

The Sheepman

THE PRACTICAL SHEEP MAGAZINE FOR FARM FLOCK OWNERS OF AMERICA

SPECIAL SHEEP DOG ISSUE.

FEBRUARY, 1949.

WORKING COLLIES

D. S. BELL, Secretary, North American Sheep Dog Society.

SOMEONE has noted that in all his writings Shakespeare made no allusion to shepherd's dogs. Another marked it as "rather strange" that only once in the Bible is any mention made of shepherd's dogs.

The above is just a way of saying that if a reader gets his pleasure from reading Shakespeare or the Bible because of the omission it isn't likely that he will get deeply interested in these notes.

Many things of interest have been happening in the Working Collie activity since this column last appeared. The objective here is to review some that hold considerable interest to Members of the Society and others who follow the activity.

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National Dog Week is a time set aside each year in special recognition of the long-time service and devotion of man's faithful companion and helper—the dog. One of the important recognition ceremonies in the 1948 celebration was staged in The Plaza of Rockefeller Center in the very heart of New York City last October. Several thousand people attended to watch the "doings" and thus to pay their respects and to gain further knowledge of things in the canine kingdom.

Upon invitation from Mr. Harry Miller, Executive Secretary of Gaines Dog Research Center, and Chairman of the National Dog Week Committee, the little Working Collies put on one of the three feature attractions. Since they had asked for one of the Society's Trials Champions, Art Allen, who had gathered in both of the Champions at the Eastern Trials held, was chased by letter and wire all over Illinois and Oklahoma until arrangements were made.

It was unique to see the little Collies, which ordinarily work livestock on the wide open spaces of farm and ranch, put on their "act" with a marble floor underfoot, and right in the very heart of the world's largest city. When Art sent Glen around the sheep to "lift" them, and as the dog paused and set his "eye" on the lambs, as a good dog will, so many photographers appeared from so many directions that Art, for a time, could see neither the dog nor the sheep. Only when these chaps with their little black boxes with flash attachments had satisfied themselves that they had a good "take" did the demonstration proceed. Both Art and the writer know the feeling of being utterly helpless in the face of great odds. If any one else wants to know the feeling we would recommend the job of trying to persuade a whole group of photographers away from a picture that looks good to them.

Another point of interest, perhaps, is the fact that this occasion was probably the first time in which Working Collies actually working sheep was ever put over television. The setting was anything but rural but the dog and the sheep were real. Dewey Jontz and his dogs, we understand, were put over the air at the Chicago International Livestock Exposition a few weeks later.

The whole National Dog Week program was an interesting one. The principal speaker was Mr. Gene Tunney, who had considerable to say about his dogs, which I presume are Boxers. The Master of Ceremonies was Mr. Joe E. Brown; the gentleman of movie fame who makes a lot out of a laugh.

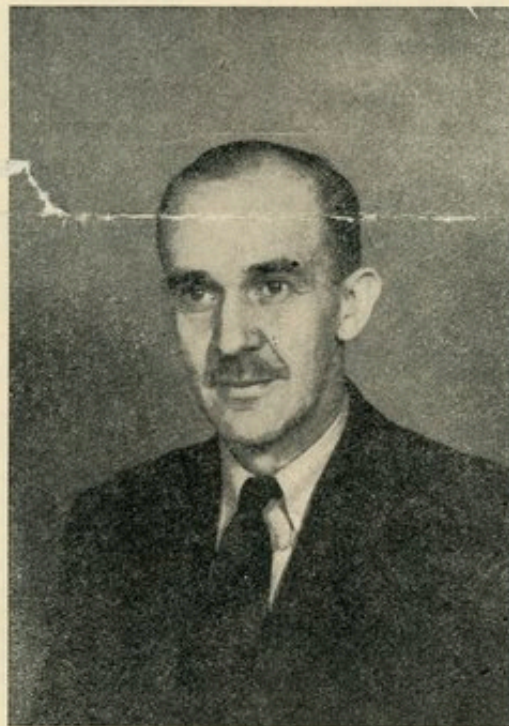
Another feature of the event was the introduction of various breeds by the American Kennel Club on a very unique basis. As most people know, most breeds originated in a foreign country. To introduce each breed a lad who was native of the country in which the dog he led had originated, or whose parents had been native of the country, was dressed in the Boy Scout uniform of that country, and also carried that country's flag. A narrator told the story of the origin of the breed as well as interesting facts about it. More than half of the 115 breeds recognized by the A.K.C. for bench show were thus introduced. It was an interesting spectacle and the American Kennel Club, as well as the Boy Scouts of America, deserve high praise.

