

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF CLUB**

A meeting of well known Mastiff owners and breeders was called at the Crystal Palace on 19th January, 1883. Dr. Forbes Winslow was in the chair and explained that the meeting had been called to consider whether it would be advisable to inaugurate a new Mastiff Club, and after making some remarks on the subject moved 'That a Mastiff Club be formed.' Mr Mark Beaufoy seconded the motion which was carried unanimously, it was agreed that the club should be called THE OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF CLUB, to differentiate it from a Mastiff club already in existence. Thus, as you will find printed on all club papers, the O.E.M.C. was Established in 1883'.

Amongst the founders of the O.E.M.C. was Dr. Sidney Turner, Mr Mark Beaufoy. Dr. Forbes Winslow, Mr F. Nichols, Mr R. Cook and Mr W. K. Taunton, to name just a few who gave great service to the Club taking an active part in organisation for many years.

Twelve members were enrolled at the first meeting, the Club grew at each Committee meeting, and the names of more members are recorded, amongst them two in particular Mr F. Hanbury and Mr Hunter Johnston. The Committee met ten times in the first year and held two General Meetings, at the first of which on 12th March, 1883 a draft of the proposed Club Rules was put before the members. The Rules were simpler than those of today but basically the same, they have been amended through the years but Rules 1 and 2 have remained exactly the same. The subscription had already been settled at the first meeting this was £1.1.0 per annum, after the first fifty members an entrance fee of £1.1.0 to be charged. These proposals were carried as also the suggestion to start a fund for the purchase of a Challenge Cup The entrance fee was discontinued in 1899, but it is interesting to note that the subscription remained at £1.1.0 until 1976 when the Committee of that year very regretfully found it necessary, owing to a rising of costs to increase it to £2.00 and to institute a subscription of £3.00 for overseas members, prior to this a 'family' subscription was introduced in 1969.

The Standard Description of the Mastiff was drawn up, it is the same as that of today with the minor difference in wording on height and substance, the, original being 'height is of less importance than substance but desirable if both points are proportionately combined.'

Lord Arthur Cecil was invited to become President of the Club, he accepted and was President for 12 years. Vice-Presidents were Colonel Leigh, Mr Eames, The Reverend W. J. Mellor, Major Gamier, Committee Dr. S. Turner, Mr M. Beaufoy, Mr Cook, Mr Nichols and Mr W. K. Taunton.

In those days it was the practice of Show Secretaries to write to Clubs in inviting their support with the offer of guarantees for classes and prizes asking for the nomination of a judge or the name of a judge acceptable to the club. A great deal of Committee time was spent in arrangements with show secretaries. From the first it was the policy of the O.E.M.C. Committee to support only those shows where the judge of their choice was appointed, and in 1889 the Committee decided that no prize would be given at shows where a club judge was not appointed. The Committee was always very generous in offering monetary prizes usually of £3.3.0 or £5.5.0, occasionally one finds a request for a prize has been refused to a show on the grounds that 'the funds of the Club will not allow'. This is not surprising as in the first year there were only 43 members, but, as the number of prizes offered during that and subsequent years were many, a number of Committee and Club Members must have

been very generous. There were fewer classes then, usually only Open Dog, Open Bitch, Puppy Dog and Bitch. When the introduction of a Novice class was suggested the Committee looked upon it with doubt - 'on the grounds that it offered a means for dogs of very inferior merit going forth to the world as first prize winners!' A Produce Stake was proposed and rules were drawn up for it.

In May 1884 the Forty Guinea Challenge Cups were produced for the approval of the Committee who pronounced them to be of 'great merit'. The Mastiff head on these cups was used as a model for the Club badge and for the heads on Miss I. Bell's four Trophies. The two Cups were on exhibition at a show at the Crystal Palace early in 1884 and were first offered for competition at the Warwick Show that year when the dog cup was won by Mr Mark Beaufoy's dog 'Tontis'. Medallions were given to the cup winners and the rules draw up for the awarding of the Challenge Cups.

