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ASPECTS of BLOODHOUND HISTORY.®

including *Notes on some Sources in the early
History of the Bloodhound*



M Barwick

Picture from *Dogs and their Management* by Edward Mayhew MRCVS.
Routledge 1860

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FOREWORD

NOTES ON SOME SOURCES IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BLOODHOUND

was printed in 1995, and sold by the Bloodhound Club. The other two articles had appeared in the *American Bloodhound Club Bulletin*, but they represent material previously published, beginning many years before, in either the Bloodhound Club or the Association of Bloodhound Breeders' magazines.

Magazines are occasional publications, which people may or may not read, but in any case are likely to throw away and then forget. I thought it would be justifiable to include the two articles, in a booklet because they involve an assemblage of facts and evidence gathered over the years which should be available on a longer term basis, if only as a starting point, so that other people investigating, or wishing to reinterpret these aspects of the history of the Bloodhound would not have to do the work all over again.

Because the three pieces were written independently of one another, a considerable amount of the same basic material appears in all three. But the focus of each study is different, and each contains illustration peculiar to itself. The amount of illustration and the detail will undoubtedly be a barrier to easy reading, but I wanted to show that there is substance and evidence behind what I have to say. In particular the first study is not intended to be a history of the bloodhound. It is, as the title says, devoted to the identification, evaluation and interpretation of *sources*. I have added a list of sources to the latest revision. Many older sources are now available to consult first hand on line, and can be found via the list of references in the *Wikipedia* entries for 'Bloodhound', 'Sleuth hound', 'Limer' etc at the moment.

In 2006 substantial additions were made to the first study, in the light of some fresh sources I had come across, primarily Edward Topsell's *History of Four-footed Beasts* 1607, and were minor changes, too, in the other pieces. I must acknowledge the help of several librarians, who seem to be a helpful breed, in aiding my inquiries, in particular Jessica Letizia of the American Kennel Club Library.

As it is, the 'pure bred' explanation is a non-starter, and it is time we heard the last of it.

THE OED REVISION

In 2006 a version of this study was sent to the editors of the *OED*, and was acknowledged as 'very full and helpful', with the added comment that it would be years before the entry for 'bloodhound' could be revised. In March 2012 the *OED* on line produced a revised version which updated the entries for 'blood' and all related words. For the first time it gave a suggested etymology for 'bloodhound' : 'apparently so called from its use in tracking (wounded) game.' Though the meaning 'of pure or noble breeding' is pursued in connection with many other words involving 'blood', it is not referred to in connection with 'bloodhound'. Clearly the editors have found nothing to make such an interpretation historically plausible.

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THE 'PURE-BRED' EXPLANATION

THOSE WHO SAY that the correct meaning is 'pure bred hound' are, in effect saying that someone probably before 1300 coined the word with this meaning. Then everyone, in spite of the value they placed upon breeding, immediately forgot this, and used it as though it meant 'blood-seeking dog'. Finally, hundreds of years later, a Frenchman, on the basis of no evidence whatsoever, realised what the true meaning was!

I can only assume that this explanation was accepted because people believed what they wanted to believe. Possibly the status of Le Couteulx and Brough as authorities on the bloodhound (not, however, on etymology!) had something to do with it. Le Couteulx of course had an interest in promoting the idea of pure breeding, because it gave some support to his idea, otherwise far-fetched, that the bloodhound was the St Hubert hound preserved for centuries *without change* in Britain when it had died out on the continent. Otherwise people must have latched on to it out of a squeamish wish to dissociate the breed from notions of bloodthirstiness. Also, the idea that a bloodhound in some way 'hunts blood', as a foxhound hunts foxes or a deerhound hunts deer, is a fairly natural conclusion for the uninformed to jump to. Perhaps over the years people who believed they knew better have relished their superiority over the ignorant. Unfortunately for them, however, the ignorant assumption seems to be the correct one.

When I first put forward some of this material, many years ago now, I was a little diffident, thinking that surely there must be some evidence for the 'pure-bred' hypothesis, and that someone would come up with it. But no-one ever has, and I have been able to find none myself. The reasoning given in the quotation from Brough (above, P 49) relies on incorrect assumptions: the word 'sleuth-hound' is not an older word than 'bloodhound', but a Scottish word of similar date; fox-hunting in its present form, requiring the development of the fox-hound, began centuries later, and the word 'blood-horse' is irrelevant, belonging to a totally different period. Obviously Brough did not realise how old the word 'bloodhound' is.

If believers in the 'pure-bred' hypothesis could find historical linguistic evidence they might be able to present some sort of a case. Such evidence might be: an early (say 14/15th century) example of the word being used where the meaning in mind clearly includes the idea of pure breeding, as well as reference to the dog; or other compound words of the same date where 'blood' refers to good breeding; or any early instances other than in compounds of 'blood' referring to good breeding in animals rather than humans; or a discussion of the derivation earlier, or obviously better supported by evidence, than the one by Caius/Fleming 1576, which is the earliest I know, and which tells us that the name came from the hound's ability to follow a blood-trail. Such discoveries, even if they were made, would not get rid of the evidence I have put forward, and the most that could then be said would be that the two views each had some support.

The latest revision is prompted by the updating of the *Oxford English Dictionary's* entry for 'bloodhound' in 2012, which for the first time gives a derivation and supports the idea that the word had nothing to do with pure or noble breeding. It also gives a new earlier citation for the first use of the word in English, as well as earlier instances of a few other blood-related words.

My researches over the years have been incomplete, extremely sporadic and not very systematic. Most of them have involved revisiting what has been known for a long time. Others before me have essentially picked out the same material — I can think of an assemblage of sources published in a Club magazine many years ago, made by Margaret Rawle, for instance. So it has been often a matter of looking critically at what has already been discovered, and the interpretations and misinterpretations which have been made. I have uncovered one or two sources not previously known within the breed, mostly Medieval, notably the first ever references to the Bloodhound in surviving English Literature. Nevertheless, my impression is that knowledge of Bloodhound history has not progressed much since the 19th century, indeed little new has been added since Jesse's book of 1866, which is frequently mentioned in what follows. In spite of which, what we now read in the dog press, or in books about dog breeds, often suggests that everything is cut and dried: that we know what the origin of the Bloodhound was, that we know what the word means, that we know what the Talbot was, and how it relates to the Bloodhound, and so on. Traditions are developing, which appear to be hardening into certainties, on the basis of assumption rather than fact. In addition to which, and perhaps because the facts do not support the interpretations put on them, the breed has been poorly served by some recent books on the subject, which present a very garbled picture of the Bloodhound's history.

The history of dog breeds is not perhaps the most important kind of history, but any study of history deserves to be approached seriously, with the object of getting it right — as near right as the sources allow — but also with the honesty to admit to uncertainty where there is uncertainty. And there is a great deal of uncertainty in the history of the Bloodhound.

Most breed societies will have as one of their major aims 'the improvement of the breed', but pedigree dogs are in many ways more about preservation – conservation, even – than improvement. Breed standards effectively 'fix' a breed at a particular stage of its history, and prevent further change and development. Dog breeds are part of a people's heritage, often quite local traditions, like that of the Bedlington Terrier, or the Sussex Spaniel, and maybe not going back much more than a century. But some breeds are particularly outstanding, because of their place in a country's history and literature. In this respect the Bloodhound is unique. I cannot think of another British breed, not even the British national emblem, the bulldog, which occupies a comparable place in our canine heritage. I hope the following writings may contribute to a sense of that heritage.

NOTES ON SOME SOURCES IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BLOODHOUND

HISTORY IS BUNK,” Henry Ford is supposed to have said, and to those who are, understandably, only interested in the hounds we have now, and the ones we intend to breed, the remote past of the Bloodhound may seem supremely irrelevant. Nevertheless, among all British breeds, the Bloodhound seems to have the longest and most storied history. The bulldog and the greyhound may be as much bywords for tenacity and speed as is the Bloodhound for smell, but few stories of their doings have come down the ages.¹ Part of the pleasure of being involved with this breed must for many be the sense of its ancientness, and the romance of its past. When we read a book on Bloodhounds, or a general interest article, such as a section on the Bloodhound in a dog book, what we inevitably get is a summary or digest of its history, condensed to a few sentences or a few pages. The author may have done the most painstaking research, or simply have relied on previous authorities, and passed on the generally received version in a more or less uncritical way. Whether many sources have been consulted or not, very rarely do we get more than a few mentioned, if any at all,² and almost never is the train of reasoning outlined which leads to the conclusion that is being put in front of us.

My approach has been to try to put myself in the position of someone starting from scratch, as it were, and to look at some early sources to see what can be gleaned from them. I first tried to do this from a linguistic point of view in relation to the meaning of the word ‘Bloodhound’, and discovered that there is no support whatever for the idea that it meant ‘hound of pure blood’, and that the meaning ‘blood-seeking hound’ is pretty clearly the original one (see Page 45). I haven’t anything as challenging to say about the general history of the Bloodhound, and my approach has been piecemeal and amateurish in the extreme. I am not energetic or rich enough to make constant visits to the British Library, or to go even further

¹ The greyhound, of course, has an extremely rich literary history in Medieval and Renaissance times, when it played an important part in pack hunting, and was highly esteemed for its nobility. But Sir Henry Dryden describes “hunting by sight and scent together” as an “unsportsmanlike method”. (In his 1844 edition of William Twiss’s *The Art of Huntynge* c1327. Revised Ed. William Mark, Northampton 1908.) Since the greyhound became predominantly used for racing, its history is less romantic.

² Someone who does acknowledge his sources is George R Jesse, in his monumental *Researches into the History of the British Dog*, in two volumes, (Robert Hardwicke, London 1866). It is largely an assemblage of sources, including Middle English, Latin and French, both literary and documentary. Very little that has been written on the early history of the Bloodhound includes anything that Jesse has missed, and anyone coming later must content himself with adding an occasional morsel to what Jesse discovered, or verifying and reinterpreting Jesse’s findings. In fact it is quite galling to have gone to some considerable trouble to find a source and extract what one wants from it, and then to get hold of Jesse, and discover it was all there, easily available, in the first place! Another is Edward C Ash: *Dogs: their History and Development* in two volumes (Ernest Benn Ltd, London 1927)

especially horses’ is from 1776, like ‘blood-horse’ originally chiefly American. ‘Bloodstock’ is first recorded from 1791, and ‘bloodline’ from 1668.

Thus there is nothing to suggest that the English speaker of around 1300 or before would, or could, have applied the word ‘blood’, especially in a compound, to a hound with the meaning of ‘noble or pure breeding.’ Nor does ‘blooded hound’ appear in early usage, as is suggested in some histories. If it had, it would have meant ‘dog covered in blood’!

THE IDEA OF BREEDING IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE PERIOD

MEDIAEVAL/RENAISSANCE SOCIETY was an aristocracy, dominated by the idea of rank and birth in humans. The notion of an innate or natural hierarchy of rank was extended to other spheres, including animals. Dogs had greater or less nobility, according to their breeding, and in the early accounts of choosing dogs for hunting, importance is given to their parentage and pedigree, just as it would be today. All dogs for hunting were carefully bred.

The word ‘gentle’, meaning ‘of excellent breeding’ (as originally in ‘gentleman’) was used of animals from as early as 1300. In 1523 Skelton writes: “*A ientyll hownd shulde neuer play the kurr*” meaning a nobly bred hound should never act like an ill-bred dog.

Caius in *De Canibus Britannicis*, translated by Abraham Fleming as *Of Englishe Dogges*, divides dogs into three kinds : a gentle (‘generosam’), a homely (‘rusticam’), and a currish (‘degenerem’) kind. All hounds, and other dogs used for finding game were of the ‘gentle’ kind, that is nobly bred animals. He considered the greyhound as ‘simply and absolutely the best of the gentle kind of hounds.’ And this leads him into a mistaken and far-fetched etymology of ‘Greyhound’ as ‘(de)greehound’ ie hound of high degree.

So, it is not impossible that someone who thought the bloodhound was the most nobly bred of all hounds should have given it a name conveying this, though they would probably have used ‘gentlehound’. What is not possible is that if this had been an available interpretation of ‘bloodhound’ anyone at the time could have been unaware of it, or if it had been the original meaning of the word that awareness of it would have been lost, given the mind-set of the whole period. If it had been a possible derivation of ‘bloodhound’, Caius, who so stressed the value of good breeding, and who devotes a separate section of his book to the names of dogs and their origin, would have been delighted to acknowledge it, but as far as he is concerned there is only one conceivable explanation.

I have also seen the suggestion that ‘blood’ refers not to the breeding of the dog, but of the people who owned it. The idea that the word could mean ‘dog owned by people of noble blood’ makes the connection between the blood and the dog even more remote and far-fetched. In any case, all dogs used for hunting were the property of kings and noblemen who had exclusive rights to hunt game in the forests, chases and parks. There would be no reason to pick out the bloodhound.

would take all the force away from the insult! Nevertheless it is apparent that the word ‘bloodhound’ has been used pejoratively from very early times. A crucial example, showing how early English speakers thought of the word ‘bloodhound’ is in an alliterative poem *Morte Arthure* of about 1400, maybe a copy of an earlier original. In it King Arthur applies the word ‘bloodhound’, as a metaphor, to his enemies. He is speaking to Lancelot, and they are on board ship, returning to England, and preparing for a sea-battle. His nephew Modred has taken over the kingdom, married Arthur’s queen Waynour (Guinever) and peopled the land with paynims and infidels who despoil the monasteries and ravish the nuns:

let es covere þe kyth, the coste es owre ownne
and gere theme brotheliche blenke, alle zone bloðhondes
bryttyne them with in bourde, and brynne theme þare aftyr
hewe downe hertly zone heythene tykes
they are harlotes half, ɿ hette ʒow myne honnde

*Let us recover the kingdom, the shore belongs to us,
and make them wince angrily, all you bloodhounds!
break them to pieces within the (ship's) side, and then burn them!
heartily hew down you heathen curs!
they are on the rogue's (ie Modred's) side, I swear to you by my hand!*

For my purposes, finding this example is an amazing piece of fortune. We could hardly have expected to find the word in such a clearly revealing context. In three lines he calls his enemies both ‘bloodhounds’ and ‘tykes’ (ie curs, ill-bred dogs). If ‘bloodhounds’ had had the connotation ‘dogs of pure, noble breeding’ he could not have used it in the same breath as ‘tykes’, which suggests the opposite! The meaning ‘blood-seeking dogs’ is entirely appropriate to the context.

In 1550 Coverdale also uses the word metaphorically: “*Manasses ...was a very bloodhound and a tyrant.*”

THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY (OED)

WE CANNOT ASSUME that the English speaker the Middle Ages had same resources available to him as we have today. We are familiar with such words as ‘blood-horse’, and ‘blood-stock’ where ‘blood’ refers to breeding, so it is easy for us to conclude that it does the same in ‘bloodhound’.

However, the *OED* tells us that while ‘blood’ in the meaning of ‘noble or gentle birth’ occurs from 1393 as applied to HUMAN BEINGS, it does not occur in the same meaning APPLIED TO BRED ANIMALS until 1711

Likewise there are no compound words (words made up of two other words, as ‘bloodhound’ is) in which ‘blood’ refers to breeding until the seventeenth century. ‘Blood-horse’ is first cited from 1615 but is generally American, ‘blood-relation’ 1668, ‘blood-relationship’ 1793. ‘Blooded’ meaning ‘of good breed in animals,

afield, or to learn Medieval French and Latin in the hope of finding some little gleaning in obscure manuscripts which might be of use. But at least I can put forward what little I know, so that other people can evaluate it, and maybe, as time goes on I may gather a little more here and there.

