

THE MIDAS TOUCH

Lady Florence Watson was born in 1894 into the privileged family of the First Baronet of Sulhamstead, Sir William George Watson, and his second wife Lady Bessie., By the time Florence was in her teens the family were resident at Sulhamstead Manor, Berkshire, locally dubbed "The White House", an 18th century mansion which William purchased in 1910 and completely refurbished. .

Even in her teens Florence demonstrated an independent, even rebellious spirit. While studying domestic economy at Evendine Court she was expelled as a result of hiring a car (having obtained her driving licence aged 15) and with a cannon's daughter visiting Worcester Cathedral without permission.,

Irish Wolfhounds

Promised a "big' dog" by her parents when she left finishing school Florence visited the Ladies Kennel Association Championship Show where the Irish Wolfhound was her breed of choice. Through Cecil Aldin whose daughter Gwen she had met in Paris, the male Manin Michael was purchased for £5 from Mr Eric Palmer in 1913.



**Marin Michael who was KC registered as Sir Michael of Sheppey
Portrait by Cecil Aldin**

During the Great War of 1914-1918 the family home became a hospital where wounded soldiers recuperated. It was there she met James Nagel, an Irishman who had emigrated to Canada and then returned to serve the King's Royal Rifle Corps during the war. .

When Florence announced her intention to marry James her parents were horrified and, threatened to disinherit her, but on 1st July 1916 she became Mrs. Nagel. With no financial support from her family Florence rolled up her sleeves and worked hard. By 1924 the couple had moved to Stonehenge Stock Farm in Amesbury where Florence ran a Tea Room to augment the couple's income

James registered Florence's Marin Michael with the Kennel Club (UK) and transferred him into the ownership of Mr. & Mrs. Nagel in 1917 adding the Kennel name Sheppey and changing the dog's name to Sir Michael of Sheppey. Food shortages during the First World War had resulted in an official prohibition on dog breeding, but Florence ignored this and bred her first litter from the bitch Lady Alma of Sheppey bred in Mr. Everett's Felixstowe kennel. The result was Sulhamstead Pedlar who was the first to carry the Kennel Name of Sulhamstead. He was Florence's constant companion and exhibited by James, became a highly successful showdog.



James Nagel with (L to R) Felixstowe Kilcoo, Sulhamstead Thelma and Sulhamstead Pedlar

In 1923 Florence purchased a bitch puppy, the runt of the litter, for £48. and registered her as Sulhamstead Thelma, She grew into an outstanding example of the breed and was awarded Challenge Certificates at three consecutive Crufts shows in 1925, 1926 and 1927.

Sulhamstead Conncara (Felixstowe Kilbarry x Caragh) was born in 1925, the only male in a litter of two, but he was blind. His breeder Mrs. Lockhart intended to euthanize him, but Florence begged her not to do so as she felt his conformation was exceptional, Mrs. Lockhart relented and Florence took him home. A specialist advised that Conncara's blindness was probably the result of an accident in very early puppyhood, Florence travelled with him to dog shows on trains, the London Underground and even by boat to Ireland..



Portrait of Ch. Sulhamstead Conncara by Cecil Aldin

Ferelith Somerfield commented “Conncara became one of the great sires of all time in the breed” and was “an outstanding dog” .a view shared by many eminent dog show judges which earned him his Championship title. Florence kept Conncara’s blindness a secret until three years after his death believing that his qualities would be overlooked by other breeders if they had known. A prepotent sire he produced several Champions and other top class showdogs none of whom were blind.



Walking the dogs near Stonehenge – James with Irish Wolfhounds, Florence (centre) with an Irish Wolfhound and Irish (Red) Setter pup (possibly Sulhamstead Ben d’Or) and a Kennel Maid with a Wolfhound

Both James and Florence were instrumental in promoting Irish Wolfhound coursing. Their first coursing event took place in Wiltshire in January 1925. The dog press reporting :

“Mr. J. Nagle of Sulhamstead prefix is all for the sound and working sort of Irish Wolfhound as well as a strong advocate of type. This good sportsman is organising a coursing meeting of Irish Wolfhounds on Salisbury Plain in December or January next and has already received eight entries and will be glad to hear from any owner who wishes to enter. It is proposed to have a small sweepstake which shall be divided into 50 percent for the winner, 30 percent for the runner-up and 10 percent for each dog beaten in the semi-final. Trophies will be purchased with the entries and presented.”

