

The Harrier

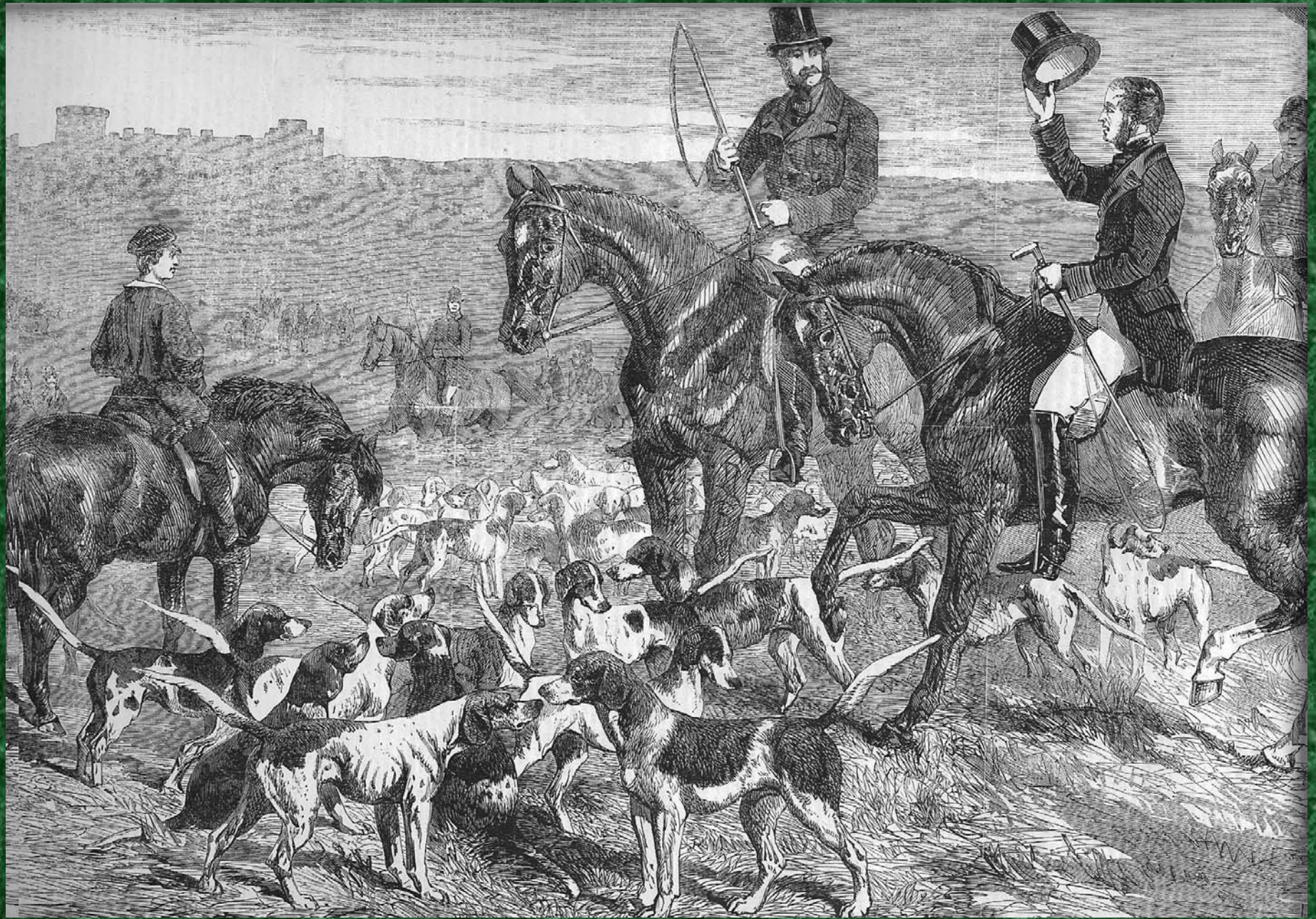


Origins of Breed History

The Harrier has a long history in England with detailed records of individual packs existing from the 13th century to present.



The first recorded pack of Harriers was the Penistone, established in 1260 and held together for over five centuries. This in itself is a great tribute to the character and hunting ability of the breed.

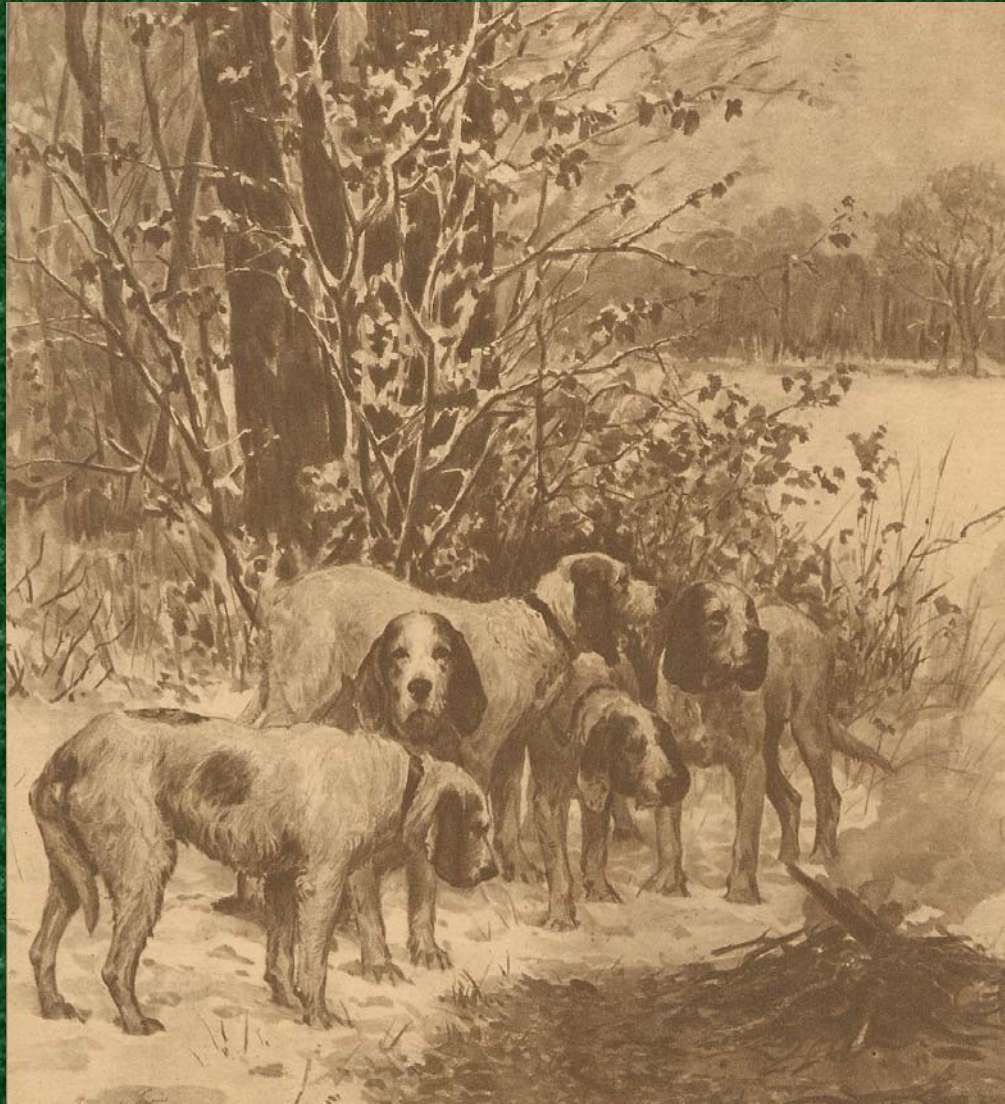


Hare hunting is a sport of much greater antiquity than fox hunting. (An ancient sport, hare hunting predates fox hunting by many centuries.)



In medieval times, and even through the eighteenth century, the hunting of hare ranked high among sportsmen.

Foundation Stock



The Harrier is believed to have come from crosses of the now extinct St. Hubert and Talbot hounds, and the Southern Hound. These Welsh Harriers are reminiscent of the old Southern Hounds. Notice the longer, semi-rough coat.



In March of 1891, the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles was formed and published a studbook. At that time, Harriers were much more popular than Beagles. The foundation stock for the 1891 edition were admitted based on individual pack records or by committee. Some of these “foundation” Harriers were, in fact, small Foxhounds with parents from recognized Foxhound kennels. In addition, those “foundation” Harriers appear back in the pedigrees of some top-winning Beagles.



Even now, hounds can be registered in the appendix of the Harrier studbook if only one parent is a registered Harrier. Offspring of Appendix Hounds bred to a registered Harrier are eligible to appear in the regular Harrier studbook and are considered full Harrier. The practice of breeding to Foxhounds still occurs in England, though less frequently, and is reflected in the distant generations of the pedigrees we see today.



The 1891 through 1900 studbook volumes list 107 registered packs of Harriers. In 1892, they began to run the Peterborough Harrier and Beagle show. This is the perpetual trophy for the Peterborough Champion Hound.

Purpose and Function



The Harrier is the only hound developed specifically to hunt hare.

