



Reg. Charity No. 1098619

# Paws 4 Thought



**SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2013**

*Paws 4 Thought is kindly sponsored by Natural Instinct*

# HOT OFF THE PRESS!

**AUTUMN WORKSHOP** HEReward  
COLLEGE, Coventry Funded by Kennel  
Club Charitable Trust September 14th &  
15th 2013

**Title: Ready! Steady! Go!!**

**Saturday 14th (am)  
Ready!**

Using your dog's natural behaviours in readiness for task work. Tug and release on command, nose and paw targeting, picking up items of different texture, weight and size and retrieving to hand or receptacle.

**Saturday 14th (pm)  
Steady!**

Levels 1 & 2 work including food refusal, down at distance, lead walking and stays with distractions.

**Sunday 15th (am)  
Go!**

Task work - Progressing natural behaviours into task work.

**Sunday 15th (pm)  
Ask the trainer**

A perfect opportunity to ask the trainers any questions regarding training.

**3.30pm finish**

**All enquiries to [sarah@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:sarah@dogaid.org.uk)**

## **Dog A.I.D. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is given that the Dog A.I.D. Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday 14th September at 4.30pm Hereward College.

**All are welcome!**





## Woofs & Wags from the Chair

*We're delighted that our latest newsletter has been edited and produced in conjunction with former Natural Instinct founders Michael McVay and David Brock who once again wanted to provide a helping paw for our charity in which they so strongly believe.*

### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

Whilst we're thrilled to announce an ever growing number of monthly reports regularly turning up at our office, there's still a fair number of you who we really haven't heard from for some while now.

Could we once again urge everyone to fill in the form that we've emailed you. It should only take a few moments of your time. Undoubtedly the disproportionate amount of success that a small grassroots charity like ours enjoys is dependent on constant member interaction and the collective sharing of great thoughts so that any thoughts you submit will never fall on deaf ears.

Remember, even if you haven't seen your trainer in the last month, we suspect you've got an interesting thought or observation to throw into the mix.

We're really not fussy how your information reaches us. E-mail is naturally our medium of choice. However there's no denying that a stamp and an envelope works equally well.

### **ERICA**

I expect most of you are aware that Erica, from the office, is now on long-term sick leave. I am sure that each and every member would want to join me in sending her our best regards whilst wishing her a full and speedy recovery.

It's also worth noting that our office is only manned on MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS. Without doubt the best way to make contact is via email on [general\\_admin@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:general_admin@dogaid.org.uk), where we'll ensure you always receive a prompt yet thorough response.

### **CALENDARS**

It's that time of year when we begin our trawl for canine calendar pin-ups for our popular fund-raising 2014 calendar. We hope that each and every one of you proud pet parents will submit a pertinent pic of your pet resting, playing, working or just simply looking adorable.

We're looking for plenty of variety across the pictures, especially with regards to portraying the four seasons, either via a suitable setting or a handy tell-tale prop.

The bottom line is we're after an eclectic mix of twelve happy, full of beans dogs, the sort of engaging images that couldn't fail to extract a smile from even the most reticent dog enthusiast.

In order to be considered for inclusion we'll need your best pic(s) by the end of June. We've even included a small piece in this newsletter about taking the perfect pic.

### **NEW ID BOOKLET**

All our clients with ASSISTANCE DOGS will be receiving their new ID booklet in the next few months. Look out for the short report on them within this newsletter.

### **CRUFTS**

Once again proved to be a tremendous success, the perfect setting to launch our new fundraising leaflet 'Small change, Big difference,' which you'll find enclosed within this newsletter. Thanks once again for everyone who gave up their time to man the stand.

If you would like any more leaflets for family and friends please contact the office.

**Fingers crossed for some more sunny weather over the coming months so that our client's training programmes are hampered as little as possible.**

# Page 3 Girl

*We're pleased to report that our guest writer Elsa has once again agreed to share some 'wise words' about her blossoming career as a Dog A.I.D. pin-up and 'in the know' newshound.*

Hi Everyone!

I'm Elsa Sleightholm. I'm a 3 year old Golden Doodle. I live with my friend Ruby who is a 13 year old Golden Retriever and my human parents Vivienne and Ian (although I'm forbidden from mentioning their ages - I'll just say they are OAP's, very Old AP's!).

