

Breed Feature

THE WELSH CORGI

– PEMBROKE AND CARDIGAN



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Content sourced from the Extended ANKC Breed Standards with additional information by J. McCann and the Welsh Corgi Club of Qld.

There are two breeds of Welsh Corgi – the Cardigan and the Pembroke. They are not varieties of the one breed. They are independent breeds, each with an independent origin and purpose.

WELSH CORGI (PEMBROKE)

The Pembroke Corgi is the physically smaller member of the Working Group, but despite its size, he has a very big heart and big appeal and is still a very popular dog in the United Kingdom, United States of America, New Zealand and, of course, here in Australia. His popularity is attributed by many to the British Royalty, who have been associated with the breed since 1934, but there is a large band of loyal supporters of the breed in the way of breeders and fanciers throughout the world who care very much for the breed's welfare and future.

PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE BREED WAS USED

The farmers in the Pembrokeshire area of Wales developed the Welsh Corgi Pembroke as a cattle dog and companion dog.

The Corgi was an indispensable helper to the farmers, where the famous herding instincts would aid in everything from bringing in the dairy beast for milking, to gathering in the sheep, to guarding the hens, to the long drover's treks.

He is an energetic worker who controls the herd from behind by barking and nipping the heels of the cattle and then going down to ground to avoid the kicking hooves. His short sturdy legs give him the ability to stop, start, twist and turn, and his low centre of gravity gives him great balance. The Welsh Corgi is not built for great speed and he was not required to work in large open spaces as the Welsh farms were only small.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BREED

Any records of the origin of the breed have been lost in time (if indeed any ever existed), but it is generally thought that the Welsh Corgi Pembroke was developed by the breeding of local dogs with spitz types brought into Wales by the invading Vikings and the Flemish weavers in about 1100AD. These early dogs were much lighter in bone and

higher off the ground than our present day dogs.

So it was that, late in 1925, a notice appeared in a Pembrokeshire newspaper inviting all interested in the Corgi to attend a meeting at the Castle Hotel in Haverfordwest on Tuesday, December 15th at 4.30pm. This advertisement was signed by J. H. Howell, M.F.H., otherwise known as "Captain Jack" Howell, of Solva, Pembrokeshire, whose papers and diaries in the County Records Office in Haverfordwest have provided much valuable and authentic information. Captain Jack became Chairman of the new club at that first meeting, which he described as "very good", noting in his diary that "40 to 50 were present". The little membership/rule book, published that month gives us the names of the founders and also states "That this Club be called "The Corgi Club".

The Welsh Corgi Pembroke, having spent hundreds of years as a farm and companion dog, finally found his way into small agricultural shows in Wales during the 1800's, but it was not until 1925 that classes were provided for them. At that stage, the Cardigans and Pembrokes were shown together. In 1928 they were officially recognised by the Kennel Club in the UK, and the first Challenge Certificates were awarded. The two breeds were separated on the Kennel Club register in 1935. And in the early days of the Welsh Corgi Club the spelling of the word "Corgi" could vary somewhat – "Corgie", "Curgi", "Curgie".

A number of Pembrokes came to Australia prior to 1930, but the first registered imports were brought into Melbourne by Mr J Nish in 1934. These first arrivals were Aust Ch Rozavel Ranger (Imp UK) and Aust Ch Rozavel Pipkin (Imp UK). In 1935 Pembrokes were exhibited for the first time at the Melbourne Royal Show. Aust Ch Rozavel Ranger (Imp UK) was the dog Challenge Certificate winner, and Aust Ch Titania of Sealy (Imp UK) won the bitch Challenge Certificate.

The General Appearance of the Pembroke states "Low set, strong, sturdily built, alert and active, giving impression of substance and stamina in a small space. This clause in the breed standard gives a sort of bird's eye view of the Pembroke Corgi as a whole, which should instantly appeal as a herding dog, alert and active, low set, strong and sturdily built."

Correct breed type must be a combination of;

- a correctly proportioned and balanced head
- foxy in shape and appearance, together with a body capable of endurance
- not so low and heavily bones as to appear coarse or overdone, nor so lightly boned as to appear racy.

The Pembroke's coat is of medium length, straight with dense undercoat, never soft, wavy or wiry.

"Fluffy" coats can occur and are not allowable in the show ring. They make attractive pets but do require additional grooming of course.

Pembroke Corgis can be a variety of colours - self colours in red, sable, fawn, black and tan, with or without white markings on legs, brisket and neck. Some white on head and foreface permissible.

