

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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Editorial

At this time of year, nature is slowly starting to fall asleep. The leaves darken and fall off, the plants stop making food and certain animals are preparing to migrate or hibernate. ‘A Season of Mists and Mellow Fruitfulness’.

Here at the Seeing Dogs however, we are beavering away from every angle.

A new trainee puppy has joined the ranks. Other trainee puppies are industriously being worked with and are all progressing. Read about how our trainee Seeing Dogs are doing too.

Discover for yourselves the difference a Qualified Seeing Dog makes to a Visually Impaired person’s life. A thought-provoking article.

Ever wondered what happens to those dogs that don’t meet the grade? Learn what happened to one such dog ‘Amy’.

On the fund-raising front, discover how being part of ‘Give as you Live’ and selecting ‘Seeing Dogs’ on your ‘Pets at Home Card’ can greatly benefit us but at no extra cost to yourselves.

And finally, hear how yet another ‘brew’ from The Brunswick Brewery will be helping to raise much needed funds for us.

As the next edition of ‘Lead On’ will be published in January, all Best Wishes for a Healthy and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Enjoy your read.

**Jane Anderson
Editor**

Seeing Dog Puppies

Sadie

By Krystyna Marshall



Figure 1. Sadie making herself at home in her new bed and new blanket.



Figure 2. Sadie exploring her new environment.

Hello everyone in Seeing Dog World! My name is Sadie and I'm the most recent recruit to the exclusive club of 'Trainee Seeing Dog Puppies'. At the time of writing this, I am 10 weeks old and 'full of bounce', as my puppy walker would say.

I haven't done much or seen much, as I'm working on the basics of having good manners around the house, like going to the toilet in the right place, sleeping through the night and not chasing my kitten friend, Jam.

I think that I am growing quickly, as I can reach so much more when I stand on my hind legs, than I did before. This is always a nice surprise to me, but not always a nice surprise to my puppy walkers!

Soon, I will have my final vaccinations and will be able to get out and about more. Until then, I am being carried about to local places to get a good idea of what's happening in the world and getting used to travelling in the car with my harness on.

I must go because I can recognise the sound of my food bowl being moved and I have a very empty tummy!

Love to all and watch this space for reports of my future adventures!

Sadie x

Proctor Update – The Early months
By John and Susan Ferguson



Figure 3. Proctor watching the ducks on the pond.

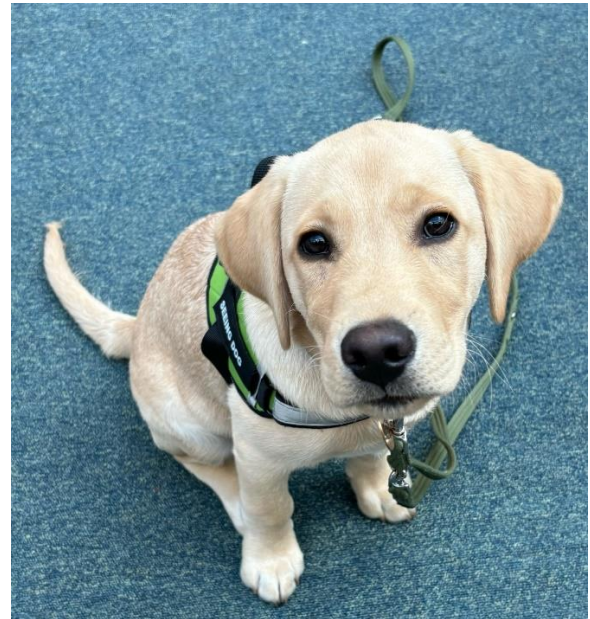


Figure 4 Proctor doing a good sit and staring at the camera.

It was 27th July 2024 that the excitement was once again building in our Puppy Walkers household, as we eagerly awaited our first meeting with new Seeing Dog Alliance puppy “Proctor”. ‘Sky’ our previous SDA puppy had left us earlier in July, to stay with her Trainer, so our household was ready to commence a new journey with another young puppy.

