

BULLETIN 73 – January 2012

Dear Members and Friends

What a wild end to 2011 and start to 2012! I hope that you have all survived without too much damage and that overall the New Year will be good for you and your Therapets, and other pets of course! Whilst this Bulletin is being written in January it will not reach you until February, so sorry for the delay.

I can start this Bulletin with some more great news! For some time we have been looking for someone to become the Area Representative for Perthshire which has large potential for Therapet work. We are delighted to announce that **HARRY GREIG** of Coupar Angus has agreed to take on the responsibility for Perthshire. Harry is a dedicated Therapet volunteer with Boxer “Alfie” and Staffie “Dixie” who, as well as being Therapets, are also keen agility competitors.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2012 are now due and renewal forms have been sent separately this year. We do hope that you will continue your membership and of course it is very important, from the insurance point of view, that Therapet Volunteers keep their membership up to date. The form contains a **Gift Aid Declaration**. If you are a tax payer please do sign this declaration as the Trust can then recover valuable tax from HM Revenue & Customs.

The annual **PRESENTATION AND AWARDS LUNCHEON** for 2011 took place at the Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate on Sunday 20th November. It was a most enjoyable event with a Chairman of Trustees, George Leslie was the master of ceremonies and we were delighted to have Patron Rosemary Long with us to make the presentations.

There were two awards made to recognise fund raising efforts in connection with sponsored walks.

The Ki-Chu-Asha Stars of Hope Memorial Trophy, which was donated by Jean Llamo, is for the organiser whose walk raised the most money. This year it has been won by **VIVIEN MOEN**, our Area Representative for Badenoch & Strathspey, whose walk raised £610.00.



The Miss Matty Award, in memory of our beloved Boxer, Matty, is awarded to the top individual fund raiser at the sponsored walks. This year the award went to **Anita MacDonald** who, with her blind Rough Collie **MUSIC**, completed a solo walk along the Great Glen Way, a trek of some 73 miles!. They raised sponsorship of £350.00. The trophy is of course in the form of a **BOXER!!**



The **Dr Morris Andrew and Daniel the Spaniel Trophy** is awarded to the Therapet Organiser of the Year Dr Andrew was a Trustee and also the Area Representative for Edinburgh and the Lothians for a number of years. The trophy was donated by members of Dr Andrew's family.

This year the award was made to **the ABERDEEN TEAM of Therapet Representatives** comprising Clare Copland, Linda Macdonald, Bruce McKenzie and Diane Wood all of whom do great work in the whole of the Grampian Area. It is not the first time that this team has been given the award, it was awarded to them in 2007 and Diane was awarded it in 2002 when she was our representative in Inverness. Until the last couple of years the team was even larger but because of failing health both **Hamish Munro** and **Inez Wood** have had to retire. We thank them both for all the work they did whilst members of the Team.

We were delighted that Clare and Linda were with us to accept the award.



SPENCER AWARD for THERAPET OF THE YEAR.

This award was donated by **Tom and Dorothy Wilkins**, whose Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, **SPENCER**, was the very first dog to be registered in the Therapet scheme, way back in 1988.

This year we received a record number of nominations in respect of Therapets all of whom do magnificent work and of whom their owners can be justifiably proud. Unfortunately there can only be one winner and the selection of the winner falls to our Trustees to decide – a very difficult task indeed!

The winner, or rather winners, of **THERAPET OF THE YEAR FOR 2011** were English Setter **LUCY** and Labrador **ANNA** who are owned by **Val Burns** of Giffnock in Glasgow. They were nominated by Lorraine McCabe, who is the Senior Playworker at the Linn Park Adventure Playground for children with additional needs.



Lucy and Anna have been Therapets for ten years. Anna started her work at Eastwood Court in Giffnock and then both dogs visited Wellmeadow Lodge in Newton Mearns for years where they were loved by all the staff and amused the residents by performing all their tricks! On one of their first visits they were introduced to a retired farmer who was blind and had not spoken since arriving at the home nine months before. Lucy laid her head on his knee and he started to ask about her and tell about his farm Collies. The staff were amazed.

The dogs now visit the Linn Park Adventure Playground and also Middlefield School in the West End of Glasgow where they help calm down children with Asperger syndrome and let autistic children walk them round the classrooms. The children love to watch the dogs perform their tricks. Some of the children are phobic but often come round after a couple of visits.

In her nomination Lorraine McCabe wrote:-

“ Lucy and Anna have been visiting the park for the last few years and their visits are eagerly anticipated by the children.

