

IS THERE A WIRE-HAIRED WHIPPET?

Bo Bengtson
Stenstugan, Sweden

I cannot think why nature didn't invent a miniature Deerhound or a rough-coated Whippet — or rather, if she did, why man did not bother to take care that it should survive. Obviously, this type of dog would fill an empty space in the long line of breeds; there just isn't anything small enough for a sighthound fancier who hasn't got room enough for a Wolfhound or a Deerhound, yet requires something hardier and more weather-resisting than a Whippet or Italian Greyhound. (If you live in the right climate it's OK, but for those of us who spend about ten months a year in rain, sleet and snow and *still* like to be out of doors it is too much to expect even a tough young Whippet to keep us company!) They are hardier breeds than most people think, but I am sure that a rough-coated Whippet would meet the requirements of a lot of people in the less temperate parts of the world.

And yet there used to be something called a Wirehaired Whippet which must have been officially recognized as a separate breed by the European kennel clubs on the continent as well as in Scandinavia, in fact by all countries belonging to the Federation Cynologique Internationale. The motivations for recognizing this variety may have been obscure, as in the country of the breed's origin, England, the wirehaired Whippet-type hounds that can be seen most certainly cannot be called pure-bred, and the Kennel Club there has not even considered registering them.

In some countries, however, wirehaired Whippets did appear at some shows a few decades ago and could probably compete for separate CACIBs on equal terms with the smooth Whippet for the title of International Champion under FCI rules! Records of the variety at this time are extremely difficult to come by, and whether there has ever been a Wirehaired Whippet champion is more than I know. All I have managed to dig up is that the official breed standard for Whippets, approved in 1945 in Sweden (which is a member of the FCI), finished with a small passage reading, "Wirehaired Whippet: same standard as for the smooth variety except for the coat, which should be short and rough." This passage is still printed in the standard today!

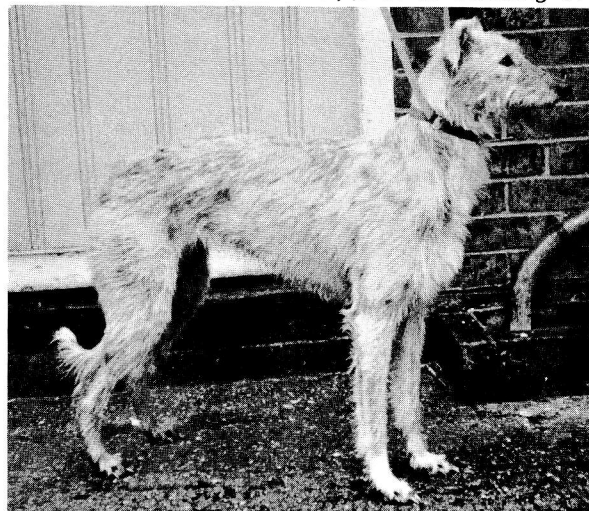
When I first became aware of the existence of a Wirehaired Whippet variety, some ten years ago, it was through a photograph of a very typical and lovely parti-colour dog in an old Swedish book, *Rashundar* (Purebred Dogs) written by Carl Leuhusen and printed in 1932. A few years ago *The Gazehound's* European counterpart, *L'Ami du Levrier/Der Windhund Freund* published an enchanting photograph of three rough-coated Whippets dating from, so the text said, around



1935. All look very typical and hardly more than knee-high. For lack of something better to do, I fell to drawing up elaborate breeding plans for crossing Whippets with Deerhounds to get the size of one and the coat of the other — the only disadvantage being that this would take me some fifty years and a few hundred dogs to experiment with!

That dogs of this type still exist was proven by the fact that a friend brought back some chance snapshots from a holiday in England. On some of these a very sweet, wirehaired Whippet was included, but it was impossible to get any further information. However, a year ago a very knowledgeable breeder-friend (mostly Retrievers — but also a successful Wolfhound exhibitor) came back from a visit to England, all excited about something she called a "lurcher" and which she had happened to come across there. I had seen lurchers in England before and was only moderately interested. (They are usually crosses between Deerhounds and coursing Greyhounds, perhaps with a bit of Collie blood and something else thrown in for good measure. They are still used quite frequently for ratting and hunting "for the pot;" they used to belong to poachers and gypsies and consequently were not held in very high esteem. All types of sizes and coats exist, and I assumed that this must be one of these rather plain, useful but not very attractive dogs.)

