



Canadian Connemara Pony Society

Newsletter

Winter 2026





Let's grow our membership!

Don't forget to encourage other Connemara pony owners to join our society and share triumphs with their Connemaras. From breeding to line classes, dressage to hunter/jumper, we want to hear all about it!



On the Cover: Wirthsmuehle Banksy. Photo submitted by Danielle Garbaty

Right: Starlight's Zara ridden by Jennifer Brownlow in a clinic with Gerald Boomer of Ireland who gave dressage and jumping clinics at Longfield Equestrian in Duncan, BC.





CANADIAN CONNEMARA PONY SOCIETY

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 Newsletter: **Myscha Stafford**
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 Promotions: **Jeannie Walsh, Elsie Priddy**
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 Stallion Directory/
 Breeders List: **Bridget Wingate**
 Website: **Penny Huggons**





NEW WEBSITE

Submitted by Penny Huggons

The decision was made at the 2023 AGM to renew and totally upgrade the existing CCPS website. Tracy Dpoko, the owner of Daventry Web Design, had designed, hosted and maintained the original CCPS website at a very reasonable cost. However due to the age of the website it was becoming difficult to upgrade and maintain.

In January 2024 the CCPS members were asked to submit suitable photos for consideration and possible use on the new website. All the photos that were received were submitted to Tracy.

In March the board and membership were asked by Tracy to submit any suggestions for the new site. This included things they would like to see on the site as well as things they felt were irrelevant on the old site and changes they felt would be beneficial. I would like to thank all those who sent in valuable suggestions.

In April the consensus was given by the board for Tracy to go ahead and start work on the new website. The "mock" website was ready for review and approval by the board, and the new site went live the the end of October. We now have a modern new website that is compatible with new technology and which has some great new features.

"Believe it or not, the old design was up for 14 years." Says Tracy. "Technology moves fast, so it is comparable to having Betamax or VHS while everyone else moved on to DVD and then Bluray. The website is now compatible with mobile devices. I think the addition of the online classified ad form is helping to streamline everything."

Members are invited to share their High Resolution photographs to be included on the website, especially non-grey ponies to cphuggons@gmail.com.

A big thank you to Tracy for all her work and dedication to the CCPS, the CCPS board and membership for their assistance in bringing this to fruition.



Welcome

Connemaras are a large pony originally from the west coast of Ireland. They are well known for their athletic ability, versatility, and good temperaments. For over fifty years, Connemaras in Canada were registered in the United States, but their growing popularity and numbers warranted the formation of the Canadian Connemara Pony Society in 2006 to register pure and halfbred Connemaras. Our registry and membership is kept by Canadian Livestock Records Corporation (CLRC) and their webpage gives details of our membership and registered ponies.

The CCPS is recognized by the parent Irish Society and is a member of the International Committee of Connemara Pony Societies.

To join the growing family of Connemara enthusiasts and breeders in Canada, [contact](#) the Society or [purchase a membership](#) from the CLRC.



CCPS Membership

The Canadian Connemara Pony Society membership runs from January 1 to December 31 and includes our bi-annual newsletter.



Classified Ads

Classified ads are free for CCPS members. Check them out!



CCPS Merchandise

Canadian Connemara Pony merchandise is now available for purchase.



RATUNDA RANCH - CONNEMARA WELSH SELLS TO THE U.S.!

Manitoba Report - Submitted by Jeannie Walsh

Constance Dyck took a look around her paddocks this past year, and decided it was time to downsize the number of her personal riding ponies. All three of these ponies are Connemara Welsh crosses by Elphin Whiskeyjack, a Registered Connemara stallion that Connie stood for several years in Manitoba. Connie double-registers her ponies, highlighting both the Welsh and Connemara side of their breeding. Elphin Whiskeyjack is by inspected and approved Elite status Maplehurst Michael MacDaire, out of an inspected Premium mare, Scottsway Lullaby. Scottsway Lullaby won Broodmare of the year award in 2016.

Connie and I are somewhat similarly built - "a little closer to-the-ground" shall we say? Connie has put much of her riding time into Ratunda Jersey Lily, a 14.1hh pretty bay mare. Jersey will turn seven this summer. Ratunda Bella Donna, a 14hh seal brown mare with lots of chrome, will likely become Connie's sole mount eventually. Bella will be six years old this summer. Bella was started as a three year old and Connie has started playing on a line with her again and has been ground driving her. Connie worked on games with her last year, but with so much ice over this past winter, it wasn't safe to take Bella across-the-road to the arena.

Standing a touch over 14hh, Ratunda Ranch Red Amarysso seemed the right choice to put on offer, for some deserving person. Red is a very pleasing to the eye, rising five year old chestnut mare, with a flaxen mane and tail. Red's Welsh dam is Amaryllis



Ratunda Ranch Red Amarysso.

of Erinleigh, and her dam's side carries Tommy Go Greatly and Nebo Calonog. Connie likes to expose her ponies to all sorts of things in the round pen, including flags, balls, tarps and balloons. Connie says that as a two year old, Red showed herself to be brave and confident, with a very calm, sweet disposition. Connie added that Red also possesses a great mind.

