



# Starters League 2012/2013

Last year Michelle asked me if I would be interested in taking over as Captain for the Starters League Agility Team. With limited competitive (3 summers) experience I wasn't that sure, but discussed it with Kylee Noad (who is equally inexperienced) and we decided we would do it between us. One of the reasons I said yes was that the vast majority of the team had little or no previous competition experience, so didn't feel that I was teaching old dogs new tricks! So off we went to the pre-season meeting to meet the other Team Captains and the groups were drawn; we would be competing against Worcester, Tuffley and Wye Valley.

Our first match was away against Tuffley, while we lost the Agility and Jumping rounds and therefore the match. We won the Relay and congratulations go to Stuart and Flake who got 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Agility and Clive and Tanya who got 4<sup>th</sup> in the jumping, with clears in the Jumping by Kylee with Teasel, Titch with Reina and myself with Spice.

A couple of weeks later we were away against Wye Valley. Again we lost over all, losing the Agility and Jumping but again winning the Relay. This time Clive and Tanya got 4<sup>th</sup> in both Agility and Jumping with a clear for myself with Spice in the Agility.

After Christmas we had our first home match against Bromsgrove. It was another match we were to lose overall, losing the Agility and Jumping but this time we lost the relay too! However Ella and Seren won the Agility and Sue and Bear were 3<sup>rd</sup> in the jumping. There were no unplaced clears on either team.

While these results might not seem particularly spectacular, the improvement in all of the team members can be seen at each match and is so exciting, I was telling one of my patients as I took her blood and she said 'It must make you so happy' and I replied 'Yes, it really does!'

So this was half way through the season. Our next match was an away match against Worcester at the beginning of February. As I drove up I was an hour and a half early so I thought 'lets stop at Over and buy some veg'. As I started to get out the car the phone went and it was Titch saying 'where are you?' 'Gloucester' I replied, 'the match is about to start' he said, I replied 'it's a 2pm start' 'No, a 1pm start' was his reply. 'Bother' (or something like that) I said, 'could you ask Kylee to run 2 dogs? I am 30 mins away.' Needless to say I did not make it in time and Miguel (my reserve, technically retired dog) didn't get to run in the competition. For the first time I was pleased of the new rule which allows each team to run 2 reserve dogs over the agility course before the change to jumping.



*Ella and Seren flying to victory*

So how did the team do? Overall we lost. However, congratulations go Jaz with Ren who were 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Agility, Mike with Merryn who were 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Agility and Clive with Tanya who received 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Agility. In the jumping the places went to Worcester but Clive with Tanya and Titch with Reina got clear rounds. So we had a lot to celebrate.

Three weeks later was our home match against Tuffley, and.... WE WON! And we won each section. I, and I hope the team, was over the moon! In the Agility Mike and Merryn were placed 3<sup>rd</sup> with Sophie and Toohey getting 4<sup>th</sup> in the Jumping. We had lots of clears: Agility-Jaz and Ren, Mike and Riley, Sophie and Toohey, Jackie and Spice, Helena and Millie. Jumping-Mike and Riley, Sue and Bear, Titch and Reina, Helena and Millie. Although we didn't get so many places it was the consistency of the team that won us the match!



*Mike and Merryn*

And so to the final match of the season home against Wye Valley. WE WON AGAIN! We won the Agility, the jumping was a draw and we lost the relay. Congratulations go to Mike with Merryn who got 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Clive with Tanya who were 3<sup>rd</sup>. Clear rounds went to Sue with Bear and Kylee with Teasel and Helena with Mille. In the jumping, congratulations again to Mike and Merryn who were 3<sup>rd</sup> and Jaz and Ren who were 4<sup>th</sup>. Clear rounds were run by Clive with Tanya, Sue with Bear, Jackie with Spice and Helena with Millie. Again the number of clears was great.

So that is the end of my first season as captain, I look forward to seeing the overall results but what gives me the biggest buzz is the improvement in the consistency of all the team's results but also their confidence in walking the course and ability to work out where they should be to give their dogs the most help.

Thanks go to the trainers, competitors and their dogs, other halves who come and spectate in the cold, and to all the people who come to make the home matches possible.

