

YOU BE THE JUDGE

By Robert Cole

From *Dogs in Canada*, August 1988

PEMBROKE WELSH CORGI

Welsh Pembroke Corgi breeders advise that two things are of special importance to this moderately long and low cattle herding breed. One is correct type and the other is movement. With this advice in mind I have provided four illustrations focusing on some aspects of correct and incorrect Pembroke type stacked, and 10 movement related illustrations indicative of typical Pembroke action at the trot.

STACKED

Stacked in profile, one of these Welsh Pembroke Corgi illustrations represents typical. A second possesses the same general balance as the typical example but exhibits five faults deemed serious for the low to ground breed. A third example departs structurally front and rear from typical. The fourth example departs from functional type in such a way as to reinforce appreciation for correct body length to height ratio.

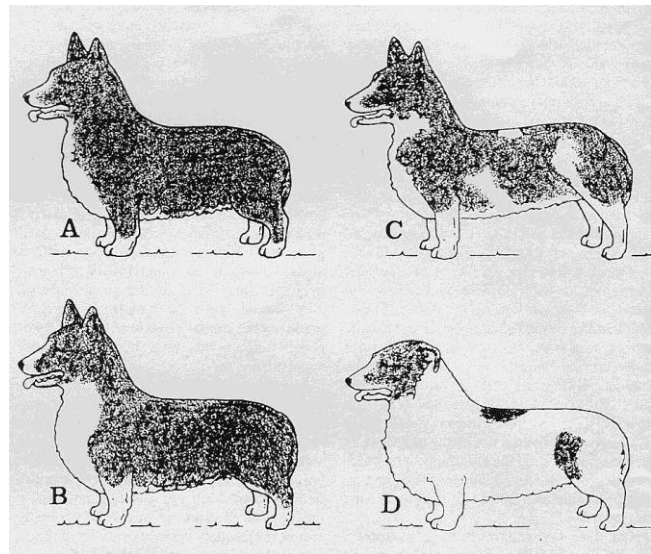
Which Pembroke – A, B, C or D – represents typical? If not immediately apparent you are in all likelihood comparing two, the two that are very much alike except for body length, one being longer than the other. If you chose the longer, changes are you are already familiar with the Pembroke. If you chose the shorter body as having more appeal you strengthen the desire of breeders that this sometimes preferred ratio be strongly denounced.

DOG B

This typical example is 11 inches at the shoulder and weighs 28 lb. which is about average (standard suggests 24 lb.) for this 10-12 inch breed. Obvious oversize specimens and diminutive toy like individuals *must be very seriously penalized*.

The impression is of a dog moderately long and low. The Welsh Pembroke Corgi body is low not only because its legs are obviously short but also because elbows position back from the forechest and *above* the bottom of the chest (brisket). In other words, the Pem's body drops down below the level of the elbow, the body is low slung. The low slung body and above the brisket elbow position must be appreciated if type in the form of this breed's unusual wrap around front is to be fully understood.

For this front to work the rib cage must be oval. The upper arm between elbow and wrist curves gently around this oval rib cage. The wrists are closer together than the elbows. Head on the forelegs are straight from the wrist down, *not* from the elbow down as is the case of higher stationed breeds. When this different but marvelously functional wrap around forequarter assembly is understood the concern of breeders for the current high incidence of straight terrier type fronts (upper arm short and steep with less curve in forearm) can more readily be appreciated. Coming and going all four legs are carried straight forward and converging slightly towards a centre line: terrier type fronts often move wide.



DOG A

This dog is similar in many respects to the preceding typical example, different in two ways. Can you see what these two differences are? The most obvious is the ratio of body length to height. Both of these first two examples are 11 inches at the shoulder. The preceding example's body is the correct length for this height – this example's shorter body is not. (A longer body than the preceding example would be equally incorrect.)

The second difference is neck length. The Standard advises that the neck be: "fairly long, of sufficient length to provide overall balance of the dog." This example's short neck is of sufficient length to balance with its too short body but the Standard is referring to typical. A breeder cannot afford to forgive this neck's shortness any more than he or she can forgive the short body.

DOG C

Length of body and length of neck are correct on this example but this dog has a number of faults. One fault relates to coat colour in the form of mismarks. Mismarks for the Pembroke are identified as serious departures.

A serious departure is any area of white on back between withers and tail, on sides between elbows and back of hindquarters, or on ears, and this dog has white on all three areas. White is acceptable on legs, chest, neck, muzzle, narrow blaze on face and underparts. How much white is acceptable on underparts is not specified in the Standard, however white that continues upward higher than the elbow would not be considered acceptable. (Black with white markings and no tan present is also a very serious fault.)

Structurally, this example is faulty both front and rear. In the front his shoulders are steep and the whole forequarter assembly has moved forward on the body. The front pasterns lack the slight slope that brings the foot under the ideal centre of support when the shoulders are correct. In the rear the steep pelvis positions the tail low, steepens the leg assembly and raises the rear.

