

The Irish Wolfhound Foundation



# Focus

## A Word From Michael D. Fullwood, The Irish Wolfhound Foundation's Newly-Elected President

Winter 2003

*Health & Research*

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The Irish Wolfhound Foundation

*Focus*

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All of us who love and live with Irish Wolfhounds owe Phillipa Crowe, first president of The Irish Wolfhound Foundation, a tremendous debt of gratitude. Before her death in August, Phillipa saw her dream of a tax-exempt charitable organization dedicated to Irish Wolfhound rescue, research, and education through to its fruition. Although we all mourn Phillipa's passing, the work of the Foundation must continue. What better way to honor her memory than to move forward and renew our commitment to our breed and to this foundation.

Phillippa's final initiative will stand as a lasting testament to her love for the breed and her passionate concern for its well-being. I am deeply honored to have been elected to serve out the remainder of her term. I bring to this position my own love for the Irish Wolfhound along with my professional experience — I currently serve as General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer of a large, tax-exempt health care organization. I join with all supporters of the Irish Wolfhound in the desire to make the Foundation a success.

The Foundation's Board met three times in the fall of 2002, solidifying and advancing the Foundation's role in research, rescue, and education. As anticipated, the majority of the IWCA's medical research fund was transferred to the Foundation's Health and Research Committee. Projects formerly operating under the direction of the IWCA will now operate under the aegis of the Foundation. Foundation-supported projects include:

• **The IW Lifetime Cardiac Study**

(A long-term follow-up study, now entering its third year, compiling serial blood pressure and electrocardiogram data on a large group of Irish Wolfhounds).

• **The IW Osteosarcoma Treatment Study** (A study examining alendronate as a palliative treatment for osteosarcoma in IWs. Principal Investigator, Dr. William Dernel, Colorado State University).

• **24-Hour Heart Rate in IW Atrial Fibrillation & Digoxin's Efficacy as a Rate Control Treatment for IW Atrial Fibrillation** (Principal Investigator, Dr. Janice Bright, Colorado State University).



Mike Fullwood with his IW, Ajax.

The Foundation will present three exciting speakers at the 2003 IWCA Specialty Show. Rhonda Hovan, an award-winning canine writer and Golden Retriever breeder-judge, will discuss managing complex genetic traits by using vertical pedigrees, while Dr. Janice Bright and Dr. Petra Jakobs, both of whom have ongoing research projects focusing on IW heart disease, will share their perspectives as research scientists. In the near future, the Foundation anticipates undertaking additional educational programs and supporting rescue efforts as well.

I urge all of you whose lives have been enriched by the Irish Wolfhound to help ensure a bright future for our hounds by making a tax-deductible contribution to The Irish Wolfhound Foundation.

# Health and Our Hounds

## Blood Pressure: What's Normal for Wolfhounds?

by Mariellen Dentino

Thank you to all the wolfhounds — and owners — whose patience over the last two years has enabled us to compile a significant database of IW blood pressure measurements. Dr. Janice M. Bright, Associate Professor, Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, published an article detailing normal blood pressure values in the Irish Wolfhound in the November/December 2002 issue of the Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association.

It is important to have established normal values in our breed. Previous 'normals' for sighthounds were based almost exclusively on measurements from track greyhounds. The few Irish Wolfhounds included in the veterinary literature actually labeled IWs as members of the sporting group! We now know that greyhounds have higher pressures than Irish Wolfhounds.

The mean systolic pressure of the 158 healthy Irish Wolfhounds measured was 116; mean diastolic pressure was 69.2. We need to follow blood pressures in as many individual wolfhounds as often as possible throughout their *entire lifetimes*. Only then will we be able to document the effect of commonly-used cardiac

drugs, whose dosage levels are typically adjusted according to blood pressure tolerance. NSAIDs like Rimadyl, as well as prednisone, increase blood pressure in humans; if this occurs in dogs as well, we need to know so that we don't unduly

stress older dogs or dogs already in heart failure. Documenting these kinds of changes in our breed is an exciting opportunity for all of us to actually participate in creating a better, healthier future for our wolfhounds.



