



**Fit for the Future: a discussion paper on the
vulnerability of the Smooth Collie**

March 2007

Fit for the Future: a discussion paper on the vulnerability of the Smooth Collie

CONTENTS

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
PART 2 - KEY STATISTICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES	2
1 Registrations	2
2 Numbers of litters registered	3
3 Size of litters	4
4 Breeders	5
5 Males and females breeding on	5
6 Family Matters	6
7 Lifestyle changes	10
PART 3 - FIT FOR THE FUTURE?	11
1 Education	11
2 Increase breeding stock	12
3 Keeping in touch	13
PART 4 - CONCLUSION	14
APPENDIX 1	15

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this discussion paper about the vulnerability status of the Smooth Collie. The paper aims to draw together a range of relevant statistics, research and outcomes of discussions to inform a debate amongst members at the Club's Annual General Meeting in 2007.

It is essential to draw these issues together with the aim of presenting an overarching vision for the future viability of Smooth Collies, and in particular how we intend to further the general improvement of our breed.

The paper has been brought together by a small sub group of officers and committee and others co-opted onto the group by virtue of their special expertise in this regard and working for the benefit of Smooth Collies. The paper has been the subject of a roundtable discussion within committee. The final version incorporates these ideas, statistical analysis and other research, fleshed out through later discussion and research.

My thanks to all who contributed to this paper, particularly Bev White for leading on this and pulling it all together. Other sub group members were Pat Lister, Stella Clark, Jane Howells, Brenda Kennedy, Isobel Griffiths and myself.

Trevor Hayward
Chairman, Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain
March 2007

Part 1 - Introduction

In 2003, a Kennel Club initiative identified 28 of our native breeds of dog as being "vulnerable". The criterion for being listed as vulnerable is breed registrations with an overall trend of fewer than 300 per year (in the UK) over a period of ten years. The original list compiled by the Kennel Club took into account breed registrations from 1993 to 2003. Over time, it is inevitable that the breeds featured on the vulnerable breeds list will change i.e. there will be breeds with currently increasing numbers that will soon fall outside the inclusion criteria and others that will be added to the list because of a continued decline in annual registrations. Recently the Club was asked if it wished Smooth Collies to remain on the list of vulnerable breeds. Although there is no question that we fulfil the criteria in terms of registration figures, in order to respond to this, the Club has undertaken some research.

There is no doubt that the breed faces some considerable challenges in the years ahead. The information within this discussion paper is intended to spark a debate about the current state of the breed. The outcome of the debate will play an important role in how we ensure that Smooth Collies continue to grace our homes in the future. If we are to find sustainable solutions to the vulnerability of our breed, there has to be a good analysis of the problems we face and the case for change.

This paper attempts to set out a number of issues and considers a number of proposed solutions. It looks purely at statistics and ignores other factors such as health, fertility and longevity. It is hoped that it will provide the basis for a focused discussion on the merits and demerits of each proposal and on what a future vision for the Smooth Collie might look like. The main elements of such a vision should include:

- ☉ An ability to meet enquiries for puppies and older stock, avoiding any over supply of stock
- ☉ A continued emphasis on producing healthy puppies of good temperament
- ☉ A focus on promoting genetic diversity whilst maintaining an emphasis on correct type

Part 2 - Key statistical and cultural changes

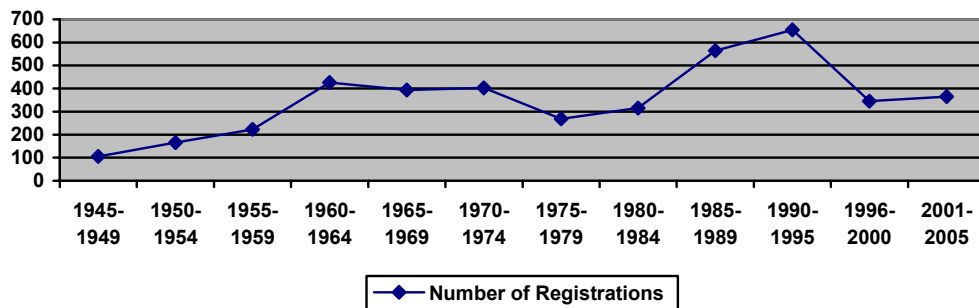
Whether the current situation is sustainable or not is mainly determined by changes in the numbers of Smooth Collies being bred, lifestyle changes and the effect these will have on demand for Smooth Collies. Analysis of trends concludes that there is a decrease in the numbers of Smooth Collies being bred and a decrease in the numbers of people breeding litters.