We all live in Horsham, West Sussex, where I have access to a delightful garden and sweeping fields that provide me with plenty of wildlife to bark at.

My human owners have had quite a few dogs before me, most of them Retrievers and always two at a time. Mum had read about how clever us Doodles are as canine helpers, so was quite insistent that I was the breed of dog she wanted to help her. Viv had been diagnosed some time back with Royal Free Disease, M.E., C.F.S. Fibromyalgia and a host of other illnesses, but when her back started causing her undue stress and strain and walking became too painful she had little choice but to adopt a wheelchair. It was at this point that she decided she needed a dog like me to help her. She had been to training classes in the past but just for pets and some demonstration work.

Viv went on the internet, tracked down some Doodle breeders and then found ME!

It took some time to find Dog A.I.D. then when she did they didn't have a trainer to help train me (as if I needed training, I've picked up socks and taken them in the garden from a young age!).

But one day Elaine came into our lives! One moment it was Clicker Classes and then the next it was serious work! Luckily my humans had always taken me with them wherever they were allowed and walking next to the wheelchair quickly became second nature for me, right side for Mum and left side for Dad; it was easy!



I love all the attention from children and people when we are out, of course it helps that I'm so pretty (but not in the least bit vain or big headed!)

I have now passed my First Level, but as Mum's back has got a lot worse we have been a bit slow with progressing to my Second Level, although with Elaine's unstinting help we will get there!

I will be so glad when I can go into shops to help her, as she doesn't like asking for help herself and look forward to when we can sneak inside for endless cups of coffee! I myself couldn't drink that much coffee, no wonder we keep having to go into little rooms that use a special lock.

Finally a quick update on my lost soft toys (see last Newsletter). Three of my favourite toys have now been found in the fields. They were very dirty and my favourite Bunny is still missing. So if anyone in West Sussex hears a fox that's squeaks as he breathes please let me know, he must be the one that comes in my garden and pinches my toys!!

**Bye from Elsa!**



# Aengus and I by Joy Devine

*A truly inspirational tale about the true joy of canine companionship...*

I suppose if anyone hears the word “tumour” they immediately think the worse. I was no exception. It had been a difficult few years with dad being ill and then going through an awful divorce. Within a week of my divorce my dad died. Three months later I was being told I had a rare tumour that needed removing. All sorts of things go through your head but I announced to my children that I wanted to own a dog before I died! Within two weeks of saying this, my son thrust a piece of paper with a scribbled mobile number on it. “They’ve got some Labrador pups, a person at work has one and they seem ok. Ring if you want.”



The following day found me ringing a rather bewildered farmer, but he managed to understand what I was referring to and said there was a little boy pup as yet with no home. I reserved him! A week later my son took me to see a rather tiny black pup. He was just five weeks old and I couldn’t put him down. A few weeks later we went to pick the little pup up to take home.

My, how he had grown! I decided to call the pup Aengus, spelt the Celtic way and was the name given to the Celtic god of Love and Youth. It seemed perfect for the little scrap that was destined to change my life. To cut a long story short I had my tumour removed and during that time Aengus went to spend time with my friend, until I was fit enough to take over looking after him.



When he did eventually come home Aengus seemed to sense that things were different with me. The tumour had left me with balance and hearing problems. Soon Aengus was alerting me when the phone rang or somebody was at the door. When out walking he seemed to know I needed some support. That was when a friend put me in touch with Dog A.I.D. and after being accepted we started our training. To date Aengus has passed his Level 1. He has a kennel club name which is Legsby Aengus and I have spent time researching his family tree. I was thrilled to discover the Queen had bred his great grandparents. He is a very special dog and a lovely companion.

As I type this he is laid out in front of my fire, which I consider to be the rightful place for any Labrador. Thank you Aengus for coming into my life and being such a lovely companion.

# Taking the Plunge

## *Fun and Fitness in the Pool for Kira and Gemma*

Kira is a 22 month old Whippet and is a Dog A.I.D. assistance dog in training for Gemma Jones from Stoke-on-Trent. Some time back Gemma and Mum, Chris Jones visited 'Well-dogs Canine Hydrotherapy Pool' with Kira



to be fitted for a new snug harness, but were so impressed with the pool's facilities that they decided to return for a swim session and have now become regular weekly visitors. Kira enjoys swimming for fitness and having lots of

fun with the ball whilst Gemma and Chris take advantage of being in the warm 30°C water to carry out their own exercises provided by their physiotherapist.

