

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs In Canada* March 1991

BEDLINGTON TERRIER

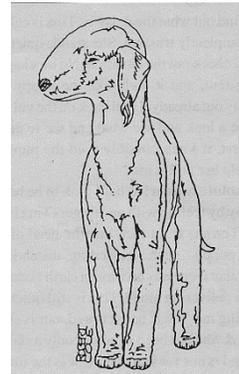
A tough choice between six examples

Here are six quite different Open class Bedlington Terriers stacked in profile. Decide the order of your four placements. Identify the serious faults possessed by the two that you do not place. The head-on view is included as a reminder that the head is wedge-shaped, narrow, deep and rounded, without cheekiness or snippiness; the oval body is flat-ribbed, rather than heart-shaped; and the straight forelegs are wider apart at the chest than the feet.

COAT AND COLOUR

The thick, linty coat is a mixture of hard and soft hair, standing well out from the skin, but not wiry. There is a distinct tendency to twist, particularly on the head and face.

Colours are blue, liver or sandy, with or without tan. Topknots are a lighter colour (nearly white) than the body coat. Lack of colour in the coat is one of the common failings in the breed – darker pigmentation of all colours is to be encouraged, especially liver. A weak, pinkish shade can scarcely be considered as liver though, technically, it is.



PURPOSE

Whippet cross were started around 1820 to bring speed and agility to the Bedlington. Today, he is probably the fastest terrier, capable of a sighthound's second period of suspension at the gallop. As a hunter he is sharp, quick and silent in the fields, underground and in water. Keen of sight and sound, he is a lone worker.

DECIDE

I do not believe you will find it difficult deciding first place. Second place is a poorly groomed version of the same bitch. My third-place bitch departs heavily towards Whippet, and my fourth place can be thought of as the old-fashioned type. The two examples out of contention for ribbons demonstrate a number of faults of current concern. Which two examples are they?

BITCH A

Too racy in outline, this longer limbed example is obviously built for speed. She is sometimes criticized for being light in bone. She represents a racy departure, within limits, from the representation of typical.

BITCH B

This sound, typey Bedlington has been poorly groomed. Beginning with the head, there is a current fashion to extend the topknot beyond the occipital bone at the back of the head, in order to give the appearance of greater length. This has been overdone, and has produced a ewe-necked appearance, accentuated by the incorrect way the back of the neck has been scissored.

The natural arch over the loin has been groomed so as to appear unnatural, and is saved only by a correct, low-set tail. Poor scissoring made the correct rear pastern appear sickled.

BITCH C

This is a graceful, lithe, muscular example, with no sign of weakness or coarseness. In repose, her expression is mild and gentle; when aroused, the eyes sparkle. She measures the preferred 15 ½ inches at the withers (dogs 16 ½ inches). An inch over or under the ideal heights for either is a serious fault.

The long jaw is strong, the bite is scissors (can be pincer), the dark lips are tight. There is no stop. The ears are set low. The small, fairly high-up oval eye (almond shaped) is deep set, and the muzzle is well filled up under the eye. Darkness of eye corresponds to darkness of coat colour; the same applies to eye rims and lips. Nostrils are large; blues and blue-and-tans have black noses. Liver, liver-and-tans, sandies, sandies-and-tans have brown noses.

Forelegs that are about the same length as the depth of deep chest appear correct to me. Due to the natural arch over loin and definite tuck-up, her hind legs appear longer than forelegs. The tail sets on low.

Angulation is moderate front and rear. The long front pasterns slope slightly, and the perpendicular rear pasterns are short (hocks near the ground). The long, hare feet are oval shaped, with thick, well closed-up pads. Dewclaws have been removed.

BITCH D

This drawing illustrates many characteristics associated with the old-fashioned Bedlington. The undesirable top (stepdown from skull to muzzle) can be seen as well as felt. The faulty ear is short, wide and rounded. The skin on the throat is loose. The topline is flat. The shoulders are well laid back, but the upper arm is short and positions vertically, forward on the body. Head-on, whether standing or moving, the forelegs do not converge.

