

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE KING CHARLES SPANIEL**

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HISTORY OF THE BREED

Also known as “Charlies” [but only to their friends], The Spaniel Gentle, or The Royal Spaniels, or simply The King Charles, these little dogs’ origins are lost in the complexities of politics and marriages of royalty, merchants, knights and adventurers. Their journey, just from where we don’t really know, is a romance.

There is no need to inform committed dog people of the fact that so many Breeds grew out of locations or Estates or under the guidance and patronage of individuals or may have been purpose made. The livestock were jealously guarded and were identifiable with estates, individuals, families, houses or regions.

Today breeders of livestock are cautious about introducing new strains into their lines so nothing should surprise us about the individuality of dog breeds in history, the way they were made up, and are now preserved.

Informed people, such as Lady Wentworth, Lady Lytton, M. Joyce Birchill, John Evans, and Alicia Pennington, with commitment, time and resources have spent a great deal of effort trying to reach into the past to identify the actual origins of the Breed and their researches have ended in many a cul de sac, by-way, or plain dead end. Evidence of the presence of the dogs, and those of similar kind does abound, in the UK, as far back as the Crusaders [c. 1170], and in both Italy and France.

We also know that Laws and Statutes were set down decreeing what people could or could not wear according to social position and what they could or could not possess and how they were to behave, dogs were part of those pieces of legislation.

In England, Henry VIII decreed that his court ladies could carry small spaniel type dogs. They were used for keeping their human companions warm, gathering fleas and lice off garments and people and for ‘taking away the humours’. The theory was - you put the dog on your stomach, it absorbed the illness and died - and you got better!

The ugliest of Henry’s wives, Anne Of Cleves, was known to have been very fond of her dogs and would have brought her Black and White Holland Spaniels across with her. Similar types of dog were present in the Italian Renaissance Courts, as well as in France, in Scotland and in Britain.

In so much as it is all *maybe* and *possibility*, there is the ‘possibility’ that the ancestors of the dogs we are discussing made the journey from the East across the Silk Road

and into Italy. [Marco Polo 1254-1300]. Alternatively, prior to the Renaissance, Crusaders may have brought them west. Indeed similar breeds may have travelled these ways and were mated.

We also have to get rid of our idea that the Renaissance was merely Italian late 16th and early 17th centuries. Venice was a mighty power in the 1300s. Florence too was a powerful Republican State. Crusades were waged and the Orient was being accessed long before England's first Elizabeth.

Venice was an incredibly wealthy major trading and inlet/outlet route in the 1300s and much passed through Venice and into the various Italian States.

There is always doubt, but if indeed their ancestors were the small toy dogs of Japan and China then the Silk Road becomes a distinct possibility of access as the Italian traders returned with exotic booty and gifts and new crafts including paper making.

The painter Titian was a resident of Venice and small sharp-nosed "Blenheim" spaniels with the central head spot appear in his portraits with their owners and with children.

Small toy Spaniel types were prevalent at the Florentine Medici Court and it is reasonable to assume that Catherine di Medici took her dogs with her when she married into the French Royal Family. [Henri II of France]. Marie de Medici certainly did when she married into the French Royals as well, and she in turn became grandmother to Charles 11 of England.

As a six-year-old child Mary Stuart inherited the Scottish throne. It was feared she would be assassinated. She was moved to France, was married off to the French Dauphin and lived in France under Catherine's protection. When she later moved from France to Scotland to assume her inheritance it is known that she followed common practice, and took her 'comforter' dogs with her.

Paintings show the small Toy Spaniel types as closer to what we know today as the Papillon or 'Phaylene', the rarely seen drop eared variety of Papillon. We do have to allow for artist's license in depiction, as painters trended to 'improve' on the originals, as they also 'improved' the people.



War and booty go together, exotic animals were prized, and the comings and goings around Europe and back and forth across the English Channel could well have allowed the dogs to travel much further than they might have done under other circumstances. The French/Scottish connection was very strong. Blood ties existed between the French and Scottish Courts more so than with the English Court and the Irish seas provided easy access.

Politics can create strange bedfellows, Mary's son James [VI of Scotland & I of England] inherited England on Elizabeth I's death. He was also very fond of his little Spaniels. His liking for the exotic, and the macabre and George Villiers ahead of his Danish Queen, Anne; led to a complex Court, but he cared for his dogs very much, as did his heir Charles I, father of Charles II. A painting of Charles II in infancy [about 18 months of age] depicts him holding a small red and white sharp faced Spaniel.

However unstable the James/Anne marriage was, contemporaries say that the Queen is said to have, "Had a great eye for the delicate and delightful". Despite being born in the cold of Denmark, she did not like the Scottish nor English climates and her comforter dogs took the chill out of her bones. So why would her children and grandchildren not have the same dogs as well?

The great era of English portraiture was dawning and family pets began to appear in the family pictures. Again and again small spaniel types appear and on rare occasions a flatter or more rounded head and shorter face appears, as in the picture of King James dining in Whitehall. Not often, it must be noted, but they are there, working their way in.

Fashion is a powerful force and the full head of hair preferred by the Stuart monarchs and the 'clubbed' wigs of Charles II were reflected in other aspects of the Court so why not in the ears of the dogs?

They looked like the Kings. The Coronation Portrait of Charles II and his portrait in The National Portrait Gallery in London, both bear startling resemblances to the aspect of the King Charles' Spaniel we know today. They were the King's dogs so why not give them that name. BUT would they eventually become The King Charles Spaniel or King Charles' Spaniels with an apostrophe showing possession? More than likely the apostrophe is correct but was dropped. They even have an undershot jaw reminiscent of Charles II and sport his dark brown/black eyes.

During the Republic, he who would be Charles II, and his brother James, scuttled back and forth across Belgium and France and Scotland where he was crowned, years before achieving the British Throne.

His pack of spaniels travelled with him and when landing to assume his English crown Samuel Pepys notes, as the landing craft rocked the King cried out "Save the dogs, - Oh, and the Duke of Monmouth" [his eldest illegitimate son – one of the seventeen he acknowledged].

