

"IT SEEMS TO ME"

Dog Judging with Tom Horner

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QUESTIONS OF ETHICS

I have recently received a letter from a breeder of a very popular toy breed who has been invited to judge his breed at a championship show. This person has been in the breed about 15 years, is a successful breeder, having won many CC's, owned a number of champions, and judged regularly at open and breed club shows, and so feels ready to award CC's in his breed.

But he has a problem about a matter in his breed that deeply concerns him; ie that many people in his breed export breeding stock and puppies to the Far Eastern countries where he feels people's attitude to dogs are unacceptable. He has strong feelings on this matter and asks if it would be justified, when judging at championship show level, to ignore the entries of people concerned in what he describes as "this despicable and inhumane trade, which is carried out purely for the money, with no regards for the animals concerned."

I am afraid my reply to this person must be that it would be wise to decline the invitation to judge. A judge is invited to judge dogs, not the owners of dogs exhibited under him or her. When judging dogs, or any other form of livestock, one's placings must be made in accordance with what one sees as the merits and faults of the animals before one. The owners do not come into the matter, whether they be one's best friends, worst enemies, complete strangers, children dressed up to catch the judge's eye or old friends in their declining years.

Judges are invited to give their opinion of the animals exhibited under them and for no other purpose. The behaviour of exhibitors is not his or her affair when judging, bad as it may be known to be.

From time to time judges can be placed in quite embarrassing positions when dogs they have bred are entered under them or when judges under whom they have recently won, or under whom they intend to show in the near future, or people of whose character or behaviour they strongly disapprove, appear in the ring before them.

In all such situations they have to perform the task they were invited to carry out - to judge the dogs to the best of their ability. The same applies when close relatives of the judge appear in the ring - a highly undesirable recent development. Previously it was not done to show under one's relatives, and I hope it will be banned.

All these circumstances can threaten a judge's reputation. The only way to deal with them is to place the dogs in each class in their order of merit as the judge sees that.

The breeding of dogs, like the judging of them, depends totally on the honesty of the people concerned - the breeders. Other breeders, using a particular owner's stud dogs or buying brood bitches from him or her, have to accept that the pedigrees they are given are correct - or the whole process would become a shambles.

In farm stock the crossing between breeds is an acceptable practice - in dog breeding it is not, all breeds are kept pure bred. The worth of a breeder's stock depends entirely of that stock's pedigree being true.

Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, a famous stud dog may become sterile or a brood bitch fails to conceive. Breeders who use such names on pedigrees knowing that the stock concerned was not bred that way, or give false information in any other way, are damaging their breed for generations to come, and if found out, also damage their own reputations irreparably.

Honesty

The whole of dog breeding depends on breeders' and judges' honesty. The giving of puppies' later dates of birth than their true ones on entry forms, to enable them to be shown longer in puppy and junior classes, is less serious but can still mislead other breeders and judges into thinking how well such youngsters have matured and so cause them to win more than perhaps they should win were their correct date of birth revealed. And chopping off years at the other end of dogs' life is another way some people seek to gain an advantage.

Pot-hunting is yet another ethical matter that may cause problems. In some breeds champions are shown year after year, even under judges who have previously awarded them CC's. When dogs have piled up a high number of CC's it takes strength of mind by judges to place them down the line, but that is what should be done if the judge considers that is where they should be placed, on their comparative merits.

The whole dog game, breeding and exhibiting, is dependent on the honesty of those people concerned. It is vital to dog's breeding's future, and by large that ethic is well respected. Long may it remain so. (DOG WORLD, September 7, 1990)

Chapter 2

A DEBATE WHICH WILL NEVER END

A successful breeder of two breeds in Ireland asks for an article on the relative importance when judging of breed type and soundness of movement. She has been asked to judge other breeds, one of two of which do not move as well as the breeds she owns, and another has a frequently occurring fault in its coat. This is a constant problem for judges and not an easy one to resolve - a large part of it is the degree of the fault concerned.

A Dalmatian without clearly defined or with insufficient spots, a Weimaraner which is not the required silvery or similar grey colour or a wire-haired terrier with a soft silky coat are all very untypical examples of their breeds, and yet the dogs concerned are quite well able to perform their function in life provided they are well made, sound and have their particular breed's instincts.

Lack of Spots

The crime that these imaginary dogs commit is that the lack of correct decoration, colour or coat texture renders them highly untypical of their breeds. I always recall judging an entry of Dalmatians where the majority were well marked but poor movers, oversized and rather coarse. There was one of really beautiful type, quality, good size and an excellent mover, which sadly had hardly any spots - easily the second best Dalmatian in the entry, except for his lack of spots.

Fortunately there was a very good one to go BOB. Had the latter not been there I would have been in the most difficult situation !

In judging, type is the first and foremost essential. When a dog is not typical of its breed it has very little chance of winning anything at all, but in such clear-cut circumstances of wrong type, they can usually be consigned to the also-rans or awards can be withheld.

It is in borderline cases, when such points as mentioned above are not as good as they should be on some of the dogs which are otherwise excellent, that it is so difficult to decide just how much emphasis a judge should put on points special to a breed, as opposed to general conformation and soundness.

Faced with a class of Fox Terriers in which some are beautifully marked and presented but not as well constructed and balanced as others which fail in markings and presentation, what is the judge to do ? Should he go for type and put up the well-marked and presented ones or should he plump for those which move well and present a pleasing picture from the point of view of make and shape and thereby movement, but are not well-presented ?

This is a dilemma which confronts judges through a whole range of breeds. An off-the-cuff answer might be that a breed specialist judge would go for the well-marked and nicely presented ones, while the all-rounder will not want to put up something untypical, however sound it may be.

Of course, there is far more to all these breeds than just the points mentioned and it is often possible to come to a decision by balancing the dogs' good points against their poor ones and to arrive at a decision which satisfies the judge, and the winner, even if it leaves the ringside in some doubt !

But when there is very little between individual dogs it can be very tough sometimes to come to a decision which would, so to speak, stand up in court. Competition in Fox Terriers is so high that such a situation is unlikely to occur in the UK, but it may very well do so abroad where numbers are far less and quality not so high. (This does not apply in America either, where the standard is very high.)

In such breeds as Manchester Terriers and English Toy Terriers, where numbers are small, the fanciers rate markings very high, these problems are always with the judges. Rich tan marking, in the right places, pencilling on the toes and thumb marks on the pasterns, are regarded as very important. Judges who give conformation and soundness prior consideration are not likely to attract good entries at subsequent shows !

Maybe because so much emphasis was laid on markings, and the fact that the choice of breeding stock was restricted, soundness in these breeds was of a rather low standard for many years. But in recent years there has been great improvements in both breeds. Breeders have tackled these points successfully and judging these breeds is now much easier than it used to be.

In some breeds the exact shade of colour is indispensable to achieve correct type. Neither the Welsh Springer Spaniel nor the Hungarian Vizsla can afford to veer away from the precise shade of red which is typical of their respective breeds, if they are to have much hope of success. It is remarkable how consistent these two breeds are in this respect.

It would be interesting to know how the Weimaraner and the Vizsla came by their very distinctive colours. It has been suggested that the Weimaraner has the blue Great Dane behind it somewhere, while an alternative view is that the Weimaraner is a pure breed and its colour is a dilute form of a darker hue. But how the Vizsla got its very distinctive colour is even less clear. That he descends from a yellow Turkish hunting dog is as near an origin as one can get. It is odd that no other breed has quite the same colour as these two European gundogs.

