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THE PBGVCA has a new section to its website [www.pbgvca.org](http://www.pbgvca.org) designed to have the most current information readily available for providing optimal health care and for making wise choices in managing breed-specific health care issues. The goals and objectives are: to develop and maintain educational information targeted to general health care of the PBGV; to develop and maintain a knowledge base of medical problems specific to the PBGV including clinical resources to assist with diagnoses, treatment and management of breed specific health issues; and to have the resources available to assist PBGV breeders and owners in making decisions for the health and welfare of the breed. This is an interesting project and I am sure owners here will be able to make good use of the information made available.

On the subject of PBGV health, you may have received an e-mail from the AHT. This is a final request for owners of DNA tested (or hereditary clear) PBGVs to send them their height measurements. It will help in research into their theory that PBGVs that are not quite as tall are more likely to carry the mutant gene responsible for POAG. The request has been broadcast worldwide and the AHT reports that further measurements are now coming in from all over the globe. For more information and details on how to measure your PBGV, go to [www.bgvclub.co.uk/health-news](http://www.bgvclub.co.uk/health-news). It is a short deadline, 13 October, so don't delay!

Congratulations to Phil & Dianne Reid who now have a baby daughter, Liùsaidh, born on 17 September.

Just the one PBGV entered at Belfast and from BOB by Mr A Kelly Ch Soletrader Magic Mike went on to G2 under Espen Engh, who awarded him BOB at Houndshow early last month. This puts Magic Mike head of the Hound Group and at #2 All Breeds.

Rather more local, over the past couple of weeks Steve & Lorna Wyllie's Callydena Diamond Star went BOB at Perthshire Canine Club from a wonderful entry of 11., the second largest behind Whippets. The judge was Sandra Johnston (Burnvale). Our Beaujons Ugly Betty of Monkams JW ShCM went BOB at South Eastern Hound under Lana Johnson (Houndsline) and Paul Osbourne's Braego Gladys Aylward was Best NSC Hound and Hound G3 at Great Yarmouth. The judge was Moray Armstrong (Bitcon).

Simon Parson's recently contemplated whether group and best in show judging is really necessary, leading on to posing the question whether certain breeds are more 'group dogs' than others. He recognised that some exhibitors sense their breeds, however good, are more often than not ignored at group level. Those with glamorous coats, an impressive, imposing presence or extrovert, showy movement may have an inbuilt advantage. That said, he added that many Whippets and Greyhounds do well in the group ring, a tribute to the breeders who have developed such an amazingly high standard.

He goes on to say that one thing which is easily forgotten is that many breeds which regularly do well at group level haven't always done so. "The PBGV has one of the best records of any breed (and not only in the UK), yet I can well remember when they started being shown in this country they were regarded by some as something of a joke, certainly not one which was ever likely to take BIS at Crufts or Top Dog all breeds. Yet some clever breeders quickly began to produce dogs which had the style and quality to appeal in the big ring, and tidied up presentation styles to show off the breed's shape without losing its rustic charm".

It is certainly true that the show animal has changed in appearance worldwide, some more so than others, making them more competitive at top level but, aside from the harsh words about the first PBGVs to be shown in this country in the '70s, many would beg to differ about the retention of the rustic charm. The two do not sit well together. Perhaps the American Standard puts this into perspective. Under General Appearance it says "Important to breed type is the compact, casual, rather tousled appearance, with no feature exaggerated and his parts in balance". The Coat section was revised in 2014 to strengthen the requirement for the essential rough, unrefined outline and tousled appearance of this rustic hunting hound. "Any sculpting, clipping, scissoring or shaping of the coat is contrary to PBGV breed type. The PBGV coat should be clean, neatened as necessary, but always remain casually disarrayed. Any deviation from the ideal described here and in the General Appearance Section of the official standard should be penalized to the extent of the deviation".

We all spend much time grooming our PBGVs before a show, to not do so is akin to throwing money down the drain, so I am not too sure that "causally disarrayed" would score well in the ring. This may be taking the "natural look" rather too far. However, those that go the extra mile, exhibiting a PBGV that is prepared skillfully to show off certain aspects of the Standard, is glamorous and a dream in motion are certainly bound to attract the group judge's eye, for how many judges take stock of the requirement for the "au naturel" aspect of the breed when selecting their winners?

In Bassets, back in the early 1890s, owners split into two groups. Although the breed had first been introduced as a hunting animal, it had mainly found its way into the show-ring. Exhibitors strayed from the conformation requirements of those that performed in the field as breeders of show dogs exaggerated certain points. They lost the practical aspects desirable in the hunting hound and this led to what became known as the "Show - Hunt Divide".

Should we now accept that a similar situation has crept into PBGVs? Structurally the same but coat preparation of the show PBGV is far removed from the natural requirement called for based on breed appearance in country of origin, where hunting is still their passion. I'd be interested to hear your views.

LINDA SKERRITT, 01375 673922, [monkams@aol.com](mailto:monkams@aol.com)