



# Belconnen Dog Obedience Club Inc.

***Chocolate Bullets win Camden Show flyball championship!***



L-R: Vicki & Chilli, Ian & Bonnie, Shannon, Max & Maddie, Carolyn & Ernie, Michelle & Woolly, Caroline & Tully. If you look closely you can see our boxloader Ross's head on top of the trophy held by Carolyn.

**Office hours** Thursdays 7–8 pm Sundays 9–11 am

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***Newsletter April 2010  
Volume E3 Issue E2***



*Note from the President*

Welcome fellow dog lovers. An especially warm welcome to our new members who commence their classes in April. We hope you and your dogs will have fun while you learn how training can make your life together so much more enjoyable.

First, some housekeeping.

**Temporary road closure**

Morisset Road will be closed on 8 April 2010 for approximately 18 weeks to allow the Morisset Road/Sandford Street and Flemington Road intersection to be upgraded. This is currently a dangerous intersection and, as Morisset Road and Sandford Street will be aligned, it will make it far safer for us. The main alternative route is via Well Station Road. However, as this route is unsealed, does not have lights and is slippery when wet, BDOC is to be provided with an entrance off Flemington Road into our car park. You will be able to access this entrance only coming from Gungahlin. If you

are coming from Northbourne Avenue, then you will need to go up a block through Mitchell and turn back into Flemington road.

**Obedience (Canine Companion) instructors course**

We are very short of instructors. Charlie Giles is coordinating an obedience instructors course, and the theoretical component will be presented on the weekend of 8/9 May 2010. If you are in Silver level or higher and have some time to give back to the Club, I urge you to attend this course. It is a great way to improve your own dog training knowledge and skills. Please see the notice elsewhere in the Newsletter for more information.

**Trivia night**

Thanks to all members and their guests who came to the Trivia night and made it such a success. We couldn't have done it without the effort of those members who helped to find sponsors, organize and conduct the evening. Special thanks to the master of ceremonies Suzanne Van Strien, who still had her voice at the end of the evening. We made nearly \$3,000, and the profits will be put towards our grounds.

**Dog training**

I recently spent a week at the National Sheepdog Championships (working as a volunteer) and met many BDOC members and their dogs who came out to watch. Although these working dogs are trained for a specific purpose – working with their handlers to herd three sheep around

a specified course, the same training principals that we use apply. Find something that your dog considers a great reward and use it for training; train as often as you can but keep the training sessions brief so the dog always wants more; be consistent with your training.

If a dog loves to work sheep then the reward is being allowed to work sheep. As we train pets, we need to make sure we find rewards that our dogs will work for such as toys and/or food.

I do some herding with my dogs, and sheep are the reward there – no doubt about it. Food and toys don't even get a glance when there are sheep around. But for obedience and agility, then both toys and food are the rewards I use. Does your dog love the rewards you choose?

Good sheepdog handlers spend a lot of time training their dogs. Do you train your dogs every day – twice a day – three times a day? Make training play-time, do it as often as you can with just a few minutes working on a behaviour and your dog will eagerly respond.

Lastly, always check what you are expecting from your dog. Do you (or everyone in your household) always use the same words, the same signals, the same body positions when training? Even experienced dog trainers make mistakes. After every training time (which should be very brief), review what you have said or done with your dog. If you have been a good dog trainer, give yourself a reward!

Happy dog training.

