

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL



Extended Breed Standard of **THE BORDER COLLIE**

Produced by
The Border Collie Club of Victoria Inc
in collaboration with the
Australian National Kennel Council

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Extended Breed Standard
of
THE BORDER COLLIE



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ORIGIN OF THE BORDER COLLIE

It must be remembered that before anything else the Border Collie is a sheepdog. He is renowned as the world's greatest sheepdog and would have to be the most widely used working dog around today. The name itself gives some indication as to the dogs' origins and so the reasons for its basic structure.

The Border Collie was originally developed in and for the conditions existing on the vast tracts of land on the Welsh and Scottish borders with England. Here the terrain varies from mountains to sweeping moorlands, the winter weather conditions being very bleak with snow, wind and sleet. Land such as this was suitable for very little except sheep and with the introduction of sheep grew the need for a suitable herding dog.

It is believed the Border Collie comes from a very mixed ancestry of larger and less sensitive dogs such as the Bob-tailed sheepdog and the Bearded Collie. The Border Collie, as we know him today, probably emerged over two hundred years ago from this more rugged but intelligent stock. Selective breeding helped develop a dog that could cope with the harsh conditions and the work required. Size and agility to cope with the mountainous terrain, stamina and economy of movement to cope with the moorlands, coat and ear type for the weather conditions.

Sheep can be anywhere from nervous/frightened to aggressive. The 'stealth' referred to in the Standard is the Border Collies' ability to 'work' his flock in a manner that does not disturb or distress them - a light footed, quiet movement, not drawing attention to itself until required.

The first sheepdog trial was held in 1876. With the introduction of International Sheepdog Trials in 1906 the outstanding ability of the Border Collie became apparent to the whole world and he subsequently became very much sought after in other countries, e.g. New Zealand and Australia. In conjunction with these very early sheepdog trials there was often held a competition to find the 'best looking' dog entered - a forerunner to our modern dog show.

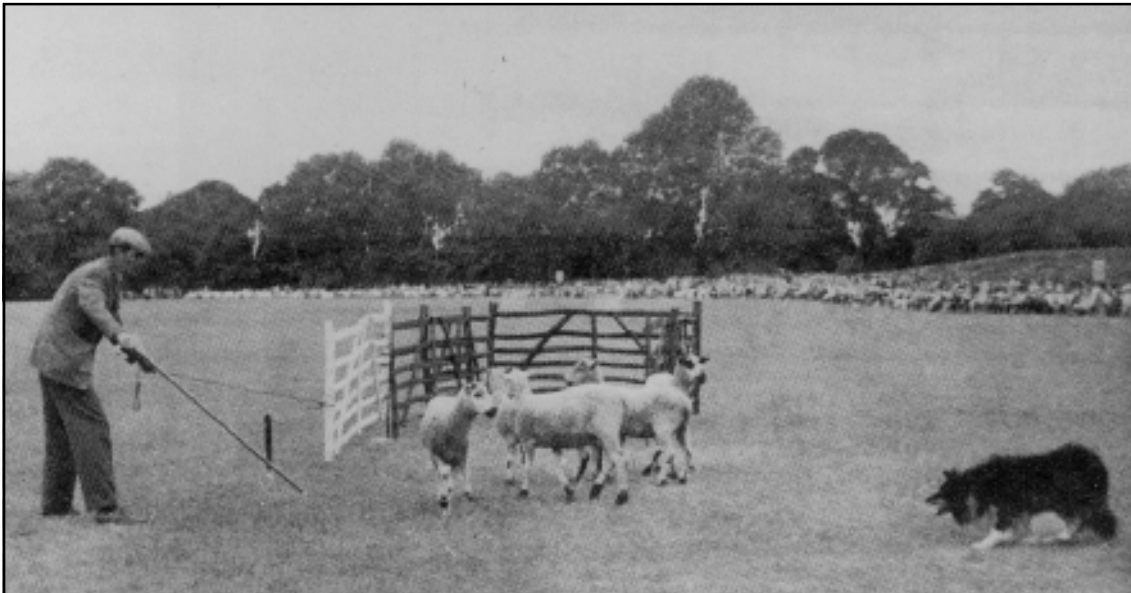
The Border Collie is still very close to his working origins. In Australia in the early 50's several states had drawn up their own standards for the breed but it was not until 1963 that the ANKC adopted a national standard for the Border Collie. Successful breeding to type was often difficult during these early years, one factor being that until the early 60's Border Collies from working stock, or with unknown pedigrees, could be registered for breeding and the showing. In UK, where the breed originated, it did not enter the showing until 1976 when it received Kennel Club recognition, and in USA the Border Collie was not given full recognition as a show dog in the Herding Group until 1995.



KEP 13

Int Supreme Champion — 1908 & 1909

Owner: J Scott — Whelped: 1901 (UK)



A Jones with Roy 7696

Int Supreme Champion Sheepdog, 1953

To A Champion Dead

The light is dimmed in your loyal eyes,
Your swift white feet in the grass are still;
No more, old champion, wary and wise,
Shall you gather your sheep upon Troneyhill!
No more shall you scatter the morning dew
As you make your cast with the rising sun;
But the shepherd world shall remember you
As long as a dog on the hill shall run!