The first thing to say is that there is very little we can be certain of. We cannot be sure that words meant then what they mean now; for instance in Old English (pre 1066), and later, the word ‘hound’ meant any kind of dog, not just a hunting dog. My assumption is - and I think it is a reasonable one - that the modern Bloodhound descends from animals referred to by the word ‘bloodhound’ from its earliest appearance in English. We have narrowed the application of the word to the limit nowadays, so that we can say that if dog does not have a certain pedigree it is not a Bloodhound. I don’t think that was true in the past, by any means, and there may have been many dogs which could be called bloodhounds which played no part in the descent of our modern breed. But there is no evidence of a discontinuity in the development of the breed in Britain up until the mid nineteenth century, when we begin to have clear records, and pictures, of individual hounds, which we can trace through our pedigrees to modern times. So we can take it that the Bloodhound comes down to us in an unbroken line, in this country, from past to present.

The Beginnings

BUT FROM WHERE DO WE TRACE THE BEGINNING? There are and have been many dogs more or less large, keen scented, with ears that hang rather than stand erect. They may very well share a common ancestor, and this may have existed in Mesopotamia or points east in the year dot. That does not make them Bloodhounds. I take it, too, that any stories about Bloodhounds existing in Britain in the time of the Romans, (or being brought here from the sack of Troy even!) are irrelevant. Such traditions have too little support and are too unspecific.

The most persistent notion is that the Bloodhound was brought over from France by William the Conqueror in 1066. I do not know of any reputable source for this idea.¹ However, there is one sense in which it is almost bound to reflect, if not the truth, at least a part of it. After the Norman Conquest the royalty and the nobility of England and the upper ranks of the church were French, while the subject population was English. And the Normans were fanatical lovers of hunting; hunting and falconry were the major peacetime pursuits of knighthood. England was not culturally isolated before the conquest, and hunting and hunting hounds existed

¹ “*Sabretache*” in his *Monarchy and the Chase* Eyre and Spottiswoode 1948 is highly sceptical about any hounds accompanying him on his invasion, but says, “I think it possible that William I brought over a pack of his own from Normandy at some time or other, since he had a very poor opinion of anything Saxon.” But this writer rarely refers to sources, so his usefulness is limited

among the English royalty and nobility who were displaced, but there could hardly have been enough to satisfy the appetite of the new aristocracy, so numbers of hounds must have been brought over from Northern France during the century after the battle of Hastings. How many, and whether the specific ancestors of the Bloodhound were among these, or whether hounds already resident gave rise to our breed,¹ or whether it came from a mingling of French with native stock, is impossible to say. The highly specific idea that a particular, pure breed of hound, the St Hubert, was brought over by William, and continued to be kept virtually pure over here till modern times, certainly lacks any basis in any early source that I have been able to find, and I shall look at the idea again when considering later evidence.

For many generations after Hastings the upper reaches of society spoke Norman French, while the lower classes spoke English. As contacts with the Continent were gradually broken over the following centuries, the French speakers were assimilated. This is famously demonstrated in the middle of the 14th Century, when French, which had been the language of the law courts, was replaced by English, because French was “much unknown in the said realm.” [*Statute of Pleading*, 1362]

Until recently it was thought that the earliest surviving use of the word ‘bloodhound’ was in about 1350, but in 2012 the update to the *Oxford English Dictionary* on line gave a new source, the Auchinleck MS (c1330) of *Guy of Warwick*, a popular verse romance. The poem is believed to have been written about 1300. The hero, Guy, is a young man who falls in love with a woman of higher social standing and must succeed in various chivalric enterprises to win her hand. At one stage he takes part in a hunt for a wild boar, which ferociously turns on the pack and kills over a hundred of the pursuing hounds.

The extract reads:

Alle þe houndes þat folwed him þere
 Oȝain turned oþer ded were.
 Wiþouten blodhoundes þre
 All the dogs that followed him (the boar) there
 turned again (=turned back) or else were dead,
 except for three bloodhounds.

The boar has escaped, but Guy follows it alone and kills it eventually with his

¹ Jesse produces a number of references showing that hunting the deer with scent hounds was a favourite pastime of Saxon kings, such as Ælfred the Great, and Edward the Confessor, and points out that the forest laws, designed to preserve game for hunting, notably those of Canute, were introduced in pre-Conquest times, though the Norman kings increased their severity. The word for a scent-hound, ‘rache’, is an Old English word, from shortly before the Norman Conquest. There is certainly no reason to suppose that the Anglo-Saxons lacked a large scent hound which could have played a rôle in the descent of the bloodhound.

writers like Caius and Boece were perfectly well aware that the bloodhound could also follow ‘dry-foot’ scent. Following a blood-trail does seem to have been part of the initial training of a bloodhound.

Early writers show that the idea of an interest in or eagerness for blood was an important concept in the way they thought of a good scent hound. This appears in writings to do with hounds not specifically called bloodhounds, but ones of a similar type, or bloodhounds under a different name.

In the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) *Patent Rolls* 20 Feb 1240 there is a text:²

Of Training dogs **to Blood** (De canibus ad sanguinem adaptandis)

‘Whereas Edward the King’s son, has intrusted to Robert de Chenney, his valet, his **dogs to be accustomed to blood**, it is commanded to all foresters, woodmen, and other bailiffs and servants of the king’s forests, and keepers of the king’s warrens, that they allow the said Robert to enter with them the King’s forests and warrens, and to hunt in them, and to take the king’s game, in order to train the said dogs. This to hold good to the feast of St Michael next ensuing.

‘Witness the King at Woodstock’

In Henry (‘Blind Harry’) the Minstrel’s poem about Sir William Wallace (written about 1478) there is the verse, concerning a sleuth hound:

In Gillisland was that bratchet bred	<i>bratchet : female scent hound</i>
Siker of scent to follow them that fled	<i>siker: true</i>
So was she used in Eske and Liddesdail	
While she gat blood no fleeing might avail.	

Other sources speak of the Talbot, which was similar to the bloodhound if not the same:

1562. Leigh *Accidens of Armorie*. A Talbot with coller and Lyame. These houndes pursue the foote of pray by sente of y^e same **or els by y^e bloude thereof**.

1615. Markham : *Country Contentments*. The black hound, the black tanned...or the milk white which is the true Talbot, are best for the string or lyam, for they doe **delight most in blood**, and haue a natural inclination to hunt dry foot.

(‘lyam’ = leash)

Since scent hounds were supposed to ‘delight in blood’, it is not surprising that the keenest scented of all should have been called ‘bloodhound’. This explanation is the one given by Caius (tr. Fleming) in *Of Englishe Dogges* 1576. It is the earliest known statement of the way the bloodhound got its name, and there is no reason to doubt it, although more than once I have seen Caius mentioned as the first person to get it wrong!

EVIDENCE FROM EARLY USAGE

ONE CAN INSULT SOMEONE by calling him a ‘dog’. One can make it worse by calling him a ‘cur’, but one would never want to call someone a ‘nobly bred dog’. It

² The source for this is Jesse. The English quoted is not the English of that date. It must be a later translation of Latin.

they thought it was too obvious to need explaining, or were simply unaware of what kind of evidence might be relevant or how to go about looking for it. As far as I know, no-one with any background in Historical Linguistics, or any familiarity with Middle English writing, has ever looked at the question before.

Having spent 15 years of my working life lecturing on the English Language, including its history, I am interested in the derivation of words. The notion that the original meaning referred figuratively to pure breeding rather than literally to blood in the veins, or shed from them, struck me as somewhat implausible, and this led me to investigate the circumstances of the earliest usages of the word. I was surprised to find how much evidence could be gleaned, and how conclusively it supports the notion that the word meant ‘dog for blood’ or ‘blood-seeking dog’.

If you want to find out what connotations the word originally had, obviously you need to go back to the circumstances surrounding its earliest known uses (around the mid 14th Century, though it must have been in use before then, at least before 1300). The essential research tool for considering this question is *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. It is a great work of scholarship, begun in 1879, the most comprehensive historical dictionary of the English language. It records the changing forms and meanings of words from their first appearance in surviving English writing. It illustrates word histories with quotations, usually one recording the first known instance of a word, and subsequently about one per century which demonstrates the word’s form or meaning clearly. The American humorist James Thurber, who maybe had more sensitivity to the nuances of English than most, was highly sceptical about the idea that ‘bloodhound’ had anything to do with ‘pure blood’, but thought that the *OED* gave no information. A bloodhound is ‘a large, very keen-scented dog’, and nothing more is said.¹ However, there is much that the *OED* can tell us, if we look at the instances it quotes, at other relevant words, especially those involving ‘blood’, the dates at which they first appear in the language, and what meanings were current at different periods. We can build up a picture of how people in the middle ages thought of blood in relation to hunting dogs, of the importance they gave to breeding and the words they used to speak of it, and of what the relevant trends and resources of the language were at the time.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLOOD

WRITERS FROM CAIUS in the 16th century onwards have said that the bloodhound gets its name from its ability to follow the blood-trail of a wounded animal (or of a dead animal being carried off.) Those who do not accept this explanation will have in their favour the fact that the bloodhound can and does follow the trail of an unwounded animal, or person. In the function of a ‘limer’ or leash-hound, used to ‘harbour’ game (that is, track it on its cold scent to its resting place, so the exciting bit of the hunt could begin) the bloodhound trailed an animal which was unwounded, because the hunt proper had not started. Nevertheless, following a wounded animal which had escaped the hunt was ONE of the things a leash-hound did, and early

sword. It is likely that it would be assumed that the three bloodhounds helped him to find it, though they are not mentioned again.

Until this source was identified the earliest known instance was in *William of Palerne or William and the Werwolf*. This romance was written in English about 1350, at the command of Sir Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford.¹ It was a translation of a French romance *Guillaume de Palerne*, of about 1220. The original French model of *Guy of Warwick* is not available, but I wondered if a comparison of French and English texts would be illuminating, and I managed to borrow a copy of the original *Guillaume de Palerne*, and find the corresponding passage.² What one finds is that the English translation (if indeed that is the correct word for it) is very free, and that the French contains no word equivalent to ‘blod-houndes’,

ʔpan hastily hized eche wigt . on hors and on fotę 2177
 then each man went hurriedly on horse and on foot
hunting wigt houndes . alle heie wodes,
 hunting nimble hounds in all high woods
till þei neyzed so neizh . to nympe þe soþe
 till they approached so close, to tell the truth
þere william and his worþi lef . were liand ifere 2180
 where william and his dear love were lying together
þat busily were thei a bowe schot . out of þe burnes sizt.
 that they were occupied a bow shot out of the man’s sight
but whan þe witthi werwolf . wist hem so nere
 but when the wise werwolf knew they were so close
and seize blodhoundes bold . so busili seche,
 and saw bold bloodhounds hunt so carefully
he þouzt wil his lif last . leten he nolde,
 he thought that while his life lasted he would not give up
forto saue and serue . þo two semli beres 2185
 protecting and serving the two seeming bears
and prestli þan putte him out . in peril of deþe
 and quickly, in peril of death, placed himself out
bifore þo herty houndes . hauteyn of cryes,
 in front of the eager hounds, with their loud cries,
to winne hem alle aweiwardes . fro þe white beres.
 to draw them all away from the white bears.

*William of
 Palerne,
 (Palermo) is
 abducted as a
 child by a
 werwolf, which
 rears him.
 Grown up,
 William enters
 the service of
 the daughter of
 the Emperor of
 Rome. The two
 fall in love, and
 flee in the
 disguise of two
 white bears,
 pursued by men
 with dogs. The
 werwolf saves
 them by
 distracting the
 dogs.*

² *Or les gart Diex de cest peril!*
Mien esciënt si fera il, 3764
Car li garox pas nes oublie,
Ains lor garist sovent la vie,
Car quant li questor aprochoient

the nearest being 'chiens'. How boring! However certain inferences may be drawn, tentative perhaps, but everything has to be tentative when one is dealing with such slender threads of evidence.

In the first place it is clear that there is no term in the French text obliging the English writer to use the word 'blod-houndes'. It can only have been his own sense that the word was appropriate to the context of the story. Bloodhounds, fascinatingly at this early date, are seen as careful hunters, and on the trail of two human beings, albeit ones disguised as bears. Secondly, this and the use in *Guy of Warwick* show that the word and its meaning must have been familiar to his English audience, not as a translation of *chien de St Hubert*, or anything of the sort, but in its own right. The fact that these are the first recorded instances means nothing more than that earlier texts in which it appeared have not survived, or have not been noticed, and that the word, like most words, was familiar in the spoken language well before it was written down. Both 'blood' and 'hound' are English words from common Germanic roots, and do not occur in French. They could have been put together to form a compound at any time there appeared an animal that needed to be named, including before the Norman conquest. We can be pretty sure that well before 1300, there were bloodhounds in England, recognised and named as such. How much earlier they may have existed here is pure conjecture.¹

The other instances that I have quoted in earlier articles reinforce this view. In *Sir*

La ou li dui amant estoient	3768
A tout lor chiens, li leus saillait;	
En aventure se metoit	
Por eus garandir et deffendre,	
Tos les faisoit a lui entendre,	3772
Que tos les avoit desvoies	
Des jovinceus et eslongies;	
Puis n'avoient garde le jor,	
Sovent ont de la mort paour.	3776
Ensi la beste les enmaine	
O grant travail et o grant paine	
Et garde de lor anemis	
Que il nes ont perçus ne pris.	3780

[Unfortunately my long-disused A-Level French is not up to giving a full translation of this Medieval text, but roughly, the werewolf (li garox) has not forgotten the two lovers (li dui amant) and when the hunters (li questor) approach with all their dogs the wolf (li leus) goes forth and puts himself at risk to protect them.]

¹ According to Jesse the earliest reference is an entry in the Patent Rolls for 20 Feb 1240, in Latin, I take it, in which permission is given for Robert de Cheney, Prince Edward's valet, to enter the King's forests and warrens, in order for his dogs to be accustomed to blood (*De canibus ad sanguinem adaptendis*). This indeed may suggest how the bloodhound got its name, but the allusion is too vague: it is not clear what kind of dogs are being referred to.

THE DERIVATION OF THE WORD 'BLOODHOUND'

ONE OF THE STRANGEST THINGS anywhere in the history of dogs is surely the way people's view of what the word 'bloodhound' originally meant has changed. If you read almost any book or article on the bloodhound published in the last half century or so you will read that the name originally meant 'dog of pure or noble blood'. Up till the late 19th Century it had always been assumed that it meant, roughly, 'blood-seeking dog' or 'dog that follows a blood-trail'.

The new explanation seems to have first been suggested by Count Le Couteulx de Canteleu, for instance in *Manuel de Vénerie Française* (1890), when he says the St Hubert hound had been preserved in Britain "*sous le nom Chien de Sang (c'est à dire de pur sang) - 'blood-hound'.*" [under the name of dog of blood (meaning of pure blood) 'bloodhound']] Had Le Couteulx been right, the meaning 'dog of pure blood' would have reinforced his argument that the bloodhound had been kept pure in Britain.

