

# Watchdog!

WALLINGFORD DOG TRAINING CLUB

## From the chair



Well - the agility show season is finished - and it's been a pretty impressive season. We have had 8 members winning up a grade, several people getting to various finals and Jenny L and Deke qualifying for the Novice semifinals at Olympia. We all wish her buckets of good luck - but most of all - we hope she enjoys the experience.

Jacky has started spending some of the profit from the show - with a shopping list of new agility equipment (including a complete set for the Demo team so that equipment doesn't have to float between the container and the trailer on Thursdays). The trainers - without whom the agility section couldn't run - had a training workshop with their dogs. They also turned out for another day with Tasha to discuss how we can improve our training and make the agility section even better for everyone. .

We were all devastated when we heard that Tonto - Lu Potter's lovely, energetic, friendly collie - was killed in a tragic accident. Understandably, Lu has retired from the club and the committee. Leanne Darling has taken over as flyball rep, and she and John-Lucas are organising the training. Two other members lost friends recently. Please see Kath Rayson's tribute to Oliver on page 4 and Jenny L lost Razz, following renal failure.

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and successful 2009.

Ian Hutchinson - Chairman

## Agility news



*The season was an extremely successful one for Wallingford. Again, too many to mention (most are on the Wiki). The most notable recent successes (in no particular order):*

**Chris & Fly** – won **G5 agility** at Bromsgrove (21 Sept) by 2 seconds so will be in senior (G6) next year. And talk about waiting until the last minute... on the last run of the last show before going to university, **Jenny & Tess** won **G3 agility** by more than 2 seconds at Prestbury Park (13-14 Sept).

**Lin & Hattie** were 7<sup>th</sup> in the Burgess Supadog Final at Peterborough (12 Oct). 'A brilliant run on an open course – they were at their best' says Jenny L.

**Lisa & Sky** ran in the CSJ final, which was held at the Malvern Show. They were last to run – and came a very creditable 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Janny L & Deke** – qualified at Stoneleigh (29 Aug) to qualify in Novice for Olympia on Sun 21 Dec.

At the KC International Agility Festival, **Lin & Hattie** represented England in the medium team, which came 2nd overall after a jumping run (which they won) and an agility run.

Continued on the last page.....

December 2008

## Diary dates

### December

**Thurs 11** - Agility training with a difference. Practise baton changes with pairs relay.

**Thurs 18** - Xmas at agility - come for the whole evening. Bring nibbles and drink to share. Last day of training.

**Sunday 21** - Last flyball training before Christmas

**Sunday 21** - Good luck & best wishes to Jenny L and Deke in their agility final at *Olympia*.

### January 2009

**Sunday 4** - First flyball training of the new year.

**Thursday 8** - Resume agility training - week 1.

**Saturday 10** - Match against UpAndOver Agility Club at the MaltHouse. Complete the entry forms and come along for a day competing.

### February

**Saturday 28** - Agility training workshop for all members - MaltHouse. With Tasha Wise & Dave Munnings.

### April

**Saturday 18 & Sunday 19** - Our annual open agility show at Newbury Showground.

## Stop Press

Our thoughts are with Gill Kimber, whose husband Michael was rushed into hospital suffering a bad stroke. We all wish him a good recovery.



# Walking With Wolves

According to the film title Kevin Costner danced with wolves, well one actually, and Little Red Riding Hood chopped the head off one after it had eaten her Grandmother! The latter is the common view of wolves, nasty blood thirsty creatures who would rip you to shreds as soon as look at you, the stuff of fairy tales and worldwide myths and legends. The truth is far removed from these stories but they are the reason why people fear and hate the wolf, the not too distant cousin of your four legged friend.

To try to redress the history of the wolf several countries have started to re-educate people, to remove the common misconceptions put into their minds by stories and biased views. This has worked so well in parts of the US that wolves have been reintroduced and, currently, have protected status. They are also considered as treasured tourist attractions in some east European countries. In Britain the last wolf was, according to legend, killed in 1743, but some of the last



ones were born in 2006 on Dartmoor, and I have met them, up close and personal.

For my birthday in May Lorraine enrolled me in the UK Wolf Conservation Trust, membership which gave me a free walk with two of the Trust's Ambassador Wolves. These are the wolves you may have seen on TV or at country shows, they are not tame but are socialised, used to human contact since birth. The two I met are European wolves called Mai (My) and Mosi, both female and gorgeous! They are not the big fluff balls on posters and wolf picture books, that is them in full Winter coat. These two look like sleek, fit animals who could do agility all day! The walks are done at a commercial forest near Aldermaston, a short drive from the Trust's base in Beenham, and that is where we met up with the Trust and the wolves. I say we, Lorraine came of course and my Mother stepped in as Chris didn't feel up to spending 2 – 2½ hours walking over forestry tracks after his operations. My Mum is a real animal lover, she has a nightly visit by foxes and badgers as well as the usual squirrels, ducks and all sorts of birds, so you can imagine she enjoyed the afternoon.

