

SEASON'S GREETINGS



"That's all my presents opened"

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 15

Well, it wasn't exactly a scorcher, but we hope you and your dogs enjoyed the summer. Apart from a few days in July it wasn't too hot for them. Now we are bracing ourselves for what the winter is going to throw at us!

Our cover picture this time is of Lady, who sadly died a few weeks after this photo was taken at the grand old age of 16. A tribute from her owner Sarah can be found later in this issue.

We enjoyed seeing those of you who came to the Fun Days and gave us the chance to see how all the dogs are doing. They always seem to enjoy strutting their stuff in the Parade! We were, however, somewhat concerned to see how very overweight some of them were. It is so easy for the pounds (or should I say kilograms) to creep on when you are seeing a dog every day, but it is really not being kind to them to let them get fat. It puts a great strain on their hearts, lungs and joints, which not only causes them pain but almost inevitably shortens their lives. You should be able to see your dog's waist and feel his ribs. Having said that, please don't stop bringing them to see us!

In this Issue you will find a short list of “doggie books” which you might enjoy reading. These are stories about various breeds and the pleasure (and pain) they give their owners. If you have any books you would like to recommend do let us know and we will publish a list from time to time.

Now the usual “inter warnings”. Dogs like nothing better than to investigate parcels on the floor, so you may find your Christmas presents unwrapped before the big day if you don’t put them out of your dog’s reach! Watch that they don’t get hold of Christmas tree decorations, and of course don’t give them turkey bones or rich food, especially chocolate (unless it’s doggy chocolate) as this is poisonous to dogs. If your household is going to be extra busy and noisy try to have a quiet place your dog can escape to if it all gets too much for him.

We hope you have a happy time, with not too much of the white stuff we had last year!

Congratulations to the two people who gained their Kennel Club Good Citizens Bronze Award at the Farlington Fun Day. These were:

Bob Stacey with Blue
Alida Finlay with Toby

Katie

4th August 1993 – 2nd April 2010

Our dear Katie has left us and our world is empty – she had been with us and part of us for 15½ years.

Katie was the third Golden to light up our lives, each with her or his own different personality and style.

Our first was Emma. She came to us as a second hand puppy – second hand only because her breeders took her back from her first owner who complained that she left puddles everywhere and couldn’t handle that. Clearly not a potential success as a dog owner. But the first owner’s loss was very much our gain, although she was everything a puppy can be and nearly wrecked our kitchen by the time she had quietened down. But then her activities were transferred to the garden where holes appeared in the grass from nowhere and planting anything new was a very risky business! Nor did she endear herself to our decorator when she stole his best brushes and gave them a good chewing!

But in time she settled down and became a most wonderful and loving member of the family, who melted everyone’s hearts. Could never resist food left out on the coffee table however! Everywhere the family was, there was Emma and this is supported by a glance at family photos in which inevitably Emma was to be seen, usually flopped out on some lucky person’s feet. Not excluding those wedding day photos of our daughter which were taken at home!

Emma enlightened our lives for over 13 years and it was a very sad day indeed for us all when the time came for us to say goodbye to her. She had so filled the house and our lives that after the initial “never again”, we could not take the emptiness and quietness – and we were introduced to Brenda Lowe, and within 13 days of losing Emma, Ben entered our lives.

And what a saviour he was!

Seven years old and a real gentleman if ever there was one. He had come from a clearly loving home where changes in their work led his previous owners to feel that it would be unkind to leave him alone in the house all day, and to seek a new home for him. He came to us at our time of need and made the transfer with no fuss whatsoever, moving in as if he had always lived with us, and took us under his wing.

Ben was a real delight and the only problem was in getting him to eat, which after Emma was something very new to us! We had been given a list of preferred food by his previous owner but it seemed that he left these preferences with them because he steadfastly refused almost everything on the list. After trying every tinned and dry food on the market we reached some sort of compromise with him but really, so unlike the breed, food was not something that bothered Ben at all and he just ate enough to keep him going. Keeping him slim and trim was never to be a problem!

