

IWAGS CONFORMATION CRITIQUE

October 26 & 27, 2008 – by Jim Behan

It was a great honour to judge at your Specialty in Oct, 2008. Thank you for your kind invitation. I felt very privileged to be escorted to the show ring by the famous Fighting 69th Regiment. A lovely touch.

May I say a very sincere Thank You to my ring stewards. Marc Campbell and Linda Deutch. I appreciated your guidance and patience in keeping me within the rules and procedures over the two days.

IWAGS certainly is the “Veteran Specialty”. It was great so see so many beautiful “oldies”, and to see seven Irish Wolfhounds entered in a class of 9 years and over was wonderful. I hope your present young hounds will develop into the marvelous specimens like the veterans seen here today.

I would like to confirm my observations and worries which we talked about during the dinner after the show. What delighted me most was seeing so many typical Irish Wolfhounds. It is said that “Type is what Breeding is all about”. I congratulate you on keeping this ideal in mind.

There are three areas that worried me: heads, teeth and toplines.

Let me talk about heads first. Although the majority had good heads, of correct length, there were quite a few that were spoiled by high frontal bones. This seemed to be almost exclusively confined to the males - and just keep an eye on the muzzles, a few were weak, lacking fill-in under the eye.

My second worry was toplines; far too many were flat with no rise over the loin. This was present in every class and is serious because it is so prevalent.

My third and biggest worry area is ‘bites’. This is becoming a serious problem in the breed. In my opinion a good bite is a very important characteristic in the Irish Wolfhound. I know it was not written into the original standard, maybe that was a mistake, but no doubt it was considered so important and fundamental that it was not felt necessary to do so. The Irish Wolfhound Club of Ireland did decide to put it in about 30 years ago “scissors ideal, level acceptable”. There were just not enough scissors bites to be seen in the hounds exhibited, far too many were level. When level is bred to level, it will lead to undershot. Please pay particular attention to this serious problem and breed away from the level bite, thus increasing the frequency of the correct scissor bite.

Jim Behan

Puppy Dogs 6-9 Months

1. Desert Dune at Curiann

A very nice typical puppy of 8 months. He has a good head. He is strong in the forequarters with good angulation. His topline is good. He has lovely hindquarters and is strong on the move. He has a good quality coat.

2. Carrickaneena Croppy Boy

Another good youngster of quality. He has a nice head and is adequately angled at the shoulder. Although he strides out well, he moves close behind at this time. I do like his overall outline.

3. Carrickaneena Cruiscin Lan

Another lovely young hound. He has a good head which he carried very well; He has enough strength of neck. He does need to tighten up in front, he is quite loose and this affects his movement. He is very promising.

4. Carrickaneena Roddy McCorley

A litter brother of 3rd above. This fellow needs a lot of time. He looks well on the stack but loses it on the move. He is very weak behind and wide in the front. But he is young and he should improve with time.

Puppy Dogs 9-12 months

1. Carnasserie Chord

A tall grey of only 9 months. His head is spoiled by too high a frontal bone, which is a pity. He has a beautiful ear, well placed. His neck is strong which goes into a nice clean shoulder. Good length of upper arm. His topline is good and he moves very soundly.

2. Redtops Cullen

A good head with a correct bite. His front is spoiled by flipping his left front leg while on the move but I feel this may settle down in time. He has good outline but needs to bulk out as he is quite narrow throughout. But again this should improve as he matures. He has very good feet.

3. Aotearoa Oldline Tumanako

This young hound has an acceptable head and his bite is O.K. He has a good neck. Needs to strengthen in the back. Although he is a little short coupled, he is nicely angulated in the rear. Love his harsh coat.

4. Paula's Mighty Quinn

Although this puppy has overall good shape, he needs condition badly. His head is O.K. He has a good topline. He strides out well.

