

Watchdog!

WALLINGFORD DOG TRAINING CLUB

November 2012

Stop Press!

**Club competition
afternoon
9th December
2012**



There will be fun courses suitable for ALL levels of dogs. Help will be on hand if you have never tried a competition before – we will walk the courses with you, explain the judge's marking of your runs, and help you improve for next time.



The venue will be an indoor riding school the “other” end of Blewbury, so a bit of rain won't matter. Hot drinks will be available!

This is also a great opportunity to learn how to do all those little jobs that make an agility ring run smoothly. Agility shows rely on volunteers on the rings to help the judge, known as ring party. Wallingford DTC are well known for our happy ring parties at shows! So come along and learn how to score, call and pole pick (you can all do that already) in between runs with your dogs.

We look forward to seeing as many members as possible for a fun afternoon. Christmas hats optional....

More info to follow....



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A word from the editor



Basil and I had an adventure this month, as for the first time he ran in the rescue agility display at Discover Dogs. I have helped to organise NAWT's part in this for several years, and it was lovely to be running rather than just ticking names off a list and handling out T-shirts! It is entirely non-competitive, and in fact the crowd always LOVE it when the dogs go wrong.

Basil was a bit nervous on Saturday when he realised there were people sat right by the ring, and he did miss out a couple of jumps and then added about 4 tunnels on the end. The children were in fits and he certainly got a big clap – unfortunately he hates clapping!

On Sunday Basil ran beautifully, so much more confident and just spooked at the A-frame for some reason. He did make some new friends too, and hopefully we will be back on the team next year at Crufts.

Thank you also to Kevin for being such a good “spare dog holder” waiting in the wings, as other team members did a quick change between dogs. Never an easy job with over-enthusiastic agility dogs desperate to get in the ring!

Watchdog seemed to grow while my back was turned, and thank you all for your contributions, I hope you all enjoy reading it.

Alison Pearce

Congratulations

On the Club's behalf the committee would like to congratulate Gill Kimber and Shade on reaching the Olympia Finals this year. In recognition of this we will be presenting Gill with a gift to mark this achievement. We would also like as many club members as possible to go along and support Gill on this special day. As a club we have offered to contribute towards the cost of travel for anyone wishing to go along to Olympia. Jill Lowe has organised a bus which the club is subsidising and also anyone else travelling independently can claim back £8 from Kevin Pearce (Treasurer). Here's hoping that everyone, including Gill and Shade, has a wonderful day. Best of luck.

WDTC Committee.

Agility news



THE KENNEL CLUB

Northdowns 10th Nov

Jill & Cass 2nd G5,6,7 Jump (53 in G5)
Jill & Cass 7th C4-5 Ag (91)



THE KENNEL CLUB

Downland 3rd Nov

Aileen & Ozzie 1st G3 Stc (190)
Aileen & Rockett CR G3 Jump (200)
Carolyn & Ollie CR C4-5 Jump (86)
Carolyn & Ollie CR C4-5 Ag (84)



Fox Agility (Ind) 28th Oct



Annette & Maze 1st C1-7 Time, Fault & Out (31)



THE KENNEL CLUB

Eastbourne DTC 21st Oct

Carolyn & Ollie 1st G4-5 Ag (60 G4)
Carolyn & Ollie 4th C3-4 Ag (208)
Carolyn & Ollie 5th G4-5 Jump (63 G4)



THE KENNEL CLUB

BHC 21st Oct



Kevin & Fell 1st C1-7 Stc pt 2 (167)
Alison & Basil 1st G1-3 Jump (6 in G2)
Alison & Basil 1st G1-4 Agility (6 in G2)
Aileen & Ozzie 2nd C1-4 Jump (154)
Aileen & Ozzie 6th C1-7 Stc pt 2 (157)
Aileen & Ozzie 12th G3 Jump (164)
Aileen & Rockett CR G3 Jumping (164)
Aileen & Rockett CR C1-7 Stc pt 1 (157)
Alison & Basil CR C1-7 Jump (80)



Bincknoll (Ind) 20th Oct

Jill & Cass 1st G5-7 all size Agility (12ish)
Jose & Pera 1st G3-4 Sm Jump (10)
Pam & Martha 2nd G3-4 Sm Jump (10)
Dinah & Cinders 2nd G3-4 Med Ag (11)
Dinah & Cinders 2nd G3-4 Med Jump (11)
Dinah & Cinders 4th G3-4 Med Stc (11)
Annette & Cass CR G5-7 Jump



