



AUSTRALIAN SOUTH DEVONS

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022

WELCOME TO MY FINAL NEWSLETTER.

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What a topsy turvy year 2022 turned out to be (and that is how I started the December 2020 newsletter too.)

There have been major floods (in places where floods have happened previously as well as where the scale has been quite unexpected and devastating); unusual cold weather including snow, and where we are: supposedly in the hot wet tropical north; we have had half of our annual rainfall, so unless it buckets down from now till the end of the year, 2022 will go down as a very dry year.

At the AGM in Adelaide, I stepped down from my position as Communications Officer which means this will be my final newsletter and someone else will also be compiling the Review next year.

We simply have too much to do here, especially with our house renovations – at the moment the entire top floor is a building site, but at least we have the new roof on – which has only happened since we got back from Adelaide.

Daphne Lines will be editing the Newsletter from now on, so all

newsletter items should be sent direct to Daphne. Both her email address and phone number have been added to the panel on the front page of this newsletter.

Daphne and Kath McUtchen have access to the ASD Facebook page so either of them can add your posts to that page.

Most of the news for this edition is going to be Queensland news because that is what has either been sent to me or I have been able to participate in myself. If you want to see your news included in the newsletter – make sure the Newsletter editor is provided with the details.

We have show results from a Chinchilla show, plus Brisbane Royal.

We also have the sale report from the inaugural JAK South Devon Production Sale and a report from the Bendemeer Sale at Clermont in Qld which included South Devon composite bulls – as well as a report on our whistlestop guided tour around the property with John Burnett to see how South Devon genetics are being used in some of the most densely populated cattle country in Australia.

First up; a quick overview of our AGM trip to Adelaide.

There was a small but enthusiastic attendance in Adelaide for the AGM and dinner. It was disappointing that we couldn't have coincided the meeting with the steer competition, but dates for that and the JAK sale clashed and the Qld contingent bent over backwards to fit the trip to Adelaide in. James delivered bulls on his way to taking no. 2 son to a football carnival in Charleville; Kath headed in the opposite direction with no. 1 son for another sporting engagement, and Graham and I drove 1000 km home from the sale on Tuesday to check our cattle, wash and repack our clothes and be on a plane at 6.30am Friday for Adelaide.

The minutes of the meeting will cover election results and decisions made, so I will just mention here that the AGM in 2023 will be by Google or Zoom and the 2024 AGM will be held at Rockhampton during Beef Week which will be between the 5th and 11th May. This was moved by Daphne and seconded by me, and both of us would advise anyone who is even considering attending to do something about securing accommodation without too much delay. John Walsh usually stays at the Capricorn Motel 703 – 751 Bruce Hwy North Rockhampton, ph 07 49364600 – but you will need transport as it is a bit out of town.

At the dinner following the AGM, some very interesting old publications which had belonged to Roy Scragg were available for new ownership. I availed myself of a number of them and Graham has actually spent more time than I have reading them. It is extremely interesting to see that some of the things we are discussing today were being kicked around about 20 years ago, but there were a lot more members then, so my query is “why have we had such a drop in membership numbers?” We know there are many SD bulls in particular out there being used in commercial and small scale breeding operations, but the owners of these cattle obviously do not see any value in being a member of the SD Society. What can we do to change this, because we stand in grave danger of becoming an invisible breed unless we can change things rather promptly. And either we all need to be more proactive – not just the few members who are already out there competing on a regular basis – or we need to embark on a planned advertising campaign promoting the value of using SD genetics. One of our biggest problems in accessing media is the fact that we have such a small member base – about once a month papers like Qld Country Life feature inserts and campaigns on behalf of the numerically larger breeds (Angus, Brahman, Droughtmaster, Santa, Charolais, Charbray, Simmental, Brangus etc) which are paid for either by the Breed society itself or by members contributing according to their stud requirements. I know we only have a handful of members by comparison, but if we don’t make a much louder noise very soon, we will be consigned to “oh yes, I remember when there used to be South Devons around – wonder what happened to them?”

On to some very positive news.

KILDARE has been quietly building their customer base with the cattle they are supplying to the direct to the public outlet ‘Our Cow’ with buyers already asking for only Kildare South Devon beef. Rick might be one of our oldest members, but he has always been proactive and prepared to ‘think outside the box’ when it comes to promoting both his cattle and our breed.

Jambili had another very successful show season with their South Devon stud stock and their SD cross steers (in led, hoof and hook, and carcase competitions) culminating in them being awarded the High Point Exhibitor Trophy from Brisbane Ekka for the Stud earning the most points across all led and hoof and hook classes. This is a real feather in the Jambili cap as they took on all other breeds, and some very large studs.

