

GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 12

Newsletter of

SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE

Registered Charity Number 1098769
PO Box 112 Cranbrook Kent TN17 4RB



Charlie – owned by Ruth and Sid Farmer

You may not have noticed that there are new Government guidelines on the welfare of dogs (and other animals). It is now an offence to allow your pet to become obese, so do watch their waistlines! They also warn that chocolate, raisins and grapes are poisonous to dogs, and this includes the cocoa mulch that many people put on their gardens.

Our two Fun Days were as usual very successful, despite the rain at the Hampshire one. Dates for this year are

17th May - Kent and 28th June - Hampshire

We hope to see you at one of the above days, and wish you and your dogs a happy and healthy summer.



Winner of our East of Area Summer Fun Competition

Our Judge, Mrs Sue Pounds-Longhurst commented

“Super interpretation with the subject filling the whole frame, and well handled on the technical front”.



The “Summer Fun” category had several entries, so congratulations to our winners, and also to Gill Grinstead whose photo of Woody in a Sunflower Field was 2nd, and to Jenny Shipton for her delightful pose of Goldie, who was placed 3rd.



Rescue continues to be busy, and in 2008 we rehomed a total of 96 dogs, which was a slight increase on 2007. Many were quite elderly and needed considerable veterinary attention.

Let’s hope we have a better summer than last year’s wash-out! Don’t forget to walk your dogs during the cooler times of day if we do have a heat-wave, and never leave them in the car, even with the windows open.

Fresh Fields

We were living in Shirley, Croydon when Shannon (originally Sam) came to us. We had recently lost Purdey our springer spaniel who had been the companion of our first golden retriever Rowley. We all missed her very much and Rowley seemed a bit lost without a friend. We had heard about Southern Golden Retriever Rescue and I contacted Pat Marchant who came to see us and I think we passed muster because she rang not long afterwards to say that she had a 10 month old dog available and could I go and see him. Off



I went to Sheen to meet this young American family with very young children who were finding it difficult to give Sam the time he needed. They were a lovely family with this 10 month bundle of fur and enthusiasm who was obviously much loved. But, with two youngsters and a baby the family were finding it hard to cope and they wanted the best for Sam. I reported back to Pat Marchant and said that if Sam and Rowley got on we would like to offer Sam a home. A few days later the dogs met up in Richmond Park and had a good romp together - a good sign. It was a day of mixed emotions for his family and us when we went to collect Sam but he came with us together with his bed, toy, and biscuits.

As our journey progressed he got more distressed and he was quite panicky by the time we arrived home. He must have been terrified and all our kind and loving words could not settle him. Rowley didn't help either - a meeting in the park for a play was one thing but home territory was a different matter. We were going to have a few tricky weeks ahead.

I think we totally underestimated the fear and confusion which Sam must have felt but with advice from Pat we soldiered on willing things to work out. He was such a delightful little dog and we didn't want to fail him. Rowley and Sam had quite a big difference of opinion one evening - it was over a toy as I recall - which resulted in some snarling and bared teeth and I thought that was the end, but I sat them down either side of me and we had a meaningful talk. I honestly don't know what happened but my boys seemed to get the message and we began to make steady progress after that. The highlight was when Pat came for a visit and Rowley very gently took the toy Sam was holding in his mouth and took it to Pat. I was speechless and delighted and Pat said that we had turned the corner and that we were going to be alright. She was not wrong.

The boys became the greatest of pals with Rowley assuming the role of elder statesman and Shannon learning from him all the while. I should explain that 'Sam' became Shannon (Shan for short) because at the time there were lots of other dogs called Sam in our area, not to mention a number of small boys. Life was potentially too confusing!

Shannon settled down and began to really enjoy his walks and outings. He was still a bit insecure and needy but Rowley helped him along and his confidence grew. It gave us much pleasure to see them together and to be such good companions, often engaging in play fighting on the lawn in summer. It couldn't last because Rowley was much older and sadly we lost him over two years ago. He developed heart trouble and he died suddenly and peacefully at home. He was 13 years old. We were heartbroken and it was an awful time - these 'goldens' do steal your heart. We let Shannon see him lying in the kitchen and he backed away and went to lie down quietly, not moving until we had cared for Rowley. He knew and understood. We were all very much at a loss and miss Rowley to this day. For a while Shannon lost his confidence again and he was very unsure about everything. He is a very endearing little chap but he does need plenty of reassurance.

