

Joint Flatcoated Retriever Clubs' Championship Show – 14th May 2017

Bitches

I really enjoyed this, the last of the Joint Championship Shows and coincidentally to be my last appointment as I have decided to hang up my 'judging head' and hand over to the youngsters. I first came into the breed 40 years ago this summer and it has been a tremendous journey, and has given me great pleasure to have been associated with such a splendid breed. Thank you to the hard working NEFRA committee, the hosts for this show, my two stewards who were kept busy all day, the super rosettes and gifts all went to make this a very special day.

Just a few general observations to make. We are all guilty of always speaking about how the breed was better 'back in the day', especially during the 80's and 90's but on really thinking about it I consider the breed has improved overall, and today there were many bitches being exhibited of correct type and of tremendous quality, heads almost without exception were excellent, showing the desired length, infill between and under the almond eye (the one-piece head with the required flat cheeks) giving the so important mischievous Flatcoat expression. My main gripes have not changed, movement, exaggeration and presentation. Please look at your dogs with an honest eye, in a gundog hind movement is of paramount importance, without which these dogs would be hampered in the field, choose your sires with care to correct any constructional failings; exaggeration may be flashy and catch the eye and you may see these take top awards but it is not correct, moderation is called for throughout, please do not take the breed to the point where other breeds have gone to the detriment of their working ability – the last point, presentation, obviously is not so important as construction, however, stripping out in my opinion does nothing to enhance, it makes necks look ridiculously too long (swan necks), artificial point of brisket and the head too big for the body (the whole is then out of balance) and the overall shape rangy. Flatcoats should not be rangy, each piece should flow smoothly and fit into the next giving an overall harmonious, unexaggerated impression, moderation throughout.

Thrilled with the final bitch line-up, all very typey, very deserving of their placing and all so pretty – I was spoilt for choice which is so good for the future of this lovely breed. We have some promising 'young' breeders who have not bowed to fashion and are breeding Flatcoats of true type, some are up and coming judges, some are already awarding CC's, for those of you who have not entered into judging and who keep saying "I don't want to judge" please think again, your knowledge is needed to take the breed forward for the next generation. My co-judge Viv Stucke and I could not agree on BOB, we both agreed that the dog and the bitch both were so deserving and so little separated them and each of us just preferred our own CC winner so the referee was called, with the nod going to the bitch. Well done to both owners on BIS and RBIS.

Veteran (17,5abs) Great class with many so worthy going unplaced.

1& BVB. JOYCE'S STRANFAER LUCY LOCKET JW – 8 years young, super size, correct head with hazel almond eye, excellent feet and bone, correctly turned hindquarters with an ever wagging tail. She looked really good on the move and standing and in the challenge close up – lovely type just pipped

2 SMITHERMAN'S SH CH SEAHEART ISABELLA JW Only just in veteran at 7 plus years of age, but have always admired, very attractive on the move with her enthusiasm and gleaming coat, again excellent bone, lovely head and eye, ever wagging.

3 COLSON'S ESKWINDS DRIVING MISS DAISY TO WINDYHOLLOWS – another young veteran at 7 years of age and has always been a great favourite of mine for her true type, size and movement. These presented a trio of great bitches.

Minor Puppy (3)

1& BPIS WALKER & ROBERTS' JADE VOM WILDFORSTERSEE AT GLOI (IMP)
Well balanced for her age of 8 months on the day, great flowing outline, excellent line through her neck and shoulders, well developed brisket, standing on good legs and feet, tail set and carriage both good, needs to steady her hind movement but she is only a baby, shows plenty of promise for the future.

2. BISHOPS'S LYNEHOLME PAINTED LADY 8.5 month liver, slightly larger all through than 1, excellent head with a good eye colour matching her coat. Just needing to settle on the move and more ringcraft training would perhaps help her owner to get the best out of her.

3. THOMAS'S TYGWYN RHIWBINA 7.5 months, smaller type all through, pretty feminine head, well coated for her age.

Puppy (15,1)

1 Repeat of Minor Puppy

2 WARRINGTON'S WOODAVENS WATERCOLOUR WIND - Lovely outline on this 11 month old, typical head and dark expressive eyes, has the desired substance without being coarse, well developed deep brisket, short loin, good bone, just needs a little more confidence in the ring but this will come as she continues to mature.

