for a Fell Pony…
And that wish may come true!

On July 5, 2002, Heidi & Buck Cook of Heritage Farms, Inc. in Spanaway, WA, received an e-mail from the Make-a-Wish foundation. As their literature states: “The Make-A-Wish Foundation grants the wishes of children with life-threatening illnesses to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.”

There was a little child out there that was hurting and the Make-A-Wish Foundation wanted to know what they could do to help. This child specifically requested a Fell Pony! An e-mail went out to find that pony. The Cook’s responded to the request with great generosity. They donated a Fell Pony with “all of the trimmings”! The Fell had just been green-broke and has a wonderful, gentle temperament, perfect for a little child who was in need of a companion to confide in. After contacts were made to firm up the donation, Heidi went out to local tack shops and feed stores for more donations of goodies. There was wonderful community support. Donations included brushes, shampoo, halter, hoof pick, hoof glitter, among other things, and a large tack box to put everything in. Bob Hubbard Horse Transportation also provided a discounted rate to haul the Fell Pony in luxury to its final destination.

Now a pick up time and date had been set. The Cook’s daughter, Ashley, and her friend, Erin Biser, rushed out to make this Fell the sharpest one anyone could imagine. After a lot of “elbow grease” and loving attention...along with some artistic talents, this pony was a “10”! He was brushed, scrubbed, bathed, adorned with red/white/blue ribbons in his mane and lovely glitter on his hooves. If ever a Fell glowed, this would be the one. He acted like he knew something good was going to happen.
Welcome to the first issue of the Fell Pony Express! I would like to take this time to let you know that the FPSNA is alive, well and growing, in spite of what information that you may have received from other sources. As with any group, there are politics and we are not immune from it. There are a couple of individuals that do not support and are actively working against the FPSNA. I would like to assure you all that the bottom line for this group is the FELL PONY. This non-profit group was formed to preserve and promote the Fell, educate the public and support it’s members, nothing else. If you have any questions about any outside information that you may be concerned about, please contact any one of your FPSNA officers to get clarification. We want to keep our feet “out of the mud” and in a positive direction. We may still have some growing pains but let’s stick together and enjoy the Fell Ponies’ wonderful journey in North America!

The Fell Pony Society of North America has been working hard to get to this point. I must say that I am very excited about the future of our group.

- we have incorporated and are now designated as a non-profit organization;
- our webpage, www.fpsna.org is up and running and getting an increasing number of visitors (not just hits) each month;
- our membership has grown to include the majority of Fell owners in North America;
- our membership has enthusiastically participated in educating the public, shown their Fells in competition (very successfully I might add!) and in informational exhibits all across North America;
- we have produced this wonderful news-

letter—which will be coming out bi-yearly

All in all, this was done with a lot of volunteer time, donations, and love for the Fell Pony. We invite all comments and suggestions to make this an even better group. Also, keep in mind there will be elections for all of the officers. Think of what position you would like to be in and throw in your hat. All of the current positions were filled by volunteers to help get the FPSNA off the ground. This is by no means a dictatorship. The FPSNA is here to help preserve and promote the traditional British Fell Pony by all of its members and we would love to have you all involved in whatever way works for you. Contact your secretary, Kristen Staehling, today! In closing, I thank you all for helping the FPSNA be successful—educating the public while we educate ourselves. May we all continue to grow and learn from the Fell Pony. From its intriguing history to its great future in North America—we preserve ALL of the Fell traits that have charmed our hearts into loving it.

Kindest Regards,

Wendy Ihlang

Chairman, FPSNA
In Memory of

Mr. James Bell
1922-2002
Waverhead, Wigton, Cumbria, UK

Mr. Jim Bell of Waverhead Fell Pony Stud recently passed away at the age of 80. He is survived by his wife Frances Bell, his daughter Barbara Bell, his grandchildren Stephen and Hilary Lightfoot, children of his late daughter Nancy Lightfoot, as well as Stephen’s wife, Dawn, and their children.

For more than 60 years, Mr. Bell was a member of the Fell Pony Society as well as a longtime member of the FPS Council, having previously served as Vice Chairman, Chairman, and President of the Society. His dedication to the Fell pony was enormous, and his death is a great loss to the breed and to Fell pony enthusiasts around the world.

High Point Yearling

Laurelhighland Prince (Newfarm Storm X Waverhead Robbie) was entered in 7 South Shore Horseman’s Council (Massachusetts) affiliated shows in class 1b Horses, Colt and Fillies and class 2 Horse, Colts and Fillies Championship. (1a is weanlings, 1b yearlings and 1c two year olds) Six of these shows were double judged.

As of August, point listings for class a, b and c were listed separately and Prince was nearly 100 points ahead of all other yearlings. At the September show all the divisions were listed together and separate point standings listed for the Championship. Prince is High Point Yearling and fourth overall behind three two year olds. Prince is owned by Susan Roy of Massachusetts.

