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GUNDOG UPDATE



TRIALS TALK

THE SHOW GUNDOG Working Certificate is not a qualification in itself, writes *Graham Cox*. It exists to enable dogs which have gained the title of show champion to remove the 'show' from their title, so that they become a champion pure and simple.

Work in the field which lets this process of simplification happen is not assessed as stringently as would happen at a field trial, but there must nonetheless be a minimum of two judges officiating, of which at least one must be an 'A' panel judge. With the emphasis on assessing the natural capabilities of the dogs, a show gundog working day must present the opportunity, in the case of retrievers, for them to face cover and to hunt for and retrieve dead or wounded game tenderly to hand. So, whilst absolute steadiness is not essential, there is no compromise on matters of mouth, and dogs must also freely enter and retrieve from water.

What the day organised by the Golden Retriever Club on December 15, 2007 at the Tortworth Estate in Gloucestershire, demonstrated most clearly though is how natural capabilities require minimal levels of training before they can effectively show themselves. So, the better prepared dogs impressed in all elements under examination.

Most notable was Paul Egginton's flatcoated retriever dog Tacumshin Lord of the Dance to Pajanbeck, who picked cleanly and quickly and was bold at the water. Also, clearly better than the other eight entrants were two curly coated retrievers: Tony Robinson's dog Caballus Waterman, who was Best of Breed at Crufts in 2007, was a little diffident at the water but Lyn Hunter's liver bitch Springcurl Agneta showed just the qualities that made the breed more prominent in the earlier days of shooting. Pick of the goldens was Louise Hartgill's Ebbledown Riversleigh, already with two challenge certificates and two reserve cc's to his name.

The six successes were thoroughly deserved, but balanced on the debit side by two instances of hard mouth, a case of serious unsteadiness and two dogs who were simply not ready for the serious assessment that Bob Hargrave and I insisted on. ○

Thrilling contest at 29th world pointer championships

THE 29TH WORLD

Championship for British and Continental Pointers and the World Hunting Championship (the 'St. Hubert') 2007 were held in autumn around Gembloux, south of Brussels, Belgium, writes *Otto Koppitsch*, chairman of the Austrian Pointer and Setter Club.

Every year a different country is tasked with organising this big international event and providing a venue with good hunting grounds and the presence of wild game. With 150 dogs being judged in the field, a good game situation is necessary for each dog to have an equal and fair chance. The trials are held over two days, with a variety of hunting grounds in the local area being used.

This year, 20 countries were represented, the English pointers were to be judged by Francesco Balducci from Italy and Jose Luis Recondo Juangorena from Spain, and the continental pointers judged by Peter Bahlke from Holland and Alain Cornet from Belgium. In accordance with the rules of international field trials, style, system, pace, stamina and pointing were judged. All dogs ran in pairs for 15-20 minute tests, accompanied by two or three guns to shoot game over them. When ordered, the dogs were expected to retrieve the fallen game. A qualification

was only given to the dogs who retrieved game after pointing it. All the dogs who had successfully qualified had to then make a retrieve from water, the highlight of the event. All handlers and visitors - about 200 people - met at the pond for an enthusiastic showdown. A dog that did not retrieve from the water was not out, but did lose points.

Between the first and second days of the Pointing Championships the World Hunting Championship is traditionally held. Known as the St. Hubert, this is similar to a walked-up shooting competition, accompanied by a pointing dog, either British or continental, and is organized separately for ladies and gentlemen. The ladies competition for 2007 was judged by Otto Koppitsch from



The British Pointer 2007 winner, Lorenzo Uma Gondra with Moko di Rivera.



The judges and winners of the St. Hubert ladies competition were, from left: Vlastil Novotny, Otto Koppitsch, third placed Irola Modes of Spain, winner Nina Baastad, second placed Simone Meili of Switzerland, Andreas Rogger and Ernesto Del Campo.



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Nina Wollmann of Germany on her way to being placed fourth in the St. Hubert ladies competition.

Austria and Vlastil Novotny of the Czech Republic, with Riccardo Acerbi from Italy, Inaki Espina Artolazabal of Spain and Jacques Goubie from France judging the gentlemen.

Each hunter was instructed by the judges where to hunt and what to shoot, and during 20 minutes was allowed to shoot two pieces of game using a maximum of four cartridges. Shooting game over the dog is only allowed when pointed by

that dog. Awards are decided on the safety, hunting ability and sporting spirit of the hunter combined with the natural talent and obedience of their dog.

