

Lynwood Choreography, Beth O'Dell, Lynwood Constitution, Jamie Faulkner, Vignoles Gambit, Lynwood Montana, Amy Pugh, Lynwood Executive, Lesley Pugh and Lynwood Graduate



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BREEDING
SPECIAL

The generation game

A fluffy, but superbly put together Welsh section A stallion takes pride of place in a stable on an immaculate yard nestled in prime Warwickshire countryside. At the ripe old age of 28, Lynwood Justice is one of the original Welsh ponies bred at Lynwood Stud, established 70 years ago by the late Ruth Burton. Along with three other home-bred Welsh stallions, he has been a linchpin in the stud's production of top-class all-rounders, encompassing first-rate conformation and endless versatility.

Ruth and her husband Morris began breeding Friesian cows and pedigree pigs in 1947 on various farms in Warwickshire, before Ruth focused on her main passion — Welsh mountain ponies.

"Mother travelled the width and breadth of the country to find her foundation mares — Grandby Jessica and Coed Coch Seren Lass — both of whom were champions before foaling the stud's stallions," explains Ruth's daughter Lesley Pugh. "The four stallions included Lynwood Jones, Lynwood Simon, Lynwood Jason and Lynwood Justice. From these stallions, she bred ponies who were successful in showing and working hunter classes."

IN 1976, Lesley, whose impressive CV boasts two Badminton completions, began "dabbling" in breeding.

"I bought a thoroughbred mare called Tudor Court who I put in foal to HIS [Hunter

Finding your niche in the world of breeding is essential. *Stephanie Bateman* visits the Lynwood Stud, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year

Improvement Society, now Sport Horse Breeding of Great Britain] stallion Thriller," Lesley reminisces. "She foaled Palmier, a mare I produced up to advanced level eventing before she was sold to the Japanese team, who competed her at the Seoul Olympics."

It was the sale of the mare that enabled Lesley to pursue her breeding and farming interests at 400-acre Wolston Fields Farm, only a few miles from her parents' farm, where the next chapter of the story unfolded.

In the late 80s, Lesley began breeding Welsh/thoroughbred "all-rounders" including

the stud's two main stallions: Lynwood Cane, a 15.2hh dark bay by Troste Brenin out of Lynwood Capitol Hill, and Lynwood Braint, a 16.1hh bright bay by Llanarth Moeth out of Bets Choice. Both were finally put down last year aged 27 and 25.

These two stallions, both successful in a variety of disciplines, have produced an impressive selection of top-class horses, noted for their trainable temperaments, superb conformation and versatility. Their offspring's standout qualities are their poker-straight legs and beautiful, pony-like heads.



Youngstock at Wolston Fields Farm, where Lesley Pugh began breeding all-rounders in the 1980s

Pictures by Peter Nixon

"I had it instilled into me that conformation, movement and temperament were vital," says Lesley. "Bloodlines are great, but if you don't have the conformation, the horse won't stay sound. We like doing a bit of everything with our horses to give them a rounded education, so they have to stay sound."

WHEN Lesley's daughter Amy (Pugh) was born in 1988, she quickly became an integral part of the business, riding and producing "Granny's" Welsh mountain ponies before successfully competing the two stallions and numerous other home-bred horses.

Amy competed Lynwood Cane up to medium level dressage, won various two-day events and showjumped nationally. Cane was also used as a vaulting horse, competing on the British team on three occasions.

Lynwood Braint, affectionately known as "Boots", hunted weekly alongside competing in a variety of disciplines, excelling in showjumping and equitation jumping.

After school, Amy studied a BSc (Hons) business degree at Loughborough University, which she says has put her in good stead for promoting the business.

"Now it's all about marketing and creating a brand. University has enabled me to bring something to the business and help promote the stud's name."