Charles' adored sister Henrietta-Anne was married to Monsignor; the Dauphin's younger brother. and she had a preference for the Pyrame, now extinct small black water dog, with webs in its feet, fused toes and double toenails. It is not beyond the realms of *possibility and probability* that Henrietta and Charles' dogs entered into trysts.

This becomes essential information as one of the most prized features of today's King Charles is the prospect of fused toes and double claws, something not seen in any Cavalier. The Charlie of today may have one (1), two (2) or three (3) or all four (4) feet carrying the mark of distinction of inheritance and bloodlines handed down from the Pyrame.

When she was murdered by her husband, who preferred male lovers to his wife, Henrietta's lady in waiting Louise de Keroualle packed up the dogs and moved to London where she became Charles long time principal mistress, and mother of four of his 17 acknowledged illegitimate children. Louise was afforded very grand apartments in Whitehall. Charles other mistresses including Barbara Villiers and Nell Gwyn were also accommodated within strolling distances, which made a lot of sense.

It was well known that wherever he moved he was accompanied by a rippling sea of spaniels whether indoors, on progress, or walking amongst his mother's birdcages that lined Birdcage Walk, or visiting his mistresses. Breeding in Charles' Court was as indiscriminate among the dogs as it was among the people, and the newly devised signs "Beware of the Dogs" meant, be careful don't tread on them, or, they are whelping.



Stories began to appear. A man approached the King's coach and was snarled at and attacked, "God Bless Your Majesty" he is credited with saying, "but God damn your dogs". (Just try and come between a King Charles and its chosen companion today, and see what you get.)

Rewards were offered for the King's and Prince's Spaniels straying out of Whitehall.

The King was criticized in Council for "Playing with his dogges all the while and not attending to his business." Even at his death, the attending Bishop was worried that his soul may not ascend, due to the number of dogs on his bed.

In France, his Cousin Louis XIV had elevated the Pyrenean to status of National Dog of France but kept packs of spaniels. Times were changing.

The Stuart line passed from Charles II, who left no legitimate heir, to his brother James II and then William and Mary (James' daughter), who brought their pugs from Holland and replaced the spaniels. The little dogs retired from Court until Anne, James II second daughter, took the throne.

Her great friend and 'closest of companions' was Sarah Churchill, who took precedence over George, Anne's Danish husband, who preferred his garden shed in Kensington Palace to Pomp and Majesty. Sarah attended the Queen at her coronation and the Danish Prince stayed home in the potting shed.

Sarah's husband, John Churchill eventually became Duke of Marlborough, and after the Battle of Blenheim, at which he triumphed, he created the family seat and the subsequent splendors at Blenheim Palace. Anne gifted Sarah her spaniels which were bred into the Blenheim Marlborough gundog pack, which would in the 20th century provide the source for the *Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. (*in 1927)

So the days of 'the Kings' in the sun, declined. Their imperious look and proud carriage remained in the homes of lovers of the breed. They crossed seas and oceans and began a new, teetered on the brink of extinction, but survived to enchant and charm and demand.

Two world wars decimated the breed and reduced the gene pool.

The English King Charles Spaniel Club has taken 20 years to assemble Champions and Pedigrees from 1948 onwards when the breed started to re-emerge. [published 2008.]

The Spaniel Gentle has gathered strength and carries its history with pride.

They cannot write their story, it is up to their devotees to do it for them, and they like that, because they are like that.

BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL

So it was that they began a battle for survival that would last over 200 years.

The arrival of 'German Geordie' and the Hanovers changed matters again.

Under the Hanoverian Court the little dogs no longer had Royal protection as such. They began the battle for existence, which they are still fighting.

The strong association between the Monarchy and the power of the Churchills was marked with gifts to the Hanoverian successors. A portrait of Queen Charlotte by Gainsborough, which hangs in the White Drawing Room at Windsor, depicts her with a Marlborough Spaniel. [Hitherto thought to be a Papillon until this research challenged it and the Kennel Club confirmed that the dog is in fact a Marlborough Spaniel.] The same dog appears in a portrait of the infant Princess Amelia.

Queen Victoria's famous Spaniel "Dash", subject of many a Victorian sampler, was also of the sharper faced breed if the very romantic portrait of the young Queen by Hayter is to be trusted. The embroidered samplers show him to have a broader muzzle than the portrait does. In the Hayter picture "Dash" could well be mistaken for a longhaired Italian Greyhound. The portrait of "Dash", commissioned from Landseer, shows him to be more of a Tricolour Cavalier with a definite muzzle.

The Charlies themselves moved in on the older female members of aristocratic families and the new rich of the Industrial Revolution. The English Midlands still remains one of their strongholds from the times they graced the laps of the industrialists' wives. Gradually they became known as Dowager Dogs or Cushion Dogs, the pampered and weakened pets of older owners. Often spending their lives on cushions.

Some retained the feistiness that is a trait of the breed and worked their way into the households of Political leaders such as Horace Walpole and into kennels and then into the show rings. Some even took over an old pub in London's East End. They first presented in Australia in a show ring in Melbourne in 1864.

They eased their way back into favour in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, even calling upon the assistance of Edward VII when the Kennel Club wanted to change their name. His Majesty fought on their behalf, demanding that the KC retain the name King Charles Spaniel, and they remained the "Kings"; only in America were they given the alternative title of English Toy Spaniels.

Essentially what we have today are the descendents of the product of the late Victorian era and the rejuvenated samples that were nursed through and then bred from after World War I and then again after World War II.

The dogs suffered, in some cases from weaknesses, particularly in the rear ends but they always maintained their independence and enormously high degree of intelligence. Sometimes they were shown on their cushions. Even today in some places such as South Africa it is not unusual for them to be judged sitting rather than standing. Sit a Charlie and tilt the head back is a good way to observe the famous 'dome'.

It must be carefully noted, at this point, that these dogs mature very slowly but like fine wine, mature well.

Intelligent, dedicated, determined and very careful breeding has restored them to bone and health and strength. They need bone, and in the USA, Canada and France, a 'twenty-five pounder or more' is not unusual.

Naturally, as in all breeds, they have changed, with location and relocation, climate and evolution and nutrition and veterinary care. Look at photos of any breed taken 30-40 years ago and note the evolutionary changes.

