



Dr. Mugford and pit bull patient, a former fighting dog he is battling to rehabilitate. Photograph by David Mansell

first lesson was to get him to other dogs on the farm, keeping him under control with a leash and halter. As soon as he was off-leash, Dr. Mugford's red setter, the dog was pushed to the ground while the whistle was set. The reaction was an anxious look of terror.

The second dog he was brought to, a lurcher, was pushed to the ground by the third dog, which learned his lesson.

Dr. Mugford said: 'By forcing the dog to the ground I am teaching him that it is not so potent that physical

punishment. All the evidence is that pain exacerbates aggression.'

After learning to behave himself with the dogs, Flint met the other animals on the farm, including an African Ebu cow, a herd of sheep and Albert, a turkey who is more than a match for most dogs. Albert pecked Flint on the nose.

Others forms of canine aggression are caused by brain disorders or disease which makes the animal bad-tempered.

Statistically the most likely breed to bite according to Dr. Mugford's records is the cocker spaniel, more predict-

ably followed by the German Shepherd dog. Occasionally Dr. Mugford will come across a dog, most frequently fight-trained bull terriers, for which the only answer is to have them put down. But the majority respond to treatment once the underlying cause of its aggression is understood.

He said: 'Banning certain breeds because they're supposedly dangerous is not the answer and would lead to a lot of bizarre anomalies. Some of the worst bites I've seen were inflicted by a chihuahua and it would probably also mean banning cocker spaniels.'

HANDLING THE WILD ONES

■ **DOMINANT DOGS.** Mainly males who try to dominate their household as they would the pack in the wild. Castration and strict handling are a large part of the solution.

■ **TERRITORIAL DOGS.** Will attack visitors and other animals that intrude on their territory. Be cool and off-hand — the more affectionate you are, the more such dogs will protect their territory. Exercise the dog frequently in public areas and ensure that many different people handle the puppy from an early stage.

■ **DESTRUCTIVE DOGS.** Anxiety of separation from the owner often expressed by chewing binges. Be off-hand when leaving the dog, thus reducing the contrast between your presence and absence.

■ **INTER-DOG AGGRESSION.** Usually by males, on other dogs. Make sure the dog has continuous and frequent contact with other dogs from an early age. Walk the dog on a lead or use a muzzle if the dog is off-lead.

■ **FIGHTING DOGS.** Examples include pit bulls selected for their aggressive natures and trained to kill. Use a lead, or muzzle if off the lead. Fit a head collar, to ensure accurate head control.