
THE FELL PONY

The Fell pony is a versatile, working breed of mountain and moorland pony originating in the north of England in Cumberland and Westmorland (Cumbria).

It was originally bred on the fell farms of northwest England, and is used as a riding and driving pony.

The Fell pony is noted for hardiness, agility, strength and sure-footedness.

2020

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Fell Pony Heritage Trust

www.fpht.co.uk



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HABITAT

The clue is in the name. And it's something to think about when we start talking fell ponies. Fell ponies have been shaped by their natural habitat and are what they are today because of it. Agility, surefooted and brains in a pony package.

Fell ponies are known for their versatility. And being able to turn their hoof to a variety of disciplines. Considering purchasing a fell? Attending breed shows and visiting breeders is a great way to find a pony for your purpose.

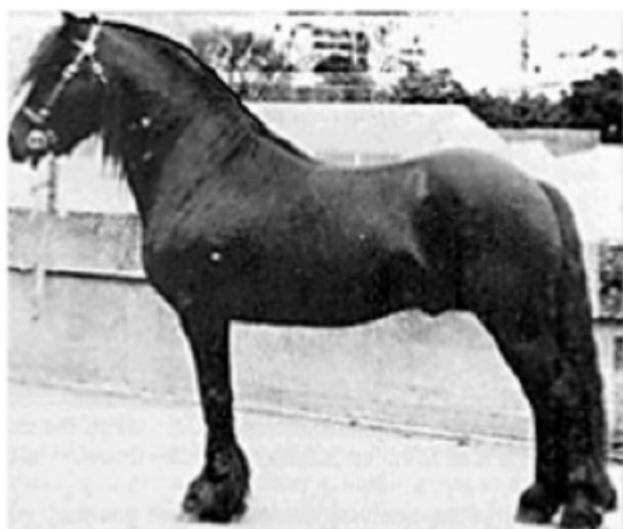


Twislehope ponies, circa 1960's, in the Scottish Borders. By Molly Laing.



Drybarrows mare and foal above Haweswater, Cumbria. By David Thompson.

PURPOSE



BREED DESCRIPTION

Head, Nostrils, Eyes, Ears, Throat & Jaw and Neck



Head: Small, well chiseled in outline, well set on, forehead broad, tapering to nose.

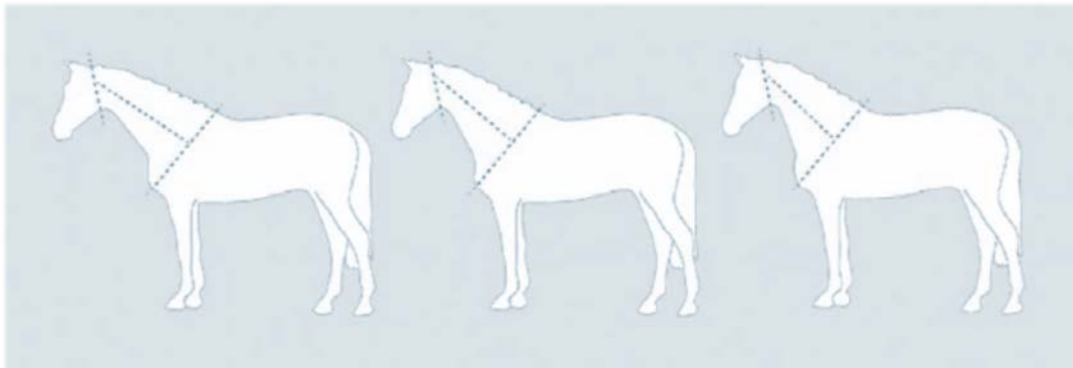


Nostrils: Large and expanding.

Eyes: Prominent, bright, mild and intelligent.



Ears: Neatly set, well formed and small.

