

SOUTHERN COUNTIES CANINE ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW
on Sunday 5th June 2016
Flatcoated Retrievers Report Judged by Sarah E F Whittaker

Thank you to the Southern Counties Canine Association for inviting me to judge the Flatcoated Retrievers at this show and to all the exhibitors for kindly supporting me. I thoroughly enjoyed my day and hope that all those in and around the ring had a good time.

I have been lucky enough to judge our wonderful breed for over thirty years and I have been an exhibitor for even longer! I was brought up to be very grateful to have a day out. As a judge it is important for me to try to put everyone at ease so that they can perform as a team (handler and dog) and enjoy their day out. I try to make sure that each exhibitor has the chance of making the most of their dog, regardless of whether I like that dog or not. Everyone has paid the same money to enter their dog and therefore have the right to go out of the ring feeling that they put in their best performance. If they manage to win the class or even be placed that is an added bonus and some days even to make it into the short list / cut is a great achievement.

Most of the exhibitors and those at ringside were very sporting over my decisions. However I was very **disappointed** that 2 exhibitors decided to withdraw their dogs from further competition, I think because they were not impressed with my decisions. I am not going into the rules and regulations on doing this but personally I take it as a matter of rudeness. I was so incensed by one exhibitor that I actually told them they were "arrogant and stupid for making such a decision, plus they missed out on a good placing in the next class by not returning to the ring!" Another exhibitor I heard saying "Tut, tut oh deary, deary me" when they were in the lower half of the line up, hopefully that comment was to the dog and not a reflection on my judging! This sort of behaviour must not be tolerated. I did hear from another judge that they too had experienced such behaviour. On the plus side, I did receive some kind words of appreciation from a few exhibitors, so there are still polite people in the flatcoat world! One quote comes to mind from Rudyard Kipling, perhaps it is just because it is coming up for Wimbledon and this is actually over the doors as players enter the Centre Court

"...If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same ..."

To those who are unable to do this, then I suggest taking up another pastime!

Now to the dogs. Overall I was impressed. Bearing in mind my last two judging appointments were very prestigious shows: Crufts and the World Dog Show, I knew that the Southern Counties Show could be an eye opener. It was 7 years since I last judged the bitches in the UK and that was in Scotland, just a few miles away! So I was eagerly awaiting the bitches, which I felt, on the day, had the edge over the dogs. I found the lack of consistency most alarming, but the good news is that there are some quality dogs (including bitches) out there, especially in the minor puppy classes, I just hope that they realise their potential. As a judge, I find it very rewarding to see dogs that I have placed as youngsters return with maturity and take the top honours, as did my two CC winners! The mouths were all scissor bites, although some were very close, so I shall not comment about the mouths in my critiques. Movement was scary! There were a number of dogs whom I gave second chances to, in the hopes that their movement would improve but sadly this rarely happened. What use is a gundog if it cannot move? Several exhibitors questioned me when I asked them to move and the response was "these are gundogs not fun dogs!"

At the end of the day I presented the BOB trophy which had been presented by the late Mr Dennis Izzard. My mind went back to the last occasion that I handled a dog under Mr Dennis Izzard. Unfortunately, the dog did not move on that day and as we returned to the judge with me apologising, Mr Izzard had tears in his eyes and he said "...Drunken sailors, I have seen it all before..." This

summed up what I witnessed at times in the ring! I would like to think that perhaps it was not helped by a hot day and some of the dogs doing back to back shows, but I know for some it was the lack of angulation which did not allow them to stretch out and cover the ground. The breed standard states 'turn of stifle', this I am seeing less and less. I fear part of the reason for this was when there was a "fashion" within the breed of condemning dogs for over angulated hind quarters, we now have to be careful of not encouraging the other extreme of no bend of stifle, which could cause all sorts of health complications.

Over the years, I have heard comments from other judges of: 'Beautiful black dogs', 'my cat's got more bone than that' and 'my little pony'. Yes I saw examples of all of these, but it is the latter that I am more forgiving of. Those who have read my overseas critiques will be familiar with '...plenty big enough for me...' but providing those dogs are otherwise typical, sound and balanced, then I am far more forgiving of this fault, which could be seen in some of my line ups.

Trimming of tails was in some cases very strange and several exhibitors were shown the blunt end of the dog's tail and then told me "I didn't do it!" The tail should be short, but please don't just chop the end of the tail off to achieve that!