The Clubs relations with Mastiff lovers in America have always been very cordial. Mr W, Wade of Pittsburgh U.S.A. was amongst the first members of the Club to be elected in 1883 and he was soon followed by Mr W. M. Lee of Boston, U.S.A. In 1886 Dr .J. F. Perry wrote suggesting the formation in America of a branch of the O.E.M.C.. At first the Committee considered this proposal impracticable but later after pressure from Club members in America it was agreed to form an American Branch of the O.E.M.C. However it was brought to the notice of the Committee that there was already a Mastiff Club of America and some difficulties arose in the American Branch of the O.E.M.C. The Branch was dissolved in 1888. In the meantime cups had been exchanged. the American 'Westminster Cup' was sent over here for competition at a show and on its return the O.E.M.C. gave a replica of the Forty Guinea Cup to the American Club for competition there. Relations with the American Club have always been very happy ones and have continued until the present day.

In 1884 the Committee met to discuss the advisability of an enquiry into the pedigree of the Mastiff Crown Prince. There had been some public statements made that the pedigree under which Crown Prince was shown was not the right one, This was important as the Breeder of Crown Prince, Mr Woolmore, was a member of the Club. The resulting correspondence makes interesting reading, the final decision to which the Committee came was that 'there was insufficient evidence to prove the allegations'.

In 1894 the Secretary was requested to write to the Secretary of a club calling itself the NORTHERN OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF CLUB suggesting that the words 'Old English' be omitted as they could give rise to confusion with the O.E.M.C. and pointing out that our name had originally been chosen to prevent confusion with a Mastiff Club already in existence. The answer was apparently an unsatisfactory one, as one reads that it was suggested that the letter be allowed to 'lie on the table.' Four years later an attempt to amalgamate with the Northern Old English Mastiff Club was made but came to nothing. No more is minuted about this Club until 1929 when a note is found recording its demise. In 1891 a letter from the Kennel Club informed the Committee that the fee for the registration of Specialist Clubs had been rescinded and suggesting that the name of the O.E.M.C. should be registered with the Kennel Club, this was done, and a register of Mastiff pedigrees kept at the Kennel Club; previous to this the Club had kept its own register of pedigrees,

In this year, 1891 it was decided that, in order to assist judges, a numerical value should be given to the points of the Mastiff, they were as follows:--

Character and symmetry	- 10 points	Chest and ribs	-	8
Height and substance	- 10	Forelegs and feet	-	10

Skull	- 12	Back, loins and flank	- 8
Muzzle	- 18	Hind legs and feet	- 10
Eyes	- 6	Tail	- 3
Ears	- 4	Colour	- 5

These points were always printed with the Standard of the Mastiff until after the last World War when the system for all breeds was abolished.

From time to time the matter of colour in Mastiffs has occupied the attention of Mastiff breeders, and Members and Committee of the O.E.M.C., brindle has been considered by many writers to be the original colour of the Mastiff but since the eighteenth century fawn has been a very general colour. In 1892 the **Cardinal Cup** was presented to the Club by several members for competition by Brindled Mastiffs. It was first offered for competition at Gloucester Show that year and won by Colonel and Mrs Piddock's Iron Duke. At the end of the century we read of concern at the preponderance of brindle mastiffs, however there were few to be seen at shows between the wars and at first, after the revival of the Mastiff, but at the present day they are much in evidence again.

It has always been the policy of the Committee to have a list of judges for Mastiffs at shows. At the first General Meeting in March 1883 the Committee were asked to draw up a list of 'gentlemen who they may think qualified to act as judges of Mastiff classes'. The following year Committee and Members were asked to suggest six or eight names they considered suitable to judge. A list of Judges has generally been maintained by the Club and sent to Show Secretaries although from time to time the list seems to have been in abeyance and not renewed for some years.

