



TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND MAIDSTONE BRANCH AND THE HEADCORN CATTERY

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THEY ARE ALL WINNERS!!!

These beautiful dogs are the winners of their respective classes at our Fun Dog Show held on 29th August.

Report inside.



Daisy, Best dog without first place so far



Benny - Best Puppy



Jasper - Best Rescue



Lottie - Prettiest Bitch



Alfie - Why my dog is so special



Katie & Daisy - Best Family pair



Lea - Best Bitch Judge would like to take home



Stocky - Best in Show, Most Handsome dog, Fastest Recall



Mia - Most Appealing eyes



Scruffy - Dog Judge would like to take home/Best Veteran



Tilly - Waggiest Tail

FUN DOG SHOW

We all gathered together on the field from 8 o'clock in the morning to finish the setting up that dog show organiser Elaine Beal couldn't do the night before. There were some concerns about the weather but we were very lucky and apart from a tiny shower early afternoon the day was warm and sunny with a light breeze - just perfect for the dogs! Sadly, despite a large amount of publicity, the numbers were lower than expected but that didn't stop all those that came from having a thoroughly enjoyable day. Maybe the August Bank Holiday was not the best time to hold this event as people often have other things in their diary.



There were 12 classes plus a Best in Show, photos of winners are seen on page 1. The Fastest Recall and Scurry were thoroughly enjoyed by the dogs and owners alike with much fun being had by all participants. During a short interval we had a delightful demonstration by the Newfoundland dogs showing us just why they are so perfect for the jobs that they do. Martin Haskell was an excellent compere and Jenny Tuckfield had the unenviable job of judging the classes.

The branch would like to thank everyone who helped make the day a success, especially Elaine Beal who organised the entire event. The event raised approximately £1500 for the animals.

Photo - Barry our lovely 2 year old is still desperately looking for a home. Barry has epilepsy but is otherwise in excellent health. On his regular medication he leads a perfectly normal life. Barry would need a home in the Maidstone area so that the branch can continue to assist with his treatment. Barry is a delightful boy just longing for someone to love. Please call 01622 891222 or 07595997674 if you think you can help Barry.

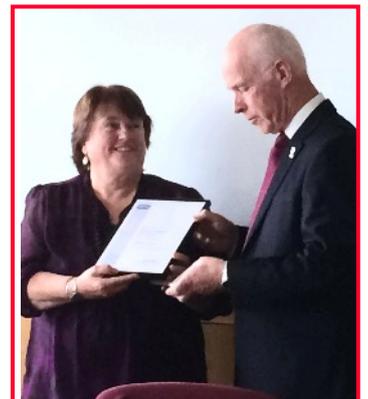
For several years the branch has wanted to get Daphne recognised for her outstanding contribution to animal welfare and the RSPCA. We are now very happy to announce that Daphne has been awarded the RSPCA Queen Victoria Gold Medal - the highest accolade you can receive - and it is only awarded for outstanding meritorious service over and above the call of duty. Daphne is only the fourth person in the history of the RSPCA to receive this prestigious award, other recipients being Vet David Grant, Ferne Animal Centre Manager John Bryant, and Pat Monk another long standing volunteer. Daphne was presented with this award at the recent Regional Board meeting in Horsham attended by RSPCA personnel, area branch representatives and guests. Daphne has been working tirelessly on animal welfare for over 40 years. She is also the Chairman of our branch and Chairman of the RSPCA Council, a position to which she was recently elected for the second time. We believe Daphne has been, and still is, an exceptional ambassador of their aims and is untiring in her total dedication to the work of animal welfare.

DAPHNE STRIKES GOLD

Daphne has loved animals from a very young age and had a small holding on her parents land taking in waifs and strays from all walks of life and finding them new and loving homes. An unwanted German Shepherd named Doyan was brought in by an Inspector and stayed with Daphne for the rest of its life being her constant companion.

Daphne is well known for her kindness and her tactful ability to be able to deal with problems, sometimes major, fairly and calmly. She has indeed become 'the fountain of all knowledge' to her branches. She has been, and still is, a great port in a storm and is highly respected by all those that know her. She will always go the extra mile to help anyone and is always ready to give her advice, knowledge and experience to anyone when asked. We congratulate her on her award and wish her all the very best for the future.

Photos: presentation of award by David Canavan acting CEO, A cake made in honour of the occasion and Daphne's gold medal.



WHAT DO WE DO? a typical day in the cattery

We all know that our staff and volunteers do a fantastic job but are you really aware of just how much they deal with in an average day.

