

MORWENNA MARSHALL

Menwinnion Griffons

The Griffon world has lost one of its most respected breeders in Morwenna. We were all shocked at the news that she died last week in hospital after surgery. Whilst it was obvious that she hadn't looked her usual self at the shows this year. I don't think any of us realised the true extent of her illness or expected this outcome.

Morwenna had carried on from her mother's 'Mountwhistle' lines which produced a number of influential champions in the breed. When her mother Nancy died she had hoped to carry on the affix but it was not granted to her and she chose Menwinnion which was an old fashioned local place name. Her parents had been missionaries, working in various parts of the world, and on their return to the UK settled in Goonhavern, Truro. They had wanted Morwenna to have a more academic career but it wasn't to be - always destined for a career in dogs, she trained at the famous Bellmead kennel and later became a groomer whilst she bred and cared for her Griffons, though mini wire haired Dachshunds were also part of the Menwinnion kennels some years ago, including her favourite Ch M Golden Rod a much admired dog.

'The Cottage' at Wheal Frances was an idyllic old Cornish long house standing in many acres. Her dogs had a wonderful country life with a lot of freedom and she loved to walk with them every day. Those who visited her were always welcomed and she delighted in long chats invariably about dogs! She was rather old fashioned and today's technology did not play a part in her life! Morwenna still wrote letters and had very distinctive, always recognisable, handwriting, but as editor of a Griffon club magazine, I would receive all her adverts written out in bold capitals.

Morwenna held her own very firm ideas on how to breed, rear and groom dogs! Over the years she produced many top winning Griffons, mostly reds, though blacks played a part in the early years. After many CCs and RCCs with various dogs she made up her first Griffon Champion at Crufts this year - the lovely red rough Sunburst. She was great friends with the late Tessa Gaines (Gaystock), they had much in common as their mothers had been friends before them and they often used each other's breeding lines.

Morwenna started judging Griffons in the early 1980s, she judged them at Crufts in 2008 and her last appointment was at the GBC Ch show in 2014.

The Menwinnion lines will not be lost to the breed but will be carried on as some young stock is with other breeders. She will be much missed and always remembered.

Carol Ritchie