

## The Brien Family, Ridgetown

### History and tradition.

I always take time to stop by the founding plaque etched with the Brien name. Duff Brien was part of the founding group and continued on as the first agricultural manager of the Royal and held the position for 23 years.

### HISTORY AND ROAD TO THE ROYAL

My grandfather George S. Brien was Agricultural clerk for both cattle and horses in the early years then, became an exhibitor of Shropshire sheep in the 1940's until the 1970's. Many champions in the breeding and the market lambs classes were brought back to Ridgetown, including the Freysing Trophy multiple times. At that time, it would be two weeks away from home with several weeks in preparing the show sheep for the competition. Photos of Shropshires with five inches of wool expertly trimmed and blocked are viewed with awe today. A minimum of seven or eight animals would be fitted and prepared for a Flock and Get of Sire for show day.

Gary started attending the Royal on show day with his father Lloyd in 1958 at ten years old. In 1964 he accompanied his grandfather George S. for the duration of the show. Gradually taking over his grandfather's flock in the 1970's, Gary started his own flocks of Suffolks and Dorsets under G. & L Brien with his wife Luanne and eventually his children.

In the late 80's and early 90's we showed the first Texel cross market lambs with great success. We hold the distinction of winning both Champions with the Live Market lamb and Carcass lamb in the same year. Showing in both the breeding classes and market classes has been carried on throughout the years.

In the 2000's Gary judged both the breeding sheep and market lamb classes, while Luanne was also called to judge the unique "Ladies Lead and Wool" competition. Son Lee and daughter Sarah have shown in the junior competition, with Lee winning Champion Lamb and Grand Champion Showperson. Sarah won her age group and went on to compete and win the Ladies Lead and Wool class and now serves on that subcommittee. Lee's experience was tapped to judge the junior show in 2013. Gary has served on the volunteer Royal Sheep Show committee as his grandfather before him and now Lee also serves on the committee.

In 2014, G & L Brien won the Don Head Trophy for supreme champion Flock, 60 years after Geo. S. Brien won it.

The Royal remains the epitome of agricultural excellence in our eyes and as our vintage 1974 Royal poster boasts; " When you've Won the Royal, you've Won it all! Our family remains proud competitors.