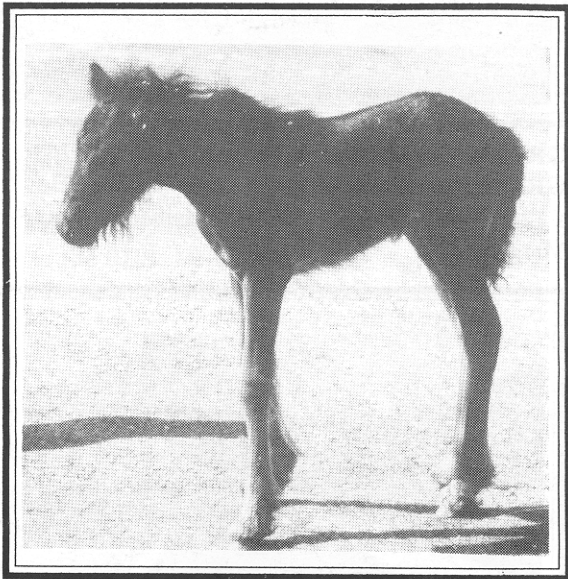
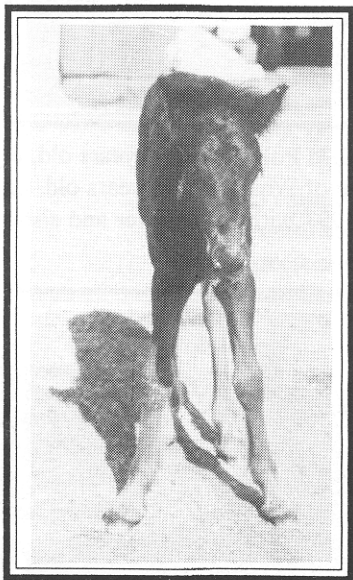


THE FELL PONY SOCIETY

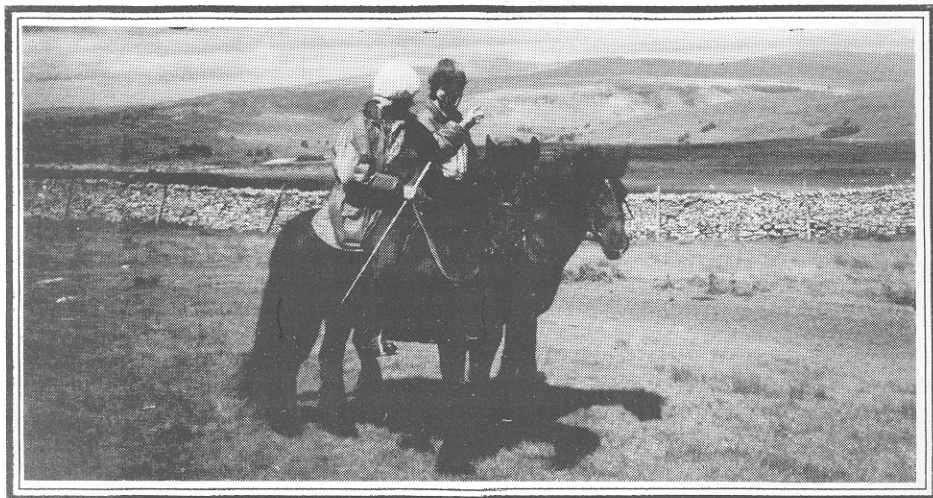
Spring 1998



Photos: D. C. Knottenbelt

Fell Foal Disease: Time to Act

Age No Barrier, if you're a Fell..



GREENFIELD TOPPER (Mountain Flash II/Greenfield Polly), left, 20 years old, & **GREENFIELD POLLY** (Heltondale Sonny Boy/Snip of Wharton), 24 years old, on a 12 mile ride between Settle & Malham in summer 1997 with Beth Slater and sister Margaret Rae.



EDENVIEW MOONSTROLLER and Jane Brindley contemplating an odd view along the M65 in Lancashire last autumn! They were taking part in a fundraiser in aid of a Children's Hospice. Stroller's other sponsored event last year was the Milestone Ride, part of the Queen's Golden Wedding Celebrations, organised by Petplan & the Daily Telegraph, which looks set to go into the Guinness Book of Records for the volume of entries. He won £500 for epitomising and reflecting "The Spirit of the Milestone Ride", having taken part in the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations in 1977 too. At 29 years of age, there seems little he hasn't already done.

The Fell Pony Society
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

President: Mrs M C M Laing

Chairman: Mrs E A Ball

Vice-Chairman: Mr B M Allen

Secretary & Treasurer:

Miss Sally M Wood, Keeper's Cottage, Guyzance, Acklington,
Northumberland, NE65 9AA.