In the showring, type is regarded as highly important. Dogs which are not typical of their breed are heavily penalized. In the field and in other work the breed's ability is regarded as far more important than how the individual looks. Some field-trial champions and highly regarded workers in other breeds would get nowhere at Crufts or other shows. In both spheres soundness is considered a major asset. (DOG WORLD, October 15, 1993)

GOOD JUDGES MUST HAVE KNOWN GOOD DOGS

Good new judges cannot be produced overnight, despite all the modern aids, training courses, video tapes, lectures and other forms of instruction available today.

A good few years of close contact with one or more breeds and pretty good examples of those breeds are essential to lay the foundation of good judgment of dogs.

Few breeds, even the most numerous and those of the highest merit, are blessed with more than a small number of top class judges who know the breed through and through, who are unbiased in every way and can be relied upon to do as good a job on dogs they have never seen as on those with which they are familiar.

Theory and the study of breeds' backgrounds, uses and history are fine, and judging courses too have their value, provided the instructors know what they are talking about, but in the end it is daily contact with good dogs, from early morning till late at night, that provides the background without which no-one can hope to become a top class judge.

Over the years I have seen many examples of people who have striven to become leading judges from different backgrounds. Perhaps after years of stewarding, as administrators, breed club and show secretaries, show managers or members of committees, they have jumped on the bandwagon and become judges. Such people know everyone in their breed, attend all meetings and become a part of the breed at the time concerned.

How can Old Joe or Daisy be ignored when they are sitting there when judging lists are being compiled? The question of whether they know the breed tends to be pushed to one side as they are added to the judges lists, year after year.

Vital

Such people become judges of the breeds concerned, but they should never quite make the top ranks unless they have good dogs - that essential ingredient for real knowhow when it comes to judging. To become judges whom breeders want to show under, whose awards carry a cachet unobtainable elsewhere - half a lifetime needs to be spent learning about one's breed and the other half putting that knowledge into practice. Constant contact with good dogs is a vital ingredient to good judging.

It does a disservice to the breed when judges are appointed who lack the practical experience which is so vital really to understand dogs and the breed concerned in particular. An exhibitor should make it plain that he or she really understands his or her breed before being invited to judge at even the smallest show - never mind how many certificates or other awards have been attained.

To be efficient in management, good at other respects of the running of shows, is not enough, valuable as those talents are. Whenever you find a real top notcher, a Joe Braddon, a Judy de Casembroot, a Bill Siggers or a Rae Furness, you will find the same background, long and successful contact with top class dogs in a number of breeds.

There are many ways of getting onto judging lists; show secretaries and chairmen are in a strong position here - by inviting officials of other clubs and all breed societies to judge at their shows they can be confident of being invited to judge in return. There have been, and still are, such rings in operation, but exhibitors know all about them and stay away accordingly, so indicating how they feel about such people.

The right way to become a judge is to plod on as a breeder and exhibitor until invited to judge because of the quality of the dogs you have. Such breeders enter the ring as judges with no mistrust in the mind of exhibitors.

Knowledge

It is a great mistake for exhibitors to be in too much a hurry to judge. An individual who takes eight or ten years learning about their breed will make a far better judge than one who bursts buttons to get into the ring before he or she has been engaged in the game for long enough to learn the rudiments of the very wide field of knowledge that it takes to produce a good judge.

No judge knows it all; the type and conformation and special points of the 150 or so breeds which are shown in the UK vary in so many ways that no-one can be an expert on all breeds. All judges make mistakes, or get things wrong on occasions; not do so would be inhuman. But it is possible to acquire an eye for dogs which tells a knowledgeable judge instantly whether the animal before him is good or bad, sound or unsound, worthy a prize or not.

To acquire that eye takes a lot of time, a lot of practice and some flair for the job, none of which can be learnt from books, or while totting up club accounts, or by joining judging rings. Good new judges come up slowly until quite suddenly they are accepted for their expertise and diligence in acquiring it.

Those hours watching and caring for good dogs have all contributed vital ingredients to such an individual's knowledge. (DOG WORLD, January 18, 1991)

THE SIX BASIC ESSENTIALS

A man with long experience with working gundogs has asked for an article on introducing show quality into his workers. The breed concerned is one in which show-bred stock is capable of work up to field trial standard but with increasing age he finds field work hard going and while retaining the same lines which have served him so well in the field, he would like to improve his line up to show standard while still maintaining their working ability.

I feel the writer would have been wiser to consult Mrs or Miss Rosslin-Williams who both have great experience in this process, but as I have been asked I will tackle the subject.

This is a pretty tough proposition. It is difficult enough to establish a consistent line of high standard for show in any breed - to maintain a high standard of working ability adds considerably to the task, and also to the time required. The two factors do not always go together - enthusiasts for these two objects tend to work away from one another. For breeders of working gundogs, appearance is often a minor consideration while for exhibition a dog's keenness to work can be regarded as a nuisance.

In this article I am concerned only with improving type and quality starting from a fairly low level.

In tackling this problem the first thing is to take a long, hard and frank look at the foundation stock in respect of the basic attributes of a top quality dog. These, for me, are the six absolute basic essentials - type, substance, balance, correct conformation, movement and temperament. In this case working ability will also be a vital factor but that is not my concern here.

To take the six basic essentials in turn. Type is the absolute bedrock of merit. If a pure-bred dog does not have breed type to a pretty good degree it is really worthless to breed from for improvement of type in its breed, however well it may work.

Type is the culmination of the points of the Standard as combined in one animal, and the head is always a very significant part of type. It is very difficult, and unusual, to win to a high level with dogs which do not have reasonable quality in head, so improvement in head is one of the first steps the breeder should give priority. This can almost always be found in some of the most successful show kennels. A line-bred good example is the most likely to bring out the desired improvement.

Important as it is, the head is not the only indicator of correct type. Many other parts of the animal go to make up correct breed type, depending on the breed. These too must be considered - it is not good having the best heads if they are attached to untypical, ill-made or unsound bodies, or if their bearers fail in one or more of the other essentials.

Improvement in overall type then is a major, perhaps the most important, part of the exercise.

Substance, the size, weight, bone and muscle of the animal, is the next factor for the breeder to consider. This is absolutely essential in the working gundog in which neither a wilting lily nor an overdone heavyweight will fill the bill. Substance in each breed is really part of type, and a typical example of any breed will have about the right amount of substance. Too much or too little detracts greatly from type - the all-important factor.

Balance too is very much part of type - it is a subtle characteristic which indicates how the various parts of the dog are proportioned to each other. It adds greatly when it is present in a high degree, and is a very obvious flaw when absent. Lack of balance amounts to a failure in type, a serious flaw. Correct conformation in conjunction with correct type is the key to a good show dog. Getting all the bones in the dog's skeleton in the right places, and of the right proportions, is a struggle in which all breeders are constantly engaged, whether they are aware of it or not ! Breeding for a particular type entails getting the conformation for that type about right, or the breeder's aim is missed.

A dog can be of good type with wrong conformation, but it cannot be a first rate dog without both correct type and correct conformation, so this is another factor which must be sought after and maintained if top quality animals are to be produced. This again can be found in the leading show kennels, preferably in a degree of linebreeding.