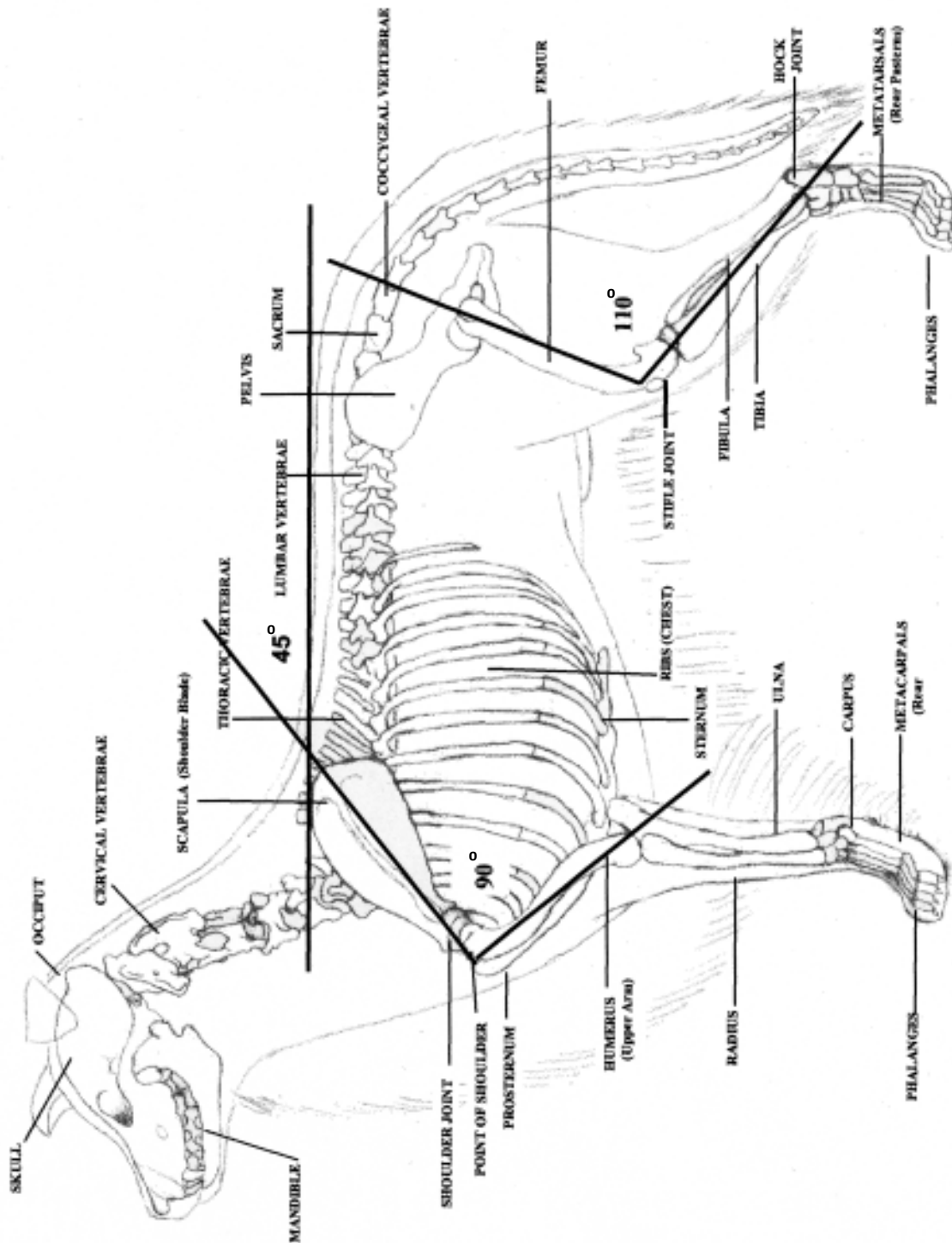
For those who have seen you stoop and fly
Like an arrow loosed from an archer's hand
Hold your sheep with that masterful eye,
Crouch and creep at the least command –
Those who have watched you 'drive' and 'pen'.
'Shed' and 'wear', on a stubborn three –
Have seen what never on earth again
The lover of dogs may be spared to see!

The short, sharp word of command shall pass
When the sheep in the showring turn and break
But no white breast shall gleam in the grass
As, alert, your answering turn you take.
Trophy and cup in the cottage stand,
Triumphs you won o'er the sheep-world's best;
But what shall they solace that lonely hand,
Champion Kep, that your tongue caressed?