Tel & Fax: 01670 761117 E-mail: fpsoc@aol.com

Sales Officer:

Mrs M C M Laing, Twislehope, Hermitage, Hawick,
Roxburghshire, TD9 0LS, Scotland

Tel: 013873 76272

Publicity & Exhibition Officers: Mrs M Laing, Mrs P Forsman, Miss B W Walker

Trainee Judge Chairman & Show Affiliation Secretary:

Mrs A A D Newall, Todridge, Great Whittington,
Northumberland, NE19 2HP

Trainee Judge Secretary: Mrs C Allen

Representative to the NPS: Miss M G Longsdon

Representative to the BHS: Mr R B Sutcliffe

Editor Fell Pony Newsletter: Miss S M Wood

Council

To retire 1998: Mrs M C Murray, Miss B W Walker, Mr R H Harrison, Mr M Allen
To retire 1999: Mr H F Wales, Mr A W Morland, Mr W S Potter
To retire 2000: Mr B M Allen, Mr R B Charlton, Mrs M Laing, Mrs A A D Newall
To retire 2001: Mr E M Wilson, Mrs C H Robinson, Mr P Forsman, Mr P Boustead
To retire 2002: Mrs E A Ball, Miss M G Longsdon, Mr J Bell, Mr R B Sutcliffe

Telephone Numbers

Mr B M Allen	01229 774528	Miss M G Longsdon	01629 640709
Mr M Allen	01539 726273	Mr A W Morland	015396 24615
Mrs E A Ball	01556 680216	Mrs M C Murray	01833 650474
Mr J Bell	016974 78644	Mrs A A D Newall	01434 672218
Mr P Boustead	01524 383665	Mr W S Potter	01931 716267
Mr R B Charlton	01434 673262	Mrs C H Robinson	01946 862439
Mr P L Forsman	01768 890372	Mr R B Sutcliffe	01254 776389
Mr T H Harrison	01931 716653	Mr H F Wales	01768 361388
Mrs M C M Laing	013873 76272	Miss B W Walker	017687 77202
		Mr E M Wilson	016974 78638

A Message from the President

A good New Year to all our members in Great Britain and abroad.

One of the greatest rewards I get from administering the pony sales list is matching suitable purchasers to vendors of ponies. I receive many telephone calls and often the hardest thing is finding a pony not too far from where the enquirer lives, as many cannot travel the length of the country just to look at a pony.

In years to come, unless the researchers are successful in finding the cause of the Fell foal disease, the number of ponies overall will decline dramatically. The breed, which today is a common sight in some areas, risks becoming very rare indeed. The Society, Rare Breeds Survival Trust, Horserace Betting Levy Board and the vets involved in investigations in both Liverpool and Penrith are all very concerned that comprehensive research work must begin. Fell Pony 2000 has been set up to get the fundraising started but the task is large and everyone who cares about the breed and its future should play a part in raising some funds.

This year's grand raffle is in aid of the research and I appeal to all members to support it. A book of tickets is included with this newsletter and anyone who can sell more books at school, work, or at local events, is welcome to collect extra books from meetings, shows and FPS events. If we can sell all the tickets, it would raise £5,000. Never has the money been more needed than now, so please do whatever you can to help.

The show season is fast approaching and I look forward as always to catching up with old friends and meeting new members on the stand over the coming months. Don't forget to get your show entries sent in well before the closing dates with an SAE. Good show secretaries are hard to come by and ours do a great job. Try and make their lives a little easier by not waiting until the last minute to rush your entry in.

Molly Luinig

Chairman's Notes

Last year has been very busy for our Society, as you will read in all the reports in this newsletter. It has meant a great deal of hard work for those of our members who do so much voluntary work to keep things going. We are all extremely grateful for their efforts, as without them the Society would not function.

We have two large threats facing us as we start another year. one is the Foal Syndrome which, thanks to the work of Derek Knottenbelt and his fellow researchers, will begin to be examined in-depth, but all the veterinary work, research and gathering of data that is still to be done to finalise the problem has yet to be financed. All the support both financial and otherwise that you, as members, can give to this cause will be greatly appreciated and will help to bring a speedy resolution to this threatening problem. The revised target figure of £25,000 for this year does look awesome but in fact if every member could raise just £20, it would bring in nearly £22,000.

The other threat that looms large over our Fell pony is the pressure that is being put on the very heart of our Fell ponies, those herds that still live and breed where they have done for hundreds of years on the Northern Fells.

The Government is not listening to the dire plight that the farmers, indeed the whole rural countryside, is in. No business can stand a 50% drop in the price it receives for its produce. Farmers still have feed, veterinary and living expenses to pay which do not get any less. The countryside is being squeezed out of existence and with it our farmers and Native Ponies. Please do all the lobbying you can to ensure a better deal for our farmers and the countryside before they all disappear. Let us hope the summer brings better news.

Liz Ball

Secretary's Letter

It may be a little late, but thank you for all your Christmas cards and good wishes. They certainly cheered up the office over the dark days of December.

I hope by the time you read this that the waterlogged fields and wall-to-wall mud, which have been the main feature of this strange winter we've had in Britain, have started to improve. The mild weather has been playing tricks on nature with birds starting to nest and spring bulbs flowering usually early. If you are despairing that your ponies will ever emerge from the thick mud with any feather and hair left, take consolation in that you are not alone; overseas members, especially in Germany, are going through the same anguish after weeks of torrential rain too. Hopefully by the start of the show season, it will only be a faint memory.

So much has happened since the last newsletter that it is hard to know where to begin. The new legislation regarding Equine Passports received Ministerial approval in December and all the breed societies have been scurrying to design new registration applications and passport documents for 1998 foals. Hopefully our new application forms will be available at the AGM onwards. The old yellow forms are now obsolete. As has been explained many times, it is the EU Commission which has imposed this requirement, not the Society. It will mean more paperwork for everyone unfortunately. The first year will be the most frustrating, I imagine, and your patience whilst I learn the new ropes would be welcome.

You cannot fail to be shocked by the front cover; this was one of the pathetic, sick foals which was examined at Leahurst before being put down. Many of you will have read in the press or seen on local TV reports about the foal disease; breeders will have been contacted by Fell Pony 2000 about the regional breeders' meetings. Experts in Liverpool and Penrith have all agreed the breed is suffering from a probable genetic fault which needs urgent research if its progress is to be arrested. Fell Pony 2000, the registered charity which is raising funds towards the research costs and is liaising between the breeders, vets and researchers, has been working hard over the winter with the Society, preparing for the coming foaling season. Their report, the first of many over the next three years, is included in this issue.

