

BULLETIN 69 – August 2010

Dear Members and Friends

2010 seems to be whizzing by and already it is time to remind you all about the annual **PRESENTATION AWARDS LUNCH** which this year will take place at the Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate on Sunday 14th November 2010 at 1.15 pm. It is always a most enjoyable event at which we pay tribute to some very special dogs and people. We hope that you will come along. An application form is enclosed which should be returned to me by 8th November at the latest. The price is £15.00 per person.

At the lunch we present our annual awards and these comprise:-

THE IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD to a person or organisation whose help has contributed substantially to the benefit of the Trust during the year or over a period of years.

THE SPENCER AWARD for THERAPET OF THE YEAR – an application form is enclosed and we look forward to receiving lots of nominations. **Please send your application to the office by 18th October.** This award is judged by the Trustees who judge all the applications individually – always a very difficult task!

THE DR MORRIS ANDREW & DANIEL THE SPANIEL MEMORIAL AWARD is a tribute to one of our much loved and missed Trustees, donated by his family. This is made to the **THERAPET ORGANISER OF THE YEAR** and the recipient is decided by the Administrator with approval of the Trustees.

THE KI-CHU-ASHA STARS OF HOPE MEMORIAL TROPHY which is awarded to the Organiser of the sponsored event which raises the most money in the year.

THE MISS MATTY AWARD to the individual who raises the most money at the sponsored events each year.

As the Trust has now been in existence for over twenty years the Trustees have decided to introduce a long service award to those members who have given continuous service for twenty years or more, either as a Therapet Volunteer or in some other capacity such as a member of the Committee of Management. These awards will be presented at the Lunch.

THERAPET OF THE YEAR 2010

This award allows the Trust to recognise the wonderful work carried out by our Therapets, and their owners, not just by the winner but by all the Therapets whether nominated or not. We are able to gain valuable publicity for the Therapet Service at the time the award is made. The Service is a great success story and we wish to build and develop it so that as many people in Scotland as possible can benefit from Therapet visits.

Please arrange for your Therapet to be nominated by sending in the form, together with, if you wish, one photograph and one press cutting, if you have one, by **18th October**. Your Area Representative will be able to help you with the form.

THE ANNUAL COMPANION DOG SHOW took place at a new venue on 6th June. Very late on (just three weeks before the show was to take place) we were informed that, following a geological survey, Queens Park in Glasgow was deemed to be no longer safe for large events. We were offered Queens Park Recreational Ground as an alternative. For many years the Pony Track at Queens Park had been a natural main ring and the layout had become familiar to us all. It was therefore with some trepidation that I arrived early (but by no means as early as some!!) on the Sunday morning to assist with the set up. I need not have worried. Trustee and Show Manager John Stead was thoroughly organised and knew exactly where everything was to go and indeed the layout was a great success. Perhaps the greatest plus mark was that there was hoards of space for cars. Parking at Queens Park had always been a bone of contention.

The weather was kind this year – overcast but dry and not too hot so it was ideal for the dogs. Our two loyal Patrons, Lesley Fitz-Simons and Rosemary Long, were there and Glasgow's Lord Provost was represented by Bailie Jean McFadden, who really enjoys this annual event.

The judge for the pedigree classes was Anne Macdonald from Bearsden. Until recently Anne was the Convenor of the Scottish Kennel Club and it was great to have her back with us. As you can imagine Anne did a very professional job! The best pedigree dog in the show was Lorna Mitchell's Husky "SABLE". The novelty classes were judged by Patron Lesley, Trustee Rita Percival, Real Radio Presenter Lynne Logan and local Vet Ross Allen.

The Road Safety Obedience classes were well filled and were judged by Pat Vaughan, Thomas Ambler, Helen Sutherland and Len Church.

Our friends from the Kirkintilloch and District Dog Training Club gave demonstrations of Agility Work throughout the day and members of the public were again able to try their own dogs on the agility course. The Club also gave a super demonstration of Flyball Racing.

