



Sussex Spaniel

ANKC Judges Training Scheme 2001

Gundog group
Sussex Spaniel
English Kennel Club Breed
Standard 1994
FCI Standard No 127

HISTORY OF THE BREED

Inside this publication

History of the Breed	1
Sussex in Australia	2
The Extension to the Standard	2
The Extension to the Standard	3
The Extension to the Standard	4
Notes on Breed Type and Judging	4
Article by Carolyn Muirhead	5
Speech by Joy Freer	6/ 7
ANKC Breed Standard	8

One of the Early recognisable breeds of Spaniel named after the County in England. In the 1800s there was a large, fairly slow but thorough type of spaniel who was gaining a reputation as a reliable working dog. These spaniels were described as 'old, short-legged and strong loined'. The proper Sussex was recognised in a number of publications at the time, as being a Golden Liver, and one notable pioneer of the breed in the early 1800's is Mr Augustus Fuller, of Rosehill Park, Sussex. He kept a pure strain of Sussex, merely for his own enjoyment.

When shows began in the mid 1800s, Sussex were generally entered in classes for 'other than Clumber', or 'large Spaniels'. In 1873 they were given classes of their own - as 'Sussex breeds'.

A handful of die-hard Spaniel men fought to keep the breed going, and even then, they had breeding problem. By the first world war, interest in them had all but ceased, but into the twenties that interest was rekindled in a number of wealthy land owners. Interest was also



aroused in the woman whose name virtually is Sussex Spaniels: Mrs Joy Freer.

It would certainly be true to say that without Mrs Joy Freer, this breed would not be around today. From her purchase of Brosse (who later became a Champion) in 1926, until her demise in 1984, Joy Freer dedicated her life to the Sussex.

It is true to say that the breed enjoyed a well deserved revival after the First World War. After the Second World War, but for Joy Freer, there would have been nothing left to revive. The remarkable story of one woman and her breed is documented elsewhere in this material.

From the forties to the sixties, a few people, mainly show people, carried on

breeding with Mrs Freer's Fourclovers stock. Show entries were limited to single figures. At Crufts 1959, for example, nine were entered. In 1964 two breeders sought and were granted permission from the Kennel Club to interbreed with the Clumber in order to widen the gene pool.

Today, the breed is healthier, numbers wise, than it has ever been. Sussex thrive in the USA, Scandinavia and the UK and have made their presence felt in all three countries.



SUSSEX SPANIELS IN AUSTRALIA

There is mention of dogs being imported from the UK in the last century, but nothing carried on into the 1900s.

In 1984 English Show Champion Risdene Albatross of Shipden bounced his way into quarantine and the history books.

Arthur was by one of the last Fourclovers dogs bred by Joy Freer and showed all the hallmarks of his famous breeding. He was followed by two of his kennel mates: Shipden Minnie the Moocher and Shipden Queen of the May and both

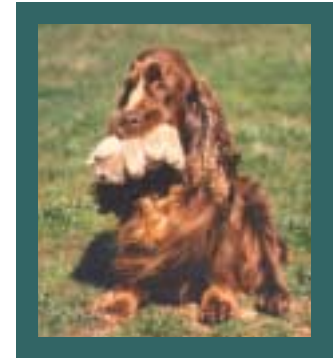
bitches whelped a litter each to him under the Keely's Alhambra prefix.

Albatross was a great Ambassador for the breed, winning numerous Groups and RUBIS and Short listings in Royal Groups. He won more and more fans for the breed at every show.

Since then the numbers have been added to by Daryl Walker (Vic) and Robert Clark (NSW) both of whom have brought out imports, Robert's being from both UK and Sweden and Daryl's from the UK.. Another litter has also been born to a UK import owned by a novice breeder, so the bloodlines are being added to constantly.

There is now a nucleus of enthusiastic

breeders and exhibitors in Victoria and the ACT who have the welfare and promotion of the breed at heart. Hopefully there may be more imports soon.



A Gallery of Sussex!