However we are now in fresh fields and a new place. We have retired and moved to Knighton, a market town on the Welsh Borders near Ludlow. You cannot get more 'border' than Knighton - cross the River Teme and you are in Shropshire and a mile or two down the road lies Herefordshire. Shannon has taken to the hills like a natural. He can't get over how many rabbits there are to chase - he never catches any of course

but he revels in the chase. He was respectful of sheep from the start and has never worried the livestock. This was good news because there are a lot of sheep in these parts! The River Teme is mostly shallow and clear running through Knighton and Shannon loves to splish in the water but he keeps his paws firmly on the riverbed. Shannon is no athlete, being somewhat short of leg and broad chested. We are getting to know the rest of the canine population and owners and we are finding new walks and hills to climb, albeit at a stately pace. Shannon is nine years old now and we are so glad that he came into our lives. He gave Rowley fun and companionship and he has given us love and friendship and we are looking forward to a good few more years of the same. Thank you Pat and Southern Golden Retriever Rescue - it has been a pleasure.

Margaret and Norman Thorp
October 2008

PS We always watch the display team strutting their stuff at Crufts and they do a great job both for the breed and the Southern Golden Retriever Society – long may they continue.



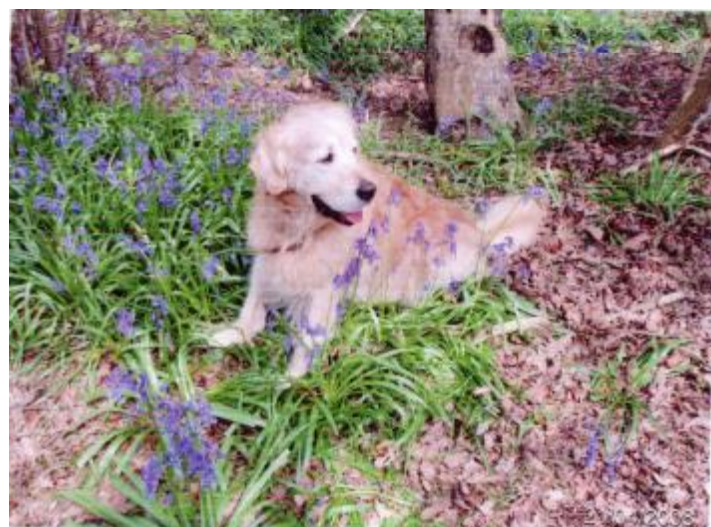
Freddie

We were told by the Retriever Rescue that a dog was available in South London; we were not quite sure he would suit us, as there was not much information about him. They thought that he was about 10 to 12 years old. He had had three owners, but was in need of a loving home. We saw his photo and thought he looked lovely, so we set off on quite a long journey to meet Magnus.

He was waiting for us with his nose resting on the front door step, a stance repeated so many times on our front step; he just loved watching the world go by. He seemed very pleased to see us, and needed no encouragement to jump into our car.

We were advised by his present owners that he had only been with them for four weeks as their small boy had developed asthma while Magnus was with them. They suggested Magnus might be deaf as he didn't seem to understand too much when spoken to. He didn't like other dogs and had a growth removed from his front paw. He was also very car sick. With this last piece of information ringing in our ears we draped ourselves with towels and set off for home. Poor Magnus was so sick but wagged his tail for the entire journey.

He seemed very pleased to be home and jumped onto his much loved padded blanket which had been given to him, and went to sleep.



Later we thought he would be hungry, so opened a tin of Premium dog food which he sniffed, put his nose in the air, and ran off. We never did get him to eat dog food. Chicken and roast beef was all he ever ate although French bread and cheese was always acceptable.

His second owner, we learnt, was an elderly Hungarian gentleman who had to go into hospital; this was the reason he didn't understand English and he never did answer to Magnus, so we believe there was also a mix-up with his name. He was such a bright dog and within a week he learnt to sit and stay and walkies were the highlight of his day, doing a little dance on his way to the garden.

We called him Fred and he answered to his name after the second day.

Feeding him was difficult as he didn't seem to like eating from a dish, so we guessed the Hungarian gentleman had shared his meals with Fred, hence his enjoyment of bread and cheese.

The first two weeks with Fred were not too easy. The second day he escaped from the front door and we found him running beside the A1, and I think he was really frightened and bewildered. He stole any food he fancied. He ate three separate half pounds of butter, a large homemade birthday cake I made for my Grandson, a large box of chocolates and many other sweet delights.

