

It is all about balance

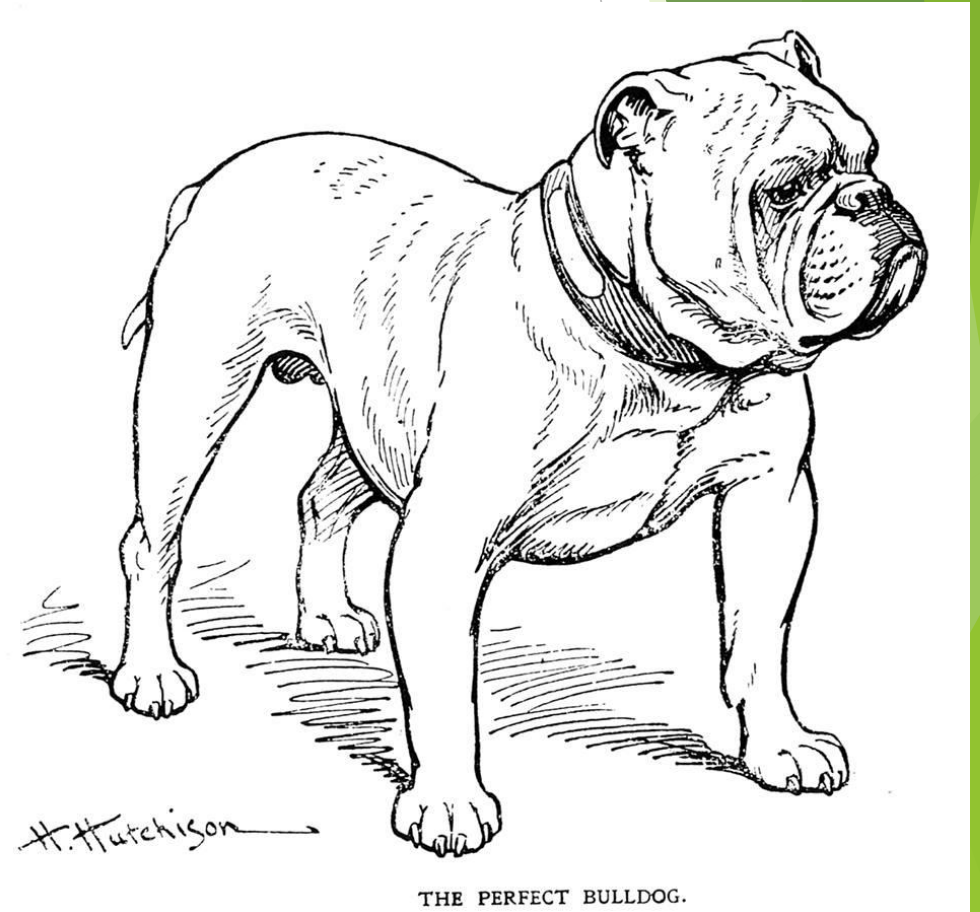
Thoughts
about the
notion of
standards
AMC

Some thoughts about the notion of standards

- We all know what a standard is but maybe it is interesting to exchange our thoughts about the definition of standard and how we use the standards when we judge.
- If the standard is the description of THE perfect animal, does it really exists?

First standard ?

