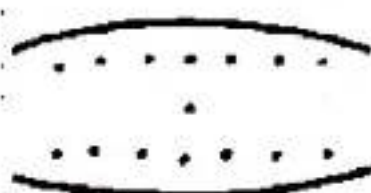
Look at the back legs from the side. A plumb line should drop down the front of the leg to the back of the foot

Look at the front legs head on. They should be straight and parallel with the feet square on the floor. They should not curve in or out.

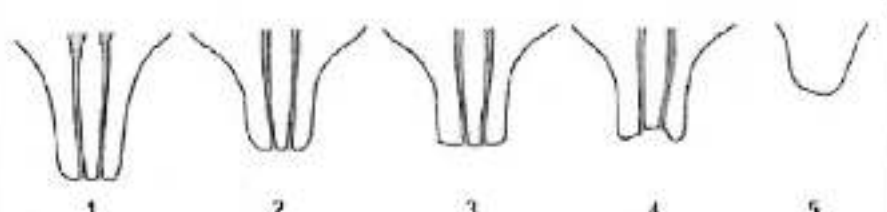
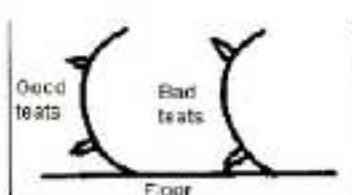
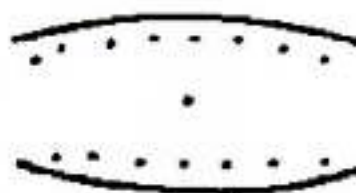


Look at the front legs from the side. Pigs should not be up on their toes.

TEATS



Teats should be parallel and evenly spaced (see left) if they diverge piglet access may be restricted. If teats are too high then access to lower tier may be difficult



A basic understanding of the anatomy of the teat is helpful if good functional ones are to be selected and their conformation can be classified from 1 to 5. The perfect teat is elongated and pointed with two teat canals opening to the exterior. A class 2 teat will not be so elongated but the teat end protrudes well down. Class 3 is the cut-off point for selection and this is where the teat sphincter (often appearing as a black dot) can still be seen when viewed at eye level. A class 4 teat is one where the teat sphincter is not visible, in other words the teat canal is shortened resulting in an inverted teat. Such a teat should be considered non viable. A proportion of inverted teats will be drawn out by the piglet at suckling, but at least 50% of them will remain blind. Why take the risk? A class 5 teat is usually one where the teat has been rubbed off in the first 48 hours of birth.

Countdown to the Three Counties Show 14-16 June by Allison Littlehailes

Although our weekend in April is HUGE, we are also planning another massive event at the Three Counties Show in June. There will be a large EXHIBITION for the public to see, a major SOCIAL EVENT with the RBST and the OLD SPOT CELEBRITY CHALLENGE. To make a success of this, we want as many exhibitors as possible there and there are lots of inducements! The Club is offering £100 to the Breed Champion and £50 to the Runner-up. There is a special class for Novice Exhibitors and an extra Sow Class. What's more, every exhibitor will receive a special Centenary Bone-China Mug. So, for those especially who have not shown before or not been to a major show, this edition of *Spot Press* starts off a countdown of what to do by Allison Littlehailes so there can be no excuses! This will continue through our Workshop in April with practical help and again in *Spot Press* in May so that, come June 14th at Malvern, you'll all be experts!



Showing pigs is a lot of fun and much less daunting than dogs or equines. What's more, it's a great advertisement for the breed and the exhibitor.

Well, hopefully you have thought about showing, were possibly even asked about going and as a Club and breed we really need your support. GOS are the most numerically strong pigs amongst the rare breeds and yet very few are shown. Through all the doom and gloom currently swirling around the industry, wouldn't it be fantastic to get out there and get to it. Show us how much you love your GOS and how fab they are as a breed to everyone at Three Counties and beyond. Let's make Three Counties the year of the GOS!

Here's where we get serious, showing needs preparation and if like me you go weak at the knees at the thought of picking a piglet, conditioning, training, when to enter the show, what class to enter, fear not. Over the run up to Three Counties there will be articles in *Spot Press*, area mentors and a session at the workshop - a half-way point to get us all walking (or running) around the ring this June.

This first article will concentrate on those July born gilts and boars coming up to seven months, but the same principle of selection can be applied to those January litters currently snuggling in neonatal contentment outside right now. So, how do you spot a good prospective show pig?

First off check for objections and disqualifications to the breed standard (shown on the Year Planner), so if your pig has:

Crooked legs.

Short, thick or elevated ears.

A rose in the coat or a line of mane bristles or a sandy colour to the coat.

Blue undertone not associated with a spot or serious wrinkles.

A heavy jaw.

Remember that the breed standard (except for the rose and sandy colour) says 'objectionable', so does not condemn your pig from registration for breeding pigs, just showing and even that can be down to the judge!

Underline needs to be checked and at six months any extra or blind teats should show clearly and the pig should be rejected. Your pig should have a minimum of fourteen evenly spaced teats (boars as well).

Study the legs and general conformation, watch the pigs walk

around. Legs should be straight and strong, back should be long and level and hams should be full and filled down to the hocks. Your pig should look well put together.

Now to the Januaries: they should be checked thoroughly at weaning or earlier. The more you can run on to fatten the easier it will be to spot that special one that stands out. Check your pigs regularly up to registration for showing as they can alter a lot over the months, especially the ears and nose, but you do have to start off with most things looking right. The teats need most attention because teats can alter.

Your January needs to be big. Size matters in the show ring and you should not waste your time with runts as they will never put on enough weight to compete with their peers. One top exhibitor remembers being told, "A good big pig should beat a good little pig." So, no matter how good a pig you have, unless it is fed well it will not be shown to its best. So be liberal with your food.

Planning for showing usually starts in the previous year picking out any possible superstars from your July & September litters and then in February when you pick out your possible Januaries and the first of the show schedules start to drop through the letterbox. Show dates are usually available well in advance from websites like www.asao.co.uk/events which lists many of the agricultural shows large and small around the UK so there's bound to be a pig show near you.

At most shows with GOS pigs, there are usually depending on the time of year a selection of the following classes:-

1. July boar born between 1 July and previous December 31.
2. January boar from same year as shown.
3. Sow born before previous 1 July in pig.
4. Female born between 1st January and 30th June previous year
5. Gilt born between previous 1 July and 31 August.
6. Gilt born between the previous 1 September and 31 December.
7. Gilt born after January same year.

This is why we mention that your planning starts a long time before the actual show with preparing your farrowing times in advance to coincide with these classes. Make sure you birth notify your litters and register any show pigs before the show.

