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November 2008

Volume 25, Issue 11

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In this month's Voice...

THE *Agility*
VOICE



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From The Editor...

Hello Everyone

Welcome to another bumper edition of The Voice. The Christmas Shopping Special is back again – you need go no further than these pages for all your Canine-related Christmas goodies. As usual, Agility Club Membership not only makes an excellent present, but also earns you two months free Membership as a bonus! Please do support our advertisers as it is their patronage that helps keep Membership costs down.

Because of the size of this issue, there are a couple of features that we have had to hold back until next month, including Photographer of the Year. When I announced that entries were closing, you all

went mad and finally sent all the pics you've been waiting for ages to submit! There are some good ones, though, and worth waiting for.

There are a few finals reports in this issue. I know that some of you find them dull (perhaps if you're not in them!) but I like to read about how our top dog and handler partnerships are doing, and I hope you'll enjoy them, too.

Also featured is the final instalment of Peter Lewis' fascinating series of article on judging. Thanks go to Peter for his contribution.

Our AGM is being held on 23rd November at Stoneleigh. It would be great if you could

come along – it's not as boring as it sounds and, after all, it's your Club. You can ask questions, make suggestions, you get to meet existing committee members and welcome new ones. You also get a chance to applaud your agility colleagues as they collect their Annual Awards.

Hope to see you there. But, if not...

See you on the circuit



Virginia

Frog Racing Raises Money for Thai Rescue Dogs

UK Agility is pleased to announce that, from the UKA charity show in August, the Frog Racing night at UKA Staverton and the Snakes and Ladders game at the week show, we have been able to donate £2801 to the Soi Dog Foundation in Thailand. Below is a letter received from the foundation.

Soi Dog Foundation would like to thank everybody who contributed to the UK Agility charity event.

The foundation which is a legally registered charity in Thailand, is run by UK ex pats John and Gill Dalley.

(Recently named an Asian of the Year. The first non Asian to receive this honour; see

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s225UCITfhY> for Singapore made TV documentary).

Together with other supporters the foundation is run entirely at our own expense, but we need to raise approximately 500,000 Thai Baht per month (approximately 8,000 UK pounds), to cover the overheads which includes employing 12 local staff including vets and nurses and other workers, purchasing over 3 tons of pet food each month, as well as all the drugs and land rent for the shelter etc..

It is only with the help of supporters like yourselves that we can continue to help the unwanted stray dogs in this region of Thailand. The money raised by your event will go directly to helping our sterilization programme, which in September saw animal number 20,000 sterilized. It will also help with our treatment programme, which sees dogs brought in almost daily suffering from cruelty and neglect. Last month with the cooperation of The Worldwide Veterinary Service we had 3 UK vets operating on Koh Lanta where there are no vets, and population control has previously been throwing unwanted dogs with weights attached into the sea. Other UK vets are currently helping us on Phi Phi Island where there is a similar problem with cats, and we now hold regular clinics in Kao Lak where previously there was massive poisoning.

Through your assistance we are able to educate and change the attitude of local people here, and hopefully seriously reduce the suffering of the region's animals.

John Dalley.

(www.soidog.org)

Right is a picture of the dog that Laura and Greg Derrett from UKA helped to rescue in Phuket at the start of 2008



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THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED WITHIN THIS MAGAZINE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE AGILITY CLUB OR EDITORIAL STAFF



From The Chair...

The new year for our Annual Awards has started now, and we've already had a few enquiries from people unsure of the category their dog should be in. To clarify, if your dog achieved the win necessary to move up a grade before October 1st then for the 2008/2009 points year it goes into the higher grade - even though it may have runs remaining at the lower grade after October 1st, and yes any places in those classes do count towards the new year's points total. Feel free to drop me an email if you have any queries - contact details are on the Club website (www.agilityclub.co.uk).

