In today's highly mechanized and technologically advanced age, opportunities to witness cattle and sheep ranchers husband their stock from range and farm to market are rare. Even the old Western movies, glorifying the cowboy life on the range, gave but a poor representation of the true task involved. In fact, today's most visible testimony to the hardy men and their herding dogs who provide the legwork that gets food to our tables are the 15-ounce beefsteaks and racks of lamb sizzling on the barbecue.

In this article, which covers many of the topics presented at the AKC Advanced Institute on Herding Breeds, we will discuss the specialized function of cattle-driving dogs and how these breeds were developed for this essential work. Although terrain, geography and economics gave rise to distinctly different styles of dogs, the common job of herding bovines dictated fundamental similarities in structure and mentality in the four breeds.

Whether it is the Australian Cattle Dog driving range cows thousands of miles across the dusty outback, or the
In this, the first installment of a three-part series on the AKC Advanced Institute on Herding Breeds, we take an up-close look at the form and function of cattle-driving dogs.

By Pluis Davern

Bouvier des Flandres and the two Welsh Corgis moving dairy cows from barn to pasture, cattle-herding dogs must have the physical aptitude and mental attitude to control their charges and guard their owner's property and family.

**The Pembroke and Cardigan Welsh Corgis**

The smallest cattle movers in the Herding Group are the two Corgis from Wales. Both the Pembroke and the Cardigan were developed with both terrain and economics in mind. Farmers who owned and used them were often stretched to make ends meet, so a small dog that would take up less room and food was regarded as an asset.

The Pembroke dates back to the 10th century. It is commonly believed that its ancestors, early Spitz-type breeds such as the Schipperke and Pomeranian, had been brought to Wales by Flemish weavers who founded the breed. Aptly named Corgi, or "dwarf dog," by its Welsh owners, the name Pembroke was added later to distin-
guish the breed from a similar dog in the Cardiganshire region of Wales, the Cardigan Welsh Corgi.

In true Welsh tradition, an early legend regarding Pembroke claimed that they were the mounts of the fairy folk and that they slipped away from their farms at night to play with the elves. The marks of the “fairy saddle” can still be seen in the coat over the shoulders. In reality, this intelligent, happy little dog was a great asset to Welsh farmers, driving intruding cattle and other unwanted animals from unfenced lands, controlling vermin in the barn and protecting the home from intruders.

Although crossings with the neighboring Cardigan Welsh Corgi were recorded early on, the Pembroke was recognized in the 1920s as a purebred dog and, in 1934, the Corgis were classified as distinct breeds. From the 1950s onward, the Pembroke’s association with the British royal family, the appearance of a Corgi family on the cover of the Farm Journal and the breed’s fame on the television film Little Dog Lost, skyrocketed its popularity in the United States. Subsequently, the illustrations of Tasha Tudor have gladdened the hearts of children and parents alike.

The Cardigan Welsh Corgi is one of the oldest breeds in the British Isles, arriving with the Celts at about 1200 B.C. It is a member of the same canine family that produced the Dachshund. Used for guarding and beating out game, the Cardigan’s uses were many and varied. Its greatest achievement came much later, however, when on the unfenced “common” land used for grazing by many crofters, or tenant farmers, it would drive its owner’s cattle to the available pasture by nipping at their heels. The crofters often called upon their dogs to clear “his” ground of his neighbors’ stock and, with a speed remarkable for such short legs, the Cardigan would respond. Although there was a lack of record keeping in the breed’s formative years, there was a rigid policy of selective breeding that is unsurpassed today. The original Cardigan Welsh Corgis had to be proficient workers; there could be no excuses.

In order to fulfill the farmers’ needs, both Welsh Corgis had to be sturdy and bold, with tremendous stamina, a sensible and dependable disposition, and a strong guarding instinct. These attributes continue to make them ideal and valued companions today in rural and urban homes alike.

Despite their low stature and comparatively small size in relation to the other cattle herders, the same attitude required to move this stock pervades the very marrow of the Corgis. And what a sight to see when the big dog in a little package takes on the likes of an Angus Bull! As herding trainer and judge Carol Delsman has remarked, “It is not the size of the dog, it’s the size of the heart that gets the job done.”

There are a number of differences between the two Corgis. The Cardigan is a heavier-boned, longer and somewhat higher-stationed dog with an undocked tail. Its ears are large and rounded at the tip, and its head is strong. The most unusual structural part is the front legs, which are slightly bowed, acting as a specialized shock absorber to
enable this front-wheel-drive dog to work at high speed over rough ground without breaking down. The Pembroke, on the other hand, is shorter-bodied and lighter boned, with straighter legs. The ears are not as rounded and the whole impression of the head is foxy. The tail is docked as short as possible. Both breeds require free and smooth movement, covering ground efficiently. Their weather-resistant double coats — the Pembroke's is a little finer textured — were designed to deal with the inclement weather of their native land. Like their taller peers, the Welsh Corgis exhibit a remarkable intelligence and loyalty to their owners. They too need to be used and be useful, to achieve their full potential and reflect their heritage.

The Australian Cattle Dog

The Australian Cattle Dog, known as the AuCaDo, is a peerless drover of cantankerous range cattle that spend their lives away from humans and civilization. In the early 1800s, Australian cattlemen tried crossing traditional herding breeds, most of which specialized in working sheep, with the native dingo, a wild dog with natural hardiness and exceptional skill at driving prey. There was little doubt that the resulting dogs could work cattle well, but they were found to be difficult to control and severe biters.

