

12 Dog Open Qualifying Stake – Batsford Estate Monday 13th January 2020

The Club held its 12 Dog Open Field Trial at the Batsford Estate, Moreton-in-the-Marsh on Monday 13th January 2020 with very kind permission of Lord and Lady Dulverton. Our sincere thanks to them once again for their very generous support of our club.

Our Field Trial Secretary Mr Roger Wiggins welcomed everyone to the ground and introduced his fellow guns Mr Michael Gough, Mr Alex Badger, Mr Andrew Holloway, Mr Stuart Reid and Mr Martyn Parkinson.

Our judges for the day were Mrs Jayne Coley (A1850), Mr Sean McGrath (A3010), Mrs Lisa Harris (B3002) and Miss Clare Baker (B3700).

Many thanks to our Club Chairman Mr Morton Redpath for stepping in as Chief Steward at short notice. Mrs Iris Wright has been very generous in her support of our club in being Chief Steward for the last few years but sadly had to step down this time due to illness. I am sure I can speak for all in sending her our thoughts and prayers for a speedy and successful recovery.

Morton introduced his Stewards Sue Goring and Bella Brown, and game carriers Steve Prosser and Rod Davies. Also introduced were the team of markers, Terry Dukes, Kate Smith, Richard Edwards, Cherry Smith, Rod Gillet and Mike Gillet. Also thanks to friends of judge Clare who came along to mark too, Betsy, Peter and Alexandra. Official picker up was Tony Stanley with Helen Goodwin helping in the morning.

Once all introductions were complete and Rod Davies had gone through the health and safety points, Morton declared the trial started with a full card at just after 9.30am.

The beaters wagon and convoy of cars moved off to the first drive, Aston Hayle. Guns and both sides of the line spread out around a sloping stubble field with very rough ground and a conifer wood behind, while the beaters worked through a crop of maize on the brow of the hill. Head Keeper and Steward of the beat Mr Matthew Farmer and his team of beaters put on a superb show of birds, partridge as well as pheasants, and the guns did a very good job at getting them on the ground, in the field and also in the rough and the wood. There were plenty of birds for the judges to put the dogs through first and second rounds. The weather stayed bright and dry although a cold wind was picking up. By the time the judges decided to move on to a second drive, there were 6 dogs remaining.

We then all moved off to the second drive, Newlands Ditch and the line spread out in grass fields either side of a brook in a deep valley. The birds were pushed down the valley and again a good show of birds were seen. The weather deteriorated and the remaining dogs were put through their paces in freezing driving rain! Three dogs from the right were sent on a bird in the ditch but didn't find and so the judges went to look. They came back empty handed and things resumed. Eventually we were down to two dogs. The judges took them back over to the other side of the valley for testing retrievers across the brook and the trial was then declared over. Everyone was very glad to get back to the warm dry shoot room and a nice hot drink!

Results were awarded as follows:-

1st Bellspaddle Otto handled by Jo Rollinson

2nd Stauntonvale Tic Bean handled by Laura Hill

Jo went home with the Agrigame Field Trial Cup and Laura took the Legges of Bromyard Trophy for Guns Choice. Many congratulations to them both.

All in all the day went extremely well and I would like to thank everyone involved who helped to make it such a successful day. Particular thanks to our club secretary Chris Peers who came along to help me organise things and who carried the red flag and kept everyone in line! I was particularly pleased at the amount of help we had. Normally I struggle to get people to come along to mark, but this time I had people contacting me to offer. This is what we need, we cannot run these events properly without people helping and the more we have the less stressful it is for everyone. So my huge thanks to each and every one of you!

Finally, a massive thank you to Skinners for their sponsorship and continuing support of our sport and our club. Laura couldn't come on the day as she was busy with the cocker championships, but thank you Laura and Skinners for your support, it is hugely appreciated.

Kelly Stringfellow

Assistant Field Trial Secretary

