

" So you want to trim your Terrier"



The top four Terriers at Melbourne Royal 2002, left, the winner, the Dandie Dinmont, Ch Hobergay Fineus Fogg, #2, the Norfolk, Nor, Swe, Dan, Fin, Nordic, Int Ch Stall Mascot Discoman, #3, the Cairn, Gr Ch Joymont Alaskan Gold, #4, the Australian, Gr Ch Rebelglen Catmandoo, and Best Puppy in the Group, the Smooth Fox, Graebrook Blak Orpheus

Showing, as you may just about have worked out, is a package. The dog may be a necessary part of the deal but husbandry, exercise, training, feeding, and grooming and I don't just mean the dog, are all part of that package.

If you're going to get serious with your Terrier, you must work out your priorities for show now. Before you even think about pulling out a hair you had better be sure your white dog STAYS WHITE and you had better be sure if it needs hairy legs that it keeps HAIRY LEGS. You had better become religious about saving its beautiful beard if your breed needs a BEAUTIFUL BEARD.

This may mean you permanently keep the show dog out of the dirt! It may mean that you always keep the grass mown short or the dog never even gets to the grass. It may mean that those crazy games down the park rolling in the mud, the blood and the beer are curtailed. Your dog doesn't want you to embarrass it, by your scruffy appearance at the show!

The principle reason for trimming your Terrier is to enhance its breathtaking outline, to show off its stunning conformation and superb type. And now that I've referred to type, I suppose I had better mention that coat and texture are both aspects of type that are defined by your breed Standard. Your breed's coat suggests just how your Terrier will be trimmed.

The Kerry coat, soft and silky, plentiful and wavy is definitely a scissor job. Likewise the pencilled coat of the Bedlington needs scissors to bring out the fullness of its texture.

Broken coated Terriers like Airedales or Wire Foxies, will need the careful nurturing of hand stripping to present the perfect harsh jacket with the thick undercoat building up legs and foreface that look solid.

I have to admit that when I first started to trim, I was never satisfied with the presentation of any Australian Airedales. I suppose I had taken to heart a schoolbook whose title was "Think For Yourself - your teacher may be wrong!" I spent hours trying to "read" the stripping of

Terriers whose photos I found in overseas magazines. I was fascinated by pictures that showed the best rugged English Terriers trimmed with the same outline as the best immaculate American Terriers. I spent hours experimenting with the wonders of the stripping knife, always with the theory that the rotten hair will grow back anyway, no matter how I massacred the dog.

Every groomer has to have a breakthrough, a dawning, an experience that finally makes the penny drop. Mine came with a visit by Peter Green in the early eighties. In Airedale circles, it was well known that I simply took off too much hair. Peter Green took my bitch for a grooming demonstration and took off a ton more

hair! He chizzelled the head and straightened the front legs. He carved out in front of the thigh and built up a great rear. I loved the front end and hated the back end, not because her hindquarters didn't look great but because the effect of carving in front of the thigh lengthened the body of my bitch.

And it finally dawned. There are NO rules to Terrier trimming. Trim to please your eye. Neat or not so neat, you are trimming to enhance the outline of the dog and its the outline that pleases you!

Anne Sorraghan



CAIRN TERRIERS THEN AND NOW

CATHY SCOTTON

The first Cairn I ever saw was at a riding academy in Lansing, Michigan in the States. She was a bouncy friendly wheaten hairy bundle that took my heart. Coming from a gun dog family I insulted the owner by saying it was a shame that she wasn't a pure bred so there could be more like her. I was quickly put right and from then on I was on a mission to find one.

My husband and I arrived in Adelaide, South Australia in the winter of 1979. Soon I was the proud owner of Skyway Cottage Joy who was to be my foundation bitch.

Cairns had been very popular in the fifties and sixties but when I started showing, many times in South Australia I was the only exhibitor. At that stage both in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales the breed seemed to be dominated by little old ladies who seemed happy to have their day out strolling around the ring with their shaggy little dogs. Rarely did Cairns have any great success except in the baby to puppy classes. The general method of grooming was to allow the coat to grow and grow with the bare minimum of shaping and tidying until it was completely blown and shapeless. The truly mop like, street dog effect. The dog would then be stripped out to undercoat and the growing process would start over again. This meant that you were out of the ring for two to three months waiting for the coat to grow in.

There was also this unwritten rule that Cairns should never be washed with the theory that it might wreck the texture of their coats. I always felt that it reflected the days in Scotland when owners rarely bathed so why would you do it to your dog.

Luckily being isolated in South Australia I missed out on all this great advice. With only one or two Cairns and being well hooked on the dog showing bug I was determined to try and keep the dogs in the ring from week to week. This led me to study the grooming of other broken coated Terrier exhibitors who had mastered the technique of rolling a coat. Following their advice I started regularly picking at the coats which allowed new coat to be constantly growing through. I also learned the importance of grooming with a large mirror so that I could see what the judge was seeing and groom accordingly. I noticed that most show dogs were clean and shiny for the dog shows so I followed suite. Mind you I soon realized that washing

the dogs the day before resulted in fluffy looking dogs.

Four or five days before a show allowed the coats to settle down and regain their texture. I was never faulted for soft coats but complimented on the cleanliness of my dogs. I soon realized also that a fit dog moved better and was happier on the lead. What you practised at home was reflected in the ring.

Soon I was travelling around the world visiting Cairn breeders and attending large shows. This allowed me to see what other breeders were doing, as well as picking up little grooming techniques here and there. From grooming I went into overall presentation of myself as well as the dog. After all it was a Dog Show! I watched the people who were winning and tried to determine what they had in common. Their dogs were always beautifully presented, well trained, alert and responsive to their owners. Needless to say I did my best to follow their example. In Australia we have some very well known successful Terrier exhibitors who I studied and tried to emulate.

I have watched with interest how the English Exhibitors have smartened up their dogs over the years. Americans are now moving away from the skirted Westie look. Here in Australia the Cairns are now in the winning circle being considered in contention for the major prizes. I was once told that my dogs in comparison to others weren't scruffy enough. I was pleased about that as the standard states a profuse coat not a scruffy and ragged one.

Around the world the standard of presentation has improved with Cairns now gaining top awards in England, Scandinavia, Europe and the United States.

Over the years I have bred at least 10 dogs that have won between them over 35 Best in Show awards at All Breed Championship Shows. I have also bred many multi Best in Group and in Show Royal winning dogs. We have five Grand Champions to date with a few more almost there. I am shortly moving to Korea for two years but looking forward to returning. Luckily I have some very good friends who will be campaigning my dogs while I am away. My interest in showing has also led me to an interest in judging. This training has allowed me to look at my dogs with a fresh approach. By looking outside your breed you learn even more about the construction of your own breed and why it came about.

There are many other Cairn breeders now in Australia who are also showing with great success in the ring. This means that the breed as a whole in Australia is in a healthy state and is in contention in the Specials ring.



Above far left, Eng Ch Ginger Christmas Carol, Airedale Terrier, BIS Crufts 1986



centre, Aust Ch Tinee Town Talktime, Australian Terrier, BIS Adelaide Royal, 1973

above right, NZ Ch Farmway Swinging Chick (imp UK), Border Terrier

and left, Ch Craiglyn Constance (imp UK), Cairn Terrier

