

CZARINA

Bulldog Legend or Mythology?

By James McCormick and Susan Burley ©

Greyhound breeding a subject of absorbing interest, a subject of a thousand theories, all directed at producing the perfect specimen.

One of the great breeding legends in the history of greyhound breeding and ancestry is the widespread acceptance that the famous blue bitch **CZARINA** descended from a Greyhound - Bulldog cross purported to have been an experiment carried out by Lord Orford in the late eighteenth century, shortly before he was to become most famous in the world of Coursing as the owner of a kennel of champions including **CZARINA**. Lord Orford was the Founder of the first ever Coursing Club, Swaffham Coursing Society in 1776.

CZARINA, forever unbeaten, winner of 47 straight challenges and according to legend the greyhound responsible for altering the genes of almost all of the entire greyhound population. Whelped in 1778 according to the Altcar Stud Book, other reports state 1779 and 1781. She is said to have whelped her only litter when she was 13 years old.

One of the great myths perpetuated by Greyhound Authors and Coursing Journalists alike for more than two hundred years, concerns the reported death of Lord Orford on the coursing fields he so loved. The truth may actually be less spectacular but very much in keeping with his portrayed erratic behaviour and enigmatic character of which much has been written. The following is an account written at the time:-

*"Lord Orford's coursing zeal remained with him to the last. No day was too long - no weather too severe for him. He was usually seen in a suit of black, without either great coat or gloves, mounted on a piebald pony, wearing a cocked hat. Such was his costume in the coursing field. His death was rather remarkable. On the day when his favourite bitch **CZARINA** was due to run a match of some consequence, nothing could restrain him from appearing on the field on his piebald pony, though the state of his health would have made his chamber a fitter place for him than such a scene of excitement. The greyhounds were started, and **CZARINA** won. During the course he could not be dissuaded from riding after the dogs; particularly as his favourite bitch displayed her superiority at every turn; when in the moment of his highest exultation and in the eagerness of his triumph, he fell from his pony, whether occasioned by apoplexy or not is unknown, but he almost immediately expired."*

This account is known to owners, breeders, and greyhound enthusiasts, however, in the detail contained within a collection of letters written by Lady Dorothy Nevill, a descendent of Lord Orford, there is a very different account reported and this was published in 'The Reminiscences of Lady Dorothy Nevill' edited by her son Ralph Nevill in 1906:-

"A great patron of the sport, he eventually met his death through taking a dive from a window. A coursing match was going on close by, and eager to see it, he seems to have been in too great a hurry to adopt the conventional method of going out by the door."

This was not the first time as a similar incident is documented within letters written by Lord Orford's uncle, Horace Walpole. The incident quoted below happened soon after his uncle arrived at what he describes as a hovel on the edge of the fens, to attend a return of his nephew's illness. Lord Orford's doctor was present when his Lordship made an almost similar attempt to exit from an upstairs window of the Parsonage House on the Fens but he was

prevented from doing so by his keeper and servants:-

"The doctor had ordered the window to be opened to let out the smoke, and, the moment he had quitted his patient, my Lord attempted to fling himself out the upstairs window, but was prevented from doing so by his keeper and servants, who flung him on to the bed."

The extracts from letters written by Sir Horace Walpole describe something of a scene of chaos and desolation that reigned at Houghton during the years when a fabled greyhound cross bulldog experiment is purported to have produced a quite extraordinary breed of greyhound, that we are asked to believe, went on to dominate the sport of greyhound coursing. Houghton Hall was the former home of Britain's first Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole. In a letter sent to Her Ladyship the Countess of Ossory on Sep 1st 1773, Sir Horace writes:-

"You know, Madam, though I think it far from a beautiful place, how very fond I am of Houghton, as the object of my father's fondness. Judge then what I felt finding it half a ruin, though the pictures, the glorious pictures, and furniture, are in general admirably well preserved. Al the rest is destruction and desolation! The two great staircases exposed to all weathers, every room in the wings rotting with wet, the ceiling and gallery in danger, the garden a common, the park half-covered with nettles and weeds, the walls and pales in ruin, mortgages swallowing the estate, and a debt of above £40,000, heaped on those of my father and my brother. A crew of banditti are harboured in the house, stables, and Town. The morning was spent visiting the kennels, in giving away pointers, greyhounds, and foreign beasts, in hearing petitions, and remonstrance's of old servants, whom I pitied, though three were drunk by the time I had breakfast. I came away chagrined and humbled."