Good dogs come in any colour, providing that the colour is correct to the standard.

Height: Approx. 25.4 to 30.5 cms
 (10 to 12 ins) at shoulder

Weight: Dogs – 10 to 12 kg (22 to 26 lbs)
 Bitches – 10 to 11 kg (20 to 24 lbs)

ROYAL CONNECTIONS

The Western Mail of February 12, 1935 carried the following: "London Takes to the Dogs – All London Went to the Dogs Last Week. A tail or not a tail – that is the question where the Welsh Corgi is concerned. It seems a vital question inasmuch as separate classification is now given to the two varieties of the breed, Pembroke and Cardigan. They are both most attractive, funny little dogs. Since the Duke of York bought one they have become very popular. The Duke bought a Pembroke Corgi and the other day I saw Princess Elizabeth in a little tweed coat and a beret, walking him on a lead in the park".

Which brings us to the "Royal" Connection. One of the famous attributes of the Welsh Corgi is his connection with the Royal Family. Since King George VI, as Duke of York, purchased the first Royal Corgi in 1933 they have been known as Royal Dogs. That first one, from Thelma Gray's Rozavel Kennels in Surrey, was known as "Dookie". He was followed, three years later, by Jane, who had a litter on Christmas Eve, from which Cracker and Carol were kept. Princess Elizabeth, for her eighteenth birthday, was given "Susan", who had been born on February 20,



1944, and lived until January 26, 1959. She was buried at Sandringham, together with Sugar and Heather. The Queen's dogs are usually buried in the grounds of the house in which Her Majesty is living at the time. The Queen now has her tenth generation directly descended from her first dog, Susan.

There was some correspondence between Buckingham Palace and Capt. Howell in 1947, the result of which was that Princess Elizabeth received a real (i.e. born in) Pembrokeshire Corgi as a wedding present. This lucky young lady was known as Solva Biscuit. Unfortunately, recalls Miss Nancy Bayly, she had problems finding her way out of Buckingham Palace "in time", and eventually was given to a lady in waiting with a more accessible garden.

Corgis were by now very firmly established as a popular breed. Stories are legion about their prowess, not only as cattle dogs, but rabbit-catchers, hunters, gundogs, obedience champions – the Corgi appears to have every talent known to dogs. Every Corgi owner knows the intelligence and determination, love of life and spirit of this little dog!!!

WELSH CORGI (CARDIGAN)

HISTORY

The Cardigan Welsh Corgi has been recorded by historians as being extraordinarily old in form dating the breed to Neolithic Man in the postglacial age. Ancient tombs do seem to depict a dog very much of similar type and shape as that of the Cardigan. However the origin is lost in the mists of time and it is better to admit we really know nothing of the breed as and if it existed a thousand years or so ago. Historians have recorded that the Cardigan appears to be the older of the two breeds of Welsh Corgi.

What has become generally accepted is that the Cardigan is descended from the short-legged TECKEL group of dogs, which roamed central and Eastern Europe and which were, brought to Wales by the ancient Celts. Photographs of the first known Cardigans show a heavy deep chested working dog with drop ears, very typical of their TECKEL ancestry. No doubt the fact that in those early years the two breeds of Corgi were not only exhibited together but also interbred, resulted in the prick eared Cardigan, which we know today.

Developed in the Cardiganshire area of Wales,





the Cardigan was originally used to drive cattle and control their movement by nipping at their heels. The Cardigan was also used as a guard and companion dog. In the late 1880's many Welsh farmers gave up breeding cattle and took to sheep for which their favourite "heeler" was not suitable due to the trait of nipping the heels of the cattle. This action was rated a fault when applied to sheep with whom a biting dog is undesirable, so in the case of the Cardigan it is thought that some farmers crossed their Corgi with the old Welsh Collie to produce a dual purpose herder.

It is also thought that such crossing may have been responsible for the emergence of the blue merle colour in the breed.

In the mountainous area where the Cardigan was developed grass grew short so it was not necessary to have a dog with long legs, but it was necessary to have a dog with a good turn of speed, plenty of spring to get over the rocky terrain, deep chest to accommodate good lungs, slightly turned out feet to enable it to move freely over marshy areas and short thick legs so that he

could duck out of the way of the flying hooves which went over his head and left him unscathed. Due to the all too frequent poor weather conditions, it was also necessary for the dog to have a good double coat to protect him from the cold and wet.

Near the turn of the century, classes were held at some livestock shows for "heelers" or "curs" but it was not until the 1920's that the term "Corgi" was used regularly and any appreciable breed history can be documented.

