

OBITUARY FOR JAMES S. F. SMITH (REDDINS IRISH SETTERS)

03/04/1937 - 29/04/2016 - By Priscilla Smith

It is with a very heavy heart that I write to say that Jim lost his fight for life on Tuesday 29th March following major surgery. I am now having to come to terms with the loss of my darling man. I am no wordsmith but Jim wrote many obituaries for others so I felt that I should try and do the same for him.

James Stanley Frederick Smith was born in Cairo on the 3rd April 1937. He came back to England in 1944 when British Nationals were evacuated from Egypt because Rommel was getting very near to Cairo. The Smith family eventually settled in West Ewell in Surrey and he attended St. Benedicts School in Ealing. He studied to become an Architect at Kingston School of Architecture in Surrey. After qualifying he worked for a large International practice in London where he became an Associate Partner. Jim and I first met when I was about 16 years old and he was 18 years old. We were just part of a group of youngsters that used to meet in Epsom (usually in the pub of which there were many in Epsom). By the time Jim and I started to go out together I had left college and was working as a secretary in London but he was still a Student. We married in 1964 as many of you will know as we celebrated our Golden Wedding two years ago.

Our first house was a converted stable block in Crawley Down in West Sussex. Strictly speaking it was half a Coach house /stable block. Very nice Victorian brickwork and the owners had converted half of it and sold the other half to us. Jim being an Architect knew exactly what he wanted to do with it and we spent every weekend working and camping down there until we got married. We lived there for ten years.

Living with Jim was never dull. He was quite a complex character, full of ideas and schemes and held forthright opinions particularly on his beloved breed the Irish Setter which were always expressed with great passion. He had a wonderful sense of humour which was always lurking. He played a lot of tennis when he was young and latterly badminton when he was working in London. On one of these occasions his achilles tendon snapped. However he got himself home from Swiss Cottage on the train, then drove the car from the railway station and arrived home saying "I think there is something wrong". I took him to the doctor the following morning and he sent him straight to A & E. He had it operated on and stitched and came out with a plaster cast up to the top of his thigh. (Even he couldn't drive with that!) We had a Mini at the time so he had to sit in the back with the seat down and the leg on top. With the abuse I got from the back and the instructions on how to drive he came pretty close to being dumped in the lane! So as you can see he did not take kindly to being thwarted. He had that cast on for 6 weeks! Coming from a Racing Town we had been brought up with horse racing in the blood so to speak, so we had many a day attending race meetings.

In 1972 we decided to get a dog of our own. We already had a cat but once I had stopped working in London (I was able to work from home) a dog became possible. Luckily he agreed to my wish for an Irish Setter, so that was the start of our love affair with the "Irish". In 1974 we moved to South Reddins (hence the affix) which had twelve acres of land and stables. After a visit to Crufts we decided to have a litter of puppies so approached Mrs James with a view to using one of their dogs at stud. After the trip to Crufts and the trip to Wendover we decided to have a go at showing and the rest is history. We are both quite competitive and do not do things by halves so after about three years we decided to try and establish our own kennel and brought in Sorrel of Andana and Scotswood Maeve to add to our original Wendover based bitch and our Marrona Midwinter dog and

these lines were the basis of our kennel "Reddins". Dog showing is a rather an all consuming hobby so our other interests took rather a back seat, particularly going racing. By and large I think the showing ended up cheaper than the racing (as there is no such thing as a poor bookmaker!) but not necessarily as exciting except for Crufts 1989 when "Ferdy" won the Gundog Group. We had a lot of success during those years and were Top Breeders 6 times.



Sh. Ch. Reddins Ferdinand

Jim was due to judge the Joint Breeds Championship Show this June hosted by the ISAE and he did a CV which I enclose here. - see below

In the 1980's we bought a stone cottage with 12 acres of land in Argyll Scotland and every year took all the dogs in a special trailer we had made up, to Scotland. We used to go up twice a year and the dogs lived in the stone barn.



In the mid 1990's we moved further up the farm track to the house we live in now and it became just "Reddins".

