

On Separation

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As we enter into 1989, one item on our agenda will be to honor the 10th anniversary of the separation of Norwich Terriers, Prick-Ear and Drop-Ear, into Norwich and Norfolk Terriers. This observance runs concurrently with England's 25th year of separation.

The road to separation was not an easy one and, in fact, remains a somewhat unique situation.

IN ENGLAND

During the 1900s, it was undoubtedly no one's intention to ever have two separate breeds. Considering, however, the variety of other established breeds that were used to "create" the Norwich Terrier, it inevitably evolved that the difference in the two types of ear carriage became a matter of preference, and this matter of preference presented a problem. The intermixing of the two carriages was proving inadvisable, and so, by the 1930s, there was serious talk of dividing the breed based on this difference.

Several attempts at separate classes at championship shows never drew sufficient support and were dropped. Additional efforts were made in the 1950s for the club to apply to The (English) Kennel Club for separation, but again, without success. The Kennel Club also refused to register the Norwich Terrier as "Prick-Ear" and "Drop Ear." Even more mystifying, they denied the request of the majority of the general membership of the club when, in 1957, the club asked for separate registrations of the two types. Originally, their explanation was based on lack of numerical strength, but then, to the astonishment and indignation of breeders, The Kennel Club issued a statement that the Norwich Terrier Club should decide which of the two varieties they wished to encourage!

After several more failed attempts, which included the use of a special council, it came about that the NTC should draw up two separate standards for the two types of ear carriage. Lo and behold, this job being done, The Kennel Club stated they were unable to grant a request for varieties, and a suggestion was made that two entirely different breeds be formed and new names be adopted!

And so it was that in 1964, the general membership accepted The Kennel Club's proposal with "Drop-Ear" breeders agreeing to the name Norfolk and "Prick-Ear" breeders retaining the name Norwich.

The ultimate result of two separate clubs and two separate breeds did little to diminish the camaraderie between Norwich and Norfolk owners, who still consider themselves members of the same family. To this day, they still enjoy a joint rally of the two clubs, with Norwich and Norfolk acting as alternate hosts each year.

IN AMERICA

By the time the two "varieties" were settled on our shores, a number of kinks had already been ironed out for us. Although many people owned both types, as they do today, pedigrees were more

established as to ear carriage, and the matter of inter-breeding presented little problem. When a breed club was formed, the original officers and members were about numerically equal in the two types of ear sets they owned or bred, leaving little room for any feelings of prejudice toward one type or the other. Their main objective was simply to join forces in a common interest, and through numerical strength, improve upon and protect the breed.

But when our English counterparts were reaching the point of separation, it suddenly seemed advantageous for American breeders to begin making some distinctions between the ear carriages. Unlike its English counterpart, the U.S. club met with no problem in 1963 when they asked the AKC to have separate litter registration forms which read “Norwich Terrier—P.E. or D.E.” And again, the club met no objections when they asked the AKC to hold separate classes at specialty shows.

In 1970, however, after much discussion, the club approached the AKC with the idea of two varieties, only to receive a letter of refusal. By now, exhibitors were beginning to feel—real or imagined—the predilection of ear sets in the show ring, and breeders, in some instances, were running into import and export problems due to the differences in breed names here and abroad.

And so, at the club’s annual meeting in 1972, instructions were given to their delegate (at the time Mr. Morgan Wing and later Mr. Philip S.P. Fell) to place before the directors of the AKC the express wish that the breed be divided by ear carriage into Norwich and Norfolk Terriers, and that the club remain one.

It was perhaps a slow but certainly a sure path that led to the ultimate recognition of the two breeds. First, there was the matter of standards which needed to be resolved. Secondly, the topic of the name of the club had to be taken into consideration, along with its constitution, and presented to the AKC and the club’s general membership.

But when finally there was light at the end of the tunnel, and all the red tape had settled, it came to pass that, effective January 1, 1979, there would be two breeds, one club, and henceforth, the Terrier Group would have a new member added to its impressive line-up.

To Norwich and Norfolk Terriers everywhere, we say, “Three cheers to the ears, prick-eared and dropped.”

— Margaretta Wood, AKC Gazette Breed Columnist

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