Suffolk Five Rivers at the end of September was our last camping show of 2008. The weather was glorious (although rather cold overnight), and we managed to get places with most of our dogs - which was a nice bonus! This was my youngster Oz's last opportunity to run in G3 until next spring, so I was very pleased when he got a 6th there - his best result so far. Mid Downs the following weekend was our last outdoor show this year, and the weather was not quite so kind! At least the rain only started at lunchtime (when our Treasurer Roger Wilkin happened to take over as judge!) - apparently the G1-2 dogs had it much worse the following day! Poor Oz had no runs there, so had to be content with games in the exercise area. Our next show is our own local club's one (North Downs), which again has no classes for G3 dogs. My G6 dog is recovering from a recent hernia operation so I've hatched a cunning plan to borrow one of my wife's to run there and at Rugby!

We probably won't be using the caravan again until next May, so last weekend I spent some time laying it up for the winter. Water system drained, battery removed, covers on the fridge vents, a good cleanout, then up on axle stands (to rest the tyres and suspension). Done yours yet?!

As I write, the Instructors' Seminar is fast approaching and we're making final arrangements for the AGM and prize-giving. Our committee meeting on October 12th was as busy and productive as usual - many thanks to Virginia for her hospitality.

That's about it for now; hope to see you at the North Downs show on November 8th or the Club's AGM on the 25th.

Best wishes to you all,

Bill Glover



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.....Sheila



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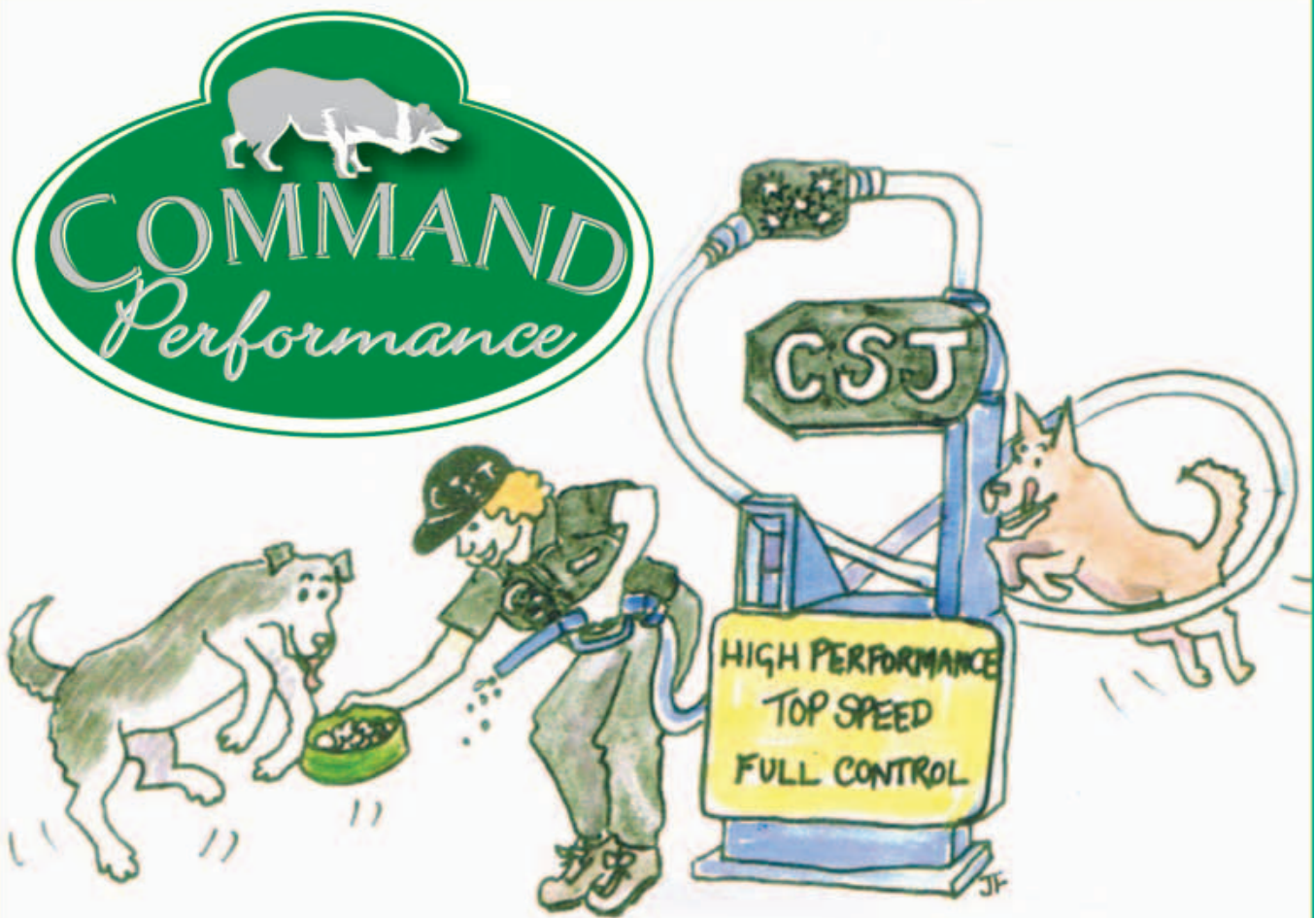
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Virginia's Blog