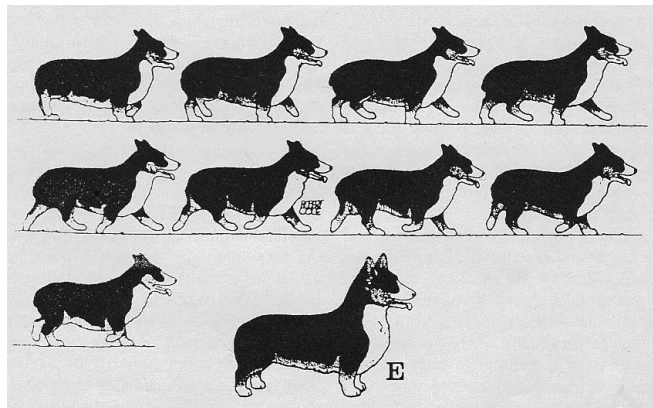
DOG D

This example is handicapped by a number of faults deemed serious in the breed. He is a 'Whitellie', having a white body colour with red (or dark) markings. He has a rose ear which folds 'over' and back so as to reveal the burr. (A button or drop ear would be equally serious).

Structurally he is too low to the ground even for a low to the ground breed. A Pembroke's lower than low position of the body can be caused by too deep a body, too horizontal and upper arm (caused by steep shoulders, or too short a forearm). This example's exaggerated lowness is caused by too short a forearm (too short between elbow and wrist).

DOG E

This real life tri-colour stacked and moving is similar physically to Dog B and comments on the latter apply equally to this sound moving example. As to movement the Pembroke Standard advises: "Movement is especially important, particularly as viewed from the side." Viewed in profile, this real life typical example can be considered to move in a typical manner.



Typical for the Pembroke, the diagonal right rear with left front “reach forward in unison without too much lift.” The required “driving action of the hind legs” can be seen in phase five and I draw your attention to the fact that the hind leg from hock to foot extends rearward beyond the vertical. If there is one single indication that Pembroke movement is poor (as dictated by inferior construction) it is a rear pastern (between hock and foot) that does not extend rearward beyond the vertical.

The action at the trot of this sound Pembroke conforms to the action of the norm for higher stationed herding breeds in that in phase five diagonal front and hind legs cease propelling the body forward at the same time. In phase six there is a brief period of suspension where the body is airborne. In phase seven diagonal right hind and left front feet strike the ground at the same time and the front pastern flexes parallel with the ground as it is carried forward.

Being short legged, long and low slung, there are two differences action takes as compared to higher stationed breeds. Both can be seen in phase six. The first is a distance of approximately an inch between feet under the body, less than that would indicate this dog’s body might be too short. Greater distance than approximately an inch would indicate at this speed that angulation front and rear was poor or the body was overly long.

The second difference is hind leg follow through. The Pembroke’s legs being short and the body low slung, the hind leg on completion of propulsion lifts and is immediately brought forward. Unlike high stationed breeds there is very little visual follow through (continued off the ground extension rearward). This rapid, short legged action (plus full coat on back of hindlegs) may contribute to the false belief (myself at one time) that a Pembroke’s rear pastern is not required to propel rearward beyond the vertical.

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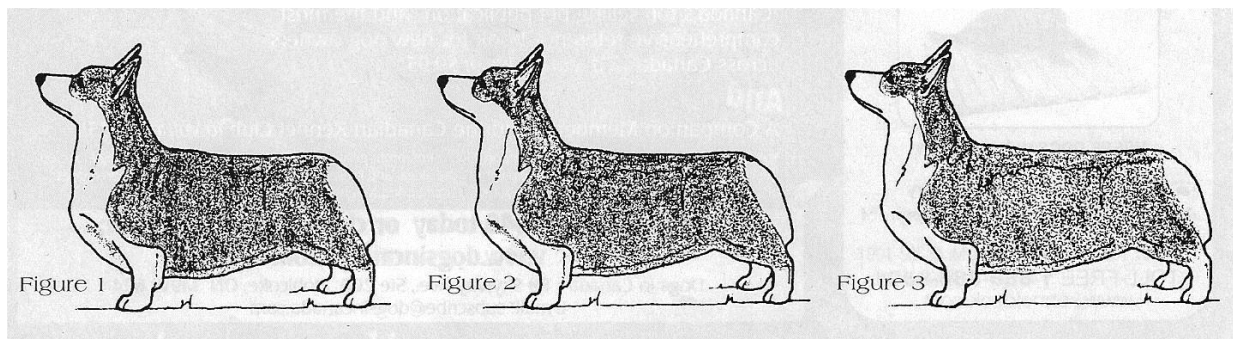
From *Dogs in Canada*, January 2002

THE PEMBROKE WELSH CORGI

Based on the CKC Standard

FIGURE 1, 2 OR 3?

Judging this low set breed with the wrap around front and short legs begins with an awareness of correct balance. Height is 10 to 12 inches at the highest point of the withers and the length of the body from the withers to the base of the tail should be approximately 40 per cent greater than the dog’s height. One of these three Pembroke Welsh Corgis is correctly balanced. Which one?



