

BULLETIN 61 – January 2008

Dear Members and Friends

First of all, a very happy New Year to you all – two and four legged! Looking back to our January issue last year I mentioned the traumas we had experienced in 2006 and looked forward to a better 2007. A broken hip at the end of January was something I could have done without and progress has been slow since. However we keep going, in my case largely due to my husband, Nick, who manages the office and is becoming quite a good cook!

We have special thanks to express to so many people who do so much for the Trust. The Trustees, the Committee of Management, our wonderful Area and Therapet Representatives and of course our hundreds of dedicated Volunteers and their super Therapets. Incredibly April will see the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the trust – its success, and particularly the success of the Therapet Scheme, is due to everyone who has become involved, past as well as present.

MARGARET PARIS

The year was not without its sad happenings, and I am heart-sore to record the death of Margaret Paris, of Aberdeen, on 20th December 2007 after a long battle with illness. Margaret became a very close friend and I am going to miss her dreadfully. She was one of our very first members and Margaret and her dear little Cavalier “Sam” really made an impact in the North-East of Scotland. As a retired Social Worker she was invaluable in approaching hospitals and homes for the introduction of Therapets. Margaret was our first Representative for the Aberdeen Area and her hard work was the foundation of the success of the Therapet Service in the area. It was wonderful that she was able to attend the presentation of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee award to the Aberdeen Team of Therapets in 2003.

Even when she was taken ill Margaret still kept in close touch and was always willing to give her wise counsel. If ever I had a problem it was never so bad after a chat to Margaret. Such friends are few. Sleep warm dear Margaret, and we shall do our best to keep your good work going. There is a lovely picture of Margaret and Sam on our main special display board, where it will always remain.

A Thanksgiving Service was held for Margaret, at Queen’s Cross Church, Aberdeen on 27th December, which was well attended. Margaret had requested that the proceeds of any retiring collection should be shared between Cairns Counselling and Canine Concern Scotland Trust. We were honoured to receive the sum of £270.00.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS for **2008** are now due and I enclose the normal renewal form. 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. Again this year the form contains a **Gift Aid Declaration**. If you are a tax payer please do sign this declaration as the Trust can then recover from the Inland Revenue 28p for each £ paid by way of membership and donation.

The membership subscription rates have not changed since the Trust was formed in 1988. It has been, and remains, the Trustees' policy to retain very modest fees and there are no plans to make any increases. We do appreciate very much the generosity of many members who feel able to send donations with their membership fees.

PRESENTATION AND AWARDS LUNCHEON

Unfortunately I was not fit enough to attend the luncheon on 18th November at the Kaim Park Hotel, Bathgate, but lots of you were there to see Patron, Lesley Fitz-Simons, make the presentations.

THE SPENCER AWARD for THERAPET OF THE YEAR was donated by Tom and Dorothy Wilkins in memory of the very first Therapet, their lovely and much missed Cavalier K.C. Spaniel. Tom and Dorothy moved to South Africa a few years ago from where they sent their best wishes. This year The Therapet of the Year Award was unusual in that it was being given to two dogs who have different owners but as they do exactly the same work, effectively as a team, it was felt that they could not be separated and accordingly they were nominated jointly by Edinburgh & Lothians Area Representative, **Douglas Ruthven**.

“**KATY**” was a cavalier King Charles Spaniel and was owned by **Alys Watson** of Edinburgh and Labrador “**NINA**” is owned by **Pat Howard** also of Edinburgh.

Unfortunately KATY had been very unwell and was unable to attend the presentation and very sadly was put to sleep the next day. We all send our sympathy to Alys.

On the nomination form Douglas wrote:-

“Katy and Nina are the front line dogs in the small team built up in Edinburgh to provide Therapet visits to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. After years of negotiation, a contract was agreed in 2006 and visits began in July to two residential homes, outwith the main hospital, which provide long-term residential and respite care for children with multiple serious disabilities.

Both dogs quickly established a rapport with several children despite the disabilities which deny these children much opportunity to make an obvious response to the dogs.