On her first visit to the pool Kira was very wary having never swam before. Gradually she gained confidence, helped by the fact that Gemma and Chris were sitting on a nearby slope of the ramp providing lots of cuddles and reassurance. In no time at all she was happy to be carried across the pool before swimming back to mum.

Every subsequent visit saw Kira's confidence grow significantly as her swimming got better and better. For the first few sessions Kira preferred the support of Gemma, but has now progressed to having lots of fun retrieving her toys.

These days Gemma brings Kira for her weekly swim session as a 'reward' for being such a 'fantastic hardworking' girl, who is currently Level 2 and soon to be taking her Level 3 assessment.

Kira not only has lots of fun with Gemma in the pool but is also enjoying the health benefits that swimming in the warm, clean water provides (and so are Gemma and Chris)! Kira's fitness and stamina have improved beyond recognition and her muscles and joints are becoming stronger and stronger which will reduce the risk of further problems in later life.

In short a structured cardiovascular workout increases overall fitness, strength and stamina whilst keeping both the heart and lungs strong. Dogs who suffer from difficulty walking, stiffness or sore joints; benefit from increased mobility and decreased pain, especially those suffering from walking ailments like arthritis; by ensuring an improved quality of life.

Initially Kira wore a full supporting floatation coat and had guidance from the hydrotherapist as she learned to swim but soon needed only Gemma and Chris in the pool. Quickly Kira progressed to a half float coat as her technique and confidence improved, and recently Gemma has allowed her to swim without a jacket so that she can be sure that Kira comes to no harm if she ever falls into any water whilst outdoors. We're so proud that Kira has become such a strong swimmer and that our fabulous little whippet can now tow Gemma to the side of the pool, a useful skill for her to acquire should Gemma ever have an accident near water.

Kira enjoys her swimming and now is eager to get Gemma and Chris out of bed on Wednesday mornings for her fun, fitness workout at the 'Well-dogs Canine Hydrotherapy Pool'



in North Staffordshire. The pool building has full disabled access and facilities and the wide, solid ramp into the water means that both dogs and people can enter the water easily, with a grab rail for support. Please take a look at the website for more information or give us a call if you are interested in paying a visit.

Well-dogs will be supporting the work of Dog A.I.D and are holding a sponsored dog swim on Saturday 15th June 2013. Of course Kira will be there to swim and to raise awareness of the charity. Unfortunately only dogs registered at the pool will be able to take part in the swim.

**If you'd like to sponsor Kira contact Well-dogs.**

**Website: [www.well-dogs.co.uk](http://www.well-dogs.co.uk)**

**Tel: 0845 291 9868**

# Drum Roll please!

*This is the section of our newsletter where we celebrate the well-deserved success of members*

## Level 1 Good Companion

Denise Badland with Samson	(Trainer Beryl Rounsley)
Peter Bond with Otie	(Trainer Leona Clark)
Deborah Boocock with Charlie	(Trainer Isabel Towers)
Diane Clow with Bono	(Trainer Dawn Binding)
Belinda Cooper with Tuli	(Trainer Kerry Bee)
Joy Devine with Aengus	(Trainer Hanna Wright)
Chris Hall with Holly	(Trainer Linda Bunting)
Emma McCloskey with Poppy	(Trainer Eryl Restall)
Helen Petley with Teddy	(Trainer Chantal Karyta)
Jazz Shaban with Tarka	(Trainer Patty Gorianoff)
Alan Sheriff with Shadow	(Trainer Angela Woodhouse)
Vivienne Sleightholm with Elsa	(Trainer Elaine Heath)
Carl Watson with Roxy	(Trainer Mark Rudd)

## Level 2 Advanced Good Companion

Sue Alcar with Rolo	(Trainer Elaine Fairhurst)
Caroline Haji with Mac	(Trainer Elaine Fairhurst)
Gemma Jones with Kira	(Trainer Sandra Fraser)
Martine Parry with Fenris	(Trainer Kirston Dillon)
Catherine Pilkington with Roxy	(Trainer Elaine Fairhurst)
Karol Reader with Lily	(Trainer Midge Walster)
Ed Williams with Ebony	(Trainer Angela Woodhouse)

