



2024 Cornwall Camelid Association Christmas Newsletter

Welcome to the winter newsletter in this small break between Christmas and New Year! I hope all you are all enjoying the holidays – even though none of us are ever completely off duty 😊

Here at Dark Sky Alpacas we've had a busy and eventful year. You may have seen one or two pics (!) of our new barn that we toiled over through Spring and Summer and finished just in time for the rain and snow!

Once we got tht finished, we rewarded ourselves with a fabulous trip to Peru to the Alpaca Fiesta which is held every 4 years in Arequipa. Guided by renowned alpaca judges Mike Safley and Amanda VandenBosch and the team from Quechua Benefit, we were extremely priviledged to take part in the Vicuña Chaccu up in the Peruvian Highlands (see the newsletter header photograph) and visit the school which the Quechua Benefit funds for children in need from the region. Along with fellow travellers, including Kate and Simon Brookes from the CCA, we also had the chance to visit one of the largest alpaca fibre production factories and see a stunning (alpaca only) fashion show.

All of which inspired us to take our first ever market stand at the recent Cornwall Christmas Market at the Royal Cornwall Showground. It was great to see so many of our alpaca friends there and to have so much interest from the public who were keen to learn more about alpacas and get to feel the raw fleece and products. Most of our products are quite a considered purchase and we were delighted to have some additional sales coming in after the show as special Christmas gifts.

On rainy days, Tom has been busy immersing himself in colour genetics and developing the Dark Sky Genie – a computer programme which helps you to work out the potential colour variants you could produce from mating different alpacas together. He's been asked to present to various regional groups across the country and to conferences in the USA aswell as featuring in alpaca publications as far afield as Australia – so we've finally got him to present to us at this year's AGM 😊



Christmas day 'poo Hoover' emptying



It was fabulous to 'bump into' Mark and Sam Norman from the CCA at the fashion show in Peru!



The Dark Sky stand at the Cornwall Christmas Market





On the show circuit, we were extremely proud of our team – particularly our young males Dark Sky Ziggy, Zoolander and Shaggy who won Supreme Champion Suri at the Dorset and Devon Halter shows and the Cornwall Fleece Show respectively. Dark Sky Ziggy was also National Light Male Suri Champion and Dark Sky Pinto Noir was National Grey Female Suri.



Continuing the show theme, both Tom and I are committee members for the BAS National Show so are in full flow with preparations for the move to our new venue at Stafford in March. The flagship Halter Show and Champion of Champions Fleece Show have both attracted a great level of entries and we hope that CCA members will once again be flying the flag for the South West! Inspired by the Cornwall Alpaca Show in 2023, we are also really pleased that Kate and a brilliant team of helpers will be part of the show demonstrating handling and training in the wider ‘world of alpacas’ features. We are hoping to attract lots of visitors from the local area in addition to alpaca enthusiasts from across the country.

Talking of BAS, don’t forget to register your cria on the BAS Pedigree Register – there’s a special offer running:

Free registrations

All existing and new members will be entitled to 20 free registrations of females or notification of males (this does not include the full registration of stud males) for the two years from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2026.

The Board hopes this will encourage members to register all the alpacas they breed, and encourage new or lapsed members to get their herd registration up to date. NB, Listing of non-breeding males destined for castration remain free of charge, and are not included in the 20 animal allocation.

You can also check out all the different BAS membership options on the [BAS-UK website](#)



Turning our attention to the CCA, it’s also been another busy year with really well supported events and our membership has grown to 67 members. Many thanks to all the committee members for putting on all the activities and a very warm **welcome to new joiners** – we hope you will enjoy and benefit from being part of association.

We kicked off the year as usual with our **AGM** by zoom closely followed by our **members Sunday Lunch** at the Plume of Feathers. Please do join us if you can for both of these this year – the AGM is again a zoom call on **Tuesday 28th January** and the lunch is on **Sunday 23rd February**.

The AGM is the time to review our activities and accounts, plan the next year’s calendar and also confirm the committee members. If you would like to be on the



committee or more involved in any way, please do let me know as we always welcome more helpers and new ideas ☺. In addition to the AGM business, this year we are extending the call to incorporate a **session on colour genetics** which Tom will run. This will include a demonstration of the Dark Sky Genie – a tool he has made so that it's easier to put theory into practice and help plan your breeding programme. If you'd like to know why your alpacas are the colours that they are – and the potential colour/s their cria could be – this is for you! Tom promises there will be no impossible to understand jargon and the session should work for both those completely new to colour genetics and people who have more experience - there will also be plenty of time for questions.

By contrast, the members lunch is simply a lovely time to catch up and chat with each other over some excellent food! Please let us know if you'd like to come along as soon as you can as we will need to confirm numbers.

A **birthing refresher** course was held by zoom this year as a *free event* and we also put on the **Fleece Education Day** for *members at no extra cost*. Many thanks to *Sarah Finch*, our honorary vet, for the former and to BAS Judge *Jay Holland* who was a great tutor for the education day, kindly hosted at Polgrain Alpacas by *Heather and David*.