A very promising young puppy



The typical head shape of a young dog



The mature dog showing correct size, and shape

The Extension to the Breed Standard

General Appearance Massive, strongly built. Active, energetic dog, whose characteristic movement is a decided roll, and unlike that of any other Spaniel.

While the first three words of the standard say massive and strongly built the next sentence says active and energetic. In order to be an active and energetic working dog the Sussex does not have to be nearly as massive as breeders and judges

fondly imagine. This is backed up by other sections of the breed standard. He needs to be heavier than a Cocker Spaniel certainly, but I cannot emphasise too strongly that the Sussex is not a brown Clumber.

Characteristics Natural working ability, gives tongue at work in thick cover.

While the Sussex is definitely at home in thick cover nobody has

as yet had one that gave tongue and indeed it is the last thing that one would want on the shoot.

Temperament Kindly disposition, aggression highly undesirable.

Speaks for itself. Most Sussex show a lively tail action all of the time. N.B. many will 'smile' and show their teeth - this is not aggression; just their way of communicating.

THE EXTENSION TO THE BREED STANDARD

Head and Skull Skull wide, showing moderate curve from ear to ear, neither flat nor apple headed, with centre indentation and a pronounced stop. Brows frowning; occiput decided, but not pointed. Nostrils well developed and liver in colour. Well balanced head.

The standard is quite clear - skull wide with moderate curve, not flat or apple headed. The centre indentation is most important and together with the frowning brows is what gives the head its character. Dogs with round soccer ball heads with a great width between the eyes and no indentation are totally incorrect.

Eyes Hazel colour, fairly large, not full, but soft expression and not showing much haw.

Hazel fairly large (beware the dogs with round pop eyes). Not showing much haw indicates that some is acceptable.

Ears Thick, fairly large and lobular, set moderately low, just above eye level. Lying close to skull.

Mouth Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, !.c. Upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the Jaws.

See notes on judging the Sussex Spaniel.

Neck Long, strong, and slightly arched, not carrying head much above level of back. Slight throatiness, but well marked frill.

The standard cannot be clearer - LONG. The long neck has all but disappeared in many of the dogs of today. A long neck gives the breed that look of activity that is essential



Two beautiful heads and expressions in Father and Son!

if it is to be the correct shape. It is to be slightly throaty with the double frill which is under the upper part of the throat..

Forequarters Shoulders sloping and free, arms well boned and muscular. Knees large and strong, pasterns short and well boned. Legs rather short and strong.

As with most short legged, long bodied breeds, well laid shoulders are not as difficult to breed.

Body Chest deep and well developed; not too round and wide. Back and loin well developed and muscular in both width and depth. The back ribs must be deep. Whole body strong and level with no sign of waistlines from withers to hips.

Deep but not too round and wide - this is important. Not rounded barrel ribs like many judges expect. The strength in the body is expected to come from correct conformation and fitness - not from being overweight. N.B. many young Sussex will show wastiness until

they are at least three to four years old when they will begin to mature.

Hindquarters Thighs strongly boned and muscular, hocks large and strong, legs short and strong with good bone. Hindlegs not appearing shorter than forelegs or over angulated.

Muscular with large strong hocks. Very important, not over angulated.

Feet Round, well padded, well feathered between toes.



Photograph shows correct body shape and dimensions in the mature male Sussex

Tail Set low and never carried above level of back. Lively actioned. Preferably docked to a length of from 5-7 ins.

5-7 inches is much longer than the average spaniel.



Another reasonably good adult male, but greatly lacking in neck

THE EXTENSION TO THE BREED STANDARD

Gait/Movement True fore and aft with distinctive roll.

Distinctive roll is due to correct proportions and the necessary width in the hindquarter.

Coat Abundant and flat with no tendency to curl and ample undercoat for weather resistance. Ears covered with soft, wavy hair, but not too profuse. Forequarters and hindquarters moderately well feathered. Tall thickly clothed with hair but not feathered.

Colour Rich golden liver and hair shading to golden at tip; gold predominating. Dark liver or puce undesirable.