At smaller local shows you may see different class headings; GOS generally come under coloured or traditional breeds classes and do not have their own classes at smaller shows, with a wider age range of pig.

You will also see classes for 'maiden gilts', gilt-in-pig, pork & bacon pigs, pairs, progeny etc if you have any queries about these please get in touch with a member of the GOS committee who will be happy to explain them to you.

At the Three Counties, there's two shows to enter so don't miss out. The main show for all breeds is on Friday and Saturday and then there's a brand new show on Sunday for Rare & Minority breeds with different judges and a chance to do better than you did two days earlier—it happens!

Make sure you read the schedule of the show relating to pigs; some shows have rules about sows having had so many litters, gilts being in pig and boars to have fathered X amount of litters so read up the rules page, there will also be information regarding the identification of your pigs and about the AML requirements. You will generally find all this information just before the list of classes. The larger county shows may seem daunting at first and you may prefer to just visit these and watch and then start at a couple of your local one day shows where the classes are a bit less formal but no less serious and you can gain experience without the added pressure of being away from your holding/farm for a few days.

Once you've decided which show and which of your pigs you would



A January gilt class at the late-lamented Royal Show 2009. Photos by Richard Lutwyche

like to enter, you will need to fill in the entry form; some shows now allow you to do this on-line, whilst others use a paper entry form. Check the entry closing dates carefully so as not to miss them - lots of people make their entries close to the wire so as to maximize their choice of pigs but most of us know well in advance which pigs we will be using for the forthcoming season. When you fill in the forms you will need to have at hand your pig's pedigree name, its date of birth, its registration & ear number and also those of its parents. Not all shows ask for the same information so it's worth making a 'show file' in which you can have copies of pedigrees, keep all your show schedules and to keep all your tick-

ets, directions, vehicle passes, numbers & programmes in when they start to arrive a couple of weeks before each show. We use a binder filled with clear wallets and slide each show into an individual wallet, label it and that way we don't get mixed up. Once your entry form is filled in, check over it and make out the appropriate



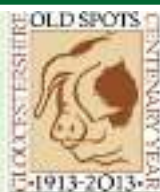
cheque or pay by card on-line, make a copy for yourself so you know what you've entered or print off from an on-line entry and add to your growing file.

Now you've made those entries it's time to start training those pigs! Each showman will have their own method of training pigs and when they start with them. We first of all separate our selected show pigs from the rest of their siblings. If you're going to do a lot of shows you will need to speak to your vet regarding an isolation unit (we use a separate stable block and yard for ours) and your show team will live in there throughout the season. Our show pigs also get a slightly increased ration of food (full 6lb per day + extra veg/fruit) as judges like to see them quite rounded; exercising helps them produce muscle and strengthen their legs.

We keep our show pigs in pairs and start walking them out individually at about 12 weeks old, we usually have our board and stick with us but for the main part it's just used as an occasional stop board or for gentle guidance, at this stage we just want them to get used to walking alone with us, most of the time we lead and they trot along behind often chewing our stick or have a gloriously giddy gallop off into the horizon! As time progresses set up a miniature show ring if you can and get your team walking in a clockwise direction, you need to be on their left side with your board and your stick in the right hand (a bit of a nuisance if you're left handed!), both tools are for guiding and controlling your pig. Practice walking out as often as you can, a sharp tap of the stick under the chin or on the shoulder will keep them in line so they learn that you are boss. We do not use or approve the use of punishment as a tool to teach pigs. We train our pigs in fairly short sessions as the pigs get bored or decide to riot! Twenty minutes two or three times a day if you can for each pig you plan to show and don't forget boars requires two competent handlers to show them.

Starting with just a July and a January gilt is a good idea until you feel more confident, it is time consuming and can be frustrating, some pigs just don't like showing but we find by spending time with our show team and fussing them, ours all have pet names, they do become more socialized and enjoy the attention. Ours are also trained to the rattle of the feed bucket so that if they do decide to make a run for it during a show they can always be coaxed back by the sound of the bucket!

99% of all training should be before the show rather than expecting the pig to learn at the show though tolerance towards January born pigs is usually exercised. You do learn as you show and at most shows the judge may come to you to tell you why your pig won/failed, in his/her opinion, which is usually good, impartial criticism and useful for future shows. The main thing is to enjoy your showing and go in at a level that suits you. Three Counties is a great place to start.



Guy Kiddy sent in a leaflet which was originally printed by the NPA in the seventies called **Preparing your Pigs For Exhibition by Donald Maclean** which we have retyped for you as the leaflet was unsuitable for scanning. Guy writes Don Maclean had fifty years experience with pigs and their exhibition at agricultural shows ranging from Middles Whites, the Large White breed and included the Essex (now British Saddleback) breed. Guy goes on further to say he was one of the best showman of his day winning prizes all over the country and Guy is fortunate to have his pig memorabilia which includes NPBA medals, scrapbooks and show box. The leaflet originally cost 40p! Please note some of the practices suggested are no longer considered advisable or acceptable.

Black pigs, white pigs, ginger pigs and spotted pigs, all need similar attention. Observation is the most critical. First, select your pigs according to their age and classification in the agricultural society show schedule. Try to give yourself some flexibility with selection if possible pick at least two or three pigs for each classification, or keep two or three pigs under observation. If you have only one pig to work on, nothing must go wrong. When the 'pros and cons' of each breed have been taken into consideration and the standard of excellence has been studied, a start can be made to put on the pigs "Sunday Suit".

Skin & Coat—My initial preparation is to get out the oil tin. Give the animal a good thorough oiling from tip of the snout to the tip of the tail, front legs, between the hind legs, the belly; at this point count the teats—fourteen well placed, four teats in front of the penis on boars. Don't forget ears. These should be wiped with an oily cloth. The oil should be vegetable, sunflower, rape, coconut etc. Avoid any oil based on paraffin. These sometimes burn the skin and bring up large red patches. The process of oiling should be carried out once a week. At the same time the Flowers of Sulphur tin should come into play. A cocoa tin with perforated lid (nail holes) will enable you to shake sulphur into the ears and down the middle of the back. This should also be done once a week.