And, of course, there was a parade of many of our Therapets from all over Scotland. Patron Rosemary Long gave the commentary, each Therapet was given a bag of goodies and each volunteer received a Volunteers Week certificate. It was really good to see so many of you there.

Our **ANNUAL PRIZE DRAW** was drawn at the show and there were winners from Aboyne, Ayr, Campbeltown, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Glasgow and many other

places. We are very grateful to everyone who donated prizes, sold tickets and bought tickets. As well as buying tickets many of you sent additional donations – too many to reply to individually, thank you for your generosity, it is very much appreciated.

THERAPETS

So far this year 79 new Therapets have been registered and if we carry on at this pace it could be a record year. A big welcome to all our new members and we hope that you and your Therapets are enjoying your involvement in the Service.

Sadly, since the April Bulletin we have learned that a number of much loved Therapets have died:-

“BRUNO” - Hugh & Pauline Third’s Staffie Cross

“BUSTER” - Stuart Deeds’s Golden Retriever

“LEO” – Sue Simpson’s Labrador

“POPPY” - Ruth Anderson’s Newfoundland

“RANNOCH”- Jocelyn Ness’s Gordon Setter

“ROSA” – Margaret Mordew’s Labrador

“SABLE” – Olivian Brown’s German Shepherd

“SPRINGER” – Bridget Harrison’s Greyhound

We send you our sympathies and also our thanks to all those wonderful dogs for their work as Therapets, and to you, their owners, for sharing them with so many people.

In the April Bulletin I recorded that Jasmine (Jassie) the Japanese Chin owned by Winifred Cowie had died. Under the heading “Jassie was a friend to many” The Banffshire Advertiser gave details of Jassie’s nine years as a Therapet during which she made weekly visits to the Netherha and Parklands Nursing Homes in Buckie.

THERAPET NEWS

Please keep sending news of how your Therapets are getting on, how they react to their role as Therapets and their stories. Please also send your views on how the service is operating and what developments you would like to see. This sort of feedback is very important to us and very valuable to other volunteers.

Joan Miller of Ayr wrote:- “In March of this year our fox terrier, Corrie, was registered as a Therapet. We have been visiting the Hospice here in Ayr and I just wanted to let you know that our visits are going swimmingly. Corrie is proving to be a great favourite both with the staff and the patients. He is used to visiting now and gets quite excited when he realises where he is going. He was a bit of a thug when he was a youngster but he has certainly found his vocation now he is mature, 10 years old today! I am finding our visits to the Hospice one of the most rewarding things I have ever done and frequently come home with a lump in my throat. To think that the monster of a rescue dog we took in can give such pleasure and comfort to people who are so very ill makes all the years of hard work with Corrie very much worth it.”

Tayside Representative Norma Murray forwarded the following email from Cheryl Ritchie who is a Playleader in the Angus Special Playscheme:-

“Karen asked if I could email you with feedback from your session at the Playscheme last week. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the session both the children and the staff! The dogs were great with the children as were the two ladies with the dogs who interacted with the children brilliantly. At first some of the boys were reluctant to get too close to the dogs however, the two ladies gently encouraged them and within ten minutes they were running round the room taking the dogs for walks or rather a jog! It was great to see the children getting so much out of the session and I really hope that we get Therapets back to the scheme again! The three boys in particular were talking about the session for the rest of the day and couldn't wait to tell their parents at home time. We had a few of the children referring back to the two information posters you left us with information about each of the two dogs - this is great for the children to remember your visit by!

Thanks again on behalf of the children and staff at the Angus Special Playscheme and we hope to see you all again soon!”

Sue Simpson's “Leo” died in May but in February Sue had sent the following:-

“I am responding to your request for Therapet photographs with a few of Leo at Bonnington Resource centre where we have been visiting for the past 15 or so years. Originally with George the yellow lab, and then Leo took over his duties, actually visiting from a few months old, before he officially became a Therapet!

Leo is now well into his 14th year and Bonnington is closing down, the clients being moved to other centres. We have sadly given up our weekly visits. Leo is rather arthritic and has lost his sense of direction, his blindness does not really hamper him as he moves slowly, unless there is a bitch in season about when he changes gear and finds a good turn of speed!

