

The Horse from three Continents *– How Constant Appaloosas UK began their Appaloosa breeding program*

This is the story of how Tim and Janette Keeley from North Wales in the UK purchased their first Appaloosa broodmare in 1991 and the detective story which then followed to establish the breeding and history of this much travelled horse. The supporting cast to this story includes both the UK and Jordanian Royal families as well as film star Sean Connery and the stunt riding team The Devil's horsemen.



Tim and Janette Keeley of Ruthin in the United Kingdom run a small Appaloosa and Quarter Horse breeding and showing operation from their farm in the mountains of North Wales. They train and show their own horses in ApHC Western disciplines in the UK and Europe, as well as in UK all breeds competitions run by the Western Equestrian Society in the UK. Tim and Janette are essentially "Hobby" breeders but have taken things to a little more of an extreme than most! Tim is a full time High School Biology teacher and

Janette a Human and Equine Chiropractor. Both Tim and Janette have several UK and European titles to their name in Halter, Pleasure, Trail, Showmanship, Horsemanship and Heritage. They are currently showing horses "Constant White Magic" European Heritage Champion and 4 times UK Supreme Champion Halter Mare (supreme means she beat the stallions as well!), "Constant Tom Tom" UK Champion of Champions, "Xtreme Paradise" European and UK Halter Champion and UK Champion and European Reserve Pleasure Champion and "CA Invite me a Partner" ApHC UK junior Western Pleasure Champion.



Janette was 2009 ApHC International Non Pro champion showing her mare "Lets Role Zip MMR".





In 1991 a good friend, who knew our breeding ambitions, contacted us to let us know that she had come across a loud black leopard mare that just may fit the bill for us. We bought her as soon as we saw her even though she was obviously not in the first bloom of youth and was just a little arthritic. Our friend, Nink, assured us that she could put her in foal to her loud USA registered chestnut leopard stallion “Carousel”, and shortly afterwards Carousel duly obliged. Along with the loud coloring

came a half remembered name “Connie”, and with this name the story really begins, as other than this we had absolutely no knowledge of this Mare’s history; and certainly no paperwork.

Some months later though via an appaloosa owning friend we heard a rumor that someone was trying to trace the whereabouts of a horse called Connie. We contacted this lady and after some investigation discovered the following story.

Connie’s real name it turned out was Constant Comment. She had been born in Alberta Canada in 1972 sired by “El Jaguar” (ApHC 73253), Grandsire “Rio Dinero” (ApHC 17748) and out of “Sage Socks” (ApHCC 5106). Her owners and breeders at that time had been Lorne and Vera Knisley. Lorne and Vera were intrepid and adventurous horse breeders who had spent many years setting up a breeding program in Arizona to produce top quality using horses with an emphasis on endurance. In 1966 they relocated their entire ranch, including 100 horses, from Arizona to British Columbia in search of ‘knee deep’ grass on the Canadian prairies. This was followed by another move the following spring to Alberta when BC’s snow proved a little too much for the horses.



An even more adventurous relocation was however soon looming. Vera and especially Lorne had recently become fascinated by the Middle East both its history, as the land of the Bible, and its horse breeding heritage. After fact finding trips to the Lebanon and Jordan, Lorne finally decided that he wished to relocate his horse breeding program to Jordan. So in 1973 they took nine



of their horses to establish a new ‘desert breed’ in the Middle East. These included the yearling Stallion “Bar d’Or” and the weanling filly “Constant Comment” as some of the best representatives of their breeding program to date.

In the Jordanian desert Lorne and Vera set about clearing rocks and building terraces, pens and water tanks from scratch – a mammoth undertaking – all done by hand with the help of some local Jordanians.

As can be imagined Lorne and Vera attracted quite a lot of attention with their Leopard Appaloosas picketed and penned in the middle of the Jordanian Desert. Many people dropped in to visit. Among these were Santiago Lopez - Master of the Royal Jordanian Stud and his wife Ursula. He was a Gibraltarian and she was British. They became good friends with the Knisleys and invited them to visit the Spanish designed Royal Stables in Amman – the capital of Jordan.



The Knisleys had hardly begun to set up their Desert ranch when severe winter rains caused an enormous washout to undermine their horse pens – leaving one yearling trapped on a temporary island in the centre of the torrent with enormous boulders crashing down on either side. The horse was saved but ranch relocation was inevitable. This time the Knisleys and their herd relocated closer to the Israeli border but deteriorating security conditions following the Six Day War and ever present blood sucking ‘no see um’ flies made Lorne and Vera reconsider their long term future.



Following discussions with Santiago Lopez and with the kind permission of King Hussein of Jordan the Knisley’s Herd was moved to the Royal stables. The Knisleys shortly returned to the USA leaving their horses in safe hands. Both “Constant Comment” and “Bar d’Or” proved popular additions to the Royal Jordanian stables both being regularly ridden by staff and members of the Royal family [Connie was a favorite of

Princess Alia]. On a visit to Jordan by the British Royal family both were paraded, along with the stable’s Arabians, in front of HRH Queen



Elizabeth and The Duke of Edinburgh. “Constant Comment” also later went on to produce a foal by one of King Hussein’s Arabian stallions.

On the death of Ursula Lopez to Gibraltar the next stage in these horses adventure began. “Constant Comment” and “Bar d’Or” were relocated to the United Kingdom where they



began life in the stables of trainers of horses for film, television and stunt show work – “The Devil’s Horsemen”. Connie appeared as an extra in the 1986 Cult film “Highlander” with Christopher Lambert and Sean Connery as well as regularly appearing in “Wild West” shows.



By the early nineties Both “Constant Comment” and Bar d’Or were now in their early twenties and were sold on. “Bar d’Or” (via the world famous Appleby Horse Fair)



began a very successful new life as a breeding Stallion with ApHC UK director Nigel Boas in Scotland and Connie came to us in North Wales. So far a pretty exciting life story for a horse named after a brand of tea! [It was Vera’s

favorite brew and can still be bought today]



In 1991 we had just uncovered this story as Ursula Lopez was trying to follow what had happened to her horses and was thus looking for a horse called “Connie”. Ursula subsequently visited us in Wales in the late nineties to see Connie and we have been in touch and Visited Vera Knisley in her home in Arizona. They both very kindly gave us all their paper work and lots of old photographs.

In 1994 Connie, at the age of 22, produced her second foal (her first was “Champagne” in Jordan) which we named “Constant Florence” having decided to register *Constant* as our suffix in her honor. Coincidentally 1994 was the year of Lorne Knisley’s death at the age of 84 at which time he was unaware that his breeding program still continued across the Atlantic! In 1995 Connie produced her third and final foal



“Constant CC’s Gal” a future halter and National Most Colorful Champion. Connie lived on happily in our herd of 20 Appaloosas including her two daughters and a granddaughter “Constant Ly Amazed”. She was euthanized in 2005 at the age of 33 and was buried on our property under a Maple tree in honor of her Canadian ancestry.



Connie’s genes continue to have an impact on our breeding program, with Tim continuing to compete on her grandson “CA invite Me a Partner” in Western Pleasure, Trail and Horsemanship. *Partner* has also begun a successful career in Youth Heritage.



As a final post script to this account “Freckle Gal” was “Constant Comment’s” Great, Great Grandmother and as she founded the Knisleys breeding Dynasty, so 50 years later, another black leopard “Constant Comment” founded ours here in the UK.

