

Fifty Years of the Annwood Stud



Wells Gillian (Wells Superb x Wells Golden Flash) b.1971

My interest in native ponies started when I learnt to ride on a Highland pony at the age of nine. I was fortunate to be able to keep my Highland pony until the time of my marriage in 1949. My interest in some of the other breeds, particularly the Dartmoor and Shetland, was heightened during the years spent bringing up my family. This was largely due to having holidays in Devon, always attending the Dartmoor Pony Society's annual show at Brimpts Farm, high up on the moor. At this event we met many exhibitors including the late George and Vera Shillibeer of the Lakehead Stud, who became very good friends. We visited them on many occasions and apart from learning a lot about Shetland and Dartmoor ponies, we always had an extremely good lunch! Having visited Arlington Court, the home of Sir Francis Chichester, who had a small stud of standard Shetland ponies, whilst on holiday in Devon in 1962, my desire to breed ponies became greater than ever. The following

year breeding ponies became a reality when Derek and I acquired Annwood Farm in Sussex.

It was very difficult to buy ponies at this time but I managed to purchase my first Shetlands in the spring of 1964; three yearling fillies that had come South the previous autumn from the Island Sales. The fillies I had found were all out of inspected mares, and would make standard height. However, they had no common, in fact rather indiscriminate, breeding. Nevertheless they each cost 100 guineas! I became a life member of the Society and intrigued with the breed and its history. We visited various studs in the south including South Park, Woodbury, Lockinge, Hurtwood, Holwell and Luckdon, and I managed to buy a few more ponies, all standard height and different colours.

In 1965 I was fortunate to lease a stallion, Avening Clown, from the late Mrs Hester Knight. He was used on all the mares and produced a

crop of good strong foals, 10 fillies and only one colt. By this time, I had decided what I really wanted to breed, so I sold my foals and in the autumn of 1966 travelled north to Scotland hoping to buy some black mares. We visited Marshwood, Transy, Wells and Netherley, but unfortunately not the Harviestoun stud. No one would sell me a black standard mare, so I realised I would have to settle for youngstock!

Over the next couple of years we attended many shows and sales, meeting other Shetland pony breeders and enthusiasts. Everyone we met was always extremely friendly and very happy to impart their knowledge of these wonderful ponies. I am especially grateful to the late Miss Nan French of the Hurtwood Stud for fostering my interest and knowledge in pony pedigrees.

We attended the Aberdeen Sale in 1968 for the first time and purchased two Wells filly foals Elenora (ex Wells Eileen) and Frieda (ex Wells Fiona) both by Topper of Berry. In the

same year, I purchased a black stallion Merlin of Luckdon (Thunder of Marshwood ex Mystic of Netherley) from an advertisement in Horse and Hound. Merlin was an unproven four year old living in a riding school with his brother Buster! He had a lovely head, excellent confirmation, good bone and a wonderful temperament. Merlin proved to be a huge success both as my foundation stallion and in the show ring. Gradually, I managed to increase the number of ponies in the stud by acquiring stock with a variety of bloodlines including ponies from Highfield, Holwell, Marshwood, Netherley, South Park and Wells. Despite drawing stock from many studs and using three different stallions, Merlin of Luckdon, Fireproof of Marshwood (bay) and Charlie Boy of Felbridge (grey) on my mares, the ponies that proved most successful in the show ring, as in-hand, ridden and driven ponies all descended from Merlin.

I began to appreciate the importance of line breeding, so I concentrated on looking



Elector of Annwood (Merlin of Luckdon x Wells Elenora) b.1978



Samantha of A. (Merlin of Luckdon x Samphire of A.) b.1980

for ponies carrying bloodlines I had come to favour. Mostly, I chose ponies that were descended from Wells Superb who, in my opinion, was the best stallion in the breed at that time. I tried on many occasions to buy a colt by Superb from Harry Sleight but never managed to persuade him to part with one that I considered suitable.

Every autumn, we attended Aberdeen and the reduction sales at St John's Wells. In 1971 I bought Wells Gillian (Wells Superb ex Wells Golden Flash). Gillian was one the brood mares, along with Wells Elenora and Fasque Fairy, that proved to be the best. Therefore, they formed the foundation of the stud and it is their bloodlines which we are still using today.

Wells Gillian gave me 15 foals, mostly fillies, initially by Merlin of Luckdon and later by Merlin's son Elector of Annwood (ex Wells Elenora). Gillian herself had a successful showing career, as did many of her progeny. Her stock excelled in the show ring, in hand and under saddle, were successful driving ponies and

wonderful children's ponies. At least two of her daughters are still alive, Gilia and Ginnia. Gilia, now aged 26, is teaching yet another child to ride and Ginnia, 25, is senior brood mare at Annwood stud.

Wells Elenora's (Topper of Berry ex Wells Eileen) first foal, Emily of Annwood, by Merlin of Luckdon, was sold to Mrs Powell of the Fairwood Stud in Wales, for whom she was Champion at the RWAS on more than one occasion. Mrs Powell sold Emily to Mr and Mrs Griffiths of the Ladbury Stud, where she continued to produce good foals. In 1978, Elenora had a colt foal, Elector of Annwood, by Merlin of Luckdon. Having inherited all of Merlin's attributes Elector became my next stud stallion and proved to be an excellent sire. He eventually went to Northern Ireland, to Mrs Lyttle's Magheradartin Stud. A number of Elector's stock are very successful driving ponies. Elenora also had a significant influence on the Champlers Stud, being the grand-dam of Champlers Ebony, Emma and Black Jack.

