

THE NEW BOOK OF THE DOG

A COMPREHENSIVE NATURAL HISTORY OF
BRITISH DOGS AND THEIR FOREIGN RELATIVES,
WITH CHAPTERS ON LAW, BREEDING, KENNEL
MANAGEMENT, AND VETERINARY TREATMENT

By ROBERT LEIGHTON

ASSISTED BY EMINENT AUTHORITIES
ON THE VARIOUS BREEDS

*ILLUSTRATED WITH TWENTY-ONE COLOURED PLATES AND
NUMEROUS PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF FAMOUS DOGS.*



CASSELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO & MELBOURNE

1912

CHAPTER XV.

THE IRISH WOLF HOUND.

BY FRED^K GRESHAM.

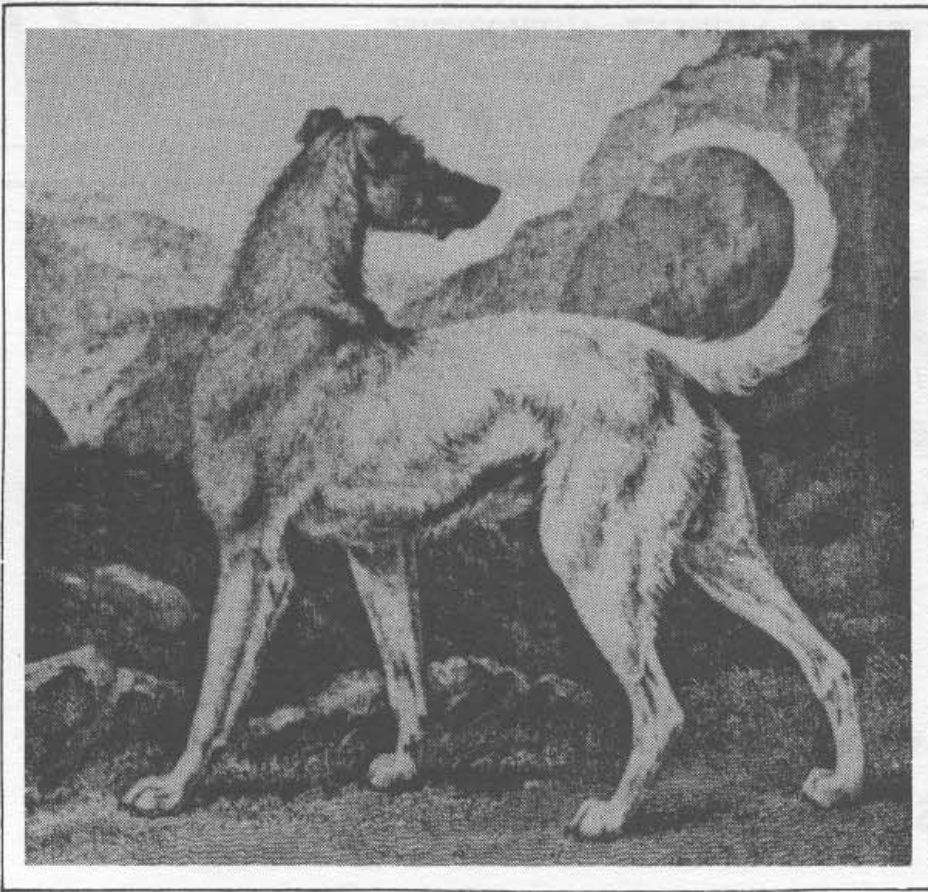
"An eye of sloe, with ear not low,
With horse's breast, with depth of chest,
With breadth of loin, and curve in groin,
And nape set far behind the head—
Such were the dogs that Fingal bred."

—TRANSLATED FROM THE IRISH.

