

Discover Dogs at Crufts 2023

By Karen Bugg

Discover Dogs at Crufts 2023 will certainly go down in history as one of the coldest and snowiest years!

There was snow on the ground all five days, yes my Crufts DD started as usual on the Wednesday before, setting up the stand. No Dave and Diane or Alex helping this year, but Mark my other half, and because of this our usual 2-3 hours setting up (depending on our visit to the Cornish pasty place for lunch!) became 4+ because he was still 'working' i.e. taking business phone calls, also he was not as quick putting up the display as in past years.



The stand had a new colourful banner this year designed by Janice and myself which certainly stopped a lot of asking our most frequently asked question, i.e. How do you pronounce the name of your breed? And a new information leaflet was printed complete with a QR code which links to the website. Our volunteers managed the stand brilliantly over the four days and colourful rosettes were given away with pictures of Schipperkes on to younger visitors; along with 'sweeties' and of course we asked the parents if they may have one!

As it was very important to make a good impression our 'A Team' took to the stand, in the form of activities experts Janice Philpott and Emma Finch, Club VP Lesley Thorne with her son Michael and club committee member Christine Massey. The dogs present were black and cream and included both a legally docked and a natural bobtailed Schipperke. They had a super day talking to the public





and show exhibitors about the dogs. Lesley had provided sweeties for the children (and DD stewards/judges) and Emma had made up a load of rosettes to give out to the children with the breed on them.

Breed expert Joe McKenna opened up the stand bright and early on Friday morning. It was a slow start to the day due to the previous night's snow fall affecting the Midlands, but the mainly adult visitors still had lots of questions about the breed, many of which hadn't even heard of a Schipperke. Joe was joined by Debbie Moore later that morning and she brought along Finlay, her a natural bobtailed cream male with her black tailed female.



Saturday's weather was much better and the public flocked to Crufts. Karen Brooks (our club Health co-ordinator) and husband Peter (club Vice Chair) along with their son did a sterling



job on the stand. Not only by talking with the public in attendance, but also by being interviewed for the KC social media platforms, giving a broader audience to our wonderful breed. Karen also featured last year on the intro to the Utility day TV coverage on Channel 4!



I was on the Schipperke stand on Sunday (which coincided with Utility day) as I was going to take it down that evening. My sister came along with me, which was helpful, and she really enjoyed talking to the public about our breed as she was a Schipperke owner having one from my very first litter.

It was a very busy day talking to visitors of all ages and we enjoyed it very much. We met people who were completely new to the breed, people who had owned the breed in the past and people who were looking forward to owning their first Schipperke very soon. And it was

lovely to meet up with old friends with other breeds who popped over to say ‘hi’, and not forgetting our foreign visitors too who exhibit at Crufts on a yearly basis.

This year I, personally, didn’t have anyone questioning the colour of the breed as much as in the past – perhaps they have now been educated about the breed standard in this country?! But there was still some “I didn’t know they came in other colours! We’ve only seen them in black”.

We were very busy all day and I am thankful to Debbie, Beryl and Linda who came along after the judging had completed and allowed us (and the dogs) to take a break and do a bit of shopping.

Finally a big THANK YOU to everyone who worked on the stand promoting our breed. They brought their Schipperkes along which included black and cream tailed males and females, a legally docked male import, three NBTs (natural bob tails) one black and two creams, all of which were great talking points about the breed. And the thing they all had in common were they were all “Happy, Healthy Dogs.”

