

# *SEASON'S GREETINGS*



*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 35

Well we shan't forget 2020 in a hurry! I do hope you have all stayed safe and well, and avoided the dreaded Covid-19. It must have been very hard on those of you unable to take your dogs for a walk.

It was so disappointing that the Fun Day had to be cancelled. I know how much you enjoy bring your dogs along and taking part, not only in the Parade but also in the various classes and games. We are keeping our fingers crossed that it will be able to go ahead next year, but of course nothing is certain.

We were very sorry to learn of the death in August of Barbara Taber, who had been a Co-ordinator for many years in the past, together with her late husband John. Barbara was also a member of the SGRS Display Team, and at her funeral the Team lined up to greet her hearse and then walked in formation behind it up to the Chapel.



Thank you Barbara for all you did for the dogs

## Farewell Freddie

We adopted Freddie at 10 months old after losing our other beloved Goldie Hewey with a sudden unexplained paralysis of his hind legs. We contacted Pat and Peter Marchant in the hope we could find another retriever to fill the massive hole left in our lives.

We were introduced to Freddie who was part of a household of two whose owners found that difficult and as the last one in Freddie was the first to go. My first sight was with him as a 10 month bundle of fun, jumping up and down against a child gate keeping him in the kitchen he lived in. It was love at first sight. I remember Pat saying if we had any doubts walk away – too late, we were hooked.

The day arrived for us to bring him home to meet the family. Our cat Allie was not convinced at first, even after living with his pal Hewey, but within days they became firm friends. He quickly became acquainted with neighbours, and was loved by all. Our grandchildren smothered him whenever they had the chance, and he loved it.



By the time Fred was four years old, in 2010, we decided to move from Caterham in Surrey and start a new life in a detached bungalow on the edge of a small village Suffolk. Fred quickly checked out his new big garden and gave the thumbs up to Allie, who was in the customary lockdown.

At five Freddie showed signs of difficulty walking and the diagnosis was that one cruciate ligament was failing and the other was close behind, so we gave the go ahead for TPLO surgery (Tibial Plateau levelling Osteotomy), one leg one leg at a time. His recovery rate was astounding but he didn't like the lead walking and restrictions he had to put up with. He was used to running through vast fields chasing hares and rabbits (not that he ever caught any).

We had booked a holiday in the Yorkshire Dales and were biting our nails as to whether Freddie could go. Thankfully he was given a clean bill of health and that two weeks saw him walk miles. He was back to his old

self and worth every penny of the £5000.

Everyone loved him in the village – he even helped a little boy overcome his fear of dogs. They eventually became best friends. He enjoyed many happy years in Suffolk. He knew his walks off by heart, once away from the roads he was off into the woods and fields, we always lost sight of him but he would sit and wait for us at certain spots, waiting for his biscuit and then off again.

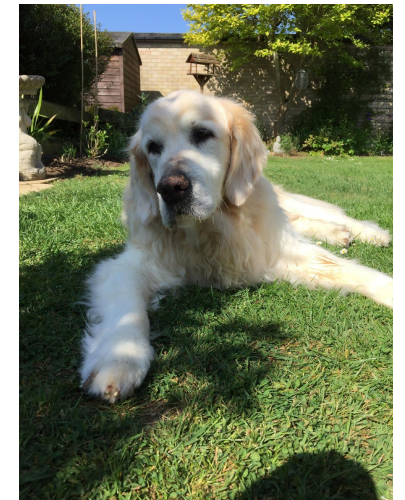
As the years progressed he started to suffer with arthritis but this was kept in check with medication and he still demanded his walks, but now a steady plod and when he had enough he turned and headed for home. Even at 14 he retained his youthful looks and was still the biggest Goldie you had ever seen. At 45 Kilos but without an ounce of fat, he could still sit at the dining room table and look across it.

In February 2020 his legs were becoming a problem - the occasional tumble walking round the garden, and in May we knew the time had come for that awful decision, just short of his 15<sup>th</sup> birthday – 8<sup>th</sup> June.