IT is now some eight and twenty years since an important controversy was carried on in the columns of *The Live Stock Journal* on the nature and history of the great Irish Wolfhound. The chief dis-

dog was a true descendant of the ancient *Canis granius Hibernicus*, or whether it was a mere manufactured mongrel, owing its origin to an admixture of the Great Dane and the dog of the Pyrences, modified and brought to type by a cross with the Highland Deerhound. It was not doubted—indeed, history and tradition clearly attested—that there had existed in early times in Ireland a very large and rugged hound of Greyhound form, whose vocation it was to hunt the wolf, the red deer, and the fox. It was assuredly known to the Romans, and there can be little doubt that the huge dog *Sámr*, which Jarl Gunnar got from the Irish king Myrkiarton in the tenth century and took back with him to Norway, was one of this breed. But it was supposed by many to have become extinct soon after the

disappearance of the last wolf in Ireland, and it was the endeavour of Captain Graham to demonstrate that specimens, although admittedly degenerate, were still to be found, and that they were capable of being



THE IRISH WOLF HOUND (1803).

From "*The Sportsman's Cabinet*." By P. Reinagle, R.A.

putants in the discussion were Captain G. A. Graham, of Dursley, Mr. G. W. Hickman, Mr. F. Adcock, and the Rev. M. B. Wynn, and the main point at issue was whether the dog then imperfectly known as the Irish Wolf-

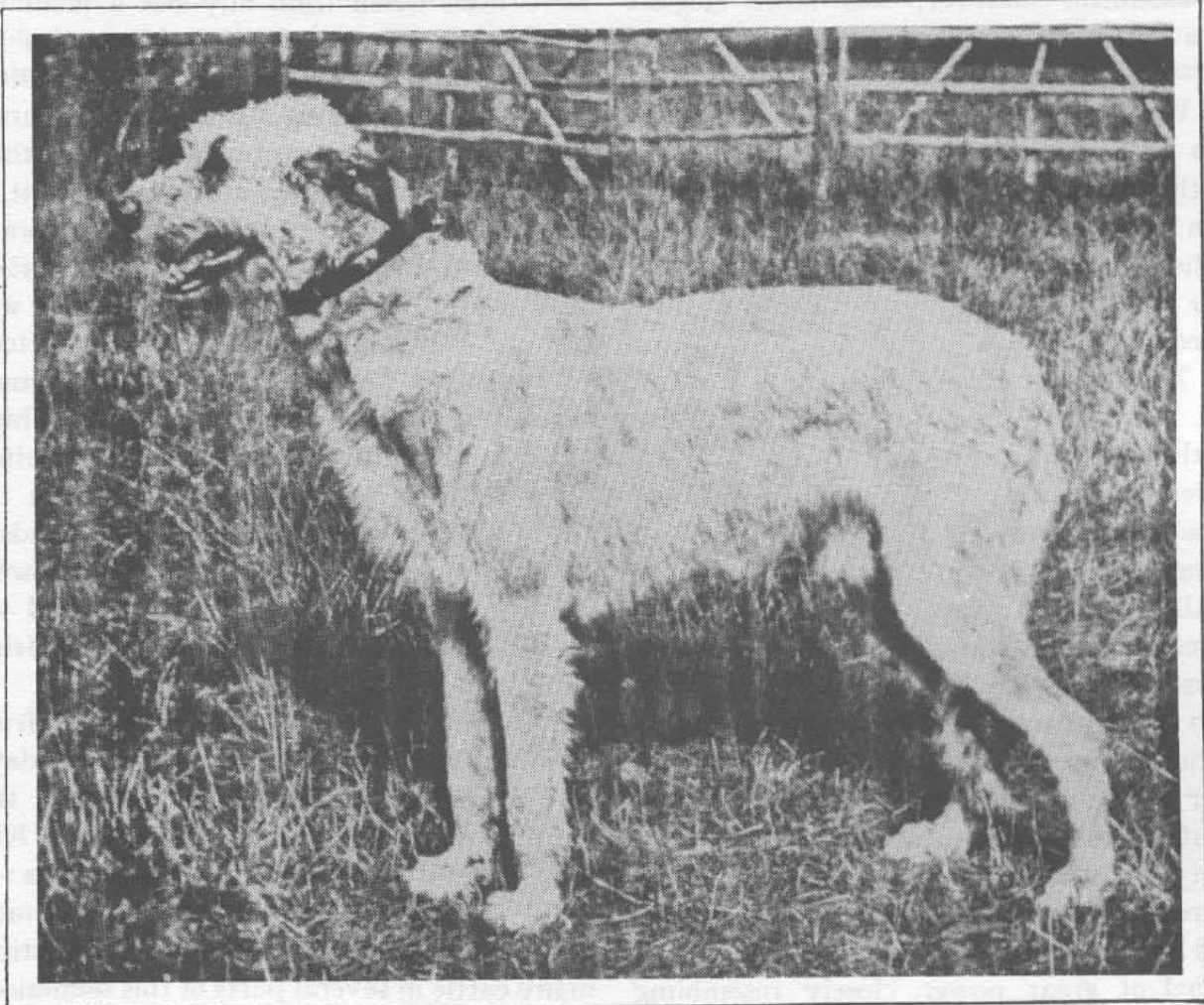
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restored to a semblance of the original type.

