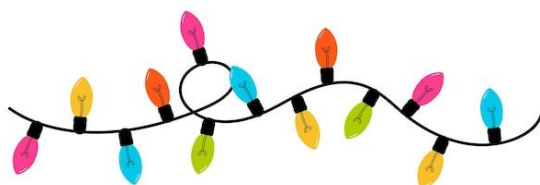


Christmas Newsletter / December 2023



Hastings & St Leonards
Dog Training Club
St Luke's Church Hall - Silverhill

www.hastingsandstleonardsdogtraining.weebly.com

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Hastings & St Leonards DTC Officers and Committee

President	Mrs Heather Hardaway	
Vice President & Chairman	Mrs Lesley Thomas	01424 219415
Secretary	Mrs Julia Norman-Brown	01424 422004
Treasurer	Mrs Lesley Russell	01424 755713
Committee	Mrs Janet Oxbury	01424 854839
	Mrs Lesley Rudling	01424 444847
	Mrs Melanie Reid	01424 756522



DATES TO REMEMBER CLASSES & EVENTS 2023/2024

Christmas Party	13 December 2023
Christmas/New Year Break	20 & 27 December 2023 & 3 January 2024
Restart all classes and New Puppy Course	10 January 2024

Puppy Foundation Passes for course starting 6/9/23 to 11/10/23 (Instructor Lesley Rudling)

Julie Adams with Nellie her Cockerpoo
Brenda Thompson with Luca her Westie
Lana Mongaji with Milo her Springer x Poodle x Labrador
Mary Bowen with Nancy her Irish Terrier
Stuart Jeffery with Cody his Springer Spaniel
Elizabeth Bornecrantz with Suzy her Rhodesian Ridgeback
Karen Bowles with Lucy her Cocker Spaniel
Hayley Widdows with Teddy her Cockerpoo

Puppy Foundation Passes for course starting 26/10/23 to 29/11/23 (Instructor Julia Norman-Brown)

Laura Hunnisett and Zera her GSD
Ann Crisp and Woody her Cavapoo
Adrienne Boyce and Tinkerbelle her Cockapoo
Karen Hewett and Murphy her Cavapoo
Natalie Comley and Juno her Cocker Spaniel
Helen Hemming and Mabel her Springer Spaniel x Poodle
Kim Edwards and Belle her Cavapoo

Passing with Merit her Beginner Certificate for a Dog over One Year (for the same course)

Rebecca Lunn and Maisie her Jack Russell Terrier

KC Tests 18 October 2023

Bronze, Silver and Gold Good Citizen Awards (Examiner Sarah Jones)

Gold

Laura Ridler and Ozzy her Rottweiler

Silver

Felicity Bennett and Lukka her Kokoni Cross

Bronze

Julia Norman Brown and Nico the Bichon Frise
Melanie Reid and Brie her Yorkie
Sean Melvin and Maze his GSD
Ed Mathis and Chester his German Short-haired Pointer

KC Tests 6 December 2023

Bronze, Silver and Gold Good Citizen Awards (Examiner Sarah Jones)

Silver

Melanie Reid with Bree her Yorkie
Jill Thornton with Ruby her Working Cocker Spaniel

Bronze

Lana Mongaji with Milo her Springer x Poodle x Labrador
Julie Adams with Nellie her Cockerpoo



Obituaries

Lesley Rudling's Alfie passed away on 18 October 2023 on his 18th birthday. Lesley writes, "He gave us a clear indication early on that day that he had had enough of life and wanted relief. As a final act of love towards him, we decided to let him go. As age got the better of him and his hearing and eyesight deteriorated, he seemed to gain pleasure from trundling around the garden at his own pace, oblivious to the other dogs racing around him."

Alfie came into our lives 10 years ago. We had gone to a home near Battle with a friend who wanted to rescue a Shih tzu, whose owner was going abroad. As we progressed along the trackway, a little Jack Russell Terrier appeared from nowhere and followed my husband into the house. When my husband sat down, Alfie jumped onto his lap and went off to sleep. So, from that day, Alfie (who also needed to be rehomed) became ours. He settled so well into our existing household routine and the other dogs accepted him totally. We called him, affectionately, Alfie Beau and he etched his way into our hearts with his happy go lucky character.

To quote from the poem by Ben Hur Lampman, 'The one best place to bury a good dog is in the heart of his master' and that is where Alfie permanently rests in peace. We bless the day Alfie adopted my husband, a union that forged many happy memories over the years."