They suffered two world wars and faced annihilation, except for a few brave and determined breeders who kept them going in the face of conflict and adversity food rationing and years of doubt and fear.

"Charlie" lovers use words such as, Difficult, Independent, Arrogant, Self Centred, Snobby, Regal, and Minds Of Their Own.

Woe betide anyone who presumes to tell them what to do, they are too 'Royal' for that. They know how to be difficult and do not hesitate to do so.

Many a judge has been given a withering look or been totally ignored when a Charlie returns from a 'triangle' or an 'out and back', if that judge clicked fingers at them or made a noise to attract their attention.

"We don't prick our magnificent ears, you don't touch our mouths, and you simply admire us. If WE are balanced and are in proportion and have quality you admire us all the more. WE do not respond until we are ready, WE come to YOU. We are presented untrimmed, because we don't need cosmetics."

They know that above all, that quality is in the eye of the beholder it cannot be defined; it is something that is recognized. The quality dog shows off its quality. Lady Lytton's famous lecture states that *".... recognition of quality is a gift the beholder possesses, it is a feeling - an intuition, like recognising a fine piece of China or Chippendale or Silver or Damask or Bloodstock. Recognition of quality cannot be taught,"* she insists and reasserts, *"It is a gift possessed by the beholder."*

1927 saw the advent of the Cavalier, and eventually with popularity subsequent confusion happens. Identifying between the two breeds is difficult for some people. They are not similar they are vastly different. It must be appreciated that they are two separate breeds and very, very different in temperament and style.

A good King Charles is a strong dog. More will be written about their points, but it is an essential part of any Extension to a Breed Standard that the reader appreciates the journey the Breed has made, and the strengths now evident.

Reality is that what we see today mainly descends from the Victorian era and from the extremely careful selective breeding; post World War II.

In Australia, the gene pool is small, so size varies as breeders maintain strength and work to establish strong and healthy dogs that come into their best at 3 or 4 years of age are mature at 5 or 6, but go on until 9 or 10. The final product begins to emerge at the age of 3 and 4 and above. You will not see a mature Charlie any younger. Some do not 'finish;' until well into their fourth year.

They will come down in size very quickly if the strength is not put back in.

So these little dogs with a long history are still working at their survival with the assistance of those who want "The Kings" to survive and develop and take their place once more with the pride that they carry inside themselves.

They have comforted, been painted and pampered, followed guns and flushed out small game and retrieved, but they have survived. The instinct of the flushing dog still clings deep down as part of the companion par excellence.

To know one is to live with independence, strength of will power, determination and feistiness, plus a wicked sense of humour.

IN SUMMARY: THE MAKING OF THE KINGS

As already stated the actual source is unfathomable. As with so many breeds we know that infusions happen into a type or style of dog, particularly if they have designated work to do. They can work, and in days gone by they flushed and retrieved as well as playing their designated role of comforters and companions. As with so many breeds we know that evolution and purpose go hand in hand; but both can be either the children or victims of fashion.

The temperament, individuality, independence and intellect may have progressed but essentially we are looking post World War II and after that thanks to the jet plane and international sales and breeders taking up the fancy, a networking such as the originators could never have conceptualized has happened. Where the dogs are living, will govern their development.

The great kennels, Vivhurst, Zepherine, Oakridges, Tudorhurst. Maibee and Amantra have all made their contribution and the French are once more emerging as major contributors in the modern era, post the millennium.

But we must look to the Pug and the French Bulldog in particular, for associated skeleton features. The sprung rib cage, not slab sided, the rounded skull, the jaw, the well laid shoulders and the solid legs on strong feet have all been bred into the basic spaniel type.

Climate must and does affect coat and bone growth, strong sun provides more vitamin D for better bone, so the physical location of the breeding programs has an effect on the evolutionary processes. This cannot and must not be underestimated, it must also be faced. However much we want to romanticize the breed, it exists in the here and now and is subject to the here and now.

Nutrients are more accessible than ever. The dogs that survived off the aristocratic tables from the 1600s and survived WW II on sawdust, biscuit and meal and offal, when it could be got, are now fed controlled diets designed to benefit bodily structure and health, so that they can fulfill their genetic potential.

A bitch in whelp will be much better cared for at all levels than even her great grandmother was.

Dogs from the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s passed on characteristics and temperament but with the fullness of time their descendants became stronger and lived longer. Evidenced by the strengthened back end development.

So a question mark can logically be put over the appearance as the logical result of food, nurture, care and climate, and the terms Quality, Proportion, Soundness, and Mobility have to be brought into the equation.

“Dwarfing” for the purposes of the show ring is a crime against nature. Like the Pekingese these dogs, at their best, have a solid bone structure and are dependent on that structure for their survival into the future.

All the great breeders agree that, bone and dome and barrel, proportion, soundness, quality and mobility must be taken into account.

Dogs are no longer judged just sitting on tables, except as previously stated in a few places such as South Africa.

The head no longer makes up 60% + of the assessment as it used to.

So as the breed emerges into the twenty first century it is attracting new attention and new fanciers. It is approaching 500 years plus, of traceable lineage, but it is changing and adapting itself to its new century.

It is now spread through England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, The Netherlands, Scandinavia (Sweden/Norway/Denmark/Finland), re-emerged with a great and new strength in France, around Europe and in Canada and the USA, New Zealand and Australia and South Africa.

The only way to extend the gene pool is through immigration and small numbers of Charlies are doing just that, immigrating.

One of England's most distinguished breeders Shealagh Waters has said, "I fear they are a breed that are trying to make themselves extinct." Not so long as their natural genetic patterns are allowed to develop and they are allowed to achieve their potential, like all things in nature if we corrupt their natural processes too far, the basics will rebel.

As with other breeds in similar circumstances, the battle proceeds between finding or breeding the perfect specimen and having dogs strong enough to keep the breed going. Thus, it is that it now becomes time to pose a question for consideration.

"What is the purpose of the Conformation Show Ring?"

Is it simply to conform?