It was a great day, and all we need add is—Thanks! Harry Miller for regarding the Working Collies as suitable for inclusion as one of the principal features of the National

Dog Week Celebration in New York City.

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While in New York in connection with the above event, President Goater and the Secretary paid a get-acquainted call to the home office of the American Kennel Club. The American Kennel Club has long referred all inquiries regarding Border Collies to the North American Sheep Dog Society; and, of course, the North American has reciprocated when any inquiries were received which concerned a breed involved in the A.K.C. activity. It seemed that the time had long since arrived for a more personal acquaintance. We were fortunate to find Mr. John Neff, Executive Secretary, in his office and he soon arranged his schedule to accommodate his impromptu callers. During the discussion Mr. Bixby arrived and it was soon a four-way discussion of things doggy and items of other interest. What had been intended as a visit of just a few minutes was



D. S. BELL

eventually interrupted by a telephone call from Rockefeller Centre saying that it was time to get over there and get ready for the show.

One of the subjects discussed was the requirements and procedure followed when new breeds are recognized by the A.K.C., or, when A.K.C. recognition of a new breed is sought by a dog breeding club. Most of this was not new to us but it was interesting to have minor details clarified; especially those changes in A.K.C. procedure which have been made during the past few years; or since the details had been explained several years ago. It seemed equally as interesting to Mr. Neff and Mr. Bixby to learn what was doing and *the how* and *the why* of the Border Collie activity as conducted by the North American Sheep Dog Society. We came away with a sincere appreciation for the A.K.C. activity as a vast institution, and also with a very high regard for its administrative executives. Their invitation to return at a later date when more time was available for discussion and to see through such features as their vast Library is deeply appreciated and undoubtedly will be taken advantage of when opportunity affords.

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Considering that there is a small group led principally by one expelled several years ago from the North American Sheep Dog Society's activity which keeps agitating for A.K.C. recognition for the Border Collie, a frank discussion of this matter may be interesting. It has been clear from the start that all any such agitation can lead to is confusion. However, many may not understand it fully; hence, a discussion may be worth while.

To understand the matter one must know that the American Kennel Club is the overall Governing Body for some 110 to 115 Member Clubs, each one of which is interested in a breed of dog which club members develop under a Standard of Perfection covering body form, size, type, weight, color, coat pattern, set of ear, eye, expression, carriage of tail, and other details of physical structure and perfection which serve for the judging of dogs in bench shows. The American Kennel Club conducts Stud Book Registration for all of the breeds they recognize. Some of the Member Clubs engaged in the breeding of Sporting Dogs hold Gun Dog Trials and such other events as may be a breed's specialty. Each breed is a specialty group. There are other activities, too, but those who may wish additional particulars should consult **THE COMPLETE DOG BOOK**, an official A.K.C. publication, or, they may write to the American Kennel Club, 221 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

From the Working Collie standpoint the first remark should be that those who have been interested in the breeding and development of the Border Collie breed, and this includes in foremost position, the farmers and shepherds of Britain, have not been interested in "standardizing" their dogs under any bench show definition. Rather the dog's ability to handle livestock and those utility values which make the dog useful under the wide variety of conditions such as maintain in Britain from precipitous hills to the low moors, have been uppermost. Work and service being the primary objectives, breeders have from the beginning taken advantage of "genes" for work and service found within any dogs within the breed and have paid little attention to standardization on the basis that all dogs of the breed shall look alike.

To enlarge this concept of work, utility, and widest adaptation, there are included with the Border Collie breed, rough-coated (long haired) dogs, semi-rough coated dogs, and smooth-coated (short-haired) dogs. There are large size dogs used principally for driving, medium size dogs for a wide variety of conditions, and small size dogs for use in the craggy, rugged, precipitous hills where the large dog often finds passage between crevices impeded, and where the large dog may soon dash itself to pieces owing to the roughness of the country.

Again, with work and utility in mind, there has been little attention given to such factors as coat-color and coat pattern; size, shape, and set of ear; color of eye; angulation of the hock or other purely esthetic points

of skeletal structure; carriage of the tail; "chiseling" of the jaw; and so on through the whole series of what may be called purely esthetic values. The result is that Working or Border Collies vary through a considerable range of size, color, coat pattern, and appearance.

