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Inventing Dog Breeds: Jack Russell Terriers

Today Jack Russell Terriers (JRTs) are among the most popular dogs in Britain and are seen to have long history, dating back to the fox terriers bred by Parson Jack Russell in the early and mid-Victorian period. Yet, JRTs are the dog breed most recently recognized by the British Kennel Club, only being allowed to enter dog shows and to be registered in the Club's stud book since 2016. This essay explores this paradox. It tells a story of struggles between different groups over the physical form and cultural meaning of this particular type of dog, but similar histories of the contested and contingent creation could be told of every dog breed. Modern dog breeds were invented materially and culturally in the Victorian era, first in Britain before being spread around the world. Then and since, the conformation of individual breeds has been subject to continual reimagining and reinvention by dog fanciers, along with the proliferation breeds to produce the 344 breeds now recognized by the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI). History shows that breed could have been differently conceived and specific dog breeds differently made.

What makes the recent controversies over JRTs particularly interesting is the sharpness and duration of the disputes over breed status, and their resolution in the existence today of at least five versions of the breed. At its simplest, the clashes were over whether JRTs were to be defined by their *function* or their *form*. In other words, were JRTs working dogs of variable appearance, bred and owned for their working abilities; or dogs of a specific, standard shape, size, color, coat, etc. — the technical term is “conformation” — bred for fancy shows and pet ownership?

History mattered in the disputes because of two foundation claims. Firstly, that Parson John Russell only valued dogs with working ability and, while a founding member of the Kennel Club, had no time for conformation dog shows. Secondly, that there was a breed-defining dog, “Trump,” that Russell had bought from a postman in 1819 and the “blood” of which should still be present in all “true” JRTs (J. & F. Jackson 10). Perversely in the light of later events, Russell is alleged to have been impressed by Trump's look, seemingly taking her form as an indicator of function. (See Figure 1.) From the first myth aficionados have argued that to be true to the Parson's beliefs, JRTs should be kept out of dog shows and away from the attentions of the Kennel Club. From the second comes an essentialist assumption that there was and is a “true” JRT

type that has existed since the mid-nineteenth century, or should be preserved and even recreated. Some “doggy people” go further. They have an essentialist view of the breed that accords it a constancy and agency, even a destiny to manifest particular abilities, or a specific look, or both.

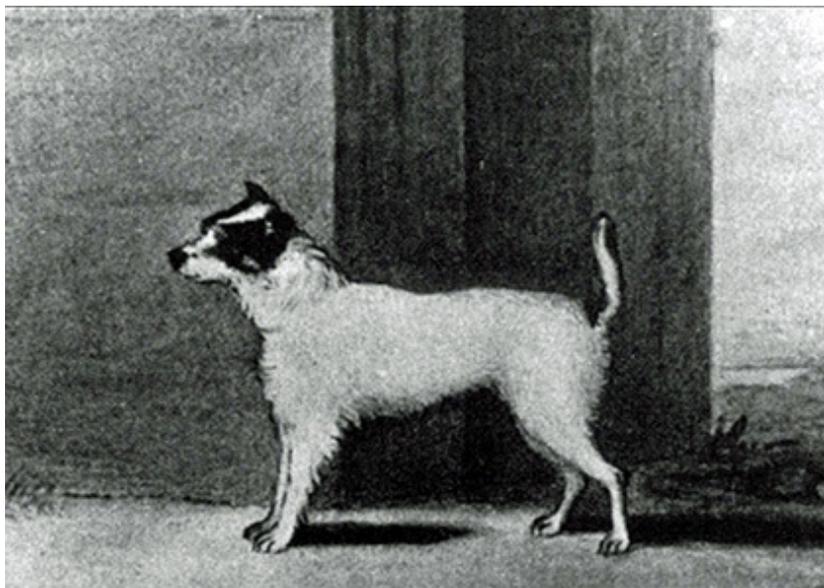


Figure 1. Trump. This is a widely circulated drawing of Jack Russell’s famous dog, though its provenance is uncertain.

In this essay, I follow the vicissitudes of JRTs from the early Victorian era to the present day, beginning with a discussion of the life of Parson John Russell (1795-1883) and fox terriers in general. Next, I look briefly at the invention of the modern notion of a dog breed in the Victorian era, and at the subsequent cultural and material co-production of distinct breeds, in which *form* took over from *function* as the primary defining and differentiating feature of all types of dog. One indicator of this change was that doggy people no longer wrote of fox terriers, but of *the* Fox Terrier: capitalization and the designation of a proper noun signifying the essentialization of breeds as singular entities. Next, I consider fox terriers and terriers more widely in the 1920s and 1930s, when there was first talk of the Parson’s dog-type being a breed. This claim was first made by Arthur Heinemann thirty years after the Parson’s death; however, he and his followers made no attempt to have his type recognized by the Kennel Club.

The inheritor of Heinemann’s type of dog was the Jack Russell Terrier Club of Great Britain (JRTC-GB), founded by sporting and rural owners in 1974 “to promote and preserve the working terrier known as the Jack Russell.” This was a political move to

head off attempts to bring JRTs into the world of fancy dog shows. The JRTC-GB was successful until 1990, when the Kennel Club accepted a JRT-type as a breed, marking its difference from the sporting version with a new name — the Parson Jack Russell Terrier (PJRT), later shortened to the Parson Russell Terrier (PRT). Subsequent developments were shaped by the success of groups in Australia, the United States, and other countries, to which the British Kennel club was aloof, in promoting JRTs as show dogs and having a breed standard accepted by national and then international dog fancy organizations. Finally, I consider the events that led in December 2015 to the acceptance, against bitter opposition from sporting owners and dog welfare activists, of a working-type JRT as a breed by the Kennel Club.

The Hunting Parson and his Terriers. John Russell’s obituary notice in the *Illustrated London News* began by describing him as “the well-known North Devon clergyman, or rather country gentlemen in clerical orders, as he was better known for his performances in the hunting-field and his social popularity” (“The Late Rev. John Russell”). His fame had crossed the Atlantic. The notice in the *Washington Post* was headed “The Last of the Old School of Reverend English Sportsmen,” while the New York Times noted his fame as “a mighty hunter throughout the West” (“The Rev. Jack Russell” and “Death of Parson Russell”). Russell had studied at Oxford, where he apparently excelled at pugilism (an early type of boxing), and then served in a number of curacies in Devon, becoming known as a good preacher, with strong opinions and starting a number of charities for his parishioners (“The Late Rev. J. Russell”). At the time of his death, he was best known for his friendship with the Prince and Princess of Wales (later Edward VII and Queen Alexandra), whom he had met in 1865 and visited several times at Sandringham. Indeed, in his later years Russell was a national celebrity, sought after to officiate at marriages (“The Death of the Rev. John Russell” and “The Aged Sporting Parson”). Over 1,000 people attended his funeral, to which the Prince of Wales sent a wreath. Only the obituaries in the sporting press, such as that in *Bell’s Life*, mentioned that had “established also a breed of fox terriers for which he had ever since been famous.”

