



Raymond Oppenheimer: A collection of wise counsel:

Raymond H. Oppenheimer said: “Keep in mind that quality is a combination of soundness and function. It is not merely the lack of faults, but the positive presence of virtues. It is the whole dog that counts.”

Raymond Oppenheimer: "No breed can long continue to progress if it is consistently badly judged, because sooner or later a general air of confusion will grow so that neither the experienced dog breeder nor the novice knows what to do next. It is therefore of great importance that everybody connected with shows should understand clearly what the term ‘a good judge’

implies so that only men and women who qualify for such a description shall be appointed to officiate on important occasions.” "If the wrong animals are put up consistently, they are liable to be chosen for breeding, which is likely to have a harmful effect on the breed concerned. So, it is very important that a high level of judging be maintained, especially at important shows (the breed club and general championship shows), for unless this happens, the general standard of the dogs will almost certainly deteriorate.”

Raymond Oppenheimer: In the chapter on judges and judging in McGuffin & Co.: A Bull Terrier History, 1964, he describes a good judge. "He must have that flair which recognizes quality, style, symmetry and balance at a glance. This requirement is one that can never be learned unless the judge has an artistic sense, and it is the one which will always mark out the first-class judge from the second-class. If a man can see quality, style, symmetry and all-round balance, he has what it takes to make both a great dog breeder and a great judge.”

From a 1965 article by William Colket on Raymond’s statements: Surely every championship show judge must know that the head has to be long, strong and egg-shaped, that the back must be short and strong, that the front must be straight, the stifles well bent and so on. It is the failure to recognize these features by some judges and an inability in others, who can recognize them, to balance one animal’s worth against another, which is the problem. There are many judges who can recite the Standard off by heart but could not pick out a correct shoulder, hindquarter, body shape or movement; there are others again who could pick out these features unerringly yet would put the animals entirely in the wrong order. Not many years ago at the request of a particular judge I ‘heard’ him recite the virtues and failings of every animal which had appeared under him at a big show, he gave me an absolutely accurate description of each one, yet the order in which he placed them in each class bore no relationship to the all-round worth of the dogs in question. To do a good job a judge must not only know the required points but he must be able to recognize them when he sees them; finally, he must above all be able to balance the virtues and

defects of each dog one against the other. I know no way in which one can teach a judge this latter quality if he does not possess it.”

A favorite Raymond story, as retold by Robert Thomas, *Grabo Bull Terriers*: One day the Curate’s servant was about to serve him an egg, noticed a spoiled spot and quickly said, ‘oh no Sir, don’t eat that egg, it’s rotten!’ The Curate replied, ‘only a few spots are spoiled, where it is good, it’s excellent, I’ll eat that!’ The moral being, that if you are judging, you are judging and awarding the animal based on the excellent parts, the virtues, and not the spoiled parts or the faults.

RHO The Fifth Bull Terrier Book “I do not think it an exaggeration to say that the speediest progress in our breed dates from the moment when it became widely accepted that animals with great virtues, perhaps accompanied by even severe faults, were of infinitely greater worth than animals entirely devoid of obvious faults but equally devoid of outstanding virtues.

In other words, once breeders accepted that there was nothing more useless than the blameless nonentity progress went ahead fast through the efforts of those breeders who knew how to retain the virtues and discard the faults.”

The following quotes reflect Oppenheimer’s belief in the importance of careful selection and planning in breeding, as well as his understanding of the long-term impact of decisions on the breed itself. His advice is applicable not only to Bull Terriers but to other breeds as well, emphasizing the need for a thoughtful approach to breeding.

TWENTY BASIC BREEDING PRINCIPLES

From "*The Complete Bull Terrier*" by Ernest Eberhard written in 1957.

There are a vast number of different breeding methods, some good, some bad. I should never presume to try to tell fanciers what is the right method because there is no such thing. Outstanding success can be achieved and has been achieved in a variety of different ways, so all I am going to do is to make some suggestions which I think helpful and to warn against certain pitfalls which trap too many of the unwary.

1. Don't make use of indiscriminate outcrosses. A judicious outcross can be of great value; an injudicious one can produce an aggregation of every imaginable fault in the breed.
2. Don't line breed just for the sake of line breeding. Line breeding with complementary types can bring great rewards; with unsuitable ones it will lead to immediate disaster.

