

MODERN DOGS

(Terriers)

NEW EDITION

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**A History and Description of the Modern Dogs of Great
Britain and Ireland
The Terriers**

The Illustrations by Arthur Wardle

THE ENGLISH WHITE TERRIER - Chapter III

On several occasions I have quoted the number of entries in the "Kennel Club Stud Book" as indicative of the rise and fall in popularity of the different varieties of dogs to which they allude. These figures must not always be taken as an actual and infallible guide either one way or the other, for when the first volume of the Stud Book was published in registration of dogs was, as it were, in its infancy. The general public know little about the thing, and only those intimately connected with shows as exhibitors and breeders took the trouble to have their dogs entered. This is not so now, for pretty nearly everyone who has a dog of good pedigree will have him entered in the "Stud Book," whether it be shown or not.

However, so far as the little dog whose name heads this chapter is concerned, the inference may be correctly drawn, for no one believes that this, the most fragile and delicate of all terriers, is so common and easily to be found as he was five-and-twenty years ago. In the first volume of the "Kennel Club Stud Book," published in 1874, there are

fiftyfour entries under the head "English and Other Smooth-haired Terriers," which did not include black and tans, and was, as a matter of fact, confined to the English white terrier under notice. The second volume contained only ten entries, whilst during 1894 there were twenty-seven registered, the section then being divided according to the sexes. Five years since some little impetus was given the variety by the establishment of a club to look after its interests, and judging from the excellent entry made at Liverpool in 1894 this little body must be doing some service. At this show there was certainly the best collection of white terriers I have seen brought together for many years, and at the same exhibition in 1896, there was likewise a capital entry; but at the London shows they have not lately mustered in very strong force.

Little is known of the early history of the English white terrier; where he originally sprang from, who produced him, or for what reason he was introduced-there is nothing to tell the searcher after information in the matter. That he is, and has been for thirty years or so, a variety of the dog in himself there is no doubt; and although he will kill rats, and is fairly plucky in other respects, he is not a sportsman's companion. He makes a nice house dog, is smart and perky in his demeanour and conduct, requires a considerable amount of cuddling and care, and so in his early days he was a favourite with the working man dog fancier of the large towns, who showed him in the bar parlour, and believed him to be the equal of any other dog in existence. The earliest illustrations of a terrier of this kind showed him to be a white dog, with a coloured mark on his body here and there; and I should say that, until he had been bred for some generations to be produced entirely white, there was seldom one born without marks of some kind or another. Even now, dogs with a colored ear or a "patch" on some part of the body or face are found in almost every litter.

The most perfect specimens of the variety have sprung from London and its suburbs, from Manchester and other large manufacturing towns of Lancashire, including Bolton and Rochdale, whilst others were to be found in Birmingham and the Black Country. At some of our early dog shows there were large classes of the English white terrier, sometimes the entries reaching quite a score; but the quality was not uniformly good, as a tan ear or dark mark might have been observed; and some of the specimens were shaped more like an Italian greyhound than a terrier. The London and Birmingham gatherings usually had the best entries, but I have seen excellent quality further north-at Belle Vue and Middleton, near Manchester, and at some of the more local Lancashire and Yorkshire exhibitions. The large London shows, as far back as 1863-64, divided these classes of white terriers, one being for dogs and bitches under six or seven pounds of weight, as the case might be; the other for dogs and bitches over that standard. To instance the popularity of the variety at that time, one exhibitor alone (Mr. F. White, of Clapham) had eleven entries in the class restricted to dogs under six pounds weight, and these were all good specimens. Indeed, Mr. White appeared to be a larger breeder of this variety of the English terrier than anyone else, so much so that I once heard it argued that it was called after him, and ought in reality to be known as "White's terrier," and not as the white terrier. However, this would not suit our friends in the north, who in reality had equally good specimens which had never seen Clapham Common. Mr. John Hoodless, of Bayswater, showed some nice terriers between 1862 and 1866.

It has been surmised that the original English white terrier had been a fox terrier crossed with a white Italian greyhound (I never saw one), and again with the small-sized bull terrier. On the contrary, I believe that the small-sized bull terrier was stopped on its road to popularity by a cross with the variety under notice. If anyone will take the trouble to wade through the early pedigrees he will find the blood of English white terriers in many of our leading little bull terriers.