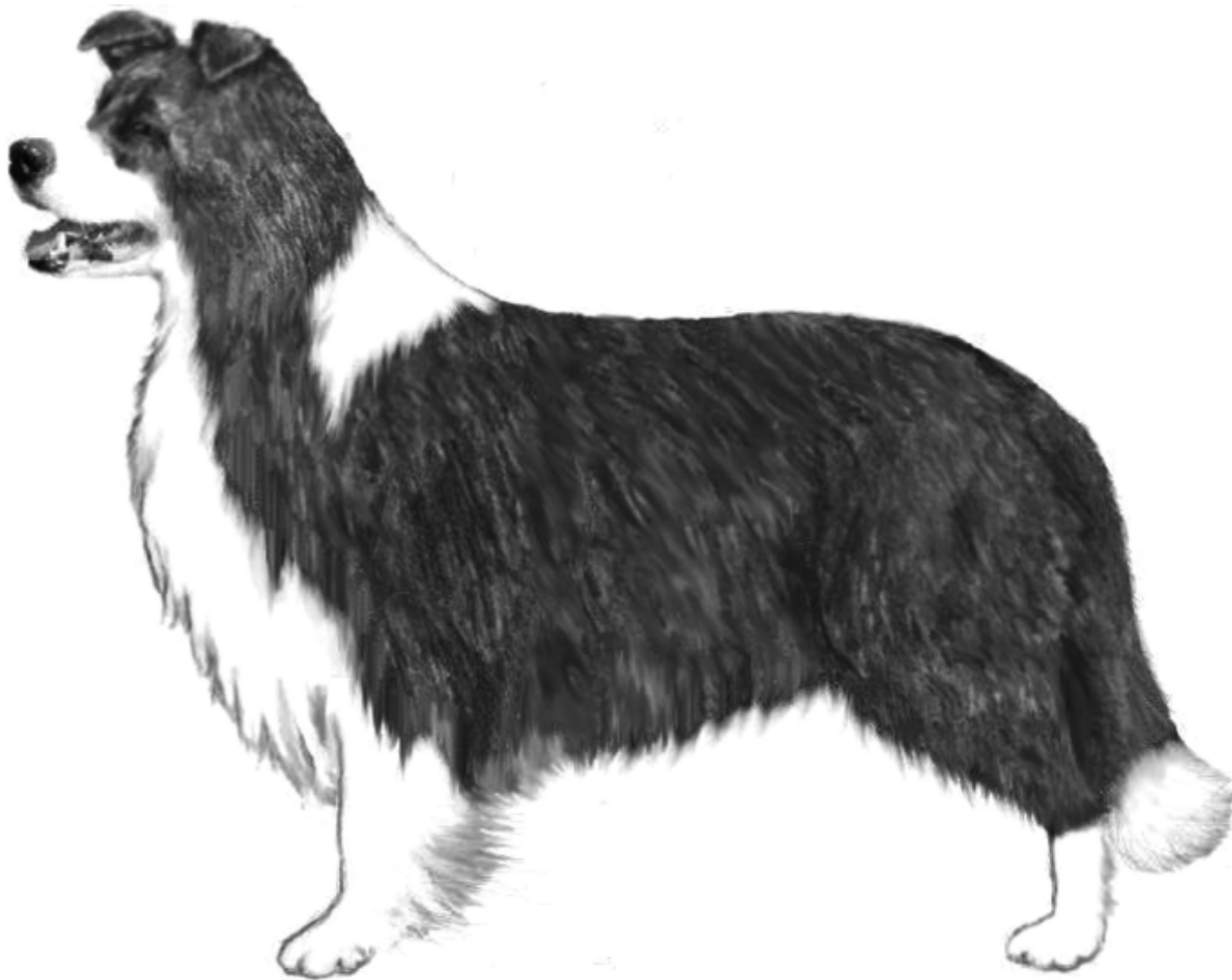
Over your grave when the hill winds blow,
Kep, old Kep, will you hear the cheers,
The ringing plaudits you learned to know
In those glorious full-lived champion years?
Over your grave as the night-dews fall
Will they bring you a memory kind and true
Of the master who loved you better than all
And faced the world with his pride of you?

Will H Ogilvie

This is a poem written to honour "Kep 13", also known as Auld Kep, a working border collie that won the title of International Supreme Champion for sheepdogs in 1908 & 1909.



Skeletal anatomy of the Border Collie



Smooth outline, quality, perfect balance — attributes of the Border Collie

- **GENERAL APPEARANCE**

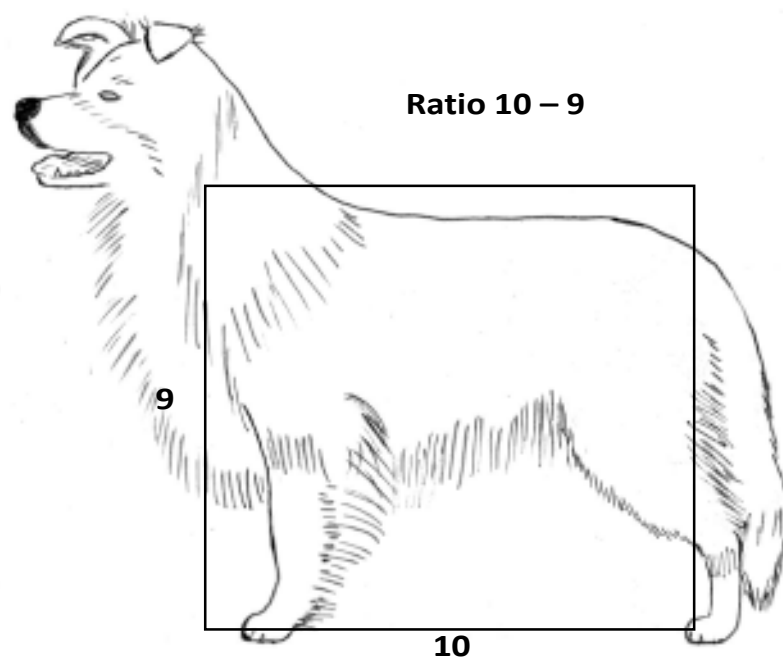
Standard - The general appearance shall be that of a well proportioned dog, the smooth outline showing quality, gracefulness and perfect balance, combined with sufficient substance to ensure that it is capable of enduring long periods of active duty in its intended task as a working sheep dog. Any tendency to coarseness or weediness is undesirable.

Think about the words 'smooth outline', 'gracefulness', 'quality', 'perfect balance'. If you find these attributes, you are well on the way to finding a good specimen of the breed.

The Border Collie obtains its grace, which should be apparent both when standing naturally and on the move, from the flowing line extending from the head, through the neck and shoulders, along the back, over the croup to the tip of the tail. To complete the picture of 'perfect balance' the size of head must be in proportion with the body.

Coarseness and weediness do not necessarily relate to height. Fine dogs will have some or all of the following; fine bone, narrow heads, narrowness across the body and hindquarters, lacking depth of chest and too cut up in the flanks. Coarse dogs will have some or all of the following; heavy bone, blocky unrefined heads, thick & heavy set body, excessive depth of chest and overall, a larger or clumsier physique than is desirable.