A biography entitled *A Memoir of the Rev. John Russell and his Out-of-door Life* had been published by Edward Davies five years before his death. It had just a couple of pages on his dogs and first told the story of Trump. Russell, then an undergraduate, was strolling around Magdalen Meadow in Oxford one afternoon when:

[B]efore he had reached Marston a milkman met him with a terrier — such an animal as Russell had as yet only seen in his dreams; he halted, as

Actæon might have done when he caught sight of Diana disporting in her bath; but, unlike that ill-fated hunter, he never budged from the spot till he had won the prize and secured it for his own. She was called Trump and became the progenitress of that famous race of terriers which, from that day to the present, have been associated with Russell's name at home and abroad — his able and keen coadjutors in the hunting-field. (Davies 53)

The author then gives a description, very much in the vein of the writings of types of dog as conformation breeds that were emerging in the later 1870s.

In the first place, the color is white with just a patch of dark tan over each eye and ear, while a similar dot, not larger than a penny piece, marks the root of the tail. The coat, which is thick, close, and a trifle wiry, is well calculated to protect the body from wet and cold, but has no affinity with the long, rough jacket of a Scotch terrier. The legs are straight as arrows, the feet perfect; the loins and conformation of the whole frame indicative of hardihood and endurance; while the size and height of the animal may be compared to that of a full-grown vixen fox. (53-4)

Davies then quotes Russell's observation, already made by the mid-1870s when conformation dog shows were barely a decade old, that "True terriers [differ] as much from the present show dogs as the wild eglantine differs from a garden rose." Moreover, that "they have so intermingled strange blood with the real article, that, if he were not informed, it would puzzle Professor Bell himself to discover what race the so-called fox terrier belongs to" (Davies 54).¹ Russell was said to have speculated that the fox terriers seen at the new dog shows were "composite animals," having been crossed with Italian greyhounds for finer skin, beagles for their ears, and bulldogs for courage. However, he believed it to be the wrong sort of courage, making dogs likely to fasten on a fox and kill it, rather than drive it out of hiding for more sport. The beauty and value of Trump was that, bred in the home of a humble postman, she had come from working bloodlines. Thus, the best guarantee of ability in a fox terrier was to breed from such stock, but it was impossible to guarantee bloodline heritage from Trump, as Russell had not kept pedigree records. When Russell died aged 87 years, he had one or two pet dogs, having given up hunting and his kennel some time previously.

Books on dogs in the first half of the nineteenth century do not distinguish fox terriers as a variety or type of terrier. In his 1840 book on dogs, Charles Hamilton Smith writes

on “terriers,” which come in “two very evident varieties,” which are described and illustrated.

The first is smooth, rounded, and rather elegant in make, with colours usually black, and tan spots over the eyes, and the same tint spread over the extremities and belly; sometimes also white; the muzzle sharp, the eye bright and lively, the ears pointed or slightly turned down, and the tail carried high and somewhat bowed; but the second is the more ancient and genuine breed, usually called the wire haired or Scottish terrier; the muzzle is shorter and fuller, the limbs more stout, the fur hard and shaggy, and the color a pale sandy or ochry, and sometimes white. (Hamilton Smith 206)

Fox terriers were not mentioned as a distinct type of terrier in William Youatt’s *The Dog* (1845) or H. D. Richardson’s *Dogs: Their Origin and Varieties* (1847). Both authors discuss just two terriers — English and Scotch, with Skyes as a sub-type of the latter. Thus, when John Henry Walsh (who published under the pseudonym of “Stonehenge”) discussed fox terriers in his influential *The Dog in Health and Disease* in 1859 (75, 82), it was as a new breed. He speculated that it had been made by crosses between English terriers and bulldogs. Their physical shape, color, coat, etc. varied across the country as they were bred to suit local geographies, styles of hunting, and the predilections of masters of fox hounds. Whatever type of dog Russell had acquired in 1819, it was nothing his contemporaries could have recognized as a fox terrier.

In 1867, Walsh edited the first book to set out conformation dog breed standards — *The Dogs of the British Islands*. Fox terriers had their own chapter and were classified with hounds, not with other terriers in the “companionable” group (107-33). The illustration showed a dog at work, about to go to ground. (See Figure 2.) The descriptions of each breed in the book were based on articles originally published in *The Field* newspaper, which Walsh also edited. The chapters had been published as “first drafts” of conformation standards, with readers encouraged to submit comments to help refine the description of “points.” With some breeds, the follow-up correspondence was included in *The Dogs of the British Islands*, and this was the case with fox terriers. Indeed, they had by far the longest chapter, of 23 pages, reprinting 20 letters. Such a response indicated the level of interest in the breed and the depth of disagreement about its conformation. The issues were those that were animating the new dog show fancy over all breeds: above all the specificities of conformation with regard to shape, color, size, and coat; the relation of form to function — for example, did length of muzzle indicate

scenting ability; and what value should be accorded to pedigrees? Russell's dogs were mentioned as one amongst many "strains" kept by individuals or the masters of hounds across the country. Indeed, the variety of physical forms was the main reason why it proved so difficult to agree on a single, national breed standard.



Figure 2. "Jock," the property of Mr. Cropper. Stonehenge, *The Dogs of the British Islands*, opp. 107.

In the second edition of *Dogs of the British Islands*, in 1872, the fox terrier chapter was unchanged, but in the third edition, in 1878, was quite different. The letters had gone, and the conformation standard was definitive. It was a breed written about as the Fox Terrier. There were new drawings of prize winning smooth and rough haired dogs, shown static and in profile. (See Figures 3 and 4.) At some shows, particularly in Ireland, rough haired dogs were called wire or coarse haired fox terriers.

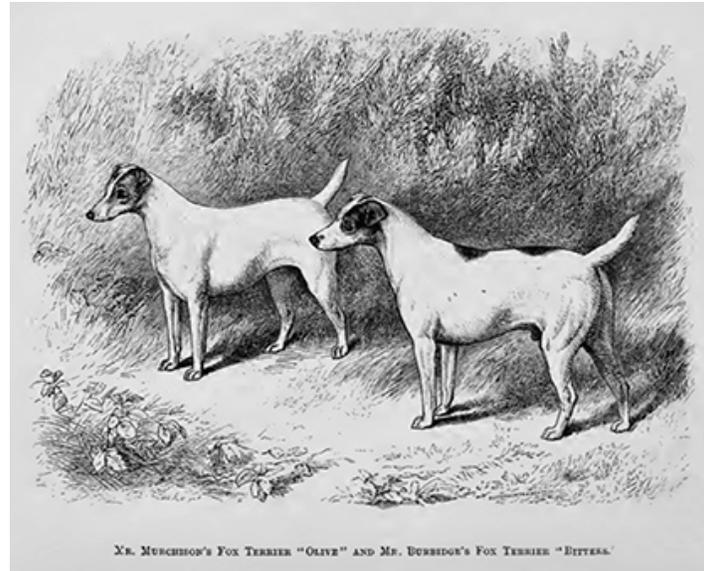


Figure 3. Mr. Murchison's Fox Terrier "Olive" and Mr. Burbidge's "Bitters." Stonehenge. *The Dogs of the British Islands*, opp. 134.

