

IRISH WOLFHOUND CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW 2008

This was an appointment I had been looking forward to for three years. It didn't disappoint. I feel I must say something about the new venue, from my point of view as the judge on the day. Yes, it is a little on the small side but the positives are that the surface is superb, no excuses here for poor movement, or feet slipping even when standing, and the lighting was great. The atmosphere was excellent, certainly from inside the ring, the spectators seemed to join in more and there was plenty of applause, which is heartening.

I certainly enjoyed the day which was mostly due to the good entry of quality hounds. I was sad about the absentees but thanks for the calls and emails after the show from some of the absentee exhibitors, and also for your entries. There seemed to be a sporting atmosphere for which I was very pleased.

I found many very good hounds, but times don't change, it has been said many times over many years that our breed lacks quality in depth, and I do have to agree to some extent, also movement as always, would benefit from some improvement. Whilst I did give quite a lot of leeway to sluggishness, I did not give any leeway to unsound movement. Many hounds which looked typical standing had really poor or incorrect movement, short steps, dishing, paddling, pinning in or too wide, and many were very close behind, these problems would inhibit one hour of hunting never mind a full day, and anyway is not typical for our breed, so their placing or lack of, reflected that. On the whole dentition was acceptable. Whilst I can ignore one misplaced tooth or even a couple of dropped lower incisors, undershot or with teeth already worn down in a youngish hound is a fault in my book. I have not commented on dentition in the write up.

I tried to judge to type, which is the most important and I found it in most classes, and pleased that in both sexes a type was represented in my line up. A mongrel can hunt and move very well, but our breed must still exhibit its breed type. If this is correct good movement should follow I looked for hounds that looked as though they could do the job, so providing the dog was built more or less correctly and moved soundly I had to forgive lack of zeal which was very evident.

I found little difference to the quality in dogs and bitches. Lack of muscle was evident, this breed requires substance and muscle but should still resemble a hunter.

Puppy Dog

1 Wilkinson's HUNACRES KLARK GABLE Just 10 months, lovely head, dark eyes, well held ears. Strong neck of good length, shoulders OK but would prefer better layback of upper arm. Would prefer better spring of ribs and he is rather long in loin but as he fills and drops my look more balanced, well angulated hindquarter, good bone but as yet hasn't learned what to do with his legs. He is a typical but a very raw puppy and has a lot to do, so patience may be required.

2 Wilkinson's HUNACRES KOLE PORTER Litter brother to 1, similar in some areas, head as good but spoiled by large, flat ears. Would prefer better shoulders and topline, he lacks rise, however, this can sometimes improve with maturity, movement is uncoordinated and erratic, like his brother he has to get his act together. Will be interested to watch how these two mature.

3 Morris & Trethowan's BRAEWISAN CONAN 11 MONTH. Cream, has grown tall and has lost his shape, but hopefully just for now. Attractive head well proportioned with dark eyes so important in the colour dog. Shoulders are just about OK but topline is hunched and he lacks bone and angulation, which I do feel and hope is a growth stage, and no doubt time will improve him.

Junior Dog

1 Amoo's BOKRA WALLACE TO SADE 17 months. He certainly fills the ring literally; a very big dog. Head proportions OK an expression is kind. He is a handsome chap, with a strong long neck into

good shoulders, has forechest although he stands a little too upright in front at present, hope this settles as he matures. He has excellent depth for his age, well ribbed back and very substantial, and is very strong though his loin. He flows well, no angles, width all through and although tall has not lost his shaped, good bone and strong legs. Moves freely enough allowing for the fact he is still a little stiff in hocks, hopefully when he lets down behind and develops more width to his stifle his balance for and aft will be better matched, and will give him more drive off his hocks. This said, his movement is true front and rear and he has plenty of energy, just needs one or two small tweaks to complete the picture, which will hopefully happen as he matures. Certainly a dog of quality.

