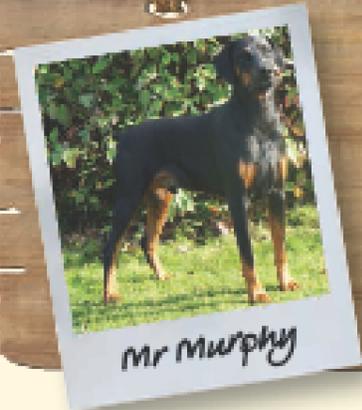


Natural Instinct

Dog & Cat food as nature intended

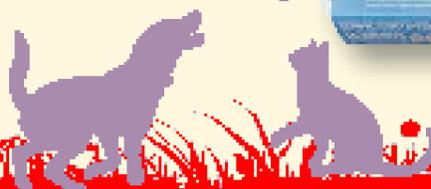


"I get almost daily comments (including from our Vet!) on Mr Murphy's condition and have introduced many people to the benefits of Natural Instinct, not only for their dogs health and condition but also for the convenience on the owner's part. The packs are easily divided into meals and store very well in the freezer and fridge once thawed."

SUZANNE GARVEY

- ✓ Biologically Appropriate Raw Food (BARF) made using only the best, DEFRA approved, human grade ingredients.
- ✓ Free from artificial additives, colour, preservatives and fillers.
- ✓ Wide variety of recipes available in both complete balanced meals and complementary raw food for dogs and cats.
- ✓ Delivered frozen to your door also available at local stockists.
- ✓ Free, friendly and professional advice on raw feeding.
- ✓ Proudly supporting British produce. 

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For more information about us and what we do contact:
Dog A.I.D. Office, Suite A, Ground Floor, New Zealand House,
160-162 Abbey Forgeate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6FD
01743 588469 www.dogaid.org.uk



Reg.Charity No. 1098619



SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2014
Paws 4 Thought is kindly supported by Natural Instinct



Notice is hereby given that the
Dog A.I.D. Annual General Meeting
 will take place on Saturday 6th September 2014
 at Stoke Mandeville Stadium at 5pm.
 All are welcome to attend.

Autumn Workshop for Clients and Trainers.

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September 2014

Sponsored by The Kennel Club Trust.

At

Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Aylesbury Bucks

Mix and Match.

Following on the success of the Spring Workshop we shall once again be working in small groups to maximise the training time for clients and dogs.

The workshop will be focussing on Obedience and Task work
 Down and/or Sit stay, lead walking and greeting behaviour.
 Picking up items and fetching help!

Other behaviours will be considered if requested.

Saturday 10 am. Introductions and grouping.

The day will be divided into 4 sessions around comfort breaks and lunch giving each client the opportunity to try or improve each behaviour.

Sunday fun day!!

Putting into practice the skills you have experienced in a fun and games morning.

The weekend is for clients and trainers.

The venue has 50 fully accessible hotel rooms. Dog A.I.D. will subsidise 1 night bed and breakfast, all other requirements to be covered by the client.

All applications to general_admin@dogaid.org.uk in the first instance.

Please **do not** contact Stoke Mandeville Stadium direct

Dog A.I.D. Merchandise



New!!!

Dog A.I.D. Polo Shirts for clients £11-99



New!!!

Keep your dog safe!! Flashing or continuous light .£6-99 plus pp

No more sticky fingers! Fill the Treat Toob with your dogs favourite food.

Easy to hold and squeeze!

Dishwasher friendly!

New!



£7-99 plus p&p

Enamel Supporters Badge £2.00



Road Refresher Bowls.

Large £11.95

Small £9.99



Crate brackets for bowls.

Large £5.99

Small £4.99



Cosy clicker £4.50



Car Sticker £2

wording

Dog A.I.D. Supporter



Wrist band £2

wording

Training pet dogs to change



Squiggle Pen £1.50



Collars and leads are a new edition to Dog A.I.D. merchandise. They are hand made from best quality English bridle leather tanned by JE Sedgwick of Walsall. These are made 100% in house, from cutting the strap from the butt of leather to preparing, finishing and burnishing.