Looking back, our much used expression “dear old Ben” about summed him up, he was just happy to be around us and never gave a moment’s trouble. However, our relaxed way of life with Ben was to last for only a year, because a while after Ben joining us, we had the idea that it would be even lovelier to have two (!) and once again the call was made to Brenda.

It took the best part of the year, but then one fateful day we went to see Yvonne and Gordon Bennett and our lives changed for ever as a 15 month old whirlwind by the name of Lucy (quickly changed to a more appropriate “Katie”) entered them!

To say that Katie was different to anything we had encountered previously is to put it mildly! She had spent most of her life living in a garage with a dog flap on the door in company with another Golden of her age, being only occasionally let into the house, wherein lived 12 cats. One can only imagine the scene and what must have happened on such occasions. She had never, it seemed, had the opportunity to socialise with other dogs, nor to have had any loving or training of which to speak.

Consequently her demeanour was in the early days very much a question of taking but not giving and we had some exciting moments until we reached a better mutual understanding! The most serious experience we had with Katie in her early days was indeed very early on and involved the gentle Ben. The day following our bringing Katie home (and we had followed the experts’ advice in introducing the two dogs outside of the house and bringing them in together, with no sign of apparent hostility), Katie to our horror suddenly turned on Ben in our sitting room and got him by the throat. Fortunately we were present and without damage to ourselves separated them – but at no time did Ben seek to defend himself or retaliate – then or ever after – we were very relieved and indeed proud of him.

Very clearly we felt that we might have to return Katie, but we spoke to the breeder from whom we had bought Emma and he was very reassuring, saying that this was Katie as the female asserting herself in the house and that it would never happen again. We felt a bit happier but still apprehensive but he was right and it never happened again.

A good start but more dramas were to follow!!

We knew when he came to us that Ben had not been neutered, and did not want to do so at his age – but no one knew whether Katie had been spayed. We found out in the most dramatic way when, only 4 days after her arrival (and two days after the episode with Ben from which we were still recovering) she came into season. This was on the 4th December but Ben thought that Christmas had come really early this year!

Brenda would have had her for us in her kennels but again, we had no idea whether her injections were up to date, or indeed whether she had had any at all, so with her own dogs to consider, Brenda could not take the chance nor could any other kennels have done so, for the same reasons. So we had to get on with it ourselves and this involved visits to Mothercare and the laying out of a tricky system of baby gates and each of us with one dog each, living in separate rooms. Much to the disappointment of both Ben and Katie!

To say that we had a fraught three weeks is an understatement, but on Christmas Day we had the best of presents and it all came to an end. And in March, Katie went to the vet!!

Another eye opener was our first (and many subsequent!) walks. Again, something of which she had clearly had little or no experience. She would go up the road like a rocket, checking all smells at top speed and especially on the lookout for cats – no surprise there! It took a long long time to get her to walk in a more dignified manner, although if the truth be told, we never really succeeded and it was not until she was in her teens that walking on the lead became less than a dramatic outing. In hindsight perhaps we should have taken her to classes but our life at the time was not conducive to this and anyway, success would have been questionable!

Black and hairy dogs we quickly discovered were particularly anathema to her and a tightening of the grip on her lead was order of the day when a potential victim came into view. In fact she must have sent out vibes since there was a particular large male Golden whom we used to come across, and who did not bother Katie – but obviously she did him or her notoriety had spread because he would come nowhere near her and would make a large circuit to go past her – at least 15/20 feet being his safety zone!

But without doubt she was a really dominant character and her early couple of years involved a regular tussle between us - not at all what we had come to expect of the breed; but then, they are all individuals and she certainly was!

