

Sampling of News Articles about 1937 Crufts Show

Seen But Not Heard

The Leeds Mercury Tuesday February 9, 1937, page 7



Jennifer Burn, young daughter of Olivia Burn, pictured with four "Blean" Basenjies in a British newspaper on the eve of the breed's debut at Crufts in 1937. Mrs Burn had six dogs entered, the two African imports, Bongo and Bokoto of Blean, plus four of their offspring who were born eight months earlier in quarantine. I wonder if this faded but highly treasured newspaper clipping depicts the four puppies.

Glen Dymock

He's A Favourite

The Daily Mirror Tuesday, February 2, 1937 page 17

Another piece of press coverage on the eve of the Basenji breed's Crufts debut in 1937. Bongo of Blean is pictured with Olivia Burn's young daughter, Jennifer. During this period, most breeders were proud to see their breed highlighted in this way. I think this photograph confirms the well-documented fact that Bongo was a small dog.

Glen Dymock

WALES'S "NEW TONGUE"

The new B.B.C. transmitter to serve North Wales was formally opened yesterday at Bangor. Principal Emrys Evans, of the University College of North Wales, said that Wales had now been given a new tongue

NOTES OF GLADNESS

Arguing that the notes of the horn blower "gladden the heart," the Essex Agricultural Society, at their meeting in London yesterday, decided to retain a horn blower in the ring for their show at Maldon.

PENSIONS JUMP

WIDOWS', orphans' and old-age pensions payments during the year ended March 31, 1936, amounted to £243,358,364, compared with £241,960,149 in the previous year. The cost of administration was £1,269,787, making a total expenditure of £244,628,151.

Income from insurance contributions was £25,443,659, leaving a deficiency of £19,184,492 to be met from the Treasury pensions account.

Women were principally concerned in what a White Paper, issued yesterday, describes as extra-statutory payments and payments made in error and which cost the accounts nearly £9,000.

Pensions awarded to ten women, whose marriages were subsequently found to be illegal, involved an expenditure of £1,286. As the sums were received in good faith, no action was taken.

HER EMPTY SCHOOL

When a number of Flintshire schools which had been closed owing to 'flu reopened yesterday the attendances were so low that they had to be closed again.

The County Director of Education, Mr. J. D. Evans, said a head teacher of one school telephoned him asking him whether she should close her school or not. When he asked her how many children were present in the school she replied: "None."



He's a favourite with her and his relations should soon be popular with other people, for Bongo is a Basenji, and Basenjis never bark. Mrs. Burns, mother of Jennifer whom you see above, will introduce this new breed of dog at Cruft's Coronation Show. She has brought her Basenjis from the Belgian Congo, where they are used by native hunters

HE MIXED HIS DRINKS

KITTEN NOW TEETOTAL

Dogs of the Day New Breeds at Crufts

By A. Croxton Smith

The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News Tuesday, February 5, 1937 page 280
Provided by Glen Dymock

Cruft's shows, ever since I can remember, have been the happy hunting ground of those who, like the Athenians of old, wish to find something new. Time after time, in the classes set aside for the miscellaneous foreign breeds that have not yet got to the registers of the Kennel Club, I have seen dogs that were the forerunners of legions.

On Wednesday and Thursday next a very great show will be staged at the Royal Agricultural Hall, at Islington. It is Mr. Cruft's fifty-first, and it will certainly be on of the best he has ever had. In glancing through his schedule, I could not help noticing the progress that is being made by several comparatively new foreign breeds. They have been elevated to the dignity of classifications all their own.

I daresay it is not the first time with some of them, but they are sufficiently novel for me to suggest that my readers should have a good look at them when they go to Islington next week.

There they will be able to see Boxers, which are dogs that appeal to very much, having the power and solidity of the bulldog without his clumsiness or abbreviated face. Although they are very active, at the same time, they are powerful enough to tackle anything. They are elegant, red in colour and of the Spitz type, which means

that they have erect ears and curly tails. In their native land they are used for flushing big game birds and sometimes for hunting bears.

