

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



## Extended Breed Standard of **THE BEARDED COLLIE**

Produced by  
The Bearded Collie Club of NSW  
in collaboration with  
The Australian National Kennel Council

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Those of us who have known and loved the Beardie for many years have the knowledge and hindsight to keep the essential character and breed type to the fore, to retain the rich heritage bequeathed to us by the farmers and crofters of Scotland.

It is to them that this work is dedicated.

## DISCOVERING THE BEARDIE

My walk in the country was very peaceful  
Until I met this fluffy fleece ball –  
Running, jumping, over and under.  
What breed of dog is this, I wonder?

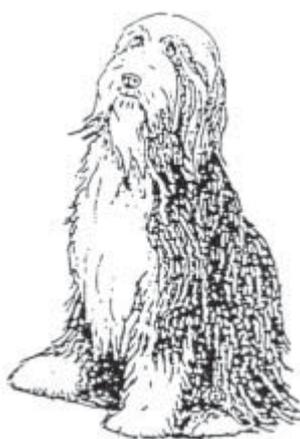
Well upstanding, not too clumsy  
Good length of rib and the tail not stumpy,  
Harsh, long coat with eye colour matching,  
Nice broad skull and a flowing action.

I watched for a while to see him working –  
The load he had he was not shirking..  
Moving the sheep from left to right  
He made it look easy – Boy! What a sight!

Up hill, down dale, obeying every command,  
His tail always wagging. Oh! Isn't he grand!  
Lie! Down! Stay! The shepherd would shout  
And he'd lie there all night so the sheep wouldn't get out.

Another day over, and off they go home.  
The dog put in his kennel and left alone.  
I went up to the shepherd to explain my folly,  
He was keen to inform me, it's a BEARDED COLLIE.

Jim Whitecross 1984



## **HISTORY OF THE BEARDED COLLIE**

Around the turn of the 16th century, a ship sailed from Poland to Scotland carrying grain in exchange for Scottish sheep. On board also were six sheepdogs used to herd the selected sheep aboard. So impressive was the dog's ability that a Scottish shepherd offered a fine horn ram and two ewes for a pair of the dogs. The Bearded Collie had arrived in Scotland!

His outgoing nature and enquiring mind made work and play all one to him. Two aspects which today have become his most endearing qualities were a headache for the farmers for whom he worked. Through the centuries his numbers would decline in the field and he would be used by the butchers in their yards. Again his playful nature would see the butchers have problems with him too, for when he became bored with the work – he played! This coupled with the eventual passing of the large butcher's yards, found the Beardie in very short supply by the early part of the 1900's.

It is reasonable to assume that some Bearded Collies would have found their way to Australia with some of the early settlers. By 1929, 'THE AUSTRALASIAN' noted, '...the Bearded Collie lacks nothing in intelligence, is as hard as nails and a most reliable worker. If mustering sheep, he may be relied upon for a successful muster, using his head when out of sight and working on his own initiative, whilst his firm and persuasive tactics when dealing with a stubborn sheep is something to be remembered. When crossed with the Border he has left his mark, and descendants of such crosses have found their way to New Zealand'. Clearly, the Australian farmers and stockmen got better value out of their Beardies than their counterparts in the Northern Hemisphere! In time the Huntaway would be developed in New Zealand, and the Smithfield in Tasmania – both carrying much 'Beardie' blood.

1948 and in the north of Scotland, a dog dealer received an order for a Sheltie puppy. As he didn't have one, and didn't wish to lose the order, he simply addressed a Beardie puppy to his client, Mrs Willison. Totally captivated by 'Jeannie's' endearing and outgoing temperament, Mrs G O Willison decided to look for a mate for her. Constant searches always seemed to be in vain, so rare had the Beardie become by this time in Scotland and England.

The summer of 1949, Mrs Willison spent with her mother in Brighton. One sunny morning, whilst taking a walk along the beach, to her delight and surprise, she saw what she felt sure was a Beardie running along the sand. She located the owner and discovered that he was looking for a home for the dog, but it must have acreage attached. Mrs Willison's home seemed to fill this requirement, and on leaving Brighton for home, she was accompanied by 'Baillie'. Jeannie and Baillie would form not only the basis of the Bothkennar Bearded Collies but the foundation of the show Bearded

Collie as it is known today. Great dedication, patience and determination to produce the Beardie as correctly as possible and to ensure that it didn't become 'lost' again, were devoted to the restructuring of the breed. Thanks to Mrs Willison, and a band of dedicated breeders later on, today the Beardie is found in large numbers around the world.

Although a Beardie appears in the catalogue of Sydney Royal in the 1930's, there is no proof that the said dog did in fact turn up! And so we have to look to the 1973 importation of RUSHMOOR LOYAL CRUSADER by the Aumann's of Victoria as the first show Beardie to arrive in Australia.

Since that time, many superb dogs and bitches have been imported, each complementing and strengthening the lines originally selected as the basis for the Australian Show Bearded Collie.

By 1978, Groups and Clubs were being formed in most States of Australia, and, as they say, the rest is history! For today Bearded Collies regularly take out that coveted award of Best Exhibit in Show.

The Obedience Ring doesn't see Beardies in such large numbers, though they are on the increase. Most States proudly claim a CD or CDX. However, top honours would have to go to NZ Ch Beagold Georgette (Imp UK) – CDX, UDX and WDX!

In view of the Beardie's outgoing and exuberant nature, it's a little surprising that he isn't seen in large numbers in the Agility Ring – this could have something to do with the fact that he needs to succeed in the Obedience Ring first. Thanks to the devotion of some obedience fanatics, his debut shouldn't be too far away.

And so we have quickly retraced the Beardie's steps over four hundred years – from that Polish ship so long ago to the present. In so doing, we've also traced man's steps for four hundred years, for Beardies and man have been constant companions for all of that time and more. And how well the dog has responded to man's involvement – worker, companion, role model for Nana in PETER PAN, displaying his incredible rapport with children, show dog, obedience dog – all wrapped up in a bundle of fun and excitement – how much more of an all-rounder could one dog be?

## ● GENERAL APPEARANCE

***A lean active dog, longer than it is high in an approximate proportion of 5-4, measured from point of chest to point of buttock. Bitches may be slightly longer. The breed, though strongly made, should show plenty of daylight under the body and should not look too heavy. A bright enquiring expression is a distinctive feature of the breed.***

The Bearded Collie is a medium size, shaggy, working dog with a medium length of coat. If the coat is too long, we lose the really important phrase, 'should show plenty of daylight under the body'. The body is long and lean and strongly made, displaying the strength to do the work for which it was bred in the rough and rocky terrain of Scotland. The bitch may be slightly longer than the male, but this should not be carried to extremes. The keyword is 'balance', the lines are flowing.