Golden Jubilee

Fell Pony Society (UK) Golden Jubilee International Convention
August 3-10, 2002

The week’s festivities included numerous events, beginning with the Fell Pony Society 2002 Breed Show on Saturday. Other events included a driving clinic on Sunday and Murthwaite Stud High Fell Walk with Mr. Thomas Capstick on Monday. This was followed by a fundraiser auction and buffet supper that evening in Penrith. There was a tour of Dalemain House and Fell Pony Museum visit on Tuesday. Tuesday evening there was a brewery tour with talk given by David Murray FRGS, Earthwatch Institute Fellow and Millennium Fellow, regarding his trip with a pack pony named “Sleddale Black Prince”. Lownthwaite Stud Open Day was on Wednesday and also featured a Fell pony showing/judging clinic. This was followed by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust’s sponsored Seminar on the Fell Foal Syndrome that evening. Thursday events included Appleby Agricultural Show followed by Linnel Stud Open Day. Lowther Driving Trials and Country Fair rounded up the week’s festivities on Friday and Saturday, and there was also a Cumbrian “Sing Song” on Friday evening.
What’s everybody doing....

Ben Beres and Ellen Eisenberg

have moved to Vermont, USA

where they enjoy winter sleigh rides with their Haflinger as well as

their Fell pony gelding, Newfarm Thunder (Lownthwaite Evelyn X Tarnbeck Lightning). Ellen has competed in some driving shows with Thunder but unfortunately the show season this summer was interrupted by Ellen’s knee injury.

Judith Bean-Calhoun also enjoys winter sleigh rides in Maine, USA with her Fell pony mare, Raisburn

Lettie II (Heltondale Sparkler IV X Heltondale Rover IV). Lettie’s ½

sister Raisburn Missie (Cleveland Debut X Heltondale Rover IV) was recently purchased by one of Judith’s driving students, Linda Smith. Linda hopes to eventually be driving Missie on the beautiful carriage roads of Acadia National Park (where Linda lives).

What’s going on in Canada...

Jan Heseldin-MacIlvride of Alberta, Canada has been taking driving lessons with her Fell pony mare, Midightvalley Thistle (Sleddale Rose Beauty X Orton Hall Danny), from someone on the short list for the Canadian singles team. Jan has been working on Thistle’s “dressage finesse” in addition to driving trails, long distance, cones and such.

Heather Rutherford of Ontario, Canada, is amazed by modern technology as she rides her aging Fell mare, Diana of Windfield – a.k.a. “Ebony”, while another mare nurses Ebony's foal! 21-year-old Ebony had her first foal this year, Deerstones Ebony of Windfield. The foal is unique in that it was born by embryo transfer, bred by Joan O’Brien and sired by her stallion Brough-

Hill Hadrian’s Wall.

More updates...

Holly Sheetz of Pennsylvania, USA, is enjoying her new bundle of joy, “Scotchvalley Black Jack”, a 2002 colt foal by Waverhead Robbie out of their mare Newfarm Storm (Lownthwaite Orange Blossom X Tarnbeck Lightning). Holly’s daughters are also taking riding lessons on Storm and hope to compete with her in Pony Club.

On Saturday August 3, 2002, Meres Jodie arrived at her new home at Stonecreek Farm in Denison, Texas. Jodie, who was imported from the United Kingdom, is in foal to Goytvalley Magic Minstrel for an early 2003 foal. Jodie is settling in nicely and is adapting to the August Texas heat. Jodie, who is already broken to ride, will begin her US show career next fall.
More imports...

Bari Wroblewski and Charles Shatzkin of New York, USA are enjoying their new imported yearling bay filly, Ludworth Brown Sugar (Rosette of Hardendale X Heltondale Bonzo Boy). She is one of only 4 bay Fells in North America and they hope to use her for riding and driving.

Louise LaFrambroise of Ontario, Canada, is thrilled with her new imported black 2 year-old stud colt, Carrock Diamond – a.k.a. “Rio” (Townend Dawn II X Lunesdale Mountain Mist). His FPS stallion license is pending.

Strawberry?

Barb Hanel of Elk Run Farm in Oregon is the proud owner of Mustahevonen Deco. Deco just got her wolf teeth taken out as she is going to start her training soon! Barb says, "My granddaughter Maddie calls her "Strawberry" -- why I have no idea. I will have to take some more pictures when we have her bitted up and on the lunge line --some moving shots!" Well, we could say Deco is one of those wonderful dark chocolate covered strawberries! Deco is fitting in quite well with the other warmbloods and her new buddy, Lyra, a Haflinger. We will be looking forward to more photos and news for the FPSNA website and the next newsletter!

More Driving...

Cathy Skivington of New York, USA, is looking forward to getting Laurelhighland English Rose (a.k.a. “Chloe”) (Guards Blossom X Waverhead Prince II) started in driving next year. Well, actually Cathy may not get much of a chance because her husband John can’t wait to drive her either! Both Cathy and John have sold their Morgans in favor of this promising Fell filly, having discovered what the rest of us already know – Fell ponies are the BEST!!
Competition 2002
Laurel Highland Farm was pleased to present their stallion, Waverhead Robbie, at Walnut Hill in Pittsford, NY — the largest Carriage Driving competition in the world. (Walnut Hill is Part 2 of the North American Pleasure Driving Championships, with the Canadian Classic being Part 1.) The “Large Pony” class was very large, so the competition was tough!!! Robbie performed beautifully, earning a 3rd place in Reinsmanship and taking 1st place in the Cross Country Obstacles Class. Overall, he finished in 3rd place which was quite a feat, considering he’d only been in training this year for a few weeks before the event.