Fasque Fairy (Wells Supervisor ex Wells Fairy Queen) also bred well with Merlin of Luckdon. Her daughter Felicia of Annwood was also a regular breeder and left me many foals, including Frensham of Annwood, by Elector of Annwood, Francesca of Annwood, his full sister was extremely successful under saddle and again an excellent brood mare.

Two Annwood mares, Samphire (Wells Supreme ex Highfield Eriskay) and Pansy (Merlin of Luckdon ex Harviestoun Pandora) had outstanding showing careers as did their progeny. Samphire's daughter, Samantha (by Merlin of Luckdon), won the yearling filly class at the Bath and West in 1981 and the culmination of her show career was winning the broodmare class and the overall championship at the Autumn Shetland Show in 1990.

In 1991, I dispersed the Annwood Stud. However, in 1995 Gilia of Annwood returned to us for my grand-daughter, Lucinda. Gilia was a great success; not only did she teach

Lucinda to ride but she kindled her love of the Shetland. Gilia's achievements, like many other Annwood ponies, including Glimpse and Garland, are too many to mention.

My daughter Mary moved to Herefordshire in 2002 with her family, and needed a companion for Lucinda's Connemara. We were fortunate to find Ginnia of Annwood (full sister to Gilia) and from that day the Annwood Stud was re-established.

Initially, not having enough space to run a stallion, Ginnia was sent to the Sapphire Stud. The following year she produced a colt foal, Annwood Victorious by Sapphire Viceroy. Kinness High Spirit, (Wells Premier x Kinness Virtue), was bought from the Kinness Stud as a colt foal to keep Victorious company.

It was proving as difficult in 2006 as it had been in 1966 to find well bred standard black ponies. However, Neil Brown kindly agreed to let us have Wells Valda (Wells Vijay x Wells Victoria), a grand-daughter of Wells Superb and her three



Ginny of A. (Elector of A. x Wells Gillian) b.1987



Gilia of A. (Elector of A. x Wells Gillian) b.1986

year old daughter Kinness Verona, (by Wells Dominator). Kinness Victory (Wells Dominator x Millhouse Vanessa) also came down from Scotland to use on our mares the following year.

Both colts, Annwood Victorious and High Spirit, were sold at Reading Sale in 2009. Victorious is now a brilliant children's pony and High Spirit is with the Old Vicarage Stud in Northumberland. We were delighted that there was so much interest in our ponies at the sale and this fuelled our determination to continue to breed standard black ponies, from carefully selected bloodlines.

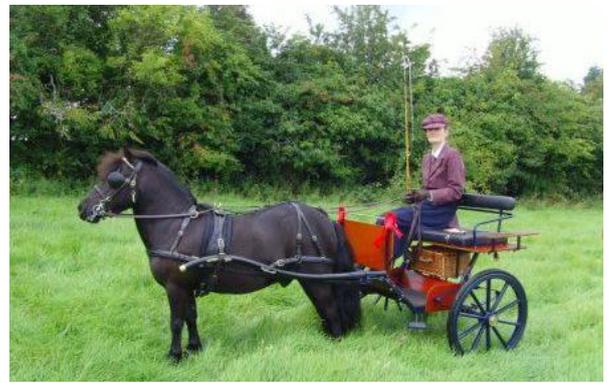
In September 2007, Oxendale Hector (Helwin of Transy x Lambeth Francesca) was entered into the Bulth Sale by Mrs Audrey Jones. We

decided that in view of his old bloodlines and as a proven stallion he would be worth buying to use on our mares. We were lucky enough to secure Hector and he was great success, having a wonderful temperament and being a gentleman with his mares and foals. Hector left us some good foals, although mostly colts.

We are committed to maintain the Annwood stud with a small nucleus of mares carrying the original bloodlines. Currently, we have four broodmares, Ginnia of Annwood, her daughter Genie of Quimper, Fiasco of Quimper (ex Francesca of Annwood) and Clashandorran Trudy (Mormond Superb ex Wells Trim, granddaughter of Wells Superb), kindly on loan from Mrs Bowden. And we have retained three fillies by Oxendale Hector; Ginnetta (ex



A. Gilder (Kinness Victory x Genie of Quimper) b.2009



Magheradartin Windsor (Elector of A. x Warrackston Bewitched) b.1999

Genie of Quimper), Valulla (ex Wells Valda) and Tulip (ex Clashandorran Trudy) to replace the ageing mares.

Kinness Victory produced a fabulous colt Annwood Gilder (ex Genie of Quimper) who we have retained. Gilder has already taken a Supreme Championship and won an NPS Silver Medal. We are looking forward to using him on Hector's daughters. So the foundations of the Annwood Stud have been laid again.

Over the years Derek and I visited many studs, exhibited at numerous shows and attended various Shetland Society functions. I became a panel judge and also served on Council. Derek's support was invaluable to me. He thoroughly enjoyed maintaining the fields and fences as well as driving the lorry to shows

and accompanying me on numerous judging commitments. He remained interested in the ponies until the end of his life last year and was always there to offer advice. We made some wonderful friends and enjoyed gatherings up and down the country and abroad. Over the years Annwood ponies have been exported to many countries including France, Holland, South Africa, Malta and Australia.

I am delighted that Mary and Lucinda are as committed as I am, and that they appreciate the knowledge I have gained over the last 50 years. We all wish to continue to breed quality ponies that are true to type, with excellent temperaments, conformation and bloodlines and sincerely hope that Annwood ponies will maintain the reputation they deserve.

J. O'B.



A. Ginnetta (Oxendale Hector x Genie of Quimper) b.2012