

The KC Stud Book of 1874 gave details of 44 Poms exhibited from 1860-1873 at pre-Kennel Club shows. In some cases colours are not recorded but a clue is in the name – Smut shown in 1864 may possibly have been black as every Pom of that name in subsequent early records was black.

A variety of size and type was shown – some illustrations of winners in periodicals of the day demonstrate Volpino type and first hand accounts comment on dogs of Italian and French origin. Several pre-1873 names are Italian - Blanco, Carlo and Nero others German - there were 3 Fritz's between 1863-1872. Some may have been of the old English Spitz type (Fox-Dog). Larger white Poms equivalent to today's Gross Spitz (FCI only) were also exhibited and were shown until 1915 when CCs were withdrawn for +7lb Poms.

As of 1874 black Poms – imported from Germany- were exhibited and recorded by the KC. Unfortunately no records exist to determine the size of pre-1886 exhibits but in that year there were sufficient under 10lb black Poms to justify a special class at a dog show. Between 1874 and 1890 32% of the 131 Poms recorded by the KC were black.

From 1896 to 1900 the Kennel Club recorded Poms by weight in the Stud Book – a total of 553 were recorded. Of these 306 were under 8lbs and 247 were over 8lb in weight. Poms as light as 1 ½ lbs were shown and as heavy as 28lbs (Belper Bounce). The weight division was altered to over or under 7lb in 1909.

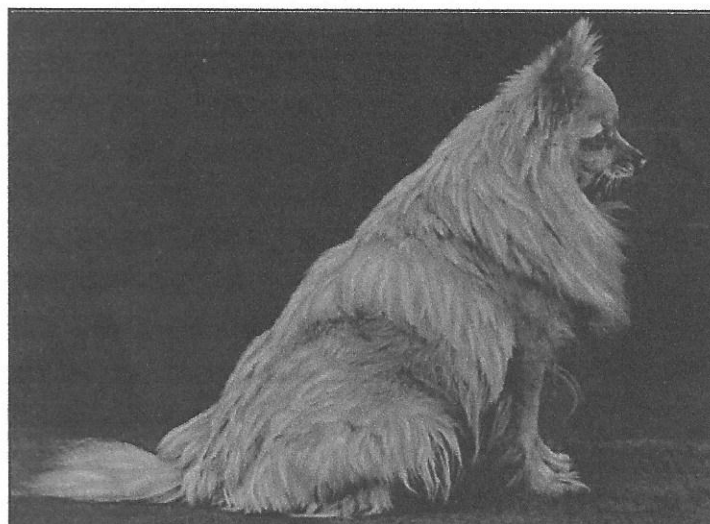
below - this is an illustration of dogs winning first prizes at a pre-Kennel Club show in 1864. Dog breeds left to right are - Fox Terrier, Skye Terrier, Pomeranian, Blenheim Spaniel and Irish Water Spaniel. The Pomeranian is Mr Eaton's Topsy by Fox out of Neil. As you can see Topsy was a small medium white Pom. Extract from my personal collection of Pomeranian memorabilia



Is it true no Poms were shown in 1890 as the breed was so unpopular?

This is also untrue! The KC Stud Book for the show year 1890 recorded 13 Poms exhibited at shows in Birmingham, The Toy Dog Show at Holborn, Crystal Palace and Leeds.

The concept that the breed was so unpopular by 1890 that no Poms were shown at all comes about by misinterpreting a comment made by Mr Hicks in 1906 where he noted no Poms were exhibited at the Kennel Club's show in April 1890. However the breed was shown elsewhere in England.



Was Queen Victoria the first person to show Poms and downsize them?

No, she was not! In the 30 years prior to the Queen exhibiting her first Pom in 1891 about 200 people bred, owned or exhibited Poms according to the records maintained by the Kennel Club (including pre-KC shows recorded in 1874 Stud Book). In 1888 the Queen acquired her foundation stock in Florence, Italy but as of 1886 classes were scheduled for Poms less than 10lbs. The Pomeranian Club, founded in 1891, quickly changed its remit from over or under 10lbs to over or under 7lbs in weight (1893) and encouraged the exhibition/breeding of the smaller size, known as Toy Pomeranians. Undoubtedly this decision reflected the popularity of pre-existing smaller dogs being imported from Germany (usually called Mannheimer or Zwerg-spitze) typically black, brown, white or wolf grey in colour. The Germans required this type to weigh less than 3.5kg with an average height at shoulder of 26-30cm.

left - Queen Victoria's Gena acquired in Florence 1888

Mrs Thomas, one of the original committee members of The Pom Club, imported several from Germany, and, by 1892 was exhibiting her home bred Lady Dinah – a 3½ lb black bitch. The Queen's son, future King Edward VII, bought his daughter a 4lb black dog (called Blackie) from Bad Homburg in Germany in 1891 having already acquired a similar dog in 1885. By 1896 Miss Hamilton, first President of the Pom Club, offered a 3lb 2oz chocolate dog Manel of Rozelle at stud.

right - Prince of Wales' (future King Edward VII) - 4.5lb Pom Blackie acquired in Bad Homburg Germany c1891 Blackie is a very good example of the Mannheimer Spitz type

The Queen obtained her foundation stock in Florence, Italy in 1888. The Italian Spitz (or Volpino) usually weighed about 7-10lbs. One of these dogs Marco (12lb) is considered to be German in type. The Queen preferred the small medium size rather than the very diminutive variety – as noted by author and show judge Charles Lane and other visitors to her kennel at Windsor.