The annual Accounts, AGM agenda and election information are contained in a separate leaflet for the first time, freeing up more space inside the newsletter. I am very pleased to say an overall profit of £4,368.96 was revealed in 1996/97 which marks a turning point for the Society. This means the expense of introducing passports, for example, can therefore be absorbed without the need to raise registration fees.

26th January marked a mini-revolution in the office as E-mail was installed, largely to aid rapid communications between Fell Pony 2000 and Leahurst, but it is already having other benefits. Recently I arranged an interview with Mrs Nygaard of the New Farm Fell Stud in Florida by a British journalist visiting the USA soon, all within a matter of minutes. (By the way, she asked to be remembered to all her friends in the Society!) In the "old days" it would mean expensive fax or telephone calls; now it just takes a local call. You can even send me your advertisements, letters and articles for the Autumn edition down the line to save all that writing. I look forward to hearing from you on fpsoc@aol.com

The Council is seeking your views on a Stallion Grading proposal to replace the "At Home" Premiums which is explained further on. Mary Longsdon is looking for riders to take part in the Pony Pilgrimage being organised by the BHS, and we're offering a prize in return for a good photograph for the 1998 Christmas card. There are plenty of events too for your diary. I wish you all good luck and good sportsmanship.

Sally Wood

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Breed Show Report (Autumn 1997)

This letter is written partly in response to Mrs Murray's Breed Show report, where she comments on the lack of support for driving classes and partly due to my observations of the driving class at the 1996 Breed Show.

I have been a driving enthusiast for 9 years and have always enjoyed a little of everything - local shows, club driving trials, demonstrations, etc - except private driving.

Whilst I appreciate the classicism and beauty of the private drive animal, harness and vehicle, I really do believe it is out of reach of many people. This might be because of finance, but it might also be a geographical problem. When going very long distances to take part a person needs to have a lot of time available. The north is particularly short of shows when compared to the Midlands, Home Counties and southern regions.

I know that driving is very popular again and on the increase each year. I believe that driving in public can be encouraged without compromising standards in any way.

What I would suggest to the Fell Pony Society, and indeed to any other organisations arranging driving classes outside the private drive circuit, is that what we should be looking for first is a well trained and well behaved pony going in the correct manner, a driver who is competent and can demonstrate accepted style - classic one handed driving for example - clean well fitting harness and vehicle well matched to the pony but not necessarily traditional. If a show can afford to divide classes then by all means "to a traditional vehicle", "modern vehicle class", "exercise class" etc, but if not, then the whole outfit should be judged on correctness of pony and driver first, and pleasing overall appearance second.

I for one, and I expect others, would be encouraged to come to the Breed Show if a clear statement of these principles were to be made in advance publicity for such events.

Perhaps those who drive Fell ponies would be willing to cooperate in an article for the magazine or might like to publish my letter and form an opinion from any response.

Pam Ward,

Longhorsley, Morpeth, Northumberland

Breed Show Secretary, Margaret Murray replies:

Your letter is very helpful and thank you for putting pen to paper and expressing your views and ideas. The FPS shows are run for the members and it is such a bonus to have positive criticism from those members, as it helps us organise the shows - particularly the Breed Show - to be, as near as possible, to their expectations.

I very much welcome your ideas of encouraging more entries into the Driving Classes and I agree with you that although driving is on the increase, not everybody who drives can afford, even wishes to own, a show vehicle and harness acceptable for Private Driving classes. However, as with riding, so with driving - at the end of the day, safety is of the utmost importance. For this, there must be more than a little knowledge of the correct fitting of vehicle and harness, and schooling of the pony. The end result should be "a well trained and well behaved pony going in a correct manner" and "a competent driver driving in a classically acceptable style". I agree also that clean, safe, and correctly fitting harness and vehicle is more important, together with encouragement at our Breed Show, rather than anything else.

I will try to change the wording in the schedule to make this aspect clear. I hope it will help at future shows as it would be a great shame to lose the Driving Classes at the Breed Show due to lack of support, particularly as Fells excel as driving ponies.

Changing Times for the Society

In the Fell Pony Society's early years, the main problem the council faced was not merely that of encouraging people to join the Society, but, more importantly, persuading them to register their stock. At a time when foals were only worth a few pounds, it was not easy to justify the expense and trouble of inspection and registration. The problem was eased to an extent by the fact that most of the council members were breeders themselves and, when it came to registering the foals, they set the precedent. Moreover, in looking after their own interest on the council, they looked after the best interests of the breed as the two were indivisible.

Since those days, when the future of the breed was far from assured, things have changed dramatically. The growing popularity of riding and driving as recreational activities in the post war years has seen the fortunes of many breeds, including the Fell, revived. Over the years, the membership of the Fell Pony Society has increased substantially, and members can now enjoy a whole new range of membership benefits from breed shows and performance events to open days, social gatherings, and regularly circulated breed magazines, none of which were available in the early days. Instead of breeders comprising the greater part of the overall membership as was once the case, breeders are now outnumbered by enthusiasts and pleasure riders, a fact reflected in some measure by the democratically elected council.

Change has also come for the ponies themselves. There are now probably fewer ponies on the fell than ever before and, regrettably, the time may come when there are no semi-feral ponies left in their native habitat. However, since the Enclosures Act was passed in 1801, there has been a continual decline in the number of ponies on the fell, a trend escalated in recent years by changes in agricultural policy and other influencing factors.

