

Interview in the American monthly magazine Dogs in Review 2002

Scottish Terrier Feature

1. When and where did you first come across a Scottish Terrier?
What attracted you to the breed? Please outline briefly your involvement as an owner, breeder, handler and/or judge.

My one overriding ambition as a child was to have a dog of my own and I spent many hours taking various dogs for walks before getting a dog of my own. I then met a Scottie at a local pet shop and the dog made a tremendous impression on me standing foursquare with an air of importance and independence about him that I have never forgotten. With the help of my dogloving grandmother my parents eventually gave in and my first Scottie Torslochs Terzette was purchased as an 8 week-old puppy. She was beautifully bred and did manage to win her title, but, more importantly, she was an excellent brood bitch and most of my present stock goes back to her. Her first litter was born in 1970 and I have bred Scotties since that day making up a total of 107 homebred champions in the breed plus owned several imports most of which have attained their titles. The dogs have all been handled and trimmed by myself with the exception of those that have been sold to other exhibitors. Several Raglan Scotties have been exported to various countries worldwide and I would like to think that some have had an impact on the breed as a whole.

In Sweden, Raglan Scotties have won Top Terrier 8 times and Ch Raglan Rory was Top Dog All Breeds in 2001 after having been a close runner-up in 2000 and he is also Sweden's Top Terrier of all times. In July this year he was BOB at the world show in Amsterdam from an entry of 108 with his top-winning daughter Ch Raglan Royal Prospect winning Best Opposite Sex.

I was first approved to judge at championship show level in 1986 and have judged Scotties and several other breeds in various parts of the world many times and is scheduled to judge Scottish Terriers at Cruft's in 2003 and in California next summer.

Over the years I have had close links with Britain and I feel fortunate in having known many of the great English breeders personally. Mrs Meyer of Reanda fame was a close personal friend and my early mentor in the breed. Miss Betty Penn-Bull(Kennelgarth) and Mrs Muriel Owen (Gaywyn) have also influenced me greatly and their enthusiasm and dedication to the breed are a constant source of inspiration.

2. What are the most important breed characteristics to keep in mind for anyone wanting to become a good Scottish Terrier judge?

A Scottish Terrier should be a sturdy, thick-set dog and he should never be a fine-drawn, elongated dog. He should be firm and solid, not fat and sloppy and he must have a good ribcage and be short-coupled. Bone and substance are vital breed characteristics but quality is also important and a top Scottie is a combination of substance and quality – one without the other does not produce a top dog. Ideally you want a long clean head, good neck and shoulders and a very sturdy body with a deep ribcage and very wide well-angulated muscular quarters and a carrot-shaped tail set right on top. This is not easy to get in the same dog! Beautiful clean heads are often linked with light bone and light bodies whereas good bone and well-developed ribcages are often seen on dogs with strong skulls and thick, throaty necks.Both are incorrect. However, it is perfectly possible to combine substance and quality in the same dog although not easy and the key to correct breed-type does lie in the correct combination of these two extremes. A Scottie that is too fine-drawn lacks breed-type no matter how good the head is, but a dog that has correct body properties often displays correct breed type even if the head is poor, and this is important to remember. Lack of quality will however never make such a dog a top

specimen. There does seem to be a tendency to favour dogs that are too racy in outline in many countries at the present time, and this is not right and I sometimes refer to such dogs as "Foxterriers in disguise", and they inevitably fail in bone and body, but often produce pleasing silhouettes, but are alien to correct type.

A Scottie should carry himself with pride and have an air of importance about him and he should never be highly strung. He should appear to stand foursquare on solid legs and look as if he had just bought the place rather than ask for forgiveness for being there! Betty Penn-Bull once said that a true Scottie should look and behave like a country squire rather than a Bond Street beauty, and I think this is a lovely way of describing both type and character.

3. Do you feel that the current AKC breed standard is adequate? Does it differ much from that in Great Britain and the FCI countries?

The AKC standard is more detailed than the British breed standard. Overall the American standard outlines the same type of dog as the British standard, but there are quite a few differences. The AKC standard specifically asks for a head with parallel plane whereas the British standard does not include this requirement. The muzzle is also described differently in the current AKC standard and so is colour and movement and also the description of the front legs. By indicating measurements for length – unlike the current British standard – the American standard seems to favour a slightly longer dog, and this is a deviation from the British version. However, by and large the AKC standard is very similar to that of the country of origin.

I do feel that it would be a good thing to have a common breed standard and that the British standard should be universally accepted, The current FCI standard is a copy of the British breed standard. Dogdom as whole would benefit greatly from having one breed standard only for each breed and it is indeed sad that we have not so far been able to agree on this policy.

4. In what foreign countries have you watched (or judged) Scotties, and how did they compare? What is the reason for any discrepancy in type?

