

HEXHAM - SECTION C WELSH PONY

The Agricultural Journal of the Cape of Good Hope, Volume xxii No 3 p332, of 1st March, 1903 reported about the 9th show of the Western Province Agricultural show held on 18th February, 1903, as follows:-

‘In the class for “Best Imported Stallion of any breed under 14.0hh section,” two exhibits came out, one an Arab stallion, “Fakir,” the property of the Government, the other, a Welsh pony stallion, “Hexham,” the property of Mr Mellish. The Welsh pony was the winner, and a real little beauty he looked, a perfect miniature stallion, as he showed himself in the ring, and exhibited a degree and quality of action not often seen. This is the sire for a man who wants to breed a smart single-harness horse from his half-bred cob mare.

‘The Arab stallion was nicely topped and symmetrically made, but gone a bit in front. This, of course, would not interfere with his value as a sire, but one would have thought the Colony had learnt from the bitter experience of De Beers that the Arab is not a sire for us. He is too old and fixed a type, and indelibly stamps his peculiarities upon his progeny, who as a rule, all take after the sire and rarely favour their dam. If the Arab pure bred was such a wonder as he is cracked up to be, some of them would have met the English Thoroughbred in long and short distance races and other tests of speed and endurance, but this is a bone of much contention. There can be but little doubt but that the indiscriminate use of Arab sires is a source of great harm to a horse-breeding country.

‘Some dissentient voices were heard in regard to the judgment in this class, some saying that as there was a class for “Hexham” in Hackneys, the Arab should have had the red ticket, but “Hexham” is not a Hackney, but a representative of a breed which possess a stud book of their own, viz., Welsh Trotting Ponies’.¹

Edward Henry Frederick Mellish had an exceptionally good show because the final results reflect that he won the Imported Thoroughbred Stallion class with ‘Pericles’, the Imported Thoroughbred Mare class with ‘Le Nora’, The Imported Hackney Stallion class with ‘Tribute’ by the famous ‘Dangelt’, the locally bred Hackney Filly class with ‘Bezil II’. In the Imported Cleveland Stallion class, he was 2nd with ‘Bromsgrave’s Pride’ to ‘Ingmanthorpe’ but he

¹ *ed. he obviously means Welsh Pony and Cob Studbook, 1902 with its release late in 1902, probably only arrived here after the date of this show*

won the Imported Cleveland Mare class with ‘Prosperity’ who was 12 years old. As above, he won the Imported Stallion class under 14hh with ‘Hexham’ and he also won the Saddle Bred horse class and topped it off with winning the championship with his Hampshire Down sheep! If one looks at the number of imported horses which were present, it is obvious that in those days it was only the well-heeled who could compete in horses, sheep, pigs, goats and cattle.

‘Edward H F Mellish ‘a man of means, energy, ability and high standards’² bought Vrede Hoek Farm with a double storey homestead and turned it into a successful dairy farm, the first in Cape Town. Mellish died in 1905 and the farm ran into disarray under the mismanagement of the son, with farming operations coming to an end in 1916. The farm was subdivided and sold off in portions. The portion with the homestead on it was sold to the University of Cape Town who used it for the South African College School (SACS) as a hostel until 1939 when it was bought by the Cape Town Municipality who demolished the homestead and established public recreational fields. Four portions of the farm became the Nazareth House gardens’³

Hexham, a Welsh Section C Stallion, registered as No 19 with the Welsh Stud book, (but also registered with the HSB and PPSB), 13.3¾ hh, Black with a star and one white foot. He was foaled in 1893 and bred by L H Armstrong, Abbey House, Hexham. His sire was Garton Fireaway (2479 HSB) and dam Pomona (3194 HSB) by Harvester (1799 HSB). He was sold to D Evans and Sons of Llwyncadfor Stud Farm, Newcastle Emlyn, Wales. He was regularly shown and achieved the following awards:-

1897 Second, and Reserve for Champion, London

1898 Second, Royal Agricultural Society of England, Maidstone

1899 First, at the Royal Show, Lancashire

1901 H C, London; First, Llanelli; Second, Carmarthen; First, Llandovery

Just before being exported to South Africa, he attended many horse shows in addition to the above as follows:

At the Norberth Entire Horse show held on 10 April, 1901,⁴ the reporter commented – ‘In the class for the best cob or pony, Mr Evans was again successful with a very nice eight-year-old called ‘Hexham’. This horse is a

² Hart 2011:51

³ from a Dissertation for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Conservation and the Built Environment by Nicoline Jongens JNGNIC002 UCT in May, 2017

⁴ The Welshman of 12 April, 1901

dark brown, almost black, showing great quality throughout and moving well all round. He had no difficulty in beating ‘Honesty’.’

At the Carmarthen Entire Horse Show held on 15 April, 1902, it is reported: ⁵ ‘In the Cob class, Mr James was again successful with ‘Myrtle Gentleman’ (see page 123), a very useful roan of three years, who moved well in front, but his hind action was only moderate. ‘Hexham’ who came second, must have run him very close. He is a very smart pony, but is just a size too small to be considered a cob’.

