



Newsletter January 2007

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From the Hot Seat

I went to the Royal Show in Christchurch this week on a cool but sunny morning to see the Connemara Classes. There was an excellent turn out of Pure and Partbreds. The ponies were very well presented. Our breed bloodlines were well represented and a good example of what we have and without exception a great credit to the breed and handlers.

The breeding season is upon us and I have exciting reports of foals on the ground.

I saw Anne Ryan this week, Anne has recently returned from a visit to her family in Ireland. Anne was our delegate to the ICCPS meeting in Clifden. Her report in this Newsletter will let you know more about what is going on in the wider Connemara community. She brought back the great news that the Irish CPBS President is coming over to Australia and possibly New Zealand sometime in May 2007. Tom is a well travelled and experienced inspector. This is great news for our society. I hope we can organise some Inspections and seminars in the North and South Island, say Auckland (north or south of), Massey, Christchurch and Invercargill, ideally in areas where there is the biggest concentration of ponies. The venues could be people's studs or halls. It would be great, no it is important to hear of ideas, beds, venues, numbers, transport etc., from our members so that we can gain as much as possible from his visit. Please contact any committee member with any ideas for a chat or to show expressions of interest. I know it is only November but time flies and we do not want to end up with a pressure cooker situation like the proposed Auckland rugby stadium. There is the Travel fund generously donated by Dr Len & Colleen Thompson for this purpose to cover his travel expenses.

This is probably an appropriate time to talk about breeding. Over the last few years the realization of our small breeding pool has become apparent to many members. With the improvement in internet communication, horse AI and transport there has been quite a flurry of activity. Some new stallions and mares have been brought in from Australia. Earlier others have imported semen. The intention to import semen appears to be a road travelled by many of us. The enquiries seem to hum along nicely until it comes to meeting our MAF frozen equine semen importation rules. Their requirements that the stallion has to be in quarantine for a time starts to put too much pressure on the stallion owner and prospective semen buyer. The added unknown costs involved cause the idea to grind to a halt. It is common knowledge, particularly since the Feely Report, that many bloodlines have been over used. Currently there is great interest world wide as to how to widen our stallion usage by not over using 'popular sires' as has been the trend. Also some owners are testing for the crème gene in an effort to minimize breeding blue eyed creams.

Some members, myself included, looked into and bought a data base program, Breedmate, with the thought it could be used by the society. Over the past 2 yrs the Registrar entered considerable data so our pony's pedigrees can be looked at. Every attempt has been made to ensure it is accurate, I don't think anyone would guarantee that it is 100%. The results confirmed what was already suspected, we have a very small genetic base.

There seem to be issues with the transfer of the program to other computers. We also need to decide who owns the data. Breedmate is a useful tool but not a registration system. We would always have to back the computer up with our current manual system, which works very well. Quite honestly with the number of ponies here one has to ask if the society would get any real value from it. A more suitable program may be available. If anyone knows of one, the committee is open to any ideas. The ICCPS is compiling a data base.

Tom MacLochlainn will be able to give us ideas of where the Irish are going and perhaps give us useful advice on our bloodlines. If you would like the extended Feely report which covers NZ Connemara characteristics please let me know as it is on disc, owing to poor internet connections perhaps it would be best to send me a disc or CD and I can copy it for you.

At our meeting of September 22nd the committee made an amendment to the DNA ruling: "That all purebred fillies be DNA recorded by six months of age, at the same time as branding". Breeders please apply to the Registrar for sample DNA envelopes and branding notification forms. The DNA cost is \$110, Cheque to CPSNZ Inc.

We are trying to locate the society's 2 clover fire brands, if anyone knows where they are could you please let a committee member know.

Unfortunately the very useful tool of communication, the email, has become very unreliable over the past few months. The Committee is experiencing what can only be described as an erratic and unreliable delivery of our emails. So if you have not received answers you may have to revert to old fashioned methods.

I would like to wish you all well for the summer season, those with foals yet to come good luck and for the one on the ground, great news. Lets all enjoy our Connemaras and meeting like minded people.