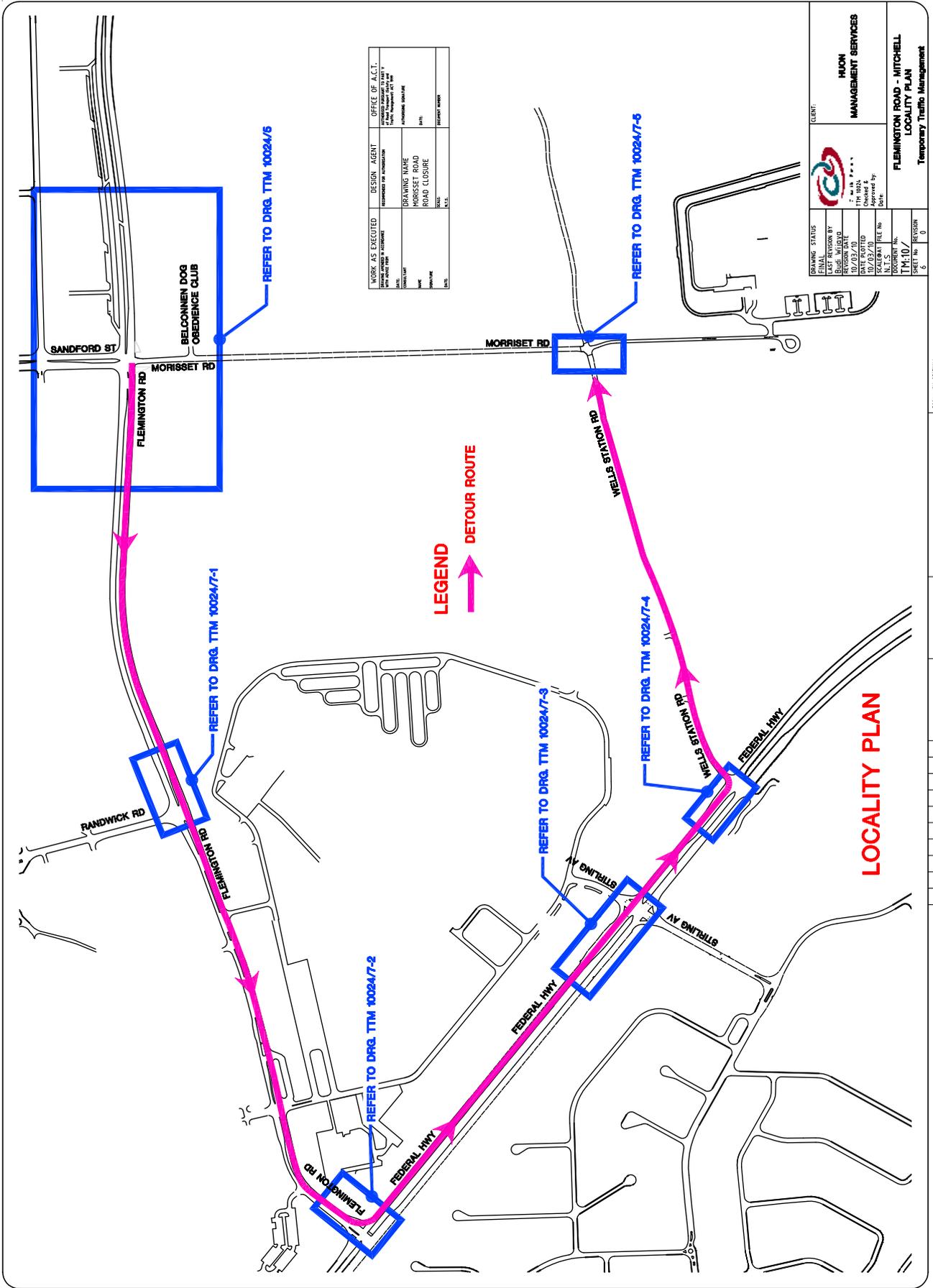
*Barbara Brown*  
President

# BDOC Session Training Dates 2010



	Session 1 (8 weeks)		Session 2 (8 weeks)		Session 3 (7 weeks)		Session 4 (8 weeks)		Session 5 (8 weeks)	
	Thursday	Sunday	Thursday	Sunday	Thursday	Sunday	Thursday	Sunday	Thursday	Sunday
<b>Week 1</b>	28 Jan	31 Jan	8 April	11 April	17 June	20 June	5 Aug	8 Aug	7 Oct	10 Oct
<b>Week 2</b>	4 Feb	7 Feb	15 April	18 April	24 June	27 June	12 Aug	15 Aug	14 Oct	17 Oct
<b>Week 3</b>	11 Feb	14 Feb	29 April	2 May	1 July	4 July	19 Aug	22 Aug	21 Oct	24 Oct
<b>Week 4</b>	18 Feb	21 Feb	6 May	9 May	8 July	11 July	26 Aug	29 Aug	28 Oct	31 Oct
<b>Week 5</b>	25 Feb	28 Feb	13 May	16 May	15 July	18 July	2 Sept	5 Sept	4 Nov	7 Nov
<b>Week 6</b>	11 Mar	14 Mar	20 May	23 May	22 July	25 July	9 Sept	12 Sept	11 Nov	14 Nov
<b>Week 7</b>	18 Mar	21 Mar	27 May	30 May	29 July					
<b>Week 8</b>	25 Mar	28 Mar	3 June	6 June	29 July	1 Aug	16 Sept	19 Sept	18 Nov	21 Nov
<b>Assessment Day</b>										
<b>Assessment and Award Night</b>									25 Nov Assessment night for all, annual award presentation, BBQ	
<b>No training</b>	Thurs 1 April Sun 4 April Thurs 4 Mar Sun 7 Mar		Thurs 22 April Sun 25 April		Thurs 10 June Sun 13 June				Thurs 30 Sept Sun 3 October	
<b>Public Holidays</b>	Tues 26 Jan (Aust. Day) Fri 2 & Mon 5 April (Easter) Mon 8 Mar (Canberra Day)		Mon 26 April (Anzac Day)		Mon 14 June (Queens Birthday)		Mon 27 September (Family and Community Day)		Mon 4 October (Labour Day)	