Feeding—My next consideration is feeding. We all have our own theories. My preference was 'wet & warm' and a good coarse ration. So many pig meal rations today are ground too fine. When mixed with water they sink in the pail. That is why I insist on a coarse ration mixed in warm water. This swells to an easily digested consistency. Remember the old adage "half the pedigree goes in by the mouth". A skilled feeder can improve a bad pig; an unskilled one can spoil a good animal. By feeding a warm mash well soaked the pig requires less energy to heat the food to body temperature and the meal is half digested by soaking. Whether this can be proved scientifically, is still open to question. No two pigs have the same appetite, so discretion must be used regarding the amount fed to each one. "A good feeder puts it on and walks it off" One must be careful not to overfeed as young pigs are inclined to go off their legs. I had many successes on this system in both carcass and live pig classes. Three feeds a day are better than two. Little and often avoids overfilling the stomach. This all helps to keep a trim, shapely pig. A dose of liquid paraffin once a week assists freedom from constipation. In warm weather a pinch of sulphur in the food helps to cool the blood. May I stress at this point there are no half measures or short cuts. Unless you are prepared to be married to the job, which is time consuming, you are unlikely to make a success of it. A pig turned out in first class order is a credit to its owner, but an under-fed badly turned out pig is no advert to anyone.

Fitness & Training—The third consideration is exercise and cleanliness. Pigs are clean if kept clean and bad habits can be altered. On arrival first thing in the morning at the sty, pen or loose box, let the animals out so they may defecate away from their pen. If time permits, this should also be carried out before each feeding. After a few days most animals will learn. For bedding my preference is wheat straw. If this is unobtainable barley straw is next best (oat straw is for feeding not bedding) I am not happy with shavings. They retain moisture and if a pig has urinated on its bed, yellow stains appear on

Preparing Pigs For Exhibition By Don Maclean (cont.....d)

Exercise should be given at least once a day—a walk with purpose. Make the animal do what you want, not what it wants to do. With your FLAT PIG BAT, not a round walking stick, constantly tap each side just behind the front legs. Don't hit the pig in the middle of the back—this will make it drop its back. A little tap on the side of the face will direct it left or right. At all times keep its head up. Nothing looks worse than a pig with a humped or dipped back. Constantly talk to the animal. A pig will learn to respond to your voice. I always insisted that every show pig I took out was 'rung'. A small copper ring in the snout is a deterrent to rooting. It also keeps the head up. After months of work to present a clean pig you finally put in a show pen with soft green turf. Naturally it will want to 'root'. The result is a dirty animal. The little copper ring makes it think twice. When exercise takes place, keep the animal on soft ground away from stones and anywhere it may lame itself. Even a sprain can make a pig limp. Judges don't take too kindly to lame pigs so keep the bottle of embrocation to hand. At the first signs of stiffness, cramp or lameness, give the joints a vigorous rubbing, but do look to see first if there are any cuts in the pad. If so call your vet. May I also recommend whilst the vet is in the yard all your show pigs are injected against erysipelas. May and September seem to be the two months when this disease flares up i.e. when there are warm days and cold nights. After months of hard work and good money spent, on a show day you do not want your pig to go down with the 'Purples'. For the sake of a £1 or so, have your pig injected and sleep soundly at night. These are a few basic pints to follow. Remember prizes are won at home, not just on the showground.

Washing—After weeks of painstaking feeding and exercising, you can look forward to a show date. All this time keep the oil tin in hand. Avoid washing your pig too early. Wait until a week before your first show, then wash it. If you don't have a clean pen to use, cut up three bran bags lengthwise and nail or tie them around the pen. This prevents the pig from rubbing on the walls. Use warm water and green soft soap (keep away from detergents). The warm water will remove the oil and dirt, then give the pig a good wash all over and underneath from snout to tail. Remember inside the ears. I found a wad of cotton wool in each ear ensured no water got in. After washing with a soft brush, sponge and cloth rinse off with a pail of warm water. Stand behind the pig and pour from tail to head. DO NOT THROW WATER IN THE PIGS FACE and avoid entering its ears. Once all the soap is off and the ears are clean dry off with woodflour (ground sawdust). Use it freely rubbing well into the skin but KEEP AWAY FROM THE EYES. Then into a pen with fresh straw and the animal will remain clean. After a first wash apply oil each day until the day before the show then repeat the washing performance once more. On show day, white, ginger and spotted pigs are shown with woodflour brushed out, but black pigs in some cases are shown 'in oil'. This treatment applies to males and females and mainly to Berkshire, British Saddleback and Large Black breeds. Black pigs kept in loose boxes are apt to lose their colour so keep these breeds outside as much as possible. Use discretion when turning out, avoiding cold nights and very hot days. There is one important thing to remember. If you are feeding using movable troughs, pans or tins remove them from the pen and wash them clean after the pigs have finished. Don't leave to chance in case an animal lames itself on the trough left in the pen.

The Show—Unless warm water is supplied by the show society, arrange to take some with you. Use a milk churn or better still a copper and calor gas cylinder. This should give you enough water for feeding, cleaning and washing. IN YOUR SHOW BOX you will need white coats, green soft soap, brushes (wet & Dry) sponge, cloth, embrocation, hammer and nails, pails, woodflour, oilskins, boar boards and pig bats. If it is not supplied by the show society arrange to take plenty of clean straw to give your pigs a good bed, also a bundle of sacks to nail or tie to any dirty pens you have been allocated.

Continued overleaf P12

Preparing Pigs For Exhibition by Don Maclean

When pigs are penned in open pens it is advisable to purchase show sheets 9ftx7ft in size. These can be stencilled with your herd name and address as a form of advertising. Don't forget a large bottle of VINEGAR in case a pig has heat stroke. Under no circumstances put cold water on an overheated pig. Using the vinegar soak a sponge and bathe the head behind the ears, the neck between the front legs and down the middle of the back. A pig is the same as a dog, it pants but does not perspire, so must be cooled down. If any green feed is available from the sheep lines collect an armful, remove all the straw from the pigs and lay green feed round it. This will help it cool off. Rope, ringers and pig rings should also be in your show box. Like a good boy scout be prepared.

Travelling- 'Bum Bags' are hessian sacks filled with straw. Depending how you pen your pigs in the lorry or trailer, tie these bags on the side, behind the pig to stop chafing or rubbing on the vehicle. Ensure adequate space is available. The pig cannot turn around in the vehicle during the journey. Road motion can cause loss of balance and injury. If you have to travel to a show early in the morning do not feed beforehand. Instead give a late feed at 9–10pm the previous evening. On returning home, repeat the process all over again even if you have another show to attend within a short time. Out with the oil can and sulphur tin to keep the skin soft and supple. A pig's skin is like a woman's soft as silk if cared for. In some cases if a pig refuses to feed after a first outing. Then give a little appetiser in the form of a tablespoon of cider vinegar added to the feed. A teaspoonful of brewers yeast also helps.