THE KENNEL CLUB

Norfolk Autumn 6th Oct

Carolyn & Max - 5th Anysize (52)



Thames Valley 6th Oct

Jill & Cass 1st Q Std Ch Stc 2 (11ish)
Annette & Maze 2nd Maxi Beg Ag (70ish)
Sarah & Merlin CR Maxi Beg Ag (70ish)

Dave Munnings' Q-me Puppy School

Little Sonic was cleared for take off after his jabs one Tuesday morning. So on the Friday we went to join Dave Munnings Q-me Puppy Pre-Agility workshop. My poor little boy was at least half the age of all the others, and definitely less than half the height! But that just meant he had twice the fun.

It was a really useful workshop. We spent the first 20 minutes or so going over a list of about 20 items that we could/should work on before our pups even look at a jump. Some of these are obvious – basic behaviours, wait, drive, back end awareness, directionals; but others were less obvious – building value for the toy, collar grabs, swapping toys/toys and toys/sweets (never had to work at that before).

After our chat we took it in turns to work with the pups for a couple of minutes at a time. We covered recall to different people but only when asked, anti-blind cross behaviour (running around in circles), driving to a dead toy, front crosses, driving to reinforcement zones (along side you).

Dave was full of useful advice, and very excited about playing with puppies!

And the nearest we got to equipment – an illegal deviation via a tunnel mid-recall!



It was a good couple of hours in a lovely venue near Aldermaston, and I've come away with a nice list of things to work on and a tired little puppy.

Jo Tidmarsh



Merlin has left the building!



Yes, Merlin has finally retired after 12 years of training at Blewbury, countless demos, a little flyball and his bronze, silver and gold good citizen's awards under Jacky and Ian's watchful eye.

It was Easter 2000 when I chose the dog formerly known as 'Rocky' at the RSPCA Blackberry Farm Animal Centre near Aylesbury. They knew little of Rocky/Merlin's early life, he'd been mistreated, was 3 or 4 years old and a collie-cross. However, the WDTC consensus was that he 1 or 2 years old and if you stood him next to a whippet it looked a more likely hereditary.

As the only dog not barking on the kennel block I thought this quiet, content and calm little fellow would be ideal for me and my cat. First impressions proved inaccurate; his favourite pastime was chasing the cat, in fact any cat. A

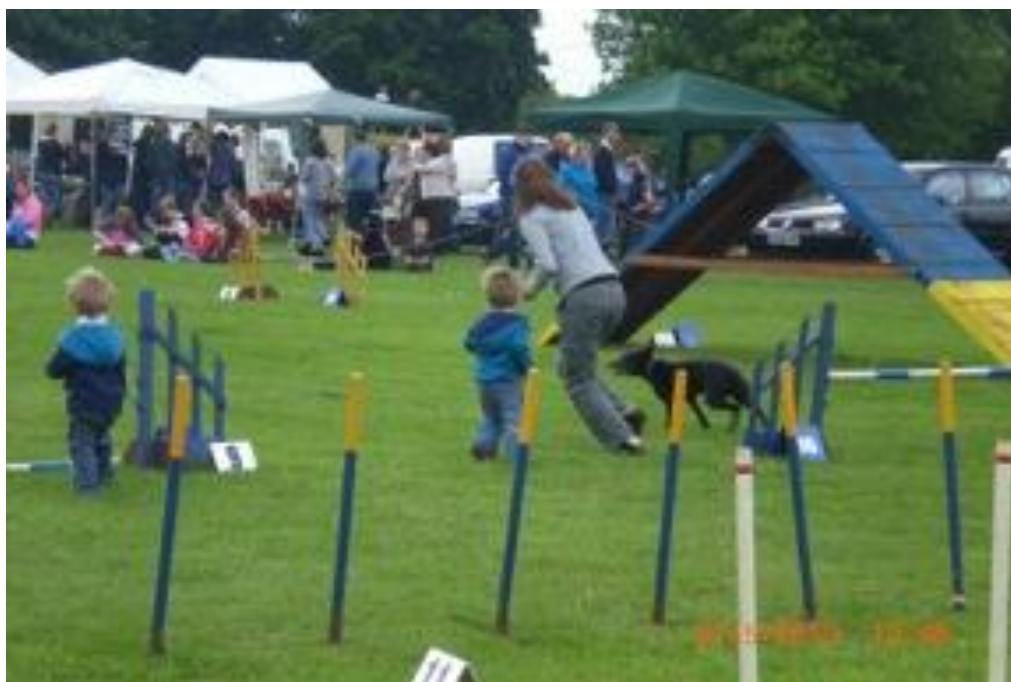
stairgate was hastily installed to keep the two apart and the cat managed to hang on a further 5 years with his constant harassment.

