

The Beckrow Story



I was born and raised with dogs. I think the dogs came ahead of me, which is probably the right way around. I have never known life without a number of dogs around.

I started showing when I was five, most of the time in child handling classes. Funnily enough, I showed my mother's Irish Setters in the child handling classes, while I showed the "Pems" in the Breed classes. For a long time, the judges had to help me lift the dogs on and off the table, because I wasn't really quite tall enough! But, eventually, I mastered that art.

As a young child, I had fallen in love with the Cardigan bitch Ch. Rozavel Blue Rosette, whom I just thought was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life, and wanted one just like her. I didn't get one just like that - immediately - but I have always had a soft spot for Cardigans. When I was deemed old enough to own a

dog of my own and look after it, mother and father let me have one. But it was on the strict condition that I looked after it.

I acquired my first Cardigan in 1969, Rozavel Blue Lace of Beckrow (Rozavel Galwynt – Rozavel Blue Spark). She was rather large, but she proved to be an absolutely fantastic brood bitch! She only had two litters. In the first litter by Rozavel Merioneth came Ch. Beckrow Bandelero, who was the first tricolour male champion in the UK. And in her second litter equally by Rozavel Merioneth, she produced the fabulous Aust. Ch. Beckrow Barona Doubtful, who went to Australia and is the top sire in Cardigans of all time in Australia.



Ch. Beckrow Barona Doubtful

She also produced in the second litter a beautiful bitch, which Thelma Gray exported to Italy for me. There she became the foundation bitch of a very successful kennel in the early 1970s. So, although she wasn't the greatest show bitch in the world, she was probably the best start you could ever get in a new breed. She produced fabulous stock and I couldn't have asked her to do more than that. Everything I have got comes down from her. If you look hard enough, you'll find her in the back of pedigrees, even now. She just gave me the start I really wanted. And, Thelma Gray was absolutely wonderful with me, because at that time I was still a very impressionable teenager. She gave me a lot of very sound advice, which I have followed ever since. And that was how I started in the "Cardis!"

My kennels, BECKROW, are named after a tiny village we used to live in, when we had the boarding kennel. Rather surprisingly it was granted because The Kennel Club doesn't give affixes to names or places.

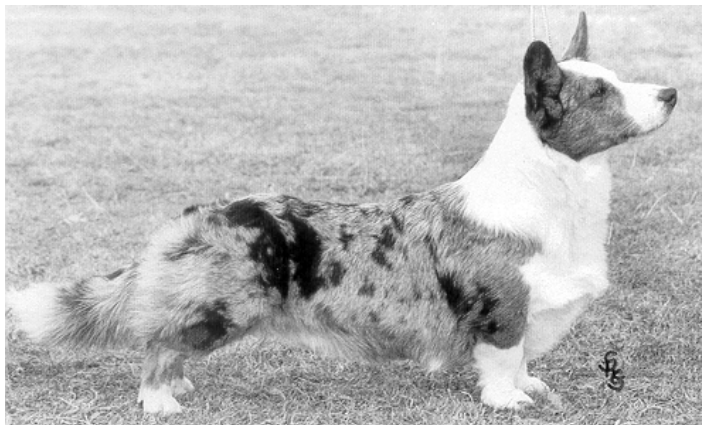
All my puppies' names begin with B! The blues are all Blue something, and the blacks are nearly all named after racehorses or show jumpers. But they all begin with B.



Ch. Beckrow Beverly at Willowglen JW, Top Cardigan 1985

Throughout the years I have occasionally exchanged puppies with my mother which is why Willowglen and Beckrow both appear on Cardigan Corgi pedigrees. My mother registers the blues as silver and that's why it is Willowglen Silver Cavalier and not Blue Cavalier.

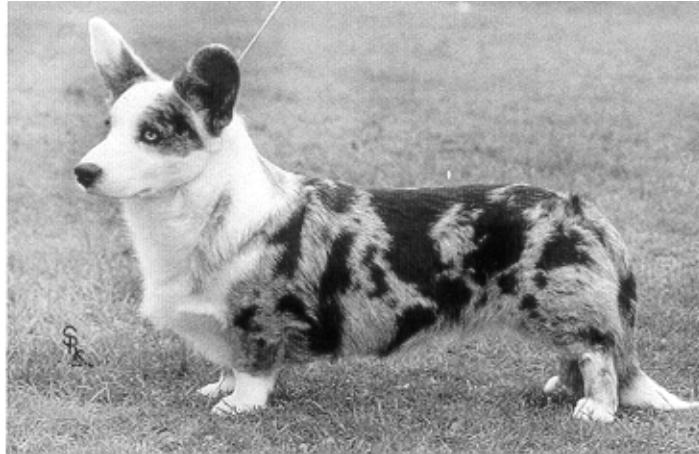
The biggest winner I have bred so far is, without any shadow of a doubt, Ch. and Am. Ch. Beckrow Blue Cedar. He was an historic top-winning blue merle of all time in the UK. He was a tremendous dog. Obviously, I was very thrilled to have bred him and very sorry when he went to the U.S., but he has a wonderful home and he is proving himself as a good stud dog over there, so it was worth doing.



