

# Watchdog!

WALLINGFORD DOG TRAINING CLUB

December 2009

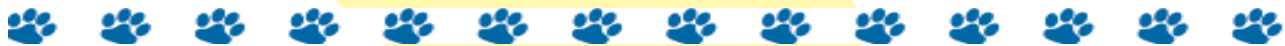
## From the Chair

Season's greetings to everyone. For most of our agility competitors the season wound down and came to an end a couple of months ago. A glance at the *Boasts* and *Winning Out* pages on the wiki shows it was another year of substantial success. For Julie and Bonnie it culminated in an appearance at Earl's Court in the KC Starters Cup final (see Julie's article in this issue). We're also looking forward to Sophie & Jinx competing at Olympia. We wish her all the best and for those not going (and it's well worth a visit) I think Eurosport are televising the finals live every evening so we can cheer from home. I know a lot of members are still competing at limited and UKA shows and if you've never attended one of these it's worth the effort particularly if you have a youngster you will be bringing out next year.

I'd like to thank John-Lucas Brown for his help training and racing during the year at Flyball. He's now having a well earned rest and we wish him well. Luce has once more picked up the training reins while Gill Rhodes is taking care of the administration side (including keeping the flyball wiki up to date). Thanks to both.

And finally many thanks to the club's trainers and committee members for all their efforts over the past year with special thanks to Jacky who has done a fantastic job running the agility section but is standing down to take a break from this high interrupt position.

Ian Hutchinson (chairman)



## Members corner

### Speedy recovery

Best wishes to four of our members for a speedy recovery. Jenny Lovegrove has had 'internal' problems - which seems to have stumped doctors for well over a year. She is awaiting an operation in the Spring which we hope will fix the problem. Jean Hatchard sadly got an infection in the new hip she received, so is now awaiting a new one; fingers crossed this will last a bit longer. Best wishes also to Karen Parker, whose bad back was diagnosed as a slipped disc and who is also awaiting an operation to fix it. And after a fall during the weekend of our show in April, Alison's knee is taking a very long time to heal. Fingers crossed that there is no permanent nerve damage and it heals soon.

### Many Tears

We went to Tesco's and did a good thing. We did something for Many Tears which was to collect money for them. It was really cold we took Tatti and Nanny and Bambi. People gave us £511 so we hope it helps the dogs that need it. There were some pugs dressed in Father Christmas outfits. Tatti wore a pink t-shirt.

From Gio-Gio and Mummy

### Letter from Luce

To all club agility trainers who have tried so hard to help my cockers and me acquire some competence in agility. And to Jacky and her predecessors as Agility Rep and members of the Small/ Medium class who have encouraged and supported us over the years.

I have decided to hang up my Agility boots now, at least for training, as my knees are rebelling against any more running. But I may help at the Club show and maybe enter a few shows in the Spring if I feel I can - so Flicker may be available for the odd team if needed. Thanks to all for many years of fun attempting to get my girls round agility courses, and all the best to everyone for the future. May the Agility section go from strength to strength!

Luce Green

P.S. Flicker and I will still be doing Flyball, so don't write us off yet!



INSIDE: Fostering dogs KC Starter report, agility and Flyball news

## Training Workshops

Sadly we had to postpone the training workshop with **Lee Gibson**, which has been scheduled for **Saturday 13th February**. The training workshop with **Tasha Wise & David Munnings** was yet again a great success, though we had to get members of local clubs to make the numbers up. Looking ahead I have provisionally booked **Tasha** for another workshop in the Spring of 2011. Two days of training with **Anthony Clarke** had a really good turnout - despite appalling weather (Ant trains outdoors). My thanks to Wendy for organising this.

## Competition nights

Following feedback from some members who didn't appreciate quite so many competition nights, I am proposing the following:

The last Thursday before Xmas - everyone attends for the whole night. Everyone is allocated to a team and has 2 courses to run. Courses will be 'do-able' by the more inexperienced dogs. Points will be attributed to your team, and there will be various prizes (this is Christmas, after all!).

Week 1 of the second course of the year (which will be at the beginning of March - Antony Clarke is training for the first course) will be turned into a 'club competition' night. Everyone attends for the whole evening, and everyone will complete 2 courses - one jumping, one agility. Points will be allocated according to the dog's usual class, and the results will be announced at the AGM in March. This will be timely for everyone to practise walking and running courses before the competition season starts, and for members to learn about how competitions run in advance of our show.

