



SPRINGER SPANIEL



exactly the same of their breed! So perhaps the question is best answered by someone who has both breeds.

4. Some people have already intimated that they will stop breeding Welsh Springers when the ban comes into force. Our feelings are that it will have very little effect, if any at all. Undocked spaniels are becoming more common in our show rings and are achieving high honours.

Having judged both breeds in Scandinavia from the early days of the docking ban over there, we know it took them very little time to overcome any problems.

In the early days their problem was more of the type of tail their dogs had and not particularly the tail carriage. Some dogs at first appeared to have a 'ropey' tail, where the feathering seemed to be wound round the tail and not the lovely setter-like tail their dogs seem to have today.

There was also quite a variation in length of tail. It took them very little time to overcome this. It will teach breeders to breed for correct tail set and correct length of back — a long backed dog can look even longer with a long tail!

As a matter of interest as far as we are aware we were the first people to place an undocked dog at a championship show in this country.

5. As far as English Springers are concerned it is probably too late as there already two distinct types, although it is most commendable that a good number of people with show English Springers are successfully working their dogs. Long may they continue to do so and they should be given as much encouragement as possible.

On the other hand Welsh Springers are not as strong numerically and due to the dedication and enthusiastic hard work of many kennels we still have a dual-purpose dog.

6. When we started in Welsh Springers in 1977 it was a minor if not rare breed, and the dogs we saw were fairly uniform. It was accepted that fronts and movement in some instances were not as good as they should have been.

As the breed grew stronger it certainly improved with sounder movement and improved fronts and all round conformation and there was type.

However, as the breed has become more popular this seems to have gone by the board and the divergence in type alarms us. When one looks at the more numerically strong classes they give the appearance of an Any Variety Welsh Springer class! There is only one Standard and only a certain amount of latitude in its interpretation.

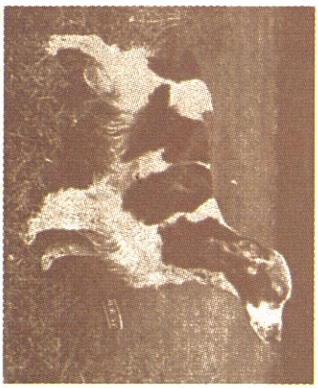
Bob & Frances Jackson (Mompesson ESS)

1. We would both nominate the one and only **Sh Ch Hawkhill Connaught**, owned and bred by Judith Hancock and the late Jimmy Cudworth, by **Sh Ch Moorcliff Dougal of Truelindale** ex **Sh Ch Slayleigh Paulina**. He fits the Standard so well and the impact he made on English Springers is truly unsurpassed during the 35 years of our involvement in the breed.

'Conn' was a great show dog winning numerous CCs, Gundog groups and many BIS awards. He also won the first Top Dog award held in 1973.

Many a great show dog has not had as lasting an impact on the breed as Connaught; he sired 26 UK champions and many more abroad, leaving his stamp on the offspring from many different bitches and many different lines. He truly represents a milestone for the English Springer Spaniel and has left his imprint on so many dogs in the ring, to this very day.

The Mompessons were founded on Conn's full sister from a previous litter, **Sh Com's** full sister from a previous litter, **Sh Comaught**; he sired 26 UK champions and many more abroad, leaving his stamp on the offspring from many different bitches and many different lines. He truly represents a milestone for the English Springer Spaniel and has left his imprint on so many dogs in the ring, to this very day.



One of the Welsh Springer favourites, Ch Dalati Del, born in 1970

photo Anne Fosdin-Williams



Sh Ch Trinere Time To Remember from Mompesson in 1999 photo Dalan

Ch Hawkhill Derby Daydream

Another of Conn's descendants from more recent years, the Australian import **Clanach Crown Destiny**, bred by Phil and Marie Merchant of the world famous Clanach kennels, has made his impact on the breed as a sire in the UK, Europe and Scandinavia. He has sired 17 champions including a Crufts BOB and is grand sire of a Crufts BOB.

With Connaught, 'what you saw was what you got'. He did not have a great amount of coat to hide under, he stood four square at all times, taking Jimmy only seconds to stand him, not ten minutes of manipulating him to a stance like some do today.

He had a super head and expression, sound conformation and a great style with a level topline held on the move. His strong hindquarters were used to produce the most powerful driving movement, and he went true front and rear. His great forward extension reached right out in front, with his hind action in complete co-ordination. His movement looked almost lazy with his great ground-covering stride, compared with the short strides of others making them look busy. What a great ambassador for the breed!

2. We have greatly admired **Boxer of Bramhope**, born in 1945 and owned by Mary Scott, because he has been such a major influence on the breed, siring in the region of 18 champions and show champions. When mated to **Susan of Stubham** they produced **Ch Dinah of Stubham**, **Sh Ch Sheila of Stubham**, **Ch Duchess of Stubham** and **Ch Alexander of Stubham** in different litters.

Mrs Oughred Till owned **Alexander**, probably the greatest of Boxer's progeny, winning 22 CCs, and 18 BOBs. He was also an exceptional sire producing 16 UK titleholders and Connaught carries many lines back to him. Boxer himself disliked the show ring, winning just one CC.

