

# Welcome

## to the BCCA's **Breed Study Seminar** and **Hands-On Workshop**

Presented by approved BCCA Breed Mentors

We hope you find the seminar worthwhile and come away with some new or refined knowledge and appreciations of our amazing breed.

The seminar will include

- History of the breed
- In-depth study of the breed standard using the Illustrated Standard, a panel of mentors and excellent examples of the breed
- Question and answer period
- Hands-on opportunity

Please find with your learning packet

- BCCA Breed Study booklet
- BCCA Illustrated Standard
- DVD with the BCCA Breed Study (approved August, 2014 by BCCA board)
- Hands-On Breed Evaluation Form (judges attending must submit to presenters)

Thank you for coming!





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List of Approved BCCA Breed Mentors can be found at

<http://beardedcollieclub.us/activities/conformation/breeder-mentors/>

Hands-On Workshop Breed Evaluation Form *(when offered)*

The Bearded Collie Club of America's Illustrated Standard

DVD with PowerPoint Breed Study Guide





# History

Sometimes known as the Highland Collie, the Mountain Collie, or the Hairy Mou'ed Collie, the Bearded Collie is one of Britain's oldest breeds. While some have theorized that the Beardie was around to greet the Romans when they first invaded Britain, the current theory is that like most shaggy haired herding dogs, the Bearded Collie descends from the Magyar Komondor of Central Europe.

As with most breeds not used by the nobility, there are few early records on this humble herdsman's dog. The earliest known pictures of Bearded Collies are a 1771 Gainsborough portrait of the Duke of Buccleigh and a 1772 Reynolds portrait of that peer's wife and daughter accompanied by two dogs. With Reinagle's more easily recognizable Sheepdog published in Taplin's 1803 Sportsman's Cabinet, and a description of the breed published in an 1818 edition of Live Stock Journal, the existence of the breed as we know it is firmly established.

At the end of the Victorian era, Beardies were fairly popular in southern Scotland, both as working and show dogs. When Bearded Collie classes were offered at shows, usually in the area about Peebleshire, they were well supported. However, there was then no official standard, since no breed club existed to establish one and each judge had to adopt his own criteria. The lack of a strong breed club proved quite a misfortune. The local popularity of the breed continued until World War I, during which there were few dog shows. By the 1930's there was no kennel breeding Bearded Collies for show purposes.

That Beardies did not die out rests on their ability as workers and the devotion of the Peebleshire shepherds and drovers to the breed. They are still highly valued as sheepdogs, due to their ability to turn in a good day's work in south Scotland's misty, rainy, and cold climate, and their adeptness on the rough, rocky ground.

After World War II, Mrs. G. O. Willison, owner of the Bothkennar Kennels, saved the Beardie from further chance of extinction when she began to breed them for show purposes. She spearheaded the establishment of the Bearded Collie Club in Britain in 1955. After much travail, in 1959 the Kennel Club in England allowed Bearded Collies to be eligible for Challenge Certificates and championships and the popularity of the breed began to steadily increase.

Bearded Collies were introduced into the United States in the late 1950's, but none of these dogs were bred. It wasn't until 1967 that the first litter of Bearded Collies was born in this country. By July 1969, there was enough interest for the Bearded Collie Club of America to be founded.

The breed became eligible to be shown in the Miscellaneous Class as of June 1, 1974. The AKC Stud Book was opened to Bearded Collie registrations on October 1, 1976, and the breed became eligible to compete in the Working Group on February 1, 1977. It became a breed of the Herding Group when that group was established, effective January 1983.

*Reprinted from the AKC website - [www.akc.org/breeds/bearded\\_collie/history.cfm](http://www.akc.org/breeds/bearded_collie/history.cfm)*



# Beardie History

*Of MacKensie:*

*He was a mongrel collie of the old Highland type known as "Beardies", and his towzled head, not unlike an extra-shaggy Dandie Dinmont's was set upon a body of immense length, girth and muscle. His manners were atrocious to all except his master, and local report accused him of every canine vice except worrying sheep.*

—John Buchan, *John MacNab*. 1898

So where did the Beardie come from?

James C. Logan, in Suzanne Moorhouse's book, *Talking About Beardies*, says

The safest thing that can be said about the origins of the Bearded Collie is that they are lost in the mists of antiquity. This is a breed which has evolved naturally over the centuries and not one created in the relatively recent past, such as the Golden Retriever and the Doberman, whose pedigrees can be traced right back to the original stud books.

Undeniably, there have been working dogs with shaggy coats and hairy faces in Scotland and in other parts of Europe for many centuries. In Scotland they existed under names such as Scotch Sheepdog, Mountain Collie, Highland Collie, or Hairy Mou'ed Collie, and probably had many equally distinctive names in other lands. Major Logan feels it would be very hard to claim a specific specimen or place as the dog or country of origin for the breed we have come to identify as Beardies.

Many conjectures as to origin are made, however; Mrs. Willison herself, in her book, "The Bearded Collie" traces them back to 1514 when three Polish Sheepdogs were brought to Scotland for Roman herders. Major Logan reminds us, however, that most of our conjectures, including Mrs. Willison's, are sheer speculation and that:

All that can really be said is that over the years a longhaired, hairy-faced dog developed in Scotland, valued for its hardiness and its ability to work sheep and cattle.

Lawrence Levy's early research into the breed supports Major Logan, noting that

The shepherds and drovers of Scotland bred their Beardies to help with their work, and were most concerned with the dog's ability to do the job and stand up to the weather in which they worked. They found a tractable, smart dog with a harsh, longish coat suitable to the adverse working conditions. Over centuries, they stabilized the breed through selective line breeding.

... Over many centuries, the shepherds in each area developed similar looking dogs to do similar jobs under similar conditions. There is a high probability that these different dogs were originally not related until more recent attempts at standardization for showing led to some interbreeding...

It is thought that the Beardie was used in cattle drives from 1707 through the early 1880s, driving cattle from North and West Highlands to market. Oral histories recount that Beardies were used in these drives, although they were particularly valued as workers once the cattle had reached market.

The Beardie was evident in art as early as 1771, when Gainsborough painted the Duke of Buccleuch with his dog—a dog that greatly resembled a Bearded Collie as we know it. Several years later the same dog appeared with the Duchess in a painting by Reynolds. Through the years, the Beardie reappeared in art, in Reinagle's 1804 painting of "The Shepherd's Dog" and Herring's "Bearded Collie and Hound" in 1855.

Proceeding to the comfort and relative certitude of written history, in 1891 D.J. Thomson Gray wrote the book, *The Dogs of Scotland*. Here, he referred to the Bearded Collie by name. He described the dog as

A big, rough, 'tousy' looking tyke, with a coat not unlike a doormat, the texture of the hair hard and fibry, and the ears hanging close to the head.

Gray further states that at the time the Bearded Collie was not common in Scotland, but neither was it particularly scarce—there were many entrants at dog shows in Glasgow and other West Country shows. The first show at which the breed was classified, however, is thought to be the 1897 Edinburgh Show of the Scottish Kennel Club. In that show a separate class was provided for working dogs—where the entry was confined to shepherds and drovers.

In 1898, Mrs. Hall Walker, using information from Beardie enthusiast and judge H. Panmure Gordon, wrote an article for *Our Dogs* which codified the standard for the Bearded Collie, refining and clarifying one offered earlier by Gray. Mrs. Walker's "standard" has remained, with few alterations, relatively intact in current standards in England and abroad to this day.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Beardies continued to be shown, though in very limited numbers, in Scotland. A move toward a breed club and Kennel Club registration was curtailed by the outbreak of the first World War in 1914. By 1923, following the war, registration efforts had resumed and three dogs made five entries at the Edinburgh show. Best of Breed was Ninewells Nell, who was to become dam of Mrs. Cameron Miller's well-known dog, Balmacneil Jock.

With Mrs. Miller, we come to more familiar ground. Mrs. Miller's dogs have been mentioned in many books that chronicle the history of the Beardie. Major Logan states that though Mrs. Miller made a great effort to promote the breed as a showdog—registering 55 dogs and breeding ten litters between 1929 and 1934—by 1936 the Beardie classification had been discontinued for the Edinburgh shows. Mr. Logan postulates that difficulties in competing with Mrs. Miller's dogs and her unwillingness to part with breeding stock were major influences in thwarting her effort to reinforce the Beardie's place in the show ring. Then, another World War brought further turmoil and discontinuity to breeding efforts,

and the last Beardie for nearly nine years was registered in 1938. Major Logan writes:

Although Bearded Collies had ceased to be registered, they had by no means become extinct, nor were they in any danger of doing so. Writing in *Working Dogs Of The World* in 1947 Hubbard describes the breed as almost extinct except in Peeblesshire. In fact, Beardies were at that time to be found, admittedly in small numbers, all over Scotland, and none of the dogs which were to form the foundation of the modern registered breed actually came from Peeblesshire. Hubbard writes that despite the small numbers, the best specimens were to be found working with the flocks instead of parading the exhibition rings, and Beardies are still to be found working today which owe absolutely nothing to the registered breed.

The present era of the Bearded Collie began by happenstance. Mr. Logan recounts:

Mrs. G.O. Willison, of Bothkennar Grange in Middlesex, was interested in training and working Shetland Sheepdogs. In January 1944 she decided that her next dog would be a Shetland Sheepdog of working stock, so she somewhat optimistically booked one from a farmers' agent in Scotland. Fortunately, but scarcely surprisingly, no such Shetland Sheepdog was available, but the agent, showing commendable initiative . . . sent her instead a Bearded Collie puppy which his own dog had recently sired from a bitch owned by a Mr. McKie of Killiecrankie. It was upon this happy accident that the revival of the Bearded Collie as a show breed depended, for Mrs. Willison was captivated by the puppy's temperament, intelligence and working instinct, and she was the very person who had the enthusiasm, persistence and opportunity to undertake the revival of the breed.