The reasoning is explained more fully by Edwin Brough, in *The Bloodhound and its Use in Tracking Criminals* (1902) :

As regards the name bloodhound, the Count Le Couteulx believed that when fox-hunting in something like its present form was instituted it was found that the sleuth-hound was not fast enough for the purpose and the present fox-hound was evolved from various material, and that about this time it became usual, speaking of the old hound of the country, to call him the bloodhound, meaning hound of pure blood, (as we should speak of a blood horse), to distinguish him from the new hound or Foxhound.

In another source of the time, Arthur Croxton-Smith, Chairman of the Kennel Club, refers to the fact that Dr Sidney Turner, co-author with Brough of the bloodhound breed standard of 1896, had drawn his attention to this suggestion of Le Couteulx. This indicates that none of these three bloodhound experts had previously known of this idea from any other source, which seems to confirm that it originated with Le Couteulx. For a while this explanation was referred to in the literature about bloodhounds as a possible alternative to the original one. Then, first of all in America in Whitney's *Bloodhounds and How to Train Them* (1947), and then in Hilary Harmer's book on the bloodhound in 1968, the old explanation was dismissed as an error of the uninitiated; the new one took over, and it has been the orthodoxy ever since. Very often the old explanation is not mentioned at all in books or articles on the bloodhound, or is mentioned only to be rejected out of hand.

What is most peculiar about all this is that neither Le Couteulx nor anyone else ever offered any historical linguistic evidence to support the new explanation. Maybe

the continentals were mixing up the St Hubert even more than we were mixing the Bloodhound. Especially, in the crucial two centuries leading up to Le Couteulx' claim that the St Hubert and the Bloodhound were the same, there is no evidence of such imports being made. That is the very period during which the St Hubert was becoming extinct, or losing its identity. Le Couteulx himself said that cross-breeding was the great vice of the French, and felt that only the Saintongeais had been preserved without change in his own time. Finally, in modern times, can the FCI produce registered St Huberts which are identical genetically and in appearance to the Bloodhound, which trace their ancestry back, not to the Bloodhound, but to the continental St Hubert of earlier times? The Bloodhound is no more the St Hubert than the English setter is the Irish setter, or the Irish wolfhound is the Scottish deerhound. The ancient St Hubert is extinct, and it is the British Bloodhound which is the father of the modern St Hubert, or rather, of the dog which is misnamed the St Hubert in a few countries. The modern Bloodhound has become the St Hubert, not because of the accumulation of new evidence since the 19th and early 20th centuries, but merely because the FCI unilaterally declared it to be so.

The name of the St Hubert represents an important tradition to French speakers, and perhaps if they wish to apply the name to the Bloodhound in their own countries we should not object. But it should be accepted that it is the resurrection of an old name, not the continuity of an old breed, which is involved. The Bloodhound has a huge tradition, as a man-hunter, in history and legend in Britain — indeed it is fair to say that the Bloodhound is the very pinnacle of the British canine heritage, the only dog which could have altered, and possibly did alter, the course of British history — and this tradition has been added to beyond measure in modern times by the tracking exploits of the breed in the USA. The word “bloodhound” has such magic in the English Language: “a nose like a bloodhound” is the standard simile for keenness of scent, the word is a metaphor for a detective, a policeman, for any relentless pursuer or searcher after anything. As the non-French-speaking nations come into a closer relationship with the FCI they should seek to have it accepted that the Bloodhound is primarily a Bloodhound, not a St Hubert Hound, and that its origin, if its origin must be stated, is in Britain, not Belgium.

Gawain and the Green Knight Bloodhounds announce the presence of a great boar hidden in a thicket, which rushes out on being discovered. This is very little later than *William of Palerne*, and suggests something of how the bloodhound was used. In *Morte Arthure* written down by Robert Thornton maybe about 1440 King Arthur calls his hated enemies ‘bloodhounds’. The fact that he uses the word as a metaphor again suggests its familiarity to his audience. There is nothing to suggest that bloodhounds were excessively fierce at this time — indeed, as I will suggest later, it seems they were not used to attack anything as a rule — and so it seems likely that Thornton was just exploiting the implication of what the *word* meant — ‘dog for blood’ or ‘blood-seeking dog’ - to label the villains of his story.¹

Another early source in the *OED*, *Catholicon Anglicum* c1475-83, is an English-Latin vocabulary. In it the translation of ‘Bloode Hownde’ is given as ‘Molossus’. This we usually equate to the large mastiff type of dog of which the Romans were supposed to have imported some specimens from Britain. What this means is that at least one very significant thing about the bloodhound of the 15th Century was its size. It is also worth noting that there is no suggestion that ‘Canis Sancti Huberti’ is an appropriate translation. Indeed there is nothing anywhere in what I have found to suggest that the St Hubert dog was known, or known of, in England before it is described in Turberville in 1575.

Caius

WE NOW HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD IN TIME to two of the most important and richest sources of our knowledge of the historical Bloodhound, Turberville, just mentioned, and Caius.

The chapter from Abraham Fleming's translation of 1576, from the Latin, of John Caius' *Of Englishe Dogges* (Latin *De Canibus Britannicis*) has appeared from time to time, in various Bloodhound related publications. It is probably fair to say that it is the most important single influence on the way Bloodhounds have been thought about to this day. It establishes their appearance: Bloodhounds are “The greater sort which serve to hunt, having lips of a large size and ears of no small length.” It discusses the reason for their name. Above all, it wonderfully describes their use and importance as man-trailers, suggesting that some were kept only for this specialised use. Finally it says they are much used in the border areas for

¹ Shakespeare's only reference to the bloodhound is similarly metaphorical, and similarly abusive. In *Henry IV Part 2* v.iv. Hostess Quickly insults the thin beadle who is dragging Doll Tearsheet before a justice, by calling him “you starv'd bloodhound”. If she meant “you blood-seeking dog”, it would be an appropriate insult, but we may also have here the beginnings of the use of “bloodhound” as a metaphor for a seeker out of criminals, a detective. The Bloodhound is briefly described in William Harrison's description of English dogs in his contribution of Holinshed's *Chronicles* 1577, which Shakespeare knew. Harrison based his account on Caius.

tracking cattle thieves, and so establishes the link between the Bloodhound and the “sleuth-hound” referred to in some Scottish writing (eg Barbour’s *Bruce*), and the “slough-dogs” kept by law in some Northern towns and villages to track invaders. Thus this whole tradition and association of the Bloodhound with the Border reivers of the sixteenth century and before becomes available. When Scotland, its clans, its feuds and cross-border romances were popularised and glamourised at the beginning of the nineteenth century especially by Sir Walter Scott, the bloodhound is included, figuring in the stories, or appearing as a kind of prop, to give local colour. The sense of threat carried by the name ‘bloodhound’ was an extra bonus to add to the atmosphere of Romantic tales. It is reasonable to conclude that the sleuth-hound, the slough dog and the bloodhound were the same *type* of dog, though at what stage they became a single breed is less certain.

Of the Dogge called a Bloudhounde in Latine *Sanguinarius*¹

The greater sort which serue to hunt, hauing lippes of a large syze, & eares of no small lenght,² doo, not onely chase the beast whiles it liueth, (as the other doo of whom mencion aboue is made) but beyng dead also by any maner of casualltie, make recourse to the place where it lyeth, hauing in this poynt an assured and infallible guyde, namely, the sent and sauour of the blood sprinkled heere and there vpon the ground. For whether the beast beyng wounded, doth not-withstanding enioye life, and escapeth the handes of the huntzman, or whether the said beast beyng slayne is conuayed clenly out of the parcke (so that there be some signification of blood shed) these Dogges with no lesse facilitie and easinesse, then auditie and greedinesse can disclose and bewray the same by smelling, applying to their pursute, agilite and nimblenesse, without tediousnesse, for which consideration, of a singuler specialtie they deserued to bee called *Sanguinarij* bloudhounds. And albeit peradventure it may chaunce, (As whether it chaunceth scaldome or sometime I am ignorant) that a peece of fleshe be subtilly stolne and cunningly conuayed away with such prouisos and precaueats as thereby all apparaunce of blood is eyther preuented, excluded, or concealed, yet these kinde of dogges by a certaine direction of an inwarde assured notyce and priuy marcke, pursue the deede dooers, through long lanes, crooked reaches, and weary wayes, without wandring awry out of the limites of the land whereon these desperate purloyners prepared their speedy passage. Yea, the natures of these Dogges is such, and so effectually is their foresight, that they ca(n) bewray, separte, and pycke them out from among an infinite multitude and an innumerable company, creepe they neuer so farre into the thickest thronge, they will finde

¹ The use of the Latin word ‘sanguinarius’ may suggest that the Bloodhound was known to the Romans, and its history is much more ancient than this study suggests. In fact, of course, in the 16th century Latin, though a dead language, was still the language of scholars and of educated communication throughout Europe. Caius wrote his treatise in Latin, for a European readership. If there was no equivalent for an English word in Latin the Medieval or Renaissance writer had to find or invent one. ‘Sanguinarius’ is Caius’ translation of the English word ‘Bloodhound’ into Latin.

² A more literal translation would be ‘with both lips and ears hung down’. The Latin of Caius’ *De Canibus Britannicis* is much more concise than Fleming’s English. 17 sides of Latin correspond to 42 pages of English in *The Works of John Caius* Cambridge 1912. Fleming wrote an expansive, rhetorical prose, based on such books as Thomas Wilson’s *Art of Rhetoric*, (1553) and all the balance, pairing off of synonyms, and exuberant alliteration, we owe to Fleming.

as the standard of “The Bloodhound, or Sleuth-Hound”, with no acknowledgement whatever of the St Hubert.

As mentioned above Le Couteulx was not generally successful in establishing the Bloodhound as a popular hound with French huntsmen. With small numbers on the continent at the beginning of the century, and the effect of two world wars, the population has in effect had to be re-established several times with imports from Britain and America.

The Bloodhound in America is of course the British Bloodhound exported there, according to Whitney, “in fairly large numbers after the Civil War”, and export continued in the 20th Century. Mrs Sadleir (Barchester) “Probably sent more fine hounds to America since 1930 than any other English breeder.” Whitney accepts the version of the history of the Bloodhound in which the St Hubert played a part, but when he refers to “the land of their origin” he means Britain, not France or Belgium. He also says, “Pure breeding and outcrossing with other hounds has gone on until our Bloodhounds can scarcely be said to be pure descendants of those early ancestors.”¹ Surely true! The standard for the Bloodhound adopted by the AKC is closely based on the original Association of Bloodhound Breeders standard.

‘Many of the genealogies of breeds of dogs make specious, rather than convincing, reading. As one researcher (Peters, 1969) could write: “..investigations revealed that records compiled prior to the middle of the 19th century are so few, incomplete and inaccurate that a person can ‘prove’ almost anything he cares to regarding specific breed ancestry.” This stricture applies equally to scientific treatises, so that any writing of this nature should be approached with caution. It is unfortunate that so many authors have uncritically repeated the speculations of earlier writers. The earlier conjectures may be legitimate, *qua* conjectures, but through the passage of time these take on the mantle of authoritative facts which is not entirely warranted.’ (Roy Robinson *Genetics for Dog Breeders* Pergamon 1989).

To say the Bloodhound is none other than the ancient St Hubert is to claim far too much certainty for something we know very little about. What we do know with reasonable certainty is that the modern animal worldwide descends from the population existing in Britain at the beginning of the 19th Century.

It is difficult to know what could justify the Belgian title to the Bloodhound. It is based on the highly specific notion that a particular, pure breed of hound, the St Hubert, was brought over by the Normans and was somehow miraculously preserved over here in its original form until modern times. From what we know of the British history of the Bloodhound, the idea seems fantastic. It was neither brought over by the Normans, nor was it kept pure. Equally the breed could not have been kept on course in Britain by continual reintroduction of St Huberts from the continent, since from what is said by Du Fouilloux, and Le Couteulx himself,

¹ *Bloodhounds and How to Train Them* Leon F Whitney 1947

Those who were writing about dogs in Britain at the time of Le Couteulx pay little regard to his claims. George R Jesse in his monumental *Researches into the History of the British Dog* 1866, which looks extensively at sources connected with the Bloodhound, says nothing, beyond quoting Turberville, of a connection with the St Hubert. In *Dogs of the British Isles*, 1878, (Edited by “Stonehenge”), there is a picture of a Bloodhound of Mr Reynolds Ray’s named St Hubert, and the writer comments on the breeding of Bloodhounds by the French from British imports - but there is no suggestion of the St Hubert hound being the same breed as the Bloodhound. He also comments on the mixed breeding of Bloodhounds in the 19th Century. Lord Wolverton’s were held to be pure. Nevill’s differed greatly from the recognised type of the breed. Rawdon Lee in *Modern Dogs*, 1906, simply says the origins of the bloodhound are obscure.

By then, a further step had been taken towards the development of the modern confusion, and towards the FCI standard. Comte Henri de Bylandt, or H A graaf van Bylandt, published *Races des Chiens*, in 1897, an expansion of a publication by the Dutch Kennel Club ‘Cynophilia’, published in 1894 as *Standard Book of the Best Known Dog Breeds*. The book of 1897 was a French edition, de Bylandt having moved to Belgium. It is dedicated to Monseigneur le Prince Albert de Belgique, President of the *Société Royal St Hubert!* (later the *Union Cynologique Saint-Hubert*) It is essentially a compilation of breed descriptions, or standards. In the French edition the Bloodhound appears as the Chien de St Hubert, although the hounds illustrating the standard are all British Bloodhounds, many of them those of Edwin Brough. The book was revised and reprinted in four languages in 1904, and in this edition the standard used in 1897 has been replaced by that of the Association of Bloodhound Breeders. This is essentially the later Kennel Club standard, given with a few alterations (not all insignificant) in English, and more or less translated into the other languages, but without the paragraph on “Wrinkle”. However, it is the description given in the earlier, ‘Belgian’, edition, which seems to have formed the basis of the modern FCI standard. In neither the 1897, nor the 1904 edition is there any claim as to the country of origin of the Bloodhound.

