

LEAD N

Magazine of Seeing Dogs

A working name of The Seeing Dogs Alliance

*Training Dogs to Guide Blind and
Partially Sighted People*

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Editor: Jane Anderson

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A charitable incorporated organisation

T: 01634 572125 E: info@seeingdogs.org.uk
18 Court Lodge Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2QU

W: www.seeingdogs.org.uk

Facebook [@seeingdogs](https://www.facebook.com/seeingdogs) Twitter [@seeing_dogs](https://twitter.com/seeing_dogs)
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Editorial

Hope no one or doggies are melting, with the sudden heat wave that is upon us.

Sunshine though always brings a smile to our faces. As F. Scott Fitzgerald said in The Great Gatsby 'I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer', I bring news of 2 new Seeing Dog puppies, our existing puppies continuing on their journeys and some puppies graduating to Seeing Dog Trainees.

Very importantly and the reason this charity is here, we learn what difference having a Seeing Dog has made to certain people's lives.

Unfortunately, without funds we cannot continue to purchase, train and produce the final product that transforms lives. Therefore, in this edition of Lead On we bring to your attention a new and simple way of texting £5 to Seeing Dogs. (Additional amounts may be available in the future.) In addition, we encourage the use of 'Give as you Live', when purchasing items on line, which at no extra cost to yourselves gives us extra funds.

Enjoy reading articles about fund raising activities, some of our supporters have undertaken. Some of the activities were more physical than others!

Thank you all for your continued support of The Seeing Dogs Alliance

Jane Anderson. Editor

New Recruits

By Jane Anderson



Meet 8-week-old Labrador brothers Robson and Proctor, the latest puppies to join Seeing Dogs. Robson is black and is held by trainer Sue Scott. Proctor is yellow and being held by trainer John Grave.

Thanks to Dogs for Good for breeding them.

Figure 1. Sue Scott + John Grave at Dogs for Good collecting Proctor and Robson.

Taisie

By Jane Anderson

Taisie, who is sponsored by the ‘Pets at Home Foundation’, is now 7 months old and no longer a tiny ball of fluff. Instead, she is quite stocky although, she has maintained her very light blonde colour, which attracts quite a bit of attention



Figure 2. Taisie admiring herself at The Hampton Court Flower show.



Figure 3. Taisie and her Puppy Walker at Wisley

She continues to make very good progress in all aspects of her training and has overcome her dislike of shopping centres. Taisie always likes to be ‘doing’ something and is now having to learn that there are times and places that you have to lie still and not bark. Work in progress.

Taisie has been to RHS Wisley, the Malvern Garden Show, after which she also stayed in a hotel and The Hampton Court Flower Show. She also attended Commemorations of the 80th year since D-Day and was totally unphased by all the noise and activities of the various aircraft!

Consolidation of skills learnt will be undertaken in coming months before going to ‘big school’.

Brunny

By Margaret Atkins

Hi Everyone,

We hope that you are enjoying the summer with your puppies. Sadly, our beautiful girl Rosie left us last month to begin her training as a Seeing Dog. She was the easiest puppy we have ever raised for Seeing Dogs.



Figure 4. Brunny playing in the paddling pool



Figure 5. Brunny sitting with Rosie in the garden

Unusually for a labrador she didn't touch a single thing in our home, including food, which she wasn't supposed to. She really loved her toys, especially her teddies, and always had them with her at home.

A few weeks before Rosie actually left us, our next puppy arrived; a pure black labrador boy called 'Brunny'. Rosie adored him and treated him like her baby.

'Brunny' even tried to feed from Rosie and she didn't mind at all. She would lick his belly clean and they were always together. Being with Rosie really helped Brunny settle in well with us.

'Brunny' is one of a litter of nine and it must be hard for puppies to leave their mum and all their siblings, at such a tender age of around only eight weeks.

'Brunny' is very bright and learns commands very quickly. He is also great when out in town, or on buses and sometimes on trains. He does get quite a lot of attention when we are out as people think he is so good looking.

Our granddaughter and her friends adore him and we will be looking after them a lot during the school holidays. He is extremely affectionate and cuddly and always by my side, wherever I am.