And so the breed progressed. That puppy, the now-famous "Jeannie", was approved by the Kennel Club and registered, the first Beardie registration since 1939. Mrs. Willison, seeking a suitable mate for Jeannie, enjoyed a second stroke of amazing good fortune. While strolling on the beach in Brighton, she encountered a Bearded Collie. His owner was about to emigrate and was seeking a home for the dog, which was immediately provided by Mrs. Willison. The dog was subsequently registered by Mrs. Willison as Bailie of Bothkennar.

And thus began the Beardie, or at least thus began the documented history of the modern day show Beardie.

But the Beardie was never a dog whose major role played only in showrings. Through the years, the Beardies maintained their fine working tradition. The shepherd dogs continued to perform the work they were bred to do, unrecognized, and, most often, unregistered. Major Logan recalls:

During the 1970s and early 1980s advertisements regularly appeared in newspapers such as the *Oban Times* for Beardies to work as "hunters" (a term now often replaced by the New Zealand term "huntaways"). These dogs are required to have "plenty noise" and they use their voices to drive the sheep to and from hill grazings. Beardies are, however, quite capable of working in a more orthodox manner.... Nor are Beardies incapable of finer work required for sheepdog trials. In 1984 Mr. Paul Turnbull's dog Blue, working in the North of England but bred in Dumfriesshire, qualified on merit for the International Sheepdog Society Register.

So the Beardie tradition continues, on the bench and in the field. While statistics about herding Beardies in the U.K. are hard to come by, the count for entries at a single U.K. Championship show always exceeds 100 and occasionally exceeds 300 Bearded canines. In fact, the Bearded Collie entry is often one of the largest of any breed at these shows. The Beardie has indeed become a popular show breed in the United Kingdom.

#### NOTE:

*In the UK:* For a breed whose history begins so far back in the annals of time, we have precious little of it committed to paper and human memory. Ancient shepherds in the hills of Scotland, indeed, have appreciated the wisdom and skill of the Bearded Collie and enjoyed their company far longer than modern aficionados either here and abroad. It's amazing to realize that though Crufts recently celebrated 100 years of shows, the first Bearded Collie Challenge Certificate and BOB was awarded to Ch. Beauty Queen of Bothkennar at Crufts as recently as 1959 – hardly the ancient past. After her success at Crufts, Beauty Queen went on to gain two more CCs that year and became the first British Champion.

*Ourside the UK:* In September of 1910 two Beardies were benched at a show in Calgary, Alberta. These two Beardies had been exported by a British breeder and enthusiast, Bailie Dalglish. The second known Bearded Collie export didn't occur until August of 1957, and this was Ambassador of Bothkennar (the only Bothkennar to carry a name beginning with a letter other than "B" – a testimony to the perceived momentous occasion of the introduction of the breed

to "foreign" soil by Mrs. Willison), by Britt out of Bra'Tawny, who was exported to Norway. Several months later, a second export certificate was issued for a Bearded Collie who was being sent to Belgium.

Since that time, Beardies have been exported to South Africa, Australia, Europe, North and South America, and other, remoter corners of the globe. Our particular interest, on this our 25th Anniversary of the BCCA, concerns the Beardie's discovery of the New World.

A review of American Beardie history would be incomplete without some special recognition of the illustrious early dogs that led the way for us all. The "First Lady of Beardedom," Brambledale Blue Bonnet, is certainly an able representative. "Bonnet" (April 15, 1972–October 6, 1984) was bred by Lynne (Evans) Sharpe and imported by J. Richard Schneider, who initially co-owned her with Henrietta and Robert Lachman. She was later owned and shown exclusively by the Lachmans. She was indeed, one of the most eminent Beardies in America. Bonnet, the first American Champion, was also the first CD, the first Bearded Collie to win a Working Group, and was the first Bearded Collie in the history of the AKC to take a Best in Show.

*Reprinted by permission from 1994 BCCA Yearbook—Silver Anniversary Commemorative Edition (edited by Judith LeRoy, Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead, Roberta Stuart).*



# Official Standard of the Bearded Collie

**Characteristics:** The Bearded Collie is hardy and active, with an aura of strength and agility characteristic of a real working dog. Bred for centuries as a companion and servant of man, the Bearded Collie is a devoted and intelligent member of the family. He is stable and self-confident, showing no signs of shyness or aggression. This is a natural and unspoiled breed.

**General Appearance:** The Bearded Collie is a medium sized dog with a medium length coat that follows the natural lines of the body and allows plenty of daylight under the body. The body is long and lean, and, though strongly made, does not appear heavy. A bright inquiring expression is a distinctive feature of the breed. The Bearded Collie should be shown in a natural stance.

**Head:** The *head* is in proportion to the size of the dog. The *skull* is broad and flat; the stop is moderate; the cheeks are well filled beneath the eyes; the *muzzle* is strong and full; the foreface is equal in length to the distance between the stop and occiput. The nose is large and squarish. A snipy muzzle is to be penalized. (See Color section for pigmentation.) *Eyes* - The eyes are large, expressive, soft and affectionate, but not round nor protruding, and are set widely apart. The eyebrows are arched to the sides to frame the eyes and are long enough to blend smoothly into the coat on the sides of the head. (See Color section for eye color.) *Ears* - The ears are medium sized, hanging and covered with long hair. They are set level with the eyes. When the dog is alert, the ears have a slight lift at the base. *Teeth* - The teeth are strong and white, meeting in a scissors bite. Full dentition is desirable.

**Neck:** The *neck* is in proportion to the length of the body, strong and slightly arched, blending smoothly into the shoulders.

**Forequarters:** The shoulders are well laid back at an angle of approximately 45 degrees; a line drawn from the highest point of the shoulder blade to the forward point of articulation approximates a right angle with a line from the forward point of articulation to the point of the elbow. The tops of the shoulder blades lie in against the withers, but they slope outwards from there sufficiently to accommodate the desired spring of ribs. The legs are straight and vertical, with substantial, but not heavy, bone and are covered with shaggy hair all around. The pasterns are flexible without weakness.

**Body:** The body is longer than it is high in an approximate ratio of 5 to 4, length measured from point of chest to point of buttocks, height measured at the highest point of the withers. The length of the back comes from the length of the ribcage and not that of the loin. The back is level. The ribs are well sprung from the spine but are flat at the sides. The chest is deep, reaching at least to the elbows. The loins are strong. The level back line blends smoothly into the curve of the rump. A flat croup or a steep croup is to be severely penalized.

**Hindquarters:** The hind legs are powerful and muscular at the thighs with well bent stifles. The hocks are low. In normal stance, the bones below the hocks are perpendicular to the ground and parallel to each other when viewed from the rear; the hind feet fall just behind a perpendicular line from the point of buttocks when viewed from the side. The legs are covered with shaggy hair all around. *Tail* - The tail is set low and is long enough for the end of the bone to reach at least the point of the hocks. It is normally carried low with an upward swirl at the tip while the dog is standing. When the dog is excited or in motion, the curve is accentuated and the tail may be raised but is never carried beyond a vertical line. The tail is covered with abundant hair.

**Feet:** The feet are oval in shape with the soles well padded. The toes are arched and close together, and well covered with hair including between the pads.

**Coat:** The coat is double with the undercoat soft, furry and close. The outercoat is flat, harsh, strong and shaggy, free from wooliness and curl, although a slight wave is permissible. The coat falls naturally to either side but must never be artificially parted. The length and density of the hair are sufficient to provide a protective coat and to enhance the shape of the dog, but not so profuse as to obscure the natural lines of the body. The dog should be shown as naturally as is consistent with good grooming but the coat must not be trimmed in any way. On the head, the bridge of the nose is sparsely covered with hair which is slightly longer on the sides to cover the lips. From the cheeks, the lower lips and under the chin, the coat increases in length towards the chest, forming the typical beard. An excessively long, silky coat or one which has been trimmed in any way must be severely penalized.

**Color:** *Coat:* All Bearded Collies are born either black, blue, brown or fawn, with or without white markings. With maturity, the coat color may lighten, so that a born black may become any shade of gray from black to slate to silver, a born brown from chocolate to sandy. Blues and fawns also show shades from dark to light. Where white occurs, it only appears on the foreface as a blaze, on the skull, on the tip of the tail, on the chest, legs and feet and around the neck. The white hair does not grow on the body behind the shoulder nor on the face to surround the eyes. Tan markings occasionally appear and are acceptable on the eyebrows, inside the ears, on the cheeks, under the root of the tail, and on the legs where the white joins the main color.

*Pigmentation:* Pigmentation on the Bearded Collie follows coat color. In a born black, the eye rims, nose and lips are black, whereas in the born blue, the pigmentation is a blue-gray color. A born brown dog has brown pigmentation and born fawns a correspondingly lighter brown. The pigmentation is completely filled in and shows no sign of spots. Eyes - Eye color will generally tone with the coat color. In a born blue or fawn, the distinctively lighter eyes are correct and must not be penalized.

**Size:** The ideal height at the withers is 21 to 22 inches for adult dogs and 20 to 21 inches for adult bitches. Height over and under the ideal is to be severely penalized. The express objective of this criterion is to insure that the Bearded Collie remains a medium sized dog.

**Gait:** Movement is free, supple and powerful. Balance combines good reach in forequarters with strong drive in hindquarters. The back remains firm and level. The feet are lifted only enough to clear the ground, giving the impression that the dog glides along making minimum contact.

Movement is lithe and flexible to enable the dog to make the sharp turns and sudden stops required of the sheep-dog. When viewed from the front and rear, the front and rear legs travel in the same plane from the shoulder and hip joint to pads at all speeds. Legs remain straight, but feet move inward as speed increases until the edges of the feet converge on a center line at a fast trot.