You cannot imagine how much pleasure our visits have given us over the years, and, as I now join some of the members every week with their art group I know by their constant asking after Leo that they enjoyed his company and miss him now. I sometimes take him down 'for the ride' and its like a royal visit!!!?

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to enrich our lives through our friendship with so many people who have been dealt a rough hand in life.”

Also from Edinburgh **Stacy Schumacher** has written:-

"Although when I was a young girl my family always had dogs, I have always felt more of a connection to cats, finding their personalities charming and engaging. When I moved into a house with a garden a few years ago, I went to Lothian Cat Rescue to find a cat that would be friendly enough to tolerate visitors to the house. I was extremely fortunate to have found Servo, a black "tuxedo" shorthair cat who not only tolerates new people, but actually enjoys meeting new friends! I was familiar with the idea of Therapet volunteering from the US, but had difficulty finding out how I could do something with Servo until I saw that the Canine Concern Trust accepted feline Therapets! I contacted the Trust and Douglas Ruthven came out to meet Servo. He thought as I did, that he would be very good with older people, and helped to arrange for us to visit a care home just up the street.

Servo and I go there every fortnight, and he has proved extremely popular, especially with some of the ladies that always used to have cats of their own until they came to the Home. Knowing how to go around and visit with him was tricky at first... cats are a bit more difficult to train than dogs! I put a small harness and lead on him so if he gets frightened he won't bolt under anyone's bed (he is not a fan of the tea trolley). But he usually just sits calmly in my arms as I take him around to visit. He loves getting scratched around his head and neck. With a few people, we place a cushion on their lap and he will sit down and relax, and I think he'd sit there all afternoon if I'd let him! He does not take any treats from the people he visits, or even myself while at the care home, but I let everyone know that he'll get a bit of sardine as a treat when he gets home, which keeps him happy to visit, I think!

I know how happy I am to have gotten him from the Rescue Centre, and I am very glad to share his incredibly calm and friendly nature with others. I'm glad the Canine Concern Scotland Trust helps to arrange Therapet volunteering for Felines as well!"

Marion Livingstone of Lilliesleaf, Melrose has written "My Whippet, Benji, is doing well at a local nursing home; although it is quite hard going with one of our clients (as she does not speak he is not very responsive), he is now a great favourite with another lady and I think our visits provide a welcome break for the staff too!"

From **Margaret Griesdale** of Portlethen, Aberdeenshire:-

"I had heard of the Therapet Service previously but I have to admit that I could not imagine how successful it has turned out to be in the case of my Scottie **Bramble**. The residents are all her friends and they perk up and take notice when she appears. Since she was small I have made sure that she is a friend to all humans, she loves the small young variety as they play with her. It is unfortunate that in her physic she thinks she is always the top dog ergo she does not have friends of the feline or canine variety, a great pity. At the nursing home we visit, all residents and staff know her and she knows her way about the place. One or two of the residents like her to sit on their knees. We are both pleased to be of service to the residents. The only known hazard is that everyone wants to feed her, which is a no, **no!**"

Avril Ritchie and her Therapet, Whippet Toto, visit the Ayr Clinic and the Ayrshire Hospice regularly. The following is Toto's account of his experiences:-

"My owner and I have been visiting the Ayr Clinic since early December. We arrive at Reception to wait for a member of the Occupational Department to come with us round the wards. While we are waiting, other staff come and go through Reception and I get lots of pats and I wag my tail with pleasure. Pretty soon the staff member arrives and after a big "hello" from me, off we go to the Women's ward. As we move towards the double doors, I can see faces at the glass. I pull hard on the lead and soon I am in the centre of a semi-circle and lots of hands stroke me and some patients get down on their knees which is great fun. I like it when the nurses come and say "hello" too – more pats for me!

We head off for the Men's ward and once again I'm surrounded – it's lovely! The men sometimes ask questions about me and they can't believe I am nearly six – they think I am a puppy! They really like my collar too!