At the time when he entered into the controversy, Captain Graham had been actively interesting himself for something like a score of years in the resuscitation of the breed, and his patience had been

rough material the majestic breed that holds so prominent a position to-day.

There is little to be gathered from ancient writings concerning the size and appearance of the Irish Wolfhounds in early times. Exaggerated figures are given as to height and weight ; but all authorities agree that



MRS. PERCY SHEWELL'S CH. COTSWOLD

BY CH. O'LEARY—PRINCESS PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT.

Photograph by Holloway, Cheltenham.

well rewarded. By the year 1881 the Irish Wolfhound had been practically restored, although it has taken close upon a quarter of a century to produce the magnificent champions Cotswold and Cotswold Patricia, which are such brilliant examples of the modern breed—a brace of Wolfhounds who bear living testimony to the vast amount of energy and perseverance which Captain Graham and his enthusiastic colleague Major Garnier have displayed in evolving from

they were impressively large and imposing dogs, and that they were regarded as the giants of the canine race. Oliver Goldsmith, himself an Irishman and also a student of natural history, wrote of dogs in 1770 or thereabout :—

“ The last variety, and the most wonderful of all that I shall mention, is the Great Irish Wolfdog, that may be considered as the first of the canine species. He is extremely beautiful and majestic in appear-

ance, being the greatest of the dog kind to be seen in the world. The largest of those I have seen—and I have seen about a dozen—was about four feet high, or as tall as a calf of a year old. He was made extremely like a Greyhound, but more robust, and inclining to the figure of the French *Martin* or the Great Dane."

Goldsmith, however, was more elegant as a writer than accurate as an observer, and it is not probable that the tallest of the *Wolfdogs* that he or any of his countrymen ever saw stood over thirty-five inches at the shoulder. A better judge of dogs than the gentle and credulous author of "The Vicar of Wakefield" was the compiler of the "Sportsman's Cabinet," published in 1803, who wrote:—

"The dogs of Greece, Denmark, Tartary, and Ireland are the largest and strongest of their species. The Irish Greyhound is of very ancient race, and is still to be found in some remote parts of that kingdom, though they are said to be reduced even in their original climate. They are much larger than the Mastiff; exceedingly ferocious when engaged."

In the same work a very spirited representation is given of this hound, engraved after a drawing by Philip Reinagle, R.A. (see p. 160). Although in some slight respects faulty, the illustration conveys an admirable impression of what the dog was like a hundred years ago—an immense rough-coated animal of great power, closely resembling the Highland Deerhound, but evidently then, as now, considerably larger in build.

It seems extraordinary that so little should have been accurately known and recorded of a dog which at one time must have been a familiar figure in the halls of the Irish kings. It was no mere mythical animal like the heraldic griffin, but an actual sporting dog which was accepted as a national emblem of the Emerald Isle, associated with the harp and the shamrock. Proof of its recognised nobility is shown in the circumstance that Irish Wolfhounds were formerly depicted as supporters of the armorial bearings of the Hibernian kings. They were usually collared *Or*, with

the appropriate motto, "Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked."

