

The Mighty Wurlitzer

*Established 1991
December 2007 Edition 16
North West Group
G.S.P.C.*



*Best Wishes For Christmas
And The New Year*

North West Group G.S.P.C.

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www.gsp.org.uk

North West Group Website
www.hprgroup.co.uk/nwg

Welcome



To the 16th
edition of The Mighty Wurlitzer.
Once again after sixteen years this publication
is packed with various items of interest including

- Working Test
- Show Trophy Winner
- Liz Ashton Trophy Winner
- Who's kidding who?
- Whistle Stop Tour
- Dog Breaking
- Empty vessels make most noise
- It's Christmas Day all is Secure
- Training Equipment

The Mighty Wurlitzer is a publication for the membership, and cannot function properly if the membership do not contribute!

Articles should be forwarded to the editor. They can be handwritten, by quill pen, ball-point, chalk, electronic, typed or anything! So lets be having them throughout the coming year!

The Editor

The German Shorthaired Pointer Club North West Group Aims & Objectives

The aim of the North West Group is to help handlers of HPR breed Gundogs to develop their training skills to enable them to produce obedient, well-mannered shooting companions, whether worked solo as rough shooting dogs, or in company, with others, beating and picking up.

The objective is to produce dogs, which are welcomed on shoots and can serve a useful purpose. The main focus remains to encourage handlers to develop the working ability of their dog(s), encourage them to participate in working tests, pointing tests, and field trials, and to introduce them into the working dog environment.

First time HPR owners and handlers are made welcome and will be encouraged to join the North West Group but should quickly show an enthusiasm for developing the working ability of their dogs.

The training programme will be one of continuous assessment, based on the Progress Test booklet. This highlights the various elements of a structured training programme. A booklet will be issued to each new member, once the member has showed full commitment towards the Group. Members should note that to achieve even the basic standard set out in this booklet they will need to progress their training in the periods between training classes. Adequate progress cannot be made simply on a once a month basis.

Any new handler attending training class for the first time will be given a copy of these aims and objectives, and will be asked to come to a decision, as to whether they are prepared to put in the time and commitment, to train themselves and their dog to a satisfactory standard.

If a decision is reached to the effect that a new handler wishes to continue, then every assistance will be given by more experienced handlers in the Group to help a new dog/handler partnership reach a satisfactory standard.

Handlers/dogs, who are not interested in progressing working ability but are simply attending for instruction in basic obedience, will be advised to seek such

training from either, a professional dog trainer, on a one to one basis, or through a local dog-training club.

President's Greeting.

Brian Finan

At present I am still in the boat which is moored in Alghero, Sardinia. However I am due to fly back to the UK. next Monday, which of course means that, by the time you get to read this I shall be firmly ensconced in Devon, although I would expect not for long.

A brief rundown on what I've been up to in 2007, just to get that out of the way.

Over the course of the year, I've had a few visitors, (sometimes including Christine), out to the boat and we've had a few trips to sea which was all very pleasant. The highlight of the year however was when a friend and I sailed the boat to Spain, in order to attend the America's Cup, unfortunately only as spectators. For those of you who are not familiar with this event, it is an International Match Race Sailing Meeting and the third biggest sporting event in the world! On this occasion it was held in Valencia, (recommended for a visit), although we were moored a little further down the coast in Denia.

Match Racing is where two boats of very similar design and standards race against each other on a course which consists of four legs, two into wind and two down wind.

The meeting starts with the Louis Vuitton Cup which is a knockout competition where all the challengers sail against one another to decide who gets to sail against the holder, (Alinghi). The winner of this cup was Emirates Team New Zealand.

This is where Tony and I came in. The Defender (Alinghi) and the Challenger (Emirates Team NZ) now meet head to head in up to nine races. The first boat to win five races takes the America's Cup home after seven very exciting racing days, (there are rest days), the Swiss boat Alinghi, with a crew almost all of whom were New Zealanders won the cup. The fact that Emirates Team NZ were beaten 5-2 doesn't begin to tell how good they were, they were beaten in the last race by one second! Gripping stuff!

After the event we went down to Alicante to change crew, another Tony. The City of Alicante would also be on my recommended list. It is not the "Full English" with the "Daily Sport" place that the British press would have you believe, although, I wouldn't know about some of the resorts around it.

Coming home to Alghero was pretty much the reverse of the trip out with stops for refreshment in Ibiza, Majorca and Minorca.

Enjoyed every minute of it!

Turning to the Group's activities. My attention has been drawn to the website:- The HPR Group. Most impressive. Everyone involved with the production of this information is to be warmly congratulated. It already carries much information and items of interest, and I feel sure that in the fullness of time it will become indispensable to anyone with an urge to train HPRs. It is very gratifying to see how well members of the Group are doing at all levels and types of competition it would be invidious to single anyone out for especial congratulation, as inevitably some worthy winner would feel left out. Well done all!

One thing that gives me cause for thought though, is that, with all these excellent results in working and pointing tests, why do we have so few achievements in field trials. Whilst accepting that there are fewer opportunities to run in trials than in tests, I do wonder whether some of you feel that it is too big a step to take to enter trials. Perhaps we could open up some discussion on this matter, both in committee and particularly between trainers and handlers, so that individual handlers might seek advice and be encouraged to enter more trials.

I understand that the classes are still a major part of the Group's activities. It's good to see that you are making use of so many, diverse geographically and varied in nature venues. The Group is indeed fortunate to have these opportunities to train and thanks is due to your committee and all the people including and especially hosts who make this possible. It isn't easy to obtain the use of land, I speak from experience on this subject.

Whilst on the subject of classes, I would like to take this opportunity, to thank your trainers, everyone of whom were once trainees and are now giving their time and experience, to put something back. May I also appeal to any of my old mates out there, who have trained with us in the past, to give assistance with the training whenever they are able. Sometimes just sitting in the pub discussing training with newer people can solve a lot of problems for them. To the people who have recently joined us may I recommend these "after training" pub visits where a wealth of knowledge can be tapped into. Who knows both sides might even enjoy it!

The amount of practical working and bird counting assistance that the group is involved in now becoming beyond belief. I doubt that there is another outfit anywhere in the country doing as much to help shoots, to gain experience and to fly the flag for the HPR breeds. It really is a credit to you all! Keep it up.

It never fails to amaze me, how from very humble beginnings, the Group has grown from strength to strength. It started because of a desperation within me, to train my first GSP, Liesl, Isara Kurzhaar Alpe, one

of Fio Roberts's "A" litter, her very first litter of GSPs. Circa 1976

No classes existed in the North of England at that time. So I pulled a few people together and under the insurance umbrella of the GSPA, found a field in Wales, talked Howard Fisher into coming to train us and we were away! Lots of changes between and now but always interesting and good fun. Long may it remain so! This I'm sure you will agree is more than enough for another year, except to send my Best Wishes for Christmas to you all and to wish you every success in training and in competition in The New Year.

Thoughts from the Chair

Geoff Saynor

I came across the following quotation at the time I was starting to think about what to put in these notes. In a strange way it summed up the importance of our producing the Wurlitzer:

*Outside a dog, a book is a man's best friend.
Inside a dog it's too dark to read.*

Groucho Marx

To some of you the exercises undertaken at training classes may appear to be a little repetitive and pointless but there are times when the importance of a structured training approach, and a focus on instilling the basic principles, are brought into sharp focus. A couple of recent experiences have helped to reinforce this issue.

The first of these was the international HPR weekend, held at Loton Park a few weeks ago, and billed as being the foremost event in the calendar for HPR working dogs. The scale of the event certainly suffered from a severe bout of over ambitiousness and much of the subsequent criticism was well founded in terms of the organisation (or lack of it) and the failure in delivery of what had been publicised. However, I would ask you to remember that at least this was a case of someone (Nick Elder) who was prepared to put in significant effort to try to organise an event which focussed on and aimed to raise the profile of the HPR breeds.

Having gone along to help with discover dogs, the lack of general public attendance provided an ideal opportunity to watch and appreciate the performance of the competing teams. The event was effectively a two day working test with competitors, rather than being single entities, being formed into teams of four, each team representing a different country. This should have been an ideal situation to see the best of working per-

performances within the UK and Europe. I have to say that, from what I saw, the standard can only be described as dismal.

One particular test involved a blind retrieve on cold game, approx 100 yards up a slightly sloping field of short grass. Totally open and simply requiring the dog to be sent out in a straight line and, if required, to be handled to the area to allow it to scent the retrieve. A significant number failed this test simply because they were unable to handle their dogs. In many cases the strategy being to send out the dog and then hope that, whilst it was running around doing its own thing, it would stub its toe on the bird. Perhaps the best excuse came from one of the Dutch team who, in all seriousness, explained that, as their country is so flat; their dogs are not used to working up a slope.