## ● CHARACTERISTICS

***The Bearded Collie should be alert, lively, self-confident and active.***

The Bearded Collie has an outgoing nature, is extremely active and, at times, exuberant.

This may give a situation where it is not possible, sometimes, to get youngsters to behave as steadily in the ring as one would wish. This is due to exuberance rather than unsteady temperament, and should settle with maturity. Outright nervousness should be penalised, and aggressiveness NEVER tolerated.

## ● TEMPERAMENT

***The temperament should be that of a steady intelligent working dog, with no signs of nervousness or aggression.***

Although lively, the Bearded Collie has a stable and self-confident attitude.

## ● HEAD AND SKULL

***The head should be in proportion to the size of the dog. The skull broad and flat and square, the distance between stop and occiput being equal to the width between the orifices of the ears. The muzzle strong and equal in length to the distance from the stop to the occiput, the whole effect being that of a dog with strength of muzzle and plenty of brain room. The stop should be moderate. The nose large and square, generally black, but normally following the coat colour in blues and browns. The nose and lips should be of solid colour without spots or patches. Pigmentation of lips and eye rims should follow nose colour.***

The HEAD is most important in giving the dog its character. There are three equal measurements:

- Nose to stop
- Stop to occiput
- The distance between the orifices of the ears.

This makes things a little confusing, as the Standard also states that the skull is 'broad, flat and square'. The actual surface of the skull tends to appear to be rectangular when measured from ear to ear. If, in fact, the actual flat surface of the skull is square, the head will probably be too blocky. (Perhaps it means that the measurements should be taken from the outside points of the orifices?)

The muzzle should be strong and although it tapers toward the nose, it should be remembered that the nose is large and square, therefore the muzzle should never give any hint of snipeyness. (The colour of the nose will be dealt with later).

The Stop should be moderate; too much will give the impression of an Old English Sheepdog; too little will result in the loss of the required rise, which allows correct formation of arching over the eyes.

## ● EYES

***The eyes should tone with coat in colour, be set widely apart and be large, soft and affectionate, but not protruding. The eyebrows arched up and forward but not so long as to obscure the eyes.***

The required eye shape is OVAL without any suggestion of bulging. This combined with the correctly arched eyebrows gives the Bearded Collie his unique, enquiring expression.

Correct arching around the eyes comes from correct placement of stop and allows the hair of an adult to fall into the tunnel-like effect without obscuring the vision. Eye colour is discussed with colour, but a wall eye cannot tone with coat colour.

**Correct eye shape 'Oval'**

**Incorrect eye shape 'Round'**

**Incorrect eye shape 'Almond'**



Fig.1

*Giving the unique enquiring expression*

*Gives a 'staring' look*

*Gives a 'harsh' expression*

## ● EARS

***The ears of medium size and drooping. When the dog is alert, the ears should lift at the base level with, but not above, the top of the skull, increasing the apparent breadth of the skull.***

The orifices of the ear should be level with the eye. When alerted, the ear will lift slightly at the base, but never above the top of the skull. Some ears have a fold in them, whilst others are flat. This appears to be of genetic inheritance and no preference should be given to either type, as long as the set of the ear is correct.

## ● MOUTH

***The teeth large and white, the incisors of the lower jaw fitting tightly behind those of the upper jaw. However, a pincer bite is acceptable.***

The Bearded Collie should have a normal scissor bite, with well-developed underjaw. Rarely seen but tolerated under the Standard is a pincer or level bite.

## ● NECK

***Moderate length, muscular and slightly arched.***

The neck should be muscular and display the required 'arch'. It is not set at right angles to the shoulder. It is carried in a line midway between the horizontal and vertical, thus enhancing the graceful, flowing lines of the overall dog.

## ● FOREQUARTERS

*The shoulders should slope well back; a line drawn through the centre of the shoulder blade should form a right angle (90 degrees) with the humerus. The shoulder blades at the withers should be separated only by the vertebrae but should slope outwards from there sufficiently to accommodate the desired spring of rib. Legs straight and vertical, with good bone, and covered with shaggy hair all round. Pasterns flexible without weakness.*

Well laid shoulders are a must in this breed. The shoulders should slope well back; a line drawn through the centre of the shoulder blade should form a right angle with the humerus. The shoulder blades at the withers should be separated only by the vertebrae and should slope outwards from there sufficiently to accommodate the desired spring of rib. The length of the upper arm should be equal to the shoulder blade. The legs should be straight, viewed from any angle with good bone, enabling the dog to do a good day's work in rough terrain.

