

YOU BE THE JUDGE

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SKYE TERRIER

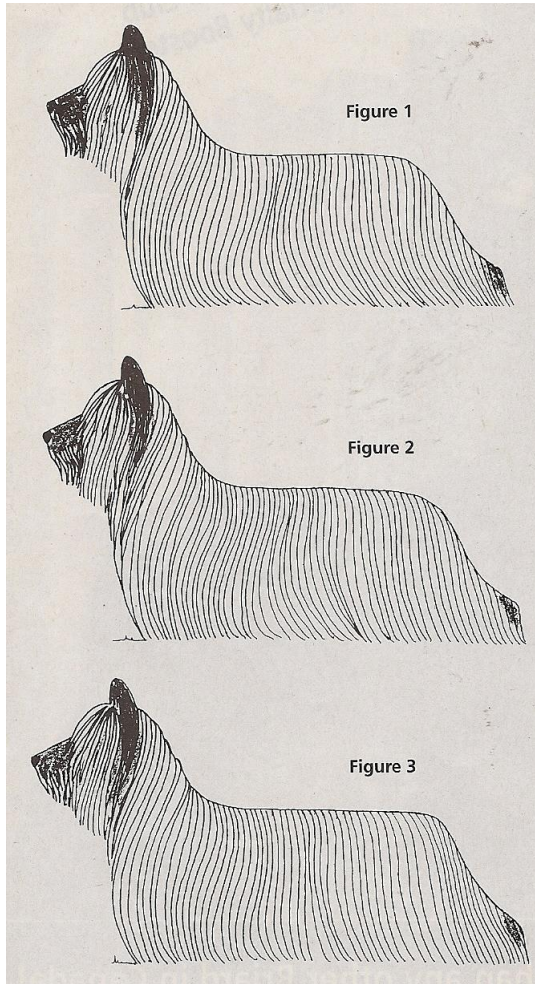


FIGURE 1, 2 OR 3?

Which one of these three Skye Terriers exhibits correct body-length-to-height proportions and, of the two remaining, which one do you prefer?

Figure 1's body is too short, Figure 3's body is too long. Figure 2 is correct. We are advised in a Skye Terrier Club of America presentation handout that dogs slightly longer than the 2-1 ratio are acceptable; however, those less than that ratio are not. More than one seminar presenter has gone so far as to advise that anything less than 2-10-1 is a major fault.

These three drawings are similar to the ones used in the Skye Terrier Club of America's 1974 *Illustrated Standard of Perfection* and 1982 *Illustrated Discussion of the Skye Terrier*. They provide an appreciation of correct and incorrect proportions, but hide from view an unorthodox front (and rear) assembly. Due to the long, straight, hard and flat outer coat, we are unable to see the length, angle and depth of this specialized digger's parts and how they fit together. We are, however, able to gain an appreciation of that which is unorthodox by comparing the Skye Terrier to the similarly constructed Standard Smooth dachshund.

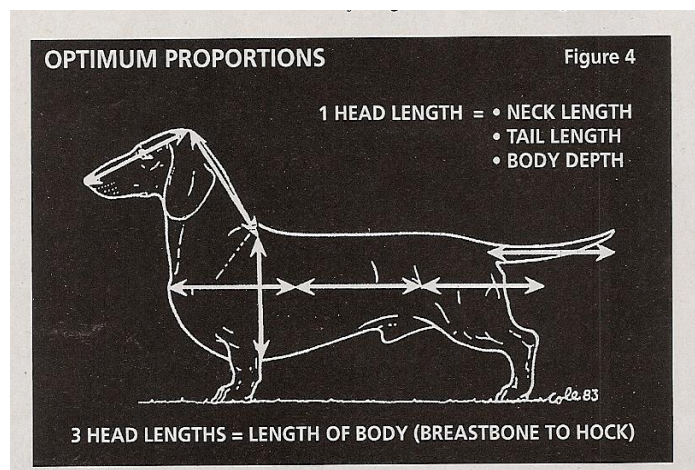


FIGURE 4

We do know the optimum proportions for the Dachshund as depicted in Figure 4 – a 35 mm slide BV (Before Video). By happy coincidence this Smooth Dachshund's 2-1 body-length-to-height proportions are the same as "Skye Proportions – The ideal ratio of body length to shoulder height is 2 to 1, which is considered the correct proportions." This is not to say that, if we shaved a Skye, we would find a Dachshund, but it does give us a starting point for investigative discussion.