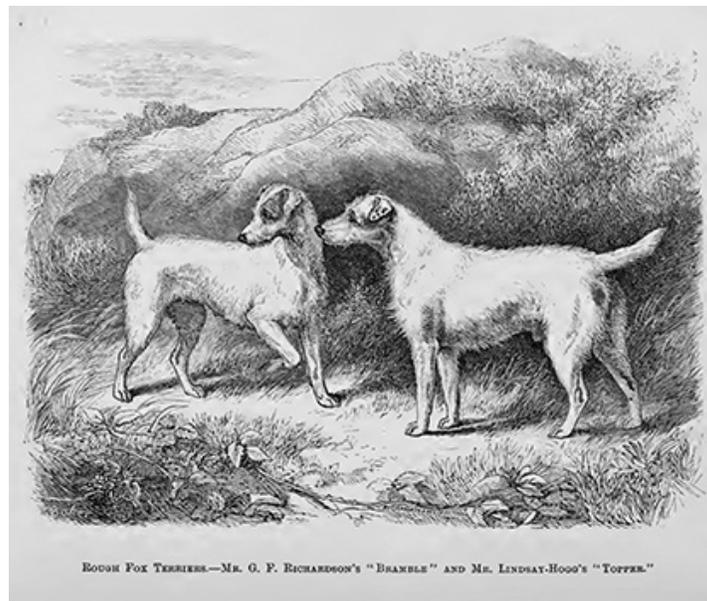


Figure 4. Rough Fox Terriers. – Mr. G. F. Richardson's "Bramble" and Mr. Lindsay-Hogg's "topper". Stonehenge. *The Dogs of the British Islands*, opp. 140.

Walsh gave descriptions of two forms — the smooth and rough coated — with close attention given to specifying points. The description stated that the breed had developed from a group of "Terriers of no Definite Breed," especially "from the strains

used with foxhounds by Mr. Radclyffe and the Rev. J. Russell in the West of England, some of which were rough and others smooth" (148-49).

Walsh was more discursive on fox terriers in the 1879 edition of *The Dog in Health and Disease*, though he was no fan. He began by observing that, "For the last ten years this pretty little dog has been the favourite companion of 'Young England,' and has lately-shared the favours of the other sex with the collie, the dachshund, and the black poodle" (80-81). The increase in the number of female owners was projected as damaging, as dogs would be bred as pets and, hence, lose their working abilities and character. Walsh wrote that "Probably not one per cent, of our existing fox terriers have ever come across the scent of a fox, either in their own persons or in those of their immediate progenitors." However, the changing nature of fox hunting had also been detrimental. Huntsmen seemingly no longer used fox terriers, as the dog's size meant they were unable to keep up in the faster chases on horseback that had become the norm, or to negotiate the hedges and fences of enclosed land. When they were used, huntsmen carried them on horseback, which further encouraged a smaller type.

Fox terriers were first admitted to dog shows in 1863, when most entries came from the north of England. Their popularity spread south, allegedly after Sewallis Shirley, the soon to be president of the Kennel Club, took up the breed in 1872, the same year that saw the separation of smooth and rough coated classes at shows. Shirley's dog "Bristles" was termed wire haired, and he may have acquired him in Ireland, where he had an estate. (See Figure 5.) Unsurprisingly, given the time taken to settle a breed standard and their increasing popularity as a pet dog, judging proved controversial. However, the codification of standards offered in Walsh's book, the growing national authority of the Kennel Club from 1873, and the establishment of the specialist Fox Terrier Club in 1876, together stabilized the breed. Hugh Dalziel, a leading author on canine matters in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, published a book exclusively on fox terriers in 1889 and edited a stud book that supplemented that kept by the Kennel Club (Dalziel 1888; and 1888-94).



Figure 5. Fox Terriers. "Buffet." The property of Mr. W. J. White (top). "Bristles." The property of Mr. S. E. Shirley (left) "Bloom." The property of Mr. F. Burbidge. (right) Vero Shaw, *The Illustrated Book of the Dog*, opposite 297.

In 1894, Rawdon Lee, another coming authority in canine journalism, published a book devoted wholly to terriers, which discussed 14 breeds, with smooth and rough coat fox terriers as distinct breeds (Lee). His main rival in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was Vero Shaw, who in 1894, in the context of the wider *fin de siècle* fears of degeneration, worried about "Dogdom's Deterioration," due to the favoring of exaggerated fancy points and inbreeding (Shaw, "Dogdom's Deterioration"). However, Lee suggested that fox terriers might be an exception, having been taken over by a better class of owner and rescued from previous abuses.

Those days are still spoken of "good old times," and so long as the dog was white, with a patch of black or brown or tan on him even brindle was not then considered disqualification — weighed anything between 11 lb. and 30 lb., and had his tail docked, he was called a fox terrier, and sold as such. He had a pedigree made for the occasion perhaps. And if his ears were too big, they could be sliced down, as they sometimes were, and if they stood up erect instead of dropping, they could be cut underneath, and often were, and made to hang in the orthodox fashion. (Lee 102-03)

Cropping ears and docking tails had been banned, size had been regularized, and fox terriers were no longer at the mercy of “dog dealers.” However, it was not only the dog fancy that had produced improvement, Lee implied fox terriers had their own agency.

At this period there was an opening for a popular dog; the fox terrier availed himself of the opportunity, the public gladly accepted his enterprise in so doing, and his progress from the stable and the servants’ hall to the drawing-room was rapid. (106)

Unusually then, popularity had not conflicted with quality.

With the multitude came, for once at least, wisdom; the youngsters studied from their elders, hob-nobbed with fanciers, and so by degrees obtained an inkling as to the requirement and appearance of a perfect terrier, or one as nearly perfect as possible.” (103)

Lee mentioned Russell’s dogs, which were included as rough haired fox terriers, one amongst many strains and one of the best. However, because of Russell’s attitude to pedigrees, Lee noted that “we look in vain for many remnants of the strain in the Stud Books” (146). In fact, Russell’s fox terriers had been sought by fancy breeders, ironically for their white coat not their abilities, being used in breeding when owners wanted to lighten the coat color of the dogs in their kennel.

Dog Breeds. The differentiation of the smooth and rough haired fox terriers into distinct breeds exemplified the profound change made to dogs from the mid-nineteenth century with the adoption of “breed” for varieties of dog.² This was nothing less than *the invention of the modern dog*, as the species was reimagined and remade into discrete, separated and standard physical forms (Worboys et al.). At the same time, these new ways of classifying and breeding led to the differentiation, essentialization, objectification, and commodification of dogs as a collection of breeds. It became impossible to think about dogs as other than this breed or that. The cur and the non-breed mongrel disappeared, as mixed types regarded as crossbreeds. This transformation saw not only the predominance, even fetishization, of the notion of “breed” defined by conformation, but the production of a uniform-looking (and conforming) population of dogs within each breed. The adoption of breed standards led to the production of sharper differentiation and separation between types of dog and the proliferation of discrete and distinctive named breeds. Greater breed uniformity externally was accompanied by greater “internal” uniformity in heredity as breeders made greater use of inbreeding to reproduce and preserve breed ideals. Agreed

conformation points brought stability; however, breeders also wanted, unsurprisingly in Victorian Britain, to “improve” and, hence, continuously alter standards.

