

Local spaniels first for Canada

The story behind Poppy Steel's raising of Cavalier King Charles spaniels reads like a doggy's fairy tale which began when a pretty young English maiden became enamored of a neglected puppy walf kept by a poor New Forest family who left him outdoors to constantly battle the inclement English elements alone, friendless, and damp.

Brutus was the dog's name and, at the time of procrustal the ambitious Poppy was involved in a self-built egg hatchery business which she had started up as a challenge to prove she could do it.

It was while out on her daily delivery of fresh warm eggs to the local customers that Poppy decided she'd like to have Brutus for herself. She managed a deal with the dog's owner who agreed to give him to the young English business woman in exchange for her two small daughters' baby clothes.

King Charles' favorite Poppy had been raised in a girls' boarding school where "not even a tortoise was allowed." She made the exchange and it was not until later that she learned that her dog was a highly exclusive English breed called the Cavalier King Charles spaniels as the direct descendants of the toy

spaniels of the 16, 17, and 18th centuries.

Reportedly they can be found in many paintings of the Old Masters and were favorites of royalty and noble families of Europe for generations, brought to England to the court of King Charles II from where they get their name. It was recorded that the monarch was frequently accompanied by these little dogs.

Poppy gave away her first pet. On a necessary move to Cornwall she gave Brutus to an elderly lady who needed a pet for companionship. Returning to New Forest some months later she wanted an identical dog and went to visit the farm of Sir Dudley and Lady Forwood who raised the particular species and had on hand, 70 Cavalier King Charles spaniels.

Beginning of end On her return to her old location, Poppy again was anxious for diversion and challenge. She tells of training as a geriatrics nurse at an old army hospital when her children were at school and working with Lady Forwood to get "dog experience." It was while working there that she bred her bitch Cymbeline of Eyeworth to champion Minshang Danby who later

produced a litter of two puppies, with the male showing the red and white Blenheim Cavalier strain like his mother and the female resembling the tri-colors of his father.

That was the beginning. From England to Mississauga the Steel family have the honor of bringing the first Canadian born pups of their breed into the country with their mother having been previously champion bred while in England and her puppies born on their 100 acre farm in Mississauga, six and one-half years ago.

Since that time there has been a steady progress report of constant breeding of the delightful little creatures all pure-line bred as opposed to inter-bred.

Playful, carefree, and easily trained, the line of dogs is constantly gaining in popularity both as household pets and as quail hunting sportsman dogs. "Gay and fearless" is how they were described in the early days in English classics and Poppy says that they just love children.

Well trained A visit to the Steel home on the 17th side road of Esquesing near the Speyside school of No. 7 highway reveals a lovely immaculate home, well cared for without the look of rambunctious

activity or puppies. Closer inspection shows a large gaily colored basket of doggy biscuits and a mere "here puppy" draws out eight delightful and well behaved creatures who have been given the special privilege of being treated like people and blossom because of it.

"Sit down and behave" and Poppy's charges relax on the rug and behave. Part of Poppy's training is for the dogs to come into the house from outside via a closet in which an infra-red light offers warmth and security. The puppies, on entering the house, come in one by one and take their place in the closet. Responding to the warmth of the room they wiggle off their outside snow or wet and are not allowed into their immaculate homestead until completely dried off.

"I treat my animals like people," said Poppy, "and they know they are loved and will be cared for." Called by name, each one appears from nowhere, anxious to get his or her share of attention and responding with a doggy display of affection.

Perfect print At the moment there are eight of the beautiful spaniels in the Steel household Pandora, Rufus, Gypsy girl, Sellina, Toby, Aquarius, Penny, and a new ruby-colored import from England

called Boy whose professional name is Cornish Legend.

Poppy says she has been waiting for two years for a dog of the particular breeding of Boy whose ruby coloring she has had difficulty in getting into her particular strain of spaniels.

In the basement of the Steel home is another surprise. Deposited in a cosy basket are four wiggly creatures evenly marked in mostly white and reddish tan with a perfect thumbprint, the mark of the purebred Cavalier King Charles spaniel.

The Steels have lived in the Acton district for the past two years. They moved here originally because it was the only area within easy distance to Toronto where a kennel license was obtainable and, in moving were able to procure the last one in the county.

Part of their two acres is fenced off as a run for their dogs. They also house two Welsh gray ponies belonging to daughters Teresa, 17 and Anita, 14, both students at the Acton high school.

Appears on T.V. Poppy's husband, Douglas Steel, is employed by B.P. Oil in Hamilton in the home comfort division. Although the entire family enjoys the enterprise of animal raising,

Poppy is almost wholly responsible for developing them as a special Canadian breed.