The plain, old-fashioned type lacks glamour. Colour is usually good, but the coat is often overly harsh and the topknot dark and scanty. Though not obvious at this scale, her round and cat-like feet are not desirable.

BITCH E

This is a sound dog, but not a sound Bedlington. This is a big-bodied, very well angulated example with short legs. Nature, to balance her short legs, has given her a short neck. Surprisingly, or maybe because of her short legs, her second thigh (between knee and hock) is long for a Bedlington

There are three head faults. First, the eyes are large and round, rather than small and almond shaped. Second, the underjaw is weak. Third, the ear is high, rather than low set.

BITCH F

Aside from perhaps a good, crisp-to-the-touch coat, this example has very little merit. Her muzzle is short, her cheeks are bulgy, her large ears are long – the extra length is minimized by beginning the tassel trim higher on the ears.

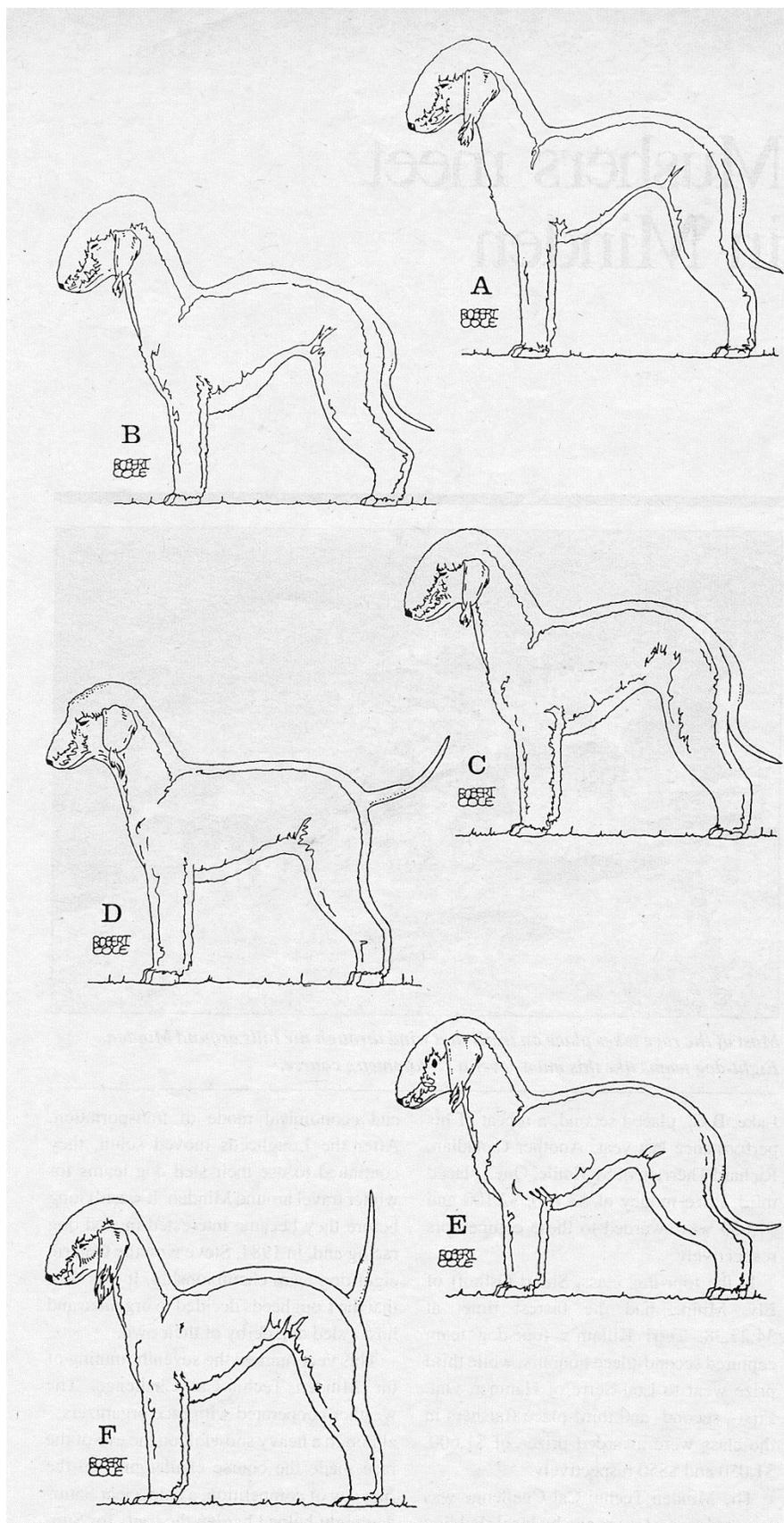
Her neck lacks curve and her shoulders are steep. Because her shoulders are steep, the arch, which should have the highest point over the last rib, has become a pronounced roach (wheel-back). Tuck-up is over accentuated.

