

A breed with Royal support faces extinction

Wendy Nix discovers why an elegant carriage horse, the Cleveland Bay, is now on the critical list

There is a conundrum in the equestrian world. On the one hand we have campaigns to prevent the production of ill-bred stock, yet on the other we have breeds that possess excellent bloodlines facing extinction. Part of the problem is that, inevitably, it is the responsible breeder who will heed the call of campaigners; in the case of the Cleveland Bay it appears that breeders are already thin on the ground, and a significant number of those who do produce a limited quantity of foals are fast approaching the autumn of their years.

Therefore, the situation is not so much a lack of interest and demand as a lack of available animals. With around 250 breeding mares and just 26 foals registered in 2012 worldwide, it is not surprising that the Cleveland Bay is, like the Hackney and several other equine breeds, on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust's critical list.

The Cleveland Bay is Britain's only native warm-blood; a horse that is elegant with stature and a temperament to die for that makes it the ultimate carriage horse. One of its particular attributes is the ability to pass on a physical likeness when crossed with other breeds, making it quite difficult to differentiate between the pure and part-bred. The Cleveland Bay x TB was known as the Yorkshire Carriage Horse, while this

and other crosses create useful sport horses making the breed extremely versatile. The fact that almost all Cleveland Bays are of that one colour makes them ideal for matching a pair, tandem or team. It was this latter fact that helped initiate a dream held by Linda and Peter Dallow.

The Cleveland Bay Endeavour Ltd

Linda, also known as Linda Skeats, and her husband Peter have invested much time and emotion into their scheme, the Cleveland Bay Endeavour Ltd. Having purchased their first Cleveland in 1997, their dream was to create a four-in-hand of pure-breds and use them to promote the breed. Opting not for a 'ready-made' team of experienced geldings, Linda and Peter worked steadily at producing a mixed team consisting of a stallion, a mare and two geldings. Endeavour Ltd was set up in 1999 and the team started to take shape.

Timberlane Huckleberry was a Cleveland Bay Horse Society (CBHS) Premium stallion and was National Stallion Association Grade 1 Performance tested; as off-side leader his temperament was such that he ignored the mare, Harrington Harmony, in wheel and happily worked alongside the gelding Fryup Farmer with the other gelding, Borderfame Endeavour completing the quartet.

All of them were capable of performing a range of disciplines including dressage, show jumping and hunting.

A huge band of helpers were involved with making Linda and Peter's dream come true; the horses were taught dressage by Donn Collins; Andrew Williams, Sarah Gregory and Peter himself put them to harness while Alf and Barbara Oats became experienced team members. Alf had been deputy head coachman at the Royal Mews prior to his retirement and helping the Dallows; Barbara is an experienced horsewoman in her own right. Peter, who had been chef d'équipe to Boyd Exell and the Australian team in 1998 and 1999, called on Boyd to help him put the team together for the first time in 2001.

The pinnacle of the dream occurred in 2004 when the team went to Badminton Park for the Coaching Club Meet. Linda and Peter invited Charles Matheson, the then President of the American Coaching Club, to take the ribbons while guests included the former Queen's Equerry, Sir John Miller who had mentored Linda and Peter. Another Cleveland Bay team is owned by Paul Berens and Chris Scott which has undertaken many coaching drives in the last 10 years.

Sadly, Harmony is the last of the team to survive and is now in semi-retirement in Yorkshire as a broodmare, having been predeceased by Endeavour, with both





Huckleberry and Fryup passing away as recently as September 2013. Linda and Peter now put all their energy and resources into actively supporting the Cleveland Bay Horse Society.

All The Queen's horses

Probably one of the best well-known Cleveland Bay stallions was Mulgrave Supreme (foaled in 1961), owned by HM The Queen. At the time, 1962, there were only four pure-bred stallions in England – and Mulgrave Supreme was heading to an American buyer when The Queen stepped in to help save the breed. Her interest may have stemmed from that of her grandfather, King George V, who had previously owned and bred Clevelands when they replaced black Hanoverian horses in the Royal Mews during the 1920s.

Her Majesty's generosity extended to making Mulgrave Supreme open to public stud and, within 15 years the number of registered stallions rose to 36. It is common knowledge that HRH The Duke of Edinburgh drove a team of Cleveland Bays when he first started competing in driving trials. All the bay horses used to pull carriages in the Royal Mews are pure and part-bred Clevelands.

The Queen has been Patron of the Cleveland Bay Horse Society since 1977 and acted as President in 1984, the society's centenary year.