12-18 months Dogs

1. R Noble for Pete's Sake of Eagle

This hound has a nice head carried on a strong neck which flows into a good shoulder. Good angulation of forequarters and hindquarters. I would like a better topline, but his croup is good. Not as tall as the others in his class.

2. Erinwood Concerto

A big lad with loads of condition. His head is good but I would like a little more length of neck. He has just enough angulation in the forequarters. His topline is very good. Would like more width through the hock. He moves out well but is a little close behind.

3. Taliesin's Wheaten Wyncher

This is a nice young grey hound. He has a good neck, and a nice head. Topline is a little weak just now. He is a very nicely made hound. It is a great pity that he was so shy on the day. I do hope he will gain in confidence.

4. Mythic's Arabus a Kindred

A tall light grey coated hound with a nice head. His ear is O.K. too. His neck is a little short. His shoulder has just enough angulation and his topline is fine. Although he carries his tail up too high, it seems to be correctly set.

Novice Dogs

1. Can. Ch Aotearoa Oldline Freehold Moa

An excellent young dog with a head of correct length and good strength of muzzle. He carries his lovely ear nicely up on the head. I like his arched neck and it blends nicely into a shoulder that has enough angulation. Although his topline is level, his croup is nicely sloped. He is a free mover with drive from a nicely angulated rear.

2. Fleetwind Carroy Duan Amergin

This hound is nicely balanced, front and rear. He has good lay back of shoulder. His good head is marred by a frontal bone that is too highly arched. He carries a lovely ear. I would like a stronger neck. His wheaten coat is of correct texture. Pity he carries his tail too high. His movement is good.

3. Carrickaneeva Meirgire

A nice tall hound with a good head. I would like a little more length of neck. His shoulder is nicely angulated. His croup starts a little too far forward which spoils his topline. He is a free mover.

Bred by Exhibitor Dogs

1. R Noble McEwan of Eagle

A typical hound with a good head. He has a good front with a nice lay-back of shoulder. His topline is O.K. Moves well at the correct pace but, strangely enough, when he moves too quickly his front reach shortens. He has a good ribcage. He had a nicely bent stifle and good width through the hock.

2. Carrickaneena An Firic Aris

I also liked this hound. He carries a nice ear on a good head and has a good neck. His forequarters are adequately angulated. His topline is flat and his loin is a little too long. His movement is O.K.

3. Castlemaine Infinity

Another pleasing hound. He has a good head, although his ear is not folded. He needs a little more length of neck. He has a nice front and his rear is nicely angulated. He lacks rise over the loin. His movement is good.

4. Crionnacht Carrickaneena Wyse, JC

A tall grey with a good head and a good bite. I would like a little more length of neck. He has a fairly good shoulder and nice length of upper arm. He moves fairly well.

American Bred Dogs

1. Starkeeper McEnroe of Limerick

A lovely red wheaten. His head is of correct length and would be perfect if he just had a little less frontal bone. He has a good neck. He has very strong forequarters. I would like a little more rise over the loin. Lovely tail set. His hindquarters are very good, with nice angulation. Strides out well.

2. FCH. Taliesin's Wizard of Wideview

Not a very big hound. He has a good head with a level bite. His lovely ear is well placed. His neck is just strong enough. Although I would like more angulation in front, it is balanced with the rear. Topline lacks rise over the loin. It is important to move him at the correct pace, otherwise his front suffers.

3. Skywalker's A'Patriot Game

A typical head with a good ear. Has just enough angulation in the forequarters. His back is weak at present, needs more muscle. He has a nicely sloped croup and his rear is O.K. Carries his tail too high.

4. Gatsby of Aerie

A very tall hound. His head is a bit weak in muzzle and a little too high in frontal bone. He has a lovely arched neck. His shoulder is a bit straight. He is very well bodied up. He has a good topline. His hindquarters are nicely angulated with very good width through the hock. A pity his movement is spoiled by being tied at the elbow.

