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30th January 2013

## Spaniel special!

## Cockers at Sandringham

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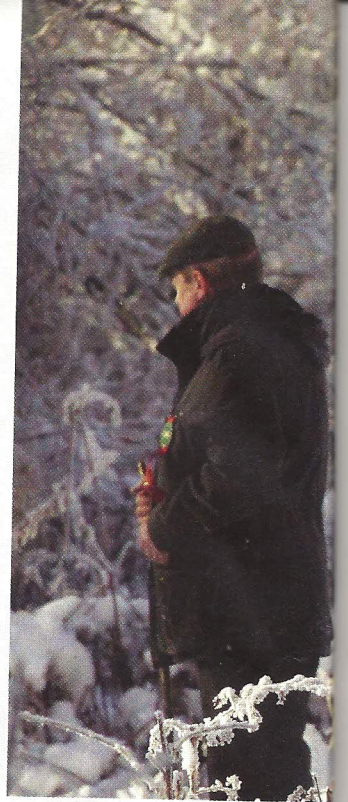
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# 2013

## Cocker Spaniel Championship

The magnificent Sandringham Estate played host to two days of thrilling trialling action, attended by Her Majesty The Queen. Paul Rawlings reports



**T**he Kennel Club's (KC) 81st Cocker Spaniel Championship, in association with dog food manufacturer Eukanuba, was held on Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 January, 2013, by gracious permission of HM The Queen at the beautiful Sandringham Estate. The trialling world will forever be indebted to Her Majesty for her support of our sport, and it is grounds of this quality that enable us to continue to develop the various breeds of gundog for the shooting field. The significant financial support provided by Eukanuba is also gratefully received and is essential to maintain the

► **Battling through the snow, FTCh Maesydderwen Snoopy returns with a pigeon**

standard of infrastructure that everyone now enjoys.

Some 36 cockers had qualified to run by winning an open field trial stake held since the last Championship, and last year's winner, FTCh *Heolybwlch Fatty*, was also eligible, making a total of 37. However, one dog, FTCh *Meadowsedge Shooting Star*, was owned by judge Andy Robinson, and there were three withdrawals, meaning that 33 dogs competed. Of those that qualified, the

bitches outnumbered the dogs by 27 to 10, an almost identical ratio to last year. The dominant sire was FTCh *Danderw Druid* with nine direct progeny entered, while FTCh *Argyll Warrior* had four, including the eventual winner.

Snow had fallen during the previous few days, and with continued icy cold conditions and temperatures down to  $-11^{\circ}\text{C}$  on both mornings, it was certainly going to be a challenge for the estate team, led by headkeeper David Clark. However, the team rose to the challenge and must be heartily congratulated for producing an exceptional championship.

### Snow-capped cover

After the introductions and changes to the card were announced by KC working party chairman Jon Kean and secretary Mike Smith, the trial began promptly on the Anmer beat, where the various cover, including bracken beds, thorns and brambles, was white with snow. First in line on the right, under the expert scrutiny of judges Andy Robinson and Dai Lloyd, was G. Hubbard's *Mallowdale Maggy*, one of six dogs handled by Ian

Openshaw. On the left, Stuart Morgan was running FTCh *Maesydderwen Saucey* under judges Malcolm Taylor and Bill Leonard. On its first cast into brambles, *Saucey* produced a cock pheasant, which





was dropped but ran like a stag. A muntjac flushed from the same bramble, delaying the dog in getting to the fall. Maggy tried and was soon away in the right direction through the woodland, making a good attempt but failing to find the bird.

FTCh *Little Felt*, after waiting on the drop for some time, made a little noise as she was cast off again. Meanwhile, Richard Preest's *Centrewalk Moonshell* completed two retrieves in quick succession. Wendy Openshaw had to handle *Chyknell Dove* on to its first retrieve, but Dove then pushed

***A muntjac flushed from the bramble, delaying the dog in getting to the fall***

the previously wounded cock out of the frozen cover and skillfully picked it, before retrieving a rabbit and making a good but unsuccessful attempt for a cock runner. Jamie Reid had tried FTCh *Glenugies Desire* on the same cock without success, but it subsequently cleanly retrieved two more pheasants from the frozen bracken. Almost every bird that was shot crashed through the frozen snow layer into the cover — the cockers and their handlers needed great skill to locate the retrieves.

