

Lus na bPog/Sean MacLochlainn Foundation Broodmare Award

***Abbeyleix Bluebird - 2011**

(Coosheen Finn x Blue Moon)

by Heather Sherratt

I never met Bluebird. She died after a difficult foaling the spring before I bought my stallion, Maplehurst Michael MacDaire.

When I bought Mick, I knew I liked his dam from her pedigree and photographs, but I had no idea she had won at Clifden and the Royal Dublin before she left Ireland as a four year old. It was only gradually, years later, that I began to piece together the achievements of this remarkable little mare. I read in the English Chronicle of her son, Dale Haze, by Tully Grey, who won the championship at the Swedish breed show for three years in a row. This sparked my interest and I started to trace her progeny in Europe.

She was a little mare who seemed to have an impact on the people who met her. Sue Clarke of Glenormiston Stud in Australia told me she had seen her in Ireland and wanted to buy her but she had been sold on to the US. Years later at an ACPS AGM Henry O'Toole asked me if I had ever owned Bluebird as he had seen her at the Royal Dublin Show and wanted to buy her. He said she was the only mare they hadn't bred themselves that he wanted, but his father said they had enough mares already. I had phone calls from Ireland asking if I had her or if I shipped Mick's frozen semen abroad. She was certainly remembered and valued in her home land.

When I wrote to Lib Petch after the death of her stallion, Coosheen Finn, I told her I had a stallion grandson of his. She well remembered Lady de Vesci bringing Bluebird's dam, Blue Moon, to Finn and showing her own mares against Bluebird at Clifden and Dublin. She sent me photos of four-year-old Bluebird at the Royal Dublin where she won the championship.

Lady de Vesci made the decision to take Bluebird to visit Tully Grey in an effort to carry on the Green line but sold Bluebird on to Johnny Lee before the foal was born. Johnny registered the foal as Dale Haze. Before Dale Haze left for Sweden, Johnny bred him to Castle Park, resulting in Hazy Dawn who went to Denmark. Bluebird herself was sold on to Georgia where she bred three foals to *Bobby Brown: Bob White, Merrie Chase and Charlie Brown, before coming to Quebec.

Unfortunately, Bluebird was not used or valued as much in North America as she was in Ireland and Europe. Her stallion son, Bob White, had few foals before he was gelded, but one daughter, Landsgate Singing Bird, had a son, Landsgate Bluebeard who is a very productive sire in the Eastern States. In Canada, she only had one foal by Gilnocky Ard-Righ MacDaire before she died at age thirteen. I was lucky enough to find that foal,

Mick, when I was looking for my first stallion. At that point, I had no idea of the influence that one little mare was going to have on the breed worldwide.

Through Dale Haze, she left grandsons, Moy Hazy Cove, in Ireland, and Hazy Dawn in Denmark. In Canada, we have had her influence not only through Mick and his sons and grandsons, Elphin Lorcan, Elphin Cronan, Elphin Song Sparrow, Century Hills Frederick McTeague and his son Century Hills Aedan Zodiac, but also through *Canal Clancy, *Fairy Hill Hawk, *Kingstown Joe and *Kippure Cara.

I am delighted that Bluebird has been honoured with the CCPS broodmare award. I truly believe that our mares can have as much influence on the breed as the stallions. As a dam of stallion sons, Bluebird has certainly made a tremendous contribution to the breed in Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and France and now in Canada and the States.