

Border Collie Club of Great Britain, Special Awards
Jill Spurr (Dreamwork)

My thanks to Border Collie Club of Great Britain for inviting me to judge the Special Awards at one of my favourite shows. Always well organised with a generous ring that really allows the dogs to move out and showcase their movement. My thanks to the hospitality team for the delicious home-cooked food too, and to Pete Simmons for stewarding.

I was looking for a moderate dog that appeared like it could work all day, demonstrating excellent movement with reach and drive front and rear, and low lift of foot.

Dogs were all shown in excellent condition and demonstrated good temperaments. A couple had profuse coats that just made the outline a touch too heavy, in particular losing the graceful sweep of the neck. Several had short tails, not just there or there abouts but bone well above the hock. The tail rudders the dog so it can perform the athletic, immediate movements of herding, and counterbalances when the dog is low on its upper arms, so needs to have sufficient length.

I was extremely pleased with my winners, although most could change places on another day. In both Post Graduate and Open, I really was spoiled for choice with some quality dogs that were a joy to go over.

Special Junior Dog/Bitch (6/1 absent)

A mixed class of youngsters with something to like in each one.

1st Hodson & Johnson's Littlethorn Mini Two BW B, the baby of the class at just under 8 months, but already showing promise. She won on her lovely outline, balanced although starting to touch a fraction bum-high, but her croup is super. Feminine all through, kind expression and alert to her handler. Head needs to develop, as you would expect in a youngster, excellent coat and condition with good bone. Being picky, her feet could be just a touch tighter, although again, this may be her age. Movement was particularly strong at the front, a little shorter in back at first but improves as she relaxes and moves out.

2nd Mitchell's Bordabears Western Style BW B, prick ears, 13 months. Different in type to 1, finer build and petite frame but proportions are there and give a balanced outline. Lovely length of neck onto a good shoulder and excellent topline. Well-muscled, she excels in movement, with smooth, free, effortless drive that eats up the ring, topline maintained throughout. Would like a touch more depth of chest, but I think this will come as she matures. Super youngster, just preferred the overall outline and balance of 1 today, although could easily change places another time.

Special Post Graduate Dog/Bitch (10, 1 absent, 1 moved to Open)

1st Wettern-Bloomfield's Alpana A Statement of Style, 2 year old black tri colour B. Excellent depth of pigment on her tri points. Extremely feminine, attentive to her owner, ears well-used and kind expression. Excels in length of neck onto well-laid

shoulder. Excellent croup, rear angulation complements the front creating an eye-catching outline finished with a tail of correct length. Well-muscled, her movement is superb, effortless, with low lift of foot, powering around the ring while maintaining a straight topline and low head and tail. Every inch a dog built to work, nothing is overdone, just lovely.

2nd Chance's Goytre Chance to Reflect, 2 year old BW D. Super head, so typical of this kennel, masculine but very expressive. He makes a striking outline on the stand, correct height and well-proportioned all through. Good length of neck onto a well-laid shoulder and straight front. Good croup and tail set, excellent muscle definition. Held his outline on the move, with head and tail low, effortless free movement and excellent reach. Pushed 1 hard, she just had the edge on consistency in her movement.

Special Open Dog/Bitch (5, 1 absent)

1st Kinton's Kinaway Dreams with Fire (ai) JW 18 months BW. Quality bitch, very tuned into her handler and alert to everything. Feminine head, excellent length of neck, super shoulder and straight front. Excellent bone, moderate coat and level topline. Excels in rear angulation, lovely croup, correct length of tail. Well-muscled, she keeps her outline on the move and powered around the large ring to take first place in a class full of quality. Still a youngster, she is definitely one to watch for the future.

2nd Surridge's Tonkory Yasmine, 3 year old BW B. Balanced outline, very feminine but has enough substance. Well-proportioned, straight front onto neat feet. Lovely head, kind expression, level topline and lovely croup. Balanced angles front and rear that drive her around the ring with minimum effort. Excellent movement, but not quite the reach and drive of 1 today.