Is it merely to measure and check against expectations in two minutes and pass on, or is there more to be considered? This is something for each individual to debate. The two apparent thrusts are (1) measuring against a documented Standard or (2) looking for Quality in Breeding Stock that could advance the Breed.

Before progressing to the actual extensions to the Breed Standard we have to look at when the basics of the present Breed Standard were put in place and the answer is, essentially it was in 1884/5.

Alicia Pennington (Tudorhurst) records what happened in 1985 when the Standards could have been revised most effectively. The three English King Charles Spaniel Clubs were given three days to examine and amend the 1885 documentation. It was, according to Pennington, not possible to get enough people together in the one place, so the opportunity was lost, but the resulting 1985 English Standard was compiled from suggestions put forward by the three English Clubs.

It is important that those assessing the breed consider the slight changes in wording such as the elimination of the word 'massive' in relation to the head, and the inclusion of the word 'soundness'. It is to be noted height is not mentioned.

Mrs. Pennington comments: *“This is the Standard, revised by the Kennel Club in 1985 after the three clubs had each submitted their suggestions. Over the years since the Toy Spaniel Club drew up the Standard in 1885 taken from Stonehenge, there has been little mention of soundness, unfortunately to the detriment of the breed. Nevertheless the King Charles Spaniel, although a toy dog, and companion par excellence, should be capable of living a normal life, and I for one am delighted that the section Gait/Movement now reads Free, active and elegant, driving from behind. Sound movement highly desirable.”*

Victorian and Edwardian Cushion Dogs probably would not have had ease of movement, and would have been light in the hindquarters. Pennington and Birchill along with other authors constantly refer to soundness and bone and quality.

Given that ‘fact’ and given the breed’s history, given two world wars, given salvaging of a small gene pool, given development and changes in veterinary care, in nutrition and in our case here, migration to the Australian climate, we could well find ourselves in Lady Lytton’s shoes looking for quality and proportion rather than seeking specimens of a Standard that may very well have become ineffective over 130 years.

And is the Australian climate comparable to an English Village Green? Arguably, the local climate with its excess of Vitamin D in the sunlight should produce a stronger example of the breed.

Therefore we may ask ourselves: - Is the Standard fact or guide? In order to preserve a judge’s integrity, it is not our intention to answer that question, but we simply pose it for consideration.

● **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

Refined, compact and cobby.

Both Pennington and Lady Wentworth sum up the opinions of all established authorities such as Birchill when they reiterate over again the impression is one of a solidly made dog with glamorous coat and regal manner, which may lean toward arrogance.

The King Charles is imperious.

Many Charlie owners would dispute “Reserved” as they can be very outgoing. However, when on show, or meeting strangers for the first time they will show great reserve and wait until they are ready to approach the stranger.

It is not always wise simply to approach a Charlie. They can ‘back off’.

The Compactness of the dog is relevant to its overall size and shape; bitches may be longer in the body. [They do not have problems whelping and are good mothers] The compactness is contained in the barrel of the ribcage and the depth of the chest and keel. As mentioned already the body when viewed from the side resembles a rectangle, approximately the same as withers to ground and withers to root of tail, but the ‘eye of the beholder’ has to be aesthetically satisfied. Proportion and quality are important.

Cobby, as also described under Body, the Cob horse is a working or light hunter, strong chunky, square, workmanlike with a lifting sprung trot a light footed half draught horse.

So the chunkiness of the King Charles is supported on strong straight legs and the movement is a light trot.

● **CHARACTERISTICS**

Happy, intelligent, toy spaniel, with distinctive domed head.

The skull of the King Charles should immediately attract attention. They are a “Head Breed”, and on the old scoring system out of the 100 points, the head was worth 60 or more points. Some judges simply looked at the head and front of the dog and the head in profile and ignored the rest.

Since 1986 when the review took place the overall strength of the dog was put back into account. Careful, selective breeding had improved the quality overall and the strengths of the rear ends of what had been ‘cushion dogs’.

So whilst the head remains the great feature of the breed the overall quality and appearance are now definitely characteristics.

As a breed they are extraordinarily intelligent with remarkable memories, King Charles do not forget people or places. Hence they will not do anything, which they do not approve of, they are stubborn, and independent and quite demanding and possessive of people and territory, because they are utterly devoted to their owner.

This is where they differ greatly from the all embracing, adoring Cavalier, who wants to be friends with everyone. Charlies choose their friends. They may also choose to sit. One distinguished All Breeds judge has said; “I never penalize a King Charles for sitting, that is what they do. They sit.” In some countries they are judged sitting.

In general the Characteristics as stated sums them up but we should add, strong personalities.

● **TEMPERAMENT**

Reserved, gentle and affectionate

With everything that has been written so far and in so far as the King Charles Spaniel Club acknowledges the Standard, many owners would raise an eyebrow at, “Reserved” and “Gentle”. Certainly reserved and gentle with strangers.

Affectionate is not readily demonstrated outside their own home and they are more reserved when away. They will force their way forward to seek attention if they feel like it, but the reserve will usually come to the fore and they will stand back and come forward in their own time. [or if they are being totally ignored which is by far the best way to get their attention]

Rule of Thumb: You do not approach a King Charles, they will approach you.

In contrast to the Cavalier, the ideal children’s dog the King Charles prefers adult company and reserves its affection for its comfort zone.



Fig. 1. Demonstrating head shape, eye placement and shape, ear placement and shape.

● HEAD AND SKULL

Skull moderately large in comparison to size, well domed, full over eyes. Nose black with large, wide-open nostrils, short and turned up. Stop, between skull and nose well defined. Muzzle square, wide and deep, well turned up, lower jaw wide, lips exactly meeting, giving nice finish. Cheeks not falling away under eyes but well cushioned.

At one time the use of the word 'massive' in relation to the skull gave the wrong impression. The word 'massive' is no longer used. A Mastiff is massive not a Charlie. We are dealing with the skull. Breeders strive for roundness, a half ball shape, or as often been quoted; the Christopher Wren Dome of St. Paul's London. Photographs can be deceptive and you will not often see the very high dome sometimes depicted or created through camera angles.