In the 1840s, a settler named Thomas Hall crossed blue-merle smooth Collies with dingoes, producing dogs that worked so well they were in great demand by cattlemen. In 1902, Robert Kaleski, a breeder and exhibitor of what was then known as the Queensland heeler or blue heeler, drew up the first standard for the Australian Cattle Dog, which was later recognized by the Kennel Club of New South Wales. Although few records were kept in the early years, there was a steadfast selection process for dogs that had the structure and stamina for long-distance droving. The inhos- pitable terrain, the vast arid regions of the outback with grazing capacity that could only support one cow for many acres, demanded a dog of unusual endurance, coupled with intelligence and courage to control the recalcitrant stock and make independent decisions regarding their welfare.

What emerged was a strong, compact, symmetrically built working dog with the appearance of substance, power, balance and hard muscular condition, as well as agility and endurance. The head was strong and broad, with only a slight stop and the forehead well-filled beneath the eyes. Carol Delsman, who uses Cattle Dogs for stock work on her ranch, cannot emphasize enough the critical need for that fill to absorb the shock of a steers kick so that the dog can come out of the fray intact.

With a powerful jaw, strongly built muzzle and a scissors bite, this breed is designed to nip cattle efficiently. The heavily muscled neck, carried low to protect the throat from kicks, presents a picture of power and determination. On the range, away from immediate medical help, the fate of a stricken working dog is often not a happy one. The need for a strong broad skull, deep muzzle and good underjaw naturally becomes of paramount importance.

Always aware of the nature of the stock their dogs had to manage, early breeders put great importance on eye placement and size. Well-set-apart, the Cattle Dog's eyes give it the necessary wide range of vision for its work. Prominent eyes are vulnerable to injury from kicks and vegetation, and sunken eyes are prone to collecting dust. The old adage "the eyes are the window to the soul" could well have been coined from the essence of the Australian Cattle Dog. The warning or suspicious glint for which it is known truly reflects the nature of this loyal, protective
The breed standard, which has remained relatively unchanged since its inception, calls for a strong, muscular and well-angulated front assembly. Observing the dog at work — charging in low to bite at the cows' heels and out again under the swing of the resulting kick — makes it apparent why the standard calls for forequarters that are somewhat wider at the point of shoulder than those of other breeds. The depth of chest, therefore, should not be overdone, reaching only to the elbows so as not to impede the dog's ability to flatten out beneath the hooves.

The Cattle Dog needs broad, muscular loins and deep flanks to couple together its strong front and powerful hindquarters. Although not as angulated as a German Shepherd Dog, the AuCaDo does need a good turn of stifle and well-let-down hocks to maximize its balance and stopping and turning ability. Its running gear has to be sound at both ends. As is often said of horses is also true with working herding dogs: "They are only as good as their feet." The need for thick, hard pads to absorb shock and protect the foot, and strong, short nails, are an absolute prerequisite for a dog expected to work long hours over varied and often difficult terrain.

To complete the picture, the moderately low-set-on tail follows the contours of the sloping croup, and hangs almost straight down at rest. This well-furred, bottle-brush shaped appendage acts as a rudder to counterbalance the dog in motion and must never be carried past a vertical line drawn through the root.

The coloring of the Australian Cattle Dog has a practical value to cattle men and was noted by Robert Kaleski in 1902 as an indication of breed purity. The darker dog is almost invisible at night and therefore does not "spook" or antagonize the cattle, while the slightly lighter brush on the tail gives the stockman an indication of the dogs' whereabouts. The base color in "blue" dogs is black in "red speckle" is red. Either the red or the blue must have white hairs mingled throughout its coat with the colored hairs.

It is interesting to note that the standard requires "red" dogs to be speckled. It is postulated that the unspeckled coloring can appear very similar to the dingo, which is still declared a noxious animal in Australia. Therefore, a color differentiation became essential to protect working red dogs from being mistakenly shot on sight.

The Bouviers des Flandres

While the long-distance droving dog was being developed in Australia, farmers and stock owners in Europe were working to create a breed for their particular needs. In Flandres, an area pertinent to both Belgium and France, the monks of the Abbey der Duynen were trading with the English and, it is believed, brought over the English deerhound in grain ships.

In crossings with the native Belgian matin, a dog emerged with the coat of the English deerhound and the body of the matin. The resulting head seemed to be a blending of the two. First used as driving game dogs by the nobility who owned them, they were later used
The Bouviers des Flandres is a truly versatile breed. As well as guarding and herding stock, they have been used as a general farmer’s helper, pulling milk carts and millstones, and protecting the farm and its occupants. Unlike the Australian Cattle Dog, which bites the heels of cattle, the Bouvier employs the techniques of a “header,” blocking and moving the lead cow to accomplish its goals.

As guard dogs. With their wiry, weather-resistant coats, they were ideal workers to guard stock from predators and aid the gendarmes during the long waits necessary to capture smugglers along the coast.

Because of the vulnerability of a tail in encounters with predators — read wolves! — it was docked. The ears were cropped for a similar reason. Owners also benefited from the dogs’ earcrop, as this identified it as a worker, and precluded the paying of a pet tax.

Despite the derivation of its name Bouvier from the Flemish word “Koehond,” or cow dog, the breed was developed from the start with versatility in mind. As well as guarding and herding stock, they were used as a general farmer’s helper, pulling milk carts and millstones, and protecting the farm property and its occupants. Over the years they have been employed as ambulance and messenger dogs, guide dogs for the blind and for police work — truly a tribute to the early breeders’ broad goals and subsequent breeding programs.

