

SOME BREEDING THOUGHTS ON THE FOXHOUND

By Roddy Bailey

Essential Elements

In order to breed any pack of hounds the following elements are essential:

- To breed a pack of hounds first secure the support of the person looking after them.
- Have an accurate hound list showing all hounds in the kennel by age, sex, sire and dam. A summary by year and sex is usually necessary. [See sample.](#)
- Have a list of all the bitches showing their date of previous 'seasons' and the date when each bitch is forecast next to come into season.
- Maintain all the pedigrees of each hound to at least six generations. [See the 'line bred' example illustrated.](#)
- Have access to the British MFHA Hound Breeding web site and learn to use the 'trial mating' option (Username and password needed). All foxhounds bred in Ireland are in the British maintained Foxhound Kennel Stud Book which is the source for the MFHA web site.
- Know the type of hound the huntsman/handler prefers ie Modern or 'Old English' foxhound.
- Know the foxhound tradition of the kennel ie Modern or 'Old English' foxhound.
- Have a secure kennel with continuity in hunt management.

Without the above the hound breeder cannot begin.

Note: These thoughts are mostly confined to the Stud Book Foxhound (Modern or 'Old English') although the principles apply to other working hounds.

Chance Breeding v Line Breeding

Many hunts select a good doghound and a good bitch and use them. This method can produce an odd good foxhound but it is 'chance breeding'. You end up with a pack of individuals and their conformation faults mean more hounds have to be kept to cover frequent lameness and the pack tends to be less effective in the field. The aim of the hound breeder is to produce a 'level' (ie uniform make and shape) pack of hounds that are athletic and work as a team. Hound colour should play no part unless the kennel wishes to maintain a 'colour' tradition. The better their conformation the less the hound takes out of itself. Therefore it is able to continue effectively when other hounds are tired often producing successful hunts at the end of a four hour hunting day. The breeder should use hounds with qualities of nose, cry, stamina, fox sense, temperament and drive and this requires breeding from known hounds with these requisite characteristics. Such 'known' hounds need not be current performers; the breeder may wish to breed back to hounds of the past whose

families were renowned foxhounds. Moreover such athletic hounds have the ability to turn out two or three times a week and their soundness means they rarely go lame. An economic advantage of a pack of well put together hounds is the hunt need not keep so many hounds since soundness results in fewer hounds being lame. There is no point in keeping a hound that can only go out once a week. The way to produce this all round athletic team of hounds with good qualities hunting two or three days a week is by line breeding not chance breeding. Line breed for work and voice, breed more than you want to allow some selection and get them as good looking as possible.

What is meant by Line Breeding?

Line breeding is a form of close breeding and therefore great care must be taken by the breeder. How do we go about doing this? The most important part when selecting a hound to breed from is that he/she and all the family must be good workers. It follows that kennels should not breed from a hound that is too young (nor too old).

The Brood Bitch

The first step is selecting the brood bitch. By the early part of the season most kennels will have a good idea which of their bitches they wish to use. A kennel list of the bitches is essential showing when they are due to come into season based on previous showings. Forward planning is vital and size is important. It is no good having a panic which bitch to use on the day the lady first comes into season. Having selected your potential brood bitch you must write out and study her pedigree back to at least six generations. The more experienced may wish to go further and research the 'tail male' and 'tail female' as far back as possible. Essentially 'tail male' is the top line on the extended pedigree sheet and 'tail female' the bottom line of the sheet.

The bitch is the key to any breeding and a good brood bitch is the hardest hound to breed. If the kennel does not have any quality brood bitches it might pay the breeder to ask an established kennel to draft (ie give away) any excess bitch puppies of a large, quality litter. These tiny entrants to the world can then be taken home and reared on the home brood bitch. This can be a useful start when taking over a kennel of mixed breeding success.

The Stallion Hound

Next is the selection of a suitable stallion hound. The breeder should check the pedigrees of the bitch and the stallion to ensure the kennel are not going any closer than the fourth generation. The name of a hound (or brother/sister) should not be repeated in the first four generations of either pedigree but repetition is welcome in the generations thereafter. Furthermore the breeder should avoid having the same tail male line and tail female line on the pedigrees of the potential sire and dam. If the breeder doesn't get this right ie going closer than four generations, the kennel is heading for problems and is unlikely to produce a fox catching team which is fun to follow on foot or horse. If the breeder does get this right

the result (eventually) will be a level pack of good working quality that can drive on together during a hunt. Such hounds will arrive at a check as a team and are less likely to divide or split.

By line breeding the kennel is multiplying the number of good, working ancestors in the pedigree of the sire and dam without going too close. A kennel that doesn't have the necessary information (ie essential elements listed at the top of this article) risks getting this wrong with resultant behavioural issues in their hounds and moderate performances in the field. Remember a good hound on one side will not correct a bad fault on the other side.

