

Watchdog!

WALLINGFORD DOG TRAINING CLUB

September 2013



Dogs in Need Finalists

Ian and Dino large G4 final winners, Rockett and Aileen CR in G3 final



Stop press:

Huge congratulations to Carolyn Davies and Ollie and Jenny Kimber running Guv (Jenny Lovegrove's dog) who have qualified for the Novice event at Olympia on Sunday 22nd December. Well done and looking forward to cheering you on!

Editor's corner

Wow, what happened to August? I think I blinked and missed it! Am I getting repetitive if I say well done everyone, some really great results?! Wallingford is now at the highest position I have ever seen on the Agility Voice point table, so don't forget to add your places and clear rounds on there too if you are an Agility Club member.

There were a variety of longer shows running through August – KCI Festival, Dogs in Need, Adams, Devon Dogs, TAG and the one we went to – Pembroke. My first visit to Pembrokeshire and it is certainly a scenic area, and when we got the tide times right we found some lovely beaches for the dogs.



For Herbie and Fig it was their first trip to the beach and they LOVED it! Herbie also had a little reunion with one of his brothers and walked around the agricultural show taking in all sorts of sights and sounds. Agility on the beach was surreal but fantastic, and a great time was had by all.

It is feeling autumnal now, and for us there are just a couple of camping shows left. Time to think about winter training plans (definitely a lot on my list there!) and perhaps book a few workshops and training days. Lots to look forward to, including hopefully another club outing to Olympia – shall we see if we can shout even louder this year? Deadline for the next issue is the 4th October.

Alison Pearce

Show News

At the club AGM back in March the issue of our traditional show date falling on Easter weekend in 2014 was discussed. Members voted still hold a show, and Aileen took on the action to try and find an alternative date. Despite making every effort, it's not been possible to do this, so the committee issued the following statement.

Wallingford Dog Training Club will NOT be holding a show in 2014

In 2014 the traditional date for Wallingford Dog Training Club's Open Agility Show falls over the Easter weekend. The committee has decided not to compete with all the other Easter shows next year. We have looked hard for an alternative date in 2014 without success, so WDTC will not be holding a show in 2014, but plan to be back in 2015 on our traditional dates: Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th April.

WDTC Committee

We will, however, be offering to do more ring parties for other clubs where clubs pay for ring parties in 2014. We did this recently, and the money was spent paying for a takeaway for all members. It was great!

Jacky Hutchinson

KC Show Results



Top ten places only are shown below... well done everyone!

Dordale 24-25 Aug

Jenny & Guv 1st G6 Agility (55)
Annette & Maze 1st C3-4 Agility (165) - *winning into G5*
Aileen & Oz 1st Tunnel Challenge (Sat eve)
Aileen & Ozzie 3rd C3-5 Adams Derby (P&S) (127) - *qualified for final next July*
Sarah & Merlin 3rd CG1-3 Jumping (180)
Kevin & Fell 4th C5-7 Agility (85)
Sarah & Merlin 4th Colimanor C1-2 Ag (57)
Sarah & Merlin 6th CG1-3 Jumping (175)
Jenny & Guv 7th C4-7 Jumping (123)

Adams 24-26 Aug

Annette & Maze 1st Adams Derby C3-5 (P&S) (113) - *qualified for final next July*
Ian & Dino 1st G1-4 Jumping (~45 G4)
Ian & Dino 1st G4-7 Agility (~45 G4)
Jill & Cass 3rd C4-7 Jumping (114)
Jill & Cass 4th G4-7 Agility (~50 G5)

Pembroke 13-15 Aug

Gill & Shade 1st G6 Jumping (~30)
Kevin & Fell 1st C4-7 Steeplechase (67)
Gill & Shade 2nd C4-7 Helter Skelter (62)
Gill & Shade 2nd C6-7 Agility (40)
Kevin & Fell 3rd C6-7 Jumping (38)
Kevin & Fell 4th C6-7 Agility (39)
Gill & Shade 4th C4-7 Steeplechase (74)
Gill & Shade 5th Rest of the World Agility (i.e. not Welsh!) C3-7 (102)