## Level 3 Final Certificate

Alison Tompsett with Millie	(Trainer Midge Walster)
Ed Williams with Ebony	(Trainer Angela Woodhouse)
Jayne Butland with Sky	(Trainer Pam Simpson)



## Roll of Honour

**A special thanks to all those members who keep going the extra yard raising those all-important extra funds for our hardworking charity.**

### Nov 17th

Craft and Table top sale. Hextable Scout Hall, Kent.  
Thank you to everyone who helped provide cakes and their time on the day. **Raised £664.87**

### Nov 30th

Collected cheque from Carol James and the Abbey Quilters at Bexleyheath Kent.  
A huge thankyou to everyone involved for selecting Dog A.I.D. as your charity of the year. **Raised £110**

### Dec 2nd

Craft Sale at Wilmington Social Club, Kent **Raised £56.61**  
Talk by Midge at Hartley Village Hall **Raised £86.90.**  
Talk by Midge for NHS retirees **Raised £66.90**

**Thanks yet again to Jane Day for raising funds and the Bank of England for matching them**

Young at Heart **Raised £100**  
JS and Foster sponsorship C.Foster Fun Run. **Raised £45**  
Railway Taverners' Bikers **Raised £70.14**  
Shrewsbury SY5 Tri Club **Raised £182.25**  
'Get off your Butts' MCC **Raised £400**  
From the Trust of Mrs. Jefcoate and Mr Jefcoate CBE DC **£3000**

Enfield County School **Raised £50**  
Shifnal Towns Women's Guild **Raised £44**  
Farningham Dog Training Society **Raised £105**  
Dunston GSD Club **Raised £543**  
Mike Bircher –Donation **Raised £185**  
Bridport Dog Training Society **Raised £75**  
Sponsorship for Kira and Gemma's training from Howden Joinery **Raised £150**

**Thanks to Lorraine Tilston Brookes and her trainer Sarah Stirling Ash for attending these shows on behalf of Dog A.I.D.**

November 4th at Northbourne - **£ 40.50**  
November 17th at Little Dale Dogs, Hawkhurst - **£40.20**  
November 2th Northiam - **£17.80**  
December 9th Northbourne(proceeds from show and stall) - **£128.50**  
February 23rd Hawkinge - **£17.00**  
March 3rd Northbourne - **£48.00**  
April 1st Northbourne (proceeds from show only) - **£233.75**  
**Total raised £515.75**



# Get That ‘Must Have’ Top Dog Shot



As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, we are eagerly awaiting the first entries for our popular 2014 fundraising calendar that will play such a pivotal role in helping our charity increase its reach over the coming months.

Here is a shortlist of handy hints to help ensure this could quite possibly be our best calendar ever. Before pressing the button consider the points below:

- Always watch the background. Think about any clutter in the picture that might compete for attention, things like park benches, refuse bins, stray feet of family members or helpers or an open door showing an untidy room!
- Set the scene. Take time to arrange the backdrop by having your dog pose by flowers, some water, other animals or a favourite toy.
- Art history shows us that an object placed in the centre is not always in the most aesthetically pleasing position. Try to vary the focal point, experimenting how you can create different looks by getting the dog just off centre.
- Take the same shot from different angles. Try lying down on the floor (if you are able) this will give you an eye level perspective of your dog. Try taking a shot directly above the dog, but first make sure your dog is comfortable with this, it can be quite intimidating and may need a few treats in the beginning to put your dog at ease.
- Take several shots of the same theme, even if it is just of the dog sitting still. By the time

you have pressed that button your dog may well have looked away.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help! Having someone on hand to hold the dog until you have set up your shot can be really helpful. The assistant can then stand behind you to quietly attract the dog's attention. RESIST calling the dog's name to get his attention as it is more likely to move towards you! A quiet kissy noise or a gentle wave of the helper's hand should be all it takes to have the dog redirect its gaze your way.
- Get shots of the dog performing a task; again you may need to get the dog to repeat the action several times before you are satisfied with the end result. You might also need your helper again, this time to take the picture for you if you are dealing with the dog. Remember to use the zoom to get a closer shot!
- Photos need to be preferably 1MB or larger. When you load the photos on to your computer it tells you all you need to know in the properties section (right click on the file and a drop down menu appears). Send the photos in their original state and not compressed by your mail client or any photo editing software you may use.
- The image must be sharply focused, in other words not blurred. Many photos look fine when on the camera but when looked at on a pc screen you see the features are blurred. One of the key reasons for taking several shots of the same subject matter.

