

Spot Press

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal

Traditionally Farmed
Gloucestershire Old Spots
Pork



Volume 24 No.1 SPRING 2014

Young Boar is Double Champion



Kilcot Pedigree Pigs won both the Champion of Champions and the Southern Championships with their boar, Pebblesford Sambo 411, bred by John & Helen Lightfoot.

Seen here with Kevin Sprigg winning the Southern Championships and the Nashes Trophy at the 2013 Newbury & Royal Berkshire Show under the judge, Mr Steve Richardson.

There was a strong turnout at the Royal Three Counties Show at Malvern where the Champion of Champions was judged by Mrs Viki Mills.

Inside you will find full details of the 2014 Showing Season where we will see if he can defend his titles or surrender them to another!

AGM In North Yorkshire Sunday 27th April

This year's AGM takes place on Sunday 27th April at Buirchfield Farm near Harrogate by kind invitation of the Whitley family. Over the last few years, the Club has adopted a policy of moving the event around the country and this will be our most northerly venue to date. After the meeting and lunch, there will be a tour of the farm, the prize-winning herd of pigs and even a visit to the Birchfield Ice Cream emporium! Samples may be on offer!!!



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Club News**AGM & Members' Day****Annual General Meeting**

At Oak Mount House, Birchfield Farm, Summer Bridge, Harrogate,
North Yorkshire, HG3 4JS

By the kind invitation of Mr & Mrs Martin Whitley and Family

Sunday 27th April 2014 at 11.30am

AGENDA

Apologies

Minutes of the 2013 AGM

Matters Arising

Annual Report

Change to the Constitution & Rules of the GOSPBC:

1. Change item 14 iv. to read: 'There may be appointed by the membership at a General Meeting, Honorary Vice-Presidents who will be *ex officio* on the Committee and all sub-committees with full voting rights (Providing they do not concurrently hold any other office)'.
2. Change item 14 vi to read: 'Any fully paid-up member (of any category) over the age of 17 may stand for election to the Committee'. The remainder of the paragraph is unchanged
3. Insert a new paragraph between 14 vii and 14 viii: 'Except in exceptional circumstances, members of the Committee must attend at least 50% of meetings called in any period between consecutive Annual General Meetings. Those failing to do so will be automatically deselected at the next Annual General Meeting'.

Accounts to 31st October, 2013

Election of Officers

Election of Hon Auditor

Richard Lutwyche

Secretary



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Club News

AGM & Members' Day

Annual General Meeting

The Long Room, Colesbourne Park, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9NP

By the kind invitation of Sir Henry & Lady Elwes

Saturday 13th April 2013 at 11.30am

MINUTES

Thirty six Club Members and family guests were in attendance. The President, Mr Dave Overton, took the Chair.

Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Mesdames Gillian Herbert and Anne Nicholls. Messrs Charles Martell and John Lightfoot. Mr & Mrs Anthony Collier.

Minutes of the 2012 AGM

These had been circulated in **Spot Press** and were accepted as a true record of proceedings and were signed by the President.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Annual Report

This was published in the current edition of **Spot Press** and the Secretary summarised the contents for the benefit of members present. The report was accepted and forms part of these Minutes.

Accounts to 31st October, 2012

The Treasurer summarised the accounts which, although turnover was down due to the reduced membership, showed a surplus on the year's activities of £1,586.34. He explained that he had resigned as Treasurer and his reasons for so doing. The accounts were passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Mr Dave Overton, Mr John Lightfoot & Miss Mandy Garbutt had all expressed the wish to stand for re-election. However, Mr Stephen Booth had resigned from the Committee and as Treasurer. Miss Garbutt proposed a vote of thanks for his input over the last seven years. The Secretary read out two nominations, Mrs Helen Lightfoot as Treasurer and Mr Guy Kiddy as a Committee Member. There being no other nominations received, Committee Members and Officers were re-elected *en bloc* with the addition of the two persons named.

It was agreed that a new Bank mandate form requires to be lodged with HSBC plc as soon as possible.

Election of Hon Auditor

Ms Emily Weaver was proposed by Mrs Helen Lightfoot and elected unopposed.

Richard Lutwyche, Secretary

15th April 2013

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.55am followed by a general discussion on issues regarding the Club and pig-keeping in general.

The AGM was followed by lunch and a tour of the arboretum before members reassembled for the Grand Afternoon Tea in the presence of HRH The Princess Royal and Vice-Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.

Club News

AGM & Members' Day

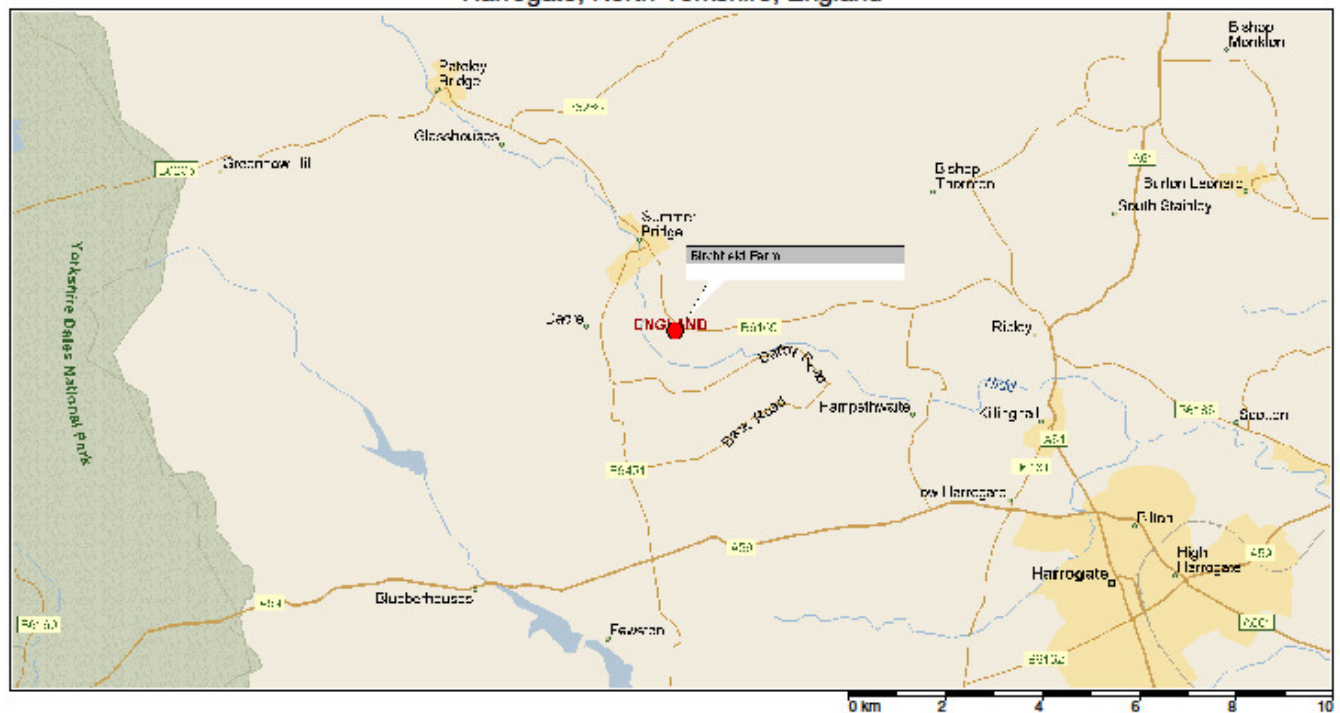
In recent years the Club has adopted a policy of moving the AGM around the country to enable all members to be able to participate and this year we're heading for North Yorkshire by the kind invitation of the Whitley family. We hope that you can attend as it's going to be a great day out.

We will meet at the farm at 11.00 for tea or coffee and the formal meeting takes place at 11.30. After that there will be a Yorkshire buffet lunch followed by a tour of the farm and ice cream works (with a possibility of samples!).

This is a wonderful way to spend time with fellow GOS enthusiasts and learn from a leading prize-winning herd. The cost for the day is just £5.00 for adults and £3.00 for those 14 years old and under.

Please phone 01285 869666 or email mail@oldspots.org.uk if you are coming and we will collect dues on the day.

Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England



Birchfield Farm lies just to the south of the B6165 north west of Harrogate between Ripley and Pateley Bridge.

Club News

Gloucester Old Spot Big Breeders' Club STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS For the year ending 31st October 2012

	<u>2011/2012</u>	<u>2010/11</u>
RECEIPTS		
Subscriptions	6,390.72	8,005.16
Donations and Fundraising (including grant)	0.00	557.17
Show & Sale (including AGM)	108.00	50.00
Interest received	4.65	4.17
TOTAL INCOME	<u>6,503.37</u>	<u>8,616.50</u>
MERCHANDISE SALES		
Sales	1,309.32	428.26
Less: Cost of Sales		
Opening Stock	-701.00	-837.62
Purchases	0.00	0.00
Stock written off	0.00	0.00
Closing Stock	574.96	701.00
	-126.04	-136.62
(Loss)/ Profit on Merchandise	<u>1,183.28</u>	<u>291.64</u>
PAYMENTS		
Printing, post and stationery (including newsletter)	2,146.24	3,486.40
Room Rental	0.00	100.00
Insurance	492.00	487.50
Secretarial Honorarium	1,250.00	1,250.00
Advertising	42.00	216.43
Sundry expenditure	2,025.37	3,360.71
Computer and website costs	0.00	187.00
Rosettes	144.70	138.65
Total Expenditure	<u>6,100.31</u>	<u>9,226.69</u>
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1,586.34	-318.55
BALANCE OF FUNDS AT START OF YEAR	7,942.09	8,260.64
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1,586.34	-318.55
BALANCE OF FUNDS C/FWD AT END YEAR	<u>9,528.43</u>	<u>7,942.09</u>
Represented by:		
Bank accounts	8,283.57	7,091.12
President's fund	3,503.57	3,001.64
Stocks Held	574.96	701.00
Creditors	-858.67	-666.67
Subscriptions in advance	-1,975.00	-2,185.00
	<u>9,528.43</u>	<u>7,942.09</u>

Club News

AGM & Members' Day

Annual Report for the Year Ending 31 October 2013

The year in question was always going to be special being the centenary of the foundation of the breed and the Club had planned for years to ensure that it was truly special. Other pig breeds had reached 100 before us but none had made such a celebration of the achievement. And an achievement it truly was as on several occasions in its bumpy history, the GOS could easily have gone the way of the Lincolnshire Curly Coat or Small White—extinct!



Wallace at the Butts Farm near Cirencester.

We began with a celebration display at the Gloucester Folk Museum which ran for 6 months was visited by 10,000 members of the public.

Probably our greatest event was last year's AGM at Colesbourne at the kind invitation of Sir Henry and Lady Elwes who had long family associations with the breed. We enjoyed a great attendance including the President and Vice-President of the GOSA who flew in specially and the crowning glory was when our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal joined us for a glorious tea with her husband Sir Timothy Laurence. Both sat at every table in turn and spoke at length to everyone in attendance - a truly memorable occasion.

The next day members enjoyed a workshop hosted by Judy Hancox and Gary

Special banners were prepared to ensure that visitors to the shows and other events knew that the GOS was 100 years young and these were displayed all around the country.

A lot of effort went into our celebrations at the Royal Three Counties Show and the showing fraternity made a tremendous effort with more GOS seen at this one show than any other in the country over those 100 years. It was a magnifi-



cent sight with the ring packed with quality Old Spots during judging on both the Friday and Sunday and on Saturday there was a huge turnout for The Champion of Champions final. The public enjoyed a historic display of the breed in a marquee with a sow and litter while the Club provided refreshments for all pig exhibitors. On the Friday night members enjoyed an informal get together with a hog roast expertly provided by Patrick Keen and his team with live music and a bar. On the Saturday, we entertained the public with a Celebrity Challenge when Adam Henson, Charles Campion and Tom Parker-Bowles competed with GOS pigs around an obstacle course.

Throughout the summer, we ran a very successful Grand Draw to help raise funds to cover the costs of the celebrations and many members did us proud with their selling efforts helped by some magnificent prizes led by a cash prize of £500 generously donated by Mandy Garbutt and Paul Mahon.

During July, the Earl of Plymouth Estates' Ludlow Food Centre staged the Festival of the GOS Pig which the club attended.

In August, the annual Show & Sale at Cirencester saw some good prices for quality pigs and eclipsed the returns for pigs sold at the Melton Mowbray event a few weeks later.

In November, the GOS Committee and Founder Members came together to enjoy a dinner at an hotel in Worcestershire and to raise a toast to coincide with the inaugural meeting of the GOS Society.

Throughout the year, the breed enjoyed enhanced publicity with appearances on local radio, BBC *Countryfile* and various magazine articles.

All in all, a very successful series of celebrations that helped promote the breed and raise awareness in what has been a very difficult period for all pedigree pig breeds.



Club News



Grand Draw

Pictured here are Mr & Mrs T Briddock from Northallerton having been presented with their prize of 12 bottles of Old Spot wine (the sow was not thrown in but a passing visitor along with photographer Mandy Garbutt who presented the prize). Full results of the prizes and winners are included in the News section on the Club's website.

We're looking for more offers like this for Members of the Club to claim via the Members' section on the website. Do YOU have something relevant to offer on a special basis?

If so please email details to mail@oldspots.org.uk

'BREEDING' BRILLIANT!

25% exclusive online discount to members of the Old Spot Breeders' Association... courtesy of Pig in a Poke wines!

**PAY FOR 9
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**AND WE
DELIVER 12**



Visit our online store at www.piginapokelive.com and enter your SNOUT321 exclusive discount code to receive 25% off all purchases.

Terms and conditions apply. Minimum purchase 6 bottles.

Pig in a Poke
The only wine with a 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE
PROUDLY DESIGNED IN GREAT BRITAIN

www.piginapokelive.com



Club Ties - £12.75 each + p&p

Order online (payment via PayPal) or send a cheque/

PO made out to 'GOSPBC'

p&p add £1.20 for 1; £3.00 for 2; £4.00 for 3 or more



Club News

Your website needs you ! By Robin Wilson

It's hard to believe that it's only 12 months since I volunteered to take over the website, and whilst I was happy that I could get the basics right, I've learnt a great deal more in how to create a shop and a forum. Whilst the site uses Wordpress as its basic software, there's a lot of customisation that's possible and the site has improved over the months as I've got to grips with the code.

We now have over 200 registered users. Registering for the site lets you contribute to the forums, and if you are a member get access to the members' area, where back issues of Spot Press are available (and well worth a read) and you can find member offers. If you haven't already registered, just visit the site and look for "Register for this site" in the menus.

But that's only a small part of our visitors. In September we had 5073 unique visitors to the site. Whilst peak visits are in the evening, we get steady numbers throughout the day and night, with many overseas visitors looking at our site. Beyond our shores, China and America are the most frequent visitors followed by France. Obviously some of these visits are to "test" our site (we have the latest security on our site to help prevent issues), but looking at the duration most of these are real human beings with 2/3rds stating on the site for over a minute.

But any website is only as good as the content, and whilst Richard and I can create so much, we need your input to make it a site you and others will want to visit regularly.

So what does the club need from you? Well basically 4 things – news, pictures, stories and results

News – If your pig has made the local paper, if you're doing something different, if ... then it would be great to feature you or your pig in a news item. This doesn't need to be earth shattering

Pictures – or as a webmaster should say "media"! We have lots of pictures of pigs, but can always have lots more – they'll be published in the gallery so there forever for others to enjoy. We also have very few of people interacting with GOS pigs – it would be great to get say some children feeding pigs, you stroking your pigs, someone building a ark, anything that can help show that pigs and people mix well.

Stories – are you running a small pig business? Do you knit hats from pig hair? Or just want to tell people about how you raise pigs. For instance a story about a co-operative (a few good souls sharing costs and responsibilities) would be good, they're becoming popular but people like to know the upsides and downsides and how to go about it. Anything that will help a newcomer understand the joys of keeping GOS.

