

GOLDEN MOMENTS ISSUE 14

Newsletter of

SOUTHERN GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE

Registered Charity Number 1098769
PO Box 112, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 4RB



Woody Grinstead in a Sunflower Field

This picture of Woody was placed 2nd in the “Summer Fun” category of our East of Area Photo Competition.

What a winter we have had! I know dogs love the snow but there are limits! Ours were unable to get to our local forest for a couple of weeks but we were lucky enough to be able to walk them on extending leads over the farm at the back of our house. If we get a long hot summer don't exercise your pets during the hottest part of the day, and never leave them in the car, even with the windows open. It is amazing how quickly the inside becomes like an oven.

The number of dogs coming into the Charity for re-homing in 2009 fell slightly to a total of 84, but again many were OAPs and in need of veterinary attention. We are so lucky to have found them lovely homes.

The weather for the Fun Day in Kent was a bit damp but the skies cleared for the afternoon and we were able to hold the Parade outside. Again we had a wonderful number of dogs taking part. The date for 2010 is **9th May**, and invitations will be sent out in due course. In contrast the Hampshire event was held on one of the hotter days of year. At the moment there is nothing planned in this area for 2010 but we hope to arrange something later on.

We wish you and a happy and healthy summer.

Shandy's Story

I was asked by my owner to write my biography for your magazine, so please excuse any translation problems - "woofits".

When I was a year old I was rescued from a difficult home by the Southern Golden Retriever Rescue people. They found me a lovely home with a wonderful man and I had 9 perfect years with him. Then he became ill and for the next two years I could sense that he was becoming more and more ill. I tried to do my bit; when we went for walks I would make sure we didn't walk too far and then I would turn back because I could feel he was getting tired. When he went into hospital or away for a few days respite care I dutifully got in the car to be taken to the kennels, but I hated it because I was always worried I would never see him again. So I always associated cars with leaving my master.



As he became more ill I didn't get brushed so much and I began to put on weight because feeding me was difficult. At 12 years (or 84 of your age) my dodgy hip was playing up, and with not getting the exercise and being overweight getting around was becoming more of an effort for me too. Sadly my owner died in the summer of 2009. I lay beside him for 3 days until someone found us both, because although I did not understand what had happened, I knew I must not leave his side. That afternoon, the man I knew from the kennels came and put me in his car and took me away. One week later, a lady came to see me. I had put on more weight because I was so sad (I think humans call it comfort eating). She stroked me and tried to talk to me but I have developed selective hearing in my old age and unless it related to food I tended to ignore humans. About a week after that the lady returned and opened her car and helped me climb in. I thought I was going home, but it was to a new home.

When I arrived it was very different to my previous home, which had been in a town. This was in the country and there were so many new sights, smells and sounds. It was very scary, so I would bark at almost everything. The first day we went for a walk, which was also very frightening because I was being taken somewhere else new and kept looking back at the garden gate. I felt safe if I could see the gate of my new home. Seven months (and a birthday) have gone by since then and my world has changed. No longer do I have to worry about my owner.

I have been put on a diet (I would have preferred by own C-food diet - see food and eat it) and I now have a waist and hips. Walks are no longer a 15 minute round trip but as long as I want (sometimes an hour) depending on how many rabbit holes I want to investigate or how many games I want to play. I am now a 91 year old going on 21 in human years and the only time I am reminded is when my dodgy hip tells me I can't leap tall buildings any more. Glucosamine, Green Lip Mussel and the odd tin of sardines keep my dodgy hip in check. I am reliving my youth and helping out with chores is my hobby. Last week my owner and a friend were sawing some logs in the back garden. I felt they would be more appropriate in the front garden, so without further discussion took one at a time round to the front. I should have checked with the rest of the team but it seemed like a good idea at the time.

I have a new life now, having spent the last couple of years of my previous owner's life trying to take care of him, now it is my turn, although I am still an independent woofie. Always keen to learn new things (it's not the age, it's the mileage that counts) I am finally learning some road sense; better late than never. A hair cut in March, next stop a "woofie" telegram from the Queen maybe, except I'm not a corgi.....hmmmmm maybe plastic surgery, facelift etc. Woof! Woof!

