

## **THE CORONATION CHAMPIONSHIPS : 1ST WCRA CHAMPIONSHIPS and VETERAN CROWNS at HEART OF ENGLAND PWRC : 7 MAY 2023 150 yards straights; veterans 145 yards at ½yd/lb plus yd/yr**

When we first booked the date we never thought we'd be trumped by a Coronation...

Preparation for the day started on Friday afternoon with the Heart of England ground team ensconced in their caravans – a huge shout out to Vince Hart, John Brearley, Gary Hogan and Michael Treacher, amongst others of the Heart of England ground team, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the track was in first class order. They did a grand job.



But despite our various misgivings at clashing with the King's Coronation the weekend was pleasantly normal. During the service, some of us found ourselves on the road to Shuttington, Snowy and I eerily passing through a rainy London before catching the train north, while the guys up at the racetrack were busy setting-up on a horrid wet day.

Full use of the Village Hall facilities was a luxury we were grateful to enjoy – lovely kitchen, shower, central heating etc. Huge thanks to the Heart of England team, they really are a hospitable bunch, nothing's too much trouble. Fish and chips all round on Saturday evening too. They even managed to lay on a sunny day for the racing, quite an achievement given what we endured either side of Sunday.

With special winner's trophies, commemorative key-fobs designed by Garry Comber for the heat winners, and bunting and balloons in the main hall we were as ready as we could be at nine o'clock Sunday. First the famous Shuttington breakfast, then to work.

An entry of 130 meant quarter-finals in the 20lb and 22lb groups and their heats started off the main business after the annual presentation. The racing was hard, especially tough during the semis with two dead-heats for second and the video working overtime, but really nice to see the younger whippets rise to the occasion. Pleasingly, no reruns or disqualifications, which with many clubs having to cancel race meetings due to the effect of wet weather, they should be well happy with how their charges ran. You wouldn't think whippet racing was a team sport but developing the youngsters and in particular ironing out less straight forward dogs is a combined club effort.

We saw one new Racing Champion, WCRCh Moonlight Millie, while four of the six Veteran Crown groups had new winners. Congratulations to them and best wishes to the new "half-coats" beginning their quests for that elusive title.

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The 16lb and 18lb groups saw a rapid-fire double for Liz and Richard Villis. Their new sixteen-pounder \*A Touch of Sass won by half a length from Andy Browne's



\*Sidari Tilly, good to see Andy back after serious illness. The 18lb final was a four-length win for WCRCh Ameesha Summer Rocket, her eleventh title, from Sarah Layfield's Winterfell Must Be Love.

Allan Parkhurst's WCRCh Sweet Secret showed her class, unbeaten through four rounds to comfortably take the 20lb weight group from her clubmate, Mike Head and Ilid Davies' Along Came Betty. The runner-up suffered severe injury in an unplanned encounter with a muntjac almost two years ago, missing at least a year and then having to be built up slowly, but hopefully time is still on her side.

The 22lb final was the first of the five-doggers and just to keep the judges on their toes the first three home were in a blanket finish. Clare Butler and Paul

Sanderson's \*Thieves Accomplice, in his first Champs, squeaked through second in a tough first-round heat, was second in his quarter and dead-heated for second in his semi before edging out Carol and Lottie Brown's Satin Summa and third Dan Bremner's \*On The Run coming back from injury.

The 24lb group, at sixteen entries on the cusp of quarter-finals, was highly competitive. Both semis were blanket finishes. Toddy and Jan Todman's WCRCh "O"cean Everglo beat Kevin Coe and Keeley Bradshaw's youngster Highlight Halo by a head in their semi and when it mattered Halo pushed it even closer, WCRCh "O"cean Everglo getting home by a whisker.

The 26lb final was one for the home team. Vince and Sarah Hart's WCRCh Scrappy Doo was unbeaten in heat and semi and took the group by two lengths from Terry Wheeler's fine half-coat \*Tik Tok Tia. Both Kevin and Sarah worked hard throughout the weekend and it was good to see them get some glory.

Kev and Sue Shakespeare aren't just racers. For instance they're part of the exotic and fun Silken Windhound clan and Sue ran the JR Whippet Rescue



shop for a number of years. \*Cairdean Chucklehead gave them a thrilling 28lb weight class win, not headed all day. The runner-up, Grant Burton and Ellie Stacey's Lemon Sherbet, was only beaten a neck, knocking on the door for the second time in only two Championships entered.

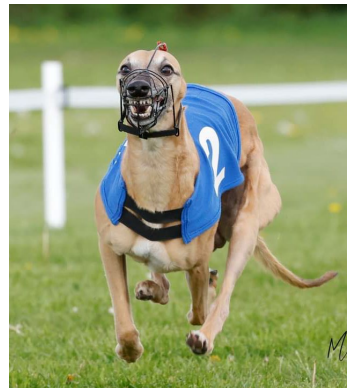
The 30lb group brought the only new Champion. Kevin and Keeley have brought WCRCh Moonlight Millie along carefully and in a three-dog final she prevailed by two lengths from Dave and Sandra Bursey's excellent five-year-old Markamy's Reddie Eddie. Eddie and the third-placed whippet, Trish Gilfeather's Gimme It All, also gave us a brilliant two-dog duel in their heat with Eddie prevailing only "on the nod".

Barbara and Sen Lee's stocky heavyweight \*Selby Lad, in the 32lb weight class, who was second twice and third once in three Championships, this time won authoritatively by two lengths from Mark Bursey's Machs White Toed Brodes. This has been a hard-fought but very sporting group in recent years and today was no exception. Dennis & Pearl's defending Champion, WCRCh Daddy's Boy with three weight group wins (so far) was unlucky to draw the same heat as winner and runner-up – one of the three had to go – but surely has nothing to prove.

## THE VETERAN CROWNS

In the 6-7yrs weight classes, two were solos, giving first Veteran Crowns to WCRCh Scrappy Doo's dam, Rebecca Hough's VC Island Sands (14-20lb group) and Maggie & John Brearley's WCRCh VC Feilly's Gold in the 26-32lb weight group. It's interesting to note that the latter group had an entry of 11 at our previous Championships. The 21-25lb weight class was a win for John Gardner's VC She Was A Showgirl who beat Sarah Layfield's Winterfell Let Me Loose by two lengths.

In the 8-9yrs, two Veteran Crowns did battle for the 14-20lb group. Andy Browne's VC Sidari Tegan beat Sarah Layfield's VC Winterfell Merry Mayhem by five lengths. Steve Miller's VC Apache Gold took the middleweights (21-25lb) by three lengths from Ruth Mabb's nine-year-old Trueloveways, while in the heavyweights (26-32) there was a popular win for Heart of England Chairman, Gary Hogan, his highly-respected VC The Quiet Man beating the Hunters' WCRCh Zola Go-Quick by two and a half lengths, with Laguna Lawns Le Lundi third, to gain a well-deserved title. Well done Brian.



Report by Mark Etheridge and Kim Saxby / WCRA