

Norwich Terriers, 2-18

Title: The N.T.C. Match Show: A Time Gone By

“Years ago I made the remark that I would rather win at our Norwich Terrier Match show than get a five-pointer under an all-rounder. The reasons are simple. You have breed authorities judging at the Match, it’s a fun weekend for you and your pups, you have time to relax and catch up with old friends who are just as busy as you are at a point show. And hopefully you have no grim faced professionals!” Mrs. James B. Hanning (Blu-Frost) 1969

Once upon a time, 1940 to be exact, a puppy match took place for a relatively new breed – the Norwich Terrier. Held on Long Island and hosted by Theodora Winthrop (later Randolph), this event would become the jewel in the crown for Norwich lovers, setting a tradition that remained revered for the next, not quite six decades. Far more significant than Westminster or Montgomery, and much more fun than a specialty, the Norwich Terrier Club Match Show became THE social event of the season. A time and place where serious breeders could exhibit and compare stock, and fans of the breed could just marvel. Like all grandiose events there was plenty of sterling to flash around in an effort to impress the guests. From 1940 to 1960, as many as a dozen silver heirlooms, offered up by pioneering kennels such as Kedron (Edith McCausland), Partree (Jean Hinkle) and Windholme (Harry Peters), appeared each year, displayed beautifully on a trophy table. Simply and affectionately referred to as The Match, reporting in *The Norwich News* received more front page and centerfold coverage than any other topic or item of interest, clearly the Club’s favorite child. Traditionally held in autumn along with the second club meeting, and because “spring is the season to have puppies. Fall is the time to show them off” (Priscilla Mallory, Minutes 1952). The match show was an event you knew was coming and you planned accordingly. How well I remember my first Match, 1975, at King’s Prevention. I had travelled down with Annette Griffiths, the Club’s Secretary and breeder of my new puppy. When Annette announced the board would meet in our motel room that first night, I paid little attention. That was until I saw the mahogany liquor cabinet come out with its silver julip cups and cut crystal decanter; followed soon after by the arrival of a tall and stately Anne Winston, a self-assured Betty Fell, and a snappy looking Ulysses Walden. I was gobsmacked by their collective confidence. The next morning, after placing third in my class of five, I thought I had died and gone to Heaven. That’s what The Match did to people – it INSPIRED.

In 1990, the (then-called) Norwich and Norfolk Terrier Club decided to have a 50th anniversary Match. Held at the Penllyn Club the day after Montgomery, the guest book read like a Who’s Who of English breeders, AKC judges, and terrier ambassadors. Close to 200 people and their Norwich, drop ear and prick ear, were there – and this was on a Monday!! It was truly a magical event. And then, just like that, it was over.

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST END

Whether or not we knew it at the time, 1999 would be the last official NNTC Match Show. Truth be told, the heart of The Match was on life support. And then, when the Club divided into separate breed clubs, everyone seemed to just scatter to the winds. Maybe we were otherwise too involved, perhaps we had no time for meeting up with old friends or making new ones, or maybe we simply weren’t INSPIRED. Hard to say really. But it’s funny – now, when I look back on it, who would have thought that a simple little puppy match show could have brought so many people together.

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