

only this but the same exhibit can be entered many times. Multiple entering of exhibits is in fact quite the norm and some dogs are entered as many as 6 times. So as to avoid confusion, our judge insisted that all dogs were returned to the ring in the order of their previous placing. For example it is quite reasonable to have a particular animal entered in the Puppy class, then the Maiden class, followed by the Novice class and finally the imported class. Country bred and of course Open classes are also available. By the time you get to the Open class most of the dogs have already been placed and the Open class can become automatic. However, just to add a bit of spice to the situation, this is not always the case.

And then there is yet another slight variation on our pattern. With some of the smaller breeds, separation of the sexes does not occur. Numerically popular breeds such as German Shepherds, Dobermans, Labradors and Golden Retrievers follow a more traditional format whereby the sexes are separated. However, with the likes of Beagles, Fox terriers and Great Danes the sexes were combined together for judging purposes. However, judges can still award a separate CC to each sex if they so choose.

Graham enquired as to the status of Chihuahuas and was informed that there were none. In fact, the entire Toy Group consisted of only two entrants. Both were Poms (imported from Rothlyne Kennels in Australia). Graham considered them to be quite typey representatives of their breed - one of them, in fact, being awarded Opposite Sex Puppy In Show.

Needless to say, as Ceylon is almost on the equator the climate of the island is always hot (only up in the mountains is cooler). Consequently, there are very few coated breeds and certainly no Collies, Shelties or the like. The Poms were apparently in quite reasonable coat. This is probably due to the dedication of a fastidious owner.

At this stage, an important fact should be mentioned. In this day of dog eat dog, or should I say Man eat dog - Sri Lanka should not be confused with various other Asian destinations. Graham considers that it is certainly not a place where the exporting of your treasured creations should be avoided at all costs. On this small island, everyone knows everyone and those who actively participate in Ceylon's world of dogs are part of a highly motivated and serious group. The influence of the British from the period of their mandate over the country is very apparent wherever you go. While the Portuguese influence can also be seen in many of the surnames such as



Frankie Boy of Silver Sand Kennels

de Zylva, Piereis and so on, adopted from the priests who baptised the children.

Similarly, while professional handlers are not in abundant supply, and the standard of some of the handling leaves a lot to be desired, there is a move towards having special handling classes during other times of the year. Exhibitors are fully aware that some of their handling techniques could be improved upon. Graham firmly believes that while lacking the ability to hold many shows there is certainly no lacking in the genuine enthusiasm and dedication of all those involved.

Finally, the language barrier proved to be no problem. Education is free right from kindergarten to university and there is a ninety percent literacy rate and everybody is relatively fluent in both Sinhalese and English. The only problem for our judge was getting the exhibitors to actually complete accurately the instructions, which were given. Fortunately, Graham had his own specially assigned steward who did not depart from standing beside his left shoulder for almost the entire day. This steward would often repeat the instructions, in Ceylon's chief language of Sinhalese, and the task would then be attempted for a second time.

At about 6.00pm - after approximately nine hours of judging (with a 15-minute break occurring about 2.30pm), the final awards were presented. Why did the judging of two hundred dogs take so long?

Firstly, apart from the large variety of classes many of the exhibits were entered numerous times;

Secondly, each dog had to be individually critiqued. Graham used a tape recorder, the



Le Bon Bon of Seaview

information on which was later transcribed into written form;

Thirdly, the enormous array of trophies had to be individually presented with each of these awards being accompanied by ceremonious photography.

And after such a programme, what conclusions had been reached?

Best Toy - Pomeranian - Rothlyne Just A Demon (Imp Aust) - Jayakody

Best Terrier - Smooth Fox Terrier Ch. Amicus Sheildmenn's Winscore (bred in Singapore) - De Silva

Best Gundog and Best Sporting Exhibit (also achieving Reserve in Show and Best Opposite Sex in Show) - Golden Retriever - Thea - Sri Lankan Air Force

Best Hound - Rhodesian Ridgeback - Ritchie II - Mendis

Best Pastoral (also Third in Show) - German Shepherd - Lyfamo Yago - Sri Lankan Air Force

Best Working (Best in Show and consequently the Best Non-Sporting) - Dobermann - Frankie Boy of Silver Sand Kennels - Heinrich

Best Utility (also Fourth in Show) - French Bulldog - Le Bon Bon of Seaview - De Livera.

