

## BULLETIN 72 – August 2011

Dear Members and Friends

So far 2011 has been a little like the curate's egg as you will gather as you read through this Bulletin. We have had some really great activity on a number of fronts but we have also had some frustrations, now thankfully largely overcome. Come to think of it, the weather has been pretty mixed as well!

First some good news! Since Diane Wood moved from Inverness to Aberdeenshire we have been on the lookout for someone to take on the role of Area Representative for Inverness-shire and Nairn. We are delighted to welcome **Susan Rae** who is already putting the heather on fire, not literally I hasten to add! Susan is very active in the dog world, particularly obedience, and she is a regular Therapet visitor with her Tibetan Terrier "Sophia". Best wishes Susan in your new role!

**PRESENTATION AWARDS LUNCH** which this year will take place at the Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2011 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**LONG SERVICE AWARDS** 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.

### **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 **22<sup>nd</sup> October**. Your Area Representative will be able to help you with the form.

**THE ANNUAL COMPANION DOG SHOW** took place at Queens Park Recreational Ground. We were again reasonably lucky with the weather although it was somewhat windy, to say the least! During the set up a strong gust of wind got hold of our special CCST mini marquee before it was anchored securely and it took off and was badly smashed and was unusable. Some re-organisation was necessary and John Stead and his team were up to the job as always.

Our two loyal Patrons, Lesley Fitz-Simons and Rosemary Long, were there and Glasgow's Lord Provost was again represented by Bailie Jean McFadden, who thoroughly enjoys her day with the dogs.

The judge for the pedigree classes was Irene McManus from Slamannan. Irene is the new Convenor of the Scottish Kennel Club (SKC) and it was great to have her with us. We have had a great relationship with SKC over the years and we are delighted that they bring their promotion tent to our show. The pedigree classes were well filled as were the novelty classes and the ever popular Road Safety Obedience Classes.

We were again very grateful to our friends from the Kirkintilloch and District Dog Training Club who organised the Obedience part of the show and gave demonstrations of Agility Work throughout the day. Members of the public were again able to try their own dogs on the agility course. The Club also gave an exciting demonstration of Flyball Racing.

We were delighted that the 2011 Crufts Best in Show, Flat Coated Retriever Show Champion Vbos the Kentuckian (JET to his friends!) came to the show and did a lap of honour. A really great dog, with a wonderful temperament.

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 welcomed by Patron Lesley Fitz-Simons and Bailie Jean McFadden and were given a bag of goodies. All the Therapet volunteers were presented with a Volunteers Week certificate as were the members of the hard working Committee of Management.

All in all it was a very good day and the rain held off until all the clearing up had been done. As I drove home through some very heavy rain I thought how lucky we had been.

Our **ANNUAL PRIZE DRAW** was drawn at the show and there were winners from all over Scotland. We are very grateful to everyone who donated prizes, sold tickets and bought tickets. As well as buying tickets many of you very kindly sent additional donations. Thank you for your generosity, it is very much appreciated.

### **THERAPETS**

Since the April Bulletin we have learned of the deaths of a number of our wonderful Therapets. First and foremost Therapets are much loved pets and when they die they leave a void in the lives of their owners. Our sympathies go out to all of you who have lost your Therapets and at the same time we send our sincere thanks for sharing them with so many people.

**“ANGUS” Sheila Godsman’s Golden Retriever**

**“BABS” Audrey Dobson’s Golden Retriever**

**“BECKY” Pat Bryce’s Collie**

**“BLUE” Rosemary O’Leary’s Border Collie**

**“CEILIDH” Jean Cooke’s Black Labrador**

**“COIRE BEAG” Vivien Moen’s Golden Retriever**

**“ENYA” Richard & Linda Stone’s German Shepherd**

**“MILLIE” Jan Bell’s Yellow Labrador**

**“MILLIE” Hilda Wightman’s Miniature Wire Haired Dachshund**

**“MUFFIN” Colin & Janet Lawson’s Miniature Schnauzer**

**“PETRA” Sophie Cassidy’s Belgian Shepherd**

**“PHOEBE” Pamela Jeffrey’s German Shepherd**

**“ROSIE” Fiona Millar’s Shetland Sheepdog**

**“TOBA” Eleanor Richmond’s Russian Black Terrier**

I hope that I have not missed anyone but if I have please do let me know.