The best hunting and shooting performance on the day was presented to Nina Baastad from Norway with her German shorthaired pointer Rampen's Salza. Revealing perfect gun handling and shooting - she hit two partridges with the first shot - she also showed outstanding

co-operation with her dog. Their combined skill was more than impressive.

After a successful and thrilling competition this year, everyone involved is now expectantly looking forward to Croatia in 2008. ○

RESULTS

British pointer

1 Lorenzo Uma Gondra (Spain) with English setter Moko di Rivera

Continental pointer

=1 Pether Rosberg (Sweden) with GWP Nilson's Dina
=1 F. Carbiijn (Netherlands) with GLP Winston v.d. Krepense Heide

St. Hubert

Ladies

1 Nina Baastad (Norway) with GSP Rampen's Salza
Gentlemen
1 Jorge M. Picarra Silva (Portugal) with GSP Uester Mont Cervenoles

OBITUARY PETER COMBES 1948-2007

THE GUNDOG FRATERNITY was deeply saddened to learn of the untimely death of Peter Combes at the age of 59. Peter was particularly well-known for the establishment of the Badgercourt kennel of English springer spaniels. Until his retirement in 2000 he was the managing director of a hop processing company, and it was not until this time that he was able to devote all of his energies to his hobby.

He first became interested in shooting as a teenager and realised that a good dog was essential for the full enjoyment of the sport. His first pup was bought from Noel Jones, which he trained to win minor awards in trials as well as be a regular shooting companion.

His next purchase was a pup from Keith Erlandson which was named Badgercourt Susan.



She won her very first trial held by the Mid Sussex Club, became his first champion and then bred three further FTChs, the best known probably being FTCh Badgercourt Druid who in turn sired a further 13 field trial champions. Peter was a self-taught trainer who learnt mainly from the books written

by Peter Moxon and Keith Erlandson, as well as from his own mistakes. Peter's first judging appointment was in the early 1980s and, after judging only eight trials, he was appointed as an 'A' panel judge. He judged the Irish Championship in 1991 and the English Spaniel Championship in 2002, both honours that he greatly cherished.

Peter leaves a widow, Pat, and three sons who retain an interest in working spaniels but have not yet had the time to devote to following that interest. ○

FIELD NOTES

IT'S THAT CRUFTS TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

The most important dog date for the 2008 diary has been announced and tickets are on sale now. Crufts, the world's greatest dog show, will be taking place from March 6-9 at the NEC, Birmingham.

Officially recognised as the world's largest dog show by the Guinness Book of Records, Crufts looks forward to expecting over 25,000 dogs, including around 1,000 dogs from overseas. The 2007 show saw over 153,000 visitors.

In addition to the world-class contest for Best in Show, several other important canine competitions are set to take place, including the International Obedience, Agility and Heelwork to Music competitions. There will also be many exciting displays from other dog organisations and charities. Visitors will be spoilt for choice with nearly 500 trade stands offering everything that you and your dog could possibly wish for, many with special Crufts discounts.

Dog lovers and prospective owners will also get the chance to get up close and personal with 190 breeds of potential pedigree partners in the Discover Dogs area, where they can get expert guidance from handlers who will help them to find their own perfect match.

For those who would like to visit Crufts, tickets for the four days are on sale now from the Crufts website, www.crufts.org.uk, or by phone from See Tickets on 0871 231 0826, or the NEC Box Office on 0870 902 8849.

NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM LABRADOR RETRIEVER CLUB NOVICE STAKE

The Northumberland & Durham LRC held a 12-dog novice stake at Bellister, nr. Haltwhistle, writes *Fred Smith*. The judges for the day were Gordon Hodgson, Glynn Coupar and Bob Jackson and the trial was generously sponsored by Skinners Dog Food.

RESULTS

1 Margaret Pearce with Claybeck Tweed of Esmoro 2(& Best Handler & Guns' Choice) Lee Hartis with Rimrock Redstart of Leacaz
3 Paul Branch with Billy Boy Lamprey of Braldnnich



From left: Bob Jackson, Gordon Hodgson, Margaret Pearce, Paul Branch, Lee Hartis & Glynn Coupar.

LABRADOR RETRIEVER CLUB

A novice field trial held at Longleat, Wiltshire for the Labrador Retriever Club, by kind invitation of Horningsham Sporting Club and Mr K. Beddel's party of guns, turned out to be about the best novice trial that the judges had seen, writes *Terry Bailey*. 15 dogs stayed steady whilst the excellent guns shot a good number of pheasants and partridges, and then handled extremely