Boston terriers have now advanced to the championship status by virtue of the number that has been registered, and for the first time they will receive challenge certificates. That should help them on a bit. Lhasa Apsos have six classes to themselves. Tibetan terriers, Tibetan spaniels and the shaggy little Shih Tzu from China all have their individuality, as well as the Pyrenean Mountain dogs and Rhodesian Ridgebacks.

As we have heard a good deal about the Rottweilers that Mrs. Phil Gray has brought over, I have no doubt that many people will find the way to their benches. I feel sure that Mrs Gray would not have gone to the trouble and expense of importing them if she had not felt that they have prospects.

The plum of all, however, as regards newness will be the Basenjis exhibited by Mrs Burn, of Bossingham, near Canterbury. I am able to give a picture of one of the today. This gentleman, like the practical dog he is, has gown a winter coat which makes him look thicker than he really is. Actually, in their close, fine summer coats they have most elegant figures with a decided waist. In their own county, of course, no winter costume is necessary.



Mrs. Burn, who at one time bred fox terriers, met these dogs when she was accompanying her husband to the Kwango district where he works. That is on the Kwillo River, a tributary of the Congo. At the first glance she realised that here was something entirely different. She was right, for to the best of my belief no Basenji has ever been seen before at a European show. They are small, not measuring more than about 18 inches at the shoulder, while their weight is from 16 lb. to 22 lb.

They have prick ears, tightly curled tails, and are usually chestnut with white points, but they may be "café au lait" or black, and occasionally a cream appears which is highly valued by the black people as they say it is like the white man.

Their skin is exceptionally loose, and when they are excited, they have wrinkled foreheads in a curious manner. The extraordinary thing is that they never bark—what treasures that would be to the down dwellers! One's immediate impression upon looking at a photograph is that they have a remarkable resemblance to one of the ancient dogs of Egypt several thousand years before the Christian Era.

They also remind me of the Ivicenes and the Maltese coursing dogs which belong to breeds to be found along the Mediterranean. These greyhounds, however, are somewhat bigger, and although they are inclined to ring their sterns, they do not carry them as the Basenjis do.

Dr Schweinfurth, who went through the Sudan in 1868 to 1971, was evidently a very careful observer, and on reading his book I was impressed with the description of the dogs he saw. The Shilloos had some in shape like greyhounds, but smaller, always foxy-red in colour. Their bodies are very slim. In the Niam-Niam territory he discovered dogs that must of the same family as the Basenji. They have short sleek hair, large, erect ears and curly tail like that of a young pig. Unlike the Basenjis, however, they were included to corpulency, the reason being that their masters regarded them as a table delicacy.

In Mrs. Burn's part of the country the dogs are used entirely for hunting. An approximate translation of the word "Basenji" is "Bush Thing" and maybe used as an adjective or a noun. The dogs are extraordinarily plucky and will even attack a leopard to protect their young. They are peculiarly clean in the habits, hardy, and as far as Mrs. Burn can see, are free from the majority of diseases that attack our pets. In some ways they are almost feline,

licking themselves clean like cats and arching their back when they stretch.

The English climate does not seem to bother them at all, although they come from such a hot country. They have wonderful noses and have been known to point game as far as 80 yards away.

They're Different

The Sphere February 20, 1937 page 298. Provided by Glen Dymock
This item appeared in a sidebar with dog titbits a week after Crufts.



The Basenji Dog

Journal of the Royal African Society. 36(CXLII): 148-149 (1937)

By Captain John Guy Dollman, BA, FLS

“The most outstanding breed shown at the recent Cruft’s Dog Show was undoubtedly the Basenji dog from Central Africa. It was imported from the Belgian Congo by Mrs. V. Burn, ... general interest in all dog-loving centres. This race, in addition to occurring in the Belgian Congo, is also found in a very similar form in main parts of Central Africa, including the French Congo and Lower Sudan. These dogs would appear to be of very ancient lineage, as there are drawings and models existing, which would seem to represent these animals, dating from the 12th Egyptian Dynasty.”

“In Africa the natives make use of the dogs for hunting purposes and in tracking small and wounded game. ...”

“As regards habits, the dogs are very fast and make excellent hunters, having both good noses and sight. They are also extremely brave and very hard and do not appear to mind the English climate in the least. ...”