At a time when the equine market generally is in recession, Fell breeders are having to cope with the backlash of media interest in the sick foal syndrome. The sensationalist style of coverage adopted by some magazines, coupled with ill-timed publication shortly before the Penrith sale of registered ponies, resulted in some very low prices under the hammer. Breeders are further discouraged by the imminent burden of equine passports, and the possible future introduction of mandatory identification systems, however worthwhile, is likely to put increasing administrative and financial pressures on those who can least afford it.

In 1916, the aim of the newly formed Fell Pony Society was to "encourage the improvement and registration of ponies", and 80 years on this should not have changed, even if many other things have. Increasing bureaucracy and documentation have inevitably been forced onto all Societies in recent years, but the hardening of attitudes within some sections of the Fell Pony Society is counter productive and is leading to dissatisfaction and division. These are difficult times for everyone involved with the breed and only by addressing the needs of all its members and reaffirming its objectives and priorities can the Society bridge the gaps within its own ranks and present a unified front for the overall benefit of the Fell pony.

**Clive Richardson,
Ulverston, Cumbria.**

Give the Fell a Chance in Mixed Mountain & Moorland Classes

As a keen Fell pony owner and supporter I have been disheartened by the attitude of some judges at local shows who fail to consider the Fell an equal contender in mixed M & M classes. A friend's 13 year old daughter who was showing her 2 year old gelding at a local indoor winter show was very disappointed when the judge on that day effectively told her that it was a waste of time showing a Fell pony in a youngstock class as it would never be placed against "open" competition. I too have met this attitude but have ignored it. Occasionally it

pays off; on another occasion I got a third placing against 16 other youngstock entries at our local winter show.

It occurred to me that others may well have been discouraged in the same way. The Fell Pony Society Special Rosettes are a good incentive in such circumstances and I have arranged with Mrs Newall for them to be available at the monthly summer shows of the Silver Birch Horse Show, Leverhulme Park, Bolton. They will be awarded, as always, to the best Registered Fell pony in the following classes: In hand - Youngstock, In hand - M&M (excluding Welsh), and Ridden - Open M&M. Exhibitors must produce their current FPS membership card in the ring to qualify. Schedules will be available from David Baxter, 38 Cartmel Close, Bolton, BL2 2QN (sae please).

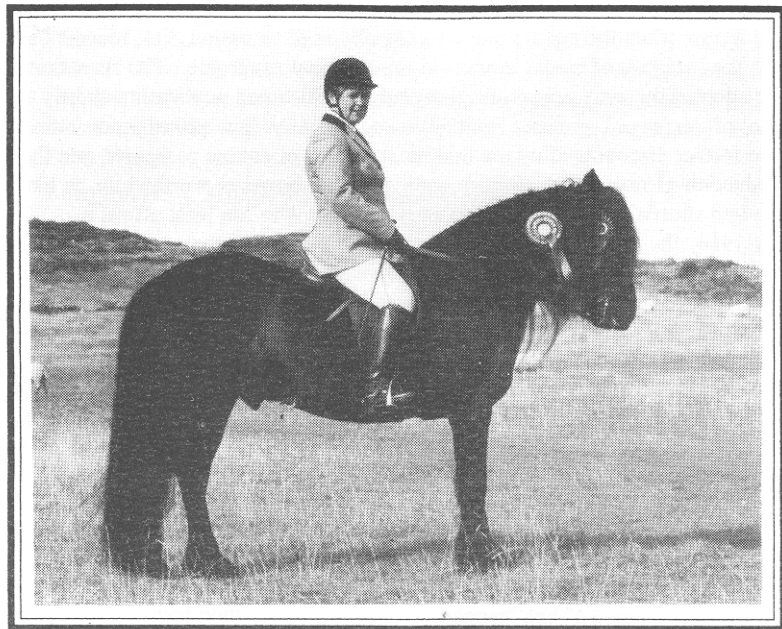
So, don't be deterred by the opinions of a few unenlightened local judges! Affiliation costs only £5 for shows which one or two extra entries from Fell exhibitors will quickly repay. Come along to our shows if you can, or try and persuade show organisers in your home area to affiliate to the Society.

Kath McVicker

Tottington, Bury

(Tel: 01204 882648 for Fell pony enquiries for Silver Birch Horse Show)

Susan McKinlay



In October 1997, the Society lost one of its most active, ardent and brave supporters, who was known to many, not least because she was four times Senior Points Winner (1993 - 1996) and set a fearsome lead for any rivals to beat. With some 450 rosettes to her credit, last year in particular Susan won two 1st and a 3rd in the UK Riders National finals, and won at North Wales Dressage Group show in 'Prix Caprille'. This was a major coup of which Susan and her husband Ian were justly proud, not least because of Susan's ill-health but also because

her aim was to prove to the world that the small, hairy Fell, and in particular, her gelding Guards Jonathan FP535G, known as Guardsman, was more than a match for the other, often unpredictable and uncooperative, horses against which she competed in a wide variety of disciplines. The local press, The Daily Post, paid the following tribute.

The North Wales horse fraternity is in mourning for a remarkable woman who survived five cancer operations and fought against encroaching blindness which threatened her passion for riding.

Ironically, Susan McKinlay, 60, of Ty'n Cae, Newborough, died the way she would have chosen - in the saddle. She collapsed with a heart attack whilst taking part in a competitive ride in forests, close to her Anglesey home. And standing over her when help arrived was her faithful 12 year old Fell pony, Guardsman.

