



## Are we burning our Bridges? are we going one bridge too far?

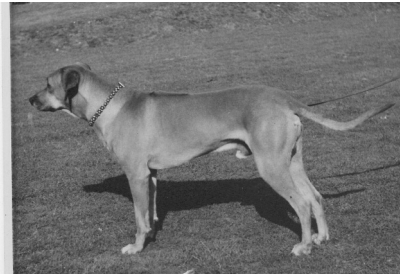
Two breeders discuss their  
different perspectives on the  
emphasis of the standardized  
ridge – past, present and future

Linda Costa      Orit Nevo

## The evolution of the Ridge standard - facts

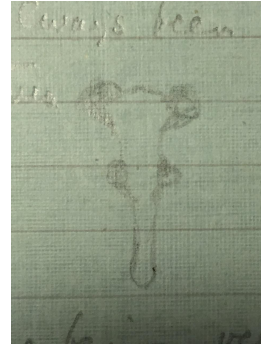
year	document	Ridge description
7.2.1923	Edmond (farmer George)	The mane, razor-back, fiddle-back or whorl – a ridge of hair up to 2 inches in height, commence above the shoulders, where it is broadest and continues along the centre of the back finishing at a point opposite the hips
1926	The Original Standard Yellow booklet	The peculiarity of this breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. This ridge, which must be regarded as the escutcheon of the breed, is broad behind the shoulders tapers off toward the root of the tail. It should be clearly defined and start immediately behind the shoulders, continue up to or over the loin. In shape it resembles a fiddle with the strings towards the tail. A dog without a clearly defined ridge is not recognised as belonging to this breed.
1931	First modification of the standard - Blue booklet	resemblance to fiddle omitted
1936/40	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> modifications	No modifications on the ridge
1945	4 <sup>th</sup> modifications to the standard. 2 <sup>nd</sup> White booklet	No modifications on the ridge
1948	5 <sup>th</sup> modification of the standard Pink booklet	The peculiarity of this breed is the ridge on the back, which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat; the ridge must be regarded as the escutcheon of the breed. The ridge should be clearly defined, tapering and symmetrical. It should start immediately behind the shoulders and continue up to the hip bones, and should contain 2 identical crowns opposite each other. The lower edge of the crowns should not extend further down the ridge than 1/3 of the length of the ridge. N.B. we do not at this stage propose standardising the width of the ridge, but feel that up to 2 inches is good average.
1952	6 <sup>th</sup> modification	Up to hip bone replaced with up to the point between the prominence of the hips The N.B. suggestion was omitted
1986	the British KC revises all its standards	Ridge – Adding “must contain two identical crowns only.”

## Fiddle shape



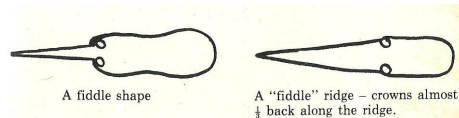
Manscross Chevallier of Hub 1949  
Mrs McKenzie wrote: he has a "fiddle shape" ridge

Courtesy: The Parent Club archive



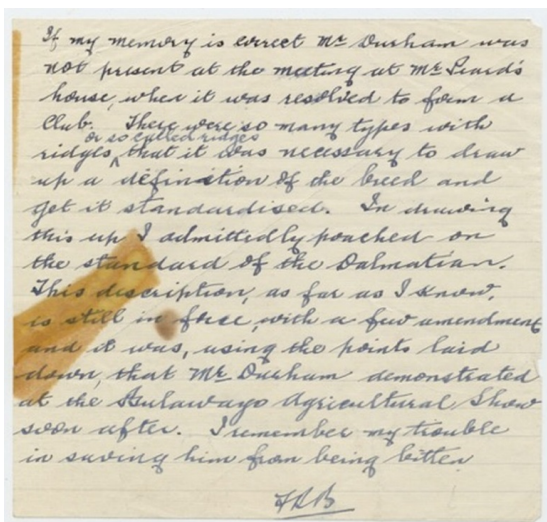
Major Mundy illustration  
of "my idea has always a  
been that perfection is  
a double crown

