

# LEAD N

Magazine of

## Seeing Dogs

A working name of The Seeing Dogs Alliance

*Training Dogs to Guide Blind and  
Partially Sighted People*

Issue No 39 – Winter 2014 - 2015

Editors

Lindsey & Mike Pannell



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Items for the next issue of *Lead On* should be with us by 1 April and sent to head office. [info@seeingdogs.org.uk](mailto:info@seeingdogs.org.uk)

Thank you.

## FROM THE EDITORS



Hello, and welcome to winter *Lead ON* for 2014/15. This will be our last issue as editors. We have enjoyed editing and putting together the magazine for the past twelve years, but feel it is time for a change. A new person has been found for the next issue, but as Chris has written about her in her *Secretary's Report*, we won't write any more about it here.

You can also read about the latest development in the setting up of the new charity, still under the name of The Seeing Dogs Alliance, in her report. Chris has, as usual, given us the latest news on our dogs and the latest on fundraising.

In the last issue, it was reported that Kaiser was retiring. You can read about his new home and family. There is also a very interesting article by Neil about dogs in the First World War.

Our thanks go to those who have sent postage stamps since the summer issue. We are not getting as many stamps sent to us as we used to. Don't forget to save your stamps for us, especially with Christmas coming up. You can continue to send them to us at 68 Osborne Gardens, Herne Bay, CT6 6SJ.

Before we go, we would like to thank everybody who has contributed articles to the magazine, and we would

like to especially thank John Grave for supplying us with so many lovely photos of our dogs.

It only remains for us now to say goodbye, and we hope you enjoy this issue of *Lead On*.

Lindsey and Mike Pannell

## SECRETARY'S REPORT



As you will see from the front page of this issue, we are now using the new charity number, although at the time of writing, we're still trying to transfer the last asset, an Owner Agreement for one of our clients, the original copy of which appears to have been lost in the post. However, I told our solicitors we would have to consider the new charity fully operational, because we needed to take out a training contract with John Grave for Zoe, the third Hungarian wirehaired vizsla we shall have trained. I was therefore told we could start using the new charity number.

The last few months have been extremely stressful. Our solicitors had the bright idea of suggesting that Geoff, John and I should go to their offices in Canary Wharf, London, to carry out our signing obligations of our clients' Transfer Agreements, as we had all signed some of the original Owner Agreements. We went there on 21 July, accompanied by Mark Corrigan, our new Treasurer, and the signing activity seemed endless. Therefore, we thought that side of things was done and dusted. The solicitors opted to send the Transfer Agreements to the clients, with a covering letter giving

instructions on what to do with the Agreements, which I also had to sign, and a prepaid envelope for them to return our copies to them. Eventually, they should send our copies to us. Inevitably, I suppose, a couple of the Transfer Agreements didn't have a signature from the charity, so they had been missed out when we went to Canary Wharf. Also, one of the return envelopes didn't have the correct postage on it, so it took two weeks to reach the solicitors. The last Transfer Agreement, whose completion we're awaiting, didn't have the client's original Owner Agreement attached to it, as the client obviously forgot it. I sent him the solicitors' address and asked him to send his original Owner Agreement to them, but it appears to have got lost in the post. This means that I am having to get another copy of his Owner Agreement signed.

Since writing the above, the final asset has now been transferred. We voted at the Trustees' Meeting on the morning of 4 October to dissolve the old charity once this had been done, although we couldn't fix a date at that time.

In addition to our new Treasurer, we have taken on board another trustee, Esther Porta, who runs her own PR company. She met Neil through her animal work for Samsung, who fund the South Korean assistance dog organisation. This organisation trains all types of assistance dogs. Esther is a great PR person, and she has agreed to have a go at taking notes for the minutes of meetings. I currently record the meetings, but so often things go wrong with the recordings, and I have to do either the whole of the minutes or parts of them from memory. Geoff has also returned as a trustee.

Ann Yates has resigned as a trustee, and Lindsey and Mike will be resigning on 31 December. Lindsey and Mike will still be prepared to raise funds for us, and I think Ann will as well,

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but Lindsey and Mike wish to focus their main fundraising efforts on Canine Partners, as most people will know that Lindsey has a Canine Partner.