According to Belgian historians, unlike other breeds developed by the monks — the Saint Bernard and the St. Hubert’s hound (Bloodhound) — the Bouvier was not named after a saint because of the less-than-peaceful nature of its guarding work.

The Bouvier as we know it today, however, was not developed over night. The early dogs were not consistent in type, color, size or coat texture, since the original specimens were selected more for their physical and mental attributes than for appearance. In the 1800s there were basically two types: the Bouvier des Roulers, a large, wiry-coated, deep-chested black dog and the Moerman, a smaller, less-coated but barrel-chested dog that came in a variety of colors. The two resulting types from these crosses were the Bouvier Briarde, a large, heavily coated black or gray dog with eyes covered like an Old English Sheepdog, and the Bouvier Ardennes, with natural ears and a softer coat. These breeds eventually developed into the Bouvier des Flandres and were recognized in 1912 by the Society Royale St. Hubert, the Belgian equivalent of the AKC.

Although World War I threatened the breed with extinction, dedicated breeders in Belgium and France resurrected the Bouvier from the few remaining specimens. Again, during the years of World War II, the breed suffered a decline and importation to the United States, which had started in the mid-1920s, was put on hold for the duration. In 1961, the official standard for the breed was drawn up jointly by the French and Belgian breed clubs. The American Bouviers des Flandres Club was founded in 1963.

The Bouvier’s herding style differs from that of the AuCaDo in that it does not bite. Instead, its herding technique is that of a “header,” blocking and moving the lead cow. To accomplish this, the need for a powerful, compact and agile animal is apparent. Its power moves the cattle and its short-coupled structure with moderate angulation and a level topline makes it quick and agile. As with the AuCaDo, the ability to move fast and escape injury from the heelf of the stock is of lifesaving importance.

The overwhelming impression given by the Bouvier des Flandres is one of power. A compact, rough-coated dog with enormous presence and no sign of clumsiness, the Bouvier is serene; its well-behaved disposition denotes its steady, resolute and fearless character. The strong bone and muscling, broad chest and large powerful hams like the Cattle Dog’s are prerequisites for the task it was bred for. No weediness or lankiness is permissible. When moving, the Bouvier must always convey strength and boldness.

The coat, a hallmark of the breed, lends the breed its tousled, rugged look; its rough outer hairs and soft, dense undercoat provide the weather-repelling qualities that have served it well in harsh climates. Second only to the coat, the head of the Bouvier des Flandres makes it instantly recognizable. Impressive in scale, accentuated by beard and mustache, it gives the appearance of strength and nobility. Like the AuCaDo, the Bouvier has little stop and its muzzle is broad, strong and well-filled, with a precise scissors bite.

With the form and function that allows the four cattle-driving breeds the drive to perform their duties comes an intense desire to perform. As breeders, exhibitors, judges and performance competitors, we must maintain and nurture the original intent of each and every working breed.

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In January 2000, 45
In this, the second installment of a three-part series on the AKC Advanced Institute on Herding Breeds, we examine the style and substance of the anything-but-sheepish sheepdogs.

All herding dogs share the innate ability to move livestock, and have a great propensity for guarding their owners and property. The sheep herders, however, do not have to assert dominance over their flock as overtly as their cattle-driving counterparts do over the herd. Sheep are more readily controlled and moved than bovines. Nevertheless, the same intensity and drive are necessary for their herders to get the job done. Of the breeds that were developed primarily as workers of sheep, the largest number come from the British Isles — where terrain, climate and economics dictated the form that enabled these dogs to perform their original function.

THE AUSTRALIAN SHEPHERD

Although its name would indicate that the Aussie, as the Australian Shepherd is affectionately called, originated “down under,” the truth is that the breed as we know it today was developed here in the United States. The breed’s association with Basque sheep herders who arrived in America from Australia in the early 1800s is most likely responsible for the misnomer. Among many theories regarding the early makeup of the Australian Shepherd, the breeds that are thought to be its progenitors are the English collie and the Smithfield sheepdog. The Aussie’s remarkable versatility, strong herding instinct, and trainability — a hallmark of the breed —
ensured its continued development by stockmen and ranchers who valued their usefulness on American farms and ranches. After World War II, the breed’s exposure to the public at rodeos and horse events, and in films and television, resulted in its rapid rise in popularity. The Aussie’s intelligence, loyalty and eagerness to please, coupled with a striking appearance, continue to win the breed converts today.

The Australian Shepherd is a medium-sized, well-balanced, slightly-longer-than-tall athletic working dog. Solid and muscular without a hint of cloddiness, the breed gives the appearance of stamina and agility. The clean-cut head is strong and dry with little tapering of the muzzle. When viewed from the side, the parallel planes of skull and muzzle are divided by a moderate but well-defined stop.

Keen yet friendly, the Aussie’s expression is enhanced by high-set triangular ears and a remarkable variation of eye color. Brown, blue, amber or any variation or combination thereof, including flecking and marbling, gives immeasurable individuality to each dog. In keeping with the breed’s athleticism, its back is straight and strong, balanced by a slightly arched neck and moderately sloped croup. Balanced angulation makes for a smooth, free and easy ground-covering gait — essential to a long-ranger herding dog.
THE BEARDED COLLIE

Myth and conjecture abound when it comes to the origin of the Bearded Collie, or Beardie, with some fanciers tracing the lineage back to 1514 when three Polish sheepdogs were brought to Scotland. "The safest thing that can be said about the origins of the Bearded Collie is that they are lost in the mists of antiquity," says longtime Beardie aficionado Maj. James C. Logan, of Scotland. "This is a breed that has evolved naturally over the centuries and not one created in the relatively recent past.