It is obvious from a letter written by Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann dated April 28th 1777 that the condition of his nephew Lord Orford had little changed:-

"I do not know whether Mr Sharpe has complied with my request, and acquainted Lady Orford with the return of her son's insanity." "After an interval of three years in which my nephew remained as much in his senses as he was supposed to be before his declared frenzy, he was seized a fortnight ago with a fever which soon brought out the colour of his blood, in two days he was furious. The low wretches, by whom in his sensible hours he was always surrounded, concealed the symptoms. I received no notice until the sixth day, and then--by the stagecoach! I set out directly for the hovel where he is—a parsonage house, as the reverend proprietor called it to me, on the edge of the fens, which my Lord hires, and his usual residence. The single chamber without a bed is a parlour seven foot high, directly under my Lord's bedchamber, without shutters, and so smoky that there is no sitting in it unless the door is open. I am forced to lie here, five miles off, in an Inn—a palace to his dwelling. The morning after my arrival, a physician I had sent from Norwich forty miles from hence, coming down to tell me how he had found my Lord, we were alarmed with a scream and a bustle. The doctor had ordered the window to be opened to let out the smoke, and, the moment he had quitted his patient, my Lord attempted to fling himself out the window but was prevented by his keeper and the servants." "They had not even sent for a physician; because, they told me, my Lord (a lunatic) has no opinion of physicians. Judge of my distress! My brother and I have too much tenderness and delicacy to take out the statute of lunacy."

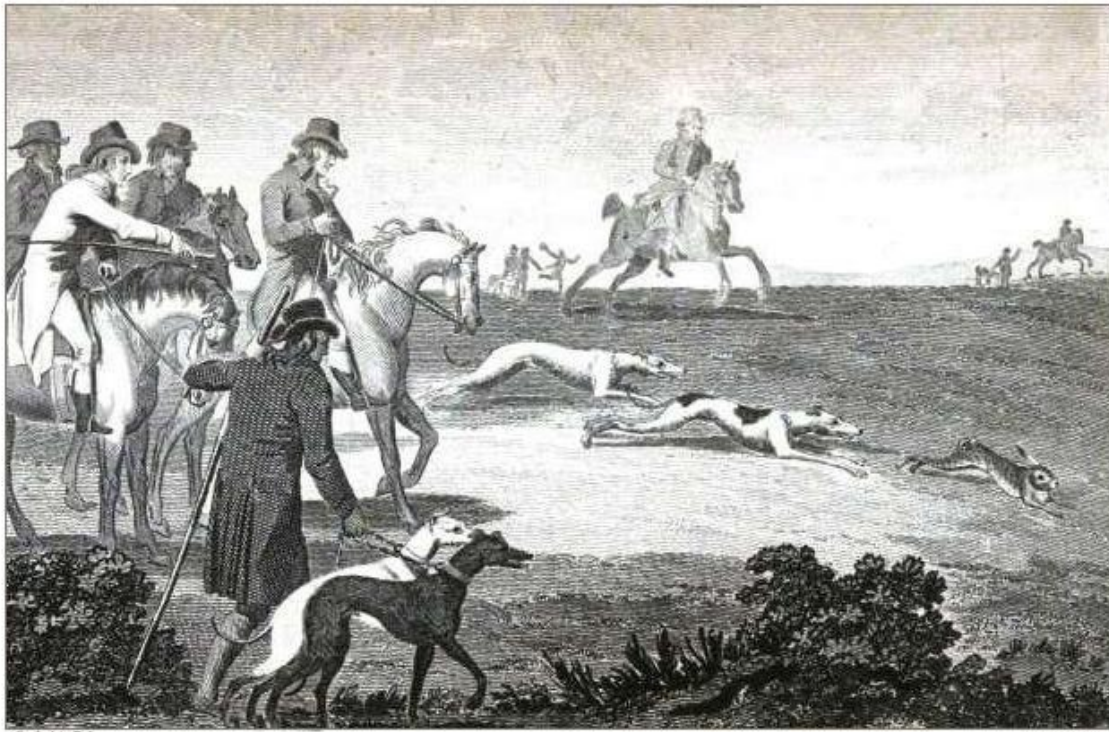
These extracts illustrate the turmoil in Lord Orford's life during the time and period when the mythology regarding the crossing of a bulldog with a greyhound was founded. It would seem that Lord Orford's chief steward was unable to read or write, and the hired workers would hardly have been capable of sensibly recording any worthwhile breeding project, and this casts serious doubt to the claims surrounding the evolvement of a bulldog cross and the possibility that the champion greyhound **CZARINA** could have been conceived in this manner. We are of the strong opinion that the modern greyhound has not inherited any genes which purport to have arrived as a result of cross breeding of this kind. We are also of the opinion that the emergence of Lord Orford as the owner of champion greyhounds is unlikely to have been connected in any way to the alleged cross breeding which might, or might not, have taken place.

