

Bearded Collie



There is mention of a breed resembling the Bearded Collie in Scottish records dating back to around the sixteenth century. He has long been known in Scotland and Northern England where he was bred for herding sheep.

Some five hundred years ago dogs which were also said to be the forerunners of the Polish Lowland Sheepdog were abandoned on the shores of Scotland and these bred with native herding dogs. A look at the Polish Lowland will show similarities. But the Bearded Collie as we know it today owes most of what we have to G Olive Willison who, in the 1940s, came into possession of a Beardie puppy called Jeannie. After searching she found a mate for Jeannie, a dog called Bailey, and her Bothkennar kennels set the mould for today's Bearded Collies.

The 'Beardie', as he is affectionately known, is a hardy dog with a lovable temperament. His handy size and adaptability, combined with workmanlike qualities, have given him a following far outside the farming community. Ideally suited to life in the country, with a double weather-resistant coat and active nature, he is a happy dog, neither timid nor aggressive. Ready to join in any activity, he has an enquiring expression that seems to ask 'Well, what shall we do now?' Gentle, good with children and adults, he makes an ideal member of a fun-loving, growing family.

What about Health Issues?

You may be aware that some breeds of dog (and crossbreeds too) can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the puppy you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found on the Kennel Club's website at:

www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth

Puppy buyers should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

And what health screening is relevant for the Bearded Collie?

Kennel Club Accredited Breeders must use, or are strongly recommended to use, the following screening schemes and/or advice for sires and dams:

- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia Scheme

This list is not necessarily comprehensive and you should still ask breeders and refer to breed clubs about health issues in the breed.