

THE SEPARATION OF THE BREEDS

From the earliest days of its show history it was recognised in West Wales that there were two quite distinct versions of the Corgi. The dogs favoured in the hills of central and northern Cardiganshire were larger and longer than those found further south, and always carried a full tail. From the first, the rivalry between the supporters of the two versions was intense. In 1925 the Kennel Club recognised the Welsh Corgi, but did not distinguish between the two varieties and the problems which ensued were to last for nine years.

In 1925 a band of pioneers who were principally interested in promoting the Pembrokeshire type founded The Corgi Club (when it was registered with the Kennel Club a year later, the adjective "Welsh" was incorporated into the title in order to satisfy Kennel Club requirements) and by the end of that year it was already a powerful body with nearly 80 members, over 60 of which lived in Pembrokeshire, and with its own list of club judges.

In 1926 a group of breeders met to form the Cardigan Corgi Club with the object to support and further the interests of the old type of the Cardiganshire Corgi. Some live dogs of different types had been brought along as examples and the question of type was discussed, but no standard was drawn up. However, at a later meeting it was decided to present a special prize at a show for the most typical Cardigan dog or bitch.

Several attempts were subsequently made to amalgamate the Cardigan Corgi Club with the Welsh Corgi Club but as the Pembrokeshire deputation insisted on the Rules and Standard of Points (including the docking of tails!) as laid down by them in their book of Rules nothing came of this.

First in 1928 the Cardigan Corgi Club, at their AGM on 27 April, discussed a standard of points and three months later, on 19 July, the first standard for the Cardiganshire Corgi was adopted by the Committee.

But let us return to 1925 when the Welsh Corgi was recognised by the Kennel Club and from then onward were being exhibited at shows held under Kennel Club jurisdiction, and, even more important, were being judged by specialist judges.

The first important show was the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, held on 5 August 1925 at Carmarthen where there were two classes for Corgis in "Any Other Variety not classified" to be judged by Mr J.W. Marples. (A Variety Class is one in which more than one breed or variety of a breed can compete). The winners of the Open Dog class were *Buller* and *Ted*, both of the

Pembrokeshire type, but the first Open Bitch was Miss C.A. Griffiths' Cardiganshire Corgi *Bellorophon* (*Prince* x *Quick*, both unregistered). This bitch did a lot of winning and bred some good stock.

It is difficult to trace Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire Corgi pedigrees very far back with accuracy as the early dogs were not registered with the Kennel Club and what pedigrees were kept were not always properly written down. Many of the early breeders were Welsh farmers who found it difficult to cope with pedigree forms in which they would have to write down by hand scores of names of dogs many of which would be in English and not in their native language. They did, however, try to preserve some permanent form of pedigree by means of copybooks, scrapbooks and loose sheets of paper covered with names of dogs.



The first Corgi to be registered with the Kennel Club was the Pembroke bitch Rose.

At the sixth annual show held on 26 August 1925 at Llangeitho, right in the heart of Cardiganshire, the Cardigan Corgis took all the prizes. They appeared in the class for "Curs" (working dogs) and were judged by Mr T. Williams.

It is interesting to note that the classes at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show of 1925 were for "Corgwn" (the proper Welsh spelling for the plural of Corgi) while the classification at Llangeitho in the same year was for "Curs". This was not only in keeping with the old nomenclature for the Corgi as in the 1890's but even with contemporary and in a few cases later shows. At the smaller events of 1925-26, not held under Kennel Club rules, the Corgi was entered under different names such as the Cur, the Corgi or the Sodlwr (Welsh for heeler).

The Lampeter show held by the Lampeter Agricultural Society on 24 September 1926 had classes for "Sodlwr", one for dogs and one for bitches. The judge was Mr J. Jordan Jones, Llanarth, the first chairman of the original Cardigan Corgi Club (this name was, at the request of the Kennel Club, changed to Cardigan Welsh Corgi Club. In 1931 it was changed to Welsh Corgi Association and finally in 1946 the current name of Cardigan Welsh Corgi Association was registered).

