

Spaniels...working in a winter wonderland

There are many beautiful Estates in the UK but you would have to search long and hard to find one in a setting as beautiful as this for the Gwynedd Spaniel Club AV Novice.

With snow on the ground and a slight fog on the hills it made the Estate a picturesque backdrop to the AV Novice that we had all congregated to see or take part in.

Whilst we enjoyed a welcome cup of tea made by the lovely Kim.

The Head Keeper Tony and the Judges Roy and Simon had a discussion on how the day would proceed. This is a possibly one of the most important parts of the day where a briefing on the lie of the land and any house keeping rules that the keepers of the estate expect to be adhered to and also how the Judges would like to see the day progress.

Jon Bailey then gave out the welcome and health & safety information on how the day would be undertaken and we were off me with my newly appointed and promoted chauffeur Jon Bailey.

We then drove through the estate to one of the drives at the top of the moor.

During the walk to the top I am happy to say it wasn't just me that kept stopping to review the scenery... which provided a fantastic excuse to get your breath back. I think it is safe to say the boys who beat there certainly earn there money.

With the Judges, Stewards, Guns, game carriers and me in the firing line we were ready to start the trial, which was a very well balanced mix of young springers and cockers. With so many beautiful young dogs all keen and attentive it was never going to be an easy task to pick a winner right from the off.

As fantastic as the ground was and an abundance of game both pheasant and rabbit a plenty the snowy conditions and a wind that didn't know

whether it was coming or going meant the conditions for any novice dog or handler were going to be a touch demanding with the poorest scenting conditions.

The dogs had to hunt hard and make sure they checked every nook and cranny for their quarry so the dogs who hunted all of their area were going to be the ones to watch on the day.

Anyone missing ground would have a big job to keep up to the high standard being set by other dogs

However during the trial it was obvious that Tony Burrows the keeper

had picked us a fantastic beat with an abundance of quality game and excellent birds for the flying days of the season!

I don't think any one was disappointed and there were some stunning contact battles from birds that were sitting tight which only proved

not only the steadiness but the amount of work that had gone into these young dogs.

The guns who rarely missed a shot were on good form and not much that got at got away... other than one poor hen who can no longer shake her tail feathers! She was however brought to hand later in the trial.

The top positions were very closely contested with not much too choose between the top 3 or the dogs who were awarded COM's I wouldn't of

swapped places with the judges Roy Ellershaw and Simon Dixon for all the spaniels in Sinosphire at that point.

It was decided that the winner had a slightly cleaner 2 runs under both judges.

In the end the winner who had had a blinding long retrieve of a very

strong runner was ESS (s)Clatburgh Rose owned & handled by Frank

Wilson... the look on his face said it all really.

In second place was ESS (s)Lilly Mai of Snowden owned and handled by Jon Bailey

in first place was Cocker (s) Military Venus of Cockentail owned and

handled by Joe Jarreno

the dogs that got COM's where

Cocker (s) Centwalk trip who had 2 lovely runs owned by Mr & Mrs

Atkinson and handled by Jason Atkinson who was o the Guns Choice

ESS(s) Breckwood Wren owned and handled by Dave Hornman did a solid job

ESS(s) Willowood Gypsy of Witcheslowes owned and handled by G Wilson

had 2 lovely runs.

Gwynedd Spaniel Club would like to formally thank His Grace The Duke

Of Westminster for allowing us the opportunity too hold the trial at

Abbeystead

Tony Burrows and Kim who provided everything in

abundance to make it a perfect trial and experience for people both

established in the trialing fraternity and new people like myself

other s have a lot to live upto if this is the standard.

The guns who provided both game and entertainment during the day

namely Wayne Joyce, Alan Eyles, Nick Cooper and Nathan Whittaker

The Judges who have one of the hardest jobs Mr Roy it can still get my

leg over after having new tonic parts J Ellershaw and Mr Simon Dixon

Gwynedd Spaniel Club would like to give special thanks to the Game Carriers, Stewards

and Sponsors Skinners Dog Food

On a personal note I just want to thank the GSC committee for making

me so welcome, trying to help me understand the who whats whys and

wheres of spaniel trialing and giving me an opportunity that doesn't come around very day.

But more importantly Veronica who has been a there hold my hand and keep me out of trouble.