Coat and Colour:
Very important breed points.

Coat Flat with undercoat,,
Not too profuse on ears;
Moderate feather on front and back legs -

Colour RICH GOLDEN LIVER SHADING TO GOLD AT TIPS

Dark Liver and Puce
UNDESIRABLE
Not the red of the Welsh Springer or liver of the English Springer (unbleached or otherwise).
Many specialists will deem a correct colour and coat as important, if not more so, as a good mouth.

Size Ideal height at withers: 38-41 cms (15-16 ins). Weight approximately 50 lbs.

N.B. the Sussex male is approximately 30lbs lighter than a Clumber male. While the standard does not differentiate by sex the female of the species is feminine and differs noticeably in size from the male and should never be penalised for being so. This is not to say that she may be weedy or lack any other breed characteristic.

Faults Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault



Sh Ch Daleyb Just Jiving winner of BIS at the Sussex Championship show 2000

and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

Note Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

NOTES ON BREED TYPE AND JUDGING THE SUSSEX SPANIEL.

To breed a Sussex of correct make and shape, with a good coat and sound movement, is one hell of an achievement. To get the above plus a good mouth is a minor miracle!

Undershot mouths can be a problem in the breed. Ironically, many of the best dogs have the worst mouths. Many breeders and specialist judges have always felt they were judging a Sussex Spaniel not a mouth. You must make up your mind which is more important to you. I know how I feel!

Massive is the first word in the standard, but is contradicted by the need for the long neck, the chest which is not too round and wide and the air of activity. Bear in mind that a Sussex is approximately 50 lbs. A Clumber is 80 lbs. Therefore the Sussex may be massive compared to the Cocker but not the Clumber.

A Sussex is a very late maturer and will not reach his peak of body development

until at least five or six years old. Therefore some obvious allowances have to be made for gawky intermediates who lack body. Also many Sussex are not keen eaters, but are active and energetic and during their early years tend to carry more muscle than fat.

The body length is not mentioned as such, but with a long neck and short legs being a requirement, it is obvious (even without the old photos and the writings of Joy Freer) that the body is expected to be long.

Although the breed is of necessity very inbred, the range in is very varied, and Joy Freer proved over the years that Sussex do not breed true. This is why we still have the problem with mouths and to a certain degree, size. To quote Joy "we still after all these years, get camels and caterpillars in the same litter".

"Beware the short necked short backed dog with a round head, and no roll. They may look like great

THE SUSSEX SPANIEL

CAROLYN MUIRHEAD

little dogs as they bustle around the ring, dripping with coat. They often catch the eye of the Group judge, for they look smart, flashy and showy! They look like everything except a Sussex!"

THE SUSSEX SPANIEL CAROLYN MUIRHEAD

Sh Ch Harvest Glow of Oldfield, the breed record holder in the UK



THE SUSSEX Spaniel was originally bred and kept for work on his estate by Mr A. E. Fuller, of Rosehill in Sussex, sometime in the late 18th century. Just what breeds were crossed to produce the distinctive type, nobody is quite certain, as Mr Fuller kept his own counsel. The breed was spread after the death of Mr Fuller, supposedly by a pair of Sussex named "George" and "Romp", given by Mr Fuller's widow to his gamekeeper. However, various writers on the breed disagree on dates and details. The other dogs in the kennel were reported to have been auctioned. This would be at the time that dog shows were becoming popular and the breed gradually spread; Mr Jacobs of Newton Abbott being one of the early breeders. On his death most of his stock was acquired by Moses Woolland of the "Bridford" kennels, and as Woolland also owned field spaniels (then also known as the black spaniel) some interbreeding appears to have taken place.

The black blood did not help to preserve

the typical Sussex colour of golden liver. Type, too, took rather a battering as very short-legged, long backed animals became fashionable, one of the causes why the breed lost favour as working Gundogs.