2 Holder & Howe's MASCOTTS MY EMPEROR Only 13 months so had a lot to give away in this class. Black, very typical, lovely head, well furnished, has dark eyes with kind expression. Strong neck and good shoulders, has depth, but he is shorter in leg for length of body so looks slightly unbalanced at present, and he is very young so still has some growing to do, hopefully the balance will happen naturally with maturity, but he moves out very well and is true from all angles, a dog to watch.

3 Wilkinson's HUNACRES KOLE PORTER He is very young to be in the company and was really out of his depth with 1 and 2.

Yearling Dog

1 Burt-Hughes's WINDSPRAY DANTE'S SONATA 24 months today. Very houndy, medium build with just enough bone for size. Head is a little broad and would prefer darker and better shaped eyes but profile view OK. He has a very elegant appearance with a long neck into good shoulders, has a shapely houndy outline and is well ribbed back. Sweeping quarters and plenty of daylight under him, however his close coated and houndy body has room for a little more substance, that would make him appear more mature and masculine for his age, his tail did float somewhat but was not high and he moves well and is sound.

2 Clarke's RIVENHOUND STEEPLECHASER 19 months. Well grown, well boned hound with a kind, soft expression, ears a little flat. A strong dog looking reasonably well balanced height to length ratio but spoiled slightly by being a bit too heavy so losing his underline, this is also not helped by the fact he has a heavy coat, losing the houndy appearance of the hunter. However he does hold his topline on the move, is well muscled with width and depth and moved out soundly all views. A dog of good type who takes your eye.

3 Dawson's PLEASEAC CAMEMBERG BY SHALICO Not yet 13 months so had a lot to give away in both junior where he was VHC and this class of well grow coming to two years olds. Lovely head and ears, kind and soft expression, ample bone for his medium size. Has depth and shape. I imagine he is going through an awkward growth stage at present which showed in his movement, which although sound coming and going side gait lacked length making it too busy.

Novice Dog

1 Tebbutt's CAREDIG GALILEO Well grown 19 months. Stood out in this company for maturity, general condition and musculature. He does present a good picture although for perfection I would like a better set on of croup, it can look too steep. Profile head view is good and expression is kind. Strong neck of adequate length, lay back of shoulder is fine but shoulders could fit more snugly to the ribcage so reducing the slightly to much width between elbows, but his upper arm is of good length. He has depth and width all through, well muscled, strong and firm through loin, his movement although true and sound was slightly uncontrolled, but I felt this was more to do with handling than conformation, but it does need addressing. He is an eye catching dog of commanding appearance and quality.

2 Clarke's RIVENHOUND STEEPLECHASER

3 Pain & Hillier's RAVENSBECH CINCINATTI Just under 13 months, so a lot to give away in this class. Super head and ear set, typical kind soft expression. Strong neck of good length, into adequate lay of shoulders. Upper arm of decent length, would prefer more forechest, depth and width all

through, although he is well ribbed back, and he is very young, so hopefully he just needs tie and to let down behind, he looked out of his depth in this class, Moved out well with good side gait.

Post Graduate Dog

1 Pinkney's HYDEBECK DEMETRIUS Now at his best at 3¾ years. Typical well proportioned head and expression, dark eyes, with long neck into well laid shoulders, adequate forechest, he has depth and width all through, strong through loin, he held his topline on the move. Broad sweeping well angulated hindquarters, wide stifles, strong one and well muscled, moved very well true all ways, presents a good picture.

2 Timmins's CORNOVI CATO Anther at his best at 3¾ years. A dog I have admired for some time, he has matured into a handsome wolfhound, masculine typical head and expression, classic outline, well angulated front and rear, well ribbed back with depth and width all through, strong bone and moves out very well, but unfortunately disappointingly today, his tail was just too gay and high flying, which does so spoil the outline and elegance of our breed when on the move, and I could not forgive it today at a show of high standing and quality exhibits, such a pity.

