

JUDGING THE PEMBROKE WELSH

By Cynthia Savioli

The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is a large dog in a small package. They are bold and powerful yet a kind and loyal companion.

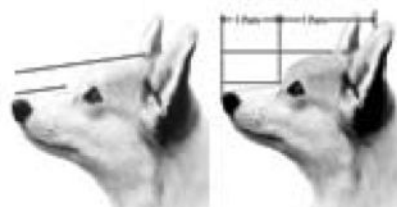
The standard for the Pembroke Welsh Corgi states that they should be low-set, strong and sturdily build, giving the impression of substance and stamina in a small space. They should have a bold outlook, pricked ears and good temperament. The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is known for having a foxy appearance to the head. They have an intelligent and interested expression. This is an outline breed with a level topline approximately 40% longer than tall. Corgis should have a fairly long neck that flows into well laid back shoulder. Gait should be free and smooth. A dog with smooth and free sidegait that is reasonably sound must be highly regarded.

General Impression

Because this is an outline breed, it is



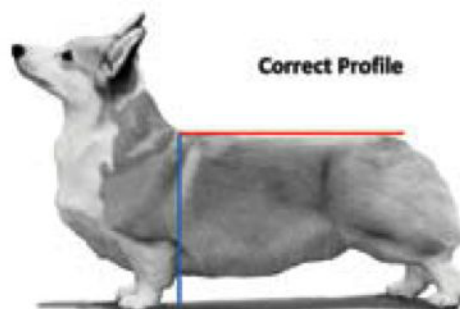
Correct head proportions showing equilateral triangle



Head

When viewing the head from the front, you should be able to see an equilateral triangle (Diagram B). Drawing a line from the nose through the eye to the tip of the ear and then from ear tip to ear tip, you find the triangle and correct proportions. The skull should be fairly wide and flat between the ears. The head planes are parallel (Diagram C). The head proportions are five parts the skull and three parts for the foreface (Diagram D). The eye opening is oval in shape and eye color is in harmony with the coat color. Because they are a herding dog, the eye is set somewhat obliquely to give them good peripheral vision to see the stock from many directions. Ears are firm and erect, medium in size and tapering to a slightly rounded point. Eye pigment in harmony with the coat color but preferably black. The nose and lip pigment should be black.

While examining the head on the table, check for a scissors bite (level is acceptable). Do not check for dentition especially in the side and back teeth. You should then examine the proportions and planes of the head and move on to the remainder of the examination. Expression should be viewed on the ground where the Corgi is most comfortable.



Correct Profile

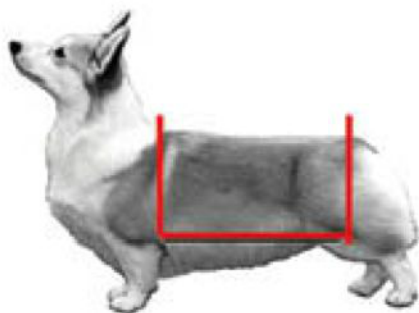
important to stand at least 15 feet away from the breed to view the profile. This should be done on the ground as a group as well as on the table during individual examination. It is the only time you will get to view the breed at eye level. The correct profile is 40% longer than tall when measured from the withers to the ground and from the withers to the base of the tail (Diagram A). Correct height is 10 to 12 inches. Weight is proportion to size but should not exceed 30 pounds for dogs and 28 pounds for bitches.



Neck and Body

The Pembroke Welsh Corgi has a fairly long neck which is of sufficient length to provide over-all balance of the dog. The neck flows into well laid back shoulders and a level topline. The upper arms should be nearly equal in length to the shoulder blade. The Corgi has a deep chest that is well let down between the forelegs. The chest is oval in shape. The forelegs are short, forearms turned slightly inward, with the distance between wrists less than between the shoulder joints so that the front does not appear absolutely straight (Diagram E). When examining the chest, it is important to place your hand between the legs and feel this shape. It should feel like the keel of a boat sitting in your hand.

The Pembroke has oval shaped bone which is carried all the way down to the oval foot. The rib cage is well sprung and moderately long with a short loin. The hindquarters should match the forequarters in angles. The hocks are short and perpendicular to the ground. When viewed from behind, they are parallel to each other. The tail is docked as short as possible but may be up to 2" in length.



Coat and Colors

The coat is medium in length, short, thick and weather-resistant. The coat varies in length with slightly longer ruff around the neck, chest and on the shoulders. There may be a slight depression behind shoulders due to the heavier neck coat meeting the shorter body coat. Because the Corgi is the fairy steeds of the elves, we say this is the saddle for the elves to ride. The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is shown with a natural coat. There should be no trimming, scissoring or sculpturing of the coat. The feet are tidied and the whiskers may be removed (optional).

The outer coat of the Pembroke comes in several colors- red, sable, fawn, black

and tan with or without white markings. White is acceptable on the legs, chest and neck, muzzle, under parts and as a narrow blaze on the head. The white markings should never exist within the rectangular box (Diagram F). It is important to always check both side of the Corgi as the markings are not symmetrical.

