

Jane Naylor has sent in the following from an old Dachshund book:

# ORIGIN AND HISTORY

The name "Dachshund" is pronounced dox-hoont (oo as in foot). In German, "Dachs" means badger, after which Wisconsin is called the Badger State, and whose hair makes the best shaving brushes; "Hund" means dog; "Dachshund" means 'badger-dog' in the same way we say 'bird dog' or 'rabbit dog'. Affectionate German diminutives include 'Dackel' and 'Teckel'.

Mythology - Few breeds escape from partisan rivalry back-dating their roots to remote antiquity - although all breeds share the same derivation from common prehistoric canine prototypes - with no valid evidence tracing any continuity from far-fetched forbears, fostered by folklore out of fantasy. Claims of Egyptian origin for dachshunds, as described on a basis of carvings in Dynasties XII and XIII (about 1500 B.C.) of short-legged dogs (one with a hieroglyphic name translated as 'Tekel') ignore the fact that there were no badgers in Egypt - so no 'badger' dog. Nor do they trace linguistic or biological connections with a dog developed to hunt badgers and so named in Germany at least 3,000 years and 1,000 dog generations later; any more than genealogists bridge the lost generations of assorted human races back to Adam and Eve. Daniel's interpretation of the Old Testament handwriting on the wall: 'Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,' defines Tekel as 'weighed in the balances and found wanting', and apt epitaph on illusory ancient origin!

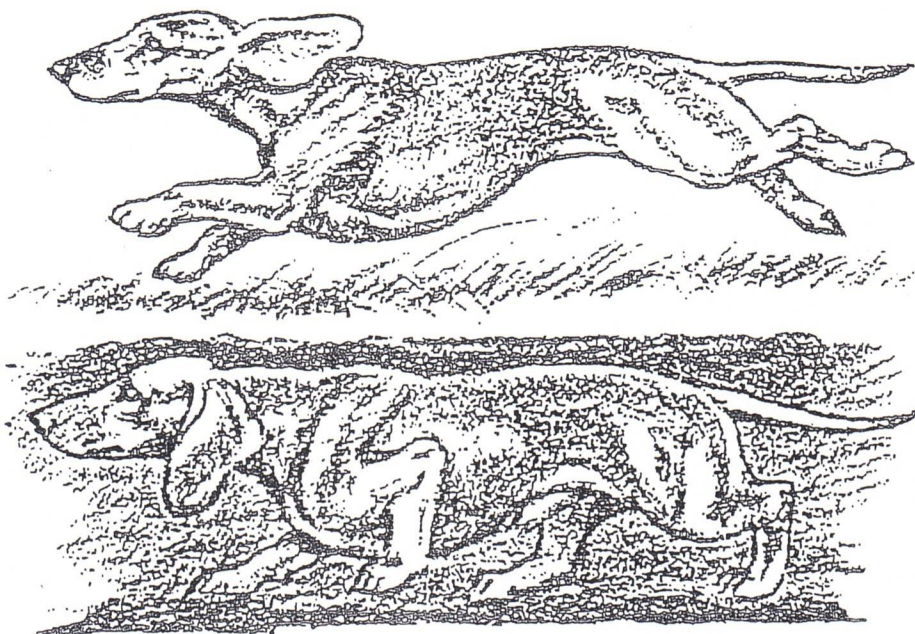
Earliest records now available of dogs hunting badgers include several woodcuts in a book first published in 1560. These dogs had long bodies, short legs, medium-length heads, pendant ears, short necks, and sickle tails. It is noteworthy that there are smooth and suggestions of longhaired coats in longer furnishings on ears, culottes and tails of some, but not all the dogs illustrated. The name 'dachshund' has been traced back to a book in German and Latin in 1681, and there are paintings dating from 1735 of unmistakable dachshunds, identified by name as such.

German history - The real origin of the dachshund breed is embraced in the 300 years (1550 - 1850) during which the German forester/game-keepers and sportsmen among the land-owning gentry - at first selecting dogs for their success in hunting badgers underground - gradually produced a 'badger dog' better adapted by structure and temperament to cope with the dangerous claws and fangs of this formidable 25 - 40 pound antagonist. Girth of chest determines the size of burrow a dachshund can penetrate, and therefore the size of the adversary in residence.