**A big bunch of flowers for all our instructors who taught in Session 1 2010.**

***Thank you to:***

Michelle Abramovic, Jay Arthur, Barbara Brown, Cliff Brock, Cassie Butterworth, Paul Cartwright, Meryl Causebrook, Lyn Clyde, Sally Druhan, Andrew Gibbs, Charlie Giles, Angela Hagedorn, Lesley Hayes, Jane Keogh, Anne Lewis, Ryan Jenkins, Pam McDougall, Pauline Murphy, Karl Newport, Bear Paintain, Shirley Stewart, Suzanne van Strien, Julie Rebbeck, Werner Roth, Joycelyn Taylor, Dai Thomas, Lucy Williams.

***Congratulations to all the teams who attended the Session 1 formal assessments for Silver and Gold levels.***

**Silver Certificate**

Barbara Berce and Maddy  
Lyn Boyer and Rob Roy  
Cheryl Fernandes and Benji  
Carol Haslam and Banjo  
Gabrielle Meyer and Charlie  
Penny Price and Lucy

**Silver Encouragement**

Emily Dallwitz and Kali  
Elaine Harrison and Leo  
Terri McGrath and Farfel  
Jane Robey and Induna

**Gold Certificate**

Barbara Brown and Dazzle  
Rachel Kane and Buffy

**Gold Encouragement**

Bas Gintings and Punky Beau  
Andrew Craig and Indie  
Shirley Stewart and Raven  
Richard Williams and Shadow



## **BDOC Committee 2009–2010**

### **President/Acting Secretary**

Barbara Brown

### **Vice-President**

Elaine Temby

### **Treasurer**

Maki Koyama

### **Committee Members**

Sally Berridge

Rhonda Cameron

Dean Gardiner

Michelle Gilbey

Nicola Hardaker

Ray Leckie

Carolyn Shrives

Lucy Williams

## **Obedience Instructors Course (for all Canine Companion levels)**

Do you like working with other people?

Do you want to improve your dog training skills and knowledge?

Do you want to give a little something back to the Club?

Are you in Silver level or higher or have you previously trained a dog to Silver level (old Level 3)?

If you said yes to any of these questions, then think hard about becoming a BDOC instructor. We are very short of instructors, and will be conducting an obedience instructors course. The theoretical component will be held over the weekend of the 8th and 9th May, and some practical sessions will be conducted after this time. Then you will assist experienced instructors to gain and practice your skills.

BDOC instructors pay only a nominal membership fee each year and this covers all training classes for their dogs in Obedience, Flyball and Agility. Instructors have full use of the BDOC library and they go to the head of waiting lists for agility and flyball.

Contact Charlie Giles 0417 208 766 or [giles@grapevine.com.au](mailto:giles@grapevine.com.au) or Barbara 0422 131 156 or [bbrown@webone.com.au](mailto:bbrown@webone.com.au) for more information or to put your name on the list.

## **Special offer for women members of BDOC (sorry, guys)**

### **Need to run just that bit faster around the agility course?**

Curves Jamison Plaza is delighted to offer members of BDOC a free three-visit trial membership AND 75% off the joining fee, should they decide to become a member – a saving of \$187.

Please call Melissa on 6251 1111 for your obligation-free fitness assessment.



## An interview with Meryl Causebrook who was awarded the Chamberlain Award (or Perseverance Award) 2009 for what she has achieved with her rescue dog Sandy.