### **THERAPET NEWS**

During the first half of the year we have registered fewer new Therapets than normal. Not for a lack of applications or for a lack of trying. At the end of February the new Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme was launched to replace the old Disclosure system. It was not until the middle of June that we finally received confirmation that Therapet Volunteers may be enrolled on the scheme. This meant that during three and a half months it was not possible to start the enrolment process and even when we were allowed to start sending in applications the turn round time has been over six weeks in most cases. The frustrations have been immense for

Volunteers, Area Representatives, institutions awaiting a Therapet visitor and, not least, the Administrator. Not good for the blood pressure!! Things are beginning to move, just the other day 16 PVG Records in my post. They will be processed as soon as can be managed but it will take time especially as more will arrive very soon. I can only apologise to new Volunteers but it really is a case of “it’s not my fault”.

In the April edition I recorded that **Joyce Rae’s German Shepherd “Travis”** had died in April. Shortly before he died Joyce had written to me with news of his visiting and a tale about Travis. At the time I had told Joyce that I would include everything in the August edition and after Travis died she graciously agreed that I could go ahead, so here goes.

“Travis and I have now been with Therapet for over three years and are enjoying all our visits. We started at a care home for the elderly with four separate areas and Travis is particularly well received in the Dementia Unit. Our biggest problem is that Travis has to stick to a diet for a minor skin allergy but the residents keep wanting to feed him custard creams!

After chatting with James Macdonald at the Arbroath Seafest in the summer we started visits on a fortnightly basis to a gentleman in his fifties with learning difficulties. He lives in Sheltered Accommodation and along with his Care Worker, myself and Travis we go for a walk to the nearby beach where he spends around half an hour playing with Travis, throwing his ball, getting Travis to speak (the gentleman loves it when Travis barks on his command!) and just having fun. He then gets to walk Travis back to his house on the lead, both tired and happy.

I would also like to tell you a short tale how Travis came to my rescue last year. I was walking my two dogs in a field when I called Tora, the younger dog, away from a horse in the next field. She did a great recall, forgot to stop and slammed into my knee, I got thrown up in the air and landed a heap on the ground. As I got up I thought that my wrist was a bit sore but carried on with my walk. I returned to my van to find that my keys were not in my coat and my mobile was locked securely in the vehicle!! By now I was in quite a lot of pain so walked back down the field towards where I had fallen and told Travis “Go Find”. After a couple of minutes he gave a beautiful indication, started nosing about in the grass and there were my keys. The relief was immense! I got the dogs back in the van and tried to drive to A&E but by now I could not use my hand at all, a call to my husband to come to my rescue and the diagnosis, a wrist broken in two places and a plaster for six weeks. Travis was trained for Working Trials and I am so glad that searching is one of the exercises required, or I could still be wandering round that field yet!”

**Jean Duffy and Bonnie** (a Collie Cross) who started visiting the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow earlier in the year reported: “The visit today went very well – the day Centre was busy again but Bonnie took it all in her stride and the patients were happy to see her and give her lots of petting. Lorna then took us up to the wards where we met several of the patients and they enjoyed having us. We both enjoyed the visit very much.”

**Harry Greig along with Boxer Alfie and American Staffordshire Bull Terrier Dixie** commenced visiting Belmont Castle care Home in Perthshire in January. Of their first visit Harry wrote:-

“Dorothy (Care Manager) was on day off but we met with Caroline her Assistant, the staff response was very positive and welcoming - one of the residents had in fact asked if it was possible for them to have pet visits so we were off to a good start.

I introduced Alfie first and within about 5 minutes he was completely relaxed and cuddling up to the residents. I then brought Dixie in and again she was also very quickly at ease with the residents and the staff.

We then had both Alfie and Dixie in together and they picked out residents to snuggle up to, and the staff were taking pictures - it did not take Alfie and Dixie long to realise if you pose you get a treat!

All in all I think it was a very positive experience for everyone and from the feedback on the day I am sure the residents were pleased.

I have agreed that we will visit every Wednesday at 2.30pm with the flexibility to change arrangements when required by myself or the Care Home.”

**Laura Neilson** who, with Cocker Spaniel **Spencer**, visits Livingstone Care Home sent in an update:-

“Spencer and I are still visiting at the Livingston Care Home. He's quite settled in there and he has his favourites that he goes to for a pet and to sneak biscuits from.

A lot of the patients have Alzheimer's and dementia so for the first wee while I wasn't sure how much of an impact his visits were making though the staff kept telling me how much the residents enjoyed it.

We usually go along every Wednesday and we have identified the people that he makes a special effort to seek out! It's only really now that I'm starting to see that they recognise him when we come in and can see the small changes in them when he's over giving paws and mooching for food! I also managed to get him to wear antlers at Christmas time when we visited which everyone loved and lots of photos were taken - I'll see if I can find one to forward on if you want? We also made a Spencer Calendar for the home at Christmas on the Jessops website which they loved!

We're planning on going along to the dog show (I think maybe waggiest tail would be our best category) and the Care Home are hoping to be able to arrange for some of the residents to come along as well.”