Mr. Isaac Everett also reported in his column Wolfhound Whines

Mr. J. Nagel writes that he has some very interesting entries for the coursing meeting and that several very well known winners on the bench are to take part. Mrs. Southey is coursing Crewkerne George (winning bitch challenge certificate at LKA) and another. Mrs. Beynon is running three or perhaps four. This is an interesting entry, as all her hounds have hunted big game in Kenya, and that good sportswoman is anxious to see how her hounds perform against the English bred hounds. Lady Watson (Florence Nagel) will probably run her hound, Sulhamstead Pedlar (the sire of Ch. Felixstowe Kilcullen). Pedlar is now in his sixth year, but kills hares regularly and will make some of the younger hounds gallop. The greatest support seems to come from the fair sex, and the entries by men are so far Mr. Nagel's Sulhamstead Thelma and the writer's Ch. Felixstowe Killcao.”



James Nagel with Irish Wolfhounds at a coursing event



**Irish Wolfhounds eager to be on the trail
James Nagel in pursuit.**

In 1927 James ran off with a kennel maid leaving Florence with two children David and Patricia and all the dogs. Divorce was an arduous and difficult legal process for a woman. When questioned in court concerning James' reason for leaving she answered "He must have got bored with me" but in private she described him as a great gambler and a big spender although their early life together had been wonderful. The divorce was finally granted in 1928 and in that year 19 Wolfhounds were transferred by the Kennel Club from the ownership of Mr. & Mrs. Nagel into Florence's name alone. At the time of her divorce she was living on a smallholding near Headley, but returned to Sulhamstead In 1932 having inherited land and money after her father's death in 1930.

During the many successful years that followed, Florence Nagel bred or owned forty-five Irish Wolfhounds who were awarded Challenge Certificates, twenty-one of them Champions. A highlight of her career came in 1960 when Ch. Sulhamstead Merman was judged Best In Show at Crufts, claiming the title of Supreme Champion. She judged the breed sixteen times at Championship level in UK, twice at Crufts, the first in 1961 the only time in a nine-year period that her dogs were not Best of Breed, and again in 1970. In 1965 she judged Best in Show at Crufts crowning a Standard Poodle Supreme Champion.

Irish Setters,

Florence acquired her first Irish Setter in 1924 as a companion for a lonely Irish Wolfhound pup registering him as Sulhamstead Ben d'Or. She probably used the suffix d'Or - the French word for 'of gold' or "golden" - to distinguish his pedigree and those that followed from the pedigrees of her Irish Wolfhounds. .

Gilbert Leighton Boyce wrote of Gorse of Auburn, Ben's sire:

"I think that Gorse had practically my favourite version of Irish Setter dog

conformation: superb shoulders, elbows back, dead right in rib, loin, quarters, stifle, pretty well the lot; but he did also have a rather broken wavy sort of coat, and this unfortunately he tended to pass on, along with his many excellences. Mrs. Ingle Bepler praised his sweet head, dark eyes and lovely expression, and called his coat and feathering 'very profuse and rich in colour'. The list of his winning offspring and descendants on the bench is fabulous, and so it is in the field trial world too, because his challenge certificate winning son Ben d'Or founded the Sulhamstead dynasty"

Sulhamstead Ben d'Or was a good winner at shows and believing that all dogs should fulfil the function for which they were originally bred, Florence entrusted George Abbott with Ben's field training. Subsequent generations of the Sulhamstead Irish Setters followed and for a short period Pointers and Golden Retrievers were added in the late 1930s., George handled all the Sulhamstead Gundogs in the field until his retirement in 1964.