We won't have a competition at the end of the second course (end of April) but we'll have one at the end of June using the same format as we do at the moment - in groups. Then we won't have competitions again until the end of December.

This will halve the number of competitions, but will make more of those we do. However, recognising that learning how to walk courses is important, trainers are encouraged to put out numbers and 'train' walking & running shorter courses with their groups where required.

This is only a proposal - do let me know what you all think.

## Times

It is good practise to switch classes round so that members who struggle to make the early - or late sessions - get a change, and those members who just train in the middle session get to do some work! So, **from Thursday 7 January 2010**, the classes will be as follows:

7.30 (to set up) Foundation & Group 3

8.40 Group 1 & Small/Medium

9.20 Improvers & Group 2 - and stay on to put equipment away.

We are also bringing in many of the new puppies club members have acquired this year. Please check which class you are in. With different members on first in the evening, **PLEASE let us get the equipment out QUICKLY!** I know it's cold & wet & horrid - but I believe that with a concerted effort we could get the equipment out and set up in 20 minutes. But only if we arrive before 7.30 - ready to get going, and that we don't start chatting until the courses have been set up. Come on Foundation & Group 3 handlers - show us it can be done!

Partly because he does really good foundation training for young dogs, and partly because so many of our trainers will be in the Foundation class with their pups - leaving us short of trainers, we have signed up Anthony Clarke to train 3 classes for a course of 8 weeks. He will be training Foundation in the first session, and then a class in the middle and end sessions - depending on availability of trainers.

**Training workshops:** Generally, club members have been doing increasingly well over the last 3 or 4 years, but I am always trying to ensure that our training is up to scratch, so I ask our guest trainers if they see anything general weaknesses. David Munnings said that he was disappointed that he remembers showing the same people how to do a front cross / rear cross that he did last year (and probably what our own trainers have been teaching). When he trains abroad, handlers take notebooks and make notes. **In the UK they don't (so we're not alone).** We all need to be ready to take on board all suggestions from all the trainers we train with, and be prepared to try, and practise, new techniques. Anthony commented that many of us are far too slow with our commands. Dawn highlights this in her new book. If we want dogs to go faster, they have to know in good time where they're going next. They need to know WELL BEFORE they jump whether they should be jumping it long and fast, or short, with a turn following. When we give late commands to our dogs, we are teaching them to run slower.

**Matches:** I have been liaising with Karen Laker at UpandOver Agility Club to organise an away, and a home match with them. We will be playing 'away' first this time - at the Catherston Stud on **Sunday 31st January**, and I have a date (tbc) of **Saturday 20th March** for our 'home' match at the Malthouse. Details and entry forms after Christmas.

**Taking time out:** I have decided to take time out from being Agility Rep for a while. I have started feeling jaded, and find that I am not doing all the things I would like to do. I need a break. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me over the past few years - with specific jobs (eg Karen running the points scheme, Wendy looking after the waiting list and Foundation training, and Jill organising large teams) and also to those of you who have given me moral support. Please could you all remember that committee members & trainers spend a lot of time on everyone's behalf, so when a request for help is made (eg to get in early to get the equipment set up) please do your bit. This is the most fantastic club with brilliant members. Please don't take the work that a few people do for granted.

**Finally - have a fabulous Christmas, and a happy, healthy & successful 2010.**

Jacky Hutchinson

# Fostering for Hope Rescue

The idea of fostering dogs first interested me when I got Bertie, my Parsons Jack Russell. I saw him on [dogpages.org.uk](http://dogpages.org.uk); he was 1 year old and had been in kennels for over 7 months. Bertie was being fostered by an amazing lady in Welwyn called Lynne who fosters 4 or more dogs at a time for different rescue organisations. Bertie was not used to living in a home and she started the process of getting him house trained and use to life in a home so he was more attractive to anyone wanting to adopt him. As well as falling in love with Bertie that day I thought how wonderful it was to be able to give dogs a better chance of finding a new home by fostering.

