

The
Swedish Vallhund
Västgötaspets



NZ CH Valkrista Alatna - National Show in Group Winner 2008



In the Beginning



By Peta Dowle - New Zealand Breed Historian.

Count Björn von Rosen and Karl-Gustave Zetterstén the two Swedish gentlemen responsible for saving the ancient Swedish Vallhund breed, were united by a newspaper advert seeking surviving examples of what Björn called stub tailed Svensk Vallhund. Between the first world war and the beginning of the second, the numbers of the little dogs Björn recalled from his boyhood visits near Vara had mostly disappeared. Karl, dog breeder and school teacher residing in Vara, responded to the advert as he had noticed the breed's decline also. Björn a dog breeder and judge, along with Karl spent the summer of 1942 making many bicycle tours of the surrounding farmlands. Following at first leads supplied by Karl's adult students they happened upon a bitch of excellent type at the farm of Gunborg and Anders Andersson. Björn was later to describe the 'shock of joy' he felt in his chest to see Topsy standing with her master along side a water well. Later they discovered, a male called Mopsen. While healthy, Mopsen only had one testicle. This was not an ideal situation. But without a lot of choice and considering cryptorchid was not a disqualifying aspect at the time, Mopsen was to become the first recognised stud of the breed. So with two more bitches, Lessi, and Vivi, the men started upon a breeding programme.

Björn recognised early that Topsy was the best specimen of them all, and although she was too old to breed from he began to write the first breed standard based on her qualities. Photos of the dogs were sent to the Swedish Kennel club. Credit must be paid to the Swedish Kennel Club, they too were very keen to see the breed saved and they commissioned Björn to write the first standard. The gentlemen were of one mind that Topsy was indeed the ideal specimen. She was regarded as having a beautiful body, a strong head, the perfect quality of hair [fur] and the correct grey colour. All the initial dogs were grey. Although Zetterstén managed to have the acceptable colours include brown, yellow and red-brown in the 1950's. There was much determination to ensure that in ongoing breeding the dogs should

still "look like grandfathers dog" essentially a reference to type. The men also believed that a correct Swedish Vallhund's coat should be maintained as a harsh half-long coat with undercoat. It shouldn't be soft or open. The breed was always to retain his cattle herding trait. The search on foot continued and by the autumn a total of six initial dogs, along with their owners, travelled to a Göteborg dog show where the dogs were assessed by three judges. The first being Count Björn von Rosen, also Colonel Bertil Burén, and Baron Carl Leuhusen. The Swedish Vallhunds were a sensation, and the public queued for hours to see the dogs on display. After a year of exhibition shows the kennel club recognised the breed in 1943. The name Västgötaskpets was officially adopted in 1952 acknowledging the region of Västergötland where the rescue was initiated. Translated Västgötaskpets means, 'Spitz of the West Goths'.

Twenty three years on and the first stud dog to come to New Zealand arrived from England in 1975. Ryslip Fabian (Puffin) was imported by Miss Maree Cooper of Tauranga. In his life he sired just the one litter with a bitch Maiden of Dunccliffe (Margot), that Maree also brought out from Britain in 1976. These bloodlines were to not advance however with all progeny becoming pets not bred. Puffin had the opportunity to stay with an Ian and Lesley Grey of Pokeno who were at the time searching for something fulfilling and interesting to do upon Ian's impending retirement. Ian and Lesley were enamoured with the breed and in 1984 imported from Britain a bitch Rosern Vancy and a stud dog Santa of Rosern. They showed their dogs to title and established their Valdemar Kennel. After a trip to England Ian and Lesley were introduced to the dog sport of agility. Back in New Zealand Ian was to lobby for rule changes that allowed the floundering dog sport to flourish in New Zealand. Valdemar Kennel produced three Swedish Vallhund litters. The dogs the Grey's owned, NZCH Rosern Vancy (IMP-UK), NZCH Santa of Rosern (IMP-UK) ADX.CDX.UDX.WDX.TDX, WT.CH Valdemar Aster ADX.CDX.UDX.WDX.TDX. and NZCH Valdemar Alpha ADX.CDX.UDX. are fondly remembered by all who met them and the dogs are considered legends by New Zealanders in the breed for all their accomplishments.

Following on from Ian and Lesley in the mid 1990's Rose and Hans Madsen of Northland were embarking upon setting up their Kennel Valkrista. It is Rose who is recognised for fully establishing the breed in New Zealand.

Count Björn von Rosen with the first dogs and below Topsy - photo Björn von Rosen





Left: Wynrik Christa with a litter of Valkrista puppies, photo R Madsen. Middle: Lesley Grey chats with Ron Bentley at the 2001 Annual Gathering, photo R Madsen. Right: Puffin, Ryslip Fabian the first stud dog in NZ, photo L Grey.

