

Finnish Connemara Pony Society – 25 years in 2009

The Finnish Connemara Pony Society is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the founding of the society in 1984. The number of Connemara ponies has grown steadily, and it is estimated that there are about 600 pure bred ponies in Finland today. In 2008 there were eight stallions standing at stud and the 200th mare was inspected for Stud Book. For the past few years breeders have had the possibility to use leased stallions from abroad as well as frozen semen from some internationally well known stallions to their mares, too.

The show season in Finland has two highlights: The National Pony Show for all breeds in Helsinki, taking part the first weekend of August every year gathering approximately 450 ponies, and the Connemara Pony Show, which hopefully will be able to establish it's annual position in the show calendar in the beginning of September.

A Connemara pony has been chosen as the Best In Show at the National Pony Show twice. In 1983 mare Espe Etta was the best pony of the show, and in 2002 her daughter Caragh Elaine Aisling (by Kåsta Scaramouche) repeated her dam's success. The judge for Connemara Ponies is invited together with the Finnish New Forest Pony Society, so usually the judges come from Great Britain.

Last year the best Connemara pony at the National Show was mare Aramara Eliza, 18 years of age. Her breeder is Outin Talli, and the owner is Hanna Koli from Pertteli in South Western Finland. Eliza is by internationally known dressage stallion Ardnasillagh O'Flaherty, out of Danish born Pilgaards Camilla (Padraig of Rosenaharley). She has so far had four foals and is now in foal to Ashfield Cathal Crodhearg who visited Finland in 2008.

The best young Connemara pony of the show was the only one of year 2008 Champions not born in Finland. Yearling colt Halle Lafferty (Coosheen Finbarr – Lofty Hazy Rambler – Frederiksminde Hazy Chance, breeder Ingrid Hallengård, owner Susanna Rahikainen) was imported to Finland in spring 2008.



Aramara Eliza



The best Connemara stallion of the show was Symphatil Hazy Becks (Frederiksminde Hazy Marvel – Pilgaards Canoc – Cnoc Dabuide, owner and breeder Susanna Rahikainen), while the best foal was filly Rockfield Arctic Glow (Atlantic Ace - Rockfield Scaramé - Kåsta Scaramouche, breeder and owner Merja Nurmi).

A month later it was time for the 12th Connemara Pony Show in Finland. The first show had been arranged in 1989, and the judge back then was Mrs Elizabeth Petch. In 2008 Mrs Petch returned to judge the show and was pleased to see the number of quality ponies bred in Finland. All Champion titles went to Finnish bred ponies!

The Supreme Champion of the day was nine year old stallion Rockfield Scarface. He is by Ard Ri Cunga, out of Rockfield Scaramé (by Kåsta Scaramouche). Breeder and owner is Merja Nurmi. The show was held at Scarface's current home stables near Loviisa, Southern Finland, where he is in training and participating in dressage classes on regional level. He is going to spend the 2009 breeding season in Sweden.



Rockfield Scarface

Other champions were the Junior Champion and Reserve Supreme Champion, yearling filly Caragh Emer (Innellan Kestrel - Caragh Enya - Ard Ri Cunga, breeder and owner Tuula

Pyöriä) greatgranddaughter of the aforementioned Espe Etta, and eight year old mare Cluain Caoilfhionn (Symphatil Hazy Becks - Paradis Aniara - Kåsta Scaramouche, breeder and owner Jaana Malin), who also became Ridden Champion with Jenni Hauhia. Best foal was like at the National Show Rockfield Arctic Glow from the successful Rockfield Stud.

In 2009 the Connemara Pony Show is going to take place on 5th September, and the organizing committee has already booked the same place as last year – an equestrian center with very spacious fields to build the show ring, and with extremely helpful people to arrange all practicalities. As it will be the 25th Anniversary Jubilee Show, some special programme including jumping and dressage classes are planned. The former CPBS president Tom MacLochlainn will judge the show.

Other plans for the year include Stallion Parade in May, breeders' get-togethers, seminars etc. Please keep an eye on the coming events on the Finnish Connemara Pony Society website at

http://www.connemara.fi/english/index_eng.html

It might be also worthwhile to have a look at Finnish breeders' websites (links can be found on the society website) and the society sales list. If you are looking for quality youngstock you might find one in Finland!



Cocum Tiger Moth

Legendary ponies like Cocum Tiger Moth (by Tiger Gill), Ard Ash Grove (by Ard Harka) and Gaelic Silver Mist (by Rosenaharley Cormac) among others established the reputation of Connemara ponies as great performers in Finland in 70's and 80's. Today's stars like Glodbles v. Graaf Janshof (by Carna Gold) and Park Benjamin (by Ashfield Festy) at national level in showjumping and Floora's Farfadet (by Frederiksminde Hazy Marvel) in dressage keep the Connemara pony flag flying with many others who compete successfully at regional level.