Possibly there came to be bull terrier blood in the white terrier, and the exhibitor was not always quite conscientious in his ideas, and if from one of his bull terrier bitches he produced an animal rather lighter in bone and longer in head than usual he forthwith entered it as a "white English terrier," and maybe won with it. At the same time he might be taking prizes with a brother or sister of the same animal in the class for small bull terriers. For some years-at any rate until the epoch of the Kennel Club and its Stud Book-there was a considerable amount of jumble in the pedigrees of both English white terriers and bull terriers, as the many-registrations of Tim in the former and of Madman in the latter to plainly testify.

However, as far back as 1862-63 Mr. F. White, already mentioned, showed at Islington and Cremorne a team of very handsome dogs, quite terriers in their way, with which he won all prizes for which he competed. The names of these dogs were Teddy, Laddie, Jep, Fly, and Nettle; but at the same time, or at any rate two or three years later, Mr. J. Walker, of Bolton, introduced a dog called Tim, which was considered to be the best terrier of the variety up to that time produced, nor do I think he has been excelled since. This dog has been bred by Bill Pearson, a well known Lancashire lad in the "fancy line", by him sold to Mr. Joe Walker, who in turn sold him to Mr. James Roocroft, of Bolton, the latter at the time owning a large and valuable kennel of this variety of terrier. Tim was an exquisitely made dog, with the darkest of eyes and perfect black nose; he was lightly built, but well ribbed up, and did not exhibit in appearance the slightest trace of whippet or snap dog blood, with which no doubt the variety had been considerably crossed. The old Tim was not only good as a puppy, but there was no better dog than he when shown at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in 1873, where, although at least eight years old, he won third prize in an excellent class. Tim weighed about 14 lb., and I do not think we have had a better strain contain some portion of his blood.

Another very good dog about this period was Mr. W. Duggan's (Birmingham) Spider, who won first prize at Birmingham four years in succession, and I am inclined to think that Spider came a good second to Tim. Later, Mr. P. Swindells, Stockport; Mr. W.E. Royd, Rochdale; Mr. W. Hodgson, Harpurhey; Mr. J.S. Skidmore, Nanwich; Mr. J.F. Godfree, Birmingham; Mr. J. Hinks, Birmingham; Mr. J. Littler, Birmingham; Mr. P. Morgan, London; Mr. S.E. Shirley, and others possessed first-rate specimens, Mr. E.T. Dew's Fly, (Weston-super-Mare) must not be forgotten. Mr. Shirley's Purity, which won third prize at the Crystal Palace in 1872, was by Tim out of a bitch by the smart fourteen-pound bull terrier Nelson, hence her name, a piece of sarcasm pointed no doubt at the carelessness (?) of some dog breeders as to how they crossed their various strains. Other dogs that did a great deal of winning in their day, about the "eighties," were Mr. J. Martin's Joe, Gem, and Pink, animals somewhat approaching the whippet type in body-though wonderfully neat in head.

I think when all is said and done that our best and purest strain of this white terrier came from the north of England, where a few are still bred, as they are in the Midlands, but fewer in the Metropolis. The most recent London-bred specimens I have seen have been comparatively toys, under 10 lb in weight, and with that round skull, or so-called "apple head," so persistent in making its appearance in lilliputian specimens of the dog-a peculiar result of inbreeding.

The English white terrier is in appearance an attractive dog, small in size-he should not be more than 14lb. weight-cleanly and elegant, but he is not particularly noted for his intelligence, as I am sorry to write is the case with all these smaller smooth coated terriers that for generations have had their ears cut. This was unfortunately the custom with the one of which I write-at any rate, this evil result of cropping is my experience, as it has been of others who have kept this variety, and the black and tan terrier likewise.