**Serious Faults:** Snipy muzzle. Flat croup or steep croup. Excessively long, silky coat. Trimmed or sculptured coat. Height over or under the ideal.

Approved August 9, 1978

# Judging the Bearded Collie

© Chris Walkowicz

Judging a ringful of bouncing furballs can be intimidating. This is especially true for those who have no experience with coated breeds or with dogs that seem to circle the ring on their hind legs, fully intent to a) plant muddy front paws on your chest or b) wash your face with unsolicited kisses. Relax, brethren! Not all Beardies bounce one-hundred percent of the time, and, contrary to popular opinion, not all handlers encourage it. It does, however, occur and, if an occasional Beardie bounce puts you off, then it's probably best not to include the breed on your repertoire.

The Bearded Collie in outline portrays a picture of smooth curves rather than sharp angles. In other words, it's more of a Van Gogh than a Picasso. It's not as large and square as the OES, nor as sleek as the Border. As you look at the line-up, you should have the impression of sturdiness, along with a winsome appeal, giving one the feeling of strength, tempered by grace. The Beardie is longer than tall, at 5 to 4 even longer than the German Shepherd. We are now seeing some Beardies that do not have the proper length, giving them an incorrect cobby appearance. Its well-muscled body is covered with a shaggy, harsh coat. It's a medium-sized dog, one we'd like to keep that way. More than one inch over or under the ideal 21-22" male and 20-21" bitch is a serious fault. Similar individuals may offer some surprises in the hands on exam, with differences in bone, musculature, forefront and other aspects covered up by a poufy coat.

## Head

Starting with the head, note the expression. With puppies especially, it's important to brush the hair away from the large, affectionate eyes. The typical Beardie expression, described as "bright and inquiring," is a mixture of angelic sweetness and charming curiosity, accompanied by a twinkle of devil-may-care. Eye color and pigmentation should tone with the coat, i.e., the darker the coat color, the darker the accoutrements: nose, lips and eyerims. Color should also surround the eyes and cover the ears. If the stop appears to be exaggerated through teased hair, let your fingers do the walking through the hair searching for the moderate stop. The broad, flat skull narrows slightly in the front. Sides of the skull are also flattened, with the head forming a blunt wedge. The foreface slopes slightly downward from the plane of the backskull. The adult's skull ideally fills the hand with fingers spread, bitches being slightly less corresponding with size difference. The head should not appear fine nor coarse, but be in balance with the rest of the body and bone. Ears are set just below the top of the skull at the edge, lifting slightly when alert.

Although we are now seeing some foreshortened muzzles which give the dog a "cutesy" look, this is not correct. The muzzle should be equal in length to the topskull. Encircle the muzzle with your hand. If your thumb and forefinger meet (allowance made for puppies), check for a snipey muzzle, which is a serious fault. Mouth faults often accompany narrow muzzles or shallow underjaws. Bad bites are being seen once again and, although the Standard simply says "meeting in a scissors bite" without mention of bite faults, they should be discouraged. Breeders prefer to see squared front jaws on puppies. The full muzzle ends in a large, square nose.

## Body

While standing in front, move the hand down the front to feel the width of chest and the prosternum, which should be gently curved, neither flat nor as pronounced as a Shepherd's. Moving to the side, check the gently arched neck, shoulder layback, length of upper arm, depth of chest (at least to the elbow). Withers are approximately two fingers apart. The Beardie's ribcage is nearly egg shaped, oval with it flattening slightly at about the half way mark. Length comes from the angulation of shoulder and rear, as well as the backward-slanted ribbing. The loin is relatively short, about the breadth of four fingers. The back is level, smoothing into the curve of the croup. A steep or flat croup is a serious fault.

The tailset is low, continuing the smooth lines into a slight curve at the tip. Many Beardies — particularly adult males — exhibit their happy-go-lucky view of life by carrying their tail up during movement. As long as the tail carriage is not curved above the vertical, and the flag lowers (or wags) when stacked, this should not be penalized. The Beardie should be well-muscled which can be checked with a quick feel of the thigh.

## Coats

Many Beardie exhibitors "judge" a judge's knowledge by whether the coat texture is examined. The double coat consists of a soft undercoat, with a thick, harsh outercoat, which makes a whispery sound when rubbed between the fingers. Far too frequently, we see long, glamorous coats which do not have the proper texture. Silkiness is a serious fault. Whether they have been softened artificially through conditioners or, worse, through genetics, this is not correct. A slight wave (not wooly or curly) is permissible.

Puppies may have close (often called old-fashioned) or puffy coats. Teens often lose their coats in bizarre fashion, from top to bottom, or front to rear. All these variations are acceptable. Length is less important than texture.

During certain awkward coat stages, the back may seem to roll or bounce when it is actually the hair which is not yet long enough to lie flat. A fully coated dog may hide back faults, so use your hands to feel through the coat to the real topline.

Even the pups exhibit the trademark wee beard. The hair parts naturally and should not be knitting needle perfect. "Trim" is a four-letter word in the Beardie community. Most exhibitors "neaten" stray sprigs of hair so the dog doesn't appear to be wearing snowshoes, but a natural shaggy look should be the goal, not sculptured perfection. Trimming and sculpturing are listed as serious faults in the Standard. PLEASE do not fault the exhibitors who refuse to do it.

### ***Color/Pigmentation***

Beardies are registered as "born" black, blue, brown or fawn, with or without white markings. The Standard says: "Where white occurs, it only appears on the foreface as a blaze, on the skull, on the tip of the tail, on the chest, legs and feet and around the neck," i.e., in the Irish pattern. Plain Janes with less white, or even self-colored (I've only seen one), should not influence the judge's opinion — nor should tan markings, or tris, although the tan rarely shows up on a fully-coated adult. One color should never be preferred over another. Skin pigmentation on the muzzle may be freckled or spotted. Probably about 95 percent of all Beardies have the fading factor, meaning the black usually fades to a range of silver to charcoal gray, the blue from powder blue to silver, the brown from sandy to Hershey chocolate, and the fawn from champagne to ecru. This usually occurs during the teenage stage, about ten months to two years. It can be difficult for non-breeder judges to discern whether the dog is a "mismatch" or is sporting white beyond the preferred pattern. If in doubt as to color, note the pigmentation and the tips of the ears which usually retain color. After this stage, the Beardie will once again darken, usually to the color of the ear tips. It is unlikely a Beardie with "pinto" markings will be shown under you, but the true white is a glistening snowy white (such as that on the chest, not the silvery/creamy appearance of the faded teenager).

### ***Movement***

As a herding dog, the Beardie is lithe and agile and should display strength in movement. The length and size make possible the quick turns, spins and leaps necessary to a dog gathering sheep in the crags, cairns and hills of Scotland. Without the proper musculature and ligamentation, the ideal layback of shoulder won't take the Beardie where it needs to go.

Thus, correct shoulder angulation, along with the ideal croup and turn of stifle is not enough unless the dog also exhibits it through good reach and drive. Gait should be effortless, with the dog seeming to float easily around the ring with the desirable daisy clipping movement.

In order to judge movement, four legs must be on the ground at least a portion of the time, but it is not rare for a 'boing' at a corner or when turning to come back on the di-

agonal. If the judge is unable to view movement adequately, a request for a repeat performance may be required. At a trot, the Beardie single tracks. Bounciness is definitely part of the persona. And the more a judge coos, the more likely the Beardie is to twiggle (tail wagging the body up to and possibly beyond the shoulder). This doesn't mean a judge should be brusque, but, if you don't want them to get up close and personal, don't schmooze!

# Judging For Yourself

Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead

One of the first things a judge looks at when the dogs enter a ring is the overall shape and silhouette of the animals. That initial impression is a very important one and often colours the way a judge will later perceive the dog in the hands-on portion of his/her examination. The Beardie possesses a unique outline, one that should immediately impress judge and spectator alike with its unmistakable shape. Too often we lose sense of the overall, and get bogged down in the specifics . . . how is the head? What about the shoulders? The loin? The tail? Even, how is it groomed? What colour is it? It is the *sum* of all these points, after all, which defines the breed; taken singly they are essentially out of context. And yet, judge and spectator alike seem to have more problem visualizing the whole than the parts.

Here I have caricatured eight Beardie outlines. I have omitted markings, colour, eyes, and most other details in order to present a less confusing task. I have exaggerated some aspects for clarity's sake. Assume that the dogs are in essentially the same condition, are groomed and presented comparatively alike. Assume they are all well within the standard as far as size goes and approximately the same age. These are all distractions which we can arbitrarily do away with graphically, but don't get bogged down in problems inherent in drawings . . . this is a learning tool.

