
DOG BREEDS RECOGNIZED BY THE FCI

The FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale), the World Canine Organization, includes 87 member countries and contract partners (one member per country). Each issues its own pedigrees and trains its own judges. The FCI ensures that the pedigrees and judges are mutually recognized by all FCI members.

Recognition of a breed by the FCI means that in almost every European country, that breed can be awarded FCI championship prizes. In 2005, the FCI provisionally recognized the:

AUSTRALIAN STUMPY TAIL CATTLE DOG

The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is classified by the FCI in Group 1, Section 2: Cattle Dogs (except Swiss Cattle Dogs). In Australia, its country of origin, the breed is classified by the Australian National Kennel Council Ltd. in Group 5 (Working Dogs). It is recognized by the New Zealand Kennel Club in Group 5 (Working), and by The Canadian Kennel Club in Group 7 (Herding). The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is not recognized by the American Kennel Club

AUSTRALIAN STUMPY TAIL CATTLE DOG



*The skull is broad and flat with a slight but definite stop. This is Aust. Ch. Ambajaye Kiss my Tail, breeder/owner-handled by Bernadette Merchant
Photo by Cabal*

text and illustrations by **RIA HÖRTER**

Courtesy **AMBAJAYE KENNELS,
BERNADETTE MERCHANT,
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

or the United Kennel Club.

As its name implies, the dog's primary function, and one in which he has no peer, is the control and herding of cattle in both wide-open and confined areas, and harsh conditions. Always alert, extremely intelligent, watchful, courageous and trustworthy with an implicit devotion to duty, the ASTCD is an ideal working cattle dog.

In its native country, the breed is represented by the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog Club of New South Wales.

Terra australis incognita – unknown land in the south Australia: The name is derived from the Latin *terra australis incognita*, meaning “unknown land in the south.” Once believed to be a vast continent that included Antarctica, Terra Australis Incognita was the last uncharted area in the world.

Although the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog shares its early history with the Australian Cattle Dog, it's a breed in its own right and not a variety of the ACD. The Stumpy Tail is held in high regard in Australia as an intelligent, tireless and silent worker.

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British Sheepdogs in Sydenham Edwards' *Cynographia Britannica*, circa 1800

It's hard to imagine, but in 1606 – the year William Shakespeare wrote *King Lear* and Rembrandt was born in The Netherlands – Australia was still uncharted land. Its discovery took place in phases. In 1606, crew members of the Dutch vessel *Duyfken* disembarked on the rough west coast, but did not stay ashore. In 1770, Capt. James Cook landed on the east coast at Botany Bay, but did not stay. It was 1788 before Englishmen landed at Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) to found a penal colony.

The continent was a British penal colony until 1868; its first Commonwealth Parliament was opened in Melbourne by Prince George, Duke of Cornwall (later King George V of England), in 1901.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL KENNEL COUNCIL

The first meeting to consider forming a national Australian kennel club was held at the Royal Agricultural Society show grounds in Sydney on April 14, 1949, during the Royal Easter Shows, but it wasn't until a meeting in Sydney on April 7, 1958, that the draft constitution was put to the delegates from Can-

berra, Western Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

A number of committees work under the Australian National Kennel Council Ltd. – for example, the National Agility Committee, National Sledding Committee and National Herding Committee – but the ANKC is not involved in organizing shows and does not keep stud books. The various dog societies in the states and territories are responsible for these two important functions.

The ANKC is a member of the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI). More information about the ANKC and breed-registration numbers can be found at ankc.org.au.

FIRST DOG SHOW

The first dog show was organized in 1862 at Hobart, on the island of Tasmania, by the Society for the Improvement in the Breeds of Dogs. The entry of 91 included setters, pointers, spaniels, Greyhounds, Beagles, Bulldogs, terriers, Newfoundland Dogs, Bull Terriers and Poodles. The three judges at this show, Mr. Elwin, Mr. Eddington and Mr. Ridge, were exhibitors as well. The local paper, the *Hobart Mercury*, reported that, "Mr. Elwin as well as Mr. Ridge went home with several first prizes" (!).

The first show on Australia's mainland was in Melbourne, in April 1864, organized by the Acclimatisation Society, which was normally occupied with importing European and British birds and plants. This Melbourne show attracted 381 dogs. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote, "There were nearly 400 exhibits – a really good number; also, that the prizes were much higher than those given now, £2 being first prize in all cases, and second prize being a certificate of merit."