Mrs McKinlay, married to a retired veterinary surgeon, moved to Newborough from Manchester 10 years ago.

Involved in equestrian activity for many years, she rode with Anglesey Draghounds, took part in many competitions and was a founder member of Hoofbeats Riding Club on the island.

Dogged by ill health, Mrs McKinlay's final battle was against blindness. She was completely blind in one eye and had a cataract in the other.

Her husband Ian said "Nothing would stand in the way of her riding and only a few days before her death she won a first rosette in a competition run by North Wales Dressage Group at Gwalchmai.

She died while taking part in a 10 mile ride.

Mr McKinlay said "Susan was with another rider who was on a longer course. They went their separate ways and a short time later another competitor found Susan on the track with Guardsman standing over her, almost as though he was guarding her."

In addition to her husband, Mrs McKinlay leaves a son, daughter and two grandchildren.

Guardsman's place in the family is, however, assured. Susan's daughter, Fiona, who has two other horses, now owns him and is discovering he's not exactly a pushover. The relationship he had with Susan was extraordinary as he sensed her disability, acted as her "minder", and as her eyesight failed he was her guide. No such thing with Fiona, however, who reports he's up to pony tricks, testing her out!

As a lasting memorial of Susan, her husband has offered to introduce and sponsor a new WHP Intermediate level trophy at both the Breed Show and the Southern Show in 1998. This will bridge the gap between Novice and Open, which will be welcomed by many riders who have outgrown the lower level but don't feel able to take on the higher level. The Society is very grateful to Ian McKinlay for his kind support and hopes riders will, in turn, enjoy competing for the trophies given in Susan's memory.

Alan Tabelin

Panel judge and keen breed supporter Alan Tabelin died suddenly on 26th January at home in Redisham, Suffolk, age 70. He attended the first Lowther Driving Trials in 1972, to write a report for the Daily Telegraph, for which he worked, supported by photographs of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in competition. Alan Tabelin was a "larger than life" character with multiple interests. He had only recently been in contact with Ailie Newall and Molly Laing when he said he was looking forward to judging this year at Royal Windsor. He donated the Tabelin Trophies which are awarded each year at the Breed Show. Our sympathies to his widow.

COUNCIL INFORMATION

FOAL DISEASE RESEARCH & FUND-RAISING

Fell Pony 2000, the registered charity set up by members to help raise funds for the research work, was accepted by Council in a special meeting on 26th September and formally adopted by the membership at the Autumn General Meeting on 18th October. Their objectives are laid out in their first report further on. Membership is open to any volunteers who wish to help with their work towards finding a solution to the disease problem.

Dr Knottenbelt has advised the research needs to be funded for three years: Year 1 will be spent on broad-range data gathering with the appointment of a full-time immunologist, Year 2 will concentrate on researching the information & patterns suggested by the data gathered the previous year and Year 3 will focus on developing and starting implementation of an effective eradication programme. Remarkably, the University of Liverpool has already absorbed some £10,000 in costs to date but clearly it cannot continue on that basis. Applications for grant funding are being submitted to a range of possible sources by each organisation involved, ie. Leahurst, Fell Pony 2000 and the Fell Pony Society. Fell Pony 2000's target for this year has risen to £25,000 following a meeting at Leahurst on 24th January involving the FP2000 executive committee, Dr Knottenbelt, Professor Kelly, Dr Carter, Barry Allen & Sally Wood. The research team's commitment is absolute as the identification of this condition is not only vital to the Fell pony breed's future, but marks the discovery of a new disease, different to any other disease already known.

The initial findings of the team from Penrith were expected to be made public in January but at time of going to press had not yet been published. Discussions have taken place with Mr Andy Holliman of the VI Centre and Mr Paul May of Barr & Partners. An agreement in principle to collaborate between Liverpool, Penrith and Edinburgh to aid advancement in the research work has been made. A meeting is being arranged.

At this time, it is FP2000's priority to reach all the breeders with in-foal mares and their vets to ensure they know what to look out for and what to do should they have a sick foal. Most breeders will be attending regional breeders' meetings but those who live too far from a meeting venue will still be informed. FP2000 is looking into producing a video presentation of a meeting which could be available to breeders abroad, as well as in outlying areas.

HORSERACE BETTING LEVY BOARD (HBLB) GRANT 1997/98

(redistributed by The National Pony Society)

The Society was awarded a grant of £3,220 and details of the Society's level of contribution and the areas in which the money was spent can be found in the Report and Accounts. The projected grant for 1998/99 is the same. The Society continues to be grateful to the Board for its support.

RARE BREEDS SURVIVAL TRUST

The RBST has re-classified the Fell Pony in the light of concerns for its future. From January 1998 the breed appears on the Priority List - Category 3 (Vulnerable), having previously appeared on the Minority List. The response of the Trust at this time is much appreciated. It is hoped the Society will participate in some of the Trust's Jubilee Year events over the coming months, when it will in particular be giving prominence to the Native Pony Breeds under threat. It has recently added the Dartmoor to the Native Breeds its recognises.

LOWTHER FELL PONY CLASSES

Following a large financial loss incurred at last year's event, the Council has carefully considered the future of the classes and the Society's presence at Lowther Horse Driving Trials. The ponies have been a feature of Lowther since it began in 1972 but much has changed in that time. It is now the largest, most profitable HDT venue on the national

circuit due to the Country Fair which attracts massive gate entries. Conversely the interest in pony showing classes has declined, in terms of both spectators and exhibitors. The organisers need to fill the Main Arena with entertainment of broad family appeal and exhibitors have difficulty accessing the Main Arena when their vehicles and other exhibits are located some distance away in the exhibitors' parking area.