"A Beardie is a dog of almost overpowering friendliness, extremely active, boisterous, an expert in escapology, a dog with a loud bark who is not afraid to use it," continues Logan. Early research, says Logan, suggests that the Scottish shepherds bred their Beardies to help with their work and were most concerned with their ability to do the job and withstand the harsh climate. A tractable, intelligent dog that worked independently of its shepherd when finding and gathering straying sheep, the breed helped drive cattle to market and was also prized for its skill in the stockyards.

"The Bearded Collie in outline," writes breeder-judge Chris Walkowicz, "portrays a picture of smooth curves rather than sharp angles. In other words, it's more of a van Gogh than a Picasso." A medium-sized dog, the Beardie gives an impression of strength and agility. It is longer than tall and, though strongly made, does not appear heavy. A distinctive feature is the breed’s bright, inquiring expression.

The Bearded Collie’s head is characterized by its broad, flat skull, strong muzzle and large, square nose. The large, softly expressive eyes are set widely apart and generally tone with the coat color. It is the coat, however, that identifies this breed so readily from other herding dogs. The double coat with soft, close undercoat and harsh, flat, shaggy outercoat falls naturally to either side and provides a protective covering that enhances the shape of the dog. On the head the coat gradually increases in length from the cheeks and lower lips to form the breed’s characteristic beard.

Good reach in forequarters coupled with a strong, driving rear and firm, level back moves the Bearded Collie over ground with suppleness and power. The slightly longer body with the low-set tail, carried by feet that are lifted just enough to clear the ground, give the impression that the dog glides along.

THE BELGIAN SHEPHERD DOGS

Belgian shepherds can trace their known history to the 1880s when they and the German, French and Dutch shepherds were called Continental shepherd dogs. In 1891, under the direction of professor of veterinary medicine Adolphe Reul, a panel of judges gathered on the outskirts of Brussels to examine and identify the shepherd dogs of that area. They concluded that for the province of Brabant there was a consistent type of native shepherd dog — square, medium-sized, with well-set triangular ears and very dark brown eyes that differed only in the texture, color and length of hair.

In 1892, again under the professor’s direction, the first Belgian shepherd standard was issued recognizing three varieties: dogs with long coats, short coats and rough coats. In 1901, the Société Royale Saint-Hubert (Belgium’s equivalent of the AKC) granted recognition to the Belgian shepherd dog. At the start of the 20th century, the varieties of Belgian shepherd dogs came to be differentiated by geographic locations. The city of Malines, led by breeder, judge and author Louis Huygebaert, formed a club to popularize the fawn shorthaired variety and gave it the name...
Belgian Malinois: the name Belgian Tervuren honored the dogs of breeder M.F. Corbeel, who lived in the town of Tervuren. Admitted to the AKC registry in 1913, the three varieties were separated into distinct breeds in 1959.

Despite the separation, the three standards all describe the dogs as alert, well-balanced, medium-sized and elegant. Although the wording may vary it is obvious that, as in the 1800s, the differences between the Belgian Sheepdog, the Tervuren and the Malinois today primarily concern texture, color and length of hair. They share the erect, triangular ears, brown, medium-sized, slightly almond-shaped eyes and parallel head planes.

All three breed standards stress the need to keep the breeds medium-sized, without being spindly or weak. A characteristic feature of the Belgian dogs is their lightfootedness and agility. The inherent proud carriage of the head and neck, and the squared strength and solidity of the general appearance, all bespeak a dog that can authoritatively and athletically handle its job.

The versatility of the Belgian breeds is well-known. They have been used as messenger dogs, Red Cross dogs and defense dogs during the two world wars. They are eager to please and sensitive. In the AKC herding program, the three breeds have shown their aptitude by working in all three styles: boundary, fetching and driving. All three standards stress the breeds' inherent aptitude for guarding flocks and their protectiveness of person and property. With this in mind, the dogs are naturally reserved and vigilant with strangers, but never apprehensive. They should not show fear or shyness.

THE BORDER COLLIE

If polled, the fancy and the general public would undoubtedly vote the Border Collie as the quintessential sheepherding dog. Even without the recent popular children's films glorifying this breed, the Border Collie stands supreme worldwide for its courage, tenacity, stamina and finesse in handling the flock.

Like many of its fellow shepherders, the Border Collie traces its lineage to the sheepdogs created by the Celtic clans after the craft of tending sheep was brought to the British Isles by the Romans. Identified by the regions where they were developed, they were known as Welsh sheepdogs, Northern sheepdogs, Highland collies, and so on. The use of the Scottish word collie to describe these dogs evidences their heritage.

These sheepdogs were bred and selected solely for their working ability and trainability for hundreds of years. The Border Collie is known among its aficionados as the "stealth" worker and, indeed, the standard requires that the dog move "with great stealth, strength and stamina." Their way of working sheep is much like a cat stalking its prey. The dog must approach the flock without disturbing or scattering it, and when it is close, must lower its head and stare down the sheep with the legendary controlling "eye."

Because sheep are usually moved in large numbers, it often takes several dogs to do the job. Therefore, teamwork is essential, as is tolerance of other dogs. Although the dogs are called upon to work for long periods during mustering, often covering upwards of 50 miles a day, when the season slackens off they must be able to relax and stay amiable.

Without the proper double coat, the Border Collie could not work in the widely disparate conditions where it is used, from the inhospitable mountain regions of New Zealand and the freezing, wet Scottish Highlands to the vast rolling prairies and intense heat waves of Texas. Because of the nature of its work, there are many times when the Border Collie must make independent decisions regarding its herd — particularly when it is alone in the scrub rooting out a stubborn ewe and her lamb, or moving the flock away from the predesignated route because of hazards not apparent to its master. This ability is one of the most valued characteristics of the breed.

