

IWAGS Speciality Show 2022  
Judge Elizabeth Thornton

I have to start with many thanks to many people. To the Committee and helpers, who created this show from scratch in their own time and made everyone welcome. The effort must have been extraordinary. Your judges were treated very well indeed and I remain deeply appreciative. The ring stewards did their best to keep me on the straight and narrow, their good humour and helpfulness was so appreciated. To the breeders and exhibitors who made the effort of bringing their hounds, often great distances-Thanks are extended to you all.

As is traditional, a preamble. It must be eleven years since I was last on this side of the USA. In the decade between visits entry numbers have been dropping in the countries I know the best. This is certainly true of the UK, where I judged a Club ( IW Society) Championship show of fifty entries last Autumn , twenty or so more wolfhounds than most general Championship shows usually draw nowadays. We have become used to seeing ones, twos and threes in a class and only one or two champions in the “ senior” classes. To be able to access double figures in many classes here in Philadelphia plus a ring- filling number in Best of Breed competition was such a joy.

Then there is the quality of the exhibits and the absence of some common flaws of past years. Many years ago it was possible to talk disparagingly of “ American ears” as large unfolded and sometimes droopingly thick ear leathers could alter the appearance of the sight hound head and not for the better. Here I more often admired leaf thin well folded greyhound- like ears, pinned tightly to the skull, high and mobile on the head. Deep stops and coarse heads were not common. Neither were very light eyes. Most exhibits looked at me trustingly with that lovely wolfhound expression. I only had a couple back away, one a heartbreakingly beautiful female who could well have placed highly if she would only have let me look at her properly. I do forgive youngsters for insecurity but in a higher, non age, class the hound will have to pay the penalty.

Were I grading this entry of hounds, as on the continent of Europe, there would have been a very high percentage of “ excellents”. The younger veteran bitch class was the best for its age group I have judged anywhere.

Standard of presentation generally very good, some young hounds were recently stripped and between coats. Some hounds didn't have the solid muscle in their second thighs for whatever reason. The old authorities reminded breeders that they had to breed for these muscles, certainly my hand dropping into a hollow where the upper thigh should mesh strongly with the lower happened more often than I would like. Hounds with this feature will never drive off the hocks as accurately or with the smoothness of those who have the muscular definition to their second thighs.

The old “ drag on the breed” is still apparent. The difficult balancing act of providing the gaze hound qualities for speed plus the substance for endurance at the gallop. Beautiful layback of shoulder, layback of upper arm beneath, fore chest present and adequately filled without resembling a pigeon - the wonderful front is still less common than one would wish for. A wolfhound really needs length and arch of neck complemented by the rest of the forehead construction, as when these hounds gallop they can run and turn better as a result. Yet great height is often achieved by straightening out these fronts. Too often the examining hands fell into a hole between the forelegs where the fill of chest was yet to appear. Again, forgivable in youngsters to some extent but not on the mature hound.

Mouths - I know, I know, not mentioned in your standard. I made a point of admiring the mouthfuls of perfectly set canines to incisors, splendid large teeth fitting beautifully could be found throughout the entry. I didn't penalise slight defects and from memory there was only one hound in the entry with too large a gap caused by the length of jaws not matching. As always, please bear this in mind when breeding. Also, either clean the teeth or provide marrow bones. Presentational small points but its helpful to keep the tartar off the teeth for the dog's sake.

Best of breed competition. What a gorgeous group of wolfhounds to pick from. I am fully aware that the final six hounds, certainly the BOB, BOS, select dog and select bitch, are very different from each other to look at as they stand. I now know that I had two brothers in the final group, not that one would have known from looking at them as they have different qualities to each other. Also BOS, the daughter of one, niece of the other - different again, a touch longer cast and leggy. What they all had in common was eye catching superb movement from excellent construction. All were fit and in great condition. What a credit to their breeders and producers to rise to the top in an entry such as this. Well done.

Best in Show, a mature male, wonderful head, harmoniously constructed body and practically impossible to fault. My hands appreciated him once I went over him. He had to win by being so correct and balanced that he rose to the top through every cut. A wonderful hound. BOS, impossible to pull your eyes away from her standing or moving. Such presence and command, standing and moving. A huntress. Select dog, what truly commanding appearance he presented at all times, an imposing and noble hound able to "put down those As" as he had perfectly matched reach and drive and plenty of angulation as he moved around the ring. The beauty and refined head and expression of Select bitch, another outstanding mover and the daughter of two hounds I had at the top in Canada some years back. AOM bitch, close to her and again so well constructed, with substance. AOM dog, again dead sound and substantial. Thank you so much for bringing these hounds to see me. I could have cut another six hounds behind them and still have been happy with the quality there.

