

Scottish Kennel Club (May)
JUDGE: Mr Gareth Lawler

DCC & BOB CALVDALE NIGHT COURT
RDCC BARECHO GOLD FEVER AT PEASBLOSSOM
BCC PEASBLOSSOM MOONSTRUCK
RBCC TRIMERE TERESA GREEN
BP MELVERLY BUONA NOTTE

Firstly my grateful thanks to the SKC for the invitation to judge at their prestigious show, one of our representative shows, and my first time at CC level in ESS north of Hadrian's Wall. The hospitality extended to me both during the day, and the previous evening, was superb.

Secondly, thanks to the exhibitors for their entries, numerically a very respectable one in this day and age, and with continually rising costs in both entries, and travel, the effort, expense and time put in was very greatly appreciated.

Thirdly my sincere apologies for the delay in this critique....I have heard several presumed reasons for the delay...none of which are correct, however. I do take appointments at any level very seriously, and whilst it would have been so easy to do a 'nice head, well bodied, good coat and condition, moved well' critique, this would have paid very little respect to the aforementioned efforts and expense by the exhibitors. A critique is time for the judge to explain fully their reasons for placing, sometimes as much can be gained from what is not written, as from what is written....so for those who like to read between the lines, I will try to make decisions as clear as possible. In addition to the individual critiques, which I feel need to distinguish clearly between placings, whilst never being unnecessarily negative, the breed overview - as seen by the judge on the day, is I feel more appropriate a place to express one's views and possible concerns!

For quite some years now I have NOT started my critiques in class order, as when one gets as far as Limit and Open bitch, complements and platitudes are becoming more difficult without being too repetitive. My cc and res cc winners get reported on first, followed by class winners etc. i tend to add to my intro as i progress through the individuals. I have sat on this critique for so long, as having put my thoughts on paper, i decided it needed a little tempering down!! This has been a gradual process- and. i hope any comments made will be taken in the constructive way in which they are intended. Several critiques have pointed out whilst there were several types in evidence, classes were nonetheless full of quality. After reading several like this I decided perhaps it was just me being picky, so was going to skip the 'potentially harmful' intro! But no....that's not my way....so here goes...

We used to read so many critiques beginning with a judge's concerns for the breed...." I was concerned at the number of light eyes" or " we need to pay attention to shoulder placement, and close hind movement also gave cause for concern". How times change! How i would love to be in a position to worry about eye colour, shoulder placement and close hind action, at least when those faults were taken into account, and hopefully improved, we would be 'on track'. Type across the breed is now so varied, the differences we used to see now pale into insignificance, as whilst

there was variation in kennel type, they were all undoubtedly English Springer Spaniels!

I fear we are fast moving towards the 'bridge of no return' and unless people act now, the breed that we have come to know and love is at risk of being lost and replaced by something quite generic. We hear various reasons for this demise in breed type, imports always being at or near the top of the list. Overseas breeders also see this demise, and to point a finger purely at the foreign influence is not only farcical, it is also untrue. Granted some of the exaggeration appeals in the overseas rings, but not all have it!

The movement away from correct proportions is also a great worry. Whilst I am no fan of the buzz phrase 'long and low', as in the majority of cases I find it inaccurate as there is no direct link between increased length of loin and decreased leg length, I do feel we must watch both these points, but taken as individual issues. Toplines are also becoming more of a problem. I for one tend not to be too hard on a dog who has a slightly sloping but straight topline when on the stack. Look at the dog on the move, many are perfectly level. However, it is the dips appearing behind the withers, and this bizarre rise toward the rear of the dog...again usually found in dogs with excessive length. The breed standard phrase "loin strong with a slight arch" is just that...the SLIGHT arch formed by musculature, NOT curvature of the spine! Lack of balance in fore and hind angulation is to my mind, far too common a fault, if the static balance is lacking, the movement can never be right!