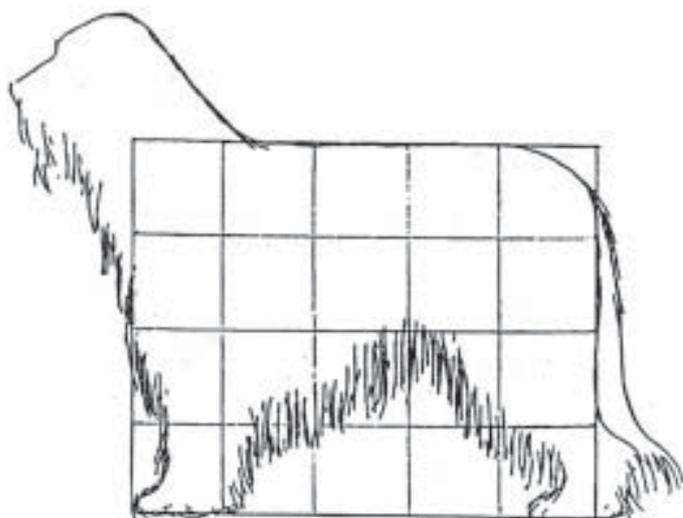


Fig. 2

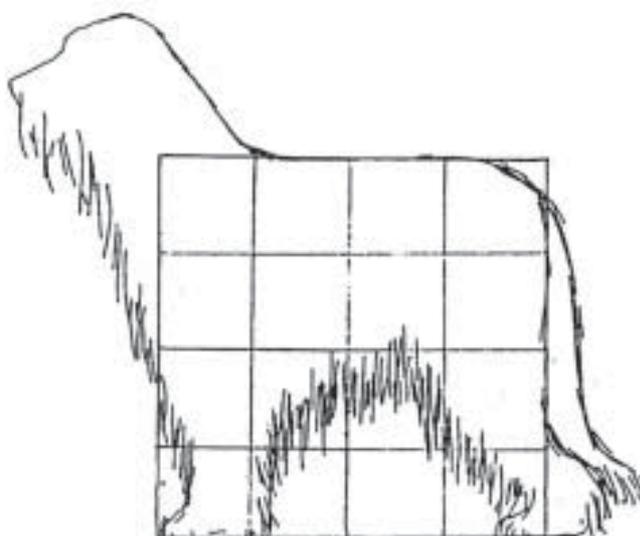
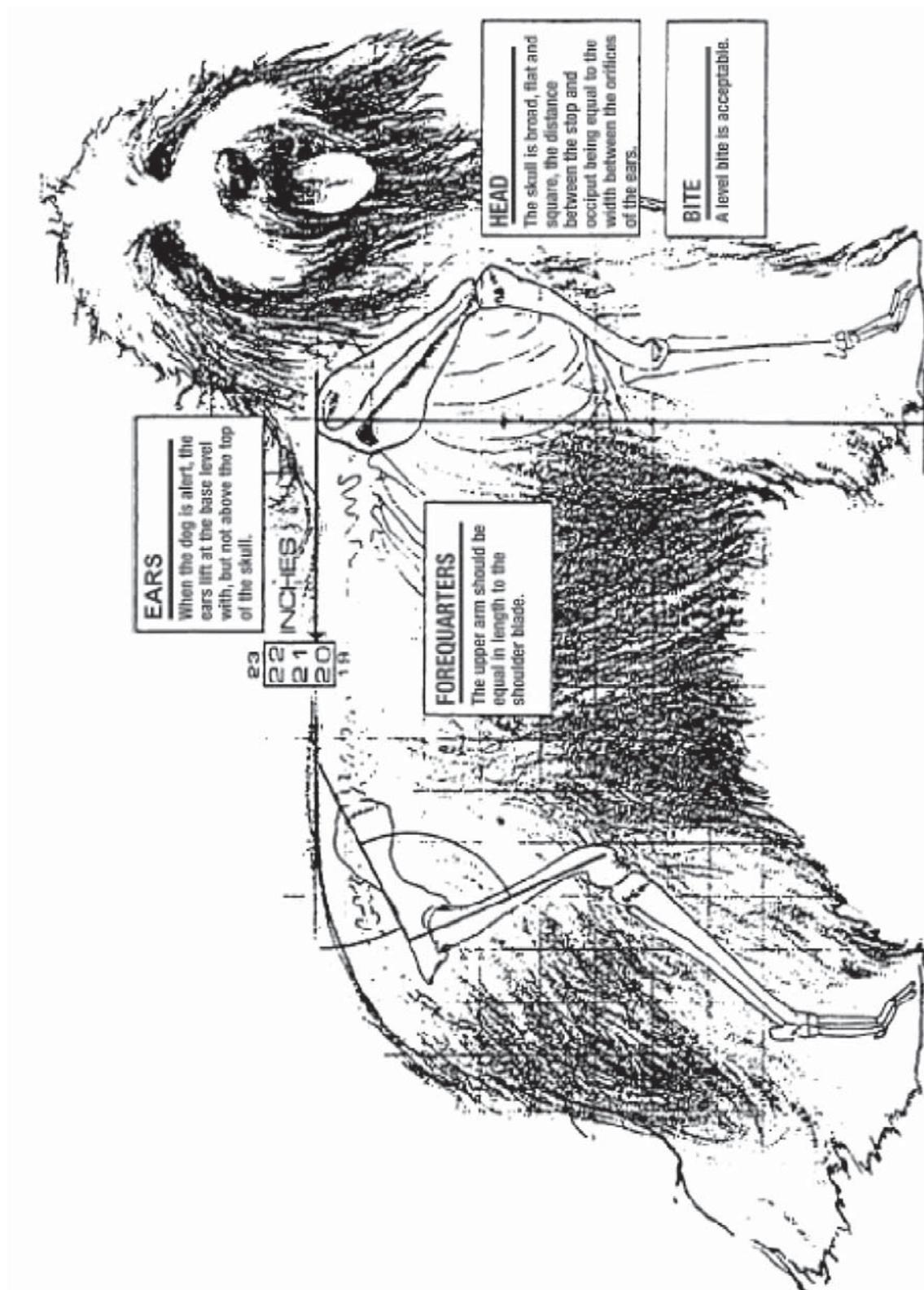


Fig. 3



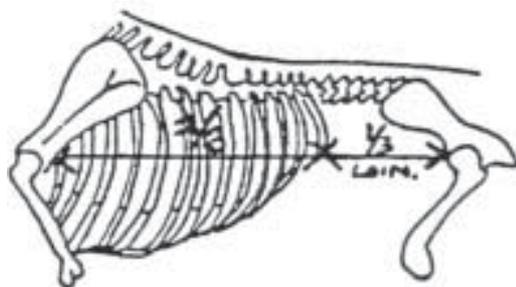
## ● BODY

***The length of the back should come from the length of the ribcage and not that of the loin. The back level and ribs well sprung but not barrelled. The loins should be strong and the chest deep, giving plenty of heart and lung room.***

Whilst the proportion of length to height is 5 to 4, this length MUST come from length of ribcage. The ribcage should feel flat at the sides but this should not be confused with slab-sidedness, as we expect to have outwards spring from the vertebrae, then flattening off. In an adult dog the chest is deep, reaching ideally to the elbows. The Bearded Collie is a lean dog and it should be noted that the width between the forelegs is approximately only that of a hand-span, i.e., slightly less than in most working breeds of similar size.

The back is strong and level, blending smoothly into the rump at approximately 30 degrees. The loin is short and strong and is taken from the last point of the ribcage, not at the point of attachment of the last rib to the vertebral column. It corresponds to the length of the ribs, not to the length of the vertebrae. There should be a moderate tuck-up.

Fig. 4



## ● HINDQUARTERS

***Well muscled with good second thighs, well bent stifles and low hocks. The lower leg should fall at a right angle to the ground and, in normal stance, should be just behind a line vertically below the point of the buttock.***

Strength of muscle is essential to produce the required drive which is necessary to create the tireless gait. This, coupled with well turned stifles and strong, low hocks, will produce the ideal hindquarters. The rear pasterns should be vertical when viewed from both the sides and rear.

## ● FEET

***Oval in shape with the soles well padded. The toes arched and close together, well covered with hair including the pads.***

Correct arching and thick, strong pads are essential in this breed. The hair between the pads is required to give protection in the dog's native terrain. This hair between pads must be checked because removal would be in contravention of the Standard, which states that the breed must not be trimmed in any way.

## ● TAIL

***Set low, without kink or twist, and long enough for the end of the bone to reach at least the hock. Carried low with an upward swirl at the tip whilst standing or walking, but may be extended at speed. Never carried over the back. Covered with abundant hair.***

The low set tail must appear to flow on from the line of the back. In an active working dog it is used as a rudder, and if incorrectly set will be of little use to the dog and will, in fact, affect his mobility. High set tails usually go with hindquarters which lack angulation. As stated, the tail may be raised when moving due to the natural exuberance of the breed, but should never be carried over the back.

## ● GAIT/MOVEMENT

***Movement should be supple, smooth and long reaching, covering the ground with the minimum of effort.***

The Bearded Collie's movement is an essential aspect of its 'workability'. Good muscling is important. The flowing movement should be effortless with great symmetry, the front legs reaching well out over the ground to accommodate the strong drive from the hindquarters – this flowing, tireless movement allowing the dog to cover the maximum amount of ground with the minimum amount of effort. When moving at normal gaing speed, the Bearded Collie should single track.

