

Judges Critique : Mrs D Milligan-Bott

Crufts Sunday 8th March 2026

Irish Setter Bitches

CRUFTS, for me was the absolute pinnacle of my judging career, when it's your own breed that you have dedicated a lifetime to it is a huge honour. It's special, Crufts is special, I was so excited and proud to be invited and I loved every moment of the day.

May I firstly thank the Crufts committee for the invitation, to my stewards Roisin Howlett & Becki Rowe, you were awesome your organisation and attention to detail gave me the pleasure to just get on with judging.

To every exhibitor who entered their beautiful Irish Setter girls for my opinion, Thank you I was truly humbled.

It was a great entry with some large classes.

I have enjoyed much success at this the greatest dog show, also experiencing the lowest of times, and a lead snap in the group which although we can laugh about now, was the most embarrassing! but, Crufts is the height of dog showing and I totally get that we all share dreams of big wins or at least a coveted Crufts prize card, Unfortunately there were far more who undeservedly left the ring empty handed, at this show more than any other the disappointment seems so much more, I took that responsibility seriously, and may I thank each everyone of you for allowing me the opportunity to judge your girls, I hope you enjoyed your day.

I genuinely was impressed by the quality running through the entry and was happy with how everyone stepped up to move their girls making the most of themselves in the large ring.

Im pleased to say I didn't find anything overly worrying: although my personal preference is for a larger framed Irish setter, trying to be objective there were still a few I would like a 'tad' more of. The breeders among us should watch size, the gene pool is ever depleting and size can be lost quickly, the loss of leg length is highlighted by the level toplines so evident.

I was obviously looking for well constructed girls, with for me, the non negotiable breed points which define the Irish setter, MUST BE Racy, full of quality and most importantly a 'gently sloping top-line'. With my biggest requisite correct driving movement, forward reach, good carriage, head up and forward, a lashing side to side tail action with top-line maintained.

Heads in the main were good and typical, with sweet expressions, most with good almond eye shape with correct colour, plenty with correct balanced length with good square finish to muzzles. As is expected with girls, some were not in the best coat. I

found a few untidy mouths and the usual few that were overly narrow in front and lacked sternum.

Overall I found the entry to have great depth of quality, which moving forward if channelled well can only be positive for our breed.

The placing of a cloth under the back feet of the dog was adopted by a few exhibitors, for whatever reason it may be, I must say I found it distracting and in some cases it interfered with an otherwise good balanced profile!...just saying!

When it came to BOB and in light of, that the owner of the Dog CC winner is a long time friend who I have enjoyed many partnerships with, my co judge Rachel and I agreed from the get go we would call the referee to award Best of Breed. I was keen for Rachel to judge 'my' Best Bitch and as I had never been 'over' the dog and wanting to give both CC winners the opportunity to keep shining and enjoying their moment, we put them through their paces; Ann Moss the gun-dog group judge and our referee then took over the final task and I was delighted with her choice of 'Electra' for BOB who she later rewarded with a well deserved group 4.

2762. Irish Setter - Good Citizen Dog Scheme Bitch

Entries: 8 Absentees: 3

1ST 15001 - Clonageera Summer Magic JW (Mrs Ja Rogers)

All Quality & well balanced, excellent body properties with Typy outline from a beautifully shaped head with soft expression, so clean through her neck & shoulders, gently sloping topline, correct tailset and moderate quarters, she was true & positive in her movement, presented in lovely condition.

2ND 14990 - Polmennor Pandora (Mrs A R Roberts)

Taller Racy outline, which appealed, quite raw & rangy and giving away in body maturity to one, long head with sweet expressions, good neck, topline & well angulated quarters with short hocks. Well coated in good condition she moved well keeping her outline & using her tail.

3RD 14834 - Teleri Here Comes Summer (ai) (Mrs P A M Catling)

RES 15029 - Emphyreansky Varga Venus Luck (Miss R & Mr D Tippett & Hurman)

VHC 15026 - Orange Starburst (Ms Ann Sweeney)

2763. Irish Setter - Minor Puppy Bitch

Entries: 2 Absentees: 0

1ST 15022 - Gwendariff Cracklin Rosie for Lochlorien (IKC) (Mr G & Mrs C Stevenson)

Two very different puppies here, I preferred this one for Her taller rangier outline. Good long head with soft expression, low set ears, good through the neck, shoulders into a promising top line. Balanced angles to her front & quarters made a pleasing profile. She was steady in movement and presented in lovely coat.

