Camelids Chronicle

NEWS-SHEET OF BRITISH CAMELIDS LTD., OWNERS AND BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Letter from the Chairman of the Steering Committee

Who would have thought just 18 months ago when the five of us sat at Keele Service Station drinking our coffee and talking about setting up British Camelids that today we would have over 100 members. So much has happened, we have made mistakes, but we have learnt from them.

I think you will agree that the Camelids Chronicle has been a tremendous success and thanks for that must go to Pat Bentley. Owing to pressure of business she has decided to hand this job on and I think you will all join with me in thanking her very much indeed for all the hard work she has put into it. "Well done Pat".

We have found a 'volunteer' to take on this job, so I should like to introduce you to Mandi Hook, who with her husband Derek and two very small sons live in the most idyllic spot in the Scottish Borders on the shore of St. Mary's Loch, together with a batchelor herd of llamas. So on her behalf I beseech you to send her any articles, information, experiences (funny or otherwise), photographs, letters, or anything you think might be of interest to other readers, and as Mandi says "this is your magazine so please help to fill it!"

Peter Knowles-Brown.

We wish to welcome the following new members to the association:-

Mrs. E.Boothroyd, Wakefield, West York. Mrs. J. Bryden, Epping, Essex. Mr. R. Byng, Edenbridge, Kent. Dr. J. Cohen, Bromsgrove, Worcs. Mr.& Mrs. M. Dalton, Hayling Island, Hants. Mrs. E.M. Dawson, Ffestiniog, Gwynedd. Mrs. J.M. Denman, Ramsgate, Kent. Mrs. S. Dennis, Blandford, Dorset. Mrs. S. Dickinson, Leek, Staffordshire. Mrs. M. Fry, Grantham, Lincolnshire. Mrs. C. Gripp, Melton Mowbray, Leics. Mr. W. Harrison, Wem, Shropshire. Mrs. A.A. Hase, Fethard, Co. Tipperary. Mr. B. Hewlett, Brentwood, Essex. Mrs. E. Kerr, Berwick, Northumberland. Mr. C.W.J.Kingston, Douglas, Isle of Man.

Mr. H. McKay, Hope-under-Dinmore,Herts.
Miss M. Lee, Escley, Herefordshire.
Mr. T. Mursell, Billingshurst, Sussex.
Miss Y. Parfett, Reading, Berkshire.
Mrs. D.M.Pulvertaft, Newton Abbot, Devon.
Mrs. S. Rapp, Church Stoke, Powys.
Mr.& Mrs. J. Roe, Mold, Clwyd.
Miss C. Sainsbury, Pontepool, Gwent.
Mrs. M. Rosenberg, Winkleigh, Devon.
Mr. P. Shepherd, Belper, Derbyshire.
Miss A.K. Shrigley, Torrance, Glasgow.
Mr. J. Smith, Barnet, Hertfordshire.
Mrs. C.P. Vendryes, Bromley, Kent.
Mr. D. Wallis, Tarporley, Cheshire.
Mrs. A. Wood, Matfield, Kent.

INVITATIONS 1989

Early April - Spring visit to Paul & Judy Rose. Llamas & Rare Breeds. September - Visit to Syke House Alpacas, Cumbria. Precise dates nearer the time.

MAY WE ALL HAVE A JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND AN EVENTFUL NEW YEAR - HERE'S TO 1989.

Pat Bentley.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

The first year of British Camelids Ltd., will be completed in March 1989 and at the A.G.M. on March 19th. the new committee will be elected. Before then therefore, postal voting must take place. Please will volunteers and nominees forward names to the secretary to arrive no later than the last day of January 1989. Now is the time to do something about it and offer your services to the association.

Above all else enthusiasm is needed, and if that can be combined with skills in or knowledge of business administration, finance, agriculture, stud book administration, marketing, publicity and advertising, entertainment, showing, etc. so much the better. - We all know the sort of people we need.

Committee members should be prepared to serve a maximum of three years.

All positions are unpaid though some expenses will be reimbursed.

Note - The rules allow for a secretary to be a non-member and to be salaried (though this is hardly possible at this time). Success at Lama Sale

Members of the Steering Committee manned

a small stand at the lama sale to publicise Association, answer questions and the new members. The stand was recruit frantically busy all afternoon. Nine new members enrolled, Camelids Chronicle sold like hot cakes and many people went away a little bit wiser about Camelids, the pleasures of owning them and their future in farming.