When one looks at the pictures of the Supreme Champions of all past International Sheep Dog Trials, with trials the basis for all registered Working Collie activity, one is impressed on the point that no two dogs look alike; nor do the dogs as a group have altogether similar appearance. To earn this championship they all did the same kind of high class work. This makes it clear that the standard is *work*; not looks.

If any one dog was selected as the "type" dog for bench show activity, then the contribution that all others might make to the working qualities of the breed would be lost. Suppose, again, that the type selected didn't carry the genes for work in the best combination. Deterioration could come about so quickly within the primary quality *work* through this hobbyism as to almost destroy the pre-eminence of the breed for WORK within a very few generations. It happened once. Breeders as a group, who desire to succeed, rarely do so by narrowing the range of opportunity to select for the primary quality. Thus, to attempt to make a show dog out of a dog bred as the Working Collie has been to make it supreme to-day for work would be to promote a program of tremendous risk and extreme sacrifice.

When this explanation was injected into the New York discussion it didn't take long for one of the group to remark that he could readily see where the sacrifices called for to make a bench show dog quickly would be too great under all existing circumstances. If, through concerted effort over the world, a standardized breed for show should be desired, and if all breeders worked for it for some 25 years or more, then such a thing as a bench show dog might come about. For anyone to think of standardizing now, or quickly, using a very few dogs from within the breed, would amount to the standardizing on the basis of a few which might represent one per cent of what Border Collies are now. No matter how one might figure it, such a move wouldn't be standardizing the *breed* for bench show purposes. It would merely be standardizing a few of the breed. The thing we think of, therefore, when we come up against this agitation for bench show recognition for the Border Collie, as promoted by a few non-thinking individuals, is A. A. Milne's story book character, Winnie the Pooh—Bear of little brain. The whole concept of WORK and UTILITY as represented by Border Collies as a breed is far broader than they seem to comprehend.

We have heard some rise at this point to remark that if a group of individuals called a breed do not look alike, can the collective group be rightly called a BREED? This again is POOH BEAR thinking. It is true that some breeds do have standards for size or color. Aberdeen Angus cattle might be taken as a good example, because breeders defer to black alone. On the color matter, though, one seems to recall that Percheron horses may vary through Grey, Bay, Black, and Dappled; and one can't deny that the Percheron is not only a breed but a great one. For the benefit of the Pooh Bears then, "look alike" from color or any other point isn't any more significant than "do alike." A breed has been most ably defined as a group of individuals within a species which possess distinctive characteristics not common to other members of the same species, with those distinctive characteristics sufficiently well fixed germinally to be uniformly transmitted. The distinctive characteristics need not be color or size. If one wants an understanding of those characteristics distinctive of Working or Border Collies let him comprehend the working ability that thousands and thousands of these dogs manifest the world around in handling livestock. Their inherent working quality is standardized but with range enough in type and size and form, and coat and so on within the breed to allow it to serve from the snow-capped hills of Northernmost Scotland to the burning sands of Australia in the out-back country, or from the northern reaches of Canada, where reindeer abound, to the plains of Texas. To grasp their distinctive characteristics one may note how the dogs go out day after day, year after year, winter or summer, hot or cold, wet or dry, and perform their tasks in a distinctive Border Collie manner. Because of the wide range of

concept in breeding, and the wide range of utility values bred into them, they are becoming one of the most widely disseminated of all breeds of domesticated livestock. It certainly is Pooh Bear thinking to even consider the discarding of most of what the Border Collie now embraces to make it something it was never intended to be. It is well understood, of course, that those who breed for money, through the conduct of pup factories, might see some personal gain in trying to tie their kite to the A.K.C., and thus capitalize on the high position and public standing of that organization. On the other hand, it is equally difficult to conceive of existing organization of high standing being interested in any small minority group which is completely out of step with the fundamental world concept that has and is continuing to develop the Border Collie as a breed. The International Sheep Dog Society of Britain understands all of this; the North American Sheep Dog Society one can be reasonably certain, understands it, and one may regard the A.K.C. administrators have some insight into the matter. Standardization of the breed for bench show just isn't in the picture at present or in the immediate future.

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Oh yes! those who have at some time read A. A. Milne's "Winnie the Pooh" to their toddlers, will recall the time that Pooh visited the Rabbit, tasted honey, and became so greedy that he overindulged. Soon his folly got him stuck in the doorway, and all of Rabbit's relations couldn't push him free. It was honey, and greed, and lack of understanding it all that brought Pooh into his catastrophic predicament. Some understanding ahead of action is often a good indulgence, and this moral could be recommended to the agitators.