Edwin Brough, the leading breeder of Bloodhounds in Britain at the end of the 19th Century, had the greatest respect for Le Couteulx who he says was “without doubt the greatest authority on the subject”, and he accepted the version of the history of the Bloodhound which Le Couteulx promoted. But he was equally positive that the Bloodhound of his time was NOT the Chien de St Hubert. He says that in one of the pedigrees in a Kennel List of Le Couteulx’ hounds of 1876 “appears a St Hubert hound, and this must have been one of the last of the breed, as it became extinct about this time.”¹ The standard produced for the Bloodhound by Brough and Dr Sidney Turner in 1896, and adopted by the Association of Bloodhound Breeders, which forms the basis of both the British and the American standards, is presented

¹ *The Bloodhound and its Use in Tracking Criminals* E Brough 1902

him out notwithstanding he lye hidden in wylde woods, in close and ouergrowen groues, and lurcke in hollow holes apte to harbour such vngracious guesstes. Moreover, although they should passe ouer the water, thinking thereby to auoyde the pursute of the houndes, yet will not these Dogges giue ouer their attempt, but presuming to swym through the streame, perseuer in their pursute, and when they be arriued and gotten the further bancke, they hunt vp and downe, to and fro runne they, from place to place shift they, vntill they haue attained to that plot of ground where they passed ouer. And this is their practise, if perdie they canot at y^e first time smelling, finde out the way which the deede doers tooke to escape. So at length get they that by arte, cunning, and diligent indeuour, which by fortune and lucke they cannot otherwyse overcome. In so much as it seemeth worthely and wisely written by Ælianus in his sixte Booke, and xxxix. Chapter [*Greek text*] to bee as it were naturally instilled and powred into these kinde of Dogges. For they wyll not pause or breath from their pursute vntill such tyme as they bee apprehended and taken which committed the facte. The owners of such houndes vse to keepe them in close and darke channells in the day time, and let them lose at liberty in the night season, to thintent that they myght with more courage and boldnesse practise to follow the fellow in the euening and solitarie houres of darkenesse, when such yll disposed varlots are principally purposed to play theyr impudent pageants, & imprudent pranckes. These houndes (vpon whom this present portion of our treatise runneth) when they are to follow such fellows as we haue before rehersed, vse not that liberty to raunge at wil, which they have otherwise when they are in game, (except upon necessary occasion, wheron dependeth an urgent and effectuall perswasion) when such purloyners make speedy way in flight, but beyng restrained and drawne backe from running at randon with the leasse, the ende whereof the owner holding in his hand is led, guyded, and directed with such swiftnesse and slownesse (whether he go on foote, or whether he ryde on horsebacke) as he himselfe in hart would wishe for the more easie apprehension of these venturous varlots. In the borders of England & Scotland, (the often and accustomed stealing of cattell so procuring) these kinde of Dogges are very much vsed and they are taught and trayned vp first of all to hunt cattell as well of the smaller as of the greater growth, and afterwarde (that qualitic relinquished and left) they are learned to pursue such pestilent persons as plant theyr pleasure in such practises of purloyning as we haue already declared. Of this kinde there is none that taketh the water naturally, except it please you so to suppose of them whych follow the Otter, whych sometimes haunte the lande, and sometime vseth the water. And yet neuerthesse all the kind of them boyling and broyling with greedy desire of the pray which by swymming passeth through ryuer and flood, plung amyds the water, and passe the streame with their pawes. Bot this propertie proceedeth from an earnest desire wherwith they be inflamed, rather then from any inclination issuynge from the ordinance and appoyntment of nature. And albeit some of this sort in English be called Brache, in Scottishe Rache, the cause hereof resteth in the shee sex and not in the generall kinde.² For we English men call bytches, belonging to the hunting kinde of Dogges, by the tearme aboue mencioned. To bee short it is proper to the nature of houndes, some to keepe silence in hunting untill

¹ At this point Caius is moving away from the Bloodhound proper to the scent hound in general. There are no chapter divisions in the Latin *De Canibus Britannicis*, merely marginal headings to a continuous text. The general topic at this point is ‘sagaces’, in which Caius has also covered harriers, then terriers.

² Caius is understandably mixed up here, reflecting the way usage had developed in the 16th Century. In fact ‘rache’ is an old English word with Norse associations, used in Medieval times for scent hounds of both sexes, primarily free-running pack hounds, distinguished from the leash-hound or ‘limer’. ‘Brache’, of French origin is also a word for a scent-hound, but very quickly in early English became specialised to refer to females. By the mid 16th century ‘rache’ had become exclusively Scottish usage.

such tyme as there is game offered. Othersome so soone as they smell out the place where the beast lurketh, to bewray it immediatly by their importunate barcking, notwithstanding it be farre of many furlongs cowchyng close in his cabbyn. And these Dogges the younger they be, the more wantonly barcke they, and the more liberally, yet, of times without necessitie, so that in them, by reason of theyr young yeares and want of practise, small certaintie is to be reposed. For continuance of tyme, and experience in game, ministreth to these houndes not onely cunning in running, but also (as in the rest) an assured foresight what is to bee done, principally, being acquainted with their masters watchwordes, cyther in reuoking or imboldening them to serue the game.

Turberville (or Gascoigne)

THE NOBLE ART OF VENERIE OR HUNTYNG 1575, is usually ascribed to George Turberville, although the *OED* and *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* attribute it to George Gascoigne. This is most important, and contains many references to Bloodhounds, but it is also potentially very deceiving. For instance it is, as far as I know, the earliest book to link up the Bloodhound with the St Hubert Hound. It is quoted, and pictures from it printed, in Brey and Reed: *The Complete Bloodhound* (1978) pages 18-21. The entire relevant section is as follows:

Of blacke hounds aunciently come from Saint Huberts abbay in Ardene. Chap. 5

The hounds which we call Saint Huberts houndes, are commonly all blacke, yet neuerthesse, their race is so mingled at these dayes, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the Abbots of Saint Hubert haue always kept some of their race or kynde, in honour and remembrance of the Sainct which was a hunter with Saint Eustace. Whervpon we may coniecture that (by the grace of God) all good huntsmen shall follow them into Paradise. To returne vnto my former purpose, this kind of Dogges hath been dispersed thorough the Countreys of *Hennault, Lorayne, Flanders and Burgonye*, they are mighty of body, neuerthesse, their legges are lowe and short, likewise they are not swift, although they be very good of sent, hunting chaces which are farre straggled, fearing neyther water nor colde, and do more couet the chaces that smell, as Foxes, Bore, and suche like, than other, bycause they find themselves neyther of swiftnesse nor courage to hunte and kill the chaces that are lighter and swifter. The Bloudhoundes of this colour prooue good, especially those that are cole blacke, but I make no great accompte to breede on them, or to keepe the kinde, and yet I founde once a Booke whiche a hunter did dedicate to a Prince of *Lorayne*, whiche seemed to loue Hunting much, wherein was a blason which the same hunter gave to his Bloudhound called *Soygillard*, which was white,

*My name came first from holy Huberts Race
Soygillard my Sire, a hound of singlar grace.*

Whervpon we may presume that some of the kind proue white sometimes, but they are not of the kind of the *Greffys*¹ or *Bauxes* which we haue at these dayes.

The deceptive thing is that here we have a book written in English, in which the

¹ These were white hounds, used for pursuing the hart, though according to Turberville-/du Fouilloux the "Dun Hounds" (Chiens Gris also known as 'Gris de S. Louis') had been held in higher esteem. From the description in Turberville these or some of them could

So we come back to Le Couteulx, who admired the British Bloodhound so much, and who surely had no idea of "stealing" the Bloodhound. Rather he thought he was honouring and uniting two traditions. He and a few others sought to establish the Bloodhound under the name of the Chien de St Hubert in France. In the exhibition of 1865, under the title *LA VÉNERIE FRANÇAISE*, three British Bloodhounds were exhibited as St Huberts; there were no St Huberts of continental origin! Apparently the rest of the hunting fraternity in France were not impressed, and one writer in the book commemorating the exhibition, maybe Le Couteulx himself, notes that French huntsmen protested against the Bloodhound as being "too heavy, too massive", and looks forward to the crossing of hounds like Cowen's Druid with some of the swift lightweight hounds which still survived in the Ardennes to produce a satisfactory breed. If the Bloodhound was the "true" St Hubert, why the desire to change it into something else?

There is no doubt that some British owners were relatively acquiescent in this, and took their hounds to France to exhibit them as St Huberts. They were prepared broadly to accept that the Bloodhound and the Chien de St Hubert were somewhat similar, and that the St Hubert had played some part in the development of the British breed. The supposed import by William the Conqueror and the legend of St Hubert's miraculous conversion¹ were good stories (and dog people always seem to prefer legend to history) to add to the already rich tradition of the Bloodhound. There was no FCI in those days, and no threat of losing title to the breed. At least one person, totally without poetry, but affected by an extreme Victorian squeamishness, didn't like the name "Bloodhound", and thought the breed would be more popular if it was called the St Hubert Hound!

In 1858 Le Couteulx published a picture of a Chien de St Hubert in his book: it looks nothing like a Bloodhound.² In his *Manuel* of 1890 there is a picture of a St Hubert and a Bloodhound for comparison. They look similar, as they would have to, to support Le Couteulx's claim, but in particular, the St Hubert lacks the head qualities and expression of the Bloodhound. Dog breeds are not separate species but related families, and as with humans, similarity of appearance is no guarantee of membership of the same family. The two are no more alike than are representatives of many different breeds of terrier, or spaniel.

¹ A story originally told about St Eustace, and only later transferred to St Hubert. Du Fouilloux suggests that Hubert was a fellow hunter with Eustace, but in fact Eustace was dead before Hubert was born, and could even have been a 2nd century Roman called Placidus.. All the earliest representations of a man being converted by a stag with a crucifix between its antlers are of Eustace, not Hubert. King David 1 of Scotland (1124-53) made use of the same story.

² The hound apparently has a British name 'Wareful', which makes one wonder if it was one of the Count's 'Bloodhounds' from Britain. If so, it was a terrible specimen!

in terms of its type and use, but there is nothing to suggest it was kept particularly pure. Again, if import of packs of St Huberts did take place, we know nothing of what happened to them afterwards. Were they absorbed into the population of Bloodhounds, or just mixed with other pack-hounds, or did they simply die out?

After the imports we find Randle Cotgrave's French-English Dictionary 1611 giving the following translations:

Limier - A Blood-hound or Lime-hound

Chien de S' Hubert - A kind of strong, short legd, and deepe mouthed hound, vsed most for hunting of the Fox, Badger, Otter, etc.

Thus late in the period of the supposed imports of St Huberts in large numbers, the St Hubert was still regarded as different from the Bloodhound. Obviously, the Chien de St Hubert was not known to the average English speaker, between Medieval times and the 17th Century, though the Bloodhound was well established, and what is surely proved is that the St Hubert can in no way have provided for the Englishman any kind of model or standard which he needed to respect in breeding Bloodhounds. The development of the Bloodhound in Britain was the result of British breeders following their own preferences. They were not trying to breed St Huberts; they were trying to breed Bloodhounds. There is a rich irony in the fact that the British have sometimes been accused of introducing 'wrong' characteristics, eg colours, or 'losing' the Talbot (if regarded as the white St Hubert). In no way were they trying to preserve the St Hubert hound, or holding it 'in trust', until the French or Belgians were finally prepared to take an interest in it – they who by misfortune, perhaps, but it seems also by neglect, lost the St Hubert in the first place!

By describing the use of Bloodhounds on the Scottish borders to track cattle thieves and the like, Caius identifies the Bloodhound with another kind of dog known in Scotland as the Sleuth Hound, and variously, as the Slough Dog or Slow Hound. There was also the Talbot, which was typically white. It is unlikely that these formed a single, totally homogenous, breed, but equally, an account such as that of Gervaise Markham in *Country Contentments* 1615, suggests that they could be, and were, interbred with each other and with smaller hounds, to suit the fancy of the individual kennel.

The great scientist, Robert Boyle 1627 - 1691 describes a trial of a bloodhound, which shows they were kept in deer parks and used for tracking both deer and men. Sydenham Edwards in *Cynographia Britannica* 1800, under the heading of "The British Bloodhound", describes exactly the same range of uses. In this book the only equivalent to the Bloodhound is "Canis Scoticus" or "Sleuth-hound", no mention of the St Hubert. Thus there is, crucially, continuity in the Bloodhound right up to the beginning of the 19th Century, though numbers had dwindled by then to very few.



Picture from Turberville, showing heavily-built limier, and lighter running hounds, the two in the foreground waiting to be slipped, if the hart comes in their direction

writer seems to be familiar with the St Hubert hound, and the Blood-hound, and says that at least the one can be the other. However, what is barely acknowledged by Turberville, and what does not appear to have been given prominence in any of the modern Bloodhound writings which refer to it, is the fact that the book is a translation from French!¹

Its source is *La Venerie de Jaques du Fouilloux* (1561). This is a marvellous book, a complete treatise on hunting, especially of the hart, illustrated with woodcuts of hounds, and all sorts of other pictures, including of the different types of dung from which one can identify the creatures that made them, and decide whether they are to be hunted or not. It probably has a place on the shelves of every French-speaking

have been black and tan with a 'badgered' saddle. However they were "running hounds" (not greyhounds, but faster, lighter scent hounds) rather than leash-hounds. From Charles IX of France in his *La Chasse Royale* (1624) we gather the white St Hubert had largely disappeared, having been interbred with the greffier to produce his favorite hound the chien blanc du roi.

¹ Both Harmer (1968) and Lowe (1981) refer to Turberville, and also speak of the "Dunne hound" mentioned by him, as though it was an English type. In fact Turberville is simply translating Du Fouilloux' "Chien gris", as mentioned in previous note. I have been puzzled as to whether there actually was a dun hound in England. Nicolas Cox (1674) describes them, but on examination, what he says proves to be just a paraphrase of Turberville, owing everything to what du Fouilloux says about the French chien gris. Subsequent writers have quite possibly taken such texts and simply assumed that dun hounds once existed in Britain.

hunting enthusiast. The degree to which Turberville follows du Fouilloux can be illustrated by quoting the equivalent passage to the one above:

Des Chiens noirs anciens de l'Abbaye Saint Hubert, en Ardene

Chapitre V

Les Chiens que nous appellons de Saint Hubert doibuent estre communément tous noirs, toutes-fois on ha tant meslé leur race, qu'il en vient auourd'huy de tous poilz. Ce sont les Chiens dont les Abbez de Saint Hubert ont tousiours gardé de la race, en l'honneur et memoire du Saint, qui estoit veneur avec Saint Eustache, dont est a coniecturer que les bons veneurs les ensuyuront en Paradis, auecq'la grace de Dieu. Pour reuenir au premier propos, cette race de Chiens ha esté semée par les pays de Haynaud, Lorraine, Flandres et Bourgongne. Ilz sont puissans de corsage, toutesfois ilz ont les iambes basses et courtes; aussi ne sont ilz pas vistes, combien qu'ilz soyent de haute nez, chassans de forlonge, ne craignant les eaux, ne les froidures, et desirent plus les bestes puantes, comme sangliers, Renardz, et leurs semblables, ou autres parce qu'ilz ne se sentent pas le cueur ne la vistesse pour courir, et prendre les bestes legieres. Les Limiers en sortent bons, principalement pur le noir, mais pour en fair race pour courir, ie n'en fais pas grand cas: toutes-fois i'ay trouvé un livre qu'un Veneur adroissoit a un Prince dr Lorraine, qui aimoit fort la chasse, ou il y avoit un Blason qu'iceluy veneur donnoit a son Limier, nommé Souillart, qui estoit blanc:

»De Saint Hubert sorti mon premier nom

»Filz de Souillard, Chien de tres grand renom

Dont est a presumer qu'il en sort quelque'une blanches, mais ilz ne sont de la race de Greffiers, que nous auons pour le iourd'huy. (Pp 16-17)

The translation is very literal. From it we can conclude that there is no reason to suppose that Turberville was familiar with St Hubert hounds in this country at all. He doesn't say he is, in fact, but it would normally be a reasonable assumption that an English writer writing for an English audience is saying something relevant to them, even though the actual places he refers to are in France. But all he is in fact doing is making a slavish translation of his source, and it is perfectly possible that Turberville had absolutely no first hand knowledge whatever of the St Hubert, either here or abroad. The reference to Bloodhounds also needs to be looked at carefully. He uses it as a translation of 'Limier'¹, here and throughout the book. A Limier is a hound hunted on a leash. It was used to 'harbour' the quarry, especially the hart, that is to seek him out where he was lying under cover during the day, so that he could be forced out and hunted by the running hounds, or raches, on his hot

¹ T 36: then tak your Bloudhounds and with them finde out the view or slotte of the Harte

F 46: puis ferez mettre les Limiers sur les routes de Cerf

T 71: all huntsmen leading their bloudhounds

F 84: le donneray icy intelligence a tous veneurs, menans le Limier au bois...

