



SPRINGER SPANIEL



last year. My main observation would be that in the '70s the breed was renowned for having bad fronts, these are now much better with hind movement becoming the problem. The number of dogs shown has increased over the years but when I started the classes were small and consisted of a few good dogs while now it may be a large class but you will find only a few good dogs in it.

Graham & Lesley Tain (Taimere WSS)

1. We came into the breed in the late '70s and a number of the dogs from that era impressed us sufficiently to make Welsh Springers our primary breed. In no particular order of merit we would choose, in bitches, Sh Ch Dalati Sarhan for her sheer elegance and quality, Sh Ch Blorenge Megan for her outstanding type, and Sh Ch Northoaks Sea Mist of Meistonia for her showmanship, type and quality.

In dogs: Sh Ch Dalati Cymro of Tamaritz, a quality and tippy dog, who is one of only two prepotent sires; the other is Sh Ch Dalati Stoni, who have graced our breed in the last twenty odd years; Sh Ch Wainfelin Barley Mow who took the breed by storm in the late '80s and had a balance, type and soundness sadly lacking today.

2. We would both love to have seen Sh Ch Golden Tint of Tregwillym and Sh Ch Dalati Rham. Of slightly different types, they each shout quality from the photographs we have seen.

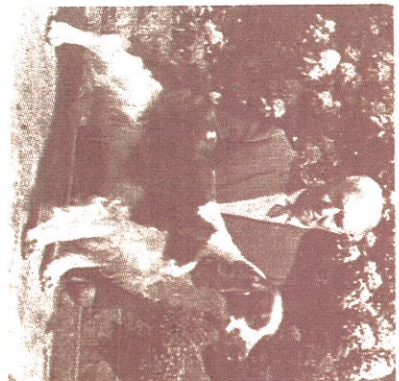
The elder statesmen and women of the breed, whose ranks we are sadly far too quickly joining, still rave about them and, allowing for senility, their records appear to support the claims.

3. Having owned both breeds, we find the Welsh asks more questions. A ball thrown for an English will be repeatedly retrieved, the Welsh will ask what is the purpose after the second throw.

Physically, apart from a slight difference in bodily balance, the head is the real difference. The English is certainly heavier with more flow; the Welsh head is 'racier' with less of everything. The movement of the Welsh is decidedly more active than that of its cousin.

4. Dogs who today 'get away' with a poor tail set will look ridiculous trotting around the ring with a red and white flag following them. The majority of dogs we have judged abroad appear to have a tail carriage much like a Golden Retriever and we do not believe this would be any different in England.

We have both seen tail damage on undocked dogs and experienced the problems of effecting a repair so believe it will



Sh Ch Tregwillym Golden Gem born New Year's Day 1972

be a further retrograde step in our politically correct world.

5. We do not believe the English will ever revert to a dual-purpose animal as the show and working sides have diverged too far.

The Welsh are more successful due to a nucleus of working owners, dedicated to the breed, who over the last 30 years have kept this side of the breed alive. Sadly this appears to be in decline.

6. Every breed has its peaks and troughs. We believe the golden years in our time were the early '80s through to the mid '90s. The latter period coincided with the demise of some of the larger influential kennels, Dalati, Platum and Tregwillym.

Recent show results would tend to provide an argument against this. We believe however that the breed is at a crossroads where type, particularly in relation to heads and the wonderful Welsh expression,

is being lost. Fashion does not make a breed but history does.

John Thirlwell (Fendel WSS)

1. There are a few whom I considered very good, however the best in my opinion would be Sh Ch Dalati Rham, owned and bred by Noel and Dodo Hannon-Morgans. She epitomised breed type with a lovely head, well balanced body with plenty of substance and a sound positive mover.

2. Sh Ch Tregwillym Golden Gem, owned and bred by Cliff Payne. Judging from photos she looks a lovely bitch, typical and full of quality. I am sure she would still win if she were around today.

3. The main difference apart from colour would be size. The English is a heavier, taller dog with slightly more substance compared to the Welsh. Heads differ a bit – the English requiring a longer ear with more feathering while the Welsh has a slightly finer head and smaller ear.

4. Although I prefer Welsh docked, I feel that they would not be affected as much by such a ban as a lot of other breeds would be.

The tail carried correctly should not alter the balance of the dog. Having judged in countries with a docking ban I have seen many Welsh with tails, the majority of



Sh Ch Cleavehill Corn Dolly born 1967

photo Diane Pearce (courtesy of the Kennel Club picture library)

them carried them correctly, level or slightly below the topline. So hopefully it would not be a problem to breed as those docked should still carry their tails in the same position.

