

Duke's Story

After Comfrey came home we kept in touch with her breeder, Judith, sending photos of where we had taken her and visiting a few times a year as we loved to see her and spend time with the other hounds. We took Comfrey's Dad, Ferryman, to the Otterhound club show one year where he was being shown along with Comfrey's Grandma (Anni) and another young lady called Kiri who was to become Duke's Mum. We also went to Crufts one year to look after Texas who was the hound we had first fallen in love with, I had been to Crufts before as a visitor, but it was a real delight to go and actually be involved with a competitor!

Our friendship with Judith grew over time and sitting drinking coffee watching the hounds out of the window we said what we really wanted was a son of Texas. By this time we had moved to a larger house and we had enough room for another shaggy hound. Judith had planned another litter between Texas and Kiri and so we put our name on the waiting list for one of the puppies. It nearly didn't happen as Tex's girlfriend was Zenia and no matter how much Kiri tried to attract his attention he wasn't interested. Finally, Kiri's persistence paid off and a few months later Judith called us to say the puppies were being born.

When they were three weeks old we visited, Mike had set his heart on one the same colour as Texas and in the event there was only one black and red boy. I had expressed a wish to show the pup and the disappointing thing was that the pup Mike fell in love with was the smallest in the litter. Never mind we said we'll do tracking or agility or something with him instead. We left jokingly asking if Judith could feed him baby bio or something to make him a bit bigger.

We went to pick our puppy up on Golden Jubilee day 2002, we arrived and looked out of the window to the puppies playing in the garden. Now I'm pretty good at remembering which animal is which once I've met them but we couldn't work out which one was our puppy. Can't you guess Judith teased us, then after a pause she said it's that one pointing to the biggest puppy sitting legs akimbo in the middle of the lawn. No! we said in amazement what did you do? I stood him in a grow bag she said. So in the end we had the biggest puppy with a giant personality, he even grew bigger than his Dad in the end. He is the most gentle giant ever as you will see from photos in the gallery.

We drove home with him spilling over my lap, what shall we call him we wondered, many names were discussed but the overriding topic was that he looked like a judge with a wig on, we talked more and in the end settled for Duke with the added anglo-american connection that John Wayne's nickname was "The Duke". His show name had already been decided as the litter were the "Merry" litter and due to our connection with Ferryman (Comfrey's Dad) Duke's show name was "Merryman". This is very appropriate he is the happiest dog and is always trying to entertain those around him.

Duke Nukem as he is affectionately known is now three and so his story has a long way to go and will be updated as time goes on. He loves going to shows and has a great sense of occasion, he loves people and never tires of the attention he gets from grown ups and children alike. However tired he is he never gets grumpy and if he gets fed up in the end then he shakes his big head at me and woofs as if to say 'please can we go now'.

He is the dog I dreamed of having when I was a child , he is quite literally the dog of my dreams.



Duke Showing - Handsome Dude