Proctor, a yellow full Labrador, was named by The Anderson family, themselves Seeing Dog Owners and Puppy Walkers, in memory of their father and Grandfather, a WW2 veteran pilot and Senior British Airways pilot. The British Airways Community Fund helped with funds for the sponsorship.

Proctor joined us in late July, weighing in at a healthy 6kg. He had left his mummy, Vista, a week or so before. The most important early days were mainly about getting used to his new surroundings, fun garden play, early toilet training and basic sit obedience. He also had the odd very brief trip in the car cage to local shops. This was to get him used to the ambience of the shops and travelling in a car cage.

Once Proctor had completed his vaccination program, around 12 weeks old, it was then safe for Proctor to venture further into the big wide world and do some socialisation work in public places, parks and the

like. This included some early recall work and sits, stays and downs in various scenarios, as well as some early off lead work in enclosed parks. Proctor was proving to be a very confident, intelligent young puppy, with excellent obedience skills and a willingness to learn. He was not fazed by noise and distractions and remained calm in most scenarios he was becoming exposed to. Proctor also learnt quickly how to settle in public places when his Puppy Walkers were taking a break, for example, at the coffee shop and also in later times, in a restaurant whilst a meal was being consumed. He uses his settle mat at the table to help him relax.

As we moved into September, Proctor's exposure to new scenarios increased and to date, by mid-October, he has come through them with flying colours. These have included short Bus Trips and Train Trips, numerous visits to larger shops, supermarkets and recently, Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent. He has also attended a University graduation ceremony, in a large theatre environment and attended larger county shows, as diverse as, a charity Dog Show in Ashford Kent, A Heavy Horse Show on Shoreham Kent and the large Paws in the Park event at Detling in Kent. All shows were a mixture of new experiences, distraction work, socialisation and a lot of chill time, people watching and resting.

Finally, Proctor started his Puppy Foundation Classes with our Trainer and to date is progressing very well. Now weighing in at a healthy 14.6 kg, it's looking like the next phase of his journey will, hopefully, be a healthy, happy and fun experience for the little star.

Brunny

By Margaret Evans

Hi everyone. I hope that you have all had a lovely summer with your puppies. Brunny is nearly 7 months old now and is very different to all of our previous Seeing Dog puppies.

He has a very strong food gene and he also loves to shred tissues and paper. Apparently, his breeder let the puppies play with newspaper and in retrospect, this probably wasn't a very good idea!



Figure 5. Brunny sitting by Christmas Ornaments

He is very chatty but never barks – he just uses little squeaking sounds which is really sweet. He is great out and about, on buses and trains, plus shopping and in coffee shops in Brighton and elsewhere. Brunny is very happy and makes us all laugh a lot; Esme, our Granddaughter and her friends, dote on him. He had his “boy op” last week and normally the boys feel quite sorry for themselves, when they get home. On the morning he went into the veterinary surgery, the vet said we could collect him at about 4.00pm. However, they telephoned us at 1.00pm and said that we could pick him up early, as he was awake and apparently full of beans!!



Figure 6. Brunny sitting in a shop near Christmas decorations.

He will probably be very excited when he meets the other Seeing Dog puppies at Hever Castle, in a few weeks’ time. Hoping that it will be a lovely sunny day. Brunny loves playing with other dogs. One of our local friends has a golden retriever puppy, a few weeks younger than Brunny. They are very best friends and love meeting up for a play date.

Bye from me and lovely Brunny.

Taisie

By Jane Anderson

Taisie is now 10 months old.

She is now consolidating her learning. She has greatly improved her ability to lie still and be quiet.

Longer journeys are being undertaken on trains and buses. I was very impressed when on one of these extended sessions, she got up ready to get off the train, when arriving at the usual station where she would disembark.

She has coped admirably with having noisy workmen around the home, for several weeks and her recall is outstanding.

Well done Taisie, keep up the good work.



Figure 7. Taisie at the 'Horses Trust', Princes Risborough with Tony her Walker's husband.



Figure 8. Taisie getting in the 'spirit' of Halloween!

