

PETTIS

BYLINE

Colleen and Hugh Pettis

1. Why Westies?

When our last Dachshund had to be put to sleep (that bad back) and we knew we were going to England and that there was a six month quarantine in England on dogs from abroad, we decided to wait until we arrived there to get another dog. But what breed? One son wanted a Cairn Terrier (because of *The Wizard of Oz* movie). Somehow that changed into a West Highland White Terrier by the time we got to England, and within a week of arrival we answered an ad and bought a Westie pup.

2. From whom did you obtain your first Westie?

A couple of months after she arrived we went to the Birmingham dog show in Bingley Hall to watch the Westies. We immediately realized that our dog did not look like those in the ring!! So we talked to some breeders there (it was a benched show) including Mary Dennis (BRANSTON). We liked both this lady and her dogs (what did we know at that time? -- just luck, I guess.) Her book *The West Highland White Terrier* had just been published and we studied it carefully while waiting for a Branston litter to be born and to reach eight weeks.

3. Was this Westie purchased as a pet or show dog?

Ultimately, we took home Byline Bob of Branston -- a quality dog. The rest is history, at least to us.

4. Who was your most important mentor and why?

Probably Mrs. Dennis was our most important mentor, even after we left England. However, many other Westie authorities contributed to our breed knowledge over the years.

5. What do you remember most about this mentor? Mrs. Dennis never let us get away with a shortcut, and could be brutal in admonishing us! I would groom Bob and then she would start all over again to make him presentable.

6. Who were some of the other mentors that influenced you? How did they do so? Barbara Graham (LASARA) and others would point out problems, maybe grooming. She was also very encouraging when I did something right in the ring. Mrs. Samson (QUAKERTOWN) was also helpful with general information about Westies. And it was always a pleasure talking to Miss Wright of CALLUNA kennels. Most of these people had known the "Grand Dame" of Westies, Mrs. C. Pacey and had interesting stories. Everyone at the shows was encouraging; staying at the benched shows all day was like going to school. And there were many small sanction shows

where we could talk and show and learn. The judges were almost all Westie breeders. I remember also, Mrs. Estcourt (RHIANFA) and the Stevensons of Scotland. We met the Marvins and Henry Sayres on both sides of the Atlantic; they gave us advice on showing in America. Back in the United States, Westie personalities I remember particularly were Anthony and Polly Walters (TYNDRUM), Mrs. Daniell-Jenkins (KENNELS OF THE ROUGE), Katharine Hayward (HUNTINGHOUSE) and the celebrated professional handler Peter Green. These were in addition to the people we met in our local Westie club in Washington, DC, particularly Billye and Tom Ward (DONNYBROOK). Bergit Kabel whom we had seen in Britain was helpful and handled some of our dogs for us.

7. To date, what has been your most important/ memorable moment in Westies?

This was probably a show in Baltimore Maryland in 1968. We had just arrived back in the U.S. and had begun entering shows. Suddenly, in Baltimore our Bob won a four-point major! My husband came over and told me I had just won a place in Westminster (those were the good old days).

8. What is your favorite dog show? Why?

My favorite show is the parent specialty at Montgomery County. There we could see so many of the top dogs, and the excitement was great. In England, that distinction probably went to Birmingham for nostalgic reasons, only.

9. Who taught you to groom?

Our great mentor Mary Dennis taught me to groom.

10. Who taught you to evaluate litters and young stock?

Mary and Brunel Dennis taught me to grade litters and young stock and to recognize the potential in young animals.

11 When you look back, which of your Westies would you consider your favorite or most influential? Why?

My favorite will always be Byline Bob of Branston. He was a favorite both in personality and his progeny—a true Westie in spirit, and conformation. The most influential for me was Ch. Monsieur aus der Flerlage owned and handled by Bergit (nee Zakschewski) Kabel. The picture of him in Marvin's book is still the ideal Westie for us.

12. Also looking back, which sire, in your opinion, had a strong influence on the breed?

I consider that Mae Pacey's Wolvey dogs had a strong influence on the breed, although today's dogs have changed somewhat. Perhaps Ch. Cruben Dextor has had the most influence on today's

WHWT show dogs.

13. What was your most memorable Montgomery County moment? Roving moment?

Probably the Great Mud Puddle at Montgomery in 1971 remains my most indelible Montgomery moment. (Fortunately I had left my entry at home that year.)

14. If you attended the Centennial in 2009, what were your greatest experiences from it?

Sadly, I did not attend the Centennial.

15. What Westie author/artist influenced you the most?

Mary Dennis' and John Marvin's books exerted the greatest influence on my Westie thinking.

16. Do you have a favorite Westie collectible(s)?

My favorite collectibles were a Beswick figurine and the Westie plate collection by Franklin Mint Heirloom. (The artist of these plates attended local matches in England with us. He was just a boy then!

17. Are you or were you active in any regional Westie Clubs?

We were most active in the West Highland White Terrier Club of Greater Washington during the years 1968-2002.

18. What do you think the future holds for the breed? Where would you like to see it in 10/20 years?

In our opinion the future bodes ill for the breed -- diminishing quality in conformation and character due to overbreeding and increasing breed popularity. We would like to see in 10 to 20 years the Westie return to its fundamental character of feisty aggression and courage, not evolving into a cute and fashionable household ornament (the current trend).

19. How best can WHWTCA members assure the future well-being of the breed.

Do not exhibit under judges who clearly favor "beauty" in presentation over sound character and temperament.

20. What advice can you impart to present and future Westie enthusiasts?

Breed with discrimination, not in haste or convenience. Resist "style" in grooming. Rejoice in the enthusiasm of living in the Westie's world of togetherness (Man and Dog). Enjoy the self-esteem for which the West Highland White Terrier is justly famous and generously shares

with us.