



OLD IRISH GOATS IN CROSSMAGLEN MARKET

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OLD IRISH GOAT SOCIETY



As captioned, the picture above depicts goats for sale at market in the early 1900's. The young goat at the centre demonstrates how the Old Irish breed can be quite leggy when young, although they develop- as shown by the older female to the right- as 'cobby', a term meaning that the leg length is typically less than the body length. These goats have quite short heads, although the facial profile is 'dished'. The long-haired female has a coat worthy of an Old Irish male, the neck hair blending with the long hair hiding the outline of the chest, and the body hair reaching down to a line with the knees and hocks. Colour is difficult to discern, although the long-haired female is most likely a Bezoar or Grey Lightbelly, judging by the facial striping. The female behind her may be a typical



Lightbelly, having a black coat. What is noticeable with these goats is the smallness of their heads.

Crossmaglen is around a dozen miles from Slieve Gullion as the Hooded Crow flies, and it is not inconceivable that goats offered for sale in this particular goat market could have come from there. More to the point, the goatmen of Dromintee may have bought stock there as they got together an annual Irish Travelling herd, this being destined to be sold off in Britain.



When we compare the remarkable likeness between these Crossmaglen females with a group of Old Irish females at rest in the market town of Tunbridge Wells, Kent, a little over a decade earlier (shown above), it is not hard to imagine how the Old Irish goat of Dromintee could have found its way to the furthest corners of the British Isles during the Victorian and Edwardian periods.



Another point of interest is that the long-haired female demonstrates just how alike the Old Irish and Old English breeds are, an indication of their common, cold weather, origin. In this instance, she is shown below with a female Cheviot Old English goat in the Cheviot Landrace Goat Society's breeding programme to preserve and promote this breed.