Temperament

Sound movement comes from correct conformation. It is particularly important to get the conformation of the forehand and the hindquarters correct to ensure the correct movement of a particular breed. Good, well placed shoulders and upper arms and well constructed and balanced hindquarters add quality to a dog as few other points do.

Almost but not quite as important as type is temperament. A shy dog of superlative type is good to look at but is pretty useless for anything else and poor temperament is a tremendous handicap to a dog in a show ring, and its daily life. So this is another factor that must be given major consideration. Poor temperament can be inherited, and such heritage should be avoided; it is usually inherited, but can be induced by poor management. Lack of human contact, too isolated a life, or too overbearing a manner by the owner, can turn a dog shy or sullen. It is well worthwhile to breed for excellent nerve-free temperament, even if it means slowing one's progress a little to get it. Bold showmanship is a great asset in the show ring.

These are the six essentials : type, substance, balance, correct conformation, movement and temperament. Any dog possessing all six at a high standard is bound to be a pretty good dog. If a breeder goes for these basic ingredients of merit in his stock he will be on very firm ground to enable him to produce first rate examples of his breed. If he can also add a little extra quality in head, and maintain working ability, he will be indeed in a strong position. (DOG WORLD, April 23, 1993)

THE PRINCIPLES OF JUDGING DOGS

I have received a long letter from a very successful breeder in Europe who feels that politics, over administration and the co-operation of friends in the judging of dogs is having a bad influence upon certain breeds in his and other European countries.

He has asked for an article on the principles of the judging of dogs; highlighting those unwritten laws by which judges of dogs are constrained to judge to the best of their ability, so revealing their knowledge of the breeds concerned, and to have always in mind the best interests of any breed they may be called upon to judge.

Of course the breed Standards and a judge's knowledge of both a breed and its Standard are of great importance, but there is more to judging than can be found in any breed Standard; and this is where judges' principles have a major part to play.

First and foremost judges must be concerned with the merit of the dogs before them; no other consideration should concern them, but there are matters in many breeds which are not mentioned in the breed Standards : defects the judge knows to be hereditary, running eyes, lameness, skin disease, hostility to humans or shyness - all on occasions arise to complicate a judge's task. Judges must not act as veterinary surgeons, though a few of the latter do judge dogs, and judges must not take it upon themselves to diagnose disease in the show-ring - they must simply regard symptoms of diseases as faults.

Faults

When a judge suspects that a serious physical or temperamental disorder is present in a dog, he is at liberty to place it out of the prize placings, or to withhold from it any award. It is not for a judge to decide what is wrong with a dog. He is most unlikely to be qualified to do so, nor will he have the necessary equipment or aids available for diagnosis even if he is qualified. Judges must have the welfare of the breed they are judging in mind and should not award high placings to dogs liable to damage that breed through their progeny. Sometimes the overall best dog in a class may have a bad fault, not evident in those of lesser quality. Then the judge has to decide whether the degree of the fault is such that it represents a danger to the breed, or if the merit of the possessor of the fault is such that it can carry it and still win.

Friends and enemies

All judges of experience have been faced with situations such as this, and sometimes decide one way and sometimes the other, depending on the merit

of the dog concerned and its competitors. I was once faced with such a situation when by far the best dog present at a breed show was limping. It had severely cut pad on one foot and that was clearly the cause of the lameness, so I took a deep breath and made it best in show on its outstanding merits. Such situations call for judging at its highest and most difficult level.

Personal considerations must have no bearing on a judge's decisions. If his worst enemy has the best dog in a class, and if his best friend has the worst one, they must be placed accordingly, and vice-versa. Ownership must play no part in a judge's decision. He is there to judge the dogs, not their owners or handlers.

A judge must show no favour - to ownership, colour, volume of coat, presentation or any other matter other than the overall merit, including health and temperament of the dogs concerned. He is there to place the dogs in their order of merit and for no other purpose. The owners do not matter : they are only there to show the dogs. When a class is concerned with the winner qualifying for an annual or nationwide competition the same rule applies : no favour, or the opposite, must be shown to any owner or handler.

Breeders' and/or handlers' reputations must not sway a judge's decision. Should a big shot in a breed's hierarchy show under an inexperienced judge, that owner's dog must be given the same consideration as any other exhibitor's dog and no more. And if, in the opinion of the judge, there are better dogs present, then they must win. To put up the big shot with a poor dog over exhibitors with better dogs will finish that judge's reputation before it has had time to get going.

If the big shot has the best dog, then of course he must go up. Nor must leading breeders be dumped because it would be thought clever or popular to do so. It is the dogs that must be placed in their order of merit, not the owners, if a judge is to be respected.

Only by judging to the best of his ability without fear or favour will a judge gain the respect of his peers. This is a primary consideration for all judges and absolutely basic to real success : if a judge has to put up his best friend, the judge at the next show, or a dog bred by himself - because those dogs are the best present - then he must do so.

No matter how conscientiously and competently a judge goes to work there will always be ringside carpers who will think up - usually unworthy and inaccurate - reasons why a judge put one dog over the others. This one simply has to ignore. Provided a judge has sound reasons for his placings it does not matter what the carpers say. Whichever dog has won, unless it is their own, that type of ringside critic will always be critical. It's their nature, they cant help it, they just had the misfortune to be born bad losers.

When one attains the highest levels of judging, of groups and best in show, the same principles apply. To judge the dogs as they are on the day is the only way, paying no attention to what the competitors have won previously, who owns them, or who sent them in. Simply judge to the best of your ability and you will be respected.

It is not clever to "bury" - as they say in Australia - the great winner any more than it is smart to put up an unfinished youngster, but if these things have to be done because of the relative merit of the competitors as the judge sees them, then so be it, he should go ahead and put the best dog first. That way

he will have nothing to bother his conscience or disturb his sleep in the days to come. Let the best dog win and the judge can go home happy, as well as that dog's owner. (DOG WORLD, March 1, 1991)

HARMONY AMONG THE PARTS

In any really great dog, correct type, balance, symmetry and proportion are essential in its make-up. That is why exaggerations are always regarded with suspicion by knowledgeable judges.

When features are exaggerated or minimised to the extent that they alter the accepted appearance of the dog, its balance is destroyed and the dog becomes untypical of its breed.

Chambers dictionary describes balance as "equality, or proportion of weight or power, harmony among the parts". Proportion is defined as "the fitness of parts to each other" and symmetry as "the beauty of form in the disposition of parts".

All three of these words and their definitions apply to dogs of quality. In a well made dog there is always "harmony among the parts" : the weight or power of the dog needs to be in "just proportion" so that the forehands fit the hindquarters, the head is of a size to balance with the body - always, of course in accordance with the specific breed's Standard description.

So much of the beauty of a good dog depends on the way its parts are placed and sized in proportion to one another.

When a dog is exceptionally well made and moves in accordance with the conformation, with verve, covering its ground freely and with drive, then it becomes clear that the balance, proportion and symmetry of its parts have been carried through to produce perfect harmony of movement.

Such a dog is the Irish Setter, Sh Ch Danaway Debonair, who won BIS at Crufts this year. He is extremely well made and balanced, making a most striking picture standing still; and when he moves it all comes alive, and no flaw in his construction comes to light. A good looking dog when he moves is sadly often unable to substantiate the impression of excellence it gives when in repose. Not so this one !