3. Don't take advice from people who have always been unsuccessful breeders. If their opinions were worth having, they would have proved it by their successes.
4. Don't believe the popular cliché about the brother or sister of the great champion being just as good to breed from. For every one that is hundreds are not. It depends on the animal concerned.
5. Don't credit your own dogs with virtues they don't possess. Self-deceit is a stepping stone to failure.
6. Don't breed from mediocrities. The absence of a fault does not in any way signify the presence of its corresponding virtue.
7. Don't try to line breed to two dogs at the same time; you will end by line breeding to neither.
8. Don't assess the worth of a stud dog by his inferior progeny. All stud dogs sire rubbish at times. What matters is how good their best efforts are.
9. Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of a stud dog. The right dog for your bitch is the right dog whoever owns it.
10. Don't allow admiration of a stud dog to blind you to his faults. If you do you will soon be the victim of auto-intoxication.
11. Don't mate together animals which share the same fault. You are asking for trouble if you do.
12. Don't forget that it is the whole dog that counts. If you forget one virtue while searching for another you will pay for it.
13. Don't search for the perfect dog as a mate for your bitch. The perfect dog (or bitch) doesn't exist, never has and never will!
14. Don't be frightened of breeding from animals that have obvious faults so long as they have compensating virtues. A lack of virtues is far the greatest fault of all.
15. Don't mate together non-complementary types. An ability to recognize type at a glance is a breeder's greatest gift. Ask the successful breeders to explain this subject—there is no other way of learning. (I would define non-complementary types as ones which have the same faults and lack the same virtues.)
16. Don't forget the necessity to preserve head quality. It will vanish like a dream if you do.
17. Don't forget that substance plus quality should be one of your aims. Any fool can breed one without the other!

18. Don't forget that a great head plus soundness should be another of your aims. Many people can never breed either!
19. Don't ever try to decry a great bull-terrier. A thing of beauty is not only a joy forever but a great bull-terrier should be a source of aesthetic pride and pleasure to all true lovers of the breed.
20. Don't be satisfied with anything but the best. The second best is never good enough.

The Oppenheimer Breeding Principles, "Extended Version".

The following principles are widely attributed to Raymond H. Oppenheimer and have been preserved through breeder tradition, club materials, and historical compilations. While often presented as a unified list, they originate from a body of writings and teachings rather than a single published document.

- Remember that the animals you select for breeding today will have an impact on the breed for many years to come. Keep that thought firmly in mind when you choose breeding stock.
- You can choose only two individuals per generation. Choose only the best, because you will have to wait for another generation to improve what you start with. Breed only if you expect the progeny to be better than both parents.
- You cannot expect statistical predictions to hold true in a small number of animals (as in one litter of puppies). Statistics only apply to large populations.
- A pedigree is a tool to help you learn the good and bad attributes that your dog is likely to exhibit or reproduce. A pedigree is only as good as the dog it represents.
- Breed for a total dog, not just one or two characteristics. Don't follow fads in your breed, because they are usually meant to emphasize one or two features of the dog at the expense of the soundness and function of the whole.
- Quality does not mean quantity. Quality is produced by careful study, having a good mental picture of what you are trying to achieve, having patience to wait until the right breeding stock is available and to evaluate what you have already produced, and above all, having a breeding plan that is at least three generations ahead of the breeding you do today.
- Remember that skeletal defects are the most difficult to change.
- Don't bother with a good dog that cannot produce well. Enjoy him (or her) for the beauty that he represents but don't use him in a breeding program.
- Use out-crosses very sparingly. For each desirable characteristic you acquire, you will get many bad traits that you will have to eliminate in succeeding generations.

- Inbreeding is a valuable tool, being the fastest method to set good characteristics and type. It brings to light hidden traits that need to be eliminated from the breed.
- Breeding does not "create" anything. What you get is what was there to begin with. It may have been hidden for many generations, but it was there.
- Discard the old cliché about the littermate of that great producer being just as good to breed to. Littermates seldom have the same genetic make-up.
- Be honest with yourself. There are no perfect dogs (or bitches) nor are there perfect producers. You cannot do a competent job of breeding if you cannot recognize the faults and virtues of the dogs you plan to breed.
- Hereditary traits are inherited equally from both parents. Do not expect to solve all of your problems in one generation.
- If the worst puppy in your last litter is no better than the worst puppy in your first litter, you are not making progress. Your last litter should be your last litter.
- If the best puppy in your last litter is no better than the best puppy in your first litter, you are not making progress. Your last litter should be your last litter.
- Do not choose a breeding animal by either the best or the worst that he (or she) has produced. Evaluate the total get by the attributes of the majority.
- Keep in mind that quality is a combination of soundness and function. It is not merely the lack of faults, but the positive presence of virtues. It is the whole dog that counts.
- Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of breeding stock. The right dog for your breeding program is the right dog, whoever owns it. Don't ever decry a good dog; they are too rare and wonderful to be demeaned by pettiness.
- Don't be satisfied with anything but the best. The second best is never good enough.
- Don't make use of indiscriminate outcrosses. A judicious outcross can be of great value, an injudicious one can produce an aggregation of every imaginable fault in the breed.
- Don't line breed just for the sake of line breeding. Line breeding with complimentary types can bring great rewards, with unsuitable ones it will lead to immediate disaster.
- Don't take advice from those who have always been unsuccessful breeders if their opinion were worth having, they would have proved it by their successes.
- Don't believe the popular cliché about the brother or the sister of the great Champion being as good to breed from, for every one that is, there are hundreds that are not. It depends on the animal concerned.
- Don't credit your own dogs with virtues they do not possess. Self-deceit is a stepping stone to failure. In other words, don't be kennel blind.

