

Skipton Swaledale rams showcase achieves 95% clearance and four four-figure prices

Four successful joint high bids of 1,000gns and an impressive 95% clearance rate - 72 of the 76 entries found new homes - were the highlights of the annual evening show and sale of registered Swaledale rams at Skipton Auction Mart, which again attracted a large attendance. (Mon, Oct 10)

The first of the four-figure prices for the hardy hill breeds came for a 3-shear ram consigned by John Smith, of Glen Farm, Carleton. Bred by Colin Birbeck in Ravenstonedale and used since a shearling, it sold to Malham Moor's Steven Towler.

Next at 1,000gns was a shearling ram from Kevin Huck, of Bordley. This strong, clean tup by a Valley Farm ram owned by fellow Bordley breeder John Tennant, out of a Stanley and Pat Brogden Helbeck-sired ewe, sold to well-known working sheep dog handler Carol Mellin, of Moor Lodge Farm, Oakworth.

The third 1,000gns sale fell to a big, bright shearling ram from Robert Crisp, of Nelson Farm, Calton. By his Tennant Gill tup, out of a ewe sired by a tup from another renowned Bordley breeder, Roy Nelson, it joined South Yorkshire's Harold Smith, of Dunford Bridge.

Last of the four-figure prices went to a home-bred 3-shear from Messrs Walker & Alpe, of Saddle End Farms in Chipping. Got by their old Mossdale tup sold at Skipton last year, it went to Robin Jackson, of Blubberhouses. The same vendors also sold a 4-shear bred the same way for 800gns to Thomas Boothman, of Linton.

Embsay's John and Claire Mason, Oddacres, also caught the eye at 900gns with a 6-shear ram, their Aygill-bred Viceroy son, Keldside Highway Man. It travelled to North Craven with Ribblehead's Jeff Pickles.

In the show arena, champion on the night was the first prize aged ram, the 3-shear Hellgap Lieutenant 2nd, from Chris Ryder, of Scaife Hall Farm, Blubberhouses, who bought the tup two years ago. He is the first son of Gillside Yorker, from Glenridding's Peter Lightfoot, out of a dam sired by Skippy I Am, from Ken Slack in Appleby, now also a well-known racehorse trainer.

The title winner, recipient of both the Robert Young Perpetual Challenge Trophy and the Stephen HK Butcher Trophy, was knocked down for 800gns to co-judge Chris Akrigg, of Manor Farm, Cray. The other co-judge was Kirkby Stephen's Bob Wearmouth.

Standing reserve champion was the first prize shearling ram from Robert and Lindsey Cowperthwaite, of Stockdale Farm, Settle. Shown by their son Sam, Stockdale Dixon 12th was their only entry on the night, picking up the M&J Spensley Trophy, presented by Joan Spensley. Sired by a Raymond Dixon Garnthwaite ram, the first of his progeny to be sold at Skipton, out of a ewe got by a Stephen Porter Summerlodge Farm tup, he sold for 400gns, again to Jeff Pickles.

It was a good night for Kevin Huck and his Knowle Bank Farm entries, which also produced both the best conformation ram and the second prize shearling, both of which were sired by the same Seal Houses tup from Arkengarthdale's Malcolm Allinson that was also responsible for Mr Huck's top price and best conformation shearling at the 2015 Skipton Swaledale highlight. This time around, his charges sold for 600gns and 300gns to, respectively, Alan Greenwood, of Trawden, and Carleton's John Smith.

Roy Nelson himself stepped up with the second prize aged ram, a 2-shear bred by Askrigg's Neil Bland and acquired as a reserve champion ram lamb, out of a dam sired by a tup from Ian Collinson's Billing Shield flock in Eastgate, Weardale. It sold for 400gns. Mr Nelson also made 750gns with one of his 2-shear aged ram entries and 600gns for a second shearling.

Jeff Walker and family, who run the Brennand pedigree Swaledale flock in Dunsop Bridge, stood third in the aged ram show class with a 3-shear bred by the Hawbank flock of Appletreewick's

Patrick Walker. It has produced some nice pure-bred gimmer lambs over the past two years for the Walkers, which are all retained for breeding. The tup made 650gns.

Back with the shearlings, the third prize ram from Andrew Haggas, of Grove Farm, Otterburn, also sold well at 450gns. It is a home-bred by a tup from Martin Sunter in Hawes.

Runner-up in the best conformation class was the fifth prize shearling ram from Wigglesworth father and daughter, Godfrey and Alison Haygarth, of Aigden Farm. By a John White Rigg Farm tup, it made 500gns,

Other shearling prices of note were: 700gns - JC& E Pedley & Sons, Sedbergh, 650gns – Colin Birbeck, Ravenstonedale, 600gns - W Mason & Sons, Appletreewick. The last mentioned also had a 500gns aged ram.

Aged rams averaged £435 per head and shearling rams £304
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Pic caption 1: Chris Ryder with his Skipton Swaledale aged ram champion.



Pic caption 2: Sam Cowperthwaite with his family's Skipton Swaledale shearling ram reserve champion.



Pic caption 3: Chris Ryder, right, with his Skipton Swaledale champion, joined by Sam Cowperthwaite and the reserve champion, and co-judges Chris Akrigg, second right, who also purchased the title winner, and Bob Wearmouth.



Pic caption 4: Chris Ryder is pictured in the Skipton ring with his Swaledale aged ram champion receiving trophies from co-judges Bob Wearmouth, centre, and Chris Akrigg, also the buyer,

Pic caption 5: Sam Cowperthwaite is pictured in the Skipton ring with the Swaledale shearling ram reserve champion, joined by his father Robert Cowperthwaite and trophy presenter Joan Spensley.

Pics by Adrian Legge Photography (*please credit if using*)

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