

IRISH WOLFHOUND CLUB OPEN SHOW 2007

It was a privilege and honour to receive such a marvellous entry for the IWC Open Show.

Many thanks are due to the IW committee and members for the invitation and opportunity to spend a brilliant day going over this beautiful breed. Thanks also to the sporting exhibitors (who after all make the show what it is!) and heartfelt appreciation to the team of dedicated, efficient and capable stewards who kept everything running smoothly.

In general, I was looking for typical hounds capable of galloping and covering ground efficiently but also, importantly, I wanted to see hounds with the look of a hunter about them, powerful, strong and muscular under the hand and therefore capable of doing the job they were bred for.

I know far more experienced and knowledgeable breeders have previously mentioned poor front construction after judging our breeds and on the day this was my structural headache as well. The dreaded terrier front much in evidence with a short upright upper arm placing the elbows forward in line with the throat often accompanied by the hound taking all their weight backwards onto the hindquarters as if unable to stand with any weight over their front limbs. Some hounds were very challenging to assess as I found them hounds of two halves ie good in rear construction, topline, underline etc but with the misfortune of a shunted forward front leaving the hound unbalanced structurally overall. Muscle tone in a lot of hounds could be vastly improved – I expected to feel lots of hard, tone muscular thighs and second thighs – in some there was no muscle evident to tone. The muscle overlying the skeletal structure has to be bred for before it can be toned to produce an athletic, powerful, galloping hound.

On the day I favoured the hounds before me which to my eye best met the breed standard, possessed sufficient strength and were balance structurally front and rear which enabled them to move easily and actively round the ring.

For my general overview, I found temperaments to be excellent and all hounds – even the puppies at their first show – stood up proudly to be handled. A few hounds were strong willed and fidgety which is an entirely different disposition and not to be confused with nervous, fearful hounds sometimes encountered. Heads were very good universally, lots of dark expressive eyes, perfect black pigmentation and small well carried ears. Only one or two marginally incorrect tooth placements – no overshot or undershot jaws. Feet, coats, tail carriage and movement also very pleasing.

Puppy Dog

1 Gregory's KILLOUGHERY THE MAVERICK Tall Rangy cream brindle puppy with a beautiful head, kindest of expressions with perfect black pigmentation. Ong neck set well onto nicely laid back shoulder. Moderately angled both ends at the moment but at 11 months wouldn't expect any different. Standing proudly on his well boned long limbs and beautifully schooled to move confidently and accurately from all angles around the ring.

2 Pain's RAVENSBEACH CINCINITTI One size smaller red brindle dog puppy again with a handsome, classic and so typical head and expression. Strong neck, fair shoulder, good spring of ribs carried well back giving him the perfect length of loin to couple onto his strong hindquarters. Well off for bone and muscle even at this tender age which gives the impression of strength to come. Another puppy taking this show all in his stride confidently doing all that was asked of him. Just flipping his front feet on the day and rather empty in his forechest but gain he's an even younger puppy and at only 7 months the baby of the class.

3 Guntrip's AINSEA THE LANCER Really classic quality dark brindle dog puppy. Super headpiece nicely furnished with excellent length and strength of muzzle. Soft expressive dark eyes. Long neck

moderate angulation both ends at the moment. He stands on big, heavily boned, strong, straight front limbs. Has depth of chest, spring of rib and substance through his body. Less houndy over his top and underlines than those who stood above him today. Handsome prospect.

Junior Dog

1 Warwick's CAIRSTORM FIRST EDITION Really well grown grey brindle male hound. Very masculine in his outlook. He dominates the ring by his presence. Again good, typical wolfhound head with strength of muzzle. Exceptional neck arch – one of the few in the entry. Really nice shoulder, long upper arm keeping his elbows back underneath his body. Strong well boned limbs. Absolutely balanced front to rear with ribs well back and correct length of loin. Sweeping hindquarters complete the picture. All he had to do was move and he did! Easy, active, powerful.

2 Clarke's RIVENHOUND STEEPLECHASER Really handsome young cream dog. Absolutely charming head and soft expression with perfect black pigment which is so attractive with this oat colour. Another hound with a long, strong neck, good shoulder and front assembly. Substantial in his bone and muscular development he feels really fit under the hand. Good spring of rib, depth of chest and powerful hindquarters with really nice width of stifle when viewed from behind. More mature than his age suggest and only outclassed by the presence and form of the winner on the day.

Yearling Dog

1 Tebbutt's WITCHESBROOM WIRION CAREDIG Really powerful looking young dog absolutely masculine in his form and construction. Strong typical head with strength in his muzzle. Soft expression but possessing that distant gaze which establishes him as a real hunter in the making. Strong neck, good shoulder, long upper ar. Solid well bone limbs standing on good tight feet Excellent spring of rib with depth of chest extending his sternum back along his underline to accommodate optimum heart and lung capacity Long femurs leading onto nice low knees and well let down hocks complete the picture. Really fit and well up to the job he was bred for.

