**John Willetts ( Tanworth Airedales ) 04/07/1938-02/01/2017**

It is with heavy heart that I write this obituary of my good friend John.B.Willetts ( Tanworth Airedale Terriers ). Who died unexpectedly at his own home.

On leaving Art college in Sutton, as a graphic designer, John went to work for George Parks Designs in his printing business, and later in his fathers business. While at college he made friends with Collin Duckitt but they went their separate ways until a few years later when Collin joined George Parks and then on to Johns dads firm of Screen printers.

They found that they both had a passion for motor racing, Colin with hill climbing and John with track racing.

As the years went by John had seen an Airedale Terrier and fancied getting one when his beloved English Bulldog Died.

He contacted a Breeder ( Barbara & John Holland Tanworth Airedales ) and acquired his first Airedale Bitch (Tanworth Pins & Needles ) Barbara persuaded him to show her so she took him under her wing and taught him to trim. Although he had many dogs with Junior Warrants he never made a champion.

During the late 80’s Colin and John decided to buy a house together and bought Barbara’s which had kennels, which allowed for the breeding and showing to take off and where they stayed until the end.

We met John when we started showing our Daisy in 1991 and he was showing Shan. One show we would win, the next John would win . At the Midland Counties Airedale Terrier Club Garden party, John came up to me and said if i needed any help then he would like to help and so our friendship grew. Our first Champion (CH Jaideld Gypsy Girl JW ) was bred, using John’s Dog Quaintway’s Uchelwr of Tanworth.

Over the years we went to shows together and John got as much enjoyment seeing me take best in shows, Best of Breeds and make up Champions from using his stud dogs , Later I would handle his dogs for him.

I will always fondly remember the first time we went to show at SKC and rented a Caravan. In the morning before heading off to the show, we took Roxy for a walk to relieve herself. On spotting a Donkey, her tail went up and she went stiff. The Donkey bayed and Roxy slipped the lead and she ran off with tail tucked beneath her. We chased her for 20 minutes before we caught her. We almost missed the show but were granted the CC which made her up so not a bad day in the end.

As the 90’s progressed we had a combination breeding plan where John would keep a Bitch or a Dog from my litters for breeding stock, while I Kept the pick of the litter as the show dog.

For many hours we would spend eating , drinking ( sometimes to much ) and talking dogs, motor racing and boxing, at their house, while Colin entertained Alaine.( with Gin and IT!! LOL )

John was, for many, years the Treasurer of Midland Counties Airedale Terrier Club and then, in his last year, he gave this up to become President .

John loved to cook and was very good at it and we had some very nice meals there.

He Also enjoyed Holiday’s looking at Churches and fell in love with Cumbria where he always planned to move to.

One thing I will put right is many in the Airedale ring thought him and Colin were partners this is not so, it was just that they did not feel the need for female company to enhance and complicate there life.

During his years racing with his father he managed to buy a works Austin-Healey Sebring Sprite race car of which only 3 were built. This one was raced by Sir Sterling Moss at Sebring in America in 1960 a 12 hour endurance race which he won .

Only 1 survives today and that is Johns, which was the subject of the channel 4 show, Car SOS where it was restored and is being shown at classic car shows around the country.

There are many other achievements that John gained throughout his life and I will miss the stories and the friendship of MY friend John. R.I.P Mate.

Martin Lockett