Gait

The standard states this best, "This is a herding dog, which must have the agility, freedom of movement and endurance to do the work for which he was developed."

The late Dr. Charles Kruger, who was an outspoken and passionate breeder of Pembroke Welsh Corgis, describes Corgi side movement the best:

"When observing the Corgi moving from the side, the head is held well forward, so the shoulder can function efficiently. The head should not be held high as it will restrict the efficiency of the shoulder function. The front foot finishing well forward of the shoulder joint. The front foot ideally will strike the ground at about the level of the ear. Any placement behind this will indicate a problem with the shoulder assembly. Front reach is measured at the point the foot hits the ground...not where the foot may be at full extension off the ground. The hind foot reaching well under the body and striking the ground at the same time as the front foot. This rare to see, but allows the dog to travel very rapidly at a trot without breaking stride thus achieving the correct, and ideal movement from the side. The hock joint opening wide and the hind foot is well extended. This is proper for the breed. The topline is strong and level in motion, a must for proper balance in a herding dog. The strong level back is perhaps the most significant single structural feature in a herding dog. Without this the drive generated from the rear quarter is hampered on its way up the spinal column.

When viewed from the front, legs do not move in exact parallel planes, but incline slightly inward to compensate for shortness of leg and width of chest. Hind legs should drive well under the body and move on a line with the forelegs, with hocks turning neither in nor out."

Judging Procedure

When judging the Pembroke Welsh Corgi, always assess the outline and balance from at least 15 feet away. You should

always exam the dog on the table. Always evaluate the expression on the ground. You should remember to check both sides of the dog. The markings are not symmetrical. A dog that is correctly marked on the judge's side may very well be a mismatch on the off side. And last but certainly not least, special emphasis should always be placed on side movement.

Disqualifications & Serious Faults

The Standard for Pembroke Welsh Corgi has no disqualifications. There are serious faults which include oversized and toy-like individuals. There are several ear faults which include button, rose or dropped ears. Overshot or undershot bites are not acceptable. Coat texture and color have several faults- fluffies, whitties, bluries and mismarks. Lastly, weak pasterns, knuckling over, slipped or double jointed hocks, barrel hocks and cowhocks are all considered serious faults.

The judge should dismiss from the ring any Pembroke Welsh Corgi that is excessively shy or vicious.

Priorities

When judging Pembroke Welsh Corgis, you should always remember the judging priorities:

- General balance & outline: proper length of body
- Attractiveness of headpiece; intelligent outlook
- Correct temperament
- Movement, particularly as viewed from the side

The Pembroke Welsh Corgi is a popular herding dog with strong breed characteristics. They are alert and always aware of their surrounds. Although bold in temperament, they are a kind and loyal companion to many families. Corgis are usually shown by breeder/owner/handlers. They are always willing to share their knowledge of the breed. ■

BIO

Cynthia, along with her husband Vince, are active breeders and exhibitors of Pembroke and Cardigan Welsh Corgis under the Aubrey prefix. They have owned and bred National Specialty winners and Best in Show winners in both breeds. Cynthia is the chairperson of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America's Judges Education Committee. She is licensed to judge Pembroke and Cardigan Welsh Corgis.

A GLANCE INTO PEMBROKE HISTORY

By Deborah S. Harper

Any attempt to unravel the early history of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi is confusing, as several distinct theories have been put forth. Certain, however, is that we must include the Cardigan Welsh Corgi's origins at the same time. The original Welsh Corgi and direct ancestor of the Cardigan is an ancient, low-stationed, drop-eared farm dog reputedly brought to the Welsh hills perhaps as early as 1200 B.C. with the invading Celts. This dog descended from the Tekel group, which includes breeds such as the Dachshund and Basset Hound. Contrarily, the Pembroke Welsh Corgi is member of the Spitz group, such as the Schipperke or Keeshound, with perk ears, curled tail (usually) and a double coat. One popular theory is that small dogs of the Spitz type accompanied the Flemish weavers who arrived in Wales in 1107 A.D. Eventually there was interbreeding so that the original corgi in Cardiganshire developed perk ears and more refinement, while the more southerly-situated dogs gained substance and

the Vallhund, including a natural bob tail gene. Their descendants were bred to the Spitzzy Flemish arrivals in the 12th century that settled in Pembrokeshire. Add in blood from another small, similar dog from northern England—the black and tan Lancaster Heeler—and perhaps others, and you pretty much have what is the basis of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi today.

A quest for nesting seabirds forms the basis of the most recent theory. In early times much sustenance was harvested from the countless seabirds inhabiting the cliffs of Britain and Scandinavia. Feathers, meat, eggs, and oils were valuable commodities. Native coastal dogs were adept at accessing bird burrows, and early people used their skills. One isolated island featured the ancient Lundehunde or Puffin Dog, who is somewhat like a fine, long-legged Corgi. It is known that in the 8th century Nordic people annually hunted the bird islands and Welsh coast. Quite likely these seafarers brought along dogs that could be helpful—perhaps the Lundehunde or a comparable canine—and that intermingled with the original Corgi.

