

*The  
Altrincham & District  
Dog Training Society*



NEWSLETTER

**Winter  
2010**

## Kennel Club Good Citizens Award

*Passed - 9th May 2010*

### **\* Bronze Level \***

Jackie Moreton *with* Chester

Fiona Clucas *with* Finlay

Maureen Oldbury *with* Lucy

Janet Burke *with* Maisie

Jess Morris *with* Ollie

Dan Paul *with* Ollie

### **\*\* Silver Level \*\***

Ying Tang *with* Sammy

Pam McNicholls *with* Tiffany

Catherine Jones *with* Dottie



## *From the Chief Training Instructor . . .*

Recent years have seen the society go from strength to strength and during one committee meeting it was revealed just what a success the ADDTS web site has been with 'hits' from countries all over the world, Spain, Brazil and India amongst them.

This got me thinking as to why people from all around the world should look up the ADDTS. I can understand people who are far from home reminiscing or just catching up with what is going on in their home town, others I suspect like to 'Google' particular words or phrases that are of interest to them such as Dog Training, Dog Behaviour, Kennel Club Accredited Instructors, Reward Based Dog Training etc. and this may account for some of the hits.

It may surprise you to learn that dog training has no specific regulation and anyone regardless of their ability can offer dog training classes. The Kennel Club is trying to prevent this with its accredited instructors scheme (KCAI) which is intended to 'drum out' those who fall short of the desired standard. This came home to me earlier this year whilst working at a fun dog show where I saw a demonstration take place in which most of the dogs wore check chains, many poorly or incorrectly fitted.

As CTI, one of the aspects of dog training I feel most deeply about is ensuring that only safe modern methods are used. Instructor training therefore is very important, not only for those on the Apprenticeship Scheme but also to prevent those of us who have been instructing for many years becoming staid in our methods. One of the first things I did as CTI was to bring about the acceptance of head collars and harnesses in class, on the understanding that the dogs would be 'weaned off' these aids during their time at the ADDTS so that they should not become a permanent method of control. I am having more difficulty however getting the acceptance of clickers. These are a positive reward based tool that once mastered may sit beside other aids in your dog training tool box. If you are unsure or confused about how to use a clicker speak to your instructor, Tina or me.

Sadly, 2010 was the first year in many that we had insufficient staff to run the Wednesday evening Agility classes and so it was decided that we would trial a short course of Sunday sessions. Unfortunately, due to poor attendance this got off to a slow start, so rather than cancel it I decided to run a class that involved the agility equipment and the clicker, to teach the dogs confidence and balance and also self control and special awareness using a technique known as 'systematic desensitisation'. This proved a great success, with handlers and dogs alike enjoying and gaining from it. If you feel you would like a specific course such as scent work, clicker, agility, retrieving etc. in addition to the regular class work and The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme please see Tina or me and we will try to make provision where possible.

On a personal note I feel very honoured to have been offered two positions within The Kennel Club which I have accepted, one as a lead assessor for the KCAI Scheme and another on the KCAI Communication and Marketing working party. Often when I am not able to be at Altrincham it is because I am on one of my regular visits to The Kennel Club HQ in London.

And so finally I would like to wish all the ADDTS members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

David Campbell CTI, KCAINPTC, AMACC, PAACT

## A steep learning curve

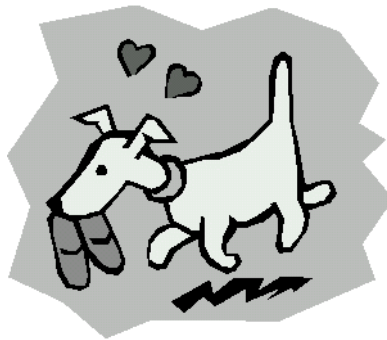
What a challenge owning a dog is! Having not owned a dog before, we had a lot to learn.

Dottie is a mixed breed rescue dog, very affectionate, but with a mind of her own. After having her for three months we decided to attend the Altrincham and District Dog Training society. What a very friendly group it is and the instructors are full of advice to help us and Dottie. We have had one or two mishaps with her where she has gone off to chase a fox and cut her foot pushing through a fence.

She and we are learning to do things correctly and trying to improve with our weekly training. In the time we have attended the classes we have found them a great help and have certainly enjoyed the Agility.

Thank you.

Catherine and Joan Jones



## Admin with a difference!



Some dogs seem to have a will to do things their way. Just like the Retriever who decided he was not going into the changing room for enrolment in the usual way - via the steps. "I'm going under the desk. So I'll tip the table and its contents down the steps and cause a little chaos". Having made an entrance, he sat down quite calmly to be enrolled!

I first became involved with ADDTS when Zak our twelve week old Shih Tzu started training. With the instructors' help we got to Class 3 and achieved a Kennel Club Bronze award. We must have had the only kleptomaniac in the club. In class, he would always take other dogs' toys and run off with them!

The admin team needed some help with enrolments, as is often the case (!), so I got involved. Later, I took over the register. Let me tell you about us and how we all work.