Many thanks to David Williamson of Joseph Dixon Ltd of Walsall West Midlands, www.josephdixon.co.uk who provided the leather, working and cutting tools free of charge. As an example of his generosity a simple splitter costs nearly £400! He has provided everything needed to cut and produce these leads and collars so all proceeds of the sales go to Dog A.I.D.

New for clients only.

Lead sleeves made in the same material as the dog jackets. £7-99



SWEET SNUGGLES *Lyn Stacey*

SWEET SNUGGLES is a site I have set up to raise money for charities. I make a variety of items from mainly fleece fabric and donate a percentage of sales to various charities including Dog A.I.D. All of the dog items I make, 10% of the sale goes to Dog AID.

At Sweet Snuggles I make Dog Warmers, Coats and Jumpers. Also dog beds/mats and small animal snuggles. All products are functional with quality materials and of course at affordable prices. The fleece I use is hard wearing, water-resistant, washable and comes in many lovely colours.

The fleece Dog Warmers, Coats and Jumpers have a dual use, as well as looking great and keeping your dog warm and cosy the fleece has wicking properties that will also dry your dog after a walk in the rain, a run in wet grass, a day at the beach or even after a bath. The fleece wicks the moisture away from the body into the fibres of the fleece, then the body heat from the dog will dry the fleece while it is still on the dog. The fleece will dry a wet dog in approx 20 to 30 minutes, making sure that your dog dries quickly helping protect them from chills and also keeping their muscles warm and supple, important for working dogs and dogs doing agility, flyball etc.

Using the Warmers/Coats/Jumpers to dry your dog you can also protect your car, furniture etc. from a damp dirty dog! At the same time keeping your dog comfortable and helping to avoid the possibility of joint stiffness in their later years.

Link to website - <http://sweet-snuggles.weebly.com/>

Link to FB page - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sweet-Snuggles/330771393702908>



A fashionable tote bag to put water bowl, treats etc, a side pocket for personal items, zip open to use as dog bed when out and about.

Medium measures 23x34inches unfolded and 24x16 folded into bag £18

Large measures 38x44inches unfolded 22x19 folded into bag. £23



This fleece treat bag has a waterproof lining and a draw string top. The opening has boning sewn in so that it stays open making it easier to get the hand in and out. The treat bag has an adjustable strap to attach to the arm of a wheelchair or a belt. It has pockets on the front and two D rings to attach clickers etc. It comes in a variety of colours. The treat bags are £5 each to Dog A.I.D. clients (normally £6.50) £1 from each sale goes to Dog A.I.D.

All Sweet Snuggles merchandise can be bought direct from Lyn via her website or by email lynn_stacey36@hotmail.com

Congratulations to Lucy and Molly from all at Dog A.I.D.

This is an extract taken from Lucy and Molly's video made for Friends for Life



Anyone with a dog knows how strong the bond can be but with Molly and me it is to the maximum. She is my best friend, my companion and the light of my life. I have had her since she was 8 weeks old, she is happy, energetic and a bit scatty sometimes.

She keeps me going, keeps me fighting.

I have just been put on the end of life register and that makes you make the most of every day. When I am having a bad day, and we have had some hard hard days that we don't think we can get through ----I see that face and Mollie looks into my eyes, her tail wagging and it melts my heart and I know I have to live for her and my family.

We live for each other.

Molly pulls my socks off, helps to pull my jacket off, gets help when I need it. She has opened so many doors for me I wanted her to be recognised for what she has done for me so I have entered her in lots of things.

Crufts was on my bucket list but I never thought we would get anywhere at the first one. But look what has happened, what a Crufts we had!!!

I was shocked but elated and so so happy.

Dog A.I.D. was nominated by Lucy as her charity of choice for the £1,500 from Friends For Life.

Thankyou to all the people who voted for Lucy and Molly.



Dogs Today Award



On 22nd May Molly collected her Dogs Today Award at a ceremony in Earl's Court as part of the London Pet Show. The awards recognise a dog or person that has done something truly remarkable or inspirational. Molly received a unique sterling silver medal made by contemporary jewellery designer Helen Noakes. Molly was nominated by Lucy "Molly has completely changed my life," says Lucy. "I live in

chronic pain and most days are a struggle for my body, but last summer with Molly was the best, especially when we went for walks. She doesn't judge me and she has broken down the barriers between the able and disabled for me."



