



# Basset Hound



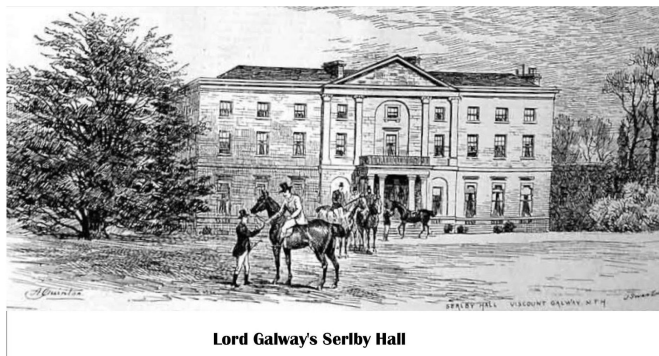
## A Brief Early History

There are many references to short legged hounds throughout Europe as early as the 1500s. It is believed that these hounds were descendants of hounds developed by St. Hubert. In Turbeville's Art of Venerie (Art of Hunt) in 1576 "St. Huberts are described as being mighty of body, legs low and short, not swift, but good on scent." Over the pursuing years the St. Hubert Hound evolved in several regions in France. They were used for different quarry based on the region they were in. In 1585 the first mention of "basset" or "low" appears in Jacques de Fouilloux's La Venerie (The Hunt) describing a hound used to hunt badger. He specifically notes a crooked legged smooth coat hound that works best in undergrowth. Any hound lower than 16 inches was called a basset. There were as many as twelve variations of these short hounds in France. They were also found in other parts of Europe. As forms of hunting changed to include shooting, these hounds spread in popularity through France, where hunting and hound breeding was taken seriously by the ruling classes. It's important to note that rabbits were considered vermin because they destroyed crops.



A drawing from Jacques de Fouilloux's *Venerie* of hounds he said were low, or "basset."

Unfortunately the French Revolution (1789 - 1799) put an abrupt end to the ruling classes in France and also their kennels. Many strains of dogs became extinct including the St. Hubert Hound. By the 1860s improvements in financial security and transportation had been established in France due to the Industrial Revolution and political changes. The first French dog show was held in Paris in 1863. Several breeds of low, basset sized, French hounds were exhibited at that show. That is where they were first seen by the public including some British admirers. In France every smooth-coated basset was called a Basset Francais. Of great importance here are the bassets of Count le Couteulx de Canteleu who spared neither trouble or expense to save excellent examples of the smooth, tricolor basset of Artois. He was assisted by Monsieur Pierre Pichot.



Lord Galway's Serlby Hall

1866 was a very important year for Basset Hounds in regard to the specific breed we are familiar with today. That was the year that the Basset as we know it today arrived officially in Great Britain. Lord Galway of Serlby imported two examples he named, Basset and Belle, from the well respected kennels of Count le Couteulx de Canteleu. The first mention of "Basset Hound" as the name for the breed to appear in British literature was in a letter from Lord Galway to Captain (later Major) C. Heseltine (of later Walhampton Bassets Pack fame). The continued breeding of Basset Hounds on a scientific basis began later that year when Lord Galway bred Basset to Belle.

In Lord Galway's letter to Heseltine he stated, "In July 1866, I was staying at Royal, Puy de Dome, France where I met the Marquis de Tournon and his son, the Comte de Tournon. The latter promised me a pair of Basset Hounds from his pack, which duly arrived in the autumn at Serlby. They were a dog and bitch and I called them "Basset" and "Belle". They were long, low hounds shaped much like a Dachshund, with crooked forelegs at the knees and with much more bone and longer heads than beagles. They were not the dark tan colour of Dachshunds but the colour of Foxhounds with a certain amount of white about them. They had deep heavy tongues more like Foxhounds than beagles." (spelling and grammar are as used by Lord Galway)



In 1867 the mating of Basset and Belle produced a litter of five. The pack of Basset Hounds developed by Lord Galway was sold to Lord Onslow around 1872. During the ten year period between 1872 and 1882 Lord Onslow continued to breed and show the bassets he purchased from Lord Galway and supplemented them with additional French imports. Three of them were named, Fino, Nestor and Finette were imported in 1877.