His last journey to the Vet's was hugely difficult. We went into the private gardens and said our final Goodbyes away from everything.

Thank you Pat and Peter but most of all thank you Freddie for 15 wonderful happy years you gave us and your friends. You will never be forgotten.

Graham & Pat



## **Food for Thought**

*Written in the Spring*

Whilst walking Reuben round the fields (in the mud at moment), I often think about my life and also try to put the world to rights. I am sure all of you reading this do the same. Quiet times with our dogs are so precious and special and as I get older I continually think that maybe one day I will be too old to have the responsibility of a dog in my life. I really dread that day but hopefully it is a long way off.

With this recent bad weather and being confined more indoors as gardening is completely out of the question most days, I have been doing some clearing out. When we moved to Kent nearly 14 years ago I had a good old clear out then but over the past years “rubbish” seems to have found its way back into the garage and the shed courtesy of my husband. He hates throwing anything away and his words are always “that could be worth something”. The kids say that they are having that put on his headstone. I know they are only joking! So I thought I would start on the photos – big mistake – so many memories of babies, puppies and children growing up, holidays, various dogs, the list goes on. Also lovely old black and white photos of my grandparents and parents. I never knew my grandparents as they died before I was born, only my paternal grandmother and my only memory of her was when I was about 3 years old. Even now it is very vivid as they lived in Croydon and I can remember being in her kitchen and a jet went over and broke the sound barrier creating a sonic boom. Quite a common occurrence then. The shock of it made her fall over and she broke her leg. She was taken to hospital but sadly never recovered as they found she was riddled with bone cancer. In the photos were various family dogs, Flossie who belonged to one set of grandparents and Peckham, my aunty’s dog. My parents had a dog during the War, he was a cross between a Red Setter and a Lab so looked a bit like a Gordon Setter. My mum loved that dog and when he died she felt she could never replace him. My sister and I (especially me) nagged our parents for a dog but my dad was adamant that we were not having one so I had white mice, rabbits and guinea pig instead. Not the same as having a dog, taking it for walks, it being my best friend just like Lassie on the TV. I borrowed the neighbours’ dogs; there was Bobby up the road and Rufus a lovely Springer Spaniel/Collie cross. I adored that dog and his owner Mrs Plummer made delicious meringues put together with butter icing as payment for the walks I took him on. He sadly died very young as he developed fits and back then there was no medication to treat him with. My best friend had an Alsation (GSD now) called Brumus. He was huge and very naughty. It took the two of us to hold him and we were always getting into trouble when we took him out.

When I eventually got married and had a family of my own my yearning for a dog was still so strong. I always imagined I would get a Border Collie after reading *Shadow the Sheepdog* but one day one of the mum’s at playgroup brought along their new puppy, a Golden Retriever called Toffee. Well I was besotted and so began my love of the Golden Retriever. As luck would have it about the same time my sister-in-law also acquired a Golden Retriever and she eventually had puppies so Pepper came into our lives. Some 42 years or more have passed since that day and now five Golden Retrievers and one Cavalier King Charles later I cannot imagine my life without a Golden by my side.

You may all wonder where my ramblings are going but since becoming a co-ordinator for SGRR I find myself worrying about who will look after my Reuben should anything happen to my husband and I. I know my children love him but their lives are very busy, my son often travels abroad and my daughter has her own dog, she also works and leads a very busy life with her family. Would they give Reuben a home if it was needed, to be honest, I don’t think they would. In the last 2 years since I have been a co-ordinator I have had to find homes for two dogs whose owners have sadly died. Their families,

for various reasons, were not prepared to give the dogs a home. As my fellow co-ordinators will agree, we all have a file full of people waiting for dogs. Not all will be suitable but luckily for the two dogs mentioned above loving, forever homes were found for them.

