

GSMD NEWSLETTER 5

Well here we are in our second year and going strong. The first AGM was held and there was a super supportive turnout with lots of issues to discuss from the agenda. As a result the Officers and Committee for 2010 have quite a few requests to take on board and deal with. The Officers remain the same for 2010 and the Committee has a new girl on board with Sue Brailey. The first meeting is scheduled for June 13th so if you have anything you want the Committee to look into please let our secretary Sue Parkin-Russell [01189 821575] know by 2ND June so that if time it can go before the Committee. After what as I said was a productive meeting we welcomed folk with their dogs for a handling match kindly judged for us by Judith Middleton who had her work cut out but came up with a winner in Eric Russell handling Maisie his Dalmatian, Peter came reserve handling Teal our Kooikerhondje.



It was a very enjoyable afternoon with all going home with something especially with a great raffle.

We are happy to report that the Kennel Club has issued an Interim Breed Standard and now after April 1st 2010 the GSMD can be show in the import classes at all shows under KC rules. At the first all breed Championship show which was WELKS Peter showed Sid and achieved a red card in 1st place, as did a Miss Stokes in the puppy class. Then at the Birmingham National Ch show Shelia & Cynthia showed and gained a 2nd place with Sid taking 4th.

There is an account by Lynne Russell that follows of a trip Lynne and I took to fetch in our new Swissie bitch from a kennel in France. Hope you enjoy.

Bally' Arrival or so you think you want to import a dog!!

Wow!! Some smashing talent this French girl!



Bally' Arrival or so you think you want to import a dog!!

As arranged Julia picked me up from the Hilton Hotel at Longbridge , Warwick at 7.15am Monday and we set off down the M40 for our long awaited trip to France to collect the newest addition of the Swinburn clan. We were really excited at the prospect of 3 days in France and actually getting Bally into the UK at last. It lasted exactly 5 minutes as we came to an abrupt halt on motorway and didn't move again for over four hours. There had been an accident about half a mile in front of us and the motorway was completely closed. We were eventually turned around and guided through the central barrier back the way we had come and then had to take the country lanes, along with everyone else of course, to rejoin the motorway again after another hour and a half. We finally arrived at the Dover port two hours after the ferry we were supposed to be on had left and at least five hours before the next one was due to sail.

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On the way I had taken a call from Eric to tell me that he had taken my beloved Maisie [our Dalmatian] to the vets and she was undergoing major surgery for suspected bloat. This turned out to be a ruptured pyometra, the worst the vet had ever seen, and she was given a very poor prognosis and poor Eric was in bits too!

The ferry eventually left Dover for Boulogne and we docked at about five to midnight, tired, worried and without a bed as we had planned to drive on to Amiens where we had a hotel booked. Peter had had to cancel this for us in order for us not to be charged but we still needed to stay somewhere overnight and where does one start from at midnight? We thought we would head towards the motorway, always hotels around junctions, and the port is well out from the city centre, so off we headed. We found ourselves on the motorway, panicked that we would end up miles away so came off at the next junction retraced our steps and decided to head for the centre of Boulogne. We finally saw a sign for a well known chain of hotels with an arrow pointing ahead on it so off we headed.

Luckily it was not that far away so into the forecourt we shot, I abandoned the car and headed in, phew!! We were lucky as they had a room so at least something was going right we thought and so we crashed out for the night. Obviously we were now much further from our required destination, but with a day to do it in, so the next day after a nice breakfast we took the scenic route through some beautiful villages and made our goal, a small town south west of Caen, arriving early evening. After a welcome chat, and at last seeing the dog we had come to get at the home of the breeder, we met all her other wonderful dogs, and cats. We were then taken out for a meal, just down the road she said but actually another drive as we followed her through the villages to a town about 20 miles away. Fed, we then made the return trip, about another 30 minutes, to a Gite for the night. Up early the next morning full of anticipation we were ready to travel back to the port with our new acquisition. At least, that was the plan. Phoning home Maisie had made it through the night and a very surprised vet had told Eric that she had not expected to see her but she still wasn't out of danger! You can guess how worried I was being unable to help and to add to this trauma 'clever me', had thought I had my phone charger only to find, yes, I had the plug adapter but no lead!! Julia's phone refused to dial out so we could only receive incoming calls on that.

