

GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 5
Newsletter of
SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE
(Registered Charity Number 1098769)

SEASON'S GREETINGS



Megan & Charlie

Waiting for Father Christmas

Once again the Festive Season is nearly upon us, and another busy year for Rescue is drawing to a close. We hope you and your dogs have had a good year. Thank you for all your articles and photographs - we love having them. If the one you sent is not in this issue we shall hope to use it in the next one. We are especially grateful to Elspeth and Ian Buchanan for allowing us to use the photo of Megan and Charlie on the front of this Newsletter, as sadly Megan has since passed away.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the two Fun Days, and we must thank the Southern Golden Retriever Society for their donation from the proceeds of the Kent day, and Farlington Dog Training Club for the proceeds of their Hampshire day. It all involves a lot of time and effort from the organisers, those who run the various stalls, and of course those who provide the refreshments.

The summer has been remarkable by the fact that in the space of five days we took in two baby abandoned puppies. Both were 8 - 10 weeks old, and quite undernourished. One was found in a rubbish skip in South London, the other in a parking area by some woods in East Sussex. We fostered them for the four weeks required by law, and

nursed them back to health (one had a very nasty gut infestation). They are both now in permanent loving homes, but thank goodness the people who found them told us!

Remember not to give your dog too much rich food over the holiday, and certainly no turkey bones or human chocolate which can poison them. Also make sure they can't chew the decorations and tree baubles. Dogs can get just as excited as children at party time!



NEWS FROM MEG

(Meg was rescued from a Welsh puppy farm and fostered for a while until she got over the worst of her fears. This is part of a letter from her new family)

Hi Gill,

A note and a video. Meg's doing really well. We absolutely adore her and she's really enjoying her life with us. She's having a ball.

When she first came here she made very dramatic progress really, especially over the first 3 - 4 weeks. She came along in leaps and bounds. She loves the family life and being part of something secure and having something to belong to. Besides food, there's nothing she likes more than when the whole family's in one place or if we all go out together for a walk as a group.

The kids have been great with her, very gentle and very sensitive to her needs. Like all children, they're very noisy but it's not something Meg finds particularly worrying. If anything this dog seems to like a lot of noise, especially loud music???

Some things she seemed to get over really quickly. Cars, people etc., and other things seem to take longer. There's no real logic in it. However the positive thing is that there is always progress. Sometimes inch by inch and other times from one day to the next. She's always been a bit funny about going in to the kitchen. Why? I don't know. I always thought that was a dog's favourite room. She'd go through the kitchen, but she wouldn't stop there. That was up until a few days ago. You'll see her on the video pausing at the kitchen door. Now.....Yesterday, for no reason whatsoever, she decided she liked the kitchen and it isn't a problem anymore!! This is the thing with her. You can't push her to do anything. It's all about trust and she has to do it in her own time.

She's a very brave, big hearted dog. The first time I took her for a walk, we went miles across fields, roads, country lanes, everywhere and she was terrified from one minute to the next. But she was also really enjoying the stimulation and the activity. Despite everything, the very next day she was ready to do it all again and with excitement and enthusiasm.

I have to say that Meg's never been a problem. Never been difficult to handle. I think that's in part because the family have collectively given her so much love, time and space (including the kids) and also because she's such an obliging dog. She has

one or two peculiarities. She'll only eat her dinner in the living room (although we've caught her once or twice trying to sneak up the stairs to steal the cats' dinners) and she steals all the kids' soft toys, puts them in her bed and tries to feed them. She drops big mouthfuls of dog food in front of them and waits for them to eat it!

She's put on about 10 lb. Not fat but muscle, especially on the hips and back legs. It's all the exercise! She has to sleep within about 4 ft of me. She's now confident to have a good bark at people, which we always find hilarious because this the world's least threatening dog. All in all she's just brilliant really and gives us so much joy and pleasure. She love's people, despite her history. Isn't that incredible? And everyone makes a fuss of her (it's compulsory. If you come into our house...you have to make a fuss of the dog).

There's no problem with the cats. The cats really like her and she tolerates them. She's predisposed to being a little jealous, so she's never going to love them but the relationship's a good one and I never worry about them being together. Meg learnt really quickly that the cats are no mugs.