Open Dogs

1. Cnoccarne Carrowmoragh, CGC

I really fell for this hound. A lovely typical hound with good conformation. He has a typical head and a strong neck of correct length which blended nicely into the shoulder. He has a good topline with lovely croup and correct tail-set. He has great depth of chest which it is well ribbed up. Forequarters and hindquarters well angulated. Everything seems balanced, nothing is exaggerated. He moved true and with a good stride. (Winners Dog & B.O.B)

2. Wolfhaven Aint No Fool to Olugh

Another very lovely hound. He has a good head; his neck is just strong enough. He has a good shoulder and uses his upper arm beautifully on the move. He has a correct topline and he is well bodied up. To be critical, I would like a little more width through the stifle. (Reserve Winners Dog)

3. Erinwood Gaston

This hound has a good head and a correct bite, his neck is good enough. I would like more angulation at the shoulder. His topline would be improved by a stronger loin. He has a lovely croup and his rear angulation is better than his front.

4. Glenamadda Starkeeper Armagh

Also a typical hound. He has a pleasing head with a level bit. He needs more angulation of the forequarters. He has a lovely spring of rib. Topline lacks rise over the loin. He has adequate angulation of the hindquarters but he was not using his rear on the move.

Puppy Bitches 6-9 months

1. Lismore Koi

A very elegant young hound, with good height. Although she was out of coat, it did show her outline to advantage. She is well angulated front and rear and has good length of limb. Good depth of chest and well ribbed up. Well balanced.

2. Skywalker's La Bella Zingara at Tir Alain

Another nice young hound. Very well put together. She has good angulation front and rear, well balanced. She is lacking in confidence just now. I hope this improves as I feel she has a good future.

3. Mystic Mesa at Curiann

A very substantial puppy with great bone throughout. The angulation of her forequarters is not as good as her hindquarters. She is well bodied up and her topline is O.K.

4. Starkeeper Karontara Carolina

A very small bitch. She is very sweet in temperament and is very shapely. Everything is in the right place. My fear is that she will not gain enough size. I hope she does.

Puppy Bitches 9-12 months

1. January of Aerie

A very attractive girl. She has a lovely head and a good neck which blends into her shoulder correctly. Nicely angulated forequarters and hindquarters. She has a correct topline and is well bodied up. Moves well. (Best Puppy)

2. Carnasserie Duet of Eagle

A tall elegant puppy with a good front. Not quite as well angulated as 1st. She has a strong neck. Her topline is good as is her underline. Moves O.K.

3. Riversong's Long May You Run

A well proportioned young lady. I preferred heads of 1st and 2nd. Her neck is just good enough. Her front needs more angulation at upper arm but it is balanced with her hindquarters. A nicely made puppy.

4. Oldline's Lee Ridge Roslin

This lady does not have the quality of the three above. Her head is good but her neck is a bit short. Her topline is good enough. I would like more angulation of the hindquarters.

12-18 Months Bitches

1. Aotearoa Tuatea Sophie

A very sweet girl with a very pretty head. Her dark pigmentation enhances her coat colour. She has a nicely angulated front, is well bodied up with a good rib-cage. She has a strong topline and well angulated hindquarters.

2. Talisker Laurel of Whitehall

Another very sound youngster with a lovely head and a nice neck blending into the shoulder which is adequately angulated. Topline could be a little better. Nicely angulated hindquarters.

She carries herself freely on the move.

3. Starkeeper California lerne

A bitch of good quality. Her head is carried well on a good neck. She has just enough angulation in front and her topline is O.K. too. She strides out well but moves close behind.

4. Sherwood's Alanna of Shancarrick

A nicely made lady with a good head. She has strength throughout but I would like more angulation in front and rear. She is well bodied up. Needs to settle on the move.

Novice Bitches

1. Kellykerry Peony of Aerie

This is a pleasing girl. She carries her lovely well placed ear on a very good head. Her bite is correct. Her strong neck blends into a nicely angulated front. Her topline lacks rise over loin. Nice depth of chest. Nicely angulated hindquarters. She moves a little close behind.