From time to time various purchasers will present a Certificate of Registration issued by one of two other so-called registering organisations to the North American Sheep Dog Society for entry in the Stud Book. They quite uniformly relate some instance of remark which led them to think, when purchasing the dog, that the Certificate would be readily accepted. What representations may have been made, the North American Society doesn't know, because it never inquired into the matter. It did recognize the writing on one Certificate as being the hand of the only individual the North American Society ever found it necessary to expel. The likelihood of acceptability of such a Certificate carries its own answer. Of course, the North American was sorry to disappoint the purchaser. The Certificate from another organization was countersigned by an individual who had called the rules of and between the International Sheep Dog Society and the North American Society "silly and immature" and who proceeded apparently to set up something that would allow "we breeders to merchandise our dogs more readily." (The two quotations are from letter on file.) Certainly, if the rules and organizational structure of the two organizations which constitute the basis on which an individual had built a private activity are regarded as "silly and immature" and need relaxing purely for merchandising purposes, then the answer to the acceptability of such a counter signed Certificate is clear of itself. Again, the North American Society had to reply—"We're sorry." The North American Sheep Dog Society is not likely to recognize Certificates like the above, nor from any organization which does not directly present its Articles of Organization, By-laws, operational procedures, Rules of Eligibility, and the like, including a list of the Officers, how they are elected, what their duties are, and so on. Not only would the above be required, but it would be necessary to find that the objects and purposes were in agreement with those of the North American's. This information is printed publicly as a statement of policy and procedure from the North American Society, and it gives the reason and the basis why some Certificates already presented have been turned down. This latter follows from the single fact that some who have presented Certificates indicated that they had gained their interest from the North American's activity in the first place, and wished to participate in it; and thus, for the benefit of others who may proceed likewise, some information and guidance seems an obligation of the North American Society in its own interest, and in the interests of those following it.

For the benefit of those who may wish to be certain that they are buying a dog eligible to registration in the North American Society's Stud Book, it may be repeated that any so-minded buyer can best protect his own interests by simply making it a part of any buying agreement that the seller guarantee to furnish a Certificate for the dog purchased showing it to be registered in the Stud Book of the North American Sheep Dog Society. Any Member of the North American Sheep Dog Society who breeds dogs eligible to direct registration, or eligible to indirect registration under the provisions of Article IV, Section 3 of the By-laws, will be glad to give a guarantee to cover each respective circumstance. It might be remarked that the North American Sheep Dog Society does not supervise private breeder advertising. Members usually indicate their Membership. So far as the North American Society is informed, only The Sheepman Magazine, Lexington, Kentucky, confines its Breeder's Directory to North American Sheep Dog Society Members, and this Magazine has asked for the Recent Membership List.

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During the 1948 Trial Season, three dogs in North America won Open Championships in competitive Trials under the rules of the North American Sheep Dog Society. Bess, and Glen owned by Mr. Arthur Allen, McLeansboro, Illinois, and Tweed owned by Mr. J. S. Palmer, Dixon, California, are the three included. It might be remarked that the California Trial was under the supervision of the California Sheep Dog Society.

In Britain, Mr. J. M. Wilson, unquestionably the greatest trialer ever to compete anywhere, won the Supreme Championship of Britain with his dog Glen, and placed second with his dog Moss. Mr. W. J. Hislop was third with his dog Sheep. Incidentally, Wilson's Glen and Hislop's Sweep are full brothers.

In looking over the North American Champions, an interesting relationship was noted. Mr. Allen's Bess and Glen, which are half-sister and half-brother relationship, are also half-sister and half-brother respectively, to the dam of Wilson's Glen and Hislop's Sweep. Mr. Palmer's Tweed in California was sired by a full brother to the dam of Wilson's Glen and Hislop's Sweep. It is, indeed, a record of family performance where dogs of such close relationship win all the Championships offered on each side of the Atlantic. Much of this kinship ties back to Mr. J. M. Wilson's dog Cap, 3036, and to Mr. McCaskie's Moss—a female that spent 13 years gathering sheep off Tinto, the highest hill in Lanark, and a female sired by Mr. Storie's Moss, and out of the Scottish National Champion Nickey.