(See further detail on movement at the end of this Extension.)

## ● COAT

***Double with the undercoat soft, furry and close. Outercoat flat, harsh, strong and shaggy, free from woolliness and curl, though a slight wave is permissible. Length and density of the hair should be sufficient to provide a protective coat and to enhance the shape of the dog, but not enough to obscure the natural lines of the body. The coat must not be trimmed in any way. On the head, the bridge of the nose should be sparsely covered with hair which is slightly longer on the sides just to cover the lips. From the cheeks, the lower lips and under the chin, the coat should increase in length towards the chest, forming the typical beard.***

Whilst the Standard describes the coat of an adult, puppies and youngsters will not have the really harsh coat of the mature specimens. Their coats may be softer and fluffier but should still be the double coat required by the Standard. At around 9–18 months of age the adult coat starts to come from puppy to full adult coat, there will be a situation where the new coat is beginning to show harsher texture, but the coat, especially over the rear, may still carry the softer, fluffier coat of the youngster. This can give the young dog a 'bitty' look, but is quite correct in the growing stages of the Bearded Collie.

The parting of the coat should be a natural one. Any plucking, trimming or shaping of ANY part of the coat should be severely penalised. The whole picture should be that of a natural, shaggy, working dog.

## COAT

Fig. 5



*A fluffy puppy*

*A youngster with a 'bitty' look  
– quite correct in the growing  
stages of the Bearded Collie*

*Mature coat of the adult dog*

### ● COLOUR

**Slate grey, reddish fawn, black, blue, all shades of grey, brown and sandy, with or without white markings. Where white occurs, it should only appear on the foreface, as a blaze on the skull, on the tip of the tail, on the chest, legs and feet and, if round the collar, the roots of the white hair should not extend behind the shoulder. White should not appear above the hocks on the outside of the hind legs. Slight tan markings are acceptable on the eyebrows, inside the ears, on the cheeks, under the root of the tail, and on the legs where white joins the main colour.**

Bearded Collies are born one of four colours – black, blue, brown or fawn. All of which are equally acceptable, and may vary greatly with age.

If there is doubt over the colour of an exhibit, inspect the pigment and check the eye colour. Pigmentation of nose, lips and eyerims should be unbroken. Whilst full pigmentation of pads is desirable, it is not essential, and lack of, should not be penalised.

Bearded Collies that are born black will sometimes stay that colour, but more often will go slate grey or silver grey; the shade can vary. They will always have black pigment on the nose, lips, eyerims and, hopefully, (but not essential in the breed) the pads. They should have brown eyes of a shade to tone with the coat colour. The eye should always be brown and never yellow, which gives a staring expression quite alien to the breed.

Blues are born blue, almost chinchilla in colour, not merle, and will have blue/grey pigment and a grey eye. This grey pigment is quite distinctly grey and is not a faded colour. Browns are born a sleek, shiny brown and will vary in shade. Pigment should be a strong brown with eye colour to match the coat colour. Eyes lighter than coat can give a harsh expression.

Fawns are born a distinctly pale colour. They are not pale brown. They have a mushroom coloured pigment and eye colour to match. The pigment is not pale brown and pigment on both blues and fawns should be strong.

Blue and fawn Bearded Collies are distinct colours. Blues are not pale blacks and fawns are not pale browns. It is perfectly possible for a blue to have a darker coat colour than a black, and a fawn a darker coat colour than a brown. Pigment always determines the colour of any dog older than a puppy.

All colours may lighten in coat colour as they develop, even to almost white. The eye may lighten as the coat lightens but should definitely darken as the coat colour darkens. If in doubt, ask birth colour and check pigment. Body patches of white are not acceptable. No one colour is to be preferred over any other colour.

## ● **SIZE**

***Ideal height at the shoulder:***

***Dogs            53-56 cms (21-22 ins)***

***Bitches        51-53 cms (20-21 ins)***

***Overall quality and proportions should be considered before size but excessive variation from the ideal height should be discouraged.***

It is stated as an ideal, and some flexibility should be allowed. However, oversized specimens that do in fact look too heavy, or undersized ones that are too fine, are to be penalised.

## ● **FAULTS**

***Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.***

## ● **NOTE**

***Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.***

## **A MOVING SUBJECT**

*by Bryony Harcourt Brown.*

I have been asked to write an article on movement, which is nice, because it is a subject I find totally absorbing!

The Bearded Collie is a working breed and, as such, it **MUST** be constructed to move well. The point of breeding and showing is primarily to produce typical dogs, capable of doing the job for which they were originally intended. If a Beardie does not move soundly it is liable to stress and, as a working dog, is prone to break down at an early age, or to be inefficient in use.

To learn about movement you should watch, critically, as many dogs move as possible, do not assume that just because they have won a lot they are perfect. If at all possible, you should try to 'go-over' as many of the dogs whose movement you have watched as possible (asking the owner first, of course!) Although, things being what they are, it may be prudent to keep your criticism to yourself! A pity, but that's human nature, and I'd hate to be the progenitor of some stand-up fights! Do not fault 'judge', the good over-all dog is what matters. All dogs have, not necessarily faults, but something you would like to change for perfection. Assess each dog on its own, as a separate entity, not against parts of other dogs. You could put bits of all the best dogs in the country together and come up with a constructionally unbalanced mess. That is because the Standard is a guideline for individual interpretation, and not to produce 'replicas'.

The dog should be considered in relation to itself, it should be balanced for itself, not for the dogs next to it. It is easy to develop a 'fetish' about the part of the construction you have most recently learned, you should avoid that at all costs.

A common complaint is that the 'big' all-rounders do not 'go over' the dogs in the accepted detail. However, given the experience, knowledge and 'eye' it is possible to determine almost every last detail of the dog's construction from merely watching it move, especially in profile. To a good judge, close examination by handling the dog is only needed for confirmation of the details and assessment of etceteras, e.g., head, eye, expression and mouth, because the design of construction found to be correct is discovered from the construction that produces the ideal movement for that breed.

Movement is produced by the dog's angles of bones, associated lengths and overall balance. Every part affects the whole dog. Consequently it is not sufficient to notice, for example, that a dog's topline dips, why does it dip? Because there is some imbalance of the front, or of the rear, or, indeed, is it unbalanced one to the other, or is its back too long for its angles, or is it just out of condition? These are all considerations.

The most important aspect of movement is that seen in profile, with experience you can tell all aspects of movement from the side, although it is important to send the dog up and back in a straight line once, to confirm suspicions of close parallel or cow-hocked hind movement, for example. To constantly assess movement from the front and rear, with preference over profile movement is to highlight your inadequate knowledge, and, at the end of your assessment, you would frequently pick an inadequate mover.

