

An English view of the Springers in America

WHEN Ernest Froggatt of the famous Moorcliff English Springers wrote to the breed's parent club I don't think he had any idea of what he was starting.

This correspondence, which suggested the separation of the Springer Spaniel as we know it, and the type the Americans show, was read at the AGM; members then referred it to the committee. We sought world opinion which was overwhelmingly for. All present CC awarding judges were asked to vote (majority for). Not one of the British clubs disagreed. Letters were sent to both the UK and American KC and the parent club of the ESS of America.

Back came a very polite letter from their club, basically worried about the proposal and inviting a representative of the club to go and observe their specialty show and hunting tests.

Our secretary could not go due to personal reasons — so I made the trip — 'of a lifetime', coming back wondering why we never did it before. This is what dogs are all about, constructive discussion, pooling ideas and communications with friends, remembering that 'strangers are just friends we haven't met.'

Computer mind

Start at the beginning, which was a long flight from Manchester to Rochester, Minnesota, thinking all the way "was this really a good idea?" — not helped by the applause when the pilot landed at Minneapolis — did they honestly expect him not to make it? Met at the airport by no less than the bench vice-president, Franca Nelson, with a very large sign, a Springer's head on it and the inscription "Hi-Hi Pam" — and to think I worried about missing her!

Franca is one of the softly-spoken, mild Americans, and it is only as you get to know her you realise she has a computer for a mind, and what goes in stays — anything you want to know, this is the person to ask. As we drive from the airport and she escorts me to the hotel there are Springers everywhere — one makes a "mistake" in the foyer of the very plush Radisson Hotel — no pulled faces or disgust here, apologies from the owner, staff say 'no problem' and 'we'll clean up.' Maybe this is dog country after all!

Dogs going up and down in the elevator (sorry, lift) and it's confirmed by Franca that most are staying in the owner's rooms. A bathing room for the dogs is provided by the hotel — it's beginning to dawn on me that I've been here two hours and the preconceived ideas are disintegrating already.

6.30 am start next morning when I meet David Hopkins the ESS FTA president, in order to attend the hunting tests. We go for breakfast and as everyone has a low time of the day, and my rockbottom is first thing in the morning, I say black coffee please, and thinking if it's like English trials the next food could be a long way away, croissant as well —

Yep, I got my croissant but this is where most of the aid to the Third World starts, and they sure don't intend any visitors being underfed: one croissant maybe, but there was egg, bacon and cheese inside it, potato scallops by the side and a salad! Off to the hunting tests, I shall gloss over the scenic route we took, plus the new (my story) words David taught me as he tried to follow a very unscientific map!

These tests are a relatively new idea there, and a very good one too — might be a thought for us to copy. The first test, junior hunter, is very similar to our gundog qualifying certificate. The dog had to prove it can hunt, retrieve, is not gunshy and will retrieve from water, but it does not have to be steady.

There is no qualification to

IN VIEW of the controversy regarding "type" in the English Springer Spaniel which stemmed from Am Ch Salllyn Condor's BIS win at Westminster, the American breed club invited the British parent club to send a representative to their specialty. Mrs Pam Wadsworth was selected, and she has written the following report in her own distinctive style

enter this and the majority were dogs who were entered at the show. If succeeding (and about half the entry did), they could put JH after their registered name.

The senior hunter was similar but requiring higher proficiency. The standard for the master hunting test was exacting. They were expected to be steady, the judge explaining that more than one whistle signal would be marked as "excessive handling". The water test was a blind retrieve (unseen by the dog) of the duck placed behind a bush on the bank, the dog having swum about 50 yards had to be directed to the right before making the retrieve from the bank. This was followed by a straight seen retrieve from the water.

David was very pleased to qualify Hambal in the first leg of this, needing six qualifying scores to add the letters MH to his name. Hambal was the only dog to be entered in all four sections, field trial, hunting tests, obedience and show although quite a lot were encountered in two.

I was delighted to meet the chairman, Harry Henriques, who works his seven Springers for

guests at his *Wild Wings* shooting lodges. Another well-known personality there was the gentlemanly Art Rogers, editor of the quality informative glossy magazine *Spaniels in the Field*, so well known over here.

Before I left a phone call from Harry Hardwicke (KC/FT), chairman) saying he had met an American fellow Springer enthusiast in the middle of a Welsh field and to be sure to look him up! I was amazed and so pleased to find Edd Kogenkamp III was judging at the tests — small world isn't it!

After the awards, back to the hotel to wash and warm up; it might have been 43 degrees but the wind came straight from the Arctic with no hills to break the continual lazy wind. It didn't go round you, it went straight through.

On to the 'welcome' party with informative talk by Shirley Johnson DVM which was held in the hotel; I was surprised to find 150 people keen enough to attend the night before the main show, loved the food being described as 'heavy hors d'oeuvres' which

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The comparison which began the debate — above, the American English Springer exemplified by Ch Salllyn Condor, BIS Westminster 1993; below, the English Springer represented by top CC-winning bitch Ch Mompesson Remember Me.

photo Dalton

