

# AKC Gazette Breed Column - November 2010

## Versatility and Venues

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This year the AKC introduced the Grand Champion title with the intention of keeping dog owners involved in Conformation. An opportunity to earn another title with my semi-retired Bedlington caught my interest. So I looked at my 8-year old Champion and said, "Let's go for it." After all, he still loves to show and regardless of age, can still compete in the conformation venue. At a recent show, competing for Grand Champion points, I learned of a Lure Coursing demonstration. Even though the Bedlington is not eligible to title in the sport, they are allowed to participate. I have always wanted to try Lure Coursing with my dog, and this was the perfect opportunity. However, the demonstration was to take place before my Bedlington was to return to the show ring for Group competition. Letting him run through tall, wet grass after a lure seemed like a ridiculous idea. I had already spent several hours that morning grooming his coat. If I let him have a go at Lure Coursing, I would have to groom him all over again. But we went for it and had a lot of fun. Well worth the price of another bath!

Bedlington Terriers are not limited to Conformation venues where the competition is based on breed type, movement, and appearance. Bedlingtons are athletic working terriers also eligible to earn titles in AKC Companion and Performance Events. Companion Events included Agility, Obedience, and Rally. Many devoted Bedlington owners and their dogs have earned the MACH title (Master Agility Champion) several times over. The Top Agility Bedlington Terrier for 2009



has a MACH 8 to his name, and did so at the age of 10! Recently, another Bedlington earned his UDX title (Utility Dog Excellent) in Obedience. And several Bedlingtons have earned the top Rally title RAE (Rally Advanced Excellent). Titles like a MACH, UDX, or RAE are not easily achieved. It takes years of practice and dedication on the part of the owner and dog. In general, Terriers are not the breed of choice for Agility, Obedience, and Rally. They have the reputation of being strong willed and not easy to train. Bedlingtons and their owners who have excelled at these sports deserve a round of applause for proving that the Bedlington is an intelligent and versatile breed.

Being a Terrier, one might think the Bedlington would have readily been accepted in Performance Events like Earthdog. But looking at its size, outline, and coat texture, the Bedlington doesn't really fit the mold of an Earthdog terrier. Most Earthdog terrier breeds are short legged, have less length of body, and harsher coats. But the Bedlington was bred to chase its prey above the ground as well as pursue its prey under the ground when asked to do so. After successful campaigning, the Bedlington was added to the Earthdog eligibility list. And many Bedlingtons have displayed their hunting skills and earned the title ME (Master Earthdog). As mentioned earlier, the Bedlington is not eligible to participate in Lure Coursing, a hunting test reserved for Sighthounds. However, based on the history and hunting skills of our breed, some Bedlington owners hope that one day the Bedlington will be allowed to title in Lure Coursing competitions where the all-around Bedlington Terrier can further display its instincts and skills.