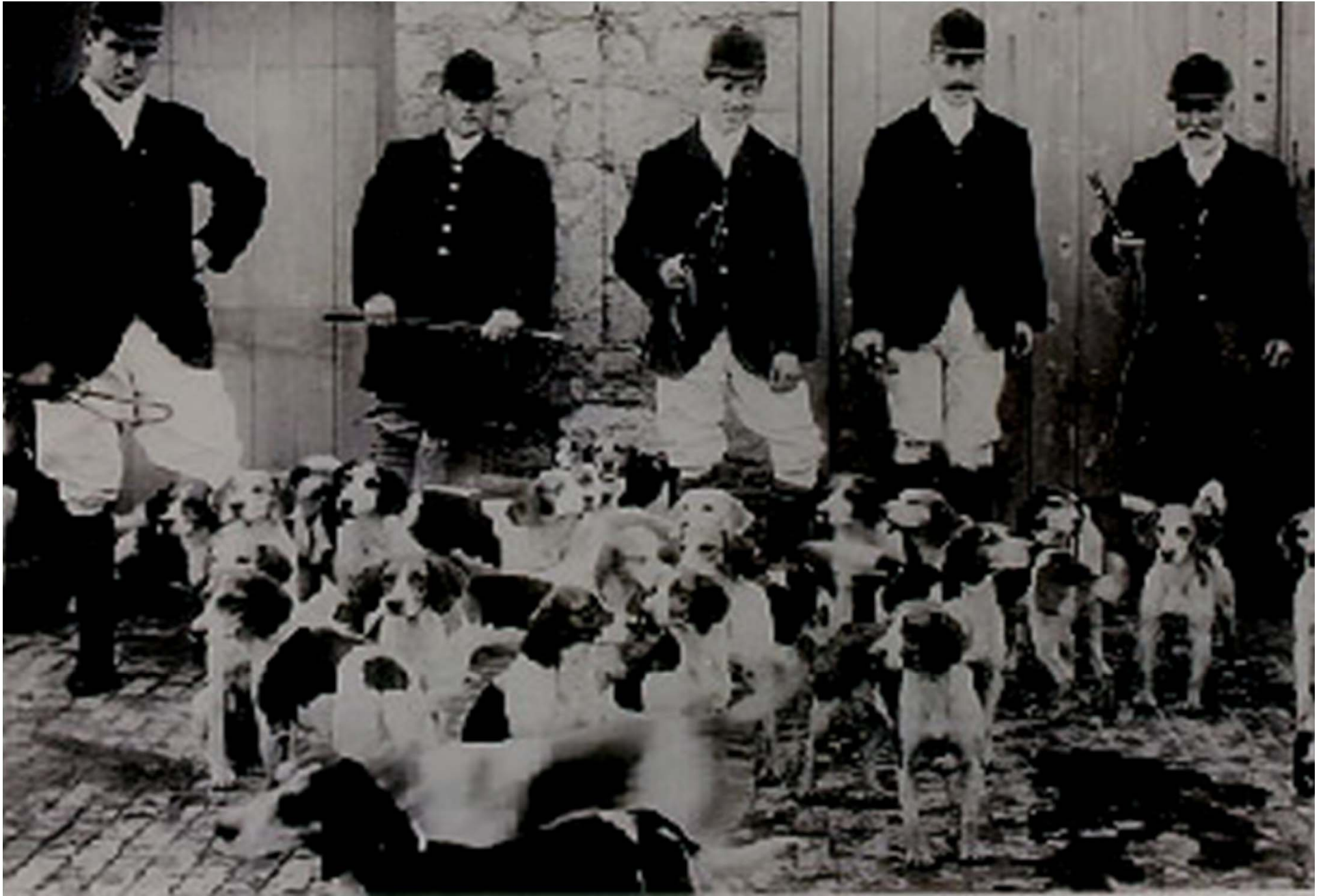


A Harrier at work.

Bred to hunt European hare

The hunting of hare on foot is what led to the popularity of the Harrier, as it was not everyone who could or wished to hunt from horseback.





Many of the early packs were “scratch” packs, comprised of hounds owned by many individuals and brought together for a day. This type of pack brought the sport within reach of the less wealthy and required a unique temperament in the hounds.



In the USA, the Harrier has been present as long as any other scent hound and has been used for hunting since colonial times. However, in North America, there are few true hares. The European Hare was imported into New York in 18893 and still flourishes in that and a few surrounding states. There are also Snowshoe Hare in the Northeast while the widespread and swift Jackrabbit resides across the nation. When foxhunting became fashionable, the smaller foot hounds did not prove popular for trailing the eastern fox.



Today, Harrier packs exist in England, Ireland, Wales, France, Belgium, the USA and New Zealand. New Zealand currently (1990's) has the largest number of Harriers, using them only for hunting.



Contemporary Use



Several organized packs of Harriers, hunting in the English style, were established in this country in the late 19th and early 20th century. Some packs were recognized by the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America, and at least two packs joined the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles in England.



Many Harriers continue to be hunted in various styles in this country. There are Snowshoe Hares being hunted in the Northeast

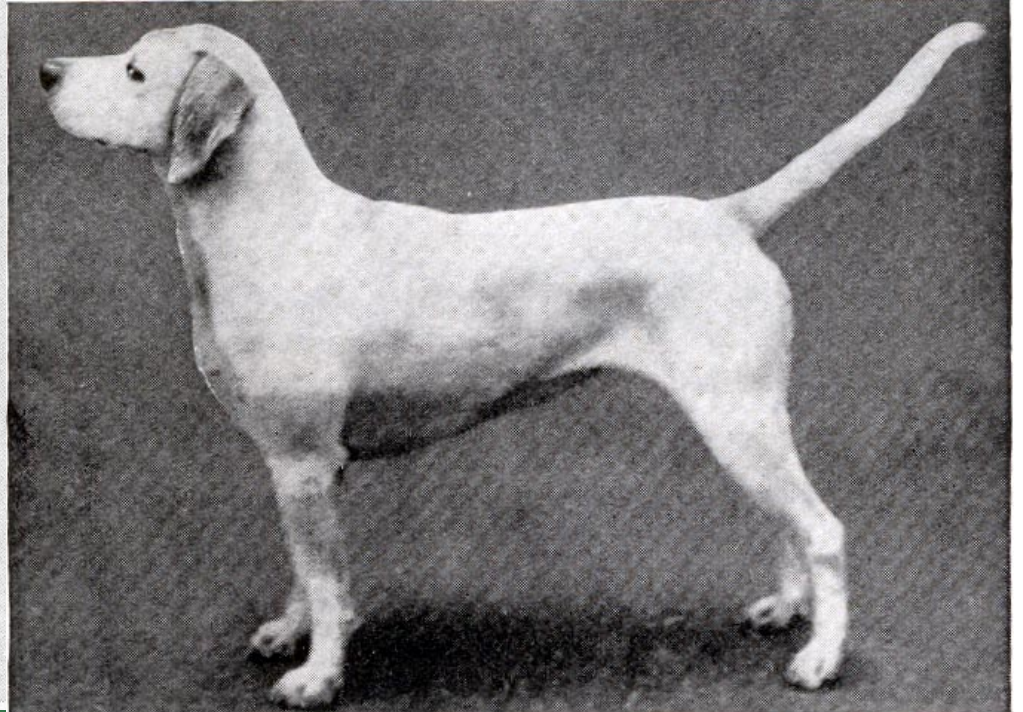
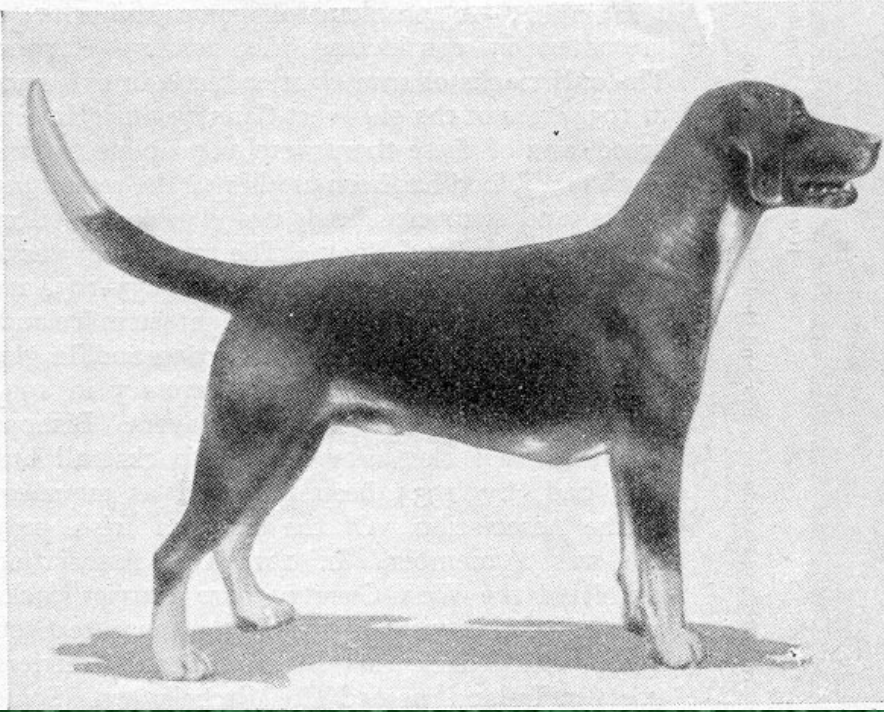


Jack rabbits hunted on horseback in the California desert.