Nick Gregory's black bitch, FTCh *Tudorbriar Moonstar*, demonstrated determined hunting ability, driving into cover to produce a hare, and then a classic flush of a rabbit followed, but the short retrieve took a considerable amount of

▲ Gun Geoff Garrod waits patiently, watching from the line  
▶ J. Davies with his bitch FTCh *Nantsannan Calpurnia of Dolbrenin*

handling to collect. Nigel Partiss's black bitch, FTCh *Brook Furlong of Tiptopjack*, attacked the frozen cover and finished with a good flush and retrieve of a hare, while Will Clulee and his liver dog *Moelfamau Griffon* began their run with lots of drive and a long retrieve of a hen pheasant. The run continued for a considerable time — three more retrieves of pheasants and two of woodcock — before the judges had seen enough after another woodcock was flushed. FTCh *Tiptopjack Sixpence*, handled by Wendy Openshaw, had similar fortunes with two pheasants, two pigeon and a woodcock to retrieve — all were loose birds, but two excellent flushes in the cover complemented their run. There was clearly no reluctance from the team of accurate Guns to enjoy the two days' shooting and anything in range was taken — not just game flushed by the dogs — which meant a lot of testing blind retrieves.

***A stylish first run***

Richard Claydon's black bitch, FTCh *Kingcott Eclipse*, caught the eye, and a flush and retrieve of a hare finished their first run in style. Howard Kirby's FTCh *Western Rosie* made a good

▶ Icy cold conditions and temperatures of -11°C persisted on both mornings of the competition



job of collecting a woodcock shot well out on the snow — FTCh *Maesydderwen Snoopy's* first flush resulted in the bird being hung up in a thorn bush, but a second flush gave them a cock to retrieve and, after flushing a hare, a live pigeon shot out in the field was soon in the bag. FTCh *Mallowdale Midge* showed exceptional hunting ability, ▶





FTCh Kingcott Eclipse bounds through the frozen cover for a retrieve



HM The Queen was presented with a cocker puppy

was tried for behind the line — again, this was found by the judges off the ground in a thorn bush. A good flush finished an eventful run.

Robin Laud's *Fenlord Dancing Queen* flushed a rabbit on its very first cast. This was retrieved and, after flushing a pheasant from the last bit of cover, they hunted round the marl pit in the adjacent field to produce three more birds — the last presented a difficult retrieve from the bottom of the pit, but was skilfully collected.

After moving ground, the trial continued in a plantation. FTCh *Wetlands Spice of Leeglen* hunted well to produce a rabbit, a pheasant and a hare, the latter being retrieved with consummate ease. Neil Thomas's *Jess of Misty Valley*, after a blind retrieve of a woodcock, picked a good running hen. Mr Philip's *Voodoo Black Widow* flushed a hen and, after a couple of casts, picked the live bird well. A good retrieve of a hare followed.

**Third time unlucky**

Some 24 dogs survived the cut and, starting the final day, FTCh *Brook Furlong of Tiptopjack* had a pigeon, two woodcock and a hen pheasant to retrieve, albeit with some amount of handling to pick the first woodcock. FTCh *Tiptopjack Dime* pulled a live bird out of the cover, but was given the benefit of the doubt, while a subsequent flush and retrieve of a cock necessitated some handler assistance. FTCh *Gournaycourt Ginger* also came out of the bracken with a live bird without penalty and, after two more flushes, retrieved a hen. FTCh *Poolgreen Farlow Ben* was the third in a row to bring a live bird from the frozen cover, but this time the dog was eliminated.

*Millden Slipper* picked a dead cock that had been shot previously, flushed and retrieved a hen, and then showed good hunting to produce another cock, which escaped low behind the line. *Mallowdale Music of Tiptopjack* needed considerable handling to find a bird shot off its own flush. FTCh *Tudorbriar Moonwarrior* hunted with drive, flushed a hare, but overshot the fall and needed

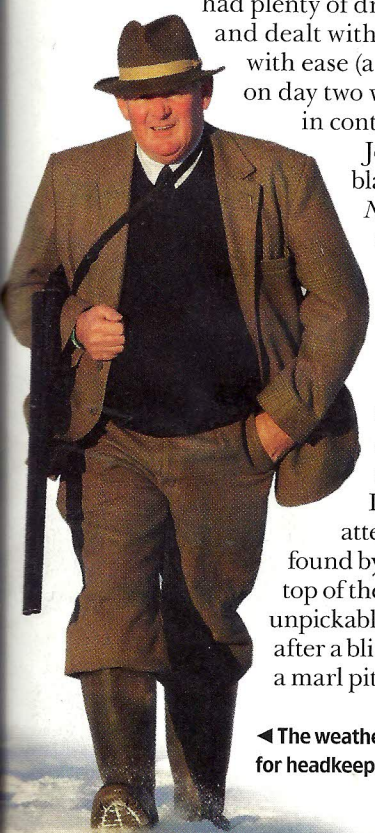
**FTCh Poolgreen Farlow Ben was the third in a row to bring a live bird from the frozen cover**

pulling back to the area. Finally, 89-year-old veteran competitor Joe Shotton completed the championship's dog work in fine style with FTCh *Chyknell Hidie* — classic pattern, drive style and gamefinding finished the run with a double flush of pheasants and a good marked retrieved out to the left, over Peddar's Way. The judges deliberated

◀ and had a tussle with a lively hare before getting it back to hand, followed by three retrieves of pheasants. FTCh *Centrewalk Willow of Episcopi* was lively and had a good flush and retrieve, while FTCh *Locklane Archibald*, a black-and-tan dog, had plenty of drive in the cover, and dealt with its retrieves with ease (a good eyewipe on day two would put it well in contention).