Lucy and Anna encourage the children to try equipment. For example, the dogs go down the slide and have a go on the roundabout, this encourages the more reluctant children to have a go when they see Lucy and Anna doing it. The dogs have great patience with the children with challenging behaviour, they bring a calming influence to the session. The children enjoy having the responsibility for walking the dogs which promotes self esteem in the children. The dogs remain calm even when on the few instances children have been acting out. The dogs also play in the soft play with the children with complex needs, these children are not able to make full use of the equipment but when the dogs are there one girl, who rarely shows emotion or any reactions, shows an awareness of the dogs and is livelier when interacting closely with them. Staff and children alike take great joy from watching the dogs take part in games such as musical bumps.

Lucy and Anna attend on fund raising days and are a big hit with all who attend the park. They have become part of the team and are greatly appreciated by everyone,”

RUNNER-UP for Therapet of the Year was **Irish Setter ROSIE** who is proudly owned by **Mary Innes**. She was nominated by the Nursing staff on the Levendale Ward in Lynebank Hospital in Dunfermline.

Mary recognised Rosie’s potential very early on when she would make a beeline for anyone who was stressed or troubled and sit down beside them and press her body against them. It was so obvious that very many people remarked on her uncanny abilities. That was when Mary applied to enlist Rosie in the Therapet Service.

Rosie started working as a Therapet 5 years ago in the Highlands and for 3 years was a regular visitor to Grand View care Home, Grant House and Ian Charles Cottage Hospital, all in Grantown-on-Spey.

For the past 2 years Rosie has been a weekly visitor to a young man in a secure Special Needs Unit within Lynebank Hospital, Dunfermline. He absolutely adores Rosie (and Annie) who joins her) and apparently is mentally transformed in the time that he spends with them.

Rosie has also recently begun working with a little boy with dog phobia – under James Macdonald’s help and guidance – attended by a psychiatrist at Lynebank Hospital, with some very rewarding results.

Although almost blind Rosie can still fulfil her duties with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment which she transmits to everyone around her.



IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD

The IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD which 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. Over the years some very special people and organisations have been given the award and this year we were delighted to make the award to another very special person. Indeed this year's very special person was given this award exactly 10 years ago.

Chairman George Leslie in presenting the award said:-

“What can we say of **JAMES MACDONALD**?

- He is a Trustee
- He is the Chairman of the Committee of Management
- He is the Area Representative for Glasgow and the Greater Glasgow Area
- With his Old English Sheepdogs he is a regular Therapet Visitor to the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow and a number of other institutions including the secure unit at the Levensdale Hospital
- He is a brilliant visitor to schools and he trains other volunteers on how to handle school visits
- He assists psychologists with children with dog phobias and as we have heard he helps other volunteers in this area of work
- He gives great support to our Area Representatives and travels with the mini marquee to help them with their events
- Every May and August he organises and mans the Trust's stand at the Scottish Kennel Club's shows
- Most years he organises a sponsored walk, and very successfully too.
- He is the Trust's WEBMASTER. Over the last couple of years this has taken a lot of his time and caused one or two grey hairs to appear!!
- He is much in demand as a speaker on the work of the Trust to interested groups.



Outside the Trust he is actively involved in Old English Sheepdog rescue and he is a committed Pet Bereavement Councillor and he even manages to fit in regular games of badminton and is highly competitive too!

James, we recognise all the work you do for the Trust – it is difficult to find the words to express the gratitude of the Trustees, Members of the Committee of Management, Area Representatives, Therapet Volunteers and the Administrator to whom you give great support.

What we can do to demonstrate our appreciation is to present you with the Iain Whyte Memorial Award.

THERAPETS NO LONGER WITH US

Since the last Bulletin, I have learned that the following much loved Therapets, have died:-

George Adams' Cocker Spaniel "**MUTTLEY**"

Isobel Cameron' Cavalier King Charles Spaniel "**MHAIRI**"

Jean Coke's Labrador "**RHANNA**"

Aidan Dunbar's German Shepherd Dog "**TIA**"

Elizabeth Hughes' Golden Retriever "**KYLE**" who was Therapet of the Year 2009.

We send our sympathies to you all and also our thanks for your participation in the Therapet Service with your beloved pets. They have given great pleasure to very many people. I hope that I have not missed anyone but if I have, please let me know.

Keith Balneaves rescued Bulldog Bronson about two years ago and was doing a wonderful job trying to bring him back to good health with a view to registering him as a Therapet to replace Muttley who has now had to retire. Sadly Bronson died very suddenly just before Christmas.

