

WAGGING TAILS

Issue 6

Autumn 1997

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FLATCOAT SENT TO PRISON

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Derrick Stephenson and I am a serving Prison Officer with the Dog Section at HMP Hull.

We are always on the lookout for dogs that have outgrown their owners, and in some cases even their homes. German Shepherds often come our way, usually from bewildered owners asking if we can take them immediately after they have eaten the furniture, and most make good patrol dogs. However, we do require dogs for specialist detection duties and, although GSDs are good at this job too, we find that the smaller breeds, spaniels, etc. are better suited to the task. I have worked with GSDs for over 5 years and Labradors as gun dogs for longer. I had never seen a Flatcoat at close quarters until I was invited to visit Mrs. Cheryl Thomas, who was prepared to offer a puppy for service. It was therefore my job to call in and see if the dog had the necessary qualities that we look for. In brief, friendly, bold, inquisitive and the beginnings of a retrieve at least.

As Flatcoat owners, I am sure you know what is coming next, and I don't mind if you smile at my expense. The door opened and I was invited in. I was immediately set upon by 3 Flatcoats and a Collie, all trying simultaneously to sit on my shoulders! I bravely took a seat and gave myself to a complete frenzy of claws, tails, damp muzzles and wet tongues. Somehow, in all this confusion, I was introduced to Riv, a 10 month old bundle of energy. After trying for what seemed an eternity to free myself from the other dogs, I eventually left with Riv for a day of testing.

I soon knew that Riv was something special. He had a well developed sense of play and was keen to bring back anything to me. I hid his toy in various difficult places for him to find and he always came back with the toy and wanting more. The afternoon was gone, I took him home to meet my family. It had been a hectic day and I decided to put my feet up for a while before taking Riv back to Cheryl. As I stretched out on the sofa, Riv obviously thought it looked inviting because he climbed up onto my chest, laid out along my body and, resting his head under my chin, went off to sleep!

I took Riv in September with the intention of completing a training course in January 1997. He became an integral member of the family and got on well with my other dogs (two GSDs and a Labrador) and responded well to basic handling. On 6th January, the honeymoon period was over and we went off to the National Dog Training Centre near Doncaster for a 4 week initial course in Arms/Explosives Search (AES) techniques. The course begins very lightly as most dogs are new to any kind of work. Some handlers have not had the dogs long and bonds need to be formed. At least this was not the case with Riv and I was hopeful that all would go well.

The course itself runs on the principle of prey drive/play drive. All dogs by instinct know how to hunt. They know how to search for prey and in the wild would ultimately learn to kill. It is this instinct that we develop and then we substitute the prey for play. The "prey" becomes a play article which the dog is encouraged to hunt for and retrieve. Immense amounts of fuss and playing with the dog follow such games and it can lead to some funny looks if the public see a grown man rolling in a puddle "fighting" with a dog over a rubber hamburger!

As the course progresses, the dogs are introduced to new scents and substances. The emphasis is always on play. It has been suggested that drugs detection dogs are hooked on drugs to make them find the substances. This is obviously not true and in my case, it would be difficult to get Riv hooked on explosives! In the detection of both types of substances it is the dog's nose that

Notes from the Secretary

Audrey Forster reports that there was little response to the establishment of a '100' Club by the Association. It has therefore been decided to put this project "on the back burner" for the time being.

Are you breeding a litter this year? If so, do let me know. I have many enquires from people interested in buying a Flatcoat and will always pass on details of any litters available. It is, however, up to the breeder to check the suitability of the purchaser.

Many thanks to Mrs. Cawkwell for her donation to the Association for the help we gave in selling her last litter.

Our 1997 Christmas cards and notelets are on sale soon (order form enclosed). The price for this year's cards is £3.50 for 6. In addition, it is possible to get a pack of 4 cards (being one each of the 1996 and 1997 cards) for £2.20.

Due to unforeseen circumstance, it has been necessary to cancel the funday planned for September in Cheshire. Hopefully, by now everyone who had sent an entry will have got their cheque back. If not, could you please let me know. We are sorry to disappoint our members but will be trying to organise an alternative event as soon as possible next year.