The list of 1886 is interesting for it contains the names of men famous for their breeding, owning and showing of well known Mastiffs as well as giving service to the Club and to the Breed. They were: -

Mr Mark Beaufoy	Mr W. K. Taunton	Mr J. Hutchings
Mr E. Hanbury	Mr F. Gresham	Mr J. T. Smith
Dr. J. S. Turner	Mr J. W. Allen	Rev. M. B. Wynn

Mr Wynn is well known for his book 'The History of the Mastiff' although a respected judge he was not a member of the O.E.M.C. for very long, resigning in 1888 and took no part in running the Club.

Mr E. Hanbury was a founder member and took a very active part in the Club serving on the Committee for many years, acting as Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary at different times. He judged frequently and was the breeder of many famous Mastiffs, the best known being Rajah, Prince and Wolsey, a son of Rajah.

Dr. Sidney Turners name is to be found continually in the Club minutes, he was a Vice-President of the Club for many years and became President in 1896, a position he held until 1908. During this time, in 1899 he was elected to the Chairmanship of the Committee of the Kennel Club. He was a breeder and exhibitor of note. In 1890 he won the Mastiff Club of America's 'Westminster Cup' with his Mastiff 'Seabreeze' at the Crystal Palace Company's Show. This cup had been sent to this country as a gesture of goodwill to the O.E.M.C. from the Mastiff Club of America to be competed for at this show only. It was returned soon after the show and arrived safely back to the Mastiff Club of America.

Mr Mark Beaufoy was also a founder member of the O.E.M.C. He was a President of the Club from 1915 - 1922 and was either on the Committee or taking a turn as Hon. Secretary or Treasurer all the time.

Mr W. K. Taunton likewise a founder member was, perhaps, the best known of all Club members, he was always on the Committee, acting frequently as Chairman and was at various times Secretary and Treasurer, he was also Delegate of the Club to the Kennel Club Council of Representatives. He wrote many articles on Mastiffs and bred many famous dogs, a well known one was 'Hotspit', he also owned the very Famous 'Ch. Beaufort' (1894) who was sired by 'Beau', bred by Dr. Turner, and considered the most perfect of Mastiffs. Mr Taunton took him on a visit to America. Mr Taunton died in 1926 and members subscribed towards a cup as a memorial to him and in 1928 the **WK Taunton Memorial Gold Cup** was bought and competed for the following year at Crufts, the judge being Mr Hunter Johnston and the winner Mr G. Cook's Ch. Cleveland Premier'. Other notable judges of that time were Mr C. Court Rice, also an energetic Committee member, Mr Norman Riggs, Capt. Piddock and Mr Hunter Johnston. All were well known for breeding excellent Mastiffs.

Mr Hunter Johnston was a great authority on the Mastiff breed and wrote many excellent articles on them. He was a zealous member for 50 years, having joined the Club in 1883. He was present at the Club's Jubilee Annual General Meeting at Crufts on 8th February, 1933 when he was made an Honorary Member.

The Club has never been a large one, at the end of the first year it numbered 43 members and slowly grew through the years but little record can be found of actual numbers. In 1896 there were 42 members listed but from that time there was a decline, in 1898 there were only 31 members. The following year the Committee decided to drop the entrance fee in the hope of encouraging new members. In 1905 the Committee in presenting their Report for the year 1904 regret that there is little to comment upon except to deplore the want of Interest and Enthusiasm generally in the Mastiff. The Committee carried on and by 1908 were able to report an improvement, this continued and early in 1914 the Report was that the year had been a satisfactory one for Mastiff breeders.

World War I caused many difficulties; shows were curtailed and, owing to the war the larger breeders curtailed their breeding programmes. A protest was sent to the Government in 1917 when they made a suggestion that breeding should be stopped. From 1920 onwards the Club grew until in 1929 there were 87 members. Owing to the 2nd World War no meetings were held between 22nd March, 1939 and 27th March, 1947. Fifteen members were present on that day at a meeting called to consider the Club's general position and to decide on future activities. From then onwards the Club grew in 1958 there were 70 members, in 1963 97, and at the present day the membership is well over 400.