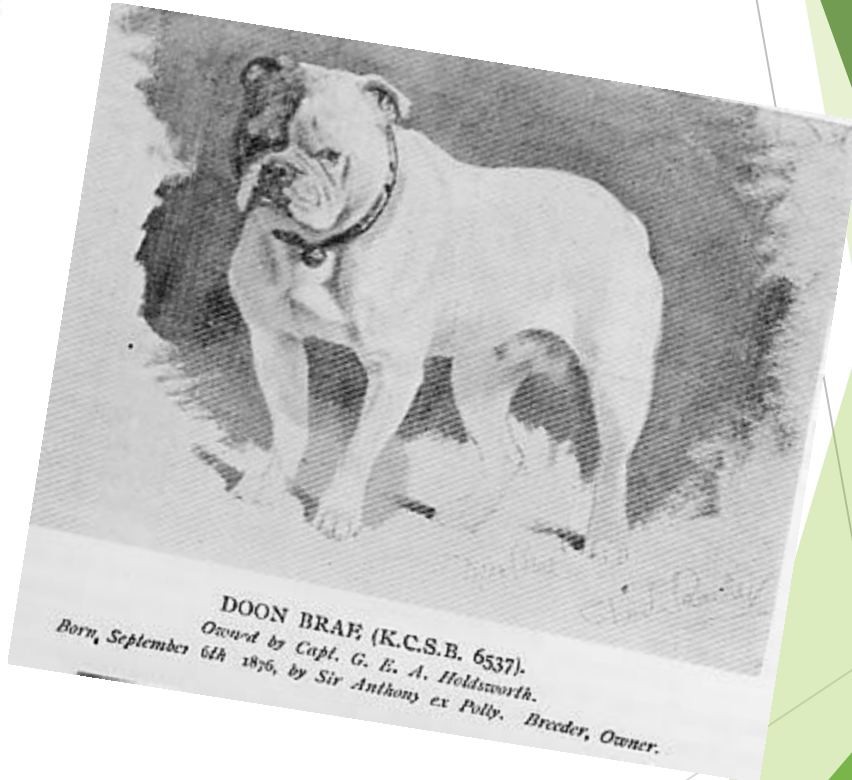
- ▶ The modern standard did not exist before the first official one, which was the English Bulldog.
- ▶ It was the first to be published in 1876.
- ▶ Is it the one we see at our shows ?



The Philo-Kuôn Description of a Bulldog
(1865)

THE BRITISH BULLDOG
(*Canis Pugnax*)

The *British Bulldog* is a majestic, ancient animal, very scarce, much maligned, and as a rule, very little understood. If treated with kindness, often noticed and frequently with his master, he is a quiet and tractable dog; but if kept chained up and little noticed, he becomes less sociable and docile, and, if excited and made savage, he is a most dangerous animal. He is generally an excellent guard, an extraordinary water dog, and very valuable to cross with Terriers, Pointers, Hounds, Greyhounds, etc., to give them courage and endurance. He is the boldest and most resolute of animals. The Gamecock is a courageous bird, but he will only attack his own species; but there is nothing a good Bulldog will not attack, and ever brave and unappalled with matchless courage, he will give up only with life itself. This noble dog becomes degenerate abroad—in truth he is a national animal, and is perfectly identified with Old England—and he is a dog of which Englishmen may be proud.



But ...



- In Gaston Phebus' hunting book, *the Livre de Chasse* (1388), we can find detailed descriptions of different breeds or types of dogs: hounds, Mastiff type (Alans Blancs), pointers.

He describes head,
muzzle, nose, ears,
eye, neck, body,
chest, coat colour,
legs, testicles.

He talked about
temperament and
the way they hunt.

.... Somewhat
something like a
standard



Later ... other example

Daubenton, in 1786, describes what a type is and wrote :
« the muzzle shape is the most significant point of the physiognomy and the distinctive characteristics to distinguish breeds as the size is less constant.

He made a study of the different breeds known at that time.

He described the head, muzzle, face, ears, eyes rarely, neck, body, legs, tail, hair, colour. But no size, no weight.

