



NEWSLETTER April 2014

Kennel Club Breeds Watch Educational day.

Having signed up to attend this seminar set up particularly for judges of breeds who are in categories 2 & 3 one always wonders what the day will entail for the almost 100 judges who attended. Scheduled were five workshops plus a talk on judges' health monitoring forms & reporting and a question and answer session.

The first workshop was given by Frank Kane on movement; he talked extensively about the various aspects involved and showed slides to explain and concluded that in all movement no exaggeration was one of the keys to sound action, then we moved into the main hall where concentration was needed for the various breeds that were moved for all to see with an ongoing explanation of certain issues within each breed. It was stressed that as judges we are in a strong position to improve things and also need good powers of observation and as always the judge's decision is final. Now since January there is a form at the back of all Championship show judges book to give a judge the option to report any specific issues that arise during the judging of any breed, so visible conditions or exaggerations considered detrimental to the health & welfare of the breed may be recorded. High profile breeds have a specific form relating to the breed.

It is important that under KC rules that prizes are never awarded to dogs and I quote from the 'judges guide booklet', which would adversely affect their health or welfare for example:

- Lameness –including 'hopping'.
- Inappropriate temperament – refusal to be handled, timid or aggressive.
- A discharge from one or both eyes or any signs of discomfort in either eye
- Obvious breathing difficulties
- Obvious skin disorder or ear irritation
- Exaggerations that would make the dog unsuited to the breed's original purpose
- Significantly over or under weight.

A judge is expected to make decisions based on extensive experience as owners and breeders and even at these early stages improvements have been noted within some breeds.

Workshop two was on eyes given by Professor Sheila Crispen MA VetMB BSc PhD DVA DVOphthal DipECVO FRCVS who gave us some graphic pictures and explanations relating to certain eye conditions which were most absorbing.

Workshop three was run by Nick Blayney BVSc MRCVS about skin in which he stated that exaggeration leads to disease and what is normally acceptable must be measured against a framework of welfare, rather than habit or custom or fashion. He went on to explain how to identify healthy skin in that it should be of uniform appearance across the whole area and that thickness and flexibility vary from place to place, depending on function. Healthy skin should not show any lesions – spots, scabs nor be pink or reddened & free from excessive greasiness & be dry. Lots of further information was given relating to breeds with skin folds and other suggestions as to places to watch out for problems with skin like ears, again pictures were used

to show various issues within his talk. Afterwards I had a long talk with him because he was our vet when we lived at Stratford-on-Avon and so I knew him from a long time ago.

Then a lunch of soup and sandwiches went down well before the fourth workshop was given by Dr R.W.James BVet.MED, PhD, MRCVS, FRCPATH. On Body conditioning where he spoke about what are basically ideal issues to look for and the scores frequently used to ascertain the norm.

The fifth workshop was all about mouth and dentition given by Annette Oliver and as she said all dogs have one so it was good to have some in depth explanations about various jaw sets and teeth in particular, some of the graphics on bad dental hygiene were best seen well after lunch and also what was interesting was the talk on the telling signs of problems with teeth and how important mouths and dentition is.

This concluded we broke for a cup of tea and as ever there was plenty to discuss over it with fellow judges and some lively debates ensued. Following this we were given an in depth talk about the Judges health monitoring forms and their use and value in reporting developing and current issues. I expect that in a short time it will become the norm that judges will take advantage of the opportunity to send in reports to the KC on various health and welfare issues within the breed they judge and as a result better understanding and healthier happy dogs in some cases will be the result.

What did come out generally was the fact that to carefully take in all issues relating to what we had been told a longer time allowance for judges to go over dogs would be needed.

Julia Swinburn.

ACHIEVEMENTS

This section is for members to submit details of what they and their dogs have achieved. I am thinking for example those who have obtained their KC Good Citizen Dog Scheme awards and at what level, but there may be other achievements be it in agility, carting, obedience, PAT dogs, etc.....

The Kennel Club Good Citizens Dog Scheme:

Has your dog obtained their Puppy, Bronze, Silver or Gold awards?

If so do let me(Tracy) know, your dog's name (Pet and Pedigree), the level achieved along with the date and venue. Details will then be published in the next newsletter

Springhaze Charisma (Jura) wins the 2013 Springhaze Trophy Award for the 3rd time. This trophy is awarded each year to the Swissy who has collected the most points throughout the year in a variety of disciplines. Jura takes part in showing, agility, water rescue, blood donating, beating and tracking. He is a truly amazing dog. Congratulations to Jura and his owners Jean and Robert.

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme (GCDS)

As a club we might be able to offer the opportunity to do our own Good Citizens testing, and I am testing the water to see if anyone would be interested in going for it if we set up an assessment session.

To be honest, I never really paid much attention to the GCDS, with its three levels of Bronze, Silver and Gold. I felt the Puppy Foundation which is an Entry level award, was necessary, but it was as far as we and Denton really needed to go.

