

BULLETIN No. 49 – January 2004

Dear Members and Friends:

Although a little late, may we wish you all a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR
Whether two or four-legged! Up to now the weather – here at any rate – has been depressingly wet and very windy and our New year began, literally, with one of our chimney stacks being blown down along with a lot of tiles and bits and pieces, not the most welcoming of sights on our return from a lovely night with our good friends in Balmaha....anyway, it could have been worse.

Last year was a year of years and I must say it was most encouraging to hear H.M. the Queen refer in her Christmas message to her pleasure in making presentations of her Golden Jubilee Awards to various groups for services to the community – of which our Aberdeen Therapets was one. Such a big thrill for us all and I am happy to be able to tell you that the lovely solid glass award and signed Certificate by Her Majesty are now on permanent public display in The Town House, Aberdeen.

Unfortunately I seem to have struck a patch of ill health at present which hopefully will soon be a thing of the past, so I am all the more grateful and thankful for the services of my “other half”, husband Nick, who looks after me so well and most importantly, carries on the work of the Trust very competently - what is more, enjoys it into the bargain! So God Bless Nick! I don't think he had any idea of just how much work was involved until he took it on, we were so lucky he did.

Matty, bless her, continues on her merry way and is a joy and delight to us both. Believe it or not she is now NINE YEARS OLD. She came to us the year we moved here and of course that also means we have now been in Machrihanish for nine years.– how time flies. I used to say that this fast passage of time was a sign of approaching old age ... I am frightened to say that anymore as I fear it may have already come!!!

PRESENTATIONS LUNCH: 2003 having been the fifteenth birthday of the Trust our Awards Lunch was very special. We always enjoy being able to pay tribute to our enthusiastic and deserving volunteers and this anniversary gave an extra lift to the proceedings. This year we changed the venue to Kaim Park Hotel at Bathgate and all were agreed the change was for the better. We had a super lunch which included a birthday cake specially baked by Mick Stead, very yummy it was too! Bathgate is not so far for those in the West to travel whilst still being comparatively near to Edinburgh. Sadly we did not have our very dear Father Jim Peat with us and his loss was deeply felt. It is still hard to believe he is no longer with us.

There were a lot of wonderful nominations and it was as difficult as ever for the Trustees to decide on the Therapet of the Year, which they do independently with marks out of ten for each nominee. In the event of a tie I as Chairman get a casting vote and thankfully have not so far been called upon to use this although the voting has always been very close. This time was no exception. However, there can only be one winner although there is a runner-up award and all nominees receive a laminated Certificate and special rosette. I must say it does the heart good to read these lovely tributes to our Therapets.

This year THE SPENCER AWARD went to a very special wee dog, Tibetan Spaniel "Ali Baba", most proudly owned by FIONA FERGUSON of Large. They visit Haylie House Residential Home for the Elderly and the nomination was made by the Home's Registrar, Margaret Comrie. She said "Ali is the highlight of many residents' week and is a perfect size for elderly people. He has a happy, outgoing personality with a coat that just begs to be stroked! Our more reserved residents obviously benefit from his visits – the look on their faces when he arrives says it all – these quieter residents become quite animated during and after a visit from Ali. He is a great favourite with staff but makes it quite clear that until he has visited HIS residents he hasn't got time for US! What a character he is!" Fiona and Ali have been visiting for EIGHT YEARS.

Fiona has told me that Ali has been quite a bit in the news of late, taking a leading role on stage playing Toto in "The Wizard of Oz" and also pictures in "The Scottish Episcopalian" wearing his Therapet coat at a special Service for animals. Well done Ali!

Close runner-up to Ali was Elkhound "Zoey" from Aberdeen, loved and owned by DAVID STUART CALDER. Both Zoey and David have done a lot for the Trust. At the time of the announcement of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award to Aberdeen Therapets they both appeared very prominently in the "Press & Journal" and other papers, adding to the already great fame enjoyed by Fiona Henderson's Westie "Toby". Fiona says Zoey is the only bi-lingual dog she knows, she can understand English and Gaelic, also sign language and whistles!

