

CONNEMARA

PONY BREEDERS' SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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AONACH EDITION APRIL 2015

AONACH GROWING

Aonach, the Connemara Pony celebration of St Patrick's Day, goes from strength to strength. In its third year, the 2015 celebration attracted entries from 32 ponies, 27 on the grounds at CSU Equine Centre, Wagga Wagga and 5 which competed in the Cyber Dressage.

The photography competition 'Connemara Ponies make a landscape beautiful' brought in work from Ireland and England as well as work from five separate Danish entrants.

The Aonach emphasis is on ponies performing, and it was good to see three stallions under saddle. It was also gratifying to see the number of pure-bred ponies (21), nearly twice as many as the partbreds (11). A further point of interest was the number of different stallions and studs represented by their offspring. Five ponies by Wychwood Willy Wagtail and four Sugargum ponies by Boonaburrah Magee headed this list, but Castle Baron, Colmaur Casey, Celtic Basil, Glenormiston Thady and Exmoor Irish Jack each had more than one representative on the grounds in the competitions. In the Cyber classes Glenormiston Dundrum and Tipper O'Toole each had two offspring.

The Dressage competitions were well patronised, with 16 entrants in the 1.2 and 9 in the higher test. Judge Gil Fraser was so impressed by the overall standard and by the calmness and correctness of movement in the ponies that she announced her intention of finding a Connemara for her granddaughter. She also commented on the wonderful atmosphere existing among the competitors – so strong that she felt it through the doors of the judge's vehicle!

Star of the Dressage arena was Elayne Verner's Glenormiston Paddy Caton who won both 1.2 and 2.2. The Older Persons Dressage (riders to be at least 50 years of age) was won by Janene Leslie riding Sugargum Sirocco on a countback from Anne White riding Capparis Ryanne. Next year's plans include a 3.2 test.

The Cyber Dressage worked well because in Dressage competitions it is fairly easy to establish a level playing field for competitors as widespread in location as Chinchilla and Rathdowney in Queensland and York in WA. There are a couple of tips for future cyber competitors and organisers elsewhere in this eBulletin. This part of Aonach will probably also be extended.

All of the jumping and working hunter classes were held in the indoor arena, and this focus made for exciting spectating. A Table A starting at 60 cms and a Puissance starting at 95 cm were added to this year's programme, and both were well-supported. CSU Cullinan (Wychwood Willy Wagtail ex Glenormiston Flashy Diamond) won both the Loose Jumping for larger ponies and, ridden by John Bromfield, the Puissance at 1.10 m. (We're sure that this standard will get higher as the years pass!)

At Aonach we like to have an 'Irish Ambassador'. Jacqui Mellett of Dun Manus accepted our invitation for this year, and filled the role delightfully. We are hoping that in 2016 Tom MacLochlainn will be here for Aonach.

Next year's date is 19 March.

Here are the full results:

Smartest on Parade:

- 1 Glenormiston Paddy Caton,
- 2 CSU Cullinan,
- 3 Wychwood Lily.

Dressage Preliminary 1.2:

- 1 Glenormiston Paddy Caton,
- 2 Glenormiston Finn McCool,
- 3 CSU Lyrebird,
- 4 Gneevebrack Storm,
- 5 CSU Cullinan.

Novice 2.2:

- 1 Glenormiston Paddy Caton,
- 2 Innisfree Beaujolais,
- 3 Sugargum Uabba Bimbi,
- 4 CSU Lyrebird,
- 5 Sugargum Sirocco.

Preparatory A - riders 50 years & over:

- 1 Sugargum Sirocco (Janene Leslie),
- 2 Capparis Rynne (Anne White),
- 3 Glenormiston Paddy Caton (Elayne Verner),
- 4 Ashleigh's Jazz (Zita Denholm),
- 5 Glenormiston Finn McCool (Rachel Crease),
- 6 Garnet Pirouette (Glenys Donovan).