The end of the 1914-8 war saw the breed at a very low ebb ~ there apparently being only five registered pure-bred Sussex left. (The Government had tried to stop wartime breeding by restricting registrations to licensed kennels only - thus there were many unregistered dogs of all breeds). The Broadhurst kennel of Mr Stephenson Clark is the main link with the present day as the first champion owned by Mrs "Fourclovers" Freer - Ch Brosse was all Broadhurst breeding. The Fourclovers have probably been more instrumental in keeping the breed alive than any other kennel in the history of the breed. Spanning the inter-war years, breeding fairly closely to retain type and character, the strain developed a slightly taller dog to counteract the exaggerated length and lowness that had become prevalent pre-

1918. When the Sussex Spaniel Association was formed the members agreed that a taller dog was necessary for work, as, although the brains and working ability were still there the ultra, short legs were becoming an impediment (some exhibits had been as low as 12 inches). Thus the height was set at approximately 16 inches.

At the end of the Second World War, the breed was marginally stronger numerically in that there were eight breedable Sussex! There was one other but he was infertile. These eight were all owned by Mrs Freer, and from them have descended all the present-day Sussex. It says much for her selection of her foundation stock, and thoughtful breeding subsequently, that the breed is in a relatively stable position.

An evergrowing number of Sussex are being used as ordinary shooting dogs with good results. The lack of popularity of the breed as workers in the past has probably been due more to the periodic shortages of puppies rather than any lack of working ability. Sussex are fairly easily trained and quite keen, sensible workers, although probably not spectacular enough to figure highly in the awards at trials. Their robust conformation and keen noses make them excel as beaters, especially in heavy cover such as bramble and rhododendron as met with on some of our estates in Norfolk, which is the type of cover the breed was originally developed for in the county it was named after.

We usually commence the training of our young stock by teaching them to retrieve at as early an age as possible, and encouraging them to carry at all



Sh Ch Creswelshaw Hannibal, the UK CC record holder in males

THE SUSSEX SPANIEL

CAROLYN MUIRHEAD

times.

The reason for placing prime importance on this item of training is because retrieving is probably the weakest point of the Sussex as a worker and with certain dogs needs special encouragement. The powerful jaws and long, strong neck make it reasonably easy for a Sussex to carry hares etc., with no problems.

Originally the breed standard was formulated with the ideal working gundog in mind, geared to the type of terrain the breed concerned was required to work. The Sussex and, likewise, the Clumber were developed to work the same type of cover eg. heavy shrubs and bushes interspersed with brambles, therefore the same basic type was evolved - the long, low, heavy, somewhat ponderous animal. For the same reason the powerful head and jaws were bred in, the deep stop offering more protection to the eyes from low branches. The strong jaws and powerful neck muscles were needed because a long retrieve from deep woodland is, of necessity, more arduous and requires more strength and stamina than a straight retrieve from bracken or a beet-field. The well developed nostrils and broad skull of the Sussex give great scenting power and intelligence and this allied to their rather painstaking style of hunting means that they miss fewer birds, than, for instance, some of the faster strains of the other breeds of gundogs which can sometimes tend to over run their nose. For all their size and ungainly appearance Sussex are surprisingly agile when the occasion demands, and they also possess the ability to switch from a serious, sober almost studious animal in the shooting field to being an absolute clown; not always at the most convenient time. Apart from giving priority to the retrieving, Sussex training follows the normal pattern of spaniel education,

Sh Ch Torshca Try
Me For Sighs

except that one can change the emphasis from "stopping" the dog to encouraging him to hunt more keenly, due to the Sussex being less "fizzy" than most of the spaniel breeds. Basically it amounts to the old maxim of being at one with your dog and tailoring the training to suit each other.

Our Sussex have profited by being worked alongside our English springers. As a gundog they are admirably suited to the roughshooter who just potters about, as they do not range as far or as fast as some breeds, or to the standing gun as they possess infinite patience and do not mind sitting for long periods.

Apart from the numerical decline of the breed, a contributory factor to the loss of interest in the breed as a working gundog is the lack of a really good field trial performer to capture the imagination of the shooting fraternity, but this is likely to be a long term project, bearing in mind the fact that the Sussex lacks the speed and style that helps to gain the top spots in trials.