'Brunny' is now our 17th training puppy in total, and the 9th with Seeing Dogs and so far, they have all qualified, all in just 7 ½ years. We would dearly like to keep one but they keep qualifying. Oh well!

Update on Trainee Dog – Rosie

By John Grave

Rosie has commenced her formal training and is settling in to a new home and work routine.

Currently, we are learning the basics of walking in the centre of the pavement slightly ahead of the handler. She has progressed into wearing the full harness and is learning to stop and sit consistently at kerbs. She enjoys the treat training and is always ready to enjoy a free run whenever the opportunity arises. Indoors she is very well behaved. She has a gentle temperament.

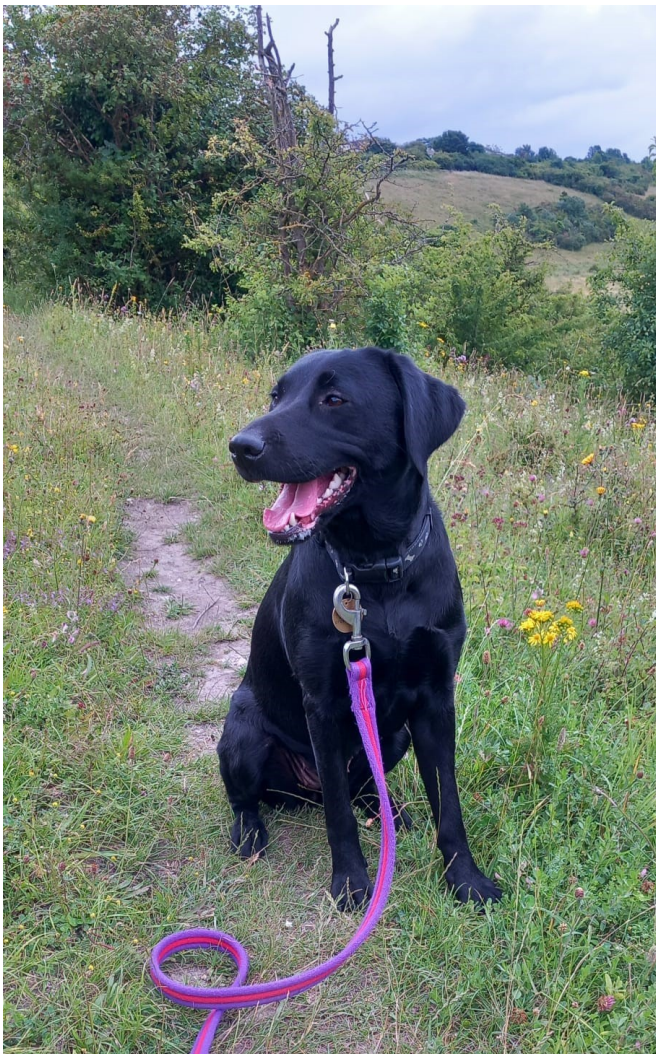


Figure 6. Rosie sitting in a field smiling



Figure 7. Rosie sitting in a field smelling a wild flower

Sky – Growing up and Moving On, the Bittersweet Day *By John and Susan Ferguson*



Figure 8. Blonde curly Labradoodle Sky

25th June 2024 is a day etched in our memory for ever.

Our latest charge who we have walked, “Sky”, is the 15th Puppy we have had in our home, for a prolonged period, as Puppy Walkers since 2008.



Figure 9. Blonde curly Labradoodle Sky.

We have also, temporarily, boarded puppies, too many to mention, for respite or holiday scenarios to help other Puppy Walker friends when we were “between” pups, over the years.

**Why a Bittersweet day?
Well, despite having experienced many days of Puppies leaving, for Advanced Training, over our time as Puppy walkers, the moment still is one of the most**

emotionally challenging days in the role, we volunteer for.

For “Bitter” read “Sad” really.

We have had a wonderful puppy in our home for up to a year and seen them develop skills and personalities, over that period, that can range from cute, affectionate and caring pups, to cheeky little imps that “try it on” when you are off guard, but this gives us new learning experiences that we, with our Trainers’ assistance, often have to learn new tactics and training methods to combat.