T 86: that they may thither returne to seeke him on the morrow by the breake of the day with the bloodhounds & the hounds of the kennell

from identical, and indicates how much development was still to take place in Britain during the following two or three centuries.

Historians of the Bloodhound appear to have found it very difficult to produce references to the St Hubert in early English writing. One book which *has* been quoted to support a link between the St Hubert and the Bloodhound is ***The Noble Art of Venerie or Huntynge***, 1575, attributed to Turberville. A short section in this book is devoted to the St Hubert hound, and says, at one point, "The Bloodhounds of this colour prove good, especially those that are cole black, but I make no great accompte to breede on them or to keepe the kinde." If this is taken at face value, it suggests that the St Hubert was known in England, and was identified with the Bloodhound, at least to a considerable extent.

However, as some authors of dog books have pointed out, but perhaps not all have been aware of, most of Turberville, and all of this section, is simply a close, but largely unacknowledged translation of a French book, ***La Venerie de Jaques du Fouilloux*** (1561), the text of which reads: "Les Limiers en sortent bons, principalement pur le noir, mais pour en fair race pour courir, ie n'en fais pas grand cas." In other words, Turberville is using the word "Bloodhound" not as a translation of "Chien de St Hubert", but as a translation of "limier", as he does throughout the book. A limier is a hound hunted on a leash, used to find the hart or wild boar, before the pack hounds ("running hounds"), were released on its trail. This was obviously how Bloodhounds were primarily used. What du Fouilloux is saying is that St Huberts make good leash-hounds, but he doesn't rate them as running hounds or pack hounds. Turberville is saying they can be *used* as Bloodhounds, not that they are Bloodhounds. Following du Fouilloux, Turberville mentions the occurrence of St Huberts in "Hennault, Lorrayne, Flanders and Burgonye" but is not prepared to depart from his source at all to mention to his English reader anything about their existence in his own country. There is in fact nothing in Turberville to suggest that the St Hubert was known in Britain.

Du Fouilloux, as translated by Turberville, describes the St Huberts as "mighty of body, neuerthelesse, their legges are lowe and short." Charles IX of France (1550-74) describes them in *La Chasse Royale* as of medium stature, and long in the body. If this was what the Chien de St Hubert was like in the 16th Century, it can hardly be identified as the same breed as the Bloodhound of the 19th!

Le Couteulx says that in the 16th Century there were gifts of large numbers of St Huberts from French aristocrats to English royalty and nobility. I have not been able to trace references to these in English writings, but it is worth noting that Du Fouilloux, writing also in the 16th century, says the Chien de St Hubert was a very mixed race, of many colours, and dispersed into various areas of France. One might question what these hounds were like, that were supposedly imported. Before the imports, as Caius shows, the Bloodhound was already firmly established in Britain

and the Norman nobles had forgotten to bring their hunting dogs, but even the name of the Chien de St Hubert was still unknown to them.” They probably brought hounds with them, but not, as far as we know, St Huberts.

Le Couteulx also advocated the idea that the word “Bloodhound” means “dog of pure blood”, rather than “blood-seeking dog”. If he were correct, the meaning would naturally give support to the argument that the breed was kept pure in Britain. It is quite likely that this derivation of the word originates with Le Couteulx himself. No one appears to have thought of it before the 19th Century, and it is clear from an examination of early sources that it is incorrect.

There is thus nothing in what we know of the Normans, or in the derivation of the word “Bloodhound” to support the idea that the Normans brought the St Hubert to England, and that it was subsequently kept pure under the name of the Bloodhound. It remains possible that the ancestors of the Bloodhound included large hounds brought over by the Normans, but what they were, we do not know.

It now becomes significant to look at the History of the Bloodhound in Britain, as far as it is relevant to this question. It is reasonable to suppose, and there is nothing to contradict the notion, that the Bloodhound known in the 19th century, which we can trace in pedigrees to our present hounds, was descended from animals known as Bloodhounds in this country in ancient times. There is no evidence of a discontinuity, from the earliest references to Bloodhounds down to the present day.

One of the earliest references to the Bloodhound in surviving English writing is round about 1350. Although it appears in an English version of a French poem, the word is **not** used to translate *Chien de Saint Hubert*, and is used in a way which suggests it was perfectly familiar to English readers at the time. It is virtually certain that the animal was in use for at least fifty years before this, and quite probably had existed for centuries in Britain. Another reference of the period implies the Bloodhound was a big dog.

The very famous account of the Bloodhound given in John Caius’ *Of Englishe Dogges* (Fleming’s translation 1576) shows that, 200 years later, the Bloodhound was still familiar in Britain. There is, of course, no suggestion that the hound was of continental origin, but it does show the basic Bloodhound of the time as having some of the characteristics by which it is still known: “The greater sort which serve to hunt, having lips of a large size, and ears of no small length...”

In Conrad Gesner’s *Thierbuch* published in 1563 in Zurich there is a picture, originating with Caius, of the ‘Englischen Bluthund’, and the same picture is printed in Edward Topsell’s *History of Four-footed Beasts* 1607. In both books it is compared with the Scottish Sleuth-hound, and indicating that the two animals were seen as having a definite British identity, both in their home countries and in European eyes. The Bloodhound pictured resembles the modern animal, but is far

scent. The translation proves that this is how the Bloodhound was characteristically used, when hunting game.

A medieval pack would include a few Bloodhounds and mostly raches, or pack hounds. In the request for hounds from Queen Margaret of Scotland (see Page 36) she asks for ‘thre or four brais (brace) of ye best ratches in ye contre’, and ‘ane brais of blude houndis’. Another source suggests the proportion should be eleven couples of raches to one of limiers. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* the great boar unharboured by the bloodhounds rushes out and cause havoc among the raches. This supports the notion that the Bloodhound never was a pack animal, though in what Turberville says and in other early books on hunting there is a suggestion that the Limier was not necessarily specifically bred, but could be ‘promoted’ to this status, on the basis of showing an aptitude for it in its youth when hunting with the pack. According to Du Fouilloux it could sometimes be slipped to hunt with the pack when the game was unharboured.¹ In using the word instead of another more explanatory word or expression (such as “lyme-hound”, perhaps) Turberville must have been pretty sure that his English audience would know what he meant, that the kind of dog and its function went together naturally in his readers’ minds. But, rather than telling us that the Bloodhound and St Hubert are one and the same, the original passage tells us that the St Hubert hound wasn’t much use as a running hound, but made a pretty good leashed hound. Turberville accepts this, using ‘Bloodhound’ for ‘limier’, but whereas Du Fouilloux dismisses the St Hubert as a running hound, Turberville dismisses it altogether. Not surprising that he did not ‘keepe the kinde’, if there weren’t any in England!

Looking at the passage in its original French context, we find a Frenchman in 1561 saying that the St Hubert Hound is a very mixed race, ie it has not been kept pure, it exists in many colours, and is dispersed into various areas of France. It is also strong of body, but short of leg. Even had the “original” Bloodhound been a St Hubert hound, brought over to England in the eleventh century, there is absolutely nothing in what we can glean of its early history to suggest that it was kept any

F 102: Premierment, ceux qui accompagnent les Chiens doyuent jetter une brisee aux dernieres voyes ou erres, la ou ilz laisseront le Cerf, a fin de le retourner quester le lendemain des le point du jour, avec le Limier, et les Chiens de la meute apres eux.

T106: take his bloudhounde

F126: Prendre son Limier

T112: found him again with their Bloudhounde or with some other stanche old hounde of the kenell

F134: en retournant la avec le Limier ou les vieux Chiens sages de la meute

T :varlet that keeps the Bloudehound

F140: valet de Limier

¹ Pointed out by Sir Henry Dryden, in *Twici*, 1327

more pure or less dispersed over here. Since there is no evidence to suggest that the Bloodhound was a St Hubert even to start with, and since the Bloodhound type has obviously been considerably modified over the years, it seems completely untenable to suggest that the Bloodhound is the St Hubert hound of Medieval times, somehow miraculously preserved over the centuries, in a country which seems hardly to have been aware of the existence of the St Hubert for most of that time.

Jesse (Vol II, Pp 319-321) quotes from Randle Cotgrave's French-English Dictionary 1611, as follows:

Limier.- A Bloud-hound, or Lime-hound

Chien de S' Hubert.- A kind of strong, short legd, and deepe mouthed hound, vsed most for hunting of the Fox, Badger, Otter, etc.

It is quite possible that Du Fouilloux/Turberville was his authority for these definitions, but obviously there was no simple English translation of *chien de St Hubert*, and what is surely proved is that the St Hubert can in no way have provided for the Englishman any kind of model or standard which he felt any need to respect in breeding Bloodhounds! The development of the the Bloodhound in Britain seems to have been the result of British breeders pursuing their own preferences.

As far as Turberville is concerned, French "Limier" and English "Bloodhound" are synonymous. But perhaps not quite. In the section on Otter hunting, which is not in Du Fouilloux, he says:

When a huntzman would hunt the otter, he should first send foure seruants or varlets with bloudhounds or such hounds as will draw in the lyame, and let him sende them, twoo vp the Riuer, and two downe the riuer...

In this section he also says:

"If any of their lyamhounds find of an otter..."

Here, freed from the need to translate, at least from du Fouilloux, he makes a distinction between the Bloodhound as a kind of dog, and the function of hunting on a lyam, or leash. My impression is, that having decided to translate "Limier" as "Bloodhound", he simply stuck to it whenever the word occurred in du Fouilloux, even though there were alternatives available.

Two early books on hunting in English make no mention of the Bloodhound, even though the word, and the animal must have been familiar. These are *The Master of Game* by Edward, Second Duke of York, written 1406-1413, largely a translation of Count Gaston de Foix [Gaston Phoebus]: *Livre de Chasse* 1387-91, and *The Boke of St Albans*, 1486, which contains a section on hunting, apparently written by a lady, Dame Juliana Barnes. Both of these use "limer" as an equivalent for French "limier".¹

¹ see next page

Cynologique Saint-Hubert which was one of the founder members of the FCI. It is not surprising therefore that (I believe in 1966) the FCI should have recognised, not the Bloodhound, but the Chien de St Hubert, and accepted the Belgian claim, in the absence of any counter claim from Britain, a non-member.

It is fair to say that the confusion of the Bloodhound with the Chien de St Hubert is largely due to one person, the French Comte Le Couteulx de Canteleu, a 19th century Bloodhound owner and breeder. He was a tremendous enthusiast for the British Bloodhound, and bought many of the best known hounds which appear in our early pedigrees. He was also a great enthusiast for the French tradition in hunting, which he described in two books *La Vénérerie Française* 1858, and *Manuel de Vénérerie Française*, 1890. He wanted to re-establish the reputation and independence of French hunting, which had fallen into a decline since the Revolution, and which, according to him, was only ceasing to be subordinate to English hunting by about 1830. He also wished to reintroduce the Chien de St Hubert, which had been an important hound in ancient French tradition, but which had died out in France. "In France, there are hardly any to be found, and even those which might still be met with in the Ardennes or the surrounding area are crossed to such an extent that they no longer have the characteristics of the breed."

(*Manuel P32*)

Three or four couples of St. Hubert's hounds were sent annually from the Abbey of St Hubert, in what is now Belgium, to the Royal Kennels of France from 1200 right up till the French Revolution of 1789. D'Yauville, who was Master of the Royal Hounds, writes in 1788:

"The St. Hubert hounds were formerly much prized; but they have no doubt degenerated, for out of six or eight that the Abbot of St. Hubert's Monastery gives each year to the King, it is rarely that one is kept in His Majesty's packs; some have been trained as 'limiers' and have turned out well."

It was the contention of Le Couteulx, however, that the Chien de St Hubert had been kept pure, in Britain, in the form of the Bloodhound. It had, according to him, been brought over at the time of the Conquest, though he is quite vague about this, saying it "probably" came over at the time of the Conquest, or could have been here before:

"In England, this breed, which probably had already been introduced there from the time of the Conquest or even before, was carefully preserved in its types, its qualities and its faults under the name of *Chien de sang* (that is to say of pure blood), Bloodhound."

The vagueness of what le Couteulx says suggests he was making assumptions, rather than working from evidence. There is, as far as I know, no evidence to support the view that the Chien de St Hubert was introduced by the Normans. Gérard Sasias, writer of the section on the Chien de St Hubert in *Encyclo-Chien* in French, says the Normans did not even know of the St Hubert. "Not that (William)

THE BLOODHOUND, THE ST HUBERT & THE FCI

THE BLOODHOUND IS AN INTERNATIONAL BREED, and no one country can claim sole proprietorship. The USA, with by far the largest population is likely to have the major influence on the breed's future. Nevertheless, breeds do have 'nationalities' which survive their transplantation to other countries. The Yorkshire Terrier, currently the third highest registered breed in France, is recognised as an English breed, and no-one would consider the Black-and-Tan Coonhound, however it might spread in the future, as anything other than an American one.

Suppose, however, that by some strange neglect we had allowed the Bloodhound to die out worldwide, there might come a time when we in Britain would look across the Atlantic at the Coonhound and say, "That looks rather like what the Bloodhound used to be." We might then claim that it *really was* the Bloodhound, and appropriate it as a British breed. Americans, one imagines, would not be at all pleased. And yet this is a precise mirror of what happened in relation to the Bloodhound itself, which is identified by the FCI as the Chien de St Hubert, and given as a breed of Belgian origin.

The FCI is an international organisation, and the British KC has not taken a stand on the issue, although it does not accept the FCI view. So there it stands at the beginning of the FCI standard: "Chien de St Hubert - Bloodhound - Race Belge" as though it was a matter of established and incontrovertible fact. And as time goes by this mistaken attribution is slowly gaining recognition, in dog literature, even in the English-speaking world, though it is accepted that the entire world population of Bloodhounds descends from animals exported from Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries (except for outcrosses, and a few which may have gone to America earlier). Those who have written books on the Bloodhound, like Brough, Appleton, Harmer and Lowe in Britain, Whitney, and Brey and Reed in the US have said no more, in covering the history of the breed, than that the St Hubert Hound probably played some part in the ancestry of the Bloodhound. None of them goes so far as to say that the Bloodhound *is* the St Hubert.

Let us look a little further at how this situation came about, and then, with this in mind, consider the history of the Bloodhound in Britain.

The process by which Belgium was able to claim to be the country of origin of the Bloodhound is as follows. During the later part of the 19th Century the Bloodhound had been loosely referred to, *by some people and in some circumstances*, as the Chien de St Hubert, for reasons which will be explained. If the Bloodhound and the Chien de St Hubert were the same, then the Chien de St Hubert must go back to St Hubert himself, who was Bishop of Liège in the 7th Century, earlier than any appearance of the Bloodhound in English references. St Hubert, the patron saint of hunting, is of course important in Belgium, whose canine organisation is the *Union*

Perhaps by Turberville's time the word *limer* had become unfashionable and unfamiliar. Sir Thomas Elyot, in his *Dictionary* of 1538 says a "lymmar" is a cross between "a hounde and a mastive" - so maybe it had become disreputable as well! Nevertheless, as an account contemporary with Jesse shows, the leash-hound in France has not always been a big dog:

*The garde de chasse goes out at daybreak, leading a limier or finder. I have generally seen them use for this purpose a small, ugly, wire haired dog, not unlike the Scotch terrier.*¹

All we can say is that "limer" did not mean "Bloodhound" to every Englishman.