Kath Jubb has asked me to pass on a big thank you to everyone who searched and offered help when she lost her handbag at the recent Blackpool Show. It's nice to hear that Flatcoat owners are generally such caring folk.

Sandra Kitching

FLATCOAT SENT TO PRISON (cont.)

does the hard work and his desire to please that lets him do the rest. If he successfully "knocks" a find, he is simply rewarded with his article and vast amounts of praise. That's all! I was asked once what the point is of teaching a dog to retrieve and then teaching him to find a bomb. The outcome could be disastrous! The fact is that we don't put the dogs into a dangerous situation and if we get an indication that there is something positive, then the experts are called in to deal with it. We are not required to defuse bombs, only to detect if there is something there.

Into the third week the work load is steadily increased. All positive finds are now replaced with many negative finds, which would mimic the real world situation. The truth is, the dogs will very seldom have a positive workday whilst on duty. We therefore give the dog the opportunity to find positive articles during our training sessions as it is in our interests to make sure the dog wins at least sometimes.

Riv performed well as the pressure increased and as he was the first ever Flatcoat to work in the service, he attracted interest everyone. During the course registration, I was required to give the breed of the dog and was quite insulted when I said 'Flatcoat' and the instructor wrote down 'long haired Lab'. By the end of the first week however, he had proved himself and was referred to by his correct name. All this was to change, however.....

Next instalment in Winter's Wagging Tails !!!!!!!

WORKING TEST - CRATHORNE - 9TH AUGUST 1997

The Association held its 2nd Working Test on 9th August for Puppy, Open and Novice dogs. The day started with warm sunny weather and temperatures soon climbed into the 80s. Fortunately, with a river on the ground and plenty of shady spots, none of the dogs appeared to suffer. The judges and stewards were not so lucky and stood in the baking sun for long stretches - shady headgear was the order of the day all round!

The Puppy and Open tests were held in the morning, the former being judged by David Bellamy and Jackie Winder and the latter by Philip Wagland and David Showell. Out of an entry of 6 in Puppy, the top award went to Mr. C. Swift with Torwood Puddleduck, 2nd to Mr. T. Wensley with Stownsley Moody Blues, 3rd to Mrs. P. Colson with Brave Bassanio of Windyhollows and 4th to Mrs. W. Moor with Stownsley Thin Lizzy.

There were 8 entries in the Open Test. Unfortunately, 1st place was withheld. One dog was leading by some considerable points but failed on the final test when the handler walked out of line. 2nd was awarded to Mr. A. Harkin with Fenstorm Silver Lining, 3rd to Mr. S. Burns with Field Maple and 4th to Miss N. Colson with Ch. Kulawand Woodnymph of Windyhollows. A Certificate of Merit was awarded to Mr. H. Brown with Cleovine Acer of Hazelmere.

A superb BBQ lunch was then served by Bob Kitching (suffering with a badly scalded ankle) and his helpers. I don't think anybody envied the "kitchen staff", slaving over a hot grill in the soaring temperatures.

22 dogs were entered in the Novice Test in the afternoon with all 4 judges assessing the dogs in 5 tests, a marked retrieve out of water, a "pick-up" with 3 blinds being laid in fairly thick cover, the dog having to retrieve 2 of them (a real test of the dog's willingness to hunt) and a further marked water retrieve laid 30yds diagonally across a river in light cover. At the end of the day, Mrs. R. Townsend with Steeplehouse Chipper won through to 1st place only dropping 4 ½ points out of a possible 70. This was a splendid "double" as the pair had won the Puppy test last year - will they do the "treble" and come back to win the Open test next year! 2nd place went to Mr. A. Harkin with Fenstorm Silver Lining, 3rd to Mr. P. Forster with Wizardwood Tawny Tamarin and 4th to Mr. S. Burns with Field Maple. The Best Novice dog/Novice handler award was gained by Mrs. P. Colson and Windyhollows My Prayer.

