

Maurice Marshall remembers...

Birmingham (UK) club celebrates 100th year

by Maurice Marshall,
in this year of 2005, the Centenary of this, the oldest regional Fox terrier club.

I joined in 1944 when dog shows were very much an escape for the many war workers in this area. Air raids were getting fewer and people were able to pursue other interests including breeding our beloved breeds of Smooth and Wire Fox Terriers. I was still a schoolboy at this time!!

Times were very hard immediately after the War and the dog game was existing on a shoestring. Food for dogs was hard to come by and I well remember sitting by the oven baking stale bread to mix with offal and gravy for them. We managed, however, and as a result of this type of dedication the foundation of our excellent breed was laid. I had a contact with someone who supplied me with the windpipes of cattle, which I paid sixpence each for.

Suddenly the bus screeched to a halt! I was unceremoniously ejected from the bus and had to walk three miles home with my smelly case!!

They were cut up by hand until I managed to get a mincer and then eventually an electric one. These windpipes were called *wesins* locally and I used to catch two corporation buses to collect them. I used to carry them in an army gas mask case, which was made of khaki webbing. These pipes were in various stages of cleanliness and contained the contents of the animal's stomach. I would carry this, oblivious of the fact that it was seeping out of the bottom of the case. On one occasion I jumped onto a bus and sat on the top deck over the driver's cab. These buses had a channel which caught rainwater from the passengers' coats and carried down to the front of the bus on the exterior. Suddenly the bus screeched to a halt!

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The green gunge from my gas mask box had seeped into this channel and run down the front of the bus, completely obscuring the vision of the driver! I was unceremoniously ejected from the bus and had to walk three miles home with my smelly case!!

During petrol rationing it was not easy getting to shows but many of us tucked our Fox terriers under our arms and took the bus. The Kennel Club helped to keep the show scene going by allowing clubs to hold a show every six weeks, which allowed Wire exhibitors to strip out the coat after a show and have it ready for the next one!! Now we have a maximum of three shows a year but Birmingham like most clubs only take up the option to hold two shows a year.

Bham spawned many great FT men such as Mr. Fox Terrier himself, Bob Barlow the Crackley wizard; George Bartley (Wynstead), acknowledged by most who knew him as the greatest handler ever; Tommy Brampton (Weycroft), who had the last champion before the War, Ch. Weycroft Warfare; and Teddy Grice (Stocksmoor), grandfather of one of our top all-rounders, Pamela Cross Stern. These names are to be found on our trophies. The Smooth people that I remember include the Duchess of Newcastle, Harold Bishop (Shearester), and a vet named Leach who had a dog called Ch. Twentygrand Avon Joystick, which was Best of Breed at our first show after the War. Others include Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel, Bill Wilkins and Mr. Davies, a bank manager in Bham.

A bystander said he saw two silly old men circling each other without landing a single punch before they all went back to the pub to nurse their imaginary injuries

One occasion I remember being at Manchester show and a pre-War breeder told me that he was looking for a good bitch to start breeding again. In one of the lower classes there was an untrimmed bitch that was placed last. I said that he should try to buy her. The owner wanted the huge sum of 35 pounds. He offered 25 pounds, which was refused. A few weeks later I visited another breeder, Harry Gill, Crackwyn who had overheard the conversation and was also interested in her but wouldn't interfere with the breeder's offer. After a suitable time lapse he offered 35 pounds and bought her. Some time later I visited Mr. Gill again and he said to

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