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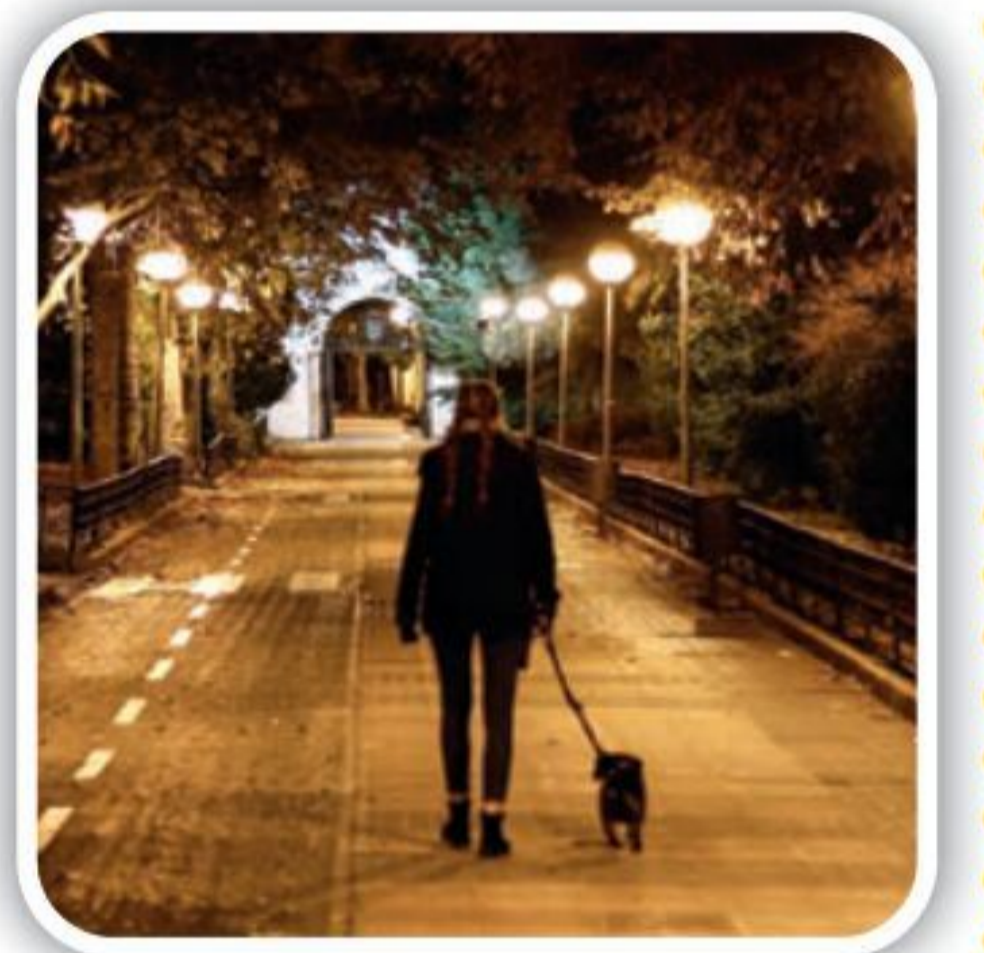
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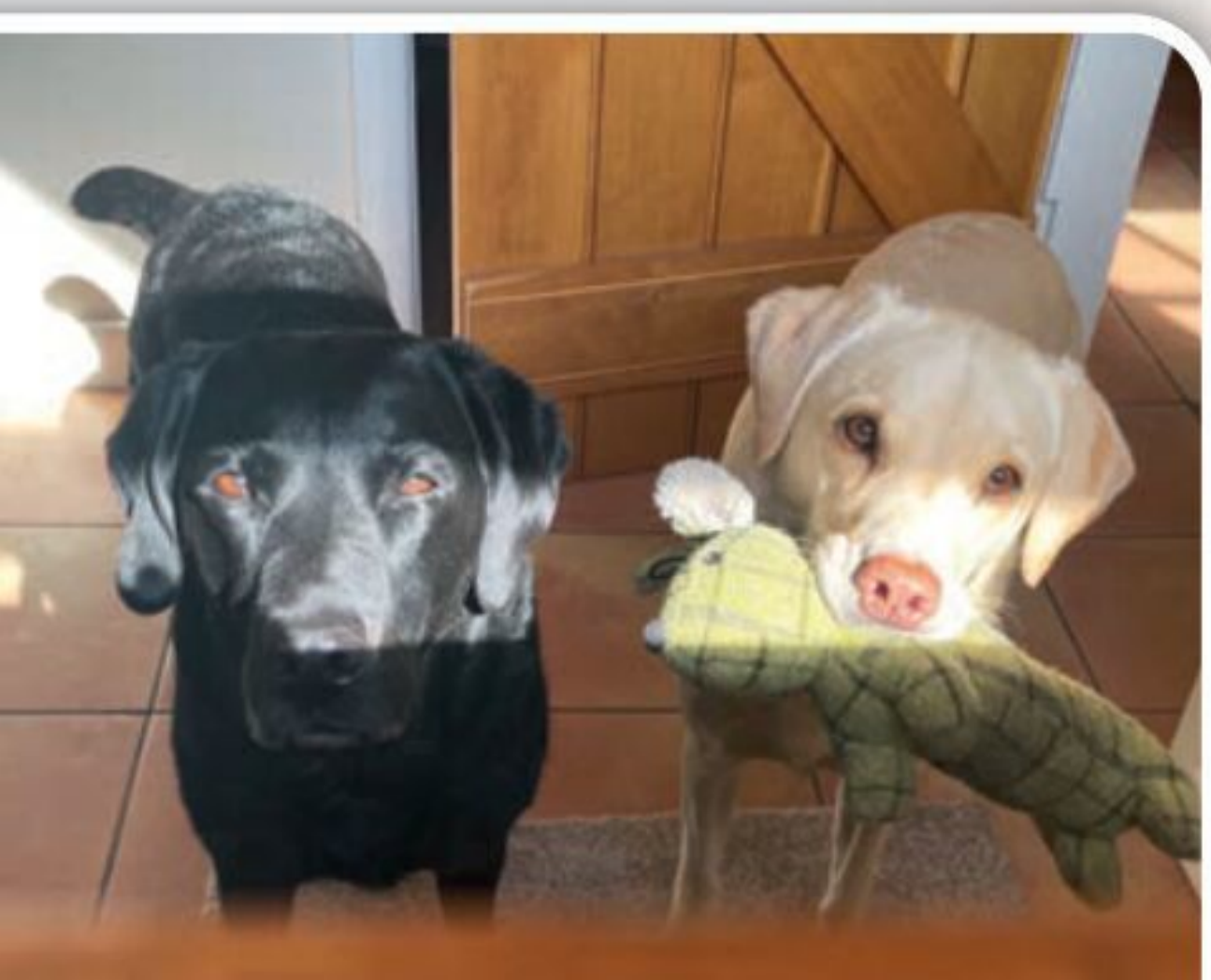
STAY SAFE WALKING YOUR DOG

WISH YOU WEREN'T HERE!

How to
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12 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA SUPERSTARS OLIVE AND MABEL



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Editor's letter

A very happy new year to all our readers and their dogs. January is always a month to take stock of things, and plan for what you want to experience and achieve in the year ahead.

If your resolutions for 2022 include getting together with friends and family, and enjoying a few more outings with your dog, then we have just the features for you!

'Nice to see you?' on page 10 is packed with advice on how to help your dog practise polite greeting behaviour when meeting other dogs and people, to achieve calm, stress-free encounters. Learning to read your dog's body language, knowing when to move on, and acting as your dog's advocate are all skills that will help to make any social encounters run smoothly.

In 'Wish you weren't here!' (page 42) Toni Shelbourne reminds us that having canine guests, or visiting them in their own homes, isn't always every dog's cup of tea, so as far as possible, it makes sense to ensure that getting together with friends and family works for everyone — and that includes your pets.

From creating safe zones to arranging initial meetings on neutral territory and removing objects that might prove

a flashpoint (think toys, beds, and food — anything that your dog might be protective of), Toni advises on how you can prepare for a trouble-free and enjoyable stay.

Reading 'Too much of a good thing!' (page 32) about the problem of dogs becoming obsessed with certain kinds of fast-paced activity, reminded me of my first dog, a rescue Border Collie X Whippet with a bit of terrier mixed in. She was bright as a button, but became fixated on balls of all shapes and sizes. I wish I'd come across an article like this all those years ago, and if you have a dog who shows similar behavioural dependencies, it will certainly make you think.

Finally, thanks to the many thousands of readers who voted for their favourite dog products in the Your Dog Product Awards 2022 — this is the moment when you discover if your favourites have won! Turn to page 30.

Here's to a great start to the new year,

Sarah Wright
Editor



★ WHO'S ON THE COVER THIS MONTH?

"Harli is a fun-loving, friendly pup who likes saying hello and making new friends," says owner Millie Bannister, from Surrey, of her now nine-month-old Cockerpoo.

"She is very gentle and loves to play. She thrives on adventures, country walks along the river, and running through the woods to chase the squirrels. She even invents her own agility course when chasing!

"Harli loves heading to the seaside especially if ice cream is involved. She is a bundle of joy and fluff, who makes people smile wherever she goes." Among the Cockerpoo's likes are chicken, muddy puddles, adventures, and cuddles — but she's not so keen on baths!

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Cover pic: Cockerpoo by Mark Taylor, Warren Photographic Ltd.

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Image: IFAW.



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JOIN THE YOUR DOG MEMBERSHIP!

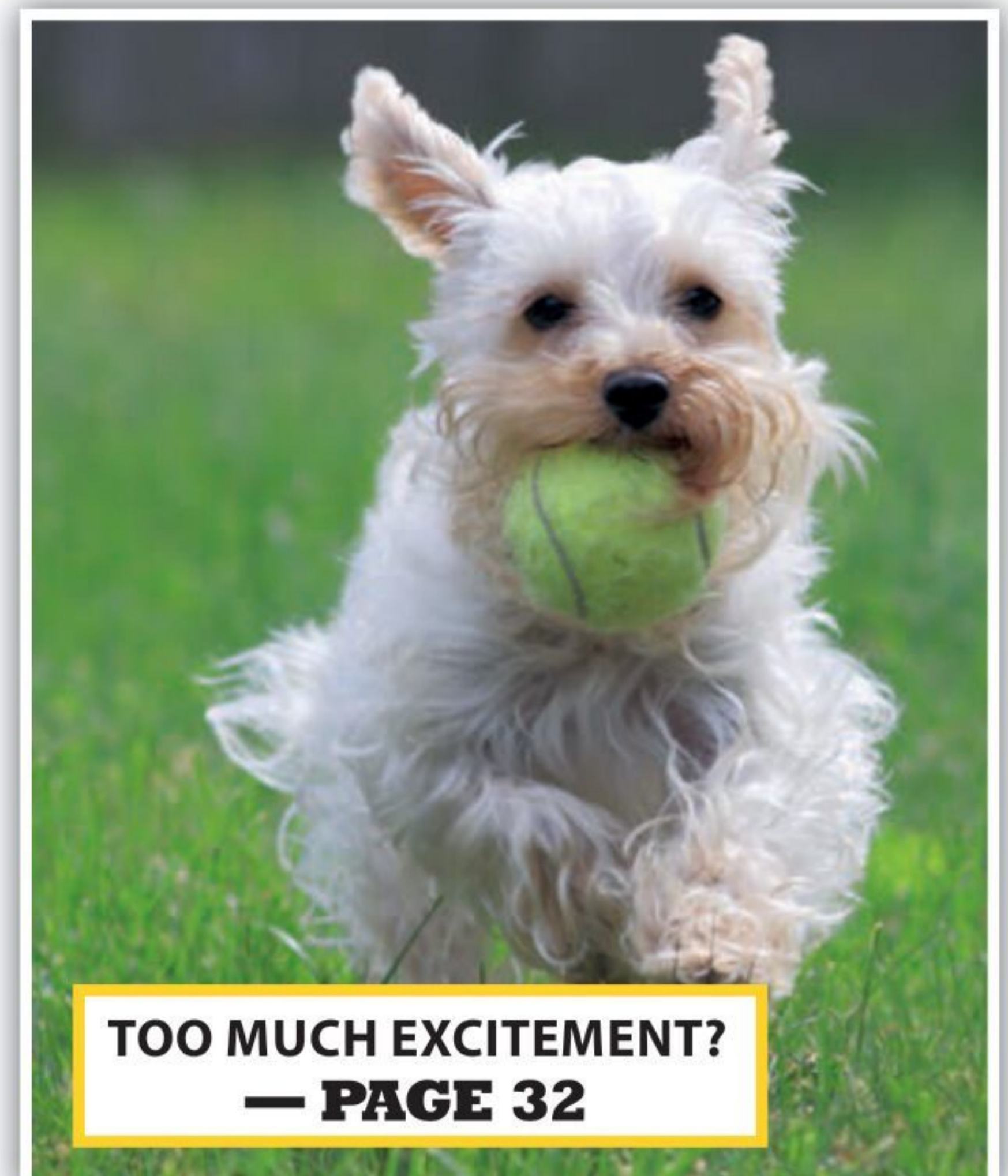
Turn to page 55 for the latest perks and discounts exclusive to our members and check out our feature on Greenhowe self-catering luxury lodges & caravans in the beautiful Lake District on page 40.



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**TOO MUCH EXCITEMENT?
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PROTECT PETS FROM PAINKILLER PERIL, WARNS PDSA

The UK's leading vet charity is urging owners to take extra precautions with cold and flu remedies this winter, after a puppy swallowed ibuprofen and needed emergency treatment.

Labrador-cross Lilly was rushed to Nottingham PDSA Pet Hospital after her owners, Emily Harrison and Johnathan Letherton, came home to find a box of painkillers missing from their bedside table, teeth marks in the foil blister pack, and loose tablets scattered around the house.

"We think she'd eaten three of the tablets, but couldn't be sure," said Emily, who became seriously concerned when her six-month-old pup's condition deteriorated rapidly.

"She started swaying from side to side, almost like she was drunk, became really lethargic and was sick."

The panicked couple, from Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottinghamshire, called a local vet but as their pet insurance had recently lapsed, the cost for Lilly to be seen out-of-hours was prohibitive.

"We would have had to get a loan for her to be seen and treated — which we would have done — but thankfully, after a search online, we came across PDSA," continued Emily, 22.

After finding they were eligible for the charity's assistance, Emily and Johnathan, 23, were told to bring their pet in immediately for urgent care with out-of-hours provider Vets Now.

Although Lilly hadn't consumed enough ibuprofen to cause life-threatening stomach ulcers or organ damage, the team needed to work quickly and give medication to protect her stomach and prevent further absorption of the toxin.

"Lilly was very lucky her owners sought vet treatment, which helped to avoid any long-term damage," explained PDSA senior vet Sarah Brown.

"It's not unusual to see animals who have swallowed human medication. If Lilly hadn't received such prompt, thorough treatment, the story could have been very different.

"Tablets can look quite attractive to dogs so owners are advised to keep all medications in a cupboard, well out of reach."

Johnathan added: "We're so grateful

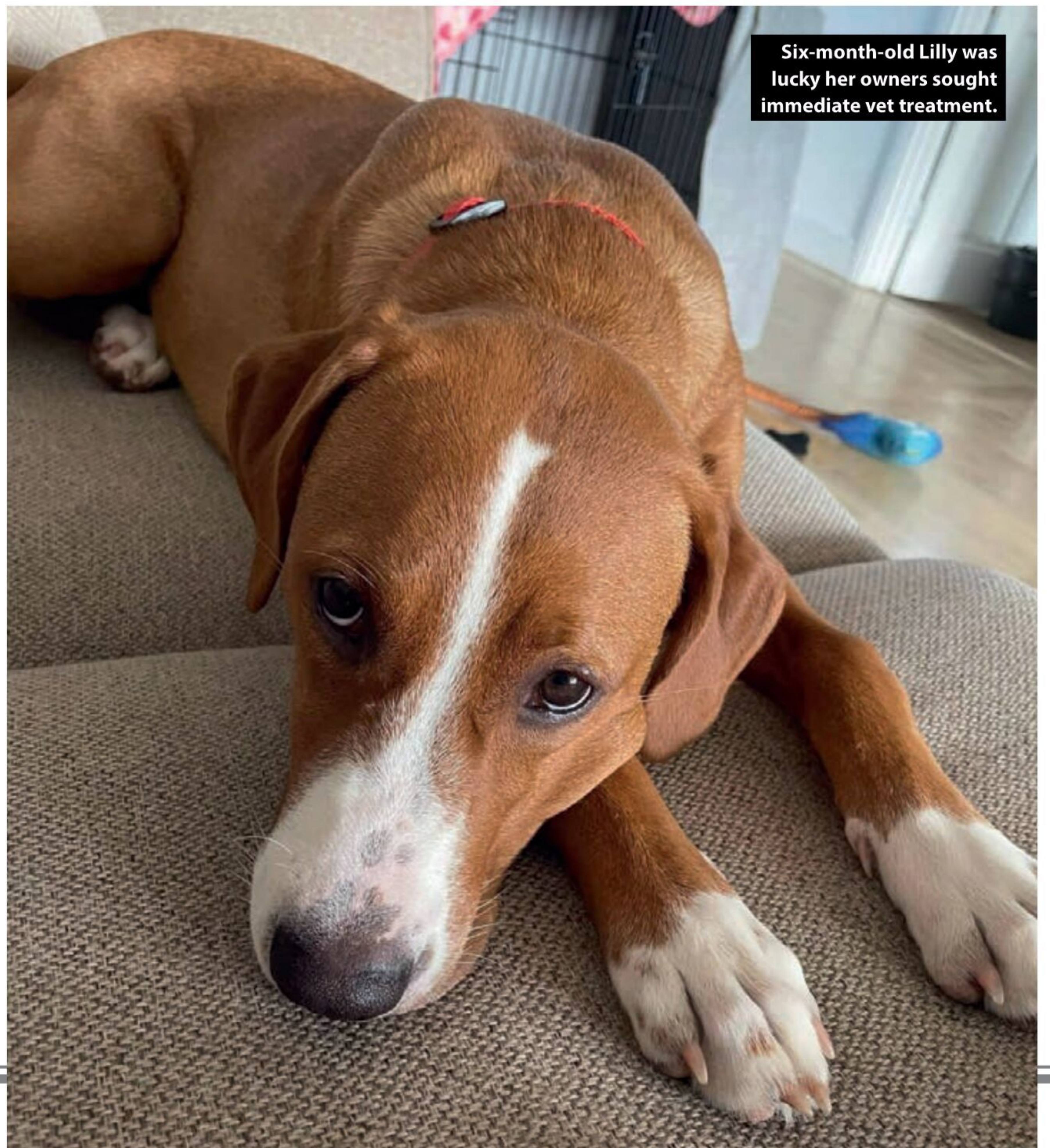


to PDSA and the Vets Now team.

"Lilly is back to her normal bouncy puppy self now, and we'll be sure to keep all medicines out of the way!"

DOG DATA

One in three Brits would take a day off work if their dog was unwell, according to research from leading raw and natural pet food expert Nature's Variety.



DOG DATA

According to research from money.co.uk, America pips the UK in having more doggy day-care centres than any other country, while Hungary has the most affordable at £8.39 per day.

OWNERS SOUGHT FOR VITAL STUDY

Researchers at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) are undertaking the world's largest study of canine autoimmune diseases — and they need your help.

Owners whose dogs have recently developed immune-mediated haemolytic anaemia (IMHA), immune thrombocytopenia (ITP, low platelet count), immune-mediated polyarthritis (IMPA) or steroid-responsive meningitis arteritis (SRMA), are being asked to participate so that data and insight into the diagnosis, treatment response, and outcomes of canine patients with these conditions can be collated.

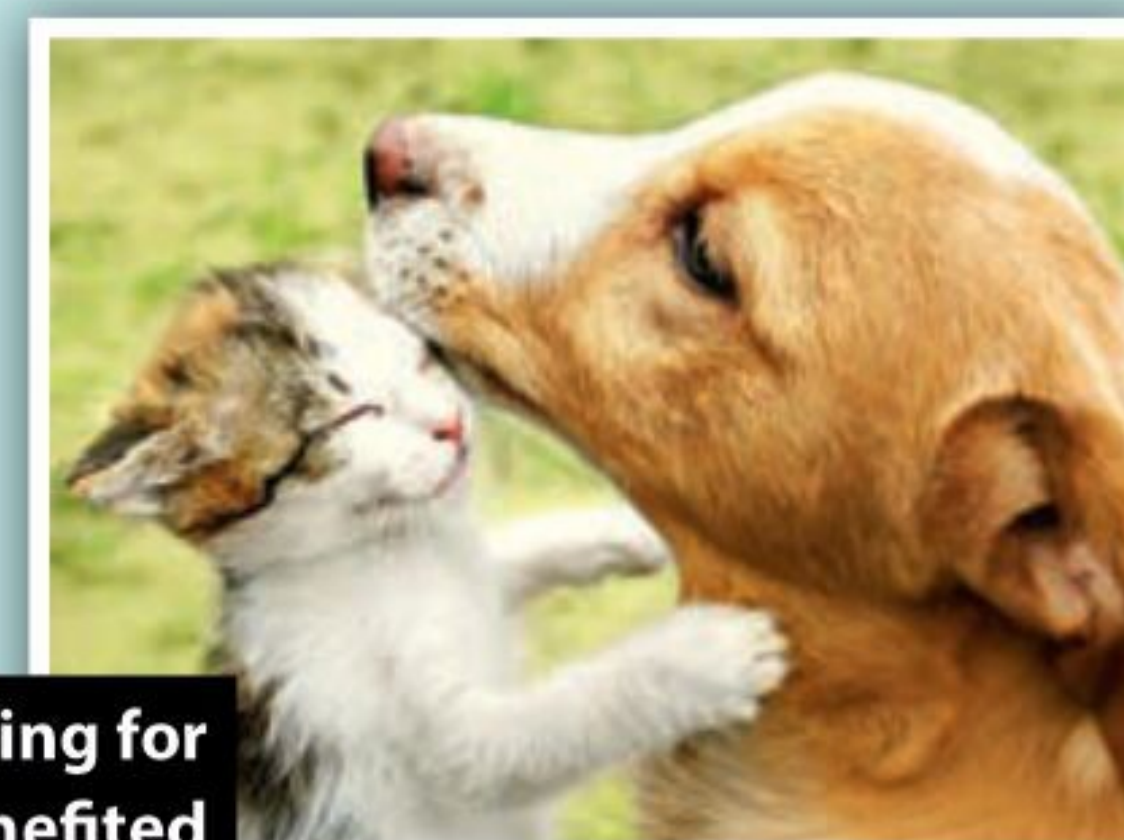
Funded by the Small Animal Medicine Society (SAMSoc), the study, called the ImmunoRegistry, has been launched to address the current shortage of information about autoimmune diseases, and will follow 400 dogs for a year in real-time to learn how they respond to treatment and whether some breeds or types develop more side effects from medications than others.

