

Why 'The Norfolk'?

by Marjorie Bunting

(from an old publication contributed by Frank Rogers)

From the very beginning of the breed which was accepted by the Kennel Club in 1932, as the Norwich Terriers, both prick-eared and drop-eared terriers were crossed to achieve the type which the early breeders were seeking. Until it became illegal to do so, most ears were cropped, and when it was no longer possible to do this, the majority of the breeders attempted to breed for prick-ears. However, ear-carriage was not really of the first importance to those early breeders and, except for the odd fanatic, so long as the terrier was hardy, good tempered and game, ear-carriage did not arouse any very strong feelings.

With Kennel Club recognition this situation changed and ears suddenly became all important. Many of the first show breeders preferred the prick-ears, but the drop-ears which had appeared over the years had a following and although both the President (Mr. R.J. Read) and Secretary (Mrs. Normandy-Rodwell), plus some of the Committee members, did try to bring into the standard an insistence that only the prick-ears should be recognized, or at least that they should have preference over the drop-ears, the drop-ear breeders had their way and the first standard read thus as regards ears: (Ears, if erect, slightly larger than a Cairn's; if dropped, very neat and small and correctly dropped.)"

In those early show days some breeders were still mating drop-eared bitches to prick-eared dogs and vice-versa, but it was not long before it was realized that this led to doubtful ear-carriage and even when an individual dog's ears were correctly carried, the breeders found that they could never be sure what would happen to the ears in the next generation, which made breeding an extra hazardous business. This in turn led to breeders sticking to one type of ear-carriage or the other and so it can be seen that as early as the 1930's the breed had started to seriously divide and by the end of the next decade there were very few Norwich Terriers with mixed ear-carriage breeding in the first two or three generations.

When shows re-commenced after the war it was soon obvious that the prick-ears were to be the dominant partner so far as major awards went, and this situation inevitably led to a flare up between breeders of the two types, which was to last off and on until official division of the breed by the Kennel Club in 1964.

On many occasions over the years from about 1948 onwards, breeders of each type had wordy battles in the canine press as to which was the original type; whether the prick-ears made for a smarter appearance; whether those with erect ears were the sounder, that there should be official separation because the drop-ears registered the most stock with the Kennel Club, but the prick-ears won the most challenge certificates, and this was an unfair situation (challenge

certificates were awarded by the Kennel Club on the number of registrations each year and three were needed to make a dog a champion); that there should be equal representation of prick and drop breeders on the Club Committee, which usually consisted of a majority of prick-ear breeders; that the dropped ears were better on a working terriers as they protected the ears from earth and such likes getting into them; that there were not enough combined registrations at the Kennel Club each year to make two types workable; that some judges gave awards to one type or the other to prove their interest or fairness and not because the dogs in question were the best and any other argument to either help or hinder the cause of separation.

In 1957 a referendum of Club members resulted in 92 being in favor of separation and only 11 against, and from this the Club applied to the Kennel Club for the breed to be officially recognized as two breeds. This only resulted in a firm 'no' from the Kennel Club General Committee, the first of many such refusals over the next 6 years. At the meeting at Windsor Championship Show when it was decided to apply for separation, the suggestion was made, and carried, by an 11 to 6 vote, that the drop-ears should be given the name of Norfolk Terrier and the prick-ear retain the name of Norwich Terrier, but at a General Meeting at Cruft's the following year, Miss Macfie proposed that because of complications with the American Norwich Terrier Club the names of the breeds should be Norwich Terriers (drop-eared) and Norwich Terriers (prick-eared) and not a change of name for one of them. This was accepted by the Meeting, and from then on until the events which immediately preceded official division no mention was ever made by Norwich Terrier breeders to a change of name.

Over the years the drop-ears had a bad time in the show ring. By 1950 there were 7 prick-ear champions but only one drop-ear with its title, from 1950-54 the prick-ears made 16 champions while the drop-ears made 3 and by the end of 1956 the prick-ear bag of post-war champions stood at 28 with the drop-ears only having a quarter of that number. In 1957 the drop-ears really hit rock bottom as they won only 3 of the 28 challenge certificates awarded that year, but the next three years saw a great improvement, in 1958 they won 13 and the prick-ears 15, in 1959 they were on equal terms, 14 going to each type and then in 1966, for the first and only time, they had the prick-ears on the defensive by winning 16 of the 28 certificate. From then on they made gradually less progress against the prick-ears, making on 5 new champions in the next 4 years, while the prick-ears made 15 and by the time separation was a fact, there were 56 prick-ears with their title.

After the first approach to the Kennel Club, when we were told that we should decide which of the two types we would encourage as the Kennel Club's answer to our problem, approaches were made about other things connected with breed separation, but always the same answer was received, a firm 'no'. An attempt was made to form a Drop-ear Association, the instigators

of this movement feeling that such an Association might help to channel off some of the extremists enthusiasm, but the Kennel Club would not allow this; when the breed standard was revised in 1961 a clause was added to the effect that crossing of the two types was undesirable because it brought bad ear-carriage, but the Kennel Club removed this clause; we asked the Kennel Club to add P.E. and D.E. to the registration certificates to show newcomers what type they were getting, but again a refusal; we asked for a deputation to be received by the Kennel Club to put our case for the separation fully to the members of the General Committee, but they would not receive such a deputation, merely refusing the application to divide the breed into two varieties, the announcement in the "Kennel Gazette" saying that we were seeking a division of the breed. We were not, however, "seeking a division". The division was already an established fact. What we were seeking was Kennel Club recognition of this fact.

Then in 1963 a sub-committee was appointed by the Norwich Terrier Club Committee to deal with separation, and this sub-committee decided to ask the Kennel Club Liaison Council for help. The matter was brought up at their spring meeting but was defeated by one vote. We requested that they again consider approaching the Kennel Club on our behalf and it was put on the agenda of their autumn meeting. This time they suggested that we draw up two standards, one for each type, as this was a stumbling block so far as the Kennel Club were concerned, that we only had one standard but considered ourselves two breeds.

A General Meeting was called, to be held at the Windsor Championship Show in July 1964, to discuss this and it was passed with only one vote against, that there should be two breeds, the drop-ears to be called the Norfolk Terrier and the prick-ears to retain the name of Norwich Terrier. The Kennel Club were informed and at a meeting of their General Committee on September 22nd they agreed to register the two breeds under these names.

An emergency Committee Meeting of the Norwich Terrier Club was called for October 4th, the agenda stating that it was for the "Creation of the Norfolk terrier" and from then on the new breed and new breed Club were in existence and challenge certificates were awarded to Norfolk Terriers for the first time at Cruft's the following year.