The two final awards were "Gotchers" and the recipients had no idea whatsoever about them. The DR. MORRIS ANDREW & DANIEL THE SPANIEL MEMORIAL AWARD – a beautiful silver quaiche donated by Morris's family – is made annually to the Therapet Organiser of the Year. Our dearly loved and much missed Morris was a Trustee and was himself area rep for Edinburgh for some years and so it was with special pleasure that this year the presentation was made to a very surprised DOUGLAS RUTHVEN! Morris himself nominated Douglas for the Committee of Management a year or so before he died, being already a very committed Therapet visitor with his own two dogs and devoted to work for dogs in other areas such as the National Canine Defence League. A real dog man in every way. Douglas has more Therapets in the Edinburgh area than any other and works very hard indeed to keep them all occupied and happy. In addition he is always willing to take on extra jobs organising stands for us, giving talks when requested, and recently has become involved with phobic patients at The Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh.

It had already been quite a week for Douglas as he also celebrated his 65th Birthday!

The final surprise award – THE IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD – is made to a person or organisation whose work has been of special benefit to the Trust over the past

year or a period of years. Certainly “period of years” was applicable here because this special twosome has been active with the Trust since the very first day – they came in with the bricks! MICK AND JOHN STEAD have been members of the Committee of Management from Day One and John is now a Trustee himself. Going back into the past when we were involved with PRO DOGS, they were the proud owners of the first ever Scottish PAT-DOGS with their beloved two Dobermans which in itself caused quite a stir and some positive publicity for this much-maligned breed.

When the Trust began Mick and John were with it 100% and helped with recruitment of Therapets. Mick is a great cook, as witness our 15th birthday cake, and is in charge of the special catering at our annual Companion Dog Show. This is a tough job but her lunches are famous! Husband John is now in overall charge of the Show itself and what a success story it is. I just do not know what we should do without the Stead team and that is a fact. It was with the very greatest pleasure that we asked BETTY LAWSON-WHYTE to present the award to this very special couple. Well done, Mick and John, always so willing and never making heavy weather of anything.

It was such a successful “do” that we have already booked Kaim Park Hotel for our 2004 presentations – so make a note in your diaries for 7th NOVEMBER.

THIS YEAR’S COMPANION DOG SHOW - whilst on the subject of dates for our diaries – as always our show will be on the first Sunday in June which this year is the 6th. And again as always, in Queens Park, Glasgow where we shall hope to have the usual full and happy day for the whole family, human and canine! All the details will be sent to you with the short bulletin accompanying the Annual Report & Accounts during April, along with, dare I say it? – books of Prize Draw tickets! It would be helpful if you could let Nick know if you are able to sell batches of these, she says hopefully!

We are always looking for helpers on the day – especially a bit of muscle for the heavy work. If you are able to lend a hand please do get in touch with John Stead, Show Manager, on 01436-675381. Believe me, we can never have too many helpers. Or if John is not available a call to James Macdonald on 0141-632-4893, or to Nick here at the office will set the wheels in motion.

And a quick plea not to throw away any of those unwanted Christmas presents as we shall have our usual Tombola which helps considerably with running costs. Anything at all will be very welcome and we can always arrange collection. It is helpful if we can get these gifts before the day of the Show so that we can get them all numbered up – saves a lot of time for Tony Jolly & Co, bless their hearts!

IN MEMORY OF FATHER JIM PEAT: In the last bulletin I mentioned that it was hoped to remember our dear Father Jim in a meaningful way and I am pleased to be able to tell you that the Trustees have decided to award most attractive medals to current Therapets who have visited in excess of five years, or who are enjoying a well-earned retirement from such a length of service. These will be well worth having and I am enclosing a form which gives full details of how to apply for yours.

I know Father Jim would be so pleased to know of these awards, bless him. Would you believe it is now a year since we lost him? I can hardly believe it.

AREA REPRESENTATIVES: Since the last issue of the complete list of our super Area Reps we have one or two amendments to make. The first is to report with great regret the retirement due to ill-health of Aberdeen rep FIONA HENDERSON who has figured so prominently on the Therapet scene for a few years now. We shall miss the work she has so gladly undertaken on behalf of the Trust but are happy to report that Fiona remains an actual Therapet visitor with dear wee “Toby” the Westie – I’m sure he would have been very peeved indeed to be left on the shelf – and is also willing to continue making presentations on the work of the Trust. She will in any case always be pleased to hear from old friends!