**Well done South Cotswold Starters League Team 2012/2013!**

*Jackie Dodington*

# Monty and Merryn



Those of you who attend Superdog will know me, I'm Monty, the youngest trainer on a Friday night. My Mummy was at Superdog the day before she went into labour with me, and I've been coming to training since I was two weeks old. I train my big sister Merryn who's a Welsh Springer Spaniel. I'd like to tell you all about living in a family with a dog. From the day I came out of hospital I have been walking Merryn twice a day come rain or shine. Mostly it has been fine but when I was three weeks old the whole family got attacked by wasps! Daddy, Merryn and I all got stung, but Mummy ran away. Walking Merryn is my favourite part of the day, when I was very young it was a good way to get me to calm down, and it also made sure that Mummy got out of the house every day. Now it is part of

my routine as I know that bedtime follows a walk. I have even started holding the lead myself.

A Springer Spaniel is a great family pet and Merryn is very loving. She always has to greet me in the morning and when I went on holiday she looked for me every day. She follows me and Mummy round the house all day, and sits with us while Mummy is settling me for sleep. When she hears a baby cry now, she always gets up and looks around because she knows it means work needs to be done. Everyone always remarks how lovely and sensible Merryn is; a far cry from when she was the naughtiest puppy in Angela's class. Mummy says that the most useful command she uses is leave it.... take it. When I'm eating my food Merryn has to leave it. She knows this and always sits in her bed waiting. When I've finished Mummy says "take it" and Merryn cleans up all the mess I've made. Very useful! Merryn gets told "leave it" a lot but sometimes Mummy isn't quick enough and Merryn has helped herself to the contents of my nappy!



I'm allowed to come to super dog even though it is past my bed time. I used to sleep in my car seat but now I stay awake and watch all the dogs. When I was small I used to cry and Daddy would take me outside. Pat said not to worry as the dogs have to get used to the noise. I am learning some commands of my own. I have to be gentle when I stroke Merryn or Baggins the cat, and Mummy shows me how to use an open hand rather than pulling. Not all dogs and cats are patient like ours and I am learning that I mustn't stroke pets without asking the owner. Apparently I'm not supposed to play splash in the drinking bowl either but I find it too fun to resist. I love growing up with animals and hope to be given the responsibility of feeding them and grooming Merryn when I get older. Coming to dog training has given my Mummy a lot of confidence because she had never had a dog before Merryn. I love coming too and as soon as I can talk more I'm going to start begging for a puppy of my own to train. I am well on the way as my first word was woof!



*Monty returning the cup Merryn won last year.*

*He took a bit of persuading to hand over the nice shiny toy.*

## Adventure in the Alpujarras by Clive Edgington

Pauline and I had been thinking about going to Spain on a longer holiday for ages but it only became a reality when my employer agreed for me to take 4 a week holiday at the end of one year and another 4 weeks at the beginning of the following year. Pauline works part time and from home and would be able to continue working while we were away - via the internet. Tanya would come with us and her only meaningful occupation is ..... dog agility! She's not bad at it, certainly she's a lot better than me! It took a while to sort out accommodation for December & January that wasn't in the middle of a beach resort - that would be desolate and deserted in the middle of Winter! Finally, we decided on a cottage just outside Orgiva in Andalucia, about 40 miles South East of Granada - it's the town that was the subject of the book 'Driving Over Lemons'.

Tanya is a Duck Toller. She is smart and willing but is incredibly headstrong! She's now 6 and over the years has given us many challenges and lots of fun. In being headstrong, when she gets an idea in her head, it's very difficult to get her to change her mind. (No, I didn't say she's a typical female!) A good example is squirrels. In the woods, if she sees or (more likely) smells a squirrel in the vicinity, she's immediately off after it and will only give it up when the squirrel runs up a tree. She has the same reaction with pheasant (if she's off the lead) and cats (unless they don't understand their true role in life which is to run away from a dog). This trait could be a big liability for an obedience class!! She's also very persistent - try telling her that a tennis ball is lost forever!