The difference between pre- and post-breed dogs can be compared to how colors appear in a rainbow and on a modern paint sample card. The former has distinct colors, but these vary in hue and shade, merging into one another at the margin. The latter consists of distinct, separated, and uniform blocks of color, with subtle differences in shade. If the small number of dog varieties in the early nineteenth century can be seen as akin to the seven colors of the rainbow, then the 204 breeds now recognized by the British Kennel Club are like the numerous colors displayed on a paint sample card.

Dog aficionados in the Victorian era adopted the notion of breed from breeders of livestock, Thoroughbred horses, and fancy poultry. The Leicestershire farmer and livestock breeder Robert Bakewell led the key cultural and material developments in the eighteenth century. The essence of breed was and is the division of a domesticated species by *form* rather than *function*. However, with livestock and poultry *form* was and is a proxy for *function*, indicating ability to produce meat, milk, eggs, etc. The term breed was first used for purebred livestock, commercial poultry, and Thoroughbred horses, then with sporting and fancy animals, and then to companion animals. In the move, breeding for form became an end in itself.

The economic historian John R. Walton has characterized Bakewell’s use of breed for his new types of sheep and cattle as “an ingenious marketing and publicity mechanism” (Walton 152). Breed worked on many levels.

Certain identifiable physical characteristics were imprinted in animals of a particular strain, and prospective purchasers were then encouraged to associate those markers with some attribute or attributes of productivity which, it was claimed, such animals also possessed: rapid weight gain, larger size, high food conversion rates, better distribution of meat, heavier milk yields and so on. The success of a breed depended to some extent on the visual impact of the chosen marker or trademark, and the ease of its transmission from one generation to the next, to some extent on the degree to which the claims made for the breed’s performance were thought to be valid. (152)

In other words, breeds were “brands.” Bakewell’s New Leicester sheep breed was claimed to be a better value product because of the meat it produced, with its name and

distinctive external form differentiating it from its competitors. But typically for a brand, it had more than economic value. Those who acquired the New Leicester were buying good, if not pure, blood and gaining an association with an improving ideology. Harriet Ritvo makes a similar point with regard to British aristocracy's fascination with prize bulls in the context of improving agriculture in the nineteenth century. However, with dog shows, along with the "doggy people" and fancy culture that supported them, Ritvo points up contradiction: "The prize-winning pedigreed dogs of the late nineteenth century seemed to symbolize simply the power to manipulate and the power to purchase — they were ultimately destabilizing emblems of status and rank as pure commodities" (Ritvo 106).

Dog breeds were, and still are, co-produced culturally and materially. In the dog fancy culture of mid-Victorian Britain, they were first imagined as ideal types of existing dog varieties, with conformation points set out for judging dogs at shows, selecting for stud duties, and realizing value in the market. The standards, as shown with fox terriers, emerged from debates amongst fancy breeders, which were then tested, confirmed, and refined through competitions. In some cases, breeders "bred up" (selected) to ideals, say, for a particular shape of ear; in others the normal variation in heredity threw up novel features that were preferred, such as that for wholly black Newfoundlands, rather than the white-and-black dogs made famous in the early Victorian period by the painter Edwin Landseer.

Breeds were defined by breaking the dog's body into a number of component parts or "points," with each given a very detailed specification and sometimes quantification. (See Figure 6.) In Walsh's 1879 edition of *The Dogs of the British Islands* the requirements for a fox terrier's head, and ears, valued at 15 out of 100 points, were as follows:

The head should be flat and narrow rather than wide, but not so narrow as to indicate weakness. It should taper from the ears to the nose, with a slight hollow in front of the brows, but no very marked stop. The jaws should be rather long and tapering, the bone strong and the muscle closing them prominent at the cheek, but not swelling out as in the bulldog, a cross of which breed is to be deprecated. The cheek-bones should be clearly cut with a very slight hollow. Teeth level and strong. An underhung mouth indicates the bull cross, and is to be penalised. End of the nose black; a cherry nose is very objectionable, and a white or spotted one almost worse. The eyes should be small and by no means prominent. Edges of the eyelids dark. Ears small and V-shaped, set close to the cheeks with the points looking forward and downward, not hanging hound-like.

Pricked, tulip, or rose ears, as being indications of the bull-cross, should never be allowed. (87)

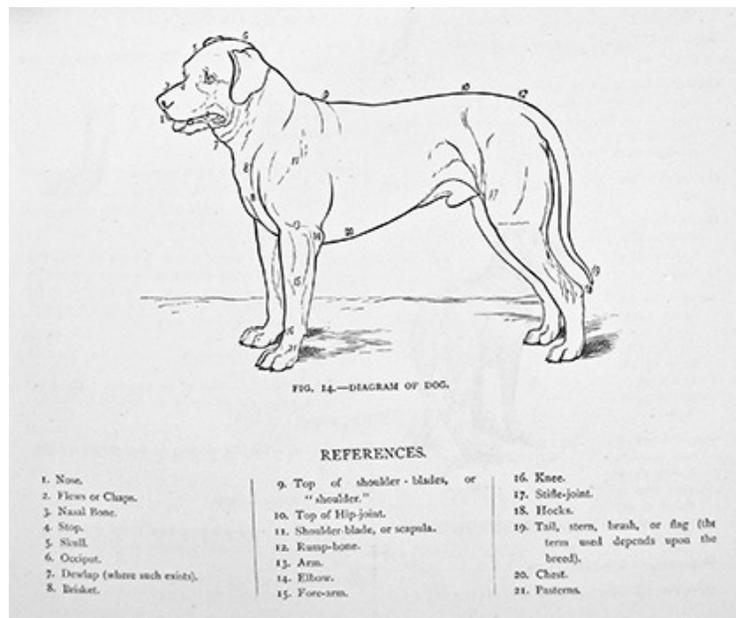


Figure 6. "Diagram of a Dog." Vero Shaw, *The Illustrated Book of the Dog*, 37.

This description takes certain features as indicators of the crossbreeding and the dilution of "true" or "pure" of *blood*, where *blood* was seen both figuratively and biologically as hereditary matter. Pure blood, concentrated by inbreeding and evidenced in pedigrees, was sought after because it was understood to best reproduce conformations — prepotency. However, breeders recognized that inbreeding too closely and too often could lead to specific health problems and overall deterioration, but they agreed that outcrossing could mitigate its dangers.