Wags and Woofs from the Chair

How time flies! We are half way through the year with the prospect of better weather.

Wasn't Crufts a wonderful success? To see one of our teams win the Friends for Life competition was such a joy. Lucy and Molly continue to fly the flag for Dog A.I.D. as they will be awarded the 'Endal Medal' at the London Pet Show in May. If Lucy can stay well enough for long enough I'm sure it won't be long before we see them as a qualified team. Our website had over 1,million hits after Crufts which has raised our profile with the rest of Britain, so a win, win situation all round.



Thank you to all those who came to support the stand at Crufts both trainers and clients and of course those brilliant dogs!



The office now has 2 part time paid staff courtesy of the lottery funding. This is making a big difference to the amount of work that can be processed. Helen Jaundrell, our project coordinator, has been working on our next Lottery bid, fingers crossed! If we get it, it will mean we can move to our own office. Lizzie Charlton is now the office admin, some of you will have met her at the last workshop, she is beginning to take on more of the administration giving me more time to concentrate on moving the charity forward.

Unfortunately this year we will not be doing a raffle or a calendar. However with the extra help this coming year we hope to resume 'normal services' so keep those photos coming in and lets make it an extra special calendar for next year. If you have any comments, for or against the raffle or ideas for prizes please let us know. We need your feed back to help make good decisions on the best way to keep the funds rolling in.



Drum Roll Please!

This is the section of our newsletter where we celebrate the success of our clients, dogs and trainers.



Level 1 Good Companion

Margaret Russell and Heidi *Trainer Jeanne Price*

Janice Arthur and Elsa *Trainer Keith Warwick*

John Clorley, Linda Beckett and Rusty *Trainer Sandra Fraser*

Brian Holland and Teddy *Trainer Midge Walster*

Level 2 Advanced good Companion

Vivienne Sleightholm and Elsa *Trainer Elaine Heath*

Peter Bond and Otie *Trainer Leona Clark*

Lynn Stacey and Bella *Trainer Vicky Walsh*

Level 3 Final Certificate

Lyn Stacey and Bella *Trainer Vicky Walsh*

Martine Evans and Fenris *Trainer Kirsten Dillon*

Karol reader and Lily *Trainer Midge Walster*

Helen Petley and Teddy *Trainer Chantal Karyta*

Lorna Brooksbank and Lola *Trainer Keith Warwick*

Vivienne Sleightholme and Elsa *Trainer Elaine Heath*



My Hero George

By Anita Castellina



George is very very special. He is amazing and never ceases to surprise me but a short while ago I had reason to thank him more than I could have ever imagined. Last winter we had just had dreadful rain, it was bitter cold, while the rain had eased off I said I would take George for his walk, it was a windy afternoon and I hadn't long left Billie my Dog A.I.D trainer.

My husband feels the cold so I said just get me into my scooter and I will walk George. We then went off down the prom wind blowing, puddles everywhere and as I was looking to avoid them 2 youths on skate boards came round a corner and knocked me over and I lost balance. I fell hard into a massive puddle of freezing water my scooter on top of me and I couldn't move. I lay there thinking what could I do, there wasn't soul around. Of course there wasn't !! Only I was stupid enough to be out on a day like this.

George came running back to me, through the mud and wet and nudging me, I couldn't get my handbag it was underneath me so I couldn't phone for help and my husband wasn't expecting me back for a while.

I started to cry and I am not sure if it was pain or fear but George reacted, I used the signal Billie and I had taught him to 'get his dad' as my husband is deaf and cannot hear me when I had my "attacks" George ran one way and another looking for help, he kept coming back as though to say I am here mum I am trying.

Then he was gone, it seemed ages but it wasn't and he had found someone, an elderly man who came to my rescue, he managed to lift the scooter and what a relief that was. He said that George had ran up to him and was circling him almost rounding him up and pushing him towards me. He saw his jacket and realized that his owner needed help but he couldn't see me until George ran towards me.

