

PIONEER BREEDER MARGARET S. DOUGLAS

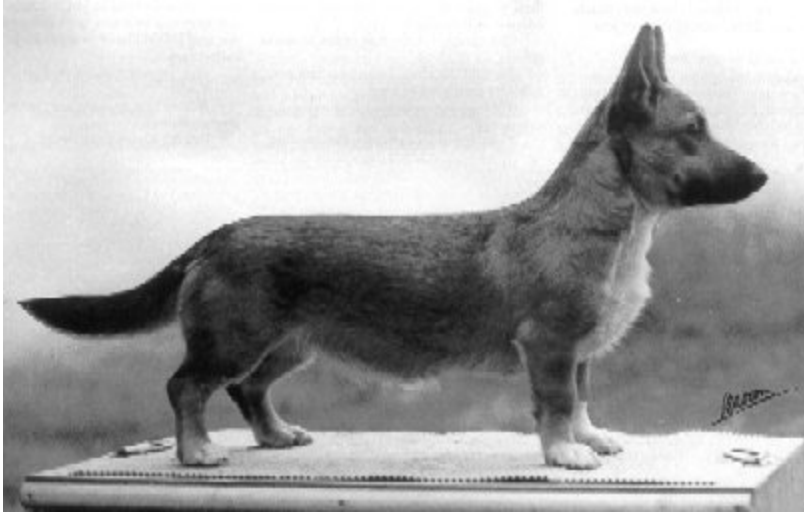
by Pat Santi

A legend in her own time, Mrs. Margaret S. Douglas started in Cardigans in 1945. We had five Champions in the breed in America at this time, two in 1936, one in 1937 and two in 1940. Then none again until 1948.

To start at the beginning, Mrs Douglas was a Collie breeder, living in Roanoke, Virginia. She used the name "Waldomar Collies, Reg." While in the Working Group with her Collies, she had been looking for the missing Cardigans, which she had seen only in pictures. She was preparing for the Roanoke Kennel Club show and had taken a Collie puppy to the park for some training, when she happened onto Dr Charles H. Peterson walking his Cardigan, Swansea Bychan, known as "Lady." Well, it was love at first sight on both Lady's and Margaret's part. They became fast friends. Dr Peterson was amazed that anyone would know what a Cardigan was, and Margaret was so thrilled to actually see one and be able to talk about them with someone who had the breed. From that moment in the park, Margaret knew she would have to have a Cardigan in her life.

Well, Dr Peterson was sending "Lady" to Cleveland to be bred at the appointed time and would need someone to whelp the puppies. What better than a breeder with children for the puppies to grow up with, and Margaret's knowledge of whelping. Of course, he would give her a puppy for her trouble. So "Lady" went off to the Senior Bole's in Cleveland and was mated to Carwyn. Dr. Peterson's nurse, Jess, accompanied "Lady" on her trip, and the first-born bitch was named "Jess." "Jess" stayed and lived with Margaret and her family and the Collies. By then, Margaret was preparing to show "Lady" to her title. Finding it difficult to locate any competition, she had to travel many, many long hours to shows out of her area. The Superintendents of that time did not send Premium Lists to those out of their territory. Margaret needed them for Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, not to mention New Jersey. So she became a professional handler, because only they received all the Premium Lists. (Please believe these are words from MSD's own mouth.)

Ch Jess

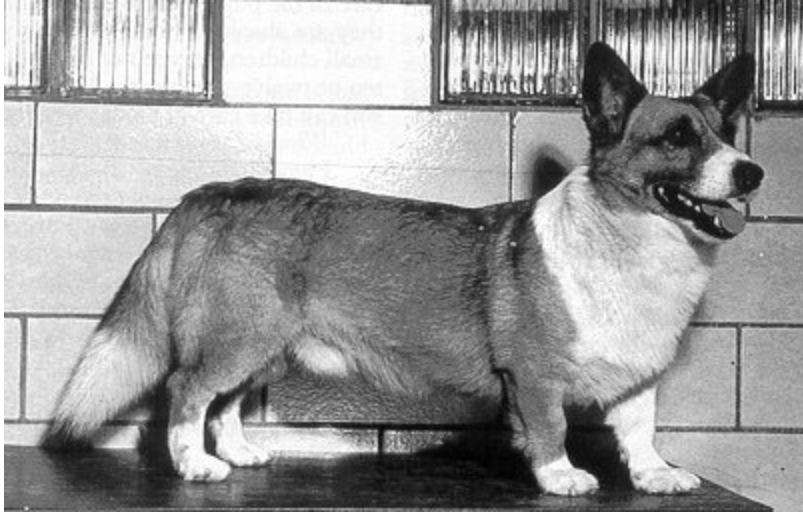


Swansea Bychan was named Swansea because Dr Peterson loved Swansea, Wales and he had to put the name on his Cardigan. But Jess carried no kennel name; she is in history as Ch. Jess, dam of Ch. Swansea Busy, the first Cardigan ever to win a Group One (Working Group).

Mrs. Douglas' story about her first Morris and Essex show is a hoot. She traveled up from Virginia to Mrs. Dodge's estate, St. Hubert's Giralda, (where our Cardigan video was filmed) and was so excited about the show because a lady from England was judging. Well, a Mrs. Cameron was judging, and afterwards Mrs Douglas went up to her and asked about Cardigans. Poor Margaret, the woman told her she only knew of them from books and that she had not judged many before. So it went in those days, not many judges were knowledgeable about the breed or what they should be looking for. Most judges wanted straight fronts and tails up. Margaret's best story was about the judge who whispered one day, you can win if you get that dog's tail up. Another time she was showing Jess and some of her pups. (Jess was very Pembroke in type, but never failed to produce good Cardigans in every litter.) When Margaret put Jess on the table, the judge said, now there is a right Corgi!