*The Chamberlain Award (or Perseverance Award) is awarded to a member of BDOC who have a difficult dog and have persevered with training over a period of year/s but never seems to achieve any great results. Not to be seen so much as a reward for perseverance but more as an acknowledgement and recognition of their dedication to the training of their difficult dog.*

### Tell us a little about yourself.

I moved to Canberra from Adelaide in early 2004 with my husband Rick, bringing our dog Zak with us (and leaving all our children in South Australia). I have a lot to thank Sandy for – he is the reason I came to BDOC, and then took the opportunity to do the instructor training (which I would encourage others to do, very rewarding and you meet lots of dogs!)



*Sandy checking whether the trophy might conceal a sandwich.*

### Sandy is a rescue dog. Where did you get him?

We adopted Sandy from ARF (Animal Rescue and Foster) just before Christmas 2005. For some reason, I logged on to their website (for the first time). Sandy stood out because he looked so much like our first rescue dog, Zak who came to live with us in 2002. They are both ridgeback crosses. We decided that we would consider adopting Sandy if that was OK with Zak.

### How old was he when you got him and how long has he now been with you?

Sandy was about nine months old when he came to live with us. We didn't know any of his history but from his behaviour have worked out the most probable scenario – he had had some basic training, had been chained up for much of

the time, had been shouted at by a man and then had been dumped from a car. We think he had been a stray for a little while, surviving on food he found near a school, as he was addicted to bread and especially sandwiches in gladwrap.

### How did he settle in with the rest of the household?

Sandy settled very quickly on one level although over the months and then years he has trusted us more and more, and become more confident in his behaviours. From the beginning, he and Zak were best friends.

Sandy had to go through many puppy stages again (as did Zak) so I suffered several pairs of chewed shoes, until I learned to put them out the way. He was a little cautious about Rick.

### What were his most unwanted behaviours and what were the best things about him?

The best things about Sandy? – his bond with Zak (we always thought Zak loved being the only dog but he absolutely relished having a little brother from the start) – his good nature, and .... just being Sandy.

Unwanted behaviours? Where do we start? Sandy was a little uncertain of Rick and other men for a while. He was also very uncertain of



other dogs, not knowing how to interpret their behaviour, and would lunge and snap at those who came too close too quickly. Zak, who is a reactive dog anyway, supported Sandy and there were various embarrassing incidents (though neither dog was actually aggressive).

Sandy suffered acute separation anxiety and proved himself to be an expert escape artist. Until

we found where he was getting back into the garden, we didn't realise how much he was getting out when we were not there. And all our lovely neighbours put up with the doggy visits without complaint! It was really very challenging,



and we (especially Rick) spent many hours by torchlight, and whole weekends, fortifying our boundaries with wire netting etc. After a few weeks, Sandy was making many demands on us, barking, jumping up, nipping at heels etc.

We had a couple of individual behavioural training sessions. As I had begun to suspect, Sandy saw Zak as top of the pack, himself as number two and Rick and I below that.

We spent some weeks using various techniques to redress this (that's another story in itself!) and eventually ended up with a much happier gentler dog. He has learnt to sit if he wants attention – which now means if he sits in front of me he expects to be patted!

**When did you start training him at BDOC?**

Once Sandy's behaviour had improved significantly I decided to take him to obedience classes, with the main aim of socialisation. I enrolled in beginners class in February 2007.

How did he take to group classes?

Sandy really enjoyed coming to 'school'. He was very uncertain of how to interpret other dogs' behaviour and we were very often the team a little way away from the main group.

He loved observing other dogs and people from a little distance (and still does).

**How long have you spent at each level?**

We spent one session at level one and at level two. We have attended level three at least three/ four? times. Sandy's behaviour, social skills and confidence improved each time but his

performance in obedience training has not improved. To be honest, this is due at least in part to my lack of confidence that he was going to do what was needed. I have decided that Sandy is unlikely to achieve level 3 (silver). However, he has fulfilled

the objective of coming to BDOC – he can interact with other dogs and humans confidently, and can cope with a range of dog behaviours. He behaves extremely well at home and (mostly) when we are out for a walk.

**Looking back at your training, is there anything you wish you had done differently?**

With the benefit of hindsight, I would like to have identified Sandy's areas of anxiety around other dogs sooner. If I had, I would have recognised situations that raised his anxiety and avoided these wherever possible.

**How would you now describe Sandy?**

Sandy is a happy confident sociable dog who takes great interest in what we are doing.