Results – Last year we started publishing the results from shows. Shows are a major ingredient in keeping the GOS population alive. They help ensure that breeders strive for the best pigs, show the public what GOS look like in the flesh, let the public understand how rare these pigs are, and potential newcomers get enthused about keeping pigs. Finally they're great fun, the pig showing community is very friendly. Results from the shows not only recognise those who do show, but together with pictures act as a valuable reference for future generations as to who and what makes a perfect GOS. This year I plan a full results service, but can only do this with help from people who show. I'll be haranguing—sorry asking nicely—some of the more regular GOS pig showing people by email, but I'm looking for volunteers for each show to send me the results and a photo of the top GOS within a few days of the show. That way we'll get a fast accurate results and a record of what the winning pig looks like.

OK, so that's how you can help you club. Give us news however small, stories, pictures and volunteer to help us next year get a first class results service.

You can send material direct to me goswebmaster@btinternet.com and I've put a link to sending material on the website.



Looking Forward to Another Show Season by Mandy Garbutt

With schedules arriving on the doormat, Mandy Garbutt looks back on last year's season while getting ready for the 2014 round.

It seems a long time since we set out on June 8th to our first show of 2013 at Honley in the Southern Pennines. Good weather and a good journey saw us arrive safely with our load of very young pigs; Brucie our January boar, Tessie our January gilt and Darcy our March born gilt. The gilts for the most part galloped round the ring enjoying this new game, then Brucie decided to up end the judge, Tom Alty, flat on his back after taking a dislike to his trousers. Mr Alty still awarded him 2nd place and Brucie has since apologised as did his very embarrassed owner at the time. Darcy was also bravely borrowed by a young handler and I'm not sure who was more exhausted on his return from the ring!

Safely returned from Honley the planning for our big adventure down to Worcestershire for the Royal Three Counties show on June 14th began. Our first big county show visit since 2005. We had incredible thunderstorms going down country and horrendous traffic snarls on the M1, texts flew between ourselves and the Whitley family who were somewhere behind us with their trailer full of pigs. There was a superb number of GOS present, some 70 pigs and their owners, many of whom had

travelled several hundred miles to be there. Classes were large and we very pleased when Brucie came third in a class of 12 and the gilts 5th and 6th in their respective classes of 15+ pigs. It was chaotic at times in the ring with so many pigs but a wonderful sight for the watching public and for the breed.



Mandy enjoying her successful trip to Malvern.



"...a wonderful sight for the watching public."

Camping was a new experience for us and thankfully the weather was kind and our good friends the Whitleys were on hand to encourage and support us so a big thanks to them.

Arriving back from the Three Counties late on Sunday night meant it was a quick turn round to go to the Cheshire show (18th) the next afternoon. Paul had to go to work so this meant a trip across the Pennines on my own but arranging to meet up with the Whitleys when I got there. I arrived before them and somebody quickly offered to reverse up my trailer (I'm not very good at it!) and help me offload my pigs. Once the Whitleys arrived and unloaded we parked up in our designated camping field, put up our tents and went to explore the huge showground. Cheshire is still a truly agricultural show which has remained faithful to its roots whilst adding in conservation and environment content as well as the inevitable food halls. I was really pleased with our results at Cheshire with Brucie coming 2nd and the gilts picking up 2nd and 3rd in their class. We also managed a 3rd in the pairs with Brucie being taken in hand by Jan Walton and Martin Whitley whilst I managed Tessie. Thanks to all who helped me at Cheshire, pigs permitting I will definitely be back in 2014.

Well we now had breathing space to recharge our batteries, do a little more training, farrow a sow, send pigs to the butchers and get some work done to pay the bills! Come mid July we'd be on the road again doing the rounds of our local shows.

July 17th saw us off to Driffield which this year had a poor turnout of pigs, mainly I think due to the fact it had been the Yorkshire show the previous week and people's pigs were either all showed out or they hadn't time to do both. Harvest was also underway. Because of the lack of pigs all the classes were amalgamated and Brucie managed a 3rd in the coloured January boar class, the girls got nothing here and white pigs dominated the champion places. Brucie was also by now becoming too much of a handful for me to show and I must thank Jodie Fairclough and Stuart Roberts (Tamworth breeders) for all their help with him and Darcy in all the shows that followed. It's very difficult showing three pigs by yourself so any help is most welcome.



July 30th took us to Ryedale show where we were only beaten by some Pietrain pigs. Brucie got 2nd and the girls 2nd and 4th. On August 4th we toddled down the A1 to Tockwith near Wetherby where at last under the auspices of Sue Hutson both Brucie and Darcy got first places and best GOS in show went to Brucie. Tessie got 2nd place in the bacon class even though I don't remember entering her!



The following Sunday (11th) took us to Ripley

which is just up the road from Whitleys so we met up again with them and two other breeders making four of us in attendance with some 30 pigs and all breeds represented except Berkshires and OSB's. We had a terrible day really the pigs were full of mischief and took a liking for the judge's table and seemed determined to cause havoc. Tessie got a 2nd place with Brucie and Darcy who had done so well the previous week getting nothing. Different judge, different tastes in pigs!

Looking Forward to Another Show Season (cont.)

This year's Egton show near Whitby was on 21st August and it is really no more than a village show which has grown to have over 6,000 visitors, on the edge of the opposite side of the North Yorkshire moors its about an hour away from us. It only started its pig classes two years ago and there are usually about three of us show our pigs. This year's judge was awful, he was a sheep man doing the pig judging, he scarcely looked at the pigs from his perch on the fence and if you happened to pass at the right time he gave you a rosette. He never asked about the pigs, checked them over or had them walk up and down and it was all over and done with in about twenty minutes



which robbed us the exhibitors and the public of a good show of pigs. I have made my feelings known to the committee of the show as we take a day off work, travel two hours and spend money on diesel to be there so the very least they could do was provide us with somebody who actually knew/cared about pigs. A member of the public would have been a better judge!

Getting towards the end of the season a 4am setting off time for Westmorland Show over in Cumbria (too cold to camp the night before) saw us battle rain and fog across the northern Pennines. This is another really good, well-organised show even though it has atrocious entry/exit routes. The GOS were pleased to have another royal visitor in the shape of Sophie, Countess of Wessex. We had a good outing with Darcy picking up a first and then reserve champion in the Northern Championships Qualifier. Champion overall was Sarah Whitley's January boar Tommy. Brucie got 2nd to him in the breed classes. A very long day but so rewarding and enjoyable.



Mandy is chuffed to win the Reserve Qualifier for the Northern Championships.

One day off and then it was off to Penistone show for our last show of the year, one of our favourite shows of the year under the management of Tim Booth who really makes us all feel super welcome. We only took Darcy with us as both Tessie and Brucie had gone to their respective new homes after Westmorland show. Again after doing so well there she got nothing at Penistone and the Saddlebacks reigned supreme!

And that was show season over for another year. A mixed bag for us with some new shows visited and our first experience of showing a January boar. We've covered just over 1,600 miles, used 11 days holiday from work and



Martin and Sarah Whitley meet HRH The Countess of Wessex

the diesel bill well lets just keep that between me and my credit card provider! Litters, health and wealth permitting we hope to be back out in 2014. It would be lovely to see a few more of you joining us and if you would like any advice or help getting started please do get in touch.

The majority of people on the show circuit whatever breed they show are very welcoming and helpful. I must lastly say a big thank you to my other half Paul who has supported me throughout the year and is now valiantly managing the pigs single handed whilst I recover from spine surgery. Bad backs and pigs seem to go hand in hand! See you all in the coming months!

Get Ready for Showing!

White Show Coats

When you start showing, the first thing you need above almost everything else, is a smart, clean white show coat.

Unique to the GOSPBC, you can order these with the Club logo embroidered onto the breast pocket.