This, of course, left us with a real headache in terms of who would be able to replace her? It is a very large and busy area and so Nick, along with James Macdonald, held a meeting of many of the active visitors in the area at the end of November and they were delighted with the numbers who turned out to chat it all through. The end result was that several very kind people have agreed to assist with assessing potential Therapets and getting them started, a team effort with co-ordination from the office. It is early days yet but so far this appears to be working quite well.

On a happier note we are able to report a new representative in an area which has not been as well served as we should have liked in the past – Stirling! Since the death of our very dear Sandy Harrison there has been a big gap for a good few years now and so we are delighted to announce a lady has come to the fore here – she is:

MRS LYNSEY THOMSON
1 Airth Drive, Broomridge, Stirling FK7 7TU
Tel. 01786-489963.
e-mail: Lynsey.wybar@virgin.net

Welcome aboard Lynsey, so pleased to have you with us! Lynsey will be pleased to hear from any of you in the area and it will be great to have her available to help and assess new Therapet visitors. Local knowledge is such a help when it comes to making placements.

We are just knocked out by all the fine work carried on by our reps up and down Scotland, in Dumfries for instance where we had no cover for yonks it is virtually buzzing with all the activities of MAUREEN HILL & Co! They undertake all kinds of activities to promote the work of the Trust and raise funds in a number of different ways, bless their hearts.

CHRISTINE WATT – our Fife Area Rep, held a very successful Coffee Morning on 27th September which resulted in a donation to funds of £280. Christine is also of course a member of the Committee of Management and is always willing to lend a hand with the Stand at S.K.C. Shows. I need hardly say that volunteers for this are always welcomed by our James – do ring him at 0141-632-4893 if you can spare some time, however brief, at either of the S.K.C. Shows. This next one in May might take place over three days but I will give details in the April short bulletin.

VIVIEN MOEN is going great guns in Badenoch and Strathspey and we now have really good cover in the area – DIANE WOOD for Inverness and MAUREEN THOMSON for Moray, all working very hard and successfully. As indeed are all of you. Many thanks indeed for your hard work.

AIDA RUSSELL was never an official area representative – she always said she preferred to be an Indian rather than a Chief --- but nonetheless was responsible for a lot of wonderful Therapetting work both as a visitor herself and arranging for others to visit in East Kilbride and the surrounding area. Aida also held a lot of Coffee Mornings for CCST funds and for many years organised heats of our sponsored walks, very successfully too. You may remember she was presented with the IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD a couple of years ago. So it was really no surprise to learn that she has received another highly prestigious award.

She was nominated by the Officer in Charge at Belmont Home for the Elderly for her services on behalf of the Trust and was presented with a beautiful engraved decanter and mounted Certificate by the Lord Provost of South Lanarkshire at a banquet held in their Offices. Well done Aida – many congratulations and a special pat for your lovely Cocker Spaniel “Chelsea”, never of course forgetting those dear Cockers no longer with you. You can find a picture of this presentation on our website.

I don't feel I can leave Area Reps without a mention of that very special guy – JAMES MACDONALD. Although of course he does a great deal more than work as our rep in South Glasgow! James always hates to get a special mention but he is also a Trustee and both Nick and I find him absolutely invaluable with a lot of our own work. Plus – he chairs the Committee of Management, does countless presentations all over Scotland and will nip along to help any of the other reps at the drop of a hat. But you all know this anyway.

James recently sent to the office a list of all his visits to various community groups since September – would you believe this amounts to FIFTEEN?!! He of course takes with him one or other of his two gorgeous Old English Sheepdogs and his efforts are often rewarded with a very nice donation to funds. He has asked me to give details of a forthcoming event he is planning,

You may remember two years ago James organised a meeting of members and other interested parties at Cowcaddens Fire Station where of course he works as a fire-fighter (just in case he didn't have anything else to do!!!) which was a great success. He hopes to hold another, again at the Fire Station, on Monday 8th March at 7.30 p.m. This will primarily consist of a talk on the work carried out by the Trust and will also include presentation of the rosettes to all who took part in the Sponsored Walk in Queens Park last September, thereby making a special little ceremony of it!

The party will then be treated to a tour of the Fire Station, which I know you will find most interesting. Tea, coffee etc. will be provided. If you have any queries as to how to find the venue, or anything else, do ring James on 0141-632-4893. It should be a good night out.

