



BREED FEATURE

TIBETAN TERRIER



By **ANDREW BRACE (UK)**

A few years ago a dog called Fabulous Willy won Best in Show at Crufts, the world's most famous dog show. In less than sixty years the Tibetan Terrier has gone a long way since a shaggy dog was found wandering in Liverpool docks and changed the breed for ever

HISTORY

Tibetan Terriers originated in "The Lost Valley" of their native land, an area that was rather inaccessible, and where the little shaggy dogs were considered to bring good luck to those who owned them. Occasionally visitors were given a dog to accompany them on their homeward journey, but because of the "good luck" connotations, such dogs were never sold on.

The breed in Britain began with Dr Agnes Greig who first met the Tibetan Terrier when working in India. Having successfully treated a member of a Tibetan family, Dr Greig was offered a puppy from a litter that they had bred from their bitch, Lily, and so a gold and white bitch named Bunti joined the Doctor. In due course Bunti was mated to a dog owned by some friends of Dr Greig's called Rajah and so in 1924 the first litter of "Tibetan Terriers" was born in India. Two years later Dr Greig returned to England with three of the breed and she began establishing her Lamleh kennel. In 1930 a panel of Indian judges agreed that Dr Greig's dogs were indeed a distinct breed and should be known as Tibetan Terriers; the British Kennel Club followed their lead and recognised the breed in 1931. The breed was granted Challenge Certificates in 1938.

The breed suffered an understandable decline in the Second World War but began to revive with new enthusiasts who had brought further dogs in from India.

The little dog that was found wandering in Liverpool by John Downey, already an enthusiast of the breed with his wife Connie, was registered as a Tibetan Terrier hav-

ing been studied by experts and was called Trojan Kynos.

In the coming years there was to be quite a battle between Dr Greig and the Downeys over the breed, as Dr Greig was not impressed when what she claimed was an "impure" dog had been used on her Lamleh-bred stock. She subsequently continued to export dogs all over the world, but refused thereafter to sell to British breeders.

The Downeys attempted to fix type in their Luneville dogs, and presented them in the show ring in a much more sophisticated manner than the rather more rustic looking Lamleh dogs of Dr Greig.

With the passage of time, and the death of the original pioneer breeders the breed has settled down to a much more consistent type, though variations will still be found, and the breed in Britain has been boosted by several imports from Europe, Scandinavia and the USA.

It is now a very popular breed in both the home and show ring, capable of taking on the very best of other breeds as was proved at Crufts this year.

The long coat of the TT requires a certain amount of care if the dog is to remain healthy and happy. It does not shed as such, but loses old coat. It is imperative that dead coat is removed as this can cause mats that can lead to skin trouble if left unattended.

Special care should be taken with the adolescent TT coat as this is when the adult double coat begins to develop, and daily grooming is advisable to aid its establishment. TTs do not develop the doggy odour of some coated breeds and they seem to be ideal for owners that have proved allergic to dogs and cats.

Grooming the TT, whether it is a show dog or companion, should always be thorough, and special care should be given to the areas around the eyes, ears, and genitals. TTs should always be checked for any debris they may have collected on a walk or run, and this must be brushed out immediately as it can

soon become embedded in the coat and cause troublesome mats all too soon.

Excess hair should be judiciously trimmed from under the pads of the feet and around the genitals and anus in the interest of hygiene.

Show grooming is always easier if tackled with the aid of fine mist grooming spray, the coat being brushed through with a pin brush in layers.

This breed was developed high in the mountains of Tibet where it needed to be hardy and rugged. Although the breed's forebears may have been used as herding dogs, they were mainly companion watch dogs for the monks. They have grown up alongside humans for many years and as such are very sociable animals.

They may be a little shy initially when confronted with strangers, but generally are outgoing, gregarious dogs and will happily coexist with other animals and all ages of humans. Their lifestyle may be quite sedentary if that is their owner's choice, but can equally enjoy any amount of activity in a more energetic family. The Tibetan Terrier has acute hearing and despite the fall of coat over its eyes can see extremely well. They are very functional watch dogs and will alert their owners to the impending arrival of guests long before the door bell rings. They can be quite vocal when excited.

They are more trainable than some of the oriental breeds, but training should always be consistent and carried out with kindness and patience.

Whilst the TT is generally healthy and long-lived there are some hereditary problems present in the breed such as hip dysplasia, progressive retinal atrophy and lens luxation. Responsible breeders screen their breeding stock for such conditions.

Its history is such that the breed could survive in all weathers and so only those dogs of a hardy constitution survived, consequently the Tibetan Terrier frequently lives well into its teens and generally has little cause to visit the vet.