Results will be shared with local veterinary practices and specialist hospitals to help owners and vets make informed decisions when their pets are diagnosed.

Often causing severe illnesses that require intensive hospital care and prolonged treatment with immunosuppressive medications, autoimmune diseases are encountered frequently in dogs, with the RVC alone seeing 50 to 100 cases a year.

● To take part in the study, visit <https://rvc.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/immunoregistry>

News HOUND-UP



Dogs and cats looking for new homes have benefited from the giveaway.



Professor Mike Herrtage.

AWARD HONOURS OUTSTANDING VETERINARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Congratulations to Professor Mike Herrtage, radiologist at Hertfordshire-based Davies Veterinary Specialists (Davies), for receiving the British Veterinary Association's prestigious Dalrymple-Champneys Cup and Medal.

One of the veterinary profession's highest scientific accolades, the award recognises Professor Herrtage's work supporting the advancement of veterinary science, which has improved the lives of thousands of cats and dogs worldwide.

HELPING HOMELESS DOGS

Vegan pet food brand Noochy Poochy has joined forces with Dogs On The Streets to donate 2,600 meals to homeless dogs in major UK cities.

"We are very excited to be working with Noochy Poochy and providing the dogs we support with 100 per cent nutritional food," said a spokesperson for Dogs On The Streets, a charity dedicated to the welfare of rough sleepers' canine companions.

Vegan vet Lucy McKinna, who formulated Noochy Poochy with animal nutritionist John Murray, added: "Being able to help Dogs On The Streets is an absolute pleasure and falls perfectly in line with our mission — caring for animals and the planet."



Arden Grange has gifted more than 40,000 dog and cat meals to rescue centres.

THE GIFT OF GIVING

Twenty-five independent animal rescue centres in the UK have benefited from a pet food company's annual charity giveaway.

Arden Grange has gifted more than 40,000 dog and cat meals during 2021 to mark its 25th year and provide a post-pandemic boost to shelters struggling from the double whammy of reduced funds and an increase in animals needing their care.

The Brighton-based business received more than 2,200 nominations from its Instagram and Facebook followers before selecting 25 at random to receive a generous bundle of food.

DERBYSHIRE DOGGY DAY-CARE SCOOPS TOP AWARD

Congratulations to Chesterfield-based Rose Cottage Doggy Day Care and Luxury Doggy Hotel for being crowned Kennel of the Year at the prestigious Pet Industry Federation (PIF) Awards.

Founded in 2017 by Dawn Brown, Rose Cottage's luxury dog boarding experience features five-and-a-half acres, 14 individual heated and air-conditioned dog pods, televisions, a chill-out lounge, agility paddock, splash pool, and toys galore.

"The PIF Awards represent the highest accolade in our industry and to win was phenomenal," said Dawn, whose business boasts more than 2,000 clients. "I want to thank my whole team for helping to make this happen."



The Rose Cottage team.



Dawn Brown founded Rose Cottage in 2017.

Calling clever canines...

Two world-renowned dog cognition scientists, including the University of Portsmouth's Dr Juliane Kaminski, are searching for the world's smartest dogs as part of their 'Finding Rico' research project.

Dr Kaminski, along with Dr Juliane Bräuer from Germany's Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, are seeking dogs as gifted as Rico (a Border Collie with the ability to understand 200 words) who can identify 20 or more objects by name.

Dr Kaminski's work on canine cognition has found dogs are more skilful than wolves or chimpanzees at reading human signals.

"We hope this citizen science project will inspire people to work with us to test their dogs' intelligence and to establish how common such superb skill really is," said Dr Kaminski.

● The two researchers have made 'Finding Rico', a video in eight languages, in the hope of reaching owners far and wide. View the English version at www.vimeo.com/574065197/cf11fadfb4

● If you think your dog is clever enough, email findingricodogs@gmail.com



Smart dog Rico.

Image: Susanne Baus.

CORGIS RETURN!

New data from the Kennel Club shows the Pembroke Welsh Corgi — once at risk of disappearing from London's streets and parks — has made a welcome comeback.

The Queen's favourite breed has entered the capital's top 20 for the first time in nearly 50 years, increasing by nearly 200 per cent during the pandemic, as Londoners used lockdown to look at alternative canine choices.

Other previously vulnerable breeds receiving a boost include the Bedlington Terrier (a 171 per cent increase), Cardigan Welsh Corgi (up by 100 per cent), Welsh Terrier (a rise of 82 per cent), Lakeland Terrier (up by 72 per cent) and Parson

Russell Terrier (an increase of 100 per cent), although the French Bulldog retains top spot.

According to the dog welfare organisation's annual puppy registrations, Londoners have opted for smaller breeds, such as Pomeranians and Miniature Schnauzers, while the rest of the UK prefers Springer Spaniels, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, and German Shepherds, with the Labrador still at number one nationally.

Bill Lambert, spokesperson for The Kennel Club, said: "The Pembroke Corgi is a real success story. We hope this is a sign that Londoners are starting to cast their net more widely when considering their dog breed of choice."



The Pembroke Welsh Corgi — bouncing back.

SWITCHED ON!

DOGTV, the world's first and only television network specifically designed for dogs and their owners, has launched.

Available on a range of smart TVs and android and Apple devices, the service is the result of three years of research and claims to help alleviate symptoms of canine separation anxiety, loneliness, and stress.

Designed to enrich the lives of stay-at-home dogs and provide a relaxing, stimulating, and behaviour-improving environment, DOGTV also has programming aimed at owners, including practical and expert tips, ideas for fun activities, recipes for dogs, and new trends, products, and services.

Animal trainer and DOGTV ambassador Victoria Stilwell said: "People think that DOGTV is a bit of a weird concept at first, but when I tell them the amount of research that has gone into this — that this TV channel can help their dogs while home alone, improve their lives considerably, and help with different stresses and anxieties — they get it."

● Visit www.dogtv.com for more info.



The duck about to be hooked.



A fully recovered Ronnie.

GOING QUACKERS!

A Bulldog puppy is recovering after emergency surgery to remove a rubber duck from his stomach.

One-year-old Ronnie was rushed to Pride Veterinary Centre in Derby by his owner, Joe Fisher, 38, after stealing the toy from a bedroom and swallowing it whole.

Debs Smith, a senior vet at Pride, part of Scarsdale Vets and the My Family Vets group, sedated and X-rayed Ronnie before using an endoscope to remove the offending item.

"It was like playing 'hook a duck,'" said Debs, who was worried the toy would cause an obstruction. "After about half an hour, we got the loop around it and pulled it out."

Ronnie was soon back to his old self, and a relieved Joe, from Nottingham, plans to frame the X-rays.



● **USA:** Pitbull Terrier Buddy was saved by his owner after a 350lb black bear mauled him in Grass Valley, Nevada County, California. Kaleb Benham punched the bear in the face and eyes to free his 90lb rescue dog, who underwent three-and-a-half hours of emergency surgery at Mother Lode Veterinary Hospital.

Buddy needed multiple stitches and staples for deep gashes near his eyes, teeth marks around his head, and a puncture wound to his lip, but is making a good recovery at home.

● **RUSSIA:** Moscow has launched a 'Tails and Paws' train carriage on the city metro system that is dedicated to rehoming stray animals. It's hoped the posters on board, which feature cats and dogs from 13 of the Russian capital's shelters, will prompt passengers to adopt them as well as promote a more responsible attitude towards animals.

DOG DATA

The team at tailored dog food company Tails.com has revealed the top 10 canine-friendly road trips in the UK, with Edinburgh to Kirkwall voted number one, ahead of the Atlantic Highway, from Barnstaple, North Devon, to the outskirts of Newquay in Cornwall.

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IT'S A DATE WHAT'S ON IN JANUARY?

● **Until April 1, 2022: 10am – 4pm: For the Love of Dog/Pour l'amour du Chien, The Kennel Club Art Gallery, 10 Clarges Street, London W1J 8AB:**

● An exhibition of 30 mainly black and white original prints by the renowned photographer Shirley Baker. The images, taken in the UK and France, of dogs in everyday settings and at shows, provide an insight into her affection and admiration for man's best friend and capture the special canine-human relationship.

● The gallery is the only art institution in central London — and one of only a few in the UK — that allows canine visitors alongside their owners.

● **Cost: Free but appointments must be booked in advance by emailing artgallery@thekennelclub.org.uk or calling 0207 518 1064.**

● **More info: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/gallery**



Shirley Baker's images capture the special canine-human bond.



Dogs are allowed to visit alongside their owners at the KC art gallery.



Nice to see you?

Not all dogs feel comfortable meeting other dogs. Trainer and behaviour adviser **Sarah Whiffen** advises on how to manage these encounters, so they remain calm and stress-free.

Politely meeting and greeting other dogs, as well as humans, is really important for your pet's safety and confidence. But the truth is that many dogs are lacking in the social skills department, and sometimes their guardians inadvertently contribute to the issue.

Most dogs show natural behaviours, such as circling and investigating, when meeting other canines, but when on the lead, they have less freedom to move away or to show polite greeting behaviours.

As there are many places and occasions when your dog has to be on the lead (and since most people will start

to introduce their dog to others when on-lead) it's important to know how to manage such meetings in a way that is calm and stress-free for everyone.

SOCIALISATION

If a dog misses out on early socialisation and appropriate education, it may impact on his ability to politely meet and greet and interact nicely with other dogs. But socialisation needs to be the right sort; while puppy classes can play an important role in this part of your dog's education, they must be properly supervised if he's to develop both confidence and good manners around other canines. Watch out for any bullying behaviour from individuals,

or puppies being overwhelmed and needing a break from play.

It's also often forgotten that socialisation and education isn't just for puppies, but is a lifelong, ongoing process — all experiences will affect future interactions.

Some dogs may be anxious about meeting others if they've been on the receiving end of intense or unwanted



ABOUT SARAH

Buckinghamshire-based Sarah worked at Battersea Dogs and Cats Home for many years, where she was a member of the canine behaviour and training team. An Animal Centred Education instructor and Level 3 Tellington TTouch practitioner, Sarah now runs Whiff'n'Woofs Dog Training, offering science-based, force-free, kind, fun, and effective canine education through 1-2-1s and workshops, using ACE methods on a daily basis.

DID YOU KNOW?

If introductions are not managed appropriately, dogs who are just a little unsure may become defensive if they don't feel listened to.



Dogs can gain a lot of information in a brief two to three-second greeting.



Puppy classes can play an important part in early socialisation, but play needs to be carefully supervised.

attention, or had their lack of confidence reinforced by negative experiences. Their behaviour may change and your support and care will be needed in future interactions. Health and well-being can also play a part in sociability, and what is appropriate for your dog now may change as he matures and ages. With any sudden changes in behaviour a vet check is always advisable.

UNKNOWN QUANTITIES

If you've just adopted a dog from a rescue centre, even though he may have been assessed as being good with others, it's nevertheless sensible to treat him as an unknown quantity until he's had time to settle and you know each other better.

"It's often forgotten that socialisation and education isn't just for puppies..."



A tight leash will add tension into the mix.

DID YOU KNOW?

Practice is important; your handling of the lead and your dog WILL influence what happens. Training is for both of you, not just your dog!

WALK THIS WAY!

Be prepared to put in extra training if necessary. Before you can encourage a polite and safe meet and greet with another dog, your canine companion needs to know how to walk nicely on the lead. He should be able to walk freely with a little slack in it; not pulling



If you need to create some distance, call your dog away rather than tugging at him.

forwards, sideways, or backwards. Spend some time teaching him to walk on either side of you; this can be helpful with keeping his posture balanced as well as in managing meet and greets.

- Dogs are constantly learning, and not just in training sessions. Think about what yours may be learning and practising as it might not be what you intended; if you let him drag you over to greet every dog you see and he jumps all over them, then that's



Most dogs show natural behaviours such as circling and investigating when meeting other canines.

“...being able to move on again is an equally important skill...”

what you are unintentionally training!

KITTED OUT

Experiment with loose lead walking on both a flat collar and a harness to see which enables your dog to walk more fluidly, as this may influence your dog's behaviour and interactions. If you use a harness, ensure it's well fitted and allows for optimum natural movement. A lead that is too short can also force your dog to pull against you, so make sure yours is long enough to allow some slack.

MOVING ON

Be fair and clear with your dog. As well as meeting and greeting politely, being able to move on again is an equally important skill for him to learn, so in addition to loose lead walking skills, work on establishing a good recall and putting a 'Let's go!' cue in place before doing on-lead introductions. If the other dog turns out not to be so friendly, you'll then be able to move away with a minimum of fuss, keeping the situation as low-key and stress-free as possible for your own dog.



Work on teaching your dog to walk on a loose lead.

If you also teach your dog a cue to 'Go say hi!' as well as to come away, he will understand that he's allowed to greet some dogs but not others. This can make not being able to meet every single dog he sees less frustrating for him, and help you choose appropriate dogs for him to meet.



It's essential to know your dog will respond to you and recall before allowing him loose.



There are many places where your dog may need to be on the lead.



It may look like play, but some dogs fool around when they're worried, uncertain, or need something to change.

BODY LANGUAGE

Everyone reacts differently under pressure; knowing your dog's body language in different situations will help you spot when he isn't enjoying the attentions of another dog, has had enough, or when he's become a bit overexcited.

Observing and correctly interpreting body language is important; bear in mind that the dog leaping around, barking, rolling on the ground, jumping up at the owner, or even play-bowing is not necessarily one who is keen for the interaction to continue. 'Fooling around' may look like play, but some dogs fool around when they're worried, uncertain, or need something to change.



Polite, socially skilled dogs don't tend to walk up to each other in a straight line — it's people who do that! Being on a lead can reduce their options.

GOLDEN RULES

- Practise with known, sociable dogs, so both of you can work on your greeting skills. A training club or class can be a good place to do this, where advice is available if you need help interpreting your dog's body language.
- Make sure your dog feels he can move to a distance where he feels safe should he be a little uncertain.
- Keep the lead as relaxed as possible so you don't add tension into the mix. If you need to create some distance, call your dog away rather than physically tugging at him.
- Keep it brief! Dogs can gain lots of information about each other in an initial two to three-second greeting, generally not a long enough period for problems to occur.
- If the greeting goes well, you can walk near each other before allowing the dogs off-lead if you think they'd enjoy playing together. However, it's essential to know your dog will respond to you and recall before letting him loose.
- Always ask before letting your dog approach another one — on-lead as well as off.
- If you feel you're struggling to introduce your dog to others, it means your dog is struggling and needs help and support. Telling him off will only make him more anxious. Instead, seek appropriate advice from a trainer who uses force-free methods.

REDUCED OPTIONS

When on the lead, your dog's options are limited. He cannot run off or distance himself, and it makes a polite approach — semi-circling rather than head-on — more difficult. If he's obviously trying to create space between himself and another, and is reluctant to approach, go with it; just as you might avoid certain individuals, this is a dog he doesn't want to say hello to. Pushing him into a situation he's not comfortable with may make him behave defensively.

KNOWING WHEN TO STOP

'Sociable' doesn't just mean playful; dogs with good social skills can read and respond to other dogs' body language, so they know when to stop. It may be hard sometimes to accept that perhaps your dog plays a little too rough with others, or doesn't always make the politest of approaches, or doesn't know when to stop, but these days, repercussions can be tough on unruly dogs. Don't allow boisterous play to continue too long, and work on improving his response to you, even when excited.

BE AN ADVOCATE

It's your responsibility to be your dog's advocate: consider if an approaching dog is one he might enjoy meeting; he doesn't need to greet every single dog he meets.

If he's generally friendly and easy going, it can be easy to get a bit too casual and not monitor interactions as closely as you should. Sometimes things can get a bit overwhelming for even the most tolerant of dogs, and if allowed to continue may cause him to become defensive. He may not know how, or be able, to extricate himself from a situation, so always be prepared to step in and protect him from over-exuberant dogs with no recall.

SPACE PLEASE!

For the guardians of a worried or reactive dog, or one on restricted exercise, a walk can be ruined by the approach of someone else's bouncy dog accompanied by the words "he only wants to play" when it's not a mutual feeling. It's important to recognise that other dog walkers may be keeping their dog on lead, or want to keep their distance, for a reason. If you see a dog wearing a yellow bandanna or vest, or with a yellow ribbon attached to the lead, it means he needs space. If yours is loose, pop him on-lead, place him on the side of you that is furthest away, and allow a bit of extra room as you pass.

- Find out more about the international Yellow Dog campaign at www.yellowdoguk.co.uk



Be your dog's advocate and step in if he's not comfortable in a situation.

“Olive and Mabel’s videos have attracted more than 90 million views...”

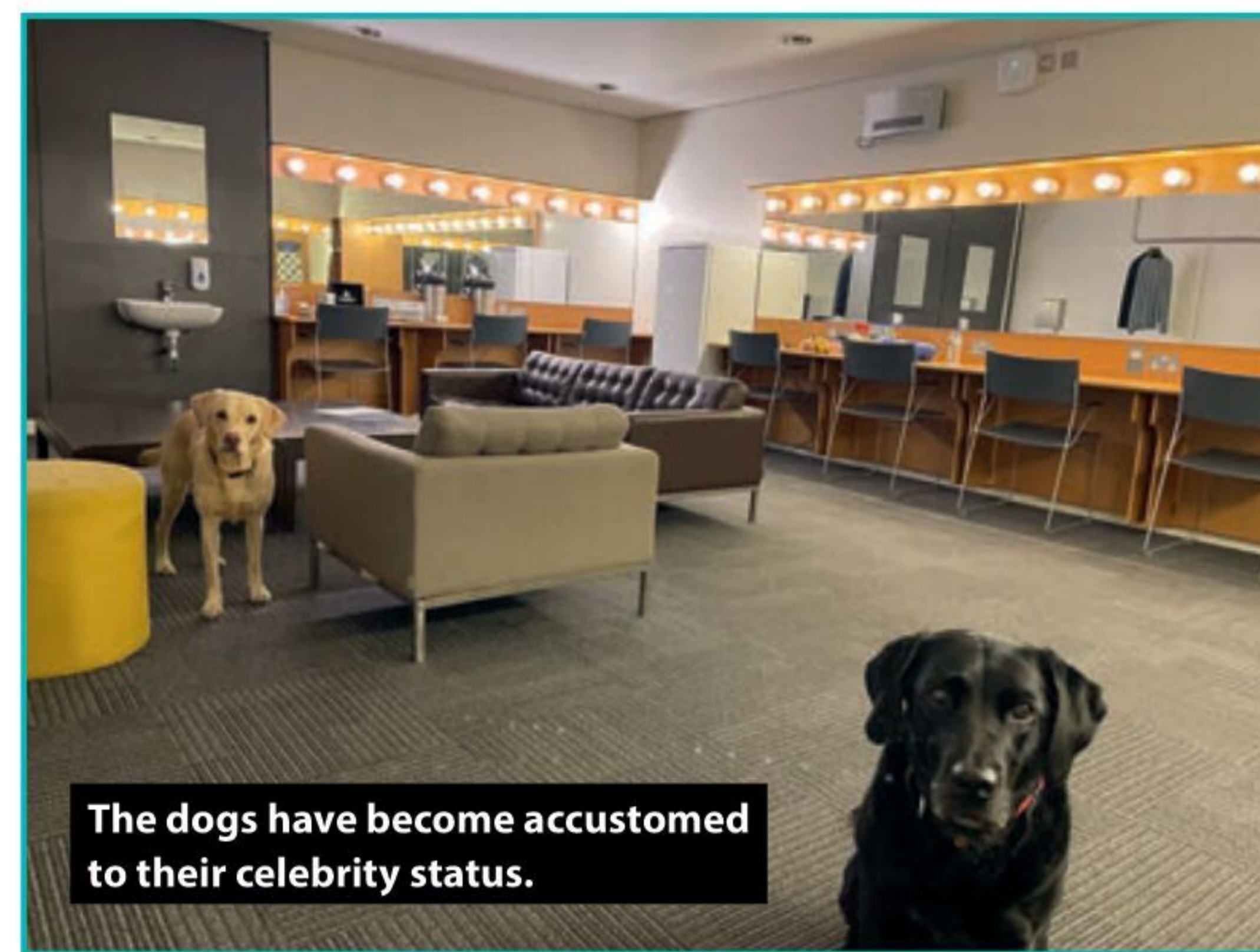
12 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT OLIVE & MABEL

As sports broadcaster Andrew Cotter’s much-anticipated second book hits the shelves, **Joanne Bednall** uncovers some fascinating facts about his celebrity canines.



Andrew says he’s been very glad to have the dogs at his side during the past year.

Image: Susie Lowe.



The dogs have become accustomed to their celebrity status.

Hot on the heels of ‘Olive, Mabel and Me’, sports broadcaster and best-selling author Andrew Cotter’s second book, ‘Dog Days: A Year with Olive & Mabel’, chronicles a whirlwind 12 months with his two faithful, food-obsessed, and often slightly bewildered Labradors.

During lockdown, in a departure from commentating on rugby, golf, tennis, and athletics, Andrew switched his focus to the everyday activities of his two dogs, catapulting them into the social media stratosphere after his hilarious videos went viral on Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

“It was lovely to see the reaction to my first book,” said Andrew. “And although Olive and Mabel have continued to offer very little practical help with the writing, they have helped as some sort of inspiration and I’m so glad that they have been by my side throughout this past year — quite often snoring. It has been an extraordinary time for everyone and I hope that ‘Dog Days’ might strike a chord with people, whether they are dog lovers or not.”

1 Now accustomed to both online and live audiences, Olive and Mabel’s stage debut was in October 2020 at the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham, as part of the town’s famous literature festival.

Attracting 100 people, it was the first time Andrew had witnessed a real-life reaction to his two dogs.

“I’d fed them both on stage beforehand, so it had already become a place of great joy,” explained Andrew, who admitted his understairs cupboard at home is bursting with goodies — treats, drawings, and even handmade leather collars from Canada — sent by the dogs’ army of adoring fans.

“Some members of the audience slipped them treats, and from then on, the front row became a source of biscuit income.”

2 Olive and Mabel were honoured to ‘sit’ for celebrity snapper Harry Borden.

More comfortable in the company of stars such as Martin Scorsese, Morgan Freeman, and the Spice Girls, the award-winning British photographer, whose work hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, was commissioned to capture the canine duo for US magazine 'Outside'.

"It was a very odd experience," recalled Andrew. "And a reminder of how American publications do things — they didn't send just any old photographer."

The resulting cover shot of Mabel — "Olive and I were dumped!" — was, not surprisingly, stunning.