The following statistics illustrate some of the challenges we face:

1 Registrations

Our access to registration records¹ dates back to 1903 and analysis of these records provides us with some interesting information. The chart below illustrates registrations in 5 year time periods from 1945 to 2005.

Figure 1 Number of Registrations 1945 - 2005



From 1903 to 2006, the total number of Smooth Collies registered was 7,417. The lowest number registered was 3 in 1941 with the periods following the two wars seeing a very slow recovery. The highest number of registrations was 204 in 1905.

In more recent times we see that in the period 1986 to the present, the total number of dogs registered was 1857. The lowest number of registrations during this period was in 1998 (48) and the highest was in 1989 (148). In this

¹ Source: Kennel Club Breed Record Supplement

period the trend in numbers registered has been downwards, with the figures for 2006 showing only 53 dogs registered including 9 litters and 1 importation. The average number of registrations per annum since 1996 has been 69.

Registrations in the last decade (from 1996) to date are as follows:

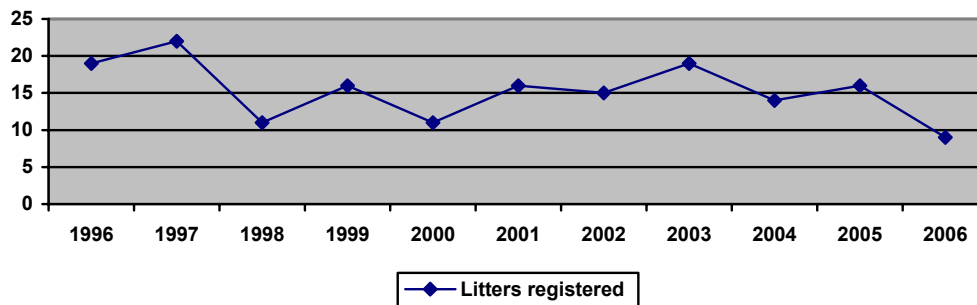
Table 1 Registrations 1996 - 2006

Year	Number of Registrations	Year	Number of Registrations
1996	76	2002	85
1997	84	2003	77
1998	48	2004	72
1999	82	2005	73
2000	56	2006	53
2001	58		

2 Numbers of litters registered

Looking at the period 1996 to 2006, we see that the total number of litters registered was 168². To date the high point of this period was 1997 when 22 litters were registered; the lowest 2006 when only 9 litters were registered.

Figure 2 Litters Registered 1996 to date



² Source: Kennel Club Breed Record Supplement

Number of litters registered in the period 1996 to date are as follows:

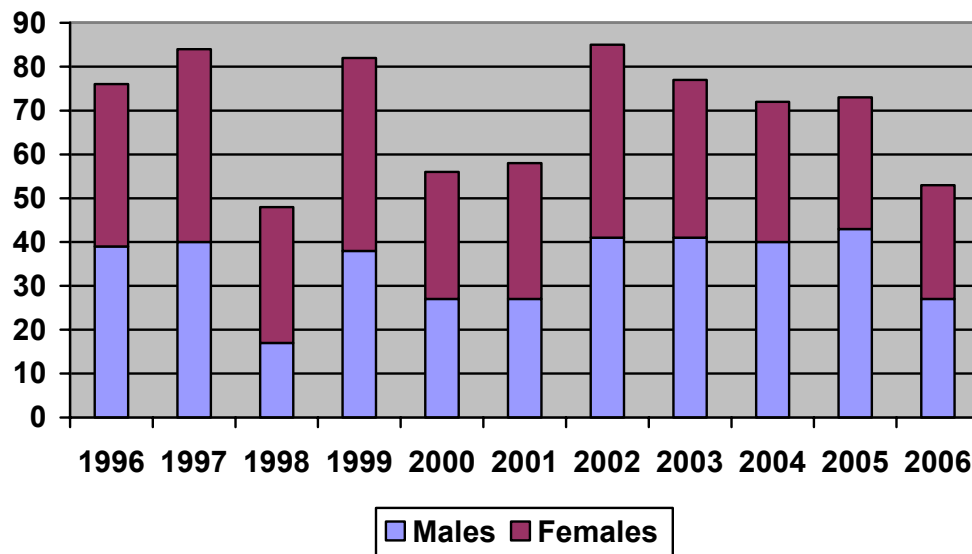
Table 2 Litters registered 1996 - 2006

Year	Number of litters registered	Year	Number of litters registered
1996	19	2002	15
1997	22	2003	19
1998	11	2004	14
1999	16	2005	16
2000	11	2006	9
2001	16		

3 Size of litters

From 1996 to 2006 the average size of a registered litter³ has been 5.8. Given that demand for puppies is not high this number does not seem to be an issue. The gender split of puppies is almost equal.

Figure 3 Gender of litters



³ Source: Kennel Club Breed Record Supplement

4 Breeders

Analysis of records shows that since 1996 a total of 48 breeders (individual or partnership) were active during the period⁴ to 2006. Upon further analysis, it would appear that of these individuals or partnerships, only 33 are actively involved in Smooth Collies currently. Of these 33, it is estimated that 12 are of retirement age or older which leaves a possible nucleus of potentially active future breeders of 21 if no further breeders come into the breed.

5 Males and females breeding on

A further indicator of the general well being of the breed is the number of dogs and bitches registered who went on to breed a litter themselves.

During the period 1996 to 2003 we note the following facts:

- 16.6% of registered males went on to sire at least one litter, and
- 22.75% of registered females went on to breed at least one registered litter.

These figures show that only a small number of dogs remain in the overall breeding programme, however it is worth noting that many - particularly bitches - are not bred from at a young age since many have a show career before retiring to raise a litter.

Table 3 Number of males and females registered who were later bred from in the UK⁵

Year	Males who bred on	% of all male registrations	Females who bred on	% of all female registrations
1996	6	15%	8	22%
1997	9	23%	9	20%
1998	1	6%	7	23%
1999	8 ⁶	21%	12	27%
2000	4	15%	3	10%
2001	7	26%	11	35%
2002	7	17%	15	34%
2003	4	10%	4	11%

⁴ Source: Kennel Club Breed Record Supplement

⁵ ibid

⁶ One male bred on in Australia and a descendant has returned to the UK

6 Family Matters

In the publications *Smooth Collie Champions*⁷ and later in *Smooth Collie Archives*⁸, charts depict how modern day Smooths can be traced back to a very limited number of sire and dam lines. The charts show how relationships can be traced between male to male and female to female. Such lines are also sometimes called 'tail male' and 'tail female'.

The significance of this work should not be lost on breeders since the goal of most breeders is to enhance desired traits so that a recognisable type of Smooth Collie is produced. If we acknowledge that there is a greater variety of type existing within the breed today, we must recognise that how and what we select as desirable traits will have a definite effect on the breed (*for a further explanation of this in relation to establishing a breeding line, please see Appendix 1*).

Concentration of breeders' efforts on a small number of lines due to their prepotence in producing winners for the show ring may have a detrimental effect on the overall health and well being of the breed and in the diversity of lines available in the future for breeders to use in their breeding programmes.