STEPPING OUT FOR SCOTLAND:

Once again our annual sponsored walks throughout Scotland were very successful and enjoyed by many from North to South. Didn't you all do well? There were three solo walks this time, one of which was happily done by our own “Matty” who receives funding from those of you unable to walk but wishing to donate towards the general total for which she sends her grateful thanks!

Here are the details:

VENUE	ORGANISER	TOTAL
Nairn	Brenda MacKenzie & Diane Wood	£1,103.00
Queens Park, Glasgow	James Macdonald	£841.90
Dumfries	Maureen Hill	£579.00
Edinburgh	Douglas Ruthven	£282.00
Moray	Maureen Thomson	£130.00
Machrihanish	Nick Price & Matty - solo	£220.00
Campbeltown	Jan Bell & Labs! - solo	£75.00
Arran	Marjory Smith & Breagh – solo	£45.00

MAKING A GRAND TOTAL OF £3,275.90 less expenses of £235.82

Our more than grateful thanks to you all! A wonderful total.

Incidentally, Marjory Smith tells me the rosette Cav.K.C Breagh got for her solo walk made her total number of rosettes 100 – quite an achievement! There was a nice little spread about her and a picture of them with some of these rosettes in their local paper. Sadly Breagh is now Marjory’s only dog, as her beloved Bethan was put to sleep after a series of severe fits. She was only seven and the sweetest wee dog. She had been a Therapet since she was a year old.

MORE SAD GOODBYES: I suppose this is a suitable place at which to tell you of other dogs who have gone - the part of the bulletin I always find so hard to write. But how much they deserve these little tributes, and how much we miss them.

You will remember last year’s Therapet of the Year – PAT RIDDELL’s GSD. “Brodie” – so dearly loved and such a brave boy who had suffered quite a while with arthritis but who nevertheless enjoyed a good quality of life and just loved his visits. He was able to take part in the big day of the Jubilee Awards at Duthie Park last July and we were all so pleased to see him there. Sleep warm Brodie.

A sad, sad story about JANE LAX’s cross-bred “Chance”, who had won her way into the Scruffts final but was knocked down in November and killed, bless her., Our Moray area rep MAUREEN THOMSON told me that they were all very upset about it – Chance visited with Maureen’s own “Holly” and it was obvious she too felt her loss. Such a tragedy.

MORAG ORMISTON’s Miniature Schnautzer “Maggie” was also knocked down and killed by a car.

CHRISTINA FARR’s deerhound “Boots” was put to sleep in August as his cancer was everywhere and he was in a lot of pain. So now at rest.

Many of you will remember RUTH BUCHANAN who died a few years ago, and who did so much for Guide Dogs. A lovely, lovely lady, she wrote one or two poems in our “My Best Friend, the Dog” book. We now hear via Myra McGlashan that Alan, Ruth’s

husband, had to have Golden Retriever “Indi” put to sleep recently – so she will now be with her Mum on the other side of the Rainbow Bridge.

An e-mail from AILEEN GALT tells us that ”Sandie” died last autumn. Sandie took part in a research project at the State Hospital, Carstairs, looking at the effect of the presence of a dog on communication levels with male psychiatric patients. She attended 32 videod research sessions, and although there were no statistically significant improvements in communication levels (there were only 12 participants) except for a reduction in the number of very short replies to questions, there were some interesting features such as a complete absence of stereotypic movement in one patient when the dog was there, the movements being evident constantly when the dog was not there. There was definitely a lot more smiling!

Aileen tells me they got Sandie from the SSPCA home at Balerno. She had been in kennels for five months, had puppies in the home, and was aged between 5 and 7 when they first got her about four years ago. She was tolerant about being touched and good with patients. Unfortunately she developed a tumour which was removed but recently was diagnosed as having degeneration of the spinal chord and so put to sleep.

You may remember this was the second Therapet at the State Hospital, the first one being “Ghillie” the Labrador. Now a new Therapet has been registered and we understand the effect he is having on patients is good. He is a delightful Westie belonging to DIANNA DOUGLAS, called “Harvey”!

MARLENE & BILL McGONAGLE’s gorgeous old Newfie, “Piper”, died a few weeks ago – bless him he was eleven and a half and had lived all his life on Skye! I know they will miss him dreadfully.