Bred by Exhibitor Bitches

1. FC Carrickaneena Crionnacht Darcy

This is a really lovely bitch of quality. Her overall outline is pleasing to the eye. I like her head. Her neck is strong and of good length. She has just enough angulation at the front. Her topline lacks rise over the loin. She has nice spring of rib and is bodied up nicely. Good angulation of the hindquarters. She is a good mover. (Reserve Winners Bitch)

2. Skyes Tess

A sound bitch. Her nice head is well carried on her long, strong neck. She needs more angulation in the front which does affect her reach on the move. She has good depth of chest but lacks rise over the loin. She drives well from behind.

3. Guffaw of Aerie

This lady has a nice head and a good mouth. Her neck is also good. I would like more angle at the upper arm, although her shoulder has adequate lay-back. She has a flat topline . She needs a longer second thigh to give adequate rear angulation.

4. Aotearoa Whakamaru

This bitch has a good head; her neck is good enough but could be a little stronger. Would like more angulation at the front and rear. Topline lacks rise over the loin. She is well bodied up with enough heart and lung room. Moves true coming and going.

American Bred Bitches

1. Carrickaneena Slieveanorra

A very good bitch with a very acceptable head. I like her neck and her shoulder is good. She is strong in topline. I would like a little more forechest. She has good, balanced angulation of the front and rear. A sound mover.

2. Crionnacht Carrickaneena Daly JC

This lady has a very nice head set off by a lovely ear. She has nice length and strength of neck. I would like more lay-back of shoulder. The topline is O.K. Her stifle is nicely angulated. She moves well.

3. Gordon of Aerie

A bitch I like. She has a good head with correct bite, and an elegant neck. Her shoulder and front could have more angulation. Her topline is flat. She lacks reach, although her hindquarters are nicely angulated. She moves close behind.

4. Kellykerry Peggy Sue of Eagle

A very tall bitch with a head complemented by a lovely ear. Needs more in the neck. Her front is a little straight and her topline is level. Her rear angulation is better than her front. She has very good feet.

Open Bitches

1. Crionnacht Carrickaneena Lyons, JC

I was very taken with this lovely, typical bitch. An elegant lady, well balanced. Her head is good, she has a level bite. Has a strong neck of correct length. Nice at the front too. Good overall outline with correct strong topline, finishing with a lovely croup. Her rear angulation matches her good front producing good movement. Very true coming and going. (Winners Bitch, BOS)

2. Wolfhaven Caper of Aerie

Another very good typical bitch. Again, a good head with a lovely ear and a strong neck. Her front has just enough angulation. Her topline is good and her movement was very good also. The winner was more balanced in conformation.

3. Taliesin's Lasa Bella

A very nicely coated grey with correct bite. Her head is spoiled by a weak muzzle. Her neck is strong enough and her shoulder and topline are O.K. She moves well coming and going.

4. Glenamadda Starkeeper Venus

A tall lady with correct bite. Her head is O.K. but her ear is not rosed. She has a nice neck. I would like more angulation in the forequarters. Her topline is flat, no rise over the loin. She has long thighs. Her movement was just O.K.

Field Trial Bitches

1. Laislinn Starkeeper Rayne, SC, FCH

A good bitch, her head is good with a correct bite. I like her strong neck and her shoulder is nicely angulated. Her topline is also strong. A pity about her ringed tail. She has a good quality coat and her hindquarters are acceptable. She moves well.

2. DC Carrickaneena Slan Leat SC, FCH

Another nice bitch. Her bite is level. I would like a stronger neck. She has a nice front, she is lacking in topline. She is not as strong in the hindquarters as the winner, but overall a nice bitch.