When we arrived in Orgiva at the beginning of December, it was a bit of a shock to find that a good proportion of the local dogs are only owned to guard a property and are kept on a relatively short tether **all** the time. The majority of the rest are allowed to roam freely either with their owners - or not! Many of those that roam freely, form street packs and it's impossible to sort out the roamers and strays from the feral. Inevitably, the local rubbish bins provide a handy gathering point so moving past those bins could sometimes be a bit of a challenge. Any dog owners we met with their dog on a lead were invariably also tourists. To meet a pack of street dogs when out on a stroll was initially a challenge but over a period of time, we got used to them and presumably vice versa.



Herds of goats and flocks of sheep regularly passed our front door each day on their way to and from pastures at the bottom of the valley. The goats would not stop browsing! They munched away at the verges at the side of the lane and any overhanging branches that they could reach. They would also clamber over walls to reach a particularly tasty morsel- a delight to watch. Unfortunately we noticed that Tanya immediately classified the goats (which she had not really come across before) in the squirrel category and 'frisked up' as soon as she caught their scent - I'd not noticed before but goats do seem to have a peculiar odour!!

# Adventure in the Alpujarras

The Alpujarras are the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. A lot of the time you can see the Mediterranean sea shimmering to the south and at the same time, the snow covered peaks of the Sierra Nevada glistening in the winter sun to the north. The Alpujarras are full of herbs - Thyme, Rosemary and Sage together with Olive trees and Eucalyptus and it's easy if you close your eyes to believe that you're walking through a herb garden. The footpaths around the mountains tend to be narrow affairs that will invariably be rough underfoot (often over loose scree) & steep. I felt that to keep Tanya on a lead the whole time would be quite dangerous for her and for me. For that reason, when we were more than a mile or so from the nearest village or farm, I would let her off the lead. The views and the light in these mountains are absolutely wonderful and we were incredibly lucky as it was usually accompanied by glorious sunshine - a little bit different from stories of weather back home!

Pauline & I have generally not had much luck with walking on public footpaths in the European countryside but there are a number of long distance paths through the Alpujarras together with shorter circular walks. Our only niggle was that when the way forward was obvious there were usually lots of signs around. The minute it became unclear which way to go, ..... the signs would be noticeable only by their absence! But hey, we're not complaining - the views, the light and the wildlife in the mountains were absolutely wonderful.



One sunny afternoon in the first week of December, Tanya and I were up in the mountains several miles away from the nearest village on our way home when I noticed something moving just in front of us - goats! Tanya immediately frisked up but I had seen them first and just managed to get her on a lead before she got away. By the time her lead **was on**, we were surrounded by well over 100 goats. They seemed to be completely camouflaged against the backcloth of the herbs, gorse and rocks - you just don't see them until they are by your side!

Tanya was desperate to chase the goats and I was just so glad that I had beaten her to it! However, at that stage I hadn't seen the goat herder - or his 5 (yes 5) goat herding dogs.



When Tanya gave a yelp of frustration, the dogs were immediately on the case and rushed over from the other side of the goat herd, They didn't mess about. They made it quite clear that they didn't want us anywhere near their goats but it was impossible to move - being completely surrounded by the goats and the dogs. The dogs were like hyenas in that one at a time they would nip in to try and bite Tanya without getting a clout or a boot from me. It was all pretty terrifying! This

went on for what seemed like an age but was probably only seconds. The goat herder must have decided that we'd had enough of a warning and called the dogs off. We then still had to negotiate our way through the goats, which wasn't helped by the goats themselves being fascinated by Tanya and coming up for a nuzzle - kamikase goats!! After a few more minutes, the whole herd were behind us and we were able to move as fast as we could down the mountainside.

# Adventure in the Alpujarras

It was only when we had moved well away from the goats and I could start to relax, that it dawned on me that if I hadn't caught Tanya in time and she had actually started chasing the goats, the dogs would have almost certainly killed her! That might seem over dramatic but in reality that's what goat herding dogs are there for; in the past they would have to have been prepared to take on a wolf or a lynx so this lot were not going to think twice about a domestic dog. As individuals, each of those dogs would of course have had their own personality and it would probably have been possible for Tanya and I to relate to them- as a pack though, it was an entirely different situation. I reckon that my move to take hold of Tanya's collar was probably less than half a second. If I had been half a second later, I would have been carrying Tanya's body back home to Pauline and the holiday would have finished very early.