The best mover will cover the ground in long, free strides, lifting its feet only minimally from the ground. Its movement is balanced and its legs stretch far in front of it, with its hindlegs stretching far behind it, with obvious expression of grace and strength. It can go on for hours in this gait. It can accomplish moving over rough ground, turns and corners and changes of speed easily and without breaking stride or gait, unless its thought is broken. It is in harmony for itself, it is BALANCED. Just as a perfectly proportioned, finely tuned engine needs a minimum of fuel to achieve maximum power, a dog that is balanced for itself will need minimal energy to achieve maximum effect.

Fig. 6

In profile the dog should bend its leading foreleg at the pastern and elbow, flexing the leg and then bringing it forward, low to the ground, and extending it as far as possible without having to lift it far off the ground. At the same time it should be bringing its opposing rear leg, (opposite side) forwards to place it over the print left by the foreleg, of that side, which is just lifting to come forwards. The rear leg should also be lifted only sufficiently to clear the ground as it is brought under the dog.

The hindleg and the foreleg of the opposing side should reach the ground, propelling the dog forwards, until the foreleg is at the dogs' midline and rear leg is extended as far behind the dog as the foreleg of that side has now extended in front of the dog. That is, as far as is possible to maintain minimum lift off the ground.

At the point of maximum extension all four feet have left the ground albeit only very slightly. The foreleg and the hindleg of one side are extended in diagonal lines, which could be drawn as one through the forefoot to shoulder. The pastern and hock straightening for maximum extension. At this point the opposing sides rear and forefeet are brought together under the dogs midline.

As a sound, kinetically balanced dog the Beardie should single-track at speed. That is to say that the forelegs and likewise, the hindlegs, should converge to a midline, the faster the dog goes, until the feet make a track along one line. In this way it is possible for a dog to move along a narrow path without having to move closely, a weaker and impeding movement. It is common for Beardies to move in a close parallel behind, while odd dogs move in a wide parallel, which puts even greater strain on the dog than the former. When single tracking the dog's legs should be in a straight, but slanted line inwards not hocking out, or at elbow.

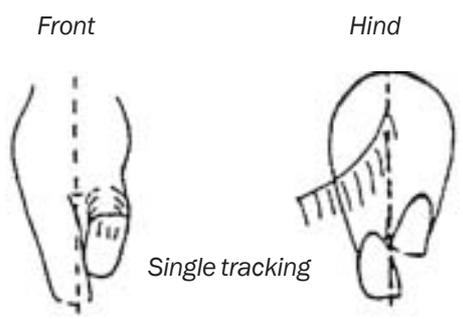
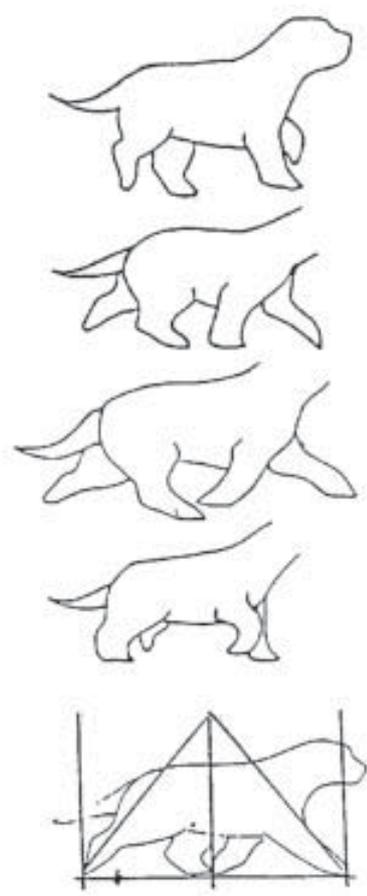


Fig. 7

Although the hocks and elbows will be, of course, further out from the midline than the feet, they should not be turned out from the line of the legs.

To continue the flowing line, so beautiful in a Beardie, the head should be held at a slight upward angle to the horizontal back. The impression should be, then, that the head is leading the animal, almost pulling it forwards. Correct front angulation and attitude determine the head carriage on the move.

## THE FRONT ASSEMBLY

Must be understood, and some, if not all of us, find this very hard initially, whilst others never grasp the basics of the front correctly. Unfortunately poor fronts are particularly prevalent in the breed. It is especially difficult for novices as they, quite naturally, will tend to assume that if a dog is a top winner it will automatically follow that it is well constructed and is sure to have a good front. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

The angle of the shoulder must be considered in relation to the angle of the upper arm, (humerus) and, since these should, ideally, be equidistant, and of a reasonable length, the lengths are important too. But you can't stop there, because the front should be considered in relation to the rest of the dog, with its rear angulation and length to height proportions.

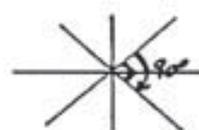
It is difficult to find a new way of explaining the front, as the conventional explanations prove hard for some people to understand. So I'm trying this way and I hope those who don't understand the angle relationships yet will find it easier.



Take a cross,



and a second cross drawn diagonally through its midpoint,

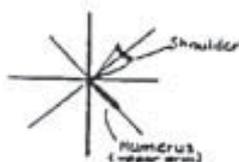


the angle marked is 90° or a right angle.

Fig. 8



The midpoint shown is the point of the shoulder and upper arm joint.

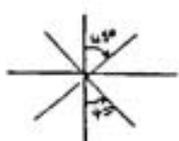


The shoulder and upper-arm should be as above, 90° is the perfect angle between them, and they should both be at the same length.

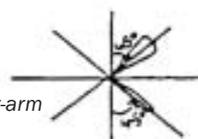


The shoulder has a raised spine running down its outer centre which can be felt on the dog. This should be used as the marker from which to measure.

The 45° angles are the ideal angles at which the shoulder and the upper-arm should be slanted back from the vertical line at the point of shoulder.



So, in the dog the bones of the shoulder and upper-arm are as shown.



At the same time the shoulder blades should be moulded to the line of the ribs as shown. So that they are separated at their upper edges only by the vertebrae. Having said this, to get this kind of 'neatness' to the shoulders of a male would be almost certainly, to produce a small, overrefined dog, and a certain amount of lee-way has to be allowed for a slightly 'looser' attachment of the shoulder to the body in order to get a more free, fluid mover with size and strength. 'Slightly' being the operative word, I am not advocating a 'coarse' shoulder.

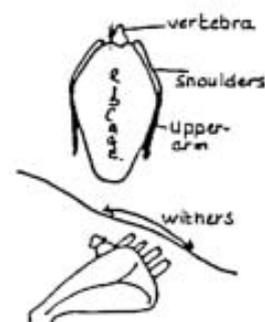


Fig. 9

The withers denote the ridge of the vertebrae above the shoulders, not the spine dropped between the shoulder blades, as is more common in Beardies. The withers in a good front should be evident as a slight rise. The pastern should be slightly sloping forwards from the joint to the foot. This is extremely important and gives the desired flexibility to the lower foreleg. Without a flexible pastern the forehand movement will be adversely affected with stilted, unsound action. A short upright pastern is often coupled with a short, upright upper-arm, the two producing a high stepping hackney action.

