

THE GREAT BREEDERS

Quita Youatt and the Kearby Bull Terriers

profile by

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All current Kearby's are descended, 18 generations on, from this quartet of more than 50 years ago; Kearby Kumara, his dam Breeze of Crockenhill, Kea of Kearby and her daughter Kearby Kakapo. Kumara sired the first two Kearby champions, and Kakapo whelped three champions

THEY SAY dog showing keeps you young at heart and for no one is this truer than Quita Youatt of the Kearby Bull Terriers.

Last year Quita celebrated, with three separate parties, her ninetieth birthday, but one can safely say that she shows not the slightest sign of getting even middle-aged. She has looked exactly the same for at least the 34 years I have known her, and her energy puts us all to shame.

I spoke to her at the LKA last year: "I'm flying home to New Zealand tomorrow;" she said, "and before I go I've got to get the list of the year's results up to date:"

No sooner had she returned to Britain, having traveled both ways on her own, than she spent a riotous weekend at the Bull Terrier Club trophy show, and seldom is there a championship show where the breed is scheduled where she is not keenly observing ringside.

Last year she awarded CCs in both Bull Terriers and Minis, as she has done regularly for the past 36 years, in the blazing heat at East of England, and she recently undertook her first visit to judge the breed in Hungary. Only once in recent years has she missed the Silverwood, the breed's American trophy show. She is currently debating which stud dog would be most suitable for her next litter, and only the legacy of a broken hip a few years ago prevents her from walking fast enough to show the Kearbys in the ring today.

Quita won her first CC in 1948, and there have been homebred Kearby champions in each of the succeeding six decades. Last year a Kearby was BOB at Crufts, 47 years after Kearby Kivitahi beat the big names to win the dog CC there. Her great passion is the coloured Bull Terrier. Over all these years she has never bred a litter without a least one parent being coloured - she did have a near miss once when a white puppy dog scaled a six-foot fence and mated a white bitch, but fortunately no puppies resulted to break the kennel's tradition.

And she still has one ambition, to breed a brindle and white UK champion male. She has bred brindle and black brindle bitch champions, a red dog, a black brindle dog and quite a number of whites, but for that classic brindle male the Kearby quest continues.



Gott's CH Bunty's
Pride of Kearby
from the '50s

Idyllic

Truly they don't make them like Quita any more...

Quita Cordner was born in New Zealand's South Island in 1913. Her father's family had emigrated from Northern Ireland when he was six and he had become a doctor in a small town between Timaru and Christchurch. Her mother's family originated in Yorkshire and her ancestors had been among the earliest to arrive in New Zealand, coming from Australia on whaling ships.

Her father served in the English army in the first world war and Quita's first visit to Britain was in 1919; she can still just remember the London of the early post-war years.

Back home, she seems to have had an idyllic childhood with dogs and horses, all part of life in the countryside. She went to school along with all the farmers' daughters from miles around, where they kept their own cows, ducks and chickens.

Her mother was a dominant character who would never give in, always involved in charity work, and she would have preferred her daughter to stay at home and join the social round. But Quita was always independent and determined to make her own way so opted to train as a nurse. "I like a social life as much as anyone," she says. "But on my terms, not other people's." Once training was complete, "our generation always seemed to go 'home' to England", and when war broke out again Quita could be found nursing in Hertfordshire. She would have preferred to join the British army but wasn't accepted, so sailed back to NZ and joined up there.



CH Kearby's Josephine
from the '60s

Escapades

The next six years were tough but adventurous; Quita served in Egypt and then moved up the Adriatic coast of Italy where her hair-raising escapades and narrow escapes were reminiscent of The English Patient. In Italy, she met Brian Youatt, an electrical engineer from Yorkshire serving in the navy. "When the moon was out we all had fun," recalls Quita, but on moonless nights Brian would sail off on various hush-hush missions.

The war over, it was safely home to NZ but England's lure was strong and soon Quita was back. Brian's first marriage had not survived the separation of the war years and before long he and Quita were together. Incidentally he did come from the same family as William Youatt, author of one of the first ever dog books.

It was time to get a dog - but what breed? As a youngster Quita had owned a Cocker and the family had had Airedales and a Smooth Fox Terrier, but living nearby had been a Bull Terrier cross she had liked a lot; many farmers crossed this breed with Australian Cattle Dogs to make the latter more effective in dealing with the pigs who had run wild.

But the dog who really converted Quita was 'Major'. A lad from Christchurch had bought two Bull Terrier puppies in Australia, taken them back to New Zealand, and when the war came took one of them into the army with him, who became known as 'the four-legged Major'.