Publicity Boost

The recent plethora of media attention has done much to highlight the growing interest in lama fibre production. I have been amazed how many people read the Daily Telegraph, and for how long after the day of publication it is read. The postal strike only interrupted the flow of enquiries and until very recently the odd letter still arrived-"I read recently in the D.T."- one of the last came from India.

First came the fortune seekers after the mythical £1000 fleece- though most people "knew that must be nonsense". Others wanted beautiful lawn mowers which lamas really are not-unless one particularly wants a neatly mown perimeter with a dung heap in the middle. The great majority were interested in the animals as pets for fibre or as an agricultural prospect. It would seem to be only the shortage of animals in the country which is preventing many more people owning llama, guanaco and alpaca. The work of the association is therefore of increasing importance if it is effectively to watch over the welfare of these lovely animals.

Camelids Chronicle has a small subscription list of people in the U.K. Canada, USA, France and Australia and the information edition (the expensive one!) has been sent to a great many addresses in the U.K., Northern Ireland and overseas.

CHEZ LINDA JOHNSON, RUFFET'S WOOD.

On November 6th. an assorted collection of us llamophiles accepted Linda Johnson's kind invitation to a Gossip Session at her house in Chipstead. As ordered by our Chairman, the day revealed itself to be of sympathetic climatic temperament, the sun shining gently throughout, counteracting a crisp nip in the air. Most of us arrived at mid morning, to be welcomed in her newly completed Medieval barn with a cup of coffee and a biscuit (or in my case several, when I thought no-one was looking). We had ample introduce ourselves to opportunity to newcomers, who were various nervous wondering apprehensively what they had committed themselves to. This led smoothly into the liquid refreshment, which geared systems up for the alimentary our scrumptious lunch of Boeuf Bourgignon, baked potatoes and vegetables, cooked solely by Linda and served impeccably by a pair of waiters who really knew their job, one of whom bore a startling resemblance to Keith, her husband.

Replete we staggered to our feet and split into two Squads to admire the animals. One squad lurched through the herbaceous Maternity section, the towards border comprising Belinda, with her gorgeous month old son Rupert, and her daughter Lucy, with her new son who as yet had no name, being a mere one day old. We gathered Linda had had a little talk to her a few days before, explaining the situation, asking for her cooperation, which was obligingly forthcoming. (I assume it was persuasion, and not squad force..?) The beat an other indeterminate pathway towards Biggles, Belinda's previous son, and Josephine, a stunning new acquisition from the lama auction. She was a llama, with all the good points of both her parents. Julian, Linda's vet was flushed out from his hiding place behind the barn door, whence he gave a brief anatomy lesson aided by a map of a llama he had pinned to the wall, and Josephine, whom he rather wished he could have done. She had other ideas, a slight altercation breaking out between the two of them. He kept cool, maintaining a professional exterior, finally completing his task. She was far too well brought up to spit though!

When we had seen the livestock, we all repaired to the barn for some tea and cake, followed by the' Ask Uncle Julian' spot. The

intrepid vet was strapped to a stool in the middle of the floor, the exit blocked, and those of us who had not had to leave early settled on chairs in front of him with our queries at the ready. He parried them all smoothly, not breaking down once. A lot of people appreciated this session very much, having a chance to learn about all sorts of little mysteries which had previously baffled or intimidated them, and it is apparent that more of these sessions would be greatly welcomed.

At dusk the party broke up, Julian not being hindered in his dash to freedom. It was lovely to see some completely new faces amongst the throng, and we hope we will see them again. I'm sure everyone will join me in awarding Linda 'Woman Of The Day' award, and issuing hearty thanks to both her and Keith for all their hard work, and to Julian for giving up some valuable free time to devote to us. (A profit of £82 was made on the day). Jenny Cobb.

CO-OPERATIVE PROSPECTS.