Next stop is Rehabilitation. Some of the men are drinking coffee, tea or soft drinks and watching TV. I go round them. Some don't feel like talking to me. That's okay, I don't mind. One man spent a lot of time with me and gave me the best back massage I have ever had!

One man I meet each time likes to sit in a small room. The staff member told me later that he hadn't communicated for some time. When I met him, I immediately kissed both his hands and he rubbed my back. He seemed pleased to see me and I really like him. Whenever I got the chance I licked his fingers. He said to me a few times "You're a nice person", then he said the word "Labrador". The staff member said it was a bit of a break-through. When we went back to see the man next time he said another couple of words. It turns out he used to have a black Labrador called Bobby. He also likes kittens. The member of staff says the next time, to help with the man's motivation, we might go for a walk round the car park and I've to go too!! I'll need to ignore any interesting smells! I must just concentrate on the man and our walk. We won't be going too far as the man doesn't find walking easy. I'm really looking forward to it!

The member of staff says my visits have made a difference to a lot of patients and they talk about me after I've left. I am really happy to think that I might have done that.

The Ayrshire Hospice was established to enhance the quality of life of those who are suffering from advanced incurable cancer, motor neurone disease, and other incurable progressive illnesses, as well as supporting families and carers facing the loss of a loved one.

My owner and I have been visiting the hospice for about eighteen months. I know when my "special" lead comes out, the one with the fluorescent Therapet identifier. When we arrive we are warmly met by the Receptionist and she writes our names in the book. We go through to Hilary (Voluntary Services Manager) and Pauline (Asst. VS) room. After lots of pats and cuddles and a drink of water, my owner picks up a list of patients who are on the ward and we set off for the Nurses' Station. We find out if there are any patients who are too ill to be visited or who would prefer not to have a visit.

Each room on the ward is named after a tree, which is lovely. One time I remember meeting a patient and I licked all the cream off her fingers. I was just saying "hello". I thought I was going to get into trouble, but the lady was very kind and said "No, it was fine." Later on I met her in the corridor and she pointed to me from her wheelchair and said "That's the dog who licked all my cream off!" She was laughing. I went up and spoke to her.

Some patients have visitors with them and that's really great 'cos it's all the more people to say "hello" to. Sometimes the patients can't talk for very long and their visitors tell us about dogs they have. Sometimes I lie down and have a rest. Not for long though. After visiting the patients on the Ward, we go back to Hilary and Pauline's room and I have a drink of water. It gets very hot.

The next place we visit is the Day Hospice. There's usually lots going on. Some patients are in wheelchairs; some in big, comfy chairs. They all sit in a semi-circle and there are staff and other volunteers there too. I always get a really big welcome. Last week, one of the men was telling us about his Jack Russell and all his antics. My owner told him about the chip I have between my shoulders to cut out my hormones 0 I was getting too friendly with the ladies!!

After being petted by the patients, staff and volunteers it's time for me and my owner to go home. We head out into the corridor and as we pass the Art Room, we have a look in and though usually there are patients there, today the room is empty.

Another drink of water awaits me. My owner takes me to the shredding room and there she shreds the list of patients on the ward – confidentiality is very important.

Finally my owner reads a report written by a schoolgirl who did work experience at the Hospice. My owner and I happened to be in that same week and Stephanie took my lead and all three of us went to the Ward and the Day Hospice, as usual. Stephanie reported that, as a result of coming with us, she could see a change in the patients. Stephanie concluded that Animal Therapy played an important part in the patients' well-being. I was really glad as I really look forward to my visits.

Love, Toto

PS Update from Ayr Clinic – the man in Rehabilitation has started throwing the ball for me in the garden, and next week we're off to the beach and the man is going to take me for a short walk – I'm really looking forward to it!!”

Many thanks Toto for this great account of your visiting. I am sure that all of your Therapet colleagues up and down Scotland have many stories to tell of their visiting and we look forward to receiving them. It is always a good idea to get them checked out before submitting them. Toto's owner had the Ayr Clinic and the Ayrshire Hospice review their sections of his account.