In the Ring—Preparation is 75% of a show pig. The other 25% is showmanship and that is another story. By making best use of the ring, keep your pig under the judge's nose so every time he turns you are there in his sights. If your pig looks better at a distance, make use of any high ground, keep to the middle of the ring and avoid the corners. Don't use board with females. Make use of your pig bat. Keep your white coat done up; hands out of pockets; no smoking in the ring. A smart turn-out of you and your pig is a very good combination. A first impression by the judge is always the best.

After Judging—The clever showman watches points. Having observed, he uses commonsense through deduction and attention to detail. Coupling this with patience and perseverance he succeeds but must also be prepared to lose and do so gracefully. Always remember—everyone has good pigs until they meet someone better. In the competitive world of the show ring only one pig can win the top award. All the others are losers. Try to win. If you are lucky, accept success with a polite manner. If you lose—and you will do that more often than winning—just return to the pen quietly and without complaint however disappointed you may be. Adopting this policy will earn respect.

The saying "There's no show people like show people" certainly applies in pig lines. Someone is always willing to help and advise you.

Privacy Notice The GOSPBC takes your privacy seriously and will only use your personal information to administer your membership and to provide the products and services you have requested from us, and these details will be kept on a password protected system. This information is never shared with third parties or other agencies. We rely on you to inform us of any changes to the information you have given.

Please also note that if your children are successful in the show ring or attend Club events, we will require your permission to use any photos taken by us of the event to be published in our Newsletter or on Facebook so we can celebrate their achievement.

Right to erasure (to be forgotten) Any Member of the GOSPBC has the right to request their details be erased. At the point of this request being made or through the cessation of your membership your personal details will be removed. Additionally if after receiving a reminder to renew your membership, the club does not hear from you within a 2 month period, your details will be erased from our database. You may of course rejoin at any time in the future should you wish.

Safe Showing

Showing is to be encouraged and useful for a variety of reasons:

- * It helps encourage people to breed and keep the best specimens
- * It provides opportunity for people to see good examples of pigs and to meet and talk to owners/breeders before buying pigs of their own
- * It gives people the opportunity to compare their own pigs with others and to have judges give their opinions on them too
- * It acts as a marketing activity—to demonstrate you keep good stock and to bring you into contact with potential customers
- * It offers the chance to socialise with likeminded people
- * Don't forget the Club has templates for posters & information display and leaflets available

To ensure you keep your show herd in tip top shape look at the following suggestions:

- * Health Management—Make sure your show stock are wormed and free from parasites and check for foot and joint soundness. Do not put any pig that is showing signs of being 'off colour' on the trailer.
- * Make best use of isolation practices preferably 20 days before your first and show and 20 days after your last show in an APHA approved part of your holding. Keep an isolation unit record book with dates of entry and which pigs are in.
- * Make sure your pigs are correctly identified by tattoo and tag
- * Clean and disinfect your trailer and towing vehicle all around outside and make sure your trailer is done inside as well.
- * Make sure any boots or wellingtons are also clean and disinfected so you don't take any possible infections with you to the show and remember to do the same on returning home
- * When you return home make sure your pig is healthy and sound and continue to keep an eye on it over the next few days just in case you picked something up at the showground

Safe Showing is something we can all aim to do and it is for the good of all exhibitors so just do it!



The Joy of Pig Showing! By Harold I. Moss (a showman for 20 years)(Part 1)

As Christmas becomes a distant memory, normality resumes with a thud. It is 11 o'clock on a freezing January evening when most sensible people are in bed, that the first farrowing of the year takes place. Knowing the length of time that can elapse between births, the mind can drift away gently to those balmy summer days at the County Shows when these offspring will obediently be walking round the ring with their proud owners in attendance...Well! That is enough of the dream, what about the reality.

Showing can tend to produce three distinct groups of people, those who love it, those who hate it but agree to help their partners and those who love to hate it! It is important to realise from the outset that there is NO one way to prepare the animals for the show and there are many variations on a theme.

Selection of stock—For the first time show person looking at a show catalogue there is bewildering number of classes, but I would unhesitatingly say that the beginner should go for the January gilt class every time. (This is a pig born on or after January 1st of that same year) A weaner gilt 12 weeks old could be purchased at the end of March but for showing DO go to a breeder who also shows, (the G.O.S.P.B.C. can provide a list of names)

Why choose January?

They flesh naturally.

They can be trained from an early age and although nippy on their feet, they are not as stubborn as older pigs.

The coat and skin condition is still excellent.

The level of the stockmanship required is not so high!!

Feeding—It is important that the pig is up to size for its class for "a good big un will beat a good little un." With stock up to in pig stage the recommended ration should be fed with the additional half a pound a day to produce a firm fleshed animal with just a hint of fat. (A parallel to a Bathing Beauty Competition!!) Over indulgence can almost be forgiven but skinny pigs are definitely out.

Training—Perhaps the single biggest reason for people not showing is the question "Will it behave?" Well they don't always and for those of us who have had children, they don't always do either. But there is no doubt that the level of enjoyment at a show is directly linked to the effort put into training.



Pigs have an incredible sense of smell so are naturally wary when moving, coupled with Gloucester's lop ears and reticent nature it is important to get them moving about as possible. Open the pen door and let them walk outside on a daily basis if time permits but certainly do it regularly. About 6-8 weeks before the show training with a board and stick can begin. The pig handler stands on the left side of the pig with the board in the left hand and the walking stick used to

guide the animal is in the right hand. There are two extremes of approach to guiding the pigs with varying combinations in-between. There is the 'close control' in which the handler holds the pig closely with the stick and board and the more 'laid back' technique where the pig is gently patted on the rear and the show person walks nearer the back of the pig with a relaxed air. The former method is perhaps more suitable for the younger pig but not required for matronly older sows. The varying techniques also tend to differ depending on the show persons age, the more youthful of the group being more capable of gadding round the ring in a bent position than the mature membership with sciatica!!



It is important that the pigs are walked regularly to build up muscle tone, for on show day they could be required to walk in the ring for quite some time, especially with lingering judges and they (the pigs), do get tired and fed up and in some cases go on strike and grumble loudly!

Washing and Show Preparation—At the same time as exercising, the pig can be having its coat and skin prepared, a bit like the ladies of the house, a good shampoo, a good quality oil to improve the skin, and a nice brush up at the end! On a more serious note, it is important to start preparations early. Firstly obtain a large bottle of sunflower oil and GENTLY rub this into the skin all over. This will then start to soften any flaky skin. DO NOT even think of trying to remove any blemishes at this stage. Leave this oil on for about ten days, making sure that the back is kept moist with oil. At the end of this time put the pig into an empty pen to shampoo it. I have known breeders use carbolic soap, Vaseline, Fairy Liquid and pure soap flakes. But do remember that a pigs' skin is very tender. The best preparation that I have used is Johnsons Baby Shampoo but be careful, animals can be allergic to chemicals and can come out in spots and blotches, if this happens try something else. That is why it is important to start washing early to avoid this problem.