The tail is set on too high – a serious fault. This, in turn, produces a high tail carriage. High tail carriage itself becomes a serious fault when the tail is carried over the back. If, instead, her tail was set on low, but carried high, even as high as this tail is carried, the high carriage would then, in my opinion, not be a serious fault.

MY PLACEMENTS

Deciding on Bitch C for first place was difficult. Second place was between Bitch A and Bitch B. I was aware Bitch B was superior, but poorly groomed – so were you after you read the description, much the same as if you conducted a hands-on- examination – so I forgave poor grooming and awarded typey Bitch B second place. Third place I gave to racy Bitch A. Fourth place went to Bitch D, the old-fashioned

type. You may have given fourth place to Bitch E; I couldn't in this instance, because she represents a very disturbing, current departure from type (short legs), one which is often over-looked.



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By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada* January 2001

BEDLINGTON TERRIER

Based on current CKC Breed Standard

ATTENTION!

Before you read about the head and how this breed differs from the other terriers, and before you place the four Bedlington Terrier bitches stacked in profile in order of preference, please take a look at the straight-on example and tell me if her front is correct.

UNORTHODOX STANCE

Do not rearrange her feet. Her unorthodox stance is correct. If, after examining her, you were to reposition her feet the same distance apart as her elbows, your reputation as a Bedlington Terrier judge would suffer. The standard reads: "forelegs are straight and wider apart at the chest than at the feet." Even the novice is aware of this and promotes this distinctive Bedlington characteristic by always stacking the feet close. Canada was the last country to officially adopt this unorthodox stance and, before the CKC standard was updated, I can remember checking each time we showed a Bedlington, to see if the judge was Canadian or American, and then positioning the feet accordingly.

DIFFERENCES

In addition to feet closer together than at the elbows, the Bedlington has a number of interesting features that differ from other terriers, such as the ability to produce a second period of suspension at the fast (sighthound) gallop; a distinctive topknot triangular ears that hang flat to the cheeks; a long, tapering neck; a high head carriage; a topline with a good natural arch over the loin, creating definite tuck-up of an underline more sighthound than terrier; and a flat-ribbed body.

Unlike the digging fronts of the Airedale, the Lakeland, the two Fox Terriers, the Welsh Terrier and the Irish Terrier, the Bedlington's upper arm appears the same length as the shoulder blade and sets at a more oblique angle; the front pasterns are both long and sloping, and the feet are long and hare-shaped.

HEAD

Hidden as it is under a profuse topknot, the head required a see-through drawing in profile and a face-on drawing from above for full appreciation.

The nose is black on blues and blue-and-tans, brown for the other coat colours; same for lips. The nostrils are large. There is no stop and the unbroken line from crown to nose in profile is without cheekiness or snippiness seen from above. The head is narrow but well filled beneath the eye, deep and rounded with the eyes set closer to the occiput than the nose. The eyes are almond shaped, small, bright and well sunk, with no tendency to tear or water; the set is oblique and the colour is dark in blues, less dark in blue-and-tans, and hazel in the lighter colours. The ears are triangular, with rounded tips set on low and hanging flat to the cheeks, and a width of approximately three inches; the 'slight projection at base' can best be seen face-on.