* & \$ % ^ FIREWORKS!

Excuse the language, but whilst this is my favourite time of year during the daytime, it becomes a nightmare after dusk. I used to quite like fireworks (although why they have to make them so loud is a mystery to me – why can't we just have pretty colours?) but now they are my public enemy number one. This year, however, I am prepared!

Firework Procedures in the Harry Household

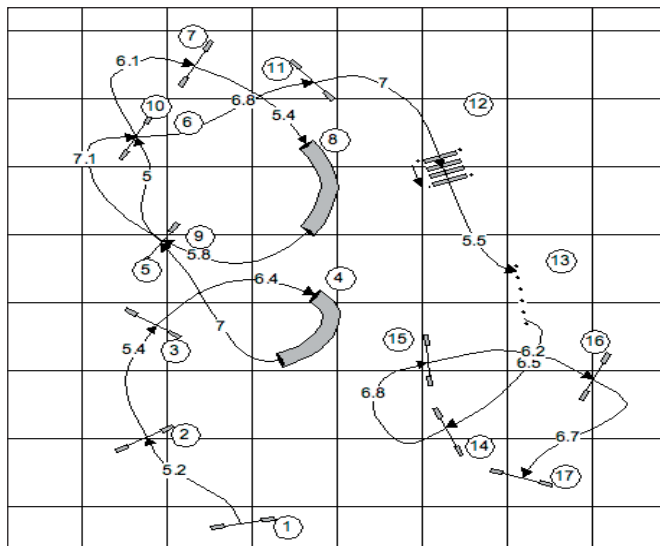
1. Build den. This is a ragged ex-sofa cover (which was perfectly serviceable as a current sofa cover until the arrival of the one-dog destruction machine that is Max) draped over the end of the sofa and fixed to the TV cabinet. It ain't pretty, but Oz and Zoe retreat there at the first sign of noise.
2. DAP collars and DAP diffusers. DAP – or dog appeasing pheromone – devices release pheromones that are supposedly similar (or the same) as those released by mummy dogs, and are therefore comforting. Last year I just went with the diffuser, but this year Zoe and Oz have a collar, too. If you're thinking of getting them, here's a tip: the small (and cheaper) one fitted Oz, who's not a small dog by any stretch of the imagination. I had to cut half a yard off Zoe's.
3. Now, had you told me the ingredients of my next fear preventative, I would have scoffed. "Soothing Animal Solution" from www.forestfarmacy.com (tel. 0800 970 9421) contains, amongst other things, essence of amethyst, angelsword (eh?), boji stone, a "synergistic blend of aromatherapy parfum", and solar infused water! However, before I got the DAP diffusers, we had some early fireworks, so I sprayed this stuff around the room (it can go in the dogs' drinking water, too) like a loony and, lo and behold, they all coped with the noise very well.
4. Expecting more fireworks last weekend (18-19th October), I dosed the dogs up with liquid Valerian compound and Skullcap and Valerian tablets from Dorwest Herbs. I just put some on their dinner, and they are such pigs that they'd eat anything. Of course, there were no fireworks all weekend!