FIGURE 5

The Dachshund, like the Skye Terrier, is an achondroplastic breed: a congenital dwarf with short extremities, a trunk of normal size and a large head. Like the Skye, the Dachshund was developed for the purpose of going to ground to bolt small game from underground burrows. Its short, sturdy legs were well suited for digging, as well as covering ground with good speed. Notice the Dachshund's elbow positions well above the bottom of the brisket; in other words, the body drops down between the front legs to the midpoint of the short forearm. Viewed head-on, the short upper arm curves slightly around the rib cage, placing the wrists closer together than the shoulder joints. This is called a wrap-around front. A number short-legged, low-slung breeds utilize this unorthodox front assembly.

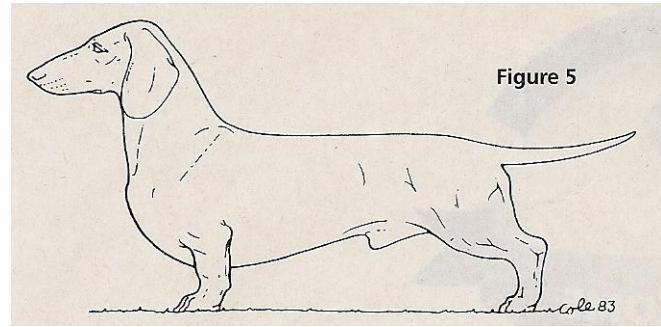
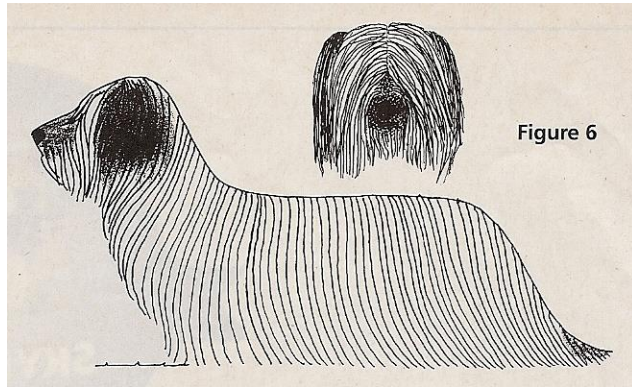


FIGURE 6



If we cover this Dachshund with a long Skye Terrier coat and furnishings, he could easily be mistaken for a Skye. A prick ear isn't necessary because there is a drop-ear variety.

FIGURE 7

You are invited to agree or disagree, in whole or in part, with this Skye Terrier illustrated ideal. To my knowledge, this is the first illustrated Skye Terrier to be fully exposed to the light of day. You must decide if it is a correct representation.

Based on the Dachshund outline, the most obvious difference is the terrier head. Writers have

suggested that the skull and muzzle are of equal length and the planes are parallel, divided by a slight stop. I reduced the degree of forechest because it is definitely pronounced on the Dachshund; its degree is never alluded to in Skye terrier writings and is not included in Skye skeletal drawings.

There is a forechest, I centered the point of the forechest on the body, about an inch in front of the point of the shoulder. That didn't alter the length or angle of the long, well-laid-back shoulder blade and upper arm.

The topline is level, the abdomen is slightly drawn up and the length of the loin is depicted. The angle of the stifle and the hock was not changed, nor was the substantial bone – ie., “Strong, full, well developed and well angulated” and “Bone is substantial.” The tail was set on as a continuation of the topline, the lower end thrown back in a moderate arc. The feet (preferably pointing forward) were changed from compact to harefoot and the hind foot made the same size as the front foot (usually the hind foot is smaller on earth diggers).

