

The French Bulldog

The French Bulldog (French: Bouledogue Français) is a French breed of companion dog or toy dog.

It appeared in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, apparently the result of cross-breeding of Toy Bulldogs imported from England and local Parisian ratters. ^[1]

It is commonly kept as a pet, and is among the most frequently registered dogs in a number of countries including Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The breed is susceptible to various health issues as a consequence of breeding for their distinctive appearance, especially the brachycephalic face and skin wrinkles.



History

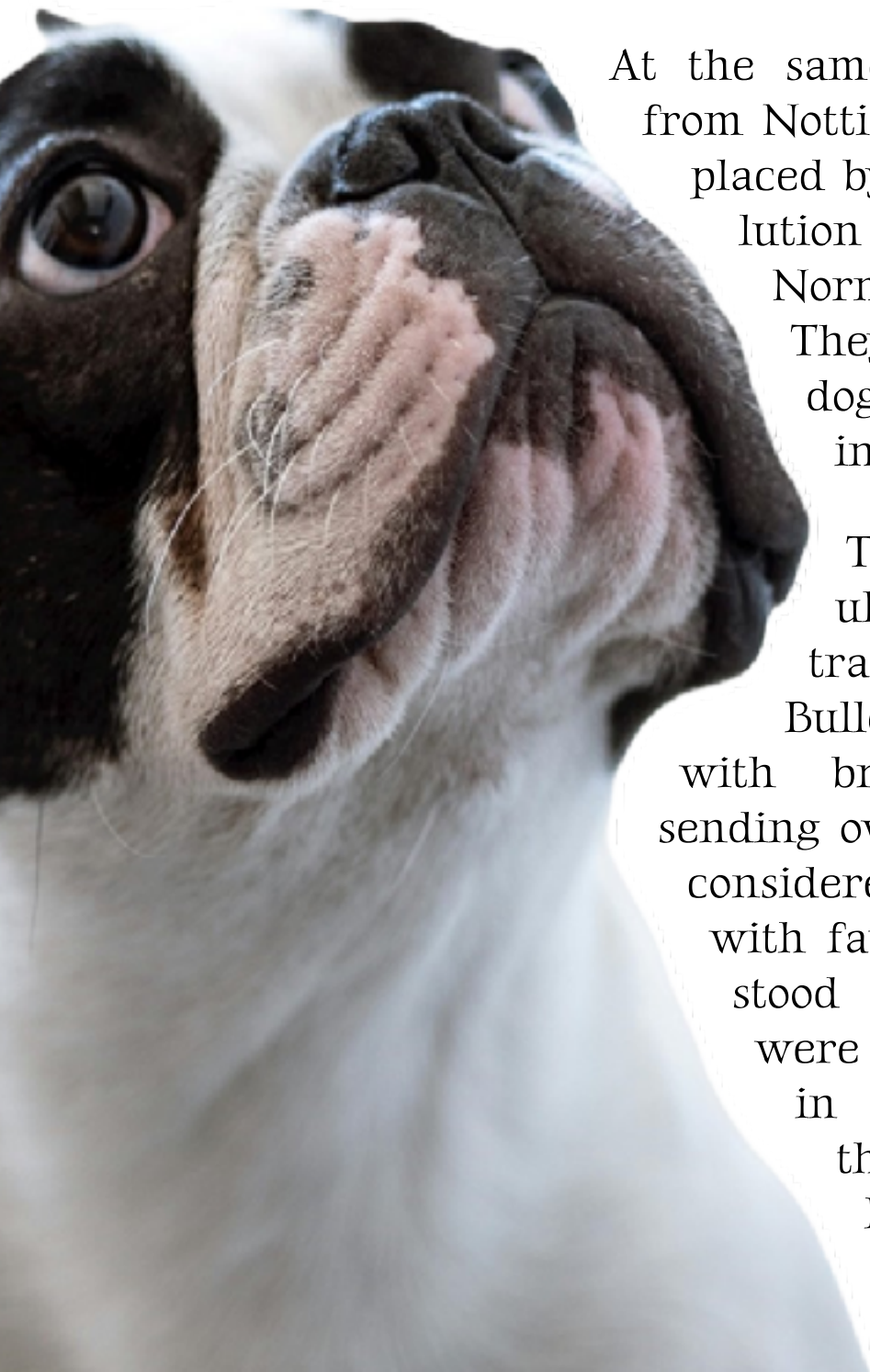
From the beginning of the nineteenth century, bulldogs were bred in the United Kingdom for purposes other than traditional blood sports such as bull-baiting, which were banned in 1835. [2]:5

By the middle of the century there were miniature bulldogs, often weighing some 7-11 kg (15-24 lb), though some weighed considerably less. [2]:6

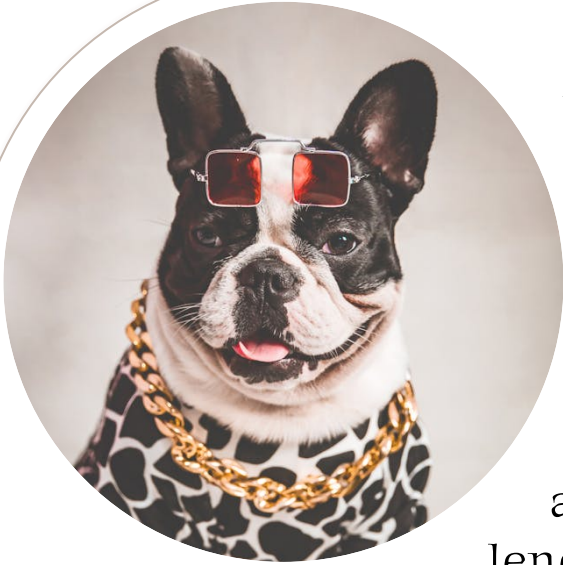
At the same time, lace workers from Nottingham who were displaced by the Industrial Revolution began to settle in Normandy, France. [3]:58