In October 2006 visits began in the main hospital in Edinburgh and have continued on a weekly basis. Katy and Nina visit the care home and the main hospital on alternate weeks and the visits are now an important part of the children's routine and are eagerly anticipated. Personalised souvenir certificates which mark the visits to each child are highly prized.

Both dogs are also now established as part of the regimes used by psychologists at the hospital in the treatment of children with dog phobia attending as out-patients, and have been successful in assisting several children to recognise and cope with their fear of dogs.

Katy and Nina are both exceptionally well suited to work with children, being very calm, well behaved dogs but with attractive appearance and an obvious friendly and totally un-threatening manner.”

The nomination was supported by Denise Claxton, Voluntary Services Co-ordinator at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, and it was great that she was able to attend the presentation. In her letter of support for the nomination Denise wrote:-

“Katy and Nina visit The Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh on alternate Thursdays. They have been an instant hit with the children, parents and staff and it is quite common for longer stay children to start a countdown until the visit. It really breaks up the week for the children and this is illustrated from the following information.

A patient, Katie, aged 12, said:-

“We have been teaching Katy to do tricks and it really gives you something to look forward to. The dogs are lovely and really make you feel calm and take your frustration away while you stroke them. I now have certificates with photographs of both dogs. We love having the dogs in the hospital.”

There is a real “buzz” around the ward when there is a visit. It extends to staff who just happen to pass by when either Katy or Nina are in the playroom! The certificates have been a wonderful addition to the visits and the children are proud to receive these and attach them to their beds. I, and the staff, children and parents in the hospital truly believe that Katy and Nina deserve this award. It has been a long process to have the dogs in the hospital and it is amazing how quickly they have become part of hospital life.”

THE DR MORRIS ANDREW & DANIEL THE SPANIEL MEMORIAL

AWARD – a beautiful silver quaiche donated by Morris’s family - is made annually to the Therapist Organiser of the Year. Morris was a Trustee and was also Area Representative for Edinburgh for a number of years. It is strange how things turn out but this award was also a joint award and this time no less than six people are involved.

When, in October 2003, we learned that our Aberdeen Area representative was having to give up her voluntary work for us, because of ill-health, we thought that we might be a bit stuck for a replacement. Not a bit of it. Nick and Trustee James Macdonald held a meeting of a goodly number of Therapist Volunteers in Aberdeen and a very constructive meeting it was.

What emerged was that a number of volunteers, eight in fact, indicated that they were prepared to assist in the assessment of potential Therapets and help them get placed in hospitals, residential homes etc. This was a start of the Aberdeen team of Therapet Representatives. Of the initial eight, Jim and Evelyn Guthrie and Margot Plenderleith have found it necessary to retire from their involvement. However **Clare Copland, Linda Macdonald, Bruce McKenzie, Hamish Munro, and Inez Wood** have welded themselves into a super team and it was great that all, with the exception of Bruce, were able to attend the presentation. They have done all that has been asked of them and more. Not only have they carried out all the vital Therapet organisational work with great enthusiasm and expertise, they have also promoted the Trust and the Therapet Scheme by manning stands at the Bon Accord Dog Shows and have also arranged very successful social functions for Members, Therapet Volunteers and of course the Therapets themselves. In addition to all this each one of them is a dedicated Therapet Volunteer in their own right. There is a great spirit of co-operation and it is wonderful that so many people are prepared to share the load.

In 2006 Inverness's loss was Aberdeen's gain when Area Representative Diane Wood relocated to Oldmeldrum, north of Aberdeen. Diane is now helping the TEAM with the Therapet work in her part of Aberdeenshire. Incidentally Diane was the Therapet Organiser of the Year way back in 2002.

Two awards were made in respect of "**STEPPING OUT FOR SCOTLAND**", a series of sponsored walks so vital for our fund raising each year. This year the award for the organiser whose walk raised the most money was won by **MAUREEN HILL (more of whom later)** who arranged the walk in Dumfries. Her walk raised the magnificent total of £1,082. The award for the individual who obtained the most sponsorship went to **Merle Mclean** who supported the Glasgow walk. Merle raised a grand total of £350.