BIS Joe and Kathy Roland's Ch R Noble Nasch

BOS his niece, new Ch Carnasserie Kincsem, owners Jacqueline Carswell and Patty Newgard. Also Winners Bitch and Best of Winners.

Select dog, Ch Temair Kailne's Dauntless, owners Cristi Campbell-Corley and Dawn Wiseman and John Corley.

Select bitch, Ch Lismore Marion Kerby, owners Dough Marx, Amy Benjamin, Karen and Steve LeVan.

AOM dog Ch R Noble Carnasserie Nazar, brother of BIS, owners Jacqueline Carswell and Patty Newgard.

AOM bitch, Ch Taliesin's Be'rin, owners Donna and David Smith.

## REGULAR CLASSES

Puppy 9-12 months dogs 3,2 present.

- 1) Monty Lismore of Aerie. 11 months and well grown. Owners Roger and Betty Johnson & Amy Benjamin. Tall and leggy grey brindle possessing an outline with style and elegance, he has a good deal of bone to his forelegs. Appealingly well furnished head with high set ears and a bright expression, a very beautiful arch of neck set well into shoulders. I made note of his very sound action with drive off the hocks. Needs to develop some arch over the loin, Best Puppy.
- 2) Antrim's Starkeeper Vimy Ridge, clever naming of this lad considering his 11/11 birthday. Owners Jocelyn Gagne, Lyn Totton, M&A Duncan. Wheaten, I admired his lovely ears, a handsome puppy of good make and shape. Needs to develop more bend of stifle, was moving close behind on this day.

12- 15 month dogs, 4, 3 present

- 1) Redtops Brynleigh, owner Rosemary Wortman, As one would expect at this age, lanky. A red dog shown in great coat and condition. I admired his head, beautifully balanced with very little stop. Dark eyes and very good ears. He possessed the best side action in this class with drive off good solid hocks. His handler just about curbed his enthusiasm, he thought showing was a great game. Like the winner of the previous class he's at the growth stage where his front needs to "bed in" to hopefully develop more layback of upper arm over time.
- 2) Shancarrick's Awesome Tullaghan, owners Robert and Estelle Flynn. A good type of hound with a strong top line with some arch over the loin and lovely bend of stifle, well muscled. Good bone, feet could be more thickly padded. Broad in chest - however he was a few pounds overweight on the day. Messed around when moving, ears tended to lie flat to head.
- 3) Donndubhan Penchattan Akahai He Koa O Ka Lani, owner Grace Kowalski. I do have a penchant for the silver brindle colour this hound possessed. Balanced, well furnished head. Another with excellent high ear placement. Strong well arched neck. Tight feet. Has breadth of chest. Smaller than the others in this class. Steep croup restricted the rear stride on the day.

15-18 month dogs. 2, 1 present

- 1) O'Lugh Blackwater Barkeep owners Jennifer Sula and Andrea Dormandy. 15 months old on the day. My notes say "very very good dog". Silver brindle, perfectly balanced, indeed so well balanced I never saw him other than poised. Excellent musculature producing really good action. High neat ears, has an arched neck with layback of shoulder and upper arm beneath it. A lovely deep well sprung ribcage led to a strong loin and a broad pelvis. Strong hindquarters, solidly muscled with balanced upper and lower thighs packed with muscle.

Novice Dog - absent

Bred by Exhibitor Dog 2,2

My notes suggest this was a close decision.

1. Deora's Faeglan Owner Mary Reese. This dog has a most typical head and expression with tightly held rose ears. Mature, he has width across the chest with fore chest thanks to sloping upper arms. A good chest and middle piece. well muscled hindquarters. A powerful and accurate mover, wish he had an arch over the loin. His tendency to drop his head moving increased the impression of a straight line on top, which cost him later on.
2. O'Lugh's Gucci of Aerie, owners Andrea and Michael Dormandy and Amy Benjamin. Immediately imposing, to use an old term I found him "high stationed" with immaculate poise and a strong long neck. Could have a darker eye. Stiff pasterns and moved close coming towards. On this day the class winner had better fluidity in his action overall.

American Bred Dog 7, 6 present. A good class.