Tables 4⁹ and 5 below present and update this information from 1980 to 2006. They show that in this period certain tail male or tail female lines have all but disappeared whilst others have seen a resurgence in significance, due largely to the use of what some may call 'fashionable' stud dogs and others may welcome as bloodlines reintroduced and used to advantage. This does not mean that particular dog or bitch lines have been lost altogether as they will still appear in pedigrees, albeit in the middle sections. Examples of present day or recent representatives of these lines whose progeny are current winners according to the Smooth Collie Club's 2006 points trophy system are included for information below.

⁷ Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain, 2003, edited Dr J Tuck

⁸ Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain, 2004, edited Dr J Tuck

⁹ Information updated in 2007 by Jane Howells and validated by Brenda Kennedy

Key:

Sire Lines

- 1 Ch Peterblue Nigel**
*Ch Moon Walker from Misstoffs,
Ch Rowvale Dream Race, Colinro
Chippendale, Ch Foxearth Snow
Flurry, Highland Gwain at
Foxearth, Sharidon Kid Boots,
Ch Manordeifi Star Buster at
Patlyns, (Ch Sharidon Silver
Phantom at Foxearth also in this
line)*
- 2 Ch Wythenshawe Windhover**
*Rowvale Storm Rising at
Southcombe, Manordeifi
Sergeant Pepper, Southcombe
Smart Alec, Ch Foxearth Fire
Cracker, Ch Misstoffs Moriarty,
Foxearth Winds of Fire, (Ch
Sylbecq Draught Guinness at
Foxearth also in this line)*
- 3 Can Ch Kelbonnie Goliath
O'Darjoro**
*Ch Oneways Skalle Per,
Foxearth Finnish Emblem,
Foxearth Flexible Friend, Ch
Foxearth Sandy Footprints,
Foxearth Finlander of
Sturtmoor, Ch Kangasvuokon
Putupthepow Wow, Int Ch
Baubons Oklahoma Oliwer,
Advance Jumping Jack Flash,
(Ch Blue Heritage at Hughley
also in this line)*
- 4 Newarp Silver Shadow**
*Ch Southcombe Sterling,
Lowerpark Pipe Major (Astrellita
Absoluto also in this line)*

Dam Families

- A Jalonda's Cerinda Caramia**
*Ch Foxearth Playing with
Fire, Foxearth Fern Ominal,
Southcombe Sunny Spell, Ch
Alopex Silverstone,
Southcombe Spell Binder, Ch
Foxearth Absolutely Fab for
Antoc, Ch Pelghart Painted
Lady, Snuggletooth Fag Ash
Lil*
- B Ch Redevalley Rosita of
Ladypark**
*Cownbred Hot 'n' Spicy at
Foxearth, Ch Foxearth
Future Magic*
- C Selskars Sablette**
*Chicnoir Hors La Loi III,
Devern Dark Mistress,
Astrellita Beloved at
Glencorrie, Lowerpark Fancy
Lass*
- D Manordeifi Rosalyn (Rough)**
*Ch Hilltarn Hopeful,
Manordeifi Sweet Sensation*
- F Honey Bun of Astrellita**

Numbers in the tables are the total number of Smooth Collies of that particular line or family who produced CC winners in each year. Numbers in (brackets) are sires or dams who produced their first CC winner.

Table 4 - Sire Lines

Sire Lines 1980 - 2006							
Year	1	2	3	4	5	Rough	Unknown
1980	4	3	1		1	1	
1981	5 (1)	4 (1)			2 (2)		
1982	4	3 (1)			1	4 (3)	
1983	5 (2)	2 (1)			1	2	
1984	4 (1)	3 (1)	1			2	
1985	2	8 (4)				2	
1986	2	5				1	
1987		5				1	
1988		4				2 (1)	
1989	1 (1)	5 (1)				3 (1)	1 (1)
1990	2 (1)	8 (4)				2	
1991	1 (1)	9 (2)				1	1 (1)
1992	6 (3)	5 (2)				2 (1)	
1993	4	6 (1)		1 (1)		1	
1994	6	8 (2)		1			
1995	4 (1)	9 (2)		1			
1996	3	5 (1)		1			
1997	3 (1)	5 (1)		1			
1998	4 (1)	4		1			
1999	3	3 (1)					
2000	6 (4)	3	1 (1)	3 (2)			
2001	4	7 (3)	2 (1)				
2002	6 (2)	4	2	1			
2003	7 (3)	6 (1)	2 (1)	2 (1)			
2004	4 (1)	5 (2)	4 (2)				
2005	6	4 (1)	6 (3)	1			
2006	4	2	5 (1)	3 (2)			