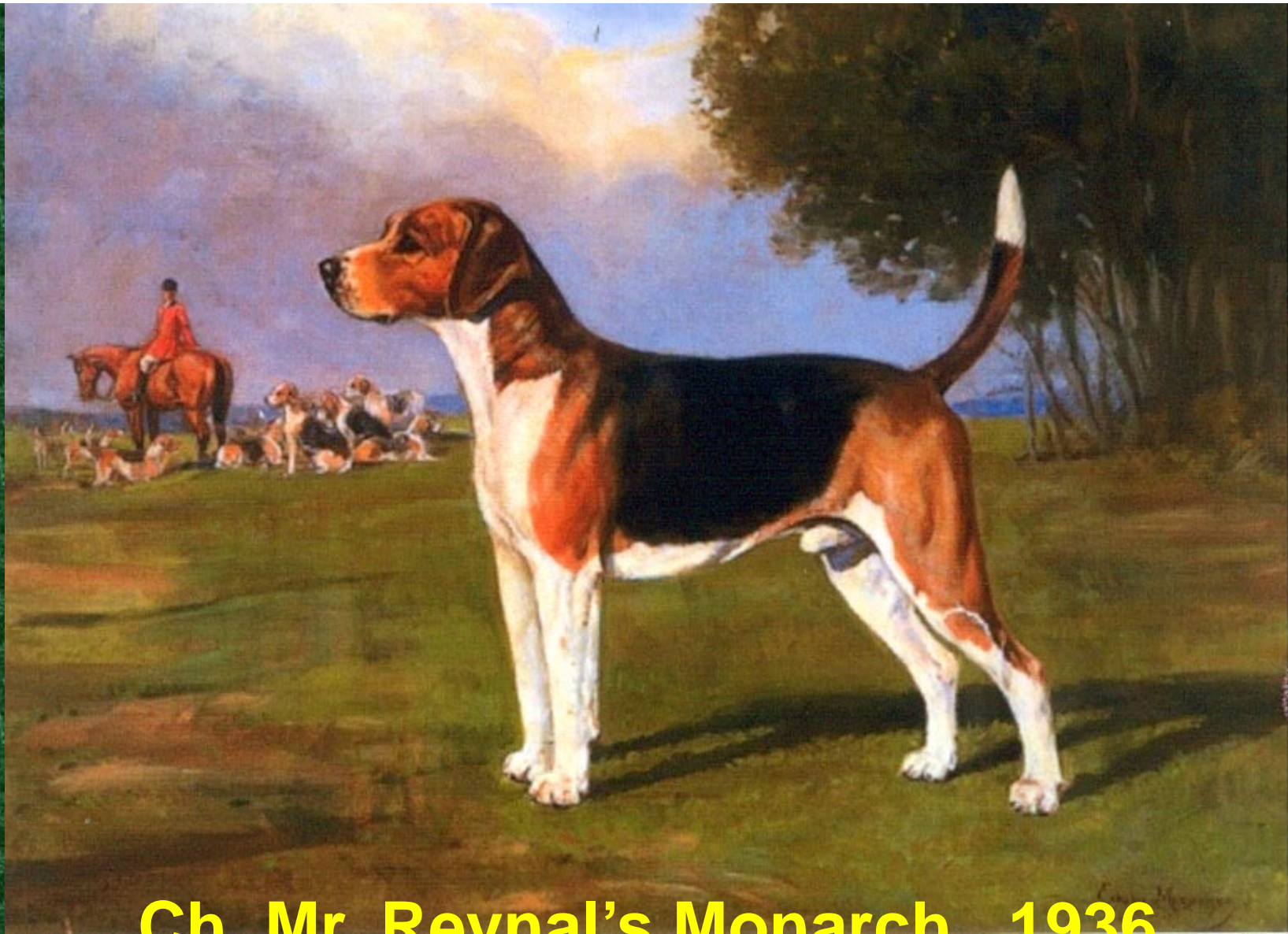


While in the northwest, Harriers are used to hunt Jack rabbits and, in heavy timber, fox. Historically most Harriers in the USA have belonged to hunting packs and were not registered with the AKC. What happened to them is unknown, but most probably they were bred into Foxhound packs and contributed to the ancestry of other US hound breeds. Although some of our current Harrier bloodlines can be traced back to US packs of the 1930-1950's, most are from more recent imports.

Harriers from the 1930's



Harriers, although never numerous, have been part of the American Kennel Club as long as any other hound. Being one of the oldest British breeds, the Harrier was the fourth hound breed to be registered in 1885 by the AKC.



Ch. Mr. Reynal's Monarch, 1936

A Harrier couple was entered in the first Westminster Show in 1877 and four were entered in 1878. Between 1908 and 1913, a few additional Harriers were admitted to the Stud Book. Then followed a lapse of 20 years. In the 1930's Harriers again surfaced both in the Stud Books and at dogs shows, including CH Mr. Reynal's Monarch who went Best in Show in 1936.

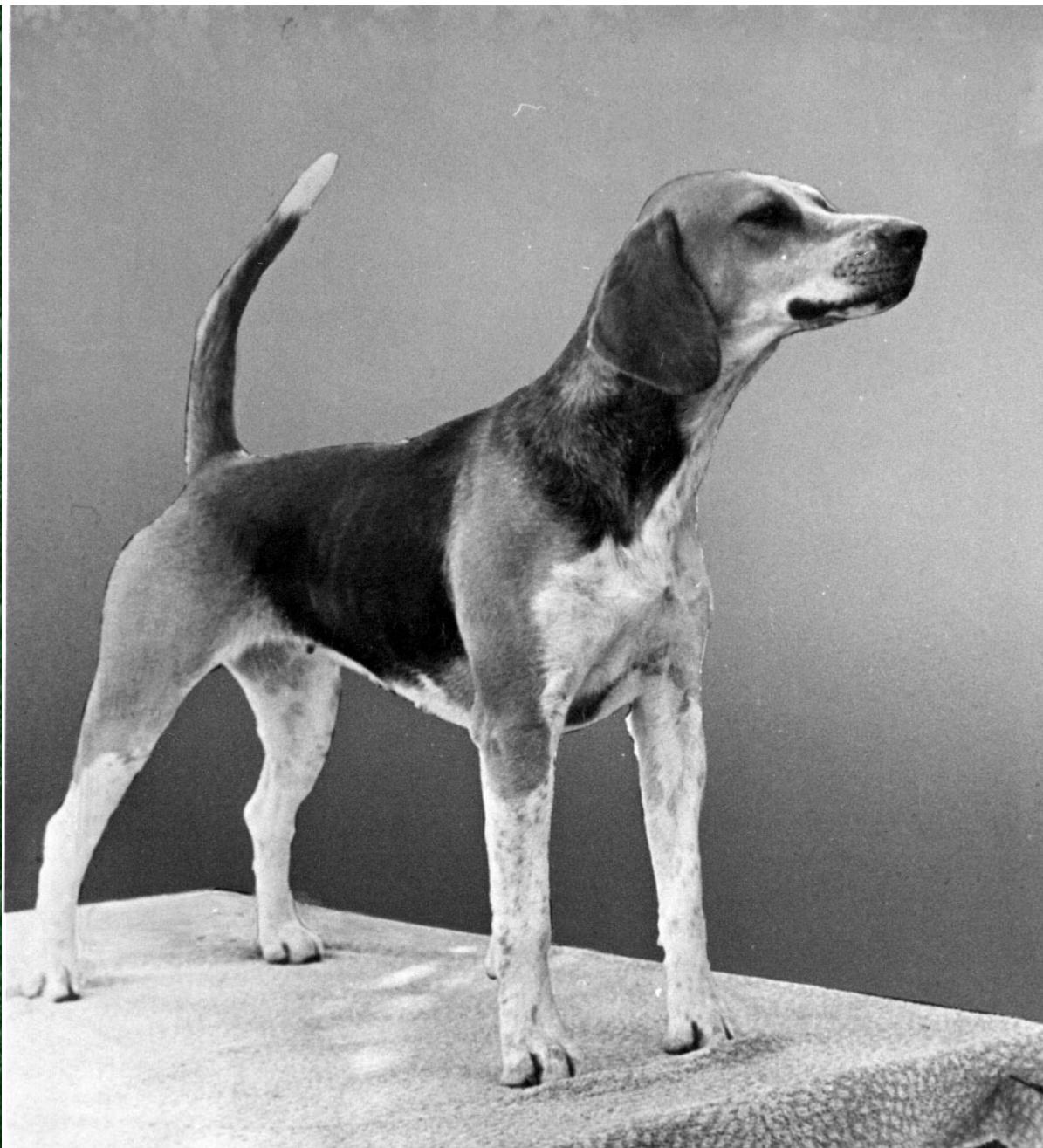


From 1940 through 1958, no Harriers appear in the AKC Stud Books, although several were registered with the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America.

