

When pack mentality takes control, dogs revert to the wild: you can't control them

The killing of a woman by the pets she was walking in Surrey last week is likely to have stemmed from a "fog of aggression"

Colin Tennant

There are hundreds of cases a week in Britain of dog attacks involving people walking dogs.

I have seen five incidents simply while walking my own dog in the past 18 months. I sometimes see a man who walks a pack of five or six huskies over which he has no control. They are all on straps or leads and when he sees you, he

goes into full panic and dives into the trees until you go past.

If they got off their leads they would seriously injure me or my dog. All dogs react to circumstances and that is natural. It is not bad or good, just the way they are.

When you have a high-aggression state, when a dog attacks another dog, you have stimulation and tension, which produces masses of adrenaline.

Once an attack starts, if there are several dogs present, the others might start to join in and you then get into what we call a "fog of aggression".

This can often lead to redirected aggression from the animals, so when one or both the walkers put their hand down to protect their dog – which they have done in all the dog-bite cases I have

dealt with in court – the human gets bitten.

Naturally, if you get a set of teeth and jaws into your hand, arm or leg, that produces a scream or shout, creating yet more panic and tension.

Humans in every court case I have seen screamed and shouted with pain, trying to get the dogs off, which adds to the cacophony – and that can be very dangerous.

The dogs may start redirecting their aggression and bite other dogs, even from within the same group.

This can stimulate inter-pack behaviour, especially within a familiar group, and if they decide that one dog is an outsider, they may all set upon it. It could be one dog that does all the damage or it could be a few, but it can

quickly get out of control. Once they get into a pack mentality, you lose most of the control – unless you are a highly skilled trainer, which most people are not.

In this pack mentality, dogs revert to type and that is when you see they are still wild animals. Domestication does not mean they are not wild. It means only that we have taken away the edges.

They can bite anyone, even someone trying to help, and potentially may decide to target a group leader.

I would compare it to a pub when there is a fight. You might grab your friend who is in the middle of the fight by the shoulder to pull him out, and he might turn around and hit you. It is because in that instance of adrenaline and rage, they simply lash out.

They do not know it is you. That is what is happening in a dog pack. In this extremely energised melee, they lash out.

Another example is a police dog line at a football match. You would not think they will bite the police dog next to them when that dog has not done anything, but they sometimes do. It happens when tension is building up from an aggressive set of fans; the police dogs are not spaced far enough apart and, in their frustration, barking on their leads at these fans (which they have been trained to bite at some point), they will often redirect and bite the nearest dog or dog handler.

Lockdown has not helped. It led to a lack of dog/person socialisation which damages an animal's temperament and

may lead to more fear and aggression. Unless dog walkers and owners are highly trained, which most will not be, walking more than four dogs at one time is not recommended. We always say it depends on the size of the dogs and the breed. What people decide they can manage is amazing. I have heard of people walking 20 at a time.

The rule I have is you can walk only the number of dogs you can physically control in an emergency. In my view, the maximum generally is two.

Colin Tennant is a former police officer, director of the Cambridge Institute of Dog Behaviour and Training and chairman of the Canine and Feline Behaviour Association. He has trained and assessed more than 25,000 dogs

Missing aristocrat went from stately home to East End terrace



Constance Marten and Mark Gordon, below, have been missing for ten days. She grew up in Crichel House in Dorset, where the 1996 adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* was filmed

Constance Marten left a burning car on a motorway ten days ago with her baby and partner. Her grandmother was a friend of Princess Margaret and she once appeared as an It girl in *Tatler*

Hannah Al-Othman and Megan Agnew

Constance Marten's life started in the sweeping corridors, drawing rooms and 5,000-acre parkland of Crichel House, Dorset. The daughter of a landed family with links to the royals, she had a talent for acting, a flair for languages and, it appeared, a glittering future ahead of her. But she turned her back on champagne parties and holidays at ski resorts, and is now being sought by police, along with Mark Gordon, a man 13 years her senior.

In recent years, the couple had moved between terraced homes and rundown flats in the satellite boroughs of London, living reclusively, rarely seen by neighbours and repeatedly evicted.

On the evening of January 5, they left the M61 in Greater Manchester on foot, a newborn baby in Marten's arms. Behind them, abandoned on the hard shoulder, was their burning car, which they had bought only six days before.