### Lifetime Cardiac Study Update

The IW Lifetime Cardiac Study has enrolled 812 Irish Wolfhounds to date. We are drawing closer to our goal of 1,000 IWs, but we continue to ask every owner who has not done so to enroll his wolfhound, and then to complete and return the yearly questionnaire. The response rate to the first questionnaire mailing was only 51%. We owe it to our dogs to make every effort to add to knowledge about our breed!

English researcher Dr. Serena Brownlie believes that a rhythm abnormality called first degree a-v heart block may be a predictor of our breed's most common heart problem, atrial fibrillation. We have over 20 IWs with this EKG abnormality presently in the study, and following them throughout their lives will demonstrate whether or not this theory is correct.

Dobermans and Boxers who are un-

dergoing routine EKGs (i.e., are asymptomatic) and are found to have premature ventricular contractions (PVCs) progress quickly to dilated cardiomyopathy. Isolated PVCs seem to be a more benign condition in the Irish Wolfhound. There are several IWs enrolled in the study who had PVCs on their original EKGs. If we follow these IWs throughout their entire lifetimes, we will gain valuable insight into this condition in our breed. If your dog has one of these EKG abnormalities, don't you want to know the prognosis?

Our initial evaluation of data from the study included information gleaned from the first 193 questionnaires which were returned. Seventeen percent of these IWs had an abnormality on their initial EKGs. Of the dogs presenting with normal EKGs, 5% developed an abnormality during the first year. Of the IWs with abnormal EKGs, 41% had a *KNOWN* close relative with heart disease.

There were 6 deaths in these 193 dogs, but no episodes of bloat reported. Two percent (four) of the 193 dogs suffered a bout of pneumonia in the preceding year. If data can be collected on the 1,000 dogs we hope to follow in the study it will indicate other areas of health concern for the breed.

The second year questionnaires were mailed beginning on June 29, 2002. If you haven't already returned yours, please do it right now! Questionnaires are mailed on a quarterly basis.

There is absolutely no pain or risk for your dog. The data generated will answer so many questions we all have about

*Continued on page 5*

### OUR PLEDGE TO EVERY IRISH WOLFHOUND

We will do everything we can to improve the health of the Irish Wolfhound.

We will make sure that our findings are made known to the veterinary community.

We will publish study results in this publication for the reference of owners and their veterinarians.

We will not propose any research programs if there is any risk or discomfort for the dog.

We will not conduct research that is in any way harmful to an IW or his owner.

**WE THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

*The IWF Health & Research Committee*

## Phillippa Crowe

It's human nature to take for granted those people who come through for us, and to assume they'll always be there when we need them. Phillippa Crowe contributed so much to our breed, in such a selfless and self-effacing manner, that we never doubted she'd be there with us every year at each specialty show. We counted on her generosity, her eye for beauty, her kindness, and especially her willingness to share and to serve.

The eldest of three girls, Phillippa grew up in Maryland, Vermont, and Sri Lanka, always surrounded by horses and dogs. Her father was an author and diplomat, and instilled in Phillippa and her sisters a deep commitment to and compassion for all living things. Phillippa was just eleven when she met her first Irish Wolfhound, and it changed her life forever. As soon as she'd graduated from college, she obtained her first IW, a Killybracken hound, from Mrs. Ellis. She was never again without a wolfhound at her side. Phillippa studied art at the University of New Mexico, and then went on to gain her master's degree in textiles from Cranbrook Academy in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. After working briefly as a textile designer, she moved to New Mexico



*July 11, 1940 ~ August 9, 2002*

(with her IW, of course!), where she started a crafts cooperative. She was an extremely talented weaver and craftsperson, whose artistic vision was informed by her extensive travels and by her love of vibrant color and complex texture. When she returned to New England, she found herself devoting ever more time to her growing population of IWs. She began to show her hounds, and bred an occasional litter. In 1987, her Kingsland Song won Best of Breed at the IWCA Specialty, and over the years Phillippa bred many

lovely hounds.