Report of a meeting between a representative of the Co-operative Development Agency and members of British Camelids Ltd. at the Crossroads Hotel, Weedon, Northants. On Wed. 19th. Oct. 1988. Guest Mr. Cyril Towse, Speaker: Marketing Consultant,

Present: Mrs. Pat Bentley Mrs. U. Dawes

- Mr. John Woodley Mrs. Yvonne Parfett
- Mrs.Jenny Cobb
- Mr. S. Wells
- Mr. Mike Leyburn
- Mr.& Mrs. Colin Campbell

Objective: To discuss the possibility of establishing a co-operative through which Camelid owners and breeders in Britain could market their fibre.

Mrs. Pat Bentley opened the meeting by introducing Mr. Towse and inviting him to describe the background to his organisation and the ways in which it might help members of British Camelids Ltd.

The Co-operative Development Agency (CDA) is an advisory body, set up by Parliament in 1978 with all party support, to promote the co-operative sector. It is funded jointly by the DTI and the DOE.

It represents and promotes the interests of co-operatives to central and local government and other organisations. The CDA covers the whole of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

An important part of its role is to provide co-operative business options and a

registration service for these. It can provide training in all aspects of cooperative working. In liaison with other national bodies, the CDA is able to advise marketing groups about formation and the early operational stages of their business. Mr. Towse went on on explain the structure and role of co-operatives. He stressed the following points:-

- 1. They are non-profit making and non-taxed.
- 2. Each member, irrespective of size, has one vote.
- 3. They are organisations which carry out the wishes of the members.
- 4. The co-operative, as such, does not trade.
- 5. All assets are held jointly by the members.
- 6. The co-operative carries limited liability normally £1 per member.
- 7. The co-opertive is funded and managed by the members and run by an elected committee.
- 8. There is a statutory requirement for a secretary and Chairperson.
- 9. Membership is by application and the members make all decisions.
- 10 The minimum number of members required to set up a co- op is seven. All members, including the seven founders, have the same status.
- 11 A members agreement must be drawn up.
- 12 The basic cost of establishing a co-op is £200.

A lively discussion took place ranging from topics such as whether Camelids should be kept for fibre at all to the possibility of obtaining financial support for a fibre feasibility study.

In conclusion, Cyril Towse expressed his enthusiasm for the idea of a Camelid fibre co-operative and his optimism that support would be forthcoming.

He undertook:

- a) To contact the Chief Executive of Food From Britain to investigate possible funding for a feasibility study into the establishment of a fibre co-op.
- b) To contact the Shirley Institute in Manchester, which is heavily involved in natural fibre research, to obtain their support.
- c) To consult with the Public Relations and Publicity Department of his organis ation to obtain their support for a publicity campaign as and when it is decided to establish a co-operative.

Mr. Towse agreed to report back to a further meeting, at 1.00 pm. on Sunday 11th. December 1988 at the Crossroads Hotel, High Street, Weedon, Northamptonshire. At the junction of the A5 and the A45.

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INBREEDING IN

CAMELIDS

By Peter Scott

MSc; BVSC, MRCVS, Mi Biol.



The serious breeding of livestock is often based on controlled inbreeding referred to as linebreeding where a line is established on a foundation sire or dam. This is followed when a particular aim is in mind based on a character shown by that line, for the camelid breeder that may be fibre quantity and quality.

fibre quantity and quality. The aim of line breeding is to reduce the variability in the gene pool and concentrate particular the factor desired. This contrasts with the zoo management of a population of wild animals where the aim is to maintain the variability of the gene pool that where possible making sure a11 "Founders" contribute to genetic the variability of the species in captivity.

Unfortunately in choosing to go the way of the commercial farmer the camelid breeder is starting out with a diminished population and relatively small gene pool (until it becomes much easier to bring in new stock pool). and enlarge the gene Ι say unfortunately because the pool seems to have already a number of likely within it conditions. Further selection inherited which is inevitably needs to be done with caution and determination, the urge to use a stud with very good fibre but which has produced offspring which appear to have faults which may be inherited must be stemmed.

Reports from the USA are that the level of inbreeding at present is causing congenital deformities to be seen quite commonly. These are of varying severities and it is very important for the "national herd" to be managed properly. Unfortunately there seems to be no data on hereditability of the various problems so all that can be said is that problems should be recorded and when they occur the breeding line should be investigated. This touches on other areas such as identification and the maintenance of a stud book, having a half dozen "Alfie's" or three B7's is useless, an indelible system is needed.