- Don't breed from mediocrities, the absence of a fault does not in any way signify the presence of its corresponding virtue.
- Don't try to line breed two dogs at the same time; you will end by line breeding to neither.
- Don't assess the worth of a stud dog by his inferior progeny. All stud dogs sire rubbish at times; what matters are how good their best efforts are.
- Don't allow personal feelings to influence your choice of a stud dog. The right dog for your bitch is the right dog whoever owns it.
- Don't allow admiration of a stud dog to blind you to his faults. If you do you will soon be the victim of autointoxication.
- Don't mate together animals which share the same faults. You are asking for trouble if you do.
- Don't forget that it is the whole dog that counts. If you forget one virtue while searching for another you will pay for it.
- Don't search for the perfect dog as a mate for your bitch. The perfect dog (or bitch) doesn't exist, never has or never will!
- Don't be frightened of breeding from animals that have obvious faults so long as they have compensating virtues. A lack of virtue is far the greatest fault of all.
- Don't mate together non-complementary types. An ability to recognize type at a glance is a breeder's greatest gift; ask the successful breeders to explain this subject - there is no other way of learning. (I would define non-complementary types as ones which have the same faults and lack the same virtues.)
- Don't forget the necessity to preserve head quality. It will vanish like a dream if you do.
- Don't forget that substance plus quality should be one of your aims. Any fool can breed one without the other.
- Don't forget that a great head plus soundness should be one of your aims. Many people can never breed either!
- Don't ever try to decry a great dog. A thing of beauty is not only a joy forever but also a great price and pleasure to all true lovers of the breed.

HOW WOULD THE TEAM . . . ?

By R. H. OPPENHEIMER (Reprinted from the Bull Terrier Book 1954).

The one gift which a fancier must possess or acquire if he is to be a successful breeder of dogs is an eye for type: all other attributes are quite useless without it and many stud dog owners can testify from their own experiences how few people are so gifted.

It is splendid if a breeder can reel off the pedigrees of every winner for five generations back, it is delightful if he can expatiate learnedly on genes and chromosomes on dominants and recessives, and it is magnificent if he can talk or write of the physical structure of the dog as compared with that of the dromedary or the hippopotamus. But all is in vain if he wishes to breed good dogs and yet does not possess an eye that is accurate in assessing type, because the skillful blending of types is the one absolute essential for success.

When I say that many stud dog owners can testify to the rarity of an eye for type I base the statement on the fact that, if left to themselves, most owners of a visiting bitch will pick the least suitable mate from the stud dogs available. The owner of a coarse bitch will choose the dog most lacking in quality, the owner of a rangy bitch will pick the dog that is least compact, and so on until sometimes one wonders, in a moment of astonishment, if they can be doing it on purpose!

And yet, bearing all this in mind, it is an amazing fact that at the many doggy brains trusts which I have attended since the fashion for these quizzes started in the war, I have never heard the question '*How would the team set about breeding a champion?*' and yet that, to me, seems the most obvious and important question of all.

I remarked on this curious fact the other day to our Editor, who promptly made me wish I had kept my mouth shut by saying '*You shall answer that question with an article in the "Annual"*', and so here I am.

To reply briefly then, I would say to a questioner: 'Devote yourself to acquiring, by every means in your power, if you do not already possess it, an ability to appreciate differences in type; for example learn to distinguish a rather bull-doggy type from a rather terriery one, learn to differentiate between an effeminate dog and a very masculine one, and between a doggy bitch and a charmingly feminine one; learn to realize when an animal, however good in itself, has a tendency to tallness or length or lightness or what-have-you, and do not be satisfied until, after discussing winning dogs, you find that your assessments of type are confirmed in the main by someone who has proved his own knowledge by what he has bred.'

After you have done that, complete the job by a study of the history of the breed and further discussion with people who know, so that you learn how to successfully to blend the various types together to get the champions you desire.'

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BULL TERRIER TYPE IN ENGLAND

By Raymond Oppenheimer (Reprint from Bull Terriers of Today, 1951)

The kennel name of "Ormandy" stands at the very top of Bull Terrier-dom in England, and Mr. Oppenheimer has a world- wide reputation for his understanding of the breed. He has often judged Championship shows and has been unusually successful in breeding to type. His remarks on Bull Terrier type in England are authoritative and, since we in the United States tend to follow the lead set by England, should receive careful study.

My friend, Mr. Earnest Eberhard, has asked me to write something on Bull Terrier type in England and I am here trying to carry out his request.

