

Vanessa McHugh

Critiques

Open Shows & Championship Shows without CCs

Evesham & DCS

22/7/2001

[As edited by Dog Press] A quality entry for my first judging appointment.

Junior (3,1). 1. Beale's Bravon Finnian's Folly. Powerful, compact body, tail set high, tightly curled, good wedge shaped head, neat dark ears, dark eyes. Still in his puppy coat, colour yet to clear, unsettled on the move. Promising. BP. 2. Gilbert's Steldawn Tantre.

Post Graduate (2,1). 1. Hicks' Malenibo Melody Maker. Square outline, close, jacket, good angulation, effortless fluid movement, pleasing feminine head, dark eyes and ears. Close decision for RBOB, but preferred Falda's tailset and more powerful build. Not yet at her best.

Open (9,6). 1. Barganska's Barbelka Eliksyr. Powerful, square outline, good length of leg, strong straight bone, correct angulation, harsh clear coat, tightly curled, high set tail, lovely, well-shaped head, neat ears, outgoing personality, moved with drive. BOB & Group 4. 2. Maun's Ch Eskamere Falda at Bowerhinton. RBOB. 3. Hicks' Malenibo Myth and Magic.

South Eastern Hound

1/9/2002

P Dog/Bitch (1) 1 Allchin's Carolon Fancy Nancy. Feminine head, well laid shoulder giving a good rise of neck, level topline, tightly curled tail. Correct close lying jacket, clear colour. Not quite so compact as her sister, nor so precise in hind movement.

Open Dog (2) 1 Davies' Carolon Trouble Shooter for Bullaine. Powerful, sound, full of ring presence, expertly handled. Masculine head, moderate loin, tail set high and tightly curled. Deep chest, good length of leg, bone straight and strong, neat feet, good rear angulation. Particularly pleasing front assembly, giving the correct amount of forechest. In glossy coat and hard condition, he moved absolutely true. BOB, delighted to hear that he was RBIS.

OB (4) 1 Allchin's Carolon She's A Cracker. Very compact, typical, feminine bitch, in hard condition. Wedge shaped head, good shoulders and rear angulation, short loin, excellent tail set and curl. Almost completely out of coat, this just emphasised her sound structure and balance. A little unsettled on the move, I saw enough to award her RBOB. 2 Allchin's Yggdrasil Special Friend of Carolon.

Heywood & Radcliffe CS

15/12/2002

P 1 Jobson's Kestos Double O Seven. Promising 10 months old puppy. Good coat texture and colour. Well developed, masculine head. Dark eyes, a trifle small. Tightly curled tail, set a shade low. Short loin, adequate length of leg, pleasing forehand construction. Didn't like the floor much at times, but moved out quite well when he settled. BP, BOB.

G 1 Jobson's Steldawn Tycoon. Very compact, a good showman. Correct size, good length of leg. Short loin, highset tail. Dark eyes of the correct shape. Still to mature at not quite 2 years of age. In the challenge, preferred the puppy's stronger bone and greater layback of shoulder. RBOB.

Leicester City CS**12/1/2003**

Thank you to the exhibitors for their quality entry. I was principally looking, as always, for a soundly constructed, workmanlike dog that looked as if it could do the job it was bred for.

P (5). Some quality puppies - the first two in particular stood out from the rest. 1. Nichols' Barlestone Annette. Promising 11 month old bitch. Correct size, compact outline, short loin, tail set high and tightly curled. Head broadening nicely, pleasant expression, but would prefer a slightly longer muzzle. Her coat was gorgeous, really clear and close-fitting. Good shoulders, the best mover in this class. BP, RBOB. 2. Hicks' Malenibo Lleandryn. 2. Hoskyn's Ravenstone Master Rapp at Cakirjo.

SpY (2) 1 Maun's Bowerhinton Bewitch. Masculine dog, liked his overall type and athleticism. Good head with frank and open expression, dark eye, tightly curled, high set tail, moderate loin, good length of leg, coat could be clearer. Good rear angulation with corresponding driving action, but rather erratic front movement. Yet to broaden across the chest.

O (7). Some good movement in this class. 1. Hicks' Malenibo Melody Maker. Feminine, wedge-shaped head, dark ears and eyes. Tail set high and tightly curled, close-fitting jacket. Excellent bone, straight and strong, mature body with well-sprung ribs, pulled herself up foursquare. Textbook front with well-laid shoulders and exactly the right breadth of chest, balanced by correct rear angulation. Her front action was flawless, as she came towards me she took my breath away. No hesitation in awarding her BOB. 2. Hicks' Malenibo Myth and Magic. 3. Nichols' Ch. Barlestone Vosse.

Melton Mowbray & DCS**6/6/2004**

Puppy. 1. Simms' Barbelka Intryga at Elverdal. Impressive 9 month old male, strong head, dark eyes and ears, lovely bone, glamorous coat, a real showman. Powerful, well-arched neck, level topline, tail set high though a little to one side. Good movement for his age. BP & RBOB. 2. Long's Vinelka Merlot. 3. Hodkinson's Bravon Goibul Cum Thordell.

Graduate. 1. Brewin's Kestos Just Jack at Liondyke. So very compact, short loin, tightly curled, high set tail, good rear angulation. Aply handled, in hard condition, he performed well. At only 19 months, just needs time to mature – worth the wait.

Open. 1. Hodkinson's Kestos So Wise at Thordell. Gorgeous, mature male. Square outline, lovely bone, very typical, nothing exaggerated. Wedge-shaped head, dark eyes and ears. Tail set high and tightly curled. Well laid back shoulders with good return of upper arm, correct rear angulation. Not always co-operative, when he got his nose off the ground, he moved fluidly and true to win BOB.

Darwen CS**18/12/2004**

I thank the exhibitors for the quality entry, some old favourites amongst them. The slippery floor adversely affected movement in some cases.