I was muddy, wet and shaking but thank goodness nothing broken just a lot of bruises the next day. By this time my husband was getting concerned and had come to look for me, he then went back and got the car and got me into it. I was so shaken and because I don 't feel the cold or shiver I had mild hypothermia but thanks to my amazing George I would be fine.

He is my hero, there is never a day goes by I don't thank him for all he does for me but most of all his love and loyalty. All I wanted was dry clothes and a nice cup of tea and cuddle from my George.

You will find in this newsletter the paperwork for the annual renewals. Please be prompt with your return, last year we had such a hassle getting the membership money and forms back, I would like to avoid it this year!

Our Spring workshop was a great success at Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Aylesbury. A great 'Thank You' to the trainers who took part, it wouldn't work without you.

As the venue was such a success we are back there again for the next workshop and AGM in September. I hope those of you that are new clients will come along and also as many trainers as possible, it really is a good opportunity to meet others and hopefully learn or pass on information.

Thank you must go to all those who have raised funds for Dog A.I.D. especially those runners and walkers who have 'gone the extra mile' , such an achievement.

I look forward to meeting new and old acquaintances at the AGM and workshop.

Sandra



Coming Events

June 22nd/23rd

Dogs Live at The Hop Farm Family Park
Maidstone Rd, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6PY

July 6th

1914 100yr WW1 Anniversary Fete Hextable Gdns, Kent BR87LF

July 26th

Dog A.I.D. Strawberry Tea at Hextable Village Hall BR87LF

August 8th/9th

Shrewsbury Flower Show Quarry Park, Shrewsbury.

September 20th/21st

Paws in Park Detling Show Ground Maidstone Kent ME14 3JF



International Assistance Dogs Awareness week. August 3rd to 9th

The goals of IADW are to:

- Recognize and honour assistance dogs
- Raise awareness and educate the public about assistance dogs
- Honour puppy raisers and trainers
- Recognize heroic deeds performed by assistance dogs in our communities

To find out more about this event look at the website.

<http://www.assistedogweek.org/>

An opportunity to show off your dogs achievements and let the general public know how important your dog is to you.

Jazz and Tarka at the April Workshop



My name is Jazz and my dog is a three year old Border Terrier called Tarka. We have been together since he was five days old. Having pick of the litter the breeder wanted me to choose early, but it was my first voyage into puppy rearing and I had no idea what to look for. Despite reading many books, all I could remember was, 'whatever you do don't choose the runt'. I chose the runt!!

One of a litter of five, Tarka was half the size of his siblings, a tiny little scrap that looked more like a baby hamster than a dog. The breeder had warned me that she didn't expect him to survive because he was so small and had already required a visit from the vet. It wasn't a good start but I could see he was spirited as he climbed over his brother and sisters to get to the best teat under his mum's arm. I prayed for his survival as I left, I felt a nudge "don't judge by outward appearances". So I didn't and Tarka has never looked back.



Taking this heaven sent bundle of fluff home eight weeks later, I quickly realised that I needed help training him. It was never going to be plain sailing because just getting him to walk next to my wheelchair was fraught with hazards for him. I was continually running over his paws as he strayed in the front of me in his haste to get to something far more interesting on the other side. He never came back if I let him off his lead, even with his puppy foundation classes, and he was always jumping up at complete strangers in his excitement when meeting and greeting. With such basic challenges to overcome then it seemed a ridiculous idea to consider assistance dog training for him. Two years later my clever little Tarka has passed Levels 1 & 2.

Running along side the usual 1-2-1 training support with our trainer Patty, are twice yearly weekend workshops in April and September. Tarka and I have been to three now, and all of them have been really useful in enabling me to get to know my dog better and see Tarka through other people's eyes.

The first workshop was a nightmare for both of us. Tarka was very young, only 9 months old and spent the whole weekend stressed out and barking at the other dogs. It could have been a pretty miserable experience for both of us if it had not been for the patience and support we had from the volunteer trainers who were on hand to give advice. One thing was clear I had a lot to aim for by the time I went to the next workshop a year later. And what a difference a year had made. Tarka had passed his level 1 in the basics and was far more confident around other dogs, sitting quietly, between exercises. It was indeed quite a transformation and I was very proud of him. He went home a tired, but happy little dog.