Robson

By Sue Scott



Figure 9. Robson sitting on some leaves

Robson is nearly 5 months.

He has been easy to crate train, which has helped with established clean routines with few accidents. The crate also prevents him chewing, although he is partial to the laces on my boots, if I'm silly enough to leave them unattended with him!

Robson loves to be out and about and is actually quite a calm male when greeting people and other dogs.

He spent time at a friends, whilst I was on holiday and adapted to the change of routines.

He has a super recall. He is a typical Labrador who loves his food, which makes training so easy. He happily engages in learning new tasks. We've even mastered retrieving.

Robson travels well both in the car and on public transport.

I look forward to seeing how he develops over the coming months.

Smooth Collie Quell

By Mel Robson

Quell is now 6 months old and growing like a weed. He's almost as tall as Hawk, the lab x golden, who he lives with.

Quell is a generally happy, confident character, friendly without being over the top and reasonably good at recognising when people aren't

interested in talking to him. People distraction is low for a dog of his age. He can have some mild dog distraction and would bark in frustration when prevented from being able to approach. I've mostly got the volume down from a bark to a moan, so we're heading in the right direction. He's quick to calm down and move on once the dog has passed.

His recall is good. I'd say around 95% of the time he'll come the first time he's asked.

He's been into some shops and cafes and given me no concerns so far.

We did have a period of some resource guarding, over not wanting to give up something in his mouth, but we appear to have come out the other side of that now.

He still gets a travel-sick tablet, but with that given he's a very calm settled traveller in the footwell of a car. He's also travelled well crated in a van and been on some short bus journeys too. I will now start increasing the length on the bus, as I feel he's ready for more.

People have been randomly setting off fireworks around here, for the last couple weeks but he's displayed no obvious signs of being worried by them so far. Some have gone off quite close by.

He's catching on well to the basics, and getting the hang of sitting at curbs and likes to indicate benches and places we've been into before too.



Figure 10. Quell sitting under a table.



Figure 11. Hawk and Quell.

Trainee Seeing Dogs

Rosie

By John Grave



Figure 12. Rosie.

Rosie is coming to the end of her training and will soon be training with her new owner in Hertfordshire. Rosie is a lovely, sensitive lab who enjoys her work. She learns very quickly and always tries to please the handler. She has enjoyed Treat training, is great socially and is very playful with other dogs.

Sky

By Wendy Biss-Cooper

Sky has fully integrated into the family and loves playing with the flattie. One of her favourite tricks is stealing my socks off the clothes horse. There has been much improvement with her recall, even when there's other dogs present.

Sky is now in full harness and picking up the training well, even with the interruptions of a holiday and being spayed. Sky has recovered well from her operation.

Sky has worked in Sheffield and Grantham, showing good adaptability. When working, Sky is still dog and cat distracted, which breaks her concentration at times. Looking forward, Sky will be working in more busier areas and taking on more responsibility.



Figure 13. Sky in her harness.



Figure 14. Sky at home with a canine friend.

Newly qualified Sharon and Seeing Dog Sybil

By Sharon Smith

My name is Sharon Smith and I'm 52 years' old. Sybil is my first Seeing Dog. Prior to Sybil, I rarely went out independently, lacking confidence with my long cane. A friend told me about Seeing Dogs. I got myself placed on the waiting list. Training with Sybil began in April 24 and it has changed my life.



Figure 15. Sharon with Sybil.

The training I received was fantastic and tailored to my individual needs. Now I'm out daily and as well as my local routes, I am confidently using buses to get me to the Gym and other areas, I would never have gone to independently. We've also been on a river boat and a long coach journey, birthday parties, music concert and fundraising for Seeing Dogs.

Sybil is amazing. She is so willing to work and remembers routes, even the Hospital ones. Sybil gets me to where I want to go and alleviates the pressure I was under, using my long cane.

She loves meeting people and after her initial excitement, she is gentle with everyone, including children and other dogs. Sometimes, I have to remember she only became 2 years old at the end of September. She loves nothing more than a good free run chasing her ball and loves retrieving games in the house.