So I tell myself that I need to have this conversation with my children. Reuben is not part of the old photos in the storage box or the accumulated “treasures” in the garage, he is my precious dog who means the world to me (and my husband). One never knows what is round the corner but I need to have this conversation with my children and make provision for Reuben.

Pam Murphy

### Mollie

As I'm sure that you all know the feeling, we were both devastated at losing our previous Goldie (Harvey) who had problems with Cruciate Ligaments in both rear legs at the age of 9 years. We took Harvey to Noel Fitzpatrick's clinic in Godalming for treatment and several operations over the course of 3 years but in the end we had to face up to the situation as Harvey was so poorly. Harvey was our fourth Goldie and we built our whole world around him. Our first Goldie, in 1986, was actually a Southern Golden Retriever rescue dog (Barnaby). He was a BIG boy ! Barnaby adored children but, amongst other things, hated Milk Floats with a passion ! The London Marathon, at that time, used a Milk Float for time keeping and Barnaby used to attack the TV when the Milk Float appeared! We took him to the Lake District with our caravan and, on one occasion, he amused other holiday makers, and us, in a most unusual way. Barnaby found a long steep sloping bank at Windermere. He then stood at the top, rolled onto his back, and wriggled until he slid still on his back, all the way to the bottom of the slope! Once he reached the bottom he ran up the slope and repeated the whole thing several times !All of our Goldies have had their own funny little characters. Our second Goldie (Ben) was a real gentleman but unfortunately he contracted Cancer very early in his life and we lost him before he reached two years old. Toby was our third Goldie and he just wanted to act the clown all day, he had such a sense of humour. As I said earlier Harvey was our fourth Boy and we just could not face not having a Goldie in our lives after we lost him in January 2019.



Luckily Joan Coppin found Mollie for us, our first girl Goldie. Mollie has been an absolute delight, she is so polite, except when meeting new people when she gets very excited ! We found it very difficult at the handover, Mollie's previous owners were very upset and we felt like we were stealing Mollie. She has settled in with us beautifully though and we love her to pieces. We are so grateful to Joan for finding us our Golden Girl and look forward to many years together.

Pat and Dave Rowcliffe

## Welcome to Percy

Laurie was my first Golden in the mid-eighties. She was a Tugwood from June and Tony Axe, who were well known in the Golden Retriever world at that time. She was a lovely dog, everyone was her long-lost friend. With June and Tony's advice she had a litter of puppies (10 puppies) and – longish story – we kept three of them. So at one time we had four Golden Retrievers! They were all lovely dogs, part of our family.

For quite a while after that we didn't have any more dogs apart from Millie, a sweet black Labrador, who adopted us and spent many a day and week with us when her owners were busy. She would come over on her own accord if given half a chance.

Eventually the time came for another Golden and I contacted SGRR. Joan rang early one morning, came to visit and shortly afterwards on a Saturday morning in April 2018 I collected Percy. He was just six years old and I was his fourth owner! He seemed to settle in quickly but I can see now that he is much more settled with his daily routine all worked out. He snoozes in the morning fully stretched out until I put my walking coat on, whereupon he is up and, with a stretch, ready to go. It always amuses me considering how long it has taken me to have a cup of tea etc.



He loves to explore side tracks from the main path and always keeps a lookout for squirrels in the treetops and so it is quite easy to lose him. One such occasion happened early on before I had my mobile phone number on his tag. He had found a dead rabbit which I had managed to swap for treats and we continued on our way. After what I thought was a safe distance I let him off his lead but he darted off along a side path and must have doubled back to where the rabbit had been left. I waited for quite a while but realising what had probably happened I went back as well. That was a mistake, we missed each other. I whistled and called but there was no sign of him. A couple had seen him trotting along with the rabbit in his mouth. Other dog walkers were on high alert looking out for him, mobile numbers exchanged. Eventually I wondered if anyone had phoned my home number and a kind neighbour went in to check, and found that a family had brought him home and left him with another neighbour (who was on the spot of calling the police to report me missing!) So while I was wearing myself out searching for him, thoughts of the coffee I had promised myself long forgotten, he was asleep on my neighbour's kitchen floor! I have now learned to wait where I last saw him and nowadays we do generally arrive home together. He looks back more often now to make sure I am still following and gives me that typical golden retriever enquiring glance when we come to a junction in the path, as if to say "which way?"

