Nineteen–sixty was an auspicious year for children's pony classes in South Africa. It was then that the first Welsh, or part Welsh pony made its debut at the Rand Easter Show. Since then, these little ponies have dominated the Children's classes. The popularity of the breed, and consequently the standard of our children's ponies, is rising daily.

There was a time, not long ago when, as far as children's ponies were concerned, anything went. Today we can compare our entry favourably in quality, if not in quantity, with any similar class overseas. Credit for this must go to the sturdy little ponies which a few faithful die-hards have struggled to establish in South Africa over almost the past twenty years.

The biggest breeder of Welsh Mountain Ponies in South Africa is undoubtedly Mrs R J Lasbrey of Constantia in the Cape Province. In 1948 she imported some of the best blood in Wales with which to found her Badgemore Stud (see 2005 Journal p41). Among the ponies she imported was that wonderful sire Coed Coch Seryddwr (see page 36) whose famous son Coed Coch Madog has kept the late Miss Brodrick's Coed Coch Stud in the forefront of the picture in the UK and throughout the world ever since the war (see 2005 Journal p85).
In 1951 Mrs I K Lockie bought the Welsh Mountain pony stallion Coed Coch Moelwyn from Miss Brodrick and brought him out to Southern Rhodesia where he is now with Mrs von der Heyde at her Moelwyn Stud. He has sired about fifty foals in Rhodesia and until now they have been the backbone of the children's classes, although there were no registered Welsh mares when he arrived and practically all his progeny have been part-breds. Recently Mrs J P Goode of Queen's Mine has brought in the WMP stallion Coed Coch Pybidd Moel, and three mares from Lord Kenyon's Gredington Stud, all in foal to outstanding sires in the UK. Mrs Goode has been lucky enough to have live foals from all her imported mares and so Southern Rhodesia will have a very welcome influx of new Welsh blood, and with the foundation of Moelwyn's stock to build on, should be able to go ahead fast (see 2009 Journal p43).

Major Seys took Coed Coch Prydus to Kenya in 1954, where the little 11.2hh stallion had great influence on the children's ponies, and was himself Champion stallion at the Royal Show, Nairobi, on more than one occasion. Prydus has now come down to the Republic where he has done very well in the show ring and is at present senior sire of Mrs Mackie Niven's (see 2008 Journal p116 Aberdare) Stud of Welsh Ponies at Amanzi. Mrs Mackie Niven has very recently imported two Welsh Mountain pony mares in foal. Both Section A, they are Revel Siesta by Revel Light – Revel Siren (foaled 1961) (see 2009 Journal p87), and Ready Token Easter Blossom by Shalbourne Prince David – Whitehall Bluebell
(foaled 1960). Siesta unfortunately slipped her foal but Blossom has a filly on May 5th 1965 (*Aberdare Petal by Furnace Landlord*)

In 1955 Mr Vincent Clarke of Hanover, Cape Province brought in some very good ponies from Lord Kenyon's Gredington Stud in Shropshire. ([see the Bundemar/Abergele Stud, 2010 Journal p61](#))

These were then the foundation Welsh Mountain Ponies in Africa.

*Gredington Ifan with Vincent Clarke*

In 1957 the Welsh Pony Society of South Africa was founded ([see 2007 Journal p4](#)), with eleven foundation members, and in 1960 that great authority on the Welsh breed, the late Miss Margaret Brodrick MBE, came out to judge our third official Welsh Pony Championships. They were held in Beaufort West and Miss Brodrick brought with her a special message of congratulations and encouragement from His Grace the Duke of Beaufort, Master of the Queen's Horse, whose ancestor, Lord Charles Somerset, founded Beaufort West in honour of his father, the then Duke of Beaufort ([see 2010 Journal p41](#)).

Miss Brodrick's visit undoubtedly gave the Welsh breed a great boost and parents began to
realise the value of the Welsh pony as a thoroughly reliable and kindly child's pony. It was in 1960, with Miss Brodrick judging the pony classes, that Valiant's half-bred son Taffy, owned by Mrs May Foxcroft, was first produced. The first pony of known Welsh breeding to appear at the Rand Easter Show, and only two years old, he behaved like a veteran in the ring, and finally stood Reserve Champion to the famous 14.3hh Thoroughbred mare Chiquita, then twenty years old.

Recently two Mountain Pony stallions have been brought in from Wales, Revel Society by Coed Coch Madog was imported by Mr R H Torr of Pampoepoort, Cape (see Torbry Stud 2006 Journal p40) and Mr A D Morris has imported Vanog Lookout to Johannesburg. There is also Mr P A M Streicher's Oakroyd Tywysog Ô Gwalia (see 2010 Journal p128 Pamshor Stud). Brockwell Will o' the Wisp, a Section B colt imported by Mr N Paul has now joined Valiant and Jamani Blue Kerrid at the Foresyte Stud at White River. Cui Hailstone, the reigning South African Champion Mountain Pony has been bought by Mr David Fox of Zululand.

