

The Origins of the Australian Cattle Dog and the Australian Stumpy-tail Cattle Dog

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George Hall was a Northumbrian free settler. He arrived in New South Wales with his wife Mary, and four small children, on the *Coromandel* in 1802 intent on starting a beef cattle empire. George and Mary Hall's family later expanded to six sons and three daughters.

Thomas Simpson Hall was born in the Hawkesbury in 1808. He was as driven and ambitious as his father. When he was still in his late teens he ventured north with his older brothers into the upper Hunter Valley to take up the land they had previously scouted for their father. There they established two cattle properties, Dartbrook first, then the much larger Gundebri, close to present day Aberdeen and Merriwa respectively. Thomas may have been young, but he obviously had the respect of his father and older brothers. He set up his home on Dartbrook and eventually oversaw the entire Hall family cattle empire from there. With his father's financial wherewithal Thomas Hall oversaw an incredible development of the family holdings that would eventually total over one million acres.

Thomas Hall was dissatisfied with the standard of the cattle in New South Wales, he set about doing something about it. He managed the breeding programs for all the family properties from Dartbrook. Developing a polled (hornless) variety, of cattle was his consuming passion. Thomas Hall and his brothers knew only too well the failings of the Smithfield as a long-distance drover's dog. So he decided to do something about that too. And he saw in the dingo the right basis for a New South Wales drover's dog. His dingoes would have lived like his other dogs until they neared sexual maturity. Then, to prevent them returning to the bush, he would have had them securely kennelled with domestic dogs of the same sex.

Finding the right working dog was the next challenge. But Hall had connections and knew where to go. It was his Durham cattle beef farming family in Northumbria that delivered him the right working dog. Sometime in the 1820s Thomas imported Durham cattle from family in Northumbria. He also asked for and received some of the blue Curs the family had long been breeding.

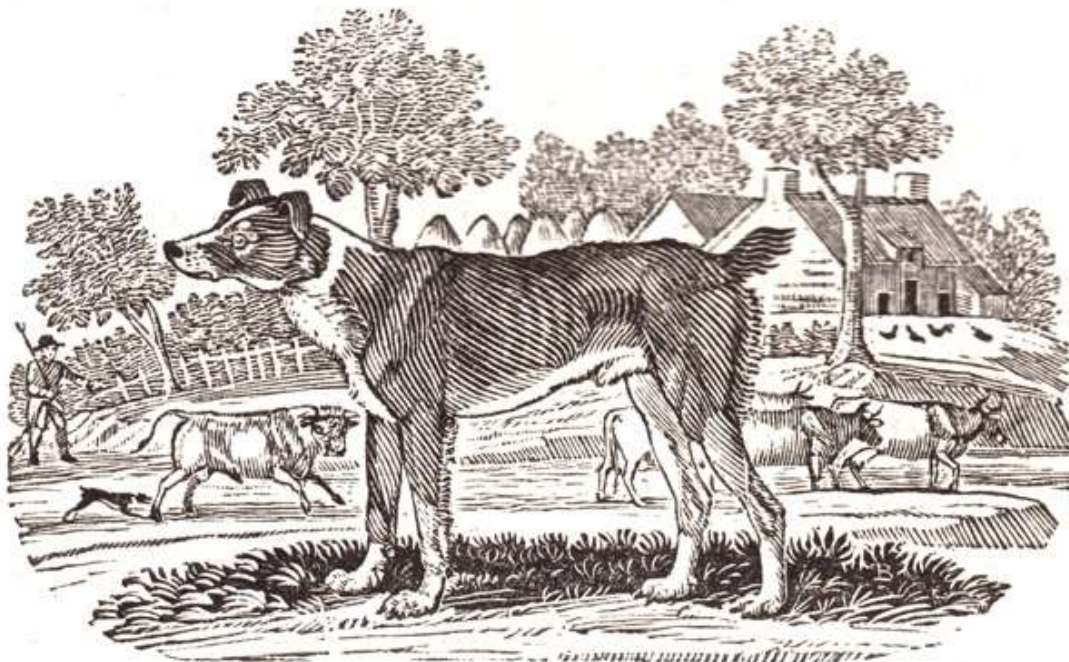
Robbie Hall, the Hall family historian in Northumbria has confirmed that the Hall family maintained a line of blue mottled Curs. There is little doubt, therefore that blue mottled, or speckled Curs, or Curs carrying the mottled colour gene, Hall's Cur, were the dogs sent to New South Wales in the 1820s with Thomas Hall's Durham cattle.

The Cur was endemic to northern England. It was another specialised droving breed/type that disappeared with the coming of the railways. Thomas Bewick the Northumbrian naturalist and master engraver published *A General History of Quadrupeds* in 1790. He described the Cur as a trusty and useful servant to the grazier. He wrote that although it wasn't recognised as a distinct breed it was the most commonly used type in the north for managing cattle.

This was a very hard dog. They were a stark departure from the sheep-working Shepherd's Dog a gathering-type worker, being developed for different, much harder work. Their hair was smoother and shorter, they were taller and squarer and were mostly of any colour; they had half-pricked ears; and they were born naturally tailless. They were a pushing, driving worker. In describing their method of working Bewick may as well have been describing today's Australian cattle dog breeds.

They bite very keenly; and as they always make their attack at the heels, the cattle have no defence against them: in this way, they are more than a match for a Bull, which they quickly compel to run. Their sagacity is uncommonly great: they know their master's fields and are singularly attentive to the cattle that are in them. A good dog watches, goes his rounds, and if any strange cattle should happen to appear amongst the herd, although unbidden, he quickly flies at them, and with keen bites obliges them to depart.