Red had two months of professional training in 2023. During that time, Red was ridden bareback in a halter, and she was also

ridden out. Connie's son, Leighton, did some desensitizing work with Red late last season, by running a lariat gently along her body and her neck. Red accepted this willingly. Leighton, who used to Event, felt safe to get on board this quiet, sensible mare bareback and take her around the indoor arena w/t/c.

Ratunda Ranch Red Amarysso

Connie felt that it was time to send Red for training in English, with an introduction to Jumping. Lorraine Wilson, an experienced English Coach and Trainer in her own right, came to mind as the right choice! Connie expressed confidence in Lorraine's Program, saying that Lorraine would put a good fitting on Red. (Lorraine had also started Elphin Whiskeyjack.) This proved to be very true, as Red was carefully and slowly brought along by Lorraine. Red always looked happy in videos and not at all stressed. Red received osteo treatments during her training. Connie states that she has used chiro and osteo treatments for years, as she has



Connie and Jersey taking part in a Clinic.



Kristi Penney of Brandon, Manitoba, riding her Lusitano Orryx.



Elainna Penney doing a Youth demonstration ride on Red.

found that it helps keep the ponies moving freely. Over the next four months, Lorraine transformed Red into a very nice little English horse, with Red demonstrating her lovely movement. Lorraine described Red as "having a steady rhythm that is not work to ride. She has a motor, without being hot or strong in-the-bridle. Her canter is of excellent quality, always riding uphill. Overall, a promising young pony that has the ability and athleticism to take a rider in any direction." What a good testament to Connie's Breeding Program!

Red was happily popping over small jumps and x-rails. Connie assessed Red as a suitable mount for a youth in a program or an adult amateur. Lorraine began receiving expressions of interest in Red. A lady requested a video of Red being ridden by a youngster. Kristi Penney's eleven year old daughter Elainna was up for the



job! Elainna's ride sealed the deal and Red has taken up residence in New Jersey, USA. Connie has been keeping the future market for horses in mind. She would like to keep a couple of broodmares on the farm. As the Connemara market reflects heavily that many middle-aged women are now wanting to ride smaller mounts, we are both hoping to see this trend begin to take shape in Manitoba. Connie intends to breed two Connie Welsh crosses in 2025. Connie has purchased both a black and a palomino Section C mare, to cross with Jack semen. For anyone interested in an in-utero foal, Connie can be reached at 1-204-305-0824 or constancedyck@gmail.com If you are looking for a good Trainer, Lorraine Wilson (LW Performance Horses) can be contacted under her own name on Face Book.

WIRTHSMUEHLE BANKSY SUBMITTED BY DANIELLE GARBATY

Sometimes you get an idea in your head and you just can't shake it. The result of that experience for me was this guy. After a few obsessive years of searching for the right colt, and lots of input and advice from various pony friends, I found Banksy in Germany at Wirthsmuehle Stud. He was imported in the spring of 2023 as a two year old. He is very correct and athletic. He has beautiful uphill movement - something Wirthsmuehle ponies are known for. His dam is full sibling to Wirthsmuehle Delaneys - a very talented pony and the pride and joy of Skaergaarden Stud in Denmark. His unique bloodlines will hopefully add to our wonderful breeding here in Canada.

Banksy is always watching me over the gate and hoping I come around to give him some love (he's hard to resist). His character, true to type, is evident in the fact that I am an amateur who has no business owning a stallion. And yet, here he is. He has been started under saddle and, if all goes to plan, will begin his breeding career this Spring. To be continued!



Connie and Jersey taking part in a Clinic.





HORSE MASTERING AND HOW I AM LEARNING TO TRULY APPRECIATE MY CONNEMARAS

Submitted by **Carolyn Blanchet**

It's been two years since my last writing due to me missing the deadline at the end of January last year: oops! I was happy to see that I wasn't late for submitting to this Spring CCPS Newsletter. Thank you Myscha for putting this together once again this year!

In my last writing, I shared with you that I had started my two Connemara geldings using the principles of Classical Dressage. Those two words: "Classical" and "Dressage" can mean a lot of different things to different people so to be clear, I thought I would expand on that. When I think of the term "dressage", I think about it in its literal sense when used in my French Mother tongue, which means training. Growing up in Québec, I had access to riding masters from the old continent, some of whom had attended reputed equestrian academies such as Cadre Noir and the Spanish Riding School. My understanding of the term "classical" developed by contrast with Western horse cultures I experienced from relocating to BC. I was now immersed in the world where emphasis was placed on Western style of riding activities. When I discovered the sport of Working Equitation, it all made sense: here was the best of both equestrian worlds. An equitation-based training approach to develop a true working equine partner for your day to day ranching activities. Ranching in South France and Spain had given rise to a similar but different type of working horses, the Iberian horses and the Camargue ponies being most notable for their cow sense. Classic meets practical.