But what a joy he proved to be; he had the sweetest of natures, his tail wagged all day unless he lost sight of my husband or me. He did not like to be left alone, but would curl up and go to sleep until we returned. He loved everyone except other dogs; he never stole any food after the first two weeks and his coat grew to be a sight to behold, wavy and silky. If we had ordered a dog, we would not have improved on Fred. We loved him dearly and he repaid us with charm, gentle nature and good manners. We never had to tell him anything twice and he settled into a wonderful routine. We hoped and prayed that he would be with us for a good while as he was a very lively dog, but it was not to be. One evening, having been with us for ten months and after a large meal of minced steak and a lovely walk, he came in from the garden, lay down on the kitchen floor and died. How we miss him. Goodbye Fred, you didn't deserve your chequered life but we thought you were wonderful.

Geoff and Pat Sparrow



Educating 'Archie'



Those who remember the significance of the title will probably have had many years of experience of the glorious breed, as we have. Archie's two predecessors gave us 26 years of delight. No surprises then that with the loss of Rupert at Easter we soon gave thought to a successor. This time domestic circumstances meant that a new-born puppy was not the best option. Accordingly, we registered our interest with all branches of the breed rescue charity in the South. After a patient wait we were introduced to Archie in October when he was then seven months old.

The experience of the last three months has been delightful. Archie displays all of the breed characteristics, unconditional love, interest, playfulness, etc. plus many of his own. When the grandchildren first met him in November he would eagerly play chase with 3 year old Ben, but gave 3 month old Thomas a wide berth. We gave no instructions but Archie knew instinctively not to fuss with the baby at floor level.

We understand that Archie was the result of a chance mating. He is blessed with a very attractive coat of gold over cream with dense black pigment. It is unlikely that two top breeders could have conspired to produce a better looking and more adorable pet.

Our sincere thanks go to Myra Corpes, the Area Co-ordinator, and the team behind the Southern Golden Retriever Rescue Service for enabling us to adopt Archie.

Tony & Margaret Green



News from Bramley

We thought it was about time we finally put pen to paper to update you about Bramley.

About 3 years ago in August we sadly lost our beloved first Golden Retriever, Spike, to cancer. By October we were in contact with SGRR to try and home a rescued dog. After one visit to meet a potential newcomer to our lives, we were so disappointed as the dog clearly wasn't keen on our young daughter. After a call in the November, giving us brief details, we drove to a kennels in Kent to meet a potential golden lunatic.

When we got there we were warned that Bramley Apple (!) was a big, boisterous 5 year old who was strong on the lead, destroyed and chewed doors, cupboards and floors and stole anything he could lay his paws on. He had been a family dog, but children had come along who were allergic to him and he subsequently had spent a lot of his life shut in the kitchen.

At the kennels we waited quietly in an indoor riding area and were advised to brace ourselves for the launching of Bramley. In he came, a 48 kg excited whirlwind who charged around us making his presence felt. He was massive (our last dog was never heavier than 28 kgs!), his head was truly huge but he had a super friendly smiley face. We asked to take him for a walk and as soon as he was on the lead he settled down. It was as if there was no dog attached to the lead. Hurrah, we all liked him and wanted to take him home.

Getting him into the car was a massive battle, and as he was an extremely nervous and vocal passenger we were deafened all the way home. We subsequently spent many hours trying to alleviate his fear of travelling by feeding him in the car, taking drives around the block, etc. Fast forward a few years and he still doesn't like the car, but it's par for the course in our lives so he has learned to put up with it! At least we don't have to lift him in anymore, no mean feat! We are very lucky to have found wonderful kennels, where Bramley sets up camp under their kitchen table occasionally. Amazingly it's called Bramley Cottage!

Talking of weight, initially he was not keen to eat dog food (we'd been told his favourite food was eggs!) but after a while he accepted that whilst he thought we were trying to poison him, the alternative was starvation. He still supplements his diet at every opportunity for more tasty morsels, such as the time he stole a hand of bananas from the fruit bowl! Another time he ate the soup from a saucepan on the stove!! He was a real plodding geriatric character when we first brought him home, so we needed to build his exercise up gradually. He'll never be lean, but he has stamina now, and muscles.

He is such a loveable boy and has settled down to life in Hampshire with us really well. We have fostered a motley mix of dogs for Havant Borough Council and Bram tolerates them, but because he is naturally anxious around other dogs (we don't think he was socialised as a puppy) he breathes a huge sigh of relief when they go to their new homes. He is not too interested in canines, much preferring us humans. He does however spend quite a lot of time with his golden retriever girlfriend Tamara, a working guide dog. Bram



does have naughty occasions, most memorably when he ate the post...6 theatre tickets! Bin emptying is another satisfying pastime! In the garden Bram and Tamara are trying to dig a more direct route to each other's homes, and clearly think we haven't noticed the excavations amongst the flowerbeds!

A more "talkative" dog we have yet to meet, he is SO vocal. Talking to cats, grumbling excitedly at squirrels, he's still puzzling out how to climb up the trees after them!