NORWEGIAN ELKHOUNDS:PG (2) 1 Newell's Kestos Envoy. In hard condition, eyecatching coat, square outline, short loin, good tail set and curl, good rear angulation, neat feet, dark eyes. A nice dog, just preferred I Spy's exceptional shoulder placement. 2 Collier's Svenala Elga With Elksam.

O (5) 1 Middleton's Kestos I Spy at Graythor. A tireless showman, square outline, good length of leg, good bone, masculine wedge shaped head with neat, dark ears, good tail set and curl. His excellent forehand construction

produced flawless front action and a lovely neck. Springy, driving hind movement. Strikingly similar to 2, but preferred his neater feet and fractionally shorter loin. BOB. 2 Newell's Kestos Kalan. 3 Taylor's Barlestone Quilla.

WHIPPETS: P (5) 1 Yacoby & Yacoby-Wright's Cobyco Can't By Me Love. Six months old baby at her first show. As one would expect at her age, some maturing to do through the loin, but I liked her size and graceful, flowing lines. Good shoulders, pasterns and legs, reflected in her absolutely true movement. BP, delighted to see her go BPIS. 2 Robinson's Pateleypride Duke at Savilepark. 3 Hutchings' Spot the Difference of Pennymeadow.

PG (2) 1 Whimpany's Cobyco Cherry Brandy of Bunnyridge. A quality bitch, elegant outline, pleasing head, well arched neck, good depth of body and breadth across the loin. Correct width across the chest. She moved well with her forelegs kept low. O (3) 1 Robinson's Savilepark Savoir-Faire J.W. I felt this dog combined strength with elegance. Balanced outline, correct size, appealing head and expression, well arched neck, muscular back, good shoulders and forelimbs, strong, springy pasterns, strong hindquarters and well developed second thighs, moved very true and low. BOB. 2 Whimpany's Cobyco Calamity Jane of Bunnyridge.

Hound Club of East Anglia

15/5/2005

I congratulate the Committee on a very well-organised and enjoyable show. It was quite a hot day, and some of the dogs seemed adversely affected by the heat. One or two coats were a little creamy or even rusty. I gave them the benefit of the doubt given the time of year.

Sp Y (7) 1 Hoskyn's Ravenstone Countess Nushka at Cakirjo. Feminine bitch, lovely colour, good topline and tail. Wedge head, well-shaped eye, would prefer a darker ear. Soundly constructed front and rear, moved well. Not quite as compact as the main winners. 2 Long's Vinelka Merlot.

PG (4) 1 Hoskyn's Bowerhinton Bright Knight at Cakirjo. Outgoing dog, correct size, beautiful head, well-arched neck, good angulation, excellent bone, good tail, coat somewhat rusty. Maintained his level topline on the move. His driving hind action won him RBOB. 2 Simms' Barbelka Intryga at Elverdal. 3 Brewin's Kestos Just Jack at Liondyke.

L (6) 1 Winsor's Yggdrasil Raincloud. Lovely mature bitch. Elegant lines, gorgeous coat, feminine head, dark eyes. Best of legs and feet, good shoulders and angulation, short loin. Tail set high and well curled. Effortless singletracking movement, with sufficient drive behind. BOB. 2 Croxford's Barlestone Yhos. 3 Long's Barbelka Fiscal at Vinelka.

O (5) 1 Winsor's Ch. Barbelka Forest. Striking dog from a larger mould. Clear jacket, powerful neck, handsome head, would prefer a darker eye. Excellent topline and underline, deep chest, good length of leg, correct tail. Just felt he moved a little lethargically in the challenge. 2 Hoskyn's Ch. Ravenstone Master Rapp at Cakirjo.

City of Birmingham

1/9/2006

I was greatly heartened by the quality of the entry. Many of these dogs were new to me as a judge, and there were some nice surprises amongst them. It was wonderful to have so many really good dogs to go over, particularly in the Open classes, where decisions were very close. Having said that, there were one or two faults in evidence that need keeping an eye on. There were a number of "east-west" fronts, one or two cow-hocks, some overreaching exhibits and some rather upright in shoulder and lacking in front extension. The former fault in particular in my view needs consideration, as on the hunt these dogs would tire easily and be prone to short-term injury and long-term damage to the joints and ligaments. I think that overall, outlines have improved over the last few years, and we are seeing a much more compact dog, but please be aware that the square outline should consist of a good layback of rib and a short loin, not short ribs and a long loin. All of the dogs were well presented and in good condition.

PD (1) 1. Hobson's Graythor Norwegian Spirit. Well-grown lad, in hard condition for his age. Attractive head, well-shaped eye, dark ears and mask. Strong body, good legs and feet, correct angulation, excellent tail. BP.

JD (6,2) 1. Nichols' Barlestone Jan-Ivar. Liked his size, compact outline, short loin and excellent tailset. Pleasing head with dark mask. Good legs and feet, correct rear angulation and breadth across the chest. Close, clear jacket. An exciting prospect for the future. 2. Long's Bowerhinton Beltain at Vinelka. Another very nice young dog. Lovely head with darkest of eyes and ears, well laid shoulders, good length of neck, straight legs, excellent rear, tail set high and tightly curled. Just felt he still needs to develop across the chest. Best profile action in the class. 3. Hobson's Graythor Norwegian Spirit.

PGD (1,1) 1. Gilbert's Balsemasi Midnyte Express. Up to size boy, lovely clear colour, pleasing head and dark well-shaped eye, good length of leg and overall proportions, tail set a shade low. Rather unsettled on the move.