Bewick's engraving of the subject Cur has a short coat, a body squarish in profile, with long legs. It is bobtailed, has half-pricked ears, a longish neck, a strong, tapering muzzle, and typical Collie markings. The pictured specimen looks like it means business, and a Cur in the middle ground is depicted heeling a bull. It appears to be a fast dog and has large, pronounced feet. It is not hard to image terrier of some description, possibly the extinct English White terrier, being present.





So, Thomas Hall created his heeler by crossbreeding the family working Cur with the dingo. He would have then back crossed and selectively bred until they were displaying all the necessary physical attributes needed and working traits. The result was exactly what he was seeking, and he achieved his ideal type in quick time. Like any breeding program there would have been unsuitable specimens, and he obviously culled ruthlessly. By 1840 Thomas Hall had his Heeler, the first working dog created in Australia, and the only modern domestic breed created by using a wolf was perfected.

From the earliest days, long tailed and stumpy tails appeared in all Hall's Heeler litters. The union of Cur and the dingo produced two types of offspring: a tailed dog with a predominately rectangular dingo appearance – the forebear of the Australian Cattle Dog, and a bob-tailed type that had a squarish, more Cur-like profile – which became known as the Timmins Biter and eventually the Australian Stumpy-tail Cattle Dog. From the dingo, the Hall's Heelers inherited cunning, high intelligence, resourcefulness, perfect adaption to the environment, and a tireless, economical gait.

From the Cur, both Heeler types inherited a powerful work ethic, the courage to confront wild cattle, a willingness to please, and a natural suspicion of strangers. The Cur's protective devotion to its master manifested itself in both types of the Hall's Heeler to a high degree. From the outset, the Hall's Heeler was a dog that took its guarding duties seriously. Its vigilance combined with its inherited dingo territoriality gave Hall's isolated outposts excellent protection from warring Aborigines, and their plant when in thief-rich Sydney.

As Thomas Hall bred his Heelers, he distributed them throughout his father's holdings that stretched northwards through the northern tablelands, the near-western plains, and the New England regions of New South Wales. The Hall pastoral empire eventually reached Surat in mid-western Queensland. His station managers assumed the responsibility for breeding the Heelers, and both Hall's Heelers types found their own supporters with the Hall stockmen.

Thomas Hall, at the southern extreme of the chain of the huge beef cattle concerns seemed to favour the tailed dogs. His fellows in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland appeared to prefer the stumpy-tailed dogs. As drover's dogs, the Stumpy had a much longer career. Like their Cur ancestors in northern England the tailed dogs that predominated Hall's southern-most properties found themselves out of long-range droving to Sydney as soon as the rail made it to the upper Hunter Valley in 1872. That coincided with the introduction of mass-produced wire, followed soon after by barbed wire. Fenced and paddocked properties bred more quiet and easier to manage stock that didn't need such a hard dog.

Hall's Heelers took their work too seriously for quiet stock on smaller improved holdings. Hall's Heeler's heyday of wrangling semi-wild cattle on the long eastern droving routes, had come and gone. The Hall's Heeler's status as the world's only privately-owned working dog breed ended soon after Thomas Hall died in 1870, aged 62. What is certain is that after the passing of Thomas Hall his Heelers the tailed southern type, and the stumpy-tailed northern type took vastly different roads towards the two-distinct breeds we know today.

The southern type of Hall's Heeler was only in fulltime work for around forty years before progress and technology began to supersede it. Hall's Heelers were hard dogs, developed for controlling wild cattle in wild terrain. They not only kept a mob together, but they were efficient at driving beasts out of thick cover or a recalcitrant steer back to the mob when they decided to go their own way. This was one tough dog, but rather than disappearing when faced with redundancy the southern, or tailed variety, the dog we now know as the Australian Cattle Dog found many friends in Sydney, its future assured by the widespread support of the show ring.

Around the same time the stumpy-tailed version of Hall's Heelers that became known as the Timmins' Biter found popularity in the more remote districts of north-west New South Wales and southern Queensland. Conditions there called for the type of cattle worker developed by Thomas Hall; a dog with plenty of daylight under him; a tireless worker of wild cattle on large holdings and long-distance droving in rough country. But eventually railheads were established in western New South Wales and western Queensland and then road stock transport became popular in the early twentieth century. The reduced demand for such hard dogs, compounded by indiscriminate breeding, cross-breeding, and little popular patronage almost caused the original Stumpy's extinction by the late twentieth century. The Stumpy has never been as popular as the ACD in the show ring.

Out in the bush where Heelers were still hard at it, the average cow cocky only cared about workability, not what length his Heeler's tail was. In both types, there have developed many, many, strains. Both breeds enjoyed legendary status for their work ethic, faithfulness, intelligence, and devotion to master and family, and both varieties became extremely popular as first-class family, show, and watch dogs. If it was blue or red speckled it had a reputation for being fiercely protective and biting first and asking questions later. Both are handsome, remarkable breeds but neither is an exact representation of the original Hall's Heeler.

CHARACTERISTICS

As the name implies, the dog's prime function, and one which he has no peer, is the control and movement of cattle in both wide open and confined areas. Always alert, extremely intelligent, watchful, courageous and trustworthy, with an implicit devotion to duty making it an ideal working dog.