The **Cornwall Fleece Show** which is open to all BAS members across the country was a sell out in 2024 with 70 entries. It was judged in July by Julia Corrigan-Stuart and CCA members who entered fared very well again – clearly displaying all that had been learned at the fleece education day ☺ - with some excellent scores and a haul of ribbons! Thanks again to *Heather and David* for hosting at Polgrain and to *Sandra, Abha and all the team of helpers* for making it happen.

This year we are hosting the Fleece Show at Dark Sky Alpacas on **Saturday July 19th** and I'm pleased to announce that our **judge will be Mary-Jo Smith**. Helping out at the fleece show is a great opportunity to see lots of beautiful fleeces up close and learn from how the judge is scoring them – so do let us know if you'd like to come along and get involved.

The annual **Vet Day** was held again in November at Carpalla Alpacas, kindly hosted by *Nigel, Margaret and Pippa* – and we had not just one but three excellent tutors for the day – many thanks to *Sarah, Charlotte and Teresa* for all their hard work preparing as well as delivering the event – there's a write up and some photos later in the newsletter.

I hope everyone who managed to attend the various events found them to be both useful and fun – for me getting together with other alpaca enthusiasts is always rewarding in and of itself as we always learn from and support each other. Hopefully you have also enjoyed our newsletters across the year – we love to feature stories and information from members, so please let us know if you would like to contribute to our next newsletter in the Spring.

The only thing we all agree that we missed was having a **halter show** this year - so you'll be pleased to know that it **will be back in 2025** and will take place on **Saturday 3rd May** at Griggs near St Austell.

The judge for the show will be revealed at the AGM on Jan 28th - another great reason to come along!

More information will follow with all the details from Teresa and the rest of the show committee who have been hard at work with all the planning – but in the meantime, we need your help!.....

STEWARDS AND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HALTER SHOW

To enable us to host the halter show we need volunteers to help on show day, ring steward, help with organising the class entrants, sort rosettes and setup/take down pens.

Even if you are not showing your alpacas, if you felt you could attend and help we would appreciate your input. It is a great opportunity to get up close to lots of alpacas, see how the show is run to British Alpaca Society rules and maybe prepare you for future showing.

If you are interested please contact Teresa Hawkin or Cathy Drage.

As we head into the New Year, the big question hanging in the alpaca world is what impact **Bluetongue** will have on our alpacas and on events scheduled around the country (including the National Show). Right now, the bottom line is that we don't know – we will enter into a 'vector free' period when the weather turns cold enough to eliminate the midges and DEFRA & APHA are considering their strategy for that period. We will bring you any new developments as soon as they emerge and in the meantime we can remain thankful for our location in the country, which will hopefully remain out of harm's way. As far as events and shows are concerned, we plan to crack on and keep everything crossed!

And with that, I wish you, your alpacas and llamas all a happy and healthy 2025!

Thank you for being part of the CCA and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Wendy Scott, CCA Chair

2024 VET DAY – write up by Sandra Muriel

This year's Vet Day held on 9th November and kindly hosted by Nigel and Margaret at Carpalla Alpacas, was again a very popular event for members. This year, instead of one vet, we had two, Sarah Finch and Charlotte Bain followed by our member Teresa Hawkin (Rosecraddoc Alpacas) gave a very informative talk on feed types and camelid digestion.

Subjects in the morning included prepping for winter and an update on the national situation regarding Bluetongue. Refreshments flowed and after lunch we all relocated to the barn to discuss body scoring, membrane checks and some husbandry. All members, those new to alpaca ownership and those who have established herds, all learnt something on the day and enjoyed the camaraderie.



CCA Planned Calendar of Events 2025

Events planned so far for 2025. We are also working with Sarah on options for a Birthing Refresher so please let us know if you would be interested in attending.



Tuesday 28th January

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Plus Presentation on Colour Genetics
by Tom Scott

Virtual meeting held by 'Zoom'

- Review 2024 activities and accounts & agree 2025 plans
- Confirm committee members and officers
- After the AGM business, a presentation on colour genetics for all those interested in how colour is inherited in alpacas



Sunday 23rd February

Members Dinner

*Lunch at The Plume of Feathers,
Mitchell TR8 5AX*

- An opportunity to meet, have a good chat and enjoy a lovely lunch
- Great for new members to get to know other alpaca and llama owners and for long standing members to have a good old catch up too



Saturday 3rd May

Halter Show

Held outside at Griggs, St Austell

PL26 7JH

- A show just for CCA members where your alpacas will be judged by a BAS Judge
- Great opportunity to get some show experience locally before entering an official show
- Good friendly competition amongst CCA members



Saturday 19th July

Cornwall Fleece Show

Judging at Dark Sky Alpacas,

St Breward PL30 4PG

- Enter the Cornwall Fleece show alongside BAS exhibitors from across the country
- Fleeces are judged by a BAS Judge and Champions are eligible to enter the National Champion of Champions show in March 2026



Late October

Vet Day

Held at Carpalla Alpacas, Foxhole

PL26 7FD

- Learn more about caring for your alpacas from experienced alpaca Vets
- Share practical experience and information with other alpaca breeders