The need for an agile dog with both acute vision and hearing becomes apparent when the dogs are doing their
Looking at the shepherd for commands while watching the flock and the other dogs requires the Border Collie to have a long, arched neck enabling it to pop up its head and lower it again to eye the sheep. The breed must also have keen hearing to take whistle directions and to hear the sounds of both sheep and predators.

The breed’s agility and stamina are legendary. With a well-angulated front and rear that make fast turns, sudden bursts of speed and rapid changes of direction possible, this medium-sized, graceful dog presents itself as the paramount athlete. Its strong but not heavy bone, deep, moderately broad chest and muscular, slightly arched loin show its strength and speed.

**THE CANAAN DOG**

Although it is a relatively new AKC-recognized breed, the Canaan Dog can trace its ancestry back to pre-biblical times. This indigenous Israeli breed originated in the land of Canaan. Drawings on tombs dating back to 2200 B.C. depict dogs that unmistakably resemble today’s Canaan Dogs.

The breed was used to guard the camps of the Israelites and protect their flocks from predators. After the dispersion of the Hebrews by the Romans over 2,000 years ago, the once prevalent Canaan Dogs were reduced in number and sought refuge in the Negev Desert, then a natural reservoir for Israeli wildlife. Avoiding extinction, they became mostly feral, with some retaining domesticity by living with the Bedouins guarding the camps and herds as their ancestors had done.

It took the vision of breeder, trainer and author Dr. Rudolphina Menzel to see the potential of the Canaan Dog. She was approached by the Israeli defense force to develop a dog for guarding isolated Israeli settlements, and supervising the training of war dogs for the War of Independence in 1948. Menzel knew that only the best Canaan dogs who had been living in the wild could have survived the harsh conditions of their native land. By capturing specimens from all parts of Palestine, she pioneered the redomestication of the breed. They proved to be highly intelligent and easily trainable, and were used in a variety of tasks, including messenger and sentry dogs, Red Cross helpers and land-mine detectors.

The Canaan Dog is a medium-sized, square-bodied dog without extremes. With an athletic, graceful and quick ground-covering trot, the breed displays the herding dogs’ ability to move efficiently and tirelessly at work. The slightly slanted eyes set in the elongated head are a characteristic of the breed, and are helpful in the dry, dusty desert. The Canaan Dog’s medium to large ears, which are set moderately low, are a distinctive feature, as the breed is known for its keen hearing as well as its uncanny sense of smell.

The clean, smooth outline with a slight arch over the loin has a good tuck-up, and the whole picture is completed by a somewhat high tail-set. When excited, the Canaan may carry its tail up over its back. Both front and rear are moderately angulated, well-muscled and in balance. As with other herding dogs, myriad coat colors are found in this breed — with only all white, or gray and brindled markings being a disqualification. A mask is a desired and distinguishing feature on the predominantly white Canaan Dog. The coat itself must be double, lying close to the body.

**THE ROUGH AND SMOOTH COLLIES**

While the origins of the Collie are a matter for conjecture, the modern form emerged in the British Isles sometime during the 1800s. The breed’s progenitors, the sheepdog, the ban dog and the cur were well-known before that. Although the prototype for the rough Collie was most likely the smaller, somewhat longer sheepdog, the cur and ban dog with their light Mastiff background could have easily played a major role in the origins of the smooth Collie.

The Collie was developed as a tool for the care and
management of livestock, primarily sheep. The hardworking and thrifty farmers who bred and used them needed a jack-of-all-trades to help on the farm and in the fields. A dog had to earn its keep.

The rough Collie is traditionally associated with maintaining the flocks on home pastures, gathering and moving stock in all sorts of weather. Working with the shepherd, the breed had to be quick, responsive and obedient, and able to respond at great distances. The dogs had to have great endurance and agility to control the often mercurial and quick stock over all sorts of terrain and in any type of weather.

The smooth Collie was more often used for droving duties, putting together stock from various home farms to take to market. This demanded dogs that were willing to work in strange surroundings with large flocks of unfamiliar stock and contain them on the road. Like their field-herding counterparts, they had to have great endurance and agility to manage these long hours and distances. Irish immigrants coming to Canada who brought their smooth Collies with them enjoyed them as hunting dogs as well, and they earned the reputation of being a good poacher’s dog.

Over the years, however, both types were used for herding and driving and have been interbred since the dawn of the breed. Aside from the coat difference, they share in all the major breed characteristics. In the opening paragraph of the breed standard the Collie is described as a “lithe, strong, responsive, active dog, carrying no useless timber, standing naturally straight and firm.” The breed’s deep, moderately wide chest shows strength, the sloping shoulders and well-bent hocks indicate speed and grace, and the face shows high intelligence.

While all the structural prerequisites for a herding dog are required in the standard, special emphasis is placed on the head and expression that are the hallmarks of the Collie. The exquisite look of a well-blunted, lean wedge of a skull, with properly placed ears that break naturally and almond-shaped eyes expressing intelligent inquisitiveness, is what sets the breed apart. As the standard says, “The Collie cannot be judged properly until its expression has been carefully evaluated.”

THE OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG

Although not able to claim the antiquity of some other dogs, the Old English Sheepdog is not exactly an upstart, as it is depicted in works of art close to 200 years ago. Engravings struck from Sir Thomas Gainsborough’s Duke of Buccleuch in 1771 show the subject embracing a dog that appears to be a fairly good representative of a present day Old English Sheepdog.