In summary and to illustrate this, an examination of the breeding behind the 2006 winners of the Club's points trophies shows the following:

Sire line 1: 4 finalists in leading stud dog, 6 finalists in leading sire of brood bitches

Sire line 2: 2 finalists in leading stud dog, 4 finalists in leading sire of brood bitches

Sire line 3: 5 finalists in leading stud dog, 6 finalists in leading sire of brood bitches

Sire line 4: 3 finalists in leading stud dog, 4 finalists in leading sire of brood bitches

Table 5 - Dam Lines

Brood Bitch Families 1980 - 2006							
Year	A	B	C	D	F	Rough	Unknown
1980	1	3	5			1	
1981		4 (3)	4		1 (1)	2 (1)	2 (2)
1982	1 (1)	3 (1)	5 (2)			1	1 (1)
1983	2 (2)	4 (1)	3 (1)			1	
1984	3 (1)	2	3			1	
1985	4 (1)	3 (2)	3 (1)			1	
1986	4 (2)	3	3 (1)			1	
1987	3	2	4		2 (2)		
1988	3	5 (3)	4 (2)				
1989	2	5 (2)	6 (2)		1		
1990	4 (2)	7 (3)	6 (1)		1		
1991	7 (3)	4	4 (1)	1 (1)	2 (1)		
1992	2	5 (3)	7 (4)	1			
1993	6 (2)	5	4 (1)	1 (1)			
1994	5 (3)	6 (1)	5 (2)	1			
1995	7 (4)	4	7 (1)	1 (1)			
1996	5 (1)	3	2 (1)	2			
1997	5 (2)	3	2 (1)	1			
1998	5 (1)	4 (2)	2	1			
1999	6 (2)	2	1	1			
2000	7 (3)	3 (2)	4 (3)	2 (1)			
2001	7 (1)	1	3 (1)	1			1 (1)
2002	7 (2)	2 (1)	3 (2)	2			
2003	12 (5)	2 (1)	3 (2)	2			
2004	6 (1)	2 (1)	2 (1)	3 (3)			1 (1)
2005	8 (1)	2	3 (1)	3 (1)			1 (1)
2006	9 (2)	2 (1)	4 (2)	2			

An examination of the breeding behind the 2006 winners of the Club's points trophies shows the following:

- Family A: 9 finalists in leading brood bitch
- Family B: 2 finalists in leading brood bitch
- Family C: 4 finalists in leading brood bitch
- Family D: 2 finalists in leading brood bitch

7 Lifestyle changes

Changes to the way we live and work and their impact on the Smooth Collie cannot be underestimated. Gone are the days of large kennels housing 20 or 30 dogs, with kennel men to exercise their charges over acres of land. These days it is more likely that the typical family lives in a three bedroom estate house with access to a small garden. Both adults are likely to work outside the home and free time is at a premium. Incomes are tied up with financing mortgages and children's university careers. Such a lifestyle does not lend itself to keeping many dogs or pursuing a breeding programme.

In the December 2006 edition of the Smooth Look, Jane Howells writes about the demise of breeds that were bred for work that no longer exists. Most of the vulnerable breeds are working dogs (terriers), hunting hounds, and gun dogs (relics of country estate shoots). In other words, they're a reflection of a pest-infested, industrial past, a shadow of strong regional identities that have since faded into a more homogenous Britain.