5. Having no experience with the working side I could not comment on keeping them dual-purpose, although I have sold Welsh puppies who have been worked, therefore the instinct must be there if encouraged.

6. Welsh Springers have improved over the 29 years I have been involved in them. There have been highs and lows in the quality of the breed but generally they are a more even type and sounder. This improvement can be seen by the number of group and BIS winners over the years, quite a rare occurrence in earlier times.

Gill Tully (Highclare WSS)

1. Ch Northey Storm Cloud epitomises the Standard as I interpret it.

She had a typical, beautiful head, long strong neck – long enough to be able to pick up game but not to long as to make her look like a setter.

Her shape was perfection for a Welsh Springer, a shape that I feel we are losing in today. She was deep in brisket and had good heart and lung room, her topline was so good that if you were to see her as a black silhouette there would be no mistaking her for any other breed than a WSS.

Her best point was her rear end – today not many Welsh have that correct rise over the loin, strong second thigh making the 'bum' one of the most noticeable parts of the Welsh Springer. I wished I had owned her.

2. Ch Dalati Del Like Storm Cloud, she epitomises the breed for me. She was also beautiful in profile and could not be mistaken for any other breed other than a Welsh Springer.

3. The differences which I can see between Welsh and English Springers are not massive, rather they are subtle. Looking at the Standard the height makes the difference, of course, and the diameter of each breed is different. The Welsh Springer height is 19" and 18" for dogs and bitches respectively but has a slightly longer topline giving them a look of a square within a rectangle. The English Springer's height is 20" for dogs and 19" for bitches giving a squarer, shorter look.

4. Personally I am for a docking ban as I like the tails. I own a tailed Welsh now and take her working; she has never come home with cut tail. I have also had two other tailed Welsh and neither has ever had a problem with tails in undergrowth.

As for most people in the breed, they will not take a docking ban without a fight but it is strange how quickly they accept a judging appointment abroad knowing that they will be judging dogs with tails. I ask them when they return about the tails and the answer is: "Once I have judged the first dog I didn't notice the tails." So why do we as dog lovers want to cut off a piece of the dog's anatomy?

5. What could help keeping the breed dual-purpose is if when owners achieve a show Gundog working certificate they would be able to put SGWC after the dog's name, it would be an incentive.

The Welsh will always be more successful as a dual-purpose dog because the breed has not split into a working dog and a show dog; we Welsh Springer breeders take a pride in keeping the breed together.

6. The breed has improved in one respect – awareness of health issues. As a breed we seem to face health problems heard on.

On the other hand I think type has been replaced with beauty; a tippy Welsh isn't always extremely beautiful like an Irish Setter. We breeders must keep as closely to type as we can and judges must do the same even if it is to the detriment of what we have in our kennel. We have to remember that we are only borrowing the breed and when we have gone it must be left in a healthy state.

Kay Woodward (Wadeson ESS)

1. It would be very difficult to name just one English Springer as over the years I have admired many, and if we are honest we all know that the perfect dog (of any breed) has yet to be born.

Of the ones I have judged I would choose two bitches: Sh Ch Berkenbar Duette and Sh Ch Calvate Queens Evidence; both were of lovely breed type and worthy show champions and neither had any major faults. They had beautiful heads with that melting expression, were of correct size with no exaggerations.

Those whom I did not have the pleasure to judge who stuck in my mind are Sh Ch Woodgill Shadofax of Bowwood, Sh Ch Cleavehill Ginger Fudge and Sh Ch Thimere Time To Remember from Mompesson.

The first two bitches were always favourites of mine of exactly the type I like, always looking immaculate, of correct size and just oozed quality. The third was of a different type but could not be ignored. In her prime she was quite outstanding and her show record speaks for itself with at least 21 CCs and group wins at ch shows.

2. Sh Ch Cleavehill Corn Dolly, a black and white bitch sired by Andrew of Eiton ex Cleavehill Bumble Bee. Born in 1967, she was one of the early Cleavehill show champions and won 16 CCs which I believe is still the record number of CCs won by a B/W bitch (I stand corrected if I am wrong).

From photographs she really appeared to me as an overall quality bitch and now, nearly 40 years later, I am sure she could still win. It was interesting to see her granda sire was the import Am Ch Doctor Primrose of Wakefield who still features in many of the pedigrees of our dogs today; however I see no sign of the American type in Dolly or other Cleavehills.

