

HOVAWART CLUB of GREAT BRITAIN

OPEN SHOW

OSWESTRY

October 3rd 2021

Sadly, the judge who should have been officiating at this prestigious show, Julie Condrón, had to withdraw at the last moment due to the illness of one of her dogs. I spoke to her after the show, and the dog was holding its own then. I hope she makes a complete and speedy recovery, and commend Julie for making the health and welfare of her dogs her absolute priority.

It was a great honour for me to be asked to stand in, and I am very grateful that the exhibitors accepted the change so sportingly. Fortunately, the only entry that would have been excluded by my judging was entered "not for competition", and all the other competitors chose to take part, rather than withdraw, as they would have been entitled to, with a refund. Maybe some people regretted that decision afterwards, because one of the downsides of judging is that you inevitably leave some people disappointed.

This was the first show for a number of dogs because of the Covid epidemic, and some of the younger ones found it difficult, which would not have happened I think had they had the chance to start their showing careers at the usual six months of age, instead of having to wait a year and a half. I was pleased with the overall temperaments of the dogs on the day, and they were largely presented in a clean and well-groomed condition, but there were one or two that, like me, were carrying the odd excess pound, and there were several over-gay tails, which to my eye spoils the outline of the dog. Some would also benefit from cleaner teeth, so important to good health in later life.

It is a concern that the youngest dogs in the show were already too old for Junior, let alone puppy, but at the other end of the age spectrum I was very impressed by the way the veterans had fared over the years. These dogs are like fine vintage wine, getting better and better, especially the winners of the last three bitch classes, whom I think I didn't particularly favour in their younger days, but now really stand out. I hope the dearth of younger stock is just the result of the recent world-wide problems, and not a terminal decline in this wonderful breed in the UK.

PUPPY DOG No Entries

JUNIOR DOG No Entries

YEARLING DOG 3 (1 withdrawn)

1) Werner-Dellar & Dellar's Hightimbers Ticket to Rock

A big, rangy 18-month-old blond, presenting a nice balanced outline, with a gleaming coat and nice shading. He has a strong head developing, with a kind expression and a dark eye. Good ear carriage, well-laid shoulders, good bone and plenty of scope for a deep chest to grow as he matures. He moved well, with drive, but his tail carriage was too high, spoiling an otherwise very promising youngster.

2) Woodger's Hightimbers Ticket to Moon

Litter brother to the winner but rather more compact, this black & gold boy has good markings, a nice head with dark eyes, but I would like more reach of neck, and his shoulders are a bit upright. He moved well, keeping a level topline, but I did prefer the overall look of power of the winner.

NOVICE DOG

3 (1 withdrawn)

1) Shone's Saxon Syn Tiswy v.d. Romerweide at Zwartbos

Last time I judged this two-year-old he was a raw puppy with a lot of promise, which I am very pleased to observe he is starting to fulfil. He is black and gold, with an excellent coat with good markings. He has a strong, masculine head and is starting to develop a real depth of chest. Good bone, powerful limbs, well ribbed back, I would ideally like a bit more lay back of shoulder, but he moved with real purpose, driven by strong hindquarters. Definitely one to watch for the future, but with a frame like his, it may be a year or two before we see him at what I hope will be a magnificent best.

2) Woodger's Hightimbers Ticket to Moon

POST GRADUATE DOG

1 (1 absent)

LIMIT DOG

2 (1 withdrawn)

1) Allen's Kanukalos Allegro

Now a fully mature 6-year-old black and gold with good markings and a noble head, with a kind expression, he has good bone, a deep chest, has a good spring of rib and strong quarters, although his upper arm is a little upright, giving a slightly stuffy appearance to his neck and shoulders. Very much the type I like, he moved well, with strong drive behind. A thoroughly nice dog.

OPEN DOG

4 (1 absent)

1) Foakes' Kanukalos Rhapsody

Litter brother to the winner of the previous class, and very much built in the same vein, and again, very much at his mature best. He has a lovely deep chest and excellent bone but once again I would like a bit more angle on the shoulder blade to give greater elegance and strength to the neck. Another good mover, and well worthy of RBD.

