

## The Kourika Story by Robin Blaikie

We started in Rough Collies in 1982 with a sable & white bitch from Tom Walls kennel, Fellview Miss Scarlet. We decided to go to an exemption show with her and she got a minor placing, so we went to an open show but did not get anything. But you know what, like countless other people we got the bug.

However, we soon realised she was not good enough, so we went back to Tom Walls a bought a Tri colour Bitch, Fellview Black Satin, she was by Ch Karava Kornishman. Unfortunately, we were given the wrong advice when her ears were light through teething by the lady who ran the training classes. She told us to take her to her house & she would shave the hair which would sort it – “Argh”!!! If only we had known. Unfortunately, she had a pancreas problem & was never shown but she was one of the most intelligent & clever dogs that we have had.

We decided to try breeding our sable bitch and we took her back to a Tri Dog at Tom Walls kennel, Aberthorne Aphrobeat - 6 puppies resulted but our bitch had serious eclampsia & we had to have her put to sleep which left us with the daunting task of hand rearing her litter at 7 days old. We managed, although I don't know how, but with help & advice they survived, and we kept a sable bitch. We took her to our first Ch show at Manchester 1986 & were placed 4th minor puppy & we thought we had won Crufts. That was us on this wonderful journey with all the highs & lows of this mad world called breeding & showing Dogs.

I was introduced to the Mybern kennel through Willie Robertson of the then Battock Kennel, a good friend who taught me so much in the early days. As soon as I saw the Mybern dogs I was blown away with the exquisite expressions, coat & shape that I had not seen before. We took our sable bitch to Ch Myberns Merideon & kept a Tri Colour bitch, Capri of Kourika. We took her to the Scottish Collie Ch show at Haddington under Jimmy Tait & got our first ever 1st in puppy. I could not understand it at the time, but I know now why Jimmy must have liked her she was right up his street, sadly she had to be spayed.

On a visit to the Mybern kennel I saw Troydon PebbalMyll at Mybern & knew this was what I wanted. So, we bought a blue bitch from Mike & Bernice called Myberns Blue Misty at Kourika (by “Pebbles”). The rest is history. She won well as a puppy & was admired by a lot of breeders. We took her back to the Myberns to mate to Ch Jankeith Gideon of Mybern, but as he was getting on, he would only mate occasionally and not this time. I said to Mike at the time it was a pity that Pebbles was her father & a blue. Mike considered the outcross through Tashadon Hot Chocolate. Looking at them dog, for bitch, it looked good but being a novice to breeding blues I was not sure.

After a few cups of tea, I decided to take the plunge, she produced the now world-famous **Ch Kourika Mantika at Troydon**.



We let him go to Bill & Glynis Shaw at Troydon. Well I did say we were novices! She was later lucky enough to be mated to Jankeith Gideon at Myberns & produced Kourika Krystal Klear at Arronwell who won well for John & Margaret Congdon, who I know thought the world of her. The next few years we bred mostly Blues & Tris.

I had heard that Pauline & Brian Skyrme had used Mantika on their Emryks Love in the Mist & thus bought our tri bitch, Meg, **Emryks Tri to Resist at Kourika**



(RCC, Judge -Brian Hawkins 1995) She was a fav of mine & was admired by many breeders. She was the litter sister to CH Emryks Phantom of the Night & produced some lovely stock for us which I can still see coming through our line.

We still dabbled with the sables & we bought a sable dog from the Geosan kennels, Geosan

Matchmaker at Kourika (litter brother to Ch Geosan Chocolate Box) who did well for us & we loved his outgoing ways. Our Kool Kidd reminds us so much of him, but unfortunately, we could never get the right bitch to him, & being in Scotland it was harder. I am sure if he had been used more there would have been progeny from him.

We used Steelhurst Dark Shadow on our Gideon blue daughter Kourika Sapphire, who produced polish Ch Kourika Blue Cascade.

We have always tried to use other kennels stud dogs to bring something in to improve. Some kennels that I would have liked to have used their dogs we could not manage to get to for one reason or another. But we have been fortunate that the dogs used have carried their lines i.e. Brilyn/Lynway/to name but a few. I used Redolla Midnight Runner at Lynaire as I always admired the beautiful clear colour the Lynaies produced & I feel that we gained that clearer colour.

We kept a blue daughter from this mating who unfortunately did not like the showing, but she had the most beautiful clear colour, head & expression. She was mated to the Tri dog CH Camanna the Copyist after I had judged him at SKC & gave him the DCC. I really loved his free-flowing movement and this mating produced our blue dog Micky Kourika Kool Water, who moved so well. He only went to two shows, his first being under Anne Hollywood, Amaile, at Scottish Collie CH show, and he won first in Minor Puppy Dog and Best Puppy Dog

Blue breeding is not for the faint hearted as there are many ups & downs, and I think it is the hardest colour to breed, but that is all part of the learning journey, & believe me to have produced a blue with colour, head shape & movement is very rewarding after all the heartache along the way.