The final award of the day was **THE IAIN WHYTE MEMORIAL AWARD**. This award is made to a person or organisation whose work has been of special benefit to the Trust over the past year or over a period of years. We always try to do one **GOTCHA** each year and this was the one. I was so pleased that my co-Trustees, with one exception, were all delighted that the **EXCEPTION** should be given the award this year. **GEORGE LESLIE** honoured us by agreeing to become a Trustee in 1990 and over the last 17 years he has done so much for the Trust. First and foremost I will be forever grateful to him for his wise counsel on many matters relating to dogs. As a vet in a busy Glasgow practice he has a wealth of knowledge about dogs. As a politician he knows how to go about things with Government and Local Authorities and his advice over the years has been invaluable.

George has spearheaded two very important surveys. The first in 1992/1993 was a most detailed survey into the Incidence of Toxocara Canis Eggs in regularly dewormed dogs was carried out by George in co-operation with Canine Concern Scotland Trust and its members. A total of 256 samples were tested and just one dog in the survey was found to have Toxocara Canis eggs. The important conclusion was that regular and repeated deworming of dogs could virtually eliminate the problem and the report called for more education.

The second, and equally important, was a survey, carried out this year, of 51 Therapets for the presence of MRSA. The results of this survey were published with our August 2007 Bulletin.

George has been the driving force behind our Therapet Health Protocol. This provides sound practical recommendations for our Therapet Volunteers to follow. A copy of it is provided with all letters of introduction to hospitals, homes etc. It is important that these institutions are aware of the standards expected of our Therapets.

And yes there is more!! George represents the Trust, and is very active, on the Cross Party Animal Welfare Group in the Scottish Parliament. The Trust made significant contributions to the consultation process in the lead up to the new animal welfare legislation and it was George who was responsible for putting together our representation.

In so many ways we are indebted to George for the contribution he has made, and continues to make, to the work of the Trust.

SOCIETY FOR COMPANION ANIMAL STUDIES (SCAS)

SCAS is an influential research and discussion organisation which has connections throughout the world. In association with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Partnership it hosted a conference in November 2007 entitled “**Animal-assisted interventions in the UK: Current trends in practice and policy.**” Our roving Trustee **JAMES MACDONALD** was invited to address the conference regarding our very successful Therapet prison visiting programme in conjunction with the Scottish Prison Service at Cornton Vale Prison which is spearheaded by **John and Cathy Waters** with their Bullmastiffs Kira, Hogan and Enya. James described in detail the special circumstances surrounding prison visiting and clearly the SCAS members appreciated hearing what is involved in practice. Our new Therapet leaflets were included in the packs supplied to conference delegates. Altogether a very worthwhile sortie across the border and we are very grateful to James for attending the conference on the Trust’s behalf.

SPONSORED WALKS

During 2007 a number of “**STEPPING OUT FOR SCOTLAND**” sponsored walks were held in various parts of Scotland. I have already reported that Maureen Hill’s walk in Dumfries raised the most sponsorship. Jan Bell with her two Therapets “Fudge” and “Millie” did a solo five mile walk along the beach from Westport to Machrihanish, James Macdonald held a walk in Queens park, Glasgow, Norma Murray organised a walk at Forfar Loch and my own “Zak” strutted his stuff, along with his Master, on his first sponsored walk in the forestry above Machrihanish. In total these walks raised a magnificent £2,475. I am very grateful to everyone who organised and took part in the walks.

NEW WEBSITE

Please visit our new website at www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk The website has been designed and is maintained by Lynsey Ramsay who was, as many of you will remember, our Administrator for a number of years.