3 MAY'S LUSSAC VINTAGE LACE – 9 months plus, smaller than 1 & 2, correct head with dark almond eye, well coated, moving well for her age being accurate and true coming and going.

Junior (13,1)

1 WELCH & DEVERALL'S STRANFAER LYIN' EYES – 13 months old. Very pretty with correct head and eye, super type, liked her line through her neck and shoulders, excellent well turned hindquarters, moving smart and true

2 ASHCROFT'S GUNOAK SOLAR WIND JW – typical for her age with an excellent profile stood and on the move, super head and eye, quality bone down to good feet, shade bigger than 1 , very well handled to take this spot in this class.

3 HUTCHINSON'S QUILLS MINT JULEP WITH WAVERTON (AI) IMP SWE) – completed a trio of quality bitches. Long head, excellent bone and feet, moved out well must surely have a good future.

Yearling (17,1)

1. MCDONALD'S STEELRIVER DANCE IN THE SUN AT SKYLOCH. Elegant, correct size and being moderate all through, long head, almond eye, quality bone and neat feet, moving well on an even stride, ever wagging.

2. STRANFAER LYIN' EYES.

3. FINLAY'S ANNBECKS AILIS AT AUGHNALLECK An active workmanlike bitch, fit and sound, pretty in head and a good eye, very strong mover.

Maiden (6,3)

1. S. LYIN' EYES.

2. JADE VON W AT GLOI.

3. L. VINTAGE LACE.

Novice (10. 1)

1 & 2. As Maiden

3. JACOBS & HOLMES WICCANSSAGE VIRTUE AT RYDANAH – very smart, good head, dark eye, bone good, excellent coat and condition, not quite as good as 1 & 2 coming toward.

Graduate (16, 1) Without doubt this was the strongest class of the day, I shortlisted many as I seriously considered them to be worthy of a place, very disappointed to not have nearly enough cards, but hope the shortlisting encourages you all as I did not wish you to go home feeling disillusioned.

1. JOYCE'S STRANFAER SOLITAIRE JW. Correct height to length, darkest of eyes set in a feminine head, quality bone down to good feet, very good hindquarters showing true drive, standing well with a level topline.
2. ROMEO-DIESTE'S YONSAFF VIENNA BY HOPEVALLEY JW Another elegant, moderately sized quality bitch, super coat, very pretty feminine head and eye, head correctly filled, moved really well to gain this place.
3. LEACH'S KISSOCK LITTLE BLACK NUMBER Another quality bitch to complete this trio, excellent type, quality bone and good feet, very lovely all through, fit, active and of a moderate size.

Post Graduate (17,1)

1. KULCZYCKA'S SEAHEART BRONTE OF EVERBLACK First of 3 which were all much of a type and very little separating them. Correctly sized, neat ears, typey head with dark eyes, clean neck, correctly sprung rib cage, quality bone, topline level, well coated, ever wagging.
2. CAMPBELL'S I BELIEVE IN ANGELS OASIS OF PEACE AT RONEVORG. She is extremely pretty with a super head and eye, well coated, short tail, and a good mover from her good hind quarters.
3. BIRD'S DRAKETOR SEA NYMPH TO SHIREDALE- and yet another beauty, super head and expressive eyes, quality bone, looked good when moving out from her very strong, sound hindquarters.

Limit (10,2) Well, from this class came the BIS winner and my RCC winner – congratulations ladies they were a joy to watch and judge. I have written in my notes “a lovely trio”

1. CC, BOB & BIS JONES' SEAHEART ANNELIESE BY BENVELLYN she stole my heart, beautifully balanced, moderate size, each part flowing into the next. Most lovely head and almond, hazel eye giving the true Flatcoat naughty expression, super front with defined brisket, quality bone down to good feet, level topline to strong, powerful hindquarters with well let down hocks. Her footfall is correct and all is set off by a short, correctly set and carried tail, ever wagging. Did her well 2 years ago and saw no reason to change my opinion.
2. & RCC GRIFFITHS' CASTLEROCK COSMIC HATTIE bitches like these make a judges day complete. So very pretty with her lovely head and eye, flowing outline, not too big just right all through, great Flatcoat attitude, she moves accurately and with drive with great enthusiasm, great coat and condition. All of which just put her above other lovely bitches.
3. HEDGES BLACKTOFT QUICKSTEP OF SATINBAZE - what do I say, no disgrace to be third here, super type from her lovely head to her ever wagging tail, good bone, movement is accurate and strong.

