

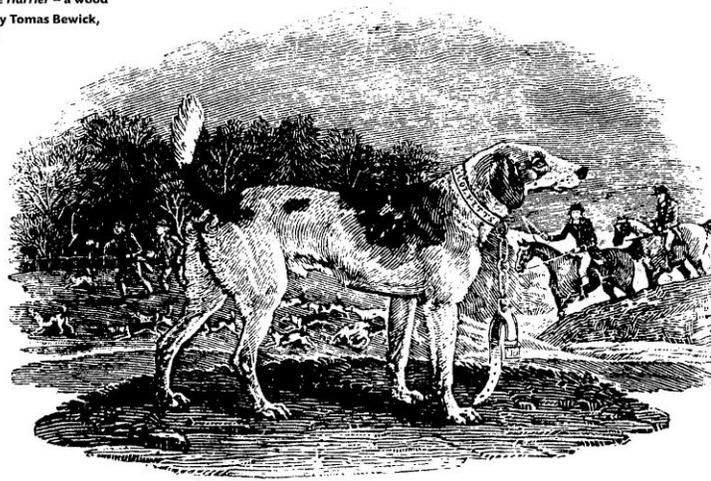
YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

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THE HARRIER

Figure 1. The Harrier – a wood engraving by Tomas Bewick, dated 1786



Hunting the hare has always had great popularity throughout the British Isles, and in some ways enjoyed greater favour than fox hunting. One reason for its popularity was that a pack of Harriers could be followed on foot. Among the hundred-odd packs that hunted regularly in England less than a century ago were many scratch packs (packs made up of hounds owned by various individuals), thus bringing the sport down to the level of the poorer man.

JUDGING THE HARRIER

This young male Harrier (Figure 2) entered in your first class appears to have a forequarter problem. The toes are turned in slightly and the elbows are not set close to the rib cage. This slight departure from the norm disturbs; however, you went over the standard thoroughly last night and remember there's something about slightly turned-in toes.

You check again. You were right. The standard reads: "Feet are round and catlike, with toes set close together turning slightly inwards."

Figure 2

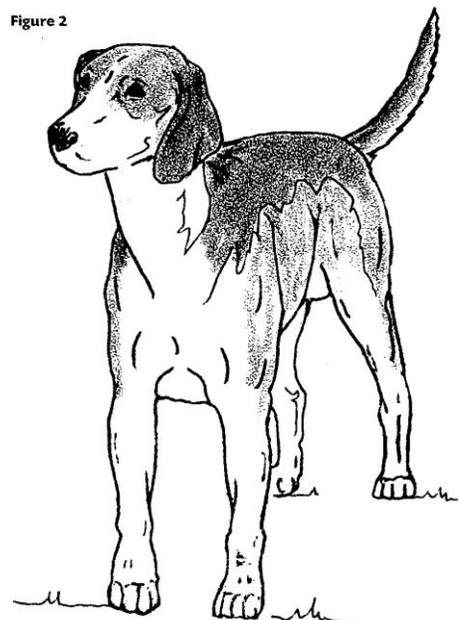
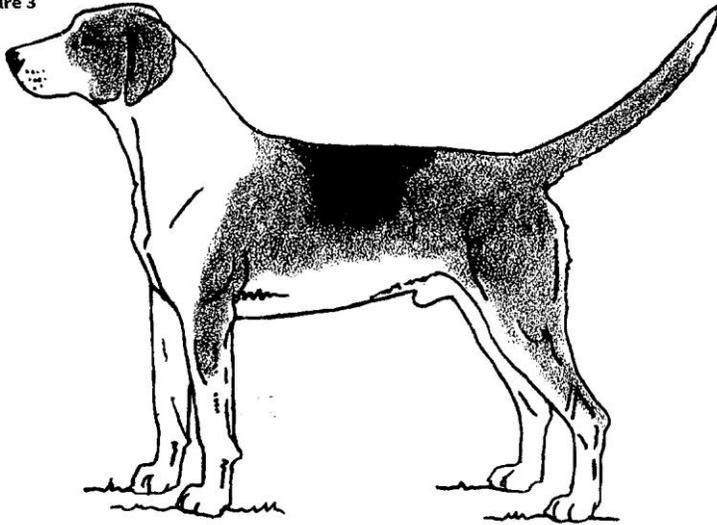


