



All change,
but **No** difference

Photography courtesy of Moyglare Stud

Moyglare bloodstock legends Stan Cosgrove and Jimmy Feane have retired, but the leading stud farm, taken over by Eva-Maria Bucher-Haefner after her father's death last year, is carrying on as before, writes **Lissa Oliver**

IT'S LESS OF A BIG CHANGE than just a natural transition for a stud that has been around for over 50 years now," says Fiona Craig of the recent alterations to the staff and ownership of the world famous Moyglare Stud.

Walter Haefner, who passed away last year at the grand age of 101, established Moyglare Stud in 1962 and manager Stan Cosgrove, who retired this year, took over from Major Eric Miville in 1968. Since then the stud has seen no major changes to personnel.

"The biggest changes have been Eva-Maria Bucher-Haefner taking over from her father, and Stan Cosgrove and Jimmy Feane retiring in the middle of August," says Craig, sales and breeding advisor for Moyglare Stud, a role that has evolved over the past 23 years and is typical



Photo: Pat Healy

Two of the retired Moyglare team at the races: Jimmy Feane (left) and Stan Cosgrove



Eva-Maria Bucher-Haefner with new Moyglare mare, the US-bred, dual Grade 1-winner Switch

of the Moyglare story.

"Major Eric Miville was the original manager and when he died in 1968 Stan Cosgrove, who had been the veterinary advisor since the stud started, was a natural successor. It's very unusual in this business to continue for such a length of time with no changes. Jimmy had been involved for over 30 years.

"Mr Haefner was an incredibly loyal man and I've always seen Eva as the same, they

are very similar in their thought process and loyalty is incredibly important to them.

"We are all so lucky to have Eva and Moyglare, and let's hope that the stud will be here in another 50 years," adds Craig, "and then it will be a whole host of new faces

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in the familiar roles, again, just a natural transition."

Indeed, had such changes occurred at any other stud farm they wouldn't have even been deemed newsworthy.

"Moyglare has a small staff and they all do a wonderful job, it has always been a big team effort," says Craig. "Malachy Ryan is the new stud manager, but there are no big changes, things go on as usual. Everyone does their bit and that's what produces Moyglare's success."

The question is will Bucher-Haefner's fresh

ideas and Ryan's new approach bring about a change of policy?

Many breeders and owners are already licking their lips at the possibility Moyglare may become more commercial, but Craig is quick to dash such hopes.

"I don't think there will be any major changes, no wholesale change of policy. Eva is a business woman, but will still make choices of the heart – Moyglare Stud was her father's great love and it's a love she shares. She came to Moyglare Stud when she was younger and she is a horsewoman herself, so she has an empathy for it and is an amazing learner. And the great thing is that she has her own opinions and ideas, which is refreshing for everybody."

While most people prefer to opt for a quiet life and avoid confrontation at work, the racing industry has always been a business that encourages debate and a fresh set of views will boost any stud. As Craig recalls Cosgrove's original appointment took the stud to new levels.

"He's a wonderful man and he looked at things from a totally different perspective as a vet. There have been a few memorable debates over the years; you need a few rows, if you all agreed you'd get nowhere!"

Craig was also able to provide reassurance about the future of one of the jewels in the Irish racing calendar, the Moyglare Stud Stakes.

"The race will continue to be sponsored by Moyglare Stud, that will never change," she insists, "and if it can be a part of Irish

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Champions Day, why not? Last year's Champions Day at Ascot is certainly worth a try to replicate. Okay, once it's been tried it will be difficult to go back, but if it fails we can be no worse off."

This year the stud has sponsored free entry for families to The Curragh on Moyglare Stud Stakes Day, a generous move aimed at



encouraging more people to enjoy a day at the races.

"Moyglare Stud wouldn't be one for 'look at me, here I am' type of thing," explains Craig, "there is the Moyglare Stud Stakes Day at the Curragh, but that's about it."

H OPEFULLY the stud's generosity will have been rewarded with a large crowd, but that hasn't always been the case on Ireland's racecourses this year, despite the unusually good weather.

"Moyglare have a runner at Tipperary tonight, but I won't be going," Craig readily admits, "there's too much that needs to be done here and I can watch on TV."

"I do appreciate why people don't go racing, but the only way you really learn about horses is by going to the races and looking at them. You can go to foal and yearling sales, but it's only at the races that you learn what racehorses actually looks like, and that is not always beautiful! The sales ring is not the racecourse, which is why we have eight grand horses winning races."

Many of the paddock picks will be Moyglare-bred and owned and, despite a relatively small band of about 35 broodmares these days, they invariably include a top-class runner. Be My Guest, Assert, Brief Truce, Dance Design, Go And Go, Media Puzzle, Stanerra, Refuse To Bend, Trusted Partner, Profound Beauty, Sapphire: the list could go on and on.

The latest Moyglare hope is Free Eagle, a High Chaparral half-brother to Sapphire. He won a maiden on his debut and holds Group 1 entries





Craig believes that breeding is like “placing an ante-post bet.” Moyglare aims to produce a Classic type by “injecting some class” into the mares

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If the daily business at Moyglare Stud will not be seeing any changes, what excitement might the future hold for the current batch of wannabes waiting in the wings and is there another star among the yearlings?