The Australian Cattle Dog should always portray a picture of an intelligent, watchful, loyal dog ready at any time to defend master and property. He must clearly convey the ability to work. A soft dog that is out of condition should be penalized heavily. They are athletes and must be kept in good hard working condition even in the show ring.

As a conformation show dog the breed has in recent years become particularly competitive with many excellent specimens gaining the ultimate Best in Show award. The Australian Cattle Dog can be seen in show rings all over the world. There are many specimens being exhibited in the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Japan, Asia, United Kingdom, New Caledonia and more recently their popularity as a show dog, working dog and companion has reached South Africa, Kenya, India and some of the more remote parts of the world.

The Obedience Dog is an area that the Australian Cattle Dog excels. This breed has a natural affinity for obedience work. Herding breeds in general with generations of experience in following the master's hand signals when moving stock are a far better bet at obedience work than perhaps a Terrier that was bred to work on its own, killing rats in the farm shed. The breed is very quick to learn and responds immediately to the master's signals and voice commands. They particularly enjoy Agility which is not only fun but often has breath holding excitement for both the handler, dog and spectators alike. The best part of all is the dogs love it.

As a Working Dog this breed was initially bred to work but over the years with the introduction of motor bikes and helicopters to herd the cattle long distances, the work of the Australian Cattle Dog in most part is confined to the yards. Although in some areas of Australia where the dense scrub is still impenetrable to a man on horseback and the modern stockman with their helicopters and motor bikes cannot get cattle out, the working cattle dog is sent in to bring out the beasts to the drovers. There is nothing more enjoyable than to watch this breed doing what they were bred for.

TEMPERAMENT

The cattle dog's loyalty and protective instincts make it a self appointed guardian to the stockman, his herd and his property. Whilst naturally suspicious of strangers, must be amenable to handling, particularly in the show ring. Any feature of temperament or structure foreign to a working dog must be considered a serious fault.

The ACD has a strong alpha "don't mess with me or my master" temperament and it is atypical for the breed to back down from any situation. A nervous, shy or overly aggressive dog should be penalized.



Doing what they were bred for

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Australian Cattle Dog has changed little since the late 1800's when the first standard was drawn up. In 1897 Robert Kaleski drew up the first Standard of points for the Australian Cattle Dog which was recognised by the original Kennel Club of New South Wales in 1903. This standard was not changed until 1963.

The following in bold is the current standard of the Australian National Kennel Council 1994 FCI Standard Number 287. In italics is the author's interpretation and the normal text is Robert Kaleski's interpretation.

The General Appearance

The general appearance is that of a strong compact, symmetrically built working dog with the ability and willingness to carry out his allotted task however arduous. Its combination of substance, power, balance and hard muscular condition must convey the impression of great agility, strength and endurance. Any tendency to grossness or weediness is a serious fault.

*The Australian Cattle Dog comes from a **spitz type breed**, the Dingo and should display all spitz characteristics except for the tail curling over the back. The head is wedge shaped, the eyes are oval, slightly obliquely set, the ears are small and pricked, and there is a slight ruff around the neck. These are all spitz characteristics. Balanced and symmetrical, sturdy and compact. The breed is generic with every part of the dog moderate. Coarse or fine boned specimens should be penalized.*

Kaleski described the breed as a "small thick set Dingo" that has a head that is broad between the ears. This ensures that the dog has a large brainbox, hence has plenty of intelligence. If narrow here, the brain must be small and the intelligence feeble, hence a poor worker.



Balanced and symmetrical resembling a SMALL thick set Dingo

HEAD AND SKULL

The head is strong and must be in balance with other proportions of the dog and in keeping with its general conformation. The broad skull is slightly curved between the ears, flattening to a slight but definite stop. The cheeks are muscular, neither coarse nor prominent with the underjaw strong, deep and well developed. The foreface is broad and well filled in under the eyes, tapering gradually to form a medium length, deep powerful muzzle with the skull and muzzle on parallel planes. The lips are tight and clean. Nose black.

The head must be balanced, wedge shaped with a broad skull and muscular cheeks. The breadth between the ears should be approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dog's overall height. The head should be in three equal parts. The muzzle from tip of nose to stop is one part, the stop to the occiput is one part and the ear from base to tip is one part. From tip of erect ear to erect ear should be 2 parts. You are not looking for an equilateral triangle but a clean wedge 3 to 2

*The skull and muzzle must be on parallel planes. The stop is not 90 degrees but a **slight break** between the eyes. When observing the head from the front, there should be no falling away under the eye, or big heavy cheeks. You should see a clean wedge. Far too often breeders and judges refer to the ACD as "must have a big head". This is incorrect. The standard calls for the head in balance with the dog, NOT a big head. Problems that are very evident are prominent stops, domed skulls, equilateral triangle shaped heads, boxed heads and heads that are too small or too large in proportion to the dog.*

"Kaleski writes". The head must taper to a point at muzzle meaning that the least weight is at the business end, ensuring that the dog can get his bite in quickly and drop out of danger, on the same principle as the boxer using light gloves instead of heavy ones - his hitting is much quicker. He must be full under the eye, ensuring that the muscles which move the lower jaw are very strong, which is very necessary, as they correspond to the biceps of a boxer and give the dog power to do his work. A dog deficient there cannot continue biting long; his jaw muscles become tired. Strong and muscular in the jaws is vital for if there is a deficiency here, when a shod horse kicks a dog, he has his jaw broken because there is no cushion of muscle to protect the bone; hence, if injured, he is useless.