Cyber Preparatory A - riders over 50 years living 1,000k from Wagga Wagga:

- 1 Greenacres Sacred Heart,
- 2 Greenacres Ambassador
(both Lyndie Panitz),
- 3 Powderbark Clare,
- 4 Powderbark Aoife
(both Carlisle Sheridan),
- 5 Costalota Twinkle Toes
(Lynda Robinson).

Working Hunter - large:

- 1 Innisfree Beaujolais,
- 2 Garnet Pirouette,
- 3 Wychwood Lily,
- 4 Glenormiston Finn McCool,
- 5 CSU Red Robin.

Working Hunter Small:

- 1 Sugargum Uabba Bimbi,
- 2 Celtic Sir James,
- 3 Garnet Silhouette,
- 4 Sugargum Sirocco.

Loose Jumping Large:

- 1 CSU Cullinan,
- 2 CSU Red Robin,
- 3 Glenormiston Finn McCool,
- 4 Garnet Pirouette,
- 5 Capparis Rynne,
- 6 Sugargum Blossom.

Loose Jumping Small:

- 1 Sugargum Sirocco,
- 2 Celtic Sir James,
- 3 Sugargum Uabba Bimbi,
- 4 Sugargum Cisco.

Table A:

(All place getters went clear in the 2nd round which was decided on speed)

- 1 Wychwood Lily,
- 2 Celtic Sir James,
- 3 Sugargum Blossom,
- 4 CSU Red Robin,
- 5 Cappariss Ryanne.

Puissance:

- 1 CSU Cullinan
- equal 2 Gneevebrack Storm,
Glenormiston Finn McCool,
CSU Red Robin, CSU Lyrebird

Most Successful Purebred:

Glenormiston Finn McCool

Runner Up

equal CSU Cullinan and Celtic Sir James

Most Successful Partbred:

Sugargum Uabba Bimbi

Runner Up

CSU Red Robin



The White sisters, Anne (on Cappariss Ryanne) and Zita (on Ashleigh's Jazz) were (by far) the eldest competitors. They finished 2nd and 4th respectively in the Seniors Dressage competition. As well as Dressage, Anne competed in the full range of the jumping events. One of the highlights of the day was the second round of the Table A over a shortened and raised course against the clock. Carrying the audience with her, Anne was first to go and jumped clean.



Rachel Crease and Glenormiston Finn McCool, most successful purebred, had placings in Dressage, Working Hunter, Loose Jumping and Puissance.

THE CYBER DRESSAGE JOURNEY

Carlisle Sheridan

It really started as a joke, along the lines of “can you deliver an Aonach dinner from Wagga Wagga to WA?” I said, “I’ll enter the senior dressage here in WA and perform it on Skype”. After a lot of talk from friends around the country about this concept, the Aonach Committee ran with the idea, and cyber-dressage was offered for the Over 50s at Aonach 2015.

I had huge plans: I’d dress like an Olympic rider in tails and a top hat, I’d ride our glorious golden stallion, Glenormiston Dundrum, I’d book up a friend’s superb arena for the video, I’d practise and would get fit and so would the pony. I might even enter a second pony if there was one worthy of being in the event. The fact that I had not completed a dressage test accurately since I was 15 was a minor detail.

Then, in December I injured my left shoulder feeding out round bales to the ponies. I had limited use of my left arm, driving was painful, riding was out of the question and it was too hot to do much anyway. Glenormiston Dundrum, the golden stallion, was having a break after his big Royal Show win and was running with mares, both our own and those belonging to clients, and the mares I used to ride all had foals at foot. Feeling very depressed I put my Aonach cyber dressage debut to the back of my mind.

In the New Year I became determined again, aided and abetted by Emily. The shoulder pain was diagnosed and finally treated in late February and after a cortisone injection the pain vanished so we were back on track

with a less than perfect left arm, but with a very short time frame. Emily helped me with the entries. The golden stallion was out of the question, he had not only not been ridden for months but he was strong and a pull on my shoulder might start the problem again. So the chosen two were 5 year old purebred mare Powderbark Aoife (Glenormiston Dundrum x Powderbark Rose) and 3 year old partbred filly Powderbark Clare (Glenormiston Dundrum x Panda – Quarab).