Because of the profligate nature of the camelid male (and human do I hear some say) the genes of an active male can be spread much more widely through a population than those of a female. Accordingly keeping records of sires is vitally important, this

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requires a significant degree of openness but is essential to avoid the spreading of undesirable traits through the animal population.

It is important to understand the terminology of the potential results of inbreeding. Congenital conditions are those which are present at birth, they may be hereditary or they may be due to the effect of environment, feeding or disease. Hereditary condition are those passed from one or both of the parents to the offspring. they are not necessarily congenital since certain conditions may develop later in life. At this time I know of no conclusive of the conditions evidence that any mentioned are hereditary, one can at this stage only base comments on knowledge of other species.

Umbilical hernias of various sizes are common but the majority close over, the camelid have a small omental bursa so there is little likelihood of the omentum (known to vet studies as the abdominal policeman) trapped and subsequently getting strangulated, usually there is just fluid present. If the hernia is still present when the animal has finished growing it can usually be easily repaired surgically. Generally this can be forecast if the swelling is still present after 3 m.o. Large hernias may require implantation of steel or nylon mesh but these are very rare.

Atresia ani is reported to be common in Peru. In this condition which is also seen quite commonly in sheep the rectum is closed off before it reaches the skin, consequently there is no anus. Often these can be corrected surgically but where the anal sphincter is not formed the animal needs to be watched to ensure it does not become soiled due to continually dropping faeces.

A related condition to atresia ani was reported by Murray Fowler where a female which didn't conceive on investigation did not have a patent vagina, the uterus was closed off and filled with fluid. When investigated surgically the animal was found to have no vagina at all and so her ovaries were removed and the uterine efluid drained.

Cryptorchids (animals with one or both testicles not fully descended into the scrotum) are found, although the majority of these retained testicles are not actually intrabdominal but are only a few inches from the right place, usually they can be found between the scrotum and the inguinal ring in the tissues alongside the penis. In this type of situation the testes are probably at least partially functional, in with fully retained testicles horses fertility is usually reduced because the testis is not properly developed due to the higher abdominal temperatures.

Angular Limb Deformities have been studied in one closed herd in a zoo, the main sign is an outward deviation of the limb below the knee, animals left to grow left with untreated were knees which overlapped and traumatised each other resulting in skin lesions. The condition was seen at birth and in others it developed at 2-6 months old. The condition can be corrected surgically.

Ventricular Septal Defects have been seen in a small number of animals but may be more common than we know because few animals are submitted for detailed post mortems, particularly newborns where the condition is probably more common.

Choanal atresia (in animals with this type of defect the oropharynx is separated from the nasal cavity by a membrane) this is usually lethal since the baby camelid is almost an obligate nasal breather (as is also the adult since the anatomy is the same). Affected babies (or are we agreed on cria) don't often last long, they have severe breathing difficulties and problems suckling. When inhaling they fill the mouth and puff out their cheeks with air, they then close the mouth and pull in the cheeks to squeeze the air past the soft palate and into the trachea. A small number of animals have been successfully corrected surgically but this is a difficult operation depending at least partially for success on rapid diagnosis and treatment.

Other problems which may have an inherited component might include failure to conceive, foetal death at any stage (philosophical discussions on the question of the inheritance of infertility to the editor please!), and metabolic disorders.

As with other articles in the series the author would like some feedback, if you have any information on these or other conditions share it with us.

Peter Scott

LAMA SALE

The first public auction of lamas took place at Stoneleigh on October 12th. when Pam and Gerald Walker offered for sale a selection of their home-bred stock and animals imported from Europe.

The huge hall somewhat dwarfed proceedings but created a quiet atmosphere no doubt greatly appreciated by the animals. The vast majority of those attending were interested onlookers, but there were enough buyers. They had come well prepared and resisted any attempt to engender excitement into the bidding; it began slowly and remained deliberate throughout the sale.

The 19 llamas averaged 3255 gns. The top price of 5,500 gns. was paid for a female with female calf at foot. Males made between 450 gns. and 3000 gns., three animals failed to reach their reserve figure. Of the seven guanaco offered the five females made between 3000 gns. and 5,500 gns.- this for a female with female calf. One male sold for a 1000 gns. the other failed to reach its reserve. Seven alpacas were offered though five failed to reach their reserve figure. A mature female sold for 9000 gns.. An immature male sold for 3000 gns.