2ND 15004 - Heathclare Faberge (Miss C J Prangle)

A quality young lady who has a balanced outline shorter coupled and more compact than above, for one so young she scored through her front assembly, well angulated shoulders & well sprung ribs. rich correct gleaming coat . Collected and sound moving.

2764. Irish Setter - Puppy Bitch

Entries: 7 Absentees: 2

1ST 14822 - Bardonhill As You Like It (Mrs M Bott)

This is a really exciting puppy excelled in quality & type and just what appeals to me! she presents a well grown outline, loved her head & expression, gently sloping top line, straight front with correct depth, well developed through the rib and loin, fabulous quarters with well developed thigh, great turn of stifle, eye catching mover for one so young. Beautiful dark coat, with the promise of good furnishings. Would be proud to have bred her. BPB

2ND 15017 - Sametsuz So to Speak (Mrs L Sketchley)

Another promising quality baby girl, giving away some in maturity, but has lots to admire too, pretty head of good shape, liked her typical racy outline, on good legs in lovely coat. Moved nicely.

3RD 14853 - Sassy Susan Lofty at Riverbrue (Imp Pol) (Mr B A & Miss A Crocker & Frost)

RES 15015 - Casachared Joleens Lady Red (Mrs S A & Miss J P Shepherd & Stallion)

VHC 15043 - Paduan True Light (Mr A J White)

2765. Irish Setter - Junior Bitch

Entries: 10 Absentees: 1

1ST 14991 - Polmennor Spice of Life (Mrs A R Roberts)

Loved this racy young lady, nice size, Quality type & outline, scores over her sister in front, but not as rangy through the quarters, she has a lovely head, elegant neck and correct topline, moved out correctly on good length of legs using her tail.

2ND 14990 - Polmennor Pandora (Mrs A R Roberts)

How lucky is this breeder to have two litter sisters with so much to offer

.3RD 14825 - Glennlokhen Chasing Dreams (Miss J & Mrs S E Boyd-Mcneil & Edwards)

RES 14828 - Here I Am Redweed (Mrs M Braunerova)

VHC 15015 - Casachared Joleens Lady Red (Mrs S A & Miss J P Shepherd & Stallion)

2766. Irish Setter - Yearling Bitch

Entries: 20 Absentees: 2

Fabulous class, interesting to see three of those placed in this strong competition were from the same kennel...congratulations.

1ST 14852 - Riverbrue Lofty (Imp Pol) (Mr B A & Miss A Crocker & Frost)

Striking young lady, caught my attention immediately, I suppose personally I'd probably like a bit more of her, but, that's in no way meant to take anything away from her, she stands over plenty of ground presenting for me a Correct racy profile that is rangy & flows from a long head with beautiful expression & low set ears, through her long nicely arched neck continuing cleanly through a straight front with good layback of shoulder and standing on legs well under, she is well ribbed back with good length through the loin, really good over the quarters with stifles well let down, and a gently sloping top line. She Got better and better on the move settling into her gait with great forward extension and drive, her carriage was a joy, head up and using her tail. Handled and presented to perfection in good coat & condition. She was one of four I seriously considered in the challenge and she gave a formidable account of herself. She has plenty of time on her side. Wish she was mine!

2ND 14911 - Almoneira Irish River Clare (Mr Z Ilyes)

This beautiful top quality girl was unlucky to meet one, she didn't put a foot wrong, was presented and handled to perfection. Slightly heavier set than one, such a clean balanced outline with correct Angulation fore & aft. She stood well over her straight front, really good shaped head with low set ears and pretty almond eye shape. Another so clean in outline from her good length of neck, correctly sloping top line, tail set on in the right place, loved her through the quarters with well let down stifles. She moved so freely & effortless time and time again, her carriage was immaculate, just what I hoped to find and All in gleaming chestnut coat .

3RD 14967 - Riverbrue Storm at Krakonastorm JW (Mr S & Mrs J L Nicholls)

RES 14817 - Riverbrue Mystique avec Brinara JW (Mrs B & Mrs L Berry & Morris)

VHC 15037 - Corranroo Winter Moon over Caervista (Miss T M & Mr N J Vincent & Spencer)

2767. Irish Setter - Post Graduate Bitch

Entries: 28

An awesome class.

I'm sure there were plenty here who would have benefited from a "Graduate class". Which for reasons only known to the powers that be this year, we had to accept the Absence of! In my opinion a big mistake ! Hence I feel many top girls left this ring empty handed.

1sr.ALOFRANA ELECTRA (Danks)

Well...today, she came, she saw, she conquered!