The popularity of the Mastiff was at its height in the nineteenth century. It suffered a set-back at the beginning of this century, slowly revived until 1914 when again it was in difficulties; however in 1920 a revival of interest began and continued until 1939. During these years the quality of Mastiffs greatly improved, breeders were helped by the knowledge of men who had known Mastiffs in their heyday. Dr. Sidney Turner, Mr W. K. Taunton, Mr C. Cook and Mr Hunter Johnston were still on the Club Committee and judges list, soon other names came to the fore - Miss Harbur, owner of Ch. Master Beowulf, Miss Garland, Miss Pope and Mr Sam Crabtree. In 1922 the Committee drew the Kennel Club's attention to the registration of some Bull-Mastiffs as Mastiffs with the result that the registrations were cancelled and the dogs registered as cross-breeds. A consequence of this was that to avoid fraud, members were urged to forward the pedigree of all Mastiffs bred or owned by them to the Club Secretary for inclusion in the Club record of Mastiff pedigree, this being a practice which had fallen into disuse of late.

The membership list now has many names well known today, in 1924 Mr Guy Greenwood joined, to he followed by Miss I. Bell and Mr F. E. Scheerboom in 1925 and Mrs Scheerboom in the following year. At this time too, Mr F. Hawkings and Mr and Mrs F. G. Oliver became members of the O.E.M.C.

This was the day of many Mastiff Breeders whose Prefix can be found in the pedigrees of present day Mastiffs, so it may be of interest to give the names and prefix of some of them: Mr and Mrs Scheerboom - Havengore, Mrs Oliver - Hellingly, Mr Bennett - Broomcourt, Mr H Cook - Cleveland, Mr Hawkings - Goldhawk, Mr Guy Greenwood - Hillcrest, Mrs Dickin - of Goring, Messrs. Thomas and Oliver - Menai, Miss I. Bell did not have a prefix until after the war when it was Withybush.

Mr E G. Oliver became a member of the Kennel Club and published many articles on Mastiffs in the Kennel Gazette. He made many researches into the early history of Mastiff their mention in books and he collected several pictures of them. He also wrote an interesting article in Hutchinson's Dog Encyclopaedia. During the years between the wars Mr Mark Beaufoy was President of the Club from 1915 - 1922 when he was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Z. Walker who was followed in 1931 by Mrs Jack Hardy. All this time the Committee were busy arranging guarantees for shows, choosing judges and classes For shows, the Judges list was revived from time to time but was often not used. Some minor alterations were made in the Club Rules and the rules governing the awarding of cups which by then the Club had acquired. New regulations for the awarding of the Breeders Prize were made and approved.

Unfortunately in 1931 some differences of opinion and dissatisfaction arose amongst members as to the way Mastiff classes at shows were arranged and judges chosen. This resulted in the resignation of Mr Oliver as Club Delegate to the Kennel Club Council of Representatives and Mr and Mrs Oliver and a few members from the Club, Later on Mr and Mrs Oliver formed a club called the Mastiff Breeders Association. In 1936 Mr O. White proposed that a move be made towards the amalgamation of the two Clubs; he said that in his experience of canine clubs two small clubs were of no good to a breed. The O.E.M.C. made overtures to the Mastiff Breeders Association but satisfactory terms couldn't be arranged and the plan came to nothing. The Mastiff Breeders Association carried on until 1939 when it dissolved.