There ought to be a moral to this story. Perhaps it could be "if you're in the mountains in Spain with a dog, think very hard before you let it off the lead - even if you think you're in the middle of nowhere and nobody and nothing is close by".

Don't you just love happy endings?

*Clive Edgington*

Note: Thanks to Peter Ashcroft for the picture of goats. Pete & Jude visited us in Orgiva.

## DUCK TOLLER : BREED PROFILE

Duck Tollers are working animals and are happiest when they have a job to do.

The breed was developed in the community of Little River Harbour in Yarmouth County, Nova Scotia, around the beginning of the 19th century. The breed was originally known as the Little River Duck Dog or the Yarmouth Toller. Its exact origins are not known but it appears that some possibly spaniel and setter-type dogs, retriever-type dogs, and farm collie may have gone into the mix.

Tollers are named for their ability to entice or lure waterfowl within gunshot range, called "tolling". The hunter stays hidden and sends the dog out to romp and play near the water, usually by tossing a ball or stick to be retrieved. The dog's appearance is similar to that of a fox. Its unusual activity and white markings pique the curiosity of ducks and geese, who swim over to investigate. When the birds are close, the hunter calls the dog back, then rises, putting the birds to flight, allowing him a shot. The Toller then retrieves any downed birds. They are particularly suited for retrieving in cold water climates because of their water-repellent double coat.

Tollers are often mistaken for small Golden Retrievers, but the Toller is more active, both physically and mentally. The Toller should be athletic, well-muscled, compact, medium boned, balanced and powerful. The chest is deep, the legs are sturdy and solid.

Tollers have webbed feet.

Colour is any shade of red, ranging from a golden red through dark coppery red, with lighter featherings on the underside of the tail, pantaloons, and body. The Toller should not be buff or brown. It usually has at least one of the following white markings: tip of tail, feet, chest, and blaze. However, lack of white is not a fault.

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers are known to be very intelligent, alert, high-energy dogs. They tend to be very affectionate and outgoing animals with family members and are known for being very patient with children. They excel at both agility and obedience.



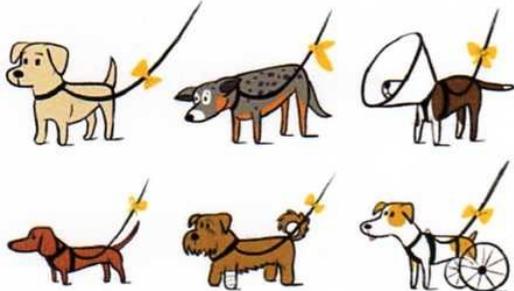
*Rory, the Middleton family's rescue Toller, possibly Toller x , pictured at Friday night Obedience.*

# THE YELLOW DOG PROJECT

The Club recently received a letter publicising The Yellow Dog Project. It was created to bring awareness to dogs who need space while training, recovering from surgery, or being rehabilitated. The Project has reached well over 40 countries. Here is an extract from its website homepage:

THE **YELLOW DOG PROJECT**.com

If you see a dog with a **YELLOW RIBBON** or something yellow on the leash, **this is a dog who needs some space**. Please do not approach this dog with your dog. Please maintain distance or give this dog and his/her person time to move out of your way.



There are many reasons why a dog may need space:

- HEALTH ISSUES
- IN TRAINING
- BEING REHABILITATED
- SCARED OR REACTIVE AROUND OTHER DOGS

**THANK YOU!**  
Those of us who own these dogs appreciate your help and respect!



Illustrated by Li Chen www.dogproject.org.uk

It's a great idea in theory, but I do wonder how we could get the message across to those dog owners who seem oblivious to the needs of other dog-walkers. Any ideas?

- Editor

## OUR THREE CHARITIES for 2013

### [www.doglost.co.uk](http://www.doglost.co.uk)

Since Dog Lost began in 2003 over 8000 missing and stolen dogs that have been registered on the site have been reunited. Dog Lost is run by volunteers but donations are essential to keep the web site running. Dogs can be 'pre-registered' to ensure swift action if they are lost or stolen.

### [www.wonkypetsrescue.co.uk](http://www.wonkypetsrescue.co.uk)

Wonky Pets is an independent rescue organisation specialising in helping animals who have physical, medical or behavioural issues, animals who are at risk of being put to sleep and those that many rescues and people have already turned their backs on.