Correct Head

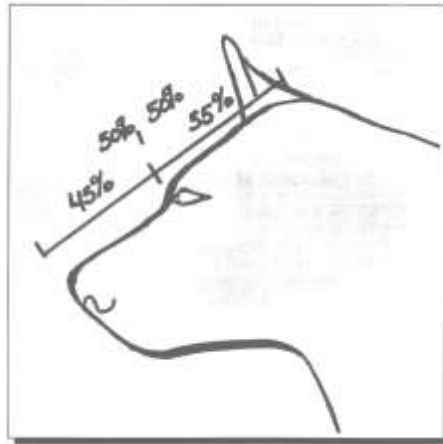


Too Wide



Too Narrow

The diagram above represent a correct head (left) where a vertical line can be drawn against the side of the head and the ears do not extend past that line. The head in the centre represents the Welsh Corgi Pembroke ear set and placement and the head on the right represents the Siberian Husky ear set and placement.



Correctly balanced, correctly proportioned heads

EYES

The eyes should be of oval shape and medium size, neither prominent nor sunken and must express alertness and intelligence. A warning or suspicious glint is characteristic when approached by strangers. Eye colour, dark brown.

The eyes must be oval in shape, set well apart and are slightly obliquely set. They are medium size and must be dark brown in colour with a warning or suspicious glint. Light coloured eyes should be penalised as this gives the dog a foreign often evil expression.

Far too often, one sees domed skulls with round protruding frontally placed eyes and muzzles that are too short. Round protruding eyes would be a hindrance to the dog whilst working, as the eye would collect dirt and foreign objects. Domed skulls are an obvious problem, as the dog would encounter a swift kick directly to the forehead rather than the kick going over the head.



Oval shaped eye

Kaleski writes. "The eyes are brown because that is the Dingo colour, therefore the best. If blue or white, the animal is extremely likely to go blind or deaf, or both; in either case, it will be useless for anything. Quick because a dog has to judge his distance every time when coming in to bite and the eye must be quick to do it. Sly-looking, because a hot-headed, rushing dog is useless as a worker, and the eye is the index to his character".

Correct oval obliquely set



Correct oval obliquely set



**Incorrect eye shape, ears
too large too wide and
too low down on skull**



Incorrect eye shape and ear too large



EARS

The ears should be of moderate size, preferably small rather than large, broad at base, muscular, pricked and moderately pointed neither spoon nor bat eared. The ears are set wide apart on the skull, inclining outwards, sensitive in their use and pricked when alert, the leather should be thick in texture and the inside of the ear fairly well furnished with hair.

The standard calls for preferably smaller rather than larger. There is a tendency to have ears too big, incorrectly placed or of poor leather quality. How big is too big? Pull the ear to the eye. A small ear will come close to the outer edge, a big ear will exceed the inner edge. Incorrectly placed? The outer edge of the ear must be on the vertical. Poor leather quality? soft, weak, fly away ears, often with a crease in the ear. Inclining outwards to catch the sounds from behind.

Kaleski writes "The ears are short, so that they can be readily laid flat when biting or fighting; and are less likely to be damaged. Pricked, so as to catch sounds, such as whistles or words of command, best, especially from a distance. Running to a tip, V- or diamond-shaped, for two reasons: (1) the progeny are more likely to be prick-eared, the ear-muscles rising much higher in a diamond-ear than a "tulip" or spoon-shaped ear; (2) the spoon-ear is a sure indication of the Bull-terrier cross; set wide apart on the skull, so that the ear inclines outwards rather than forwards, for in the latter case they do not hear so well; hence cannot answer to the whistle or word of command as efficiently from a distance. They should be as pricked as a cat's for this reason".



Correct ear shape

MOUTH

The teeth sound, strong and evenly spaced, gripping with a scissor-bite the lower incisors close behind and just touching the upper. As the dog is required to move difficult cattle by heeling or biting, teeth, which are, sound and strong are very important.

An older dog with worn teeth should not be heavily penalised, but any dog that did not have a correct scissor bite would indicate lack of strength as a biter. It is not a requirement of the breed to have 42 well placed teeth, but the standard does call for evenly spaced teeth therefore, gaps are not desired but, an obviously superior specimen should not be penalized for a small number of missing teeth.



Scissor Bite

Upper incisor teeth fit closely over lower ones, with lower canines in front of the upper.



Level

Teeth meet edge-to-edge.



Overshot

Top jaw protruding over lower jaw leaving a gap. Position of canines is also reversed.



Undershot

Lower incisors protrude beyond upper incisors leaving a gap between upper and lower canines.

NECK

The neck is extremely strong, muscular, and of medium length broadening to blend into the body and free from throatiness.

Must be well muscled, balanced with body, clean, never throaty or carrying any looseness of skin. The standard calls for medium length. Far too often extremely strong is interpreted as no neck, which gives the dog an unbalanced stuffy appearance.

