

BEAGLES: DOGS AND BOATS – a brief memoir

By Tor Fosnæs



I've been a dogs' companion for most of my life, 5 animals over 60 years.

Dusty – a golden Cocker Spaniel, daffy, died young of distemper on Central Street in Corner Brook

Napoleon – small bitch, short black and white fur, had lots of pups, 16 years got cancer and the needle; her pups were much sought after and ended up going to homes all across the Wet Coast and up the Northern Peninsula; estimated that she bore near on to 100 puppies in 12 years. No pictures remain.

Lady – spayed, cross between an Alsatian watchdog and a small Beagle, aka Dumbest Dog Ever Born, from a neighbour on Eaststaff Steet, failed to run across a speeding dump truck on Route 10. Too dumb to photograph.

Arthur – not neutered, was Genevieve's dog, 10\$ in Buckmaster's Circle, a lot of poodle with beagle-like



markings, fur kept growing with little shedding, didn't like cold weather, water, or car washes. He terrorized beagle pens all over Mobile, successfully burrowed under the wire to get at bitches in heat, aka Arthur the Pendoggie, died old at 14, the last two years castrated, he could make me feel guilty even though I explained it was for health purposes. Arthur liked the camera, and when he saw it would always pose.

Annabelle – spayed, Genevieve gave her to me because she wanted another dog, I brought her up firmly, she



had a large vocabulary and vocalized, a really smart dog, could say her name, aka She Who Runs Away, ran the wilds of Mobile Bay until she lost a leg in a rabbit snare at 4.5 years old, three-legged, talking dog, died old at 14.

So, back to Lady. Dumbest Dog Ever Born. A walking stomach. She had many of the classic beagle traits to be found below, but really, really dumb. She would often run into things so intent on keeping her nose to the ground, or floor. Loved racing along behind the truck until her pads would blow out or she would stagger into a ditch of badly rancid, green, slimy, water to cool down. Charming.

Wasn't a lap dog, Had her own bed. Ate everything, Dead usually. Cat shit. Any shit found outdoors. Rotten preferably, Rotten stuff she'd eat and then roll in it. Made her happy, I guessed.

Anyway, once you've owned a dumb beagle you find other people who've made the same mistake. The poor creatures kept in cages year round, the Newfoundland *rabbit dog*, are a different topic. There are organizations that 'save' them and have them 'adopted' by the unsuspecting.

No, beagles I knew are the other ones. The pet beagle that found a dead deer carcass in the woods and ate until her stomach exploded. The beagle who couldn't resist the quarter of moose just hanging there, standing on his hind legs to get as far up the hinder as possible scarfing a good 10 or 12 pounds of rump roast, damn near died.

So, let's start at the very beginning – the beagle puppy, or sometimes, buppy. Iconic, appealing, entrancing, smell nice, those eyes. Unfortunately, at this stage it is impossible to gauge their smarts, the



dumb and the smart (if there are any) look the same.

They are virtually untrainable, except with food, the happy beagle owner must carry about four pounds of dog biscuits around per day to get any control at all. O, the dog show people can get their beagles to



look like this, but the average couple living in an apartment haven't the resources, and as hard as they try the dumber it grows.



See. Little or no self-respect, no pride, just dumb.

Beagles are good with kids and can tolerate a lot of ear pulling and finger poking, but they also learn to contribute cacophonously to the normal small child household. They bark at everything. Bay at the moon and their gods in the night.

Most are timid, I can't remember a beagle ever attacking anyone.

Where do they come from, everyone wants to know, and what are their characteristics, besides being dumb? Turning to the fount of modern knowledge, Wikipedia, where Beagle is treated lengthily.

Development of the modern breed

Reverend Phillip Honeywood established a beagle pack in Essex in the 1830s and it is believed that this pack formed the basis for the modern breed. Although details of the pack's lineage are not recorded, ... Honeywood's Beagles were small, standing at about 10 inches (25 cm) at the shoulder, and pure white according to John Mills (writing in *The Sportsman's Library* in 1845). Prince Albert and Lord Winterton also had Beagle packs around this time, ... , but Honeywood's pack was regarded as the finest of the three.