They brought a variety of dogs with them, including Toy Bulldogs. [4]

The dogs became popular in France and a trade in imported small Bulldogs was created, with breeders in England sending over Bulldogs that they considered to be too small, or with faults such as ears that stood up. By 1860, there were few Toy Bulldogs left in England, such was their popularity in France. [2]:6



Health



A study in the UK comparing French Bulldogs to the general canine population found that of 43 common conditions, the French Bulldog had significantly higher prevalence for almost half (20/43) and a significantly lower prevalence for a quarter (11/43). Stenotic nares had an occurrence rate of 42 times the general population, brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome was 30 times more prevalent, aural discharge was 14 times more prevalent, skin fold dermatitis was 11 times more prevalent, and dystocia was 9 times more prevalent. ^[5]

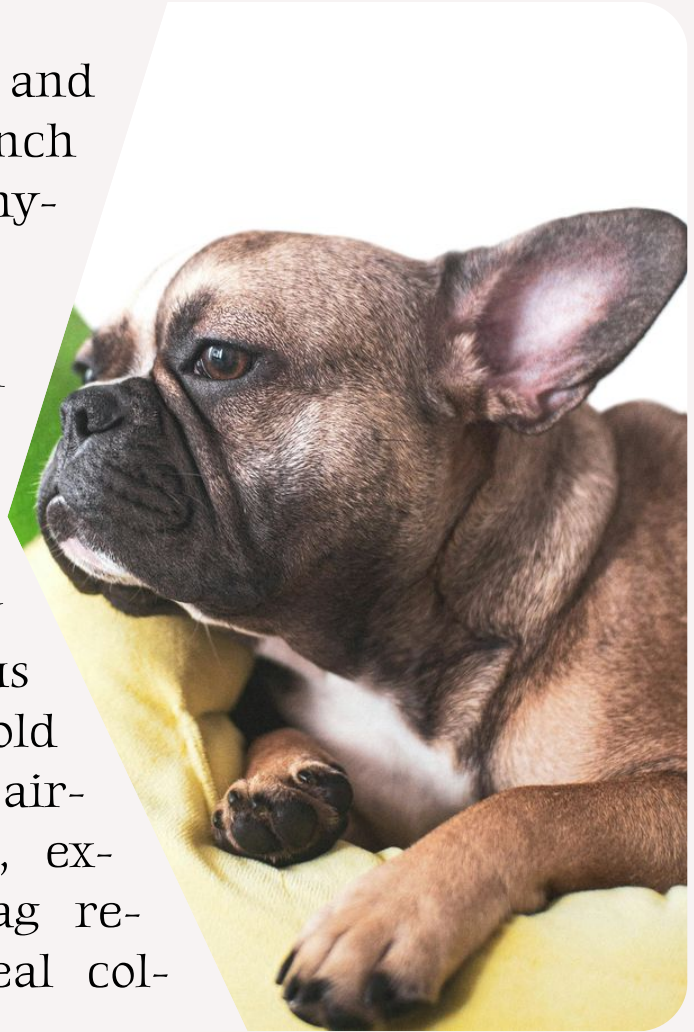
In 2013, a UK Medical Study reviewed the health of 2228 French Bulldogs under veterinary care in the UK. The study found that 1612 (72.4%) of these French Bulldog had at least one recorded health issue: The most common disorders recorded were ear infections (14.0%), diarrhea (7.5%) and conjunctivitis (3.2%). Skin problems were the most commonly reported group of disorders (17.9%). ^[6]

Brachycephaly

The shortened snout and pushed in face of the French Bulldog is known as brachycephaly. ^[7]

Brachycephaly results in deformation of the upper airway tract and leads to obstruction of breathing.


^[8] Effects of brachycephaly are stridor, stertorous breathing, emesis, skin fold dermatitis, brachycephalic airway obstructive syndrome, exophthalmos, pharyngeal gag reflex, cyanosis, and laryngeal collapse. ^{[9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [15]}



Other issues arising from brachycephaly are risk of complications whilst under anaesthesia, ^[16] and hyperthermia - with the latter caused due to an inability to effectively reduce body temperature via panting. ^[17]

French Bulldogs are banned by several commercial airlines due to the numbers that have died while in the air. ^{[18] [19]}

Life Expectancy



A study of the deaths of 30,563 dogs of different breeds in the United Kingdom in 2016-2020 found the French Bulldog to have a life expectancy at birth of 4.53 years, the lowest by a large margin of all breeds in the study, which found an average for all dogs of 11.23 years. [20]:1

This same study indicates that the low life expectancy for French Bulldogs is possibly influenced by the increasing number of French Bulldogs present in the UK, increasing from 2,771 KC registered individuals in 2011 to 39,266 individuals in 2020, skewing the general population to be very young on average and biasing the data. [20]:1

Birth and Reproduction

French Bulldogs frequently require Caesarean section to give birth, with over 80% of litters delivered this way. [21] [22] A UK study identified French Bulldog bitches to be 15.9 times more likely to experience dystocia. [23]

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Image References

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