

An interview with **Tony Brindley (Cabrindle)** established 1981

by Chris Kerrigan (Leadstaffs)

Chris: Can you tell me how you started with Stafford's?

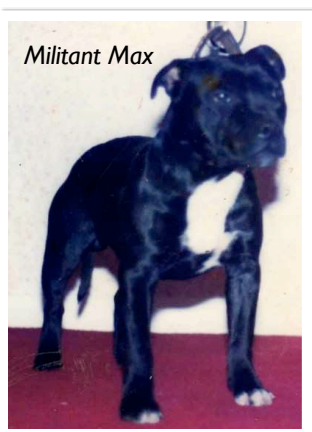
Tony: Thirty years ago my son wanted a dog and when I eventually agreed I remembered that a neighbour once had a Staffordshire bull terrier. It was a friendly, people loving dog, not too big as far as dogs go and it had an easy to manage short coat. The breed was not so common or popular in those days so via a newspaper I bought a dog from a local breeder.

Chris: So how did you go from owning your Stafford to showing it?

Tony: As often happens with children, my son became more interested in other past times rather than exhibiting, so I began to handle our 'Sam' myself. Some months later I purchased a bitch from a well known and local breeder/exhibitor/judge. When she was old enough I mated her and from the litter I kept a dog whom I named 'Militant Max'. About fifteen months later I bought in another bitch which I exhibited. When she was five years old after travelling many miles to enter many shows and gaining six K.C. C.'s Caravella Queen became a champion.

Chris: How did you leap from showing to judging?

Tony: Although I had no aspirations to become a judge the secretary of the Potteries S.B.T. club asked me to preside at Alfreton Leisure Centre. I was rather surprised to have an entry of fifty one Stafford's.



Chris: That was a great entry. Did you enjoy your first appointment?

Tony: Not particularly; I found that it needed a lot of concentration. The little knowledge that I had mainly comprised of a Stafford that had a pleasing expression, large



head, plenty of substance, a wide chest and muscular.

Chris: Where did you learn; where did you get your information?

Tony: Whilst at a dog show, Dean Cund introduced me to James McEwan who really has outstanding knowledge concerning the Stafford's conformation and movement. He explained about various muscles working in conjunction with the bones that needed to have the correct angulations that were conducive to good movement, agility and endurance etc. I realized that it was my responsibility and only fair to exhibitors to acquire such knowledge if I was to continue to judge our beloved breed. So I started to talk to experienced people, but found that mainly information is best gained from reading books.

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Chris: The books you used, were they breed specific or general dog construction?

Tony: Dogs in general. It is best to learn how construction varies from breed to breed depending upon the function that each particular breed was originally bred for.

Chris: Is there a book that you would recommend to others to read?

Tony: Yes; the book that I relied on mostly, 'The Dog In Action' by McDowell Lyon.

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Chris: Is it true that you have a reputation for liking tall dogs?

Tony: Some folks have given me that 'tag' but others know me for being a honest judge who likes fit and agile dogs that are healthy and sound in conformation and movement. Along with type and balance, I would not sacrifice them for an inch or two and many of my winning Stafford's have been very near to sixteen inches some less than that. The five dogs that I used on my bitches were Thorndyke Chez, sixteen and half inches, - Ch. Master Jay, approximately sixteen inches, - Shining Black Sabre, Approximately fifteen and half inches, - Winston The Lionheart, approximately sixteen inches - and Aradaz Downtown Bogeyman seventeen and a half inches. No giants there?

Chris: Do you think it should be compulsory for judges to prove some sort of knowledge of construction before they are allowed to judge?

Tony: Yes, for the future betterment of the S.B.T. E.g. I believe that there are many aspiring judges, and some experienced judges who do not even know what 'well



let down in the hocks' means, let alone the reason as to why it is necessary.

Chris: Have you been involved any with clubs ?

Tony: Yes, at one time I was a committee member of Newcastle Canine Society.

Also I have served the Potteries S.B.T. club for twenty six years, including five years as chairman and ten as president. I was the Breed Council delegate for approximately eleven years, and ran the handling classes and match meetings during that same period. For eight years I organised the annual dinner and dance, was publicity officer for six years and show manager for four years. As ring steward, I officiated many times and often did home vetting for Stafford rescue. During the bad publicity in the media in 1989/90, along with other breed club representatives I lobbied M.P's at Whitehall.



Chris: Did you enjoy your day judging at Crufts and do you feel it's as good as it gets?

Tony: I enjoyed it very much. Crufts is the biggest dog show in the world and is the most prestigious. The atmosphere is truly amazing. But to myself, the breed club shows are just as enjoyable.

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Chris: Do you think you will breed or show again in the future?



Tony: No. At my age (69) it would not be fair to the dog who might live fifteen or more years and would need exercise for many of them. Also, if I suddenly departed from this world I wouldn't it to end up in an over crowded rescue centre.

Chris: Do you think Stafford's are in better shape today or do you think they were better in the past?

Tony: That's a fairly difficult question to answer, but I believe that Stafford's in general are in better shape than they were thirty years ago. It does hearten me to see many new people in the breed who are asking questions and reading books on anatomy and movement, which shows a willingness to learn. There are some learned young judges who have recently awarded, or are about to award Kennel Club Challenge Certificates and that is good news for the dog known as the Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

Many thanks once again to our regular columnist Chris Kerrigan (Leadstaffs) for another fine interview - we look forward to the next one in the September-October issue of TSK