Tony Turner.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Report From Anne Ryan</i> <i>Our Patron and Delegate to the ICCPS</i></p>

How lucky I am to have family living in Ireland and to be able to get back to visit them often and so keep up my very great interest in the Connemara pony.

I was able to go to Dublin horse Show and watched the Connemara classes on my first day. Some lovely mares in the six year old and over class and the judges finally pulled them in their order and then put the 1st and 2nd in front and took a long time to make up their minds- finally reversing the order- I think I agreed with them. Nine stallions came forward to be judged and I really did not agree with their choice of the winner. He is seventeen years old recently imported from Sweden. Janns has no middle and I thought he looked like a sausage! It will be interesting to see how his progeny conform.

Clifden late in August was the usual great gathering of Connemara enthusiasts from around the world. Five of us stay in a quite unique B&B one from Ireland one from England two from Australia and myself. Paddy gives us such a breakfast of fruit, cereals scrambled eggs and smoked salmon it sees us thru' the whole day!

Tuesday was the International get together-Hours were spent on EU groups and their objections to Irish Stud Book rules as drafted and I hope by now it has been sorted.

The data base progress was presented and a discussion followed and it is hoped by 2007 much will be finalised and introduction of member usage will be indicated. That evening Ireland hosted the usual evening party at the Abbey Glen Hotel and a great gathering of international friends.

On Wednesday I went to a video presentation on the Irish Pony. I missed the parade of horse and pony drawn vehicles- all Connemaras- through the streets of Clifden. Instead I went to see a friend at Kylemore Abbey. I had hoped to walk around the famous gardens but when I

saw about ten tour buses and about 300 cars I changed my mind! In the evening some of us had our usual party taking Pat Lyne out for dinner. Afterwards we went to the Station Hotel for the launching of Pat's book 'As I see it' How lucky the ponies are to have Pat chronicle all their family blood lines- long may she continue to write.

An early start on Thursday and us early birds waited patiently for the gate to open and rush to get our favoured ring side board seat which we sat on from 8.30am till 7pm.! Huge crowds right round the large ring. Some classes had eighteen entries and the judges really had busy and exhausting day. Fortunately the day stayed fine. The older mare classes a delight to watch, Connemaras do need time to mature. I was delighted Coosheen Breeze- out of my Scarteen Minstral- and two progeny won the Progeny class. Minstral also has a stallion standing in Ireland, Coosheen Storm Boy- and another stallion standing in Sweden so I feel very proud.

The world societies have been so fortunate to have John Tennent as chairman, without his enthusiasm and guidance we'd all be just sitting on a fence while the Irish society tried to make up its mind and the EU. Societies being ruled by Brussels make more problems. John has fairness and balance and I hope whoever takes over from him next year will be as strong and fair-minded.

May I wish all New Zealand Connemara owners and breeders, luck, success and happiness with their ponies for the coming year.

Anne Ryan.

Show Results

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND SHOW

In Hand Connemara Pony - Judge: Jerome Harforth, UK

Best Presented Connemara and Handler, 25% or more (11): Wembleybrook Stud - P & G Mullen - Bunratty Chieftain S13 1, Rodney Newman - Glenmay Levi PG184 2, Susan Falconer - Glenardon Inishmore PG 165 3.

Purebred Connemara, 3 years and over (5): Sheila Ramsay - Bunratty Bridgette M66 1, Wembleybrook Stud - P & G Mullen - Bunratty Chieftain 2, Virginia Saunders - Ridgeway Vision M13 3.

- Champion Purebred Connemara: Sheila Ramsay - Bunratty Bridgette M66.
- Reserve Champion Purebred Connemara: Wembleybrook Stud - P & G Mullen - Bunratty Chieftain S13.

Partbred Connemara, 25% or more, 3 years & over. (5): Susan Falconer - Glenardon Inishmore PG 165 1, Bell Vue Lodge Stud/C McGregor-Oakley - Aquila Troy r. Miss Courtney McGregor 2, Sarah Garrett- Burke - Tallyho Merlin 171 3.