John Nash wrote of George Abbott and the Sulhamstead Irish Setters:
"Having watched and competed against him many times, I think he was the best handler I ever saw anywhere and that includes the top handlers in Europe and Scandinavia. He seemed to have that rare gift of having absolute 100% control without taking out any of the dash and drive in the dogs. It was an education to see him walk along at a trial with four 55 to 60 pound (24kg to 27kg) dogs who did not pull on the leash. It was also a joy to see him keep a dog out of trouble on a bad scenting day, he could keep even the fastest of dogs on a very lean pattern across his toes, while the brace mate made all the mistakes early on and at some signal, the dog opened out in the true Abbott pattern with eight angled turns, invariably upwind. Interestingly he had no say in the breeding of the Sulhamsteads. S. Ben d'Or was a winner at field trials and was sired by the famous dual purpose Gorse of Auburn out of Ruby Mahoney. This mating was repeated and Nagel kept three puppies, one being the indomitable Sulhamstead Sheilin d'Or. She won the GB Championship twice in 1927 and 1930.



**Florence Nagel and George Abbott with the Sulhamstead Irish Setters (1930s)
L to R Dinah, Scuttle, Token, Valla, Sheilin, Ben & Baffle**



1930 FT CH. Sulhamstead Sheilin d'Or hunting grouse
PEDIGREE OF SULHAMSTEAD SHEILIN D'OR born 01.08.1925

GORSE OF AUBURN 13/03/1917	GALAHAD 21/11/1906	CH KERRY PALMERSTON (20/07/1902)	ROYAL SOVEREIGN (1900) KERRY QUAIL
		CH STRABANE SALLY	YOUNG PHIL NORA
	AUBURN NELLIE (8/02/1913)	CH STEWARTSTOWN CHIEFTAIN (20/5/1908)	GLENARIFF CHIEFTAIN (21/06/1906) QUAIL OF STEWARTSTOWN (10/02/1903)
		AUBURN BELLE	RIVERSDALE RED STAR CH RIVERSDALE RED LIGHT
RUBY MAHONEY	CH TERRY OF BOYNE (1/08/1919)	CH & IR CH BRIAN OF BOYNE	BEN MORE DOLLY OF BOYNE DANIEL OF BOYNE
		YOUNG NORAH OF BOYNE	NOREEN OF BOYNE
	KITTY OF BOYNE		
		CATHIE OF BOYNE	RAVENHILL FLORRIE

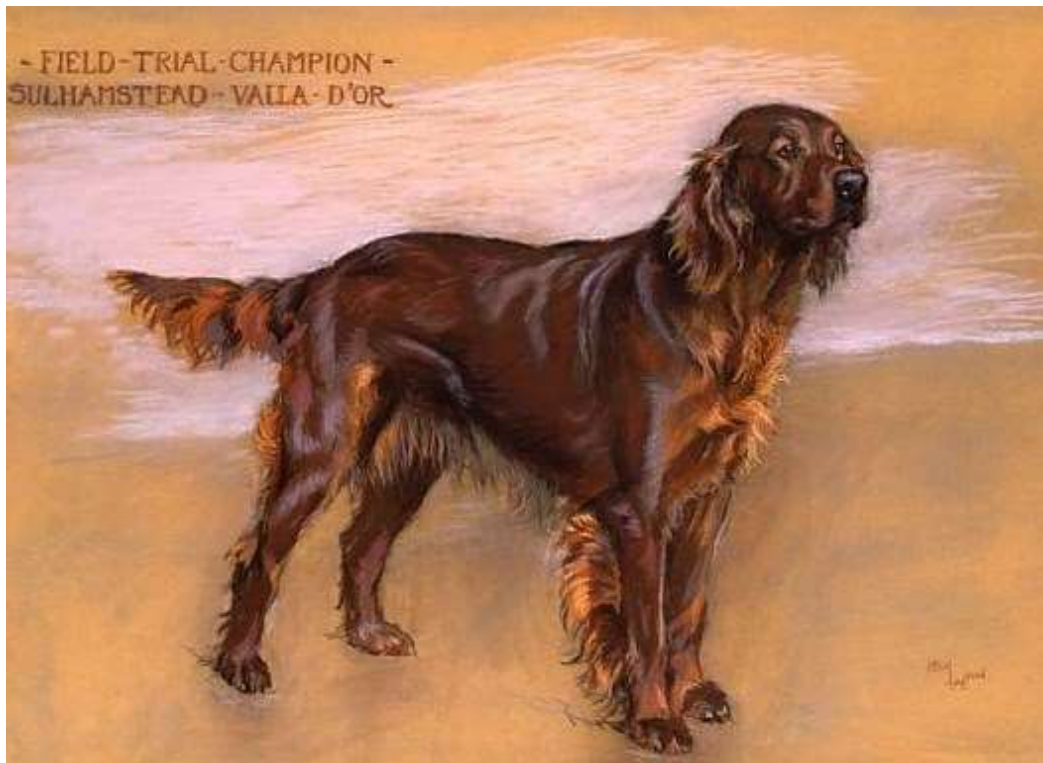
J.A. Carberry's Boyne Irish Setters also played a significant roll in the pedigrees of the early Sulhamstead dogs. Terry of Boyne became a full Champion in 1922. He was exported to America in 1923, but before his departure he sired International Ch. Oonagh of Boyne out of Flush of Boyne



