

Fletcher

BRIARD BRIEFS

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MORE SHOWING NEEDED: Going over American Kennel Club records for 1958 (up to December 6th), it is evident that Briards were shown in but 17 AKC point shows. This is a miserable record and there is no sense in trying to justify it. There was a total of 39 dogs shown. The best of breed winners at the 17 events were as follows:

Lorfi's Lesser Yellow Legs	<i>Seattle</i> (Jonal Kennels)	4 wins
Westlawn Keelson	(Thomas)	3 wins
Chef D'Oeuvre	(Westlawn)	2 wins
Walton's Suzanne	(Vogel)	2 wins
Haro de Vasony	(Acton)	2 wins
✓ Qui Vive de la Galliarde	(Fletcher) - <i>Yakima</i>	1 win
Westlawn Kingpin	(Vogel)	1 win
Beau Jean of Alpen	(Gilbert)	1 win
Ithuriel	(Murphy)	1 win

All but two of the owners mentioned are members of The Fellowship. Any attempt for jubilation on the grounds that nearly 90% of the events were dominated by Fellowship dogs may be a statistician's triumph, but it does not hide the fact, going back only to 1950, that there were 49 shows with Briards and a total of 218 dogs shown. In other words we have dropped in eight years from 218 to 39 dogs and from 49 to 17 shows. Further indication of the lack of competition comes from the fact that in 1950, Briards collected 91 points towards championships whereas in 1958 the total was only 23.

In 1950 the largest event was The Fellowship Specialty with a total of 60 entries. Eight years later the biggest event was again our specialty with 11 dogs. In the relatively short span of eight years we show at approximately one-third as many shows and bring out about one-fifth as many entries.

There has to be a "why" to anything as discouraging as the above miserable record. Are the dogs of poorer quality? There is nothing to indicate any such condition. Are there fewer Briards being bred? The answer there is a resounding "yes". Why that is so is not so easy to state. Some of you may point the finger towards the writer who, admittedly does not breed as often as in the past. If I must be placed in a position of defense there are two reasons. One is that my business cares have increased so greatly in the last few years that time to attend to puppies and to the details of shipping them, has become more difficult unless outside help is employed. The second reason -- and one that is stated with some reluctance -- is that entries were reduced in some cases because my own kennels were doing too much winning. I have had owners call me up before the closing date of a show and ask if I was going to show certain dogs. When the answer was in the affirmative the inquirer did not enter a dog in competition. So, aside from some of The Fellowship's traditional feature shows,

Westlawn entries have been reduced. To gain one or two entries at the expense of six or more dogs certainly does not add up. The only assumption from such a condition is that some Briard owners are more interested in winning than they are in promoting the breed. If top dogs are to be kept home because they win, logic would dictate that only poor dogs should be shown.

Perhaps Briards are too good. By that we mean that they are, for the most part, owned by one-dog families where they are part of the family. One owner stated this very clearly. He said, "I would as soon enter my wife in a beauty contest as show my Briard". This is a wrong attitude predicated largely by the mistaken idea that dogs do not like to be shown and that showing is a bitter, soul-searing affair requiring great skill and determination. This was recognized when The Fellowship was founded and the regulation put into effect that professional handlers were barred from handling our dogs. In other words, shows like Westminster and the other primarily professional events have not drawn Briard entries for years. We have not taken interest in events where all hands are out for blood and the dogs and owners are virtually placed in jail; to stay on exhibit until the show has collected sufficient funds from the gate receipts. However, those conditions do not apply to the one-day shows and especially to those which allow you to go home soon after the ring appearance. It is this phase that has been responsible, year after year, for our annual specialty having the largest entry.

For a great many years the Twin Brooks K.C. show at West Orange, N.J. has been considered as the annual indoor feature event. This year the show will be on Sunday, April 12th. We will be judged by Mrs. Baiter who has had years of experience with the breed. The trophy list is attractive. Premium lists are obtainable from the Foley Dog Show Organization, 2009 Ranstead St., Philadelphia 3, Pa. The Fellowship office will have a limited number available and copies will be sent to a few members we believe are sure to enter. Why not be on the safe side and write Foley for a copy anyway? Closing date will be March 30th. If we can get cooperation for Twin Brooks, we will at least start 1959 towards a better record than the 1958 entries indicate.

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BRIARD PICTURED IN LIFE: The recent picture of the Briard Irving was sent in by Member Laura Davis. The dog is actually Dom Perigon of Stilt, a magnificent youngster bred by Fred Leary. He did well at our last specialty at Far Hills.

ETIENNE NOW CHAMPION: Member Bill Kent's Walton's Etienne UD has been awarded a show ring championship. This honor comes on top of the UD degree for obedience work.

DON'T WASH YOUR BRIARD: In spite of advice to the contrary do NOT bathe your Briard, do NOT comb the hair in the reverse direction of the lay of the hair unless you want the dog to look like a poodle and not like the lithe animal specified in the Standard. And do not smear perfume on him.