Standards were never static but were changed by the collective decisions of show judges, reflecting their preferences and responding to the "improvements" made by breeders in selection for specific points and crossbreeding. Improvement was sought for individual dogs to better match ideals and for greater uniformity of conformation across a breed population. Disagreements amongst fanciers over the status of established and improved types was often resolved by the proliferation of breed types, as seen with fox terriers: first, splitting into smooth and rough coated dogs, and then the latter remade as coarse or wire haired varieties.

Fox Terrier in the 1920s and 1930s. The founder of the charity the Tail-Waggers' Club, Captain H. E. Hobbs, wrote in 1931 that terriers of all types had never been more popular, and that "An old dog fancier of 1800 would be astonished at the changes that have been wrought and the extraordinary range of the modern terrier types" (Hobbs). He observed that the fox terrier "first evolved about 1860," and he speculated a quite novel origin, from "the old black-and-tan terrier, with a subsequent introduction of beagle blood." The rough and coarse haired labels had been relatively short-lived, being combined and remade as the wire haired or wire fox terrier. In the hands of the Wire Fox Terrier Association, established in 1913, other differences were developed. The dogs were made slimmer and bred with a squarer looking head, largely due to the length of hair around the muzzle. (See Figure 7.) The Wire Fox Terrier has the distinction of having won Best in Show at the Westminster Dog Show of the AKA more than any other breed.



Figure 7. Wire-haired Fox Terrier, 1917.

Through the inter-war period, at shows fox terriers were divided into smooth and wire classes. With the public, they were popular pets. In 1939, the *Daily Express*, a leading British national newspaper, announced "We are going to buy a dog" and invited readers to recommend a breed (Cooper). They received over 10,000 nominations, and the top three were: 1st. Fox terrier (wire haired) — 2nd. Scottish terrier — 3rd. Fox terrier (smooth haired). The journalist who had the winning breed as a family pet

described his new dog “a chap with a head like a brick,” and from past experience seemed none too pleased with the readers’ choice. In the voting, Jack Russells had their supporters, but not many.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, the leading breeder of JRTs was Mrs. Anne Harris (née Rawle), who had taken over the kennel of Arthur Heinemann and maintained its working orientation (J. & F. Jackson 55-80). However, the popularity of terriers meant that JRTs, along with other breeds favored as pets, were bred to a general type rather than conformation standard. Heinemann had been a badger-hunting enthusiast and “dog dealer” who made the JRT a brand, claiming his dogs were true blood descendants of the Parson’s dogs. They were sporting dogs, with the alertness, courage, and strength to follow foxes and other quarry to ground.

Heinemann’s role in the history of Jack Russell terriers is disputed. To some breed supporters, he was the person who preserved and protected “the genuine Jack Russell Terrier,” but to others his role was more ambiguous. In 1986, Jean and Frank Jackson argued that “Heinemann’s attitude towards terriers and to the work expected of them were very different from Parson Jack Russell’s” (J. & F. Jackson 57). They dismiss claims that his dogs were based on four bequeathed to him by the Parson, pointing out that he was only 11 years old when the Parson died and that by then the Parson had no working dogs. Heinemann was a graduate of Eton and Cambridge, who eventually made his living from journalism, writing under the pseudonym “Peep-out,” and breeding. The Jacksons argue that his career and entrepreneurial activities gave him a platform to shape a false narrative of JRTs. In fact, his preferred sport was badger-digging and badger-bating, which led him to produce dogs suited to this type of work. Indeed, the Parson Jack Russell Terrier Club he founded in 1914 had previously been the Devon and Somerset Badger Digging Club. The Jacksons have styled Heinemann a “dog dealer,” a pejorative term from the Victorian era to the present day, who appreciated “value” not “quality” in dogs.

The largely working and pet profile of JRT owners in the inter-war years was evident in their lack interest in the rewards of “dog dealing” and fancy shows. Compare their dogs with the career of a terrier with similar origins — the Sealyham Terrier. This breed had been developed for going to ground by huntsmen across the Severn Estuary from North Devon in South Wales. It moved from a strain of fox terrier to a breed when it was recognized by the Kennel Club in 1911 (Marples). Breeders developed more exaggerated fancy points, such as longer hair and a beard. Sealyhams became highly fashionable in Hollywood, where owners included Humphrey Bogart, Bette Davis, Cary

Grant, Jean Harlow, Alfred Hitchcock (whose dog acted in *The Birds*) and Elizabeth Taylor (Hough; Salkel; "Country Life").³ In Britain the Royal Family favored them, and one was owned by Agatha Christie. They were bought and sold for high prices as symbols of celebrity and wealth. Sealyham terriers were typical of the way breeds of terrier proliferated. In part, this came from recognition of the types that had existed in particular regions across the country before the codification of breeds, and in part from "product differentiation" produced by competition at dog shows, in the market, and ownership of the latest status symbols.

In the 1950s and 1960s, JRTs continued to be bred as working dogs and continued to grow in popularity as pets. Stanley Dangerfield, the canine correspondent of the *Daily Express*, wrote regularly on JRTs and especially on why it was not a breed. Dangerfield was a critic of the Kennel Club and had soft spot for JRTs. He observed they had "charm but not papers," and that were "classless," the "non-conformists" of the dog world. Indeed, they had become a "reverse status symbol" (Dangerfield, "Answers"; Dangerfield, "We Don't Want"). Dangerfield told his readers that JRTs were a variety or type, not a breed. He wrote "It has never been established what is the shape, size or colour of these dogs," and that to achieve breed status, "it was up to fanciers to agree a conformation and breed consistently for several generations" (Dangerfield, "Replies"; Dangerfield, "How To Choose"). At this time, there were no JRT clubs, but this soon changed.

"The Genuine Jack Russell Terrier." The first, largest and most vocal of the new organizations was the Jack Russell Terrier Club of Great Britain (JRTC-GB), formed in 1974 to maintain the dog's working abilities and to counter the activities of the South Eastern Jack Russell Club (SEJRC), which was pushing for Kennel Club recognition of JRTs in conformation shows (Huxham 30-31). This prompted "a brief period of internecine warfare" over the status of the JRT (Jackson 94). In the event, it was anything but brief, running for over 40 years and continues even after the Kennel Club decision in 2015.

The JRTC-GB's aim was to "Promote and preserve the working terrier known as the Jack Russell." The founders argued that such a club was needed to save JRTs from ruin by pet owners, dog show exhibitors, and commercial breeders (Tottenham 143-47). At one level, aficionados of JRTs were pleased with their popularity as pets, but were concerned that the public was being offered and accepting as JRTs dogs of the wrong size, shape, color, and, worse still, with no working ability. Moreover, there was the danger that the JRT working type would be taken up by fancy breeders and introduced into conformation shows. The danger was that the likely greater number of show dogs

would inevitably see more crosses with working dogs and an overall loss of ability and character. To avoid such developments, written into the JRTC-GB's constitution was opposition to the Kennel Club.