At this show the celebrated red and white Cardigan Corgi *Bob Llwyd*, born 1917 (*Bowlin* x *Handy*, both unregistered), made his first major appearance and was the winner of the Open Dog class.

Bob Llwyd, owned by Dr J.T. Lloyd of Tregaron, was the most influential stud dog at the time and the first standard for the Cardiganshire type was based on him. He lived to the ripe old age of 18 years and according to J.K. Linacre (*Dog World*, 24.09.1976) all today's Cardigans trace back to him. In 1927, he was BOB at Crufts, but as yet there were no CCs on offer for the Corgis. (According to Charles Lister-Kaye, "The Popular Welsh Corgi", Crufts 1927 had separate classes for the two types!!).

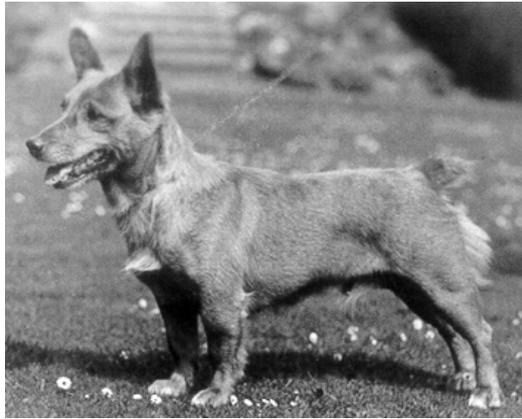


Cardigan dog Bob Llwyd

The official debut was first in 1928 when the Welsh Corgi was taken off the register of "Any Other Variety not classified" at the Kennel Club, added to the list of "Non-sporting" breeds and granted Challenge Certificates (in the UK the title of champion is awarded to dogs who have won three Challenge Certificates (CCs) under three separate judges at Championship shows only). This was naturally a tremendous step in the right direction and a goodly muster of both types faced the judge at Crufts' famous Championship Show at the Agricultural Hall in London although there were no CCs on offer for Corgis at that show that year. As yet, and for many years to come, the breed was known simply as Welsh Corgis (the Kennel Club refused to recognise "distinctions based on geographical location") and the day when Cardigans and Pembrokes were recognised as separate breeds was far away. CCs at Crufts were first granted to Corgis in 1929 and until 1934, when the breeds were separated, all CCs were won by Pembrokehire Corgis.

The very first CCs for Corgis were granted at the show in Cardiff on 25 July 1928 and both were awarded to Pembroke Corgis. The dog CC was awarded to the only 6 months old *Fairmay Fondo* (*Bowhit Pepper* x *Shan*) and the bitch CC went to his litter sister *Shan Fach*. In 1928 there were two more shows with

CCs for Corgis, the first on 23 August in Worcester and the second, on 10-11 October, was the Kennel Club's show at the Crystal Palace in London.



Ch. Shan Fach

The first Champion Corgi (of either breed) was *Ch. Shan Fach*. She was a red bitch born in January 1928.



Bonny Gyp was the first Pembroke Champion dog

The first Cardigan to gain the champion title was the dog *Golden Arrow*, born 1928 (*Bob Llwyd x Ruby*). This happened at the South Wales Kennel Association Show in July 1931 and only few minutes later *Nell of Twyn*, born 1925 (*Jack x Nell*, both unregistered), became the first Cardigan champion bitch.



Ch. Golden Arrow, the first Cardigan dog champion.

Lots of people attended these shows, and particularly Crufts where this new breed attracted much attention. The Corgis gained many admirers, though the public in general were very much mystified by the wide variance in type displayed in the ring. After all, one specimen of a pure breed usually resembles another to a great extent, even if it differs in the finer points. Yet the little Pembrokes with their stumpy tails, and the bigger Cardigans with their foxy brushes were all Welsh Corgis though they looked quite different! And, in addition, both types contained Corgis of all sorts - long, short, high, low, big, small, heavy, slight, short hair, long hair, and many other differences.