By the time we went to our third Dog A.I.D. Training Workshop this April which was located at Stoke Mandeville Sports Centre 'home of the disabled athlete' where I trained as a youngster, I expected Tarka to be top of the class. And to my mind he was, but all those that went would say the same thing because in reality all the dogs attending the workshop were on top form that weekend. Most people and their dogs had been to workshops before and it was good to catch up and see how the dogs had progressed.

The London to Brighton Challenge. Karol Reader and Lily



Lily and I entered the London to Brighton Challenge to walk 100km from Old Deer Park, Richmond to Brighton Racecourse, over two days, 24th and 25th May 2014. Three thousand people ran, jogged or walked the journey, all for a charity, loved one or in memory of someone.

With backpack, pole and waterproofs we set off at 10.40am with other fellow walkers to sound of music and well wishers. We encountered cold, wind, rain and sunshine, good old mixture of British weather in one day! Walking through the park the footpaths were made difficult due to the muddy conditions, poor Lily was covered in mud, often looking at me as if to say 'What are we doing here Mum?'

During our walk we were stopped several times and asked about Lily and our charity and we were delighted to oblige. The walk consisted of rest stops around every 12.5km, where there were portable toilets, hot drinks, water, energy drinks, fruit, cereal bars etc. A marquee for first aid where they tended the blisters and any injuries, and an ambulance was present. A large marquee with tables and chairs where you could eat and refresh yourself, happy music echoed around the place.

We walked the first 12.5km to the first rest stop where Lily had a short rest before setting off again. The weather changed and rain made the walking difficult, poor Lily looked awful, my backpack was getting heavier and we were gradually being overtaken. Lily slumped to a down after just passing the 22km mark, her poor little face said it all, she had walked her challenge! I tried to encourage her with treats to get to the next rest stop at 25km. Across the road people were laughing and a gentleman in his garden told me to look up....Lily had stopped at a bus stop....if only someone could have taken a photo! It was a priceless scene. Not silly is she?

Lily walked a few more steps at that point but I knew our challenge was over. I carried her part of the way through the woods on my own to the rest stop at The Oaks Park, Banstead, by this time the light was dim and I made the decision to withdraw. We were not quite the last and not the first to retire.

The event was exciting and I loved the experience, I want to --- no I am going to walk again, but I need a team behind me to help me achieve this and to look after Lily as it is not possible for her to walk the whole distance. I also need a walking buddy if I haven't got Lily (I think Midge has found one for me for next time) and the walk goes on through the night so wouldn't want to do it alone.

Carrying a full backpack made it harder, reducing the weight (I had to carry Lily's food and drink as well as my own) and by having help at rest stops so that I did not have to carry so much would be good.

The whole event is well organised and the action team were brilliant, helpful and lovely people, although they cannot help on an individual basis. You are scanned in and given encouragement and support. Hot food was later on in the walk which we did not reach.

I enjoyed the experience and look forward to having another chance at going for a challenge in the future.



Roll of Honour

Our grateful thanks to all those who have

Raised their Paws to support our cause



Steph with her marathon medal

Steph is a friend of Caroline Lewis and included Dog A.I.D. in the charities she ran for. She works for Barclays Bank and they have promised to match her total of sponsorship money. Total is unknown at the present so watch this space!!! Many thanks Steph!

Val Hickson ran a half marathon raising £327 Caroline (Val is Carolines P.A.) was there to meet her. Well done and thank you.



Following an article in Thart's Life magazine about Alison Tompset and Millie, Snodland Town Council donated £182 to Dog A.I.D.

Thank you again to Peter Bond for continuing to use his collection box and sending in regular cheques.

Glenda Young, Auction of Coronation Street sign. £53.00

Lynn Crock, Online Heelwork to Music £150.00

Lynn Stacey, On line Cavey show. £110.

Beckenham Dog Club Raffle at AGM £50

Barbara Pointer DITTO.raised £125 at their Christmas raffle.

