

Newsletter 2024

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Club Training

We had another year of brilliant guest trainers taking our monthly sessions and would like to say a big thank you to Colin Pelham, John Stubbs, Barbara Kuen & Alan Buckland. We are looking forward to another year featuring guest trainers every month.

Thank you to all who came along to training and supporting the club, we hope to see you all back next year.

Training takes place on the second Saturday of the month from February to July. 8th February, 8th March, 12th April, 10th May, 14th June & 12th July. Please see Club calendar. All sessions begin at 10.30 and end around 12.30. Please do not arrive earlier than 10.00!

Membership

After 12 years since the club has increased the membership and due to increased overhead costs we have decided that the membership rate will increase to £10. This will bring us in line with other clubs and enables us to keep club training at £10 per session which we want to keep affordable to all. Please could you amend standing orders to reflect this increase before they are due on the 1st of January. This will massively help reduce the extra admin for Marilyn, our Membership Secretary, and she will be extremely grateful. A few are paying their membership in December. If you could alter it to January it would be much appreciated – it does create issues for preparing the accounts – you have to be listed as creditors! Anyone paying less than the membership subs will be treated as having made a donation to the club and will no longer receive information about the club. If you need a form or account details please contact Marilyn by email (membership@KVGTS.org.uk) or check on the website or Facebook page. Anyone not having paid by the AGM will not be eligible to vote on any motion.

Charity

This year we have made a £100 donation to the charity Medical Detection Dogs. Medical Detection Dogs train dogs to detect the odour of human disease with the aim of developing faster, more efficient and less invasive diagnostics that lead to better patient outcomes. They are at the forefront of the research into the fight against cancer and other life-threatening diseases, including Parkinson's disease and bacterial infections.

Committee & AGM

This year we have had some new committee members join and would like to say a massive thank you to them for giving up their time for free, without them the club wouldn't be able to run.

Our AGM will be held on Sunday 9th February at 2:00pm at Burghfield Village Hall.



Away Training

This year our Training Coordinator, Helen Sanderson, organised some fantastic away training days. Giving our members the opportunity to train on different ground to practice or learn skills on challenging terrain like water, jumps, barriers, valleys and walked up scenarios. Keep a look out on our facebook page and website for some exciting away training opportunities to come this year!



We had 2 days at Colin Pelham's ground, the first to spruce up ready for the working test season and the second focused on Walked-Up - just in time for our Walked-Up Test ;) Both days had Novices in the morning and Opens in the afternoon. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and gained a lot from Colin's expertise.



Karen Handley & Ed hosted 2 fabulous days at South West Gundog Training Centre in Devon. Everyone agreed it was well worth the journey. Karen helped everyone improve in areas they needed help with and the purpose built training ground has a section designed to work on anything you would possibly need to. Plus the view is to die for and they have a proper loo - what luxury!



Everything water was the theme of the training day with Jennifer Thomas, taking advantage of the vast water training opportunities at West Wycombe Estate. Working on retrieves & steadiness near and along side the water, sending them across as well as into the river. It was the perfect opportunity to work on delivery out of water which catches so many of us out at times.

Working Tests

Another successful year of tests thanks to the committee, landowners, all the volunteers and judges. These tests would not be able to happen without the volunteers so if you aren't running your dogs please think about helping on a test or two, it would be much appreciated so we can all continue to enjoy this sport which we all love. If you can help on any of the dates below please email coral.meakes@kennetvalleygts.org.uk

Test Dates for 2024:

Open & Intermediate - Saturday 29th March
Puppy, SP & NDNH - Saturday 28th June

Novice & Veteran- Saturday 3rd May
Walked up - Saturday 16th August

The Intermediate will have limited runners.

The entry fee for all tests other than the walked-up is £12 for members and £20 for non-members and the entry fee for the walked-up is £12 for members and £24 for non-members.

Working Test Results

Open Test

Judges: Sue Berman, Alan Buckland, Bob Marcham & John Stubbs.

- 1st Bolebrokeold Burnet By Parrockbrook handle by Gill Sweeting
- 2nd Movenne Acorn At Peterspond handled by Karen Handley
- 3rd Abbotsann Firefly handled by John Scott
- 4th Riverlily Sunny Sunshine Of Galicombe handled Harriet Newcombe

CoM:

- Gwidigada Bombay Sapphire handled by Jennifer Thomas
- Sintonsand Slingsby Of Quails by handled by Izzy Riley
- Gwidigada Affinity At Dipplodge handled by Barbara Kuen
- Troddenmills If Only handled by Robert Small
- Lyebreach Golden Eagle Of Riverlily handled by Abbie Reid



Intermediate Test

Judges: Chris Marshall, Karen Handley, Belinda Routledge & Janice Miller.