At the end of a long, hot day, trophies, award cards and rosettes were distributed to the winning handlers by Lady Crathorne and much posing for photographs took place, the dogs in most instances looking much fresher than the handlers! Everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves and one welcome compliment was that "you Northerners certainly know how to put on a good day". Hopefully, our reputation for putting on fair and realistic tests and providing superb food will spread and reflect in future entries. Judge's comments on the test will appear in the next issue of "Wagging Tails".

Two Tests will be held next year, one during March at St. Helen's in Lancashire and an August test back at Crathorne, with the kind permission of Lord and Lady Crathorne.

WORKING TEST REPORT - Phil Wagland

As a Golden Retriever owner and Field Trial judge, I tend to see far more Labradors and Golden Retrievers than Flatcoats. However, I see occasional Flatcoats at training classes and there are several useful ones running in tests in the North Midlands. It was encouraging to see a goodly gathering at Yarm for the NEFRA Test day. It was a lovely ground with plenty of variety to test the dogs and it was most pleasant to see the host and patron, Lord and Lady Crathorne, taking an interest in proceedings. I have known Peter Forster for 25 years and it was interesting to see him again and discuss the tests.

Whilst David Bellamy and Jackie Winder assessed the Puppies, David Showell and I had the Open dogs to test. David started with a double involving a distraction and a blind over a fence. I started with a walk up with 3 dogs in line. During the walk up, each dog had two retrieves, one a mark on a steep slope and the other a blind on a slope leading down to the river. A couple of horses caused some bother and the first three competitors had to begin again. After a number of adventures we completed the exercise, but it was not an impressive start. Next David judged a pick up in a wood. I was in a scenic riverside spot near a bridge where the dogs did very well on a mark in the river followed by a blind on the far bank. The last exercise was a long blind which most completed after a fashion. The outstanding dog up to then had been Cherry Wood's Lawton Julia, with a string of good scores. Unfortunately, this nice bitch got down into the river and had difficulty returning through jungle on the steep bank, so the handler went to collect her. Thus it was clear we could not award First place and the results were as stated in the previous report.

We were then treated to a sumptuous lunch and all members gathered in the warm sunshine for a pleasant sociable time. The afternoon was taken up with some interesting tests for the 22 Novices. David Bellamy and Jackie judged a walk up in a stubble field with a forward mark and a blind behind. Some were unsteady but many did well. David Showell did an exercise involving the fence, followed by a test of hunting in bramble undergrowth below deciduous trees. I was allotted two water exercises. The first was a mark falling in a trout pool with the dogs sent 30m back from the bank. There was some bold water work, spoiled in too many cases by dropping the dummy to shake. The second exercise was a mark over the river near the monkey bridge. The overall standard in the Novices was encouraging though some of the handlers could smarten up their commands and learn to anticipate what their dog is going to do. The top few handlers and dogs did well and deserved their awards.

My co-judges and I were well looked after and enjoyed the day. NEFRA seems to have a good friendly atmosphere with lots of members helping and giving their support. I wish you well in your objectives of promoting the Flatcoated Retriever and its work and educating members to aim to be successful handlers.

LAMENT OF A LADY WHO'S GONE TO THE DOGS

There was a time, there really was, when I was young and tender
When show dog was a Disney star and "Bitch" was not a gender
I went to bed at half past ten - I went to church on Sunday
On Saturday I baked the beans and did the wash on Monday
But then I got a certain pup and an erstwhile friend said "SHOW"
And so I did, and so I do. Oh, what I didn't know!
Once I dressed with flair and style, that was the life, don't knock it
Now every dress from bed to ball must have a good Bait Pocket
I used to have a certain air, I wallowed in perfume
I used to smell like Nuit d'Amour, now I smell like Mr. Groom
My furniture was haute decor - my pets a tank of guppies
Now I've furniture that's unstuffed and well adjusted puppies
I used to long for furs and jewels and a figure classed and super
But now the thing I yearn for most is a nice new Pooper Scooper!
I was taught to be well groomed, no matter where I went
Now all the grooming that I do is in the handler's tent
While once I spoke in pristine prose, in delicate tones and frail
Now I am using language that would turn a sailor pale
I adored a man who murmured verse through intimate little dinners
But now the words I thrill to hear are just three... Best of Winners
I rise at dawn and pack the van - the road ahead's a long one
The one I've routed on the map's invariably the wrong one
I really love my doggy life, I wouldn't care to change it
But when I get the BEST IN SHOW I could probably rearrange it
And when my days on earth are done, I'll go without much nudging
Just give me three weeks closing time and let me know who's judging

Author unknown

FLATCOATS ARE BETTER THAN MEN BECAUSE.....

