

# YOU BE THE JUDGE

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## THE CAIRN TERRIER

(Based on the AKC 1938 standard)



### PLACE IN ORDER

The Cairn Terrier drawn face-on illustrates many of the breed's desirable characteristics as described below in JUDGING THE CAIRN section. However, it is the three stacked-in-profile Cairns with similar heads, necks, tails, feet, furnishings and soundness that you are invited to place in order of functional merit. Which one represents the American ideal?

### INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCES

In addition to discussing the Cairn Terrier in detail, this graphic presentation demonstrates the international differences that prohibit my producing one representation of typical for readers in all six English-speaking countries where my column is seen. I can, however, unofficially reduce the number to what I believe are three illustrated national ideals – i.e., Canada, the United States and Great Britain. It is assumed that readers in

South Africa, Australia and New Zealand will select my British national ideal as the one functionally correct for Scotland, this breed's country of origin, as size is a national factor.

As a Canadian, my selection for first place is not that of the published American illustrated ideal even though we use the same worded standard. Neither is it the same as the one selected for first place by my terrier mentor, the late Tom Horner of England. My own personal ideal reflects a desire in Canada to delete the words "of the short-legged class" found in both the Canadian and American standards, and to come to grips with the difference of two inches in height and two pounds in weight between the American-Canadian and British standards.

Your own preference, of course, should be for the balanced Cairn Terrier you believe would be best able to jump from rock to rock and to twist and turn in and out of holes among rock cairns, chasing vermin. The question is, which one of these three sound Cairn Terriers has the best balance to do this job?

An experienced Highlands of Scotland gamekeeper, in a 1914 issue of *Dog Weekly* wrote: "Give me a medium-length back Cairn, strong hind quarters, good feet, and not too short-legged." Depending on how you interpret "medium-length", all three examples could have this desired back length, and the same for "not too short-legged".

The British standard and the American-Canadian standards use much the same wording, both asking for a body of "medium length" and a leg of "medium length". My task was to graphically illustrate "medium". Your task, whether you agree with my graphic interpretation or not, is to place these three in-profile Cairns in order of merit, a task made easy because they differ only in medium length of body and medium length of leg.

### JUDGING THE CAIRN

The example I have drawn in three-quarter view has done very well both in Canada and in the United States and, aside from some slight overgrooming, illustrates virtues common to all countries. His firm, level

topline is a must, as is his good length of neck (not discussed in the American-Canadian 1938 standard), sloping shoulders and sloping upper arm. He has bent (but not excessively bent) hind legs, short rear pasterns, and thick and well-padded feet (the front feet larger than the hind).

His front legs are straight and the forefeet are allowed to be slightly turned out. His brisket, level with elbow, does not drop between the front legs as on a Scottie. His tail is set on high and carried at 12 or 1 o'clock. He gives the impression of an agile, active dog able to look out for himself. Based on the American-Canadian standard, he (supposedly) stands 10 inches and weighs 14 pounds – two pounds and two inches smaller or shorter than the British standard.

His head is broad in proportion to length, full furnishings giving a general impression of roundness viewed face-on. His dark hazel eyes are medium in size, slightly sunken and placed well apart under shaggy eyebrows. There is a definite stop, the muzzle is shorter than the skull in a ratio of four to five (American Education Committee), and he has a scissors bite. His small, pointed ears are carried erect but not too close.

His weather-resistant double coat is hard, the outer coat harsh, and the undercoat short, soft and close. The British standard allows for a slight wave. The American illustrated guide produced by the parent club adds that the profuse coat should be thick and a minimum of two inches in length all over the body, and that any appearance of the “jacketed or sculptured” look should be severely penalized.

### BRITISH IDEAL

For visual guidance as to the country of origin's current moderate length of body and moderate length of leg preference, I sent these three profile drawings in 1993 to Tom Horner for an opinion. Tom stressed the need for the right length of body and length of leg, remarking that the leading sentence in the American-Canadian standard, which describes the Cairn as being in the “short-legged” class, does not reflect a desired criterion in Britain. Tom's preference was for Cairn Terrier C.

### AMERICAN IDEAL

The Cairn Terrier Club of America has published a graphic interpretation and worded description of the ideal. He stands 10 inches at the withers and measures 15 inches from front of chest to back of hindquarters. The length of body and length of leg of Cairn Terrier A match that of the American illustrated ideal. I sent the set of three drawings to members of the American Cairn Terrier Education Committee to confirm that Dog A was still the current ideal because, like Tom Horner, I had problems with Dog A's short legs. The answer was affirmative; the ideal has not changed.

### CANADIAN IDEAL

A great number of people in Canada prefer a slightly longer leg than Dog A possesses. They are not in favour of lengthening the body; they only want to put some leg on the American illustrated ideal. They want



the words “short-legged” taken out, “moderate” left in and the height specification increased. They prefer Cairn Terrier B.

### **ORDER OF MERIT**

My preference for first place is Dog B. For second place I would go with Dog C and for third place, Dog A.

### **AMERICAN-CANADIAN CAIRN STANDARD**

At the 1993 annual general meeting of the Cairn Terrier Club of Canada, the members voted in favour of a review of the breed standard. Change suggestions were requested from Cairnites. I am not a Cairnite and, although I may have already answered some of the questions non-Cairnites ask when suing the 1938 standard, the following is a list of questions I would like to see reviewed by Cairnites, especially those who wish the standard to remain as it has for over a half century.

1. Isn't the strong but not-too-heavy muzzle slightly shorter than the skull?
2. Is the Cairn a “short-legged” breed, or one with “medium length of leg”? (The standard claims both).
3. Do the ears actually set on the side of the head?
4. Would it help expression to mention eye shape?
5. Is there a reason the neck does not receive attention?
6. Would it improve the forequarters if the standard referred to the upper arm?
7. Is the lower height and lighter weight (than country of origin) still applicable today?
8. Is mention of correct Cairn temperament not important?
9. As Cairn teeth are getting smaller; would it not be advantageous to describe the teeth as large and the bite a complete scissors bite?
10. Shouldn't the hindquarters receive mention?
11. Couldn't the British description of gait be used, even improved upon?