Barkless Dogs of Central Africa Steal Show at London Exhibition

“The Afro American” 27 March, 1937

LONDON – (ANP) – Displayed for the first time outside their native habitat, the Basenjis, barkless dogs from the heart of Central Africa, have stolen the show at the London exhibition for dog fanciers which began in Agricultural Hall on Wednesday.

The eight Basenjis were brought here by Miss Olivia Burns, who has sold them at high prices and is having more rushed to the city by aeroplane. Their failure to bark comes as a result of training by Africans, who used them to chase game and taught them not to bark. They now emit only gentle growls.

Basenjis are slightly larger than fox terriers and average twenty-two pounds in weight, but despite their size they chase lions and other ferocious game. They are cat-like in appearance, wash their faces with their paws and arch their back when angry. Most of them are chestnut red.

Animals: Bush Things

“Time” Monday, Oct. 04, 1937

The Basenji is a smallish, chestnut-brown African dog, sturdy, compact and bony. Catlike, it slinks, catlike washes its face with its paws. The name means "bush thing." Unique characteristic of the Basenji is that it does not bark; it utters only one noise, "GROOO!" Breeders believe its lineage can be traced back to the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty. Since then countless generations of Africans, legend says, have succeeded in breeding out its bark, for the sake of silence not in the home but on the hunt.

In the Belgian Congo the Basenji is highly domesticated, plays with the children, eats with the family, hunts with a gourd full of pebbles tied around his neck so he can be followed in the jungle.

Years ago a Mrs. Olivia Burn brought from Africa the first Basenjis England had ever seen. Last February she exhibited them at Cruft’s Coronation Dog Show in London and caused something of a sensation.

This week B. Hamilton Rogers, vice president of an organization called Dogs Inc., arrived in the U. S. with two barkless, but playful Basenji puppies. He intends to show them and breed them, hopes to introduce the Basenji to recognized aristocracy of pedigreed dogs.

The Barkless Basenji

"Pittsburgh Press" 5 October 1937

"LET DOGS delight to bark and bite," said Dr. Watts. But the good Doctor had never heard of the Basenji hunting dogs from the African Congo which a New York kennel owner is introducing to this country. The Basenjies are small, active dogs, usually a rich chestnut in color. Their breed has been traced back to the Twelfth Egyptian Dynasty. And they don't delight to bark and bite. At least, they don't delight to bark, because they can't.

The New Yorker who is importing them says that barklessness of the Basenji will cause them to be blessed by thousands of light sleepers in America.

We fear it won't. Light sleepers will continue to curse barking dogs, but they aren't likely to appreciate the silence of the barkless Basenji. That's how things are in this country, and the Basenji might as well realize it now as later. The fellow who makes a big noise may annoy the neighbors, but they know he's there. The fellow who goes about his business quietly maybe a mighty good citizen, but he usually has to his virtue as its own reward.

Dogs Without Barks

"The Montreal Gazette" 6 October 1937

"Two canine oddities, dogs that cannot bark—not because they have been trained to be still but because nature made them that way—have arrived in New York from England on the Berengaria, according to the New York Sun. Known as Basenjies, the African term for "bush dog," they were transported to England from their native Belgian Congo less than a year ago. They quickly caught the attention of English dog fanciers, have been officially recognized by breeders in that country and

now are making their first appearance on this side of the Atlantic.

"The pair imported today were brought over by Dogs, Inc. of 59 East Fifty-Second Street, a venture of which Mrs. Olga Rogers is president and H. Byron Rogers vice president. The latter has been in England buying breeding stock for the establishment and the Basenji are only part, though the most unusual part, of the consignment of dogs he brought back. After being kept for a short time in this city they will be taken to the Misty Isles kennels of Mrs. Byron Rogers at Bedford, N.Y.

It is not surprising that the importers envision a demand for barkless dogs in communities where noise-reducing campaigns are common. Just what makes them mute has not been determined.

Although their vocal cords are not developed, they have all the other attributes of good dogs. They are exceptional hunters, although in the African bush the natives have to tie gourds around their necks that they may be followed by the rattling sound.

Mrs. Olivia Burn, an English woman who had been living in the Belgian Congo, took the first Basenji to England. They bred so closely to the same standard that they were readily accepted by the experts as an authentic and old breed. It is believed that they date back to about the twelfth Egyptian dynasty. Although natives of the tropics, they quickly became acclimated to England.