Farewell Bess
(From Joan and Les Anderson)

Bess came to us just over 4 years ago, very friendly and loving. She loved being by the sea – she never swam but loved to paddle and of course the best thing she liked was sitting in puddles, the muddier the better. The times she really loved best were to go fishing with Les. They would go



early in the morning and stay until the tide had turned. She sat with Les most of the time, have a little wander, and then come back for a drink or a chew and settle down again. She loved the car and would travel to Norfolk with us several times a year.

The sad thing was that she didn't know how to play with a ball or any toys, which are the basics for dogs.

Bess at Westwood Ho!, Devon

She gave us 4 wonderful years, but for the last 2 she was very ill, and had spent some time in hospital and was on a special diet. In November 2009 she became very ill again and was back in hospital for several days. She would not eat which was very unusual for Bess as eating was her favourite hobby. We brought her home but she did not improve, not eating and in pain, so we saw the Vet again, who said that she would never get better, so very, very sadly we had to say "goodbye". She was a wonderful friend to us both and will always be missed by us both.



"There is no faith which has never yet been broken, except that of a truly faithful dog".

Konrad Z Lorenz

"You think dogs will not be in heaven? I tell you, they will be there long before any of us".

Robert Louis Stevenson



Henry 1995-2010

When our Rescue Goldie Digger died suddenly at the age of 10½, I cried buckets down the phone to Gillian Robinson, explaining that Digger had to be put to sleep during an exploratory operation as they had found a fast advancing cancer. Gill was very sympathetic and said "we'll find you another friend". I wasn't really ready for another dog, but since I had waited ½ year for Digger to come along, I thought it would take at least that again. However, 3 weeks later Gillian rang and said that Mr. & Mrs. Smith were fostering a boisterous 6 month old youngster.

Not sure what to expect, we drove down to Kent to meet Henry. By 'we' I mean my husband Neil as well as Jill & Keith Mitchell, who had shared Digger with us. People might find it bizarre that 2 families share a dog, my friends said How Can You Share Your Dog and I said How Can You Go To Work All Day And Leave Him At Home Alone? The arrangements worked really well, Jill was their company while I was at work and I paid all the bills for them. I am lucky in my job at Heathrow as I get so much time off, so I would be out riding in the New Forest with the dogs on my days off, usually 4-5 days in a row, then they would return to Jill's for 3 days or so till I picked them up the next time. The amount of exercise they got from the riding made it easy for Jill to manage

them as she said they mostly slept for the next couple of days. It also meant the dogs never had to go to kennels in their lifetime as we worked our holidays round each other. Both Digger and Henry were ecstatic to see me when I picked them up and they were equally delighted to see Jill on their return a few days later. It probably doesn't suit a shy dog, it would need to be a confident dog that loves everybody, not a difficult criterion for a Goldie. Jill and I had both sobbed over the phone, comforting each other when Digger died and decided to share another friend.

Enter Henry.

What I remember most of him was his huge black eyes and grinning mouth and a furiously wagging tail. Apparently he was handed in to Goldie Rescue because he was deemed 'unmanageable, disobedient and rude'. Well, at his age he would be if he didn't get the time, training, exercise and attention he needed, which his first family apparently were not able to give him. He didn't know 'sit', he didn't even know his name. The commands 'come' and 'stay' didn't feature in his vocabulary. I told him he'd have to start dog school straight away - he grinned.

We took him home and he ping-ponged off the walls with all his excess energy.

Dog school said he'd definitely be a 'challenge'. Well, a year later he beat the instructor's dog at the obedience class. I was so proud of him!

He was now able to 'heel' to the horse, having introduced him gradually to the horses. As he was still very young we had to build his level of fitness up gradually under veterinary instruction in order not to overburden his growing bones.