The relaxing of quarantine laws in recent years has made it far easier to import dogs to Britain, and 'new' eye-catching breeds such as the Japanese Akita, the Australian Shepherd, the Dogue de Bordeaux and others are now high on the public's wish list. It could be said that the Kennel Club itself is partly responsible for the decline of indigenous breeds - 40 breeds were listed when it started out in 1873; there are now over 200.

Sometimes it is necessary to join a lengthy waiting list for a Smooth Collie puppy - other breeds are easier to acquire if the prospective owner is not willing to wait.

Part 3 - Fit for the future?

A future vision for the Smooth Collie in 10 to 20 years time should be based on the assumption that the breed should exist in sufficient numbers to meet the demand of the pet market given the majority of dogs we breed are sold to pet homes. However, we should not be producing an oversupply of dogs which puts strain onto breeders and sees dogs potentially in rescue centres. The present position of the breed as one of the healthiest should not be compromised. Correct type is paramount and we should strive for continual improvement in this regard. Within this framework, the following sections outline suggestions for change.

1 Education

We should promote the Smooth Collie as an intelligent, versatile and healthy family pet to the general public. To do this we must:

- ⊗ Continue to support events such as Discover Dogs, parades at agricultural shows and so on
- ⊗ Continue to benefit from the publicity gained as a result of affiliation with the British and Irish Dog Breeds Preservation Trust and others
- ⊗ Continue to encourage owners of other breeds/judges to attend our breed specific seminars
- ⊗ Continue to encourage exhibitors to support a wide range of shows and events such as obedience and agility
- ⊗ Advertise the breed and Club in appropriate publications
- ⊗ Maintain a presence on the internet
- ⊗ Encourage responsible dog ownership amongst Smooth owners
- ⊗ Take advantage of the breed's natural aptitude for companionship with people through opportunities such as PAT dog schemes, visits to schools with local education authorities etc

2 Increase breeding stock

Our restricted gene pool means that any inherited disease that goes undiagnosed will have devastating repercussions on the state of the Smooth Collie. We must strive to have sufficient healthy breeding stock to ensure that the breed continues into the future. To do this we must:

- ⊙ Encourage breeders to maintain contact with pet owners
- ⊙ Encourage breeders to not endorse registrations as 'cannot be bred from' unless absolutely necessary
- ⊙ Dissuade owners from spaying/neutering stock unless there is a clinical reason for doing so
- ⊙ Welcome the importation of stock from abroad to promote genetic diversity
- ⊙ Promote the use of a wide range of stud dogs to prevent 'genetic bottlenecks'
- ⊙ Assist owners and breeders to be well informed by promoting and assisting in the study of pedigrees
- ⊙ Maintain breed records and widely report trends in registrations, litters bred etc annually through the Smooth Look
- ⊙ Balance the desire to breed only from the best (for the show ring) with the need to foster a long term view of health and viability
- ⊙ Encourage usage of health screening schemes such as eye testing, hip dysplasia scoring and others as appropriate
- ⊙ Be honest, open and supportive about health issues
- ⊙ Act swiftly to alert people to concerns about numbers or health issues

3 Keeping in touch

To increase the numbers of Smooth Collies, we need to find more people who are willing to own Smooth Collies and keep in touch with breeders and the Club. To do this we must:

- ① Develop and continue a programme of education as outlined above
- ① Encourage pet owners to stay in touch with breeders
- ① Provide breeders with information packs about the Club and the breed to give to pet owners which will also offer one year's subsidised club membership for pet owners
- ① Maintain a club database of all owners for the purposes of keeping in touch (*and in compliance with data protection guidance*)
- ① Continue to invest in the Smooth Look as a way of keeping in touch with members
- ① Encourage non- show owners to stay in touch with the Club by arranging social events such as fun days and assessments at venues around the country to encourage take up

Part 4 - Conclusion

It is clear from looking at the statistics that the Smooth Collie has always been a minority breed - a connoisseur's dog. In the terms of the Kennel Club's definition it is vulnerable. The two terms are not interchangeable. Outside of the UK there are sufficient populations in Europe, Scandinavia, the United States and Australasia to go to should numbers ever drop and give real cause for concern. In recent years we have seen the importation of dogs from Canada, the United States, Scandinavia and most recently, Australia to boost both numbers and the gene pool. The benefits of these ventures are many and well evidenced.