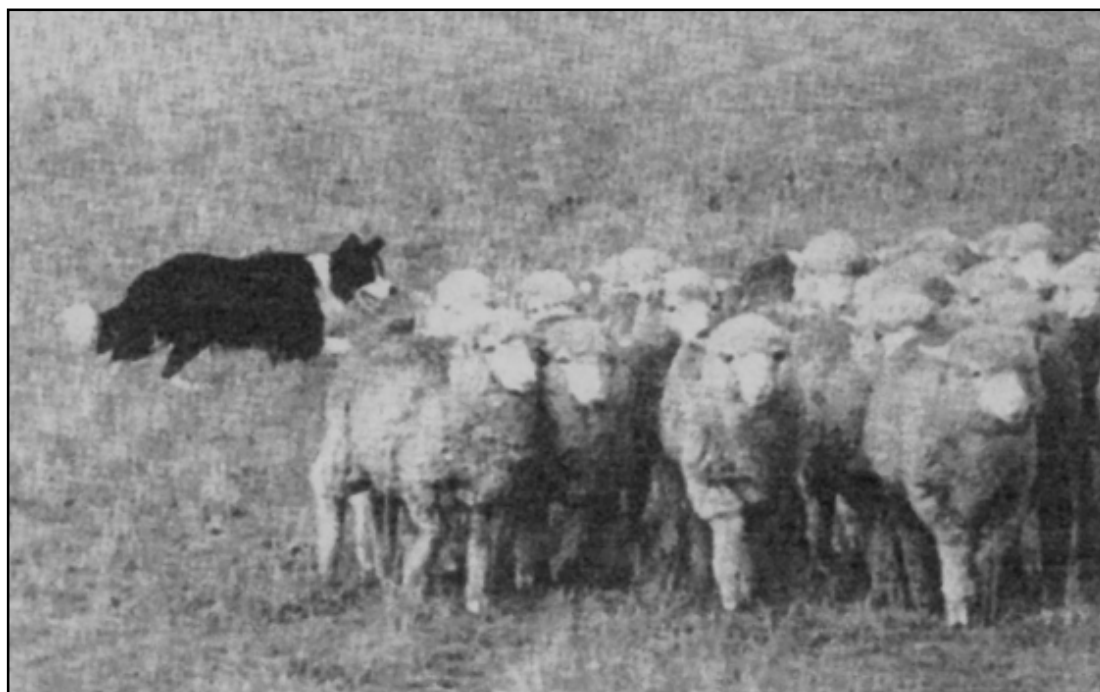
In profile, the Border Collie should be slightly longer, measured from point of shoulder to rear of upper thigh, than in height from ground to withers, the ratio being approximately as 10 is to 9. This length of body must come from the length of ribcage, not the loins. (See grid drawing below)



- **CHARACTERISTICS (General)**

Standard - *The Border Collie is highly intelligent, with an instinctive tendency to work and is readily responsive to training. Its keen, alert and eager expression add to its intelligent appearance*

A feature of the Border Collie is its free flowing movement where the head may be slightly lowered or in line with the body. Another feature is its expression - expression comes primarily from the harmony of the correct eye shape, placement and colour and is complemented by the correct ear placement. The Border Collie is a biddable, steady and intelligent working dog, friendly but with attention primarily to its owner/handler.



- **CHARACTERISTICS (Temperament)**

Standard:..... , whilst its loyal and faithful nature demonstrates that it is at all times kindly disposed towards stock. Any aspect of structure or temperament foreign to a working dog is uncharacteristic.

A Border Collie's temperament is stable, biddable and willing to please, steady with no sign of timidity or aggression. Any sign of aggression is uncharacteristic of this breed and should not be tolerated. It should be severely penalised.

HEAD

MUZZLE & SKULL

- ✓ Equal lengths
- ✓ On parallel planes

STOP

- ✓ Pronounced
- ✗ Steep
- ✗ Flat

SKULL

- ✓ Broad
- ✓ Flat
- ✗ Apple
- ✗ Pronounced occiput

NOSE

- ✓ Large
- ✓ Open
- ✗ Butterfly nose
- ✗ Ram's nose
- ✗ Dudley nose



EYES

- ✓ Oval shape
- ✗ 'Hard' eyes
- ✗ Round
- ✗ Almond shape

LIPS

- ✓ Clean
- ✗ Loose
- ✗ Lippy
- ✗ Pendulous

CHIN & UNDERJAW

- ✓ Moderately strong

Moderate chiselling
below and to side of
the eyes

EXPRESSION

- ✓ Keen
- ✓ Alert
- ✓ Eager

- **HEAD**

Standard - The skull is broad and flat between the ears, slightly narrowing to the eye, with a pronounced stop, cheeks deep but not prominent. The muzzle tapering to the nose, is strong and the same length as the skull. The lips are tight and clean and the nose is large with open nostrils. The nose colour in all dogs will be a solid colour, with no pink or light pigment, and shall complement the background colour of the dog.

The head should be broad and flat between the ears with a well defined stop and the occiput (upper, back point of the skull) not too pronounced. If there is a pronounced occiput it will either affect the proper ratio of the head or it will mean the skull, minus the occiput, is too short.

The muzzle should be well rounded with a flat bridge, not narrow, with a moderately strong chin and underjaw, making a snipy or weak muzzle undesirable. There must be a moderate amount of chiselling to the foreface below and to the side of the eye.

When viewed from the side the skull should be flat, the planes of the foreface and skull parallel and of equal length. When viewed from above, the skull tapers into the muzzle.

So as not to affect the overall balance of the dog, the head must be in proportion to the rest of the body.



Female Head



A promising youngster

Pigmentation should not be gauged by nose colour alone. Correct colour of pigment can be verified on lips, eye rims, etc. which must mirror the nose colour. The black and white, the red, the tri colour (black, white & tan), and the blue merle Border Collies have black noses, the chocolate a liver nose and the blue's nose is slate colour.