Before a system of registering pedigrees was introduced in 1873, breedings of working dogs were predicated more on ability than the preservation of type. Sometimes an infusion of “foreign” blood was used to propagate the working qualities. Some fanciers feel the Scotch bearded collie played a major role in developing the Old English, while others claim the Russian ovcharka as a progenitor. For sheep farmers in the English West Country, the most important requirements were intelligence, agility and hardiness. These qualities were fused together in the Old English Sheepdog.

At the start of the 18th century, drover’s dogs were
largely used to drive sheep and cattle from the hills to market centers. These hardworking dogs were exempt from taxes and, to identify their occupation, their tails were docked, a practice continued today, giving them their nickname — "bobtail." This has led to the misunderstanding that the breed is born tailless, and while this does occur occasionally, the majority of Old English Sheepdog puppies have their tails removed at 3 to 4 days.

Like similar types of sheepdogs in Russia, Italy and the Pyrenees, the Old English Sheepdog's massive build was a virtue, for its other task was to guard the flocks from attack. Described as a strong, compact dog of great symmetry, the breed is nearly square, thickly set, muscular, able-bodied and agile.

The breed is distinguished by its square head, well-defined stop and ears that are carried flat, as well as by its topline, which stands lower at the withers than at the loin. The body is broader at the rump than at the shoulders, which is emphasized by the profuse double coat with its soft under hairs and harsh outer hairs. When trotting, the Old English often displays a lethargic, ambling gait which belies its elastic and immensely powerful gallop.

THE PULI

The Puli is an ancient sheepdog purported to have been introduced to Hungary by the migration of the Magyars over 1,000 years ago. As far back as the 9th century, records indicate this exuberant, active dog was working stock on the plains of the Puszta. The Puli was used to gather up stock from the villages and take them to graze on the vast plains, moving them for miles along the roads. This task often meant long, hard days of work, and the dog was developed as a medium-boned, wiry, agile animal with a thick, protective all-weather coat, the black color distinguishing it from sheep.

One of the most fundamental characteristics of the Puli is its almost mystical relationship with its owners. The nomadic shepherds that originated the breed understood the value of these incredible little herding dogs and were often heard to say, "It's not a dog, it's a Puli!" The shepherds were ruthless in their efforts to maintain their dogs' working qualities, and it was an unwritten law that a Puli was not sold or given to anyone but another shepherd or family member.

Unlike the other shepherders, the Puli serves as a constantly alert foot dog for the shepherd. When commanded to perform a task, it responds with tremendous speed and agility, then returns to the shepherd's side to await the next order. Its method of moving stock is not by eye but by its buoyant, energetic manner and the occasional high-pitched bark. The Puli works close to its flock, turning them with its body. Despite its obvious subordination to the shepherd, the Puli can work on its own initiative and take care of problems without being commanded. It has an uncanny sense of property and boundaries, and the instinct to gather and move livestock is a dominant factor in its temperament.

The Puli standard stresses the words *medium* and *moderate* 10 times. Apart from the uniquely heavy coat, large teeth and sometimes intense vocalizing, the breed is
moderate in all respects. A compact, square dog with distinctive, sprightly movement and a strikingly shaggy coat, the Puli epitomizes the agile, hardy herder able to work all day. The aspects of its structure denote strength, agility and balance. The topline is strong and level, with a short loin and slightly sloping croup, and the tail is carried over, blending into the backline. The Puli’s head, carried on a strong muscular neck, is medium-sized.

The most distinctive feature of the breed is its coat, which will, if allowed, naturally form cords as the dog matures. However, the Puli must possess a double coat with the proper texture apparent. Although it is an affectionate, intelligent and home-loving companion, the Puli is by nature a watchdog and therefore is sensibly suspicious.

THE SHETLAND SHEEPDOG

Developed by crossing the Border Collie with some small, intelligent longhaired breeds in the Shetland Islands, the Shetland Sheepdog was bred to herd and guard the diminutive, agile and wily breed of indigenous sheep. This good-natured, all-purpose little dog fulfilled many functions for the poor crofters of the region, acting as a herder, hunter, ratter, sentry dog and family companion.

The extremely harsh, cold and damp climate of the North Sea, where the islands are situated, dictated the need for a dog with a superlative coat that could withstand such an inhospitable climate. In fact, the dogs were sometimes left on an island over the summer months where they had to protect the flock as well as forage for themselves in the rocky, unforgiving and rugged terrain. Since large predators such as wolves were not an issue on the islands as they were on the Scottish mainland, there was no need for a large dog. A smaller dog was cheaper to feed, and this was of paramount importance in a society where man was barely eking out a living.

In those early days the Sheltie did not possess the elegance we see today, since it was selected purely on working ability. However, with official recognition by the Kennel Club (England) in 1909, small collies were used to make improvements and may account for the fact that even today there is a tendency for a number of individuals to be oversized. Although diminutive, the Shetland Sheepdog does not lack substance; strong bone is called for, as is hard muscular condition. The arched, muscular neck should be of sufficient length to carry the head proudly. The back should be level with a deep chest; the breed should have well-sprung ribs and a slightly sloping croup. Well-angulated, balanced front and rear quarters are a must for this breed that was built to work.

As with the standard for its larger cousin the Collie, the Shetland Sheepdog standard emphasizes the importance of expression as a characteristic of the breed. The obliquely set, almond-shaped eyes, the contours and chiseling of the head, and set and use of the ears all combine to produce the alert, intelligent and questioning look so desirable in the Sheltie. Framed by the magnificent mane — especially in the males — the Sheltie’s head has won it many admirers. Now known more for its competitive qualities in the obedience and agility arenas, this little dog for all seasons continues its multipurpose function in today’s world.