Having seen that there is no substitute to a well trained dog in the working test environment I can move onto the second example. With Karen taking part in several field trials recently I have had the opportunity to observe. On one of these as Chief Steward I was able to observe at close quarters, the performance of the runners. Whilst there are many things which can, and usually do, go wrong for a number of the runners and for a variety of reasons, it is disappointing to see several people being put out of a field trial simply because they are unable to handle their dog onto a retrieve. On these days which, as closely as possible, mimic the circumstances of a rough shooting day, there are no guarantees that a bird will be shot as a nice simple seen retrieve. It is more likely that you will be asked either to retrieve a bird shot out of sight or one which has been shot whilst another dog has been working. This is no different from being able to handle a dog to a blind retrieve at a working test. If you have a dog which will obey basic stop and directional commands the retrieve becomes relatively straightforward. Without these it becomes considerably more difficult and to a large extent reliant on luck.

Although both these examples relate to various testing situations they do represent a progression towards taking our dogs out into a true working environment. The opportunities to do this are, for most of us, dependent on an ability to demonstrate, that the presence of our dogs will be a benefit to a shoot. If we cannot have the basics of control in place the opportunities to work will simply not be available.

I am trying to put across this view not out of a sense of smugness but rather to raise the awareness of the importance of this approach. It is not something which happens easily. Earlier on this year I re-homed my

young dog, Alfie. Circumstances had reached a point where my commitments with work had not allowed me to put in anything like sufficient time to training and this meant that I was ending up with a dog with significant failings in terms of his ability in a working environment and with me being unable to give the commitment necessary to work on these issues. To be blunt, if I am out for long hours Monday to Friday and generally busy at the weekends this does not allow for the development in training which is necessary to iron out any flaws. As a result Alfie is now at a great home in Scotland, making a wonderful family pet and enjoying life to the full.

The point I am working towards is that within the Group we are not miracle workers. There is a wealth of experience and widespread availability of views on all matters related to HPR gundogs. However we cannot create your working dog for you. Coming to a training class once a month will only help to provide pointers towards the areas requiring your effort and approaches which may help you to address these points. The effort has to come from you as individual handlers. Developing with your dogs is an every day activity, a continuing process and not one which can readily be picked up and dropped to suit other commitments. It is probably closer to the truth to say that those people who are able to continuously achieve success with their dogs are able to find an approach which allows them to mould their lives around their dogs. I accept that for many of us this is not a feasible aim but the further your lifestyle moves away from this ideal the greater is the need to put in additional effort to compensate.

There is not an easy route. There is no simple answer. Owning and working successfully with an HPR dog is a commitment which gradually takes over your life. Whilst all dogs are individuals and some will naturally perform better than others it is essential that you develop an understanding of the level of commitment necessary to achieve success and satisfaction. The basis on which you measure this can come from a number of sources. The progress tests run by the group, participation in working tests, field trials or training events and eventually the opportunity to work your dog in a real shooting environment. The real measure of success however will come with the satisfaction you feel at each small achievement along the route and the pleasure that comes from the knowledge that the effort you have put into training is starting to reap rewards.

Anyway this is enough of my rambling. I would like to thank all the committee and the group members for their efforts throughout the year and their input into the activities of the group. Without this we would not be able to exist. I hope that we will continue to see you all

over the coming months and would like to wish everyone a very enjoyable Christmas and a successful New Year.

Secretary's Ramblings

Eddie Kania

How quickly a year passes, and how many changes a year brings:

The AGM brought changes to the committee, Peter and David did not stand for re-election, however Peter did agree to continue to edit the Wurlitzer. The committee was brought to full strength with the election of Andy, Don, Geoff, and Rob.

2007 brought its problems too, due to changes beyond our control we had to move the working test from the traditional third Sunday in July to the second, this was not without its problems, Karen did a splendid job securing judges, competitors did support our working test and once again it was a great success. I'd like to personally thank all those members that helped make it such an enjoyable day out. Look out for the Working Test Reports later in this issue of the Wurlitzer

Counting Grouse and on some moors other species continues to be undertaken by some members of the group. Whilst not an official group activity members who demonstrate that they are capable will be invited to the counting team when opportunities arise. Once again by recommendation another Grouse moor owner has asked us to count his moor, counting pairs in late March and April and then counting the same areas in late July and August provides an accurate count of the number of Grouse on the moor, and provides invaluable information for keepers and shoot captains.

The membership has largely progressed into the shooting field; with fewer puppies attending classes during 2007 the progress test was much more manageable this year. The group's membership is transient and ever changing, however a wise man once said "members don't stop attending if they are being successful" I'm looking forward to 2008, several puppies will join our ranks I'd like to wish them every success.

Earlier this year your committee took the decision to sponsor a page on the HPRGROUP website. It is envisaged that we will use this site to communicate with the HPR community. We will use this site to post information about the group and our events.

2007 has seen several members taking awards at working tests and pointing tests please see www.hprgroup.co.uk where the results are listed.

Nestle Purina have asked me to thank those members who helped at the BETA Gundog Working Test. Claydon House Oxfordshire was the venue for the 2007 Working Test. Once again this event was a huge success; members stewarding the main tests and looked after the registration process. Even though this is not an official North West Group event the principle event stewards have been drawn from the membership of the NWG and as the event has grown more help has been needed and a larger contingent of helpers has travelled to the event. Personally it's always been a very enjoyable weekend, hard work but so rewarding and possibly the only opportunity we would ever have to observe other gundog breeds working.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who help and provide support for the group, land owners who allow us to use their ground, committee members who work tirelessly and more often than not their wives and partners who provide support, Thanks to you all for your continued support.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Peaceful New Year

The Liz Ashton Memorial Trophy

Eddie Kania

The Trophy is to be awarded annually at the Group AGM to the handler and dog partnership who gain the most points in field events during the year. The purpose of the scheme is to encourage members of the North West Group to improve as handlers and to enter more competitive events.

Handlers running more than one dog may submit separate claim forms for each dog.

Points can only be gained from competition at Pointing Tests, Working Tests, Field Trials LICENCED BY THE UK KENNEL CLUB and the NWG Progress Test. From May 1st to April 30th. Points can only be claimed in one class per Working Test i.e. Puppy or Novice, which ever is the higher. Eligibility, Handlers shall be fully paid up members of the GSP Club for the period that points are being claimed within and must attend a minimum of 4 Group-training events other than the July Working Test, and October Progress Test, between May 1st and 30th April each year. The GSP Club membership number must be included on the claim form and all claims will be verified. In the event of a tie, the

committee will decide the award.

POINTING TEST

Excellent	4 points
Very Good	3 points
Good	2 points

WORKING TEST

1 st	4 points
2 nd	3 points
3 rd	2 points
4 th	1 point

FIELD TRIAL

1 st	20 points
2 nd	15 points
3 rd	12 points
4 th	10 points
C of M	8 points

GROUP PROGRESS TEST

Excellent	3 points
Very Good	2 points
Good	1 point

Only the highest points for ONE test in each category of the Progress Test - Hunting, Retrieving / Tracking, Obedience/ Steadiness, Water – will be awarded, regardless of the number of tests entered. A maximum of 12 points therefore can be gained in the Progress Test during the year.

Gaining of Field Trial Champion Status 30 points

The German Shorthaired Pointer Club cannot accept any responsibility for any injury, damage or loss to person, dog or property whilst taking part in the competition.

Please forward completed claim forms by 30th April 2008 to:

Catherine Dysdale 01257 261 584
dryrika@hotmail.co.uk

NOTE:

To better reflect achievement the committee has decided to re-align the points for the Liz Ashton Trophy from May 2008.

The Points awards listed below will be applicable from May 1st 2008 and will apply to the Liz Ashton Trophy that will be awarded at the May 2009 AGM – otherwise current conditions apply – i.e. only one class to count at each working test.

POINTING TEST

Excellent	2 points
Very Good	1 point

WORKING TEST

1 st	4 points
2 nd	3 points
3 rd	2 points
4 th	1 point

FIELD TRIAL

1 st	20 points
2 nd	15 points
3 rd	12 points
4 th	10 points
C of M	8 points

Gaining of Field Trial Champion Status 30 points

GROUP PROGRESS TEST

Excellent	3 points
Very Good	2 points
Good	1 point

North West Group

Show Dog of the Year Trophy

Eddie Kania

A trophy is to be awarded annually at the Group AGM, to the dog, which has gained the most points at Open and Championship shows during the previous year.