I'm actually going down to visit my cousin in deepest, darkest, and hopefully firework-free Wales on the first weekend in November, but around here they go on and on, and there's also Diwali on the 28th October, so all my procedures will, no doubt, be put to the test.

Let's Have a Heated Debate!

Last month I wrote about the Agility "Trades Descriptions Act" and Helter-skelters. The judge of the course to which I was referring gave me a call and we had quite a heated debate about what makes a helter skelter. (He also said that I hadn't done a very good job of remembering his course, so here's his version.)



This gentleman's argument is that there are no printed guidelines or description of a helter-skelter course, and that having continuous turns in the same direction satisfies his interpretation of a helter-skelter. It still, however, does not satisfy mine and I am sorry to say that we couldn't find common ground on this issue. Nonetheless, I am happy to print his justification for the course design. He says...

"I would be grateful if you would also state my justification for the course design and explain that there are no printed rules for the design of a helter-skelter course: Just like ANY course in KC shows (except Championship classes), course design is left entirely to the individual judge's interpretation of the appropriate standard, equipment used, and course layout. Until this changes, I don't believe anyone has any right to complain about a course unless it is considered to be actually dangerous, in which case the competitor has a duty to point that out before the class actually starts."

I did get an email, though, from our Chairman, Peter Lewis, which says, "I was interested in your Helter Skelter article in the Voice. Out of interest the class was invented by Shirley Robinson, wife of Les Robinson who won Olympia in 1980. She designed it in the classic shape of the well known fairground attraction with the spiral

starting in the middle and expanding outwards. This is of course what happens with original slide down on a mat HS.”



I would like to say, as I mentioned last month, that it was not my intention to critique the course as far as courses go. However, the judge has taken it thus, and I am sorry if my article has caused him distress.

Training, Training, Training...

Well, it's contact retraining time. Given that I taught my first agility dog, Gizzy, to do contacts by running along the side of her, holding a piece of cheese under her nose (in fact, "cheese" was my contact command!), my dogs' contacts have improved over the years. However, Oz still comes down the down of the dog walk in slo-mo, looking at me as if I'm about to zap him with a cattle prod, and then quite often jumps off before I do! (Just kidding. No cattle prod was harmed in the training of Oz' contacts.) He also, as Dawn Weaver revealed to me, stops with his back feet too high on the A-frame, resulting in a stop and step off – right over the yellow bit.

So. It's back to basics. Unfortunately this method requires a helper. The idea is to have them lure the dog over the equipment by waving its favourite toy around madly and then, when it's reached the contact at full speed, play extravagantly with it in the correct position. Oz picked up this game very quickly – all except for the stop. Linda Cook hopes to be back on her feet again in time for next season! It's a dangerous game being lure for Oz, built as he is like a brick latrine! Next time I think I'll have to rope in John Cook and maybe we'll get a stop!

To be honest, though, at the moment I'm happy for him just to be speeding down, even if he runs off the end.

Using this method with Zoe (food stuffed toy as lure) she sliced over half a second off her usual dog walk time, coming in at under 2 seconds.

I'm still training Baby Diva to do running contacts. She is, very slowly, learning to adjust her stride to hit the target mat with her feet. She has to go slowly to do it, and if she goes faster she forgets. We're sticking with it, though.

Oh Pooh!

Can anyone help me? Diva and Max eat the most disgusting things when we are out on walks. Essentially, if it's come out of another animal's bottom, then it's fair game to eat and/or roll in. Clearly it doesn't do them any harm, but it makes me feel sick. Do you know of any way I can stop them doing it?

On that salubrious note, I shall say adieu (practicing my French as I'm off to France to pay for sex again soon) for this month. I suppose I'd better explain to Agility Club newcomers that the sex isn't actually for me, personally, good heavens no. It's for Zoe, my little Pyrenean Sheepdog. This will (hopefully) be her second litter, and most people who saw me through her first one think I am completely mad to do it again. Which is a fair assessment of my general mental health. I'm using a different sire this time, happily located in Trouville, so I shall be visiting Honfleur and surrounding Normandy and eating lots of moules frites.

And there! You thought it was all over. It is now.