3 Wilson's HYDEBECK LISTER LEEMAN AT DRAGONMOOR 2½ years. Masculine tall well built dog. Typical head soft expression, good length of strong neck into adequate lay of shoulders, would prefer less space between elbows. He has plenty of substance and muscle, long ribbing, but he is more angular and 1 and 2 although dog not to be ignored. He has depth and width all through and a defined underline, and has a good side and rear gait but a bit too wide coming towards.

Mid Limit Dog

For this class I had to ignore movement as most were very sluggish and some untypical.

1 Kenis-Pordham's SOLSTRAND WOLF BLASS Almost 3 years. Typical and handsome dog with a wonderful head and expression. Well grown, I good harsh goat. Has a strong arched neck into good shoulders, depth and width all through. Well ribbed back, strong through loins, broad hindquarters with well angulated rear, but lacked enthusiasm on the move.

2 Webb's CLESEAC CAPT'N GARY HAWKINS OF INKLEBOYS 2½ years. Attractive head, good pigmentation important in this colour. Would prefer slightly more length of neck for perfection, shoulder not too bad, reasonable return of upper arm and has depth and width all through and is very well muscled, not a bad dog at all, but like others in this class movement was not inspiring.

3 Vaudin's HOLLYHENGE WILLY HARRYSSON FROM TORTEVAL 3½ years, so now mature. Tall dog, very well built. Very deep in chest making him appear unbalanced in front, maybe too much coat here which needs some tidying to streamline him. Plenty of width and depth, but would like a longer second thigh and better let down behind, showing some drive off his hocks but again, same as the rest of the class, not a wonderful mover today.

Limit Dog

1 McConnell's HYDEBECK MENALOUS Almost 3½ years and he did catch my eye. He has matured very well into a well balanced typical hound who certainly challenged for the RCC. Lovely head and expression, well coated although maybe a bit too much, it could do with some attention to show off his hound outline. Good bone, strong neck of correct length, well angulated and lay of shoulders, correct outline, depth and width all through strong board croup and well angulated hind quarters, he flows from head to toe. He moves soundly, steadily and true and looks as though he could go all day.

2 McHugh's ANSTYARNA RUADA TO MADIAMOY 5 years and mature now. An attractive hound, head planes very good with dark pigment and lovely expression. I would also like less coat on this hound, it makes him look heavy and not houndy. However he is a good dog, with strong bone and is well muscled with a good outline, board quarters and moved out soundly and with verve.

3 Tebbutt's WITCHESBROOM WIRION CAREDIG 2¼ years. Strong dog catches one's eye as he enters the ring, however he didn't flow today. He is well muscled and strong with good forechest and

depth, width all through and very well muscled, but lacks the smooth flowing outline. He was crabbing on the move and looked close behind today, although his side gait showed scope.

Open Dog

1 Pain's CH CONCHOBAR FANCY FREE TO RAVENSBEECH (IMP ITA) 3½ years, mature now and well grown, with commanding appearance. Proudly carried lovely classic head, well held rose ears, long strong neck into good shoulders. Well developed with good bone and feet, spring of rib and well ribbed back, length of loin OK. Has depth and correct underline, enough width all through and correct angle of croup and sweep to hindquarters, stands over a lot of ground, no exaggerations. Well angulated front and rear presenting a flowing outline, he moved out steadily with true and collected gait all angles. Sometimes he can look a tad longer in back than perfection, but he is a very good example and ambassador of the breed.

2 Pask's BARONGLEN THE JAYWALKER Just 4 years and this dog has blossomed with maturity. His shape, strength, musculature and type means he cannot be ignored. Looking at the standing dogs this was a close contest. 1 won on movement. Like 1, this dog can also appear a little long in back, but his substance makes up for it. For type they are both very close. Typical head and expression although ears could be a shade neater. Strong neck into good shoulders, deep body and lovely outline, well ribbed back, with strength all through and firm loin, this dog was the best muscled dog of the day, with width and depth, he is a sound mover, correct coming and going but so lacks enthusiasm, wants to be somewhere else. He is another dog of commanding appearance and a good ambassador of the breed.