- They don't read at the table
- They mean it when they kiss you
- They don't have problems expressing affection in public
- They don't mind if you do all the driving
- They don't criticise your friends
- They don't correct your stories
- They miss you when you're gone
- They think you are a culinary genius
- Gorgeous dogs don't know they're gorgeous

(Please note - all the newsletter subcommittee are female. Hopefully, we will be able to publish why Flatcoats are better than women next time if any of our male readers have any alternative views - anonymity ensured if required!)

FUN DAY - SANDHILLS FARM, CRATHORNE, 27th JULY 1997

We were both blessed and cursed by the weather for our latest Funday but the event lived up to it's title as everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

The day started with sunshine as Val Orme held a ringcraft session & Liz Geoghegan, aided and abetted by Den Orme, soon had people queuing up for the ever popular scurry.

Gary Whiting was in charge of the Retrieving "test" and had set a stiff challenge for the dogs. How many could bring back both a cooked sausage and a Bonio? - Not many!! One veteran dog did manage to bring the sausage most of the way back but he must have been a vegetarian. On approaching his handler, he spat the sausage out and to ensure it wasn't eaten by anybody else he then "marked" it to the amusement of all the spectators!

Bob Kitching had once again excelled himself with the catering and had laid out a magnificent spread when the heavens opened up with a vengeance. It was all hands to the pumps as chairs and fully laden tables were carried into the kennel block and hastily rearranged. There was a sort of Dunkirk spirit as we tucked into our barbecue lunch of steak, burger, and sausage (not the same ones as for the retrieve I must add) and salad and with choice of dessert. We were all left both replete and wondering how on earth Bob does it all for £3 per head.

The downpour stopped during lunch and afterwards we were entertained by the Quaker Agility Team, after which several Flatcoats had a go at the course with varying degrees of success. Some Flatcoats showed real promise in this field and quite impressed the agility team.

Elaine Whiting was "press-ganged" to judge the show match and with some trepidation, under the eyes of so many experienced judges, she chose Mr. & Mrs. Slack's Wizardwood Orlando as her Best in Match.

Lord Crathorne and Joan Rudkin judged the photographic competition and this year's Christmas card will feature Kathryn Trevor's winning entry, with the second place, a Clowbeck dog (bred by but not owned by Bob & Sandra), appearing on the notelets.

Thanks to all the committee and spouses who helped to make it such an enjoyable day and an extra special thanks to Bob and Sandra for the use of their home.

PRESIDENT'S CUP

Val Orme reports that the present placings for the President's Cup (up to and including City of Birmingham Ch. Show) are as follows:

1st - Murray's Sh. Ch. Gayplume Fancy Tree (41 pts), 2nd Foster's Abercairny Wild Rumour (40 pts), 3rd Winton's Sh. Ch. Braidwyn Bonnie Lad (36 pts), 4th Winton's Braidwyn Blue Bayou (34 pts) and Brooks' Gayplume Sea Fever at Culmquill (34 pts), 6th Rudkin's Sh. Ch. Gayplume Fine Fettle (30 pts), 7th Hargreaves' Forgeway Park Royal (26 pts) and 8th Egginton's Riversflight Quishon to Pajenbenck (21 pts).

The winner will be presented with the cup at the A. G. M. and the final results will be published in "Wagging Tales" Spring 1998.