1930 FT Ch Sulhamstead Valla d'Or hunting partridge

PEDIGREE OF FT CH SULHAMSTEAD VALLA D'OR born 27.03.1928

SULHAMSTEAD BEN D'OR 03/04/1924	GORSE OF AUBURN (13/03/1917)	GALAHAD (21/11/1906)	CH KERRY PALMERSTON (20/07/1902) CH STRABANE SALLY CH STEWARTSTOWN CHIEFTAIN (20/05/1908) AUBURN BELLE
		AUBURN NELLIE (8/02/1913)	
	RUBY MAHONEY	CH TERRY OF BOYNE (1/08/1919)	CH & IR CH BRIAN OF BOYNE (29/05/1913) YOUNG NORAH OF BOYNE (15/07/1914)
		KITTY OF BOYNE	
SULHAMSTEAD OONA D'OR 04/03/1926	CAPPAGH CHIEFTAN (3/07/1921)	BELTRA (19/06/1915)	CATHIE OF BOYNE RHEOLA TOBY LAUREOLA
		LISSADELL	BEN THE MOHICAN PARK BIDDY
	INT CH OONAGH OF BOYNE	CH TERRY OF BOYNE (1/08/1919)	CH & IR CH BRIAN OF BOYNE (29/05/1913) YOUNG NORAH OF BOYNE (15/07/1914)
		FLUSH OF BOYNE	DANIEL OF BOYNE NOREEN OF BOYNE (16/08/1912)



Florence Nagel maintained that FT Ch. Sulhamstead Sheilin d'Or and FT. Ch.Sulhamstead Valla d'Or were inseparable in life, and when worked as a brace were unbeatable in the field, The Kennel Club acquired Cecil Aldin's portraits of the dogs after Nagel's death and as a tribute their portraits are always displayed together in the gallery.



1930 FT.CH. SULHAMSTEAD BAFFLE D'OR litter brother to Valla

FT Ch Sulhamstead Baffle d'Or won a puppy class at Crufts and was a great worker, winning the Kennel Club Derby (the top award for puppies) and the Champion Stake. Ten of his progeny won in the field and four became Field Trial Champions.

Florence won the Pointer and Setter Champion Stake five times paying tribute to handler George Abbott for this success while Bill Rasbridge commented "*that much of the success was due to the merits of the dogs themselves, a fact that was ignored by other breeders at the time*".

In the early 1930s Dan Mc Menamin sold Cloghan Belle to Davy Jones who was employed by Mrs. Mary Holt of Menaifron Irish Setters, subsequently Florence purchased her for the Sulhamstead kennel. She became a Field Champion and her progeny by FT Ch Sulhamstead Baffle d'Or, namely Ban, Brantome and Bounty became winners in the field with Buff achieving his Field Champion title .

Until 1929 the Irish Setter Association of England had concentrated their efforts on holding breed conformation shows but in that year it was decided to organize a field trial meeting confined to Irish Setters. This was held at Ruabon in North Wales and organized by Col. Wilson with Florence as Field Trail Secretary a post she held until 1936. .

