

CRIBAN MEMORIES

The Criban ponies have been on the Brecon Beacons since 1870 when Howell Richards lived at Abercriban and took ponies off the mountains, their own records kept in leather-bound ledgers came to form the backbone of the Welsh Stud Books and Howell was one of the founder members.

In 1919 the farm and homestead were buried forever beneath the Talybont reservoir so the whole family had to move to houses lower down in the Usk Valley. Llewellyn moved to the Allt where he remained for the rest of his life except when he was temporarily away in the army. At least 200 ponies roamed the tops at Cui, Blaen Taff and the Criban Beacons. In the 1930's more than 60 ponies were exported to the USA to make foundation mares.



Criban Ponies on the Criban Beacons with the Pontsticill reservoir in the distance. The Talybont reservoir is to the left of this photograph by Dr Wynne Davies

As children, Dick, Llewellyn and Nell Pennell (Bwlch) occasionally raced their ponies and traps home from church and they regularly hunted with the Brecon and Talybont hounds.

In 1947 there was a great snow that buried sheep and ponies; it was two weeks

before they were rescued and Llewellyn noticed that the hard colours, brown, dark roans and duns survived the best. As breeder he emphasized the importance of flat bone, good feet, depth of girth, good riding shoulder and withers. Action was one of the first things he looked for in his ponies. The ponies' long history on the Beacons required them to be tough, as shepherds' mounts crossing the steep mountains checking the thousands of sheep spread across the Beacons and exchanging stallions from neighbouring breeders – Emrys Griffiths (The Revel), Gwyn Price (Dyrin) and Mr Miller (Forest Lodge). Among well-known stallions used at Criban were Mathrafal Tuppence, Ness Commander, Vardra Sunstar, Revel Springlight, Gaerstone Beacon, Bowdler Blue Boy, Criban Winston, Criban Bumble Bee, Criban Shot and Criban Bantam.

The Section B stallion Criban Victor, that paragon of substance, balance and style has been all over the world on the back of his own postage stamp (*see 2012 Journal p52*). Criban Socks also is on the WPCS car stickers. In addition to Llewellyn's dedication as a breeder of A's and B's and children's riding ponies, he was a very respected judge of most equine breeds. (*Llewellyn Richards judged the 1972 SA*



National Championships held in conjunction with the Rand Easter Show seen above with Twyford Jock who received a special award – see the 2012 Journal p41 – his Champion Mare was Aberdare Prydus's Satellite as below)

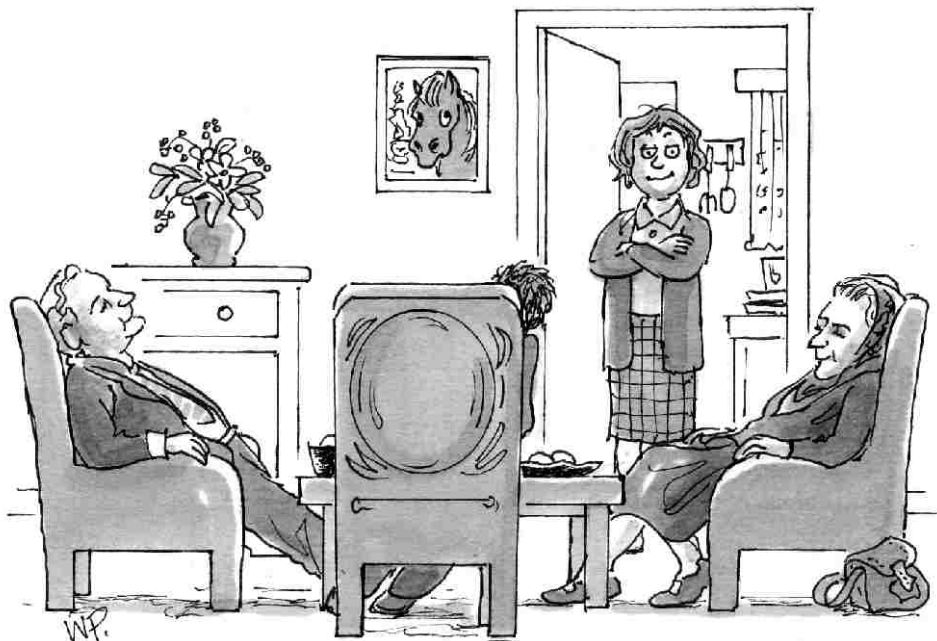


He recounted to me an occasion when an irate mother did not approve of his



decision and as she got nearer to where he was standing he said “Madam, I do like your hat!” This completely floored her and she forgot her complaint.

