

THE MALTA CANINE SOCIETY'S WINTER CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW
6th & 7th February 2016

The first time I judged here was in 2010 when The Pug Dog Club of Malta had the misfortune to lose the usual venue and, by unhappy coincidence for the organizers, it happened yet again this year! However, their small committee did a marvelous job in transforming the Maria Assumpta Girl's Secondary School at Hamrun into a spacious arena with a large, fully carpeted ring. Some impressive trophies were on offer along with some magnificent rosettes supplied by no less than our own Birdbrook.

There was a happy friendly atmosphere throughout both days of the show with most generous applause from the ringside for each and every class while sporting losers were congratulating winners with genuine enthusiasm.

The quality of dogs over both days was exceptionally high. Interestingly, although run under Kennel Club Rules, Malta has kept to six groups with the addition of junior groups for each, the pastoral breeds being included in the working group. Another major difference is that bitches are always judged before dogs in the breed classes.

I was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm, dedication and expertise in the well filled classes of young handlers, not only the elder entry of Juniors all competing for the privilege of going to Crufts but the children's class from just four to 10 years old. They all, without exception, obviously love their dogs and were trying their very best. May they long continue with the keenness of their interest.

A type of cabaret was provided by a family of Chihuahuas, who very obviously did not care for the indoor show scene, resulting in the majority lying down flat rather than moving in any direction whatsoever. One, towards the end of the show, simply lay on his side, put his head down between precisely crossed front legs and promptly went to sleep, while another expressed his contempt for the whole thing by grasping the lead tightly between his front paws while managing to walk smartly on his two hind legs the whole length of the ring and, to emphasize the point, repeated the performance back again. Quite remarkable!

One momentous event, whose memory I will long treasure, occurred during BIS when all the group winners had come into the ring in the order they had been judged – and what a thrill it was to have all of my own choice from which to choose the best!

I then altered the order to allow the slower paced dogs to go round on their own together before asking the larger faster movers to do the same and was just standing back for a final assessment. Suddenly and without warning, the Pug and his handler came rushing into the middle of the ring, which earned my response “Where on earth do you think you are going?” and the reply “I was just going back to my original place at the end behind the bigger dogs” He was speedily directed back to exactly from where he had emerged to a sudden burst of clapping and laughter from the audience with equal pleasure being expressed by both judge and exhibitor concerned. The laughter kept erupting for some time afterwards and, strange as this may sound, it somehow typified the good humour and happiness of the whole show!

Best in Show The most beautiful **Keeshond, Ch Neradmik Late Night Love**, champion bred and it shows! So well balanced and conformed with good layback of shoulder, firm compact body, in splendid mature double coat and hard condition with the tightest of well set and carried tails. Beautiful head with a bright alert expression in her dark sparkling eyes with well defined spectacles. Holding herself with the greatest of pride, she moved to match the excellence of her conformation.

RBIS & Best Junior in Show. American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, She is My Sin Sentinel. A breed, I have to admit to never having seen, let alone judged, before but there she was to illustrate my interpretation of the breed standard. A most charming fawn, such a happy friendly character with tail constantly awag, full of enthusiasm and obviously loving every moment. Strongly built, of excellent make and shape, in the best of coat and hard muscular condition. Super sound, strong and positive on the move with good reach in profile. Most impressive.

BPIS, and to who I unashamedly lost my heart, the five month old Smooth Fox Terrier, **Agria Black Magic**. Quite enchanting, beautifully made and balanced with good layback of shoulder, in excellent coat and condition. Seemingly a born showgirl with lovely head and dark sparkling eyes. So alert, holding herself with the greatest of pride and moving superbly. A star is surely born!

BPIS: Whippet, Dew Princess Diana. Lovely size, type, make and shape with good layback of shoulder, ideally can still deepen a touch through the heart and this should come naturally with maturity. Full of quality and so elegant with no exaggerations, she moved beautifully. Has everything to take her to the top.

Reserve Best Junior in Show, Portuguese Pointer, Porthugese Malta Kennels Max. So typey, balanced and well made all through, in the hardest of muscular condition with shaped head and eye. Charming character and a great showman with well angulated shoulders and hindquarters and good bone. Most impressive on the move.

Best Veteran In Show Boxer: Ch Yellowstone Glory Days. Most impressive, well balanced and so good for make, shape and type with good layback of shoulder, depth of chest, bone and body, neat feet, super sound, powerful and impressive on the move. His title is well deserved.