Dogs in Need 13-17 Aug

Ian & Dino 1st G4 Agility (77) - *into G5*
Tania & Kia 1st G3 Jumping (62)
Rory & Ammo 2nd Junior Jumping (25)
Annette & Maze 2nd G4 Agility (81)
Gio-Gio & Tatti 2nd YKC ADOTY (6)
Gio-Gio & Bambi 3rd YKC ADOTY (5)
Gio-Gio & Bambi 3rd Junior Jumping all heights (26)
Dawn & Daisy 3rd G1 Jumping (105)
Jo & Pip 3rd G4 Agility (81)
Jill & Cass 4th G5 Agility (97)
Ian & Dino 4th G4 Jumping (79)
Aileen & Rockett 5th G3 Jumping pt3 (120)
Rory & Ammo 5th Junior Agility (25)
Annette & Maze 5th G4 Agility (79)
Gio-Gio & Tatti 5th Junior Jumping all heights (26)
Rory & Pilot 5th YKC ADOTY (17)
Ian & Dino 6th G4 Jumping

Aileen & Rockett 6th G3 Jumping pt3 (122)
Dawn & Daisy 6th G1 Jumping (108)
Ian & Dino 10th G4 Jumping



Above: Daisy with 3rd, 6th and CR at DIN

DIN Finalists

Ian & Dino 1st G4 Final (*pic on cover!*)
Rory & Ammo 1st Junior Final (*pic below*)
Gio Gio and Bambi Junior Final
Gio Gio and Tatti Junior Final
Aileen & Rockett CR G3 Final



KC International Festival 9-11 Aug

Gio-Gio & Bambi 1st International Young Handler U12 Agility (5)
Gio-Gio & Bambi 1st International Young Handler U12 Jumping (5)
Sarah & Merlin 2nd KC Starters Jump (63)
Sarah & Merlin 3rd G2 Agility (53)
Gio-Gio & Bambi 3rd International Young Handler U12 all heights (23)
Sarah & Merlin 4th KC Starters Agility (63)
Jill & Cass 4th C4-5 Agility pt 1 (165)
Jo & Pip 4th CG4-5 Agility (165)

Pam & Martha 5th Grade 3 jumping (76)
 Rory & Ozzie 5th International Young
 Handler Agility (24)
 Rory & Ammo 6th International Young
 Handler Agility (24)
 Gill & Shade 7th G6 Jumping (231)
 Aileen & Rockett 8th G3 Jumping pt 1 (164)
 Jill & Cass 10th G5 Jumping (160)

Diamond 3-4 Aug

Gill & Bertie 1st G3-5 Ag (~20 G3) - into G4
 Sarah & Merlin 1st G1-2 Jumping (~40 G2)
 – third jumping win – into G3 (pic right)
 Gill & Mindy 2nd G1-4 Ag (~20 G3)
 Gill & Mindy 2nd G1-4 Jump (~20 G3)
 Aileen & Ozzie 3rd G4-5 agility (~ 60 G4)
 Aileen & Rockett 7th G3 jumping (159)

Agility Club 27-28 July

Sarah & Merlin 1st G1- 2 Jump (75 G2)
 Gill & Mindy 2nd C1-3 Jumping (92)
 Gill & Mindy 2nd G1-3 Jump (~50 G3)
 Ian & Dino 2nd G4 Agility (130)
 Jenny & Guv 2nd G5 Agility
 Sarah & Merlin 2nd C1-2 Jumping (190)
 Sarah & Merlin 2nd G1-2 Agility (78 G2)
 Gill & Mindy 3rd G3-5 Agility (~50 G3)
 Jenny & Pip 4th C3-5 Jumping Pt 1 (246)
 Gill & Bertie 4th G3-5 Agility (~50 G3)
 Aileen & Ozzie 5th G4-5 Jump (~180 G4)
 Jenny & Guv 6th C3-6 Jumping Pt 2 (247)
 Gill & Bertie 7th C1-3 Jumping (92)

Adams 20- 24 July

Aileen & Rockett 3rd G1-4 Agility (~130 G3)

Aileen & Ozzie 4th G1-4 Jump (~80 G4)
 Aileen & Rockett 6th G1-4 Jump (~180 G3)
 Gill & Shade 6th G4-7 Agility (~120 G6)
 Gill & Shade 8th C4-7 Jumping (203)
 Aileen & Rockett 8th G1-4 Jump (~170 G3)

Newlands 20 July

Sarah & Merlin 2nd G1-2 Jumping (172)
 Sarah & Merlin 3rd C1-2 Jumping (165)



Above: Merlin with his three G2 jumping trophies and rosettes from wins at Lansdown, Agility Club and Diamond moving him and Sarah up to G3.