My favourite photo of him is one I took at Camber Sands last summer. It was so bright I couldn't see what I was taking but this one with a ball he found turned out quite well. It was a lovely day, warm but not hot walking along the wide expanse of sand and dunes.

Despite a few more misdemeanours Percy has turned out to be a lovely dog and I am so glad Joan thought of me when Percy came along looking for a new home.

Patricia

## Freddie

In 2007 we had two goldies,, Murphy and Harry, who were great pals and always attracted admiring glances from other dog lovers. Sadly, when Murphy was eleven, he passed away, leaving Harry absolutely inconsolable. We didn't know what to do with him except find him a new "best friend". We didn't think we could cope with another puppy as we were getting on a bit so we approached Southern Golden Retriever Rescue. After a few months we were given the opportunity to adopt "Freddie" so we travelled down to Kent with Harry of course to see this 2 year old. When we got there we were introduced to him and to see how they got on with each other we took Freddie and Harry for a walk together. They both seemed to enjoy that and so that was it! Freddie came home with us. He was sick in the car on the way home as I think he was very anxious about what was going to happen to him now. However, after a day or two he had settled in with Harry and from then on they became firm friends.

Freddie still suffered from some separation issues but wasn't too bad as he had Harry for company. They both had different personalities which we really liked. Freddie was more boisterous and Harry was very laid back but it seemed to work for both of them.



Harry had a long life and was on the whole very healthy but sadly at the age of 15 he suffered a stroke and passed away. We didn't make the mistake we did when Murphy died when Harry never saw him after his passing. To Harry it seemed he just suddenly disappeared. So when Harry died we got Freddie in from the garden and took him to where Harry lay. He had a couple of sniffs and sat down beside him. He seemed to understand. During the following days and weeks, he was fine, just played more with other dogs. The only downside was his separation anxiety which became more acute so whenever we could we'd take him everywhere with us. We even took him to church with us every Sunday and he became the most adored member of our congregation!

We are blessed where we live with woods and fields around – all excellent dog walking territory. He adored his walks as he made many friends, dogs and humans. Everyone knew Freddie. He became the local character of the dog community. He was a very healthy dog but regrettably it was the wretched arthritis in his back legs that were his downfall. He still tried to stay active and play but they got worse and worse despite all the supplements and pain relief we gave him. He'd always come up to our bedroom at night and sleep near the bed but in the end we had to help him up the stairs and getting him down in the morning was very challenging. Because he was so healthy in every other respect, even at the age of fifteen, I think we delayed the inevitable too long.

However, we couldn't let him suffer like that any longer so on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 we took him to our vets for the last time. Freddie absolutely hated going there and I was so upset that his final memory would be in that environment. I needn't have worried. When Bill, the only vet Freddie could tolerate gave him a mild sedative to settle him, Freddie



licked Bill's hand. Incredible!!! It seemed as if he was saying "Thanks Mate". So we said our tear-drenched goodbyes when he had the final injection. Bill said he was definitely ready to go as he didn't have to use all of the medication to make him pass.

So that was it. Our darling Freddie has now joined our three other Goldies and leaves us with a mountain of wonderful memories. His ashes have been scattered in our woods among the bluebells and over a log which he loved to hurdle. We miss him dreadfully of course but want to thank Golden Retriever Rescue for giving us the opportunity to have a wonderful dog for 13 years. As we feel too old now to take on another dog we'll just have to enjoy sharing my son's Retriever puppy, "Cooper" who is only 10 weeks old and proper little rascal. Already fallen in love with him!

Good luck to SGRR and thanks for all the hard work you do to give people and dogs so much happiness.

Jan and David Carter