History has shown Kennel Club recognition to be detrimental to the physical structure and working capabilities of a variety of working breeds. Therefore, this club is opposed to Kennel Club recognition of the Jack Russell Terrier. (JRTC-GB)

Nonetheless, the JRTC-GB had a conformation standard and held shows where dogs were judged on their look. However, their standard stressed form as a proxy of function, ability, and character. Furthermore, specific physical features were not tightly defined. For example, on height, which was later to become the key issue, its standard allowed dogs between 10 and 15 inches at the shoulder. To emphasize that beauty and form were not primary, the standard set out that: "Old scars or injuries, the result of work or accident, should not be allowed to prejudice a terrier's chance in the show ring unless they interfere with its movement or with its utility for work or stud" (JRTC-GB). The JRTC-GB's standard was drawn to best capture the sense of an anti-conformation breed.

The main activities of the JRTC-GB were supporting owners who worked with their dogs hunting foxes, badgers, and rats, including organizing JRT-only shows, and arranging working terrier events at agricultural shows. The latter could be large affairs, as at the Great Yorkshire Show in 1983, where there were 648 entries in events for working dogs, with 52 rough coated JRTs on display (Atter). From 1984, the JRTC-GB was supported by the National Working Terrier Federation (NWTF), which gained over 30 affiliate organizations in Britain, representing all working terriers, plus other working dogs, such as lurchers and whippets, and ferrets (National Working Terrier Federation). These activities continue in the twenty-first century, despite the ban on blood sports enacted in 2004, which limited some types of hunting (Atkinson). Hunts with pack of hounds now follow scent trails, but fox terriers are still used to flush foxes out from their hiding places into nets for humane killing and for the control of rats.

The Jack Russell Terrier Club of America (JRTCA) was formed in 1976 on the same model as its British counterpart, to protect the "true" and "REAL" working dogs; it similarly rejected affiliation with the American Kennel Club, being "emphatically opposed to recognition of the Jack Russell Terrier by any kennel club or all-breed registry." At the shows of all these organizations, judges used less circumscribed

conformation criteria than those at conformation shows. Greater variation of physical form was accepted, and more attention paid to appraising character and physical ability. The clubs also hold trials for trailing and locating vermin, and sometimes obedience, racing, going-to-ground, and agility. In 2018, the JRTCA held 21 events and plans to open a museum and library.

The Parson Jack Russell Terrier. The first challenge to the JRTC-GB came in 1983, with the foundation of the Parson Jack Russell Terrier Club (PJRTC), which wanted, albeit reluctantly, its promoters said, to seek Kennel Club recognition for the breed (Bartlett). The founders of the PJRTC were worried that JRTs were under threat on three fronts: i) they were losing a distinctive conformation in the hands of the JRTC-GB; ii) they were losing ability due to their popularity as pets; and iii) they were being exploited by dog dealers who were marketing any small white terrier as a JRT. The PJRTC claimed to be protecting the working type by preserving its conformation. For them, there was no contradiction. They argued that an uninformed, sentimental public was being sold dogs that were too short to be true JRTs and many were crossbred, such that “Thousands of small terriers, because they are white, and don’t belong to any breed are generally called ‘Jack Russells’” (The Parson Jack Russell Terrier Club). The PJRTC argued that Kennel Club recognition would define a type, provide registration of pedigrees, give expert advice on breeding and health, and entry into competitions would, through the selection of the best, bring improvement (Hussey-Wilford, “The Parson Jack Russell Terrier Club”). The addition of “Parson” to the Club’s name was not only to distinguish it from the JRTC-GB, but also to indicate it was more committed to heritage and re-establishing dogs that were true to the Parson’s type in body and character, basing their breed standard of Heinemann’s 1903 template.

The immediate cause of the foundation of the PJRTC was another application for Kennel Club acceptance of JRTs. In November 1983, the SEJRC had applied for recognition of their JRTs and caused consternation by their proposed standard of 10 inches in height (Wheatland). The application prompted the leading weekly newspaper *Our Dogs* to open a forum on the issue (Jackson, “Recognition”). The majority of articles and letters published in *Our Dogs* were, unsurprisingly, in favor Kennel Club recognition. They argued that it was the best way to protect the breed from ruin. However, there were differences over timing. Some argued that recognition was urgent, others that it should be delayed to allow the PJRTC to establish its authority, to build up pedigree records, and to agree on a standard.

The PJRTC applied to the Kennel Club for breed recognition several times through the 1980s and, after several rejections, their type was accepted in January 1990. But not

immediately as a breed in its own right, rather as a variant of the Fox Terrier that in time would be upgraded to breed status when its conformation was stabilized, and numbers provided good competition and reduced inbreeding. Full acceptance required “dogs of known ancestry for two full generations and at least half a third (generation)” recorded in the stud book (Hussey-Wilford, “Fear Not”). In fact, when provisionally recognized, the number of PJRTs was so low that it started out on the Rare Breeds Register! The announcement of provisional acceptance of the PJRT was front-page news in the leading dog magazine *Our Dogs* (“Recognition of Parson Jack Russell!”). Fanciers claimed that their dogs, to be named Parson Jack Russell Terrier (PJRT), would reproduce the old type of working terrier, though its “work” from now on would only be in the show ring and at stud. That said, the breed standard began by setting out conformation features that were linked to character and ability.

General Appearance. Workmanlike, active and agile; built for speed and endurance.

Characteristics. Essentially a working terrier, with ability and conformation to go to ground and run with hounds.

Temperament. Bold and friendly. (“Parson Jack Russell Terrier — Recognition”)

A key feature was to achieve dogs that were “14/14” — 14 inches in height and 14 lbs. in weight. Having obtained their standard from History, albeit a selective reading of texts, where would the PJRTC find the dogs to start the new “true” breed? If they went to the JRTC-GB, it was likely they would be denied the best dogs, leaving only their “varmint” as foundation stock (Brewer). One correspondent to *Our Dogs* wanted to exclude the influence of “Mr. and Mrs. Average-Dog-Owner” and their pets, with the avoidance of “cute faces,” “Queen Anne legs” (curved or bandy legs), and “belly to the ground” dwarfs (Bartlett). Breed aficionados feared the merging of the working and show dogs, with the latter taking precedence due to the money and the personal glory that came from dog shows prizes. Other supporters of recognition were skeptical about turning the clock back to an unknowable, and likely non-existent “true” type. They argued that a new and dominant JRT should be allowed to emerge from competition at shows, in a Darwinian survival of the fittest. Bert Gripton, who had been “sixty years a breeder,” claimed that “All the fuss over the recognition of the Jack Russell terrier is a sheer waste of time. There are a dozen different types of the breed,” and that reference to a “true type” was “sales talk and guesswork” (Gripton). Other skeptics felt that all

that would be gained from Kennel Club recognition was paperwork and increased costs of ownership (J. & F. Jackson 58-9).

