

Press Release

27 April 2023

World class shearing at The Royal Bath & West Show

A long-established favourite on the competitive shearing circuit, this year the Royal Bath & West Show hosts an abundance of professional shearing talent across the classes. Including at least one world record holding shearer, Jon Roberts from Robertsacre Farm, Dartmoor.

Mr Roberts, who has recently returned from shearing on the Falkland Islands across several farms with numbers in excess of 50,000 sheep, holds the two-stand, eight-hour strong wool ewe world record, along with shearing partner Martin Howlett. The pair sheared a massive 1,075 ewes, beating the old record of 1,069.

So, what led Mr Roberts to take on the challenge?

“I was inspired to take on a record after seeing Matt Smith smash the nine-hour strong wool world record in 2016,” explains Mr Roberts. “It was the hardest thing I’ve ever done, but I wanted to see how far I could push my body and my mind. And I’m a better shearer for it, my pattern and style have definitely improved as a result.”

Mr Roberts shears around 20,000 sheep a year for UK clients, and alongside his wife Sophie and two young children Isla and Sky – who love getting muddy on the farm - operates a regenerative farming enterprise on Dartmoor.

The family run a flock of Perendale ewes and a small suckler herd on a rotational grazing system. The farm is developing a crossbred Merino ewe to enhance wool quality and add value to the product, while lambs and cattle fattened for meat are sold locally in meat boxes with provenance and quality at the heart of the brand.

“As a business we’re interested in delivering high quality product, both in terms of wool and meat, that adds margin and is sold locally to customers with whom we can develop a relationship. We like to know where our produce is going, and the people it is going to. That’s important to us.”

Mr Roberts is looking forward to a great couple of days of competition at the show. “I’ve been competing at the Royal Bath & West Show since 2008, and I love going out there trying to beat everyone,” he says.

Competitive shearing takes place on 2 and 3 June, with classes from Juniors to Blade Novice, to the prestigious Open and the English National. Cash prizes of up to £275 are on offer for placed competitors, and there’s still time to get involved as entries close on 23 May at 12pm. “While we’re all trying to beat each other, once the handpiece is put down, we’re mates, and I find it important mentally to spend social time with other shearers who are doing the hard graft of day-to-day shearing - it’s a community.”

- The Royal Bath & West Show takes place on 1-3 June 2023 at The Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6QN. Competition entries can be made by visiting <https://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show/competitions>
- Book show tickets here: <https://www.bathandwest.com/tickets>
- Entries for shearing close on 23 May 2023 at 12pm. Entry forms are available here: <https://www.bathandwest.com/sheep-shearing>

Editors' notes.

About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture, and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

- Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
- Technical events and seminars
- Practical farming advice and conferences
- Countryside education
- Diversification advice for farmers
- Education for children
- A marketplace for countryside products

The Society continues to deliver a wonderful mix of established traditional exhibits through to the latest energy technology and contemporary entertainment.

The entertainment and features around the 240-acre site ensure enjoyment for every member of the family and include attractions that are spectacular to watch, educational, inspirational, "hands on" or just plain fun.

