

THE KEESHOND (DUTCH BARGE DOG)



This is the Dutch National Breed used as a watchdog on barges in Holland. During the French Revolution, a man called Kees de Gyselaer led the patriots. This man was a great dog lover and owned a dog-called Kees. Kees became the Symbol of the patriots and gave the breed its name.

The Keeshond dog was originally brought to England by Mrs Wingfield-Digby, were it was to reside in the magnificent surroundings of Sherborne Castle in Dorset. In October 1925 Mrs Wingfield-Digby was fundamental in the starting of the "The Dutch Barge Dog Club".

The name was changed a year later to "The Keeshond Club" in 1926 at the request of the Kennel Club..

Whilst on holiday with her family she then,

Miss Hamilton-Fletcher, stopped in a village called Zaandam and stayed for a week buying her first Keeshonds thus the start of the first ever Keeshond kennel VAN ZAANDAM KEESHONDS

It is to this lady and others like her that we owe so much as without them we could not have the breed that we all love and admire in the UK today.

The Keeshonds general appearance is a short, compact body, confident carriage, thus giving the square outline on the body desirable to breeders. The Fox-like head, when looked at from above should be wedged shaped with dark small erect ears. These are velvet to the touch and shaped like an ivy leaf. The muzzle should be dark in colour and equal to the length of the flat skull. The Keeshond should have a well-defined stop. The Keeshond should have an alert and intelligent expression, this is achieved by the correct "spectacles" a delicately pencilled line slanting slightly upward from the outer corner of each eye to the lower corner of the ear, coupled with distinct markings and shadings forming short but expressive eyebrows. The eyes should be dark in colour of medium size being almond in shape and obliquely set. The mouth should have black lips with a complete set of teeth with the correct scissor bite. A large ruff should be present around the neck, shoulders and chest giving the impression of a lion's mane. The body should be compact with a short straight back, with a good spring of ribs and depth of brisket.

A Keeshond should have a well-feathered tail curled over its back forming a part of the overall outline of the dog. The tail should be light in colour with a black tip.

Movement should be brisk, straight and sharp. When viewed from the back the hind legs should be strong and muscled with the pasterns parallel to each other. The front legs should be straight turning neither in nor out. The feet should be cat like with black nails and cream in colour

The colour is a mixture of Grey and Black with a thick undercoat of pale grey or cream. Standing 18 inches in the dogs and 17 inches in the bitches

The Keeshonds coat although consisting of two layers an undercoat of soft thick, light coloured hair and an abundant outer coat of straight harsh, grey shaded hair. It is surprising how easily the coat is kept in good condition. The best thing you can do for your Keeshond is to regularly groom him, this giving you the contact with him and the chance to check for any abnormalities on your dog's body. If your dog has been trained from an early age he should find the grooming process an enjoyable experience. Bathing need only be done as necessary as the Keeshonds coat keeps its self clean with regular grooming.

There is some trimming to do on the Keeshond but this can achieve good results if time is taken over it. The feet are the main area, which needs trimming you, do this by trimming the excess hairs which grow between the pads then you trim around the feet to give them a neat appearance. The nails need to be trimmed to keep them short.

The legs are trimmed to give a nice neat appearance, trimming all straggly hair on the feathering on the front legs. The hind legs have the hair on the back of the leg up to the hock neatened.

You will need some brushes and a good metal toothcomb. You start by parting the hair down to the skin and brush through removing all knots with the comb.

Always brushing the coat towards the head. Lifting the coat as you go the end result will depend on how much time you take on the grooming.

Fan the tail out making sure that there are no knots.

When you have finished let him shake and admire the finished dog.

The Keeshond should only need a good stiff weekly brushing to keep the coat in top shape.

Keeshonds love to show off and make fantastic show dogs wanting to please their owners all the time.

Many children have showed Keeshonds (thus making them an ideal junior handling dog).

A Keeshond will if treated with respect give you years of unconditional love and respect but be warned having got your first Keeshond expect the second to follow soon as you can never seem to get enough of them.

It's sturdy, intelligent and adaptable characteristics make for the ideal companion and guard dog. A Keeshond will naturally protect the family children although he has not been trained for it. Although very loyal they can be as stubborn as any child when they do not wish to do something.

There are two clubs in the U.K. for Keeshond fanciers, these both holding Championship Shows and Open Show yearly plus Breed Seminars.

There is also a Breed Rescue Society where there are sometimes dogs requiring rehoming.