2 Wilson's HYDEBECK LISTER LEEMAN AT DRAGONMOOR Strikingly well balanced young grey brindle dog. Very impressive in profile with his typical galloping hound outline. Classic head, kindest of expressions, neatest of ears. Strong neck, good shoulder and long upper are perhaps set a shade forward Really good depth and spring of ribs, underline and topline with a well set and carried tail to finish. Lot out to 1 by standing moving elbows wide on the day.

3 Riley & Thomas's BALLYPHELAN MALLACHI Quality dog hound and another young hunter in the making. Masculine, strong head, Fair neck and shoulder placement. Developing nicely through body with long strongly bone limbs. Bit of a handful for his handler today but long string, sound mover in profile.

Special Beginners Dog

Novice Dog

1 Boyne's SOLSTRAND YAMUNGO OF BRINDECKEL Standing alone but pleased to be able to give him this first place having seen him in the puppy class. Dark brindle dog puppy of quality, tall and rangy. He's open in his angulation both front and rear today but at 10 months of age very forgivable. Really nice arch on long, strong neck. Already has depth to his chest and stands over a lot of ground on long limbs. Good coat to finish and well turned out.

Post Graduate Dog

1 Pinkney's HYDEBECK DEMETRIUS Classic quality grey brindle wolfhound and another unmistakable male hound. Beautiful well furnished balanced head with perfect pigment and neat, well placed and carried ears. Long neck well set on good shoulder. Galloping hound outline in profile with exceptionally good hindquarters with well let down stifles and neat low hocks. Top class harsh coat. Super ground covering side gait on the move.

2 Pursglove's COIREDubh CORROI FROM ROGUESMOOR Typical grey brindle dog hound with particularly attractive head planes. Correct length and strength of muzzle and really nicely furnished to finish. A balanced hound in his conformation front and rear he feels much stronger under the hand than he first appears. Standing on lovely long boned limbs with his elbows underneath him on super tight, arched feet. On the day he just couldn't quite match the presence drive and length of stride of the hound placed in front of him.

3 Neal's FAIGAI GHOST STEPS AT CAHMEGA Substantial dog hound maturing nicely. Well presented with handsome head and expression. Sound straight limbs. Not in any way overdone so he doesn't immediately catch your eye but a honest hound with much to commend.

Limit Dog

1 Cole and Sheppard's CULKEERAN CHASE Lovely cream brindle mature hound who catches your eye as soon as he comes into the ring. Watching him move on his first lap makes you all the more keen to get hands on and I was not disappointed. Strong masculine head with soft expressive kind eyes, perfect pigment on eyelids lips and great bit black nose. Particularly strong and muscular neck with a real arched crest at the top graduating down to his sloping shoulders. Good spring of rib with plenty of depth giving him all the necessary heart and lung room. He feels absolutely solid under the hand and stands on well boned supportive straight front limbs. Beautifully schooled and handled his movement was ground covering and active and he owned the ring with his presence. Well deserved Best Dog and BIS.

2 Tebbutt's WITCHESBROOM WIRION CAREDIG

3 McHugh's ANSTYARNA RUADA TO MADIAMOY Substantial workmanlike male hound with much to like. Feels solid under the hand. Really calm attitude to his showing, giving evidence of a nice temperament. Strong male had, good eyes and pigment. Good shoulder and front assembly. Super depth of chest and spring of ribs carried well back. Great heavily boned limbs with real width across his pelvis. Well presented and shown.

Open Dog

Three top class dogs all of which I liked for different reasons.

1 Gilbert's ANSTYARNA MR SCHLOEMP Grey brindle dog hound really substantial to go over. Balanced in his angulation front and rear, he's a powerful mature dog who looks like he could do the job he was bred for. Nice head, correct expression, ears could be smaller and better held. Massive well boned legs, deep capacious body, strong hindquarters with nicely bent stifles. Real hunter on the move in his side profile.

2 Neal's CAHMEGA MAHLOO Dark brindle dog hound who well combines size with quality. A commanding appearance topped by a handsome head, dark eye and strong jaw. Ears as the first placed, could be smaller and better held. Good fronted dog with well laid shoulders and long upper arm returning well under the body allowing him to stand solidly over his front limbs on good feet. Good depth of chest, spring of rib and loin arch, curving hindquarters with nicely bent stifles. Marginally lacking in second thigh which resulted in less power and accuracy behind when moving but still a very impressive long striding dog in profile.

