

Watchdog!

WALLINGFORD DOG TRAINING CLUB

January 2007

From the Chair

I hope you like the new-look newsletter. The old format was starting to look a bit jaded and our 30th anniversary year seemed like a good time to revamp the style. If you have any ideas on what you would like the club to do to celebrate 30 years, do tell a committee member. Our show in April has a special quiz with a good prize, and the committee is considering a party.

Yet again, Wallingford Dog Training Club has had a great year. The Open Agility Show kept a core of members very busy for a few weeks, and almost all the members busy for 2 or 3 days. And we made a modest profit, which we immediately spent on some new agility equipment! A few agility members have been exceptionally successful – probably the most successful being Sammie and her collie Dylon. There have been numerous other successes, including the Wallingford mini team (Robert with Becky, Pam with Rowan, Luce with Willow and Jose with Honey) coming second at Wye Valley, and at the same show Chris & Fly won out of Starters (1st in

jumping and 2nd in agility). Chris has also obtained his agility warrant for Fly this year. John & Quest had a great weekend at Golden Valley, with a 1st in Novice Jumping and 10th in NA, and Martha & Tyler won out of Starters with a win at Vyne show in May. Our final winning out certificate goes to Louise who won out of Starters with Spangle at Chart-Orchard show in September.

We have had several flyball reports from Jean – keen to spread the word of the club's flyball successes. Sadly there has not been a newsletter for a year, so Jean resorted to posting her reports on the agility noticeboard for everyone to see. The latest report appears in this newsletter, the culmination of a great year for the flyball team.

Looking ahead – we aim to produce the newsletter every 2 months, and keep abreast of news. Publications are planned for February/March, April/May, June/July, August/September, October/November and the last one to cover December/January. It goes without saying to send in your stories, photographs, anecdotes, and news.

Ian Hutchinson

News in brief

New Agility Grades

This year there is a big change in the agility grade structure. Out go the names we know and love – elementary, starter, novice, senior etc, and in comes a logical, (but rather boring) graded system. See page 3 for information.

Extra Agility Training

We have booked 2 days of extra agility training with external trainers. We will be putting handlers of a similar level / sizes together, and keeping the numbers in each group fairly small. This is an excellent way to kick-start the new year's training. See page 2 for details.

WDTC
Open
Agility
Show

Sat 21 April
and
Sun 22 April

Newbury
Showground



New Faces at Agility

There has been a long succession of young furry bundles turning up at agility for some important socialisation training. They will be making an appearance at agility training during the year. For the first time for quite a while, we've had room to take on new members at agility. We welcome: Joanna & Bramble, Philip & Molly, Rosie (Pete's grand daughter) & Tiggy, Shawn & Phoebe, Sue & Dash and Tanya & Scooby. Existing member Sarah is bringing along her young cocker Morgana.





Extra Agility Training

We have booked 2 days of extra agility training with external trainers. We will be putting handlers of a similar level / sizes together, and keeping the numbers in each group fairly small. This is an excellent way to kick-start the new year's training.

On Saturday 3rd February Anthony Clarke will lead us through some concentrated training. Anthony is the top junior handler in the Country. He has won the YKC Agility Dog Of The Year at Crufts for the last 2 years and has recently won into Advanced with Magic, his BSD X Collie. Magic has also won the Junior Final at Dogs in Need and The Agility Voice Junior Final for the past 2 years. Anthony won the Junior Points

Leagues in the Agility Eye and Voice for the last 2 years. Anthony has a young BC called Scrum who won into Senior in her first season competing and has 1 win towards Advanced. Anthony is not only a good handler, he's a first class trainer, too. Checkout his website for more information about Anthony and his dogs:

<http://acagility.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/>

On Saturday 24th March Nancy Hudson will come to Blewbury to give members extra training before the season starts. She is an advanced handler, an agility judge and an excellent trainer. More about Nancy later.

We will keep the cost of these days as low as possible. If you're interested in either or both training days, please add your name to the appropriate list on the notice board.

Training Dates

Sat 3 Feb
Anthony
Clarke

Sat 24 March
Nancy
Hudson

Members corner

Over the Rainbow Bridge

Sadly some members said a final goodbye to their four legged friends this year. Jacky's black standard poodle Inky made that final trip over the rainbow bridge at the beginning of May, just a month short of her 12th birthday.

Kath lost Kimba in August with bone cancer in the shoulder.

The saddest farewell was said by Louise who lost her young dog Lennox. He had been at the vets for a number of days fighting a lung problem. He seemed to be recuperating when he suddenly collapsed and died – a real shock for Louise and Gary.

It's always devastating to lose one of our best friends – but more poignant with a young dog.