Cont....d

When washing the pig do use warm water and once the back is well lathered, take a soft brush and gently remove some of the dead scaly skin. Rinse thoroughly with warm water and then use an old towel to dry off the surplus water. Put the pig back into a clean dry pen with clean bedding and shake on some wood flour and brush this out. You may need to repeat this process until the pig is up to show standard. NOTE, do not apply wood flour in a dirty pen as they do have a habit of trying to remove it.



Loading and unloading.—Do you have a hernia? Sciatica? High blood pressure? Prone to using bad language or providing alternative amusement for the spectators at Agricultural Shows, then you can safely say that you have loaded or unloaded live stock! THIS NEED NOT BE THE CASE Pigs can be trained to go quite happily into a trailer providing the incentive is there.

About 3 or 4 weeks before the show, start to feed the pigs in the trailer, this gets them used to leaving the pen and entering the trailer. Feeding pig nuts prevents staining the face and they are easier to put on the floor of the trailer. Some pigs find the clatter of mounting the trailer

ramp off putting, so I put down an old fire side rug for them to walk up. This was much admired by my show colleagues with some cheeky comments

With more people now showing, loading and unloading has improved tremendously and it is now uncommon to see 3 or 4 burly men at the back of an old sow which could lead the observer to stretch the limits of the imagination!!

In summary you cannot over train your pig and when it is well done it makes showing look easy but if you don't, then the whole day and be ruined by anxiety and trepidation.

To the Show!

Wherever possible, livestock should be moved early in the morning or in the cool of the evening. Obviously for one day shows, it is early morning but for 2 or 3 day County Shows, most stock tends to be taken the night before. It is always beneficial to allow the pigs to rest prior to a day showing and on the day the exhibitor doesn't have the problems associated with unloading and parking. At the show you will meet many more like minded people who are willing to show you the ropes. Do not arrive too late, otherwise help to unload will not be on hand as the exhibitors retire rather early for a wide variety of night caps, some containing alcohol..!!

The Morning of the Show

An exciting time with lots of atmosphere. Pigs washed and fed early, alarmingly the owners have spruced up and look 'different'. There is an eager anticipation. At the Royal Lancashire it was always the case of taking a guess as to when the downpour would arrive and it was usually Sunday!



Judging usually begins between 9.00am and 10.00am and it is here that the exhibitors sartorial elegance can be given full rein. The obligatory dress is white coat, G.O.S.P.B.C. tie, shoes with a good tread or wellies in a monsoon and a natty line in white headgear if the sun shines. The coat can be nylon or cotton the later tend to look and stay whiter over the years. When you enter the ring take your time. The judge will usually stand in the centre of the ring, so it makes sense to proceed in a clockwise direction. Never stand between the pig and the judge, walk at a gentle pace and try to keep in the judge's eye. If the pig goes through the judges legs you are too close! Eventually the judge will make a decision and rosettes will be awarded.

As Rudyard Kipling wrote "If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat the two imposters just the same.....you'll be a man, my son" (from the poem 'If') So whatever the result, treat success with humility and failure with good grace and magnanimity, remember, the people who are usually the greatest critics are those not even in the showing. This article has been written in the hope that it will perhaps encourage more people to have a go. Above all....enjoy it!!! I look forward to seeing you at the show.

Illustrations by Suzanne Moss From Sp Spring 2015

Countdown to the Three Counties Show 14-16 June by Mandy Garbutt

Show Preparation

From Spring 2013



In the last edition of Spot Press we covered choosing your pigs, entering classes and a little on training them. Here we're going to go through the steps in preparing for your show. Show calendars are pretty much available early



Our isolation unit yard

on in the year so this enables you to make arrangements to have your other stock, home and premises looked after while you're away showing; for us that can be somebody to let the dog out during a long one day show to arranging for somebody to house/animal sit for longer events. It is peace of mind to get this sorted out early so you can concentrate on your show experience.



Practising walking in the yard.

Twenty one days before our first show we move our show pigs into our isolation unit, (contact your local AVLHA or vet to find out more details); this enables us to make sure they are fit and well to go showing. Never under any circumstances take a pig showing signs of illness to a show. A week before showing they are wormed with an Ivermectin based jab which also covers creepy crawlies and mange. They are also given a first bath usually with a dog anti-flea shampoo and have their ear tags and tattoos checked. Meanwhile, continuing with training around the isolation unit yard.

A week or so before the show it is time to check your trailer over especially if you don't use it regularly. Check that the lights and brakes work and that the tyres are at the correct pressure. Oil hinges and gates. You will also ensure it is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected inside and out. You can then cover the floor with straw or sawdust as you prefer. We use straw as it lets the pigs snuggle down for a comfy ride.



Show wallet and contents

Next do the paperwork. A couple of weeks before the show the show secretary will send you a pack which usually contains a list of your class entries, your numbers, show passes and directions which should be in your show file. Check these when they arrive. Just before the show we transfer these to a plastic travel wallet. It's also time to do your AML (Animal Movement Licence) on line, if your show isn't listed tele-

phone them and it will be added; they just need the showground holding number and the secretary's name. You should also have ready any show literature and signage you want to display.



A board detailing your herd helps to sell stock

After several shows where we forgot to take something with us we made a spreadsheet for a packing list - (you can download a copy in its entirety from the Showing section of the GOS website).

For one day shows we include:- Waterproofs and wellies (clean), umbrella, pen cover (waterproof preferably—see above), straw if not provided, mobile phone, paperwork (AML, show tickets, numbers etc.), map or sat nav, string/rope/cable ties/tape, deckchairs, cool box (picnic & cold drinks), flask (hot drinks), change of socks/t-shirt etc., pig grooming kit, bowl and feed, buckets, white coat(s), board(s) and stick(s), money, towel, rubbish bag, first aid kit, camera, herd display/literature, reading/sun glasses.

For overnight shows we add:- tent (optional), camp beds, sleeping bags, pillows/cushions, blanket/duvet, hot water bottle, stove & gas, kettle, water container, frying pan, crockery/cutlery, tin/bottle opener, food and drink of choice, bowl/dishcloth/washing-up liquid, tea towel, wash bag and towel, change of clothes/underwear, light/torch/batteries, toilet roll.

