

GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 6

Newsletter of SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE Registered Charity Number 1098769

It only seems like yesterday that we were sending you the Christmas Newsletter and here we are preparing the summer one!

Last year we re-homed a total of 98 dogs, 4 less than in 2004, but again many of them were elderly or infirm. Of course some of these came because their owners had died, but others were just "surplus to requirements!"

Woody



Skipper



The two baby puppies we mentioned in the Christmas Newsletter are thriving in their new homes, and giving their doting owners a hectic time!

This year so far has been no different, with lots more goldens needing loving homes. We are thankful that there are so many of you out there wanting to care for them.

Several of the following stories are about the joys of adopting an older dog. If you think you might be able to give a home to one of these, in addition to your younger golden, please let your Co-ordinator know.

The Country Code

If you are taking your dog for a walk in the countryside remember to keep them off cultivated land and under control whenever livestock is around, and always shut field gates behind you. Pick up after your dog and don't leave any of your own litter. Remember also never to leave your dog in the car in the summer, even with the windows partly open. The heat inside the car builds up incredibly quickly, and many dogs have died because of their owner's thoughtlessness. Even if you are parked in the shade, the sun moves round and the shade disappears. Also, don't exercise your dog in the heat of the day - keep to early morning or later in the day. The symptoms of heat stroke are excessive panting, perhaps vomiting, fitting or difficulty in breathing and if your dog develops any of these you should act as follows:

- keep it calm, move it into the shade, a cool room or building, or near a fan or breeze;
- cool all of the dog with water, paying particular attention to the head;
- offer the dog frequent small amounts of cool water.
- Call the Vet

Having said all that, have a lovely summer with your dog. The Countryside Agency publishes "The Countryside Code" and "You and Your Dog in the Countryside", and these can be obtained from www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Dates for your Diary

21st May Hampshire Fun Day – Denmead Community Centre

11th June Kent Fun Day - Potters Mede Community Centre

We hope you will be able to join us at one of these.

We always welcome any stories you would like to send us, preferably with a photo. Don't forget to let us know if your dog has won any awards – perhaps in Obedience, Agility or Companion Animal Shows, or perhaps he or she has become a PAT Dog, or attained any of the Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Awards.

Double Trouble

(Maggie Long has sent us this article about Sadie and Meg, whom she calls "Double Trouble")

I first got Sadie as a 1 year old, and she is now 9. We were her third home, and I wasn't quite ready for her as I had just lost my other rescue retriever Charlie, suddenly at the age of 13. She was the light of my life. It had taken me 2 years to win her trust but it was worth it - she was a lovely dog. So I was not ready for a destructive puppy, although I still had my other dog - a rescued Jack Russell called Tess, who missed Charlie very much. Charlie was her guardian angel and no other dog would dare to look at Tess while she was keeping watch over her. So along came Sadie. She did do quite a bit of damage, including locking us out of the bungalow. Somehow she managed to push the bottom bolt of the door into the locked position so we had to get a neighbour to help us break in, but she brightened up my Tess's life again, and ours.



Then we lost Tess at 15 and along came Meg at the age of 5. She had been turned down by the first person who saw her, but as soon as we saw her we fell in love with her. We do keep in touch with her previous owners as they didn't want to part with her, but they went from a house to a flat. They love the photos I send them and say how lucky Meg is, but we are the lucky ones having her. At first we called her "moaning Meg" as all poor Sadie had to do was walk past her and she would grumble at her. Now they are the best of friends, and although Sadie is the younger dog she looks after Meg like an old mother hen.

Neither has had an easy life. At 18 months Sadie was ill and it turned out that all her insides were stuck together, so that needed major surgery. The Vet said it may recur as the scar tissue may stick together but that was over 8 years ago, so touch wood she is OK. Meg had a lump removed from her back 4 years ago and then at the age of 10 had major surgery to remove her spleen. She was 12 on 21st January, and has other problems as well but to look at her you would not think so, she is such a happy dog. Thank goodness for a very good Vet and insurance!