Open (9,3)

1. HENESY & OSTMAN'S IR SH CH CACI'S POSH AND SASSY AT WRENSMEAD (IMP SWE) And again another trio of beautiful bitches. Excellent type displaying quality all through, good in bone, strong well constructed hindquarters, goes well with drive, as I said before I was spoilt for choice close up to the top spots.
2. WILLIAMS & GOODWIN'S SH CH WISTASTON LOVEBIRD, slightly heavier all through than 1, plenty of substance, good bone down to excellent feet just preferred presentation of 1 on the day, but still moved with plenty of drive from good hind quarters.
3. WATSON'S RAINESGIFT FLEUR DE LUNA 9.5 years of age, and could she move, really powered round the ring, loved her type, attitude, super hindquarters, from a breeder who consistently turns out Flatcoats of correct type - which brings me to what I have written above.

Special Liver (4)

1. COLSON'S WINDYHOLLOWS WINNIPEG Super type, with a most lovely well moulded head and good eye colour matching her coat perfectly. Well constructed, level topline and sound, powerful movement. I must say today I was pleased to see the dark livers being exhibited, none of the wishy washy colours, gingery coloured Flatcoats, or those with a metallic sheen.
2. Lutner & Lutner's Telurn Better Believe It. Excellent colour, well made but preferred the refinement in head of 1.
3. Reynold's Gemswin Let's Dance – giving away a lot of age to those placed 1 & 2, super dark liver, lovely head but needs time to finish and mature.

Val Jones (Judge)

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Dogs

My thanks to the committee both for this appointment, and for the wonderful organisation which was evident behind the whole day. Also, of course, to all the exhibitors. My particular thanks to my two superb stewards, Bob Allen and Margaret Melrose for keeping proceedings going smoothly.

It was both a pleasure and a privilege to judge dogs at this, the last of the flatcoated retriever 'joint' clubs' championship shows, with Val Jones as co-judge and Anne Brook as referee. The standard of entry gave me plenty to enjoy, some very difficult decisions to make, and in a number of classes not enough cards for the dogs which deserved one. A number of dogs I have liked in the past were not at their best, others who have not done well before were on song today. Perhaps we all should remember that every day and every show is a new opportunity? Dogs continue to change and develop – never give up.

I found a number of dogs who really showed the desired characteristics, with racy outline, correct construction and the one-piece moulded head the breed is renowned for. No dog is perfect, but I felt pleased with the overall quality present. Movement was sometimes the deciding factor in close decisions and I would echo Val Jones' comments on this aspect of the breed. Temperaments were superb, enthusiasm was evident, and this really is a wonderful breed to judge. The decision for Best in Show was not easy because of the quality the two exhibited. I was more than happy to give the referee an opportunity to make that final decision and perfectly content with that decision – both dogs are a credit to the breed. We agreed on all other decisions.

Veteran 9 (2a) A cracking class with dogs I hated to see leave the ring empty-handed.

1. Holland's Ch Calzeat Causa Commotion at Flatcharm (Imp). This dog could be an example of have patience and the day may come. Today he was in sparkling form, both of condition, personality and movement, belying his almost 10 years. Excellent gleaming coat with lovely feathering, elegant head and eye of good colour and shape. Moderate length of neck and correct construction, well developed ribcage and correct in coupling. Came into his own on the move, flowing round the ring with power and ease showing the proverbial clean pair of heels with some width between. Presented a typical, happy and racy Flatcoat outline and could not be denied a well-deserved CC, RBIS and Best Veteran.