I asked Jill and Lucy to take me through a typical day in the cattery.....



9.00 am - arrive and unlock. Quick check of all animals for obvious problems. Open up the rabbits, feed them, check them (especially their bottoms for any signs of trouble or fly-strike - especially in the summer). Spray rabbits with fly deterrent and put them out in their outdoor runs (weather permitting). Remove all empty and old cat food and feed all the cats. Add fresh water.

9.45 am - other staff and volunteers arrive and the day begins in earnest.

Cats are cleaned first followed by rabbit hutches. Phone messages get picked up. Urgent messages are dealt with first followed by any other call-backs necessary. Depending on the urgency or problem this can take up until lunchtime. During this time staff assisted by volunteers also carry out health checks, flea treatment, worming treatment, flu jabs, microchipping and paperwork. Any vet visits have to be fitted in around the working day, usually in the afternoon when most of the work is done.

11.00 am-1.30 pm the cattery is open to people wishing to see the animals with a view to adoption. This is always done by appointment. On a busy day it can be 3.30 before the cattery is actually closed thus giving potential adopters plenty of time to get to know their hoped for pet and reserve it. People who have already chosen a pet also pick up between these times and complete the necessary paperwork .

Katie the Manageress works through until 5.00, usually doing the vet runs and any other jobs that crop up. In the summer she will take the rabbits in around 9.00 pm so that they enjoy the very best of the day outside, in winter it is 7.00 pm unless the weather is bad. She is always on call if there are major problems to be dealt with.

No two days are exactly the same. Sometimes they have to deal with rude and abusive phone calls when people don't get what they want. Other times they may have to deal with 'dumped' animals at the gate.

One thing is for sure they ALL do a FANTASTIC JOB for our animals often beyond the call of duty. Thank you girls and boys on behalf of our animals for your patience, love, understanding and kindness. Our animals are lucky to have you!

NEWS IN BRIEF

In 2014 279 animals taken in , 252 Rehomed*, 655 neutered, 1041 helped with welfare vouchers through the branch clinic and cattery. Well over 1000 animals were helped during the course of the year.

**The difference in numbers is explained by some animals still in-house into this year and some moved on to other centres.*

At the recent Regional Board Meeting in Horsham David Bowles, Director of Communications, told branch members that the RSPCA continues to fight against hunting with hounds and that 154,000 supporters voted to help prevent the law being amended. The Society's continued stand against hunting has earned them some unpleasant newspaper criticism but he said that there were also national papers who were willing to, and do, support the RSPCA.

The Society has trained specialist Inspectors to deal with the increasing number of problems with exotic pets.

Chief Inspector Paul Stilgoe reported that councils can now act after 9 days instead of having to wait 15 days when horses are left tethered on land and that the horse crisis is now under control.



OUR THOUGHT FOR CHRISTMAS - LILLY'S STORY



Lilly was a branch dog that sadly had to have one of her front legs amputated and was facing a bleak future. Whilst recovering at the vets she was seen by Maureen and Barry Whitford who had gone there to pick up the ashes of their beloved boxer dog. Maureen and Barry were so upset at the loss of their dog they said they couldn't go through it again, but Lilly seemed to take a liking to them and they decided to give her a home.

When she had recovered sufficiently Maureen and Barry took her to dog training classes and it was the trainer there who suggested that perhaps Lilly could be trained as a therapy dog because of her lovely nature. Lilly was taken to classes and was put through her paces taking 30 units in tests. She only failed two of these which were for recall - not an essential for a therapy dog who would be on the lead during sessions.

Lilly has since become a great asset to the first Kent Cynophobia group - a group that helps children with a phobia of dogs. She has helped many children to overcome their fear and become her friends. She has already got her bronze and silver medals and is now working for her gold.

Lilly you are an inspiration and so are your loving owners who took you on and gave you a chance of life after losing your leg. You have shown us all that a rescue dog is not only a friend for life but can also bring love and support to others.

Maureen and Barry tell us that off the lead Lilly can run extremely fast - so fast that people can't believe she only has 3 legs!! They absolutely adore her and she them. Thank you Maureen and Barry for sharing this lovely story with us. We hope Lilly will continue to help young people for years to come.



OUR VERY BEST WISHES TO ALL READERS AND THEIR PETS FOR CHRISTMAS AND 2016

(Photos top Lilly, bottom Lilly receiving her award as a therapy dog)



Editor Kate Matthews