Rescue update: Lilo now Lilly, fostered by Tori after an email appeal was sent out through the club and successfully rehomed through LRRS. The picture below shows she is very happy in her new home!



1st, 2nd and 3rd places only shown below!

Gio-Gio & Tatti 3rd Overall Juniors -
qualified for Grand Finals



In August we have been joined by lots of new members in the new Juniors sub-group at 8pm, and in the new Foundation group at 8.40pm. I look forward to learning a few names – humans and dogs!

Alison Pearce

Winter League



It is very sad, but the summer is almost over and autumn/winter is just around the corner. However, for those of you missing the summer already here is a little snippet of what is to come:

As a Club we have accepted an invitation to join a Winter League which means that on at least four occasions we will have the chance to participate in an indoor show against other clubs. The clubs involved in this league are: Thames, Cranborne, Vyne & Diamond Dogz.



The dates for the matches have been suggested as the following: October 19th, November 30th, January 18th, February 22nd; so might be worth noting in the diary and keeping available.

The league (like all leagues) is a point based system, so all runs will count as points for the Club. There will be a cost, but it is likely to be something like £10 for any competing dog possibly to cover all shows – but more of this once Jo, Jenny and I have been to a meeting. Once we know more we will be reporting back to you all.

More importantly the shows will all be held at Burchett's Green which is just before you get to Maidenhead – so not too far to travel. **All** paid up or honorary Wallingford members (you don't have to be training on a Thursday!) will be welcome to take part in the Winter League. Some of those of you who are members but don't come training might like to give it a go!

If you want more information please ask Aileen, Jo or Jenny. Aileen is our co-ordinator for the Winter League.

For those of you concerned about our match against Andover – don't panic, the away match is scheduled for Saturday 23rd November with the home match likely to be February 2014!

Aileen Watson

Dogs in Need Agility Show

This year was my first visit to the Dogs In Need Agility Show (DINAS), Ipswich and I LOVED it. I thought writing about it for Watchdog would be really easy – but there was so much to do and so much on offer, that I don't know where to start – and then there's agility.....

Joking aside, 21 years ago, DINAS started as a holiday for people with dogs. It has now grown into a huge event, with 13 rings (numbered 1 -12, plus ring 99 to avoid superstition over the number 13!), 800 camping pitches, trade stands, catering vans, daily farm shop, cream teas etc etc. Trinity Park is a permanent showground with tarmac roads, and venue halls onsite. Camping facilities include optional electric hook up, and there are toilet blocks a plenty, and good portable showers provided for those like me in a tent. As well as the usual trade stands selling dog toys and food, there were craft stands, and a caravan stand selling gas, and camping accessories. And if you don't have a caravan but would like to camp in one, you can even hire a caravan which will be set up ready for your arrival!



(left: Parkie waiting for his breakfast)

Although it is now a large event, the organisers really have managed to keep the holiday feel, and the friendly and fun atmosphere. There are classes available for everyone, from Grade 1 to 7, as well as junior classes, pairs, fancy dress and finals that you can qualify for. Runs are limited to 2 runs per dog per day, and Thursday is a "day off" unless you are in the small, medium or junior final. (Large finals are on the Sunday.) And if you fancied something more energetic on the Thursday – there is a Fun Run to enter, with proceeds being donated to charity.

For juniors, there were not only plenty of classes and fantastic additional training available most evenings, but also kids clubs, film afternoons, football matches, bouncy castles and acres of flat tarmac roads to cycle on – note to self.... take a bike next year!

For everyone, there was entertainment galore if you wanted to enter the holiday spirit. There was bingo, quiz night, a disco, Elvis and on Saturday live music from The NBS Band.