Embedded in that approach are horsemanship and equestrian arts developed over thousands of years of humans evolving with horses and having horses at the epicenter of many civilizations. The classical Masters were a necessity of their times. Their "job" (see passion) was to be concerned with all manners of training horses as perfect war machines. For that to be achieved, the unit man-horses had to become One. In order to tap into horsepower and achieve maximum potential on the battlefield, the Masters needed to deeply understand horse psyche and teach the cavalry riders. They were the early observers and behaviorists of our modern equine partners, who developed the idea of horsemanship first followed by full partnership. As horses became obsolete

- due in part to the introduction of better war machines such as tanks - the Masters had to reinvented themselves, so they used their art to entertain: they became Circus Masters. The elite military riders became performance riders.

As a kid, I was fascinated by circus acts, especially when it involved the original stars of the circus: horses. Having grown up in Montreal, I was surrounded by internationally known Cirque du Soleil as well as Cavalia - whose mission was to bring back the magic of horse performances. I have attended many Cavalia shows at many different venues and I remain mesmerized and fascinated by the artistic magic displayed by the unity between horses and trainers. When I got horses again as an adult, I decided that my focus with horses had to pivot if I truly wanted to become a horse master. With all my soul, I wanted to access the magic by speaking horses so I could do wonderful and beautiful things with them instead of to them.



Working Equitation: an equitation-based training approach to develop a true working equine partner for your day to day ranching activities.



It is hard to truly appreciate our own success since, if you are like me, you feel that you are constantly in progression thus, moving along with it. Despite that, I can safely assert that my progress has accelerated exponentially over the last two years. It is similar to how, toward the end of completing a puzzle, things start to happen a bit faster as you have less pieces to figure out. I feel knowledge pouring over me at a faster rate as I seek and find more pieces of this gigantic horse puzzle which reveals itself more clearly. Thanks to the internet, access to knowledge is out there and oftentimes it's free, although free does not always mean reliable information, and paid knowledge is not necessarily useful. To really dive deep, you do need some kind of investment: money for sure, but more importantly, your time. I feel very grateful that my life situation allows me to be here with my animals



Devon Ridge Alfa Romeo (2018) at CADORA Jumper Derby Sept. 20

on my farm so I can have plenty of time to invest in relationship building. Most of my semi-retirement life is devoted to the study of animals whom I live with (horses, cats, dogs, salamanders, moose, deer, fisher cat, wild birds, etc.) and, a big part of developing understanding toward all life involves spending time observing them without our own human agenda or constraints.

There is also the aspect of measuring success: how do we set goals and measure accomplishments outside of the show ring? Does it really matter that there is no one there to witness? A progression means that you constantly move goalposts in order to keep improving. I found that the only meaningful question to ask and answer is "How do my horses truly respond to me?" And are we a well oiled-machine in any possible situation?" My appreciation of success as a horse person does not rely on placings and ribbons anymore. In fact, I simply donate back prizes and ribbons when I compete. I do believe in supporting local and regional



Travelling buddies.

equestrian events by participating either as a competitor or a volunteer. Here in Central BC, we have solid groups of people representing many equestrian sports in Classical style of riding: BC Interior H/J, Northern BC CADORA and Working Equitation North Cariboo chapter- of which I have been the VP (currently my role is secretary-treasurer). We host two WE shows a year, along with WE clinics from introductory to advanced. So I know about all the effort involved in organizing equestrian events. I am very thankful that we still have horse people and communities who get together and continue to put in countless volunteer hours for competitors to enjoy. Personally, I have enjoyed camaraderie and friendships with many fantastic horse people over the past 20 years and I do believe it's important to support each other's existence within the equine industry. All those things that I took for granted as an eventing junky teenager spending the 90's doing the horse trial circuits in Quebec, I now truly appreciate.

And most notably, I truly appreciate my two Connemaras; not only were they the perfect choice for taking me to the next level of horsemanship but they also both fit me like a glove. I am rather short standing at 5 ft and weighing around 7.5 stones (I always



wanted to use this weight unit like the Irish do!) and they are rather tall for Connemaras, both standing at 15 hands. Somehow, we just fit together. My flaw is that I am not so photo-obsessed these days so I rely on show photographers to have some evidence of what we do together. But this is also why I don't have a picture of my favourite thing, which is spending time working with both of them, either on the trails, in the ring or in the paddock.