Phillippa actively defended animals and the environment throughout her life. She was a true preservationist and conservationist. She was a patron of the arts, and an avid gardener. But most of her efforts were on behalf of our breed. For many years, she sat on the Boards of Directors of IWANE and the IWCA, as well as serving as president of both these clubs. In 1992, she founded the IWCA Research Committee, and IWCA began its

screening and testing programs at that year's specialty show. Phillippa interested veterinary cardiologist Dr. Neil Harpster in investigating Lone Atrial Fibrillation in our breed, and now, ten years later, we

*"The Irish Wolfhound is the common thread that weaves us all together. We must remember that their welfare is our goal."*

know much more about its incidence in IWs. To support the research endeavors of the IWCA, she instituted the annual Research Raffle; she herself donated the lovely "objets de wolfhound" we all hoped to win.

Most recently, Phillippa directed her efforts toward establishing a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to furthering Irish Wolfhound health, rescue, and education. In January, just as the Foundation was officially incorporated, the unthinkable happened: Phillippa was diagnosed with cancer. Nevertheless, Phillippa served as the Foundation's first president, and held this office until her death, working to the end to ensure its success. The Foundation was her greatest legacy to the future of our breed.

We are all diminished by her absence from our midst.

*K.W.*



*The Irish and Their Hounds, Part One*

# St. Patrick's Footprint

"I will give thee a dog which I got in Ireland. He is huge of limb, and for a follower, equal to an able man. Moreover, he hath a man's wit and will bark at thine enemies but never at thy friends. And he will see by each man's face whether he be ill- or well-disposed to thee. And.....he will lay down his life for thee."

*from The Icelandic Saga of Nial*

by **Micheale A. Mac Gorman**

High atop the Mourne Mountains, far off the beaten tourist paths between Armagh and Downpatrick, is a little-known reminder of the foundations of Irish culture and character. The Mourne Mountains loom large over Carlingford Lough and the Newry Canal, looking eastward toward Wales and Britain, alternately beautiful and ominous, majestic and mystical. On the side of a small winding road twisting up the southern side of a peak, far too narrow for any automobile to pass, a large boulder lies buried deep in the loamy soil, all but its very top hidden deep inside the mountain. The boulder has resided in its present position for millennia, unmarked, unnoticed, unappreciated — except by those native to the area who understand its significance.

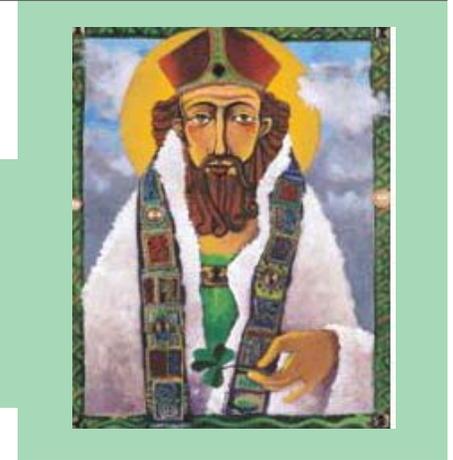
In the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., a young Romanized Briton boy was brought in chains across the waters from the Severn Estuary in Britain to the shores of Ireland to serve as slave to a king of Antrim named Miliucc. The young slave's name was Patricius, and he remained enslaved to Miliucc for more than six years, until he received a message from a mysterious spirit voice to leave his bonds of misery and return home. Patricius did as the voice instructed, and left Miliucc the next day, heading for the southeastern coast. There he found a ship readying to sail across the sea to Britain — with a "cargo of prized Irish hounds to be sold to warriors on the continent." The captain of the ship refused passage to an obvious fugitive. As Patricius turned to leave, the hounds let out a great wailing, so loud it could be heard for some considerable distance. One of the sailors, frightened by the hounds' noise and its meaning, called to Patricius, saying,

"Come quickly! They are calling you!" So it was that St. Patrick returned to his native Britain —and freedom— in the company of wolfhounds .