Pluis Davern is a professional handler, field trainer and breeder from Gilroy, Calif. Dedicated to the sport for more than 30 years, she has taken part in, and trained dogs for, conformation, obedience, hunting tests, field trials and search-and-rescue work.
Taking Stock Of

BY PLUIS DAVERN
In this, the final installment of a three-part series on the AKC Advanced Institute on Herding Breeds, we explore the boundaries of the perimeter dogs.

The purpose of dogs in the Herding Group is, of course, to move and tend livestock, but there are distinguishing differences in the manner in which these tasks are carried out. Depending on the type of stock and the needs of the farmer, breeds were developed which, while able to take on all the varied jobs around the farm, were specialists in a certain area. Boundary, or perimeter, dogs — which include the German Shepherd Dog and Briard — are a prime example of this specialization.

**THE GERMAN SHEPHERD DOG**

Although its forebears were used for centuries to herd and carry out general farm work, the German Shepherd Dog as we know it today is a breed that came about in the 20th century. Over the years, German shepherders selected and bred from their best working dogs without giving much thought to consistency in type, size, shape, coat length and texture, or whether ears were pricked or not. Early attempts in Germany to merge different strains into one distinct breed had proven unsuccessful, and all sheep-herding dogs were subsequently placed under the general category of “shepherds.”

It was not until the late 1800s that a young cavalry officer, Max von Stephanitz, successfully took on the task. He observed the then relatively small herding dogs working flocks of large, tough sheep indigenous to the region while their shepherd dozed under a tree. The purpose of the dogs was to contain the sheep in an area where they could graze, and to prevent them from straying into neighboring crops or roads. This need for a “living fence” dictated constant movement on the part of the dogs, circling the flock endlessly without crowding or impacting the feeding pattern of the sheep. The dogs performed this task with little or no help from their masters.

It was von Stephanitz’s determination to develop a more medium-sized dog that was intelligent, tractable, physically sound and able to easily handle sheep of any size, as well as to protect both its charges and its master, that resulted in the present day German Shepherd Dog and earned von Stephanitz the distinction of “father of the breed.”

Not only did this forward-thinking man develop the German Shepherd, he also formed a national breed club to ensure its continuity. Under his guidance and tutelage, breeders of the time were able to mold the heterogeneous sheepdogs into a distinct breed remarkably quickly. The system von Stephanitz devised whereby specially appointed breed wardens gave advice on pedigrees, inspected litters at birth and decreed the maximum number of puppies a bitch should raise is still in effect in Germany. Recognizing that many owners would not necessarily use their dogs for herding, he spearheaded the establishment of obedience and working tests so that the energy and intelligence of the breed would be focused and developed. The working abilities of the German Shepherd were immediately recognized and utilized by German policemen. As the breed’s usefulness as a service dog became apparent, government-subsidized training groups sprang up in villages around the
country, so that Germany had more than 6,000 dogs to deploy at the outbreak of World War I. They were trained as medical dogs that carried drugs, as messengers that crossed mine fields, as members of rescue squadrons that brought in wounded soldiers, as sentries and as guardians.

Allied servicemen were so taken with the breed that many brought them home after the war. In fact, the German Shepherd soon became the most popular breed in Great Britain. To avoid any association with Germany — the British still harbored resentment after the war — the breed was for many years called the Alsatian, after the region of Alsace-Lorraine. In the United States, the German Shepherd equally captured the imagination of the public; by 1926, German Shepherds comprised one third of all purebred dogs registered with the AKC.

As the standard states: “The first impression that a good German Shepherd gives is that of a strong, agile, well-muscled animal, alert and full of life.” Longer than it is tall, with a well-balanced front and rear, it presents an outline of smooth curves rather than angles. Whether at rest or in motion, it must give an impression of muscular fitness, of a substantial dog stamped with a look of quality and nobility.

The German Shepherd stands 24 to 26 inches at the withers for males, and 22 to 24 inches for females. The desired length-to-height proportion — 10 to 8½ — is not derived from a long back, but from overall length with relation to height, and is achieved by length of forequarter and length of withers and hindquarters when viewed from the side. The strong, cleanly chiseled head, which should be in proportion to the body, gives the breed a distinguished look, while medium-sized, dark and slightly obliquely set eyes make for its expression of keen intelligence. Moderately pointed ears opening toward the front are carried erect when the dog is at attention.

A born trotter, the German Shepherd typically carries its head forward rather than up as it covers ground with a far-reaching stride. Its strong, well-angled front and rear assemblies are propelled by short, strong and tightly articulated hocks. The overall impression is one of strength and endurance, with a well-filled chest, and a relatively short back and loin leading into a long, gradually sloping croup.

Like its herding counterparts, the German Shepherd has a double coat. Of medium length, the outercoat is dense, straight and hard, and lays close to the body. Coat color varies and most colors are permissible, with rich, strong color being preferred. The exception, however, is white, which is a disqualification in the breed.

In the standard, emphasis is given to the German Shepherd’s gait, which should seem effortless, elastic, smooth and rhythmic, covering the maximum amount of ground with the minimum number of steps. Ideally, the breed’s long stride appears to be the steady motion of a well-lubricated machine. The well-angled rear reaches far under and surpasses the imprint left by the front foot. This usually necessitates one hind foot passing outside and the other hind foot inside the track of the forefoot; this is not to be faulted unless the locomotion is crablike.

