

## EDITORIAL

The last two years have been challenging, to say the least, and as predicted last year, it appears as if Covid-19 is here to stay and that regular inoculations would be necessary in order that a 'new normal' state may be achieved. It is not understood how anyone could still in this day and age fail to protect themselves and those around them by refusing to be vaccinated, thereby delaying the resumption of a reasonable sense of daily life as we used to know it before 2020.

### ARTICLES:

#### History

For a number of years I have been trying to source information on the importation of Welsh ponies and cobs in the early period of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and eventually I have been able to piece together some of the history of these early imports. John Kenyon Hill imported three Cob stallions in 1902 while in Bloemfontein (*p118*), Andrew Kiddie imported two Cob mares, but he also lived through the Siege of Kimberley (*p157*), Edward Mellish who imported the first Welsh Pony of Cob Type to Cape Town in 1902 (*p54*), Neville Griffin who imported two Welsh Mountain Ponies to the then Natal (*p174*), Daniel Bresler importing two Welsh Mountain pony mares (*p106*), Basil Holmes importing three Welsh cob mares (*p148*), E Pugh with a Welsh cob mare (*p146*), Dave Forbes with a Section B stallion (*p134*), H Soggers also with a Welsh cob mare (*p132*), Archibald Wright with a Welsh cob mare (*p133*) and two Welsh cob stallions (*p130*). 19 Welsh ponies and cobs were imported into South Africa between the Anglo-Boer War and the First World War and we have nothing whatsoever to show for it. This is dealt with in an article on Thoughts on Registration (*p36*). I was so fascinated by my research and the people involved that I have decided to provide a more elaborate record of the personal history of these early admirers of the Welsh breed.

These articles would not have been possible without the co-operation of so many people, some family; including, great-great-grandchildren, but more specifically the libraries and museums, without whose assistance, none of this history would have been known.

#### The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902

During the research I have done for some of the articles, I have been fascinated by a number of peripheral aspects of the breeding of horses. One of the most disturbing and uncomfortable arose when I was doing the above articles. It became necessary to learn much about the horses, donkeys and

mules imported into the country by the British forces during the Anglo-Boer war. The article on Horses of the Anglo-Boer War (*p178*) covers but a limited history of these horses, many of which would have been Welsh Cobs as evidenced in the articles with Welsh cob mares, and sensitive readers are advised to avoid this article because it may be disconcerting. One of the most telling comments on the war was that made by Pakanham on p572 of his book on the three-year war where he says ‘400 346 horses, mules and donkeys were ‘expended during the war’ – they paid dearly for the human squabbling’. That is 413 animals per day, mostly through sheer ignorance, not in combat! The average life expectancy of a British horse, from the time of its arrival in Port Elizabeth, was about six weeks.

Those readers who wish to learn the full history of this unfortunate episode in our history should consult the references quoted; but you are warned, it is not pleasant reading!

### **Studs**

I am pleased to be able to once again highlight a number of the studs which breed Welsh ponies and cobs, and those which are no longer active in breeding. The history, trials and tribulations of these studs are important to understand so that anyone keen on doing the same understands that to achieve anything in life requires dedication, persistence and determination. My thanks to those breeders who participated in providing the history of their studs as well as the photographs of their foundation stock and progeny for all readers to learn from and enjoy. It is so unfortunate that some breeders and owners refuse to contribute their stories to this Journal in order to record the interesting and diverse history of the breed. Hopefully they will relent before it is too late.

### **Shows**

As per usual, I deal with the Welsh shows. Unfortunately, for obvious reasons, there was a two year gap, but after 105 weeks, the Europa Welsh Autumn Show 2022 was an opportunity of showing off the breed once again. The earliest show reported on is the Cape Show in 1903 which as far as I am able to determine was the first one where a registered Welsh Pony of Cob type was officially shown (*p50*) but I also have been able to source the pictures of the 2002 Bloemfontein show (*p63*), to complement those of the earlier shows in Bloemfontein and elsewhere. It is interesting to note that this was the last National Championship at which a Badgemore pony was shown, 45 years after the first Badgemore pony was shown at the National Championship held in Middelburg, Cape, in 1957.

## **Animal history**

Aside from the request for breeders and owners to participate in providing the history of their studs and animals, there must be many old photographs in photo-albums or hanging on walls which have never been seen by others – so please let me have them to add to our history and knowledge of the ponies and cobs which added so much to our lives. Will this appeal again fall on deaf ears? If you are prepared to publish it on Facebook, why not the Journal? Remember, I can only record the history which is related to me or through research and without your help, there will not be any future Journals. So, the future of this Journal beyond this, the current 18<sup>th</sup> issue depends on you. And if there are any topics that you would like to read about, let me know and I am sure I will be able to get someone who is competent to write an article about it, or there may be articles available in other publications for re-publishing.

## **THE FUTURE**

It should be obvious to anyone who has followed the development of the Welsh Mountain pony in South Africa that we are slowly but surely breeding ourselves into a corner and the ponies are becoming smaller and smaller as the years go by. It is of utmost importance for new blood to be introduced from time to time. Unless this happens, the ponies bred will move further and further away from the Breed Standard (*p8*). It is realised that the importation of a stallion is expensive but if a few breeders are serious in their endeavours, they will realise that this money will be well-spent for the future of the breed, and that working together to import some stallions has many advantages.

Fortunately, it has been possible to ensure a nucleus of Welsh cob stallions and mares, many of them still the imported animals, or by imported stock, so it is hoped that this exercise will be highly successful and that the Welsh Cob and Welsh Pony of Cob Type in South Africa will have a great future. It is intended to have an article in next year's Journal, so this is something to look out for.

Because I wanted to cover all the Welsh ponies and cobs imported over a century ago in one issue, this Journal is a bumper one with plenty to read which I hope you will find as interesting to read as I had in researching and writing about them. This is supplemented by numerous studs which bred maybe only one pony, but it adds to the varied and colourful history of the breed in Southern Africa.

## **GK 2022**