In the Dublin Museum there is preserved the skull of one of the old Irish Wolfhounds, but this is of little help to those who would inquire into the nature and character of the original hound. It is short and round, and could not possibly have been taken from any but a medium-sized dog. Contributory evidence as to the size of the *Wolfdog* is perhaps better sought by considering the size of its quarry. The Irish wolf was probably no larger than the wolf of any other country; but it is certain that the hound was a contemporary of the extinct Irish Elk (*Megaceros hibernicus*), and that this immense animal was commonly hunted by these dogs. Skeletons of the Irish Elk are to be seen in most museums. It stood about six feet high at the shoulder, and the antlers often measure from ten to eleven feet from tip to tip, with a weight of eighty pounds.* Such an animal would require a very powerful hound indeed to pull it down, and we may therefore assume that the original Irish *Wolfdog* was no pigmy.

It is interesting to note that the Irish Wolfhound was legislated for in the days of Cromwell. A declaration against the transporting of "*Wolfdogges*" dated Kilkenny, April 27th, 1652, reads as follows:—

"Forasmuch as we are credibly informed that wolves do much increase and destroy many cattle in several parts of this dominion, and that some of the enemy's party who have laid down their arms and have liberty to go beyond the seas, and others do attempt to carry away several such great dogges as are commonly called *Wolfe Dogges*, whereby the breed of them which are useful for destroying wolves would, if not prevented, speedily suffer decay, these are therefore to prohibit all persons whatsoever from exporting any of the said dogges out of this dominion."

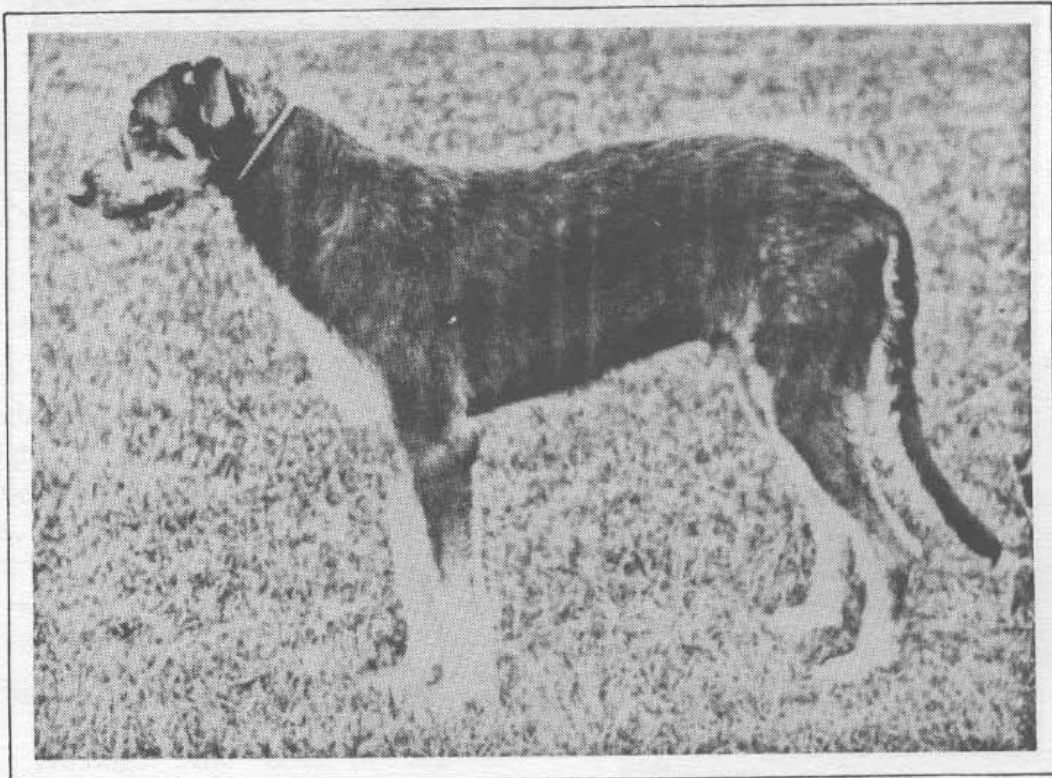
As regards the origin of the Irish Wolf-

* My friend Mrs. Clement K. Shorter possesses a well-preserved skull of an elk, dug up from a bog in Ireland. The stretch of the antlers is 8 feet 2 inches from tip to tip.—ED.