OD (5,1) This class simply oozed quality. 1. Middleton's Ch. Kestos I Spy at Graythor JW ShCM. What makes this dog stand out is his superb front construction, coupled with his outline and his overall showmanship. Correct size, attractive head, medium eye, powerful neck. Strong, compact body, centrally carried, tight tail. Excellent bone and such good straight limbs. In rock hard condition, like a coiled spring. Best Dog & BOB. 2. Tress' Bowerhinton Bright Knight at Cakirjo. So much to offer - take a good look at him. A lovely head, dark eyes and mask, good length of neck and a level topline, short loin, tail set high and tightly curled, the best rear angulation in this class. Lovely clear colour. Well laid shoulders. Just needs to tighten up a shade more in front, but it's coming! Find some irresistible bait. Reserve Best Dog. 3. Adams' Kestos Vinny Jones.

VetB (2, 1) 1. Lake's Maubrea Moonlight Mystique. Dignified, 13-year-old lady, in really hard condition for her age. Lovely head, dark ears, which were just a shade tall. Good strong bone, tail carried well on the move, shining coat, moved well. Not quite as compact as 2, but could not deny her overall soundness and particularly the remarkable strength of her hindquarters, which put some of the youngsters to shame. 2 Croxford's Ch. Whittimere Silver Cracker. Almost 13, she has not forgotten how to be a showgirl. Pretty head with twinkling eyes, good shoulders and topline, straight forelegs, compact outline, centrally carried and tightly curled tail. Not quite as true behind as 1, but her overall condition is a credit to her owners' care.

JB (3,0) 1. Walter-Browne's Barlestone Kaia at Oseberg. Eye-catching bitch, so smart and showy. Lovely coat and colour, pleasing feminine head, well-shaped eye, dark mask. Tail set high and tightly curled, level topline. Good layback of shoulder, excellent rear angulation, moved with drive. 2. Croxford's Barlestone Kaisa. Feminine head, dark ears, slightly shorter coupled than 1, but not quite her topline. Lovely colour. Preferred her bone to that of 3. Well handled by her young owner. 3. Nichol's Barlestone Johanna.

PGB (7,1) 1. Lake's Ravenstone Mia Tua of Maubrea. Quality bitch. Gorgeous head, dark eyes, lovely coat and colour. Good length of leg and excellent bone. Good straight quarters and correct angulation. Tail set high and tightly curled. Not cooperating with her handler, which cost her in the challenge. 2. Tress' Bowerhinton Bumble Bee. Compact outline, lovely colour, good head and neck and well laid shoulders, best of legs and feet, excellent tail, a little tucked-up. Not quite the rear angulation of 1. 3. Walter-Browne's Barlestone Kaia at Oseberg.

OB (6,1) A trio of lovely bitches. 1. Maun's Bowerhinton Betterbelieveit JW. A true find, really well put together and balanced. Cobby body, good wedge head, good layback of rib, short loin, highset tail. Excellent bone, correct angulation, easy movement. Good coat and colour. Pressed hard by 2 and 3, she won the class with her natural showmanship. Best Bitch & BOS. 2. Winsor's Ch. Yggdrasil Raincloud. Lovely, flowing lines, so feminine and elegant. Gorgeous colour, lovely bone, beautiful head. Tail set high and tightly curled, excellent quarters. Just felt she was not putting it all in on the day. Reserve Best Bitch. 3. Anthony's Norvin Snowstorm.

It was a great honour and a privilege to be asked to judge the bitches at the Club Open Show, and I would like to thank the Committee and the membership for the invitation. Thank you also to my hard-working team of stewards, whose friendly support soon put me at my ease.

The large ring afforded me plenty of opportunity to observe gait, but I must say that the surface appeared to be littered with clumps of carpet and other debris in places, which distracted some of the dogs, often at the least opportune moment. Also, one side of the floor was quite slippery, and a number of the veterans in particular found it quite hazardous negotiating the corner.

My overall impressions of my entry were quite favourable. Outlines have noticeably improved over the last few years, as have coat colour and tails. Dentition was on the whole good, although I did find one level bite. Coats were clean and dogs were mostly well presented, except for one or two carrying a shade too much weight. Size seems more even, and most bitches were close to standard size, or at least within the acceptable range. However, I must say that I was struck by the fact that there seems to be a range of different types in the ring at the moment, which presents the judge with a problem in that at times it proves impossible to select animals that match one's ideal without sacrificing construction and movement. I understand why this has happened, and it disturbs me no end. I found a number of bitches that lacked forechest owing to a short upper arm, the front legs coming too far forward. This can make them appear more compact (an optical illusion!), as the eye does not have to take in the extra body length created by a proper forechest, but does nothing for front action. Feet are also a concern. I found quite a few round, splayed feet, with fat toes and white claws. That said, I was delighted with my principal winners. The fabulous Open Bitch class was an absolute joy, packed with high quality bitches throughout, and there are some very promising youngsters coming up from the lower classes who will trouble them in the future, I've no doubt.

Minor Puppy Bitch (3,1) Two promising babies. 1. Weston & Pearson's Nevelka Show Me Some Lovin at Powdermill. Well-developed body, good angulation, straight limbs. Tail set high and tightly curled, clear colour, dark eyes. Still dressed in her puppy coat and yet to develop in the head. 2. Allchin's Carolon Hickory's Fancy. If I could take just one seedling home to see how it would grow, it would be this one. Sweet little poppet, just six months, short back, good straight front, excellent tail, dark eyes and a pretty head. At the moment, just rising up at the rear, but that will change as she grows on. Not quite as positive on the move as 1. Looked very young against the older puppies.

Puppy Bitch (8, 2) Lovely class that could easily change places another time. 1. Cree's Barbelka Motyl. Excellent type. A lovely, well-proportioned head with dark eyes, ears and mask. Compact outline, strong bone, well-muscled for her age. Good layback of shoulder with correct forechest, neat feet. Good breadth across the loin and thigh and perfect tail. Moved really well. BPB & RBPIS. 2. Moughton's Ravenstone Fivestar. More mature bitch, pleasing balanced outline with good length of leg, good bone. Correct close-fitting, clear jacket. A well-shaped, feminine head, just preferred the markings on 1, dark eyes. Well-laid shoulders giving a good reach of neck, hard topline, tightly curled tail. Very sound on the move. 3. Anthony's Norvin Vesla.

