

THE HISTORY OF THE MANCHESTER TERRIER



- The earliest illustration of a black & tan terrier type dog appears in the 'Hours of the Virgin'. This illustrated manuscript is dated approximately 1500. 'The Hours' were a devotional book of psalms, prayers etc to be used at certain times of the day, Prime, Matins, Vespers etc and were first written in the 9th Century for use by the clergy. In time, with the expansion of commerce, the laity were more able to read, and 'The Hours' became generally more popular from the mid-13th to late 16th Century. They were even used to teach children to read. They contain pictures of everyday life, presumably to make them more appealing and relevant to the reader, and amongst the pictures of daily life such as farming activities and weaving we see a couple outside the door of their house with their faithful black and tan terrier-type dog.



- The earliest documentary description comes from Dr Caius (pronounced 'Keys' and after whom the Cambridge College is named), once physician to Queen Elizabeth 1. Dr Caius wrote a study of British Dogs in which he described in detail, small black and tan coloured terrier type dogs, working as ratters, that bear a remarkable resemblance to later documented examples of the type. This, places black & tan terrier type dogs as far back as Tudor times but without doubt they existed earlier.
- Throughout the 1600s information on these dogs is scarce but they were occasionally documented. It is worthy to note that mention is made of smooth coated terrier types during this period. This was the time that terriers began to diverge into different types, but the black & tan terriers remained largely unchanged. No doubt due to the isolated lifestyle of its owners and its satisfactory working ability.
- A quotation from **wood engraver** Thomas Bewick' book 'The General History of Quadrupeds' published in 1790 states – there are two types of terrier, one being smooth and sleek, beautifully formed, reddish brown or black in colour with tanned legs, and is similar in size to the rough terrier in disposition and faculties but smaller in size, strength and hardiness.
- Daniel in his 1802 book Rural Sports writes about – Types of terriers which are elegant and sprightly, with smooth coats, black in body and tanned on the leg. It would appear that the black & tan terrier was already showing the elegance and agility that typify the modern Manchester Terrier. The black & tan terrier of these times



was a working ratter used in buildings to control vermin. Those of a coarser type were often kept at hunt kennels presumably for the same purpose. Paintings from the period show the black and tan running with the hounds – indeed the Smooth Fox Terrier is now thought to count the smooth black and tan terrier as its' primary ancestor.

- Being very efficient ratters black & terriers were a widespread choice for rat catchers during the 19th century. One of the most famous being Jack Black who lived and worked in London around the 1850s and was once the royal rat catcher.
- A claim to fame or perhaps a notoriety for the breed was its use in the so-called sport of the rat pit, a popular pastime. The pit consisted of an enclosure approximately six feet in diameter with



wooden sides at elbow height and a rim for clients to lean on. Into this they tipped rats followed by a dog to dispatch the rats in a set time.

Enthusiasts would take bets on the proceedings. The winning dogs could become quite valuable! Jemmy Shaw who owned one of the largest sporting public houses in

London would buy 300-700 rats a week from local rat catchers

- During the 1850's & 60's black and tan terriers were used to hunt



rabbit. The idea to make the breed finer and faster for this purpose must have occurred to John Hulme. He developed a finer, long-legged variety of black and tan terrier, a dual-purpose terrier suitable for vermin and small game. Other breeders followed suit. Early owners of show dogs adopted this type of terrier. They

influenced the changes that ultimately resulted in the type of black and tan we see today.

- John Henry Walsh who wrote under the pseudonym 'Stonehenge' was one time Editor of 'The Field' and heavily involved with early dog shows, influencing the creation of the Kennel Club. He wrote - The black and tan terrier has as good a right to be considered the representative of the Old English Terrier as any breed but does not

have a breed club to protect his interests. He continued – the breed at this time is such a favourite of the public as it deserves to be, for it has many excellent qualities to those who like a dog who does not need nursing, an affectionate lively and amiable companion not given to quarrelling – Very active and graceful in its actions and with pluck enough and keen zest for hunting and destroying such vermin as rats that infest houses and outbuildings. With fox and badger generally, he has not the hardiness to cope or stand their bites, he is built for nimbleness and speed rather than power. A description that still holds good today.

- At this period in time black & tan terriers had their ears cropped to stand upright. This according to Rawdon B Lee in his 1894 book of Modern Dogs – produced a negative effect on the popularity of the breed. However, in 1884 the breed enjoyed a period of popularity when the first breed club, the Black and Tan Terrier Club was formed
- During the 1890's the name 'Manchester Terrier' began to be used more than 'Black and Tan Terrier' when referring to the breed. This was due to the fact that many black and tan terriers were found in the area around Manchester known as Cottonopolis, so named because of its association with the cotton industry. It is reported that some, including Walsh, favoured the name Black and Tan Terrier over Manchester Terrier and there was great debate well into the 20th Century, this is reflected in the studbooks of the KC which swapped between the two names for many years.
- In 1893 three breed clubs existed and for exhibition purposes the breed standards were the preserves of these clubs. All standards were essentially the same. •
- In 1897 the Kennel Club banned ear cropping. This caused a noticeable fall in the number of Black and Tans being shown. The breed noticeably struggled after this but in 1909 a total of 83 were registered in the Kennel Club and it appeared the breed had begun to regain its earlier popularity.
- The First World War hit the whole dog world hard. Regulations reduced travelling and dog shows were suspended. Difficulties

feeding dogs and the fear of rabies contributed to a fall in registrations of all breeds. In 1914 35 Black & Tans were registered. This number had dropped to 12 in 1917. Thankfully numbers slowly recovered after the war thanks to breed fanciers Colonel Dean, Miss Hopwood and Mr Hazzlewood.

- In 1924 the Kennel Club officially adopted the name Manchester Terrier for the breed.



- The breed soldiered on through the 1920s & 30's. Hutchinson's Dog Encyclopaedia contained illustrations of two notable dogs of the time. Ch Prince Rufus & Ch Threlkeld Cliff. Annual registrations were 30.



- In 1937 The National Black & Tan Terrier Club, not registered with the Kennel Club, was reformed under the name the British Manchester Terrier Club appropriately at the Manchester Championship Show.
- World War Two saw the breed suffer the same problems as in WW1. In 1940 no Manchester Terriers were registered. After the war in 1946 only 11 Manchester Terriers were known to exist of which most were too old to be bred from. The breed was close to extinction and action to save the breed was initiated. Even so by 1951 only nine new registrations were recorded by the Kennel Club. To help with the breeds recovery the kennel Club allowed licensed cross breeding between the Manchester and the English Toy Terrier. Breed registrations in 1953 were 29 and in 1954 were 36.

- In 1955 the Kennel Club resumed the awarding of Challenge Certificates, and the first post war champion was Ch Oldlane Sensation. Around this time two dogs were imported from the USA, Sir Oscar of Chatham Farms & Gwinney Willows Thunderstorm. These added important new blood and set the seal on the breeds recovery.



- One breed club has survived the trials of the 1940s & 50s The British Manchester Terrier Club. Its members were instrumental in receiving the breed following WW II so has earned the right to be known as the saviour and guardian of the breed.

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