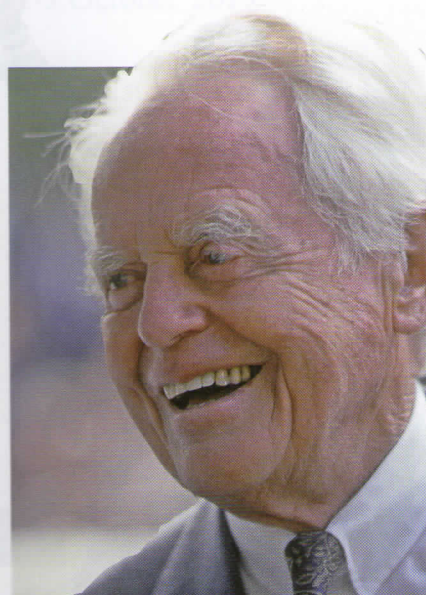
“We only have six colts this year, which include a Dark Angel half-brother to Sapphire

nice Dylan Thomas colt, but we have some very nice fillies, we hope” reveals Craig. “There is a sister to last year’s Ribblesdale winner Princess Highway by Street Cry out of Irresistible Jewel, a Dubawi half-sister to Carla Bianca out of Majestic Silver, and a lovely Dalakhani out of Nunavik.

“And this is exactly where they make liars of you as by this time next year the fillies could all be as slow as boats and the colts top class! You can never predict what will happen.”

Fortunately Craig and her team are happy to take the good with the bad and their longevity has at least taught them the realities of the game.

“Breeding a mare is like placing a bet ante-post – you do your research and try to find the best odds, but for every good horse someone breeds there’s also a heap of useless ones they’ve bred too,” she points out. “Like everyone, we have had our share of big



The late Walter Haefner
Photo: Thoroughbred Photography

You can't always remember every horse, but looking back through the photos you can see family traits and make comparisons

that most horses are average or less and you just have to accept that. Of course, you try to mate for, and raise, a stakes horse, but in many instances that's not going to be the case and you have to move forward and look for the next one.

"We try to breed the Classic horse and the broodmare band is itself mainly Classic-bred, middle-distance types," she continues. "It would be no use trying to breed a sprinter when we don't have that type of mare to breed from. We aim to inject class, rather than just speed, and look for a turn of foot, for acceleration, rather than just a 5f sprinter."

"You can have a great turn of foot in a two mile, but if we just send a middle-distance mare to a sprinter what we end up with will be neither one thing nor the other."

"Eva spent \$4.4 million last year on the multiple Grade 1-winning US racemare Switch, a fast mare from Classic US bloodlines, as, with the Sadler's Wells mares Moyglare owns, we were struggling to find a mare of the right level of Galileo. She is in-foal and we shall see. That is the future."



Again, the loyalty of the Haefner family becomes a plus factor with regard to breeding policies. Just as the stud staff have remained basically constant, Dermot Weld has trained the Moyglare horses for 40 years and has retained only two jockeys during that time, Mick Kinane and Pat Smullen.

"Everyone, including Dermot and Pat, know the families so well, and we all have an input; you often get a feeling for what will suit them and hence plan their matings almost on instinct. I'm sometimes thinking about matings for a filly even before she's gone into training!" she laughs, before adding: "I've been taking conformation photos of all the foals every season for the past 23 years, it's invaluable."

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"Because Moyglare doesn't stand stallions, there is the freedom to go where we want, within some economic and geographic restraints. I am not sure about the concept of the perfect mating – there are so many varying contributions such as the state of grass when the foal was reared, the weather, the staff handling the horse, so many things can affect the development of a young horse."

"A mare can visit the same stallion three years in a row, but will she produce three champions? We all just try to get the balance right and there are normally three or four choices for each mare, that is where the price and location often come into play."

The quest to produce a champion is further complicated by popular bloodlines. "I'm not a fan of doubling up on many popular sire lines close up in a pedigree, and we're struggling with so many Danehills and Sadler's Wells," Crag continues, mirroring the problems of many European breeders.

"A lot of our mares have US pedigrees and we have started adding back in the American bloodlines, not so much deliberately but

as we look for alternatives. Somehow, in doing that, we got a bit of zip back into it, as with Sapphire, who comes from the Talking Picture line, through Trusted Partner. We sent her dam Polished Gem to Medicean by Machiavellian, by Mr Prospector – Sapphire's by an English-bred stallion from an American sire line out of an Irish bred mare, but from there her pedigree is American.

"Profound Beauty is the same, her third dam is the Fappiano mare Aptostar. Her first foal is a Dubawi filly – Dubai Millenium is by the Mr Prospector sire Seeking The Gold. She is tough to breed, stayed two miles, had a great turn of foot, is built like the backside of a bus and is by Danehill, and her granddam is by Sadler's Wells!"

"That's why we have a few mares in the States. Stallions such as Street Cry and Arch seem to suit us. That's the big challenge, particularly here in Ireland."

"We did great with Indian Ridge, but there just isn't another of him around."

Having celebrated 50 years last year, Moyglare Stud looks set to continue safely for another 50 years and beyond, Eva's children Chiara and Mischa sharing her passion and enthusiasm.

Already Sapphire's little brother Free Eagle has given them something to dream about for next season and though it may be a new dawn, the day ahead remains the same. ■



Sapphire and Pat Smullen after winning the 2012 Qipco British Champion Fillies and Mares', right, Fiona Craig at the sales