Farewell to Julie Norman-Brown's Harpo, the Bichon Frisé. Julie writes, "In March 2008 my neighbour asked if I knew of anyone who would want a 13-month-old Bichon as his owner could not cope with him. At the time we had a GSD, Erla, a Bichon of our own, Zeppo, and a visiting one called Cheeko, so clearly there was no room at our Inn! I told my husband about the dog, then called Dandy, and he immediately said that we should have him, as Bichons were only small and what difference would one more make! So that weekend we took Zeppo and Cheeko to meet Dandy. He had never been groomed as the lady liked him "shaggy" so he was just bathed and dried! So, this dreadlocked cream ball greeted us. He had never seen another dog and went mad chasing Zeppo everywhere, across the backs of the sofa in this beautiful house with a grand piano in the corner. He was absolutely manic. It transpired that the lady had a bad knee and could not walk him, he also slept in her arms every night and was never left. I offered to help her by coming to walk him, but she said no, "I want him gone and I want him gone now!" All his belongings were packed in the hall, and she had already signed him over to me! So, we came away with him and changed his name to Harpo to go with our other Marx brothers. My daughter's first comment was that I liked a challenge and what a challenge he was! We walked him and he would just lay down, not with a heart condition as I first thought, but fear as he had never been out. He would not leave my boys or girls alone but decided, after my GSD gave him a flash of her excellent dental work, that he would stick with the boys! His castration was fast tracked, his food was changed from a 34% protein to something more befitting his lifestyle. The summer was spent taking him to the park where he eventually overcame his fears and learnt to enjoy his walks although he never enjoyed walking in the dark or rain. We used to say, if he was a child he would hang back and say "Carry, Mummy, Carry". Sadly, after a very short illness we lost our beloved Erla very suddenly and Zeppo was devastated. Just having Harpo in his life was not enough, so we were then given my friend's retired brood bitch, Lottie. She was brilliant for Harpo and became his Mum, her basket would be full of Bichons with one GSD.

Harpo began coming to Dog Club and was my demonstration dog until Covid closed the Club. He was an excellent demo dog with Lottie but after she died, he would not sit and be tied up without his mum, so in each course a lap was chosen for him to observe from. Harpo was not the sharpest knife in the drawer but managed to pass his KC Good Citizen Bronze and Silver tests. He struggled with the stay as I would leave him in his position, he would look round and forget what he was there for so, as other dogs around him broke their stays, he thought oh it's over I will go to Mum! Eventually with a great deal of hard work we cracked it. I remember practising with him before his Silver test over and over again with the stay and someone said, I don't think you should do anymore. Little did she know that this was the best way to get

it stuck in Harpo's head that he should not move! He passed with flying colours. Lottie was 7 when we got her so, when she died at the age of 10, Zenda joined our family. She just slotted in and took her role as the mother of two Bichons completely in her stride and was rewarded with their undying love and devotion. Harpo overcame his separation anxiety and was happy to be left with his canine family. Loud bangs terrified him, and the firework season was a great trial for him. He also hated Christmas crackers, so we just stopped having them. He loved to sunbathe and would run into the garden and lay on his back and soak up the sun. Obviously, he was very aware of the potential for skin damage, and after about 5 minutes would turn over and run off and play with the others. One summer he became terrified of the garden and would not walk up our top lawn. We could not fathom why this was and the vet decided to prescribe very strong anti-anxiety drugs but fortunately before he took them, we discovered the cause, our neighbour had an animal scarer which made a dreadful noise which we could not hear but he could! Once the volume was turned down, he went back to normal.

In 2017 our daughter, Fiona acquired Humphrey her Cavalier King Charles Spaniel. He and Harpo became firm friends for life and always played beautifully together. In 2020 Zeppo died but Harpo still had Humphrey and Zenda and our new puppy GSD Lia. Harpo could cope but by the time he was 14, when Zenda died his separation anxiety returned and he could not be left so, as he was small and so well behaved, he was able to come everywhere with us and if he couldn't, we didn't go. Harpo liked to go out but as his sight began to fade it made walks stressful for him, so we decided to use a doggy pram. He loved it and could continue to go everywhere with us. Remarkably, his fear of fireworks and bangs disappeared with age. In February our daughter Louise got her own Bichon, Nico, so Harpo took full advantage of having a visiting Bichon to cuddle up to. He continued to enjoy life to the full and despite his age, still played with Humphrey.