This young lady of two and a half years old, made her presence known on entering the ring, she was presented in tip top condition. She owned her ground in this ring, I found myself keep glancing back at her even before getting to judge her. She oozed the 'x factor'. On inspection she didn't disappoint ! She has a beautiful head with a soft but naughty expression, she's so well balanced her correct angulation is only confirmed with hands on, her profile outline is classic, of good size with that flow from head to tail through the desired correctly sloping top line. I liked her good quality well presented coat, with enough feathering at this stage. what she has on the move is text book foot fall, with the carriage & attitude in abundance I was hoping to find, her ring presence was awesome she never once deviated from standing a perfect stack to the easy effortless gait, showing everyone. 'This is how you do it' she loved being the centre of attention and I felt privileged to find her. The competition for the CC was extremely tough but, I found her, on this day to be the benchmark of balance type, beauty, & showmanship. She continued to be gently handled & presented to perfection all the way to BOB which for reasons as said in my intro was awarded by the referee. I was proud she represented our beautiful breed so well, shining bright in the gun dog group to a very well deserved G4.

2ND 15045 - Caskeys United with Bluesprings (Mr M J & Mrs L C Williamson)

What a lovely type this girl is reminiscent of days gone past, a nice size, rangy, racy and all Irish Setter standing over plenty of ground in a dark mahogany coat. She has a correct head & expression with raised brows. Nicely balanced angulation, particularly liked her width across the croup and well angulated stifle.like above, she came alive on the move, another with correct setter shaped carriage and good footfall.

3RD 15033 - Blazing Bronze Jitterbug with Dazycutter (Imp Nld) (Ms J Turner)

RES 15024 - Forfarian Fancy Me JW (Mrs S & Misses N & J Sturrock)

VHC~ 14846 - Camaling Rose Royale (Mrs S L Coleman)

2768. Irish Setter - Mid Limit Bitch

Entries: 11 Absentees: 0

A mixed class some carrying just a bit too much 'body'!

1ST 15007 - Clonageera Take A Chance JW (Mrs P J & Miss C Rutherford & Prangle)

The type and quality synonymous with this top class kennel, this young lady stood away for good honest conformation, so balanced from her beautiful head piece to correctly set on tail. Ideal size with good straight bone standing on neat feet, looked great moving with correct footfall and for me she kept a true outline, lovely show presence, head up and good tail action in gleaming coat.

2ND 14901 - Alolfrana Queen of Hearts at Bryntwrw (Mrs N W & Mr J K Hughes)

A good type of girl, really good head & lovely expression, her outline appealed, matched the first in front assembly liked her sloping topline & tailset just lost out to one over the croup and quarters, but she made a good account of herself moving around the ring very well with good enthusiasm.

3RD 14970 - Forfarian Flutt'r Yer Lashes at Bransett (Mrs D & Miss J Parsons)

RES 14972 - Corranroo Hot Sensation at Shirlilah (Miss L M Peters)

VHC 14820 - Danwish Aria On Lotushill (Mrs C Borthwick)

2769. Irish Setter - Limit Bitch

Entries: 9 Absentees: 1

1ST 14877 - Clonageera Dancing Queen Ir Jun Ch (Ms I D Gawn)

This lovely girl was a lovely type and a size I like, handled and presented very well. Very well balanced and well made. Beautiful head shape with soft gentle expression, correct raised brow and dark almond shaped eyes, long low set ears. Stands over a good straight front with Well laid back shoulder placement, good depth of chest and well ribbed back., liked her width across the croup, adequate angulation through the stifle,. Moved out with ease using her tail, keeping a good outline.

2ND 14979 - Beatrice Irish Red Arrows (Ms L Pruzinova)

This lovely girl moved herself to a close 2nd here,, good free movement and nice carriage. Good head with sweet expression, low set ears. Balanced outline from good angles front & rear, preferred the tailset & croup assembly On the first.handled & presented well.

3RD 14843 - Covarney Dream Time from Bronrians JW (Mr D & Miss C Clarke)

I have done well for this beautiful girl before, handled and presented to perfection, no disgrace with her placement today.shes all quality, and I wish her Future success.

RES 14952 - Copper's Snow or Never (Mrs A E S Mogony)

VHC 14884 - Covarney Time After Time for Marzanne (Mrs M Hadfield)

2770. Irish Setter - Open Bitch

Entries: 26 Absentees: 6

Stunning class, could easily have placed another line-up! it broke my heart to walk past and ultimately leave out so many beautiful girls. With this sort of class i felt my decisions were made with the smallest of margins, quite the best class I've ever judged.