Although started with such great enthusiasm, the actual progress of the breed during the years 1927 to 1930 was lamentably slow and Corgis remained in every way at much the same level. Corgis were very erratic in type; people often laughed at them and called them "mongrels" and there was a depressing lack of enthusiasm and interest on the part of show secretaries when classes for the breed were suggested.

However, in 1931 and 1932 an era of prosperity for the breed began (that is chiefly the Pembrokeshire type) and this was really the start of its remarkable rise to popularity which was further boosted when in 1933 King George VI (then still Duke of York) acquired a Pembroke puppy for the Princess Elizabeth.

Registrations suddenly began to increase, a number of new exhibitors started swelling the entries to shows and several dog shows hitherto disinterested, successfully included classes for the Welsh Corgis in their schedules. These classes were, for some reason or another, filled and supported almost exclusively by the owners of the Pembrokeshire type.

There always seemed to be some idea that if the judge selected was a Cardiganshire type fancier, he would favour his type and penalise the Pembrokes, and vice versa, and unfortunately this often was the case. It could also happen that one CC went to one breed and one to the other. Entries suffered accordingly, and although all-round judges were frequently chosen rather than specialist judges, in the hope that the prospect of awards unbiased in favour of either type would encourage entries in these cases, the Cardigans were often the losers because the all-round judges did not understand the two types, and when looking for the straight front required in a Pembroke Corgi, would penalise a Cardigan with a bowed front, unaware that this point was really quite correct. This state of affairs was very unsatisfactory for both varieties, and taking it all round, it was the Cardigans which suffered most.

According to Pembroke breeders Thelma Gray (Rozavel) and John Holmes (Formakin) between 50 and 60 percent of the Pembrokeshire type were born

with a natural bobtail and until 1931 it was customary to dock any long or half-tailed puppies. In July of that year, however, the Kennel Club passed a rule prohibiting this, and it was this rule that led to a lot of the confusion between the two types that existed among the public in general.

Exactly why this rule was passed has never been clearly understood, but the general impression has been that the proposal was made by some of the Cardigan type breeders, who presumably hoped that the Pembroke Corgis would be almost exclusively born with long tails and that the rule would settle the differences between the two types by merging the two breeds into one. But instead of solving the existing difficulties, the move led to even greater rivalry and dissatisfaction and it would have been far better for the two breeds if the rule had never been passed at all.



Penelope of Sundance, undocked Pembroke
in Canadian ownership (about 1932).

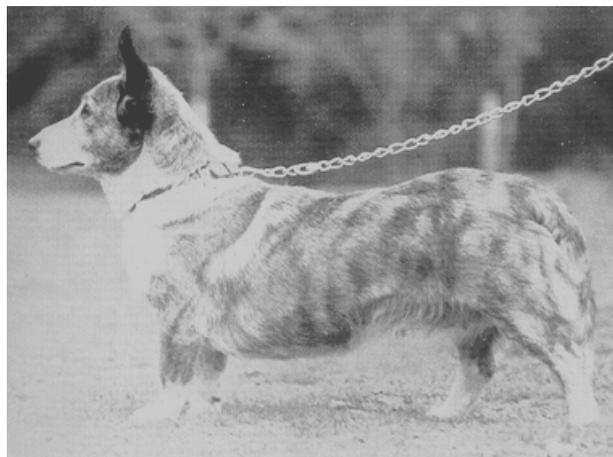
The Pembrokes continued to be born with a natural bob, but sufficient of their number still arrived with full-length tails to get everyone beautifully muddled as to what was a Pembroke and what was a Cardigan. The persistence, however, with which the natural "bobs" cropped up made the fact that it was a true characteristic of the breed more and more obvious. However, the docking ban remained in force in spite of tremendous efforts on the part of the Welsh Corgi Club and its members to get it repealed. (The Welsh Corgi League was first founded in 1938).