Over her breeding career she imported many new bloodlines from Europe and Australia. It all began with their foundation breeding dogs Wynrik Christa and Steppenwolfe Zip. Rose bred some 15 NZ Champions, exported to Australia, Japan, and America. She also made available her imported stud dogs and was just a phone call away for anyone needing advice. We mourned the loss of Rose Madsen last year, but she will always be remembered for assisting, supporting and encouraging new breeders. Rose supplied foundation bitches to Kennel's Vanaheim, Torvall, Tala, Vallarity, Murivall, Little Court, Svensk, and Barahwolfe. Rose and many of the people who took her puppies, and became her friends stayed in regular contact. Valkrista hosted an annual gathering where people would come with their Swedish Vallhunds to spend time in the company of others who owned and loved Swedish Vallhunds. Today the Valkrista Annual Gathering is an official event hosted in March and is held at different locations around the country. It is now also a day to remember Rose and her foundation bitch Christa.

Mid 2009 Natalie Morgan and Peta Dowle proposed to all the breeders in New Zealand, with the support of Rose Madsen the start of a breed club. All the breeders filled in a questionnaire and within a year an organisation that boasts over 100 members, and an enthusiastic committee of eight, applied for and gained recognition by the NZKC. With incorporation pending the Swedish Vallhund Club have tallied a reasonable list of completed projects to promote both the breed and club. Some of these projects included taking the breed to Pet Expo in Hamilton, gaining television coverage in September being featured on Whitebait t-v's 'Animal Academy' and setting up a popular website to report on monthly news and activities. Next on the plan list is a serious undertaking to create an

Australasian Västgötaspets Health Register planned for launch this year. The A.V.H.R is to be a stand-alone, independent registry that will collate and verify breeder claims regarding limited health screening (clear eye certification and hip scores). There will also be provision for future storing of individual dog DNA samples or data, creating a potentially valuable body of evidence for genetic investigations. Written into the club's founding documentation is the underlying principle of education over legislation. The Swedish Vallhund Club wish to support and work with breeders, not control or penalise.

The Swedish Vallhund Club owe a debt of gratitude to the late Mrs Rose Madsen being the first club Patron, and signatory to the incorporation application. They are honoured that current Club Patron Mr Ian Grey accepted the role following on from Rose. The Committee also appreciate the support of Anita Whitmarsh and the Specialklubben för Västgötaspets of Sweden, Jacqui Bayliss President of the Swedish Vallhund Society (UK), Ulla Gamberg President of the Swedish Vallhund Club of Canada, Karen Gilliland President of the United Swedish Vallhund Association (UK), and Sharon Donaldson and Wes Field of Västgötaspets Australia. The advice, support, and encouragement for a new club has been fantastic.

The committee of the Swedish Vallhund Club wish to encourage others in New Zealand who do not have a breed club set up to consider giving it a go. Pay no heed to detractors and those who say it isn't possible. Put aside the negativity you may encounter, roll up your sleeves and just start. You will be surprised at the talented people around you that will come together if you just step out with a little faith.



Natalie Morgan, Valkrista Gathering South Island
Photo Bruce Knox



The Swedish Vallhund

In The Spotlight

BARAHWOLFE



Barahwolfe Sweet Fudge & Amelia Dowle

Ethical breeder, striving to breed Beautiful, Healthy Dogs ideal for Farm, Family & Competition.

We are:

- * Passionate about our Breed,
- * Dedicated to the Standard,
- * Constantly Learning,
- * Encouraging of Newcomers,
- * Enjoying Success,
- * Approachable & Friendly
- * Excited about the Future!

PETA DOWLE

Phone: +64 3 485 9090
www.vallhund.co.nz



TALA



Introducing Camile Hansen

New Zealand's newest

Swedish Vallhund Breeder

Proud of our Valkrista Bloodlines

Members of NZKC & the

Swedish Vallhund Club

Enquiries Welcome

09 527 1514

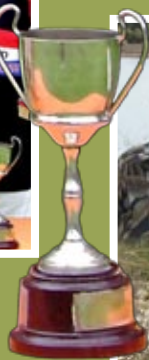
www.tala.co.nz

Pocket Wolves

A Viking Legacy.



With over 20 years Pedigree Dog Experience Janette understands the Fundamentals of breeding to standard, for Type and for Temperament. The last 13 years of successful breeding and showing Beagles has seen Little Court title six New Zealand Champions and achieve a Reserve In Show (Beagle Specialty Show)



Now Home to
NZCH Valkrista Miss Matilda
Currently Campaigning
Rising Star Barahwolfe
Caramel Velvet

Look out for us Ringside and
with Dogzonline
Puppy Enquiries Welcome

Little Court Swedish Vallhunds

www.swedish-vallhund.co.nz
Top of the South Island

Ph 03 544 2574
Mob 021 1302213



Photo: Oili Helenius - A Range of Looks - the Richness of the Breed

Judging the 'J Litter'

Peta Dowle & Natalie Morgan

For the assessment and breeding of Västgötaspets The N.Z.K.C. recognises and observes the official Breed Standard of Sweden, as adopted and endorsed by the FCI. The Swedish Vallhund is described as a small, powerful and fearless all-purpose farm dog whose primary function was to herd cows by rounding and nipping at hocks. The little Vallhund needed to be able to dart and dash forward, then in an instant flatten to the ground to avoid kicking hooves. He needed to be agile enough to bound back up and keenly move forward again.