We believe that the article penned by greyhound genealogist Charles Castle FZS is misleading and not based on traceable fact, he states:-

*'The breeding of **CZARINA** is still the closely guarded secret of Lord Orford, but there is little doubt that she contained the blood of some of his Lordships experimental crosses with bulldogs and other breeds; she was whelped in 1781 and failed to breed until she was thirteen years old.'*

Most of the eighteenth century coursing owners and breeders seemed to have a need for self-glorification, which they hoped to achieve through the prowess of their greyhounds on the field. Perhaps it was thought that a little secrecy was warranted to prevent others from tapping into their successful strains. Was it the very successful greyhound coursing dynasties of Lord Orford and Colonel Thornton that unintentionally created the mythology and the legend of the bulldog breed? It is certain that **CZARINA's** supposed pedigree has become legend and it has been accepted for many years that her ancestry is seven times removed from the bulldog cross. How did this become a fact which was allowed to prosper and yet never seriously refuted by any Coursing Journalist or greyhound writer for more than two hundred years? Was it possible there was such an absence of proving documentation?

Lord Orford we know established the first Coursing Club in 1776 at Swaffham and held organised coursing meetings open to the public but with a select membership. Membership was restricted to twenty-six, the number of letters in the alphabet, with each member allotted a letter and colour, this meant that all members should name their dogs starting with the letter they were allotted, Lord Orford's letter was 'C' and Mr. William Woodley's letter was 'W' and his colours were white and crimson.



Coursing at Swaffham.
Published Jan^y 1st 1795. by J. Whittle, Warwick Square.

Coursing prior to the formation of Coursing Club's like Swaffham in 1776, Ashdown Park in 1780 and Malton which was formed in 1781 under the auspices of Colonel Thornton and Major Topham, were a private affair mainly upon and over the estates of the Landed Gentry. Tenant Farmer coursing meetings were held on occasion and the farmers were invited to compete against his Lordship or the Squire with their own greyhounds. One prominent coursing Tenant Farmer Mr. John Purser, of the Duke of Bedford's Estate is accredited as owning a champion named Pilot born in 1820. Pilot is the direct male-line descendant of 95% of all the greyhounds in the world today. It is unfortunate, that through time and the under-reported private meetings held in and around Bedfordshire that Pilot's pedigree still remains unknown. Despite extensive research even extending to contacting present day relatives of John Purser, we have been unable to establish his breeding.

We believe there is sufficient evidence to repudiate the belief of **CZARINA's** connection with Lord Orford's bulldog experiments. The supposed acceptance of her part bulldog pedigree by coursing writers during the period which preceded the first Greyhound Stud Books of Thomas Goodlake and Thomas Thacker has flourished right up till now. Up until that time little was ever revealed as to greyhound pedigrees, which might explain how it was possible for myth to become accepted fact.

Since the supposed experiment of Lord Orford, which was regarded as a success, others have experimented with the bulldog cross, and the prevalent opinion is that the produce has a tendency to run by nose. It is certainly a known fact, that the sense of smelling of a bulldog is exquisite, and that the breed of dogs here spoken of are easier brought to perfection for the midnight purposes of the poacher in driving hares to net than any other canine species.

