

CANINE CORNER

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In memoriam

It seemed almost fitting that early on the foggy Christchurch morning of 9 September, we heard the announcement of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The weather matched the mood of many who felt an attachment to Her Majesty for so many reasons.

I will remember the Queen because of her long association with and love for her dogs. She was widely regarded for her role in breeding Pembroke Welsh Corgis and in the accidental mating of one of her Corgis with her sister's Dachshund, creating the first 'Dorgi.'

She was an active dog breeder for her Corgi line for 14 generations. In 2012, as part of the opening ceremony for the London Olympic Games, three of her Corgis featured alongside Her Majesty and James Bond (Daniel Craig).

When she celebrated her 90th birthday, photographer Annie Leibovitz was called in to mark the occasion for *Vanity Fair* magazine; her dogs were part of those official photos.

Over the years of her reign, the Queen had been quoted as saying that her Corgis were family, receiving meals prepared by the palace chefs and receiving their own Christmas stockings each year.

As this issue goes to print, it has been reported that Prince Andrew will care for at least two of the remaining four of the Queen's dogs, since it was Andrew who gifted them to her.



One of my favourite stories about the Queen comes from Dr David Nott, a physician who has served on the front lines of many conflicts including in Syria. In his memoir *War Doctor*, he spoke of being invited to lunch with the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

When she asked about his time in Syria, he could feel the familiar effects of panic and PTSD rising to the surface, fearing that he would lose control in front of Her Majesty.

Sensing his struggle, the Queen opened a silver box on the table containing dog biscuits and together they fed biscuits to the Corgis who were sitting under the table.

From then on, the Queen talked with him about her dogs while Dr Nott petted the dogs until his "anxiety and stress drained away." The Queen said, "That's so much better than talking, isn't it?"

I am sure many dog lovers will raise a glass to Her Majesty, echoing the words of Paddington Bear at this year's Platinum Jubilee.

"Thank you Ma'am, for everything." 🐾

