



Left: James Hinks (1829-1878), creator of the modern Bull Terrier

Below, left: James Hinks' celebrated dogs, artist unknown, depicts seven dogs owned by Hinks. The Bulldog has a prominent position.

PART 7:

# James Hinks and the Bull Terrier

Most dog breeds were developed after hundreds of years of evolution and lengthy selection by breeders. However, some breeds owe their existence to just one person.



James Hinks (1829-78) was born in the city of Mullingar, the county town of Westmeath, one of the poorest places in Ireland. His parents were John Hinks – a shoemaker – and Charlotte Callew. In those days, a shoemaker earned only enough to keep his family from starvation. Typhus, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases were widespread; contaminated water caused cholera outbreaks throughout the 19th century.

James's father spent some time in the army and because the family lived at various locations in the vicinity of barracks, he may have been a military shoemaker. By around 1851, the Hinks family had moved to Birmingham, an industrial town described as “an immense workshop, a huge forge, a vast shop. One hears nothing but the sound of hammers and the whistle of steam escaping from boilers.”

Not surprisingly James began his career as a brass founder – by 1840, more than 3,500 people were working in Birmingham's foundries and living in small, dark workers' houses with poor sanitation and shared by several large families. Still, Hinks was in a privileged position: he had a job and an income.

## HIGGLER AND POULTRY DEALER

In January 1851, James Hinks married Elizabeth Moore in Birmingham. Their first son, James II, was born in December; daughter Mary was born in 1853, followed by Frederick in 1854. During this period, Hinks became a “higgler” (trader) and poultry dealer. These professions were obviously a little higher up the social ladder, because Hinks became a registered trader in the Market Hall and was also breeding foreign and domestic birds and rabbits. His Bulldog, ‘Old Madman,’ was born in 1855, so apart from birds, rabbits and poultry, he became a dog breeder and dealer.

James Hinks was no goody-goody; several times in his life he came into conflict with the law. We know that around 1855 he served a few months in prison for selling rabbits stolen from the vicar’s garden. Another conviction followed when a policeman asked him to remove a crate of chickens from a walkway and Hinks punched the man. Still, he was making progress in life and became the owner of premises close to the Market Hall. Several times, he and his family moved to more spacious accommodation.

The Hinks family grew rapidly – their fourth child was born in 1855, and their eighth and last in 1864. Although Hinks had been selling dogs since the mid-1850s, he was never identified as a dog dealer on his children’s birth certificates. Only later, in the mid-1860s, was he listed as a “bird and dog dealer” in a Birmingham street directory.

In 1865, the Hinks family moved to 53 Worcester St., taking over the Sportsman Alehouse. We know this address from the “Great Annual Exhibition of Sporting and Other Dogs” show catalogue.

In 1877, Hinks contracted tuberculosis and died in May 1878, only 49 years old and leaving a widow and eight children, aged 13 to 26. In his lifetime, he had lifted his family from the slums and accumulated an estate worth £450.

## BULL-AND-TERRIER DOGS

In writing about Bull Terrier history, one must mention the early history of Bulldogs and terriers. From the 13th century, dogs had been used for bullbaiting, a spectacle enjoyed even in the highest circles. To make the show more interesting, breeders began crossing Bulldogs for strength, and terriers for their speed, fierceness and versatility.



Above: Bulldogs. From Vero Shaw, *The Illustrated Book of the Dog*, 1881.



Left: “Mr. James Hinks’s Bulldog” (Old Madman). From a composite illustration of winners at Birmingham, *The Illustrated London News*, December 1860.



Below: English Terriers. From Vero Shaw, *The Illustrated Book of the Dog*, 1881.



**Top: Bull Terrier in a landscape by Henry Bernard Chalton, circa 1847. Below: Bull Terrier and Dalmatian. There are many similarities in their outline. From Cassell, *The Book of the Dog*, 1881.**

Bull-, bear- and badger-baiting was banned in Britain in 1835, but illegal fights continued in pubs and secret pits. By the 1860s, vigilant police forces had eliminated the pits from the cities and the fights moved to remote areas. Kevin Kane, Hinks' biographer, believes that Hinks was never involved in dogfighting – why should he risk his show dogs in a pit where they could be killed or mutilated?

As a dog dealer, Hinks sold many breeds – Mastiffs, Pointers, Bloodhounds, King Charles Spaniels, Pugs, Black and Tan Terriers, Dalmatians and Italian Greyhounds – but Bulldogs and terriers were his favourites.

We know little about his activities as a breeder when he laid the foundation for a 'modern' Bull Terrier. Hinks was certainly not the first to cross Bulldogs and terriers and it's possible that in the beginning there was little difference between Hinks' dogs and other Bulldogs or Bull-and-terriers in the show ring.