As I have written so much above I have kept my critiques shorter, as hopefully readers will have a better idea of what I was looking for.

Minor Puppy - Dog

Entries: 6 Absentees: 0

This was a lovely class with some very promising babies. My first and second were at extremes of size, which must have made it look a rather funny line up, but they were both balanced which is the important attribute.

1st & Best Puppy Dog Mrs V Goldberg & Ms L Keight's LAURVIC TALKING ITALIAN

This is a very mature dog, showing great strength and balance, with excellent quality bone. He has a classical head and I only wish we could see more of those heads in the breed. His front is of correct angulation, a super topline, correct tailset and carriage which is maintained on the move. His accurate movement won him the class. I just hope that he does not grow on any more.

2nd Mrs CA Staff's BONNYHILBRAE ROYAL FLUSH

Another super puppy full of flatcoat character, with quality bone, showing the correct type with great balance and angulation front and rear. Nice head with a lovely dark eye and excellent reach of neck.

3rd Mrs P Lynott's AVENING SPIRIT OF THE SKY

4th Mrs B Reynold's WICCANSSAGE HUGOS DREAM

Puppy – Dog

Entries: 7 Absentees: 0

1st Mrs J H Hewison – CASBLAIDD VERY ERNEST

A nicely balanced boy of correct size, with good angulation which enabled him to move with great drive that won him the class. He needs time and practice in the ring to do himself justice. I would have preferred a slightly darker eye to compliment the otherwise very pleasing head.

2nd Mrs S, Mrs G & Mr M Knight & Jacob's – GEMSWIN ROLLING IN THE DEEP

What a fantastic temperament on this puppy, so pleased with his day out and full of that flatcoat character and personality that we have come to love in the breed, but the downside of this was that he was not prepared to be serious for his movement, which sadly let him down on the day! He has a nicely moulded head with a good dark eye, good reach of neck and great depth of chest.

3rd Mrs D Jury's – SUSKIM SHAMROCK AT TORWOOD

4th Mr B & Mrs G Broadbent's – TRAPESTONE OUT OF THE BLUE

Junior – Dog

Entries: 4 Absentees: 0

1st Mrs PS & Mrs MG Burr's – WOODFINCH TORRIN OF SCHEINDUBH

Another dog who won his class on his excellent movement, because he has super balance and angulation, front and rear, which helped him to cover the ground so well. He has an excellent depth of chest and is of correct size.

2nd Mr R Douglas' – PLAINFIRE'S QUINTESSENTIAL GREENBAY HILL (IMP CHE)

This is a beautiful boy, full of flatcoat character, who unfortunately did not move as well as he should have done. He has that lovely moulded head and nice eye, with a good reach of neck into a pleasing lay of shoulder. Shows good balance with the correct tailset and carriage!

3rd Mrs D Jury's – SUSKIM SHAMROCK AT TORWOOD

4th Mr B & Mrs G Broadbent's – TRAPESTONE OUT OF THE BLUE

Yearling – Dog

Entries: 3 Absentees: 1

These were two very high quality youngsters, both very typical of the breed and showing great balance. On another day the results could easily swap around.

1st Mrs W Blain's – CACI'S JUST A GIGOLO AT STEELRIVER (IMP SWE) JW

Lovely moulded head, dark eye colour, expression, shape and placement. Excellent quality bone, good strong topline and tailset. Wonderful short tail which he carried correctly. On the day he had just the more accurate movement than the second placed dog.

2nd Ms A Clarke's – CAPELDEWI HOME BEFORE DARK

Nicely presented dog with correct angulation, depth of chest, a good turn of stifle and strong hindquarters. On the day not quite the accurate movement of the winner, but he is still a classy and typical flatcoat, with a pleasing head.

Graduate – Dog

Entries: 8 Absentees: 0

Again the first two dogs were very difficult to separate. Both are nicely balanced dogs with pleasing angulation.

1st Mr & Mrs M Bell's – ROTHERFIELD BLACK ILLUSION

Just won the class on his slightly more accurate movement which was so powerful, I felt he could have moved for hours! He was beautifully handled which showed him off to his best, so much so that I seriously considered him for the Res CC, which I later found out I awarded to his father! So nice to see that the CC winner is producing quality stock!

2nd Mrs H M Fox's – BLACK MICA'S LIKES IT HOT AT BLACKTOFT JW (IMP SWE)

So unlucky to come up against the 1st whom he pushed very hard for his place, but he has all the essentials of correct type, size, bone, angulation and pleasing head. I am sure he will have a great future.

