

NOVEMBER NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

A quote from the Australian Anzac ode goes *age shall not weary them nor the years condemn* and from the news this month from Australia, this could apply to the Connemara Pony. Read on!

The “Jo Heard” Memorial trophy for 2009 was given to one of Joe’s home bred ponies – **Ballantrae Turkish Delight**. The story of the acquisition of and the working with this pony by its present owner is delightful. The trophy is decided on the Connemara Pony that is “out doing”. Not necessarily winning ribbons but out doing whatever it is that shows the Connemara pony is capable of doing better than most other ponies! A broad spectrum, but one that Jo always bred her ponies to achieve.

Turkish Delight, or “Star” as he is known at home, was first noticed at a Horse Sale on the River Murray in March 2004 by Nicole Salisbury. Catalogued as “black gelding, white star, done stock work, good jumper, suite pony club, nice type, 11yr, and 14.2hh”, Star took the eye and was purchased by Nicole’s parents that “Pony Club type” would be correct. There was no indication as to breed, or type.

It soon became evident that the previous owner had been a bully and had belted Star frequently and consistently. He had a fear of everything! Some tender loving care soon had Star beginning to accept the new environment and he went to pony Club a few times, then in May 2004, he went to his first Pony Club Gymkhana. To the surprise of all, including his new owner, he came home with 3 reserve Champions, 5 firsts, 2 seconds, 3 thirds and a first in Jumping. All of this from a pony that was initially scared of everything from his previous treatment and had been in work with the Salisbury family for just 2 months. TLC really worked.

Some little time later Nicole and her mother went riding in the bush – and got well and truly lost. The Australian bush can be very tricky in many areas if you are not “Bush orientated”. Good common sense saw Star given his head and he turned, took a course that he knew was to home although it went down steep hills, huge rocks protruding etc. but he knew and soon familiar sights were noticed and home became evident.



At one show he was taken to a person stated that he was a New Forest Pony and should be registered as such. Shortly after this event the Secretary of the CPBSA, Vicki Plummer was in touch with the Salisbury family to say that she believed that Star was in fact a Connemara Pony. Records were checked, previous recorded owners contacted and finally Star was found to be Ballantrae Turkish Delight. Great joy for Nicole as she now knew what a gem she had been riding and could now see the reasons for the qualities in her new pony! She owned a Connemara.

Nicole cannot name all that Star has done and won with her as rider. Suffice to say that mum has made five rugs of the ribbons that have been won at varying disciplines. Star now trusts Nicole with everything; he has got over the fear etc. Those who saw him in the early days cannot believe the difference in the Pony and the brilliance that he is showing with the questions “is this the same pony that you had previously?”

In Nicole’s words: “Star has truly helped me find my favourite breed of horse. I will always know that you cannot beat a Connemara”. Star is now 15 years of age and he is really just now finding his rhythm.

To continue with the theme “Age shall not weary them” come the story of **Binnowie Mandolin** from Sally Weiss. After purchasing Mandolin, an out of work 12 year old with limited education and no training in dressage just over 12 months ago he has had a huge change of pace. He is successfully competing in Pony Club Dressage, consistently scoring top in preliminary and has placed 5TH AT State Championships. He has had numerous top placings at EFA Pony Dressage at 2** level. Mandolin is not limited to Dressage having been placed 2nd at EFA Jnr. Preliminary ODE events, 80cm Pony Club Combined training to State level and 90cm Interschool Show Jumping.



Mandolin being a Connemara, would do anything for food, hence teaching him to bow for presentations was really quite simple – once a carrot was introduced. Sally’s own words say it all: “Binnowie Mandolin has been our introduction to Connemara Ponies and this has been an absolute delight!”

What those with Connemara ponies already know – The Connemara pony is always an absolute delight and they do really just keep on keeping on!



News from South Australia again centres on the “Mature” Connemara.

Mayo Mary has been show jumping for a number of years but indicated that enough was enough. Yet, she still wanted to “do things” so her owner/rider entered her, at the age of 14 years, in her first ODE. I actually saw this event and was surprised to see Mary on course. She performed extremely well on an uphill, twisting course that ran through a steep dry creek bed with several fences set precariously on the brink of the uphill cut of the creek bed. At one fence that was built on a curve Mary decided that she did not have enough room and had a stop. The only one for the course and that fault was that of the rider. The combination at its first event finished midfield but the Connemara was noticed and recognised for all of those traits that we know the Connemara to have.

Yet another mature Connemara **Newlands Winsome** (Newlands Gideon x Wychwood Fairy Wren) is showing the true Connemara Colours. Newlands Winsome is owned by a mature aged lady and the combination attend "Riding club and potter around". (Owner's words)



At one meeting a ridden Dressage test to music was convened. Owner Helen decided that she and Winsome would have a go, "just for the hell of it!" First time ever at dressage! Music was chosen – *This could be the last* by John Farnham (perhaps appropriate at that time) and the tune had a firm 1-2 beat rhythm and so began the training. The event time came and perhaps it was the atmosphere – perhaps it was the music – perhaps the

mare understood the feelings of her rider – whatever it was – Winsome powered on, picked up the beat with intelligence, worked to perfection and to the great excitement of all, Winsome and Helen won the event by a mile!

Once again those wonderful traits of the Connemara Pony came to the fore. Whilst Winsome is not considered "aged" in the true sense of the opening adage, the combination fits in as Helen said to me when talking about the event – "I fit in to your introduction, I have the age and it does weary me at times – but the mare took it in her stride and really excelled beyond belief".

News from Hobart

Glenormiston Benbaun was awarded Champion Australian pony, reserve Saddle pony and Supreme Australian Pony at the Hobart Royal Agricultural Show 2009. Do not be misled by the awards. In Australia, because of the lack of numbers at many shows, ponies are collectively entered in classes. For Instance the "Australian" pony could have Welsh, Connemara, Australian, New Forest, Shetland, Dartmoor etc. ponies entered in the one class called "Australian" Pony. Even greater the win varying breeds competing.

News from New South Wales

From NSW comes the news that **Glenormiston Bartle** was awarded the Supreme Champion ribbon at the Castle Hill show in March 2009. Glenormiston Stud yet again in the news!

- Finally a consignment of frozen semen from **Spinway Comet** is now available to owners and breeders of Connemara Ponies in Australia. In due course, this service will form part of the liaison between the Charles Sturt University and the CPBSA.

What a wonderful Pony the Connemara Pony is!!!