

Going around by Andrew Brace



Minus twenty outside but a venue par excellence in Norway

JILL PEAK and I missed our connection from Amsterdam to Oslo which caused something of a panic with both ourselves and the show management of the international show that was taking place in Bø in the county of Telemark - a name that reminded me of *The Heroes of Telemark*, a film I watched as a child.

The Norwegian resistance ultimately sabotaged the Vemork Norsk Hydro plant in the town of Rjukan in the county of Telemark, Norway, which the Nazis were using to produce heavy water to make a nuclear bomb.

But I digress, at the KLM desk we discovered that there was one later flight to Oslo and one to Sandefjord, but both were fully booked. However, after having been given standby boarding passes, we managed to get seats on the latter and arrived in Norway just after 11pm. So

did our bags thankfully! We eventually checked into the Bø hotel at around one in the morning, which gave us six hours sleep before our wake up call.

At breakfast I had a long chat with Espen Engh and partner Åge Gjetnes, both of whom had judged at Westminster, Åge of course having sent through the eventual BIS winner. They were still full of the excitement and sense of occasion of the whole event, something with which I could identify as I know how I bored my friends rigid for weeks after I judged there last year. Later in the evening I was able to pull up some of the video streaming of Espen's breed judging and have him talk me through it.

It was minus 20 degrees when we woke but despite the sub-zero temperature outside, the sports stadium at which the show was being held must rank as one of

the finest venues I have ever judged in. They have a permanent astro-turf floor which is just like having impeccably mown grass, the temperature was perfect and the lighting marvellous - dogs did not turn tangerine, even when being photographed, as they tend to in some of our leisure centres at home.

Despite the fact that the location can only be reached by winding snowbound roads that look like a slalom run, exhibitors had given this show a 25 per cent increase in its entry and it wasn't just the locals who supported - dogs had travelled from several different countries in the quest for their Norwegian titles. Yes, dog people are crazy!

Hanne Neergaard and Dagny Wangensteen seemed to be in charge of most of the organisation and hospitality and what a superb job they did; everything seemed to have been thought of right down to the finest detail and things happened when they were supposed to - these girls had the show running like a well-oiled machine. And bear in mind they had to cope with several last minute changes of judge, which is always a pain for show organisers.

I started on Saturday morning with a good entry of Pugs where quality was high, especially in the males. The Tangetoppens kennel cleaned up by winning BOS with an American import, Ch Winsome's Gold Standard, who is having a great run at BIS level but BOB went to a young bitch bred from two homebreds who really impressed me. Tangetoppens Hot And Spicy beats her kennelmate in several areas; clear-coated with perfect angulation and combining substance with quality, she is one of the best moving Pugs I have ever judged - her 'out and back' is virtually flawless and she also has a heavenly face and expression with the most exquisite eyes.

I had a very efficient ring steward in Jon-Atle Andresen who was also training up a student steward, while my writer was doing it for the first time, however young Michelle proved to be highly efficient and I was relieved to hear that she would also be working with me on the Sunday. A good writer is worth her weight in gold when you have 80 critiques to produce. Michelle had actually lived in the US for several years and is now considering coming to the UK to study. They proved a really superb ring team.

There were just two King Charles present, both males in the same ownership and I preferred the slightly lighter bodied Blenheim to his heavier but longer champion kennelmate. Tibama's Royal Rex is bred from two Amantra exports and has a beautiful head, sound construction and really good movement.

Pekingese were interesting. I had a young male whose body, construction, movement and attitude were truly wondrous and he stood proud and free, unaided, when his handler let him. His head qualities were rather lacking, but it was marvellous to see a Peke showing his virtues without a handler praying alongside! BOB went to a really excellent champion red male, so sound and heavy, shapely with an unexaggerated face and very impressive features. He too carried himself beautifully and was moved in an unhurried fashion so he could display typical Pekingese gait. He turned out to be an export from the Genisim kennel, Besenyei, sired by a Bramblefiels dog and had apparently recently won an all-breeds best.

Toy Poodles were mixed but eventually BOB was won by a free-showing young black bitch with great shape and angles, the prettiest of heads and a rare lightness of foot. I would have liked Ankaru's Primadonna to have a better coat texture but judging is so often a question of compromise.



Andrew Brace awarded BOB and G1 to the 16-month-old Pug bitch, Tangetoppens Hot And Spicy; her kennelmate won BOS, the US imported male, Ch Winsome's Gold Standard. photo Brace

Next came Salukis and these were impressive. There was great excitement when a fawn dog won the CACIB as apparently this gave him his title. Buster av All Sighthounds had a beautiful head and expression and held himself wonderfully on the go-around if he could have been a tad cleaner coming on.

Afghans were a huge disappointment - especially the males - which was doubly worrying when they have been so strong in Norway in years gone by. BOB went to a black and tan bitch of excellent overall type and shape and she made the best of herself on the move. Ch Moving I Crashed My Shelby Cobra made a balanced picture and moved with true Afghan carriage.

My big ring job was group 9 and here I could see nothing to beat the wonderful moving Pug bitch with the Peke second,

third going to a young Lhasa Apso who had won BOB under Jill and fourth an extremely pleasing Bolognese.

Slick management meant that the show was finished at four, so we had ample time to rest up before dinner. We later met up promptly for a champagne reception followed by a really superb dinner before which the maitre d explained the selection of wine that would accompany our food. Speeches were kept to a minimum and, despite its rather traumatic beginning, this weekend was turning into one of the most enjoyable shows I have been to in Scandinavia in a long while.

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Winning his title on the day, the Saluki male, Buster av All Sighthounds won BOB under Andrew Brace. He later placed in Nenne Runsten's hound group. photo Brace



The Afghan Hound bitch, Ch Moving I Crashed My Shelby Cobra, won BOB under Andrew Brace at the Norwegian Kennel Club's first international show of the year held at Bø in the county of Telemark. photo Brace



Nenne Runsten awarded G1 to the Greyhound bitch, Int/Norw/Sw/Dan Ch Showline Sporting Step, who last year won G3 at the LKA under Anne Macdonald. She is seen here winning RBIS at Bø the next day under Rafael Malo Alcrudo from Spain. photo Brace