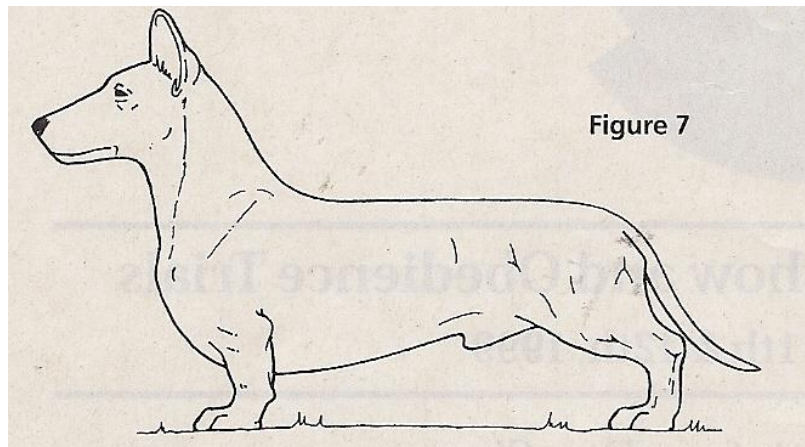
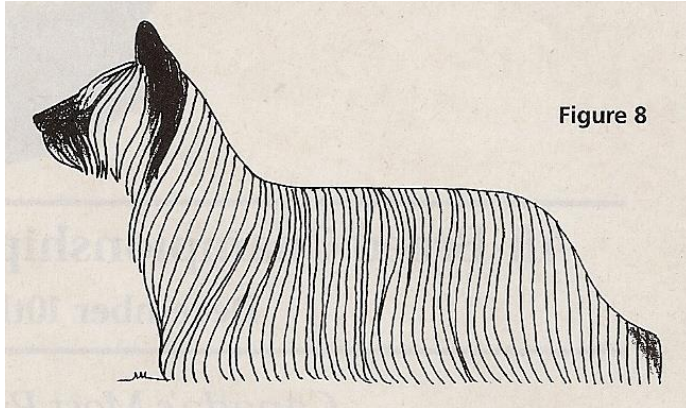


FIGURE 8

Writers contend that the most distinguishing feature of the Skye is its coat. They agree that it is very important to have a double coat – a short, close, soft and woolly undercoat with a hard, straight and flat outer coat. They disagree on “Coat, 5 ½ inches long without extra credit granted for greater length.” One school adheres to this wording while the second school admits that a 5 ½ inch-long coat on an 11 inch dog would be a disadvantage in the show ring today.

The body coat hangs straight down each side, parting from head to tail. The head hair, which may be shorter, veils the forehead and eyes and forms a moderate beard and apron. The long feathering on the ears falls straight down from the tips and the outer edges, surrounding the ears like a fringe and outlining their shape. The ends of the hair should mingle with the hair on the neck. The tail is well feathered.



COLOUR

The coat must be of one overall colour at the skin but may be of varying shades of the same colour in the full coat, which may be black, blue, dark or light grey, silver platinum, fawn or cream.

The dog must have no distinctive markings except for the desirable black points of the ears, muzzle and tip of the tail. Puppy coats are the exception.

FIGURES 9, 10 AND 11

Two of these prick-ear-set illustrations are correct and one is not. A Skye head overlaid on the face of a clock is used at seminars to convey ideal (Figure 9), acceptable (Figure 10) and ears with a problem (Figure 11).

I drew these ear-sets to emphasize the information provided by Donna and Ben Dale in the *AKC Gazette* (July 1989) that: “Skyes do not always carry their ears in the most upright and perky position. It should be stressed that having seen a dog use its ears once, that should be enough. Some judges seem to want them up constantly, which is not natural, and often judges seem to make their decisions based on the ability of the dog to keep its ears tighter and tighter; or to make cutesy head movements. Some Skyes do this, but it is neither called for nor is it necessary.”

