

AGAIN PLEASE, MORE SLOUGHI

My article about the Sloughi and the Oska, has really started something, and I find that in all fairness to everyone, including myself, I need to return to the subject. So far I have been guilty of presenting only one side of the story, though in fact I don't feel guilty, as I have only had one side of the story to present. I must confess to being a little chary of accepting readily a proliferation of new breeds. I feel that our strength lies in our smaller number of numerically strong breeds that we have developed over many years, as distinct from some other countries, where one finds oneself judging classes of ones and two in all sorts of obscure breeds that stand no chance of reaching the heights of say the Cocker or the Alsatian. I checked on the catalogue of a recent British show and found that of the eighty-six breeds scheduled, only three drew less than ten entries and those in breeds which were without challenge certificates. At a similar show, though this time an International Championship show that I judged overseas recently, there were one hundred and thirty-four breeds scheduled, and ninety-nine of them failed to draw ten entries. That is why people from all over the world flock to our shows.

Nevertheless there is always the other side of any story, and I have been fortunate enough to have this presented by two very authoritative sources. The first is the man who has imported the Sloughi. He has very kindly sent me the standard of the breed, several articles on the dogs, and a mass of photographs. I must confess that they sound different, and look different, as indeed I suspected that they might, and I must also admit, that ignoring the outline and conformation, which, to one steeped in the sheer physical beauty of the Whippet and the Greyhound as I have been for so many years, I find somewhat strange, they are good looking dogs.

The other contact was with the Saluki or Gazelle Hound Club, from which source I am information that there is officially no objection to the Sloughi, and more important still, no desire to have the two coats of the Saluki separated into two distinct breeds.

Ah! well! I raised the hare, and who am I to object if it has been run into the ground by the Saluki, the Sloughi, and going back to my original article, perhaps even the Oska.

HASTEN SLOUGHLI

I have had response to the article on the Oska and the Saluki. The letter comes from someone who has been interested in the Saluki from the very early days of the breed, and who, as an historian and a dog man we could do well to listen to.

He confirms my point that the breed was originally all one, smooth coat or long coat, or whatever they happened to be called, they were the same breed of dog. When the Arabs conquered North Africa in the 7th and 8th centuries they undoubtedly brought with them the Saluki "El Hor", Algeria became French Algeria. The French (Algerian) breeders then claimed them as a separate breed, and the F.C.I. accepted this.

He feels with me, that in accepting the Sloughi we have been perhaps somewhat hasty, and that the solution would have been to divide the Saluki into two coats in the way in which the Dachshund has been divided and to have just the two distinct breeds, Salukis Long Coat and Salukis Smooth Coat.

If we do not, the danger lies in the fact that we shall finish up with so many slightly different breeds all looking so alike that not even the experts will be able to tell a good one of one breed from a bad one of another. A Smooth Saluki with faults which would prevent it from winning in its breed, could well be mistaken for a rare breed and be well placed in varieties by a judge trying to be just that little bit adventurous.

Harry Glover

Keresforth House, Barnsley, Yorkshire
Tel: Barnsley 2765