All of which makes Katie sound a nightmare – in a way she was but with us and the family she was fine. To the end though she was a free spirit and her own very independent doggie person. She was not and in truth she never became the sort of dog who lay at your feet or enjoyed games or grooming, Katie would have none of that, even though where she would sleep was always somewhere where she could see us and know that we were there. Probably one of her few concessions to domesticity!!

However, once we became aware of her sometimes fiery temperament towards other dogs and very independent attitude, she became as much loved as our other dogs and, when sadly three years after Katie took us over, we lost our very gentle Ben (who had accepted Katie and her wild ways with much equanimity) she was a great consolation to us. And being Katie, his absence in truth seemed to have little effect on her even though they had spent a lot of time in each other's company – although had never played together or anything “soft” like that.

But Ben despite all clearly felt he had a protective role to perform – once when they were both out and off the lead, we encountered a pair of Rottweilers, who were really causing no offence but Katie (“make my day, punk”) started to react, no surprise there (!) so hero Ben moved and placed himself between Katie and the two Rotties. It was such a conscious movement that it could not have been other than he was moving to protect her..! We had to tell Ben that he was a bit out of his league and got them both back onto their leads and away!

Katie's attitude did make her a very good house dog and the uproar which would follow a knock at the door resulted in some very nervous callers standing well back from it! Mind you, Ben was no slouch in that area either and he would stand up at the letter box tearing the mail to pieces as it came through, until we fitted an external box. But the sound of both of them reacting to what they considered a possible intruder was quite something!

So the years went by and happily Katie remained in good health, slowly becoming more sedate as time passed – but only slowly!



Our daughter and family acquired a BLACK Lab puppy when Katie was 11 – that was interesting! Poor Max wanted so much to be friends with Katie but reality was something else and he spent most of his time in her company being told very clearly to go away – Katie had a fine set of teeth which she was happy to display on any suitable occasion. Max being a really lovable softie of a dog refused to take no for an answer and gradually managed to wear Katie down so that in the end she tolerated him, although often we

would remark that when they were together, Max was just invisible to her!

When Katie became 13, we began to think that having reached the age when we lost Emma, she might not be with us for too much longer, but she must have just scoffed at such negative thoughts. Her 14th birthday came and went.. then her 15th.. AND her 16th, and it was not until that 16th year that her health started to deteriorate. Up until then we had had practically no problems with her in this regard and in truth, we really feel that being such a “toughie”, she simply enjoyed rude health and seemed to have no susceptibility to normal ailments! And she only really started to look her age during the last six months, if that.

In fact the ailments which she did eventually develop were purely age related – drooping of her eyelids causing eyelashes to turn inwards, arthritic back legs and eventually her front legs, plus becoming rather deaf (or just not wanting to hear). Despite all this she was still able to detect at long distance our resident fox and give voice and chase (albeit in a rather lumbering sort of way) right up to a week before the end.



But the last few months were difficult. She would give calls for assistance in the middle of the night and need a heave up to get up onto her feet so that she could make her way into the garden, where she would flop down to gather strength to move some more and do what she had to do – we built an earth and turf ramp from the lawn onto the patio so that she could negotiate this section.

This time coincided with the extended period of snow and ice, not to mention heavy rain – truly dedicated Golden ownership is standing on the grass in the snow or pouring rain in pyjamas at 2.30 in the morning in January!

But then we reached a time when our normally happy eater went more and more off her food and keeping a regular intake of goodness into her became increasingly difficult – but still her indomitable spirit carried on and she continued to have a reasonably good quality of life. In no way would we have let her suffer but she continued to remain around us and regularly in the garden taking in all the smells and sounds.

16½ came and went and after that we knew that her time was approaching and increased the frequency of visits from our vet, who was kindness itself and eminently practical. But in the last week, her eating dropped even more and we were watching her closely with aching hearts, knowing that soon we would have to make that awful decision. Then on her last visit the vet discovered an apparent swelling in Katie’s stomach – which might have been a tumour or a reaction to the necessary anti-inflammatories she was receiving.