Two years later I broached the subject of fostering dogs with my husband and to my amazement he agreed. As well as wanting the challenge of helping rescue dogs I also felt it would be good for Bertie. After several bad experiences with other dogs he had become nervous and I felt this would be a chance for him to improve his social skills! I contacted Lynne and asked her to recommend which dog rescue organisations I should approach for



fostering. One of these was Hope Rescue, based in Wales.

After a visit and home check in April we had our first foster within weeks. This was Sid, a very tiny Jack Russell. He was 3 years old and had been surrendered by his owners who didn't want him anymore. I was very nervous to see how Bertie would react, but after an initial scrap, all was well. It took several days for Bertie to completely accept Sid in the house but I was relieved it went as smoothly as it did. Although Sid was very affectionate, and loved a cuddle on your lap, it was obvious he had missed out on some things in life. I was told he had never been let off the lead and that he

wasn't good with other dogs. He was completely uninterested in toys and treats, didn't seem to know his name and couldn't even sit. He also threw himself, barking and snapping, at most dogs we passed on a walk! Not surprisingly this was affecting Bertie and I decided I would have to walk the dogs separately. It took 3 months to find a new home for Sid and although he was never perfect with other dogs he did improve a lot. I was so proud of his achievements; he could sit, wait, down, shake paws, roll over and come to his name. He also loved agility and could go over jumps and through tunnels.

Our second foster was Darwin who arrived on 24<sup>th</sup> September and he was lovely. I could easily have kept him, but if I had, I wouldn't be able to continue fostering so I started looking for a really super home for him, preferably local so that I can still see him! Darwin is a white JRT with very large black pointed ears and he is really friendly to all dogs and people. He was from Newport pound, about 2 years old; an unclaimed stray with no name. We tried calling him different names but he responded best to my son and daughter's suggestion of 'Darwin'. He loved playing ball and tugger and had a great time playing with Bertie. Within 3 days I was letting him off in the park and he was racing back when I called his name. Only 4 weeks after he arrived he could sit, wait, down, had a good recall and was getting the hang of agility too. He loved jumping, racing up the dog walk and was happy being led over a seesaw. I took him to flyball training twice and he was a real star, racing over all the jumps, picking up the ball and racing enthusiastically back to me. This was a great move, as Luce & Jean have decided to adopt Darwin, so Darwin (now Fred) he will be continuing with his flyball training with the Club. (See separate article, with photo, on page 5)

Although fostering is hard at times it is incredibly rewarding seeing their progress. Hope Rescue has been very supportive and they were always there when I needed advice on Sid's problems. If anyone has any unwanted leads, collars, dog toys, bedding or crates I am collecting these locally for Hope Rescue to help them with their work of rescuing unwanted dogs.

Gill Rhodes



## Introducing Merrywood-Forget-Me-Not

### Alias Tattiana - aka 'Tatti'

Most have already met the nutty grey Pyrenean Sheepdog who is always in trouble with both canine and humans.

Her bad habits include: hating lawnmowers & certain hoovers, biting the grass if you don't throw the ball quickly enough, stealing potatoes, socks and knickers plus barking!

Good habits: Does she have any other than being very cute and playful?



Wendy



# KC starters cup final

## 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, Earls Court London

Having never expected to achieve anything more than the 'nice but dim' dog and handler award, getting to the KC starters cup final in Earls Court was an unexpected. I was chuffed at getting there but also full of dread of competing in such a big event, for these that have trained with Bonnie and I you understand that my concern of public humiliation was not unfounded!!! It had the potential for the following synarios...

1) Bonnie could be great, calm, responsive to my every command, would fly round the course while I handled it like a pro, the crowd would ooh and aarh and the judge would smile and clap at the end of the round. (Possible but HIGHLY unlikely)

Or the more probable outcome...

2) Bonnie would act as if she had never seen a piece of agility equipment in her life, her sole intent on biting my ankle, which is more effective than a Johnny Wilkinson tackle getting me from vertical to horizontal faster than you can say whoopsy, (then again Johnny Wilkinson wouldn't have to tackle me to get me horizontal...anyway I digress!!!) You get my point I had cause for concern.

My plan was to get in lots of extra training in the months leading up to the final, unfortunately my work and family had other ideas, so I settled for the other lesser known training method, commonly known as 'panic training', this involves doing as much as you can in the 24hours leading up to the big event!