"Mabel looked beautiful — as well as rather lost and confused, which is her default setting," added Andrew.

3 During their first trip to London in autumn 2020, the two dogs appeared on 'BBC Breakfast', followed a few days later by 'The Chris Evans Breakfast Show' on Virgin Radio, where Olive and Mabel were initially mistaken for assistance dogs at reception.

"Luckily, there were no 'Blue Peter' moments but Mabel did manage to leave blonde hairs all over the carpets," recalled Andrew.

4 Olive hates shiny floors and will do almost anything to avoid them.

According to Andrew, the black Labrador will hug a wall or go round the edge of a room to escape a slippery surface and will leap on a chair or even a luggage trolley in a bid to seek sanctuary.

"It's Olive's one 'thing,'" explained Andrew. "All I can do is gently cajole her and be breezily firm — like talking to a child."

5 Mabel celebrated her fifth birthday on December 13 [2021] while Olive was nine on November 29 [2021]. "Every day is a birthday for these two!" quipped Andrew.

6 Although Andrew is adamant he will never 'sell out' his dogs, and regularly turns down brand deals for fear of commercialising them, he admitted the offer of an Olive and Mabel wine was tempting.

"A reputable, established wine merchant approached us and even showed us a mock-up of the label," explained Andrew. "It looked good and was done very well — the product was high-end and would



On occasions, Andrew and his dogs love to get away from the spotlight.

have made a nice gift. But it is weird for me to think of my pets as any kind of brand."

7 While people tend to gravitate towards Mabel, who can be quite shy at first, dogs are more likely to focus their attention on Olive. Despite their black

Labrador neighbour, Dexter, "wanting to be more than good friends", the girls just aren't interested.

"Dexter is one of life's hopeless optimists and worships Olive, but she only sees him as pleasant company," laughed Andrew.

8 Both are terrible guard dogs.

"Although Olive has a loud bark, Mabel has only barked twice in her entire life," said Andrew.

"They would probably agree to burglars stealing anything. The other day, a young delivery driver seemed very wary of them and asked if they would bite — I assured him there was more chance of him being licked to death."

9 Olive and Mabel's videos have attracted more than 90 million views across Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The most popular is the second film Andrew made, 'Game of Bones', in which he commentates on Mabel patiently waiting to steal an orange rubber bone from Olive. It has received around 30 million views in total to date.

10 Andrew attaches a range of affectionate monikers to Olive and Mabel at home, although they are just as likely to ignore 'Mouse', 'Chops', 'Chump', 'Diggle', 'Plum', and 'Noodle' as they are their real names.

11 Along with Chris Evans and Louise Minchin, Olive and Mabel have met Michael Palin, Ed Miliband, Clare Balding, and former Westlife member Brian McFadden, whose golf ball Mabel managed to stop with her paw as it headed for the hole during a charity golf competition, before the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth in September. "He didn't mind though and chatted to both dogs afterwards," added Andrew.

12 After a sell-out UK tour in 2021, six new dates have been confirmed in March and April 2022 for Andrew's acclaimed road show with his dogs.

Due to popular demand 'An Evening with Andrew Cotter, Olive, and Mabel' — described by the sports commentator as a "mini farewell tour" and "the dog version of ABBA" — will now call into Swansea, Chester, Glasgow, London, Belfast, and Dublin.

● For more information and to book, visit www.fane.co.uk/andrew-cotter



Olive and Mabel have become internet sensations.



● PUBLISHED BY BLACK & WHITE PUBLISHING, 'DOG DAYS: A YEAR WITH OLIVE & MABEL' is on sale now from Amazon, Waterstones, all good book shops, and at www.oliveandmabelbook.com, priced at £20 (hardback).

Be prepared and stay
safe on your walks.

“If you’re new to an area,
joining a rambling group
can be a great way of
finding good walks, and
making friends...”

STAY SAFE!

Most of the time, walking your dog is an enjoyable way of spending time together, but there’s also plenty of potential for getting into trouble. Karen Bush advises.



There's safety in numbers, so walking with others is a good idea.



Don't let your dogs get too far away from you, particularly if their recall is not always reliable.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Walking with others when possible is safer than walking alone, but even with a companion you can still encounter difficulties, so tell someone where you're going and how long you plan to be. Remember to let them know on your return so they don't send out search parties needlessly!

If you're new to an area, joining a rambling group can be a great way of finding good walks, making friends (and maybe finding a daily walking buddy), and learning about any local hazards. Some dog clubs also organise regular walks for members, as do breed interest groups. If there's nothing currently near you, consider setting something up yourself — it will benefit others as well as you.

It's a sad indictment of our society, but where taking your dog for a walk used to be a great icebreaker, nowadays you should exercise caution about talking to strangers. It may all be perfectly innocent if someone approaches, asks questions about your pet, and bends down to stroke them; but equally, there may be more sinister intentions. Keep your distance, and act on your instincts; if something looks or feels wrong, then get away from the situation as quickly as possible. Try to vary the routes you take for daily walks, and if possible the time too; some dogs have been targeted and snatched by thieves who have been watching them previously. Be aware too of vehicles nearby slowing down as they get close to you.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Dress suitably for the terrain and weather. Wearing something high-vis is always a good idea. If you have to walk along the edge of a road with no pavement, it'll be easier for motorists to see you; even in good weather you can easily blend into the background, particularly alongside shaded hedge lines. In the event of having an accident in more remote and secluded places, it'll also be easier for rescuers to spot you.

Sensible footwear is essential for comfort, stability — and so you can run away from danger if necessary. Don't put anything around your neck that someone could grab hold of; carry your lead in your hand and either put items such as your whistle and personal alarm in a pocket or bumbag, or attach them to your belt using short lanyards and trigger clips.

Try to avoid walking in the dark; if you have no choice, stick to well-lit routes, kit yourself and your dog out in high-vis clothing, and wear lights.

Be prepared

The basics to carry with you — even if it's just a quick walk around the block — should include a mobile phone and personal alarm. On longer walks or where you're going to be off the beaten track, also take a pocket first-aid kit which can double up for both you and your dog, plus a whistle.

In more out-of-the-way areas, the sound of a whistle carries better than your voice; six blasts repeated at one minute intervals is the international distress signal.

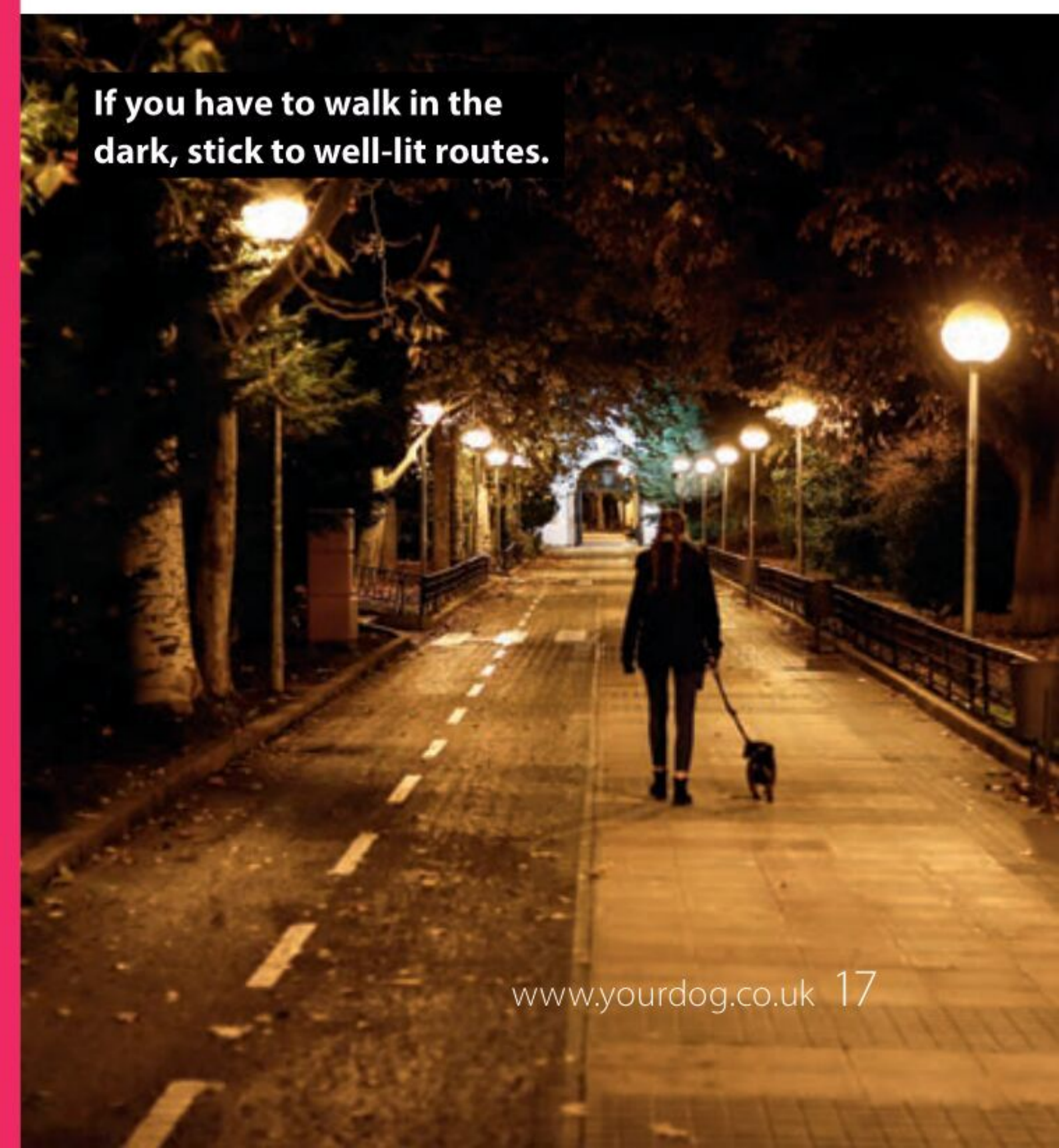
AVOID CONFRONTATION

Every situation is different, but generally, official police advice is to try to avoid confrontation. If someone threatens you:

- Shout for help and set off your personal alarm. The idea of the alarm is to shock and distract an attacker, so choose one that is as loud and shrill as possible and makes a continuous noise. It should also be easy to set off with one hand, and be carried where you can reach it quickly. If you need to use it, set it off, holding it as close to the attacker's face as you can; then drop it at their feet and remove yourself and your dog from the situation as quickly as possible.
- If other people are nearby, attract their attention. Shouting 'Call the police!' makes it clear you're in danger and need help.

TAKE A COURSE

Learning some basic human and canine first aid will ensure you know the right action to take in an emergency, and could save a life. ▶



If you have to walk in the dark, stick to well-lit routes.

“Keep your eyes on your dog...”

While official guidance is to avoid confrontation wherever possible, should it become unavoidable, the law says you can use ‘reasonable force’ to protect yourself and your property (which includes your dog). Taking a self-defence class is worthwhile, just in case you unavoidably get into a tight situation — but be aware that your attacker may be stronger than you, so always take the ‘shout and run away’ course of action whenever possible.

● **There are many aerosol sprays on the market that claim to be legal, but currently the only fully legal self-defence product you can carry is a personal alarm.**

DON'T BE DISTRACTED

Always be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Leave headphones and earbuds at home as they may muffle sounds you should be aware of, whether traffic, or a cyclist or jogger approaching. Except in an emergency, stay off your mobile; it advertises the fact you have something worth stealing. It also distracts your attention away from what your dog is doing — and after all, taking him for a walk should be quality time for you to share, rather than spent listening to music, catching up on gossip, or sorting work issues.

Keep your eyes on your dog, and if the reliability of his recall dwindles with distance, keep him within a close radius of you. If you have to walk him when it's dark, keep him on a lead, to ensure he can't wander off out of sight or get

into any trouble before you realise what has happened.

GETTING HELP IN AN EMERGENCY

No matter how careful you are, sometimes things happen that are out of your control. Always carry a mobile phone with you so you can call for help if necessary; make sure the battery is charged up before setting out anywhere. If you are using GPS on your smartphone to help you navigate your way, it can run it down quite quickly so it's not a bad idea to take a cheap PAYG mobile as a backup.

You can contact emergency services — police, fire, ambulance, coastguard, and mountain rescue — by ringing 999. Calls are free: speak slowly and clearly and ask for the service (or services) you need. Provide your name, the number you're ringing from, and your location, being as accurate as you can and mentioning any hazards. Don't hang up until the control officer has cleared the line, and leave your phone switched on so the emergency services can call you back if necessary.

GET SOME TECH

It's worth exploring some of the apps available, such as a tracker you can download to your phone which allows a trusted family member or friend to see your real-time location. You might also find that investing in a tracking device for your dog gives you peace

of mind. While he should have a reliable recall before you let him loose, should it fail for any reason you will at least be able to see where he's run off to.

How familiar are you with all your phone's functions? Consult the user manual to find out how to make emergency calls before the need arises. Modern smartphones (and smartwatches) can be set up to auto-call and message designated contacts without having to dial them, and can send your location, even if you are unable to talk on the phone at that moment in time. You can also set up quick, easy ways to directly call emergency services too.

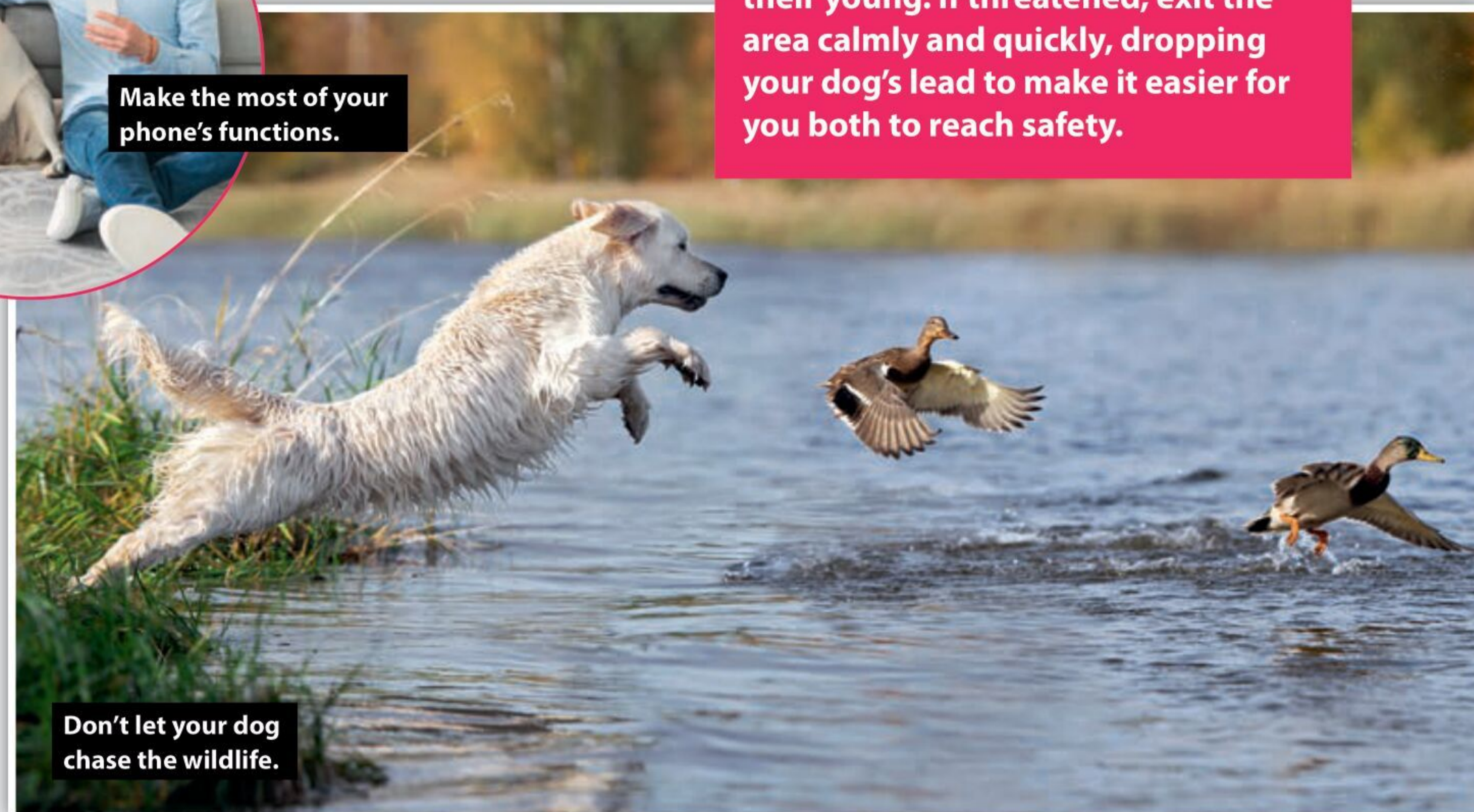
Other animals

You might consider humans or other dogs to be the most likely source of danger, but don't discount other animals. Legalities aside, letting your dog chase wildlife while out for a walk is never a good idea, and some animals are anything but defenceless; deer, for example, have razor sharp hooves that can inflict fearsome injuries, and even squirrels can bite back.

Farm animals and horses can also pose a hazard on occasion too. Avoid entering fields they're in if possible, but should you have no choice, keep your dog on a short lead and give them a wide berth, ensuring you don't come between any mothers and their young. If threatened, exit the area calmly and quickly, dropping your dog's lead to make it easier for you both to reach safety.



Make the most of your phone's functions.



Don't let your dog chase the wildlife.

TOP TIP!

Keep a list of In Case of Emergency (ICE) contacts on your phone's address book, labelled ICE1, ICE 2, and so on. In the event of a serious accident, you might not be conscious, so it can also be a good idea to wear an ICE wristband similar to the ones favoured by cyclists, with ICE contacts and any important medical information such as allergies.

**Next
issue**

A nice walk with your dog — what could possibly go wrong?

How to survive whatever the weather and terrain throws at you — from getting caught out in extreme weather to coping with water hazards, snow, fog, bogs, and more!



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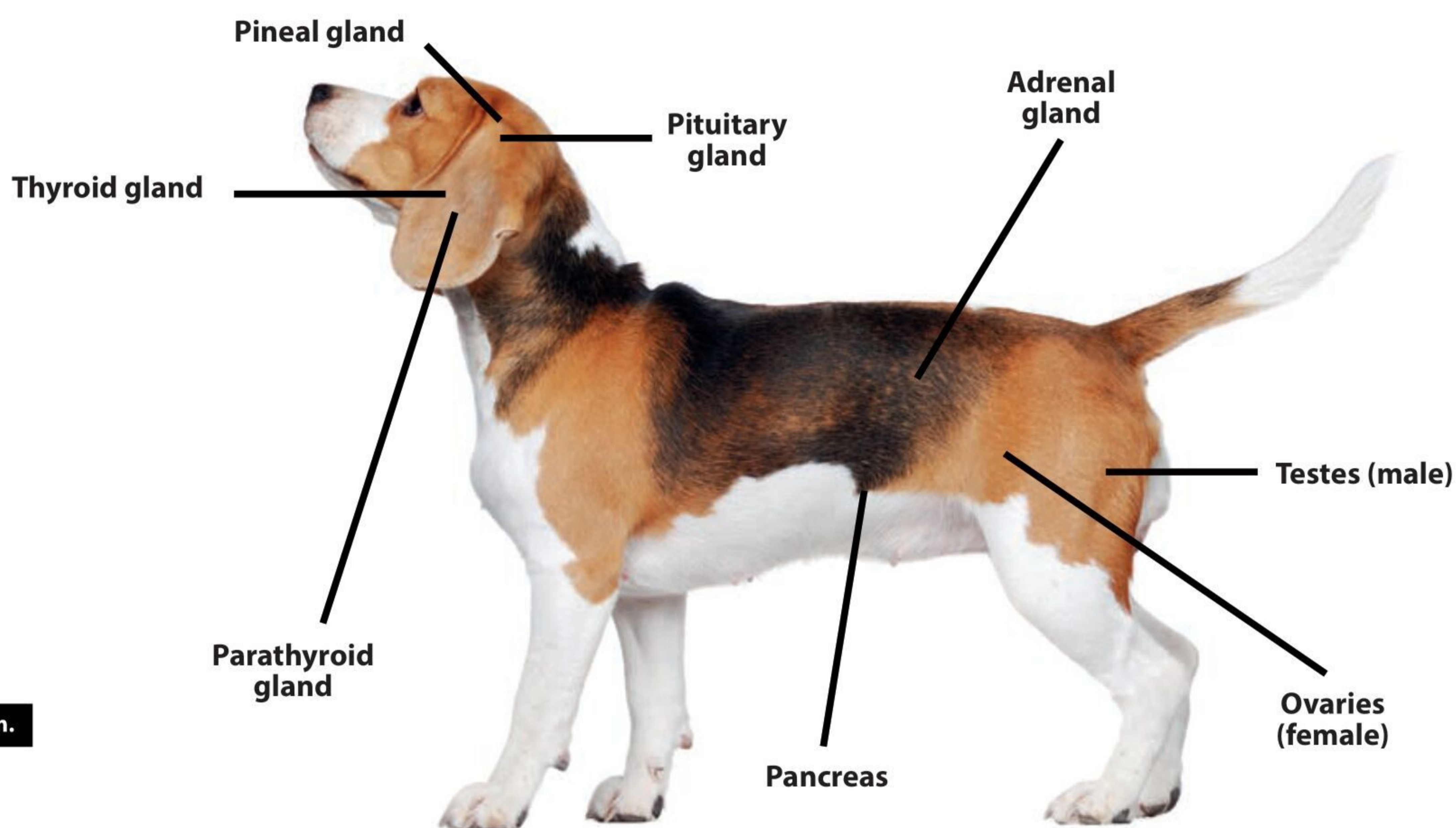
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Healthy glands, healthy body!



ABOUT VICKY
Holistic vet Vicky Payne BVetMed MRCVS is based in East Sussex, and qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in 2001. She uses a range of complementary therapies alongside conventional medicine and surgery.

Your dog's endocrine system needs to be functioning well to avoid serious health issues, says **Vicky Payne**.



The canine endocrine system.

The endocrine organs produce hormones, which regulate how the body works. The organs are the pineal gland, the pituitary gland, the thyroid and parathyroid glands, the adrenal glands, the endocrine pancreas, and the ovaries or testes. Malfunction of these glands can

have serious health consequences for your dog and are common reasons for pets to present to their vet.

SIGNS OF DISEASE

I had my suspicions about Bertie Cloud (known as BC) as soon as he walked into the consulting room. He was a new patient having recently moved to the area and was booked in for his vaccinations. BC is a Bichon Frise, but his lovely white hair was very thin down both his sides, and he had a big round belly.