Another hair-raising time was my 50th birthday. We went on a boating holiday, and at 10 pm one night she fell in the river Thames. She cannot swim and we were right by a weir, and it was not long after she had had the lump removed from her back. My husband jumped in fully clothed to rescue her - we could hear her crying but couldn't see her as she had gone underneath the boat. The only way out was up a steep metal ladder, and my husband had to heave her up as far as he could and then I pulled with all my strength to get her up, and all the thanks we got was to be shaken over.

Their favourite pastime is caravanning. They have been all over the country, and everyone says how well behaved they are - they love the country pubs with the nice stone floors. Their other hobby is gardening. They love to dig the grass up and tread down all the plants I have just put in, then come indoors with muddy paws.

You cannot beat Rescue dogs - they give so much love.

News from Bennie

(Peter & Clare Humphreys have written the following)

Bennie has settled in very well. We have had him now for 8 months and he has turned out to be a very affectionate, loving member of our family. Things haven't always been good though, and he still dislikes other dogs, but that too is slowly getting better.

He loves his long walks in the country that he has twice a day, and has great games collecting sticks. Every now and again he steals food, the most recent one being half a pound of butter, from which he was very sick and felt very sorry for himself for the whole day and night!



We regularly take him down to Devon (every school holiday) to stay with "nanny". He has made friends with the cows, sheep and horses, but still hates dogs!

Bennie loves people and always makes a real fuss when someone comes to visit, always presenting them with one of his soft toys, but never actually letting go of it!

Thank you for allowing us to have such a lovely dog as a member of our family.

Slugs and Snails

Some of your "little treasures" may have the delightful habit of eating slugs and snails, but beware – these slimy creatures can give your dog lungworm. However, provided they are wormed regularly with a broad spectrum wormer all should be well.

I'm sure you all know that slug bait is deadly to dogs, so please take care that your pet and slug bait are kept well away from each other.

If your dog is reluctant to take pills, it is best to point the head upwards so the neck and chin form a straight line. One hand should be placed over the muzzle and the finger and thumb placed behind the canine teeth. The other hand holding the pill is used to open the mouth and put the pill as far to the back of the throat as possible, and certainly behind the tongue. Then rub the throat until the pill is swallowed. (I hope you're better at it than I am!)

Tia's Progress

(Gill & Peter Sweetman adopted Tia last autumn after she had been fostered for a while, and given some training)



Tia has been home with us for 3 months now without a sign of any aggression or bad temper whatsoever and during that time she has been spayed.

We got the impression the day we brought her home that she had not had much experience of travelling in a car and was nervous, but now knows it usually means fun times ahead.

She mixes well with Gemma our 10 year old and begs her to play, but at that age Gemma is rarely interested in rough & tumble and doesn't stand a chance of keeping up with Tia in the park. Tia is so strong, fit and fast! The dogs feed at the same time in the same place, without incident, and Tia is very gentle when taking treats, food or playing games with toys.

We have been confident enough to allow Tia to mix with our Great Nephews aged 2 & 6 and they love her dearly. She is also allowed off the lead in the parks we visit, and loves to chase and fetch a ball at incredible speed. She has been known to run to Mums with kids in push-chairs, but this is purely investigative on her part. Brandy, one of our previous Rescue dogs, did the same.

Tia is a great joy to own and has been welcomed into our family unit. She is clean and in general very well behaved. We are very proud of her.

Poppy's Story

(Susie Hallatt of East Dean Kennels tells how they came to adopt Poppy)

It was Easter Sunday afternoon, we'd been at East Dean just a few months and were still finding our feet when a lady walked in saying "This has just walked into my sitting room, what are you going to do about it?" "This" was clearly an ageing Goldie in a pathetic state - clumps of coat missing, nails over an inch too long, tail so long it dragged behind her and the most awful smell coming from a gruesome ear infection. However, "its" tail was wagging and the Goldie smile was definitely there so I knew exactly what I was going to do - one call to Gill Robinson and the Goldie was rescued as a Southern Goldie Girl.

We bathed and trimmed her, took her to the Vet and a beautiful rich golden girl emerged, smelling a lot more fragrant! Over the next few days she somehow managed to make her way from our isolation block to my kitchen where my four other dogs accepted her immediately.