Am./Eng. Ch. Beckrow Blue Cedar

Probably the best dog I've ever owned is Ch. Willowglen Silver Cavalier, the dog I'm showing now. Hopefully, maybe one day, he will take his father's position as top-winning blue merle of all time. He's an absolutely stunning dog! And he's a wonderful dog to live with, which I like even better. He has 19 CCs so far and his dad had 30. So he has got a long way to go yet to beat his father. At the moment, he is second top-winning blue merle of all time. He has been top Cardigan two years running. His father was top Cardigan here for three years. So, I would like to make it three years in a row. A recent highlight for me was winning Best in

Show in the Cardigan Association, which only happened two years ago for the first time. That was a terrific thrill!



Ch. Willowglen Silver Cavalier

When it comes to breeding I would like to have common links in the pedigree. I don't like to outcross completely. You just don't know what you are introducing. Whereas, if you have got common lines, you know roughly what you are going to get - or hopefully going to get. Sometimes it doesn't work, sometimes it works very well. The closest I would like to go is aunt to nephew, or grandfather to granddaughter, which produces some excellent results. I have done a father to daughter mating - that was a walking disaster area! So I'm staying well clear of doing anything quite as close as that.

A dog whom I admired greatly, and was given the privilege of judging, was Ch. Pharoah of Joseter. He was, in my opinion, one of the best males we have ever had. I have tried to incorporate him into my own pedigrees, and he is there. By incorporating some of that bloodline into my line, they have improved. Another dog that influenced me greatly was Ch. Wendac Robgwen Midnight Special. He was another outstanding dog, who, again, was a very good producer. So, I have combined two of the best males we have seen in the UK, and the results are beginning to speak for themselves.

I start evaluating my puppies when they are first born. Often there is one that takes my eye. Otherwise, I just look at them over the weeks. Between six and seven weeks is the ideal time to assess their potential, then they are on their feet and you get a better assessment of them. But it's a funny thing, if one does take your eye at a very early age, you keep going back to that one.

My ambition is to keep breeding good quality Cardigans, with a good temperament. Type, temperament and soundness are all of equal importance to me. Good fronts are difficult to breed, but, fortunately, I have mostly sound fronts and my Cardigans are pretty free-moving. There are exceptions, but most of them can get up and go around the ring. They have to be sound, if they are going to do the job for which they are intended. Also, obviously, temperament is very important. A nice-tempered dog is much easier to live with than one that is nervous or shy.

One of my ambitions, obviously, is to win a Group for the Cardigan. It's never been done in the U.K. I've gone Reserve in Group, and I've been pulled out in the final six in Groups, a near miss. The other ambition is to get 100 CCs. I have 70 plus, now!

My husband Mike Applegate and I live next door to my parents in the same house. We have quite a large kennel, which is divided for the dogs, with large concrete runs, which are used

for their normal exercise, and then they go out into the garden. But most of the dogs live in the house.

I tend not to keep the males together for obvious reasons. Usually it is maybe two girls and a boy together, or a girl and boy. If the girls get on well, then it is fine. Most of the boys do get on fairly well, but I wouldn't trust them left alone. If you kennel a load of males together, you may possibly be asking for trouble at some future date. It is usually two by two in the kennel.

If we have got a bitch that maybe had one litter or perhaps two, we will let them go into a pet home provided the right home comes along. They have much more fun in a home where they are the only one. Usually they are three, or maybe four years old, sometimes, they're even younger than that. If they're over six years, they stay. We just let them live their lives out with us.



Ch. Beckrow Be My Hope, born 13-01-1995, as a puppy

When breeding dogs you have to take the bad with the good. Most of the time, it is fun - but there is always something around the corner that is going to get you. One of the saddest times was to lose Jaunty. He was only a young dog, still in his prime. He slipped a disc, and then had a stroke brought on by the stress. To put a dog down at only five years old was very, very hard. In fact, at the time, I had to think if I really wanted to continue breeding Cardigans, but something good happened very soon afterwards, and sort of helped ease the heartache. That is life when you are looking after animals.

Sandra Tonkyn

Based on an interview conducted by Ortrud W. Römer-Horn at the home of Chris, Joy and Sandra Tonkyn in March 1995 and published in Corgi Quarterly, Winter 1995-96.
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Sandra owned and/or bred 12 UK champions and had numerous champions throughout the world which she had bred. When Sandra died in 1998 we took over the Beckrow affix and made up 3 more Beckrow champions. As Sandra had won so well with Ch. Willowglen Silver Cavalier by winning 34 CC's she was determined to go for the Breed record which had been held for 17 years by Ch. Grangefield Deb's Delight. We carried on and when Silver Cavalier

was 10 years old he won his 36th CC and the breed record, his father Ch. Beckrow Blue Cedar won 30 CC's before he emigrated to a friend in the States.



Ch. Beckrow Bleu Superbe, born 22-09-2000

Beckrow is now jointly owned by Kevin Dover, Steven Wilmer, Allan Taylor and Idris Jones who will continue breeding Cardigan Corgis as well as their lovely Pembroke Corgis so the 'Beckrows' will be around for many years to come.

Joy Tonkyn
October 2004