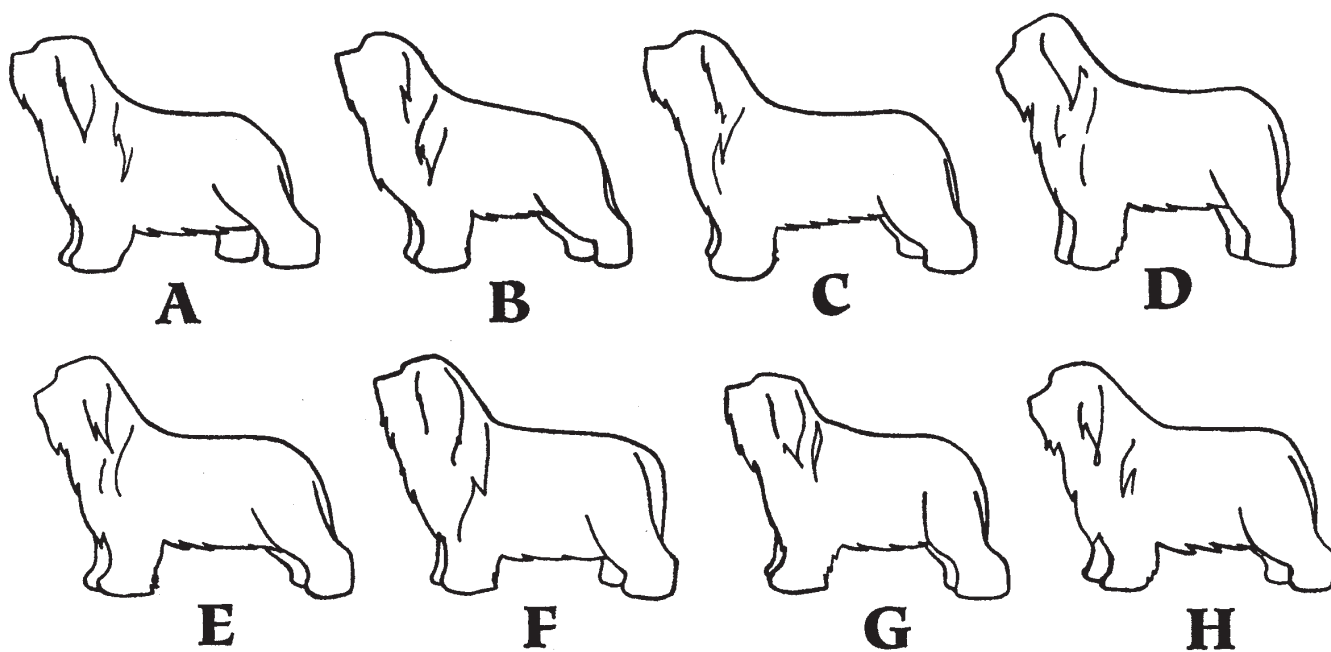
This, then, is your Open Dog class. They come in and go around the ring (a nice, large, flat one) and stand, as a class, for your examination. You are doing your first overview. Look carefully at each, concentrating on the shape and overall structure. What does it tell you? How do you place them? You be the judge. And remember, a judge should judge each dog against the standard, not against the other dogs in the ring.

## *First Place*

If you picked Beardie E, you and I are in agreement. However, if you picked Beardie C, you have a very good case, too. Beardie E wins in my mind on three points over C: length and straightness of back, balance, and head. E's body is longer than it is high, in the approximate five to four ratio. His back is level and blends smoothly into the curve of the rump. The tail is set low. The shoulders are well laid-back at an approximate 45° angle. The neck is in proportion to the length of the body, strong and slightly arched, and blends smoothly into the shoulders. The hind legs have well-bent stifles, the hocks are low, but not excessively so. They are perpendicular to the ground and the hind feet fall just behind a perpendicular line from the point of buttocks. The head is in proportion to the size of the dog. The skull is flat; the stop is moderate, but clearly discernible. The muzzle is strong and full and the foreface is equal in length to the distance between the stop and occiput. These are all things we can see in the drawing, and they are all things which are called for in the Beardie standard. This Beardie should be able to move freely, supplely, and powerfully. His balance should combine good reach in forequarters with strong drive behind. He should appear to glide effortlessly on the move.

## *Second Place*

Beardie C. As they say in England, this dog was "unlucky to meet number 1" today. Another nice, long dog, especially nice in the well-arched neck and the proper tail set. There is a slight rise over the point of the croup, however, keeping the topline from being completely level. Moreover, C appears to be slightly straighter both front and rear than E . . . that is, less angulated, especially in





front. The position of the front legs is slightly less under the dog. This could also be caused by poor handling technique, but since we agreed that all our dogs were handled the same we must conclude here that Beardie C's shoulders are not as well laid back or that the whole forequarter section is less well-constructed than E's. Since the rear, while less angulated than E's, is more angulated than its own front, the balance of the dog is thrown off slightly. And this will surely show up in the way the dog moves . . . possibly by sidewinding—although a dog this long may not move so badly as a shorter-backed one with the same problem. Finally, the backskull of Beardie C appears to be slightly domed or rounded, with a slope where the well-defined occiput should be. Still and all, this is a nice overall picture, of a slightly different type of Beardie than E.

### *Third Place*

Things get a little murkier as you go down the line. My third place pick is Beardie H. While not as elegant a dog as either E or C, Beardie H has several things to recommend him . . . but even more to keep him out of the first two places. First, he is considerably shorter in body length, although he does appear to have a level topline. Most glaring is the high, poor tailset, which completely spoils the outline of the croup and makes him appear even shorter in back than he really is. On the move this tail will probably be carried very high, possibly beyond the vertical. His very low hocks (excessively low hocks are as improper and useless as high ones) are combined with a short, very angulated stifle . . . a combination which often means lack of drive and extension in the rear. By contrast, his front doesn't look too bad . . . but all four legs appear to be a little short...even for his cobbler back. He does have a nice head and adequate neck; the neck appears to blend nicely into the shoulders. This is a finishable dog, but not a special one.

### *Fourth place*

Beardie F. This dog is very similar in type to Beardie H. He appears, however, to be slightly straighter in front and more angulated in the rear. Moreover, he is longer in the stifle as well. This type of unbalance results in more drive than reach and you often will see such a Beardie hackneying in his attempt to get his front out of the way of his more dynamic rear. Another high tailset, but this one looks as if it might even have been fixed. (Yes, it does happen in Beardies.) That unnatural "break" point is suspicious-looking, although it can happen congenitally as well. In any event, the set-on is too high, and the carriage makes it look even worse. The head is not too bad, but if you were to take off more of that heavy head coat, you might notice that it is just a little small to be truly pleasing as far as balance goes, and that it requires a tad more stop to allow for the bright enquiring expression that is one of the hallmarks of our breed.

### *What about the others?*

Well . . . Beardie A's steep croup, short back, and wide rear kept him out of the ribbons. His foreface is also considerably shorter than his backskull, a construction that makes the cheeks *appear* to be well-filled beneath the eyes, whether they are, in fact, or not; This is usually the "cutesy" type of Beardie face. His front doesn't look too bad, but again he has "more" rear than front.

Beardie B's topline is atrocious; the slope adds to the already short back and makes it appear even shorter. This Beardie will *appear* to be racing around the ring like an Irish Setter . . . whether he is going

anywhere or not! He is short in foreface and his backskull drops off. He does not appear to have enough neck, probably because his layback is inadequate, making his front too straight.

Beardie D is short in back. Even so, his topline dips. You often find a similar dip when the dog is too long in loin and the length of back comes from there instead of the proper long, angled back ribcage. Additionally, his steep croup and/or high tailset add to the general problem. He is tall on leg as well. The whole effect is of a square dog like an OES rather than a rectangular one like the Beardie. He is extremely straight both front and rear—especially rear—and high on hock. His foreface and backskull are the right length, but his foreface is downturned too much.

Beardie G's head isn't too bad, but his withers appear to be around his ears. Whether he is truly short on neck or this is another case of inadequate layback making it appear he has no neck would be determined by feel. He does seem straighter in front than in rear. He, too, is slightly high on hock. Again, a short back and rise over the point of the croup make him unlikely to move with ease or authority.

### *And what about that elusive word "type"?*

We have barely touched on the question of "type" here, for one good reason: these comments are universal and applicable to all Beardies, regardless of type. There simply is no "type" of Bearded Collie that should have a short back, or a high hock, or a domed head. Where type comes into play is when everything else is equal in quality . . . then, and only then, should the judge allow himself the luxury of choosing the type that he or she finds personally the most pleasing. To choose a particular type over a better-constructed and -moving dog of a type that is not, say, similar to what you have in your own kennel is irresponsible judging. Breed the type you like, but look for the best overall dog in the ring when you judge.

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# Application of the Bearded Collie Standard

## in Conjunction with Conformation Shows and Performance Events

Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead

Those of us who make the verbal distinction between conformation and the so-called “performance events” may be doing us all a disservice. If anything, conformation is the ultimate performance event. Not only is it based on how the dog historically was to perform, all the parts of the dog must perform appropriately in order for the dog to achieve that historical goal.

The earliest conformation competitions centered on choosing excellent breeding stock, and while we may pay lip service to the notion that that is still what we are doing, nagging common sense tells us that though we may have become more knowledgeable and effective groomers or handlers, in today’s conformation competitions we have become less knowledgeable and less effective judges of breeding stock. Competitive events introduce variables that challenge the integrity of any breed. Those can be as simple as fad and fashion or as complicated as politics and polemics. However, all the skillful grooming and handling in the world cannot change a mediocre dog into a top one; nor are cosmetics transmitted genetically.

The first arbiter of conformation was, of necessity, function and functionality. Those physical and mental aspects that allowed a dog to most successfully perform its primary function were valued and selected for. Those that in anyway detracted or interfered with a dog doing its job were faulted and bred away from.

So closely intertwined are these tenets of form and function that it is virtually impossible to see where one ends and the other begins.

We look at our breed’s historical job description, then, to see the underpinnings of our breed standard and the modern-day basis for both conformation judging and whelping box examinations.

The Bearded Collie’s original purpose was as a herder or drover over a variety of rugged UK terrains. Those early shepherds and drovers were most concerned with the dogs’ ability to do the job and to stand up to the weather in which they worked. Over centuries the breed was stabilized through selective breeding—simply by using similar dogs doing similar jobs under similar conditions from a number of different areas. In all likelihood, these early dogs were not otherwise specifically related. The shepherds and drovers simply selected breeding stock that best underscored and enhanced the dogs’ usefulness. The same basic tractable, intelligent dog with a long, harsh, water-turning coat suitable for the adverse working conditions of Scotland was valued wherever it was found for its ability to put in a good honest day’s work. And, it remains so to this day.

