

Margaret Workman

- Our Centenarian Patron

By Liz Workman

Margaret Workman (nee Mason) was born in Ealing in London in 1922 to a Scottish GP father and an English mother, who, along with being an artist and a London Tour Guide, bred and showed French Bulldogs. After being educated at St Paul's Girls' School and going up to Cambridge, Margaret was recruited during the war to Bletchley Park as a code-breaker. (Interestingly she never talked of this, having signed the official secrets act, she was sworn to secrecy until around 1994, when it was my father who broke it to us about her extraordinary war-time contribution).



Mum with her brother David and nanny Evelyn and a litter of French Bulldogs in 1932.

At the very end of the war she met my father Charlie (a Scot from Glasgow) at Wycombe Abbey where he was demobbed, (having been a tank commander with the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry), she was teaching and as ever accompanied by her beloved Frenchie Yvette.



Mum and dad in Bournemouth (roughly 1958).

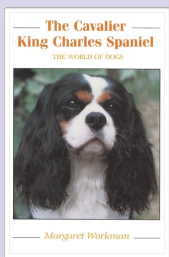


Cosima

She married Charlie in 1949 and moved to Scotland, where they lived in Cumbernauld with another Frenchie, and a Cocker, and where my brother Donald and sister Rosie were born. After a few years they moved to Edinburgh, and I was born (the dogs were still a Frenchie and now a Boston). Dad was working at the Scottish Office, Mum was teaching at a girls school, Oxenford Castle, as well as volunteering with the Samaritans.

She picked up showing again around 1969 with a Boston, Rowhilage Cherry Tria, known as Cosima. She was a very smart little thing, and did well in the show ring (and with me in junior handling) but Bostons are not easy whelpers, and Mum wanted a natural whelping breed, so bought her first cavalier from Gill and Moira Stewart – a B/T bitch called Pamojill Tarawa. Thus the Costara affix which was an amalgamation of the first parts of “Cosima and Tara” was introduced, in 1972.

In 1999 Mum's book *The Cavalier King Charles Spaniel* was published. She spent hours sourcing dozens of photos of winning cavaliers from around the world, at a time when showing was still very much domestic. She also included a comprehensive chapter on genetics, meticulously researched, and really valuable for any breeder.



**Pamajill Tarawa of Costara,
Costara Ruaridh Ruadh, Costara Stella
and Caleyburn Sonata of Costara.**

She made many friends in the process, both here and abroad - wonderful when she went to visit my sister in Australia, she would look up her Australian dog friends and visit. Throughout her life she has been a great traveller, firstly with us as kids – epic car journeys to camping holidays in Europe, tours to Egypt, trips to visit my sister in Australia, Mexico, as well as the US, Russia, Hong Kong, China.....She even took herself off on safari in around 2012, determined to check it off her bucket-list.

My father sadly died in 2009, and mum moved into a flat in Edinburgh, still with two Cavaliers. She was still very active with the Club and still showing, travelling to shows with Ken Town and Lindsay Gow, who have both been great friends over many years.



Her last show girl was Turretbank Saffron Silk, a ruby bitch kindly given to Mum by Katie Sloan, Saffy was beautiful and a wow in the show ring. Mum was still showing up to 10 years ago.

Her last litter was from Phoebe – Titian Puppetry of Costara, a very beautiful Ruby, co-owned with Lindsay Gow. The litter, by Lyncraeg Daydream, yielded four puppies, of which one, Reuben, Costara Ruadh at Lyncraeg, owned by Lesley Fraser is still with us at age 13 1/2. (Above).



Turretbank Saffron aka Saffy at The SCKCS Club Show at Alva. Judge: Mrs W Morrison (Bowerswell)

In 1982, my grandmother died, leaving Mum a bequest, which she used to buy boarding kennels, Nivensknowe, outside Edinburgh. There was room there for around 20 dogs and 30 cats, Mum found a lovely manager and we as family were recruited to help out on high days and holidays. I loved it mostly, although to be honest there were days when poo patrol for 25 dogs in -5 degrees was less than pleasant. It was however a great way to learn about different breeds. (Cats, not so much). She owned it until 1986 when she sold it to Ken Town.