THERAPET

As always I have to report that, sadly, a number of our wonderful Therapets and pets have died in recent months. I have already mentioned Alys Watson's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, and Therapet of the Year, "Katy", and would like to record the following much loved dogs:-

Maureen Carracher's Lurcher Cross "Meg"
Jim and Evelyn Guthrie's "Flash" and "Lara"
Margaret & Tom Kinnear's Curly Coated Labrador "Bonnie"
Catherine Leiper's Llaso Apso "Muffin"
Roberta McGurk's Old English Sheepdog "Paddy"
Lynn Moir's Pug "Lenny"
Susan Ross' Border Collie "Glen"
Allan & Anna Sim's Scottie "Zoe"
Louise & Danielle Steen's Mixed Breed "Snoopy"
Val Street's Collie/Labrador "Sam"
Marie Wallace's Border Collie "Wallace"
Margaret Workman's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel "Toby"

Hopefully I have not missed anyone, but if I have please drop me a note and I will mention them in the next Bulletin.

Therapet News – we are delighted to welcome a lot more volunteers and their newly registered Therapets and wish you all well in your visiting. It is always a great pleasure to receive news of how you and your Therapets are getting on so please keep writing! And pictures too!

Our Therapets help so many people in so many different ways. **Morag Murray**, an Independent Advocate, recently wrote on behalf of an Advocacy group in Aberdeenshire:-

"I am writing on behalf of the service users who were extremely fortunate to have a visit from two of your Therapets. Linda Macdonald and colleague visited with their wonderful dogs, to the delight of this group of adults with learning difficulties.

The group thoroughly enjoyed their visit from the dogs and particularly enjoyed stroking them and feeding them biscuits. The main benefit to one individual member was his ability, at a late date, to talk about his life with working dogs. This was monumental for this individual as he is normally very reticent to become involved in discussions. Another group member is now willing to fight to become a pet owner in her current home, as she had been many years ago.

The visit was greatly appreciated and the group also learned about volunteering and the giving of themselves and their time to benefit the lives of others. We were very grateful for the visit and discussions around it continue, which is great praise.

Thank you very much for your time and commitment to this wonderful service."

Karen McNamara, a Manager at HM Prison Cornton Vale, sent the following email to John and Cathy Waters:-

“The visits are well received and it helps to normalise life in prison by allowing prisoners access to the dogs as many have pets on the outside and obviously don’t get visits with them. It also helps build confidence in prisoners who are wary of dogs and is an excellent distraction therapy allowing prisoners something else to concentrate on and this takes their mind from their own issues and problems.”

Lesley Good from Aberdeen has written saying “We are now visiting two mornings weekly as the boys are in great demand! We cover four wards which is nice because I can split the visit between the dogs and they don’t get tired. It never ceases to amaze me how well Paddy has done since the first day he started. The staff and I love seeing him give “special treatment” to certain patients, adapting to their mood on the day or apprehension to touching him initially. He has been a lot of work since coming into our home at 16 weeks of age and many a day I’ve thought what have we done – in fact, I think that Jake has probably thought that more than me!!

Paddy, as many of our Therapets do, clearly understands when he is “at work”!!

THERAPET PUBLICITY

In recent months we have had some great publicity for Therapet. A great article in The Scotsman, featuring **Anne Macdonald** and “Poppy” has brought forth a lot of enquiries. **Bill Sutherland**, although having moved to Fife, still visits a Leonard Cheshire Home in the Granton area of Edinburgh, wrote an excellent article for the Labrador Club of Scotland Yearbook. Our hard working Area Representative for Dumfries, **Maureen Hill**, attended no less than ten events in November and December. Not only does her stall at these events give great publicity for Therapet but at the same time she raised the incredible sum of £1,257 by selling lovely comfy dog beds and other goods which she and her helpers have made. We have a number of Irish Setter Therapets and they and the Therapet Service are to be featured in the **Irish Setter Club of Scotland Yearbook**.

If you are a member of a breed, training or agility club perhaps you could obtain some publicity for the Therapet work you do and the Therapet Service in general by submitting an article for the club Newsletter or Yearbook. If you would like some help with this please let Nick know.

Another great way of publicising the Therapet Service is by asking your Veterinary Surgeon and your Doctor if it would be possible to pin one of our **Therapet Posters** on their surgery notice board. If you are able to place posters in this way please tick the box on the membership renewal slip or ask Nick for supplies!

With best wishes to you all and your dogs.

Yours sincerely

Marjorie Henley Price

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