Greyhound – Data team members **Jim McCormick and Sue Burley** are both of the opinion that the modern greyhound has not inherited any genes from the English bulldog. We believe some hidden truths were perpetuated by the secrecy of Lord Orford, and perhaps later by Colonel Thornton who acquired at auction, soon after his Lordship's death, the greyhound celebrity **CZARINA** along with the sire of her litter of eight, JUPITER, a litter that included CLARET, the sire of the renowned champions MAJOR and SNOWBALL. Was it Lord Orford's secrecy surrounding his bulldog and other cross pedigrees which was not repudiated by Colonel Thornton following his purchase of many of those greyhounds that started the chain of circumstance which eventuated in a broad acceptance that these particular greyhounds had inherited the bulldog cross gene? It is clear that whenever the subject was brought up over the past two hundred years, it has always been taken for granted that the celebrated **CZARINA** was the prime specimen to have actually evolved from that experiment.

Hitherto, it has always been assumed that Lord Orford actually bred **CZARINA** himself, but from what has been written in the Sporting Magazines of 1802, and 1805, a period closer to the happenings we have described, and relating to greyhounds and Coursing some two decades before Thomas Goodlake's first Stud Book, some doubt does exist. The 1802 Sporting Magazine makes a direct link as to who bred CZARINA by naming Mr William Woodley as her breeder; this assertion is repeated in the May 1805 issue:-

"SNOWBALL was got by Colonel Thornton's CLARET (who never lost a match) who was got by Colonel Thorntons JUPITER who's grandsire was JAVELIN and great grand sire BLUE JUPITER all having been bred at Thornton Royal, his great grand sire was RAINHAM CLARET who was out of Lord Orfords famous CZARINA, who was bought by Colonel Thornton at his Lordships sale, and was bred by Mr William Woodley."

All bred at Thornton Royal (Colonel Thornton's estate) is misleading as it is thought Lord Orford was responsible for breeding **CZARINA's** only litter from his stud dog JAVELIN who was also known as young Blue Jupiter. Furthermore the 1800 Sporting Magazine notes that Colonel Thornton

purchased the majority of the litter of eight whelps and these included CLARET and YELLOW CZARINA. Much more interesting is the reference to **CZARINA** "and was bred by Mr William Woodley." An interesting quote from Mr Goodlake in an article about Swaffham Coursing Club in which he says:- "The winner of the first Cup in 1792 was Mr William Woodley's WARRANT" and "Mr Woodley was remarkable for his breed of greyhounds" thus placing Mr Woodley in very high regard.

A similar review of Claret's pedigree from an article printed in the May 1805 Sporting Magazine which refers to the proposed Sale at Tattersall's of Colonel Thornton's two celebrated greyhounds CLARET and YOUNG CZARINA;

"CLARET was got by JUPITER; son of Colonel Thornton's OLD BLUE JUPITER, out of BLUE CZARINA (Bred by Mr William Woodley of Eccles, Norfolk) sold to Lord Orford, who was got by CUBLON, a cross of King George III's breed."

Some slight confusion is caused to the reader with the mention of "son of Old Blue Jupiter" which is true, but in our opinion this confuses the two known names of Claret's dam who from the Thornton Royal Stud advertisement of 1802 shown above, is clearly named Old Blue Jupiter her name before Lord Orford changed that to **CZARINA** to reflect his good fortune by the purchase of his family paintings for a very substantial sum by the Czarina, Empress of Russia.

The suggestion from each magazine is to the effect that **CZARINA** was bred by Mr Woodley and sold to Lord Orford.

There is a slight confusion by naming Claret's sire as JUPITER (1784), who we believe was renamed JAVELIN by Colonel Thornton after he purchased him from a Dispersal Auction Sale shortly after Lord Orford's death. JUPITER had previously been referred to as Blue JUPITER and Young Blue JUPITER when owned by Lord Orford to avoid confusion with his similarly named (Old) BLUE JUPITER. From the Dispersal Auction Sale, Colonel Thornton also purchased **CZARINA** (formerly Old BLUE JUPITER) and her litter of eight bred by Lord Orford and whelped in February 1791. Lord Orford had already named those Saplings, Claret, (Yellow) Czarina, Catgut, Ciao, Clyto, Comfort, Cauatic (purchased by Major Topham and renamed Vengeance) and Conspiracy (purchased by Colonel Leigh).

Our conclusions may be an unpalatable truth for those greyhound pedigree enthusiasts who like us grew up reading about the fabled bulldog bloodlines of **CZARINA** and broadly accepted it as fact. It is remarkable those two hundred and twenty years of misinformation whether by design or intent were allowed to prosper for so long.

