

# CRUFTS MARCH 2007

Paula Heikkinen-Lehkinen



**BEST IN SHOW - TIBETAN TERRIER  
UK CH ARAKI FABULOUS WILLY**



The legendary Crufts show again had some dramatic turns, although no scandals. The chairman of the show committee, Terry Thorn, was taken ill just before the show, and this changed his program. He is the number 1 judge in the UK, well known all over the world. But the whole huge machine works perfectly, everybody knows his duties and everything was well planned, so the absence of the commander-in-chief was hardly noticeable for the public. Another one of the topmost British judges, Mr. Ellis Hulme, had cancelled his appointment to judge his favourite breed, the Papillon, due to ill health. At least three participating dogs were reported to die during the show, for various reasons.

The Crufts show, recognised as the biggest dog show in the world, is still growing. The British people respect traditions, and many things at Crufts are kept exactly as they have been, but at the same time there is room for innovation. This year they had taken some new halls into use. The obedience and the finals were in new places with more room for the public. Again on Sunday at the BIS final each seat was occupied, so this really was a necessary change. Also the press people were pleased to have a new bigger press room, which had formerly served as the overseas visitors' lounge. Now the overseas visitors have been banished into the old small press room. About 800 reporters and photographers of various levels from all over the world had been registered, so there certainly was need for a decent press room. The BBC showed on its channel 2 a long program every day, the entire Group finals and many interviews etc.

There were about 25 000 dogs entered and about 135 000 tickets sold, altogether on the four days. Crufts is becoming more and more international every year. This year in 35 different breeds the BOB winner had come from overseas. This might have shocked the British breeders, as they are not used to the international competition, at least to that extent as the rest of Europe. Importing and transporting dogs without quarantine has been, however, possible for several years now, although it still is rather complicated and expensive. Also judges from other countries are very rare at Crufts, as in the UK in general.

In UK they don't recognise as many breeds as most other countries, and not all the breeds are able to win CCs and become champions. A breed must reach a certain size of population and stability, before they are granted the CCs. For the first time this always happens at Crufts. It might be the only set of CCs available for those breeds in the whole year, and even later on the number of CCs depends on the registration and entry figures. The champions can compete for the CCs as long as they want to, so it is not easy to get the British title. This year the new breeds to reach this level were the Basset Fauve de Bretagne, the Glen of Imaal Terrier and the Portuguese Water Dog.

The current topic in the British dog world is the docking ban, which is likely to come into force in April. Docking has been banned in many European countries already for several years. Basically, there should be the same rules in this matter in every country and at the same time, it would make our lives much easier. Another timely topic is the health of the pure-bred dogs, but of course, this is not only in England but a generally important subject everywhere. We dog people have to fight against the common image that pure-bred dogs are somehow weak and burdened with all kinds of hereditary problems etc. Actually, there are many health controls and programs against hereditary diseases, which have brought good results, in many countries, as we all know.

Crufts is not only a conformation show, every day there are many kinds of activities and many things to see for the general public. One of the most popular ones is Mary Ray with her dancing Border Collies, unbelievably skilful. The obedience, agility and flyball competitions are very tough with a lot of high quality competitors. The obedience was very international this time, and the winner was the Dutch team. The Canine Good Citizen scheme is going on, and there are rings for performing dogs. At the Kennel Club stand a breeder can have his litter registered, or you can order an export pedigree etc. The Discover Dogs section is always very crowded, there the volunteers of the breed clubs staff an information stand for each breed. Many other organisations and funds are making themselves known, such as animal welfare organisation, therapy dogs or those looking for new homes for retired racing Greyhounds etc.

Some celebrities visit the show, and of course a Royal visit is a must. Prince Michael of Kent is the Patron of the Kennel Club, and he came to see the show as he has many times before. One very interesting thing was also the auction of dog art, held by the Kennel Club Charitable Fund. If you have money and are interested in art, you can find something really nice there. The most expensive piece was an oil painting of two foxes, which was sold for 2000 pounds. There were many nice smaller pieces sold for more reasonable prices, like under 200.

There are a couple of independent shows within the show, the gamekeeper's classes for working gundogs and the Kennel Club Youth Organisation show for its members. Each of these have their own judges and classes and also their own BIS finals.

England is a dog loving country, but the truth is that dogs bite about 250 000 persons yearly so that they must be treated, and 4000 of them are badly bitten. All the dogs don't behave well, and everybody doesn't love them. The Kennel Club is working hard to promote dogs and their meaning for human beings. There was already last year this very popular "Friends for Life" campaign. By this they underline how a dog can change somebody's life, make it better. A jury had chosen six finalists with their dogs for this. There was public voting, the candidates were presented on TV and newspapers. Each one had a really touching story of life. Last year the winning couple was a young boy in a wheelchair with his Labrador. This year most votes went to 81-year-old Tony Higbed, who was lonely after both his wife and dogs had died. Mr Higbed is deaf, so he was very helpless alone. After he had got a crossbred little dog Molly, trained as a hearing aid, his life was changed. Molly is Tony's ears and his companion who takes him out for walks etc. All the finalists plus last year's winner were brought into the main ring just before the BIS final, they were presented and then finally the winner was announced. A group of youngsters sang and Tony Higbed with Molly were standing in the middle of spotlights.



**RUNNER UP BEST IN SHOW - WIRE FOX TERRIER  
UK CH TRAVELLA SHOW STOPPER**



**Runner Up Best  
In Terrier Group  
Dandie Dinmont  
Aust/Am Ch  
Hobergay's Fineas  
Fogg**



**BEST OF THE TOY GROUP - MALTESE  
DIVINES MARC OF FRIENDSHIP AT DELCOST,  
Owned by Mrs C R Gillies**



**Runner up Best  
In Toy Group  
Griffon Bruxellois  
Ch Donzeata  
Royal Vintage,**



**BEST IN GUNDOG GROUP - FLAT COATED RETRIEVER  
CH ALMANZA FAR AND FLYG**