

DOLLY AND LADY BANG: WELSH PONIES DANIEL M BRESLER

Daniel Marthinus Bresler was born in Malmesbury, Cape Colony in 1866, and married 19 y-o Catharina Zoutendyk in 1887 after he graduated as a school teacher. Their children were born where he was employed as a teacher in Cape Town in 1888 (Martin), Hopefield in 1892 and 1894 (Casparus and Corina) and in Harrismith in 1896 (Jasper). He moved to Philipstown in the Northern Cape immediately prior to the Anglo-Boer war as school Principal. The British forces occupied the Orange Free State and annexed the region as the Orange River Colony on 28 May, 1900, and the Transvaal shortly thereafter. The Boer forces then regrouped and started the guerrilla phase of the war which included incursions into the Cape Colony and Natal.

Bresler was reported to be the first Cape rebel to join Hertzog's invasion force¹ in December 1900 and it is recorded that "The School Principal of Philipstown, D M Bresler, who had 'invited' the Boers to occupy the town, closed his school and joined their forces"². He was apparently made a Kommandant of the Boer forces, ostensibly on the fact that he was a nephew of General Jan Christian Smuts³. His duty with the Boer forces was rather short because "on 9th April, 1901, at Dewetsdorp, in the south-east of the Orange River Colony, Lieutenant Colonel Monro, with a detachment of 150 mounted men and a pom-pom (*ed 37mm autocannon QF 1 pounder*), after two hours' fighting cleverly effected the capture of the Boer convoy of 83 prisoners, including Commandant Bresler and Lieutenant Lindique of the Staats Artillery"⁴.

¹ Reported in "The Colesberg Advertiser" of 28th December, 1900

² "The Guerrilla War of the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899 – 1902: A case study of the Republican and Rebel Commando movement" by Rodney James Constantine for his Dissertation for a degree of Master of Arts, UCT.

³ I can find no record in the family tree of General Smuts of any 'Bresler' being part of the extended family. But then 'Oom' (uncle) could be interpreted in many ways. Smuts was a Cape Advocate having studied in Cambridge, England, but he fell out with Cecil John Rhodes. He joined President Paul Kruger as State Attorney of the Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek and served as a General with the Boer forces. He became Prime Minister of South Africa from 1919-1924 and again from 1939-1948 and was made a Field-Marshal of the Allied forces in 1941 during the Second World War. He died on 11 September.1950. He is the only statesman to have signed the founding documents of both the League of Nations and the United Nations.

⁴ "The Times History of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902" in Lord Kitchener's despatch of 8th May, 1901.

It is here where the history becomes rather complicated. Bresler must have given his Harrismith, Orange River Colony, address to the British forces and hence he was banished to the Ahmednagar Concentration Camp in India, Prisoner No 18514. Had he been recognised as a ‘Cape Rebel’ he would have been arrested and tried for High Treason, which carried the Death penalty⁵. Daniel was obviously released from the Concentration Camp soon after the Treaty of Vereeniging. The next he is seen standing in the accompanying photograph taken in 1902 with two other Cape Rebels, General Lategan and Kommandant Conroy in the Netherlands.

It must have been during this visit to Europe that Daniel visited the land of his recent enemy, England, because the following is recorded in an article⁶

Pedigree Stock for the O.R.C.

On October 15th last, a large consignment of pedigree stock left London, per the s.s. Hyantes, for Capetown to the order of Commandant D M Bresler, of the Orange River Colony. Messrs. William Cooper & Nephews, the proprietors of Cooper’s Dip, supplied from their farms one Shorthorn bull, 50 Shropshire ram lambs, 2 large white boars, and 10 large white gilts. These, together with 1 Ayrshire bull, 12 Ayrshire cows and some Shetland ponies, were selected by Mr Frank Welsh, of Shepstone (the firm’s export agent), on behalf of Mr. Bresler. The Commandant also took by the same boat 50 mares and geldings, 7 stallions (Frieslander), 11 ponies, 7 bulls (Frieslander), 7 bull calves, 34 cows, 34 calves, 14 sheep, and 33 pigs.