Given the multitude of non-herding tasks for which the German Shepherd is used, not the least of which are guiding the blind, disaster and wilderness search-and-rescue, and protection work, the sound temperament of this breed is paramount. The German Shepherd has a distinct personality marked by a direct and fearless expression. Although not given to immediate friendships, it must be approachable, showing a willingness to meet strangers. Timidity, nervousness and lack of confidence are not typical of good character.

“Outstanding intelligence and incomparable devotion to its owner and family are the hallmarks of the breed,” says breeder-judge Dr. Ruby Hertz. “There is probably not a more versatile dog than the German Shepherd — if the teacher has the skill to teach it. The more you give them to do, the happier they are.”

THE BRIARD

Most historians agree that the Briard belongs to a line of sheepdogs that swept into Europe with a band of Asian invaders from late Roman times to the late Middle Ages. In 1809, the French Abbé Rozier described two varieties of sheepdog, the Chien Berger de la Brie and the Chien Berger de la Beauce. The former was described as being longhaired and the latter shorthaired, more like a Mastiff. The Chien de Berger de la Brie, which later became known as the Briard, seems to have remained relatively unchanged.

In 1909, the French breed club Les Amis du Briard (“Friends of the Briard”) was formed, with a final standard approved in 1925. For centuries the Briard was used as both guardian and shepherd, protecting flocks from the depredations of wolves, wild boar and poachers. Since today’s farms in Western Europe consist of mostly small landholdings, sheep are kept in barns at night and are driven out to pasture by shepherds and dogs each day.
Like the German Shepherd, the Briard is required to keep its sheep contained for grazing during daylight hours. As the allowed areas may be flanked by crops or orchards, and the shepherd subjected to heavy fines if the sheep stray there, it is critical that the dogs keep their charges in line.

By constantly patrolling the perimeter — often working in numbers as a team to maintain an environment conducive to grazing — the Briard acts as a living fence. It works mostly at the trot, tirelessly patrolling the borders, but will break into a gallop if it senses that a boundary might be breached. The dogs are in motion almost constantly to keep the sheep out of mischief — and out of harm’s way.

Much like an Allied version of the German Shepherd, the breed distinguished itself during World War I, carrying ammunition and small machine-gun parts in specially designed backpacks to the front lines for the French army. In its Red Cross work, it transported first-aid supplies and was taught to locate wounded soldiers. The breed was also employed at the front lines as sentries. In 1922, the breed was registered with the AKC, six years before the Briard Club of America was founded.

The Briard is described as a dog of handsome form, vigorous and alert, powerful without coarseness, strong in bone and muscle, and exhibiting strength and agility. It must possess the structural integrity necessary to keep it on the move for long hours as it tends its flock. Agility and flexibility are the qualities that are the keystones of the breed’s success. Unlike many other herding dogs, the Briard is not cobby, and is somewhat longer than tall, although not so much so as the German Shepherd.

One of the hallmarks of the breed is its distinctive head. Measured from the prominent occiput to the tip of the nose, the correct head is equal in length to 40 percent of the dog’s height at the withers. From any angle, the fully coated silhouette gives the impression of two rectangles, equal in length but different in height and width, blending together rather abruptly. The larger rectangle is the skull and the smaller forms the muzzle. Joining the neck at a right angle, the head is held proudly alert.

With its large, widely set dark eyes, the Briard presents an expression that is frank, questioning and confident. The ears may be natural or cropped. The Briard’s topline has a slight incline downward from the prominent withers to the straight back and broad loin, ending in a slightly sloped croup. The deep, broad chest is formed by curved, egg-shaped ribs that enable free movement of the forelegs.

Another distinctive feature of the breed is its tail, which in repose descends to the point of the hock, terminating in the crook, similar to a printed J when viewed from the dog’s right side. The powerful front and rear quarters are well-angulated, with the legs straight and parallel to the median line of the body. The construction of the legs is of paramount importance, determining the dog’s ability to work without fatigue. The Briard must have double dewclaws on the rear legs, ideally forming additional functioning toes.

The breed’s coarse outercoat lies down flat and falls naturally in long, slightly wavy locks, generally 6 inches or more in length over the shoulders. The undercoat is fine and tight over all the body. The hair on the breed’s head forms a natural part in the center, with the eyebrows arching up and out in a curve that lightly veils the eyes. Apart from disqualifying white, all uniform coat colors are permitted with deeper shades preferred.

The breed is characterized by its quick movement, described by many as “quicksilver.” Its fast, agile and sure-footed gait allow the breed to make the abrupt turns, springing starts and sudden stops required of a sheepherding dog. Catlike in gait, the Briard gives the impression of gliding along without touching the ground. It is, above all, a trotter. Intelligent, easily trained, faithful and gentle, the Briard has an ardent desire to please. Although reserved with strangers, it is loving and loyal to those it knows.

Now that we have come to know all 17 members the Herding Group — the cattle-driving dogs, sheepdogs and boundary dogs — as presented at the AKC Advanced Institute on Herding Breeds, we can better understand how these breeds developed. Although terrain, geography and economics — in addition to herding style — gave rise to distinctly different types of dogs, the common job of herding has dictated fundamental similarities in structure and mentality. We must also remember that many other breeds, including the Rottweiler, Samoyed and Kerry Blue Terrier, are also able herders. This brings us to a final, and lasting, point: It is not just herding instinct that drives our beloved dogs, but heart.

By constantly patrolling the perimeter of a grazing area, the Briard acts as a living fence around its charges. The breed is in motion, usually at a trot, almost constantly to keep the sheep out of mischief — and out of harm’s way.

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