Nor his runner-up the Irish Wolfhound, Ch Drakesleat Odyt, another example of first rate conformation, balance and movement.

The correct or desirable balance for each breed is described in its breed Standard, and in many cases it varies a great deal.

A Lakeland Terrier and a Welsh Terrier are very much alike but there is a difference in the lengths of the heads and the height at the shoulder which gives these breeds a different balance; the same applies to the Wire Fox Terrier. This breed has very much the same conformation as the other two but more length of head than the Welsh and more refinement in skull and length of foreface than either of the other two, which gives each breed a different balance.

Good breeders of each of these breeds recognize a typical specimen of their particular breed, and to them a Welsh-looking Lakeland or a Fox Terrier looking Welsh is not right. Their balance is wrong and therefore unpleasing to the eye accustomed to correct type in those breeds. To please a connoisseur of

any of these breeds, a dog must have the balance recognised as correct in each of these breeds.

All spaniels have spaniel character, and in a general sense, spaniel type but differences in balance or proportion - as well as colour in several - make their breed type unmistakable.

Unless the Sussex Spaniel for instance is lower to ground with a shorter head than a liver Field Spaniel standing behind him, he is in danger of being mistaken with a poor example of that breed. It is the balance between the height at the shoulder and the length of the body plus the proportionally different head which give these two breeds their individual type.

Balance is not only necessary in the structure of the dog, its movement must be balanced too, so that the length of stride taken by the forelegs balances with that of the hind legs. Dachshunds, and other short-legged breeds, are prone to all sorts of movement faults; some of them flap their front feet, turning them in and out, others patter along with their hind feet tapping their stomachs and showing no drive. Others are out at elbow or cow-hocked, but the best of them are a real joy to see in action.

When exaggerations are allowed to develop type changes, sometimes permanently. In fact, few breeds have remained completely unchanged in type in the last 50 or 60 years. Perhaps Deerhounds and Schipperkes have changed less than any other breed.

Even the Wire Fox Terrier, one of the first breeds to reach a high standard of perfection after shows started 130 years ago, is now bred with far longer hind legs than it was in those early dogs, with the result that when viewed going away these days the Wire has rather exaggerated hind action and does not win as well as it used to do.

Some other breeders show this exaggerated hind action these days so that their hind legs no longer move in harmony with the forelegs; throwing up of the hocks to keep co-ordination with the much shorter forelegs. The effect is wrong balance with too much turn of stifle and the hocks placed too far behind the dogs, with the adverse effect upon the proportion and symmetry of these breeds in present form.

A well made, sound dog is a joy to breed and to judge, and very well worth striving for if the highest available awards are what breeders aim for. (DOG WORLD, April 16, 1993)

Chapter 7

THAT ESSENTIAL 'EYE'

One of the major skills which an experienced breeder or judge acquires after a considerable apprenticeship in their breed, is the ability to sum up the merit of a particular dog almost at a glance, and irrespective of coat, condition of the animal, or its handler's performance.

A newcomer to a very numerous breed has written to ask how the good judges can get through large classes so quickly, when there is so much about a dog to check on and consider.

Experienced judges of talent have acquired "an eye for a dog". Newcomers to dog judging find it difficult to appreciate the value of this. It is only when they have been at the game for some years that it begins to dawn upon people new to judging that there are things about dogs, in particular their own breed, that they do not fully understand.

A few people seem never to acquire skill at judging. They put up, or down, dogs for all sort of reasons not connected with their actual merit. They appear to have political, personal or other quite inconsequential motives for judging as they do. Happily such judges are usually a minority and most eventually acquire a perceptive eye for a dog.

This factor is built upon observation and study over a long period of what is right and what is wrong in any particular breed. A good knowledge of the Standard and close observation of high class specimens are essential for success in this field.

Daily contact

A fancier who owns good quality stock and is a successful breeder and good rearer of youngsters will be likely to have a better eye for, and also to become a better judge, than one who is content to operate at a lower level of quality - though a great deal can be learned by attending shows where high quality examples owned by other people are regularly to be seen, and by paying close attention to the judging.

One does not necessarily have had to own or bred a particular breed to judge it, but it certainly helps. An eye for a breed comes much more quickly to someone in daily contact with such a breed than to judges who contact them only occasionally.

An eye for a particular breed or two helps a great deal in acquiring an eye for further varieties.

The kind of thing which gives a breeder or judge an eye for a dog is proper understanding of the basic conformation - the bone structure of the breed, in particular the structure, size, proportion and function of the forehand and hindquarters.

A breeder or judge with an eye for a dog can see at a glance whether or not a particular dog has a good slope of shoulder, a compatible length and placement of the upper arm, a correctly sloped croup and sufficient angulation at stifle and hock. In long coated breeds a judge has to handle these areas to discover their merit, and it pays to do so in smooth coated breeds too.

All these points affect a dog ability to move well or badly and much can be told how a dog is likely to move simply by looking at these points.

An eye for a dog enables a breeder or a judge to recognize, at a glance, that a particular dog has a combination of type, balance, the correct conformation for its breed - different in every breed to some extent - and the character of its breed, which combine to make it a high class specimen - or, if faulty, a less good one.

I recall, many years ago taking a new puppy into its first class at a championship show and going straight through the classes - as one would in those days - to win the CC, under the late Mrs Dolly Robbs of the famous and well named Cylva Bull Terriers. As she handed me the CC Mrs Robbs said "Why so surprised ? I knew she was winner as soon as I set eyes on her".

Mrs Robbs had owned a very strong kennel in the early 1930's and she had the reputation of being a very astute buyer, a by-product of her highly developed eye for a dog. And yet she had not owned any dogs for some years and had not judged for a considerable time before making that rather dashing placement.

She was not too far out in her assessment as the bitch became a champion still a puppy (she could in those days) and went on to win the breed's major award, the Regent Trophy, at the end of the year.

Open mind

In the same breed there is a breeder who has made up a number of champions over a long period of years but has never been lucky enough to make up a really great one, and yet that breeder undoubtedly has an eye for a dog as she is one of the very best judges we have, quick, decisive and with the ability to recognize merit, no matter how immature, poorly presented or poorly handled, and with excellent understanding of type, conformation and movement.

Many judges who get into a tangle are over-concerned with faults, the sort of person who announces that he or she will never put up a dog with a less than perfect mouth, or other than dark eyes, or such specific fault, is heading for disaster. Inevitably they will find themselves faced with by far the best dog in a class with just the fault they have rejected. Sadly judges of that kind are often reluctant to eat their words and put up the best dog, instead placing first something quite inferior.

Good judges keep an open mind and assess each dog as a whole, not discarding it for a single fault. Judges are required to place the exhibits in their order of merit; not to exercise their whims and fancies in respect of points they may particularly like or dislike.

Of course, an eye for a dog is not all that a judge, or a breeder, needs; other factors will help towards success in the show ring, but possession of such a gift

gives him or her a huge advantage over those not so fortunate. Such judges are able to judge quickly and usually very well. (DOG WORLD, May 7, 1993)

THE ESSENTIAL INTANGIBLES

Perhaps the most difficult hurdles for judges to surmount are the intangible factors which vary in each breed and are virtually impossible to express precisely in words. Type, balance, quality and style are all individual to each and every breed.