2) Murphy's Micona Foxtrot

At four years old this black and gold dog is just coming to full maturity, and very much looks the part. Although slightly smaller than the winner, he is very balanced fore and aft. He has a good head, with a kind eye, good shoulder placement and strong bone with good angulation behind an excellent ribcage. He moved with drive, but was a little close behind, and a blown coat did him no favours today.

3) Tyerman and Challoner's Farmwatch Snow Shadow

At three and a half, he is giving away quite a lot in maturity to those in front of him. Black and gold, he is well marked and moved well, but I would like a bit more width Throughout. Happily, with this breed, he still has time on his side, and I look forward to seeing him in the years to come, when no doubt he will be challenging for the top places.

SPECIAL VETERAN DOG 1

1) Murphy's Castlemary Druid

This is the third time I have had the privilege of judging this marvellous dog, and he wears his nine years very lightly. I am out of superlatives to describe his balance, demeanour and movement, he is the best dog I have ever judged, and apart from a blond dog called Dargo, seen from the ringside at a stud dog exhibition in East Berlin during a starry-eyed visit as the Wall was falling some thirty-odd years ago, the best I've seen. A contest between these two would be something !!! I am just so thankful he hasn't managed to grow that extra centimetre on his tail, or we might as well all give up and go home !! Elaine said that the highlight of her year was being allowed to run him round the ring after it was all over. BD, BV and BIS

SPECIAL VINTAGE DOG No Entries

GOOD CITIZEN SCHEME DOG No Entries

PUPPY BITCH No Entries

JUNIOR BITCH No Entries

YEARLING BITCH 2

1) Christopherson's Hightimbers Ticket to Evita

A well grown eighteen-month-old blonde bitch, the fourth of five from this litter entered today, and much the most mature. A lovely head, a strong but elegant neck, nicely laid shoulders, good bone, a depth of chest coming, nice width throughout and in good coat. She moved well. A most promising bitch that should be up there in the future. BY

2) McLure's Hightimbers Ticket to Dream at Kanukalos

The fifth from this litter, but she looks as though she is giving away at least six months to the winner today. Fortunately, as I have said, this is such a slow-maturing breed that this could be a positive advantage in the long run. She is black and gold, a touch overmarked for me, and in good balance front and back, and at the moment is a bit fine throughout. She has a good lay of shoulder and nicely angled hindquarters and moved every bit as well as you would expect from such an athletic looking girl. I will be very interested to see how she develops in the next few years.

NOVICE BITCH 2

1) Harrison's Lowenheart Derby

Just turned three, this black and gold bitch is just coming to full maturity. A good overall body shape, nicely balanced with good muscling behind, giving her good drive on the move. Her tail carriage was right, but I would ideally like cleaner face markings a little more angle to the shoulder.

2) Williams' Annvad Miss Holly

Now just over five and a half, this b/g bitch is attractive, with a lovely kind expression, good markings and a good coat. She has reasonable bone, but again I would like a bit more lay back of shoulder. She rather flew her tail in moving.

POSTGRADUATE BITCH

2

1) Murphy's Micona Delta

A really nice blonde bitch, at just over now coming to her best. She presents a well-balanced picture, with good angles throughout, good bone and strong hindquarters which she used well on the move. Her coat is very nicely shaded. Another offspring of the best dog and doesn't let him down.

2) Boisseau's Quincebois Tigerwood

Coming up to veteran status, she is a neat, compact b/g bitch. Nice head with good face markings, but perhaps could do with a little less on her chest, which has good depth. A well laid shoulder, and kept her topline well on the move, but it was a touch spoilt by her being a pound or so overweight. Two nice bitches.

LIMIT BITCH

2

1) Shone's Zwartbos Moondance

A big black bitch, at just turned five and in her absolute prime. Well boned, with a strong head, excellent bone and well-placed shoulders, strong legs, and a good coat. She moved well, but a somewhat gay tail did take the edge off the good impression she presents standing.

2) Hemsworth's Hightimbers Travel Tickets

Another black bitch, rather smaller all through, but very much a good type, and gives a nicely balanced, very feminine picture. A delightful head and expression, but her lighter bone means that she looks rather fine, especially in contrast to the winner. She had a good topline on the move, with nice tail carriage, but her front movement could be more positive.

