

THE SMOOTH COLLIE CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

OPEN SHOW

SATURDAY 30TH MAY 2015

SMOOTH COLLIES

I was honoured to be invited to judge at the Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain's Open Show, held back-to-back with the Collie

Association's Open Show and would like to thank the committee for their invitation and for putting on such a well-run and enjoyable show. The weather was perfect and there was a lovely atmosphere with both Clubs working together to the benefit of the exhibitors. I would also like to thank the exhibitors for giving me such a great entry - 49 dogs without CCs was amazing and more than all CC entries over the past twelve months except Crufts. When you take into account that because of the low registration figures for the last quarter of 2014, there were no entries in the first four dog classes (MPD, PD, JD & ND), this was nothing short of astounding. Of course, there were a number of absentees on the day for various reasons and to those unable to come I look forward to judging your dogs in the future and you missed a great day! To those that were there, I'm pleased to say that there was quality as well as quantity and this meant some tight decisions had to be made.

As always, I was looking for that classic Collie outline and type with that unmistakeable Collie head and sweet expression, the right height to length proportions and for the dogs to be constructed so that they could still carry out the job they were bred to do, with a flowing outline held on the move.

I judged purely as I found the dogs on the day, regardless of how I may have placed them when I have judged them before and some that I have liked and done well previously did not perform as well as in the past. Others continued to impress.

I had the luxury of a good sized ring and plenty of time and even with the good entry I was able to really put them through their paces and it would have been pretty obvious that I place a lot of emphasis on good movement. I make no apologies for working them hard and yes, it was a warm day but the dogs coped fine as they should do, although some of the handlers didn't find it quite so easy and are now thinking of working on their own fitness!

Type was very varied throughout the entry and I realised early on that it was pointless expecting to be able to get an even line-up so I concentrated on finding the dogs that fitted my interpretation of the standard, regardless of how even the line-up looked. The good thing about the variation is that it means there are different breeding options available and hopefully dogs can be found that have the virtues required to improve on what you have.

Movement was generally sound; temperaments were good as I expected; heads and expressions were mixed and there are some lovely dogs with upper arms that are still either too short or too straight. Generally though, I felt that it was an improving picture overall, so a small pat on the back to the breeders amongst you!

MPD (0,0)

PD (0,0)

JD (0,0)

ND (0,0)

PG (2,2a) 1. Vickery's Oakestelle Sebastian Bach. Well balanced 22 months tri dog at the lower end of the height range and of finer build but all in proportion for his size. Particularly good eye shape and placement with his

dam's lovely ear set and carriage giving a most alert look. Stop just needs to clear and he drops off a touch over the nose. His front is very good with lovely angulation which is matched at the rear giving him a lovely flow down the neck and over the topline. Good feet and coat and moved freely, lightly and with ease. A neat, athletic looking young dog and still a maturing picture. 2. Bell's Koczkodan Nosblyth. Larger 3 years tri male I judged as a puppy and still the same happy temperament although not liking the planes overhead. Now a more mature picture with a masculine head and expression, lovely flat skull and better stop than 1 although 1 has the edge on eye and ear carriage. Good flow over the topline and depth of body with pleasing angulation at the rear and length of tail but preferred 1's excellent front and better reach and balance on the move. Well muscled and correct coat texture.

LD (7,3) 1. Czyzak's Cuba Libre Smooth Drinks (Imp Pol). Impressive, masculine, rich gold sable male of 4 years. This was one of the dogs I hoped I might get my hands on today and my wish was granted! Yes, it goes without saying that he is top size and I would prefer him a touch smaller. However, he is well boned, all in proportion to his size and above all he has that classic Collie nobility with the dignity and self assurance that I hope to find in a male. From the ringside I have wondered how I would find his head but it is not deep through. It has length, strength (no snipeyness here), level planes, good fill to muzzle, is clean and nicely moulded with a lovely eye and expression and super ear set and carriage. His proportions height to length are good, his outline flows, he is beautifully balanced which comes from super angulation both front and rear with excellent length of neck and a firm topline. Superb length of tail, good feet and he excels on the move with rhythmical, easy, ground covering strides. Being such a big boy he still needs time to mature in body and I felt he could do with a bit more condition but he is fit and obviously well exercised. In the challenge for BD he just lost his rhythm slightly and the more mature and finished OD never let up but he hit his stride again when competing for RBD which it gave me great pleasure to award him. Put to the right bitches I feel this could be a very useful dog for the breed and I look forward to seeing the finished article – I loved him. Also awarded Best Coloured Sable & White. 2. Leach's Manordeifi Dionysus at Hilltarn. I last judged this b/m boy back in 2009 as a gawky junior and his critique then read: '...has a good head pattern with level planes and a sweet eye. Ear set and carriage is good. Holds a firm topline and is sound up and down. His b/m coat is correct for texture, colour and markings. Will undoubtedly mature on..'. All of which still holds true and now 4 years old, he still hasn't quite reached his best but he is nearly there. He showed the best I've seen him for his substitute handler revealing the most lovely, enquiring expression. Still needs a bit more maturity in body but another fit well muscled boy. Preferred the length of upper arm and length of stride in front of 1 but he moved freely and accurately, holding a firm topline and excellent tail carriage. A good honest Smooth of a lovely type and later awarded him Best Coloured Blue Merle. 3. Denton's Ryecombe Jaffa Jake.

