



The Beautiful Brick-shaped Head

By Betty Davey

Part 1

There are few phrases which generate as much disparity of opinion among members of our breed than the highly-contentious "brick-shaped head." While some Bulldoggers support the analogy between the brick-shape and the Bulldog head, others dispute it. Some dislike it. Many don't understand it. Some feel that the comparison pertains to an old English paving block. Others insist that it refers to the skull rather than the head, and even among supporters there is variation of interpretation. Controversial it is. Confusing it is. And it is exactly this contro-

versy and confusion that prompted one old-time breeder-judge to comment, "throw the damn brick out the window and stick to the wording of the Standard."

Even its history is vague. It is not mentioned in any Standard, past or present, and, although the term has been bandied about for half a century, perhaps even longer, nobody seems to know exactly when or where it originated, or who the perpetrator of all this confusion and controversy was. And, if memory and information serve me correctly, sometime in the late 50's or early



60's, the term "brick-shaped" was such a popular part of Bulldog vernacular that a BCA-endorsed committee to study the possibility of rewording or clarifying the Standard seriously entertained its inclusion in a revised version. Obviously this never came to fruition.

Despite the controversy and confusion, however, much like our breed itself, the term has remarkable tenacity. Its popularity continues to this day. Offhand I can think of six, possibly seven, references to the brick-shaped head which appeared in articles or letters in national dog magazines within the past two or three years. Such persistence and repetition warrant further discussion and, for the benefit of newcomers, explanations.

This series will present the brick-shaped head from a novel perspective, graphically interpreted to demonstrate how the long rectangular-type head (perhaps a more accurate description) not only meets all the criterion of our Standard, but also how it relates to heads of outstanding champions from the earliest days of our breed who were particularly noted for their excellence in this specific area. In addition, it will show how correct length of head contributes to overall balance.

Brick-shaped head proponents are pretty much in agreement that the term was never meant to suggest that the actual dimensions of a Bulldog head related to the exact proportions of a brick. The analogy primarily suggests FLATNESS and LENGTH in a rectangular-type

head. My own feeling is that it refers mainly to the Bulldog head in profile, since it is from the sideview position that FLATNESS and LENGTH can best be evaluated.

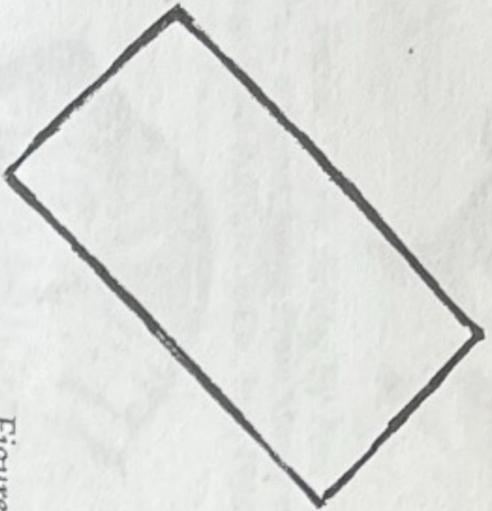


Figure 1

Who but the artists among you would believe that the colored profile sketch at the beginning of this article began with a simple rectangle in EXACTLY the same proportions as Figure 1. This long rectangular shape, approximately twice as long as it is deep, was used as a guideline to draw the Bulldog profile in the same manner as an artist uses an egg-shape as a guideline when drawing the human head. It was placed at an angle to simulate layback. I vaguely recall reading

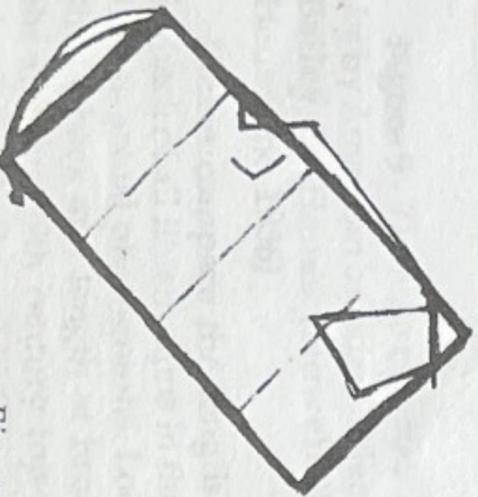


Figure 2

The Bulldogger

quite some time ago that a Bulldog head in profile resembles a "brick on its side." When considering Figure 1, the correlation becomes plausible.