The big surprise of the day was the prices paid for llama guanaco cross-breeds. A female with female calf at foot went for 6000 gns. - all females made over 3000 gns.. The only male sold for 900 gns.. It is to be hoped that these prices do not encourage the breeding of more of the same.

Concern that many animals would go to overseas buyers were unfounded, only three will be lost from the national herd though one was a fine, young, imported male who, at 1300 gns., was not expensive.

Great credit is due to the Walkers and their staff who must have worked hard and long to reach the point at which each beautifully groomed animal could be led from the gloom onto the brightly lit dais with no more that a second glance at the sea of faces which confronted them. They have shown that it can be done, the buyers showed that it was worth doing and owners and potential owners will be glad to have a guide on the vexed question of price.

Pat Bentley.



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ALPACA IMPORTS?

News has come to our attention of a potential importation of 1000 alpacas from Zealand. It seems Chili via New a complicated exercise fraught with risk, the association will keep an eye on developments and report more definite news when it is available.

OBSERVATIONS ON CHILEAN CAMELIDS RESULTING FROM A RECENT TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA.

At the end of September I was fortunate to be able to make a business trip to Chile in connection with my work with sheep. At the end of my visit I spent two days in Region 1 (the far north of the country on the Peruvian/Bolivian frontier) finding out what I could about the local camelids.

General

95% of the Camelids in Chile are kept in the Altiplano (4,000 metres) by the local peasant farmers. A few larger farmers have small herds of Llamas and alpacas in the lowlands, mainly with the idea of exporting them in the future. The peasant farmers have mixed herds of between ten and one hundred mixed alpacas and llamas (60% llamas, 40% alpacas), but in general these do not interbreed. The males run with the females throughout the year. Some cross breeds can. however, be observed and the local people consider that from time to time vicuna and guanaco males move into the domesticated flocks at night and serve the odd female. Nutrition is the main factor determining camelid reproduction, if rainfall is good the animals condition improves due to better grazing and thus more calves are born. The peasants do not have the resources to buy any hay or concentrates for their animals. Herds of wild guanaco occur throughout the length of the country in the Altiplano, but they are most numerous in the far south del Fuego/Patagonia). Chilean (Tierra guanacos are invariably of the pale coloured variety unlike the dark type often seen in the U.K. There are some herd of wild Vicuna in the north and the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture has a vicuna conservation project near Arica. Because of the low reproduction rate, due to suboptimal nutrition, the peasants keep the majority of the female calves born, but sell most surplus males for meat since castration is not practised. Peasant income from camelids is considered to be low and may be divided into 60% sale and home consumption of animals for meat and 40% from sale of fibre. Where camelids are farmed (rather than being kept by peasants) males commence

breeding at between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 years of age, females are generally mated for the first these little younger, under time a conditions the males are kept separate from the females except at mating periods. Live weight and size would seem to be a more important factor in determining time of first breeding rather than age. Inbreeding in the camelids kept be peasants is thought to be a serious problem as there is little or no selection of unrelated or improved males as herd sires. Short or non-existent ears and missing toes are a sign of inbreeding. In peasant flocks the pieces of coloured wool attached to the animals ears decorations for festivals are not identification markers. The owner identifies his animals with a token attached to a string around the neck.

Peru and Bolivia

Due to the very serious political problems in Peru there are now many terrorists in the Altiplano. Recently many camelids were shot by the terrorists at the Peruvian High Altitude Animal (Camelid) Research Station near Puno and several of the senior qualified staff are likely to leave as a result. The national crisis shows no sign of improvement. Bolivia is considered to be very under-developed with respect to livestock production and in contrast to Chile and Peru has few, if any, animal projects. Both countries have endemic Foot and Mouth disease and have a ban on the export of camelids.

Camelid Exports From Chile. Chile is the only South American country prepared to export camelids. It is now considered to be free from Foot and Mouth disease, but the FAO country disease status report still has Chile as a country not free from the reovirus Blue Tongue. The Chilean veterinary authorities however, consider that the country is free of Blue Tongue and as a result forbid vaccination. Excellent modern quarantine facilities exist near the port of Arica for the export of camelids and one thousand alpacas are at present awaiting export to New Zealand. It would appear that Zealand is prepared to test New or vaccinatethe animals for Blue Tongue during transit by ship. Small numbers of both 11amas and alpacas are now awaiting final clearance for Foot and Mouth before export to the U.S.A.

