

1. What fascinated you most about the ISCWT?

I saw the Wheaten for the first time in a book of several breeds. I was looking for a second dog for my mixed breed dog and this time it had to be a purebred dog. The descriptions of the character and its outer appearance impressed me. I have found the kennel "Yesterday's Hero" who at time had 4 Wheatens in his home: Gordi Wheaten of der Steig, Wheaten Rebel's Fergus Mc Roy, Yesterdays Hero Cherley Sheleen and Wheaten Rebel's Eliza Doolittle. Experiencing the Wheaten in real life and feeling the described silky coat encouraged my decision to take an Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier into my house.

For how many years have you been dealing with the breed?

For 22 years now.

Yesterday's Hero Cherley Sheleen joined me in 1996. She was already 4 years old. She became my foundation female for the kennel Strongbow's, which I started in 1997.



*Yesterday's Hero
Cherley Sheleen*

Are Wheaten your original breed?

Yes

2. What do you think is the best Wheaten you own or have bred?

Since 1997 I have bred 14 litters. Of course, there is no such thing as THE perfect dog. The quality of the dogs is predominantly measured with success at exhibitions. But the results at exhibitions are not the most important thing for my breeding. First and foremost, I breed family dogs whereby I consider health as the absolute priority.



CH Strongbow's Conway Fintain

I've had great success with "Strongbow's Conway Fintain" (Fenian O'Connor & Yesterday's Hero Cherley Sheleen). He was honored with many champion titles and showed himself successfully at an old age at many exhibitions.



CH Strongbow's Grastuil Flannery

One of his offspring is my male "Strongbow's Grastuil Flannery" (Strongbow's Conway Fintain & Strongbow's Dealramh na Greine), who is also very successful at exhibitions and follows his father's footsteps. He also owns several champion titles. The daughter of him "Cailin Irish Ainnir Faylinn", bred and owned by Anne Kraan-Sefrin, is very successful on shows and has lots of Champion titles for her young age.

Together with Claudia Morey Vazquez – Kennel "Kelly's Home" – I imported Honeyrags Smokey Duncan from Sandra Hellsing, Sweden.



Honeyrags Smokey Duncan

My females aren't inferior to my dogs.



CH Strongbow's Eimhin Narbhflaith

I have celebrated huge successes with "Strongbow's Eimhin Narbhflaith" (Choroschie Drusja's Amazing Boy & Strongbow's Finola Keeva). This level of success remained stable even at an old age: at the age of 13 ½ years she finished her show career with the title Veteranen-Europasieger.



CH Strongbow's Eimhin Narbhflaith

My female "Strongbow's Delreamh na Greine" (Uniques Globetrotter & Strongbow's Eimhin Narbhflaith) is still a very powerful female. She's not that successful on shows, but gave birth to wonderful, typical Irish Wheaten.



CH Strongbow's Méan Fomhair

My female "Strongbow's Méan Fomhair" (Oscar Osheen On Inis Glass & Strongbow's Dealramh na Greine) is a masculine, strong female. She also presents herself very well at exhibitions and already has several champion titles. She also won the Wheaten Top Ten in the Netherlands.



CH Strongbow's Laoise Meabh

My youngest offspring female is "Strongbow's Laoise Meabh" (Honeyrags Smokey Duncan & Strongbow's Méan Fomhair).

In addition to my own dogs, offspring from and with Strongbow's have been successfully exhibited.

3. Apart from the Wheaten you were dealing with, which 2 or 3 Wheaten would you describe as the best you saw and why?



Puppy out of my L-litter

I think these are the names of the dogs that all wheaten breeders who are familiar with the history of this breed, know. Geijes Kilmore: he has everything a Wheaten should have. I've never had a chance to see him in real life. But the most famous picture of him speaks for itself. Two other impressive dogs are Newkilber Camelot and of course Newkilber the Quiet Man. They correspond the closest to the standard.

The mentioned dogs are all represented in my pedigrees. And I'm proud of that. Additionally, I like to mention the old dogs of Wheaten Rebel's. Among them were many very typical Wheaten type, which had great influence on the development of the breed. In the early years of my breeding I had the opportunity to see some of them at exhibitions.

From Kennel Camacha of Rob and Monique Hubner there are Camacha Nevan, his son Feanaro Niallan Naomhan owned by Richard Dalton and Camacha Gildray Naoimh, who have impressed me greatly in their outward appearance.