Recognition, albeit conditional, of the PJRT infuriated JRTC-GB, and its members redoubled their efforts to keep their working dogs away from the clutches of the Kennel Club (Langley). However, the Kennel Club were in no mood for a fight and pointed out that “Great care has been taken to distinguish this breed from its more populous (and popular?) short-legged namesake and, unique in Breed Standards, a *minimum* height is stated” (“Parson Jack Russell Terrier”). The reference to “short-legged” JRTs was also a slight on dogs of the SEJRTC, which had continued, unsuccessfully, to seek recognition for its JRTs. The PJRT standard was not without its critics, with objections over color, coat, and hocks (the sharp angled joint at the back of the leg, equivalent to the human ankle) (Hussey-Wilford 1990). The new standard was framed to avoid the conformation-based health issues of the short-legged, long back “dwarf” of the SEJRTC. The Kennel Club leadership were aware that this might not be the end of the story. They noted that no other applications for the recognition of JRT types had been received and more might be expected. In a conflation of aficionados and their dogs, and perhaps again suggesting canine agency, the report on the decision in the *Kennel Gazette* ended by stating that “the initiative lies with the breed” (Hussey-Wilford, “Fear Not”). The number of PJRTs increased after 1990 and full acceptance came in 1997, though acknowledging the unsatisfactory compromise in its original name, it soon became just the Parson Russell Terrier (PRT).

In the negotiations towards breed recognition of the PJRT, the working dogs of the JRTC-GB were studiously ignored, seemingly beyond the pale. That said, the JRTC-GB enjoyed a victory of sorts, as the newly recognized breed had been given the longer and less familiar name of the Parson Jack Russell Terrier. But there were soon new tensions amongst the working JRT fraternity. In 1992 a new club for working JRTs was formed – the British Jack Russell Terrier Club (BJRC). Why? Its founders were concerned that members of the JRTC-GB were cross-breeding their dogs with white Lakeland terriers and Staffordshire bull terriers to improve look, working ability, or both. The aim was familiar – to preserve the “Real” or “Pure” Jack Russell and to exclude “foreign blood.” Thus, their proposed standard was that “A Jack Russell should not show any strong characteristics of another breed.” In response, the JRTC-GB members acted to counter the practice of cross-breeding, but it took two decades for the BJRC to be satisfied before it was wound up in 2012.

Jack Russell Terriers Home and Away. Through the 1990s, there was a new challenge to British aficionados of JRTs of all types. The Australian, American, and other national

kennel clubs had recognized a short-legged, show-type fox terrier dog, and gave it the iconic name of the Jack Russell Terrier (Jackson, “The Parson Under Threat”). The Australian Kennel Club had accepted a Jack Russell Terrier in 1991, alongside the PJRT, later PJR. The most obvious difference was shape: the PJR was square (drawn neck to front toes, to rear toes, to base of tail, back to neck), while the Australian JRT was rectangular. (See Figure 8.)

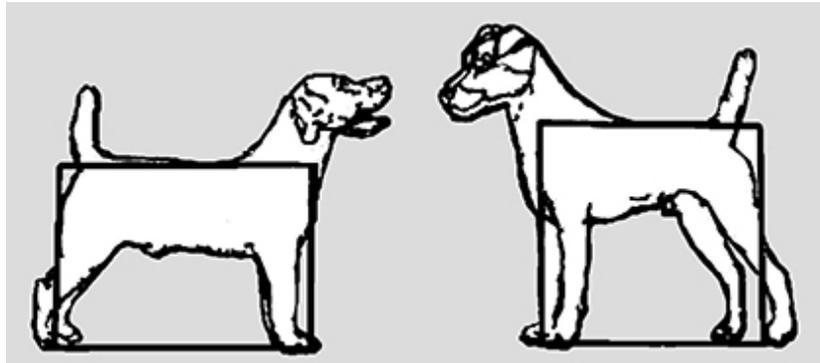


Figure 8. Shapes of Jack Russell Terrier and Parson Russell Terrier. I am grateful to Terrierman for permission to use this image.

With typical British canine chauvinism, fanciers argued that kennel clubs in other countries had been wrongheaded in recognizing a dog that, *Our Dogs* columnist Frank Jackson asserted, “does not exist in Britain except as an increasingly uncommon type of mongrel” (Jackson, “Origins”). Indeed, Jackson was affronted by the claim that such dogs had been “attached to the Parson’s illustrious name” and deemed to be British. He was not against recognition as such, only that it should be seen as an Australian breed and given a different name. In 1994 an American Russell Terrier Club (which had been known as the English Jack Russell Terrier Club) started to register 10-12-inch-tall dogs as JRTs (Terrierman). The American Kennel Association (AKA) accepted this standard in 2004, but for legal reasons the breed was named the Russell Terrier (RT). The situation with names and types became bewildering: the AKA recognized the Australian JRT, while neither the FCI nor the British Kennel Club accepted the American RT.

The FCI had adopted the Kennel Club’s PJRT standard (no. 339) in 1990; however, it allowed a transition period when the minimum height was set at 10 inches (FCI Breed Standard). This compromise lasted 11 years, until it came under pressure to accept small JRTs as a distinct breed and perhaps to abandon the “bastard” compromise of the PRT.⁴ The FCI provisionally recognized the smaller Australian JRT as the Jack Russell

Terrier in 2001, with full adoption in 2003. The British Kennel Club was initially aloof to these developments. It had never joined the FCI. Having been founded in 1873, many decades before the FCI in 1903, it had claimed superior experience and knowledge. For over a century it was unwilling to concede any of its authority to the FCI; however, the growing internationalization of the dog fancy meant that its detached stance was becoming untenable.

Indeed, after FCI recognition of the Australian JRT and the success of the breed at dog shows across the world the Kennel Club bowed to the pressure and moved to recognize an Australian-FCI type as a breed. However, the Club proposed its own conformation standard, which it said reflected the knowledge and experience of the JRT's country of origin. The delineation of the new British JRT was in many distinct from its other conformation standards by allowing considerable latitude with breed points; The new British standard was in many distinct from that of other breeds by allowing considerable variations; thus, the coat "May be smooth, broken or rough," and the ears "Button or dropped." Significantly and perhaps still inviting a future compromise with the working JRT fraternity, the standard set out: "Scars not to be penalised" and "Broken or missing teeth due to work are not to be penalised."

Unsurprisingly, the Kennel Club decision sparked a mixed reaction. On one side, there was outrage and uproar from the JRTC-GB and dog welfare activists, and on the other resigned acceptance from PRTs aficionados and breeders of the smooth and wire haired fox terriers. The leaders of the JRTC-GB were affronted by recognition of the British-JRT. Its Chair and founder Greg Mousley issued a statement attacking the Kennel Club and claiming that his Club had been, and would continue to be, the protectors of the JRT ("Jack Russell Terrier Club of GB Protest"). They had a registration system, dating back to the 1970s, that was "carefully structured to prevent any Kennel Club pollution," and they were at the center of an international network of affiliated working JRT clubs. He went on that "Our terriers worldwide, are classy, correct in conformation and possess a tremendous working ability. They are virtually free of both hereditary and congenital defects whilst amongst the Kennel Club breeds these are rife." Mousley claimed that the Kennel Club had tried before to usurp their role, but the JRTC-GB had "held firm against the Parson Russell [breed] and succeeded." He homed in on the position of the PRT, arguing that its low numbers and poor quality made it a "failure." He predicted the same fate for the British-JRT. However, it was not his Club that offered the ultimate protection: "The true working Jack Russell is quite safe where it always has been. Long before the old sporting parson bought one! Safe, with the working terrier men and women of Great Britain and the rest of the world!" The JRTC-GB enjoyed the support of the "Pedigree Dogs Exposed Blog," which had been started in 2008 after the

showing of the documentary of the same name on BBC television (“Pedigree Dogs Plagued by Disease”; Bateson). In October 2015, the Blog’s editor, Jemima Harrison, started a petition to “Save the Jack Russell” from “the Kennel Club’s lean, mean inbreeding machine” (“Save the Jack Russell”). Ronnie Irving, who had been Chair of the Kennel Club from 2002 to 2011, allegedly tried to explore reconciliation with the JRTC-GB, but predictably to no avail (Thomas).

