

2008 News

Battle of the Breeds 2008

We had a good team of ponies and rider/drivers this year, but good luck was not with us, and we finished 5th overall out of 14 teams. The mule team was in a much deserved 1st place, with the next half dozen teams being only points apart. Each team has a maximum of 4 competitors, of which 2 have to be in each of the 5 events. Our team was:

Brian Morton - Bien Mallins Rory O'Sullivan
Jumping, obstacle driving, barrel racing & trail

Melonie White - Balius Cardea
Compulsory skills & obstacle driving

Erin Eacrett - Avenns Cairbre McCarthy "Peso"
Compulsory skills & jumping

Caitlin McEvoy - Rills Carrick Fergus
Barrel racing & trail

The first competition was compulsory skills with a driven dressage test where at the last halt Melonie had a rein hook under the point of the shaft which distracted Cardea. "Peso" was very tense for Erin and did not score well, so we were not in the ribbons.

The jumping competition in the afternoon went much better. The organizers had made somewhat of an error having the jeopardy jump too high (?4ft) and only 4 of the 28 competitors attempted it. Erin was first to go on "Peso" and declined the jeopardy. Brian was very confident on Rory and after a clear round took the jeopardy in style, being only one of two competitors to clear it. At 13.2 hh Rory was one of the smallest horses in this competition, and the crowd responded accordingly! We placed 2nd behind the Thoroughbreds who had also cleared the last fence.

On Friday there was good crowd to watch the obstacle driving. This was a very difficult course with a water obstacle (which Cardea jumped!), a ditch, a compulsory 3 second halt and a painted circle to be straddled by the wheels. Both Cardea and Rory went well and Connemaras finished 5th.

Barrel racing is always a popular event, and there was a big crowd despite cold and rain. Good times in the first run put our team of Rory and Fergus in the top 6 run-off. Unfortunately Fergus and Caitlin had a barrel down which added 5 seconds to their score, and left us in 6th place.

The trail class on Saturday morning is always very early, but there was a good crowd at the ring-side. There were several new obstacles and there again the organizers had made a very difficult choice of the jeopardy with trotting rails. Only those who had nothing to loose attempted this win/lose 100 points obstacle. Rory and Fergus both had quite good scores, but it is hard to beat the Mules and Quarter Horses at this game and we placed 6th.

Bridget Wingate
Team Captain

News from Nancy Page in Ontario

Nancy has three part bred Connemaras by Maplehurst Michael MacDaire. Elphin Callisto and Elphin Brynmor are active in the dressage world and here are photos of Nancy riding Callisto and one of Bryelle Steffen riding Brynmore in 2007. Nancy and Callisto were riding at Training Level and had no problem keeping up with the warm bloods.

They are putting time and money into training this year and have ridden in clinics with John MacPherson and Gillian Sutherland. They hope to make their First Level debut at a Gold Show in early September. Elphin Andromeda had nasty fracture of her elbow a few years ago and is living a life of leisure on the farm. Her job is to make sure the old TB mares mind their manners!



Canadian Connemara Pony Society: 2008 AGM and Inspections

On Friday, July 25 we held our third AGM and our first inspections using our own CCPS program. This took place at M&M Farms in Langley, BC, thanks to the generosity of Melanie White.

We were very fortunate to have as our senior inspector Philip Scott, who had come from Ireland to judge the Irish Extravaganza and had agreed to take part in our inspections. This was the first time we had used the CCPS inspection program so it was instructive to see how it worked and have Philip's comments as well. Margot Watson and I completed the inspection team and Susan MacDougall was a trainee inspector.

We inspected nine ponies in all, including two stallions, some of which had come from as far as Salt Spring Island and Vancouver Island. Many thanks to the owners for supporting the program and presenting such well-prepared ponies. It makes our job inspecting so much easier when the ponies are well mannered and well turned out.

The inspection team quickly got used to the new program and under Philip's skilled guidance we had completed the inspection by early afternoon, including a discussion of each

pony after inspection. Again, I would like to thank the owners for allowing us to discuss their ponies in front of our audience as this made it a very good educational experience for all. Philip was very helpful and knowledgeable in discussing the finer points of conformation and type and I think the inspection team gained useful information.

I hope to be able to get a complete list of all inspected and approved ponies in Canada, both ACPS and CCPS, on the web page shortly.

After a quick break we adjourned to Melanie's house for lunch and the AGM. Ten members were able to attend the meeting, although the number fluctuated a little as people were busy preparing ponies for the show the next day. We invited Philip to join us and enjoyed some interesting comments from him on inspections and showing as well as an offer to come again next year. This meeting was a consolidation of the work that has been going on in committees this year. We approved the inspection program.

