



ISSUE
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BLACK AND TAN STUDIES

Notes Toward a History of the Manchester Terrier

by GORDON ATKINSON

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MANCHESTER
DOG SHOW
1864.



*The Manchester Terrier—
A small dog of great spirit,
intelligence and devotion.
—G. A.*

BREEDER'S NOTEBOOK
1883-1892

Type
Temperament
Condition
Gameness
Cleanliness
Soundness



OUR DOGS
1870

THE SPORTING
CHRONICLE

THE ILLUSTRATED
SPORTING & DRAMATIC
NEWS

CASSELL'S BOOK
OF THE DOG

VETERINARY NOTES
& MEMORANDA

VICTORIAN DOG WORLD

KENNELS AND BLOODLINES

BRITISH DOG BREEDS

HISTORICAL CANINE
REFERENCE

RESEARCH.
RESPECT.
REMEMBER.

PARKER
QUINK

The Field
MANCHESTER EXHIBITION



NOTES ON BREEDING
AND SELECTION

MANCHESTER TERRIER

A Companion to **GLADIATOR: The Manchester Black and Tan**

HISTORICAL NOTES • BREEDING HISTORY • VICTORIAN REFERENCES • BIBLIOGRAPHY



THE MANCHESTER CHRONICLES



I discovered the fascinating history of the Manchester area Black and Tan, the oldest proto-terrier breed left in the world, in 2025 when my dear Glenda gave me a Manchester Terrier for my birthday. His name is Toby.

I wanted to learn the history of the breed because I fell in love with Toby. After a little time with Google I ran into a fascinating dead end. There are no histories of this breed, at least no

books that show any evidence of having been seriously researched. The current wikipedia article lists two books, both recent, and neither of those quote any sources at all.

As it turns out, no one has written a serious history of the Manchester Terrier, doubtless because the breed is not a popular one. I referred to the dog as a “proto-terrier” because the ancient Black and Tan from Britannia was perhaps eight-hundred years old when the rising dog show movement in the 18th century began using the word terrier to describe rat killing dogs. The 19th century brought an explosion of terrier breeds, now engineered more for human enjoyment than for work. In the 1880s, dog show officials rebranded classic Black and Tan as Manchester Terrier so its name would match the other dogs with rat killing ancestry.





It was an insult to the original breed, which would soon be extinct because of the new Manchester variety. It was also an insult to the breeders from Lancaster and other urban areas who were working on the same breed modifications and had dogs identical to those in Manchester. However unfortunate, that is how the name Manchester Terrier came to be.