Junior Bitch (4, 1) 1. Ravenstone Fivestar. 2. Mortimer's Laakso Pikku Susi. Slightly lighter build than 1, good compact body, lovely colour, excellent tail. Dark eyes, ears a little tall. Not quite so true on the move as 1. Shown in hard condition. 3. Barbelka Muzyka.

Special Yearling Bitch (3, 0) 1. Ravenstone Fivestar. 2. Croxford & Greaves' Swillyvalley As You Like It of Whittimere. Aply handled to display a nice outline with a good topline and well-curved tail. Correct coat and colour, dark eyes and ears, would prefer a little less stop. A good rear and moved well in profile, not quite the soundness of 1 in front. 3. Barbelka Muzyka.

Novice Bitch (3, 0) 1. Barbelka Muzyka. Up-to-size bitch, good, well-marked wedge head, dark eyes and ears. Strong bone, well-arched neck, single-curl tail. Correct coat and colour. Moved quite soundly behind once she settled, but needs to tighten up in front. 2. Harper's Ravenstone Cheers. A conundrum. First impressions in the puppy class said here might be a class winner. Feminine, very square, short loin, pretty head, clear coat, good tail and neat feet. A

little lighter built than her sibling and preferred her layback of shoulder. Disappointingly, really was not cooperating with her handler and consequently appeared to pick her front feet high off the floor. 3. Carolon Hickory's Fancy.

Graduate Bitch (3, 0) 1. Swillyvalley As You Like It of Whittimere. 2. Granne's Kestos Luna. Taller bitch, slightly longer cast, good bone, tightly curled tail, correct angulation, good clear coat of medium grey. Unfortunately, tending to pace. 3. Ravenstone Cheers.

Post Graduate Bitch (5,2) 1. Gray's Bowerhinton Better Behave. A well-constructed bitch. Solidly made, yet feminine. Good bone, correct angulation front and rear and corresponding easy, effortless movement. A well-balanced head with dark ears, eyes and mask. Just a shade longer in the couplings than my principal winners. 2. Allchin's Carolon Puttin On The Ritz. Compact outline, lovely colour, good bone, tightly curled tail. Preferred the winner's head. 3. Brewin's Graythor Norwegian Star at Liondyke.

Limit Bitch (8,2) 1. Mortimer's Carolon Kash N Cracker. Really feminine bitch, nice head, although ears a little tall, good straight front and rear and balanced, correct angulation. Level topline which she maintained on the move, good layback of rib, tightly curled, highset tail. One of the best movers of the day. Lovely colour, just wish she had a little more undercoat. 2. Lake's Ravenstone Mia Tua of Maubrea. A lovely head with dark eyes and ears, a good coat and colour, excellent bone, well-sprung ribs, loin short and wide and good breadth across the thigh, good straight front and rear. Tending to stand awkwardly, which threw her topline into disarray. 3. Nichols' Barlestone Johanna.

Open Bitch (7, 0) Here I was totally spoilt for choice. 1. Winsor's Ch. Yggdrasil Raincloud. I truly love this bitch. She combines good conformation with glamour. A shade taller than some, but feminine throughout. Square outline, good layback of rib, short loin, super bone, balanced angulation, good breadth across the thigh, correct feet. Solidly built, but not heavy, she has plenty of air beneath her. A pleasing head, excellent tailset, and that gorgeous, breathtaking coat. Moved out effortlessly, nothing exaggerated. BB, BOS & RBIS. 2. Anthony's Norvin Snow Storm. A very typical, well-constructed, neat bitch. A very compact outline, short loin, excellent layback of shoulder giving a good reach of neck and correct forechest, adequate bone for her size. Excellent topline and underline and leg to body ratio. A good head with a sweet expression, neat dark ears, dark eyes and mask, medium grey, close coat. Tail set high and tightly curled, and a happy disposition. Balanced angulation reflected in her good movement. RBB. 3. Walter-Browne's Barlestone Kaia at Oseberg JW.

Special Veteran Bitch (over 7 years but under 10) (5, 1) 1. Mead's Malenibo Mulan Mystere. A compact, typical bitch. A pretty head with the neatest ears I saw all day, dark eyes and a friendly expression. Hard topline, good body proportions, correct angulation, strong bone, neat feet. Really good shoulders with correct forechest, moving true. BVB. 2. Barganska's Barbelka Calusek. A very feminine, alert bitch. A nice head with a sweet expression, dark eyes and ears, good reach of neck, sound topline. Lovely coat and colour, correct angulation, good length of leg, in hard condition. Moved very freely. Slightly longer cast than 1, and unlucky to meet her. 3. Granne's Kestos Gaupa

Special Veteran Bitch (10 years and over) (7, 2) 1. Middleton's Kestos Weekender. One I have long admired. 13 now, and in lovely condition. Good body proportions, truly short coupled, good bone, neat feet, feminine head, dark eye, correct close jacket of medium grey, tight tail. Her movement still brings a tear to the eye – what a showgirl! 2. Gilbert's Barskimming Corinthia. A square, well-constructed, solidly built bitch in good condition. A good wedge head, foreface somewhat faded, excellent bone, good coat and colour, good spring of rib and a tightly curled tail. Moved quite well, letting us know she was there. 3. Gray's Eskamere Gaupa

Special Beginners Bitch (4, 3) 1. Ravenstone Fivestar

Special Newcomers Dog or Bitch (3, 1) 1. Nevelka Show Me Some Lovin at Powdermill 2. Barbelka Seasara with Seasara

Brace (2, 0) 1. Maun's brace. 2. Mortimer's brace

Witney & DCS

4/5/2008

Junior (2, 0) Two promising puppies. 1. Mortimer's Laakso's Going For Gold. Well grown six months old bitch. Nice outline, lovely bone, neat feet. Strong head, dark eyes and ears. Well curled tail, good harsh coat, darker than some. Well schooled and easy moving, quite the little showgirl. BP. 2. Mead's Malenibo Jasmine of Thunor.