Finally the day came when she refused all our attempts to feed her at breakfast time, even scrambled egg which the day before she had been happy to have. We gave her a clean up and brush and left her quiet, knowing that our call to the vet was imminent – but dear old girl, independent to the end, within half an hour she moved herself to her blanket and peacefully went to sleep and left us....

We miss our dear old hooligan so much, she had made an indelible mark on our lives. But we take some comfort from the fact that, joints apart, she seemed to have no pain and right up to the day before she was still taking an interest. In fact that day she had had a good meal (of top quality stewed steak!) and had passed a good two hours on the patio on what was a warm sunny day, lying with her head up looking around and taking everything in. Her last full day with us then had been a happy day for Katie and very much something for us to be able to keep in our minds when we think of her – which is often.

Ann & Michael Coker

This is the story of Gracie and Scooby



Scooby came to us three years ago, aged 2, after the death of our lovely Jasper(who we had as a puppy from Pat Easton). Scooby had come from a family who had discovered that a member of the family had a very severe reaction to Scooby's fur. Previously he had been in a divorce situation. Scooby was and is quite different from our Retriever Jasper. He is very laid back and a small dark retriever, who takes everything in his stride.

We initially did very little training as he came when called, but did sometimes go off to do his own thing and you sometimes waited a while for him to come back, having chased rabbits, or birds, even the occasional deer!.

We had Scooby for over 2 years before we thought about having another. It had always been in our minds, but we wanted to wait for him to fully settle down and feel at home.

Last year, about this time, we agreed to look after Gracie, who was 18 months old and the youngest of four retrievers, over the summer holidays. Just about a week before the holiday, the owner phoned to say that she was going to re-home Gracie through retriever rescue and would we like to consider her permanently? We were thrilled. We had planned for two eventually, and now this little lady was going to come and live with us. Before we committed, the owner explained that Gracie had had a form of Meningitis when she was about 9 months old which left her with high levels of anxiety and panic in certain situations (particularly when outside and with other dogs).

Gracie came after signing an adoption form and she was lovely. Scooby was reluctant at first to even think about another dog sharing his toys (so we had to put them all away). He was rather aloof and gave an air of one who certainly did not know how to share his space, and maybe didn't really want to. After a few days however they started to play and that was the breakthrough that we were looking for. They shared toys and Gracie seemed to respect Scooby as the dominant male. From there on in it has been a lovely relationship that has grown and developed over the past 10 months.

It was however not without its pitfalls for us as owners. Scooby had been okay on walks prior to Gracie, but now had become a runaway, taking Gracie with him, and both returning separately after maybe 45 minutes! The situation was very stressful (not something you go on a walk for) and I said to my husband in February that we had to do something. At that stage we had Gracie on an extension lead and Scooby off for the most part. This worked fairly well, but Scooby would still go off on occasions and Gracie never had freedom off the lead.

Eventually we employed the services of a behaviourist (at great expense). He explained that they were both foraging and doing their own thing without checking or responding to our commands. He put the dogs on long ropes and initially joined them together. Gracie was very responsive and came back to the whistle and treats, dragging Scooby along with her. After a while we put them on separate ropes and now (thank goodness) they are both off the lead without ropes. There are the odd occasions however, when we have to remind Gracie to stay with us and not too far ahead, and slip the rope over her. On the whole though things have worked out really well.

We love both the dogs, and the lovely relationship they have built between them. Every day they play fight (unless it is pouring with rain) and then save it up for their walk when they can have a chase.

Having another dog has helped Scooby so much to share and not be a selfish “old man”. For Gracie it’s been more about respect for another dog and providing the young energy and play, which was missing in Scooby’s life.

We wouldn’t swap them for the world, and now I don’t think they would either!

Tim and Jan Pearson.

Barney, Me and Pets As Therapy]



On entering the garden of the family who wanted their dog rehomed, I was greeted by a big bouncy 1 year old Goldie called Barney, I knew instantly he was just what I was looking for.