I was looking forward to dog walking, but the summer of 2000 seemed as wet and cold as that of 2012. More successful was obedience training, where Merlin proved himself an expert at performing trips for clicker and treats – maintaining that behaviour and harnessing his enthusiasm was more challenging. Constant barking, jumping up and general hyperactivity at agility made him a challenge for a first time handler - whatever happened to that quiet dog in the kennel.

On the occasions we could pull things together he was lightening quick and rarely had a fence down (full height in the early days). However, the frustration of every first round being a car crash of an event, and being time-short, convinced me that I did not want to run competitively.

Like most dogs, Merlin has experienced tragedies, illness, triumphs and traumas. An auto-immune response laid him low for 6 weeks when he was young and a couple of dog bites caused him to be wary of dogs in the park.

But, perhaps his biggest challenge was the arrival twin boys, Luke and Jamie, in 2007. Never a fan of small children they proved tolerable up until the point they started crawling around. Behind the re-utilised stairgate Merlin whined grumpily, until they were old enough to steer clear of his intolerant attitude and he was able regain his hold on the sofa. Amazingly, when the boys reached 3.5 he was willing to demean himself to run agility with them (if they had treats). Luke often says what a good choice of dog Merlin is and he loves him.



Loving and loyal, Merlin curls up on your lap and can sleep for hours (the ideal office dog at my small business). Ready at the drop of a hat for any activity, he loves walks in the country, yet happily adjusts to walking with push chairs, bikes and scooters around town.

A back injury, sustained whilst jumping out of the bath (his idea, not mine), has been the deciding factor in his retirement. 8 weeks or so on and he is now picking up a dragging rear leg and running across the park again. A little stiff at the back, a little grey and on the deaf side, Merlin is still an active little dog at somewhere between 14 to 17 years old. I count myself very lucky to have found him.

We're both missing agility training and want to send a big thank you to WDTC members for all your help, support and friendships. What a great bunch!

Karen Leahy and Merlin

Our great time with WDTC

How do I start this? I've been promising it to Alison for a while but here I am, children at school, radio on, Splash at my feet after vaccinations at the vets "is she really nearly 11?" and a nice sunny walk. My children are both at school now so hopefully back to work soon, life changes....

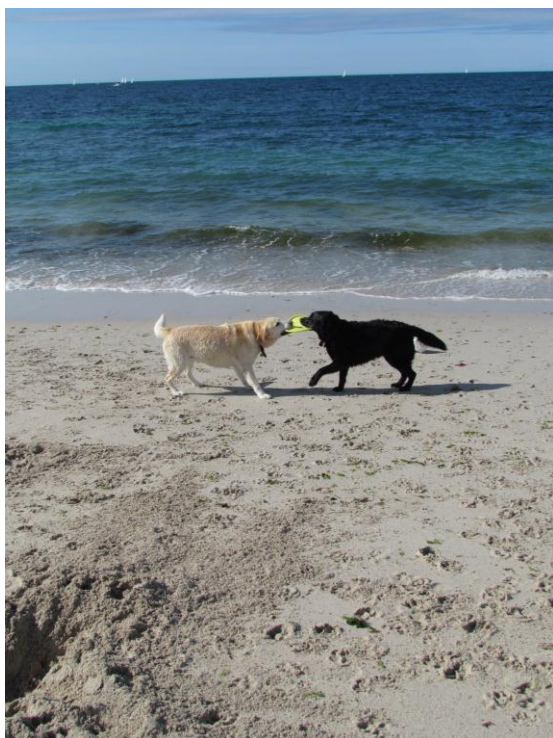
Hello to all of you who have noticed we've disappeared. If the names don't ring a bell Splash is the crazy yellow Lab who thought the best thing to do at the start was BARK and Inca is the black Lab who simply didn't like border collies an unfortunate trait whilst training for agility oops. Thanks to all the BC owners who were tolerant!