## HINKS' STRAIN

We don't know which breeds Hinks used for his creation, let alone in what order, although we do know that a Bulldog, smooth-coated terrier, Dalmatian and possibly a Greyhound were part of the mix. It is certain, however, that his white Bulldog Old Madman (Crib x Smit), born in 1855 and exhibited in Birmingham in 1860, played an important role. "Idstone" (Rev. Thomas Pearce) described Old Madman as "One of the first Bulldogs exhibited which was worthy of the name belonged to Mr. James Hinks of Birmingham. He was a white dog; and gained first prize in Mr. Hinks' native town in 1860." Puss, later Old Puss (Rebel x Wasp), born in 1861 and regarded as the first official white Bull Terrier, was exhibited in Cremorne Gardens (Chelsea, London) in 1863. It has to be emphasized that the all-white Bull Terrier was favoured by not only Hinks but those who bought his "white cavaliers." As a result, coloured Bull Terriers weren't developed until after 1900.

By the 1860s, dog fanciers and writers were noticing that Hinks was breeding a new type of Bull Terrier, eliminating many of the Bulldog's undesirable physical characteristics while preserving its courage. He added 'nobility' – a longer neck, head and legs. It's said that he used the Dalmatian to strengthen general appearance and the Greyhound for longer legs. To this day there are four types in Bull Terriers: a terrier type, Dalmatian type and Bulldog type, and a middle-of-the-road type that's considered the ideal type by experts, having just enough of the three other types to be a good Bull Terrier.

Slowly but surely the Bull Terrier entered the show scene. The first show with classes for the breed was in Leeds, in 1861.

## SHOW-RING DOMINATION

Exhibiting a dog was almost always an indication that the dog was for sale. In 1864, Hinks valued Puss at £25 and Madman at £100. Old catalogues list the dogs entered by Hinks, but unfortunately they aren't a reliable source of information. There could be several dogs of the same breed with the same name and Hinks' entries were almost certainly made verbally. However, it

is correct that in a class of Bull Terriers over 10 pounds at the Cremorne show in 1864, Hinks won a first prize with Madman (Old Madman x Old Puss), a second with Puss (Old Madman x Old Puss) and a third with Old Puss (Rebel x Wasp). In the years to come, Hinks dominated the show ring and a year after his death, Vero Shaw wrote: "To the late Mr. James Hinks of Worcester Street, Birmingham is due the credit for bringing the breed before the notice of the public in its later and more desirable form, and with his well known Old Madman and Puss he farmed our leading shows for a long period."

Between 1862 and 1870, Hinks attended 82 shows. Considering the way people travelled over a century ago, his trips must have been true undertakings. Around 1870, Hinks stepped back from breeding and exhibiting Bull Terriers, on the one hand because other breeders were successfully using his line, and on the other because he was paying more attention to his alehouse. It's possible that he earned more money drawing beer than breeding and showing dogs.

Hinks disappeared from the dog scene around 1870, but the mark he left on the breed is huge. His creation is familiar all over the world and his first dogs – Old Madman, Madman and Puss – are regarded as the start of the Bull Terrier. As for all the breeds Hinks used for his creation, the mystery is only partly resolved. Even his sons didn't know exactly the combinations he used, or the names on the pedigrees of his first dogs. Possibly, Hinks himself didn't know or remember.

In the 1930s, when he was over 80 years old, James Hinks II wrote an article for the American magazine *Dogdom*. In it he stated that his father had used a Dalmatian, a Bulldog and White English Terriers to create the breed. How he created a breed, can be read in Kevin Kane's book: "... in the fact that he created, what was basically a mongrel and presented it to an unsuspecting world as The Bull Terrier. The judges of the day showed a preference for his strain of Bull Terrier."

## BLUEPRINT

Idstone used the type from "Hinks strain" as a blueprint for 'The Points of The Bull Terrier,' the forerunner of the breed standard, first published in 1888, 10 years after Hinks' death.

Can it be explained why James Hinks' strain was so successful and how it happened that this man single-handedly created the breed? The first crossings between Bulldogs and terriers were made long before Hinks started doing it and they were not handsome at all! A



An old miners' fighting dog changed into a top show dog: Am. Ch. Rocky Tops Sundance Kid, winner of 32 Best in Shows.

simple explanation is that Hinks was the right man, in the right place, at the right time. He formed the link between the old miners' fighting dog in Staffordshire and the modern show and companion Bull Terrier. The dog from the pit became the "white cavalier."

James Hinks' sons, James II and Frederick, continued their father's work. In 1933, 82-year-old James II visited the Birmingham show for the 70th time. Carleton Hinks, a son of James II, bred Bull Terriers until his death in 1977.

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