

GRIFFON WORLD

NEWS FROM THE 50th ANNIVERSARY SHOW OF THE SWEDISH GRIFFON CLUB – where Howard Ogden judged the smooths and belge (black and black and tan roughs only) whilst Stephen Thompson judged the red roughs, since Howard had drawn about 130 exhibits which is more than the maximum permitted for one judge given the critiques to dictate.

Being a non-CC Club show, there was no grading except to indicate an Honour Prize both for an exceptional exhibit and to allow it to come back to compete for best of sex, there being 4 such placements. Although you declare a best of breed, the best of each sex still competes for Best In Show which are placed in reverse order from 6 to 1:

BIS 6: CHILLICHAWAS BIG SPIRIT. Black rough male. Good name! Correctly small, quality young dog. Correct in body balance; super head and expression; good show attitude; still needs to mature.

BIS 5: CH GRIFFLAND BRIDGET JONES. Red rough bitch. Really useful bitch for any one of us to have in our kennel and I wish there were more like her. Not flashy but simply good breed type; well constructed; large head; super jacket. More terrier than “cobby”.

BIS 4: CH FIDDLE-STICKS SWING THAT CAT. Black smooth bitch from the USA. Incredible head! Cobby; deep; short tight coat; stylish; just carrying a bit too much weight that affected her front action. I am very envious of her owner.

BIS 3: CH GRIFFON d’LUXE OLIVIA. Black rough bitch. Beautiful! Perfect proportions of large, round head on short, cobby body; great expression; sound; very typy; just a bit “casual” at the end of a long, wet day!

BIS 2: CH KING WIZARD ELTON. Black smooth dog whose photo in the club’s book of champions does not do him justice; perfect size; lovely body lines; nothing coarse about him; good head; well angulated; tight jacket; flat tail but perfect tail set.

BIS 1: CH WALLIANTS FIX IDĚ. Red rough male. A fitting link, through his breeder, with 25 years ago! True Griffon type head to tail. Same vital basics of a large, round head set on a small, square body. Great attitude, expression, coat and style. I see that his breeding represents not only the best of Swedish breeding but of dedication by all concerned for the betterment of the breed, over a lifetime.

The special for best black and tan went to **Ch Sleepyhollow Pop Go's The Weezel** an American bred bitch I would have readily taken home – and put on a diet! Superb in both type and structure with a textbook head to take your breath away. So cobby.

Super coat and markings. Just too heavy in condition that made her too wide in front, even for a Griffon.

Rain threatened all day with the two rings surrounded by exhibitor gazebos, set out on a football ground.

Stephen took on all the puppies, as they are classed as the “unofficial” part of the show, and the Bruxellois (red roughs only); approximately 25 exhibits (so as to reduce my load to a permitted number, being about 60 smooths (all colours) and 25 belge being black or black and tan but all to be roughs.

Part way through the smooths the heavens opened and the previous drizzle became a torrent as the ringside fled to their gazebos and yours truly and exhibitors kept going, there being no indoor accommodation.

I examined individual exhibits as the rain dripped down my neck in a gazebo containing myself and critique writer furiously typing. Some kind “larger lady” provided a kagool to keep me drier and I feel guilty as I still have it! The exhibits headed off to tented cover in between, until needed once the last in a class had been seen.

It was the black griffons, whether shown as belge or brabancons, that were of the best quality and took BIS 2, 3 and 4 and the influence of Ch Marquant Mr Bad Guy was self-evident (and taking second best male himself). Elsewhere the influence of Ch Donzeata Royal Heritage shone through. I had the privilege of using this prepotent red smooth myself and on several visits to Sweden I have seen his litters of typy puppies. He was their gain!

As ever, the Swedish dogs are well made overall, fit, cobby and outgoing. My gripe was the loss of head type with long, straight noses, with narrow jaws and weak chins; small yellow eyes; and huge spaniel ears. And this could be all on the same dog! On more than one occasion I would have sworn I was looking at a crossbreed! Conversely, the American bred exhibits, all owned by Susanne Soderberg, were breathtaking in their head type. Some may call it “extreme” but I call it “perfect”, being so round with large, well-spaced features and broad in muzzle and skull giving that cheeky, monkey-faced expression that just makes you smile!

I was honoured to judge the 25th Anniversary. This is a passionate family of breed supporters, whether as breeders or pet owners, and I can but hope that when the 75th Anniversary comes around someone will be asking “Is he still alive?” and, if so, will ensure I get the chance to go back!