Having selected the sire and dam it is worth remembering late litters are to be avoided. The sensible breeder does not put a bitch to the chosen stallion hound after 1st May. Late litters hardly ever catch up and can be at a serious disadvantage in the all important autumn hunting period when educating the young hounds is vital.

Trial Mating Tool

Many practitioners will be familiar with the British MFHA's web site with links to their 'On Line Stud Book'. It has a useful 'Trial Mating' option which makes life much easier for those wishing to line breed. A username and password is necessary but the site will save many long hours. The foxhound breeder would be wise to learn how to use this handy tool. Nearly all Stud Book (SB) foxhounds are recorded on this site including all SB foxhounds bred in Ireland.

Attached is a line bred pedigree example of the Duke of Beaufort's Bailiff '03 and such a distinguished kennel obviously gets it right. The earlier (four) generations do not have hounds repeated in the pedigree but the later generations have known good workers repeated. It is worth emphasising it takes ten years to produce a good pack of hounds and ten days to ruin them. By a good pack of hounds I mean one that is well handled and well line bred thus producing a working team that is fun to follow. Handling needs to be of a high order to complement line breeding.

Use of an Outcross

Sooner or later any kennel will have used similar good hounds on both sides of its pedigrees. The risk of inbreeding needs to be avoided. This means an 'outcross' experiment (for that is what it is) will be needed from time to time. 'Outcross' is a term describing a foxhound that is relatively unrelated to other hounds in the kennel and his or her use in breeding would 'freshen up' the bloodlines. How many times has a Huntsman been heard to say he has 'nowhere to go' because all hounds in the kennel are related and their use would risk inbreeding? This is when an outcross should be introduced. Using an outcross to refresh the kennel (or improve it in some other way) may not always be a success hence the breeder will want at least two extra litters to maintain the kennel. Hopefully enough puppy walkers

are available. If the outcross is successful there is the temptation to use the same experiment again. This is fine but the breeder should be cautious since there is the risk of changing the kennel type which may not be the intention. Go back to your own sires and brood bitches as soon as you think you have achieved the 'freshening up' or desired improvement.

It is important the tail female lines are sufficiently established to withstand outcross experiments. In simple terms that means if you cross an 'Alsatian' with a foxhound and the result is a litter that is half Alsatian and half Foxhound the female lines are insufficiently strong. If however the result of such a cross is a litter that looks like a foxhound then the female lines are sufficiently robust to withstand experiments.

Broadly speaking if an outcross has worked well for three generations it may be worth using again by introducing outside hounds of a similar pedigree to the ones that were successful previously. Over the years many Masters have not been traditionalists and their experiments have undoubtedly improved the foxhound but such outcrossing should only be attempted in large kennels with plenty of hounds - they can afford to stand the mistakes! Sometimes the outcross experiment results in attracting the worst qualities of both so beware. The Hunt should be under stable leadership. Using an outcross is taking a chance so the breeder will need 'management support' in case things go wrong.

Famous Hounds to Breed Back To

A good hound is a good hound in any country but careful breeding has a better chance of getting the right hounds for the right conditions of modern foxhunting. The best of the past and present should be bred back to - such is the care taken with the foxhound over two centuries. A list of such well known foxhounds is below. The list includes Modern foxhounds, 'Old English' type foxhounds, Welsh & Fell. The Modern foxhound was the result of several outcrosses (notably by 'Ikey' Bell MFH of the West Waterford) and so successful was his experiment with Welsh bloodlines that few packs today do not have the value of his ideas in their pedigrees.

The hounds listed below are those who found favour with our distinguished forefathers and also those of foxhound breeders of the present day. No distinction is made between types; whether Modern, 'Old English', Fell and so on. All have their characteristics and much depends on the kennel tradition. If the kennel has a long history of Old English type foxhounds (the type dates from the late 19th/early 20th century) a breeder would be unwise to change them to Modern. The reverse situation is also true. If no such tradition exists the breeder is free to produce hounds that suit the practitioner and the country.

The breeder should be excited if the names below occur in their kennel pedigrees. If that is the case the hunt is fortunate. They are the sort of hounds the kennel should consider breeding back to when selecting their current breeding programme.

Welcome Characteristics

There are many characteristics breeders welcome. The values of cry and stamina are important. Hounds that hunt the roads and tracks are useful. This skill is largely inherited but can be developed often by puppies at walk being allowed freedom to hunt. Hounds noted for being unwilling to change foxes ('no changers') should be considered in any breeding policy.