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hound, more than one theory is advanced. By some authorities it is suggested that it was the dog which we now know as the Great Dane. Others hold that as there were rough-coated Greyhounds in Ireland, it is this dog, under another name, which is now accepted. But probably Captain Graham is nearer the truth when he gives the opinion that the Irish hound that was kept to hunt wolves has never become extinct at all, but is now represented in

and they appeared to have very much deteriorated in bone and substance. Sir J. Power, of Kilfane, was responsible for one line, Mr. Baker, of Ballytobin, for another, and Mr. Mahoney, of Dromore, for the remaining strain. From bitches obtained from two of these kennels, Captain Graham, by crossing them with the Great Dane and Scottish Deerhound, achieved the first step towards producing the animal that he desired. Later on the Russian



MR. I. W. EVERETT'S BLACK AND TAN WOLFHOUND FELIXSTOWE YIRRA
BY KILCULLEN—KITTY ASTORE.

the Scottish Deerhound, only altered a little in size and strength to suit the easier work required of it—that of hunting the deer. This is the more probable, as the fact remains that the chief factor in the resuscitation of the Irish Wolfhound has been the Scottish Deerhound.

The result of Captain Graham's investigations when seeking for animals bearing some relationship to the original Irish Wolfe Dogge was that three strains were to be found in Ireland, but none of the representatives at that time were anything like so large as those mentioned in early writings,

Wolfhound Koratai, better known as the Borzoi, who was an exceedingly large hound, was introduced, as also were one or two other large breeds of dogs.

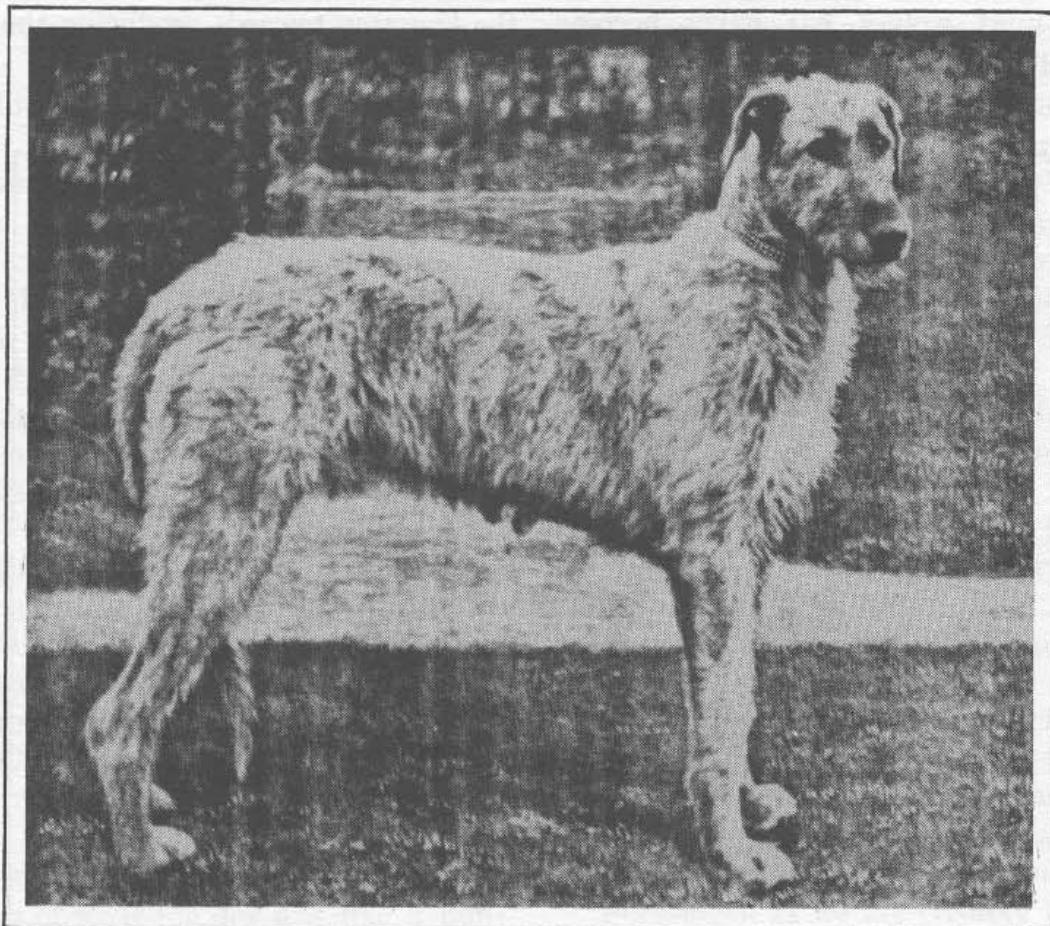
The intermixture of these canine giants, however, was not at first very satisfactory, as although plenty of bone was obtained, many were most ungainly in appearance and ill-shaped animals that had very little about them to attract attention. Captain Graham, however, stuck to his work, and very soon the specimens that he brought forward began to show a fixity of type both in head and in general outline. Brian