The first years of showing were not easy, as travel was long and hard and the entry was nil. Margaret had to go out to Ohio for most of her points, which took time and she had a young family. I think that the story about Margaret's trip on the Merritt Parkway is funny. She got out of New York City and saw an exit sign, thought it was a detour and got off to find herself very lost. Even better is the time she got off and followed a car full of dogs only to find the owner pulling into his driveway, as he had just been to the Vets! Yesterday's dog show traveling was not at all like today's turnpikes and freeways; one traveled the long, hard roads up and back.

Another first was the first Champion C.D. in the breed. This was Ch. Swansea Jon, the twelfth Champion in the breed, whose mother was Ch. Jess. Margaret can still say she never trained an Obedience dog in her life. She had a little boy, Gene Nappingberger, who had trained Obedience Collies, to train and show Jon to his Obedience title.



CH. Swansea Jon

Up until 1960, Mrs. Douglas had bred or finished 19 Cardigans; all other breeders combined had finished 39. In 1954, Margaret was in Pennsylvania with her Cardigans. Delaware County Kennel Club had the largest entry of Cardigans for their Specialty, 51, which was also the largest entry of any breed at the show (taken from "Dog World" of Oct. '54). At this time the Swansea Cardigans were flourishing in Bucks County, PA. Margaret created the Sweepstakes for Cardigans and held many, many positions on the CWCCA Board and Officers' slate. She truly was a pioneer, who would do anything for the breed.

At about this time, Mrs Douglas was the Manager of Dr Ivans' famous Holiday House Kennels, an elite boarding kennel in Doylestown, PA. Margaret was also the Professional Handler of his ever-famous Afghan Hounds.

Margaret won many Group Placings and Group Firsts with Dr Ivans' dogs. Of course, being a Cardigan breeder, this gave the breed a lot more publicity. At this time, Cardigans were mainly in the hands of the wealthy, and Margaret gave rise to them being in the hands of working people.

Margaret continued on the East Coast with Cardi's and showing other breeds until 1961, when she moved to California. Just before this time, the Swansea and Springdale Cardigans were all under one roof and they went to California that way. That is the reason there are so many double-named Cardigans in the history of this period. Margaret began to pioneer all over the State of California. In 1965, she took on her Junior Partner and more history began. Her Junior Partner is the author of this article, and I can truly say I owe what I learned to her. She was and is a great teacher, if you but listen to her.

After taking on her Junior Partner in the Spring of 1965, Mrs Douglas only had four Cardigans at this point, and she was not showing on a large scale. Pat, of course, brought her Pembrokes to

Swansea and began a new era with them. In the next ten years, this partnership produced 76 Cardigan Champions and many more related. From these dogs came the first Blue Merle group placer in the history of the breed, Ch. Swansea Blue Jeans of Cambria. Ch. Lord Jim's Lucky Domino would become a great producer, followed by his son, Ch. Swansea Lord of Rhydowen, C.D., and his grandson, Ch. Swansea Good Nite in later years. Many Group Placers and top winners who carry on today are a credit to this lady.

I can remember going to Texas year after year for the circuits, and never seeing another Cardigan. Then, the day Blue Jeans got her first group placing, the man at the gate would not let Margaret and Jeannie in the show building because it was for pure-bred dogs only. (N.B. that was the day Blue Jeans got a Group IV!) We attended many shows like that. Many times, most of the Show Committee had not seen a Cardigan Welsh Corgi or they wondered why we had left the tail on. And a blue merle besides, now, that was just too much for them to take. Lord Jim was campaigned over many areas new to Cardigans, as was Blue Jeans, and the stories would make a best seller!

The heavy years of showing were 1972-75, and these were the years of Brymore and Winsdown also. Brymore came into being in 1960 and Winsdown in 1968. Then as they tapered off the breed continued as it is today. But the bumper years were '74 and '75.

Ch. Swansea Blue Diana was the sole puppy in the last litter bred by Mrs Douglas alone. We should all remember Diana as being the blue merle bitch who won Best of Breed from the Open Bitch Class over a field of 145 entries at the 1979 CWCCA National Specialty. Pat got Diana out of the classes and Margaret steered her to Best of Breed and then, two years later, to BOS at the 1981 National Specialty. This was Margaret's swan song handling dogs.

Margaret has since bred many pups with Pat out of Diana, and they still co-own Diana, a grand ol' lady who lives in Pennsylvania.

Margaret's true retirement came in 1975, after thirty very full and active years of pioneering the Cardigan Welsh Corgi, a breed that she is truly devoted to. Her contributions were many, and numerous Cardigan firsts belong to her as well. She left us with a well-thought-out bloodline which, in turn, is found almost everywhere today either under the name Swansea or Rhydowen. What better tribute to any pioneer breeder than to say, well done, your lines go on and on.

This grand lady of Cardigans knows more about this breed than many of us will ever know, and she had to learn it all the hard way by trial and error. For in her day no one would share knowledge and help other breeders. A lesson she would always preach was "be sure and share your knowledge for what good is it if only you know." "The Breed will progress only when we can share good and bad and we can all learn from it."

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