"Farwell to you! But not farwell to all my fondest thoughts of you. Within my heart they still shall dwell and they shall cheer and comfort me."

Anne Bronte



It is not easy being the team captain, trying to choose a team who were all on form, and worked well together. In April last year, I had no such problem as there were only four of us with small dogs available to run in a team at Wye Valley. I knew that each of us were able to have a clear round, but as team captain, I elected to go last. Robert and Becky were first to run - clear round. They were followed by Luce and Willow, then Pam and Rowan - two more clears. No pressure!! I ran last with Honey - and thankfully, also got a clear round (pewh!). this gave us a second place (from 46 teams), and very proud of this success we all were.

Jose Rostagni



Flyball news

Our luck has continued through until the end of the year, with considerable success in the four tournaments we have entered since August.

Lu arranged 2 demonstrations for us to show off the flyball skills of our dogs to the public. The first was in July at Kidmore End school fete on a lovely hot day and the second in late August at Binfield Dog & Flower show. These proved popular with those who participated and also with the spectators. Such demos allow us to publicise flyball and show what pet dogs are capable of achieving, as well as providing some extra training.

The Knights September tournament was at the Paws in the Park event at Hop Farm near Maidstone, running in Div 3 of 5. We had 6 races, but fortunately with 5 dogs (Flicker, Tonto, Bronwen, Jasmine and Millie), we had some flexibility. We won 4 races but our fastest time was only 21.33, due to the heat, so we came 3rd overall. We also enjoyed looking round the event, where many dog activities were being demonstrated. Some of our dogs also entered Cleverdogs, Agility and Gundog competitions and we gained at least one place in these.

In October 4 dogs (Flicker, Tonto, Jasmine and Millie) travelled to the Wolf Pack tournament at Portway. The Knights were the bottom seed in Div 3 of 7, a bit above our usual level. But we set off in optimistic mood and won our first race in 4 legs. We lost the next 2 races but won the last two, making us equal 2nd with 2 other teams. Sadly we lost to both of them in the run-offs and ended up 4th with a best time of 20.68 - an excellent achievement!

A week later The Knights ran at Maidstone, where Flicker and Millie were joined by Jade and Johnnie - Bronwen was due to come but woke up ill on the morning! It was Johnnie's first indoor tournament and he found the noise and proximity of the spectators took some getting used to. We were in Div 3 of 4 and managed to win 3 races to get 3rd overall in a best time of 21.24 - very creditable with 2 inexperienced dogs.

The Knights last tournament of the year was also at Maidstone, with Tonto joining Flicker, Millie, Jade and Johnnie. Bronwen was again scheduled to come, but her handler, Jo, sprained her ankle the previous evening so had to pull out - again!. We ran in Div 3 of 5 but were not too successful, winning only one of five - too many mistakes! But we broke 20 secs for the first time with a run of 19.99secs, beating our previous fastest time. We also ran a full-height team for the first time, with jumps at 14" rather than 10", with Flicker as height dog, and the times were competitive. We ended the day only 5th, but with the fastest time in the division!

We also added to the BFA awards won by individual dogs. Johnnie got Flyball Dog (200 points) in the October Maidstone and Jasmine gained Flyball Dog Intermediate (1000 points) at Paws in the Park. Millie and Tonto gained Flyball Dog Graduate (3000 Points) at Portway and at Maidstone in November Flicker was the first dog running for The Knights to gain Flyball Dog Advanced (5000 points) also in November. We are always indebted to Kate, who has attended every tournament this year and loaded the box faultlessly. Well done, everyone!

2006 has proved our best year yet, but what will 2007 offer? I hope to be able to run 2 teams sometimes. At present, we have 3 dogs in training, Jake, Rico and Bree, who are showing promise and may be ready for competition within the next few months, together with Sir Willow and Katie. We are going to acquire a mascot, Gill's tiny Jack Russell, called Flyball, to accompany the team sometimes. We have also purchased a new Flyball box, more like our present best box. The oldest one will be surplus to requirements and offered for purchase to members and/or other clubs.

I wish everyone an enjoyable and successful New Year running flyball in 2007.

Jean Hatchard, Flyball rep.

New Agility Grades

This year there is a big change in the agility grade structure. Out go the names we know and love – elementary, starter, novice, senior etc, and in comes a logical, (but rather boring) graded system. Below is a basic summary of the new system.

New handlers with new dogs start in **Grade 1** (unless your dog is owned by someone who has competed at Kennel Club shows and has already won out of elementary or starters).

Handlers currently competing go into the grade equivalent (see below) with Novice dogs having three grades.

If you were in elementary last year (ie, you haven't ever had a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place at a Kennel Club licensed open agility show) you will be in **Grade 1**.

If you ended 2006 as a starter you will be **Grade 2**.