Most of all enjoy the fun of recording things your dog does or can do whether at work rest or play.

Please send your photos for a chance to be included in the calendar to:  
[stephen@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:stephen@dogaid.org.uk)  
by mid June.





# DOG A.I.D. Merchandise

*You may wish to peruse our ever popular merchandise offers including our new range of leather collars and leads.*



Retractable Key ring  
£3.00



Enamel Supporters Badge £2.00



Cosy clicker  
£4.50



Canvas shopping bag  
(18ins x 15ins)  
£3.99



Car Sticker  
(wording is 'Dog A.I.D. Supporter')  
£2.00



Squiggle Pen £1.50



Penny Pot label. Free



Road Refresher Bowls  
Large £11.95  
Small £9.99

Crate Brackets  
Large £5.99  
Small £4.99

## NEW for 2013!

Collars and leads are a new addition to Dog A.I.D. merchandise. They are handmade 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](http://www.josephdixon.co.uk) who provided all 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 leads and collars, so all the proceeds of the sales go to Dog A.I.D.

# A moving outside perspective on Dog A.I.D.



In 2001 a young pup came into my life whom I named Jade. At 16-18 weeks old, Jade was full of beans and always eager to learn but had already formed her own opinions on various aspects of life. These were to prove difficult to reprogram.

A few months later I was handed a leaflet on a Charity called Dog A.I.D. (some of you may have heard of it!).

The thought of having help to not only 'tame the beast' that can be any adolescent dog, but also provide guidance and support to train my new intelligent friend really appealed. Having applied, Sandra Fraser was sent to assess my young dog and me for acceptance onto the training scheme (she's been stuck with me ever since).

Sandra visited regularly, shared her expertise and left us homework. Everyday my PAs and I spent a little time putting what we'd learned into practice and using the advice received to problem solve Jade's deep-seated preconceptions of:

- Men with hats
- Men without hats
- Skateboards
- Bikes
- Dogs
- Cats



The list really seemed endless and was anything but predictable. Luckily Sandra had the patience of a saint and each week she showed that through trust and kindness Jade could cope with the big wide world. She learned her tasks with ease and in 2005 we eventually achieved Assistance Dog status -Sandra's first!

In 2006 I became Treasurer for Dog A.I.D. and although have retired from that position I remain an active Committee member. It was and still is a really good feeling to be able to give back to the charity that had helped enhance my life by showing me, with my third GSD just how extra special the bond can be, when your canine friend becomes your unconditional helping hand.

Jade swiftly reached a point where I barely needed to ask for her help, she would anticipate and even occasionally show her sense of humour by plunging us into darkness by switching the garage light off while I was getting in or out of the car.....would she turn it on again?.....nah!

I simply can't really put into words the impact an Assistance Dog, especially self trained, had on my life. It's an exceptionally special relationship and one made all the more so when that dog starts as a pet but quickly becomes so much more. I always knew Jade's limits and she had faith in me, that I would never put her in situations or environments that might cause her unnecessary stress.

In her final years Jade slowed down but remained my trusting buddy. After her retirement, I nursed her through 3 attacks of Vestibular Syndrome and with the help of the vet tried many ways to manage a heart murmur which developed latterly, but which in the end took its toll. I decided to let my friend go before it became an emergency. She went to sleep on my bed in my arms on the 22 January with the vet of my choice, whom she had come to trust and greeted with a final wag of her tail. The greatest gift I could give her and the hardest decision of my life.

On the 5th April a new young soul entered my life in the shape of Sera. She's a very young black GSD and a blank canvas. Let's hope I can remember how to paint!



# Planning for the future

Our charity is now reaching a stage in its life where clients who have had their dog for a number of years are starting to consider a successor dog. This is never an easy decision to take and should be made either in consultation with your trainer (if you are still in contact), or with one of our trustees.