Now that cropping is thoroughly done away with, one great drawback to his becoming a fashionable favourite has been removed, still, however, his elegance and the purity of his white coat may fill the eye, he is by no means a hardy dog. Then he is difficult to breed in perfection; the puppies are as likely to come with patches on them as not, and bull terrier like heads or greyhound shaped bodies and vice versa` are by no means unusual. He is not easy to keep in condition for exhibition, and is particularly subject to total or partial deafness, which may be hereditary or arise from other causes, perhaps from a delicacy that is supposed to appertain to totally white animals, especially such as are inbred to a great extent, as is the case here. I have heard that at least one of the most successful bitches of the early time, and from which many of the best were descended, was "stone deaf." No doubt this is that to which Mr. Roocroft alluded in Cassell's "Book of the Dog" as being one of the best he ever saw, and which preceded his favourite Tim. Perhaps when we have had a few generations of English white terriers not subjected to having their ears cropped the deafness will disappear.

For show purposes, which means when it is required to place the animal before the judges to the best advantage, it is usual to cut off the whiskers, and to singe or clip the under part of the tail where it might be clad with coarse hair. Indeed, this trimming is done to such extent, and evidently acknowledged as being quite honest and straight forward, that at the autumn show of the Kennel Club in 1893 I saw an exhibitor clipping hairs from the ears of a white terrier whilst on its bench, in full view of the company present; and strangely enough this public "faking" did not appear to attract any attention.

During 1893 some attention was drawn to the decadence and seeming neglect of the breed, and it was almost sad to see one of its admirers, and the owner of specially good specimens, expressing himself pretty much in the same strain as I have done as to the anxiety the keeping in show form this terrier causes. Dr. Lee Bell wrote as follows:-

“All breeders have, I daresay, experienced the same difficulty of breeding pure white puppies with level heads and fine skulls, together with proper English terrier lines of body. The puppies are either foul-marked, or have domed skulls and whippet bodies, or they have level heads, with the thick skull and wide chest and general stoutness of body of the bull terrier. But apart from those difficulties which is the art of breeding and selection to overcome, the great amount of trouble requisite to keep white English in form and to prepare them for exhibition naturally exercises an influence inimical to the popularity of the breed. The cropping of the ears, the trimming of the tail, shaving of the ears, the washing and general anxiety to keep the dog spotless till after the show, all combine to make the hobby too tiresome to allow the breed to be popular with those at any rate who have little leisure for the indulgence of their pet hobby. The appearance of red wounds, too, on the white ground is also a great drawback.

For all these reasons I doubt it is too much to expect that the breed can ever become popular, especially when there are other breeds of terriers better suited for the special purposes for which pet dogs are kept. Such terriers as the Irish, for example, are game, gay, and always the same, ready for a fight, and rarely much the worse for a shindy, while they can be picked up and set on the show bench with the least possible trouble-and what more do we want? While regretting extremely the decay of the white English terrier, I am afraid they must bow to the inevitable, and give place to dogs better suited to the wants and conveniences of the present day than they unfortunately are.”

With all of which I cordially agree, and in this age we must be content with the “survival of the fittest.” It is only to be expected that in the common course of events, when we are introducing new varieties of the dog from foreign countries and re-populating varieties of our own,

that the least suitable must go to the wall sooner or later. We imagine that there has been a turn in the tide so far as this dog is concerned, for during 1895 the classes at the various shows were certainly better filled than has been the case for years, and now that "cropping is dead" a more popular future may be in store for this graceful and elegant variety of the terrier.

At the time I am writing this, some of the best of our white terriers are to be found in Scotland, for which there is no particular reason, as the Scottish shows give them no more encouragement than they receive this side of the Border. Mr. Ballantyne, at Edinburgh, has a particularly good kennel, his Morning Star, Rising Star, and Silver Blaze being especially notable; Dr. Lees Bells Leed's Elect is another noteworthy dog at the present day, whilst Mr. C. Randall in Liverpool has a kennel that includes Bange, Little Beauty, and Semolina, all winners at our leading shows, as are Mr. J.P. Heap's Eclipse and Mr. G.H. Newman's Nobility; Mrs. J.E. Walsh's Lady of the Lake and Lady Superior, the Premier, and Hereward; Mr. W. Smith's Duchess III, Miss Cresswell's Silver Star; Mr. H.C. Hodson's Sunbeam; Mr. Richard Bolton's Charlie; whilst Silver Star, Starlight, Don Juan, The Princess, Miss Bange (uncropped), Barwood Hermit, Lady Godiva are all first rate youngsters. Mr. J. Heap, Mr. J. Whyte, Mrs. Newman, Mr. G. Howard, Mr. J.B. Thompson, Mr. J. Dewhirst, Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Richard Lee, Bolton, and Mrs. J.E. Walsh, Halifax, are more or less successful breeders of this terrier about the time I write, and with such material in their hands as already alluded to the future of the breed ought to be assured. The last name just now holds a very strong hand, which undoubtedly includes more good specimens than any other single kennel can produce.