First then, type anywhere is and must be the prime essential of every breed since, in the final analysis, it is only type which differentiates one breed from another or the pure bred from the mongrel. Now to pass from the general to the particular, correct Bull Terrier type as we see it in England is a blend between the terrier and the bulldog on to which is added the various specific points as set out in our Standard.

A departure from that correct type towards an undue emphasis of the terrier or bulldog characteristics we regard as very bad, as also any houndy tendency because we feel that the dog immediately ceases to conform to the basic demands of the Standard which was grounded upon the conceptions of the men who evolved the original White Bull Terrier.

I have spoken of a blend and in that connection, I should make it clear that in our view the blending not only applies to individual tendencies but most important of all to the proportions. These agreed proportions are not simply the outcome of the whim of some bewhiskered ancestor of the modern fancier, they are on the contrary based upon sound mechanical knowledge as to what best constitutes theoretically the ideal fighting machine. With that in mind the framers of our Standard demanded width of chest for stability, shortness of back to give maneuverability and quick turning power, and enough length of foreleg for reach and agility. On to these proportions they added the other necessary points, e.g., correct shoulders, strong hindquarters and so on to complete the perfect fighter.

So far so good, but there were in addition some points added on for purely aesthetic reasons, such as a white coat, no wall eyes and other points which we all know, until there emerged the picture of a splendid animal complete in every detail and of a type quite unmistakable.

Having said so much, I am going on to make use of something I have written elsewhere because I think it will fit into the pattern of what I have tried to say here and complete the fabric: when it was previously published it was called "A Pen Picture of a Bull Terrier" and I make no apology for repeating it with certain emendations since it sets out, as well as I can do it, what I think a Bull Terrier should look like.

Beginning then with the head, looked at full face it should appear long and strong and it should be oval or egg-shaped, that is to say it should be filled up everywhere so that the surface has upon it no hollows or bumps, and there should be a minimum of loose skin, especially round the throat and mouth, while the forehead should be flat from ear to ear and not domed or peaked like a gnome. The cheeks should be flat and clean and not coarse and lumpy, while the ears should be on top of the dog's head and fairly close together and should be capable of being held by the dog stiffly erect, when they should point upwards and neither sideways nor forwards. When all these features are present, the head gives a general impression of smoothness almost as if it had been "blown up" with an air pump.

In profile the head should form nearly an unbroken line *curving* slowly downwards from the top almost to the end of the nose where it should for the last half inch or so curve down a little more steeply producing that feature generally referred to as the 'Roman finish'. Continuing in profile, the head should give an appearance of depth and should look neither shallow nor bird-like, nor should the profile be so exaggeratedly curved nor angulated as to cause the dog to look like some kind of sheep, and lastly the head should be in proportion to the rest of the dog.

To finish with the head, there is one other feature of paramount importance and that is the dog's eye and more particularly expression. The eye itself should be as near black as possible and it should be well sunk into the head; the opening into which the eye is sunk should be high up the dog's head so that the distance from the nose to the eye is perceptibly greater than that from the eye to the top of the head. Further, the opening should be small and it should be triangular and above all slanting so that it points upwards and outwards-with these features the dog will have the true Bull Terrier expression which, for me, contains something of the gay, proud, mischievous and brave and much of the impassive, repelling and inscrutable.

Now let us pass to the rest of the dog; he should have a wide chest with straight front legs and clean shoulders, i.e., ones that are not rounded or bulgy when looked at head-on, they should be firmly attached to the dog's body and the shoulder blades should be well laid-back; that is to say, that a line drawn from the front and bottom of the shoulder blade to the top and back of it should

point up over the middle of the dog's back and not directly upwards only just behind his head. When the shoulder blades are thus laid back, the dog's neck comes into its body in a clean sweep and not at that very unattractive near right angle which spoils so many quite nicely arched necks. A neck that is reachy, arched and muscular and sweeps smoothly into the line of the back is one of the most distinguishing marks of a good Bull Terrier.

Looking down on the dog's back, the spring or bowing of its ribs should be plain to see and he should be much wider across his back than across his loins. Looked at sideways, the dog's brisket should be much nearer the ground than its belly and it is this formation which gives an appearance of lowness to ground as opposed to the ill-balanced bull-doggy stunted appearance of so many with too short legs.

Continuing to look at the dog sideways, its back should be short, strong and level until the loin where there should be a slight rise, or roach as the term is, after which the line should curve smoothly downwards and be set off nicely by a tail which should be attached to the dog low down; it should taper from base to tip and be carried parallel to the ground. Beneath this should come well-muscled broad hindquarters leading on downwards to a well-bent stifle and a well-angulated hock giving almost an impression as if the dog were slightly crouched to spring. Another important attribute of a well-made dog is that the various parts of the body should be in proportion to each other, that is to say, the length of the leg to the width of the dog, to its length of back and so on and it is of paramount importance that the dog should neither be nor look disconnected.

