

A Thoroughly Scottish Affair *(Thanks to Pernice Press)*



In 2005 the second IGL Retriever Championship to be held on the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry KT's estate in Dumfries and Galloway was a thoroughly Scottish affair. Hard and uncompromising from the outset, it provided the dazzling spectacle of landscape and dog work of the highest quality.

Gamefinding proved of utmost importance: the field of 49 dogs had to cover prodigious distances, often out of sight of their handlers, as well as hunt systematically to find birds or ground game.

Winners **Jim Swindlehurst and his five-year-old black Labrador FTCh Mill Cottage Pathfinder** were up to the challenge, coping with ease and authority over the 3 days. In the second round Pathfinder

showed perfect marking and memory when he picked a previously shot partridge down the hill on the left of the line. And in the final drive along the River Nith, he picked a cock pheasant that had fallen across a stream and 150 yards along the edge of a wood - with a minimum of handling, making light of thick mist, frost and ice.

If the picturesque landscape proved to have a hard edge, it was one that produced dog work that time and again outshone its context. As Chapter 24 of 'The Best of the Best' makes clear, it was one hell of a Championship to win, and no-one knew that better than Jim Swindlehurst.

In the photo above: 2005 IGL Championship winners Jim Swindlehurst and FTCh Mill Cottage Pathfinder.