Stand at Avery Hill University for Disability Awareness £26

Family member of Janette Kennely £200.00

Kent's Hill Infant Academy £400.00

Chappel's Cake Box £102.00

Enfield County School £50.00

St Davids Dog Training Show £800.00

Stoke on Trent Lions Club £150.00

Nantile DTC £100.00

Stratford DTC £1,500.00

Forest of Dean DTC £200.00

Talk at Gravesend W.I. £84.50

Dog A.I.D. National Strawberry Tea Month of July



Here is your opportunity to raise funds for Dog A.I.D.

The event can be as big or as simple as you like.

BBQ with Stawberry desserts. Watch wimbledon with Strawberries. Coffee morning for those who prefer it. A Strawberry Tea in the garden for one or two friends. Make strawberry jam to sell.

It's your help we appreciate and every penny counts.

Unlike the previous workshops we had been to, this one had a very chilled out atmosphere. I felt the venue was a good choice because the accessible accommodation was in close proximity to the sports hall where the workshop was held. There were no mad dashes to and from the hall during sessions if Tarka needed a wee because there were exit doors leading to the stadium's all weather racing track. Not that I let Tarka actually relieve himself anywhere near it, but we did do two laps around the track on the second day when he was getting fed up with sitting in the hall.

The workshop training itself was well structured with individual task groups on the Saturday and circuit training, reinforcing the basics on Sunday. Each task group was lead by an experienced trainer who you could discuss specific training issues with. I had been doing a bit of 'pick up' training with Tarka prior to the workshop, but found the advice on picking up named articles very helpful. There were two circuit tracks that we had to complete. One was about controlled handling of sits, downs, stops and walking. The other was similar, but with distractions from people, toys and food. It was good to see how far Tarka had come and justified his level two certificate I thought.

For me the down side of being in a sports hall was that it was very big. That was fine when doing the circuit exercises, where space was needed, but the acoustics made hearing instructions very difficult. I also felt that the small groups would have benefited from a more intimate setting perhaps located in one or two of the venues conference rooms because the size of the room with so much else going on was quite distracting for an impressionable little terrier who has the attention span of a goldfish.

All said I feel that the workshops are a great way for dogs to see each other in action and I learned as much from watching the other dogs and their handlers as I did from watching Tarka. So if anyone reading this is thinking of joining the September workshop, go for it. It might be hard going at first, but I promise you by the next workshop you will see the improvement. I can honestly say I did.



What's in a Name Mo Aegeter

"What's in a name" of my motley crew of dogs past and present.



Firstly, I was born not long after the war ended (not the first WW you cheeky lot, the second WW) and arrived not only in a pet shop, but in a town called Barking in Essex. YES I am an Essex Girl I admit it!

First real memories of a dog were my Grandmother's Prince, a typical mongrel of the time white with patches, who taught me some manners by biting my face when my constant petting became annoying. As I grew and he aged we reached a loving understanding and a walk for Prince was top priority on family visits.

Before starting school the first of a number of health scares occurred with paralysis thought to be Polio, which was in the area at that time but, which was in fact the early onset of this wretched Secondary Progressive MS.

Much more happily whilst working as the Assistant Regional Fundraising Secretary for the (then) Veterinary Hospital of the PDSA I met Chris who was by then the Centres Manager and a few years later we married and complete with my 12 year old Daughter moved to Surrey where Chris had started a new career and I worked as a technical typist in aero engine testing.

We had my little BC Snowy (what else could a practically all white dog be called)? Following on a rescue Gsd x Labrador named Russett by my Mother when seeing her rich Autumn leaf colouring. She was the first dog I had, that I actually tried to train properly and then another BC Shambles so named because she was just that, another rescue, completely chaotic, enthusiastic, joyful character who helped give Russett the confidence she had lacked.



Madly, I longed for a hound to both attempt OB training and to show. Well I was right both ways. Splash was the first Otterhound to achieve a GCD award and also gained her Stud Book entry after winning her class at Championship level, meaning she could enter Crufts for life and she did indeed win Best Veteran Bitch there. I had wanted to change her name to Underwood Puddlewalker to reflect her personality but as she had a stud book entry the KC would not permit this. Instead she had her original name of Ottersdream Psalm. That seemed very strange to me I always thought

Ottersnightmare would have been more appropriate. She was a first generation out of the Kendal and Dumfriesshire packs who featured in Tarka the Otter. Her little soulmate (and my first 'small' dog) was a tiny rough coated Jack Russell X Lakeland Terrier called Polo. I cannot think of a single reason for this name, just couldn't think of anything else I suppose! However by the time I needed to register her with the KC, Ruffwood Fallen Angel fell easily to mind!