What we have with "limer" seems to be a situation where *use* shades into *type*: limers, dogs used to follow trails leashed, were usually big (mastiff-like!), and could include bloodhounds. With "Bloodhound" we seem to have *use* and *type* shading into *breed*. In Medieval and Renaissance society, social rank was determined by birth and breeding, and the notion of careful breeding was readily applied to animals and even plants. There is plenty in the early books on hunting to tell us that if you want to breed a good hound you must choose its parents carefully. Caius distinguished between "gentle" (ie nobly bred) dogs (which included all hounds) and others. But there is not the same sense of sharply delimited breeds we have today, which is carried to its limit in KC registered dogs, where a complete pedigree of recognised specimens of a breed is expected if the puppy is to be so recognised. Breeds in the past have been rather fuzzier round the edges, and the chances are that if you asked two people of different periods, or even different people of the same period, what they meant by a bloodhound you'd get somewhat different answers, but the meaning would never be narrower than it is now, and would always include the ancestors of today's bloodhounds.

"And the length of the hounds' couples between the hounds should be a foot, and the rope of a limer three fathoms and a half, be he ever so wise a limer it sufficeth." (*Master of Game*)

and:

"XV Which beestis shall be reride with the lymere?"

My dere sonnys, echeon now will I yow lere

How many maner beestys as with the lymere

Shall be upreryde in fryth or in felde

155

Booth the hert and the bucke and the boore so wilde

And all other beestys that huntid shall be

Shall be sought and found with ratches so fre."

(*Boke of St Albans*).

'Which beasts shall be upreared (ie sought out or harboured) with the Leash-hound? My dear sons, I will now teach each one of you how many kinds of beasts must be upreared with the leash-hound in wood or in field - both the hart and the buck and the boar so wild. All other animals which are hunted must be sought and found with free-running pack-hounds.'

¹ (Jesse II P250): at this time the St Hubert Hound, which had been one of the principal Limiers in French hunting, was effectively extinct on the Continent, so maybe the choice of a large limier was not available.

The Sleuth-Hound

JOHAN BARBOUR'S *THE BRUCE*, a very long poem in impenetrable Medieval Scots dialect on the life of the Scottish King, is dated 1375, and contains the first instance known of the word "sleuth-hound". King Robert is twice tracked by a sleuth-hound; that set on him by his enemy John of Lorn keeps solely to the trail of the king, although he keeps dividing up his party to try to confuse it. It is eventually thwarted only when the king crosses water. The actual year in which Robert the Bruce was tracked by a sleuth-hound is 1307, and Barbour himself was probably born about 1320, nine years before King Robert's death, so he was fairly close to the events he was describing. Though *The Bruce* is a romance, full of heroic deeds, rather than a factual history, there is no reason to disbelieve the story, and certainly nothing to suggest that the sleuth-hound was an anachronism in 1307. And if they were available they would certainly be used to pursue such a fugitive as the Bruce was from time to time in his life. There is a similar story told of Sir William Wallace,¹ the Scottish guerrilla fighter, who was executed in 1305,¹ though in this case the source, a poem by Henry ("blind Harry") the Minstrel, is much later, about 1470. So, there is every reason to believe that the Bloodhound and the Sleuth-hound were exact contemporaries, and both begin to appear in literature about the same time. It is perfectly possible that they were the same kind of animal, and shared the same breeding, since there was much coming and going between the two kingdoms. Robert the Bruce's family had property near Chelmsford, where it has been claimed he was born! Importantly, the tradition of using Bloodhounds as man-trailers in Britain is shown as having begun at least before 1300.

The earliest description of the sleuthhound is in Hector Boethius, (or Boece, 1465-1536, Canon of Aberdeen), in *The history and croniklis of Scotland*. (Translatit laithly in our vulgar and commoun langage be maister Johne Bellenden.) ff. ccl. Thomas Davidson: Edinburgh, [1536.] Under the heading "Of the gret plente of haris, hartis, and vthir vvild bestialll in Scotland. **Of the meruellus nature of syndry Scottis doggis.** And of the nature of Salmond" (Book on "the cosmogrphe and discription of Albion," Capter XI (Latin original pub Paris 1526):

In Scotland ar doggis of meruellus nature, For abone the commoun nature and conditioun of doggis, quhilkis ar sene in all partis, ar thre maner of doggis in Scotland, quhilk ar sene in na uthir partis of the world. The first is ane hound baith wycht, hardy and swift.² Thir houndis ar nocht allanerlie fiers and cruell on all wyld beistis. Bot on theuis and ennymes to thair maister on the same maner. The secound kynd is ane rache, that sekis thair pray, baith of fowlis, beistis and fische be sent and smell of thair neis. The thrid kynd is mair than any rache.³ Reid hewit or ellis blak with small spraingis of

¹ Wallace eludes the sleuth hound by killing one of his party whom he suspects of treachery and leaving the corpse to distract the hound. Nice one, Braveheart!

² Associated writings suggest this might have been a kind of greyhound.

³ A check of the originals shows that Boece, in his Latin was saying the sleuthhound was **not** bigger ('haud maius') than the rache, whereas Bellenden, who gives us the

with "Bloodhound" relegated to brackets afterwards, and it is given as a Belgian breed! The Chien de St Hubert, it seems likely, was a Belgian Breed, the Bloodhound certainly is a British one, and what we unequivocally have here, in America, and on the Continent, is the Bloodhound. The process by which it was hijacked, when FCI standards were being drawn up, without the involvement of the Kennel Club, is probably worth a separate study.

A study such as this is an ongoing affair, and can never make a claim to completeness. No doubt there are other sources in existence but unknown which could supply interesting and relevant information. Something could very well appear which would radically challenge some of the conclusions I have drawn. However the corpus of Medieval and Renaissance writing surviving to modern times, though finite, is very large. Combing it for scattered references to the Bloodhound would be enormously time-consuming even if I had ready access to the texts. As Jesse says:

they who have ever sought for accurate and original sources of information on any subject, are well aware how little the result is adequate, in many cases, to the amount of time and drudgery bestowed. In the event of any of his readers being kindly disposed to point out to the writer any historical information he has overlooked, or not had access to, it will be received with grateful thanks.

As regards the Sleuth-hound and Talbot, I can find nothing to support the idea that either was an *earlier* breed from which the Bloodhound developed. Both of them are breeds with which the Bloodhound is sometimes compared, and at others to some degree identified. The Talbot definitely appears to be a later name. On the St Hubert hound the books generally agree that the “true” St Hubert died out on the Continent in the late 19th Century, but state that it was one of the ancestors of the bloodhound, or that “it is likely that the St Hubert hound was involved at some time.” [Lowe (1981)]. Fair enough, though up until Turberville, no early reference to the Bloodhound gives any support to the idea, and Turberville, when properly related to Du Fouilloux, simply gives us the information that St Hubert hounds made good leash-hounds in France, and that leash-hounds in England could also be called Bloodhounds. The connection is pretty remote, and it is apparent that from the period from 1300 onwards the St Hubert and the Bloodhound each had chequered and independent histories.

One thing that emerges very clearly from sources is the distinction between the limer, or leash hound, and the rache or running hound in early times. In pictures from Medieval times the limer, or ‘limier’ in France, is almost always shown as a larger, heavier dog than the pack hounds, though the latter must have been quite substantial animals, to number the hart and wild boar among their quarry. We may assume that this difference held true of the Bloodhound and the rache, and that the rache continued in use, losing its name, in England and then in Scotland, in the course of time, but diversifying with appropriate mixing into such breeds as the foxhound, harrier, staghound, buckhound etc. It is clear from writers such as Markham and Cox that there were many kinds and local variations among hounds, both large and small in the 17th century. The numbers of bloodhounds must always have been small; in the long run, though, the breed held to its name and use.

It is sometimes said that the Bloodhound is the original hound from which all other scent hounds developed. It seems much more likely that the rache forms the basis of our modern breeds. In fact, given that the rache is recorded in English about three and a half centuries before the bloodhound, it is highly possible that the bloodhound itself developed from the rache, say in the period between 1000, and 1300. Writers on dog breeds love to claim the maximum importance, and the maximum antiquity, for their breed. They do this by widening the scope of what their breed’s name refers to, making it more inclusive as they go back in history, and prehistory. In the case of the Bloodhound, ‘Bloodhound’ comes to mean ‘large scent-hound’, so that we lose sight of the question of when and how ‘large scent hound’ (or hounds) became the Bloodhound.

This is not intended to consider the modern history of the Bloodhound, the chief source for which, for the Bloodhound book writers, seems to have been, directly or indirectly, Brough. It is nevertheless something I cannot resist commenting on that the FCI standard for the Bloodhound is the standard for the Chien de St Hubert,

spottis, and ar callit be the peple sleuthoundis. Thir doggis hes sa meruellus wit, that yai serche theuis and followis on thaym allanerlie be sent of the guddis that ar tane away. And nocht allanerlie fyndis the theif, but inuadis hym with gret cruelte. And youcht the theuis oftymes cors the watter, quair they pas, to cause ye hound to tynce the sent of thaym and the guudis, yit he serchis heir and thair with sic diligence, that be his fut he fyndis baith the trace of the theif and the guddis. The meruellous nature of yir houndis wil have na faith with vncouth peple. Howbeit the samyn ar rycht frequent and ryfe on the bordouris of Ingland and Scotland. Attour it is statute be the lawis of the bordouris, he that denyis entres to the sleuthound in tyme of chace and serching of guddis, salbe haldin participant with the cryme and theft committit.

In Scotland there are dogs of a marvellous nature, far above the common nature and condition of dogs which are seen in all places. There are three sorts of dogs in Scotland which are seen in no other parts of the world. The first is a dog both courageous hardy and swift.³ These dogs are not only fierce and cruel on all wild beasts but of thieves and enemies to their master in the same fashion. The second kind is a pack-hound, which seek their prey, both both of birds, animals and fish by the scent and smell of their nose. The third kind is larger than any pack-hound, red coloured or else black with small streaks of spots, and they are called sleuth-hounds by the people. These dogs have such a marvellous cleverness that they seek for thieves, and follow them only by the scent of the goods that are taken away. And not only find the thief but attack him with great cruelty. And though the thieves often cross the water, where they pass to make the hound lose the scent of them and the goods, yet he searches here and there with such diligence that by his foot (ie by the foot-scent of the thief) he finds both the trace of the thief and his goods. The marvellous nature of these hounds will not be believed by ignorant people. Nevertheless, the same hounds are very frequent and common on the borders of England and Scotland. In addition it is established by the laws of the border that he that denies entry to the sleuth-hound on an occasion of pursuit and searching for goods shall be held as an accomplice to the crime and theft committed.

It is quite clear that the circumstances of their use are the same as those ascribed to the Bloodhound in Caius, but was it the same animal? The description throws some doubt on this, in relation to size, and ferocity - though Caius does not say the Bloodhound is not fierce. The sleuth-hound’s pursuits were not always to attack, one presumes, because the reason the hound which pursued Bruce would not leave his scent was, according to Barbour, that it knew him well:

And sa mckill of hym he maid
That his awyn handis wald him feid...
Sa that the hund him followit swa
That he wald part na wyss him fra

And he made so much of him that he would feed him with his own hands, with the result that the hound followed him so that he would not part from him in any way.

In addition, Boece says the kinds of dog are known in no other parts of the world, whereas we know the Bloodhound was well known in England.

However, a successor of Boece, Lesley, Bishop of Ross, in his *De Origine Moribus et rebus gestis Scotorum*, 1578, basically repeats his predecessor’s description of the sleuth-hound, saying that the hound will find a thief it has been tracking even among a crowd of other people, and tear him to pieces:

*vernacular names of the dogs, not in Boethius, says it **was** bigger. It seems likely that Bellenden had some independent knowledge here, and was correcting Boethius. See P21.*

Nor has he imbibed this art from Nature alone, but has learned it of man, who, with much labour forms them skillfully to this; whence it comes that such among them as excel are purchased at a very high price. Yet they think this is not at all a different species from that which traces hares and other wild game.¹

Here, the implication is that the sleuth-hound is not a special breed of man-trailing dog, but an ordinary scent-hound, very highly trained to track man. Some kind of leash-hound would be the obvious choice.

In 1526 King James V of Scotland, and his Queen Margaret both wrote letters to Thomas Mangnus, Archediocoun of Eistriding [Archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire] asking if he could supply raches, “with ane brais of blude houndis of ye leist bynde yat ar gude & will ryde behind men one hors bak.”²

Here we have a very early Scottish text which refers to “Blude houndis”, not sleuth-hounds, perhaps because they were different, perhaps because they were writing to someone in England, to whom the term “sleuth-hound” might not be familiar. In reply, Magnus refers to “a couple of Lyam houndes of the beste kynde that woll ride behynde men vpon horsebak.” He failed to supply them, but shows no surprise at the request!

This example suggests that perhaps in the early sixteenth century, though the Bloodhound and the sleuth-hound may have overlapped as regards breed or type, it was possible to draw a distinction between a sleuth-hound as a man-trailing animal, and the Bloodhound as a leash-hound used in association with a pack to harbour beasts of venery.

In the context of the Scottish border the Bloodhound is referred to by name in the old ballad *Hobbie Noble*, referring to events in the 16th century. Border ballads are notoriously difficult to establish a clear date or provenance for; however the following section provides a good deal more information on the relationship between the bloodhound and sleuthhound in the 16th century.

Topsell/Gesner

EDWARD TOPSELL’S *History of Four-Footed Beasts* 1607, is the next major source of information regarding the early Bloodhound, how it was regarded, and how it relates to similar breeds. It also takes us back to Boece, to John Caius, and into Europe.

In it, on facing pages there are woodcuts of the Scottish Rache, (pronounced /ratʃ/ to rhyme with 'catch') the Scottish Sleuthhound and the English Bloodhound, with

¹ Quoted in Jesse II, P.172

² Jesse II P148. Copy of a Record in the Public Record Office Intitled, State Papers, Scotland, Henry VIII - Vol III, No 43



This Medieval Limer shows impressive depth of lip, but a short rounded head and short ears

spite of references to hanging flews, long ears, and dewlaps “like bulls” (in Shakespeare’s description of the Spartan hounds in *A Midsummernight’s Dream*), early descriptions do not mention loose skins or wrinkle!

From the Bloodhounds in Britain in the 16th century, our modern Bloodhounds have descended. When they began to exhibit the changes which certainly distinguish our hounds

from the Bloodhound and the Talbot and the Sleuth-hound of remoter times we do not appear to know, but change they did. We appear to have lost a number of colour and coat patterns which were once characteristic of the Bloodhound; Again, when this happened I do not know but I know of no reference to white or spotted bloodhounds (as distinct from Talbots) after the 17th century.