Harpo began to have seizures last June and in November he began to have cluster seizures and we had to make the decision to say goodbye to him, he was 3 months shy of his 17th birthday. I miss him every day and cannot get used to going out without him. He was a super little dog, a fantastic character who could always melt our hearts and make us laugh. How lucky we were that his first owner could not cope with him!"



Christmas Party for everyone - Wednesday 13 December 2023

Please arrive around 7pm.
Games commence 7.15 sharp.

Entry £1.00 per person + 1 tin/packet of dog food (to be donated to Ann Craske's Charity to top up her Dog Food Bank).

We will be holding a raffle with a STAR PRIZE of a £25 voucher, so remember to bring some extra money for raffle tickets. Donations of raffle prizes will be much appreciated.

The games are arranged so there is something to enjoy for all abilities with prizes for the winners. Bring some titbits for getting your dog's attention! There will be a prize for the member who guesses most accurately the weights of the pre-selected group of dogs paraded on the night. There will be light refreshments in the interval.

ALL THE CASH RAISED FROM THIS EVENT WILL GO TO THE CINNAMON TRUST CHARITY.

Games Programme

- 1) Positions Knock-out (all)
- 2) Best 'Go to Bed' (Gold and Gold + classes) - bring mat/bed
- 3) Fastest Recall

4) Santa Relay

INTERVAL

Final parade of dogs to guess the Weight
Refreshments, Weight of Dogs results, Raffle draw.

- 5) Best Veteran - for dogs 10 years and over, who have attended Club for training at some time.
- 6) Temptation Alley
- 7) Best Dog Trick (practice your party piece)
- 8) Musical Papers (if time)

Members might like to bring Christmas Cards for their friends or trainers to save sending them. If you have any that you can't give out, please collect them at the end of the party so that you can then deliver them yourself.



The Perils of Christmas for our Canine Friends

As the festive season approaches, it is a good time to remember that Christmas represents many hazards for animals. With just a few precautions, Christmas can be enjoyed, and unnecessary drama avoided.

The joy of a Christmas Tree can be very short-lived if you have a puppy. All those tree decorations are perfect for chewing and swallowing but not quite so perfect for exiting the dog's digestive system! So, for all those puppies and ardent chewers, put the tree on a table and all that stress can be avoided. Christmas tree decorations can be located by any self-respecting dog from approximately one mile! As we all know, chocolate is poisonous to dogs and the most toxic chocolate is that which has the highest percentage of cocoa solids. Vets are most often called out at Christmas for dogs eating chocolate, so make sure it is out of reach.

Presents under the tree can be a further hazard. Never assume that you relative (in my experience it is always relatives, rarely friends, who give the dodgy Christmas gifts) have given sensible presents. One year, our daughter was given a present by a relative whose presents are always opened with a sense of foreboding which seldom disappoints. This time, the gift was supplemented by a packet of seven little bars of chocolate which, although hidden up high, were located and consumed by Zeppo, the Bichon. Fortunately, the theft and criminal were quickly apprehended and Zeppo was given something to ensure the chocolate caused no harm. So, for all dog owners, make sure that if presents are under the tree or accessible, the dog is always supervised.

The Christmas turkey is very rich for dogs but, most importantly, don't be tempted to give the dog the skin. It is very fatty and can cause tummy upsets and, in some cases, it can lead to pancreatitis which can be very painful and cause life threatening complications for a dog. Christmas doggy treats should be given in moderation. Remember that raisins and sultanas can be highly toxic to dogs, so no mince pies, Christmas cake or pudding for Fido!

If we do have a white Christmas, dogs should be discouraged from eating snow as it can lead to gastric torsion. Also, do check their paws as they can become clogged with ice and snow.

If you have lots of visitors and children and it becomes very exciting, particularly if your dog is not used to children, put the dog in another room. It is far better to take precautions than to have an accident. Dogs don't really know it's Christmas and may miss their usual routine. They like their own space at times, so make sure they have somewhere they can go to when it gets too much and, if they do take themselves off,

make sure they are not pestered. Just because it is Christmas, it is no reason why they should not still be treated with respect.

So, enjoy Christmas and take advantage of the extra time at home with your dog when you can go for lots of lovely walks together and burn off all those extra calories. Then you will be fortified and ready to meet the greatest hazard of all, the once-a-year dog walkers!

Julia Norman-Brown

FINALLY, MAY WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR DOGS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

HOPEFULLY SEE YOU ALL AGAIN ON 10TH JANUARY 2024, UNLESS IT IS SNOWY!