On 15th December 1933 Our Dog Newspaper published an Irish Setter Supplement which included the Sulhamstead Working Irish Setters. The text reads:

'The Sulhamstead Field Setters had 1033 brace of grouse killed over them in 21 days this season, this performance Mrs. Nagle values even more than the Trial wins, because it is the real thing, and by far the best Field Trial dogs were easily the best shooting dogs.

Mr. George Abbott as trainer and handler is due much of the credit for the good performance put on by the Sulhamstead Irish Setters at Trials. He has fathomed the breed's peculiarities and knows how to get the best out of them, it says much for the lasting powers of his training that five of his Trial dogs returned with their manners unimpaired after being handled by their owners for a week – one of them being a bitch discarded in Ireland as being impossible to train.

The Irish Setter may not be as stylish, but to make up for that he has stamina and will come out fresh and ready for his turn for as many days running as you like. Stamina is the only thing it is difficult to test at a trail, but on a day's shooting it is indeed a valuable asset. The aim of Sulhamstead is to breed for brains, courage and stamina, without which essentials you cannot have a good gundog. How far this policy has been successful is for others to decide.'

With the onset of World War II in 1939 major shows and field trials came to a halt and in 1942 Florence moved to Westerlands, a farm she owned in Petworth, Sussex, where she had stables. Supporting the war effort she ran a canteen for the Air Raid Protection organization in Folkestone, Kent and purchased a Spitfire fighter aircraft for £5000 which she named Sulhamstead and donated it to the Royal Air Force. During the last year of the war, she bred Sulhamstead Bomb, progeny of Sulhamstead Ban d'Or out of Sulhamstead Maybe d'Or born on 29.04.1944

With the arrival of peace in Europe, life began to normalize and Club activities resumed, but there was a different battle to be fought. Bill Rasbridge, then Secretary of the Irish Setter Club of England launched the campaign to eliminate the early onset blinding disease Progressive Retinal Atrophy rcd 1 from Irish Setters. Both Mary Holt and Florence, the leading field trial breeders of the time supported Rasbridge in his quest, but advocated the scrapping of all Ingle Bepler's Rheola based breeding stock, which had spread the condition widely through the breed,. To support the project they offered their own Menaifron and Sulhamstead stud dogs on generous terms.

In 1946 The Irish Setter Association of England collaborated with Mrs (Barrowdale). Ogden of the Setter and Pointer Club to hold the first post-war Championship Show for all Setter breeds and Pointers which was held in Blackpool on 20th November, with a Field Trial following in March 1947.

Gilbert Leighton Boyce commenting in the post-war period wrote “Mrs.(Menaifron) Holt and Mrs. (Sulhamstead) Nagle carried the (field trial) banner between them; and soon after Mrs. Holt had replaced Mrs. Ingle-Beppler as President of the Irish Setter Association of England she died and it seemed that Mrs. Nagle was alone. In any case Mrs. Nagle had strength enough in her kennel to carry on with the incredible string of successes, almost certain to remain unsurpassed in the British history of the breed”.

By 1949 the bitch Sulhamstead Banco d’Or was born and in 1951 the male Sulhamstead Bristle d’Or their pedigrees still reflecting Florence’s first Irish Setter Sulhamstead Ben d’Or in their ancestry.

Feeling that a outcross was needed to bolster her Sulhamstead post war breeding she used Sulhamstead Montebellos Norseman d’Or imported from Norway and bred him to Sulhamstead Banco d’Or. The resulting litter produced the male Sulhamstead Norse d’Or and his sister Sulhamstead Nina d’Or

**PEDIGREE OF FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NORSE D’OR &
FT CH. SULHAMSTEAD NINA D’OR born 04.05.1955**