1. Lindenhall Carnasserie Concerto Grosso, owner Gabrielle Shneidman. My reserve winners dog. My notes say he was 20 months, a "very raw" hound. He's narrow through and I hope he develops more spring of rib, he just about has time for this. However - A most wonderful male head, high quality with kindly expression and high tucked ears. It was his outstanding movement which won this award. Accurate from every angle, flowing and with head held high. I could have watched him move forever.
2. Coleraine's Zenith Of Taliesin owners David and Donna Smith & Maura High. Substantial hound, my notes say "great expression", to which I can add what a lovely male head he has with high well set ears. Solid well made front. Excellent depth and breadth of chest, well ribbed back. His rear could have been more settled, didn't drive as steadily as the class winner on the

day which came as a surprise as he has a lovely croup and low hocks with plenty of muscle to his rear end. A very handsome exhibit whose day will come.

3. Shancarrick's Cashel Coyne, owners Susan and Nicholas Forzono. Well made grey brindle of a smaller make and shape than those who beat him. Curvaceous, well put together. Moving wide in front on the day. Dark and kind eye, neat ears.

Open Dog 6, 5 present. My overall comment in my notes for this class says "high tails". Also, all good heads.

1. Taliesin Blaze's Buachaill of Wideview, owners David and Margie Milne and Donna R Smith. Winners Dog. I liked so much about this dog. Beautiful male head with neatly rosed ears. He has breadth of chest, strong bone and tight feet. Lovely neck and front construction flowing through in perfect harmony. Deep chest ribbed well back. Long gently sloped pelvis setting the tail in the right place, low hocks under well muscled thighs and second thighs. All this produced the sort of movement I was hoping for, foot perfect, balanced and with strong drive from the rear. I did wonder why he had to fly his tail, but it never went above the level of his back. His maturity with lovely coat- and of course this movement and construction gave him the award hands down.
2. Llonkyle Pining for the Fjords Owners Michael and Alissa Muffley. Another very handsome exhibit, in great coat. A strong dog, could have been a little stronger on the pasterns which in turn would have tightened the feet. Well carried larger ears.
3. Echo Hounds Friar Tuck of Sherwood, owners Sherwood P Prawel III and Carin Jordan. Another lovely quality head, overall good make and shape, softer coat than those above him and standing straighter behind.
4. Gladstone's Kiss Me Kieran, owners Helen Clint and Roger Johnson. Beautiful tall and imposing hound. I tried hard to get him out of it, but he would persist in pacing.

Puppy Bitch 6- 9 months, 2, 1.

1. Samsara Sans Souci Owners Drs Hartenstein & Spadle. Its a good thing I took photographs as well as notes as the latter sum this eight month puppy up in just one word - spectacular. If anyone has a better puppy of this age I would be interested to see her, there is nothing to fault on her construction. Beautiful quality head . Side action is just wonderful, as is going away. It was a hot afternoon by the time i saw her and she had had a busy morning in stakes earlier. In the challenge for best puppy she needed to keep her elbows under better control and a couple of pounds less on the ribs would have put a stop to the slight rolling there, i think. However the next day I kept this baby in to the near end of the bitch challenge as I enjoyed watching her so much. What a prospect.

Puppy Bitch 9-12 months. 7, 5 present. Overall comment "lots of loose ears, but what a good class". I see two pairs of sisters rose to the top.

1. Muse Lismore of Aerie, owners Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. Sister of the best puppy dog. I very much liked the balance of this puppy, that and her beautiful head and composure. Feminine yet has strong bone and a good chest and middle piece. Needs to develop some arch over the loin. Light and easy ground covering action. Very nice indeed.
2. Myrna Loy Lismore of Aerie, owners Dough Marx and Amy Benjamin, Steve and Karen Le Van. Sister of class winner and more raw for this stage I felt. Very promising, has strong bone, was shown in good coat. Needs to fill out, has plenty of time for it. Liked her top line, curve of stifle and low hocks.
3. Enaceilte Across the Universe owners Mindy Bellinger and Jacqueline Carswell. A nice strong bitch with good length of leg, bone and bend of stifle. Super ribbing. Needs to lose just a few pounds, although I can completely understand having extra weight on puppies ahead of potentially stressful trips away from home, best to have some reserves in case of illness.

4. Enaceilte Strange Magic, owners Mindy Ballinger and Jacqueline Carswell. Tall and elegant red brindle, my notes suggested she was rangy and rather wild on the day. I do like these leggy hounds, my first champion was very like her as a youngster.

12- 15 months bitch 1 exhibit.

1. Quezee of Aerie Owners Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. 13 month youngster shown in lovely coat and condition. She's a good size and one of the eye-catching sort. Very promising once she sorts her action out, she would persist in crabbing and I suspect she needs to get her head around how to use these big muscular stifles. Very promising.

Novice bitch, 8, 7 present . I looked at this class and wondered how on earth these lovely bitches could all be novices. Covid no doubt. Excellent class decided on small points.