£30.00 each + £4.50p&p (same p&p for mul-

Sizes:

XS=33-34"

S=35-36"

M=37-39"

L=40-43"

XL=44-47"



Pig of the Century Competition

Our eminent judges, Mr Dave Overton, Mrs Marlene Renshaw and Mr Guy Kiddy made their individual selections and then we allocated points in the same way as they are given in Formula One, ie 25 to the winner, 18 to 2nd, 15 to 3rd etc. giving us the top 6 you see above. These are:

1st Nashes Josephine 57 [1936]

2nd Poundbury Muriel 8 [1961]

3rd Foston Sambo 21 [1993]

4th= Winterwood Princess 42 [1984]

4th= Windmill Bluebell 2 [2006]

6th Nashes Josephine 68 [1965]

From the entries received, based on those who got closest to the judges' selections, the winners are:

1st Mandy Garbutt

2nd Jane Everitt

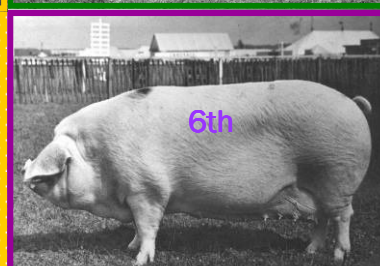
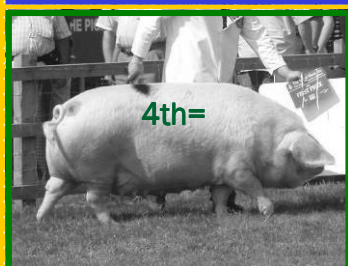
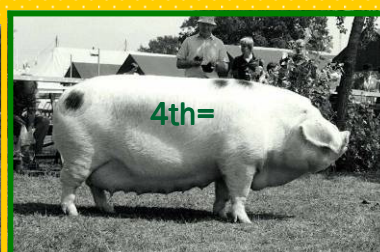
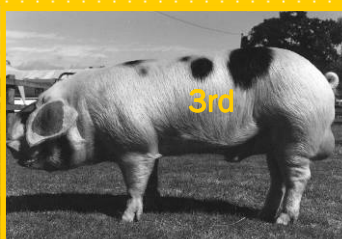
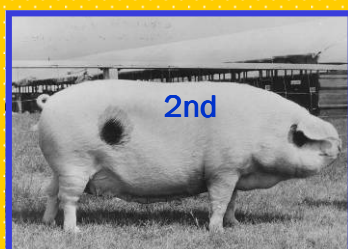
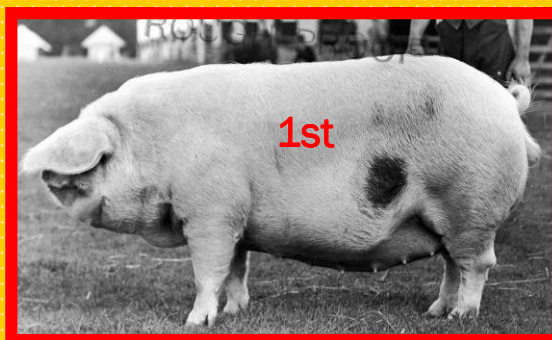
3rd Paul Mahon

4th Mrs Sowter

Interesting Fact #1 Two judges picked Nashes Josephine 57 as their first choice but after that, all three judges varied enormously in their selections. There was huge variation among the professionals!

Interesting Fact #2 Not one of the contestants picked the overall winner in their top six pigs!

CONCLUSION - There is no right or wrong selection in pig judging—beauty is well and truly in the sty of the beholder!



The History of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Breed by Richard Lutwyche

How the Breed Came About

Where does a breed of pig come from, or indeed almost any breed of any species, come to that? If it's been developed since the middle of the twentieth century, it's probably well documented so we have a pretty good idea although precious few new breeds of farm stock have been created in such recent times.

No pig breeds were recorded as pedigree in Great Britain before 1884. The first was the Berkshire, by a matter of days, and the reason that pedigree pig recording all started then was from demands from American importers as many breeds shipped from the "stockyard of the world", as this country was then known, didn't breed true to type. So, either side of the beginning of the 20th century, a whole host of pig breeds were first recorded and their herd books begun, following government pressure.

Here we are interested in the native breed from Gloucestershire and we have some history recorded in the very first herd books. But it is scant on facts. The newly established society stated that the breed was called 'Old' Spots because, "It had been known since time immemorial in this part of the country". In other words, no one then knew really how it had developed and the intervening century has done little to qualify the situation precisely.

Should we be surprised? Pigs have a strange relationship with man. Historically, they were despised by the middle classes but cherished by the toffs and the working man. The upper classes include Winston Churchill, The Duchess of Devonshire and many members of the Royal family from Queen Victoria to our present Queen, the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal, all of whom keep or have kept pedigree pigs. Throughout most of history, there were no breeds and writers of the time described county 'types' although not every county featured and not every county type enjoyed the same descriptions from different authors! And why should this be? Well, if you take a typical scenario from the Middle Ages on, land was divided into estates of different sizes and much of the land would be tenanted. Those farmers renting a few or more acres from the squire would have relied upon a pig or two to clear up the wastes from the fields, the dairy and the house and to provide protein for the harsh winter. But structured pig farming where large herds were created in an organised fashion did not really take place until the industrial revolution forced thousands of workers off the land and into factories and workshops in urban environments.

Pigs before then were a useful adjunct – essential in many ways – but without refrigeration and mass transport, there was no point in them having more than the waste stuff you produced otherwise they just competed with their masters for human food – grain and vegetables. And thus we begin to get an inkling for how regional variations came about; the beginnings of the county 'types'.



The tenant, or surfer in earlier times, kept his sow and bred her to produce a litter to fatten with the intention of slaughtering them in November. This date was important for several reasons. Pigs were turned out throughout the autumn to feed on the fruits of the hedgerow and forest; acorns, berries, windfall fruit, nuts, mast and more were all pretty much exhausted as autumn turned to winter and the time came to call on the services of the village pig killer – often the local butcher but it could be anyone, even in more recent times, the parish bobby – the police constable.

The free food was gone and the meat from the pigs killed at this time would be salted and smoked to provide protein during the long cold winter. Cattle were kept as draught animals and milkers so were not routinely killed for the pot, (until old age had rendered them redundant from their other duties), and sheep for their wool were likewise too precious and anyway their meat was not so versatile. You might think that meat was therefore plentiful but bear in mind that before industrialised farming, pigs were pretty primitive and litters would be much smaller than we have today and the meat yield from a carcase much poorer. Not only that but there were other calls upon your porkers – the tithes for the church and the parish were often paid in store pigs and maybe part of the rent too.

But we must return to the origins of the county type. What we can see from the above is that the tenant could not afford or justify keeping a stock boar. The squire would have one and his tenants would be able to send their sow to him for mating and thus this pig influenced the pigs being produced in the region. (In later times, the village blacksmith took over responsibility for maintaining the local stock boar but the upshot was fairly similar). Perhaps the chosen boar was ginger, had long legs, or a short snout or whatever. If he was long lived, he would have greatly influenced the type of pigs being produced over quite a large area. Without a modern understanding of genetics, he would have been mated to his daughters, his sisters, his cousins and his nieces, rapidly fixing a type. The chances are that his place would have been taken by a son of his, narrowing the gene base even further.

If this boar pig was widely admired, other estates close at hand may have come and bartered for a son also which then began the process of stamping his mark in a neighbouring parish and so on. Thus we see how local favourites began to influence the type of swine kept over quite a large area in time. So, we have the beginnings of distinctive types of pigs but why did the colour and conformation vary so much giving us still a wide variety of breeds in the UK today? All pigs started life being descended from the common European wild boar (*sus scrofa*) which was found at large in the British Isles up to the 17th century and still exists in mainland Europe from Spain and

Portugal right up through to northern parts of Scandinavia and through much of Russia and other eastern European countries. It was hunted to extinction in the UK but is now making a small but definite comeback as the result of escapes from specialist farms resulting in growing colonies in areas such as the Kent/Sussex borders, Devon and the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire.

These domesticated wild boar were poor creatures; slow growing with low fecundity, poor conformation and a sharp temper. No wonder Gervase Markham, writing in the 1650s, called pigs at that time "...troublesome, noysome, unruly, and great ravenours...". They were broad at the shoulder and narrow at the hip and only bred once a year. Pigs in the Middle Ages were often not considered ready for slaughter until they were two years old or more.