They are a light chestnut color, with white markings, sharp pointed ears, carried erect, short coats and a tail that curls up tightly over the back. They are about the same size as a Samoyed or a Norwegian elkhound, and except for their color and short coats, have much in common with these breeds.

Barkless Dogs

"The Hartford Courant Times" 15 October 1937

Basenji Animals Will Please Those Bothered by Noisy Canines

"To the Editor of The Courant: ~ I've recently seen pictures of the new Ba. dogs from the Belgian Congo which are imported into this country. It is believed ... but omit no louder sound than a low growl when ..."

Troubles of the Importer

DOGS OF THE DAY By A. CROXTON SMITH

"The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News" 20 August 1937

This item appeared in well after Crufts Dog Show.

Provided by Glen Dymock

The ways of the importer are not easy, unless the dogs that are brought into the country come from civilised lands that are easy of access. Then there are few difficulties beyond the cost of quarantine, that is unavoidable and will probably be 12£ 6d per week for 6 months.

The trouble begins when anyone is seized with a desire to possess dogs that come from remote parts of the beaten track. It is easier now than it was to get them out of Tibet. Before the Forbidden Land was thrown open to our nationals any dogs from there had to be smuggled out or picked up on the Indian borders, without much certainty that they were representative of their kind.

Afghan hounds were almost as unattainable, and those that came to us were sometimes cross-bred. Since the war we have been more fortunate, largely because Mrs. Amps'

husband used to live in Afghanistan. She thus had opportunities of studying the breed that were denied to ordinary people, but she must have been put to a great expense in getting the dogs home.

Mrs. Foljambe, I believe, got her Rhodesian Ridgebacks from Kenya, which is not so inaccessible in these days, and they can, of course, be picked up in Rhodesia. Probably Mrs. Burn has had as much trouble as anybody in bringing home the Basenjies that caused so much talk at Mr. Cruft's last show.

They came from a region bordering on a river that discharges itself into the Congo far from its source, and the facilities for transport are difficult. They made such a sensation at Cruft's, however, that many people wanted puppies, and Mrs. Burn has felt justified in going to the expense of importing others to reinforce her stock, and the consignment arrived a few weeks ago. At first there was a prospect of a rapid transport being arranged direct from the interior via Brussels and Croydon. Her husband had bought the dogs and had made them specially light, three-ply boxes, when at the last moment the company decided that they could not carry them.

After a delay of some weeks a Belgian was found who undertook the dogs' supervision on the long journey. At Leopoldville, the guardian was thrown into consternation, as they escaped from the hotel and were missing for a day.

Fortunately, with their unerring sense of direction and knowledge of the hour, the dogs made their way back to the hotel at their usual feeding time through the perils of unknown streets and terrifying traffic. Thence they went by train to Matadi at the mouth of the Congo, and another nineteen days landed them at Antwerp, where they were met by Mrs. Burn.

Earlier in the year I wrote of the wide distribution of these hunting dogs or their near relatives. The latest

arrivals came from the Kasai, five hundred miles from the home of the first. Consequently, they are unrelated, and I am told that they are quiet and nicely behaved.

Mrs. Burn's husband has a beautiful bitch in Africa that he obtained from the wild Dankesse people. Probably by the time these words are read she will have whelped, so with luck there should be more to come later on. The autumn will be an awkward time of the year for them to land, considering the heat of their native climate, but a pair that reached here on Christmas Eve two years ago survived the winter successfully.

Miss Spiller, of Maidenhead, has bought a Basenji, Foxie of Blean, from Mrs. Burn, which she showed at Richmond and Maidenhead. He may be seen on the left of the accompanying photograph. A knowing man to whom I showed the picture was scornful about the dogs. "Look at the difference in type between the two," he remarked. He was not clever enough to recognize that the second dog in the photograph is a coloured bull terrier.

The Basenjis that I have seen are singularly alike. It is true that most of them are related, but even when dogs are we often observe differences of type and appearance. One imagines that the natives have bred them with more care than might be expected from untutored minds. It may be that there are not many other breeds with them to bring about a mixture. That I cannot say.