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morphed into the corgi from Pembrokeshire.

Another theory involves the Vikings who ravaged coastal Wales in the 9th and 10th century. They were believed to have brought with them a Spitz type catle dog similar to the Swedish Vallhund who influenced the indigeneous Welsh farm dog. Thus resulted a variety of corgi which shared many characteristics with

None of these concepts has been confirmed as THE finite origin of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi. Nonetheless, it appears clear that the Vallhund and Pembroke Corgi have crossed paths somewhere; or at least they have a common progenitor.

Once established in Wales, the Corgis proved to be invaluable as all-round farm dogs, working the livestock, dispatching

vermin, and guarding the home. At first, when the small Welsh cattle were grazed on open common rangeland, the Corgis were handy at chasing competitors off a farmer's favorite patch. Later, about 1875, after fencing divided the land up, most herding jobs went to Collies and other larger dogs, while the Corgis turned their talents to driving the stock to market. Pembroke were customarily used to work poultry. Large flocks of geese were their specialty.

The Welsh farmers were wont to exhibit their livestock in agricultural shows, and so the Corgis—both breeds lumped together as “Curs”—found themselves in competition. The first recorded show was held in Carmarthen in 1892, and both breeds were judged together, even though there was growing support for each breed.



Princess Elizabeth and her Corgis, late 1930s.



Rozavel Corgis from the same era.

It was not until 1925 that the UK Kennel Club offered classes under its auspices—still together as Welsh Corgis and judged by a single Standard. In 1928 they were placed in the Non-Sporting group. During this period there was some interbreeding, and often littermates competed



Pembroke Corgis excel at performance activities.

as Pembrokes or Cardigans. Nonetheless, enthusiasm for separate breeds grew quite heated. Finally, in 1934, the KC granted them separate status, and their supporters worked to define and enhance the distinctions between the two breeds. Incidentally, it was in 1934 that an earlier tail docking ban was lifted, which helped solidify the appearance of the Pembrokes.

Interest in the attractive little herding dog, the Pembroke Welsh Corgi, soon spread beyond its Welsh homeland. Influential dog people established breed clubs, and then in 1938 The Welsh Corgi League came into existence as a major force. The breed's popularity soared—no doubt partially due to King George VI's 1933 purchase of a puppy for his daughter Elizabeth! Talented breeders built up kennels of quality dogs, and the homogeneity of breed type greatly improved. There was a hiatus for the duration of World War II, but activities soon resumed and continue apace. The Pembroke Corgi now has established himself throughout Europe, Canada, South Africa and Australia.

A Pembroke Welsh Corgi arrived on USA soil in 1934 after captivating her new owner, a prominent East Coast Old English Sheepdog breeder visiting in England.

The Corgi, Little Madam of Merriedip, became the first to be registered by the AKC when it recognized the breed later that year. Other imports soon followed, with several settling in California, including an English champion. The first litter whelped in the United States was also registered with the AKC in 1934.

Initially Pembrokes and Cardigans were still shown together in the Terrier group, though by 1935 they were shifted to the Working group. The first champion was Eng. Am. Can. Ch. Sierra Bowhit Pivot (Little Madam was the first bitch champion), and he was also the first to win a Group I. (The first Best in Show was not until 1949, and was won by the import Ch. Rozavel Uncle Sam of Waseeka.) As the breed caught on here, imports flooded in and breeders were quick to develop their own bloodlines and promote the breed.

1936 was an important milestone, as the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America was established. Throughout the years this impressive club has achieved many things and served the breed and its admirers well. Of primary importance is the club's guardianship of the breed Standard. First drawn up in 1925, it was a mere 120 words long. The Standard evolved, and our

most recent version was done in 1993. To go along with the document, the club has prepared an excellent "Illustrated Standard" and Judges Education Slide Show presentation.

The huge National Specialty Show each year is extremely prestigious and popular. As well as conformation, it showcases the talents and versatility of our breed in Obedience, Tracking, Herding, Agility, and Rally Obedience. Historically, all of these venues have seen exciting "Firsts" won by accomplished Corgis and handlers too numerous to mention, as the opportunities for sport with pure-bred dogs have proliferated. The breed is in good hands with the PWCCA at the helm.

A final note of historical importance concerns the prohibition of docking tails. While the Pembroke has always carried a gene for a natural bob tail, over time this trait has receded while breeders worked to improve overall structure and type. Now virtually all Europe, Britain, Australia and other countries disallow docking tails. Eventually the USA might be included in this ban. Many people are trying quite successfully to retrieve the lost gene. Only time will tell if our beloved "Bunny Butt" look will survive. ■