We are very proud of Robbie and of course his driver, Nicole Cable, who both did a great job promoting Fell ponies! They did quite a bit better compared to last year when a few judges (very unfamiliar with Fells!!) said that they thought Robbie’s mane should be shorter and his feather should be trimmed. Trim the feather or that glorious mane? Never! So last year we decided it was time to try to “break the mold” of what a pony “should” look like at North American shows, and I think we did! After just one year, the judges already seem used to that look of hair everywhere! And whereas last year no one had a clue what breed Robbie was since they’d never seen a Fell before, this year when people saw him they yelled, “There is that Fell pony!!” So it looks like we are making progress educating the public about a rare breed.

Open Horse Show...

Ingletharth Celebration "Glory" made her US showing debut on July 13, 2002 at the Hunt County Horseman’s Association Open Horse Show. Glory has an extensive show record in the UK, but had not, until July 13th, been shown in America. Glory captured the audience with her beautiful long mane, tail and her jet black coat. Everyone wanted to know what breed she was. Competing against Quarter Horses, Paints and Arabians, Glory took home a 1st place ribbon for English Pleasure and a 2nd place ribbon for the Aged Mares Halter Class, the only two classes she was entered into.

Going Western?

Mustahevonen Debut posing with a Western saddle and Tania, a trainer at Longmire Training Barn, Yelm, Washington. “Doobie and I are going to “ground work summer school” and won’t begin riding until she’s at least four,” Roxanne Dimyan says.
A Pair of Fells…

Heidi & Buck Cook of Heritage Farms in Spanaway, Washington, are now the proud owners of a pair of black 2002 Fell colts, Mustahevonen Taisto & Mustahevonen Zorro.

Buck is the driver in the family and plans to make these fine boys into a crack driving team. Buck has extensive experience training horses/ponies to drive. He has worked with singles and pairs; Morgans, Hanoverians, Friesians and Fell Ponies. After working with Mustahevonen Farm’s Fell Ponies, Heidi and Buck went to England with Wendy Ihlang to help her pick out a stallion prospect for her breeding program. The Cooks were so impressed with the Fells that they imported one, also. Buck is currently training Mustahevonen Farm’s stallion, *Townend Rheged, to drive at their farm. Heritage Farms will be standing Rheged at stud next year for the Ihlangs.

Buck also has had experience building carriages. Now if we can just get him interested in making harnesses! The Cooks own and manage a very successful Hanoverian stud farm, so this is a great addition to their facility.

Imported filly…

Susan Barry of Connecticut, USA, is also enjoying her imported yearling black filly, Greenholme Tina – a.k.a. “Lena” (Bluecaster Felicity X Drybarrows Rusty). Susan has been using both John Lyons techniques and clicker training with her with good results. “I love her to pieces!”

Taisto with Jojo and Zorro with his new family
The FPS International Convention Week, held in honor of Her Majesty The Queen’s Golden Jubilee celebration, provided a wonderful opportunity to visit Cumbria and the surrounding area in northern England. This was a great time not only to see an incredible display of Fell ponies but also to meet many of the families that have raised Fell ponies on the fells, just as nature intended, for many generations.

I had wanted to make this trip for a number of years, hoping to see where all our ponies were born and raised before they came to Pennsylvania. After corresponding with so many people abroad not only during the purchasing of ponies but also in doing research for the Fell pony book I’ve been working on, I was anxious to finally match some names and faces! However, this was not the easiest time in my life to be traveling to Europe – as much as I wanted to go, I would never imagine leaving behind my 6-month-old and 2 1/2-year-old daughters!! Fortunately I was able to convince my husband Ed that this was a great idea for a vacation so I was able to drag him along, too. He didn’t really believe me initially since, being an equine vet, he didn’t want to spend his “vacation looking at horses” and being with “horse people”!

The week started with the FPS Breed Show on Saturday which provided a wonderful display of beautiful ponies being shown in a variety of disciplines, with competitions in-hand, driving, riding, jumping as well as a costume class. It was a great learning experience to see Fell ponies of all ages all together at one show. We met a lot of people and finally got to match a lot of names and faces! We especially enjoyed “tailgating” (i.e. picnicking on the tailgate of her truck!) with Mrs. Allie Newall of Dene Fell Pony Stud. Mrs. Newall has been raising Fell ponies for many, many years and is very knowledgeable, so we enjoyed discussing ponies with her very much.

On Sunday morning we took a tour of Keswick, visiting one of the many beautiful lakes in the Lake District of Cumbria. There is a beautiful park around the lake and we were able to enjoy a tour by boat as well. The scenery around the area is just breathtaking – not only are there beautiful ponies everywhere but there are also many other things to see and do. The fells remind me very much of home in Pennsylvania other than our “fells” tend to be more tree-covered whereas those in northern England tend to be covered with sheep! This was also a welcome and unexpected site – after the Foot-and-Mouth Disease crisis in 2001 I was not expecting to see any of them left! However, although there were a number of sheep to be seen, according to the local farmers the sheep herds remain drastically reduced compared to normal. I was also amazed by the openness of the land in what Americans would have to consider a very old and also relatively small country – after all it takes about as long to drive across England as it does to drive across the State of Pennsylvania alone! Despite this, the region is very picturesque with vast expanses of relatively unspoiled land, dotted only by sheep, ponies and
other livestock, and divided by literally miles upon miles of freestone walls which only add to its charm.