Generally, the English white terrier ought to be constructed on pretty nearly the same lines as a black and tan terrier, but he must never reach the full size of the latter variety, and he should be a more compact and a more sprightly little dog generally, possessing a

character of his own in the latter respect. He may vary in weight from, say, 6 lb. to 14 lb., and perfect specimen of the small size is as pretty and elegant a little creature as anyone need desire to possess, though he may be delicate and perhaps deaf. No colour in a perfect specimen is allowable but pure white, eyes dark hazel, or as dark as they can be had, nose perfectly black, and the eye-lashes must be as dark as possible; a cherry or partly cherry coloured nose, or yellow gooseberry coloured eyes ought to disqualify.

Tail carried straight from the back without curl, and gradually tapering to a point; the ears were formerly cropped, and “trained” to stand quite upright with an inward inclination. The ear in it’s natural state should, according to the Club standard, be a drop or button ear, shaped, hanging close to the head above the eyes. Some are born with large erect ears, certainly by no means picturesque, hence possibly the reason why the “fancier” endeavoured to improve upon nature, and cut such ears into what he considered an elegant shape. Fore legs straight, with nice amount of bone; hind legs nicely trimmed and proportionate. The feet ought to be as round and thick as those of a fox terrier or bull terrier, although good feet are seldom seen on this terrier, they having more than an inclination to be long-hare-like in fact, which to my idea shows more than a sign of a cross with the Italian greyhound or whippet. The coat fine, though fairly strong, and so close that it should quite hide any of the black skin marks that appear in so many instances on smooth coated white dogs of all kinds. The teeth must be perfectly level and sound. They are not always the former and I rather astonished an exhibitor some years ago when I had his white terrier before me in a “variety class,” a dog that had hitherto never been shown without winning a prize. It was, however, undershot, and of course I left it out of the list of winners altogether, nor did the owner consider me wrong in so doing.

The description of the English white terrier as drawn up by the club is as follows:

HEAD.—Narrow, long and level, almost flat skull, without cheek muscles, wedge-shaped, well filled up under the eyes, tapering to the nose, and not lippy.

EYES.—Small and black, set fairly close together, and oblong in shape.

EARS.—Small and V shaped, hanging close to the head above the eyes.

NECK and SHOULDERS.—The neck should be fairly long and tapering from the shoulders to the head, with sloping shoulders, the neck being free from throatiness, and slightly arched at the occiput.

CHEST.—Narrow and deep.

BODY.—Short and curving upwards at the loin, ribs sprung out behind the shoulders, back slightly arched at loin, and falling again at the joining of the tail to the same height as the shoulders.

LEGS.—Perfectly straight and well under the body, moderate in bone, and of proportionate length.

FEET.—Feet nicely arched, with toes set well together, and more inclined to be round than hare-footed.

TAIL.—Moderate length, and set on where the arch of the back ends, thick where it joins the body, tapering to a point, and not carried higher than the back.

COAT.—Close, hard, short, and glossy.

COLOUR.—Pure white; coloured marking to disqualify.

CONDITION.—Flesh and muscles to be hard and firm.

WEIGHT.—from 12lb. to 20lb.

SCALE OF POINTS & VALUE

Head and eyes - 25

Body - 15

Neck - 5

Tail - 10

Ears - 5

Condition - 10

Legs and feet - 15

General Appearance - 15

Grand Total - 100

Disqualifications, colored markings of any kind, and uneven teeth, i.e., teeth either “undershot” or “overshot.” A dog 12lb. to 14lb. is better than one weighing 18lb., hence the points allowed for size. As a matter of fact, I do not ever remember seeing a really so-called pure English white terrier up to 20lb., the maximum allowed by the club. Perhaps it may be wise in making such an extreme limit in order to stop any decadence which may be perceptible in the variety, generally through breeding from small and more or less puny parents.

~From the personal collection of Jo Ann Emrick