THERAPET PUBLICITY

News items about Therapets in newspapers, on radio and television are the best publicity we can get. If you are able to interest the media, in your area, about the Therapet Service, please let me know and I will be able to supply you, and the media, with backup information.

This year we have had some super coverage including:-

Julia Shaw and Therapet “Poppy”, an Irish Setter, were featured in an excellent article, with a great picture, in the Midlothian Advertiser.

When Jackie Wilson received Therapet Rosie's Father Jim Peat memorial Medal for five years of service as a Therapet she decided to approach the media in her part of Scotland in order to publicise the Therapet Service. As a result articles and photographs appeared in the West Highland Free Press and the Ross-shire Journal and there was also an article in the Gairloch & District Times. There was a news

bulletin item on Two Lochs Radio and Jackie was interviewed at some length on the same radio station. Jackie sent me a recording and it really was a super interview.

Jackie also sent me a copy of an article by Melanie Reid in The Times Magazine in June. Melanie had an horrific riding accident and is in the Spinal Unit at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. In her article Melanie wrote: -

“I have a new friend, one I am free to tell you about. Her name is Poppy and she is a pretty soul with kind brown eyes who comes to visit every Tuesday. She’s a Springer Spaniel, a “Therapet” from the Charity Canine Concern Scotland Trust, and she sits patiently next to each of us in turn, offering unconditional solace and the comfort of a caress. You can observe people’s faces, haggard with suffering, soften as they stroke her.

The first time I touch Poppy, I burst into tears because she abruptly reminds me of how much I miss my own dog, the sweetest little rescue Staffordshire Terrier. Like Roy Hattersley, I know Staffies are hugely maligned. Pip doesn’t travel – she gets sick – so she has not been to visit me. At home. I’m told she is needy, missing me. She sniffs my dirty washing in the laundry basket and looks up mournfully, quizzically. There is no way to explain why I have abandoned her. Instead, we must both wait for the weeks to tick by until I get my first day pass home. As T.S. Elliot put it, we are condemned to learn that “only through time time is conquered”.”

Poppy is of course owned by Anne Macdonald who has done wonderful work over very many years at the Southern General, also at the Yorkhill Children’s Hospital and with psychiatrists in connection with phobic children. Anne’s first Therapet was Eilidh, who did exceptional work, and Poppy became registered in 2005. I contacted Anne and she responded:-

“I have been following Melanie's column in the Times since the very early days, her journey was in The Times newspaper but from 26 June has been in the Saturday magazine. Melanie interviewed me for an article in the Herald in 2003 regarding the benefits of animals/therapy which we discussed the other week and both winced at the irony!

I have been working with her on my weekly visits, since the early days. I don't know if any of you have been reading her column, her first entry, unbelievably only 3 weeks after being thrown by her horse who refused a jump - something she had previously experienced unscathed many times. She dictated her column whilst she was still under the weird effects of morphine, her description of the fear, despair, panic and 101 other emotions of the possibility of being unable to do anything for oneself, perhaps for the rest of your life, is one of the most humbling pieces of journalism I have ever read.

Unfortunately The Times now charges for on-line readership, but if you google 'The Times Melanie Reid' you should pick up her first diary entry. I have been visiting SGH for 10 years, to gain an insight through Melanie's articulate reporting mixes painful fact and dark humour, which has helped many people through this dark time, has been an eye opener

I usually see Mel and some of her other 'friends' in the gym when it is 'hand therapy', Poppy lies along the table and everyone watches and appreciates this calm time.

Through my Therapet visiting I am involved in several NHS committees. I think Melanie's column is an invaluable piece of journalism and will be discussing this with the Director of Nursing next week. I strongly believe this should be incorporated into staff training, how can you not take advantage of this information!

Everything I have said above has been in Mel's column so I am not breaking any patient confidentiality.”

AREA & THERAPET REPRESENTATIVES

We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful group of people who are prepared to devote a considerable amount of their time to the work of the Trust and in particular to the Therapet Service. Without them the Therapet Service would not be the success that it is. The majority were able to join the Trustees in Perth in July at what has now become an annual meeting to consider all aspects of the Trust's work and particularly the Therapet Service. We missed those who couldn't come because of other commitments, health reasons or holidays.

