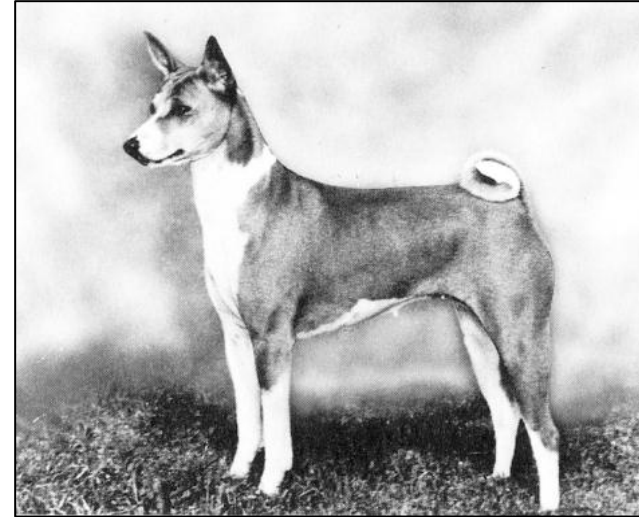


Dainty Dancer's Story

Sheila Anderson

Glenairley Basenjjs, British Columbia, Canada

The Basenji (The Mailbox) June 1976



In 1956 Mrs. Harold Berg of Seattle brought her pet Basenji bitch Princess Trina to be mated to my dog Can. & Am. Ch. Joss of Glenairley (Eng. Ch. Black Magic of the Congo x Lotusbud of the Congo.) The result of this mating produced four puppies, all red/white, and as they were born on St. Patrick's Day all were given Irish names. I went to Seattle to see the litter and one little bitch Colleen attracted me very much. On returning to Victoria I got in touch with Mrs. Margaret Bowden who was interested in getting into Basenjjs and strongly recommended she could do well to buy Colleen. This Mrs. Bowden did.

...I felt that although Princess Trina was not, to my mind, classically bred, with careful understanding of this, and a breeding program which could tolerate no inbreeding to her, we should find in her a valuable outcross to my stock. In case anyone thinks I am against inbreeding I should say that to my mind inbreeding is only justified for

two reasons: 1. If there are no other animals of that breed available, and 2. When you have absolute knowledge of the traits which your animals can inherit and you wish to make those traits 'fixed' in your stock. Princess Trina was a loveable little dog, ideal size with a pretty head and short fine coat. She had a nice long neck, well laid back shoulders and pretty little feet. Her tail was poorly curled and she should have had a shorter back. I felt mated to Joss there was every chance they would have very good puppies. Joss was a small dog, red/white, his red was a brilliant shade, no tinge of brown which I knew to be in Trina's background. His back was very short and he had a tight, double curled tail, well placed. His feet were too big (inherited from his dam) and his coat was a bit coarse. He was a showy little dog; he liked the applause and had a real presence in the ring. When I showed him at a big show in Seattle in 1952, Maxwell Riddle, the well-known hound judge said, "I feel I am seeing a Basenji for the first time!"

Margot decided to buy Colleen and when she was old enough I suggested she be mated to Can. & Am. Ch. Glenairley Black Trellis (by Joss x Eng. & Can. Ch. Orange Fizz of the Congo.) I was anxious to introduce Fizz's exceptionally sweet and placid nature which Trellis had inherited. Trellis was a rather tall dog, but very elegant and refined. A classic tri with brilliant tan markings and very sharply defined demarcation lines between the black, white and tan. He had a nice head, lots of wrinkle, and the length of his muzzle was definitely shorter than the distance from the occiput to his stop. He always made a good impression in the ring...and couple with the sound movement, and like his sire, a show-off!

Colleen produced four puppies. Sadly when they were 4 weeks old Margot lost all her dogs to a virulent form of virus. All she had left was one dog up, a red/white called Drumadoon Ducat. Everyone felt sorry and in an effort to start Margot up again, I suggest I give her a red/white puppy called Glenairley Melodious. She was by Can. & Am. Ch. Flageolet of the Congo x Glenairley Missalthrush. Margot accepted her and we made a breeding arrangement that we would share her first litter when she was mated to Ducat with me getting first choice, Margot second, etc.

