**NOVICE FIELD TRIAL 2022**

The Society held its 179th Field Trial, a Breed Only Novice, on Wednesday 23rd November on The Avon Tyrrell Estate by kind permission of The Lord and Lady Manners.

After overnight rain and gales dawn brought clearing skies and a moderate wind which made for good sporting birds which were driven out of a game crop to challenge the team of guns who competently delivered landing a good number of partridge and pheasant in woodland and meadow.

The card of thirteen was split by the judges. Mr Nick Coates and Mrs Jill Gardener took half the handlers to stand behind the guns in the field with leads off whilst the drive took place. Mr Dave England and Mrs Jane Mann took the remainder to stand behind the drive in woodland, similarly with leads off. When the drive was over each pair of judges took two dogs forward to be sent for birds marked down whilst the remainder replaced their leads until being called forward. Sadly quite a number of dogs were lost for a variety of reasons and only two dogs were taken on to the next drive which was a game crop pushed out over an oak belt towards woodland. This again with the westerly wind made for some good fast birds and the Japanese Green cross pheasants once more proved their worth on ground not blessed with hills. The partridge also made sport for the guns on the challenging wind and once more the guns obliged landing birds in game cover and thick hedges. During the drive a cock bird had landed off to the right of the two remaining dogs and ran into the hedge. Fred Newton was asked to send his dog, Keamarola Just as Good, who made fast work of returning the bird to hand.

At this point the judges conferred on how best to test the two remaining dogs and both dogs were asked to pick a bird from the game cover, a task they both achieved. Keith Manley was then asked to work a thick hedge for birds that had been marked to the area. His dog worked down the hedge with a crossing wind and returned with an injured pheasant. The second dog was asked to work the same area but failed to find.

Finally Keith was asked to send his dog out into winter wheat at an angle from the hedge, a straight line out about sixty yards saw Brickley Blossom at Lenyam pick her last bird of the day and the judges declare the Trial over.

As there were still birds down handlers from the gallery were asked to pick up the remaining birds and then to pick up for the last drive, this was gratefully received as some handlers had not had much opportunity to work their dogs on game this season due to the impact on shoots of the Avian flu which has seen many shoots closed or restricted.

At the presentation of the awards the Field Trial Secretary thanked Lord Manners and his impressive team of guns and the Keeper, Mr Wayne Barrow and his beaters for an excellent day. The Judges were thanked for graciously giving of their time and expertise. Finally a very important vote of thanks was given to those who came to help on the day as stewards and bird markers, helping the day to flow.

All in all it was a successful day, showing our sport in a good light with a superb atmosphere compensating for the lack of awards.

**Awards**

1st Place and The Laudale Trophy Brickley Blossom At Lenyam Keith Manley

Guns Choice Keamarola Just As Good Fred Newton