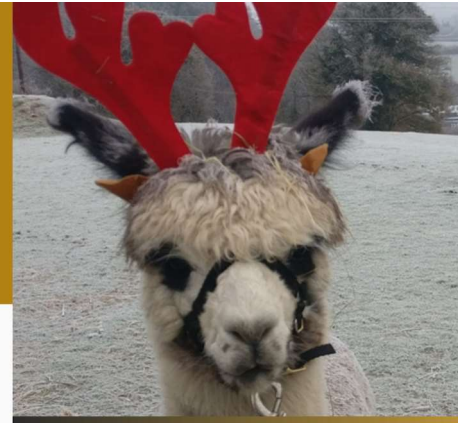


CCA NEWSLETTER



Chair's intro

A Very Happy Christmas to everyone and a warm welcome to our new members.

I shall not mention the mud (or rain), and instead focus on more cheerful goings on in the land of alpacas!



Here at Dark Sky, we've just weaned the 2023 cria and love to see the little gang of eight charging about the place and working out who's going to be boss!

A couple of them are still coming to terms with hard food (vs nice warm milk from Mum!) but, with a little encouragement, I'm sure they will all be scoffing away in no time at all.

Our weaning tactic is to give both Mums and cria a 'clean break' –

we keep the little ones on familiar territory and bring them into the field shelter at night for the first few weeks to establish their feeding routine and keep them warm and dry overnight.

The Mums move to a new field and shelter and are for the most part out of both sight and sound, to limit the amount of anxious hanging around gates and searching for a view of one another. Whilst we always feel a bit mean, this does mean that as a rule everyone settles down after a couple of days and into their new routine, ready for the new year ahead.

Our committee have also been thinking about 2024 and we are busy making plans. We've got two great opportunities coming up to share and discuss our thoughts with you and hope you will be able to join one or both.

First we have our **AGM** which will take place on **Tuesday 30th January at 7pm** as an online zoom call, to try to accommodate as many members as possible.

Hot on the heels of that will be our **members lunch on Sunday February 18th** which is at the Plume of Feathers in Mitchell (as it was this year).

Later in the newsletter we've included our initial thoughts on our new 'Education' event planned for May so you can give it some thought and let us know your views – and hopefully also put in the diary!

This event was inspired by a conversation that long standing CCA member, Rosalind Pugh, kicked off at the BAS AGM – you can read her article later in the newsletter for the backstory!

But before we get to all that, let's look back a little on 2023. We had a really full year of events and welcomed a number of new members, as well as, inevitably, saying goodbye to some old ones as their lives moved in different directions.

A case in point being Liz Brealy who many of you will know and who has made such a great contribution to the CCA over the years – she and Trevor are in the process of relocating so they are looking for homes for their six lovely males – see the feature on them later in the newsletter and do get in touch if you, or someone you know, might be able to help.

After all the comings and goings, we currently have 60 members and hosted seven events over the course of the year in addition to putting out our quarterly newsletters. 40 members (69%) participated in at least one event, and on average these people attended at least 3 different things.

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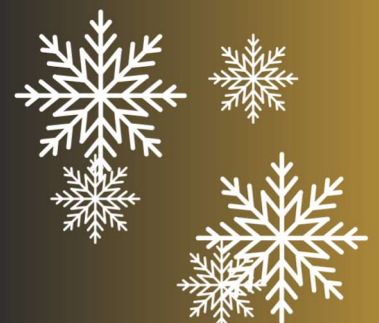
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All of which would not have been possible without the 19 members who helped to put the events on – that's a third of the membership and we are very grateful to all of you for your time and energy - and letting us use your premises!

The year kicked off with a really informative zoom seminar with Barbara Hetherington of Beck Brow Alpacas, in which she generously shared her alpaca journey so far and helped us all to think about what we want to achieve with our herds.



The Halter Show at the Royal Cornwall Showground was enjoyed by all with 12 herds entering and numerous other members taking stalls for their alpaca products and putting on demonstrations for visitors. With 500 members of the public paying to join in, it was a great atmosphere and our thanks go to everyone on the organising committee, our helpers on the day and our many, generous sponsors.



