**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS SINCE THE REINTRODUCTION OF SCHIPPERKES INTO NEW ZEALAND.**

**Although it has been well researched that the first Schipperkes arrived in New Zealand in 1907 when a breeding pair were shipped to Christchurch for Dr Percy Hammersley, unfortunately he was not successful in his efforts to breed from them and so the breed died out.**

**Later, in 1922, a Scottish couple from Ayrshire, Mr and Mrs Robert Marshall, migrated to New Zealand bringing several of their Schipperkes with them. They settled in the Mangere area of Auckland and became active in the dog club fraternity for a number of years during which Mr Marshall started to rebel against the New Zealand Kennel Club administration. As a result of their behaviour the Executive Council banished the Marshalls and all their dogs were deregistered in 1932. They continued to breed Schipperkes which were unregistered until they finally relented and apologised for their transgressions in 1949. The catalyst for their decision to relent was the marriage of their only daughter and their desire to give her a registered pedigree Schipperke puppy as a wedding present from their final litter. Unfortunately the damage had been done and it proved too late for the breed to survive as no other person had shown interest in fostering the breed. Due to failing momentum the breed faded into obscurity and by 1960 there were none left in this country.**

**It was a very different story across the Tasman as several breeders in both Victoria and New South Wales were active and the Schipperke was growing in popularity especially during the 1960’s. Many New Zealand judges accepted assignments in Australia and soon became acquainted with the breed. One in particularly, who lived in Christchurch, was so impressed, that when his next door neighbour and fellow Pembroke Welsh Corgi breeder stated he was looking for a new breed, that well known judge, Bryan Giles, had no hesitation in recommending this smart “little black devil” to him. As a result Robert Thompson soon made arrangements to purchase the first of several Schipperkes. The rest is now history as on 1st November 1968 two Schipperkes arrived in New Zealand by air from Sydney and the breed was once again re-established on this soil. Now 50 years later the breed regularly appears in the show ring with success. The most successful has undoubtedly been Sup.Ch.Sanlyn Pickapocket who has been awarded Best in Show on twenty occasions.**

**In the last five decades Schipperkes have been imported from Australia, England, Sweden, America and more recently Canada to extend and improve the gene pool in New Zealand. In return NZ bred Schipperkes have also appeared in the show ring in several countries overseas, predominantly Australia, but more recently Exmoor Mana Magic (Imp NZ), became an American Champion and is now poised to also become a Canadian Champion.**

**The dog world is changing for various reasons, not least being the modern pressures on leisure time and the introduction of legislation that impinges on dog owners freedom of choice. Our breed is no different in respect to most others in that it relies on dedicated breeders for it survival. In the 1970/80 era there was a dozen active breeders of Schipperkes, now there are just two still fostering this unique breed. To ensure its continuance for the next 50 years new breed guardians will need to step forward and take up that role.**

 **Bernard Fears**