Finally, when the dog moves the front and hind legs should travel in parallel straight towards the observer and straight away and the dog should cover the ground easily and with a swinging springy stride, his front legs reaching out well forward and his hind legs flexing easily at the stifle and hock and moving smoothly, truly and strongly from the hip, the dog carrying himself proudly and in one piece.

I have so far only dealt in detail with head, with make and shape and with proportions, but if to that we add big round, but not coarse, bone, strong 'cat' feet, a temperament obedient but full of go and muscles rippling beneath a shining coat, we shall have gone a long way to describing a dog in which every feature is in proportion to all the others so that the predominating impression will be, not of some outstanding point but of a general level of all round excellence approaching the Standard's description of a "strongly built, muscular, active, symmetrical animal, with a keen determined expression, full of fire but of sweet disposition, amenable to discipline".

No one has ever bred the perfect Bull Terrier, no one ever will, but in the struggle to approach more and more nearly to the unattainable lies the source of so much happiness to so many and in

the foregoing words I have tried to paint a picture of the particular unattainable, which we in England are trying to approach.

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Word Picture of a Bull Terrier by Raymond Oppenheimer (reprinted from the Summer 1997 Bull Terrier Club Bulletin)

(In Dog World of January 31st, 1949, Mr. Raymond Oppenheimer replied to an anonymous Bull Terrier enthusiast who asked: 'What exactly, is meant by make and shape?' The article which answered that query was not only complete and erudite, but was written with a simplicity of expression which may never be bettered. We appreciate permission to reproduce it here, and to supplement it with an extension, written to complete what is, in fact, a narrative picture of the complete Bull Terrier.)

From Dog World, January 31st, 1949:

- Beginning at “the front end”; a well made and shaped dog should have a straight front with clean shoulders, i.e. ones that are not rounded or bulgy when looked at head on, they should be firmly attached to the dog’s body and the shoulder blades should be well laid back , that is to say, that a line drawn from the front and bottom of the shoulder blade to the top and back of it should point up over the middle of the dog’s back and not directly upwards only just behind his head. When the shoulder blades are thus laid back, the dog’s neck comes into its body at a pleasing angle and not at that very unattractive near right angle which spoils so many quite nice reachy necks.
- Looking down on the dog’s back the spring or bowing of its ribs should be plain to see and he should be much wider across his back than across his loins.
- Looked at sideways, the dog’s brisket should be much nearer the ground than its belly, and it is this formation which gives the appearance of lowness to ground as opposed to the ill-balanced stunted appearance of so many with too short legs.
- Continuing to look at the dog sideways its back should be short, strong and level until the loin where there should be a slight rise, or roach as the term is, after which the line should curve smoothly downwards and be set off nicely by a tail which should be attached to the dog low down, it should taper from base to tip and be carried parallel to the ground. Beneath this should come really well muscled broad hindquarters leading on downwards to a well bent stifle and a well-angulated hock, giving almost an impression as if the dog were crouched to spring.

- Another important attribute of a well-made dog is that the various parts of the body should be in proportion to each other, that is to say, the length of the leg to the width of the dog, to its length of back and so on, and it is of paramount importance that the dog should not appear disconnected.
- Finally, when the dog moves, the front and hind legs should travel in parallel straight towards the observer, and straight away, and the dog should cover the ground easily and with a swinging springy stride, his front legs reaching out well in front and his hind legs flexing well and easily at the stifle and hock and moving smoothly and strongly from the hip, the dog carrying himself proudly and in one piece.
- There are, of course, other points, but what I have written so far will do to go on with. I am aware that I have made use of certain terms which are not technically entirely accurate, but I believe they will make more clear what I am trying to describe than the use of the more accurate term would, and those who already understand the subject will not be misled.

From 'Ormandy' White Waltham, January 31st, 1950:

At the request of the Editor of the *Annual* I am going to try to describe the correct Bull Terrier head in equally simple language.

Looked at full face, the head should appear long and strong and it should be oval or egg-shaped, that is to say it should be filled up everywhere so that the surface has upon it no hollows or bumps, and there should be no loose skin, especially around the throat and mouth, while the forehead should be flat between the ears and neither domed nor peaked like a gnome. The cheeks should be flat and clean and not lumpy, while the ears should be on top of the dog's head and close together and should be capable of being held by the dog stiffly erect, when they should point upwards and neither outwards nor forward. When all these features are present the head gives a general impression of smoothness, almost as if it had been 'blown up' with a bicycle pump.

In profile, the head should form nearly an unbroken line curving slowly downwards from the top to almost the end of the nose where it should for the last half inch or so curve down a little more steeply producing that feature generally referred to as the 'Roman finish': continuing in profile the head should give an appearance of depth and should look neither shallow nor bird-like, nor should the curve of profile be so exaggerated as to cause the dog to look like some kind of sheep, and lastly the head should be in proportion to the rest of the dog.