If you can imagine your arm as a dogs' foreleg and put your fingers, arched, on the floor as the foot, the palm and upper-hand represent the pastern and the forearm the foreleg. The elbow and the upper arm

represent their counterparts in the dog. If you keep your wrist and elbow straight you can see that you would soon get very weary with a very jarred arm if you had to run and land on that. But, give these two joints their correct angles and you can feel the added flexibility that comes with them, achieving the desired shock absorbing effect. The arm idea may sound silly and beneath your dignity, but I think it brings home a message which might not, otherwise seem so significant.

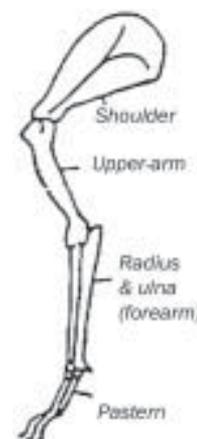


Fig. 10

All types of unbalance of the front are available in the breed in abundance. You should familiarise yourself with these and more, importantly, their effects on the shape of the dog and its movement.

## EXAMPLES ARE AS FOLLOWS

*90° between the shoulder and upper-arm, but the shoulder less than 45° (upright) and the upper-arm more than 45° (over-angulation)*

This leads to the objectionable fault of a rise to the shoulders, so prevalent in the breed, and rarely noticed for some reason. This rise to the shoulders can accompany:

*More than 90° and less than 45° angles (Upright shoulder and upper arm).*

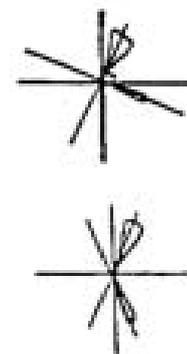
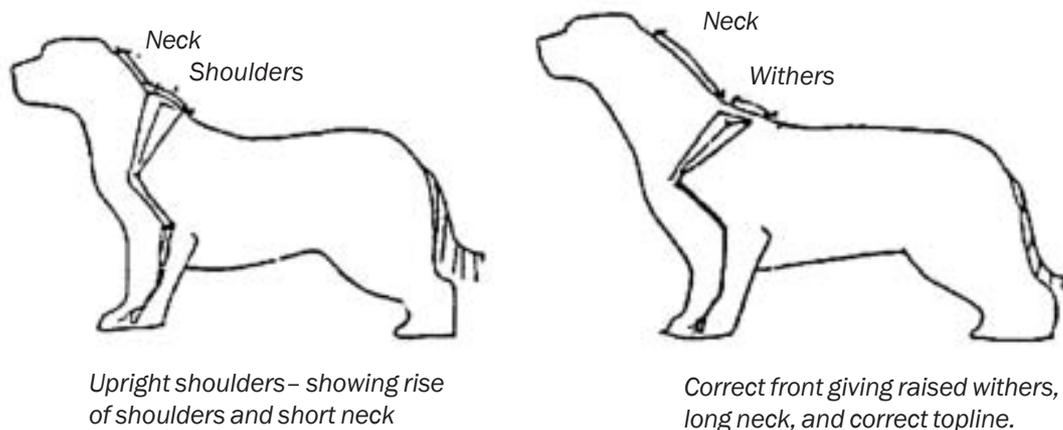


Fig. 11

Rising to the shoulders is particularly noticeable, for beginners, from behind. In profile it is apparent as, unlike the slightly raised withers of a dog with a good front, a rise starting from sometimes as much as the middle of the back, rising up to the shoulders, with a short neck at the top of them. These dogs are sometimes praised for long necks and level topline — strange!

Fig. 12



Upright upper-arms with 45° shoulder angulation tend to result in long necks but these dogs tend to lack the flowing neckline of a good front. They move with heads held high and, for this reason are popular with some judges. They extend in front but the leg is lifted high and flies up and forwards, lacking precision and strength. The dog is not sound and is liable to stress. Dogs with upright upper-arms tend to move closely in front as they lack breadth at this unnatural elbow angle.

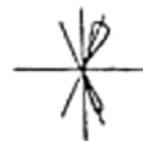
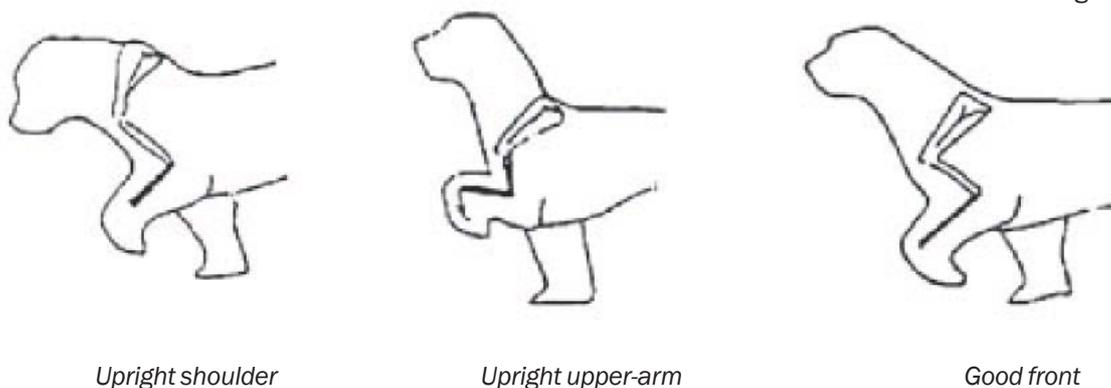


Fig. 13

Dogs with upright shoulders and over-angulated or correct upper-arms may extend fairly well in front when moving, but they are apt to carry their heads lower than those with good fronts. They may move wide in front if the elbows are angled back to a broader level of the chest than normal. In any event these dogs do not have the flowing line of a dog with a good front, when moving, with head and neck carried low and a 'hump' where the shoulders are sticking up!

Fig. 14



## ON TO THE MIDDLE BIT

The depth of the ribcage is important, but not so much so that it takes precedence over angulation and balance. The ribcage is necessary for the protection of the vital organs, for example the heart and lungs. If the ribcage is too narrow or shallow for the size of dog in question there is a potential loss of heart and lung space. In practice only very shallow or narrow ribcages would result in discernible restriction of these organs. Exceptional depth of chest makes a good dog better. Unfortunately our new Standard misses out a fundamental feature of the Beardie ribcage, that it should be flat-sided. This point means that the Beardie ribcage differs from that of a Rough Collie, which is rounded, and that of an Afghan for instance, which should be oval as with a lot of other breeds.