Each week when you give your name in at the desk, your attendance is marked on the list of one of the eight classes. Members are urged to check-in because of the Society's insurance cover and attendance records. Later on the attendance information is entered on to the computer.

New members are enrolled each week. Some weeks are busier than others, especially the first Sunday in the month when up to twenty new members can be enrolled. Jacquie (Membership Secretary), John (Treasurer), Helen, Karen, Wendy and Cheryl do the enrolments.

Helen also does the committee meeting minutes and helps with the Web site.

Enrolment information is also entered on the computer. We need some extra help with enrolments at times: how about you? We'll welcome you with open arms .... and a cuppa from Peggy.

There is a lot of work and time spent keeping the databases updated, printing and supplying information, etc. The committee members and the instructors also put in a lot of time. We all work hard together for the smooth running of your club.

Since becoming a team and committee member I've made friends and met a lot of people (and dogs!). Why do I turn up every Sunday in all weathers? I enjoy doing the job and chatting to other members. The downside is when it gets cold and rains!

Barbara



## Dogs' Day Out

This was the sixth year that the ADDTS has worked with the Friends of the Denzell Gardens and Devisdale to run this popular event. The weather could have been kinder because, despite us choosing a date at the beginning of May, it was a little cold. That, unfortunately, is something we have no control over - we can only pray for a fine day!

The people who came enjoyed being with their dogs: they participated in the games with great enthusiasm and also entered the Class Competitions, Agility and the new 'Junior Handler' section. A new game (for this venue) this year was the 'sausage retrieve' - the sausage being thrown by the dog's owner in the hope that it would be returned uneaten ... with some breeds however ... there was no chance of that happening! There was a good entry for the 'Junior Handler' competition. Instructors from the Club taught the youngsters a few basic exercises, a run off took place followed by the 'Grand Final'. The winner received a certificate and prize and the other finalists were also rewarded. The Class Competitions were very popular and some of the rings were full, so next year bigger rings will be needed. The favourite Classes were: 'Prettiest Bitch' and 'Handsome Dog'. These are difficult to judge as even if we don't win we still feel, 'My dog is the best'. It was all taken with good humour though, which is as it should be.

The dogs, on the whole, were very well behaved. This is so important because they are in such close proximity to one another and they become very excited during some of the events. We are so lucky to have the perfect venue in the Denzell Gardens, which always look so attractive. We ensure the ground is left clean when we leave.

A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes for such an event. There is much involved in planning the programme, designing and printing the certificates, preparing the Class labels, buying the prizes, obtaining the rosettes etc. Then there is the Agility equipment that has to be packed up, transported and assembled only for the same to happen in reverse order a couple of hours later. The side stalls all have to be erected and dismantled similarly. But it is so worthwhile when people have a good afternoon.

For many years now trainee instructors from ADDTS have practised teaching small groups of handlers and dogs on a weekday morning at the Denzell Gardens before going on to take classes at the Club on Sunday afternoons. This has given them valuable experience and it is a pleasure for us to be able to express our thanks for the provision of such a facility by taking part in the annual Dogs' Day Out.

Look on the Website in the new year for details of the 2011 event. We will look forward to you joining in.

Liz Killick

## Apprenticeship

Ever since I was a child I have loved animals and through all my working years my dream was to become a writer, live by the sea and have two dogs which I could walk along the deserted beach between arduous hours creating literary masterpieces!?

When I gave up work, I decided that at least part of my dream should come true and after lots of research, my family and I decided that a Golden Retriever would be the perfect companion for us. We found the ideal litter and Daisy entered our life, which I didn't realise at the time was to be changed forever.

I was determined that Daisy would be well trained and a neighbour recommended Altrincham and District Dog Training Society. I was nervous before the first lesson and concerned that Daisy wouldn't be as good as the other dogs. I had done a lot of research, trained at home, even let her off lead in the park, we were as ready as we would ever be. We planned that the whole family would attend training, as consistency was the key, so one Sunday we all piled in the car and headed off to Altrincham College of Arts. We had a great time, my son Liam loved seeing the puppies and listened intently to all the instructions and spent the next few months informing my husband and me about all the things we were doing wrong.

Goodbye business suits and boardrooms, hello muddy clothes and constant house cleaning! I didn't realise that bringing up a puppy was worse than having a baby to look after. I didn't know that wet muddy dogs love to wait until they get into the house to have a good shake, splattering the walls with mud and like nothing better after a shower or bath than a good roll on the carpet ... or worse still ... the bed!

But I was living at least part of my dream and loving it, I gained a whole new circle of friends, got so much fitter and became known by many as 'Daisy's Mum'.

When Daisy graduated to Class Two I heard about the train-the-trainer sessions at Denzell gardens on a Wednesday morning and that they needed Class Two dogs with their handlers for the apprentice trainers to practise instructing. A friend and I decided to attend, as the dogs loved training and we could certainly do with the practice! We started to go along and that is when my interest in training really kicked in. I loved the sessions and really started to believe that I could become an instructor if I was willing to put the work in.