**Jocelyn Ness** of Edinburgh was one of the very first people to register a Therapist in 1988 and since then has been a most loyal visitor with a number of her Gordon Setters. In February she sent in the following:-

“I was also going to contact you with news of my Gordon Setter, Rhum. One of the places he visits is a home for severely, multiply disabled adults, Murraypark. When

there recently, one of the guys, who is normally very quiet and unresponsive, attracted the attention of Rhum, who appeared to be very concerned, cocking his head, then starting to nudge him. Rhum seemed to think there was something wrong. Certainly, I felt that he was distressed about something, by the unusual vocalisation. (These adults are not able to speak). I asked one of the nurses if there was a problem, and it turned out that medication had just been changed, and he was indeed disturbed by this. This is a classic case of dogs' awareness in amazing ways that we can't possibly understand. The follow up to this was the next visit, 2 weeks later, when Rhum went and pushed his nose in, as if to check that all was well again. Interestingly, I felt that this man was actually looking at Rhum, for the first time when I was there this week.

Aren't dogs wonderful? I know that the visits made by Rannoch in the past, and Rhum now, are very much appreciated by the staff. The guys in the house all know the dog (probably not aware that the dog has changed) and respond to him in their own ways and with smiles where possible. Let nobody say that people who are unable to speak, or have great difficulty in communicating, are unable to obtain pleasure from visits. I find that the dog can often soothe while with someone."

The following appeared in the Summer 2011 edition of the Newsletter of the ACCORD Hospice in Paisley.

#### **"PET THERAPY**

Therapets **Islay and Guinness** (both Labradors) with their owners **Ann and John Mitchell** have been visiting the Hospice since 2002, but having reached the grand old age of 12 it is time for the dogs to retire. We thank them for their commitment to ACCORD over many years. Pet Therapy is beneficial to patients in a variety of ways. It can increase feelings of well-being, help bring down blood pressure, reduce stress and increase tolerance for pain. We are delighted to welcome Therapet **Ailsa** and her owner **Pat Jack** who are now taking over."

**Peter Cameron** of Renfrew wrote:

"I visited Hunterhill Care Home with **Briagha** (a Border Collie) today (20/02/11 between 2pm & 3.30pm). Taken round by one of the staff, called into the five units. Most of the residents were in their respective sitting rooms. Visited a couple of residents who were in their bedrooms, (member of staff in attendance). One of the ladies I visited in her bedroom is very nervous, anxious about touching anything because of germs, her relative was in the room. The staff and relative wanted to see what would happen, I introduced myself and Briagha, asked if she wanted to clap Briagha, she said yes to every one's amazement, sat Briagha in front of her, she immediately leaned forward and began clapping her and saying how beautiful she was. Apparently quite a big breakthrough, relative and staff very happy. Briagha did a great job, some of the residents remembered her from last visit. Good visit, staff and residents happy."

**Susan Rae** visits the Highland Hospice in Inverness with Sophia, a Tibetan Terrier and she sent the following:- "The visits are going very well. All the patients and staff make such a fuss of Sophia and they really seem to enjoy her visits. I am trying to take Sophia in approx every two weeks as this is all I can really manage with work and other commitments at the moment. Sophia is really good at being a Therapet, she

is very quiet and calm with the patients. One patient in particular was in the hospice for a while and unfortunately her condition meant that she was unable to move or speak, Sophia would lie on the bed beside her and lick her hands and rest her head on her lap, and although the patient could not move, if staff or myself helped by taking the lady's hand she was then able to stroke Sophia and feel her fur. We also visited one patient who used to run his own boarding kennels, and he also enjoyed meeting Sophia and talking to me about all his dogs. Sometimes it can be quite emotional for patients, but Sophia copes well with this.”

Mrs O Hull from Dingwall wrote to us in March saying:-“I enclose a cheque on behalf on my late mother’s estate. For about seven years from when she entered her care home until **Bonsai** (a Jack Russell) became too old to visit she was visited very regularly by **Mrs Marie Corbett** and her wonderful canine companion from Invergordon. Marie became a good friend and mum adored Bonsai and so looked forward to their visits that she refused to do anything else on a Wednesday and wouldn’t let anything interfere with his visit. So, I enclose the cheque as a wee thank you for all your wonderful work.”

**Jan Bell** from Campbeltown who has been Therapet visiting for ten years tells us that “**Fudge** (a Yellow Labrador) continues to enjoy visiting Auchinlee and Kintyre nursing homes. As soon as I put her jacket out she knows she is going to work! Everyone makes a huge fuss of her to which she responds happily with licks and tail wags. Elizabeth at Auchinlee supplies biscuits for people (who like dogs that is) and eagerly wait for Fudge to go round to them, much to everyone’s pleasure. Fudge has to be reminded occasionally to be gentle when taking the biscuit (a flat hand helps). She certainly brings a smile to most people, including me!”