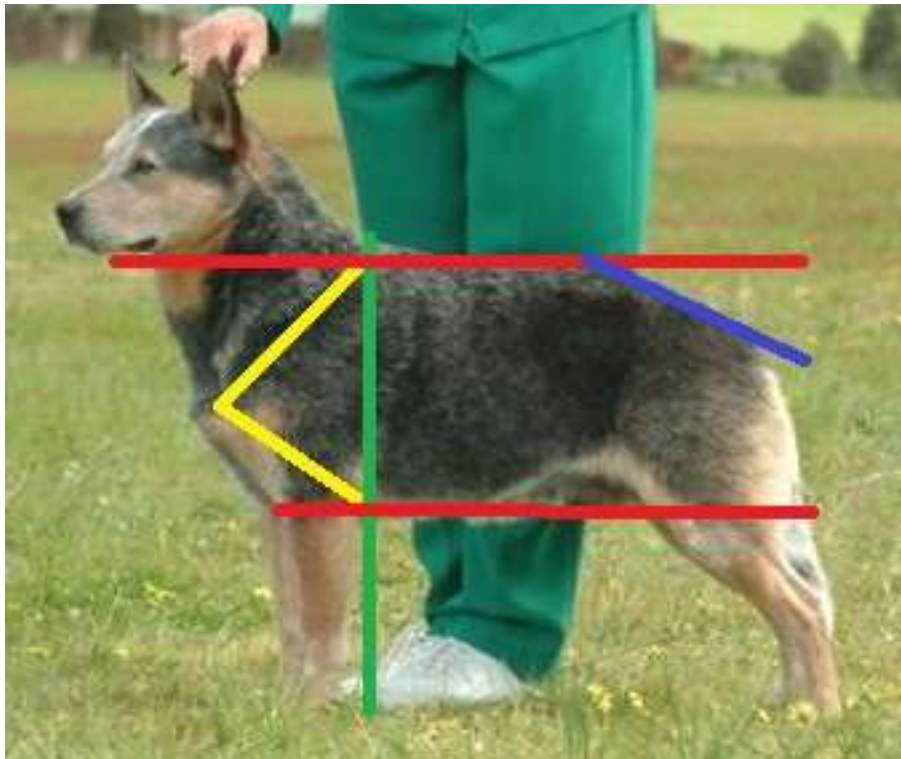


FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders are strong, sloping, muscular and well angulated to the upper arm and should not be too closely set at the point of the withers. The forelegs have strong, round bone, extending to the feet and should show flexibility with a slight angle to the forearm when viewed from the side. Although the shoulders are muscular and the bone is strong, loaded shoulders and heavy fronts will hamper correct movement and limit working ability.

The upper arm should join the shoulder blade as near to 90 degrees as possible. There is a great tendency to see many short upper arms, which does not allow for the correct extension required. Also, from the wither to the point of elbow should be equal to the point of elbow to the ground. This is a problem area where the chest extends past the point of elbow or the foreleg from the elbow to ground is too short. All these hinder correct, free, supple movement.

The shoulders are strong and well sloped, so that the dog gallops easily and drops with ease when biting. Chest is deep because a shallow-chested dog has no heartroom and is easily thrown off balance. If too deep, or "Bulldoggy" as Kaleski referred to it, he cannot travel at any speed, but it must not be out of proportion to the body.

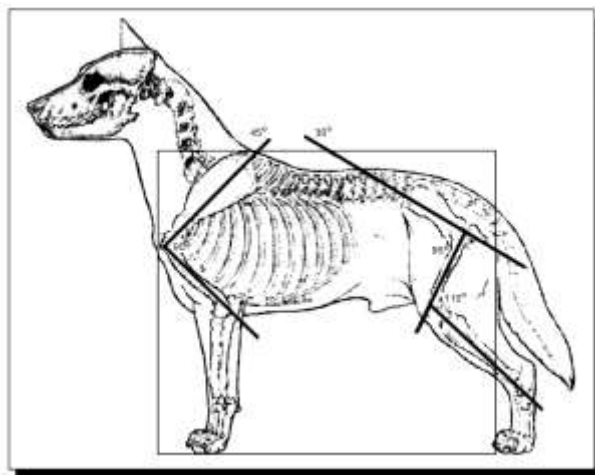


BODY

The length of the body from the point of the breastbone, in a straight line to the buttocks, is greater than the height at the withers, as 10 is to 9. The topline is level, back strong with ribs well sprung and carried well back with the loins broad, strong and muscular and the flanks deep. The dog is strongly coupled.

Far too many dogs are too long in body (the dog should be 10% longer than high) which does not give the flexibility to turn quickly thus restricts movement. Must be well ribbed back with a deep and powerful chest allowing for plenty of lung and heart room for maximum endurance. General proportions of the back are 2/3 ribcage and 1/3 loin. Deep, broad and muscular loins with deep flanks coupled together with balanced strong forequarters and powerful hindquarters. When viewed from above the well muscled shoulders and loins should be in a straight line with a clearly defined waistline and very little tuck up.

An area of concern that is becoming more evident is the lack of level backs in the breed. A dip just behind the wither normally indicates that the dog is too high in wither and not correctly angled in front. The wither is too far up on the neck and the forequarter too far forward. You often find that dogs with this problem have a roll when they move. The second and also common problem is a dip right in the middle of the back which means that the dog is not ribbed back sufficiently and often too long in loin, therefore too long in body.