The purpose of the scheme is to encourage members of the North West Group to participate in showing events, and therefore help preserve the dual-purpose nature of HPR breeds.

Points can only be gained from Breed competition at OPEN & CHAMPIONSHIP Shows LICENCED BY THE UK KENNEL CLUB.

From January 1st to 31st December.

Points can only be claimed from ONE BREED class per show.

OPEN SHOWS

1 st	3 points
2 nd	2 points
3 rd	1 point

PLUS Best of Breed 1 point

Best Puppy in Breed 1 point

CHAMPIONSHIP SHOWS

1 st	10 points
2 nd	9 points
3 rd	8 points

PLUS Challenge Certificate 2 points

Reserve Challenge Certificate 1 point

Best Puppy in Breed 1 point

Gaining Show Champion Status 30 points

ELIGIBILITY

The registered owner of the dog must be a fully paid up member of the GSP Club for the period, during which the points are claimed. Additionally the Dog (accompanied by its registered owner) must have attended a minimum of 4 Group-training classes other than the progress test and working test, between January 1st and December 31st.

Owners will submit a list of all awards gained in the qualifying period on the relevant form, (i.e. claims for the period 1st Jan 2007 -31st Dec 2007 should be submitted by 30th April 2008). The GSPC membership number must be included on the claim form, and all claims must be verified. In the event of a tie the committee will decide the award.

Please forward all claim forms to:

Catherine Drysdale 01257 261 584

Email - drysika@hotmail.co.uk

North West Group Trophy Winners—2007

Liz Ashton Memorial Trophy 2007

Due to a lack of submitted entries in previous years, it had been decided by the committee to award certificates to the top 3 handlers entering.

Wendy reported that several entries had been received for the Liz Ashton Trophy.

Results:

1st: Karen Saynor with Inca —18 points

2nd: Don Potter with Bruno—15 points

3rd: Andy Peers with Flake—12 points

Show Trophy 2007

Wendy reported that only one entry had been received for the NWG Show Trophy.

Awarded to Catherine Drysdale with Hattie (64 points)

Congratulations to the winners!

" He is your friend, your partner,
your defender, your dog.
You are his life, his love, his leader. He will
be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat
of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of
such devotion."

Unknown

"If there are no dogs in Heaven,
then when I die I want to go
where they went."
Will Rogers, 1897-1935

North West Group Working Test WATERGROVE, Rochdale – 8th July 2007



PUPPY TEST:

Judge – Peter Guest

My thanks to the GSPC for inviting me to judge, and to the competitors, and their puppies, that braved the elements and stayed 'til the end of the day.

Hunting was with a sit and recall. The ground was moor land with reeds, feagy grass and sheep as a distraction. Several of the puppies had a 'WOW' written in my book and others exhibited good pace, but the ground treatment was poor. One handler was very noisy during the hunting phase and this 'closed' the dog down. At the end of the hunting whilst I was talking to the handler this puppy went off and did some lovely hunting.....undisturbed!

Water Retrieve was a short 10yd 'seen' Retrieve with a nice entry. All dogs, apart from one, completed the water.

The first retrieve was a 30yd 'seen' Retrieve onto open ground just short of some reeds. All the puppies completed this well with only two of them missing the mark and having to be handled and re-sent.

The second retrieve was a 30yd 'memory' around a corner. Apart from the thunderstorm, the main problem in this exercise was that handlers were rushing the exercise and throwing the dummy rather than placing it.

The third retrieve was a 'split' Retrieve. Two dummies were thrown, but only one dummy (which was nominated by the handler) to be retrieved. Most handlers nominated the second dummy, which meant that the majority of the puppies completed this test with only the odd puppy either mismarking the dummies or deciding to go for the other dummy.

The fourth retrieve was quite a stiff test for puppies. It consisted of a 'seen' down a steep gully, over a stream and slate outcrop onto a grassy bank. Again the majority of the puppies completed this test; others lacked confidence and had to be walked forward.

NOVICE TEST:

Judge – Shaun Heath

This year the novice test were allocated two judges due to the size of the entry to what is always a well

supported and well run working test, on possibly the best working test ground in the country. My co-judge Roy Cullen set the retrieving tests towards the upper end of novice standard and I was in agreement with that as the more successful dogs will hopefully push on higher up the working test ladder and be successful in graduate and open classes.

Test 1 – Water

This was a standard seen 'retrieve' from water, of about 15-20 yards.

A good entry and exit point by some reeds. All but three dogs completed this test and generally a good standard of water work.

Test 2 – Long Seen Retrieve

A pretty straightforward, if long seen 'retrieve', over open ground with good vision for dogs and handlers. All the usual suspects raised their heads in this test:

- either dog or handler not marking fall of dummy
- dog marking fall short
- lack of control at distance
- lack of encouragement to dog from handler

I must stress that handler's work on their relationships with their dog at shorter distances until near perfect and then begin to stretch the distance. It was the case that some handlers had resigned themselves to defeat even before setting their dogs up for the test and it was sheer delight when the dog completed a 100yrd retrieve: Verdict – have more faith in your dogs' ability! Unfortunately seven dogs did not complete this test.

Test 3 - Memory Retrieve

A very successful and high scoring test for all but one dog. This is testament to the hard work that handlers are putting in.

1st Place - Coengos Kozen

An almost faultless display on all tests

Extremely good relationship between handler and dog and should now push onto greater success in graduate and open standard - A real pleasure to watch.

2nd Place - Wintershorn Sunshine over Coney Convert

Unfortunate to meet 1st place dog in top form but very well handled on all tests and good to see an excellent relationship between handler and dog. Hopefully a novice test winner in the near future. Good luck.

3rd Place – Giggs Shining Starlet

Another consistent display in all tests with only 2 points

separating 2nd and 3rd place so concentrate on tightening up on small details and put more faith in your dog and this dog will be consistently in the cards, possibly pushing on to higher things.

I would like to thank the NW Group for inviting me to judge at this working test and also to my stewards and dummy throwers who did a fantastic job on the day.

GRADUATE TEST:

Judge – Ray Davies

Test 1: Seen retrieve with shot across water.

Here with only one dog unable to complete the test, it must be said that where a good and robust partnership between handler and dog, that the goal (dummy) was achieved with style.

The setting up of the dog and minimal commands given was a testament to executing the retrieve, by swimming straight across, then with several veering to the left behind small trees and bushes, so obscured from the handler who needed to assist the dog onto the dummy.

Test 2; this was a long seen retrieve with shot across pasture and patches of rushes then up slope to a dummy.

The latter part of the out-run through rushes was to become a barrier for several dogs, so becoming a trial of minds and command between the partnership to achieving it's retrieve, as the wind was at an angle from left to right, so needed to get the dog up to the right side, so being in its best position to work across and onto the dummy.

For some, handler and dog were to show a good working partnership as its dog strode confidently up the slope through rushes and grass, so returning to hand with dummy.

Test 3: Split retrieve down and across expanse of grass and rushes, over a small stone wall with seen to right and blind to left, close to the flag marker, having used dummy launcher in process.

At the start the decision (the right one) was taken to send the dog for the seen first after the blind which again for several dogs was to show a lack of ability to achieve, without a lot of input from the handler To get the dog to accept and follow instructions to retrieve, not to hunt, so extending it's time to fulfill each part of the test.

For others the biddable and capable dogs achieved the retrieves in a very efficient and effective manner, so accepting and respecting the wishes of their handler. Test 4; Hunting up section of ground of rough pasture which had caged game (set 20 yards from white marker) to acknowledge/point after which move on for short period, to sit to shot and return to handler.

All dogs strived to fulfill the brief given the time, but for some its balance of covering the ground equally on both sides was not always successful, so making it harder to point/find its game.

Only one dog did not achieve in finding the game, so down to a good working partnership, as the hunting and steadiness of this dog was also not up to an acceptable standard.

To finish on, I would be happy as a gun to follow the majority of the dogs knowing that they would find the game and my supper!

1st. 'Ayita Independence Day'

HWV - Handler - Mark Herbert

It was shown from the start to be a very close and efficient working partnership, on all the tests with minimal need of handlers extra input.

As the dog showed clean retrieving abilities on all the tests and for its hunting full marks for showing style/pace having a back wind to cope with and no difficulty in all aspects.

2nd. 'Whistlecraft Blackmagick.'

GSP - Handler - Don Potter

Again another good working partnership that showed up in all its retrieving tests, with minimal input from handler to get their dog to return to hand with dummy. It was just pipped on the hunting on the day, otherwise a good style/pace to enjoy.

3rd. 'Gunfield Evita'

HV -Handler - Rob Irvine

A very biddable dog that strived to fulfill the wishes of it's handler, that just needs a little more time and understanding of expectations and the commands to be used by the handler,

So execute the retrieves as shown in the split.

