

Report on the 172nd FCRS Field Trial held at Coughton Shoot, Coughton, Warwickshire on Saturday, 13th January 2018.

The 172nd Society Field Trial, a 12-Dog Open Breed Stake, was held at Coughton Shoot, a small private shoot run by Jo and Nick Turner. The shoot covers about 500 acres of woodland, grassland and arable land, and 4 drives were available for the trial.

The judges were Henrik Vilendal, Phil Bruton, Graham Bird and Sally Richardson, and the Chief Steward was Roz Bellamy. David Bellamy was Captain of the team of 6 guns.

The trial started with 10 dogs, one having come into season and another having gone lame a few days prior to the trial. The first drive was a large area of woodland surrounded by fields of arable crops. Even number dogs were placed on the left and odd numbers on the right, the dogs and handlers being placed in line with and close to the guns. All of the birds on this drive were flushed on the left side, and led to one dog running in, and a dog was lost on the right making a noise. Four birds were successfully gathered on the left from a field of oil seed rape, including one very long retrieve across the rape field.



The second drive was of a section of woodland which narrowed into a dense scrubby area and then led into a long hedge. The dogs were arranged either side of the hedge, either alongside the guns, or a little way back from them. This drive saw a better spread of birds, with some falling on open ground and some in the scrubby area. Two dogs were lost running in.

Four dogs on the right were sent in turn into the scrubby area for a bird but all were unsuccessful, as were the judges. There was a nice piece of handling of a dog on the right, successfully recovering a bird well hidden in a ditch. This dog and two others were then sent for a bird which had fallen near to the

hedge and then run, although it was unclear where. Despite getting in the area these three dogs failed on the bird and it looked to be lost. However, a fourth dog took a line on the downwind side of the hedge for about 150m, and picked the bird on the return run, eye wiping the other three. The three remaining dogs all completed second round retrieves successfully.

The third drive took place in an area of woodland, with the three remains dogs, handled by Helen Ford, Josef Honsel and Bjarne Holm, in the centre of the line of guns. Three birds were shot but Helen Ford's dog failed to get in the area of one and was out. The birds were then successfully recovered by the other two dogs.

The fourth and final drive saw Josef Honsel's dog make a long outrun but was unable to locate a bird that had fallen about 25m from the edge of a wood, but which was successfully recovered by Bjarne Holm's dog. He went on to successfully complete two more retrieves, ending the trial.



One award was made by the judges, a Certificate of Merit to Bjarne Holm's dog Waternuts High and Mighty, who was also awarded Gun's Choice.



Judge Henrik Vilendal offered the following comments at the end of the Trial:

Thank you very much for inviting us to judge for you hear today and thank you very much to Jo and Nick for having us here on your lovely ground, a fantastic shooting ground. A thank you to all the helpers who have turned up and given us a super day.

I would like to say well done to all the ten that have come here to take part. Flatcoats, I think, take something extra, a bit of courage, and you have been very brave coming here and running in the Open Stake. On the other hand, we have to set a standard for the dog work,

and the standard today unfortunately did not allow us to award anything more than a Certificate of Merit. One dog came through and we had a few knocks on that dog which did not justify that dog to be placed.

It has been nice to be here, the weather has been kind, we have been very well looked after and we have got on together, and we have been in complete agreement with awarding a COM to Number 12 and well done Bjarne, competing for the first time in the country, and we hope to see you again soon.