Above all on this occasion we missed **JEAN CONNOR**. Jean, whose husband died earlier this year, has not been in good health and has decided to move to England to be near her son. Jean has been with us since 1989 and has been a great support in so many ways, as a member of the Committee of Management, as an Area Representative, as a fund raiser and more. We send her our love, and our thanks for all that she has done, and we wish her better health.

SPONSORED EVENTS, FUND RAISING AND PROMOTION

ANN HUGHES, Area Representative for Fife writes:-

“I would like to thank the Fife Therapet Volunteers who took part in our first Sponsored Walk in Ravenscraig Park, Kirkcaldy in May. We raised a magnificent £966.50 Special thanks to Kirsten Reekie & her family for all the help so readily given. Thankfully the weather was kind to us on the day.

We are holding a Fun Evening on Friday 29th October at Dunshalt Hall. All will be welcome along with their Therapets. It should be a good evening!! Food and entertainment etc!! Details will be sent later.”

DOUGLAS RUTHVEN, Trustee and Area Representative for Edinburgh and the Lothians tells me that he will be organising a sponsored walk this year. It will be a farm walk on a farm near Temple, Midlothian. A date will be settled once it is known when the harvesting will be completed and we will write to everyone, in the Edinburgh and the Lothians area, with details and directions.

Sponsored Walks are great fun and provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other – quite apart from being excellent fund raising events.

MAUREEN HILL our indefatigable Area Representative for Dumfries has been to many agricultural shows, and other events, this summer with her beautifully made dog bedding. Apart from raising a great deal of money for the Trust from the sale of the bedding Maureen is able to publicise the work of the Trust to a wide range of people.

VIVIEN MOEN, Area Representative for Badenoch and Strathspey, along with a team of helpers, including roving Trustee James Macdonald, had a very successful stand at the Figgat Fair in Grantown-on-Spey. A busy day was had by all and a goodly sum of money was raised.

NORMA MURRAY, Area Representative for Tayside, plus a very strong team of members (including the tireless James Macdonald) and their Therapets had a stand at a "Seafront Spectacular" Event in Arbroath. The stand generated a great deal of interest in the Therapet Service and a large number of information packs were posted subsequently to prospective volunteers.

NORMA has arranged to have a **sponsored walk** in Friockheim Woods on Sunday 5th September start at 2.00pm from Norma's house in Friockheim. She has already written to everyone in her area so this is just a reminder. Norm hopes that there will be a great turn out of members and their Therapets.

DOUGLAS RUTHVEN and JAMES MACDONALD manned a stand at Dogs Trust Glasgow Fun Day on Sunday 25th July at Strathclyde Country Park and Douglas also had a stand at Dogs Trust Open Day at their kennels in West Calder on 22nd August. Both events were very busy and we received a great number of enquiries from prospective Therapet volunteers.

CCST EDUCATION - CHILDREN AND DOGS

George Leslie, Chairman of Trustees writes:-

CCST has always had its core a desire to promote responsible dog ownership and our DVD – Children and Dogs has been one of the most advanced educational tools available for teaching young children about working with dogs.

Always seeking ways to expand this role of CCST James MacDonald and myself arranged a meeting with the Dogs Trust, SSPCA and the SKC to discuss what each organisation is doing about promotion of responsible dog ownership through their educational roles. The meeting was held at the Dogs Trust new premises at Mt Vernon on the outskirts of Glasgow. We were also given a tour of the new premises which is primarily for re-homing of dogs but also does a lot of useful educational work. The premises are impressive and are worth visiting.

James gave an excellent presentation of the CCST approach to school visits and also our DVD, and also went into detail about how try to obtain feed-back from the schools about the success of these visits. Although both Dogs Trust and SSPCA had lots of leaflets neither had developed a DVD of similar quality.

