

Basset Griffon Vendéen (Petit)

25 / 1/ 2019

FIRST OF ALL I must apologise for the late posting of last week's breed notes. I was without internet for several days so although written I was unable to upload them. Living without internet is difficult if not nigh on impossible nowadays! I seem to be going through a bad patch all round though as, early yesterday evening, a control knob and the spring behind it popped off my oven while it was on and I spent ages trying to turn it off, without much success. It was getting hotter and hotter in the kitchen and conservatory. I went to open the conservatory door to let some of the heat out, only to find it was already open! As the room fugged up alarmingly and the smell of burning increased, the PBGVs stood looking bewildered so I shoed them further away as I began to wonder whether it could catch fire. I think my son-in-law sensed the urgency in my voice when I phoned for help and, after finding the hidden oven point for switching off the electricity and spending maybe 15mins trying to turn what was left of the knob, he thankfully succeeded. With a replacement knob on order I now find that, as with maintenance of cars, gone are the days where oven cleaning was a simple business of being able to remove parts, clean and replace them. That said, the shock of what happened yesterday evening has goaded me into action to do some early spring cleaning!

I am often asked about missing critiques. Every year, when several months have elapsed after a show, if there has been no critique published, I contact the KC and they take up the matter. It is a shame this has to be done when part of a judge's contract is to supply a critique but last year I asked the KC to look into the non-appearance of nine PBGV and GBGV championship show ones. To date four are still outstanding. As you all know, one of these is for PBGVs at Crufts last year. This was going to the KC Shows Executive Committee for a decision on a penalty, which will appear in the Kennel Journal, so I will update you in due course.

Of course, the majority of judges take their appointments seriously and I'd like to quote to you a comment I received from one such person yesterday, which I am sure he won't mind me putting in print here. "A critique takes no more than a couple of hours of your time and provides pleasure, reassurance and gives the exhibitor the answers they are looking for. I cannot understand how some judges do not feel that is important. As a non-specialist judge it's important to remember that the exhibitor has far more knowledge about their breed than you do. There is no greater compliment in this hobby than someone paying for your opinion of their dogs. There is no greater insult to the exhibitor than not sharing that opinion and explaining why you made those decisions. If you can't explain, then how can your opinion be worth seeking ever again".

As the "last man standing" Our Dogs provides a good facility for club secretaries to check on old critiques or whether critiques have indeed been published at all. However, publication of any critique is slowed down by the volume of reports Our Dogs receives at any one time, also with restrictions on the size of weekly newspaper printed. At the height of the dog showing season they get swamped with over 500 critiques weekly. Reports do not go on their website straight away, they are only uploaded once the staff have dealt with them. This doesn't help the exhibitor who is waiting impatiently, keen to see what the judge thought of his/her dog and getting more frustrated as the weeks pass and no critique.

Of course, now the Kennel Club has provided the facility for judges to upload their critiques straight away <https://kcjudgescritiques.org.uk/> with their website sporting a photo of Ceri McEwan judging a Fauve on the home page. We had a good example of swift uploading last year where Mark Cocozza posted his "warts and all" PBGV critique the same day as judging at Three Counties; and you will find that Gavin Robertson uploaded his critique shortly after Hound day at Manchester last week. This is a refreshing change for exhibitors, though someone did make the comment that posting critiques too swiftly allows the Group judge to view results and the judge's view of the BOB. This is a valid comment however, I would imagine, highly unlikely and no more likely than a conversation in the Judges' Room.

Nearly the end of January and the days are getting a little longer though some of you have weathered snow this week. Please bear in mind that, if your annual subscription is unpaid by the end of this month, you will be ineligible to receive voting papers should there be any ballot before the AGM. Annual subscription rates are: Single - £10, Joint - £12, Overseas – single or joint £18 (electronic communication) or £25 (postal communication), Junior £2 (under 17 and accompanied by one paying adult). Payment should either be made by standing order, direct bank transfer or by cheque sent to our Membership Secretary Martin Bishop at 1 Longship Way, Maldon, Essex CM9 6UG. Tel 01621 855984, email martin.bishop10@btopenworld.com.

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