Beardies should still possess the concentration and intelligence, the steady dependability and perseverance, and the sane and sensible outlook that makes valuable teamwork possible with his humans. And those qualities should be just as evident in the conformation ring as they should be in the field.

It is, after all, the history from which a breed has evolved that conveys crucial details that assist judges in their adjudication, details that the written standard was never intended to do. And it is the historical purpose and all the events that have led to the conclusion of a breed’s type that offer insight into the creation and evolution of a breed’s standard. Type, after all, is functional. And without it, one breed is indistinguishable from another.

The written standard should be an affirmation of a breed’s design. When a standard is inadequate or unclear it weakens the judges’ and the breeders’ ability to follow and understand nature’s answers to problems of natural construction and temperament. The standard represents an attempt to quantify that which the eyes and hands have seen and felt to be true in any breed.

However, anyone who attempts to judge a breed solely on the basis of a written standard will inevitably fall short. What the standard helps do is to summarize and, to a certain extent, prioritize the important aspects of a breed. What it does not do is adequately address all the individual nuances of a given breed that define type.

The best judges are those who systematically study and learn the intricacies of the breeds they will be judging—by reading, by being mentored, by observing in and out of the ring, and by countless hours of discussion and debate with other knowledgeable people, breeders and other judges alike. Remember, too, that a difference of opinion is not necessarily a difference of principle. You can agree to disagree, and everyone may be perfectly correct.

Beardies present a conundrum: the breed is an ancient one, with an ancient heritage, no doubt about that. But the Bearded Collie that we all know and love has essentially evolved from Mrs. Willison’s dogs in the late ’40s and early ’50s. When we discuss the integrity of the breed, we are not necessarily speaking solely about those unknown Highland workers for whom a very different set of problems was reality. The earliest written standards—and they may well precede even the 1805 Scottish version many of us have read—reflected the dogs of the time, just as our does—or should do—today. In our breed, as for most breeds, the standard was created to define dogs in existence in an attempt to fix type. It is the original, inherent character qualities that defined not only the true

essence of the breed, but the physical makeup as well.

It should be remembered, moreover, that we have, and society has, for the most part, essentially changed the job for which the breed was developed. For in spite of our sincere efforts to maintain the working ability of which we can justifiably be proud, it is that show ring with its specific requirements, that has become the natural “working” arena for the Bearded Collie today.

And though change is inevitable—and not always an evil thing—the dogs in the ring today do not define the essence of the breed. Rather, they should be considered reflections of the breed’s original intent. Consequently, to put up a dog with picture-perfect structural qualities, but inappropriate expression of temperament for the breed, does a disservice to both the breed and the standard.

Mental stability goes with physical ability. I know many of us perceive and like to promote our breed as carefree, loveable clowns. While there is surely that aspect to a good Beardie’s temperament, there must be much more to it than that. Going back to our historical job description, what was required by the herdsman and drovers was considerably different than the canine equivalent of the proverbial dumb blonde.

So, while pretty much anybody, given enough time and perseverance, can read and re-read our standard, and quote it back verbatim, to correctly understand and appraise a breed requires more than a good memory.

Most good dog judges would agree that they carry a clearly defined mental picture of the ideal breed dog in their heads. Any dog can gait soundly. And there is a great tendency to define breeds only within the limited scope of basic structure. To be sure, you must know basic dog structure and its conformation in relation to all the moving parts. But even though the old type versus soundness debate still rears its ugly head from time to time, I don’t believe the two are mutually exclusive.

Pitting the essence of the breed against the generalized biological requisites necessary to define the breed’s overall balance and general appearance is counterproductive to good judging. You must examine the breed in breed-specific ways, and that means, as Anne Rogers Clark so succinctly puts it, “make your first cut on type and then reward the soundness of your typical specimens.” That makes type and soundness a continuum.

Balance and proportion are probably the most important aspects to be defined by any standard. Dogs must be considered as a whole and not as a large assortment of various parts. A dog can score well on individual points and still not be balanced. Our standard spells out a number of crucial points on balance and proportion, and your general education and dog knowledge fills in others. A Beardie considered to be within the guidelines set down in the standard is an acceptable animal to do the work for which he was intended.

When you examine a Bearded Collie in profile, you should immediately discern on a medium-sized frame the 5:4

proportion called for in our standard which contributes to the suppleness and movement of a tireless herding dog. That the length of back should come from the ribcage and not the loin helps insure a firm, level topline, with no wasted energy expended on twisting or rolling. Such a topline connotes both strength and agility. An incorrect croup may cause or exacerbate the exaggerated rear kickup we see all too frequently in our breed. Or it may bring the rear foot too far under the body to allow the necessary balance front to rear to show good typical sidegait.

Excessive hock action is undesirable and keeping the hocks well let down avoids this problem. The correct slope of pastern is necessary for the quick turns of the herder and acts as an effective shock absorber. Legs and feet that turn neither in nor out, but remain straight even when flexed in movement mean maximum thrust, unweakened by joints being out of line. But don’t confuse the relative narrowness of correct movement in a lean body with either hockiness or overcloseness. Corresponding and correct angles front and rear maximize reach and drive, and singletracking minimizes the possibility of any fatiguing roll.

Good depth of chest with the long uniquely shaped ribcage of a lithe body allows plenty of room for heart and lungs, lending endurance and stamina.

Coat texture and length of coat are important to a breed meant to work in harsh weather over unforgiving terrain. A soft or heavy coat cannot shed burrs or turn water readily. And of course, the characteristic beard from which the breed takes its name, should be present and accounted for.

The head should show plenty of flat backskull and a corresponding amount of well-filled foreface, allowing room for the particularly appealing and expressive eyes to be set wide and obliquely and for the jaws to hold a full complement of teeth.

A bright, enquiring expression is a hallmark of the breed. Bright, however, should not connote feverish or frantic, but rather an innate sense of intelligence and willingness to engage in a meaningful partnership with most humans. Ears should be of correct length and carriage, sufficiently mobile to facilitate hearing in less-than-optimum conditions. Acceptable color and pigment add to the beauty of the dog.

Our standard is, by and large, a good one, I think and the opening paragraph pretty well sums up what I consider to be the essence of the Beardie:

“He is hardy and active, with an aura of strength and agility characteristic of a real working dog. Bred for centuries as a companion and servant of man, the Bearded Collie is a devoted and intelligent member of the family. He is stable and self-confident, showing no signs of shyness and aggression. This is a natural and unspoiled breed.”

While there are no disqualifications in this breed, we do note a number of serious faults, and we would hope that you take these seriously into consideration. In the end, current grooming practices notwithstanding, most of us would like to keep this a natural and unspoiled breed and we appreciate all the help you can give us.



# Just How Serious?

© Chris Walkowicz

At a recent National, our judge penalized trimmed dogs and reminded people trimming is a serious fault in our breed. This prompted a lively discussion on the internet Beardies-List. A review of the serious faults listed in the Bearded Collie Standard seems appropriate. Listed as serious faults are: snikey muzzle, flat or steep croup, height over or under the ideal, an excessively long, silky coat, and a trimmed or sculptured coat.

Let's start with the easiest to recognize: height over or under the ideal. Males should be 21 to 22 inches tall at the withers, with bitches being 20 – 21 inches. The Standard goes on to read, "The express objective of this criterion is to insure that the Bearded Collie remains a medium sized dog."

Dogs and bitches may mature at slightly over or under the Standard and are usually penalized according to the disparity. Although the Standard sets forth the ideal, minor discrepancies of size are not as important as body proportion. Breeders often accept an inch over or under the ideal, decreasing or increasing to the ideal in the next generation. The medium size allows the Bearded Collie to move swiftly and gather its charges, with sharp turns, screeching halts and shoulder-high leaps. When too much allowance is given, with dogs creeping up to an inch and a half or more towering over the ideal, the whole prospect of maintaining a medium-sized dog becomes impossible. Snikey muzzle: "...the muzzle is strong and full..." This was a problem we saw more frequently when Beardies were first approved in 1977. The muzzle should be equal in length to the backskull and, on the adult dog, full enough to fill a hand encircling it. The muzzle should not be tapered like a Collie's or Border Collie's, but more boxy in shape.

Weak underjaws often hide bad mouths. Although we still have some bad bites (and mouths that seem to move around during the entire life of the dog), they have improved over the years. Flat or steep croup: "The level back line blends smoothly into the curve of the rump." The croup, as in many dogs, is angled at about thirty degrees. This allows the dog fluidity of movement, good reach and drive and the agility to perform those startling leaps when they look you in the eye and kiss you on the nose. Coat: "The dog should be shown as naturally as is consistent with good grooming but the coat must not be trimmed in any way. An excessively long, silky coat or one which has been trimmed in any way must be severely penalized." When I first wrote *The Bearded Collie* a dozen years ago, I didn't even mention trimming in the interpretation of the Standard. Now, sending an on-line seminar to the Judges List, I took two pages to address the subject.

Twenty years ago, most exhibitors stopped at a hygienic trim (in order to live with the dog). As the chase for the purple-and-gold soared, coats were poufed, coiffed and glamorized to become more beauteous and bountiful. Conditioners entered the picture. Brambles, so well known in the Bearded Collie's mother country, are usually not found in the typical U.S. backyard and, besides, they'd tear the precious coat! These changes meant the hair on the feet sometimes began to look like bedroom slippers. It would be difficult now to find many dogs that haven't had the feet "neatened," as the exhibitors prefer to call it. Sculpturing, however, is another matter totally, and most exhibitors also object to it.

Unfortunately, the old give-'em-an-inch-and-they'll-take-a-mile syndrome has bitten some of the handlers and owners. It's not uncommon to see the bottom line evened out, manes thinned, and/or hocks shaped. Occasionally, we even see tails trimmed, ears and beard squared, and side coat "evened" or layered.

