

HACKNEY STUD BOOK - RELEVANCE

In a number of articles in this Journal and in previous ones, mention is made of the Hackney Stud Book (HSB) in the United Kingdom. Perhaps it would be opportune to explain the significance of this Stud Book and its relevance to the breeding of Section C and Section D Welsh Cobs.

In the 2016 Journal on page 61, the Introduction to the first Stud Book in 1902 of the recently established Welsh Pony and Cob Society was written by Mr John Hill of Marsh Brook House, Church Stretton for the “Live Stock Journal” and republished for information of Welsh pony and cob members.

The following are extracts:-

“I have always maintained that the Welsh Cob and the Welsh Cart Horse are closely allied. With their winter coat and silky feather, the cob looks just like a little cart horse. They were active and powerful, of moderate size – perhaps even when compared with the modern cart horse, even of small size – but very compact, and with remarkable pluck, being able to move heavy weights in the hilly country of Wales which would have been thought beyond their power. Their legs and feet were sound, and their bone hard and flinty. Their heads were free from all coarseness, and they had none of the sluggish look which was noticeable in the Old English Cart Horse.”

“The Welsh Cob as it used to be before the modern Stud Book Hackney was introduced, was the result of further crossing this ‘cob pony’ cart horse with well-bred sires. **In those days the ‘Hackney’ was applied to any horse which was not a cart horse**, and in Wales and Shropshire, at all events, had no reference to the Norfolk horse or any special breed. When an animal’s pedigree was asked for, or any description of the sire, the answer would be, ‘Oh, indeed, he was by a Hackney,’ meaning that it was not by a cart horse. I mention this as the expression ‘Hackney’ so frequently occurs in old writings that, unless carefully considered, the impression is formed that the pedigree Stud Book Hackney is meant, which is altogether misleading.”

Readers are earnestly requested to read the full article as published in the 2016 Journal to ensure an understanding of the importance of having four sections to our Stud Book. Up to 1901 Welsh stock was registered in the HSB as there was no other avenue to register the purebred Welsh breeds. When the Welsh Stud Book was introduced in 1902, registration in the HSB therefore became unnecessary and in any case, would have been misleading.