The walk is, as I said around 2 hours and the party is made up of about a dozen 'walkers' and 10 volunteers. The wolves are on light chain leads with two handlers, this is a safety measure in case one slips or the wolf lunges as they are very strong. We set off along the track for about 20 minutes allowing the wolves to settle and do their business, no poo bags in sight! We then have the first 'meet and greet' session. Each wolf is approached by a 'walker' from the front and with a fist held out like a nose for the wolf to sniff. When told, you then give the wolf a tummy rub just under the back leg; get it right and you get a balancing act as the leg is raised in ecstasy! My Mum got the ultimate bonus; her hand was licked in thanks, although Lorraine had one wolf jump up on her when the handler had looked away for a split second as we walked along. With 4-5 stops everyone who wanted to had the chance to meet and touch a real live wolf at least once. A halfway stop to give us a rest and the wolves a bit of 'me time', and allowed our walk leader, Paul, to give a short talk about wolves in general, and the Trust's wolves in particular. He was an interesting guy and very knowledgeable about these fabulous animals.

After the walk we travelled in convoy back to the Trust's base in Beenham where we had coffee and look around the gift shop before a guided tour of the three enclosures, which each held three wolves who are all very well looked after. In fact, so well looked after that the oldest one is 14, about twice his wild life expectancy. All nine residents are socialised but not tame; they are not afraid of people, but at the same time cannot be considered as big dogs. They have three North American, three European and three juveniles, the two we walked with and a rare North American/European cross. What a big lad he will be when fully grown! The trust's aims are to educate people into the truths about wolves and to help out other similar organisations sharing knowledge built up over the years studying them. If you want to know more check out their website at <http://www.ukwolf.org/> they have open days and howl nights where you can see the wolves and hear about them and the Trust, I recommend it, and cannot wait to go again.

Mick Chambers





## What a successful year for Hollie

Hollie Kavanagh is the latest junior at the club - one of the intake of Beginners. She handles a young Dobermann called Dermut - but I have recently heard that she is a formidable handler - showing Dermut's dad Seamus. Here is a report of a brilliantly successful year for young Hollie.

"Hollie is 14, we have 7 Dobermanns a Bernese Mountain Dog and an English Mastiff. Hollie mainly handles a dog we bred which she has trained herself and shows in the Junior Handling and the Young Kennel Club, and she also competes with him at adult-level in the breed rings. The dog she handles is called Seamus (Doberway Chocktaw) & he is 4 years old. This year she has had a phenomenal year both here in the UK, in Ireland and in Europe.

1. March: Won the YKC Working Handling Finals at Crufts.
2. July: Won the International Golden lead for Best Handler in Show at the Golden Dog Trophy Show in Liege, Belgium.
3. In September Hollie won the Junior Handling Association working semi finals for handlers aged 12-16 this win put her in the top 14 Junior Handlers in the UK. The final of this event was held at Earls Court on 9th November to compete for the UK Junior Handler of the Year 2008.
4. At the end of September Hollie competed in Maastricht in Holland and again her and Seamus won the Pedigree International Junior handling competition. They also won in the breed ring winning the CACIB and the CAC and also her dog went Best of Breed. So this week end was a very spectacular one for them both.
5. The UK Junior Handler of the Year at Earls Court was her next big competition, the ultimate winner of this prestigious event then has the nerve-wracking task of representing the UK in the international final held at Crufts 2009 against some 30 other countries. Yes - she won this title as well.
6. Her latest success was a weekend in Kortrijk in Belgium for the Eurodog International Show Handling competition. And yes, guess what, she won that as well! Hollie achieved a score from 4 international judges of 466 points out of a possible 480. This was the highest score across the weekend from all the age groups: under 12yrs, 13 - 17, 18 - 40, and over 40yrs. The countries competing were the UK, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Italy & Germany. The UK won the Inter Country trophy as well, and Hollie brought that home as well as the highest scoring competitor."

Hollie was keen to advertise her latest love - agility, and her report finished with the following:

"As well as showing & handling Hollie now belongs to Wallingford Dog Training Club where she is learning Agility with Seamus's son Dermut." And to top everything else, Hollie's dogs have also started to do film work and have recently been used in the new Minder series and a film for CBBC's."

Wow!! This has been a fantastic year for young Hollie - congratulations to her. And here's wishing her a similarly successful agility career.

With flyball becoming increasingly popular, and with more new additions, it has become clear that the decision to split the beginners and improvers into separate groups was the right move to make. We are now able to provide the level of training needed for each group and give more time to dogs and handlers who need a little extra help. Congratulations to Sharon & Chico, Gill & Red and John & Lucy, who have now completed the beginner's course and received their beginners shield.