I had such a good time mixing my holiday with agility. I took 7 dogs with me (4 mine, 1 foster and 2 'holiday' boarders) (*pic right – editor's note, I didn't cut Dawn's head off, she did that before sending me the picture!*), and only competed with one dog. However they all had a ball! The exercise areas were large, and across the road there were some lovely walks through the woods, or you could use a large meadow adjacent. It was quite a sight on an evening seeing groups of friends with multiple dogs having fun! And the beach is also only a short drive away, with lots of dog friendly spots if you fancy a change.



All in all, I can highly recommend this show, and I will definitely be putting next year's dates in my diary August 11th to 17th! For more information please see www.dogsinneedagility.com.

Dawn Graham



Goals! Did you set them this year? Have you achieved them this year? Where do you go from here?

I mentally set myself a few goals at the beginning of this year with my dogs and was just contemplating how things sometimes don't quite work the way you expect them.

Goal 1 – to work towards winning into G4 . This was achieved with Ozzie winning his third G3 jumping win at Wye Valley, so moved up to G4 at Lansdown – how amazing is that, because Lansdown was the show he won his first G3 jumping win last year!

Having achieved that, I am now working hard at trying to control and tighten turns when working in G4. It is a work in progress, and we continue to have to work on start line waits – he waits beautifully for Rory when he runs him in juniors and for Jenny when she on occasions runs him.

Goal 2 – who would get their Agility Warrant first? The aim has been to get Rockett to AW(G) before the end of the year, and I thought we had done that at BATS in May. I can remember being so excited when she got a 7th place in agility and jumping up and down (sorry Tori!) – we'd made it! Then I started writing up my points only to discover somewhere along the line I had miscounted by about 100 points, and so the counting started again.

As I write we are still just 6 points away, so more cake on the way I hope. In the meantime I realised that Ozzie had achieved enough points at Agility Club for his AW(B) – clever boy! More about Agility Warrants and points at another time! So still a goal to achieve – but nearly there!



Goal 3 – to get into a final. I guess I had hoped that Ozzie and I might work together to achieve a place in the semi finals working towards Olympia – no chance. We have a long way to go before that becomes a reality, so that remains a goal for next year.

However, it was fun, amazing and a delight to watch Carolyn and Ollie make it through to the semi's and they are next week as I write so here's hoping they are successful – Go Ollie! However, although Olympia was in my mind, I would accept any final.

Both Ozzie and Rockett qualified to take part in the KCI Novice Cup. Rockett managed two clear rounds, but was not up in the places, so did not get through – but well done to Sarah and Merlin who did get through in the Starters Cup – what an amazing achievement.

Then we went to DINAS where again there is a final on the Sunday for those who qualified over two days of competition.



Blow me! It wasn't Ozzie who qualified, it was Rockett and bless her she also got a fabulous clear round in the final, but was not fast enough for a place – so goal achieved but not the way I planned. Ozzie has now qualified for the Adams Derby final next year – so goal achieved with both dogs!

(Very well done to Ian and Dino who won the G4 final at DINAS – what a fabulous round that was)

Left: Rockett and Ozzie with their haul of rossies from KCI and DINAS!

Goals for next year, well some are still there like Olympia, but others need to be worked on. Are they achievable – might be worth discussing with a trainer. How to achieve them – break them down into smaller aims and then share with trainers. And then – you've got to be in it to win it – so work out which shows you want to go to. I know there are a lot of UKA achievable goals – so one of my goals for Mickey might well be Beginners Steeplechase Final – who knows!

When setting goals, be realistic. If you are new to the sport, a realistic goal might be to compete for the first time at a show – find out from people what you need to do, how to enter and hopefully someone from Club will be at the same show and give you moral support. How you get there may be the aims for an 8 week course; your dog going ahead to a tunnel or doing a set of full height jumps. All goals can be broken down with realistic targets being achieved along the way.

Aileen Watson

When Agility is the Reward

In the last issue, in the first of what will hopefully be a series of articles on rewards, Jacky referred briefly to dogs who find the agility itself rewarding – how do you reinforce those dogs? And how do you correct them?