Our Pig Grooming Kit consists of:- wood flour (if using), flannel, small scrubbing brush, soap/shampoo, wound powder, brush, baby/pig oil and sponge, sun cream, vinegar (to dab behind the pigs' ears in case of overheating).



Trailers and pens at a smaller show.

You can alter the list to suit your requirements and some of the items vary from show to show - a quick call to the show secretary can save you lugging straw and a pen cover if straw is provided and the pigs are in a marquee.

Check your white coats are laundered and your shirt and tie are ready to go. You will also need sturdy, waterproof footwear.

It's now the evening before show day, this is when we bath our pigs paying particular attention to legs and feet with a scrubbing brush, we use a damp flannel to rub faces and wipe round ears, (don't get water in your pigs' ears, it will make them walk lop-sided!), we then dry ours using big old beach towels or you can smother them in wood flour - (check the Showing page on the website for details of where to buy this). We then

put them into a clean, freshly strawed stable for the night, then we straw up the trailer and make sure it has got the correct number plate on it. Next we pack our vehicle with all our other kit except for the picnic and flasks which we'll do in the morning.

Next get a good night's sleep if you're not too nervous, and don't forget to put something fizzy in the fridge for when you come home to celebrate even if it's just getting through your first show!

Show Day - Show days are usually an early start particularly one day shows. For longer shows it's usual to arrive the afternoon/evening before to get settled in. So up and at 'em. Factor in the time to have breakfast, attend to your other stock if you have to, make your picnic and flasks, (don't leave it in the middle of the kitchen floor like we did one time last year!), and put in with your other kit. Allow plenty of time to load your pigs, stressing them now will only wind them up and fluster you. Remember not to feed them this morning so they're not travel sick but you can use a few nuts or treats to coax them into the trailer if needed, (one of our show girls doesn't need any coaxing, she hears the trailer reverse up and its "yahoo show time" and in she trots!)

While the pigs settle into the trailer go and get yourself ready, do your final property checks, lock up, load the postcode into the satnav and away you go.

Aim to arrive at the showground at least an hour before classes begin, some shows have times you have to be there by so take note when the schedule arrives. When you do arrive at the show ground follow the signs/ directions for livestock, you may have a vehicle pass to display so put this in your windscreen now, ask at the gate (if they don't tell you) as you go in for directions to the pig section. Find the steward(s) and let them know you've arrived, at most shows your pens are labelled with your name if not just choose your pens. Straw up your pens and then back your trailer up to the entry point (most big shows operate a one-way system) and unload your pigs, there's usually someone around to give you a hand with this, again take your time and calmly walk your pigs to their pens, once they're in them you can close up your trailer and take it to the allocated parking. Remember to take out the kit you'll need to see to your pigs. Kit pens are usually provided. We generally at this point give the pigs a light breakfast and then go and have a tea break of our own and say hello to other arrivals and see if they need any help unloading.



Penned and ready to go.



Parading sedately at the Great Yorkshire Show.

Nearly time for classes check your pigs for grubby marks and clean if necessary with a damp cloth, wash your pigs face again - usually much to their disgust! - and dab baby/pig oil on their black spots to make them stand out. Get on your tie and white coat and grab your clean board and stick/baton. Now listen out for your classes to be called and if in doubt ask somebody.

Once in the ring direct your pig in a clockwise direction, concentrate on getting your pig around the ring watching the judge if you can. It's not always easy first time out but the judge will be sympathetic towards new exhibitors.

The judge will come across and examine your pig particularly the underline, they may ask you to walk it up and down and ask its date of birth depending on the class. Sometimes it's a bit of a crush and you may need to keep your pig to one side or in a corner whilst the judge looks at the other pigs. Make sure someone captures your adventures on camera so you can show us all by reporting for Spot

Press and posting on Facebook.

Fingers crossed you'll come away with a rosette, but don't be disappointed if you come away empty handed first time out, we had to wait four years for that elusive red 1st place one but gosh it was worth it. Practice makes perfect!

After show classes there's usually time to look around the rest of the show before you're allowed to leave usually around 4pm, don't forget to take any rubbish away with you.

Have a safe trip home for that bottle of cold fizz hopefully feeling pleased with your venture into the world of showing.

Showing is a great shop window for your breed and herd. The most well known herds in the GOS breed all have show herd origins. It's a great way to meet fellow pig keepers and learn from them too. At overnight shows there's usually some social event in the evening to catch up on all the piggy community gossip and partake in a beverage or two.

We hope you'll have a go at showing and the main thing is to enjoy yourself. The saying goes "it's not about winning it's the taking part that counts" and we think this is true. Winning is nice but for the most part it's the joining in and being part of something unique that counts and if at the end of the day you can say you gave it a good go then well done you.

If there's anything you think we've missed please use the GOS forum to comment or ask questions. We can only tell you what we do and what works for us. Everyone has different experiences and opinions and there's nothing quite like a pig keeper for having an opinion!



The growing collection of the Fowgill Herd!

Pandora's Box! By Harold I. Moss (The Joys of Pig Showing part 2)

As a young boy going up and down the lines of cattle at the agricultural shows, I was always fascinated by the show boxes. Those rectangular wooden constructs on which, very often, would be perched an elderly sage regaling the virtues of some particular breeding line or other. Emblazoned across the top or the front of the box would be the owners prefixes and other such information such as "The X Herd of Pedigree Shorthorns". Sometimes beautifully sign written, on other occasions barely more than utility. It was always interesting to peer into these boxes, very often the insides of the tops would be festooned with rosettes, like rows of coloured washing, halters, curry combs and other equipment piled inside.

Do not despair and feel the need to rush out to the nearest D.I.Y. shop to buy sufficient wood to make 3'x2'x18" box. Firstly many wives are not strong enough to carry unaided such an unwieldy construct(!) and secondly plastic boxes from B & Q are far more versatile and user friendly. Over the years of showing we found that the most efficient way of packing was to use a check list. Some items on the list seem so glaringly obvious as to be laughable, but I can recall providing a spare wheel to a friend with a puncture whilst he was on the way to The Royal three Counties Show, fully loaded at 9.00pm at night!

So here goes:- **1. Trailer spare wheel & 2. Trailer Jack**



3. Wheel clamps - Do not assume shows are without their share of reprobates. Clamp the trailer preferably on the vehicle and lock all car doors on the trailer and car.

4. Tow Rope - If you do not have a 4x4 then it's a good idea to know someone who has, just in case you get stuck. The Royal Lancashire Show invariably had a monsoon on the last day which rendered the ground suitable for ducks & hippos.