We are “Sad” to let them go after they have become an integral part of our family and daily life, over their time with us.

The “Sweet” part of the emotional experience, however, is a warm, proud feeling that the puppy you have raised and help develop, over the time with you, will, hopefully, go on to develop with the Advance Training they will receive from their Trainer. Hopefully, eventually they graduate to become a life changing partner, to a person with sight Impairment. Hopefully, they will bring with them, not only a full set of exceptional skills to assist their partner in their daily life, but also the same affection, comfort and loyalty they have given us as their Puppy Walkers in their early life.

So, to the latest of our puppies “Sky”. The Bittersweet moment was much in evidence as Sky, who only joined us at 7 months of age and left us at one year of age, was, for us, a very precious Puppy who really did gain our affection.

Sky, when joining us, had a considerable amount of catching up to do, in a short time. Sky is a sensitive puppy, who took a few weeks to adapt to a new home, but then began to reward us with improving basic skills, both at weekly training sessions and also in our daily lives in between them.

Sky experienced lots of real-life situations in her time with us. We followed many well practiced Puppy Walking environments like Shopping, Bus Rides, Train Rides, Busy, Noisy, Traffic scenarios on street walks, as well as general lead walks.

However, we also undertook special environments like Theatres (Our Daughters BA performance at the Uni theatre provided such an opportunity), Cinema, A Cable Car across the Thames and two memorable trips to London, where all manner of experiences were on hand to challenge her.

We are pleased to say that ‘Sky’ handled all situations presented to her in her usual calm and relaxed manner. She seemed to enjoy her time out with us, walking on lead in those environments and some of the time, when taking a rest, just sitting with us on a bench “taking it all in” and people watching.

It was not all work though and Sky enjoyed joining us on a week’s break at the Norfolk Coast in March, where she experienced many beach situations on and off lead and woodland walks on lead. She adapted to the new surroundings of the cottage accommodation and new experiences very well.

Sky also enjoyed the company of our friends’ dogs on occasions, where, in safe surroundings, she could run free and play with other dogs which she enjoyed immensely. Recall practice, away from dogs, was one training exercise we could practice.

Sky moved on to the North of England, to join trainer Wendy and hopefully she will eventually find a lifetime partner, to bring her special skills, affection and comfort to.

The house is quiet for a while and old habits die hard. We still have to stop ourselves getting food bowls ready, thinking its morning “walkies” time and “finding things to do with our hands when shopping”! Hopefully, it will not be too long before we start on another journey of discovery and learning, with another young one in our home.

This journey, as Puppy Walkers, has become an integral part of our lives and a great learning and development experience for both the “newbie” and us.

Go “Sky” make us proud of your future achievements x

Sky

By Wendy Biss-Cooper

I collected Sky at the end of June and she has settled into my home dynamics well, although initially, she was a little reserved. She is coming out of her shell, showing she has a gentle and friendly disposition. Sky has spent the first month doing obedience and assessment walks and she's progressed well, showing she is environmentally sound. She travels well in the car and was very good on the train. Sky is cat and dog distracted both within the household and when out walking. Her recall is affected by this on free runs which will need some work. Looking forward to progressing her training.



Figure 10. Sky on her new bed



Figure 11. Sky out and about with her new Instructor

An update on newly qualified ‘Cora’

by Seeing Dog Owner Teresa Pecorella (her new owner)

When Cora came round to see me for the first time I fell in love with her. When you get a new Seeing Dog it takes time to trust the dog but with Cora, she was different. I would say she is an excellent worker and I trusted her from my first day of training with John.

Cora will do lots of things, helping me to cross roads, shopping, going on buses and trains. Cora and I will grow together to become a strong team. On a recent hospital stay over, Cora didn't like being away from me. She pulled the nurse to get to me. Only when she got close to me did she relax and settle. We already have a close bond. She is a lovely dog and has given me my independence back.



