

## **History of Breeding and Training of the Kladruber Horses**

The Kladruber horse is the only breed of the original ceremonial horses still bred that is the only draught horse breed in the world originated, bred and trained for drawing carriages of the social elites.

Thanks to the Habsburg conservatism and unchanged breeding goal, the Kladruber horse has preserved its original “baroque” appearance from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to date. It still bears the traits of the original, but now extinct breeds (old Spanish horse and old Italian horse) which were at its beginning and from medieval times until the 18<sup>th</sup> century influenced the stock in most European countries and colonies and by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were extinct.

Even though there are only limited opportunities for ceremonial carriage horses to be used at (now the most frequent breeds are warmblooded horses for sport) the Kladruber horse breed has been preserved and still serves its original purpose for example at the Danish Royal Court and it is also used for state functions.

Horse breeds are divided into primitive (indigenous) and intentionally designed (on the basis of targeted selective breeding) however some breeds oscillate between these two main types. Then the horse breeds are divided according to their purpose such as draught horses which the carriage horses fall into (weight up to 1200 kg), riding horses (up to 800kg) and pack horses (less than 500 kg).

A new horse breed came into existence either in a particular area, using the same genetic material and the effect of the external conditions and climate (most of the breeds started in this way) or it came into existence in a single place – at a dedicated stud farm with a clearly defined breeding goal using particular horses of selected breeds imported for this sole purpose and applying the knowledge of selective breeding available at that time as well as the knowledge of local natural conditions and climate. In this case it was important to provide the best conditions for horse breeding and the best knowledge of stock management and selective breeding procedures.

Most breeds originated in much larger areas, where the conditions were favourable for horses, nevertheless the landscape in which they were bred was not deliberately designed for this purpose. This particularly applies to the breeds of riding horses (see more details later in the text).

In a limited number of cases a new breed came into existence at a single point and in even less instances horse breeding and training was so closely associated with the landscape, not only for its natural conditions such as quality of soil, vegetation, hydrological and climate conditions but also because such landscape was purposely designed for horse breeding and training.

Because draught breeds are mightier than riding breeds, most of the draught breeds originated and were bred in fertile and flat lowlands (e.g. Percheron breed in France coming from Le Perche (a former province in north-west France), Belgian cold blood horses from the lowland around the Maas River). A mightier horse required more fodder (that in turn required more fertile and adequately irrigated land) and flat countryside, without any challenging obstacles for their training, because it was more appropriate for their future service; in a hilly or mountainous terrain these mighty and heavy horses could not fully utilise their drawing power and their weight would work against them. And there is a question whether such terrains would be suitable for rides in a carriage.

In the case of riding horses there was not a particular need for fertile lowlands for their breeding, sometimes just the opposite applied and horses were bred in hilly areas to acquire robust and resilient breeds (e.g. Lipizzaner at the Karst Plateau in Slovenia or Andalusian horse in the Pyrenees) as well as lighter for running. Such horse breeds were shorter than the mighty draught horses, however more agile with a bigger stamina. These horses were trained in an environment full of obstacles, some of which were deliberately added into the landscape, and on uneven terrain to be ready for their future service, particularly in cavalry or equestrian sports, including hunting, where they had to overcome many sorts of obstacles.

Even smaller riding horses and pack horses coming from mountainous areas (e.g. Hafling in the Alps, Hucul in the Carpathian Mountains) were able to carry loads and riders or draw smaller carts in a challenging mountainous terrain, thanks to their light weight, blood circulation and breathing apparatus. Such horses had to be robust, resistant, strong, undemanding and versatile, with an easy going character.

The Habsburg Imperial Court required unique draught horses for ceremonies which the House of Habsburgs introduced, being inspired by the etiquette of the Spanish royal court ruled by their relatives as well as by the opulence of the French royal court.