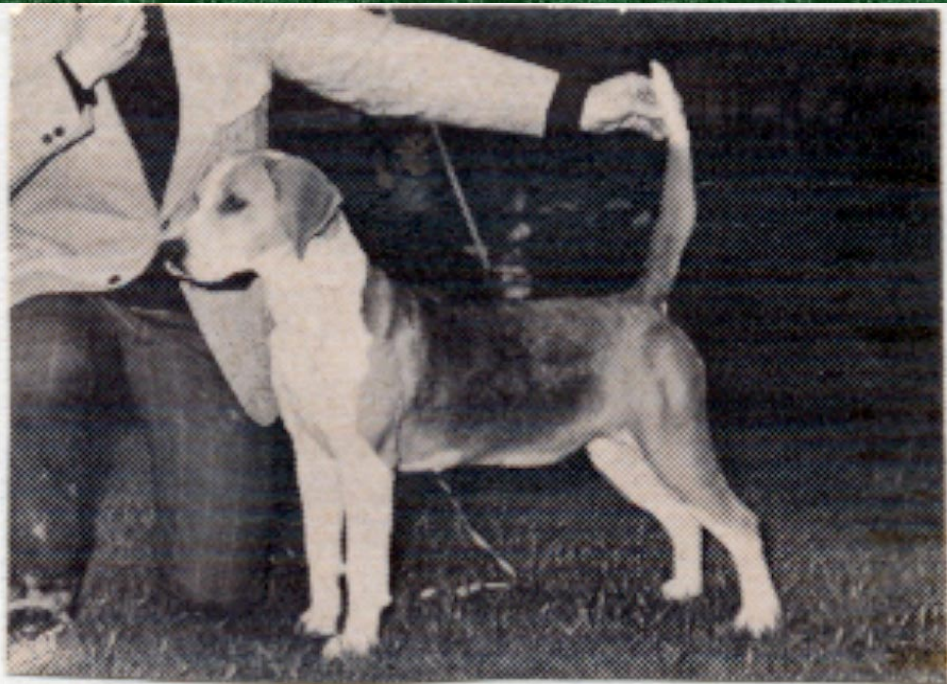
In the Early 1960's



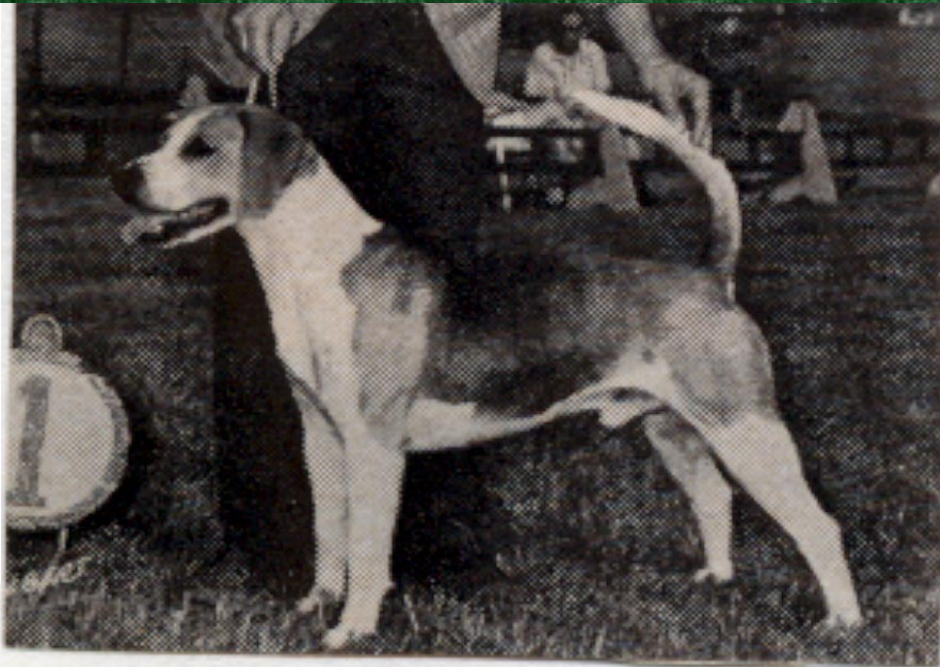
In the early 60's, Harriers began to reappear at AKC shows. CH Naabeeho's Harvey, whelped in 1966, was the first Harrier to go BIS since CH Mr. Reynal's Monarch



This is Blue Hills Rachel, owned by Robbin Phillips, whelped in 1969 (and her first Harrier) Rachel's sire and dam were Breezewood Harriers, a well-known and respected hunt and show kennel in the 1960's.

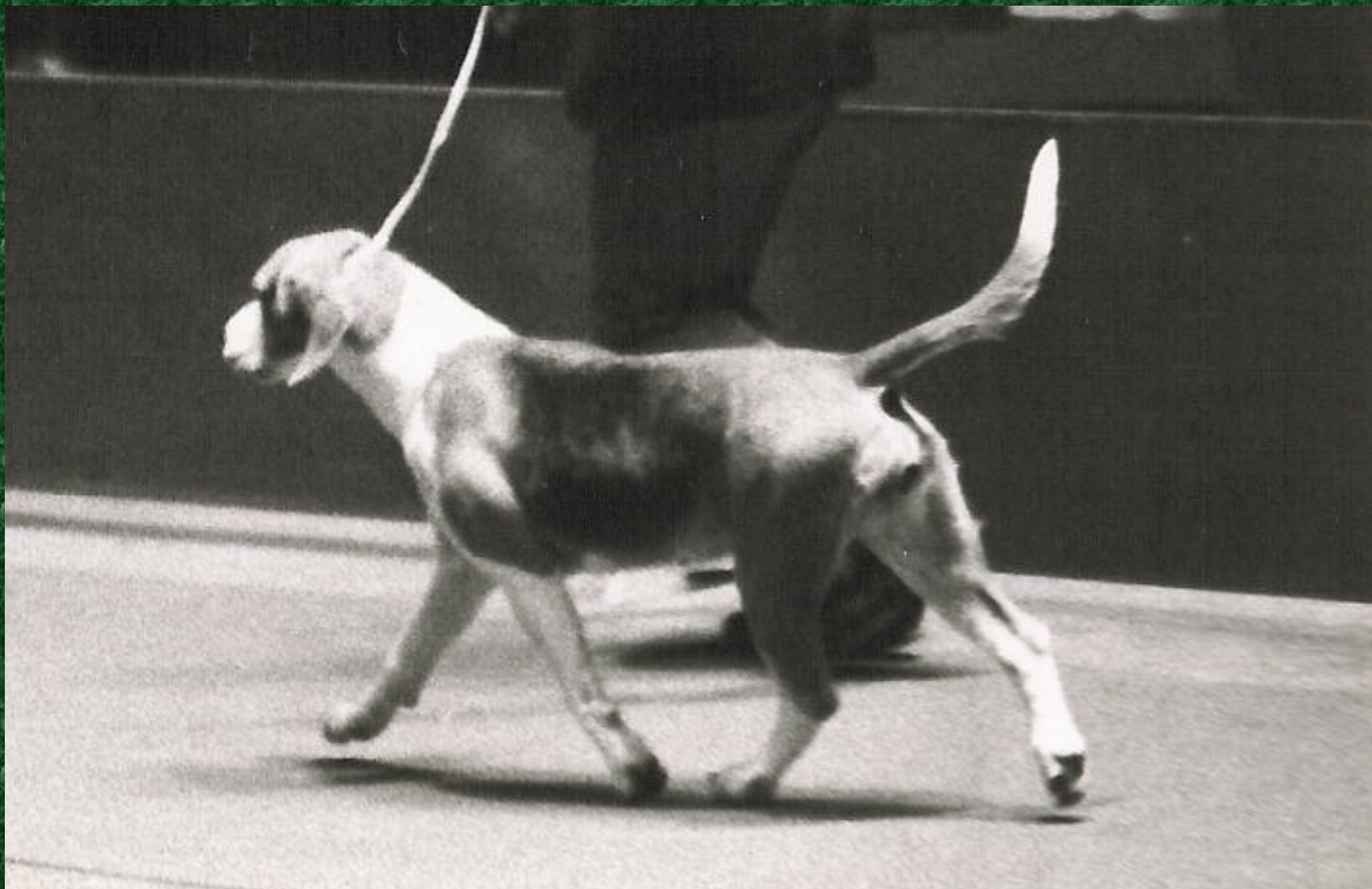


Lady Elizabeth



Pretty Boy Floyd

CH Johnson's Pretty Boy Floyd and CH Lady Elizabeth of Byron Mews were littermates whelped in 1968. Floyd earned 5 AKC Best in Show awards and 2 CKC Best in Shows. He also took a Group 1 at the Show of Shows, making him the #1 Canadian Hound in 1970.



Ch Lady Elizabeth earned one Best in Show, becoming the first Harrier bitch to do so. She was also Best of Breed at Westminster in 1970.



A third littermate, CH Brentcliffe New Broom, was the grand dam of this bitch, CH Brentcliffe Jill.



Jill went Best in Show 16 times in the late 70's.

Show activity, in small but increasing numbers, has continued ever since. The majority of activity has been in California.

In the last few years, several Harriers have gone Best in Show both in the US and in Canada.

Over the last 118 years...



HCA Supported Entry

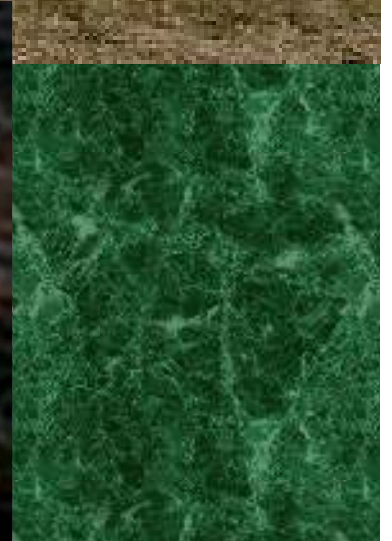
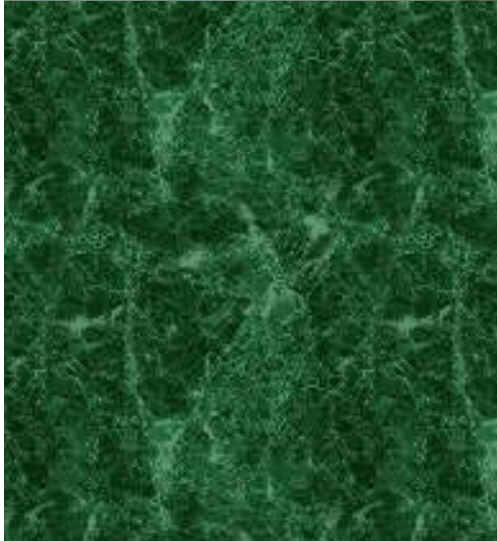
Las Vegas, NV

October 1995

Early studbooks and the AKC Gazette year-end statistics through 2001, show that in the prior 118 years only 1,145 Harriers have been registered. Registrations remained fairly consistent, about 30 per year, for the prior three decades.