COAT

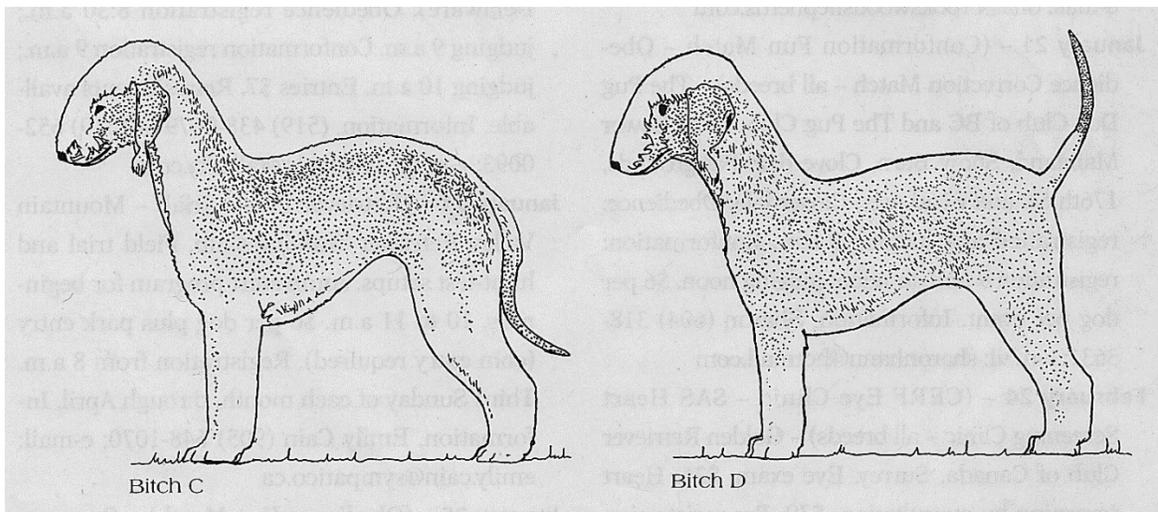
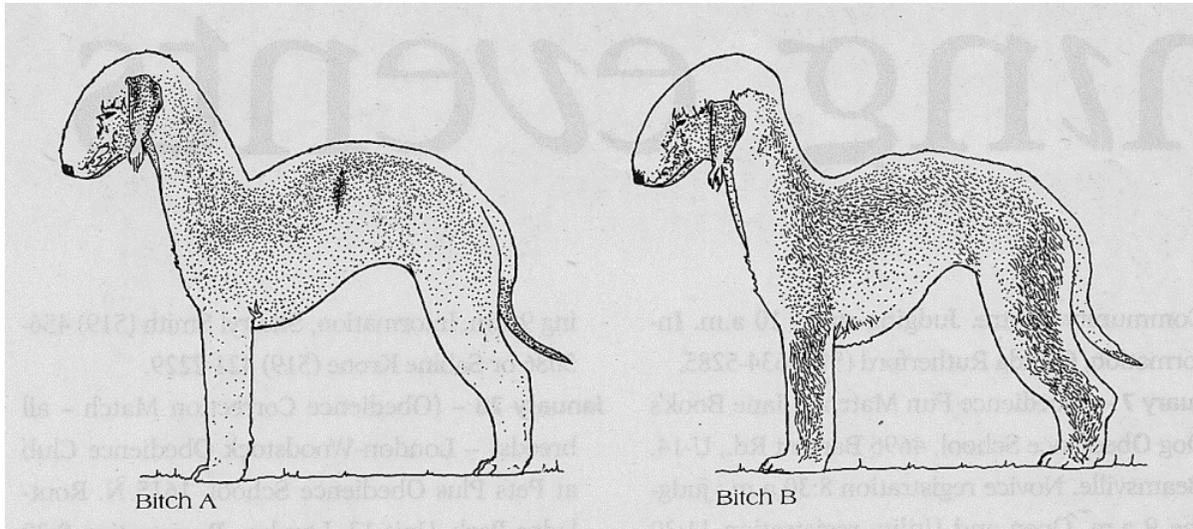
The coat is a mixture of both hard and soft hair standing well out from the skin but not wiry. The show trim must not exceed one inch on the body, with the hair on the legs slightly longer. There is a distinct tendency for the hair to curl, especially on the head and face.

