

EDITORIAL

Covid-19

Without doubt, the Covid-19 pandemic has been the most devastating happening internationally and no-one could have predicted how it would turn the world upside-down. Although it was identified in China mid December 2019, it was only on 5th March, 2020, that the first positive case was identified in South Africa in KZN of people who returned to South Africa from Italy a few days earlier. Professor Salim Abdool Karim, Chairman of the task force explained it in simple terms: 'Life is not going to be the same in any shape or form from when we woke up on the 5th March'. How true!

When we will return to the 'new normal' is anyone's guess and even so it will be necessary to continue taking precautions for some time to come. Hopefully, when the vaccine is rolled out to South Africans, we may be able to start on the path to the new normal but when that will be is still suspect. At present it appears that regular vaccination may be the order of the day, similar to our ponies/cobs needing the African Horse Sickness vaccine annually.

How long it will be before regular shows can be held again is difficult to predict but it is hoped that before the end of 2021 this may be possible under strict precautionary conditions of mask wearing, keeping a safe distance and sanitising regularly, together with limiting numbers of spectators.

On being an Editor:

I have often been asked why I produce this Journal, and various replies have been given, the most enduring one being that before the history of the Welsh ponies and cobs in South Africa is lost forever, that it be recorded for posterity. In this I found the writing of Charles Coltman Rogers, a Trustee of the first Council of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society in 1902 to reflect my views exactly. Where there are italics below, they come from his writings in the second volume of the Welsh Stud Book published in 1903.

'I have said that I consider any work I have done in connection with this subject to be more a labour of editorial enterprise than any profound and intimate knowledge of every horse or pony mentioned. Nor do I wish to lay claim to any dogmatic and experienced knowledge of the intricacies of horse or pony breeding, though I have given vent to some generally expressed opinions of the best qualified writers on the subject. Under the circumstances, the least I can do is to acknowledge help received from many'

However, even today there are some who are reluctant to share their knowledge and experiences with us and flatly refuse to participate in giving us the benefit of their experience or knowledge nor their history and photographs of their ponies/cobs which make any article so much more interesting. It is interesting that these same people are very keen to receive the journal, though!

'Those that knew did not tabulate, and those that could did not leave records. So it is, and so it will be, that many things of value and interest have been buried unapproachably deep. They have gone, alas, to the realms of the Great Forgotten. We have failed to convince them that the pen is mightier than the tongue, and more enduring. Well, if those who know and can talk won't write, for the sake of posterity and the future, those who have not had their experience, and do not possess their vivid memories, must'

In addition to this, there are those families whose involvement with Welsh ponies and cobs must have been a particularly traumatic period because on the death of the breeder, all records and photographs were either deliberately destroyed by fire or dumped down the nearest well to be lost forever. How sad.

'At all events there is one lesson to be learnt from unburying the past, that anyone who writes, where facts are apt to be dragged in, should pay diligent regard to accuracy, for though he will probably be discredited in his own generation, there is no knowing but that he may find a few stray believers among the readers of a future time'.

'So let me express my thanks to my sources of information, and if they will share the responsibility of my errors, so much the lighter any burthen of error for me to bear'.

In addition to these annual journals being distributed to the relevant Society's members, the contributors and numerous recipients overseas, they are also submitted in terms of the Legal Deposit Act to the four holding libraries for all publication, viz., The National Library of South Africa in Cape Town and Pretoria, the Mangaung Library Service in Bloemfontein and the Msundizi Municipal Library in Pietermaritzburg. So, the full set of journals will be available for study by anyone at those libraries.

Articles:

This year we have a lot of interesting articles and many reports on studs all of the past. I am grateful to so many who took the trouble to provide me with the

background information to their studs and the photographs which they were prepared to share with our readers. Thank you all. These are Sandy van Wijk on the Sanasha Stud (*p14*), Jackie Wilkinson on her Kumben Stud (*p40*), Sue Goodman on her Forsight Stud (*p87*), Aneesa and Ebrahiem Moses on the Snowball Stables (*p80*) and Florence Vernon and Neville Comley on the Font Stud (*p57*).

After my article on the Galway Stud last year, I received a response from the previous owner of Rotherwood Royalist, Sue Walden, and she kindly provided me with further information on 'Charlie' as he was known to them (*p12*). Comments on articles are always welcome and most times further information on ponies and cobs are received which adds to the diverse history of the breed in South Africa. These are always more than welcome.

As usual I cover the shows held in Bloemfontein 45, 40, 30 and 20 years ago together with the Cape show in 1976 and the Pretoria show, also in 2001. I am indebted to Norman Kalinsky of Canada for his article on Conformation and the diagrams used in their judges training programmes in North America. In addition, the ancient and early history of the Welsh are dealt with together with the questioning required to determine a legacy breeder.

I call on anyone to let me know of breeders of the past whom I have not been able to contact, to provide their names and contact details, preferably mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, so that I can approach them to cover their stud in future editions. And if there is someone who has done particularly well on a specific pony/cob also, so that the achievements of that pony/cob can be highlighted.

Independence:

I would like to point out that these journals are published without any advertisements meaning that I am not bound by any requirements from that sector. The journal really comprises the shows which are reported to me, the re-publishing of any articles throughout the world which may be of interest to us and studs which bred Welsh ponies and cobs, even if only one foal was bred. In addition, some of the Breed have excelled in the show ring be it in-hand, under saddle or in harness, or for that matter any form of equine recreation; showing, jumping, dressage, eventing, endurance, etc. It is still a part of the history of the breed and I would like to record it in these pages.

GK