Even breeds descended from the same roots vary in type. In some cases these differences are the very cause of one breed becoming two breeds - or more, as in the case of the Dachshunds and the Belgium Shepherds.

The West Highland White Terrier broke away from the Cairn Terrier, and now the two are quite distinct in type. The Westie is shorter backed, the Cairn higher on the leg and more flexible in body than the ideal Westie.

The Norfolk Terrier broke away from the Norwich Terrier and now there are distinct differences between the two breeds, quite apart from their ear carriage. They differ in expression and in demeanour; the Norfolk being rather less outgoing and bossy than the Norwich.

The Setter breeds are all built on galloping lines but the Irish Setter is racier and livelier in temperament than the placid English Setter, while the Gordon is heavier still and more dour in temperament, as befits a Scottish breed.

Grown apart

The Scottish and Skye Terriers are ostensibly designed for the same purpose, to hunt small game and go to ground if required. Though from a common origin, they have grown widely apart in type and balance over the years. The short back required in the Scottie is just what is not required in the Skye, and the head points of the two breeds have become completely different.

Points that add up to quality in the Bulldog are exactly such as Saluki breeders would never condone, and vice-versa.

A dog of quality has to have quality in terms of each breed's Standard requirements and the purposes which the various breeds are to perform. The dour stand-off look of old Sourmug, the Bulldog, is completely different from the far-away gaze of the Saluki or the Afghan Hound, just as the smooth sharp lines of the Bull Terrier are totally different from the Samoyed's flowing coat and welcoming smile - although both breeds are all white and similar in other ways.

It can take many years for breeders fully to learn and appreciate the niceties of type and quality, the balance and style that are correct, or not correct, for just one breed. And here the all-rounders really have their work cut out when they set out to learn to appreciate correctly these intangible factors that so often will come into their assessment when judging at the highest level, and where many breeds are concerned.

It is not easy to define these intangible factors when they vary with everyone of the 160 odd breeds, and which are very often more a matter of proportion, strength and finish than tangible items such as height, length and weight. Balance, quality and style are all parts of type, which is different in every breed and individual in every breed. A dog can be typical, balanced and have style if it is too big, too small, sound or unsound, or has a faulty construction, but it can never be a good specimen of the breed if it is of the wrong type, even though it is of the correct height and weight and perfectly sound.

A Dachshund that is high on the leg with an unlevel back can never be a good one, no matter how well he moves; it does not fulfil its Standard's basic requirements and so must be untypical, no matter how good its head or excellent its movement may be.

While to be a good specimen, a whippet must display a nice blend of strength, substance and refinement throughout its conformation, all contained within a series of sweeping lines from nose to tail.

The best dog in a show will not go as far as it could if it refuses to put its qualities on show and is liable to be beaten by something less good which is showing its heart out. Showmanship is an invaluable asset in a show dog but judges should not mistake it for merit. The quiet unresponsive specimen with real merit should always beat the flashy flatcatcher. (DOG WORLD, date n/a)

TYPE, THE INTANGIBLE

The world of show dogs has a language all its own in which certain words have very special meanings - usually a lot narrower than when the same words are used in reference to wider matters. This applies especially to the words used to the intangible factors that play so big a part in the make up of high class show dogs.

The word "type" is one of several rather vague terms we apply to dogs which are instantly recognisable to the experienced breeder, always present in the first rate specimens of the breed, but very difficult to define precisely and which take a lot of understanding and appreciating by the newcomer to a breed. Other words of similar intangible character are "quality" and "balance". Such factors as size, height, weight and colour are finite - they can be measured or a scale applied to them - but these measurements cannot be applied to the intangible which are in the observer's mind and like beauty in the human or the landscape, can only be appreciated by the beholder. Also, what adds up to good type in one breed often does not do so in other breeds, although they are very similar. A judge who promoted a Welsh Terrier with the refinement and length of head which is correct for a Fox Terrier will be considered to have put up the wrong type; just as would a judge who promoted a Hungarian Vizsla of the height and substance required by a Weimaraner. While each of the above might be of good structure and quality and move soundly they would both fail to comply with the type called for in their Standard.

A dog can appear physically perfect, move with precision and style and measure the correct height and size called for in its Standard, yet unless it has the correct type for its breed it will have no appeal for the real expert. An eye for type is indispensable to good judging of dogs; all good judges have it although they may not all agree on exactly what is the correct type for a particular breed. Ask a dozen judges to define type in any breed and you are likely to receive a dozen different answers, but all pretty close to what the Standard describes.

Perfection

It is as if these intangibles properties possessed by all really good dogs are spiritual, rather than actual, although all are based on physical attributes, except for character and style.

Type as applied to dogs has a special meaning. It indicates that the set of characteristics listed in the Standard are all present and in the right proportions. No two dogs are ever exactly alike, even within a very high class breed - always there are minor (sometimes major) differences, but overall a typical dog complies pretty closely to the Standard's requirements.

The best definition of type I have come across is : "Type is the sum of those points which make a dog like its own breed and no other." Without reasonably correct type a dog is a non-starter on the road to success in the show ring. Types within a breed can vary quite considerably. For instance, there is a distinct difference in the type of the solid and the particoloured Cockers in the ring today.

It may be claimed that this should not be so - all are the same breed - but there is no question that there are differences. Some breeders keep only the blacks and reds and some only roans and particolours. It may be that there are colour preferences for reasons not attributable to type. Some colours are more amenable in temperament than others and some are easier to prepare for show - no names, no pack drill ! Very few breeders keep both solids and coloureds. But both sectors can and do produce outstandingly good cockers. Absolute perfection of type lies at the centre of a Standard's description of a breed, not at its extremes. Perfect type occurs more often, in most breeds, in bitches rather than in dogs. Exaggerations are great destroyers of type in many breeds. Big, coarse, overcoated Pekingese are currently doing a lot of winning except when the really expert judges are taking the breed. There are always breeders who try to get ahead of the other competitors by showing dogs with a bit more of this or that feature. Very soon this practice can lead to dogs which are untypical and unbalanced. An exaggerated dog will, sadly, often attract unthinking breeders to make use of its services - and so spread the drawbacks of oversize or some other bad point.

Thrilling

With breeds in which great size or weight is a desired point it is of course necessary to have males somewhere near the upper limits of the Standard's recommendations to maintain the desired type, but even in such breeds excessive height or weight can produce a variety of problems which would not arise if the Standard were more closely adhered to. In these breeds some breeders are tempted to aim for bigger and bigger specimens, with disastrous results.

The reverse often arises in the toy breeds; balance and thereby correct type is often lost when attempts are made to breed very small specimens. Here again perfection in type or its nearest approach is found in the medium sizes. Very tiny specimens may be pleasing and remarkable, but they in turn are likely to produce females too small to breed naturally, a real crime to foist upon any breed.

A dog of outstanding type is a thrilling sight and a great achievement for its breeder and for any true fancier of a breed. To be true type it does not have to be exaggerated, just to comply with the terms of its Standard and possess balance and quality plus that little extra something which makes it a "real one" and lifts it out of the rut of mediocrity and ordinariness. (DOG WORLD, May 31, 1991)

THE MEANING OF BALANCE

A reader from Israel, which speaks well for the circulation of DOG WORLD, has written asking what exactly is meant by the word balance when used in reference to dogs.