Going for a walk was a new experience for him and the first couple of months were a learning curve for both of us - once off the lead the chances of him coming back when called were rare..... two years, 5 pairs of walking boots and a lot of patience later, Barney is a pleasure to take out.

Barney’s biggest achievement though is that he’s now a Pets As Therapy dog. We

first heard of the Charity at Paws in the Park 2009 and I knew then that Barney was such a gentle giant he would be an ideal candidate.

Barney had to go through an assessment process and passed with flying colours. We now go to a nursing home once a week where Barney is eagerly awaited. It’s so rewarding to hear the staff say that some patients, many suffering with dementia, never speak or want to socialise but when they know we are coming they go along to see Barney, where they hold a conversation and remember the times they’ve had with their own dogs in the past. They love to feed him treats which I take along, although it has been known for one lady to remove a toffee from her mouth and give it to him!

The staff also said that Barney coming to see the patients is a more beneficial experience than even relatives visiting.

Yesterday whilst we were out, a group of disabled children were playing with Barney and I’m now hoping to find a childrens’ establishment to start visiting .

I want to say “thank you Rachel and the SGRR“ for finding Barney, who gives not only me, but many other people so much pleasure.

Paul Wicker

Book List

“Walking Ollie”	Stephen Foster	Pub: Short Books
“A Big Little Life”	Dean Koontz	Pub: Harper
“Nop’s Trials”	Donald McCaig	Pub: Collins
“Breeders” (a novel)	Anita Burgh	Pub: Orion

A Tribute to Lady

I lost Lady on 19th February 2010, and miss her so much. She went very quickly and suddenly, the Vet felt that she did it for me so I would not have to make that terrible decision. As I write this the tears will not stop. She was my best friend, loyal, faithful and so loving. Going home is so empty, she always came out with me, except for the food shopping as she disliked waiting in the car.

The last six months she had done so well. She took her many tablets and never complained. If she was in pain she never showed it, loving the tablets in cream cheese. I think losing our nineteen year old cat before in November affected her as well, but she never gave up till that Friday evening.

I have some lovely memories of her, she will always be so special - the first time at the beach, not liking the water but loving the woods and the different smells. She was a very private dog, not mixing, maybe not trusting other dogs (a legacy from her first home?)

I remember the Christmases surrounded with Christmas paper, trying to find her Christmas biscuits, and when the rescue chickens (6) arrived telling them she was boss. Even when Lizzie, the cat belonging to an old gentleman who had passed away, came to live with us Lady was boss, but after Lady died Lizzie slept in her basket. Sadly I have lost her too now.

I feel so blessed that I had Lady for ten years. She was happy, loved by the boys and brought so much pleasure, happiness and love to us all. Thank you for giving me Lady – I was so lucky to have her in my life.

Sarah Bevan

“Crumble” 9th September 1996 – 29th June 2009

I would like to begin this story of our beloved Crumble from the time we rescued her in June 2002 so you can understand why we loved her so dearly until her untimely death in June 2009.

Our previous Golden Retriever (Tara) died in August 2001 at the unbelievable age of 15½ years. She gave us much joy and love although she did have a few problems with other dogs as she had been attacked by two black Labradors when she was about 18 months old, so despite the many different remedies we tried she got in first and attacked when other dogs came up to her. However, she loved people and was always gentle and friendly with them. My husband Joe and I felt very sad at her loss and decided to look for a rescue dog to whom we could give a good home. We tried various avenues and finally contacted Southern Golden Retriever Rescue, and came into contact with Chris Hadley, who promised she would look for a dog about four to six years old. It took about nine months but my goodness it was well worth waiting for.

