



# Thoughts on Breeding

by Alan Mitchell (2008 reprint)

Many people starting out at breeding and rush to use the current highest scoring dog without any research and they are gambling against the house. That wonder dog may have been the odd one out in a sub-standard litter and the pups are likely to be like them. Next, of course, is the fact that the dog may be totally unrelated and of a different type altogether. The resultant litter in that case will probably be an odd mixture of quality and type.

In my view, if your aim is to breed long term and produce typical, sound dogs of good quality and temperament, a clinical approach is best. Look for a stud dog which is reasonably fault-free and doesn't rely on one outstanding feature for success. You will find several. Then look at the partner and grandparents (if possible) to see whether they are very much off one mould. Next, where possible, look at pups off the dog when the bitch is of a quality and of similar type to yours.

The next thing is to pray hard to whatever god you have, because Lady Luck always plays a part.

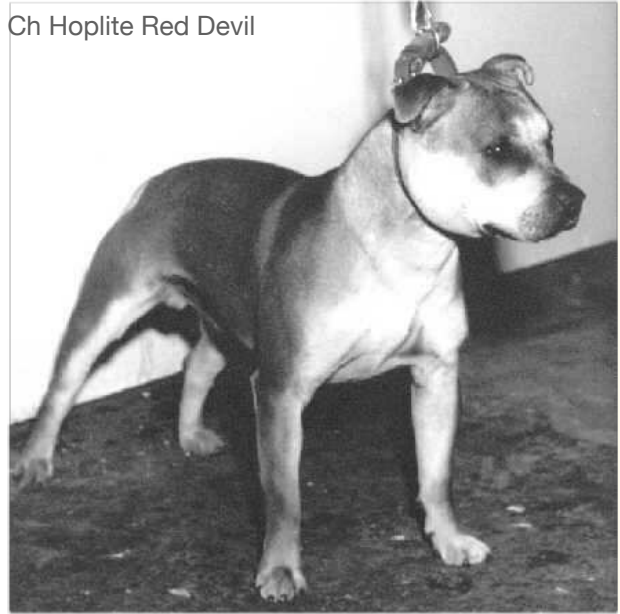
Having bred your first litter, I would keep the best bitch as if you bred first-class bitches time after time, you can try each to three stud dogs which carry the same blood on the top or bottom line of the pedigree, select again and pursue the line which gives most success.

Now, you have a recognizable type carrying your affix and the time comes when success should follow. I believe that getting the bitches right gives the stud a real chance of producing the goods.

Last of all you need to cultivate, if it isn't inborn, a stubborn determination to succeed in producing 'the goods' – Staffords which truly are worthy.

It isn't an easy task and is often two steps forward and one step back, as just when you think you have cracked it, a fault seems to have come from nowhere. This is where the true enthusiast goes about sorting the problem.

Ch Hoplite Red Devil





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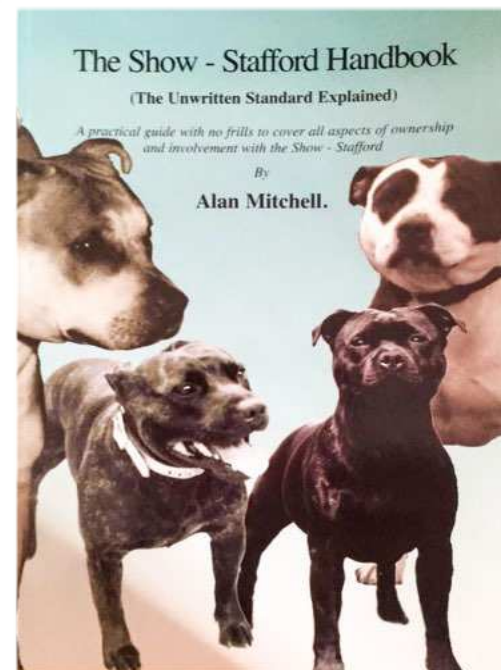
Faced with this problem, I bought in two bitches from good stock. One produced huge dogs although only 15" herself and one suited my stud dogs ideally. However, a repeat mating of the one which produced the problem, done to check if it was a permanent problem produced excellent pups with no trace of the fault. A little sperm with Michael Phelps' ability to swim had done the trick.

Nothing is straight forward, which is the fascination. For years you may produce first-class Staffords when there are one or two specimens owned by others which are beating them. It's frustrating but after a while you have the reward as the position is reversed and you are on the upswing again.

At times you will have balanced dogs when bully ones are favored and then top-sized dogs when smaller ones are in vogue, or balanced ones when a group of the show judges go for terriers with no trace of the bull factor. Keep going, stick to your guns and the wheel will go round and when the bully ones run into problems with heart and have to be helped on hot days or when the bone becomes too slight on the terriers and the bitches have whelping problems, your stock will be at a premium. Oh! And keep your fingers crossed!!



Bill McKnight (Belnight) with Ch Hoplite Fearless Devil



If you own a Stafford and do not own this book - do yourself a favor and get your hands on a copy!



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A candid photo from Alan's last judging assignment, Perry Georgia 2008



Ch Hoplite Another Ace



Alan Mitchell (Hoplite) & Mark Marshall (Marstaff)



CH Marstaff Easter Surprise at Hoplite out of Ch Brystaff Simply The Best