Quita first got to know him when he was brought in along with human casualties to her hospital in Egypt to have shrapnel removed. His original master was killed but Major settled with another officer, and his typical Bull Terrier ways endeared him to all the nurses. He would wear a collar with his meat ticket and blood group attached and had a local girlfriend after which a litter was inevitable. When the nurses went off on camels to see the pyramids, Major came too; when they went on social occasions to the English club, Major came too.

On one occasion he disappeared for several weeks; when he eventually deigned to come back to camp he was 'demoted' to Lance-Corporal. But he wouldn't answer to the new name, so soon reverted to Major (unpaid).

So a Bull Terrier it had to be, and off Quita went to Harrods. They had a nice brindle Bull Terrier, but it had diarrhoea so wasn't



Kearby's CH Major
Barbara, dam of
Temptress, from the
'70s



Youatt & Ellis's CH
Druridge Augustus of
Kearby from the '80s

saleable at that point. However the woman in charge knew of a friend who had a litter, and from this Quita bought a red bitch who became Kiwi of Kearby, the affix coming from the village near Leeds where she and Brian lived.

Living nearby was farmer Alfie Bryant who had the Rougemont kennel and he suggested Quita showed her puppy. Off they went to a Boxing Day show at Leeds Corn Exchange and won a third.

Brian encouraged her to get involved more seriously and she bought another bitch, only for it to go undershot. Over the years, mouths have always been the most heart-breaking aspect of breeding Bull Terriers; it is so depressing to watch a promising puppy developing nicely and then you look one morning and the mouth has gone...

Next, Quita heard of a litter in Yorkshire by a dog from the well-known Blanmerle kennel of coloureds. There was a very nice puppy, but it wasn't for sale, however, the taller, leaner sister was, for £6. Quita felt sorry for this one and thought she deserved a chance to be properly reared, so she took her, intending to get her a good home in due course if necessary. Kea of Kearby stayed for ever, winning a bit around the Northern club-shows and in 1949 Quita took her to the Stockton-on-Tees championship show, held on an old airport on a bitterly cold day. She traveled with a Southern friend whose bitch really should have got the CC, and they went off to the bar where Quita bought Kea a sherry to warm her up while her friend gave her bitch a brandy. The sherry obviously worked better than the brandy for Quita's bitch showed superbly and won the CC under all-rounder Tom Scott.

Kea was never shown again; having attended countless country horse shows as a girl, Quita had enough of an 'eye' to know she wasn't really good enough for CCs. However she, along with another brindle foundation bitch, Breeze of Crockenhill, a Ch Ormandy's Kertrim Bo' sun daughter bred by Kay Herbert, started a line which is now in its eighteenth generation.

Equal terms

Breeze wasn't shown as she came through the dreaded hard pad and in her first litter produced four coloured and four white puppies. Another bitch was always keen to look after puppies, so Quita gave her the four coloureds and left the whites with Breeze. Next morning _ no white puppies to be found, Quita having to learn the hard way that some Bull Terriers can make very poor mothers and that one has to arrange a round-the-clock watch on them. Since then her own bitches, including Breeze far her subsequent litter, have generally been excellent mothers, but she has not taken any chances.

First CC for a homebred went to the white dog, Kearbys Rangi, a son of the original Kiwi, but it was when the lines from Breeze and Kea were combined that the first champions emerged.

At that time the breed was dominated by two great kennels in the South East, Raymond Oppenheimer and Eva Weatherill's Ormandy/Souperlative, who concentrated on whites, and D Montague Johnstone and Margaret Williams' Romany, who with astonishing skill brought the coloureds, previously in general the poor relation, to a stage where they could compete on equal terms with the whites. Quite apart from their colour, Quita tended to prefer the consistent type and temperament of the Romany dogs, and at first tended mainly to use their stud dogs or descendants.

Her own first successful stud dog was the white, Kearby Kumara (Ch Romany Rhinegold ex Breeze) and mated to Kearby Kakapo (Ch Romany Reprieved ex Kea) sired the red, Ch Kearby Kihikihi

The red was sold as a puppy but was handled in the ring by Quita, a pattern she and other Bull Terrier people have often adopted. Obviously it is not practical for any but the largest kennels to keep more than a very few stud dogs at home so it makes more sense to place promising males with pet owners who are happy for them to be shown, though she was careful no to push



Stanley's CH Kearby's Jonah
at Aricon from the '90s



Monk's CH Kearbys
Beautician from the '00s

matters if the owners weren't too keen. If the dogs were to be used at stud, Quita would insist that they came to her house to do the mating; in that way they were never any trouble to their owners at home.