The Fleece Show was also a great success in 2023 and it was particularly pleasing that CCA members did so well against competition from across the country. 12 CCA herds put in entries and both the Supremes (Huacaya and Suri) went to members, along with plenty of other championship sashes. Another excellent team effort to manage the receipt and dispatch of all the entries in addition to the judging day itself.

We held two vet days this year, a birthing refresher in April and the more general day in October, with 17 and 22 attendees respectively. Sarah Finch (née Caldwell), our honorary vet, hosted with her usual professional and friendly style and it's fabulous to have both Sarah and each other to keep us all up to date and learning ever more about how to care for our alpacas. The generosity of the hosts who welcome members to their farms and alpacas for these days helps to make these days a great success and both practical as well as theoretical.

Two visits were arranged and open to members to join – one to the Natural Fibre Mill at Launceston and the other to the British Alpaca Fashion Company (aka EKO ALPAKA) at Dulverton. These were both great to understand more about what is involved with processing and using the wonderful fibre that we have from our alpacas. 14 members visited the mill and 9 made the trip to Dulverton and we really appreciated both our hosts at the venues and the organisers.

All in all, I hope you enjoyed and benefited from being a CCA member this year and are looking forward to 2024. I'm delighted to welcome Alex and Hannah Price of Little Acorn Alpacas who have volunteered to join the committee – it's great to have their fresh perspective and extra pairs of hands! Together, we'd really like to make sure there is something for everyone, that support is always there when you need it and that our alpacas and our community give us enjoyment. So please do feel free to let us know your views and if you are inspired to do, please come forward and get involved in putting on events and providing stories and features for the newsletter.

In the meantime, enjoy the newsletter and I wish you, your families and your alpacas a very Happy Christmas!

Wendy

CCA AGM - Tuesday 30/01/24

From 7pm to 8:30pm by zoom call
(link will be emailed to all members in January)

CCA Annual Dinner - Sunday 18/02/24

From 1pm



We have decided that the next AGM will follow the same formula as the last one. The AGM will be held via zoom call at the end of January then a separate dinner will be held in February.

After the successful Sunday lunch at The Plume of Feathers in Mitchell, we have decided to go there again. We have made a booking for 14 (based on last year's numbers) for Sunday Lunch at 1.00pm on Sunday 18th February 2024 – however, we'd love to see as many of you as can make it - so if you think you would like to come along, please could you indicate this by emailing cornwallcamelidassociation@hotmail.com. If we need to adjust the numbers up, then the more notice we can give them the better!

Heather Lester
CCA Secretary

VET'S DAY - CARPALLA ALPACAS

A particularly enjoyable day at Carpalla for another Vets Day with Sarah.

Thanks to Nigel, Margaret and Pippa for hosting and making everyone welcome.



VET DAY SUMMARY – Sarah Finch

On 21st October, the CCA group descended on Carpella Alpacas for the Annual Vet Day. Hosts, Nigel and Margaret, had organised a lovely spread of treats and it was a real pleasure to be welcomed into their home and for the use of their animals – thank you.

The day's presentation was based on my experiences as a camelid vet over the past 10 years and how the type of visits has evolved during this time. We explored some of the more common ailments seen today, such as eye infections and trauma, anemia, and skin conditions and how advances in breeding and husbandry have resulted in a decline in dental and vitamin D associated lameness cases.

Whilst there will always be the need for firefighting, at least a quarter of my camelid caseload is based on husbandry, driven by owners wanting to invest in safeguarding their herds, and improve health and performance (hoorah!).

A breakout session during the morning gave smaller groups the opportunity to critique four husbandry set-ups (and my drawing skills!) with an emphasis on the pros and cons regarding biosecurity and infectious disease.