3rd AF, CJ & M Durrant's – GLENTURRET CUTTING CREW

4th Mr RA & Mrs M Millbank's – KVICKSANS EYE OF THE STORM OF LARKSDOWN

Post Graduate – Dog

Entries: 12 Absentee: 1

1st Mrs V Davis' – PAJANBECK RUMOUR HAS IT

A beautifully presented dog, who is nicely balanced and so workmanlike, from his muscle tone he could have kept moving all day, it was effortless and sound. He has good tight feet and a pleasing head.

2nd Mr TJ & Mrs A De Meyer's – RONEVORG PURPLE PRINCE

A nicely handled dog, shown in super profuse coat. He has a lovely strong topline and correct tailset and carriage. His head is pleasing although a slightly darker eye would have completed the picture.

3rd Mrs G & Mrs J Jacobs and Holmes' – CHARMING MELVIN OASIS OF PEACE (IMP CZ) JW

4th Mrs A Youens – GLOI DUBH DEVERON AT RIVERGLIDE

Limit – Dog

Entries: 7 Absentee: 2

1st & Res CC Mrs K Armstrong's – ALMANZA FINAL IMPACT (IMP SWE)

Wow what a pleasure to go over this dog, nicely presented although needed some encouraging to get the best out of his movement, but we got there! A lovely moulded head with the correct eye, good reach of neck down to a well defined brisket. Lovely tight feet. Excellent strong topline and correct set of tail.

2nd Miss AL and EL Gardiner & Bambrook's – KULAWAND TIME TO TREASURE WITH SVENJAK

Unlucky to come up against the winner. Presented in beautiful condition, with the correct topline, tailset and carriage. Moved soundly. Good tight feet and quality bone, with well let down hocks.

3rd Mrs MC & Mrs FA Mayne's – SIMARFIELD EXPLORER

4th Mr B & Mrs G Broadbent's – HALLBENT OCTOBER TOCCATA

Open – Dog

Entries: 8 Absentees: 3

1st, CC & BOB Mr R Douglas' – SH CH GREENBAYHILL BLACK TUXEDO

Well I guess the saying "If at first you don't succeed try, try and try again!" This is a dog whom I have been judging over the years, seeing him work his way up through the classes and who has consistently been rewarded, but had to wait until today for the top honour which I was delighted to award him! He is a classical workmanlike dog, with excellent balance and the correct angulation. He has super tight feet. He moved so soundly and well for his different handlers. It just showed his quality that he is correctly put together with good muscle, could be handled by different people and still put in a great performance. Of course "willingness to please". He has a wonderful one piece moulded head with that lovely reach of neck to give that super flowing outline.

2nd Mrs HM Fox's – SH CH STEELRIVE BLAZIN HOT AT BLACKTOFT JW

Another lovely typical dog of outstanding quality. He has that wonderful balance and angulation, excellent strong topline, correct tail set and carriage on the move. He covered the ground well. He has a super eye – colour, shape and expression. Beautifully presented.

3rd Mrs V Bowen's – CANDILIZ BLACK ADMIRAL FOR CLANDRIFT JW

4th Mr P & Mrs J & Miss S Eggington's – CH GLENDARUEL SEA THE STARS WITH PAJANBECK (AI)

Veteran – Dog

Entries: 3 Absentees: 0

I have a "soft spot" for the veterans and it is fantastic for the breed to see these older dogs still putting in good performances.

1st Mr AP, Mrs HC & Miss MB Osborne-Brown's – CASSIOPHYNN'S TRIBUTE BY PERRYMEL SHCM

It is hard to think of this dog as a veteran, the very professional handling showed him off to his best, especially on the move. He has a lovely moulded typical head, with superb depth of chest and a nice turn of stifle. Good cat like feet and quality bone.

2nd Mrs J Gribble's – BRYSHOT KINGFISHER

Wonderful to see a classical liver with that nicely moulded head and correct eye colour and expression. He moved very soundly and good to see him enjoying his day out.

3rd Mrs JH Hewison's – CASBLAIDD LITTLE ARCHER

Good Citizen – Dog or Bitch

Entries: 4 Absentees: 1

1st Mrs V Bowen's – CLANDRIFT MIDNIGHT GALAXY

This is a very nicely balanced bitch, in good condition which helped her move so soundly, along with her correct lay of shoulder and strong rear. She has a pleasing typical head and good feet.