Another new volunteer, **Jan Anderson** from Glasgow sent an email saying:-

“**Skye** (an Irish Setter) and I have just completed our 5th Therapet visit to The Whitecraigs Care Home and thought that I should send you a little update. The visits are going well with both Skye and myself learning "on the job". The residents are so pleased to see the dog and for her part she now recognises the home when we arrive and whines to get out of the car. Some residents remember her name and they certainly enjoy petting her. She loves the attention and unexpected treats that she receives. Skye had never tried liquorice allsorts before but finds them quite pleasant!”

**Jim Hollas** of Kilmarnock had been visiting Thornton House Nursing Home with Border Collie **Ben** for nine years. Jim wrote “Due to health reasons we will be unable to continue. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be part of this great scheme.”

From **Margaret Grisedale**, of Portlethen in Aberdeenshire, comes a tale of a bundle of mischief called **Bramble**.

“I write to let you know how successful I have found your scheme, and at times entertaining! I visit with a black Scottie dog, and they can have a will of their own. This Scottie is named Bramble and is a real people person dog. We arrive at the nursing home and she proceeds to visit all the people she has got to know from the manager onwards. Anyone who is new she soon converts to best friend. When she arrives at the lounge the cry goes up, Bramble is here!”

There is a male patient who does not speak or make eye contact. He had in fact been watching Bramble being fed her own dog biscuits from all her friends. After a few weeks he put his hand out to me to put some of the biscuits in it, he then put his hand down to Bramble and stroked her along her back, the smile that came to his face was worth any effort any of had to make. He still does not speak but his hand goes out when he knows that Bramble is there.

Bramble also goes along all the corridors and seems to know where she is welcome. In one of the rooms she visits is an ex farmer and she is on his being stroked and spoken to for about 15 minutes. As I said she is a Scottie and since being a puppy she has had various tartan rugs to sit and sleep on. One week at the home the weather was cold and there were two ladies with tartan knee rugs watching the TV – in a short time they also had a black dog on their laps sharing their tartan rugs.

I feel that it is a privilege to visit the home and I know that Bramble does as well.”

**Please keep your reports, stories and experiences coming. It is great to be able to share them with all our members and friends. They demonstrate, in many different ways, the value and success of the Therapet Service.**

## **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.

Our website [www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk](http://www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk) is constantly being updated by the indefatigable James Macdonald. You will see that there is now a Press Reports section. Please send in your news items so that James can include them.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Just a gentle reminder to anyone who has not renewed so far this year. Our 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 active Therapet volunteers have their membership up-to-date.

## **LITERATURE**

Please let me know if you need some copies of our leaflets and posters to help publicise the work of the Trust and the Therapet Service in particular. At present we have two leaflets about the Therapet Service. “**My Therapet**” and “**The Therapet Service**”. By the time you read this Bulletin we will have a third one available which is entitled “**Therapet Working In The Clinical World**”. This leaflet is aimed at the healthcare professionals who are steadily accepting the value of pet therapy in many differing environments. We are wishing to distribute this leaflet as widely as possible in the various healthcare services and institutions. If you are able to help with this please let me know.



## **AREA & THERAPET REPRESENTATIVES**

As always we are eternally grateful to our Area and Therapet Representatives who do such great work in assessing potential Therapets and for placing newly registered Therapets. Many also give talks to interested groups in their areas and also engage in valuable fund raising.

I have already mentioned that **Susan Rae** has become our representative in Inverness and surrounds. However in Aberdeen area **Inez Wood** who has done great work for us has had to retire from her post on health grounds. We thank Inez for all that she has done and it is good to know that she is able to continue her own Therapet visiting with Sheltie **Amber**. Also in Aberdeen **Hamish Munro's** health has not been good for some time now but hopefully he will be able soon be back to better health and able to help out with the assessment of potential Therapets. Best wishes Hamish

In July we had the annual joint meeting of the Trustees and the Representatives in Perth. This is always a most interesting meeting in which we consider and discuss all aspects of the Therapet Service, and this year we had a very good session on the educational programmes for schools. The meeting is a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other and to exchange views and experiences.

I hope that you have enjoyed this edition of the Bulletin. Please keep sending in your accounts of your Therapet visiting. Also please send me pictures of your Therapets so that they can be put on the website.

With best wishes  
Yours sincerely

**Nick Henley Price**

PS Please remember:-

- a) The Awards Lunch on 20<sup>th</sup> November
- b) Nominations for Therapet of the Year to be in by 22nd October
- c) Renew your membership, if you have not already done so!

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