

German Toy Pomeranians

Meanwhile, a trend was developing in England to import small Pomeranians from Germany (mostly from the Mannheim area) and Italy. The German dogs were often marketed in mail order catalogues. A show organised by Charles Cruft at St Stephen's Hall in 1886 for Toy Dogs tantalised the public by advertising in the show catalogue, that next month's *Pet Dog Journal*, would feature portraits of 'German Toy Pomeranians'. The term Toy was used at this time and they are described as Toy Pomeranians in the *Kennel Club Stud Book of 1897*. Zwergspitz, the name used by the Germans for this size, translated as dwarf spitz.

In 1888 no less a personage than the Queen of England became interested in the smaller size, having had no previous interest in the larger specimens.

Queen Victoria probably did more to speed up the rehabilitation of the Spitz in America than any other person. In November 1894 there was an article in the *New York Times* about her dogs in which Gina was referred to as a 7½ lb Toy Pomeranian from Italy and Marco (12lb size) was deemed to be the finest Spitz dog in England'. Some believe Marco originated in Germany and not Florence, so this may be why he was called a Spitz. Toy Poms had become increasingly popular throughout the 1880s and writers extolled their sweet dispositions and good temperament – so it is no wonder they were liked!

There was not a word of criticism about the Queen's Spitz in the press!

Also in 1888 the American Kennel Club permitted the registration of the breed under the designation of Pomeranian. Perhaps they noted the Queen's interest. Now the Pomeranian or Spitz dog would be shown as a Pomeranian, as they were in Britain.

The society ladies of New York took a passion for the diminutive Toy Pomeranians and they became 'the' dog to own. From the late 1890's English breeders, joined the ranks of those who exported Poms and enormous sums of money changed hands. The traditional size Pomeranian had never been fully embraced by American Show exhibitors even after they were admitted back in to the show ring. The smaller size also appealed to women who increasingly swelled the ranks of the show world.

The problem caused by the Toy size was a swing by breeders and enthusiasts away from the over 8lb size. Changes in the allocation of top awards by the British KC in 1904 and 1915 did little to help the larger size. In America, from about 1900, small Poms were frequently exhibited at dog shows, winning and dominating the American Pomeranian Club Shows held after 1911. Some over 8lb dogs were exhibited but fewer classes were scheduled for them. Before long the division was reduced to 7lb.

In both America and Britain fanciers of the larger size Pom or Spitz Dog found themselves with dogs that no longer appealed to judges even though they were entitled to compete and were popular with the public – a sort of canine limbo.

As dog showing became increasingly popular pedigree dogs rose in value. The various Kennel Clubs became increasingly fussy about registrations, breed designations and breed standards. In America the breed registry for Poms apparently closed with the formation of the American Pomeranian Club in 1901. This meant that any Pomeranians not registered by that date would not be admitted into the breed. Some oversize Poms were registered but most would have been unregistered dogs.

What happened to the larger Pomeranians?



Breed authority, Herr Albert Kull, mentioned three sizes existed in Germany in 1898 'the great or carter's Pomeranian, the medium sized and the dwarf Pomeranian'. Eventually the dwarf size (Zwergspitz) applied to the modern Pomeranian, the old dwarf size became the small Pomeranian (Kleinspitz), the typical 18th and 19th century Pomeranian became the medium or great size (Mittelspitz or Gross Spitz) and the larger Keeshond type is known as the Wolfspitz.

It would have been much easier for enthusiasts in both America and England if the Pomeranian or Spitz dog had been re-designated in a similar way – or like Schnauzers or Poodles divided into 3 sizes. Far less confusing!

In Britain they continued to be called the Pomeranian and for a while the under 7lb size was called the Toy Pomeranian. This eventually stopped. In 1985 the British KC, as a result of a lengthy lobbying campaign to re-establish the over 7lb size, responded by recognising the German Spitz Klein or Mittel, this being in keeping with European convention (provided existing Pom stock had a prescribed infusion of certain recently imported European Spitz stock). They are not subject to weight guidelines but must conform to a regulation height at the shoulder. Prior to this date incoming small or medium size German Spitz or Keeshonden were registered as Pomeranians.

Evidence suggests the solution in America was to re-brand the larger white size, commencing in 1913 with the UKC recognising them as the German or American Spitz dog. The white coloured dogs appear to have enjoyed the greatest popularity from the 1850's onwards and despite the bad press continued to have a large fan base. The traditional type was a more sensible size for most families, and undoubtedly there were lingering associations of this dog as a high status canine.

Perhaps the last character attack in the press was dealt by the reviewer of a new book called 'House and Pet Dogs' published in 1890. The book had a short anecdote about the loyalty of Pomeranian or Spitz dogs and also dared to raise the issue of the mad dog scare 'then came the hue and cry (principally raised by certain New York papers) 'down with the Spitz', 'rabies', 'another victim', and all that sort of talk. We never believed so much bad of him. If he had been shorn of his long hair in the summer and kept cool, he would have remained as sane as any other dog'.

The book reviewer retaliated with a vigorous attempt at justifying previous events. 'Give a dog a bad name, and his fate is doomed' he stated, and then mentioned Spitzes/Pomeranians are black listed by

many. He confessed to a 'positive dread of the Pomeranian' and continued, that although noble looking, he had cruel propensities, and was best fit for a 'brewery yard', or led about muzzled and leashed by a heavy chain. American breweries were typically established by Germans, who no doubt, also favoured dogs of German ancestry.

They had been enjoying good publicity in recent times - the children of the future King George V were photographed with an old type white Pom or Spitz. Actresses such as Ellen Terry featured on postcards embracing their white Spitz. Postcards often featured them doing tricks and some performed in circuses. There were even Actress Classes scheduled at some shows where Poms were exhibited. The public loved them – there are hundreds of postcards featuring a variety of size and type generated from this era.

Further evidence the breed was virtually rehabilitated came with the publication, in 1905, in the newspaper of a light-hearted poem sent to the editor. It was about a German called Fritz with a German dog – a Spitz. Fritz said he was a good dog who never bit and it was just canine temper that affected him not hydrophobic fits. This time there was no editorial comment!

Unfortunately in 1908 there was another hydrophobia scare! The *New York Times* very sensibly urged the public to be sensible and fair to the dogs. They pointed out there were no facts to substantiate the latest worry, and, the recent death of a man was from hysterical derangement caused by fear of hydrophobia. This was indeed a change of heart by the newspaper, having once noted, they were the first to alert the public to the connection of Spitz dogs and rabies.

Spitz dogs were not singled out this time. In fact one article criticised another paper for stirring up the public, referring to their story as 'a case of newspaper hydrophobia'. Some parties at this time blamed mad dog scares on vivisectionists and believed dogs not destroyed were handed over for experimentation.

By 1913 the motivations to re-brand the traditional white Pom may have included any of these factors. They were popular but mostly unregistered. There was little point in trying to lobby for the re-opening of the breed registry to include unregistered larger specimens due to the spectacular popularity of the small Poms and the trend for small dogs. Furthermore, no breeder had been able to successfully downsize pure white Poms – in Miss Ives book (4th edition 1929) is a clear statement about this fact. Attempts had been on-going for years, Miss Hamilton was said to have devoted herself to this task for years. Her smaller specimens were disappointing, deficient in coat, lacking 'real type and the buoyant disposition of the breed' and were 'sad, little pathetic creatures'. Many years later, Miss Barrow tried to reduce pure white strains and was also disappointed. It would serve no purpose by adding more large whites to the existing registered white gene pool.