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Part 2

Following on from last month's description of my journey thus far, this month I will describe how and what I've taught my dogs for the Start Line and how I am teaching layered pull-throughs.

On the Start Line. For my dogs a wait is not optional. It can take me as long to walk into position on the course as it subsequently takes them run it! Not only do I expect them to stay put until released, I expect them to drive off the start line, in the right direction regardless of where I am. Zippy's wait started when she was a puppy. She very quickly learnt a good solid wait until released was the fastest route to her food bowl. I repeated the wait practice around the agility equipment rewarding her by throwing her ball back to her. Occasionally I still do.

The drive I taught by doing 35 yard send-aways to her ball in as many different locations as possible, 35 yards being the size of the ring. Driving in the right direction when she was faced with multiple choice agility equipment and a natural tendency to look at me, proved a little more problematic. The solution came from Sally Jones. I trained the food-loving Zippy to look at the first jump by putting her in a wait, balancing a piece of cheese on the pole of the first jump, walking off, turning, pointing at the jump/cheese and clicking and rewarding the moment she looked in the right direction. Now I simply point at the first jump, wait for her to look, and release her.

For the occasions when she has crept forward, to save time and me having to walk back to the start line, I

have taught her to walk backward at a distance. All the elements, the wait, the send-away, the focusing on the first obstacle, the walking backward, I started with Zippy close to me at home, then proofed in different locations and added the distance later. I find if she really understands what I'm asking her to do, she finds adding the distance relatively easy.

Which brings me to Virginia's original question of how I am teaching pull-throughs at a distance. We'd started the basic left and right turns, both with me and away from me, in Jackie's Paddock. Zippy, once she had re-orientated to my new body language and unpredictable position on the course found the basic turns relatively easy. Probably because as a puppy I had played games up with her, more Heelwork to Music than Obedience on this occasion, teaching her to turn with me, away from me and toward me in my corridor at home. Without realising it, this was the basis for the body language I would later use on the agility course.

For me the key was working out which arm to use in conjunction with which direction I turned and once I'd worked out the formula, being consistent. If Zippy is on my left, I used my left arm and turn to the right, Zippy will turn to the right with me. If Zippy is on my right and I use my left arm and turn right, Zippy will turn right away from me (rear cross). If Zippy is on my left and I use my right arm and turn left Zippy will turn towards me (front cross) and vice versa in the opposite directions. To this I've added the 'come' turn towards me, 'back' turn away from me commands, rather than the dog's left and right commands.



Zippy jumping

The system is developing organically over time. Lauren Langman, ever the teacher, in the early days got me to write it down, which helped clarify it in my mind and me

be more consistent. Graham Partridge, with whom I've had a few 'debates' about why I do what I do, which again helps me clarify what I'm doing, observed that to my dog a change of command means a change of direction and therefore to keep my dog turning in the same direction I needed to repeat the same command, even when it occasionally looks contradictory to the direction the dog is travelling in.

To improve my timing, Anthony Clarke introduced the concept of splitting the verbal and body language commands, giving the verbal commands ahead of the body language. For someone with timing notoriously as bad as mine, this is like asking me to rub my tummy, pat my head, and run the agility course! HA! I'm still working on it Ant! Improving my timing is one of my biggest challenges, made even more so by Zippy and Binky having very different points of commitment.



BINKY

Meanwhile out on the course, Zippy has split the command hierarchy even further, prioritising my hand signals over the direction I am turning in, probably

because my arms move faster than my feet. She also, having been taught to 'if you can see it jump it', found turning to the next obstacle when it was out of her immediate view, much harder. So I set up one jump in the garden and practiced the various basic turns over and around the jump, giving her the confidence to wrap around the wing to find her reward, in the garden or, on the course, the next obstacle. This tight turn around the wing I gave a different, more urgent command. On the corner of a box this wrap around gives me a pull and/or push through \bar{h} without the need for me to be on the wing of the jump or for any of the conventional false turn fancy footwork that I find so impossible. This was the pull through Virginia saw. However, on a row of jumps the success or not is far more dependent on my position in relation to the obstacle and more often than not I'm not there!