Miss Ida Illingworth, Foresyte Stud, White River (see 2005 Journal p108), has recently acquired a Section B filly, Trefesgob Priscilla, a two-year old by Cusop Sheriff (now America) – Trefesgob Plush by Rhyd-y-felin Selwyn. Priscilla is at present with Mrs Mountain at the Twyford Stud in Sussex (see 2007 Journal p37) where she will be covered by Brockwell Berwyn by Rhyd-y-felin Selwyn: if the resulting foal is a colt, it will be very valuable to the Section B. (It was a filly, Foresyte Sweet Nell o' th' Mountains born on March 23, 1966)
Mention must be made of the versatility of these ponies, for although both pure and part-breds of both sections are best known for their outstanding suitability as children's hacks and hunters, they are also extremely smart in harness and more than hold their own in gymkhana events. And here, too, is the ideal 'pet' pony for the child too young to have developed any horse-sense. The Welsh pony will endure any amount of fussing, inexpert bridling and being played with; and will carry a really young rider with kindness and docility.
No account of Welsh Ponies can fail to reveal the immense influence which the late Miss Brodrick's Coed Coch herd had on the breed, and it is good to know that her cousin, Col E Williams Wynn, is carrying on the herd on the same lines on which Miss Brodrick founded it. Although Coed Coch is mentioned so frequently in so many studs it must not be thought that the breed is therefore in danger of too close inbreeding (see 2005 Journal p85 and 2014 Journal p101). Coed Coch was, and is still, a very large herd and includes many famous families, and although Coed Coch Seryddwr's family is very well represented in South Africa, we are glad that it should be so for it is a famous family and is now much sought after in the UK.

At the present time the total number of purebred ponies of both sections registered or eligible for registration with the South African Stud Book is 122 with 75 Part-bred Welsh recorded with the Welsh Society of South Africa.

In 1957 there was a small number of registered Welsh Mountain Ponies (Section A) and Welsh Ponies (Section B). The Welsh Pony and Cob Society's Stud Book in Wales consists of four sections but so far only two purebred sections have come out to Africa. Section A, the Welsh Mountain Pony with a height limit of 12 hands, from which all the other sections are derived, and Section B, the Welsh Pony of riding type with a height limit of 13.2 hands. At present Section C in South Africa consists of Part-bred Welsh Ponies under 14.2hh and having not less than 25 per cent Welsh blood in their veins. (Breed standards are shown on pages 8 and 9).
Perhaps the most important characteristics of the Welsh Pony is its versatility as demonstrated here as the Show Jumper, Harness Pony, First Pony and a Show Pony.

**IDA ILLINGWORTH 1965**
From Horses And Riding in South Africa, edited by Pamela Struben

i)Coed Coch Seryddwr, Criban Sara, Criban Dun Bee, Revel Black Style, Revel Silver Spray and Coed Coch Perten

ii)Dyrin Fancy Free, Gredington Siriol and Tydi Misty and in 1965 Arvon Glaw and Gredington Niwl

iii)In 1964 Rhaiadr Idris out of Tydi Misty by Coed Coch Planed, Rhaiadr Golden Girl out of Dyrin Fancy Free by Gredington Simwnt, Rhaiadr St Donat out of Gredington Siriol by Criban Victor and in 1966 Rhaiadr Mari out of Arvon Glaw by Gredington Simwnt

iv)Gredington Ifan, Gredington Hogennig, Clan Belle and Clan Bet

v)Miss Ida Illingworth, Mr Jan Grobbelaar, Mrs Charmaine Grobbelaar, Mrs Pam Trolllip, Mrs Rosalie Lasbrey, Mrs Joyce Southey, Mrs Sheila Southey, Mr Vincent Clarke, Mr Kleintjie de Klerk, Mr Kabous de Klerk and Mrs Shirley Kingwill
VALIANT IN SOUTH AFRICA

'Valiant' is a 13hh Section B pony by Criban Victor out of Coed Coch Silian. He was bred by the late Mrs EGE Griffith and did very well for her in the show ring before she allowed me to bring him to S Africa as a three year old in 1956 to breed children's ponies. As we, Valiant and I, live in the Transvaal, rather naturally he is making his mark there first, although his stock are gradually getting known all over the Republic.

In 1958 he was on exhibition at the Rand Easter Show having just won the South African Championship (Section B) at the Cape, and Mr Dorian Williams, who was out here judging that year, said in a broadcast after the show: “The presence of the five year old Welsh Pony Stallion 'Valiant' interested us particularly because, having judged the children's ponies, we felt that although we'd seen many nice ponies, there was generally speaking a lack of quality; and as we have discovered at Home, the introduction of the best Welsh blood is almost invaluable: the Welsh Pony not only having quality but also having the ideal temperament for a child's pony, and being nice and narrow”.