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was one of his best dogs, but he was not very large, as he only stood just over thirty inches at the shoulder. Banshee and Fin-tragh were others, but probably the best of Captain Graham's kennel was the bitch Sheelah. It was not, however, until towards the end of the past century that

to keep his name green; the best probably being Mr. Hall's Ch. Gareth.

Mr. F. M. Birtill in the following year produced Wargrave and Ballyhooley in one litter; these two, who were sired by Brian II., also becoming the parents of excellent offspring. Wargrave was sent



MR. A. S. HALL'S CH. GARETH
BY CH. DERMOT ASTORE—TYNAGH.

the most perfect dogs were bred. These included O'Leary, the property of Mr. Crisp, of Playford Hall. O'Leary is responsible for many of the best dogs of the present day, and was the sire of Mrs. Percy Shewell's Ch. Cotswold and the same lady's Kilcullen, besides several other high-class prize-winners. Then Captain Graham bred Dermot Astore in 1896, and sold him to Mrs. Williams, of Llanllowell Rectory, near Usk. This dog carried all before him for some time, but was never quite such a typical dog as O'Leary. He has, however, left many good dogs and bitches behind him

by his breeder to a show at Gloucester when about a year old, and was entered in the catalogue to be sold for £25; he was nearly defeating Dermot Astore, was claimed by more than one would-be buyer, and was consequently put up to auction, when he was bought by Mr. Hood Wright for forty-five guineas. Later on he became the property of Mrs. Williams, who held a strong hand at that time. Wargrave soon became a champion, and when eighteen months old bred Ch. Artara, who was probably the best Irish Wolfhound bitch that has ever been bred. When shown in con-

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dition, Artara could beat all the dogs. Ch. Wargrave was also the sire of Wolf Tone, who has done an immense amount of good to his breed. He was bred by the late



HEAD OF FELIXSTOWE YIRRA.

Mr. Herbert Compton, who always had a very high opinion of him. Like his sire Wargrave, Wolf Tone has excellent legs and feet, and now that the dog belongs to Mrs. Shewell, the stock that he produces are all remarkable for their good limbs, and he has had a great deal to do with abolishing the straight hocks which were such an eyesore with many of the older hounds. Amongst the best of his offspring is Ch. Cotswold Patricia, the handsome animal who forms one of the illustrations in this chapter (p. 166). Ballyhooley, the litter brother of Wargrave, went into the hands of Mr. W. Williams, who did very well with him.

In 1900 Mr. Crisp bred Kilcullen from O'Leary, this dog winning the championship at the Kennel Club Show at the Crystal Palace in 1902 under Captain Graham. This was the year the Irish Wolfhound Club presented the hound Rajah of Kidnal as a regimental pet to the newly formed Irish Guards, and the present Lord Powerscourt went to the Crystal Palace with a non-commissioned officer to receive the dog.

Rajah of Kidnal, who was bred and exhibited by Mrs. A. Gerard, of Malpas, was

the selection of Captain Graham and two other judges. This dog, which has been renamed Brian Boru, is still hearty and well, and was at his post on St. Patrick's Day, 1907, when the shamrock that had been sent by Her Majesty Queen Alexandra was handed to the men.

