

## Northumberland & Durham Labrador Club Championship show 18 June 2023

Firstly a sincere thank you to the club for asking me to judge your special Centenary show. Running two shows in two days, a WT, and other activities must have required work and organisation beyond most of our imaginations. It was so worth it to celebrate this club's long history with the breed. It was lovely for people to be able to sit in the walled garden to Etal Castle and have cream teas and fish and chips. My steward was an absolute blessing, keeping everything running smoothly and always being there at the right times. Thank you. Without stewards we wouldn't have shows.

How things must have changed in many ways during the time since the club was established. I wonder how many times I have heard breeders and exhibitors, in the 57 years I've been involved, say they want to improve the breed through what they are doing. Have we a right to try to 'improve' the breed from what it started out as? And if we have that right then have we succeeded? Being totally honest I'm not so sure. The Labrador was a working dog, pure and simple. Have we developed it into a 'show' animal? When I started many of the 'show' dogs were also worked. They had to be made right to be able to carry out their job for as many years as possible and remain 'sound'. I'm not convinced that this is still the case. Not attending shows these days I can possibly see more easily how things that have changed within the show population. I'm not saying all is bad, far from it, and you may not want to hear this or be interested, but today's Labrador is a different animal to what it was. Unfortunately I believe we have gone too far to ever get back to the honest workmanlike dog of yesteryear. People's reasons for showing are different now. The days of the working man (and woman) meeting at shows to compare their working dogs in order to see what they could introduce into their lines to improve (and yes I mean improve in this sense) certain features that they knew their dogs lacked has long gone. Even if today you don't work your dogs it should still always be in your mind that the Labrador is a working breed and it should be physically and mentally capable of doing its job.

So what were my impressions of the dogs brought under me today. My hands have never been as clean at the end of the day as they were today. It was also good to not see as many hyper dogs as there have been. Mad showing Labs are not typical of the breed. Many dogs had a decent length of neck, not too short, or too long. Bone was a little less overdone. Strong bone yes but not excessive bone that makes for a heavily built cumbersome dog. The four things that concerned me were heads, coats, tails and movement. There were some strange heads that consisted of one almost square block of skull and another smaller block of muzzle. Like two boxes stuck to each other. Quite often they also had round dark eyes. A very dark eye is not correct in the breed. All of this does not give the true Labrador expression. It was a bad time of year for coats but even so a dog with a correct coat of the right texture can still be assessed to some degree. What I was finding were bitches with soft open coats or short single coats with no undercoat. Movement generally coming and going was fairly good, but in profile they swung their legs, both front and rear, like pendulums, in a stilted way. Whilst we don't want over angulated hindquarters we do require a dog to have enough angulation to pick its legs up and drive off its stifle and hock joints, not just swing them. We don't require flashy extravagant movement in Labs but they should cover ground with ease. Tails, well hardly a true otter like tail to be found on the day. Long and thin or thicker, bushy and with feathering on the underside. The tail should be tightly clothed all round. One other thing. Quite a lot of the bitches stand close up to their handlers. This has the effect of pushing their heads and necks back and making their shoulders look incorrect. Whilst some of them do not have the greatest angulated shoulders some make themselves look worse than they actually are.

## **Bitches.**

### **Minor Puppy Bitch (5, 1 Ab)**

1st Bishop's The Girl is Fun from Linjor. Yellow, typical and strongly built puppy. Good muzzle length and well proportioned to skull. Kind eye. Good reach of neck, well boned legs all the way down to feet. Excellent well sprung ribs and well ribbed back. She has a very good first and second thigh. Moved well once she got her act together. Doesn't need to carry any more weight. Should grow into a nice bitch.

2nd Rowe's Centenalee Angelic at Rocheby. Really good type, though different type to 1. I thought her very promising. Might like her head to grow on a shade to balance with the rest of her but this should come in time. Decent reach of neck and well angulated front and rear. Strong topline and well set tail. Moved soundly and covered the ground.

3rd Cain's Exelby Scandalous Hannabee

### **Puppy Bitch (5)**

1st Davis & Rowe's Rochevale Palm Reader. Black. Puppy with much to like about her. She excelled in outline and overall balance. Intelligent expression and a nicely balanced head. Very good reach of neck and lovely line over shoulder, back and on to tail. Good length of rib and loin, not too short. Strong quarters and covered plenty of ground. Was pleased to give her **BPB**. When it came to BP the dog was a touch stronger in his topline today and a bit more together when moving.