Greyhound writers, Journalists, Authors and all manner of greyhound pedigree experts re-wrote or quoted **CZARINA's** bulldog related pedigree without knowing or investigating whether it had any real merit. But! in their defence at the turn of the eighteenth century when the Stallion Greyhound advertisement from Thornton Royal and later the announcement of the proposed sale of **CZARINA's** son CLARET were published in the Sporting Magazine, few would have seen it. The monthly Sporting Magazine had a select readership and perhaps at the time of Thomas Goodlake (The first Greyhound Stud book) and later Thomas Thacker, Abraham Welsh (Thacker) and John Walsh (Stonehenge) very few researchable copies of the monthly Magazine remained.

Much has also been written about the inheritance from the bulldog of the coat colour brindle seen in many of today's greyhounds. Mr. Mundy of Derbyshire, a foremost breeder of greyhounds in about the same period as Lord Orford's supposed bulldog experiment, was of the opinion that the brindle coat colour was inherited from the Scottish coarse haired greyhound. Mr. Mundy's breed of greyhounds we know included this favoured cross of the Scottish course haired greyhound with his own smooth haired Derbyshire greyhound. A Quote from Thacker's Coursers Companion of 1834:-

“In the days of Queen Elizabeth it seems to have been a fine effective animal, but approaching more to the bony wire haired make of the Highland Greyhound, represented in the pictures of Edwin Landseer, and deficient in the symmetry and fine glossy coat which mark a high bred kennel of modern times.”

An inherited mane of course hair running from the neck down to the shoulder can still be seen in some of today's greyhounds. One prominent ancestor in some greyhound pedigree's today is Mr Mundy's Wonder 1798. It is unlikely that Mr. Mundy competed many of his greyhounds at the Swaffham Club, because of Rule XIV: No rough haired dog to be deemed a greyhound.

Stonehenge, on the Bulldog cross says:-

“There is still one point which must be considered in the selection of the cross, namely, whether it is advisable or not to use these breeds which are notoriously crossed with the bull-dog. In the early days of public Coursing, Lord Orford, Lord Rivers, Mr. Etwall, Mr. Raimes, Sir John Boswell and Mr. Fyson all adopted this cross and their example in more recent times by Mr Lawrence, who, like Mr. Etwall with 'Egypt', used his brother 'Lopez' at stud with success. These two dogs have a double strain of the bull-dog, taking one through their sire 'Vraye Foy,' who was twelve, removes from the bull-dog, and another from their dam 'Elf' the ninth descent from that breed.”

The above is written clearly without reference to the publication in the May 1805 Sporting Magazine, of Colonel Thornton's notice of his intended sale of Claret and Fawn coloured Czarina, Lydia and her sister yet another Czarina. He was obviously aware that CZARINA was a very highly bred greyhound because it was he who purchased almost every greyhound connected or related to her for very substantial sums, soon after Lord Orford's death. These included CZARINA and most of her eight offspring and also included the sire of those offspring the Stud dog Young Blue Jupiter. Colonel Thornton would have been well acquainted with both Lord Orford and Mr. William Woodley of Eccles, Norfolk so it would be unlikely that he would include the extended pedigree of his famous CZARINA, purchased from Lord Orford, and to be displayed within the catalogue of Tattersall's, without proper knowledge of that pedigree.

WE believe that the information portrayed within the 1802 and 1805 Sporting Magazines is a proper account of CZARINA's breeding as given by Colonel Thornton. As the purchaser, of all the offspring, and all the other greyhounds connected to CZARINA, in our opinion Colonel Thornton would not have paid substantial sums of money for greyhounds with unknown ancestry. As a prominent courser it is unlikely he was not conversant with the connections from whom Lord Orford purchased those greyhounds.

SPORTING MAGAZINE FEBRUARY, 1802

*Greyhounds will ward bitches at Thornville Royal,
Near, Knaresborough, Yorkshire.*

At seven Guineas – Major, by Claret, dam the Berkshire bitch (Phyllis).

Claret by Young Blue Jupiter, dam Old Blue Jupiter, by Whebly, out of Cublon, bred by George III.