Mrs. Gerard owned one of the largest kennels of Irish Wolfhounds in England, and amongst her many good dogs and bitches was Cheevra, who was a wonderful brood bitch, and included amongst her stock were several that worked their way up to championship honours; she was the dam of Rajah of Kidnal.

Besides Ballyhooley, Mr. W. Williams owned a good dog in Finn by Brian II. Finn produced Miss Packe's Wickham Lavengro, a black and tan dog that has won several prizes. Some judges are opposed



HEAD OF CH. COTSWOLD.

to giving prizes to Irish Wolfhounds of this colour, but Captain Graham does not object to it. Finn was a very heavy dog, and weighed 148 lbs.

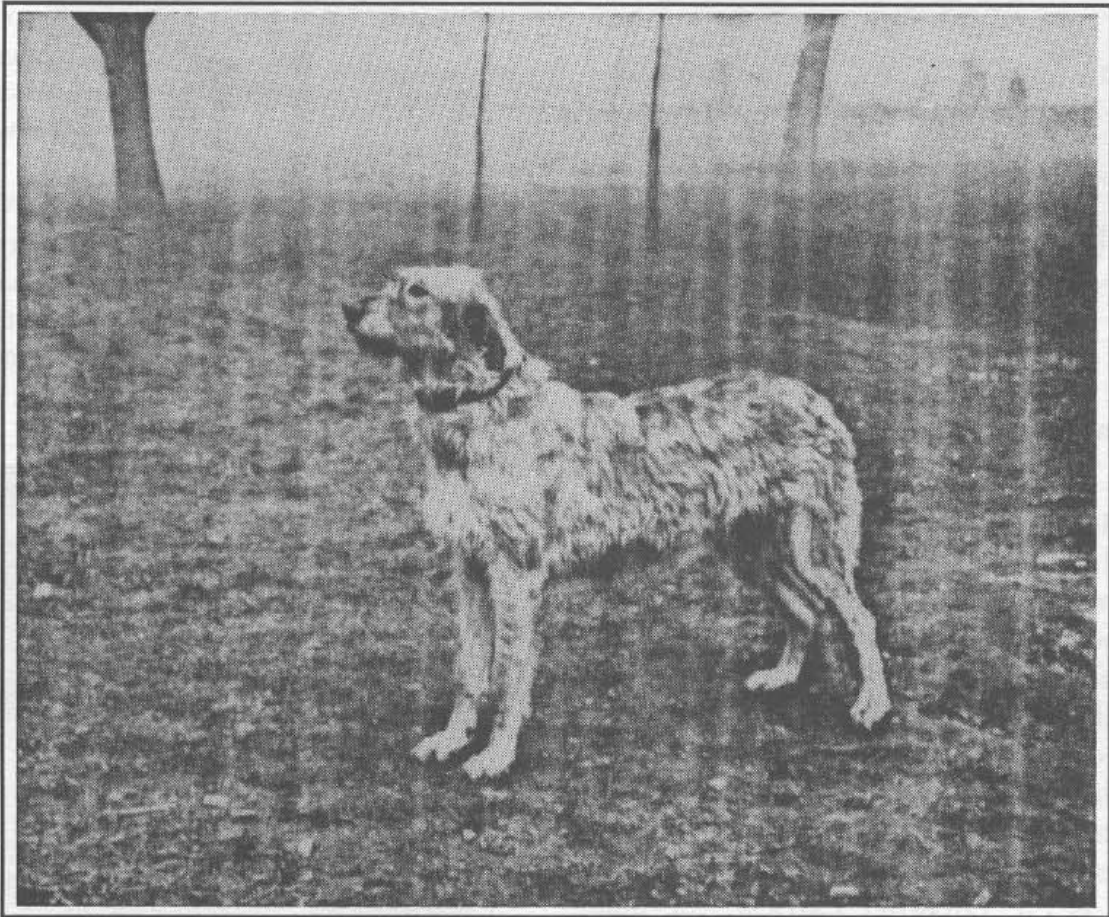
A hound that has been of great benefit

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to the breed in Ireland is Ch. Marquis of Donegal. He is the property of Mr. Martin, and I believe I am correct in saying that he is an own brother to Dermot Astore. Mr. Martin has had several other high-class specimens, of which Connaught was one of the best.

