

A short report on the Open Trial held on Tuesday 28th January at Whatton House, Nr. Kegworth, Leicestershire by kind permission of Lord Crawshaw and Head Keeper Brian Twigger. Also the Show Gundog Working Certificate held on the same day.

The rain had stopped by the time we all arrived at Whatton House for the 162nd Flatcoated Retriever Open (Qualifying) Trial on Tuesday 28th January.

Our Chief Steward, Mrs Anne Sparkes welcomed everyone and wished all the competitors good luck. She particularly welcomed our visiting competitor from Germany and three spectators who had travelled over from The Netherlands to watch the day.

Judges, Mr Jim Gale, Mr Steve Crookes, Mr Steve Richardson and Mr Dave Barnes commenced the day and we moved off to the first drive. We lost a couple of dogs on this drive, but several of the dogs made good retrieves from the meadow land and through a fence into long white grass.

The Trial continued with some good dog work on mostly cock birds. Dogs worked well, but the second round was finished with only four dogs left in the running. We then moved to the third drive and the beaters pushed some good, strong birds over the guns to provide plenty of game on the ground to complete the test. This is where Mark Johnson's dog shone and finally the Judges declared the Trial over and we all returned to the Gun Room for the results.

Lord Crawshaw came down to present the prizes and the beautiful old trophies. The Winch Challenge Cup to the Winner of the Stake. The Birch Challenge Cup to the highest placed retriever handled by its owner (who must be an amateur) both these trophies were presented to our winner Mark Johnson with his dog Sachbash Dom Perignon (Rondix Woodcock at Hawksthorpe x Sachbash Shimmer) d.o.b. 15.03.2010, bred by Mr Ron Lane who was present at the trial and delighted to see Mark's success. Guns choice was presented to Steve Ashby with last year's winner; Houndwood Cedar at Tunnelwood (Gowran Indigo Extra x Trioaks Mouse at Houndwood).

Meanwhile, alongside the Trial Mr Derrek Capel and Mr John Kahlow were judging a Show Gundog Working Certificate. This Test commenced with a water retrieve into the large pond on the estate. Sadly a couple of the dogs would not enter the deep water and therefore could go no further. The remaining five all executed this well

Whilst the Trial dogs were picking their birds, the guns shot the next drive for the SGWC dogs who were being tested off the lead, in line. Subsequently, each dog was asked to retrieve a number of birds once the drive was over. These were dead birds and some runners.

We had seven dogs taking part in the SGWC and achieved four passes. Next year, with a little more experience, the remaining three will no doubt achieve.

The successful dogs were:

Mrs Hayley Tomlinson's Rainesgift Over the Moon Dog. (Castlerock Magic Charm of Graylswater x Rainesgift Renn with Kilbourne) d.o.b. 23.10.09.

Mrs Helen Fox's Blacktoft Burlesque. Bitch (Tou noir Hiriwa Tohuba of Benvellyn JW x Blacktoft Bazanty). d.o.b. 12.05.13

Mrs Helen Fox's Blacktoft Bazanty. Bitch (Braemist Ocean Kestrel JW x Blacktoft Blue Like Jazz) d.o.b. 11.04.09

Mr D & Mrs R Bellamy's Woodfinch Lorelei. Bitch (Sh. Ch. Calzeat Causa Commotion at Flatcharm Imp.Swe x Rainesgift Fleur-de-Lis for Woodfinch) d.o.b. 15.02.11.

Lord Crawshaw, The four Trial Judges, the two SGWC Judges, The Keeper, Brian; Anne Sparkes our Chief Steward and all the helpers and the guns were thanked most sincerely for providing a super end to the season for the Flatcoated Retrievers.

We also had the pleasure of a professional photographer, Mr Steve Magennis present on the day who took some remarkable photographs.