In judging the merits of dogs, there are six essentials which one must always have in the forefront of one's mind. They are : type, substance, balance, conformation, movement and firm and typical temperament for the breed concerned.

With the exception of the last one, all these qualities are related. For a dog to have good type it needs to have an appropriate amount of substance; he must have conformation which is more or less correct for his breed. his movement must be reasonably orthodox for the breed he represents, and he must be balanced to comply pretty closely with the terms of its Standard. Without all, or at least most, of these essentials he is unlikely to be a good example of his breed – i.e. a good type.

What is balance ? In the context of the judging of dogs, balance refers to the proportions of the parts of the dog in the terms of that breed Standard. An Airedale may have a beautifully balanced head for an Airedale but in no way would such a head look balanced on a Bulldog or a Borzoi, or even on a Lakeland Terrier; Old Sourmug's head is wider and deeper, the Borzoi's longer and leaner and the Lakeland's shorter in both skull and muzzle.

Each Standard in its entirety lays down the balance of the breed it describes, and breeders and judges need to know just how the various parts of the breed should be proportioned to produce a typical example of the breed described. If, in a gundog class, a Flatcoat Retriever and a Labrador standing side by side have heads of the same length and breadth, one or the other - possibly both ! - will be out of balance. The Flatcoat's longer, more streamlined head would be quite out of place on a Labrador, and the Labrador's broader skull and less filled-in muzzle equally so on a Flatcoat.

In the Kennel Club's Standards all three type of Dachshund have the same basic Standard but a Longhair or a Wirehair who had the same streamlined appearance as the Smooth would - to an experienced judge or breeder's eye - appear to be short of substance. It is, in fact, only the texture and fullness of their coats that gives the Long and Wire Dachshunds the appearance of greater substance, but that is enough to give the impression that these two varieties are more substantial, more heavily boned and built than their cousin, the Smooth.

This fact is even more apparent in the Miniature Dachshunds. Mini Smooths are often criticised for the lack of bone in comparison with the other two varieties, an accusation that is not always backed up by fact when these little ones are carefully handled. Profuse furnishing on the legs of the Miniature Longs and Wires can, and sometimes do, hide a shortage of bone.

The skill in breeding Bull Terriers lies in striking a nice balance between the strength and the substance of the Bulldog, and the agility and athletic appearance of the Terrier. If we, in seeking for activity and good movement, lean too much towards the Terrier, we end up with a weedy flatcatcher, probably excelling in quality and movement; if too much in the other direction we end up with a cumbersome, probably short-legged and decidedly unathletic lump.

Devilish hard

The ideal, perfect Bull Terrier type and balance lies somewhere between the two - exactly where is devilish hard to find. But just now and then someone hits right on the ideal balance between substance, quality, activity and sound movement, and we are blessed with a real flyer, a model for breeders to aim for in their future programmes.

Cairn Terriers have a different problem. A good Cairn is compact but not too short in back, and with good length of leg so that there is plenty of daylight to be seen underneath the dog. It is tempting for breeders new to the breed to go for a shorter back and shorter legs to achieve what they see as a smarter Terrier - but in so doing they lose Cairn type. They have upset the balance of the typical Cairn, so valued by those people who understand the correct proportions.

To my mind nothing looks worse in a Chow than the very short legs found in some specimens these days; Chow type is completely ruined by such a fault. Dignity is one of the Chow's major attributes, not possible to attain when the legs are too short. The Chow Standard asks for "essentially well-balanced, leonine in appearance". Lions do not have short legs !

In longhaired breeds where trimming plays a part in presentation, the balance of a dog can be drastically changed by skilful, or inexpert trimming. Given a long backed or short-legged Poodle, an expert trimmer will minimise the faults by taking off coat in certain places and leaving it in others.

If, in the case of a long backed dog, the hair in front of the chest is shortened and the mane allowed to grow to its full length, a little beyond the last rib, the effect, from distance, will be to shorten the apparent length of the dog's body. An experienced judge will, of course, spot such manoeuvring on going over the dog.

When a dog is too short on the leg, the hair on the brisket can be shortened to minimise the fault; just as over-long legs can be made to look less if more hair is left under the chest. Poodles' outlines are quite flexible, depending on the skill of the trimmer. Some are trimmed in different ways to suit the known preferences of different judges !

Skilful trimming can help many breeds where such drastic trimming as is seen in Poodles is not allowed. Skill with the brush can work wonders in long-coated breeds such as the Pekingese, for instance.

A very famous judge once gave a verbal critique at a show of this breed, criticising one particular dog rather severely and awarding it nothing. Later he praised a dog very highly, pointing out how superior it was to the one he had earlier criticised. He was not amused when told it was the same dog, but

groomed by a more expert person. That expert obviously had an eye for the dog's good points that the owner did not appreciate.

No matter how bizarre a breed's make and shape may be, it can be well - or badly - balanced so long as it is judged in terms of its Standard. (DOG WORLD, February 26, 1993)

BALANCE IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

A newcomer to the showing of dogs has written with a number of questions, one of which is asking for a definition of balance in dogs. This correspondent wants to know how balance can apply to breeds which vary so tremendously, and asks how a Sealyham and a Saluki can both be well balanced ?

Someone, somewhere, once wrote that beauty is on the eye of the beholder. Balance when referring to dogs is very much in the same bracket.

An enthusiast for trains will drool over the powerful lines of a giant locomotive, just as an artist is thrilled by the beauty of the Venus de Milo. Each of them sees beauty in high class examples of whatever is that they admire; each has an eye for his subject.

In very much the same way, admirers of different breeds of dog will admire the balance of the really high class examples of their favourite breeds. True balance is an essential attribute in any really high class dog; but balance is not a fixed factor. Dogs come in so many shapes and sizes that balance must be assessed as it is interpreted in each breed's Standard.

Both the Standard of the Cocker Spaniel and Dobermann require the breed concerned to be square in outline but those Standards go on to describe their breed's balance quite differently.

The Cocker's Standard calls for a dog that is "well balanced, compact, measuring approximately the same from the withers to the ground as from the withers to the root of the tail." While the Dobermann's Standard calls for a breed that is "square with height measured vertically from the ground to the highest point at the withers equal to the length from the forechest to the rear projection of the upper thigh".

When these two breeds comply with their Standard's requirements, the result is a balanced dog in each case, and yet for each of them the balance is measured completely differently. The balance of each breed is in the eye of the beholder, familiar with that particular breed's Standard.

A Cocker measured the same way as the Dobermann would have to be far too tall or excessively short in the back to comply with the Dobermann Standard's definition of balance. While a Dobermann which was as long in the back as from the wither to the ground would be as long in the back as the proverbial wet week. The term "balance" means something quite different to fanciers of each of these breeds.

Square

The Boxer Standard expresses similar balance to the Dobermann in a different way, saying "The body viewed in profile should be of square appearance. The length of body from the front of the chest to the rear of the body should equal the height from the ground to the top of the shoulder, giving the Boxer a short

coupled, square profile". In general these two breeds have very similar outlines and therefore similarly described balance.

