

## **CONNEMARA NEWS – AND – THOUGHTS UPON WHICH TO PONDER**

Those of you who are lucky enough to be able to purchase the magazine “Ireland’s Equestrian” will probably have already read the article on “Kippure Stud – The Business of Connemaras”

Many of you will probably have visited “Kippure”, spoken to Michael Igeo and realised the depth of Connemara knowledge that he possesses and will readily appreciate the message that is contained in his article on page 69 – 71 of the March April issue of Ireland’s Equestrian.

Michael outlines the primary use of the Connemara Pony in the early days and the market forces that saw change in the use of the Pony – consumerism, specialisation, dependence and market propaganda prevailed with the system of brood mares no longer expected to be worked and tested thoroughly. Faults and weaknesses that other wise would be found at the source of the working were now getting through. He speaks of a broad universal knowledge that is now found in place of what was a narrow detailed personal knowledge of individual ponies and the breed in general that lasted from childhood until death. Succession meant inherited knowledge and the passing on of this knowledge.

Understanding the relationship of “*form and function*” holds the key to success. Get it wrong and the result is devastating he states. Selective breeding is an art, which is second nature to someone who is gifted with the knowledge. Understanding the bloodlines and back breeding requires patience and analysis. He refers to the knowledge of Susan De Vesci, Jimmy Jones and Graham Tulloch that represented a Life’s work, a philosophy committed to memory.

In the heading – “*Links in the chain*” -Michael refers to the activities of the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the problems of inbreeding, over height, lack of bone etc. Michael states that as we delve further into the Connemara Pony, the more impressive is the impact that some of our predecessors have made. These vital links must be maintained, as without them, the demise is hastened.

“*Need for reform –Blueprints for competition*” Michael believes that our endeavours are to build on the efforts of our past stalwart breeders and be authentic in this restoration. The “In-Hand” world is only a small glimpse into the story of the Connemara Pony. Ponies must be bred that will meet customers expectations. There is a need to instil confidence in the industry of breeding Connemara ponies that in fact possess those unique qualities of the Connemara pony that can and do perform As well as and in fact better than most.

An interesting and thought provoking article for those who have concerns for the future of the Connemara pony.