Nice pace and style was shown in the hunting, completing each part satisfactorily

4th. 'Seek Infront'.

Handler - Davison

A strong working dog that strived to achieve each test with pace and style, which will come in time after the partnership is forged through understanding and commands as to what is expected from each party in the partnership.

This was a pleasing dog that has the potential to do well.

OPEN TEST

Judge – John Naylor

In the past I have expressed concerns over the hunting element at some

working tests, Given the limitations of the working test format and working pointing dogs on caged game, it would have been difficult to improve on the hunting for this open test. The ground cover of white grass and rush was ideal for testing H. P. R's, each dog had fresh ground and the one item of caged game present on

each beat meant that dogs and handlers needed to apply themselves, One dog also pointed a wild pheasant. The wind was awkward and the presence of sheep caused additional difficulty.

Both in the hunting and the retrieving there were a number of competent performances, and I am not going to write an individual critique on all the dogs, I would like to say why I found the top two dogs so pleasing and what separated them from the others on the day. These dogs tied on equal points but I felt happy and justified to award first place to the dog with the superior hunting performance.

'AYITA INDEPENDENCE DAY' was a real pleasure to watch. He had lovely pace, great drive and a range that took in plenty of ground. There was fluency about this dog hunting which placed it head and shoulders above all the others on the day. As well as natural ability, he had the training and a level of polish which gave the handler the confidence to allow the dog to hunt, rather than making it quarter the ground. As a result the hunting pattern was excellent. His retrieving was also good only dropping serious marks when getting into difficulty with one element of the split retrieve. How nice to see a "Hairy" Vizsla show what the breed is capable of **THOLUMI BROTHER OF SOUL**, a mature G.S.P. dog, also hunted with pace and drive on the wind and had good range. Maybe because of the heavier rush cover and the slightly bigger beat the handler tried to direct the dog over every inch of the beat and the ground treatment became a little untidy resulting in some bits being missed and others being covered twice. His retrieving was first class. The water test was a reasonably straight forward blind over a descent expanse of clear water. My notes for the dog at this test say, "Good entry, pushed back once, straight to mark, pushed back once, good pick up, straight return, delivered to hand." It's as simple as that. I docked the dog one mark from the possible maximum of twenty to allow an advantage to be given to any dog that might complete the test needing no handling other than the initial send. The split retrieve consisted of a longish blind across a shallow valley and up the opposite bank, with a seen dummy fired from a dummy launcher as the dog was returning. This dog showed that combination of retrieving instinct, training and the temperament to accept handling that resulted in a fine performance. The dog showed pace and desire and when he needed a little guidance he was completely responsive and not fighting against it. I believe there maybe H.P.R. people who regard training and handling as being for wimps and Labrador handlers but I don't happen to be one of them. This level of what I will again refer to as polish was a pleasure to watch.

My thanks to the North West Group for the invitation to judge and their hospitality and in particular to Paul for his efficient stewarding.



Judges & competitors at Watergrove

The Most Successful Novice Handler in the UK?

Sharon Potter

When NW group member Mark Lovell showed one of his HWV puppies to Mark Herbert, it was the first HPR Mark (H) had owned and he bought it for use with his Harris Hawk. Mark H attended NW training classes from an early stage and has **been a regular attendee ever since**. His puppy Milo is now about 2½ years old. Mark H quickly got the HPR bug and decided to enter the GSPC NW group working test at Watergrove in 2006. Not only did Mark finish 2nd in puppy he won the Novice class! The following year Mark entered his second working test (once again the NW Group event at Watergrove) and this time he won both the graduate and the open class! Later in 2007, Mark entered the HWV working test at Watergrove (he doesn't like to travel far) – and came 2nd in open. So in 3 working tests he has competed in a total of 5 classes, under 5 different judges, achieving 2 seconds and 3 firsts - that has to be some kind of a record! Well done Mark!

Clay Pigeon Shoot

Andy & Theresa Peers



The winner Rob Irvine

Saturday 23rd June, Venue Wild Boar Shooting Ground, Crowden, Time 10.30 sharp with Gun and Wife.

Arrived at the ground after a slight oversight of not seeing the entrance and signpost (it's not on the sat nav). Parked up and went for bacon butty and a cup of tea or two. The ground is placed on the hillside with great surrounding views of Crowden and the reservoir. Felt like I was actually on a shoot day, had a quick debrief off the ground staff and Eddy and split into groups. Theresa and I teamed up with Steve and Mel and Paul Dark.

Our group were having plenty of missed and hits and loads of banter were shouted around the ground, as we had most of the ground to ourselves. The clays ranged from very easy, to easy, to hard and the god dam impossible to hit.

After finishing our 75 clays each on the various traps on the ground, we head for more food and cups of tea. After the food and a chat we decided to do a simulated driven game with the clays.

We split into 3 teams, Mel Dark joined in to represent the women {as by this time Theresa's arm was numb – through only being the 2nd time she had shot a gun} Each member of the team stood on a peg facing the oncoming clays {or the on slaughter of clays} they came from every direction 6 clays at a time, causing mayhem for all the teams.

It was agreed good fun was had by all, the hospitably by the ground staff was good and good value for money.

Recommend for all members to release some end of the week stress and recommend any beginners to come along next time and have go. {Like Theresa and Mel did} Next time we should get a girls team together. Scores from the day:

- Rob – 44
- Paul – 43
- Pete – 41
- Derek – 38
- Jack – 34
- Andy – 31
- Dave – 29
- Mel – 25
- Steve – 22
- Eddie – 19
- Mark – 17
- John – 16
- Theresa – 9

Teams scores for driven game

Team 1 - 37

Team 2 – 29

Team 3 – 38

As you can see from the scores from 75 clays this was just a fun day and nothing serious.

Who's Kidding Who?

Shaun Patterson

I'm sure everyone would agree taking on a new pup is a big, big decision.

I am setting out on my journey with my young Wirehair and have a wonderful image of how things will play out and how this time I will 'raise the bar'.....that's the plan.....but how will it all end...hold that thought for now....

I started coming to training classes around 12 years ago....I had a 10 month old energy packed bundle of confusion...and I was the original chocolate fire guard in terms of handling....a recall was something that Toys r Us applied to sub standard teddy bears and the stop whistle was something a Police officer might have blown....Eddie and the stalwarts had their hands full....

Hugo and he did, whenever he wanted, was knocked down chasing a rabbit...I was devastated...

However, I had the bug, I loved the idea of working a dog...developing a solid partnership and working together....piecing together the jigsaw, over at times, a painstaking process, but feeling the pride and joy of working in unison with man's best friend.....what a feeling....I think you know what I mean.

Anyway on to my point...When I first joined the club there were a number of fantastic handler dog partnerships. I don't think a working test or trial would pass without our members cleaning up. This is where I wanted to go! This is what I wanted to achieve! I would listen in the background to some of these members (who shall remain nameless) talk about their training techniques and ideas...the same people would be the first to comment in a positive way on new dogs and handlers that were achieving - if edged out in competition to a better dog it was acknowledged... there would be a large degree of self questioning about why they might have failed a test or not done as well as expected....ultimately it would be back to the training ground and rectify the problem. I wanted to be a part of all that, constantly evaluating my practice and aiming high

Today, I don't see the level of quality dogs...I see some good dogs, but not the great dogs of previous years (this is only my opinion). Why is this? What's

changed? We all still have the same raw material to work with. From a personal view I see many reasons. From my own experience I would say that I was too happy to 'make do'....those early years with Hugo ensured that my tolerance level with future dogs was, in terms of what is acceptable, way too high....My current dog Mya is a great little hunter and in general she is ok, she will find birds all day, stop, come back and retrieve when required...sounds great....but the stop takes a couple of seconds, the recall is ok, the retrieve means a crunched bird if she doesn't switch back onto hunting and have to be stopped and re-sent again for the retrieve.... When it all comes together, occasionally, its fantastic...I have always been in the award cards at every working test we have entered, although never had a first. This is not the fault of Mya, she is a very biddable dog, had bags of potential and a great companion, this I feel is down to me...sometimes you have to hold your hand up and admit you have let your dog down. I have been happy to accept slight delays to commands, after all it was much better than I had previously experienced. The failure to insist on immediate responses from our dogs plants the seed of mediocrity and it becomes an up hill battle to re-capture instant response and with it a great dog.