Chinchilla Show was held in mid-May, with South Devons again represented by Kildare and Jambili Studs.

A smaller team than usual was taken but it was still a successful day.



Kildare's sole entry **Kildare Rio** (photo left) won his bull class and was then named **Senior and Grand Champion British Bull**. Jambili's sole stud entry **Jambili QP** won her class and was named **Res Senior Champion British Female**. The led steer section proved to be very successful for the South Devon breed with Jambili Twister



and Jambili Yella Terror taking 1st and 2nd respectively in the Lightweight class and Jambili Tricky awarded 1st in the Heavyweight class. **Jambili Tricky** then went on to be awarded **Champion Led Steer** and **Jambili Twister** receiving the **Reserve Champion** award. The reserve ribbon was especially exciting as Alannah (age 8) was leading him and this was her first broad ribbon. *Photo shows Jambili steers with Alannah and Twister on the left.*

2022 - Ekka Wrap Up (thanks Kath)

'After 2 cancellations we finally managed to get back to the Show Ring at the RNA Grounds in Brisbane for the Ekka. The weather gods certainly shone down upon us as the days were moderate and very well suited to the showing of cattle.

Wednesday the 3rd saw the Hoof Section of the 2022 Led Steer Competition, with the McUtchen Family exhibiting their 5 South Devon infused exhibits for 4 ribbons. Class 2 'Coaltrain' 4th, Class 6 'Twister' 2nd & 'Yella Terror' 3rd, Class 9 'Tricky' 2nd. This was a great achievement considering there were approx. 130 head entered and the steers were in the larger classes. All judging was streamed through Stocklive.

These steers were then sold and processed. The carcasses were judged and the winners announced on Saturday the 6th. McUtchen's class 9 steer '**Tricky**' won his carcass class and hung up **Res Champion Heavy Weight Carcass**, and their class 6 steer 'Yella Terror' placed 2nd, with Class 2 steer 'Coaltrain' placing 4th.

The South Devon Stud section was judged on Friday 5th August in Ring 5, the results were as follows:

Junior Heifer Class;

1st Kildare Dianna 114, 2nd Jambili Sarabi, 3rd Jambili Sleep'n Beauty.

Heifer

1st Jambili Red Ridinghood.

Senior Female Class

1st Jambili QP.

Champion Female

Jambili QP (photo right).



Junior Bull Class;

1st Jambili Salakaia-Loto, 2nd Kildare Salute & 3rd Kildare Snoopy.

Senior Bull Class;

1st Kildare Rio Grand, 2nd Jambili Rocokoco & 3rd Kildare Remarkable.



Champion Bull & Grand Champion Exhibit

Jambili Salakaia- Loto.

Thanks to those who came to support the South Devon breed by watching the judging either in person or from afar online.'

The inaugural JAK sale, held at Bell Showgrounds on Monday 5th September, was well attended by a committed number of people as seen by the stunning results. Kath has provided the following sale report.

'JAK Production Sale Success

September 5th heralded the holding of the inaugural JAK Production Sale at the Bell Showgrounds, Qld. The sale focused on pure bred South Devon Bulls offered by Jambili & Kildare South Devon Studs, Composite Bulls, cross bred heifers, and steers from Jambili. The 'A' of the JAK sale, Athlone had to withdraw their bull due to illness, so River will now be

shown on the North Qld Show Circuit next season and is no longer available for sale.

The day created great interest and was well supported by Buyers, Qld Promotional Group Members, local community members and online participants watching from across the country.

The sale itself had the usual ups and downs that the auction process produces.

JAK PRODUCTION SALE



Jambili Radradra

Registered Pure South Devon
EMA:139 P8:10 Rib:8 IMF:5.6

JAK PRODUCTION SALE



Kildare Rio Grand

Registered Pure South Devon
EMA:135 P8:21 Rib:15 IMF:7

22 of the 26 Bulls sold to Average \$8,350. The Highlights were **Jambili Radradra selling for \$20,000** and **Kildare Rio Grand selling for \$16,000**. Both were purchased by Burnett Grazing to be used in their bull breeding program. We wish the Burnett Family much success with their purchases and look forward to seeing their progeny in the coming years.

The \$20,000 purchase price for Radradra has caused a lot of discussion with a number of our long standing members unable to

recall anyone paying a higher price. Congratulations to The McUtchen Family of Jambili South Devons on their National Breed Record Price.

Volume purchaser of the day was the Groat Family from Injune, who selected 5 bulls for their breeding program for an average price of \$7,600.