I will always encourage puppy owners to go for the Foundation; we did it in 2011 when Denton was about 6 months old. It's all about being a responsible dog owner and getting your dog to be better socialised. Our plan was to carry on to do the Bronze with our training club but they moved to new premises and the floor was quite slippery. We weren't going to risk Denton doing a Bambi! So that was when I decided that the Bronze wasn't all that important.

Two years later and now a GSMD Club committee member, I volunteered to find out more about the Good Citizen's. I received a bulging pack of information, forms, assessor's notes, for clubs wanting to deliver training and assessments.

At the Driffield Show I had a great chance to learn more about the Bronze Award first hand. The show organisers were offering testing for a nominal sum. So I entered Denton and we had a go. Because I had done a bit of homework I felt fairly confident that we could achieve, even without formal training.

There are 10 tests and 2 of them were for the handler alone.

Exercise 1 *Cleanliness and Identification.* I was asked if I had any poop bags handy. I always carry them, so I produced a handful out of my pocket. Denton's dog tag was checked that we had name & address on it; it does, and our phone numbers are on it too. We got a tick in the box on the assessment form.

Exercise 2 *Collar and Lead.* With Denton sitting I changed his collar and lead with a training lead that the assessor had supplied, and swapped back again. Dog calm and all under perfect control – box ticked.

Exercise 3 *Walk on Lead.* Fairly straightforward, we were asked to walk with turns to the left and right for about 30 metres in an area where there was no distractions.

Exercise 4 *Control at Door/Gate.* Walking with the dog on his lead, I had to open a gate set up in the testing area. Denton waited patiently as I fiddled with the gate, opened it and he walked through on invitation. He waited as I shut the gate and we walked back to the assessor. Box ticked.

Exercise 5 *Controlled walk amongst people and dogs.* This was done outside walking past various stalls where there were people with dogs standing chatting. I must admit I was a bit worried because I was asked to use his normal collar and not rely on the Dogmatic. I should have had more faith, I asked him to "leave" and "stay close", our version of heel - and he did it perfectly. Another box ticked.

Exercise 6 *Stay on lead for 1 minute.* Back in the testing area, I placed Denton's lead on the ground. Told him to stand and wait while I stepped away from him. He was fine until the adjacent ring started to be used and several lively spaniels greeted him. However he did as he was told. I walked back to him and gather his lead. Thinking about it now, I could have made it easier for him to get him to sit or lie, but no harm done he got a tick in the box.

Exercise 7 *Grooming.* Using a borrowed brush I was groomed him, back, chest, legs and tail. Box ticked.

Exercise 8 Examination of the dog. I had to conduct a pretty thorough examination, eyes, teeth, mouth, ears, body, legs and all four paws. No problem Denton took it all in his stride. Box ticked.

Exercise 9 Return to handler. I set Denton to a “Wait”, walked about 12 paces from him and then called him. He came on command and another box was ticked.

Exercise 10 Responsibility and care. The final hurdle, I was asked questions like where are you not allowed to have your dog off a lead, what are the responsibilities of the public to a dog and owner, and so on. I managed to stammer some appropriate response and hey, box ticked.

So now Denton has got his Bronze Award, without any formal training I might add. He has picked up his skills by our day-to-day interaction: -

- The poop bag and collar are self-explanatory, it's the law.
- When we walk through woods with him off-lead and he has to stand still when we put his head collar back on to walk home.
- Walking on a lead is something we always practice; neither of us will tolerate him tugging on the lead and use voice to control him aided by the head collar.
- Going through a door – we read somewhere that it is important in dog society for the leader to go first and we have a rule at home he is told to “Wait” at an open door until invited through.
- We have been practicing voice control on a lead - a slack lead, and he has responded well. We use plenty of “Stay Close” and timely “Leave” if his concentration starts to wane.
- He occasionally gets groomed which he thoroughly enjoys. Every now and again he goes to shows and has become used to having judges check him over. Incidentally, our vet did ask if he has been to ringcraft training because he is so very easy to handle.
- Since he was a puppy he always has had his paws dried on a towel when coming in from the rain, so inspecting his pads is not a problem.
- As far as the knowledge is concerned it should be fairly common sense and I managed to blag it. The Kennel Club do have information sheets about the obligations of dog ownership.

I think that we are well on the way to having a well-mannered and contented dog just by following basic good practice, and to have an award that formalises your dog's achievements is quite satisfying.

These Good Citizens awards are intended to be the conclusion to a programme of training with targets logged and recorded with a formal test at the end. However as I have tried to point out above we all “train” our dogs daily as we interact with them, if there are gaps then a few sessions in a quiet open space might do the trick.

If there is anyone who feels that their Swissie is ready and would like to do the Bronze Award, could you please express an interest to me Graham Slater, at grumpy66uk@hotmail.com. Perhaps we could arrange assessment on one of the club event, the AGM for instance?