- Champion Partbred Connemara: Susan Falconer - Glenardon Inishmore PG 165.
- Reserve Champion Partbred Connemara: Bell Vue Lodge Stud/C McGregor-Oakley - Aquila Troy r. Miss Courtney McGregor.

Supreme Connemara Exhibit: Susan Falconer - Glenardon Inishmore

RAS Gold Medal: Susan Falconer - Glenardon Inishmore



Champion Partbred and Supreme Connemara Exhibit, Glenardon Inishmore (photo courtesy of Tony Turner)



Champion Purebred Connemara – Bunratty Bridgette (photo courtesy of Tony Turner)

Congratulations to Tania Taylor for her successes in elementary dressage on Hollywood Taylormade.

Congratulations also to Poppy Stowell and Timaunga Skylark for completing the Springston Trophy on their dressage score, and helping their Waihora team finish in a creditable 16th place.

Congratulations also to Val Taylor. Danesmead Caracciola had a very successful time at the 2006 North Island All-Breeds In-hand Horse Show, first taking the stallion or gelding 4 years and over, the Best of Breed, the Champion Adult Purebred Native Pony, and finally taking the Grand Champion Native Pony title!

Battle of the Breeds – Spruce Meadows

In September 2006, 'Team Connemara' competed against 12 other breeds to take home the champion title of the Telus Battle of the Breeds at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Canada. The Battle of the Breeds competition is unique in that only a Breed association can enter a team - individual entries are not accepted. For each breed, a team of four is chosen to compete. Two ponies have to compete in each of a variety of events, and the scores of each pony are combined. Team Connemara placed 5th in the Compulsory (similar to dressage), second in the Jeopardy Jumping, 1st in the Precision Driving, 2nd in the Barrel Racing, and 5th in the Trail event. Other breeds represented included Appaloosas, Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds and Shetland Ponies! The Connemara's have competed admirably for a number of years, previously having placed twice as Reserve Champions.

The winning team consisted of:

Bien Mallin's Rory O'Sullivan (stallion), owned by M & M Connemaras, ridden by Chelsea MacNeil
Hillside Sassafras (mare), owned by M & M Connemaras, ridden Brian Morten
Rills Carrick Fergus (gelding), owned by Eloden Connemaras, ridden by Elsie Priddy
Avenn's Airrin Tara (mare), owned by Devon Ridge Connemaras, driven by Marsoe La Rouseau

CPBS President Visit

As some of you may already be aware, the CPBS President Tomas MacLochlainn, looks set to come out to Australia in May next year. The CPSBA has asked if New Zealand would like to 'share' this visit, and Tom has indicated that he would be quite happy to come to NZ in April to give clinics, inspect ponies or help in any way. The CPSNZ has money invested from a past generous donation for such a visit as this, which could be used to share the international travel expenses with Australia. The current proposal is for Tom to be in NZ 10 days during April and then go to Australia. As his time here is limited, the current timetable has him arriving in Auckland and progressively travelling south to Invercargill and holding educational forums at venues wherever the most ponies/members are. People could join in at any stage either with ponies at their nearest venue or without wherever they wish.

This visit is still in the planning phase, and is not yet confirmed but we need to think about it now in order to get the most out of the visit for our members the ponies and the society. Any ideas, offers of hospitality, drivers, ponies for inspection or available for a clinic, etc are welcome, but time is of the essence, so please get in touch with Tony Turner ASAP.

The Connemara Colour Conundrum – or 'What colour is your grey pony?'

So you have grey mare, and you breed her to a grey stallion – imagine your surprise when your long awaited foal is a Blue Eyed Cream! How did it happen? Even though both parents appeared grey, they both carried a single copy of a dilution factor - the Crème gene - that produces buckskins and palominos. When two 'dilute' ponies are bred together, there is a 1 in 4 chance of them producing a 'double dilute', or Blue Eyed Cream (BEC) foal.

The genetic factor at work behind the production of BEC's is not rocket science, yet these basic principles do not seem to be understood by the majority of the breeders (and indeed

some veterinary professionals). Coat colour is determined by the genes that each individual pony inherits from its parents; each parent passes to the progeny one copy of a base colour, and one copy of any modifying factors it may carry.

