

JURA Year 2 (4 pages)

Well I tried, I really did, but it was just not enough to win the Springhaze trophy again this year. Congratulations to Springhaze Dazzling Gem - Roxi on her success. I have had a busy year though so I thought I'd keep you all up to speed with what's been going on.

Agility – I go to college to learn agility. OK so its an evening class at an agricultural college but further education looks good on my CV. I also go to outdoors training which in some ways is more fun because there are lots of passer's by (human and canine) who get the opportunity to meet me, whether they really want to or not. I like to stop at the top of the A-Frame and gaze around. This has 2 benefits, firstly Jean thinks I'm stuck or nervous and tempts me down with sausage and it also means that everyone gets the chance to fully appreciate just how good looking I am. I am doing OK at almost all of the equipment but the weave poles are still a mystery to me. I will be entering my first show soon and all I need to do is to get measured first. It beats me why they need to measure me, its blindingly obvious I am a **LARGE** dog and not a small or a medium one but "rules is rules" as far as the Kennel Club is concerned. Then all I need is a course with no weave poles. I'll keep you posted.

Tracking – well with such a finely turned nose I should be able to use it. I have done some simple tracking routes. The funniest was when the track was laid in an old closed graveyard. It seemed sensible at the time, quiet, out of the way with no passing people or dogs to confuse the scent. The lady who laid the track did get some funny looks though dribbling blood along the paths between



the graves. I have had one disappointment though. I was following the track just nicely, got to the end, and someone had stolen the treat that had been left for me. Now we make sure to hide the treat in the hope it will still be there when I get to it.

Showing – I travelled quite a bit during the last year to go to dog shows. Furthest North was Inverurie, north of Aberdeen and furthest South was Malvern. The travel doesn't bother me one bit, after all I lie and sleep most of the time so what's not to like? I've met lots of other dogs and lots of people who didn't know what a GSMD was until they met me. The best day was when we went to Malvern and there were sooooo many other Swissies there. Sadly I didn't win but it was really great

to see all the others. My best win was at Scottish Working and Pastoral Breed show where I got to do a parade of honour round the Best in Group ring – just to show all the others that GSMD are on the way up so watch out!

Beating – what a great day out this is! I get to go grouse/pheasant/partridge beating. I yomp over the heather all day with people and other dogs and I am now quite good at finding where the birds



are and then I gently “push them up”. There’s a lot of loud banging sometimes but I ignore that. The downside is that sometimes we have to sit still and worst of all quiet, although a small snack helps make this easier. At lunchtime all of the “guns” get to come over and meet me. The first time I went they scoffed at me as not being a proper working dog and said I’d never last the whole day.



They had to take that back when even at the end of the day I was still going strong and managed to get to a dropped sausage roll before it even hit the ground.

Carting – I had my very first “go” in a carting harness and got to pull a huge log around the showground at Kelso – courtesy of the Bernese carters group. I don’t see what all the fuss is about, I like a challenge and the log wasn’t really all that big although all that mud made it a bit sticky at times. I’m hoping to have another go and maybe even get to try a proper cart next year. Jean says she refuses to dress up as Heidi no matter what so my career in carting may already have ended ☹.

Swimming – well to be honest I do this to keep Jean happy. Personally I can take it or leave it. The first few times I did not really get the hang of it so Jean had to come into the water with me. For



obvious reasons this is a summer only activity with me – Jean’s not so daft as to go in the sea any other time! I am now quite confident in the water and can easily pull her along. Its fun on a hot day but unless there are other dogs that need my help with a particularly large stick or toy I usually restrict myself to “chest high” water.

Munro bagging - A Munro is a mountain in Scotland with a height over 3,000 ft and bagging is the hobby of climbing all 280ish of them. Well I started my bagging career by climbing 3 Munros last year. Frankly, as a mountain dog, you would expect this to be easy for me and it was. However the people who accompany me – well let’s be honest follow my lead to the top – think it’s a big deal and so they bring treats for me. It would be rude to refuse after they have carried them all that way. I have to admit to a slight error on navigation on one climb – for me its simple keep going up until you get to the top and then turn round and go down until you get to the car and sleep all the way home. One time the weather was atrocious and after we got to the top we didn’t turn round properly and set off down, but not back the way we came up. It took us 2 hours to get to the top and then 4 hours to get back down again! At least the treats didn’t run out but maybe I need to pay more attention

rather than worrying about making sure that the summit photo gets my best side in future.



Visit to Isle of Jura – I was named after a range of Swiss mountains, a Scottish island and a whisky distillery and so I dropped in on the island and the distillery during the year. Lexie my Bernese best friend and I had lunch at the island's only hotel, named after me. It's a lovely place but too small for me to stay for too long especially as the distillery seemed to be in its silent season and no distilling was going on – well that's what Jean and Robert said.



Now if I manage to perfect a tightrope walking act I'd be bound to win the trophy next year. The downside is that 2 cats have just moved into our house and I'm not sure exactly how they work. They might distract Jean and Robert and take over some of the attention that really should be lavished on me.