By the time we get to *Dignity and Impudence* 1839, we have, in Grafton, something which still shows a broad, rather rounded and peakless skull, short of lip by modern standards, but with long ears. They may be set on fairly low, taking account of the fact that the dog has them ‘pricked’ in the picture, but, like those of the Bloodhound on the cover of this booklet, are set higher than those of the modern hound. But we are certainly well on the way to the modern breed, and it is likely that there was more variation in type at the beginning of the nineteenth century than there is now.

Conclusion

WHAT I HAVE AIMED AT IN THIS STUDY has not really been to say anything new, but to try to make a beginning in getting the early history of the Bloodhound onto a firm and clear footing, by naming the sources on which my conclusions are based, and making clear what inferences I am drawing from what evidence. Where I have made assumptions which are not supported by evidence, I hope they have been reasonable ones.

If I had discovered anything which radically changed our picture of the Bloodhound’s history, I would have certainly proclaimed it. What emerges from my sources, which I suspect are the same as theirs, is a picture broadly similar to that given by the writers of Bloodhound books (Brey and Reed, etc.)

set-on of the ears is high, and they are not especially long.

The picture of the Limier below shows similar qualities, and one notices that the nose appears to be short and uprising, as in Markham's description. Nevertheless, in view of Turbervile's habit of translating "limier" by "bloodhound", one must acknowledge that the representation must have been, to him and his readers, not too outrageous as a stylized picture of a bloodhound. Nevertheless, the purpose of the picture is not to show what a bloodhound was like, and we may assume a degree of inaccuracy

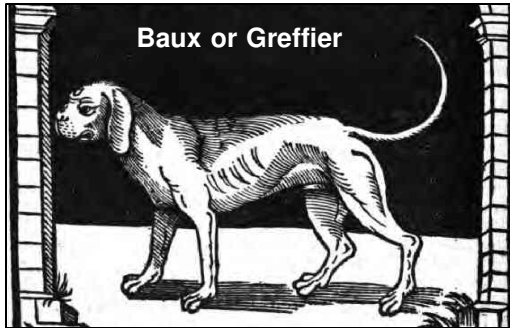


Here will I giue precepts to all Huntmen leading their bloudhounds with them in the Forrests, how they shal gouerne themselves according to the moneths and seasons, for Harts do change their manner of feeding every moneth.

standards, lacking length. It is some way from being a bloodhound.

It seems most likely that the dogs exported to England in the period after 1066 were of this sort. The 'English Bloodhound' of 1563 shows considerable difference, and we do not know how much it owed to imports from the Continent, and how much to native stock. The advice Markham gives for a huntsman to build up his kennel by crossing different sizes of hound from different parts of the country suggests much further scope for change in the 17th century.

It is worth noting in passing, that in



was tolerable. In all these cases we are relying on the competence of the artist; the picture of the sleuth hound on page 22 is poor, that of the Swiss original even more so, and gives one little confidence.

These pictures come from the mid 16th century, while the Bloodhound, we can be confident, goes back to before 1300. A genuine French Medieval picture of a Limier (below) shows an obviously heavy dog, with square lips, but a relatively short muzzle and a rounded head with a high stop, and ears high set, and by modern



associated descriptions, as on pages 22-23. Here we have the relationship spelled out pretty clearly. The Sleuthhound is similar to the rache, but bigger¹, and the Bloodhound hardly differs from the Sleuthhound, except that it is bigger still, and has a greater range of colours.

It is fascinating to find that there are all sorts of connections to be made between this and earlier sources. In the descriptions of the sleuth hound and rache one can see connections with Boece/Bellenden.

The provenance of the woodcuts shows even more connections. Topsell's book is a translation of Conrad Gesner's *Historiae Animalium*, the first volume published in Zurich in 1551, with later books in subsequent years. This is a vast assemblage of information about the animals of the world, domestic, wild and mythical. Two of these pictures, those of the rache and the sleuthhound, appear in an appendix to the Latin text published in 1554, and entitled *De Canibus Scoticis Trium Generum* (*Concerning Three Kinds of Scottish Dog*). The connection to Boece is very obvious. The caption given to the Rache is

*Canis Scoticus sagax, uulgo dictus anc Rache, Germanice dici potest, Ein Schottischer Wasserhund. (Scottish scent hound commonly called a rache, which can be called in German 'a Scottish Water-dog')*²

The sleuthhound is identified as follows:

Canis Scoticus furum deprehensor, Scoticus uocatus anc Schluth hownd. Germanice Schlathund uocari potest. (Scottish dog, detector of thieves, in Scots called a Schluth hound, which can be called Schlathund in German)

In this Latin text, Gesner acknowledges that the source of his information is Hector Boethius (Boece). The picture of the bloodhound seems to appear first in *Thierbuch*, a German condensed version of Gesner's work, published in 1563, in which all three pictures are printed.³ The Bloodhound is captioned 'Englischen Bluthund', and 'Canis sagax sanguinarius apud Anglos' (= 'English scent hound with associations of blood'). The other pictures are also there, and the sleuthhound as well as being identified as British and Scottish 'furum deprehensor', is

¹ Topsell follows Bellenden rather than Boece, in saying the sleuthhound is bigger. Gesner follows Boece, in saying it is not. Topsell/Bellenden maybe knew better.

² Boece's reference (P18) to the rache finding fish seems to have caused confusion, leading Gesner to identify it as a water dog, and Caius to say that there aren't any in England, and to doubt that there are any anywhere. It seems pretty obvious that all Boece is saying is that the rache finds its prey by smelling, and that it is a versatile animal. If prey of any description, flesh, fowl or fish, is on the ground the rache will be able to find it.

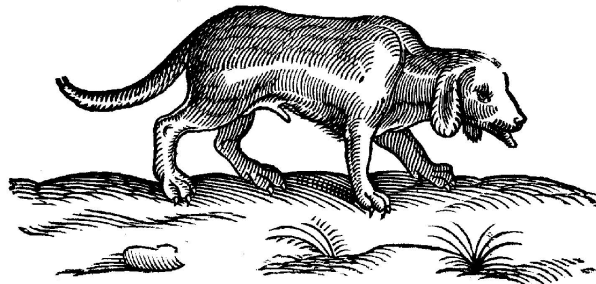
³ It should be mentioned that these pictures show differences, mostly small but not always, from those in Topsell. In particular the earliest sleuthhound is reversed, hairier, and more rat-faced. It seems that later printings were copyings of the woodcuts in the earlier books. Topsell probably drew his copies himself.

(Page 118) There are in *England* and *Scotland* two kinds of hunting Dogs, and no where else in all the world; the first kinde they call in *Scotland* *Ane Rache* and this is a foot-smelling creature, both of wilde Beasts, Birds, and fishes also, which lie hid among the Rocks; the female herof in *England*, is called a *Brache*. The second kinde is called in *Scotland*, a *Sluth-hound*, being a little greater then the hunting Hound; and in colour for the most part brown, or sandy-spotted. The sense of smelling is so quick in these. that they can follow the foot-steps of theeves, and persue them with violence untill they overtake them; and if the thief take the water, they cast in themselves also, and swim to the other side, where they finde out again afresh their former labour, untill they finde the thing they seek for: for this is common in the Borders of *England* and *Scotland*, where the people were wont to live much upon theft ; and if the Dog brought his leader unto any house, where they may not be suffered to come in, they take it for granted, that there is both the stolen goods, and the thief also hidden.

The Hunting Hound of *Scotland* called *RACHE*, and in *Englisb* a *HOUND*.



The *SLUTH-HOUND* of *Scotland*, called in *Germany* a *SCHLATHUND*.



unexplained could easily lead to further confusion between use and breed or type. A young bloodhound is not a “made” Bloodhound until it has been trained.

What were bloodhounds like?

CAIUS’ PICTURE OF THE ENGLISH BLOODHOUND on page 23 is as far as I know the earliest (pre-1563) picture which actually has the purpose of showing what a bloodhound looks like. Coupled with the associated text in Topsell, it gives an impression unmatched by any other source, telling us about the colours, size, and relationship to other similar hounds, as well as showing us shape and conformation.

When we read the description of the Bloodhound in Caius, that they were great dogs with large lips and long ears, it is easy to conjure up a picture of the modern animal. The description of the Talbot-like hound in Markham is also one we can relate to, but the round, big, thick head and short nose make us realise that this is something a bit different. It is the more agile pack hounds which should have the narrower skulls and longer muzzles. Turberville also describes the qualities a scent hound should have, and says of the head that it “is more to bee esteemed when it is long, than when it is short snowted” - here presumably following Du Fouilloux.

The picture of the English Bloodhound doesn’t look like the modern animal, but there is a reasonably long head, and the ears, though shorter and higher than those of the modern Bloodhound are quite long. The lip doesn’t look large, though there is a suggestion of hanging flews, and other versions of the picture I’ve seen do seem to have a slightly squarer lip. Notably also the top of the skull is flat, rather than rounded, and at the back of the skull there is a tight curve, suggesting a slightly pointed occiput.

There are also illustrations in Turberville, mostly cribbed from Du Fouilloux. In the black hound supposed to depict the St Hubert, one notices that in spite of Du Fouilloux’ description it is not at all short legged. Comparing it with other pictures of hounds throughout the book, it is apparent that the artist has simply taken his standard way of drawing a hound, and coloured it black. It is similar to the picture of the white baux or greffier, which du Fouilloux specifically says was not of the type of the St Hubert. One has to say that art in those days was not photographic, and that the image of the dog is probably somewhat conventionalised. One notices that the head is rounded, not peaked, the lips no larger than those of a modern foxhound, probably less so, the



I have had strange answers given me in Ireland, by those who make a gain, if not an entire livelihood, by killing of wolves in that country (where they are paid so much for every head they bring in), about the sagacity of that particular race of dogs they employ in hunting them; but not trusting much to those relators, I shall add, that a very sober and discreet gentleman of my acquaintance, who has often occasion to employ bloodhounds, assures me that, if a man have but passed over a field, the scent will lie, as they speak, so as to be perceptible enough to a good dog of that sort for several hours after. And an ingenious hunter assures me that he has observed that the scent of a flying and heated deer will sometimes continue on the ground from one day to the next following. *On the Strange Subtily of Effluvioms: from Boyle's Life and Works*, by T Birch 1772. Vol. iii, p.674.

A person of quality, to whom I am near allied, related to me that to make a trial whether a young bloodhound was well instructed (or, as the huntsmen call it, made), he caused one of his servants, who had not killed or so much as touched any of his deer, to walk to a country town four miles off, and thence to a market-town three miles distant from thence; which done, this nobleman did a competent while after put the bloodhound on the scent of the man and caused him to be followed by a servant or two, the master himself thinking it also fit to go after them to see the event; which was that the dog, without ever seeing the man he was to pursue, followed him by the scent to the above mentioned places, notwithstanding the multitude of market people that went along in the same way, and of travellers that had occasion to cross it. And when the bloodhound came to the chief market-town, he passed through the streets without taking any notice of any of the people there, and left not till he had gone to the house where the man he sought rested himself, and found him in an upper room, to the wonder of those that followed him. The particulars of this narrative the nobleman's wife, a person of great veracity, that happened to be with him when the trial was made, confirmed to me.

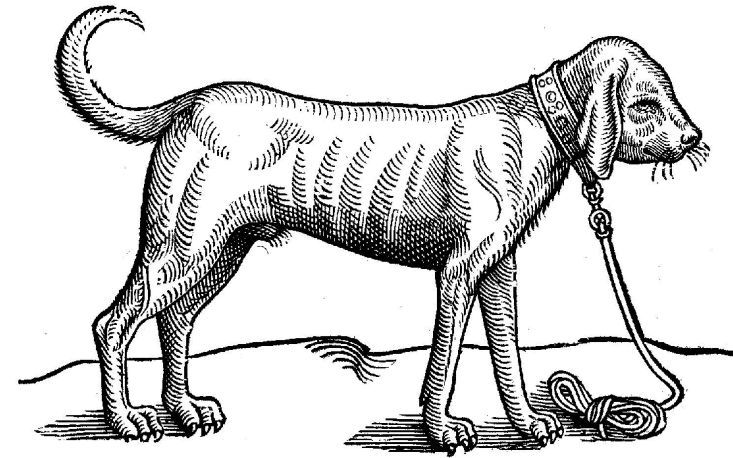
Inquiring of a studious person that was keeper of a red-deer park, and versed in making bloodhounds, in how long time after a man or deer had passed by a grassy place one of these dogs would be able to follow him by the scent? he told me it would be six or seven hours: whereupon an ingenious gentleman that chanced to be present, and lived near that park, assured us both that he had old dogs of so good a scent, that, if a buck had the day before passed in a wood¹, they will, when they come where the scent lies, though at such a distance of time after, presently find the scent and run directly to that part of the wood where the buck is. He also told me that, though an old bloodhound will not so easily fix on the scent of a single deer that presently hides himself in a whole herd, yet, if the deer be chased a little till he be heated, the dog will go nigh to single him out, though the whole herd also be chased. The above named gentleman also affirmed that he could easily distinguish whether his hound were in chase of a hare or a fox by their way of holding up their noses higher than ordinary when they pursue a fox, whose scent is more strong.

Of the Determinate Nature of Effluvioms from Boyle's Life and Works, by T Birch 1772. Vol. iii. p.695

In the late 17th Century Boyle uses "Bloodhound" in preference to any alternative, such as "Talbot", and explains the phrase "make a Bloodhound", which,

¹Jesse includes the note: "Scent lies better for hounds in rough and wooded ground." I do not know if the note is his alone, or if it appears in Boyle.

The English BLOOD-HOUND.



Page 119.The Blood-hound differeth nothing in quality from the *Scottish Sluth-hound*, saving they are greater in quantity¹, and not alway of one and the same colour; for among them they are sometime red, sanded, black, white, spotted, all of such colour as are other Hounds, but most commonly brown or red.

additionally also called 'Bluthund', and its closeness to the English Bloodhound is acknowledged.

The connection with Caius is that Caius wrote his treatise on English Dogs as a contribution to Gesner's work. Apparently it did not actually appear in anything Gesner published.² But Ash (1927) translates from a 1603 edition of Gesner, discussing the Sleuth-hound, as described by Boethius:

'They may be compared with the "bloodhound" of the English, i.e. the bloodhound that hunts by scent. Jo. Caius sent a picture of a bloodhound like this one, a cut of which will be given with its leash, but he writes that his is larger than this one or the next.' (ie the sleuthhound or the rache)

¹ Greater in quantity = 'bigger'

² In the preamble to *Of Englishe Dogges* Caius says he sent Gesner a 'manifold History' of animals, birds, fish and plants, and, separately, information about Dogs. Gesner had promised to publish the latter, but Caius had stayed the publication of it, because he was not satisfied with it. He notes that Gesner had, however, printed something about Scottish Dogs. Caius then wrote *De Canibus Britannicis* as a second attempt at the subject. Caius also says that he is calling the dogs British, because Britain is an island including all English and all Scots. Fleming naughtily alters Caius' title, and says he calls them all 'English' because England is 'not without Scottish' ones too. However, this confirms that Caius knew what Boece had to say about the sleuth hound, because he had read it in Gesner, if no where else, and that in his treatment of the Bloodhound he quite knowingly included the sleuth hound, regarding them as near enough to a single breed. Finally we should note that Topsell includes the whole of Fleming's translation of Caius in his *History of Four-Footed Beasts*, as an insertion into his translation of Gesner's Latin original.