Jeremy Davies' black bitch, FTCh *Nantsannan Calpurnia of Dolbrenin*, did not have luck on her side — before the lead was off they were taken over the other side to try for a woodcock. It was a good attempt, but it was found by the judges on top of the brambles in an unpickable position. Then, after a blind retrieve from a marl pit, another bird

◀ The weather proved challenging for headkeeper David Clark's team



The judges (l-r): Bill Leonard, Malcolm Taylor, Andrew Robinson and David Lloyd



Veteran competitor Joe Shotton, 89, with FTCh Chyknell Hidie

## 2013 Cocker Spaniel Championship results

**1st** *Moelfamau Griffon*  
**OWNER/HANDLER:** Will Clulee

**AWARDED:** £100 plus the Lady Auckland Memorial Trophy, the Brook Challenge Cup, the C. A. Phillips Perpetual Challenge Cup, the Prewett Cup and silver frame from the Kennel Club. The Rivington Challenge Cup was presented to breeder Darren Skidmore.



Winner Will Clulee received his award from HM The Queen



**2nd** *Voodoo Black Widow* **Owner:** G. O. Philips **Handler:** Nick Gregory  
**Awarded:** £50 plus the Jack Windle Memorial Trophy.

**3rd** *FTCh Tudorbriar Moonwarrior* **Owner:** Jocelyn Tudor **Handler:** Ian Openshaw  
**Awarded:** £30 plus the Chyknell Trophy.

**4th** *FTCh Lockslane Archibald*  
**Owner/handler:** Derek Lee

### Diplomas of Merit

- *Mallowdale Maggie* **Owner:** Mr and Mrs G. Hubbard **Handler:** Ian Openshaw
- *Centrewalk Moonshell* **Owner/handler:** Richard Preest
- *FTCh Winhocklin Single Star of Tiptopjack* **Owner:** Nigel Partiss **Handler:** Ian Openshaw
- *FTCh Tudorbriar Moonstar* **Owner/handler:** Nick Gregory
- *FTCh Tiptopjack Sixpence* **Owner:** The late Jim Openshaw **Handler:** Wendy Openshaw
- *FTCh Tiptopjack Dime* **Owner:** Nigel Partiss **Handler:** Ian Openshaw
- *FTCh Gourmaycourt Ginger* **Owner:** Janet Menzies **Handler:** Jon Bailey

- *FTCh Mallowdale Midge* **Owner:** John Heeley **Handler:** Ian Openshaw
- *Millden Slipper* **Owner/handler:** Jim Thompson
- *Fenlord Dancing Queen* **Owner/handler:** Robin Laud
- *Mallowdale Music of Tiptopjack* **Owner/handler:** Nigel Partiss
- *FTCh Wetlands Spice of Leeglen* **Owner/handler:** Graham West
- *Jess of Misty Valley* **Owner/handler:** Neil Thomas
- *FTCh Chyknell Hidie* **Owner/handler:** Joe Shotton
- *FTCh Brook Furlong of Tiptopjack* **Owner:** Nigel Partiss **Handler:** Ian Openshaw (Guns' choice)

at length before the Championship was declared over without the need for a run-off. The winner was Will Clulee and his liver dog *Moelfamau Griffon*.

At the presentation, KC chairman professor Steve Dean gave thanks to Her Majesty for her gracious invitation, allowing the KC to stage the magnificent two-day event at Sandringham.

Speaking to the assembled crowd, judge Malcolm Taylor commented: "Thank you, Your Majesty, for allowing us to play in your back garden for two days. And what a back garden it is, though I was a tad disappointed that you did not parachute in!"

HM The Queen then presented the numerous prizes, trophies and diplomas to the delighted recipients. ■

### Peter Hall Trophy

The Peter Hall Trophy, awarded by the Cocker Spaniel Club to the cocker spaniel with the most points gained in open stakes during the current season, was announced by Lyn Randall, the Cocker Spaniel Club secretary, and presented by HM The Queen to Graham West, with his liver bitch *FTCh Wetlands Spice of Leeglen* having gained 25 points.

▼ The snow meant that both cocker and handler required great skill to locate their retrieves