We also enjoyed a very memorable Sunday afternoon visit to Waverhead Stud, birthplace of both of our stallions. We were able to meet Robbie’s sire, Waverhead Prince II, and Model’s sire, Lownthwaite Gary. Both sires are past Supreme Champions at the Stallion Show. We also saw all the other beautiful Waverhead ponies. Sadly, Mr. Jim Bell could not be there that day since he was very ill in the hospital, and as many of you know he passed away shortly thereafter. Jim gave a lifetime of support to the Fell pony and the Fell Pony Society, so this was a tremendous loss to the breed. We were very grateful to be able to spend time with Jim’s lovely wife, Mrs. Frances Bell, their daughter Barbara Bell, and granddaughter Hilary Lightfoot. Frances also showed us a large display of Fell-related family photographs which we enjoyed in addition to seeing all the ponies.

On Monday, due to our little ones suffering from some pretty serious jet lag, we got a late start and unfortunately wound up late for Thomas Capstick’s High Fell Walk. We made a valiant attempt to catch up with everyone, driving up a road that was supposedly undrivable! When we were near the top we reached a closed gate so we decided to give up trying, thinking we were in the wrong place. There we could see some amazing views nonetheless! Too bad we couldn’t see just over the top of the hill past the gate where everyone we had been trying to find happened to be! Oh well. . .Unfortunately we realized just then that the only way down was in reverse (with the emergency break on!) since the extremely narrow road had no place to turn around. Somehow we made it back down without trashing the rental car! We drove around a little more after that, hiking and seeing some of the sites around Kirkby-Stephen and Tebay.

On Tuesday we did more hiking and also visited the Rheged Museum in Penrith. In the afternoon we enjoyed another wonderful private stud visit – this time Greenholme Stud in Tebay, which is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bill Potter. Mr. George Guy, owner of Severnvale Stud, was also there to show us his beautiful stallion Severnvale Grey Bobby who had bred one of our mares prior to import this year. Sarah Mueller, daughter of Barbara Mueller of Narnia Fell Ponies in Germany, visited with us and we enjoyed her company, too. Bill had graciously brought down a number of his beautiful mares and foals off the adjacent fell so we could see them a little easier. In addition, David Murray was also visiting and we had a nice talk with him. What a small world we live in – we found out that David had worked at a camp before not far from our home in Pennsylvania! David was going to give a talk that night as part
of the Convention activities in conjunction with the brewery tour. I didn’t think my little daughters would be up for that, but fortunately David gave us an impromptu “mini-presentation”, showing us his very old, restored army pack saddle and describing the trials and tribulations of touring with an inexperienced Fell pack pony, Sleddale Black Prince. After this we drove to another place in Penrith where there were more Greenholme ponies to see. What a sight to watch a huge herd running free -- it is scene I will not soon forget!

On Wednesday we went to the Lownthwaite Open Day, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wales and family. Their daughters, Mrs. Christine Morton and Mrs. Frances Awde, helped also to provide wonderful hospitality and a beautiful display of ponies and photos as well. Two of our ponies were born at Lownthwaite so this was a special visit for us. I was also able to meet and speak with Dr. Gareth Thomas who is in charge of the Fell Foal Syndrome Research. Mr. Bert Morland of Lunesdale Stud gave a Fell pony showing/judging clinic as well.

Wednesday evening began with a private meeting with the FPS Council, whom I met with on behalf of FPSNA. The meeting began with Mr. Charlton, FPS Chairman, summarizing what he understood had transpired over the last couple of years in North America regarding Fell pony organizations. Based on that discussion, I attempted to clarify some problems and misunderstandings of the past as briefly and as best I could. I do hope the past can now finally be put to rest!! The bottom line of my discussion was that the division amongst a few Fell enthusiasts in North America is based mostly on personal differences, something supporters of FPSNA have been diligently trying to put aside for the best interests of the Fell pony! We have repeatedly invited and welcomed ALL Fell pony owners and enthusiasts to join us in this worthy cause – promoting and preserving the Fell pony. That is what this should be all about – the pony, not politics! I respectfully asked the Council to give FPSNA a fair chance to prove itself. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Charlton stated that the whole issue of FPSNA would be reconsidered at the next Council meeting, which is a step forward considering that previously they had said there would be no further discussion until 2004. As of this writing I have not heard their decision which hopefully will be forthcoming soon.*

Following the meeting with the Council, there was a lengthy symposium on the Fell Foal Syndrome sponsored by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. It was very informative and a summary of the presentation is found elsewhere in this newsletter. (pg 14)
Lunesdale Mountain Princess and Emma Woolley won champion Ridden Pony at the Breed show! Nick Woolley wrote: “Less than two weeks after you took the photo of Emma, she went on to take the National Mountain & Moorland Championship at Peterborough.”

On Thursday, we again spent a bit of time hiking and enjoying all the beautiful scenery. In the afternoon we began our journey by car to Northumberland for the Linnel Stud Open Day, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Charlton. The route we took is supposedly one of the 10 most beautiful drives in the world, and I believe it!! The drive is across the Pennines, the great “backbone” that divides northern England. The views were simply spectacular! Of course visiting Linnel Wood was well worth the trip in and of itself. There were many beautiful ponies in addition to a positively amazing display of photos and Fell pony memorabilia.

Friday was our last full day there and, despite a wonderful week of ponies, my husband insisted we do something “non-horsey” on the last day! Being the outdoors types we of course went hiking again and also visited an animal park and zoo near our hotel in Keswick. The Lowther Fell classes were not until Saturday which unfortunately we had to miss since we were on our long way home by then... We were able to briefly stop by the Cumbrian “Sing Song” Friday evening on our way back to the Manchester area for our early morning flight. Well, maybe next time we’ll make it to a few more events and visit more Fell studs but all in all we did a lot and had a great time, too! We’ll definitely visit again someday (but ideally not until both of our girls are potty-trained...!)