1933 was the Club's Jubilee and plans were made to celebrate this, a special badge was presented to all members, this was circular, pale blue in the centre with 1883 - 1933 in gold surrounded by a darker blue border with the Old English Mastiff Club in gold on the dark blue. The Club Show was held at Crufts, the judge was Mr Greenwood and there was a record entry for the South of England with an entry of 135, made up of 48 Mastiffs. (There had been an entry of 144 at Darlington three years before.) Each Exhibitor was presented with a card as a memento, this had a reproduction of a drawing of the Exhibitors and Mastiffs at the first Club Show in 1890, together with the signature of the judge; as well as the usual prize cards and Club Cups. Mrs Walton presented the 'Jubilee Cup' and the President, Mrs Hardy gave a reception and dinner to all members.

Mrs N. Dickin became the Club Honorary Secretary in 1932 and in 1936 in conjunction with the St. Bernard Club a small book called 'The St. Bernard and Mastiff' was published with the history of both breeds, Mrs Dickin wrote the Mastiff part. Unfortunately, although all of the Mastiff history could be found by anybody with time for research, Mr Oliver took exception to what Mrs Dickin had written claiming that she was guilty of 'literary larceny' in copying from his article on Mastiffs as published in the Kennel Gazette, and although she was innocent of this

offence Mr Oliver took her to court on the charge of plagiarism. Unfortunately Mrs Dickin lost her case and the book was ordered to be withdrawn from publication. Mrs Dickin tendered her resignation as Club Secretary to the Committee of the O.E.M.C., but the Committee, convinced of her innocence, asked her to continue as Honorary Secretary to the Club, an office she held for 32 years retiring in 1964.

In 1938 the shadow of war began to appear, the Committee carried on with plans for a Club Badge which, however, didn't appear until many years later. Guarantees were granted for classes at shows and two pages were booked in Our Dogs Christmas number for members advertisements as had been the custom for the past four years.

At the Annual General Meeting held in February 1939 a discussion took place as to what should be done with the Club Cups and Trophies in the event of hostilities, nothing definite was decided then, but eventually some were collected at the beginning of the war and placed in the care of the Goldsmith and Silversmith's Company. Shows were arranged and classes guaranteed for the year but after a Committee meeting in March no further meetings of Committee or Club were held for eight years.

The previous year many breeders had curtailed their breeding plans for many of them realised that in the event of war breaking out there would be great difficulty in feeding a kennel of large dogs. In the early summer of 1939 Miss Bell found homes all over the country for her Mastiffs, only keeping a young stud dog and two bitches herself, as a foundation for restarting her kennels in the future; Mr and Mrs Scheerboom did much the same, whilst Mr Bowles sent his three best bitches to America for safe keeping.

After the war there were few Mastiffs left in this country. In 1946 the O.E.M.C. held an Open Meeting in London which was attended by 15 people who promised to do all they could to save the breed from extinction. First they tried to trace all the Mastiffs in the country and found between 20 - 30, most of them unfortunately too old for breeding. The Club revived and held its Annual General Meeting in March 1947 where the matter of the Breed was discussed, and Officers and Committee for the ensuing year were elected. Mrs Hardy (now Mrs Maurice Burt) was elected President, Miss Bell and Mr Greenwood were two of the Vice-Presidents and Mr and Mrs Scheerboom and Mrs Day were amongst the Committee. They decided that they must try to import some young Mastiffs from America. During the year Mrs Dickin corresponded with several American breeders on this matter. She went to America in 1948 to see if she could find any suitable Mastiffs, but without success. That year at the A.G.M. a fund had been inaugurated for this purpose, members were asked to subscribe a minimum of £10.00, the Club pledging itself to see that donors had first priority of purchasing stock, £100 was immediately subscribed by those present. At the end of 1948 Mrs Burt resigned as President on going to live in South Africa and in 1949 Mr Greenwood was elected President, the other Officers and Committee remained the same, Mrs Dickin continuing as Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, and Mr Scheerboom acting as Delegate to the Kennel Club's Council of Representatives. This year the Rules were revised and Rule 14 added.

Towards the end of 1948 Mr and Mrs Mellish of Vancouver, British Columbia heard of our need of Mastiffs and generously offered the gift of two puppies, asking only that in future two puppies should be given to them in return. This generous present was gladly accepted. In the meantime, several Members had been able to import puppies from America and Mrs Day one from Canada.