On 22 April, 1902, at an unnamed show, ⁶ ‘Myrtle Gentleman’ once again won the class with ‘Hexham’ Second.

However, at the Cardigan and Tivyside Entire Horse Show held on 26 April, 1902, ⁷ the tables were turned where it was reported: ‘The Cob class was a small but very good section. The first prize was awarded to ‘Trustful’ (Myrtle Gentleman’s sire) but the colour was rather against him. ‘Hexham’ was a close second with ‘Myrtle Gentleman’ in third. The symmetry of the animals shown in this class was perfect’

It appears that just before he was exported to Edward H F Mellish in the Cape Colony, he served three mares and the results of these coverings were three foals all born in 1903, two colts and a filly:

Lord Go Bang 217, a Black Section C Colt, out of 359 Nancy by Welsh Flyer II; Royal Flyer 177, a Black Section C Colt, out of Caper by Eiddwen Flyer; and 1859 Deva, a Black Section C Filly, out of a ‘Welsh Pony’

As far as I have been able to research, the Cape Show held in February 1903 was the first at which a registered Welsh Pony was officially shown.

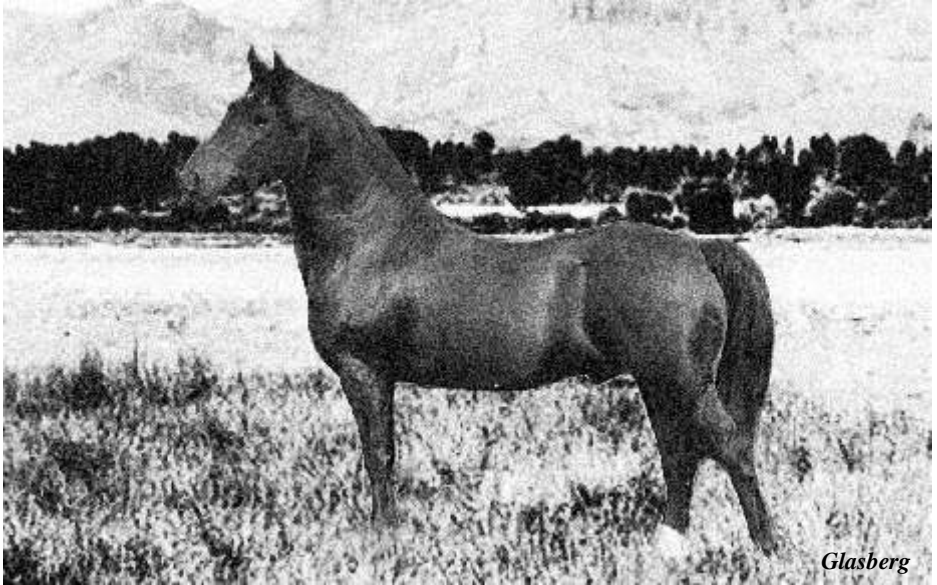
‘More interesting from the farmer's point of view would be a visit to Mr E. H. F. Mellish's mixed stud of Hackney, Cleveland, and Suffolk Punch horses, good typical specimens of the three breeds, and all suitable, when properly mated with colonial horses, for raising the size of colonial breeding mares. The breeds are here mentioned in order of merit, so far as the general-purpose horse is concerned. The high action of the Hackney is objected to by some owing to the periodical hard dry condition of colonial roads, but the action of the colonial horse errs in the other direction, and the use of the blood stallion

⁵ *Carmarthen Journal & South Wales Advertiser of 25 April 1902, also in the Cardiff Times of 19 April 1902 reporting ‘Old Fashioned Cobs’ as well as the Weekly Mail, also of 19 April, 1902 under ‘Cobs under 15hh’*

⁶ *Welsh Gazette of 24 April, 1902*

⁷ *Welsh Gazette and West Wales Advertiser 1 May, 1902*

on the cross-bred Hackney mares will still further modify the high movement.



Found in an old folder, a photograph marked 'Roadster' which matches the markings for Hexham, and taken in 1904 by Glasberg, the photographer in Paarl. The foreground appears to have been blurred deliberately

Though possessed of good bone and substance, the Cleveland Bay horse, mainly on account of the lowness of his action, but also because he is not so nearly related to the Thoroughbred, is to our thinking not quite equal to the Hackney for the purpose. Nevertheless, the success which has attended the use of Cleveland Bay stallions in Australia, with a similar object in view, is sufficient reason for giving them a trial in the Cape. In the production of heavy draught horses, for work in towns, the Suffolk Punch will no doubt be useful, not only in breeding pure stock, but also in crossing with large-framed native mares. To secure the best results in fast work, something more solid and compact in structure is necessary than the bone of a work or draught horse of any breed'⁸

‘n Reus van toetertyd

‘Net soos ‘n Ben Mostert in die jare vyftig van die vorige eeu met lorrievragte van tot 60 perde by die Kaapse Skou opgedaag het, was EHF Mellish van

⁸ *Farming Industries of Cape Colony by Robert Wallace 1903*

Milnerton net voor en na die Anglo-Boereoorlog die groot ondersteuner van die skou in Kaapstad.

