

GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 8

Newsletter of

SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE

Registered Charity Number 1098769

Summer is approaching fast and it's time for another edition of our Newsletter. 2006 was yet another busy year for us, with a total of 96 dogs coming into the Charity. As last year we had quite a few older dogs to re-home, and it must be very traumatic for them to find themselves suddenly in a strange situation. Fortunately they seem to settle well into their new homes and it is very rewarding to see them in a new loving family. We are always looking for good homes for our dogs, so if you know anyone who would like to have a "rescue" golden please let us know.

As our summers get hotter we must be aware that our pets may have difficulty in the heat. It is better to exercise them in the cooler parts of the day, and to make sure they have plenty of water available. Never leave them in the car, even if it is parked in the shade, as the sun moves round and the temperature in the car becomes unbearable very quickly. Think how hot it gets just being caught in a traffic jam in the sun!

If you are taking your dog abroad with you there is an article in this issue on some of the diseases which can be picked up by your dog overseas, and which you should be aware of should he become ill when you return home.

We hope that won't happen, and that you and your dog have a lovely summer.



Don't forget to send us your stories, and also let us know if your dog achieves any successes, either by gaining a Kennel Club Good Citizen award or in a competition of some kind.



News from Oscar

Oscar has now been with us for a year so I thought I would drop you a line to say hello. The photo shows one of his favourite activities – swimming. We usually go Saturday morning and it has done wonders to develop his confidence and get him used to a variety of people and dogs.



We have also taken to going to Agility on a Monday but I am not sure who is doing the most exercise, Oscar or myself. We are still not allowed on the see-saw as we are too bouncy but are working on this.

Gun dog training is another of Oscar's favourite activities and we went to watch a Gun Dog Show in Berkshire last Saturday.

We see Wendy every week at training classes and have got our Silver Good Citizens award, but just missed the Gold as we broke the down stay! Will try again later.

Sadie is doing well and is now holding her own much better if Oscar tries to take something she really wants, like a bone!!

Best wishes, *Paula, Bob, Sadie & Oscar*



Saffie sends her love

(Saffie was re-homed because she didn't get on with the family's other dog)

Dear Barbara and John

I guess I have you to thank for finding me a new home with this funny family in Guildford. I did wonder what was happening when I was taken off in this big van. It seemed a long time before we got out and an even longer time before I was allowed to go to the toilet unsupervised! I'm still not quite sure who else lives here. There is a very old lady called "Dod" who walks around with a metal cage called "Zimmer" – I keep clear of that, and there is a whirring chair that disappears up the stairs every night with the old lady on it – I keep clear of that too! There is a cat called Sammy who seems to be in charge. He certainly does a lot of talking. And there are loads of people in and out all the time. One lady comes and takes me for walks to some nice smelly places, out in the hills and down by the river where I fell in! That was great!



Before I came here I was used to being taken for walks but this is ridiculous! As soon as I get in from one walk I'm off on another – I'm hoping the novelty will wear off before I turn into a dachshund. For over a week I was taken for walks on a great long lead – I felt like a Flymo! I think they were afraid of losing me. At least now I have proved I will come back (for a small treat) and I can have a pooh in peace.

I didn't bark for a while. Well, it didn't seem worth it. I wasn't sure that I'd be staying here for that long before someone carted me off somewhere else. Then the

paper boy came. That was it! Pushing a great big wad through my front door – the cheek of it! So I let him know who lived here.

Then they had some kind of party here and half the world came. That was great because I got a tummy rub from everyone. But then there was a knock at the door and some creature came in with tangled hair – I think they call them dreadlocks but he looked a bit like an Irish Water spaniel in a fit. I let him have it – both barrels – if you thought Al Read's dog had a big bark! Anyway, I let him in and it turned out he was Pete and Pat's son Michael – some kind of DJ – youth worker person. As he carved the meat for dinner I made friends with him. Their daughter Anna lives next door and she comes in to see me every day. I have even discovered the secret way to get into her bedroom – she has got a huge bed!

Another lady brought a bag with pig's ears in. I don't know whether she has another bag with dog's ears in – I heard her say how silky mine were. I'm going to keep them covered in case she needs a purse.