Base colour - Very simplistically, there are two basic coat colours: Black which gives rise to black and dark brown, and Red which is the base of all the chestnut and bay variations. All the other colours and coat patterns which we see, are built upon these base colours.

Modifying factors - There are many different colour modifiers which influence the final colour and markings. The modifiers which concern us here are the Crème gene (Cr) and the Grey gene (Gr)

(There is a **LOT** more than this involved in horse colour genetics in general; if you want in-depth information, there are a number of very authoritative websites available on the internet, and many good books in the library)

In Ireland, the preferred colour for the Connemara Pony is grey or dun (buckskin). As the grey modifying gene is a dominant gene, the result is that the majority of our ponies are grey. The Connemara Ponies called dun in Ireland are in reality buckskin. This difference is not just a matter of semantics - they are different genes that act differently, and only the Crème gene will produce a BEC. The (Gr) grey and the (Cr) crème genes work in a different manner:

Grey (Gr) is NOT a colour, it is a modifying gene which acts in the manner of throwing a blanket over the birth coat colour to hide it. The Gr, is dominant: if inherited HAS to be expressed – if the individual has inherited the Gr gene, it will turn grey as it matures. Conversely an individual without a grey gene cannot turn grey. A horse with two Grey genes will ALWAYS produce offspring that go grey. No pony is born grey – it goes grey. It may be born with obvious signs that it is going to grey out, but that is not the birth coat colour.

Crème (Cr) modifies the red base colour of bay and chestnut, diluting the colour to produce buckskin and palomino respectively. The much maligned BEC is the result of two parents both giving the Cr gene to the progeny – this results in the DOUBLE dilution of the base coat colour. BEC stallions in other breeds are popular because they will always pass on a copy of the Cr gene to their offspring, and hence will reliably produce buckskin and palomino foals (single dilute mares and stallions only have a 50% chance of passing the gene on to their foals – BEC's pass this gene on to 100% of their offspring). 'Smokey Black' is a dilute colour that is particularly hard to pick. The Crème dilution does not dilute the black part of the coat, only the red, and the Crème not be obvious in the darker base coat. There are subtle signs of Smokey Black, such as a lighter eye colour, that may give a clue that the pony is a dilute, but most breeders are not even aware this colour exists, never mind have the confidence to make a call on whether their pony has inherited the Crème gene.

Some of the stallions brought into New Zealand are known to have carried the Crème gene:

Chiltern Sunsilks was a dilute grey. He was still noticeably buckskin in colour when he was imported from the UK as a youngster. Unfortunately most of his grey progeny are recorded with no birth coat colour listed, but Sunsilks has left a number of purebred bay offspring, plus one buckskin, so only carried a single copy of the grey gene.

Glenormiston Jasper is also a dilute grey. Jasper appeared to be black at birth, and was sold to a breeder wanting a non-dilute colt. He later produced a BEC foal to a dilute mare – a classic example of a 'Smokey Black' birthcoat fooling an experienced breeder! Jasper has also left non-grey offspring, so only carried a single grey gene.

Capparis Casanova is a recent import, that like the two stallions above, is known to be a dilute grey. Casanova was born palomino, and also only carries a single grey gene.

Looking through the studbooks to see the recorded colour of their progeny gives clues about the other stallions:

Connemara Park Roy was grey, and all his purebred progeny were grey (hardly surprising as all the purebred mares to whom he was bred were also grey). A large percentage of Roy's crossbred progeny are recorded as being non-grey, therefore Roy himself carried only one copy of the Gr modifying gene. Roy's birth coat colour is not recorded, but perusal of the part bred records throws up some interesting information - a BEC is registered. If this breeding is correct, then Roy also had to be carrying the Cr gene.

Connemara Park Michael appears to have carried a single Gr gene, and was non-dilute, as all his progeny are listed as being grey, black, brown, or chestnut.