Amongst the bitches that have been in-

most promising young dog in Felixstowe Yirra, a son of Kilcullen and Kitty Astore, with which he was second to Mrs. Shewell's Ch. Cotswold, who is undoubtedly the grandest Irish Wolfhound ever bred, and has so far had an unbeaten record. In height Ch. Cotswold stands $34\frac{1}{2}$ inches. At the same show Miss Clifford, of Ryde,



MRS. P. SHEWELL'S CH. COTSWOLD PATRICIA

BY WOLF TONE—PRINCESS PATRICIA OF CONNAUGHT.

strumental in building up the breed to its present high state of excellence is Princess Patricia of Connaught, who is by Dermot Astore out of Cheevra, and is the dam of Ch. Cotswold Patricia. She is one of the tallest of her race, her height being 33 inches; another bitch that measures the same number of inches at the shoulder being Dr. Pitts-Tucker's Juno of the Fen, a daughter of Ch. Wargrave, who has had several prizes placed to her credit.

Mr. Everett, of Felixstowe, is now one of the most successful breeders. He exhibited at the last Kennel Club show a

exhibited a good hound in Wildcroft, another of Dermot Astore's sons, and other supporters of the breed are Lady Kathleen Pilkington, Mr. T. Hamilton Adams, Mr. G. H. Thurston, Mr. Bailey, Mrs. F. Marshall, Mr. J. L. T. Dobbin, and Miss Ethel McCheane.

The following is the description of the variety as drawn up by the Club:—

1. General Appearance.—The Irish Wolfhound should not be quite so heavy or massive as the Great Dane, but more so than the Deerhound, which in general type he should otherwise resemble. Of great size and commanding appearance, very

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muscular, strongly though gracefully built: movements easy and active; head and neck carried high; the tail carried with an upward sweep, with a slight curve towards the extremity. The minimum height and weight of dogs should be 31 inches and 120 pounds, of bitches 28 inches and 90 pounds. Anything below this should be debarred from competition. Great size, including height at shoulder and proportionate length of body, is the desideratum to be aimed at, and it is desired firmly to establish a race that shall average from 32 inches to 34 inches in dogs, showing the requisite power, activity, courage, and symmetry.

2. Head.—Long, the frontal bones of the forehead very slightly raised and very little indentation between the eyes. Skull not too broad; muzzle long and moderately pointed; ears small and Greyhound-like in carriage.

3. Neck.—Rather long, very strong and muscular, well arched, without dewlap and loose skin about the throat.

4. Chest.—Very deep, breast wide.

5. Back.—Rather long than short. Loins arched.

6. Tail.—Long and slightly curved, of moderate thickness, and well covered with hair.

7. Belly.—Well drawn up.

8. Forequarters.—Shoulders muscular, giving breadth of chest, set sloping, elbows well under, neither turned inwards nor outwards. Leg—Forearm muscular and the whole leg strong and quite straight.

9. Hindquarters.—Muscular thighs, and second thigh long and strong as in the Greyhound, and hocks well let down and turning neither in nor out.

10. Feet.—Moderately large and round, neither turned inwards nor outwards; toes well arched and closed, nails very strong and curved.

11. Hair.—Rough and hard on body, legs, and head; especially wiry and long over eyes and under jaw.

12. Colour and Markings.—The recognised colours are grey, brindle, red, black, pure white, fawn, or any colour that appears in the Deerhound.

Faults.—Too light or heavy in head, too highly arched frontal bone, large ears and hanging flat to the face; short neck; full dewlap; too narrow or too broad a chest; sunken and hollow or quite level back; bent forelegs; overbent fetlocks; twisted feet; spreading toes; too curly a tail; weak hindquarters, cow hocks, and a general want of muscle; too short in body.



BRIAN BORU: THE IRISH GUARDS' WOLFHOUND.

Photograph by Pictorial Agency.