WHICH ONE?

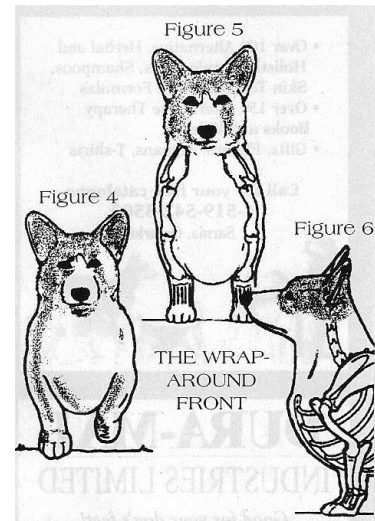
You have probably decided that one has a body that is two inches too short and one has a body that is two inches too long. Figure 2 is bracketed by these two incorrect examples and provides a visual appreciation of correct balance. I am sure Figure 2 is correctly balanced for this breed because it possesses the same height to body length proportion as the Pembroke labelled “Correct Profile” on page 4 of *The New Illustrated Study of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Standard*, prepared and published in 2000 by the Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America Inc. I have seen a number of good illustrated studies lately and this one on the Pembroke is one of the best. The photographic manipulation is excellent, as are the colour photos and the informative text. The club and the committee have made a great contribution to the breed. I recommend it as required reading.

UNORTHODOX FRONT

The Pembroke’s wrap around front increases herding ability by lowering the body down below the elbows (Figure 6), out of harm’s way. The forearm (Figures 4 and 5) wraps or curves slightly around the rib cage, bringing the wrists closer together than the elbows. This lowers the height of a 30 pound dog to 10 to 12 inches. A cow’s kick passes harmlessly over this close to the ground herder.

Viewed coming (Figure 4), the legs are not brought forward in exact parallel planes, but incline slightly. There is no tendency for the legs to swing out, move wide, cross over or interfere.

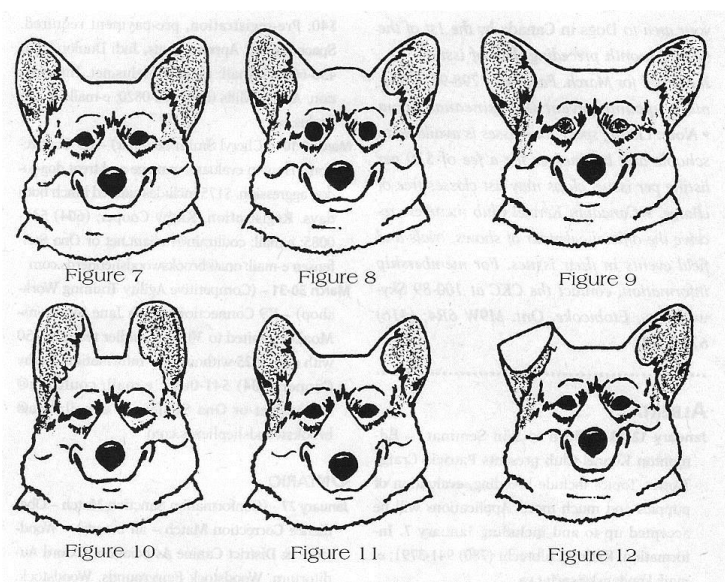
This is a herding breed that must have the agility, freedom of movement, and endurance to do the work for which it was developed.



THE HEAD FACE ON

The good head (Figure 7) is foxy in shape and appearance, but not with the snipey muzzle or slit like eyes of a fox. Expression is intelligent and interested. The fairly broad, flat skull should be on a parallel plane with the muzzle; the stop is moderate; the ratio of skull from nose to stop and from stop to occiput is 3 to 5. The eyes are medium in size, and set somewhat obliquely. The ears are of moderate size, tapering slightly to a rounded point. A line drawn from the tip of the fully pigmented black nose, through the brown eyes, to the tips of the erect ears and across, should form an approximate equilateral triangle.

Each of the remaining heads has two faults. Can you identify them? In numerical order they are: round skull and round eyes; low set ears and light eyes; bat ears and small eyes; small cat ears and long muzzle; and button or drop ear and narrow muzzle. (Note: the Pembroke has a scissors bite.)



SIX DEPARTURES

With the image of correct proportions (Figure 2) still fresh in your mind, identify the way in which each of these six Pembroke Welsh Corgis departs in one way from correct. Some departures are obvious, some are less so. For instance, which dog is coarse?

Figure 13's neck should be fairly long, not short. Figure 14's topline should be firm and level, not roached. Figure 15's body should be well let down between the forelegs, but not as low as this exaggeration depicts. Figure 16 is coarse. Figure 17 should have a level topline and moderate hindquarter angulation, and should not be steep in the rear. (We are reminded that a judge should not place any emphasis on tail dock unless the tail is longer than two inches.) Figure 18's topline should be level, not with a soft dip.