The one difference that may be seized upon in the above is the mention of Old Blue Jupiter as the dam of Claret. We suggest JUPITER later referred to as OLD BLUE JUPITER was the name of CZARINA before Lord Orford purchased and renamed her soon after the sale of his valuable paintings to the Czarina of Russia.

SPORTING MAGAZINE 1805

MAJOR AND CZARINA

WE are informed it is the intention of Colonel Thornton to dispose of his two celebrated greyhounds Major and CZARINA. They are now at Mr. Tattersall's who is appointed by the Colonel to dispose of them by private contract. Major has beat Major Topham's Snowball, Sir Francis Boyton's Dent, and many others; and has received forfeit of 1000 guineas from Mr. Durand. Majors produce are all superior; he is the sire of Colonel Thornton's Honest John Smith, who won a handsome piece of plate on Ganton Brow, beating easy Major Topham's Blacksmith at the same meeting, notwithstanding it has been asserted that Blacksmith was never beat. At this meeting Honest John Smith ran under the name of General Le Bruen against Captain Leslie's Blacksmith, who was entered under the name of The Duke of York. Indeed there were many who were very sanguine in favour of the Duke; but to the great mortification of those who backed him, he was completely beaten. Major is also the sire of those valuable dogs Schimmelpenninck and Blue Eliza, neither who were ever beat: Major was got by Colonel Thornton's Claret, out of a Berkshire bitch (Phyllis), the property of Mr. St. Quintin, lent to Major Topham. Claret was got by Jupiter son of Colonel Thornton's Old Blue Jupiter, out of Blue CZARINA (bred by William Woodley of Eccles) Sold to Lord Orford, who was got by Cublon, a cross of King George III's breed. Fawn coloured Czarina was a sister to Claret, and is justly esteemed the best bitch of our day. Claret has won about forty matches. The produce of Major and Fawn coloured Czarina, Lydia and Czarina, are in London, and may be seen by applying to Mr. Tattersall. They are matched for 2000 guineas to kill a boxed hare within 500 yards, and the hare to have twenty yards law.

