

Basset Griffon Vendéen (Petit)

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THE HILLS SURROUNDING BULTH WELLS are prone to draw in the rain clouds. Diana Sadler lives less than 25 miles away from the showground and, with the heavy rain falling and her mind turning to tractors for towing, as she optimistically but amusingly put it "Everything changes when you get over the hill".

Out of the entry of 36 at Welsh KC, there were 30 for judge Anne Macdonald to go over. It was a good day for Soletrader as DCC, BOB and a subsequent Hound Group win under Miss Elina Haapaniemi went to Sara Robertson & Wendy Doherty's Ch Soletrader Magic Mike. From Limit, BCC went to Katherine Bamford's Tangaer Amour (Debucher Quel Chance avec Tangaer ex Putjade Utterly Butterly), handled by Linda Lewis. Reserves went to Jane Brown's Soletrader Valentino Rossi (Ch Soletrader Noble Kinsmen ex Soletrader Bumble Bee) and Sara Robertson & Wendy Doherty's Soletrader Rita Ora, who is now a champion. BP went to Sara and Oliver Robertson's Soletrader Buddy Holly (Ch Soletrader Magic Mike ex Debucher Ristourne with Soletrader) with BV to the only one present Jean Hood's Tangaer Savoir Faire ShCM (Ch/Ir Ch Tangaer Magique ex Enklassique Kiss Me Quick at Lavierge), also handled by breeder Linda Lewis. The strikingly coloured Tomos later went on to Veteran Group 2 under Vivien Phillips.

In other classes, Katie and Lilly O'Brien were both short listed in large YKC handling classes, and Katie gained a VHC in the Junior Handling Association Qualifying Heats (12-16) under Robin Alner.

Over the following two days, a good number of BGV owners joined together at Carmel in South Wales for Linda Lewis' Tangaer weekend, which was as popular and successful as ever. Linda had undoubtedly put in a lot of hard work to guarantee an enjoyable weekend and there was a good mix of Petits, Grands, Fauves and other breeds. Plenty of food, entertainment, a great auction and raffle, not to mention the agility display, which was available for all to have a go with their dogs, the sausage race and fun dog show. There were plenty of laughs and, for those who still had the energy left, there was a walk at Llyn Llech Owain Country Park though by then the good weather had deserted them. However, a good lunch at the Stag and Pheasant Inn, Carmel made a great end to a great weekend.

The same weekend in another part of the UK, Sue Brundle hosted another walk, this time at the 700 acre Petworth Park, West Sussex. With the reluctance nowadays for people to travel far for events mostly local folk attended, though Paul and Ann Stallard from Uxbridge were made most welcome. Paul said the number of deer was almost too much for their PBGV Rupert, whose nose was soon picking up their scent. Petworth Park has been the home of this magnificent herd of fallow deer for over 500 years. It seems Henry VIII got in first before the BGVs by reportedly hunting them on his visit there in the 1500s.

Emily Jeanes from the Animal Health Trust has been up to Scotland. She had unfortunately been unable to attend Linda Lewis' Tangaer weekend as she was booked to go to Edinburgh, where she completed her Masters Degree. Apart from taking in Edinburgh Festival and the Fringe, at Linda's suggestion she also seized the opportunity to measure the height of PBGVs living north of the border as part of the ongoing research into whether dogs with mutations in ADAMTS17 (a mutation associated with Primary Lens Luxation) tend to be short in stature. In all, she measured nine. Although having already done some at Crufts earlier in the year, this allowed her to double check. The day was a relaxing one with an enjoyable pub lunch in the Lomond Tavern in Falkland, then a woodland walk in lovely weather before Emily returned by train to Edinburgh.

Overseas, the same weekend, Phil Freer was judging at the Swedish PBGV Club's 25th Anniversary Show at Tanga Hed where he had an entry of 49. With help from Cilla Gylen, Inge Hansen (Väntans) had a good show with BIS Breeder, BPIS (Väntans Rock 'n Roll Raffa), BIS Hunting Dog and BIS4 (Väntans Qoketta Qarin). With BOS going to Around Another Bad Hair Day (Around Surprise Surprise ex Around Jar of Jam), BOB went to Annicke Lofgren's Swe/Nor Ch Around Ultra Exclusive (Swe/Dk Ch Rainstone Dustin ex Swe/Nor Ch Around Nothing Else Matters), who also went BIS.

Finally, it can't have gone unnoticed that a few days back parts of America experienced a total eclipse. This phenomenon turned day to night in much of the States, with the first experiences on the West Coast in Oregon. Valerie Link returned there more than 2yrs ago to be with her family and, over the past weeks, they have been experiencing extremely high temperatures of well over 30C. Last week an estimated 1.5 million eclipse hunters were flocking north past her Grants Pass home on Interstate 5, all headed towards the Salem area. People travelling through were calling in at the store where Valerie helps out. Putting it mildly, trade was brisk. A wildfire started up nearby between Grants Pass and Rogue River, possibly due to someone throwing a cigarette out of a car window and reduced visibility caused traffic to slow down. There were tense moments with planes flying overhead fighting the fire and Valerie not knowing whether any towns nearby would be evacuated.

Where she lives they experienced 94% totality. However, despite witnessing this once in a lifetime event, Valerie said another local fire subsequently resulted in not fog, not clouds but smoke filling the air and reducing visibility. One big fire is near Brookings on the coast about 80 miles from her and she says "Your eyes burn, your throat hurts, it is terrible. Apparently this fire started by a lightning strike last month and advice was to leave it to burn itself out due to where it is. However, it then got out of control with the winds and even jumped a river so has now spread to 100,000 acres and evacuations are taking place at Brookings". It is a worrying time all round for this normally relatively quiet town and, of course, after the eclipse, reverse visitor flow has been in full force down I-5 so things have never been so exciting in Grants Pass.

LINDA SKERRITT, 01375 673922, monkhams@aol.com