I know that my new family can't show me or breed from me (which is a shame because I am so beautiful – everyone who sees me says so) but I overheard them saying that they wouldn't mind training me to hunt for truffles. I wondered why they were taking me up to the woods a lot. I think that for a while I am going to pretend I have no sense of smell just in case I end up on a diet of mushrooms. It's bad enough being a guinea pig for Tesco Complete Dog Food and lams (whatever that is). When are they going to open an Asda in Surrey? Even the cat liked the Asda dog food. But then I suspect he is one of those cats who thinks he is a dog!"

I want you to know that I am doing my best to create a good impression for Southern Golden Retriever Rescue, but how long do you want me to keep this up? I am getting a bit fed up with rolling over for a fuss every time someone comes into the house and lying down to have my lead put on, eating all my food and walking to heel! Walking to heel!!! I haven't had a good tug for weeks! And as for digging – I can't wait to get stuck into a succulent flower bed but there's no time! I'm too busy being good.

Please keep in touch and let my previous owners know that I love them very much and appreciate all the love their family have given me.

Lots of licks, Saffie



Sam's Story

It was a Saturday on a cold crisp October day when Rachel Clark called me, "Were we still interested in rescuing a Golden Retriever"? She had a very boisterous 14 month old who needed a home. So my husband John, myself and my daughter Sally drove to Rachel's place to meet Sam.

As we arrived there was barking, and then this lovely friendly face with warm chocolate coloured eyes jumped up at the fence, and as we entered he bounced all over us, yes he was boisterous!! We all went for a walk in the fields with Sam, and Rachel's other dogs who behaved well, came when called, and were never far from Rachel, and then there was Sam, who bounded about through bushes, and mud, running around us all, not doing anything he was told, and so clumsy that he almost knocked you off your feet as he barged through. We were covered in blond hairs, mud and slobber!!!! My thoughts of John's dark work suits covered in hairs flashed through my mind as we contemplated giving Sam a home. We went away to think about it, although he had already stolen our hearts. We knew he was going to be hard work!!! After long family discussions and commitment from everyone we agreed that yes, Sam could join the family.



So he arrived, greeting everyone so eagerly (where did he get his energy from?). We had purchased a crate so that he could be contained when necessary, and although it seemed a bit harsh to put him in it, he didn't seem to mind and eventually he started to sleep in there with the door left open. Our garden is quite large and the lines that John had worked tirelessly to create in the grass soon disappeared, replaced with large ruts and holes. He repeatedly leapt the fence to next door to play with Molly the Staffie and helped to wreck their garden too!! Every flowerpot was to be eaten, strewn across the garden. I now own lots of odd pairs of shoes, Sally's collection of beanies has halved and the Hoover has never been so overworked.

Feeding time was another story. Sam had been fed on leftovers by his previous owner and his obvious favourite was take-away, as we discovered the first time Chinese was delivered in Sam's company. We tried every conceivable animal feed on the market, he just turned his nose up and waited for our food. He was so thin, the vet advised we just keep on trying. Perseverance paid off, and he now has tripe and mince every day with Bakers. We occasionally allow him some leftovers if he has eaten his food.

We took him for long walks and he learnt to walk on the lead, fetch the ball off the lead and sit. We still occasionally have to chase after him when he sees another dog, or a human that he is convinced wants to say "hi" to him.

Was it worth it?

Well, it's 10 months since he arrived, and today is Sam's 2nd birthday. Our house has, you could say, adapted to Sam, together with our garden and of course John's suits.

The crate has been put away and the grass has started to grow again. I have pots with flowers in and some new shoes that have stayed in pairs without teeth marks. We have a higher fence between us and next door and when Sam comes home from his daily walks he sits and raises his front paws one at a time to dry his feet. When I come home every day he walks up wagging his tail, always so pleased to see me, and no matter what sort of day I've had he always makes me smile with those lovely chocolate eyes that I fell in love with.

Oh yes, it was worth it. He's put on weight and is such a handsome boy. We've still got plenty of work to do with Sam and I expect that there'll be hiccups along the way, but our lives would seem incomplete without him now. So a big thank you to Golden Retriever Rescue, especially Rachel, who gave us the chance to meet Sam.



Some Diseases of Travelling Pets

The advent of the Pet Passport scheme had made it possible for us to take our pets on holiday with us, but this does mean that they may pick up various, often fatal, conditions which affect dogs and cats in other countries and which our own vets may not be very familiar with. Some of these are transmitted by ticks.