Veteran Dogs 6-8 Years

1. Am Can Ch. Curiann's Celtic Rune

A lovely hound, still as sound as a bell. He has a grand head, his bite is level. Still strong in body and nicely angulated in front. A little over-angulated behind. His Topline is still strong. The longest tail I have ever seen. Sound mover. (Award of Merit)

2. Ch Skyes Comet

Another grand hound. Very well made too. He has a nice head. He is well bodied up but needs a little more angulation in front which resulted in lack of reach on the move. He is a bit lazy today but he moves true.

3. Ch Carrickaneena Ultach

A very good hound, still moving very soundly. He has a nice head but a light eye. He is still strong in body and moves well around the ring.

4. Ch Karontara Starkeeper Dylan

Another hound of whom to be proud. I like his head. His neck could be stronger. He holds his topline on the move. He is still a sound mover.

Veteran Dogs 8-9 Years

1. Ch Carrickanena Dearg Mac Logan

A very typical dog. He has a lovely head and his ears are nicely carried. His good neck meets a nice shoulder. His topline is still very strong. Maybe losing out a little in the rear, but that is alright at this age.

Veteran Dogs 9 Years and over

1. Ch Ironweed Deataig

Yet another lovely hound and at 10.5 years he is brilliant. His head is lovely. He has a good front. His good topline is still intact. Getting a little weak behind now but would still give some of the youngsters a run for their money.

Veterans Bitches 6-8 Years

1. Ch Giggles Aerie of Eagle

A very lovely elegant lady, just oozing type. She has a nice head with a good bite. Her neck is good and it joins a nicely angulated shoulder. Her upper-arm is a little straight. Her topline is sound. To be critical she should have more reach, but really lovely. (Best Veteran)

2. Ch Starkeeper Glenamadda Realtan

Another lovely girl. She also has a good head and neck. Her topline is still very strong. Her feet are a bit too long and she is not using her stifle joint enough while on the move. She is a lovely typical hound.

3. Caithness Ruby Saoirse

I have type written over all my notes on these lovely veterans and this lady is no exception. She is well built, her topline is still good and she carries herself very well. She is sluggish on the move and I would like her to keep her head up.

4. Ch Knocknarea Tamsin

She is a lovely hound. Head strong but elegant, her neck may be a little short. Her topline is good. She needs more forechest. She has good angulation of the hindquarters.

Veterans Bitches 8-9 years

1. Ch Ballincu Kellair Ashleigh CGC

Elegant girl, very feminine. She has a lovely head. Her neck is strong and her front is still good, as is her topline. She is nicely angulated at the rear and still moves very well.

2. Ch Rosslare Kindred Mythic Nell, CD

Still very sound and true on the move. She has a lovely head, although her ear is carried flat and her neck could be stronger. Her topline is still good. She is sound behind and still drives strongly.

3. Ballincu Kelair Alleagan Rua

Another lovely bitch. She has a good head. Her neck is elegant, but she is a little upright in shoulder. Her topline is good. A bit sluggish on the move on the day. A lovely bitch.

Veteran Bitches 9 Years and over

1. Ch Golden Lass of Nutstown

Still great at ten years old. Very sound and in very good condition. She still holds her overall outline, even on the move. She has a good harsh red/fawn coat. She is lovely and moves soundly.

2. Carrickaneena Sise

Her 9th birthday today. She has a lovely head and a beautiful ear. Her front is still O.K. and her topline is good. She has balanced angulation front and rear. Still moves well.

3. Ch Carrickaneena Ruithneach

A gorgeous 11 year old with a lovely 'old fashioned' head. Her neck is good but her shoulder is too straight. She is in lovely condition, although getting weak behind now.

4. Ch Kellcastle Starkeeper Vanilla

She is a lovely 11 year old. Her black pigmentation contrasts with her lovely red/wheaten coat. She is so elegant with her beautiful head. She is in wonderful condition.

It was a great joy and a privilege to witness so many beautiful veterans. Thank you for bringing them to me.

Jim Behan