

Letters To The Editor

1 Lund St, Trafford Park, Manchester, M16 9EJ
or fax to 0844 504 9013

AS is always happy to consider letters for publication but reserves the right to edit these as required. Letters will not be considered for publication unless full name and contact details are supplied, including telephone number.

Letters may be sent by facsimile to our newsfax number on: 0844 504 9013 or email to editor@ourdogs.co.uk.



OPINION

Open show survey

Open shows are one of the exhibitor based groups to appear on the dog show scene in recent times. This particular group was set up for the health and welfare of all pedigree dogs. It represents its members' interests at the Kennel Club. It works in conjunction with the Kennel Club to promote the interests of

members with other like minded organisations in any aspect of the dog world.

Our main activities for its members are: "Working for the Health & Welfare of Pedigree Dogs by Negotiation not Confrontation."

It is our intention to be congratulated for the professionalism of its members. The survey entitled "Open Shows – the Future". The survey and its results have been set out with great expertise. The responses from the first stage of the research have now been published in this week's issue of OUR DOGS and we will be pleased to see the results of future stages when these become available.

The results are in line with what one would have expected – a need for classification, show location and space in the venue all feature on the list of exhibitors' priorities in making the decision whether or not to attend an open dog show.

It is the finding that respondents to the survey believed that breed clubs seem not to be interested in promoting their open shows. That we regard as a great pity.

It is interesting in a survey aimed at finding ways of making dog shows more popular, is the evidence that there are more people who say: 'Would you like to see more members of the public at open shows?' who say 'No' than there are who say 'Yes'. It is not bode well for those with the task of attempting to improve the open dog show scene.

It is not, however, leaving the matter at that. Having established what people think is important and what they see as important for open shows they are now going on to form 'focus groups' using various categories of people – breeders, Judges, Show Organisers, the Canine Media, and the KC. These groups will attempt to find ways of improving open shows by improving classification, judges, venues, competitions and awards, and by better promotion and the appeal of the open show in general.

That the Kennel Club appears to have endorsed these activities. In view of the importance of the open show to the dog world and of the British dog show scene we wish them all well in their work, and OUR DOGS stands ready to assist them in whatever way we can.

**Genetics centre
- progress**

It is interesting to note that the Kennel Club's announcement covered in our

Safe?

SO MUCH has been written over recent times about inbreeding and health. But how right are the doom merchants?

I have been watching the big race on TV and saw the German horse pulverise the field with the jockey having the greatest difficulty in pulling him up. The time was a record. In the interview afterwards the owner/breeder said it was a case of generations he bred and that the horse was inbred seven times to the great Nearco.

I sat there wondering if I heard right. I have said it in the bedding-ton notes at times that, as a youngster, I was told that inbreeding was good if you knew what you were doing. Does this mean that inbreeding from healthy dogs with generations of only healthy stock behind is perfectly safe?

Yours etc
Ken Bounden

We're no luddites!

I WAS thrilled to read Ronnie Irving's article (Our Dogs, July 19th) and discover that I played such a large part in it.

The thought that such a behemoth of the dog world had even read my article let alone deigned to comment upon it (especially in such an expansive manner) was truly astounding.

Of course the result of this exposure has tripled the usual traffic to my website and Facebook and Twitter accounts with the resultant surge of congratulatory emails not just from this country but from those facing similar challenges around the world. So it seems that I am most definitely not alone.

However there are just a few points I would like to address...

Firstly I believe, if you do not know a person well or if you have never met before it is always best to use the highest level of formality such as my use of 'Mr Irving'. Such formality reflects courtesy and respect for the other side and I do indeed have enormous respect for his considerable achievements in the world of dogs. To be held in such high esteem not only by the aficionados of the pedigree world but also its notable detractors (Jemima Harrison) is no mean feat.

However my main bone of contention was the use of the derogatory term 'luddite' aimed at those who

disagree with the KC's recognition and promotion of the 'designer dog' brigade.

Far from being 'luddites', the people raising a disapproving eyebrow at these cleverly rebranded mongrels are often at the forefront on improving the health of their respective breeds grasping the nettle and putting their stock through the myriad of costly health tests.

Just because there are at least 4,000 of these Cockerpoos and Labradoodles being produced annually does not make their acceptance right. I've witnessed a huge influx of such dogs into my local animal shelter. Time and time again the excuses given for the dogs abandonment are along the lines of 'I just can't cope with her coat...' and 'We were told they don't moult...' or 'He's just too excitable...'

The sad truth is (unlike the majority of our long-established pedigree breeds) the character of (and, in some cases, the coats of) these dogs are a complete gamble. Many times I've heard the argument put forward, 'But these dogs have unique qualities...'

However when asked to elucidate on these 'unique' qualities (not found in any of the 211 recognised breeds) they become strangely reticent.

And where does it all end? What if the Pomchi, Jachadach or Chiweenie is suddenly given a dose of celebrity driven popularity? Do we fling open the doors of acceptance to them too? Maybe we could have a whole group dedicated to these 'new kids on the block'.

Alongside the established utility, toy and hound groups, how about the creation of the 'designer' group? It all seems rather at odds with the KC's stance on responsible dog breeding. How is it 'responsible' to give the green light to those who purposely breed a fancily titled mongrel, especially one whose originator, Wally Conran, has expressed regrets over their creation. I cannot recall reading of similar sentiments expressed by Herr Dobermann or Frantisek Horak.

No, Mr Irving, I'm not 'self-appointed expert'; I'm just a humble commentator expressing my own opinion and, I can assure you, all comments in my articles are my own. If others are echoing my opinion then maybe those in the higher echelons of the dog world should listen to their concerns before it's too late.

Oh, and, just one final point to

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HOKAMIX

clear up; there is no familial (or any other link) to Steven Seymour - your obsession of whom is becoming a tad worrying!
Yours etc
Lee Connor

Views welcome

IT IS disappointing that even after almost 10 years of development, Joy Bradley (OD 26th July) still needs to have what the ABS stands for explained to her.

As has been well publicised since it was announced, the change from the name 'Accredited' to 'Assured' was simply in accordance with a requirement from the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS). The Kennel Club was proud to receive UKAS recognition as a certification body earlier this year, and will shortly be in a position to acknowledge breeders who have been inspected to newly agreed protocols. These members will have UKAS certificates issued.

Although inspection of members is just one of the many policing mechanisms that we have within the scheme, it is an important one. However, it does of course come at a cost, and surely even Joy will recognise that it cannot be achieved at the current fee of just £10 per annum. The challenge that we now face is to retain the appeal of not just the regular breeder who will often have puppies available, but also the casual breeder who chooses to breed just a single litter every two or three years. These 'low volume' breeders make up the majority of our membership.

Digestive Health will be featured in
OUR DOGS in FOCUS

Your glossy supplement with the focus on pedigree dogs

13th July 2013

OUR DOGS in FOCUS