3. The English and Welsh Springers are not as closely related as one may be led to believe considering the breed names. The English Springer's evolution is more closely linked to that of the Cocker and Field Spaniel than to the Welsh.

Both breeds should have genuine, typical temperament being merry, active, biddable and eager to please. We believe the Welsh Springer is slightly more 'independent' than the English meaning they have a stronger will. Some also say that the Welsh can be more sensitive and perhaps also more active. However we think the difference in character varies more between individuals within the breed, than between the two breeds themselves.

The Welsh is a shade smaller than the English and a little lighter in build; still they should have enough bone to give an impression of strength. The English Springer is more up on his legs, being the tallest of the land spaniels. The head shape differs between all spaniel breeds, head and expression represents an important part of breed type. The typical Welsh head is more tapered, cleaner, ears set higher with less feathering and they have a different shape.

4. Scandinavian countries are already coping with a ban and we are sure that we would eventually get used to undocked tails. We don't anticipate any problems with breeding a Springer with a suitable tail carriage. A new tail description to allow for an undocked tail was written into the English Springer Standard in July 2001.

5. We don't think so. The breed clubs do a terrific amount of work to encourage breeders/exhibitors to work their dogs. And while the English Springer has split into separate lines, such as 'working' and 'show' English Springers, this is not the

case with the Welsh, he is truly an all-purpose Springer.

Ninety per cent of all English Springers are bred from working lines, counting for large numbers registered every year. Working ESS and Cocker's totally dominate the Spaniel field trials; competing successfully with the show type has virtually become impossible.

6. Like most breeds the English Springer has changed over the years. New breeders tend to use the big winner of the day without any thought or study of their own pedigrees, to see if he will be beneficial to their stock, resulting in the many different types we have today.

The big kennels of years ago, where breeders kept 20-40 Springers, are long gone. Today many breeders are able to keep only a handful of bitches at the most, and we have some outstanding bitches at the moment, but it is becoming extremely difficult to find stud dogs of the calibre of **Connaught**, his sire **Ch Moorcliff Dougal of Truelindale**, **Sh Ch Hawkhill Starsky**, **Sh Ch Grifflinbury Geoghis Khan** and **Ch Teesview Tarmac** to mate them to. This surely accounts for the lack of in-depth quality throughout the breed.

The '70s and '80s were regarded by many as the best years as the top breeders turned out one good dog after another. We had some very typical and outstanding Springers then: **Connaught**, **Sh Ch Teesview Pan-dora of Truelindale**, **Ch Swallowtail of Shipden**, **Sh Ch Hildarry Roast Chestnut**, **Sh Ch Moorcliff Sunnymaid** and **Ch Mompesson Remember Me** to name but a few.

If we had to express a little concern it would be the about the typical Springer movement. The great forward extension reaching right in front, with solid well-muscled hindquarters moving with real drive and power, are sadly becoming something of a rarity. We now see lots of Springers with a short, choppy type action, and sloping topline.

Springers today have far more coat, and presentation has improved tremendously with it. However, we do not want to see the English Springer becoming an overdone 'coat-breed' that the average owner can hardly cope with.

Sadly, some of today's exhibitors do not want a judge's opinion, they just want to win. Winning, for them, is all about self-promotion and they are very clever at telling others how good their dog is!

Christine McDonald (Northey WSS)

1. **Ch Dalati Del**. I fell in love with her picture in the 1978 Welsh Springer Spaniel Club year book, and set her shape as my ideal for the breed. I then saw her in the flesh at her home and was equally impressed.

A beautifully shaped head with a sweet, kind expression, and I loved her balanced outline — crested neck with clean throat, excellent lay of shoulders (which the Dalati dogs are famous for), good angulation behind, and a topline which for me epitomised what was desired in the Standard, with a muscular loin — 'slightly arched and well coupled up'. She had great forechest, ribs and depth of brisket, which gave her good heart and lung capacity, and a nicely rounded rump for propulsion and breed type.

2. **Sh Ch Golden Tint of Tregwillym** who was born in 1964 and at one time held the breed record of 33 CCs. So many judges admired her, I would have liked to see with my own eyes. In males, **Ch Statesman of Tregwillym**, because his picture demonstrated the same qualities I had seen in Del, and because he appears so often in the extended pedigree of my stock.

3. In terms of character, I prefer to base my comments on my adult dogs at home — since 1976, around 25 Welsh and two English Springers from working lines. Many of the dogs have been or are used in the field, and I'm fortunate to have bred four full champion, and seven with show Gundog working certificates.

Welsh Springers like to be a part of your life, thriving on human contact and companionship. They are just as happy making their own mischief as they are being asked to do things for you. They are very people-love and they like praise, but feel it must be earned otherwise you will be mocked.

In the field, they tend to line-hunt, and be very persistent where there is game available, but need much training to

The new English Springer CC record holder, Sh Ch Wadeson Inspector Wexford in 2000

Photo Hanley



encourage hunting to a pattern as is expected by many judges, particularly those used to field trial English Springers.