Eventually he was able to ride out with us without having to heel to the horse once we were on open land. He tore around like a bullet, but would come storming back when called, without fail.

He was so well trained that we once nearly forgot him! We had been out on a week long circular trek on horseback which stretches from the New Forest, across Dorset and round the Cranborne Chase in Wiltshire. My friend and I were in the middle of nowhere with countryside in all 4 directions, miles away from any roads, happily chatting away on horseback when she suddenly asked where Henry

was. We looked back and there he sat ½ mile back, waiting by a dirt track crossing because I hadn't told him to cross the track!

He always waited for me to tell him when to cross a road, but I hadn't classified a dirt track as a road, but he clearly had.

We once had a deer run across right in front of us in the forest, Henry leapt forward, I shouted 'down' and he dropped in mid-flight! The couple who had witnessed this said they had never seen a dog carry out a command so quickly, especially under such challenging circumstances when they are giving chase.

He soon learned not to chase anything, the treats in my pockets were far more rewarding.

In fact, he was so well behaved that once a flock of sheep came over to investigate Henry. I was on a bridle path and had told him to heel to the horse, which he did. The sheep got curious and started running up to him - Henry was mortified! We quickly trotted off across the field with a whole flock of sheep in hot pursuit!

He was ever so good with livestock or other animals in general. We often stayed in the New Forest on a small holding. The owner of the farm, Sonja, has a very soft heart and frequently brings in new-born lambs in Spring if the frost returns. The lambs are put in a very large cardboard box in the kitchen, which is always warm. Once the lambs broke out from their cardboard pen and stormed into the lounge where we sat. They ran straight over to Henry and leapt into his dog basket where they snuggled up against him. I wish I'd had a camera! He looked at me, mortified, looked back at

the lambs and very slowly got out of his basket, then sat in front of them and gave me his wondrous look.

Henry came with us wherever we went. Every spare moment is spent on horse back, with Henry accompanying us all over the countryside. Once, my friend, who has a top-fit eventing horse, was a bit concerned if the little Arabian horse I rode and Henry could go the week-long distance. I said not to worry! On the last day the Arabian horse I rode decided to take off up a hill like a bullet. I got to the top and was able to open my saddle bags, take out my camera, undo the camera case and take a series of shots of my friend galloping up the hill. When she got to the top she looked incredulously at my Arab, more so at Henry already by my side and said that she was amazed, and added that the final insult came when Henry overtook her super fit horse half-way up the hill.

Another friend and I once galloped a mile-long stretch in the New Forest and almost at the end my friend asked if we should pull up and wait for Henry. I said "look to your side" and there was Henry outrunning her horse. She couldn't believe it. We have criss-crossed the UK on horseback many times over. My friends are convinced he had an ever-lasting battery hidden inside him. They called him Super Dog, Duracell Dog and Husky In Disguise.

I can't even begin to imagine how many thousands of miles he must have run. A week long Bridle Ride alone is 100 miles for the horses, probably nearer 150 for Henry as he would always run flat out in huge circles around the horses and even at lunchtime, when we gave the horses a break, he was still running.



We did many of these weeklong rides every year and in between we spent our days roaming the New Forest with lunch in our saddle bags.

This is how Henry spent his life till he was almost 15 years old. He just never stopped running. Sure, we had to pace our rides to him as he got older, and always had a car on standby in case he got tired, but he still kept on running. Then just before Christmas he was walking behind the horses, not trotting ahead of them like he normally did. Coupled with him being off his food that morning, I knew there was something wrong. Scans and x-rays revealed heart problems, but to what extent, the vet couldn't say and referred Henry to Stephen Collins, a Cardiologist at the Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists near Ringwood in the New Forest.

Henry was diagnosed with Pericardial Effusion, a condition where there is a fluid build-up between the heart and the membrane around it, effectively squeezing the heart and so lowering the blood pressure to a dangerously low level and is fatal if not treated quickly.