2. Fox's Sh Ch Steelriver Blazing Hot at Blacktoft JW Lovely dog of real breed type. Slightly heavier built and his profuse shiny coat almost detracted from his outline. Loved his head and eye, kind expression, has matured to advantage since I judged him before. Firm in loin and hindquarters which he used to advantage on the move but not quite with the freedom of one. Really happy showman, excellent tailset. A dog to be proud of.

3. Knight and Jacobs' Broomsward Hugo Boss by Gemswin ShCM Delightful sound and typical boy, gentle expression, typical male head. Great depth of chest, correct

moderate bend of stifle and tight feet. Very sound on the move to take third place in this lovely class.

Minor Puppy (2)

1. Malone's Kirkbeck The Man in Black. This puppy won this class and the next on his good construction, strong bone and the overall picture he presented. He has a super head and eye of lovely shape and colour, correct angulation and tight feet. Quite mature in coat already. Needs time to come together on the move but a well deserved win. Happy exuberant showman.

2. Newton's Tygwyn Radyr A month younger and needs time to develop confidence but is well constructed, has an elegant head and good length of neck. Finer built than 1. Moved soundly .

Puppy (8, 2a)

1. K The Man in Black.

2. Plumtree's Cellaigh Capricornio Close decision 2 and 3. 2 won place on overall type, development, and movement on the day. Good head, expression and ear size and placement. Pleasing front construction particularly appealed and coat coming nicely. Sound on the move.

3. King's Kingsisla Glen Sligachan Lovely boy. Similar remarks to 2 apply, and more mature at this stage with everything developing well. Good length of neck, firm hindquarters but just not so organised on the move today.

Junior (12, 2a) Some very promising dogs had to go unplaced on the day.

1. Stephenson's Llantrussa Oliver at Falahall This young man presented a typical Flatcoat outline and pleased on handling. Head proportions correct, nice expression, good unexaggerated length of neck with well developed front, good layback of shoulder, and level topline. Maintained this on the move as he went easily round the ring.

2. Gardiner and Bambrook's Jetstarski All Eyes on You at Svenjak Elegant head on this youngster, good earset and size, good length of neck and well constructed fore and aft. In good coat and another easy mover with happy personality. Will take longer to come together.

3. Joyce's Stranfaer Get Over It Lots to like about this slightly smaller boy who appealed for overall type with particularly good hind construction. Lovely head but just preferred expression of 1 and 2. In excellent coat and moved very soundly.

Yearling (11,1a) Another lovely class.

1. Reynold's Wiccanssage Hugo's Dream JW SGWC Loved the head and eye on this unexaggerated dog who won on overall type and sound driving movement. Good bone, brisket, well developed depth and length of ribcage, correct hindquarters and tailset, and in gleaming coat with some to clear.

2. Faunch's Clandrift Scout for Stars at Morrieland Loved this dog rising two, slightly bigger than winner but all in proportion. Well balanced. Good male head with enough neck, good brisket, correct length of ribcage and coupling. Level topline and tailset. Moved really well on tight feet. Promising.

3. Savory's Hopevalley Morning Arizona Typical medium-sized boy from this kennel, with a lovely expression from well shaped eye, good earset, lovely outline and tailset and moved very soundly.

Maiden (9,1a)

1. Hammersley's Castlerock Magical Shadow Just 12 months, interested to see the breeding. Loved the elegant but masculine head on this dog who is very well put together. Good eye in colour and shape, excellent length of neck, deep in ribcage already but still room for development. In lovely coat condition. Good moderate bend of stifle. Went powerfully and soundly round the ring.

2. Stranfaer Get Over It.

3. Kirkbeck the Man in Black.

Novice (6)

1 and 2 as above.

3. Gardiner and Bambrook's Kulawand Kookaburra for Svenjak. Slightly taller dog at 22 months, still coming together. Correct male head and eye. Liked his layback of shoulder particularly, and bend of stifle. Good flat coat and sound on the move.

Graduate (12, 5a)

1. Clandrift Scout for Stars at Morrieland.

2. Harris' Highlander Z Mokre Hory at Siancala (Imp Cze) This dog is developing well, with an excellent outline showing elegant head, good length of neck, well laid-back shoulder, depth of rib, moderate bend of stifle. Quality bone, level topline, correct tailset and moved soundly.