**They had to find a landscape suitable for breeding such horses – and, as stated above, preferably flat or undulated fertile lowland where the required breed could originate, be bred and trained. They chose the landscape at Kladruby nad Labem as the most suitable one for this purpose, where horse breeding was started in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by the noble family of Pernsteins. On top of that, this area being far away from the Turkish threat was still close enough to the centre of power of the Austrian Habsburgs and the land was owned by the Czech Royal Chamber, an administrative body of the Bohemian Kingdom. It is evidence that the breeders had a clearly defined breeding goal, very good knowledge of selective breeding and experience in this area on one hand and an excellent overview of the natural conditions across the land ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs on the other, which they applied in choosing the most suitable location for breeding and training of the horse breed required to perform the representative function.** (The attempt to introduce the Kladruber breed in a place with a similar terrain at Kopčany, now Slovakia, failed, most likely because of its climate conditions, vegetation and veterinary situation and soon the breeding refocused again solely on Kladruby nad Labem.) By coincidence the landscape of the Property is very similar to the old Italian horse homeland (Ferrara Principality, landscape surrounding Mantova) which significantly contributed to the creation of Kladruber horse breed.

The landscape at Kladruby nad Labem was modified and designed in the High Classicist style on the basis of the then best practice, having the breeding and training goals in mind, and these goals were also fully respected during its more recent modifications.

**It is the only preserved landscape in the world which still serves its original purpose which for centuries has been intentionally used for breeding the draught horse breed exclusively designed for the representation of the ruling court and the design and composition of which was subject to the needs of horse training and breeding.**

When assessing how a particular stud farm, together with its landscape, affected the local horses in general, it is necessary to consider whether its mission was the mere “reproduction” of the breed and its further enhancement (reinforcement of the breed traits) and production of breeding studs or whether its task was to come up with a new horse breed on the basis of selective breeding. In the latter case the best conditions for horse breeding were of the utmost

importance, therefore the surrounding landscape had to satisfy the most stringent requirements and the best knowledge of selective horse breeding and training was a must.

**On the site of the Property, the Kladruber breed originated the name of which is derived from the place where it started; it also contributed to the diversity of the breeds of draught horses with the mighty horse with convex face and big dark eyes, high majestic action of the front legs when trotting, extremely co-operative and adequately temperamental but still calm horse.**

**The evidence of the Kladruber horses' privileged position as "horses for the rulers" is the fact that, even though it was a high performance draught breed that could be easily used during armed conflicts for drawing heavy wagons and cannons, this was never the case. If there was a war, the breeding herd was evacuated, like any other valuable crown treasure, as soon as the enemy army was approaching.**

**The Kladruber horse has unique zootechnical qualities – in its genes it has preserved the traits of the medieval horse breeds (old Spanish and old Italian horses) which have become extinct. In this respect it could be used for their resurrection by means of genetic engineering if necessary. The Kladruber breed has been bred on the site of the Property to date and represents the most valuable genetic pool for the population of this breed. The Kladruber horse contributed to the rise and breeding of other horse breeds such as Lipizzaner, Trakehner and Nonius.**

**There are more stud farms in the world where a breed of horses originated through selective breeding; nonetheless it is very rare that the historic stud farms and their landscapes have preserved their unique position in breeding the particular horse breed which they brought into existence in the past. Some stud farms including their landscape either do not exist anymore or their breeding programme has been significantly changed or due to historic circumstances (war etc.) their breeding herd was moved to other stud farms in the past and even though the breeding of the same horse breed was restarted they never resumed their leading position in breeding that particular horse breed. (For example at Lipica in Slovenia where Lipizzaners are still bred as well as Piber in Austria where they are bred for the Classical Horsemanship and the High School of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna.)**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century the horses were bred in a semi-wild manner in fenced horse parks. The same approach was also adopted in the Landscape where horses were kept in a fenced park. There was a gradual change from free grazing in a fenced park to separately fenced grazing lots in an open landscape.

After the Landscape was modified in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the method of horse breeding changed and it has survived to date. It is based on three farmsteads with stables built in those times (the main one is at Kladruby nad Labem then at Františkov and Josefov) surrounded by pasture segments the geometry of which is defined by means of the landscape composition (see the relevant chapters) and interconnected with the main communication axis which in fact are the main composition axis as well as other roads necessary for horse training.

The pastures surrounding the three farmsteads are situated next to each other and together with their respective farmstead they represent an integrated functional unit: the main farmstead of Kladruby nad Labem serves for horse breeding as such and the studs and the herd of breeding mares, nursed foals up to six months of age (until weaned from dams) and horses in training (it starts at the age of three) are stabled there; at the Františkov farmstead there are colts and fillies from six months to three years of age. The Josefov farmstead is used

according to the operational needs either for stabling a part of the breeding herd of mares or for the youngest weaned foals. The modus operandi of the stud farm, that is the specialisation of and co-operation between its parts, has not been changed since it was established in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been preserved in its original form. The buildings housing the stables are still used for the same purpose for which they were originally built and the same applies to the landscape modified at that time.