She explains that it would be almost impossible for anyone to make a living raising only one breed of dog with so many others for people to choose from. To support her hobby which, from her point of view it is, Poppy sometimes works either as an assistant with the Children's Aid Society or in a friend's shop in Mississauga.

Besides showing her dogs at sportsman shows during the year and covering the circuit of dog shows around the province, Poppy has also been interviewed with them on several TV shows. She has appeared from time to time on the Uncle Bobby show teaching children how to train and generally care for animals as well as how to make puppy toys out of old stockings.

The sign at the front of the Steel home reads, Newforest Kennels. Several of the puppies have been purchased for re-breeding but mostly they are chosen as pets for families. "Others have been taken as advertising dogs," says the pet animal breeder who mentions the pup Truffles who was sent to Ohio and is sometimes seen posing for various paint companies.



FIRST CANADIAN BRED Cavalier King Charles spaniel puppies were produced through the Newforest kennels. Poppy Steel is the proprietor of the establishment which flourishes under her able and loving hands as each frolicsome creature is treated "like people" and thrives accordingly.



"Wicked Willie" a man of many interests

He's known as "Wicked Willie" but that's another story! Bill Johnson of Nassagaweya has so many stories to tell, and all of them interesting, that it's difficult to know where to begin.

His list of interests and accomplishments include, ecology, sculpture, letter-writing, W.W.2 commando and paratrooper, deep sea fisherman, home builder, brick-layer, lover of architecture, culture and history.

Perhaps best known in the press for his letter writing, hardly a week passes without an opinion stated clearly, firmly and much of the time with a sense of humor by W. A. Johnson, R.R. 2, Rockwood. In fact his signature on a letter is as widely recognized as an author's by-line.

He remembers the first letter he ever wrote. It was when he was a deep sea fisherman in Hull, England. An occupation of his ancestors and relatives, Bill considers it to be one of the most hazardous jobs anyone could have. He fished in Greenland, Iceland, Newfoundland, Bear Island with only one 48 hour shore leave each month. At sea the hours were 18 on and six hours off duty.

Research Complaints were issued by citizens about the frivolity of the fishermen while on shore leave and a charge made that they made too much money. This infuriated Bill who made it his business to keep an accurate record of hours

worked and money received. His first letter was the result of careful research and justified consternation.

Since that time he writes from well-kept files of information. His work as chairman of the land use and publicity committees for GUARD, Group United Against Rural Dumping, began in 1973. But his interest in land use dates back to 1965.

While taking his sister-in-law, who was visiting from England, on a sight-seeing drive, he took the wrong turn and ended up at the Georgetown dump. His visitor was so shocked and disgusted she promptly lost her lunch. Upon recovery she told Bill how in England they are burning all the garbage on the truck. He investigated, wrote his new-found ideas to the Toronto Star, and got many interesting inquiries.

He's been known, among other things, as "the garbage man." In 1967 he read in the Toronto papers that Metro garbage is a 60 million dollar a year business. All they needed was somewhere to put it. As Bill described it, it wasn't too long before the whiz-kids put garbage and quarries together. Living in an area where quarries are abundant I became very interested.

GUARD Once again he began to gather data. In January 1973 he talked to the soil experts at Guelph Agricultural College who printed a bleak picture of soil and water conditions resulting from seepage from garbage dumps. It was back

to the writing pad and as he puts it, "Lo and behold I find that Metro-Toronto is in a deal with Anglo-Recycling Co. and Industrial Quarries to put 400,000 tons of garbage a year in Esquesing quarries." This was the beginning of GUARD as an organized force.

Today 43 groups across Ontario, a total of 50,000 people, have joined together to study the garbage situation and bring pressure to bear. Bill's theory is that garbage has terrific value as fuel and explains, "Instead of Hydro spreading their lines across arable land, each large area would have an energy-producing plant." His disenchantment with many government officials prompts his humorous quotation about

Environment Minister James Auld, "Auld's acquaintance should be forgot!"

Sculpture In the past year Bill has become interested in whittling.

His wood sculpture, resembling primitive art, is described by his close friend and neighbor Doug Stone as "Original British Immigrant Eskimo Art." Bill's explanation for his style is, "In Canada we have our own Indian culture and yet we import cultures and architecture from other countries. We're the interlopers here and we tend to forget it. What more beautiful names are there than Nassagaweya, Esquesing and Chinguacousy."

For an "interloper" Bill has certainly made his mark on this country. At the end of the war he married Mary in England and began raising a family. He had returned to his life as a deep sea fisherman, earning his bosun's certificate for Arctic waters.