Kiwitahi's great moment came at Crufts 1956 where Douglas Lindsay judged. Ch Romany Repeat Performance had been the star of the previous year and had been sold to the US; he had been confidently expected to win the CC at Crufts and then fly out to Westminster for a double victory. But Douglas did his own thing and put this relatively unknown Northern dog over him for the CC, much to the chagrin of the 'establishment', all the more satisfying for Quita as Kiwitahi was homebred from homebred parents.

He gained his title later in the year just missing becoming the first Kearby champion as he was beaten to it by Bunty's Pride of Kearby, bred and owned by the Gott family, by Kumara ex a bitch Quita had sold them on breeding terms. His first CC came at the Northern Provincial club under American expert Ernest Eberhard.

Brother Kihikihi was in some ways better but developed a problem normally seen in cattle which raised the glands in his neck and spoilt his outline. At that time Quita and Brian had an old Mercedes which they had converted into a very early version of a camper van, and Kihikihi accompanied them on their camping trips. On one of these occasions they stayed a night with the Brailsford family, old friends who owned a Kearby bitch. The bitch happened to be in season and they left the pair overnight in the stable to see what happened. The result was Ch The Conqueror of Kearby, and his sister Pollux who was a successful brood. Conqueror, shown by his owner Mr Fielden, had his big day at the Bull Terrier Club, winning the CC under the great American breeder Dr Edward Montgomery - must be something about American judges!

Liz Brailsford, at that time a schoolgirl, has played a big part in the Kearby story over the years and today lives next door to Quita and helps look after the dogs.

By now people were threatening Quita that they wouldn't use her dogs as their names were so hard to pronounce! So subsequent Kearbys were English rather than Maori.

Kakapo proved a super brood, as in a litter by Ch Dulac Heathlands Commander she produced the white, Ch Dulac Kearby's Commodore for Betty Macleod, the Bannisters' brindle, Ch Kearbys Mermaid, and their good but less spectacular headed sister Pinnafore who bred on well.

Mermaid was put to Ch Ormandy Souperlative Snowflash and from this the Bannisters kept Ch Kearby's Leprechaun. He wasn't the easiest dog to show and Quita had to ensure that the judges spoke to her first, thus 'introducing' themselves to the dog, otherwise there was no way they could go over him. Quita showed him to two CCs and then he had one of his bad days and was beaten for the CC by her own puppy. His owner wasn't happy and decided to handle him herself, but he was even worse behaved, so she let Quita show him again and he was soon made up.

The greatest of the Romanys, and still in Quita's view the most outstanding Bull Terrier she has seen, was Ch Romany Robin Goodfellow, the first of the breed to win BIS at a UK general championship show. Quita bred two brindle bitch champions, Josephine and Helena, by him.

By now it was the early '60s and time for something different. Not many people would decide to drive to New Zealand and back, but Quita and Brian did just that. Kind friends, notably Maureen Bell whose Geham kennel was just getting established, offered to keep the Kearby line going, and the Youatts loaded up their long-wheelbase Land Rover and off they set, accompanied by a bitch puppy whom they delivered personally to her new home in what was then Ceylon. She in fact earned her keep on the way as a guard while they drove through the Middle Eastern deserts.



Brian and Quita Youatt during their great adventure when they drove to New Zealand and back in their Land Rover

Back in business

Before setting out they had sent a dog puppy to New Zealand and while they were there his owner kindly let Quita show him, with great success. Eventually it was time to come home via Alaska, Mexico and the mainland US.

Soon, thanks to Maureen and others, the Kearbys were back in business with descendants of the old line. The first five champions of the new era were all white: Magnum, Jeremy, Gabriel, Rosemary and her son William, runner-up in the Regent Trophy, but it was Geham Black Velvet of Kearby, a black brindle bitch bred by Maureen and descended from Leprechaun, Josephine and Conqueror, from whom stemmed Quita's greatest triumphs with her beloved coloureds.

To Magnum she bred Kearby's Barmaid, in whom an American breeder was very interested. She wished to buy her, in whelp to a certain Ormandy dog. Quita found that the dog was no longer at stud. "It's that one or nothing," insisted the American, so Quita decided to keep her and breed from her herself. Just as well, for mated to Ch Maerdy Maestro of Ormandy she produced the wonderful headed and very typy brindle Ch Kearby's Major Barbara, whom Quita considers probably her best even though she was not as spectacular a showman as her famous daughter.

The day she won her third CC she was ready to be mated and Quita took her to the very shapely Maestro son, Ch Hollyfir Devil's Disciple. Half-brother to half-sister matings have often produced the goods in Bull Terriers, this one no exception, and the brindle Kearby's Temptress, won six CCs as a puppy, and her title shortly afterwards.