Negotiations with the show organisers have resulted in a changed approach for 1998 which will again be reviewed later in the year. The Council has seriously considered ceasing the classes altogether but has decided to continue this year. The future of the event is essentially in the hands of the exhibitors, our members, and it remains to be seen how many will give it their support.

This year only 5 classes will be offered. Schedules will be available from the AGM onwards. Classes will take place in the Bogside Arena adjacent to the lorry park, on the morning of Saturday 8th August. The first class will NOT begin before 9.15 am to allow for exhibitors travelling a distance. The championship will be pre-judged and will take place in the Main Arena around midday, together with a brief ridden display. The entry fees have been revised to £5 entry for one class and any subsequent classes entered by the same exhibitor will be charged at the lower rate of £2 each. The show organisers have kindly offered to donate an engraved piece of crystal to each of the first prize winners, in addition to prize money and rosettes. Each exhibitor will receive 2 entry passes and 1 vehicle pass.

Every effort is being made to try and keep this venue going for the Fells. If you want it, please support it, either as exhibitor or spectator. This year's judge will be Mr Russell Sutcliffe who will be making his first visit to Lowther; don't let it be his last!

PONY PILGRIMAGE 1998

Chance to Win a Rupert Fairfax Saddle!

The BHS has taken over the co-ordination of this mammoth event which is designed to celebrate the nine Native Pony Breeds whilst also drawing attention to the nation's riding routes by organising rides led by ponies from their area of origin, terminating in the Main Ring at the Royal Show on Wednesday 8th July.

Each stage of the route, drawn up by member Sheila Hardy, of the Access & Rights of Way Department at the BHS, will be covered by 2 ponies, either ridden or driven, carrying a banner, sash or tabard to be given at the hand over point to the next participants. Other ponies, in addition to the two "official" ponies, may also participate in parts of the overall route. For this a charge of £10 each is being made. In return a commemorative rosette or certificate will be given to each, and every rider's name will be entered into a prize draw to win a Rupert Fairfax saddle. The draw will be made at the journey's end at the Royal Show. All remaining proceeds at the end of the Pilgrimage after taking account of expenses will be shared equally amongst the Native Pony Breed Societies and the BHS.

Mary Longsdon is our co-ordinator and at the AGM in March she will be taking names of members who would like to ride or drive any of the route. The only requirement is that the ponies being used must be registered.

The Stallion & Colt Show on Saturday 9th May at Dalemain will provide an excellent setting for the journey to begin and it has been suggested that two driving ponies be used as the official ponies, at the conclusion of the driving class. Other ponies may accompany the official starters. The Society hopes a local celebrity will attend the launch. The first part of the route will rendez-vous with the other Northern Native Pony Breeds - Highland, Shetland and Dales - at the Fat Lamb Inn, Ravenstonedale, near Kirkby Stephen. The press are being invited by the BHS to come and meet the ponies and riders at the head of the proposed Pennine Bridleway route.

It is clear there will be sections of the journey to Stoneleigh which cannot be negotiated on horseback. The sash or tabard will be transported to the next negotiable stage of the route to handed to the official riders.

If you would like to be part of this event, please put your name on the list at the AGM or contact Mary Longsdon directly if you are not attending the meeting. Helpers in the form of back up, marshalls, and fundraisers will also be welcome.

PARTICIPATION IN OVERSEAS EQUESTRIAN EXHIBITIONS

In March 1997 the BHS subsidised a place in a native pony display team for a pony and rider to go to Essen Equitana in Germany. It was a big event, took a lot of preparation and, despite underwriting many of the expenses involved, still cost the participant a not insignificant amount.

When offers of places for such events arrive, often it is impossible to reach all the members through the newsletter because time does not allow. The requirements are usually quite exacting - pony must be minimum 5/6 years old, excellent performance pony, able to show off in front of large, noisy and enthusiastic crowds, very good breed example and a capable rider is required to accompany it. Additionally, it is now stipulated that the pony must also be for sale.

At this stage no events prior to Essen Equitana 1999 will be supported by the Society, but it would be extremely helpful if anyone who has a pony they think could be suitable for such a future event would write to the Secretary with details. These will be held on file until an invitation arrives from the BHS, to whom details will be passed to aid the selection process.

NATIONAL PONY SOCIETY

At an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the NPS in December, the membership voted to accept the revised Memorandum and Articles of Association which included removing the place on Council for each of the Native Breed Society representatives, in favour of two elected M & M representatives overall. The election of these individuals, who can be co-opted, will occur in a meeting following the NPS AGM in March.

REGISTRATION OF FOALS BORN FROM 1.1.98 ONWARDS

To comply with the Order passed in late December 1997 requiring all registered horses and ponies born after 1 January 1998 to carry a passport when being moved, the existing yellow Application for Registration forms have been replaced. The yellow forms are no longer valid and will not be accepted.

The new Passport Application forms will be available at the AGM, all shows and events and from the Secretary's office. The cost of registration remains at £5 for colts and £12 for fillies (double for non-members). Registration must still be done in the year of birth for paddock bred ponies; the current extension for recognised hill breeders will continue until further notice. The passport will contain all the information previously found on the Registration Certificate, as well as other information required by law.