A senior handler will be in **Grade 6** and advanced handlers in **Grade 7**.

Grades 3, 4 and 5 cover the current novice dogs. Existing novice dogs who have not had a top 10 place in Novice during 2006 will be in **Grade 3**, dogs which have not been placed 6th to 10th in 2006 will be in **Grade 4** and if your novice dog has gained a top 5 place in 2006 you will be in **Grade 5**.

You will only be able to enter classes that include the grade you're in. So, for example, if you're new to agility competitions and have never had a place 3 or above at a KC registered show, you will be Grade 1. You will be able to enter any class including Grade 1. These might include 'Grade 1 jumping' (where you will be competing only against other Grade 1 dogs) or Combined Grades 1-3 Agility (where you will be competing against other dogs at grades 1, 2 and 3).

This is not the whole story (for example, there are graded combined classes).

There is a good diagram on the noticeboard, and good summary that will be available at Blewbury to help you determine the grade you're in, but if you're still unsure, ask your trainer.

Remember: all dogs now need to be measured before competing at their first agility show.

Wallingford Open Agility Show

Our annual open agility show show at Newbury Showground will take place this year on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd April. The schedule is now out – and is available from our website – www.wdte.info – follow the link on the left. It is also available on the ISS website – the Interactive Show Services which offers an excellent on-line show-booking service. When you register, the details of your dogs are kept online, and entering agility shows is so much easier than filling in the forms and writing cheques. And this year, it's a cheaper way to enter our show. If you enter shows and haven't already signed up with ISS it is worth giving it a go. www.ishowservices.com Whichever way you enter – if you do agility, you should enter our show, and book out the weekend in your diary – we'll need everyone's help. This year is our club's 30th anniversary and our show this year will be much larger than in past years.



Christmas Festivities

The last evening's training before Christmas very nearly didn't happen when the padlock on the container jammed and refused to open, despite gentle persuasion and frustrated bashing by many members. But Steve and Pippa came to the rescue with a huge metal rasp and a pair of gigantic bolt cutters! It took about 10 minutes of serious filing and cutting before entry was gained and the two courses were set up. Teams were drawn and then queued up to run the helter skelter and the snooker – a course many of those new to agility have never come across before.

The standard was good – with half those running the helter skelter going clear. Top small dog in the helter skelter was Jose & Honey in ninth place and Louise with Spangle the top medium dog at fourth. Wendy, running Robbie for the last time, had a lovely round getting sixth place. Wendy has done really well with her 'borrowed' dog, and Robbie's owners have enjoyed seeing Robbie do so well with Wendy, but have sadly decided to retire him from his agility training. Second place went to Jill and Katie, who just beat Jenny and Tess into third place. The winner of the helter skelter, by just 0.04 secs, was Carol & Tigg.

Kevin took the plunge and ran first, showing handlers the best way round the snooker course. This was a big course, with a long gap to the yellow jump which favoured those dogs who would power on ahead of their handlers. Pippa and Daisy did a cracking round to get the top small dog position of ninth. Jenny and Tess were third, Kevin and Solo second, and Carol and Tigg put in a stonking round to win the class – and top dog over both courses. A formidable achievement.

The top team was the yellow team – with Cazz & Daphne, Jose with Honey & Poppy, Kat and Winston, and Carol & Tigg.

As the equipment was being put away at one end, the food was being put out at the other, and while everyone munched on sausage rolls and mince pies, the prizes were awarded.

Thanks to everyone who helped: Luce for getting the food and drinks, Carolyn for the prizes, and for giving up running her dogs to help, Ian and Jill for judging the helter-skelter, everyone who brought extra food (and Kath for a very large tin of choccy's!), and all the members for making the evening fun and festive.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 27th January

Training Workshop for the club's agility trainers. Leading up to this, Natasha Wise - who is coordinating and running this workshop - will be talking to the trainers and some of the handlers, and will be videoing some of the exercises we currently do. These videos will only be used for training. If anyone is unhappy being videoed for this purpose, please make this known to Natasha when she comes to classes.

< >

Saturday 3rd February · Anthony Clarke agility training day.

< >

Saturday 24th March · Nancy Hudson agility training day

< >

Thursday 8th March to Sunday 11th March - Crufts at the NEC

< >

Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd April - Wallingford Open agility show at Newbury Showground.

< >

End of February

Deadline for the next edition of Watchdog. News, articles, successes, photographs are all welcome - please pass on to Ian or Jacky.

Last but not least

Congratulations to Karen (nee Leahy) who got married on 30th December. Best Wishes to Karen & Craig for a long and happy marriage.

And a VERY BIG thank-you to Karen for the design of Watchdog. I think it's fab.
Jacky Hutchinson