Another story he told against himself – he, Nell Pennell and another breeder met at the Allt for a very important business and policy making meeting for the WPCS after a tour of the ponies on the Beacons – 'After a large tea, my wife Rene went off to wash the dishes; returning, she found the three policy makers *all fast asleep and snoring on our chairs!*'



Breeding Mountain Ponies occupies a special place in the Richards family tradition, many of the bloodlines still remain at Cui with Betty and her daughter Sarah.

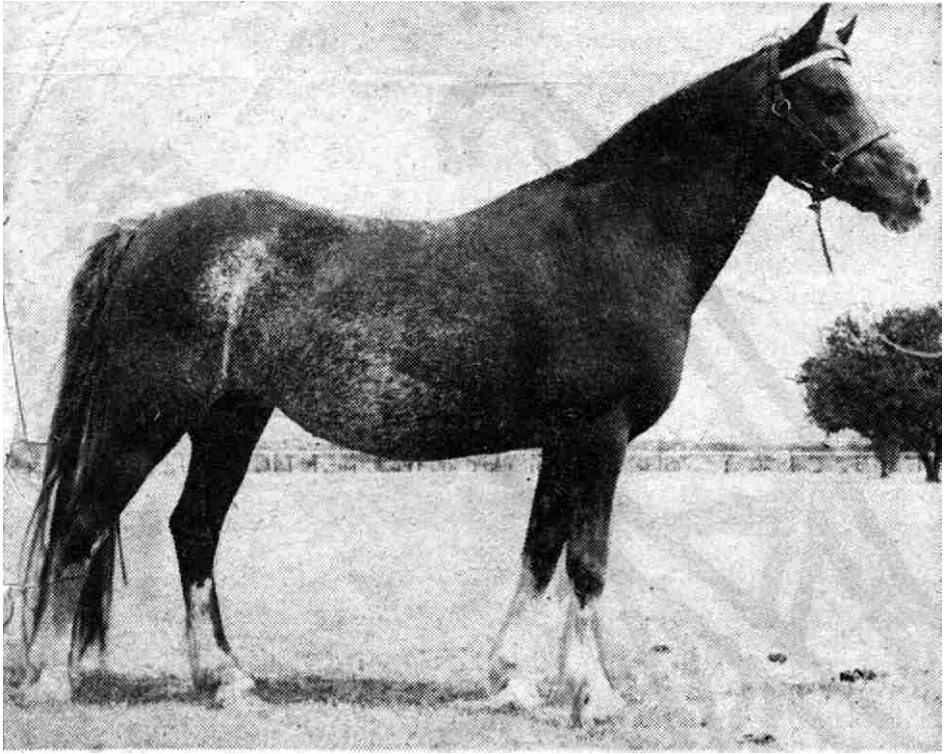
The Criban ponies have a long outstanding record of show winners and exports to all parts of the world; Holland, Denmark, USA, Germany, Africa, South America, India, Sweden, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

(Mrs Rose Lasbrey of the Badgemore Stud imported two Criban mares in 1948; Criban Dun Bee (f1940) by Criban Cockade out of Criban Busy Bee and Criban Sara (f1944) by Criban Winston out of Criban Posy)

Llewellyn and Rene would always welcome everyone at the Allt and his knowledge of all livestock was immense

Lady Jennifer Evans-Bevan 2006

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The two Criban mares imported by Mrs Rose Lasbrey in 1948; Criban Sara (above) and Criban Dun Bee