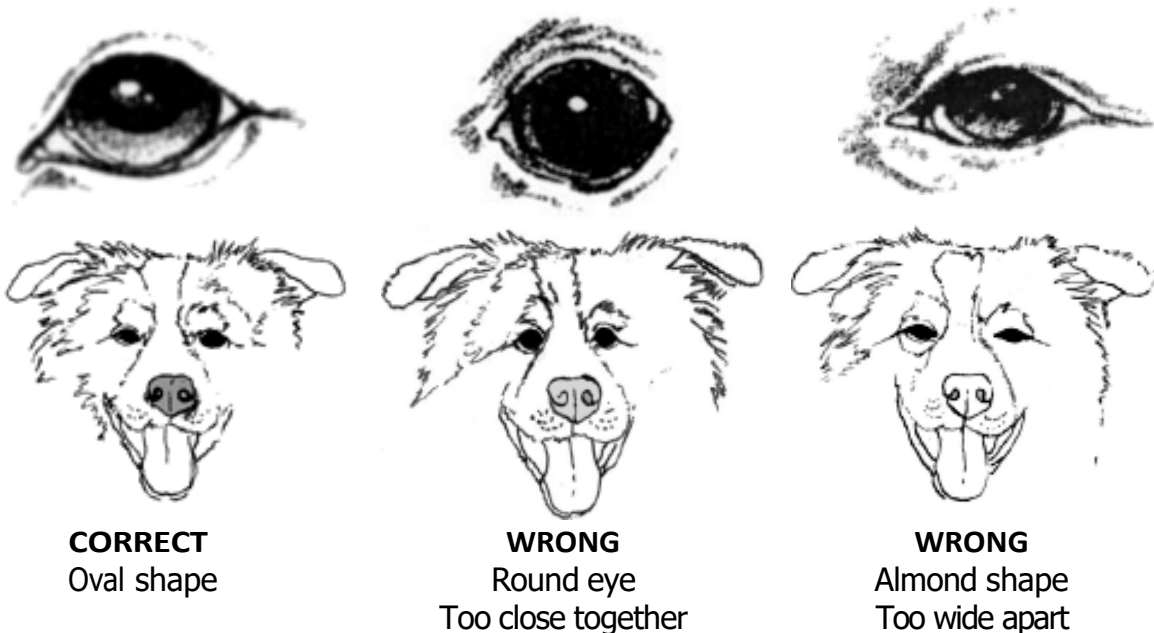
- **EYES**

Standard - The eyes are set wide apart, oval shaped of moderate size, harmonising with the colour of the coat but darker colour preferred, except in the case of chocolate where a lighter colour is permissible and in the case of merles where blue is permissible. The expression is mild but keen, alert and intelligent.

Although the standard no longer requires the eye colour to be brown, to allow for the different coat colours, it is still appropriate for brown to be specifically mentioned for the eye colour of the Border Collie. In blacks, tri-colour and red Border Collies, the eye colour is essentially brown, darker brown preferred. Black or yellow eyes are undesirable because they detract from the characteristic mild expression of the Border Collie

The chocolate Border Collie may have a lighter brown eye and the blue may have a hazel eye.

Blue merles may have brown eyes or (one or both, or part of one or both) blue or blue flecked.



Please note the word 'mild' with regard to expression. Incorrect eye shape, colour and size gives the dog an uncharacteristic expression. This includes a hard eye.

A 'hard' eye can be one or more of the following incorrect eye characteristics:

- a. Too light or too dark an eye colour.
- b. Incorrect eye shape or position.
- c. Eyes not set well enough into the sockets.
- d. An 'unkind' or penetrating expression of the eyes.
- e. Bulging eyes.

- **EARS**

Standard - *Medium size and texture, set well apart. Carried erect or semi erect and sensitive in use.*

The ears are sensitive in their use.

Remember the skull should be flat and broad between the ears. Do look for the correct width of skull to go with the ears. Because of the varying heights in Border Collies' ears, the dogs with the higher ears may look more alert, but alertness is shown with a combination of the eyes, the ear placement and ear carriage.

Ear placement can visually effect the shape of the head. With too high set an ear the correct shape of the Border Collie head is lost, the same as when the ear is set too low.

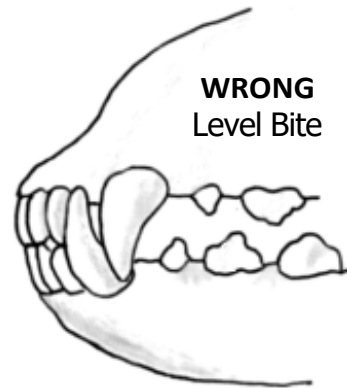
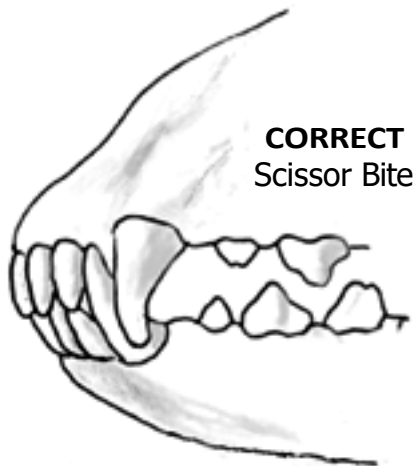
The tips of the ears are slightly rounded.

There are no ear carriage faults listed in the standard. Ear carriage should only be penalised to the extent that it detracts from the breed type expression and the balanced proportions of the head.

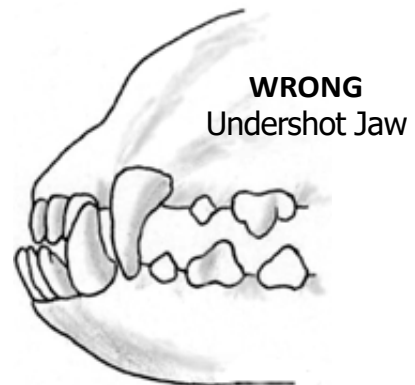
As always – judge the dog as a whole not for any one single aspect alone

- MOUTH

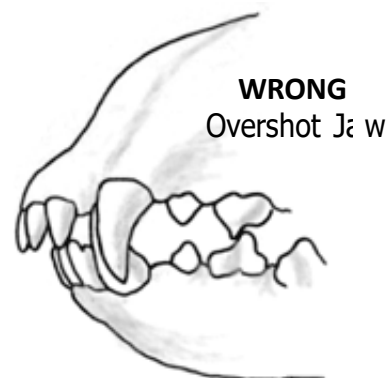
Standard -The teeth should be sound, strong and evenly spaced, the lower incisors just behind but touching the upper, that is a scissor bite.



