

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 38*

I hope you and your dogs survived the summer heat. I know we need the rain now but I can't say I enjoy it!

Life has been busy for the Co-ordinators and they never know what problems are going to crop up. At least Covid is not such a problem now but they do offer to wear masks when doing home checks and assessments.

It was great to be able to attend the SGRS Fun Day again, and a report on this appears later in this issue.

There is also an important article about the dangers of letting our dogs become overweight. Obesity isn't restricted to humans!

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and healthy 2023.

Milly and Rocky

It's been a little while since the last news from Milly so we'd better bring you up to date. In April 2021, we had a few days in the New Forest with Mollie and Milly. A lovely time and Milly had great fun walking in the Forest with plenty to explore. Sadly Mollie wasn't up to a lot of walking having suffered another seizure shortly before we went away. The girls had a nice time snoozing in the garden area and watching the world go by. Sadly in July, Mollie suffered 2 seizures in one day which left her unable to stand. We knew the time had come for Mollie, having just reached 13. The heart-breaking decision had to be made to let her go. We have wonderful memories of her, bringing various items home, removing washing from the machine and mug carrying among many other things. A wonderful 6 years with us.

Milly obviously missed her companion however she adapted really well, as dogs invariably do. She came to work with me where possible and has her own fan club. This mainly consists of various children of primary school age that she meets on her morning walks. Milly also visits various local shops especially when the door is open. She really enjoys meeting people and knows which shops have treats. We have a friend who is now resident in a care home. The home are very welcoming to visiting dogs and we've taken Milly to visit a couple of times. It was a very different environment for her but once she had a good look round settled well. The first time we didn't tell our friend Milly was coming so it was a pleasant surprise for her which made her day. It's true, people's faces do brighten up when a pet visits. Milly has proved popular with the staff and other residents at the home and now her attendance is compulsory.

Milly has also been accompanying me to work taking pride of place in the van. In September, we went to Dorset with the cottage being right next door to the village pub. Milly realised this and decided to form a queue at the door at 8 AM! Needless to say, we were obliged to visit later when the pub was open. The latest item of interest for Milly is moles. She will search out the freshest of mole hills and start digging. Quite what will happen if a mole appears is yet to be discovered.

In the Spring we adopted Rocky, a senior gentleman of 12. He is very friendly, enjoys meeting people and will bring you a greeting gift of a soft toy. He was a bit on the burly side, 43 kg, but very cuddly. He's not used to car journeys and just getting him into the car was a challenge but we got there. He travelled well, closely observed by Milly. In that time, they have formed quite a bond and are easy in each others company. Rocky has had a change of diet and this plus exercise has seen his weight reduce to 39.6 kg. He has thoroughly explored the garden and the bucket of water by the greenhouse is to his satisfaction. He really enjoys his walks with Milly and has discovered such delights as the fish and chip shop, pie shop, butchers and pub. Rocky isn't used to sleeping indoors and his first night was unsettled (finally asleep at 3.30 am!) as expected. Milly and Rocky attended the Fun Day and had a wonderful time meeting and greeting. Rocky came third in his class and won the Holly Trophy as the oldest rescue dog in attendance. Milly and Rocky have also visited the local dementia group. They and the clients had a great time. It was a pleasure for everyone and they have been invited back. As I write, at the beginning of June, Rocky is more settled and comfortable in his new surroundings. It's a new lease of life and what fun.



Pete, Jayne, Milly & Rocky

We are very grateful to all those who raise money for us but particular thanks go to Marion and Adrian Palmer who have for many years held boot and garage sales and raised several thousand pounds for our benefit. We are also grateful to the Southern Golden Retriever Society who give us half the proceeds of the Fun Day.

SGRS Fun Day 2022

After a two year absence thanks to Covid the Southern Golden Retriever Society once again held their annual Fun Day at the end of May. There was a change of venue almost at the last minute and it was held at Larkfield Village Hall. This proved to be a very successful setting and there was an exceptionally good turnout. Although the clouds gathered the rain held off except for a few drops and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event.

There were various stalls and games and the SGRS Display Team gave their usual polished performance as seen at Crufts. It is very rewarding that three of our rehomed dogs regularly perform in the team. The very popular Parade of Rescue Dogs, which always brings a lump to the throat, had 35 dogs and their proud owners walking round the ring while their stories were read out.. It's amazing what some of these dogs have been through.

Three trophies were presented. The Holly Trophy, presented by the Dyer family for the oldest rescue dog present on the day was awarded to Rocky, owned by Peter and Jayne Stevens.