Figure 2 shows how the rectangle has been divided into quarters as an additional guideline for adding features. The tip of the nose is placed at the first quarter mark, directly opposite the corner of the eye. The flew is drawn in front with the corner of the mouth ending directly under the corner of the eye. The jaw is added. The top tip of the rectangle is levelled off, indicating the area of the apex, earset, and approximate location of the tip of the occiput, the top back center point of the skull. A vertical frontal bone is indicated in front of the eye, raising slightly above the top line of the rectangle, and the top of this frontal bone is connected in a straight line, indicating the forehead, to the area of the apex. Notice that the frontal bone, which the Standard states "should be very well defined, broad, square and high," elevates the forehead ever so slightly, placing it at an almost imperceptibly different angle



Figure 3

from the forehead.

In Figure 3, the progression continues with the addition of wrinkles, dewlap, neck, etc. The layback remains the original top line of the rectangle. If it were a ruler, it would touch the tip of lower jaw, tip of nose, pass through the frontal bones, continue up through the furrow in the forehead, and just about reach the top of the head.

When the drawing is advanced to this stage, the four lines of the original rectangle are erased, and the remaining sketch is further refined. The result is Figure 4... the same head outline used in the colored drawing at the beginning of this article.

The graphic exercise which you just observed, demonstrating the analogy between the brick-shape and the Bulldog head in profile, was described in an excellent article entitled "The Brick Head" by J. Patrick Hartle in *The Bulldogger* (BCA, Winter 1974, reprinted in *The Bulldogger Digest*). Pat wrote:

"Looking at the head in profile we can visualize the top of the brick



Figure 4

within the outlines of the layback from the tip of the jaw to the apex of the skull. Adding to that the hard upfaced turn of jaw with correct depth of muzzle, both of which are the result of the jaw bone that has a continual arch from hinge to point of jaw, you will find a general brick outline in this total bone formation."

The following illustrations show similar layback and length. The dates demonstrate continuity of interpretation from the earliest days of our breed.



Figure 5 - Charles G. Hopton, early BCA secretary and breeder of the first American-bred champion, Ch. L'Ambassadeur, used this sketch of Rodney Dreadnought for his own explanation of the Standard, which appeared in a chapter entitled "The Bulldog" in *The Dog*, published in 1908.



Figure 6 - *The Perfect Bulldog in Word and Picture* by British artist-writer, J. Hay Hutchison, originally published in 1908, reprinted by The Bulldog Club (Inc.) in 1977.



Figure 7 - *The Bulldog* by American artist, sculptor, judge Erno Meyer (Orange Judd Publishing Co., Inc., 1948)



Figure 8 - From a series of Bulldog drawings illustrating the Standard by American artist, Robert Lockett. Probably from the early 50's.



Figure 9 - *The New Complete Bulldog* by American breeder/Judge Col. Bailey C. Hanes (Howell Book House, Inc. 1956)

Please compare the length and layback of all illustrations in this article to actual photographs. Look at the layback and length of head on the famous 19th century top-winning Eng. Ch. Pressgang (Figure 10).

Look at the similar layback and length of head on his American counterpart of many generations later, Ch. Lord Timothy Scott (Figure 11).

There it is, my fellow Bulldoggers... on both of them... the long rectangular-type head. It is the head



Figure 10

described in our Standard. It is the head celebrated by early fanciers in our breed. It is the head to which today's knowledgeable breeders aspire. It is the head which our breed must never lose. And it is the head which some of us still call "the BEAUTIFUL brick-shaped head."



Figure 11



BCA, Division II



Kentuckiana Bulldog Club

1996 Specialty Shows & Puppy Match

Holiday Inn

120 W. Broadway, Louisville, KY

KBC Puppy Match: Friday, March 15

Judge: Janet Klopp

BCA, Division II Specialty Show: Friday, March 15

Judge: Judy Silberberger

KBC Specialty Show and Sweeps: Saturday, March 16

Judge: Ruth Williams

Sweeps: John Gallagher, Jr.

Entries close: **Wednesday, February 28, 1996**

Show Secretary: Christine Knopf

11228 Horsefly Hollow Rd., Lenabon Junction, KY 40150 (502) 543-1772

February, 1996

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