Best Locally Bred: Alaskan Malamute, Mlt Ivram Adele, lovely feminine head with small neat ears, well laid shoulder. Good mover with well set and carried tail, just not in the fullest of coat currently.

JUNIOR HANDLERS (10 – 17 yrs) (6e 0ab)

1. **Kimberley Sciberras Scott**, just 13 years yet such a very sophisticated mature handler. Encouraging her Whippet just enough with her voice and handling her quietly and calmly with no exaggerations. She performed just as well with a change of dog. Good luck for the Finals at Crufts!
2. **Riona Manicaro**. Only 11 years old but already so competent, efficient and caring with her Border Collie, talking to her quietly and encouraging her to give of her best and she did. A very clever handler. Also did extremely well with the change of dog.
3. **Paolo Cushchieri**. Very smart with not a hair out of place. In fact, the only one who made full use of the large ring with her Bracco on the move. Just inclined to worry a bit too much when setting up her dog and ran ahead of her charge rather than beside when it came to the change of dog. These are only very minor and hopefully helpful comments as she is an excellent handler.

CHILDREN'S CLASS (6e,1ab)

Winner: Gareth Joyce, An easy winner here and such a expert sympathetic handler, mature well beyond his nine years. Absolutely at one with his puppy both standing and moving, encouraging her quietly and gently, allowing her to show herself at her best.
His younger brother, Nathan, is obviously one to watch for the future, following faithfully in Gareth's footsteps, handling his dog exceptionally well for his age.

HOUND GROUP

Winner: Beagle, **Ch Niko Vom Hause Niveksue**. Very masculine, a real Stallion Hound, in excellent coat and hard muscular condition. So well made all through and sound as the proverbial bell on the move driving strongly from his hocks.

Reserve: L/h Dachshund, **Ch Abydachs Summer Sun**. Glamorous showman in splendid richly coloured coat, so well conformed with good layback of shoulder, excellent topline, tailset and carriage.

Ideally could do with just a touch more weight. Very good mover.

HOUND PUPPY GROUP

Winner: Whippet, RBPIS

Reserve: Basset, **Terra D'Orfili Folco**, charm personified, a keen energetic showman with tail constantly awag, well made all through with good, bone, body and layback of shoulder. Can still mature a touch in topline. He went well. Such a happy character, who made me smile

HOUND JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: Saluki, **Baribal's Idris**. A sweet temperament with handsome masculine head. Very fit with effortless movement, which he emphasised when asked to move down the ring, extending this with one fluid stride straight up onto the hall's stage!

UTILITY GROUP

Winner: Keeshond, BIS

Reserve: Akita, **Ch Mooncry Scorpion Deadly Touch**. Another high quality dog and indeed unlucky to meet the winner on such top form. Beautiful head, eye and expression, in excellent coat and condition, good feet and layback of shoulder. A powerful mover with good length of stride in profile.

UTILITY PUPPY GROUP

Winner: French Bulldog, **Deland the Rock**, so sturdy and mature for his nearly 8 months, super for make, shape, size, type and balance. Very good mover. Should have a great future.

Reserve: Boston Terrier, **Deniro Cosmic Encounter**, smart, beautifully marked neat chap of just 4 months. So well made that he naturally stands four square, good layback of shoulder, moved very well for his age. Most exciting.

UTILITY JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: **Deniro Ice Queen**, Boston Terrier, full sister to the BOB from an earlier litter and very similar in excellence of type, size, make and shape. Her turn will surely come.

Reserve: Keeshond, **Samkees Purrrsonal Love**, daughter of the Gp winner. Good head, eye and expression, just not currently in her best jacket.

TERRIER GROUP

Winner: American Staffordshire Bull Terrier, RBIS

Reserve: Smooth Fox Terrier, BPIS

TERRIER PUPPY GROUP

Winner: Smooth Fox Terrier, BPIS

Reserve: Bull Terrier, **Noreloe Ghost from Hell**, in excellent coat and hard muscular condition, keen showman who can still mature in topline and darken in pigment.

TERRIER JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: Am Staff, RBIS

Reserve: Norwich Terrier, **Ragus Murray Mint**. Rather over-enthusiastic dog with well shaped head and eye with neat, well set ears, enjoying himself to the full.

