

The Importance of the "Distinct" Stop in a Fox Terriers Head

Presentation: a challenge

for the new exhibitor

One of the smartest dogs in the showing is the Fox Terrier. Many prospective owners who admire from the ringside do not realise the great deal of work which goes into the preparation of the breed, particularly the Wire-haired variety, and in maintaining the coat to look its best for that special show.

The coat of the Wire-haired Fox Terrier should be hard and crisp; the texture has been likened to one of those old fashioned doormats. The coat is weather resistant because it is a double coat, having in addition a soft undercoat. If left uncared for, the outer coat becomes long and bushy, and of course the undercoat moults and becomes untidy and unhealthy.

The Wire-haired Fox Terrier usually has its full coat by the time it is twelve months old, the outer hair about two inches long, the undercoat getting a bit woolly, and if it has never been attended to, the inside leg hair, under the armpits, belly and inside the hind legs will probably be matted and tangled.

Traditionally the Wire-haired Fox Terrier has his moulting coat stripped out, and the wiry rough top coat stripped down to a close fitting, comfortable, hardtextured jacket.

The companion dog needs this done about twice a year. A good dog grooming salon should be able to do this; ask the breeder of the dog for a referral to an experienced groomer.

For the showing a lot more work is required. Fashions in the presentation of dogs come and go, this year it may be the style to have big trousers, next year neat pants may be the rage. But the basic rules remain the same.

The basic rule is that the long old hair must be stripped out with a "stripping knife". Because the hair grows at different rates in different areas, the coat must be repaired in a particular order over a period of weeks with the aim of getting the dog in perfect coat for a particular show or series of shows.

Timing is vitally important. The new hard outer coat takes about eight weeks to grow. Every part of the dog is covered in succession, usually starting with the head. the legs are dealt with slightly differently, usually being trimmed and pulled if necessary because this is where the special look of the dog can be ruined.

While the new outer coat is coming through, the under coat must also be timed correctly and this usually involves daily or alternate days combing.

The clever groomer can greatly enhance the appearance of the dog - emphasising virtues and disguising faults. The novice who wants to take up the challenge of showing the Wire-haired should be guided first by the breeder and be determined to slowly learn the secrets and skills of the demanding, but rewarding skill.

For those without the self-discipline to follow the coat preparation schedule demanded by the Wire-hair, the Smooth hair is a better choice. All Fox Terriers, smooth and wire, have an undercoat. With the smooth variety, the companion dog requires only a daily brushing with a hard brush to keep the coat healthy, and combing a couple of times a week with a fine comb to remove excess and dead undercoat.

The show dog requires somewhat more trimming and preparation and an excellent routine is set out by Cam Milward in his book, Grenpark Fox Terriers.



Quality head with ears to match - good flat skull-shapely face

dog enabling him to do his work with the utmost benefit and protection it could give to the eyes, as well as improve the expression.

The skull and topline of the foreface being parallel to each other, with the standard asking for a

near circular shape of the eye, is another part or reason, for it is difficult to achieve the correct shape and setting, without the "stop" being correct.

View other breeds without the "stop" (Bedlington and Bull Terrier) and it is easy to see what a different shape and setting the eyes portray in these breeds, and why it is so important to have the correct "stop" in the head of a Fox Terrier to give the correct spacing, setting, shape size, and expression.

One only has to view the photos of the "old time" Fox terriers to see the clearly defined, if perhaps a little over large "stop", that is setting the eyes straight in front of the skull, with defined allowable

spacing and full circular shape. This also emphasises the wording that it should be apparent as a "stop" not just run on down from the skull to the foreface, forming a continuous line from the skull to the foreface. This then would reduce the shape and deeper setting of the eyes which would reduce their protection also. The eyes being set straight in the "stop" allows them to have better straight forward vision, with much better and keener expression that could put more fear into the opponent.