In 1960, the late Miss Brodrick MBE, when judging at the Rand Easter Show, made 'Taffy', the only Valiant son on the show, Reserve Champion Child's Pony as a two year old. In her Christmas letter from Coed Coch that year she wrote: 'With few exceptions the children rode Small Horses who could not claim any Pony characteristics! One 13.3 grey, who gave
a faultless display, stood out as being a real pony. I eventually made him Reserve Champion to a lovely old TB mare. Only after I handed the pony his rosette did I discover that he was a half-bred son of Valiant and his age, two years!! He well deserved his award!' At the last Welsh Championship Show held in conjunction with the Rand Easter Show in 1962 (Judged Col Hurrell) Valiant was Supreme Champion Stallion winning the Welsh Pony and Cob Society's Shield for the best Section B pony; the Ponies of Britain 'Special' for the Best Pony bred in the UK and many other awards. In the Open children's ridden classes, Taffy was Champion Child's Hunter and Reserve Champion Child's Pony to a Pure bred Welsh Mountain Pony, Badgemore Silver Prince shown from Rhodesia but bred in the Cape by Mrs RJ Lasbrey.

At the 1963 Rand Easter Show, Capt George Rich of Leicestershire had an entry of 81 children's Ponies and 55 children's Hunters. Of these 6 were Valiant's offspring and between them they won five firsts and two seconds and both the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society's medals awarded to the Pony classes. Capt Rich wrote in his report in Horse and Hound on the Easter Show: 'The Pony classes were rather disappointing although there were four of five nice youngsters. Most of these were by an imported Welsh sire (Valiant) owned by Miss I Illingworth, but I hear that the standard of ponies is rapidly improving'.

Valiant with Stud Groom Willie Shabangu. They had just arrived at the Rand Easter Show after three days travelling and Willie took him straight into the arena to stretch his legs.
At this year's Children's Show in Johannesburg and at the Rand Spring Show, once again Valiant's progeny won top honours and we hope that there will be plenty of them at the Rand Easter Show in 1964 when Mr and Mrs Dorian Williams will once again be judging.

The success of Valiant's stock is all the more remarkable when it is realised that they are all half-bred and Miss Brodrick said of the mares I had managed to collect for him: 'Miss Illingworth has provided Valiant with a bunch of wives mostly of unknown breeding ranging from 12 to 15 hands including two Basuto mares. One would describe most of them as useful that then beautiful but from what I saw of their progeny, Valiant was certainly doing a good job'.

I have to send Valiant travelling as we have Horse Sickness in our area and many people will not risk sending their mares here. Last year he stood in Natal for three months where again he will be producing half-bred ponies as there are not pure Welsh mares for him. I hear that there are some beautiful Valiant foals coming along there now.

I am glad to be able to report that Valiant now has one pure Section B colt foal, Foresyte Valiant Prince Llewelyn out of Coed Coch Pala. I bought Pala at Miss Brodrick's sale of 1959 and flew her out here as a six months foal. Pala was Champion Section B mare in 1962, the only time she has been shown, but she is too valuable to me as a brood mare to risk travelling the long distances we must go, to show any more.
I thought you might be interested to hear of the impact of Valiant on the children's ponies of South Africa where riding as in the rest of the world, is growing ever more popular and the need for suitable children's ponies is at last being recognised.

There are quite a number of WMP's mostly in the Cape Province and they also are making their mark and proving the versatility of the Welshman by holding their own against bigger horses in tent pegging and other gymkhana events as well as the harness classes which are such a great feature of the Cape Shows.

Ida F Illingworth 1963
Foresyte Stud
This article first appeared in the Journal of the WPCS UK in 1964
A rather belated thank you for your wonderful journal from Danny Boy and me, and I am sure, countless other ponies and their amazingly privileged associates. I have read the journal several times and always I am struck by the richness that the ponies have given, with their characteristically unconditional generosity, to the lives of those of us fortunate enough to have had them cross our paths. It becomes increasingly more distasteful to me now, living as I do amongst wild animals, to harness and dominate any animal, but I must recognise that they are selectively and artificially evolved creatures; the little horses that are our companions, and I just long, increasingly, for a little bold presence at my side as I walk in the bush, I did not appreciate the ponies enough when I had them, but hindsight is what it is. I have even thought of trying to find a pair of retired ponies to live out their days here, but last night the leopard had everyone in a state, snorting and blowing, with his prowling, and last week killed a mountain reedbuck behind the house, so that ponies here would not be fair, and in no way restful, but it would have been fun. We have never had any trouble from the resident leopard here, we sometimes find something that he has killed, including another younger male, but other than that, all he does is cough around the house in the dusk. Last Saturday the nyalas and kudus were barking continuously, most unusual, they are such a laid back lot, the monkeys were shrieking from all directions, my black cat came streaking into the house on her belly, vomited, (not a brave girl), and charged to the window to look out, growling; the orange cat followed suit but managed to keep her food down; my husband, Harold, went to investigate. As he went up to the kitchen, (separate from the living house) he surprised a sub adult leopard at the door, who lolloped off up the mountain, in no great hurry. Although it is super to know that the population appears dynamic, just a bit too close, this youngster!

There will be an article by Ruth in the 2015 Journal
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