Opposite page left: Peter Dallow goes hunting with Harrington Harmony in 1998. Right: Endeavour Ltd's team wait patiently in front of Badminton House in 2004

This page above: The Cleveland Bay team belonging to Paul Berens and Chris Scott pass a lake in France (2006). Right: Zoe Woods' QA-approved stallion, Afondale Highlander.

Clevelands abroad

The breed is valued worldwide; the British-bred stallion Carolina Boaz was recently bought by The Imperial Stud of Japan, one of several over many years and used to breed carriage and ceremonial horses. The breed is also in evidence in America and Australia, while Zoe Woods and her husband set up a stud in France. Having overcome the problem of the breed not being recognised by the National Stud of France by writing direct to Prime Minister Fillon when he was in government, Clevelands can now compete in all disciplines in the country and her stallion, Afondale Highlander, is QA-approved.

Zoe said: "In 1997 Carriage Driving magazine featured the Cleveland Bay stallion Borderfame Prince Charming. We were

determined to buy a Cleveland Bay and went in search of a mare by him and bought two - as you do! The first being his daughter Stoneridge Merindah Jundah went on to be a Champion Small Hunter, qualified for the Scottish Masters and won the Royal Highland Society Perpetual Trophy in 2005.

"My husband and I decided to make breeding Cleveland Bays our retirement hobby and purchased a 32-acre farm in the Loire region of France in 2005. We owned three horses and now have four pure-bred mares, a pure and part-bred filly and a pure-bred stallion. Another part-bred is due next year. Highpasture Hattie is by Timberlane Huckleberry and her full brother, Highpasture Harliquin was purchased by The Queen and gifted to the King's Troop. We saw him on



Photo: Zoe Woods

Trooping the Colour where he got a special mention from [commentator] Clare Balding”.

Competing at top level

There are a number of horses with Cleveland bloodlines competing at top level; a Cleveland Bay x TB show jumped at the Tokyo Olympics (1964) while another half-bred, Madison Time ridden by Harvey Smith, jumped for the British team in Mexico four years later. In the mid-1980s Kenley Britannia (by a pure Cleveland stallion out of a 15hh mare) jumped successfully at the Spruce Meadows Masters, before being sold and going on to jump in major tournaments in the US. At the Horse of the Year Show in 2013 Oathill Take The Biscuit, a part-bred Cleveland owned by Dawn Weston and ridden by Danielle Heath, took the Middleweight Show Hunter of the Year title and was second in the Science Supplements Ladies’ Hunter of the Year.

Samantha Thurman-Baker is a young dressage rider training with Carl Hester. In 2009 she won the Petplan Advanced Medium National Championship on Spring Pascal who is by the Hanoverian stallion Pascal out

of a Cleveland mare, Springtime Girl. Spring Pascal’s passport has been over-stamped by the CBHS.

Australian Bob Edwards had a team of Cleveland x TBs that he brought over to the UK in order to qualify for the World Equestrian Games in Aachen (2006). He sold the team afterwards to fund the venture, a heart wrenching decision as he and his wife had owned and trained the horses since they were foals. One of them was Carrington Park Ajax who went on to become one of Boyd Exell’s winning FEI Indoor World Cup™ team.

At a more modest level, Glen McGirr drives a pure-bred Cleveland pair in combined driving in the States. His mares are BeyBreze Nadia from his own farm and Idlehour Jade from the Idlehour Stud.

History

CBHS claims that the breed is Britain’s oldest native, although data prior to the Middle Ages is not recorded. However, Henry Edmunds FRES – who has written a lengthy article on the Cleveland’s origins published on the Southern Cleveland

Bay Club website – believes it goes back to Roman times, some 1,800 years ago. His article goes back even further, to the Sarmatians of Southern Ukraine in 4BC; they were formidable warriors and were the first mounted knights in armour. Sarmatians had an on-off relationship with the Romans leading, eventually, to a peace treaty in AD175 which compelled the Sarmatians to send 5,500 warriors and horses to Britain where they patrolled Hadrian’s Wall, remaining on duty until the Romans left these shores, some 235 years later.

In maintaining such a huge army and its horses it was inevitable that an equine

Top left: At four years old Highpasture Hattie takes life in her stride. Her full brother was gifted by The Queen to the King’s Troop. Bottom left: Spring Pascal shows off his paces with Samantha Thurman-Baker. Top right: Part-bred Kenley Britannia show jumped with great success in Canada and the US during the 1980s. Bottom right: Glen McGirr competing at the Rocky Mountain Carriage Club Fall Follies CDE in 2012 with his pure-bred mares Beybreeze Nadia and Idlehour Jade.