3 Pask's BARONGLEN THE JOURNEYMAN Handsome dog of real quality and a hound that really caught my eye with his classic galloping hound outline. Perfection over his top and underlines with spot on angulation behind. Not co-operating with his handler today and insisted on pushing his weight backwards in the stance and short striding in profile. Gave him extra change to sort himself out but just off form on the day.

Puppy Bitch

What a class! I needed more cards and those placed could easily change places another day.

1 Tebbutt's CAREDIG FFIASCO Top class puppy as I see her breeding suggests. Really hard work for her handler as she's so wilful but gorgeous! Top quality headpiece, dark eye, length and strength

of muzzle. Beautiful furnishings very feminine, well set and carried ear. Fair shoulder, lovely long upper arm with good return setting her elbows nicely under her body. Good spring of rib with that most attractive sternum carried well back along her underline. Powerful sweeping hindquarters with nicely bent stifles and neat low hocks. What else is there to say – I loved her and she's a little powerhouse as she covers the ground easily and actively.

2 Hawkins's CAREDIG FREYA Litter sister to 1 and so close up in all departments. Again, quality head with length and strength of muzzle. Beautiful black points with perfect pigment. Strong neck, really good lay back of shoulder. Plenty of fill in forechest with a long upper arm. Already a deep chest with capacious ribbing. On the day, marginally longer in the loin than her litter sister but her equal in power, activity and strength. Please, if possible, invest in more ring training as she's stunning.

3 Pask's SOLSTRAND YELENA OF BARONGLEN Very pretty bitch, ultra feminine and absolutely charming to go over. Lovely head, neck and shoulder. Fair upper arm. Long straight front limbs. Fair depth of chest and good ribbing for age. By comparison she was lighter in condition under the hand on the day than those placed above her but a quality puppy nonetheless and ultra sound mover.

Junior Bitch

1 Sheppard's CAIRSTORM FABLE OF GOLDSWIFT Tall but feminine cream bitch with very pretty head, super pigment and neat little rose shaped ears. Long strong neck, good shoulders, long upper arm placing elbows tidily underneath her. Standing proudly on her long, straight, well boned forelimbs with perfect, well arched and padded feet. Good depth of chest, topline and tailset. Not cooperating 100% with her handler today, she's obviously got a mind and will of her own.

2 Richardson's BALLYPHELAN CADI HUW Quality bitch with good head planes, perfectly feminine in her outlook. Neat and tidy well placed/held ears, strong muscular neck. Fair shoulder, very good length and placement of upper arm. Another hound standing soundly over her forelimbs. Marginally upright in stifle and standing higher behind than in front today, but a 16 months she has plenty of time to soften and even up.

Yearling Bitch

1 Gregory's KILLOUGHERY AINE Classy, workmanlike, real quality young bitch and an absolute hunter in the making. Gorgeous dark eye, soft expression, rose ears. Strong muscular neck, nice lay back of shoulder, long upper arm with good fill in forechest. Galloping hound outline which is so attractive and overall in hard muscular condition liked she could run all day and finish the job to boot.

2 Trethowan's BRAEWISAN BLAITHNAID Another good headed young bitch, well put together. She is nicely balanced, has a good front, deep chest and strong hindquarters. Her fault is her self-will and she is absolutely determined not to show herself to any advantage and give her handler a really hard time. Such a shame as she has a lot to offer.

3 McCall's MCLIGHT CHERRY Made up a trio of sound moving bitches but this young bitch does everything she can to hide her virtues. Very pretty feminine head with good pigment. Strong neck, fair shoulder, balanced front and rear and well bodied up. Slightly less tidy in her front movement but can cover the ground easily and actively in profile.

Special Beginners Bitch

1 Robert's TARLOG TARA Lovely cream bitch and if there was a prize for the cleanest and best presented hound this one would have won it! She was reserve in the huge puppy class and I had a good look at her then. Very attractive with her black pigment against her coat colour. Muzzle sloping downwards forward of her eyes, which slightly detracts from her otherwise classic headpiece. Particularly well arched neck, good shoulders and long, well placed upper arm. Plenty of depth and well ribbed up. Loin arch starts slightly forward and dips her topline otherwise nice hound shape. Charming, calm and confident outlook to her showing.

2 Poole's RAINSTER EITHNE OF CONMERYL Balanced, houndy brindle bitch who really caught my eye. Strong but feminine head, good planes, real quality huntress. Muscular neck fair shoulder,

excellent upper arm placement, good forechest, depth of chest and ribbing. Nice arch over loin and potentially good hindquarters but presently lacking in second thigh muscling and standing so tense that she tucks her otherwise nicely bent stifles underneath her body. What a cracking mover, though.