'Fox sense' is highly prized by huntsmen and breeders alike. This 'sense' is the innate ability to know where a fox hides or has gone. Some are annotated below but sometimes fox sense can develop into unwelcome 'skirting'. The huntsman should be wary of this trait since it is a bad habit that can spread as can unsteadiness. Such habits damage a pack's performance.

There are good young hounds in the UK and Ireland today. Given time they will warrant inclusion in the lists of hound heroes.

This list is only a selection; there are many more hounds whose presence in a pedigree would delight any foxhunter. All these hounds were reported as excellent by the huntsmen of the day. They were robust, road/track hunters, had fox sense, great cry & drive, and possessed stamina. Some were 'no changers'. Many were of good temperament. Doubtless they had many other welcome characteristics; needless to say they were all loved.

Name	Sire	Dam	Notes
<i>Lord Henry Bentinck's</i> Regulus 1861	<i>Lord Henry's</i> Titian 1858	<i>Lord Henry's</i> Ringworm 1856	'Regulus for Roads'.
<i>Glog</i> Nimrod '1904	<i>Glog (Welsh)</i> Gambler 1897	<i>Glog (Welsh)</i> Lovely 1895	One of most famous Welsh hounds to influence the modern hound.
<i>Co Limerick</i> Chorister 1915	Chanter 1910	Pastime 1910	
<i>Tiverton</i> Actor 1922	Lictor 1917	Bertha 1918	Famous sire.
<i>Co Limerick</i> Chanter 1910	<i>Heythrop</i> Chorister 1906	<i>Duhallow</i> Restless 1906	

<i>South & West Wilts Godfrey</i> 1928	<i>Kilkenny Gory</i> 1921	<i>Carlow Goosecap</i> 1922	'Top pace, tough as steel, jumps gates for fun' - Ikey Bell, his breeder.
<i>Brecon Paragon</i> '23	<i>Mr Curre's Danger</i> 1915	<i>Brecon Pamela</i> '21	Famous line.
<i>Portman Freshman</i> '49	<i>Friar</i> '47	<i>South Oxfordshire Poem</i> '41	
<i>VWH Bugle</i> '76	<i>Old Berks Bullrush</i> '71	<i>VWH Haughty</i> '71	
<i>Berkeley Somerset</i> '79 & <i>Sophie</i> '79	<i>Co Limerick Seaman</i> '76	<i>Berkeley Dorcas</i> '71	<i>Co Limerick Solace</i> '73. Seaman was said to be the best hound bred by Lord Daresbury at Limerick.
<i>Kilkenny Duchess</i> '77	<i>Distaff</i> '71	<i>Greedy</i> '74	Back to <i>Beaufort Palmer</i> '59, <i>Portman Wizard</i> '55 & <i>Heythrop Craftsman</i> '62.
<i>Carmarthenshire Nimrod</i> '24	<i>Nelson</i> '16	<i>Vanity</i> '21	A foundation modern foxhound. Bred by Lord Coventry.
<i>Berkeley Freshman</i> '84	<i>Exmoor Freestone</i> '81	<i>Berkeley Delta</i> '79	<i>Berkeley Dora</i> '74
<i>Cotswold Crofter</i> '81	<i>Groomsman</i> '75	<i>Compass</i> '76	Back to <i>Beaufort Palmer</i> '59
<i>Portman Genius</i> '87	<i>VWH General</i> '80	<i>Portman Caution</i> '84	Great fox sense. Road/track hunter.

<i>VWH General</i> '80	<i>Cotswold Gentry</i> '76	Charcoal '77	Back to <i>Kilkenny Climber</i> '73, <i>Kilkenny Wary</i> '65 & <i>Old Berks Grammar</i> '61.
<i>Exmoor Garrison</i> '89	Daresbury '87	Goodwill '83	Back to <i>Old Dominion (USA) Gorgeous</i> '68. Famous USA line of Bill Brainard MFH (<i>Old Dominion</i>)
<i>Chiddingfold Lec & Cowdray</i> Godson '83	<i>Crawley & Horsham</i> Bailiff '75	<i>Heythrop Golden</i> '76	Taken to North Cotswold on change of Mastership.
<i>South Shropshire</i> Crackshot '88	<i>Berkeley</i> Freshman '84	Cornet '84	Robust
<i>Braes of Derwent</i> Leopard '85	<i>Cattistock</i> Merthyr '99	Lesson '80	Woolly & white. 'No changer'
<i>Cotswold</i> Glenrock'84 & Glencoyne '84	<i>Blencathra</i> Glider '76	<i>Cotswold</i> Clematis '81	Successful Fell outcross. <i>Blencathra Glider</i> '76 widely used.
<i>Cottesmore</i> Starter '85	<i>Exmoor</i> Friar '81	<i>Cottesmore</i> Stella '82	'The famous <i>Carlow</i> 'ST' line of 'The Missus' - Mrs W C (Olive) Hall MFH'. See <i>Carlow Stylish</i> '63.
<i>Belvoir</i> Lovelock'94	<i>Berkeley</i> Loafer '90	<i>Avon Vale</i> Saucer '89	Back to <i>Co Limerick Sawyer</i> '83
<i>Exmoor</i> Daydream '95 & Dealer '95	<i>Heythrop</i> Glazier '90	Destiny '92	Back to <i>Blencathra Glider</i> '76. <i>Kilkenny Duchess</i> '77, <i>Kilkenny</i>