So the day of the final arrived, I got up at 5.30am in order to give Bonnie a good run before we arrived at Earls court as I didn't know what the facilities would be like when we got there. I was hoping this might also run off a little of Bonnies loopy tendencies. However.... The wind was blowing a gale and the rain was lashing down so we had a cuppa and went back to bed for an hour instead, and don't roll your eyes at me KP even Mother Teresa herself wouldn't of walked her dog in that weather!



After a couple of loops round earls court looking for the car park we finally arrived as the doors opened and meet up with the posse that had come to support for the day, this was wonderful and much appreciated (but it also meant I had witnesses and would not be able to make up a tale of great heroics to the rest of the club!). A short briefing later and we were walking the jumping course. The ring was a lot smaller than I had

anticipated and although the course was quite simple it had a few bits in it that could catch you out. Out came the running orders and s##t - we were first to run.

With the rabble settled in the stands we waited on the start line. It was a relief to finally be off and Bonnie went over the first of the jumps into a 90' turn and into the tunnel without her usual enthusiasm. Next came a snake/flicflac, she was running like she does in thistles obviously not liking the spongy carpet to run on, this combined with my bad handling meant she came out of the weaves and picked up 5 faults. She finished well with another tunnel, jumps and a tyre to finish. Bonnie, not realising that she had finished, continued over the picket fence and into the crowd (back to the 'nice but dim' prize!!). Not the round I had hoped for and I knew she could do so much better BUT under the strange conditions I was really pleased with her (and the fact I didn't fall on my arse was a bonus).

A few hours later we were all back walking the agility course, which I knew straight away, was NOT a Bonnie course, very tight and twisty. But with nothing to lose but my dignity, we had to go for it and this time we were the last to run. The course meant we needed a start line wait, which to my utter amazement Bonnie did, I didn't dare push my luck and released her before I would have liked but as soon as she started I knew she had got over the strangeness of it all and was off like a rocket. Unfortunately she got faulted on our up and down contact on the A frame (I would have liked an Hawkeye second opinion!) which incurred another 10 faults, but I really didn't care as she ran this difficult course so well. Had a slight error at the end when Bonnie translated my "away" command to "come here and run under my feet!" but I was very pleased with our round.

The 15 faults incurred meant we finished near the bottom overall, but I'm so proud of what we achieved and despite the nerves and prospect of public humiliation, now that we've been there once I want to do it again!

Thanks to everyone for the support and encouragement.

Julie and Bonnie

*Ed: Good arm signal, Julie*



## 'I Don't Know' by Fred - As told to Jean Hatchard

- I don't know – where in Wales I was born.
- I don't know – who my Mum was – I suppose some Jack Russell in or around Wales.
- I don't know – if I had any brothers and sisters.
- I don't know – how I arrived at a railway station, or even before that, how I got food.
- I don't know – who found me and took me to a dog pound and then how I got to Hope Rescue centre. I remember I got food and someone showed me a little affection. But I knew my journey had not ended.
- I don't know – why my Foster Mum chose me, took me in and looked after me so well. I would have liked to stay but she took me to Flyball, which I love doing, and one of my future Mums got to like me. So one day Jean & Luce came to see me and took me home to meet a Golden Retriever (very friendly) and 2 Cocker Spaniels (not so friendly, but they are getting used to me and me to them).
- But I DO know – that my journey has ended. I'm home with lots of love, food and walkies in the country.

Thank you to everybody who helped me get there.



### Yet more puppies



Which one would *you* choose? Pam will reveal in the next edition



Rocket's puppies - article about the highs and lows of breeding a litter in the next edition.

### A good read

I bought, and have read some of Dawn Weaver's new book 'Knowledge Equals Speed' and I wholeheartedly agree with a couple of her views, and I'm convinced her suggested way to train waits is the way to go.

**Motivation** - Dawn is quite passionate that agility is the most wonderful experience for her dogs - she NEVER tells her dogs off while they are doing agility - and she ALWAYS has a really good game with them after each exercise. Dawn emphasises that the most important thing, from the dog's point of view, is that it *never* finds out when its *handler* makes a mistake. Agility should always be the greatest game ever to the dogs.