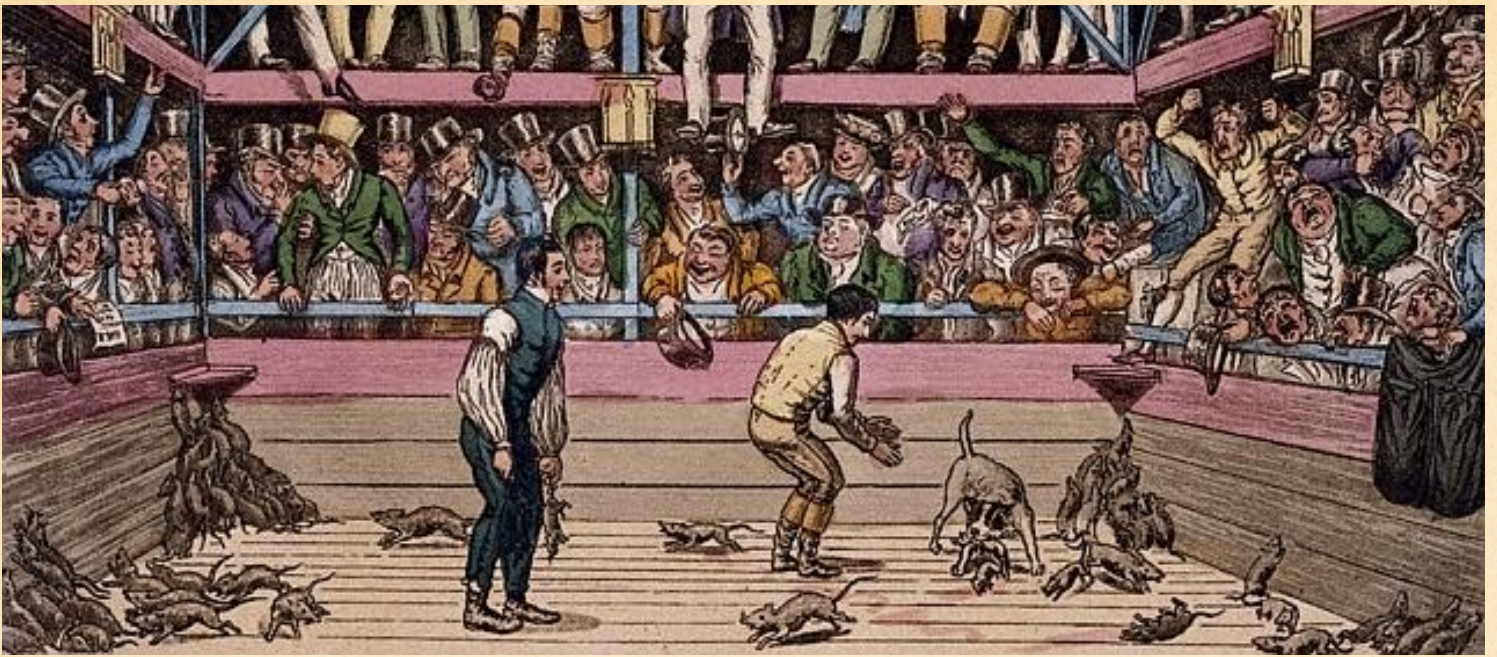
General dog books devote a chapter to the breed with a couple of

paragraphs of history, usually suggesting the Manchester Terrier was developed by John Hulme for hunting rabbits as well as killing rats. These brief paragraphs always have a healthy, pastoral feel to them. One imagines a family man arriving home with a coney for the family stew pot.

I've spent months combing through records and ancient books. Those sources tell a different story, a darker and more tragic one.

To state it bluntly: the Manchester area Black and Tan was a specialized form of the classic British Black and Tan, developed in secret by wealthy breeders around Manchester, Lancaster, and other urban areas. Nobody was catching rabbits with the Manchester Black and Tans. The only purpose of the breed was to dominate the pre-industrial wagering sport of rat baiting.





Rat baiting rose to prominence when cultural energy shifted from the countryside to the new industrial urban centers. Men who once competed by turning two dogs loose on a rat infested barn and betting on the results now gathered in the cellars of taverns and watched professional dogs kill rats in a confined space known as “The Pit.”

The Manchester style Black and Tan, as some called it, was a pure killing machine, physically and temperamentally. They were bred to abhor and instantly attack rodents and small mammals, while remaining family oriented and affectionate to humans. Although the original Black and Tans came in smooth or rough coats, the Manchesters were all of the smooth variety. They were a gorgeous sleek black, with erect ears and a reddish brown accents, including the classic pips above each eye. And they were whippet quick.



By the 1850s, no urban gentlemen wanted an old fashioned Black and Tan. They wanted the sporty upgrade. By the year 1900, the original breed was extinct for all practical purposes, the only remaining evidence today being written records and a few black and white photos.



The only known photo of an actual rat pit

They called the new breed "The Gentlemen's Dog." Gentlemen, in this context, was used rather as we speak of gentlemen's clubs today. The men who created the early Manchester Black and Tans were anything but gentle. They kept their methods secret, and their breed of dog was so successful in the rat pits it led to the banning of the sport in both the United States and England.

How Did they Engineer the Manchester Black and Tan?

The most truthful answer is that no one knows. The people making the variety did not write down their formulas, as far as anyone knows. There is no primary source from a breeder with notes and formulae. The topic of rat-baiting and other canine blood sports was popular, so educated writers of that era suggested that a cross was made between some form of the classic Black and Tan and a sight-hound, also known at that time as a Snap Dog.





