

Border Heartbeat



*The Official Newsletter
of the
Midlands Border Collie Club
Winter 2009*

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A Word From The Editor

A new editor and a new format – following on from the ballot this is MBCC's first web-based Border Heartbeat and we sincerely hope you will enjoy it. It started off being a pretty streamlined issue but thanks to some interesting contributions I feel our maiden voyage has turned into rather a good one!

You may have noticed that the Newsletter web page carried a humorous plea for several weeks, but there was a serious note behind the fun. MBCC would like to provide you with an interesting & informative Border Heartbeat every time, but as you all know each issue relies heavily on contributions from you, the members, so go ahead, make my day & send me something good to include next time ☺

Sheila

P.S. Let me also direct you to our website <http://www.midlandsbordercollieclub.com> There you'll find news, show results & an impressive array of interesting articles. We also have a comprehensive archive for you to dip into.

An Extra Word re Submission Of Articles

Any article you submit must be your own work, **or** you must have permission from the author/hold the copyright. Submitting your article to MBCC grants us the right to publish it in Border Heartbeat. It does not entitle you to any form of compensation, financial or otherwise. We reserve the right to reject an article if we feel it to be unsuitable. We reserve the right to correct spelling and/or grammar should that be necessary. Articles should preferably be submitted in Word or Notepad electronic format via email.

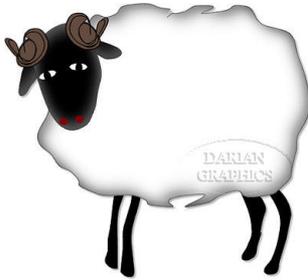
Please note – the views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by the Midlands Border Collie Club or the Editor.

No cartoon animals were hurt during the making of this newsletter.

Forthcoming Events 2010:

Jan 25-31: Championship Working Trial
Feb 7: Championship Breed Show
Feb 27: AGM & Breed Judging Assessment
April 3rd: Utility Day (Easter Saturday, at our Obedience venue)
April 4th: Open Obedience Show (Easter Sunday -)
April 5th: Championship Obedience Show (Easter Monday)
April 10: Sheepdog Training Day
May 1: Breed Council Open Day with (MBCC run) DNA clinic

Chairman's Chunters



Another year is almost over & 2009 has again been a great success for our club.

The MBCC has endeavoured to fill the calendar with events for all our members & our new events for 2009 included a sheep-training day. Members enjoyed a relaxed day in Shropshire, which included a super Sunday lunch, hosted by Dave Taylor and Di Venn. Thanks and we will see you next year!

We asked the members what we should do with our newsletter and the response was poor. It will now be included in the club's website, but if you require a paper copy just ring or email the editor Sheila Gay.

We have a new venue for our two-day Championship Obedience Show; the map is on our web site. Please pay us a visit - it's a country park with interest for all, set in rural Nottingham.

Another sheep training day is being held in April in Worcestershire - contact Diane Savage (diane.savage@ntlworld.com) for details.

The MBCC has been awarded the honour of running the KC Working Trial in 2013. Barry James will be fundraising - please help if you can as this is a very prestigious event and quite expensive to run. More details can be found on the web site.

Please come along to our AGM and put your views forward. We hold it in Leicester so put it in your diary (February 27th).

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the coming year,

Bob Tunnicliff
MBCC Chairman



Secretary's Slavings

Coming to the end of another great year for MBCC...more good things achieved with much more planned for 2010.

On top of the always well-attended shows, you might well be thinking that 2009 was the year of the sheepdog, with all of the fun we've had with sheep - this included Dave Taylor's training day in September. Nice to see the club taking a pro-active stance in taking the breed back to its roots...& there's more to follow in 2010...keep an eye on the website for details of more sheepdog activities.



In 2009 we also saw a glimpse of the club in the future, as we were granted the KC Working Trial Championships for 2013 & we've applied for Championship Classes for our first Agility Show in 2011...great news in the year when our own agility teams were going from strength to strength & only just missed out on qualifying for Crufts.

Thinking ahead to 2010, the AGM is scheduled for Saturday 27th February at The Bassett Centre, Wigston, Leicester. This is being held in conjunction with a Judges Assessment Day (details from Sheila Gay on the website). Please note that all items for the agenda must be with the Secretary at least 28 days beforehand, to give us time to give notice of any important items in the press.

Finally, there will be a new Secretary in place after the AGM, as I will not be seeking re-election. Please give the new Secretary all of your support in what is often a thankless task. As well as from the other Officers, I've received tremendous support from Sheilagh Hyde, who's been a great help with the Minutes at all the Committee Meetings...big thanks to Sheilagh.