Improvements arrived on the decks of merchant ships in the 18th and 19th centuries. Sailing ships travelling long distances would set off from their home port with local pigs on board. These bred quite quickly and the offspring grew rapidly enough to provide fresh and preserved meat for the crew when voyages could last for months at a time. They also provided something to bargain with on arrival in far off lands and explorers discovering new territories would often leave a breeding group there so that when they or others returned, there was a chance of some pig hunting to provide sustenance where other foods may be scarce. Thus it was Christopher Columbus who introduced pigs to the Americas, (the descendants of which can still be found in the wild known as 'razorbacks'), and Captain Cook who did a similar service in the Antipodes. It was almost certainly pigs left in just such a way that did for the dodo in Mauritius - a ground breeding, flightless bird stood little chance against such an invader.



The daddy of them all, the wild boar now making a comeback in the UK.

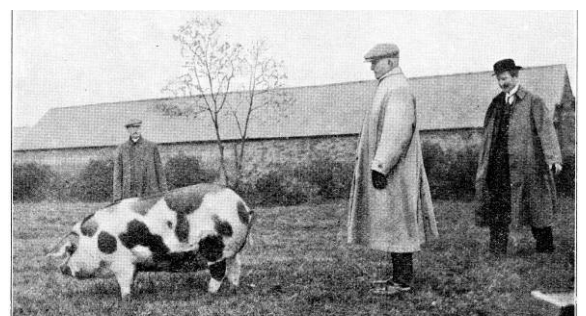
Ships arriving from the Far East in British ports carried an entirely different type of pig from the slab-sided British types. These were smaller, faster growing and fatter, descended from different wild pigs from Asia – *sus vittatus*. They had larger litters and grew more quickly and thus some enterprising types at British ports bartered with their Chinese and Siamese traders and acquired some of these new porcine types. They were bred with British pigs and the combination improved many of the local types and helped British agriculture as a consequence. This happened to such an extent that it is said that every British breed known today has some degree of oriental influence in their make-up. Those with most such genes are said to be the Middle Whites, a smaller breed distinctive with its pug face and squashed snout. The least influenced is the Tamworth, said to be descended from the English Forest pig and still maintaining the extended snout shared with the wild boar. The Gloucestershire Old Spots, like most British breeds, lies at some midway point between the two extremes.

So let us look again at why we should expect to have no definite line of descent showing us the forebears of the Old Spots breed.

All pigs began as semi-domesticated versions of the wild boar. Rudimentary selection for different types began on a localised level leading to different county 'types' in certain parts of the country as we saw above. Improvements began in the 18th century when British pigs were crossed with pigs from the Far East arriving on merchant ships.

So let's fast-forward to 1913 and the likely discussions that took place around a meeting room somewhere in Bristol. We don't have a record of that meeting, (all the records of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Pig Society were lost when their Bristol offices were bombed during the second World War), but we do have an essay by the Society's founder Chairman, James Peter, JP, published in the first herd book in 1915. James Peter was not only the inaugural Chairman of the GOS Pig Society, he effectively founded the Young Farmers Clubs movement, still thriving today. Here is an extract:

'The very fact that these pigs [the GOS breed] have survived the encroachments of other breeds and have maintained their purity of blood, must be an undoubted guarantee of their merits from a utility point of view. To compile an accurate historical record of the breed is practically impossible as written or printed records are unobtainable, and one has to fall back on the memory of the "oldest inhabitant"; this may not be a satisfactory method of procedure in some cases, but in the present case we can confidently accept it in justification of the assertion that the Gloucestershire Old Spots are not a recent production obtained by the crossing of any breed of pigs at present recognised as pure bred. The Royal Agricultural Society's prize schedule of 1857 contained classes for two varieties of pigs only, namely a large breed and a small breed with no distinction as to colour, and it was not till some considerably later period that the distinctive breeds obtained official recognition by the Society – my personal knowledge extending backwards for nearly fifty years confirms the assertion that the Gloucestershire Old Spots were not produced by crossing registered breeds.'



Mr James Peter of Berkeley behind the GOS

So, in summary, despite memories going back 50 years to the middle of the 19th century, (and way before the first recognition of a British pig breed in 1884), there was no certain knowledge of how the GOS had evolved.

The History of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Breed (Cont.)

I'm just going to speculate for a moment on how the breed might have been created and how difficult that might have been to record, farmers being famed for having an aversion to paperwork. A man who spends his time in the fields battling nature and the British climate, does not have the desire or inclination to return home as the sun goes down to start a new labour of form filling and that is as true today as it ever was throughout history. I have in front of me a plain, simple little note book which I purchased some years ago from a specialist book dealer. Inscribed in the inside front cover are the words 'JHHL Farm Book 1839 Bodin'. I was told after receipt of the little book that it was considered so rare that a national museum had also been interested in its purchase. The first entry reads: 'Beauty 10 Pigs by Helliotope 16 Nov '39' followed by 'Mona to Helliotope 22 Nov '39'. And so on. It diverges from JHHL's pigs through straw, wheat and oats to a brief record of cattle but most of it is the breeding record and sales of pigs from his three sows, (the third appears to be called 'Fright'), and his stock boar 'Helliotope'. Much of it is illegible and the writing decreases in legibility as the pages progress. However, it is a record of sorts and a rarity from its period so let's go back to my speculation as to how a GOS-type might have evolved.

Let's suppose it is true that pigs of the GOS had been around for the 50 years before 1913 that James Peter JP had implied and take our scenario back to around 1850. On a small farm near the river Severn, a farmer and his neighbour lean against a stable door and look inwards into the dark shed and the bunch of store pigs within.

"What'll you do with these then Tom?" asks the neighbour.

"They're all for sale. I always sell all my pigs for fattening; I've a good trade and regular customers," comes the reply.

"My, but that's a fine pig there, Tom, that spotty one. Too good for the knife, him. Fetch him out and let's have a proper look."

So the farmer enters the shed and herds the chosen pig into the daylight of the yard and off she scampers as the door is closed behind.

"Why, that's a find hilt [gilt] Tom, you ought to breed from her. She's long and fine boned and her hams are good too."

"I don't need no more breeding stock, James. How'd you like to buy her then, save her from the chop?"

"I might just do that Tom – what's her breeding?"

"Well, now let me see. She was out of my old sow, Dorothy, who's gone now. 'Twas her last litter but one so let me think, her pa would be.... I think it was old Geoff Parson's boar you know. He was a bit spotty hisself and Geoff owed me so I had his boar here for a while to pay for some straw he had that Michaelmas. Yes, that was it. Mind, old Geoff's gone now so I don't reckon we'd ever know 'owt about the boar or where he come from but he threw a good pig or two, I'll give him that. And Dorothy, now. Well, I had her a long time and she was out of an old sow I had from market, Daisy. She come from that fellow who left his farm on the tump and took himself off to Australia."

"I'll take her off your hands, Tom. Reckon she'll make a good sow and I could do with some fresh blood and she looks better than any of my old pigs."

And so a deal was done as it was countless times over countless stable doors and the meagre 'facts' about the origins of an animal passed on with it.

You may think that a little exaggerated but it would be typical of how things were in small farms on the Vale of Berkeley and, indeed, almost anywhere in the British Isles at the time. And were it not for pedigrees and the insistence on better recording, things may not have changed much today either if farming folk had been left to their own devices!

The only other clues we can derive then are from old text books on farming written in Victorian times and before. The 19th century saw far more books published on farming and good husbandry than before or since, mostly predicated on the huge improvements in techniques and machinery being developed throughout that period. So perhaps we can find a clue in some of those.

I have researched more than fifty books published before 1914, some just about pigs, some about farm livestock and others on more general farming methods. The vast majority do not mention Gloucestershire pigs but that should not be too surprising. Most writers of the period – before the availability of mass transportation – only knew about the stock of their local area and they wrote accordingly. Thus many county types are mentioned only seldomly. Strangely, some of the most repeated are those from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, neither of which made it across the divide into pedigree breed status.

The earliest reference comes from *'The Rural Economy of Gloucestershire'* part of an official nationwide audit of what was happening in agriculture. It was written by William Marshall and published in the 1780s. Here he describes the pigs then found in the area known as The Vale of Gloucester, further to the east of the Vale of Berkeley. "The tall, long, white breed, which was formerly, perhaps, the prevailing breed of this island, is here still considered as the "true Gloucestershire breed". They grow to a great size.

"At present, the Berkshire and a cross between these two breeds, are the prevailing species."