Whilst well formed dentition aids in the correct formation of the jaw it must be remembered that this breed is not required to bite. Teeth should be white, strong, and in proportion to the size of the muzzle, i.e. not small or soft. Broken teeth should not be penalised.



The Border Collie must have a well developed underjaw in order to give it strength and room for the correct size of teeth.



Lips should be tight and with sufficient and appropriate pigmentation with no tendency to lipiness, jowliness or pendulous flews.

- **NECK**

Standard - *The neck is of good length, strong and muscular, slightly arched and broadening to the shoulders, without throatiness or coarseness.*



Sufficient, but not excessive, length of neck is a crucial factor in the overall balance of the Border Collie. Without the appropriate reach of neck the dog would be unable to correctly lower its head in movement. Whilst the dog is on the move, the ideal carriage of the head is more or less in line with the back.

Generally, a shorter neck is accompanied by incorrect front assembly.

Remember, the Border Collie acquires part of its grace from the flow of the neck into the forequarters.

CORRECT LENGTH OF NECK



STUFFY NECK



NECK TOO LONG



WE NECK

- **FOREQUARTERS**

Standard - The shoulders are long, and well angulated to the upper arm, neither in nor out at elbow. The forelegs are well boned, straight and parallel when viewed from the front. Pasterns show flexibility with a slight slope when viewed from the side.

The shoulder blade and the upper arm should be approx. of equal length with the shoulder blade cutting the topline at 45 degrees.

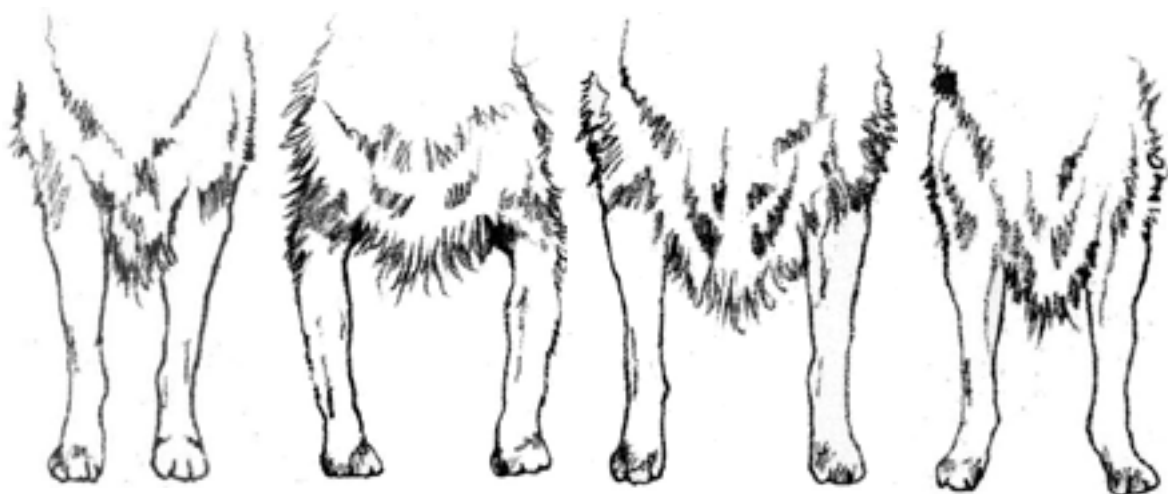
The distance from the withers to the elbow is equal to the distance from the elbow to ground - i.e. the lower leg from ground to the elbow is 50% of the distance from ground to withers. A vertical line should be able to be drawn from the withers to the rear of the elbow.

Well boned does not mean heavy boned.

The shape of the front leg (including sinews and muscle) looked at in cross-section, should be oval, not round.



✓ **CORRECT**



XNARROW

XOUT AT ELBOW

XBROAD

XWEAK PASTERNS

- **BODY**

Standard - The body is moderately long with well sprung ribs tapering to a fairly deep and moderately broad chest. The loins are broad, deep, muscular and only slightly arched, flanks deep and not cut up.

In profile the Border Collie should be slightly longer, measured from the point of shoulder to the rear of the upper thigh than in height from ground to withers. The ratio being approx. 10:9. (See Pg.7). The top line is level with only a slight rise over the loin, which is broad, deep and muscular, flowing gracefully through the croup to the low set tail (See main diagram). The length of loin in a mature adult (male) should be approx. a hand width (4"/100mm)

The length in the body should be in the ribcage, not the loin, whilst depth of chest should ideally reach to the elbow. (See Pg.5) 'Well sprung ribs' should never be interpreted as barrel ribbed.

The amount of coat falling from the flanks and loin can affect the appearance of the cut up.

A dippy, sloping or roach back is undesirable.



CORRECT TOPLINE



ROACH BACK



SLOPING TOPLINE



DIPPY BACK

- **HINDQUARTERS**

Standard - The hindquarters are broad and muscular, in profile sloping gracefully to the set on of tail. The thighs are long, broad, deep and muscular with well turned stifles and strong hocks, well let down, and when viewed from the rear are straight and parallel.



REAR VIEW

Rear pasterns should be vertical when viewed from the side or from behind when standing, or from behind when moving.

The strength and angulation of the hindquarters are in keeping with that of the forequarters, to maintain the balance required. If hindquarter angulation is incorrect, the dog will not have a correct gait.