To end, there is one other feature in the head which is of paramount importance and that is the dog's eye and expression. The eye itself should be as dark as possible and it should be well sunk

into the head; the opening into which the eye is sunk should be high up the dog's head so that the distance from the nose to the eye is perceptibly greater than that from the eye to the top of the head; further the opening should be small, and it should be triangular or almond shaped and above all, obliquely placed i.e. slanting so that it points upwards and outwards; with these features the dog will have the true Bull Terrier expression which, for me, contains something of the gay, proud and brave, and much of the impassive, repelling and inscrutable.

I have here only dealt with make and shape and with head, but if, to what I have written, we add big, but not coarse, bone, round strong 'cat' feet, sufficient length of fore-leg to make the dog active, a temperament obedient but full of go, and muscles rippling beneath a shining coat we shall have gone a long way to describing a dog in which every feature is in proportion to all the others so that the predominating impression will be, not of some outstanding point but of a general level of all-round excellence, approaching the standard's description of 'a strongly built, muscular, active symmetrical animal with a keen determined expression, full of fire but of sweet disposition, amenable to discipline.'

No one has ever bred the perfect Bull Terrier, no one ever will, but in the struggle to approach more and more nearly to the unattainable lies the source of so much happiness to so many of us.

Short Dog World columns by RHO

March 25, 1977

A good many years ago now I wrote a piece called "The Incoming Tide" in which I pointed out that, even after the biggest wave, there was always a drag back but that all the time tide was moving steadily, if almost imperceptibly, up the beach.

I would earnestly counsel those who appear to want it all at once to be a little patient and to study photographs of those dogs of former years, who were, in their day, considered to be the ultimate in achievement and quality.

Such a study will surprise them, as well as teaching them the invaluable lesson that progress is not achieved by an unbroken march forward with never a pause.

If, by mating sound animals to ones with the greatest heads, one always got ones that were both sound and great headed we should all quickly have achieved perfection. It is the skillful use of the virtues and the skillful discarding of the faults which make for progress and which distinguish the successful breeders from the rest.

April 8, 1977

I want to return this week to the subject of mouths. As I have written elsewhere, when I came into the breed, one single tooth out of place was enough to cause an otherwise excellent dog to be cast into outer darkness while third rate animals were placed over them just because they had correct mouths.

For instance, too obvious to need specifying this was an idiotic way to judge and eventually a more rational approach came to be accepted in which good dogs, with slightly incorrect mouths, were assessed on their all-round merits. So far so good and events have again and again proved the wisdom of such an attitude.

However, having said so much, I think it important to reiterate that, like every other fault, how bad a mouth is must be balanced against the animal's virtues.

To put up an animal to high honors with a totally undershot jaw, in which the lower teeth are a quarter of an inch or more in front of the upper ones is as unbalanced and undesirable as to award top honors to a dog with a front like a Queen Anne chair.

Lately it has seemed to me that on occasions judges have tended to ignore that portion of the breed Standard which declares that the seriousness of a fault shall be in exact proportion to its degree.

It is of paramount importance indeed it is the basis upon which all good judging rests, that this proviso shall not be ignored since it is the balancing of the degree of fault or faults against the virtues of an animal which decides the worth and value of that animal.

The good judges do the balancing well and by and large the future tends to support their balancing whereas the poor judges do a bad balancing act and so end by falling flat on their faces!

Sept. 2, 1977

A curious misuse of a phrase has recently been creeping into Bull Terrier terminology and that is "*an upright shoulder*". I was for some time puzzled by this until I discovered recently on hearing it yet three more times, that the speakers were using it to describe a shoulder in which, when looked at head on, the blades did not lean inwards towards each other, in other words they were vertical viewed from the front, leaving the top of them a considerable distance apart.

This formation is not correct and indeed it leads to a Bulldoggy front action but this is not what is meant by "*an upright shoulder*". This can only be assessed by looking at the dog in silhouette and refers solely to the angle which the shoulder blade makes with the upper arm.

Where an upright shoulder is present the easiest way to identify it, for anyone who is in doubt, is by noting that, in such a case, the top of the shoulder blade is almost directly above the front foot whereas with a well laid-back shoulder the top of the blade is well behind the front foot.

June 24, 1977

Admirers of the writings of Rudyard Kipling will be familiar with his famous short story of *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*, Conqueror of the abominable cobras, Nag of Nagaina, but it is not of them I propose to write.

The character which interests me in the present context is Chuchundra, the muskrat who spent his whole life trying to make up his mind to run into the middle of the floor and never quite got there!

The reason why he interests me at the present moment is because a very large number of Bull Terrier breeders seem to me nowadays to be human Chuchundras, they would like to take a chance when breeding but can never quite make up their minds to run into the middle of the floor!