For the update

After working with Devon Ridge Alfa Romeo, aka ("Romeo") on our Liberty routines and doing a few Working equitation shows - just to get his hooves in- I started him over fences this past year. I had a hunch that it was what he truly wanted and sure enough, he proved to me that I found his jam! He always loves to perform explosively; he had quickly mastered rearing on command and the Spanish walk so adding jumping was a natural extension of his athletic abilities. He is enthusiastic and full of beans when presented with jumps, especially jumping natural fences in an open field. I made a point to participate in the BC Eventing clinic at Johvale last year and we are planning to return again this year. After working with cavalettis and pole work most of the riding season, Romeo and I were ready for a jumper show last September. It was hosted by my friends at the CADORA Prince George group. He was his fantastic usual self, such an easy and fun ride! I think we placed first in most of the classes but as explained, I gave back the ribbons so I don't exactly recall? It doesn't really matter because the experience was to be about fun and relationship building. I think I have decided to stick with jumper classes since there are no restrictions on the type of headgear. As you may notice from the picture, I prefer riding bitless. Romeo responds to my subtle body cues, or less subtle voice cues. As you

can see, he easily clears a 2.6ft fence, a typical Dillon baby!

My other Connemara, my Muskoka boy "Bene" (MLC Belfast Benediction) remains my dream princess horse from my childhood dreams: my tall, dark and handsome steed. He is a true gentleman and the perfect partner who taught me how to truly ride classically. Since he is two years older than Romeo, I have had a few more years of training with him. We are climbing up the level of the world of Working Equitation, which gives a simplified form of measurement of our training development. At Level 4, also called "Intermediate B", we are doing much more interesting movements and developing our skills at the working canter with simple changes for most of the obstacles, beginning of pirouette and one hand riding (see picture). Self-carriage and true collection are the main end goal and the "proof will be in the pudding" when we are doing piaffe and levade.

But the most exciting thing for us is to work together in sync. In my previous article, I mentioned my desire to do Hungarian riding (two horses, one standing rider, one foot on each croup, two bridles in hand). I have been working on this as well and learning that, I need more gear to have them both in hand in front of me! There are lots of things to work on separately before putting it all together and synchronicity is a must. When that magic happens it is the most connected and harmonious -dare I say spiritual- feeling ever; we truly merge as one! My mantra has been to live in the moment and to be present by being mindful of all my relationships. Writing this update allowed me to reflect on where I am and how I got here, what is in front of me and what I currently have and realize that I am one lucky Irish pony owner! It's a magical world out there and I encourage everyone to seek out ways to enjoy spending quality time with your unicorns.

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mystable.ca/canadian-connemara-pony-society



WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Submitted by Marion Howard, ON

I always dreamed of having a dapple grey Connie from childhood, but ended up instead with a TB, several QHs and a Hanoverian. My Hanoverian mare is drop-dead gorgeous, but still on the big side for me because I'm only 5'1". I then got the idea of breeding her to a Connie stud and even getting into breeding Connies - I thought I was the first one to think of doing this in Canada. LOL as I then found out many others had the same thought and even were already doing it.

Before breeding my mare, I found a weanling online that was exactly what I was hoping for in a foal - a Hanoverian cross, black and super flashy. So, instead of breeding, I bought her last year. I'm not sure if she will stay a pony or will grow taller than that. Time will tell. We have our own farm and she is turned out with our 4 horses and everyone gets along well.



NEW STALLION IN MANITOBA

Submitted

We have a very exciting announcement to make from Manitoba! We now have a young Connemara stallion prospect in the Province. "Finn" is still very young, but his new owner has high hopes and plans for his future. This future will involve the purchase of a few mares, and to hopefully stand Finn to the public.

Kristi Penney of Brandon, Manitoba bought this gorgeous and well bred Connemara stallion prospect from Jocelyn Garneau-Davies, of Spruce Grove Alberta. Devon Ridge Fingal Arian is by MLC Madmartigan (by Tormod the Rebel), out of Droghe-da's Bengal Chutney.



Kristi's family originally came to Canada from Ireland. Since she was a little girl, Kristi has always wanted both a grey Connemara, and a grey Lusitano. "As an adult, I made that happen!" I bought a yearling bay Lusitano named Orryx. Orryx is descended from strong bull fighting bloodlines. Orryx is now grown and

being ridden, but jumping is not his forte. So far, Orryx isn't too interested in turning grey but he is a good boy, so that is ok. Kristi said, "This is where Finn comes in". Kristi started watching the Connemara sites and began talking with Jocelyn. Did Jocelyn have a grey stallion prospect? Jocelyn had a buckskin, a colour that Kristi also likes, but she decided to wait and see what Jocelyn had for colts in 2024.

Finn loaded like a trooper during a dark Alberta evening, and he arrived in Manitoba on December 2, 2024. Finn was unloaded in Manitoba - again in the dark.

There will be more information on Kristi, her daughter Elainna and Finn in the next CCPS Newsletter!



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