3. Evans' Gemswin Relight My Fire JW. Delightful liver dog with matching eye colour and a lovely expression, correct male head in no way overdone. Excellent bone, turn of stifle and tight feet.

Post Graduate (12, 3a, 1w/d)

1. Ashcroft's Gunoak Obsidian Really liked this medium sized and unexaggerated dog who moved very soundly with drive. Typical male head with good length of foreface, has a nice length of neck, the desired front angulation, length and depth of ribcage, and sturdy hindquarters. Well balanced on the move, lovely bone and tight feet. Level topline and tailset and used that tail to advantage.

2. Taylor-Ellis and Ellis' Capworth Corsair Liked the construction and outline of this dog, who was lovely on the move and very well handled. Typical male head although just preferred one. Lovely depth to body, well ribbed and short coupled with gleaming coat and well feathered. Powerful free mover.

3. Fox's Black Mica's Likes it Hot at Blacktoft (Imp Swe) JW Slightly bigger overall with a most classic head and almond eye shape. Quality bone and correct feet, overall super shape with desired length and depth of rib. Another lovely dog who moved soundly.

Limit (13, 1a) Really nit-picking to sort this quality class, a pleasure to judge. It is all on the day.

1. Smith's Castlerock First Glance at Whirlymere This young dog is certainly up to size but I was struck by his elegant outline, everything was in proportion, and he was balanced with real power and freedom on the move. Classical head with beautiful eye, correct length and depth of muzzle, layback of shoulder, depth of ribcage and lovely turn of stifle. Super level topline maintained on the move. Hope he can gain more animation standing to go further.

2. Blain's Caci's Just a Gigolo at Steelriver (Imp Swe) JW This is a lovely young dog with a beautiful elegant head of correct proportions, super dark eye. Needs time still and coat not at its best today but has a lovely outline, liked front construction, sturdy hindquarters, level topline and tailset. Went very well round the ring but just pipped by the freedom of the winner today.

3. Horner's Pajanbeck Magic Moments A truly medium-sized dog with gorgeous soft expression from eye of lovely colour, and beautiful male head. Desired outline, moderate bend of stifle and tight feet. Moved soundly but not quite the drive and extension today.

Open (11, 1a) Superb class.

1. Laird's Sh Ch Branchalwood Tamdhu of Daicheil JW ShCM. Have liked this dog before. He is such a typy dog fitting the standard so well without any exaggeration. Truly medium-sized, with lovely soft but naughty expression, obviously keen to please. Attractive masculine head not overdone, typical of the breed, with enough length of neck, good front angulation, depth of chest, quality bone and neat feet. Short coupled, correct moderate bend of stifle and level topline. Moved very soundly. A close decision, but could not match Veteran winner for power and freedom in the run-off. Pleasure to award RCC.

2. Douglas's Sh Ch Greenbayhill Black Tuxedo This well-known dog has matured to advantage and deserves his success. Super outline from his elegant one-piece head to ever-wagging tail. Well constructed, quality bone, tight feet, excellent bend of stifle. Went so well, looked great going round. Close decision, just a couple of points where I preferred the winner, but a grand dog.

3. Holland's Sh Ch Brightmoor Caught in the Act at Flatcharm (Imp) Another lovely medium-sized boy with plenty of substance. Gleaming profuse coat which perhaps detracts a little from desired raciness. Loved his elegant head and eye, correct earset. Well constructed, level topline and went very soundly to beat another dog I have liked before and still admire.

Special Liver (3)

1. Jacobs and Holmes's Charming Melvin Oasis of Peace (Imp CZ) JW Excellent liver dog of true Flatcoat type. Beautiful head with correct skull and foreface. Super construction and his powerful hindquarters helped him move round the ring with style and drive. In excellent coat, loved him, would hold his own in any class. Best Liver in Show

2. Evans G Relight My Fire

3. Hedderwick's Torwood Paw Trait 15 month-old dog with still some developing to do, at an in-between stage so not quite balanced at the moment. Excellent coat colour.

Vivien Stucke (Judge)