If you watch an agility class, often those dogs who break the start line jump their contacts too. They want to GET ON WITH IT, and just RUN RUN RUN – they can be adrenalin junkies. Sometimes this lack of self control can be seen in other contexts away from agility. Who is the dog who barges full speed through the door when it opens a crack? Who is the dog who cannot walk next to you when you have a ball in your hand without jumping and grabbing it?

So for the second article I thought I would share how Kevin and I worked on an agility training problem with such a dog. Meet Fell (*right*).



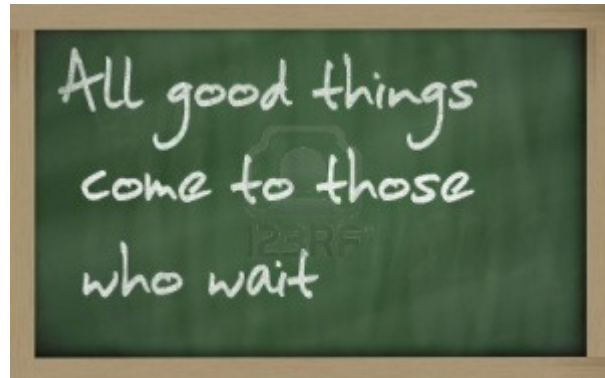
A few years ago Fell progressively lost her start line wait. It was very erratic, sometimes she would wait, sometimes she would wait then break, sometimes she would simply fly when the lead came off. At training Fell would be taken back to the start and would usually hold her second wait. At a show she would usually be allowed to run as the timer had started!

When training a wait in the first place, you are hopefully told to go back and reward the dog in position. Teach the dog that staying put is rewarding. Go back and play with them, feed them sausage, tell them they are clever, that's all good. However, if the dog learns that staying put never gets rewarded at shows, and breaking the wait always gets rewarded with agility (which they love) then you have a problem.

Like most handlers, the first time Fell broke her wait, Kevin was taken by surprise, but wanted to run the course, and kept up as best he could and cobbled together some kind of round. Next time, he probably said "wait" louder, and probably repeated it a few times while glaring over his shoulder. This works at first, but at each stage, no matter how fierce you get or how much you walk backwards, the dog learns that waiting is optional, and they get to run anyway.

The way we tackled this with Fell was to teach her that getting to do the agility was conditional on her waiting until told to go.

First question – does the dog understand a wait? Yes, with no agility in the picture Fell would wait beautifully, one command only, even with distractions.



Second question – can you stop the dog from continuing without you on an agility course? Fell is very sensitive to Kevin running with her – any hesitation from him and she hesitates, and if he stops running she stops easily and can be recalled – she will not continue taking random obstacles without him i.e. she will not run ahead to self-reward.

Third question – do you have access to somewhere to work on this with just the dog in question and a stooge dog? This is not essential, but it makes for much more effective learning, as you can get a lot of repetitions in a short space of time.

We began this re-training at a time when there were very few shows, as it was important that Fell did not get to practice breaking her wait at shows.

We went up to our training field with Alf as the stooge dog, so to get Fell excited (her normal state at agility!) Alf did a little sequence first, then Kevin set Fell up. Led out. Looked over his shoulder. And a Fell-shaped blur shot past him. Oh dear. Well actually, oh good, this was exactly what we needed – you can't teach a consequence to something if you can't make that thing happen.

This was not about telling her off, it was about teaching her that there was now a consequence to her actions – you break, you don't run. I told Kevin to think of "disappointed dad" and the phrase he chose was just "oh dear" and he would walk off the course with disappointed body language. Think of your parents or your boss – do you remember a quiet, sad, disappointed discussion, where you let someone down,

not anger and shouting, where probably you got a bit cross back in return, even if only privately.

So Kevin said “oh dear”, then called Fell back, put her on lead, no game, just walked her to the side, said nothing. Her face was totally bemused. I set Alf up, did a few jumps, big game, and then we gave Fell another go.

At first, Fell would break quite a lot, and each time she would get “oh dear”, disappointed dad walks her off the course, and she has to watch Alf have a go. The consequence for breaking her wait was missing her turn. If Fell held her wait until the “ok” she got to run something simple and fast (remember, adrenalin junky, agility is a reward) with a massive game at the end that carried on all through Alf’s next turn too.