One issue that has cropped up frequently during the course of this research is the widely held opinion that we *undervalue* our breed. There is a wide variation in the costs of a puppy between breeds and around the country. It is believed that a Smooth Collie puppy is one of the cheapest breeds to buy and this may be a factor in its unpopularity - buyers wonder 'why so cheap?' Some buyers may expect to pay more having waited many months for their new family member who they are told is a vulnerable breed and therefore quite rare. Although the Club cannot set a purchase price for puppies or older stock, breeders would be well advised to ask around other members or contact Club officials for guidance about this.

This debate is only the start of what could be an exciting opportunity to confirm the Smooth Collie as part of the vibrant canine community for many years to come. Involving members in a discussion about options for the future as suggested in part 3 of this paper is the only way to reach a consensus about the way forward. Such an approach will be vitally important in ensuring that the Smooth Collie is *fit for the future*.

The significance of Sire Lines and Brood Bitch Families

Looking at the breed's history, it is interesting to see how families and lines develop. Sometimes it is the important families that produce 'excellence' for generation after generation whilst in others a producer suddenly appears out of an ancestry that has produced little of note for generations. Some families do well and then go into decline until a fortuitous mating revives its fortunes.

One of the most influential families of recent years may be the descendants of Jzero Moondust of Newarp as shown in the following chart. However, the female side of this family is now in danger of disappearing but its influence continues through Ch Newarp Silver Moonbeam's son, grandson, great grandson and great-great grandson.

Some basic knowledge of genetics as they relate to breeding shows that the bitch actually contributes a substantial amount to genetic makeup. The bitch has two X chromosomes, one that she received from her dam and one that her sire received from his dam. For this reason, it is possible to develop a very strong bitch line by only using sires that had outstanding dams. The great producing bitches in the breed are actually those in possession of two strong X chromosomes, enabling them to be prepotent. This double copy would cause such a bitch to produce superb quality when bred to various sires. Selection of a good brood bitch from a strong tail female line is essential for a breeding program.

Similarly choosing an appropriate stud to compliment the bitch tail line depends upon the dominance of the stud dog. In great sire lines, generally the grandsire and sometimes the great-grandsire were also outstanding producers. By virtue of the fact that the sire passes his Y chromosome to his sons, then genetic material will be concentrated in the tail male line. The