On 22nd August we received some devastating news from Lu Potter. Her beloved dog Tonto was hit by a car and sadly didn't survive. Tonto was a big part of Flyball and would entertain himself by doing endless recalls all on his own whilst waiting for his mum to collect monies and chat to other members before he could get on with his favourite game. He would bound down to the box growling away and tongue sticking out. He was part of the Knights team and would turn up to all of the competitions raring to go with Lu clinging on for dear life before he would rocket off down to the box for his ball. Understandably Lu has decided to give up her Flyball commitments and has stepped down as Flyball rep and team captain. We wish Lu all the best for the future and will sadly miss both Lu and Tonto. Thank you for all of your help Lu.

The Knights have competed in two competitions since the last newsletter. The first at Chiltern Shows in Stockbridge on 20<sup>th</sup> July. We took Gunner, Tonto, Gyp, Jade, Flicker, and Willow, with Kate as box loader. We finished 1<sup>st</sup> in our division, clocking up a new best ever time of 19.91, beating our previous fastest time of 19.97 at Frimley Lodge on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 07. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> competition we took Gunner, Gyp, Jade, Willow, Flicker, and Pera, with Kate as box loader to Fairview Farm in Great Missenden Bucks, where we finished a very respectful 2<sup>nd</sup> in our division with a fastest time of 20.39. This was Pera's first time out with the Knights team and he ran his little socks off. Well done Pera.

## Training

We now train on a Sunday morning for the winter months. Training times are:-

**Advanced** – 10.30am – 11am (please arrive by 10.15am to help set up)

**Beginners** – 11am – 11.30am

**Intermediate** – 11.30 – 12 noon (please help put away at the end)

Our last training session before Christmas will be Sun 21<sup>st</sup> December. We will start back on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> January '09.

Leanne Darling - Flyball

## Oliver 9/11/94 - 19/11/08

*You will not be nothing,  
you will be alive again  
in a thousand blades of grass and a million leaves  
I will see you in the falling raindrops  
and blowing in the fresh breeze  
you will be glittering in the dew  
under the stars and the moon  
out there in the physical world*

*(Philip Pullman)*

*and in my imagination you are still running with  
our pack....*



Oliver trained in the club and took part in the club's Agility demos for many years and at home he helped to train many, many dogs and their owners. He took part in our daily ball-game until the day before he died. His legs refused to work and he became paralysed. He had just celebrated his 14th birthday. He was a true gentleman all his life and he never stopped eating and fell quietly asleep eating liver-cake. He was "mum" and "dad" to Kimba, Milo, Bacchus and Winston. We miss him.

Kath, Milo, Bacchus and Winston

### Wiki Webs

The club has both an **agility** and a **flyball** 'Wiki' website which are viewable just by club members. If any member still needs to be 'signed up' to the **agility** Wiki, please let Ian know. It includes agility boasts, teams, camping lists and **demonstrations**. For access to the club's **flyball** Wiki site you need to contact Leanne. Shows, results, training and information on BFA are all here.



## Agility news

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At Dogs in Need **Ian & Stig** won 2 G3 agility classes, **Karen & Sasha** won 3 classes. Both qualified for the final (Karen, with most points and top of the leader board, had to run last).

**Karen & Sasha** got to 3 finals in a very successful year.

Lots of successes also at UKA shows.

**Jenny L's Razz** getting 2 wins at Waverunner show, his last show.

**Annette & Roxy** have been doing very well at several UKA shows, for example winning Beginners agility at Cornwall (16-17 August) so now running at Novice level in Performance.

**Up & coming – Wendy & Bambi** – 5 faults at Southdowns (28<sup>th</sup> Sept) – but beating the winning time by 5 seconds.

Congratulations to everyone who competed - at whatever level. The first clear round is just as exciting (but probably less scary!) than running in a final at Olympia, but just as important to the handler.

### Equipment

The committee has agreed that we can spend some of the profits from past shows on some new equipment. This will ensure a complete set stays on the trailer for the demonstration team. This will save hassle every so often when equipment has to be loaded onto and off the trailer on Thursday evenings. We will also be getting more of the lighter tunnels, and some more weaves.

### Training

The two weeks prior to our Christmas break will be slightly different. On 11th December we will have simple jumping courses at each end - and we'll have some fun practising baton changes with pairs relays. And that last week before Christmas (18th December) we will have our Christmas get together. Could everyone come at 7.30 and stay for the whole evening. Everyone will be put into teams - which will include members of all grades and all sizes. This is an opportunity to meet other members of the club. Bring some drinks and nibbles to share - and enjoy the evening.

### Match Saturday 10 January

For those new to agility, this is a great way to start competing - in a friendly, supportive environment. For members who regularly compete in the Summer, it's a welcome interruption to the Winter break. We will supply refreshments - but bring your lunch. As we're hosting the match, we'll need help from lots of you - a good chance to learn some of the jobs in advance of our show.

Jacky Hutchinson

### Watchdog January 2009

The next Watchdog will be produced in January. Please send articles, photographs, successes, ideas for articles, letters, etc... by end of December. Preferably by email to: [jacian@ntlworld.com](mailto:jacian@ntlworld.com)