I asked his owner a few questions and yes, he was drinking more than he used to, and seemed to be panting a lot on his walks. I was suspicious that BC had Cushing's disease.

Cushing's disease, properly called hyperadrenocorticism, is the result of the adrenal glands producing too much of the steroid cortisol. It can be caused either by a tiny tumour in the pituitary gland, or a tumour in the adrenal gland. Cushing's disease can be tricky to diagnose, and I discussed the blood tests that we would need to do to get a diagnosis for BC. We were also able to do a scan of his adrenal glands, which showed that, like 80 per cent of dogs, his Cushing's was caused by an excess of the hormone ACTH being produced by his pituitary gland. His treatment is a capsule, which he takes once a day. Luckily BC is insured as regular blood tests are needed to check that the medication is working, but not dropping his cortisol levels too low. BC's hair has started to regrow, and he is livelier.



Increased thirst may be a sign of Cushing's disease.

“Diabetic dogs are usually middle-aged...”

DIFFICULT TO DIAGNOSE

Sabre, the German Shepherd, has the opposite problem and was more difficult to diagnose. She had a history of episodes of vomiting and weakness that got better with a drip and supportive care. One weekend she had the same symptoms but much worse and having been to a lecture on Addison's disease the week before, I decided to run some blood tests. Sure enough, Sabre showed signs of hypoadrenocorticism, where the body does not make enough steroids. We gave Sabre some intravenous steroids, then started her on monthly injections and steroid tablets. She has been stable for a few years, but her owners give her extra steroid tablets when she is under stress as her body can't do this for her.

LOW HORMONE LEVELS

The most common endocrine problem I see in dogs is hypothyroidism. Thyroid hormone is vital as it controls the metabolism. Bouncer, a chocolate Labrador, came in with similar symptoms to BC. He was gaining weight despite a strict diet, his coat was poor and thin, he was tiring easily on walks, and he was getting repeated skin infections. Blood tests showed low levels of thyroid hormone, and high levels of thyroid stimulating hormone, showing that his thyroid gland just couldn't make the hormone he needed. The good news is that replacing the thyroid hormone is easy and not that expensive. Bouncer takes a tablet twice a day and is now back to his old bouncy self.

CHALLENGING CONDITION

More recently, I was asked to help a colleague with a diabetes case. Diabetes is another common endocrine disease in dogs caused by a failure of the pancreas to produce insulin to control blood sugar. Diabetic dogs are usually middle-aged, and females are more commonly affected than males. Like with some of the other endocrine problems, symptoms include drinking more, lethargy, and urinating more.

Sally was diagnosed with diabetes a few months ago and has been having injections of insulin twice a day. Unfortunately, it is proving difficult to properly control her blood sugar. Discussing the case with my colleague it became apparent that the problem was that Sally's family was struggling to give her the stable feeding and exercise regime that a diabetic dog needs. We have talked about changing her to a high-fibre diet, which helps regulate blood sugar, but it will be important that she doesn't get too many extra treats during the day. Sally also needs to be fed and exercised at the same times each day as well as being given insulin injections.

Diabetes can be very challenging, but I am hopeful that Sally's owners are now on board with her treatment plan, and they will continue to get regular support from our team of veterinary nurses.



Sticking to strict feeding and exercise routines is important for diabetic dogs.

DID YOU KNOW?

The pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain and called 'the master gland', produces many hormones that act on other endocrine glands, such as the adrenal glands, and cause them to release their own hormones.



Middle-aged female dogs may be more prone to diabetes; one of the symptoms is increased urination.

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Making sense of mealtimes!

Confused by the terminology when it comes to feeding your dog? Dr Jacqueline Boyd explains all in her glossary of nutritional terms.

● **ANALLERGENIC** diets are processed in a highly managed and specific way, often in a dedicated factory to minimise contamination. They include ingredients to support the management of allergies and intolerances. They can be useful in managing severe allergies or sensitivities or in food elimination trials. Many veterinary prescribed diets for sensitivities are termed anallergenic.

● **ANTIOXIDANTS** are substances that support the body in managing the effects of free radicals, which are produced during inflammation, stress, toxin exposure, and as part of day-to-day life! Antioxidants are also added to dog foods to minimise the deterioration of the food from the effects of free radicals. Common dietary antioxidants include vitamin C and vitamin E, which is often called tocopherol.

● **ASH (OR CRUDE ASH)** is a fraction identified in the 'analytical constituents' part of a pet food label. It indicates the portion of the food that is left as ash after the required chemical analyses of the food are undertaken. Ash is the mineral fraction of the food, which includes key nutrients such as calcium, phosphorous, zinc, and others. Food that is high in bone or other animal-derived products will often have a higher ash percentage than food lower in these ingredients. Crude ash might also be identified as 'incinerated residue' or 'inorganic matter'.

● **CARNITINE** is an amino acid that can be synthesised by dogs, although a dietary supply can be useful for some breeds such as Boxers, Dobermanns, and Cocker Spaniels who may have deficient production. Meat is a good source of carnitine and the body uses carnitine to support heart health and fat metabolism. Weight management foods are often supplemented with carnitine for this reason.

● **CHONDROITIN** is a substance often added directly to diets, or fed as a supplement, to support joint health. It is naturally found in the cartilage of many animals. A dietary supply may be useful for supporting the health of joints.

● **COLD-PRESSED** foods have been processed in such a way that the ingredients are literally pressed together at temperatures typically between 40 and 50°C to form nuggets or pellets. Cold pressing is often viewed as a less intense form of food processing than others, and can help to maintain a better nutrient profile because the cooler processing temperatures mean nutrients are less likely to be damaged. Cold-pressed foods may also have higher digestibility and are less likely to swell in the digestive system than

other dry foods. However, the shelf life of cold-pressed foods is shorter than many other dry diets as the lower processing temperatures means there can be more microbial activity.

● **COMPLETE** is a definition which identifies that the diet, when fed according to the recommended feeding guidelines, will provide complete nutrition based on its composition and formulation.

● **COMPLEMENTARY** is a definition which identifies that the food is not suitable to be fed on its own and must be fed in combination with another food to provide a nutritionally complete and balanced diet. Many biscuit mixers are called complementary as they are intended to be fed alongside moist or other forms of dog food.



Make sense of what's in your dog's food bowl.

● **DRY** dog food has a moisture content of 14 per cent or less. Extruded dog foods are examples of dry diets and often have a moisture content of between 8 – 10 per cent.

● **EXTRUDED** foods are made via the process of extrusion. This is one of the most common ways that dry dog food is made and involves a machine called an extruder. The extruder works almost like a bread oven, with ingredients being mixed, kneaded, and baked under high pressures and temperatures. The resulting product is a dry, biscuit kibble of different shapes or sizes based on the diet that was used.



ABOUT JACQUELINE

Dr Jacqueline Boyd is an animal scientist and humane education specialist with a passion for applying and sharing scientific knowledge to improve animal health and welfare. She has five 'multi-purpose' Cocker Spaniels who do cani-cross, agility, gundog work, and heelwork to music.



It's dinner time!

● **GLUCOSAMINE** is a substance often added to diets, or given as a supplement, to support joint health. It is naturally found in the cartilage of many animals and can be extracted from the shells of some marine animals such as mussels. A dietary supply may be useful for supporting the health of joints.

● **GRAIN-FREE (SOMETIMES TERMED CEREAL-FREE)** foods are formulated without the inclusion of grain or cereal in their ingredients. This means these diets will not include ingredients such as rice, wheat, barley, or oats, although they will typically still include a carbohydrate source such as potato or sweet potato, so they are not carbohydrate-free.

● **HYPO-ALLERGENIC** diets are those that do not include ingredients thought to be involved in many dog intolerances or allergies, such as wheat, barley, dairy, soya, and others. The term literally means 'reduced likelihood of allergy' and can suggest the suitability of the diet for sensitive dogs. Historically, many hypo-allergenic diets were based on lamb and rice ingredients as these were considered unusual for many dogs. However, this is less true nowadays!

● **HYDROLYSED** diets have their protein ingredients processed in such a way that the proteins are already broken down before being included in the food. The chemical process is called ▶

Making a meal of it.



● **FAT (OR CRUDE FAT)** is a fraction identified in the 'analytical constituents' part of a pet food label and indicates the percentage of fat identified in the food by chemical analysis. Diets for active dogs will typically have higher levels of fat than diets for weight management or less active dogs.

● **FIBRE (OR CRUDE FIBRE)** is a fraction identified in the 'analytical constituents' part of a pet food label and indicates the percentage of fibre identified in the food by chemical analysis. Dietary fibre can be important for gut health and to bulk faeces.

● **FOS (OR FRUCTO-OLIGOSACCHARIDES)** are prebiotic fibres that are not digested but can be fermented by gut bacteria to produce substances that support gut health, in addition to supporting the health of the microbes comprising the microbiome population.

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THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING...



Holly and Cocker Spaniel Sofie get ready for another muddy walk.

Those of us whose best friends have four legs are out in all weathers, and — as we all know — a decent pair of boots is essential. **Holly Mash** tests out four of the best on offer...

As someone with an energetic Cocker Spaniel who needs to get out for a walk every day come rain or shine, I know that I need the right kit — and that starts with boots!

So, when my bog-standard pair developed a split in the side (after barely two months of wear) the search for a pair of boots that would last was on! Maybe I should have invested more than £20 in the first place...

I'm lucky enough to live in a semi-rural spot, so my daily dog walks usually consist of muddy fields, slippery woodland, rough, stony tracks, and sometimes the odd park for Kong or ball chasing.

My ideal boots will be able to cope with a range of terrains, but don't necessarily have to be long-distance hiking wear. Above everything else, I want them to be comfy and warm — nobody likes having freezing toes.





BOOT 1 — FACT FILE ADULT NEOPRENE-LINED FIELD WELLIES FROM THE WARM WELLY COMPANY.

- **Sizes:** UK 4 – 8.
- **Colours:** Green or purple.
- **Price:** £55.
- **Available from:** www.warmwellies.co.uk

The first boots I tested were the Adult Field Wellies from The Warm Welly Company. These tall green (or purple) boots (touted by some as a cheaper alternative to Hunter) are neoprene-lined and

have a useful high-vis tag at the back (great for dusk dog walks).

Warm Wellies are the brainchild of an innovative farming family in Cumbria who got fed up with not being able to find wellies that were warm enough for their children.

They're made of natural rubber and have a 4mm neoprene lining, which keeps your feet toasty whatever the weather. In fact, my feet were almost too warm when I first wore them — something to consider.

BOOT 2 — FACT FILE HUNTER WOMEN'S BALMORAL ADJUSTABLE 3MM NEOPRENE WELLINGTON BOOTS.

- **Sizes:** UK 3 – 9.
- **Colours:** navy/peppercorn, dark olive, or slate/peppercorn.
- **Price:** £160.
- **Available from:** www.hunterboots.com

Next up were the Balmoral Hunter wellies, undeniably the Rolls Royce of boots. You can feel the quality as soon as you slip them on. These also have a neoprene lining and a Vibram outsole,

which basically means that they are highly resilient in muddy conditions and are extremely grippy — I was almost as sure-footed as my spaniel as we romped around the muddy woods together.

These boots have an adjustable gusset and buckle at the side, so you can fit them around your calves. A handy little tag ('kickspur') at the back of the boot makes them easy to take off, and each pair comes with additional inner soles.

The only disadvantage was that the boot soles were so incredibly thick and robust that I couldn't drive in them. Hunter also offers free returns, which is particularly reassuring if you are buying online.



As I walk our pup in parks and along less muddy tracks quite often (and, of course, it's not muddy all year) I wanted to give leather boots a try too. I tested two waterproof styles:

BOOT 3 — FACT FILE ARIAT WOMEN'S ESKDALE WATERPROOF BOOTS.

- **Sizes:** UK 3 – 8.5 in regular or wide fit.
 - **Colour:** Java.
 - **Price:** £185.
 - **Available from:** www.ariat.com
- The Ariat brand was originally aimed

at the equine market, but dog walkers can also benefit from their high-performance soles.

These boots made running about at our weekly agility classes a breeze, almost like wearing trainers. Being largely suede, they probably need a bit more TLC than their rubber counterparts but they're comfortable and do the job.



BOOT 4 — FACT FILE LE CHAMEAU WOMEN'S JAMESON BOOTS.

- **Sizes:** UK 4 – 8.5.
- **Colour:** Caramel.
- **Price:** £300.
- **Available from:** www.lechameau.com

Made from natural nubuck leather, these boots are undeniably very smart and elegant. I tested

them on urban walks as well as at our regular training classes and found them to be flexible when you're running around after your dog or squatting down to clip leads or harnesses on and off.

But, to be honest, these boots look so good they'd be more at home on a shopping trip to Chelsea, and you'll probably be reluctant to let them get trashed in a muddy field!



The verdict

So, which boots were my favourites and do you really get what you pay for?

Well, bear in mind that Le Chameau's leather boots cost £300. They are very well made, but probably not what most of us need for a casual walk with our dogs — very nice though if you can afford them.

The Ariat boots, also leather, are a more affordable £185. Comfortable and warm, they come up a little bit bigger in size than the others — but they wouldn't be

my first choice for a muddy field either.

The Hunter Balmoral boots come in at £160 and strike a pretty good balance between style, comfort, and price. They're also perfect for any weather.

But, the pair that I've worn every day and find to be the most versatile are the Warm Wellies, and I've even splashed out on a pair for my son. At £55 they're really well priced and seem like they'll last the course!

At the end of the day, it seems that the saying really is true: there's no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong boots!



REMEMBER HOW THEY MADE CHRISTMAS EXTRA SPECIAL?

REMEMBER THEM WITH A SMILE



This festive season, take a moment to celebrate those pets who are no longer with us, but brought endless joy to our lives.

At Battersea we know how unique every animal is and understand just how hard the loss of a beloved pet can be.

Remember those pets who have given us special memories, this Christmas and every day, by donating to help the dogs and cats at Battersea still waiting to make someone's Christmas extra special.



DONATE IN MEMORY

Find out how you can support Battersea while remembering your beloved pet:

Telephone (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm):
020 7627 9300

Visit:
battersea.org.uk/inmemory

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home is a charity registered in England and Wales (206394).



YOUR DOG PROMOTION

REMEMBER THEM THIS Christmas!

Our dogs never fail to bring us joy. Whether they're tearing open Christmas presents in a moment of boundless energy or snuggled up in the strangest position, it's their cheeky personalities and funny little quirks that make our companions so lovable and endearing.

For many, the festive season will be a time for reflection, remembering our beloved pets who are no longer with us and sharing memories of the joy they brought to our lives.

At Battersea, we understand how difficult it can be to lose a beloved pet, and how important it is to pay tribute to the huge impact they had on our lives. Donating to Battersea in memory is a wonderful way to remember the pets who are no longer with us but will always make us smile, while also helping to raise vital funds for the dogs and cats at Battersea who are waiting to bring joy and smiles to a loving new home.

April decided to remember her dog, Harvey, by donating to Battersea in his



Harvey, a loving and loyal companion.

More Info:

● To make a donation to Battersea in memory of your pet, please visit battersea.org.uk/inmemory

memory and shared what this meant to her: "Harvey had a beautiful personality; he was loving, loyal and had such a kind soul. He was the best ambassador for his breed and changed the opinion of so many people. I'm so proud of him, and donating to Battersea in his memory is my reminder of just how special he was."

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*5% discount. Minimum premiums apply (including Insurance Premium Tax) of £98.16 for dogs and £67.88 for cats. MiPet Cover is a trading name of CVS (UK) Limited which is an appointed representative of Insurance Factory Limited. Insurance Factory Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (No. 306164). Registered in England and Wales number 02982445. Registered office: Markerstudy House, 45 Westerham Road, Bessels Green, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 2QB. You can check this by visiting the Financial Services Register at www.fca.org.uk/register

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THE ^{your} dog PRODUCT AWARDS

Which products and services got your votes in our annual awards?

BEST SPECIALIST FOOD

THE WINNER: ● Burns Weight Control

Help your pet shed the pounds with a low-fat, healthy, and tasty weight-loss food from Burns Pet Nutrition. The Weight Control range has been specially formulated with wholegrain oats, peas, seaweed, and yummy chicken. This tasty food is high in fibre, low-calorie, and provides a steady release of energy to help dogs feel fuller for longer.

● Find out more at <https://burnspet.co.uk>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Arden Grange Sensitive Light/Senior. ● Orijen Small Breed.



BEST DRY COMPLETE FOOD

THE WINNER: ● Laughing Dog

Naturally Complete Salmon Dog Food

Jam-packed with first-class superfoods, Laughing Dog offers recipes designed to maintain glossy coats, bright eyes, brain function, slow-release energy, and more, using natural ingredients and absolutely no fillers, 'nasties', or artificial additives.

● Find out more at

<https://www.laughingdogfood.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Fish4Dogs Finest. ● James Wellbeloved.



BEST WET FOOD

THE WINNER:

● Forthglade Complete Grain Free Wet Food

Forthglade's range of grain free complete wet meals for dogs won the category of Best Wet Food last year too. The natural recipes are packed with high-quality ingredients and gently cooked to ensure all the goodness remains locked in. The

range includes recipes such as lamb, duck, beef, salmon, and turkey, combined with tasty vegetables, vitamins, and minerals.

● Find out more at <https://forthglade.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Lily's Kitchen. ● Burns Organic Chicken with Carrots and Organic Brown Rice.



BEST RAW FOOD

THE WINNER: ● Natures Menu

This award-winning range of complete and balanced raw meals is presented in convenient nuggets and made with human-grade meats, fish, blended vegetables, and healthy carbohydrates. Raw feeding has many reported benefits including improved digestion, shinier coats, and firmer poos.

● Find out more at

<https://www.naturesmenu.co.uk>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Natural Instinct. ● Wilsons Pet Food Raw Frozen Dog Food.



BEST TREAT

THE WINNER:

● Forthglade Natural Soft Bites

Forthglade's natural soft bites treats are packed full of flavour and guaranteed to get a tail wag of approval. The grain free hand-baked treats range is free from any 'nasties' and includes salmon, lamb, and turkey recipes.

● Find out more at <https://forthglade.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Pet Munchies Natural Training Treats. ● Laughing Dog Cheesy Bites.



BEST HEALTH PRODUCT

THE WINNER: ● Fish4Dogs Support+ Salmon Oil

This pure, 100 per cent natural fish oil, made from the finest Norwegian salmon, provides high levels of EPA and DHA, ideal for those dogs needing a little bit of extra care and attention. The high levels of natural omega 3 hydrate dry, itchy skin, aid joint mobility, soothe cracked paws, and help maintain a lustrous, glossy coat. Salmon Oil can be mixed in or drizzled over your dog's usual food.

● Find out more at

<https://www.fish4dogs.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Lintbells Yumove. ● Adaptil.



BEST INTERACTIVE TOY

THE WINNER: ● LickiMat Enrichment Mat

LickiMat is the way dogs would choose to be fed! The textured surface of this enrichment mat triggers your dog to lick up whatever tasty treat you've spread on it. As well as improving your dog's digestion and aiding weight loss by slowing down his eating, this licking action reduces stress and anxiety too. It's not just for treats; you can use LickiMat with wet, dry, raw, or liquid food.

● Find out more at

<https://www.lickimat.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● TastyBone Nylon Trio Bone Chew. ● PetSafe Automatic Ball Launcher.



BEST DOG BED

THE WINNER: ● Scruffs Kensington Box Bed

The Scruffs Kensington bed collection provides the ultimate support for your four-legged friend, featuring a stylish, eco-suede outer fabric, with a deep-filled 100 per cent polyester centre to ensure your dog remains as comfortable as can be. Scruffs Kensington Box Bed features a contrasting and reversible centre cushion. The deep side walls and high-sided rear of the bed offer the ideal resting environment for your pet.

● Find out more at

<https://www.petslovescruffs.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Dream Paws Anxiety Reducing Plush Bed. ● Tuffies Dog Beds.



2022 – the results!



It's time to reveal the winners!



BEST GROOMING PRODUCT

THE WINNER: ● FURminator

The FURminator Undercoat deShedding Tool reduces loose hair from shedding by up to 90 per cent. Use it once or twice every week for 10 to 20 minutes per session on dry hair, and enjoy a fur-free and cleaner home, while keeping your pet healthy and his coat shining. The stainless steel deShedding edge reaches through the topcoat to remove loose hair and

undercoat safely and easily when used as directed.

● Find out more at <https://www.furminator.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Scruffs Noodle 2-in-1 Grooming and Drying Mitt. ● Beaphar BIO Shampoo for Dogs.

BEST FLEA PRODUCT (FOR HOME)

THE WINNER:

● Indorex Defence Household Flea Spray

Indorex Defence is the UK's number one household flea spray and has been awarded the 'Best Flea Product (for home)' by Your Dog Magazine 14 years in a row. Indorex Defence is used to help prevent and treat household flea infestations. The unique formulation kills adult fleas on contact for up to two months and continues to protect your home from fleas and house dust mites for a full year.

● Find out more at <https://uk.virbac.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Bob Martin Clear Home Flea Spray Plus. ● Johnson's 4fleas Household Spray.



BEST FLEA PRODUCT (FOR PET)

THE WINNER: ● Frontline Plus

The UK's best-selling flea and tick protection for your best friends, Frontline Plus kills both fleas and ticks on dogs to help protect them from the discomfort and diseases these parasites cause. Plus, its advanced formula stops the flea eggs that fall off pets from hatching in your home.

● Find out more at <https://uk.frontline.com>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Advocate. ● Bravecto.



BEST INSURANCE

THE WINNER: ● Petplan

Petplan is the UK's number one pet insurance provider and has been helping keep the nation's pets healthy for over 40 years. Its unrivalled knowledge of pet health allows Petplan to design policies to cover as many conditions as possible, which is why it is able to pay 97 per cent of all the claims it receives. Both Petplan's '12 month' and 'Covered For Life' policies are packed with benefits to give your dog access to the best care after an illness or injury.

● Find out more at <https://www.petplan.co.uk>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Animal Friends.

● Insurance Emporium.



BEST ONLINE PET RETAILER

THE WINNER: ● Zooplus

Zooplus offers the best online pet shop experience with everything you need in one place — just a click away.

With its extensive range of quality pet food and accessories, it caters for all pets large or small, and every discerning taste!

The Zooplus team has years of pet expertise and constantly strives to make shopping for your pets as simple and stress-free as possible. Discover all the benefits Zooplus offers at your fingertips.

● Find out more at <https://www.zooplus.co.uk>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● VioVet ● PetShop.co.uk



BEST PET TECH PRODUCT

THE WINNER: ● PetSafe Kibble Chase Roaming Treat Dispenser

This fun, interactive battery-powered dog toy dispenses treats as it rolls across the floor in random patterns, keeping your dog active and entertained. It's simple to use and has two speed modes suited for hard or carpeted surfaces; its sleep mode lets your dog rest after 10 minutes, with the toy waking up if nudged.