Figure 12. Cora posing for the camera



Figure 13. Cora and Busby who she shares the house with

And now for a bit of fun

Seeing Dog WORDSEARCH

G Y R Z B W V R R P L C P M A
T U X E G F O O E C Z K G Z P
B N I Z V D E S N W M J K A J
X I U D A E D I I I Y J W X R
F D A R E Q I E A A F P G E L
N O B O U K F R R B K H K J E
W A N E D L O G T M A C B C T
L O T R E A T S A E I R N F G
Q L W Y I C R K G L R A N D T
U R R J I M E H C I T I G E S
S K L A W A R K K S U G W K Y
A W Y Y U I Y O I L K L Y L G
H A R N E S S S L E C J Q K A
K M W N X O S Y B A K V B O S
H X B B S A Y F D D B C J E G

assistance
golden
Labrador
retriever
trainer

Barney
guide
lead
Rosie
treats

clicker
harness
paw
Sky
walks

Find the word in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction.

Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Election 4th July 2024

Dogs Going to Vote



Figure 14. Ava at the Polling Station



Figure 15. Sky at the Polling Station

Recent Fund Raising Events

Waitrose Bucket Collection

By Jane Anderson

Recently, the Anderson family were able to have a bucket collection at their local Waitrose Branch (South Harrow).

Barney (retired Seeing Dog), Ava (Seeing Dog) and Taisie (Seeing Dog Puppy) took it in turns to be with the bucket collectors. They definitely pulled a crowd. £350.00 was raised.

Thank you to Waitrose and the generosity of your customers.



Figure 16. Bucket collection at Waitrose. Jane Anderson, Taisie and Ava.



Figure 17. Bucket Collection at Waitrose. Tony and Stephen Anderson with Taisie, Barney and Ava

And We Will Ride 100 Miles

By Mel Robson

I should probably start off by admitting that I was a reluctant cyclist. For years, family had suggested I try going on a tandem and for years my response was on the lines of, ‘why would I want to do that?’ I then decided to go along to one of the newly started tandem sessions, being run at a local track, because I had an afternoon free. I thought I could have a go, confirm I didn’t like it and finally stop the family nagging! As I’m still doing it 3 years later, it’s fair to say my cunning plan backfired spectacularly. The family have been very gracious in not telling me ‘They told me so’ at every given opportunity.

But whilst I still ride the track regularly, and occasionally the velodrome, I much prefer being out on the road.

Last year, I made what was mostly a casual throw away comment to my friend, Steve, who I tandem with on the road, about doing a distance ride one day, maybe 100 miles or something for a charity like ‘Seeing Dogs’. Given the furthest we’d gone by that point was around 45 miles, it would be a challenge, but that is the point, I guess! Anyway, the thought sat with both of us, and at some point, actually can’t remember when, ‘100 miles for Seeing Dogs’ became a thing we were doing.

It was our friend and fellow ‘Stockton Wheeler’, Barry, who suggested we ride a route to York and back, which is technically 115 miles, but who’s counting the extra 15 anyway.

Myself and Steve originally planned to build up ride distance, to prepare ourselves. Due to a combination of events, mostly atrocious weather, that didn’t exactly happen. The furthest we managed was 56 miles, the Tuesday before our ride day.

18 of us from the ‘Stockton Wheelers’ set out on the morning of May 5th with some reasonable weather. In other words, it wasn’t actually raining or freezing, for our first tea stop point at North Allerton.



I won’t bore you all with every small, apparently picturesque, little village we went through that day. I’ll simply say we all thoroughly enjoyed the challenge, though Lauren does not recommend coming off and landing in a nettle patch!

Figure 18. Stockton Wheeler Riders

Other highlights include, a loo with a view, a toilet which turned out to

be a shed that had a window in the door, and another one of our group Dave, almost getting locked in a pub on the ride back! I'm still not sure if he's disappointed that didn't happen or not.

We returned to our starting point at the Myton House Farm at around 7:30pm, tired but all thrilled that we'd done it.