Some fanciers advocate that the foreface should fall away from the "stop" sloping downwards out of parallel with the skull line, so that the dog with such profile shaping would be able to see better. This shape is completely wrong and as such would be a serious fault, (Boomerang head) which also effects the shape, setting, keen expression and finish to the head, apart from other faults that would be sure to accompany it in the foreface, lacking depth and strength to the underjaw or / and top jaw.

Heads without the correct "stop" invariably relates to the formation of the Skull-incorrect chiselling and its importance to the foreface, giving a dog a common appearance to the head, unfortunately judges with lack of knowledge accept these mis-shapen heads and accept them as being correct.

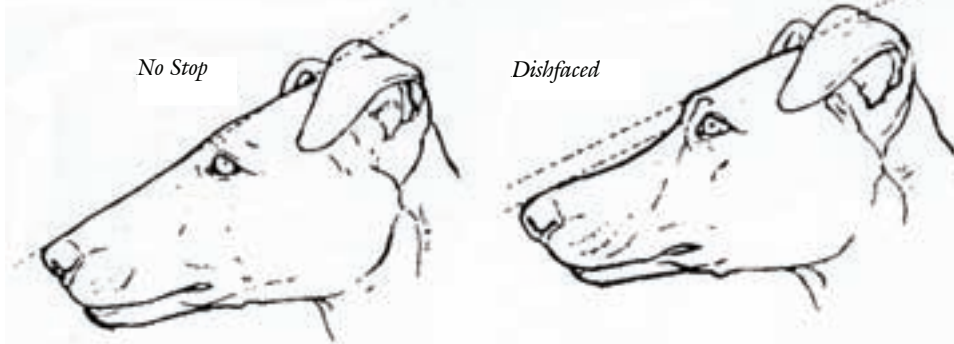
Late W. R.
POLLEY

With permission

THE STANDARD says, "not much stop should be apparent", but one may ask, why is a "stop" so important a feature to be mentioned in the original standard of the Fox Terrier?

Many other breeds have this feature in their make-up, so there must be specific reason for it to be there as such for the Fox Terrier. Perhaps it is far more obvious and exaggerated in other breeds, but it still must be a necessary feature component in the breeds of dog that have it.

If it was not an important feature for the Fox Terrier to have, it would not have been included in the standard in the beginning by men who knew just how important it was to the



From National Dog September 1991

Royal domination in 1930s and '40s

Fox Terriers dominated the Sydney Royal in the 1930s and '40s. In 1939 there were 129 Smooths entered, compared with 54 at Melbourne Royal. Wires were almost as numerous, with 124 at Sydney, and 68 in Melbourne, higher than the Smooth entry.

In 1941 Sydney had 122 Wires entered and 115 Smooths. By 1949 the picture was slightly different, only 81 Wires compared with 130 Smooths. By 1959 the figures were 49 Wires and 75 Smooths.

William Hamilton, after whom the dog pavilion at Sydney Showgrounds is named, was a Fox Terrier man, and a famous perpetual shield bears his name. This was won by the best champion (Smooth or Wire) dog or bitch at the Royal and the three championship shows held during the year by the Fox Terrier Club of NSW. The winner was the dog or bitch with the greatest number of points at those shows, assessed on placings 1st to 4th, with 4 to 1 points being scored.

The list of winners reads like a Fox Terrier Who's Who:

In 1938 - two Smooths shared the spot:

W R Polley's Ch Jerry Ideal and

A A Rowles' Ch Dunara Daffodil.

1939 - J White's Wire, Ch Flornell Conquest, imp.

1940, 1941 and 1942 - D D Senogle's Smooth, Ch Kelvin Kandy.

1943 and 1944 - Mrs D Longworth's Ch Wyoming Gal.

1945 - two Wires: F Mantle's Ch Dunsbrae Duenna and H Godwin's Ch Burndale Balalaika.

1946 - Ch Dunsbrae Duenna was again the winner.

1947 - T B Steer's Ch Cotslowe Cinderella, Wire.

1948 - Mrs L J Robinson's Smooth, Kelvin Kollingwood .