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2010 Wilkinson Sword winner, Harford Logan

by Kim Gibson



Harford Logan and Stag, winners of the Scottish National at Glamis Castle in 1981

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First presented in 1980, the Wilkinson Sword Trophy is one of the Society's highest honours. It is awarded each year to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the Society, to Sheep Dogs, or to Sheep Dog trialling. It was presented to Harford Logan in 2010, at the third Irish International near Antrim in County Down. Harford is the fourth Irishman to earn such honours.

The award was presented to Lionel Pennefather in 1983, Lyn (J. W. L) McKee in 1997, and Tim Flood in 2007. Harford is one of Ireland's top triallers, he has spent a lifetime working dogs. He represented Ireland at several Hyde Park trials when sheepdog trialling really was in its heyday as a spectator sport, drawing thousands of visitors. Harford was in the first Irish team to compete at the International in 1961. He has been involved in organising many Trials, Nationals and Internationals. He is a long standing director of the ISDS, and was also a Council member,

believing strongly in promoting the society and what it stands for – the encouragement of all aspects of the working sheepdog, with high standards of breeding and handling. In the 1990s, Harford judged the Continental with Joe McGrath in East Germany. Harford has regularly been asked to judge sheepdog trials at home and abroad, in America, Canada, and across Europe.

The eighth generation of the Logan family to farm at Shanaghan farm in Katesbridge in County Down, Harford was the only son on the arable and stock farm, but found time to develop his own way of communicating with his father's dogs. His first dog was called Cap, and they built up a great friendship, working in partnership. This was the beginning of a lifetime's passion in sheep farming and sheepdog trials.

In 1952, when he was twenty two, Harford took the plunge and ran in his first sheepdog trial, held at a horse fair in Banbridge, with a dog called Dick. They won the novice class, and were third in the open, and that led to an offer of fifty pounds for Dick a few days later. Fifty pounds was ten times the weekly wage at the time, so Dick went away with one of the top trial men of that era. Harford's first open trial win was with Nell 10656 (by David Murray's Vic 4368, out of W. Wardrop's Nell 9667). She was £8, including carriage from Auchterarder in Perthshire to Katesbridge station, and became a great favourite. "Nell could do a lot on her own, she had good control of sheep, without giving her a command, and she was a very good listener". It was the start of a successful trialling career.



Trials were well established in Ireland at this time, with competitors coming over from England, Scotland and Wales for some trials, raising the standard of the competition. Having to fight for an entry, Harford won the Ardee trial at his first attempt with Nell in 1956, with 49.5 out of 50 points and then the celebrated Bangor trial in 1958 in County Down with Nell 10656. "It was the Bangor trials that were considered to be the early Irish nationals. Other early Irish trials were the Swords sheepdog trial which Harford won five times, winning the trophy outright, and the Royal Dublin spring show which was an invitation trial. Harford won the Dublin trial five times, with Nell twice, with Cap once and twice with Jim between 1950s and 1970s.

Dublin Show, 1970s

Hyde Park Trials

One of three Irish handlers who were invited to compete in the Daily Express Sheepdog Trials in Hyde Park, running Nell, Harford had soon become one of the top Irish trialers. The Hyde Park Trials were held in London from the 1930s to the 1960s on Whit weekend, sponsored by the Daily Express newspaper and organised by the ISDS. "The dogs were kennelled in the Barracks of the Royal Horseguards in Knightsbridge. Nell was kennelled in the very last horse box on the left where she slept for two nights. When she returned a few years later, she galloped off to the same horse box and jumped in, and straight back out, as there was a horse in there that year. I was there the year that it was swamped with animal rights people following the sheep and was also there the year that there were 200,000 spectators."

Irish Nationals and Internationals

A National trial was held in Ireland every year since the war, with singles and doubles, but it was not until 1961 that Irish men competed in the International at Ayr – though their entry was limited to just three dogs. The All Ireland Collie Club, representing competitors in Southern Ireland decided that the number of dogs permitted to enter was too small and that they were not in favour of an all Ireland National team at that time".

So, it was in 1961 that the first three Irish dogs to compete at International level were drawn from Northern Irish handlers and selected at the Irish National competition in Glenarm Castle in County Antrim. There was only entry to the singles competition, not the driving championship or the brace. In 1961, the three Northern Irish dogs chosen were Jim Brady's Whin 12973, and Lyn McKee's Whitehope Corrie 13706 and Snip 10677. However, Jim Brady's bitch Whin was injured temporarily, Harford was reserve with Pete 18591 (bred by Harford, by Jim 7060, out of Susie 9624), and so he was literally the first Irish man to run at an International in 1961. "My first time at the International was in 1955, that was as a spectator. I saw J. M. Wilson win his last International. I thought he was head and shoulders above the rest, he had such an understanding of sheep. Everything just seemed to happen for him. What impressed me the most about him was that he commanded his dogs so well, with different tones".