- 1st Boggwater Fifty Pounds handled by George Hodgson
- 2nd Jinkster Goldencrest handled by Mary Hogg
- 3rd Hillchurch Firefly of Janfran handled by Jane Trowell (also awarded the Brattonsplash Trophy for the Highest placed novice dog)

CoM's:

- Gwidigada Bombay Sapphire handled by Jennifer Thomas
- Troddenmills Kamikazeat at Sunshimmer handled by Jennie Knight
- Abbotsann Goldilocks handled by Carolanne Bowyer



Novice Dog/Novice Handler Test

Judges: Chris Marshall, Karen Handley, Belinda Routledge & Janice Miller.

- 1st Littlecoxwel Heliwr handled by Caroline Manners
- 2nd Kenxtwen Fairest handled by Brad Stray
- 3rd Bellaroyal's Star Cracker handled by Amy Jobson

Special Puppy Test

Judges: Chris Marshall, Karen Handley, Belinda Routledge & Janice Miller.

- 1st Wiremoor Edgar handled by Jacqui Crew
- 2nd Eadiespools Rosefinch handled by James Prout
- 3rd Okemvale Urrard Rob Roy handled by Rob Smallman



Novice Test

Judges: Martin Bagg, Kirsty Harris, Ian Scutter & Terry Souter

- 1st Saintmartha Tosca handled by Jane Hunter
- 2nd Pedebouc Summer handled by Anthony Stewart
- 3rd Oaklyfield Nugget handled by Emma Mills
- 4th Boggwater Fifty Pounds handled by George Hodgson
- CoM Chatervalley Amber handled by Linda Smith

Vetran Test

Judges: Martin Bagg, Kirsty Harris, Ian Scutter & Terry Souter

- 1st Suthcharic Freya handled by Sue Berman
 - 2nd Millerise Jacob handled by David Miller
 - 3rd Millerise Jemima handled by Janice Miller
- Pictured above.



A few words from Sue Berman and Suthcharic Freya

How fortunate we all were to have an opportunity to run our dogs on the beautiful Kimbers Estate. It was the first time a working test had been held there. The weather was kind, sunshine and a light wind. Freya had a ball all day, making a good start with the double mark. We stood at the base of a fairly steep grassy slope with our judge, Kirsty Harris, to see two marks thrown out to shot at the top of the slope. We had to nominate which we would retrieve first. I opted for the second thrown to our left. Neither retrieve caused any difficulty.

On to Terry Souter's test in the woodland. We were at the bottom of another grassy slope. A mark thrown out at the top over the brow. We had to stop the dogs halfway and handle to a blind into wooded cover on the left. Then to the memory at the top of the hill. Successfully executed.

Then onto Ian Scutter's double blind. Not so easy. No shot. We could choose which one we went for first. I sent Freya to the one on the left not far out from the wood. We were standing out in the open on fairly short grass. She took it into her head she should go into the wood. Eventually made it to the retrieve and managed the second one easily with the help of the wind, opposite the first on a bit of an incline below some trees.

Finally to the walk-up judged by Martin Bagg. Oddly Freya mis-marked her first retrieve but happily nailed the second one. Then to make things even more exciting we had an extra retrieve! We were called to a run-off with David Miller. A mark thrown out to our left. Leave that. Send for a blind straight in front up a bank with plenty of long grass and Spring flowers. Thankfully Freya did as she was asked and that was it. A second amazing Veteran Test under our belt, this year, with a one-eyed dog!

Thank you to the Kennet Valley Committee, who all work very hard and set excellent tests. To the judges taking the time and trouble to travel and spend the day judging a lot of dogs. And never forgetting all the helpers. Without their help we could not do this. And, of course, huge thanks to Mr Freddie Tulloch, the Landowner and his Keeper. Altogether it was a very enjoyable day out among people with a similar interest!