Today, the largest dog show in Australia is the Royal Melbourne Championship Dog Show with over 200 breeds and more than 4,000 dogs competing. Judges are usually invited from abroad; in 2014, judges from Slovenia, Finland, Portugal, Germany and the Philippines formed an exceptional judging panel. You can find more information at rasv.com.au.

Australia is interesting from a dog fancier's point of view, not only because it has several native breeds, but because one of its native dogs, the Dingo, helped create two breeds: the Australian Cattle Dog and the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog.

SMITHFIELDS

The early history of the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is similar to that of the Australian Cattle Dog. Settlers emigrating to Australia took their stock with them, along with the dogs that worked the stock. Most of their dogs were so-called Smithfields or Smithfield Curs, named for the Smith-



Study of a Drover's Dog
from *Animals from the Sketchbook of Harrison Weir*,
published in 1858

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field Meat Market in London, where the dogs guarded pigs, chickens, ponies, sheep and cattle. These dogs were described as heavy, black, flop-eared and bobtailed with some white around the neck. Before they arrived at the meat markets, they herded and drove

Curdogge

Cur: From the Middle English word “curdogge,” which perhaps derived from the Old Norse word kurr, “grumbling.” According to Thomas Bewick (1790), “The Cur Dog is a trusty and useful servant to the farmer and grazier.... They are chiefly employed in driving cattle....”

livestock over great distances – hence their name, drover’s dog or drover’s cur.

In his book *Sheep and Cattle Driving Dog Breeds Around the World* (2008), Georg Enzlin stated, “The lack of tails with working dogs dates back from the time cattle drivers (drovers) in Great Britain were exempt from taxation if their working dogs had docked tails. This custom was abolished in 1796, as many dog keepers had the tails of their dogs docked to avoid taxes.”

It is said that the Smithfields carried the gene for taillessness. Due to selective breeding of bobtail to bobtail, this characteristic is now fixed in the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog.

In her book *Herding Dogs* (1987), Irish Combe described the Smithfields as, “a specially bred strain of both smooth- and shaggy-coated dogs, belonging to a band of drovers licensed and employed by the famous fatstock show and market which existed for a long time on what was then the edge of the metropolis, on an area of level pasture originally known as Smooth Fields. In 1860, the old market was rebuilt and renamed Smithfield, then a further extension in 1866 soon earned it a very high reputation as a first-class fatstock show and market.”

SILENT WORKER

At first the settlers used their Smithfields, but the dogs were hard biters and barked too much, and had trouble with the Australian climate. The crossing of Smithfields, Dingoes and blue merle smooth Collies to produce a silent worker was the start of both the Australian Cattle Dog and the Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog. The main difference between the Cattle Dog and the Stumpy Tail is... the Kelpie. Unlike the Australian Cattle Dog, the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog has no Kelpie blood, which means he lacks the black-

and-tan gene. Any tan in a Stumpy Tail indicates an Australian Cattle Dog or Kelpie somewhere in the pedigree.

TIMMINS BITERS AND HALL’S HEELERS

The first attempt to breed a silent cattle dog that didn’t bite as hard as the Smithfield was made by a cattle drover named John (Jack) Timmins (1816-1911), who crossed a Smithfield with a Dingo. The results were red bobtailed dogs known as Timmins Biters. They were indeed silent workers, but proved to be ruthless biters and couldn’t be trusted with calves.

In 1840, Thomas Hall of Muswellbrook – one of the new landowners in New South Wales – imported a couple of blue smooth Highland collies. In *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1811) Thomas Bewick described the early collie as, “A trusty and useful servant to the farmer and grazier. In the north of England [a cur] and the shepherd’s dog are called ‘coally dogs.’”

Hall’s next step was to cross the progeny of these collies with a Dingo. Hall’s collies were described as blue merle and resembled the old Border Collie and working Bearded Collie. The results of Hall’s crossings were blue or red merle puppies, first known as Hall’s Heelers and later as Merlins or Blue Heelers.

After Hall’s death in 1870, his Heelers dispersed over Queensland and New South Wales. By the 1890s, Halls Heelers were being exhibited at shows – for example, the one organized by the National Agricultural and Industrial Association.

In her book *A Dog Called Blue* (2003), Noreen R. Clark makes the case – as did dog writers before and after her – that both the Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog and the Australian Cattle Dog descended from the same stock.

DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog was recognized by the Royal Agricultural Society Kennel Council (RASKC) in 1845. By the early

1960s, the breed was on the verge of extinction, but its survival was guaranteed when the ANKC opened a Development Register grading scheme in October 1988, to ensure that Australia’s oldest developed Working Dog breed would live on. The ANKC stated: “The Australian National Kennel Council decided to introduce an ongoing programme to ensure the preservation of the Stumpy-Tail Cattle Dog, the rarest of our recognized Australian breeds.”

To avoid registration of untypical Stumpy Tails, the



The movement of the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is free, supple and tireless. A fine example of the breed: Aust. Ch. Ambajaye Heads for Tails
Photo by Beljekali

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ANKC set up a grading system with a panel of three judges. In the earlier days of the system, there were three categories: A (of excellent breed type), B (could also be of good breed type but lacking some qualities), and C (not of good breed type – possibly tan markings). From October, 2000, only dogs of excellent breed type were permitted into the grading scheme.

The redevelopment scheme closed in 2007 when the establishment of a viable gene pool over the preceding 20 years had made the infusion of graded (unregistered) dogs no longer necessary.

In the past, the Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog had been known as Smithfield, Smithfield Heeler and Stumpy. In 1963, the ANKC adopted Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog as the official name; in 2001 it was changed to Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog.

A BREED IN ITS OWN RIGHT

Although the Stumpy Tail shares its early history with the Australian Cattle Dog, it's a breed in its own right and certainly not a variety of the Australian Cattle Dog.

Today, the breed is a companion dog, show dog and sporting dog, but has retained the qualities of the drovers' dogs from the past. The Stumpy Tail is brave, loyal, strong and highly intelligent. The breed can live up to 15 years.

The Stumpy Tail is a square dog, leggier than the Australian Cattle Dog and has a finer and more wedge-shaped head, with ears set on higher. In general, he's racier than the ACD, with moderate angulation, and tends to amble at slow gaits. (The ACD standard calls for that breed to be well-angulated.)

Relatively uncommon in the show ring, the breed is held in high regard in Australia as a tireless and silent worker. Managing cattle on the vast farms would have been impossible without their courage and dedication.

They work the same way as the Australian Cattle Dog: herding cattle by nipping at the heels with a bite that is both low and silent. Obedience training is a must as his intelligence needs harnessing.

Bernadette Merchant of the Ambajaye Kennel in New South Wales, Australia, is a well-known breeder of Stumpy Tails. Her prefix was registered in 1985.

BREED STANDARD (FCI)

The Australian Stumpy Tail Cattle Dog is, "a well-proportioned working dog, rather square in profile with a hard-bitten, rugged appearance." He possesses "a natural aptitude in the working and control of cattle" and is "ever alert, watchful and obedient though suspicious of strangers." The skull is broad and flat, with a slight but definite stop. The oval shaped eyes are dark brown. His ears are moderately small, pricked and almost pointed. They are "set on high yet well apart."

This is a true working dog, showing a neck "of exceptional strength"; well-boned and muscular forelegs; a body



*'Jack' – A Smithfield Type of Dog
Pictured in Sydney, 1898*

with deep and muscular loins and a deep and moderately broad chest. The breed has "broad, powerful and muscular" hindquarters with well-developed thighs. The outer coat is moderately short, straight, dense "and of medium hard texture.... The coat around the neck is longer, forming [a] mild ruff."

The colors of the Stumpy Tail are blue or red speckle. The blue may be mottled and may have black markings; the red speckle should have a good even speckle all over, including the undercoat. Blues should not have any appearance of red and reds should not have any

appearance of blue. Tan markings are not permitted under any circumstances. A cream or white undercoat is also a serious fault.

Movement is free, supple and tireless. A Stumpy Tail is a versatile dog; "capability of quick and sudden movement is essential." Serious faults include cow or bow hocks, loaded or slack shoulders, weakness at elbows, pasterns or feet, and a straight shoulder placement.

Height at the withers is 18 to 20 inches (46 to 51 centimeters) for males, and 17 to 19 inches (43 to 48 centimeters) for females.

Stumpy Tail Cattle Dogs can compete in agility trials, obedience, flyball, tracking and herding events. Instincts and trainability can be measured at non-competitive herding tests.

We have tried to find the names of all photographers. Unfortunately, we do not always succeed. Please send a message to the author if you think you are the owner of a copyright.

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*The colors of the Stumpy Tail are blue or red.
The blue may be mottled and may have black markings.
Photo: Wendy Hodges, Wikipedia*