● Find out more at www.petsafe.com/UK

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● PetSafe Smart Feed Automatic Pet Feeder. ● Animo Activity and Behaviour Monitor.



PRODUCT YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

THE WINNER: ● Dogmatic

Dogmatic is incredibly proud to have been voted 'Product you can't live without' for a record ninth time. Dogmatic provides a kind solution to dogs pulling on the lead. Its wide range of dog headcollars in leather and padded, cushioned webbing, with matching collars and training leads, are comfortable, work correctly, do not ride up, and look good.

● Find out more at <https://www.dogmatic.org.uk>

HIGHLY COMMENDED: ● Rough and Tumble Dog Drying Coat. ● Pet Munchies Natural Training Treats.



It's our job to regulate our dogs' activities.

Exciting, fast-paced exercise can be addictive, and have a negative impact on your dog's brain/body balance, as Julie Hill discovers.



TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING!

When my dog, Luna, starts becoming obsessed about balls, I've lost her. She's gone; she's in a different place; she's not the loving, attentive, emotional beast I adore," explained Hannah Capon, vet and founder of Canine Arthritis Management (CAM).

Hannah Capon doesn't give Luna access to tennis balls.



"She's fixated, and I don't think she's actually having a great time."

Hannah learned a lot from her previous Border Collie, Holly, who developed painful conditions but still wanted to chase a ball. Now, Hannah avoids giving Luna access to balls to prevent her developing a similar obsession.

"At the moment, it's trendy to be very naturopathic, but when you look at natural dog behaviour, do they chase balls repeatedly? No," said Hannah. Personally, and in her work with CAM, Hannah has seen the physical and mental dangers of too frenetic exercise, and asks dog owners to honestly evaluate what they are doing.

The science backs up Hannah's concerns — any fast exercise can become too rewarding for a dog.

Clinical animal behaviourist Roz Pooley, founder of The Mutt Professor, said: "Some dogs enjoy going for a run with their owners, two of mine included. The issue here is that as their physiology changes during aerobic and high-intensity exercises, it can mask their perception of pain. Dogs may not realise they're in pain until later."

Roz says balls can be a useful teaching tool if used correctly.



Even more alarmingly, she revealed: "In hot weather, dogs can die of heat stroke because, regardless of weather conditions, they'll continue to be motivated to play ball due to the dopamine released during anticipating and accessing the reinforcer — in other words chasing and catching the ball.

"It's unnatural to have dogs continuously engaged in the chase part of the predatory sequence. It can be a useful training tool,

DID YOU KNOW?

Every species has evolved to live in its own particular balance.

Research shows that dogs favour a bimodal pattern of activity — being active twice a day.

Dogs need around 12 hours of sleep a day.

but you need to be sensible and use it in moderation.”

Kathy Murphy, vet, neuroscientist, and founder of Barking Brains, agrees and added: “Throwing a ball is not inherently bad, it’s the way that you throw it.

“If you’re chucking the ball in a very repetitive, predictable way, it has potentially negative consequences. If you look at the effects of repetitive exercise activity like that, you get a change in the reward systems in the brain; the reward pathways become hijacked in a way. It’s a little bit like addiction to video games, or to your smartphone, or other types of what we call behavioural dependencies. It doesn’t happen to all dogs, but some dogs are predisposed to these behavioural dependencies. The dog will keep wanting and seeking that behaviour even though it’s detrimental to their physical or their mental health.”

INCREASED AROUSAL

So, how do you know if your dog has a problem?

Roz Pooley explained: “You can monitor your dog’s arousal levels when you play these games. If your dog is slower to respond to you, or is less able to maintain cued positions, it is likely to be due to increasing arousal.”

However, don’t abruptly cease your usual activities, but rather ease your dog into healthier ones.

Kathy Murphy adopted a Belgian Malinois with a behavioural dependency. “She couldn’t think about anything else other than her ball when she was on a walk,” explained Kathy. “I still used it, but I would roll it along the ground so it wasn’t flying through the air, which avoided the possibility that she was going to land awkwardly and twist and turn, but was enough of a movement to get her excited. Then when she brought the ball back, I’d sometimes not take the ball back, but do other things. I’d sprinkle food in the grass, or ask her to do a bit of heelwork — just break it up.”

It is important to address the issue — albeit gradually — because behavioural



The real Elvis is a calm, loving, sensitive dog.



But this photo demonstrates how too much intense activity could push him over the threshold.

Case study

Active but calm

Wendy Johnson, from Burnley, Lancashire, knew that Cocker Spaniel Elvis would be an active dog. “Seven years on I’m still learning how to manage it!” she said.

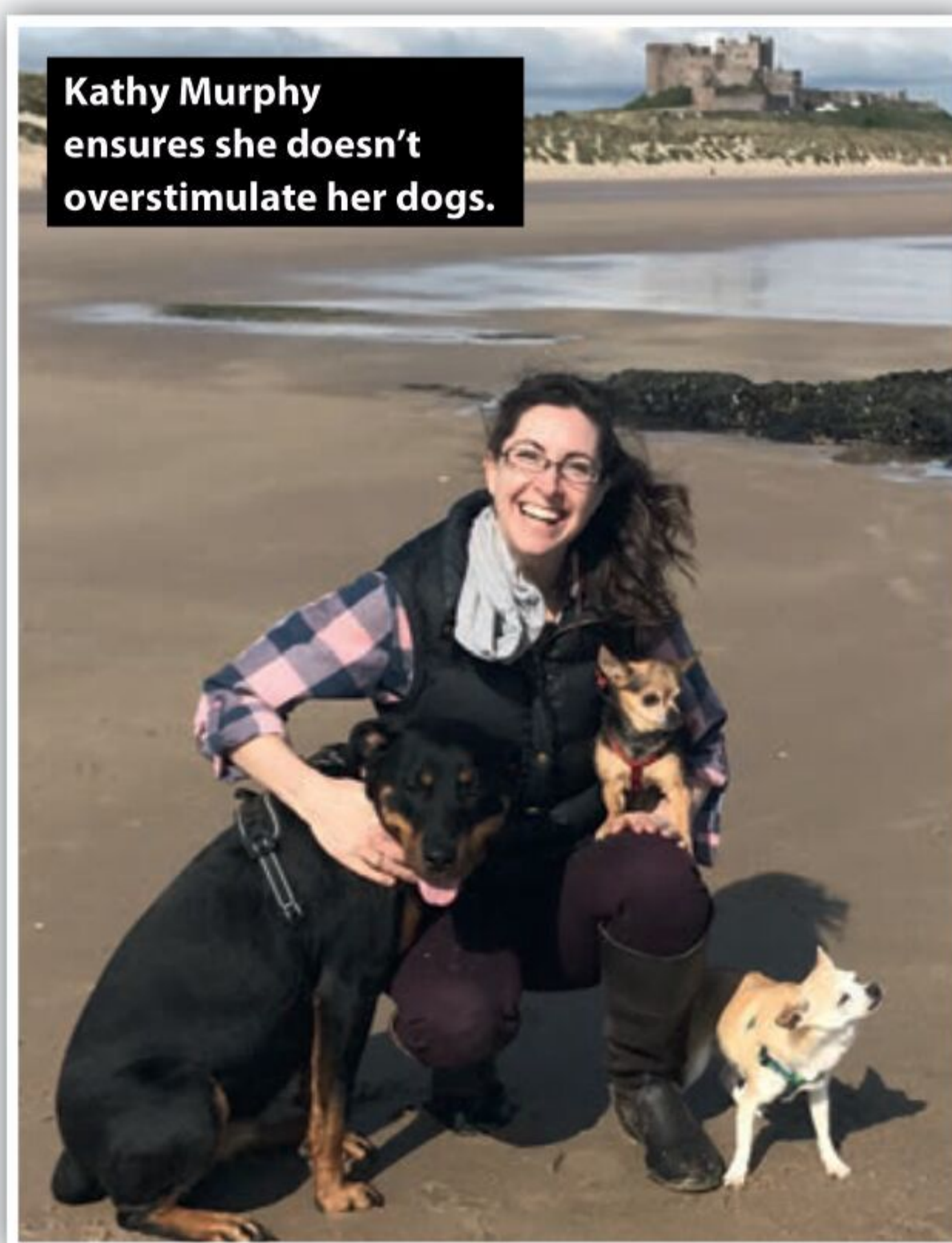
In training classes, Elvis found it impossible to concentrate and participate. Competing wound him up further, so now they stick to activities he can tolerate and enjoy.

“I used to do disc dog with him but it’s so fast and furious, he’d be charging around and barking — but if you looked at his face, you could see he wasn’t having a good time. He just couldn’t deal with all the adrenaline

and emotion. He was quite fearful because I think sometimes dogs don’t know the difference between being excited and being frightened.”

Wendy found that scent work allowed Elvis to be active but stay calm. They also participate in hoopers, but she has to remind Elvis to take it slowly to retain his self-control.

“When Elvis goes over the threshold, the noise he makes is so high-pitched it could break glass. I still play chuck it with him because he loves it, but we might only get to throw a ball twice in half an hour. It’s about him being in the right state of mind.”



Kathy Murphy ensures she doesn’t overstimulate her dogs.

dependencies pose many risks to your dog.

“In behavioural and physiological terms, meeting the physical needs of both body and brain, we talk about the concept of homeostasis, which is how a living organism wants to stay in a balance,” said Amber Batson, vet, behaviourist, and founder of Understand Animals. According to her, one of the problems is that we risk our dogs getting out of balance through repeated or extended fast exercise. ▶

Top tips

- If your dog stops listening to you during exercise he may have a problem.
- Don’t make your dog go ‘cold turkey’ — make gradual changes.
- Ensure activities are age and health-appropriate.
- Roll a ball rather than throwing it.
- Scent work offers a combined brain and body workout.
- Variety is the key to keeping your dog thinking and calmer.
- Hide tennis balls or other items for your dog to find rather than chase.
- Don’t go to the same location, at the same time of day, for the same length of time.
- Don’t take your dog running too often.



Kathy's dog Nancy enjoying sniffing and walking on a hike.



Amber Batson stresses that keeping the brain and body in balance is crucial.

Amber pointed out that dogs evolved to be in a balance, and when we start moving them outside the activity range in which they find their balance, we put them under significant pressure.

"Dogs and humans have trillions of bugs — a mixture of bacteria, viruses, and other things — in their gut. Those gut bugs help break down our food, so without them we can't digest our food properly, but they also produce chemicals, which communicate with the brain. If we don't have the right community of bugs in our guts, we can dramatically get our brain



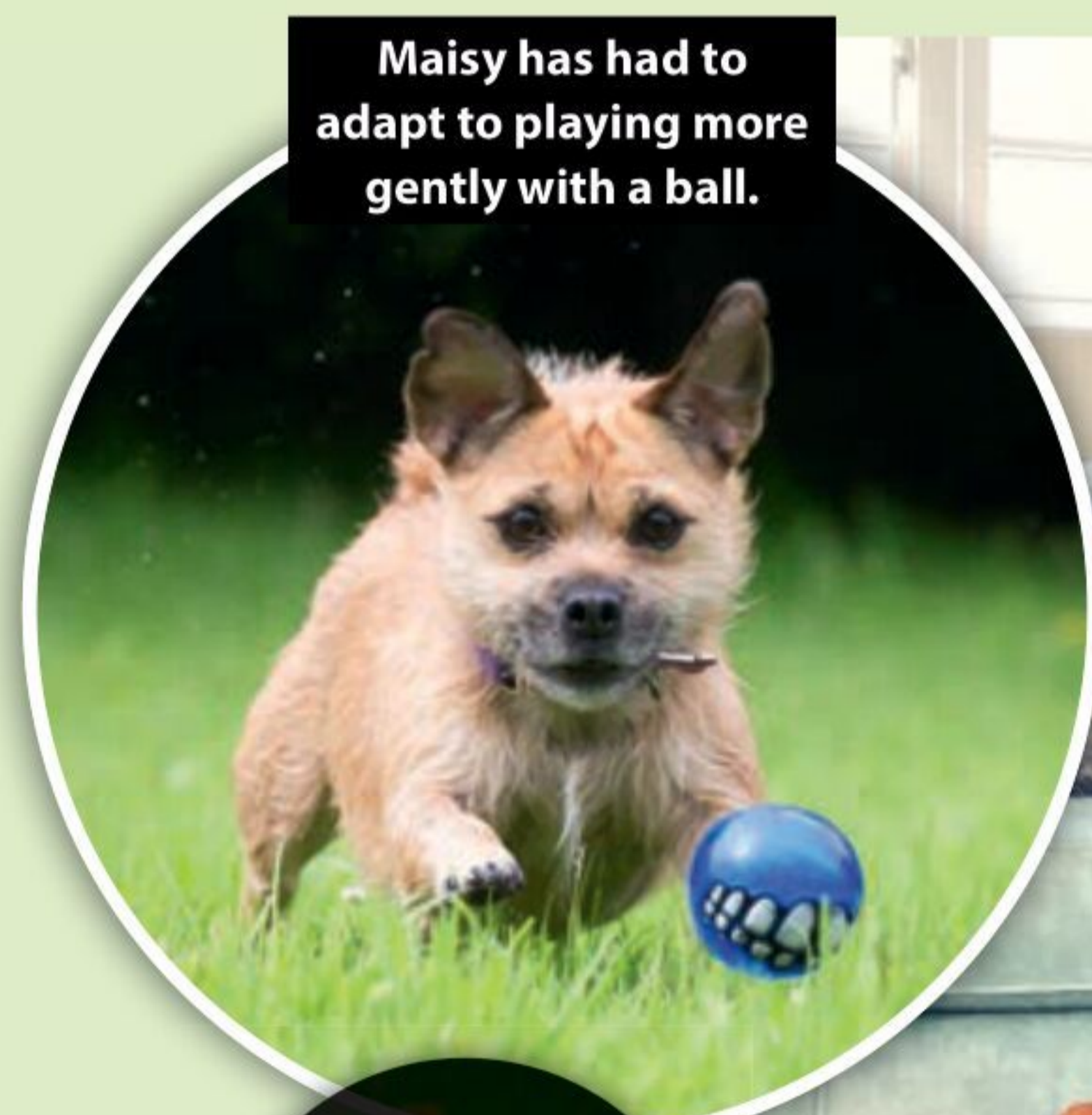
Border Collies in particular can develop behavioural dependencies on chasing a ball.

function and chemistry out of order."

These vital gut bugs can be significantly impacted by the rise in heat during exercise, as well as the blood supply being diverted to muscles. These effects continue for a long time after strenuous exercise, as the dog's body strives to cool itself and remove lactic acid from the muscles. This recovery can knock the dog's sleep cycle out of balance, with the potential to impact on behaviour.

Clearly, all this can have huge implications for our dogs. "It isn't just a discussion about overloading the elbow or other joints when a dog does sliding stops to repeatedly catch a ball; there are other factors also affecting behaviour and health," explained Amber.

Implementing some changes may in fact increase your bond with your dog. "What people don't realise is that in lobbing a ball with a ball chucker, you're not actually engaged with your dog at all; you're not even in the picture. All that dog cares about is that ball, that journey," said Hannah.



Maisy has had to adapt to playing more gently with a ball.



Rachel Rodgers with her dogs, Rico and Maisy.

Case study

Limited ball play

Nine-year-old Pug X Jack Russell Terrier Maisy was diagnosed with arthritis and hip dysplasia in 2020, leaving owner Rachel Rodgers, of Whitchurch, Shropshire, with a challenge.

"I knew tennis ball play wasn't great, so we'd always limited it, but Maisy loves it. She'll drop a ball at your feet and keep going until you put the ball away. She had 50 balls stashed around the house!" said Rachel.

Previously, Maisy also loved running in the forest, but that has had to stop as the undulating ground exacerbates her conditions, although she can run

on a flat surface like a beach.

"She's still got the desire to play with a ball, but we don't throw it for her now, we roll or hide it. She also does scent work, with marzipan as her target odour and the ball as a reward. Now, instead of fifteen minutes playing with the ball, it's however long doing scent work then a tiny bit of time with the ball. It's completely changed the way she looks at it. We know sniffing is just as good for her, if not better, because it's not winding her up; it's calming her down. It's a different type of enjoyment but she definitely enjoys it."

DID YOU KNOW?

Dogs have difficulty lowering their temperature during exercise because they don't sweat.

An exhausted, panting dog can look like he's grinning happily to us.

A hyperthermic dog can't sleep because they can't pant and sleep.

Useful contacts

Find out more at

- <https://caninearthritis.co.uk>
- <https://themuttyprofessor.co.uk>
- <https://www.facebook.com/neuroscienceisawesome>
- <https://www.facebook.com/understandanimals>

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Products that were highly commended by readers in our product awards.



FLEA SOLUTIONS

Did you know that 95 per cent of fleas are in your home, with only five per cent on your pet, meaning that with any flea infestation it's important to treat both your home and your pet. Bob Martin's specially formulated Clear Plus Home & Furniture Flea Spray kills any fleas or flea eggs hiding in your

carpets, bedding and soft furnishings, protecting your home for up to 12 months.

● **Bob Martin's market-leading range of vet-strength solutions for fleas, ticks, and worms can be found in the pet aisles of all major supermarkets, independent pet retailers, or by visiting www.bobmartin.co.uk**

TOP TREATS

Award-winning Pet Munchies is a super-premium, gourmet range of excellent high-quality dog treats, all made with 100 per cent natural, human-grade real meat and fish.

The company is delighted to announce that they have received prestigious Highly Commended awards in the Best Treat and 'Product you can't live without' categories for their

all-natural training treats.

Pet Munchies Training Treats are a soft bite and come in a wide selection of different flavours: chicken, liver and chicken, venison, duck sushi, and wild salmon, and sizes to suit any dog.

Pet Munchies treats are tasty,

easily digestible, and are perfect for both inside and outside training as a reward, and to encourage good behaviour.

They are used and recommended by world champions.

● **Find out more at www.pet-munchies.com**



HAVING A BALL

The PetSafe Automatic Ball Launcher is the ultimate game of fetch for dogs! Suitable for all breeds, this launcher keeps dogs entertained while encouraging mental and physical activity.

The innovative launcher has nine distance settings and six ball-angle settings, plus it has a built-in delay after ball placement, helping instil valuable waiting skills. Battery or mains operated and weighing just 4 kg, the ball launcher can be easily moved around or transported to gardens and parks using its carry handle.

● **For more information on the full PetSafe® Play & Challenge range, visit www.petsafe.com/UK.**

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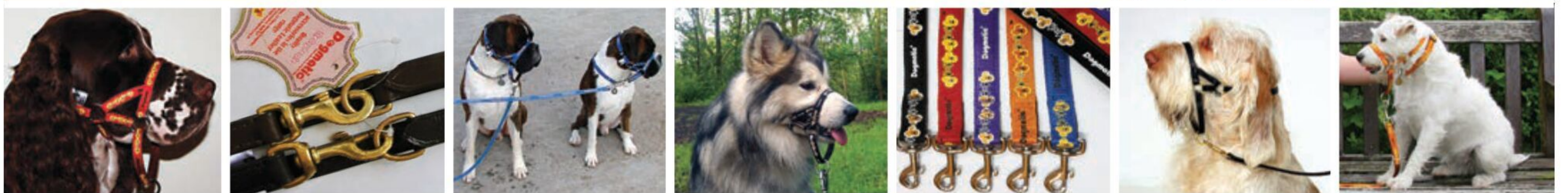
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*Which? Magazine, voice of the Consumers Association, brand dog food survey 2020



GET IN TOUCH...

Email your letters to sarah.wright@warnersgroup.co.uk
Alternatively, write to: Sarah Wright, Letters, Your Dog Magazine, Warners Group Publications, The Maltings, West Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 9PH. Please include your full name, home address, and daytime telephone number with your correspondence. The editor reserves the right to abridge and edit letters submitted. You can also pass your comments and views to Sarah through Twitter (@yourdog) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/yourdogmagazine).

LETTERS

MY TRIPAWD BEAUTIE!

Read the letter 'Coping with a tripawd pet' (November issue), and the request for other tripawd owners to share their experiences.

My husband and I rescued a three-legged Saluki X Border Collie named Beautie when we were living in Dubai.

When she was about one year old, she got run over by a car and left at the side of the road. Luckily a passer-by picked her up and took her to the vet's. Unfortunately, her leg was too badly damaged and her left hind had to be amputated. She was taken in by a dog rescue centre and stayed in a couple of foster homes, but nobody wanted to adopt her because of her three legs. That was until we found her! She is the most happy dog and copes exceptionally well on just three legs. We are now back in the UK and live in West Yorkshire.

We have been very conscious from the start that she will need more care and attention because of her missing leg.

The most important thing is to keep her weight down. She's on a strict diet but does get treats — just healthy ones. We go to the vet's regularly so we stay on top of any changes. She is now nine and a year ago, on recommendation from our vet's, we started her on joint supplements. We've recently visited a clinical canine massage practitioner and she taught us how to spot signs that your dog is in pain. Beautie has a ripple in her coat, which tells us that there is tension in that area. We have been shown massage techniques that we perform on a daily basis to relieve that tension. It's so easy to do and Beautie enjoys it so much she often falls asleep. Then there

are lots of other things that help, like investing in a good bed that gives the right amount of support and is easy to get in and out of. We keep walking upstairs to a minimum, so are glad we just have one set of stairs in the house!

She is starting physio soon too as a preventative measure, and we are currently on the lookout for a dog carrier. Beautie's absolute favourite activity is hiking but we have noticed that she can't go as far any more. By taking a carrier with us, we'll be able to give her regular breaks so she can continue to do what she loves.

Tripawds might be a lot of work but we would do anything to keep our baby as happy as can be. She is the absolute best! She even has her own Instagram account @3legsbetterthan4.

She is also the inspiration behind my non-profit DoggyLottery (www.doggylottery.co.uk). We raise funds for dog rescue centres in need through an online lottery. We launched in July 2020 and so far have raised over £35,000 for 80 different centres.

Lisette van Riel, via email.



Beautie and Lisette.

Image: Pooch & Pineapple Dog Photography.