Novice Walked-Up Test

Judges: Colin Pelham & Jo Rollinson
Steward of the Beat: Barbara Kuen

No first was awarded

2nd Cornwood Glorious Twelfth handled by Lesley Scutter

3rd Idawood Lustre handled by Francesca Prentice

4th Abbotsann Brightwater handled by John Scott

CoM's:

Downfarm Cognac Of Quardrum handled by Judy Venables

Idawood Limo handled by Kerry Wallis



Open Walked-Up Test

Judges: Colin Pelham & Jo Rollinson
Steward of the Beat: Barbara Kuen

1st & winner of the Rollinson Bowl: Lucky Billy Boy
handled by Jessica Webster

2nd Meridenred Devils Desire handled by Jos Evans

3rd Culpepper Lucetta handled by Sarah Lowman

CoM's:

Suthcharic Roux handled by Sue Berman

Millerise Jemima handled by Janice Miller

Abbotsann Firefly handled by John Scott

Inter-Counties Team Event

Judges: Diana Stevens, John Keegan, Colin Pelham, Ruben Mort

Kennet Valley Team consisted of 3 Open Dogs:

Paul Wheeler & Willowrise Lilly

Rob Smallman & Caitlin Primrose

Aaron Wright & Garrethall Toddy

The Intercounties Retriever Team challenge was held on 20th April 2024 at the beautiful Springhead Estate courtesy of the landowners The Haywood Family and the Parham Park Estate Trust.

The team worked hard all day not to pick up any O's and were one of two teams not to get a 0. Some fantastic tests which had been set by the Arun and Dowland committee.

Test 1 3 Bind retrieves with extra birds laid out (not required)

Test 2 3 dog walk up comprising of 3 marks and then 3 blinds 180 degrees behind the line

Test 3 Delayed mark onto water, a blind under a tree on the same line as the mark on the water and a long blind in the opposite direction along a steep bank

Test 4 3 memory marks over water and each handler had to take the nominated bird.

Test 5 3 memory marks crossing over the other dogs.

These tests were brilliantly thought out to test the dog's ability to mark and handle at a great distance. All 3 handlers were stretched hard as well as the dogs. The team flew the Kennet Valley flag high and came 2nd. What an achievement for the handlers and the club. Congratulations to the Dukeries team who won and Kennet Valley look forward to them hosting the event in 2025. Arun and Downland hosted a fantastic day and it finished with a super hog roast for all those involved.



Southern Inter Club Team Event

Hosted by UGS Surrey, West Sussex & Hampshire

Judges: Chris Marshall, Ben Starns, Beth Morgan, Julia Smith, Robert Worrall

Kennet Valley Team consisted of:

ND/NH - Emma South Mildanelane and Black Orchid

Novice - Lois Richardson and Jubilee Bakewell

Open - Terry Souter and Suthcharic Grigson

'Three blinds, no shot!' What a way to start for Emma, Terry and Lois, who were working together as a team for the first time and representing Kennet Valley. Emma, as the Novice Handler and despite beginner's nerves, set off first and after handling a few times finished with a respectable 16 points, as did Lois with her Novice dog. Terry's Open dog had a daunting task by comparison. His Blind was some considerable distance across barriers and up a steep hill but, ably handled by our most experienced team member, dog and dummy returned safely after only minimal handling and with the best point score so far.



The second test was the Walk Up judged by Chris Marshall. We all agreed later that, in hindsight, we should have played our joker and doubled our points, as it was to be our best score of the day, dropping only four points between us. All dogs heeled through tall bracken well and achieved excellent individual Marks. The final retrieves were left up to the team to decide how to collect the three Blinds and so Terry advised Emma and Lois as to the most effective way to collect as a team. To the team's credit, instructions were carried out most efficiently and we looked like we had worked together many times before, as three dummies were returned in timely order and dogs took their outrun at the correct moment. Game on! Nerves were now dissipating, and we began to believe we may be in with a chance for a respectable team score, despite the strong opposition.

The third test, Hunting, also proved to be a strong test for the team and the judge seemed to think we had picked the dummies as well or better than most other clubs. With three blinds and only one shot, there was always a chance the dogs may pull to the sound, but the order picked was immaterial and all dummies were duly returned.

Perhaps the team began to believe just a bit too early as then, with two water tests left and a joker to be played, the 'wheels came off'! Our doubled joker scores were not good enough and the final test across water proved too much at the end of the day for tired dogs and the team saw their first zero.

Despite not quite coming up to the team's own high expectations everyone would feel that the teamwork had grown right from the start and Terry had given excellent advice and encouragement to the other two, less experienced members.

Emma should be particularly congratulated for her very good and consistent performance, 87 points achieved over the five tests for a Novice Handler and under the pressure of such a prestigious event was excellent.

At the end of the day as the team gathered to reflect on their day's performance in the evening sun, a hog roast was enjoyed in the beautiful surroundings of Isenhurst Estate with its fabulous water and forestry. UGSSWSH are to be thanked for their hard work and excellent organisation, as are the judges, dummy throwers and all other helpers, it would not have been such a perfect day without them and, of course, the landowners who so generously allowed the Inter Clubs Tournament to be held in their outstanding grounds!

And, remember, there's always next year!

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

The Committee would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you all next year at training and tests.