The best that can be hoped for at present is to gain minor awards, if owners can be persuaded to train their dogs and run them - and nominations are not too easily come by! Some of the rangier, less typical specimens could probably be "geed-up" and develop the necessary style and speed, but this would eventually lead to a division of the breed, as has happened to several other breeds, into field trial and show types.

It is due entirely to the show-orientated



breeders that the breed is still in existence. A small nucleus of owners work their dogs, but the working abilities must be retained and encouraged without loss of breed type.

The late Joy Freer is credited with saving Sussex Spaniels from extinction after World War II. Few people would dispute that she played a major role in developing modern day Sussex. In 1978 Mrs. Freer was asked to speak before a Swedish kennel club and give her thoughts on Sussex Spaniels. What follows is her speech, in it's entirety. All underlining and emphasis is Mrs. Freer's.

SUSSEX SPANIELS - SPEECH BY JOY FREER

When I think of Sussex Spaniels the first thing that comes to mind is their remarkable colour.

It was the thing that struck me most when I saw them for the first time. There is no other animal that has this colouring except the lion which has the same tawny shade. They also have the same big bone and big feet, and something of the same steady way of regarding you that the lion has. I understand that the lion hates to be alone which is another resemblance to the Sussex. Sussex have wonderful noses and rarely miss any game. They are, therefore, useful gundogs and though not so fast as some they never over run their noses. They are always anxious to please and for that reason, easy to train.

There seem to be many theories as to their origin. For my part, I always think



Sh Ch Gaelcourt Sojer Hossifer

SUSSEX SPANIELS -

SPEECH BY JOY FREER

they must have a strong mixture of the old Norfolk Spaniel and that is how they have come by their love of water. The temperament of the Sussex should be quiet and steady and their movement the same. I don't like to see a Sussex bouncing about. He moves with a roll that is quite distinctive.

I have owned and bred Sussex for 50 years and one odd thing I have noticed is that one dog, usually the oldest, will stay with me and never be very far away. Whether this is a guarding instinct from somewhere in the past I do not know but it has always been the same.

In addition to colour the texture of coat is very characteristic. It is very short and very soft with a very thick undercoat which never grows much feather. The late Col. Claude Cane once described it to me as being like sealskin which I think is very apt.

The old description ran that they were "long, low, level and strong", but we had so many complaints from gundog people in the 1930's that we were ruining the breed by getting them too low and too small, that we decided to insert the words "moderately low" and raise the height at shoulder to 16 ins., more or less.

Considering the necessity for constant inbreeding the breed is an extraordinarily tough one. We found that dogs which had just had ordinary exercise daily could go out at first light and work solidly all day without feeling the least fatigue. They seem to require no extra walking to get them into working condition. The Sussex head is a smaller edition of the Clumber Spaniel, though the old Harviestoun strain, which was still going when I first owned one was more of the Bloodhound type not quite so broad across the muzzle as the Rosehill strain; personally I prefer the latter, but as I used both strains when I started I still get an occasional Harviestoun head cropping up. It is such a very distinctive head that it is impossible to mistake a Sussex. The eyes are large, from hazel to amber and have a very soft expression and the neck should be long and arched;

we still have the arch, but I'm afraid most Sussex today are rather inclined to be too short in the neck. Movement is another distinctive feature as the Sussex is supposed to move with a roll. Probably due to the fact that he has a short thick straight hock joint whereas in most breeds it is longer with much more bend.

Having owned Sussex for so long they have become so much part of me that I cannot imagine what life would be like without one and I know a great many other people who feel just the same. They are extremely hardy. My own dogs have never had any artificial heat of any kind and are kept out in one pack winter and summer in two kennels for shelter and when the weather is dry prefer to sleep under a large Ilex tree only using their kennels when wet.

