

The Lees Blue Merle Line

Many years ago I promised myself I would one day own a blue merle Cardigan Welsh Corgi. They weren't very easy to find in those days, but at a show one day I saw a lovely blue merle bitch puppy of about nine months old that I really fell for. She was being shown by her breeder Mr Eddie Young. To cut a long story short I was eventually able to purchase her – and so Rhiwelli Blue Ray came to join the 'Lees' as my foundation bitch. Five generations on, the line is still producing champions and other big winners.



Lees Cockade

Blue Ray was a lovely bitch, good colour, beautiful head, ideal size and sweet temperament, but she wasn't very keen on shows. She much preferred rounding up the local cows and hunting rabbits.

However she put up with shows long enough to gain her championship and then returned to a country life and as a brood bitch at which she really excelled. She had several beautiful litters to different dogs.

Most of her puppies went as pets, which was really a waste, but there wasn't a great demand for Cardigans then. But two lovely tricolour dogs went abroad to Sweden (Lees Black Cloud) and Holland (Lees Black Berry) and they had quite a good influence on the breed in those countries.

I kept a blue merle bitch from one of the litters: Lees Blue Diamond.

I bred from Blue Diamond only twice and from her second litter, when she was six, I kept two blue merle bitches: Lees Blue Chevron and Lees Blue Emblem.

They are now 10 years old and have finished breeding, but they bred some really lovely Cardigans and luckily several of their progeny have gone to breeders who are keeping the line going.

A lovely blue merle bitch went to Sarah Taylor of the Bymil Kennels. She became Ch. Lees Blue Rose of Bymil and she in turn produced Ch. Bymil Silver Lining, Bymil Blue Bell of Gorthleck, who has two Challenges, and Bymil Blue Thorn who has done a lot of winning.

Bymil Blue Bell has bred Gorthleck Blue Danube who has won a Challenge and four Reserve Challenges to date and Am. Ch. Gorthleck Fly High.

A black and white brindle-point bitch (Lees Jet) went to Aileen Speding of Antoc Collie fame and she was mated to a red dog and has bred some lovely red brindles of which 'Antoc Cinnabar' is a champion and she has bred on in the next generation some big winners including Challenge Certificate winners.

Other kennels that have sons or daughters of Chevron and Emblem are : Margo Parsons (Deavitte Kennels), who has Lees Blue Moon, a big winner with one Challenge Certificate, she has a super daughter just old enough to be shown and at her first show won Best Bitch !

Mrs Joy Tonkyn of Beckrow Kennels has Lees Blue Iris. She was not shown, but is a beloved pet and has produced an excellent litter due to hit the show ring this year. Sandra Tonkyn had a son of Chevron who has sired some good winners. I myself kept Lees Cockade who was Leading Stud Dog in 1987.

Unfortunately there are very few blue-bred tricolour stud dogs to mate to the blue bitches just now, so we have to use black and white dogs which mostly have a lot of brindle breeding in them, so most of the tricolours that come from these litters are brindle point.

The blues are still coming, quite good colours in most cases, but we shall have to watch that we don't lose our good colour merles.

However, there are still plenty of good blue merles about and more breeders seem interested in them, so I feel their future is safe.

I think Blue Ray will go down in the breed's history as one of the pillars of the breed.



Pat Curties with some Blue merle pups.

Pat L. Curties – Lees Kennels

Published in the New Zealand Kennel Gazette, April 1989.