2nd Mrs JH Hewison's – CASBLAIDD TEA LEAF

Another very nice liver, although rather naked and missing her feathering. She has a pleasing head with a good head reach of neck. Lovely turn of stifle.

3rd Mrs SW Perry's Kamberin Love Never Dies

Minor Puppy Bitch

Entries: 7 Absentees: 0

Wow what a lovely class to judge. I just hope these girls will mature and realise their potential! My first two were at the extremes of size.

1st Mr DA Ashcroft's – GUNOAK SOLAR WIND

This is such a lovely balanced puppy, very workmanlike and beautifully presented with excellent bone and tight feet. She has the required angulation which enabled her to move so well. A real beauty at just six months. She and her handler will have great fun.

2nd Mrs SJ McDonnell's – LAURVIC CIAO BELLA

This is another quality bitch, but on the day she and her handler were needing time and practice in the ring to do her justice. She has a beautiful typical head with good eye colour, placement, shape and expression. Excellent bone, a good lay of shoulder which helped her to move well.

3rd Miss S Stevenson's – STEELRIVER SUN KISSED

4th Mrs G & Mrs J Jacobs & Holmes – WICCANSSAGE VIRTUE AT RYDANAH

Puppy Bitch

Entries: 9 Absentees: 3

1st & Best Puppy Mr & Mrs RS & Mrs P Lane & Lane-Ridyard – KULAWAND KODEBREAKER

Wow what an eye catching bitch, with fantastic ring presence and "look at me" attitude. Lovely typical head, with a nice dark eye. She has a good reach of neck into correct lay of shoulder. Excellent quality bone and nice tight feet. Moved very accurately around the ring. I was very tempted to consider her for further honours. Interestingly I see that she is the daughter of my res dog CC winner.

2nd Miss S Stevenson's – STEELRIVER SUN KISSED

Another quality puppy, with a nice typical head, with good reach of neck into a pleasing front.

Excellent bone and tight feet. Moved well but, on the day, lacked the drive and accuracy of the winner.

3rd Mr B Montandon's – TRAPESTONE BOHEMIAN GIRL

4th Miss GK & Mr RL Dutton & Davies' – BRYNYWAWR AURA

Junior Bitch

Entries: 9 Absentees: 1

1st Miss AL Green's – BITCON WINTER GLORY

Oh how easy it would have been to overlook this quality bitch. I do so hope that her handler works at them being a team, putting in that time and practice in the ring to show off Winter Glory to her full glory! She is a beautifully balanced bitch with excellent angulation front and rear, super topline and tail set, which was carried correctly on the move. My catalogue tells me this is a half sister to the Best Puppy!

2nd Miss S Stevenson's – FLAT CARDEN'S MILADY XXVIII STEELRIVER (IMP NOR)

It was a close decision between these first two bitches, which was decided on maturity on the day.

This is a classical bitch, beautifully presented, with a super typical head, with correct eye colour, shape and expression. Good tight feet and moved soundly, with that lovely flow from her nose to the tip of her tail.

3rd Mr P & Mrs J Eggington's – PAJANBECK I PUT A SPELL ON YOU

4th Mrs V Bowen's – CLANDRIFT MIDNIGHT GALAXY

Yearling Bitch

Entries: 6 Absentees: 2

A very difficult decision to split the first two placed bitches in this class. Both high quality girls with a lot to like about them, but oh so very different!

1st Mrs SM Candler's – CAPELDEWI LOVE ON THE ROCKS

She excels "raciness without weediness" with a beautiful typical head and the correct eye colour, shape and expression which won me over and her the class! Her good angulation both front and rear enabled her to move soundly and accurately. Lovely set of tail which was carried correctly and completed that wonderful flowing action.

2nd Mr & Mrs LB & Mrs C Nicholls & Afseth Price's – LLANTRUSSA HOT OFF THE PRESS TO LINEOVER JW

A real workmanlike bitch, something she shares with her mother the winner of Veteran. She has a lovely topline and correct tailset and carriage. Pleasing head and a good reach of neck. She has a lovely strong rear end with good angulation and quality bone.

3rd Miss P King's – FOXPATH ARTEMIS (AI)

4th Miss AC Yates' – MOITY THURSDAY NEXT A CLEIRWY

Graduate Bitch

Entries: 12 Absentees: 3

Another very difficult decision to split these two outstanding bitches. Little did I realise at the time that they would be my top two bitches! Both beautifully presented, putting their all into the day.