SULHAMSTEAD MONTEBELLOS NORSEMAN	GRÖNSJOENS RIPPER	TELL	BJORNTANGENS PRINCE
		GRÖNSJOENS SALLY	VIGDIS EVADALS RIP
	NOR CH MONTEBELLOS JAPPY	MONTEBELLOS CHASSE	GRÖNSJOENS TANJA STEFF
		FIREORAS TOPSY	MONTEBELLOS VALLA GRÖNSJOENS GREI
SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D’OR 19/01/1949	SULHAMSTEAD BLAST D’OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAN D’OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAFFLE D’OR (27/03/1928) FT CH CLOGHAN BELLE (15/02/1928)
		SULHAMSTEAD MAYBE D’OR (16/01/1936)	MARTINDALE MURGATROYD (23/10/1931) SULHAMSTEAD BOUNTY D’OR (5/01/1934)
	SULHAMSTEAD BANTAM D’OR	SULHAMSTEAD BOMB D’OR (29/04/1944)	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAN D’OR SULHAMSTEAD MAYBE D’OR (16/01/1936)
		MENAIFRON RUSTLE O’MOY (21/02/1945)	MENAIFRON RORY O’MOY MENAIFRON ROSEANNA O’MOY (21/12/1939)

Florence judged in America and exported several Irish Setters, amongst them Sulhamstead Beppo d’Or and Trace d’Or to Ernest Levering and

Sulhamstead Major d'Or to Les Blackwell. The most successful of them all was Sulhamstead Norse d'Or to Mr. W.E "Ned" Le Grande, who amassed placings in 41 stakes; winning the 1962 National Red Setter Championship Stake and runner-up in the 1969 Middle Atlantic States Regional Shooting Dog Classic. As a prepotent sire he produced 21 field trial winners and starting in 1952 Le Grande's Willow Wind dogs won more than 500 trials. All went back to the original Sulhamstead stock.

Norse's sister FT Ch. Sulhamstead Nina d'Or was bred to Sulhamstead Bristle d'Or which produced FT.CH. Sulhamstead Nearco d'Or. about whom Gilbert Leighton Boyce told this amusing anecdote. *"Nearco was once missing before the start of his round in a stake and was found crouched cat-like along the branch of a tree doing a bit of bird watching! He, like his ancestors, was not called a red devil for nothing. Early in his career he was drawn in a novice stake against a show dog that had run an extremely good qualifier earlier in the day. This dog went totally to pieces and no one knew why. I have a theory that Nearco just gave him a look before they started!"*

PEDIGREE OF SULHAMSTEAD NEARCO D'OR born 11.05.1957

BRISTLE D'OR (23/02/1951)	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BLAST D'OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAN D'OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAFFLE D'OR (27/03/1928) FT CH CLOGHAN BELLE (15/02/1928)	
		SULHAMSTEAD MAYBE D'OR (16/01/1936)	MARTINDALE MURGATROYD (23 /10/1931) FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BOUNTY D'OR (5/01/1934)	
	SULHAMSTEAD BANTAM D'OR	SULHAMSTEAD BOMB D'OR (29/04/1944)	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAN D'OR SULHAMSTEAD MAYBE D'OR (16/01/1936)	
		MENAIFRON RUSTLE O'MOY (21/02/1945)	MENAIFRON RORY O'MOY MENAIFRON ROSEANNA O'MOY (21/12/1939)	
	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NINA D'OR (4/05/1955)	SULHAMSTEAD MONTEBELLOS NORSEMAN	GRÖNSJOENS RIPPER	TELL GRÖNSJOENS SALLY
			NOR CH MONTEBELLOS JAPPY	MENAIFRON CHASSE EIRORAS TOPSY
SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D'OR (19/01/1949)		SULHAMSTEAD BLAST D'OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BAN D'OR SULHAMSTEAD MAYBE D'OR	
		SULHAMSTEAD BANTAM D'OR	SULHAMSTEAD BOMB D'OR (29/04/1944) MENAIFRON RUSTLE O'MOY (21/02/1945)	

In all Florence Nagel's Sulhamstead produced eighteen UK Irish (Red) Setter Field Trial Champions during her long career in the breed, with many more fulfilling their function as gundogs around the world.

Irish Red & White Setters

Nearco's daughter Sulhamstead Natty d'Or played a significant roll in the 1960/70s resurrection of Irish Red & White Setters when solid reds were being bred across to the remnants of the Irish Red & White Setters in Ireland.