At Bournemouth 1976 she and Quita enjoyed one of those days granted to very few exhibitors, taking the CC, BOB, terrier group, puppy stakes and ending up BIS at 11 months, the first coloured bitch to achieve that and astonishingly the most recent Bull Terrier to do so. Two days later at Darlington she again won BOB and the Pup of the Year heat, but it was the year the tents blew down and by the time Quita had made her way from the stakes to where the group was being judged, it was too late to compete. The Pup of the Year final was then held at Richmond at Olympia, the last show of the season. Judge was Marie Moore from the US and the results were announced in reverse order. Quita was concentrating on her dog and not watching the judge who patiently walked up to her, tapped her on the arm and said: "Don't you want to win!"

A natural showgirl, Temptress was always first choice to take in for any junior handlers at the club shows.

Considered by many to have been unlucky in the breed trophies, Temptress proved her worth as a brood, producing a black brindle Kearby's Black Buck, and a white champion son, Kearby's Jacobite of Geham, by different dogs; between them they won seven consecutive CCs in 1979. Black Buck sired Ch Kearby's Merry Dancer, who went to Mrs. Johnson for whom she did well in the trophies, won BOB at Crufts and her title in her next two shows and was then sold to America, while Jacobite sired Ch Kearby's Partisan.

For some years in the '80s Gordon Ellis of the Honeylyn affix, whose wife Brenda is also well known in Bichons, was a partner in the Kearbys and during this time two champions were made up, the white Crufts BOB winner Ch Druridge Augustus of Kearby who is behind most of today's winners, and his red son, Ch Redeye Tough Commander of Kearby. Quita also handled Augustus' brother, Druridge Tiberius, to his crown; they were ex a Kearby bitch by the influential Ch Aricon Chief Eye Shy.

A lovely bitch of the '80s was Kearby's Goosander who won two CCs and then someone ran into the car as they were leaving a show and she never enjoyed traveling again.

Enthusiasm

A Romany dog, Rising Comet, had been sold to the North and Quita campaigned him to a hard-earned title, and she also handled Maureen Bell's Ch IledenTop Shot of Geham to her championship; she had become thoroughly bored with the ring but Quita got her enthusiasm back and made her look a different bitch.

While Quita was concentrating on her Minis, the Standards took a back seat but the line continued and in the late '90s she used one of Eric Stanley's Aricon dogs and produced a

superb headed black brindle. His first home didn't work out, so Kearby's Jonah joined the Aricons and gained his title in three shows. He was then sold overseas and died young in a tragic accident, choking on one of his toys.

His younger sister Zero has carried on the line and produced two lovely black brindle bitch puppies by Marshelsea Hellraiser. Both went to relatively novice owners: the Monks' Kearby's Beautician quickly became a champion, winning her third CC at Crufts '02, and figured well in the trophies. Her sister Bethsheba was scarcely shown and eventually Quita was informed she had been sold. Lucky buyers were John and Mandy Young of the Bullyviews; they made her a champion in three shows and with her fourth CC she took BOB at Crufts '03.

The last great Romany stud dog in the late '60s was the small, compact brindle River Pirate. By him Quita bred Kearby's Quinto who won a CC but was too small to reach the top. River Pirate

descendants had achieved a lot in the early years of the programme which allowed Miniature Bull Terrier people to use a Standard parent and register the puppies as Minis. The Clark family with the Grandoperas had done particularly well and asked Quita if by any chance there was a small brother to Quinto.

Indeed there was, a delightful little dog in a pet home, so they used him on Ch Grandopera Fedora and came up with three champion bitches, Imelda, Isolde and Isabella.



Ch Lizette First Endeavour of Kearby, at top winning miniature who showed great promise as a sire before being found to be afflicted with lens luxation

Quinto herself produced an even smaller daughter, so Quita's thoughts turned to the possibility of breeding Minis. She looked round for a son of one of these Grandopera bitches and decided upon Esses Bullfinch, whose dam was Imelda. From a litter of six, Graham and Maureen Hughes bought Kerry's Mini Maggy at Graymor, an indomitable little showgirl who was an immediate sensation. She ended up as the bitch CC record holder, a record which lasted until Crufts this year when Mrs Hughes gave a twenty-third CC to Ch Margins Minnie The Moocher.

Something about her little sister Mouse always appealed to Quita so in spite of an incorrect mouth she stayed at Kearby. She even had her moment in the ring at a wet and windy Leeds show where she out-showed everything, even Maggy, to win a CC!

