

BENCHED DOG SHOWS - A SPECTATORS DREAM



An extremely rare 1920's peek at a chow benching area. This photo is in my personal collection.

This kind of dog show in the photos above was called a BENCHED SHOW. All the dogs were partitioned off in designated spaces, on public display for the entire day as the show was running.

Westminster Kennel Club is one of the 6 shows left in the USA which are still benched.

PRIVATE COLLECTION OF SANDRA MILLER



THE CHOWS' BENCH

BY GEORGE DENHOLM ARMOUR 1934



CRYSTAL PALACE SHOW 1895

Exhibitors would go to great lengths to decorate their benched areas in elaborate ways, and clubs would many times have contests and give awards for the best display. The concept was fantastic for both exhibitors and spectators who could find any dog, breeder, or breed at any time during the day. Once benching dogs became out of fashion, the show scene changed dramatically to a “show and go” atmosphere.

I think the fancy is really missing a lot by not encouraging breeders to sit together all day long where they inevitably end up chatting about pedigrees , litters, experiences in the breed ... like a “stitch n bitch” (quilting bee) for dog breeders.



This 1895 illustration from the Crystal show is one of the earliest records of chows being shown

DOG SHOW DESCRIPTION of THE CRYSTAL PALACE 1895

“Paxton’s great building at Sydenham is admirably adapted for big exhibitions such as the annual Dog Show of the Kennel Club. The animals are benched all along the nave, which is 1,608 feet long; and even this space is insufficient for all the competitors, while there is plenty of room in the Central Transept for the judges rings, one of which is shown in our picture.

Moreover, the Palace is light and airy, and the barking of the dogs is not so deafening here as in smaller buildings. To these shows the best bred dogs in the country are sent, of almost every known variety, and to win a prize in such company is praise indeed. The Kennel Club, which was founded in 1874,

has much the same authority in the “doggy world” that the Jockey Club exercises....”

SOURCE:

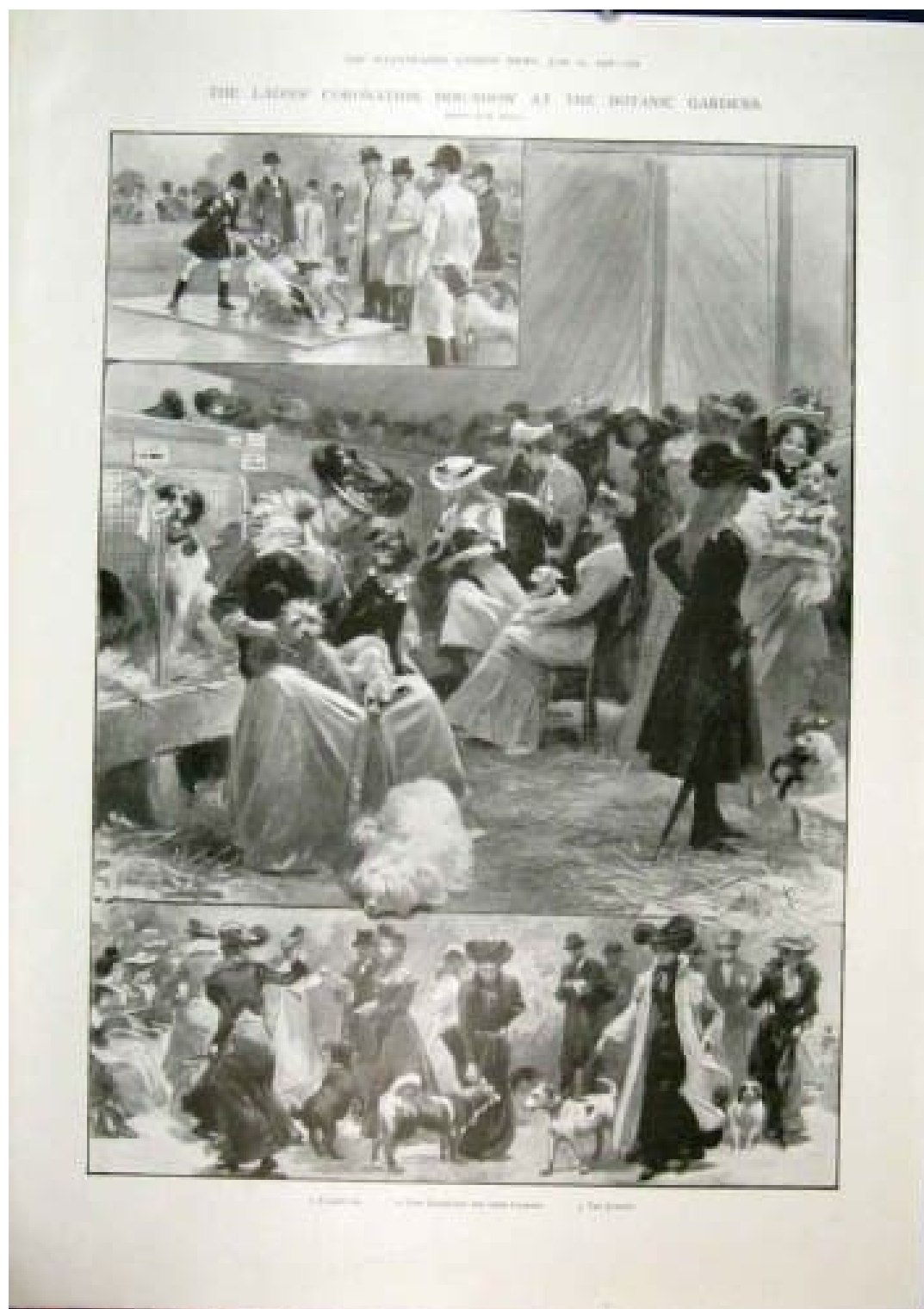
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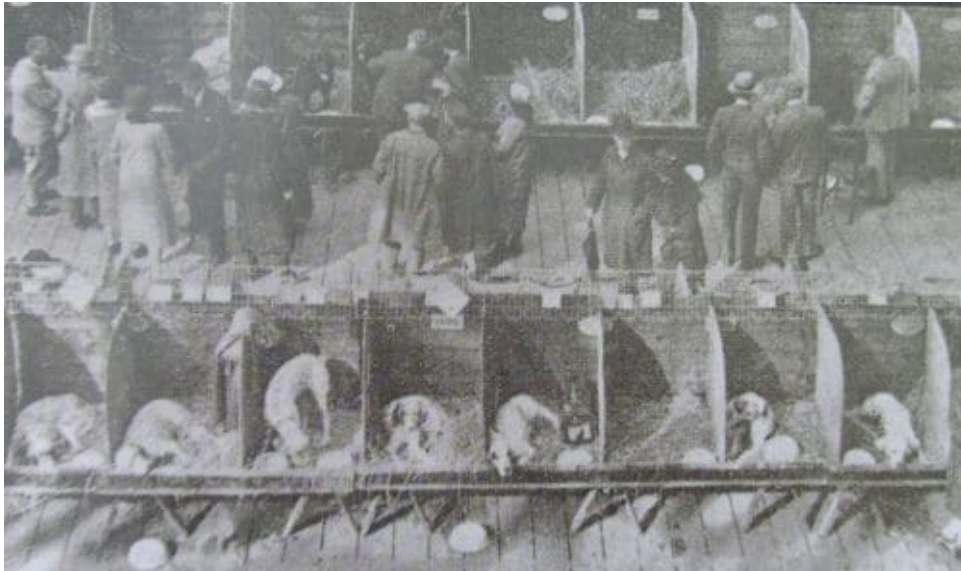
Example of a benching setup



Crufts Bench show 1880



1902 Benched Show with a chow in the foreground



Benching at Crufts in 1891



Example of an 1880's benching setup