**Basic obedience** - Dawn has ground rules which she is strict about away from agility - her dogs don't pull on the lead - they have good recalls, etc.. But they all love being with her because she bases all her training on motivation & reward. And when they are with her they are totally focussed on her.

**Waits** - Dawn trains a 'countdown' wait. And it makes sense. Currently many handlers insist that their dog waits on the line until, at some time, the handler suddenly announces 'go'. The dog doesn't know when the release command will come, so a keen dog is on tenterhooks as soon as the handler leaves, twitching at every sound or movement the handler makes, waiting for the release. A dog taught the 'countdown' (Dawn uses 3-2-1) knows that nothing happens until the start of the countdown, so in theory will be more relaxed until the start of the countdown, and consequently less likely to jump the start. Think of the lights at the Grand Prix, the 'On your marks, Get set, bang' in athletics.

Throughout the book there are loads of short exercises, showing the best way to handle them. Because Dawn runs dogs at all sizes, she explains how dogs with different stride lengths would run the same exercises differently. definitely a good read.

Jacky



# Flyball news

Flyball is the fastest-growing dog sport in Britain and the Club's second sport. We train at Harwell Rec on Sun mornings during the winter and Tues evenings in summer and have 4 large dogs and 5 small ones in our Team group and 4-6 dogs in the Beginners. Our team competes in British Flyball Association (BFA)

sanctioned tournaments. In these, the teams entering are split into divisions, each containing 6 or 7 teams with similar racing times. Each team then races all the others in their division, running 4 dogs out of a maximum of 6 in a relay format. The race winner is the team winning 3 legs first.

The Knightmares competed in our 6<sup>th</sup> and last tournament of the year in mid-Sep at Acremead Kennels near Abingdon, in Div 5 of 6. We had a new Start dog, Mason with Julie. He is a fast dog and ran well for most of the day, making mistakes only when he got tired in the 4<sup>th</sup> race of the morning. The team also included Jade with Gill A, always our fastest dog, and 3 small dogs, Pera, Bertie and Flicker. So for each race we ran Mason, Jade



and 2 small dogs, ending with 3 wins out of 6 with a fastest time of 21.48 sec, the fastest run of the Knightmares this year. So a good effort overall!

As large dogs are generally faster than small ones, we would like to be able to run at least 3 large dogs in our best team. (The advantage of including a small one is to reduce the jump heights, which depend on the height of the smallest dog.) So we would welcome additional large dogs for training. If you have or know of a dog interested in

balls and would like to have a go, please get in touch with the Flyball rep, Gill Rhodes. Anyone can come to one training session for free and we are always looking for potential flyball dogs, especially large ones at present, to compete in our teams and have a lot of fun doing it.

Luce Green,  
Team Captain



# Dear Dogs,

We need to clarify the regulations of the house - please take the time to re familiarise yourself with the rules:

When I say to move, it means go somewhere else, not switch positions with each other so there are still two of you in the way.

The dishes with the paw prints are yours and contain your food. The other dishes are mine and contain my food.. (Please note, placing a paw print in the middle of my plate of food does not stake a claim for it becoming your food dish, nor do I find that aesthetically pleasing in the slightest.)

The hallway was not designed by NASCAR and is not a racetrack. Beating me to the lounge is not the object. Tripping me doesn't help because I fall faster than you can run.

I cannot buy or afford a bigger bed. I am very sorry about this. Do not think I will continue to sleep on a single portion of the bed to ensure your comfort. I have bought some videos of dogs and cats sleeping - please practice these positions. They can actually curl up in a ball. It is not necessary to sleep perpendicular to each other stretched out to the fullest extent possible. (I also know that sticking tails straight out and having tongues hanging out the other end to maximize space used is nothing but a sarcastic statement directed at me.)

For the last time, there is no secret exit from the toilet. If by some miracle I beat you there and manage to get the door shut, it is not necessary to claw, whine, or get your paw under the edge and try to pull the door open. I must exit through the same door eventually. (In addition, I have been using the bathroom for years...canine attendance is not mandatory and I'm not scared to be in there by myself.)

Note the proper order is kiss me, then go smell the other dogs' butts. I cannot stress this enough. It would be such a simple change for you and a breath of fresh air for me.