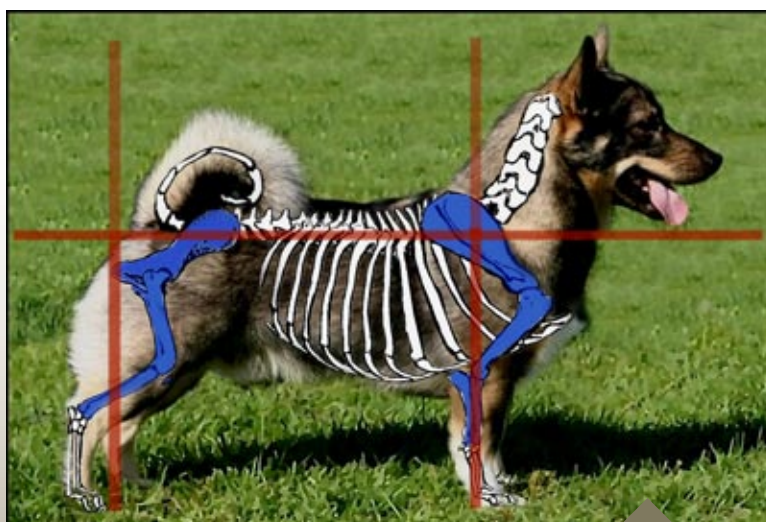
Founding rescuer von Rosen described the breed as being "quite similar among themselves and different to all others in the dog world." While the initial dogs were homogenous for type, from Topsy to Mopsen Västgötaspets have always had a variety of looks. A range of type does not compromise what is correct, fits neatly inside the standard and is the richness of the breed. It must not be lost.

Like all working dogs the Swedish Vallhund that has been built well will move well. Note the skeletal diagram here displaying the correct angulation for good balance and a level topline. The bones that create the front and rear assembly are highlighted in blue. Combined with well developed muscle this Swedish Vallhund will have efficiency of movement, therefore good functionality and be pleasing to the eye. Correct anatomical structure will also create less wear and strain for the ageing body.

Pat Hastings tells us in her excellent book 'Tricks of the Trade - From Best Intentions To Best In Show' to "...remember legs weren't designed to hold up the head; they were designed to hold up the body". The red vertical plumb line at the front of the dog in the diagram should be able to be visualised on any Swedish Vallhund. It drops from the base of the neck, runs down through the shoulder blade and straight down

the front leg. The neck should be in front of this line, all of the head including lower jaw completely above the topline. When the angles of the bones in the hind leg are correct you should be able to visualise another plumb line at the rear which drops from the point of buttock and falls at the toes as shown.

The Swedish Vallhund Club encourages breeders to be familiar with the standard, to strive to breed dogs with a level topline, an arched neck and a dog that is not too light or heavy of bone. A dog that is over 14 kg and is not overweight may be too tall or too heavy of bone. A bitch that is under 9 kg and is not underweight may be either too short or be too light of bone. Above all a Swedish Vallhund's character must be watchful, confident, keen, people orientated and at ease with himself. This is needed as much for the family dog as it is for the working farm dog. Breeders should avoid breeding on with any dog that carries a predisposition to timidity, anxiousness or fearful temperament.

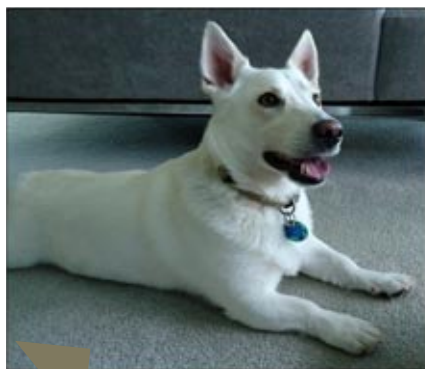


Skeletal Diagram

Photo: Ada Walder, diagram Peta Dowle.

The correct colours of a Swedish Vallhund are grey, grey-brown, grey-yellow, red-yellow and red-brown. Disqualifying colours occasionally seen in the breed are black, white, liver brown, and blue. Some white markings are permissible on the chest, also on the fore and hind legs, as socks. White socks may not extend above the upper half of leg. Additionally white colouring that exceeds more than 30% overall is a severe fault. Such dogs are referred to as being 'over marked'. The standard makes accommodation for a 'narrow blaze', 'neck spot' or 'slight necklace'. A broad white collar is not a necklace, and will usually extend into a full white shirt front and full white legs.

The much loved Swedish Vallhunds over have severe or disqualifying faults. These dogs are still Swedish Vallhunds in every other respect and are valued members of the Västgötaspets community.



Left to right: A dilute white, photo Laura Lee. A blue coat, photo Oili Helenius. An over-marked bitch, photo John Laing, and a red pup with a blue eye, photo Oili Helenius.

Meet the 'J Litter'

Cast your eyes over the 'Oil Paintings' below. All six Swedish Vallhunds are based on dogs that have existed in real life. See if you can spot the strengths and weakness in these images, and place them in order before reading the assessment observations below.