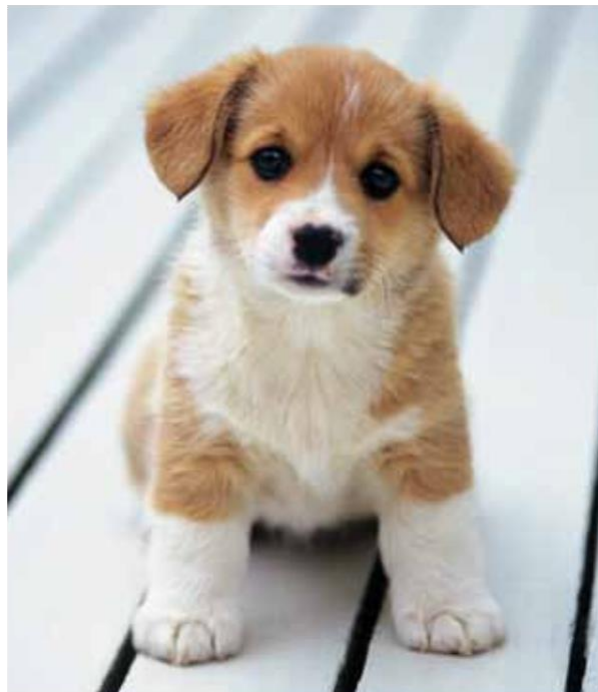
## KEY POINTS TO MULL OVER:

- Should a puppy be considered?  
and the older dog in tandem?
- How will you manage a puppy and the older dog in tandem?  
the arrival of a new puppy on the scene?
- How will the older dog deal with a new puppy on the scene?  
puppy as it will need individual socialising in order to be confident?
- A young puppy will not have the right of access your Assistance Dog has!
- Can you go out without your Assistance Dog?
- Can you afford 2 lots of insurance and food?

I'm sure all these thoughts have gone through our clients' minds. The other option is to think about taking on a rescue dog for which most of the aforementioned considerations above will still apply.

Some clients experience the sudden loss of their Assistance Dog. Such a traumatic event can leave a huge gap in the client's life and much thought then needs to be given with regards how best to source a replacement dog whilst maintaining a client's independence.

The trustees do urge clients not to rush into taking on a puppy or rescue dog without proper consultation. The charity has to consider the best use of finite resources and whilst we will always give priority to clients



who have lost their dog and wish to take on another, it's not always possible to provide a trainer if the client's Assistance Dog is still working well.

We are there to give advice on where to go for training to make sure that your dog has the best possible start.

Today Dog A.I.D. is working closely with Guide Dogs for the Blind, to set up a scheme whereby clients can apply through the trustees for a withdrawn Guide Dog. We are working on a pilot scheme to see how this might work. The scheme will probably be open to those who have lost their dog or where the dog has had to retire due to ill health. The process of locating a dog can take several months and we will have to consider the geographical location of the dog and the Dog A.I.D. client. Please keep the office informed of any change in circumstances with your Assistance Dog and consult the trustees via the office should you consider taking the next step in planning for the future.



# How About Clicker Training a Hen?

.....Cluck Cluck by Angela Woodhouse

Last July I travelled to Sweden to do a week's course in clicker training a hen under the tutelage of the renowned Bob Bailey.....I know, it sounds totally barmy. I tried to avoid telling people exactly why I was going to Sweden as it inevitably meant a complete silence, followed by long explanations which didn't actually help-except of course for my dog trainer friends.

For those of you who have never heard of him, he is one of the original reward based trainers who worked in the USA around the middle/end of the last century. He and his wife, Marian, trained all sorts of animals and birds over many years for both commercial and military use, only using positive re-enforcement and a marker-that means a clicker nowadays. He has been doing these courses for many years, mostly in the USA, and this was his last one.

So, when faced with sceptics who say that this type of training is only for 'easy' dogs it is something for them to think about. These trained animals had to be absolutely reliable, because if they weren't, the family didn't get fed and the employees didn't get paid. Also peoples' lives could be at stake for instance with the dolphins who travelled miles under the sea to find explosives.

There were around forty people who had travelled to Sweden, from all over the world-Europe, the USA and an animal trainer from Dubai. We had the military and police, a Dutch children's entertainer who wanted to be able to train his own animals rather than have to employ someone, several students from a local University who were studying bird behaviour and wanted to learn how to handle the birds better, as well as dog and horse trainers. There are actually six modules, each lasting five days. Many of the students were doing all six, one after the other. I just did the one and it was more than enough for me!