5. Feeding and Water Buckets - For the purpose of showing, the easiest to take are distributed by Faulks and Co. on 01455 848 184 - sales@faulks.co.uk - and are made of recycled rubber, are black and almost indestructible. If you forget to move them from the pen, pigs will quite happily lie on them!! Also they are easy to pack away.

6. Parking and entry tickets

7. Pig Entry Forms - These state your classes and catalogue numbers.

8. Movement Licence - In days before Foot and Mouth these were rarely seen never mind collected, but now all the paper work will need to be 100% correct. You must not forget. It is also a requirement that show pigs must be ear tagged.



Cont.....d

9. **The Pig Board** - An essential piece of equipment designed to gently guide the pig around the ring. It measures 24"x24" with a hand hole, and is only $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. For those on the circuit, boards are sometimes handed out by sponsoring companies e.g Barclays, Waitrose and BOCM Pauls. Try your feed rep. And if all else fails make one out of ply and paint it white.

10. **The Pig Bat** - The pig bat is a flat piece of measuring about 40cmx5cmx1metre which is used to tap the pig. It is largely obsolete, the up turned end of a light weight walking stick is preferred. This can lead to interesting variations, thick, thin, light brown, dark brown, in times of need it can be upturned and used to support the owner!

11. **Meal, Nuts and Scoop** - Pigs for a show should ideally be on nuts, these cause far less staining around the mouth.

12. **Wood Flour** - Exactly what it says, do make sure that it is white! It is applied after the pig has been washed and rinsed, it must be brushed out of the coat before entering the ring. Dab the spots with baby oil to enhance the blackness. Remember all the washing equipment you will need at the show. White wood flour is available from - Wood Treatment Limited, Bosley, Cheshire on 01260223284 or 222111.

13. **White Coats** - Do take two! You will also need small clips to attach your ring number to your coat, these need to be fastened on straight to avoid contortions by the judge to read them!

14. **Vinegar and Towels** - Vinegar is the magic potion. If any pig appears to be distressed by the heat in its pen, then a cold solution of vinegar and water applied behind the ears with a sponge or spray at intervals and cover the body with a wet towel.

15. **Brush, Muck Fork and Shovel** - All shows expect you to keep your pigs, pens and alleyway clear otherwise it can be slippery and creates a bad image to the public.

16. **Chairs - have a picnic** - This should be a sociable event. To this end take along the cool box. This can house all the essential equipment kept at a suitable temperature, whisky, gin, dry ginger, tonic, Fosters, Chardonnay and perhaps some food. After all if it's a three day show you don't have to worry about driving anywhere. Try and limit the taking of refreshments until after judging, lurching about in the ring can be hazardous!!

So now you know.....it will soon be time to select your pigs and begin training. See you at the shows - especially The Royal Three Counties in June. (Illustrations by Suzanne Moss)



Harold & Suzanne are founder members who had the Causeway herd of GOS in Lancashire. Now in Worcestershire and retired from pig keeping they remain very active members of the club providing help & advice with Spot Press and attending our recent AGM.

Ethical Behaviour at Shows by Frank Miller, British Lop Pig Society

Newcomers to pig showing, and even some more experienced exhibitors, seem to be unaware of the ethics involved in showing, and the time is probably right to offer a little advice on behaviour.

Judges

One of the greatest problems is that pig exhibitors are a fairly close, friendly group. One might therefore forget that your mate, who is currently the judge, could be compromised by being seen to be over friendly with you shortly before the show. Can you imagine the comments that might be passed if, half an hour before you and your pigs appeared before the judge, you were seen having a quiet drink with him/her, and you subsequently won? This could be made even worse if your pig had faults which everyone but the judge could see.

A sensible judge would avoid meeting with or talking to any exhibitor for the few days before the show. He or she would avoid the pig lines until a few minutes before classes start, when the steward would direct him/her into the ring without any opportunity to observe any pigs. The judge will then be seen to make his/her decisions only on how the pig performs on the day, in the ring. He/she will no doubt greet you when you appear in the ring, but you should not engage in any conversation save only to answer the questions that he/she might pose, such as how old the pig is and when it is due to farrow. The judge will not have seen the catalogue for the show, and some judges might ask the ring steward for the date of birth, rather than you directly.



Walk by the pig's left shoulder with the board in your left hand and the stick on the right side of the pig, so that you are controlling it between the two. Go round the ring in a clockwise direction, so that the judge can see the pig without the board between it and him/her.

If the pig that you are showing has been bred by the judge then it is imperative that you draw this to the attention of the ring steward before the classes start. Under these circumstances the judge will make his/her decisions about the order of the other pigs, without looking at yours, and then the ring steward will ask another judge to enter the ring and to place the pig of the judge's breeding in relation to the other pigs. This is designed to ensure that everything is above board and is seen to be so.

After making the awards the judge may come to you to tell you how your pig failed, in his/her opinion, which is usually good, impartial criticism and therefore useful. Even if you disagree with this criticism, and can see even worse faults in the other pigs present, you must not argue with the judge, but bite your tongue and listen carefully – you may actually learn something, even if it is what faults that judge considers important, a useful knowledge for next time you appear before him/her.

After all the judging is over it is usual for the champion to offer the judge a drink, either in the bar or from the secret supply in your show box. The other exhibitors in your classes would normally expect to be invited too, which avoids any suggestion that you are paying your debts to the judge!

Your pig

No matter how good or poor your pig is it is important that it appears in the ring in a clean and 'cared for' condition. If you have washed your pig earlier and covered it with wood flour, then it is usually sufficient to brush out the wood flour completely, which will remove any dirt that has smeared the pig since washing. However, if this doesn't work then you should be prepared to sponge-off the dirt before bringing the pig before the judge. The judge will be an experienced exhibitor in his/her own right and will be tolerant of any dirt picked up getting to, or in, the ring.

Your pig must be completely under your control at all times and must not present a risk to you, other exhibitors, their pigs or the general public. This comes down to training before the show rather than expecting the pig to learn at the show. Again tolerance towards January born pigs will be exercised, but you should be constantly watching for risky situations.



...but you should not engage in any conversation save only to answer the questions that he/she might pose, such as how old the pig is and when it is due to farrow.

Ethical Behaviour at Shows by Frank Miller, BLPS (cont).

Yourself

Just as your pig should be clean and tidy on entering the ring, so should you. You should be washed and shaved/made up as appropriate. Your white coat should be clean. Gentlemen should be wearing a clean shirt and tie and pressed slacks beneath their white coat. Ladies should also dress appropriately to their own choice. Both sexes should be wearing sensible shoes.



While in the ring watch your pig and the judge constantly.

