

Basset Griffon Vendéen (Petit)

7 / 12/ 2018

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW PHOTOS are now on www.bgvclub.co.uk/2015-18-ch-shows. Photos are also in the winter newsletter, which should be with you soon. The tight deadline to ensure Voice was printed and with you before Christmas meant no time to wait for inclusion of critiques. These will go on the website when available. Thanks must go to Sue Marshall who survived the pressure I put on her to get main winners photos to me in double quick time, also to Tim Jennings who helped her. After next year's 23 November show date, we will be reverting to our more familiar October dates, which will not only give the slightly longer days but more breathing space between the show and issue of the winter newsletter.

Christine Marrett is on a high as her Limier Didier of Gayteckels Pd'H is Guernsey Kennel Club Veteran of the Year. This prestigious win was announced at the recent GKC AGM. Well done Didi, who achieved this from 2 BVIS and 1 RBVIS in Guernsey this year. At West Lothian CS Society Open, Lorna Wyllie's Ch Tangaer Rhapsody at Callydena ShCM went Best Hound Veteran under Tom Roberts, then Reserve BVIS under Hilary Male. And at Burton on Trent KA there was a fantastic entry of 11 from two classes for Tracy Boyles (Bleyos) who awarded Tim & Deborah Bartley's Erylan Zeus Roi des Dieux BP. He went on to PG4 under Rachel Wray (Perrault).

Otherwise a quiet week for show news so I thought I'd tell you a bit about the recent parliamentary debate on "Ban the sale of fireworks to the public. Displays for licenced venues only". This is a subject very close to my heart and I suspect many other dog owners, who dread the weeks surrounding 5 November. Many found the Minister's response to this petition hugely disappointing so I was therefore most impressed with the succinct and forthright introductory speech given by Helen Jones (Warrington North) who covered just about every aspect of the problem that is growing year on year. She made it clear that firework displays were no longer the idyllic occasions from our childhood when, on 5 November, our fathers would let off a few fireworks, plus a packet of sparklers and a Catherine wheel that wouldn't go round properly. Nowadays bonfire night extends beyond a couple of dates a year and, as fireworks have come to be used more frequently, they have grown more powerful and noisier. It was concern about this issue that led to the Fireworks Act 2003. Then the Fireworks Regulations 2004 introduced a lot of rules about the sale, possession and use of fireworks. They introduced a licensing system for those who sell fireworks all year round, limited the sale by other suppliers to dates around 5 November, New Year, Chinese New Year and Diwali, imposed a maximum decibel level of 120 and forbade the possession of adult fireworks—those in the F2 and F3 categories—in a public place by anyone under 18. F4 fireworks, which are the most explosive, can be possessed only by fireworks professionals. However the problem of course is one of enforcement. Trading Standards are unable to enforce licencing and the thinly stretched police and community officers have enough to do without being on the spot when someone is distressed or complains about misuse.

And so public concern continues to rise, including complaints from those who witness the effect on animals. As well as injuring people, fireworks are an immense problem for animals. Helen Jones had been contacted by people who said their pets have to be sedated when fireworks were going off. They were supported by the KC and a number of charities, including Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, the Blue Cross, Dogs Trust and RSPCA. The RSPCA wants to see the maximum decibel level reduced. However no-one seemed to latch onto the point that the proximity of the exploding fireworks obviously has a bearing on the level of distress caused.

Although Helen Jones referred to silent fireworks John Howell (Henley) put forward the argument that they are not entirely silent and this would not remove the whole problem as flashes often cause the most distress to animals.

With many MPs recounting the number of complaints they had received from constituents concerned about the effect loud fireworks had on their animals, the emphasis was clearly on whether the Government had plans to amend the regulations on the sale or use of fireworks to reduce the maximum decibel level of fireworks purchasable by the general public, and to encourage the use of low-noise fireworks. It was also good to see it suggested that use should be restricted to certain times during the year.

The session ended with Helen Jones saying that the Home Office had to start taking this matter seriously or they would be debating the subject time and time again until it did. She concluded "These are serious issues about people being injured, emergency workers being attacked and people's lives being made a misery. It is time that the Government started to take it seriously".

If you don't have time to watch the debate in full but would like to read the transcript, it is on <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-26/debates/C95047CD-F24E-44DA-BE73-FC571B014CEF/FireworksPublicSales>. It is well worth reading.

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