Every single part of the Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses at Kladruby nad Labem serves a different purpose in horse breeding. The fenced pastures serve for grazing, meadows (unfenced) are primarily used for hay production and sometimes, depending on the season of the year, horses are grazing on them (then a temporary fence is installed); the arable land serves for oat and barley production. The share of the total area of pastures and meadows has been constant over the years and corresponds to the relatively stable size of the herd bred in other words it fully satisfies the herd's needs for grazing and fodder. The area of arable land has also remained stable to cater for the herd of the given size.

The use of meadows is defined by the needs of the herd – they are cut twice a year. The alleys of fruit trees not only perform their composition and aesthetic function, particularly in spring, but fruit is also used as a supplement to the fodder.

The functional allocation of land plots as meadows, pastures and fields has remained unchanged for years as documented in the Land Register where meadows and pastures are recorded as a different type of land than the arable land.

In addition to the pasture fencing there are also fenced winter paddocks. These are used in winter to keep the horses in good condition and maintain their muscle strength.

Separate paddocks for studs (each must have its own to prevent them from fighting with each other) are arranged as an integral part of the formal composition of the Landscape and they are located in the close vicinity of the Kladruby nad Labem farmstead (to the south and west of the stables). They are smaller than pastures and the fences are higher. Every farmstead has its own ring or course to be used by horses in winter where they can run and move faster; normally in winter they spend the daytime in the winter paddocks.

The forest is used not only for timber production which also serves in horse breeding e.g. for fencing of pastures and paddocks but it also serves as a training ground for teams of horses – the forest lanes are mainly straight with right angle geometry and they are sandy. The meadows in the Mošnice Country Park are used for hay production and they also underline the overall composition. The ways in the park have gentle bends with a big radius suitable for the training of teams of horses in hand.

The horse breeding method applied in the Landscape is based on keeping horses in herds on pastures. The grazing season starts as soon as possible in spring (usually in April) and ends in late autumn (mostly in November). Every morning all herds from the three farmsteads (mares, mares with foals, foals/young horses) are driven to the adjacent pastures and every evening there are driven back. This daily ritual, repeated every morning and evening is an authentic part of the landscape life underlining its everyday beat and rhythm.

The herds are driven by herders using special long whips the cracking sound of which is typical in the landscape and works as an acoustic signal for the herd. The herd follows the cracking sound of a whip when driven to the pasture. This sound also rounds up the herd when driven back to the stable.

The size of pastures is proportionate to the size of a herd. The average area of a pasture is 5 ha. It can provide feed for a herd of 20 to 40 horses for about 2–3 weeks depending on the

quality of vegetation. Then the herd is moved to another pasture. The fence is not too high as horses have no need to leave the pasture as there is always enough grass and other vegetation for all of them. As mentioned earlier, every stud has its own paddock to avoid their fighting and therefore these paddocks are smaller (approximately 20x40 meters) with a higher fence (1.8m) to prevent studs from jumping over it. The fence around the pastures used by mares and foals is lower (approximately 1 meter).

The breeding mares are covered for the first time when they are five years old and the same applies to stallions. The gestation period takes on average 335 days.

Foals are born in the main farmstead at Kladruby nad Labem. The traditional training method of Kladruber horses has been preserved. The imprinting approach is used since the birth that is let horses get used to people, wearing the headgear, being tethered, being led by bridle, grooming, cleaning, lifting legs, sustaining basic veterinary checks etc. Mares with foals are driven to the pasture daily.

After weaning from dams, the six months old foals are transferred from the Kladruby nad Labem farmstead via Selmická Alley to Františkov farmstead where there two herds are kept, one of colts and one of fillies. During the daylight the herds are grazing on the pastures and in the evening they return back to their stables where they can move freely.

When foals are about 3 years old they are walked back from the Františkov farmstead to the Kladruby nad Labem where they are based in the training stables (a group of stallions and a group of mares separately). In the training stables every horse has its own box. During the training the mares are driven to the pastures and stallions stay in their respective paddocks (as mentioned above).