They made their way south, paying for taxis in cash, using fake names in hotels. Last Saturday at 9am, they were seen near Harwich port, Essex. In CCTV footage released by police, Marten seemed to be carrying the baby under a red shawl. She was then spotted a number of times 20 miles away in Colchester, and police have since checked every hotel and B&B.

Officers believe the family took a 70-mile taxi to East Ham Tube station in Newham, east London, where they were captured on CCTV between 11.45am and 12.30pm. They have not been seen since.

The couple are believed to have access to significant means thanks to Marten's family wealth. Police appealed for them to come forward so mother and baby can be checked by doctors.

Constance Dorothea Marten was born in 1987 to one of England's most prominent aristocratic families. She and her brothers, Maximilian, 34, and Tobias, 31,

grew up at Crichel House, the family seat where Gwyneth Paltrow's 1996 *Emma* was filmed. Crichel is an 18th-century Georgian house in Dorset, with 50 cottages, a chapel, an ornamental lake and a grand "south façade" with 28 windows.

Marten's paternal grandmother, Mary Anna Marten, was goddaughter to the late Queen Mother, and a playmate of Princess Margaret, while her great-grandfather was Captain Napier Sturt, the third and final Baron Alington.

Constance's mother, Virginie De Selliers, 63, is a psychotherapist. Her father, Napier Marten, a former page to Queen Elizabeth, was heir to the family's £115 million fortune. His sister, Charlotte, married Oswald Alexander Mosley, son of the leader of the British Union of Fascists and Diana Mitford.

In 1996, Napier had an awakening. A voice told him to leave his inheritance and fly to Australia. He shaved his head, joined a group of indigenous people and had an out-of-body experience.

Although he eventually returned to the UK, he passed the estate prematurely to Maximilian. In 2010, the family sold some of the contents of the house in an auction reported to have raised £12.5 million, and in 2013, they sold the house and its land to an American financier for an unknown price. It was originally put on the market for £100 million.

On her Facebook page, Marten, known to friends as "Toots", reminisced about "naked picnics, siestas amid [hay bales], and tractor scoops" at her childhood home. She studied at St Mary's Shaftesbury, an independent Roman Catholic boarding school for girls, which counts the author Sophie Kinsella and film director Martha Fiennes, sister of actor Ralph, among its alumnae. The school, which closed in 2020, charged boarders fees of more than £30,000.

In 2008, Marten went to Leeds University to do a degree in Arabic and Middle

Eastern studies, spending a year in Cairo and graduating with a 2:1. While a student, she appeared on *Tatler's* "Babe of the Month" page, the magazine's directory of well-heeled It girls. In it, she said she loved cider, describing it as "one of my five-a-day". Her future plans involved getting a tortoise tattooed on her foot.

She lived freely and adventurously, sharing updates of her travels around the world on social media. She spent time volunteering at a football project with street children in Nepal, and was in Tahrir Square during the 2011 Egyptian uprising. She enjoyed summers in the Swiss Alps, describing her favourite place in the world as the top of the Matterhorn.

After university, she made London her home, working as a researcher with the English arm of the Arabic television network Al Jazeera. She went on to study for an NCTJ qualification in journalism, winning competitions for her photography.

Soon after completing her journalism studies, Marten enrolled in an acting course at East 15 drama school in Essex. Her course, according to a fellow classmate, was paid for by a trust fund.

"She was just beautiful, full of life, full of kindness ... and she was very, very talented," the classmate said. But Marten changed, her friend said, and eventually dropped out in 2016. Her course mate said that while they were studying together, Marten was in an erratic relationship with a man they had never met.

Around 2016, Marten started living with Mark Gordon in Ilford, east London. Born in Birmingham, Gordon moved with his mother and half-siblings to Florida when he was young, moving back to the UK around 2010, to the outskirts of north London.

It is unclear exactly when and how Marten and Gordon first met, but by 2016 they had set up home together. It is believed she was estranged from her family as a result of the relationship, though



she continued to have access to money from a multimillion-pound trust fund at C Hoare & Co, the UK's oldest private bank.

In Ilford, the couple lived in a small terraced house. They were "mysterious", said a neighbour, and kept to themselves.

They were evicted from the Ilford house. By August 2020, they were living on the Coldharbour Estate, southeast London. Once again, they rarely engaged with others in the estate, although shouting was sometimes heard.