Some time later, St. Patrick, now a Bishop, dreamt of receiving a letter from the Vox Hiberionacum, the Voice of the Irish. The Voice called to Patrick, crying, "We beg you to come and walk among us once more." He complied and



returned to Ireland, setting his bishopric in Ard Macha (Armagh), very near Emain Macha, seat of the Ulster Kings in the Mourne Mountains. St. Patrick's work spans great sections of Ireland, reaching into Leinster and Connacht. His travels are legendary, and, much like George Washington in the eastern United States, he seems to have slept in an inordinate number of locations throughout Ireland. Fortunately, while much of the history of



Ireland is lost due to lack of records, St. Patrick kept a faithful narrative of his travels, some of which survives to this day. It is from translations of this text that natives of the Mourne Mountains learned that the deep impression of a left foot in the center of the aforementioned boulder belongs to their nation's patron saint.

"The Track of the Foot," as this spot has come to be known locally, is a mysterious thing, indeed. Legend has it that no matter the size of one's foot, it will fit perfectly within the impression. A small child's foot will fit just as snugly as that of a large man. It is also said that whoever steps in the footprint steps into a life modeled on St. Patrick's. Impressed in the boulder's surface alongside St. Patrick's footprint are the very clear tracks of a large hound.

It is no coincidence that Irish hounds are so closely connected to Ireland's great saint. In many ways, the Irish hound — also known as the Irish Wolf Dog, Greyhound, and modernly, Wolfhound— has been a symbol of Ireland, Irish culture, and Celtic tradition. The Celts, who reached Ireland around 350 BC, took control of the island from an ancient race called the Tuatha de Danaan, and formed a foundation for what would become the Irish people. Long before the harp, shamrock, or wearing of the green, the wolfhound was a symbol of Celtic strength and prowess in battle.

The hound prints next to the track-of-the-foot in the Mourne Mountains are perhaps fitting images of the tracks in history of the Irish people. The Irish Wolfhound is a living symbol of Irish culture and of the Celtic past.

*Part Two of The Irish and Their Hounds will appear in the next issue of IWF Focus.*

## IWF Supports Osteosarcoma Studies



A study to determine the benefits of alendronate (Fosomax) as palliative treatment of osteosarcoma in the Irish Wolfhound is ongoing at Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital under the direction of Dr. William Dernell. The original canine study utilized a dosage of 10mg. per day. However, in human studies, a higher dose is used to treat destructive bone lesions, so the IW Osteosarcoma Treatment Study dose was increased to 70 mg. every other day.

Nine dogs have entered the study at this dose, and several more have been treated but are not officially entered into the study. One IW is doing very well on Fosomax, a full four months after the original diagnosis was made. Two dogs only recently entered the study, and their response to the Fosomax is not yet known. The remaining dogs all showed improvement, with less pain and fewer symptoms, but the response was short-lived, and euthanasia was usually reported 6 — 10 weeks later, due to tumor growth or failure of pain control. Dr. Dernell would like to study 15 dogs at this dose before he closes this phase of the study and writes up the results.

All the dogs tolerated the Fosomax very well. One advantage to this treatment option is that the IW is comfortable, and has real quality time spent at home with his family! Only one dog was unable to tolerate the drug due to diarrhea after each dose.

The tumors have varied in location

and aggressive growth characteristics. It is felt this class of drugs (bisphosphonates) has promise in the treatment of canine osteosarcoma. There are many ongoing studies in human tumors (especially breast cancer, where it has been shown to prevent metastases to the bone and improve quality of life). It is possible the drug is not uniformly absorbed from the GI tract, and monthly intravenous treatment may be more effective. There are also more powerful bisphosphonates being developed. The IW Foundation will continue to sponsor research in this area.