Although Harford won the Irish Brace Championship in 1961 with Nell and Moss (up against Lionel Pennefather, Jim Brady, and Lyn McKee), there was no brace team going forward to the International that year. But there was when Harford won the Irish Brace for the second time in 1963, with Nell, this time partnering Pete. In 1963, Harford ran Nell and Pete in the International Brace Championship at York

racecourse, the first Irishman to run brace at the International. "Running against the top brace men was a bit daunting. We were not used to the larger courses, as had run on smaller courses. It was good to be there though, and very enjoyable". Harford won the title another three times, making a total of five Irish Brace wins: in 1967 with Jock II 16687 and Cap 24328, in 1971 with Cap and Trim 52587, and in 1975 with Jim 67676 and Bill 72574. Harford came third in the International Brace on the old racecourse at Cardiff in 1971, (J. T. Campbell won with Cap 416 and Nell 37323, and Alan Jones was second with Robin 42746 and Lad 44675).

It was in 1966 that Harford won his first Irish Driving Trophy, with Cap, and in 1969, they won the Irish National singles competition at Castlewellan. He had won the year before, with Moy 42363, at Tallaght in 1968. Harford won another two Irish National titles with Jim in 1974 and 1977. He won the Irish Driving again in 1976 with Jim. At the International, they won the Irish International Aggregate Trophy at Libanus in 1977 and at Chatsworth in 1978. "I think I got through to the Supreme for the first time at the first Chatsworth International with Jim. It went well but it could have gone better in the qualifying trial. Of the two collared sheep, one was easy and one was difficult. We got left with the difficult one, we still managed to qualify but I think one judge wanted to disqualify us. If I had got a clean single, we would have won the qualifying trial. In the Supreme, I was sixth, we completed the course in eighteen minutes. Missing the second fetch with ten sheep cost us a lot of points".

In 1980, Harford won the Irish National again, this time with Sweep 87666 and at the International that year, they won the International Driving Trophy.



Harford moved to a farm called Lagnaha in the Highlands of Scotland, and won the Scottish National in 1981 the following year with Star 109497. Technically, he was both the Irish and Scottish National Champion at the same time briefly. He represented Scotland three times at the International.

Back in Ireland, Harford won the Irish Driving for the third time in 1994 with Dick 174159, and the Irish International Aggregate for the third and fourth time in 1992 and 1994. Five times he ran Dick in the Irish National and five times they qualified, three times for the Supreme. Overall, Harford represented Ireland at the International over twenty times, making the Supreme seven times, quite a record. They were equal fourth (without a shed or pen) at Mostyn in 1995, and fifth at Aberystwyth in 1992. "Dick would have to have been my best dog, he was a tremendous outrunner. He could size sheep up, he would be careful with them or if they were heavy, he would

just walk right into them".

Harford has also competed in the B.B.C. 'One Man and His Dog' competition three times, winning the Brace competition in 1988 with Micky and Jim. "Jim is the dog on the front cover of the book. They were both trained by A. P. Wilson, I bought them from him. One went to Ian Wear in Texas and ended up the Sheepdog Hall of Fame. The first time that I was on One Man and His Dog, they filmed me taking sheep to market from the Copeland Islands, that would have been in about 1976". Those islands are on the coast of Northern Island, near Bangor. At the time, Harford was farming in Millisle, he had a flock of sheep there for eight years, and stayed there

every spring to lamb them”.

‘Over the hills and far away’

Now living in Bangor in County Down, the place where some of the earliest sheepdog trials took place in Ireland, Harford has documented his life with sheepdogs in his book ‘Over the hills and far away’. It is a good read, and can be found on his daughter Joanne’s website [‘www.thebordercollie.co.uk’](http://www.thebordercollie.co.uk). He introduces the characters and lifestyle of the farming world he grew up in during 1940s Ireland. Along with the joys and challenges of farming the family farm, and other places including the Copeland Islands off County Down, and the mountainous Lagnaha in the Western Highlands of Scotland. There are chapters dedicated to his dogs, sheep, sheepdog trial successes and judging trips abroad. With advice on how to train a sheepdog into a champion, Harford reveals what worked for him training his renowned Dick, as one of Ireland’s finest partnerships. Harford was quite a cyclist, exploring Ireland. At the age of eighty two, Harford is still judging sheepdog trials.

‘Logan Whistles’ & Sculptures



Logan Whistles, sponsored the prizes at the 2014 Tain World Trial. Harford has been perfecting the design of sheepdog whistles for his own use since the 1950s. There is a complete range of whistles available – the Classic ENES whistle, the A1 whistle, the Turbo, the Supreme, the Sterling and the Logan 304 whistles.

As well as the selection of whistles, there are three sculptures of bronze border collies, by sculptor Holly Bennett, who worked closely with Harford to capture the essence of a working border collie.