Sight Hounds are the fastest of all dog breeds. Greyhounds, Whippets, and Italian Greyhounds would have been commonly available to breeders around the year 1800. Virtually every book and article on the Manchester Terrier says that John Hulme bred a Black and Tan with a Whippet. They say that because the other modern books say that. It is not true.



The most likely explanation is that John Hulme crossed a ferocious smaller Black and Tan with a gentle, tame-able Lurcher. Lurchers were homemade snap dog crosses, using all the varieties to achieve whatever the breeders wanted to accomplish.

The body shape of the Manchester variety is evidence of a snap dog cross. That is all anyone knows unless new sources arise.

What Happened Next?

Once the sport was banned, the breed was mostly forgotten. After World War II there were only a handful of breeders and a dozen or two Manchester Terriers left in the world. Few people will ever see a Manchester Terrier apart from in dog shows, and there are precious few of them there. That is how close we came to losing the last remaining example of the ancient British Black and Tan, whose noble spirit lives on in all modern terriers.



I believe the historic nature of this breed warrants a higher level of literary work and attention, and I don't think anyone else is going to do it, so I guess it's up to me. I intend to produce the first history of the Black and Tan, and release it as a series of comic books.

It's an odd choice, I know, but I'm doing it that way for my own reasons. Mostly because it sounds like fun.

I intend to tell the story of this magnificent breed while getting to know my own Manchester Terrier, Toby. I am also going to show Toby as an owner handler at the fancy dog shows, though at this moment I don't even know how you sign up for them. Toby is a puppy still. We have time to figure that kind of stuff out.

I assume I'll make all sorts of hilarious mistakes along the way. I don't mind mistakes. They make for interesting writing.



About My Approach

Historical chapters will be documented and written like historical fiction, meaning where possible the people, places, and events are real. It is up to me to weave the facts into a narrative.

For example, in the first issue, virtually everything is documented fact. The Three Tuns Tavern was a notorious den of rat baiting. Rat Catcher Bill was a real man from New York who was interviewed in a sporting magazine from the era. The infamous Spanish Swarm event happened, and the featured dogs in my story were real. Dart and Crib were the

actual names of the dogs involved, and their descriptions were included in

the original accounts. I gave Lucy her name, as the account I read only listed her breed and the terrifying details of the event.

I have not yet found the exact year when John Hulme and his fellow breeders shocked the Dog Fancy world with the newly designed Black and Tan. They just started showing in "sporting" venues winning lots of money killing rats in the 1800s. There were no reporters allowed at these events, which by the mid 1800s had become distasteful to most people and were eventually outlawed.

Therefore we can only imagine what happened when the first generation of Manchester Black and Tans began dominating betting events in the industrial cities of 19th century England.

The reporter who had in the mean time entered as a spectator, thus describes the **pit** and the performance:—

The **pit** is about 30 feet deep and 15 feet wide, and in the centre is the dog and **crib** **pit**, built of white pine boards set on end, and about 3 feet high. In one corner of the room was a large wire cage, containing about 150 rats, and congregated around the **pit** was a motley crowd. The doors having been closed, Jack Jennings entered, and said:—

"Now, gentlemen, ve vill show you some of the finest sport hof the season hif you vill honly mind your heyes and keep your blasted potato traps shet, because you knows has'ow them cops and peelers hare likely to pull this place hin a minute's notice hif you make a noise. So now, my coveys, the fun vill commence."

Jack's speech was received with murmurs of applause by his auditors. Jack then thrust his hand into the cage containing the rats, and seizing five of them by the tails, slung them into the **pit**. Sallying into the back room, he soon brought forth a large white bull-dog, with which he entered the **pit**, remarking that "hif this here hanimal does not kill them 'ere rats, that them rats vill kill the hanimal." The dog with considerable difficulty killed the rats. A young man had a dog which he was anxious to **pit** against any other man's dog for \$5, and Jack Jennings expressed his willingness to accommodate him. Jack then produced his dog, and placing the two brutes in the **pit**, the fight was begun, and had lasted about twenty minutes, each dog giving and receiving fearful punishment, when suddenly the cry arose of "The cops!" "Douse the glim!" but it was too late.