This dog loves to eat. The kids have stopped putting their plates on the floor (bad habit anyway). And...we don't use a fruit bowl anymore. Yes, she'll devour apples and oranges given half the chance. It's been a learning process for all of us. She's a bit spoilt, but then I think she deserves to be. From the moment she jumped into the car (much to my surprise and yours) I think she was meant to be here. She's still jumpy but the difference is that if something spooks her she'll get over it in seconds. She's become really focused. Lots of eye contact, good body language and lots of wagging. She's very clean. We had a few accidents but that was more because she didn't know how to ask to go out (and the kitchen problem) and also because we weren't being as vigilant as we could have been.

She's never left on her own. The longest ever has been a couple of hours but even then she had the cats and the radio. Liz is home all day then works in the evening and I'm home all evening (child minder). Did you notice that she's got 2 bottom teeth missing and a couple of front claws missing? She's also got a very heavy scar inside one of her ears. I could write a book about this....but I won't!

Best wishes and kindest regards.....*Michael*



Don't Leave Your Dog in the Lurch

In Rescue we often have to re-home dogs when their owners have passed away, and so I thought I should stress how important it is to leave instructions for the future of your dog in your Will. If there are no instructions your Executors can sell your dog (or any other pets you may have) in order to maximise the value of your estate, and this may not be at all in the animal's best interests! If you do not have a suitable relative who is willing to care for the dog, you can leave him or her to Southern Golden Retriever Rescue and a good home will be found.



My New Home by Willow Hamlyn

*(Willow's first owners had not had a dog before and had little or no idea how to train and cope with a Golden Retriever puppy)
(Please read verses from left to right)*

Life changed for me at the end of May
Peter and Pat came to my home one day
Into their car and off to Kent
I don't know why away I was sent

Ann and Graham came the very next day
Yes we'll have her I heard them say
I stayed where I was for the following week
While they dog proofed the boundary, all holes
to seek

No walks at first, there was a reason
Unfortunately I was in season
Friends' dogs came to visit and to meet
New people and pets for me to greet

I swiftly follow and give chase
And usually end up with a swipe at the face
Up and down the stairs we go
She's older than me therefore a bit slow

Ann's slippers I love especially the left
She now has three right and is rather bereft
I make rather a mess as I lick them and chew
What a big fuss it's not a real shoe

Now why do humans prune their shrubs
Put plants and bulbs in many tubs
You don't need to prune with me about
I pull and tug till they come out

I hate my harness but am good in the car
Usually it's up to the park, not too far
An hour or more of fun and games
Then it's time to be called some names

It's weeks now since I chewed a letter
Things are really getting better
I know they now don't reach the floor
Could be that box that's on the door

Training had been sadly lacking
Maybe that's why they sent me packing
My name I didn't answer to
Or the times I did were very few

Ann changed my name that very first day
She called me Willow way back in May
My training started there and then
I was nine months old coming on ten

Now the resident cat was another matter
She would hiss and spit and teeth would chatter
We've come to a truce and she now purrs
Lays next to me, fine till she stirs

Graham mutters and I hear him say
Once again and she's going away
I've reshaped the carpet by the front door
It's beautifully frayed, you know the score

The garden I've started to alter the shape
A new design I'm trying to make
I bury my bones so there's not a trace
A few minutes later I try another place

What a mess the garden's in
What's that word - I know a sin
Never mind it will grow again
All we need is sun and rain

Willow, darling, are but two
Others I think there are a few
Defiant, teenage rebel are two more
Got to go home, what a bore.

I love it here, I think I'll stay
I do not want to go away
I have improved I'm growing up
But deep at heart I'm still a pup!!!



Billy's Story

(Billy had two homes before being signed over to Rescue)

Hi! I'm Billy

My new owners call me Nortie coz I'm on my third home. The picture that you see is of me in their garden when I first arrived from Pat Marchant's Retriever Rescue. When they first came to see me from where I was staying I was as good as gold and gave them lots of licks. I think the other family didn't like me a lot so they were pleased to see me go. Wow! when I got back and saw the garden I knew at once that I could start burying my bones in the lawn and there were lots of squirrels to chase too.