What are the things you best love about him?

Sandy is extremely affectionate and has a very strong bond with both Rick and I. He and Zak are extremely close and love to wrestle, play chasey and other games that clearly have very definite rules.

**What are the things Sandy best loves about his life with you?**

Everything!!!



## Flyball

### **Belconnen Bullets win Championship Trophy!!**

On 20th March 2010 St George Flyball Club hosted the 3rd Annual Camden Show Championship.

Seeded in Division 4, the Belconnen Chocolate Bullets were competing against seven other teams. They went through the day as winners, until reaching the last race of the day. Despite this loss, the Chocolate Bullets were declared winners in their division, qualifying them into the Championship Elimination rounds against the winners of Divisions 1, 2 and 3.

Racing on a handicap system, the Chocolate Bullets faced the Division 1 Norwest Thunderdogs in the first semi-final of the afternoon. With Norwest posting the fastest time of the day, at under 18 seconds, the Bullets were given a 7.5 second head start. Racing in a best of five race format, the Bullets won their semi final by taking the first three heats. They are the first team to ever defeat a Division 1 team when racing in this format!

Moving into the final, the Chocolate Bullets were up against the Division 2 team from Southern Cross, who were winners against Division 3 in the second semi-final. There were only a few minor stumbles (mainly dropping of balls), and at two heats all (best out of five, so whoever won was the winner of the final heat), the Chocolate Bullets hung on and were declared Championship winners for the day!

This is the first time a team outside Division 1 has won a Championship. A huge achievement!

### **2010 Flyball calendar for Belconnen Bullets (until June)**

DATE	EVENT	VENUE	HOST CLUB
20 March	Camden Show	Camden NSW	St Gorge Flyball
02 May	Mudd on Paws	Ulladulla NSW	Mudd on Paws
16 May	Million Paws Walk	Canberra ACT	CDC
13 June	Winter Classic	Canberra ACT	Belconnen Bullets (BDOC)

**Contact the office to be put on the flyball waiting list.**



### ACCESS TO THE CLUB GROUNDS

Members who are attending BDOC classes are entitled to use the Club grounds at times other than when they are in use for scheduled classes or booked for other purposes such as training days and trials.

The gates are kept locked to safeguard the grounds and the access code is changed on a regular basis. Members who wish to gain access must register at the office and the gate code will be provided to them.

All members are asked to follow the rules regarding the use of the grounds which are included in the Club Rules in the Members Handbook.

### REMINDERS ON GROUND USE ETIQUETTE

- Use of the grounds is reserved for financial Club members and their financial dogs who are attending regular classes (at least 75% of the classes). BDOC does not offer ground use only memberships.
- No use of grounds during scheduled class times, when a trial is in progress, or when the grounds are otherwise booked. See the notice board for scheduled class times in obedience, agility and flyball.
- Training takes precedence at all times – do not allow your dog to distract others.
- Do not enter a yard already in use without first checking with the current occupant.
- Limit your use to 10 minutes if others are waiting.
- Handlers must always have their dogs under control and be able to recall the dog at any time.
- Do not permit your dog to run along the fences.
- Do not leave your dog unattended.
- Always remove your dog's faeces immediately from the grounds and dispose of them in the bins provided. This includes the car parking areas.

### PARKING

Please note that parking in front of the club house is for **instructors and committee members only**. Please join us in parking there – just become an instructor or a committee member!

### Give me space

*Sally Berridge*

You will see the article on the next page, and perhaps not fully understand it. I didn't, until my dogs had been attacked twice by pit bull type dogs in the past few months while we were out walking. These attacks have left me and my dogs with a fear of medium-sized or large dogs that approach us. I still have some PTSD symptoms, and tend towards a panic attack if a dog approaches. My brave dogs hide behind my legs. We aren't being weak or stupid, we are left with a trauma. Hopefully it will wear off in time. I now carry a stick when we are out, as well as an aerosol of tropical strength insect repellent and my mobile phone. I am in discussions with Jon Stanhope and the Domestic Animals people to see if they can improve things.

Meanwhile, please give us and others some space, even if you have the friendliest dog in the world.



CAN YOU READ THE BODY LANGUAGE OF THESE DOGS

# give me space

Having your dog tied up or even on lead restricts its ability to react naturally to dogs (or people) that approach. They can't run or hide if they are frightened or anxious. This can lead to dogs becoming nervous or even aggressive around other dogs.