I had ridden Aoife often before and loved her: she was a gem in the bush, great fun, with a motto “if in doubt, jump!” Dressage was not her best thing but at least I knew she wouldn’t dump me on the ground. We had ridden one competition together for an Adult Riding Clubs Inter-Club Challenge: although we got the top marks for conformation and run out in hand, I had got lost in the dressage and we had marks deducted in the jumping because we cut the corners – not a distinguished performance. This would be Aoife’s ridden debut after having a foal. Clare was a very newly broken filly, very willing and kind, and this event would be her first with me, after less than 10 rides in total after returning from the breaker. Again, I was confident she would allow me to stay on board. So far, her only anti-social activity was finding new and increasingly better ways to remove her halters.

The next problem was the arena. Not being sure if either pony would complete the test we gave up the idea of borrowing the special arena and

decided to mark out our own. Finding a flat piece of ground was a problem, but we selected a place which had been recently occupied by mares, foals and hay rolls so as well as measuring it and marking it out we had to rake it and remove the old hay and rocks – much to the delight of our young turkeys who “helped” a lot. The mares and foals relegated to the paddock over the fence were less delighted. I practised in the arena using the “tuk tuk” to everyone’s amusement, but I did manage to learn the test. I also had a ride on each of the ponies and established that we were capable of going from start to finish with the test.

The last morning before the deadline to send off the videos to get to Aonach in time arrived, so Emily dressed me in jodhpurs, I found my clean green shirt, cleaned my boots, borrowed Emily’s helmet and dressage saddle and was ready. Meanwhile she had brushed the ponies, saddled and bridled them, set up the camera and did a last minute revamp of my dressage space. Moving the turkeys off the arena was a major problem. Bear, our maremma, tried to help but being a “guardian” dog, not a “herder”, he sent them in all sorts of different directions. Then having finally emptied the arena of turkeys he selected it for his own playground until the offer of a bone distracted him.

I climbed on to Clare with the help of the water trough and Emily. The next moment was interesting: I hadn’t anticipated that Aonach would have the foresight to send not one but two low flying light aircraft and one low flying helicopter to film my dressage performance from the air. Clare was distracted, as we all were, but when the noise had abated we moved into

filming. Poor Clare hadn’t seen Emily’s head behind the camera on the stand before so our entry was far from straight or forward, and her trot away from the camera was very lively, but after that she settled down and I could concentrate on remembering the test without too many mistakes. She is the sweetest pony and I was delighted with her work given how young and inexperienced she is. One test was completed: I had one to go.

While Emily checked the video technology I scrambled off Clare, put her back in the stable with a feed and collected Aoife for the second test. Again I mounted with the help of Emily and the water trough. Aoife felt familiar and willing which was reassuring. We were spared the light planes and helicopters overhead but the first winds from the cyclone up North came in and Aoife objected to having dust blown in her eyes. None-the-less she completed the test with some nicely balanced moments. The head tossing demonstrated not only the dust in the wind but also her opinion that dressage is SOOO boring. Towards the end of the test she had worked out which of my shoulders was not working well and did her best to leave the arena but fortunately my right leg was up to the challenge and we completed our personal best performance in the dressage arena. Two tests done!

Getting off Aoife was a challenge, followed by the even greater challenges of taking off my boots and jodhpurs. Who would have guessed that you need a working left shoulder and a strong arm for those things? Emily completed what she had to do with the technology and our dressage tests were posted off to Aonach and arrived in time. Phew!

The Aonach weekend was a delight. We had had lovely messages from other cyber dressage entrants before and during the weekend, then were regularly updated and – yes – I did hear the clapping – or was it the storm outside? To discover that Clare had come third and Aoife fourth was the best result: good enough to win

rosettes and giving room for improvement next year.

Who knows? I may yet ride the beautiful golden stallion on the perfect arena dressed like an Olympic rider.

After all, I'll still be "Over 50" next year too.



