

# Charolais at 60

## Breeder Profile

### **Mattie Dockery**

**Kye, Elphin, Co. Roscommon**

**Herd: KYE CHAROLAIS**

**177<sup>th</sup> Member of the Society**

**Date of Membership: 24<sup>th</sup> August 1978**

## Q & A

### **1. Why Charolais? ... what first attracted you to become involved in Charolais Breeding.**

*I was raised on a small farm in Co. Roscommon and in the 1970's I got a job as a Livestock Inspector with the Department of Agriculture. That involved the inspection and licensing of bulls at various centres throughout the country. I had a keen interest in cattle breeding and was very impressed by the Charolais bulls in terms of muscle, conformation, weight for age and bone compared to other breeds.*

### **2. When and where was the herds first Charolais purchased?**

*I purchased my first Charolais in Goffs in Autumn 1977. She was Meath Melissa and was bred by Bart Monaghan, Staffordstown House, Navan. She was followed by Meath Nana, also bred by Bart, in June 1978. Both cows had heifer calves and those cattle became the foundation of the herd.*

### **3. What has been the biggest enjoyment/achievement from breeding Charolais cattle?**

*The greatest enjoyment has been having healthy, well bred, lively calves going out to grass in Spring. I also get great enjoyment and satisfaction from the positive feedback from customers who have purchased Charolais heifers and bulls. It is always a pleasure to welcome back many repeat customers and to hear that their calves are thriving and profitable. In recent years I have concentrated mostly on selling in-calf heifers, both home bred and purchased. I research the breeding of the heifers and choose bulls with ease of calving in mind to get the best possible result in*

*terms of calf quality with emphasis on safe delivery. Docility is also a priority for me as safety has become a vital part of farming.*

**4. What do you think of the standard of Charolais in Ireland today compared to when the herd was first established?**

*The Charolais breed has its foundation in muscle and conformation. The bloodlines of Shamrock Ambassador, Hermes, Doonally New, Indurain, Pirate and many more contributed greatly to the quality cattle which in turn resulted in top quality commercial Charolais achieving premium prices at the marts. AI has played a significant role in that for smaller herds and has enabled breeders like myself to match cows to bulls where different traits were required. Nowadays the emphasis is on ICBF data and ease of calving. It is encouraging to see a new generation of breeders showing top quality animals at shows all over the country.*

**5. What do you look for in a good bull?**

*Good hind leg and feet, good muscle, level top line, nice masculine head, good length and plenty of size for age as well as docile.*

**6. What do you look for in a good breeding female?**

*Nice stylish docile animal with average bone, medium height, feminine head, good length, good replacement value with sufficient milk.*

**7. Do you have any special feeding regimes; (a) prior to calving; (b) when preparing animals for show/sales?**

*(a) Cows would normally come off good grass and be housed in November. Good quality hay would be fed with some pre-calvers nuts for 3 weeks prior to calving date.*

*(b) Calves are introduced to meal feeding before weaning and are creep fed with good quality weaning crunch. A 16% protein ration with minerals and vitamins is fed to bulls. This is increased as required. Heifers for sale are grass fed and only get small quantities of concentrates after housing in winter. They are not over fed and particular attention is paid to maintain growth and enhance reproduction and breeding prospects.*

**8. What advice would you give to new breeders who are just starting out on their journey breeding Charolais cattle?**

*Try to buy good quality females as they are the foundation for your herd. Take indexes and stars into account and aim to improve with quality AI sires.*

**9. What's the biggest change in farming you've seen over the nearly 50 years since the herd was established?**

*The biggest change has been the increase in part time farmers especially in suckler herds. Off farm income is a necessity now. Ease of calving is a priority for part time farmers who may not be present when cows are calving. Costs and inputs have increased and there has been a dramatic increase in paperwork for farmers with technology now playing a major role.*

**10. Where do you see the breed in 10 years-time?**

*Charolais has been the top beef breed in Ireland for the past four decades and with careful breeding I expect that there will always be a premium price for top quality animals both pedigree and commercial. While there will be an overall reduction in the national herd Charolais will continue to be the most profitable beef breed.*

**11. What is/was the best piece of advice you received re. Charolais?**

*To persist in selecting top quality stock, take the highs with the lows and trust your instincts!*



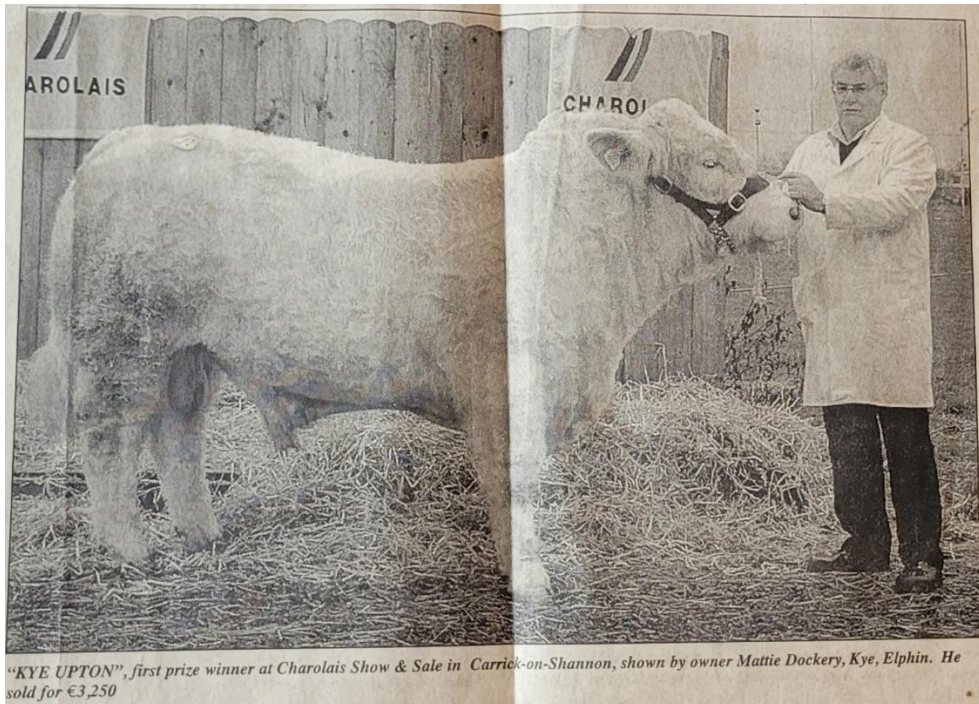
**Kye Owen – At the Show/Sale in Goffs, Co. Kildare held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1980.**



**Kye Primrose – Lot 46 at Goffs Sale in Kill, Co. Kildare on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1980.  
Born 4<sup>th</sup> November 1979 and sired by Shamrock Ambassadeur.**



**Kye Titanic – Sold for €5,100 in Carrick-on-Shannon in November 2003.  
Born 20<sup>th</sup> April 2002 and sire by Hermes.**



*"KYE UPTON", first prize winner at Charolais Show & Sale in Carrick-on-Shannon, shown by owner Mattie Dockery, Kye, Elphin. He sold for €3,250*

**Kye Upton – First prize winner at the Carrick-on-Shannon Show/Sale in December 2004. He sold for €3,250. Born 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003 and sired by Excellent.**



**Kye Val - Sold for €5,600 at the Tullamore Show/Sale in February 2006. Born 21<sup>st</sup> September 2004 and sired by Doonally New.**



**Kye Almera – Sold for €7,500 at the Christmas Cracker Show/Sale in December 2006.  
Born 14<sup>th</sup> December 2005 and sired by Doonally Olmeto.**