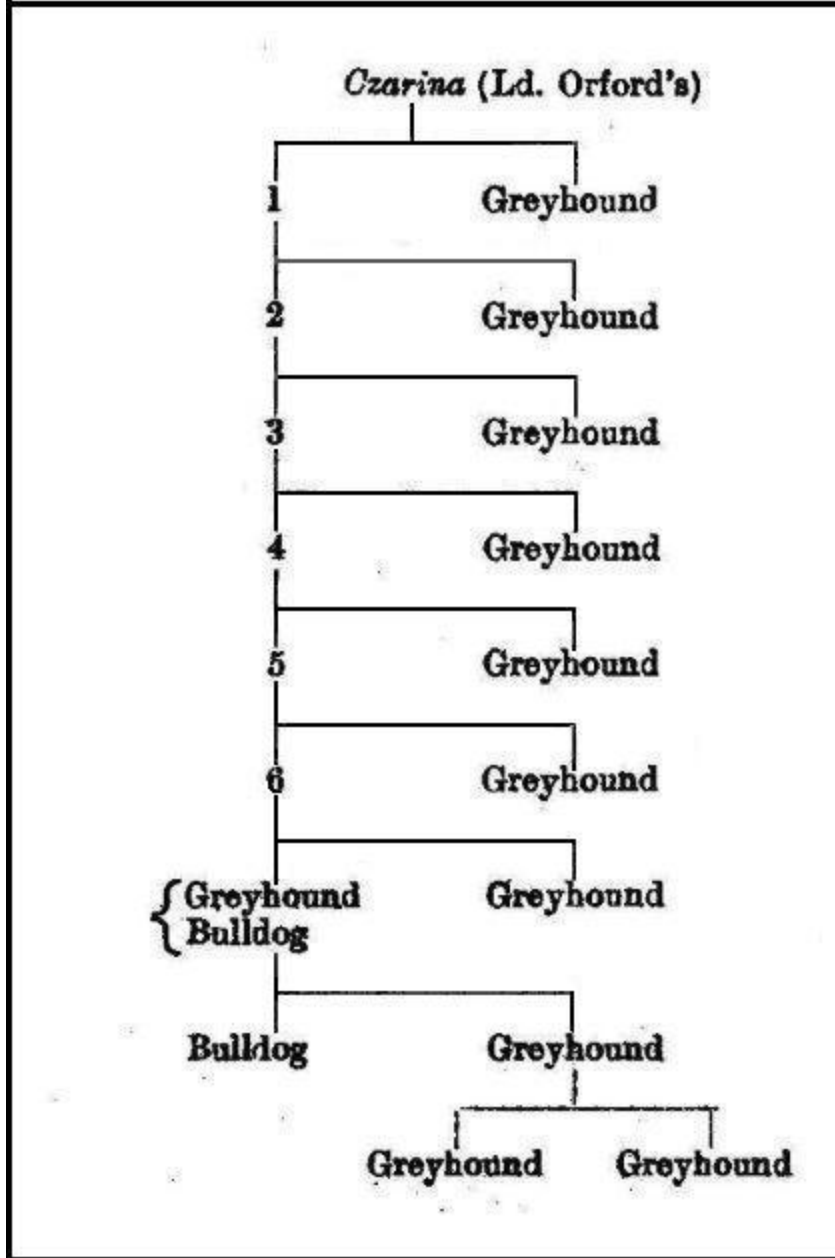
THE COMPLETE SPORTSMAN 1817

"In a short space after Lord Orford's decease, his greyhounds came under the hammer of the auctioneer; when Colonel Thornton, of Thornton Royal, Yorkshire, became the purchaser of CZARINA, JUPITER, CLARET, and most of his best dogs, giving from thirty to fifty guineas each; thus the select blood of the Norfolk dogs was transferred to Yorkshire"

This would suggest that it was Lord Orford who bred from CZARINA when JUPITER was used to produce eight pups named by Lord Orford, CLARET, YELLOW CZARINA, CIAO, CATGUT, CAUTIUS, CLYTO, CAUATIC and CONSPIRACY all using his allotted letter 'C' and each of whom proved to be of excellent quality, AS whelped sometime before his Lordship's death on December 5th, 1781. However, there are later publications which credit Colonel Thornton as having been the breeder of CZARINA's only litter at the very advanced age of thirteen. We are entitled to ask ourselves just how many greyhound bitches have been able to produce a first litter at such an age, surely some scepticism is allowed. We further speculate that CZARINA has never been accredited with an actual year of having been whelped, or in fact that the celebrated litter of pups was her truly first experience. What we have been able to satisfy ourselves is that the supposed involvement of bulldog crosses in the progeny of CZARINA and its effect on the world of greyhound breeding is a fallacy, and cannot be regarded as having played any part in the history, or actuality, of the modern greyhound's pedigree. Furthermore, we are simply at a loss to understand on what basis such a preposterous idea somehow became to be accepted by so many people for so many years, in a period covering more than two hundred years, during which time we have been assured that the breeding of CZARINA was a closely guarded secret of the third Earl of Orford who has always been purported to have been the breeder, regardless of the advertisement placed by Colonel Thornton in the Sporting Magazine of 1802 when he gives the pedigree of CLARET as by OLD BLUE JUPITER out of BLUE CZARINA by WHELBY out of a King George III bitch CUBLON; And notes that CZARINA was bred by Mr William Woodley of Eccles A very similar recollection of CZARINA's pedigree and a statement confirming her as having been bred by Mr Woodley again appeared in the Sporting Magazine of May 1805, having been written in the reporting of Sale at Tattersall's which featured Colonel Thornton's CLARET, YOUNG CZARINA and two of her offspring LYDIA and a younger CZARINA.

Below is the extended pedigree of CZARINA's supposed bulldog ancestry, reprinted as fact in many nineteenth and twentieth century publications about the Greyhound breed.

**LORD ORFORD'S BREEDING OF *CZARINA*
AS FAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED**



All these facts and displays have led us to conclude that our very extensive research has been extremely worthwhile and has shown that far from being a product of some fanciful bulldog breeding cross, **CZARINA** carried the genes of the highest bred greyhounds of the eighteenth century, those of King George III and Mr. William Woodley of Eccles, Norfolk, and that she springs from the mating of WHELBY and CUBLON, two highly bred greyhounds carrying the blood of champions which produced a great champion and a true greyhound legend in the incomparable **CZARINA**.



LORD ORFORD



COLONEL THORNTON



MAJOR TOPHAM