IN LARA'S NAME

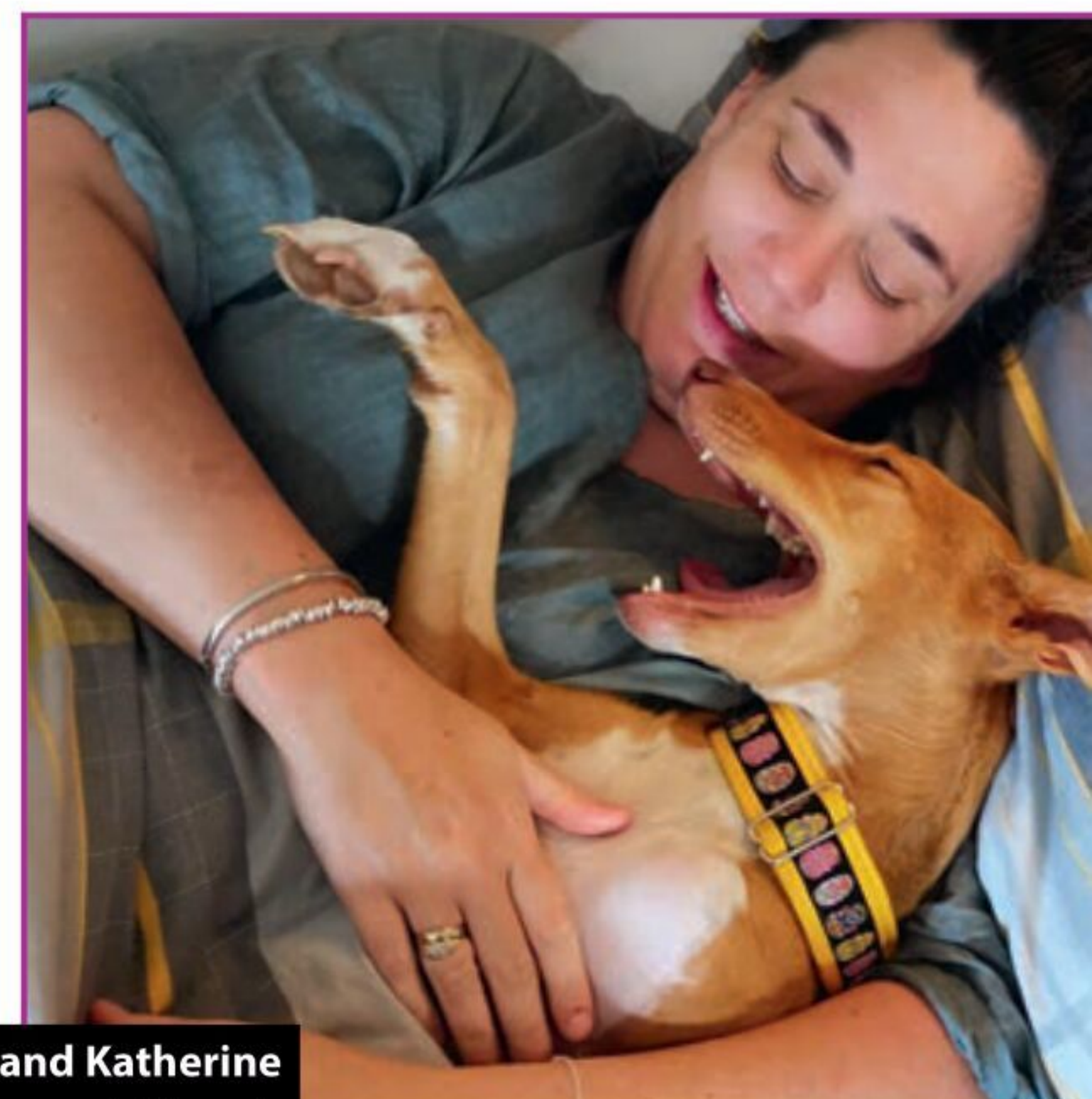
On November 5, 2021, my dog, Lara-Beau, was killed in a fatal firework RTA on the M53. I am trying to share her story far and wide in the hope that we can prevent more family tragedies.

It was before 6pm and my dog was not home alone, but I had forgotten about the partially open upstairs window, which was in my son's bedroom on the upstairs floor.

Lara-Beau was sitting with my husband and followed him upstairs to the bathroom. At that moment, a very loud firework went off in the neighbourhood and in a blind 'fight or flight' response, she bolted and scrambled out of the half-open bedroom window in panic. She wasn't a nervous or anxious dog under normal circumstances. She was confident, full of fun,

loved people and other dogs, and loved to snuggle. She was less than two years old, and had only been with us for four months but she bonded with me immediately.

This was her first experience of Bonfire Night. I will never, ever forgive myself for not getting home sooner, and for not remembering to shut that window. We had put so much in place to keep



Lara-Beau and Katherine shared a special bond.

LETTERS

her and our other rescue dogs safe over bonfire weekend. I was picking my son up and we were home less than five minutes after this happened.

Lara-Beau was a rescue, an ex-hunting Podenco who was used, abused, injured, and discarded on the streets of Spain. When the rescue picked her up, she was traumatised and emaciated and her leg was so infected it had to be amputated. Despite such cruel and difficult beginnings at the hands of humans, she was still so trusting and loving and for this to happen to her is just completely heartbreaking.

My beautiful little girl jumped out of that bedroom window and bolted, running without stopping, straight on to the M53 motorway where she was involved in a fatal road traffic collision. No one stopped and she wasn't picked up until the following morning when a local volunteer, Carol Pinchin, found her body and brought her home.

This should not have happened to my beautiful Lara-Beau or any of the other animals who paid the ultimate price as a result of random fireworks being set off in residential areas.

No doubt nearly all of their owners are going over 'what ifs' and 'should haves' just as I am.

I take full responsibility for my part in this, but it would not have happened if fireworks were silent, if they were properly regulated and managed, were not on sale to the general public, and were only used at organised events, away from housing areas, and if proper



notices of the time of any displays were issued.

Fireworks cause unnecessary stress to animals. If we can limit the use of fireworks to public displays only, it means the owners of domestic animals can make better preparations to help prevent unnecessary stress to their pets.

When I was small Bonfire Night was about Guy Fawkes and perhaps a few Catherine wheels, Roman candles, and sparklers. In the intervening years, as with all things, there have been huge advances in the spectacular nature of fireworks. I am not a killjoy; this is clearly exciting and awe-inspiring for many people, but regulations need to catch up and the auditory insult on some is too much to bear in their territory, their safe space, their backyard. It should be

a choice to engage in enjoying a Bonfire Night fireworks display; with the removal of personal choice, it becomes something totally different.

I will never be able to enjoy fireworks again, and I am really passionate about getting fireworks legislation changed to accommodate and consider the needs of every being in our communities.

Please try and get my voice heard — in Lara's name.

Katherine Robinson, via email.

Ed's note: Katherine's MP Justin Madders read out Lara-Beau's story in parliament during a debate relating to the sale and use of fireworks.

Katherine added: "I am absolutely determined that her little life will not be forgotten, and that all the love she had in her heart will be shared positively in the world!"



FAMILY GATHERING!

I had to share this photo of my Beaglier (Beagle X Cavalier King Charles Spaniel) Bertie (far right) meeting his siblings: Ollie, Monty, Rosie, and Gloria, for the first time in Manchester.

We got our puppies from Warrington almost two years ago, and found each other through social media.

Our first meet-up was cancelled due to lockdown, but we managed to get together just before their second birthdays.

It was a beautiful sight, watching them identify with each other; they definitely recognised their brothers and sisters, had a great play, and a run around.

It's lovely to see our pups grow up with each other, and I am looking forward to the next meet-up!

Rebecca Street, Surrey.

Are flea treatments failing?

I work as a dog groomer and I often come across dogs who have fleas. There is nothing unusual about this as fleas naturally occur in the environment and they spread extremely easily among animals.

But the surprising thing I am finding is that the majority of the owners of these dogs are adamant that they are giving them regular preventative flea treatments, and are really quite shocked when I tell them I've found fleas on their dogs. And to be honest, I believe what the owners say, as the dogs in

question are clearly very well-loved and looked after.

I wondered if any other readers have noticed a problem with dogs still getting fleas even though they have been given regular preventative treatments? Are fleas becoming harder to prevent?

Ruth Jolley, Norfolk.

Ed's note: What are other readers' experiences? Share your flea stories!

Are fleas getting tougher?





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ESCAPE to the hills

Stunning scenery, peace and quiet, and wonderful walks — the Lake District is the perfect holiday destination for dog lovers.

Nestled in the heart of Lakeland, surrounded by the famous Lake District hills, lies Greenhowe self-catering luxury lodges & caravans in a secluded and beautifully wooded park.

With such a scenic location, and a variety of walks starting right from your doorstep, it is the ideal base for a holiday, short break, or weekend escape.

Greenhowe sits at the end of the Great Langdale Valley. The breathtakingly beautiful area of Langdale runs from the popular town of Ambleside up to the Langdale Pikes, where it splits into two valleys: Great Langdale and Little Langdale. It includes the lovely village of Elterwater with its pub and craft shops, and countless walking routes, both low and high level.

Dogs are welcome in most of the Greenhowe caravans, which are fully equipped with everything you'll need to ensure a relaxing and memorable holiday.

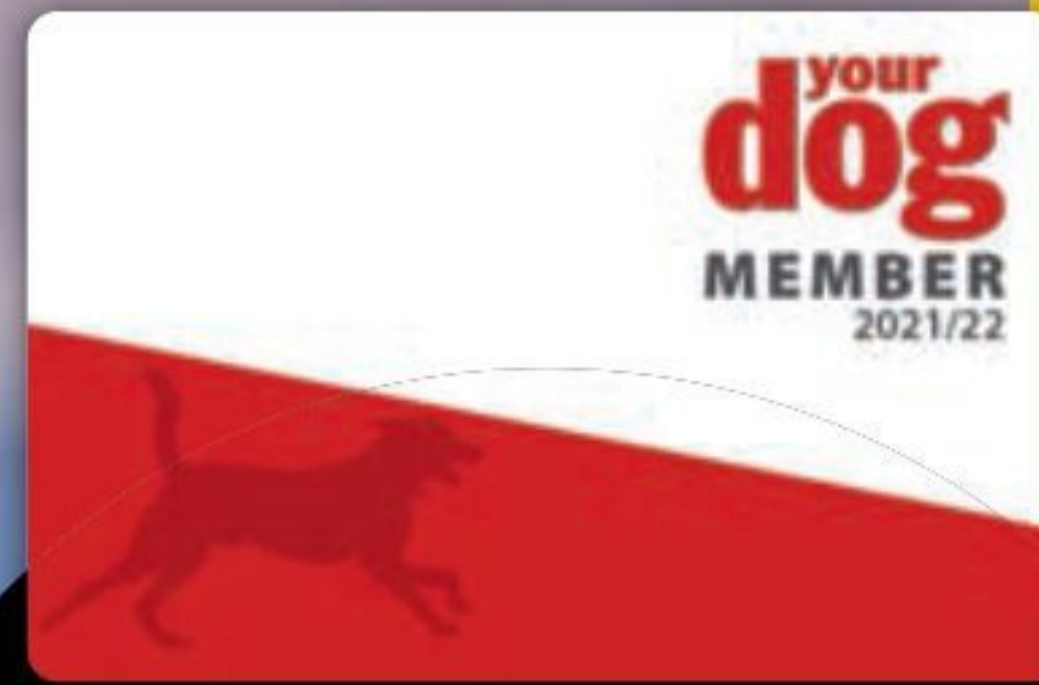
DID YOU KNOW?

There are 15 national parks in the UK and the Lake District is the largest in England.

DID YOU KNOW?

It includes 16 lakes (or bodies of water — only Bassenthwaite is called a lake) and many smaller tarns, as well as England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike, at 3,210ft.

Beautiful Blea Tarn is a popular nearby walking spot.



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Your Dog members can get a 10 per cent discount at Greenhowe. Please state you are a Your Dog member when booking, and present your membership card on arrival.



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● Spacious and comfy interiors.

"You may leave the Lake District, but once you've been, it'll never leave you..."

Anonymous

The stunning Langdale Valley.



“...meet up on neutral ground first and take the dogs for a walk...”

Dogs don't always get on, especially when there is a lot of upheaval.

Wish you weren't here!



TONI SHELBOURNE has over three decades of experience working with dogs and wild canids. She is an animal behaviourist (full member of INTODogs and ICAN), a Tellington TTouch instructor, real dog yoga Instructor, author of four books, and co-author of the 'HELP! My Dog...' books series. She lives in Oxfordshire, where she sees clients, runs workshops, and gives talks and webinars. For more information visit www.toni-shelbourne.co.uk

Image: Michelle Holland.

Having canine guests or visiting them in their own homes doesn't suit all dogs. **Toni Shelbourne** advises on how to ensure getting together with family and friends works for everyone — including your pets!

When you visit family and friends, how much thought do you give to your dog's emotional well-being?

You might think taking your canine companion with you, or letting others bring their dogs to your home, will be fine, but this isn't always the case, and in reality dog-on-dog bite injuries often occur as a result.

Many dogs struggle with strange dogs in their personal space, and because our attention is often elsewhere, entertaining the human guests, we don't really notice tension building between the dogs.

So, what can you do to prevent a problem? The obvious answer is to leave your dog at home or ask family not to bring theirs, but if you have no alternative, try these simple measures to ensure everyone is safe and happy.

SOCIAL WALKS

If feasible, arrange to meet up and walk the dogs together before you visit. Start with an on-lead parallel walk (both dogs walking in the same direction with space between them, without the dogs being able to make physical contact). If one dog is nervous, make sure the distance is wide enough for comfort, and ensure both handlers walk between the dogs, which provides

added barriers to help them feel safe. Over time, if both seem calm and happy, you can decrease the distance.

Don't rush to let them romp around off-lead, especially if their energy levels don't seem to match or their ages vastly differ. Take it slowly and arrange to meet in the park several times before they visit you at home.

TOP TIP!

Think about the length of time you are visiting and try to ensure you stick to your dog's routine as much as is feasibly possible. Dogs can get incredibly stressed if dinner or walks don't turn up on time.



Walk the dogs together first before returning to the house.

TOP TIP!

If you are feeding treats or longer lasting chews, pop the dogs in their crates or on different sides of a baby gate to avoid confrontation.

HAVE A SNIFTER

Prepare your dog and any canine visitor by swapping some hair that has been groomed from each dog. Keep it in an airtight container and regularly let your dog sniff the scent and then reward him with tasty treats, dinner, or a game depending on what he enjoys most.

This means that the dogs will be familiar with each other before they meet, as they will recognise each other's smell and have a positive association through the rewards you have been giving.

TIDY UP

Prepare the house before your guests arrive. Take up food bowls, toys, and beds or anything you think your dog will be protective of. Try to eliminate anything that might be a flashpoint.



CREATING SAFE ZONES

On the day, meet up on neutral ground first and take the dogs for a walk so they can let off some energy and re-familiarise themselves with each other. When back at the house, firstly let them in the garden, and then into the house, if all is going well.

If one or both dogs are crate trained make sure the crates are set up in appropriate places; do this before bringing the dogs in to avoid lots of movement and noise. Think carefully about the location and use the crates when needed. This should be if you feel the dogs are getting overexcited or one is looking overwhelmed. It is best to give the dogs regular downtime with something

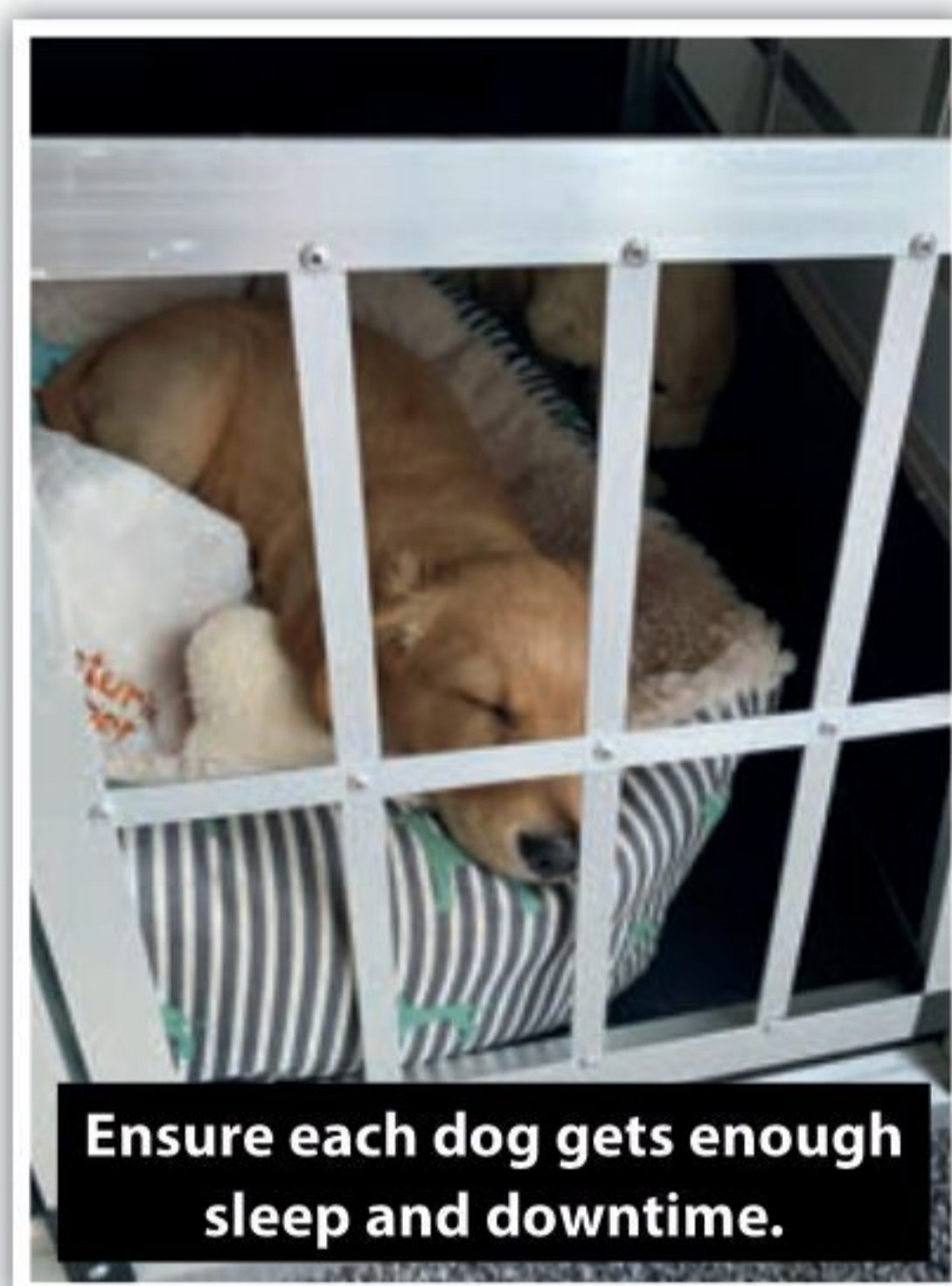


Image: Hannah Lockwood.

tasty in a cosy crate rather than let them get overtired or upset.

If you don't have a crate, create barriers with baby gates or puppy panels or with anything that comes to hand. Some dogs need to have a visual barrier too, so be prepared to cover crates or gates with towels or blankets.

If you have no way of creating a barrier, it might be wise to pop both dogs on the lead and get them to settle on a mat at your feet if they need to calm down.

DINNER TIME

Take extra care at mealtimes and around any food, dog or human. Although it is

best to stick to your dog's routine to avoid extra stress, don't let one dog see you feed another if he isn't due a feed; dogs can get frustrated if they think they are missing out on something. When you feed them, put each dog in a separate room with the door firmly closed. Ensure each dog is supervised and take the bowls up immediately the meal is finished; it is best not to let them approach, sniff, or lick each other's bowls. Once they have finished their dinner, a supervised toilet break in the garden might be necessary. Take care that they don't run around after they have eaten, or it could cause a serious health problem like bloat. If you need to, pop each dog on a lead to toilet. Alternatively, take both dogs for a short, slow, on-lead potter up the road and back.

NOT FAIR!

Dogs know if they are being treated unjustly so don't allow the visiting dog liberties your dog doesn't enjoy. This includes titbits from the table, time on the sofa, or going upstairs.

TOP TIP!

If your dog is nervous or reactive, and you haven't been able to do several introductions, I would suggest keeping the dogs separate at all times to be on the safe side. Some introverted dogs need lots of time alone so are happy to be in another room.



SLEEPOVERS

If your guests are staying overnight don't expect the dogs to share a room. You will have no idea what is going on for the eight or so hours you aren't with them. Separate bedrooms is the ideal, with the guest dog sleeping in the same room as their guardian. Dogs can often be unsettled for the first night in an unfamiliar house, plus the stress of the day and possibly a few treats might also mean your pet needs to toilet in the night.

Most importantly, set all the dogs and humans up for success; plan visits carefully and make sure each person knows, agrees, and sticks to the plan. That way everyone, including the dogs, can have a relaxing visit.

Dog SHOPPING

From canine-themed cheeseboards to dog treats galore, we've lined up some great goodies to help banish those winter blues.

DRINK TO THAT!

TopLife Formula has added a delicious oat drink to its popular and fast-growing range of milks for dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens. Formulated to a vegan recipe, TopLife Oat Drink is an alternative to water for keeping dogs hydrated, and can be added to dry food or given as a treat.

This refreshing plant-based drink is made from British oats and is fortified with glucosamine to promote strong, healthy joints, calcium to support bones and teeth, and green tea extract to boost the immune system. Free from artificial ingredients, colours, flavourings, and preservatives, it's suitable for dogs aged over 12 months and those on a flexitarian diet.

- **Key feature:** This long-life product can be stored in a cupboard, but once opened should be refrigerated and used within five days.

- **Price:** £1.10 (330ml recyclable Tetra Pak carton).

- **Available from:** Pets at Home, Asda, Morrisons, Ocado, Tesco, Poundstretcher, Home Bargains, B&M, VioVet, Paws.com and www.thewebshop.shop/collections/toplife



SUSTAINABLY SCOTTISH

Searching for a dog-themed house-warming present? Check out these slate cheeseboards, coasters, and placemats from Scottish gift company Just Slate. Just Slate brand Scottish Made also boasts sustainable oak serving boards, coasters, bottle stoppers, and openers, engraved with a spaniel, Dachshund, Labrador, or Cockerpoo.

- **Key features:** The wipe-clean slate cheeseboards measure 35cm X 25cm, the placemats are 30cm X 22cm, and the oak serving boards measure 30cm X 20cm X 2cm.

- **Prices:** Slate cheeseboard: £26; slate coasters (set of four): £26; slate placemats (set of two — spaniel design only): £28; oak serving board: £36; oak coasters (set of two): £18; oak bottle stopper: £14; oak bottle opener: £16.

- **Available from:** www.justslate.co.uk/shop-by-design/dogs-designs



CHIC TO CHIC

Essex-based canine accessories and human clothing company Pup Chic Boutique has launched its best collection yet. Featuring a vintage tattoo-style pattern, including swallows, hearts, and flowers on a grey background, the new Artful Dogster set comprises a harness, collar, lead, and poo bag holder. The stylish, super-comfy harness is adjustable at the neck and chest.

