



Axstane Agility Club

Members' Newsletter June 2011

www.axstane.co.uk



A note from the Editor: I wish to pass on all the club's best wishes to Melanie and Echo who have moved up to grade 6 and to Martine and Bubbles who have moved up to grade 4. Well done!

Don't forget our own show running between 17th-19th June. All members are asked to attend and help in any way that they can.

Happy training, Nicky



Reciprocal Ring Partying 2011

Billingshurst at Cranley on Sunday 10th July
Trent Park in Essex on Sunday, 25th September

DON'T FORGET OUR OWN SHOW AT ORSETT
We need help Friday, Saturday & Sunday 17th -19th June

Voluntary Ring Parties

We will provide an Axstane ring party at DIN (Ipswich) 16th-20th August in order to retain our camping location

We will be ring partying at Letchworth Show (Huntingdon Racecourse) 9th-11th September to support Melanie in exchange for excellent camping location on top of the rings

We will be supporting Martine at Stour Valley Show on Saturday, 24th September – this may become a formal reciprocal ring party!

**Please return your ring party form to Gina
as soon as possible.**

Burnham has asked if Axstane can offer a reciprocal ring party at their show in Latchingdon, Essex on 10th & 11th September – can you help? Please let Georgina know

Training Days 2012

It might seem a long way off yet but your committee is already planning your training day for next year!

We will have 2 trainers for 2012 in Mac and Wendy Card. Some club members will have already had the pleasure of training with Mac and Wendy at one of their training days that are run at their own club Pioneer Agility Kent.

Mac and Wendy have over 30 years experience of agility between them and Mac has competed at Olympia on more than one occasion as well as representing the UK in Europe.

Wendy believes in positive reward based training with lots of motivation. This should be enjoyable and fun for both handler and dog. She also believes in treating everyone and every dog as individuals.

Malcolm (or Mac as he likes to be known) believes in being firm but fair with both handlers and dogs. He enjoys the competitive side, but this is not a necessity to enjoy agility.

He is always open to new ideas and methods and will try to help any dog or handler with a particular problem. He enjoys the challenge of getting the best out of dog and handler, especially the handler.

The training sessions for 2012 are likely to be run over two weekends and will be at Judds Wood Farm, nr Tonbridge which is Mac and Wendy's training venue. Mac has thought of your pockets here as the training sessions will be cheaper than if held at Eaglesfield.

Within each training session the group will be split into two: Mac takes one half and tends to focus on more technical handling skills while Wendy tends to work more on motivation.

More details on the training day/s will be available in future newsletters.



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Axstane has a facebook group! To join please register as a user on facebook and then send your email address to either Kerry or Nicky who will add you as a member of the group. The group is closed so only members of the group can see what has been written or added. From the Ed: I see it has already stimulated great debate both on the group page and at club about that fantastic Lee Windeatt weaves video....have a look if you haven't already seen it: <http://www.leewindeatt.co.uk/> (under gallery/videos) Something for us all to aspire to!



How could I not include this photo!! Flying Zep who started competing this season.



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Update on Jake from Andrew Bird: Jake is doing really quite well now, after coming to agility a few weeks back it soon became obvious that it had been much too soon as he was limping pretty badly again the next day. We took the decision to book him in for a course of shock wave therapy and they were able to start it a few days later. He was very groggy when he first came round but was soon feeling much more himself and we only saw him limp 3 times in the course of the next week.

He had a second lot three weeks after and we have not really looked back since. It has been about two months now, I guess, and he has not limped once. We have been able to get him back to full length walks and off lead exercise, thank God - taking him to the garden on a lead had become a real pain for all of us and I am sure it was even worse for Jake. He now jumps over the wall and tears around much as he did before.

We are gradually weaning him off the medication and in a few more weeks he should be off it completely. As to whether he comes back to agility we are still not sure. We have decided not to even attempt it before September, regardless of what the vet says, but after that we will have to see how he goes. He would love to come back I am quite sure but it has been a very expensive business and would be very unfair on him to risk a set back, but we will see. I will keep you posted. We are very much looking forward to meeting up with you all again at the show in June, as we are coming to help even though Jake will not be competing.