Crumble lived with another Golden Retriever (Bonnie) in a very large house in Cranleigh, Surrey, with her owners Lindsay and David and their two daughters aged nine and eleven. Lindsay was planning to go back to full time work and felt it would not be fair to leave the dogs for such long hours, but wanted them both to go the same day so it would be less upsetting for the two girls. Chris felt the dogs should go to separate homes as Crumble was very much an outdoor dog and loved long walks whereas Bonnie, who was ten years old, was a “plodder” and loved to stay at home. Chris arranged for Joe and I plus Mike, who was willing to take Bonnie, to meet in the house at Cranleigh. Mike had his own pet shop and felt Bonnie would suit him very well.

I will never forget the first sight we had of Crumble. When we got out of our car Crumble, who was with the family in the front drive, immediately walked up to us and the look in her eyes said “I want to come home with you”. It was a real magical moment, and fortunately Bonnie had the same idea with Mike. Lindsay was very sad about giving up the dogs but felt she was doing the right thing. I think when we left with Crumble, who jumped straight into the back of our car without a care in the world, we all had tears in our eyes.

Crumble settled into our home as though it was the only one she had ever known. Chris had told us to keep her on the lead when walking for the first two weeks, but this only lasted two days as she was so obedient and walked by our side. Lindsay had taken Bonnie to training school when she first had her, and Crumble had Bonnie as her “teacher” right from the start. You would never find any dog as obedient and loving as Crumble. I always called her “Miss Goody Good Shoes” – *she that could do no wrong!!* She also loved other dogs which was a real treat for us after Tara. She loved our family and was so good with our grandchildren.

Chris came to our aid again when we needed someone to look after Crumble as we were going away on a cruise for a week. She found a neighbour who had a Yorkshire Terrier and had a lot of experience with dogs. Her name was Jenny Westhenry and we arranged to take Crumble to see her. That was the start of a great friendship – Crumble fell in love at first sight with Jenny and Tommy (the Terrier) and they really got on so well together. Crumble knew that when we took her to Jenny’s it was her holiday as well, and as soon as we were half a mile from Jenny’s house her ears would prick-up and her tail start wagging. She had many happy times with Jenny and Tommy and I know they are as sad as we are at her loss. We will certainly keep in touch as Jenny is a fantastic person and a joy to know.



Unfortunately, in May 2009 Crumble was diagnosed with cancer of the liver, and the news was devastating for us all. Up to the last couple of weeks she had a good quality of life – still eating well and playing with her toys. Every day she would get them out of her special basket until she found her favourite one – a black and white cat with a little bell around its neck. She was so gentle the bell never came off. She only thing was that we couldn’t take her out for long walks because her breathing became very distressful. Then a few days before she died she suddenly became very ill and the cancer had spread to her lungs. We kept her for a few more days but realised we had to let her go peacefully. It was the hardest thing that Joe and I have ever had to do, but our love for her decided that she should be at peace.

One of the things I miss so much is the tremendous love that Crumble showed to us. There was a very strong bond between her and Joe and once, when Joe was up in the local woods, he tripped on a tree root and fell face-down on the ground. Crumble was so distressed she immediately tried to get him up by putting her head under his armpits and trying to lift him up. Once he was up she would not leave him alone and kept wagging her tail as if to say “Are you alright now?” She was quite set in her ways and would only do things in her own time. We live in a bungalow and she has always had the run of the house and knew she was welcome wherever she went. At bedtime she would stay on her bed in the lounge until she was ready to go to sleep, but after about 30 minutes she would burst into our bedroom and come over to me. I would make a fuss of her and she would then kiss me on the eyes, make a little sound and lie down to go to sleep. I would always say to her “and I love you too” when she lay down and I’m sure her little sound meant “I love you”. How I miss those moments now – I would give anything to have her kiss me again. I realise that life must go on and that time will heal my grief, but her love for us was unique and uninhibited. She was a VERY SPECIAL DOG and I hope and pray that soon I will have another “Crumble” to care for and love, as I think this is the only way that I will get over the loss of this wonderful dog.

I could write a lot more about Crumble, but I hope that you will understand how wonderful our four-legged friends are to us humans.

Claire Goatcher - 2009