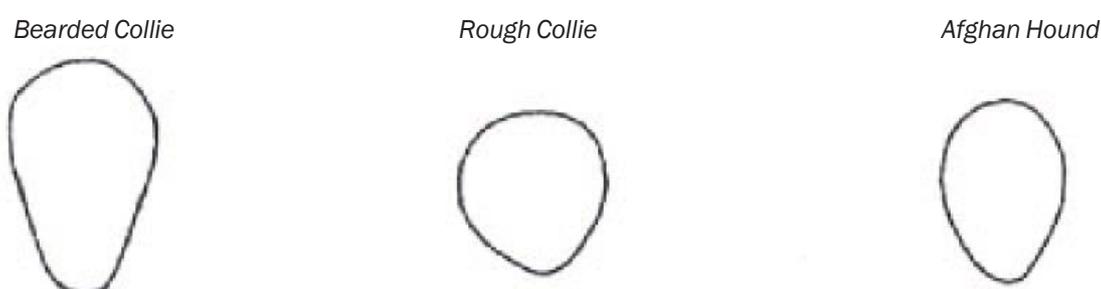


Fig. 15

This shape of ribcage allows for the particular movement of the Beardie, encouraging the elbow to be held closely to the body whilst the dog is standing, and maintaining it in correct alignment during movement. It also continues the streamline of the Beardie shape. A Shallow or narrow ribcage will adversely affect the dog on the move, as it will not give the breadth at the point of the elbow and the dog will be narrow in front. A barrel chest will cause the dog to move widely in front, or it will paddle, be out at elbow, or may roll.

The length of the ribcage has given rise to some consternation in the breed recently. I honestly haven't noticed that the lengths of ribcage have altered drastically since I started in the breed, but since that's only 14 years ago, maybe they have altered since before that time. It is, however, obvious that a long-bodied dog is likely to have a longer loin than a short dog.

The length of the spine comes from the individual lengths of the vertebrae, and the widths of the intervertebral discs, not more vertebrae in convenient places. It is very hard to breed the lumbar vertebrae an unusual disproportionate length, so it invariably follows that the length of the loin will be closely associated with the overall length of the back – and rightly so, since the point is that it should be balanced for the dog in question, not the same length as the dog next to it! Ideally the loin should measure  $\frac{1}{3}$  when considered in relation to the ribcage, which should be  $\frac{2}{3}$ . There are thirteen pairs of ribs and each is attached to its corresponding thoracic vertebra. Ribs 1-9 on both sides, are attached to the sternum, or breast bone. Ribs 10, 11 and 12 are attached to the sternum by cartilaginous extensions. The thirteenth ribs are 'floating' ribs, they are not attached to the sternum and can be easily felt on any but overweight dogs.

In some dogs however, (often those with barrel chests) the floating ribs are held outwards rather than descending backwards. In these dogs the ribcage will be shorter, leaving some of the normally protected organs exposed to potential injury. When the loin is long the dog will dip when moving and when the loin is short (coupled with a short back) the dog will roll. When the length of loin adversely affects the movement it becomes important. The loin should not be too long, no, but it shouldn't be too short either, it should be balanced for the dog in question.

N.B. The length of loin is taken from the last point of the ribcage, not at the point of attachment of the last rib to the vertebral column. It corresponds to the length of the ribs, not the length of the vertebrae.

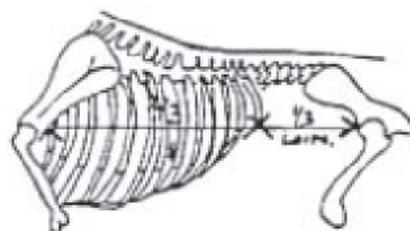


Fig. 16

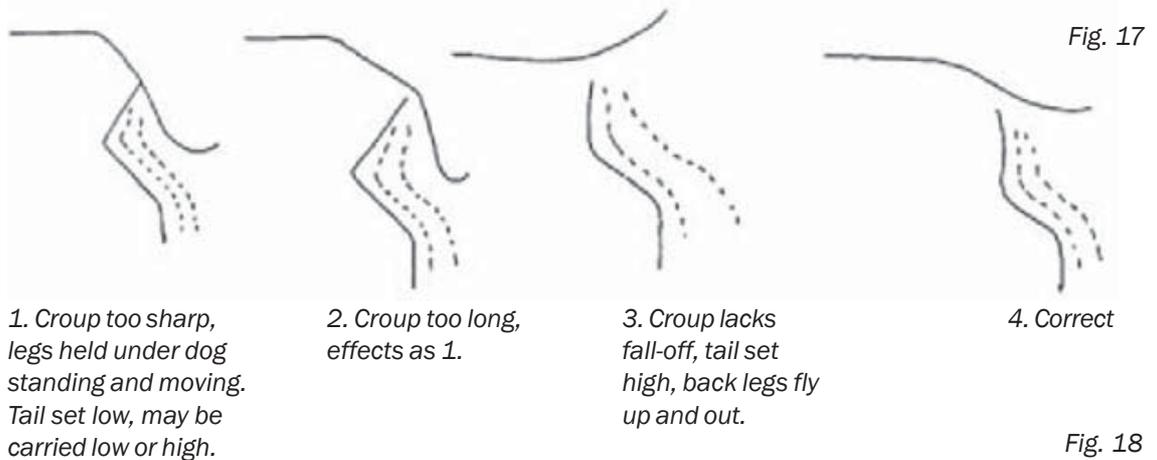
## THE BACK END

Sounds as though it's not important, tagged onto the end as an after-thought. In fact it is commonly thought to be less important than the front, probably because everyone takes ages to work out the shoulder bit, even longer to grasp the upper-arm and assumes that the hindquarters just take care of themselves if the rest's right. They think that the stifle should be bent a bit and the rear pastern shouldn't be too long. But there's a bit more than that! You can put a straightish but well balanced front on a shortish dog with a straightish rear, so it is balanced all through, and it will move soundly, if not with much scope. But, give that dog, as an alternative a commonly termed 'well' angulated back-end and it will have all sorts of problems. It will crab or pace or overstep, it may roach its back or short-step in front, anything to compensate for the over-drive from the rear, the over-reach of the rear legs, on the move. Give a dog a well angulated front and a straightish rear and it will move adequately, but it will lack the necessary drive behind, and it will be forced to work extra hard to maintain the propulsion of a balanced dog.