Hi, my name is Jess and in this picture I am 18 days old and have just started to eat solid food to top up my supply of milk from Mum's Milk Bar. My own mum Bonnie, who is very pretty, has a sister Maddie who you all know because she belongs to Linda (D). Well, my new dad phoned Linda (D) on the same day that I was born and was told all about my three sisters and four brothers, although at the time everyone thought it was three brothers and four sisters! Why didn't they ask ME? Anyway, because there were only supposed to have been five of us in total there were three little black and white tri girls looking for good homes. Lots of emails and photographs were sent to everyone who knew about us, and when I was six days old this good looking man came to see us and picked ME! Since then I have found out that my new mum had a lot of input in choosing me, so all of this makes me very special. I can't wait to see my new home as I have heard that there is a good-looking big brother called Jack waiting to play with me, and over the next few weeks my new mum and dad hope to make more visits to see how we are all progressing. I have heard about "puppy classes" - can't wait to find out more about these and meet all of you at Axstane. Bye for now - I will keep in touch. Jess





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Linda Dowell's dogs: Marty and Maddy at the beach.....Denny flying high!

I had always fancied trying agility but understood that you stayed on waiting lists for years on end and I couldn't be bothered with that. I have to thank Ron and Shirley Parnell for starting me off in agility. They belonged to Bexley Dog Training Club which was the club that I belonged to with the two collies that I had back in 1994; Lady, the most un-collie-like collie that you could ever meet and my wonderful Denny. Ron and Shirley started an agility club in a field in Westbrooke Road, Welling on a Saturday morning which was 5 minutes away from where I live; sadly that field has now turned into a school.

I got Denny with the intention of competing in Obedience and although he was never brilliant he was quite happy to turn his paw to anything as long as he was doing it with me. He won me out of Pre-beginners, Beginners, Novice and won 1 A and 2 Bs in obedience before the agility bug totally took hold. We also did a bit of flyball. My first agility show was in December 1995; the Southern Border Collie show in Faversham. My first ever run was Starters Jumping in the outside ring, I had not got a clue what I was doing or who was who, didn't even know which one the judge was. Somebody told me to go and I just ran round the course with Denny. It was a nice 'S' shaped course, we encountered our first cloth tunnel and our first wall and I came 7th. Lady had a run off in Elementary Jumping at the same show and came 21st but that was one of only two places that she ever got in her whole life, she was very much a steady clear round dog. I also won £10 on the Lottery that same weekend.

After that I wanted to get into a more competitive club. I put myself on the waiting list for Axstane and CATS but it was Linda Croxford who took pity on me. I phoned her one Sunday and she said to come along to Leybourne on Monday and she took both my dogs straight away. Axstane kept me on a waiting list for 2 years and as far as I know I am still on the waiting list for CATS!! Not that I'm bitter or twisted at all. Denny won me out of Starters and Novice in agility and loved yapping round agility courses. My next collie was Jamie, my big black dog. He was a real character: his hobbies included joining in with football games, stealing other dogs' toys, watching television, digging and eating holes in the garden and agility. He also made it to Senior in agility.

My present two dogs are Marty and Maddy. Marty is 9 now. He is and probably always will be a Grade 3, as he just hasn't got that manic turn of speed, but he enjoys his agility and is fun to run. Maddy is 4 and is quite fast. She won a jumping class at the beginning of last year at Mid Downs, when Axstane were ring party, another jumping class at DIN when Martine was judging and Axstane were ring party and an agility class at Stour Valley when Melanie was judging and Axstane were ring party. There seems to be some sort of pattern forming there so I will have to make sure I do all the ring party shows this year. She also won the Grade 3 final at DIN last year.

I have just heard that my new puppy has been born today so looking forward to the patter of tiny feet quite soon.

Linda, Maddy and Martie



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I had always wanted a dog but working full time caused a problem, leaving the house at 7.00 and returning at 6.00. I wanted a Collie but everyone told me that they needed hours of exercise. I settled for a rescue German Shepherd Bitch called Tyara. She was about 1yr when I got her from an advert in the paper. She was a nervous wreck and bit me several times on the way home. It took a year before she accepted Peter. After a while I did some obedience with her and decided to have a few litters from her. She was a brilliant mother. Suzie, one of her pups, was my first attempt at agility. My first show was, I think, at Ipswich. I then bred Saisha and had 3yrs of agility with her until I had to retire her. She won out of Elementary into Starters at the Southern Border Collie Show Faversham. Thanks to Melanie, we eventually cracked the weaves. She would work all day for you and had a wonderful temperament. Then along came the collies.

