

ARTICLE- The Chow Chow Club (England) Founded 1895



One of the great pioneers of the Chow breed in England in the 1920s and beyond was Mrs. Mannooch, pictured above with her Choonam Chows

Below you will find a wonderful article circa 1985 in a British dog publication , highlighting the first 90 years of England's rich chow breed history. All the photos are from the article which showcase some of the most prominent breeders and dogs of the eras being discussed. I'm so happy to have this gem from my private collection finally scanned and archived!! A MUST READ

The Chow Chow Club Founded 1895

by Vi Elsworth

THE first meeting of The Chow Chow Club took place on July 1, 1895, at 66 Carlisle Mansions, Victoria Street, SW1. The Chair was taken by Mr W. R. Temple, and inaugural members present were Lady Granville Gordon, Mrs Arthur James, Mrs G Fitzwilliams, Mr and Mrs Janvrin Dickson, Mrs Burgess, Miss Casella, Miss Armyne Gordon (later Lady Faudel Phillips) and Mr Onken.

The Club's Early Years

The first task undertaken at this meeting was to draw up a "Scale of points of Chow Chows", or as we now call it, the Breed Standard, which was based on the Premier Chow of the day, Chow VIII, owned by Mr Temple. The scale of points differs little from our present Standard, except "General Appearance" includes the word Lively, the colour yellow is given which I suppose we call light red, and

white, with no mention of cream. Eyes are stated to be "dark and small", which rather refutes the statement sometimes made these days that this is a more recent fad, and must have applied to Chows as they were then, many being recent imports from their native land. In spite also of our opinion of early Chows, the section on forelegs clearly states "with great bone", hindlegs to be the same. There was no mention of height.

Mr Temple was appointed the first Secretary, Mrs Burgess Treasurer, and the Rules adopted were those of the St Hubert Schipperke Club, with whom the Chow Club had a close association, running shows in conjunction for a number of years. Club Specials were to be Silver and Bronze Medals, and many famous dogs are listed as winners over the years. Lady Elena Wickham and Mrs Carlton Cowper were elected to the Club, the total membership thus being 25, and the subscription fixed at 1 guinea (£1.05) – now £1.25! For some time the Chairman was elected from those present at the meeting.

The first Chow classes, two only, were at the Autumn 1895 Kennel Club Show: Novice and Open. A move to provide a Puppy Class was resisted because of the great liability of the breed to contract distemper.

The first Chow show was held in conjunction with the Schipperke Club in December 1895. Mrs Janvrin Dickson suggested that a "real Chinaman" should be asked to judge, but the meeting came to the conclusion "that the Chinaman would probably judge the dogs from an eating point of view, which would not tend towards the improvement of the breed". The prize money at the show was a Sweepstake of the entry fees, half of the money awarded to the First prizewinner, the other half divided so that two-thirds went to Second and one-third to Third. From time to time during the early years, the committee were called upon to decide whether dogs were pure bred Chows.

It was not long before Chow classes were being scheduled at a number of other shows, but a request for support by the Secretary of Birmingham Show was turned down as the committee felt that keeping dogs tied on benches for *five* days was an act of gross cruelty. Mr Temple resigned the Secretaryship in 1898 and was elected President. Miss Manley took over as Secretary, and Chow classes continued to increase all over the country. Many conditions were made, and accepted, for the awarding of the Club Medals. Judges were voted onto a list at the Annual General Meeting, but usually only about 12 names were required. There was no time limit on length of appointments. Sir William Cospatrick Dunbar was President of the Club for a number of years, Mrs Rawson and Mrs Moore following Miss Manley as Secretary.

Meetings were held in Edinburgh as Sir William attended meetings regularly. After this, different areas were used to suit committee members' convenience and the Annual General Meeting was at Crufts. I seem to recall older Chowists telling me of the first day being the show, the second day meetings and so on.

A surprising discovery whilst researching this article was a proposition in 1914 for amalgamation with the Provincial Chow Club, this not having been mentioned previously, and on March 25, 1914, a new Minute Book is headed "The Chow Chow Club (London and Provincial)". It seems the merger took place without acrimony with Mrs Scaramanga being elected President and Mrs Moore continuing as Secretary.

