

IRISH SETTER BREED NOTES  
W/C MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

Well here we are, a week since Crufts, so I thought it a good time to write about it.

Crufts isn't 'just another dog show', it's the biggest in the world with almost 20,000 dogs entered, of which almost 4000 were from overseas; and there were over 450 trade stands this year. I'm not sure what the gate was but the place was teeming with visitors.

Unlike any other show dogs have to qualify in order to enter.

Although it is the Kennel Club's showcase of all things canine it is run by the Crufts Committee, not all of whom are on the KC Board.

An annual talking point is the selection of judges. It is a widely held belief that a judge must have awarded tickets at least 7 times before being considered for Crufts and whilst the selection is loosely based on this, it is not an exact science.

The method by which Crufts as a show society selects its judges is at the discretion of the society.

They are a show society like any other and they have the right to propose judges.

The invitations are sent out about 3 ½ years in advance but this year's judges were victims of the pandemic. Invitations were sent in November 2017 for the March 2021 show but this was cancelled and invitations already being in place for 2022 and 2023, the judges were put back to this year.

I don't know if you are aware, but you cannot judge at Crufts if you are over 80 so it is tragic that some judges lost their appointment of a life time due to Covid.

Judges are expected to stay in the Metropole Hotel at the NEC the night before they judge. This is so that they know you are there and leaves no last minute panic trying to find replacements.

Judges are given clear written instructions beforehand about staying in the hotel and how much they will be paid in expenses. Dinner, bed and breakfast are included.

Judges are also given their class breakdown and a clear start and end time.

The evening before judging all judges must attend a briefing where they are reminded of the judges' code of best practise, particularly the clause which states that judges may exclude any dog from the ring if it is considered not in a fit state for exhibition, because there is reputational risk to The Kennel Club and dog showing in general with such a high profile show as Crufts.

It is a sociable affair when a judge can get together with the rest of the judges and drinks and nibbles are provided.

On the morning of the show judges report to Judges' Reception where they are given their judge's book, a Crufts pen and a canvas Crufts bag to keep it all in.

You are asked if you will want lunch in the restaurant or a packed lunch in the ring.

You may have noticed that judges don't have rosettes to wear; instead, they are given a lovely Crufts Judge badge.

Once in your ring and if possible before start of judging, the Hall Steward will ask some questions from a check list. Examples are, what are you having for lunch? What time do you expect to finish? And if there are two judges, do you think the referee will be needed?

The show is run to a very strict time table and because of the sheer vastness of Crufts another peculiarity of it is that two referees are appointed.

These are the Group judge and one other.

Again, the Hall Stewards keep a very close watch on which class a judge is up to and if they believe a judge is running over time, they will ask them to hurry up.

They are also mindful that the referee might possibly be needed and radio back to the Chief Steward to find out where in this huge venue the referee is.

All judging is expected to be finished by 17:30 so that the BOBs can gather in the collecting ring.

Once in the collecting ring the dogs are given another 'sort of' vet check. I 'say sort' of because a vet assesses them moving on the carpet.

The carpets in the rings can prove problematical for some exhibits who slide on their back feet when stacking and can lose their footing when moving. It is another thing that makes Crufts different from other shows.

I don't know of any dogs who regularly move on carpet and so they can be wary and reluctant to do so. The slippery floor outside the rings can put many a dog off as well.

But the flooring in the main arena is a different texture again and so the dogs are given the chance to get accustomed to it.

The arena is packed to the gills for the groups and tickets for Sunday's Best in Show sell out early. Although Channel 4 advertises Crufts as live it is delayed on TV so that any unfortunate incidents can be excluded.

Channel 4 provided us with excellent coverage this year and Clare Balding's interviews were terrific. A Little Mate's Husband Story.

MLM's husband David has been retired for many a year now but keeps up with his old workmates by regularly meeting them in a pub for a few pints of beer. I say 'a few', but from 1.00pm to 5.00pm quite a few can be drunk.

These days are known as 'David Days' and MLM relishes them because she has the house and time to herself.

Last Friday was a David Day.

So this morning (Sunday) I ring MLM but David answers

'You can't have her' he says 'because she's taken My Little Pony to a dog show at Newark'

Me: Oh Ok. How was your David Day?

David: She's told you, hasn't she?

Me: I've not spoken her since last Thursday

David: So you don't know what happened then?

Me: Oh no, David, what happened, are you OK?

David: Yes I'm fine

Me: So what is it then?

David: Well I caught the bus, got to the pub and I was the first there.

Me: And?

David: I got my pint, sat at a table and read my phone. I drank my pint, got another and tried to look nonchalant as though I'd gone in there just to read my phone.

Me: Then what happened?

David: No one turned up but it was raining so I guess they couldn't be bothered to come. I rang Chris and she came to collect me.

Me: Crikey, are they all OK? Have you heard from them since?

David: No I haven't and I'm not going to ring them either if they can't be bothered.

Me: I think you should David because they are all old

David: No, I'm not. We always meet on the first Friday of the month, have done for years.

Me: But David, last Friday wasn't the first Friday of the month....

David: Yes I know that now but they didn't show up the week before either.

Me: So you went last week and no one came?

David: Yes

Me: David last week was the second Friday in the month.....

#2ofakind #wellsuited #livewithemtillyougetlikeem

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