1. Carrickaneena Siobhan Owner E M and E B Flanagan. Even in this good class this bitch became the one to beat on her first lap around the ring, such pride in bearing and steady stride. Later her accurate movement on the up and down gave her even more of an edge. Mature, roomy and dead sound say my notes. She's a rich cream brindle whose amber eye colour matches her coat. Nothing about her is exaggerated. Splendid bone, has arch of neck and a well rounded rib cage, carried well back to add strength to her top line. Impressive bend of stifle packed with muscle. Lovely viewed from the front too, has a forechest and width through without excess.
2. Samsara Syndicate, owners Drs Hartenstein and Spadle. Another impressive hound, black brindle with length of leg and combines substance with houndy lines. Slightly strong in skull compared to muzzle. Lovely ear set and carriage. Has arch over loin and big curvy stifles.
3. Zendaye Della Bassa Pavese owners Steven and Karen Le Van. A lighter framed, younger bitch of quality, chest needs more development and coat to come in but the outline and essentials for maturity are there.
4. Lindenhall Carnasserie Camerata Owner Gabrielle Schneiderman. Very lovely outline on this youngster. Long head with imperceptible stop. Lovely length of neck and curvaceous outline. My notes suggest she needs to fill out as is rather immature and narrow at present.

Bred by Exhibitor Bitches 10, 9 present " super class",

1. Carnasserie Kincsem Owners Jacqueline Carswell and Patty Newgard. WB, BOW, BOS. The One to Beat. What a lovely bitch. I could go on to extol her many virtues point for point but that might be as boring as a recital of the breed standard. Key points for me - the harsh perfectly presented coat. The length of leg, heavy bone, poise and commanding appearance at all times. The set of her head on her neck is just perfect. The great size with femininity, hard condition and omg the movement. Ground covering, easy and foot perfect. The sort of hound about which is written " she may have flaws, but don't expect to find faults".
2. Samsara Scandal res WB. Owners Drs Hartenstein and Spadle. Much as i loved the class winner this hound was hot on her heels. Long legged and curvaceous bitch with plenty of rib cage and big well bent stifles. Ears could be neater and smaller, but a small point. Superb type, you could absolutely see her chasing down large game in the field.
3. New Girl In Town at R Noble, owners Joe and Kathy Roland. Black hound in excellent coat and condition. I very much liked her long arched neck, fore chest and good ribbing. Lovely layback of shoulder. Beautiful head and expression.
4. Gin Fizz O'Lugh of Aerie Owners Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. Outstanding head and ears, coat in perfect condition, well presented. A balanced and curvaceous female.

American Bred Bitches 6, 5 present Another lovely class of quality.

1. Carnasserie R Noble Zenyatta owners Angela Bixler and Joe Roland. This winner was such a lovely mover. Shown in immaculate coat and condition. Balanced and feminine, head and ears are super. Lovely front, curvaceous all through with muscle.
2. Taliesin's Beoadh of Findaway owners Veronica Neimstedt and Donna Smith. Such a beautiful head and expression, I was very taken by her. A hound of quality. Beautiful carriage, shapely rib cage and lovely stifles with low set hocks. Would prefer more breadth of chest.
3. Shancarrick's Czipra, Owners Robert Ireland and Estelle & Robert Flynn. So interesting to see her sire was Ch Moloney's Andre, I judged that dog what must be twenty years ago on the West Coast and from memory he was best puppy. He had a similarly lovely head. Big strong bitch with a good front and ribbing. Not moving with the activity of the first two on this day.
4. O'Lugh's CC and Ginger at Massapeag Owners Karen Eberl & Andrea Dormandy. Completed my "set" of high quality females, again a lovely head, I made note of her good neck set and shoulder/ upper arm with good width of front and strong bone and feet. A touch less hind angulation than those ahead of her. Was splitting hairs.

Open Bitch 15, 1 absentee, 1 moved to BOB. Excellent class.