‘Boonop was hy een van die onderhandelaars wat met die destydse eerste minister Cecil John Rhodes, samesprekinge gevoer het oor die verkryging van grond waarop die beroemde Rosebank-skou vanaf 1894 gehou is.

‘Op hierdie eerste skou aldaar was hy saam met onder andere die broers Melck van Bergrivier, HD Bradley, JA Fraser en PJ de Wet van die belangrikste perdevertoners.

‘Mellish het 14 ingevoerde hingste en merries vertoon, waaronder die Hackneyhings, Tribute, 20 hings- en merrievullens, ‘n paar swaar trekperde. ‘n karpard, ‘n bul en vyf koeie, ‘n aantal verse, varke en voëls.

‘Toe hy kort voor die skou van 1905 oorlede is, was dit dus ‘n groot slag vir die organiseerders daarvan. Hoewel hierdie betrokke skou net na die Anglo-Boereoorlog gehou is, is nogtans 249 perde, nege muile en twee donkies ingeskryf.

‘Die familie Mellish het steeds ‘n aantal Clydesdales op hul plaas langs die N7-hoofweg op pad na die Noorde.’⁹

Edward Mellish competed in many shows and at times took his show animals by ship to Port Elizabeth to compete in the Shows there and other venues in the Eastern Cape. The following are some of the trophies he won during the Agricultural show in Port Elizabeth in 1890.



Some of the sterling silver trophies won by Edward Mellish at the Port Elizabeth Show in 1890

⁹ *Trekperdpioniers van Suid-Afrika 1906-2006 deur Hennie Basson, bl 218*

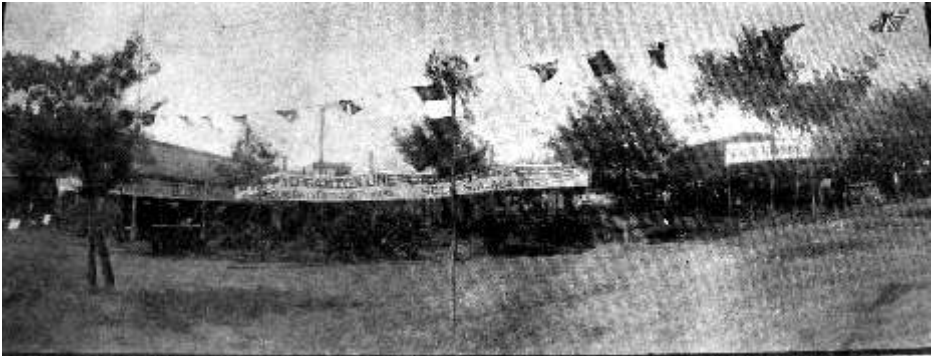
I am indebted to Ann Dalton of Agri-Expo for access to the show catalogues from 1894 up to 1916 and Wilna Brink of the Elsenburg Agricultural College Library for access to the Agricultural Journals published by the Department of Agriculture of the Cape Colony from 1894 to 1909. The information contained in those documents is phenomenal and will be used in future editions. We are so fortunate that there are still organisations which value our history and are so professional in ensuring that they are kept safe and are available to the public because without their help, this article would not have been possible.



Clydesdale stallion with two of his mares and foal on the farm Welbeloond off the N7 in 2021



General view of the judging at the Port Elizabeth show attended by Edward Mellish



Part of the Machinery Exhibition at Rosebank Showgrounds

I was fortunate in being able to meet Andrew Gustave Mellish, his wife Beverley and their son Andrew John Mellish at their farm at Welbeloond to get more information about the family. Edward H F Mellish had 13 children and five generations later there are an enormous number of members of the greater Mellish family. I still have not been able to trace any family photograph album but this is continuing and it is hoped that one day I will be successful.

In addition, I was able to gain considerable information from Jackie Loos who wrote two articles on Edward Mellish on the centenary of his death. These were published in the Weekend Argus in 2006.

My thanks also to Nicoline Jongens, the architect, for initially pointing me in the correct direction with the information recorded in her dissertation and, in fact, being the spark which led to the further investigation to the background of Edward H F Mellish.

GK 2022

Post Script: Writing on the establishment of Vol 1 of the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Stud Book, Sir Richard Green Price commented as follows: ‘Class C (*ed obviously he means Section C*) embraces ten stallions of which George Horace, Llandilo Wonder, **Hexham** and Marmion deserve mention’¹⁰

I often wonder what happened to him.

¹⁰ The Welsh Pony and Cob Society – article by Sir Richard D Green Price, Bart, Live Stock Journal Almanac for 1903