We ran a small boarding kennel which curtailed our showing & breeding a bit & our two boys who had been dragged from show to show needed some of our time; that & running my Minibus Taxi Co and so we stopped showing for a few years. Now they can hopefully look after themselves. We kept our blue dog Kourika Kool Water & his Tri Colour Sister & a Tri Colour bitch, Kourika Lady Killer of Amalie/Roanburn lines. She was mated to Kool Water and produced our lovely blue bitch, Kourika Klear Star. We sadly lost her at two & a half as her immune system broke down. We were devastated as she had a lovely character & smiled when she saw the lead. She was close to a perfect blue for us, so it was back to the drawing board again. She was mated to Ch Roanburn Black is Back at Zolkhan & produced her blue son Kourika Coast Guard at Bahatiview Her mother, Kourika Lady Killer, was mated to Ch Roanburn Simply Red & produced in his first litter Kourika Kool Kidd & Kourika Kazmika at Roanburn who gained an RCC at eight and a half months. They had a very successful puppy career & were so outgoing puppies.

Thanks to my dear friend Gwen Hartley (Roanburn), sadly now passed away, Lady Killers Tri daughter Kourika Kiss Me, by Kool Water was also mated to Ch Roanburn Simply Red & Kourika Koffee Kreme, a sable/white bitch who go back to all above. We decided we needed some sable blood to bring into our line, but I had not given up on our true love, blues & tris.

I took Kourika Kiss me, Kool Waters daughter to Deborah Finneys, Camanna Coast to Coast at Bahatiview a sweet natured boy who was by a Lynaire dog to keep the colour and this produced Kourika Karazmatic 3 RCCS. Her colour & movement were a joy to behold. I took her to CH Erjon Ebony Byron for some old blood , a dog who had a lovely eye & expression, this produced our blue bitch Kourika Kleopatra & her brother Kourika Klear Konnection who had a beautiful colour ,bone & substance and who in turn produced Kourika Koconut Kream to a tri bitch Kola Kube coming down from our sable & blue line.

I was concentrating on blue breeding more at this point & I saw a photo of a lovely Tri Dog pup Murphy owned by Di Ware. **Willowdene Double or Quits at Wassail.**



After speaking to her when she was in Ireland, she said it would be nice to show him in the UK & I said that I would as I liked the look of him. After bringing him to Scotland I just loved his free flowing movement & head & expression that reminded me of CH Mantika in type & thought he could be very useful with his breeding to use on the blue bitches I had at the time & so I asked Di if she would sell me him which she did & I will always be grateful that she let this boy come here. He has given me so much pleasure in & out of the ring & when the late Jimmy Tait gave him his first RCC at 11 Months I was so honoured. Jimmy said he thought he had a lot of promise ,sadly he never got to see him being made up but it's a memory I will never forget & he has thrown some lovely typy pups with super temperaments to the small amount of outcross bitches he has had. I have mated him to all my blue bitches;



Karazmatic produced the lovely Kourika Krushed Krystal at Eximer, Kleopatra produced **Ch Kourika Karrizma** & Koconut Kream produced Kourika Kandita again her shape & colour is what I look for in a blue & has done so well for me & his blue daughter Ronansprey Rumour Has it for Terri Brand.

I purchased a sable bitch pup from Karen Johnstone Geosamka Has To Be at Kourika, Hannah, who carries a lot of old lines back through Sea Dreamers & Riverside Song. she has matured nicely & keeps me active in and out of the ring. Mated to Double or Quits she produced **Kourika Kover Girl.**



I haven't mentioned all the dogs & bitches that we have had & used over the years who have influenced the kennel in one way or another not enough space but so many different scenarios over almost 40 years that give you the experience of a lifetime in our breed.

It has been a privilege to hand out CC'S in dogs & bitches in the UK & I have been fortunate to have judged in Belgium, Germany, Russia, England and Ireland & Scotland. It has been a wonderful lifetime journey & have been lucky to have had some success & made so many close friends, shared the laughs, beers & tears along the way.

Showing & breeding has been curtailed a bit now but judging still gives me great pleasure & after having assessed a dog & watched his movement & looking over & getting goose bumps down my back is still the best feeling in the world.

I know some of us in our tender years go on about dogs from the 70's, 80's & 90's but these were great dogs bred in the purple by breeders who were or had done their apprenticeship & spent many years of hard work & breeding learning pedigrees & knowing a lot of the dogs good & bad points & making mistakes & learning from them to produce these dogs; without sounding negative many of their offspring went abroad to their benefit & all credit to the breeders abroad who have had success with these lines but now sadly in the UK we don't seem to have as many breeders breeding & keeping especially male dogs who have the bloodlines & quality needed

to keep it going but a lot of dogs are being imported not that I'm against that at all as many carry the old lines from UK but as long as thought & planning & homework goes into it & as we all know they don't all make it. Saddens & worries me that we don't have as many young people interested here now, as that is the future, why I don't really know could be many things it would seem that in other countries there is more younger male & female people active in the breed it would be sad if all the work & dedication our forebearers were to be lost to a degree. Time will tell no doubt.

It has been a long apprenticeship, and it still continues to this day. If any young or older person was to ask for advice or help I would be more than willing to help and keep the breed I love so much going forward. Hopefully I will have left something to give the future breeders of this wonderful breed, the Rough Collie.

I would like to say to old & new breeders, no dog is perfect or human either as the song says, 'have a little patience'. To everybody too many to mention I thank you all & to the Rough Collie for the privilege of letting me be part of its history.

### The Kourika Story (Robin Blaikie)

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