All trustees of the new charity will have life membership on appointment. They will still have to stand down at the beginning of the first AGM following their appointment, and be elected by the members of the charity, if they wish to remain trustees. We could still do with more trustees, so if anyone would like to offer themselves, please contact me. There will be a lot of reading of Charity Commission leaflets to do, so it would be a good idea for any applicants to have access to the internet.

Although the new charity was registered on 24 April, its first financial year started on 1 January 2014, and will end on 31 December 2014. I know I suggested in the last issue that members shouldn't pay another subscription till 1 January 2015, but this was bad advice. Some people did pay a subscription earlier this year, which was correct. For the purpose of sending the notice of the general meeting which was held on 4 October, I considered anyone who had paid a subscription from 1 April 2013, or had paid a subscription before that for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, to be a member. However, although we shall not need to send an Annual Return to the Charity Commission for the 2013/14 year of the old charity, provided it's removed from the Register of Charities before 31 January 2015, which is the date the Annual Return is due, we were told by the Charity Commission that we would need to extend that financial year to the date the assets were transferred. We hope that will be some time next week. Nevertheless, I think the trustees would like those people who haven't paid a subscription for 2014 to either pay one when

they receive this magazine, or pay two years' subscriptions when they pay their 2015 subscription, one for 2014 and one for 2015.

We held our general meeting on 4 October for the new charity, which was the first general meeting of the members of the new charity. We held it mainly so that we could get amendments to the CIO constitution approved. However, we were going to ask members who attended where they thought the first AGM of the new charity should be held. As only one member who wasn't a trustee attended, there seemed little point in raising the matter. At the moment, it's booked for 4 July at RNIB, and July is now the ideal month to hold it, as it's seven months after the end of our financial year, which is the time we have allowed for some years now between the end of the financial year and the AGM. Anyone who wasn't able to attend the general meeting can send me their preferences. Remember, though, that July is the peak season for hotel prices, which is why the majority of the trustees prefer to hold it at RNIB.

We were delighted at our Trustees' Meeting on the morning of 4 October when Esther Porta, one of our new trustees, expressed an interest in editing *Lead On*. Lindsey and Mike's last issue will be this one; therefore, Esther will do the spring 2015 issue and see how it goes and how she feels about doing the job permanently. We do have the position registered with the Woking Volunteer Centre, but we have had no applications yet from that source. We wish Esther all the best in her endeavours, and we're sure it will go well. I shall do the braille copy.

Esther has also agreed to be our Minute Secretary. I've been wanting someone to take on this job for some time.

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I should like to express my thanks to Lindsey and Mike for all the years they have edited *Lead On*, and also for their work as trustees. I'm sure we all wish them all the best in the future.

Although it is extremely early, this is the only chance I shall have to wish members and supporters collectively a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chris Parker

# DOG NEWS

Barney, a yellow Labrador, who has been undergoing his Seeing Dog training since March, has greatly improved over the months. He used to be afraid of shiny floors, and his speed and tension were excessive. However, the latest work report I have received from John Grave, the Guide Dog Mobility Instructor who trains our dogs and partnerships, describes him as a bright dog, whose work has improved considerably. He can still be excitable, especially when fussed by people other than John or his partner. However, things are looking very good.



John has matched Barney with a Seeing Dog owner who needs a replacement dog, and the Seeing

Dog Owner says he will be willing to train with Barney, which is very satisfying.

Zoe, a Hungarian wirehaired vizsla, the other dog currently receiving her Seeing Dog training, has only recently started being worked in harness.

Although John collected her from her puppy rearer, Penny Stratton, who has puppy reared three Hungarian wirehaired vizslas for us, in July,



Zoe's training has been delayed, partly by the need to get the new charity fully operational, so that we could take out a contract with John under the new charity number, and not have to transfer a contract taken out under the old charity number as an asset to the new charity, partly by the fact that she had a late season, and partly by the need to have two operations on her tail. She has very little fur on it, and when wagging it, she was injuring it, so the vet suggested docking it by about a third. This didn't prove satisfactory, leaving exposed skin, so she then had another operation to dock it by another third. This has proved very successful, so she can now be trained. However, in a few weeks' time, she will have to be spayed, so that will mean some more time off work.