Stephen said he sees a large number of Goldies with this condition, they don't know why it occurs, but it usually happens when they are younger. It is fixable via surgery, but Henry was already 15 years old. To give me time to think, Stephen drew off the liquid with a needle and Henry was visibly better very quickly. Stephen explained that sometimes it only ever happens once and never again. Sometimes it will occur several times in quick succession and then surgery is the only option. I agonized over this, hoping it wouldn't recur, but over the following 4 weeks he had 3 episodes and had to have the fluid drawn out every time. Although in between the bouts, Henry was still running (yes, running, my friend couldn't keep up with him on foot), I knew that he couldn't have fluid drawn off every 10 days or so and the only option left was surgery. But Henry was almost 15 years old. I spoke to friends and family and they all said the same, you cannot put a 15 year old through surgery.

What I was absolutely afraid of, was that Henry would die of complications after surgery, alone in his kennel and never come home, so his final days would be of misery.

I understand that these days pain relief is phenomenal, but there must still be some pain after surgery, in addition to which it must be much harder on an older body to recover after surgery and the chances of survival/recovery surely are reduced at that age. And when I weighed up the possible complications compared to what I could gain on the other side, ie how much time I could possibly buy him when he was already 15, I kept thinking it would not be right to put him through it.

I would never have forgiven myself if he died at the vets, when I had the choice not to have him end like that.

It is so easy to stick the head in the sand and just say Yes to surgery and let fate take over, it is much harder to take the decision not to.

My sister who is a doctor, said that most elderly people who had been put through a major operation had said to her that it wasn't worth the pain for what time was left. It was simply too much to cope with at an old age, the body not able to heal itself as efficiently as a younger body, and hence the increased amount of pain. They told my sister that they had wished they could have died in peace, rather than

having to suffer such pain and effort for so little time left, as they felt they had already led a fulfilled life which old age and living longer could not improve upon. She said of course the family wants the person to live at all costs, but for the patient, their wish was often not to be put through the pain and effort of a major op. For them it was often much better just to have pain management and make the most of what time they had left. Animals don't have a concept of death, but they do of pain.

So if I just had him put to sleep next time, I would know for sure that at no stage was he in pain, only "off-colour" that day. I would know that up till his last day he'd be running around, happy and pain free and when he had a sudden onset of fluid (it happens within a day), he'd only have one day of feeling flat (but not in actual pain) and he would be put to sleep surrounded by people who love him.

In my mind the day would never come where he wasn't running alongside my horse.

But that day did come, 6 weeks after the first episode. When he was off his food again in the morning I had hoped it was nothing or something else, but scans that day revealed that the fluid was now also in his chest and it was only a matter of time before he was going rapidly downhill.

He died with his face in my hands.

It was the hardest thing I ever had to do.

My consolation is knowing that he didn't die in any pain and was still a content dog till he died.

He was my constant friend and travel companion for nearly 15 years, I know it is a good age for a Goldie, but just not long enough. I still can't believe I won't see him again, his smiley face, always keen, he was my sunshine.

I'm devastated and I'm not sure how to go on.

Maybe there will be another dog one day, but not like Henry. He was my Person, my Once In A Lifetime Dog.

I will be releasing Henry's ashes on top of one of our favourite hills in the New Forest. We often used to gallop up to the top of this hill, me on the horse, Henry by my side, We would then watch the sun set over the New Forest.

He spent most of his life in the New Forest, it is only fitting that his ashes be released there, a vast expanse of thousands of acres, where he could run and run and run.

I miss him terribly.

Judith Ross



Drummer's 10th Birthday

I just thought you would like to know how I am at 10 years old. My man thinks that I am his very best friend and shadow. Really, I just have to roll my big brown eyes at him and he goes weak at the knees and gives me a “piggy ear” or another walk or anything I fancy.



As for growing old, I still love to play with other dogs and join in with all the games the grand-children play. I don't know why they complain when I run off with the cricket ball; they hit it across the lawn in the first place. They also don't seem very pleased when I remove the fluffy bits off tennis balls, you can never please everybody.

