**The Trefoil Family Gathering – An AICSS ‘Back to Roots’ Experience**

Every Rough Collie and Smooth Collie of pedigree can be traced, through the male tail line, back to one dog. He is recorded in Volume 2 of the Stud Book as a “Rough Coated Colley/Sheepdog” named Trefoil – bred by Sewallis Shirley in March 1873.

One month after Trefoil’s birth, Sewallis Shirley and some other gentlemen founded the Kennel Club London. Trefoil however had been born at the Shirley Estate in Lough Fea, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, Ireland.

The members of the All Ireland Collie and Sheepdog Society (AICSS) have always been extremely proud of the Irish ancestry of the Rough Collie. We learned of this from the late Iris Combe, who extensively researched Trefoil and traced pedigrees back to this great dog. Iris interviewed Sewallis Shirley’s grandson, Major John Shirley, for her article “The Irish Ancestry of the Rough Collie”.

One of our honorary life members, Paul Battigan, came up with the idea of a family gathering for collies and told the club that the Shirley family were still in residence in Lough Fea house. With the help and gracious welcome of Philip Shirley, great grandson of Sewallis, the AICSS, with support from the Smooth Collie Club of Ireland, organised an event which will go down in the history of our beautiful breeds.

On 23rd September 2018 - 145 years after Trefoil’s birth – his ancestors gathered at his birthplace - to celebrate the legacy of this great dog. Paul Battigan had traced the pedigrees for all who attended – the average collie being 43 generations descended from Trefoil.

We walked our collies around the estate, had a picnic and enjoyed each other’s company at this non-competitive event. The photographer Noel Beggs took group shots in front of the house. Philip Shirley and his aunt joined us and she can be seen in the photographs holding a family picture of her grandfather – Trefoil’s breeder, Sewallis Shirley.

Maureen Timmins

All Ireland Collie & Sheepdog Society