Here are some suggestions to help limit problems and help make sure that your dog enjoys coming to school

- Avoid letting your dog approach other dogs that are tied up.
- Avoid tying your dog up in 'high traffic' areas (like right outside the clubhouse doors), and limit the amount of time you leave your dog unattended.
- Before taking your dog up to 'say hello' to another dog, check with the dog's owner that it is okay to approach.

●●● **Learn how to recognise signs that your dog is stressed or over-excited.** If your dog starts to show these signs, move them away from other dogs. This gives them the space they need to feel comfortable, helps them relax and makes classes more fun for them and for you.

**Do not throw your cigarette butts away on our grounds – this includes the carparks.**

Cigarette butts are toxic to dogs, especially small puppies.

As well as being unsightly and dangerous, they are unwanted rubbish that has to be cleaned up.



**Place your butts in the bin where they belong.**



## How do dogs perceive the world?

A summary of some information from

**How dogs think: understanding the canine mind by Stanley Coren (Pocket Books 2005)**

*Sally Berridge*

When I first saw the title of this book, I thought it should have been 'Do dogs think?', but as I got further into the book, I began to understand just what a different world dogs live in, and to me it seems something of a miracle that dogs and humans cooperate with each other as well as they do. Reading the book has certainly helped me to understand my dogs.

Coren has collated some interesting facts by summarising the results of many experiments looking at dog's sensory apparatus.

Take vision, for example. The experiments seem benign enough, thank goodness. For example, in eyesight tests dogs are taught to select a black and white striped pattern from a uniform grey pattern and get a treat for doing so. Then the stripes are made narrower and narrower until they are so fine that they appear grey to the dog. The size of the stripes at this point can be converted mathematically to the equivalent of the eye chart that is used for humans, and a measure of visual acuity can be made.

Dogs can get a bit frustrated by the testing process when the stripes become very narrow, and it seems some have worked out that they would get a treat half the time anyway! As sight isn't so important for dogs, it seems they are less interested. But a particularly dedicated German poodle apparently did enough tests to determine that he could see only stripes that were six times wider than those humans could see, giving him an acuity of 20/75. This means that he could see an object at 20 feet (6m) where a human could see it at 75 feet (23 m).

The primary sense for humans is sight, yet for dogs vision doesn't dominate the brain in the same way. This means that a dog's interpretation of the world is less dependent on sight than a human's. Yet in some ways, dogs can see better than humans, particularly a sight hound such as a greyhound. A dog's sight is particularly active at dawn and dusk, and dogs can operate in dim light.

In humans, the eyes are focused by small muscles that actually change the shape of the lens. A dog's eye is unable to do this as much as a human's, and possibly the whole dog's eye can change shape (shorter or longer) to assist the process of focussing. The acuity of eyesight can vary amongst breeds,

suggesting that this trait is genetic in nature. For example, many Rottweilers, miniature schnauzers and German Shepherds seem to be nearsighted. Dogs that have been bred especially for hunting with their noses, too, have less developed eyesight.

It seems, then, that dogs might see less accurately than us, with soft focus: something like looking through a fine gauze, without internal details but probably with a clear outline.

Has your dog sometimes been uncertain who you were until you spoke? Or if you weren't wearing your usual big hat?

Dogs can see motion much more easily than stationary shapes, and can recognise patterns of motion. Those of us doing agility know what subtle changes of motion (fast, slow, leaning forward or back) or shape (hand in, out, up or down) a dog can perceive.

Motion perception is based on the ability to see a flicker. For example, the TV flickers at 60 times a second, above the human ability of 55 Hz, so we see a continuous image. I have tried to interest my dogs in 'Inspector Rex' and 'It's me or the dog', but no. Apparently the flicker is too slow for them, so the images don't seem real. They can resolve at 75 Hz. Apparently some dogs can show interest in TV images with lots of activity, and one doggy-day-care owner keeps pooches amused with the Marx Brothers, the Three Stooges and classic Westerns (not sure about Lassie!). And I do have a classic photo of a litter of my puppies sitting on a big cushion watching Sesame Street (sorry, scanner not working).

