

## Pastoral

### Old English Sheepdog

Traditional theory suggests that the Scottish Collie or Bearded Collie played some part in the development of the breed and some breed historians suggests that the sheepdogs of Europe including the Ovtcharka might have played their part. The Old English is the most substantial of sheepdogs, and underneath the glamour of a crisp blue and white coat, there should be a dog still fit for working with the flocks. The Old English Sheepdog was until recent years customarily docked, but since tail docking is no longer allowed the traditional epithet 'The Bobtail' is no longer appropriate.

Indeed, the traditional docking of the tail in this breed is debated, one party saying that the Old English was docked for hygienic purposes as in the same way that sheep are docked. Another party suggests that the practice was started as a ruse to avoid tax as at one time drover's dogs were exempt from tax and a mark of this was the docked tail. Note that it was seen as a drover's dog for driving cattle, hence calling into question the title of the breed as sheepdogs, which were not docked because they needed their tail to act as rudders and balance in their quick athletic turns and movement. The slower moving cattle dogs did not require the tail. An interesting debate.

So too is the name of the breed – Old English – and theories exist to suggest that Scottish Bearded Collies were crossed with European sheepdogs including the Ovtcharka to produce the breed.

So here in the debated history of the name and origins of the Old English Sheepdog is illustrated the fact that very little is certain in the origins and development of any breed, except perhaps in the more recent ones where breeding programmes have been recorded in detail. There is a lot of supposition and the theories are fascinating.

Breed Group	Pastoral
Vulnerable Breed	No
Size	Large
How much exercise?	More than 2 hours per day
Length of coat	Long
How much grooming?	Every day
Supposedly sheds?	Yes
Town or Country	Either
Type of home	Large House
Minimum garden size	Large
Lifespan	Over 10 Years

### Varieties

- Bobtail

## Health Information

You may be aware that some breeds of dog and their crosses can be susceptible to inherited disease. Of course you want to be sure that the dog you choose is as healthy as possible, and you would like to know that it has not inherited any undesirable disease-causing genes from its parents. There is some help in that DNA tests for diseases in purebred dogs are available for some conditions in some breeds, but there are not very many such tests just yet! There are also, however, a number of clinical veterinary screening schemes that dog breeders can use to increase the probability of producing healthy puppies.

Details of the various screening schemes, both veterinary and DNA, that are available to breeders in the UK can be found at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/doghealth)

Potential dog owners should be aware that, at present, the application of various health screening results to breeding programmes is not always straightforward, and breeders may make choices for various reasons. A responsible breeder though, will always be willing to discuss relevant health issues with you. Breed clubs are often useful sources of breed-specific information.

## What Screening is relevant for the Old English Sheepdog?

Kennel Club Assured Breeders must use the following screening schemes for sires and dams BVA/KC

- BVA/KC Hip Dysplasia Scheme
- Eye testing

Kennel Club Assured Breeders are strongly recommended to use the following screening schemes and/or advice for sires and dams

- DNA test - PCD

The list above is not necessarily comprehensive. Breed clubs and experienced breeders are useful sources of information on health issues in the breed. All breeds have a Breed Health Coordinator.

## Breeding Restrictions

The Kennel Club will not accept an application to register a litter when:

- 1) The dam has already whelped 4 litters (as of the 1st January 2012 the limit changed from 6 litters to 4 litters). As of this date the Kennel Club will no longer register any further litters from any bitch which our records show has already whelped 4 litters. Therefore for any litter born on or after the 1st January 2012, the system will automatically check to see how many previous litters the Kennel Club has an account of. Where the number previously recorded is 4 or more, the application will be rejected, or
- 2) The dam has already reached the age of 8 years at the date of whelping, (relief from this restriction may be considered normally provided an application is made prior to the mating, the proposed dam has previously whelped at least one other registered litter, and the application is supported by veterinary evidence as to the suitability of the bitch involved in the proposed whelping), or
- 3) The dam was under one year old at the time of mating, or
- 4) The offspring are the result of any mating between father and daughter, mother and son or brother and sister, save in exceptional circumstances or for scientifically proven welfare reasons, or

- 5) (From 1st January 2012) The dam has already had two litters delivered by caesarean section, save for scientifically proven welfare reasons and this only normally provided the application is made prior to the mating, or
- 6) The dam was not resident at a UK address at the date of whelping.

There are further Kennel Club Rules and Regulations that may prevent a litter from being registered; the full Kennel Club Rules and Regulations are contained in the Kennel Club Year Book.

## Breed Specific Breeding Restrictions

In October 2008, the General Committee agreed to record puppies that are born with naturally bobbed tails on registration certificates. The decision was made in order to help breeders identify which dogs or lines carry the tailless gene. The word bobtail is the only description of the tail which is accepted. The description of any other tail length or tails which are not naturally bobbed, such as full tail or legally docked will not be recorded. Confirmation of the tail status of puppies must be accompanied by veterinary certification (on practice headed paper) and sent with the litter registration form. As veterinary certification is required to record the status, this service is not available online.

## Old English Sheepdog Clubs

Name	Telephone
East Anglian Old English Sheepdog Club	07979 755278
Greater London Old English Sheepdog Club	01234 838249
Lancastrian Old English Sheepdog Club	01204 696 085
Midland Old English Sheepdog Club	01922 410611
North Eastern Old English Sheepdog Club	0191 410 9733
North Western Old English Sheepdog Club	01302 872253
Old English Sheepdog Club	01793 741002
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Northern Ireland	079 2107 3043
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland	01355 520417
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Wales	01633 612326
South Eastern Old English Sheepdog Club	01268 511987
South Western Old English Sheepdog Club	01225 351609

## Old English Sheepdog Rescue Organisations

Name	Telephone
North Eastern Old English Sheepdog Rescue	0191 410 9733
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01236 765905
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01383 881091
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01259 761537
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01355 520417
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01224 820597
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	01294 608256
Old English Sheepdog Club Of Scotland Rescue & Rehoming	0141 632 4893
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	01268 511987

Name	Telephone
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	07742 159600
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	01453 886751
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	01633 614544
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	0121 770 5941
Old English Sheepdog Rehoming & Welfare Society	01604 830408
Old English Sheepdog Rescue & Welfare	01327 360908
Truffle Sky Old English Sheepdog Rescue	028 6632 6730