John Nash mated her to his FT. Ch. Moanruad Raff, a red dog with large splashes of white on his front chest, neck and feet which produced Moanruad Nestor grandsire to Harlequin of Knockalla who was pivotal in the revival of the breed

PEDIGREE OF MOANRUAD NESTOR progeny of Moanruad Raff x Sulhamstead Natty d'Or

FT CH MOANRUAD RAFF	IR FT CH MOANRUAD DAN (22/04/1962)	WAYDOWN SANDY	MacANDREWS SHOT	
		INT. FT CH RAHARD BELLE 15/02/1956	MacANDREWS NELL PORTOWN ROMEO	
	RUBY MOANRUAD	ALLA ROCK (11/04/1959)	RED BLAZE	MOANRUAD ROCK
		RED BLAZE	ANNIE ALLA	CHIEF OF BLACKHALL CARNHALLA GROUSE
SULHAMSTEAD NATTY D'OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NEARCO D'OR 11/5/1957	SULHAMSTEAD BRISTLE D'OR (23/02/1951)	SULHAMSTEAD BLAST D'OR SULHAMSTEAD BANTAM D'OR	
		FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NINA D'OR (4/05/1955)	SULHAMSTEAD MONTEBELLOS NORSEMAN SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D'OR (19/01/1949)	
	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD UNA D'OR (29/08/1960)	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD BASIL D'OR (18/02/1952)	MENAIFRON SHANNON (15/04/1950) SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D'OR (19/01/1949)	
		FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NINA D'OR (4/05/1955)	SULHAMSTEAD MONTEBELLOS NORSEMAN SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D'OR (19/01/1949)	
			SULHAMSTEAD MONTEBELLOS NORSEMAN SULHAMSTEAD BANCO D'OR (19/01/1949)	



HARLEQUIN OF KNOCKALLA born 04.04.1977

**PEDIGREE OF HARLEQUIN OF KNOCKALLA born 04.04.1977
Bred by Mrs. Cuddy and owned by Mr.& Mrs. Gormley**

GLENKEEN SANDY	MOANRUAD NESTOR	FT CH MOANRUAD RAFF	IR FT CH MOANRUAD DAN (22/04/1962) RUBY MOANRUAD
		SULHAMSTEAD NATTY D'OR	FT CH SULHAMSTEAD NEARCO D'OR (11/05/1957) FT CH SULHAMSTEAD UNA D'OR
	INT FT CH MOANRUAD KEEN GIRLIE (7/03/1969)	IRE FT CH BALLYMAC EAGLE (26/03/1959)	IRE FT CH PRINCE OF KILMURRAY (17/12/1953) CURROW GEM
		IRE FT CH PATRICIA OF KILLONE	WAYDOWN SANDY INT FT CH RAHARD BELLE (15/02/1956)
GAYLE OF KNOCKALLA	RUSTY (Mr.Ruan's)	FINN	WAYDOWN SANDY BIDDY OF SLIEVEBAWN MacANDREWS SHOT
		SHERRY 11	SHERRY 1
	DUCHESS (Mr. Gaynor's)	WHISKEY 1	JERAMY OF KNOCKALLA FELICITY OF KNOCKALLA
		VIXEN (Mr Fox's)	FINN SHERRY 11

Justice for Women at the Kennel Club

The male hierarchy of the Kennel Club confined women to the ladies branch with limited powers in decision making policy. In 1977 Bill Rasbridge and Stafford Somerfield nominated Florence to the male dominated higher ranking of the Kennel Club governing body with full membership rights.

Her nomination was refused in 1978, despite the fact that the Sex Discrimination Act had been passed in 1975. Unwilling to accept this decision Florence challenged the Kennel Club in court. The judgement was not in her favour, and stated that it was not unlawful for the Kennel Club to deny her full membership. However, the Industrial Tribunal encouraged Florence to continue the fight and the Equal Opportunities Commission offered to finance further action, but before an Appeal was heard the male members of the Kennel Club succumbed to the mounting pressure.