The croup should slope but not be steep nor flat, to complete the smooth flowing outline and is complemented by the correct turn of stifle and short rear pasterns.

The term 'hock' is sometimes taken to mean not only the actual hock joint but also the rear pasterns. When a dog is said to be 'long in hocks', it indicates that there is too much length in the rear pasterns and not in the hock itself, which is the joint between the lower end of the tibia/fibula and the rear pastern.

'Hocks well let down' - Asking for 'well let down hocks' is another way of asking for a long tibia/fibula and a short rear pastern.

Good hocks, well angulated, secure the maximum reach forward and thrust back as the dog propels itself in movement. Undefined, straight hocks (lacking in angulation) are not capable of reaching sufficiently far forward or back to propel the dog with the same force (drive) as those that are correctly structured. If the bones are not the correct length or the angles insufficient, there will be a loss of leverage and so a loss of power/drive in the hind action.



BOW HOCKS



NARROW HOCKS



COW HOCKS

- FEET

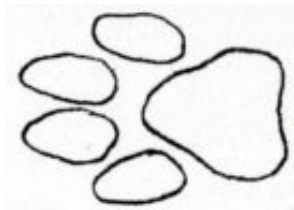
Standard - *Oval in shape, pads deep, strong and sound, toes moderately arched and close together. Nails short and strong.*



The shape of the foot is a spoon shaped oval with correct arching and deep strong pads which are essential in this breed for it to be able to fulfil its purpose in life.

Those aspects of the foot that most affect a Border Collie's ability to endure long periods of active duty in its intended task as a working sheepdog are arch, tightness, and depth & texture of pad.

Hair on the feet is customarily trimmed for neatness and also to help avoid grass seed injuries.



It is permissible to have front dew claws removed, if desired. It is uncommon for hind dew claws to occur, but if they should, they are normally removed to avoid injury to the dog.

CORRECT

Oval foot, deep pads



XROUND FOOT



XHARE FOOT



XSPLAY FOOT

- **TAIL**

Standard - *The tail is moderately long, set on low, well furnished and with an upward swirl towards the end, completing the graceful contour and balance of the dog. The tail may be raised in excitement, but not carried over the back.*

A correctly set, well carried tail, with sufficient furnishings, is most important in the assessment of overall balance of the Border Collie. If he carries his tail high, his balance is affected and he loses his smooth flowing movement, sometimes having an ungainly rear action. You may also find that he has a high set on tail.

Carriage of the tail is the result of;

- a. Correct length and angle of croup
- b. Correct tail set and length
- c. Changes in direction of travel when on the move
- d. Disposition of the dog.

The bone of the tail should reach at least to the hock joint with no kinks or knots. When on the move the tail should ideally be carried horizontally or lower than the line of the back.

The (upward) swirl in the tail is a feature of this breed, as is the white tip on the end of the tail.

The moderately long, low set tail of the Border Collie (with its upward swirl, whilst the dog is moving) is not only a feature of this breed, but serves a functional purpose as well. While concentrating at a given task the tail is carried low and is used almost like a rudder to help balance the dog when turning. Consequently judges should be aware that tails which are too short lack functional usefulness.



ON THE MOVE SHOWING SWIRL OF TAIL

- **MOVEMENT**

Standard - *The movement is free, smooth and tireless, with a minimum lift of the feet, conveying the impression of the ability to move with great stealth. The action, viewed from the front, should be straight forward and true, without weakness at shoulders, elbows or pasterns. Viewed from behind the quarters thrust with strength and flexibility, with hocks not close nor too far apart. When trotting, the dog's feet tend to come closer together as speed increases, but when the dog comes to rest he should stand four square. Any tendency to stiltiness or to cowhocks or bow hocks is a serious fault.*

One of the characteristics of the Border Collie is to move with great stealth. This is best defined as 'to pass by unnoticed'. While working it will seem as if it is crouching, the head and neck appear to become a continuation of the body. This is to help the Border Collie attract minimum attention to itself whilst working. It gaits with a moderately low head carriage - compared with most other breeds. The head is pushed forward and slightly higher than the level of the back.

The Border Collie is an agile dog able to suddenly change speed and direction without loss of balance and grace. It should have a smooth, balanced, low action, displaying a minimum of up and down movement giving the impression of being tireless. The head, shoulders, back and rump should not appear to rise and fall with each stride.

No reference is made to speed being desirable. Fast movement does not necessarily mean good movement. The dog should be moved at a speed that conveys the impression of a smooth, tireless gait with a minimum lift and maximum extension of the feet. When viewed from the side the stride should cover maximum ground with minimum effort. With correct extension and balance, an imaginary vertical line can be drawn from the nose to the extended foot - see page 20.

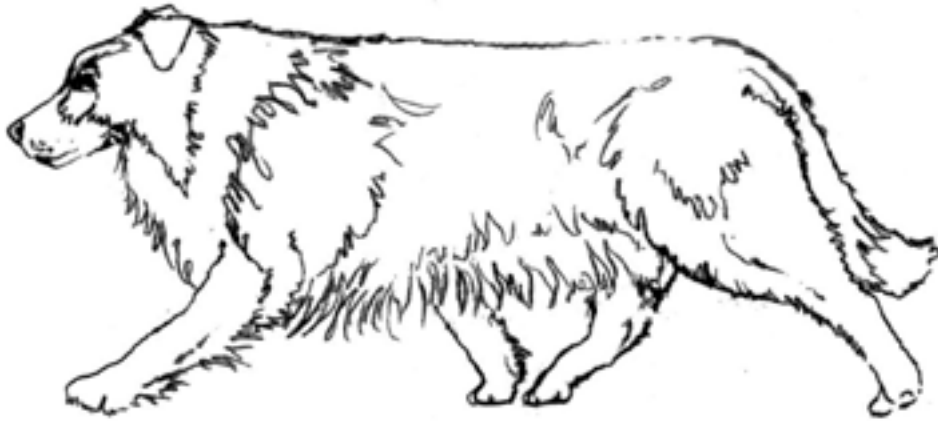
The words 'free, smooth and tireless' eliminates short-stepping, strutting movement. Judges should not expect a high-headed, high stepping dog as this is not typical of the breed.

