

OPEN FARM SUNDAY at Hill Farm

As part of the Open Farm Sunday events nationwide, Hill Farm at Priors Hardwick opened its gates to allow families and children to get hands on experience of life on a farm. Hill Farm specialises in sheep farming and the demonstrations were centred around this.

A shearing demonstration explained how the shearer can get the fleece off in one take, using what is now the most common New Zealand Godfrey Bowen method. Notice all the Southern Hemisphere connections! A shearer can expect about £1.30 per sheep sheared, they take him a minute each, and thus he could do about 250 in a

day! However enough wool for a jumper might only cost between 5p and 8p.

British wool gets used for carpets and socks because it is hardwearing because of our climate! It was fascinating to watch this essential craft that has been handed down the centuries, and becomes such a common commodity. Like shoeing a horse it cannot be done in any other way, right here on our doorstep in the Four Shires.

Hugh Darbishire also gave a guided tour of his 450 acre farm on the back of a trailer, to see the wheat and barley growing, to feed his

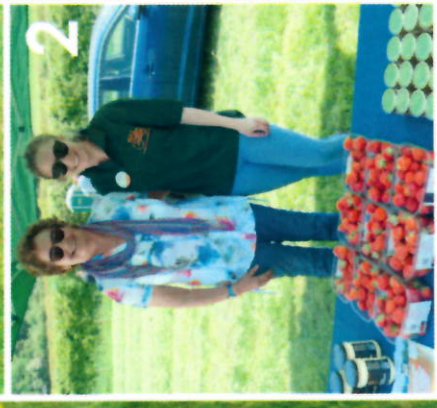
animals and make bread and beer, oilseed rape, wild birds, managed hedgerows to encourage birds, and wild flowers for bees for honey. Worms are encouraged to aerate the soil, and thus becomes an organic whole!

Hill Farm has been run by the same family since 1938.

*words and pictures
Jonathan Wain*



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- 1: the shepherd's hut
- 2: Jenny & Emily Hayward
- 3: Ollie Newbury, Amber Tilleard & Ed Darbishire with Asada lamb
- 4: Jenny Hayward
- 5: in the trailer
- 6: Tree Thurston & Amanda McCurdie
- 7: Annie Scott & Claire Gregson



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