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One of the most generous letters ever received by the North American Sheep Dog Society is the one arriving recently from Britain. It says: "It may be of interest to some of your Members to know that in September, 1951, I am hoping for the first time, to hold the full scale International Trials in London, and I hope that if any of your Members are at any time coming to this country, they will make a point of letting me know, so that I can do anything possible to help them whilst they are here, and if they are over in the Trial Season, the Home Society will issue them complimentary tickets, and will be very pleased to entertain them." Thank you, sincerely, and we reciprocate. The letter was signed: "T. Harry Halsall, Secretary, International Sheep Dog Society, 41 Houghton Street, Southport, England." Mr. Halsall is being advised that each Member will hold an Annual Membership Card, and presentation of same showing Membership during the year in question will be a full introduction. The letter, of course, will carry other comments in keeping with such generosity and co-operation in THE CAUSE.

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Members and others who may be interested in information which came as a result of inquiry to Chief,

Department, Washington, D.C. The import duty on Working Dogs of the Border Collie Breed which heretofore has been 15% ad valorem is now reduced to 7½% ad valorem on declared value pursuant to the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade concluded at Geneva on October 30, 1947.

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It seems to be a developing plan for the North American Society to put its major effort this coming Trials Season into a big two or three-day event which will end with declaring the winner as Supreme Champion Sheep Dog of North America. There will be other trials, of course, but the major effort by the Society will be as indicated. More details will be released as the progress develops.

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A number of books have arrived at the office since our last news release in this Magazine. *Working Dogs of the World*, by Clifford L. B. Hubbard, is an English book published by Sidgwick and Jackson Ltd., London, which deals broadly with many breeds. This book may be generally available, but the only listing the Secretary has seen for the United States is The Sporting Gallery and Bookshop, 38 East 52nd Street, New York, 22.

Training the Dog, by Captain Will Judy, Judy Publishing Company, Chicago, 16, Illinois, is a general book which deals with training of dogs of various breeds.

Still another is *Boots, the Working Sheep Dog*, by Col. S. P. Meek, Picatinny Arsenal, and published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York. This "story" of a Sheep Dog was inspired by Col. Meek having seen Jimmy Davidson's dog Boots doing his "chores" around the flocks at the University of Wyoming, at Laramie. Boots, incidentally, was sired by DUKE, Champion Sheep Dog at the Golden Gate Exposition in California a number of years ago, and is from Art Allen's Champion "Old Meg." This is Jimmy's year, it seems, with a book inspired, and

Champion Hampshire wether lamb over all breeds at the recent International Livestock Exposition in Chicago. This moves Jimmy Davidson up into the class of Excellent Public Relations Expert, University of Wyoming; Dean Hill please note.

Still another book was an "old timer" sent over by Mr. Reid for its reference value, and one which is highly appreciated. We will save this one for broader comment later.

Finally, in this list we mention receipt of Vol. II, New Zealand Working Sheep Dog Stud Book, sent along by Patron, Mr. F. T. "Jack" Matson, Christchurch. Volume I had been earlier received. We are very grateful, too, for the rules and entry books of their Trials, and also the Score Book giving the results. While speaking of "Jack" Matson, with whom we have been corresponding for a number of years, an interesting coincidence happened at the International at Chicago. I was introduced to a gentleman from New Zealand. After talking for a time I happened to ask that silly question—do you happen to know . . . ? and he replied, Goodness, Yes, his office is next to mine. It was next thing to saying Howdy Jack! And as he reads this, as I am quite sure he will, many thanks again and publicly for sending along the reports on your 11 days of Trials competition when you handled 4 classes, the least patronized of which had 136 dogs in the entry list.

For the benefit of Members or any others who may be interested, the Program of the Scottish, English, and Welsh National Trials of Britain, as well as the Program and final scores of the International Judging are on file; these having been so generously provided by the International Sheep Dog Society, along with newspaper report.

And finally, there was the Christmas Greeting from Doc Kelly, past President of the New South Wales Sheep Dog Society of Australia indicating that Boveaugh dogs make good Artist's subjects as well as work sheep. So it goes the whole world around; Sheep Dog activity everywhere. Even Geo. Litton put a good wish on us for 1949—and thanks George.

41 HOGHTON STREET,
SOUTHPORT,
1ST MARCH, 1949.

TO ALL MEMBERS,

I am indebted to The Secretary of the North American Sheep Dog Society for the February issue of the Sheepman. I thought it was of interest and I am sure Mr. Bell will not mind my reproducing it.

Yours faithfully,

T. H. HALSALL.