OPEN BITCH

3 (1abs)

1) Mooney's Micona Sierra

Litter sister to the winner of Postgraduate, this b/g bitch is a real favourite of mine. She is beautifully put together, with a good head, graceful neck leading into well laid shoulders, the right amount of bone for her size, with a good coat and the right length of loin, leading from well sprung ribs. She was in a close competition with the second in this class, but her easy and flowing movement won the day. BB

2) McClure's Kanukalos Burletta

At six and a half, this b/g bitch is both very much in her prime and very much my type of Hovawart. I have seen her from the ringside a couple of times in the last three weeks, and her improvement from what I understand to be a back injury has been palpable. She has a strong but feminine head, good ear carriage a lovely sweep of neck, good shoulders, strong limbs, good bone and a nice coat. She too is well ribbed back, and has a well angled croup, giving her a nice tail set. With her owner not at peak fitness either, she did lose out on movement today, but these are two cracking bitches, and make me proud of the breed.

3) Gutjahr's Zwartbos Brown-eyed Girl

Another nice bitch, litter sister to the winner of limit, but she lost out today on the overall class and elegance of those above her.

The fourth entry in this class was our own bitch, and obviously she had to be withdrawn, but it is interesting to speculate as to how she might have done. If I am honest, in cricket parlance, I don't think she would have troubled the scorers today.

SPECIAL VETERAN BITCH

3

1) Robinson's Zwartbos Moet

This really is a remarkable breed. This nine-year-old b/g bitch is a revelation. I really didn't care for her as a youngster, but now she is super, even her markings, which were fudged now are clearly defined, and her feet are tight and no longer flat. Her coat is gleaming, her bone good, she shows no signs of age in her smooth and accurate movement, and was so unlucky to meet an older, even more improved bitch for best veteran of sex.

2) Harrison's Fibi Srebrne Pole at Lowenheart

Yet another excellent veteran, coming up eight, in fine condition. Like the winner of this class, she had a career away from the showring, and I am sure that mental stimulus, just as much as physical exercise, has a really beneficial effect on the ageing process, because she too shows very few signs of her age. Today, she just lost out on a slightly more upright shoulder and strength of hind movement.

3) Hemsworth's Driftingsky Tousle

Very close up, a third cracking veteran, although "of a certain age" might be a more reasonable epithet. She is more feminine than the two above her, but just didn't have the presence on the day. Having said that, I could quite see them changing places, she is in lovely condition and moves soundly, without quite the drive and purpose needed to show her to the best advantage.

1) Gutjahr's Zwartbos Arreton

For me, the surprise of the day. I judged this bitch, now ten years old, early in her career, and to be frank didn't rate her greatly. But wow, look at her now !! A lovely blonde with an excellent coat, pretty feminine head, good bone, well laid-back shoulder, strong limbs, super balance throughout, and she moved with drive using her hindquarters well, and keeping a really level topline. Very unlucky that the BiS Dog is also a veteran, making her just BVB and RBB.

2) McClure's Hightimbers Penny

Another smashing blonde bitch conceding six months to the winner, and again in beautiful coat. She has a sweet head and expression, and is well put together, showing a nice balance, but today lost on her topline to the winner.

3) Inches' Fasskoleys Silkie

At over eleven, this b/g bitch is barely showing any signs of her age, very little grey to be seen. Very much my type of Hovawart, with a lovely head, good bone and presenting a good balance standing. Unfortunately, min's motorised transport didn't have the usual effect on movement. Normally it gets her dogs really striding round the ring, but today Silkie's progress was a bit awkward, and perhaps a little less weight would correct the roll. Nevertheless, three remarkable bitches.

1) White & Whitmore's Driftingsky Alize

Yet another surprise, a b/g bitch of seven who has, to my mind, improved out of all recognition. She really looks the part, with a grand head and melting expression, a good reach of neck leading into a good shoulder placement, excellent bone all through, lovely overall balance and good, positive movement.

- 1) Murphy
- 2) Gutjahr

A well-matched pair of b/g dogs just had it over a duo of mixed blond & black, although the latter pair were very much of a type

BREEDER 1

1) Murphy

PROGENY 1

1) Murphy

There was no competition in these two classes, but bearing in mind the places the dogs had achieved in the show, both awards were well merited

John Sharpe

(Stand in) Judge