

THE BRYMORE LADIES

by Pat Santi.

Having had the privilege of living at Brymore over a year in the 1970's, I learnt a great deal about the early history of their interest in Cardigans. Mary told me, "My husband was busy teaching. I had an adopted son, and we needed a dog. He and I came to Washington for the summer, since that was my family's roots. One summer in the '40's we bought a lovely red and white Cardigan from the senior Bole's. She was called Taffy." Mary and her son took the Cardigan back to Texas, and Mr Nelms. His comments were not as favorable about the dog as Mary's and her son's. But he knew that was what she wanted, so the dog stayed. Mary's favorite color right up to her death was always to be the red and white.

In 1955, after Taffy had died, Mary got in touch with Kentwood Kennels in England, and bought Kentwood Rhosyn, better known as "Penny." To Mary, Penny could do no wrong. About 1957, Mary went to England to visit with Penny's breeders, and she imported yet another Cardigan. Since the bitch was tri-color, she gave her to Hal Nelson. Hal bred Kentwood Dilys (Fanny) to Kentwood Helgi, who was already in the US. The resultant litter gave Mary her second champion, Ch. Springdale Theda of Bara. Bara became Mary's kennel name for her home at Barcroft in the early '60's.

Now enters Michael Pym, the other Brymore lady. She had joined the CWCCA in 1958 after coming to the US as an officer's wife. Her maiden name was Pym, which she chose to keep and use for her life. Michael was very familiar with England, where her roots were, and this fascinated Mary. Michael had also written a book on India, having spent considerable time there and having become an knowledgeable archaeology buff. She was a foreign correspondent by trade. She delighted Mary with her stories and her knowledge. She always had a new idea for everything.

In the early 1960's, Mary (in her sixties) and Michael (in her seventies) ventured forth to England to purchase Cardigans which to begin a new joint kennel, to be named Brymore by Michael. Brymore was an old family name for Michael, and Mary had only used Bara a few times.

They wanted to improve the Cardigans that were on the Eastern seaboard, and introduce more bloodlines back into the US. They brought back eleven dogs on the Queen Mary. What an adventure for ladies of their age!

Mary had already had two Cardigans from England. Ch. Parmel Bryn was the more famous of the two. But now, the ladies found themselves with 13 Cardigans and living in Mary's home in an exclusive residential area. This could not keep the neighbors happy. They went out and began a kennel on the Eastern Shores of Maryland. During this time period they used several professional handlers, including the late Martha Covington Thorne, and the 1989 National Specialty Judge, Jane Kay. As they got older, other friends helped to keep the dogs going.

After two years in Maryland, Mary wanted to go back to Washington, but would settle for Virginia. Michael gave in and Mary bought the house and grounds that most of us knew as Brymore on Waples Mill Rd. in Oakton, VA. Having to rely completely on hired help due to their ages, they eventually ran into some problems. They returned to their friend Oliver Jones in Wales and imported Pantyblaidd Piper and Pantyblaidd Beat. I arrived on the scene after they had their first litter, from which I had purchased Mary Michael of Brymore, (better known as M&M) a lovely, delightful and very coaty bitch. When I moved back east she ate all my "Bach" tapes in the car. Mary claimed it was because she grew up with music! Mary had been a music major. Michael claimed that she was a "she-devil". Unfortunately M&M proved to be barren, so Michael allowed me to co-own Piper with her. We drove all over the place showing Piper and the Chins. I found her a delightful lady who had more ideas than anyone I have ever met. For every hour that we were away, I had to spend equal time with Mary. We swam, did the "Bulletin", listened to music, attended plays and concerts. Michael inspired me to write more, and Mary helped me to put things as I saw them. It was a delightful education indeed.

Their contributions to Cardigans were many. Michael started the Bulletin as it is today, full of pictures and history. Mary said that anyone who desired a Cardigan had one, and more often two. They gave the shows big entries, and always made their home a haven for dogs and people alike. Mary liked pretty Cardis, and Michael wanted them with style and bone. Their dogs had numerous wins over the years, but they have left but a few since they died.

Michael died first. Mary had fallen some time before and hurt her ankle. She took to a wheelchair and it became a part of her. Mary's devotion to Cardigans never changed. She loved the breed, never refusing a stud service or a puppy to anyone. Michael also loved the breed, but wanted to see it progress and become popular. There is little of the original Brymore lines left today, except for the Pantyblaidd's. The sixties and the seventies were their active years. Mary, a true southern lady with charm, and Michael, with her wit and sharpness, and deep knowledge, made an unforgettable impression on the Breed. Mary's devotion had me take most of the show pictures and the early copies of the Bulletin before she died as part of their history in Cardigans. Also the picture of Piper and Beat which they had in the living room for years.

Thank you ladies...see I'm still writing, and still typing on Michael's old typewriter.

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