3 Simpson's AMARACH MELAGHLIN OF TATTEREDGOWN 2¾ years, so still more to do to reach maturity. He is a good type of medium build and lighter in bone, has a upper outline, presenting a well balanced hound although maybe slightly better spring of rib would improve. Attractive head and expression, good length of neck with arch, he has sufficient depth and width for his build, although would prefer slightly shorter loin. He is balanced front and rear and is well let down behind. He moves out very well and soundly, he looks like he could go all day. To me he seems very immature for his age particularly in this class and competition Interested to see him in another 12 months when he should have reached maturity.

Veteran Dog

1 Sanders' ARDMACHA CORMAC AT SANDERSTOWN 7½ years. In good condition. Typical head and expression, front angulation OK and well bodied, has depth and width. Well muscled and very active movement showing enthusiasm but does fly his tail. A grand veteran.

Puppy Bitch

1 Harpwood's KILFENORA SPIRIT OF THE SEA AT FINLOREN Just turned 6 months and so pretty and she knows it. She fills the ring when she enters. Beautiful head with correct planes, soft expression, well held rosebud ears. Good shoulder and front assembly with a lovely outline and angulation, just right and so well balanced. Extra long tail which she carries correctly when she moves out, so steadily and soundly, Such elegance in such a youngster. Really promising.

2 Simpson's TATTEREDGOWN TRUCE Almost 11 months. Well bodied, attractive youngster but I would prefer better shoulders and set on of front assembly. General outline quite good and she has well turned hindquarters but still has a lot to do, movement OK.

3 Trethowan's BRAEWISAN AIBREAUN Almost 12 months. Much taller youngster, so may well take much longer to come together. Would prefer better lay of shoulders but she has good depth and width. Topline needs to settle down and hopefully will with maturity. Moves quite well.

Junior Bitch

1 Johnson's NELLWYNS MS ELIZA DOOLITTLE Just turned 12 months. Beautiful bitch, classic head with wonderful expression. Very feminine. Well balanced with a super flowing outline, not

angles, no exaggerations. Well laid shoulders and well angled front assembly with enough forechest. Correct topline and depth of chest, well ribbed back with a well defined correct tuck-up with firm strong loin with sweeping broad hindquarters. Good width through stifle. Movement true front, rear and side gait with plenty of scope. Very promising bitch.

2 Surrell & Coleman's BOKRA WINDCHYME Almost 16 months. Another really lovely bitch, a close decision for 1 and 2 which was made on minor points. Very well balanced, classic head and expression, long strong neck with super front assembly with plenty of forechest, strong with depth and width all through, super outline, presents a lovely picture of strength with elegance, moved soundly but not quite the drive of 1.

3 Donaldson's RAVENSBECH CAMARILLO Just 12 months of age. Very houndy rangy type and shows promise. Lovely head, well laid shoulders and adequate front assembly, correct outline, just needs to take her time to fill out as she matures. Holds her outline on the move which is sound and reachy but a little close behind.

Yearling Bitch

1 Burt-Hughes's WINDSPRAY NOCTURNE Just 24 months today, litter sister to winner of junior dog. These two littermates are more workmanlike and plainer than I normally go for, but I could not ignore their soundness and general conformation. She is a houndy, athletic looking youngster, medium bone and perhaps I would prefer more width through second this and hock, but is more substantial all through than her brother, without losing her elegance. Well proportioned but plain head, eyes could be darker and ears could be neater, but she carries her head proudly. Her front and rear assembly are well put together and adequate angulation, she has depth and is well ribbed back, and has plenty of daylight under her, with a lovely flowing outline. She is a steady sound mover.

2 Sumner's BALLYPHELAN JENNI JONES 21 months of age and actually looking more my type. She is a lovely balanced hound, pretty head of excellent type, strong neck of correct length, good shoulders and depth with forechest, she is well ribbed back. Has good bone and in super coat, however she was standing looking a little high over the loin making her croup too steep which affected her movement which today was short stepping, but sound and true coming and going, so hopefully this is just a development stage, she is after all only just out of her teens and looks young still.