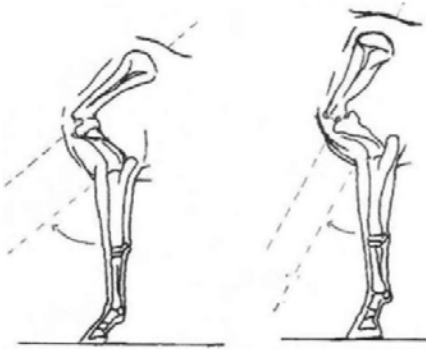
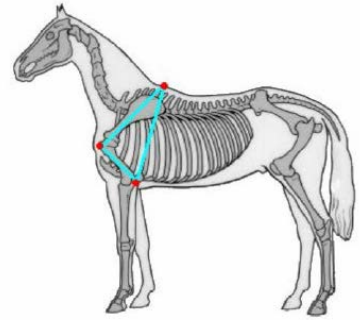


Throat & Jaw: Fine, showing no signs of throatiness nor coarseness.

Shoulders

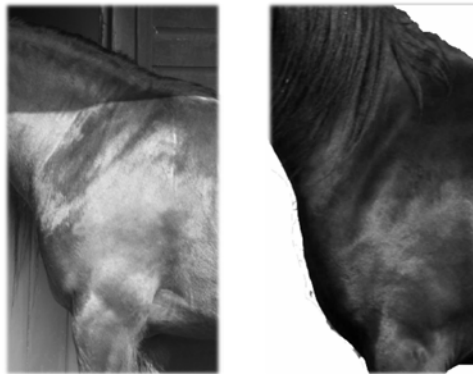
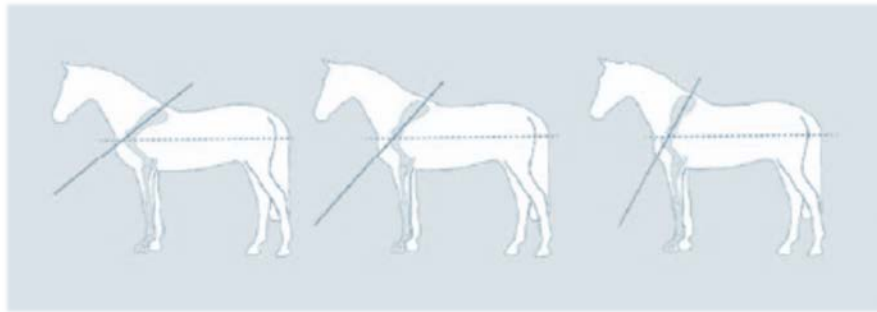
Most important, well laid back and sloping, not too fine at withers, nor loaded at the points - a good long shoulder blade, muscles well developed.

Shoulder slope to largely land between 45-55 degrees:



- 45 degrees more suitable for dressage. 55 degrees more suitable for jumping.
- A slope of 55 degrees is considered 'straight or upright' and is more useful in jumping or gaited horses for lifting the knee.
- A shoulder slope of 50 degrees is what I call 'utility or all-around'.
- For carriage or Draft horses, that a laid back shoulder is desired to more readily fit a collar.
- At the outer limits of range we have 40 and 60. Neither

ends of the spectrum are desirable in a horse.



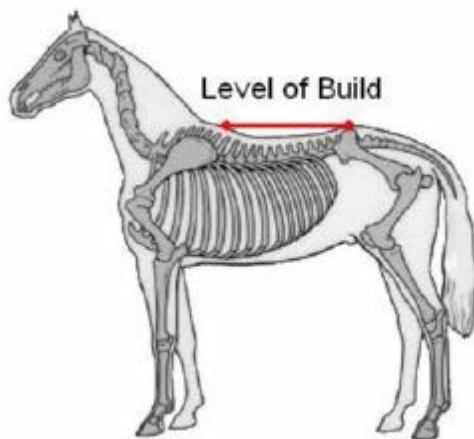
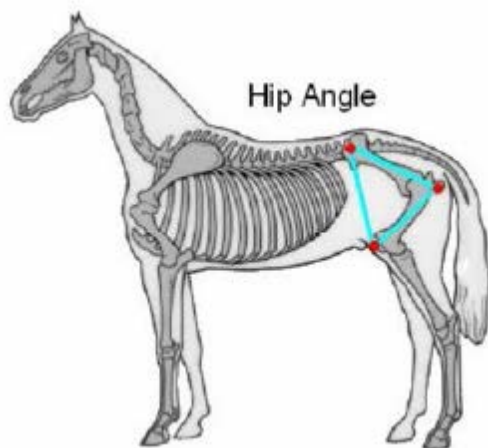
Carcase