Harriers have always ranked at or near the bottom in individual dogs and litters registered.

From 2008 to 2017, registrations in Harriers dropped significantly but is currently coming back up. Only 4 Harriers were registered in 2015, but this came back up to 33 in 2018. It is a breed that needs watching!



Harriers have also earned Obedience, tracking (including a Champion Tracker), agility titles (including multiple MACHS)

Breed Type



There is a standard of unknown origin describes the Harrier with the body of a small English Foxhound, but with the head and eyes being what set the Harrier apart”.

Head – Somewhat broad, not in any way peaked like the Bloodhound. Eyes very prominent, cheeks cut clean from the eyes to the nostril; ears set low, soft and thin. The expression is quieter and more benevolent than that of the Foxhound; the fierce character of the latter is not wanted.

Eyes – Very bright and deeply set. A playful, lively look is truly Harrier-like.

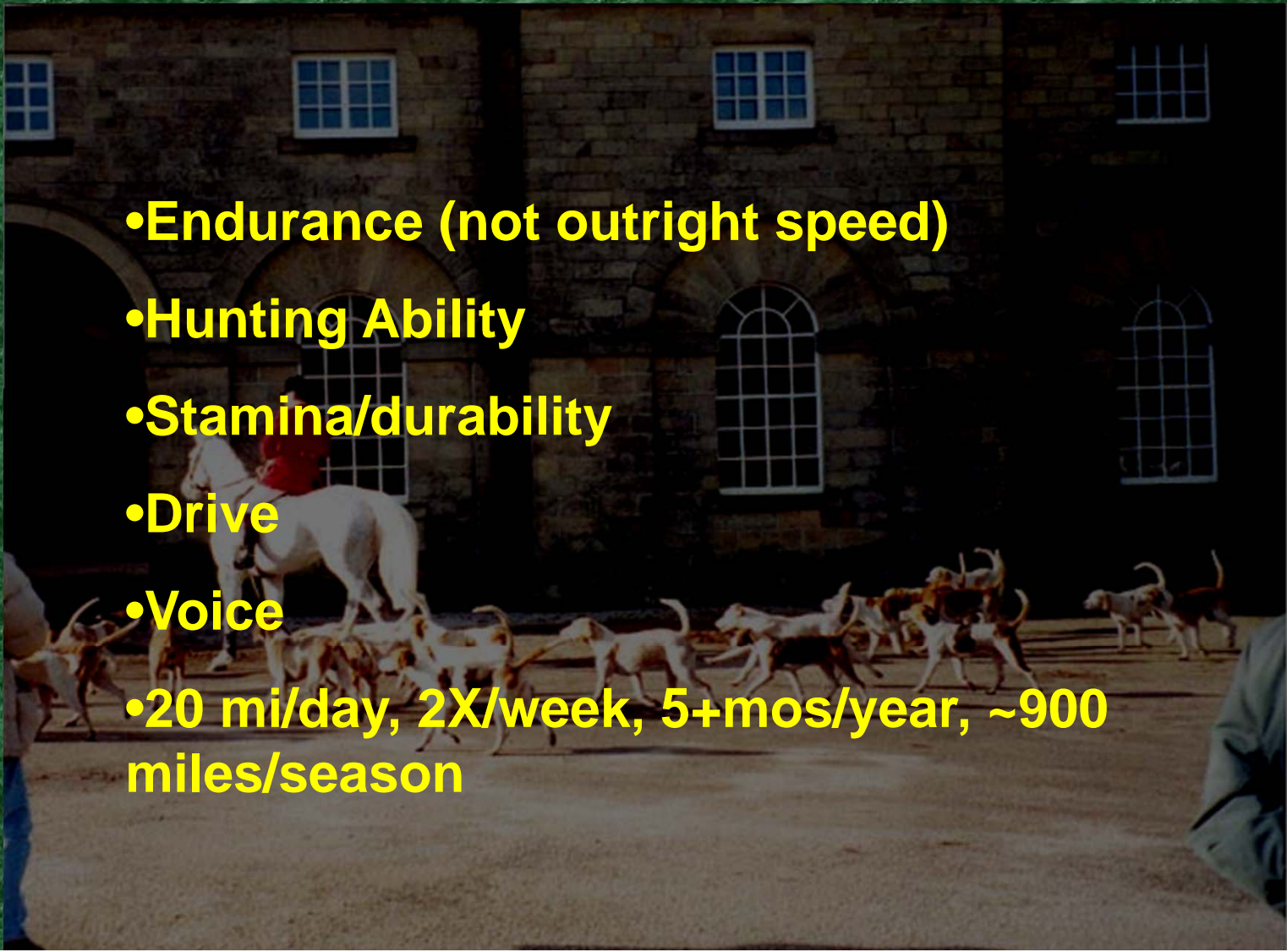
Working Gait



The typical working gait of hunting pack hounds is anywhere from a trot to a run with the neck in a downward or level carriage



A Harrier should be able to run, jump, and scent tirelessly all day long.

- 
- Endurance (not outright speed)
 - Hunting Ability
 - Stamina/durability
 - Drive
 - Voice
 - 20 mi/day, 2X/week, 5+mos/year, ~900 miles/season

Beyond proper gait, the working Harrier should possess these attributes. Endurance for 10+ hour hunts; Hunting ability which can't be taught; stamina and durability over all terrains; drive to continue when other breeds would falter; and voice – neither babbling nor running silent. An average working pack hound hunting with horses can expect to work 20 miles a day, two times a week, five plus months a year, roughly 900 miles or more a season.



In the show ring, this should manifest as a trot that is effortless.

Ground-covering movement at moderate speed.

Common Gait Faults

- **Straight fronts resulting in restricted movement**
- **Out at elbows**
- **Straight rears resulting in bicycle movement**
- **Collapsed hocks**
- **Should not keep up with sighthounds in group**

Don't be afraid to give hocks the push test.

A Harrier should neither mimic the movement nor the speed of a sight hound.

Temperament



Must get along in large groups

The Harrier is a pack hound that must be able to work with other hounds.



Even those unfamiliar to him.



Aggressiveness towards other dogs, of any breed, should not be tolerated.

Must be “biddable” and respond well to people



He should have a happy, gregarious character.

**Have
no dignity
and a great
sense of
humor**



**Are wonderful
with kids**

The Harrier's sense of humor allows no hang-ups concerning dignity, and he possesses an inherent love of children

The Breed Standard

Current version written by AKC

Harriers did not have a parent club until 1989.

The Harrier Club of America was established in 1997.

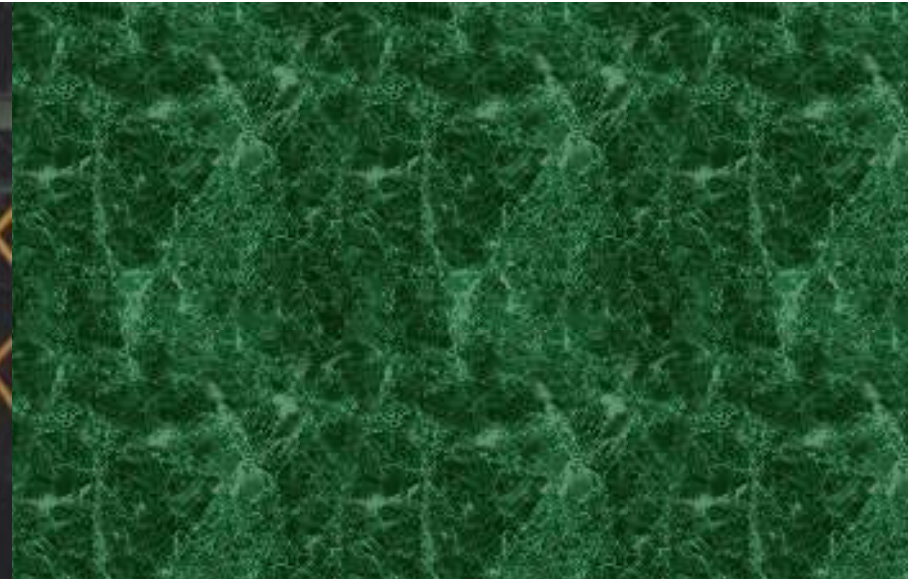


“General appearance: Developed in England to hunt hare in packs. Harriers must have all the attributes of a scenting pack hound.”