Doris Jacobi presented the Awards program which has been put together with the help of Nancy Page and myself. Presentations were made for the 2007 year to Balius Cardea for the Devonridge Purebred of the year, and the Half-Bred trophy was awarded to W.C. Celtic Legacy. Rills Carrick Fergus won the Lynfield's MacCarthy western award which is for western riding events in the Prairies region. We discussed an awards program for Hall of Fame Awards and struck a committee to look into finding donors and sponsors and writing criteria.

We had an interesting discussion on our newsletter and magazine. Rick Doner will be bringing out a fall edition of the newsletter again, this time mainly in black and white and distributed to members only. We discussed the importance of a printed newsletter as some members do not have email access or use it regularly. Jocelyn Davies suggested that we should look into the possibility of producing an annual colour magazine reporting on the achievements of our ponies over the year. Michael and Lesley Colgan from Salt Spring Island have experience in producing this sort of magazine and have volunteered to look into sponsorship, advertising and costs.

We approved the new webpage policy and the appointment of Tracy Dopko as webmaster. I hope you noticed the up-dated web page and will contribute news to Penny Huggons and Chris Carey for our new farm-news page.

Margot gave us a report of our financial situation and while we are still comfortably in the black, we decided we should raise our membership fees and some of our registration fees. While CLRC have done a wonderful job of getting our registry started and collecting our membership, we do pay for this work. If we are to have money to finance other programs for the society, we decided that, as our fees were some of the lowest of societies with CLRC, we should make some changes. The new fee schedule will be put on the web page shortly but the new fees don't come into operation until January 2009 so get your 2008 registrations in on time. In 2008 CLRC has so far registered 39 purebred ponies and 30 half-breds and there were 21 transfers.

Finally, our 2009 AGM will be in Alberta. It was suggested that we hold it in September in Calgary in conjunction with Spruce Meadows and the Battle of the Breeds. We could also hold another inspection in Calgary and/or Edmonton if we have sufficient ponies nominated. The idea of bringing another Irish inspector over to work with us was discussed but this will depend on the number of ponies to be inspected and the costs. The Irish have strongly suggested that we should use international inspectors in our program for at least a couple of years to insure we maintain correct standards and if we can manage to bring someone over again, we would also hold a clinic on Connemara type, conformation, breeding, and history.

I would like to thank all our members in BC for doing such a good job hosting the meeting and inspections and for all the people who traveled to make both these events possible. It is a great idea to hold the meeting in conjunction with other pony-related activities although it does make for a lot of work for the hosting region.

The Executive for 2008 is President – Heather Sherratt, V.P. – Bridget Wingate, Secretary – Jocelyn Davies and Treasurer – Margot Watson.

Heather Sherratt



Mares passed:

Sullivan's Shanna
Bien Mallin's Rory O'Sullivan x Lasrachai's Blue Shannon
Birthdate 27/06/05

Awley Loura O'Sullivan
Bien Mallin's Rory O'Sullivan x M&M's Toura Loura Lally
Birthdate 03/26/06

M&M's Gracie McFadden
Bien Mallin's Silver Blaze x Drogheda Heather Queen
Birthdate 4/29/06

Devon Ridge Fantasia
Bantry Bay's Dillon x Avenns Golden Legacy
Birthdate 05/27/04

Rill's Shea Mor
Fairhill Hawk x Rills Kelpie
Birthdate 05/27/2005

Avenns Mairi Leggs
Avenns Kimble Wind x Bar S Arrin Grey
Birthdate 05/14/2004

Stallion passed:

Blennerhassett Sir Lancelot
Fairhill Hawk x Erin Meadows Lexilip
Birthdate 06/10/05

Philip Scott – Clinician, Inspector and Judge

The Irish Horse Extravaganza has been very fortunate to have the services of Philip Scott as judge for their show. Philip is not only an inspector for the CPBS but a judge and inspector of Irish Draught and Irish Sport Horses. Himself a top competitor in eventing, dressage and in hand showing, he has judged in Ireland, France and England, including the Horse of the Year Show, Hickstead and the British Sport Horse Show. We were very lucky to have Philip as senior inspector at our first CCPS program inspections and the judge of in hand and performance classes at the Extravaganza.

After judging in hand all day, Philip conducted a fascinating clinic on in hand showing and conformation before our chicken dinner. Unfortunately Philip's DVD did not like North American computers so we had to make do with still photographs and Philip's personal demonstrations.

He started with a conformation discussion of what to look for and what is acceptable in judging breed conformation classes. One of the points that he emphasized, both in the clinic and at the inspection, is that the horse should look all of a piece. It is easy to get so carried away with the details of conformation that one forgets to look at the overall picture and to ensure that all the pieces fit to make a horse that is overall well balanced as well as correct. We were lucky that a brave owner had let us use a horse that did not have perfect conformation so Philip could point out the good and bad features. Another thing he emphasized was the importance of noting the good points as well as looking for faults. Again this was important in our inspections the day before.