*Editor’s note: Since this article was written, most or all of you may have received a very shocking letter from FPS Acting Secretary, addressing this issue. We are unsure as to why this letter was sent and were told the situation of FPSNA would be addressed at the next council meeting. We plan to continue to work with FPS as a whole and work through these unfortunate incidences.
“Doobie” – Fell Pony In America

What a difference 2 years make! Doobie and I first met a few hours after she was born, June 14, 2000. I was planning to be logical, save up $$ for next year’s Fell foal. But that flew out the window a few days later, when she squeaked at me while rescuing her from an “inquisitive Doobie” adventure.

That summer we spent a lot of time together, while I pulled weeds in the pasture. Time for a few shady tree naps together and visits at night under the friendly moon.

One sunny afternoon, a Federal Express truck stopped by the fence. I walked over to talk with the driver. Galloping up behind me came Doobie, curious girl. She skidded to a stop beside me and stretched her neck over the fence … “Hi, Mr. FedEx Man! Anything for me?”

Doobie is the first Fell born on the West Coast of the US. Her “stork’s on his way” announcement arrived eleven months earlier, when I got a phone call while on a home exchange in the UK. Through the magic of cross-continental “A.I.”, Newfarm Midsummers Night and Midnightvalley Poppy (at Musta Hevonen Farm) were Doobie’s official parents-to-be.

My UK summer of ’99 was a “jolly good” chance for Fell pony research in Cumbria: the Fell show at Lowther, the Breed Show, Lownthwaite and Wavehead studs, and an introduction to Doobie’s great-grandfather, Waverhead Prince II, plus dozens more relatives.

Miss Doobie asked me not to spill the beans, but both Queen Elizabeth and I stood under the same oak tree, watching the rain-soaked mare and foal class at Lowther … It’s true!

The Doobster and I are learning a lot about Fells. Actually, she already knows. It’s up to me to be patient and pick up her cues.

Roxanne Dimyan and “Doobie” – Mustahevonen Debut

Vancouver, Washington, US
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Peter Rabbit’s Wild Fell Ponies

Fell ponies, as a rare breed, are equally rare in literature. It took a rabbit to lead me to a bookish Fell discovery.

While Peter Rabbit is famous as the creation of Beatrix Potter, Beatrix Potter is much more than a hare-y tale-spinner. I knew of her financial donations to the Fell Pony Society during the 1930s and her love of Cumbria, home of the Fell, where she lived and farmed as Mrs. Heelis, from her 1913 wedding to her death in 1943. But what Fell pony encounters did she really have? A trip to the library and several books later, here’s the gem uncovered in The Tale of Beatrix Potter:

“In the calm spacious days that seem so long ago,” she wrote, a little before her death, “I loved to wander on the Troutbeck fell. Sometimes I had with me an old sheepdog, Nip, or Fly; more often I went alone. But never lonely. There was company of gentle sheep, and wild flowers and singing waters.” Sometimes strange things happened in the solitary places. “Another time all by myself alone I watched a weird dance … It was far away in that lonely wilderness behind the table-land on Troutbeck Tongue. In the midst of this waste of yellow bent-grass and stones there is a patch of green grass and a stunted thorn.”

“Round the tree - round and round in measured canter - went four of the wild fell ponies.
Round and round, then checked and turned; round and round reversed; arched necks, tossing manes, tails streaming. I watched a while, crouching behind a boulder. Who had taught them? Who had learned them to “dance the heys” in that wilderness? Oftentimes I have seen managed horses cantering round the sawdust ring under a circus tent; but these half-wild youngsters had never been handled by man …”

Lane, Margaret. The Tale of Beatrix Potter: A Biography.
Special thanks to “Doobie” - Mustahevonen Debut - who agreed to stand-in as the photo’s “wild fell ponies”.

![Image of wild fell ponies]
On August 7, 2002, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust sponsored an informative symposium on the Fell Foal Syndrome. Speakers included Paul May, a local Veterinary Surgeon; Prof. Stuart Carter and Gareth Thomas (Veterinary Surgeon), both Syndrome Researchers from Liverpool University; Dr. Saffron Townsend, Technical Advisor for RBST; Dr. June Swinburne and Dr. Matthew Binns; Geneticists from Animal Health Trust; Miss Rosemary Masbridge, Chief Executive RBST, and Fell pony breeders Mrs. Carole Morland and Mrs. Jane Glass. Each of the speakers reviewed various facets of the syndrome including clinical signs, status of research, genetics, and breeders' perspectives on the problem. It was a very worthwhile meeting to say the least!

The following is a brief synopsis of the presentation:

- "Fell Foal Syndrome" is comprised of immunodeficiency and anemia which has been documented only in Fell pony foals. It results in repeated infections as well as progressive and profound anemia, invariably resulting in death by 3-4 months of age. There is no known cure for this disease.

- The Syndrome is presumed to be caused by a lethal recessive gene. This remains unproven but researchers feel very strongly this is the case.

- The cause remains unknown but foals with the syndrome have been found to have reduced number of B-lymphocytes, the type of white blood cell which is responsible for the production of antibodies. (This is the basis of the current blood test used for diagnosis.) Antibodies are necessary weapons of the immune system needed to fight against infection.