2nd Park's Kinchyle Bedazzled. Nice black with a good outline. Medium neck, and enough bone on good feet. Pleasing expression. Well ribbed back and short in loin. Good angulation. Carried her tail nicely and it is well set, though could be a tidier shape. Would insist on moving with her nose to the ground but from what I could see it seemed pretty straight.

3<sup>rd</sup> O'Neill's Ramsayville Gigi at Taligal

### **Junior Bitch (10, 1 Ab)**

1st Threader's Lillyview Diamonds Forever. Black. With a good outline which flowed well from head to tail. Plenty of bone but not over boned. She did turn her feet out a bit. Pleasant expression with good eye colour, not too dark. In between coat but enough to feel its texture. Firm in topline and tail well set. Well developed quarters which she uses on the move.

2nd Pollock's Pollham Jump For Joy. Yellow. Shorter in back, rib and loin than 1. Yellow youngster of a very different type. More compact overall and shorter in neck, though it balanced with the rest of her. Good amount of bone and neat feet. Excellent in rib and short in loin. Dense coat though perhaps could be a little harder to the feel. Tail a bit untidy underneath. She moved with plenty of drive and covered the ground well.

### 3rd Ireland's Barold's Black Coral

#### **Yearling Bitch (6, 1 Ab)**

1st Edward's Kimbajak Miss Jazz Swinger. Interesting young yellow. She is kind of midway between the older type and the more modern type. Has class written all over her. Beautifully balanced with length in back and rib yet short in loin. Loved her outline and flow. In beautiful condition and carrying just the right amount of weight. Kind expression with a decent length of muzzle and not too much stop. Clean in cheek which was where so many failed. Good reach of neck and good spring of rib without it being too round. Very strong in topline and correctly set and carried tail, not waving in the wind. If I had to change anything it might be a more dense undercoat but I couldn't penalise her for perhaps not being in full coat on the day. She has more maturing to do and I am sure she will make up with no trouble. Good luck with her. **RCC**

2nd Collins Foxrush Joyfull. Yellow. Strongly built bitch who is well balanced overall. Head strong enough and might prefer a little more muzzle length, certainly for me, but she has well set ears. Today she was a little unsure of herself. Hopefully temporarily. Good length of neck, excellent well sprung ribs and well ribbed back. Very well developed muscular first thigh. Not in full coat which made her look a little light behind. Again a temporary thing. Moved OK.

### 3rd Cameron's Lillyview Shooting Star

#### **Maiden Bitch (4)**

1st Lewis's Crammondkirk Ooh La La. Black bitch just out of Yearling. Not a big bitch but big enough. Well balanced overall and carrying correct amount of weight, not too much. I think I'd describe her as a neat bitch, yet she isn't lacking in scope. Her eye is dark enough, wouldn't want it any more so. She has a good reach of neck and it is clean, running into a good front, and enough bone for her size. Coat OK, she may not have been in the fullest of coat. She carries her tail nicely out from her croup, and the set is correct. Well muscled quarters and sound movement.

2nd Morrow's Rhythm Lacey. Choc with a good eye colour and expression. Head not overdone. Could afford to lose a bit of weight and I'd like a bit more angulation in her stifle. She is strong in her topline and moved with drive, using her quarters well.

### 3rd Ramsayville Gigi at Taligal

#### **Novice Bitch (7, 1 Ab)**

1st The Girl is Fun from Linjor

2nd Leith Ross & Gildroy's Shork's Homecoming De La Vallee de Chevre. Black bitch. Just 2 years old and has maturing to do, which is how it should be. Very good outline and a well balanced bitch. Excellent type. Bone OK for size. Kindly expression with a nice eye. Enough reach of neck to function. Good length of rib and not too deep. Strong topline without dips. Her tail is a little feathery but she carries it nicely. Moved with plenty of drive and covers the ground easily.

### 3rd Rhythm Lacey

#### **Undergrad Bitch (8, 2 Ab)**

1<sup>st</sup> Edward's Kimbajak Hip Hop to the Top. This yellow turned out to be the sister of the RCC winner and in some ways I preferred her. She is definitely the more backward of the two and will take time to reach her best. No bad thing. Older type of bitch and she has the slightly better angled front, standing with her forelegs more under her ribs. Liked her head and expression, well set ears, eye colour, and reach of neck. Good length and depth of rib, enough bone. Not in her best coat but enough to judge texture. She really moved out well. I'll be interested to see what she makes into in the future.

