

The International Weekend 4-5 July 2015

Judges: Gaynor Richardson & John Young

Referee: Ferelith Somerfield.

Championship Show: Vanessa Hearne.



Now the dust has settled over the International Weekend and the big clean-up behind us, based on the generous feedback received from so many exhibitors and spectators alike, I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard and contributed so much to make the weekend such a resounding success. It's always hard to take an idea from scratch and try to make 'something' of it. I have to acknowledge the unstinting support of our numerically small committee for daring to be different and staying the course, and thank them for having the courage to change our well-supported championship show date from its safe year-end slot, to share the weekend with a completely new summer event. As this carried risk (with merchants of doom warning us of dire consequences of shifting the last champ show of the year) the decision process was certainly not for the feint-hearted.

Although peeping through open-fingers leading up to the event, I was really gratified as so many people were so unstinting in their praise and appreciation of the time and effort that went in to staging it. I have to express sincere gratitude to the weekend's *real* heroes: the eight teams, for their support in pulling groups of six dogs (+ Reserves) together and travelling with people and dogs to the UK, many staying for the full weekend – I believe the "Friends By Natural Greatness" from Spain clocked-up over 2200 kilometres to be there! The four German teams reflected their astounding commitment and their country's depth of quality by presenting four separate teams. With a very strong line-up of lovely quality dogs arriving all the way from Poland.

Every teams' enthusiasm was so heart-warming and their sportsmanship and good humour throughout the weekend a credit to them all, providing a timely reminder of why we're actually involved in this periodically wonderful fancy ours.

We staged a behind the scenes rehearsal to practice how teams were to parade into and around the ring that morning. Kathryn Ford (part of Team-Ford, including parents Peter and Brenda, who were first to arrive and almost last to leave), did a brilliant job in choreographing everyone, coaching them through some hilarious moments as we progressed from mild chaos to sporadic order over the space of an hour, in which everyone laughed out loud at each other's blunders and themselves until, miraculously, it started to take shape, resulting in a well ordered gladiatorial entry two hours later to the music selected by each team.

We could not possibly have staged such a large event without the massive support of friends, supporters and family – I can't possibly list them all, but Feffie Somerfield did a great job from the start by assisting our Patron, Andrea Wylie, in welcoming

VIPs on arrival, before stepping in as our replacement referee to decide the nail-biting final places across any one of three teams in the last class, determining top-

spot and runner-up in the International Competition. Donald Goudie cut a fine figure in his kilt, oozing Scottishness the whole day long: many thanks to him and Edwina for keeping everything flowing nicely. Heulwen Bloom grafted like a Trojan over both days: marshalling on the Saturday with Steve Walker and stewarding all the next with Adele Jennings as they organised a fabulous record entry of 115 dogs (incs 8 nfc) for Vanessa Hearne to get to grips with. We are also grateful for the support of Dinu Catalina for undertaking PKD & Patella testing on a completely free of charge basis to all members. The "*Friends by Natural Greatness*" from Spain generously donated a fabulous Ham, who were thanked by Anna Blair for helping to raise £245 for Bull Terrier Welfare. I want to thank so many others, but it would resemble an old-fashioned telephone directory! Their help was genuinely appreciated and I thank them so much for their contribution.

Gaynor Richardson and John Young were also a joy to work with. Although very unfairly presented with a brief run-through in the morning of how the competition process worked, they never complained and simply rolled up their experienced sleeves and got stuck in. All dogs were placed in order from 1st to 9th confidentially, no conferring, following which the scrutineers (thanks again to Kathryn & Anna) applied the simple points system to establish overall Winner and Runner-up from the accumulative scores. Most appreciated that placings were not declared at the end of each class to avoid any out-and-out leader(s) being identifiable early and spoiling the ultimate surprise. In the event we did announce that three teams were in contention with three classes left classes to judge, which changed and changed again until the final class, which required Feffie Somerfield to decide the day by placing them first to fourth places on which the final winners depended!

All team members received a distinctive glass coaster engraved with the International Event logo. Congratulations to the UK Team (9) for winning the beautiful 80oz Georgian solid silver 'Transcend Champagne Cup' presented by club Patron, Andrea Wylie, and Team Germany the Runner-up.

I'm delighted to advise that the International Event was videoed throughout, with DVDs due to be available anytime – it will no doubt be posted on the website.

The evening started immediately before the buffet, with special thanks to Steve Ribbons of Dogs In Print for another first: presenting a 45 minute PowerPoint talk on Bull Terrier and Miniature art and antiques, which was very interesting, informative and conveyed with a light touch and a dash of humour.

Despite a number of problems arising from the hotel losing their gas supply over the weekend (for which they offered appropriate refunds to help put things right), the buffet and awards ceremony was fun, with presentations to the individual winners of each class: **Under two dog**: Kid Vom Kaiserstuhl; **Over two dog**: Famous Star Kit Kat, **Champion dog**: Ch Canabull North Wind; **Under two Bitch**, Tuskenada Anais Anais with Transcend, **Over two Bitch**: Ch Graymor Glacial Dawn, **Champion Bitch**: Ch Shacals Diamond in the Sky. With a bottle of champagne presented to the '**Team Providing the Most Fun**' awarded to the 'Of Slanting Shore' Team, for

singing their way into the ring dressed as miners, wearing hard-hats and carrying a small Davy Lamp (while still managing to maintain high quality synchronisation!). Jill Richardson took the award for the **Funniest dog**, for his exuberant gymnastics as he extravagantly returned to his place. There was a brief auction, with items donated by Gaynor Richardson alone raising more than £500; while Johnny “*Fluff*” Catlow was brilliant as resident our DJ (I know this because, like all good ‘jocks’, I couldn’t understand a word he said): he clearly has hidden depths... and a baseball cap. Photos will hopefully go on-line soon showing our beloved secretary boogieing-on-down, a la Suzie Quattro, strumming an inflatable guitar!

We would also appreciate any and all good photos of the day, inside and out, to capture.

Thanks to the level of support received for both events: the championship show continues to grow from a strong entry of 58 dogs entered four years ago under Jacqui Thornley; a record 87 for Pat Dandridge the following year and 93 for Ronnie Scott last year. With such strong support from overseas teams, (36 dogs) I look forward to this year’s record 115 continuing to be yet another stepping stone in getting so many top-flight Minis together under one roof.

Next year’s International Weekend is clearly now assured, at a venue to be decided, with the planning process due to get underway soon. I know that we’re delighted Simon Parsons has already accepted an invitation to be one of our judges, with the committee due to issue an invitation to the second judge shortly. Nothing has been decided at this stage, but I would not be surprised if the committee were to consider the possibility of inviting an overseas judge (not resident in any of the countries taking part) to join Simon on the day.

The committee has already received a number of great new ideas and recommendations, and would welcome more on how to strengthen and/or improve the event even further next year. Please keep them coming, as they will all be considered on their merits.

Apologies for the length of the overview, but a lot happened!

The International Weekend

“Something *BIG* in a *MINI* World”... Watch this space!

Dominic Clark
(MBTC Chairman)