So far, she has been judged to be sensitive, but her speed and tension are reasonably satisfactory, and very little sniffing

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has been seen. Her position on the pavement is central, which is a good trait.

Some slight food aggression has been observed when another dog threatens her food. However, I'm sure this will improve in John's capable hands. It's very early days at the moment in her training, so there's a long way to go. John has mentioned to me already, though, a possible owner for her.

Milo, our latest puppy, was attacked by a Staffordshire bull terrier on Sunday, 24 August, when walking past the dog, which was in the control of an eight-year-old girl outside Tesco, in Strood, a district of Rochester, Kent. The offending dog pulled the little girl over when he got away from her and jumped on Milo, who had not encouraged the attack. Passers-by eventually got the dog off Milo by using their feet and anything they could grab. Milo received deep puncture wounds to his face where the dog was biting him. His puppy rearer, Trina Curtis, was in total shock. Her teenage son was with her at the time. The police were called. The owner of the dog had left it in the control of his daughter while he was shopping in Tesco. Trina rang the out-of-hours vet, who suggested that because Milo had no wounds which needed stitching, she should take him to her local vet after the Bank Holiday, as 25 August was a Bank Holiday. Trina did take Milo to her vet on Tuesday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, who gave her some antibiotics, which probably meant that the wounds were infected.

Milo's behaviour was affected by the attack at first. He took a week or two to get over it, but I understand he has more or less returned to normal now.

We thought the owner might be prosecuted under the Dangerous Dogs Act, as Milo is to be trained to be an

assistance dog. However, although the Act says it is an offence for another dog to attack an assistance dog, that Act doesn't define an assistance dog, but simply refers to the Equality Act for a definition. The Equality Act defines an assistance dog as a dog which *has been trained to help a disabled person*.

Therefore, because Milo hasn't yet been trained to be a Seeing Dog, the police's solicitor advised that they would stand very little chance of taking a successful prosecution.

*The Kent Messenger* did include two articles about the attack, one on Friday, 29 August, and an update on Monday, 1 September.

The Dog Liaison Officer went to see the dog in its own home. He told us that it was a friendly dog. It might have been friendly towards humans, but we feel it had not been socialised with other dogs.

Kaiser, who was our youngest dog to qualify, has now retired, and is living on a smallholding in Somerset. He is enjoying his new life enormously.

We put an advertisement in *The Surrey Advertiser*, Geoff's and my local weekly newspaper. We have advertised a reject Seeing dog in that newspaper, and received lots of offers of new homes. Therefore, we thought it would be the same with a retired Seeing Dog. We did receive one or two offers of local homes, but they were either not suitable, or when the people found that Kaiser didn't have health insurance, they were not interested. As I explained to them, even if he had been insured, they would still have had to take out a new policy, as insurers won't pass a policy to new owners. A lady in Send was looking after Kaiser while we were finding him a new home. She takes local dogs for days or weekends when their owners are not at home. We originally told her she would probably

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have Kaiser for a week to ten days. Therefore, when time was going on and we hadn't found a permanent home for him, Geoff asked people at the bridge club where he plays bridge on Wednesday evenings if anyone knew someone who could take him. Although no one local offered Kaiser a home, a gentleman told Geoff he had a daughter living in Somerset, who, with her husband, owned a smallholding. They wanted a dog as a companion for their parsons terrier. Although we didn't want Kaiser to be rehomed as far away as that, we decided to ask John Grave to take Kaiser down, so that he could inspect the property. He reported that it was a very nice property, and Kaiser would be welcome there, so John left him there.



We are still experiencing problems finding puppy rearers. We had several inquiries from John's advert in his local magazine, but the only person we took on was Trina. She has a sister who is a guide dog owner, which was one of the reasons she wanted to help us. However, I understand even she didn't realise how much work was involved in rearing a puppy to be a guide dog or a Seeing Dog. If anyone knows of someone in the Home Counties or the West Midlands who would be prepared to rear a puppy, **please** refer them to us. We should like puppy rearers to live where they can be supervised by Neil Ewart, our Chairman, John Grave or Geoff and me. People who have walked guide dog puppies, but would like a change of charity, are likely to be the most suitable people.

