

'Yorkshireman' through and through



David Garbutt is one of nine exceptional handlers to have won the IGL Retriever Championship three or more times since its inception in 1909, winning three times with three different dogs that he bred and handled himself.

As noted in Chapter Two of 'The Best of the Best', few have matched his skills as a handler. He qualified for the Championship 21 times with 13 different dogs gaining 7 awards and 3 wins: in 1981 with **FTCh Pocklington Glen**, in 1988 with Dave Benson's **FTCh Pocklea Tide of Middlegate**, (*pictured above*) and in 1991 with **FTCh Pocklea Remus** (*below*).

In 1988, the IGL Retriever Championship was held for the first time at the Ampton Estate at Great Livermere, Suffolk at the invitation of Peter Hammond and Bob Hales. The winner was Dave Benson's three-year-old Labrador **Pocklea Tide of Middlegate**, **handled by breeder David Garbutt**.

Pocklea Tide was an offspring of John Halstead's legendary FTCh Breeze of Drakeshead, who had won the three previous Championships. Over two days the young bitch consistently showed the sort of game finding that made her sire's record-breaking exploits possible.

In torrential rain and sleet there was a high casualty rate the first day in woodland and only 11 Labradors survived to sit the second day, during which spectators witnessed spectacular retrieves across straw and in water at a final duck drive.

Although there were several top dogs, **FTCh Pocklea Tide of Middlegate** distinguished herself with pleasing control and responsiveness, good hunting and the breath-taking retrieve of a cock runner behind the line.

As a stud dog **Pocklea Remus** greatly influenced breeding programmes over the next few generations: 27 of his progeny qualified for the Championship 54 times, winning 13 awards including a first.

One would be hard pressed to find a working Labrador pedigree today that does not go back to **FTCh Pocklea Remus** (*pictured right*).

'A Yorkshireman' through and through, David Garbutt is now retired from trialling. He was not only a good 'dog man', but a very well respected judge: he judged the Championship five times, the last time at Windsor in 2007.



The Queen's Favourites

Although Sandringham Sydney was a celebrity, he never became one of The Queen's pets. Her favourite Labradors were two black bitches that were both field trial champions, personal shooting dogs and beloved pets.

The first one was FTCh Sherry of Biteabout, purchased by Bill Meldrum as a pup when he took over Sandringham kennels. He bought her from Bill Davidson in Durham after seeing an ad in Shooting Times; her sire was FTCh Glenfarg Skid, who he had handled to victory at the 1963 IGL Retriever Championship.

When she died The Queen was desolate, and she no longer had a personal shooting dog. Bill's father George Meldrum had another black bitch named Lugwardine Jade (Jericho Rocket x FTCh Holdgate Vesta, bred by Mrs Wordsworth in 1968). He had bought her from a woman in tears at a shoot because, although fully trained, she was going wild. He saw potential, and after a fortnight with him she won her first trial.

George Meldrum loaned Jade to Her Majesty for the shooting season, after which she went on to win the 1975 Championship at Woburn, where she put on a solid display of game finding ability and experience throughout the 2 days. He then gifted her outright to The Queen, who kept her by her side along with her corgis. She was buried at Windsor.

In the photo below, George Meldrum and FTCh Lugwardine Jade at the 1975 IGL Retriever Championship.