Post Graduate (5, 1) 1. Greaves & Croxford's Swillyvalley As You Like It of Whittimere. Maturing well, she impressed me with her good outline and attractive head with well shaped eyes and dark ears, good bone and tail. A good close jacket, clear colour. In tip top condition, muscles on muscles. Her forehand much improved on last acquaintance, she moved with drive from strong hindquarters. 2. Holton & Harper's Ravenstone Cheers. 3. Mortimer's Laakso Pikku Susi.

Open (6, 1) 1. Winsor's Ch. Yggdrasil Raincloud. I can't say any more about this lovely lady's virtues than has been said already - they all still apply. Suffice to say, although not quite in show condition, her type and quality won her BOB, above the exceptionally free moving. 2. Mortimer's Carolon Kash N Cracker. RBOB. 3. Ravenstone Cheers.

Bournemouth

9/8/2009

I was delighted with the quality of the entry. The classes were well-filled, and there were no absentees, a fact that was remarked upon by my two helpful stewards. I want to thank, from the bottom of my heart, all those that paid me the compliment of entering under me. The day was rather warm, and we were a little later in getting into the ring than I had hoped – consequently, some dogs appeared affected by the heat, which was at its zenith.

One or two dogs were a little out of coat, which was to be expected given the time of year, but it did not affect my placings. The coat is the icing on the cake, although the undercoat should of course be clear and the markings well defined. Tails were set high and tightly curled. When I judge, I'm principally looking for a sound, well-constructed, typical animal that looks as if it can do the job it is bred for. The blueprint is the type I have seen in my trips to Scandinavia, where the dogs are still used to hunt elk. There were a number of dogs here that fitted that blueprint, and I was spoiled for choice.

Junior Dog (1, 0) 1. Wilson's Bowerhinton Blizzard at Suchow. Striking youngster, a real character. Well-developed body, good length of leg, excellent bone. Pleasing, proportionate head with neat, dark ears and dark mask, clear undercoat. Moved with drive from well-angulated hindquarters. BP.

Limit Dog (3, 0) 1. Mortimer's Laakso's Lone Ranger. Excellent type, in hard condition, exuding athleticism and vigour. Nice head, dark ears and eyes, good reach of neck, well-laid shoulders, good length of rib, ultrashort loin, adequate bone, close jacket. Rock-steady topline which he maintained on the move, correct rear angulation. Perfectly balanced, fluid, economical movement. Not yet two, he should be hard to beat when fully mature. Stunning. BD & BOB. 2. Maun's Bowerhinton Bear Necessity. Glamorous male, lovely coat and colour, masculine head, dark mask, neat, dark ears. Well-arched neck and good shoulders. Excellent bone, straight limbs. Moved quite well, but would prefer slightly more rear extension. 3. Gray's Barbelka Huragan.

Open Dog (4, 0) 1. Thomas' Malenibo Kynedyr ShCM. Quality exhibit, fully mature. Well-marked, abundant coat, good bone. Beautiful head with dark mask and ears, well-laid shoulders and excellent hindquarters. Deep, broad chest, well-sprung ribs, short loin. Moved well when settled. Topline just beginning to dip slightly in the challenge – it was very hot! RBD. 2. Winsor's Ch Barbelka Forest. Rather different type, up to size. Handsome head, dark ears, striking coat and colour, good tailset and bone, correct feet. Well ribbed back, slightly longer in loin than 1. His forehand action has not suffered with age, and he appeared little affected by the heat, moving steadily with a flowing stride. 3. Gray's Barbelka Dziarski.

Puppy Bitch (2, 0) 1. Maun & Stirling's Bowerhinton Black Magic. Sweet bitch with a pretty head, good shoulders giving a pleasing arch to the neck, a good coat and colour. In hard condition and well-boned. Forehand action pleasing, but not quite as positive behind as her brother in the puppy challenge. 2. Punnett's Barbelka Ozdoba. Younger than the other puppies, she has some maturing to do. Rather finer boned than 1, and yet to develop in the head, I liked her overall body proportions, level topline and short loin, dark, well-shaped eyes, close jacket and well-curved tail. Needs time.

Post Graduate Bitch (3, 0) 1. Mortimer's Laakso's Going For Gold. Dark eyes and ears, which were a little tall, a well-shaped head, good body proportions and bone, neat feet. Good, harsh coat and well-set tail. Good breadth across the chest, moved quite well. 2. Barganska's Barbelka Muzyka. Taller bitch, a little longer cast than 1, mature in body with well-sprung ribs. Pretty head with an appealing expression, dark ears, preferred her coat colour. Good hindquarters, not quite as true in front as 1. 3. Weston & Pearson's Nevelka Show Me Some Lovin at Powdermill.

Limit Bitch (4, 0) Cowper's Bowerhinton Bright N Breeze of Rothenborg JW. Rather out of coat, although what she had was a lovely colour, she impressed me with her compact outline and good length of leg. Neat head, good reach of neck and a firm topline, maintained on the move. Good angulation and bone, correct feet, excellent tail. Moved and showed really well. 2. Gray's Bowerhinton Better Behave. Lovely, mature bitch with a beautiful head, dark ears and good strong bone. Well-laid shoulders balanced by correct rear angulation, good topline and tail, she was just a shade longer in the loin than 1. Moved very well. 3. Croxford's Barlestone Kaisa.