The first day was spent learning how to hold the cup with the food in it and how to deliver the food so that it did not spill all over the place, or lead the bird to moving towards it

and falling off the table-and yes, that did happen! The clicker was attached to the handle of the cup, as you can see in the photograph so one hand was free to move the target around.

This was a Discrimination Workshop. The others are more complex.

The first task was to train the hen to peck at a small cardboard shape put down on the table in front of it. There were four shapes in total-square, triangle, circle and hexagon. It did not matter which shape you chose for your hen. When the hen was reliably pecking at the one shape, and you could move it around the table and put it behind the hen so that it could not see it, then you moved onto discrimination.



Say that the hen was pecking at the circle: you put down a triangle alongside the circle and brought the hen out. If the hen pecked at the circle she was clicked and treated: if she pecked at the triangle it was immediately removed and when she pecked at the circle as there was then no choice, she was clicked and treated as normal. We removed the shape, not the bird, as that would have been punishing.

This continued, putting the shapes in the same place until the hen reliably pecked at the circle even when the triangle was alongside it. The shapes were then moved around the table in different positions until she was adept at pecking at the circle wherever the shapes were. You then introduced another shape so there were three on the table and repeated the procedure. And so on.

As the number of shapes grew, so more time had to be allowed (we had a timer so that we didn't train for too long) for the hen to learn what she needed to do to get the food, but once that timer went, the hen was back in her cage.

It was surprising how quickly the hen could learn this **if the clicking was well timed and the reward was delivered correctly.**

- Where the cup was held was of great importance, as if that was cleverly done, you could help the hen to make the right choice.
- Any sort of verbal help, or correction, was of no use.
- Any sort of physical guidance or restraint was of no use.
- The whole experience had to be good for the hen otherwise she would just jump off the table and wander off-and, again, that did happen.
- The hen had no interest whatsoever in pleasing you but if she felt comfortable with you and happy to be on the table then she learnt more quickly.

We were put in pairs so that the partner could time you and help if needed for instance by moving the shapes without the hen seeing. The timer was of immense importance, particularly in the early days. We started with 15 seconds and then 30 and then, on the last couple of days when more complex exercises needed more time a whole minute. Wow.

It took a day or two to get accustomed to working with the birds, and the food delivery not to mention clicking at the right time!

Hens are used because they are easily available and easy to look after. They can be handled by anyone, aren't too big or too small. They have a behaviour pattern- pecking-which can be utilised without difficulty. Our job was to get them to peck at shapes cut out of cardboard.

We had two hens each, the same ones all week so that we did not put too much pressure on just one. They had defined rest periods and of course, very short training sessions. Interestingly, the hens loved to come out of their cages to be trained once they got to know what was coming. One of mine used to bite at my hands when I put her back in as she didn't want to go! Bob also said that the hens that they used in the USA for the demonstrations actually lived longer than average lives, and they stopped retiring them until of course they became too infirm to continue.

There are a lot of lessons for us dog trainers to learn from this sort of experience-some of which are:

1. One thing at a time.
2. Don't move on until you have the behaviour reliable in different scenarios (e.g. the shapes in different order, sometimes in a line, sometimes a circle or a square). But remember that you need to move on slightly so that you don't just train a habit that can't be improved on
3. Keep the sessions short. Use a timer or get someone else to time you.

Think of what you can do in 15 seconds with a hen and a circle of card. This concentrates the mind wonderfully and keeps you focussed, believe me! For 15 seconds we could stay totally focused. Any longer and our timing and minds started to wander, we made mistakes, we were also 'trained' to control ourselves and gradually increase this skill as we increased the timer with the hen

It was very hard work but very enjoyable, and Bob is a fascinating speaker with great experience over many years, but who still has the enthusiasm to put over to us all what he deeply believes in.

This First Workshop included other discrimination exercises which I cannot go into otherwise I would be writing a whole newsletter about it. There are some great videos on Youtube showing hens being clicker trained for those who are interested.

Some of Bob's sayings to ponder over:

**Training principles are the same for all higher animals. This of course includes us humans!**

**Operant conditioning is simple, but not easy.**

**Doing more of the wrong thing does not make it right.**

**Learning was not invented by trainers. Learning is a natural process. Animals in nature who did not learn perished.**



# ID opens more doors



A new identification book for people with assistance dogs aims to improve awareness and stop discrimination.