Our love and sympathies to all of you who have lost your very special dogs. One thing is certain, they are never forgotten and we are indeed fortunate to have known their company and love for however long or short a time.

Meantime our special good wishes to our human friends who have been unwell . MARGARET PARIS who was our very first Aberdeen representative keeps in regular touch with me and although she is seldom really well she remains very cheerful and keeps going as best she can. I fear that both ANNE GORDON and PEGGY GROGAN continue to be very unwell and I know you would like to send best wishes to them Just today I had a sad little note telling me that WINNIE LINDSAY is away in a Nursing Home permanently now and knows little of what goes on. Winnie is the widow of our very special and good friend DAVID LINDSAY who used to do such wonderful photographs for us until he died fairly suddenly several years ago.

MY BOOK! You’ll never believe it but I have actually FINISHED IT!!! The book is something I have had in the back of my mind for years and years – it is in memory of my very first Boxer, and is called “Sprigs of Holly”. Those of you who know me in any way at all will have heard about Holly as she was the beginning of everything and I do mean everything! There would be no Canine Concern or Therapets without her and although it is now 25 years since she died I can still sense her presence here as if it were yesterday ... The book is now being printed and I should have details for the next

bulletin. Any profits made from it will go to the Trust. I was determined to finish it before my brain started to waste away The main problem was trying to decide which photographs should go in, or perhaps more importantly, could be left out. There were so many and I must say going through them brought back a lot of both sad and happy memories. Also quite a few shocks in terms of how young and slim we looked in those days I am looking forward (I think!) to seeing the finished product and only hope it turns out to be reasonably readable.

THERAPET NEWS: Perhaps I should begin by reminding you that ANNUAL SUBS ARE NOW DUE ... and this has particular reference to Therapet visitors for insurance purposes. Nick has asked me to point this out to you and there is of course, the usual form enclosed for renewals and a special directive for you to read.

A wonderful article appeared in THE GLASGOW HERALD in November written by MELANIE REID, it was quite long and said a great deal about Therapets and in particular the work carried out by ANNE MACDONALD and Springer Spaniel "Eilidh" who was, of course, our Therapet of the Year in 2001. Here is a part of the beginning:

"Many parents will attest to the fact that children thrive physically, emotionally and socially when there is a pet in the house. A recent survey carried out by Dr June McNicholas, a health psychologist at Warwick University, suggested nearly half of young pet owners went to their animal if they were upset or bored, and a third sought out their pet, in this case mostly a dog, if they felt scared.

Lindsay Macleod, a psychologist, gave in after her daughter Marie became obsessed with getting a dog at the age of eight. "She was desperate. There was a genuine despair, a loneliness there, that I knew I had to do something about", she said. The trouble was that they were not a doggy family, not only that but Marie's father was strongly opposed to the idea. Eventually he was talked into it, on condition the dog lived outside, and Marie got her puppy, a husky called "Blue". Overnight she flourished and grew into a well-adjusted, happy teenager. She recently qualified as a vet (with her own dog permanently by her side). "On a professional level I am convinced that Blue saved her" said Lindsay. "It sounds far-fetched, but the power of animals and the needs of children are immense. It's a relationship which is very simple and yet very complicated at the same time."

The role of the family dog should never be underestimated. The dog is the cement that fills in the gaps of the human relationships. While the adults have long since forgotten the pain of growing up, the dog is always there to listen, and to sympathise. The dog never tells a child they are not good enough, not smart enough, or not cool enough. They never shout at them to tidy their rooms, to grow up, or to stop being ridiculous. Every family dog knows far more about the hopes and fears of the children in the house than anyone else alive. For the children, the dog is not just a dog, he is friend, confidante, and the guardian of dreams. It is a lucky child who has that."

All in all, a great article and one which I am sure gained the Trust a lot of new volunteers.

With the necessity for Disclosures before Therapets can be accepted, we were uncertain just how much difference this would make to the scheme in terms of numbers – but personally I am surprised and happy that we are still getting quite a number of new visitors up and down Scotland. It does make a lot more work for Nick on the administrative side but his back is broad and I am good with the whip!!

On balance I think it is true to say we get more publicity and are getting to be much more readily recognised by the general public, which is thanks to all your hard work!

