

# **A Golden Retrievers History of Origin**

## **History**

During the nineteenth century, there was an ongoing quest among the British gentry for the perfect hunting dog. As a result, most of today's retrievers and many other hunting dogs have their roots in these early efforts. Many attempted this goal by acquiring and breeding good hunting dogs, using outcrosses to other breeds in an effort to bring in other desirable qualities. Sometimes this worked, more often it did not. That the "exact origins" of several of the retriever breeds is unclear due to the somewhat haphazard or occasionally secretive methods used at the time.

The origin of the Golden Retriever, in contrast, lies in the careful work of one man, Sir Dudley Marjoribanks (later the first Lord Tweedmouth) who also set out to breed a good hunting dog. A colorful folk tale has him buying Russian circus dogs, reportedly 100+ lbs., 30" at the shoulder, pale blonde and extremely intelligent as the foundation for his breed. This fanciful story even appears in the GRCA's Yearbook as late as 1950. However, examination of his Stud Book, covering the years from 1835 to 1890 and finally made publicly available in 1952, records no such purchase but instead details a careful line-breeding program unusual at that time and place for dogs. In 1865, Lord Tweedmouth purchased a yellow retriever "Nous" from an unregistered litter of otherwise black Wavy-Coated Retrievers. Nous was later bred with "Belle", a Tweed Water Spaniel, and the resulting litter produced four bitches that were instrumental to his breeding program. One of them, "Cowslip," he bred back to for over twenty years. Over the years, several outcrosses, to black Wavy Coated Retrievers, an Irish Setter, and later a sandy-colored Bloodhound occurred as he sought to improve and fix his new breed. The coat textures of the Goldens of this time reportedly varied, as did the color, which ranged from fox red to light cream.

The Wavy-Coated Retrievers were the ancestors of today's Flat-Coat Retriever and they in turn were developed from crossing setters with the lesser St. John's Water Dog of Newfoundland. The Tweed Water Spaniel, now extinct, came from early water dogs crossed with land or field spaniels to develop Water Spaniels. These spaniels were developed in the Tweed River area and were described by contemporaries as a small liver-colored retriever ("liver" at the time signifying any shade from yellow to brown).

The Kennel Club of England accepted the first Goldens for registration in 1903. At the time, they were registered as "Flat Coats -- Golden". By 1904 the first Golden placement at a field trial was recorded. Among the first shown in conformation were Culham Brass and Culham Copper. In 1911, they were recognized as a separate breed, at first called "Yellow or Golden Retrievers," but within several years the "Yellow" was dropped from their

**name.**

**The first Golden in Canada seems to have been brought over by Hon. Archie Marjoribanks in 1881. The Canadian Kennel Club first recognized the breed in 1927. In 1928, Mr. M.M. Armstrong of Winnipeg took an interest in the breed and his Gilnockie kennel was started. At his death, Gilhockie was transferred to Col. Samuel Magoffin's kennel in Denver, Colorado, and from this he eventually imported his first Golden, Am/Can CH Speedwell Pluto.**

**The Golden Retriever Club of Canada was formed in 1958 with the original name of the Golden Retriever Club of Ontario. In 1960 it became the Golden Retriever Club of Canada and to this day has grown steadily.**

**Goldens have been in the US since about 1890, with the earliest recorded dog being Hon. Archie Marjoribanks's "Lady" in 1894. The first AKC registered Golden was Robert Appleton's Lomberdale Blondin. But there was no serious interest in them until about 1930 when Magoffin's import, CH Speedwell Pluto, captured widespread interest. The Golden Retriever was, subsequently, recognized by the AKC in 1932. At that time they were a rare breed.**

**In 1938, a group of Golden Retriever fanciers formed the Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) which is today among the largest of the parent breed clubs in the AKC, numbering over 5000 members.**