I have judged Scotties in 27 different countries and there are some lovely dogs in many different countries. The quality has, however, dropped considerably in Britain lately numerically too, and this is perhaps due to a generation gap among the breeders, but it is very worrying and the breed urgently needs new enthusiasts of stamina! However, the top dogs in Britain score in type and I also feel the breed is strong in Scandinavia although entries could be larger. The best Scandinavian dogs are in many ways an essence of the best British bloodlines and the Swedish dogs in particular could hold their own in any country. The other Scandinavian countries have largely relied on Swedish imports and there are some very good dogs there too. Entries are generally larger at the Danish shows and the top dogs are very good indeed, but the overall quality is disappointing with several poorly constructed dogs and I feel that many Danish dogs have a temperament problem as there always seems to be a fair number of non-showers in the ring.

There is tremendous interest in Scotties in Russia and 100 or more Scotties at a show is nothing unusual. I have judged there on two occasions with five years in between appointments and I noticed a very considerable improvement and the Russians are now producing very good dogs indeed. Some are still long and rather coarse, but the breed seems to be in the hands of capable breeders who have utilised the available stock very wisely, and it is indeed rewarding to see the breed prosper.

On the European continent, I feel that France is a real hotbed for Scottish Terriers. The French have produced some excellent dogs and the breed seems to go from strength to strength. Wheatens are very popular, and I have seen many good ones bred in France. Most of the French dogs seem to be a combination of American and European bloodlines and the blend seems to work! Italy and Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg have had some good Scotties too, but mainly imports and they seem to rely on purchased stock either from Britain or nowadays from France or the Scandinavian countries.

I have also judged the breed in some of the East ex-communist countries, and have seen some good dogs there too, but overall, the breed is not very exciting there.

The Australians are also very keen breeders and have produced some very good dogs, but there does not seem to be a lot of cooperation between the breeders and most of their stock are direct descendants from imported stock, mainly from Britain. Presentation seems to be a problem too although the top people certainly know how to trim and present a Scottie to advantage.

Numbers are very small in South Africa and most of the dogs are based on British imports too. This seems to apply to Japan as well, where I have not judged myself, but there are certainly many keen breeders who seem to know what they want!

I have only once judged in America (Hatboro in 1998) where I was very impressed by my winners and they pleased me enormously. On my first visit in the early 70's I was also very taken with the top dogs, so I am sure that there are some very good dogs in the States. There does however seem to be a tendency for a finer, racier type of dog that is not so typical but my observations are based on a small number of dogs, so perhaps they are not quite accurate. Over the years, I have, however, come across American exports to many different countries, and some of these have been very good, but many rather tall and shelly.

Overall, there are many good Scotties in different corners of the world, but there does seem to be a tendency among judges to favour rather tall, racy dogs with good showmanship and pleasing silhouettes. To understand correct breed type, judges need to know much more and those that judge on outline and showmanship alone do not understand the deeper implications of selecting Scottish Terriers for top awards.

5. Please mention at least one Scottish Terrier not owned, bred or shown by yourself, which you particularly admired. Which one of those you have been involved with was the best?

This is a very difficult question to answer as dogs can be good in so many ways but on reflection I think that one of the best Scottish Terriers that I have seen was Dick Hensel's Ch Dunbar's Democrat of Sandoone, bred by Betty Malinka and handled by Bergit Coady-Kabel. I saw him on my first visit to the States and he made a tremendous impression on me with his lovely type, perfect balance and superb combination of substance and quality. He also had a lovely coat and he was a true mover. There have of course been other dogs that have come near my ideal, and I particularly admired Eng Ch Mayson Canasta and her contemporary Eng Ch Brio Once Upon a Time but also Eng Ch Tamzin Total Etiquette and Eng Ch Brio Corvette. They were all wonderful bitches and the very essence of Scottish Terriers and I feel fortunate to have seen and handled them.

Of my own, I think that Ch Raglan Rory is probably the best. He is a very masculine, sturdy dog with plenty of quality and style and it has always been a pleasure to show him. He has done equally well under specialist judges and allrounders and he has been a popular dog amongst other breeders too. In 2001 he was Top Dog all breeds in Sweden and is the current Top Terrier of all times. His stock is now also winning well and at the world show in Amsterdam this year it was one of those special shows where he himself won BOB and his daughter Ch Raglan Royal Prospect won BOS!

In the 70's, my best dogs were probably Ch Raglan Red Rarity and the beautifully headed Ch Raglan Regatta, both top winners that have proved their worth for future generations over here. In the early 80's, my best dog was Ch Raglan Royal Commander, twice Top Terrier and certainly one of the very best dogs that I have owned and he was also a top producer. Ch Raglan Royal Serenade is another of my favourites, and she combines most of the best points and was Top Terrier in 1996 after

having won BOB under Betty Penn-Bull who later wrote that she was one of the best bitches that she had ever seen. Serenade is now almost 10 years old and she still gives me daily pleasure and is a joy to live with. I would also like to mention Ch Raglan Referee, Muriel Owen's choice for BIS at the 25th Anniversary Scottish Terrier Club Show in 1997 and he particularly scored in head, neck and shoulders.