THERAPET NEWS

Doocot View is a very sheltered housing facility with a day care centre in Banff. The Assistant Co-ordinator, Oriette Stubbs asked for a visit from a Therapet and **John Bell** of Newpitsligo volunteered to go along with **Chihuahua Molly**. After the first visit Oriette sent the following message:-

"John was in touch and came to visit today with Molly. The tenants and day care members were very pleased and we have arranged for them to come back next week. Thank you for your help with this, it was lovely to see everyone so happy."

Shona Morris on Millport wrote:-

"As you know, **Alfie, Lewis** (Toy Poodles) and I have been visiting the care home in Millport for adults with ASN. They are happy with short weekly visits and that suits us, too.

Yesterday we also started fortnightly visits to Burnlea Care Home in Largs. It was lovely to hear the nurses there tell me two particular ladies have not been so happy in a long time, as when they petted the dogs. Very worthwhile and the boys loved it!

Peter Cameron of Renfrew visits Hunterhill Care Home in Paisley with Therapet **Briagha**, a Border Collie, and last September he sent the following report:-

“We have now visited the home on 9 occasions. The home has a respite unit, so every time we visit she is getting the opportunity to interact with new people. There is also an Alzheimer's unit, a couple of the residents are managing to remember her name etc. The lady I mentioned in my first email is now asking when Briagha is coming, she is talking to Briagha, clapping her, she plays with her ears - her sister is over the moon. Most of the other residents appear to be enjoying her visits, they would like me to leave her so they can look after her. I might be slightly bias, I think she is doing a great job.”

From Craig Court in Milltimber, Aberdeen, **Gail Jamieson** sent the following:-

“I am writing this letter on behalf of one of our residents.

We are an acquired brain injury unit based in Aberdeen and we have been receiving the service of a Therapet visit on a weekly basis from **Clare Copland** and **Walton** which has been a huge success and made a big difference to his life. Clare, who comes to our home, is very experienced and down to earth with our residents.

Our resident would like to make a donation of £50.00 towards your charity, which we must say is a very valuable service.”

Walton is a Retriever/Labrador and was Therapet of the Year in 2008.

Jean Duffy wrote that Collie Cross **Bonnie** is continuing to visit as a Therapet at the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow and is a great favourite with both the patients and staff. In fact one of the patients loves her so much that he has a photo of her on his bedroom wall!

Ian McKim & Julie Jackson along with Greyhound **Jasper** visit the Mansionhouse Unit in the Victoria Infirmary in Glasgow and they reported:-

“All went well on our visit last Sunday. We were there for around 25 minutes & accompanied by an auxiliary nurse, who both identified suitable patients and manipulated them to best see and stroke Jasper.

On updating the Sister, Helen Reid, today, we were advised that the staff felt that the patients had benefitted greatly from the visit, with one male in particular electing to wave us goodbye on our departure, showing an awareness and positive response that he hasn't exhibited before.

The next visit will be on Sunday 8 January at 11am, which, the staff & sister advise, is the best time for staff availability.”

From **Christine Grist** of Drumeldrie in Fife, sent the following:-

“Ellie, my 4 year old Lhasa Apso is a great wee character. She is a bright, busy, happy little dog, and has been the Therapet at our local Psychiatric ward in Kirkcaldy for around a year. During that time we have made friends with many of the long term patients. Ellie’s friendly, inquisitive nature has also benefited short term patients. The nurses tell me that many of these people rarely smile, except when Ellie comes to visit!

Last week, as Ellie and I sat in the day room with a nurse waiting for the patients to arrive, a new patient was walking along the corridor outside the door, stopping to look in through the glass window each time she passed. The nurse asked if I would mind if she left the room as she said that the new patient would probably not come into the room while she was there. I agreed and she left.

Sure enough, a few minutes later, the door was gingerly opened just enough for patient to pop her head around and ask ‘What kind of dog is that?’ I answered that she was a Lhasa Apso called Ellie and would she like to come in and stroke her. She moved a little way into the room and we spoke about Ellie, and about the dogs that the patient had owned in the past, while Ellie ran around her feet and made her smile. After a little while she said goodbye and went back to the ward.

When the nurse returned she was very surprised and pleased. The patient had not communicated with anyone since she was brought into the hospital a few days earlier. I like to think that her little time with Ellie could be the start of the healing process for her. We will look out for her again when we return next week.”