Judge's Observations

By Melanie Harris

Jake

Looks to be a top size male but this could be because he is too tall on the leg and, therefore, not correctly proportioned and balanced. That said, you don't want Vallhunds to be too low on the leg either (like a Pembroke Corgi). Head looks to be clean cut although looks like he needs a better defined stop (difficult to tell at that angle). Has excellent mask markings which are highly desirable. Perhaps could do with a slightly deeper muzzle. Eye looks to be dark and of a good shape. Ears appear to be correct size and shape. The sternum (forechest) is visible but his shoulders are not quite at the correct 45° angle, which makes him look slightly short in neck and he stands with his forelegs just slightly too far forward, consequently this makes his topline dip behind his withers because his forelegs are not in the correct position. Has good length of chest, which is of reasonable depth, lacking a slight tuck up. Short strong loin, with broad croup but lacks the slight slope. Reasonable width to hindquarters, which look to be well muscled. Too long in hock and lacking in hind angulation. Feet are short and oval and has strong pads. Coat is of medium length and of a good colour with well marked harness markings. Would say this is a harsh coat with soft undercoat. White markings on chest are perfectly acceptable. Obviously cannot assess movement but judging from his angulation would say that he would move close behind and would lack reach and drive.

Jasper

Super example of the breed. He epitomises the overall appearance of a Vallhund which sets him apart from his cousin, the Pembroke Corgi. Small, powerfully built with a fairly long body. Long clean cut blunt wedge head. Well defined stop. Good square muzzle with strong lower jaw. Well defined mask. Well set ears, and correctly shaped, dark eye. Strong long neck in to well-placed shoulders at the correct angle. Straight legs which if viewed from

front I am sure would have slight bend to fit around chest. Slightly sloping pasterns. Great forechest with good length and depth of chest, with lowest point being just behind elbows. Correct elliptical chest. Level topline with short strong loin. Strong, broad slightly sloping croup and correct tail carriage. Long chest with good spring of rib and slight tuck up. Good width of thigh, well muscled. Well angulated hindquarters with low hocks and well bent stifles. White markings acceptable and a very good example of a Vallhund, with good harness markings. Good harsh offstanding coat.

Jenna

Blunt wedge shaped head with slightly flat skull and well defined stop. Square muzzle with correct underjaw. Well set ears and well placed dark eye. Well defined mask markings. Strong well muscled neck. Slightly upright in shoulder, so although she has some forechest this is slightly masked by the shoulder angulation. Reasonable bone on forelegs, which are straight from the side view. Looks to be slightly straight in pastern. Has good length of rib cage but she is slightly long



'The J Litter'

in loin and has too much tuck up. She dips behind the withers, due to the extra body length and rises over the loin to compensate. Too much slope to croup and would appear to be narrow in the area too. Needs more width and strength to hindquarters. Whilst hind angulation is OK, she is too long in the hock and would lack drive on the move. Good colour and harness markings. Looks to be rather close coated without a good undercoat.

Josh

Initial observations are that he is not masculine enough, too fine in bone. Head looks clean cut but would like more width between the ears and more depth to underjaw as he looks a little weak in this area. Too wide in front, due to poor shoulder angulation as this is too upright. Front legs too straight with no slight bend to accommodate chest. Slightly upright in pastern. Also lacks forechest due to the placement of shoulders. Lacks length of chest and not deep enough. Too much tuck up. Far too straight in hind angulation due to overall poor conformation and would be very poor on the move. Too much slope on croup. Roaches over loin to compensate for poor rear end to help himself balance. Lacks width of thigh. Has correct mask markings and white on legs acceptable. Appears to be rather closed coated with not a lot of undercoat.

Jilly

As Jasper is a good representative of a male Vallhund, then Jilly is an excellent example of a bitch. Well balanced head with an almost flat skull and well defined stop. Looks to have a good shaped, dark eye. Well defined mask markings. Strong square muzzle with correct amount of underjaw. Long well muscled neck of good reach. Well angulated shoulders, with good forechest. Well boned legs and good feet. Forelegs straight when viewed from the side but have a slight bend when viewed from front. Correct elliptical chest. Good depth and length of chest with well sprung ribs. Excellent level topline, with short strong loin. Broad strong croup. Well muscled strong hindquarters with well bent stifles and short hocks. Well shaped feet with thick pads. Lovely silver grey colour, with good harness markings and correct harsh topcoat with soft undercoat.

Jimbo

Overall for size, substance and balance this is not a bad example of a Vallhund. Strong clean cut blunt wedge head with well defined stop. Well placed ears but could be slightly large. Dark eye. Strong well muscled neck. Not quite the perfect shoulder placement of Jasper but not far off. His white markings are deceptive and you would need to get your hands on him to appreciate the angle of his shoulders. Forechest is visible. Well boned forelegs which are straight when viewed from side. Has good length and depth of chest with correct tuck up. Good spring of rib. Level topline with broad strong slightly sloping croup. Tail is well carried and an acceptable carriage. Strong well muscled hindquarters. Well bent stifles and good hind angulation with low well set hocks.