OD (2,2) 1. Hutchings Ch Collidach Molloney Ta Tu You. The second class winner by Ch Sandcastles True Topic and now a worthy title holder, this 6 years tri male was my BD last time I judged Smooths. Not a flashy dog but so correct; his proportions, flow of outline and excellent angulation make him a Smooth to be appreciated for his many virtues. He has a quality head shape with good length, planes and fill of muzzle, although I preferred the beautiful eye shape and the tighter ear set of 2. Has enough length of neck which flows into a textbook front, a firm topline with the correct rise over the loin, a gentle sweep to the tail and with the benefit of full maturity in body he looked the finished article today. On move his excellent, balanced angulation really shows with easy reach in front, effortless drive from the rear and he looks like he could go on for ever. In good, weather resistant coat and in peak condition, his handler always had him looking right and he was a willing and attentive showman. It was a winning performance and I could find nothing to beat him in the males and so he took a well deserved BD & BOS. In the challenge for RBOB, I preferred his sister's eye and expression and he just lost the edge on his concentration with a substitute handler. 2. Norman & Ratcliffe's Easy Listening at Seanua. So pleased to have this 6 years pale gold sable male entered under me. I know how hard his owner handler has worked on him to get him back to this level of performance and I was delighted to go over him. He holds an almost elegant outline with such a classy head with a refined quality about it but losing nothing in strength. Lovely clean, flat skull with good underjaw, the sweetest of eyes with ear set and carriage spot on, giving quite a noble expression. Has a lovely neck and good, well angulated front with super depth of body and length of ribbing. Good rise over loin, drops a touch steeply over croup to good tailset and carriage. Preferred 1's rear

angulation and strength of front pasterns and although he moves with easy reach in front I felt he didn't have quite the same balance at the rear and as a consequence not the topline of 1 on the move. Deservedly considered for RBD but preferred the topline and balance of the LD moving. However, no doubting that he is a quality, typy male.

VD (2,0) 1. Griffith's Alopex Matt Finnish. Always a pleasure to judge the veterans and this was the first time I've had hands on this 8½ years old typy tri male. He has a lovely length of head, a sweet eye and expression and very good ear set and carriage, looking so alertly up at his owner handler who he obviously adores (and I know full well it is mutual!). So well constructed with lovely angulation front and rear giving ideal balance. No part is out of proportion and nothing exaggerated. Never one to give more than he has to on the move he went fluidly, with good reach and easy propulsion, still holding his topline and giving an excellent outline. Preferred the body and coat of the bitch for BV but I know he has been unwell over recent weeks and I was delighted to see him here and have the opportunity to judge him. 2. Loader's Foxearth Flaming Star. What a jolly old gent this 10¼ sable boy is! Can't remember having seen him before? Sweet head with a lovely eye and expression, flat skull, good head planes and super ear set although ears pricked now. Good neck and front and just enough rear angulation. Coat a little open and topline not so firm but moves willingly and with obvious enjoyment. Hope he has many more such fun days out!

MPB (1,0) 1. Forbes Natalain Kilkenny at Willowhurst (Imp Rus) NAF TAF. Oh, what a scrummy baby! Bright gold sable puppy of 8 months and I really fell for this one. Has a lovely outline for one so young, beautifully proportioned and lovely bone. Gorgeous head and sweet expression at this age, lovely wedge shape, almond eyes set slightly obliquely with an enquiring, gentle look. Stop is in the right place, head planes good and skull already nice and flat for her tender years. Has a lengthy neck with good shoulders and upper arm, nice length of body and a good little rear end with lovely turn of stifle and tail. Her angulation shows on the move and even at this tender age she has real reach in front and balanced easy drive at the rear showing a great length of stride and is so fluid and balanced, holding a lovely topline. With her full white collar and beautiful colour she is real little looker and a very promising prospect indeed. Handled steadily and sympathetically, I just hope she grows on a bit and retains her quality head piece as she matures. Definitely the one the judge would have taken home and I shall watch her progress with interest. BMPIB, BPIB, RBMPIS & RBPIS.