From the Fun Classes, judged by Mandy Pett, the John Richardson Trophy for Best Rescue Dog and given in



memory of John who, with his wife Eileen, used to be Co-ordinators for the Horsham area, was awarded to Wills, owned by Wendy Penfold and presented by Eileen who had travelled all the way from Lowestoft to be with us. A new Trophy for the Best Rescue Bitch and given in memory of Yvonne

Bennett, was awarded to Cloud owned by Mrs Ann Price and presented by Yvonne's husband Gordon along with his lovely dog Jackson. They used to be Co-ordinators for the mid-Kent area. We were delighted to welcome Eileen and Gordon and hope they enjoyed the day.



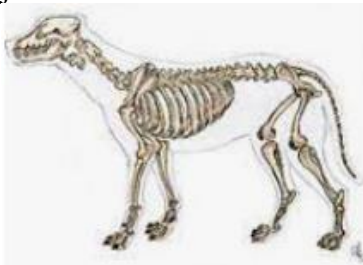
Why being OVERWEIGHT really matters for your dog's well-being ...

Did you know, it is estimated that 63% of all dogs are overweight. And 90% of owners cannot see that their dog is overweight!

There is undisputed evidence, in humans and dogs, that carrying too much body weight is not good for health in general, but it is particularly bad for Osteoarthritis (OA), a disease that affects all structures within the joint.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common cause of chronic pain in dogs. It affects 80% of dogs over the age of 8 years old, and potentially up to 35% of dogs of all ages. It is considered a welfare concern in companion animals such as dogs, especially if left untreated.

To understand why excess weight and OA are so intrinsically linked, look at the shape of their weight bearing limbs – their 4 legs. They are not straight like ours, but have many angles. At each angle there is a joint.



Excess body weight on a dog increases the mechanical forces these joints are subjected to. This will exacerbate any pain and the degeneration of the disease.

In addition to this, body fat, also known as adipose tissue, contains inflammatory mediators that aggravate arthritic pain, as well as causing havoc in general.

What can you do ...?

Understand what good condition and a good weight looks like for your dog. Be honest with your best friend. Look at them with un-biased eyes.

A healthy gut with a diverse microbiome is now understood to be vital for all health and well-being, in humans as well as dogs. Recent studies have highlighted how a healthy gut can influence appetite as well as many other physical and behavioural expressions.

A healthy microbiome can be achieved through a species appropriate diet rich in a variety of fresh food.

For the best life-long results, this should be introduced to puppies.

Fresh food is considered anything not processed or minimally processed, for example frozen or lightly cooked.

“There is no such thing as ‘human food’, it’s all just FOOD” (Dr Judy Morgan)

Evidence also supports adding good quality omega 3 fatty acids to a dog's diet

The good news is - studies have shown that losing 6% of excess body fat was shown to significantly reduce arthritic dog's lameness...

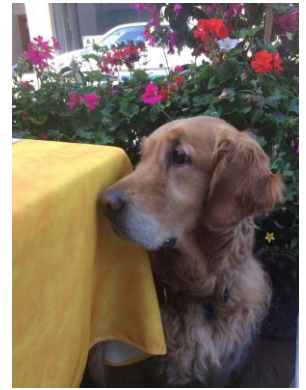
Want to learn more ...?

Dr Conor Brady – book - Feeding Dogs. Website <https://dogsfirst.ie/>
Canine Arthritis Management website and Facebook pages

Honey joined us in Godalming when she was nearly two...she was rather round and everyone said she wouldn't make old bones...but she lasted to 15 years and 5 months – an excellent age for a Golden Retriever.



She had a lovely family to start her life and found her move to Godalming rather disappointing...only dog food and why all this walking? But over the years she became the perfect walking companion and she especially loved our time living in Switzerland...nothing better than getting a cable car up to the top of a mountain and walking down. Is she the only retriever to have travelled up the Jungfrauabahn and walked across the glacier just below the Eiger?, travelled up the Skyway Monte Bianco cable car and entertained everyone at the top? She was equally happy rambling in Scotland and at home in Surrey.



We miss her dreadfully, but she was the best rescue ever and we will treasure her memories for ever.

Tim's Welcome to Walter

Walter, who came to us in March last year, is our second dog from the Southern Golden Retriever centre. I was expecting Walter to be just like our previous dog "Henry". After all, Walter is exactly the same breed, so I assumed he would be very similar in behaviour and temperament. Like getting a replacement car I thought - same characteristics - just a wee bit different in colour perhaps and the name changed of course. How wrong I have been! Whereas Henry was extremely extrovert - prepared to bound over an entire field just to greet another human being - Walter is far more hesitant. In fact he is nervous of small dogs in particular and shies away from them. He likes companionship but familiar faces suit him best.

