

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

On Sunday 1st May, I arrived at Besford Farm Shoot as the Society were holding a training day for spaniels to go through the rules and regulations for working tests and field trials, under the auspices of the Kennel Club, who are the backbone of all the events regulated by this organisation.

Steve Smith (Chairman) and Ann Turner (Spaniel Field Trial Secretary) managed the day, while the main speaker/facilitator committee member Ben Randall ('B' Panel Judge and Cocker Spaniel Champion 2011), gave a wealth of knowledge (including training tips!!) on the understanding and reasoning behind the rules and regulations that govern the different standards of events.

There were a group of 13 people, several had brought their spaniels with them to participate later in the practical side of the day, who over coffee and tea, introduced themselves as they sat around the long gun room table, before starting to look at copies of the Rules and Regulations.

It was to be give and take throughout the next two hours with questions and answers flowing back and forth from Ben to individuals, and at times we not only learned from 'Trainers', but also our 'Peer Group' (fellow spaniel handlers) and this was to show over this period of time. So by mid-day, we had exhausted Q & A's and we stopped for another drink and nibble, before going out into the shoot to see the reasons etc behind the rules and put them into practice, which was to throw up further Q & A's.

Having a piece of ground containing old oil seed rape and rough grain, Ben set up scenarios of running single, then braces of spaniels in test conditions with stewards – walking guns – dummy throwers, plus a running commentary by Ben, that was appreciated by all present.

Time had been given up by "everybody" present who all wanted to learn and prepare so they felt confident in themselves and their dog when entering future events, whether working tests, field trials or both!!

A positive atmosphere was prevalent throughout the day, as for me being somewhat an 'observer' with some participation in its practical side, a good time had been had by all.

Who am I, well!!!!

Ray Davies
WGDS HPR Organiser/Field Trial Secretary