



A Pearl of Great Advice by Noel Banks



Sometimes a great article comes to us from other breeds. Good information is worthy no matter the source if it has proven value. Therefore we at TSK have brought you this gem. We hope you enjoy!

In the commercial world of greyhound breeding, the following statement has often been made by an enthusiast becoming attracted to the sport of the greyhound: “I decided to get a bitch pup rather than a dog pup as if it is no good for racing at least I can breed a litter and get my money back.”

What a fallacy! No doubt in a majority of these cases, a later mating would be effected with a currently popular sire, with thoughts of ready sale of the progeny uppermost in the breeder's mind, without due regard to the needs of compatibility of bloodlines, temperament, conformation, and, of course, a continuation of inherited inability in relation to speed or pace.

Perhaps the following article, although it was originally written in relation to another species of canine, is equally applicable to the practical and proper approach to those deeply interested in the reproduction of the greyhound. (*or Stafford)

A horse breeder once told me, “A good mare gives more than half to her foal.” This was a knowledgeable man, a long-time successful breeder. I started to object — genetically the inheritance gift must be half. “No,” he went on to say. “At the instant that the egg is fertilised, they have each given one half, stud and mare, but from that point on it is the mare's own healthy body that nourishes that newly created life. At the instant of fertilisation that organism acquired its total potential. From then on realisation of that potential will be up to the dam.”

This is as true for the brood bitch as it is for the mare. Man, the breeder of record, will assume the responsibility only at some time after the actual birth, and if that responsibility must be taken very early in the young life, it is very possible that no matter how diligent the care, it will never provide what could have been derived from a healthy, temperamentally sound dam providing from her own body the perfect diet, warmth, and security.



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The creation of a fine brood bitch must begin generations before the day she first whelps. Not only must she come from stock notable for beauty of form and movement, and stability of temperament ideal for her breed, but there should be also behind her generations of dams granddams who whelped easily, normally, and who nourished their litters without assistance, and who never slackened their attention to the cleanliness and safety of their broods.

Laziness and weakness in the whelping box, enough to make the surgical birth, caesarean section, necessary, and irresponsible maternal attitudes seem to be inherited. A bitch puppy whelped naturally in peaceful, comfortable surroundings, and given the proper care by her dam from the first anxious lick, seems also to be 'programmed' for performance of the same duties when her turn comes.

Modern veterinary medicine coupled with the know how of the experienced breeder have today made it possible to save many a pup, even many a litter that would a few decades past never have lived to maturity. This becomes a mixed blessing for it enables us to preserve the constitutionally inferior animal and from it propagate a weakened strain. The medical skills that can save the strong pup from epidemic viral disease and accidental post-natal injury are far too often employed to preserve a life that nature has marked as inadequate for continuance of the race. That body beautiful brought precariously into this world and maintained here solely through human effort and against nature's will to eliminate the weak

may well survive to pass many essential weaknesses throughout subsequent generations.

Trust a good bitch. If she has six strong, wriggling, greedy puppies filled with the unlimited urge to survive, fighting for their nourishment, thriving, don't be upset about that seventh one that she has shoved off into a cool corner to expire. If she has been handling her personal affairs up to this point suitably, assume she knows something you don't know. Let that one go! And that littlest one who can't seem to hang on to a tit—let it go! Many a tiny one is unbudgeable as is the biggest in the litter. Vigour and ability to survive is unallied with size, large or small.

Long ago in the eager altruistic early days of my dog-breeding experience it was a matter of pride to 'save them air. And many a time I was successful. One little female that I remember especially had to be fed minute quantities of food every two hours. Because she had thus become very dear to my





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heart as a result of our great battle together, I gave her to a very good home. Within four months she had succumbed to the worst all-over case of red mange I have ever seen; she grew bald and scarred. I recommended euthanasia but her owners persisted with the most time-consuming care. At the age of two-and-a-half years, after finally achieving an orderly estral cycle, she kicked the mite and haired out almost completely, except for a few areas permanently scarred as a result of secondary bacterial infections. Very much against my advice they bred her. Slow, difficult labour produced two pups and a caesarean section the remained four, of which one was dead and another dying. Massive infections followed and ultimately one pup survived. A few months later the bitch did finally have to be euthanised because of almost complete paralysis from back trouble. Full and half sisters of this same bitch, out of the same dam, bitches vigorous and strong from birth on are the best whelpers, the strongest, fiercest, most infection-resistant members of my kennel gang.

Without details, I will say that something like this did have to happen more than once before I became a believer.

Now, when someone mentions a lot of trouble with a litter, I ask questions about a bitch's family and make a mental note to follow the reproductive career of the survivors. Far too often the sad story is repeated in varying forms.