Quite simply Jim was unique with his own blend of characteristics. He was a very compassionate man. He would write cards or letters to people if he knew they were having a hard time. He never discussed it with me and then someone would come up to me at a show and thank me for the card.

He had a very strong sense of humour and we had a lot of laughs and good times with our friends in dogs. He liked informality. When he gave up work in London the suits and ties were consigned to the back of the cupboard. He liked talking so all these modern electronic ways of communicating did not suit him. When he had a topic he wanted or needed to write about it just flowed from the pen and I had to do the typing! He loved music mostly classical but was a big fan of Amy Winehouse. He was very knowledgeable about art because of his training as an Architect. He had quite a short fuse especially later in life, mainly due to the frustrations of life as you get older. He liked an argument, or as he and I would say "a discussion". He would say "black" was "white" if it promoted a bit of a banter. When we became engaged our friends couldn't believe it because we always argued, but as we told them "this is not an argument this is a discussion if you want an argument we'll give you one!" We had a wonderful marriage and shared our lives very much together. We were rarely apart for those 52 years and were very happy. Of course I shall miss him dreadfully but I am so thankful that he is no longer having to suffer the pain and discomfort. Although physically he is no longer here he is very much present everywhere I look around me, he is in my head and my memory and will always be a part of me. My love for him had no bounds.



C.V. FOR JAMES S. F. SMITH (REDDINS)

Priscilla and I had our first Irish setter in 1972 "Redbirch Romance". Holly was from a mating between "Wendover Grandee" and "Gaye of Redbirch" (who was a daughter of Sh. Ch. Wendover Ballymoss) and so Wendover based. That was the introduction to the show world and Irish setters. I was an architect by profession and was an associate partner of a London based International firm. We married 53 years ago and have only ever kept "Irish". Our kennel was very much a combined interest together based upon our love of this breed. Even in early years as we planned our life and developed our home in rural East Sussex it centred around "the dogs". We were not a commercial kennel and maintained our interest in breeding - only breeding to try to enhance and solidify our lines.

In our time we have on KC records against our affix 85 CC winners and 57 RCC winners, included amongst which are eight Sh. Ch's, (one of which was a full Champion). Five of which were owned by us and rather remarkably (and little known) a USA and Mexican champion, plus 2 further Irish Champions. Not forgetting those who achieved high honours in single and double CC's. We were delighted to have bred 4 Sh. Ch's for other owners, some of whom went on to establish their own lines and now award CC's in this breed. However, uppermost is the life and happiness we brought to families and their dogs, wonderful owners (not involved in showing) who loved and cherished their

dogs. We always took great trouble and care in homing our puppies which almost without exception turned out a success.

My first appointment awarding tickets was in 1986 (SWEKA) and I have awarded CC's on 13 occasions since. I have been a member of the Kennel Club for 35 years since 1981. I served as ISBC Chairman and Vice Chairman and committee member of the S. of E. Irish setter Club for many years not long after its inception. For some years I was the Breed Correspondent for Dog World. Our most illustrious winner was Sh. Ch. Reddins Ferdinand who won 21 CC's, 15 RCC's and four Gundog Groups at Crufts, LKA, WELKS and Richmond. We were proud to have won CC's under judges like Des McGarry, Olga Hampton, Rae Furness, Gwen Broadley and not forgetting Valerie Foss who were highly respected judges in their breeds

Apart from dogs Priscilla and I have a wide range of interests in gardening, theatre, arts and sculpture, politics and music, but running and maintaining our home and dogs keeps us both fairly busy.

I suppose the one instance involving judging which stands out in my mind was in judging dogs for the club (ISAE) in 1990 and awarding Sh. Ch. Kerryfair Night Fever his 26th CC and final CC at the remarkable age of 11 years. I had given him a CC previously and knew his age and birth date. Sandra Chorley (his owner) only brought him under me as a "Veteran" because it was a breed club. He earned and won his CC and BOB that day - a very special dog and a special memory for me.