The most important aspect of caring for the TT is regular grooming, as the coat can soon become matted and unmanageable and this may result in the need to clip off the coat, thus robbing the breed of its crowning glory, and certainly offending its dignity.

There can be no denying that the Tibetan Terrier, since its arrival in the UK, has seen some dramatic changes internationally. Those of us who can go far enough back can remember Dr Greig's Lamleh dogs and the first impression was of a rugged, sturdy "doggy" dog, sound, solid and free of exaggeration. The breed standard has always centred around moderation and this surely has to be one of the easiest virtues to breed for.

With the advent of much more sophisticated presentation of coats and the increased love affair with exhibitors and "flash and dash" the Tibetan Terrier has, I believe, become one of the main victims. It could be argued that Ch Dokham Cavaradossi of Tintavon (who was campaigned by a very young Paul Stanton long before he left his native UK for Sweden, where he continued a successful showing and breeding campaign, later to become one Sweden's busiest all-rounder judges) and Ch Dokham La Calisto (who was shown by Ken and Betty Rawlings whose Antarctica Shih Tzus were one of the major strongholds of the breed) marked a turning point in the breed's grooming for the show ring. Both Paul and the Rawlings set a new level of presentation for the TT and it was Cavaradossi who became the breed's first all-breeds BIS winner in the UK.

The breed standard has not changed markedly and interestingly recent years have seen a huge influx of imports in the breed, notably from the USA, Europe and Scandinavia. It is both difficult and dangerous to generalise and link any particular "type" to a dog based purely on its passport as I have seen a variety of dogs from these countries and others that slot neatly into a number of different stamps.

The opening "general appear-
Continued on page 58

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BREED FEATURE TIBETAN TERRIER



The Breed Standard

GENERAL APPEARANCE:

Sturdy, medium sized, long haired, generally square outline. Balanced, without exaggeration.

CHARACTERISTICS:

Lively, good natured. Loyal companion dog with many engaging ways.

TEMPERAMENT:

Outgoing, alert, intelligent and game; neither fierce nor pugnacious. Sparing of affection to strangers.

HEAD AND SKULL:

Skull of medium length, neither broad nor coarse, narrowing slightly from ear to eye, neither domed nor absolutely flat between ears. Zygomatic arch curved, but not overdeveloped so as to bulge. Marked stop in front of eyes but not exaggerated. Muzzle strong; well developed lower jaw. Length from eye to tip of nose equal to length from eye to occiput. Nose black. Head well furnished with long hair, falling forward but not affecting the dog's ability to see. Lower jaw carrying small, but not exaggerated amount of beard. In all giving a resolute expression.

EYES: Large, round, dark brown, neither prominent nor sunken; set fairly wide apart. Eye rims black.

EARS: Pendant, carried not too close to head. V-shaped, not too large, set fairly high on the side of the skull, heavily feathered.

MOUTH: Scissor or reverse scissor bite. Incisors set in a slight curve, evenly spaced and set perpendicular to jaw. Full dentition desirable.

NECK: Strong, muscular, medium length, allowing head to be carried above level of back and giving overall balanced appearance. Flowing into well placed shoulders.

FOREQUARTERS: Heavily furnished. Shoulders well laid, with good length and slope of upper arm. Legs straight and parallel; pasterns slightly sloping.

BODY: Well muscled, compact and powerful. Length from point of shoulder to root of tail equal to height at withers. Fair spring of rib with depth of brisket to elbow. Ribbed well back. Top line level, loin short, slightly arched; croup level.

HINDQUARTERS: Heavily furnished, well muscled. Well bent stifles and low set hocks giving level topline and drive.

FEET: Large, round, heavily furnished with hair between toes and pads. Standing well down on pads; no arch in feet.

TAIL: Medium length, set on fairly high and carried in a gay curl over back. Very well feathered. Kink near tip often occurring and permissible.

GAIT/MOVEMENT: Smooth, effortless stride with good reach and powerful drive. When walking or trotting hind legs should track neither inside nor outside the front legs.

COAT: Double coat. Undercoat fine and woolly. Top coat profuse, fine but neither silky nor woolly; long; either straight or waved but not curly.

COLOUR: White, golden, cream, grey or smoke, black, parti-colour and tri-colours; in fact any colour except chocolate or liver permissible.

SIZES: Height: Dogs 36-41 cms (14-16 ins) at shoulder
Bitches slightly smaller

FAULTS: Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

NOTES:

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

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Bring on ...2016



BREED FEATURE TIBETAN TERRIER



Breeder Interview

Q.1. How long have you been breeding Tibetan Terriers?