The Bearded Collie's balance is somewhat different. That Standard asks for "a lean active dog, longer than it is high, in an approximate proportion of five to four, measured from the point of the chest to the point of the buttock." This, of course, arises from the fact that the Bearded Collie's legs are not as long as those of the Dobermann and the Boxer - his way of working is as a sheepdog or cattle drover, not as a guard dog. Because the boxer is considerably longer in the leg than the Bearded Collie, it tends to look much shorter in back though the actual difference is only sight - again correct balance is in the eye of the owner and judge.

For a more extreme example, it is quite possible to have a well-balanced Basset Hound or Dachshund provided the individual example of those breeds is correctly made according to its Standard, though a judge accustomed only to looking at long or medium legged breeds may have some difficulty in adjusting his or her eye to the completely different balance of those breeds.

Exaggerations

Much the same applies to such breeds as the Pekingese and the Bulldog whose balances are completely different from other breeds. To achieve first rate specimens of either breed, their balance must be in accordance with the Standard.

Breeders of all differently balanced breeds like to see well balanced examples of their breed; other people may consider them exaggerated - it is all in the eye of the beholder. A good judge of these breeds, or any breed of more usual balance, has in his or her's mind eye the correct balance for each breed. Group and BIS judges need to be walking encyclopaedias to carry in their minds all the points and the balances of the different breeds that confront them.

Such judges' task is even more difficult in breeds which are similar in appearance and conformation than in those which differ strongly in type. It is much harder to assess the relative merit between an English and an Irish Setter, or a Lakeland and a Welsh Terrier, than between a Pointer and a Weimaraner or a Sealyham and a Skye Terrier.

Balance is not measured only in the height and length of a dog, though that is how it is usually assessed in Standards. To be well balanced, the size of a dog's head must be in proportion to the body and the power of the hindquarters, the depth of the chest and other less important points and their proportions should be those given in the Standard.

In many long legged breeds balance is evident when the length of the forelegs is approximately equal to the actual depth of the body - not that made apparent by a profusion of coat.

In stand-off coated breeds such as Samoyeds and Chows, the length of the dog legs should be assessed by handling - excessive coat can give quite the wrong impression in these breeds. One way and another, balance is a trap into which it is easy for judges and breeders to fall. Like beauty, balance is in the eye of the beholder, and the beholder needs to know what to look for - in each and every breed. (DOG WORLD, June 14, 1991)

WHAT IS QUALITY ?

Since I started to write this feature for DOG WORLD, around the middle of 1975, I have been asked to discuss the main features which go to make up a good dog on many occasions.

In my view, the essential features of a good example of any breed are as follows : type, substance, balance, conformation, movement and temperament, with three more features which are not essential but highly desirable : quality, style and presentation - the latter includes both the way the dog is prepared and how it is handled in the ring.

During the ensuing years I have written many times about all these aspects of a dog's merit, but the most frequent one to be asked about by readers has always been quality.

Middle order

Once again I have received a plea for a definition of quality from a fairly newcomer to breeding who owns a dog which wins consistently in the middle classes at championship shows but which is frequently reported on as a good specimen, but lacking in quality.

In my book on the judging of dogs, TAKE THEM ROUND PLEASE, first published in 1975 and about to be re-printed, I wrote that "Quality is that subtle something which makes one dog look better than its peers".

Part of quality is the texture of the materials of which the dog is made; it is not a lack of substance but is the way the joints flow together, without unsightly interruptions, and above all it is the dog's own bearing and expression. If it feels like an aristocrat, it will look like one.

Our language

Dictionaries give many definitions of quality according to how the word is used. In terms of dog judging we use the word in two ways - as a noun saying "that dog has quality", and as an adjective when we say "There's a quality dog !" In these contexts the dictionaries describe quality used as a noun as a "grade of goodness" and as an adjective "of a high grade of excellence". But in that weird language we all use in relation to dogs, neither of the above definitions fits exactly what we mean.

Quality when used in relation to dogs has come to mean classiness, of above average merit, having refinement; and by inference showing no signs of coarseness or weakness.

The word quality is sometimes used to indicate a lack of substance or weakness but this is not what it means in relation to dogs. The word should

never imply those meanings but indicate an excellent specimen of correct type and character, and neither coarse nor weedy.

In many breeds a lack of quality destroys correct breed type. A Poodle, of any size, whose skull is over-wide or too deep or whose bone in the legs is too heavy, is immediately condemned as "common", no matter how profuse or well presented the coat. On the other hand, Poodles with weak forefaces, over-narrow skulls or shelly bone are equally lacking in quality.

Quality stems from a dog having good type and a good balance of strength and refinement that fits its Standard. It is nothing to do with size; Standard Poodles can have more quality than Toy Poodles, and the other way about. Quality is closely linked with a breed's type and balance as laid down in the Standard. A head of a certain length or depth can have quality in one breed and be either coarse or weak in many other breeds. There is no precise definition of quality which applies to every breed - in each breed quality is linked with that breed's type, even in breeds which are very similar in general type and conformation.

A Wire Fox Terrier with a head which is of the length and width suited to a Welsh Terrier is not a quality example of its breed any more than a Hungarian Vizsla with a head suited to a Weimaraner could be said to possess quality, although quality is very evident in the best Weimaraners.

To achieve quality, a dog's points need to be in approximately correct proportions to comply with its Standard's requirements. Unless they are, the dog will look incorrectly balanced and so lose quality; it will not look right to judges whose eyes are attuned to correct type.

Severe Test

When a dog of any breed appears with outstanding type, balance and quality, along with soundness and good movement, it usually has no difficulty in going right to the top, but when such a dog appears with a bad fault that is a severe test for the breed's judges.

Those with real knowledge and the courage of their convictions will probably put it up, providing they find it overall of real outstanding merit - despite its fault it will have much else that is good to offer its breed. Others may consider its fault is too serious to be ignored.

History usually comes down on the side of the bold ones who put it up for its many outstanding good points rather than of those who put it down for its one flaw.

Quality is not quite the same as merit. A dog can have all the points required by its Standard and be just about correct and well-balanced all through, and yet because it can lack finish and refinement on its points it can lack quality. Such a dog can be a good dog but not a quality dog.

A Rolls Royce

Skillful presentation and handling can present such a dog in tip top condition, but to the knowledgeable judges it will not have the quality of a more refined

dog, far less well presented. It is rather like comparing a Rolls Royce which is old and poorly maintained with a brand new lorry - it is the Rolls Royce which has the quality.

In short, quality represents type at its very best. Quality is not so much an embellishment as a measure of the merit of the dog concerned. A quality dog has type, balance and merit - four pretty strong cards to hold ! (DOG WORLD, February 1991)

NO BREED HAS ONLY ONE TYPE

A judge of several breeds from South Africa has written asking for an article about type and its importance.

For some people the fact that a judge kept to the same type all through his classes is the highest praise a judge can attract. But judging strictly to one type has disadvantages. It can, and frequently does, mean that inferior dogs of a particular type admired by a judge are placed above superior dogs of different type.

There is very little indeed in the show regulations of any Kennel Club about the way judges should select their winners, or arrive at their decisions. The judges are required to select the best dogs, not those most similar, or one of particular type.

Judging to type is a very different exercise if injustice is to be avoided. To judge consistently to type it requires the standard of merit in the breed concerned to be very high, and for there to be enough animals of the judge's preferred type, which are also of first rate quality, conformation and soundness, to fill the top positions in each class.