- Affected foals usually appear normal at birth but at about 4-6 weeks of age begin to deteriorate, usually dying by 3-4 months of age (if not euthanized before then). Foals that show no signs of the syndrome by 4 months of age are no longer considered to be at risk.

- The timing of onset of the syndrome is believed related to antibody production. Foals normally receive colostrum from their mothers at birth which is rich in antibodies. The foals’ immune systems need to take over antibody production as these antibodies from their mothers wear off, usually around 4-8 weeks of age. Failure to do so results in impaired immunity and susceptibility to infections.

- In the last few years, on average there have been approximately 10/250 syndrome foals documented each year in the UK.

- If the disease is indeed inherited as a recessive gene, based on the incidence of the syndrome, it is currently believed that 1/3 to 1/2 of Fell ponies are carriers of this presumed lethal gene. This is only an estimate and until it is confirmed recessive and a carrier test is developed the true prevalence of the suspected gene is unknown.

- If it is a recessive disease, (barring mutation) breeding a carrier to a non-carrier will never produce a syndrome foal. Breeding a carrier to a carrier will produce 50% carriers, 25% non-carriers, and 25% syndrome foals. A carrier test may thus be helpful.

- RBST and Syndrome researchers STRONGLY advise that no attempt should be made to breed out this disease on the basis of rumors and hearsay. To attempt to do so, particularly without a carrier test, may do far more damage to the breed by unnecessarily restricting an already-too-narrow gene pool. Without a carrier test, breeding programs should NOT be altered because of the syndrome.
• Because of the small gene pool and relatively small global population of Fell ponies, even if a carrier test is developed, carrier animals should not be eliminated from the gene pool. Doing so may cause further damage to the breed by restricting a narrow gene pool, potentially exposing other deleterious recessive traits and/or favoring otherwise lesser-quality, non-carrier animals to be used for breeding.

• Because of the small global population of Fell ponies in addition to the possibility of a lethal recessive gene, RBST has changed the Fell pony classification from “Rare” to “Endangered”. Preserving the Fell pony breed thus requires the concerted effort of all Fell pony breeders! Continued research requires the cooperation of all breeders, particularly those with affected foals since all such data is needed to facilitate the research progress.

Compared to the previous presentation on the Syndrome by Gareth Thomas in September, 2000, a few changes have occurred. (See notes from prior presentation at http://www.laurelhighland.com/FellFoalSyndromeProgressReport.htm) This includes the estimate of carriers which was previously believed to be at “saturation” (i.e., 2/3). It is now estimated at 1/3 to 1/2. Of course that is still a very significant amount in a very small population!! The estimate assumes that the syndrome is recessive and also that the incidence of syndrome foals produced is not skewed by avoiding suspected carrier stallions in favor of non-carriers. Another change is that the syndrome can now be diagnosed with a blood test in the appropriate clinical setting, whereas previously it required bone marrow and/or lymph node biopsy. In addition, reduced B-lymphocyte number is now apparent. These may be abnormal even before the profound anemia develops.

A more detailed summary of the symposium may be forthcoming from the Fell Pony Society (UK).

(This article was kindly proofread by Gareth Thomas BVM&S MRCVS)

DNA-testing of Fell Ponies

Many of us have already submitted samples on all Fell ponies, including all foals and imports, as part of Dr. Gus Cothran’s ongoing research program which began more than 2 years ago. The data may also be shared with the Fell Foal Syndrome Research Team. DNA-testing with parentage verification is also required for FPS registration if foals are conceived by artificial insemination. Dr. Cothran has been kind enough to provide this service free of charge. If you have additional ponies that have not yet been tested, below is the contact information.

University of Kentucky Equine Parentage Verification and Research Laboratory
205 W. W. Dimock Animal Pathology Building
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40546-0076
USA

Phone: (859) 257-1165   Fax: (859) 257-4119

Dr. E. Gus Cothran, Director
For contract information, requests for blood typing kits, or general questions about bloodtyping and DNA testing, color testing and questions related to potential research projects.
gcothran@pop.uky.edu; (859) 257-3777

Jodie, who was imported from the United Kingdom, is in foal to Goytvalley Magic Minstrel for an early 2003 foal.
Request for Inclusion of the Fell Pony on ALBC’s Conservation Priority List

Below are the current requirements for such inclusion as found on the ALBC’s web site which can be found at [http://www.albc-usa.org/watchlistpara.htm](http://www.albc-usa.org/watchlistpara.htm)

Several years ago, members of what is now FPSNA, INC. made a formal request to ALBC to include the Fell pony on their conservation list. At that time we did not meet their criteria. As soon as FPSNA was incorporated as a non-profit in January, 2002, we resubmitted that request since we believed the Fell pony now satisfied all their criteria for inclusion. As you can see, these criteria include “must have a breed association in North America”, which of course FPSNA satisfies. We have been assured that the Fell pony would be reconsidered later this year when equine breeds are reassessed in this year’s census.

Parameters for Livestock Breeds on ALBC Conservation Priority List

Livestock breeds on the ALBC priority list conform to certain genetic and numerical parameters.

1. The breed is from one of the six traditional North American livestock species (asses, cattle, goats, horses, pigs, and sheep).

