

NEWS



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ers might find themselves in 'circumstances' making it difficult to consult a vet. The newspaper also carries adverts for training treadmills.

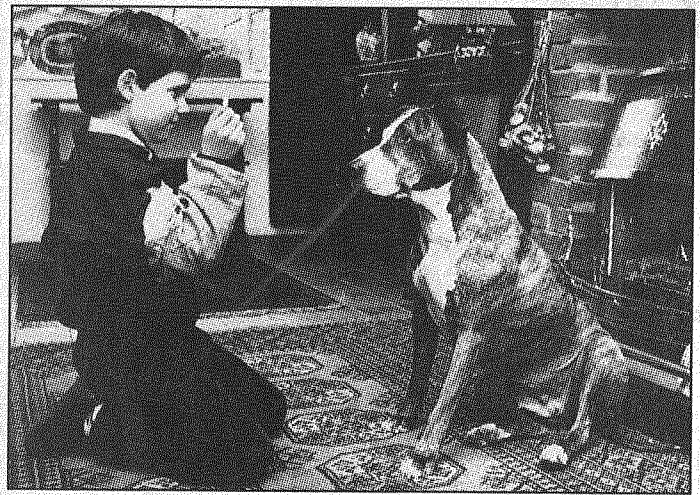
The same edition of *Pit Bull News* carried a report of a fight — Fagin's Beau Belle v. Meg: 'Meg appeared stronger and was top dog from the start — but, by round 15, things had evened out.' By round 19 Meg was counted out — pit bull fighters' jargon for dead.

The editor Joe Graham denies any involvement in fighting. 'The vast majority of pit bulls are pets — but of

course people want something that will guard the house. These animals are gentle and sweet. Owners are always complaining to me that they "are too soft". I have two and they sleep in my bedroom.'

Mr Graham refused to supply *The Observer* with the latest copy of his newspaper. Ed Reid, editor of the *Sporting Dog Periodical*, did not return our telephone calls.

The largest concentration of 'sporting' dogs is in the white working class areas of east and north London. Owners are usually young men with short hair-



Best friend?: Graham's seven-year-old son with Tiger.

P.B.N. Dog of the Year 1986 and first official Champion. Four outings - four wins. Twice approaching the 3 hour mark. "Max" has good air - durability and the WILL TO WIN. With 7 hours 45 minutes contract time to his credit "Max" has earned his reputation the hard way and is now enjoying a well deserved retirement.

Put to the right bitches, his offspring must stand a good chance.

ENQUIRIES PLEASE RING: 01-832-1234

Secret trade: Ad for a fighting dog in *Pit Bull News*.

cuts, tattoos and a well developed sense of 'patriotism'. Nigel Morris, a vet in Chalk Farm, north London, with over 100 pit bulls on his books, describes them as 'the essential uniform of the underclass'.

A common sight in the parks of east London is old tyres suspended from trees. Pit bull terriers can be seen hanging from them by their teeth — an exercise to increase their biting power to levels beyond 1,000 lbs per square inch.

The most gruesome training device is the treadmill, known as the catmill in the US. The machine is advertised in the magazines and manuals for them are easily obtained. On Friday, *The Observer*, bought a book with diagrams and instructions on use of the catmill for £25. The author, Richard Stratton, tells his readers: 'If you are going to match your dog, it is your responsibility to learn something about caring for him after battle . . . learn all you can about caring for a battle-sick dog.'

Graham Payne, a Crufts champion breeder of bulldogs,

sells the book from his shop, Stockbull, in London's Old Kent Road.

Mr Payne denies that fights take place in London. 'I have thousands of customers and they are not into fighting. Drug dealers use these dogs but there are always a handful of extremists. There are millions of nutters in this country but you can't penalise the rest for their behaviour. You would have to ban everything.

'So people buy books on fighting, but that's because they are interested in the history of the dog. That's what all human history books are about — wars. It's all hysteria about the pit bulls — they are good pets. The owners can't walk down the street any more without getting verbal abuse. It's intimidation.'

■ On Friday seven policemen were unable to contain a stray pit bull terrier in north London. The dog attacked Leon Teage, himself a pit bull owner. Mr Teage said: 'The police had no idea what to do, they were scared. If I hadn't been there a child would have been killed.' The dog was destroyed.