Note: Colour – as I can only see one side of this dog I have no idea if the white is a full collar or not. FCI rules are now very specific about where white is permitted i.e. narrow blaze, neck spot (these are very common) and a slight necklace. White is permitted on chest, fore and hindlegs but white socks must not extend above upper half of leg. So you could say he has too much white on him. FCI rules state this is a severe but not a disqualifying fault. If I was judging this dog, I would have to compare him with the other dogs in the class. Jimbo has many good points which I feel would outweigh the colour issue.

If in competition, I would place the “J Litter” in order ranked below.

1st Jasper. 2nd Jilly. 3rd Jimbo. 4th Jake. 5th Jenna. 6th Josh.

The Swedish Vallhund Club thank and acknowledge contributors to Judging the J Litter article including, Melanie Harris, Inga Kahlman, Anita Whitmarsh, Karen Gilliland, Mari-Anne Westerberg, Laura Lee, Ada Walder and John Laing. ■

Fact file...

Swedish Vallhunds:

- Are a National dog breed of Sweden.
- Are an all-purpose little farm dog, primarily used to herd cattle.
- Were near extinction between the first and second world wars.
- Are believed to date back about 800 - 900 years.
- Have very high pain thresholds, and have been known to endure and mask significant discomfort for long periods.
- Have a double layered coat made up of a woolly under coat with an over layer of longer guard hairs. This keeps them dry and warm in the harshest of wet and snowy conditions.
- Have low dog-odour. Although they have a significant moult once a year losing the woolly undercoat as they move from winter to summer, shedding is otherwise low to moderate.
- Have an adult weight range between 9 - 14 kg, and a height range between 31 - 33 cm, with an accepted leeway of 1.5 cm under or over this.
- Often live up to 16-17 years.
- Are robust, hardy and healthy with few known genetic health problems.
- Are not always a good ‘first dog’. But make fabulous family companion pets for knowledgeable dog homes or for people dedicated to learning how to be their dog’s leader.
- Are a natural stub tailed breed, (sharing the T-Box mutation with some 22 known working dog breeds) that sees approximately half the population whelped with a short tail or with no tail.
- Are intelligent, needing plenty of mental stimulation. They love dogs sports including agility, obedience and flyball.
- Are ideal as alarm dogs, alerting the family to arriving visitors.
- Are very loyal, people-orientated dogs that are so strongly bonded to their owners, that when rehomed as adults usually carry a real flight risk for several months after appearing to settle.
- Are good with other dog breeds when raised well, but delight especially in the company of other Swedish Vallhunds.
- Are brave! They are seemingly unaware of their short stature and are very often courageous beyond their size.





The Swedish Vallhund

In The Spotlight

Barahwolfe Blackberry Jazz



www.ausled-australia.com



AUSTRALIAN Swedish Vallhund
Breeders send well wishes to the
SWEDISH VALLHUND CLUB
in New Zealand

Congratulations to Mr Martin
Jansen and the NZ club committee
for all their hard work through
2010, for gaining official
recognition by the NZKC. May
you enjoy success promoting our
breed and the club through 2011

From the Australian members of
VASTGOTASPETS AUSTRALIA

www.vastgotaspets.com



Akka Pilatus Porter &
Akka Absolut On Ice NT (right)

www.akka-australia.com

VANAHEIM SWEDISH VALLHUNDS



AWARD WINNING KENNEL

Home to New Zealand Champion and Intermediate in Group National Show Winner
VALKRISTA ALATNA

New Zealand Breeder working with Best In Show
Winning Bloodlines from

- Australia
- Sweden
- Ireland
- England
- Finland



Enquiries Welcome

WWW.SWEDISHVALLHUNDS.CO.NZ



THURSTON KENNELS

Celebrates the Versatile Swedish Vallhund with foundation dogs of

* Conformation * Type * Quality * Health * Temperament



Thurston is home to the proven stud and
ever popular Valkrista Paddy's Rune Stone
and also currently campaigning
Barahwolfe Hazelnut Whirl.



We embrace the versatility of this
wonderful breed - not only show dogs,
Thurston dogs also participate
in agility, obedience and herding.
Our dogs are working farm dogs
but equally relaxed as
loyal family companions.

www.thurstonlodge.co.nz

Contact: Louise & Murray Smith Ph: +64 21 056 9126 Em: louise@thurstonlodge.co.nz

In Consideration Of The Stub Tail Gene

By Peta Dowle

Dog Breeder, Vet Nurse, Breed Historian and Secretary, Swedish Vallhund Club (NZ)



The Swedish Vallhund breed are naturally born with a full length spitz-curl tail, also with varying lengths of a naturally occurring stub tail including a variation that presents as no discernible tail at all. Right from time of Björn von Rosen and Karl Gustave Zetterstén, there was a suspicion that there may be a link between the Pembroke Welsh Corgi and the Swedish Vallhund. People pondered on the possibilities that reached way back into the time of the Viking Raiders who travelled to the Corgi region.