It uses foster homes to rehabilitate animals which are neutered, vaccinated and microchipped and then try to find them new homes or permanent foster places if deemed unrehomable.

*It has a strict non-destruct policy.*

### [www.rspca-southcotswolds.org.uk](http://www.rspca-southcotswolds.org.uk)

Work is focused on providing welfare for local animals. As well as finding new homes for many unwanted animals each year, it provides a twice weekly veterinary clinic, reduced fee neutering and veterinary help vouchers for people within the community on income support. *It is an independent charity and relies wholly on local support, not central funds, to enable it to deliver animal welfare.*

### Did you know?

Stroud District Council brought in 4 major Dog Control Orders on December 1st 2012 under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

The orders relate to keeping dogs on leads in certain areas, and being directed to put them on the lead if requested, the fouling of land by dogs, and the exclusion of dogs from certain areas.

Full details are on the Stroud district Council website and on the club website.

## University, Graduation and now for a Masters...

**Apologies to Emily for taking so long to publish her letter to us. An agility member for many years, club is a less entertaining place without her happy presence. She has been back several times since September, and has written the super training checklist on the page opposite. Thanks Emily, we all wish you the greatest success in your career.**

Dear Club,

I figured now was a good time to write a little bit about my past three years at Uni as I set off to Lincoln for the year. I have a perfect little house all to myself (it's a two bed so any visitors are welcome) up there meaning I get my independence back... Well, as independent as you can be when your mum is supporting you all the way! My course is in Clinical Animal Behaviour so it's building upon my undergrad degree, focusing more on the human animal relationship, clinical skills for behaviour management and problem behaviours and how to help 'cure' them. I can't wait to get stuck in (although have a hunch I forgot far too quickly how dull it is writing assignments! Not to mention dissertations!)

Talking of dissertations, thanks again to those of you from South Cots who helping me with my data collection. My dissertation is currently being reviewed for publication in The Veterinary Journal and once published I intend to go for a little chat with the Kennel Club about my findings and what they propose to do about it!

Now, I know everyone who knows me well is well aware of my somewhat forgetful and foolish nature but believe it or not I managed to leave Uni with a first class degree! It took three years of very hard work and dedication to get there and I was so afraid I was going to fall at the last hurdle (don't ever let anyone tell you finals aren't daunting!) but I managed it and here I am now with a beautiful certificate and some letters after my name (and true to form I can't seem to find my certificate and I have no idea what letters are meant to be behind my name!). I am hoping that what I have learnt over the past three years wants to stay in my brain to help me out over the next year but no doubt I'll forget all that relevant information so as to ensure I can keep useless information firmly wedged in there! See I should here be able to tell you about the types of memory and why that occurs but alas I can't!

So what have I learnt about animal behaviour and welfare? A lot! I have done modules on anatomy and physiology to animal psychology to anthrozoology to animal welfare to pet behaviour counselling and that's not even a quarter of them! I always remember the funny little facts (some of which are not suitable for likes of a newsletter) such as blue tits and sparrows all queue up to get it on with Mr Hot Sparrow whilst pretending to Mr Ugly Sparrow that they are his kids so that he stays at home and helps rear them! Clever little birds know that these attractive men won't stay around and that you're better off with Billy No Mates who will be an eternally loyal father... so long as he doesn't find out the kids aren't his! All behavioural and evolutionary ecology interests me though really, if your bored look up Zahavi's Handicap Principle and altruism in vampire bats... That can entertain me for hours!

So here I am in my final week before a new start... I look forward to seeing you all at Christmas and then again next September (and by that time agility people I'll be back with Zipper, ready to take the world by storm!)

**Emily Birch**



*Emily at the Skittles Evening*

# The Top Ten Tips

Training your new dog can seem like a huge task but remembering just a few key points can really help



## The 10 tips...

**Tip One – Consistency** Make sure you have set criteria of what you expect from each command. This helps ensure you are consistent with your rewards.

**Tip Two – Planning** Plan each training session to ensure you get the most out of it and that you have everything on hand once you get started.