In 1875 the first Basset Hound to be shown in a British show was "Model" (right) owned by Sir Everett Millais. Millais imported "Model" from France in 1874. Lord Onslow's Finette was later bred to Model.



Model owned by Sir Everett Millais

In 1880, the Basset Hound was officially recognized by The Kennel Club in Britain. Millais coordinated a large Basset Hound entry for the Wolverhampton dog show which brought about public attention to the breed. This was the first show that had a separate class for "Basset Hounds."

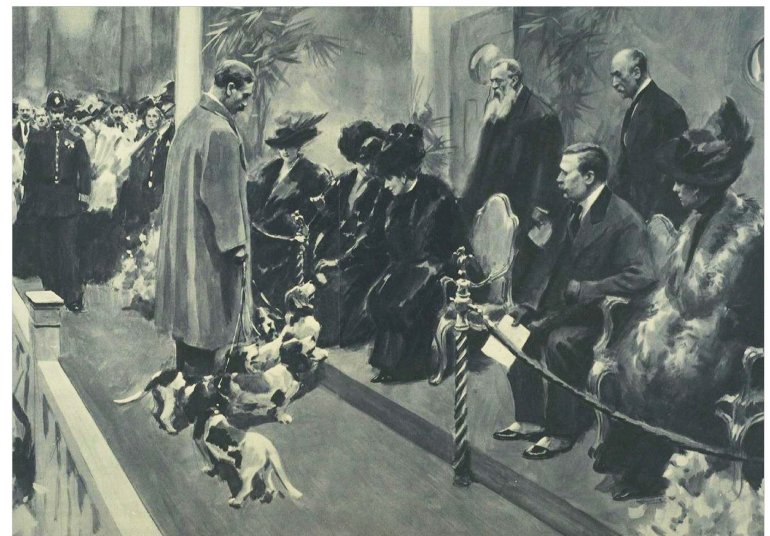
About this same time Mr. George Krehl imported "Fino de Paris" (center at left). Some people today believe that this male was the pillar the breed in British Basset Hound history. He was one of the Count de Couteulx's Bassets from France. About 1882 Lord Onslow sold a pack of fifteen hounds to Sir Everett Millais and George Krehl.

The Basset Hound Club was formed in Britain in 1884 with such influential supporters as Princess Alexandra (who

later became Queen), herself a keen breeder of Basset Hounds. Although these hounds were bred predominately as show dogs or good-natured companions, formal hunting packs of Basset Hounds were formed around this time.

In 1883 George Krehl exported a Basset Hound named Nemours by Jupiter (left above) and Vivien to the United States and by 1885 he was a Champion. Jupiter was also the father of some other early imports that were sold to a Texas cattle-baron, Lord Aylesford. Mr Gilbert of Connecticut also had a hound Chance, by Jupiter. The first Basset Hounds to be recorded by the American Kennel Club (AKC) were registered in 1885.

"By 1900 the Basset Hound had been in Britain thirty-four years, and had become very well established. It was widely recognized as the true breed of Basset Hound." George Johnston.



Giving biscuits to her Basset Hounds from Sandringham Kennels: Queen Alexandra greeting her exhibits in the Royal Agricultural Hall

The FCI Standard for Basset Hounds (used in France) states: The Basset was reputedly bred by monks in France in the Middle Ages to hunt in heavy cover and is able to hold its nose close to the ground. Though closely related to the entire family of French Bassets the breed was developed to perfection in Britain.

For more information on Basset Hounds go to [BHCSC.COM](http://BHCSC.COM)

Prepared for the BHCSC by Donald W. Bullock  
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