Geneticist and Fellow of the Royal Society Dr. Bruce Cattanach, sheds some much needed light over the controversy surrounding naturally stub tailed dogs and debunks some myths along the way. Today we know about the genes that create the stub tail which have been identified at the DNA level, and consist of an inheritable T-box mutation. The precise mutation represents a base-pair change. Essentially an important protein fails to bind to it's DNA target which leads to a short-tail phenotype. The discovery of the responsible gene was initiated by Dr Cattanach. He had successfully introduced the dominant gene into his Boxers with a careful breeding program that began with the crossing of one of his Boxers with a Pembroke Welsh Corgi. Dr Cattanach's fascinating project to create natural bobtail Boxers that would not need docking can be found in detail online by searching for Steynmere Boxers. Blood samples he took from his Corgi/Boxer crosses were studied to find the gene and it's mutation. We also now know that this same T-Box mutation causes stub tails in Swedish Vallhunds and another 22 identified working dog breeds. The Swedish Vallhund world owes a debt of thanks to the work of Dr Cattanach and his colleagues which ultimately led to the detection of the gene.

Today in Finland there is a blanket ban on the breeding together of a stub tailed + stub tail dogs. The legislation for this ban was implemented in January of 2009 in an effort to prevent congenital abnormalities carried by puppies suspected of being born with a lethal double dose (homozygote) of the T-box mutation. Dr Cattanach and several others believe that very shortly after conception pups that inherit this double dose die and are reabsorbed by the bitch.

A controversial Norwegian study that claimed that two malformed puppies born of a stub tail + stub tail pairing had inherited a double dose of the T-Box mutation. Rather than die and be reabsorbed very early in gestation, they had apparently survived to birth. While the Norwegian paper had a genetic overtone, it was a descriptive investigation and claimed the puppies were homozygotes. No data to support this was produced, nor were alternative explanations discussed. Surprisingly given they believed it was an observation of something not seen before there was also no further investigation and no neonate homozygotes pups have been found, or claimed since. The Finnish law

was designed to prevent the homozygote fetus even being conceived, in what is an over the top reaction to a natural occurrence. The likely early reabsorption of homozygotes appears to have no ill consequence for the bitch in whelp, or the puppies she later delivers.

Anecdotal observation from experienced older breeders suggest that there are no obvious health consequences associated with pups born of stub tail + stub tail pairings over and above the incidence of health consequences to pups born of tail + tail and also stub tail + tail pairings. Breeders also detail how deformed puppies are actually quite rarely seen, and occur in no greater numbers than a breeder might expect in the natural course of breeding any dog variety. Further, multi-generation stub tail + stub tail breeding is in reality no different from one generation. There is no accumulative effect associated with the T-Box mutation. Stub tailed dogs only have one dose of the gene (heterozygous) irrespective of their parents, or grand-parents. Nothing can change. There is no significant science to show that multigeneration breeding of only stub tails + stub tail dogs creates any negative outcomes for puppies. Neither can multigeneration breeding of stub tail + stub tail pairings alter ratios of stub tail / tailed puppies in the litter.

The issue for breeders is that in the Finnish rush to prevent possible genetic problems the gene pool has been unnecessarily and significantly narrowed by cutting out so many options of breed pairings. The ban is not something that solely affects Finland. Swedish Vallhunds are a rare breed that descend from just a small handful of dogs. The Finnish efforts and contributions feed into the wider global Västgötaspets gene pool. The general consensus among Swedish Vallhund breeders is that the Finnish law is unwarranted. Most breeders hope that not only should this ban not spread to other countries, but that the Finnish ban might one day be challenged and repealed.

Until there is very good, peer reviewed science to establish just reason to avoid stub tail + stub tail matings in Swedish Vallhunds the freedom to make choices about which dogs to breed together must remain the domain of the breeder as it has for the hundreds of years this gene has been with our dogs. ■

Breed Describing in Sweden

Exteriörbeskrivning

By Peta Dowle

The Specialklubben for Västgötaspets is the Swedish Vallhund Club of Sweden. All official Swedish Vallhund organisations around the world look to the S.K.V. for their lead and wisdom regarding a dog breed that is their own.

Aside from the obvious enjoyment involved with dog showing where an individual dog is judged against the standard usually alongside competition there is another method of assessing a Swedish Vallhund that is popular in Sweden. Not all pedigree Swedish Vallhunds are taken to Championship shows yet the vast majority are examined and described by qualified breed experts known as 'Beskrivare'. These Describers are trained people approved by the S.K.V. to measure with skill an individual dog according to the breed standard. The protocol of examination is thorough, extensive and incorporates every conceivable aspect of an individual dog.

Owners bring their Swedish Vallhund to an advertised day event, and the examination is conducted in front of the owner/handler. The dogs are never judged one against the other, but measured and considered alone against the breed standard. The cost for this examination works out to about NZ\$40 per dog and the comprehensive findings are recorded in triplicate. Copies given to the owner, the breeder and lodged with the S.K.V. Beskrivare, Mr Gunnar Smedberg says, "...When we classify a dog we use a special protocol of about fifty points. We used to work together two by two to be able to discuss every point with each other, but we now also work alone in assessing. We all have long experience of the breed. I dare to say that no judge has seen so many Swedish Vallhunds as we have, and definitely has not been so careful in judgments as we are in our classifying. Judging a dog takes a couple of minutes, we can classify 20-25 dogs on a whole day, not more."

A dog may be considered over the age of two years, to allow maturation.