The Sussex are a slow maturing breed and do not reach their best until 2 to 3 years old and I have found that most of them live till about 12 years old with one or two exceptions. As regards working I have found that it is best not to start serious training until they reach a year old. I find that as with most breeds too much dummy retrieving too early sours them, so we generally start them on a dummy retrieve at 6 weeks when they find it great fun and then once a week and only once for another 2 weeks and then every other week for a month and that seems to be ample until they go into full training.

In the interim we let and encourage them to hunt - this is most important. Most Sussex don't get their noses down until 7 months or so, some even later. Once they start they are great questers, quartering the ground eagerly and well and are a delight to watch and there is

no cover they will not face. One final point, always get your puppies to retrieve before they hunt, this is most important.

I do hope that people will work them as well as show them, there is such a lot of fun to be had pitting your wits against theirs. About 40 years ago, I once said to Mr. Cornthwaite of the celebrated "Rufton" Springers - "Do you think Sussex are stupid?" He replied, "Heavens no, they have always thought of it before you have", and I think that just about sums up their intelligence.

The Sussex Spaniel was first bred by Mr. Fuller of "Rosehill" in 1795 and once established most farmers and farm labourers in the County of Sussex owned one and they were big dogs, much bigger than the dogs of today although we are slowly getting them back to their original size!!

One final word, Sussex puppies must be done well from the time they leave their dam as they need lots of protein for their big frame and - I like mine to get - if anything on the fat side with plenty of reserve to draw on for their strong bone. In choosing your puppies for the true type pick on those with the biggest head, strongest bone, large feet and fatter tail. You never see a good Sussex with a thin tail.

Joy Freer

No Sussex with a thin tail was ever any good. Just take note!!

(the above addendum added by Mrs. Freer. ed.)

Sh Ch Topjoys Sussex
Bisto Brown
Winner of 15 cc's



The Breed Standard

Kennel Club, London 1994 F.C.I. Standard No 127

GENERAL APPEARANCE - Massive, strongly built. Active, energetic dog, whose characteristic movement is a decided roll, and unlike that of any other Spaniel.

CHARACTERISTICS - Natural working ability, gives tongue at work in thick cover.

TEMPERAMENT - Kindly disposition, aggression highly undesirable.

HEAD AND SKULL - Skull wide, showing moderate curve from ear to ear, neither flat nor apple headed, with centre indentation and a pronounced stop. Brows frowning; occiput decided, but not pointed. Nostrils well developed and liver in colour. Well balanced head.

EYES - Hazel colour, fairly large, not full, but soft expression and not showing much haw.

EARS - Thick, fairly large and lobular, set moderately low, just above eye level. Lying close to skull.

MOUTH - Jaws strong, with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. Upper teeth closely overlapping lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

NECK - Long, strong, and slightly arched, not carrying head much above level of back. Slight throatiness, but well marked frill.

FOREQUARTERS - Shoulders sloping and free; arms well boned and muscular. Knees large and strong, pastern short and well boned. Legs rather short and strong.

BODY - Chest deep and well developed; not too round and wide. Back and loin well developed and muscular in both width and depth. The back ribs must be deep. Whole body strong and level with no sign of waistlines from withers to hips.

HINDQUARTERS - Thighs strongly boned and muscular; hocks large and strong, legs short and strong with good bone. Hindlegs not appearing shorter than forelegs or over angulated.

FEET - Round, well padded, well feathered between toes.

TAIL - Set low and never carried above level of back. Lively actioned. Preferably docked to a length of from 5-7 ins.

GAIT/MOVEMENT - True fore and aft with distinctive roll.

COAT - Abundant and flat with no tendency to curl and ample undercoat for weather resistance. Ears covered with soft, wavy hair, but not too profuse. Forequarters and hindquarters moderately well feathered. Tail thickly clothed with hair but not feathered.

COLOUR - rich golden liver and hair shading to golden at tip; gold predominating. Dark liver or puce undesirable.

SIZE -

Ideal Height: 38-41 cms (15-16 ins) at withers

Ideal Weight approx. 50 lbs

FAULTS - Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

NOTE - Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Gundog Group A.N.K.C. © January 1998

This publication © Kate Keely 2001