2nd Hodge's Naiken Glass Slippers. Chocolate with a lovely expression and good skull to muzzle proportions. Nicely set and carried ears. She is a fairly solid sort of bitch but was in good fit condition. Enough neck and well angulated front and rear. Very good bone and feet. Ribs very well sprung and short in loin. Holds herself together all the time. Good tight coat and texture. Tail well set and carried, not high in the air. Moved with drive. Might perhaps prefer an extra inch on her leg length but otherwise a nice bitch. Shows nice and steadily.

### 3rd Rochevale Palm Reader

#### **Graduate Bitch (9, 3 Ab)**

1st Killeen's Carpenny Pametta. Black. A lovely type and now I see where she comes from it's hardly surprising. Pleasing expression on well balanced head, with the right amount of stop. Medium reach of neck going into a well angulated front. Correct amount of bone and well shaped feet. Well sprung ribs that go back to a short loin. Moved soundly with drive and propulsion. She's the sort that could breed something very nice.

2nd Parker's Bruadarach Baile Eilidh. Choc. Well balance bitch with a feminine head. Good reach of clean neck. A scopey sort who looked fit to do the job. Enough bone and decent feet. Not in full coat but enough to see she had top and undercoat. Good length of back and well set tail. Moved soundly. Maybe 1 slightly better in upperarm. Useful sort.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Shork's Homecoming De La Vallee de Chevree

#### **Post Grad Bitch (8, 2 Ab)**

1st Deane's Abbeystead Glamour at Tanronen's. Yellow. I liked her medium size and substance. Good eye colour and a well balanced head. Well off for bone and tight feet. Enough neck. Big in rib and holds her topline well on the move. Plenty of coat, though could be a little harder to the feel. She could do with dropping into her stifle a bit when she stands but even so she moves with plenty of drive and purpose. Well handled in that you don't notice the handler.

2nd Percival's Wynfaul New Years Eve JW. Black. Smaller neater sort. Well balanced for her size. Her head is nicely balanced with a good eye colour and feminine expression, decent length of neck.

Bone is right for her size with good feet. Would prefer a bit more turn of stifle but she moves with accuracy coming and going.

3rd Ireland's Shannorell Sydney

### **Mid Limit Bitch (9, 3 Ab)**

1st Bradley's Nancy's Special Treasure. Black. Very strongly built bitch. Might prefer a more feminine head and expression but it is a kindly expression all the same and without too much stop. She was in lovely condition, a credit to her owner. Such a good type of Labrador. Enough neck into well angulated front. Well boned legs right down to her feet. Big ribs and well ribbed back. Really good tail. She certainly has power in those quarters. Should make up.

2nd Venturi Rose's Leospring East Indie. Choc. Liked her type, proportions and scope. More on the leg and not as deep ribbed as 1 but I don't mind that. well balanced head, good length of muzzle with a feminine expression. Eye colour is light enough but within the Standard. Not in good coat but just about enough to feel the texture. I liked the fact that she is not an overdone bitch. She has the required build to work and has enough bone and substance to fit within the Standard. Would insist in standing up close to her handler which didn't help her front yet when she moved and dropped her head she covered the ground really well.

3rd Powell's Clairstone Sweet Memory of Seatallan (DMK) NAF

### **Limit Bitch (16, 8 Ab)** First three definitely CC quality.

1st Minchella's Abbeystead Psion of Haselorhill. Black. Such a typey classic bitch. No mistaking her for anything else but a Labrador. Loved her expression, she looks at you 'right'. Good in muzzle to skull balance and such a kindly eye. Clean in neck with a good reach. Well made in front with a good length of upperarm. Not in her best coat today but enough to know its got texture. She can stand a bit straight behind and with the lack of coat on her quarters this somewhat exaggerated it. However she moved with real drive in an unassuming way. Love that she gets her head down level with her topline, none of this high head carriage that tends to go with a short upperarm or lack of layback of shoulder blade. A bitch who would deserve her title.

