

# Birthday Surprise brings Show Success



*Leos Pride / Anni-frid Champion and  
Leos Pride / Nelson Reserve Champion  
at Moreton-in-Marsh 2003*

IN 1994 housewife and busy mother of three Betty Ellis faced the annual conundrum of just what to buy husband David as a birthday present?

The solution, a total surprise to a delighted David, was one that was to lead to national success in the showing for the Ellis family and make Betty one of the most popular and successful members of the Hereford Society!

Two pedigree Herefords heifers, David's birthday surprise, laid the foundations of one of the most successful small pedigree herds in Britain, which in 2010 achieved the remarkable double of winning both the Hereford Poll Bull and Hereford Bull of the Year awards.

Betty takes up the story of those Hereford heifers that made for a memorable birthday surprise.

"At the time our eldest daughter Jacqueline, who had trained at agricultural college, was working for Genus and suggested some Hereford cattle. An excellent idea as David, since being a young boy with his father on the farm, had always admired the breed, but they were always just out of his reach.

"So our search began, and soon afterwards we purchased Alice and Violet at eleven months old, our first two heifers and the foundations of all our show success from Mrs Hazel Timmis of MJ



*Betty Ellis with a selection of awards won by one of the smallest, but most admired Hereford herds.*

*Betty is a former Secretary and currently the Vice-President of the North of England Hereford Breeders' Association.*

& HM Timmis, Shraden Herefords, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

"Our next plan was then to find suitable bulls to put them in calf, this fell to Jacqueline and we

*By Rodney Magowan,  
Press & PR Agency*



*Leos Pride I Elisia seen here at The Royal Show, Stoneleigh in 1999 is still in the herd having produced equally impressive calves that brought home numerous awards for David and Betty Ellis. For example, her bull calf "Vanquish" aged 13 months took the Hereford Junior Bull Championship at the Royal Show, the Royal Welsh and the Great Yorkshire Shows before being sold to the Cameron family for their Baldinnie Herd in Fife. The very prolific Leos Pride I Elisia is a daughter of "Violet", one of the foundation heifers bought as a surprise birthday present for David Ellis in 1994.*

sourced two sires, Seaconpoll I Rampage bred by Colin Christie in Northern Ireland out of Seaconpoll I Yankee Lady a tremendous cow unbeaten in the show ring and by a bull called Gladwyne I Skywalker out of Canada. We used this sire on Violet and the resulting Calf was Leos Pride I Elisia, the first calf to be born on this farm in over 30 years.

"The other sire we chose was Koanui Blueprint, a New Zealand bred bull with particularly good EBV's out of a very well known cow Koanui Cynthia 97 by the famous American sire BT Butler 452M. The resulting calf was Leo's Pride I Craimer, who was later purchased by Daphne Ferrier of Pembrokeshire and went on to have many successes in the show ring."

Betty remembers from the beginning that "Despite not coming from a farming background I took it upon myself to get involved in the Herefords as it became obvious to me that, although having a keen interest in the cows, David's business and motorsport activities took up most of his time"

Betty goes on to say, "You know at first I was so nervous just walking through cattle in the field, even docile Herefords, but soon realised that working with livestock is fascinating and rewarding".

"For the first few years of showing we had very little knowledge of what show preparation was all about. At this time Jacqueline had a work colleague, Fraser Cormack, who had travelled extensively showing and preparing Herefords

internationally so we approached and asked him to take on the role.

"Thanks to Fraser's patience I picked up the necessary skills and soon found preparing stock for showing a pleasure.

"Well you can imagine our delight when in 1997 at the Royal Show on a first entry into the showing Leo's Pride I Elisia aged 17 months took the Reserve Junior Championship. Indeed she went on to win at nine of the 10 shows we

supported that year and concluded this with the National Poll Female award. From then on the Ellis family were well and truly bitten by the Hereford breeding and showing bug!" Betty admitted.

Following on from this Elisia, in 1999, as a first calf heifer with heifer calf at foot when judged by Dave Hasson of Ontario achieved the ultimate accolade of Supreme Champion at the Royal Show Stoneleigh, the first time in over a hundred years of the show's history where a female had stood above the male.

"All the family are equally enthusiastic about breeding pedigree Herefords, the ultimate terminal sire for producing beef that makes a premium price."

With Leos Pride I Ellis having 'done the double' and won both the Hereford Poll Bull and Bull of the Year trophies in 2010 Betty Ellis and family are now firmly in the national spotlight.

Many fellow breeders are clearly amazed and impressed to learn that so much success has been achieved with a herd of only nine Herefords. Clearly by selecting for stock with a real presence in the showing and attention to detail Betty and family have achieved almost all their ambitions as exhibitors.

At the same time the stock produced have found a ready market on farms as far afield as Aberdeen, Argyll and Fife.

"That judges are impressed is pleasing, but to have other farmers come back again for another bull from us really shows we are on the right lines," Betty added.

The younger generation of the Ellis family



*Mrs Betty Ellis, centre, daughter Jane and son John were clearly delighted to win the 2010 Hereford Poll Bull and Bull of the Year Competitions with Leos Pride I Ellis.*

have clearly inherited Betty's enthusiasm for doing the job right as son John completed a successful professional rugby league career in several clubs in the U.K plus a year in Australia and represented England at touch rugby in 1999.

Now back home and lending a helping hand with the Herefords John is still playing, but purely for pleasure, this time with top amateur side St Patrick's Rugby League Club in Wigan, one of the oldest and most respected in the sport.

Jacqueline now lives in New Zealand working in the agricultural industry and still continues to support the herd's success. She looks forward to setting up another herd in New Zealand, a country offering more opportunities due to land



"Alice" and "Violet", the two heifers bought as a birthday surprise by Betty for husband David in 1994, were the foundation stock of the highly successful Leos Pride Hereford Herd.



Leos Pride I Vanquish at the 2002 Royal Show, Stoneleigh, was bred from "Elisia", a daughter of foundation heifer Violet.

availability and the scale of the farming industry.

The youngest member of the Ellis family, Jane, is well known to many in the farming community not only for helping exhibit cattle, but also as a member of a top ABBA tribute band.

"There are over 80 such tribute bands across the UK, but our ABBA Forever band is recognised not just in the British Isles, but in Sweden as one of the very best," explained Jane, who runs this entertainment business with her husband.

"Kept busy year round with concerts

nationwide, we also played this past year at the Hereford Cattle Society's European Conference Gala Dinner. An opportunity for friends in the pedigree world to see me in a very different role!" Jane noted.

Looking ahead the Ellis family have their sights set on further success and aspire to achieve an interbreed award.

"Showing cattle is not the way to a large income, but it is the route to a great deal of enjoyment and the opportunity to make good friends all across the UK. There is a special satisfaction in breeding the ultimate British beef breed, the Hereford, and I hope to continue as long as I am able," confirmed Betty Ellis

# Leo's Pride Herefords

Est 1994



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Hello My name is "Ellis"  
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of the Year and Poll  
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Many thanks to all our customers past & present

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