Correct length to height ratio

Kaleski writes "the legs are clean, because a hairy-legged dog becomes weighted with mud on soft roads and soon tires. Fair amount of bone to carry a fairly heavy body. If too light in bone he is top-heavy. Great muscular development, because without it he lacks the driving power to do the work; hence he is useless. Back is straight, because a hollow-backed dog is always weak in the loins, and hence cannot drop or come back quickly enough when biting. Ribs are well-sprung or "casky" which denotes a strong,

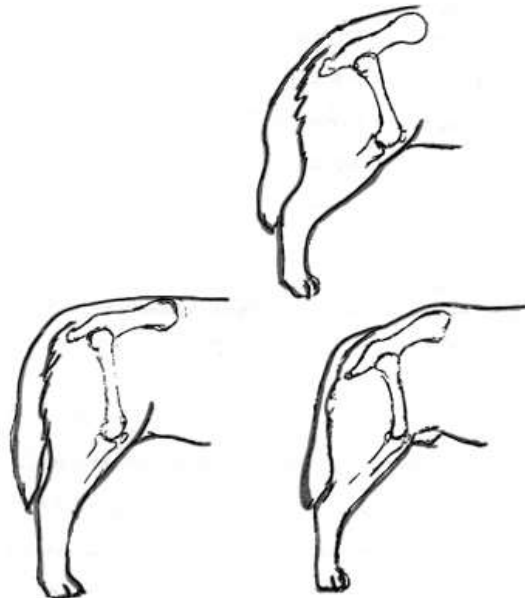
hardy constitution; "well-ribbed up" means that the last rib is close to the hip, thus enabling the dog to turn and twist his body easily".

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarters are broad, strong and muscular. The croup is rather long and sloping, thighs long, broad and well developed, the stifles well turned, and the hocks well let down. When viewed from behind, the hind legs, from the hock to the feet, are straight and placed parallel, neither close nor too far apart.

The most common problem in the hindquarter would be the insufficient turn of stifle. The standard calls for well-turned stifle, but we do not want the angulation of a German Shepherd. Remember the Australian Cattle Dog is moderate in every respect. We can not therefore excuse the many straight stifles that are being exhibited today which unfortunately leads to higher than required tail sets and incorrect angle of the croup. This will cause lack of drive and stilted rear movement. The length of hock should be approximately 1/3 the height of the dog, for preference the shorter the better.

Kaleski writes, the hindquarters are strong and muscular because they are the "engine" or propelling power of the dog. Some dogs are perfect in front but fail lamentably here; such dogs tire very quickly, and do not earn their salt for a drover. Back thighs well let down for speed, because the lower the hockjoint the longer the stride; hence more speed. No dewclaws on feet, because they catch in the long grass or mud and tear the sinew, crippling the dog. Good loins, because they are the hinge of the body, and if weak the body is useless. The loin should arch slightly, because the dog's hindquarters are then of the Greyhound shape, giving him more speed and activity than a straight-backed dog.



Top graphic – correct length and lay of croup

Left – croup too flat

Right – goose rumped

FEET

The feet should be round and the toes short, strong well arched and held close together. The pads are hard and deep, and the nails must be short and strong.

"No feet, no working dog".

Feet are small and shaped like those of a cat, because offering the smallest bearing surface for heatblisters on hot roads, or thorns ("bindii"); also, when the foot is small the power is more concentrated giving better results. The shape of the foot was a disputed point for some years. Some breeders arguing that the dog with the splay or "hare" foot 'sank less in soft ground' have a greater bearing surface. However, experience has proved that the cat foot is the best all round.



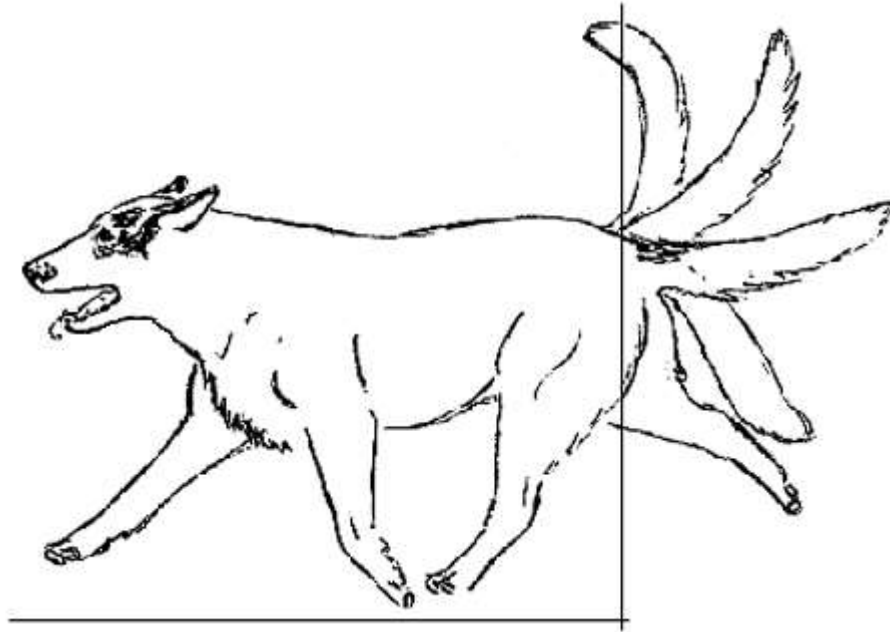
TAIL

The set on is moderately low, following the contours of the sloping croup and of length to reach approximately to the hock. At rest it should hang in a very slight curve. During movement or excitement, the tail may be raised, but under no circumstances should any part of the tail be carried past the vertical line drawn through the root. The tail should carry a good brush.

The tail should flow as part of the dog. It acts as a rudder for the dog in movement. All too often one sees a tail carried over the back like an antenna. The tail and croup go together. The flatter the croup and higher the tailset. More often than not this is also associated with straight stifle. The tail should never hook or curl and should never come up over the back. There should not be any kinks or bumps in the tail.

