

agree. We have a hot and humid summer and yes, it is uncomfortable, and one has to be careful with exercising dogs to avoid sunstroke and so on. Many areas of the United States and Australia suffer similarly, but one very rarely hears a murmur about that.

Balmy spring

My experience over 19 years of dog-owning here is that dogs' energy levels drop so much that they need very little exercise then. They more or less snooze their way through the summer, as we owners do too. Mine have a slow 20-minute walk early morning and the same late at night, and in between laze around the air-conditioned house.

When autumn comes around they leap right back into action. July, August, September are the really hot months and June is very warm, sticky and rainy. But that leaves eight months of very pleasant weather — a cool autumn, moderately cold, crisp and dry winter with some snow, and balmy spring. And I am talking about Tokyo.

Go just a little further north and there is continuous snow in winter — hence the next Olympic Winter Games will be held here. The northern part of Japan is cool all year round.

I have walked my dogs all these years along a very long stretch of river bank in a Tokyo suburb and so I have met hundreds of pet-dog owners, many of them numerous times, and have spent many hours chatting or just watching. I see no difference between most of these people and the average British dog owner. They are good, decent owners, and many are extremely devoted; and their dogs are very much part of the family. And I don't see any difference in the treatment of pedigree dogs or mongrels; they appear to be equally valued by pet owners.

Admittedly this is a large city so that it may be a kind of showcase of what is best in Japan, with regard to dogs anyway. But what is happening here will slowly but surely spread.

The show world is another matter altogether. I often think the British have got it all totally upside down, and I am not the only foreign resident here to feel that.

The ordinary Japanese pet owner comes in for a lot of criticism, much of it so unjust. The show scene, on the other hand, has well-respected judges such as Terry Thorn and his wife telling the world how wonderful it is, and that people should have no worries about exporting here.

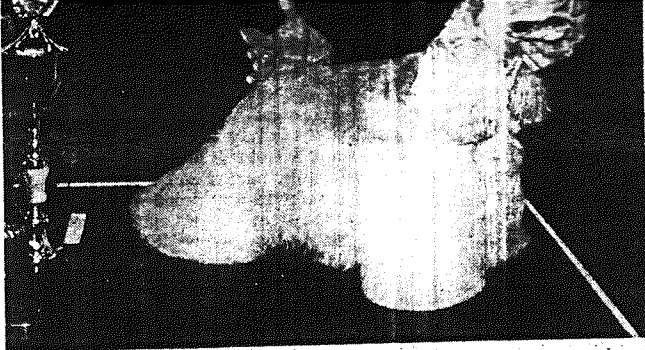
Tiny kennels

In my view the dog show world here is synonymous with business. Enormous amounts of money exchange hands for imported dogs — mainly from America — and the puppies from these dogs are then sold for high prices.

My breed is numerically relatively small and dominated by a few breeders; whenever I speak to one of these people it is to hear that he has yet another litter on the ground. Most of them have several litters a year, year after year. Kennels are tiny, for the most part, with these very large dogs kept in small pens, except for exercise time, which in many cases is a bicycle ride a few times around the block.

If numbers were kept to reasonable levels it would not be so bad, but I know of kennels with 10, 20, 30 or more dogs, and there is just not the space in this country for that kind of set-up, except perhaps for small breeds.

The main show and breeders' magazine, *Aiken no Tomo*, is full of advertisements for dog-importing companies, large-scale pet shops, puppy auction centres and large-scale commercial kennels. Many of the people running these businesses are to be at shows, either showing one of their latest acquisitions, or involved in organising the shows themselves.



At the international ch show in Zuidlaren (Netherlands), 2,713 dogs were entered. BIS was the American Cocker, Ch Midnight Power de la Vigie (Am Ch Gazon's Starfighter ex Homestead's Windchime Vigie), bred by P L Servion and owned by F J M Brunenberg.

photo van Wessem

I covet a Swedish Scottie — Miss Hopeful reborn

WHAT A lovely surprise I had when I went to Sweden to judge at the Vastvenska Terrierklubben show at Orby. The people made up for the appalling weather. The Swedes are always so hospitable and kind.

The show was held in a most unusual venue. It was a holiday village with 'chalet cottages'. The grounds were a park with a big lake. When we arrived on Friday there was no sign of the show, but come Saturday the rings were decorated with lovely coloured open-fronted tents.

I applauded the exhibitors for showing in the cold and rain. Had it been me, I would have packed up and gone home. It was amazing how they managed to keep the dogs looking immaculate.

My breeds were Airedales, Kerry Blues, Norwich, Norfolks and Bedlington, plus BIS. Although it was not the first time I had judged Airedales with undocked tails, they just don't look right. The whole balance of the dog disappears with these peculiar tail sets. However when a good dog comes in, it is the old story, it doesn't hit you in the eye so much. It was the also rans who upset me.

I did not find the quality good generally among the Airedales, chiefly because temperaments were so dodgy. Several dogs I was unable to handle and as this was my first breed I began to wonder if it was due to the weather conditions. However, Kerries followed them, and they didn't turn a hair. I thought the overall standard of the

Kerries extremely good, tails or no tails.

I had a lovely veteran Norwich who really fitted the Standard, a lot of Norfolks with some quality dogs and a good young Bedlington who just needs time.

We were all frozen to the bone — I literally couldn't speak — then I and my excellent stewards went to the KC cottage for lunch where we thawed out.

However not for long — it was group judging time. In Scandinavia they have groups for all the classes plus progeny and breeders, and then BIS. I like their system whereby you pre-judge the groups in an outside ring, and then the dogs go into the big ring and you just select the winners.

It gave me a thrill to judge the Scottish Terrier. She was Miss Hopeful reborn. What a magnificent bitch. The most glorious head and expression, really low slung, perfect front and topline, and moved as though she owned the joint. This Scottie would win the world over. She is a class act, the sort of dog you dream about.

Judging this bitch made up for the weather. I just wish she was in England, where she would undoubtedly win groups and possibly BIS.

Another thing I would like to import into this country is the ring stewards. They are all so efficient, and you have no trouble with translation. We are able to work as a team and in weather like this it does help.

AUDREY DALLISON

Appeal for Bosnia

ANIMAL WARDENS from the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) have travelled to Bosnia to tackle the growing problem of stray dogs in the former war zone. The trip follows reports that animals are being clubbed to death or poisoned in an attempt to reduce numbers.

The charity has launched an appeal for funds for medical equipment and veterinary drugs for Bosnia. The team has taken animal handling equipment and drugs, and will provide training in humane methods of stray control to replace the 'catch-and-kill' methods currently in use. It will also advise on setting up centres for stray animals and establishing rehoming and neutering programmes.

The trip, at the official invitation of the Bosnian government, follows reports that packs of stray dogs — many of them pedigree dogs aban-

doned during the war — are becoming a nuisance in both Sarajevo and Tuzla.

Ken Rowe, an animal warden with North Herts District Council, and Alan Puling, who works for Chelmsford Borough Council, will spend several days in each city meeting vets and government officials and will ensure that any euthanasia that does take place is humane.

'Forgotten'

Mr Rowe, who has made several foreign trips for WSPA, said: "In every war situation there are forgotten casualties and there has been no relief effort for the animals. I expect to find the dogs in very poor conditions. We can help improve the situation but it will need more financial help and more time to set up long term solutions."