Darren Savage

Working Trials Agility

The Agility Group (the jumps) in Working Trials has been the subject of much debate and criticism over the years. Unfortunately most of the criticism has come from a base of ignorance with no real knowledge of the exercises. It is hoped that this article will address some of these issues.

The Working Trials jumps consist of a Clear Jump of up to 3ft high, a Long Jump of up to 9ft long and a Scale Jump up to 6ft high. The dog has to be **capable** of taking on these jumps, **fit**, **sound** and **trained properly** before these jumps can be safely achieved. The dog should be 'warmed' up before jumping, much like an athlete will warm up before competing. A dog should never be jumped from 'cold'. It must be exercised first. e.g. throwing a ball a few times.

Before examining the subject I would like to relate an experience I was fortunate enough to witness. I had gone to Scotland to see a potential sire and dam for my next competition dog. I was invited to watch some experienced sheepdogs working a flock of sheep. There was a very large area, which contained steep slopes, rocky crags and a reasonably wide stream running through a gully. The sheep were way over to the top left-hand area a distance well in

excess of 800 yards. A dog was sent out to 'pick-up' the sheep and bring them back towards the handler. The dog ran out, jumped the stream and came round the back of the sheep. The ground was rough and undulating and the dog had to run round the rocky crags, or jump up and jump down over the rocks to keep the dogs on track back to the handler. As I watched I realized that the dog was naturally negotiating obstacles that were sometimes in excess what we ask our dogs to do in Working Trials.

This is not an article on *how* to train a dog to do the Working Trials jumps. I recommend that this type of training be with an experienced working trials person or trainer from the very beginning. Rather it is some sensible prerequisites that a handler should consider before embarking into the world of Working Trials.

First, horses for courses! You would not get a Shetland pony to compete in the Grand National or a Rottweiler to compete in the Greyhound Derby. There are a number of different breeds that are quite capable of competing well in Working Trials as there are a number of breeds totally unsuitable for the event. Take a look at a Working Trial if you get a chance. You will see Border Collies, Working Sheepdogs, German Shepherds, Australian Shepherds, Labradors and Golden Retrievers to name a few, plus other breeds of similar build.

Second, the dog has to be extremely fit, ***the dog has to be extremely fit!*** Yes, I did write it twice!

We are talking at least 2 long walks a day (3 – 5 miles each walk), off the lead where possible and able to safely run where possible. A stroll down the lane once a day will not be enough. Diet will also play an important role. The dog cannot be over weight!

Third, the dog has to be 100% sound. Choose your dog carefully, check that the dog and its parents have had all the necessary health checks available. Not an absolute guarantee we know but it will certainly help to eliminate potential problems. Some people take a lot of trouble in selecting dogs from proven working stock and place great store on the success in competition of the dog's ancestors. Again, this should obviously help to eliminate performance problems but it is no guarantee. Above all the dog should be **sound** at the start and throughout its competition career. Any sign of soundness problems should result in immediate investigation, rest and treatment. It may well be that the dog needs to be retired from competition if any unsoundness cannot be adequately treated. Far better to have a relatively fit dog as a companion and pet than a cripple with a string of awards after its name.

Fourth, the training has to be carefully structured so the dog is brought along confidently and knows *exactly* what is required of it. Above all the agility training in Working Trials cannot be rushed – there are no short cuts. This is why it is recommended that newbies arrange to train with an experienced working trials person or trainer. One unpleasant experience for the dog on the working trials jumps can take months of training to overcome (even if you know what you are doing!). Sometimes it will stay with the dog forever. It is **not** recommended to start serious working trials agility training until the dog is at least 12 months old, or more. Little 'play' jumps of a few inches are fine to teach a young dog the commands.

If you are starting out on a Working Trials career, good luck – you and your dog will enjoy the experience plus Working Trials people tend to be quite a helpful and friendly bunch.

Barrie James
Working Trials Manager
Midlands Border Collie Club

Kennel Tales



Welcome to our new series, looking at some of the affixes (or Kennel Names, as the KC now calls them) within our breed. How did their owners first become involved in the wonderful world of Border Collies and how did their affix come into being? Our thanks to **Judith Gregory**, of the **Tonkory** kennel, who has kindly contributed the first instalment – and a fascinating read it is too!

Judith writes:

When I was fifteen I used to take my Jack Russell terrier, Sally, to obedience training at the Solihull Dog Training Club, which was then run by the very famous dog trainer Sandon Moss. I also helped an elderly couple train their German Shepherd bitch, which was far too strong for them. This may be the reason I am so appreciative of younger handlers helping me out now I am also elderly!