This form of breed assessment is often very helpful for those wanting to have a litter, as it understandably assists in matching strengths to weakness in potential breeding mates. Having your dog described in detail allows the breeder another tool beyond their own knowledge, and ability to 'see' what is correct in a Swedish Vallhund. It understandably helps to guard against 'kennel blindness'.

Exteriörbeskrivning was never intended as a replacement for judgment at a conformation show, but rather it is an in-depth, complimentary option for the dog owner to utilise.

While show wins definitely have value particularly when gained against competition, alone they will not divulge a dog's strengths and weaknesses specifically in the way a Beskrivare's detailed report can.

The accepted norm in Sweden is to keep pedigree dogs entire unless there is a pressing medical reason for sterilisation, so the accessible Swedish Vallhund gene pool today is much wider than it might otherwise have been. There are options to use well-bred, beautiful dogs and bitches that have never been to a dog show, but have been formally examined with skill. The work done by the Beskrivare accurately detailing so many members of a rare breed, in a non competitive environment is a system to be applauded. ■



Above right: Ewa Sundin, Beskrivare - both photos by Oili Helenius - Jaxonville Kennel



Rags to Riches Rosie's Story

Part one - Rags

by Natalie Morgan

Dog breeder, Vet Nurse and Rescue & Rehoming Officer Swedish Vallhund Club.

The call for help came on a sunny summer's evening from a breeder friend of mine who lived in the North Island. She had placed a little Swedish Vallhund named Rosie into what seemed an ideal country home in the South Island. However her vision of Rosie's paradise it seemed was in tatters and fast becoming a nightmare. I lived a stone throw away from Rosie's home and my friend knew I was experienced and qualified in the animal welfare industry. She was phoning to ask me to visit them, and if necessary recover Rosie. I immediately contacted Rosie's owners and arranged to visit them the next day.

When I arrived at Rosie's home I was greeted by a pack of mixed dogs that looked to be running amok. The owners invited me into the house along with the chaotic, jostling dogs. We sat down to chat and in the course of the conversation it transpired that another bitch causing problems had recently been destroyed for her unruly behaviour. The owners told me Rosie was being singled out for the same fate as they had determined that she also was a troublemaker, ringleader and official disturber of the peace. Observing the dogs, I noted they were very uncomfortable with me, generally fearful and appeared to be lacking the happy behaviour of socialised dogs. Next I was told the only place the dogs seemed to feel secure was when they were put to bed at night in a chicken coop!

After assessing the situation I managed to convince the owners to release Rosie to me rather than have her put to sleep. They agreed to this, but as we walked towards the car the owners hailed me saying they had changed their mind. Desperate for the little dog I set to convincing them again to let her go and was very relieved when we were finally able to leave. As I pulled out on to the main road Rosie, the poor girl, had nervously pasted herself flat to the floor of my vehicle. When I got home I phoned the breeder to update her and then proposed Rosie stay with me for assessment and rehabilitation. She quickly agreed.

Anyone that knows Vallhunds will tell you most are ball, stick and toy mad. My own Vallhund will happily play fetch for hours. The first time I picked up a stick to throw for the dogs Rosie disappeared! She had hidden under the house and wouldn't come out. It took a lot of coaxing to recover her and needless to say we didn't play fetch a stick with

Rosie again. This was just one of the behavioural obstacles we faced. Some of Rosie's other behavioural hurdles were her fear of strangers approaching, different objects, other animals and car travel. As her socialising and rehabilitation progressed, she started to come out of her shell. It wasn't long before I realised that her previous owner's assessment of her was completely wrong. Rosie was a sweet, loving dog and all she wanted to do was please.

Seven months later a friend of mine came over for a visit and was totally taken with Rosie, and Rosie with him. After a few visits he asked if he could give Rosie a permanent home. Adam had a gentle, considerate way about him and since he came from a knowledgeable doggie background it was an easy decision to let Rosie go. Adam took Rosie everywhere with him; to work, on holidays, out and about. Rosie quickly became well loved by everyone in Adam's world. This was the happy ending Rosie deserved, or so I thought. Eighteen months later Adam was in an horrific accident that had left him paralysed and no longer able to care for Rosie. It was

a devastating situation for them both. Adam's neighbours took over caring for Rosie at the time of the accident. They were volunteers for the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People organisation. Keen to help re-home Rosie, so that Adam could concentrate on his own plight it was suggested she was passed on to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People for assessment.



www.svclub.org.nz

continued over page...

Part two - Riches

By Clare McLaughlin

Director of Services Hearing Dogs for Deaf
People New Zealand.

The Swedish Vallhund Rosie was a little older than we would normally consider for training when she arrived with us for assessment. But she was quick to win the hearts at the staff at the Training Centre. She was very obedient and took to the 'sound work' lessons with a passion. After training she was matched with her recipient Dianne Luckens and went to begin another phase in her life in Auckland.

Dianne had a brain tumour removed and unfortunately the hearing nerve was cut. Although she is not profoundly deaf her hearing is severely impaired and she is unable to hear a lot of everyday sounds in the home. Once Hearing Dogs for Deaf received Dianne's application it wasn't too long before Rosie was considered as her aid. When they were matched Rosie and Dianne became one of nearly 50 hearing dog/recipient partnerships in New Zealand today.

