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I.D. Number 4128

## **THE WELSH SPRINGER SPANIEL CLUB OF SOUTH WALES**

The club hosted a Field Trial of all Aged any variety Spaniel (except Cocker and English Springer) Stake on

**Thursday 20th November 2025**

**at Stubton Estate, Lincolnshire.**

By Kind Permission of – **Mr. M. PARTRIDGE**

And with thanks to – **THE TEAM OF GUNS**

Judges: – **Mr. J. Sexton (AP A3326)** and **Mr. L. Cozens (NP)**

### **REPORT of FIELD TRIAL 2025**

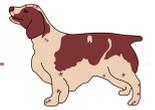
We had another excellent turn out again for our 2025 Field Trial with representation from a good spectrum of minor breeds. Sadly no WSS this year, my own two pups being too young to run in a trial yet.

The location was Stubton Estate in Lincolnshire, and grateful thanks go to Malcom Partridge and Jim Briggs for providing such excellent ground with a steady supply of game.

The day dawned freezing cold, a heavy sky promised snow and the ground was frozen. Nevertheless, the competitors were undaunted and arrived well prepared to brave the day. I arrived early and was fortunate that a close group of friends, all involved in the day as either competitors, judges, game carriers or guns pitched in and turned up early too to help me blank in some strips of cover and set up the banners and tables before the trial, as ever, I am indebted to my helpers and volunteers without whom it would prove impossible to run the trials.

Once all were assembled, well wrapped up to face the day and provided with their armband, number and a running order, I gave the welcome and safety briefs, welcomed the competitors, thanked the landowner and keepers, introduced the judges and the guns. That done, the trial was declared open and we were underway.

The ground for the day consisted of broad strips of woodland, with plenty of groundcover within to hold game, edged with brambles and ditches, and surrounded by fields of either plough or white grass. Ideal spaniel ground.



Right on cue the snow started, and the blizzards continued for the first half of the trial. Not deterred we cracked on in the swirling snow with the challenging conditions meaning that game was seeking cover and sitting tight. As always though, the superb ground at Stubton produced plenty of birds regardless of weather conditions with flushes coming regularly in the woodland and being brought down smartly by the excellent team of guns, who shot consistently throughout the day despite the snow and wind.

The harsh weather and strong winds sorted through the field fairly rapidly and it was clear to see where experience was lacking and dogwork fell short. Dogs needed to hunt close and tight, ground treatment was paramount as game was tucked in very tight, keeping out of the cold, so those dogs and handlers who lacked experience here, and didn't work in close communication came unstuck with dogs pulling on ahead of the guns, failing to produce game in range.

Steadiness was severely tested too, with the need to push game out of thick cover proving too much for many and underlining again how experience and training are key in trials where the standard required is necessarily high. For many this sport and the demands it places on the handlers and dogs can be hard to rationalise, but its important to keep in mind the purpose of Field Trials: to demonstrate the working ability of our spaniels at the highest level, and for our minority breeds this is even more crucial, with dwindling numbers of puppies bred alongside diminishing interest in the true purpose of these dogs in favour of purely their appearance which has led to a sharp drop off in entries in trials and training events.

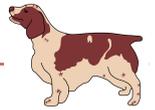
Despite the very difficult weather and the severe cold all enjoyed the day, and it was lovely to welcome a few fresh faces to the trialling community, giving it a go and clearly being bitten by the bug, vowing to come back and run in more trials next season.

Alongside the Trial I also ran a separate training event once the trial was completed. This gave those people who were wavering on the brink of deciding to enter their dog in a trial the opportunity to run under trial conditions, both my judges very kindly agreed to continue judging on after the completion of the Trial and gave their time and expertise generously, and this event was very well attended, with the judges providing plenty of guidance and feedback.

It also provided an invaluable opportunity for those running Minority Breeds in the field trial to closely observe other breeds more specifically bred for working and trialling, running under the same conditions, and it's important to remember that whilst there might be different styles of working amongst the various breeds, they are all expected to do the same job – to hunt for game in varied cover, flush it for the gun demonstrating steadiness to flush and shot, then retrieve it tenderly to hand. In a Trial the judges will be looking for those dogs that most please their notions of an ideal hunting spaniel.

By the time both the trial and training were completed everyone was happy to head back to the meeting point for the hot drinks and lunch I had provided.

We were very fortunate, this year, to be sponsored by Marsdens Feeds and Huw Gruffydd very kindly drove up from Carmarthenshire to join us for the day and present the awards with a very generous contribution of his Premium Dog Food, both in huge sacks and as vouchers to present with the awards.



Earlier in the year I ran a training day in the Midlands to see whether there was an appetite out there in our Welsh Springer community to pursue gundog training. The uptake was extremely heartening and the day was oversubscribed. It was aimed at an introductory level, and was extremely successful with all that attended keen to carry on with training and eager for more training days to be laid on. With this being the case, I will be running a series of days over the spring through to Autumn, so if this is something you feel you'd be keen to take part in I'd love to hear from you. Details of dates and location will be posted on our website, so keep an eye out for them.

I look forward to welcoming you and keeping our beautiful dogs working as they are intended.

Jane Sutherland  
Field Trial & Working Secretary

**After a well attended and competitive event the judges decided upon the following awards:**

**4th – Number 1. Huddleston Let It Be.**

Clumber Spaniel. Owned by Mr & Mrs Smith Boden  
Handled Roy Ellershaw

**CoM – Number 5. Meadowsky Mr Brightside**

Clumber Spaniel  
Owned and handled Kevan Hawkes

**CoM – Number 8. Lendevers All Bets Are Off**

Spanish Water Dog  
Owned and handled Rachael Capille

**1st, 2nd, and 3rd positions were not awarded**