I had spent a lot of time rewarding the girls for jumping what they saw, particularly Binky whose herding instinct was so strong she was hard wired to jump obstacle 1, miss 2 and jump 3. Having established the principle of, 'if you can see it, jump it', now I am asking them to not only nip round the back of what they see, but to jump it from the other direction as well! Several back jumps later ... and back in the garden I am polishing up my fancy footwork-free false turns. Time will tell whether this, in combination with the wing wrapping, will give me reliable pull-throughs in all directions at a distance. If not, I'll try something else. For me this is half the fun. I'm chuffed to bits when my girls learn something new – so chuffed I do random things like agreeing to write articles!

I guess I was lucky. I'd seen Chris take the lovely Smurf to Grade 6, I knew Ilsa had competed in the American National Finals. and John Gilbert had told me about the 'good Novice' disabled handlers internationally. I knew distance work in Obedience, Working Trials, Heelwork to Music, and Shepherding was well established. So I never doubted it could be done in Agility. And as I've been writing this article I've realised that distance handling is not something I'm aiming to do, it is something I am doing. OK I've still got a long way to go, but it's actually happening. I am actually living my dream. How cool is that?

Many thanks to everyone who has helped or is helping me along the way, for the many kind words of encouragement and support and to my fellow disabled handlers.

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UK Agility IFCS 2010 World Team Selection.



The IFCS world cup takes place in Spring 2010. The venue is yet to be confirmed but is expected in late April or May. IFCS hope to confirm this very shortly.

Due to the success of the UK team in 2006 and 2008, and from the feedback received from the competitors who tried out, we have chosen to keep the team selection process very similar. There are, however, one or two changes. We believe that this selection process incorporates many of the skills that are required to compete at an international level and in particular the IFCS event.

- Any dog regardless of breed may enter.
- Only competitors competing in UKA Champion classes will be considered. (All KC Grade 7 dogs registering with UKA are immediately eligible for Championship class.)
- All results must come from the equivalent UKA jump height to the IFCS jump height the dog is eligible for.
- All results must be gained by the same handler.

Qualifying will be in 3 sections and briefly outlined below.

Show Results

Competitors will have to submit times from their best 5 Champion Agility and best 5 Champion Jumping runs from any UKA show between the dates of January 1st 2009 – October 5th 2009.

National Final Results and Royal Canin UKA Grand Prix Results

To gain points from the National Final section dogs must qualify and run in Round 1 of the National Finals at the UK Agility Week show (28th July – 3rd August 2009).

Bonus points will be gained for qualifying and running in the Royal Canin UKA Grand Prix Final

Individual Runs

All dogs will run head-to-head in a Gamblers and Snooker class at the UKA week show. These runs will be the Champion Snooker on the Wednesday and the Champion Gamblers on the Sunday. All dogs must also have achieved qualifying scores in 2 Gamblers and 2 Snookers at UKA shows between the dates of January 1st 2009 – October 5th 2009.

For more detailed information, a complete copy of selection rules, entry forms and if you have any questions please contact UK Agility by any of the following:

UK Agility, Langdale, Church Street, Offenham, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 8RW.
Or email greg@ukagility.com or phone 01386 424218

Helsinki 2008 FCI World Championships

The Inside View by Angela Williams



ANGELA AND TEN

Preparation

As you may have already read, the qualifying for this event was held at the end of July. Because we had to fund ourselves this time we agreed to attend one team training session prior to the event in order to help keep the costs down. Once we were informed of the competition judges by Steve Croxford he was excellent in forwarding internet sites containing their previous courses. We all analysed these courses, trying to spot common traits, patterns, and reoccurring sequences, and I know that each competitor put in a great deal of individual training.

The first time we all got together as a team was the Sunday before the competition, when we all met at Steve Croxford's venue for the Official Training session. It was a nice sunny day, and a very relaxed atmosphere. Most of the team had been to this competition before, so those that had not been to an FCI event had loads of questions. Especially with the added worry of having to fly the dogs in the cargo hold!!