- **Key feature:** All items can also be bought separately, while matching bow ties, mugs, phone cases, and human clothing are available too.

- **Sizes:** XS harness/XS collar; XS harness/S collar; S harness/S collar; S harness/M collar; M harness/S collar; M harness/M collar.

- **Price:** £49.99.

- **Available from:** www.pupchic.boutique



COOKING UP A STORM

Fancy making your own dog treats but don't have enough time? Then these fun and easy to bake at home dog treat mixes from Oggi's Oven are the perfect solution.

Simply add water to the ingredients, mix, use the cutter provided, and bake for just 12 or 15 minutes. These 100 per cent natural dog biscuits

and cakes have no artificial additives, preservatives, or flavourings. Containing just 30 calories, the biscuits come in original and cheese flavours; the original or apple-flavoured cakes are 80 calories each.

- **Key feature:** Five per cent of sales are donated to charity Blue Cross.

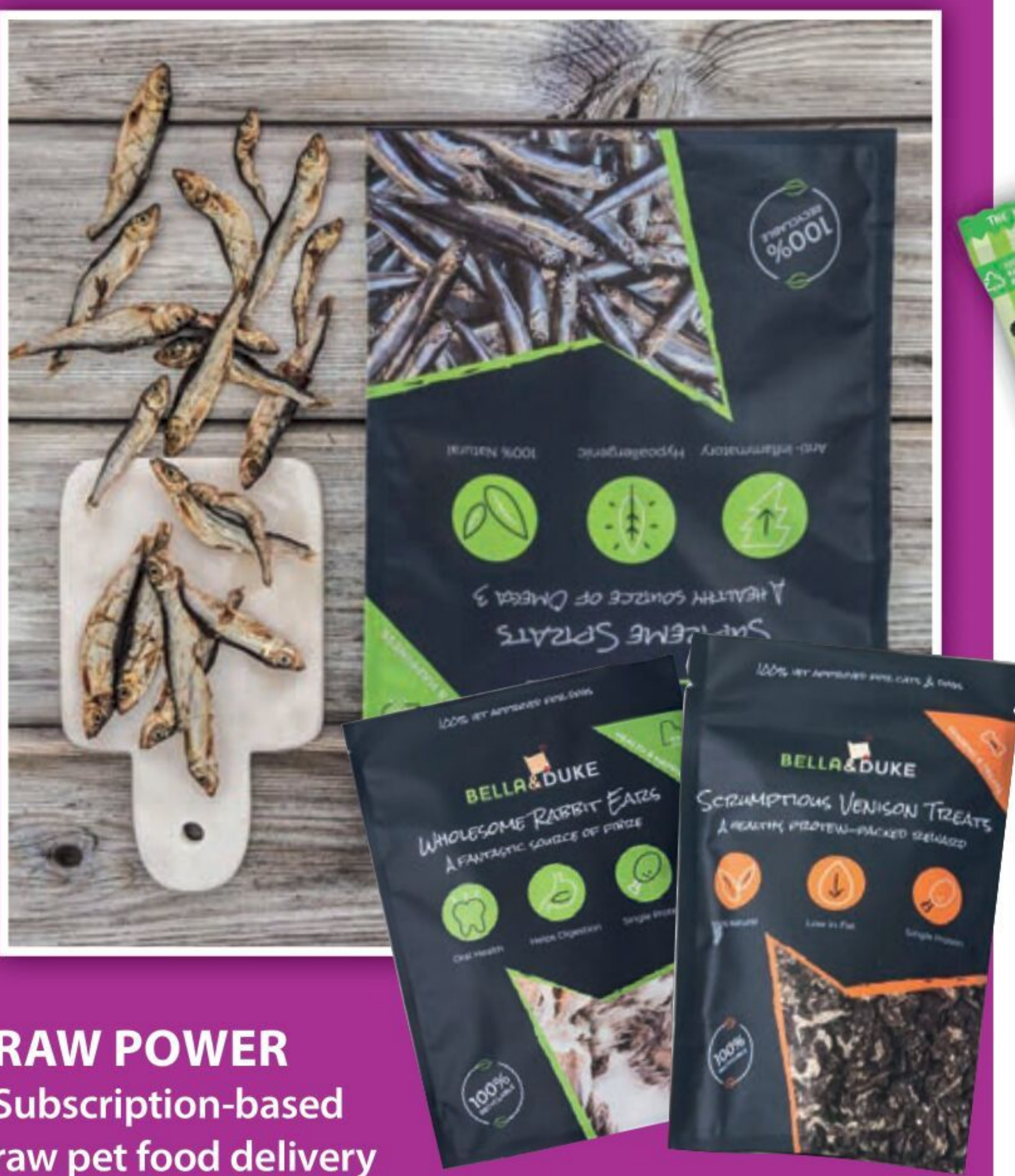
- **Price:** £3.99 per

box (20 biscuits or 12 cakes).

- **Available from:** Independent pet shops and garden centres; online at Amazon, Pets at Home, and Paws.com

- **More info:** www.oggisworld.com





RAW POWER

Subscription-based raw pet food delivery company Bella & Duke has added seven new premium and healthy treats to its range. Focusing on four major elements in our pets' lives — training, health and happiness, teeth and oral hygiene, and calming comfort — the selection includes chews, broths, snacks, and remedies in varying flavours.

● **Key feature:** Each treat is formulated with a clear nutritional or behavioural purpose and can be ordered to complement pre-existing meal plans via a Bella & Duke subscription — each one delivered to your door frozen, to lock in essential nutrients.

● **Varieties and prices:** Prime Ox Liver Treats (£3.59); Wholesome Rabbit Ears (£6.99); Hearty Ox Bites with Organic Apple Cider Vinegar (£5.99); Supreme Sprats (£7.99); Premium Beef Pizzles (£12.99); Pure Venison Snack (£8.49); and Sumptuous Venison Treats (£4.99).

● **Available from:** www.bellaandduke.com

SEEING THE LIGHT

Be a bright spark this winter and invest in a reflective dog coat from Proviz.

The new REFLECT360 Waterproof Dog Coat is just the job for highlighting your canine companion during evening, early morning, or foggy winter walks, especially if he's a dark colour.

Featuring a 100 per cent reflective outer shell, adjustable neck and chest strap, and harness attachment hole, the coat comes in six sizes.

The REFLECT360 Waterproof Dog Coat is also available with a cosy micro-fleece lining.

● **Key feature:** An essential part of any dog's winter wardrobe, the Proviz coat shines brightly when illuminated by a torch or oncoming car headlights.

● **Sizes:** XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL.

● **Prices:** REFLECT360 Waterproof Dog Coat: £29.99; REFLECT360 Waterproof Fleece-Lined Dog Coat: £35.99.

● **Available from:** www.provizsports.com/en-gb/outdoor/outdoor-dog



BACK TO SCHOOL

Available in four varieties, Tuck Shop Treats from ethical dog food brand Barking Heads are made from high-quality ingredients with no artificial colours, flavours, or preservatives.

Bite-sized Whine Gums contain vitamin- and mineral-rich apple, dried seaweed, and spirulina to support a healthy skin and coat.

Packed full of tasty chicken, potato, yucca, chicory, and apple, Slobstoppers are long-lasting chews that also include collagen to help maintain healthy joints.

Roll Overs feature chicken, potato, and chicory, while Gnawbreakers are the perfect veggie treat, formulated with potato, fennel, liquorice root, parsley, and eucalyptus for fresher breath.

● **Key feature:** All flavours are low in fat, easy to digest, and come in recyclable bags.

● **Price:** £2.50.

● **Available from:** Selected Waitrose stores and www.barkingheads.co.uk



ONE FOR THE ROAD

Owners planning on taking their dogs to visit relatives in the new year can look forward to a smoother journey, thanks to this clever product. The Orvis Front Seat Barrier is designed to protect your car's seats and help your canine passenger to settle.

Attaching to adjustable headrests and clipping securely to the bottom of the seat if needed, it allows your dog to see you through the large mesh window, and heat or air conditioning to circulate.

There's also a handy mesh storage pouch on each side of the window to stow leads, toys, bowls, and other accessories.

● **Key feature:** The Orvis Front Seat Barrier is machine washable and made from durable 100 per cent polyester fabric with plastic buckles.

● **Size:** 51 cm high X 99 cm wide.

● **Price:** £89.

● **Available from:** www.orvis.co.uk

GO! GO! GO!

Celebrating its 50th year of fuelling working dogs, Skinner's has created a complete pet food range to keep canine companions active, while inspiring owners to reconnect with the great outdoors.

Skinner's Get Out and Go! comprises three varieties of nutritionally balanced complete wet food, and four complete dry foods, as well as hand-baked salmon and carrot training treats, and innovative energy bars.

These high-quality and high-performance diets feature a chicken and sweet potato base, and owners can move up and down the protein and fat levels depending on how much energy their dog expends.

Boasting British-sourced ingredients where possible, both the wet and dry foods are grain-free and can be geared to dogs on a daily walk or those on a long hike, as well as being suitable for puppies and veterans.

● **Key feature:** Committed to sustainability, Skinner's is the first UK dog food brand to produce Tetra Pak on site, ensuring a lower carbon footprint and recyclable packaging.

● **Prices:** Skinner's Get Out & Go! dry food: £14.49 (2.5kg bag), £54.99 (10kg – 4 x 2.5kg bags); wet food: £1.69 (390g carton), £30.42 (18 x 390g case); protein and recovery bars: £1.29 (single 35g bar), £15.48 (pack of 12); treats: £1.69 (single 100g pouch), £13.52 (eight pouches).

● **Available from:** www.skinner.co.uk



Me and my dog

THE CANINE COMFORTER



Image: Roger Allen.

Helping traumatised NHS COVID-19 staff has earned Cockerpoo Jasper a prestigious award. **Joanne Bednall** spoke to his owner, David Anderson, about their vital work.

Hundreds of NHS staff in Lancashire have a special therapy dog to thank for lowering their stress levels and providing cuddles during the challenges posed by the pandemic.

Cockerpoo Jasper and his owner David Anderson, a hospital chaplain and counsellor, support more than 9,000 staff

working across East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust's acute and community hospitals, including the Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and Burnley General Teaching Hospital.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, David and his six-year-old dog's main focus was visiting patients who had suffered a stroke or mental health crisis or were undergoing end of life care.

But during lockdown, with Blackburn one of the country's worst affected areas, Jasper was no longer able to visit the wards and initially had to stay at home. Their role, like that of many others, had to adapt, and David turned to offering end of life calls via an iPad. As the number of COVID patients in the hospital started to reduce, the pair's focus shifted again, with David and Jasper providing in-person support to hospital staff struggling with the pressures of the past two years.

Preston-based David has owned Jasper since he was a pup, after deciding a Cockerpoo would be the best fit for his family and their lifestyle.

"We wanted a fun, gentle dog who liked a lot of exercise because we love walking," said David. "Plus my son has asthma and Jasper's coat is hypo-allergenic."

It wasn't until Jasper was three or four that David noticed he had a particular flair for comforting people.

"When private clients visited me at home, Jasper would always come up and say hello. I soon realised young clients, particularly those who were self-harming, became more relaxed when he was around — they would sit on the floor and cuddle him."

A vacancy for a therapy dog at the hospital had become available after the previous incumbent, a Labrador, left, so a private canine behaviourist was employed to help David train Jasper for the role.



Image: Roger Allen.

Jasper has been a calming and reassuring presence for hospital staff.

"It took two days to teach him not to jump up," recalled David, who added that the three-month training period consisted of four tough assessments — "more than was needed for my job!"

Jasper was evaluated at home, in a community setting, in the hospital, and finally on a children's ward, before passing with flying colours.

"At first, slippery floors were his biggest challenge — he would do a Bambi impression and lose confidence," continued David, whose dog is totally unfazed by beds, wheelchairs, alarms, and plates of food, even though "his nose twitches more on Friday when it's fish day!"

SUPPORT SESSIONS

Since 2019, Jasper has not only become a familiar face on the wards but he now plays a key role in 'listening lounges' — 50-minute support sessions, which have been attended by more than 1,000 members of staff. In fact, the format has been such a success that it's been highlighted as good practice by NHS England, the Care Quality Commission, and Health Education England.

Drop-in 20-minute one-to-one sessions just with Jasper are also proving popular, as are taking the Cockerpoop for walks, which can be booked via his own email address.

Crucially, these 'Conversations with Jasper' aren't framed to provide advice, training, or solutions, but simply to offer small groups of health-care workers a non-judgemental and empathic environment where they can stop, rest, talk, reflect, and be respected, as well as feel reassured and comforted. They can even play with Jasper at the end of the session, if they choose.

(Below) Emma Coupe and Susan Holgate from ELHT's pharmacy enjoy a cuddle with Jasper.



Images: Roger Allen.

Jasper with Helen Kirkwood and Leanne Smith from ELHT's specialist palliative care team.



"Jasper's role has always been to make people smile and feel better..."

Many have reported that just seeing Jasper makes them feel happy and calm, while stroking him is therapeutic and calming, which boosts their mental and emotional health.

"Jasper's role has always been to make people smile and feel better, and during the peak of the pandemic, when everyone was giving so much, sometimes staff just needed to have a cuddle with him, have a cry, and go back to the wards," said David, who explained that it's only now the trauma of the previous year is hitting home, with many staff continuing to struggle as the next wave of COVID patients has been markedly younger.

"It can be hard for staff to talk to their loved ones about the horrors of the pandemic — it's too distressing, but just seeing a wagging tail helps them relax, and when Jasper puts his head in their laps, they feel safe and less alone.

"Some also say they feel lighter and less burdened after a session."

PERCEPTIVE JASPER

Although Jasper is trained to go to people who are showing distress, David said his dog is naturally empathetic and perceptive to the emotions around him, and chooses to spend more time with cancer sufferers.

David recalled one patient, pre-COVID, who he will never forget. A woman in ICU had slipped into a coma and the consultant had tried everything, from family members being present to music, to rouse her. But nothing was working.

"When we placed her hand on Jasper, she moved her thumb," said David, whose work

during the pandemic has been recognised with the British Empire Medal.

"It was a very special moment as it proved there was brain activity. She later came round and recovered. It was a really emotional time for everyone and even the consultant started crying."

Jasper spends at least two full days a week in the trust's hospitals, typically starting work around 10am in a children's ward, where he will support young people who have self-harmed, taken an overdose, or suffer from fear or anxiety. He will then attend a couple of group sessions, before being taken for a walk by a member of staff or small group.

After a rest, the Cockerpoop and David will see a patient — perhaps an end of life visit — before supporting staff in a further group or one-to-one session. Cuddles and play time are saved until the end of the day, and once home, Jasper will have a shower and his dinner before falling fast asleep. When he's not working, Jasper loves nothing more than meeting up with other Cockerpoos on the beach and enjoying a good run.

David is understandably very proud of his special dog and his achievements, including being named Animal of the Year in the International Fund for Animal Welfare's prestigious Animal Action Awards.

"We are thrilled that Jasper has been given this award from IFAW," added David. "He's had a massive impact on the hospital, and this award helps to raise the profile of the role of therapy dogs in workplaces.

"All of us here will carry the scars of working through COVID forever, so it is important we continue to offer this support."

Jasper with his IFAW award.



Image: IFAW.



FREEBIES

Check out our freebies this month — your chance to win some fabulous prizes!

HOW TO ENTER FREEBIES

For your chance to win these fabulous prizes, enter online by visiting www.yourdog.co.uk/freebies, quote the code WFL16LFW, and follow the instructions on screen.

The closing date for entries is January 15, 2022 (UK only). Please note, you can enter online from December 7, 2021.

For full competition terms and conditions, visit www.warnersgroup.co.uk/competition-terms

FOOD, TREATS, AND NATIONAL TRUST PASSES

We've teamed up with Forthglade natural pet food in Devon to celebrate the company's partnership with the National Trust and its tasty range of co-branded meals and treats. Sales from the delicious range go towards supporting the Trust's conservation work, and the Dogs Welcome project.

Three lucky winners can enjoy a case of delicious gourmet, complete, wet meals, which includes two recipes: duck & venison and turkey & goose. Each meal is grain-free and free from any 'nasties'. Our winners will also receive two cases of Forthglade's grain-free, hand-baked, natural soft-bite dog treats and a National Trust family day pass (worth up to £45).

● For more information, visit www.forthglade.com

3
TO GIVE AWAY



GROMIT RAINCOATS

Gromit's Raincoat, from Urban Pup, is part of a range of Wallace and Gromit coats and accessories inspired by the much-loved characters.

The raincoat comes in a distinctive light blue/yellow Gromit pattern and features adjustable drawstrings on the detachable hood and the hem, to keep your dog warm and dry. A soft, fleece lining offers additional comfort, and the raincoat is easy to take on and off thanks to the popper button fastenings. It is water-resistant and has a high-visibility stripe.

We have six raincoats to give away to readers.

● For more information, visit www.urbanpup.com

6
TO GIVE AWAY



TUBS OF SUPPLEMENT

New from The Golden Paste Company, Turmerlitch for Dogs is a carefully formulated supplement that soothes to reduce itching, improves skin and coat health, promotes hair regrowth, and helps to repel insects.

The succulent salmon triangles are easy to feed; dogs find them irresistible, and thanks to the enhanced bioavailability of all the key ingredients, Turmerlitch for Dogs is highly effective, making it the ideal daily coat and skin supplement for your dog.

The high-quality ingredients include turmeric, red bush tea, camomile, apple cider vinegar, milk thistle, lemongrass, thyme, cooked linseed, sweet potato, and salmon.

We have nine tubs of Turmerlitch to give away to readers.

● For more information, visit www.goldenpastecompany.co.uk

9
TO GIVE AWAY



PET FOUNTAINS

PetSafe is offering four lucky readers the chance to win a Drinkwell Pet Fountain. Holding up to 3.7 litres of fresh, filtered water, the fountain has an adjustable flow control, so you can customise the free-falling stream from nearly silent circulation on the lowest setting, to a tranquil stream on the highest. The fountain also has a replaceable foam filter to catch hair and debris, and the replaceable charcoal filter removes bad tastes and odours from the water. For easy carrying and placement, the fountain has handy grips on the side of the bowl.

● For more information, visit www.petsafe.com/UK

4
TO GIVE AWAY





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Just email your problem/query to editorial@yourdog.co.uk or, if you prefer, you can post it to 'Dog Answers' at our Bourne address (see page 4). You can also post your query on Facebook www.facebook.com/yourdogmagazine.



DOG Answers

OUT AND ABOUT

THE PERFECT TRAIL

Q How dog friendly are Britain's national trails and are some better than others for dog walkers?
Michael Askew, County Durham.

Keep dogs on leads on cliff-top paths.

DID YOU KNOW?
There are 16 national trails in England and Wales and 29 great trails in Scotland.

Ladder stiles can be difficult for people and dogs to negotiate.



Stephen says: Much depends on what you mean by 'dog friendly'.

All national trails in England and Wales are open for walkers with dogs, although you may find some small diversions and on-lead sections at sensitive times for wildlife.

Sections of the trails, especially in upland areas (like the Pennine Way), are grazed by farm animals, so dogs often need to be on a lead (but release them if threatened by cattle).

There's far less exposure to farm animals on the many coastal trails and the Yorkshire Wolds Way, and so these are better for off-lead walks especially along beaches. However, dogs are best on-lead near cliffs for safety reasons.

The Ridgeway and Pennine Bridleway also have much less walking through fields with livestock, as they often run along mostly traffic-free walled lanes, but you are more likely to meet cyclists and horse riders.

Also consider how agile you

are, as some routes, notably the Hadrian's Wall Path, have lots of ladder stiles that can be hard to get over.

The national trails website (www.nationaltrail.co.uk) also suggests the best options based on your preferred landscapes and walking distances. There are pre-planned itineraries, completion certificates (personalise them with your dog's name), and details of accommodation and other support services. The related trails shop (www.thetrailsshop.co.uk) makes it easy to purchase all the maps and guidebooks for your chosen route.



As you are in the north of England, also consider Scotland's long-distance routes where dogs are also allowed: www.scotlandsgreattrails.com



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THE EXPERT PANEL



TAMSIN DURSTON is a canine behaviour officer in Dogs Trust's canine behaviour and research team.



TONY CRUSE is a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers and the Institute of Modern Dog Trainers.



VICKY PAYNE BVetMed, MRCVS is a holistic vet based in East Sussex.



HOLLY MASH BVSc, MRCVS specialises in herbal medicine, acupuncture, and nutrition.



JOANNE ANGUS LCGI is a founder member of the Guild of Master Groomers.



JOHN BURNS BVMS, MRCVS is a vet, and founder of feed company Burns Pet Nutrition.



STEPHEN JENKINSON is access adviser to Your Dog, the Kennel Club, and local councils.

Quick-fire questions

WHAT CAN I DO TO MOTIVATE AND TREAT MY PUPPY DURING TRAINING SESSIONS?

Always have a reward your puppy will really want and enjoy; this will help to motivate him to find out what he needs to do to earn it, and means he will always really enjoy your training sessions. Choose something he loves, whether that is food or toys. If you're using food, try cutting your chosen treat into small pieces about the size of a fingernail and count them out into 10s, so you can be sure to give your dog a break after every set of 10 practices.

MY DOG'S QUITE OLD; IS IT POSSIBLE TO INSURE AN OLDER DOG?

Yes, but it's often more expensive, with less choice of companies, and various exclusions. Always check policies to see what happens when your dog reaches senior status; some companies may decline to reinsure or there may be an appreciable hike in premiums or in the excess payable in the event of a claim.

BEHAVIOUR

WHY DOES HE SCRAPE THE GROUND?



Dogs may scrape the ground to release their scent into the environment.

Q My 10-year-old, male Border Terrier always scrapes the ground with his back legs when we go out for our daily walks. Why does he do this? It's got worse since the pandemic.

Laura Fielding, Northumberland.



Tamsin says:

Dogs have scent glands in their paws, so scraping their feet can be a way of shedding their own scent in their environment. This could help explain why it might be happening more often since the pandemic. If your dog has been isolated from other dogs for a time, and because there are more unfamiliar dogs around now due to many people getting dogs during the pandemic, he may feel the need to add his own scent into the local environment.

Dogs communicate socially using their scent, so think about what message

he might be trying to give. Observe how he behaves with other dogs and people outside. If he's worried about new dogs or strangers, then securing more of his own scent about the place might help him to feel more confident.

This behaviour might also be an attempt to alleviate tension in the hips and lower back, so it's worth having him checked by your vet to rule out any discomfort, particularly as he's reached double figures during the pandemic. Your vet can also refer you to an accredited behaviourist or trainer if you feel he would benefit from some general confidence building.