Missalthrush had a very handsome tri litter brother called Merlin who I had sold to Margaret Robertson in 1954 as a very young puppy. Merlin was a wonderful dog with a lovely disposition and a flair for learning both clever tricks and obedience work. He still holds the all-time record in any country when he got 199 out 200 at the Bremerton Obedience trial in 1957.



Basenji

**AM. and CAN.
CH. DAINTY DANCER OF GLENAIRLEY**

Owner, Mrs. Margaret E. Robertson
Merlea Basenjis
2826 Tudor Ave.
Victoria, B. C., Canada



Photo of Dainty Dancer with handler Bob Hastings. Many years later he said that she was great fun to show. She would not let the judge pass her by. If they tried she yodelled at them!

Mrs. Robertson had become completely captivated by Basenjis and decided she would like to become seriously involved with them. She asked me if I would sell her my best bitch puppy from several litters I expected, I agreed. When the time came to choose her puppy Margaret (who has that precious gift 'an eye' for a show animal) was extremely taken with a little red/white bitch called Glenairley Golden Twinkle, a daughter of Trellis' litter sister, black Trinket. This puppy to my mind was the best I had bred. However, in Melodious' litter was a little red/white puppy which I thought looked promising. I told Margaret before she decided to see this puppy. The minute Margaret saw her, her mind was made up — this was the puppy she wanted and she stuck to her decision even though Margot thought a sister more promising. This puppy, of course, was Dainty Dancer of Glenairley.

From what I have written I think it will be understood that Can. & Am. Ch. Dainty Dancer of Glenairley was no fluke. Her breeding was a planned affair with a great deal of thought given to the faults and virtues of her forebears. Margaret and I spent many hours at my kitchen table listing their traits both physical and mental, literally doing arithmetical calculations regarding what we were likely to get with the various matings we were contemplating. I suppose it could be said we were human computers — being human I think we had an advantage over a machine as we could assess those intangibles like flair, appeal and presence. It is these intangibles which make for greatness — be they found in animals or humans.

Dainty's Best in Show in 1957 was without doubt the greatest thrill of my Basenji life. The first time in this continent of North America such a thing had happened for a Basenji to go Best in Show at a championship show. Of course, Best in Show had happened in Basenjis before; I'd won one myself with Joss at a Sanction Show (equivalent to an English Open Show). Philo's Blaze of Koko Crater had won Best in Show at a champions show in Hawaii before it was a state, and Cracker Jack had won a BIS at a war time Open Show in England. But Dainty's win was at a prestigious Championship Show so it was an absolute First for a Basenji in North America. At long last, judges would look at a Basenji as a potential winner, not only of groups but of shows. A tremendous break through for the breed. Six more times Dainty would win Best in Show, and all at important Championship shows, a tremendous record.

I make no apology if it sounds as if I am boasting regarding my part in the production of Dainty. I am no longer actively breeding Basenjis, nor do I own one now. While I was in the breed I said very little about my share in it all, but with the passage of time, and sadly, too many inaccuracies in the canine press at the moment, it seems only right and proper to speak up with the complete and accurate version of this little Basenji.

I hope that the present and future devotees of the breed will realize what an impact Can. & Am. Ch. Dainty Dancer of Glenairley had on the breed. I hope that future historians will accord her the credit which I believe to be her due. A beautiful Basenji with that intangible something which makes for greatness.

THE BASENJI,

This photo appears on the wall of the entryway at the Crystal Gardens in Victoria, BC, Canada.

Dee Lowit



Editor's note: It would appear to be Am. Can. Ch. Dainty Dancer of Glenairley who was from Victoria! What a find!

Celebrations in Print:

Walter Philo writes in his column in
AKC's Purebred Dog, December 1958

...until September 6, 1957.