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People's recipient survey last year revealed startling evidence that many recipients continue to suffer the humiliation of being refused entry when trying to access shops, banks restaurants and other public places with their dogs. This is unacceptable and against the law. The Equality act 2010 supports equality of access for people with registered assistance dogs.

But the problem does not just affect hearing dog partnerships. It affects other assistance dog users too - even Guide Dogs for the Blind, which has been established for more than 80 years, says its clients regularly experience problems when trying to gain access to places with their dogs.

The strength of being a member organisation of Assistance Dogs (UK) means we can unite in order to tackle this problem head on.

In February, AD (UK) launched a national form of identification for all assistance dogs registered with member organisations. Each AD (UK) member organisation will also personalise a new yellow ID book with its own logo and a photograph of the partnership to whom the book is issued.

Our access and inclusion manager Phil Biggs, who is also a hearing dog recipient, says: "The new ID book is evidence of our rights as an assistance dog partnership. As well as stating the law and answering the questions that people in authority may ask, it includes photographic identification and information about the member organisation."

*Dog A.I.D. would like to thank Hearing Dogs for their permission to use this article which first appeared in their magazine 'Favour'. Special thanks also to Philip Biggs who has put a lot of hard work into the organisation of the ID booklets.*





# And finally...

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS (South East)**

Dog A.I.D. representatives will be working their little cotton socks off over the coming months as they seek to raise awareness and funds for our cause. If you're in the neighbourhood or have a little free time to spare please pop along as a friendly face is always appreciated.

### **June**

8th - Leybourne RSPCA Fun Day, Castle Way, West Malling Kent, ME19 5HW (10-30 til 4-30)

### **July**

21st - Strawberry Tea at Black Horse Farm, Crouch Lane, Borough Green TN15 8QL

### **August**

2nd Animal Health week town Centre Swanley Kent 11am – 3pm  
10th Carol's Garden Party, Hartley, Kent.

### **September**

21st& 22nd - Paws In Park, Detling Show Ground, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3JF

### **November**

23rd - Craft & Table Top sale. Scout Hall, College Rd, Hextable Kent BR8 7LT

The following shows will be attended by Lorraine Tilston Brookes and Sarah Stirling Ash on behalf of Dog A.I.D.

**May 26th** poss Dover or Willesborough

**June 2nd** Ham Street

**June 23rd** Northbourne

**June 30th** Royal Tunbridge Wells (provisional)

**July 14th** Pegwell Bay (provisional)

**July 20th** Hythe (provisional)

**August 3rd** West Malling

**August 26th** Willesborough

**September 8th** Herne Bay (provisional)

**September 15th** Folkestone

**October 6th** Northbourne

**October 20th** Northbourne

**November 3rd** Northbourne

**December 15th** Northbourne



## **DOG A.I.D. NATIONAL STRAWBERRY & CREAM TEA MONTH ALL JULY**

Here's your opportunity to support our cause by raising funds for Dog A.I.D. The event you choose to host can be as simple or as lavish as you like, it's your help we appreciate as every penny raised makes a world of difference

- **BBQ with strawberry desserts**
- **Pick your own Strawberries to sell.**
- **Watching Wimbledon with Strawberries.**
- **Coffee morning for those who prefer it.**
- **A strawberry tea in your garden for one or two friends.**
- **Make strawberry jam to sell.**

For posters to promote your event please get in touch with the office.

As further events emerge they will be posted on the website and our Facebook page



Reg. Charity No. 1098619

# Paws 4 Thought

The main difference between Dog A.I.D. and many other assistance dog groups is that the physically disabled owner learns how to train their own pet dog. Generally all the training is carried out by the owner with supervision from a specially trained instructor.

Dog A.I.D. training is designed to give a measure of independence and provide owners with the knowledge to train other tasks. This allows them to adapt the training to their own needs with an instructor, who is able to give advice as required.

For more information about us and what we do contact:  
Dog A.I.D.  
CVS Buildings,  
Arthur Street, Chadsmoor,  
Cannock, Staffordshire.  
WS11 5HD

**Tel: 01543 899463**

**[www.dogaid.org.uk](http://www.dogaid.org.uk)**

*Paws 4 Thought is kindly sponsored by Michael McVay and David Brock*