Structural faults, i.e., deviations from the ideal height, snikey muzzles and flat or steep croups, are serious. Trimming is but one fault and a cosmetic one at that, but it is, according to our Standard, also a serious fault and should be considered such by judges, exhibitors, handlers and spectators.

*This article first appeared in the AKC Gazette's breed columns in June, 1997.*



# Seeing Ahead

Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead

To anyone who owns a Beardie, it is no surprise that there seems to be a tendency to wax eloquent, searching for the proper words to describe the Beardie's unique expression:

Alfred Ollivant's:

... Noble breadth of brow. . . . ; last and most unfailing test of all should you look into two snow-clad eyes, calm, wistful, inscrutable, their soft depths clothed on with eternal sadness — yearning, as is said, for the soul that is not theirs . . . .

*Owd Bob, 1898*

Mrs. Willison's:

One early writer describes the Bearded Collies' head as similar to that of a Dandie Dinmont. Reluctantly I disagree. Since with a dog expression is everything, surely the closest affinity is with the Scottish Deerhound?

Both have that dreamy, wishful, far-away gaze. A gentleness. And yet a nobility which lifts them out of the rut they might otherwise fall into as mere shaggy dogs.

*The Bearded Collie, 1971*

And yet, what about the underpinnings, without which the "nobility" would not be possible? As far as the head itself goes, the standard states:

Head: The head is in proportion to the size of the dog. The skull is broad and flat; the stop is moderate; the cheeks are well filled beneath the eyes; the muzzle is strong and full; the foreface is equal in length to the distance between the stop and occiput. The nose is large and squarish. A snipey muzzle is to be penalized.

I was once told by a judge that my dog was too thin: "Why, I can feel every bone in his head!" Whether she had been reared with the dreaded — now hopefully extinct — Fat-Headed Beardies of Upper Volta is uncertain, but what is clear is that she didn't know much about Beardie heads. You and should feel the bones in a Beardie head, including the rather prominent occiput. A flesh of a good Beardie head will simply

Follow the contours of the broad, flat skull underneath. Bear in mind that I am talking about *adult* heads throughout this article. Beardie heads can and do change quite a bit throughout their various development stages. In most cases, heads are "finished" by age two years or so; however, some of the later maturing "lines" may still be evolving up until almost four years.

The Beardie's head should be examined from two views: (1) full front looking down on the head from above, and (2) full profile. A complete assessment also requires a longer view from the side to note the proportion of head to body. Viewed from above, the backskull is slightly longer from stop to occiput than it is wide between the ears. It is also slightly wider at the back than at the front. The backskull should be flat, with no hint of a dome; it should *not* feel

like an over-turned rowboat, with a ridge down the middle (except possibly in the younger pups, where it may indicate additional development coming). Generally speaking, the backskull should readily fill an average-sized hand, keeping in mind the overall size of the dog. The sides of the backskull should be flat and blend smoothly into the foreface, so that with your hands on either side of the head, you should feel a smooth, wedgelike transition.

The foreface should be strong and full, and its length, from stop to tip of nose, should be approximately equal to that of the backskull. While some prefer (and we certainly see in the ring) a somewhat shorter foreface, since it gives a fuller or cheekier *appearance*, my feeling is that with the proper strength and width of muzzle, the desired fullness is actually achieved automatically, and the shorter muzzle gives the dog a less characteristic expression — more of a "cute, fuzzy-face."

Viewed from the side, the "stop" is that line from the top of the skull to the muzzle. This line should be slight and at a small angle, but well-defined. Too little stop or angle gives the Beardie a Deerhound- or Collie-like profile; too much stop or angle gives the Dandie Dinmont look. An incorrect stop may be *visually* camouflaged by teasing the head hair — and often is. For this reason, a hands-on exam is truly necessary.

In addition, too short a muzzle and/or insufficient stop and backskull often combine to force the eyes more forward and rounder in shape. Again, this gives an uncharacteristic expression, although it can seem charming in puppies.

The planes of the head should be approximately parallel; you will find that, in fact, the foreface slopes *slightly* down from the line of the backskull.

Beardie muzzle should be deep and rather square, ending in the large, squarish nose, and not slant back too suddenly from under the nose to the lower jaw. Again, the overall side view is that of the blunt wedge. If the dog is "snipey," it means that there is not enough depth to either or both jaws. It can also mean that the front arch of both upper and lower jaws is too narrow, which causes the correspondingly too narrow or pointy muzzle. One cannot find good deep root systems and properly place teeth in such jaws. (The standard states only: "full dentition is desirable." It also calls for a scissors bite. ) The pinched or pointy-nosed look or a sloping sharklike profile should be penalized. More and more Beardies are coming up with missing teeth, particularly premolars. While it is hard to fault this in the showing on the basis of the standard's weak statement, attention must be paid to this problem in the whelping box.

Overall proportions of head to body should be considered from some distance back. What we are striving for is some sort of balance, whereby the head and body look as if they are part of an entire unit and not as if they are spare parts which could belong to two different animals. Visually, just as with

actors onstage, the eye is more please by a Beardie with a slightly too large head than by one whose head is too small.

Eyes: The eyes are large, expressive, soft and affectionate, but not round nor protruding, and are set widely apart. The eyebrows are arched to the sides to frame the eyes and are long enough to blend smoothly into the coat on the sides of the head.

Size, shape, placement, and colour of the eyes have a lot to do with expression. Beardie eyes are large and oval, *not* round, and set wide apart and slightly obliquely at the front of the head (though not as far forward as in the Dandie Dinmont). There is quite a range of acceptable eye colour for each of the four allowable coat colours, though in every case the eye should tone with the coat: in black dogs, ranging from medium to darkest brown; in browns, blues, and fawns, the colour of the iris blends with the lighter coat colour. "Bird of prey" eyes (yellow) should always be avoided, even in the fawns, where a dusty gold or amber colour is the lightest truly acceptable colour. *Generally* speaking, the darker the dog, the darker the eye should be, but the lighter eyes should never be penalized in the lighter-coloured dogs. In any case, a hard, hostile, or frightened expression, whether caused by the lack of colour coordination or by anything else is undesirable, since the Beardie cannot have the requisite "bright, inquiring" expression if he is exhibiting signs of deep-rooted fear or – Heaven forbid – viciousness. Puppy fright due to inexperience or unfamiliarity is different entirely, and the age and experience of the dog must be taken into consideration.

One interesting difference between the British and Canadian standards and the American standard is in regards to the "eyebrows." Unlike our, the other two standards specify eyebrows "arched up and forward but no so long as to obscure the eyes." This certainly changes the overall expression of the dog – in part because this type of headhair has the effect of giving the dog the appearance of having more stop, or at least serves to camouflage an insufficient one. Most probably this change in wording came as a result of reflecting the evolution in coat length and texture we've seen in the modern Beardie; the longer, more glamorous show coats have tended to be softer and simply do not break off so easily.

An entire article could be devoted to how different colours and markings on the face and head, especially around the eyes, can also greatly affect expression. For instance, very dark eyes, surrounded completely by white hair can give the dog a very harsh or staring look. The same dark eyes surrounded by very dark hair may be so "hidden" as to appear too small or dull. Markings on the foreface can influence the way we perceive its length and width – dark hair tends to make the muzzle look smaller and/or narrower, white hair tends to do the opposite. Uneven or asymmetrical markings may also affect the dog's expression, but space prohibits further discussion of these and other such important considerations at this time.

Ears: The ears are medium sized, hanging and covered with long hair. They are set level with the eyes. When

the dog is alert, the ears have a slight lift at the base.

Beardie ears are set just below the top of the skull (even when the ears are lifted, they should not come above the top of the skull). Too low a set gives the dog a spanielish or setterish look; too high, a terrier-like look. There are two basic ear styles: those folded only across the flap where it joins the head, and those which fold similarly to the Wolfhound, longitudinally down the flap. This second type usually has considerably more mobility – the Beardie can lay the ear back against the head and expose the entire ear orifice. This more workmanlike ear tends to be smaller. Occasionally you will find a Beardie with one of each type. Ear size in general varies quite a bit, although when the adult coat comes in, the size of the flap (leather) itself cannot readily be discerning under the long hair without actually feeling. Generally speaking, the tip of the ear flap should be long enough to reach around to the eye. However, I have never penalized a dog for having too large or too small an ear, as long as the set is correct, since the carriage of the ears contributes greatly to the dog's expression.

It is, then, the combination of head and muzzle, size, shape, colour, and placement of the eye; markings and colour; correct position and carriage of the ear; along with, of course, the dog's personality and attitude, that all go together to help make up the unique Beardie expression we started talking about.

In her foreword to *The Beardie Collie*, Mrs. Willison concludes:

*Finally a confession. A luxury no judge should permit himself. Before making it I insist that the writer has yet to be born who can create a perfect work picture of a dog.*

*Equally no artist exists imaginative enough to paint a dog accurately, straight from the official standards. How long is a neck of "fair length," a "fairly long" back, or a moderately long" tail.*

*Let us then admit that breed standards are not "blueprints." Rather they are guides to be interpreted within a broad framework.*

*When judging, even within this framework, one often sees a proportion of every class of Bearded Collies carrying some indefinable suggestion of Bobtails or Old English Sheepdog.*

*The traces are elusive. Hard to put a finger on. Even harder to put a work to. But they can be seen by a perceptive and unbiased viewer.*

*I usually put this type on the right hand side of my final line-up. And I make my awards from the left!*

This may well be one of the most important passages I've come across in Beardie literature, underscoring as it does, *two* vital points: (1) breed standards in general are of necessity open to subjective interpretation, and (2) there are essential particular differences which, while absolutely defining a breed, can elude the most well-meaning observer, but especially are unfathomable to the novice or uneducated eye.