One of my greatest memories was filling in for a friend (answers on a post card) at a working test....a last minute commitment, move over Johnny Wilkinson, had meant he could not make the test so I was 'volunteered'...I knew Bell but had not done any training with her alone. We won the working test at a cantor, Bell responded immediately to everything I asked of her and probably anticipated potential moments of bad handling to get us out of any corners. It was a great day! But, the point is, could many of us, hand on heart, confidently hand over our four legged friends to a friend to work with....It's down to that training...insisting on a command immediately....a stop whistle is a stop whistle it shouldn't matter who is blowing it or whether or not a rabbit is passing. In my opinion (and opinions are what makes the world go round) this is inherent in many of the dogs I see, not that it would appear to be the case in most of the handlers you speak to. The amount of times I have heard people come up with excuses and try and reason for poor performance..."My dog likes his/her own dummies"...." We haven't trained for a test like that before"..."The tests are too hard"....."My dog won't retrieve dummies just game"...."The judge has a family vendetta against me".....I could go on and on and on....the truth is....you have let the dog down in your training or your dog just isn't up to the job....let's not make excuses....Who's kidding who....!

Don't get me wrong, as previously stated, there are a number of good handler dog relationships out there, but only a very few great handler dog relationships.

Here is a challenge to everyone....let's take our dogs onwards and upwards to the next step....Unless you are happy with average and that is fine and believe me I have grasped average very firmly after Hugo....But we have to move on and do our breed, training and four legged friends justice.....So no more excuses eh!

Back to how I started this article...full of anticipation hope and promise...I have plans for Jess, I want to practice what I preach.....and yes, anyone at training class has permission to come over to me at any point and ask what happened to the master plan...I'll blame the wife...she can't stand dogs!

Good luck and seasons greetings to you all.

Whistle Stop Tour

Alan Drysdale

When one considers the various tasks that our gundogs are requested to undertake, it becomes clear that a prompt and reliable response to the 'stop whistle' is essential for success in the field. This will facilitate many aspects of HPR work, including steadiness to the flush of both birds and ground game; directional changes when handling onto shot quarry and, of course, in any situation where the dog's failure to stop would compromise it's safety.

How best to introduce and develop this good response is a subjective thing and any glance through the various gundog training books and articles will quickly reveal a whole host of differing approaches. One recurring theme, however, is that of 'modelling' (no not that type gentlemen!). In the context of this article, this relates to when the 'stop whistle', (usually a long and continuous blast) is applied by the handler, whilst he/she simultaneously pushes the dog's rump down and jerks the lead in an upward direction. Whilst this will result in the dog sitting, I feel that it is an inefficient and ineffective method and that there is a much better way of achieving results. The issue I have with 'modelling' is that the handler is blowing the whistle, the meaning of which the dog has no idea and at the same time pushing and pulling the dog around. Further, the pushing and pulling very often intensifies and, in some instances, leads to aggression on the part of the handler. Now, if I approached anyone of you good people (no exceptions here of course!) and shouted, "SLIBNEG!" whilst simultaneously grabbing your collar and pushing you backwards, how would you feel? Would you feel

threatened, defensive, confused and perhaps a little anxious? Of course you would. Then why do we do this to our dogs?

A much more preferable approach is to establish what food type your dog is motivated by and utilize this. The following approach is particularly effective with puppies, however, can be used to good effect with older dogs too. It really is quite simple and involves some lateral thinking on behalf of the handler, in that he/she is to establish the behaviour BEFORE giving the command or cue. What the hell is he talking about? Well, all that is required is for you to show your dog that you have a tasty treat in your hand and to then place your hand right on the end of your dog's nose, so to speak. Next you SLOWLY lift your hand above and behind your dog's head and, 'hey presto' your dog is sitting. Hooray! As soon as your dog's bum hits the deck, you release the treat for your dog to enjoy. This process is to be repeated until your dog is reliably following the 'lure' and adopting the sit position. Then and only then would you consider applying the command or cue. Using the same environment, prepare as before, only this time blow your 'stop whistle' BEFORE moving your 'treat hand' above and behind your dog's head. When your dog has sat, release the treat. The reason that the whistle is blown BEFORE the hand gesture is to ensure that your dog has the chance to respond to this new stimulus. If you blow the whistle either at the same time as or after the hand gesture, then obviously your dog will be responding to the hand gesture only, as this is a known stimulus. The idea from this point is to gradually fade the hand gesture until it is no longer used and for the dog to respond appropriately to just the whistle. Similarly, if you then wanted to achieve the sit response to the word sit or the raised arm, then you should follow the procedure above, in terms of introducing this new stimulus BEFORE and IN FRONT of the known and existing stimulus.

The advantages to this method as opposed to the modelling are abundantly clear to me. The fact that you are not giving the dog a command or cue that it does not understand and that there is no pushing and jerking involved means that the dog can attend to the exercise without experiencing any of the aforementioned negative effects. Basically, your dog is an active participant in its own learning as opposed to a passive recipient. Further, the dog's actions are positively reinforced, which has a knock on effect for future learning. I am conscious that this article is really only an overview and I would ask people to come and speak to me if they require clarification or further information as to how this approach can be applied further and with regard to other aspects of HPR training and work.

Recipes

Lemon Curd

Phil Ackley

INGREDIENTS

4 or 5 medium lemons zested and juiced ensure the lemons are unwaxed
4 large eggs
13 oz caster sugar
250 g (9oz) unsalted butter
1 level tablespoon corn flour
3x 300ml (½) pint jars, lids and wax discs

METHOD

Sterilize the jars and lids with boiling water
Place all the ingredients into a saucepan and whisk vigorously for 30 seconds to combine the ingredients
Heat over a low light whisking constantly to ensure the contents do not stick to the side of the pan. Check the temperature 70C or 158F are a sign that the eggs and corn flour are about to emulsify and gelatinise.
Once the mixture has thickened, carry on cooking for just 1 minute, and then remove the pan from the heat.
Pour the curd into the sterilised jars with a funnel, place the wax discs on the top of the curd and seal with the lids.
Allow the curd to cool and then store in the refrigerator, it will keep up to 6 weeks
The curd is ideal for lemon meringue, lemon tarts or on toast

Sweet Pickled Onions

Phil Ackley

INGREDIENTS

3 lb pickling onions
Sea salt
Cloves
Fresh chillies
14 oz sugar
2 pints white wine vinegar

PREPERATION AND BOTTLING

Top and tail the onions, do not cut to far down the onion or they will fall apart.
Leaving the skins still on pour boiling water over the onions and leave to blanch for 30 seconds, cover with cold water and peel them under water This will pre-

vent the surfaces oxidising and toughening up.
Place the peeled onions in a clean bowl and sprinkle with salt between each layer. The salt will draw the moisture from the onions making a pleasant crunch.
Cover with a clean cloth and leave overnight
Next day rinse the onions and dry thoroughly, place the onions in sterilised jars (jars and lids can be sterilised by scalding with boiling water) .In each jar with the onions place ½ a chilli, 2 cloves and a blade of mace

Boil up the sugar and vinegar for 1 minute then pour the hot liquid over the onions then seal the jars
Leave the onions 2 to 3 weeks before eating; they will keep for at least 6 months.

If you prefer a hotter pickle you can increase the chilli, for a change add a clove of garlic or a bay leaf to the jar

Jars, lids, labels etc can be bought from www.lakeland.co.uk and go to the preserving section or visit the shop at Lakeland, 227 Wimslow Road, Handforth, Cheshire. SK9 3JX

Sloe Gin

Equipment

1 Demijon or Kilner Jar
1 Lb or 454 gram Sloes
1 Pint of Gin
1 lb or 454 of Brown Sugar
1 clove

Wash and prick Sloe's mix with gin and sugar add 1 clove, cork, leave, in a dark place, aids retention of colour, for as long as you can, shaking weekly, decant into bottles filtering as you go, a coffee filter is great, it has been suggested that after the sloes have been removed from the Sloe Gin adding them, for some time, to port, adds to the port?

"A dog is 'almost human' and I know of no greater insult to the canine race than to describe it as such."
John Holmes

"Man is troubled by what might be called the Dog Wish,
a strange and involved compulsion to be as happy and carefree as a dog."
James Thurber - And So To Medve

RESPONSIBLE USE OF STARTING PISTOLS AND DUMMY LAUNCHERS

In the light of the current fear of the general public to the sight of weapons, sound of bangs, explosions etc. it is best to err on the cautious side when using blank firing devices for dog training.

According to Section 19 of the Firearms Act 1968 it is an offence for someone to have with them a loaded shotgun, a loaded air weapon, or any other firearm (whether loaded or not) together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm, in a public place without **lawful authority or reasonable excuse** (the proof lies on the person in possession).