The dogs themselves, like us, get older and also like us (me anyway!!) have to take things a little more slowly. So it is often with the greatest regret that some of these “oldies” have to take honourable retirement. “Cindy” Chalmers of Kirkliston, West Lothian, is one such, and she wrote us a nice letter enclosing a photograph of herself when younger – a very pretty Golden Retriever! She writes:

“I am now ten years old and have been padding around once every week, four wards, the Stroke Unit and the Macmillan Day Centre where I met on average 160 to 200 patients at St John’s Hospital, Livingston for the past nine years. Unfortunately my arthritis is bothering me and the hospital stairs are getting steeper and the corridors longer. So I have decided to retire and hang up my Therapet badge. Wishing you all very happy Therapetting, and a successful future, with love, Cindy”.

Well done Cindy, you truly deserve your nice peaceful retirement with lots of special treats, and thanks from us all for your hard work over the years. I’m sure you will love your new special Father Jim Peat medal.

A nice little letter from IRENE TAYLOR of Arbroath, Angus, tells us about “Sam”, her lovely Golden Retriever. All these Goldens! I don’t think there is any doubt that numerically this breed tops the lot, but then there are so many Goldens throughout the U.K. altogether. On second thoughts there are probably more cross-bred Therapets... but all are lovely in their own ways and each brings its own special benefits.

Going back to Sam, for about 8 years he has been taking a lady out for a stroll, then coffee! She was in the local hospital but is now back in the community. Sam visits about every ten days and his company makes a huge difference to the lady. He also goes with Irene when she is on the rota at the Club they run (The Friends at Sunnyside Home). Well done that boy.

CHILDREN AND DOGS: As you will know, the Trust’s policy has always been to promote responsible and caring dog ownership and believe that this can best be done by visits to schools wherever possible in terms of personnel. I agree wholeheartedly with the views expressed in Melanie Reid’s article about the importance of dogs to children but children should also be educated into how to show love and respect for the animal’s welfare.

I was reminded of this very forcibly this week when I saw the item on television about the dearly loved pet dog who was taken away by two boys from outside the Edinburgh shop, where he was tied up and waiting for his owner, and later found dead on the motorway.

I must say I have been unable to get this out of my mind especially as this incident was actually caught on CCTV . I hope these boys may be identified although of course nothing will bring back the poor dog It has always worried me when seeing dogs tied up outside supermarkets etc. – they are so vulnerable. Someone said to me that this bit of exercise is probably all the dog gets all day. Just the same I don't like to see it. All of which brings me to our

SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN: There is nothing like an actual school visit which is enjoyed by the children and teaches them how to behave with pets.. We do our very best here but it is far from easy in terms of having enough school volunteers to carry out this valuable work. Our special Schools video, “CHILDREN AND DOGS”, was made to accompany these visits, and where no visitors are available at least the video is the next best thing. It comes with teacher's notes, posters to colour in, stickers etc. and a quiz for older children and has been enthusiastically received in all parts of the U.K. and even abroad.

Early this Spring we intend to circularise all Scottish Primary Schools with details of this video which costs the small sum of £7.50 and is, believe me, well worth the money! In the past we have also offered the film on free loan to schools or youth groups but unfortunately many of these have never been returned and hence we now feel it is better to make the outright charge for the film which is then available year after year.

Obviously in this often sad world in which we live those particular boys had no knowledge of how to treat animals and thought it all a great joke. All the more reason then for children's natural love for animals of which we are so aware to be properly channelled and here is where education is vital

FOUL PLAY! Failing to clean up after our dogs is now against the law and could result in a fixed fine under the Dog Fouling Act. This Act changes the nature of the offence from one of allowing a dog to foul to one of failing to clean up. It will apply to all public land and will allow the police and local authorities to enforce the new provisions by means of fixed penalty notices instead of going through the courts. The Act also removes the need for corroborative evidence which previously had made a conviction difficult.

Finance and Public Services Minister Andy Kerr said “The enforcement of this Act makes our message to irresponsible owners clear – it is unacceptable to let your dog foul in a public place and not clean up after it..... While enforcement will undoubtedly play a large part in the Act it is also essential that we educate and encourage dog owners to act more responsibly. Tackling dog fouling is an integral part of our wider initiative to improve the quality of life for the people of Scotland by making our communities safe, secure and clean. We believe that the combination of better legislation and our publicity campaign will make real change for the better in communities across Scotland.”