PB (2,0) 1. Forbes Natalain Kilkenny at Willowhurst (Imp Rus) NAF TAF. 2. Moores Manordeifi Summer Magic. Larger tri bitch of 11 months of lovely type now starting to look a bit adolescent and not the quite the same balance in outline of 1 at the moment. She has a good length head with correct underjaw and a well placed, sweet eye. Front construction is good as usual with this breeder/exhibitor and I like her length of body which already has good depth. I would like her to come up on the leg a bit to balance out her rear end. Stands over plenty of ground and moves freely and with verve. Just needed to settle up and down today and watch her tail carriage and she is still carrying a little puppy fat. One I would like to see again with a bit more maturity. Later awarded Best Coloured Tricolour.

JB (2,1) 1. Forbes Willowhurst Vanity. This flashy 15 month old tri bitch reminds me so much of her sire but is a slightly more extreme type. Has the cleanest of heads with flat skull, good eye shape and position and a real wedge from above and the side. Her ears are very well set and nicely tipped but would prefer them less tightly carried as I found her expression a little intense. She has a good neck, lovely lay of shoulder and a good topline which flows neatly over the croup. At the moment is slightly over angulated at the rear and although she creates a balanced profile standing and goes with great energy and drive on the move, she just lifts her front a touch high and goes a bit wide behind. Shorter coat type but good sheen and well muscled. Will be interested to see her with the benefit of maturity.

NB (1,0) 1. Moores Manordeifi Summer Magic.

PGB (6,2) 1. Peacock's Blamorder Back to the Start for Saraneth. Very smart 20 months tri bitch, picture marked and in glorious coat and condition. Super head and expression with flat skull, good planes, eye shape and position giving a quick, intelligent look. Ears not the smallest but well set and alertly carried. Has a good lay of

shoulder, good neck and flawless topline, still maturing in body as to be expected and neat over the rear with sufficient but not excessive turn of stifle. An active and balanced mover with a quick, energetic but smooth stride and very accurate up and down, just has a slight tendency to fly her tail which needs watching. A totally unexaggerated bitch, whose handler really gets the best out of her – not easy when they are as intense as this one. 2. Moores Tomalca Button’N’Bows at Manordeifi. 3 year old sable with a lot to like. Lovely head and expression with a gorgeous eye. Skull flat, planes good although stop a little long. Well placed and carried ears giving sweet, alert look. Good neck and shoulder but preferred the upper arm of 1. Maturing in body, holds a good topline and liked her strong, well angulated quarters. Good, rich sable coat. Another energetic mover with great drive, just preferred the reach in front and balance on the move of 1 but a nice bitch. 3. Glover’s Oakestelle Indie Rock at Stormsett.

LB (5,2) Beeney’s Ryecombe Jolly Jonquil at Coneypark. Lovely 3 year old sable and a very balanced bitch, well boned but with an air of refinement which appeals. She has a lovely, moulded head piece with good length, planes and underjaw, a sweet eye and expression and alert ear set and carriage. Stop could be cleaner. Loved her front and has good fill of chest and a really good body – nothing narrow or whippetty about this girl. Neat quarters and holds a lovely topline and moves with great balance, rhythm and freedom which is how I like it. Slightly out of coat but what was there was of good texture. The sort I would like to breed from, a good bitch. 2. Moores Manordeifi Silver Dazzler. It was nip and tuck between 2 and 3 and this was the third second place from me for this sporting breeder/handler today. No secret that I like this neat 4 year old b/m bitch having given her a BOB previously. Not quite in that form today and it was only when she started to settle and concentrate on the final go around that she clinched this place. Of different type to 1 and she also has a lovely head and expression with a sweet eye but although her earset is good she only carries them well when she wants to, unlike 3 who is the picture of alertness and an excellent showgirl. Would like a little more neck but would look better if she used what she has! She has an excellent front and the benefit of maturity in body over 3 and although both have good lay of shoulder I preferred the upperarm of 2. Has a smooth flow over the topline to a neat rear with those lovely short rear pasterns. In good coat of lovely colour and once she settled was smooth and balanced on the move with good length of stride and drive from the rear. If only she would pull herself up and show herself off she would do so much better. Lovely to see her again. 3. Benton’s Oakestelle Venus de Milo. Would like to see the finished article as she is a quality youngster but up against the big girls here.