Whilst the Firearms Act does not provide a clear definition of what is meant by "lawful authority" or "reasonable excuse" it is understood that "lawful authority" would not necessarily apply to shooting sportsmen. "Reasonable excuse" would apply to shooting sportsmen if the person were engaging in an activity connected with the firearm's use and having permission to be on premises where it is to be used.

Blank firing handguns and starting pistols are classed as imitation firearms. As such, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 amends Section 19 of the 1968 Firearms Act to include such imitation firearms. We can take it that it is an offence to possess an imitation firearm in a public place (including buildings accessible by the public) without a reasonable excuse. **A reasonable excuse for the possession of an imitation firearm in a public place would be for dog training.**

In order to provide a reasonable excuse where you are carrying an imitation firearm, one should be engaged in dog training or some activity in connection with dog training e.g. taking the gun for repair, or going to and from a dog training event/venue. By leaving an imitation firearm and/or ammunition in a vehicle until you need to use it again would not constitute a reasonable excuse and would be an offence. One should only possess an imitation firearm in a public place when one can prove one is going to and from a training session or event.

NB: A public place is anywhere where the public are allowed to go even though they may have to pay.

Roads, streets, footpaths, canal towpaths, public parks and play areas are all examples of public places.

Vehicles are also classed as public places if the vehicle is present in a public place.

Currently no legislation governs the use of imitation firearms on private premises where you have the right to be for the purposes of using an imitation firearm.

DUMMY LAUNCHERS

Standard Dummy Launchers (like Turner Richards) are not firearms nor are they an imitation firearm as they do not look like a real gun. Some modified dummy launchers that can be shoulder mounted or have a pistol grip and may be interpreted as an imitation firearm. If one uses such a launcher then it is probably best to assume that it will be considered to be an imitation firearm, only to be used in connection with dog training; otherwise it could be hard to prove you had a reasonable excuse.

RIGHT TO ROAM

Some areas of the UK have been opened up for public access and recreation. Most open access lands are still owned privately but permission can be granted to use such land for the purposes of dog training; however these open areas are now classified as public places as the public have a right of access. Sensible precautions are required when dog training in a public place with any imitation firearm or dummy launcher, in order to avoid being reported to the police. One should choose a suitable and possibly secluded area for dog training in order to avoid causing alarm to other countryside users; however, you will always be exposed to the possibility of receiving complaints when in a public place.

To ensure added protection and to help the police if questioned, it is recommended to obtain a letter from the landowner, stating you have permission to carry out dog training with blank firing handguns or dummy launchers. A signed letter of permission should protect your position as it is documentary proof of the landowners' authority and will support your reasonable excuse at such a time as you are providing it to the police. Your reasonable excuse will simply be provided verbally e.g. "you are training your gun dog to accustom it to the sights and sounds of sporting shooting". This is reinforced by the fact you have a gundog with you at that time; however there is nothing better than a letter of permission. If you are confronted by any park ranger or police officer who wishes to take the matter further, advise them to speak to the landowner to check your permission.

To summarise

Be sensitive to public concern about firearms.

Get (written) permission to use starting pistols/dummy launchers on training ground.

Keep starting pistols/dummy launchers safe in the home and out of sight whilst travelling.

Be calm and courteous if questioned by a member of the public or a police officer.

"The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog."

George Graham Vest

"No animal I know of can consistently be more of a friend and companion than a dog."

Stanley Leinwoll

No Matter how little money and how few possessions, you own, having a dog makes you rich."

Louis Sabin

"The fate of animals is of greater importance to me than the fear of appearing ridiculous; it is indissolubly connected with the fate of men."

- Emile Zola (1840-1902)

"Dogs are our link to paradise. They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent. To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring-- it was peace."

Milan Kundera

*****g

Could you donate a puppy or young dog like Lola to become a hearing dog?

To meet the increased demand for hearing dogs, we desperately need puppies or young adult dogs between the ages of eight months and three and a half years to be donated for training. They must be confident dogs that are friendly towards animals and people.



Most breeds, crossbreeds and mongrels considered. If you have a puppy or young dog that you think might be suitable for us, please email

dogassessment@hearingdogs.org.uk

Mel Dark

Progress Test

I had the privilege of judging the group's retrieving test on Syke Moor. On a whole the standard was good but with lots of room for improvement. The things that let most people down were the very basics in field craft i.e. not noticing in which direction the wind was coming from and giving your dog commands whilst the dog was on the move.

If a dog is running away from you there is no point standing with your arms out to the left or right and telling it to get out. The dog carries on getting out, as you have told it, but in the wrong direction. It is a handler error not a dog error! Stop your dog, make it look at you and then give the command.

Training classes are great for getting some of the more experienced handler's back on track also!

Hope to see you all in the New Year.
Merry Christmas.
Paul Dark

NO CHARGE FOR LOVE

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups. And set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of a little boy. "Mister," he said, "I want to buy one of your puppies." "Well," said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat of the back of his neck, "These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money." The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer. "I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?" "Sure," said the farmer, and with that he let out a whistle. Here, Dolly!" he called. Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur. The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a

somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up.... "I want that one," the little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, "Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would." With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers. In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe. Looking back up at the farmer, he said, "You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands." With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully he handed it to the little boy. "How much?" asked the little boy. "No charge," answered the farmer, "There's no charge for love."

Recipes

Game paté

Ingredients
 240g (8 1/2oz) streaky bacon
 350g (12oz) pheasant minced or blitzed in a food processor
 675g (1 1/2lb) fatty pork, eg belly, minced
 1 pheasant breast, diced
 2 tbsps brandy
 8 tbsps wine
 1 clove garlic, crushed
 Salt & pepper
 6-8 juniper berries, chopped
 2 tbsps fresh rosemary, chopped
 2 tbsps fresh thyme, chopped
 Small bunch fresh coriander, chopped
 Bay leaves for decoration

Notes

150C, 300F, Gas Mark 2

Method

Preparation Time: 0 Hours & 0 Mins
 Cooking Time: 2 Hours & 30 Mins

Chop half the bacon into small squares, reserving the other half, and mix together with the other ingredients. Allow to stand for an hour for the flavours to develop if time allows.

Put into a terrine or large oven-proof baking dish, smooth the top and arrange the remaining bacon slices diagonally across. Decorate with the bay leaves. Place, uncovered, in a baking tin of hot water to come half way up the sides and cook in a slow oven for 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

The paté is cooked when it starts to come away from the side of the dish and the juices run clear when a skewer is inserted into the middle.

Remove from the oven and weight down (use a similar sized dish with kitchen scale weights or even a brick covered with tinfoil).

Allow to cool, then refrigerate overnight.

Serving Suggestion

Cut into slices to serve.

Paper wrapped partridge

Ingredients

4 young partridges
 12 juniper berries
 handful fresh sage leaves
 4 cloves of garlic, skin on
 salt & freshly ground black pepper
 4 pieces pancetta (or streaky bacon)
 4 sprigs fresh rosemary
 50g (2oz) butter plus extra for greasing

Preparation Time: 0 Hours & 0 Mins

Cooking Time: 0 Hours & 0 Mins

1. Preheat oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Wipe the partridges inside with a damp cloth.
2. Put a quarter of the butter, 3 juniper berries, a couple of sage leaves, a garlic clove and a pinch of salt in the cavity of each bird.
3. Season with salt and pepper. Put a sprig of rosemary on top of each bird and hold in place with a piece of pancetta draped over the bird.
4. Wrap each bird in buttered greaseproof paper, place in a roasting tin or oven proof dish and cook for about 30 minutes, or until juices run clear.
5. Remove paper, being careful not to spill the fragrant juices, and serve with mashed potatoes and green beans

How Popular are HPR's?

As the number of breeds in the HPR Group of dogs increases (14 up to date) the number of HPR's registered with the Kennel Club also increase. However, the number of dogs registered over the last few years has stayed roughly the same, with some breeds registering more one year and less the next.

There are 207 breeds of dogs registered with the UK Kennel Club. Below is a list of dogs registered and what position they are in the list. Position 1 is the highest and 207 the lowest.

207 Recognised Breeds

2006	Dogs Registered	Position
Small Munsterlander (import)	3	194
Korthals Griffon (import)	16	183
GLP	36	168
Bracco Italiano (import)	43	158
Slovakian rough (import)	54	155
Spanish Water Dog (import)	86	135
Large Munsterlander	122	122
Brittany	167	111
Hungarian Wire Vizla	253	93
GWP	287	88
Italian Spinone	353	79
Hungarian Vizla	1,030	46
GSP	1,530	35
Weimaraner	2,744	19

As you can see the Weimaraner is the most popular and has been for the last few years. The positions of the popularity of the dogs does not change much with the top 3 staying the same and the others going up and down in position. But when you compare HPR breeds registered to the most popular dog in the UK then there are very few HPR's around. The top breed is the Labrador with over 45,500 dogs registered in a year.