The features as pointed out in the standard, are: the dome certainly, but just as important is the shape of the skull; the protuberance over the eyes; the set of the nose which is not buried in the face but does have a stop; and the upturn of the lower jaw. The description of the nose as being turned up to meet the skull can give a false impression, so an imaginary line from the nose to the skull would complete a curved join but we don't want the poor dog's nose attached to its forehead. The King Charles remains a head breed and great attention must be paid to the head.

The lips drape over the slightly undershot lower jaw and the cheeks under the eyes should be well cushioned, certainly not sunken in.

The set of ears and positioning of the eyes will be dealt with but you should be confronted with an overall picture; and bear in mind Birchill, Pennington and Lytton's concerns about finding quality and proportion. We want to find an identifiable King Charles head but we do not want a dog that is all head and nothing else. We are looking for a strong feature head indicative of the breed.

A head that is proud, elegant, well proportioned, stylish, made of good bone that proclaims itself the head of a King Charles.



Fig. 2 – note skull shape and strength of foreface.

As in every single point of the dog, aesthetics and recognition of quality are in the beholder. White markings on the heads of whole colours are no acceptable.

• EYES

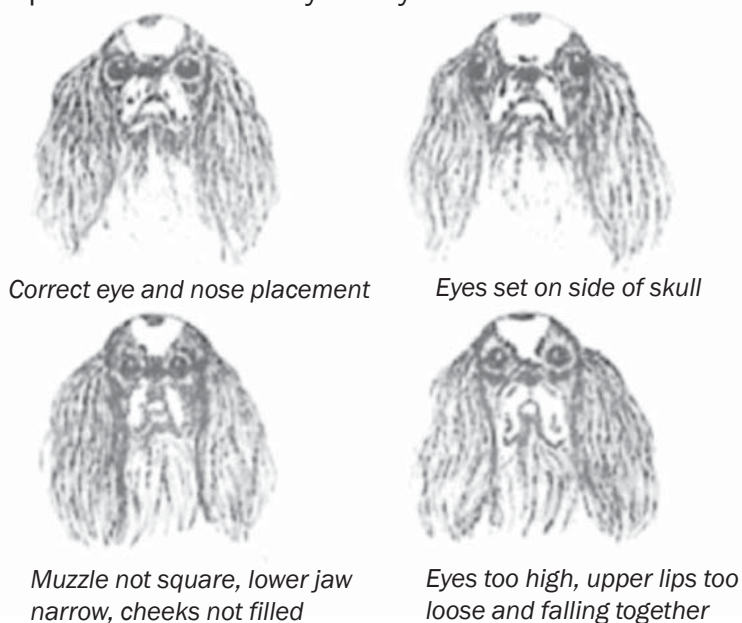
Relatively large and dark, set wide apart, eyelids block square to face line, pleasing expression.

The eyes are dark brown/black, verging more to black than brown and fill the socket, no white showing as in the Chin, and they look forward, they should not turn to the side.

The eyes in the coronation portrait of Charles II in fact exemplify them. They are wise eyes and knowing, but discreet. They are excellent eyes, far seeing and will follow the flight of a bird.

The tip of the nose should complete the line from eye to eye.

Fig. 3 – Demonstrating various head situations



A King Charles will use its eyes as a sign of danger; they will protrude slightly as the dog goes 'on guard'.

● EARS

Set on low, hanging close to the cheeks, very long and well feathered.

The ears are the splendid glorification of the head. They are set low. If you place your forefingers in the dogs earholes you will find where the root of ear sits on the skull, often excess hair makes them look higher set than they actually are so locating the start and smoothing the ears down will show you.

A line across the eyes, the top tip of the nose and top of the ears in perfection should relate one feature to the next.

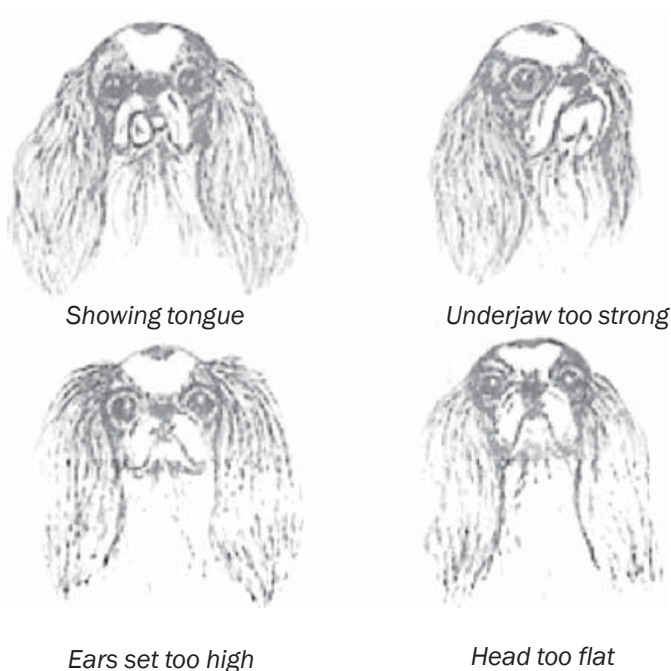
The leathers are usually long and it appears to be fair comment to say that it is more than likely that the black haired ears will be more profuse, longer and more dense than the red ones. So Black and Tans and Tricolours will probably have longer and more densely feathered ears than Blenheims and Rubies. The red ears may appear to have a higher set.

The hair should fall softly and may be waved but never curly nor frizzed. The ears provide a perfect frame for the face and expression and add to the flow in movement.

A Charlie does move its ears naturally but do not expect them to react or prick them for you in the show ring. The independence of the breed will emerge if affronted and the older dogs will more than likely look away when coming back from a triangle or an out and back.

The ears frame and hang they do not go up and down and in a mature adult i.e. 3/4+ the natural weight of the profuse feathering means that the ears are weighed down.

Fig 4 – Further head situations



● MOUTH

Bite should be slightly undershot, protruding tongue highly undesirable.

Mouth judging is the bane of Charlie owners. The dogs hate it, and some otherwise well tempered dogs, will react very badly to the point that they may well become shy of the judging table and acquire problems.