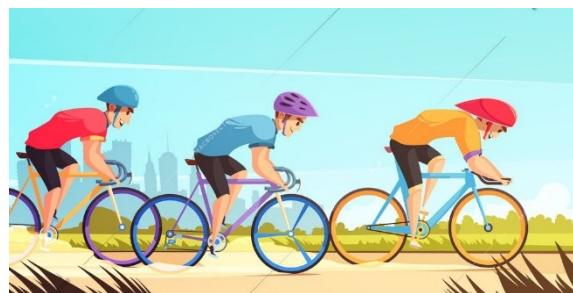
Including Gift Aid, we managed to raise a little over £1400 for 'Seeing Dogs'.



Figure 19. All the riders at the end of the fund-raising ride

People enjoyed the ride so much, there's now talk of making it an annual club charity ride, in aid of 'Seeing Dogs'.

There are certainly worse things to be responsible for.



Our New Text 'TO GIVE' campaign



Figure 20. Text your Donations

You can now donate £5 through your phone by texting SEEINGDOGS to 70085.

What difference does your £5 donation make?

- **£5 will pay for a puppy's food, vet care, toys and treats for a day.**
- **£10 will pay for a collar and bells a Seeing Dog has to wear when it is out and about. The bells mean the dog's partner knows where the dog is!**
- **£15 will pay for a grooming kit, keeping our Seeing Dogs smart and presentable. It is essential to groom our dogs to keep them healthy and looking the part.**

It costs around £20,000 to fully train a Seeing Dog. With generous donations we can continue to provide visually impaired people with independence and mobility, that can be taken for granted. 100% of your donation goes to training Seeing Dogs.

Promoting The Seeing Dogs Alliance

**The Seeing Dogs Alliance has a website – <https://seeingdogs.org.uk>
And Facebook and an Instagram account**

Please share, follow and like all three social media outlets to spread the word.

All of us, even if we're not active users of them, will be aware of the massive part social media platforms play, in many people's day to day lives. We are expanding our presence across social media to support our drive for direct to consumer giving.

People need to know we're here, who we are, what we do, and why they should care about us. If someone wants to donate money, or time as a volunteer, then why us?

Social media is possibly the best way we have at our disposal to answer that question.

**The Seeing Dogs Alliance has a Just Giving Page
<https://www.justgiving.com/seeingdogs> for donations.**

There are several other ways of raising funds and donations for The Seeing Dogs Alliance -

There is still 'Give as you Live' at no extra cost to yourself -

'Give as you live' is very similar to Amazon smile, which regrettably no longer exists. 'Give as you live' allows anyone to raise funds for their favourite charity when they shop online. 'Give as you live' is partnered with 6,000 stores as well as dozens of providers across insurance, energy and broadband. As a 'thank you' for shopping with these stores, a certain % of your spend is given to the charity of your choice.

**Each retailer will specify their % 'thank you'. There is NO EXTRA cost to yourself. All you have to do is register with 'Give as you live' www.giveasyoulive.com and specify your charity (The Seeing Dogs Alliance). The thing to remember is that to get the % thank you, you MUST access the website of the store you wish to buy from, THROUGH the 'Give as you live' website www.giveasyoulive.com .
New stores are joining 'Give as you live' daily.**

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If you are a taxpayer and you haven't given us permission to claim Gift Aid on your donation, 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. This now includes people who took out a Bankers' Order before January 2013, as we now have a different charity number. We send the Subscription and Donation Form and Bankers' Order to everyone who receives *Lead On*, whether they are subscribing or donating or not, as it saves keeping several lists. If you want to set up a new Bankers' Order, you will need to cancel any previous ones.

You can donate online via our website, www.seeingdogs.org.uk or on www.mydonatebt.com. Remember that you can also sponsor a puppy or a dog via our website.

You can donate, or pay subscriptions, by a direct bank transfer, although if you wish us to claim Gift Aid, you will have to complete a Gift Aid Declaration. Please use your name as the reference, so that we can recognise your payment. Our bank details are sort code 40 52 40, account number 00010645. These details are also on the Bankers' Order.

If you donate or pay your subscription online, or by direct bank transfer, please let us know.

Remember you can also donate anonymously if you wish, either by sending a cheque direct to Caf Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, ME19 4JQ, or via our website. However, we like to acknowledge donations, so we would rather you let us know who you are. Thank you.

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If so, please email your photos and personal stories, by
1st October 2024, to: info@seeingdogs.org.uk*

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