Out of all the HPR's registered I wonder what percentage are actually used in the shooting field, probably less than 25 per cent.

Paul Dark

Dog Breaking – The Most Expeditious, Certain and Easy Method

Compiled by Geoff Wood (November 2007)

Some thoughts & comments on a book by General W N Hutchinson

I was recently looking through some books upon my shelves and re-discovered this little gem. First of all, do not be disturbed by the title. This book was first published in 1848, when the word “breaking” was commonly used to mean “training”

What is the relevance of a book written so long ago, compared with our modern dog breeds and training methods?

During the period when the book was written, most game was shot over dogs, as they rise to go away, and not as they come to the gun, as in driven game shooting. Our work with HPR's (none of which existed in 1848) is much the same, with the emphasis on finding and holding game until the gun (single barrel muzzle loading in 1848) is in range, followed by accurate shooting and efficient retrieving.

So what did General Hutchinson have to say on the treatment and training of gundogs all those years ago?

“The chief requisites of a breaker are- firstly, **command of temper**, that he may never be betrayed into giving one un-necessary blow; secondly, **consistency**, that in his exhilaration of spirits, or in his eagerness to secure a bird, he may *not* permit a fault to go un-reproved, which in a less exciting moment he would have noticed – and that, on the other hand, he may not correct a dog more harshly because the shot has been missed, or the game lost.; and lastly, the exercise of a little **reflection**, to enable him to judge what meaning an unreasoning animal is likely to attach to every word and sign – nay, every look”

We can not argue with that, can we?

“No dog can be considered perfectly broken that does not make his point when he first feels assured of the presence of game, and remains stationary *where he makes it*, until urged on by you to draw nearer – that does not, as a matter of course, lie down without any word of command the moment you have fired, and after, perseveringly seek the dead bird in the direction that you may point out, - and all this without having occasion to speak more than in a low voice “find” when he gets near to the dead bird.”

I wish!! He is talking here about a confident game finder with the ability to hold it's birds; that has be trained by conditioning to “drop to shot”, followed by a retrieve with

the aid of hand signals alone. Is it us or the dogs that are conditioned to rely so much on the whistle and vocal commands, in preference to hand signals and body language? I believe that I am! If we used the whistle and voice less, would the dog be more attentive, and more easily handled by silent signals?

“It is seldom of any advantage to a dog to have more than one instructor. The methods of teaching may be the same; but there will be a difference in the tone of voice and in the manner that it will more or less puzzle the learner, and retard rather than advance the education.”

Most HPR handlers follow this advice, but it does underline the importance of consistency, when training a young dog.

“As a general rule, let his education begin when he is about six or seven months old. A quarter hour's indoor training – for 3 or 4 weeks will effect more than a month's constant hunting without preliminary tuition”

“Never take a young dog out of doors for instruction until he has learned to know and obey the several words of command which you intend to give him in the field, and is well acquainted with all the signs which you will have occasion to make to him with your arms”

General Hutchinson impresses on his readers the importance of concentrating on basic training, before exposing a dog to the big wide world!

“Let all your commands be given in a low voice. Your words must reach your dog's ears more or less softened by distance, and, if their influence depends on loudness, they will have the least effect at the very moment when you wish it to have the most!”

“If you wish the birds to hear the gun, do *not* let them hear your voice”

For those that have ever wondered why noisy handling is severely marked down by some judges, here is your answer. Also, when attending a Field Trial followed by a noisy gallery is it not surprising that the birds are “jumpy” and lifting early? How many times when a handler has completed a noisy retrieve, does the following dog have a blank run!!

On Retrieving

“When your young dog is tolerably well advanced in the lessons which you have been advised to practice, hide a piece of bread or biscuit. Say “Dead, dead” (we would “mark”) Call him to you. Let him remain by you for a minute or two. Then say “find” or “seek” Accompany him in his search. By your actions and gestures make him fancy that you are yourself looking for something, for dogs are observing; one might say, imitative creatures.

Stoop and move your right hand to and fro near the ground. Conceive that he shall come upon the bread, and reward him by permitting him to eat it"

"After a little time, (a few days) he will show great eagerness on your saying, at any unexpected moment, "dead." He will connect the word with the idea that there is something very desirable hidden near him, and he will be all impatience to be off to find it; *but make him first come to you.* Keep him half a minute. **(Instilling steadiness)** Then say "find" and, without your accompanying him, he will search for what you have previously hidden. Always let him be encouraged to perseverance by discovering something acceptable" All the above mentioned is conditioning the dog to fact that one set of circumstances will lead to another, though without such training the dog would not be able to connect them. General Hutchinson wrote the first edition of his book "Dog Breaking" a year before the famous scientist Pavlov was born!! General Hutchinson was not a scientist, but he surely knew what he was talking about.

"Unseen by him, place the rewards (one at a time) in different parts of the room, under the rug or carpet, and more frequently on a chair, a table or a low shelf. He will be at a loss in what part of the room to search. Assist him by motion of your arm and hand. A wave of the right arm to the right will soon show him that he is to hunt to the right, as he *will* find it there. The corresponding wave of the left hand will explain to him that he is to make his cast to the left. An underhand bowler's swing of the right arm will show him that he is to hunt in a forward direction. Your occasional throwing the delicacy (in the direction that you wish him to take,) whilst waving your hand, will aid in making him comprehend the signal. Obedience to all such signals will hereafter be taught out of doors, gradually increasing the distance. With a view to his someday retrieving blind, it will be your aim to get him not to seek immediately, but to watch your signals, until, by obeying them you will have placed him close by to where the object lies, at which precise moment you will say energetically, "find," and will cease to make any further signals."

Directional training by hand signals in the house to find a morsel of food (conditioning again) 160 years ago! We all now know that the morsels of food can be quickly replaced by something else (a dummy) to the same effect. The words of command may have changed, but even then in 1847, General Hutchinson knew to keep the commands short and easily recognizable.

When to and when not to intervene

"When we see a winged pheasant racing off, most of us are too apt to assist a young dog, forgetting that we thereby teach him, instead of devoting his whole attention to work out the scent, to turn to us for aid on occasions when it will be impossible to give it. When a dog is hunting *for* birds, he should frequently look to the gun for signals, but when he is *on* them, he should trust to nothing but his own scenting faculties."

In the case of "runners" all that the handler can do is place the dog at the fall, from then on (unless, rarely seen) the bird may take any direction and it is only the dog's tracking ability that will bring the bird to the bag.

The fact that "Dog Breaking" was written half a century before our beloved HPR breeds were even conceived, it is remarkable to me that this book (in parts) could have been written for us.

Early copies of the book are expensive and hard to find, but new reprint copies are available at amazon.co.uk (search for "breaking dogs"). Apart from the training tips, the book has many stories and anecdotes relating to the period.

Empty vessels make most noise!

Frances Brooks

Yes your right, its that time of year again, the shooting season is once more upon us and I'm really looking forward to this year for I have some young dogs who will be out with me for the first time. Both Labradors and Spaniels they will be joining the working pack and I will be anxious as to how they shape up in the real world. The first outings as I have said previously are so important to a young dog. I have often come across people who brag about how they had 'Fido' out shooting with them at so many months old! I cringe inwardly when I hear this for experience has taught me that they are certainly 'treading on thin ice'. Young shooting dogs are in danger of becoming over excited – leading to all sorts of problems which 'giving tongue' [making a noise] is one. I am paranoid about this for there is nothing worse than having a dog on the shooting field which is vocal. Even a slight whinge drives me to distraction and of course in Field Trialling it is an eliminating fault. I am a great believer in letting dogs have their puppy hood

Noise is a strange phenomenon in gundogs. Dogs can be quiet around the kennel but give tongue while working and quiet while working but then noisy around the kennel.

I have a friend - let's call him John. I have known 'John' and his family for many years. John currently has 4 Springer Spaniels all from different breeding lines and all make a noise whilst working! His Labradors [he has 3] are also very whiney. Now John is an

intelligent man university educated who is very successful in his career - obviously the noise from his dogs has been 'handler induced' and is not due to any genetic fault. So what has gone wrong? I have watched John with a new pup where everything starts well with some play training to begin with but by the time the pup is eight to ten months old more pressure has been put upon the youngster until tension builds within the young mind and sure enough the noise begins. I have tried repeatedly to tell him to ease off with his regimented approach. Noise whilst working is due to internal conflict building up to such a level that the release comes in the form of noise. Cockers are notorious for this as they are very precocious in their learning and the inexperienced handler is therefore tempted to push on with the training gradually and sometimes inadvertently putting more and more pressure on the young dog's mind which sooner rather than later will react. *'Just because you can do something doesn't mean to say you should!'*

When you think that the average gundog will give eight to ten years faithful service it is really quite prudent to take your time and gradually introduce them to their working environment. The young dogs that I shall have out for the first time this year will be no younger than eighteen months old. Some will be slightly older and I shall be watching them most carefully for signs of tension and their ability to cope with it.

