

OD International - Australia

Australian Border Collie Nationals



The State based Border Collie Clubs thought it would be a great idea for each state to host a "National" event every 2-3 years or so, with a different host club each time. This would give all the exhibitors the opportunity to catch up 'face to face' and to see each other's dogs in action.

With the advent of social media it's easy to see the dogs in other states and note the ones you would like to use in a breeding programme, but of course there is nothing like seeing the dogs in the flesh as they say.

So it was the turn of the "Sunshine State" - Queensland to host the 4th Border Collie Nationals in 2016, in the beautiful city of Brisbane. As things turned out there was a degree of irony in the nickname of this state in relation to this show; but more of that story later!!!

The main confirmation judge on this occasion, as well as for the previous three Nationals, was a breed specialist from the UK. This time it was Judith Gregory of the well-known Tonkory affix. The overall entry was around 250 Border Collies in the breed classes, which was considerably down on the numbers entered at the previous ones. The organising Committee were obviously disappointed with the entry numbers, however this was more than made up for by a big increase over the previous Nationals, in numbers entered in the Obedience, Agility and Rally classes. Steve Peel, also a breed specialist, but from New Zealand, was the appointed judge for the "Property classes".

The show itself was held at the permanent show grounds at Durack, about a 25-minute drive from Brisbane centre. A great venue owned by the state kennel council and it has most of the facilities a dog show would need, such as camping, good car parking, catering on-site, etc. I say most things however, as the one significant thing that it lacks is a wet weather facility, which on this occasion proved to have disastrous implications for this show on the final day.

These Nationals have become increasingly popular with overseas visitors despite the long travel distances to Australia with spectators this time coming from, amongst other places, America, China, Finland, Germany, Japan, Italy, New Zealand and of course a strong contingent from the UK.

The Nationals commenced on the Friday evening with a very well attended opening ceremony. A traditional Aboriginal greeting was given with music played on the Didgeridoo, as well as performances from three violinists playing local

Report & Pictures By GARY CLARKE



Show Chairperson Kylie Leslie and husband Stuart.

music and a talented young soprano singing the national anthems of the host country as well as those of the 2 principal judges. In between the audience were treated to displays showing the versatility of this marvellous breed, which included Agility, Obedience, Heelwork to Music and a demonstration of 'Duck herding'.

Each International visitor was also given a welcoming gift bag containing information about Brisbane and the surrounding areas, as well as a commemorative wine goblet and an "Aussie show survival kit" with such interesting items as tea, chocolate, sweets, plasters and of course the legendary 'Vegemite'!!! This was a really thoughtful gesture by Kylie Leslie (the Chairperson of the organising committee) and her team. All guests at the ceremony were also given drinks and nibbles, which was well received by both the local and international visitors alike.

Mid-morning on the Saturday, following the Property classes and Judith Gregory made her way to the centre of the ring to start the main event - the confirmation classes for the males. Another interesting moment for the Brits on tour as the first class of the day was baby puppy (3 - 6 months old), again something else we don't see at home. Judith worked her way steadily through the classes until the lunchtime break, at which point we had three Junior Handling classes judged by an experienced ex-junior herself, Sonja Gangell from Tasmania. Presentation and handling skills were of course top class, as we have come to expect at our own shows from the younger generations and Sonja gave her top award to 14 year old Georgia Harrison from New South Wales. Georgia, not lacking any confidence, also led out the Etherial team of Border Collies the next day in the Breeders Stakes for breeder Sam Taylor!!

Late in the afternoon we came to the climax of the first day with the Dog Challenge ... It's a good job that this show ground also has floodlights as it went dark at 5pm as the Challenge dogs came into the ring. Judith's choice for winner of Dog Challenge was a local dog - the



The winner of Best in Show and BIS was Aust Ch Tullacrest Call Me Maybe, owned by Patrice Smith and Courtney Spencer.

winner of the Junior Class Houlden's Pukawidgee Reverie and Reserve Challenge went to the "Australian Bred" class winner Aust. Grand Ch. Nahrof White Collar Crime owned by Somers & Badior from Sydney.

Sunday followed the same format as day one, but now with the Property classes for bitches. I was interested to note that the winner of 'Best Gaited Bitch' was the same bitch that won this class at the previous Nationals in 2014, Aust. Ch. Allclarity Collectors Edition. Fleur is a daughter of the dog that I campaigned in the UK for many years, the very well known All-breeds BIS winning male, Aust. Ch/UK Show Ch. Danari De Beers, so this was a lovely moment for me to watch another of his Champion daughters win a top award.

As with the pattern on day one, Judith commenced judging the bitch classes mid-morning with the completion of the Property classes. Unfortunately for all concerned the skies were now dark and grey and by lunchtime it was raining gently but persistently. Judging continued over lunch with five teams entered in the Breeders Stakes under "three Mystery Judges" announced on the day. The Breeders stakes were held in memory of Judy Vos, the founder and owner of the well known Clan-Aby kennels in New Zealand, who had sadly passed away not long after the 2014 Nationals which she had originally been scheduled to judge at, but was not able to do so due to ill health.