Look at the head in profile and from the front, rub your thumb along the bottom jaw, and you will feel the shape and you will see the even drape of the lips. If you wish to see the teeth ask the handler. Better to take the precaution than to upset the dog, which may lead to it refusing to show for months or forever.

A protruding tongue is usually the result of a weakness in the jaw structure or missing teeth. Charlies do have large, broad tongues, which they may carry, slightly curled in their mouths.

The slightly undershot bite does not affect their eating habits or their ability to bite, Charlies have remarkably healthy appetites and if provoked will readily demonstrate a strong fast an effective bite as well as having a good chewing bite. If disturbed they will nip very effectively and quickly.

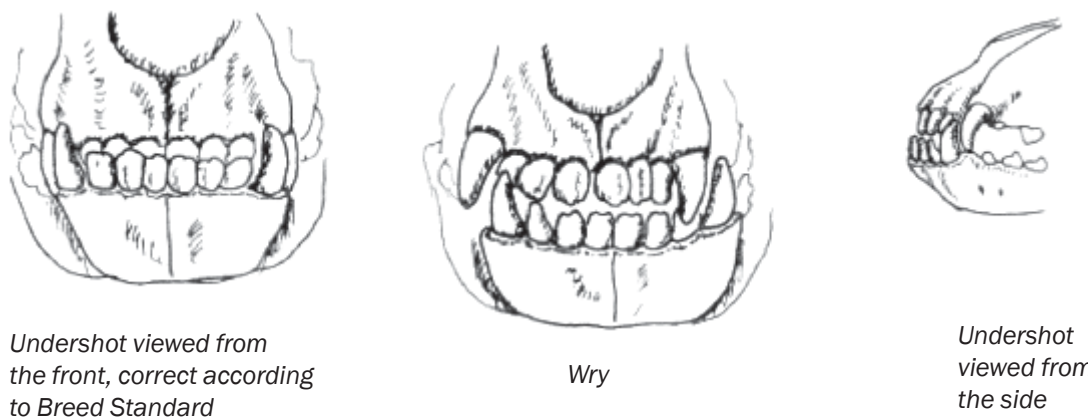


Fig. 5 – Dentition.

● NECK

Of medium length arched giving a proud carriage to the head.

We should probably add very solidly muscled.

The rise from the withers to the base of the skull is an elegant arch, but made of solid muscle. If you feel in behind the ears and then down the neck your hand should glide over a muscular arch. It is strong and firm to the touch. Once again taking proportion and quality into account a well-arched neck compliments the overall shape and line. In the mature males (possibly 4 years old +) in particular it can be enhanced by the fullness of the mane and the width of the withers. It is here that you may get an impression of the flushing dog that can flush out birds. A strong neck leading to a beautiful head with the compliment of flowing ears makes not only a regal picture but also a working picture. This is no porcelain dog it has strong muscle and bone.

● FOREQUARTERS

Legs short, straight. Shoulders well laid back, elbows close to rib cage, turning neither in nor out.

Viewed from the front you should see a broad chunky dog in the manner of the French Bulldog. They are not Frenchies but the image fits. The legs are straight and well made columns of bone; the feet are surprisingly large and may look even larger as the dogs are presented untrimmed.

The shoulders are definitely well laid and without the shoulder being well laid, the movement will be impeded. Subsequently if the shoulders are correct and the legs are strong and straight the elbows will be tucked in to the sides.

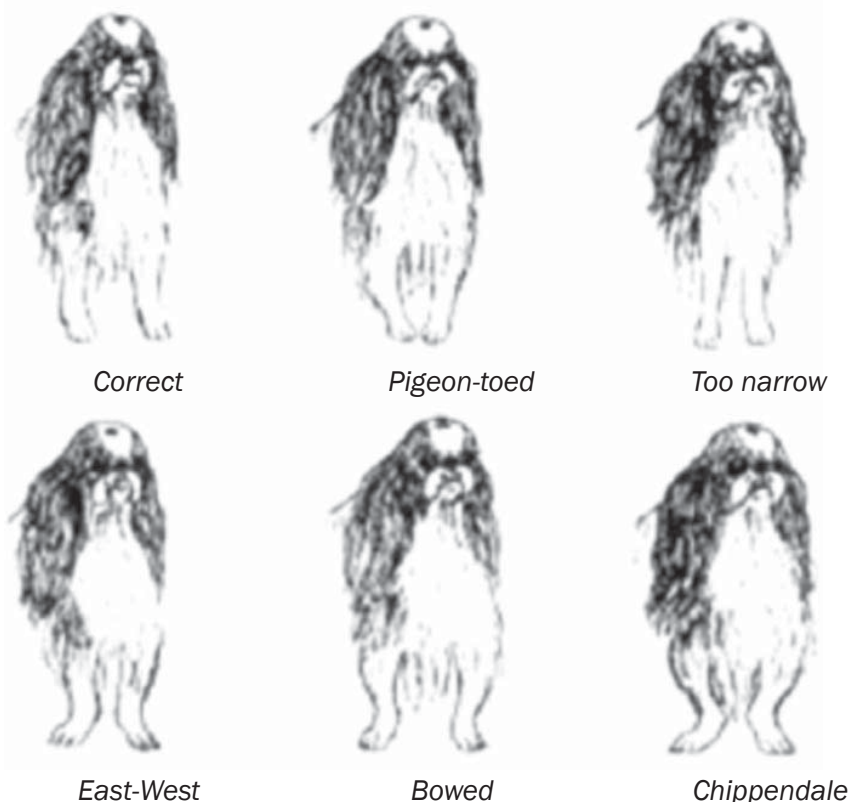


Fig. 6 – Shows correct and incorrect fronts

● BODY

Chest wide and deep, back short and level

The width and depth of the chest automatically leads to the well-sprung rib cage, Bitches need it and the whole balance of the dog depends upon it as well as providing space for internal organs to function. This is one of the reasons that the life span has extended - there is space inside for the vital organs to function. It is because of the body and the making of the legs that the dog is stacked over its legs not stretched out like a gun dog.

Rule of Thumb: The rectangle of the body and legs should be as long as it is high.