2. The breed census satisfies numerical guidelines:
   - **Critical**: Fewer than 200 North American annual registrations and estimated fewer than 2000 global population.
   - **Rare**: Fewer than 1000 annual North American registrations and estimated fewer than 5000 global population.
   - **Watch**: Fewer than 2500 North American annual registrations and estimated fewer than 10,000 global population. Also included are breeds that present genetic or numerical concerns or have a limited geographic distribution.
   - **Study**: Breeds which are of genetic interest but lack definition, historical or genetic documentation.
   - **Recovering**: Breeds which were once listed in one of the other categories and have exceeded Watch category numbers but are still in need of monitoring.

3. The breed is a true genetic breed (when mated together, it reproduces the breed type).

4. An established and continuously breeding population in North America since 1925.
   - Or, if imported since 1950,
     - Must be below global guidelines for inclusion (see #2).
     - Must have at least three breeding lines in North America.
     - Must have at least twenty breeding females in North America.
     - Must have at least five breeders in different locations in North America.
     - **Must have an association of breeders in North America**.
     - Must be contributing to the breed’s survival internationally. In general this means that the North American population is reciprocal to other international populations, or is an important and numerous population when compared to that in other countries, or the non-North America populations of the breed are at risk geographically or politically.

Breeds not meeting all these criteria may be placed in the “study” category and monitored.
Laurelhighland Knight Waver, otherwise known as “Wavy.” It has been such a joy to watch him “grow up.” He is such a gentle fella. I have to remind people that this is my “vicious Stallion.” You would never know it from his sweet temperament.

I look forward to starting him under saddle this spring. We will possibly put him to a cart also. What excitement these little ponies bring to our lives. At 13h, he is a small bundle of Joy. He will already let Koryn climb on his back for a leisurely walk. What more could you ask for.

From California is Laurelhighland Harmony (at 1/2 day old), owned by Mackenzie Rosman. Harmony is exhibiting a coloration not unusual in newborn fells--but is a black Fell Pony!

Patty Gallagher in New Jersey owns Laurelhighland Gypsy (shown on the left at three days old).

Laurelhighland Duke (shown on the right at one day old) owned by Peggy Shuford of Hickory, NC

Little colts grow up...
Midnightvalley Poppy had a full year!

It has been a very full year for Midnightvalley Poppy. We started her under saddle early spring using some Lyons style techniques. She was a very eager willing learner. My German foreign exchange student, Philip Stoffel was interested in learning to start a horse and Poppy became his project. Poppy was very receptive to the extra attention and soon would almost pout if she wasn't retrieved from the field for riding. She quickly picked up the basics and was entered in her first schooling show. From there she was taken to the Carolina Classic Horse Expo to show off her “Regal” mane and tail and beautiful movement. She was a little nervous in an indoor arena.

And after all, who could help but cheer for such a lovely pony being ridden sidesaddle by a “Princess.”

In May, Poppy arrived at the Kentucky Horse Park. She was the First Fell ever to be featured at the Park. Poppy was one of the first to greet the visitors on a daily basis in a paddock near the entrance. Poppy is a great example of the wonderful temperament of our Fells. There wasn’t a day that went by that a passer by didn’t stop to love on Poppy and even braid her mane as she ate up the attention. Poppy was hooked to her first cart while at the Park by the Equine Operations Director, R. K. Walker. Of course, she took all in stride. She is a natural. She was ridden in the Parade of Breeds by her young owner, Koryn Staehling to a full stadium. On another day, Pony Clubber, Jessica Laws showed off her beautiful movement and flowing mane in the Parade at a canter.

By the time you read this, Poppy will be at home happily munching on hay, enjoying her winter turnout and soon preparing for another full season.

Kristen Staehling
When Midnightvalley Sweet William arrived, I didn't really know what he was going to be like. The vet who had done the pre-purchase exam told me he was barely halter broke, had an over-bite, was pigeon toed and off in the knee. I asked his previous owner for pictures specifically of his legs, didn't see anything that would be a problem and several weeks later he arrived. William was slightly pigeon toed, his knees were fine, there was absolutely no over-bite and after two days he led like a dream. He was extremely wary of people and had the habit of not letting me catch him in the stall. When it came time to turn him out in the pasture, I also found out he liked to bolt. Really bad. One night he spun too fast and caught my ankle. It only left a bruise, but I started talking to more people about how to stop the habit. A woman at the stable volunteered to help and the next morning we had our first real round-penning lesson. The woman had 12 years experience training mostly Fresians and was excited about working with a Fell pony. An hour and a half later, we really hadn’t gotten anywhere. He would go, change direction and stop but would not come in or “join-up”. We ended there and went out into the pasture to try to work on the bolting problem. The round-penning had helped some, because he learned that the didn’t want to work. Using this (and the occasional treat), we did learn how to fix the bolting problem. Several weeks later and it was gone. He still does still like to gallop out to herd, but only after walking a good several yards. The woman wanted me to keep round-penning him every morning, but his demeanor after the session seemed discontent and unhappy. I decided to end the session and continue with my own routine. His manners in the stall continued to be a problem though. He would turn his back end to me every time I entered and it would take several minutes just to put the halter on. Instead of fighting, I made him walk around the stall, change direction and walk some more until he got tired of working and would turn his shoulder in instead of his butt. In his own time, I think William did “join-up” without the round-pen and things have gone uphill ever since. Two weeks ago I got on his back without a problem. I didn’t have a saddle which fit his wide withers, so our basic training was done bareback (and very carefully!). He did have some prior training (mostly bridle work and being saddled) which sped up our progress greatly. It seems like he enjoys having something to do and learns quickly. The calmer Fell personality has come through, along with the intelligence, and we haven’t had very many problems at all.