So what is the main cause of the move away from correct breed type (NOT kennel type) ? It most certainly cannot simply be attributed to imports -some overseas dogs are far superior in some areas. I honestly feel it is down, in many cases, not so much to lack of understanding of breed type, but the inability to admit lack of understanding! We all started from nowhere, we all started with no or very limited knowledge, but the old way was actually to take note of our elders! These days with the kc approved "do it with numbers" judging route, speed of progression is of the essence. Newcomers are very eager to learn, or at least very eager to progress. However, the ability to be able to quote verbatim from the breed standard whilst demonstrating the ability to retain information, it does not necessarily infer understanding of the breed. Very soon, with some success, yesterday's newcomers become the new 'experienced' breeders, and as a result the knowledge passed on is based on peoples ability to attract the eye of modern day judges, not necessarily their knowledge and more importantly, understanding of the breed-and so the downward spiral continues.

Having been involved in this breed for over 30 years, i think i have become quite saddened not only by the demise in consistency of breed type, but moreso by the acceptance of this demise. Many years ago, in her introduction and overview, one of our top breeders wrote "one cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear!". There was almost a "revolution amongst the peasants" in horror at the wording, but, the time has come to say it again....forcible it may sound, negative in many ways, but unless we act soon, it really will be too late, it will be "bye bye ESS, hello generic spaniel"! Sorry to sound so harsh, but this is how I feel.

Minor Puppy - Dog Entries: 1 Absentees: 0

1st MELVERLY BUONA NOTTE (MR R J SMITH) What a way to start the day! Top quality puppy dog with the balance and style one has come to expect from this kennel. Pleasing masculine head, no doubting his sex, with a kind eye. He has good length of neck flowing into well placed shoulders, with correct length and return of upper arm. Very well boned, good depth, he is well ribbed back, compact in loin, with great hindquarters, good width of thigh and low set hocks. For a dog of just 6 months and a minute, his composure on the move was excellent, and he was sound on the away and back. Needs to even up slightly in topline, but this is purely a growth issue, however the reach, extension and drive he exhibited on the move, took my eye and ensured him BPIB and in the final cut Of 3 for the CC!! What a debut! Will follow his career with great interest

Junior - Dog Entries: 3 Absentees: 1

1st CALVDALE NIGHT COURT (MR & MRS M CALVERT) Impressive young male.....he came. He saw. He conquered. Lovely masculine head with correct chiselling, and a super eye and expression. His construction throughout is balanced. A moderate dog in many ways, he has good length of neck into well laid shoulders, and a good length of upper arm. He is very well boned, showing the substance to go with his sex, but no hint of coarseness. He stands foresquare on the most super feet. He has lovely depth throughout, is very well ribbed-well back, and compact through the loin. He is very well let down behind, well rounded quarters with good width of second thigh 'meatier' than most, right down to low set hocks. On the move he is sound, collected and accurate, and whilst he may not appear as flamboyant as some, he covers the ground with free easy strides . Many years ago, his owner wrote an Ode to Cleavehill Johnnie Walker, which contained the following line " A quietly spoken upright gent, dressed in silken black...".....this undoubtedly sums up this young man, his correctness and balance all through being covered with a beautifully presented gleaming black jacket. My penchant for good black and whites is undoubtedly well known, however, until today, when judging, none have rocked my boat as much as this youngster.....and it was my pleasure to award him his first cc and ultimately BOB.

2nd JOROBADEN BALLABRIGAS (MRS A C HAPPS) LW male of pleasing overall type. He is masculine in head, and his eye and expression were pleasing. He is quite balanced in outline, moderately angled throughout, with fair depth. He is well boned and compact. Needs to be a little more collected on the move, but he went with adequacy both on the away and back and in profile. Well conditioned and presented

Post Graduate - Dog Entries: 9 Absentees: 3

1st BERKENBAR GENEPI (MRS B GANARIN) Young man of very pleasing type, has a look of quality. Masculine headpiece, with a proportionate length of skull to foreface. He presents a picture of balance . He is moderately angled fore and aft, and very well boned, a strongly made dog all through, yet retains a degree of refinement in appearance. Compact in loin, very well let down behind, he uses his hocks well as he drives around the ring, covering some ground, and quite sound as he goes. To be critical, a little more fill in front would enhance, and would like to see

his 'whites' sparkle a little more, but one with potential who could do some very useful winning.