Always facing the possibility of a death struggle underground, where no human help could avail, a dachshund's self-reliant use of its own armament of jaws and teeth must settle the question of survival. A dachshund head and neck inadequate to balance its body, would be no match for the defending opponent, any more than any small-calibre weapon is effective against large-calibre game. Within depth and height limits of the bore of the average badger tunnel, successive dachshund generations converged more and more toward a pattern balancing punishing head with length of neck and body and 'retractable' running gear, and combining maximum combat capacity with maximum manoeuvrability. Male and female dachshunds were used interchangeably for hunting - there was no distinction of warrior armed for battle, and delicately-proportioned chatelaine pursuing cultural arts at home. In addition, left to her own devices, a mother dachshund would be responsible for bringing home the game to feed her litter. Among dachshunds, there is no excuse for a 'weaker sex', no feminine discount for head and neck equally needed for defence and offence by both sexes.

There were many other forms of game in German forests besides badgers, and the versatility of dachshunds was encouraged, to seek out small game on the surface; and on a five metre leash, to trail wounded game including small and large deer, for their despatch, and recovery of the venison. In packs, they also were employed successfully against wild boar. However, as their name emphasises, their structure was specialised for pursuing appropriate game underground. By the time of the earliest preserved breeding records, about a century ago, dachshund type, as we distinguish it today from other breeds, had become clearly defined and stabilised. Since then, this type has been continuously improved, and the ratio of good dachshunds has been constantly increased by selective breeding.



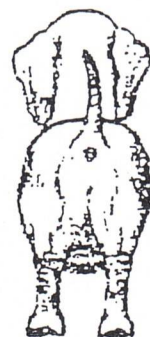


Functional design - Badger earths were not air conditioned. As oxygen was reduced by repeated breathing, it became necessary to breathe a larger volume of the depleted air to support maximum exertion. Lungs extend back as far as the soft ribs, which help the diaphragm act as a bellows; the oval cross-section of the chest provides liberal room for lungs and heart without extending the shoulder structure to excessive width. The longer the rib-cage, the more air could be processed; and a long rib-cage also helps support the long back.

To move this long body freely through badger setts, it was necessary for the legs to fold to a minimum length. Anyone experimenting with a carpenter's rule can convince himself that three sections of equal length can fold shorter, and extend longer than any comparable sections of unequal lengths. In the forequarters, the shoulder blade, upper arm, and forearm (elbow to wrist) do this folding. In the hindquarters, the thigh and shin bones and the 'bone' from hock joint to foot, are so folded in crawling through a burrow or under a bureau. Fully extended at a gallop, these same short Dachshund legs can cover an unexpected amount of ground.



*Viewed from front or rear, a dachshund should have a straight, parallel stance; front feet centered under shoulder blades, hind feet under the pelvic socket joints.*



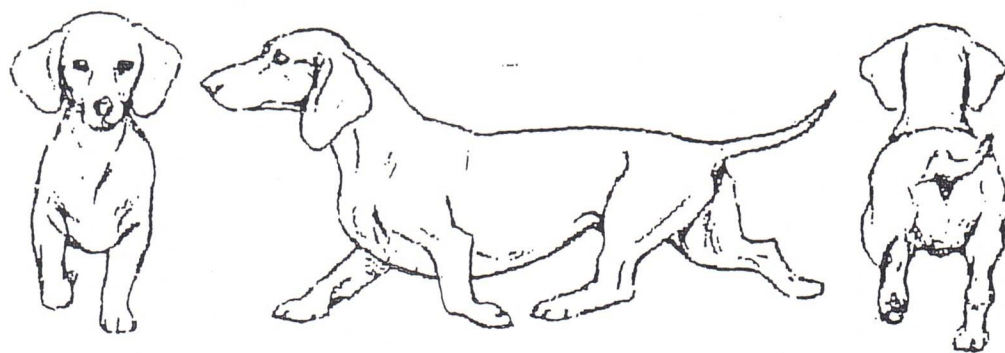
When wild animals digging their tunnels encountered a rock or a large root, they dug around or over it, leaving a constriction. If an eager dachshund forced its chest past such an obstruction and had to back up to get clear, it became important that the breastbone of the afterchest have the same gradual sled-runner up-curve as the forechest; like a shoehorn to ease the chest over the obstruction in either direction. A cut-up (chicken-breasted) afterchest could be 'hung' over such an obstacle as though by an anchor fluke. A properly constructed dachshund, with forelegs at the deepest point of the hammock-shaped keel, can crawl through a tunnel which just clears its depth from keel to withers, equally able to move its legs ahead or back. Turned-out 'digging' front feet (once said to 'throw dirt to the sides' where there is no room for it in a tunnel) have been replaced by snug arched feet with forward alignment. Too heavy a chest, or too coarse bone are as much



of a handicap as underdevelopment. A properly proportioned dachshund suggests the symmetrical build and lithe agility of the middle-weight boxing champion.