The eyes of many dogs are placed on the sides of their heads (not so much pugs and Pokes), rather than on the front, like humans. This means they have a much bigger, panoramic visual field. This gives them about 240 degrees compared with 200 degrees for humans, even up to 270 degrees for a log-nosed dog with eyes more on the sides. This wide range, again, is handy in agility, where the dog may be well ahead of the handler yet can see where they are.

What about colour? Apparently dogs can see the world in colour, but in fewer, duller colours than humans. Colour is a trick of the brain – we attach a colour to a particular light frequency using colour-sensitive cells (cones) in our eyes. Humans



have three kinds of cones: these interpret longer wavelength light as orange, medium as green and shortwave as blue, making up all the colours in between. Dogs' eyes have many fewer cones, so colour for them is less rich and intense. Also, they have only two kinds of cones: one kind is similar to the human shortwave cone (blue) and another that is between the orange and green cones, suggesting that dogs are less sensitive to red. Painstaking research (4,000 tests) was performed with beagles, cocker spaniels, Italian greyhounds, mixed breeds and a poodle. First they were taught to find one item out of three (each a different colour). This was difficult, due to their disinterest in vision in general and colour in particular. Nevertheless the researchers persisted, and when the dogs understood what they were asked to do, carried out numerous tests to differentiate between colours. More than 33% of correct choices were taken to show that the choices were more than chance. The results of these tests suggested that dogs would see a rainbow as dark blue, light blue, grey, light yellow, brownish yellow and very dark grey. So now you understand why your dog can't see a red ball on green grass! Fluoro colours are hard for them to see too. Put a blue ball on grass and it's much more easily seen, or one with blue and white patches.

Dogs use sight to confirm what they already know from their hearing or scenting. A dog's hearing is much more acute than a human's, for some sounds it may be hundreds of times better. Testing has shown that dogs have a larger high frequency range of hearing – like adding 28 notes to the right hand side of the piano keyboard (possibly an evolutionary benefit for catching mice through their squeaks?). Also apparently they can discriminate 1/8 of the distance between C and C-sharp. Our human ears are tuned to the lower frequencies of speech, and such discrimination is unnecessary.

And the nose! This is the dominant sensory system for dogs. They have four times more olfactory bulbs than humans, though on average their brains are about 10% the size of a human brain. They can identify smells about 1000 to 10 000 times more sensitively than humans.

They work hard to gather scents, moving and wiggling their noses and interrupting their normal breathing to push air into a bony shelf in the nose where it is temporarily trapped and analysed.

A dog has a unique noseprint too, with ridges and dimples, as individual as a human fingerprint.

You can noseprint your dog: dry the nose with a tissue, put a small dab of food colouring on the nose and press onto paper. Voila! (Wash later so you won't have to explain about the pink or blue nose!)

There is lots in the book about how dogs can sniff out cancer, about why they have cold noses, about the relatively enormous section of dog's brains taken up with scent receptors, and some differences between breeds (varying from 300 million in the blood hound, to 125 million in a dachshund). Humans have about 2% of the scent receptors of the beagle.

Moving on, touch is really important to dogs too, involving as it does pressure, heat/cold, perception of pain and the awareness of the body. Touch is concerned with the arousal of emotions and the forming of bonds for both us as humans and for our dogs. Dogs have pressure receptors near the base of each hair, and sensors deeper in the skin for harder pressure, both very similar to humans. Different spots have differing degrees of sensitivity: the nose and lips are extremely sensitive, especially the whiskers. These are quite different from men's moustaches and beards. They are rigid and, because they have numerous touch cells at their bases, are extremely sophisticated in their sensory ability. Of the areas in the dog's brain devoted to touch, 40% is allocated to the face, and most of that to the whiskers. The whiskers serve as a warning and protection to the face, and in the location and possibly recognition of objects, especially in dim light. It's thought that some of the sensations come from the perception of slight changes in air currents when approaching an object. So I have now stopped trimming my dog's whiskers because they are so important for them to make sense of the world.

Feet are particularly sensitive too, sensing vibration and stability of surfaces (and not liking trimming or toenail cutting). Notice that when greeting each other, dogs avoid the ultra-sensitive faces and feet.

There's so much information in this book that I can't summarise it all here. Have a look at it for yourself and see how it changes your ideas about your best friends and their behaviour. They are not furry little two-year-olds, they are dogs with all their special characteristics, some of which are close to human, but others that are just so different.

I give my dogs lots of credit for putting up with my blundering (though well-intentioned) human ways.