2nd TRYHARD PRIVATEER AT DEBANZA (MR A & MRS A GEDDES) A pleasing dog, yet not eye-catching. He again has a masculine headpiece, with that 'noble' outlook, that comes from a little more length throughout the head. His eye and expression is kind and appealing. He is moderately angled throughout, and again very well boned. Well bodied and good depth, he is nicely proportioned. Very well let down, and used his hocks well to really cover the ground. A little proud of his tail at times, but otherwise has super deportment as he goes round the ring. Some may describe him as 'old fashioned' – a very useful dog

3rd ALANEA JUKE FOR CHERISHYM (MR P & MRS Y RICHARDSON & TERRY-RICHARDSON)

Res GAOLACHCARA SOMHLTH SH CM (MR & MRS STEVENSON)

VHC BAXBALACH RUMOUR HAS IT (MRS F MCGOVERN)

Limit - Dog Entries: 6 Absentees: 0

1st BARECHO GOLD FEVER AT PEASBLOSSOM (IMP SWE) (MR & MRS D MITCHELL) A dog of very pleasing proportions. Well chiselled head with a super dark eye and melting expression, to coin a phrase of the late Ellen Dobson, eyes like brown velvet. He has a good length of neck and is absolutely balanced in his fore and hind angulation. When I stood back to look he just gives the impression of being 'all of a piece'. He is not overcoated and as a result, everything is there for the eye to see. A very compact dog, with good ribbing and depth, and is well coupled. Nicely rounded hindquarters and low set hocks. He stands on well boned legs, with good feet. When he moved, he did so with great extension, reach and drive, and cannot fail to catch the eye as he powers round the ring. Without being too critical a more masculine headpiece would enhance his appeal even more, and this was undoubtedly a deciding factor in the dog challenge, but I felt he ticked so many boxes for his breed type, size and construction, on today's performance he could not be denied the Res CC. A quality medium sized well made dog who could do the breed a power of good!

2nd MEADOWDALE RIOT IS MADAZA (MISS S D LARGE) a quality dog, of different style to my winner. I have often admired him from the ringside – and was not disappointed on handling. He pleases in his headpiece, masculine, yet not coarse, nicely balanced skull to forehead. Moderately angled fore and aft, he presented a very pleasing outline, with good height to length proportions. Good ribbing and depth, compact, he was very well let down behind, and has good bone and nice thickly padded well shaped feet. He moves accurately and with style, reach extension and drive all good. He was in super hard condition and was beautifully presented as usual. I am sure his 3rd cannot be far away – he should wear his crown!!!

3rd EASTRIDING ARMANI BLACK (MRS K JENKINSON)

Res PLAIGLEN DREAM DANCER (MR KL & MRS M E MORGAN)

VHC GAOLACHCARA OGHMA SH CM (MR & MRS STEVENSON)

Open - Dog Entries: 5 Absentees: 0

1st SH CH MEADOWDALE CHAOS JW SHCM (MR S & MRS J EYEINGTON) A dog who will always catch the eye. As he has matured, he has refined somewhat in

headpiece and now has a beautifully moulded, masculine head, and good expression. Super length and return of upper arm, well ribbed back, good depth, good covering on him, and as usually presented in immaculate condition. Nicely proportioned throughout, great bone and feet. In the class he performed with his usual style, yet in the challenge wasn't covering the ground as well as my final 3 2nd SH CH JOROBADEN ALDERNITI OF EMIANNA JW (MRS A C HAPPS) a dog who continues to improve. Pleasing in so many ways- of good breed type. His head is masculine, and now with age the darker eye gives the kind look that had been lacking in him before. He is well made throughout, nicely proportioned, with good body and depth, compact in loin, and completely balanced in his moderate angulation for and aft. He moves soundly, covering the ground well. A close decision here today, just lacked a little of the "sparkle" of the younger male in the class.