Sense of smell

Alongside the Bloodhound and Basset Hound, the beagle has one of the best developed senses of smell of any dog. In the 1950s, John Paul Scott and John Fuller began a 13-year study of canine behavior. As part of this research, they tested the scenting abilities of various breeds by putting a mouse in a one-acre field and timing how long it took the dogs to find it. The beagles found it in less than a minute while Fox Terriers took 15 minutes and Scottish Terriers failed to find it at all. The long ears and large lips of the beagle probably assist in trapping the scents close to the nose.

There are argument that their increased smell sense results in their overly large, domed heads, lots of sinus passages and olfactory glands.

Detection

Beagles have excellent noses; this dog is employed by the US



Customs and Border Protection Agency ... to detect food items in luggage After trialling several breeds, beagles were chosen because they are relatively small and unthreatening to people who are uncomfortable around dogs, easy to care for, intelligent and work well for rewards.

Testing

Beagles are the dog breed most often used in animal testing, due to their size and passive nature. In the United States, as many as 65,000 beagles are used every year for medical, cosmetic, beauty, and other chemical tests. They are purpose bred and live their lives in cages undergoing experiments. The Rescue + Freedom Project (formerly Beagle Freedom Project) has successfully advocated for beagles to be released from labs. This organisation has freed hundreds of animals.

Now there is something to ponder, caged like rabbit dogs and experimented on. 'Hundreds' rescued out of 65,00. Hmmm. So what is the ratio of caged (hunting dogs and test subjects) to pets? Research for another day, perhaps.

Another interesting thing to note is the 'pack', seems they like to be in a pack, otherwise they would have to have individual personalities, which we know they are too dumb to have.

Darwin's Beagle

Well. It wasn't *his* Beagle, rather he was the HMS Beagle's charter scientist. Wikipedia, again.

HMS Beagle was a Cherokee-class 10-gun brig-sloop of the Royal Navy, one of more than 100 ships of this class. The vessel, ... , was launched on 11 May 1820 from the Woolwich Dockyard on the River Thames.

Beagle was a breed name before Honeywood's 1830's modern development of the breed. Beagle was one of a number of animal breed names given to 100 vessels of her type. Popular, affordable craft, multi-purpose, most had a life span of about 40 to 60 years in various services, military and civil.

Other animal names of Cherokee Class HMS vessels, from Wikipedia:

Badger, Opossum, Wild Boar, Beaver, Chameleon, Beagle, Weazle, Ferret, Reindeer, Lynx; and birds; Goldfinch, Woodlark, Shearwater, Redpole, Drake, Bustard, Cygnet, Falcon, Partridge, Plover, Kingfisher, Lapwing, Sheldrake, Skylark, Curlew, Buzzard.

There was a Scorpion, a Griffon, a Sphinx and some 70 others.

Final years

In 1845, HMS Beagle was refitted as a static coastguard watch vessel, renamed *Southend W.V.No. 7*. She was transferred to HM Customs and Excise to control smuggling on the Essex coast in the navigable waterways beyond the north bank of the Thames Estuary. She was moored mid-river in the River Roach which forms part of an extensive maze of waterways and marshes known as The River Crouch and River Roach Tidal River System, In 1851, oyster companies and traders who cultivated and harvested the "Walflete" or "Walfleet" oyster *Ostrea edulis*, petitioned for the Customs and Excise watch vessel ... to be removed as she was obstructing the river and its oyster-beds. ... In 1870, she was sold to "Messrs Murray and Trainer" to be broken up.

Why the British Navy would use the name Cherokee, an American word, is not clear. For most of the 18th century Cherokee-English/Scottish/Irish alliances were common. The Cherokee Class designer, Sir Henry Peake had no obvious American connections.

The United States Navy had successful multi-purpose tugboats built from 1940 to 1945, originally called Navaho Class but later changed to Cherokee Class. They all had North American tribal names. The last, USN Seneca, was sunk as a target in 2003.



Nice tugs, the first diesel-electric powered vessels.