(Quotes from the standard appear in italics in the next several slides)

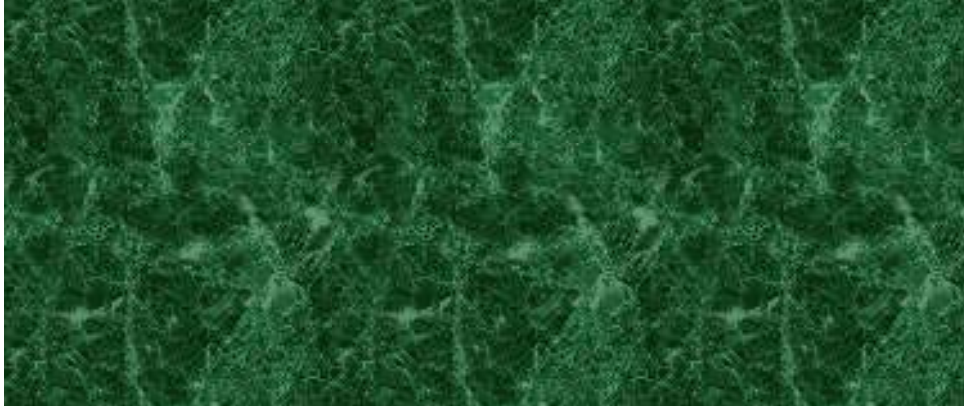
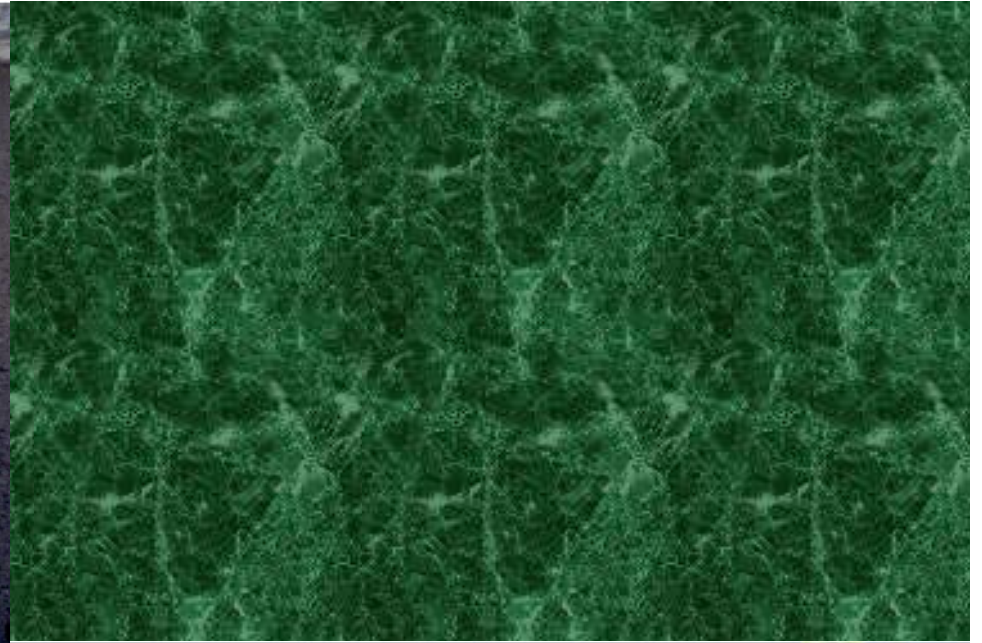


“They are very sturdily built with large bone for their size. They must be active, well balanced, and full of strength and quality, in all ways appearing able to work tirelessly, no matter the terrain, for long periods.”



“Running gear and scenting ability are particularly important features.”





“The Harrier should, in fact, be a smaller version of the English Foxhound.”



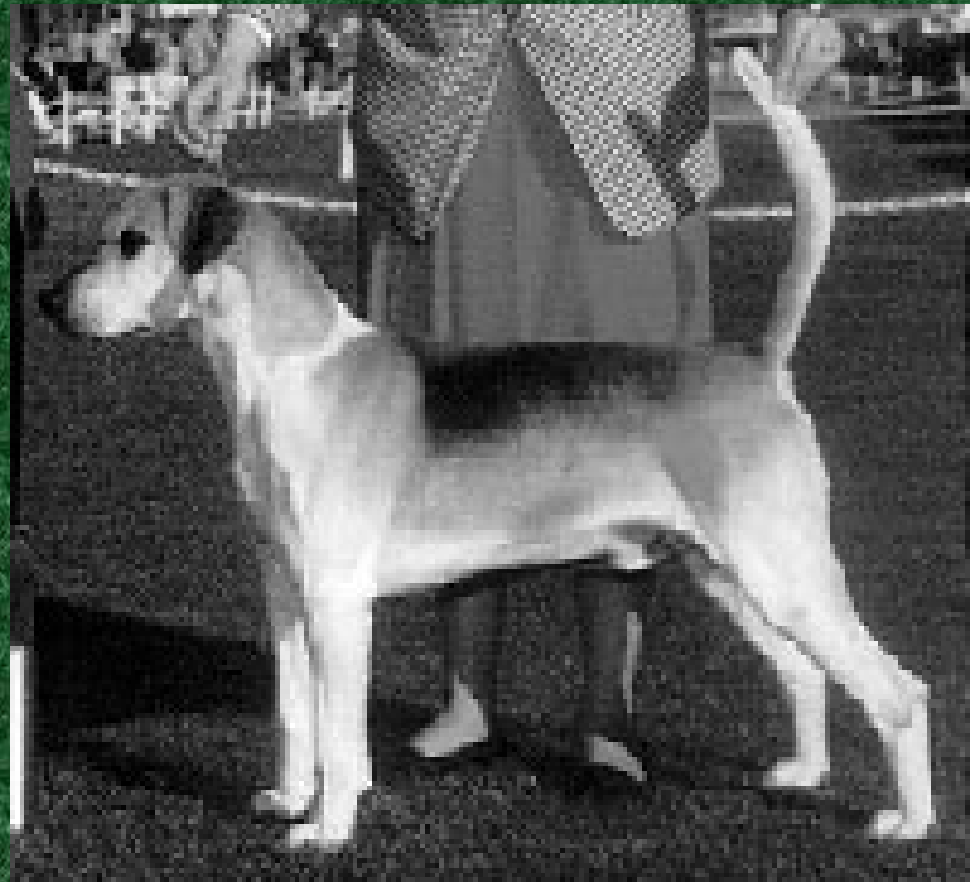
Size, proportion, and substance

- Size makes a Harrier a Harrier and not a Foxhound or Beagle
- Ideal size is 19"-21" for dogs & bitches, with our standard allowing an inch leeway either way.

Size, proportion, and substance



“Proportion is off square. The Harrier is slightly longer from point of shoulder to rump than from withers to ground.”



Size proportion, and substance



Substance – solidly built, full of strength and quality. The breed has as much substance and bone as possible without being heavy or coarse.”

Size, proportion, and substance



Overdone

Substance should not be confused with coarseness and/or excessive body mass as in these two hounds.

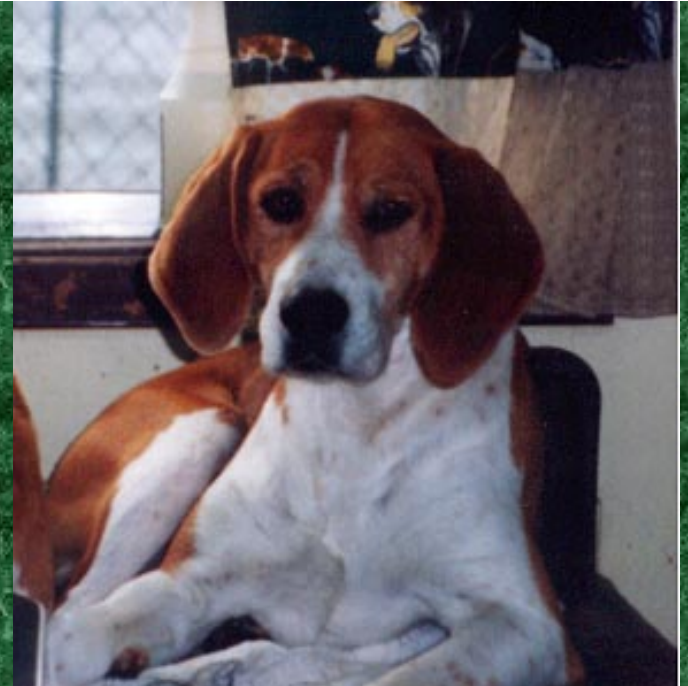
Size, proportion, and substance



Underdone

This bitch shows an overall lack of substance, including bone, body and head.

Head



“The head is in proportion to the overall dog. No part of the head should stand out relative to any other parts. The expression is gentle when relaxed, sensible yet alert when aroused. Eyes are medium size, set well apart, brown or hazel color in darker dogs, lighter hazel to yellow in lighter dogs, though darker colors are always desired. Ears are set on low and lie close to the cheeks, rounded at the tips. “

Head



“The skull is in proportion to the entire animal, with good length and breadth and a bold forehead. The stop is moderately defined. The muzzle from stop to tip of nose is approximately the same length as the skull from stop to occiput. The muzzle is substantial with good depth, and the lips complete the square, clean look of the muzzle, without excess skin or flews. A good nose is essential. It must be wide, with well-opened nostrils. Teeth meet in a scissors bite or they may be level. Overshot or undershot bites faulted to the degree of severity of the misalignment.”



These heads all lack breed type. The one on the left is too snipey, while the hound on the right is too short in the muzzle with ears set much too high. The bottom hound lacks stop and the planes of the muzzle create a wedge instead of a square.

Neck, topline, and body



“The neck is long and strong with no excess skin or throatiness, sweeping smoothly into the muscling of the forequarters. The topline is level. Back muscular with no dip behind the withers or roach over the loin.”