Proper conformation is important to allow the horse to be balanced, powerful and maneuverable as well as to maintain soundness over its lifespan. Evaluating a horse based on its conformation should give an idea of how the horse might perform a given task and how sound it will stay. There are exceptions to every rule, and there are definitely horses with poor conformation that go on to be great performers, and horses with crooked legs

that never take a lame step. However, looking at conformation is one of the most reliable predictors of both athletic ability and soundness in the majority of horses.



Good strong back of good outline, muscular loins, deep carcase, thick through heart, round ribbed from shoulders to flank, short and well coupled, hindquarters square and strong with tail well set on.



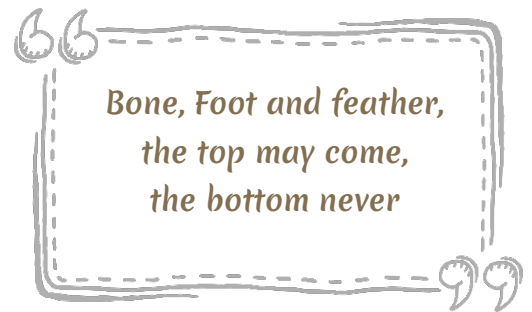
Feet, Legs and joints and Hind Legs

Feet of good size, round and well formed, open at heels with the characteristic blue horn, fair sloping pasterns, not too long, forelegs should be straight, well placed not tied in at el-bows, big well formed knees, short cannon bone, plenty of good flat bone below the knee (eight inches at least), great muscularity of arm.



Foreleg conformation (from shoulder to hoof) determines length of stride. The primary function of the front legs is to support most of the horse's weight, absorb the shock of concussion, and lift the body for the "flight" phase of each stride. Strongest construction consists of relatively straight

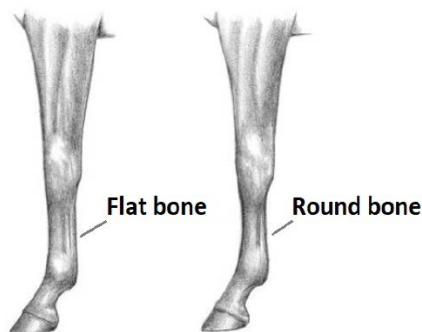
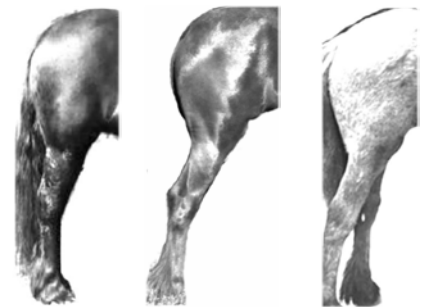
legs with sturdy bone structure, big flat knees, and well-shaped fetlock joints.



Conformation of the hind legs and hind-quarters of a horse is important because it plays a major role in how a horse moves and in his soundness. The hindquarters provide most of the propelling power of the horse, with their direct hook-up to the backbone. The groups of muscles in the hind legs are larger and more powerful than those of the front legs.



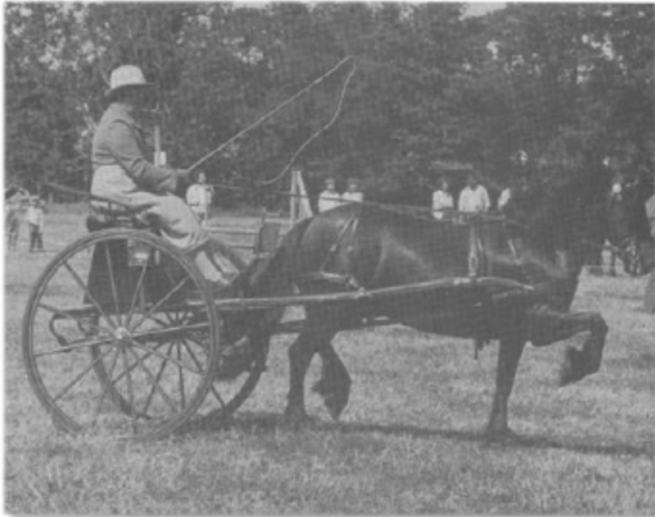
The hind legs must be able to hold the entire body weight at times, and are also important when the horse "puts on the brakes" for stop-ping. Any horse that must stop and turn quick-ly needs strong, well-made hindquarters, as does a horse that travels up and down steep hills or over jumps.