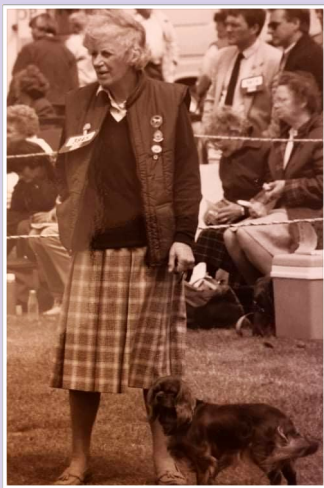


Judging. (Anne Coaker showing)



With Diana Schilizzi at the rally
at Chacombe 1981

Mum started judging around the mid-80s, judging some Open and then a few Breed shows, she enjoyed this and was scrupulously fair. She was also still showing, by now she had three Rubies and a B/T, still with her original lines.



Scots on tour. Rally at Chacombe

She joined the Scottish Club in 1973 helping at shows and with the Rescue. She was Year Book Editor from 1979-1984, famous for her much loved Dora and Paula problem page as well as being active on the Committee from 1979-1984 and from 1997-1999 before becoming Patron in 2004.

At the girls boarding school where Mum taught, the headmistress loved dogs and had a pair of Tara's offspring. As a result, all teachers were allowed to have dogs with them, so the corridors abounded with Cavaliers, as Mum's friends and colleagues all fell in love with the breed. At one point there were around 6 or 7 of them – all Tara's progeny - bouncing around corridors and "helping" in Maths lessons....



Mum showing Rory around 1978-1980

Tara was a beautiful girl, very calm, and produced several nice litters. Costara Ruaridh Ruadh (by Red Rake of Caplode) and Costara Stella (by Rhossnessney Arkle) were her earliest show progeny. Rory was a beautiful ruby and sired many lovely offspring. Stella was a super B/T bitch, I showed her and mum and I covered much of the country with the 2 dogs, usually on overnight coaches or mini-buses from Edinburgh down south – often with a gang of other Scots (you know who you are!) . It was exhausting and chaotic but great fun. Both were consistent winners, and one of my proudest days was when Stella won Best Opposite Sex at one of the Club shows at Alva – around 1982. Tara continued to produce a number of puppies who we showed when we could – Mum was still working and Dad was involved in weekend T.A. activities. Mum continued to breed from her lines, not massively but always very carefully. She was very interested in the genetics of the breed, and tried to keep her whole-colour lines clean and using well-researched stud dogs.



From left Costara Ruaridh Ruadh, Costara Stella, Caleyburn Sonata of Costara, Pamojill Tarawa of Costara and Costara Stella's Rose.



Dameron Floradora of Costara.



Paula - Egama Aria of Costara and Beanie - Beechmast Robina of Costara.



Mum now lives back in London, not far from where she was brought up. She's not so active now, but still taking an interest in the dogs, and is indeed visited daily by my dogs, Cockers and now a very sweet new B/T puppy (from Caroline Gibson, Toraylac Grace Kelly x Pascavale Carbon). She is excited that I'm hoping to show her, and that we can continue the Costara name in the ring. She has made many friends over the years, and misses the social side of showing.

Costara Charlotte Flora, who lived to be 16 and was owned by Liz.

My mother is a force to be reckoned with, as well as having a wicked sense of humour, as those of you who know her will recognise. For almost all her life she has been active across so many different things – from her war-time activities, to teaching, to volunteering, to chairing the local planning committees, to her huge involvement and contribution to the Club through her love of dogs – as well as raising three kids! She is an amazing role model to me and my siblings, and now her many grandchildren. Would that we had half her grit.



Above: Turretbank Saffron Silk aka 'Saffy' who was mum's last show girl. Saffy came to London when mum moved down.

Right: Celebrating mum's 90th birthday with Costara Jasmin and Costara Charlotte. (Right)

We will 'raise a glass' on Feb 5th to her amazing tenacity and strength, and salute her century – surrounded as usual by dogs. Hopefully you will all join us in spirit.

Liz Workman