ANNUAL DINNER to held at OLD GOLF HOUSE, OUTLANE,
HUDDERSFIELD

Saturday 25th OCTOBER 1997

Name: Chris Hewison + Caroline Colton

Address: 10 Hall St
HALIFAX

Please book me 2 places at the above event @ £16.00 each

Number of vegetarian meals required (if any) 0

Total enclosed for ANNUAL DINNER £ 32

Please send Form and cheque (made payable to NEFRA) to -
The Honorary Secretary, Mrs. S Kitching, Sandhills Farm, Crathorne, Yarm, Cleveland
TS15 0AD

Please enclose a S.A.E. if receipt and directions are required

HEALTH SEMINAR to held at ASHBROOK EQUINE
HOSPITAL, Nr KNUTSFORD- Sunday 23rd NOVEMBER 1997

Name:

Address:

Please book me places at the above event @ £3.00 each

I expect to require lunch ordering at nearby pub. Number of meals required.....

Total enclosed for SEMINAR £.....

Please send Form and cheque (made payable to NEFRA) to -
The Honorary Secretary, Mrs. S Kitching, Sandhills Farm, Crathorne, Yarm, Cleveland
TS15 0AD

ASSOCIATION ITEMS FOR SALE

The following items can be purchased from the Association:

Car stickers..... £ 1.25

Metal badges..... £ 2.50

Ring Clips..... £ 3.00

Christmas cards 1997..... £ 3.50 for pack of 6

Notelets 1997..... £ 3.50 for pack of 6

Mixed pack of cards..... £ 2.20
(one of each Christmas and notelet from 1996 and 1997)

These are usually available at our events but to avoid disappointment can be ordered
by post from:

Hon Treasurer, Mrs. E Whiting, Great Gable, 225 Kitson Hill Road, Mirfield, West
Yorkshire WF14 9DS Tel: 01924 490741

Postage costs - Cards - 1 pack 40p, 2 packs 60p, 3 packs or more 90p.
- Other items - 1 to 3 items 20p, 4 items or more 40p.

Name:

Address:

Please forward me the following items.....

Total £..... plus postage..... Cheque enclosed (payable to NEFRA) £.....

T A I L E N D E R S

Future Dates for your Diary

Annual Dinner, Saturday 25th October - Old Golf House Hotel, Outlane, Huddersfield. Entry form enclosed. The price is £16 per head with a fixed menu. We are having an after dinner speaker, followed by an open discussion with questions and answers. The usual quiz and raffle will also take place. Rooms at preferential rates can be booked directly with the hotel (Tel. No. 01422 379311).

Third Open Show 16th November - Remember this is our "trophy" show and we would be grateful if all last year's winners could arrange to have the trophies returned to Mrs. A. Forster before the show. Show schedule is enclosed with this newsletter.

Seminar Sunday 23rd November - To be held at Ashbrook Equine Hospital, Nr Knutsford, this will include a talk on movement from Peter Forster in the morning and from a number of other vets in the afternoon on various alternative medical treatments. A raffle will be held and the proceeds donated to the hospital (prizes would be appreciated). It will be possible to purchase lunch at a local pub, please indicate if you wish to do this on the entry form enclosed. Because of space, this event will be limited strictly to the first 60 persons to apply and, as a large response is expected, your early application would be sensible. A map of the venue will be sent to you by way of acknowledgement of your place. Please arrive at 10.00 a.m. for a prompt start at 10.30 a.m.

Tips of the Tail

- When you call a pup's name and it looks up, remember it is not clairvoyant, it doesn't know what you are thinking. Give it an instruction - "Come", "Sit", "Heel", etc. How many times do you see someone call a dog, it looks at them, gets no further response, so goes back to what it was doing, perhaps assuming it misheard. Remember, a dog's name does not mean "Come" but "Acknowledge".

- **A real tail-ender** The very vulnerable tip of the tail, often ever wagging in a flatcoat, bleeds profusely and cannot heal up. Permanganate of potash is good to stop bleeding. Protect the tail with a sausage balloon over the end with cotton wool immediately around the tail to cushion the blows.

The Newsletter sub committee would greatly appreciate your "Letters to the Editor" or tips for the above section. These will be included in future newsletters as and when space is available.

Items included in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Association.

News Letter Sub Committee.

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