Open Bitch (5, 0) 1. Winsor's Ch Yggdrasil Raincloud. In lovely condition, back on form. A little out of coat, it did not detract from her overall balance. Excellent type, with a feminine head, good length of leg, correct rear angulation. Well-laid shoulders giving a good reach of neck, lovely bone and a perfect tail. Easy, effortless movement. BB. 2. Maun's Ch/Ir Ch/Int Ch Bowerhinton Betterbelieveit JW ShCM. Exceptionally sound, well-made bitch. Attractive wedge head with dark eyes and neat ears, solid, but not coarse, bone, in full coat. Good, straight front, a short back, broad across the loin, good width across the second thigh. In the final line-up, she was just beginning to flag a little – a pity, as she pushed hard. RBB. 3. Barganska's Ch Barbelka Eliksyr.

Championship Shows with CCs

East of England

10/7/2011

I was greatly heartened by the quality of the entry, particularly in the bitches. There was much to be delighted by, although the performance by some dogs that initially caught my eye disappointed at times. I was looking, as always, for an unexaggerated, workmanlike animal, built to hunt, and overall, I was satisfied with what I found. Proportions have improved in recent years, with more dogs now presenting the square outline required by the Standard. Breeders have obviously worked hard on correcting some of the issues with fronts that were so common when I first started judging a decade or so ago. Where we now need to concentrate our efforts is on rear angulation, and here we certainly have some work to do. Hind movement overall was not good, particularly in the males, and some of the dogs were not balanced in profile action, or else were balanced, but only in that they were straight in angulation in front and rear, and therefore lacked both reach and drive. The standard calls for moderate rear angulation, but here I found some over angulated dogs with corresponding inefficient, overreaching action, whilst a couple of others were rather straight in stifle, with long rear pasterns and weak, almost double-jointed hock joints, correspondingly moving with very little drive. This latter fault is a serious one in a working animal, causing the dog to be more prone to injury, which is the reason why the Standard for our breed was altered years ago to allow for slightly more angulation in the rear than had previously been the case. Some dogs were excessively tucked up, the underline cutting up sharply before the ninth rib. The Norwegian elkhound is an endurance athlete and should have a good length of rib and very little tuck up, allowing ample room for the heart and lungs. These dogs [*those just referred to, not the whole entry*] tended to feature a long loin and a short ribcage. Some dogs were not well-presented – at this

level of competition, presentation does make a difference. Some dogs were beginning to moult, and hence looked rather beige, the guard hairs shining red. White markings are beginning to creep in, and these are undesirable.

Puppy Dog (3, 0) 1. Lees' Aftonlee Archie. Up-to-size young boy, good length of leg, strong bone, straight limbs. Masculine head with dark mask, eyes and ears. Well laid shoulders giving a pleasing length of neck, good width across the chest, correct rear angulation. Moved well, demonstrating good reach in his forehand action. BP. 2. Walters' Ellahyde Bear's Legacy. Another very promising puppy, not quite so steady on the move. Liked his compact outline and short loin, well-shaped head, dark eye and ear and harsh coat. Just rising up a little in the rear at the moment. 3. Gray's Strom Footloose For Grasilva (imp).

Junior Dog (1, 0) 1. Gray's Strom Footloose For Grasilva (imp). Smart, eyecatching youngster of good type. Compact outline, attractive head with dark eyes and ears, clear undercoat, tail set high. Some maturing to do all through. In the previous class, not quite the extension front and rear of the winner.

Limit Dog (5, 0) 1. Firth & Walters' Huistenbosch Aksel at Breckslake. My find of the day. Under the big coat is a dog in hard condition. Gorgeous head with dark ears, excellent bone, deep chest, well-sprung ribs, strong wide loin, tail set well on. Good length of leg and width across the thigh. He gives the impression of a powerful, coiled spring under the hands. Well handled to show off his excellent, balanced movement. In the challenge, just preferred the winners' outlines, but it was close. 2. Simms' Bowerhinton Broder at Elverdal. Beautifully presented young male of excellent type. Attractive head and pleasing front assembly, but might yet broaden slightly across the chest to finish, in keeping with his age. Lovely arch of neck, good length of rib and short loin. Good bone, tail set high and tightly curled. One to watch. 3. McMahon's Barbelka Laser With Seasara.

Open Dog (9, 1) 1. Mortimer's Ch. Laakso's Lone Ranger. Took my eye immediately with his balanced outline and ring presence, and did not disappoint. Excellent body proportions and moderate angulation, nothing exaggerated, nothing jarring to the eye. Stood foursquare with a proud carriage to his attractive head and tightly curled tail. On the move, he really took the breath away, moving effortlessly with a true, single-tracking action, keeping his topline level. Somewhat lacking in coat today, his conformation and movement outclassed the opposition – he can always grow another coat! CC. 2. Middleton's Ch. & Ir. Ch. Kestos I Spy at Graythor JW ShCM. An old favourite, the ultimate showman, beautifully presented. Exquisite, wedge-shaped head with the neatest of ears, a lovely, flowing line to his neck, well-laid shoulders, good spring of rib and breadth across the loin. Breed type contained in a powerful, mature frame. Moved well coming towards me, but not quite the same precision going away. RCC. 3. Haugstad's Kestos Night Cap at Skogly.

Puppy Bitch (1, 0) 1. Sibley's Bowerhinton Blacklabel. Sweet 6 months baby. Pretty head with neat ears, good coat and colour. Good straight legs, with some growth left in the knuckle. Pleasing proportions, good bone, well-curved tail carried centrally over the back. Moved and showed well.