Henry loved being curled up in his bed when at home – tucked away privately in the larder space where he would, as it suited him, occasionally open an eye to see what was going on. Walter, in contrast, has only just taken to using a dog bed and this sporadically. Walter is happy to lie down anywhere and he is certainly not bothered if this impedes our view of the TV set or makes it impossible to serve up a meal as he prostrates himself in front of the dining room table!

The main difference between the two dogs, however, is them being on the lead. Henry would pull ahead all the time and almost propel you up a hill, his muscular body always inching forward in desperation to see something new. In contrast, Walter likes to amble along slowly sniffing at the ground and taking in all the smells. A plodder in contrast.

Other than this, the two dogs are very similar to one another, with all the lovely traits golden retrievers possess, being companionable and strikingly adorable.

There is one difference I do want Walter to possess that Henry did not have – the ability to live a long and healthy life. Henry got cancer and passed away, too young, aged 9. Walter has just reached this milestone. I do want him to thrive for many more years yet.



Hugo and Dusty Chapter 4

Continuing the Story

Since my last bulletin about our furry family, we have sadly lost our dear old Staffie cross, Hazel, at the grand old age of nearly 16 years.

A great loss to us, and I know to Hugo and Dusty, who had become accustomed to lying down and waiting for her to catch up on our lovely lakeside walks.

Nevertheless, they have continued to enjoy life and make the most of every day with us, starting with throwing themselves onto our bed each morning after they have enjoyed their breakfast downstairs, stretching and rolling around joyfully on their backs until they force us to get up and take them out!



First though, there are my yoga exercises on the bedroom floor, which they have now both been delighted to join me in. They haven't quite got the hang of it yet though and treat the whole thing as a great game whereby we all become entangled together as I am licked from head to foot, and toes playfully nibbled!

This activity sums up their amazing playfulness. Hugo is ball-obsessed, and our walks involve throwing the ball for him to deliberately nose it into the densest crop of brambles and nettles he can, then he waits patiently for one of us to dive in and retrieve it, emerging covered in bloody scratches and stings!

Dusty on the other hand is only interested in a ball in order to de-construct it in the shortest time possible, so instead occupies his walks with the sport of disappearing down a rabbit hole or occasional exit stage left through the nearest break in the fence and gallivanting around at speed into the neighbouring woods.

At least he eventually returns after I have shouted myself hoarse and attempted to pursue him through yet more brambles.

So, who needs Yoga with such an exercise regime carefully planned by our lovely Retrievers?

They are truly a joy though no matter what antics they get up to, and very much a focal point of our lives. That means everything has to fit in with them, quite rightly!

Our latest plan is to buy a little holiday cottage on the coast where we will be able to actually take them away with us for holiday breaks together, and indulge in some of the lovely peaceful beach and coastal path walks.

They are very much looking forward to it, and so are we !



Yellow Dog Project

This project, which has been mentioned in some of the glossy dog magazines, was created to bring awareness of dogs who need space while training, recovering from surgery, or being rehabilitated. If you see a dog with a YELLOW ribbon, bandana or similar on the lead or on the dog, it means the dog needs some space. Please do not approach this dog or its people with your dog. It is an indication that the dog cannot be close to other dogs, so maintain distance and give them time to move out of your way.

There are many reasons why a dog may need space:

- It may have health issues
- It may be another rescue dog being rehabilitated and lacking confidence
- It may have had a bad experience with another dog, or just not be very friendly
- It may be a bitch on heat
- It may be in training
- It may be very old and arthritic
- It may be very shy or nervous

You can read about the project on www.YELLOWDOGUK.co.uk

Bloat, The Killer

(This appeared in an issue a few years ago but deserves to be repeated)

Bloat is a true emergency, which requires **immediate** veterinary attention. If you experience a combination of the following signs be prepared to drive to the surgery **straight away**. The chance of survival decreases alarmingly if you delay more than 60-90 minutes after the first signs.

- Your dog retches from the throat but nothing is produced other than a small amount of frothy mucus.
- Your dog tries to defaecate unsuccessfully.
- Your dog's tummy goes hard and/or swells up like a balloon and is as taut as a drum.
- Your dog is trying to bite, or worry, the abdomen.
- Your dog is very unsettled.

So, whether you're about to catch a plane, serve a meal or go to bed – DON'T. Take your dog to the Vet.



An Epitaph

(This is from a biography of Lord Hailsham who translated an ancient Greek poem on a dog's tombstone – probably written in the 5th century BC)

Laugh if you must
But when you die,
Will you be mourned
As much as I ?