In the first year a three year old horse undergoes the basic training. First horses are trained to get used to the bridle, followed by lunging, getting used to a saddle and later to the weight of a rider. A driving horse is first trained on a lunge. Then he gets used to the harness; first the harness ropes are held by handlers then a log is used to be pulled by a horse. If the horse can manage pulling the log then it can be hitched to a coach. Usually a younger horse is teamed with an older one, so called teacher. When young horses (so called “remounts”) can walk reliably they are put in teams of two. In the team they are usually horses of the same sex or geldings with mares, only exceptionally can a mare and a stallion be teamed together.

After a year of training the horses must pass the performance test. After they pass the performance test mares and stallions either join the breeding herd or they are offered for sale. The type and look of a horse is assessed in a traditional way on a demonstration pedestal located at the edge of the central courtyard. When demonstrating a horse in trot the handler walks in the same gait as the horse which is a tradition dating back to the imperial era.

The main communication and composition axis (Selmická Alley) is the most important one in terms of horse breeding. It is surrounded by the majority of pasture segments. The refore this avenue serves as the main route for driving the herds from the farmsteads at Kladruby nad Labem and Františkov to the nearby pastures and several times a year a group of horses walks via the avenue when transferred from one age group to another. These transfers are traditionally made “on the hoof”. It is one of the rituals happening in the Landscape. This axis is not only important for the overall landscape composition but it is also important for the key moments of the daily and annual routines in the stud farm operations.

The roads and bridle ways in the Landscape are used for horse training (both in hand and under saddle), for daily exercising (e.g. studs in teams, under saddle), for presenting the

landscape to visitors (from a coach or a horseback). The sandy surface of the forest lanes and the sandy loam soil in the meadows and pastures are ideal for horse training – such surfaces are flexible enough for horses and at the same time strong enough to sustain the weight of a pulled load.

The network of watercourses has gradually developed. It irrigates meadows and pastures during dry seasons and drains the landscape in case of extreme rainfall. It also serves for horse training either as a ford (for a coach or horse wading if under saddle) or a natural obstacle (horse jumping under saddle). Therefore the horses which were trained in the Landscape for Breeding and Training of Ceremonial Carriage Horses at Kladruby nad Labem are used to watercourses and they are not scared of water. Water in any form has never been an issue for them. This was particularly important when they served as draft horses and had to overcome obstacles such as ford crossings.

Kladruber horses are still used for work in the landscape (this is a part of their training to get used to towing a load – a carriage) e.g. transporting manure, harrowing of the main court, sometimes for transporting hay, straw, oats, timber and other materials. They are also used for logging in the forest where they tow logs from felled areas closer to the roads.

The National Stud Farm at Kladruby nad Labem also provides job opportunities to traditional craftsman such as ferriers who as sole traders treat hoofs and shoe horses in the workshop owned by and located at the National Stud Farm at Kladruby nad Labem. The stud farm also employs two saddle makers who make and repair all horse tack – harnesses, saddles, bridles, whips etc. and their workshop is located in the former Forester's House at Kladruby nad Labem.

The stud farm operates its own timber mill to process the timber from its forests. Timber is used for traditional fencing of pastures. It is also used for making traditional ID labels for each horse. The key data is hand written on them, which is an old imperial tradition, and these include the horse name, lineage, date of birth and in case of studs their height and weight.

To keep the stables clean and tidy traditional handmade birch brooms are used for housekeeping. These brooms are made by the stud farm employees and they are preferred because their bristles are sharp enough and adequately flexible at the same time. Before sweeping the floors, made of oak cobbles, are sprayed with water to reduce the amount of dust. A special vessel with a hole at the bottom is used for floor spraying to create a typical pattern on the floor. In every stable the pattern is different depending on the skills and creativity of the grooms.

The location of the stud farm in the fertile Polabí area and the nature of the landscape had an influence on the physical characteristics of horses bred there. The flat land with pastures rich in nutrients has significantly contributed to the breeding of a mighty Kladruber horse which was predestined for towing big majestic coaches (carrossiers). For this reason the landscape composition pursued the aim to provide sufficient training opportunities for these horses.

Keeping horses in herds of the same age cohorts has a positive impact on their mental development resulting in a calm and composed character which is an essential quality if they serve in official ceremonies or in the police force in the contemporary urban traffic. Their composed character is also crucial when they are used for therapeutic purposes.