I am very lucky with my man, he lets me wipe my mouth over his trousers without complaint (much). I also let him sleep in my bedroom. I let him sleep in the bed as he is very old, it's those big brown eyes again.

When he goes out in his car, I can usually slip into the back to keep him company.

At the last clay shoot my man went to, with me of course, I think he was very cross when I ran across the guns chasing a clay rabbit! I was having such fun but I then spent the rest of the shoot on a lead, even rolling my eyes did not work. I thought they expected me to chase rabbits and pheasants.

Anyway, just to let you know that my man and I are in very good health. I see that he gets plenty of fresh air and regular walks. Some of his friends are not so keen on my company when I have been swimming, as they object to a bit of slobber and mud on their clothes – how can they be so fussy!

Well, I must press on and find a nice cool spot in the garden to dream about rabbits.

Bye for now,

Drummer

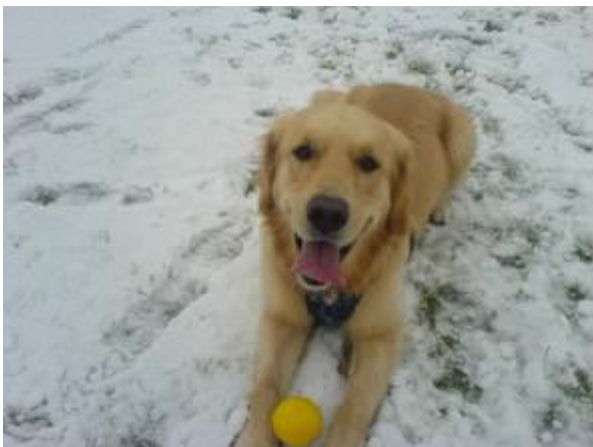
PS My man says thank you for letting me (Drummer) live with him.

PPS I have often told my man how very lucky he is to have me around.



Shadow's News

(From Roland, Ann, Caitlin and Shadow Heal)



Just a quick update on Shadow's progress. Not a day goes by when we don't have to pinch ourselves on how lucky we are to have him. When he first arrived I spent a lot of time training him to stay, not pull on the lead and retrieve, and now he is a very well-behaved dog. It did take a little time to socialize him with the other dogs as I think he was never allowed off the lead, but now he loves his walks in the park every day, and is very well behaved around other dogs, although he still does not play with them. He loves chasing his ball and

brings it back for more - he would chase it until he could not run any more. When he first arrived he didn't know what to do with toys as, again, I think he didn't have any of his own. He now loves playing with his Ted and Duck and loves to play tug on his tug rope. We have sorted out his diet and he only eats James Wellbeloved kibble and has no more tummy upsets. He travels well in the car and is generally a very loving dog, wanting attention all the time. He gets on like a house on fire with my 16 year old daughter and they play all the time.



Thank you so much for allowing us to take him. He is an important member of our family and makes me smile every day.



Gemma's Tribute to her best friend Shem

(Gemma and Shem were re-homed when their previous owner became too old to cope with them)

It was 25th January 2005 when Shem and I (Gemma) went to our new home. Our new people had been warned that Shem barked all night and we began to think that we would not be welcome, but Shem did not bark at all any night. We enjoyed our new home from the start because we now lived near the beach and could play in the sand and rock pools. We also enjoyed long walks in the local



country park, especially when the tea and coffee kiosk was there and we each had a sausage. At home Shem was a bit naughty in that he would steal things, for example a rich fruit birthday cake and the Harvest loaf meant for the church altar. If anything fell to the ground, of course, I would help him to eat it! He was often reprimanded for stealing but had such a look in his eyes that he was soon forgiven. We used to tumble around on the floor and I would win the game and then lick his ears. It was a great shock, therefore, when we were jumping around and welcoming our folks home after they had been out, that Shem collapsed and

died. I found it difficult to understand and wondered for a long time where he had gone. He has left a big hole in our household and in our lives, but we are so thankful that we were able to enjoy so many happy times together.