1. O'Lugh's Martini Owners Andrea and Michael Dormandy. One of those bitches who looked the winner on the first run in and only had to keep up this promise on closer examination, which she so did. Excellent presentation. Quality head and darkest eye with beautiful expression. A perfect blend of substance and hound quality, very balanced, especial note about her deep chest well ribbed back and big muscular quarters. Astonishing reach and drive in profile movement. She was strongly in contention at the end and I can't now remember what moved me in the direction of the two Winners on the final analysis. She would be a worthy champion anywhere.
2. Gotcha of Aerie, owners Shari Irick, Doug Marx and Amy Benjamin. Black brindle with big white feet, her eyes are a shade of amber, beautiful quality head and ears. Has breadth of chest and admirable neck set and lay of shoulders. Excellent body qualities and long muscular stifles with low hocks. Balanced, easy movement.
3. O Lugh Lismore Bunnahabhain, owners Stephen and Karen Le Van. What excellent ears, mobile and tiny and so well carried. More lightly framed than the big girls above her in this class, she too has the super neck and lay of shoulder, the strong back line and plenty of ribbing through. Curvaceous stifles, low hocks, well muscled. My notes say she "ran out of petrol", perhaps just being lazy.
4. R Noble Nainsi, owners Joe and Kathy Roland. Immaculately presented black hound. Quality head with dark eyes, neatly carried ears. Balanced and feminine with substance. Has breadth of chest. Well ribbed back. I needed to get her out of crabbing to move her higher in this strong class.

Non Regular Classes

Veteran Bronze 6-8 year dogs 2, 1 present.

- 1, Ch Coleraine's Cathbhadh Incubator Jones Owners Maura High and Michael & Alissa Muffley. There must be quite a story behind this hound's name! 7 year old in excellent coat and condition. Beautifully handled to bring out his classic qualities. Quality head and ears. Solid front and well boned, strong body, sound movement. Looks slightly shorter coupled as he has a steepish croup and could do with a touch more let down of hock and length of second thigh. Good tail carriage.

Veteran Bronze 6-8 years bitches. 5 present. This was such a wonderful class of beautiful, sound classic females. Best of its age group have ever judged.

1. Mythic's Phinney Branwen, Owners Stuart and Susan Gilson. Black brindle female of elegance and great quality. Superb head and dark eyed expression. Good neck set, front angulations, rib cage and broad well set stifles. Light ground covering movement, accurate from all angles.
2. Ch Carrickaneena Mo Chait Mo Stor, Owners Eileen M and Eileen B Flanagan. This hound presented a lovely outline, she is strong and well boned with beautiful head well carried on a long strong and arched neck. I loved her outline, curving stifles and ample bone, muscle and substance, super action viewed from the side. Moved a touch close behind.
3. Dun Myrica R Noble Nuala of Eagle, Owners Joe and Kathy Roland. Another quality black brindle with a beautiful head, outline and set of neck. Very well presented in gleaming coat and condition. Excellent lay of shoulder. Her tail is shorter at this stage of her life and she was rather wide in hind action.  
Ch Gladstone's Call Me Kelt, Owners Betty & Roger and Christina Johnston. Tall and elegant light grey hound with an exceptional head and expression. Still has the outline and bearing of a quality hound. Narrower in chest than those above her, was running out of steam by the end of the class.

Veteran Bitch 8 years and older

1. Ch Carrickaneena Anna Liffey owners Eileen M and Eileen B Flanagan. My best veteran and not an easy decision given the qualities the winner of the previous class of females had to display to win that wonderful class. As I went over this old girl (not that she would have owned that description, of course) I was struck by her wonderful substance and in particular by the quality of her musculature. She has very good construction with an arched neck, correctly rounded and well carried back ribbing, breadth across her front and heavy bone. Her stifles too are packed with muscle. These qualities won her the award as she is over nine by some margin and was giving away three years to her competitor.

Stud Dog 2, 1 present

The winner here was Ch Nazar. Although unopposed, he sired many of my placements on the day including BOS and reserve Winners dog. He would have been difficult to beat.

Brood Bitch 2, 1 present

Ch Dun Myrica Noble Noala of Eagle, classic type which she has handed down to her offspring.

Best Head 10 entries, 8 present

I see this society has this category as a class which individuals can enter, which is easier on a judge than (as for the Head Cup in the UK) nominating hounds to challenge for this award. Had we been using the rules from home I would have had some forty or fifty hounds judging on my comments from the classes earlier, quality heads and expressions - and ears - are not rare here, as I discovered. This was a good win for Ch Shancarrick's Darling, Owners Robert and Estelle Flynn. She has the feminine beauty with strength, the high neat ears, the gentle expression and perfect balance of muzzle to skull. I understand she or her mother have won this cup on many occasions, congratulations.

Best Gait 10 entries, 9 present

My choice this time was Ch Carrickaneena Cumann Na Mbn, a strong five year old who had also been in the Best of Breed competition. She also won best hound with Irish Spotting.

Best Brace ( 4 pairs, 2 absent)

- 1) this class won by the well matched quality females ZEnyatta and Bunnahabhain who both won or placed in their classes in breed competition, they moved well together. Owners Steven and Karen Le Van.
- 2) Grace Kowalski's pair, not as well matched in colour and size as those placed above.

Elizabeth Thornton ( Judge)