Gold Medals were Awarded from WWI Onwards

During the First World War the committee met only twice a year, but shows continued and Gold Medals were now being awarded. One special award was offered for the Chow with the straightest fore and hind legs. By 1921 the Club was once again titled The Chow Chow Club, only, and familiar names appear in the list of shows with Chow classes, L.K.A., Blackpool, Edinburgh, Richmond, Manchester, and the membership was consulted about judges and venue for the Club show. Many famous names appear as committee members over the years, Miss Baker, Mr Allwright, Mrs Chetwode, Mr Hartwell, Mrs Jones, Mrs Woodcock, Mr Scriven, Mrs Tidd, Mr Will Hally, Mrs Mannooch and Mr Rotch in addition to those already mentioned. In 1923 The Kennel Club turned down a proposition made by Mr Hartwell and seconded by Mr Scriven "to debar any dog or bitch which had not sired or bred a litter for four years, from winning challenge prizes".

Mrs Jones was appointed Secretary/Treasurer in 1925, although at this time the idea of having a paid Secretary/Treasurer was mooted, but not pursued.

The Kennel Club were approached to see if anything could be done to stop the practice at Crufts of charging 1/- (5p.) for taking dogs out at night, and also the exorbitant charge of 2/6d. (12½p.) for benching together.

To mark the Club's appreciation of the long service given to the Club by Mrs Moore as Secretary, a presentation was made, all donors being listed in an illuminated book bound in leather, the cost of which at £5 was viewed with some disquiet, and was deducted from the donations.

Mr Cruft's "Royal" Command

In 1926 Mr Cruft invited the Club to hold their show in conjunction with his in February, this at that time being something akin to a royal summons, but the Club declined as Mr Cruft would not accede to their request for the Third prize money to be no lower than the entry fee. At this time the membership was 61.

In 1933 the first postal ballot for the Club Judges list took place with 29 names on the ballot paper, but this was not continued due to the poor response from members: once again, times don't change! At shows scheduling Chow classes, judges were always requested from the Club, and classes guaranteed with Club Spoons offered as Specials, the purchase price being 2/6d. (12½p.) obtained from Archibald C. Burge, Edinburgh. What became of the die?

An objection from the committee to the proposed name of "National" for a new Chow Club fell on stony ground with the Kennel Club, much to the committee's annoyance. In 1937 Mr E. Lumley was elected to the committee and his connection with, and interest in, the Club continued until his death in 1984, when he was their Patron and a Life Member. On January 12, 1938, the Club's first show just for Chows was held at Tattersalls, the judges being Mr Hartwell and Lady Faudel Phillips, but it appears that, despite a good entry, it was not a financial



The late Duke of Kent, the present Duke and Princess Alexandra with their Choonam Chow in 1938.

success. Unsuccessful approaches were made to The Chinese Chow Club to hold a joint Club Show, so instead the show was held in conjunction with another: Kensington at Hendon Stadium. The rings had now been improved and would not now be on the cinder tracks! The Club judges lists were still being compiled at the Annual General Meeting and in 1939 comprised 39 names, which included Miss J. O. Joshua, Miss N. Corelli, Miss C. E. Collett, and Mr E. Lumley. Mrs Scaramanga still held the office of President.

The Second World War and After

In December 1939 the subscription was reduced to 2/6d. (12½p.) for the duration of the war as no large shows were being held, and committee business was transacted by post. Annual General Meetings continued to be held in London, and Miss G. Morton was elected to the committee in 1944 along with Mrs Stanley Barratt. Storage of the Club's Trophies was a problem due to the blitz, but they

did find a safe niche in a vault in St Pauls Churchyard.

In 1946 Miss Baker was elected President, it having been impossible to trace Mrs Scaramanga after the War, and Mrs Jones, having served 21 years as did Mrs Moore, resigned as Secretary, Miss Morton being appointed in her place. At this meeting, the Club were informed by the Kennel Club that any Breed Standard was a matter which they always left to the Specialist Clubs concerned, this matter having arisen due to a press report that a Panel of Judges was being formed to consider the revision of Standards.

Chinese Counsellor Presented Prizes at First Championship Show

Championship status was granted to the Club in 1946 and a professional show manager ran all the Club's shows until Miss Morton's retirement. The show was held during this year on a weekday at the Horticultural Hall, London with 32 classes. Mr Browning and Mr Hurst



Ch. Ukwong King Solomon holds the record for the number of CCs won by any breed.

judged 104 Chows – 381 entries, CC winners being Mr Beet's Viking of Barwick and Miss Collett's Anthea of Barwick, the latter Best in Show. Both became Champions at a later date. The Counsellor from The Chinese Embassy presented the Trophies. The show was advertised in *The Times*! In this year, The Midland Chow Club applied to change its name to The Chow Chow Association, to which the committee objected, and this time the application was not successful.