On that date a Canadian-bred puppy bitch named Dainty Dancer of Glenairley, bred by Mrs. Margot Bowden and owned by Mrs. Margaret Robertson, made an inauspicious debut at the first of the two all-breed CKC

shows of the Vancouver Island Dog Fanciers Association. Although she placed third in Open at the first show, next day she went first in Open, winners bitch, best of winners, first in Group and, at the end, best in show. To prove that this great win was neither accidental nor whimsical, the pup repeated her performance on October 5 at the Victoria City KC Show (also CKC). We were all very proud, of course, but still, the entries were smallish, 171 and 124 respectively and, while we felt that the two judges were competent and surely of sound mind, wasn't it possible that they did not really know the breed? (This is the same question we also ask whenever we fail to win even reserve.) Perhaps we had better not applaud too loudly until Dainty Dancer met some solid competition in a U.S. show.

Thereupon, Dainty Dancer paid several visits to the United States, met the solid competition—and placed in group in seven U.S. shows, taking in five.

On the morning of August 16, 1958, Mrs. Robertson met a retired Indian chief on the main street of Renton, Washington, mistook him for a beggar, opened her purse and forced the equivalent of a silver shilling on him and hurried with her red and white prize-winner to the two-day Olympic K.C. Show. There, Am. and Can. Ch. Dainty Dancer of Glenairley went BB over seven entries and placed first in group, under Heywood Hartley, over ten hound breeds, representing 103 hounds in competition. On the second day she went BIS under George Scroth, over 557 entries and answered the question finally whether or not a Basenji could go BIS at a large U.S. all-breed show. Through October 18 of this year, she has won three more BIS in Canada.

Dainty Dancer is not only aesthetically pleasing but sound structurally. She was designed to function as a



DAINTY DANCER OF GLENAIRLEY, Basenji, owned by Mrs. Margaret Robertson, Victoria, Can., first of breed to win a BIS in North America; BIS, Vancouver (R. Waters) and BIS Victoria City (W. Bowden); handler, E. R. Hastings.—Allen

Basenji. Her appearance leaves no doubt of rapid acceleration, quick braking power and ability to turn on a dime. She is alert and curious, swift and agile. She can spring and dodge and, like the Basenjis in Africa that leap above the tall elephant grass to course their prey, can jump very high, as is indicated by her clean, long legs. Authorities on the Basenji are quick to admire the high tail set, the short back, the level top line and, at close range, the exquisitely chiseled head and the fine, profuse wrinkles.

One of the charming ironies of Basenji-dom is that at present most of our top winners are owned by sheer

novices. Almost all of our Specialties have been won by owner-handlers and several, by single-dog owners. Margaret Robertson, a comparative newcomer, was just such an amateur, so unprofessional that when she acquired her first Basenji, Glenairley Black Merlin, she entered him in obedience! Incidentally, Merlin, between February 23 and March 24, 1957, achieved scores of 192 at Seattle, 191 at Washington and 199 at Peninsula, winning his U.S. Companion Dog degree and the Club cup for highest obedience scores in 1957. Some amateur!

Dog World 1958

The Thrill of a Lifetime — First BIS Basenji in U.S.

Ch. Dainty Dancer of Glenairley, owned by MARGERT ROBERTSON, Victoria, B.C., Canada, made basenji history August 17 by going BIS at Olympic KC show, Renton, Washington, under George Schroth—the first basenji BIS in the US! (Note BU Editor: Hawaii was a Territory at that time so there was some confusion about the Hawaiian BIS earlier)

In the September-October Bulletin of the Basenji Club of America, in an article, “A Weekend to Remember, or How to Age 10 Years in 48 Hours,” Mrs. Robertson writes:

‘Take one small basenji—start with BB over a particularly nice entry at 9 AM. Hold your breath, through the Hound Group last thing that night, then control yourself for a full 24 hours until BIS judging the following evening. After that suspense and excitement, I guarantee any other devoted owner would be in the same state of shock that I was in.