A long head provides suitable accommodation for the organs for keen scenting ability; and for strong jaws and teeth of maximum effectiveness, with scissor fit of incisors, interlocking fangs, and shearing capacity of molars. Eyes are protected by a deep setting, and well-developed surrounding bone structure. Ears set on high and well back can be drawn up over the neck out of harm's way, like small braided pigtails. A neck of good length serves the thrusting and parrying purposes of a fencer's nimble wrist. Even a tail of good size and length, in continuation of the spine, has been used by a hunter's long arm forcibly to rescue many a dachshund from places of great tightness.

Further to adapt it to work in constricted space, a dachshund whose skin was elastic enough to stretch and slip like a loose glove, had an advantage. But as soon as released, the skin should snap back to a slick fit, for a wrinkle of loose skin, by folding over, could grip a dog in tight quarters. Loose skin around head and throat could be grasped or torn by an adversary with dangerous loss of blood; skin hanging around the ankles, like wrinkled socks, also is undesirable.



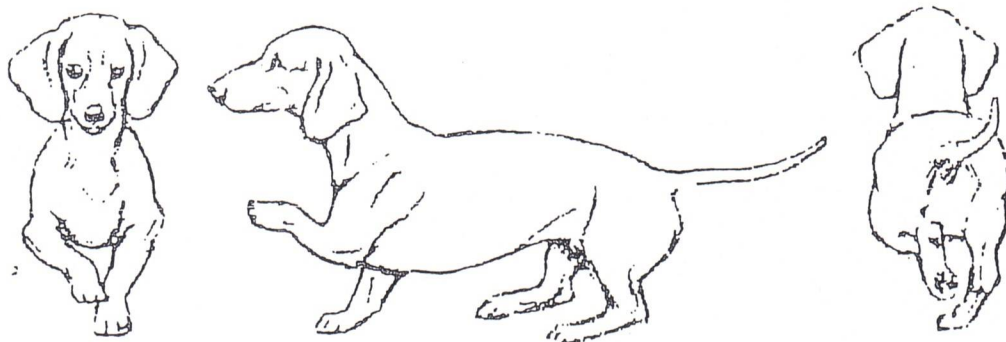
—correct gait

To avoid fatigue, straight legs, viewed from front or rear with gait parallel like locomotive side-rods, make efficient use of muscular energy. Viewed from the side, front and hind leg action suggesting a broad capital 'A', expends this energy on desirable reach and thrust, walking or trotting with surprising, apparently effortless speed, and split-second rocket-like 'low gear' getaway. The ninety-degree upper arm to shoulder blade angulation (each forty-five degrees from the vertical) provides 'shock absorber' action, running or jumping. A fair clearance under the breastbone is needed, to clear rough ground, or the treads of a staircase. Pawing the air, like the goose-step, under chin or belly, or throwing feet in or out waste energy and are



undesirable. So are 'dancing' or 'weaving' gaits, or short stilted steps, or too many other variations from the correct gait. The back should stay level in motion, neither roach, sag or bounce.

—*faulty gait*



Coats and sizes - Smooth and longhaired coats were early separated; the smooth, short, dense and sleek; the longhaired, soft and silky, to protect from water and cold. During the nineteenth century, to protect from briar and bramble, a harsh, wiry, terrier-type coat, with water-repellent undercoat produced the third variety - the Wirehaired. The badger hunting weight of thirty to forty pounds was reduced for fox to sixteen to twenty pounds; and since the turn of the twentieth century, for smaller vermin and to bolt rabbits, miniature dachshunds of all three coats have been bred down as small as six and five pounds, and are increasing in popularity as pets.

Colours - The original colour of the dachshund was brown, now officially called 'red'. However, when a hunter with a shotgun was nervously waiting for a quick brown fox to jump out of a burrow, chased by an equally quick and equally brown dachshund, and the dachshund beat the fox to the exit, you can guess what sometimes shouldn't have happened to the dachshund! So black and tan dachshunds were developed by crossing to a small bloodhound of that colour, and occasional albinistic variants (dapples) have been highly prized as particularly suitable for trigger-happy hunters. Other albinistic variants with tan markings include chocolate and a mousy grey called 'blue'.

Two intangible products of the formative centuries of the dachshund also endure; the dachshund bark, able to penetrate from burrow depths to the surface; and a uniquely self-reliant character developed in this one sporting breed, to engage its quarry in pursuit or mortal combat remotely underground, without guidance or support of a hunter. Dachshunds unable to rely on themselves in the dark depths of the earth to come up with answers that worked, just didn't come up at all to perpetuate their indecisions. Small wonder that today, they don't turn to people for much advice.