Neighbours said they thought Gordon did not work, staying in the house all day, while Marten had odd jobs. It is believed the tenancy agreement was in her name. One neighbour said it looked as if they might have been living between two places, regularly returning with lots of bags after periods away. They were not paying rent.

After a hearing in court, they were evicted in August 2022, reportedly leaving thousands of pounds worth of dam-

age, with sightings of a partially collapsed ceiling and smoke damage.

What the couple did next is unknown – until January 5, when they broke down near junction 4 of the M61. The next day, Greater Manchester Police issued a plea for them to return, saying evidence suggested Marten had "recently given birth and neither her nor the baby have been assessed by medical professionals".

Last week Detective Chief Inspector Rob Huddleston, of Essex police, said: "We do not wish to impose ourselves for any reason other than to make sure the baby is alive and well." The inquiry is now being handed by the Met.

Marten is not believed to have had any contact with her family since she disappeared but a police source said they had concerns that, with access to significant financial resources, she and Gordon could continue to evade them indefinitely.

Additional reporting by Simon Trump and David Byers

Lumley's fab music podcast with maestro husband examines life, marriage and Mozart

Liam Kelly
Arts Correspondent

They have been married for almost 40 years, but there are questions that Dame Joanna Lumley still wants to ask her husband, the composer and conductor Stephen Barlow.

The 76-year-old star of *Absolutely Fabulous* and Barlow, 68, share a passion for classical music but she said they "hardly ever have the luxury of having time just to sit and talk about it" – until now. The couple are starting a podcast, *Joanna & the Maestro*, on Tuesday, in which they will discuss Richard Wagner's *Die Rheingold*, the music that shaped their childhoods, their long and happy marriage and much else.

They recorded the podcast in the music room at the end of their garden in Stockwell, south London, usually with a packet of cigarettes to hand. Each of the episodes is unplanned and unstructured, save for coming up with a title, such as "Mozart and Beethoven". During recording, Barlow occasionally plays the Steinway piano that Lumley bought as an engagement present.

While she admits the podcast's name gives her more prominence than her husband, it is "just in case this maestro says I've had enough of it, and I can just get another".

The pair met when she was 31 and he was 23, at a mutual friend's wedding in Dawlish,

Devon, where he was playing the organ. Although they both had other partners – Lumley has a son, Jamie, 55, with the photographer Michael Claydon – she said that seeing Barlow was "like being hit by a lightning bolt". It took about eight more years for them to get together, when they were both single and he put a note through her door. They married in 1986.

"We spend long chunks of our lives having to be apart because of work, and I think that might be quite healthy," Lumley said. "People are individuals even when you're married and I think it doesn't hurt to be apart from each other sometimes."

Lumley was brought up listening to classical music, mostly Mozart and



Stephen Barlow and Dame Joanna Lumley record the podcast in the music room of their south London home

Beethoven, although she said: "I obviously hadn't got anything like [Barlow's] breadth of knowledge." Barlow said he listened to a lot of contemporary classical music that Lumley disliked, and can "often feel [her] walking into the room [it's playing in] and walking out again".

The couple fear for the accessibility of classical music, and criticised ministers for making a push for children to learn sciences, with maths being mooted as an obligatory A-level subject, while the arts are neglected. Lumley said: "The things that were taken for granted when I was younger seem to have disappeared from the school curriculum", such as singing and music lessons.

She is concerned that the lack of visibility of the arts on the school curriculum makes them more "elitist". Barlow said it was "disastrous".

Lumley added: "They keep saying 'maths, maths, maths', but don't understand that most people are motivated by, elevated by or comforted by anything to do with the arts. We watch arts on television, we go to the movies, we are tremendously influenced by fashion, the visual arts, creative arts, music. So why strip this out of schools? ... It's nobody's fault that you don't have classical music at home, but it seems all wrong that [for] enormous sections of society now it's a world of mystery, and therefore elitism, and therefore snobbery, and

therefore not for you. And that breaks my heart."

Lumley said she hoped the podcast would help people "feel at ease with asking questions", such as why conductors choose a certain tempo for a piece of music or why different voices appeal to listeners, "without it being preachy".

Despite long illustrious careers in the arts, the couple have seldom worked together. Their most recent collaboration was in 2005, when Barlow composed the opera *Rainbow Bear*, with Lumley serving as narrator. Even playing music together at home can be a cause for concern. "One of my big dreams is having to turn the pages when Stevie is playing the piano," said Lumley.