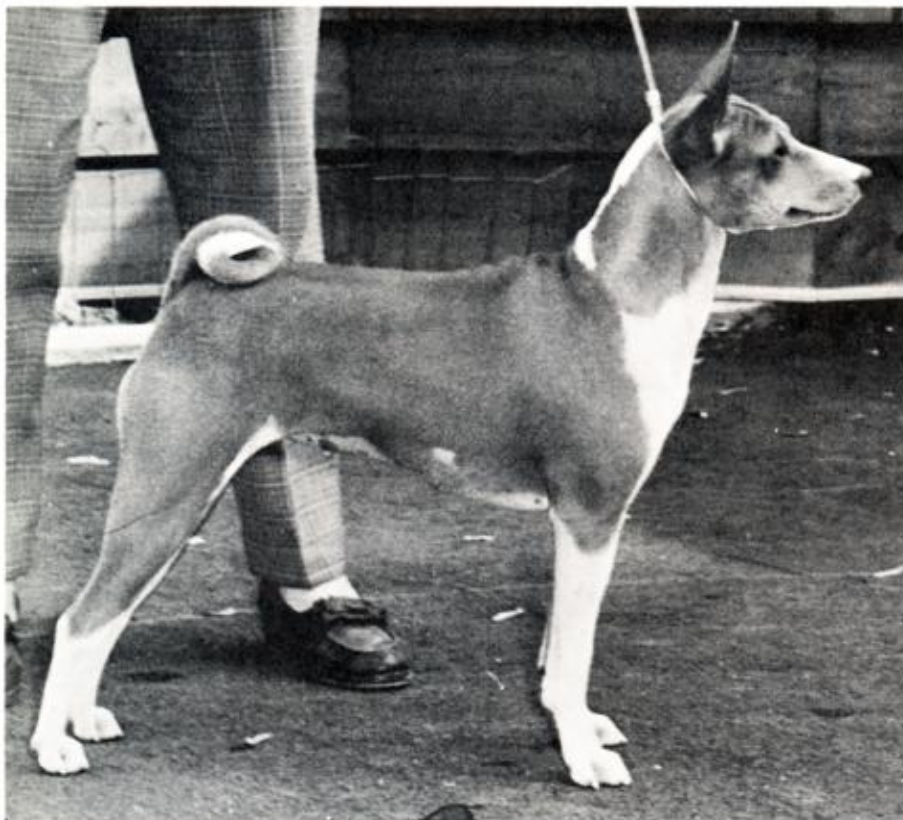
‘Mr. Haywood Hartley, who was very complimentary about the basenji entry, gave Dainty Dancer the Group and Mr. George Schroth picked her BIS over the Doberman Pinscher, a Cocker, a Scottie, a Miniature Poodle and a Toy Poodle.

‘Dainty looked the picture in the ring and seemed to know that she had made her first appearance in the show ring at the same show a year before and so was determined to take that show as a celebration. Mr. Schroth asked how old she was and when told that she was 20 months, he was surprised and said that she wouldn’t reach her prime until she was at least three.

‘This is, of course, Dainty’s biggest win as there was an entry in the neighborhood of 600 dogs.

‘Wish that I had a movie and sound track of Dainty winning. When the final moment came and the judge waved to the raised platform for her BIS presentation. Dainty jumped on the stand and threw back her head and gave vent to the most beautiful yodel of her career, much to the delight and amusement of the large audience.

A PLACE IN THE SUN



AM. & CAN. CH. DAINTY DANCER OF GLENAIRLEY

(December 12, 1956 - March 19, 1970)

Passed peacefully away - Regal as always

DAINTY was the first Basenji to win Best in Show on the North American continent. She gained her Canadian Championship with two Best in Show wins and three Group Firsts. Although shown only 24 times as a Special in 1958, she won 23 Bests of Breed with 18 Group Firsts, and placing in Group each of the other times. She went on to win 7 Bests in Show in Canada and the United States. In 1958 she was awarded the B. C. O. A. Best in Show Trophy, the Bettina Belmont Ward Hound Group Trophy, The Canadian Kennel Club Medal for Top Winning Canadian-bred dog over all breeds of dogs in all of Canada, and the Ken-L Ration Western Zone Award over all breeds.

More important than her show wins, DAINTY was our loving and constant companion and she is sadly missed by all of us. She sleeps undisturbed in her well-deserved place in the sun.

Merlea Basenjis

Mrs. Margaret Robertson
2826 Tudor Avenue, Victoria, British Columbia