1934 stands out as a milestone in Corgi history. In September that year, the Kennel Club listened to the arguments put forward, and the Pembrookeshire Corgi was added to the list of breeds in which docking is permitted. At the same time the Kennel Club granted separate registrations for the two types. All Welsh Corgis born on or after October 16, 1934 could only be registered as pure bred under either heading if both parents were recognised as belonging to their respective type. This ruling allowed a cross between a Cardigan and a Pembroke to be registered either as a Cardigan or a Pembroke, provided that the animal

had been born before October 16, 1934, but it also allowed a pure bred Pembroke to be registered as a Cardigan, or vice versa, if born before that date.

Each of the Clubs, the Welsh Corgi Club (Pembrokes) and the Welsh Corgi Association (Cardigans), delegated a specialist to the Kennel Club to examine the registrations made to that date and to decide which dogs were Cardigan and which Pembroke Corgis. The sorting out was a difficult task for the two types had been interbred to some extent so that there were many Pembrokes containing Cardigan blood and vice versa. For instance, the noted Cardigan dog *Ch. My Rockin' Mawr* was sired by the Pembroke *Bowhit Pepper* out of *Fancy*. *Fancy* was a daughter of the Pembroke *Ch. Bonnie Gyp* out of *Nellie* and had four Cruft wins to her credit. And, as Pembrokes were not allowed to be docked between July 1931 and September 1934, it actually happened on more than one occasion that a long-tailed pure bred Pembroke puppy turned out more Cardigan than Pembroke in type, quite apart from his long tail and the owner of such a dog could thus register him as a Cardigan. However, in the majority of cases there was no problem, stock had been kept separate and distinct, and when it was impossible to classify the dogs as either Cardigans or Pembrokes, the Kennel Club wrote to the owners asking them to state the classification they considered correct for their dogs.

This business of separating the two breeds, which in reality had been poles apart in everything but name for years, was indeed a wise move on the part of the Kennel Club and was an immense help to those working to popularise the breeds. Registrations showed an immediate increase, all the past rivalry concerning judging was forgotten, and breeders of both types settled down with the barriers between them removed, and with nothing to prevent either breed achieving the popularity so richly deserved.



Fancy, a typical blue merle(?) Cardigan bitch, in the 1930's.
(Clifford L.B. Hubbard, 1952).

In 1934, there were nine shows with CCs for Corgis, and the first seven were still for both types mixed, but for the Kennel Club Show on 10 and 11 October of that year, separate classes for Welsh Corgis (Pembroke) and Welsh Corgis (Cardigan) were scheduled and for the first time certificates were offered for each type. A few weeks later, Birmingham catered for the two breeds in a similar manner and thus ended 1934. It was indeed a momentous year for those who had been working so long to get the two types of Corgis recognised as the two entirely different breeds they are.

When the division of the two breeds was completed, it was found that the Pembrokes were registered in larger numbers (240 were classified as Pembrokes while 59 Corgis were classified as Cardigans) and so, when the CCs were granted for 1935, the Cardigans were allowed fewer CCs than the Pembrokes. Both types competed for Championship honours at Crufts, Cheltenham, Cardiff, the Kennel Club, and Birmingham shows, and in addition Pembrokes had CCs at the Ladies Kennel Association, Taunton, and Abergavenny Championship shows.

Registrations until the beginning of World War II were as follows:

	<u>Pembroke</u>	<u>Cardigan</u>
1934	240	59
1935	360	110
1936	562	81
1937	919	96
1938	975	78
1939	695	58

Bibliography:

Clifford L.B. Hubbard: *The Cardiganshire Corgi & The Pembrokeshire Corgi*
Thelma Gray: *The Welsh Corgi, Pembrokeshire & Cardiganshire Types*

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Source: <http://www.welshcorgi-news.ch>