

# SEASON'S GREETINGS

Woody – owned by Gill Grinstead



“See amid the winter’s snow”

*With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

*From the Trustees and Co-ordinators  
of  
SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE  
(Registered Charity Number 1098769)  
PO Box 112, Cranbrook, Kent. TN17 3RB*

## **GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 11**

Congratulations to the winners of our east of area “Christmas Time” photo competition. First place was awarded to Gill Grinstead for her photo of Woody, (see front page), Second place to Jenny Shipton for Goldie and Third was Charlie owned by Ruth and Sid Farmer. Goldie and Charlie’s photos will appear in future Newsletters. Our Judge, Mrs Sue Pounds-Longhurst, commented that all the entries were taken in the snow so her final placements were based on correct exposure, sharpness and printing quality. The winners of our “Summer Fun” competition were – First, Charlie Farmer, Second, Woody Grinstead and Third Goldie Shipton. They will appear in our next Newsletter.

We hope you all have a Happy Christmas. Don’t let your dogs get too excited, and be careful they can’t eat the decorations or knock the tree over! As I have said before, too much rich food won’t do their tums any good, and clearing up after them may dampen the Christmas spirit. As always, turkey bones are definitely taboo. We have a lot of stories this time, so have had to edit some, and hold others until the next issue, so we hope you will be understanding about this.

**Bunsen's story**  
*(from Mr & Mrs Mason)*



"We were contacted by Retriever Rescue in March 2007 as we were looking for a bitch to take on in late summer, but when Yvonne Bennett called us a day or two later with an emergency request to Foster a dog we saw no reason to say no. Actually there was a good reason - in two day's time my wife Sandra would be in hospital for a total knee replacement, but as we had missed a dog in the family, Yvonne arranged a short stay with Jean Robbins (how grateful we are to these two ladies). When Sandra was back home Bunsen arrived - a big lump of amiability - and we knew pretty well at once that he would be staying! Yvonne told us that he was VERY overweight, but that was almost an understatement. Fellow dog walkers guessed that he was eight or nine - pretty shaming for a dog just a few weeks past his second birthday. Early walks saw him collapse in a heap after a couple of hundred yards - "I can't do this" and we had to ensure we were not walking after nine in the morning or before seven in the evening. April 2007 was the hottest

month of the year, more like June and we could not risk too much exercise in the heat. The weight began to fall off, however, he was soon showing a huge appetite for outings. He will always be a big boy - front paws like a young lion - but at more than a stone lighter, he is now a proper shape for his age and has a waist! He loves chasing rabbits - and he has caught a few!

Happily his nature has not changed a bit - he loves everyone and everything, nothing seems to spoil his good humour. He leans against us if we are standing or seated and lies all over us if we sit on the ground.

Comfort is not important, contact is all that matters. He may have felt some insecurity when he first arrived, but that has long since passed and there is no reduction in his desire to cuddle up. As boisterous in play as any young dog, he is nevertheless very gentle with children and other friends and family and he has never given Sandra a moment's worry during her convalescence.



He does not have an ounce of aggression in him and rarely barks, but he does 'talk' to us particularly when he is carrying something in his mouth (anything up to and including six foot branches) or greeting us in the morning and when we return home on the rare occasions he has not accompanied us.

It is a strange sound from the back of his throat, but hugely Endearing. If we 'talk' back to him with the same sounds, we can keep the conversation going for ages!! He has made friends, of course, with the rest of our animals, including our rescue cat.

He even sings in close harmony with our donkey - the donkey 'honks' Bunsen howls - the effect is amazing and they only have one setting 'really loud'. Thank goodness it is only an occasional activity! We may be giving the impression that Bunsen is the Perfect Dog - Not so, he is probably the messiest drinker in the country and floods the kitchen - but we can live with that!"

## **Manu by Himself**

*(owned by Sarah Smith)*



I personally don't know what the fuss was about. I just did what I usually do. Stayed close to mum's left leg, turned when she did, picked up the dumbbell (well, OK, I don't ALWAYS do this!) and did my usual happy Goldie strutting.

But it got us a red rosette. And red rosettes are, I believe, the best you can get. We were at the March SGRS show, taking part in the Novice obedience test. As I said, I don't know what all the fuss was about, but mum went home very happy – even though she said I hadn't beaten any collies!