The Journey

The whole trip finally started to come together and it was very evident that everyone had been working hard behind the scenes to make it a success. Dave and Nicola had decided to drive to Brussels and catch a flight from there to Helsinki. Besides the flights for the dogs working out to be much cheaper, there was the added bonus that the two small dogs Indi and Princess Libby could fly in the cabin as hand luggage as opposed to cargo. So that left the other six dogs to fly from Heathrow, with Steve working out the logistics behind this trip. As the airline had a restriction of only three dogs per flight, the group had to be split into two.

The rest of the training day was spent running courses and doing sequences that we might see out in Finland. After a successful afternoon, and a quick check of our paperwork

by Rachel, goodbyes were said and the next time we would all meet would be in Helsinki.

On the Wednesday morning, the first group's flight departure time was 7.30am, but the dogs had to be at the cargo terminal 3 hours before the flight (4.30am) Then, at the last minute, this was changed to 4 hours, making it a very long day for the first team, and leaving Steve wondering why he'd bothered to book that Travel Lodge! For travelling purposes we split into two teams, the Red team leaving on the first flight, consisting of Rachel and Nutmeg, Leslie and Beanie, Karen and Kai.

The second team, the Blue (or Medium) team, met at the cargo terminal at 6am after a wake up call from Steve due to the 4 hours before the flight rule. This was the worse part for us all, having to leave the dogs with strangers, knowing that they had a long wait before the flight. We were to spend the rest of our time at the airport looking out for the dog crates, at every opportunity.

Due to the large amount of luggage we had to take, I think all of the team that flew from Heathrow were over the luggage allowance. Ooops! I think that it must have been that agility charm and the time that we all spent chatting to the people at check in, explaining why we all had large soft crates and dog food in our luggage that prevented any of us from being charged for excess luggage. Lucky for us!

Just before we boarded our plane we saw the dogs being loaded into the hold, in their travel crates, so at least we were all on the same flight. (You hear all those stories about luggage ending up at different airports.) Once aboard the plane we checked with the air hostesses that the pilot knew that he had dogs in the hold and to turn the temperature up. He even asked us if we would like the lights on. But no in-flight catering or entertainment was provided for them even at £710.00 a ticket each. (Yes you did read that right. This was to be the most expensive agility show ever.)

Arrival

After what seemed an age, the flight landed. We had to collect our luggage, get the taxis, which looked a bit like the mafia with blacked out windows driven by a man that looked like he was in ZZ Top, then go to the cargo terminal to collect dogs. This was the reunion we had all been anxiously waiting for. After all of the paperwork was checked, which seemed to take forever, the dogs were finally released and lots of hugging and kissing took place between handlers and their dogs. We arrived at the hotel about 5pm Finish time; there is a two hour time difference between UK and Finland.

The hotel was really nice (thank you, Kate) and welcomed all of the dogs; several other teams were also staying there. The main priority then was to take the dogs out as they had literally spent all day in their travel crates. There

was a park just opposite the hotel so I think we all ended up exercising our dogs there. (Again well planned, Kate). It was only later that we found out that there is a Finnish bylaw prohibiting dogs from being off lead in the parks. We were all criminals on our first night in Finland!

We met in the evening, as a team, for a meal in the hotel. Half the team in true British style had burgers and chips whilst some of the more adventurous tried the reindeer (Rudolph) with one team member announcing she wanted Father Christmas tomorrow!

To the Venue

The following morning we had to meet at the venue for vet checks and team practice. It was 10-15 minute's walk or 5 minutes tram ride if you got the right tram! The venue was in an ice rink, with astro turf covering the ice.

For some reason Team GB was given their own room. I don't know if we ever found out the reasoning behind this, but were not going to argue as the other teams had to make do on the balconies behind the seating areas. (Apparently we were considered some sort of a risk).

We had our own toilet, but no door and a TV screen televising the competition so we could sit with the dogs and watch.

At 10.58 we had our vet check and random measuring of dogs. All of our team were checked by the vets, and then all of our Medium team managed to be randomly selected for measuring. This was a strange set up with small sliding measure and three officials in an area which was quite public with lots of people coming and going. Needless to say all the dogs measured into Medium.



ALAN AND JUDE IN ACTION

As our practice session was not until 11.58, everyone filtered out to the main arena to watch other countries practice. It was our first chance to view the opposition.