Much has been already written about the definition of "type"; I haven't attempted to add much more at this time. Rather, I chose this quotation to close this discussion on heads, since in my estimation, Beardie heads in general and, even more particularly, resultant Beardie expression are of inestimable importance in defining the character and essence of the breed.



# Visualizing The Beardie Standard

## Fronts and Rears

Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead

The Bearded Collie standard states, in its section on **Forequarters**:

The shoulders are well laid back at an angle of approximately 45°; a line drawn from the highest point of the shoulder blade to the forward point of articulation\* approximates a right angle with a line from the forward point of articulation to the point of the elbow.

There are two principle forequarter angles, then:

(1) First, there is that angle which we take into consideration as “the layback.” This simply means that a line drawn from point “d” (“the highest point of the shoulder blade”) to point “a” (“the forward point of articulation”\*) will form an approximate 45° angle with respect to an imaginary horizontal line. The “d-a” line should run midway—longwise—through the scapula, or shoulder blade. The resultant angle is labeled “X.”

(2) Second, there is that angle which we view as a dog standing “well under itself,” and which we usually call the “front angulation.” This means that a line drawn from point “d” (“the highest point of the shoulder blade”) to point “a” (“the forward point of articulation”) will form an approximate 90° angle with respect to another line drawn from point “a” to the point of the elbow, paralleling the axis of the humerus, or upper arm. This angle is labeled “Y.”

It is important to note that these are two different angles, and represent different measurements; it is very easy to become confused in conversation when strictly correct terminology is not always used. In simplest terms, “front angulation” refers to the angle at which the scapula and humerus meet; ideally this should be approximately 90°. “Layback” is the angle set of the scapula; ideally at about 45°.

Two other “lines” of interest can be easily seen in the illustration:

(1) Most of a Beardie’s weight is supported by its forequarters (approximately 60%); this weight-bearing is distributed along a “vertical center of gravity.” This “line” intersects the axis of the shoulder and the center of the heel pad as it touches the ground when the dog is at ease. (The axis of the shoulder is that “pivot” point which remains stationary when the pull of the muscles controlling forward movement is equalized with the pull of the muscles controlling backward movement in the forequarters.)

(2) As with many other long haired breeds, it is often difficult to immediately visually evaluate the forequarters angulation in a Beardie. A useful tool, therefore, for judges and other observers is the “visual approximation” of the center of gravity, shown here as the dotted line “d-e,” which runs from the highest point of the shoulder, in line with the rear of the elbow joint, and to the ground slightly behind the heel pad as shown. Only when the front assembly approaches the ideal will these points align themselves properly, thereby giving a quick visual checkpoint from which to begin assessment.

Two final considerations:

(1) Although the length of the scapula (“a-b”) should ideally equal the length of the humerus (“a-c”), the actual angle of the attachment of the radius-ulna, or lower arm, is relatively unimportant so long as the bones are straight and vertical when viewed from side or front. An appropriate upper structure will, in fact, make an appropriate lower structure more or less “automatic ally.”

2) The Beardie standard calls only for pasterns which are “flexible

without weakness,” without requiring any specific slope as some standards do. The pastern is moderately sloped in order to put the heel pad directly under the center of gravity, as well as to provide additional length of reach of foreleg and to increase the gripping power and leverage of the foot. It also functions as a shock absorber.

The combination of these components makes up the front assembly, which is responsible for providing the Beardie’s primary balance and directional control. Front action is referred to as “reach.”

As with forequarters, proper Beardie **hindquarters** are dependent on several and various angles, most easily viewed in diagrams. The standard states:

The hind legs are powerful and muscular at the thighs with well bent stifles. The hocks are low.

(1) First, there is the angle of the pelvis which delineates the “croup.” The pelvis should be sloped at an angle of about 30° (line “r-s”) with respect to an imaginary horizontal line, as shown by angle “P.” For an excellent discussion of the croup, see Tom Davies’ discussion in last issue, Vol. 12, No. 1, pages 4-5.

(2) Second, there is that angle made by the axis of the femur, or upper leg, intersecting the pelvic slope (line “t-u”) at about 90°. This is what is commonly referred to as the “rear angulation,” and is labeled angle “Q.”

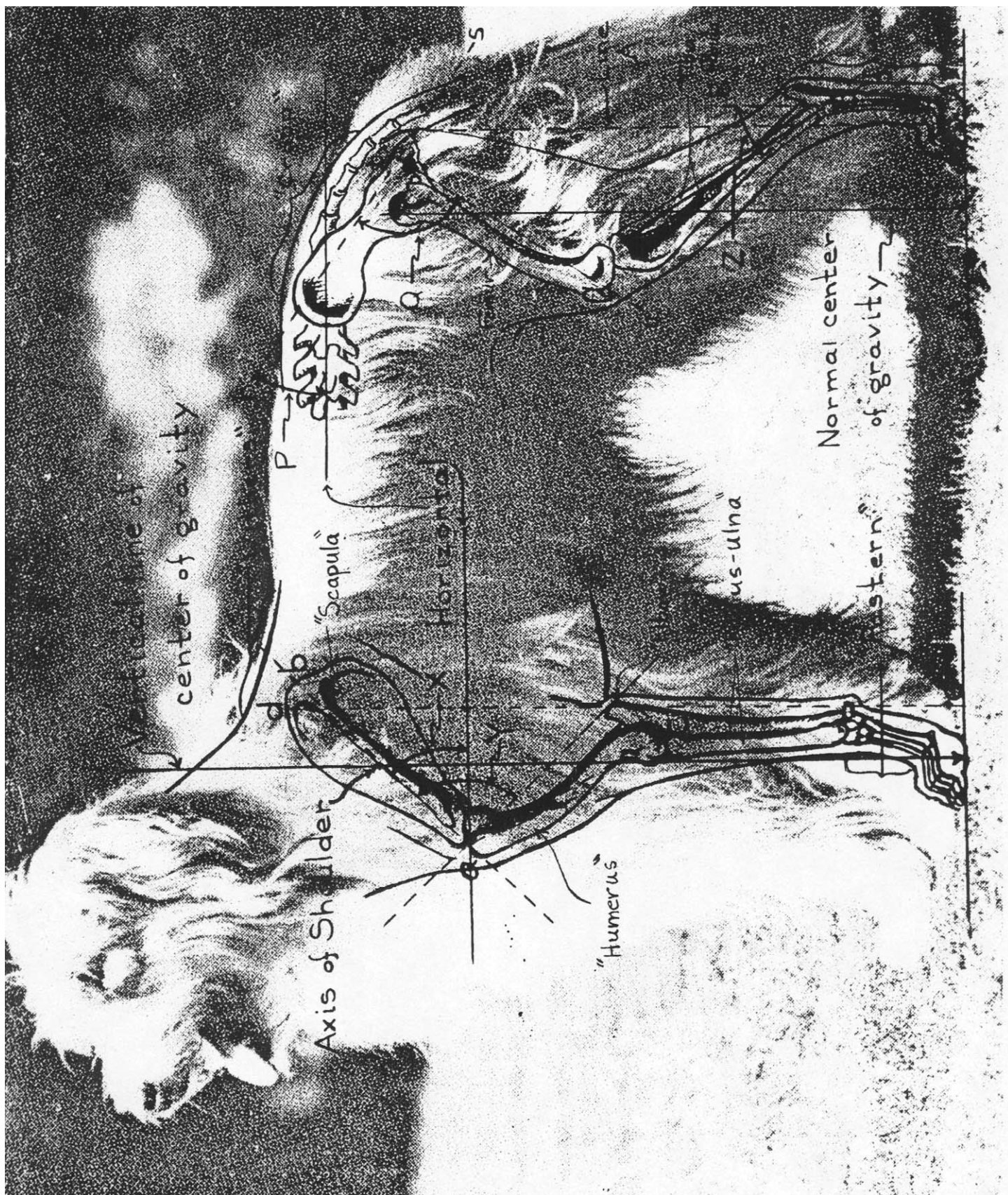
(3) There is the angle at the stifle joint, near “u”, where the stifle—consisting of two bones, the tibia and fibula—articulates with the femur. (This angle may measure about 115°, and represents what is commonly meant by the phrase “a good bend of stifle.”) The overall length of the stifle should at least equal the length of the femur.

(4) Then, there is that angle at the hock “joint,” where it joins the lower end of the stifle. This is labeled angle “Z” and ideally should measure 45°. The standard calls for bones below the hocks to be “perpendicular to the ground,” and for the hind feet to “fall just behind a perpendicular line from the point of buttock [line “A”] when viewed from the side.” Note that this diagram is just a bit off according to that statement. To attain what that actually says would require an even longer stifle and correspondingly lower hock. On the other hand, this drawing does seem to look about right to me. Bear in mind, however, that it is the combination of the long stifle and low hock (“hocks well let down”) that produces the typical Beardie leverage, and helps allow for the necessary “drive,” or forward propulsion, of “a real working dog.”

In order for movement to be balanced, and therefore most efficient, front and rear angulation must be the same. For that reason, where the ideal is not attainable, it is actually preferable to have a dog with a front and rear which are equally “off,” rather than well-angulated at one end and not at the other. If the front and rear do not move with the same efficiency (i.e., if the reach and drive are not equal), the dog will be unbalanced and forced to compensate somehow in his movement. These compensations represent weaknesses, and therefore are both undesirable and subject to breakdown. For an excellent discussion of what these compensations and/or weaknesses may be, see *Beardie Basics* (Rieseberg & McKinney) pp. 16-23.

\*“Articulation” means “junction” or “joint” in this case, of the shoulder blade with the humerus.







# Telling Tails

by Carol Gold



It can be as true about dogs as it is about books - the ending doesn't always fit the rest. So what's the tale about tails?