It is not known under whose instruction he was operating.

⁵ In the book “The Cape Rebels of the South African War 1899 – 1902” by Dr Taffy Shearing, submitted to the University of Stellenbosch as a Thesis for DPhil (History) in 2005, it is recorded that between 12 205 and 16 198 residents of the Cape Colony served with the Boer forces. There were only 800 cases before the courts and 44 persons were found guilty of High Treason and executed, the others were sent for penal servitude in St Helena, Bermuda and elsewhere. Many of the forces arrested gave false addresses elsewhere but letters from ‘home’ soon proved otherwise. In terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging which was signed on 31 May, 1902, if the Rebels surrendered, they would receive partial amnesty and be disenfranchised for 5 years. A general amnesty to all combatants was issued in 1905.

⁶ Natal Agricultural Journal Volume VI No 2 of December 1902



As Daniel had only just been released from the concentration camp, where would he have obtained the funds to import such a large quantity of pedigree stock, and as a school teacher, where would he have acquired the knowledge to enable him to make the selection of such a vast array of animals even though the services of Mr Frank Welsh was used? This will remain a mystery.

It appears that Daniel visited the UK again in 1903 on a buying spree for a number of pedigree livestock as shown on the accompanying advert⁷, and in respect of the Welsh ponies, Tudor Lewis of Llangadock, because he imported the following two ponies⁸

953 DOLLY

Owners.

D. M. Bresler,
Maitland, Cape Town, South Africa.

Dark Bay, star. Foaled, 1898. Height, 11.3.

Breeder, TUDOR LEWIS, Llangadock.

Sire, PRINCE LLEWELLYN, bay, 13.2.

Dam, MOUNTAIN PONY, bay.

1081 LADY BANG

Owners.

D. M. Bresler,
Maitland, Cape Town, S.A.

Bay. White fetlock. Foaled, 1901. Height, 12.2.

Breeder, TUDOR LEWIS, Llangadock.

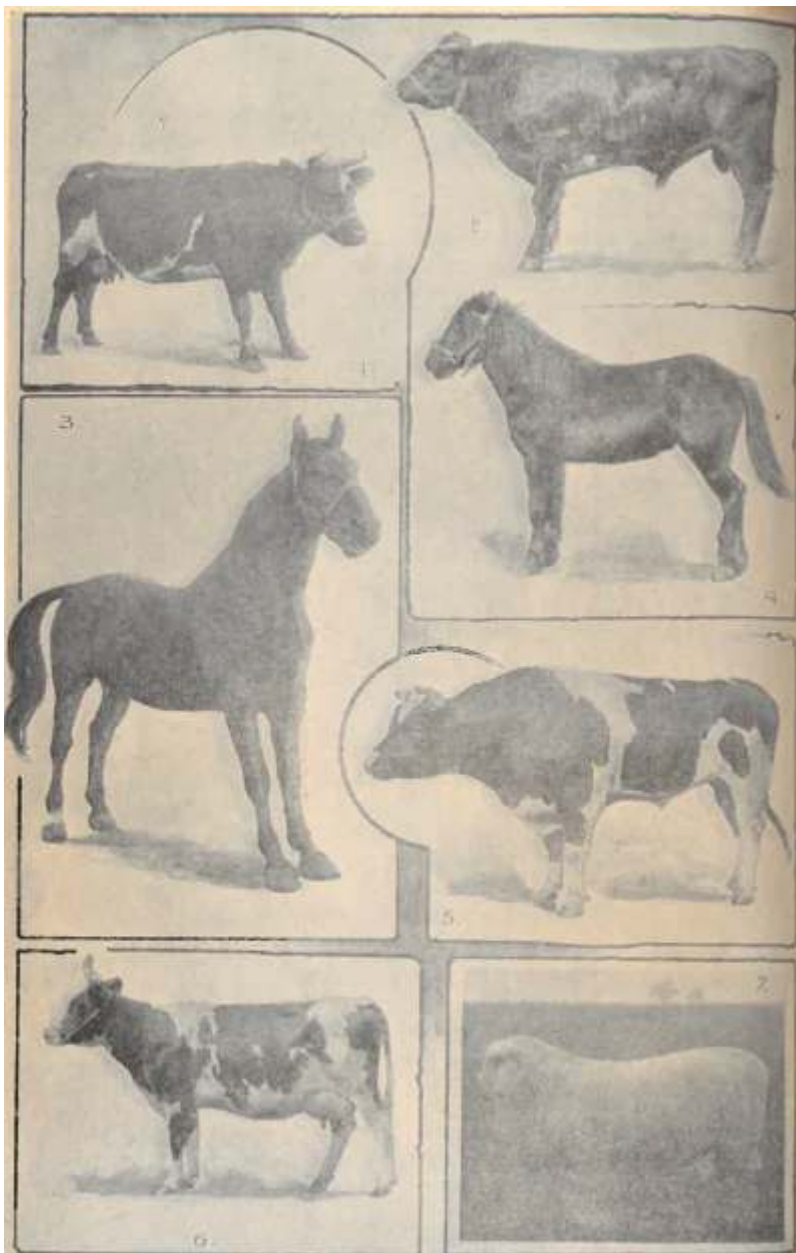
Sire, LORD BANG II., roan, 15.0.