All farms are different, and we don't often have the luxury to start from scratch, so recognising risk factors of new and existing scenarios is an important skill. I also highlighted the opportunity for alpaca owners to seek **FREE veterinary advice**, including two on-farm visits and tailored (realistic) action plan for safeguarding your herd from TB, through the **TBAS scheme**. I would encourage you all to speak to your vets to arrange this whilst available.

I have **attached** my Biosecurity and Quarantine Crib-Sheet – any questions please ask.

After lunch we migrated to the barn, where Nigel had housed a group of alpacas that are new additions to the farm that had some skin issues. We discussed likely causes and treatment options and I am pleased to report the Zincoseb shampoo I left has been working well on the crusty back lesions most likely caused by rain scald – can you guess where the shampoo was applied?!

We also reviewed how to handle alpacas for access to the jugular vein, which is the site for blood taking and transfusions. To make these procedures as stress-free as possible for the animal, handler and vet, the presentation of the animal is key. A guide has been **attached** for your information.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day and I look forward to the next! I am off to Vienna on the 7th December for the Camelid Congress so hopefully there should be some up-to-date information to feedback soon! In the meantime, **I wish you all a very Happy Christmas x**



Sarah

The Mystery Blue Eyes – Can You Help? 🤔

- Do you have any animals with a **slightly blue tinge to the eyes?**
- Do you have any **poorer grown, darker animals?**
- Do you have any animals with **loss of fleece?**
- Do you have any animals with an **unexplained lameness?**
- Have you got a known **cobalt/B12 deficiency?**



I have seen an increasing number of animals with these symptoms and am interested to investigate further. If any of the above symptoms mean anything to you, please let me know!

The Human Vet
compassionate veterinary consultancy

**20%
DISCOUNT**

~~£70~~
£56

"Sarah has not only dealt with various individual health cases but has done some excellent work with us on various projects including nutritional modelling."
Hilltop Alpacas, Ireland

THANK YOU

for your continued support.

I am offering CCA Members a

20% discount

on a **30-minute consultation**

for the **next 12 months** (Dec 24)



The Human Vet



Due to house relocation early next year, sadly, I am looking for an amazing home for my six male alpacas. Here is a little bit about them and some pictures:

- 2 x grey alpacas – Earl and Eliot – born 2015, BAS registered and bred by Rosecraddoc Alpacas
- 1 black/1 brown alpaca – Hurricane and Lancaster – born 2014, BAS registered and bred by Popham Alpaca
- 1 fawn and 1 white – Monty and Nelson – born 2014, bred by Moor View Alpacas

• All have been castrated and are fully up-to-date with their vaccinations.

They are all a lovely temperament, halter trained and a pleasure to keep and I will be very sad to lose them, so I am looking for the very best of homes.

If you know anyone suitable to look after these boys, please contact me: thebrealys@gmail.com or mobile: 07866 863466.

Price: £1850 for the group.

I am looking to relocate in February 2024.



Having kept and bred alpacas for over 20 years I have seen many changes, some really good, others not quite so good.

Medication can be a sore point, protocols change and the medication too. The producers change their formulae or it is difficult to obtain, and particularly difficult for owners of only a small herd as it becomes so very expensive.

Both BAS and regional groups have come on in leaps and bounds, thanks to so many kind volunteers giving of their time and knowledge.

Where did that knowledge come from? It has been passed down by those that started out years ago going to Peru and other places where people have been ahead of us in breeding for quality fleece.

When John and I decided we might get some alpacas as a retirement project we went on 3 different courses to find out as much as we could. I did go all the way with the judge's course but decided I didn't want to stand in the ring telling people what I thought!

As the years have gone by more people have bred not necessarily the best alpaca, these have been sold as pets and the like to people who have only heard about the basics of husbandry, the outcome? Messages on facebook with queries about alpaca care and the annual plea 'what can I do with the fleece?' A couple of hours with a breeder from whom you are buying is not enough to know the whole years' worth of care and maintenance. How can we reach these owners?