Each dog and team were scored separately by the three judges and then the collective points were added together to give an overall winning team. The organisers had decided to only give out the results of the breeders' stakes at the Gala Dinner (after the show), to build up the sense of anticipation. It was great to later see members of the Vos family, over from New Zealand, to make the stakes presentation award at the Gala Dinner to the winning team, which was eventually announced as the Nahrof Border Collies.

Judging was called to a halt at the end of the 'Open bitch' class, at around 4pm with standing water now in large parts of the show ring. It transpired that around four inches (100mm) of rain had fallen in a little over three hours, but unfortunately Judith still had three bitch classes to judge as well as making all the general special awards (or 'In Show'

awards as we call them in the UK). A huge dilemma for the organisers as this show had been two years in the planning and no "carry over" days were permitted.

The only 'covered' facility on the site was an outdoor barbecue area with a concrete floor and a roof, but no sides. The committee decided that this location was the only safe place to complete the judging on site, so the brave exhibitors left standing, trekked across the show ground in the monsoon like conditions. Whilst the committee had few options at this point in time, this was a major disappointment for the many spectators who were eagerly awaiting Best in Show, as the organisers imposed a complete ban on any spectators at the new 'ring' location. The space available was at most ten metres square, so it was restricted to those who still had bitches to show or those who would compete later on in the "In Show" awards.

This was hugely disappointing for the many International visitors who now missed the grand finale of the show ... most had no option but to leave the show and await the results via Facebook or by word of mouth. A major anti-climax to what had been a fabulous show up until the rains came.

When results "leaked out" (if that is an appropriate phrase), it transpired that the Open Bitch winner Aust. Ch. Tullacrest Call Me Maybe (Ruby) had taken the bitch challenge and the runner-up bitch was the Intermediate class winner Aust. Ch. Nahrof Knock On.

The bitches then went head to head with their male counterparts and BIS went to the Ruby and RBIS to 'Rev' the dog challenge winner.

Ruby is owned by the mother and daughter team of Patrice Smith and Courtney Spencer from Sydney (and is handled by Courtney) and she was bred by the very famous Tullacrest kennels of Bill and Lynn Harrison in Adelaide. Ruby, although only young, has had a stellar career to date, winning not only BIS at Specialty shows, but also an All-breeds BIS before her second birthday!!! Courtney was thrilled with this major win and said it was one of the highest points of her career, which takes some doing as she is also a multi BIS All breeds winner/handler of a world class Hungarian Puli as well!!!

I can't resist a small brag at this point in the review as my own imported dog Fitzzy sired Ruby before he was brought to the UK



Dog CC and Reserve BIS was Pukawidgee Reverie, owned by A. Houlden.

from Australia (co-owned with his breeder Jacquie Robertson). Fitzzy, more formally known as Aust. Ch / UK Show Ch. Waveney Kozmonaut is also an All-breeds BIS winner in Australia, as well as a BIS and multi-group winner in the UK, so it was great to see his daughter also flying high at the premier Border Collie event in Australia.

The remaining major special awards went to the veteran bitch winner, Aust. Ch. Etherial Double Platinum, for Best Veteran in Show and to the puppy dog winner Trucharm It's Not Rocket Science for Best Puppy in Show. Other head to heads also took place for Open in Show, Best Australian Bred in Show, Junior etc., etc., with the bitches narrowly coming out on top in the end by six general special wins to five!!!

The day after the show proved to be bright and breezy, which was a welcome relief to all the UK contingent on tour, as we had also been very kindly invited to the beach wedding of two well known UK

Border Collie exhibitors who had decided to tie the knot whilst down under!! Pete Simmons and Yvonne Strachan, a very popular couple in the Border Collie world got married in the fabulous beachside location of Surfers Paradise on the nearby Gold Coast.... a hot and sunny location for the wedding, the irony of which was not lost on the wedding party who had been soaked to the skin less than 24 hours earlier.

On a final note, if you ever get asked to judge at any breed show or at the Brisbane Royal then leap at the chance. The city of Brisbane is exciting, vibrant, clean and safe and with the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast each less than one-hour drive away to the north and south of the city then you can combine shopping with relaxing. Even better if that invite is for 2018, as the city is hosting the Commonwealth Games that year so if your trip coincides with that then you have got it made!!!



Judge Judith Gregory deep in concentration.



Winner of the Open Dog class was Aust Ch Tullaview Take Your Mark, owned by P. Smith & C. Spencer.



Winner of the Veteran Dog class was Am Grand Ch. Aust Supreme Ch Borderlace Flash N Dash, owned by A. Cowin.



Winner of Intermediate Dog was Aust Ch Winpara Imagine Dragons, owned by R. Evans.



Best Puppy in Show was Trucharm It's Not Rocket Science, owned by K. & S. Leslie.



Quinora Breeder Team in the stakes.



Nahrof Breeder Team in the stakes.



Teyha Breeder Team in the stakes.