The Committee now turned its attention to evolving a scheme for the custody of the

Club puppies when they came out of quarantine, and any other puppies the Club was able to buy.

This Scheme was as follows:-

The Bitch should remain the property of the Club, who would also be responsible for the insurance. The Member who was custodian of the Bitch should have the second choice from the litter, such decision to be made at the age of six weeks. The Bitch to become the property of the custodian after the Club had received ten puppies. The sole choice of the stud dog to rest with the Club, who would pay any stud fees. The Club to be the registered breeder. The custodian had the right to return the Bitch to the Club and the Club had the right to reclaim the Bitch, should circumstances warrant such an action. The dog, to be on loan, to remain the property of the Club. Stud fees to be decided by and paid to the Club. The custodian to receive £2.2.0 for each bitch the dog serves. The Club to provide the custodian with a list of mastiff bitches and only these to be served by the dog. The dog to become the property of the custodian at six years of age. The clauses re. insurance and the return of the bitch to be the same for the dog.

The Kennel Club was applied to for permission to register the puppies owned by the Club in the Club's name. This was granted and all the puppies bred, owned and registered by the Club had the prefix O.E.M.C.

Mr Greenwood became the custodian of the first Club bitch, O.E.M.C. Heatherbelle Portia of Goring, but handed her over to Miss Bell who bred and reared a litter of 12 puppies from her.

Mr Ocky White was custodian of the dog, O.E.M.C. Heatherbelle Stirling Silver, but soon gave him into Mrs Scheerboom's care.

The interest in Mastiffs revived, many new members joined the Club, the number of Mastiffs grew, puppies were in demand, and in 1951 Mastiffs were again exhibited at Crufts after an absence of 12 years.

The Committee turned its attention towards offering guarantees for Mastiff classes at shows. In 1952 there were four shows with Mastiff classes, by 1956 there were eight shows, five of them with Challenge Certificates, there were classes at several Open Shows as well. Year by year the number of shows increased until, greatly daring, in 1962 the Club held its own Championship show, this was held in the grounds of the Nautical College at Pangbourne by kind permission of Captain Lewis. The Show was a great success with the largest gathering of Mastiffs for 50 years. Fifty-seven Mastiffs' were entered for Mrs Dickin to judge. The Club didn't hold another Championship show until 1971, and again in 1975, this was so successful that the Club has held a Championship show yearly ever since. Open shows have been successful, the first one in 1967 was followed by others and in 1978 the Club held two Open Club shows, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn.

From time to time the Club has been given or subscribed for Cups and Trophies for competition by Members, and are offered for competition at different shows. A list of them can be found in the Annual Report, their history is interesting but would take up too much space to give here. The Committee is responsible for the care of the Cups and Trophies; they are insured, revalued from time to time and the insurance brought up to date. Handing over the Cups year by year from winner to winner caused many difficulties, and often the Cups suffered damage in transit, so in 1962 it was decided to appoint a Cup Steward to look after them. Mr Lindley undertook to do this, on his retirement, Mrs Anderson became Cup Steward. A plan was evolved whereby Members are allowed to hold a Cup or Trophy for a year, when they are asked to return them at the Annual General Meeting: here they are displayed

before presentation to the new holders. This works very well and reduces the risk of loss or damage.

In 1960 a Progeny Award was instituted in memory of Mr K. Hulbert, this is for the dog and bitch whose progeny have won the greatest number of prizes at Championship shows during the year a small plaque bearing the Club badge with the date of the year is given to the owners of the winning dog and bitch.

In 1959 a News Letter was edited and distributed to all Members by Mr Hanson, after three years this was discontinued, but was revived by Mr J. Steele and has continued until the present day being edited in turn by Major Reardon, Mrs Shorter and Mr G. Hicks, Miss Blackstone and currently Mrs L Say. The News Letter was usually distributed four times a year this has been reduced to twice yearly. It is a valuable means of keeping Members in touch with Mastiff and Club affairs.

