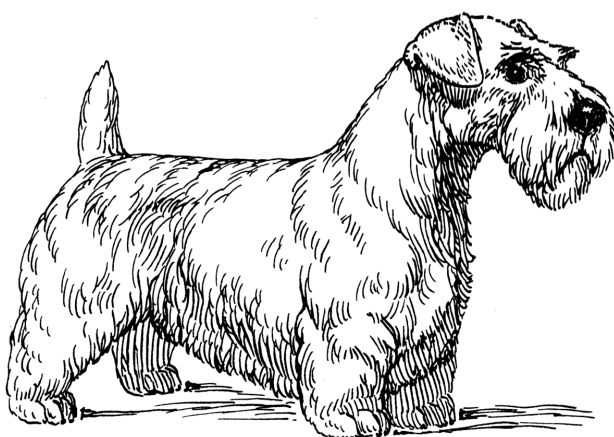


Dogs

Throughout our lives Eva and I have always had dogs. We had collies to work on the farm.

In about 1965 we looked after a dog for someone whilst they were on holiday. This dog was totally untrained. The owner used to take him to Ashdown Forest and just let him run for half an hour or so until he returned to the car. It was quite a big dog, a cross-breed collie.

The second day we had him he chased sheep and would not come back, and actually got a sheep down. The next day I took him out and fastened a long length of bailer twine to his collar and kept hold of the other end. When he ran off at speed to chase the sheep I called him, then pulled back hard on the string. He went over backwards and I wondered if he had broken his neck. He was okay and the next time I called him he came straight back. This dog was lucky because one night he went into the swimming pool and couldn't get back over the wall. William was in bed and rushed down in his pyjamas to rescue it.



A Sealyham Terrier

For one birthday I bought Eva a Sealyham¹ cross collie. It was stung by a wasp one day, and after that it always went mad about wasps.

We were then given a five month old collie called Nick. He had been reared in a shed with the rest of the litter, and fed mostly on whole rabbits which were thrown in. The rest

of the litter had an undershot jaw, what they called in the sheep

¹ Image from Wikipedia, donated by Pearson Scott Foresman



Eva as a child

trade 'a hog chop', and were difficult to sell. I don't know if the way he was reared made any difference, but this dog was amazingly fierce. Eva said how bad he was when I wasn't there. He never went for her but was protecting her and the house.

I was about five hundred yards away up the main road helping Miss Bourne when I heard this terrific commotion, with the dog sounding really fierce. I returned to the farm to find a man in a van out by the main road at the end of the drive. He had brought over a bag of turnip seed that I had ordered. This had a hole in it. On being asked why, the man said he went up the drive and as he got out the

dog went for him and bit the turnip seed bag by mistake. He hastily got back into the van.

We had fishermen at the farm and this dog would let them park by the drive and walk round the buildings to go to the ponds. Anyone else was prevented in no uncertain terms. The whole of his hackles stood up all over his body, and no way would he back off. We sometimes had gypsies calling on us trying to sell things. One day one came when I was in the drive. Nick was standing beside me. He said "If I were to touch you, that dog would go for me." I said "Why don't you try?" He replied that even for a hundred quid he wouldn't.

This dog was very clever, but I don't know how he worked out who could come and who couldn't. After we moved to Sedlescombe Nick soon got to know. There was no gate at the end of our drive but he never went on the road. No one, unless known to him, was allowed anywhere near the house. The postman came the first day

and introduced himself. The next day the dog went for him and we had to put a box down by the road.

Once when we went on holiday William looked after the farm for us. The farm was about two miles from the house so he went in my farm pick-up. William put the dog in but then the dog wouldn't let William get in. William had to push him out with a broom and leave him behind. Another time a friend of ours, David Shearer, looked after the farm for us. He took Nick up to the farm but when coming back at dinnertime, the dog wouldn't get in and stood there barking. David left him there and went back to the house. When he returned, about an hour later, he told Nick to get in, which Nick did with no more trouble.

We had a notice which said 'Dogs loose - stay in car, sound horn'. People still did this long after Nick was dead, and indeed after we got a more docile dog called Ben. It was a great deterrent!