(Article continues with another subject.)



THE BARKLESS BASENJI: Miss R. V. Spiller, of Maidenhead, with her Basenji, Foxie of Blean. On the right is a coloured bull terrier.



SADA-EL-KABUL, an Afghan exhibit at the show, and (left), Bokoto of Blean, a Basengi, entered by Mrs. Burn, of Canterbury, Kent.

BARKLESS DOGS USE TOM-TOMS

BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE throbbing of jungle tom-toms mingled with the yapping of terriers, the barking of retrievers and the baying of hounds at the opening of Cruft's Show, in the Agricultural Hall, Islington, N., yesterday.

It was the "hunting call" of the barkless dogs, the Basenjis from Africa.

Round the throats of the Basenji exhibits were native gourds with a rattle inside, which beat a deep, rhythmic tattoo as the dogs moved in their pens.

They are the hunting dogs of the Congo, no bigger than wirehaired terriers, but fleet enough to chase an elephant, strong enough to bring down a bushbuck and brave enough to tackle a leopard.

As they have been muted by Nature and never bark, the natives fit the gourds round their necks so as to follow them through the six-foot high jungle growth.

Mrs. Burn, of Canterbury, who is exhibiting them, is the wife of an official in a remote part of Central Africa.

"In preparation for this show I had two sent by air from the Congo. At every stop they were taken out, exercised and fed. Within 4½ days they had been transferred from the depths of Equatorial Africa into an English winter. That does not worry them. They are a hardy breed."

More than 9,000 dogs of 92 breeds are on show, with cocker spaniels leading in number (755). Labradors are "runners-up" with 634, and Cairns are a bad third with 306. Sealyhams, the rage of a few years ago, are now down to 135 entries.

The King's Labrador retriever, Sandringham Stream, was placed first in a class for post-graduate bitches.

Barkless Dogs Use Tom-Toms

Daily Herald February 10, 1938 page 6
Provided by Glen Dymock

A news clipping featuring Bokoto of Blean wearing a wooden hunting bell at Crufts 1938, illustrating the continuing press interest in the breed, even one year after it made its debut at the show.

The 1938 show was where a Pathé News clip was made of Bokoto and Bongo wearing their wooden bells.

Go to: youtube.com/watch?v=ufj8iShBF8s
(Basenjis are at the 00.17 mark>)

Glen Dymock

Another Video

A video issued in 1938 of The Blean dogs: **Basenjis Dogs Issue Title - Pots Of Plots** with description: "Several M/S's of the Basenjis dogs at Bossingham Kennels near Canterbury in Kent. Nice M/S of a little girl holding two puppies. The commentator says that the dogs come from the Belgian Congo in Africa. He also says that they have no bark. More nice shots of numerous puppies playing with the girl and being fed."

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/basenjis-dogs-issue-title-pots-of-plots>

A Final Footnote

Glen Dymock

Croxtan Smith writing in 1943, after the Kennel Club had just bought the rights to the Crufts brand from Charles Cruft's widow:

... One feature of these shows stands out conspicuously in my mind. With my old friend, Charles Cruft, the show was the thing. Many times, in my life I have met great showmen, the majority of whom were not unduly endowed with the admirable quality of modesty. They loved to see their names in the papers. Charles Cruft was wholly indifferent to the adventitious aids of publicity for the furtherance of his own personality. If he got into the papers, it was not his own seeking. With him it was the show that mattered, and he was prepared to stand or fall by the quality of the entertainment that he provided for exhibitors and public.

His aim was to attract entries by providing an exceptional classification and getting the soundest judges that were available. The advertising of his shows was done in a straightforward manner. When Basenjis were first exhibited there, as a member of his committee I told him that I was going to write a paragraph for the Press about the "Barkless Dogs," and it needed some persuasion to convince him that it was a legitimate piece of news for the papers and the public. As events turned out, it was one of the best advertisements that his show had ever had, crowds flocking to see the dogs that didn't bark. It was equalled, perhaps, by a note about the "Fever Dogs" that I circulated. That was an Egyptian hairless dog that touchy of which was thought by the ignorant fellaheen to cure a fever.



Photo from the *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, September 23, 1938, page 587.