In April this year he clearly saw snow for the first time. If ever a dog could show total astonishment at how

his world had changed, Bram showed it. He went outside and barked for England at the snow covered trailer, then barked a bit more at the ground. I think he was pleased with himself for chasing the snow away around lunchtime. We had time to build a very large snowman and completed him with a large carrot nose. By the time we had got the camera from the house, the nose had vanished and Bramley was looking most angelic and clearly knew nothing of snowman noses!!

A couple of years ago after experiencing a couple of periods of lameness our vet diagnosed fused discs in Bram's lower spine. Thankfully this does not seem to bother him as yet, and he enjoys excellent health. We really cannot imagine Bram not being in our lives, he is such a wonderful chap, not to mention gorgeous and handsome as you will see by the picture!

The Coles Family



My Second Chance by Gus McTavish. From 13th April 2005

I knew my prospective new guardians (Tony and Joan) must be keen because they travelled from Hampshire to Dover but I almost spoilt it for myself. When they arrived I could see how shocked they were, I was very overweight, very dirty and my coat was very matted. But they smiled and had a cup of tea. After chatting about me for a while they asked if they could take me out on their own for a walk to see how I behaved when I was out. All seemed to be going well until I saw another dog across the field, that was it, no one could stop me, I was away, I was naughty (not a good move on my part) my prospective new guardians had to chase me across a ploughed field and they took me back home in disgrace, I could see they were going to say no so I had to think fast. They were in stocking feet so I thought I would playfully nibble his toes. I could see it was working so I pushed my head under his arm and looked up with pleading eyes, it worked, he was hooked! They looked at each other and at me, and she said it's up to you, I will leave the decision to you, I had won!

However when they then went to put me in their car I was not sure what was happening! Although I was fastened in the back of the estate car I still managed to scramble over the back seat and tried to get into the front with my new guardians. My nails were very long and sharp and I dug them into my new owners arms, I was sorry as I know it hurt her, so they had to quickly pull over in a lay-by, you see my old owner said I would sit in the back and not move NOT TRUE! We had a traumatic journey and I could see they thought they had made a big mistake.

When I reached my new home I knew I wanted to stay, I was allowed in the house and could walk on soft carpets, not shut out in a muddy garden! I was so smelly and dirty I needed a bath! What an ordeal, but to be honest I was getting loads of fuss and it felt quite good to be getting rid of a lot of dirt and fur. Then Tony one of my new guardians spent hours and hours with me gently getting the matting from my coat and all the time he was saying encouraging words to me and was very patient.

At first I made them virtually lift me in and out of the car and as I was very overweight it was no mean feat I can tell you, but I soon learnt that every time I went in the car, however short the journey, there was a fresh walk and new smells at the end, so I soon started to help a little by putting my front feet up on the car, they were delighted, but I still did not like those noisy motorbikes screeching past, very scary!

Some friends of Tony and Joan who have dogs of their own wanted to come and see me so they were invited in for morning coffee. They brought me toys and chewy sticks and started to play ball with me which was great fun. Then they asked if they could look around the new caravan so they left me in the lounge. ANOTHER BIG MISTAKE! I am very ashamed to say the beautiful cakes and biscuits on the coffee table were just too much and when they came back in the plate was on the floor and empty! Well they were teaching me new things so I had to teach them I could not be trusted around food. Lesson learnt they have not done it since!

My new home has a very nice garden with comfortable chairs and I love to sit on one with my beloved towel in my mouth. (My towel is my comfort blanket and doubles up as a prop, for cuddles). I soon learnt there was an abundance of towels dotted around my new house and when they put mine in the washing machine I sneaked in and stole one from another room. It took them a while to realize what I was doing (at this stage they did not know I could open doors and help myself) Fun! Fun! Fun!

In my old house I was encouraged to chase after cats to keep them out of the garden. I soon learnt this was not the case in my new home, it was definitely taboo! I got a real telling off and soon realised it was not worth it, mind you, I still have fun keeping them out of my garden and I am always on the look out when I am on my walks so I can scare them as we walk past!

Soon it was time for my first experience of going away with the Caravan. We were in a field with a couple of other caravans and opposite I spied guess what? Someone had brought their cat with them, what fun! I was securely tied up but it didn't stop me trying! At night it was great fun. I was on a special bed and felt very safe and secure as I was near enough in the morning to walk over to their bed and get loads of cuddles.

My next treat was a visit to Monmouth, although the 3 hour journey didn't feel like a treat at the time. I didn't realise how big I looked next to three year old twins. Matthew thought I was a Polar Bear but Emily thought I was a large teddy bear and loved and stroked me straight away but it took Matthew a little longer to realise I was not going to eat him! Well we had a great time with some lovely walks, even though I opened the garden gate to explore further afield.

