

THE CLOWN OF THE TERRIER GROUP

The Bull Terrier by Ann Radford

A study of the Bull Terrier reveals a remarkable breed that is of interest not only to Bull Terrier enthusiasts but also, to dog enthusiasts in general. The Bull Terrier was genetically designed to fulfill a certain purpose, and has since been modified with a definite goal in mind.

Amazingly, this evolution can be traced, with considerable accuracy almost from the beginning.

The History of the Bull Terrier

There have been many books written in the past decades describing the Bull Terrier in great detail. To summarize to some degree, the Bull Terrier was originally bred to fight. Dog fighting, along with bull and bear baiting and cock fighting, was a popular sport in England until the British Parliament outlawed it in 1835. Many breeds were cross-bred to attain the perfect fighting dog, the one with the most power and the most courage. The most successful was the result of cross-breeding the Bulldog with the Terrier. The Bulldog of the early 1800's was a heavy dog, strong Headed and broad-chested, similar to the Staffordshire Bull Terrier of today. The Terrier of the day was a general term for any dog that would catch and kill vermin. The result was called the Bull-and-Terrier.

When dog fighting was eventually banned; breeders searched for a better-looking dog to sell, one that would also be an excellent game dog. In the 1850's a James Hinks from Birmingham began experimenting by crossing the Bull-and-Terrier with the now extinct White English Terrier. These White Terriers were elegant and intelligent, and very similar in appearance to the present day Manchester Terrier. Hinks further experimented by introducing the Dalmation into the cross. The result was an immaculate, white-coated Bull-and-Terrier, small and glamorous, which Hinks named the Bull Terrier. These dogs showed a refinement and grace absent from the mongrel Bull-and-Terrier. In comparison, the Bull Terrier was longer and cleaner in head, stronger in muzzle with more of a Roman finish. Hinks' critics did not think much of this new breed and challenged him to a fight. The result was the infamous battle of 1862 where Hinks' Puss killed the Bull-and-Terrier she was pitted against and, unmarked, went on to win numerous ribbons in a dog show the following day. Puss's victory proved that the Bull Terrier had lost none of its talent and this snow-white dog soon became very popular.

While the white Bull Terrier continued to improve and increase in popularity the old Bull-and-Terrier faded into the background. It did not disappear however, as lovers of the old Bull-and-Terrier continued to breed and emerged with the respectable, purebred Staffordshire Bull Terrier. Furthermore, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, when crossed with the white Bull Terrier, in the early 1900's, started the emergence of the coloured Bull Terrier.

The modern Bull Terrier, while keeping its spirit, is nothing like the dog that was bred to fight to the death in the pits. The domesticated Bull Terrier is disciplined by family loyalty and has become the ideal pet. As the Standard states, "The Bull Terrier must be strongly built, muscular, symmetrical and active, with keen, determined and intelligent expression, full of fire but of sweet disposition and amenable to discipline." Over the year's the Bull Terrier has steadily improved and today is capable of winning

the highest placement at the largest dog shows. The Bull Terrier can hold its own and many times comes out victorious. It has attained true refinement while losing none of its power and grace, and certainly none of its courage and character.

Common Misconceptions

The most common misconception factoring Bull Terrier lovers and owners today is that surrounding the difference between a Bull Terrier and a Pit Bull. It is almost certain that Staffordshire Bull Terrier enthusiasts as well as American Staffordshire Terrier enthusiasts face the same public ignorance.

The Pit Bull is an unrecognized breed in Canada. In general, the Pit Bull is a strong, athletic dog that measures up to 19 inches at the shoulder. It's head is of medium length, wedge-like in shape, with a broad skull. The cheeks are prominent and there is a distinct stop. The muzzle is square and of medium length with wide powerful jaws and firm lips. The eyes are round and dark and are set low down in the skull and far apart. The ears may be cropped or natural and are set high on the head.

The one unique feature that distinguishes a Bull Terrier from another breed is the shape of the head. The head should appear long and strong and should be oval or egg-shaped. It should be completely filled so that there are no hollows or bumps. There should be very little loose skin and the forehead should be flat and clean from ear to ear. The ears should be small and thin and erect on the top of the dog's head, fairly close together and should point upwards. With all of these features present, the head should give the appearance of smoothness. The profile should be an unbroken, curving down face from the top of the head to almost the end of the nose. About an inch from the nose tip, it should curve more steeply. This is referred to as a "Roman Finish". The eyes should be well sunken and as black as possible with a piercing glint, giving a keen expression. They should be small and triangular, and nearer the ears than the nose and set closely together.

The Bull Terrier Club of Canada

There were many reasons for the development of the Bull Terrier Club during the early part of the century. The main reason was the need to progress the breed as a whole, rather than as a group of individuals each going their own way. As club members we compare pedigrees and agree to exchange services and help each other in any way possible. One might say that we are pooling our resources with the hope of producing the perfect Bull Terrier.

In Canada today, the national club, the Bull Terrier Club of Canada, maintains a very active membership. Since the late 1960's Canadian breeders have attended and won many Specialty shows in the United States. Canadian's have bred some of the top dogs at the Bull Terrier Club of America's specialty show, "Silverwood," and continue to play a major role in the ongoing development of the breed.

The Bull Terrier Club of Canada (BTCC) sponsors both Specialty events for the serious Bull Terrier breeder and owner as well as numerous events for the pet owner, such as the annual Club Picnic. Each year club members get together on a sunny June day and enjoy each other's company, a fun match, a fancy dress contest, and a best trick contest. Not to be forgotten is the infamous "Bully-Olympics," where bullies are put to a physical workout of jumping through hoops, catching balls, and other grueling fun. The

top three winners are presented with medals and all participants receive a participation certificate. The Club also offers a puppy placement service for club members and sponsors educational seminars whenever possible. The BTCC newsletter, "Bulls-eye," is published four times a year and sent to all members. New members are always welcome and are encouraged to get involved.

The most efficient way to get more information that is up to date on the current affairs in the Bull Terrier world is to contact the Canadian Kennel Club, the BTCC Club Liaison, Lori Bozian at 905- 986-5430 or info@thebullterrierclub.ca or visit the BTCC Website at www.thebullterrierclub.ca
If you wish to become a member of the BTCC download the membership application and mail into the address indicated in the .PDF file.