

Discover Dogs - 13th and 14th November 2010

By Joan Martyn DD Co-ordinator for the GBBA

Well, another year has flown by and it was time again for Discover Dogs at Earls Court.

Initially, in the summer, the GBBA had a run through of ideas/layouts for the 2010 Stand. It wasn't until the week before Discover Dogs that Carol and I had a meeting with Ian Willsmer at his studio, where photographs and wording for our Stand were chosen, to portray the image of Griffons as wonderful family members. The Club is so fortunate to have such a talented and stalwart member as Ian Willsmer, who is so supportive on the graphics front. Then we left it up to Ian to produce all (bless him).

Once again Ian produced some beautiful artwork, most of which was "new" for the Booth. We had prints showing all three coat colours, red, black and black and tan, in both coat types, rough and smooth of Griffons with tails. Also there were many prints showing Griffons in different situations - one with a red rough with a child, red smooth relaxing by the river, red smooth playing with a pink heart shaped toy, red roughs running through the snow, two prints showing two red smooths participating in agility, red smooth (my Ron) curled up with his friend Ada, the Deerhound and Imelda showing off with some of her rosettes. Also some very appealing prints showing Imelda's two puppies from birth to 8 weeks. Most eye-catching of all where the two massive prints, one showing a red rough and the other two red smooths.

The pen itself was "bordered" with a tape of yellow background with the silhouettes in dark green of a smooth and rough Griffon. "Luckily" the organisers have again spelt the "Bruxellois" at the top of the Stand wrongly, giving us an excuse to display our own banner to cover the wrong spelling. This together with the vibrant colours really does make our Booth stand out. An extremely welcome addition to the booths this year were antibacterial foam hand dispensers, which certainly helped to cut down the risk of infection.

Ian, being the closest member to Earls Court of the Discover Dogs team (and the youngest) kindly offered to set up the Stand on the Friday afternoon

before the Show - how could we refuse. So on the Saturday everything was in place and no last minute rush, so it was so nice to arrive and see the stand in all its glory.

Again there was a huge amount of interest from the public in the suitability of Griffons as companions. Many of the enquiries were from genuinely interested parties, some of whom had already delved into the history of the breed. Generally, they wanted to know their suitability as a pet, how they got on with other dogs, children and whether they were any major health issues. On both days the Hall was packed with the public. We were once again visited at the Stand by Tessa Gaines, who for many years was "in charge" and still has an input with ideas to improve the stand, which it does year on year. Also we had a visit from David Guy and Stuart Plane. Stuart was there to judge the Junior Handling on the Sunday. David was especially pleased as the large photograph of a red rough was his own Taffeta. There are always some familiar faces who visit our Stand year after year.

Chris and Carol Rundle had travelled all the way from Wales to be there for the morning of the first day, staying well into the afternoon. Carol and I arrived late morning with my daughter, Kate, and her friend Rachel, to take over from Chris and Carol. Ian was there all day with his beloved Imelda, fresh from maternal duties. Sadly her usual "friend" my dear Poppy, who had been on the Stand for quite a few years in the past was not there as I lost her to cancer in August. Both Poppy and Imelda were great representatives of the breed, basking in the attention bestowed on them from admiring members of the public.

On the Sunday morning, Michelle Swinge, who has been on the Stand for many years came along with two of her Griffons and she was joined by Janet Carpenter and her boy, Alfie, and they stayed until well into the afternoon. Kate and I returned at lunchtime, with our two red smooths. After lunch we were joined by Ann Meaden (who unfortunately had such an awful journey) and her black roughs, so overall we have as good a mix of colours and coats as we could manage. Again Ian spent the day on the Booth.

At the end of the afternoon, it was time once again to pack everything away until next year and so ended another Discover Dogs.

The GBBA would like to extend our very grateful thanks for all the Griffonites manning the Stand on the two days, without whose help we could not manage.

A really special thanks to Ian Willsmer who has put in such a tremendous amount of effort and time to make the Griffon Bruxellois stand so eye-catching and colourful. He already is putting in place ideas for more improvements for Discover Dogs Earls Court 2011.