OB (10,2) This was a stonker of a class, the class of the day, full of quality bitches, all of them being green card winners and I thoroughly enjoyed sorting it out. 1. Denton’s Ch Kevranna Theras Enate Echo. The second class winner by Ch Foxearth Felix Cited and what a lovely scopey bitch this is! A stunning, shaded sable of 3½ years who just got better and better as the class went on. Although top size for a bitch, she is such a lovely shape, her proportions height to length are spot on and her outline just flows from head to tail. I loved her head which is a lovely wedge shape with super planes and stop, clean and moulded through the cheeks and with a beautifully calm, serene expression from well shaped eyes. Her earset is good and although she can be a bit lazy with them, when she concentrates and pulls them up the effect is beautiful. Her neck is of good length which she holds so well with lovely lay of shoulder and good upperarm although it can appear straighter when she reaches up fixed on a titbit – something for the handler to watch! She has correct length of body which is mature, lovely bone down to good feet and her rear angulation is perfect, finished off with a good length, well carried tail. She has a good, weatherproof coat of the correct texture, is attractively marked and she moves freely and easily, with the length of stride her angulation would suggest and so smoothly it appears almost lazy but at the same time really covers the ground. I had no hesitation in awarding her the class in front of another favourite of mine and then BB and BOB. She is truly a classic Collie bitch and I was so pleased to have my opinion endorsed when she went BIS over the Rough under breed specialist Penny Sewell. 2. Hutching’s Ch Collidach Molloney Fay Mouse ShCM. Another by Ch True Topic. Her owner/breeder/handler knows my high opinion of this lovely b/m bitch, now nearly 6 years old and she was my BOB last time I judged Smooths, also going on to BIS. Different in type to 1 being a smaller, neater sort but also with lovely balance and so well made, feminine but well boned, typy but unexaggerated. Her head and expression are beautiful with level planes, stop just right and clean through the cheeks. She has such a lovely eye and scored slightly over 1 with her sweetness of expression. Good underjaw makes a perfect blunted wedge shape in profile. She was a little more reluctant than 1 to hold her ears tighter

today but they are well set and perfectly tipped. Good length of neck flows into the same smashing front as her brother, she has a level topline with gentle rise over the loin and equally gentle curve over the croup to a lovely well angulated rear, with super width of thigh and a well carried tail. Mature in body, with lovely feet, in tight fitting coat still of gorgeous silvery blue, well marbled with black and nice tan, she presents a lovely picture. Her movement is on a par with 1, smooth, balanced, effortless, totally co-ordinated and just eats up the ground. Today 1 edged in front for me with that little more height on the leg and the length of head I prefer. Another classy Collie lady and a deserving RBB & RBOB over her brother. 3. Lusty's Juniperwood Just A Dream. It was certainly no disgrace to finish third and beyond in this strong class. Another top quality bitch.

VB (5,2) 1. French's Ch Lilymead Amazing Grace. This 10 year old b/m bitch was my RBB and BV last time I judged Smooths and if anything she looked even better 2 years on and showed a bomb for her substitute handler. She is very feminine, nothing is overdone or exaggerated and she has real quality. I said before that I find her head and expression enchanting and I still do; everything is perfectly placed with superb ear set and carriage, lovely eye shape and set, perfectly level planes and placement of stop with good underjaw; clean through the cheeks and nicely filled in muzzle. Ideal length of neck into lovely front angulation, mature in body, firm in topline and neat unexaggerated quarters and perfect set and carriage of tail. She is perfectly sound and moves with lightness of foot, low reach and easy drive. In tight fitting coat, well marked but as to be expected, a slightly darker blue now. Not always an enthusiastic show girl she really stood up and did herself proud and I was pleased to award her BVB. She scored in body and coat against the VD and pulled out the stops on the move at just the right minute, clinching BV and the coveted painting by Jane Howells. Well done. Interesting to note the veterans were sired by litter brothers; the dog by Ch Moon Walker from Misstoft and the bitch, Ch Fido Fax to Foxearth. 2. Lusty's Juniperwood Dream Maker at Blamorder. Only just into veteran, this 7 years tri is a lovely shape although a little squarer in proportions compared to 1. She also has a lovely head although of a different type. Not the exceptional eye shape and ears of 1 but good planes, stop and underjaw. Well angulated front and rear, holds a good topline and moves out accurately with easy reach and drive. In good coat of lovely texture and colour and a switched on show girl, she certainly wouldn't have looked out of place in Open. 3. Hutchings Ch Foxearth Fluorescence at Molloney ShCM. Looking so well for 12 years – lovely to see her again.

BRACE (4,2) Real tough one with two very good pairs. 1. Lustys. Tricolour mother and daughter pair and like peas in a pod. So similar in head type, proportions, body shape and length of stride. Looked super. 2. Bentons. Another mother and daughter pair, this time b/m and also very similar. The bigger age and maturity gap between these two was more obvious and their stride pattern wasn't quite in sync which ultimately made the decision easier. It was no disgrace to come second!

SIMON BURTON (Judge)