The commercial composite cattle were offered by the McUtchen Family. Led steers averaged \$1800 and heifers \$1,550. The majority of steers were purchased on behalf of Dalby State High School, by led steer presenter extraordinaire Travis Luscombe. This is an exciting prospect for the JAK Sale and Jambili Stud as these steers will be shown all across Southern Queensland.

We look forward to many JAK Production Sales for years to come. The JAK team tells us that it is pencilled in to be held annually on the first Monday in September which makes the 2023 Sale scheduled for the 4th of September.'

South Devons Represented at 2022 Bendemeer Bull Sale

In early November, James & Kath McUtchen delivered the last of the JAK Sale Bulls to their new home with the Burnett Group at Clermont. The Burnetts had purchased 5 Bulls from the Jambili & Kildare Studs in September, including top priced bulls, a South Devon National Record Jambili Radradra and Stud Record Kildare Rio Grand. James & Kath were guests of John & Jan Burnett for their duration of their stay.

The delivery coincided with the Burnett Group's Bendemeer Bull Sale where they offered 60 Bulls including 40 of those with South Devon



Genetics. The Burnett Group use South Devons to produce composite Bulls, often crossing them with SD x Brahman Cows or straight Brahman Cows.

Photo left shows on of the Brahman x SD bulls.

The day was also attended by North Queensland Members Graham & Heather Lindsay from Athlone Stud. The SD members provided copies of the SD Review and Caps for interested attendees to take.

Perhaps the highlight of the afternoon was the impromptu tour of the 34,500 acre property Bendemeer offered by John Burnett to the four SD members.



Bendemeer is the property used for the Burnetts bull breeding herd and covers approx. 60,000 acres. This tour gave us a wonderful insight into how Radradra and Rio Grand will be utilised in the herd. **Not sure**

what we were discussing in the photo above, but it must have been important!



We were able to observe the South Devon x Cows with $\frac{3}{4}$ Calves at foot, and Brahman cows with their South Devon x Calves at Foot.

(Photo left shows a typical Bendemeer commercial cow in the paddock.)

Heather has her eye on one particular little bull

calf who is $\frac{3}{4}$ South Devon.

The following day saw John, James & Kath tour multiple properties owned by the Burnett Group. We travelled to Jo Jo (85,500 acres) where they currently had approx. 350 bulls waiting to go out with their cows including 2 pure bred Kildare South Devon Bulls, the Burnett Group operate with Multisite operation. We spent the majority of our day on the 168,000 acre property Frankfield. Here we were able to see the how the progeny is weaned and grown out to Bullocks before being sold.

The Burnett Group of properties cover approx. 500,000 acres and is used for cropping and cattle. During the few days we spent with John and Jan we only experienced a small portion of what they do. We appreciate the time which they took out of their busy schedule to show us their properties and their hospitality. If the opportunity every arose and it was able to be co-ordinated I would love to see the World Conference visit the Burnetts to gauge the scale of their operation and the number of cattle that they have.

The Lindsay Report on the Bendemeer sale trip; Early on 10th November, Graham and I drove out to the sale - it is only 4 hours from our place to Bendemeer, but it's a whole different world when it comes to quality of cattle country. We are 15 km from the coast with the attendant lush looking but often nutrient poor grass and known deficiencies in phosphorous, calcium and magnesium, whereas the Burnett enterprise is smack in the middle of excellent cattle country with a variety of grasses and legumes (most of which is the result of their planned property development). The Burnett Group is a large scale commercial cattle breeding operation using SD genetics (and participating in the Northern Cattle breeding programme with its focus on genomic breeding values, particularly in the areas of fertility, weight gain, temperament, and meat quality). There was a brief presentation on Genomic Breeding Values and the Northern Beef Programme immediately prior to the start of the sale.

To say Graham and I had cattle envy after our drive around inspecting the newborn composite calves (a couple of which I would really like to see again when they are a bit bigger) would be a massive understatement.

One thing that needs to be understood by we South Devon breeders is that most cattle owners (*I wrote cattlemen and the editing programme suggested a more inclusive term – politically correctness at every level!*) from the northern areas have an almost pathological dislike of hair on a beast. It doesn't matter how often you say, 'but you don't eat the hair,' they will still only do a cursory inspection of an animal with any length of hair and then pass on to the sleeker breeds. I truly have not worked out how to overcome this and it frustrates the heck out of me.

Fortunately, we have not encountered this bias in the showring with our crossbred steer. In fact, the judges were Brahman breeders and have all been very complimentary in their comments on the quality of the beast.

We recently sent four cull cows to the meatworks near Mackay and the staff at the unloading dock could not get over their size and condition. The youngest one was 8, a purebred SD who had decided to stop breeding (so she had to go) and weighed 800 kg (which is pretty well unheard of for cattle from this area). Apparently the staff commented on the shape of the rear ends – they're used to high content brahman and they are usually a much narrower profile, especially straight out of the paddock.