Some Key dates

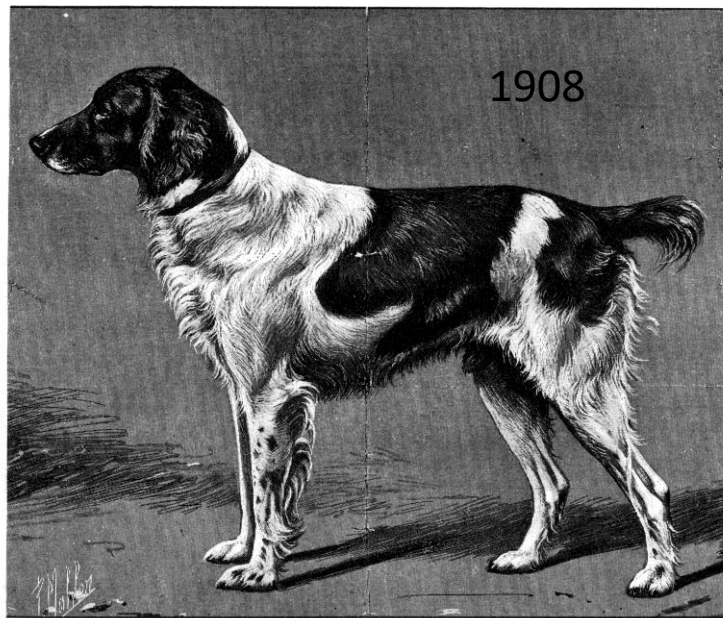
- ▶ First show in Belgium 1847, in Tervueren, only for Pointers.
1859, first British show
1863 First French exhibition with 1000 dogs.
1873 foundation of the British KC
1882 foundation of the SCC, French Kennel Club
1883 foundation of the Société Royale Saint Hubert (Belgium)
Foundation of the FCI by Germany, Austria, Belgium, France and the Netherland.
- ▶ Then ... the standards multiplied.

Standard accuracy: is it important ?

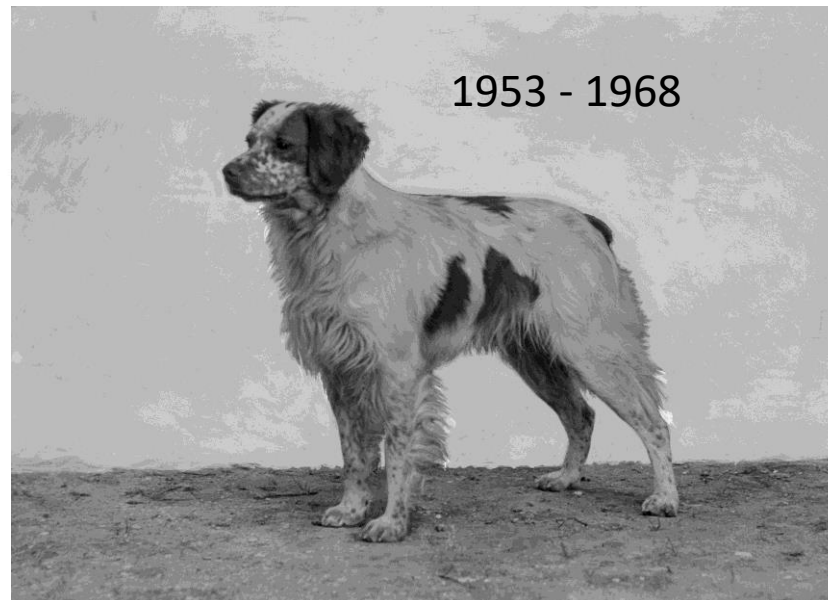
- ▶ There is much work to do that all standards are correctly and clearly redacted
 - ▶ Judges?
We must have a framework to evaluate dogs and to justify our decisions.
- ▶ Exhibitors are allowed to know why their dog is granted, placed, qualified.
- ▶ Breeders need to know breed characteristics to select.

A question:

- ▶ if a standard is enough specific, can we recognise the breed



"ARVOR DU COS-KER", Épagneul breton,
1^{er} Prix, Exposition canine de Paris 1905.
Appartenant à M. le Vicomte DE CAMBOURG.

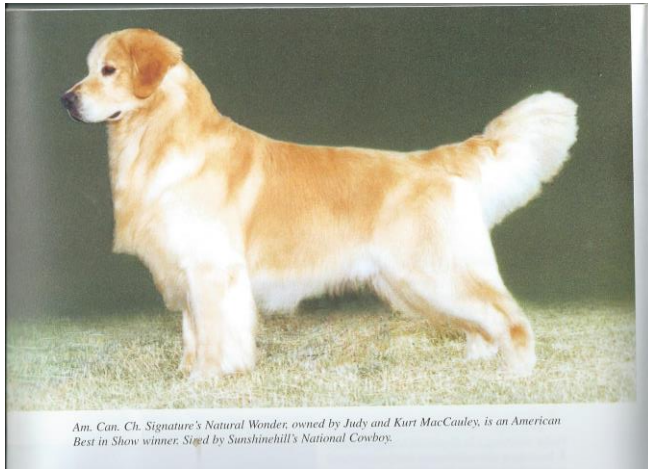


Standard accuracy: What do you think ?