- An appropriately positioned cannon bone should make the leg-appear wider front to back - a desirable conformation known as flat bone. By contrast round bone is a conformation fault. It occurs when a horse's tendon and cannon bone are postioned to closely together.
- Round bone should appear alike a broom handle. Whereas flat will appear like an axe handle.
- Measuring Bone is done just below the knee.

Action

Walk, smart and true. Trot well balanced all round, with good knee and hock action, going well from the shoulder and flex-ing the hocks, nor going too wide or near behind. Should show great pace and endurance, bringing the hind legs well under the body when going.



Mrs Jennifer Harrison driving her winning "Flash of Tebay" to a competition gig.

*GIBSIDE COUNTESS FP1794, foaled 1989
Sire: Gibside Danny Boy 6458; Dam:
Waverhead Dawn 16551.*



*Rotton Row, London. September 1990.
Organised by Jane Glass.
Left to right: Drybarrows Queenbee,
Heltondale Jester, Busby Rock Rose
and Tebay Just William.*

General Characteristics and Breed Type





Summary

HEIGHT

Not exceeding 14 hands (142.2 cms).

COLOUR & MARKINGS

Black, brown, bay and grey. Chesnuts, pie-balds and skewbalds are debarred.

A star and/or a little white on or below the hind fetlock is acceptable. An excess of white markings is discouraged, but such po-nies are eligible for registration.

HEAD

Small, well chiselled in outline, well set on, forehead broad, tapering to nose.

NOSTRILS

Large and expanding.

EYES

Prominent, bright, mild and intelligent.

EARS

Neatly set, well formed and small.

THROAT & JAW

Fine, showing no signs of throatiness nor coarseness.

NECK

Of proportionate length, giving good length of rein, strong and not too heavy, moderate crest in case of stallion.

SHOULDERS

Most important, well laid back and sloping, not too fine at withers, nor loaded at the points - a good long shoulder blade, muscles well developed.

CARCASE

Good strong back of good outline, muscular loins, deep carcase, thick through heart, round ribbed from shoulders to flank, short and well coupled, hind quarters square and strong with tail well set on.

FEET, LEGS AND JOINTS

Feet of good size, round and well formed, open at heels with the characteristic blue horn, fair sloping pasterns not too long, forelegs should be straight, well placed not tied at elbows, big well formed knees, short cannon bone, plenty of good flat bone below knee (eight inches at least), great muscularity of arm.

HIND LEGS

Good thighs and second thighs, very muscular, hocks well let down and clean cut, plenty of bone below joint, hocks should not be sickle nor cow-hocked.

MANE, TAIL AND FEATHER

Plenty of fine hair at heels (coarse hair objectionable), all the fine hair except that at point of heel may be cast in summer. Mane and tail are left to grow long.