I wasn't always the happy-go-lucky chap that I am now. I came to mum and dad about four years ago. I must have been nearly two and up until then life hadn't been a bunch of roses. I hadn't been ill-treated exactly but I was very low and didn't have a lot of confidence. I didn't know how to walk on the lead, I was very frightened of traffic and a bit anxious about other dogs and people. This was about the third home I'd had and I was very mixed up.

All that's changed now. I share my home with a dotty old Yorkshire Terrier called Pippin and a very clever but neurotic Border Collie called Cariad. Everything got better after I arrived here. Lots of lovely long walks, some great holidays and something called 'obedience training.' Mum decided to start doing the competitive stuff with me for two reasons – firstly, she said I had a natural, happy style and secondly she had to give up competing with Cariad because of something called a ruptured cruciate. . It was me who ruptured it actually. There we were, racing along the beach after duckies (seagulls) when she stopped. No slowing down, no indication, nothing. I tried to apply the brakes but they didn't work. It cost lots of money to get Cariad sorted. In fact, I think I have probably cost them more than the other two dogs put together. A couple of times I have swallowed stones and then there was a time when I picked up a tasty morsel on the beach with something sharp in it. I was very brave when the vet removed the fish hook from the back of my mouth and mum was very brave when she got the bill (It was New Year's Day, you see, and cost more than usual.)

But although things have got so much better, life is never perfect is it? In fact I sometimes think I should ask the rescue people to put me on the transfer list. The issues I have are with sleeping arrangements and food. When it comes to sleeping arrangements I am the victim of gross discrimination. We all have beds in their bedroom but the other two have proper dog duvets and I only have a sleeping bag in a duvet cover – and they think I don't know the difference! Pippin also whinges until she is LIFTED onto their bed at night (even though I know she manages to get up there perfectly well when they are not there) and the collie sometimes manages to sneak onto the bed in the middle of the night. But when I try to sneak up they tell me there's not enough room.

However, I have perfected a good revenge tactic. It's called 'unmaking the bed' and I commend it to all Goldies. First of all you need to lay across the pillows, with your back firmly against the headboard. Brace yourself and then start kicking all your legs. If done properly, this should dislodge the bedclothes and push them down the bed. Then slide off the pillows while continuing to kick. The bedclothes should end up either at the bottom of the bed or off it completely. My two humans started blaming each other for not making the bed until I fell asleep on the job one day and they put two and two together.

Please note that this is particularly effective if you are wet, muddy or - even better - sandy.

The other issue I have is with food. To me, walks are all about foraging. The promenade yields lots of lovely stuff – especially under the benches on a Saturday or Sunday morning. And the beach itself is wonderful. But do they appreciate my foraging skills? No they don't. Mum tries to keep her eye on me when we're on the beach but while she's gazing at the sunrise or deep in thought, I sometimes manage to sneak off. By the time she notices, I'm usually half way through my impromptu meal. She shouts a lot but I can't always hear what she's saying (although I can see her lips moving). She then tries to get to me before I've finished eating. I don't know if you've ever seen someone who is past their first flush of youth (well past it, to be honest) trying to run fast on a shingle beach? It's VERY funny! I can eat quicker than she can run and I am usually walking towards her with a smug look on my face before she gets to me. She looks at me in despair and tells me I am given very good dog food that's got all the supplements I need.

But is it supplemented with cold chips, congealing Chinese take-away and rotting fish? I rest my case.

The day after I won the red rosette, I decided to bring mum back down to earth. We were left for 15 minutes while dad went to meet her from the station. Dad had prepared a curry and had left six onion bhajis and a packet of naan bread on the work surface. By the time they got back I had eaten all the bhajis and was just about to tuck into the naan bread. I decided to give it to them as a present instead.

Never let it be said that I've let success go to my head.

### **Fun Day**



At the Kent Fun Day Chairman Anne Hodgson receives a cheque for £525 from Mascotts Hydrotherapy from the proceeds of their Boxing Day Fun Swim for dogs, and raffle.



### **News of Mina** *(from Ann Goodenough)*

Mina came to me a year ago, aged 11½ when her owners had to move into rented accommodation, where dogs were not allowed. Initially she was unhappy and bewildered, and had to be coaxed to eat. Now, mealtimes are a big event. She loves visitors, particularly my daughter who comes twice a week with her two rescue dogs. Mina forgets her age and greets them enthusiastically. She is now a very happy and much loved companion.