Chris Parker

## KAISER

Kaiser has been with us for 4 weeks now and it's already hard to imagine what it was like without him. He has settled down so quickly. Kaiser



found the countryside a little different to start with, and we were surprised when he chased our sheep! However, he only needs telling once and he hasn't repeated that escapade.

He has made many friends around the village, with people falling for him instantly. His new house has a resident dog, Ralph, as you can see in the picture, and they get on very well, with Ralph teaching Kaiser how to relax into his retirement. Being a terrier, he knows how to be a bit naughty!

Kaiser also has children to play with him. he is very patient with our two-year-old, who has taught him to play "peek a boo".

Kaiser is enjoying all the long walks he is getting twice a day, his favourite being along the river. He often comes back having to have a good wash down.

The nurses at the vets have put him on Weight Watchers, so he gets regular weight checks. His weight has fallen slightly since his arrival, but his Hoover

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instincts need a good eye, especially with a toddler who adores him.

Kaiser is such a lovely dog. He accompanies me everywhere around the smallholding. Even if it's to put the chickens away at night, he will be there. He has visited the local school to teach the children in Reception Year about Seeing Dogs. He takes it all in his stride. Kaiser is a wonderful addition to our family.

Carolyn Roche

*We are so pleased to know that Kaiser has settled down in his lovely new home. We hope you and he continue to enjoy each other for many years to come.*

The Editors

## FUNDRAISING NEWS



We have received one or two further donations from charitable trusts, following our appeal using consultants in 2013. All of them from whom we have received further funding gave us money last year, apart from one company which runs two trusts, and we asked the consultants not to include that company on the list, as it has given us frequent donations of £5,000 from one of the trusts, and two or three donations of £3,000 from the other one. I appealed separately this year to the Chairman of both these trusts, and he has given us another £3,000 from the one from which he normally gives us that sum when he gives us a

donation from it. I believe our Treasurer, Mark Corrigan, wishes to do something with trusts to try to get us more money.

Since the last issue, we have held Flag Days in Coventry, where three/four collectors raised nearly £600, on Victoria Station, London, where six collectors raised £1800, and the Into Uxbridge Shopping Centre. We didn't do so well there this year, as unbeknown to us, Geoff was suffering from pneumonia in his right lung. He was in quite a lot of pain all day, so I did most of the collecting, and I think we raised over £600, but not much over. Geoff and I normally raise at least £800 there.

Pets Pantry, in Whitstable, continues to support us with its collecting box, although the owners have changed. We have received £400 or £500 from them this year. We also received a very generous donation from the mother of a Seeing Dog applicant.

We have recently received £610 from Waitrose in Hersham, near Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. We were either the charity, or one of the charities, for which they raised money in August. We're not sure how the Waitrose fundraising scheme works now. We think their customers used to have to recommend a charity to receive a monthly sum, and it depended on which charity the management chose from those recommended to receive this. However, we're not sure whether customers still have to recommend a charity to receive a one-off sum. If this is the case, we believe we have a supporter in Hersham, who might have recommended us to receive money. However it works, we are very grateful for the cheque, which had to be collected from the Hersham Centre, which I understand is a shopping centre.

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We did receive about £700 or £800 from Gift Aid. I'm not sure whether we're going to claim Gift Aid from 6 April 2013, as we haven't received many Gift Aided donations, and we have a tight schedule to dissolve the old charity and have it removed from the Register of Charities.

We shall be advertising with *The Law Society Gazette* in their Christmas Appeal, and on the Your Expert Witness website, a website where solicitors go to find experts to help them with cases they are taking, and look for charities to which to recommend their clients to leave bequests in their wills.

I would appeal to members and supporters to remember us in their wills. Don't forget to mention that our charity number has changed, however, although our name hasn't.

Julie McGuffie, whose daughter had a Seeing Dog, which had to be retired due to health reasons, gave a talk to a branch of the WI on 13 October. She raised £30, which included some money from sales of her homemade jewellery and a donation.