Capt. Allaire ordered the doors closed, and marched off with the prisoners.

Thirty-four were arraigned, and have since being indicted by the Grand Jury.

CANINE CURIOSITY.

The celebrated Jaccomacaco, the American non-descript, whose punishing qualities bid defiance to our English bow-wows, has returned from a country excursion, and is to enliven the frequenters of Roche's coliseum, in West-street, on Thursday evening, when he is to perform against time with "an out-and-outer." The amusements of the evening are to be diversified by the delicate accompaniments of badger-drawing, stake badger, rat-killing, and a mill between two fifty pound dogs for 5*l.* a side.

On Tuesday evening there is to be a drawing match at Weatherhead's pit, Mint-square, Borough, between Frank Redmond's white bitch, Busy, and a bitch belonging to a gentleman in the city, of 15 pounds each, for five sovereigns a side. The bitch which draws most times in ten minutes to be the winner. A match between two 31 pound dogs will close the games.

Charley Alstrop has a dog of 31½ pounds, which he will back against any thing "living," of its weight, for from 10*l.* to 25*l.*

Turk and Trusty, of 20 pounds weight each, will contend for 10 sovereigns each, at the Gentlemen's Subscription Pit, New-inn-yard, Tottenham-court-road, on Wednesday next.

The pit consists of a board crib of octagon form in the centre of the cellar, about eight feet in diameter and three and one half feet high, tightly secured at the sides. On three sides of the cellar are rows of board seats, rising one above the other, for the accommodation of spectators. On the other side, stands the proprietor and his assistant and an empty flour barrel, only it is half full of live rats, which are kept in their prison-house by a wire netting over the top of the cask. The amphitheatre is lighted with oil lamps or candles, with a potatoe, a turnip, or an empty bottle for a candlestick. Spectators are admitted at twenty-five cents a head, and take their seats, when preparations for the evening's entertainment commence. The proprietor carefully lifts the edge of the wire netting over the rat barrel, and with an instrument looking much like a pair of curling tongs, he begins fishing out

Bibliography: Chapter One

PERIODICALS AND EPHEMERA

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~**The Manchester Examiner and Times** (est. 1846). Essential for mapping the local, industrial backdrop of Manchester during John Hulme's era, capturing the smog-choked atmosphere of the working-class neighborhoods where the cellar pits operated.

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~**Lee, Rawdon B. A History and Description of the Modern Dogs of Great Britain and Ireland: The Terriers** (1896). Offers extensive retrospectives on the evolution of the terrier breeds, the specific utility of the Black and Tan in urban pest control, and the breed's eventual transition from the tavern cellars to the refined show ring.

~**Youatt, William. The Dog** (1845). Published precisely in the era our story opens, Youatt's work provides a vital, real-time snapshot of how working terriers and bulldogs were viewed, categorized, and utilized in England at the height of Hulme's operations.

SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT (The "Fancy" and Rat-Catching)

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~**Egan, Pierce. Life in London** (1821). Though published a couple of decades prior to our specific setting, Egan's seminal work defined the culture of "The Fancy"—that unique, cross-class mixture of wealthy aristocrats and working-class street toughs who stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the sporting taverns and gambling cellars of England.

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~**Ritvo, Harriet. The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age** (1987). Provides the vital academic and cultural context regarding how the Victorians viewed, bred, and used animals, mapping the journey from the chaotic blood sports of the early 1800s to the strict, homogenized rules of the Kennel Club.

CURIOSITIES FOR THE FANCY.

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Coming Soon - THE ANCESTRAL GHOST!

Voice Agency Comics Issue #13, chapter two in our Black and Tan history series.

Charles Darwin posited the existence of an ancient canine (perhaps related to modern jackals) which was so easy to domesticate and such a powerful ally that it left its DNA in dog breeds from Siberia to Great Britain. This explains the common black and tan markings that arise in modern dogs independently across that entire region.