The only serious fault mentioned in the standard is 'any tendency to stiltedness, or to cowhocks or bow hocks'. These would affect the dog's movement and hamper endurance.

Any deviation to a sound moving dog is also a fault, e.g. crabbing which is usually associated with a short coupled or square dog. Overreaching, lack of reach and drive normally also relate to incorrect structure. In final assessment, gait is an essential factor confirming physical evaluation.

To appreciate the correct movement of a Border Collie it is preferable they be moved on a loose lead.

MOVEMENT



CORRECT MOVEMENT

Head in line with body



OVERREACHING



HIGH STEPPING, HIGH HEADED



WORKING DOG SHOWING 'STEALTH'

- **COAT**

Standard - HAIR: Two varieties: Moderately long or Smooth. In both, topcoat dense and medium textured, undercoat soft and dense giving good weather resistance. In the moderately long-coated variety, abundant coat forms mane, breeching and brush. On face, ears, forelegs (except for feather), hind legs from hock to ground, hair should be short and smooth.

In the long-coated variety, the body coat of the Border Collie should not be so abundant or curly, as to detract from the graceful outline of the animal.

In the long-coated variety, the hair should be sufficiently long on the rear of the front legs, between elbow and pastern, to form a distinct feather, and on the rear of the thighs the coat should form a breeching. The tail should have an abundance of coat to form a brush. The coat may be straight or have a slight wave.

In both varieties, the complete absence of undercoat is to be regarded as a fault in an adult dog as this will reduce the coats insulating quality. The medium textured top coat gives a waterproofing quality and together with the undercoat will ensure the dog's capacity for enduring various weather and working conditions. Bitches are generally not as heavily coated as dogs.

Baby puppies will display different coat qualities until the adult top coat begins to appear at 4-6 months of age.

- **COLOUR**

Standard - Variety of colours permissible. White should never predominate.

There should be no doubt about what colour the coat is and each specific colour should be distinguishable from the others, i.e. there should be no confusion between the black and the blue colours, nor between the chocolate and the red colours.

White is permissible on any part of the head or body provided the basic body colour predominates and is the background colour of the dog.

Beware - uneven markings can create optical illusions of structure or movement. For example, a vertical line from withers to elbow can create the impression of a straight shoulder and uneven leg markings can be confusing to the eye when the dog is moving.

Markings are secondary to breed type.

- **SIZE**

*Height: Dogs 48 - 53 cm (approx. 19 - 21 ins) at withers
 Bitches 46 - 51 cm (approx. 18 - 20 ins) at withers.*

- **FAULTS**

Standard - 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 and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog.

- **NOTE**

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

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANGULATION	The angles formed at a joint by a meeting of the bones.
APPLE HEADED	Very domed, rounded skull.
ARCHED NECK	A convex curve from nape to withers, sloping gently into topline.
BACK	Region between withers and loin.
BALANCE	The harmonisation of the various parts in relation to each other for a particular breed.
BLAZE	White mark running up the middle of muzzle and/or skull.
BONE	The relationship to thickness, quality and strength of bone as seen in the legs.
BREECHING	Hair on the outside thighs and on back of buttocks.
BUTTERFLY NOSE	Parti-coloured nose, e.g. dark spotted with flesh colour.
CHEST	The forepart of the body or trunk that is enclosed by the ribs.
CHISELLING	Clean cut lines and contours in the head and foreface.
CLODDY	Thickset and comparatively heavy.
CLOSE-COUPLED	Short in coupling.
COUPLING	The part of the body between the last rib and the commencement of the hindquarter section.
COW HOCKED	Hock joints turned or pointed towards each other causing the feet to turn out.
CRABBING	The forward movement of the dog such that its body is at slight angle to the point of direction in order to avoid the clip of the front feet by the rear feet.
CROUP	The portion of the topline extending from the hip bones to the set on of the tail.
CRYPTORCHID	Male dog without testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
CUT UP	Concave underline of body curving upwards from end of sternum to waist.

DOUBLE COATED	An outer coat of longer hair with a shorter softer dense undercoat.
DUDLEY NOSE	Weakly pigmented.
EXPRESSION	The general appearance of all features of the head, particularly eyes and ears.
FEATHERING	Longer fringe of hairs on tail, legs, feet. ears and body.
HOCKS	Joint on the hind limb located between the lower thigh and rear pastern.
LAY OF SHOULDER	The angle or inclination of the shoulder blade to the horizontal.
LIPPY	Pendulous lip or lips that do not fit tightly.
MONORCHID	A male dog with only one testicle descended and in the scrotum.
OCCIPUT	The prominent bone at the back of the skull.
OVER REACHING	A gait where the rear feet are forced to step to one side and forward of the forefeet to avoid interference with the front feet.
PASTERN	The region between the wrist and the front foot.
POINT OF SHOULDER	The front of the joint where the upper arm and the shoulder blade meet.
QUALITY	Excellence of type and bearing giving close adherence to the breed standard, the indefinable attribute denoting refinement and mobility. The absence of coarseness giving strength to a dog and refinement to a bitch without weakness.
SNIPY	A weak pointed muzzle.
STIFLE	The joint of the hind leg, between the first and second thigh.
STOP	The step up from the muzzle to skull; indentation between the eyes where the nasal bone and skull meet.
TUCK UP	Concave underline of body curving upwards from end of rib to waist.
UNDERCOAT	The shorter dense hair appearing under the longer harsher outer coat.