

CHAMPION TALKER

“SPARKIE” WINS B.B.C. TALKING-BUDGIE CONTEST

Three budgerigars, who “talked” their way into winning the B.B.C.’s “Home for the Day” cage word contest, were taken by their owners to the B.B.C. Press Office in Cavendish Place, London, on July 25, to receive suitably-inscribed cups.

The competition, organised by Mr. Philip Marsden, attracted an entry of 2,768 birds within a few days of being opened on May 11.

Not all the birds entered by their owners spoke in English. There were performers in German, French, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish, Welsh, Gaelic and Greek.

150 Phrases

Centre of attraction at the ceremony was 3½-years-old “Sparkie”, the talking wonder owned by Mrs. Mattie L. Williams, of 34 Granville Drive, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He has a repertoire of more than 150 phrases and eight complete nursery rhymes.

Mrs. Williams was presented with the prizewinner’s cup by Miss Marjorie Anderson, compere of the “Home for the Day” programme.

The finalists were given four to six weeks in which to learn the phrase, “Home for the Day”.

Mrs. Williams said “Sparkie” had more trouble in mastering this phrase than many others he says.

The second place winner was “Billie”, the five-year-old pet of Mrs. A. Squire, of 7 Craven Avenue, Ealing, W.5.

Mrs. Squire said she spends about an hour each day teaching “Billie” new phrases. He can recite ten complete nursery rhymes and more than 130 phrases.

An equally versatile talker, and the only one of the finalists to have taken part in a competition before, was third place winner, “Joey”, the five-year-old pet of Miss Mary Wallace, of 62 Haugh Road, Glasgow, C.3.

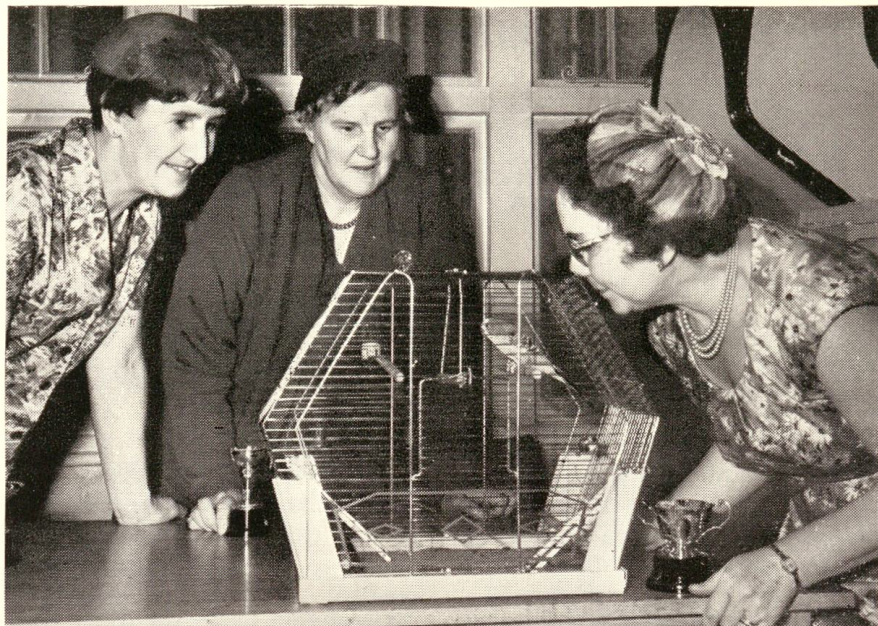
Six Contests

Miss Wallace said that “Joey” can sing, recite nursery rhymes and rattle off more than 150 phrases—“in a Scottish accent”. His prowess as a talker has won him six contests and a television appearance.

Bought in a Glasgow pet shop, “Joey” is Miss Wallace’s only companion.

After the presentations, recordings of the birds, heard by listeners to the “Home for the Day” programme on Sunday, July 27, were played.

Present at the ceremony were the three judges, Miss Jean Metcalfe, Mr. W. J. Bourne and Mr. Marsden.



Centre of attraction is “Sparkie”, winner of the “Home for the Day” cage word contest. Left to right are Mrs. A. Squire, owner of runner-up, “Billie”, Miss Mary Wallace, whose pet, “Joey”, was third, and Mrs. Mattie Williams, owner of the champion.

FISH IN PRISON

A fish tank is being installed at Wakefield Prison, Yorkshire. It will have goldfish at first but is being fitted with heating equipment so that it can take tropical fish.

BUDGIES CLEARED

Professor George Dick has quashed rumours that budgerigars can transmit polio. He told the British Medical Association he found it impossible to infect budgies with any virus strain.

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