Puppy in Show was awarded to a German Shepherd, Fleetwood's Alto, imported from India. Owned by local architect Nela De Zoysa, this exhibit was quite well handled by a fellow who also showed a wide range of other exhibits.

On the way to the climax of the awarding of Best In Show, the Best Opposite Sex in each group was also judged. Also, numerous classes in show: such as the 'Best Conditioned Exhibit', 'Best Country Bred In Show', a separate class for 'Owner Bred Country Exhibit', as well as various breed classes and Handler classes.

Members of the armed forces - particularly the army, air force and police, own many dogs. An anonymous donor had given four cash prizes for the 'Best Service Handlers' - yet another category that required thoughtful adjudication. This is a popular class and the ring was filled with handlers and dogs.

All these sections had to be decided before the final few prizes were formally announced.

What a day! Although it had been quite hot and humid (and the judge was rather tired to say the least), the event had been an undeniable success. However, the programme was not over yet. Monday night would conclude the occasion with a special dinner.

Monday morning dawned and our judge arose from an excellent sleep after the previous day's exhausting judging schedule. Collected at about 9.00am for a relatively short (60 km) drive, Graham again encountered the true picture of Sri Lankan road life. The drive took some 2 and a half hours. Traffic is indeed

a memorable experience in Sri Lanka. Everyone just presses the pedal and heads off into whatever space is available in front of them. All the wealthy people have their own drivers and so, through constant practice, these experienced employees have learnt how to avoid all the others on the road and somehow reach their final destination in one piece. Experiencing this provides one with some unique memories. Plans have been gazetted for freeways. Graham awaits with great interest the news of where these new roads are going to be built, since space is at a premium, particularly in Colombo.

The drive eventually resulted in our intrepid traveller arriving at a world famous elephant orphanage - "Pinnawala". Here, live some 60 magnificent animals (all orphans for various reasons).

This centre has recently featured in an Australian television programme. An article was filmed about one of their babies who had lost its front leg in a bomb explosion and consequently ended up in their care. Sadly, no success has been achieved with the attempts at providing it with an artificial leg. However, the will to live can achieve wonderful things and this seemingly disadvantaged youngster appears to experience no problems in walking around the compound. (See picture of page 20)

During the tour, Graham saw half a dozen babies being feed. He was informed that each calf demolishes a total of 21 litres of milk over a total of five feeds each day.

It was an eye-opening experience - most informative and highly interesting. Without doubt the centre is staffed by a very caring and dedicated group of people.

The lengthy return journey to Colombo was broken by a stop over at a Spice Garden. This beautiful centre is divided into sections each displaying specific trees. Samples of the various products were handed out. There was also a talk that provided an insight into herbal medicine - Sri Lankan style.

After arriving back at the hotel there was only a short interval in which to prepare for the important dinner and meeting the exhibitors.

This dinner is an integral part of the entire ceremony. Certificates are not actually signed until this 'Meet the Judge' function. Why hurry such an important task when everyone knows everyone and no exhibitors are actually going anywhere. After all who would think of leaving this tropical island paradise. The dinner was held at the Colombo Golf Club (one of the oldest courses in Asia - a British legacy) and attracted approximately fifty guests - all of whom were keen to discuss the merits of their particular exhibits with their Australian visitor. The dinner finished at about 11.30pm, although no one seemed in any hurry to depart. Every one, including Graham, was delighted at the successful conclusion to an incredibly exhausting but most important event in the Ceylonese Dog Calendar.

An early morning rise at 5.00am, the following morning, was necessary as passengers are required to arrive at the airport a good three hours early - due to security requirements. The return flight departed at 11.00am, once again stopping in Singapore before finally touching down in Brisbane around 6.00am. It is undoubtedly a fairly arduous trip as many hours are spent travelling to and from the destination. However, such a marvellous chance to encounter so many new and exciting experiences is not to be underestimated. After all, as an early 20th Century proverb states: "Travels broadens the mind" and Graham wholeheartedly agrees he is all the richer for embarking upon this sojourn into the Sri Lankan show scene.