Barwidgee Erriff also appears to have carried a single Gr gene and been non-dilute. Of all his pure and part-bred progeny listed in the Part bred Register under the Galway prefix, only one is recorded as being dilute (which in this case is likely to have come from the dam).

Canningvale Irish Dusk left a high percentage of geldings, and there are not many mares of breeding age to track. All his progeny are recorded as being grey, and he is likely to have been non-dilute and had two copies of the Grey gene.

Ganty Champ left a number of non-grey progeny to grey mares, including a number of chestnuts – again, he is likely to have carried a single Gr gene and been non-dilute.

At present Blue Eyed Cream ponies are not eligible for registration in the New Zealand Connemara Pony Stud Book, and as a result these ponies are 'lost' to the gene pool. New Zealand has the potential to produce many BEC's in the Connemara Pony because of a number of reasons:

- We have a high proportion of grey Connemara ponies hiding the Crème gene
- The early days of recording was done in Australia where they still do not require the birth coat colour to be recorded on the adult registration papers (as a result the birth coat colour of many of our foundation ponies is not and never has been available to us in New Zealand)
- Although the birth coat colour IS asked for in New Zealand registrations, the tendency is still for people to record 'grey'
- At least some of the founding stallions imported into New Zealand were dilute greys - that is, they had a dilute birth coat that later greyed out

On top of that, the colour of a foal may be very misleading – not all 'dun' looking ponies may carry the Crème gene (a pale muzzle and flanks on a bay pony may be due to other genetic factors). Some black/brown looking foals may in fact be 'Smokey Black', and some palomino foals are also born with blue eyes that darken within a few weeks.

As long as BEC's remain an unregistrable liability, breeders who wish to avoid the possibility of producing a BEC foal should ensure that they know what colour their ponies actually are. However, colour may not be your most important consideration when breeding – if Pat Lyne had been excessively concerned about the possibility of breeding more BEC's, she would not have continued breeding Artic Moon to Island Duke, and the global Connemara population (including New Zealand) would not have had the influence of these 'Chiltern' ponies.

If you are concerned or curious about the true colour of your pony, the Crème gene can be tested for (much like the DNA testing for parentage, it simply requires a sample of mane

hair). Currently this is not done in New Zealand and hair has to be sent to overseas laboratories, but this is likely to change in the near future.

Sheila Ramsay, Liz Gillespie

Vale Waterfall Dan

Our sympathies go out to Tania Taylor over the sudden and unexpected loss of the Society stallion Waterfall Dan. Dan was the only stallion son of New Zealand's first Connemara stallion Connemara Park Roy, and was out of the last of the imported Blandings mares, Blandings Kimberly. To date, he has left very few purebred foals, and no son to carry on this line.

Website

Hopefully the CPSNZ website is about to be revamped. Members are welcome to submit pictures, news items etc. for the website. Penny Mahy is our web 'officer', so please direct any suggestions or corrections you have directly to her.

Studbook Rule Changes

Breeders should note that now all purebred fillies, born after 1st August 2006 and eligible for entry into the Studbook, must be DNA tested by 6 months of age.

This change was brought about as the result of a recent 'anomaly' where a pony's recorded breeding did not match its DNA profile. If you are considering buying a pony for breeding, it may be prudent check if the pony has been parentage tested. The registrar holds records of all ponies that have been DNA tested, and if has not had its breeding confirmed it may be a good idea have this done before purchase – accidents can and do happen! Please note that all sales are private and not the responsibility of the society.

Change of Registrar

Phoebe Turner has resigned as the CPSNZ Registrar – thank you Phoebe for all your hard work in this position. Conveniently for everyone (as we are now well into the stud and show season) Bridget Turner has agreed to take over the role. Even though Bridget knows her way around the workings of the CPSNZ, please be patient as she comes to grips with the intricacies her new role.

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From the Editors Desk

By now summer seems to have finally arrived to most of the country. Foals are on the ground, mares are being bred, and the show season is in full swing, so I won't occupy any more of your valuable time with polite niceties!

I have heard a second-hand rumour that some of you may not have received the last (August) newsletter. If you don't have a copy, please drop me a line and I will put another one in the post ASAP.