The inherent weaknesses having to do with reproductive capacity express themselves differently in the male. The undescended testicle is one thing, the low or non-existent sperm count another. The breed as a whole is luckier than the individual proud owner when a terrific performer fails to reproduce himself. It suffers sorely when the constitutionally

inadequate male that has been kept alive at all cost and raised to maturity because of his famous parentage and sheer external beauty does succeed in reproducing himself prodigiously. “We didn't want to lose the bloodline,” may be the excuse. If that bloodline is essentially sturdy, this weakling will not honour it, and if not, chances are that this line is one that nature, if left to her own devices, would have cancelled some generations earlier.

There is a bonus benefit. Inherent constitutional vigor carries with it in both the male and the female the ability to resist infection, disease, and even severe parasitical infestation. The animal will flesh out and grow glossy coated with only a good maintenance diet, not requiring a superfluity of dietary supplements as it is able to extract the maximum available in the food ingested. It will adjust readily to extremes of heat and cold, thus it will require less artificial heating and cooling in the kennel. This in turn reduces chances of illness from changes of weather and temperature in the course of shipping and traveling. This healthy animal will cost you a lot less in time and money to keep in top condition and may even spare you the heartache of an early demise, with possible disruption of carefully formulated breeding plans.

So, if your bitch is beautiful and healthy, strong and natural in her breeding behaviour, talented in the performance of her maternal duties—trust her. Pick your winners from the healthiest of her offspring. Honor her—she will honor you — this pearl of great price.



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Noel Banks [Pioneer]

Years involved in industry: 40

Category : Pioneer

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Greyhound Racing Control Board Member 24 years
- Awarded Order of Australia (OAM) Medal in 1986
- National Coursing Association Secretary 17 years
- National Coursing Association Executive 14 years
- Original Director of the Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association

Born in Dalmore near Tooradin in May 1921, Noel Banks OAM spent his early childhood in Oakleigh where he went to the local primary school and then to Caulfield Technical School. His first job was with the Singer sewing machine company in Melbourne where he earned 17 pounds and six shillings a week.

Banks later worked at the West Oakleigh abattoirs and 'graduated' to the Oakleigh brickyards where his father and three brothers worked. He returned to the brickyards after WWII and eventually bought a truck to cart bricks until the late 1960s. When he was 11 he was given his first greyhound - Winellie - by an uncle who had rescued the dog from injury after it was bewildered by the traffic in Flinders Street.

He began following coursing in 1934 after the opening of the Sandown Speed Coursing track where he won his first plumpton competition. Winnellie, was bought for 10 pounds (around \$685 these days). He also raced one of Silver Chief's pups, a greyhound named Cansia, which had his first win on the tin hare at Harold Park.

Banks won an unprecedented 11 Waterloo Cups as either the breeder and/or trainer. One of these Waterloo Cup winners, Sylvan Prince also won three country cups and was runner-up to the immortal Temlee in the 1974 Maturity Classic. "He left nothing to chance in the preparation of a coursing greyhound. And he gave plenty of thought to breeding," said incumbent NCA president Tony Mills, who was 10 years old when he started walking greyhounds with Banks. "I picked up a lot of things from Noel, from both a training and administrative perspective."

Banks devoted a lifetime to sport but particularly to his first passion, coursing. Banks became a member of the NCA executive in 1955, representing the Tynong Coursing

Club. He commenced as NCA secretary in 1969, initially for a three-month period, but stayed in the position for 17 years.

Before joining the NCA, Banks was one of the original directors of the Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association (MGRA) and was appointed to the Greyhound Racing Control Board (GRCB) in 1964, which he served with distinction for 24 years. "Noel was proactive and always searching for ways to improve coursing. He was a deep thinker, and he didn't want his name up in lights," Mills said. "And he wouldn't stand for any skulduggery. He was straight down the line and kept a lot of people honest."

In addition to his work in greyhounds, Banks was a Justice of the Peace and a committeeman of the Bendigo Coursing Association. For 10 years he was president of the Kyneton Shire, the government nominee on the Kyneton Water Trust and a member of the Kyneton Sewerage Authority. He was also president of the Kyneton Football Club for six years, president of the Bendigo Football League for 14 years and president of the Victorian Country Leagues Association for six years, and acted as president and treasurer of the Kyneton Golf-Bowling Club.

Noel Banks was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 1986. He passed away in November 2001, aged 80.



Noel Banks [Pioneer]



Noel Banks, a true greyhound man, was considered to be one of Australia's most respected authorities on greyhound breeding. He was a leading breeder who bred 11 Waterloo Cup winners at a time when the Waterloo Cup was considered the holy grail of coursing. He also trained six Waterloo Cup winners. Noel Banks was secretary of the NCA of Victoria and Keeper of the Stud Book for 17 years. He was a Member of the GRCB of Victoria for 24 years and a member of the NCA Executive for 14 years. No greyhound man was held in higher esteem for his breeding knowledge.