Alongside helping on the stud, Amy competes a number of home-breds in dressage



Under the watchful eye of her parents Lesley and Bob, Amy schools 17-year-old Lynwood Executive, by Lynwood Cane, currently competing at PSG dressage

'Bloodlines are great, but without the conformation, the horse won't stay sound'

LESLEY PUGH ON BREEDING PRIORITIES

and eventing. She has also bred two Anglo European Studbook (AES) yearlings in a bid to start her own performance lines.

"It's been amazing growing up and listening to Mum analyse a horse. I've learnt so much about how they should be put together. Mum has an eye for it and it just works," she says.

The most successful home-bred to date is 17-year-old Lynwood Executive, a striking palomino by Lynwood Cane, who has various

70 YEARS OF LYNWOOD STUD

British Dressage accolades to his name and is currently competing at PSG.

Lynwood Montana is a nine-year-old mare by Lynwood Braint out of a part-bred Arab pony mare who Amy has produced up to CIC* and their success to date includes jumping a double clear at Gatcombe International.

Amy also events eight-year-old Lynwood Constitution, currently competing at novice level. By Medoc out of Lynwood Chantilly, the dark bay gelding was entire for the first six years of life before being gelded to concentrate on his eventing career. Lesley collected straws from him and he's since sired two foals, one of which, Lynwood Focus, graded highly at his Futurity grading.

SIX years ago, it was decided that "Granny" would move in with Lesley, and Amy would take on the original stud and farmhouse in nearby Dunchurch. Amy has since transformed the expansive 225-acre farm into a thriving competition yard from where she produces and competes the home-breds.

"When Granny passed away, we spread her ashes up on a hill where she used to keep her Welsh mountain ponies," explains Amy. "It's where I ride if I need to take some time out. The view is amazing and it puts everything into perspective."

The stable yard boasts a smart indoor block with airy integral stables, organised tack room and feed room and wash box. Outside there are further stables, a 25mx60m arena, horse walker and ample land offering lush all-year grazing and a variety of cross-country fences and hunt jumps.

Both the stud and competition yard grow their own hay and haylage, some of which is sold, and each yard takes a number of liveryes.

"At the stud, we also have youngstock liveryes, mares in for foaling, horses for retirement, plus we sell youngstock to put money back into the pot," says Lesley.

The stud's main market is the "ambitious amateur".

"We're fussy about what we want to produce, because there are so many people breeding that you have to stand out," adds Lesley. "We feel there is a real need for

Amy Pugh in action with her CIC* eventer Lynwood Montana, by Lynwood Braint



Lesley and Ruth Pugh with the 28-year-old Lynwood Justice, one of the stud's original Welsh ponies



'We're fussy about what we produce': Lynwood youngsters Definition and Unlimited

'There's a need for versatile, sound and trainable horses that go well for anyone'

LESLEY PUGH ON KNOWING THE MARKET

versatile, sound and trainable horses that go well for anyone and can be successful at the higher amateur levels."

Lesley and Amy are not only particular about the horses they breed, but also who they sell their horses to.

"One of the secrets to success is being choosy about who you sell to," Amy says. "There's nothing more heartbreaking than producing a decent young horse only to find it doesn't reach its potential."

LESLEY and Amy make a formidable team. They clearly respect one another's opinion and share the same ambitions. So, what does the future hold?

"The aim is to develop the Lynwood brand, and we're in the process of creating a children's book telling stories of the stud," says Lesley. "We're also upgrading our arena at the stud with the aim of holding clinics focusing on the rider's ability to produce horses correctly."

"We've contemplated having another stallion but they take up so much time and I'd like to be able to watch Amy competing our home-breds," Lesley tells. "We've still got frozen semen from our stallions and a selection of sport horse broodmares, so we can continue the bloodlines for a few years yet."

Lesley's long-term goal is to breed another four-star horse.

"My dream is to outcross some of our broodmares and breed another horse for Amy to compete at top level," she adds. "I will always support the leisure rider market, but I'd love to breed another Olympic horse like Palmier."

"We've always maintained that stickability is the main ingredient when working with horses," Lesley concurs. "It's a hard slog and you have to balance the good with the bad, but we cherish the good times and can't imagine doing anything else." **H&H**