Colin Campbell.

Note-The animals mentioned here as awaiting transport to New Zealand are not the ones destined to be re-exported from New Zealand to England. Ed.

LETTERS

Dear Camelids Chronicle,

First may I, through the Chronicle, express Judy's and my sincerest thanks to Rosemary Walker and to Mr. Mrs. Derek Williams for extending such hospitality to the Association at Midway Manor on the 24th. August. I know that we will be echoing the voices of many when we say how much we enjoyed the visit and the meeting.

The turnout, particularly as it was midweek, and the animated discussions were ample evidence of the need and members' desire for more, regular meetings. I would like to suggest that one such meeting be held at least quarterly with the formal AGM making a fifth meeting. I would like to see at least two of these meetings being without formal business.

There having being meetings now at two very established and fine Llama establishments, members may be reticent in coming forward as hosts, so may Judy and I set the ball rolling ... We have only four (very lovable) Llamas to show, but we would be delighted to host a meeting. Perhaps members would be interested in combining this with a visit to Joe Henson's very fine (alas llamaless) Rare Breeds Centre which is very near us.

May I also offer a little food for thought prior to the AGM ...

Membership Fees: I believe that they are far too low for the Association to be able to progress constructively and to offer positive benefits for the membership. £10 is not an economic figure for membership of anything in the 1980's.

I would like to see either a universal increase to at least £35 per member or preferably a simple structure, such as ... £15 for non-owners (£10.00 joining fee).

£35 for private owners(£20.00 joining fee). £75 for commercial owners - those who make a living from camelids. (£20.00 joining fee).

I find it hard to believe that people would find these fees unacceptable providing the money is well spent. Just how it would be spent lies in deeper discussion of the long term aims of the Association. The meetings I have attended have not had too much discussion on those. Sponsoring research and providing members with thorough information packs, would be two of my suggestions.

Finally in the discussion that took place at the last meeting concerning the heavy cost of the newsletter, I feel it was unfortunate that a most important factor was ignored. Typesetting and printing can be expensive and we must work to reduce these costs, but it should be remembered that first comes the huge amount of work and

energy needed to put a newsletter together and this is being provided entirely free of charge by the Secretary to whom we are Paul Rose, Manor Farm. greatly indebted.

Glos.

SECURITY

If anyone is concerned about the security of stock in their fields may I share with them these suggestions made by my local crime prevention officer.

By its very nature accommodation land is difficult to secure. Alarm systems are very expensive, need to be weather and storm proof and not prone to be activated by farmstock or wildlife.

It may be worth considering alarm securing a central area into which all animals are brought at night.

A detailed inspection of the property with security in mind will probably bring to light obvious points of risk which could be eliminated.

Keep hedges, fences, etc. in good order.

Remove all redundant animal handling systems, disused sheds, shelter walls, spur fences, etc. anything with which to furmel or corner stock.

Gateways, hardly if ever used, could be and replaced with a permanent removed barrier.

Whilst removing gates destroy also the hard standing.

Gates onto roads or lanes could perhaps be relocated in a more secure area. Gates onto a busy road are safer than those onto quiet roads.

Gate hinges could be capped or one reversed to prevent removal of the gate. Secure the other end with the strongest form of lock available.

Consider making ditches inside all vulnerable boundaries.

Keep roadside ditches wide open and/ or the verges soft enough to bog down a lorry consult the council first!

Thieves will not want to have to bring with them quantities of equipment with which to bridge ditches and funnel animals long distances, therefore anything that can be done to make this necessary may discourage them or at least make the act of stealing difficult and prolonged enough to give time for them to be seen or heard.

Permanently tagging animals will aid the identification of a stolen animal especially if the tagging is systemised throughout the association herd book registers. Any animal being offered for sale could thereby be traced through association records.

He also offered a warning about the use such devises as trip wires, loud of explosions, guard dogs, geese and guns. -One is not allowed to damage an intruder.

Pat Bentley.

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Black and white photos are welcome and can be returned. Please enclose SAE.

BRITISH CAMELIDS

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