Dogs Trust was represented by Lorraine Hare their Education Officer. Lorraine - carries out an impressive number of school visits using her own dog for demonstration

purposes and the Dogs Trust have a lot of leaflets which they hand out to the children. Lorraine is based in Glasgow so the majority of her visits are concentrated in the central belt.

SSPCA were represented by their senior Education Officer, Gill Irving Lewis. It is worth noting that the SSPCA have five full-time education officers and most of their inspectors also carry out some educational work. This is in contrast to the RSPCA who not only have less inspectors per head of population but have for the moment withdrawn from educational work.

The SSPCA do a lot of school visits with four main themes - animal welfare, pets, farm animals and wildlife. They do not take dogs into class-rooms but their literature and promotional material is excellent.

SKC was represented by Jean Fairlie whom many of you will know. The SKC do not do school visits but of course are very involved in dog training which has a vital role to play in promoting responsible dog ownership.

The meeting was very interesting. Each of us have a great deal to offer in the field of education. James and I learned that CCST has a lot to offer with the number of volunteers with dogs who can take part in school visits but we also learned from the others about their contacts with the school system which are better than our own.

CONTROL OF DOGS (SCOTLAND) ACT by George Leslie

The new Control of Dogs (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 22nd April and received royal assent on the 26th May. This new law is a vast improvement on the Dangerous Dogs Act in that it tries to adopt a preventative role. The aim is to identify dogs that are “out of control” and impose on the owner a Dog Control Order (as one newspaper described it a sort of Doggy ASBO).

These orders will be imposed by local authority officers called Dog Control Officers when confronted by a dog and can require owners to microchip and neuter their dog as well as keep it under control not just in public places but also in private places such as in the owner’s home and garden.

Canine Concern Scotland Trust submitted a written opinion and gave oral evidence to the Parliamentary Committee which was scrutinising the Bill. We welcomed the Bill but expressed three major points of concern.

1) The Bill stated that a “dog is out of control if its behaviour (or irrespective of its behaviour its size and power) give rise to reasonable alarm and apprehensiveness to a person or to another animal” We felt that the words in parenthesis were in contradiction to the underlying principle of the Bill which was declared to be “deed not breed”.

Several other witnesses agreed with this and an amendment was introduced to remove those words. This amendment was carried and the final Act does not include the reference to “size and power”.

2) We also tried to have the words “reasonable alarm and apprehensiveness” altered by suggesting that a dog is out of control if its behaviour “threatened the safety of any individual, or if it acted aggressively towards an individual who was not acting in a threatening way towards that dog”. We had no success with this one and the phrase “reasonable alarm and apprehensiveness” will still be used to define “out of control”.

3) We also raised the position of a dog being alone in a private place and acting aggressively towards an unwanted intruder. The answer to this was a little vague but it was generally felt that any alarm and apprehensiveness felt by an unwanted intruder into a private place when confronted by a dog could not be deemed to be reasonable.

We are now facing an uncertain period when these new regulations will be put into practice. To a large extent it will be dependent on the interpretation of the regulations by the Dog Control Officers, and the Act itself allows for owners to be able to appeal to a Court against the imposition of a Dog Control Order.

If anyone feels that the Act is being used unreasonably then contact one of the Trustees and we shall endeavour to investigate such cases and publicise any case where we agree that the Act has been improperly used.

MEMBERSHIP

A renewal notice was issued with the January Bulletin and a reminder in April to members who had not so far paid. As always the response has been marvellous and we do appreciate the many additional donations that have been received. We are not issuing a further reminder but if you have not paid so far please pop a cheque in the post. The fees remain at £4.00 single, £6.50 joint and £2.00 Senior Citizen. From the Trust’s insurance point of view it is important that all Therapet volunteers have their membership up-to-date.

I hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the Bulletin and I hope that it will inspire you to send in accounts of your Therapet visiting. Please also view our new and developing website www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk. Enjoy what is left of this rather wet summer, perhaps we will get a glorious autumn!

Yours sincerely

Nick Henley Price

PS Please remember:-

- a) The Awards Lunch on 14th November
- b) Nominations for Therapet of the Year to be in by 18th October
- c) Renew your membership, if you have not already done so!