Rosie immediately loved Dianne's gentle but consistent manner and soon became a very reliable assistance dog. Rosie hears the sound (for example the door bell ringing) and goes to Dianne and paws her gently on the leg, Dianne asks "where is it?" while gesturing her hands in an outward motion. Rosie then leads Dianne to the source of the sound, Rosie is always eager to receive a "treat" for her efforts and this reward training is what keeps the job alive for Rosie and for that matter most Hearing Dogs.

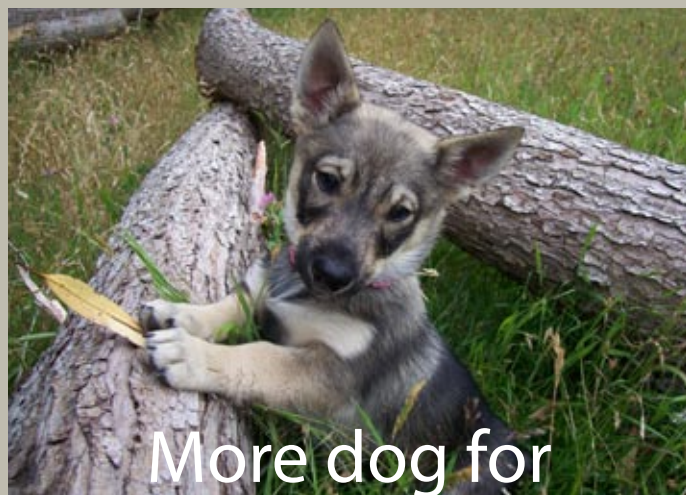
Rosie is 'the ears' for Dianne, alerting her to people coming to the home, the phone ringing, her alarm clock and the cooker timer. Rosie starts every morning with a play of running up and down the hall way after Storm, the cat, who is the other animal in the home. Storm is insistent on teasing Rosie from high places, but after their 'mad moments' up and down the hall they settle under the dining table to catch their breath. Rosie is well known by all the children as they pass on their way to and from school and whenever she can she sits at the front gate for a pat. Whenever they go out in public places Rosie wears her bright yellow 'hearing dog jacket' with pride as she walks to heel.

Apart from these tasks Rosie is always at Dianne's side and Dianne is able to get a good night's sleep knowing that Rosie will be there. With more surgery ahead for Dianne she says she can't imagine going through this without her faithful assistant. Dianne says she "loves Rosie to bits" and of course Rosie doesn't need to say anything as everyone can see her devotion to Dianne.

www.hearingdogs.org.nz

Little did anyone know that an unruly, unsocialised little dog that used to sleep in a chicken coop, would prove that you can teach a dog new tricks, saving her own life along the way and enriching the lives of others. The happy outcome of rags to riches did happen for Rosie in the end, just not how anyone expected.

Well done Rosie we are all very proud of you.



More dog for their dollar

A comment on the fashion trends of tail types

At the time of the rescue of the stub tailed dogs in the early 1940's, the fashion was to have a short tails on Västgötaspets and so tailed puppies were docked. Even when tailed dogs were used for the purposes of bringing in new bloodlines the ideal was to have a uniform looking breed. Stub tails were also considered as ideal for the show ring.

Today the official regard for the tail is to embrace all tail types.

No official Swedish Vallhund club or organisation endorses the tail docking of the breed, it is regarded as unnecessary and in many countries no longer legal. In assessment a dog should not be penalised or credited for having or not having a tail. The Judge or Descriptor should instead consider the croup and tail set.

Most Swedish Vallhunds worldwide do not enter the show ring and are instead bound for a life as a beloved family companion pet or working dog. These dogs are not immune to the changing winds of fashion. In countries where tail docking is illegal the stub tailed Swedish Vallhund is often selected first by the pet buying public in preference over his tailed littermate. In New Zealand where tail docking of dogs is an accepted and legal practise there is no such demand on the Swedish Vallhund breeder to produce stub tails. Perhaps Kiwis think they are getting more dog for their dollar when they take home one with a flash curling tail. Whatever the reason there is a marked preference for tailed puppies noted by New Zealand breeders. The late Mrs Rose Madsen often stated that 'there was more to a Swedish Vallhund than his tail', and she was right. At the same time breeders should not neglect to use and include both tail types in a considered breeding program.

The breeder who exclusively uses only one tail type to meet the demands of the pet buying public should seriously consider their motives for breeding. The genuine enthusiast, will understand the importance of utilising in their breeding program both tail types.

Ensuring that tailed and stub tailed dogs are continuously woven back into the forward moving breeding program ensures always having good breedable examples of both tailed and stub tailed dogs.

Breeders in the U.K. lamenting the lack of good quality tailed stud dogs, have learnt the lesson of pandering to fashion trends and warn other countries to take heed.

NB:

Tail + Tail Pairings can create puppies with Tails only.

Tail + Stub Tail Pairings can create puppies with all Tail types.

Stub Tail + Stub Tail Pairings can create puppies with all Tail types.