3rd SH CH LOCHINDORB CHIEF O'THE CLAN SH CM (MR R S & MRS M I NICOLSON)

Res SU/NU CH HIGH SCORE XCITING XPERIENCE WITH CELGARN (MR G & MRS C NOTLEY)

VHC PETRANELLA PERFICKLY FRANK WITH DEXBENELLA JW SHCM (MRS J & MISS D LAUHLAN)

Minor Puppy - Bitch Entries: 5 Absentees: 0

1st BARECHO ODD MOLLY AT PEASBLOSSOM (IMP SWE) (MR & MRS D MITCHELL) very much a 'blast from the past' for me, with this sweet puppy, a definite 'northern type'. Super type, very feminine in head, lovely eye and expression. She appeals so much for balance, style and proportion, is very well made throughout, with those neat hocks that really allowed her to cover the ground. Very outgoing, with that hint of 'naughty', she was in super well muscled condition and her dark brown velvet jacket just completed the picture. BPB

2nd EASTRIDING NAUGHTY ALICE (MRS K JENKINSON) another very sweet bitch, less ready at the moment, nonetheless full of quality. She again has a pretty head, and many of the same points apply as regards balance, style and conformation. She does need to drop into her hindquarter a little, although her hocks are low set. She moves with some reach and drive for one so young, I look forward to seeing her develop.

3rd CALVDALE DULY NOTED (MR & MRS M CALVERT)

Res ARRAMOW ATHENA (MR KL & MRS M E MORGAN)

VHC MELVERLY MISDEMEANOUR FOR POTRAIL (MRS H & MR S MACLEAY)

Puppy - Bitch Entries: 1 Absentees: 0

1st ARRAMOW ATHENA (MR KL & MRS M E MORGAN) 4th in previous class behind 3 super prospects, and she too has much to commend her. Sweet feminine head, good depth for age, nicely angulated hindquarter. Unfortunately, today looked like she was in her flannelettes, and she needs to settle and gain a little confidence in movement.

Junior - Bitch Entries: 7 Absentees: 0

1st PEASBLOSSOM MOONSTRUCK (MR & MRS D MITCHELL) What a sweet bitch!!! So very 'me' in all aspects. Very feminine, well moulded head, and such a soft melting expression, She has good length of neck, running smoothly into well placed shoulders, with corresponding length and return in upper arm. Well boned, good feet. She has lovely depth, and is well ribbed back. Compact through the loin, she has a well rounded hindquarter, again meaty and full down to low set hocks. Standing back and taking all in, to me she just screams type and quality, although whilst the frame is there, she undoubtedly has a little more filling to do. As always from this kennel, she was presented in super condition! On the move she excels in profile...great reach in front, drives well from powerful hocks. A real showgirl, she is beautiful-and knows it, her exuberance causing her to lose a little accuracy at times on the away and back. When looking for my higher awards, whilst it may not be everyone's way, i want something that asks for it..in some way or another.....she did, and her type, quality, feminine outlook and profile movement, coupled with her super well muscled condition, made her a 'no brainer' for me....i was delighted to award her first CC.

2nd TRIMERE TERESA GREEN (MRS A CORBETT) A different style of bitch, but nonetheless of great type and quality. A little stronger in head than i keep myself, but well moulded and balanced, with a kind eye. She has correct length of neck and her shoulders are well laid. Good length and return of upper arm. She has super, well boned legs and feet, good ribbing and sufficient depth. A very well proportioned young lady being very compact, with length of leg yet she retains the substance. Compact in loin, well let down behind, correct turn of stifle. She does need to develop and fill a little in hindquarter, but for her age, was acceptable. when i stood and looked at her from the other side of the ring, some of the many virtues almost evaporate, as she doesnt give the same impression as on handling. However, on the move, her super construction is very apparent, very sound bitch on the away and back, and profile is correct, with good reach and drive, yet retains a degree of efficiency as she goes. Although different in style to my cc winner, and she too needs to develop more, her construction and movement appealed to me, and i was pleased to award her the res cc

3rd KINGSHEATH KAITLYN OF MEADOWDALE (MR S & MRS J EYEINGTON)
Res KENNAIR LIKE A DIAMOND (MR K T & MRS C M GREEN)
VHC DONARDEN MADAME BUTTERFLY (MISS N CAMERON)

Post Graduate - Bitch Entries: 16 Absentees: 1 An excellent class, splitting hairs in some cases

1st CHERISHYM CHARA (MR P & MRS Y RICHARDSON & TERRY-RICHARDSON) a really pretty bitch – in fairness I hadn't really noticed her before, yet I had noticed her sister! She is only just out of junior, and the best is yet to come, but she is so feminine in head and outlook, good length of neck flowing into well laid shoulders, very nicely proportioned throughout, good depth and ribbing, well angulated in hindquarter and low in hock. Coming and going she is very sound, today I felt she could possibly do with a little more "throw" in front to complete the picture. I liked her very much!