Figure 3



TYPICAL

Figure 3 represents typical. This hound stands between 19 and 21 inches, with a variation of an inch in either direction being acceptable. The Harrier is slightly longer from the point of the shoulder to the rump than from the withers to the ground. There is a shelf under the tail when the pelvis is correctly angled. Use of the point of the shoulder as a measuring point, rather than the point of the forechest, tends to create neglect for the existence and importance of a forechest.

The head is in proportion to the overall dog. Eyes are brown or hazel, or light hazel to yellow in lighter dogs, though darker colours are always desired. The ears are set low. The muzzle and skull are about the same length; the stop is moderately defined. The muzzle has a clean look without excess skin or flews. The black nose has large, open nostrils. The bite is a scissors or pincer.

The neck is long; the topline level. The tail is long and is carried from 3 o'clock to 12 o'clock, depending on attitude. Angulation is moderate front and rear. The coat is short and glossy, dense and hard. Any colour is permissible.

SUBTLE DIFFERENCE

The standard's advice that the "Chest [is] deep, extending to the elbows" aptly describes both of these Harriers (Figures 4 and 5) but only one of them is correctly balanced. A breed standard has its word limitations, but length of leg and depth of body should not be one of them. All that would need to be added to the foregoing excerpt from the standard is: "The elbow half the height of the dog." With this clarification, only Figure 4 exhibits the desired balance for this breed.

Figure 5

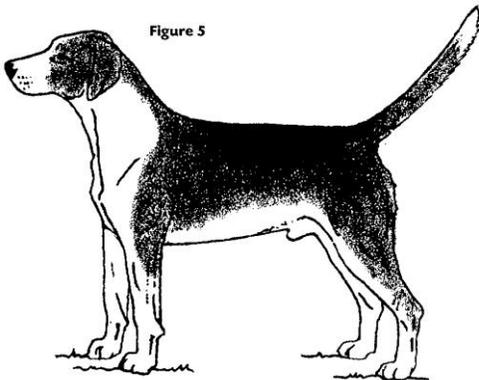
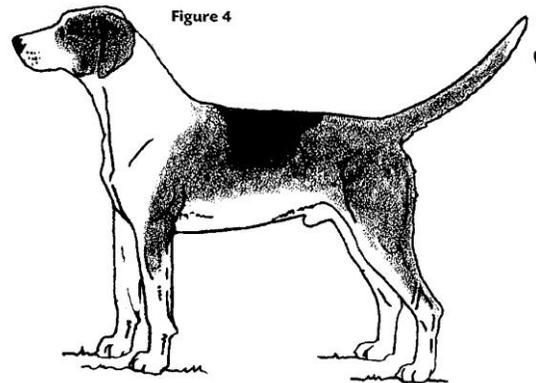
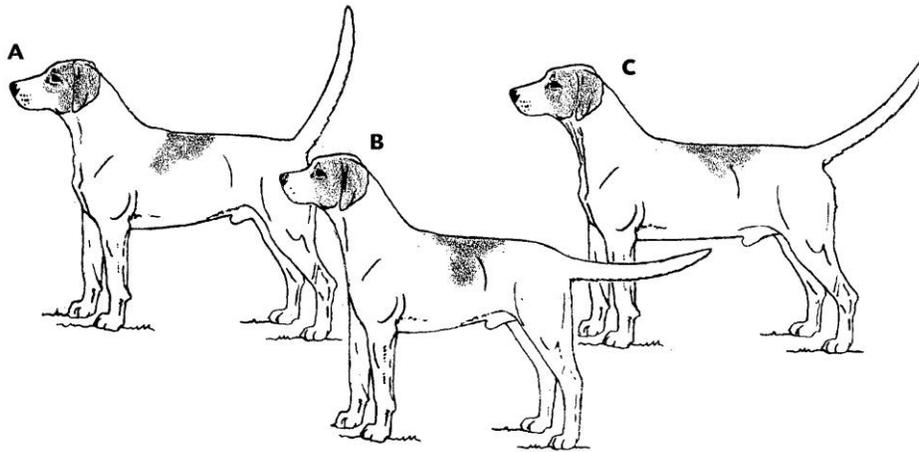


Figure 4



IDENTIFYING FAULTS

I have selected for these three light dogs departures worthy of identifications and discussion. Dog A has two departures, Dog B has six and Dog C has three.