Your board and stick should be clean. They should not identify your herd or yourself (even though the judge probably knows already). Boards advertising a sponsor are acceptable, although some shows insist that it is only their sponsor who can advertise. A favourite trick in the past was to go into a class that Barclays Bank was sponsoring carrying a Nat West board and stick, which meant that Barclays immediately gave you a new board and stick, but those days have sadly gone and boards and sticks are becoming hard to find. If you make your own, why not emblazon it with "Gloucestershire Old Spots Pigs" as a form of advertising to the general public?

While in the ring watch your pig and the judge constantly. The former so that you are ready for misbehaviour, the latter so that you are aware of what he wants you to do. Walk by the pig's left shoulder with the board in your left hand and the stick on the right side of the pig, so that you are controlling it between the two. Go round the ring in a clockwise direction, so that the judge can see

the pig without the board between it and him/her. The judge will ask you to stand the pig while teats and feet are inspected on both sides, and then to walk the pig towards him/her and away. He/she will then pass on to the next pig and you should continue to circulate the ring clockwise, constantly watching the judge. If you keep walking and watching you will not have time to engage in conversation with ringside observers or other exhibitors!

Finally

Always remember to clap and congratulate the winners, no matter how disappointed or 'robbed' you have been. Always thank the judge at the end of the show. Judging is hard work and thankless, for you will inevitably 'upset' someone when you are judging, and a few words of appreciation go a long way. Who knows, he/she might remember you next time as being a good sport and this could help to sway his/her decisions about your pigs next time!



Always remember to clap and congratulate the winners, no matter how disappointed or 'robbed' you have been.



Your white coat should be clean. Gentlemen should be wearing a clean shirt and tie and pressed slacks beneath their white coat.

Reproduced by kind permission of the Lop Society 2007. You will still find Frank around the Cheshire and Yorkshire shows usually assisting in some way or other be it calling competitors to the ring or checking ear numbers.

Promoting GOS & your herd (an alternative to showing)

Whilst it would be great for all our members to have a go at showing their pigs it isn't for everyone.. So if you don't want to show how can you get your herd known and promote the GOS breed? The answer is exhibiting. We have exhibited at small-holder shows, RHS gardens, local shows, and Open Farm Sunday's. It a good way to let people see your pigs and promote your herd and the breed.

This is our experience and you can use it for guidance. We were either approached by the events or we contacted the shows and offered to put on a small display of young pigs. Weaners or pigs up to about 16wks are ideal. We contacted our local DEFRA office for advice and they told us so long as the pigs never left the trailer it was considered as "going for a ride out" and no AML's would be required so we always exhibit the pigs (three is a good number) in the trailer with the back door dropped onto a couple of bales and the gates opened with a hurdle tied securely across to provide a display area. (see pics) Wonky & Doug both slept thro' most of the time!



We have a display board to the side and a number of leaflets available for people to see which tell them about GOS pigs and our herd. The board is made of a sheet of ply cut into two pieces and hinged together and with knotted end ropes through two drilled holes to stop it doing the splits. Oh and don't forget your deckchair!

In this picture you can see another trailer next to us this had rare breed sheep in it exhibited the same way!

At some of the shows they will provide you with a pen but that WILL mean you need to do an AML2 as your pigs will leave their trailer. If they do offer you a pen make sure its very secure, sheep pens are generally not strong enough and we have take additional pieces of scaffold poles and rope/cable ties for strengthening weak pens!



So there you are get contacting your local shows and suggest they have a piggy display. A sow & litter are always popular. The public get very few chances to see real pigs so why not show them yours.

If you have any problems or need any further advice please get in touch.

fowgillfarm@hotmail.co.uk



Young Handlers

As we grown-ups are not getting any younger we need to look at bringing the next generation of GOS pig keepers into the fold. The BPA runs a Junior pig club (www.bpajuniorpigclub.co.uk) which encourages new entrants into the pig world and showing pigs is a good way for youngsters to get involved. They learn how to handle the pigs, stockmanship and social skills. Children



as young as three years old are already out in the ring and there are a number of older children coming up through the age groups. Photos (L to R) **Oliver Kirtley age 3 with his Aunt Sarah Whitley & Alfie Holding age 3 with his pig Peggy Spot**



Our Niece Anya (below left) started at 8 with a January gilt before that she just wasn't physically strong enough. Its all about building a relationship up with the pig and just putting in the time practising. In these pictures you can see her with Clover, we later shortened the stick to make it a better fit for her and we made her a smaller board out of lightweight ply. White coats are easily available on e-bay , we googled 'childrens lab coats'.



Children must **NEVER** show boars and a competent adult should be nearby , most judges will allow the adults into the ring especially with the very young. As children get older they become more adept at showing sometimes as good if not better than some of the adults!



The GOS has several young stars coming through. (L to R) **Alfie Dallaway, Connie Dallaway & Niall Kelly**

The Great Yorkshire

Show especially puts a lot of effort into displaying young handlers, Tom Alty usually commentates and encourages the children, they swap pigs and there are games and obstacle courses. **Tallulah Lascelles age 7** made her debut at the Great Yorkshire Show and came away with a rosette much to her delight. (Photo below Left)



Royal Three Counties is also another good show for youngsters, **Photo right shows Ella Kirtley negotiating her pig across the obstacle course bridge at RTC**

So come on young GOS keepers lets hope to see some of you this year. BPA Junior pig club can be emailed at

juniorpigclub@yahoo.co.uk

Photographs

Mandy Garbutt, & Mark Dallaway





www.gospbc.co.uk

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Ed's Note

We hope you have found this special issue interesting and perhaps incentive to go showing this summer.

There's lots of ways to get involved, even if you don't want to show your pigs you can offer to help out at your local show, knowledgeable stewards and willing volunteers are always welcome.



You can find a 2024 show list on the website and details of GOS only competitions. <http://www.gospbc.co.uk/showing-pigs> and more information on shows.

It's a great shop window for your pigs so why not have a go.

Club President Marlene Renshaw will be doing the rounds of the shows so please go say hello and have a chat with her, she showed her Tennyson herd of GOS very successfully and has lots of wisdom to pass on.

As mentioned we are going into our 15th year wow but sadly its possibly may be one of our last as though the mind is willing the body these days is struggling to keep up! We'll have to see what the good doc says!

We look forward to meeting you over the summer, please do come and say hello and have a chat.

Happy showing. Oink Oink.

Mandy Garbutt

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You can also email to mail@gospbc.co.uk

Initial contact is preferred by e-mail but if you do need to telephone please do so at a reasonable hour

Thank you