Anyway, Wednesday we arrived back at the home of the breeder before 9.00am and after checking, and rechecking, all the paperwork for Bally she was loaded into the car and we set off for the homeward trip, about 260 miles to Boulogne. We took the motorways this time as we wanted a smooth ride for Bally and she was an absolutely brilliant passenger. Going over the 'Le Pont de Normandie' bridge was an experience. We stopped a couple of times for comfort breaks, for her and the humans, and she hardly moved the whole journey. Mind you reloading a 12 stone dog who was not keen on the idea proved fun, it was a good job nobody had a camera handy!! We arrived at the port in plenty of time, even having time for a wander around the supermarket for Julia's pate, and then filled up with the cheaper diesel for the final leg home. The nerves had started to kick in a bit but I'm always the optimist, and just knew it would be fine. How wrong was I! When we passed over the three passports it was immediately obvious that there was a problem. The pet passport had a date that had been transposed incorrectly by the vet and the port guy despite phoning DEFRA had no option but to refuse to let us travel. Julia was absolutely devastated to say the least, up until then the adrenalin had kept her going but now everything just crashed around us. Anyway, we had to do something, we had a dog to take care of and the only option was to return to the breeder as the correction had to be done by the original vet. It's at times like this that you wish you'd paid more attention to the French teacher, stuck in a place where it is difficult to make any one understand you, or us them, and a huge problem to tackle!

So we were left with no choice but to make the 260 miles return trip. After six hours, at least 1.5 of these spent in a traffic queue into Caen, many phone calls and also trying to cope with a sat nav system that insisted on losing its voice as soon as it got us into the town centre, we arrived back, to find no one in except the guard dogs. The noise from the 20 or so other dogs was absolutely deafening, but even this was drowned out by the resident donkey who also joined in and managed to almost break the sound barrier with his braying as it must have been a record in terms of the decibel reading. The house is fortunately in a wooded area away from anywhere so hopefully no neighbours to disturb! We ignored them and found an empty kennel to put Bally in, fed her and left her there. She must have been so confused, 13 hours in a car and just back where she had started from! We returned to the Gite, frantically booked by Peter from England, and after a sleepless night, we were back at the breeder's home before 8.30am in order for her to go to the vets to get the date officially corrected. The vet took some time to register the problem but eventually, after much discussion, we got it corrected and with Bally back on board we set off on the 260 miles journey to Boulogne, again, and hopefully home!

We know the route now, we even know the amounts at each of the toll booths, a total of 73.50 Euros in tolls we spent, more if you include the Euros I managed to throw on the floor instead of into the toll bin because they were on my side of the car, and Le Pont de Normandie was just as spectacular the second time, but we still spent the whole journey trying not to worry about the "what ifs" etc. We filled up with diesel, again, at the port and proceeded to passport control. At precisely 3.05pm the girl in the booth handed us back all the passports, allowing us to proceed, the problem now was that we didn't have a ferry booking!! Julia's face was a picture and I thought the strain was finally getting to her, she had driven 13 hours the day before and another 5 hours so far, but after checking the details again she found the original booking had been put on hold so we were able to pass through and wait the final 2 hours on the dockside. We did both ring home at this stage but we still held our breath and kept fingers crossed all the way over the channel and neither of us really relaxed until we actually drove out of Dover docks with our very precious cargo on board.

The last leg of the journey home, another 3 hour drive to my home and then an a further 1.5 hours for Julia, meant that Bally had been in the car for another 13 hours but she was absolutely brilliant the whole time and even though this has been the most stressful trip the end result is well worth it. I'm not sure how long Julia will need to recover from all the driving, we did a total of nearly 1600 miles in four days, and both our posterior's know it, but Bally is a beautiful dog and is already beginning to settle into her new surroundings in Uttroter. Five days on from her ordeal my Maisie also seems well on the way to recovery and Peter and Eric can also relax after all the traumas of the last week. [Just to update you all, Maisie is going from strength to strength and Bally is settling in well especially with the fine weather where all our dogs can lie outside and sun themselves. Mind you after all that there is not a lot else to report as I am in a darkened room trying to recover, and poor Lynne had to go off to work the next day. Ed.](#)

Thanks to all who supported us at the AGM and the Committee has a lot to take on board from it and remember to keep the 30th October free for our Fun day where it will be a great chance to meet Swissies and folk alike.

More details will be forthcoming so watch out.

[Also come on some of you must have accounts of your adventures with Swissies that you can send in to me or perhaps some interesting pictures.](#)

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