We disappeared in February after I developed plantar fasciitis which is basically nasty heel pain every time you step *ouch* and all the doctors say is "don't walk". I was better by the summer and thinking about coming back on Thursday nights when Splash suddenly didn't want to move and ended up on painkillers after a busy weekend with a dog walker. Our vet a little hastily concluded arthritis and we thought it best to stop agility. Thankfully we now think all she had was a muscle strain.

I thought long and hard and eventually concluded it wasn't fair to Splash to return to agility when she's already downgraded to medium height and is a mad Labrador with no intention of ever taking life gently. Best to aim for a healthy happy old age we can have fun in other ways as we have today. Thank you to all of you who kindly gave me old age dog tips.

Inca is only 9 but has retired by default. With her aggressive tendencies as above I've never quite enjoyed it as much as with Splash and I just can't shut Splash in every Thursday as she will SMELL where we've been. Sorry dog.

So what do I say now? THANK YOU to all at WDTC for very enjoyable Thursday nights for about 8 years. Especially trainers who tolerated both my barking yellow nut (now having a dream at my feet complete with little woofs and wagging) and also that I never seemed to master moving my arms enough. It was 98% great fun and the 2% of the time I got slightly cross both dogs seemed more focused. Splash and Inca do get less attention now I have children and agility was a very special time when it was just me and them learning and having fun. Inca is the sort of dog who likes everything but Splash really understands how to play, AGILITY and BEACHES are her loves and one of those is a lot easier to do in Oxfordshire.



I'm staying as a member so we might try for a demo or Christmas party. Seven year old Daniel and four year old Lucy still want to see "dog training" and it's a little hard that now the children are old enough to be interested the dogs are too old! Daniel still "fondly" remembers getting freezing feet at a January friendly match where all Splash and Inca did upon the word "Go!" was go for a sniff around!

We've not many pictures of them doing agility as Stephen was mainly too cold to hold a camera so here they are this summer in France. The big hole at bottom left is Splash's creation and by the time we leave she has usually created a lunar landscape! To be repeated in Spain 2013.

Lastly, I'd definitely like to do agility with WDTC again in the future please. So I hope you'll all keep having fun on freezing nights in the mud until I'm back. Thank you to you all!

Maria Taylor, Splash and Inca.

Zak

Some of you already know Zak's story – he was allegedly 9 months when I acquired him from a foster re-homing lady in Milton Keynes. Apparently he had been through 5 homes prior to getting into the back of my car! He was my first dog – and quite an introduction into owning a dog!



It became apparent at an early stage that I needed help in trying to sort out some of his problems both with people and dogs – imagine... when I first got him he could not walk behind a couple without getting extremely agitated, he would know more about what was going on up in the sky than on the ground and would not go near anyone who was smoking a cigarette – it leaves me only imagining what it must have been like prior to arriving with me! His favourite spot was either sitting in the front window watching the world go by or lazing on the back of a chair without a care in the world!

Zak was the reason I first got into agility and for that I will be forever grateful. It was a miracle as our first introductions were not brilliant. Gillian and I went for an introductory lesson which we thoroughly enjoyed – our two dogs in a barn trying out different pieces of equipment, jumping jumps, etc.... and then our first lesson - a disaster! In a barn with lots of other dogs barking noisily – never again!

Luckily for us we then met Rosemary T who took Zak (and me!) under her wing. She understood him and gave us many happy hours with dogs he could 'cope' with. We even began competing and managed the occasional clear round. Once Zak started going under jumps rather than over them, I decided we would try the 'Anysize' classes which he thoroughly enjoyed, as did I, until he became overwhelmed by the smell of the treat and started pre-empting the end of the course. It had always been impossible to queue with Zak and I had to depend on others if we were to get anywhere near a ring, so when he stopped 'doing' the courses with the fear of him running out of the ring to get at the treats or potentially attack another dog I decided to hang up his agility lead. He continued to love the shows that we went to, feeling really at home both in the caravan and van.

I nearly lost Zak a couple of years ago when he collapsed at home and was at death's door - he was quickly diagnosed with Addison's disease. After that it was daily pills and regular visits to the vet – which he loved. He loved people and most people loved him. Whether it was down to the disease I will never really know, but he found it harder and harder to cope with other dogs – both ones he knew and ones he didn't. And there were others he loved – Berry, Fly, Bonnie, Mango, Sasha, Rou, Toby and of course Rockett - to name a few specials!