When my husband decided to buy in and train English Springers as shooting companions, I noticed a difference from my Welsh Springers in attitude. Maybe it's just his training methods, but it seems to me that his commands were met by an expression and action that said: "Of course, master, you said 'jump', how high would you like me to jump and how often?" My Welsh Springers, faced with the same command, met it with questions — "Why should I do that?", "What's in it for me?" and "Is this negotiable?"

Physically, English Springers are defined in their Standard as the raciest in build of all British land spaniels, although this is not always apparent in the ring. Both Standards are similar in their description of the loin, but I have always understood the Welsh Springer should have very slightly more arch in the loin area than the English.

The head shapes defined in the Standards are very different. The foreface and flews are deeper in English Springer, who should have fluting between the eyes, and the ESS Standard specifies almond shaped eyes. Although there is no defined shape in the Welsh Standard, I feel WSS eyes tend to have a more rounded appearance.

Ears are quite different: English Springer ears should be lobular with good length and width, whereas the Welsh Springer's ears are smaller and should narrow towards the tip. For the show ring, trimming is also different. Hair on the English Springer's ears is customarily short at the top portion, and left long on the lower part, whereas the Welsh's ears have medium feathering throughout. The Americans use the term 'divergent planes' for the Welsh Springer head which I feel well describes the side profile of the Welsh.

Regarding movement, the English Springer Standard asks for the forelegs to swing straight forward from the shoulders, throwing feet well forward. The Welsh show more flexion in the forelimbs.

4. Some breeders will change their allegiance to another breed, some will oppose the ban on the grounds of damage to working dogs in the field, and some will take on the challenge of breeding with acceptable long tails.

On the Continent and in Scandinavia, breeders have worked hard to include tail structure in their selection process with successful results in terms of thickness and length of appendage for the show ring.

Personally, I like to see spaniels in the field wearing their stumps enthusiastically, especially to indicate the presence of game; the sweeping movement of a long tail to me does not demonstrate the busy nature of flushing spaniels. However, in the light of increasing influence from Europe and the anti-country sports brigade, I think we might have to get used to the idea if we wish to continue with our chosen breed.

5. Titles seem to attract (like JW and ShCM) so perhaps the letters SGWC (show Gundog working certificate) and WGC (working Gundog certificate) as suffixes may be an incentive for 'show people' to try for working Gundog qualifications, although I have my reservations about this line of action. In any case, I understand the Kennel Club field trials and Hlason council has recently ruled out the idea.

The success of Welsh Springers as dual-purpose dogs is largely due to the influence of individuals who have championed the cause and persuaded others to join in the fun! Dorothy Morris, Eileen Falconer, Dolly Leach and Basil Mullins, particularly, were exponents of dual-purpose Welsh Springers during my early years in the breed.

Since then, there has been a nucleus of successful handlers in South Wales, and in the South East. It is always dangerous to single out personalities, but I feel John Phillips also deserves a mention for his devotion to the dual-purpose ethos through personal contact, the WSSC, and via his breed notes and definitive book *The Essential Welsh Springer Spaniel* (now out of print).

In the late '70s and '80s, he ran a local training group, and many graduates from his classes have gone on to inspire another generation of handlers to experience pleasure from working their dogs and in the show ring.

The same has happened in South Wales and with a group in the North of England. I also feel the emphasis placed on annual club awards for dual-purpose dogs is a feature that encourages owners.

6. Fronts have improved, but classic shape has not. Too many dogs have flat, sloping topline. Heads vary as much as they have done since I first came into the breed, although there is a greater proportion of those with more chiselling and 'class'.

Coats appear to have improved, but it is difficult to ascertain whether this is truly the case with the advent of common use of dog coats and similar to dry coats flat! Presentation has certainly improved, in terms of trimming. The 'whole package' has assumed new heights, with the growing interest in group competition.

Health-wise, it is difficult to ascertain whether there has been an improvement. Knowledge of breed health and defects is greater with the advent of better communication, but it is impossible to tell whether the incidence of problems such as hip dysplasia, glaucoma and epilepsy is greater or lesser than in previous years.

It is easy to say "The breed is not what it used to be", but beware of the rose-coloured spectacles!

Don Miller (Feotig ESS)

1. Over the years I have been privileged to see, or judge, many of the all time 'greats'. It would be wrong in my quest for the best not to take into consideration **Ch Moorcliff Dougal of Truelindale**, **Sh Ch Teesview Pandora of Truelindale**, **Sh Ch Wadeson Miss Marple**, **Ch Mompesson Remember Me** and up to the present day **Sh Ch Wadeson Inspector Wexford**.

My choice would be Jim Cudworth and Judith Hancock's unforgettable **Sh Ch Hawkhill Connaught**. He epitomised everything I looked for in the breed and was so ably piloted by Jim. His superb movement proved to be a lasting memory although I never judged him, I used him at stud to give me several champions and be part of his impressive record of siring 25 champions.

With the quality of the breed improving globally, I must include two outstanding dogs whom I have judged in my travels. Tarja Hovila's **Matti Ch Adamant's Superman**, I judged him as a youngster and he went on to greater heights. In Australia, it was the Kinsleran Kennels'