Kevin found this process quite frustrating himself, the temptation was to repeat “wait wait wait”, to watch Fell over his shoulder, to tell her “no” if she broke, which may help for that one run, but in the long run none of that would help her self control, which is what was really needed. Remember at a show if your dog breaks, the judge may allow you to put them back, and you may get a lovely clear round after, but if they have been over the first jump before you put them back you have still got an E. We needed to teach Fell to choose to wait first time.

After a few sessions with Alf at the field, we felt Fell was getting the idea. Her success rate was much higher, and I started throwing in other distractions – walking behind or in front of her, having a conversation with Kevin pretending the judge wasn’t ready, throwing toys on the floor, playing with Alf next to the first jump – all things that could happen at shows. If she broke the response was still the same disappointed “oh dear” and she missed her turn. Fell showed she understood what was happening by the reaction to “oh dear” as she would immediately stop and come back to Kevin.

Now Fell was ready for Kevin to put the plan into action at club and it was really important to have supportive class members and trainers. The process was exactly the same, if Fell broke her wait, “oh dear”, and she didn’t get to run. For a few weeks the class were on their toes, ready to step in to run straight away if Fell didn’t wait. Then after the next dog, she would get another attempt. There was no other training goal at this point for Fell, it didn’t matter if she never did any of the sequences, it was all about getting that wait. Thank you to everyone who helped with this!

After a few weeks, there was some improvement, but Fell had settled into a pattern, she would break the first one or two, then wait fine for the rest of the lesson. For a show, this was clearly still not going to be good enough, as usually you only have three runs in one day! Due to the history of having been allowed to run on broken waits in the past, when the anticipation of that first run was high Fell was still not using any self control.

So we upped the consequence. If Fell broke her first wait at club, she got “oh dear”, put back on a lead, walked out of the arena (no toy, no talking, no eye contact) and put back in the van. Very clear consequence – if you break you don’t get to play. Kevin gave her five minutes to think about it, went and got her out, and she waited first time.

Gradually there was improvement at club, some weeks she would be brilliant, some weeks she would break and “oh dear” she would miss a turn. The key was never to think it was fixed – the consequence ALWAYS had to be there if she did not do as asked and wait on the start. So, time to try it at shows.

This stage proved to be the hardest for Kevin. He hated walking courses knowing he may not get beyond the first jump. The first time Fell broke her wait at a show and got “oh dear”, put back on lead, walked to van, no game, no speaking, no eye contact, put away, her face was a picture. I could almost hear her thinking “But we didn’t run the course? But you never do that at **shows?**”.

The worst day we had was two broken waits, then she held it for the third run. Kevin would warn the person queued behind him that if she didn’t wait, he would leave the ring, so they were not caught on the hop. Over the following months, she settled at an average of one broken wait per weekend – not always the first run. Then came a weekend with no broken waits. *Woohoo!*



Fell still occasionally breaks a wait at training, and she still gets told “oh dear” and misses her turn. But I cannot remember the last time she broke a wait at a show – I think perhaps the harsher consequence of not getting another go at running for hours, or even that day, perhaps has made it sink in more for her.

Left: Fell with her trophies and rosettes from Pembroke – yes the beach trophy is a plastic bucket!

Looking back, Kevin would be the first to agree that one reason the problem was so hard to fix was because it had been allowed to continue for so long. It took a lot of determination on his part to treat it as a training exercise, try to stay calm, let the dog learn from her mistakes. Reward = agility. No reward = no agility. Providing the dog has this pattern learnt in advance, with a cue word so they understand what is happening, removing the possibility of doing agility is a huge consequence and you can use it in the ring.

Of course, hopefully it goes without saying that if you have a dog who lacks motivation, who breaks their start line wait to go off sniffing or to say hi to spectators, then removing the possibility of continuing the course is not going to fix that issue. A dog who breaks their wait to do something **other** than agility needs a different kind of training and a different kind of reward – watch this space!

Alison Pearce

Don't forget to send your pictures, successes, stories, show reports, judging reports, demo reports or whatever else before the deadline of 4th October for the next issue