3 Pateman's NELLWYNS MISS JANIS JAY Just 12 months, very pretty bitch and also very noisy. I don't think I remember a wolfhound as noisy in the ring. She is obviously a very loved pet! Typical head, very kind expression. Lay back of shoulder adequate and she has a good outline, a rangy type, but she needs to settle down when in the ring and learn what is expected of her, but she is only very young so I am sure she will learn to cope. Good sweep to her hindquarters. Movement sound enough.

Novice Bitch

1 Thornton's MOCHRAS OTTALINE 2¾ years. Tall bitch with a lovely head, very typical with kind expression Well laid shoulders although slightly more forechest would please, upper arm of OK length and set on, she does have depth and width all through with a pleasing outline although a more defined underline would suit her, as she still looks quite young although well balanced and stylish, with correct rear angulation and moves true and very soundly and with verve.

2 Tebbutt's CAREDIG GRACE 19 months. Another lovely bitch who challenged for 1st. Good head and expression, well laid shoulders but a little too wide in front and would prefer a better lay of upper arm. She has depth and width with a good underline. Lighter n bone but adequate for her size, her movement was a bit erratic and a little wide coming towards.

3 Holder & Howe's NELLWYNS MISS ELLA Just 12 months so giving a lot away in this class. Litter sister to junior bitch winner but not the outline and balance yet, time will tell. Very pretty, typical head and expression with correct proportions, good shoulders, has depth and good bone, but high behind at present spoiling her topline and angulation to her rear which was standing straight, although she moves out soundly.

Post Graduate Bitch

1 Tebbutt's CUALAINN PSYCHE CAREDIG 2½ years. Lovely bitch. Very headstrong who needs to be taken under control, it spoilt her changes to go further today. Classic head proportions and expression, still feminine. Super neck into very well angulated shoulders and return of upper arm, depth of chest with forechest, and a lovely outline, strength, depth and width all through, very well muscled. Super strong well angulated hindquarters, good width of stifle, standing foursquare. I could not ignore her for 1st, she has wonderful ring presence but she is uncontrolled on the move and her competition will become stronger and controlled so she must also be.

2 Surrell & Coleman's BOKRA VALENCIA Also 2½ years. This really was a very close decision, she is a really lovely type. Super front assembly, correct outline and depth, is well balanced and moves very soundly and controlled although not the drive from behind, but a very stylish bitch to be proud of and who I couldn't ignore.

3 Goodson's MORALACH LIL WEE BIT O JOY 19 months. Another lovely type, this was a good class. She is very typical, with a feminine classy head and kind expression. Long neck into good shoulders. Has a very good outline and is filling out nicely now, she comes into her own on the move which has scoped covering the ground without effort and is sound all angles.

Mid Limit Bitch

1 Harvey's CUALAINN PERSIA 2½ years and litter sister to winner of PG Bitch, but a different type completely. Classy head with soft expression, strong neck of correct length. Shoulders are well laid and she has some forechest, topline is OK albeit a little flat, she does stand a little square so some more sweeping curves would perfect the picture. She is controlled and moves out well and very soundly but does not have the ring presence of her sister but a bitch of quality.

2 Smith-King's BRIBIBA DESTINY OF SCOTLAND 2½ years. Head proportions are good although ears are a little long, she has a kind expression. Strong neck of good length into good shoulders although would prefer more forechest. She has depth and width but topline is a bit hollow with her rise being over the pin bones rather than the loin, perhaps more musculature would help here. However she moves out well and soundly.

3 Vaudin's BRIBIBA HERMIONE OF TORTEVAL 6¼ years. She has a lovely head but spoilt by large ears, a good neck into rather upright shoulders, she has depth and width all through, but stands a bit too high through loin which tucks her up behind and spoils her movement.