There was this rather eccentric woman who came to the club with a variety of breeds including Griffons, Shelties and Whippets. One day she turned up with a year old B&W male Border Collie called Sam. I was immediately drawn to this dog. After a couple of sessions at the dog club she said I could have him if I wanted him and pay her weekly out of my pocket money; she didn't realise it would have taken about 10 years on the amount of pocket money I received.

My mother used to breed budgies and as the aviary was now empty I cleaned it out with the intention of keeping Sam in it. After a week my father said the dog must go back and I could not keep him. That day I resolved that when I was independent I would have as many BCs as I wanted and that they were the dog for me.

The dog club went on a trip to a farm where BCs were trained for sheep trialling to a very high standard and my cousin brought home 2 BC pups for her and her husband to train, so I still had my BC 'fix' twice a week with them.

The next BC I had was from a B&W rough coated bitch presumably mated to a trialling dog; the only two bitches in the litter were smooth coated and what is now known as EE red. This was in 1960. I was told at this time if this farmer's dogs got a bit slow then he would put a greyhound in to speed them up. I think this may have happened! He would also put terrier in if they were losing courage! My cousin's dogs were strong and courageous and ISDS registered but rather straight in the front.

Over the years I had Plas Major dogs and a rescue blue merle bitch from a local farm and did agility and obedience and also went to Barbara Carpenter for some sheep trialling training. Barbara was a wonderful woman who really knew her dogs. I regularly went on Charlie Wyant courses with Sandy Wadhams and Diane Weston and when Diane mated her ISDS bitch to Stillmoor Jamie of Hurstview I asked her for a puppy, as I loved Jamie.

I was lucky enough to get a dark heavy coated male pup called Toby. As he had an indestructible quality about him I renamed him Tonka after the children's Tonka toys. He was to be the inspiration for my affix, TONKORY which is made up from Tonka Gregory. He was definitely my dog of a lifetime and I am so glad he is still here every day through my affix.

Rod Roberts asked to use Tonka at stud and then sent me a schedule for National Working Breeds in 1978 saying if I showed him in breed it would help to sell the pups. Greg and I went along to our first Championship breed show and met Mary Miller, Bruce and Sheena Kilsby and a few other regular breeders and exhibitors and Tonka went BOB. That was the beginning of my Championship breed showing and that was 31 years ago.

There are now 13 homebred UK Show Champions with the TONKORY affix and several more abroad.

You live on forever my special boy TONKA.

Judith Gregory

A Baptism Of Fire

Our handsome young lad Darwin was born on December 19th 2007 and was one of seven gorgeous puppies from the renowned Caleykiz stable. First and foremost he was to be our companion/pet. There was no intention to show him at all. When we travelled from Banbury to Leeds to see him we knew that he was the one.



As time went on, Donna, Mark and Carol Wiltshire (from Caleykiz) popped in to see us on the way back from a show and had their first look at Darwin since he left them some 20 months before.

They felt it would be a travesty if we didn't show him so we agreed to give it a go. Sue was more excited than Carl to be truthful as his goal was to take photographs - which is one of his passions. When we arrived at Newark

we got our first taste of what a show was like. There were wonderful Border Collies everywhere, and what's this? Dogs basking on makeshift tables getting groomed as if they were royalty? The faces of the owners were a real study as they prepared for the show paying serious attention to detail – for good reason.

There were plenty of very friendly people to talk to, and the opportunity to learn more and enjoy the experience. Then it was show time and we began to get nervous. Carl was snapping away but got too close to Darwin who could smell him and he didn't even make the cut. Ouch! This was a sobering experience. Our little beauty didn't get anywhere but people were very kind and explained that on any given day results can differ depending on the judge and a bit of good fortune, and that we were not to take it too personally.

Carl didn't go to the next show in the midlands due to illness but Sue and Darwin certainly did...and Darwin won his class! Donna who is always motivated by dogs achieving their potential was delighted, especially since she is the one that shows Darwin in the ring, but we were also thrilled. The next competition was in Preston, and Darwin had to finish in the top three to secure a place at Crufts. He finished third and can now look forward to entering perhaps the most prestigious dog show in the world.

He has since taken a third place in Weston Super-Mare and we look forward to the NEC next.

Darwin is settling into 'show days' and is getting recognised by the experienced and knowledgeable folk that have been doing this for years. It's fascinating, it's competitive and it does hurt if Darwin doesn't do well. However, everyone has been incredibly helpful and friendly and we applaud the community that attend such shows. We hope to see more of you in 2010 that's for sure.

Carl Portman and Susan Watson



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