Maybe it was the move, maybe it was a progression of his disease, but his aggression towards other dogs increased, to the point where it was becoming unmanageable. So it has been with a heavy heart, and after much consultation that the time had come to let Zak go. He was very peaceful and hopefully he is now free and happy to run and chase bunnies again. RIP.

Aileen Watson

My First Foster Dog

Back in March 2012, I fell in love with a very small terrier called Parkie who was being fostered by Wendy Botto, for Many Tears Rescue, and I ended up adopting him to join my 3 other dogs. Parkie is a wonderful, super little character and despite being vertically challenged in the leg department, he loves agility! Then a few weeks ago, after dropping a few hints - Wendy who is never without a foster dog, and has rehomed more than 25 this year, asked me if fostering was something I would like to do, and once I'd thought about it I said yes!



So after completing the fosterer application and being approved by Many Tears, my first dog duly arrived. He was called Asterix, and was a 1 year old delightful fluffy terrier crossed with Sheltie/Pom/Teddy Bear?!

This little fellow had seen a lot of changes in his life – he had ended up in a pound, been rescued, sent to Many Tears Centre, neutered then sent to Blewbury –but for all that he was such a lovely person!

He looked too pretty a dog to have never been in a house, but for the first day, I did wonder as he 'marked' everything he could, and I thought that evening perhaps I would be

stuck with him for a while! Why on earth had I thought fostering was a good idea?? Thankfully, he stopped that behaviour very quickly, and it turned out that he was house trained and a real lovely dog to have around. He very quickly made himself at home, and was a joy to have.

After a couple of days, I took him to Wendy's field and got him popping a couple of little jumps, and got some photos and videos – he looked like a cracking small agility prospect. All the dogs in foster, as well as the ones still in kennels with Many Tears, have their own profile page on the website, which means as a fosterer you are not completely responsible for finding your dog a home. You are however asked to send in an update and photographs for the dog's profile page on the website so people can see how the dog has settled to home life etc. Of course if you can pass the word about, put posts on social media and any canine sites the chances of finding a home can dramatically improve.

Now I know I'm a grown up and the whole concept of fostering is temporary, but I didn't expect to feel the way I did when after only a few days he received an application to be adopted. Oh the emotions!! Happy for him, sad for me, and then worried. What if he wasn't what they expected, what if he went and was naughty? The family that had applied for him were not local, and were therefore not going to meet him until the application was approved and Home Check passed.

It was a very stressful and emotional week – BUT, when the family arrived, it was very clear that they were going to love him to bits and vice versa. And I have to say that after waving him off, and having a little cry, I can't tell you how happy I've been to receive texts with photos of him in his new home, and although I probably won't see him again - and if I did he probably wouldn't remember me – I feel that the whole process has been totally worth it.

So whilst the tissues were still damp, and my eyes a little red, with so many dogs looking for homes, Asterix was very quickly replaced by the adorable terrier Scamp, who just so wants to please, and a cute puppy called Jessica, who is going to be one very fast agility dog! (Really want to keep this one!) So I'm going to fall in love again, and wish I could keep them both, but if I did, I would have too many of my own dogs and then I couldn't help find the others a home, so I'll put on a brave face (who am I trying to kid!) when the adopters come, and wave goodbye knowing that another little dog has found their forever home. ☺

Dawn Graham

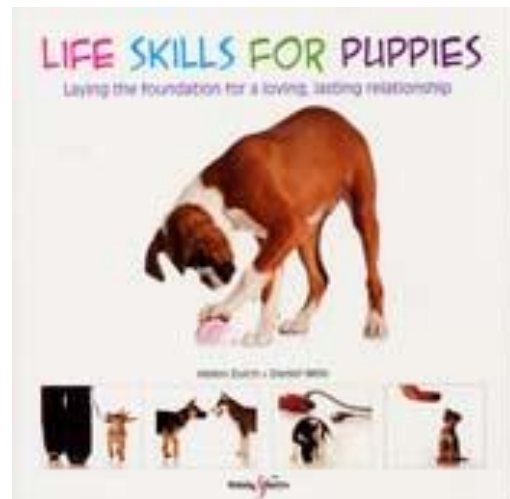
Beyond Socialisation: teaching the life skills that enable dogs to succeed in human society

This was the rather grand title for a seminar that quite a few of our club members attended, which was organised by Four Paws Dog Training Club.