If you close your eyes and picture the ideal Beardedie floating across the grass, the ideal tail streams out behind the dog, leaving the body smoothly and extending at the level of the back or just below, with an upward swirl at the tip. The long hair accentuates the gentle wagging as the dog moves. When the dog stops, the tail relaxes and lowers, blending smoothly into the rump and following the curve of the rear legs. The tail extends at least to the hock and often still has a slight swirl at the end, even in repose. Ideally, it keeps up that gentle wagging.



Unfortunately, with tails, as with everything else, the ideal isn't always attained. But there can be a lot of variation without the tail being absolutely wrong.

For instance, when the dog moves, the tail might be carried higher than level with the back. It's not as nice, but it's okay. It can even stand almost upright (as often happens when a number of stud dogs congregate in a class) as long as it doesn't come forward over the back. If it does, not only is it wrong, but it drastically alters the dog's outline. Suddenly, the dog can appear short in body, or high in rear. It even affects your perception of the dog's stride, if not the actuality.



Another thing tails can do is curl. The Standard's only reference to this is to call for an upward swirl at the tip. But some tails carry the tip all the way to the rump. Some curl to the side, others curl up like semi-Malamutes, still others roll themselves up like pin curls. If the tail acts like a rudder, a curly tail would be less effective than a straight one.

Usually the curl - as with high carriage - only appears when the dog starts to move. When the dog stops, the tail straightens and drops. It should never stay up and or curled when the dog is standing (except for that aforementioned congregation of stud dogs). Obviously, tail carriage is not a fault that's easy to spot in posed photographs.

Whatever the tail does, there's a lot of latitude between ideal and absolutely wrong and how big a problem the tail poses depends on how far it's drifted from the ideal.

In recent years, the British have gone overboard in their concern about tail carriage and have taken to training their dogs to carry their tails down when moving. They do this by slapping at the offending tail, or hitting it with a stick or the end of the leash. You can often spot these dogs in the ring, scuttling around with their bottom ends tucked in or straining on a tight leash.



No Standard requires such extreme measures and neither does the dog's ability to function. In fact, training the tail - or worse, cutting the muscles so it just lies there - probably does more damage to the dog's gait and stress level than the worst-carried tail. And what's the point? After all, if you have to go all the way to the end of the dog to find a noticeable fault, you've probably got a pretty good dog.





# How Does Your Bearded Measure Up?

by Cynthia Mahigian Moorhead

The Bearded Collie standard calls for a medium-sized dog, 21–22" tall (height taken at the highest point of the shoulder) for males, 20–21" tall for bitches. It discourages height over and under the ideal by specifying any such deviation to be severely penalized. It is important to remember, however, that while the actual height of a dog can, in fact, be "scientifically" ascertained, it is more often simply the *visual perception* of a dog's size which the ringside viewer accepts as the ultimate criterion of height, however erroneous that may be.

Many factors can influence this visual perception. Two major considerations are (1) the relationship of any given dog to the other dogs around it and/or to its handler, and (2) specific structural and/or cosmetic considerations regarding the dog's appearance, itself.

The first consideration is easily understood: the eye tends to generalize a ring full of dogs—i.e., it tends to accept the *majority as average* and consequently may brand any deviation from that "average" as too large or too small. As an example, a 22" dog standing next to several 20" dogs will be obviously the "odd man out," and may therefore get looked on as being *oversized*, rather than the majority being perceived as being on the *small* size. Conversely, a 22" dog in a ring full of 23" dogs, will again be obviously the odd man out; however, this time he may be perceived as being *undersized*.

Similarly, a 22" dog with a tall handler will tend to look smaller than the same sized dog with a short one. When you start combining these factors even for our sample

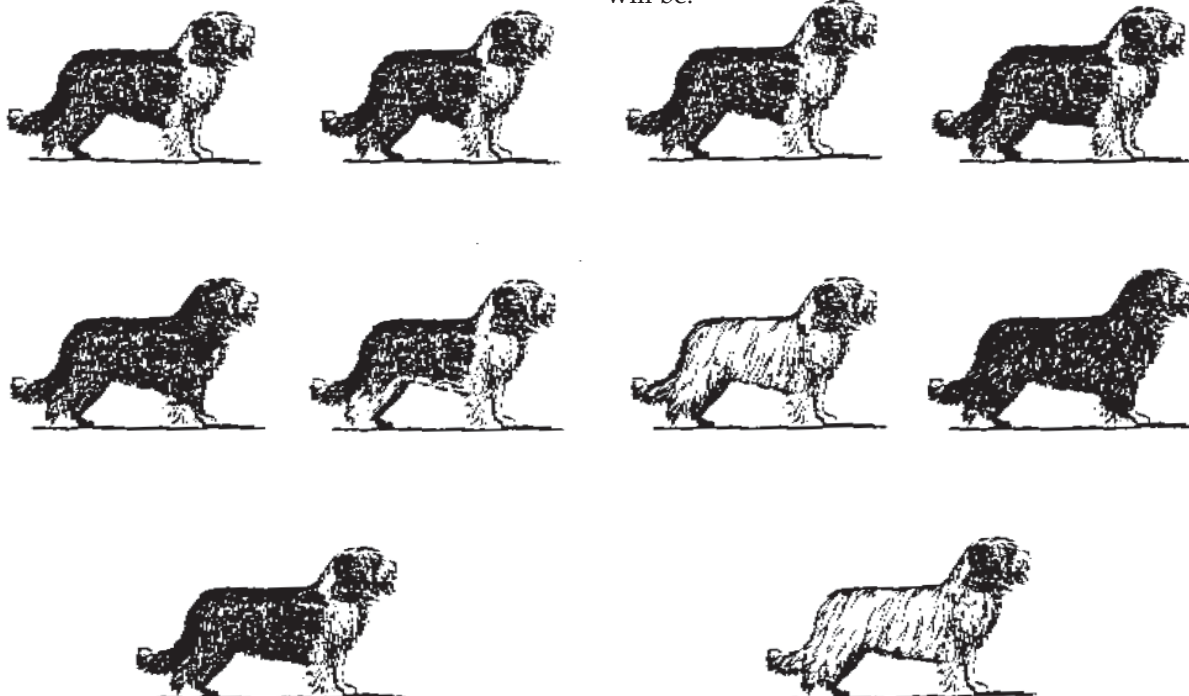
22" dog alone, the number of possibly confusing visual signals increases substantially. But when you also consider that there are virtually endless combinations of dog heights and handler heights possible, it is obvious that one must cultivate a pretty good "eye" indeed to be able to overcome such misleading factors.

The second major consideration—structural and/or cosmetic variations—can be readily illustrated.

Every one of the ten Beardies depicted is exactly the same height at the shoulder. What varies from dog to dog are length of neck, length of back, amount of coat, markings (or lack thereof), and various combinations of those variables. Obviously, these are not all the possibilities, but this should serve to point out that apparent discrepancies in height can be heavily influenced by such factors as these, and others less easily illustrated—grooming habits, showing techniques, etc. The upshot of all this is to simply point out that the *eye*—especially the *ringside* eye—can sometimes be fooled into giving—especially the mouth—inaccurate information.

It is desirable, therefore, to try to "educate" your eye so that it becomes more discerning, and, therefore, more accurate in its perceptions. One of the first steps is to simply remain aware of the possibility of error. Another is to have your own comparative data on hand (or in head) and make use of it. By this I mean *measure* your own Beardies, *don't guess at their height*, and "file" this information away for future reference.

Obviously, the more accurate data you have at your command, the less likely it will be that you are "tricked" by inaccurate data. Like any other educational program, the more accurate information you assimilate, the more successful the program will be.





# More Information on Bearded Collies

## *Books*

All About the Bearded Collie, by Joyce Collis, Pelham Books

The Bearded Collie, by G.W. Willison, a Foyles Handbook

Pet Owners Guide to the Bearded Collie, by Brenda White, Ringpress Books

The Bearded Collie, by Chris Walkowicz, publisher Alpine/Denlinger

Bearded Collies, by Carol Gold, publisher TFH

Beardie Basics and Beyond, by Barbara Rieseberg and B.J. McKinney, revised by Jo Parker, publisher Alpine

The Complete Bearded Collie, by Joyce Collis and Pat Jones, publisher Howell Book House

Little Dog Lost, by Suzanne Moorhouse, publisher The Book Guild, Ltd., Suxxex, England

Talking About Beardies, by Suzanne Moorhouse, self-published

Beardies: Past, Present, Future, by Wendy Hines, publisher Jendie Books

## *DVDs*

Getting to Know Ewe II, herding information available from the Great Plains Bearded Collie Club, contact Ann Witte: [adoannie@msn.com](mailto:adoannie@msn.com)

## *Periodicals*

Beardie Bulletin, published by the Bearded Collie Club of America.

For subscription information or copies, please contact Lillian Esposito, Editor, at [lillianespo@verizon.net](mailto:lillianespo@verizon.net)

Website:

*Bearded Collie Club of America:* <http://beardedcolliclub.us/>

*Illustrated Standard:*

Copies of the Illustrated Standard may be ordered using the order form

[http://beardedcolliclub.us/wp-content/uploads/forms/IS\\_Order\\_form\\_1404.pdf](http://beardedcolliclub.us/wp-content/uploads/forms/IS_Order_form_1404.pdf)





**Hands-On Workshop Breed Evaluation Form**  
**Must be completed in full and returned to Presenter for their signature**  
*Subject to be reviewed by Judging Operations Department for credit.*

Breed \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant/Judge Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Judges'#: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Print ~ Breed Specific terminology is required*

| Dog | Ranking | Reasons and Observations |
|-----|---------|--------------------------|
| A   |         |                          |
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Presenter print name /Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Presenter: please return to Judging Operations Department with Attendance form, Seminar & Hands-on Workshop report  
September 1, 2015*