- ▶ HEAD : Balanced and well chiseled.
- ▶ CRANIAL REGION : Skull : Broad without coarseness; well set on neck. Stop : Well defined.
- ▶ FACIAL REGION : Nose : Preferably black. Muzzle : Powerful, wide and deep. Length of foreface approximately equals length from stop to occiput. Jaws/Teeth : Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.
- ▶ Eyes : Dark brown, set well apart, dark rims. (shape?)
- ▶ Ears : Moderate size, set on approximate level with eyes.

American and British standard

► American and British ones



What must we do when the country standard is really different from the FCI one?

- ▶ Another question concerns non FCI standards. Of course, we FCI judges must judge according to FCI standards. But ... What should we do when we judge in America?
- ▶ As you know, the Americans have their own standards.

In some breeds, standards are closed



- Some breeds are from far stronger in America than in any other country in the world, this is the case for Mastiffs for instance. Luckily there is not so many differences between the American standard and the FCI standard.



Exaggerations

- ▶ One must not look at a standard in isolation, but remember that behind it, there is the future of a breed which should evolve in one direction or another. It is important for the long term evolution of the breed and it's not just a fad. We must always allow enough leeway to correct exaggerations which affect the well-being of dogs.

Standards are also subject to laws.

- ▶ For instance, when cropped ears (or tails) were forbidden in a number of countries, the standards concerned had to be modified consequently.
- ▶ Other example, years ago, the FCI standard commission demanded that in the standard of the Fila Brasileiro, the following sentence was withdrawn “*it can happen that the dog attacks the judge and the fact should never be considered as a fault*”.

About type

- ▶ What is a TYPE? When is it mentioned in the Standard?
- ▶ The type is what allows to recognise that a dog belongs to its breed. That's a first definition. But, often, when somebody speaks about type, there is another meaning, a little bit different.
- ▶ We can also speak of Greyhound type, mountain dog type, Mastiff type, Spitz type etc... in a more general way.
- ▶ There is a more restrictive meaning in a breed which is type within the breed. This meaning is dangerous (for the judge) as it is often the type of a particular Kennel, or the type which is fashionable at a certain point.

Is it interesting to have a photo in the breed standard?

- ▶ The ideal standard can only be described with words.
Is it enough ? Isn't it the average type that the standard describes ?
- ▶ A picture is just a particular dog at a particular moment.
A drawn is better and it is good that it is written that it is not necessarily the ideal example of the breed.
- ▶ As the breed should not be retreated in a too restrictive description.
- ▶ Courreau: It is unquestionably to provide the most accurate breed definition when drawing up a standard, since a breed is inherently variable.
- ▶ Denis: "It is important to insist on this compromise between fixity and variability"

Some questions

- ▶ Is there only ONE type according to our standards?
- ▶ Or are there more types possible? Are types a matter of fashion ?
- ▶ How to judge these differences in types?
- ▶ The judge's work is to allow selection by preserving breed characteristics described by the standard and their possible evolving. (either allowed by the standard writing or ... allowed when the standard is changed by the responsible Kennel Club).

Is it the same
standard ? It is !



Does the standard describes the ideal specimen of a breed or the average type of the breed ?

One of our colleague wrote that a show judge has to strike a careful balance between a spectacular hypertype and an ordinary dog.

What says the standard ?



COAT

Hair: On body moderately long, perfectly straight (not wavy), glossy; fine silky texture, not woolly, must never impede movement.

Between lack of type and exaggerations

- The standard says : *Whilst in repose, any exaggeration of wrinkle or excess of skin is unacceptable in mature adults.*



Beautiful, fit and good



Temperament and utilisation qualities are also described in standards.