Powderbark Clare

Powderbark Aoife



Bear

Tuk Tuk



and you guessed it – the turkeys





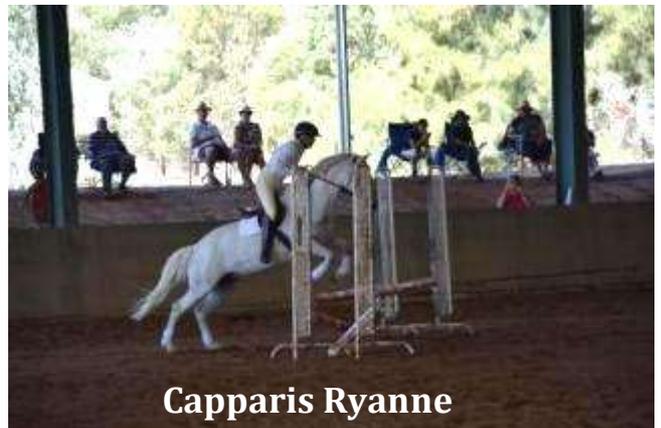
Blandings Sorbet, the eldest pony present, with Ella Hughes (8), one of the youngest riders of the day.



Gneevebrack Storm



Caitlin Bouchier and Monahan Quickstep. Caitlin brought two ponies to Aonach, and was one of the furthest travellers.



Capparis Ryanne



Hope Masterston with Garnet Silhouette in the 1.2 Dressage. Hope, aged 7, was the youngest competitor on the day.



Innisfree Beaujolais, ridden by his owner, Carol Benassy, the furthest traveller to Aonach 2015, won the Working Hunter for larger ponies and had success in Dressage.



Glenys Donovan and Garnet Pirouette competed successfully in Dressage, Working Hunter, Loose Jumping and Table A events.



CSU Lyrebird, ridden by Madeline Oldaker, had placings in two Dressage tests and the Puissance. Madeline was riding both Lyrebird and Red Robin with a suspected (but undiagnosed) broken fibula near her ankle. It is now mending.



Capparis Ryanne, ridden by Anne White, was successful in Dressage, Loose Jumping and Table A events.



Nicola Smith and Sugargum Blossom competed well and had success in the Table A.



Innisfree Beaujolais

Marshalling for the Parade:
Glenormiston Paddy Caton, Innisfree
Beaujolais. Paddy was the most
successful Dressage Pony, and
Beaujolais ridden by his owner, Carol
Benassy, was one of the three stallions
present. He had successes in both
Dressage and jumping classes.

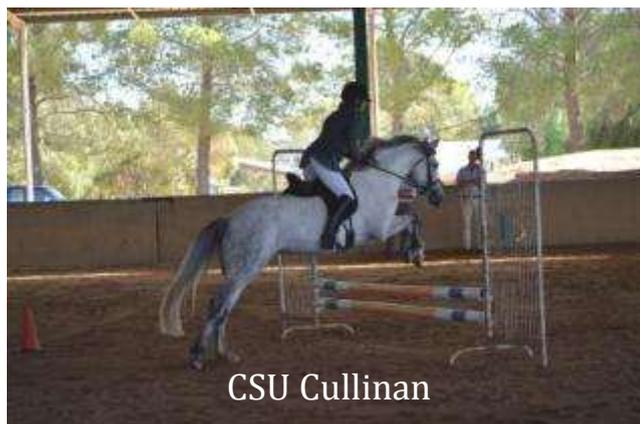


Sugargum Art & Wychwood Lily



Meeting after almost a year,
Sugargum Uabba Bimbi (with Lydia Alston) and
Sugargum Art (with Makkaide Smith).

Bimbi was the most successful Partbred at Aonach 2015.



CSU Cullinan



CSU Red Robin
ridden by Madeline Oldaker, was
runner up in the Most Successful
Partbred, with placings in Dressage,
Loose Jumping, Working Hunter,
Table A and Puissance.



Gneevebrack Storm
ridden by Aaron Oldaker, had
successes in Dressage and
Jumping classes. Until late in the
programme, Aaron was one of
only two males competing on the
day. Jason Smith handled Janene
Leslie's Sugargum Sirocco in the
Young Handler class. In the
evening John Bromfield accepted
the ride on Kirsten Volz's CSU
Cullinan in the Puissance – and
won!