The extra work involved in producing a passport will quite probably result in delays until at least the new procedure becomes familiar. Ponies born this year must have a passport. Ponies born prior to 1998 do not by law require one although owners may apply to purchase one (at a fee to be decided) if they wish, in which case the existing Registration Certificate must be surrendered to the Society. However, priority will be given to new registrations.

TEACH-IN/TRAINING DAY 1998

It is hoped that another demonstration can be arranged later this year in the Penrith area, this time on the ridden pony.

If you are interested in attending, please send your name to Sally, and information will be sent to you as soon as details have been finalised.

STALLION GRADING SCHEME PROPOSAL

(For introduction in 1999)

In 1996 a sub-committee was formed to discuss the possible introduction of a stallion grading scheme which would not be compulsory but would help promote the use of good stallions by inspecting and grading a stallion first on its own merit, and, later, in conjunction with an inspection of six of its progeny. The Grading would reward the owner with a Premium which would replace the present "At Home" Premiums which are awarded currently to licensed and blood-typed stallions, based on the number of registered progeny resulting in the year after the stallion paraded at the Stallion & Colt Show.

As well as not being compulsory, the scheme would not require gelding of any stallion which failed to be Graded, and the pony could be inspected up to a maximum of three times in order to achieve being Graded, if the owner so wished.

The Grading would be carried out at the Stallion & Colt Show at Dalemain, near Penrith in May, and another venue would be selected in the South, dependent upon the location and numbers of stallions coming forward for inspection. Whereas the "At Home" Premiums are awarded to a maximum of 6 stallions in a year, there would be no limit on the number of stallions which could be Graded in a year.

The criteria of the proposal is as follows:

- **Eligibility.** Colts must be 3 years old or over, registered, licensed and blood typed. Grading to be done annually.
- **Method of Grading.** Grading on Scale of Points. Colts scoring over 70% would be awarded Premium Grade. Over 50% but less than 70% to be Graded. Under 50% not Graded.
- **Upgrading.** Graded and Ungraded stallions could be brought back for upgrading for a maximum of 3 times.
- **Stallions awarded Premium Grade** at 6 years old or over can apply to be upgraded to Super Premium on re-inspection and inspection of 6 progeny.
- **Stallions holding Premium Grade** status would retain this status for a maximum of 3 years before requiring to be re-inspected or lose the status.
- **Super Premium** status would last a pony's lifetime as a stallion.
- **Scale of Points.** Grading to be done on the following points system:

a)	Type/general impression, colour, hair, feather	30
b)	Carcass	10
c)	Legs	10
d)	Feet	10
e)	Head, neck, shoulders	10
f)	Hind-quarters	10
g)	Walk	10
h)	Trot	10
	Total	100

- **Background.** Graders would be supplied the stallion's breeding and care would be taken to ensure as wide a gene pool as possible is retained.
- **Location.** Stallion & Colt Show and another venue in the South.
- **Number of Gradings.** No limits on number of stallions to be Graded although initial demand may outstrip available time and financial resources until the Scheme is established.
- **Cost.** Entry fee of £5.00 per stallion.

- **Premiums.** Graded £25, Premium £50, Super Premium £100*.
- **Appointment of Graders.** Appointment by secret ballot in Council, each member voting for 2 names from the current Judges' Panel. The 6 names polling the highest number of votes would form the Graders' Panel. 3 names would be used each year, with the first retiring at the end of year 1 to be replaced by the 4th name on the original list. Council would vote in a new name off the Judges' Panel onto the reserve list. With one grader standing down each year, no grader would complete more than 3 consecutive years on the Graders' Panel, followed by a mandatory break of 1 year before being eligible for re-election onto the reserve panel. Where appropriate, travelling expenses for Graders to inspection venues would be payable by the Society.
* Anticipated levels.

The Council would like feedback from breeders and any members who have an interest before a decision is taken. The introduction of any new scheme of this type needs careful consideration and planning. Between the AGM and General Meeting in October, Council will meet twice, on 12th May and at the end of August. Comments in writing to the Secretary must be received before the latter meeting so information can be put to the meeting.

An announcement will be made in the autumn.

FELL PONY 2000 - The First Report

At last, everyone is aware that Fell Pony foals are dying in unusually large numbers. The veterinary world is now very concerned about this situation. After listening to a talk by Dr Derek Knottenbelt B.V.M.S., M.R.C.V.S., D.V.M.S., (a foremost authority on equine veterinary medicine at Liverpool University), it was evident that an immediate focussed programme to achieve a solution to the Foal Mortality problem was needed. We, a group of concerned Fell Pony Society members, decided in August 1997 to take the initiative and form an action group to concentrate on achieving a solution to this problem.

From the initial evidence it was apparent that the breed's survival could be at risk and that a solution was required before the next millennium. That is why we have called ourselves "*Fell Pony 2000*".

Following further discussions with Dr Knottenbelt we constructed a plan of action which requires everyone's involvement. The Fell Pony Society Council has given us the authority to act on its behalf in this matter. This position was supported by a vote of confidence of the membership at the Autumn general meeting.

Taking on this responsibility we appreciated two important issues. Firstly, the need for charitable status which would support our commitment of financial accountability to the Society and enable us to attract funding. Secondly, the inclusion of two F.P.S. Council officers as trustees of our charity, to be involved in the decision making and to act as a liaison between ourselves and the F.P.S. Council.

We also have an additional Independent trustee, Mr. Peter Byrne, Manager National Westminster Bank, which brings our total trustee membership to six people.

On the 28th of January this year we achieved charitable registration for our group. (Registered No. **1067818**) and earlier, in October 1997, Lt Col Sir John Miller GCVO, DSO, MC kindly accepted an invitation to be Patron.