Club Badges had been considered just before the war, Mrs Langton had produced a model which was never used: after the war the Committee tried to find this model which they did after a good deal of difficulty, the silver club badges were ordered and sold to Members in 1960.

The Club was growing and it was proposed and carried at the Annual General Meeting in 1963 that a postal vote should be held for the election of Officers and Committee of the Club, this was carried out the following year.

The Club has always had a representative at the Kennel Club; at first this was a Delegate to the Kennel Club Council of Representatives, now it is to the Kennel Club Breed Liaison Council.

Of recent years the Club has held matches and social meetings. The first of these was in 1965, a garden party and match held at Lephram Bridge Farm, by the kind invitation of Mrs Lloyd Jones when Members of the Club presented Mrs Dickin with an engraved glass goblet as a token of appreciation of all she had done for the Club and the breed during the 32 years she was Secretary to the Club and from which office she had retired the previous year. She was President for a year before she died in 1966.

The general improvement, care and well-being of the Mastiff has always been the first consideration of all Club Members and all Committees have always had this in mind. When hip displasia first caused concern many special meetings and discussions on this were held. A fund was set up to hold enquiries into the trouble and to assist any Member who might need help to have a Mastiff X-Rayed. Then the matter was the need of a scheme to rescue or help any Mastiff found to be homeless, in need of re-housing or any kind of care. A fund was started and a sub-committee formed who after many meetings and much discussion, evolved a workable plan and Mr. J. Hicks agreed to be the Director of the Scheme, and he and his family put many hours into finding the right homes, Various dedicated members have run the rescue which now has far more dogs requiring assistance; mostly they come from non member breeders, most club member breeders and stud dog owners taking responsibility for those that have come from their stock but not all.

Throughout this time members have assisted in vetting homes and helping to transport mastiffs when required. During the time this scheme has been working a number of Mastiffs have been found new and satisfactory homes. This scheme has been well used over the years sadly it is getting to the stage of being overloaded, the majority of the dogs requiring assistance come from non club members who are not at all interested in what happens to their puppies. Most club members are only too ready to take responsibility for those they have bred.

Between 1958 and 1977 the O.E.M.C. lost six of its most influential Members, their loss is a very great one to the Club and Breed.

Mr K. Hulbert, whose valuable help had done so much to re establish Mastiffs after the war died in 1958. The Progeny Awards are a memorial to him.

Mr F. F. Scheerboom died in 1959, his interest and knowledge of Mastiffs was very great, he also gave generously of his time to Committee work. A leather-covered book containing photographs and records of all champions since 1950 was given as a memorial to him.

Miss Ianthe Bell who died suddenly in 1960 was a Vice-President and served on the Committee for many years, she bred many champion Mastiffs from the time she acquired her first Mastiff in 1924, and her influence on the breed was great. She left money for the purchase of trophies to the memory of four of her Champions and all her photographs of Mastiffs which have been put in an album given by Mrs Hector.

Mr Greenwood who was President from 1949 until his death in 1962 joined the Club in 1924. He had a lifelong understanding and knowledge of Mastiffs for his father had kept them before him.

Mr Bowles was President from 1963 to 1965 when ill health forced him to retire; he was a noted breeder, especially after the war, when he gave much help in re-establishing Mastiffs.

Mrs N. Dickin was a devoted member of the Club and Secretary for 32 years. She was President for a year before she died in 1966. She was followed by Mrs Scheerboom who died in 1977, and who had made the name of Havengore famous. The O.E.M.C. has had many ups and downs' during its 96 years, but it flourishes in spite of difficulties. May it continue to watch over the interests of Mastiffs for very many years.