So that you do not think these rules are all for my benefit and to pacify you, I will post the following message on our front door.....

Rules for Non-pet owners who visit and like to complain about our dogs:

1. They live here; you don't.
2. If you don't want their hair on your clothes, keep standing and stay off the furniture.
3. I like my dogs better than I like many people.
4. To you they might be 'just dogs'. To me they are adopted sons and daughters who just happen to be short and hairy, walk on all fours and are speech challenged. I've seen some of your kids and to be honest - I'm doing OK thank you very much.

## Agility Liaison

All changes made to the Kennel Club rules and regs which govern KC agility are developed through a number of Agility Council Reps, who represent the handlers and clubs in their area. Although Oxfordshire is listed in the Midlands area, meetings for the South West area are held closer to us and Lesley Olden agreed to include me on her distribution list. The latest communication has been issued, which I have posted on the Agility Wiki (under news). The Kennel Club is obviously worried about the increasing number of incidents involving aggressive dogs they have reported from shows and a discussion document has been produced suggesting that all dogs should pass some type of character test (the KC Good Citizen has been mentioned) before they are allowed to compete at KC shows. Is this a good idea? Is it workable? This will be discussed at the next meeting, and anyone who would like to comment on this, or anything else on the agenda, can pass your comments to me to pass on to Lesley (or send directly to her). Other items include: double handling, clarification for ABC classes - and reruns, a change that wins up to and including 31 days before a show shall be counted when entering shows and a change to grade progression for classes 2, 4 and 5. Checkout the details on the Wiki.



## Patch - latest foster JR

Patch is our latest foster, a Parsons Jack Russell about a 1yr old. He arrived on 24<sup>th</sup> November, extremely thin and nervous, cowering at our every move and terrified of Bertie. A week later and he is starting to behave like a young JRT should. He played with Bertie in the garden for the first time this morning and has at last got his tail up in the air and wagging. He is now loving he walks and running about rather than staying close to me. He still has a way to go and toilet training is still ongoing but he is a very affectionate pup and deserves a good home. I took him to Dinah's on Saturday and although he was too nervous to play with Cinders he enjoyed going over the dog walk and jumping several jumps; he definitely has agility potential with those long legs and only about 30cm high.



Gill Rhodes



## Poet's corner

### Agility according to Cinders

When I was two, the opportunity came for my mistress and me to try a new game.

There were all sorts of hazards with very strange names - tunnels and tyres, weaves and A-frames.

The name of this game is doggie agility - to play it you need to have some ability.

I make many mistakes but my mistress makes more - sometimes she even falls on the floor!

We try very hard to get better together. We enjoy our training whatever the weather.

We're not very good and haven't yet won, but one thing's for sure it's certainly fun.



Below is Rowan showing off her "Doggles". She has progressive retinal atrophy. There is no cure and no treatment for it, but the vet said the best thing was to keep her out of the bright sunlight. That would preserve what sight she has for as long as possible. I found these on e-bay; they have UV filters and help her to see in the bright light. Before she had them she had a tendency to run off when it was very bright as she couldn't see at all. She loves wearing them and I have had no problems with her keeping them on. In fact, she waits for me to put them on when the sun is shining!



## Dates for your diary

**Tuesday 15th to Monday 21st December** - Olympia Horse Show - which includes many agility finals including, on the Sunday, the Novice Stakes in which Sophie & Jinx will compete.

**Thursdays 24th & 31st December** - no agility training at Blewbury.

**Thurs 7th December** - 1st agility training in 2010.

**Sunday 31st January** - Agility match .vs. Upandover club. 'Away' at Catherstone Stud.

**Saturday 13th February** - rescheduled training Workshop with Lee Gibson at the Malt House.

**Thursday 11th to Sunday 14th March** - Crufts at the NEC, Birmingham.

*Thursday:* Working & Pastoral groups,

*Friday:* Terrier & Hound groups,

*Saturday:* Toy & Utility groups and

*Sunday:* Gundog group.

Lots of agility on each day - check out

[www.crufts.org.uk](http://www.crufts.org.uk)

**Saturday 20th March** - return match .vs. Upandover. 'Home' at the Malt House.

**Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th April 2010** - our Open Agility Show at Newbury Showground.