1ST 14887 - Glennara Cherry Cola JW (Mrs K A Hall)

Well she had to be a good one, and I found her to be just that and more, heading this exceptional class. She is beautiful, classically racy, all very Irish Setter. long head with correct soft but quizzical expression from dark eyes with correct raised brow. I found her well made with a balanced correctly angulated outline, loved the 'feel' of her hour glass figure, she has a tad extra length through the couplings which when she cooperates enables her to stand over and own her ground, holding her tail and looking at her from above, for me she excels. A couple of times she nearly threw it by pulling back on the stack, but what I couldn't ignore was her movement; well done to her stand in handler for getting the very best of her, she owned this ring, and any questions I may have had on the stack were expelled when time & again she moved around the ring with enviable reach, drive and stylish profile carriage. loved her.res.CC in awesome company.

2ND 14867 - Sh Ch Quensha Beautiful Stranger of Gracewood (Ms A & Ms S Douthwaite & Wharfe) I remember judging this classy girl as a youngster and being impressed then, today as a very worthy Champion she proved all that early promise, she excels in good honest quality, her make and shape fits the standard, racy from her beautiful well worked head & true Irish expression, through her sloping backline, in outline she is not dissimilar to above who she pushed very hard,, standing on a correct true front she flows through the body to good strong quarters, which she uses very well showing her sound movement in every direction always carrying herself to advantage.

3RD 14914 - Sh Ch Gwendariff Dazzling Diva JW (Mrs R & Dr H Jones)

RES 15025 - Sh Ch Forfarian Soo Lush JW (Mrs S & Misses N & J Sturrock)

VHC 14956 - Sh Ch Lynwood Rather Scrumptious JW (Mr R C & Mrs J P)

2773. Irish Setter - Veteran Bitch

Well, what a class to end on! This amazing class equalled 'open' for numerous classy girls, I held all those shortlisted & those finally placed in high-esteem, especially where again so many had to go unplaced.

Entries: 17 Absentees: 2

1ST 14908 - Sh Ch/int Sh Ch Fairhaven Electra (Imp Swe) (Ms M Hunter)

Have admired this well known beautiful lady on numerous occasions , she excels in quality and type. All Irish Setter through and through, presented in hard body condition with full correct coat. She has a beautiful head and a soft 'knowing' expression flowing from her slightly arched neck into a strong sloping top line with good tail set, good width to strong quarters with well let down sweeping stifles she stands on an excellent front with the right depth, she gains a little extra length in back which emphasises her very racy profile, she moved out so well with super carriage & style every time Belying her nine years. A credit to her owner and testament to our special breed. She was one of my four shortlist, pushing the hairsplitting decisions for top honours to the limit! I enjoyed judging her immensely and was delighted she was also the referee:s choice to be awarded Best Veteran in breed.

2ND 14811 - Corranroo One More Kiss (Mr G C & Mrs J Bayne)

This 'young lady' also of 9 years owns a classic balanced and more 'upstanding' outline, presented in hard condition and quality coat; with good angles to shoulder and quarters, great depth of chest, strong through the loin into correct sloping back line, all set in a larger frame, but nothing overdone, A beautiful head & expression highlighted by the sprinkling of grey through her muzzle & for-face. move she certainly did, with correct footfall & panache covering the ground so well.

3RD 14955 - Sh Ch Lynwood Abracadabra JW (Mr R C & Mrs J P Mugford)

RES 14871 - Sh Ch Gwendariff Its Numero Uno at Bonhomie JW (Mrs S E Edwards)

VHC 14989 - Sh Ch Jetsetter Cristalle to Polmennor JW (Imp Rus) (Mrs A R Roberts)



DCC 14925 - Int/multi Ch Bramblebush Bonnaroo Buzz by Oakdene Int Jch (Mrs A & Mr W Lauwers)

RDCC 14912 - Int/pol/lt Ch Gwendariff Dutch Invader Ew24 (Mr P Iwanicki)

BCC 14859 - Alolfrana Electra (Mrs R D Danks-Kemish)

RBCC 14887 - Glennara Cherry Cola JW (Mrs K A Hall)

BOB 14859 - Alolfrana Electra (Mrs R D Danks-Kemish)

BP 15014 - Casachared Mr Delaneys Son (Mrs Sa Shepherd)

BV 14908 - Sh Ch/int Sh Ch Fairhaven Electra (Imp Swe) (Ms M Hunter)

Judge Dee Milligan-Bott