Courtesy: The Parent Club  
archive



J. N. Murray description of Fiddle shape ridge  
"The Rhodesian Ridgeback 1924-74 (1975)

## Historical background of the ridge changes in the 1948 standard

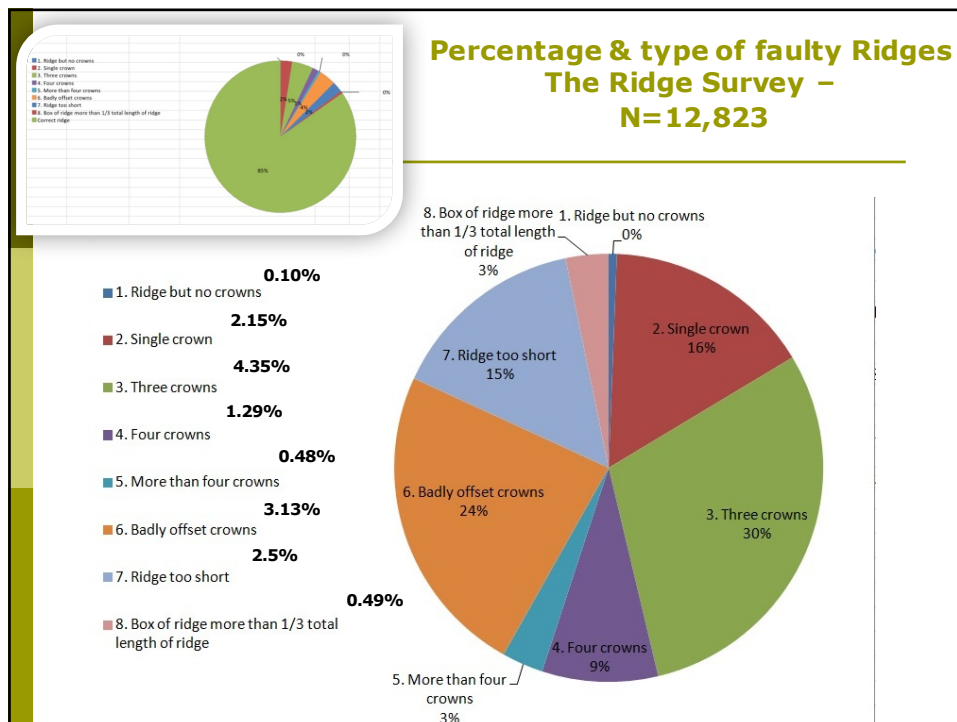


Portion of a letter  
from Francis Barnes  
written in about 1954  
to Mabel Wellings  
describing the  
formation of the  
Rhodesian Ridgeback  
Club in 1922 - and the  
writing of the original  
Standard

Courtesy: The Parent  
Club archive

# The Ridge Survey

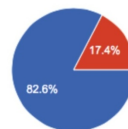
- February – April 2016
- Anonymously
- 152 responses
- 1,527 litters
- 12,823 pups
- 1975-2016



## The Ridge Survey

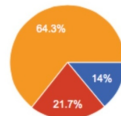
- 3 crowns – 4.35%
- Badly offset crowns – 3.13%
- Too short ridge – 2.5%
- Single crown – 2.15%
- 4 crowns -1.29%
- Box longer then 1/3 – 0.49%
- More then 4 crowns – 0.48%
- =14.75% faulty + 6.96% ridgeless=21.7%

7. Do you think a certain proportion of faulty ridges are to be expected over a long period of time?



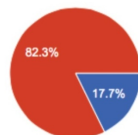
Yes	119	82.6%
No	25	17.4%

1. Over the years, have you noticed an increase or a decrease in the number of faulty ridges that occur in your whelping box?



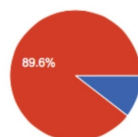
Increase	20	14%
Decrease	31	21.7%
About the same	92	64.3%

5. Do you think that certain lines or kennels are free of ridge faults?



Yes	26	17.7%
No	121	82.3%

6. If so, would you go to that line or kennel solely to select for ridges?



Yes	14	10.4%
No	120	89.6%

## RIDGE GENETICS FOR THE NOVICE

*In collaboration with canine geneticist Dr Mark Neff, USA*

**Q. Can you predict a ridge or not?**

**A. Sometimes but not always**

Predictive DNA test is not always accurate, can only be considered indicative

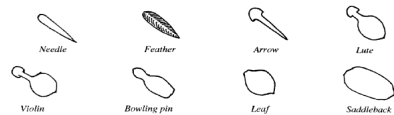
**Q. Can you accurately predict ridge traits, such as number and placement of crowns?**

**A. No**

Ridge characteristics appear to have been selectively bred for over time

Selection is known to act on genetic variation

Without this artificial selection a greater expression of ridge diversity may be seen



**Q. Do genes tell the whole story?**

**A. Perhaps not**

An alternative explanation could be epigenetics

the study of changes in organisms caused by modification or suppression of gene expression rather than alteration of the genetic code itself

These changes are defined early in embryonic development and are irreversible

Examples - sub-aortic stenosis - ectopic ureters - coloboma of the eye - cryptorchidism

**Q. What conclusions (if any) can we draw with respect to breeding correct ridges?**

**A. Unfortunately not many**

Both genetic and non-genetic factors probably involved

Unable to identify or control what modifying factors are affecting ridge expression so far

## Thai Ridgeback Ridge patterns



**Pictures:  
Barbos.me**

# So where do we go from here?



**Linda Costa**  
**Orit Nevo**