2nd Hopkinson's Rocheby Serenity. Yellow. Very nice type of bitch who lacked coat today and so hadn't finish to go any higher on the day. She is very well balanced with good strong bone, and tidy feet. Well balanced head with a good length of muzzle and soft expression. Excellent reach of neck into a well put together front. Strong in ribs and loin. Well turned stifles and she used her quarters to drive around the ring. Not a flashy bitch at all but who needs flash when you are a Labrador.

3rd Percival's Wynfaul Dancing Flame JW

### **Open Bitch (8, 1 Ab)**

1st Key's Keydella Kafenoir. Black. No nonsense workmanlike bitch who is a genuine Labrador in all ways. Lovely head and expression and like the Limit winner looks at you in the way a Lab should. Nothing hard in that expression. She has enough neck and a decent front assembly. Well sprung

ribs that go a good way back, and a short loin. Not overboned and a good strong first and second thigh. Really dense coat, and good tailset and shape. Covered the ground well on the move in a sensible way. She just wasn't holding her topline when it came to the final judgement. She would definitely be a worthy Champion and wasn't far off the CC today.

2nd Hopkinson's Rocheby Hickory. Black. Only a young bitch and much to like about her. She has scope and balance. Liked her head proportions and she has a good length of muzzle, and well set and carried ears. Good strong bone and tight feet. Well ribbed back. Coat and condition held her in good stead. Lovely flow from top of head to tail. Good length of back, yet short in loin. Tail set and carriage correct. Really well developed thighs. Will be interesting to see how she grows on and matures.

3rd Minchella's Abbeystead Hope

### **Champion Bitch (2, 1 Ab)**

1st Rowe's SH.CH.Rochevale Once Upon A Time. Yellow. Oh how easy it is to write critiques on the good ones! Handled so quietly and effectively. I really wouldn't want to change anything about this bitch. I had no idea who she or her handler were so it made it a pleasure to judge this lovely bitch in a totally objective way. Older type of Labrador, so beautifully balanced with a really lovely head and expression. No mistaking her for a male. The reach of neck would enable her to bend down easily and pick up game. Loved the flow from head to tail. Strong in topline with tail nicely off her back so you get that continuous gentle line without it being like a ridged table top. There was flexibility in it. Good bone and feet, excellent spring of rib. She has a front with legs under her ribs, not ahead of her rib cage. Strong well muscled quarters that propelled her with ease around the ring. A really lovely bitch and I was delighted to award her the **CC** and with my co judges agreement she also went **BIS**.

### **Special Open Working (6, 1 Ab)**

1st Powell's CH.Seatallan Yellow Archangel (AI) Yellow. Again an older type of bitch who is beautifully balanced. Now a veteran and has kept her condition very well. Well proportioned head and feminine expression. Good reach of neck running into well angulated front assembly. Flows beautifully all the way through. Even now she holds her topline well and tail comes nicely off her back and is carried in the correct position. I appreciated her bone and feet. Good length of rib and short in loin. A worthy Champion.

2nd Venturi Rose's Leospring Bunty Chocnut. Choc. Totally different type but has plenty to like about her. I actually found her better to go over than when I first looked at her. Smaller and more compact than winner. She has a pleasing expression and a good length of neck for her size and balance. Bone OK, good rib and moved well.

3rd Leith Ross & Gildroy's Hop Off Newfoundland Coast WGC

### **Field Trial Bitch (1)**

1st Venturi Rose's Leospring Tiffin. Black. Smallish bitch but all in proportion. Feminine, intelligent expression. Good functional length of neck with a strong topline. Enough bone for her size and build. Well turned stifles and she covered the ground when moving. Perhaps could be a size bigger but I could still see her galloping over plough and jumping fences with ease.

### **Veteran Bitch (8, 4 Ab)**

1st Bell's Westerulston Nola. Black. Such a lovely type of bitch. All Labrador through and through. Beautiful head with such a kind expression. Enough neck, well made in front with good bone and feet. Very well sprung rib and short in loin. Her quarters are really muscled and she has a good turn of stifle and correct length of rear pastern. This bitch has a dense coat with definite top and undercoat. One of the few who did. **BVIS**

2nd Parr's Stoneavon Minni The Moocher. Choc. Nice type of bitch who has many virtues. Well put together and still moves with purpose. Just carrying a bit more weight which made her look a fraction short in leg. She has plenty of bone but isn't overdone. Good eye colour and balanced head. Neat feet and an excellent rib. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> thigh are still well muscled.

3rd Pollock's Pollham Freya.

**Anne Taylor (Fabracken)**