



John Bell and Shaun Richards top dogs again at Skipton

Two bids topping 4,000gns were the highlights of the opening winter sale of 115 working sheep dogs at Skipton Auction Mart. (Fri, Feb 10)

John Bell, of Parks Farm Howden, Selby, who has often headed the prices at Skipton, again led the way at 4,800gns with Nell, a two-year-old black and white bitch, who returned to her roots when bought back by her Scottish Highlands breeder Jock Sutherland, of Keoldale Farm, Sangormore, Durness.

Nell is by Caithness-based MA Cook's Spot, himself a well-bred son of Scottish parentage, being by D McDonald's Dave, out of Michael Shearer's Bess. Nell was emulating her dam Dot, who is by Welshman Kevin Evans' 2008 International Supreme champion Mirk, and headed the prices for Mr Bell at Skipton two years ago.

She will be used for work, trials and breeding by her new owner, who farms North Country Cheviots in the most north westerly village on mainland Britain and was a member of the Scottish trials team in 2007. "I will have her ready for the 2012 nurseries," said Mr Sutherland, who returned home with three Skipton-bought dogs.

Next best at 4,200gns was Shaun Richards, of Watson Laithe, Hapton, Burnley, a frequent high price achiever at Skipton, with his 13-month-old black and white bitch Fan, who found a new home in Suffolk with Eddie Thornalley, of Mildenhall, shepherd for Andrew Foulds at Elveden.

Fan is a second covering daughter of Rossendale breeder Alf Kyme's Moss, out of Mr Richards' own Meg, who on their first mating also produced another Moss, acquired for 3,000gns by Mr Thornalley at Skipton last May.

Buoyed up by Moss's sparkling performance since - he described her as a "fantastic, a top-class working dog" - Mr Thornalley purposely returned to Skipton to secure Fan.

Ireland's Michael Gallagher from Armoy, County Antrim, third in last year's World Sheep Dog Trials, achieved 3,000gns for his September, 2010, black and white and mottled bitch Fly. She is by his father Aiden Gallagher's Jimmy, out of the vendor's own Lyn.

Fly was purchased as a work dog by Andrew Procter, of Villa Farm, Great Musgrave, Kirkby Stephen. He and his brother Trevor, who farm 2,000 Swaledale and Mule sheep, along with beef cattle, have bought a number of dogs at Skipton, including a 3,150gns purchase from Shaun Richards a couple of years ago. "They have all done well," said Trevor.

The second dog to take the field, Floss, an April, 2010-born black and white bitch from Iain Mackay, of Culloden Moor, Inverness, made 2,750gns when acquired by a buyer from Lancashire. Scottish-bred, she is by DA Goulding's Rock, out of Derek Purdham's Jess.

Late in the day, Northern Ireland's William Torrens, of Castlederg, Belfast, who regularly sells dogs at Skipton, saw his 20-month-old Irish-bred black and white dog Jed, by Michael O'Sullivan's Rover, out of JW Kavanagh's Lass, join retired Scottish farmer and 2011 World Trials qualifier Joe McRobert, of Fingland, Biggar, for 2,500gns.

Mr Torrens also sold his May, 2008-born black and white bitch Nan, by G Mullan's Fleet, out of IG Olphett's Grahams Tiny, for 2,150gns to a buyer from Staffordshire.

Of the younger dogs, Patch, a 12-month-old tri-coloured bitch from local breeder Roy Canning, of Keighley, sold well at 2,400gns. By Glen, bred by C Robinson, out of Shaun Richards' Nan, Patch is now in mid-Wales with Beryl Lewis, of Penybont, Powys, who has bought several dogs at Skipton for the trials field. She will prepare her latest acquisition for the Autumn nursery season.

John Bell also achieved 2,400gns for Fly, his August, 2010-born black and white bitch by Michael Gallagher's Cap, the 2010 International champion and his 2011 World Trials third placed dog. She was knocked down to a buyer from the Midlands.

Two other vendors sold broken dogs at 2,000gns. First up was shepherd Ray Edwards, from Chumleigh in Devon, the 2006 English National champion, with Kate, an August, 2010-born tri-coloured bitch by WE Armstrong's Snow, out of William Torrens' Jessie.

She joined up-and-coming young trialist, 21-year-old Rachel Scrimgeour, of Lonscale Farm, Keswick, who hopes to follow in the footsteps of her well-known father Derek, a multiple English National trialist and winner of the competition in 2008. Rachel also hopes to breed from Kate.

The second 2,000gns achiever was Welshman Ben Owens, of Llandrindod Wells, Penybont, with his October, 2010-born black and white dog Jack, who was bought for work by beef and multi-breeds sheep farmer Clive Mitchell, of Caldwell, Holmfirth. "He is very keen," said Mr Mitchell, after trying out his new acquisition. He also bought a second dog at Skipton.

With quality dogs again much sought after, broken registered dogs averaged £1,938. Part broken registered dogs sold to 1,350gns, averaging £726, broken unregistered dogs to 1,800gns (av £987), part broken unregistered dogs to 380gns (av £299), registered pups to 400gns (av £279) and unregistered pups to 180gns (av £112).

Skipton's next working dogs fixture in May is a two-day event, featuring an afternoon trial on Thursday, May 17, followed on the Friday by the annual Spring sale of fully and part trained dogs and pups.



Above left: John Bell, right, with Jock Sutherland, buyer of his 4,800gns Skipton dog.
Above right: Shaun Richards, left, with Eddie Thornalley, buyer of his 4,200gns Skipton dog.