Editor's Note - Frances Brookes trains and breeds working Cocker Spaniels under the name of Contrail Cockers (www.contrailcockers.co.uk), Castle Douglas, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland. She is a regular contributor to the gundog column of the 'Dumfries & Galloway Standard' newspaper.

A Tribute to TRUDE

Sue Kania

Sadly we lost Trude our family pet and hardworking German Shorthaired Pointer on 23rd August 2007 aged 10 years.

Trude came home with us as a puppy at 8 weeks old, for our son Paul who wanted a dog to show. Although Paul worked very hard with Trude her heart didn't lie in the show ring.

Eddie also started training her for the field, it soon became obvious which was Trude's love. From the first day Trude started to work on shoot days she began to sparkle and pretty soon there was no stopping her, it was definitely her love to be out with Chloe (our older GSP) and of course Eddie on Grouse Moors and Pheasant days.

Trude's light began to shine and got brighter over the years as she worked her little socks off for Eddie, never letting him down finding Grouse, Pheasant and Partridge wherever they were hiding. When Trude went on point there was always something there and she would never give up until Ed sent her in and she flushed the little feathered critter out.

At 9 years old she still worked every week on the moor running like a 2 year old finding and flushing birds for Ed, in our eyes a true champion!

She leaves us with the best memories and a daughter who has a lot to live up to.

Thanks Trude.

THE BEST PLACE TO BURY A DOG

Melody Dark

"There is one best place to bury a dog.

"If you bury him in this spot, he will come to you when you call - come to you over the grim, dim frontier of death, and down the well-remembered path, and to your side again.

"And though you call a dozen living dogs to heel, they shall not growl at him, nor resent his coming, for he belongs there.

"People may scoff at you, who see no lightest blade of grass bent by his footfall, who hear no whimper, people who may never really have had a dog. Smile at them, for you shall know something that is hidden from them, and which is well worth the knowing.

"The one best place to bury a good dog is in the heart of his master."

Dedicated to Storm

Children and dogs are as necessary to the welfare of our country as Wall Street and the railroads."

Harry S. Truman

"Dogs' lives are too short. Their only fault, really."

-Agnes Sligh Turnbull

"He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion."

Unknown

Gundog Equipment

Loan & Sale

Eddie Kania

The Group carries stocks of training equipment for the convenience of the members. Often using a soiled dummy can be counter productive. Keep your dummies clean and replace them when they become old and tatty. Below is a selection of training equipment that we usually have in stock. Other equipment can be purchased through the group. Please see Eddie for a quotation.

DUMMIES

Puppy Dummies w. toggle
Intermediate Dummies
Dummies 1lb
Blank Firing Dummy

Whistles

210, 210 ½, 211, 212 , Thunderer 606

Traditional Lanyards
Bolting Hare Elastic
Leads Rope , Choke chains
Short Blanks , Long Blanks RED
Hi Viz Stretch Collar

DVD

We have a selection of DVD's on HPR training. The above can be borrowed please see: Eddie Kania.

Dummy Launcher

We need a £50.00 deposit returnable when the launcher is returned. There is no charge for the loan of the launcher. Blanks are available from Eddie

Embroidered Garments North West Group



Polo shirts, Fleece, Sweatshirts and Caps are available. All have the GSPC emblem embroidered on them Together with North West North West Group.

Paul Dark can arrange for your own items of clothing to be embroidered with these logos. Please see Paul at training classes or email on paul.dark@tiscali.co.uk

Insurance

Members should note that the insurance cover provided by the GSPC only covers official group activities. It is therefore advisable to make your own arrangement regarding insurance cover for other activities.

Web Page

Please make use of our pages and the information contained therein on www.hprgroup.co.uk

Hand Made Leather Dog Leads & Collars

All items are made from top quality bridle leather & hand stitched with waxed linen thread. Metal parts are made from cast brass & will not rust.

Because of the quality of materials used, apart from neglect, the products of my work should last a lifetime.

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Also my popular "beaters coat slings", belts & gun slings.

Other non-standard items can be made to your request.

Enquiries to Geoff Wood -

alias@maggiesfarm.plus.com or text to 07764 932773

Lanyards

Top quality, hand-braided leather lanyards for whistles, keys, phones etc. Most colours can be made or any special lengths. Contact Karen on 01352 716099 or www.lagopus.co.uk

"We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare.

And in return, dogs give us their all.

It's the best deal man has ever made."

M.Facklam

"The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world, the one that never deserts him, the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog."

George Graham Vest

AND FINALLY— spare a thought for the British Servicemen and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan over the festive season and remember the following!

**ITS CHRISTMAS DAY
ALL IS SECURE**

'Twas the night before Christmas,
He lived all alone,
In a one bed roomed house made of plaster & stone.
I had come down the chimney with presents to give,
and just to see who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see....
No tinsel, no presents - not even a tree.
No stocking by the mantle, just boots, filled with sand.
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands,
with medals & badges - awards of all kinds!
A sober thought came through my mind,
for this house was different, it was dark and dreary.
I'd found a home of a soldier once, I could see clearly
The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled up on the floor in this one bed roomed home.
The face was so gentle, the room is such disorder,
not how I pictured a lone British soldier
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read,
curled up on a poncho - the floor for a bed?
I realised the families that I saw this night
owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.
Soon around the world, the children would play,
and grown ups would celebrate a bright Christmas Day.
They all enjoy freedom each month of the year,
because of the soldiers like the one lying here.
I couldn't help but wonder, how many alone
on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home?
The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees & started to cry.
The soldier awakened, & I heard a rough voice
"Santa don't cry - this life is my choice,
I fought for freedom, I don't ask for more.
My life is My God, My Country, My Corps."
The soldier rolled over & drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent & still,
And we both sat & shivered from the cold nights' chill
I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night,
this Guardian of Honour, so willing to fight.
Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft & pure
Whispered "carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day - all is secure"
One look at my watch & I knew he was right
"Merry Christmas my friend, & to all a Good Night"

This poem was written by a serving 'Peace Keeping Soldier', stationed overseas.

THE FOLLOWING IS HIS REQUEST I THINK IT IS REASONABLE.
"PLEASE WOULD YOU DO ME THE KIND FAVOUR OF SENDING THIS TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN.
CHRISTMAS WILL BE COMING SOON AND SOME CREDIT IS DUE TO OUR BRITISH SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN
FOR OUR BEING ABLE TO CELEBRATE THESE FESTIVITIES.
LETS TRY IN THIS SMALL WAY TO PAY A TINY BIT BACK OF WHAT WE OWE!"

Amazing HPR plays "Ba(ch)rk"

Submitted by Hans vom Bump za Dazee

During the time of our puppy training with my new dog, "Wolfgang", it soon became apparent that he had a strong taste for music.

Being creatures of habit, we always fed him in the evening at 7.30 pm exactly. It didn't take long for "Wolfgang" to realize that the opening bars of the Coronation Street theme meant mealtime. Even when our favourite soap came on at irregular times, our "Wolfgang" made for his feeding spot, tapping his little paws as if in time to the music.

Could our puppy be a "child genius" we wondered?

Fortunately, we had our trusty Wurlitzer in the house so we decided to test our puppy protégé to the limit, by placing the Wurlitzer at the customary feeding place. To our amazement, "Wolfgang" jumped up onto the stool and began to tap out the notes to his favourite tune, not perfect but recognizable. Within a few days, he had it off pat.

Once we were satisfied that this lesson was well learned, we decided to move onto something more demanding. One of our all time favourite pieces is "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Procul Harum, so gradually this tune replaced the "Corrie" theme at mealtimes. Sure enough our musical talent adapted quickly to his new piece, which is very appropriate as its tune is derived from "Air on the G String," from the "Suite No. 3 in D Major" by Johan Sebastian Bark. "Wolfgang's" training went on apace and before long, all we had to say was "Wurlitzer" and he would jump onto his stool and start pumping out the notes.

Can he hunt? Can he retrieve? You may be asking yourselves. Can he heck as like!! Too worried about damaging his nails for real work. It is a poor excuse I know, but we will not be challenging for field honours in the near future, back to the drawing board. May be he will have to go and join a Group!!





**That's all for this year folks from
North of the Border!**