Post Graduate Bitch (2, 0) 1. Punnett's Barbelka Ozdoba. Pretty head with dark eyes, front assembly coming together as she matures, good length of neck, would prefer a shorter loin. Short on coat today, which made her look rather light in bone, but a good clear colour, nice tail, in hard condition. Her well-muscled rear gave her drive. 2. Firth's Breckslake Merry. More compact outline, not quite the shoulders of 1, or her muscle tone in the rear. Pleasing head, good clear coat, well-curved tail and adequate for bone.

Limit Bitch (5, 0) 1. Middleton's Bowerhinton Be Madams Spy at Graythor. Lovely, cobby bitch, very smart and full of presence. Attractive, feminine head, dark eyes, good straight quarters and a good return of upper arm, hocks well let down, excellent length of leg to body ratio. Sufficient bone, lovely coat and colour, level topline and a well-set tail. A work of art in progress, she will trouble the best when she matures and her ribs spring. Moved well once settled. RCC. 2. Cowper's Steldawn Alltopplayfor of Rothenborg. Taller bitch, rather different in type. Pleasing head, good length of neck, sufficient bone, well-set tail, moved out soundly on good straight legs. Good topline and underline, well-ribbed up. Not quite the outline of 1, but a most eyecatching girl. 3. Andrews' Huistenbosch Lexi.

Open Bitch (9, 3) 1. Gray's Ch. Grasilva Gwendoline Mary. Very typical bitch in rock hard condition, she never put a foot wrong all day. Classic, feminine, wedge head with laughing dark eyes and neat ears, well-filled beneath the eye, excellent bone, good length of neck and well-laid shoulders. Compact body comprised of a good length of rib and short loin. Tail set high and tightly curled, excellent width across the thigh, correct rear angulation. On the move, she combined perfect foot timing with precision, moving out effortlessly with reach and drive and a level topline. Without any doubt, this beautifully put together bitch could hunt all day. CC & BOB. 2. Datta's Cakirjo Moonlight Shadow ShCM. Many of the same comments apply to this sound little bitch. Very similar to 1 in terms of topline, coat colour, bone and angulation. Attractive, feminine head, good tail, excellent breadth across the loin. She also moved very well. In the challenge, just preferred the length of leg of the winner. 3. Anthony's Ch. Norvin Snow Storm.

SWKA

13/10/2013

It is just two years since my last appointment, and although the entry here was much smaller than last time, as it often has been this year, it was large enough to use as a measure of where the breed is now. All of the dogs were new to me, with one exception. I was pleased that there are some promising young dogs coming up, which bodes well for the future of the breed. I think that most of us feel that there are not enough youngsters around, though, to make that future completely secure. Although there are still some differences in type, there seemed to be less variation in size, with all of the dogs falling within the acceptable range. I also felt that heads have improved, with less evidence of the incorrect bear-shaped head with its foreshortened muzzle and domed stop.

There were some issues. Last time I judged, I mentioned that white markings were creeping in, and this was more marked here. Cream or white cheeks are undesirable, as are spectacles, which rather spoil the expression. Although a small amount of white on the chest may be forgivable, large patches of white on the chest and feet are not. These markings should be penalised by judges, but it seems that nowadays, they are being ignored. The old breeders would have said that the white markings showed impurity in the blood, a throwback to crosses with the Swedish elkhound which at one time was seen as the same breed, until separate standards for each breed of elkhound were drawn up. Many of the early imports to this country were more of the Swedish elkhound type, and hence the early enthusiasts who developed the breed in this country were so keen to steer away from the white markings.

I still feel that breeders need to concentrate more on correct conformation, and less on 'glamour', whatever that is – I personally think that there is nothing more beautiful than a well-constructed dog on the move. Ours is a working breed, bred for endurance, with unexaggerated, moderate conformation. At no time when judging should I be thinking that a particular animal reminds me of another breed. Norwegian elkhounds are not German shepherds, keeshonds, akitas or buhunds, but, over the years, I have seen animals that remind me of each of those breeds. Some faults in construction could be seen in the dogs' movement. In some cases, dogs were throwing their hocks out to bring the feet under the body - artificially replicating singletracking from the hock joint downwards. Some of the dogs moved like rocking horses, with the topline breaking behind the withers and the shortened stride caused by upright shoulders and lack of drive. The lack of muscle-tone in some exhibits was evident, and nowhere more so than in the inner thigh. My principle winners were in super condition, and were a credit to their owners' hard work in conditioning them.

Puppy Dog (1, 0) 1. Eaves-Paull's Barbelka Uwaga. A very smart, eye-catching youngster, who excelled in type and proportions. Neat, dark ears; well-shaped head, though still to broaden a little; dark eyes with that little glimmer of something delightfully naughty. Correct coat, with the desired contrast between the darker guard hairs and the gleaming, clear undercoat. Compact outline, short loin, well set and curled tail. Pleasing width across the second thigh, well let-down hocks, moderate rear angulation, good bone, neat feet. Just needs to develop a little in the forechest. Moved well behind, just lifting his front feet a shade high in profile, which his handler did well to check.

Junior Dog (0, 0)

Post Graduate Dog (1, 0) 1. Borck & Bailey's Grasilva Uncle Sam. I liked this dog for his type and overall balance, and I really feel that he could do the job that he was bred to do. Pleasing head that will broaden with maturity, ears a little tall, but dark, would prefer a darker eye. Good body proportions, well ribbed back with short couplings, tail set high, close jacket, a little darker than is fashionable today. His chest has begun to drop, but his ribs are yet to spring, consistent with his age. Well-laid, sloping shoulders, giving a pleasing arch to his neck; adequate forechest, sufficient bone, elbows set in, with the slight bend to the pastern which provides shock absorption to the front assembly. Good, economical profile action, keeping his topline level, but just a shade close behind. RCC.