His, or her, winners must, in each class be capable of beating all the other dogs of different types, if the awards are to be fair and acceptable to the competitors.

Mightily hard

I feel there are very few breeds, anywhere, in which such conditions exist, either in Britain where numbers, and often quality are at their highest, or elsewhere. It would be very difficult to fill the winning places in all classes with animals of the same type in the great majority of breeds without leaving out animals of higher merit but different type.

It looks consistent and tidy to award top places in class after class to animals of the same type but it is mightily hard in the majority of breeds to do so and get the animals in their order of merit as required by the Kennel Club's regulations - there are seldom enough good ones all of the same type, in most breeds, for this to be possible.

This aspect of the question of judging to type was pointed out by the late Dr John A. Vlasto in his excellent book on the Pekingese.

He writes : "I am against hard and fast rules in judging. Standards provide an elastic framework into which a number of types meet. The judge should put up, if he can, the type he most admires but should hesitate to put a less than first rate specimen of the type he admires above a first rate one of another type".

The doctor goes on : "To my mind it is the existence of these other types which enables us to correct the failings of our own type as they become

noticeable; and speaking as a breeder I should be sorry to see the disappearance of some types I do not admire as a judge, realising that their differences can be useful to the breed as a whole. Certain virtues frequently go with particular faults and breeders must have flexibility to correct these failings."

"Consistency", the doctor goes on, "is the dullest of virtues and when strictly applied in judging dogs often causes some very good dogs to go cardless, while less good ones win, a situation that is not good for the breed".

In some of our strongest breeds where both numbers and quality are high it might, at first glance, appear easy to judge to type - but there are difficulties which are often impossible to overcome.

In these two very strong gundog breeds, Cocker Spaniels and Labrador Retrievers, there are differences in type related to colour. Solid coloured Cockers, the blacks, reds and goldens, are quite different in type from the coloureds, the blue roans, lemon and whites and black and whites. They differ in head, in coat, very often in character and in construction; the solid colours are short and compact, the other coloureds often more racy and softer in expression.

It would be considered outrageous if a judge placed nothing but solids or only roans in all classes. It is inconceivable that in this strong breed some of one colour group were not better than some of the other; both sections attain a very high standard of quality in their best specimens, top honours going just as frequently to one as to the other.

And in Labradors the blacks and yellows are again different in type, particularly the head and coat, and sometimes in tail; and yet Labradors of both colours are quite capable of topping their breed and going on to win the gundog group. No judge of that breed could reasonably justify in putting up only one colour in the standard of competition encountered in this breed - and yet if he did he could be said to be judging to type.

The point made by Dr Vlasto, that different types are needed to correct faults, is a valid one. If a breeder who has gone flat out for some particular point - perhaps quality - finds his stock coming too refined to the point of weediness, he will look around for a dog or bitch of more sturdy build to re-introduce substance to his breeding programme; this may well be of a type he does not care for, but which has the asset he is seeking to improve in his own stock. Or if in trying for some other point a breeder finds that conformation or movement - or both - have declined in his stock, he will very likely have to look to a different type to put the failing right; something perhaps a little plainer but sounder, or without the fault who is bothering him.

Not true

A few people maintain that a breed has only one type - that described by the Standard. This is patently not true. Any ten people reading a breed Standard will have ten different mental pictures of what the Standard describes, probably modelled on a particular dog they have admired. All Standards have room for different types within their broadly based descriptions.

Anything else would be useless. Dogs just do not conform completely to an ideal description, however brilliantly conceived or carefully worded. They all differ, little or much, and that is what makes the judging of dogs such a challenge. Weighing the pros against the cons can be a teasing conundrum at times.

All experienced judges have encountered dogs, even champions, who have points they particularly admire and flaws they particularly dislike.

Of course the answer to all this is that one should try, first and foremost, to place the best dogs in the highest positions; merit is the ultimate criterion of a dog's worth, whether it be of a type the judge particularly admires or not. This situation confronted me at Crufts until the last two group judges sent forward dogs I greatly admired both for type and other parts of their Standard, and so solved my problems for me. (DOG WORLD, April 30, 1993)

YOU CAN'T JUDGE BY MEASUREMENTS

A reader, new to the judging of dogs, asks if it would not be easier for judges if Standards gave measurements for the various parts of the dogs.

This person feels it would be easier for breeders and judges if Standards gave exact measurements and statistics, such as ideal heights, lengths of head and body, depth of chest, girths and weights etc, for breeders to aim for.

The first and last of these points are given in almost all Standards and on the Continent one sees judges measuring dogs in the ring, not only in those breeds like poodles and Dachshunds which have different sizes, but also in such breeds as German Shepherds and Boxers.

This to me never makes sense because it gives over-riding importance to one aspect of judging - size - and makes the judging of young or immature animals even more difficult than it already is. Good judges take the whole animal into consideration - not just one factor of its make-up.

It is possible to have an animal who complies with all the requirements of a set of measurements but which at the same time has an incorrect coat texture, eye colour, tail carriage, poor temperament or some other fault, such as to put it right out of the judges' reckoning for a high position in his or her placings.

Judging is about breeding - it is the judges' job to indicate that, in the light of his or her experience, the dogs who win on the day are the ones in the entry most likely to be useful for furthering the breed's progress in the years to come. That is why I feel it is pointless to allow de-sexed dogs and bitches to be shown.

If the overall best specimen is a little too big, or rather small, but in the light of its other merits is the best on the day, then it must win. That is what judging is all about, finding the best examples on the day, taking all aspects of the Standard into consideration, not just size or any other single characteristic.

Judging is both a science and an art. Judges have to understand how the various parts of the dog, especially its limbs, function in order to be able to assess the efficiency and correctness, or otherwise, of its movements. But when it comes to less tangible features of the dog's appearance, such as proportion and balance, then a judge has to exercise his artistic ability to decide which of the dogs before him best fits its Standard's requirements, and which is, overall, the most pleasing to the eye.

A whole

That decision cannot be achieved solely by mathematics. Such features must relate to one another so that the finished article is pleasing to the eye as a whole, not as an assembly of separate parts, and then there are maturity, coat and body condition, temperament and movement to be considered - none of

which can be weighed or measured, all are a matter of that subtle property, an eye for a dog.

A judge's major consideration is the way the whole animal conforms to its Standard, not just the correctness of its different parts. This determines which dogs are winners, and which are losers.

When art enters the matter there is bound to be an element of artistic licence. It is exercising this factor which makes the difference between a good judge and a poor one. A good artist can draw or paint something beautifully with just a few strokes while a less good one can spend hours and end up with nothing like as a good picture.

When faced with dogs of Standard size, over-size and under-size, a good judge, other things being equal, will put up the dog of Standard size. But when the over or under-sized ones are of superior quality, the mere fact of being Standard size should not enable that one to win. Good judges take the whole dog into account : not just its size, or any other single feature.

No good judge will put up dogs which are far too big or far too small, but a bit of variation from Standard size does no harm, taken in conjunction with the dog's other points. Dogs of both over or under-size can have their uses in keeping size about right; they can be just what is needed to counteract the opposite in one's breeding stock.

The longer one goes on judging, the more complex and fascinating it becomes. No two shows, or breed entries are ever exactly the same. Each one brings its problems and new aspects of the art and science that makes it the challenging business that it is. (DOG WORLD, August 20, 1993)