Babesiosis is a disease of dogs caused by a microscopic organism which lives inside red blood cells of a number of animal species. If a tick sucks blood from an affected animal it will pass the organism on to the next animal it attaches to. So far ticks found in the UK are not considered a risk.

The disease can be diagnosed by a special blood test. It can usually be treated if caught early. Effective tick control is vitally important for dogs travelling abroad.

Ehrlichiosis is caused by bacteria which invade white blood cells and destroy them, and is also transmitted from animal to animal by a tick which is widespread in central Europe and some southern European countries. It has also been found in UK quarantine kennels.

Diagnosis can be confirmed by a blood test. There is no vaccine available, and again, effective tick control is the only method of prevention.

Leishmaniasis is caused by a microscopic parasite which invades the white blood cells of the host animal. It can cause disease in dogs, cats and humans and is extremely widespread in countries surrounding the Mediterranean, the Middle East and South America. It is transferred from animal to animal by the saliva of biting insects called sandflies. There is no vaccine available, and medicines to treat the disease have to be obtained from abroad and are rarely curative, so prevention by treatment with fly repellents available from your vet, and keeping the dog indoors between 7.00 pm and 7.00 am is the best option.

Heartworm is caused by a parasitic worm and is common in Southern Europe, USA, Canada and southern parts of Asia. Larvae are transmitted by mosquitoes which inject them under the skin, from where they migrate slowly to the right pulmonary artery, where they mature into adult worms. The onset of the disease is usually slow, often many months after exposure. Heartworm disease can be prevented by drugs which kill the migrating larvae before they have a chance to mature, and you should consult your Vet about these.

If you have taken your dog abroad and he becomes unwell afterwards, please consult your Vet as soon as possible.



Nasty Nettles

The new spring growths of stinging nettles can cause problems for dogs. They can suffer a very nasty allergic reaction in various areas, such as feet, mouths, ears etc, resulting in considerable distress. It is a good idea to take a Piriton tablet on walks to give immediately if this problem occurs. When you get home bathe with cold water laced with a drop of lavender oil, or apply Aloe Vera Jelly.



Acknowledgements

We are very grateful for the support given by so many to the Charity. Our special thanks go to:

- Susie Hallatt and Chris Beardwell of East Dean Kennels, Headcorn, Kent for making their kennels available to us when needed
- Adrian and Marion Palmer for raising in excess of £5,000 over the last 8 years from their boot and garage sales
- Farlington Dog Training Club for giving us more than £9,000 over the same period from the proceeds of their various events
- The members and Committee of Southern Golden Retriever Society for their continue support



Sad Goodbyes

(From Maggie, Ray & Sadie Long)

I wrote an article last year about Double Trouble (*Golden Moments Issue 6 – Ed*). I am very sorry to say we lost Meg on 29th December 2006 – a very sad day. She would have been 13 on 21st January 2007. Her best friend Sadie is missing her very much, almost as much as us. Those people who say dogs don't need company don't know what they're talking about, they should take a look at Sadie.

Meg had a good life with us and Sadie but that is no consolation at the moment, but we keep thinking of the good times which we know we must. We have her rosettes she won at the Southern Golden Retriever Fun Day and lots of photos of her and Sadie at the show. Meg is the dog in the front of the photo which was taken at last year's Fun Day.

When the time comes to say goodbye to your dog be with them at the vets or at home, like we were with Meg. They have been your best friend so make sure you are there at the end for them. It is a very hard thing to do but we owe it to man's best friend.

We will get another pal for Sadie but not just yet as we need to grieve for Meg. We feel as if a light has gone out of our lives.



(From one of our Co-ordinators)



Charlie (we called him this because we didn't know his real name) came to live with us last August Bank Holiday Monday, having been found wandering in a terrible state. He was mentioned in the Foreword to Golden Moments Issue 7. We managed to put some weight on him and he became a member of our doggie family. He always hated not being with us, which showed his insecurity having been parted from his original owners. He enjoyed his (very slow) walks in the forest, and wandering around our garden, and most of all his food, having obviously been starved for some time before being found.

Sadly, we only had him for 7 months, as he became unable to keep his food down. The vet concluded he had a growth internally, and he was put to sleep towards the end of March to save further suffering. We are so glad that he had someone to care for him and make him feel wanted for the last few months of his life.



We hope to see you at one of our Fun Days. The Kent one is on 20th May at Potters Mede Centre, Borough Green, and the Hampshire one on 9th September at Denmead Community Centre.