Some 30-odd years later, *'The Complete Grazier'* by a Lincolnshire Grazier was published [1816] and includes a fairly unflattering description of the pigs found in Gloucestershire: "Colour white, size large, legs long, having two wattles or dugs pendant from the throat; carcase long and thin, skin thinner than that of the Berkshire sort, ill formed. A very unprofitable sort; found chiefly in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, and West Devon; supposed to have formerly been the only breed in Britain. Do not fatten so well, or so kindly, as the Berkshire breed."

Moving forward to the middle of the 19th century, we have two further similar descriptions. Firstly in H D Richardson's *'The Pig Its Origins and Varieties'*. "The Gloucestershire hogs are somewhat less in size than the preceding [the Herefordshire], and are also shorter in the body, rounder both in frame and limb, and altogether more compactly built. They are white, and have wattles hanging from each jaw; large and especially tall. They are hardy in constitution, and very prolific, and are profitable pigs for pork – more so than for bacon. They make good store pigs, and their pork is also said to be of prime quality. Some have pronounced them to be superior to the preceding breed; an opinion to which I cannot subscribe."

The second is *'The Pig'* by William Youatt published in 1847. "The Gloucestershire is another of the large old breeds, gaunt, long legged, and unprofitable, of a dirty white colour, and having wattles depending from the neck.

"It has been supposed to have once been the prevailing breed in England, but it is now rapidly disappearing before the alterations produced by the present prevailing system of crossing them from small breeds."



The unimproved Berkshire by William Shiels ca 1840 which appeared in Low's textbook.

The Berkshire of this period is not the same animal we see today. We know from the illustrations and descriptions from Low's *"On Domesticated Animals"* published in the middle of the nineteenth century that the Berkshire of the day was a sandy-coloured pig with spots or blotches. Indeed, the original Oxford Sandy & Black – although never a breed with a pedigree recorded until its 'revival' in the 1970s – was probably based on a remnant population of the original Berkshire, both deriving from the area around Wantage where the two counties meet.

Firstly, William Marshall and then William Youatt some 60-odd years later, tell us that there was a process of crossing the original type of local pig with the Berkshire. J Lawrence, writing in 1809 in *'General Treatise on Livestock'* tells us that the spotted Berkshire "...was one of the commonest pigs in Devon, Gloucestershire and Norfolk".

Equally, we know that the Gloucestershire sort was not confined to the West Country. In the series of works discovering agricultural practices by county, Arthur Young wrote in 1804 in *'General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hertfordshire'*, "Mr LEACH, bailiff to the Earl of CLARENDON, fattens the large Gloucester hogs; he has a lot of very fine ones, for which he sent into Gloucestershire. Some of them he thinks will rise to 70 stone." Assuming that there were then 14lbs to a stone, (the number has varied by area and over time until the last century), this equates to 445kgs or nearly half a tonne – the size of a modern bullock.

The Berkshire pig was heavily influenced by the oriental pigs purchased from merchant ships docking in Britain as described earlier. It morphed from the spotted sandy pigs into the black pig (really very dark brown), with white points that we know today. Indeed, it is one of the smaller breeds. So there is a gradual transformation. Nothing is black and white but we have evidence from contemporary writers of the changes taking place; the crossing of the original, fairly primitive sort, with the Berkshire, a type that was itself gradually changing and improving with genes from *sus vittatus*. And there may well have been other crosses along the way.

From the mid 1800s to 1913, there is really no description given of pigs in Gloucestershire so we can only imagine that the transformation gradually took place until such time as someone such as our imaginary Tom and James picked on a type and decided to breed from them, gradually fixing the pig that the founders of the breed society had known "*since time immemorial*".

This may seem sketchy and unsatisfactory but it is the likeliest scenario. There is no other explanation found in any other textbooks suggesting a credible alternative. Remember that the GOS was the outcome but that no individual or group of people ever set out with the aim of achieving that result. It happened by accident almost, through individuals doing what they could at the time to improve the stock that they had available, until the Gloucestershire Old Spots breed evolved. There were none of the great livestock improvers – men like Robert Bakewell and Thomas Coke – involved as pigs were seen as less desirable and more utilitarian than cattle, horses and sheep. The same routes of development applied to almost all pigs and resulted in many breeds, some of which are still around today.

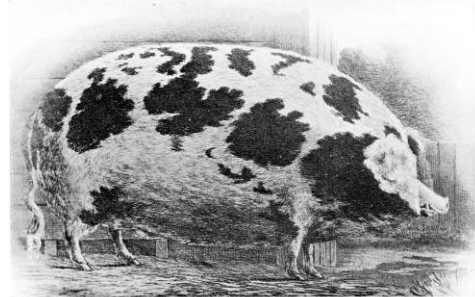
Now, before we leave this section, I'm sure some of you will be shouting out that evidence *does* exist and that I am ignorant of it. This is in the form of paintings from the 18th and 19th centuries showing spotted pigs, usually in the primitive style, some of which are entitled, 'Gloucester Old Spot' or something similar. Sadly, a little research soon shows that whilst the paintings were indeed created at the time,

The History of the Gloucestershire Old Spots Breed (Cont.)

the titles have been added since, often by auction houses or galleries looking to validate those works. There was no malicious intent, just ignorance of the history of the GOS breed which, unfortunately, renders such 'evidence' as invalid.



Painting from 1834 by John Miles titled as a GOS by the Gloucester City Museum where it hangs.



Not a GOS despite modern labels as such, this painting dates from 1798.

GOS in the News - Stray Pig in Virginia - Reward Offered



UPDATE: Charlotte County Pig Still Missing

Posted: Feb 26, 2014 10:53 PM GST

UPDATE: Garcia the pig is still missing and his family is now offering a \$1,000 reward for his safe return.

If you believe you've seen Garcia, you're asked to call Charlotte County Animal Control at (434) 542-5117 or the Griffith family at (434) 665-5246.

Second Act | Italian Hours

In Florence, the English entrepreneur Sue Townsend merges the warmth of great English decorating with the spare patina of Renaissance architecture for an interior that is the best of both worlds.

"I gave the Prince a pig once," Sue Townsend says. "It was a Gloucester Old Spot. He asked me when we could turn it into sausages. I said, 'But how dreadful! It's only this big!' " It was just over two decades ago that Townsend, one of the founders of Crabtree & Evelyn, the quintessentially British soap brand, helped the Prince of Wales start Duchy Originals, his line of organic products. After persuading him that biscuits with English butter taste far better than ones with "those ghastly hydrogenated fats" and that "proper marmalade" should not stick to glass jars like glue, she retired to Florence in 2000.

The 2014 Show Calendar

BPA Approved Show	Dates	Entries Close	Classes	Judge	Contact Phone
Newark & Notts	10-11 May		Any Traditional Breed	Mr Guy Kiddy	01636 705796
Balmoral	14-16 May	20 March	GOS	TBC	028 9066 5225
Devon	22-24 May		GOS	Mrs Sharon Barnfield	01392 353705
Royal Welsh Spring	17-18 May		GOS	Mr Andrew Warriner	01982 554408
Royal Bath & West	28-31 May	14 April	GOS	Mr Malcolm Hicks	01749 822209
Staffordshire	28-29 May		GOS	Mr Jonathan Cloke	01785 258060
Suffolk	28-29 May		Any Coloured Breed	Mr Andrew Robinson	01473 707115
South of England	5-7 June		GOS	Mr Bryan Card	01444 892700
Royal Cornwall	5-7 June		GOS	Mr Peter le Bas	01208 812183
Royal Three Counties	13-15 June	6 May	GOS	Mrs Marlene Renshaw	01684 584901
Cheshire	17-18 June		GOS	Mr Arthur Uglow	01565 650200
Lincolnshire	18-19 June		Any Traditional Breed	Mr John Flay	01522 585511
Royal Norfolk	25-26 June		Any Traditional Breed	Mr John Herbert	01603 731965
Great Yorkshire	8-10 July		GOS	Mr Stephen Booth	01423 546231
Royal Welsh	21-24 July		Any Traditional Breed	Mr Robert Overend	01982 554404
Stoneleigh	CANCELLED				
Anglesey	12-13 Aug		Any Traditional Breed	Mr Nick Kiddy	01407 720072
Newbury & Royal	20-21 Sep		GOS	TBC	01635 247111

