

The English Shetland Sheepdog Club

Working Section

Sheltie Heelwork to Music Training Day

On Saturday 16th January 2010

At Odd Fellows Hall, Maidstone Road, Footscray. Kent DA14 5HB.

Our trainer for the day Jeanette Maggs has written a little bit about herself. From my earliest memories there has always been a dog in our family. My first introduction to dog training was with the families Smooth Collie circ. 1965. I remember having to walk several miles to and from training classes since the family didn't have a car at that time - but at least we were both kept fit!

Since those days there has always been a Rough Collie in my life and my first Sheltie arrived when I was unable to continue training my Rough Collie because he suffered from epilepsy and I desperately wanted to train a dog for competitive obedience. It took a while to persuade my parents into becoming a two dog family but in 1981, a little sable sheltie called Dumbo joined us and dog training finally became my way of life or at least of leisure! We progressed from pre-beginner to B until at the age of six (his not mine!), I decided to retire him from competition and we spent the next ten years happily together giving the local rabbit and squirrel populations a run for their money. I remained in the world of dog training during this time as an instructor at a local pet dog training club.

In 1996 just before I lost Dumbo, a second sheltie (Jester) joined our pack and in 1997 another little one (Buzby) arrived. Since then a number of other dogs have arrived and to day I share my life with one Rough Collie, three Shelties, two Papillons and a little Chihuahua rescued from Battersea.

In the late 1990 my interest in dog training widened to include Agility and I now run a thriving club, primarily for people who want to have some fun with their dog.

My interest in Heelwork To Music started I guess when I saw Mary Ray performing a routine to Riverdance - I can't remember what year it was but I do remember sitting watching the television and wondering if I could ever train a dog to do that and oh so wishing that I could! My very first foray into the world of HTM was in 1998 when I gave a demonstration for a local school fete.

By 2000 I had started a small Heelwork To Music section to my training club, with members having to bring their own mats! Oh those were the days! At that time Jester was an active PAT Dog and we got together with two friends and did a number of demonstrations at local care homes, we did a routine to 'The Stripper' and always said that if the dogs were that bad we would take our clothes off but fortunately it never came to that! We were nominated and won the PAT Dog Team of the Year in 2001, so the three of us trooped off to the celebration dinner where we did a performance of The Stripper, followed by a routine by Jester and myself to Banner Man by Blue Mink. Since then we have given several displays at local school fetes along with other members of my HTM club. Highlight of my displays to date has been at the ESSC 90th Celebration, where although I was unable to do a routine with Jester because he was recovering from injury but Buzby stepped into the breach and worked his little heart out for me. I count myself lucky indeed to have two such willing and clever little Shelties.

I started off working both my dogs in obedience and turned to HTM following a leg injury to one of the dogs that meant that he could no longer sit straight nor hold the sit position for very long (not very useful in competitive obedience!). HTM offers a greater range of movements to teach a dog and also allows you to compensate for any physical problems that the dog may have – if the dog is uncomfortable doing a move then there is what says you have to do it! We started 'competing' at the demonstration events held before the sport was recognised by KC and have continued on to take part in the KC licensed events that are now held.

Having already trained obedience exercises, I chose to enter Heelwork To Music rather than FreeStyle classes to begin with. During 2002 and 2003 we attended a small number of shows (there weren't that many held at the time) and both dogs were never out of the places in all their classes and we even managed a 1st with Buzby at his first attempt! During 2004 at the first of the KC licensed events both dogs won out of starters Heelwork To Music and Buzby won out of starters FreeStyle during the year. In 2005, now in Novice HTM and FreeStyle, they continued being placed – with Jester now working in HTM and Buzby in FreeStyle. In 2006 Jester won out of Novice HTM and is now Intermediate.

We have 'danced' to a wide range of music – from English Morris Dancing to Russian Classical with a splash of 1960's Pop Band and Shirley Bassey thrown in for good measure.

Jester and I have also been part of the Richard Curtis HTM Training Demonstrations at both Discover Dogs and Crufts.

Summing up? Me in a nutshell?

I have always adored dogs and have a very special soft spot for Shelties, Rough Collies, plus of course my Papillons and Chihuahuas.

I've seen dog training evolve from check chains and force to thankfully, kind collars, rewards and lots of fun.

Dogs don't ask to be owned by us: they are willing to share their lives with us and give so much – it's up to us to repay that kindness and generosity, not to ignore it.

Training should be fun for both dog and handler – if it's not there is something wrong that needs to be put right.

Apart from my own dogs, the next biggest pleasure in my life is to see an owner and their dog begin to work together in mutual respect and admiration.

I'm really looking forward to a training day full of Shelties and their owners I'm sure we will be in for a great deal of fun – just make sure that you come well armed with treats and please remember to put your inhibitions (if you have any that is) in the bin at the door on your way in.

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO E.S.S.C. WORKING SECTION

Please return the booking form with your cheque to:-

Hon. Secretary Mrs Lesley Lubbi. Layash, 2 Celia Crescent, Ashford, Middx TW15 3NW

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