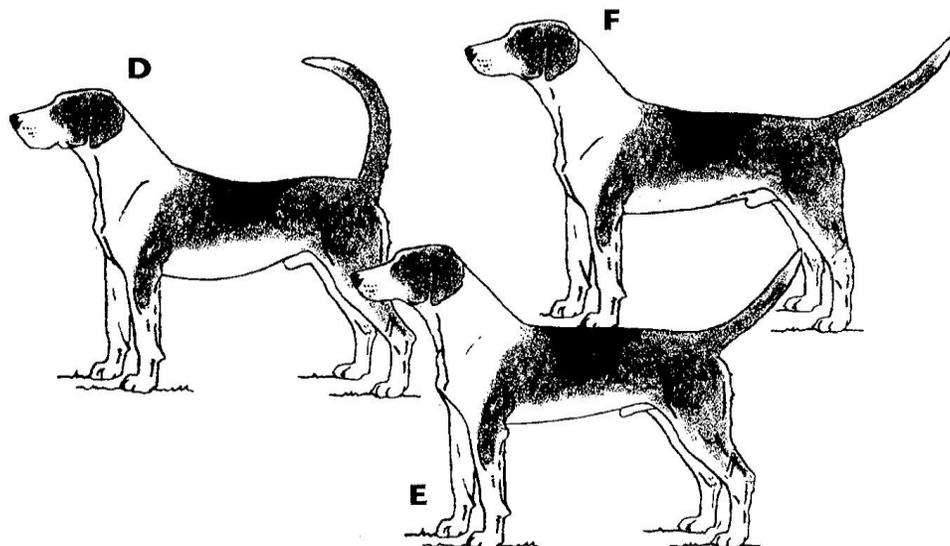
Beginning with Dog A, one of his departures receives mention in the standard, the other two do not. Have you decided what they are? The standard describes the neck as long. This dog's neck is short, causing him to look heavy. In my opinion, the forelegs should be as long as the body is deep and the elbow should be half the height and level with the brisket. Dog A's forelegs are short, their length less than half the height at the withers.

Dog B is balanced in that the poor front complements the equally poor rear; however, one fault doesn't cancel out another. There is an absence of forechest and the tail sets on too low. This hound's fifth fault is his long rear pasterns, and his sixth fault is a short muzzle.

Dog C's loose skin at the neck disturbs, as does his long body. His third departure does not receive warning or mention in the standard; it is the lack of tuck-up under the body. The amount of tuck-up is usually related to the speed and agility required of the breed.

CLASS OF THREE

All three possess virtues – for instance, two have good heads while the third is balanced front to rear. All three have as much substance and bone as possible without being heavy or coarse. They also have faults – some of little concern; others of great concern. You are invited to determine what these visible faults are and the degree to which they depart from typical. Place these three Harriers in your order of merit.



Dog D has four visible faults; Dog E has four visible faults; and Dog F has four visible faults, the fourth being the imbalance (stacked and moving) caused by superior forequarters.

The most obvious departure is the Harrier with the dip in his back. A good, firm topline is always desired. A sagging back could be caused by poor condition, or the result of illness, but in this case the dip is in conjunction with upright shoulders, as is the abrupt transition of the neck into the withers. The too-long neck produces a foreign balance. Excess flews on an otherwise good head is a concern. The tail is set on high but should not be curled over the back.

The tail should be long. The chest should extend down to the elbow. After examining Dog E, you have concluded that the reason for the chest not to drop is immaturity; however, you cannot be sure and must judge accordingly. I placed Dog E first, Dog F second and Dog D third.