When his son Malcolm was five years old he was asked by his dad to fetch his slippers. Bill was again in the routine of being away from home months at a time. Malcolm's reply was, "I don't have to." When he felt Bill's ire he turned to his mother and said, "That man who comes home and brings me the pennies said he'd paddle my bottom."

Emigrated It was at this point Bill knew he didn't want his son raised in the same at-

mosphere he had been. Knowing he'd just go back to sea if he remained in England, he moved to Canada with his family in 1952.

For the past 14 years Bill has been an engineer with Domtar Fine Papers in Georgetown. All his adult life he has been a crusader for human rights.

He isn't the only member of his family to write letters. His brother in England hadn't heard personally from him for years but found out about his letters-to-the-editors. He wrote a letter to the Acton Free Press referring to his brother as "Wicked Willie" and "publicly" rode him for not having enough time to write to his own brother! It seems Bill comes by his sense of humor honestly.

Nassagaweya out with a boom

Nassagaweya Township had a boom year in construction during its last year in existence. According to building inspector Terry Galamore the value of permits issued during the year amounts to \$4,709,300. That is an increase of \$2,832,800 over the 1972 figure for building value in the township.

Permits issued during the year were for 80 single family dwellings, 27 single family additions or alterations, 14 garages and 22 permits for agricultural structures.

Total even 100 Permits for five commercial structures, one institutional building, two industrial buildings and one demolition were issued. There were 100 permits issued during the year.

During December permits for work valued at \$789,500 were issued. That included 15 new houses at a value of \$690,000.

Local entries Talent Festival

Talent Festival, one of the several annual provincial Junior Farmer activities, will be the first event in 1974 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario.

With an all time high of 175 entries, the Festival promises to provide a full day's entertainment for the 1500 plus expected to attend the program February 2 at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Halton county Junior Farmers will be represented in public speaking and general talent competitions.

Cindy (Ordingley of Hornby will participate in the Provincial Public Speaking Competition.

In addition this year, there will be an art and photography display contributed by Junior Farmers from across Ontario. Several members from Halton will be entering exhibits.

Highlighting the Festival will be the "Show of Stars" in the Canadian Room of the hotel. Included in this program will be selections from the winners in the vocal solo, ladies' trio, folk singing and choir competitions. As well as the top presentations in the public speaking competition will be heard. During the "Show of Stars", a mass choir performance will take place under the direction of Lloyd Bradshaw. Following this a dance will be held in the Canadian Room.

During the Festival winners of several of this year's Junior Farmer travel programs will be announced including the Australia and New Zealand Exchange and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food Travelling Scholarships to the United Kingdom. Rick Britton of Acton has been nominated by Halton County for the U.K. visit.

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

The Council for the Town of Halton Hills has previously advertised for the names of persons resident within the new municipality of the Town of Halton Hills who are interested in serving on the Halton Hills Committee of Adjustment.

Residents within the Municipality are again requested to advise the undersigned by 5.00 p.m. on Monday, February 4th, 1974 if they are interested in serving upon this Committee and provide a brief resume of their experience which may lend itself to discharging the duties as a member of the Committee of Adjustment.

Any resident who has previously submitted a letter indicating their interest in serving on this Committee, please be informed that such applications are on file and are being considered.

G. D. Pritchard
Clerk Administrator
Town of Halton Hills
36 Main Street South
Georgetown, Ontario

ACTON Y's MEN'S CLUB
5th ANNUAL
SNOWMOBILE RACES
FAIRY LAKE ACTON OVAL RACING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3rd
Events for Men, Ladies, and Juniors
Registration 12 Noon
Race Time 1:00 p.m.
CASH PRIZES TROPHIES
\$5.00 entry fee
PRE RACE DANCE AT THE BAND HALL
ACTON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2nd
LIMITED TICKETS
Call: 853-0926

YES WE CAN
\$2,000 to \$50,000
2nd & 3rd Mtges.
We are now making loans on all types of properties in your area. Call direct collect - Prompt Investment Corp., 330 Bay Street, Toronto, 366-9586, evgs. 231-8146. Low cost, any purpose, Ontario wide service.

Pizza Palace
29 MILL ST. E. ACTON
853-2450
VALUABLE COUPON
THIS COUPON IS WORTH 50¢
on the purchase of a Medium or Large Pizza from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. daily (Except Tuesday)
NOTE: ONLY ONE COUPON PER PIZZA ORDER
853-2450
OFFER GOOD UNTIL FEB. 4th at ACTON LOCATION ONLY