Many other breeds have asked for information about using alendronate to treat osteosarcoma, and several owners called the study for advice. Presently, two Borzoi, one Saluki, two Greyhounds, one Poodle, an Anatolian Shepherd and a Labrador Retriever are taking Fosomax for their osteosarcoma. Fosomax will hopefully increase quality time for many dogs with this common canine cancer.

A recent proposal by Dr. Stuart Helfrand from the University of Wisconsin is investigating a possible treatment to extend time free of metastases in dogs that undergo amputation and chemotherapy. This is very exciting, as it may increase the number of dogs that actually have a chance for long-term survival. It will not be applicable to all IWs, but if amputation and chemotherapy are a good option for a particular dog, it would be nice to have the hope of longer survival. The IW Foundation will help sponsor this study.

## The Lifetime Cardiac Study

*continued from Page 2*

prevention and treatment of heart disease in the Irish Wolfhound! However, we will not get these answers if owners can't be bothered to take the time to keep their dogs current in the study. So *please* consider joining — and remaining—in the study. Thank You!

### *IW Seizure Study*

## Geneticists Analyze DNA

Drs Margret Casal, Richard Munuve, and Paula Henthorn, from the Section of Medical Genetics, Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, will soon complete a clinical paper on epilepsy in the Irish Wolfhound. This paper will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed veterinary journal. While this paper will not have any linkage data in it, it will describe the disease, age of onset, the outcome of the different forms of treatments, possible mode of inheritance, and future directions.

Linkage analysis is a technically-sophisticated method to detect specific sequences of DNA, called *markers*, when the location of the disease-causing gene is unknown. There are hundreds of markers scattered throughout every individual's DNA. However, all the affected animals will have one form of a specific marker, and the normal individuals will have another form of the same marker. Thus, we have to look at all markers in order to find the ones that are common to affected animals. For more information, visit the study website at [www.irishwolfhoundstudy.com](http://www.irishwolfhoundstudy.com).

## Researchers Finding Clues to IW Cardiac Disease

Many of our country's top research scientists are investigating heart disease in the Irish Wolfhound.

Dr. Janice M. Bright is evaluating 24-hour heart rates in hounds with lone atrial fibrillation (i.e., fibrillation without underlying heart disease). She compares data collected from fibrillating IWs to data collected from normal wolfhounds. Dr. Bright's hypothesis is that dogs with AF have wider fluctuations in heart rate as well as more rapid heart rates, that might damage cardiac muscle, resulting in dilated cardiomyopathy. Her study is looking at how well digoxin controls heart rates in these dogs. Dr. Bright hopes to have preliminary results from this study to present at the 2003 IWCA Specialty; her work is funded by The Irish Wolfhound Foundation.

Dr. Daniel F. Hogan, Purdue University, is comparing hormone levels in normal IWs and IWs with AF to determine the optimal time for beginning treatment for this arrhythmia.

Drs. Petra Jakobs and Michael Litt of Oregon Health Sciences University have received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to map the gene for Atrial Fibrillation and Dilated Cardiomyopathy in Irish Wolfhounds. Using DNA samples from families of IWs with both affected and normal dogs, they are working to establish genetic markers to predict which IWs carry this gene and can pass it on when bred.



# The Classical Hound

by Kathy Wilson

Cellist Beatrice Harrison in the garden with four of the family's canine companions. (private collection)

**M**argaret Harrison and her Sanctuary hounds are an integral part of Irish Wolfhound history; they figure prominently in every discussion of our breed in the twentieth century. When the devastation of World War II left the breeding population of IWs in Britain critically depleted, Jay McGregor sent Rory of Kihone as a gift to the English club to infuse much-needed new blood into their lines. Margaret visited Rory every day while he was in quarantine, and after he came to live with the Harrison sisters, he was available to all the great bitches who'd survived the war. Rory figures prominently in so many of our hounds' pedigrees; he passed along his lovely type, head, and temperament.