			Famous '77.
<i>Midland (USA)</i> Rambler '98	<i>Belle Meade (USA)</i> Ben	<i>Midland (USA)</i> Roxie '91	American bred. Noted for 'game sense 'in USA.
<i>Wynnstay</i> Paragon '95	Warrior '91	Pastry '92	Back to <i>Wynnstay</i> <i>Woolham</i> '88 & <i>Muskerry</i> Paragon '88.
<i>VWH</i> Daring '97	<i>Beaufort</i> Daystar '91	Dowry '94	
<i>Morpeth</i> Mowbray '98 & Monmouth '98	<i>Beaufort</i> Mostyn '92	<i>Y & A (North)</i> Candle '93	Both Show Champions and good workers.
<i>Beaufort</i> Mostyn '95	Baritone '89	Model '87	Widely used sire
<i>Exmoor</i> Whinchat '93	Nutwood '90	Windmill '89	
<i>Y & A (North)</i> Cromwell '91	<i>South</i> <i>Shropshire</i> Crackshot '88	<i>Y & A (North)</i> Drury '86	Robust modern doghound. Withstood electric fencing.
<i>Y & A (North)</i> Candle '93	<i>Exmoor</i> Nutwood '90	Cheshire Carmen '89	Threw size & voice.
<i>Brosna</i> Tonton '07	<i>Louth</i> Gordon '01	Tasty '03	Entirely Irish bred.
<i>Middleton</i> Builder '04	<i>Beaufort</i> Burglar '99	Victim '97	Small but excellent.
<i>Tipperary</i> Captain '09	<i>Meynell</i> Luther '04	Oakley Caramel '05	Extensively used at Tipperary. Good in work.
<i>Waterford</i> Ali '04	<i>UHC</i> Actor '98	Linseed '01	Irish bred. OE.
<i>Duhallow</i>	<i>Muskerry</i>	Pastime '92	Also entered as

Poacher '08	Cricketer '94		Belvoir. Used as successful outcross on Heythrop.
<i>Percy</i> Spitfire '08	<i>Postman</i> '05	Spendthrift '03	Example of OE 'modernised'. Back to 'Regulus for Roads'. <i>Co Limerick</i> Tenor '98 & Python '93. Modernised OE.
<i>Morpeth</i> Stratford '01	<i>VWH</i> Worcester '98	North Cotswold Gremlin '99.	Carlow 'ST' line. Famous Irish line.
<i>Morpeth</i> Crasher '01	Gambler '98	Crossword '97	Good all rounder.
<i>Waterford</i> Panther 2009	Ali '04	Pastry '06	OE sire
<i>Ormond</i> Crownier '08	<i>Percy</i> Clamper '01	<i>Waterford</i> Cracker '05	Hard - withstood electric fencing. Passed to his progeny.
<i>Wynnstay</i> Parker '08 (Modernised OE)	Hazard '04	Pantry '05	Modern to <i>Duhallow</i> Poacher '98 on top male line. Pantry '05 OE to <i>Duhallow</i> Cleaver '95 bottom line.
<i>VWH</i> Smiler'09 (Peterborough Bitch Champion 2010)	Rival '02	Sable '04	Modern line breeding throughout.
<i>Wynnstay</i> Halifax & Hazard '04	<i>Berkeley</i> Harlequin '96	Pastime '01	'Modernised 'OE'
<i>Morpeth</i> Gateshead '03	Gambler '98	Gracious '99	No changer and robust. Good sire.

Photographs:

1. Example of a Line Bred Old English type foxhound. Waterford Panther '09. Photo: R Markham.
2. Example of a Line Bred 'Modernised' Old English type foxhound. Sir Watkin Williams - Wynn's Parker '08. Photo: Richard Tyacke MFH.
3. Example of a Line Bred Modern foxhound. VWH Smiler '09 (Peterborough Bitch Champion 2010). Photo: Martin Scott & Jim Meads.
4. A sample hound list. Morpeth 2005/6.
5. A sample line bred pedigree. Beaufort Bailiff '03.

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