1603 is long after the deaths of both Gesner & Caius, so the text almost certainly appears in an earlier edition, not available to Ash. The picture must surely be the original of that shown above. It confirms that Caius was the source of the picture, and the text also mentions that the pictures sent by Caius were 'drawn from life,' the collar and long, coiled leash of the Bloodhound emphasising its inescapable association with the function of a limer. It is apparent, too, that Caius knew Boece's writing about the sleuthhound - though it is highly unlikely he had anything to do with the pictures of Scottish dogs published in 1554. But he obviously thought the Bloodhound and sleuthhound were near enough the same to be treated as one in *De Canibus Britannicis*.

Whether the Bloodhound and the sleuthhound were seen as two different breeds or slightly different variants of the same breed, it seems that after 1700, if not before, people apparently saw no difference between the two. In Nicholson and Burns' *History of the Antiquities of Westmorland and Cumberland* published in 1777, there is a statement as to these dogs:

Slough-dogs were for pursuing offenders through the sloughs, mosses, and bogs, that were not passable but by those who were acquainted with the various intricate by-paths and turnings. These offenders were peculiarly styled moss-troopers: and the dogs were commonly called blood-hounds; which were kept in use within the memory of many of our fathers¹

By the end of the 18th century 'Bloodhound' is definitely the preferred term, used by Sir Walter Scott, even in Scottish contexts. As it affects the descent of the present-day Bloodhound, what I think is pretty certain is that, perhaps from the earliest times, but at least by the end of the sixteenth century, the Bloodhound and the Sleuth-hound were thought of as to some extent interchangeable, and would therefore be regarded as breeding partners which would preserve both type and a particular, and extraordinary, scenting ability.

On the Talbot

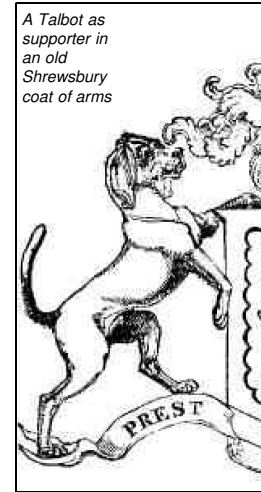
AS WITH THE SLEUTH-HOUND, it is sometimes claimed that the Talbot is the original of the Bloodhound, and that it was so known in its earliest days, the modern word being a later name. In what I have been able to uncover, the evidence is that there is *no* word for the Bloodhound earlier than "Bloodhound" itself. *The Oxford English Dictionary* has this to say about "Talbot":

"Understood to be derived from the ancient English family name Talbot... but evidence is wanting.

"Chaucer has *Talbot* as the name of an individual dog, and in quot c1449, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, is called 'Talbot, oure good dogge' (in allusion to the badge of the family) but it is not clear what is the connection between these applications, or which of the senses was the earlier."

[References to the heraldic Talbot seem earlier than those to the real dog.]

¹ Quoted in E H Richardson: *Watch-dogs: their training and management*. Hutchinson 1923



The artist Sydenham Edwards, writing in 1800 in *Cynographia Britannica*, presumably given the information by Thomas Astle, whose Bloodhounds he had painted, says this:

The British Blood-hound, though not so swift as the Fox-hound, is superior in fleetness to the Talbot-hound, and does not dwell so long on the scent, nor throw himself on his haunches to give mouth; but having discovered his object, goes gaily on, giving tongue as he runs..

Here there is a clear distinction between the Bloodhound and the Talbot, more than a matter of colour. This must have been about the time that the Talbot disappeared, but if it was not extant at the time this was written, it was alive in the memories of those who had known it.

Robert Boyle's Account

IN JESSE, THERE IS AN ACCOUNT which I cannot remember seeing published before in the Bloodhound literature¹, taken from Robert Boyle (1627-1691). This should be regarded as an absolute classic, in view of its early date, and the eminence of its author, the great scientist, founder member of the Royal Society, author of *The Skeptical Chymist*, originator of Boyle's Law. Although the account is anecdotal, it is in the context of someone showing a scientist's interest in the nature of scent, and at least a respectable scepticism about the reliability of witnesses. It is the earliest description I know of of a bloodhound trial, and one on a human scent, and confirms the use of Bloodhounds for both man and animal tracking at that time. The standard of performance reflected is quite fascinating, in view of the many more modern instances.

¹ Harmer mentions it briefly, but with no reference to Boyle

to be helped over hedges. That also seems familiar!

Another seventeenth century source:(1668: Charleton, Walter :*Onomasticon zoicon* 23, cited in the *OED*) defines *Sagax* as “a bloodhound or Talbot”. Even here it is not clear that the words are synonyms. The implication could be “either a Bloodhound or a Talbot” or “a Bloodhound, also known as a Talbot”.

What we get, then, from 16th and early 17th century accounts, is a picture in which clear definition is lacking. Turberville refers frequently to the Bloodhound, but not to the sleuth-hound, and mentions “Talbot” only as an individual dog-name. Markham, who mentions Turberville, does not use “Bloodhound” at all, but refers both to the sleuth hound (“Slow hound”) and the Talbot. That there *were* Bloodhounds, is beyond dispute, but how they related to other hounds is quite confused.¹ There is no suggestion that they were kept pure. As regards the Talbot, the most plausible story seems to be that the white hound depicted in the Talbot coat of arms, which may itself have been suggested by the fact that “Talbot” was a common name for an individual hound, led to heavyweight white hounds being called “Talbots”.² Because such large hounds occurred in a range of colours, these could also be called, by extension, “Talbots”, or “Talbot-like” hounds, though white remained the *true* colour. Maybe the word “Bloodhound” became somewhat unfashionable³ for a while, because of the associations of



John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury 'presenting a book to Queen Margaret. The white hound behind him serves to identify him, but is very small.

¹ There is an account in *The Experienced Huntsman*, 1714, by Arthur Stringer, of the “shot-hound”, also referred to as a bloodhound, perhaps mostly in an Irish context. The hound was used to track a deer which had been shot but not brought down. Though the hound had to be staunch to the scent of that particular animal, Stringer didn't regard its task as very difficult in scenting terms, as the scent was usually very hot. I am grateful to Fred Daniel for sending me this reference.

² A further ramification of this is suggested in an article by S M Lampson *The Mystery of the Talbot Hound* published in *Country Life* in 1965. He comments on the rarity of references to the Talbot, and mentions that the Talbot is the only hound used in Heraldry. It may be that initially it was purely a heraldic hound, having no more connection with reality than the unicorn, gryphon, etc. This may be the source of its appearance on pub signs. Subsequently the name could have been applied to hounds approximating to the idea of the Talbot, and a breed could have been developed.

³ However, Brough in *The Bloodhound and its Use in Tracking Criminals* Illustrated Kennel News 1902, quotes from Thomas Tickell (1686-1740) and Swift (1667-1745) showing that the Bloodhound was still a powerful image early in the 18th Century, and presumably remained so: “And though the villain ‘scapes a while, he feels Slow vengeance, like a bloodhound, at his heels.” (Swift)

In the mid sixteenth century, “Talbot” was still popular as the name of an individual hound, as is illustrated by parallel examples from *The Boke of St Albans* and Turberville. In the former, the cries with which a huntsman should encourage his hound by name are all illustrated in French:

And iff any fynde of the haare[hare] ther[where] he hath bene 255
And he hight[is called] Richer or Bemounde, thus to hym bedyne[command]:
“Oyés, a Bemounde le vaillant!, and I shall yow avowe
Que quida trover la cowarde ou la court cove!”
That [is] Bemonde the worthe without any fayle
That weneth[thinks] to fynde the coward with the short taylor.¹

French was still the language of hunting, though it had to be translated for English readers by 1486.

In Turberville we have (the original passage from Du Fouilloux is in italics):

T112: hallow vnto that hounde, naming him, as to say, *Hyke a Talbot*, etc
F136: *en cryant et nommant le Chien, Voylecy aller, it dit vray, Voylecy aller le Cerf*
T114: name that hounde to them, as to say *Talbot, a Talbot*, as beforesayd
F139: *en nommant le Chien, ha Cleraud, ou ha Mirault, comme i'ay dit cy dessus*

French has been altogether replaced, and Turberville chooses ‘Talbot’ as the English and typical name of a hound, as substitute for the French name given in du Fouilloux. Turberville does not mention the Talbot as a type of dog, though he refers many times to the Bloodhound, under the circumstances I have already outlined.

A book which does the reverse is *Country Contentments, or the Husbandmans Recreations*, by GM (Gervaise Markham) 1615. This, it seems, is not aimed at the high nobility, so much as at the country squire, or even the yeoman farmer, but it contains sections on Hunting and hawking.

Of hounds he says:

These *Hounds* are of divers colours, and according to [P5] their colours, so we elect them for the chase: as thus for example. The white *hound*, or the white with blacke spots, or the white with some few liver spots are the most principall best to compose your Kennell of, and will indeed hunt any chase exceeding well, especially the *Hare, Stag, Bucke, Roe or Otter* for they will well endure both woods and waters; yet if you demand which is the best and most beautiful of all colours for the generall Kennell, then I answer, the white with the black eares, and blacke spot at the setting on of the taile, and are ever found both of good sent, and of good condition. The blacke hound, the black tann'd or he that is all liver-hew'd or the milke-white which is the true *Talbot*, are best for the string or lyam, for they do delight most in blood, and have a natural inclination to hunt dry-foot, and of

¹ Many of these early accounts of hunting are versions of earlier ones. Cf. William Twici (Venour le Roi d'Engleterre - huntsman to the King of England) in *Le Art de Venerie* c1327: “oyez a Beaumon le vaillant, que il quide trover le Coward od la courte cove” - “Hark to Beaumon the valiant, for he thinks to find the coward with the short tail” (Medieval translation).

these the largest are ever the best and most comely. The grizeld which are ever most commonly shag-hair'd, or any other colour, whether it be mix'd or unmix'd, so it be shag-hair'd, are the best verminers, and therefore are chosen to hunt the *Foxe*, *Badger* or any other hot-sent.

Certainly by the second half of the sixteenth century the Talbot was known as a breed or type, but a comparison of Caius, Turbervile and Markham shows how confusing the picture is in respect of uses, types and breeds. Leash-hounds could be black and tan, liver, all black, or white, and were best when largest. It is easy to see the Bloodhound among these! Markham having said that the pursuers of all game are called hounds goess on:

Now of these *hounds* there are divers kinds, as the *Slow-hound*, which is a large great Dog, tall and heavie, and are bred for the most part in the West Countries of this Kingdome as also in *Ches shire*, and *Lanca-shire*, and most woodland and mountainous Countries; then the middle-siz'd Dog, which is more fit for the Chase, being of a more nimble composure, and are bred in *Worster-shire*, *Bedfordshire*, and many other well-mix'd soiles, where the Champaigne and covert are of equal largenesse, then the light, nimble, swift slender Dog, which is bred in the North part of this Kingdome, as *Yorkeshire*, *Cumberland*, *Northumberland*, and many other plaine champaigne Countries; and lastly the little *Beagle*, which may be carried in a mans glove, and are bred in many Countries for delight only, being of curious sents and passing cunning in their hunting; for the most part tiring (but seldom killing) the prey, except at some strange advantage.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives “slow-hound” as a variant of “sleuth-hound”, here ascribed to the West Countries, rather than to Scotland or its borders; this serves only to complicate our picture still further. A slightly later passage describes choosing hounds for conformation:

For the shape of your *Hound*, it must be according to the climate where he is bred, and according to the naturall composition of his body, as thus, if you would choose a large, heavie, slow true *Talbot*-like hound, you must choose him which hath a round, big, thicke head, with a short nose uprising, & large open nostrels, which shows that he is of good & quick sent, his eares exceeding large, thin, and down-hanging much lower then his chaps, and the flews of his upper lips almost two inches lower then his nether chaps, which shows a merry deep mouth [P6] and a loud ringer,¹ his backe strong and streight, yet

¹ Markham associates depth of lip with a sonorous bay, and makes much of the need for a pack to make good music: [P8] If you would have your kennell for sweetnesse of cry, then you must compound it of some large Dogges, that have deepe solemne mouthes and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, beare the base in the consort, then a double number of roaring and loud ringing mouthes which must beare the counter tenor, then some hollow plaine sweet mouthes, which must beare the meane or middle part; and so with these three parts of musicke you shall make your cry perfect...

rather rising, then inwardly yeelding, which shewes much toughnesse and indurance, his fillets would be thicke and great, which approve a quicke gathering up of his legs without paine, his huckle bones round, and hidden, which shewes he will not tyre, his thighes round and his hams streight, which shewes swiftnesse, his tail long and rush grown, that is, big at the setting on, and small downward, which shewes a perfect strong Chine, and a good wind, the hair under his belly hard and stiffe, which shewes willingness and ability to endure labour in all weathers and in all places, his legs large and leane, which shews nimblenesse in leaping, or climbing, his foot round, high knuckled, and well clawed, with a dry hard soale,¹ which shews he will never surbait, and the generall composure of his body, so just and even, that no levell may distinguish whether his hinder or forepart be higher, all which shew him of much ability, and that in his labour he will seldom find any annoyance: but if you will choose a swift light hound, then must his head be more slender, and his nose more long, his ears and flews more shallow...and his general composure much more slender and *Gray-hound-like*; and thus in the generality for the most part and all your *Yorkshire hounds*, whose vertues I can praise no further then for scent and swiftnesse, for to speake of their mouths, they have only a little sharp sweetnesse like a Jig, but no depth or ground like more solemne musicke.

Now to speak of the composition of kennels....if it be for [P7] cunning *hunting*² you shall breed your *Dogs* from the slowest and largest of the Northern hounds and the swiftest and slenderest of the West country *hounds*....These *hounds* will neither be exceeding slow that you shall waste many daies without some fruit of your labour, nor so unnimble, that you shall need men to help them over every hedge, as I have many times seene to my very much wonder....

This description of the “Talbot-like” hound again shows something which is also Bloodhound-like, with the exception of the desire for “a round, big thick head” and a “short nose uprising”. Such hounds could play their part, as the swiftest and slenderest of the West Country “slow-hounds”, in producing Markham’s ideal hound for “cunning hunting”. Presumably the slow-hounds were the ones that had

[P9] If you would have your kennell for depth of mouth, then you shall compound it of the largest dogges, which have the greatest mouthes, and deepest flews, such as your West Countrey, *Ches-shire* and *Lancashire* dogges are....

¹ Both Hilary Harmer *The Bloodhound* Foyle 1968, and Brian Lowe *Hunting the Clean Boot* Blandford Press 1981, quote an abbreviated, modernised version of this, ending here, suggesting they weren’t looking at the original source.

² For keenness of scent Markham specifies not the Bloodhound as a breed, but a hound of proven hunting ability:

You shall also in this, and all other kennels, have at least a couple of good high-way dogs, that is to say, Hounds of such cunning and perfect scent that they will hunt as well upon a dry hard high-way (where you cannot pricke forth the passage of your chase) as upon the freshest mould, or will hunt as truly through flocks of sheepe or herds of beasts, as upon the grounds where no beasts come; these are called Hounds for the high-way, or guides of the Kennell, and are exceeding necessary, and fit for all mens pleasure, for they take from the Hunts-man, both sense of paine and anger.