Jake was my first collie and although I didn't do many shows he was a brilliant dog. Tell him once and he knew what to do either in Agility or Obedience. I needed another dog to train so in my usual haste I travelled to Gillingham, Devon and bought Dollar. Little did I know that I had bought a very nervous dog.

With one ear up and one ear down we try to be successful. Having really got the bug now I rescued a collie from Valgrays. I have known Val for many years and the minute Megan arrived at Val's I jumped in the car and collected her. What a loving nature she has. And how willing to work and please you. A couple of days after I had her at home I noticed that her outside toe was broken. It had been broken and healed before I got her. Whilst she was being spayed the vet agreed to amputate the toe. Once these healed it was off to agility classes.

I knew once I started training her I had a wonderful dog - quick to learn, very obedient. I said to everyone that she would be the dog to get me into Grade three and sure enough at Bridge House last year she did.

I would like to thank all those at Axstane Agility Club and my other club, Sunnadays, for all the hard work and dedication the trainers have given to the clubs.

Lesley, Dollar & Megan

Megan in action!





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Brushes and Grooming

There are many different makes and types of grooming equipment available on the market today. Each type has its own purpose. However there are three types of brushes commonly sold, used and recommended.

Slicker Brush

Slicker Brushes can be used in general on most coat types except smooth coats. Always be aware when purchasing a new slicker brush that the pins can be quite hard and will need to be worn in. Although on the market now there are a variety of different slickers I would recommend a soft slicker or a ball pin slicker. This is because over use of a slicker can cause abrasions of the skin called brush burn or slicker burn. This can potentially lead to more severe skin problems as the dog may lick and chew the affected area.

A slicker brush will help de-matt by removing the dead undercoat and reduce shedding (beware if your dog is competing: as a breed show dog you do not want to remove the undercoat). After slicker brushing your whole dog it is a good idea to use a comb over the dog to ensure you have removed the entire dead coat. The comb should pass through the coat with no pulling if this is not the case then more brushing is needed.



Pin and Bristle Brushes

These brushes work wonderfully well on double-coated dog breeds like English Sheepdogs. The best brushes for grooming short-haired dogs with no thick layer of undercoat are the soft bristle brushes. The bristles get any loose fur or dirt off the body at the same time stimulating the skin and circulation. You might prefer a single-sided brush (as in the photo) or a double-sided brush with bristles on one side and pins on the other.



Rubber brush and glove

For smooth-coated breeds, a rubber brush or glove is an excellent tool for removing the dead undercoat and creating a shiny top outer coat



Thank you to Julia Hickson for providing this grooming article.

No excuses now!! The Ed.



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The Kennel Club Accredited Instructor (KCAI) Scheme

From Melanie Fisher: Some of you may have heard that I am being sponsored by the Club to participate in the Kennel Club Accreditation Scheme for Instructor in Dog Training and Canine Behaviour. This is a scheme that is approved by the City & Guilds NPTC. <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/kcai/>

The Kennel Club launched the scheme as a pilot in 2001 with the primary aim of setting up national standards in dog training and to enable instructors to gain a nationally recognised qualification. There is now far more publicity and awareness of the scheme across the disciplines, but agility seems to be lagging behind. Ultimately the Kennel Club would like to see an accredited instructor in every registered agility club. Some of you may have read John Leslie's article on AgilityNet "The Apprentice Instructor and the KCAI Blog".

So I decided to have a go! I have now received the dreaded Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) forms for my provisional self-assessment. This is to work out my initial membership level in the scheme. As I have been instructing for over 5 years, if I get over 1000 points I will be registered as a "member working towards accreditation." I have to grade myself according to a chart and then also take into account my "Justifying Experience Level" which adds another dimension by looking at how long you have been involved with each activity

There are three main sections in the form and each has a number of individual modules. Section A is applied knowledge of theories with 10 modules covering such topics as development of the dog, Dangerous Dogs Act and canine welfare.

Section B looks at your background experience in canine activities and Section C covers coaching (instructing and advising) skills.

Once I have completed this APL form and returned it I then have to set about compiling a portfolio of evidence to support my claims and then to work towards increasing the scores where needed and ultimately applying for accreditation. I may ask some of you for "witness statements" and other evidence that I can use in my portfolio

Why am I doing this? Not sure really. I really enjoy training and feel that I want to do the best I can for both the handlers and the dogs. If this helps me to achieve that and I can pass on that support to other trainers then that will be great. So watch this space!