Neck, topline and body



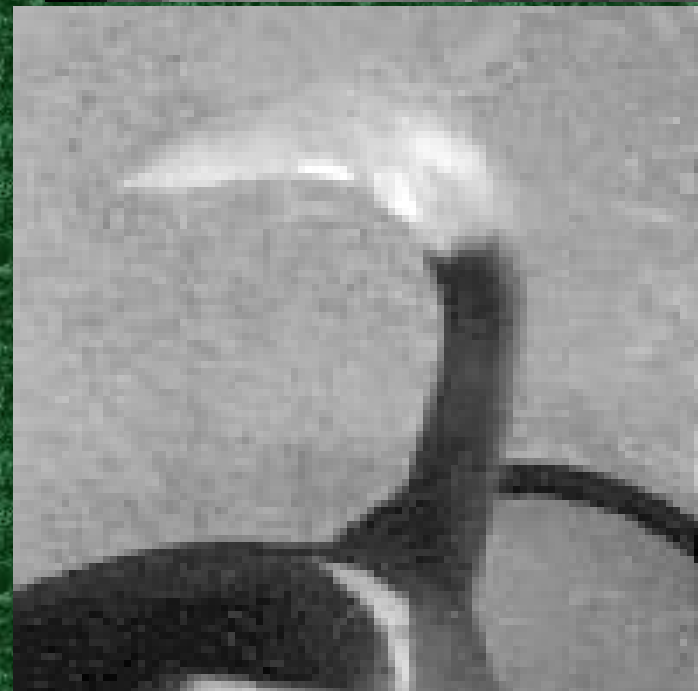
“Body – Chest deep, extending to the elbows, with well sprung ribs that extend well back, providing plenty of heart and lung room. The ribs should not be so well sprung that they interfere with the free, efficient movement of the front assembly. The loin is short, wide and well muscled.”

Neck, topline, and body



This is a young dog that shows nice potential in all areas. (Tragically, shortly after this photo was taken, he died in a kennel fire)

Tail



“The tail is long, set on high and carried up from 12 o’clock to 3 o’clock, depending on attitude. It tapers to a point with a brush of hair. The tail should not be curled over the back”

The left hand photo shows a nice tail with the brush. The top right hand photo is also correct tail carriage. The bottom right is not acceptable.

Forequarters



“Forequarters – Moderate angulation, with long shoulders sloping into the muscles of the back, clean at the withers. The shoulders are well clothed with muscle without being excessively heavy or loaded, giving the impression of free, strong action. Elbows are set well away from the ribs, running parallel with the body and not turning outwards. Good straight plenty of bone running well down to the toes, but not overburdened, inclined to knuckle over very slightly but not exaggerated in the slightest degree.”

Forequarters



The first hound has very straight shoulders. The second knuckles over in a fashion that prevents him from standing on the rear pad of his feet. The last dog is down in the pastern as well as having flat feet.

Feet



round, compact, catlike

“Feet are round and catlike, with toes set close together turning slightly inwards. The pads are thick, well developed and strong.”

Note that the hound on the left toes in beginning at the pasterns. This is incorrect. Only the toes should turn in, not the legs.

Hindquarters



MODERATE Angulation

“Hindquarters – Angulation in balance with the front assembly, so that rear drive is in harmony with front reach. Well-developed muscles, providing strength for long hours of work, are important. Endurance is more important than pure speed, and as such, the stifles are only moderately angulated. Feet point straight ahead, are round and catlike with toes set close together, with thick, well-developed pads. “

Hindquarters



These dogs all lack proper moderate angulation. They are too straight, a much more common problem in this breed than over angulation.

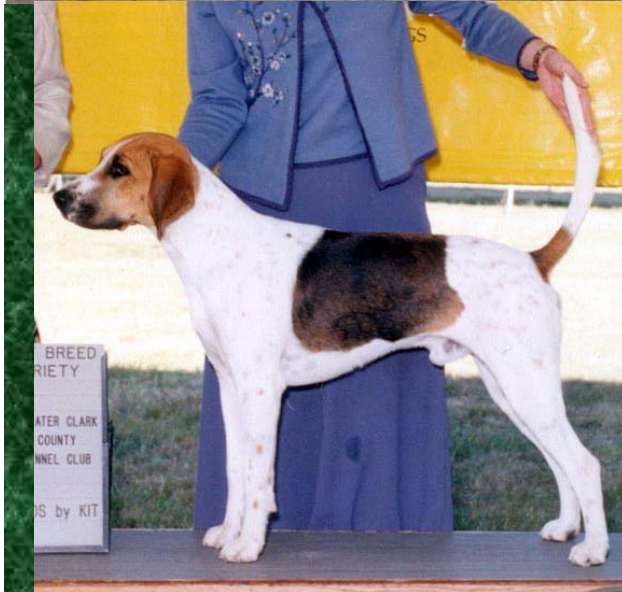
ANY Color



A good hound CANNOT be a bad color

“Coat – Short, dense, hard and glossy. Coat texture on the ears is finer than on the body. There is a brush of hair on the underside of the tail. Color – Any color, not regarded as very important. “

Here are examples of several possible patterns. Note that while the hound in the upper right is a red & white, the one on the bottom left is actually a tri whose saddle has completely faded except for a few black hairs.



Once again, you see a faded tri in the upper left. However, the hound in the upper right is not. He is red & white, the darkest we've seen. Although the standard does not address pigment, it is well to note that a red & white will not have a black nose. This should not be confused with poor pigment.

In contrast, the hounds in the bottom middle are likely lemon & white, although they appear to be solid white – a color that does occur. In the UK, there are also Harriers that are black and tan, without any white.

Gait



*“**Gait** – Perfect coordination between the front and hind legs. Reach and drive are consistent with the desired moderate angulation.”*

NOTE the head and tail carriage. These are natural for the breed. Harriers should not be gaited with their heads strung up.

Gait



Although this young bitch is moving faster than desired, she still maintains coordination between front and rear with no excessive kick out. To accomplish this, she lowers both head and tail for balance.

Gait



This dog is being moved very slowly, again able to maintain balance.

Gait



The Harrier should be moved at a moderate speed, head loose while showing balanced reach and drive.

Gait



“Coming and going, the dog moves in a straight line, evidencing no sign of crabbing. A slight toeing-in of the front feet is acceptable. Clean movement coming and going is important, but not nearly as important as side gait, which is smooth, efficient and ground-covering.”

The hound on the right shows the slight toeing in, but the elbows do not turn out.

Gait



Both these hounds show nice rear movement.



This is an example of **lack** of balanced reach and drive. Notice the resulting roach over the topline.



This dog compensates for improper angulation by turning his right front leg in and his left rear leg landing inside his front leg. Note that his head is being held too high, which accentuates poor movement .

Temperament



Temperament. Outgoing and friendly. As a working pack breed, Harriers must be able to work in close contact with other hounds. Therefore, aggressiveness towards other dogs cannot be tolerated.

Common Problems

- **Rears – all up and down, no reach and drive**
- **Unbalanced front & rear**
- **Straight fronts & rears**
- **Out at the elbows**
- **Slipped hocks**
- **Size**
- **Tails**

Rears all up and down. This results in bicycle movement

Unbalanced front/rear, either excessive kick out of hind legs due to straight shoulders or that up/down movement of the rear while the front reaches way out.

Straight fronts and rears – lots of leg motion while covering very little ground. Legs tend to move like they are stiff

Out at elbows – this is where the elbows are actually turned out from the body as opposed to just being set out from the chest but still straight, which is correct.

Slipped hocks manifest most in going away, when the foot hits the ground you tend to see a side-to-side movement at the hock

Size – has been an issue in the breed both here and in England for decades (due in part of breeding with Foxhounds) but must be careful on judging size since there can be quite a range in the ring and the biggest is not necessarily too big.

Tails – While a slight curve of the entire length is acceptable, it should not hook sharply or be carried curled over the back.