Withers to root of tail, and shoulder to ground. Its not 100% accurate, nor to be demanded but it's a good starting place, then most importantly, the eye for proportion and quality is employed.

The word “Cobby” is unusual to Australian ears. Derived from a Cob horse it infers, strong chunky, square, workmanlike with a lifting sprung trot a light-footed half draught horse. Like so much imagery in language it is just that, imagery, and not a definable quantifiable quality — its an impression.

● HINDQUARTERS

Sufficient muscle to give positive driving movement, stifles well bent, hocks well let down and defined. Straight viewed from behind, turning neither in nor out.

As stated sufficient muscle is important for a straight line when moving. Dogs that fall away in the back end as their recent ancestors - 1880s and up to World War 1/ 1920s- did - are not going to lead comfortable lives nor will they produce strong offspring with good hips and kneecaps. The engine must be capable of functioning comfortably and the muscles will indicate the strength and staying power of the dog.

The well turned stifle facilitates this but once again it is not necessary to stretch the dog out to see it, touch it feel it, lift the leg but if you stretch the dog out you will change your aspect on the proportions.

Moving away it is essential that they move in a straight line then the shoulders and hindquarters are lined up with the bulk of the body carried easily between the two sets of legs. If the dog shows sideways movement it may be favouring muscular pain or some form of disorder – on the other hand it might just be a Charlie having a Charlie day, or not responding because it did not feel like it today or because it did not like what happened on the table. Or because it has been ‘strung up’ when it wants to trot free.

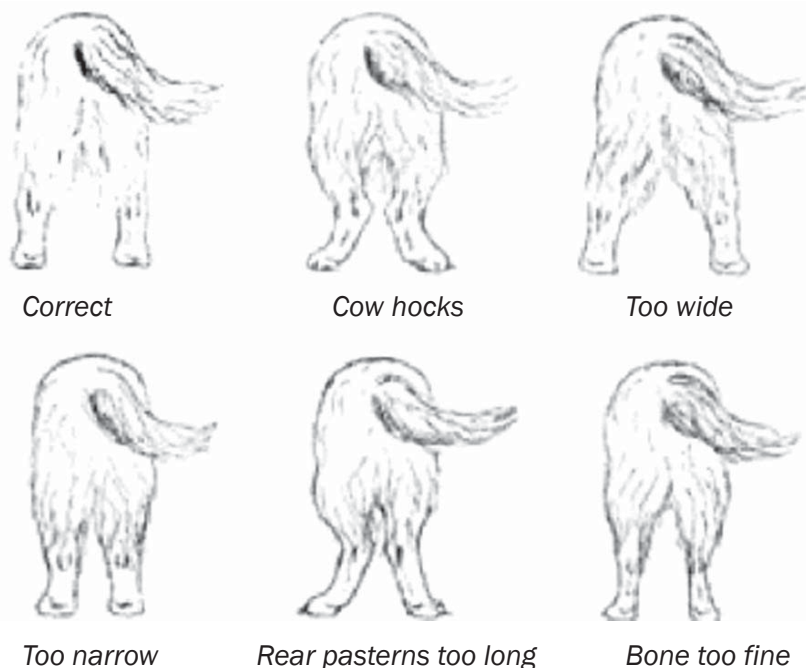


Fig. 7 Correct and incorrect hindquarters from the rear

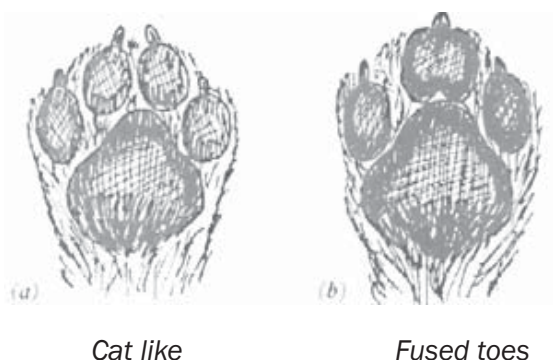
● FEET

Compact, well padded and feathered, toes well knuckled, round cat-shaped foot, well cushioned, pasterns firm.

You may find the much-prized Pyrame foot or feet, One, Two, Three or Four feet may have the fused pad and double nail, it is preferred to be present but is not a fault if it is not present. It is historical not anatomical.

The pads are usually very well cushioned and lifting the foot and running a finger over the pads is usually acceptable to most Charlies. The bones in the foot are easily detected with a light touch and should be balanced and evenly spaced. Hair between the pads should be trimmed away to allow better grip. Charlies will sometimes curl their feet like little hands as you touch them. The foot is the natural extension of the leg and the proportion of leg to foot should be aesthetically balanced and also practical for carrying the weight of the dog.

Fig. 8 – Feet



● TAIL

Docked: Well feathered, not carried over or above level of the back.

Undocked: Well feathered, not carried over or above level of back. In overall balance with the rest of the dog.

Tails vary in length and make up. They may have a kink. They may have a thickening at the base of the spine and taper away; they may be as long as the body of the dog or shorter. When they could be docked the length was more easily controlled and viewed from the side, the length of the tail could change the perspective of the proportions of the dog. The tail swings during movement.

If the dog feels like it and it's the right day and you just might get the famous Charlie movement presented to you, then the waving tail adds to the picture and to the balance during movement. If the tail does not move during movement something is wrong, which may be physical or temperamental. But come back tomorrow because we will do it completely differently for you tomorrow. That's the way we are.

● GAIT/MOVEMENT

Free, active and elegant, driving from behind. Sound movement highly desirable.

Time was when movement was not bothered about. But as Pennington wrote thank goodness its back on the agenda. Once seen –never forgotten.

The King Charles in full light stepping movement is a wonderful sight. There is a regal elegance about it as they travel over the ground, light, upward, sometimes they will dance and then move into the flow. A strong, healthy, happy, secure Charlie will show off with the movement, if it is the right day. If it is not the right day, or if judge or handler has mishandled them, you won't see it.

Some do better in a circle than in a triangle; maybe it is better to let the handler decide. Some will do even better if they go around the ring before going to the table, because when they then come to the triangle they have seen the ring and felt its space. They are very sensitive to space. With all the problems that the 1800s and early 1900s had for the skeletons of the breed the movement we now have indicates quite clearly the success of selective breeding.