Somehow, we ended up all leaving the room, shutting the door, and leaving the key and our dogs on the inside and us on the outside. Steve took this all in his stride and managed to find someone to unlock the room just in time for us to do the practice.

As we only had 9 dogs we were only allowed 13 minutes to get familiar with the equipment. The ring was split in to three sections. So we divided up into sizes, with all hands



STEVE AND RACHEL

on deck to change heights of jumps, tyres, and table. With just four minutes a section to get our dogs happy with the surface and the equipment. The table was new to us all I think. It beeped, starting slowly, building up to faster beeps when the time was completed. The contacts had a rubber coating on them, which was also something that our dogs were not used to, and the weaves were orange with enormous gaps in-between. The wall was very strange with a half round gutter pipe on top which fell very easily. The familiarisation went well and all dogs and handlers came away happy ready for the following day's competition to begin.

After the practice we all decided to have a beer whilst we watched the other teams. We later found out that the American coach had reported us to Steve for drinking alcohol! The cost of living is high in Finland €16 for two small beers and two cheese and ham rolls.

That evening a few of us ventured into the town to eat. It was just a few minutes tram ride from the hotel. We were still trying to work out how you paid for the trams. They pulled up at the stops and we got off where we wanted. How or who do we pay?

We never did figure out how to pay for them and, in the end it became a bit of a challenge and the whole team took advantage of the free transport. (Thank you, Finland).

The Competition Starts





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The opening ceremony began at 8am on Friday. Luckily this was kept brief. Just a quick flag wave and a walk around the main ring then the competition began at 9.30 with the Large team jumping.

We had all of the dogs crated in our changing room which was just about 20 metres away from the main ring. There were benches around the room so we could all lounge and relax between competing - well as best as you can when representing your country in the World Championships. The atmosphere was great and the whole team were very supportive of each other as most people did not take grooms due to the cost of the trip. Even the dogs were very well behaved and got on well with each other.

Opposite the venue was an area of woodland where the dogs were officially allowed off lead so we had somewhere to take them for time out away from all of the excitement.

There was also a practice jump outside of the building on some carpet that we were free to use if we needed. The next three days of competition flew by, and were full of emotion with plenty of highs and lows.

The Small team were fantastic, winning the Bronze medal, but we also had several could have been, so close, just missing out on more medals and clear rounds by fractions and small mistakes. But that is Agility.

One of those "should have beens" was for Natasha Wise who put in what looked like two stunning clears, only to have been marked (see below) for what, finally, we worked out was a digression from the course (even though she had the fastest time). Even the eventual winner told her that she should have won.

The whole trip was extremely memorable and I am sure the whole team had a great time regardless of the result. I know in our eyes we had the best 9 dogs there. Many

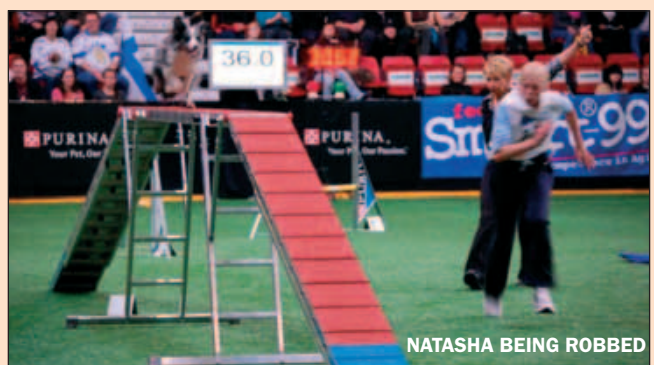
thanks go to Steve and Debbie for effectively planning and organising the trip, Rachel who had the patience of a Saint, endlessly waiting at each cargo depot, Kate Howard for her fantastic choice of hotel, and all of the team GB supporters who were great. (We could hear you cheer when we were on the line waiting to run.) No regrets.



Angela would like to thank Dog Games for their sponsorship.



SMALL TEAM WINNING BRONZE. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, NICOLA AND INDIE, DAVE AND LIBBY, RACHEL AND MEG



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