**Tip Three – House Rules** Write a list of house rules and make sure every member of the house uses them.

**Tip Four – Generalizing** Training occurs everywhere. Take your training to lots of different places and situations.

**Tip Five – Reward** Write a list of things your dog likes from likes a little to likes a lot. Use different rewards for different situations.

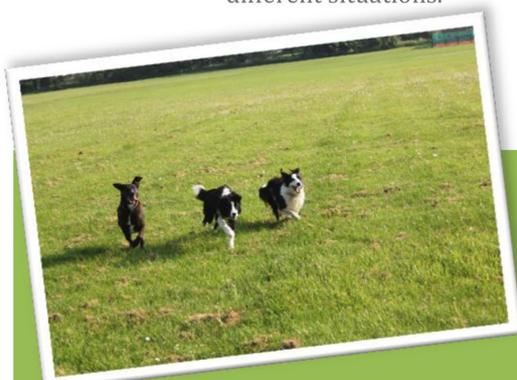
**Tip Six – Duration** Keep your training sessions short doing 3 or 4 short sessions rather than one long one.

**Tip Seven – ‘Bite size’** Try and break each new behaviour into small bite size tasks to learn rather than one big thing.

**Tip Eight – Don't blame the dog** When your dog gets things wrong ask yourself if it really knows what you are asking of it. Don't just think the dog is silly or bad because it won't do what you are asking.

**Tip Nine – Nagging** Give your dog time to just be a dog and be careful not to become a nag. By nagging your dog they may learn to ignore you, which is not something you want to happen.

**Tip Ten – Fun** Keep your training fun. See it as a journey to embark upon together and not as a means to an end that has to be done.



It is not the challenges that we encounter when training but more how we overcome these challenges and what we learn from our experiences.

Enjoy your dog and the training journey that you have before you...

# Club Clothing

We have experienced a few problems with merchandise from **Sew-What**. It seems that although the range of clothing is really comprehensive and the logo and lettering is perfectly clear on T-shirt material, on fleece it becomes indistinct. The lettering on the back of agility fleeces is particularly disappointing.

Please bear with us, we will either clarify our requirements with Sew-What, or source another supplier. An email will be sent out in the next few weeks to let you know what we decide.

*We value your contributions: Remember, this is your newsletter.*

*Please feel free to submit doggie stories, photos, news & views.*

*These can be emailed to the editor Liz, at : [liz.steele@btinternet.com](mailto:liz.steele@btinternet.com)*

## Club Contacts for The Good Citizen Dog Scheme:

**Obedience** —Please contact Pat Jones for more details — Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

**Agility** —Please contact Julie Bearder, [julie@bearder.co.uk](mailto:julie@bearder.co.uk) who is happy to liaise with Pat to set up Bronze classes for agility dogs .

## TROPHIES AWARDED at the AGM for 2012/3

*Tryfan Trophy:* Oscar—Jane and Richard Newman

*Shepherd Boy Cup:* Poppy—Lynda Studdert-Kennedy

*Gundog Trophy:* Lexi—Angie Swann

*Working Dog Cup:* Kylie and Titch Noad

*Pastoral Cup:* Dixie— Susie Thomson

*Terrier Cup:* Chuck— Virginia Lugard-Brayne

*Toy Dog Cup:* Dizzy-Dinah Martin

*Junior Handler:* Phoebe Dalton

*Rio Cup:* Cato— Susie Thomson

*Superdog Achievement:* Oscar— J & R Newman

*Crumble Cup:* Lottie— Doreen Hoskins

*Agility 'A' frame:* Julie Bearder

*Barnaby Challenge Cup:* Spice— Jackie Dodington

# Club Officials

### **Chairman**

Susie Thomson (01453 835045)

### **Secretary**

Pat Jones (01453 860696)

### **Treasurer**

Tracey Meadows

### **Newsletter**

Liz Steele (01453 833235)

### **Obedience Trainers**

Susie Thomson

Pat Jones

Liz Davis

Helen Oakes

Dinah Martin

Angela Morton

### **Agility Information**

Jill Sims (01453 834903)

### **Agility Trainers**

Julie Bearder

Caroline Coventry

Simon Coventry

Kevin Cross

Alison Edgington

Caroline James

Julia Maclean

Jill Sims

Janette Smith

Steve Smith

Steve Swankie

Shelley Woodward