

Tom and Joyce Boardman.....the end of an era.

I first met Tom and Joyce Boardman when I was nominated as the Affenpinscher Representative for South Eastern Counties Toy Dog Society in the late 1980s. Joyce was the Breed Representatives for Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and Tom was Secretary. I was made most welcome as the “new boy” and was invited to their home in nearby Sunningdale by way of inducting me to the committee.

The Society staged 2 shows then and Joyce was responsible for the consistently large entry of Cavaliers which regularly exceeded 100 as a result of cajoling many of her friends to enter. Many of the breed judges selected by Joyce went on to award CCs in the breed, their numbers significantly boosted by the entry they attracted at our show.

Tom and Joyce’s home in Sunningdale was filled mostly with Cavaliers, bred by Joyce, and King Charles Spaniels which were Tom’s favourites. They were generous hosts and the highlight of the year was the legendary Garden Party they held on the afternoon of Toy Day at Windsor Championship Show which saw dozens of exhibitors and their dogs mingle.

Tom was a member of nearby Wentworth Golf Club and it was from there that they had a visit on their wedding day in 1953 by Bing Crosby and Bob Hope who “dropped in” to wish them well at their reception. Although both American, they could be mistaken for English society people. They had a diverse group of aristocratic and celebrity friends. Joyce was an elegant lady who dressed immaculately and always had perfectly coiffed hair and perfect nails. Tom was the epitome of a country squire.

I succeeded Tom as Secretary and he became President and Joyce Vice President. They were both active Officers and were very supportive during my tenure. Sadly age began to take its toll and Tom developed mild dementia and Joyce suffered increasingly from mobility issues. During a cruise on the Queen Mary 2, Tom sustained a fall on the gangway in Cape Town and was hospitalised for a time. He was medically repatriated and Joyce, naturally, accompanied him flying home First Class with British Airways.

Tom’s health deteriorated rapidly and he lived out his final years in a nursing home a short distance from their Sunningdale home. Joyce then became our President. She lived with a reduced number of dogs and still exhibited occasionally at a few shows. She took an active interest in our affairs and we exchanged doggy gossip whenever I dropped in to see her. She then took the decision to move into a retirement home 2 years ago and it was here that she resided until she passed away in April.

Stuart Band