There were in fact relatively few enthusiasts for the British-JRT as a show dog. Indeed, there was some mystery as to why the move-to-recognize decision had been made at all. There was no breed club pushing for the change, seemingly only the lobbying of an individual, Geoff Corish, who had been taken with the Australian JRTs when he had seen them abroad. Cynics suggested that the Kennel Club was driven by money and prospect of income from pedigree registrations of a popular breed.⁵ However, the Club maintained that its aim was to protect dogs and their owners from dealers who were passing off any old small white terrier as a JRT, and to promote improvement of the breed. No doubt, the Club’s leadership also wanted to reclaim ownership of an iconic British breed from Australian breeders and the FCI, and restore some of their authority to shape canine affairs. However, in large part they were accepting the success of the Australian-JRT type at shows internationally, and especially in comparison to the PRT. At the big FCI meeting in Milan in 2013 there were 189 Australian-JRT entries and just 59 PRTs. Ronnie Irving wrote in *Our Dogs* in October 2015 2014 that he was in favor of recognition by the Club, but that it should be called the Australian JRT to recognize where it was “developed” (Irving).

Practical problems with the British-JRT were predicted. With no breed club nor other body for its development, the new breed lacked the essential social infrastructure to provide shows judges, expert advice, and networks of breeders.⁶ Problems were anticipated because the breed standard was relaxed, but supporters argued that these would be settled over time through competitions. Needless to say, there were few British-JRTs from which to breed with, hence, its establishment began with a foundation dog that Geoff Corish imported from Japan, presumably of Australian heritage (“Kennel Club to Recognise the Jack Russell Terrier”). It was a moot point whether breeders would turn to working JRTs to develop the breed, rely upon imports, or perhaps even go for the best-looking pet dogs.

Robert Killick, a regular columnist in *Our Dogs* and JRT owner, satirized the decision to recognize the British-JRT. He asked: why it had taken so long to accept what he called

“the real Jack Russell,” implicitly and perversely endorsing the dogs of the JRTC-GB (Killick). He worried about the consequences of recognition.

We all know that once the breeders think they can win prizes with their version of the Jack Russell, it will not take long before it becomes just another terrier far removed from the one we’ve known and loved for years.

He speculated that JRTs’ temperament would be calmed to suit life as a pet and that its name might be changed again, say, to the “Priestly Jack Russell.” But then, they would need a new name and standard for the “old type” JRT, which he facetiously called the “Fred Russell.” His breed standard began:

He should be a cunning, loving dog who will bite your visitors and then sit dotingly on their laps. He will catch any living creature including the postman. And he is under the impression that he is as big as Great Dane.

Killick suggested that JRTs were unsuited to showing and would not follow instructions, potentially causing mayhem in show rings due to their energetic, anarchic behavior. He ended with a familiar trope — if your Fred Russell Terrier had these attributes of character and activity, rather than specific conformation points, then “the very Reverend Gentlemen who invented the breed, would be very pleased.”

Conclusion. The story of JRTs demonstrates how dog breeds have been continually co-produced and co-reproduced culturally and materially. In the first instance, the very notion of breed was and remains an invented social, economic, and cultural category that supports the biological division of canines into distinct, separated physical forms. The invention and manufacture of breeds in the Victorian period involved segmenting, separating, and often exaggerating the normal variation in physical form within a species, and then fixing it by further selection and inbreeding. This way of thinking about and changing animals was first developed with livestock, where physical form or conformation was a proxy for function or production, and economic value. However, when extended to dogs and breeding for fancy, achieving a desired conformation became an end in itself, as top dogs won prizes and prestige for their owners, and represented a new ordering of dogs that echoed social hierarchies, and which different groups gave and derived from cultural meanings. There are two distinctive features of the story of JRTs: the importance of History, and the impact of international developments in breed development and politics.

The different breed JRT conformations that have been created have been contingent, shaped by “doggy politics” and its interactions with the biology of dogs. The dogs have agency, not in the mystical, essentialist manner that some JRT aficionados claim, but in their normal biological variation in form and ability, which provides breeders and owners with the resources to select for and change conformations and behaviors. Dogs have been remarkably malleable. In no other domesticated species are there such relative differences in size and form as in dogs, say, between the Great Dane and the Chihuahua. And it is these same properties operating at the other end of the scale, giving slight differences in coat, color, size, form, etc. that have enabled breeders to imagine, produce, and reproduce the JRT types now recognized and the great variety of “unrecognized” JRTs appreciated as companions.

The many versions of Jack Russell Terriers that have been created around the world since the early twentieth century are typical of the ways all dog breeds have been made and remade. The story of these developments show how differences over the “true” breed type, amongst breeders, owners, exhibitors, and dealers, have been settled, sometimes by reaching a consensus, but more often by splitting breeds, multiplying their numbers, differentiating and embellishing their physical forms. Dog breeds were (and still are) co-produced culturally and biologically, and the history of JRTs demonstrates that “breed” itself could have been differently conceived and individual breeds differently made.

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Notes

1. Davies is referring to Joseph Bell, an Edinburgh surgeon and anatomist with forensic interests, now best known as the inspiration for the character of Sherlock Holmes.
2. The best known earlier use of the term “breed” in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, in which John Gaunt speaks of “This happy breed of men, his little world.” There is agreement that this refers to the English population and the country. The speech also speaks of

“this scepter’s isle” and “This other Eden, demi-paradise, this fortress built by Nature herself.” Later in the speech breed refers to royalty: “Feared be their breed and famous by their birth.”

3. By the end of the twentieth century, the Sealyham Terrier’s popularity had plummeted, and it was designated an endangered breed.

4. The French Club du Jack Russell claimed that the temporary standard led to dogs that were “bastard and lame, adding that “In England, only Parson Russell Terriers are officially recognized. A shame for the country of origin of the breed!” Club du Jack Russell, <https://www.jackrussellofficiel.com/la-race/standards-commentaires/standards-f-c-i.html>. Accessed 19 Dec 2017.

5. One estimate was that if just half of the 10,000 plus JRTs in Britain were registered, the Kennel Club would gain £80,000.

6. A breed club was founded in 2016.

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