3. Not having any really close association with the Welsh Springer I feel the character would be best described by the owners. However, I do think that the English appear to be more laid-back in their outlook on life and seem to take things more in their stride.

My first impressions of a Welsh is that it is a smaller dog although there is actually not so much difference (or shouldn't be) in height. They are a finer breed all through, but still have the substance, are quite different in topline with the rise over the loin, also the head and vine-shaped ears are completely different from the English.

4. I personally would not like to see a docking ban in our breed and feel this would have a great impact, in particular from the working point of view – tails are damaged so easily when dogs are out in the



Sh Ch Northoak Sea Mist at Meistonia in 1994

field.

From a show point of view I would not like to see a docking ban in force but if it happens I would judge them as I do abroad – by looking mainly at only the part of the tail that would be there were it docked. I think that in most cases the tail will rise up at the end but as long as it does not curl over the back it would be acceptable.

If a dog has the correct tail carriage when it is docked then it should be fine if left undocked, so hopefully it would not be too much of a problem. I would not like the ban to come into force but if it did it would not stop me from carrying on with breeding.

5. As secretary of the Midland ESS Club for the past 13 years, I have been involved with the Show Spaniels Field Day and looking at the statistics can't see how the Welsh can be looked on as a more dual-purpose breed.

Of course we have the field trial English who will never be dual purpose, but of the show ones, in the 38 years since the Field Day started 104 English Springers have gained the show Gundog working certificate as opposed to 59 Welsh so I believe the English can still be dual-purpose.

6. My involvement in English Springers started in 1974, and we made up our first show ch champion in 1979. Over the years I think we have had a steady flow of quality dogs and as in all breeds you get the ones who will never make it. At times you worry as there seem to be no really outstanding youngsters but things seem to turn around and they get better again.

Overall the quality has improved over the years; at present eye colour and expression are two of the main worries but with careful breeding this will hopefully be corrected in the not too distant future.

Frank Whyte (Kazval WSS)

1. Sh Ch Fendel Cwella, a truly beautiful bitch who is full of breed type, strong but feminine and no matter from which angle you look at her she projects a balanced quality picture.

2. A bitch I would like to have seen in the flesh for her overall shape, balance, substance, and breed type was Sh Ch Dalati Rham, an eye-catching example of the breed.

3. Apart from Welsh Springers not being as tall as their English cousins, major differences include head shape: the Welsh has not the same depth of forehead and such a pronounced stop while the English has that

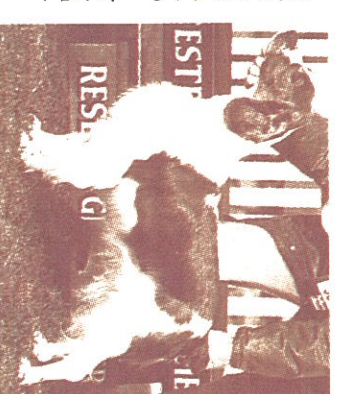


Sh Ch Golden Tint of Tregwillym

4. A docking ban will change the overall balance and outline of some breeds as we know them and we may see a possible increase in tail injuries to adult dogs.

To breed acceptable tail carriage will need the same consideration that you give to other parts of the canine anatomy when planning a litter. If this one point is the main consideration for correction then the tailset of the individuals in that particular line will need to be given serious consideration.

5. As Welsh Springers seem to be classed



Sh Ch Dalati Sarhan in 1988 photo Dalton

as the more successful dual-purpose breed as regards showing and working, this may partially be because many owners and breeders are involved in both aspects and therefore need to keep both purposes in mind when planning their breeding.

To assume that an active, lively, extra-vert dog will 'work all day' may be to the detriment of the overall construction required. A balanced, well constructed dog should cover the ground with ease and least effort, thus allowing it to work all day. Being busy and active does not necessarily mean that they will work efficiently.

6. Welsh Springers have improved over the time I have been involved and as we have seen over recent years they are consistently a major contender in the Gundog group. Right at this present time they are not at the strongest I have seen them and this may partially be due to the available 'gene pool'. There are very few larger kennels available for people to go back to for advice and to use their stock to line breed.

Maybe more small groups of people with common interests in the breed need to work together to help develop and improve the breed during the time that we are caretakers and hopefully contribute to leaving the breed in a better condition than we found it.