Limit Bitch

1 Pain's RAVENSBEECH BRITTANICA Almost 3 years and maturing. She is a close coated bitch who looks slighter than she is, she is substantial and well muscled. Head proportions correct but her head is on the plain side, some furnishing would make such a difference, but she has a lovely kind calm expression and well held ears. Long strong neck into super shoulders and good length of upper arm, although a little more forechest would make a difference, medium bone and excellent feet, she has depth and is ribbed well back, with width and strong firm loin. Sweeping hindquarters well let down, she is a very stylish lady with a lovely outline who moves very well side gait and coming but is close behind.

2 MacLeod's BRACHAN BUSTED KHIA 3¼ years old and just off a litter of 14 weeks, and she looks fantastic, still well muscled and has a lovely outline too. This was quite a close decision as they are not dissimilar. She is a slightly larger made lady with more coat and furnishings. Classy head and expression, super neck and front assembly with correct angulation fore and aft. Strong bone but front feet not quite as good as 1. She has good depth and width and considering her litter she has almost tightened up her underline already. She has sweeping quarters, moves out soundly and true all ways but at present does not have the enthusiasm to move out with verve.

3 Vaudin's BROLLACHAN REALLY IRISH IN TORTEVAL (IMP CZE) Almost 3 years. A nice type, typical head and expression, shoulder lay adequate, she has depth but stands a little too high behind

which spoils her outline and she has not let down behind sufficiently so her movement is a little stilted, although true enough front and rear.

Open Bitch

1 Johnson's CH MASCOTTS MISS MARPLE 5½ years and not looked better. She filled my eyes as soon as she moved into the rig. She is ageing very elegantly. Lovely classic head well furnished. Strong neck of correct length, good shoulders and adequate return of upper arm, has plenty of depth and width all through, still with good tuck up and rise over strong firm loin, making a lovely outline, broad sweeping hindquarters, she flows from head to toe, not angles on her at all. A lovely elegant mature wolfhound, moving out well true from all angles with reach and drive from a well angulated well let down rear, and she carried her log well covered tail correctly.

2 Tebbutt's CH CAREDIG HEGARTY 3½ years and mature. Not dissimilar in type to 1 but perhaps not quite so well balanced which decided the results which was a close call. A lovely type, with a super head, well proportioned. Well angulated shoulders and upper arm of good length, she has forechest with depth and width all through, a very strong substantial bitch who has a good topline with rise over loin, strength all through, but her underline is not quite so defined. She has sweeping well muscled quarters with width through stifle and hocks and is well let down so showed good drive, showing a super side gait and true front and rear.

3 Amoo's SADE JYNNX 3¾ years. A lovely bitch but slightly different type, plainer in head although proportions are good, she has a very good front assembly with forechest and depth of chest and enough width for her build, but not quite the rear angulation or width of quarters and stifle to balance with her front, so slightly spoiling the overall picture for perfection. She moves true all ways but not let down sufficiently behind to give that extra rear propulsion and drive off the hocks to complete the picture of power.

Veteran Bitch

A lovely class of typical ladies of the same age and all deserving to be considered, so decisions were made on finer points.

1 Downes & Waring's DOWNWARES IMPASSIONED Born Aug 2000. In excellent condition, who moved as well as many of the youngsters. Age has certainly improved her. She has a beautiful head and the softest expression, superb ears not often spotted these days. Well constructed and depth and width, lovely outline, well muscled, good bone and good tight feet, she has width all through with sweeping broad quarters, well muscled and wide stifles and she moved out with determination and verve.

2 Catlow's LAOISEACH FLORAGH Born July 2000. Upstanding bitch in good condition, lovely head and expression, lighter bone and slightly finer type to 1. Not quite the correct topline but has depth. Very elegant and moved true enough.

3 Stayte's MALLANIGH LILY AT CARWENWY Born Aug 2000. Nice type too with a lovely head, long neck into adequate shoulders, she has depth although her topline is not what it was but she is still a lovely example of the breed and moved out well.

Jean Malley