

Canadian
Cardigan
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Club

NEWSLETTER

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One Person's Opinion:

THE CARDIGAN CORGI REAR:

Patrick Ormos

The Cardigan Corgi rear is not really any different from the rear assembly of most other breeds. However, like many other breeds in the ring today, there are breeder-exhibitors who are swayed by current fads in other breeds, or by a current winner in their own breed. It is important to keep in mind what the breed was bred to do, and what "breed type" should be.

First, the Cardigan is a breed whose standard calls for it to carry its tail down. Now this does not mean curled under its belly, or even dragging on the floor as if it were a peacock tail. Rather it means that the tail is carried more in the manner of a German Shepherd Dog, that is, normally at or below the level of the top of the back. When excited, or happy, or challenged (especially the males) that tail will go up. But it is important to look carefully at it now. Does it curl over the back? Is it held up in a long curve? Is it straight up in the air? Is it tightly curled over (like an Akita)? The long curve is more correct (in my opinion, anyway) than any of the other aberrations. Most of the tail is still close to the level of the back-line, with a curve upwards towards the second half of the tail.

Of prime importance in trying to understand the question of tail carriage is the issue of tail-set, and pelvic angle. Please note that I have not said anything about the angle of the "croup" (that mythical section of the rear created by the slant from the topmost portion of the pelvis downwards and the tail-set [the root of the tail]).

We will save discussion of the vertebral column (neck, back, and tail) for another article. For the moment, let us move on to the pelvis, one of the most important bones of the entire body.

This bone, by its angle and length and breadth, will control the entire movement of the rear legs, i.e. the propulsive power of the dog. If the angle is too steep, then the dog will be able to reach well underneath, but there will be no real follow-through. If the angle is too flat (too shallow), then there will be too much follow-through (resulting in a kick-up in the rear) and insufficient under-reach. If the pelvis is too short (even if properly angled), then the whole cycle of rear movement is also cut short by a proportional amount. If the pelvis is too narrow, then there is not enough room for muscle attachment (not to mention the whelping problems). I hope I'm beginning to clarify why I feel this is such an important bone to a properly constructed Cardigan, or to any dog. My best educated guess is that the Cardigan pelvis should slope at about 30 degrees off the horizontal. This is about the same amount of slope as a German Shepherd, and will give the Cardigan sufficient under-reach and follow-through. A proper tail-set is therefore about 15 degrees off the horizontal. set will give the illusion that the croup (that mythical element)

Try measuring your dogs. Hold a compass with one leg on the horizontal and one leg running along the line of the croup (with the dog set up four square, hocks perpendicular to the ground), then measure this angle with a protractor. This will give you an approximate measurement. There are specific tools for doing this kind of measurement, but this will do for a start. Then compare the angle of the pelvis. Take the horizontal line, and a line running from the high point of the pelvis down to the "tail bone". This should be around 30 degrees.

In Cardigans, the pelvic bone itself will measure about five and one-half inches in length. This is important, since only this bone can be accurately measured (there are no joints to interfere). The shoulder-blade, the upper arm, and the upper thigh (scapular, humerus, and femur) will each also be about the same length. Again, a dog whose bones each measure equal to each other is balanced, and stands a better chance of moving correctly than a dog whose bones are not in balance. If you measure most of your dogs, my bet is that you will find that the large majority of our Cardigans are very short in upper arm (which explains some of the front movement which we see).

I have noticed that some Cardigans are beginning to turn up with grossly exaggerated rear angulation...as if they were modern German Shepherds. These dogs look quite stunning when set up...but they are a case of a good thing taken too far! Their rears no longer look like a really good ham (as the older UK breeders speak of Cardigan rears) but like something else again. In order to have this kind of angulation (this departure from moderation), the bone lengths must be changed! And then the muscles and ligaments are also changed, and so is the way in which they work. No longer do we have levers working with optimum leverage, but muscles trying to move something which is at the limit of their strength range...leading to wobbly rears. The hocks usually end up being a little long as well. (When you lengthen one set of bones, you often affect other bones at the same time.) Genetics is tricky. We must be very careful to not overdo anything, lest we lose something special to the breed while doing so.

The Cardigan should move with power and grace. The dog has a good under-reach, a good follow-through, and control throughout the sequence.

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Viewed from the rear the Cardigan will tend to single-track (usually more so in the rear than in the front). This does not mean close in the rear, nor does it mean parallel track, but a true tendency to single-track. The topline will remain level during movement and the whole thing will seem like a dog just flowing around the ring. It is quite, quite beautiful!

Once again, this is one person's opinion, which I hope will stimulate others to think and discuss, and perhaps disagree. What do you think?

SPECIALTY UPDATE

The rosettes are ordered, the entries have only a few hours before we close, our trophies are bought and ordered. The sweepstakes trophies again reflect the talents of our members. Every year we learn of a new one - Ruth Lister sent in some super wood carvings she has done! A truly generous gift when you consider she has Pembroke!

I hope that those members within driving distance will make a special effort to join us on Saturday, August 25th at Richmond Green Sports Centre on Elgin Mills Road between Bayview and Leslie. Sweepstakes go at 10.30 then there will be a lunch/grooming break before the specialty judging at 1pm. This will be followed by the raffle draw and the Annual General Meeting approx. 3pm. All club members and participants are invited to come to Charlie and Fanny's house for a barbecue. The menu is filet steaks, salads and desserts. We are saying \$6.00 per person and we need to have the numbers of people coming by Thursday Aug.23 so that we can pick up the meat and organise quantities of salads. (For those coming to the show we can play follow the leader. For others locate Stouffville on an Ontario map N.E. of Toronto. Then go N.E. again and locate the village of Goodwood. We live on Concession Rd. 2 which is one road west of Goodwood ie. before Goodwood coming from Toronto or the show. Go north for 4 km. to number 5729 above a blue mailbox on chains.)

Club members and show participants who wish to camp chez Charlie and Fanny are welcome but please tell us when you expect to arrive.

Tickets for the raffle are enclosed. The cost is \$5.00 for 10. The top prize this year is an embroidered linen tablecloth made and donated by Fanny Edwards. Our raffle table has always had a number of items for winners to choose - Donations can be brought to the show on the day to save mailing but it would be helpful to know what we might expect. Being a numerically small breed the specialty is more expensive per entry than say the Labrador specialty when there is an entry of 200. The raffle is very important to us. PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE BACK OF THE TICKETS AND RETURN THEM PROMPTLY.

THIS 'N' THAT FROM HERE 'N' THERE

We are losing our Quebec director, Rev. Patrick Ormos, whose family has moved to Wisconsin. We wish them the best in all their endeavours and hope this is not a forever move out of the country. Patrick's input to the club has been much appreciated and I hope it will continue. Their new address:- Phi Kennels Reg'd, P.O. Box 128, Avoca, WI USA 53506

The sharp-eyed amongst you may have spotted the picture of a cardigan tied to the dog statue in Asquith park in the Toronto Star of Sun July 29.

If you did that puts you ahead of the photographer who intimated it was a springer. Actually it was Crystal (Markwell's Christabel) owned by Christina Yasacki. Crystal is a truly city dog living in a highrise apartment and whose favourite shop is Holt Renfrew because the staff make such a fuss over her.

Useful hint from my vet - If your dog is bothered by a hotspot (moist eczema) or any other spot where you wish to discourage licking, swab with a mixture of water and chlorine bleach (25 - 30% bleach to water) and let it dry. The chlorine seems to put them off. It does seem to help.