Professor Daniel Mills started by offering evidence to de-bunk the idea that there is a critical period during which you have to socialise your puppy. This is the, and I quote from one article I found on the web, “the sensitive period of development in which socialisation and habituation must occur and be properly completed if the dog is not to grow up to be maladjusted”. The exact time of this critical period does vary a bit depending on where you look – but typically starts as early as possible, and stops around 12 to 14 weeks.

Prof Mills suggested that the sample size in the early experiments were too small to be significant, and suggested that there was no such thing as the ‘fearless’ and ‘fearful’ puppy stages, and that the timeliness of socialisation was unimportant. He stated that a significantly large proportion of dogs he saw with nervous behavioural problems had been to puppy classes, and hence he felt that these didn’t work. He felt that the most important thing was that every new experience for a puppy is pleasurable and offered ten rules that dogs need to live happily with humans.

Dr Hannah Wright proceeded to explain each of these ten rules – the things all dogs need. Professor Mills has just co-written a book (and had copies for sale) covering these rules, and I take the following from the book: ‘Life Skills for Puppies’ by Helen Zulch & Daniel Mills.



1. ‘I have confidence’. Two things are important for a dog to have confidence: as puppies, they need to have experienced everything that they may come across during their life, and that experience needs to have been a pleasurable experience.

2. ‘I like surprises’. Key points here is that if a puppy is anxious having spotted something strange (e.g. plastic bag caught in a hedge and blowing) the puppy is allowed to approach the article in his own time and not forced. Making a noise (not too loud) to startle (not scare) the puppy, then throwing a few treats on the ground, should help it to associate noises with positive things.

3. ‘I like to be touched’. Dogs need to tolerate handling of all parts of their bodies by their owners and strangers (e.g. vets). Puppies need to be taught that being handled is a pleasurable experience.

4. ‘I can’t do everything I want, when I want it; I don’t expect to get everything I want when I want it’. This is about dogs being able to exercise self-control and to tolerate frustration. Examples include not jumping up to greet people, not grabbing at toys and walking without pulling on the lead.

5. ‘I can be calm’. Teaching a pup to calm down when excited (eg stopping a game) and to relax and amuse himself. It’s important that the owner instigates the end of these quiet sessions.

6. ‘I know (and can follow) the rules’. Owners need to establish the ground rules of the house and then stick to them.

7. 'I can listen'. This is about dogs paying attention to the handler for the next command/cue.

8. 'I have good manners and can say "please".' Dogs need to behave politely towards other dogs and people.

9. 'I need help to make the right choices'. This is about giving dogs choices, but helping puppies make the right choice. An example where a handler would help is when a puppy notices another dog in the distance when out on a walk. The handler shouldn't wait until the puppy rushes off to greet the dog, but call him the moment he sees the other dog, then making a huge fuss when he comes to you.

10. 'I have the right to be a dog and to express my opinion politely'. Puppies & dogs need time to perform normal canine behaviours – e.g. chewing, sniffing, playing and running.

I haven't read it cover to cover but having dipped into it, the book appears to be good and offers lots of advice on puppy training, including worksheets for each life rule.

My view on the seminar: I don't think there was much new stuff in this seminar, but there was some good stuff packaged differently. I've always been a bit sceptical of the 'fearless/fearful' stages of puppies – though it does make sense that in the wild, fox/wolf cubs need to be cautious & fearful of new experiences when they start to venture away from the den – for their own survival.

I think 10 is too many rules, and some of them seem a bit contrived. People can generally remember six things fairly easily, so I would suggest reducing them to 6 by merging some of them.

One really interesting snippet of information was that puppies brought up in towns who were in regular contact with traffic were significantly less fearful than those brought up in a quieter, rural environment. I think this is partly because one of the most important things about socialisation and habituation is that one experience is not enough – puppies need to continue having pleasurable experiences in different situations throughout their lives.

Jacky Hutchinson

One of Professor Mills' more radical suggestions was to teach all dogs to wear muzzles and to muzzle your dog on walks. I think his argument was that if your dog is muzzled they are absolutely protected from any accusations that they have bitten anyone. This did come up in the context that someone in the audience had just asked about a dog that reacted to other dogs I think. This generated quite a lot of debate.... See below...

Alison Pearce

There were a few bits I wasn't sure I agreed with such as Muzzles but I think we all agreed on that. A few things I wrote down that I was going to apply to my fosters and new agility dogs too include:-

'Let the dog investigate - don't impose'

'Give dogs the time to work out situations for themselves'

'Teach dogs to like surprises' e.g. a loud bang and something good follows - I already knew it but sometimes it takes someone to point it out again to really make you work on it.

