

Town & Country

DEVOTEES of the dwindling numbers of the Dandie Dinmont terrier are to join forces at a special event in Scotland in February in a bid to raise awareness of the dogs' plight.

Distinctive due to their fluffy coat, characterful 'top knot' and the fact they're the only breed to be named after a literary character, these stocky little dogs quickly rose in popularity after being immortalised as the loyal canine companions of a farmer called Dandie Dinmont in Sir Walter Scott's 1815 novel *Guy Mannering*.

Although they had been known as unique 'Mustard and Pepper' terriers since the 1700s, the unprecedented success of Scott's novel—the first edition of which sold out within 24 hours—fuelled the breed's popularity, with royalty and nobility heading north to secure Dandie Dinmonts.

Sadly, in recent years, puppy registrations have dropped dramatically. So much so, that, for the past decade, the dogs have languished on the Kennel Club's list of vulnerable native breeds—just 300 puppies a year are bred worldwide, with only about 100 of those being born in Britain.

Can you save the Dandie Dinmont from disaster?



However, fans of these fun-loving, affectionate and determined dogs—along with 50 Dandie Dinmonts—will gather at Sir Walter Scott's former home, Abbotsford House, at Galashiels in the Scottish Borders, on February 24 to commemorate the publication of the book and to try to give breed numbers a boost.

Today, only about 100 'Mustard and Pepper' Dandie Dinmont terriers are bred in the UK each year

'In 1815, Sir Walter Scott brought the Dandie Dinmont terrier to prominence and, 200 years later, we are asking for his help once again to create awareness of this lovely little dog and hopefully save it from possible extinction,' says Paul Keevil, UK co-ordinator of the Dandie Dinmont—200 years campaign. *Katy Birchall*