

INTERNATIONAL SPORT PONY BREEDERS MACHNO WELSH SPORT PONY STUD - UK

Submitted by Meirion Jones - Stud Principal

I grew up in the farming community of North Wales. In this beautiful but harsh landscape Welsh Mountain sheep and Welsh Black cattle were the main source of farming income. These breeds were hardy, sure footed, good mothers, and able to forage for themselves on the rough pastures, requiring minimal care. Almost every farmer also had a few ponies running on the hills in those days. These were working ponies, and were used by the farmers to get round their land and up onto the mountains to look after the sheep and cattle. The ponies were bred on the farms with each farmer favouring his own type of pony. So there were always mares and young ponies running on the hills with selective breeding taking place for centuries.

These ponies have formed the base of modern Sport ponies, which we now see in studbooks worldwide. My earliest memory of the Welsh ponies was the excitement of helping at round up time. We fashioned makeshift bridles and jumped on them bareback! This was how we learned to ride. It is hard not to be impressed by the hardiness of these ponies, which could carry a man uphill all day picking their way around the rocks and boulders, rear a foal on the mountain and find food and shelter for themselves in the worst of weathers. This early interest has hardened into a life long commitment to breeding Welsh ponies for the kind of work we need them to do today, so different from the work they traditionally performed on these hill farms. Today the Welsh ponies have to demonstrate the characteristics of their breeding: strong constitutions, soundness, pure movement and the spirit or courage that makes them good performance ponies.

My ponies are all registered in the Welsh Pony and Cob Society Stud Book. I stand three stallions at stud, two are Welsh Cobs, a Thoroughbred and a Welsh Sport Pony is available through AI. The stallions are proving themselves as top class sires with outstanding stock in every discipline. The senior stallion is Carregcoch Bleddyn (Welsh Cob) graded Elite; and one of only eight Elite stallions in Britain. He was awarded the Leading Sire of Performance Ponies by the British Equine Federation and the Sport Pony Studbook Society (SPSS).

Democrat (Welsh Cob) competed in dressage classes scoring to 85% and winning many championships. He has sired many excellent jumping and dressage ponies. Relmo (Thoroughbred) is a new introduction to Machno Stud and his 1st foals here are eagerly awaited in 2007. He is already a proven sire of eventers, jumpers, show hacks/ponies and anglo arabs. I have selected breeding ponies according to my own criteria and would choose from any bloodline that I felt would help me to produce the type of pony I am looking for from any particular mating. Bloodlines are a matter for individual consideration before deciding on each mating.

The demand for Welsh ponies amongst both children and adults has increased worldwide due to their versatility. Not every pony can be a world beater but there is a spirit about these ponies that makes them great competitors. The characteristics bred into them to enable them to survive and thrive on the Welsh Mountains are the same characteristics that bring out the best in them in competition.

The characteristics that I am aiming to maximise in my breeding programme include sound constitutions, clean limbs with sure footed action and a good length of stride, of course good conformation with the typical structure of a good Welsh pony, and a dash of courage to enable them to perform and compete against all comers.

In the UK our Sports Pony Studbook Society operates very much like the Warmblood breed societies. Ponies can be put forward for

mare or stallion assessment and grading. Competitions are held and sponsored by the SPSS for breeding stock, youngstock and performance ponies. The award presented to Carregcoch Bleddyn by the SPSS is purely on performance results of his offspring, so is one of the most useful indicators for mare owners when looking for the best progenitors available in the UK.

Ponies that I have bred and have reached international acclaim include **Machno Carwyn** (x Carregcoch Bleddyn). Carwyn is the most successful show jumping pony stallion of all time. He is the winner of two European individual Gold medals (only 4 of the best ponies of each country qualify), 4 National gold's and 1 bronze, placed in 25 Grand Prix including 7 wins and in addition is the winner of 50 international competitions. Another Bleddyn son, the 4 y.o. **Machno Showtime**, was 2006 British National Potential Show-jumping Champion 4 or 5 year old with a score of 83.91% (scoring higher than the horse champion).



A Democrat son **Machno Ramezez** was Reserve Champion at the British Dressage Breeders Championships 2005 and at Sheeppgate against horses, qualified with his 13 year old rider for the North West Regional Championships in 2006 against both horses and riders of all and ages. **Machno Dawnus** is also by Democrat and at 13.2hh is winning speed classes against horses. This year Dawnus was 7th in the Swiss National pony trophy. Another 6 y.o. at 13.2hh by Democrat was 2nd at the prestigious British Scope Festival and recently placed 1st in a top international competition.



In the UK a dressage test judged by a British Dressage trained judge would score each rider/horse combination against a set of criteria, meaning ponies are at no disadvantage in dressage competitions and score highly on their movement, power and presence.

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