**M**argaret Harrison supplied the Irish Guards with many a Sanctuary hound to use as their regimental mascots. The last of these was the tenth Mascot of the Guards, Malachy of Sanctuary (bred by Dagmar Kenis), born in 1990. Margaret was qualified to judge many breeds, and her numerous judging assignments included Crufts. She was as well-known in the canine world for her Pekingese as for her wolfhounds.

**B**ut Margaret and her sisters May, Beatrice, and Monica, were much better-known for their music than for their association with dogs. Margaret and May were violinists, Beatrice played the cello, and Monica sang; all four were excellent pianists as well. The Harrison sisters performed at all the great concert halls, and



several of their recordings are still available today. Cellist Beatrice, in particular, was famous throughout the world. Beatrice toured Europe and North America many times, usually with May or Margaret along to accompany her on piano or violin.

**A**nnie Martin Harrison, their mother, was herself a musician, and devoted herself to providing her four daughters with every opportunity to develop their talents. Annie came from a distinguished and artistic Anglo-Irish family. Her uncle was a famous actor, and authors Edith Somerville and Martin Ross (Violet Martin), best known for *The Irish R.M.* novels (adapted for BBC television in the '80s) depicting life among the Irish

Ascendancy, were her cousins. Annie was obviously an animal lover as well, for the Harrison household included dogs, cats, birds, a donkey, and, at one time, even a pair of alligators — the gift of an American admirer, given especially as a surprise for animal-lover Margaret.

**M**ay and Beatrice were the first of the sisters to attend the Royal College of Music in London, and Margaret soon followed them there. Margaret was the youngest student ever admitted to the college, at age four (she was already playing Schumann's *Abendlied* on her tiny violin at age two). Obviously, the Harrisons provided an extraordinary environment in which their daughters were able to learn, to explore, and to excel.

**A**t the same time that the Harrisons shared their home with a huge menagerie, their music room and garden played host to the leading artists, writers, musicians, and composers of the day. Delius, Glazunov, Elgar, Kodaly — all these composers were friends of the family, as were Rachmaninov, Kreisler, Casals, Melba, Beecham, d'Albert, Paderewski, and Dame Myra Hess.

**T**he BBC broadcast a series of live concerts from the Harrison garden. Beatrice played her cello and was joined by a rare nightingale. During the first concert, their donkey escaped from his shed, braying loudly, but luckily was soon caught. The nightingale's duet with the cello began.

(continued in the next issue)

*The Irish Wolfhound Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generosity and support of the following individuals and organizations in 2002.*

Frances L. Abrams	Karen L. Eberl	Sue Ann Lesser, DVM, CAC	RMITWA
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*Donations were received in honor of the following individuals and hounds:*

Phillippa Crowe	Cashel	Heartson's Rapscallion	Shamus
Edna Edwards	Cassanova	Kelly	Silo
Mary Major	Chloe Louise	Keystone's Eamiasmagora	Sorcha
	Diamond	Maeve	Sulhamstead Minita of Mistimourne
Ch. Antostal William Macenchroe	Ernie	Major Acres Tim Finnegan	Tara
Bailey	Fey Rei & Koke	Max	Tippy
Barty	Fionn	Murphy	Trevor
Baxter	Fleetwind Corrigan	Pied Piper of Harrow Hill	Very & Piper
Bridget, Casey, & Shea	Ch. Grianan's Reilly, C.D.	Seamus	Vesper
Casey	Garda Siocana Dublin Pilgrim	Shamrock, Kayla, & Carrick	

**YES!** I want to support the Irish Wolfhound Foundation's work through my **tax-deductible** donation! Please use my donation for the following:

Health       Education  
 Rescue       Wherever it's needed most.

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