A number of our Therapets and owners assist psychologists in helping people, primarily children, overcome their fear of dogs. **James Macdonald**, who is very experienced in this work, received the following email of thanks from the psychologist he had been helping:-

“Just wanted to say many thanks for today's session with Lacy and for bringing the ribbon for the young girl, that worked out great as red happens to be her favourite colour at the moment. The girl's parents report that she is no longer scared when walking down the street and there are dogs present and she does not seem to be avoiding places like parks any longer.

So, her fear no longer seems to be impacting upon her life and she seems a lot more confident around dogs, which is why I suggested having a review session in January. I have told dad to do things like visit parks and go for walks so that the girl is coming into contact with dogs and not avoiding situations. She may never be fully comfortable around dogs, but her fear doesn't seem to be holding her back, which is the main thing. Hopefully when I see her again things will have continued to improve. However, I will be in touch if things have taken a step back (hopefully not).

Many thanks again for your help with this young girl, it was a pleasure working with yourself and Lacy.”

Finally another Chihuahua called **Honey**, owned by **Alice and Austin Gallacher**, sent the following to me:-

“Just a little note to let you know that I started being a Therapet on 14th November and went on my third visit today to the Carrickstone Care Home in Cumbernauld. I am thoroughly enjoying my visits and everyone spoils me so much. I hope I bring them as much comfort and happiness as they bring me. I think my “assistants” are enjoying it too. I took Christmas cards to everyone today with my picture in them and I think they loved them.”

Please keep sending in your reports and snippets about your experiences whilst Therapet visiting. It is really great to share them with all our members and friends and to demonstrate the wonderful work that you are all doing with your Therapets.

2012 DIARY DATES

Please put the following in your diaries:-

- Companion Dog Show at Queens Park Recreational Park, Queens Drive, Glasgow on Sunday 3rd June
- Meeting of Trustees and Area and Therapet Representatives at the Salutation Hotel, Perth on Saturday 16th June
- Presentation and Awards Luncheon at the Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate on Sunday 18th November

CONTACTS

In the next pages I have included the details for all of our Area Representatives, Aberdeen Therapet Representatives and Trustees. They are all there to help and advise so please do not hesitate to contact them.

With best wishes to you all and your Therapets.

Yours sincerely

Nick Henley Price

PS Please remember your membership!

PPS Visit our Website!

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KEEPING YOUR THERAPET HEALTHY

The Therapet is almost by definition going to meet and bring comfort and happiness to people who are not in the best of health and whose immune systems may be weak either through disease or in some cases because of the treatments which they are receiving.

It is the duty of every Therapet owner to ensure that their Therapet is in the best of health and not going to take germs into the environment of those we are visiting. We must also be able to convince the authorities in charge of hospitals, homes or schools that we have taken every precaution to ensure that our Therapet is safe and can only bring benefits to those whom we visit.

Canine Concern Scotland would like to ask all Therapet owners to take the following health precautions.

* **Annual Health Check.** We would like all Therapets to have an annual check-up by your local vet. Be sure to tell your vet that your dog is a Therapet and ask your vet's advice as to what vaccinations your Therapet would require, (but ask in particular for Kennel Cough Vaccination as this vaccine covers a bacterium called Bordetella which can affect humans.) You should in particular ask your vet to check for any signs of ear, eye, nose or mouth infections and to ensure that coat is clear of any overt signs of infection. Remember these are the parts of the dog which the patients you are visiting will make direct contact with.

* **Deworming every 3 months and monthly if your Therapet is visiting schools or youth groups.**

* **Skin Parasites.** We would recommend "spot-ons" since flea collars and powders can occasionally cause reactions in pets and humans. Some of the "spot-ons" cover fleas only and some cover fleas and ticks. There are also some spot-ons which cover fleas, worms and some mange mites. In general the more comprehensive the protective cover the better, but at the very least all Therapet owners must ensure that their animals are free of fleas.

* **Regular dental checks to stop smelly breath, and the risk of spreading infection from infected saliva.**

* **Regular ear checks since even a mild, early ear infection can be painful if someone pats the head or rubs the ears.** (Ear infections may also include bacteria which can infect humans.)

In general any Therapet who is even mildly unwell should be withdrawn from duties until professionally cleared. Therapet owners should also not visit if they are unwell. We should also take precautions when visiting to ensure that our Therapet does not carry any human germs from one patient to the next. If it can be done without causing offence have some bacteriocidal wipes with you to wipe your Therapets head or face before moving on to your next patient.

November 2011