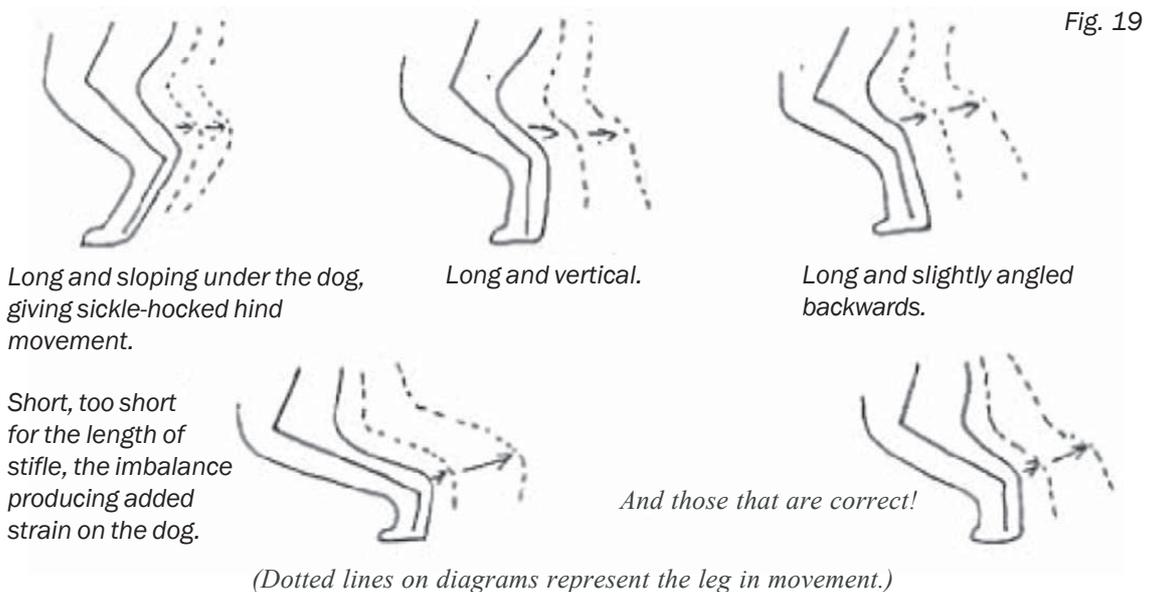
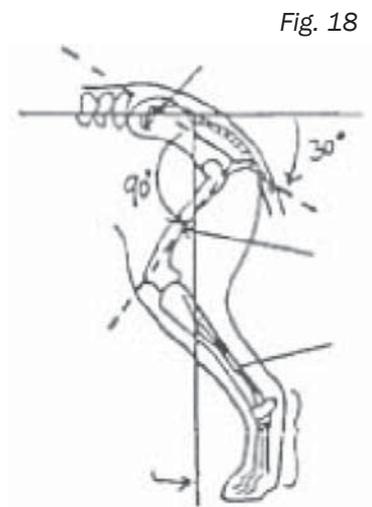
Every part or component of the hindquarters determines the ultimate performance on the move. Fortunately it can be stated that a dog will really good hind movement is correctly built in its hind assembly. It is incorrect to state that a dog moves well but that it has a constructional fault in its hindquarters, as the two do not go together.

The hindquarters start with the croup. If the croup's wrong then the whole back-end will be spoilt, it is not simply there to keep the tail set correctly! (though it does help!) The slight slope of the croup is produced by the angle of the pelvis in relation to the horizontal line of the back. Ideally this is 30°. The length between the hip bones and the root of the tail determines the tail set. If the croup, or pelvis angle is too great, it may be long or short or of correct length, or if the angle is correct but the croup is too long, the tail will be set low and the movement will be adversely affected. In these cases the hindquarters will be 'tied' under the dog and the movement will lack hind extension. A long croup is often accompanied by a long rear pastern in Beardies and the dog then moves with a characteristic lifting up and down of the hindlegs, as if it is walking in sticky mud, as opposed to the fluent drive from behind.

A croup with too little drop-off allows for free extension of the hindlegs when moving, but the legs 'fly' up and back, lacking the driving effect, and the tail set is high. The difference between extension, merely, and extension with drive is a subtle but important one.



The femur, thigh, should be at an angle of 90° to the pelvis, so that it is directed forwards under the dog, for support. The tibia and fibula, the two bones which form the second thigh, run from the stifle joint (corresponding to the knee joint in man) to the hock joint, (the heel in man). These bones should slope back outwards from the femur, giving stifle angulation. Although the angulation of the stifle is often thought to be the most important aspect if the angles of the pelvis and femur are correct and the lengths are right (with the femur and second thigh equidistant or the latter slightly longer), it will invariably follow that the stifle is at the correct angle, (providing the hocks right too, of course!). The pelvis, as stated, is the start of many of the major problems in the hindquarters.



Correct rear angulation, with the right pelvis angle, and correct tail set. In movement the good tail will be held outwards, with an upward swirl at the tip, helping by acting as a rudder, and maintaining the streamlined shape of a good Beardie.

Correct hocks have strong joints, only possible in a well-boned dog. They are vertical to the ground, or directed slightly forwards under the dog or slightly backwards, away from the dog, depending on the position of the dog's leg at the time.

When you have examined the movement of a dog, seen that it is sound, decided that it is driving and reaching and that it is balanced, it is time to decide whether that dog has great breadth of skull, good eyes and the required pigmentation. It is pointless to have a good head and eye on a poorly constructed, poor mover. What use are ultra dark eyes, they don't help the dog to work, they may be aesthetically pleasing to us, but the sheep don't care and the dogs don't perform better because they know they've got pretty eyes and they feel good! It doesn't follow that a dog with an extra broad skull and more brain-room actually is more intelligent. I know some of my best headed dogs are also the thickest in the brain! Feeling minute breadth differences in skull and gazing in dogs faces, making chucking noises to see if the dog is alert in a foreign situation, to someone other than its owner, are stalling tactics for the unsure judge. Heads, eyes, pigmentation are etceteras, extras.

**Given a group of basically typical dogs:**

A poor dog may possess only good etceteras in its favour. A good dog is basically sound and has a few of good etceteras, the outstanding dog is a sound, well constructed, good mover, with the etceteras.

I rest my case.

*Note: All drawings are diagrammatic — and should be considered as such.*

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Members of the Bearded Collie Club of S.A. Inc.

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"Jake"

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*“... Should you while wandering in the wild sheepland,  
happen on moor or in market,  
upon a very perfect gentley knight,  
clothed on in dark grey habit,  
splashed here and there with rays of moon,  
free by right divine of the guild of gentlemen,  
strenuous as a prince,  
lithe as a rowan,  
graceful as a girl,  
with high King carriage,  
motions and manners of a fairy Queen;  
should he have a noble breadth of brow,  
an air of still strength,  
born of right confidence,  
all unassuming;  
last and most unfailing test of all,  
should you look into two snow-clad eyes,  
calm,  
wistful,  
inscrutable,  
their soft depths clothed on with eternal sadness,  
yearning,  
as is said,  
for the soul that is not theirs  
— know then, that you look upon one of the line  
of the most illustrious sheepdogs of the North.”*



*from*  
OWD BOB  
by Alfred Olliphant  
1819