The Chairman of the Kennel Club, Leonard Pagliero announced that the General Committee was recommending that the Constitution of the Kennel Club be changed to allow women full membership which was announced on 8th September 1978 in the Dog Press,

With the approval of the General Committee the first 80 women became fully fledged members. Florence was hailed as "The Woman of the Year" by the Dog World Newspaper.

Race Horses

In her youth Florence had trained Fernley an Irish-bred colt for the race course and by 1932 she owned and trained Solano who won the Newport Nursery Handicap. A journalist recording the event commented "*While Solano is not Mrs. Nagle's first winner, it is some years since the rifle green, red cross-belts' (her racing colours) caught the judge's eye*".

As The Jockey Club did not permit women to hold a Trainer's Licence, Florence was forced to employ Alfred Stickly as head stable lad to hold the Licence for her Westerland stable.



Sandsprite, bred, owned and trained by Florence Nagel

From the mare, Wood Nymph she bred and trained, Sandsprite sired by Sandwich a son of the great stud Sansovino. and entered him in The Derby in 1937 Critics differed on Sandsprite's merits, one reporter described him as "*a commanding individual*" while another commented "*he was only good enough to give rides at the seaside*". Florence had the satisfaction of seeing Sandsprite finish second to Mid-day Sun owned by Mrs. Lettice Miller the first woman owner ever to win the Derby. Sandsprite went on to gain several race placings, but his career as a racehorse and stud was cut short when he broke a leg and had to be destroyed.

Florence also bred Westerland Rose sired by the stallion Columbo out of Rose of England a 15 year old mare ,she purchased for 3,500 guineas.. Westerland Rose became a highly successful brood mare producing five progeny Westerlands Chalice, Game Rose Champagne, Prince and Rosebud which .accounted for ten race wins between them in the 1950s.

From Westerlands Rosebud she bred and trained Gelert sired by Owen Tudor and owned by Miss Newton Deakin who became one of the main winners in Florence's stable



Florence with one of the racehorses she trained and her Irish Wolfhound

Justice for women racehorse trainers.

The Jockey Club still refused to give any woman a Trainer's Licence in the 1960s so Florence sought legal redress. The case finally reached the Court of Appeal in 1966 where she emerged victorious The Judges condemned the

male hierarchy at the Jockey Club for being “*arbitrary and capricious*” “*restrictive and nonsensical.*” Embarrassed by the judgement the Jockey Club capitulated and on 3rd August 1966 Florence and Norah Wilmot, who was training horses for the Queen, became the first women in Britain to receive Trainer Licences. Florence credited herself with “*dragging the Jockey Club into the twentieth century*” Newton Deakin’s Mahwa was the first winning horse officially trained by Florence and as late as 1975 she was still training twelve racehorses.

In 1972 the Jockey Club permitted women jockeys. When asked by a journalist if she thought women could ever match men on the racecourse, she replied: “*My dear man, it used to be said women couldn’t stand up to three-day-eventing. Now they’re beating the men regularly – and the same will happen in racing .Give them time*”. The press dubbed her “*the Emily Pankhurst of British horse racing.*”

Still dissatisfied with the lack of opportunities for women jockeys in the 1980s Florence sponsored The Florence Nagle Girl Apprentices Handicap at Kempton Park Racecourse in 1986. After the race John Oaksey commented in the Daily Telegraph newspaper “*Nagle was no doubt looking down from her celestial cloud with approval*”. She responded “*that she was still alive, but that when the time came she expected to end up in a hotter place and there to meet most of her racing friends.*” In her Will she made a bequest to secure the race was run in perpetuity.

Florence’s Last Days

Full of plans concerning her move into a new bungalow she built at Westerlands Florence attended the Championship Show of the Wolfhound Society at the end of September 1988 and enjoyed her 94th birthday. At the time of her death on 30th October 1988 she was Vice President of the Kennel Club. The funeral took place at St. Mary’s Church, Sulhamstead in Berkshire,



Florence Nagle’s Biography



The elderly Florence Nagle

A decade after her death Dog World Press published Florence Nagel's biography written by Florence's friend Ferelith Somerfield. Its title MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

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NOTE: Every effort has been made to cross reference material used in this article to ensure accuracy.