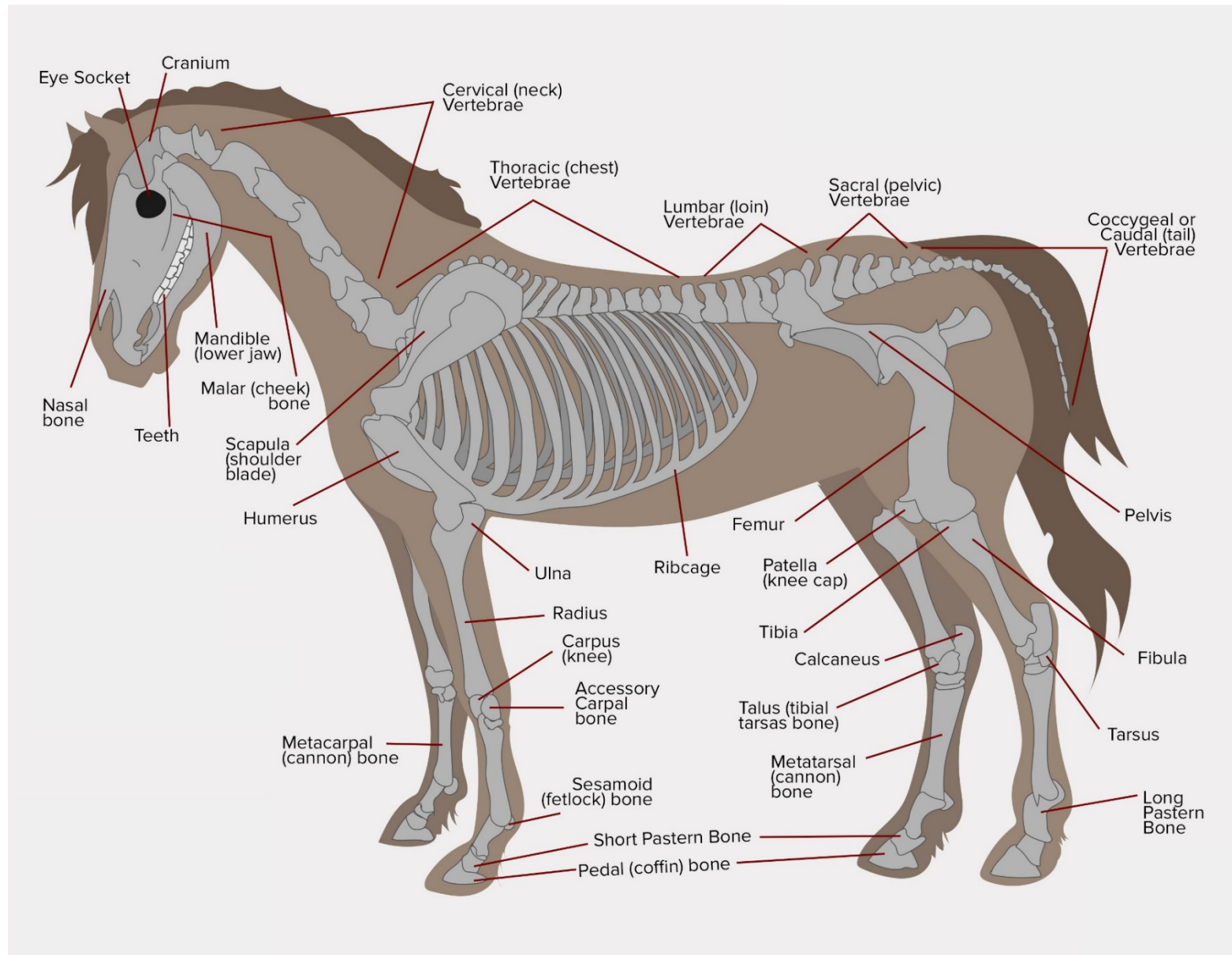
ACTION

Walk, smart and true. Trot well balanced all round, with good knee and hock action, go-ing well from the shoulder and flexing the hocks, not going too wide nor near behind. Should show great pace and endurance, bringing the hind legs well under the body when going.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS AND BREED TYPE

The Fell Pony should be constitutionally as hard as iron and show good pony characteristics with the unmistakable appearance of hardiness peculiar to mountain ponies, and at the same time, have a lively and alert appearance and great bone

POINTS AND SKELETON OF THE HORSE



REFERENCES

Cover photo: *The Late Mr. Tommy Capstick*

Purpose: *FPS Newsletters* from various years.

Breed description:

Photos by *Allie Slack*.

Diagrams from Pinterest.

'Action' photos from *FPS Newsletters* from various years.

General characteristics and breed type photos:

Photos 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 - *Fleur Hallam*

Photos 2 and 3 - *FPS Newsletters* from various years.

Photo 6 - *Allie Slack*

Photo 10 - Endurance ridden photo by *Barbara Austin*, "Fell Pony Vinnie ridden by owner Jenny Gilmour".

Points and skeleton of the horse diagram: Google images.

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