It is known that Cardigans were exhibited as far back as 1892, however classes under the jurisdiction of the English Kennel Club were not provided until 1925, both types being regarded as one breed, divided into two types. Challenge Certificates were first offered to Corgis at Cardiff in 1928, both types being exhibited together. The two types were recognised as two breeds in 1934 and from that time Challenge Certificates were issued for each breed.

The Cardigan Welsh Corgi is overall a slightly larger dog than the Pembroke Welsh Corgi. It is

not as numerically strong as the Pembroke and its breeders are fewer in number. However its attractive appearance, calm temperament and kindly expression have endeared the breed to the general public with whom it is popular as a companion dog. The breed has loyal devotees in England, throughout the Scandinavian Countries, the United States of America, New Zealand and Australia.

The Cardigan Welsh Corgi was first brought to Australia in 1953 by an English migrating couple Mr. and Mrs. W Lewis. They were already well-established breeders under the LEWDUX prefix in England when they emigrated to live in Western Australia. They brought with them five Cardigans, two males and three females. The 1954 Perth Royal Show was the first Royal Show at which Cardigans were exhibited. English Ch. Hannaford Rudie was awarded first in both the Limit and Open Dog classes and was also awarded the Dog CC and Best Non Sporting Dog in Show. English Ch Morfudd of Lewdux was awarded first in Limit and Open Bitch classes and was also awarded the Bitch CC and Limit Bitch in Show.

In the general appearance of the breed, the Cardigan Welsh Corgi is described as “sturdy, tough, mobile, capable of endurance. Long in proportion to height, terminating in fox-like brush, set in line with body.”

The Cardigan was bred to work over extremely rough and marshy terrain. He was therefore developed as a sturdy dog with strong bone, able to work tirelessly. It should be noted that the body is required to be long in proportion to height. It is this length of body that permits added spring, giving the dog plenty of mobility.

The impression of a Cardigan is that of a well-balanced, low-slung, long bodied dog of quality with strong bone, keen of expression and free from any coarseness. The finishing touch being the low set tail with its fox like brush.

The breed is alert, active, intelligent, steady, not shy or aggressive.

The Cardigan has a natural steady temperament. With strangers he does not give of himself lightly and is often quite reserved. However, shyness must be penalised and any viciousness





encountered must be eliminated altogether as it is not naturally found in the temperament of the Cardigan.

Their coat is short or medium and of hard texture. Weatherproof, with good undercoat. Preferably straight.

The colours of the Cardigan Corgi differ from that of the Pembroke Corgi.

Any colour, with or without white markings, but white should not predominate. The Cardigan comes in many beautiful colours and shadings. The colours found in the show ring today are red/white, tricolour, brindle of various shadings, sable, black/white and the lovely blue merle with the marbled mixture of blue, grey and black hairs. White markings on chest, feet, tip of tail and sometimes a collar, add to the beauty of such colours.

SIZE

Ideal Height: 30 cms (12 ins) at shoulders.

Both the Pembroke and the Cardigan Corgi have been highly successful in the show ring.

Additionally, they have proven their suitability in other dog sports such as Agility, Obedience and Herding.



THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WELSH CORGI PEMBROKE AND CARDIGAN

CHARACTERISTIC	PEMBROKE	CARDIGAN
SIZE/WEIGHT	25.4 to 30.5 cms (10 to 12 inches) Dogs: 10 to 12 kgs (22 to 26 lbs) Bitches: 10 to 11 kgs (20 to 24 lbs)	As near as possible to 30.5 cms (12 ins) No weight restriction applicable
HEADS	Skull is flat between the ears	Head is bigger and stronger and has dome above the eyes
EARS	Medium size, tapering and slightly rounded at the tip	Ears are larger and more rounded
NOSE	Black	Nose is larger and more prominent
EYES	Brown	Dark
BODY	Medium length	Fairly long
RIB CAGE	Oval	Pear shaped
FRONT	Oval feet and no crook	Distinct crook with larger round feet
COAT	Medium length, straight	Coat is shorter and harsher
TAIL	Short, preferably natural. Docked: Short. Undocked: Set in line with topline. Natural carriage above topline when moving or alert	Long fox's brush tail
COLOUR	Self colours of red, sable, fawn, black and tan with or without white on legs, chest, neck and muzzle	May be any colour without white dominating
TEMPERAMENT	Bold, outgoing and friendly	Steady temperament
GAIT	More active and free moving	Tend to move steadier