## Holly

Hello, my name is Holly and I am nearly 10, my owners found me through the Southern Golden Retriever Rescue and took me home July 2002. Although I had a happy home with Sharon and her 3 triplets it became very hard to look after us all. Sharon decided it would be best to find me a new home where I can get plenty of exercise, as titbits from 3 toddlers did give me an expanding waistline.



Not long after moving to Broadstairs with John and June (Kelly) I started to have problems with my legs and needed an operation. The vet advised this was due to my weight and I was promptly put on a diet. June and John decided it would be nice for me to have a friend and one weekend Charlie came into my life. Charlie, a Cairn Terrier Cross, was 10 months old when he arrived and had not had a very good start to life. He was very skinny, dirty and frightened and followed me everywhere, we soon become firm friends.

Our life is very good with lots of strolls along the beach, I swim and Charlie plays with his ball keeping me in his sights to make sure I don't swim too far away. Also when other dogs pester Charlie and he gets frightened I chase the other dogs away. Luckily for me Charlie is a very fussy eater so I manage to get all his leftovers and titbits. My neighbour Richard is always giving me treats, even though June tells him off, he never forgets me. When I go to the park I never rush and can't wait for my lead to be put on so that I get my sweet, but when I am on the beach I can run as fast as any young pup.

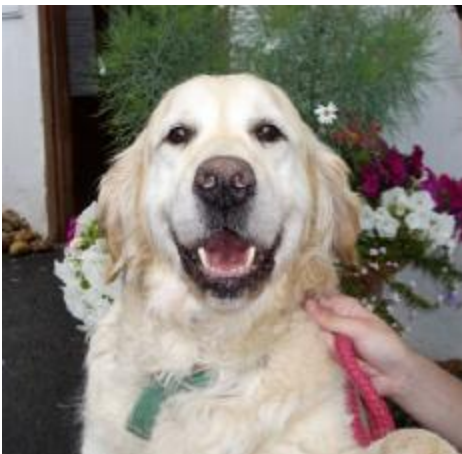


Thank you Southern Rescue for finding me a lovely home, you do a very good job indeed.  
June Kelly.

### **Do they ever grow up? Fergus aged 12**

*(Shirley Midgley sent this update on Fergus settling in)*

I left him at home on Wednesday when I went to work. My mum called about an hour after I left and he had found my son's chocolate birthday cake (which for some reason I was storing in my bedroom ready for this Sunday). He took it downstairs and was sharing it with Sasha along with what she told me were shredded crisp packets (but turned out to be a shredded carrier bag) so they had quite a party. When I came home I was dreading to see what else he had been up to but everything was in order.



He is enjoying his walks and when Andy gets home in the evenings Fergus runs to get his lead and presents it to him. He has also brought me Andy's digital camera which was on the bedside cabinet so I think that was a reminder that I need to take some pictures of him to send to you. Luckily it was wrapped in bubble wrap and was undamaged.

His appetite is increasing and he seems generally more settled which I think is amazing in only 4 days. He settles at night good as gold with the girls, doesn't sleep on the furniture (unlike them) and his favourite place is our porch. It is quite spacious and has a tiled floor which I thought he liked because it is cool. However, I have put a duvet in there and he now sleeps on that during the day.

### **Charlie's day at Crufts 2008**

*(Charlie was adopted by Tricia Robinson in 2002 when she was a delightful but **very** lively 6 months old)*



I was asked to go to Crufts 2008 with my six year old rescue bitch, Charlie, to give demonstrations of heelwork to music. It was such an honour to be asked and we were the only Golden Retriever to be doing these demonstrations. We performed in the dog activities ring which was near the Discover Dogs area. There was also a pen which we had to man for various periods during the day showing the public how we train our dogs to perform.

When it was our turn to perform our routine I was surprised to see such large numbers of people around the ring watching. It was quite nerve racking for me but Charlie took it all in her stride and wagged her tail throughout. She was a real star and just loved the atmosphere. There was then a session in the ring where children could come over to the dogs to learn how to get the dogs to perform different moves. As the only Golden a lot of children wanted to work with Charlie and were thrilled when she performed for them.

It was a very long day for Charlie – we set off at 6am and didn't return home until 10.30pm. Needless to say Charlie spent the return journey fast asleep!

The organisers were very pleased with us and there is a chance we may be asked to return next year, we shall have to wait and see. We would both love to do it all over again.

### **Farewell to Gus**



Gus went to live with the McTavish family on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2005. He had been neglected, was very overweight, dirty and his coat was matted. He was very much loved, but sadly died on his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, and a longer story about his life will appear in our next Newsletter.