Everyone in the barn I board at loves him, and he gets plenty of attention. I’ve gotten remarks like “now I know why you like the breed” and plenty of positive comments on his movement and personality. In a little over a month, William has done a total 360 and has become the highlight of my evening. I rarely have a bad day and look forward to the spring when I can start showing him, and the breed, off at local shows.

Allison
Lit'l Lena

It’s been almost six months now since our “baby” came into our lives... time flies (and so can she)!

It’s been such a pleasure to see Lit’l Lena grow up. The once shy, timid little foal with the shaggy coat, has turned into a sleek, inquisitive and attention–loving youngster. If she were human, (even though sometimes she thinks she is!) she’d be at the questioning stage of, “what’s that”, “but why”, etc...

Lena has been a great sport about everything I’ve worked on with her so far. I use the “T-Touch” and Pat Parrelli approach in all of our training sessions, and with much success. Lena now stands quietly for the farrier, loads into the trailer by herself, stands for her bath when it gets really hot and humid, walks fairly quietly down the drive to the mailbox (except when the neighbor’s horse charges the fence!) along with a variety of other “antics” she’s come up with on her own! We’re still working on catching her when she’s out at pasture, though she seems to be getting bored with the game. She now knows that if she doesn’t allow me to catch her, she has to keep moving. Since all she really wants to do is to eat everything in sight, the time frame is getting shorter and shorter each session! Thanks to her though, I’ve kept in shape without having to go to the gym!

I think back to anxiously awaiting her arrival, and now couldn’t imagine life in our barn without her. She’s brought a new life back to my old Quarter Horse mare, who thinks Lena is her baby and spends most of her day watching out for her. She’s also taught my Arab mare a small amount of patience!

As I look at her grazing in the pasture below, I try to imagine what life was like for her in her native home, and simply hope she’s as happy here in her new, “forever” home.

Sue Barry
The Fell left shortly after, with a wave and a tear or two from the Cooks...but mostly happiness. This pony was on a mission, to make a child happy and that he is doi

The Cooks received a letter soon after the arrival of the pony from the Make-A-Wish Foundation: “Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude for the amazing gift... that you gave to our dear little wish child... You went out of your way to make all the arrangements...right down to having him all fixed up to look like a very special delivery. Which he was indeed! Thank you for sharing the power of a wish.” The child’s mother wrote, “Thank you so much for your efforts on our behalf. (Our child) is so excited.... It has been a real lift ...to find a positive thing to associate with (the) illness. Now (there is) another special friend to share ... emotions and time with while undergoing...therapy... This special anticipated wish has helped distract (our child) from the rigors of illness and its associated stress. (Our child) is very lucky...to have this opportunity and be blessed through the kindness of others.”

The Cooks would like to see more people join in the efforts to help children through the wonderful organization, the Make-A-Wish Foundation. To make children’s dreams come true gives one a very fulfilling, gratifying feeling -- something everyone should experience. The Cooks loved this Fell, but also know that he will be loved as much, if not more, at this new home.

We have left names and photos out to respect the family’s wish to remain anonymous.

Latest news: this Make-A-Wish Fell’s continued schooling has been donated by an internationally known horse trainer.

For more information on The Make-A-Wish Foundation, contact:

www.wish.org

Make-A-Wish Foundation of America
3550 North Central Avenue, Suite 300
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2127

General e-mail: mawfa@wish.org

Monday - Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Arizona Time
Phone: (602) 279-WISH (9474)
Toll free: (800) 722-WISH (9474)
FAX: (602) 279-0855

By: Wendy Ihlang
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FPSNA, INC., c/o Kristen Staehling, 4937 Deer Path Road, Suffolk, VA 23437

The Fell Pony Society of North America, Inc. (FPSNA), was established in 2001 as a not-for-profit organization to promote and preserve the Fell Pony breed in North America in ways that are consistent with the rules and regulations of the Fell Pony Society (FPS) in the UK. Members of FPSNA are encouraged to become members of FPS, the worldwide authority and registry for this rare native British pony breed. FPS has stated that they will not officially recognize any Fell breed organizations in North America until 2004.

THANK-YOU -- WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

Mr. Ian Simper, Secretary, The Fell Pony Society,
North Craigs Cottage, Waterbeck, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire DG 11 3 HA.
Tel/Fax 01461 600606.

Annual Membership Fee for Overseas Member: £25.00 due January 1st

Please enroll me as a Full Member of the Fell Pony Society (UK). Payment of £ 25.00 will be made on my behalf by FPSNA, INC. I agree to be bound by the rules of the Society as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and I understand that my liability as a Member of the Company is limited to a maximum of £1.00.

Please complete clearly in block capitals:

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The Fell Pony Society is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company Number 3233346. Registered office: as above.
Fells can Jump!!!

Goytvalley Magic Minstrel
Sire: Waverhead Black Magic
Dam: Kerbeck Night Music
13.2hh
Dob: 4-13-92
Black Stallion
Picture taken by Gina Feakins
@ NPS Summer Championships
This particular photograph - he took a first for the stallion performance test.
Owned by Gina Feakins of Llancloudy Stud