Limit Dog (3, 0) 1. Moughton & Wolstenholme's Bowerhinton Bellino at Dekris. This dog has something of the majesty and power of the great males of yesteryear. My first impression was one of soundness and virility, and his movement did nothing to disabuse me of this thinking. A very masculine, well-shaped head with neat, thick, dark ears and a medium brown eye, coat profuse and of good colour. Strong bone, good straight limbs and balanced angulation. Deep body, well-sprung ribs, moderate loin, would prefer slightly less tuck-up, tail set high and tightly curled. Well-laid shoulders and excellent width across the second thigh; easy, fluid movement; the muscles in his hindquarters, including the inner thigh, were firm, a testament to the owners' conditioning regime. He is in his prime, and I'm sure should soon make up. CC, BOB & Hound Group 3. 2. Grasilva Uncle Sam. 3. Crossley's Bowerhinton Benriach at Crossridge.

Open Dog (4, 2) 1. Grasilva Uncle Sam. 2. Croxford's Ch/Ir Ch Whittimere Pontiac ShCM. Excellent type, spot on for size and with good body proportions and bone. Well-marked and in gorgeous, full coat. Handsome head with dark ears and eyes, open and friendly expression. Good, deep chest, short loin, compact outline, well-set tail. A little upright in the pasterns, his front action was somewhat erratic, rather better going away.

Veteran Dog (0, 0)

Good Citizen Dog (1, 1)

Puppy Bitch (2, 0) 1. Allchin's Laakso Kia's Cracker of Carolon. A very sound young bitch, with a calm and collected temperament that belies her age. Lovely coat and correct markings. Well-proportioned head with dark ears, eyes and mask. Excellent front assembly and width across the chest, strong bone, feet a little untidy. Good depth of body, broad across the loin, just rising up a little in the rear at the moment. Her good shoulders were matched by equally good angulation at the rear, giving her excellent foot timing in profile. Her hocks were straight when viewed from behind, and she stood foursquare. BP & Hound Puppy Group 4. 2. Cowper's Rothenborg Nelle. This youngster had a very pretty head with neat ears that were dark, as were her eyes and mask. I liked her coat and colour, but her cheeks were somewhat pale. She did not have quite the layback of shoulder of 1, and was rather short in upper arm, causing her to stand with her front legs rather forward of her body and making her stride rather short in profile; at the rear, she stood with her hind legs spread, perhaps indicating a lack of static balance. Her tail was tightly curled over the centre of her back. I preferred her topline. She was quite compact, and I liked her neat feet.

Junior Bitch (1, 0) 1. Barganska's Barbelka Topaz. Rather racy in outline, and up-to-size. Well-proportioned, feminine head, which will develop with age, dark eyes and ears, adequate bone. Well ribbed back, short loin; needs to develop in the body, but that will come. Withers a little high, but otherwise a good topline and a well-carried tail; good width across the thigh, but rather long in the rear pasterns. Good, harsh jacket, but looked a little light in coat. On the move, a little wide in front, and throwing her hocks out slightly going away.

Post Graduate Bitch (3, 0) 1. Stokes' Kestos Octavia. What a lovely bitch! Very moderate in angulation and proportionate overall, with nothing jarring to the eye. A pretty, feminine head, dark ears, a medium-coloured eye giving a kind expression – her temperament was just as sweet. Compact outline, excellent length of leg to body ratio, well-laid shoulders and a level topline; tail set high and tightly curled. Her pleasing front assembly was

matched by her equally good hindquarters; her movement, as I expected, was light, easy and economical. Out of coat on the day, she just felt a little light all through going over her – in full coat, she would be unbeatable. This is a bitch that I would love to own. RCC. 2. Barbelka Topaz. 3. Brown's Grasilva Premiere Rose.

Limit Bitch (2, 0) 1. Stokes' Kestos Ziva. Another excellent type, compact and pleasing in profile and with good proportions. Quite a solidly made bitch, well-muscled, with a good width across the loin and strong bone. Level topline and good underline, with very little tuck-up. Her head was attractive, but she did not quite have the flowing lines through the shoulders and neck of her younger kennelmate; she also had slightly more angulation in the rear. Her movement in profile was good. She was a good colour, but her harness markings were a little indistinct. Very close up to the main winners. 2. Cowper's Steldawn Alltoplayfor of Rothenborg. Returned to the ring after maternal duties, the lay of this bitch's coat still showed the tell-tale signs of her pregnancy, but her undercoat was just as clear and lovely as before, and she was well-marked. A taller, rangier bitch than 1, I preferred her hind angulation. I liked her feminine head, her length of neck and topline. Her tail was well set on, and her bone adequate. Her profile action was good, and she moved well going away; she was not quite so positive coming towards me, her pasterns rather upright.

Open Bitch (3, 0) 1. Greaves & Croxford's Ch/Ir Ch Ennafort The One And Only ShCM. You need to get your hands on this bitch to appreciate her fully. Quite a strong, wedge-shaped head, with medium-brown eyes, and neat dark ears. In full coat, she looked a little heavy across the withers at first glance, but the hand revealed a well-laid pair of shoulders and a longer neck than had been apparent. The plush jacket was a beautiful colour. Well-developed body, strong and broad throughout, with a short loin and a well-carried tail. Excellent bone and good width across the thigh; in hard condition. On the move, she blew the competition in this class away – foot perfect, singletracking action, particularly good from the rear. CC, her topline just dipping slightly in the challenge for BOB. 2. Cowper's Ch Rothenborg Leaha. Rather different in type to 1, but smart and eye-catching. A well-shaped, feminine head, the expression rather marred by her markings and the ears a little light. Pleasing coat and colour. Good shoulders, giving a flowing line from neck to topline; a good underline, well-developed body and moderate loin; tail tightly curled. Rather acutely angulated through the stifles, and tended to stand and move sickle hocked. 3. Barganska's Ch Barbelka Nowinka JW.

Veteran Bitch (0, 0)

Good Citizen Bitch (1, 1)