





Club for the Border Terrier to be recognized as a breed, but this also came to nothing. Six years later, a subsequent application was granted, but not all Border Terrier owners were thrilled to see their cherished breed being introduced to the show ring. They feared that its working qualities, honed in the Borders region over the course of centuries, would be lost. As a compromise, the Border Terrier Club was hastily set up, its breed standard accepted by the Kennel Club.

Some advocates of the breed responded by setting up the Northumberland Border Terrier Club, calling for a ban on anyone living outside the county being able to breed these terriers. This aim was never realized, however, and the breed's popularity soared as it became known to a much wider dog-loving audience. Fittingly, the first Challenge Certificates were then awarded at a show held in Carlisle, close to the Scottish border. Even today, as a direct legacy of that era, the opening sentence of the Breed Standard dictates that the general appearance of the Border Terrier should be essentially that of a working terrier.

There are still those who worry about the popularity of the Border Terrier and how this could impact on the breed. Unlike many of Britain's other terrier breeds, the Border Terrier is thriving, both in the show ring and as a companion. It typically ranks within the top 20 most popular breeds, based on the Kennel Club's registration figures, and although less numerous in the United States, it still features well within the 100 most popular breeds there. Its rise in popularity has been steady rather than spectacular, suggesting that it

YOU AND YOUR BORDER TERRIER: THE *Essential* GUIDE

is not a breed that will be easily affected by the vagaries of fashion. This may, in part, be a reflection of its appearance, since although the dog is undeniably attractive, it is certainly not cute.

The character of the Border Terrier

It is possible to glean much about the temperament of these dogs from their background. Firstly, although they are relatively small, they are also brave, as befits a breed that was created to venture underground to tackle foxes and do battle with badgers, both of which are formidable adversaries, particularly



when at bay in the confines of their underground retreats. This means that, in spite of their relatively small size, Border Terriers are not easily intimidated by other dogs that they may encounter – even much larger individuals. This trait can sometimes lead to a potential conflict situation, underlining the importance of your dog being well trained and under control.

Border Terriers are also naturally curious and, particularly when exploring in the countryside, their instincts may lead them to investigate underground burrows. It is important to keep a watchful eye on your pet in case it disappears in such surroundings. The most important thing that must be done to curb the Border Terrier's fearless nature, however, is to train it to return to you when called, which will help keep it out of danger.

On the go

Like most other terriers, the Border Terrier possesses a greater level of energy than its size might suggest. So, if you are seeking a genuine 'lap dog,' do not be fooled into thinking that this breed will meet your requirements. Despite its constant 'on-the-go' attitude, however, the Border Terrier is well suited to a home with older children and teenagers, particularly due to its surprisingly tolerant character. These dogs are also very affectionate and loyal. Border Terriers like to be actively involved in what is happening around them, rather than simply being passive companions. They will also prove to be alert guardians, and once again their vigorous bark rather belies their size. Once they are familiar with a newly arrived visitor, however, they will become quiet – rather than continuing to bark like many other terriers.

Border Terriers are social creatures, and will accept the company of other dogs as well. This pack-oriented aspect of their nature is further reflected by their baying calls, which are rather reminiscent of those of Foxhounds, and could even suggest the involvement of some hound stock in their lineage at some stage in the distant past. You are unlikely to hear this unusual call unless you keep two or more Border Terriers together, but it is very distinctive and quite unlike that of any other terrier.

The hunting instincts of the Border Terrier can occasionally cause it to be aggressive towards cats, but a young puppy reared in a home alongside an established adult cat will soon learn its subordinate position! Again, because of the dog's hunting ancestry, care must obviously be taken if you also keep other potentially vulnerable pets, such as rabbits. However, it is quite possible to teach a Border Terrier to trot alongside a horse, just like its ancestors were accustomed to doing, providing you do this in safe surroundings away from roads.

All-purpose terrier

These terriers are not only responsive to training, but surprisingly adaptable, too, and have performed well in activities including flyball (a competition in which dogs chase balls), and agility, as well as in obedience competitions, and yet they have also been used very successfully as therapy dogs when visiting the sick.

Country dogs at heart, Border Terriers can nevertheless adjust well to suburban living, provided you are willing to ensure your pet receives plenty of exercise every day. Their inclination to dig, however, may sometimes cause friction with other household members who are keen gardeners – particularly as most Border Terriers are always inclined to investigate freshly dug soil. They



are also adept at tunnelling, and are able to turn even a small gap under a fence into an escape route from your garden, a behaviour especially prevalent in dogs that become bored.

Defining the standard

The official standard provides a written description of the characteristic



features of a particular breed, with that of the Border Terrier having remained essentially unaltered to any significant extent for over 90 years.

HEAD

The Border Terrier's distinctive appearance stems partly from the otter-like shape of its head. The muzzle is short and powerful, and the skull relatively broad. The ears should be quite small and V-shaped, hanging forwards down over the cheeks. The bite – which refers to the way that the jaws meet – should be a scissor bite, meaning that the upper teeth overlap those in the lower jaw when the mouth is closed; however, a level bite, in which the upper and lower teeth meet evenly, is also acceptable. The canine teeth located at each corner of the mouth are relatively large, as is common in terriers.

BODY

Working back along the body, the neck is powerful, with the body being deep, as well as narrow and quite long. This provides for good lung capacity, without hindering the movement of the terrier when it is underground. Power is evident