Tail is of fair length, for the reason that it regulates the dog's movements, being merely a continuation of the backbone covered with hair, and it serves to balance the dog in his gallop. If too short or too long, his speed and action suffer accordingly, just as with Greyhounds. A dog with a brush tail rests better than any other, as in a wild state the dog sleeps coiled in a circle, with the nose buried

in the fur of the brush. I don't know why exactly but believe that there is a physiological reason for it. Probably, by lessening the respiration in this way, the dog conserves energy on the same idea as hibernation - otherwise suspended animation.



COAT

The coat is smooth, a double coat with a short dense undercoat. The outer-coat is close, each hair straight, hard and lying flat, so that it is rain-resisting. Under the body, to behind the legs, the coat is longer and forms near the thigh a mild form of breeching. On the head (including the inside of the ears), to the front of the legs and feet, the hair is short. Along the neck, it is longer and thicker. A coat either too long or too short is a fault. As an average, the hairs on the body should be from 2.5 to 4 cms. (approx. 1-1 1/2 ins) in length.

The breed is required to work in all weather conditions therefore, they must have adequate protection against the elements. The coat is a double coat with the outer coat approximately 1 - 1.5 inches in length, straight and the undercoat is softer and shorter to keep the dog warm in winter and cool in summer. The coat should be harsh to the touch and close knit. Curly or wavy coats are sometimes evident in older dogs but should be penalised in a young dog. In addition, open coats with little undercoat are seen, this should also be penalised, as it would lack the required weather resistance.

Kaleski writes" the coat must be short, smooth and very dense, as the cattle dog has to work in all climates and all weathers. Like the Dingo, the coat consists of two - a loose outer one to turn the sun's rays, and a short inner one, close and fine as a seal's fur, to keep out cold and wet".



COLOUR

Blue. The colour should be blue, blue-mottled or blue speckled with or without other markings. The permissible markings are black, blue or tan markings on the head, evenly distributed for preference. The forelegs tan midway up the legs and extending up the front to breast and throat, with tan on jaws; the hindquarters tan on inside of hindlegs, and the inside of thighs, showing down the front of the stifles and broadening out to the outside of the hindlegs from the hock to the toes. Tan undercoat is permissible on the body providing it does not show through the blue outer coat. Black markings on the body are not desirable.

Red Speckle. The colour should be of good even red speckle all over, including the undercoat, (neither white nor cream), with or without darker red markings on the head. Even head markings are desirable. Red markings on the body are permissible but not desirable.

The standard lays out quite clearly the colour requirements of this breed. The correct colour and markings are a good indication as to the purity of the breed. Although body patches are undesirable, an otherwise excellent specimen should not be penalised for a body patch

Nose and toenails black regardless of colour.

A group of white hairs on the forehead (ranging from a few hairs to a large spot) in both colours commonly known as the "Bentley Star" is a characteristic of the breed. White, ringed and/or patching on the tail seen in both red and blue dogs is a breed characteristic and just as acceptable as self-coloured tails.

Blue

The blue base colour in the Australian Cattle Dog is black. Although white is not mentioned in the standard, the "blue" colour is produced by a more or less even intermingling of black and white hairs in the outer coat giving the impression of bluish colour. The more white hairs present, the lighter the blue, the fewer white hairs present, the darker the blue.

If the white hairs are so abundant that the animal appears white or the white hairs are so few that the animal appears black, the colour is considered undesirable

Blue speckle is produced by small, irregular groups of light hair clustered together in strips distributed more or less evenly through the coat against a dark background. The size of the speckle is, normally from slightly less than 2cm up to approx 2.5cm.

Blue mottle is fingertip sized dark spots usually from slightly less than 2cm up to approx 2.5cm against a light background.

Red

The red base colour in the Australian Cattle Dog is red.

Red speckle is produced by small, irregular groups of white hair clustered together in strips distributed more or less evenly through the coat against a red background. The size of the speckle is, normally from slightly less than 2cm up to approx 2.5cm.

Red Speckle is the only colour provided for, in the standard for red dogs.

Absence of speckle is undesirable as are black hairs showing through the coats of red dogs. The undercoat in red speckle dogs must be red, not white nor cream. The undercoat in the blue coloured dogs may be black and or tan. If tan, it should not show through the outer coat. In mottled dogs only, areas of white may possibly include a small amount of white undercoat hair.

Black body patches

Kaleski standard of 1903 Qld Kennel Club version of 1906 reference to: Dark blue on back, sometimes with black saddle and black spot on tail butt.

Both colours produce body patches. Currently the wording and interpretation allows for red patches on the body of red coloured dogs to be more acceptable than black patches on the body of blue coloured dogs.

Nose and toenails black regardless of colour

Liver, chocolate, unpigmented nose colour, flesh, pink coloured toenails in either blue or red dogs are incorrect and must be penalised.

The “Bentley”

This is a white mark in the middle of the forehead that all ACD's carry regardless of colour of dog and needs mention due to confusion by judges as to its existence.

Black/Blue muzzle and/or blue overlay on body in red dogs

The colour must clearly be either red or blue and not a mixture of both.

Kaleski writes “Colour, for two reasons: (1) That true blue colour (neither light nor dark) is the most invisible colour possible particularly at night; hence a dog of this colour is not easily seen by cattle or horses, and thus has the least chance of being kicked. (2) the markings and colours as indicated stand for purity of breeding. In every strain of blue cattle dog there is some peculiarity, and it shows in the colour as well as in the shape, so that an expert can tell by looking at any blue dog how he has been bred.

Faults:

Cream or white undercoat.

Any colour other than black on nose and toenails.

Creeping Tan. Tan on the legs of blue dogs should not extend onto the shoulders and/or the hips. On the face, the tan should not engulf the eye circumference and creep onto the ears.