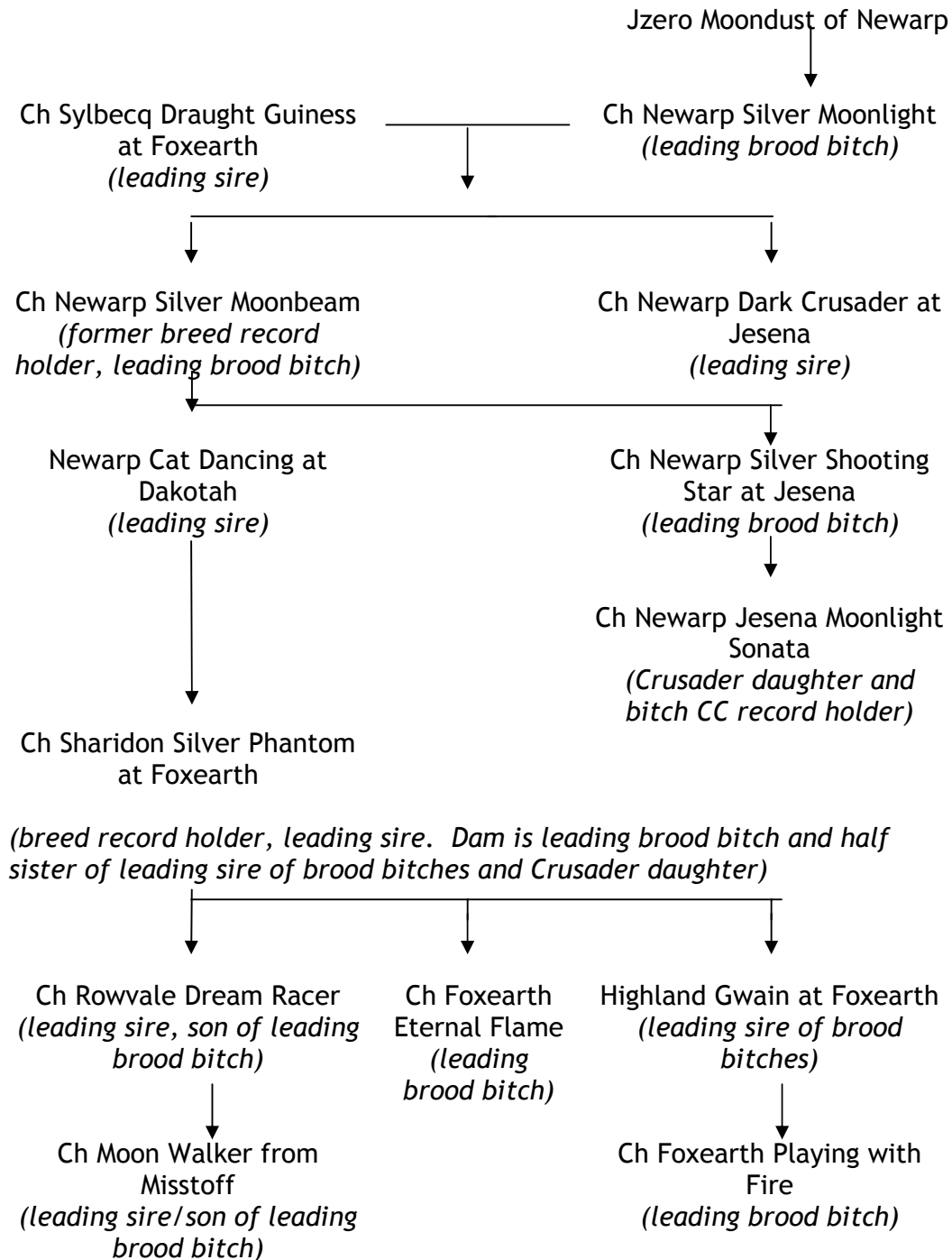
choice of a stud can also enhance line-breeding. If the strong males of the family are on the top side and come from a strong female line, and there are strong females on the bottom, the line-breeding is enhanced and allows genetic information associated with the X and Y chromosomes to make entry into the next generation.

Outcrossing appears to only work when the outcross animal is the result of hybrid vigour created by merging two strong lines that are unrelated, and if both are similar in type. It also appears to work best when dealing with a relatively small gene pool in which the same traits are selected consistently. Certainly knowledge of the pedigree and the characteristic traits represented by the names in the pedigree are very important. It appears that by making a careful selection of which dog to mate to a bitch, and knowledge of the traits behind both lines, it is then possible to move to breed true to the type desired.

Using the chart on the following page, we can see how the theory that good sires come from bitches of good families applies in this case. Often a leading sire is the son of a leading brood bitch yet a leading sire of brood bitches is not always a leading sire himself. However, the leading brood bitches are often well bred. For example, Ch Foxearth Fire Cracker whose dam, Foxearth Silver Fontan was a Ch Sylbecq Draught Guinness of Foxearth daughter out of an International Champion who also produced Foxearth Silver Florin, a leading brood bitch and dam of leading sire Ch Sharidon Silver Phantom at Foxearth.

Silver Phantom's son Highland Gwain is another example. Never a leading sire himself, he, like Fire Cracker, is out of a Guinness daughter

An example of family influence



Produced by the Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain
March 2007

Further copies of this paper may be downloaded from
www.smoothcollieclub.com

© Smooth Collie Club of Great Britain, 2007