WORKING GROUP

Winner: Alaskan Malamute, **Ch/Am Ch Palemoon's Rivendell Fire Starter**. Most impressive, strongly built, in the best of coat and hard muscular condition. Excellent make, shape and balance with good layback of shoulder and compact feet. The ultimate showman who moved so freely, driving from his hocks looking as if he could go all day with no trouble at all.

Reserve: Boxer, **Highcrest Out of the Blues**, BOB from 17, the highest entry of the show. This dark brindle bitch certainly has the wow factor as she is superbly conformed, this being reflected in the excellence of her movement, covering ground and driving from behind. No toeing in here! Beautiful head, eye and expression, in excellent coat and hard condition. So charismatic and enthusiastic, enjoying herself to the full. Most exciting.

WORKING PUPPY GROUP

Winner: Siberian Husky, **Return to Innocence Legend of the Spirit**. Lovely head with such a charming alert expression. Well balanced with good tailset and carriage. She moved beautifully.

Reserve: Australian Shepherd, **Edenisle Leia Organa**. Just five months and in very good coat for her age, well balanced, excellent layback of shoulder and good firm topline. She moved well if, understandably, a touch babyish in front. Her turn will surely come.

WORKING JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: Boxer, **Cilemm Touch In Time Fernando**. Lovely head and well made all through with good layback of shoulder. He went well if going a touch close in front at times.

GUNDOG GROUP

Winner: Pointer, **Chesterhope Kavallier Malti**. Strongly built workmanlike dog, well named with an exact spot between the ears as desired by many a Cavalier KCS. Very fit, in the hardest of muscular condition with excellent coat and neat well padded feet. So good for make and shape with

well angulated shoulders and hindquarters. A joy to see him move with good reach in profile, driving strongly from his hocks.

Reserve: Portuguese Pointer, **RB Junior in Show**

GUNDOG PUPPY GROUP

Winner: American Cocker , **Very Vegie L'Hypnotic**. Super buff dog of just six months at his first show and already a well schooled, confident, energetic showman. Such a well balanced outline and excellent confirmation with good layback of shoulder, forechest, body, feet and turn of stifle. He moved beautifully, covering ground in sidegait and obviously enjoying every moment. Most exciting.

Reserve: Pointer, **Thomareman Valley the Legend**, Charming temperament and such an alert expression. Enthusiastic mover, going particularly well behind.

GUNDOG JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: Port Pointer, **RB Junior in Show**

Reserve: Pointer, **Jeanly Ice**. Lovely head, eye and expression, excellent make and shape with good layback of shoulder. Can move extremely well when he concentrates but would insist on throwing up his front legs with over-enthusiasm at times.

TOY GROUP

Winner: Pug, **Ch Gabra CK Dendrum Orchid**. Truly multum in parvo, topping a high quality entry with his excellent balance, size, type, make and shape with good layback of shoulder and wide healthy nostrils. Very masculine and chock full of his own importance, he stood and moved beautifully with good length of stride in profile. Very obviously has as good a sense of humour as his handler.

Reserve: Yorkshire Terrier, **Ch King of Ring of Maryon's Home** in glorious straight silky coat of typically deep steel blue. He moved very well, keeping his firm topline.

TOY PUPPY GROUP

Winner: CKCS, **Manicaro Bethlina**. Just eight months, of lovely type with sweet head and a charming feminine expression. Well conformed all through with good shoulders together with a well set and carried tail. Still a bit of growing and maturing to do. She moved beautifully for her expert young handler.

Reserve: S/c Chihuahua, **Cragarnat Mad Spike** Well nigh irresistible parti of just four months and already such a great showman! So good for make, shape, size and type with excellent, body, shoulder, topline, tailset and carriage. Another co-operating so happily and willingly for his even younger handler, extremely sound and typically brisk on the move.

TOY JUNIOR GROUP

Winner: S/c Chihuahua, **Uniqie Passion Hypnotic Faith**. Feminine cream with well shaped head and good layback of shoulder. She moved well behind, can still firm a touch in front.

Reserve: L/c Chihuahua, **Te Chichi Alilaw Rucas Jnr**. Golden cream with well angulated shoulders and excellent body. A dog of strong character, who went well - that is when not clutching his lead firmly between his forepaws!

Jane Lilley

Judge