I also liked that he mentioned working out the developmental stage that a dog is at when it comes from a rescue, when you do not know its background and that due to being slightly older they would experience things slightly differently even if they had little prior exposure to the world, simply due to their age (e.g. could be more frightened as more aware of the emotion of fear as had it longer or had longer time without humans) - again pretty obvious but made me more conscious of it. Would have been interesting had they actually gone into depth how they would overcome issues but maybe that is another seminar, this did seem to be quite a 'vague' seminar, did other feel that or is it the wrong word.

There was lot of info about dismissing earlier theories due to limited info collected for them, but I wasn't quite sure that I came away having learnt anything else? Lots of puppies who go to socialisation classes end up in behaviour clinics, but is that cos the owners just went to puppy

classes then did nothing else with the dog? It was almost as if he was poo pooing puppy classes but surely that would be even more detrimental to the more ignorant dog owners? As you can probably tell, I didn't really come away feeling it had been very worthwhile...

Wendy Botto

I could see where he was coming from with the muzzle bit but I don't think he explained it or sold it very well! Also I agree that the sample size for the socialisation period study was far too small to draw any proper conclusions from, and I agreed with him about the developmental stages not being rigid nor the same for every puppy.

However I agree with Wendy that he shouldn't have belittled puppy socialisation classes so much - what about all those puppies who have been to them and NOT had to go to a behaviourist?? Agreed some people should never run them but equally there are lots of good ones out there.

I liked the book - it is only really saying things that we all probably do without even thinking about it, but not everyone is in that fortunate position - and for me just stating it and making me think again was good. I think it makes a very good handbook for new puppy owners even if some of the topics do repeat, and maybe that's not a bad thing.

It was interesting to apply the book to Mischief - and to see which bits I'd been blasé about and assumed she would be OK with! She's certainly the most "thinking" puppy I've had, I can't rush her into new things.

Sue Cuddon

This is the first time I have heard either of these speakers. I found Dr Hannah Wright very easy to listen to and very clear in her explanations. I found Professor Daniel Mills required much concentration, as at times he seemed to be trying to transmit so much knowledge to us all at once he kept interrupting his own sentences and I thought he might explode with enthusiasm. I love listening to people who have a passion for their subject, and I would definitely attend future talks by both speakers.

My personal interpretation was not that Prof. Mills was rubbishing all puppy classes. I took his point to mean that not all puppy classes are good at preventing future problems. The evidence for this was that many of his clients (owners of adults dogs with behaviour problems, referred from vets) had attended puppy classes. Therefore either something was going wrong at puppy classes, or puppy classes were not enough on their own to ensure a well-balanced dog who is a pleasure to own.

I think it is a bit of both, and as I have been involved in teaching puppy classes for a little while, I would totally agree that an hour a week is not enough on its own. Most of us know from our own dogs, you can have a dog who can do something perfectly in one context yet not in any other... and nobody lives full time in the village hall, so puppy training needs to continue at home and on walks!

I didn't buy the book on the night, as they ran out of copies, but I did buy it off Amazon the next day! I think the book is excellent for new owners who have never had a dog before, and addresses many things that new puppy owners ask. The book is clearly laid out, the concepts are simple and there is no training jargon. It also has gorgeous pictures of puppies throughout, which certainly kept me turning the pages! We have many owners who come to class with their children, and the children would also be able to read and understand the book.

I did enjoy the talk – it confirmed some things I felt I already knew, but also reminded me to look at some things again. However it was only a short talk and I felt frustrated that it was very much a “taster” of the work that the team have been doing. I greatly look forward to a “Teaching Life Skills” book aimed at puppy class trainers in the future.

Alison Pearce

WDTC on Facebook



Just a reminder to everyone that we have a club facebook page which is great for getting in contact with other members and hearing about the latest club news. Search for WDTC and choose the one with a paw print. It's a closed group so you have to request to join.

Gill Rhodes

flyball

I've had a number of enquiries from beginners about flyball so thought I'd write a bit about flyball and what's happening.



Flyball is a team sport where a team of 4 dogs and their owners compete against another team in a relay race. Each dog has to go over 4 jumps, pick up a ball from a box and then run back over the jumps to the owner. The team that completes this with the fastest, without any faults wins. Dogs can compete in starter competitions from 12 months old and at full competitions from 18 months old.