On balance we can only say that, of course, we agree it is vital all should clean up after their dogs and this is something we try to get home in a lot of our leaflets, video etc. There can be extenuating circumstances, the elderly for instance sometimes find difficulty in bending down and it is hoped that “arresting officers” will use a little tolerance here and there. I should be very interested to hear how this Act is being applied within your own areas and just how many people have been fined, or whatever.

I have not noticed much happening here in Campbeltown but that is not unusual, it takes a while for Kintyre to latch on to something new!!! It has to be said that we do have quite a number of “street-wise” dogs here, trotting along quite happily and doing their own thing whenever they want! They will not, of course, be able to read the notices and I would have my doubts about whether their owners will act any differently. Probably remove any identification just in case! Education is a far better tool to use and you never know, one day it might just get through via children and school visits. That is one of our fondest hopes. Children do see the logic of this when it is explained to them.

LYNSEY RAMSAY: A lot of you ask me if there is any news of Lynsey, who worked for the Trust very happily until family circumstances meant her husband, Scott, had to move away to Mull to where we also moved the office. Then another move took place, this time to Lochgilphead where it was not possible to take the office and furthermore, another baby (Shannah Holly!) was on the way! That was when Nick stepped in and saved the day for us all.

Anyway, yesterday I had a very happy phone call from Lynsey with the news that they are coming back to Campbeltown and counting the days! Having lived all her life in Campbeltown Lynsey had never found it easy to settle anywhere else and she has been going through a bad patch with worries over the health of Keilan, her little boy, and so to be back within the family circle has really cheered them all. You may remember Lynsey organises our website for us and so it will be good to have her near at hand. Shannah is now just over a year old and getting up to all kinds of mischief. Lynsey sends her love to all who remember her.

ANIMAL ARIAS CONCERT: Yes, that is really what it was called! This was organised by a group called “Animals Matter” and resulted in a wonderful donation to our funds of £320.00 . This was half the total, the other half being presented to Glasgow based Charity “Catflap”. James Macdonald attended on our behalf and said it was a most unusual and enjoyable evening. A letter received from the organisation said it was a great pleasure to meet him and to hear about the Trust’s excellent work throughout the country. Anne-Marie Discombe who wrote the letter said that James’s Therapet “Echo” also got lots of attention and she herself was certainly not alone in feeling the benefit of giving her a hug or two! Anne-Marie said they would be happy to help in whatever way they could in the future. So – yet more good and valuable contacts.

“DOGS IN OUR LIVES”

Living as we do in a remote part of the country, we do a lot of our shopping via catalogues and it was delightful to find an item entitled as above in one such, a clothing organisation called “Orvis”, for no apparent reason so far as I could see. I am sure they would not mind it being reproduced here:

“We aren’t house-proud. If we were, we wouldn’t abide the scratches on the door frame, the holes in the screen, the darkened shine of worn spots on the chair. We would wince at the mottled carpet and fret at the hair clinging to our clothes.

We don’t. If anything we lovers of dogs are a tolerant lot, finding greater value in the unabashed affection of

our friends than in immaculate sofas. Shoes can be replaced but heroic retrievers are timeless.

Without dogs, our homes are cold receptacles for things. Dogs make a fire warmer with their curled presence. They wake us, greet us, protect us, and ultimately carve a place in our hearts and our history. On reflection, our lives are often referenced in parts defined by the all-too-short lives of our dogs.

Paul Fersen”

How very true. I must say I found this when writing my book – for instance I mention in it how very very sad it was finally to replace a much chewed and scratched back doorpost, frequently polyfilled and repainted, which was our darling old Baron’s legacy at being left behind when we were obliged to go out without him! It was the only damage he ever did, bless him! Well, purposely!!

Time to go. Keep sending me all your news, pictures, and, of course, your **MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THIS YEAR!!** You will stay with us another year, won’t you? Very best wishes from us all here at the Trust and special big hugs for your dogs,

Yours sincerely

Chair of Trustees

DON’T FORGET:-

JAMES MACDONALD’s evening at Cowcaddens
on Monday 8th March at 7.30 pm

OUR COMPANION DOG SHOW - Sunday 6th June
In Queens Park, Glasgow. Tombola gifts, help with Show
Etc.

PRESENTATIONS LUNCH – Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate
On Sunday 7th November

To renew your sub!