Anyway, back to my original point. We need to select for the quality (as in fineness) of the coats as well as the other desirable characteristics if we are to have a genuine hope of breaking into the northern cattle market – and statistically that is where the largest numbers of cattle in Australia are.



The calves in these three photos are by an Athlone bred $\frac{3}{4}$ SD $\frac{1}{4}$ brahman bull out of brahman type cows. We're hoping to have one of them ready as a led steer for next year and still have him going as an older steer at Beef 2024.

These are the type of calves that should do well in the tropical north with its ticks,

buffalo fly, heat, humidity, and everything else that goes with northern Australia. Breeders up here are waking up to the fact that they need to breed better quality meat and to do that they are slowly realizing that they need to use British or at least Euro blood (and that mostly happens through the purchase of bulls). We need to offer them a realistic alternative – not just a cheaper one. Ultra blacks are becoming popular as are Brangus - why can't we get our collective foot in the door and get

some more South Devons up here? Burnetts have been using South Devon genetics for quite some years and John in particular values the SD contribution to meat quality, fertility, and weight gain. Through the Northern Beef Group, they are compiling some interesting statistics and Genomic Breeding Values which we can only hope that some of the other participants see the Burnett figures and realize that it is the SD blood that is helping make them as good as they are. We as a breed must keep 'the pedal to the metal' and keep our breed in the eyes and minds of other cattlemen.

I know SD bulls are selling relatively well in the Southern states, but in order to raise our breed profile on a national basis, we have to lift the volume of bulls being sold into the major cattle producing areas. If we ever get to this enviable state, Qld SD producers do not produce enough bulls – hence my continued ear bashing on this issue. Do we as a breed want to be players in the mainstream, or are we happy to be considered a 'boutique breed' not suited for the larger market?

We always have copies of the Review in whichever vehicle we are in to hand out, and if someone says 'we want black bulls' I will point out the SD breeders who have black cattle. If someone insists on black, I'd rather they had black SD cattle. We only have about 20 head of SD now, so **IF** we ever get a market going up here, we need to be able to provide details of breeders with suitable cattle.

I also firmly believe that a yearling bull is a better buy so they can acclimatise before they are used. . In fact, my preference is to buy a weanling, and when we buy another bull, that is exactly what we will be doing. There is a huge adjustment that cattle from the south have to make, and we know from experience that the younger cattle have a much easier time during the transition. Over to you now. I've always been told that I try to run before I walk, so why should my promotion of our cattle be any different?

Here endeth my sermon – and if you are still reading – thank you!!

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported me in my endeavours as Newsletter Editor for the past few years and hope they show the same support to future editors.

Special 'Thanks' must go to John and Sue Harvey who have been my principal proof-readers for the whole time I have been editor – without them, you would have had some very grammatically incorrect reading.

Breaking news from John and Sue is that they have decided it is time to hang up their cattle breeding hats, although at this stage they will still be living on their property at Trentham. They have sold all of their South Devons and Torr Down stud will cease to exist, but there have been 2 new studs started up with Torr Down cattle. John and Sue have been long-time stalwarts of the South Devon breed and have worked tirelessly to promote both their cattle and the breed as a whole. They have been solid supporters of the Beef Week Open Days over the years and Torr Down bulls have been highly sought after by new and repeat buyers. A long time before Graham and I became involved with South Devons, Torr Down cattle were trucked up to Qld to participate in sales – no small journey even today. Graham and I only met John and Sue in 2012 or 2013 and it was an immediate case of 'opposites attract' because we have always had an extremely good relationship with them right from day one. I only wish we had met them a lot sooner in our journey into the South Devon world because we'd have had a lot more Torr Down blood in our herd – they're our sort of cattle and they have never disappointed us, even though we have dragged them from the middle of Victoria to the Western Downs of Queensland and then into the VERY different conditions of tropical North Queensland. We wish John and Sue a happy retirement and thank them for their invaluable contribution to South Devon breeding.

Kath McUtchen deserves huge thanks for the time and effort she has invested in sending me show reports and maintaining the Facebook page when I was having difficulties with access. Kath has been the mainstay of the Facebook page for most of the past year.

I should thank Graham for not complaining too much when I was doing SD stuff and he needed my help elsewhere.

Thanks also to David McDonald for his patience, which I have sorely tried in the last few months by making him wait, and wait, and wait, for this last newsletter.

Heather Lindsay (former newsletter editor)

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE, AND I WISH A HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE NEW YEAR TO ALL SOUTH DEVON BREEDERS AND SUPPORTERS.