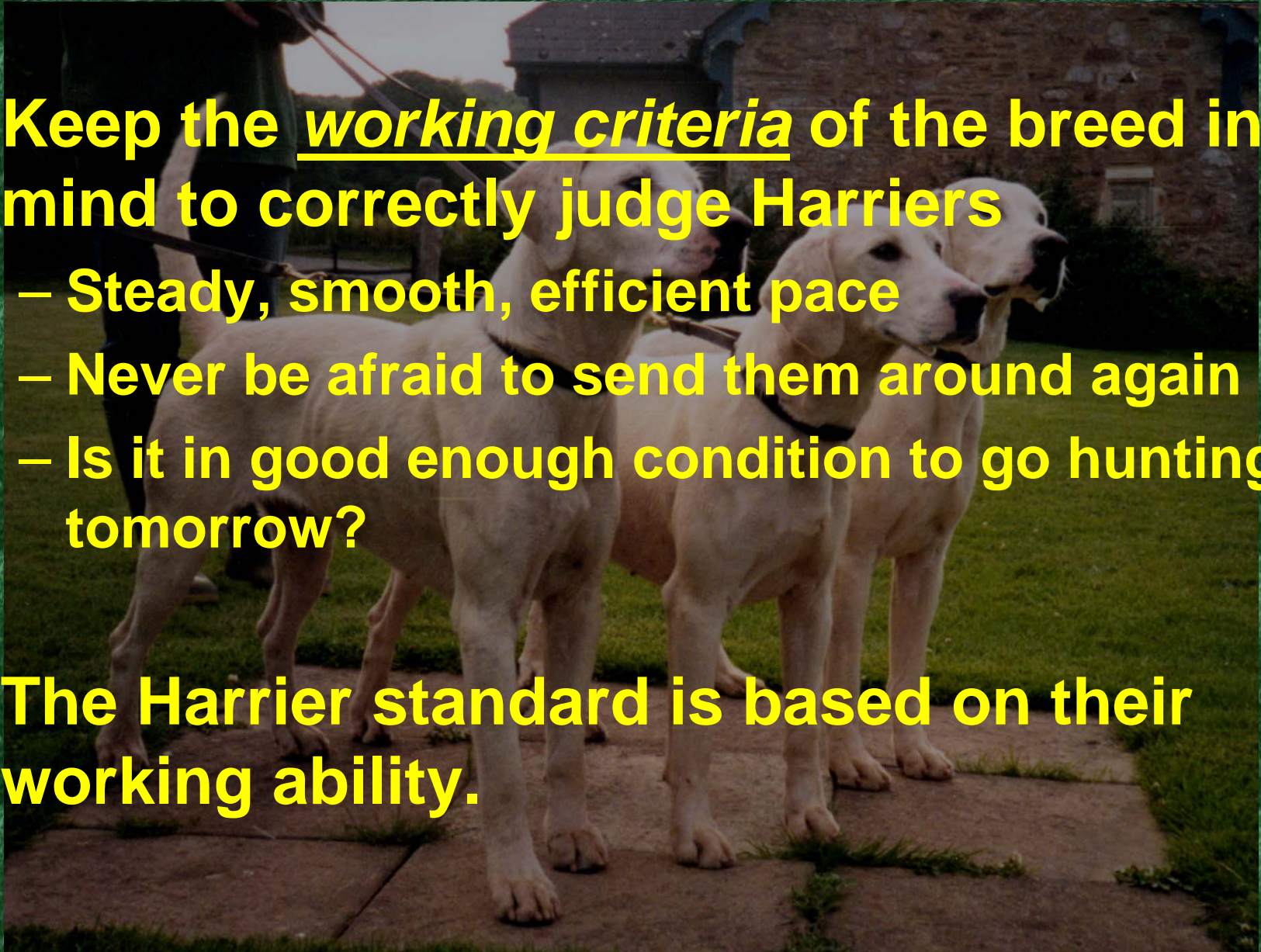
Judging Harriers



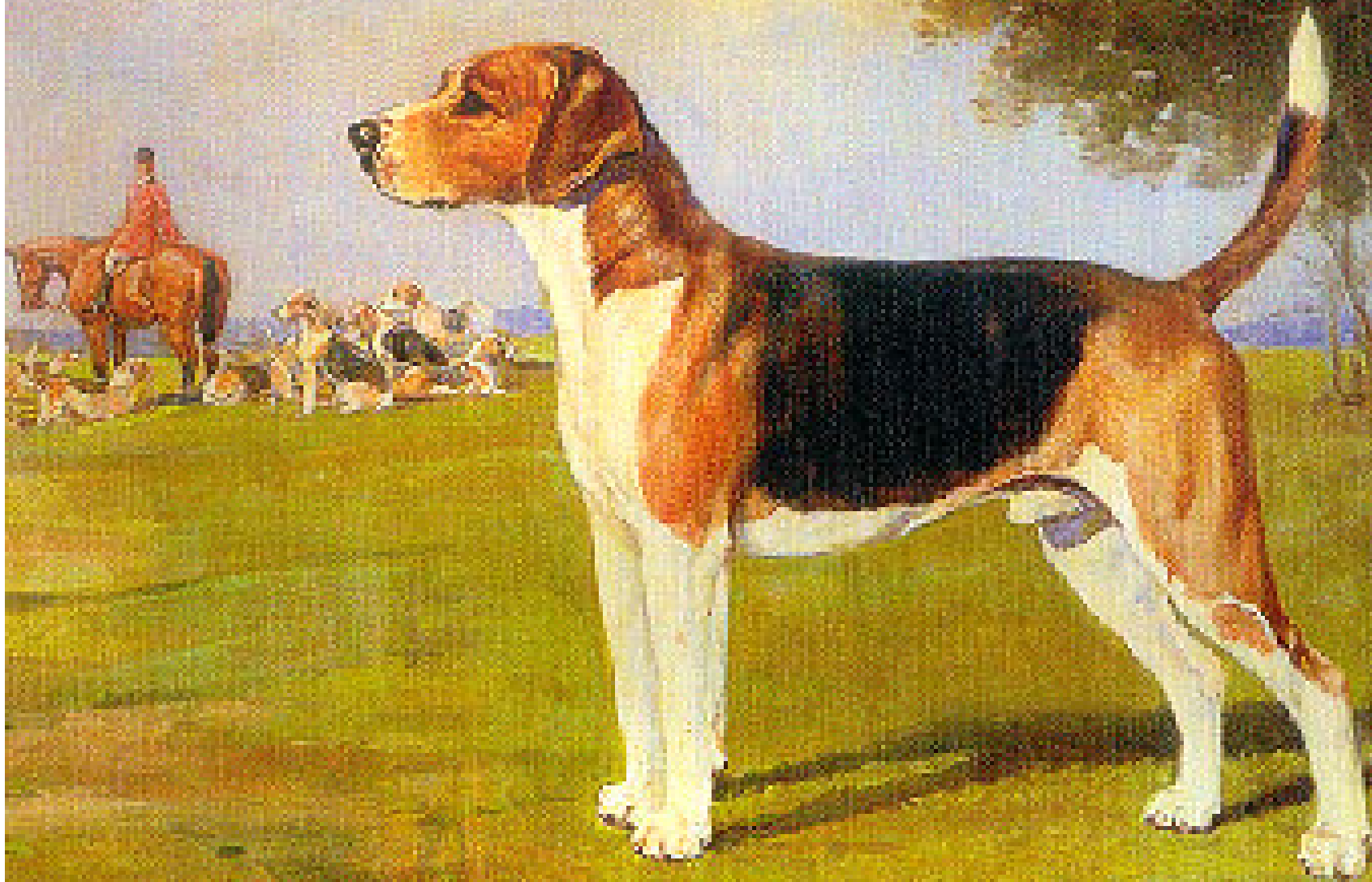
As good feet are so important in the breed, it is helpful to have them stand on a solid surface. This slide shows Harriers being shown in the UK on a traditional flagstone pad.

Judging Harriers

- Keep the working criteria of the breed in mind to correctly judge Harriers
 - Steady, smooth, efficient pace
 - Never be afraid to send them around again
 - Is it in good enough condition to go hunting tomorrow?
- The Harrier standard is based on their working ability.



Judging Harriers



Ch Mr. Reynal's Monarch

Judging Harriers

- MODERATE speed on a loose leash (if possible) – the head should be forward
- Do not reward spooky or shy temperaments
- Minimal grooming is encouraged (clean & well turned out, but not shaved and sculpted)
- Whiskers left on should be totally acceptable

Hounds be moved at a moderate speed on a loose lead. Their heads should not be strung up. **A slightly up or forward head carriage is correct.**

Harriers should not exhibit spooky or shy temperament traits. Do not confused this with a wiggly hound that simply refuses to stand still but is not afraid.

As a hunting breed, minimal grooming is encouraged. Hounds should be clean and well turned out. A Harrier should not be shaved other than to lightly clean the tuck up, and NEVER sculpted. **The presence of whiskers is totally acceptable.**

A photograph of a man in a white lab coat and a black bowler hat, leading three Harrier dogs on leashes. The dogs are standing on a grassy field. In the background, other people in red jackets and grey suits are visible, suggesting a dog show or competition. The text "Conformation vs Cosmetics" is overlaid in yellow on the right side of the image.

Conformation vs Cosmetics

The ultimate Harrier would possess all the attributes in both conformation and cosmetics. However, perfection is something generally strived for, but not obtained. In judging the Harrier, the importance of the hounds individual attributes must be weighed.

Conformation vs Cosmetics

Conformation:

- Moderate Movement
- Correct body & structure
 - Substance
 - Balanced Angulation
 - Toplevel
 - Rib spring & depth
 - Feet
 - Bite
 - Conditioning

Cosmetics

- Pretty Head
- Dark Eyes
- Tail/brush
- Flashy Color



Deceptive Grooming/Handling Techniques

- Not much to hide on a Harrier, grooming-wise!
- Moving at a fast speed will hide some movement faults you'd see at a correct *moderate* speed

Grooming – The negative occurrences surrounding this topic are the tendency to shave necks and rears, and the unfortunate pressure to “create” a saddle though artificially enhanced color.

Handling – There are two main areas here that a judge should be aware of – the stringing up of the head or an unnaturally high head carriage and the gaiting of Harriers are an excessive speed.

Examining Harriers

- **Space between ribs & elbows – correct!**
- **Look at feet – should be tight & sturdy**
- **Conditioning is important**
- **Don't measure ears or tail**
- **Toeing-in when standing/moving is normal & correct!**

The space between the elbows and ribs is correct if there is proper rib spring. Just be sure it's not due to the elbows turning out.

Conditioning is important – smooth, well developed muscles. No bunching

There is no need to measure ears or tail as the standard has no definition of length in relation to other body parts.

Toeing in is correct, but should be “slight” and only at the toes – not beginning at the pasterns nor accompanied by elbows which are turned out.

Variations

- Over 100 packs in the UK in 1900.
- All crafted their pack to best fit their territory & quarry, sometimes over centuries
- While there are far fewer packs in the UK today, The Kennel Club in 2020 accepted Harriers into their registry. They are currently developing a standard.
- AKC Standard is written loosely enough to accommodate the variations, but you should not lose sight of breed type.

National Specialties

A full listing of Harrier National Specialties with pictures of winners is posted to the Harrier Club of America website



<http://www.harrierclubofamerica.com>