Although Seeing Dog owners have to pay for the upkeep of their dog, I have found this reasonably priced and affordable. I think of the money I'm saving on taxi fares. It's a win-win situation.

I just want to thank everyone at Seeing Dogs and all the supporters, who have made it possible for me to be lucky enough to have been paired with Sybil. We make a great team and I can't imagine being without her.

Thank you for the sponsorship from Pets at Home.

One that got away. Seeing Dog Amy.

By John Grave + Sally Blouet

Amy, along with her brother Winston, joined Seeing Dogs some 8 years ago. Unfortunately, Amy never made the grade but was lovingly rehomed with her Puppy Walker. Sadly, Amy recently passed away. Here's how her Puppy Walker Sally remembers her.

She was a very gregarious dog, loved everybody and everything. She showed it by constantly bringing gifts (slippers and trainers mainly), whilst sounding like Chewbacca (Star Wars), her whole body shaking due to her tail wagging. She was very affectionate, loved the sea and would jump very high waves - people would stop to watch her! Amy loved chasing with other dogs on the beach and in the sea.

Her best friend, of all time, was a Lab cross Springer, called Jessie. They were inseparable when together and if she heard Jessie's owner on the phone, she would pace, with a toy, in anticipation and go to the front door. Her other friends were Bella (Beagle Spaniel cross), Ruby (Kerry Blue Jack Russell cross), Ronnie (Dachshund) and Cooper (Labrador who couldn't resist her).

She was bright, affectionate and enthusiastic about life. Amy was always up for games, particularly balls of the squeaky type. She would press her cheek up against your face, to get as close as possible and purr like a cat when she was being kissed. She had a large vocabulary and knew many people's names. I could tell her to go and find my dad and she would go through the woods to their house to find him (squealing when she found him). I could also tell her who was coming to the house (just once) and she would stare at the door. She would bring whatever I asked her to. Often, I didn't need the lead on her.

I miss her so much.

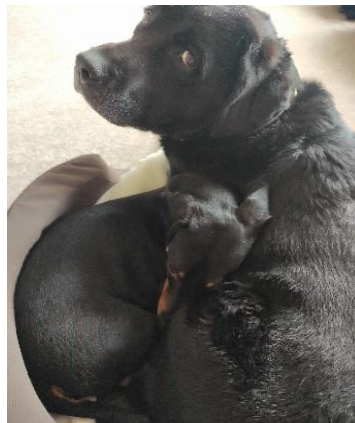


Figure 16. Amy with Ronnie

Dogs in World War 1

By Neil Ewart

Just over 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 along. He lived with the 102 and 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 locate wounded soldiers and remain with them, until the medics could reach them. He would stand guard in the trenches and did actually give advanced warning of a gas attacks. On another occasion, a German soldier sneaked into the American trenches but retreated quickly, with teeth marks in his backside!



Figure 17. Stubby

‘Stubby’ survived 17 battles and the appreciative soldiers made him a special coat, for when he was presented to 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 skillful dog and the

British tried everything to capture him but all 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 who 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 on the many human bodies lying around. Terriers were kept busy trying to keep the numbers down.

Many of these dogs must have provided wonderful company and offer 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 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 recognized that dogs could help blinded soldiers by acting as guides. By the end of the war, a great many had been successfully trained.

FUND RAISING

New Beer Launched by Brunswick Brewery

By Emma Rushton

The Brunswick Inn and The Seeing Dogs Alliance are proud to announce the launch of "Night Vision," a 4.7% Chocolate, Oat, and Rye porter, crafted to raise funds to support The Seeing Dogs Alliance. With every pint sold, 10p will be donated to the charity, helping to fund the training of seeing dogs that provide life-changing mobility for visually impaired people across the UK.

This new brew arrives alongside the relaunch of "Double Vision," a limited-edition golden ale, that has already raised over £1000 for the charity. As a result of the overwhelming support from the community and the brews popularity, the 4.4% ABV ale with hops from New Zealand and the US, is back by popular demand.