Mouse proved a devil to mate; the Hughes brought along their interbred dog, Zenway of Zedbees at Graymor, and as she ran across the furniture he ran round; the house was like a racetrack. Eventually the deed was done and in her only litter she bred three champions: Kearby's Mini Mo, Kearby's Mini Miracle at Graymor and Kearby's Mini Marathon. The latter proved a good sire and Quita bought in the lovely brindle brother and sister Chs Lizette First Endeavour and First Edition of Kearby, both of them Crufts BOB winners. Endeavour is an exceptional Mini of tremendous type, head, power and substance, won 16 CCs and started off by producing some superb puppies.

One of the reasons Quita had wanted to breed Minis was to help them with their eye problems. The dreaded lens luxation was present in many lines, but interbreeding **with** Standards could at least ensure that there were no cases in the next generation. Quita had not run into any problems until now, but tragically for the breed Endeavour developed the condition, a great disappointment. Who said dog breeding is easy?

Over the years both Quita and Maureen Bell have been noted for campaigning their dogs everywhere. Whereas many Bull Terrier people aimed to make up their dogs in three shows, preferably not too far from home, the Kearbys and Gehams could be found at almost every championship show and many of the club open shows too. No journey was too long for these intrepid travelers in Land Rover or camper van, and very often they would be rewarded with a CC or two.

Quita recalls the last time the breed had CCs at Belfast and she won the dog CC, celebrated rather too well and fell asleep on her bench with the dog. Came time to catch the ferry and the dog wouldn't let anyone touch her, so her friends had to throw things at her until she woke up!

Damaging

She has never kept very many dogs herself - 'my husband would have gone crackers!' - and frequently put bitches out on breeding terms. This usually worked well, the terms being generous with only one litter ever involved.

Although it would be silly to pretend there was never in the heyday of the big kennels a commercial element to some Bull Terrier breeders, Quita is horrified at the breeding purely for money which goes on today, and which can be so damaging to the breed especially when temperament is not a priority. Look through the Breed Records Supplement and the proportion of well-bred litters is small indeed, and the number coming onto Welfare is terrifying. "I wouldn't like to own a stud dog nowadays" she says.

Unquestionably the breed has changed from the days of Romany and Ormandy. "The big kennels kept us all on our toes, and trying to breed something better." She was always interested to talk to Raymond Oppenheimer about his views on any proposed matings; even if she didn't take his advice she was keen to know the reasoning behind any recommendations he made.

Quita first judged at Otley's lovely summer open show, which in those days would draw an entry of up to 30 Bull Terriers. Her first CC appointment was at the Scottish Kennel Club in 1967 when she put up Geham Gold Label and Brobar Caramia, and since then she has judged at Crufts, all the main club shows and trophy shows at home and abroad, including four times at the Silverwood.

Like many people she is impressed by the quality of the coloureds in the US. Quite illogically, out there they are a separate variety from the whites, though interbreeding is allowed, with the result that littermates may well compete entirely separately. Nevertheless, the standard is very high so perhaps there is something to be said for this strange arrangement after all.

Quita has been a stalwart of the breed clubs, starting off with the Yorkshire of which she became secretary/treasurer following a difficult period when the club funds went walkabout. She and other committee members used to hold cocktail parties at home to raise money for the club and cooked jar upon jar of home-made marmalade 'until it came out of my head'.

She was one of the earliest area representatives on the Bull Terrier Club committee and has been both chairman and president; she still serves on the Coloured Bull Terrier Club committee and is president of the Miniature Club. She has written breed notes for Our Dogs for many years.

In a substantial heavy-boned breed, rearing is all-important and Quita, like most of her generation, swears by the traditional feeding methods, tripe and a quality biscuit, with her bitches going on to shin of beef as soon as they are known to be in whelp.

Trust

She remembers the days before she had a car when she would cycle a couple of miles, then take the bus into Leeds carrying an old army bag which she would load up with horsemeat. The hard bit was the last mile up the hill to the house.

Movement in the breed, especially behind, has never been its strong point but Quita wonders if exercising methods may play a part. She is convinced that if a dog is trained only to walk on the owner's left, it will inevitably start toeing in on one leg, so always used to exercise her dogs for a mile on the left, a mile on the right.

Like all serious breeders, she would travel many miles to see a vet she knew and could trust, and if a caesar was necessary they would always let her help.

Her interest in Miniatures notwithstanding, Quita's preference has always been for a substantial, good sized Bull Terrier, and she likes a strapping bitch capable of producing handsome sons. Her views on the breed remain trenchant: "I put up a beautiful, masculine dog last year and the selectors didn't invite him to the trophies. I was not happy." Certainly the courage, staying power and determination for which the breed is known are still well in evidence in its most senior breeder.