Red undercoat appearing through blue outer coat.

Black/Blue muzzle and/or extensive blue overlay on body in red dogs

The Three Varieties of Blue



Blue(variety accepted)



Blue Speckle (variety accepted)



Blue Mottle (variety accepted)

The Three Varieties of Red



Red (variety currently not accepted)



Red Speckle (only variety currently accepted)

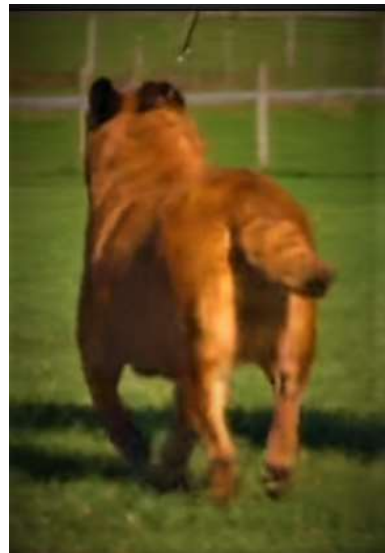


Red Mottle (variety currently not accepted)

GAIT/MOVEMENT

The action is true, free, supple and tireless and the movement of the shoulders and forelegs is in unison with the powerful thrust of the hindquarters. The capability of quick and sudden movement is essential. Soundness is of paramount importance and stiltedness, loaded or slack shoulders, straight shoulder placement, weakness at elbows, pasterns or feet, straight stifles, cow or bow hocks, must be regarded as serious faults. When trotting the feet tend to come closer together at ground level as speed increases, but when the dog comes to rest he should stand four square.

*Correct movement is of paramount importance. Only a well constructed dog is going to move correctly. Gait in itself is not soundness, but a measure of soundness and correct gait is not possible without correct construction. The dog will converge to the centre line at faster paces, **but they do not single track.***



SIZE

The height at the withers should be Dogs 46-51cms (18-20ins) Bitches 43-48cms (17-19ins).

Dogs or bitches over or under these specified sizes should be penalized.

Height of about twenty inches has been found by experience to be the best height for working purposes. They work well in all heights, but do not stand the constant work like the dog of twenty inches; just as the medium-sized man is always the best for constant work, as against a big or a little one. Bitches of course should always be a little finer and smaller than the dog.



FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree. Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Faults are common in all breeds of dogs, and without them most of the challenge would go out of breeding. It is important however to be aware of the faults of your dogs and try to overcome them. Faults are only an obstacle in our attempt to breed the perfect dog.

Quick Guide to General Proportions

Height to Length is as 9 is to 10 – 10% longer than high

Muzzle to stop/Stop to occiput 45% to 50% - 50% to 50%

Back is 2/3 ribcage 1/3 loin

Wither to elbow = elbow to ground

Hock to ground length - approx 1/3 of height

Length of head from tip of ear to nose is 3 equal parts from tip of ear to tip of ear is 2 equal parts

Breadth between the ears should be ¼ of the height of the dog

JUDGING THE BREED

As with all other working dogs, there are certain basic features about the Cattle Dog judge must keep in mind always. They must be very clear in distinguishing the Australian Cattle Dog from the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog. This a sturdy, tough working dog with strength and endurance possibly greater than any either dog of similar size. Although its height, length and proportions are similar to the Kelpie and Siberian Husky, it has much heavier bone and all over, far greater substance.

In looking for the correct breed type with strength and substance the judge must be careful not to be misled by dogs which have been fattened up to give impression of substance. The standard calls for "hard muscular condition" and a dog capable of quick and sudden movement. Therefore, fat dogs with clumsy, sluggish movement must be penalized.

Although this dog is renowned for its strength and strong alpha temperament, judges should not tolerate unreliable behaviour in the showring. If the dog has the intelligence and temperament required, he should respond to the control of the handler and be tractable always whilst the judge is examining him.

The head must clearly reflect the dog's intelligence and his ability to move cattle with the power of his jaws. It is this ability to nip which enables him to shift a stubborn beast, therefore strength of jaw and moderate size wedge shaped head with parallel planes and slight stop is required.

The expression is can only be described as hard and strong with a look that tells strangers clearly to beware. It is probably in this expression above any other feature that his Dingo ancestry is demonstrated.

To clearly understand this breed, one must make a detailed comparison between this breed and other breeds. For example, the ears of the ACD compared with the Siberian Husky, GSD, Corgi or Kelpie. There are many points of similarity, but the main differences should be clear. The ACD ear is wider at the base and smaller in comparison to the size of the head. The base of the ear should never be lower than the furthest corner of the eye. Soft ears have from time to time been a problem and normally associated with ears that are oversized. Remember the standard calls for smaller rather than large.

The neck should blend into well angled shoulders, the chest is moderately broad and ribs well sprung, which gives the ACD a much rounder chest and body than we find in the Kelpie or a Siberian. With his strong hindquarters and ribs carried well back, level topline and well-turned stifle with short hocks he should present a picture of compact, muscular power. Although a slight spring of pastern is allowed, we find generally that the bone runs right down to the feet which are compact and strong.

Colour is important and spelt out clearly in the standard. These colours are unique and are what sets this breed apart from any other.

Finally, where you are in doubt as to a decision between two dogs, move them around the ring once more and decide which is better fitted for the task of droving cattle. This is what the dogs were developed for, to work cattle under harsh Australian conditions and the dog best equipped for this task should be the winner.