Dam, POLLY, bay, 13.0, by FLASH, bay, 12.3.

In a search in the Welsh Stud Book, neither of these mares appeared to have had any foals in the UK. It is also interesting that Daniel as DM Bresler & Co is using an address in Maitland, Cape Town. It does not appear that he ever participated in agricultural shows in the Western Cape during that period.

⁷ Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Journal 1904 page 310

⁸ Welsh Stud Book 1904 Volume III pages 30 and 64



Pedigree Stock imported by D. M. Bresler & Co.

1. Friesland Cow. 2. Shorthorn Bull. 3. Aldenburg Stallion. 4. Welsh Pony.
 5. Friesland Bull. 6. Ayrshire Cow. 7. Shropshire Ram.

The illustration of the Welsh Pony appears to be that of '953 Dolly' because Lady Bang had a white to fetlock.

I cannot find any mention of either of these mares in any of the records of any South African show or publication, other than the advert shown. However, I have found an advert⁹ of "Aged Hackney¹⁰ Mare 'Lady Bang' by 'Lord Bang', believed to be in foal", although there is no record in the Welsh Stud Book of her ever foaling.

The question arises, did she return to Wales, or did she never leave there in the first place?

Another interesting fact was that he joined as a member of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society in Wales and is recorded as a member in the 1905 Welsh Stud Book, which, in relation to what follows, appears to be irrelevant.

So, what happened to Daniel and his family?

It is recorded¹¹ that in 1904 Daniel led the Boer colonization in Lacar, Vego de Maipli - farmed in San Martin de los Andes - 132 280 hectares given to him by the National Government of Argentina. The Boer colonization of Argentina started on 4 June 1902 when land distribution was authorised by President Julio Argentino Roca and his Minister of Agriculture, Wesuslao Escalante. Daniel obtained 50 farms under concession from the Argentinian Government in Rio Negro in the province of Neuquén in Patagonia near the Alumene River. About 300 Boer families arrived on a British Cargo Ship with their bullock carts. He also, owned a house in the town.

He lived in Cordilleras and later owned the farm ' Que Chuquina ' which was situated near Lake Laco Lacar, and his four children went to a private German School in Yaldivia, Chile. He was a deeply religious man and known by the locals as Commandante Boer who later appealed to General Smuts to assist in recruiting more Boer settlers for Argentina. There is no record of him having Welsh ponies in Argentina.

Daniel died in 1930 at the age of 64 years, in Santos, San Pablo, Argentina.

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⁹ The Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Weekly Advertiser of 12 September, 1919

¹⁰ Bearing in mind the comment about the Hackney Stud Book on page 81

¹¹ Geni.com