Photo: Zoe Woods



Photo: Lesley Orange



Photo: Paul Ruttle



Photo: Glen McGirr



Photo: Ian Robertson

breeding programme evolved. The horse of the Samartian was of the Parthian type, bay with black feet. The feet were particularly important as they were hard-wearing and less prone to cracking than those of other equines. The horses' stamina also played a vital part, often marching for miles before engaging in battle – it was a tumultuous period in British history. Henry says in his article that the Kabardin horses bred today by the Sarmatians in their homeland are very similar to the Cleveland and a genetic survey has revealed a direct link between the two breeds.

Between the Dark Ages and Middle Ages many of these former war horses turned to

work on the land, their size and strength making them ideal for the task. In the early 1130s the Cistercian Abbeys of Rivaulx and Fountains were established and the working lay brothers took on the task of breeding the horses that carried on working the land or became pack animals. In 1539 the monasteries were dissolved and the horses taken on by Chapman, people who brought merchandise carried by pack horses, thus they were known as Chapman horses.

The Elizabethan period saw further role changes as carriages were introduced and the popular bay horse, now also known as the Yorkshire Galloway, with its strength,

action and stamina was put to harness. Fast forward to the 18th century and 70 Yorkshire Galloway mares were selected to be put to the Darley Arabian, the Byerley Turk and the Godolphin Barb, forerunners of today's TB. In Victorian times Cleveland mares were put to TB stallions to produce the Yorkshire Carriage Horse – considered by aficionados to be 'the most beautiful coach horse the world has ever seen'. Resulting mares were later put back to pure Cleveland stallions to retain the original qualities of the breed. There then followed a period of further out-crossing, to the extent that the breed was in danger of losing purity.

In 1884 the CBHS was set up, with a back-dated Stud Book (Volume I) giving details of stallions foaled prior to January 1800. Since then, the popularity of the breed worldwide has never waned but the effects of two world wars, recessions and loss of breeders have made their mark, bringing the Cleveland to the critical situation it faces today.

On show at Equifest

If the above has tempted you, then don't miss seeing these lovely horses in the flesh. The CBHS holds its National Championships at Equifest (East of England Showground) on Saturday 16 August, 2014. There is also opportunity to support the breed by becoming a Friend (you don't have to own one). Funds raised from this scheme go towards conserving stallion semen and, hopefully, enabling embryo freezing in the future as well as supporting marketing and promotional campaigns.

This page: Proving you can take Cleveland Bays anywhere!

Breed Standards

Height - 16.0 hh to 16.2 hh, but height should not disqualify an otherwise good sort.

Colour - Cleveland Bays must be bay with black points, i.e. black legs, black mane and black tail. Grey hairs in mane and tail do not disqualify. These have been long recognised as a feature in certain strains of pure Cleveland blood. Legs which are bay or red below the knees and hocks do not disqualify but are faulty as to colour.

White, the size of a very small star is permitted. White exceeding a small star, or any other significant mismarking such as chestnut, is outside Breed standards but as from January 2005 mismarked horses can still be registered as pure to protect their genetic value to the breed. However Breed Committee comments are noted on the passport and in the Stud Book.

Body - The body should be wide and deep. The back should not be too long, and should be strong with muscular loins. The shoulders should be sloping, deep

and muscular. The quarters should be level, powerful, long and oval, the tail springing well from the quarters.

Head and neck - The head characteristic of the breed should be bold and not too small. It should be well carried on a long lean neck.

Eyes - Eyes should be large, well set and kindly in expression.

Ears - Tend to be large and fine.

Limbs - Arms and thighs and second thighs should be muscular. The knees and hocks should be large and well closed. There should be upwards of 9" good flat bone below the knee measured at the narrowest point on a tight tape. The pasterns should be strong, sloping and not too long. The legs should be clear of superfluous hair and as clean and hard as possible.

Feet - One of the most important features of the breed; the feet must be of the best and blue in colour. Feet that are shallow or narrow are undesirable.

Action - Must be true, straight and free.

High action is not characteristic of the breed. The Cleveland which moves well will move freely from the shoulder and will flex his knees and hocks sufficiently. The action required is free all round, gets over the ground, and fits the wear-and-tear qualities of the breed.

Further information

Cleveland Bay Horse Society
Tel: 01423 546168
E: info@clevelandbays.co.uk
W: www.clevelandbay.com

Southern Cleveland Bay Club
W: www.southernclevelandbayclub.co.uk

Cleveland Bay Horse Society of North America
W: www.clevelandbay.com/links

Cleveland Bay Horse Society of Australasia
Secretary Karen Halford
Mob: 0417 121 791
E: cbhsasocietysecretary@gmail.com
W: www.cbhsa.com.au

The Cleveland Bay Endeavour Ltd
W: www.clevelandbayendeavour.co.uk