COLOUR

Colours are blue, liver or sandy with or without tan. Topknots are lighter in colour than the body coat. Lack of colour in the coat is one of the common failings in the breed, and darker pigmentation of all colours is to be encouraged, especially liver. A weak, pinkish shade can scarcely be considered liver, although technically it is.

PURPOSE

The possibility of Whippet and Lurcher crosses introduced to bring speed and agility into the breed is easy to believe. Today the Bedlington is probably the fastest terrier, capable of a sighthound's second period of suspension at the fast gallop. As a hunter he is sharp, quick and silent, in the fields, underground and in the water. Keen of sight and sound, he is a lone worker.



DECISION TIME

If you placed the best groomed of the four bitches first, then, in my opinion, you made the wrong choice. Poorly groomed Bitch B and a well-groomed Bitch C have equally well-constructed bodies, but Bitch C has a functional head fault

The Bedlington's eye must position closer to the occiput than the nose for the head to be functional. In other words, the jaw must be long. The jaws on both Bitch B and Bitch C look short; however, poorly groomed Bitch B's looks short because her topknot is overdone, extending too far beyond the occipital bone at the back of the head. This creates a muzzle-to-skull imbalance and also makes the neck appear to go the wrong way (ewe instead of arched).

Bitch C's muzzle is anatomically short. When the muzzle is short, you can usually expect a snipey, too-abrupt wedge shape viewed from above, and often the nostrils are pinched. Based on this one functional consideration, I placed poorly groomed Bitch B first, followed by Bitch C in second place.

Poor grooming on Bitch B includes her brisket, topline, tail and rear pasterns, especially near the hocks, making her appear sickly-hocked because too much hair was left projecting from the top of her rear pasterns.

Her legs are coloured. Usually the hair is white. However, it would be wrong to penalize Bitch B for having coloured legs, which is the original and natural state for the breed. Colour is a plus; lack of coat colour, especially in the livers, is one of the breed's current failings.

Many blues could also do with deeper colour. The standard says, "Darker body pigmentation of all colours is to be encouraged." It may be that the white legs to which we have become accustomed here have developed through the general lack of pigment that tends to prevail in this breed.

THIRD PLACE

Bitch A's roach begins too far forward – directly behind the top of the shoulder blades – rather than the required, "The back should be roached and the loin markedly arched." Compare Bitch A's incorrect, abrupt transition of shoulders into roached back with the correct, smooth transition of withers into roached back on Bitch B and Bitch C. Their toplines are quite different.

Bitch A also has a sighthound's moderately long foreleg (longer than her body is deep, the elbow level with the brisket). The standard doesn't say how long the forelegs should be. I go along with English terrier authority Tom Homer's opinion that moderate (the same length as the depth of body) is correct for the Bedlington Terrier.

Finally, this bitch's ears are set too high. The patch of darker hair from an honest injury is not objectionable. Her tail, which should only reach the hock, appears long but isn't – the fault is the long rear pastern (hocks should be "well let down").

FOURTH PLACE

Bitch D could have a definite stop; however, no trimmer is going to disclose this fault. Instead, focus on the seven faults the trimmer couldn't hide and the grooming embellishment he or she employed to produce hind-leg angulation.

The eyes are large and round; the ears are large and wide; there is too much loose skin under the chin; the arch is over the croup, rather than the loin; the tail is high set; the buttocks lack shelf, the front legs are short; and the feet are cat-foot shaped rather than long and hare-shaped. To produce angulation, the trimmer left the knees full and the back of the rear pasterns full.