The summer holidays were time for more fun, they could not believe they had a Retriever who didn't like water so Tony gently encouraged me to paddle then we both went in deeper and he had his hand under me and I found it was a lovely feeling and I floated along. After that I quite enjoyed the sea and we splashed around quite happily, I still didn't like it going over my head though.

Tony has a classic car, a Triumph TR6, and Joan bet him £50 I would never go out in it with the hood down, so Tony was clever and let me sit in it when he was working on it in the garage. After a while we went gently on a short route, and eventually we had a drive round the countryside and it was great with the wind in my hair. What was funny was the look of disbelief on peoples faces, seeing me in the back of a sports car – with my harness on, of course.



Guess what? One thing I am so very proud of, I can now be trusted off the lead and it's great! I am enjoying a great life in Hampshire thanks to the patience of Tony and Joan - THANK YOU to Southern Retriever Rescue for enabling this to happen!

Well it's now over two years since I arrived in Hampshire, and things are still great for me. I am unfortunately getting older, I am 11 years old now and was getting a bit stiff so now I have some medicine to put on my food, and although I am still a bit stiff it certainly isn't as painful as it was.



One of the things I really look forward to on Christmas Day is it's the only day I am allowed on Tony and Joan's bed to open my presents. It's so nice to be loved so much. We had quite a quiet Christmas this year which was nice but boy did we make up for it on Boxing Day! There was a lot of food being prepared, and soon Emily and Matthew arrived from Wales with their mum and dad. After lunch games were prepared, lots of lovely nibbles put around the room, and Aunty Marian arrived with her family and the party started. We had great fun, especially when we played the flour game, the children loved it as everyone got quite messy!

In summer 2008 there was a lot of activity going on, the Caravan was washed, the garden was looking neat and tidy and I saw them put my bed and food in so all was well. First we went to Cambridge for a few days, where we had lots of nice walks, but I had to be carried down the stairs of the sight-seeing bus as I lay down and refused to move. Next we went to Clacton on Sea for 2 nights and then on to Canterbury. The weather was hot and so we drove to Herne Bay where dogs were allowed on the beach. Tony and I walked into the sea together, it was lovely and cool, very calm and flat and I just kept on walking. Eventually Tony managed to encourage me out of the water. Joan sat on the beach taking photos of us enjoying ourselves in the water.

Later on that day I was very tired and my legs were stiffer than they had been. I didn't mind as I had a lovely paddle! The day after was another warm day so after a lazy morning it was decided to go back to Herne Bay where we went to sit on the beach. The breeze was lovely and Joan paddled a little with me but as I was getting back to the beach my back legs became very wobbly so Tony came to help me. We had had another lovely day, but I was still very stiff. To cut a long story short after a couple of days and visits to the local vets my legs still didn't improve so Tony slept next to me in the awning in case I needed help in the night. It was lovely and even though it rained heavily in the night I felt secure as Tony had his arm round me and was talking soothingly to me. There was no improvement in my legs the next day so they decided to take me home to see my own vet Mr Whittaker.

It was my 12 birthday so I was really being spoilt, I had chicken for my breakfast and loads of hugs and cuddles then Tony lifted me in the car and we were off home. Tony lifted me out of the car and how my tail wagged to be home in my beloved garden, I stayed there under a broolly to keep the sun off me, both Tony and Joan sat with me, it was very peaceful. Then to my surprise when Tony had his lunch guess what, as it was my Birthday I had a 3 course meal, soup, chicken and ice cream followed by Birthday cake, what more could one ask for! About an hour later I decided I wanted to go indoors and so Tony once again carried me in and sat with me on my bed until it was time to go and see Mr Whittaker. Joan and Tony were very sad but I was very contented as I had had a lovely holiday with them and a great birthday.

I hope anyone reading this story realizes what a wonderful gentle warm mischievous charismatic character he was who enjoyed his life with us until the end; we will really miss our pal Gus and remember him with such fondness, he made such a difference to so many lives we will always be grateful for the short time we were able to share his life.

God bless Gus.

1st August 1996 – 1st August 2008

Tony & Joan Brown



Acknowledgements - we are extremely grateful for the support given by so many to the Charity. Our special thanks go to:

- Susie and Colin Beardwell of East Dean Kennels, Headcorn, Kent for making their kennels available to us when needed
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- Farlington Dog Training Club for fund-raising for us by their various events
- The members and Committee of the Southern Golden Retriever Society for their continued support