Smaller Shows	Date	Classes	Judge	Phone
Chelford Spring S&S	26 April	All Breeds	Mrs Debbie Beeby	07783 45958
Lambourn	4 May	Traditional Breeds	TBC	07919 851111
North Somerset	5 May	Any Breed	Mrs R Nicholls	08456 342464
South Suffolk	11 May	Any Breed	Ms Sue Hutson	01767 650884
Essex Young Farmers	18 May	Any breed	Messrs Robert & Duncan Howie	01245 360442
Heathfield	24 May	Any Breed	Mr Steve Loveless	01435 360442
Dorset Rare Breeds	26 May	Traditional Breeds	Mrs Maggie Todd	01935 428405
Surrey County	26 May	Any Breed	Miss Amanda Thomas	01483 890810

Smaller Shows	Date	Classes	Judge	Contact Phone
Scottish Smallholders	31 May	Any Breed	Mrs Caron Kennedy-Stewart	
Honley	14 June	All Breeds	Mrs Debbie Beeby	01302 841144
Nat'l Rare & Minority Breeds	15 June	GOS	Mr Malcolm Hicks	01684 584901
Great Eccleston	12-13 July	Any Breed	Mr Ron Filedhouse	07884 071924
Drifffield	16 July	Any Breed	Mr Andrew Warriner	01262 602671
Singleton Rare Breeds	20 July	Any Traditional Breed	TBC	01243 811363
Mid-Devon	26 July	Any Breed	Mr Brian Merry	01884 821815
Shuestoke & Whiteacres	26 July	Any Breed	Mr Malcolm Hicks	01675 481517
Shrewsbury Show & Sale	26 July	Native Breeds	TBC	01743 462620
New Forest	29-31 July	Any Breed	Mrs Debbie Beeby	01590 622400
Ryedale	29 July	Any Coloured Breed	TBC	01653 697820
Oswestry	2 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Stan Samuels	01588 650407
Cranleigh	2 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Richard Lutwyche	01483 267771
Wayland	3 Aug	Any Coloured Breed	Mr Keith Flack	01379 687273
Tockwith	3 Aug	Any Breed	TBC	01904 744353
Gower	3 Aug	Any Breed	TBC	01792 390207
Thornton le Dale	6 Aug	Any Coloured Breed	Mr Mark Horsley	01653 668218
Chertsey	9-10 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Julian Wiseman	01753 682063
Filongley	10 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Brian Merry	02476 466117
Ripley	10 Aug	Any Breed	TBC	01943 466654
Trawden	10 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Tom Alty	01282 838093
Okehampton	14 Aug	Any Traditional Breed	Mr Jonathan Cloke	01392 861750
Mid-Somerset	17 Aug	Any Traditional Breed	Mr Ian Acreman	01749 938044
Pembrokeshire	19-21 Aug	Any Breed	Mrs Helen Tongue	01437 764331
Melplash	21 Aug	Any Traditional Breed	TBC	01308 423337
Egham	23-24 Aug	Any Breed	TBC	01784 740979
Edenbridge	24-25 Aug	Any Breed	Mr Paul Churchyard	
Dorchester	6-7 Sept	Any Breed	Mr Martin Snell	01305 264249
Moreton-in-Marsh	6 Sept	Any Breed	Mr Phil Fowlie	01451 822640
Westmorland	11 Sept	Any Breed	TBC	01254 852839
Nidderdale	22 Sept	Any Breed	TBC	01969 650129
Penistone	23 Sept	Any Breed	Mr Brian Mulkeen	01226 767989
Scottish Smallholders	27 Sept	Any Breed	Mr Brian Mulkeen	

Club Competitions

CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

SHOW	DATES	SHOW	DATES
South Suffolk	11th May	Notts County	10th-11th May
Devon County	22nd-24th May	Welsh Smallholders	17th-18th May
Royal Bath & West	28th-31st May	Staffordshire	28th-29th May
Royal Cornwall	5th—7th June	South of England	5th—7th June
Royal Three Counties	13th-15th June		

NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS (The Champion from the 2013 Westmorland Show is also a Qualifier for this Championship)

SHOW	DATES	SHOW	DATES
South Suffolk	11th May	Notts County	10th-11th May
Staffordshire	28th—29th May	Suffolk County	28th-29th May
Cheshire	17th—18th June	Lincolnshire County	18th-19th June
Royal Norfolk	25th-26th June	Great Yorkshire	8th-10th July

SOUTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS

SHOW	DATES	SHOW	DATES
Dorset Rare Breeds	26th May	Lambourn	4th May
North Somerset	5th May	Devon County	22nd-24th May
Welsh Smallholders	17th-18th May	Royal Bath & West	28th– 31st May
South of England	5th-7th June	Royal Cornwall	5th-7th June
Royal Three Counties	13th—15th June	Royal Welsh	21st-24th July
Singleton	20th July	Mid-Devon	26th July
Cranleigh	2nd August	Okehampton	14th August
Dorchester	6th-7th Sept	Royal Berkshire & Newbury	20th-21st Sept

Enamel Club Badge

Wear your breed with pride with this high quality enamel brooch/badge. Order online or send a cheque/PO made out to GOSPBC to the Club.

Only £3.60 each plus p&p

p&p add 75p for 1 or 2; £1.80 for 3 badges



Rare Breed Pig Keeping

In 2003, the GOSPBC published the above titled book which was very successful with the entire print run of 1,000 selling out. There had been plans to update and republish but it is surprising how quickly things change and how much is now out of date. Furthermore, when it was produced there were virtually no other titles on the market geared for small-scale pig keeping enterprises but today that has changed and the budding pig keeper has a wide selection to choose from. So, instead of risking substantial funds on a revision and reprint, we shall reproduce the book over a number of issues of Spot Press and hope that members will find the enterprise to be helpful to them. Incidentally, the GOSPBC is the only such organisation to publish a book intended to help novice pig keepers demonstrating its commitment and leadership in the field.

SHOWING PIGS

by Guy Kiddy

Why Show Pigs?

Showing of all species of animals was started to enable the pedigree breeder to show off his stock and therefore increase sales to other breeders. This is still very often the case with sheep and cattle, but showing within the pig industry has lost much of its popularity because so much of the breeding for commercial pig units has moved into the hands of the large pig breeding companies, leaving just a few pedigree breeders and enthusiasts to bring their stock to agricultural shows. Having said this, those breeders who do still show pigs do a valuable service to the whole pig industry, allowing the general public to see many different breeds in one place which would otherwise be very difficult to achieve. With so many disease precautions, most breeders do not welcome visitors to their commercial units.

Anybody who keeps pigs and thinks they may like to show them should first of all visit several shows, talk to breeders who are already showing and watch the judging to see what the judges are looking for. The judges will be the pig breeders who also show, or have shown pigs and, at the larger shows, will have been drawn from the *British Pig Association's* list of judges. At the larger shows, there will be individual judges for each breed but at the smaller shows, one judge will probably do all of the different classes.

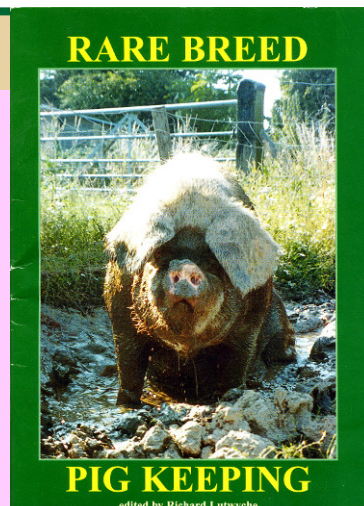
Once you have decided you wish to show pigs, decide which classes you want to enter and select stock accordingly. The majority of shows have classes for gilts born in July and September of the previous year and January of the current year. There are also classes for sows and at some shows for boars, commonly those born in January. Start selecting stock early; I always pick out 3 or 4 July born gilts when I am tattooing at about 3 weeks of age, then watch them grow and select the best two at about 5 months of age. The same procedure is adopted for September and January pigs.