After raising the cash with Double Vision, The Brunswick Inn was given the honour of naming one of The Seeing Dogs Alliance's puppies. The male Labrador, now named 'Brunny', pays tribute to the pub and brewery that helped make his placement possible. It's hoped that 'Night Vision' will be just as successful as Double Vision and raise even more money for the charity.



Figure 18. Pump Label for 'Night Vision'.



Figure 19. Brunny as a Tiny Puppy.

Chair of The Seeing Dogs Alliance, Liam Flynn, expressed his gratitude for the ongoing partnership:

"Our launch of Double Vision went better than expected. This showed how good the beer itself is, but also how supportive the customers, staff and landlords have been in promoting the great cause, that drinking Double Vision supports. We are hoping that we can have a similar success with Night Vision. Double Vision raised over £1000 on its initial launch which meant the pub could choose a name for one of our future Seeing Dogs in training. It not only provided Brunny with a name but also gives him the chance to provide critical support for a blind or severely sight-impaired individual. With it costing around £20,000 to train and maintain a Seeing Dog from start to finish, contributions like these are vital. As a small charity, we rely on such incredible support, to have a direct impact on those who need it most."

Landlord of The Brunswick Inn, Alan Pickersgill, shared his excitement about the partnership:

"We've been longtime supporters of The Seeing Dogs Alliance and are thrilled with the success of Double Vision - so much so we had to bring it back for a relaunch. We hope to see similar support for Night Vision - it's a different kind of Brew but it's no less delicious. We're committed to continuing our support for this incredible charity and their work in improving the lives of visually impaired people."

Both Night Vision and Double Vision are now available to purchase at The Brunswick Inn, with proceeds going towards funding the essential work of The Seeing Dogs Alliance.

GIVE AS YOU LIVE

Another way of raising funds for The Seeing Dogs Alliance is through 'Give as you Live'.

'Give as you live' allows anyone to raise funds for their favourite charity when they shop online, at no extra cost to yourself. '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.

PLEASE join up if you can.

Pets at Home
By Jane Anderson



Figure 20. Pets at Home Logo

‘Pets at Home’ have very generously sponsored 3 Seeing Dogs in total. In addition to this, we have learnt that, from 1st November 2024, The Seeing Dogs Alliance is being added to the ‘Life Line’ Members List of Charities, that customers can nominate to receive their reward points from their ‘Pets Card’.

Every 500 rewards a person earns on their ‘Pets Card’, will give the ‘Charity’ one Life Line point i.e. £1.

Vouchers for the Life Line points will be issued 4 times a year to The Seeing Dogs for them to use.

If you feel able, please ensure your ‘Pets Card’ has us as your nominated Charity.

Also, Pets at Home are on The Give as you Live Scheme. If you go through the ‘Give as you Live Website to the Pets at Home Website, you can also earn a percentage ‘thank you’ from your spend at Pets as Home. With Pets at Home you order on line, goods can be delivered to you or you can still collect in store.

Having us nominated on your ‘Pets Card and on Give as you Live is a double bonus when shopping at Pets at Home.

Giving by Text

A reminder of another way to forward funds to The Seeing Dogs Alliance



Figure 21. details of texting £5 funds to Seeing Dogs

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.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS & DONATIONS

To give a donation, or to pay your subscription for one or more years by cheque, please use the enclosed Subscription and Donation Form.

If you wish to give a donation and/or pay your subscription automatically each year, please complete the enclosed Bankers' Order and return it to us, as we need to keep a record of who pays their subscription or donates by this method. We will send it to your bank. Payments can be made monthly, quarterly, or annually by this method. If you want to combine a regular donation with your subscription using this method, £5 of your first payment for the financial year will be considered to be your subscription. The Subscription and Donation Form and the Bankers' Order will also be enclosed with the braille and tape copies, and they will be sent as an attachment to the email copies.

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.

***Would you like us to feature YOUR stories and news?
If so, please email your photos and personal stories, by
7th January 2025, to: info@seeingdogs.org.uk***