Philip then went on to demonstrate techniques in presentation and how important that can be to the final placing of a pony. Using a Connemara this time, he showed us how to train a pony to walk and trot forward with impulsion and how to walk it forward into a correct stance. It was amazing the difference professional presentation can make and easy to see how that could move a pony up a place or two.

Then it was turn out and how to make the most of your pony by careful grooming and presentation. He expects all ponies older than yearlings to be shown in bits, either with bridle or with the show halters seen in England and Europe. He suggested rather than reins, to use a lead shank with the chain run through the bit. This gives more control and with skill can make the pony present itself better as well as looking neat.

As for trimming native ponies, Philip told an anecdote of one pony he had that was never doing as well as he should in in-hand classes when shown with a long flowing mane, full feathers and no facial clipping. After tidying the mane to a length of about 6-8 inches, discreetly trimming the feathers to show off the good fetlocks rather than hiding them, and again discreet trimming of beard and whiskers to show off the lines of his head, the pony started to consistently win. He does not advocate showing native ponies completely clipped and trimmed with severely pulled manes, but suggests that they should be groomed and trimmed to allow the judge to see their good points which can be hidden by too much mane. Tails should be tidily banged and again discreetly tidied to show off good hind quarters.

Judging, Philip maintains that one should spend an equal amount of time on every competitor and give them the chance to show their pony's attributes. In his classes, every pony was stood up individually for the judge, walked out and trotted back. Some of the larger classes took time, but his attention to each pony was obvious. He also says that a good judge never touches a pony while judging. He should be able to assess everything by viewing from a distance from all angles. Movement is important as was pointed out in his clinic, and the pony should be trained to show off a good free trot and forward walk.

The Extravaganza finished on Sunday with the performance classes, again judged by Philip. In the morning the flat classes were conducted much the same as the in hand classes the day before, with every pony giving a short individual show under saddle. After lunch it was jumping, culminating in the Gamblers' Choice class at 4ft. Each jump had a point value and riders had a set time to jump as many fences as they could, collecting points. Any fence could be jumped a maximum of twice, in either direction and there was a jeopardy jump of two vertical rails with a value of 200 points. A rider could choose whether to jump this at the end of his round – clear and you won 200 points, knock down and you lost 200 points.

Tension rose as the two Connemaras, Hillside Sassafrass and Rory O'Sullivan competed against the much larger Irish Sport horses. Ponies do have the advantage of being able to turn much faster than the bigger horses and Rory and Sassie made full use of this. And both cleared the Jeopardy fence with Rory coming in first and Sassie second.

CCPS Inspection Program – Premiums and Elites

The CCPS Inspection Program was passed at the 2008 AGM and we held our first inspections using this program the same day under the senior inspector, Philip Scott from Ireland. Details of the inspection program can be found on the website but I would like to mention two parts of the program that will be new to most members.

We have established a premium status for mares who score 75% or higher at their inspection. A mare has to be at least five years of age to gain a premium as we consider she should be mature at that age. Ponies that have passed inspection at ages two to four years can be represented for a premium after the age of five.

The pass mark for stallions is 75% and after considerable discussion we decided not to institute a premium program for stallions. Interestingly, the CPBS has recently started a program for premium stallions but Philip Scott said that many stallion owners are very reluctant to put their ponies up for a premium in case they do not make the grade. This reinforced our decision that once a stallion has passed inspection he should be considered of a high enough standard to improve or maintain the quality and type of ponies.

We have also instituted a new concept in the Elite Program which includes performance and progeny requirements. All stallions that have passed inspection are eligible for the program as are premium mares. For details of the requirements, refer to the inspection program on the webpage.

The performance requirements are for any discipline and points accumulated in the Achievement Awards Program can be used, as can results from any shows, tabulated using the Achievement Awards system. Stallions have to accumulate more points than mares as they have more opportunity to compete than a mare who also has to produce foals. The progeny requirements are also higher for stallions than mares as they can produce more

offspring in a lifetime. Offspring have to be purebred and have passed inspection to ensure that we are rewarding quality rather than just quantity.

Inspections are not mandatory and neither are the premium or elite programs. They are designed to encourage breeders to maintain the breed standard and high-quality ponies and at the same time to promote the breed through open competition. All ponies already passed under the ACPS program will be grandfathered into our program, including premium mares.

Applications for consideration for elite status should be sent to the Chair of the Inspections Committee and will be considered by the committee as a whole.