

DECEMBER 2013

# VIEWPOINT

From the Premier Breeder of British Registered Soay Sheep  
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## **4th Annual British Soay sheep Gathering, September 2013, Merlin, Oregon**



Food and lots of it was Nancy's advise when I asked how did she do such a good job with the gathering last year. And so Becky and I prepared lots - more that we could eat. The week-end began with a picnic in the Cascades and a trip up to Crater Lake. We were shocked to see a foot of snow and this was only the end of September. On the way home we stopped for dinner at an old hotel in Prospect, met a woman who was traveling alone and talked her into joining us for dinner. She had never heard of Soay sheep before she ran into us but by the time we parted

company she was trying to figure out how she could keep one in an apartment in the city. I am sure she is still shaking her head about those crazy sheep ladies who had gathered from around the country and across the pond. Actually I think she was pretty inspired by our devotion to these little sheep and our group's determination to meet once a year.

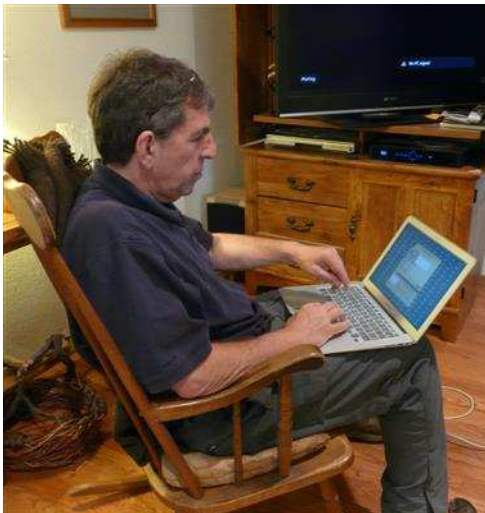


The end of September is usually the loveliest time of the year here in southern Oregon, but not this year. It was damp and dreary and cold which actually worked out because Kathy Nelson had planned an indoor lesson on what we could do with our wool. It was a follow up to the presentation Deb Robson had given us in Colorado two years earlier. Kathy had taken some of my wool earlier in the year and had prepared it to give us a demonstration on how to get it ready for spinning. She had samples of it raw, washed, combed, carded and spun in several plys and a small weaving with an explanation of each process and what it was best suited for. We were also given a lesson in spinning with a drop spindle .....some of us were better at it than others. Her presentation was wonderful.

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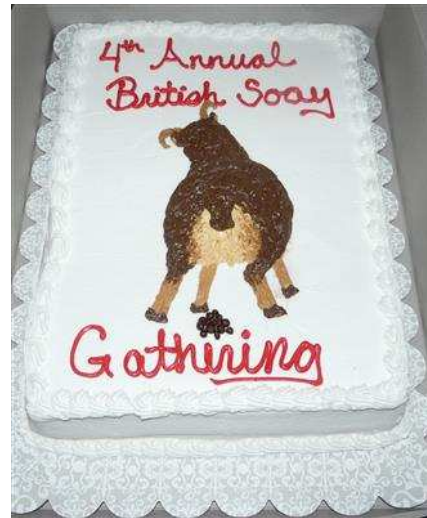
After feeding the animals and eating our own dinner we sat down in front of television to watch Mike's power point presentation on Soay sheep genetics. While we had played with wool in the afternoon Mike had run around - including a trip to town- to find a part that would get his laptop to talk to my television.



Thankfully he did as we were all riveted by what he had to show us and to say. Our little British Soay sheep really are very unique and special and he stressed the importance of keeping good records and registrations.



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After dessert and the lecture most of us headed to the girls "dormitory" up the hill (we were actually scattered in buildings all over the property) where our conversations about genetics and keeping sheep continued until we all fell asleep.



Our plan for Sunday had been to work with rams in the barn; managing a large flock, cutting horns and trimming feet, etc. but it was cold and rainy and sitting by a cozy warm fire sharing experiences and stories just seemed more appealing to all of us.

When the sun did finally come out on Monday we put Kathy C. on the tractor for a lesson in the use of farm equipment. She was a natural and went home convinced that a tractor needed to be in her future. We also finally got to spend some time playing with sheep which I had turned loose in my corn and pumpkin patch. They were a perfect end of the season clean up crew.





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The plan for our fifth gathering next year is to meet at LaFour Soay Ranch in Paradise Valley, Nevada. The date has not been set yet, but it will be in July or August 2014. Becky has already started planning and has even made arrangements for our housing. For those who are interested Bill and Susan Shaul have added us to their show schedule and plan to make a delivery to the ranch for anyone interested in any of their equipment. Watch our [website](#) for details and dates.

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