As the research programme develops and knowledge is gained, so the priorities change, but our plan of action still has the same four basic priorities. These are:-

- a) to gather supportive data for the research
- b) to communicate and liaise with Fell pony breeders and Society members, acting as a source of information
- c) to co-ordinate veterinary activities, and
- d) to act as a catalyst for fund raising.

Our current priority is the arrangement of five regional meetings for those breeders expecting foals this season, their vets and any other interested parties. These meetings are intended to provide information to as many breeders as possible and to enable them to meet Dr Knottenbelt and the research team.

We are also planning a major publicity and fund raising campaign in support of the research project.

Everyone's priority at this time must be to raise money. Liverpool University has already spent £10,000 out of their own resources in researching this problem. In order to complete this year's research and project activity, a further £25,000 is needed NOW. This will largely fund the work of a full-time immunologist for one year on this project. The success of this first year project will elevate the research programme to a position where it could attract major academic funding.

So far Fell Pony Society members and others have donated various sums of money from both fund raising activities and out of their own pockets. We should like to take the opportunity of publicly thanking all these people for their generous efforts. We are also grateful for those who have given their time and who have helped us in many other ways – thank you.

Just think, as the Chairman Mrs Ball has said, if every member of the Fell Pony Society raised a sum of £20, this would provide most of the money which is needed.

Please send all donations to The Treasurer, Fell Pony 2000, Stannally Farm, Stoney Royd Lane, TODMORDEN, W. Yorks. OL14 8EP, making any cheques payable to Fell Pony 2000.

Alternatively donations can be placed into the Fell Pony 2000 account, National Westminster Bank, Hebden Bridge, sort code 01-03-99, a/c no. 49452185.



A. Johnson (Mrs) - Chairman
D. Brunt (Mr) - Secretary
D.A. Brunt (Mrs) - Treasurer

General Information & News Items

1998 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription rates remain unchanged as follows:

Full Member	£15.00
Junior Member (under age 18)	£ 7.50
Family Member	£ 7.50

Subscriptions are renewable annually on 1 January. There is a period of grace of 3 months, until 1 April, at which time membership is deemed to have lapsed. A reminder letter will be issued, after which no further mailings will be sent and privileges of membership of the Society are withdrawn.

PLEASE NOTE: You must have paid your 1998 subscription and received your membership card before the AGM to be eligible to vote (Full and Honorary Members only). Please produce your membership card on arrival at the meeting on 28th March, whereupon

you will be given a voting card and papers. This procedure saves much time at the meeting. Please return your voting card to Mrs Laing at the end of the meeting.

REGISTRATIONS, PREFIXES, TRANSFERS **& STALLION LICENSING**

Sending the wrong amount with your papers will result in delays, so please be sure to send the correct fee.

To Register a Foal: This **must** be done in the year of its birth and by 31 December (the only exceptions being colt foals out of grading up Section (A) and (B) mares, which must be gelded before registration, and foals bred by Native Heath Breeders which must be registered by 1 April in the year following the foal's birth). A Registration/Passport Application form should be completed and sent to the Secretary together with the dam's record of service slip (provided by stallion owner at time of covering) together with the fee: Colts £5.00, Fillies £12.00 (non-members pay double fees).

Prefixes: A prefix is likened to a breeder's signature. It is not compulsory but for people intending to breed several foals, it is preferable to have one as all stock will be placed together in the Stud Book and it is of much service in tracing the pedigree of an animal. Prefixes tend to be chosen from names of places, farms, areas and without registering such a name, this cannot be used in conjunction with the foal's name. Registering a prefix is a simple procedure but as the British Central Prefix Register is a national organisation, increasingly names are being rejected as they are already registered to another breeder. This is why three choices are required at time of application, in order of preference. The choices must be all single words (no hyphens or spaces allowed) and the completed form should be returned to the Secretary together with the fee of £25 (overseas £40). The procedure takes usually a few weeks to be completed, after which registration of foals can resume. Application forms available from the Secretary.

Stallion Licensing: Colts are eligible from 2 years old, after 1 January of their second year. Owners must supply the Secretary with the contact details of a veterinary surgeon *from a practice other than their usual one*. An examination & report form is sent together with a letter which is copied to the colt's owner, who also receives the blood-typing kit for the vet's use. The owner makes arrangements with the vet for the inspection, after which, if the colt has passed the blood is taken. The cost of the vet's inspection is borne by the colt's owner. The appointment should be at the beginning of the week to allow the sample to arrive at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket for testing prior to the weekend. The vet returns the examination and report forms to the Secretary. The licence is issued when the blood typing confirmation is received, records up-dated and a stallion service book is issued in the spring. **A COLT WHICH PASSES THE EXAMINATION MAY NOT BE USED FOR STUD PURPOSES UNTIL THE LICENCE IS ISSUED.** It is important to register transfers of ownership of stallions so the service book is sent to the correct owner, avoiding delays. The cost of a stallion licence, which includes a subsidised blood-kit, is £50 (non-members double fee). **Stallion service books must be returned by 1 September annually.**

TRANSFERS (OWNERSHIP & TO GELDING): £10 each (non-members double).

'QUALITY BREEDING' FOCUS OF NEW 'ROYAL' EQUINE CLASSES

Two new competitive classes, based on progeny groups of breed and performance ponies, will be introduced for the first time at this year's Royal Show at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire, 6th - 9th July. The competition - family group entries of three ponies, for example, a sire or dam with two progeny - is expected to attract some leading bloodlines from