A dog with correct angulation covering the ground with balanced strides

Fig. 9- Demonstrating correct gait.



A dog with incorrect angulation taking short, stilted strides

Fig. 10 - poor gait.

● COAT

Long, silky and straight, slight wave allowed, never curly. Legs, ears and tail, profusely feathered.

Touch it and feel its silky texture, there may be 'Marcel style' waves along the back but definite curling is not an option. Those waves can look as if they have been squeezed between the fingers, but definitely not curling or frizz.

Male dogs may have a slight touch of curl in the mane. As they mature so late the mane can be very thick. A mature male could well have a well-developed and profuse mane. Dogs are presented untrimmed, so apart from natural wear and tear with good care and grooming the King Charles should present in a soft, fine, free flowing coat as befits its status. In a healthy dog the coat will have a sheen to it and white on Tricolours will have an iridescence whilst, white on Blenheims will probably lean toward cream. Blue black and Chestnut red of the whole colours should give a living glow to the coat.

A few white hairs on the chest of a whole colour are not at all desirable but do not actually disqualify, white on a whole colour head is not permissible.

As the King Charles is a Toy Dog the coat is most certainly a major part of its style, attraction and its quality. Seasonal 'drops' may affect the quality but in general terms it is a soft profuse coat making a large contribution to the appearance of the dog.

● COLOURS

Black and Tan: full rich glossy black with bright mahogany tan markings, on muzzle, legs, chest, linings of ears, under tail and spots over eyes. White patch on chest undesirable.

Tricolour: ground pearly white, with well distributed black patches, brilliant tan markings on cheeks, linings of ears, under tail and spots over eyes. Wide white blaze between eyes and up forehead.

Blenheim: ground pearly white, with well defined chestnut red patches. Wide clear blaze with the 'spot' in centre of skull. Should be a clear chestnut red mark about the size of a penny. [10/20c piece]

Ruby: whole coloured, rich chestnut red. White patch on chest highly undesirable.

As a toy breed the colour and coat is important to the purpose of the dog they must be aesthetically pleasing and the colours and texture are a feature, as also; let it be noted; in the King Charles **splodges or **freckles on the muzzle and face are totally acceptable as character giving points and markings, unlike the clear muzzle and face on the Cavalier

"We like our splodges." Absolute symmetry is not essential and should not interfere with seeking quality. White markings on a whole colour are most undesirable as stated above. It should also be noted that a white blaze on a whole colour is incorrect. Colour combined with quality adds up to a major attraction of the breed.

Fig. 11- Black and tan.



Fig. 12 - Tricolour



Fig. 13 – Blenheim with profuse coat.



Fig.14- Ruby



With the beauty of the colours there is a temptation to miss the structure of the dog, which comes as a whole, it is not an overcoat to be dealt with separately nor is the dog a skeleton with a skin stretched over it, everything adds up to a whole.

- **SIZE**

- **3.6 -6.3 Kgs (8-14lbs)**

This is the source of the great debate. Rightly questions should always be asked. The current “Size” which is only about weight is considered by many to be an unrealistic expectation.

It is not just weight alone. Questions arise regarding, health, strength, fitness. suitability for the environment, weight and strength of bone, whelping and welfare and longevity, in the Australian dog.

Look at other breeds and how they have developed over the years and in different locations. The breeds differ according to where they are, they are similar, very similar, but breeds differ in Europe and the Americas, in Asia and the Orient and in South Africa so why should Australian development have been arrested, simply put it hasn't, development has occurred here too.

The cry of “The smaller the better.” has done the toy breeds a great deal of harm. What does a breeder do, dwarf a good specimen by underfeeding to keep it small and win in the show ring but never breed from it because its genetic potential has been reduced along with its substanciability? Do you leave your strong breeding stock at home and show your rejects? If so what is that doing to the overall picture of the breed? Some countries very sensibly do not mention weight but rely on the aspects of the dog its quality and proportions as formerly stated in the USA, France and Canada a strong healthy ‘25 pounder +’ is not unusual at all

A glance through “Noble Hounds and Dear Companions” will show you how much dogs have changed since the days of Queen Victoria's famous kennels at Windsor, only her Pekingese stolen from China and Queen Alexandra's Borzoi are mainly unchanged and would pass today. Although that Peke is smaller, finer and with a silkier coat than those we see. Even the little Mexican dogs are bigger today than yesterday. If a Standard is drawn up when dogs were fed on biscuit and table scraps and did not have the benefit of space and sunshine and good food and care, there is room to ask questions.

Consider the quality and proportions the balance and the overall appearance of the dog. Its purpose is to give affection and pleasure and to be a companion, but it must also be strong.

It is noted that the Standard does not mention height.

● FAULTS

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault is regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

If you ask a Charlie it will tell you “We have no faults” but then they all have magic mirrors that only give them one answer, “Yes, you are the fairest of them all.”

Degrees are in the eyes of the beholder as is quality. As a mature adult assessing and making judgements you are on your own here. You have to ask yourself what is your own purpose because your decision exposes your attitudes and values. We move into the realms of opinion at this point and opinions may be offered, discussed and even disputed but it does remain with the individual to make up their own mind based on the information they have and what they consider important.

Unfortunately, ideas of assessment have always been linked to quantitative assessment rather than qualitative. A dog is not a piece of furniture, it is and can be many things, how you judge or assess it may in time say more about you than about the dog itself.

● NOTE

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

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Submitted by The King Charles Spaniel Club [Inc.] Vic.

Note: This is the only KCS Club in Australia and therefore it is the body to be referred to for matters pertaining to The King Charles Spaniel in Australia.

The Committee and Members of KCSC fully acknowledge the existing Breed Standard but welcome this opportunity to present extended information regarding the Breed, its evolution and history as well as its growth in Australia.

The original Standard was devised in the 1880s in the UK. [1885]

The purpose of this Breed Standard Extension is not to define but to begin to pose some questions and to introduce some of the quirks and twists that occur in the development of anything over a period of time and to extend thoughts regarding points of the Standard in order to better understand and assess the breed.

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