



# The Celtic Times

Official publication of the  
celtic warmblood registry

Issue No. 1

February 2002

---

## Light The Lantern - Editorials and information

Cynthia Lurix – Editor

### **Breeding Sport Horses Using Irish Draught Horse Foundation Stock Brawn, Brains, and Jumping Ability**

The Celtic Warmblood Registry hopes to benefit the Irish Draught enthusiast world wide in a number of ways. The Irish Draught horse is in itself subject of much debate from simply how to pronounce the word Draught to the much-esteemed inspectors agreeing on a definitive breed type. The classic Irish Draught is frequently scorned by the people dedicated to preserving it. They deplore its lack of elasticity, often 'common look'. and debate the infusion of Thoroughbred as its only saving characteristic. People will refer with reverence to the PUREBRED but advise Clover Hill and King of Diamond bloodlines. The gaps in the pedigrees of these stallions are common knowledge. There is much debate over the value of retaining the specific Draught characteristics; the heavier bone, the straighter shoulder, the legs traveling close behind. (For farm work) and yet it is these same characteristics that are proving to be invaluable in the sport horse arena Dan Marks DVM for the USET\* and noted conformation authority Deb Bennett both agree on the advantage of the straighter shoulder for jumping (powerful take off and greater tucking ability) while also agreeing that it is not perhaps ideal for Dressage. They have noticed that many of the top performance horses stand closer behind and that the back feet should be angled slightly outward to match the angle of the stifle.\* Incidentally takes one generation to lose bone and four to get it back. It would seem the heavier horses should always have their place.

Sport horse breeding with Irish Draught horses is a risky endeavor going the traditional route. You might buy a purebred foal for seven to ten thousand dollars in the hopes of using it as foundation stock then wait two to three years to see if that same animal will even have registration papers. If you want to breed from traditional foundation stock you will probably not be showing that same youngster at a highly competitive level with other European warmbloods either in hand or in lower level Dressage. There are notable exceptions of course but it is not generally so. The proof of their worth will be in their progeny so you must wait for the progeny to do well to command a market. In both Ireland and the US and perhaps world wide there is security in breeding King of Diamond and Clover Hill lines as these remarkably prepotent sires, now deceased consistently breed athletic horses. This fact parallels the modern history of the American Quarterhorse with its infusion of the Thoroughbred Three Bars. Specific horses seem to possess the key to success among certain breeds. Is this the result of inspections? Was the remarkable athletic prepotency of these stallions recognized before they were bred? Although I seek these bloodlines out in my own breeding program I also see it as a 'paint by number' answer in the artistry of sport horse breeding. The famous Suma Stud in Navan, Co Meath, Ireland doesn't rely on this formula breeding and yet they consistently produce highly athletic Irish Draught horses both pure and part bred.

The most marketable qualities of the Irish Draught in the sport horse world are its hardiness its remarkably intelligent and calm temperament and its powerful jump. Highly marketable qualities in an increasingly amateur dominated market. If you eliminate all Draught characteristics will you also eliminate these qualities and end up with a poor imitation of a Hannoverian? Should we perhaps line breed the top performance Irish Draughts to insure more prepotency in the breed?

The horsemen I know are gamblers of the highest order. They strive for excellence while taking huge risks. Whether they are jumping formidable courses or breeding a stallion to their cherished mare, the stakes are consistently high, financially emotionally and physically. There is no clear path to excellence and it takes this courage to try to even have a shot at success. The Celtic Warmblood Registry does not suggest you give up on or fail to register any horse qualified for your national IDHS Society. However we do question the worth of inspections that approve foreign-born Irish horses for their own registries without automatic inclusion in the Irish

studbook. (This is the result of inspection variations) .For the Celtic Warmblood Registry RID acceptance will be an accolade not a necessity leaving the show ring and the subsequent progeny to decide its merits. The IALHA registry has its annual inspections and the animals approved are immediately entered into the studbooks of the country of origin. Those not eligible to inspect or approve do not lose their registration rights or their right to be used as breeding stock. Interestingly in the national shows the non-approved horses frequently score above the approved animals. These inspections are not 100 day tests either. And even proven excellence in conformation and athleticism is no guarantee of reproduction. The combination of two superior animals is frequently mediocrity. The Irish Draught sport horse breeder needs the power and right to experiment without punishment. While the Irish Draughts excel in jumping their ability to compete in Dressage is limited. Until we find a path in our cross breeding efforts to produce Draught related horses who excel in Dressage as well as jumping we cannot really compete with the European warmbloods. If we stick with what is safe we will not progress. I personally want to cross the Irish Draughts with the military type Andalusian with the classic Terry top line or Line bred Lusitanos. Their competitive ability in the dressage arena is finally undisputed. In addition their temperament of intelligent sane willing animals mirrors the best in the Irish Draught. They are as well physically hardy and economical to keep. The Andalusians history of successful crossbreeding is accepted as fact.

As we attempt to unite Irish Draught enthusiasts worldwide we also hope to encourage the universal sharing of experience and information. The Celtic Warmblood Registry hopes to encourage this type of communication by offering to pay for articles accepted into our publication. We will also provide ghost writers for people whose talents do not include the written word but who have invaluable information to impart.

In conclusion I hope the guarantee of legitimate registration verification will encourage the best characteristics of any breeding program; a clear vision combined the information and freedom to achieve it. The Celtic Warmblood Registry is dedicated to the preservation of the traditional Irish Draught horse and its continuing and progressive impact on the modern sport horse world.

**Reference and suggested reading:**

**Principles Of Conformation Analysis** by Deb Bennett Ph.D. (in three volumes)

*Fault or Fiction* by Dan Marks DVM with Elizabeth Iliff, **Practical Horseman**.  
January 2002

The International Andalusian and Lusitano Horse Association (see LINKS page)

**The Irish Draught Horse** by Alex Fell