Once again, if anyone can hold a Coffee Morning for us, please let us know. We have been pleased with how our funds have grown, but if we are to increase the number of people we can help by supplying them with a Seeing Dog, we need to keep increasing the funds. If anyone wants copies of an Information Sheet to give to members of an audience to whom they give a talk, let me know.

We're not changing our account numbers for the new charity. The bank is prepared to let us keep our account numbers, and simply change the status of the accounts from an unincorporated association to a charitable incorporated organisation; therefore, anyone who has taken out a Bankers' Order won't have to change the account their money goes into.

Chris Parker

## Dogs in World War 1

One hundred years ago, much of Europe plunged into a long and very bloody war.

I was recently reading about a dog called Stubby, a terrier type dog, who was found wandering the streets of Connecticut, USA, just prior to the American entry into the Great War. His saviour was a young man named Rob Conroy. When Rob joined up and was sent to France, Stubby was smuggled there. He lived with the 102nd Infantry Battalion, but wasn't just a pet. He became an excellent guard with very sharp eyes and ears. No matter how tough the action was, Stubby would run out into the battlefield and would locate wounded soldiers, and remain with them until the medics could reach them. He would stand guard in the trenches, and actually gave advanced warning of a gas attack. On another occasion, a German soldier sneaked into the American trenches, but retreated quickly with teeth marks in his backside.

He survived 17 battles and the appreciative soldiers made him a special coat, for when he was presented to the President, Woodrow Wilson. Stubby returned to the US and toured, raising money for military charities.

Dogs played many roles during the conflict. They made great messengers, as they were taught to run across the battlefields with messages fastened to their collars. They made difficult targets most of the time. It is reported that the Germans had one particularly skilful dog and the British tried everything to capture him, but all

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failed. Then a bright individual introduced a bitch, which I assume was in season, to use as bait. It worked!!

Dogs were also put in harness and used to drag machine guns around. Also, they would have reels of telephone cables attached to them. As they ran, the cable would be laid out along their route.

The trenches were very close together, and it was not unheard of for opposite armies to send each other friendly messages, tobacco and even newspapers via a dog, which would return with similar booty. I guess they will have taken full advantage of some hospitality shown by either side.

Rats were a constant problem, and would dine off the many human bodies lying around, so terriers were kept busy trying to keep the numbers down.

Many of these dogs must have provided wonderful company and offered a degree of normality in a world seemingly gone mad.

A soldier wrote this poem to his dog, Jim:

A tough little, rough little beggar  
And merry the eyes the eyes on him  
But no German or Turk  
Can do dirtier work  
With an enemy rat than Jim

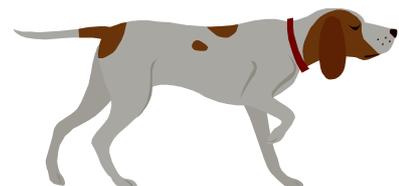
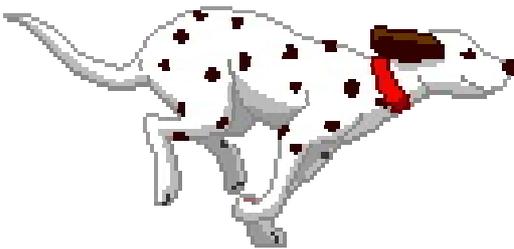
And when the light's done and night's falling  
And shadows are darkling and dim  
In my coat you will nuzzle  
Your pink little muzzle  
And growl in your dreams, little Jim

Let's hope they both survived!

Finally, it was the Germans in 1916 who recognised that dogs could help blinded soldiers by acting as guides. By the end of the War, a great many had been successfully trained, and this pioneering work led to the current situation, where we find guide dogs working all over the world.

So, it is fair to say that some good came out of the carnage.

Neil Ewart



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If you are a taxpayer and you are giving £20 or more, and you haven't given us permission to claim Gift Aid on your subscription and/or donation before January 2013, we would be grateful if you could complete the Gift Aid Declaration on whichever of the forms you use, to give us permission to claim Gift Aid. However, please read the information given on it very carefully, as it has changed

for new donations given from the beginning of 2013. Payments under £20 automatically attract Gift Aid.

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**"Job done, time to get ready  
for the festive season"**





