

THE MOUNTAIN LAD LINE

A REPORT FROM DONNA DUCKWORTH IN THE USA

In 1980 it was thought that the Mountain Lad stallion line, one of three major Connemara stallion lines, was in grave danger. The situation was thought to be so dire that some extraordinary measures to save the line were taken. In the US, May Medley in Georgia started to breed her son of Mon Tully Man (Tully Lad X Tooreen Pet [by Tooreen Laddie]), who she had been keeping with a gelding in her backyard for many years. Montully Son, the stallion, is a great grandson of Mountain Lad through his grandsire Tully Lad. May had been told by Caroline Nesbitt that he was the last of the Mountain Lad line. Montully Son was out of a daughter of Marconi, Marconi's Stormy Rebel. May also bought a daughter of Jiminy Cricket, another son of Tully Lad, so she could line breed from the Mountain Lad line. This pony, Aillte Mhuire, had had one daughter by Custusha's Cashel Rock, Courtney's April Frolic, before coming to Georgia where she produced many offspring. Courtney's April Frolic is the dam of the winner of the ACPS Clifden Trophy for the Purebred Connemara in the USEF Pony Hunter divisions who receives the most points in USEF sponsored competition, Balmullo's Azalea who is shown as Ooh La La.

Aillte Mhuire's progeny by Montully Son were also highly successful. Tullymor's April Fool was a beautiful and productive mare whose son, Balmullo's Beacon (Tullymor's April Fool X Aladdin), owned by Vanessa Morgan, was a successful eventer and prolific sire for Foothill's Farm in Tennessee. May also bred Montully Son to many other what she called "old-fashioned" Connemaras, those that she could find with no Little Heaven blood in their pedigree. This program was in many ways extraordinarily successful with Tullymor ponies, including many stallions, now in every corner of the US, where they successfully compete in driving, eventing and dressage.

While all this was happening in the US, in England, a special consortium was formed to save the aged stallion Thunderbolt from the knackers. Thunderbolt was by Thunder, another son of Tully Lad and out of Irene Grey, who was a granddaughter of the Irish Draft, May Boy. This program has also produced ponies that are found far and wide. In Europe Chiltern Thunderburst (Thunderbolt x Chiltern Cameo) and his son, Rory Rasputin (Chiltern Thunderburst x Van de Aronbosch Donna) are very popular sires in Denmark and The Netherlands, respectively. In England there is Spinway Comet (Thunderbolt x Spinway Cailin) who is a many-times winner in hand. In the US, there is a son and a grandson of Thunderbolt in California. The son, Lasrachai, is out of Lovely Marcella (by Rebel Wind). The grandson is Sydserff Avalon (Cocum Camelot [by Thunderbolt] X Ballydonagh Misterina [by Kirtling Brigadoon]). There is another grandson in Indiana, Landsdown Willow's Harbor Boy (*Chiltern Colm X Sillbridge Miranda [by Thunderbolt]). *Callowfeenish Thunder, Sam Davis' famous gelding, Tor, was a Thunderbolt son imported to the US as a stallion and sired at least one pony in Virginia, Aluinn Torrence, before being gelded.



In 1983 in Ireland Tully Grey (Tully Lad X Cait Nu Dhuibhir) was bred to Abbeyleix Bluebird (Coosheen Finn X Blue Moon), starting a third major branch of the Mountain Lad line, the "Hazy" pony line, perhaps the most prolific of all the branches. The result of this cross, Dale Haze, has sons and grandsons throughout Europe and the US through the stallions Hazy Dawn, Moy Hazy Cove and later, Hazy Match. Fernville Matchmaker (Hazy Match X Ross Castle Moya [by Abbeyleix Owen])

was imported to the US two years ago and has gotten his first mare in foal.

Now the Mountain Lad genes are spread throughout the world and it is hard to find a Connemara pedigree without Mountain Lad in it somewhere. The importation of Frederiksminde Hazy Cavalier (Hazy Dawn X Frederiksminde Christina) to Australia assures that the line will continue to increase! Sue Clark of the Glenormiston stud in Australia says that Cavalier has filled out a lot since he arrived. Sue also said, "Unfortunately his dam Frederiksminde Christina died recently at the age of 25 so he is the last of this (Christina) line. His sire Hazy Dawn is also in his 20's but will hopefully continue to breed for a few more years.