About twelve months ago, in tragic circumstances, we became a two dog family and the beautiful but slightly wacky Thea joined our happy band. My husband, Richard, then had to step up to the plate and take on a full handler role on Sundays. There were many funny moments, one particularly memorable one when we were asked to do a 'fun down', the idea being that the handler encourages the dog to go into a down using a toy or play. Richard had never come across this before and proceeded to throw himself across the grass, Thea landed on top of him loving every moment, it was one of those times when you wish you had a video camera! I started instructing Richard at home and had some success, if I could teach him I could teach anyone, so I asked if I could be considered to be taken on the apprenticeship scheme at Altrincham. Luckily I was accepted on to the scheme and was soon to realise how little I knew about dog training.

I had done some training and a lot of public speaking in my job so that part didn't faze me too much, but when I was standing in front of a group of handlers trying to remember what I had to teach and how to teach it, everything I had learned went straight out of my head. Luckily I had a great mentor at the beginning of my apprenticeship in puppy class. At first I watched and listened and just helped out, then it was my turn to teach some exercises. It was nerve wracking but I prepared and spent hours going through the spiel in my head. On the whole things went alright and I got regular feedback and I found that I really enjoyed helping the handlers train their puppies.

My intention was to have a detailed plan for my first solo flight but, as is often the case, things didn't turn out that way. Due to illnesses my first class was sprung on me with about five minutes notice! In a way, it was probably the best thing to have happened, no time to worry, just having to get on with it. I really enjoyed my first class, this was in no small way due to the fantastic dogs and handlers that took part and I hope that they found it as much fun as I did. I did however need a large glass of wine once I got home!

It's an amazing feeling when you have a good class and a complete nightmare when it all goes wrong. I have still only learnt a small fraction of what I need to know, but I guess that will always be the case. The trick is to read lots and keep asking questions even when you feel people are sick of you. I will always remember mentioning the problem of Daisy rolling in fox dung, only to have 'tomato ketchup' shouted at me from around the table, I must have looked perplexed as it was then explained to me that it gets rid of the nasty smell and is great as long as you remember to wash it out afterwards!

I am very grateful for the chance that has been presented to me and even more so for the continued patience of those who are helping me learn.

Brenda Allen

## **Agility**

In previous years Agility has been held on a Wednesday evening during the summer months but this year, owing to the constraints of the training team, it was decided to hold the sessions on a Sunday afternoon alongside the usual classes, as a trial. This arrangement meant that two instructors would have to be withdrawn from other classes but we thought it would be possible to do this.

We asked those who were interested in taking part in this new style Agility course to let us know and had a good response from Club members. Places on the course were limited so we allocated places to handlers from the more senior classes first.

Carys and I volunteered to take the course and we started the classes with a few items of equipment, which we added to over the weeks. During the 'warm up' to the sessions, we showed the class how to send their dogs to the left and the right, how to stop them on command and encouraged them to work their dogs on their right hand side rather than the more usual side for training. Each handler and dog was shown a piece of equipment and encouraged to practise working on it. Some dogs were nervous of unfamiliar pieces and they were encouraged by the use of treats and praise. Once they felt secure and confident they moved on to the next piece of equipment. At the end of each session they had the opportunity to go round the complete course individually.

By Week Four some of the dogs in the group were becoming over excited during the sessions and there were occasional episodes of aggression. Dave then decided that the course be adapted to promote more control. We set out small courses consisting of maybe a jump and a tunnel close together and encouraged the dogs to focus more closely on their owners and move towards working off lead.

The training, unfortunately, had to be cut short because of the building work being carried out at the school. However, by the end, we had received a lot of positive feedback and many smiles from both the handlers and dogs that had completed the course.

It is our hope that Agility will continue next summer, maybe a little earlier than this year. It would be good to fit in two 6 - 8 week blocks of training.

Watch this space!

Michelle Pollitt

## Training Tip

*Regular readers of this newsletter will remember Aunty Bumble's 'Problem Page' and 'Training Tips'. Sadly, Aunty Bumble is no longer with us but she now has an able successor in Toby, who has been persuaded to share some of his experience in training dog handlers garnered over many years ....*

### **'Fetch'**

PREPARATION for this exercise begins before you leave the house. OBSERVE carefully to ensure that an appropriate ball or toy has been added to the usual tangle of equipment assembled in readiness for the assault on 'the outside'. Immediately you spot it, demonstrate your APPROVAL with exuberant displays of excitement - twirling in small circles ... jumping on the spot ... barking ... that sort of thing. Your handler should then become infected with your enthusiasm. REPEAT this behaviour when you reach the park. This should have the effect of encouraging your handler to throw the ball as far away as he can. RUN after the ball as if your life depends on it but DO NOT TOUCH it under any circumstances. USE your EYES! STARE at the ball intently, and when your handler catches up with you LOOK at him briefly and then return to your contemplation of the ball. Your patience will be rewarded, your handler will (albeit sometimes a little reluctantly) pick up the ball for you. Trust me!

Toby