

UK BREED STANDARD IN DETAIL

A personal interpretation by Mr J.E.J. Parkinson, Chairman of the CWCA, of the Cardigan Welsh Corgi breed standard of 1949.

General Appearance - in other words, what type of dog is the Cardigan Welsh Corgi, and what makes it readily distinguishable from other breeds, especially from its cousin the Pembroke?

The Cardigan is essentially a working dog, of medium size, fairly long body in comparison to height, low to ground but with appreciable ground clearance, a tail resembling that of a fox, neck well developed, carrying head of size proportionate to body, and ears somewhat large and prominent. Expression should be alert and watchful.

Comparing the Cardigan with the Pembroke - the head is stronger, has a doming above the eyes. The ears are bigger with the tips more rounded; the front legs show more bowing and a **slight** turning out of the front feet is frequent. The length of body and the length/height ratio are greater than in the Pembroke and, of course, the presence of the tail is an obvious difference, but one which should not have to be resorted to - in other words, a Cardigan should never appear to be a Pembroke with a tail.

Colour in Cardigans is of a wider variety than in the Pembroke. Only pure white is strictly out of order; brindles and Blue Merles are allowed in addition to the Pembroke colours.

Head and Skull - The K.C. standard needs little elaboration: foxy in shape and appearance, fairly wide skull, flat between the ears, tapering towards the eyes, with slight doming above the eyes. The length of the foreface in proportion to the skull (3-5) and in comparison to the width is important, as too long foreface to width gives the wrong Collie appearance which is quite foreign.

Nose - Black (except in Blue Merles) rules out the butterfly nose some-times encountered.

Eyes - Medium size giving sharp, watchful expression, rather widely set, cornea clearly defined; preferably dark but clear. Silver eyes (wall-eyed) in Blue Merles. Small eyes give a mean expression, protruding large, round eyes, and black eyes are to be discouraged, as are light eyes. In other words, the eye should blend with the general colour of the particular dog and be neither too prominent nor small and furtive.

Ears - To be rather large and prominent, moderately wide at base, carried erect, about 3.5 inches apart and well back so they can be laid flat along the neck. The ears are a distinctive feature of the Cardigan - carried erect does not mean vertical, but the centre of the top of the ears should be slightly wide of the line running through the eyes from the end of the nose. A dog should use its ears as necessary to demonstrate its alertness and interest. Soft ears should be avoided in breeding and show ring alike.

Mouth - Teeth strong, level and sound. The normal bite is the scissor, namely, the backs of the top teeth resting on the fronts of the lower teeth, but a pincer bite is permissible. The arrangement of the teeth should be regular in relation to one another.

Neck - Muscular, well developed and in proportion to the dog's build, fitting into well-sloped shoulders. This is almost self-explanatory, but nevertheless relates to a very important feature and one which can make or mar the balance of your Cardi. A short stuffy neck - head in the shoulders - or a too long neck are so obviously wrong to an experienced eye.

Forequarters - Front to be slightly bowed with strong bone. Legs short and strong. Shoulders strong and muscular. The Cardigan forelegs should mould round the chest with only a slight outward turn of the feet. The shoulder must be correctly angled, approx. 90° to the upper leg; the elbows should not stick out loosely from the body. Bone should be adequate for the individual dog, neither fine nor coarse and clumsy, and should go right down to the feet. Incorrect angulation results in incorrect movement - such as short, high stepping and choppy action.

Body - Chest to be moderately broad with prominent breast bone. Body fairly long and strong, deep brisket, well-sprung ribs and clearly defined waist. The heart room required by the Cardi as a working breed necessitates the broad chest, deep brisket and the well-sprung ribs; lack of these essentials limit the scope for endurance and ability to do the job for which the breed is intended. Viewed from above, the picture should present a definite waist line, from the side, a lowness to ground but with a reasonable amount of clearance, a level top line, with the set of tail preferably below this line, thus sometimes giving the impression of a slight rise over the hindquarters. The body length should be in balance with the dog's height at shoulder, exhibiting a leaning to the Dachshund rather than the Finnish Spitz.

Hindquarters - To be strong with muscular thighs, legs short and strong. To achieve thrust from the rear, the Cardi must have legs which are almost straight below the hocks (viewed from the side), i.e. not carried under the body, and have a well-developed second thigh - the portion of the leg above the hock. The legs should show no tendency to cow hocks or barrel hocks.

Feet - Round and well padded. All dew claws removed. Rather large. The feet of the Cardi are characteristic, one of the minor differences between this breed and the Pembroke. The feet should be tight, not splayed, with short nails and dew claws removed to prevent damage and at the same time make for a neater appearance.

Tail - To be moderately long and set almost in line with the body, and resembling that of a fox. This needs little further explanation but it is, nevertheless, a feature which can greatly mar the appearance of an otherwise excellent specimen. The tail is the dog's rudder and whilst it may be carried in line with the back line when working, it should not curl over the back and should be well down (but not round under the body) when the dog is stationary.

Coat - Short or medium, of hard texture. It is often mistakenly assumed that the Cardigan coat is long - longer than that of the Pembroke but this is untrue, and as in the case of the Pem, should consist of two coats - the undercoat of short thick hair, and outer coat of harder straight hair. The coat should be weather resisting, devoid of curl, silkiness or wiry tendency. Some feathering occurs around the neck to form a ruff, around the hind-quarters to form a breeching, on the tail to, form a brush and on the legs to a lesser degree.

Colour - Any except pure white, although many appear to feel a preponderance of white undesirable. Reds of all shades, sable (red with black pencilling), brindles, black and tan or any of these colours with white markings, plus the Blue Merles are all permissible.

Weight and Size - Height to be as near as possible 12 inches at shoulder. Weight: dogs 22-26 lb., bitches 20-24 lb. These measurements are the ideal and should be looked upon as such, leaving a certain amount of latitude in their interpretation. It is balance which must be maintained and as in many instances in other breeds size and weight are not always accompanied by balance, where all the different parts belong together in proportion to one another. Whilst keeping these measurements in mind, the foregoing points of the standard must be satisfied too.

There still remains one item to produce that "flyer". Does it work, or should I say could it work and do the job for which the breed was intended?

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