A.1. After acquiring our first two adult Tibetan Terriers early 2010, the first litter arrived in mid 2011.

Why are they our chosen breed?

Having reached the pinnacle of success in Afghan Hounds (& getting older), we were searching for another breed. Following consideration of a number of smaller breeds, we were lucky to come across Tibetan Terriers, where we were able to purchase quality dogs from the English kennel of Ken Sinclair, who is a long standing & most successful breeder/exhibitor in the breed including Best in Show at Crufts in 2007. Ken has proved to be a great mentor.

Q.2. With the influx of imports over recent times, and numbers on the increase in the ring, the

breed appears to be thriving - is there any one point you feel Tibetan Terriers breeders should be working towards?

A.2. Breeders should be looking to maintain consistency of type & size within the breed & attempting to achieve success at group & in show level.

“ Research the breed, talk to owners & breeders, visit breeders, obtain evidence of DNA health testing, be aware of coat care ”

Q.3. Could you list in order of priority the 5 most important points you think a judge should look for in the Tibetan Terrier?

A.3. 1. Type
2. Breed Characteristics (Feet,

Ears, Zygomatic arch, Expression)
3. Sturdy, Generally Square, Sound
4. Temperament
5. Coat & Presentation

Q.4. If you were able to add a sentence to the Tibetan Terrier breed standard what would it be?

A.4. Forechest not too wide, moderately filled. Front of the sternum projecting slightly further forward than the point of shoulder.

Q.5. Does the Tibetan Terrier have any health problems?

A.5. In earlier times the breed was susceptible to hereditary eye conditions, however, with the advent of DNA testing, responsible breeders have been able to eliminate animals affected by these conditions.

Dedicated breeders also hip score breeding stock for Hip Dysplasia, but this does not appear to be a serious problem within the breed.



Q.6. What would your advice be to a potential puppy buyer when looking for a Tibetan Terrier?

A.6. Research the breed, talk to owners & breeders, visit breeders, obtain evidence of DNA health testing, be aware of coat care.

Meet Tibetan Terriers to ensure the sometimes exuberant & often mischievous temperament is suitable for your lifestyle.

**Louise Hickie
Gengala Kennels**



BREED FEATURE TIBETAN TERRIER



Continued from page 51

ance" clause of the Standard begins with the word "sturdy" and ends "without exaggeration".

My worry about the breed is that its basic shape seems to be changing and that hairdressing is being given too much importance. It bothers me to see dogs that are too long in body, too long – or short – in neck, overangulated behind, and groomed like Yorkshire Terriers taking top honours and the blame cannot be laid specifically at the foot of either specialist or all rounder judge.

Once you get extremes in the TT you lose the essential look of moderation and perfect balance and it seems to me that several important breed characteristics are all but disappearing. When I last judged the breed in the UK at CC

level the number of reverse scissor bites could be counted on one hand with some fingers to spare. In all the oriental breeds I believe that the firm underjaw and slightly underhung bite contribute hugely to the arrogance of expression.

The other breed point that is fast evaporating is the correct foot. Many of our top winning TTs have tight cat feet of which any Boxer would be proud, but that is not what the Standard calls for, and not what was necessary for the breed to function in its natural habitat. The written description of the ideal TT foot in the standard is graphic and easily understood, yet it would appear that most exhibitors simply ignore this aspect of the dog.

Coat texture also seems to be changing and the old adage of "the more the better" seems to be kicking in. The TT coat should enhance

its basic frame and shape but not mask it. Sadly this is not always the case.

Size has always been variable but I feel that today far too often dogs that are well within the Standard tend to be overlooked in favour of dogs that are clearly oversized. In the present climate when the British Kennel Club is placing great emphasis on judging to avoid extremes and exaggeration, and dogs being "fit for function", we all need to study our Standards, assess the dogs in front of us and try our best to get back to basics and be faithful to the breed's ideal.

To illustrate how I see the breed I have chosen four photographs of Tibetan Terriers that I have judged in recent years and which represent how I interpret type and balance. They may vary in details but I believe the basic stamp is the same,

bearing in mind that the dogs are of different ages. The photographs also prove that you have to look beyond coat and presentation to see the real dog within.

Without identifying any of the dogs individually, I will tell you that one is bred in Finland, one in Germany, one in the UK and one in the USA. I wonder if you can work out which is which?

For the breed to go forward and yet remain faithful to the Standard, I think it is vital for breeders, exhibitors and judges alike to forget the brushes and blow dryers for a while, look at the dogs beneath and attempt to preserve that rugged little dog that is a joy to behold when it is correctly constructed, correctly balanced and moves with the marvellous freedom and fluidity that a dog so made has to.

Andrew Brace