1st & Bitch CC Ms C & Ms G Drottsgard & Brunnstrom – MOONSTRUCK MACADAMIA JWW 15

What a lovely workmanlike bitch who is of the right size, shown in excellent condition, with good muscle tone which helped her to cover the ground so well, along with her good angulation, lovely length of upper arm and turn of stifle. She has a super, typical head, with a pleasing melting eye expression, correct neat ears and a great reach of neck. Lovely to see that my best junior at the World Show a year ago had matured into such a wonderful bitch!

2nd & Res Bitch CC Mrs L Sturmeys – POLGARA ECLIPSE

What a beautifully balanced bitch shown in superb hard condition. She has a classical typical head, with a nice eye shape, colour and expression, good reach of neck. Wonderful depth of chest and strong hindquarters. She moved so soundly that I felt she could have gone on and on even in the excessive heat. So unlucky to come up against the winner.

3rd AF, CJ & M Durrant's – GLENTURRET COLOUR ME CRAZY

4th Mr D & Mrs SE Savory's – GHILGRANGE PUZZLE PIECES

Post Graduate Bitch

Entries: 13 Absentees: 3

1st Miss RC Davies – HARLISTREAM ELLERSTINA

This is a very eye catching bitch, whom I considered for the top honours. She has that beautiful balanced outline and angulation that I was looking for, with a super topline, tail set and carriage which is maintained on the move. Pleasing typical head with the dark eye colour and kind expression. Lovely reach of neck into a good lay of shoulder.

2nd Mr G & Mrs J Goodman's – BLACKLAKE CORDELIA

Beautifully presented bitch, shown in excellent condition, with good angulation front and rear, which helped her to move well. Nicely moulded head, I would just have preferred a slightly darker eye.

3rd Mr AP, Mrs HC & Miss MB Osborne-Brown's – CASSIOPI JUST DANCE FOR PERRYMEL

4th Mr B & Mrs G Izzard's – BRYSHOT NEVER SAY NEVER

Limit Bitch

Entries: 9 Absentees: 1

1st Miss D Warrington's – COVELLYN'S BLACK DIAMOND BY WOODAVENS (IMP CH)

Lovely workmanlike showy girl who was so pleased with her day out, no questioning that she has that "willingness to please"! A beautifully balanced outline, well angulated bitch who moved very soundly. Has a good, strong topline with a correct set of tail and carriage. Excellent tight feet.

2nd Mrs A Youens' – BITCON BLACK CAVIAR AT RIVERGLIDE

Again another pleasing, balanced bitch of required size. She too was pleased to show off in the ring but at times let herself down and was not quite as accurate as she could have been with her

movement. She has a lovely typical head with a good eye. Unlucky to come up against the winner who had just got the edge on maturity but I loved the flowing outline of this bitch.

3rd Mrs DE Edwards' – BROOMSWARD VERA WANG

4th Mrs JS Montandon's – CALSWISH HAPPY ENDING

Open Bitch

Entries: 5 Absentees: 4

Oh how disappointing that there was so many absentees. Just hope that they did not give up on the judge!

1st Mrs SM & Ms C Henesey & Ostman's – CACI'S POSH AND SASSY AT WRENSMEAD (IMP SWE)

A very nicely balanced bitch with good angulation, that helped her to move well. She has a classical typical flatcoat head with a nice kind eye and soft expression. Beautifully presented in good hard condition.

Veteran Bitch

Entries: 2 Absentees:1

1st Mrs CA Price – LLANTRUSSA LADY MYFANWY

An outstanding workmanlike bitch, balanced outline and of correct size. Moved amazingly well for her 9 years and in the heat of the day. Nicely moulded head with a good reach of neck into an excellent front and a lovely turn of stifle. She was in contention for the top honours and had it been a cooler day she may well have given that "extra sparkle" and shown the youngsters how to do it!

One last observation, I think it is very healthy for the breed that at present there does not seem to be the dominance of an individual stud dog - or perhaps that was just at this show? Over the years, we have seen 'breeders' rushing out to use the 'latest champion' and fortunately this does not seem to be the fashion at present. Of course, there will always be popular stud dogs but when breeding the focus has to be on the male and the female complimenting each other, making the best use of the blood lines to hopefully produce healthy and typical Flatcoats.

Thank you again.

Sarah Whittaker

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