

## **Michael J. O'Malley Award**

**In the spirit of Michael J. O'Malley and to commemorate the initiative and passion displayed in his pioneering visit to Olympia with two Connemara ponies, an annual award will be given to an International (someone outside of Ireland) owner, or breeder, who has selflessly promoted the Connemara Pony during their Lifetime.**

**Historical Introduction:** The Michael J. O'Malley legacy.

Michael J. O'Malley was born in Rosmuc, Connemara, Co. Galway in 1884. He took great pride in his native Connemara Pony and was among those present at a meeting of the Connemara Pony committee, held in Clifden on 15th November 1911, when a description and definition of the Connemara Pony was drawn up. An attempt to form a Society failed, but Michael O'Malley was passionately determined to promote his beloved, Connemara Pony.

In June 1912, Michael O'Malley, Joe Welsh and two Connemara Ponies (the stallion, Irish Dragoon, and mare, Eileen Alanna) travelled the long journey from Rosmuc, the heart of Connemara, to the National Agricultural Hall (now called Olympia) in Kensington, London to take part in the 1912 World Exhibition of Breeds. His untiring efforts to raise awareness of the breed were well rewarded as his ponies were much admired. The hardships of the long journey had been worthwhile.

On his return from Olympia, Michael J. O'Malley set about trying to revive the breed. He wrote the first of many letters to the Irish Farming World titled "A Plea for the Connemara Pony" in which he deplored the deterioration of the Connemara Pony due to the introduction of unsuitable sires, and urged that steps be taken to revive the breed. He hoped to raise awareness of the Connemara Pony. Between November 1912 and July 1913, a total of twenty letters were published in the Irish Farming World, concerning the Connemara Pony. Thankfully, these letters have been preserved and published by Pat Lyne.

Eleven years later, The Connemara Pony Breeders' Society was formed on 12th December 1923, with Rev. Father C.J. White as President and Michael J. O'Malley as Honorary Secretary. Throughout his life Michael J. O'Malley strived to preserve, promote and improve the Connemara Pony. Michael J. O'Malley is a figure well known to historians of the Connemara breed as the man most responsible for the setting up of the CPBS and the eventual salvation of the pony as a distinct breed.

(Adapted from Connemara Pony Breeders' Society 1923 - 1998, *Elizabeth Petch*, Ashbrook Stud and Connemara Pony Breeders' Society web sites)

2012 marks a special anniversary for the Connemara Pony. It has been one hundred years since Michael J. O'Malley brought the Connemara Pony to the notice of the general public.

To recognize the contribution Michael O'Malley made to the Connemara Pony, **an annual award will be given to an International (someone outside of Ireland) owner, or breeder, who has selflessly promoted the Connemara Pony during their Lifetime.**

**Nomination:**

Annual nomination

Owner or breeder of the Connemara Pony for more than 15 years

Encourage acknowledgement of altruistic, non-visible, unsung hero

Lifetime achievement award

International nominee = someone outside of Ireland

Selfless promotion of the Connemara Pony

Purely for Connemara Pony vs. rosettes for self/farm/prefix

An approved ICCPS daughter society may nominate one person each year

**Selection Committee:**

Selected by a committee of people/peers (ICCPS Exec Board)