



**Workinggundogs,** Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Cambridge  
Structured training for a balanced dog

## **Yuletide Mistletoe “Ruari” Winner of the Mid Norfolk Novice Working Test**

Written by Stewart North Northglen Gundogs.

**Mid Norfolk Gundog Club, Puppy & Novice Working Test Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Sennowe Park, Guist, Norfolk by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. C Temple-Richards ~ Judges Mr. M Skipper (1917) & Mrs. J. Hankey (2273), Chief Steward Mr. R Bannock**

A 6am start Sunday morning was difficult after celebrating a Leicester Tigers Guinness Premiership victory at Twickenham the night before and to make matters more uncomfortable, I had a cold and felt very miserable.

Despite feeling under the weather, it was important to attend this event with Mrs. J Wick's Labrador Retriever Yuletide Mistletoe call name “Ruari” as the dog has been showing a lot of promise and is nearing completion of 6 weeks residential training.

I also decided to enter two bitch puppies Russlayne Bracken “Poppy” & Ballagan Handa “Tilley” just to make the day a little more interesting, this would be their first outing!

The venue of the test was Sennowe Park, home to Mr. & Mrs. C Temple-Richards a very nice country house just outside Guist in Norfolk.

After the usual introductions 31 dogs listed on the **RUNNING CARD** were taken to the entrance gates of the estate for Test 1, which was a walk up down the main drive to the estate. The first 8 dogs on the running card were puppies (gundogs under 18 months of age). Of the 8 puppies 2 had not turned up, so with Tilley being number 5 was sent immediately into line with 3 other dogs and was placed on the left hand side under judge Mrs. J Hankey.

The guns were moved forward of the line to help puppies mark better, each Puppy need to retrieve a mark to their own gun with shot, the lowest number on the right being the first dog, followed by the lowest number on the left, which was Tilley.

Tilley was very steady whilst in line although overshot her mark being wrong side for wind, I avoided the whistle as its not been too good of late and watch her hunt up, it took a long time but she kept hunting and eventually pick the dummy.



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After all 4 dogs had picked their first retrieves, each dog was given a cross retrieve to their own gun with shot. Tilley made a much better job of this mark and delivered to hand nicely.

I came out of line and returned immediately to the left hand side again with Poppy for the same retrieves, Poppy was a lot more excited and was on the edge of running in. Like most dogs on the edge, she made 2 first class retrieves with lots of style and pace, but looked very unsteady at heel, which know doubt would have drawn the attention of the judge!

I came out of line for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time then rejoined again with my novice dog Ruari, although this time I was under the right hand Judge Mr. M Skipper, and the guns had moved into the line and the dummy throwers were approx 80m in front.

Ruari had the first retrieve, which was difficult as the back drop was a large tree with no visible sky line, he judge the distance perfectly and returned with the dummy very promptly. After honoring a further 3 retrieves, our second mark which was a cross retrieve and again Ruari hit the mark to perfection.

After the walk up, Test 2 was a double mark for the puppies, the first mark was thrown adjacent the lake in short grass, and the second mark was in the water. The Puppies were sent for the water retrieve first, and then were asked to pick the memory mark in the grass.

Tilley was so fixed on the first mark, and with poor handling on my might part she missed the water mark and need taking to the waters edge to pick the dummy and needed to be encouraged with some stone throwing!, she did pick the memory but that was the end of Tilley performance for the day. She would have received a zero.

Next came Poppy's chance, I was much better prepared and turned the dog for the water Retrieve, she entered the water with no hesitation, held onto the dummy with a little shake on exit and delivered to hand, I then sent her for the memory mark, which she pick with ease.

Test 2, was changed to a double mark on water for the novice dogs and the entry to the water on the second mark was much steeper. Ruari set out on both marks with lots of speed and style and delivered to hand without shaking prematurely.

Test 3 was the most difficult of the tests so far and the weather had deteriorated into torrential rain, the puppies were asked to pick two blind dummies from cover with the gun shot. Both Puppies failed miserably, both ran to the gun and the dummies were adjacent some 30m in medium cover from the gun, neither puppy had good handling skills, so I decided to retire both dogs, the judge did allow the dogs to be taken to the area for some reward for their efforts. This test proved to be very difficult for all the Puppies and only one completed the task. With the benefit of hindsight it was difficult enough without the shot.



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The same test was given to the novice dogs and Ruari made an excellent job of both blinds, I did not handle the dog at all, he took the line and used the wind for both dummies. I don't think they could have been done any better!

These tests completed the morning session and after a short lunch break, the winner was announced for the puppy test Mrs. S Dingle with Paradise Wroe Brachen a 14 month old dog, which was the only Puppy to complete the tests!

In the afternoon 10 dogs made the cut Numbered 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 26, & 29 Test 4 was set in the woodland which was a double blind without shot, the first retrieve was situated on the brow of an incline under a rhododendron through medium bracken cover and the second blind was on the right hand side of a track approx 80m on the opposite side to the previous blind.

I had a short wait being number 14 and after instructions, I sent Ruari to the side of the cover directly up the bank, he retrieved with minimal handling. On the next blind with one cast back, up the track and with one stop whistle and right cast he picked immediately.

I was then fortunate to watch the remaining dogs complete the same tasks, and it was interesting to see the different routes handlers choose, there was only one dog who completed the first retrieve with less handling than myself, but unfortunately his second retrieve required lots more handling.

Poor handling of some very good dogs; positioned wrong for wind; and delays with stop whistle made Ruari performance look so much better especially on the second blind.

The judges called two dogs numbered 13 & 16 forward for a run off, both were given a mark in the cover on the bank with shot at a distance of approx 70m. Both dogs failed mark and needed handling to the retrieve.

We then retired back to the parking area for the awards, which were presented by the estate owner Mr. C Temple-Richards. The Chairman of Mid Norfolk Gundog Club thanked the host, judges and helpers and announced the awards.

I was highly delighted to receive first place with Mrs. J Wick's Yuletide Mistletoe "Ruari", I had already ran this dog in 2 working tests, the first being the Kennel Club Novice last year where he picked up a Certificate of Merit, he then ran in the Midland Gundog Society Novice 3 weeks ago after only being with me for 7 days and put in a very good performance but missed the awards. He now qualifies as an open test dog and I have every confidence he will be worthy of the challenges that awaits him.

Slideshow of this event can be seen with this [link](#)



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### Results

Novice Working Test		
1st	2nd	3rd
Mr. S North	Mr. R Blanch	Mr. C Green
Yuletide Mistletoe Lab D 211206	Postwick Gold Lad D 050507	Moultonrose Toby Lab D 170307
FTW Northglen Charlie x Isobels Princess	Redbrick Archie x Hannahs Angel	Blackharn Brewster x Aldertree Blackfoot
Owner Mrs. J Wicks	Owner Mr. R Blanch	Owner Mr. C Green
Breeder – Mrs. S McPhail	Breeder R Crisp	Breeder Mr. C Green



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