

**WRITE UP - 1ST WCRA CHAMPIONSHIPS and VETERAN CROWNS at RYEMEADOWS on 6th JUNE 21 - 150 yards straight**

Six hundred and twenty days since the last Champs, a Golden Jubilee shunted back a year. All very minor in the scheme of things; but how we've all missed our racing. A blessing to see so many of us emerge from isolation to give battle once more; and thoughts for those who didn't make it through. We did try and make the most of the downtime with a special version of our unique Owners' Directory, comprising over 3800 entries plus a limited edition free booklet to celebrate 50 years of the WCRA.

An additional complication this year was the late start to the season, early April, which prevented the customary winter schooling. Several clubs have staged additional Wednesday sessions, we salute the club workers and the schoolmaster whippets who have put in the hard yards to bring the youngsters up to speed.

For us on the committee it was also a matter of trying to pick up our routines after such a long interval and add to that the need to maintain COVID precautions. We are grateful for all the help we get, a good measure of it from people who didn't have dogs to run but very kindly gave their time. Most of all we thank Dave and Lynn, their work behind the scenes, their hospitality and a racetrack that looked great and ran wonderfully, reflecting all the work Dave's put into it.

This being our (belated) fiftieth anniversary, people have very kindly sponsored weight groups so in this special year, all finalists receive trophies. Many thanks to you all.

After a long, hot and sunny Saturday setting up, a barbeque followed - two long tables laden with food and various meats; plenty for the 20 plus people who contributed and turned up with their chairs, plates and alcohol – the firepit was in use too for those that stayed up late and a great social time for everyone.

Sunday was cooler and cloudier, at least till the afternoon when the sun came out and stayed out. We had some excellent, close racing, only the one rerun and so far as we know, no injuries. Well done to all the dogs, we had no non-finishers or disqualifications.

We had one new Racing Champion, Call Me Enchanting, and four new Veteran Crown titles, for Winterfelin Vanilla Sky and three whippets already Racing Champions - Tinkers Moondancer, Ryamber Spring Fever and Radar.

The Dexters' \*Luna-Tic won a solo to win her half-coat in the 16lb group then the Villis' WCRCh Ameesha Summer Rocket became the only whippet to "defend" a Racing Champion title when she won the 18lb final from Sarah Layfield's Winterfell It Must Be Love. Indeed, there were only five WCRCh's in the Championship draw, many had migrated to the very strong veteran classes.

In the next two finals, Dave and Lynn gained excellent reward for all that hard work, with Jacquie Mullin's and Dean Leonard's two charges each a close second. In the 20lb group, \*My Girl Enfys came home a length ahead of London Girl and in the 22's, after Glad All Over won their heat, \*Tiana reversed the placings to prevail in the final.

In the 24lb final, when WCRCh Call Me Enchanting beat Christine Howard's \*Ryamber It's Aw Reet to be "made up", Lady Luck finally smiled on one of the Cuttlers' two half-coats. Injuries (including \*Call Me Amazing's withdrawal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Champs of 2019 after winning both heat and semi) and inconveniently-timed seasons (this time, the same bitch came into season three days after the entry was sent) – Dave and Carole must have wondered "Why us?".

The 26lb final was won by Viv Thurman's \*Dance With The Devil – his very first race meeting – with Sue Lloyd's Nancy Now a very creditable second. The 28lb was a race for bruisers, Ruth Mabb's \*One For Arthur trapping neatly to win his "half" from WCRCh Lovely Jubbly. Kentish club stalwart Ruth has to fit her racing around a nursing job with on-call responsibilities which

restricts what she can do on the open circuit but what a wonderful moment for her, her first Championship weight class win.

The next two finals were also ones for the new generation. Alistair and Lynne Holmes' \*Believe In Me beat Dave and Sandra Burseys' Markamy's Reddie Eddie in the 30's, while in the heavyweights, Ian Brown's \*Moon Gazer Gold hailing from south of Lake Windermere prevailed over Sandra and Paul Thorpe's \*Figaro.

All six Veteran Crowns groups were tough. Even the two-dogger was horrid, no easy wins here. First the six-to seven-year-olds. Sarah Mills didn't expect her WCRCh VC Tinker's Moondancer to win, on the comeback trail and beaten a length in her heat, but never write off a good 'un; she showed what she was made of to take the 14-20lb group from Sarah Layfield's Winterfell Merry Mayhem.

The 21-25lb final was a one-two for Christine Howard's WCRCh VC Ryamber Spring Fever winning from runner up WCRCh Ryamber Something Different, while the 32lb final supplied the only rerun of the day. The first try had a bit of drama with WCRCh Markamy's Son And Air left in a closed trap and then the button for the lure machine became momentarily stuck so the lure hit the top pulley, sending the photographers diving for cover as the dogs zeroed in. The 1-2 and indeed the winning distance of one length was the same both times with Race Manager Ian German's WCRCh VC Radar beating his long-time rival, Lynn and Dave's WCRCh Zola Go-Quick.

The two-dog group was the 8-9 year-olds' 14-20lb group, titled whippets both. Liz and Richard's WCRCh VC Little Ebs beat Garry Comber's WCRCh Jett Black. It will be interesting to see how they go against each other over the shorter distance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Veteran Crowns.

In the senior veterans 21-25lb group, the Cuttlers' VC Call Me Lucky, mum to the 24lb winner gave Dave and Carole a nice win double over her littermate and rival WCRCh VC Polly Flinders. A third littermate, the Brearleys' Marley's Gold bowed out in the second heat of two, some good longevity here.

The 8-9 year-old heavyweight group, Sue Meecham's VC Winterfellin Vanilla Sky, with her lure-coursing toughness has gotten better like a fine wine in a driving finish she won by three-quarters of a length and a head from Pat Gant's WCRCh VC Scallywag, making his first Champs appearance for over two years, and the Burseys' WCRCh Markamy's Red Fred whose trademark fast finish was for once without reward.

The great racing more than made up for a long day with over 100 dogs.

Report by Mark Etheridge