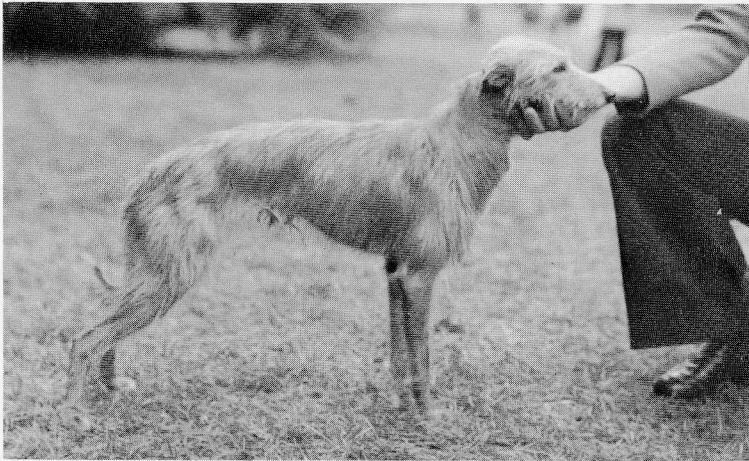
A photograph soon convinced me, however, that this bitch, Fly, was by no means an ordinary lurcher. I became as enthusiastic as my friend and when in England next time went to see her. She was, and happily still is, owned by Mrs. A. Mountain of the very well known Twyford Welsh Pony Stud in Sussex, and she was all I had expected and a good deal more. The temperament which she and several others of her type demonstrate must be quite unique in its blending of gay



friendliness and absolute self-reliance. Too big for a Whippet (at least by our European standards!), Fly is of course technically a mongrel, as her sire was a Whippet/Bedlington cross and her dam a Greyhound/Deerhound cross, but she had so much quality, elegance of appearance and sighthound type that to me she looked as pure-bred as a thoroughbred horse!

Later I realized that there are quite a lot of even smaller, Whippet-size lurchers in England. They are even shown occasionally and unofficially. At the British Field Sports Society's country sports fair at Aldershot last summer, I saw some 65 lurchers being shown, half of them rough-coated and

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about half of those measuring around 20 inches. I met one lovely little dog in the heart of London and a really beautiful small bitch at the Arab Horse Association's annual show in Brentford; the latter was perhaps closer to my ideal than anything I had seen before. Her owner called her a lurcher, too, but as a matter of fact she was a first generation cross between a Whippet and a Bedlington!

And where does one go from here? At the moment I am busy corresponding with various kennel clubs, trying to find out in the first place whether the wire variety is still officially recognized (not so easy to find out as it sounds — as none seem to have been registered for decades), whether there is any chance of getting this variety established as a separate breed in the future, and whether there are still any specimens hidden away somewhere. As I write this I have just heard that someone is trying to get the breed started again in Germany, and the schedule for the FCI International Show in Paris later this spring includes Whippets both "a poil court" (smooth) and "a poil dur" (wire) saying explicitly that there are CACIBs available for *both* these varieties.



Whirlaways War Bonnet

Shown joining the ranks of her winners' circle companions and relatives.



HOUND GROUP I judged by Gail Roberts (pictured), **BEST OF BREED** judged by Dick Guthrie, handler/owner, Carroll Hayhurst, at the all-breed Father's Day Match, 6/16/74, when "Bonnie" was just 5½ months old —

"Bonnie" is a kennel-mate of the famous CH. WHIRLAWAYS APACHE, P.C.C., A.R.M. & C.D. and his son CH. WHIRLAWAYS TOMAHAWK. "Bonnie's" dam is the litter sister of CH. RUNNER'S OUR OWN CHARISMA, Runner's Countess Bijou, and her sire is the Swiss import, Earltoulouse of Whirlwind. Just watch this lovely charcoal and white youngster move out in the ring —

Owners: Carroll & Ruby Hayhurst
4475 Denver Street
Montclair, California

She will be co-owned
with Isabell Stoffers