About a week after she arrived, a young man phoned saying he thought we had his Nan's Goldie - I confess to mixed feelings, pleased that we knew who the dog was but sorry that she may be leaving us, albeit to go home. However, it transpired that Nan had recently passed away and her grandson had promised to take care of Poppy - ah, she had a name at last. However, he had a new baby, new house, worked full time and was scared to death of incurring Vet's bills. When I suggested that Poppy stayed with us, he was most relieved and so signed her over.

We did try to find a new home for Poppy but aged 13½ - Nan's grandson was certain of that because Poppy had arrived on his 10th birthday - and largely deaf, it wasn't easy. Also, Poppy had become a much loved member of our family and when I realised that I dreaded Gillian phoning to say she'd found her a home, I knew that Poppy actually was at home, she should stay with us. To our relief and lasting gratitude, Gillian said she could stay and so we settled in to life with 5 dogs around the Aga!

Poppy was such a character - she made us laugh every single day and although largely deaf, could detect a shortbread tin opening at 90 paces! She loved to swim but with her deafness - and mischievous nature! - it

was always a problem getting her out of the water, more than once I've had to go in and get her, getting soaked in the process! She was amazingly cunning for her age and could outwit all our younger dogs when we played ball etc; as they were busy squabbling, she would nip in, get the ball and be off with that huge Goldie grin back over her shoulder.

We didn't know her exact birthday so we made it Remembrance - "Poppy" - Day. Last year, we celebrated her 16th birthday in style - scotch eggs, mini pork pies, custard creams and a cake with candles - no expense spared for our Pops! She had a wonderful day. However, just two days later, I found her unable to get up in the kitchen and just knew the time had suddenly come. I like to think that Nan was waiting for her and that she would be pleased with Poppy's time with us. We feel so lucky to have had her and when the poppies we've planted in the garden flower later this year, we'll remember that winning Goldie smile with love.

(Sadly we don't have a suitable photo of Poppy)

Farewell Ben

(Claire & Mark Yearsley have sent us this tribute to Ben)



I am writing this letter following the loss of one of our beloved dogs, Ben. We adopted Ben over three years ago, with the help of the Southern Golden Retriever Rescue. Gill Clark called us to say she had a lovely older gentleman, who in her words "just wants a cuddle". On a Sunday morning we set off to meet Ben. As soon as we saw him, we knew he was the one. A big, pale gentle giant with eyes that made you melt. Gill knew little about him, he didn't even have a collar or a lead, but he was perfect and we took him home. From that day onwards, Ben was a huge part of our lives. Despite his picky eating habits, his occasional grumpiness and often extreme halitosis (!) he was part of our family and became treasured by everyone. Often mistaken as the "pub" dog, Ben became a well known member of our village with people knowing his name and not ours! He was so popular in our pub that if we booked a table it was placed under his name, and a bowl of water usually arrived before the wine did.

We lost our Ben to cancer on Friday 13th January. In only one week he went from the fun-loving dog he always had been to being weak and unable to carry on. When we adopted Ben he was 9 years old but could still clear a five-bar gate and could do so up until about a year ago. He was as "fit as a butcher's dog" and to see him deteriorate so quickly was indeed a shock to both my husband and me. We were absolutely devastated with our loss and it is only now that I can even begin to write our story. It was Penny, Ben's new female golden friend who helped us through this tough time and also gave Ben companionship in his last few months with us.

I wanted to write this to share the joy and happiness that having an "older" rescue dog can bring into your life. I know that some people think that it is brave to take on a dog that you may only have for a limited period of time but there are so many benefits and plus points. Ben was a calm, well-mannered dog who was gentle and laid back, at nine years old he only wanted fuss and walks and food (even though the food part was the most difficult)! He never went to the vets except for his injections and loved long walks and sleeping by the fire. He was great with children but all he really wanted from life was indeed a cuddle! We only had three years with him but we wouldn't have changed him for the world.

My husband and I always say that we didn't choose Ben, he chose us. We always felt that we were "his people" rather than him being our dog. I hope by reading this that you may be encouraged to give an older dog a new chance in life, they deserve it so much and can bring you so much happiness.