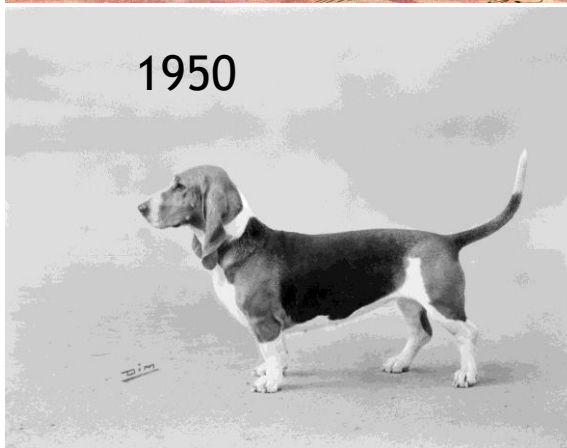
Isn't it as important as morphology ?

A beautiful dog must also be a happy dog says Raymond Triquet. So, it means that, in the name of animal welfare, and it is not written in the standard, it must be fit.

Ideal dog ... ideal standard ?

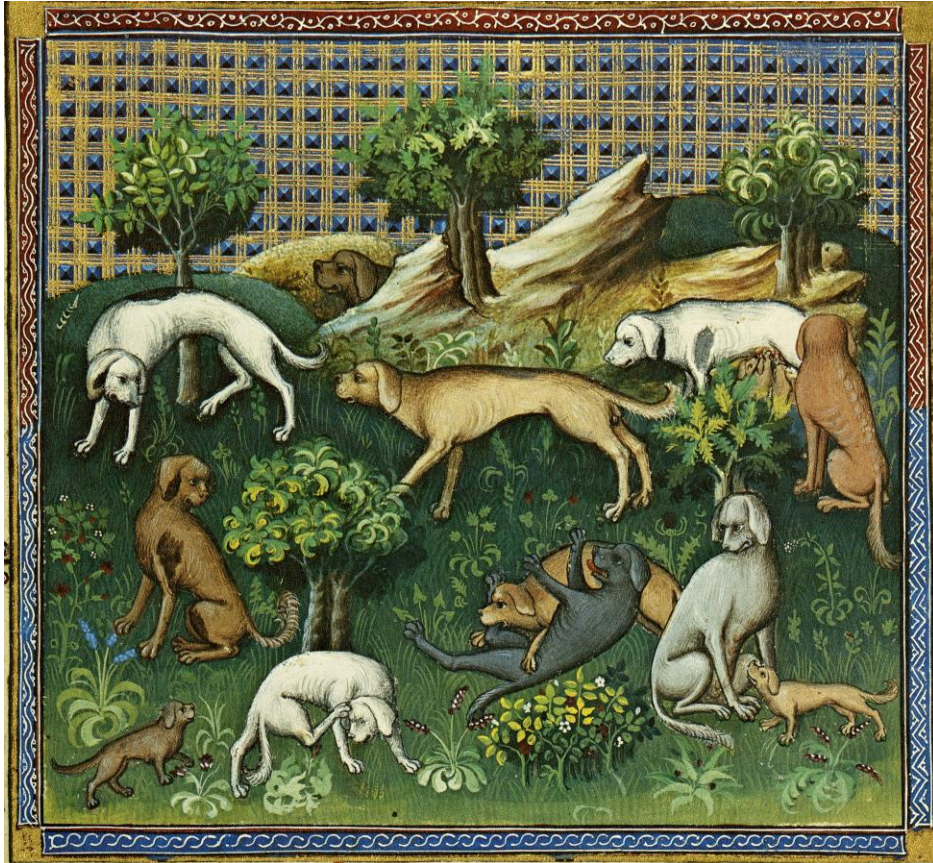
- ▶ A standard which is correctly written must allow a judge to access an animal in a technical and objective manner at least concerning the attribution of qualificative adjectives.
- ▶ The designation of the best can, in the end, have a subjective aspect. But if the standard is correctly constructed and written, the expert should be able to refer to the points of the document to justify his or her choices.
- ▶ On another hand, a standard which is too meticulous, can become a constraint.
- ▶ With too many details, it becomes not possible for the judge to remember all points.

Variability in the standard



- ▶ If we consider that maintaining variability is essential for the future of breeds.
- ▶ We expect a standard to be accurate, concise and not to restrictive.

In conclusion....



- ▶ the standard commission, have a lot to keep themselves busy !