Where would the Romany kennel be today if Miss Montague-Johnstone had not run into the middle of the floor and used Contango Cobblestone with his incorrect mouth? At a time when the breed was shuddering over Princeling's ears the Millers took a deep breath and produced Keg, what a pay-off they received for this in due course! Frosty Flake, with a soft ear, which stopped all but a very few from using him, did not do badly, did he?

Naturally the crucial point at issue is whether an animal with a serious fault has enough virtues to outweigh the fault and make him worth using but the art of breeding good showing animals is to succeed in collecting into one and the same exhibit the maximum number of virtues and the fewest number of faults but one very certain thing is that those who do not use the animals with the virtues will not get them in their stock and will end with rows of indifferent nonentities, however devoid of faults they may be!

Superficial faults and their significance – Raymond Oppenheimer from the Bull Terrier Club Bulletin Spring 1969.

The appearance in the ring last year of a dog with a mark on his tail, the award to him of a challenge certificate and of a reserve best of sex card and his selection as a competitor for the major trophies has, as might have been expected, set off a fresh controversy.

As usual those who are most alarmed and excited over the problem are the same sort of people who used to froth at the mouth over ticks, over a few misplaced teeth, over slightly soft ears or any other of the superficial faults.

The truth of the matter is that pink noses, incorrect mouth, soft ear, light and wall eyes, unilateral cryptorchidism and marks behind the collar are only seven different facets of the same problem, that of the polygenic recessive and how to deal with it.

Events over the years have proved beyond a doubt that a policy which puts a taboo on any single fault is disastrous so far as breed progress is concerned. In fact, it is only fair to say that had some of the breeders not been more far seeing than some of the legislators, our breed certainly and many others probably, would be thirty years behind the advanced position it and they have now reached.

An appreciation of this fact is absolutely fundamental to progress and what is most required of judges is that they shall calmly and dispassionately assess the virtues and the faults of each animal which comes before them, balancing the one against the other. I have said that a variety of shortcomings in our breed are only different facets of the same problem. Let us now examine the lessons of history in this respect and see if they bear out what I have written.

The great Brigadier, when he first appeared in the ring, had an extremely pink nose. The superficialists, in other words those who could not see the wood for the trees, made just the same fuss over his pink nose as has since been made over other similar defects and if they had had their way he would never have won a prize and would therefore scarcely have been used at stud, yet this pink nose caused no concern whatever in subsequent generations.

Twenty or thirty years earlier in fact a dog with such a nose never would have been seen in public.

Let us pass on from there to incorrect mouths. Mrs. Schuster never bothered to show Contango Cobblestone because he was undershot and in the then climate of opinion, he would never have won a prize not been used at stud except by the percipient breeder. Miss Montague-Johnstone was one of the far seeing and by using him produced Romany Rivet, dam of Reliance. Miss Weatherill and I never troubled to show Souperlative Soap Bubble

because of her mouth, many people would never have bred from her either for the same reason, magnificent bitch though she was. Had she been discarded there never would have been a Snowflash.

Next let us move on to light and/or wall eyes – the Knave had a light one, the dam of the Sphinx and of Starshine had wall eyes. What a tragedy it would have been if these three first class animals had never been used.

Before the last war ears such as Princeling's would have condemned him to life as a pet yet if he had not been used there would never have been a Barbelle, a Rheingold, a Silver Bob and a dozen others.

Exactly the same principle applies in the case of Bar Sinister, from one of whose normal brothers more unilateral cryptorchids are descended than have come down from Bar Sinister himself.

Over the years I am happy to say a more rational attitude has been adopted towards the first five of these defects with great success and profit to the breed and we must hope that increased knowledge will help the Kennel Club to a more sensible and constructive handling of the testicle problem in due course.

Let us now return in conclusion to the point of which started us off, namely to the question of marks behind the collar.

Souperlative Amelia Bebe was a good bitch but she had a black spot on the root of her tail, she was mated and produced the great Spurrell. I cannot, offhand, remember anything by Spurrell nor indeed anything descended from him in the first two or three generations which was marked behind the collar yet, in total contrast, I could name at least a dozen animals descended from Ben, of which Tracval's Barney Boy is indeed one, which are marked behind the head yet there is no mark behind Ben, known to me anyway, for endless generations, in fact not till we get back into the dim ages with Hampstead Heathen.

What this demonstrates, as do all other similar cases, is that there is no sense whatsoever in refraining from breeding from really top-class animals carrying one of these polygenic recessives unless one is able also to avoid using any of their relations since these, even if on the surface unaffected, are very likely to transmit the defect. As this is the case no good but actual harm is done if first class animals are debarred from the ring or the prize list while their less good contemporaries can win the highest honours.