Flyball is a great sport for dogs that love retrieving balls! Your dog doesn't have to be the fastest to do well as each team of dogs runs in a division dependant on the speed of that team, so you are only competing against teams of a similar standard.

Small dogs are just as important as larger dogs in flyball as the height of the smallest dog in the team determines what height jump all the dogs in that team jump over. Flyball is a great sport for encouraging your dog to go ahead of you over jumps and therefore can help your dog improve at dog agility too.

Warning... flyball is a very exciting (and addictive) sport for dogs and their owners and can be also be very noisy! My terrier is very quiet at agility but when he's ready to race in flyball he is so excited he starts barking and doesn't stop until I release him to get his ball!

WDTC used to have its own flyball section but unfortunately this had to close as we didn't have enough members to keep running. When our flyball section closed several of our members (including myself) joined another local flyball team 'Mad Mutts'. Recently Mad Mutts lost their training ground, so we have been unable to take on and train new members but we are now in the last stages of getting a new training ground in Blewbury and hope to start training very shortly.

In December we will be holding a taster day (weather permitting!) £4 per dog on either Sun 2nd or 9th December. Anyone who is interested in having a go at flyball, or just finding out more please contact Sam Bawden who runs Matt Mutts flyball

Gill Rhodes

Dates for your diary



Sunday 9th December – Club competition afternoon – Blewbury – more details to follow

Thursday 20 December is the last training day this year. You are invited to come for the whole evening (from 7.30) and there will be fun competitions, food & drink and a Christmas theme. More details later.

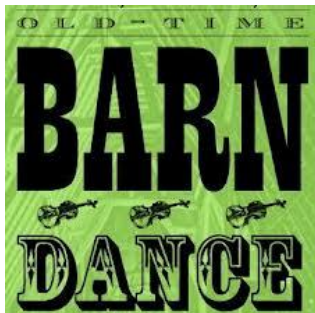
Thursday 10 January 2013 is the first training session of next year. In order to spread the work of putting out & putting away equipment, and give everyone a turn at the late night, we rotate the classes each year. This year, we'll be making a few changes to the groups before the end of the year in order to make room for a fresh intake of new members.

January 2013 is the start of the new year and your **membership subscriptions** will be due. Next month a form will be sent to all members (and will be available to download from the Wiki). It's amazing how many people forget that they have changed mobile phone numbers or email addresses during the year...



Saturday 19 January - **agility seminar** with a great trainer - Toni Dawkins. Instructors who have taken at least one 8 week session in 2012 get first refusal (and it's free for them - a small thank-you from the club for all their work) and it will be offered to others if there are spaces.

Saturday 16 February - **WDTc Barn Dance**, 7-11pm at Manor Primary School, Didcot.



We are holding a barn dance, with the same brilliant caller and barn dance group as last year 'Grandma's YoYo' with legendary caller DON ROUSE. Jacket potato with variety of fillings and salad included. Bring your own drinks. Tickets £10 adults, £5 children - all WDTc members and family welcome. Tickets available nearer the time but reserve this date now! A great opportunity for us all to get together, you don't need to know how to barn dance - the caller tells you what to do and going wrong is half the fun.

March - the club **AGM** is held in March - the date has yet to be decided. As well as the election of the committee and a review of the year, we make a few presentations and partake of nibbles & drinks. It's a good opportunity to meet & chat with other club members.

Dates for your diary cont.



Thursday 18 to Sunday 21 April is our club agility show.

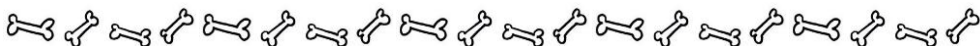
We do expect ALL club members to help out as the income from the show funds the equipment for the club (though obviously if you're invited to the wedding of a close relative in the Bahamas, we would understand it if you chose the Bahamas over Newbury Showground!).

From early afternoon on **Thursday** we'll be marking out the 250 camping slots, the rings and the trade stands.

On **Friday** we need ring parties to set up each of the nine rings and direct the caravans as they arrive.

Then we're down to the show itself on **Saturday & Sunday** where lots of help is needed on the rings and with all sorts of things in the marquee and around the showground.

No agility knowledge is necessary for many jobs, so family members are also welcome to help out. This is a busy weekend, but with lots of members helping out it is also great fun.



*Don't forget to send your articles, pictures, questions and reports
before the 31st December for the next issue!*