BAS have a list of affiliated trainers who do a great job passing on their knowledge, but not enough people take up these courses. Having asked a question about this at the AGM I didn't have to speak for an hour as so many people joined the discussion, no real answers came except that perhaps the regional groups could do more to encourage owners of small herds to join their groups. Any suggestions as to how we can get owners of small nonbreeding herds to join us would be welcome.

I am a bit of a dinosaur, particularly where computers are concerned but I am always happy to teach Alpaca to whoever will listen.

I am planning to write an article for the BAS Magazine, I have the first line "The question is, how do you retire from alpaca? The answer is 'with difficulty'" but I have no more after that and anyway I am too busy bottle feeding this year's premature cria and doing craft fairs with the products from my herd.

I wish my alpaca friends a Happy Christmas and a successful 2024!

Rosalind





In the Autumn Newsletter, I introduced the idea of hosting a new event in May 2024 and the back story for it. We discussed the proposal more fully at our last committee meeting so I'd like to share here our latest thinking on what they day would include.

Just to re-cap, the Royal Cornwall Showground are unable to offer us a weekend in May for a Halter Show due to prior bookings at the start of the month and proximity to the Royal Cornwall Show later in the month (there has to be a clear 30 days before the RCS in which no other livestock have been on the site). As a result we have come up with an event with broader appeal to the CCA membership that also supports those interested in showing.

The aim of the day will be to help:

- Increase your knowledge in areas of alpaca ownership that interest you
- Meet, share and learn from other alpaca owners and experts
- Develop your support network

Heather and David Lester of Polgrain Alpacas have kindly offered to host the event at their farm which gives us plenty of room and the opportunity for members to have a tour to see their facilities and alpacas.

We envisage having a number of activities running simultaneously in different parts of the farm so that members can choose to take part in things that interest them (and not to have to spend time on things that don't!)

1)Halter Showing:

- What the judge is looking for – conformation and fleece
- Ring etiquette – how to present your alpaca in the ring
- Opportunity to practice showing alpacas in the ring

2)Fleece Evaluation:

- How to skirt a fleece for processing or showing
- How a judge scores a fleece in a show
- Practice skirting and / or scoring a fleece
- Bring your own fleeces along for evaluation

3)Handling:

- Teaching alpacas to walk on the halter
- Practice fitting a headcollar and walking

4)Using Fleece & Crafting:

- Observe and join in with spinning, weaving and felting

5)Farm tour:

- See Polgrain farm and learn about their facilities & biosecurity

Activities will repeat at various times in the day to give people maximum choice of what to participate in.

We will have an official BAS Judge with us for the day and members with experience in the various different areas will also help to host sessions.

The event will be open to all CCA members and, by invitation, to other alpaca owners and prospective owners in the South West, including members of SWAG (the South West Alpaca Group) and those who are not currently a member of either regional group.

The proposed date is **Saturday May 4th**. There will be a modest ticket price and food and drink available to buy throughout the day and for lunch.

We are still working through the details of the day so welcome any feedback and input from members, please just drop us a line at cornwallcamelidassociation@hotmail.com



I was interested to see how our entries would fare under the new BAS fleece scoring system, all the fleece shows are competitive against top herds.

Cornwall Fleece Show

I was beyond thrilled with **Corinthian** winning his 60+ month white fleece, Champion White Fleece, Supreme Huacaya and Judge's Choice with 83.50 points.

Dash won 1st place 24-36 months brown and Reserve Champion Brown Fleece.

Somerset County Fleece Show

Bullion won 1st in 60+ months brown and Reserve Champion Brown Fleece with 78 points.

Fauve won a 1st place in 36-48 months white fleece scoring highly with 81.50 points.....Worth noting she is sired by Corinthian.

Northern Fleece Show

Corinthian won 1st on his 60+months white fleece with 80 points, one of 3 huacaya fleeces scoring above 80 points.

Pleased with these high scoring fleeces in the upper 70 and over 80 points.

Happy Christmas to all CCA members, best wishes for 2024....

Sandra Muriel, Alpacas of Cornwall, the Crewenna Herd.