From the 1980 handbook written by Miss B. BLACKSTONE updated by Lyn Say 2002

Miss Blackstone who wrote most of the above, served the mastiff for most of her life, taking over as secretary from Mrs Dickin until 1976 when she became a Vice President, she still attended most of the meetings, and in 1985 became editor of the newsletter for a long period. She continued her life long interest, despite being unable to attend meetings until her death in 1998.

Following the death of Mrs Scheerboom, in 1977 who had been president since 1967, Mrs Pam Day (Holleley) became President. She had served on the committee since 1947 and worked long and hard for the breed and the club. She had her first mastiff in 1938 Hermit of Tiddicar, she was one of the few people who had a mastiff throughout the war, living in the country she was able to make use of rabbits for foodstuff. After the war she went to Canada to find him a suitable mate, unfortunately in her absence he died. From Canada she acquired Honey of Parkhurst, who started the famous Hollesley line. Following Mrs Days death in 1996 Mrs P Greenwell took over the presidency and holds that position to date. At this time a change of rules was made 'The President shall be elected for seven years and shall be eligible for re-election and Vice Presidents elected 'for life'. Retiring Presidents shall automatically become Past Presidents with the same privileges as Vice Presidents. (Annual Report 1996).

To celebrate the clubs 100<sup>th</sup> year a photographic review The Mastiff 1883 - 1983 was published. Now out of print.

The Centenary Show was held at the home of the President Mrs Day, judged by Mrs Catherine Sutton, Best of Breed Thomas and Tugwells Ch Bredwardine Beau Ide'al Best opposite sex same owners Ch Bellabees Blunder of Bredwardine. It was at this show that the late Ed Gerace presented the club with the Progeny Award and it was won at this show by Mesdames Lloyd Jones and Greenwell.

A proposal at the AGM in 1984 that an honorary Archivist be appointed, was carried unanimously. The first archivist being Graham Hicks.

In 1984 the Best of Breed at Crufts was presented with the Sidney Turner cup by the Kennel Club, donated by Mrs Turner for mastiffs in 1920. Since the war, for some reason this trophy had been presented to Chihuahuas. Following Mrs How's personal intervention in 1985, she had managed to secure the Hellingly Salver for Best of Breed at Crufts and the Sidney Turner cup for Best Opposite Sex.

At the AGM in 1973 the formation of regional branches was discussed and agreed, it was not until 1985 that the first of the branches was formed. The Eastern Branch continues to thrive and raises much money for rescue and other charitable causes by way of a limited show Christmas Party etc. they also publish a regular newsletter. The Southern Branch remain active, holding an annual fun day. Sadly the Northern Branch faded some years ago but perhaps one day it will be revived.

Historical Affixes July 1986 the KC instituted a scheme for clubs to protect historical affixes whose ownership had lapsed initially, the O.E.M.C. took on the following Havengore, Bearehill, Broomcourt, Frithend, Goring, Hellingly, Mansatta and O.E.M.C. The Havengore prefix had already been registered in another ownership, this has since passed to the Mastiff Association. It was later found that the prefix Goring was already protected in perpetuity.

In 1988 Gordon Edwards died naming the O.E.M.C. as the residual legatee. Part of the residue estate to provide a magazine. The first edition went out to members in 1996 Also in 1988 a numbered edition of Wynns History of The Mastiff was reprinted. A further bequest was received by the club in 1992 from Mr D A Degenhart. This bequest has been fraught with difficulties as an incorrect amount was originally sent to the club and the matter still has not been settled. Connel Coan has worked hard to try and sort this matter out.

To mark the Millennium a joint social event with the Mastiff Association was held at Cheltenham racecourse, where some 100 members and their dogs gathered, for an enjoyable day.

The club continues to hold a Championship and Open show each year a further event being held in the autumn normally this is in the form of a joint Breed Symposium with the Mastiff Association.

For the last five years two mastiff prints of top winning mastiffs have been published as a limited edition. In 2001 an Illustrated Breed Standard was published copies of the above are available via Lyn Say