2nd MELVERLY ISLAY INSPIRED AT LOSSIEDOON (MRS D SCOTT) another quality bitch maturing very well. Super head and expression, and very well angulated fore and aft. She has well boned legs and neat feet. Presented in excellent coat and

condition. When she settled, she moved very well – and I feel this is her going to be her “look at me” moment – on the go round.

3rd MELVERLY BANG TIDY (MR R J SMITH)

Res MOMPESSON ROYAL FLUSH (MR R & MRS J REYNOLDS)

VHC ROSANNOCH FORTUNA JW (MRS E ROSE)

Limit - Bitch Entries: 4 Absentees: 0 Not the best Limit class I have ever judged, I must confess! To be perfectly honest, much as the eventual winner had previously appealed for her outline and potential from the ringside, a Limit class win I thought would be a little time away. However one must do as one sees, and this was very much a case of a fine balancing act – a definite compromise situation

1st CHERISHYM CELANEO (MR P & MRS Y RICHARDSON & TERRY-RICHARDSON)) Very sweet headed youngster. – no she's not ready, that's a given, but what is there is what set her aside in this class. She is so feminine in her outlook, balanced in her construction, and has a great look of quality. She will take time in reaching her full potential, and possibly a little more schooling for dog and handler to realise this fully. A tad close going away from me, but she does cover the ground very well

2nd GAOLACHCARA CLIODNA JW SHCM (MR & MRS STEVENSON) Good type of Springer, well made with good bone, correct ribbing and depth. Good eye colour, she covered the ground well

3rd DONARDEN SWEET SENSATION AT SPUFFING JW (MRS J WEYMAN)

Res CALVDALE SWAG AT ELBREC (MRS J GOODMAN)

Open - Bitch Entries: 3 Absentees: 0

1st SU(U)CH ART-WAVES AWESOME (MR & MRS D MITCHELL) What a headache she gave me – or heartache, I couldn't quite decide which! Such a glorious feminine outlook, with a kind yet pert expression, so feminine all through yet she has substance. She appeals greatly for size, super neck flowing well into well laid shoulders, correct in upper arm, great for ribbing, depth, I found her proportions to be very acceptable, she has super bone and neat feet, she goes with such enthusiasm covering the ground well, and was in absolutely super coat and condition. Her type, and sheer quality ensured her a very comfortable win in this class, and in the final cut for the CC. I looked at her so hard in the challenge as in many ways she had it all....when it came down to it she was, for me, a little too exaggerated in her hindquarter – and the more moderate outlook of the 2 younger bitches just appealed to me more. Nonetheless, a bitch with MUCH to commend her

2nd BERKENBAR ARRIANA AT ARDTALLA (DR B SCORGIE) Much more strongly built throughout, that said she is well made and balanced throughout with great substance. She is a little strong in head for my taste, yet has a kind eye. She moved ok

3rd CHERISHYM BRIGHT STAR JW (MR P & MRS Y RICHARDSON & TERRY-RICHARDSON)

Veteran - Bitch Entries: 1 Absentees: 0

1st SH CH ELIMVEK EARLY LANDING AT LOSSIEDOON (MR R S & MRS M I & MRS D M NICOLSON & SCOTT) This 10 year old girl wears her years so lightly,

and her owner is to be commended for her superb condition. She still pleases in head and eye, is very well balanced, retains her figure well – she is in hard well muscled condition. Her forte now- as it always was, is her movement however, she could go all day and does so with such precision, she covers the ground so well, yet retains a degree of efficiency. Travelling the length and breadth of the country with one of the UKs most widely travelled exhibitors, I hope we will see 'Rowan' doing her bit in the showring for some time to come! What a credit!