There is, moreover, the basic fact which should never be lost sight of in addition to the foregoing and that is that for very straightforward genetic reasons a dog with outstanding virtues and outstanding faults is arithmetically more likely to transmit his virtues than his

faults, because the virtues in our breed anyway, are in the genetic sense of the term “dominant” while faults are “recessive”. In fact, at the very worst if one mates together two animals one of which has one of the defects of which I have written it could only be even money on it reappearing in the puppies whereas again at the very worst it is three to one on such an animal transmitting a virtue, therefore those who will not take the chances in breeding are always stacking the odds against themselves as compared with breeders who will take chances. To sum up then fanciers should maintain an entirely dispassionate attitude to all faults and to all virtues and breeders, judges and critics alike should bear in mind that the entire problem revolves round a sensible balancing of the faults against the virtues.

The breed standard makes the position extremely clear when it states very plainly and simply that any departure from the list of desired points is a fault and that the seriousness of the fault should be in exact proportion to its degree.

In other words, how badly undershot or overshot a mouth is, how soft the ears are, how pink the nose is, how big is the mark behind the collar, how blue or how light an eye or how abnormal are the testicles has to be balanced by breeder or critic against the virtues of any animal which carries such a fault or faults.

The basic point at issue is quite simply how bad are the points, superficial or indeed anatomical, carried by an animal and how do they compare with his or her virtues.

The good judges and clever breeders will work out the answers to the best advantage and history in the vast majority of cases will support the decisions which they reach.

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### **Brindle, Brindle all the way**

By Raymond Oppenheimer (reprinted from the Winter 1976 Bull Terrier Club Bulletin).

To most modern fanciers the phrase “a pure-bred white” will be absolutely meaningless unless they are students of breed history. Twenty-five odd years ago it meant a white Bull Terrier which had come from generation after generation of white-to-white breeding, and indeed any other sort of white Bull Terrier, that is to say one with any traceable colour in its pedigree, was regarded as quite untouchable in those days.

The reasons why this was so and how it came to be changed do not concern us here; anyone who is interested can read about it all in "McGuffin and Co.". What does concern us, however, is what stemmed from the change since the results were of paramount importance and the implications of those results must never be forgotten nor overlooked if the breed is to continue to progress.

In 1950, the Bull Terrier Club members at the Annual General Meeting rescinded the rule which prohibited the use of coloured or colour-bred white Bull Terriers as the basis of a white strain. By 1953 four first-class colour-bred white dogs appeared in the Trophies: Ch Kashdowd White Rock, Ch Ormandy's Limpsfield Winston, Ch Beechhouse Ballyhooligan and Ch Beechhouse Snow Vision. The first three in the present context can be ignored, White Rock because he was hardly used before he went to America, Ballyhooligan because only really Mrs Sweeten made any great use of him and Winston, because though his contribution to the breed was immense, he did not carry brindle. That leaves us with Snow Vision and in due course he sired two top class bitches, one of which was brindle, Ch Romany Robinsonya and one of which carried brindle, Ch Souperlative Summer Queen.

These two bitches, through their progeny, were speedily to prove the point which the protagonists of mixing white and coloured together as the basis of a white strain had long been making, namely that the brindle factor was an essential element in breed progress. By a natural process of elimination this factor had vanished over the years from white Bull Terriers, now it was to be restored with amazing success.

Robinsonya produced Ch Romany Robin Goodfellow and Summer Queen produced Ch Souperlative Brinhead and Ch Souperlative Princeling; the former was brindle, the latter two carried it. These three dogs, when combining the blood of Ch Ormandy Souperlative Snowflash, the last of the so-called pure-bred whites, and of the aforementioned Winston, supplied the brindle factor which had for so long been lacking in the white, improved them very rapidly and in doing so made them, in their turn, of very great value reciprocally to the coloureds. Incidentally, in passing, it is not without very great significance that Snowflash, who still easily holds the record of fifteen British champions, sired every one of them to a coloured or a colour-bred white mate.

Now let us return to Goodfellow, Brinhead and Princeling. The first of their get, sons and daughters of Goodfellow, appeared in the major trophies of 1959, the following year Brinhead and Princeling themselves appeared in the ring and by 1963 their get in turn were competing.

We now come to the astonishing and significant fact that from 1959 to 1975, that is seventeen years, 50 of the 51 major trophies were won by animals which had one parent anyway and often both, which carried the brindle factor. The one exception is Ch Hollyfir Devil's Disciple, both his parents carried red but three of his four grandparents carried brindle. During this same period there were ten winners of the Golden State Trophy for best of opposite sex to the Regent Trophy winner, which did not win one of the Jugs and of these ten, eight conformed to the same pattern, the exceptions being Souperlative Bella (two brindle grandparents) and Ch Abraxas Athenia (only one brindle-carrying grandparent). Finally, to complete the picture, there are ten other animals which, for one reason or another, did not compete in the trophies but which would have had a good chance of winning, and all ten of these also have at least one brindle-carrying parent.

I think that it is therefore safe to say that, if breeders here or elsewhere in the world, ever forget the overwhelming importance of the brindle factor, they and the breed will suffer severely.