Information is readily available from The Kennel Club on the Internet at

<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/training/good-citizen-dog-training-scheme/information-for-dog-owners/>

WEBSITE

The new password for the club's members only area on the club website has now been changed to dogcart and if anyone has a photo of their Swissy, with or without a story, for the front page it would be most welcome.

BREEDERS

Breeders Health Tests (New page on club website)

All breeders/members agree to abide by the Kennel Club's Code of Ethics see here.....(link) Anyone found to be in breach of these rules may be removed from the club membership.

It is recommended that all breeding stock undergo a character assessment test and no dog or bitch showing signs of severe aggression or nervousness should be bred from.

No bitch should be whelped from until at least 24 months of age and the last litter whelped prior to her 7th birthday.

Stud dogs should not be bred from until at least 20 months of age.

No bitch should be bred from more than 3 times and at least 12 months should have elapsed before the birth of each litter.

Before any breeding takes place the following health tests are recommended and the results should be submitted to the breed liaison officer Sue Brailey(link) for inclusion on the club's database.

1. Eye test. This should be performed by a certified BVA/KC specialist. The results will be shown on the Registration Certificate of the dog and also kept on the club's database. Eye tests should be performed before any breeding takes place and every 2 years until the dog is 7 years old. Please note if you wish to use an overseas stud dog you may require an ECVO specialist eye test which is available at The Willows, Solihull and Animal Health Trust, Newmarket

2. Hip Dysplasia. X-rays of the hips should be taken at no less than 15 months of age. The x rays are sent to the BVA for scoring. The score is available from the KC website and will be recorded on the dog's registration certificate. Hips scores range from 0 – 60 on each hip with a combined score of 0 – 120. The lower the score the better and preferably below the combined mean score of the breed which in the UK currently stands at 8. This score currently is very low so a combined score of 15 is acceptable.

3. Elbow Dysplasia. X rays of the elbows are taken at no less than 15 months of age. The x rays are sent to the BVA for scoring. The score is available from the KC website and will be recorded on the dog's registration certificate. Elbow scores range from 0 – 3. Only elbow scores of 0 or 1 are permissible for breeding.

The following test is also available and may be performed if desired.

4. OCD. The shoulder x rays are taken and then sent to an approved centre for scoring. There is currently no scoring system within the BVA for shoulders. Only a score of 0/0 is permissible for breeding. The x rays will need to be sent to either Switzerland or Germany for scoring.

Please note anyone intending to use an overseas stud dog will need to perform an ECVO eye test, HD, ED and in most cases OCD before the foreign breed clubs will give permission to mate.

6. Epilepsy. There is no test for epilepsy at present. Please notify the club if any dog develops epilepsy so it can be noted on the database. No dog or bitch suffering from epilepsy should be bred from. This condition is prevalent within the breed so the only way to stop its progression is by breeders and owners being honest and notifying the club's breed liaison officer so an accurate history can be kept. This will then allow a more informed decision to be made when selecting breeding pairs.

Artificial Insemination. To view the current KC conditions regarding the use of AI please see the following link <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=738>

In-breeding. Before any mating takes place a careful check should be made for an in-breeding analysis. Trial matings showing in-breeding can be performed using the club's database. Please contact Sue Brailey to use this service. The club's database currently holds the pedigrees of over 1000 GSMD's worldwide.

Future Events

Saturday 17th May 2014

Carting Event and General Fun Day – 17th May 2014 at Overseal Village Hall, Woodville Road, Overseal, Derbyshire. 10 minutes from Junction 11 of the M42.

11am – Carting for Beginners

Those interested can try a course & get a GSMD CLUB certificate [for completion]

Break for lunch, rolls, cakes & drinks available.

During the lunch break there will be a short Special General Meeting to deal with matters from the AGM in order to move the Club forward.

After lunch there will be a Fun match to include any breed as well as our beloved Swissies.

No experience necessary at showing is necessary just come along and have a go.

There will be a Raffle

So please come & support your Club and enjoy a day in the company of Swissies & their owners.

Sunday 20th July 2014

Character Assessment day

This year this will be held on Sunday 20th July 2014 at Overseal Village Hall. Costs will be £10. If you and your Swissie wish to take part please contact Sue Parkin-Russell via GSMDCLUB@gmail.com in the first instance.

Saturday 4th October 2014

Club Event - Judges Training Seminar

The club will be holding it's first breed Judging seminar on 4th October 2014 at Overseal. Costs will be £20 for Judging exam and £5 just for the seminar which will be held in the morning. All enquiries to GSMDCLUB@gmail.com in the first instance please.

Saturday 15th November

Fun Day - Details nearer the date

All Club events will be held at Overseal Village Hall unless otherwise indicated

Car Stickers

If you would like to purchase either of these car stickers, priced at **£1 each for club members** and **£1.50 for non members**, please contact a member of the committee.



Any items you would like to put in future Newsletters, no matter how small; then please send them to the Editor, tracythornett5@msn.com