The pigs will be judged according to breed standards and so it is essential to obtain a copy of these from the *British Pig Association* or other breed society. The pigs will need to have 12 or 14 evenly spaced teats, depending upon the breed, good strong legs they walk well on, well filled hams and a long straight back. They should also look bright and alert.

As the show season draws near, obtain the schedules of classes from the show societies and decide which classes you wish to enter. Read the schedule carefully to make sure the correct classes are being entered. As well as age, the classes will be split either by breed or colour. In many shows, splitting by colour is common with classes for white breeds and coloured breeds. If show societies have good entries of a particular breed, they may be subdivided just prior to the show. Make sure your entries are sent back to the show society well before the closing date. All pedigree pigs entered at shows must have been registered with the relevant breed society.

As the date of the show approaches, the pigs will need to be trained. If possible, show pigs should be kept in individual pens or in pairs. This allows close observation and individual feeding as well as making it easy to keep the pens clean. The pigs need to be trained to walk with a stick and a board. This should be done in a fenced off area in case they decide to run. Start off doing this twice a week, then daily and then twice daily.

Pigs usually enjoy walking once they get used to it, but can sometimes move faster than you. The walking not only allows you and the pig to get used to each other, but makes the pig fitter and strengthens their legs. It will also increase the handler's confidence and ability to handle the pig.



Washing

A week before the show, the pigs will need to be washed for the first time; this will then need to be done on a regular basis until the show. Pigs can be washed with washing up liquid or *Lux* flakes - avoid scented soaps as this can cause an allergic reaction. The pigs can be scrubbed using a stiff bristled brush, but beware of making the skin sore; some breeds of pigs have softer skin than others. The pigs need to be washed all over using liberal amounts of soapy water; remember to wash the insides of the legs. Once they have been thoroughly washed, use clean water to rinse all the soap off. It is best to use warm water to wash the pig, but do not make it too hot. Once washing is complete, white breeds (including GOS) should have wood flour rubbed all over them. This will help dry them out and improve the whiteness of the pig when it is brushed out. Although GOS need wood flour, in mixed classes, they are classified as a coloured breed and must be entered accordingly.

Make sure the pig pen you return them to is clean, and deeply littered with straw. It is a waste of all that hard work to get a pig nice and clean for it then to have a roll in a dirty pen. Always wash the pigs just before going to the show, it will make preparation much easier once you get there.

The day of the show

On the day of the show allow plenty of time to prepare both the pigs and yourself. The pigs need to be washed and the white pigs covered in wood flour. If the pigs have been in the pens overnight, these will want all dung removed before returning the pigs to the pen. Make sure you know what time the pig classes start - remember the classes will not wait for you.

Just before going into the show ring, the wood flour will need to be brushed out of the pigs, or if they are black pigs, pig oil will need to be applied. This emphasises the blackness of their skin.

The pigs are paraded around the ring using a board and stick (the board is usually white and should not have your name or herd name on it). Watch the judge at all times, try and avoid getting yourself between the pig and the judge and make sure the pig is walking when he looks in your direction. You will also need to know the date of birth of the pig you are showing, when it is due to farrow and, if relevant, how many litters it has had. Wear a clean white coat when showing pigs and pin your number on it where the judge can easily see it.

Many shows have commercial pig classes as well as those for breeding stock. These are normally split into pork pigs (50-65 kgs), cutter pigs (66-80 kgs) and bacon pigs (81-90 kgs), although the weight can vary slightly from show to show. These pigs are normally entered as pairs and are judged as suitable for slaughter. They should be long, lean and have large firm hams. It is best to have your pigs at the top of the weight range because there can be weight loss on the journey to the show. They are usually shown in pens, but be prepared to take them out if the judge requests it.

This is a brief guide to showing pigs. Should you decide to have a go, talk to the other more experienced hands at the many shows around the country. 'Pig People' are always very helpful and will give you many useful tips. Most of all, have fun and enjoy yourself.

This article was first published in Country Garden & Smallholding in September 1998

Important!

Meat Marketing - A Reminder

In order to market the produce of your pigs by breed name - whether GOS or another breed - both parents must be registered pedigree and the litter Birth Notified and properly identified in accordance with BPA or other breed society rules. If the pigs cannot be identified as pedigree, then they are just pigs and you and your customers cannot claim that the pork or bacon is GOS. To do so may leave you open to a visit by Trading Standards.

So remember, Birth Notify all your litters, earmark every pig and get the advantage of selling real Gloucestershire Old Spots produce!

Merchandise - Support GOS - Wear the Logo!

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

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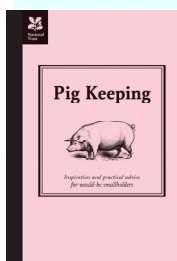


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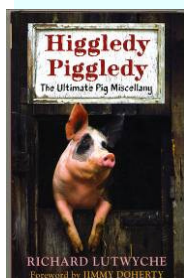
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father of these boars is the oldest
Rufus alive on the register and he
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underlines, really good legs.
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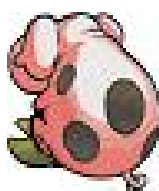
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Many thanks.
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Superior Tattooing Equipment

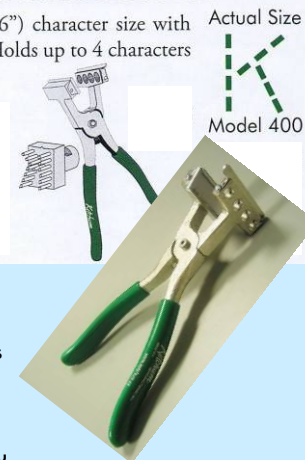
You should only need to buy one tattooing kit in
your lifetime so make sure it's good quality. You
will find cheaper equipment but one of the things
that exercises established breeders is the poor
quality of many tattoos in pig's ears that become

Large Character Tattoo Outfits

Model 400: 14mm (9/16") character size with
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Nos. in sets 0—9

- 1 set will do nos 1-10
- 2 sets 11-110
- 3 sets 111-1110
- 4 sets 1111-9999



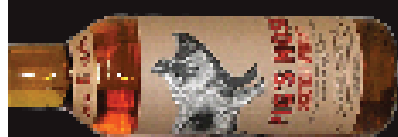
illegible in a short
space of time.

Part of the problem is
technique but the
biggest failing is the
equipment available
in the UK which is why
the Club have been instrumental in importing from
Canada special pliers that take 14mm high charac-
ters which are chisel point instead of needle point.
Such numbers carry more ink through the pig's ear
which, coupled with the larger size, means that
there's a much better chance of the ear number
being legible throughout the pig's life. Remember
these are not only suitable for GOS but Large
White, Tamworth, Middle White, Welsh, British Lop,
Oxford Sandy & Black, Pietrain, Landrace etc.

Order details can be found on the Club's Shop on
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The next edition will be published in June/July 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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New Centenary Bone China Mugs



There's nothing quite like a hot drink from a bone china mug and thus the Club have commissioned these lovely mugs to help celebrate the Centenary. On one side they have a splendid GOS sow and on the other the centenary logo. Inside are a pair of GOS piglets.

These mugs will be available at certain shows and events during the year but you can buy them in the online store @ £27.00 for a box of 6. They can be bought

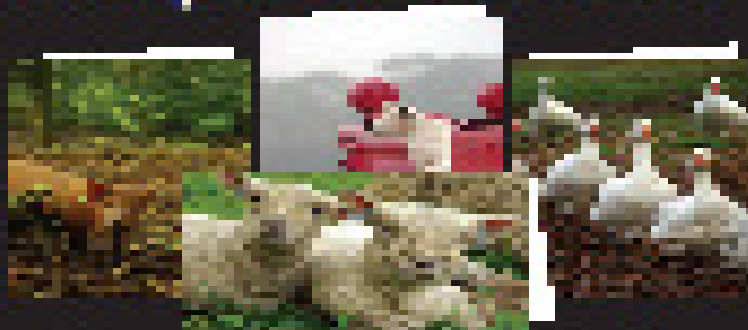
individually at events but for post and packing purposes, they need to be supplied in the special packs of 6. You can order as many as you like and they will make unique and special gifts.

Not only do they look great, your tea will be all the better from a bone china mug.

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