In 1948, the new Standard (which had been submitted by the Kennel Club for approval) and was practically word for word the old Chow Club Standard, was accepted, the only addition being the minimum height sentence.

In 1961 Mrs Street took over as Secretary from Miss Morton, Miss Baker continued as President and Mrs Vi Elsworth was Cup Steward. Championship shows were held on a Saturday at Queensway Baths Hall W2 (now Sainsburys). Mrs Joan Bennett was a member of the committee, and she continued to serve until her death in 1984. Mr Frank Watkinson advertised his Ch. Minhow Edward of Junggwaw as The Hyperion of the Chow Fancy.

In 1965 Mrs Vi Elsworth was elected Secretary. At that time, Mr A. E. Burrows



A line-up in the late 1940s: (left to right) back row, Mr A.O.Grindey, Mr Ryder, Mr Kingsbury, Mrs Hall, front row, Mrs Brind, Miss Buckley and her kennel maid.

of the famous Penhow Smooth Chows was President, Dr T. Kemp Homer Chairman and the Championship Show was held at Leicester. The Club Newsletter had come into being and after a rather hit-and-miss few years, now appears regularly in June and December. By 1970 the 75th Year, Mr Frank Watkinson had become President and he too continued until his death in 1979, travelling to Banbury for all committee meetings from his Yorkshire home. He was succeeded by Mr G. Webster, and Mr A. J. Ansell is the current President, taking over in 1983 after the death of Mr Webster. The Championship Show was at the best-ever venue, The Winter Gardens, Banbury. Mrs J. Jack judged Dogs and Mr G. Leatt Bitches. They drew an entry of 359 made by 155 Chows, and Special Prizes of great value were donated by overseas members: Best in Show, the Bitch CC winner Wyndham Thomas's Sikong Katy of Shergay (Mr Thomas will judge Crufts this month), Dog CC Claxton and Phillips Chanoyu Golden Marcus and Best Puppy, Earnshaw's Oliver of Tymoshan. The 80th Anniversary was the next milestone and the Club's President, Mr Watkinson, judged Dogs with Mrs Joey Natrass from Canada judging Bitches, the entry surpassing the 75th: 172 Chows, 392 Entries. Best in Show the Bitch CC winner Westlake's Baytor Blue Enchantress, Dog CC Joan Bennett's Kukim Gambler of

Perkychow. Best Puppy was Nunn's Honey's Boy Gubbonair.

The Club Possesses many Trophies

The Club Trophy list is now very long, and Trophies are perpetual, a set being awarded at each of the three shows to be held for one year, but in the early days they could be won outright with many differing conditions. The committee kept a close watch on shows where the Club Trophies were awarded and decided quite arbitrarily once to withdraw them from Crufts "on account of the Sliding Scale in force at that Show". A tantalising statement, there being no explanation. The first Trophy was purchased in 1891, cost 20 guineas, and was purchased as a result of a whip round at an Annual General Meeting. Mr and Mrs Faber donated the next one, also valued at 20 guineas, still competed for at our Championship Show; its present day value far exceeds this amount. A deposit of £5 was charged to cup winners, which, with a cup costing 20 guineas, seems a lot of money. By 1946 the total value of the Trophies was £504 and the insurance premium was £2/11/6 (£2.55), winners having to pay 5/- (25p.) towards the insurance. Nowadays, with 66 up for competition at the Championship Show alone, some exhibitors prefer not to take them home, and no deposit is charged.



1973 Dinner: (left to right) Mrs K. A. J. Clark (Treasurer), Mrs Vi Elsworth (Secretary), the Mayor of Banbury, Mrs D. Watkinson, Mr D. Tucker (Chairman), the Mayoress and Mr Frank Watkinson (President).

700-strong Membership

For a number of years, the Club has run three shows during the year, and none are now held in London. The membership has risen rapidly in the past twenty years from 83 to around the 700 mark, nearly 100 of these being overseas. In 1964 the

Club were the prime movers in starting The Chow of the Year Show, the biggest Chow show in the world, which is now sponsored annually by each of the 9 Chow Clubs in turn. The Club are proud to be sponsoring this year when it comes of age on March 31 at Bingley Hall, Stafford.

The committee hope that their predecessors listed in the first paragraph would consider they are continuing the aims with which the Club started out 90 years ago, now stated in our Rules: "to promote the interest and the welfare of the breed at all times." ●