One hound and one terrier together equals one heck of a lot of mischief. Both of them were very loving companions and travelled with me all over England and Wales. Splash was quite huge with a cuddly amiable disposition, a wonderfully melodic bay but, any body posing a threat better watch out, her growl shook the ground with its deepness and body language was formidable. Two guys tried to mug me for my briefcase on a snowy lunchtime when I had abandoned attempts to use the car in favour of walking to deliver test results to the office only half a mile away, using it as an excuse to give Splash a short walk too. All that was left of the muggers was their footprints in the snow!

I wrote an exam paper for The Canine Studies Institute based on life with Splash and The Old Surrey and Burstow Foxhounds, at the time when it appeared all hounds were likely to disappear under the weight of anti hunting legislation. "Pack Hound to Pet Dog" earned me a Can.Stds.Inst.Dip., or something like that, can't quite remember! (I do have the diploma somewhere and remember it was the late John Fisher who was my mentor "Now you're thinking dog").

Despite her breeding Splash was only into tracking prey, not killing anything. I had bought a tiny little kitten for Chris (a cat person really) who was cream and marmalade and therefore named Garfield after the cartoon character. I had always been scared of cats, even teeny weeny ones but thought all would be well as Chris would naturally look after Garfield and surely given time I would get used to this little whirling dervish. Twenty four hours later Chris was on his way to a 'Hot Spot' of the Miners Strike and I was left to manage as best I could with this little scrap of mayhem who seemed intent on practicing her feline attack skills on me every day. After about a year of long absences Chris was able to take over care of Garfield who naturally was by then as good as gold. I was much more confident and could pass other cats without so much trepidation! We got our own back on Chris for being away too. One day there was an anguished yell from Chris, "Your hound has killed my cat" Oh! That! I said "didn't I tell you" Garfy loves being carried around the garden, by her head, by Splash, it's their latest game!

From time to time Splash would appear with her cheeks puffing in and out as she breathed. I got to know quickly that this was a sign that she had 'found' some little creature that she felt needed to live indoors, but what? A command to 'give' would produce a mouse, vole, baby bird, huge beetle or whatever, live and uninjured into my hand. I never knew what to expect and I think my eyes were closed half the time, not wanting to know what this gift would be. One day I heard some growling from the kitchen and found the elderly Russett, and Polo, Splash and Garfy surrounding a large snake Eeek! None of us knew what to do about that one so we evacuated to the garden and left the snake in the kitchen until we were rescued when Chris arrived home!



We had a small flock of Dorset and Suffolk sheep so with my mobility worsening it was time to add a working dog to the mix and so it was Angel Dustlud Granddaughter of International Sheepdog Champion Davy. She became my constant companion with her career covering sheep work, some agility in quiet times, obedience and HTM all the time doing her 'day job' of assistance dog too. Her Welsh ISDS name Angel and KC Dustlud translated to Dusty who many of you would have known.

Topaz, now rising fourteen years was born in a very stormy Autumn and viewing the pups (all so gorgeous) and collecting her was via many detours around the floods, but boy was it worth it! Hence her name Ruffwood Stormy Angel.



Last but not least Breeze at Ruffwood a Labradoodle, a gentle trustworthy character who can be relied on in her role of Reg. Assistance Dog wherever we are. She has her life nicely sorted into work mode, pet dog mode and occasionally in HTM 'away with the fairies' mode'. Life is a 'Breeze' with her, a very easy dog to live with and beautiful too!



Now she is 9 years we have added another member to the crew in readiness to take over the assistance work. Wheelworker Jazz a sweet Border Collie X with the high drive of the BC but none of the chase or sound sensitivity, how lucky am I!

Must mention too, two granddaughters and three great grandchildren, all living in the West Country close to Mum in law (103 yrs soon) So five generations when we get together.

That's it then, a snippet from our lives with the 'crew'. *Mo*