4. Which kennel inside and outside the breed impressed you and why?

Of course Holmenocks from the past - and this requires no further explanation. Louise Borst-Borremann "Brugh na Boinne" impresses me with the greatest historical knowledge and the beautiful dogs she bred. I was fortunate to meet her in 2000 when I was allowed to use her import male, Fenian O'Connor, as the father of my C-litter. I still enjoy talking to her today. Also Geijes' breeding program impresses me very much, as they have remained true to the purely Irish Wheaten for decades. Actually, I would have to name all breeders here who try to keep the pure Irish Wheaten alive. Unfortunately, there are only a few left. Outside the breed, Thomas Hoenener impresses me with his Irish Setter kennel "Yesterday's Hero". With much love, dedication and a great deal of historical knowledge he has been breeding the Irish Setter for over three decades.



Eirin & Connor

5. If you could just put a dog from the past into your breeding program, what would that be and why?

That's a very difficult question. The first thing that comes to mind is Geijes Kilmore. His appearance pops up in my mind when I think of Wheaten. He also had a great, positive influence on the evolution of the breed and is represented in my pedigrees.

Of course, I love presenting my dogs at shows and styling them accordingly but I prefer the original type of Wheaten. It would be very exciting to use the Wheaten of the beginnings to return to the original type of this wonderful breed.



6. Who was your biggest mentor?

I never had the great honor of meeting Maureen Holmes in person. Thankfully she recorded her knowledge, experiences and opinions in her book. A must for every breeder and breed interested. Thomas Hoevener accompanied me during the first years of my breeding career. He showed me how the correct Wheaten should look like. Furthermore he taught me how to read pedigrees. He was passionate defender of the pure Irish Wheaten. Louise Borst-Borremann also supported me with her great historical knowledge and advice. Today I am in close contact with the Dutch breeders of the Irish Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club Netherlands, who are committed to the preservation and improvement of the breed. They are always available with help and advice. Joint reviews of puppies and the selection of the best puppies are always very educational. Unfortunately, as in Germany, there are only a handful of breeders who bear this task. I am happy to be a member of this community.



Typical Irish Puppy

7. Ever since you started the Wheaten, have you seen many changes in the breed?

When I started breeding the Wheaten and visited more and more exhibitions over time, the changes were clearly visible. The Wheaten of the Irish type disappeared rapidly. Breeders who previously owned and bred the Irish type changed their mind. Most of the judges preferred the Wheaten American type. Thus, the Wheaten of the Irish type had a very difficult stand at exhibitions. The Irish Wheaten, when placed in the ring with Wheatens of the American type, was set back. Not infrequently he was also rated with a VG. Even well-known breeders, who had bred beautiful Irish dogs, started to ignore the standard whereby they showed Wheatens whose ears were black / gray, with woolly coat, exaggerated hind corners and too short back. In the movement, they were more like the Kerry Blue Terrier and not an Irish "working terrier". Everything that is listed as a mistake in the standard of the Wheaten has been and will be judged on exhibitions with Excellent. Some breeders changed/adapted their lines because being rewarded at exhibitions became more important than preserving the original race.



Strongbow's Nóe Mi na Samhna & Strongbow's Loinnir Juverna

8. Has the quality deteriorated or improved since you became involved in the breed?

If you look at the standard, the breed has deteriorated. The Wheaten of the Irish type has a very difficult time. For many breeders, success in exhibitions is more important than maintaining the original Wheaten type. Irish Wheatens are on shows in the shadow of the American type, as many international judges prefer the American type. Due to the change on shows, breeders of the Irish type became more and more rare. Many switched from Irish to Mixed/American type.



9. In your opinion, what is the biggest hurdle for the breed?

Breeders of these wonderful dogs shouldn't breed only for the success in the show ring and the sale of the puppies. They should rather remember the originality of this breed. Breeders of the pure Irish lines should pass on the puppies of their litters with the utmost care to breeders, whom one can trust and which commit themselves to mate these offspring and their descendants only with purely Irish lines. In my opinion, siblings should not be sold to different breeders: Quality not quantity.



CH Strongbow's Eimhin Narbhflaith

10. What needs to be done to protect the breed in the future?



Strongbow's Bright Blizzard

The Irish Kennel Club has created a breed standard. This breed standard applies to all countries that belong to the FCI. Judges should follow this standard. However, there are very few national and international judges who apply this standard; they reward dogs with disqualifying errors with champion points. I have experienced how even judges from Ireland, country of origin, praised the incorrect type. How this is possible, is beyond my understanding. It takes away the hope of the breeders and lovers of the Irish type as it becomes more and more difficult to show the correct type. I agree with Louise, that judges who don't like the Wheaten's Irish type simply shouldn't accept judging invitations.



Stefanie Petz