Novice Bitch

1 Tebbutt's CUALAINN PSYCHE CAREDIG Not the tallest but substantial and muscular bitch. Built as tough as they come. Not a lot of furnishings on an otherwise, dare I say it, Old fashioned type of head, long muzzle slightly downward sloping in front of eyes. Well folded and carried ears. Strong neck, good front standing soundly on her strong limbs. Good ribbing carried well back, plenty of depth of chest and good rise over loin. Really nicely angulated hindquarters, hocks out behind her. This bitch is so wilful and strong you get three second to assess her movement. In profile she looks powerful, covers the ground easily and I would think she's well capable of running and hunting all day.

2 Pain's RAVENSBEECH CIMARRON Loved this bitch but for different reasons to 1. Absolutely true to type, has a classic head, beautiful planes, balanced with spot on coal black pigmentation. Well folded and carried ears. Long, strong neck on fair shoulder. Shorter in upper arm than 1 and less filled in forechest. Quite superb houndy top and underline finished by really useful strong hindquarters. Expertly schooled and presented and totally sound, accurate and confident in her outlook and movement up and down the ring.

3 Braine's HOLLYHENGE MRS MINX Typical grey bitch with size and substance. Well furnished very pretty head, excellent pigment around eyes, lips and lovely black nose. Well folded neat ears. Strong neck, good shoulder and long sloping upper arm. Really nice top and underlines, good arch over loin and strong well angulated hindquarters with well let down hocks. More muscle tone would improve her and take her to another level.

Post Graduate Bitch

Very difficult to separate first three. Nit picking decisions.

1 Goodall & Painter's DRIFTCOT MERCEDES Substantia grey brindle bitch. Well furnished beautiful head with soft eye and expression. Feels rock solid under the hand. Strong neck, good shoulder, really nice forechest. Marginally wide in front and turning her feet in both standing and on he move but she presents such a great outline, really strong over her ribs, chest, loin and hindquarters and she backs it all up with the power to do the job.

2 Neal's FIAGAI MITEXI AT CAHMEGA Another substantial grey brindle bitch topped by a upper quality head. Balanced in her outline and standing on long well muscled limbs. Good depth to her chest particularly pleasing over her top and underlines she presents a nice galloping hound outline. Shorter in her upper arm and standing with feet turning out today. I was having to be really picky to separate these two lovely girls.

3 Biggs's GRIFEMY ETERNAL MAGIC Completed my trio of good headed young bitches Good shoulders marginally more upright in upper arms than those that stood above her. Plenty of depth of chest and really nice ribbing carried well back. Heavily boned limbs and strong sound mover in profile.

Limit Bitch

1 McMillan's BALLALYN'S WHAT IF Good size wheaten bitch, so attractive as she moves round the ring absolutely ground covering easy movement. Excellent pigment on her typical head. Good neck, fair front assembly, good topline. She has all the muscle, power and width of hindquarters I was looking for. Tends to stand herself very stiffly thus presenting a more upright frame than she really has, which is unfortunate as when she softens and relaxes momentarily she is better than she would have you believe. Couldn't deny her first place with her spot on enthusiastic powerful gait.

2 Wilkinson's HUNACRES KANTATA Absolutely genuine, honest typical wheaten bitch. I love her demeanour, and attitude to the ring – what you see is what you get and she never fails to impress me. More generous in her angulation both front and rear than 1. Plenty of fill in forechest, she has depth of chest, spring of rib, bone and muscle to match. Looking short in her neck today and rather cubby

than I've seen her previously thus softening her condition overall and putting a hold on her reachy movement which I know she's capable of. Few less pies, perhaps?

3 Dawson's SHALICO HOWL AT THE MOON Young bitch of good proportions overall. Good head, strong jaw, balanced in front and behind her eyes. Strong neck, fair shoulder and front assembly. Well sprung ribs, strong bodied bitch. Moving with less purpose, strength and power on the day than those above her, but she's yet to mature and come to her best.

Open Bitch

1 Wilkinson's HUNACRES KAROLINE Old favourite of mine. Beautifully presented and handled, this dark steel grey brindles has substance and quality in good measure with a calm confident and serene outlook of a mature wolfhound bitch. Top class head nicely furnished with perfect planes ad that slightly aquiline curve to her great black nose – so attractive. Kind eye, well set and carried ears. Strong muscular neck well set onto sloping shoulders. Plenty of depth of chest, spring of rib and rise over loin. Curving galloping bound outline from top to tail finished off with a crisp coat. She had power and activity in her movement and I couldn't resist making her BB and Res BIS.

2 Sheppard's GRIFEMY ENCHANTED EMERALD FOR GOLDSWIFT Houndy brindle, well presented. Classic head. Shorter in neck and upper arm when compared with 1. Good shoulder, deep capacious chest and spring of rib. Would like more rise over loin and better set and carried tail to finish her, but still a stylish quality bitch with much to commend.

Olly Guard