I could also smell that they'd had other dogs there in the past who I knew were no longer there. It felt sad. Sometimes when I was lying under their flowering Cherry trees in the warm sun I felt them come over to me and welcome me to what was their home. They told me not to be sad for them or grieve. They told me that these were loving humans and would give me a good life if I behaved well. I looked round again and they were gone. Not even a blade of grass was disturbed by their footfall but I knew they would watch over me.

Anyway I soon settled in and to my delight apart from the squirrels I chased there were three cats. One, a fat ginger tom spat at me first until I knew he liked to be licked. I tried licking the two white sisters - they were girls of course and being cats they didn't like me at first.

I found out where my masters' two bathrooms were and in them were toilet rolls. I loved to chew them up. I think I got through more than they used in a week. For that I got told off. They also have a very comfortable bed and it's better than mine. I always try and get up when I see the cats on there and cannot understand why I am pushed off. Maybe it's because I dribble on the duvet.



They got so mad at me one day they called in Dr Roger Mugford's Practice. Apparently when my master was talking to the lady who came I understood that I needed treatment. I did my best but I was more interested in the lady's nice legs.

I do have a doggie girlfriend who lives a few doors down who is taken for a walk by her family. She always wags her tail but she's a bit snooty. I always stop outside her house to smell if she has been out yet for her walk. Maybe I'll get lucky!

I've been good lately as if I'm real bad they have a long "nortie" lead they put me on to stop me trying to leap on my master's lap in the evenings for a cuddle.

Oh yes! One thing I did forget to say was that I have a passion for chewing up their remote DVD and video controls when they are watching TV. I'm usually barking then to be taken out and that's the only way I can get their attention

Anyway I expect I'll have another woof or two for you soon. I think they are going to get me a brother or maybe a sister to play with very soon. I have to go for my tea now, and to see if the bathroom door is open.



Daisy's Happy Story

Daisy was rescued from a puppy farm and was totally traumatised, so she was fostered for 5 weeks until she began to trust humans and lose some of her fears. When she went to her new home she was extremely destructive when she was alone in a room, and caused thousands of pounds worth of damage, and her new owners were at their wits' end. Much as they loved her they wondered if their home could withstand the onslaught!



The Rescue Co-ordinators gave all the advice they could think of, but feared for quite a while that Daisy would be returned. However, thankfully her owners persevered and gradually Daisy's chewing became less, and they say it's difficult to believe she is now the same dog. She has much more confidence, loves hassling them for food and running around the field behind the house playing rough & tumble with her collie friend. This photo shows her wearing her body-stocking after she was spayed!



Clicking with Rosie

(Brigitte Taylor adopted Rosie when she was only 10 months old. She writes here about how she set about training her)



Now aged 3½ Rosie has become an excellent companion without losing her mischievousness or excitement at meeting people and dogs. We have had some lovely weekend breaks together and as Rosie now has a passport we are planning a trip to Europe too.

It doesn't seem possible that just over 2 years ago I collected a chubby, totally untrained, unsocialised, almost adult golden. She was totally switched off and didn't respond to her name, playing, or basic commands. Fortunately, I met an excellent clicker trainer and gradually, with the reward being food, food and even more food, we made slow progress. Recall was the hardest command to master, but we are now more or less there.

Two years on and we have a good knowledge of command words and some distance control together with a small repertoire of tricks to entertain people with.

The most amazing quality Rosie has is the ability to know when people are not well or feeling frail. Being naturally enthusiastic, jumping up at people is an ongoing challenge but taken into a Nursing Home to see my grandma, she was the picture of gentleness and tranquillity. She stayed beside my grandma and actually nudged the bed the moment she died (at the great age of 93!) Now she is helping a close family member to cope with Alzheimer's disease. I am proudly hoping that she will have a career as a PAT dog in the near future.

So all the tears, heartache, frustrations, chewed carpets, shoes, post and underwear, holes in garden, hours and hours of training, petrified cat, wary visitors and miles and miles of walking every day have now paid off. She's here to stay!