OUT AND ABOUT GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Q This sign (pictured below) in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh confused me. It says dogs must be on a lead by law, but the visitor leaflet tells you to keep dogs at your side or on a lead when there are sheep about and when birds are nesting on the ground.

Hamish Thomas, Lanarkshire



Stephen says:

While well-intentioned, this sign is legally incorrect. Recent changes in Scottish law have introduced greater powers and penalties if a dog chases or attacks livestock, and there are proposals for similar changes in England and Wales. But it's currently not an offence in itself for a dog to be off-lead on farmland in England, Scotland, or Wales.

A dog actually attacking livestock is a criminal offence, as is chasing farm animals to cause suffering, injury, or loss in value. Thus a dog doesn't have to bite to get its owner a criminal record; chasing or being out of control in a field of sheep is enough. Plus a dog can be lawfully shot if there's no other way to stop an attack. So, the best advice is to keep your dog on a short lead around farm animals, as it helps reduce worry for all, but do release him if threatened by cattle.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (www.jessthedog.org.uk) accurately sets out where leads are needed and where dogs are not allowed (such as fields with lambs).



Image: Ramblers Scotland.

DOG Answers

Observe how
your dog reacts
around food.

BEHAVIOUR

TROUBLE OVER TREATS

Q My 18-month-old Cockerpoo, Poppy, is a lovable and sometimes shy dog; however, the last few months have seen her behaviour change towards other dogs, and we are having particular difficulties with food.

I generally always have some treats in my bag when out on a walk; this was a suggestion from the puppy group teacher, as Poppy has a particular problem with squirrel hunting. We often walk with friends who also have dogs and they all play happily. However, Poppy has started to show some aggression around food, particularly treats.

She panics if we get a treat out, constantly looking at other dogs to ensure they aren't approaching. If they do, she will snap at them and make a very aggressive noise.

This has now happened on a few occasions and I worry

that the more she practises this behaviour, the more it will be reinforced, and may even intensify. She does not resource guard anything else and will happily share her toys.

The behaviour is now increasing, and she has told off a few dogs who have gone near her dinner in our house. I want to ensure I nip it in the bud. There is also a concern she could tell off the wrong dog and get bitten.

Your Dog reader, via email.



Tamsin says: Thank you for being such an observant, caring owner. You're

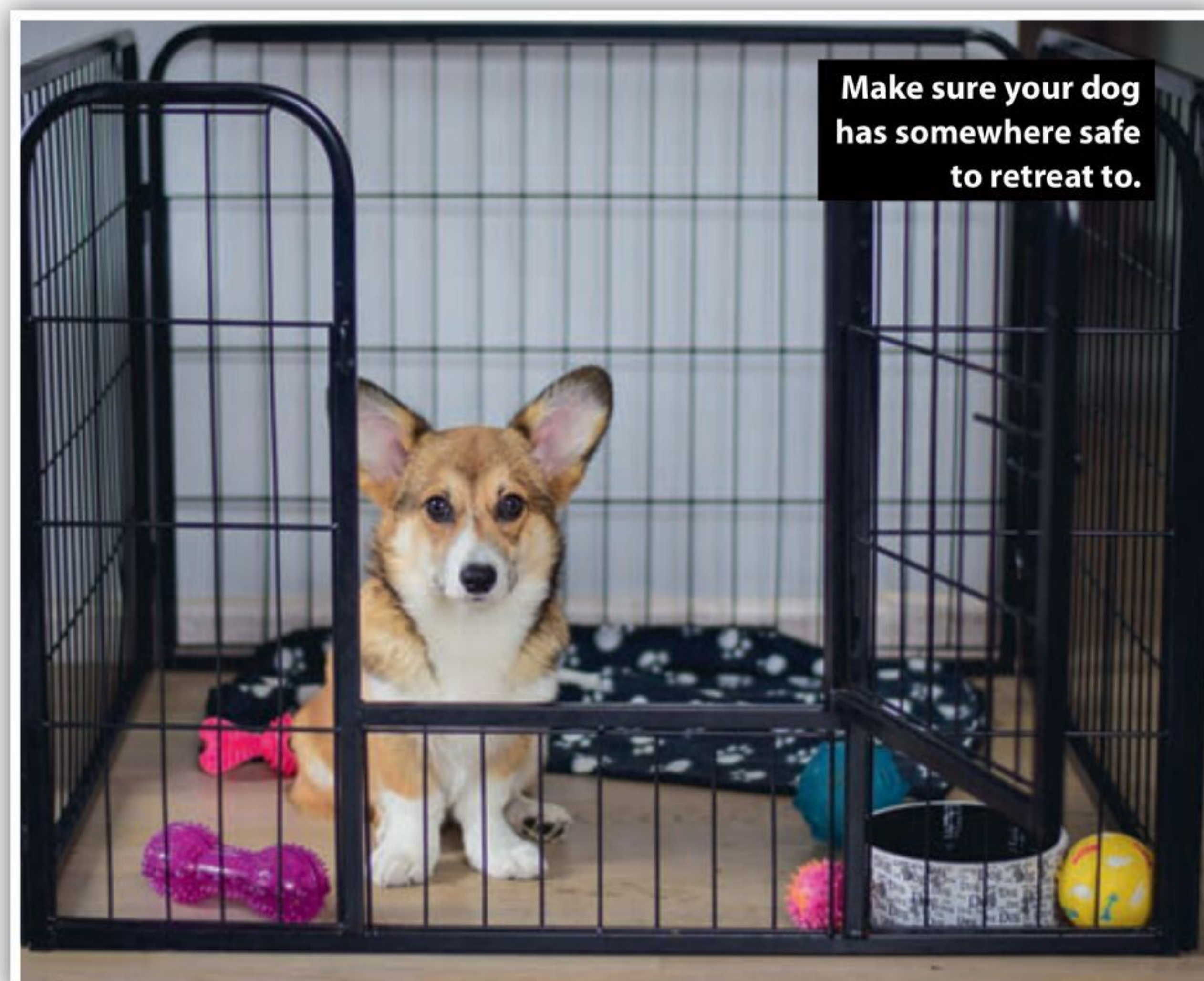
right to nip this behaviour in the bud as dogs get better at what they practise and you don't want Poppy rehearsing these guarding/aggressive behaviours, or to feel worried about the food she so clearly values.

At 18 months old, she's likely to be experiencing

adolescence, and would benefit from some extra TLC and guidance on how best to behave. During dogs' adolescence many of us struggle and have to seek help, so don't worry. First, have Poppy checked by your vet. Changes in behaviour, even those we might feel are easily explained, can have a medical cause, so your vet will be able to rule out any digestion-related problems

BEHAVIOUR

A GUIDE TO HAVING GUESTS



Q Can you offer any advice on how to keep my cross-breed dog, acquired during lockdown, calm and relaxed over the new year holiday period? He is now nine months old and is quite anxious. We have family coming to stay and the house will be quite busy, which is something he hasn't been used to over the past months.

Helen Taylor, Wiltshire.



Tamsin says: Definitely start teaching him some useful skills now, so he's had time to learn them before the visit. Make sure he has a cosy, comfy, out-of-the-way den all of his own within the home; you could use an indoor crate or barrier, such as a child-gate, to cordon off a secure area. Pop in some toys and treats and teach him to enjoy relaxing in this area by giving him

a long-lasting tasty treat such as a stuffed, food-releasing toy, or a licking mat. When you have visitors, he can be encouraged to settle in his den to enjoy a long-lasting activity, which he'll be used to doing. He'll also be safe in there, as he won't need to worry about people trying to interact with him; you'll need to explain to your visitors how important it is to leave your dog alone.

that might be increasing Poppy's worry about losing out on the opportunity to eat.

Your vet will also be able to refer you to an accredited clinical animal behaviourist, sourced via the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour (ASAB) or the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (ABTC). They will be able to work with you to create a tailor-made plan to help Poppy feel differently about other dogs being near food or anything she values.

This might take some time, because she will need to learn at her own pace, but it's such an emotional issue it's important to work with the support of someone experienced and suitably qualified. Meanwhile, avoid situations with other animals and food. Use toys and reward good behaviour outside with a game instead.

DID YOU KNOW?

Resource guarding is when a dog becomes defensive in order to keep people or animals away from a particular item. The most common type of resource guarding involves food.

TOP TIP!

For more advice on having canine guests or visiting them in their own homes, check out our feature 'Wish you weren't here!' on page 42.

It can take dogs a while to learn this, so stay with your dog at first, for company and to build confidence, then gradually begin to potter about while he's busy, so he learns it's OK to be in his den even when you're elsewhere in the house or doing other things.

Asking your vet to refer you to an accredited behaviourist might help you to feel reassured that you're doing everything you can.

OUT AND ABOUT

SHOOTING SEASON SAFETY

Q I have recently moved to live in a house on a country estate where, at this time of year, they have pheasant shoots. I have an eight-year-old Golden Retriever and intend to avoid walking on the estate when these are planned. However, there is a footpath running near the area where the shoots take place, and I may have to use this to access other walks. What do I need to be aware of and what is the legal position in this case? Obviously, I'd stick to the footpath and keep my dog on a lead, but I don't want to put him or anyone else involved at risk.

Your Dog reader, Norfolk.



Stephen says: In legal terms, if that footpath is a public right of way, by law the estate must keep it unobstructed and safe to use at all times. If it's close to where there's shooting, the best-run shoots will provide stewards to advise people of what's happening and ensure their safety.

However, paths across country estates can often be 'permissive' meaning there's no general right to use them (even for local residents); usage is usually dependent on the goodwill of the estate owner.

The best advice is to talk with the estate or shoot manager, as apart from this being neighbourly it can have added benefits. For example, you might obtain a list of when and where shoots are occurring during the pheasant season, which in England is October 1 to February 1 (excluding Sundays and Christmas Day). Do remember that shooting can take place at any time of year, and at night for some species like rabbits and pigeons.

If your dog isn't used to the sound of gunshot, liaising with the estate can help you habituate him to loud bangs in a managed, positive, and gradual way. Just because a pet is a gundog breed doesn't mean he won't be scared or startled.

Irrespective of one's views on shooting live birds, it can be very enlightening to witness the joy of gundogs doing what they were originally bred to do, especially when trained using modern, positive techniques that reward them for making best use of their natural abilities.



Even though the Golden Retriever is a gundog breed that doesn't mean your pet won't be spooked by loud bangs.

Quick-fire questions

ANY TIPS ON HOW TO GET MY DOG TO LISTEN TO ME?

- Listen to what your dog is 'saying'.
- Make yourself interesting to your dog.
- Try trick training.
- Know what motivates your dog.
- Vary your food treats and the way you present them.
- Reinforce your dog's behaviour when he listens to you.
- Above all else, get your relationship right — and love your dog!

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I GROOM MY DOG?

This all depends on the length and density of his coat, and your lifestyle.

A smooth-coated dog, such as a Boxer, will require minimal grooming in comparison to an Old English Sheepdog with a full-length coat. A good rule to follow is if your dog is a coated breed (has long or semi-long hair) then he needs regular brushing and combing at least twice a week.

If your dog has a wool or wool-mix coat (such as Poodles, Bichons Frise, and Cockerpoos), then grooming should be done every other day.

If your dog frequents woodland areas, beaches, or generally muddy walks then he'll need to be groomed to remove any debris from his coat.

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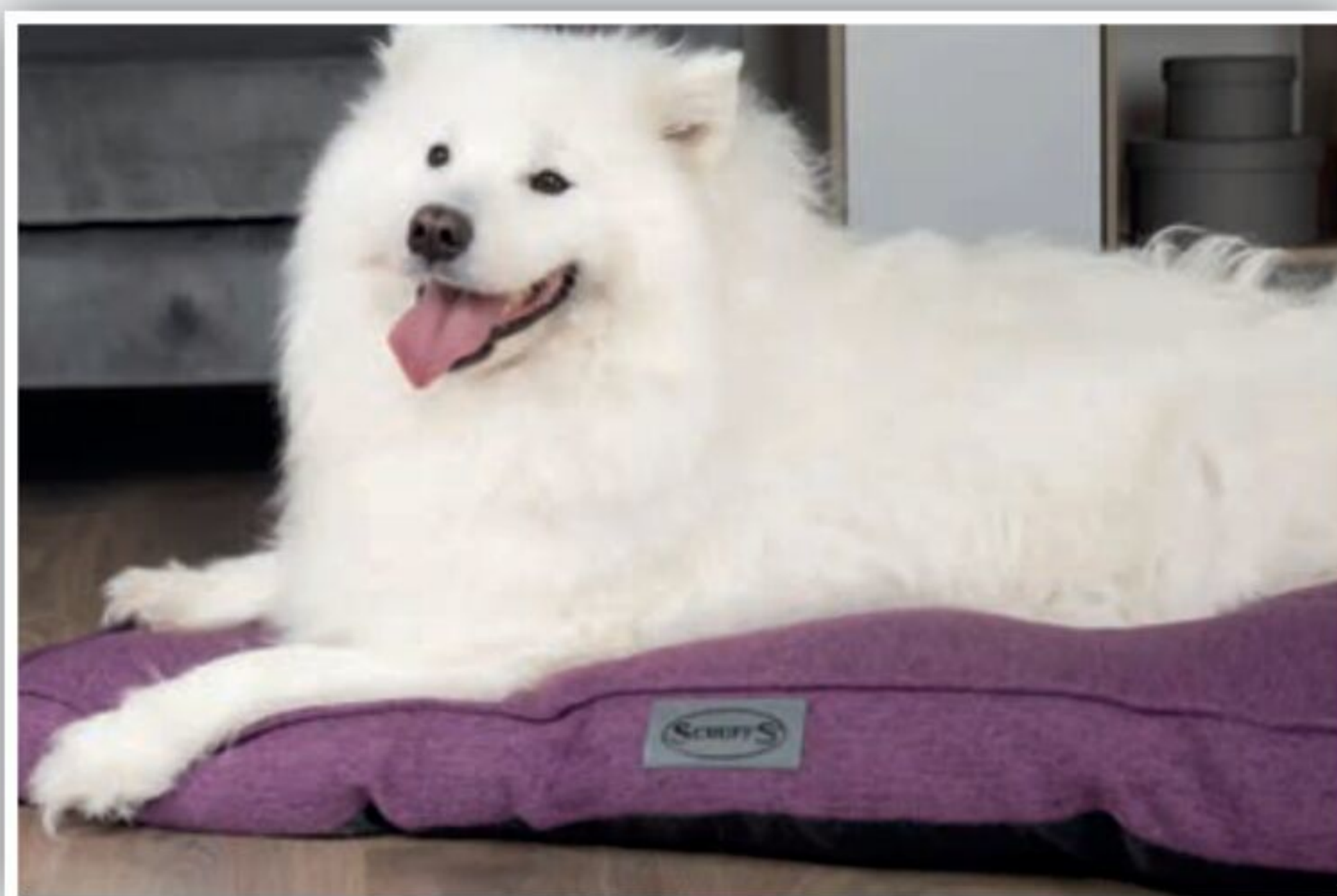
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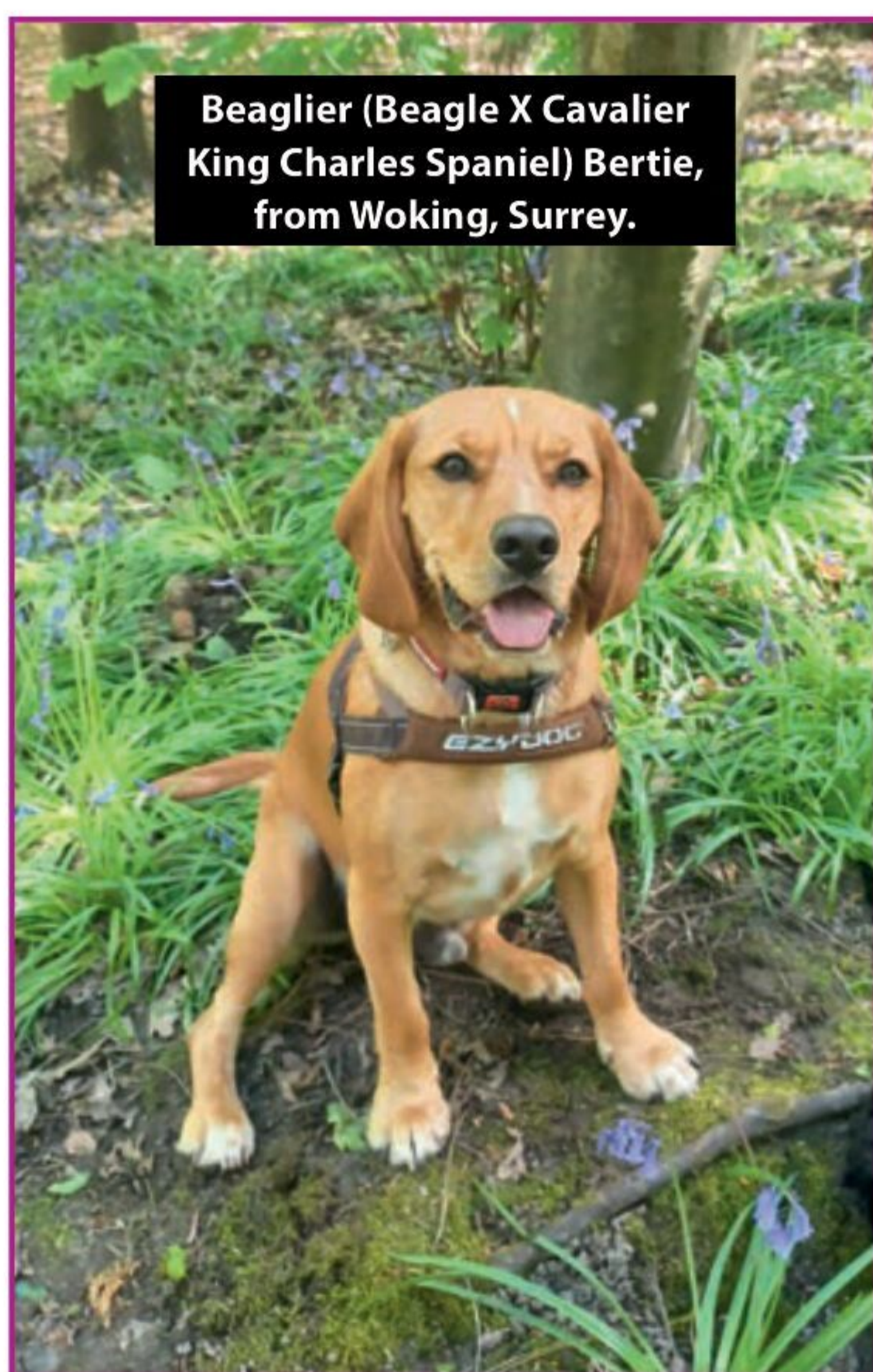
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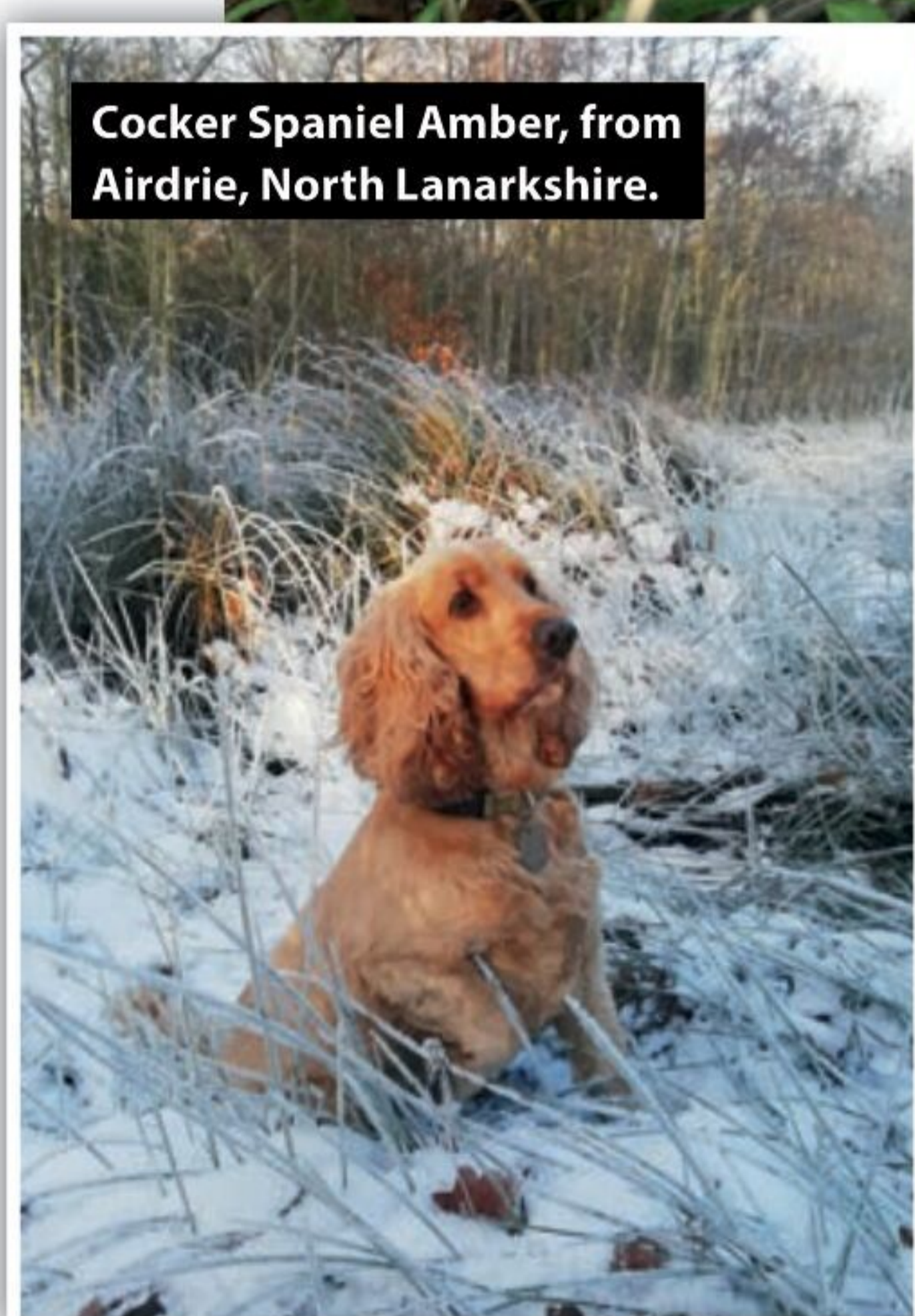
Cesky Terrier Nell,
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Beaglier (Beagle X Cavalier
King Charles Spaniel) Bertie,
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Cocker Spaniel Amber, from
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Leicestershire.



Pug Tiggy, from
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Cockerpoo Ada, from Beckenham, Kent.



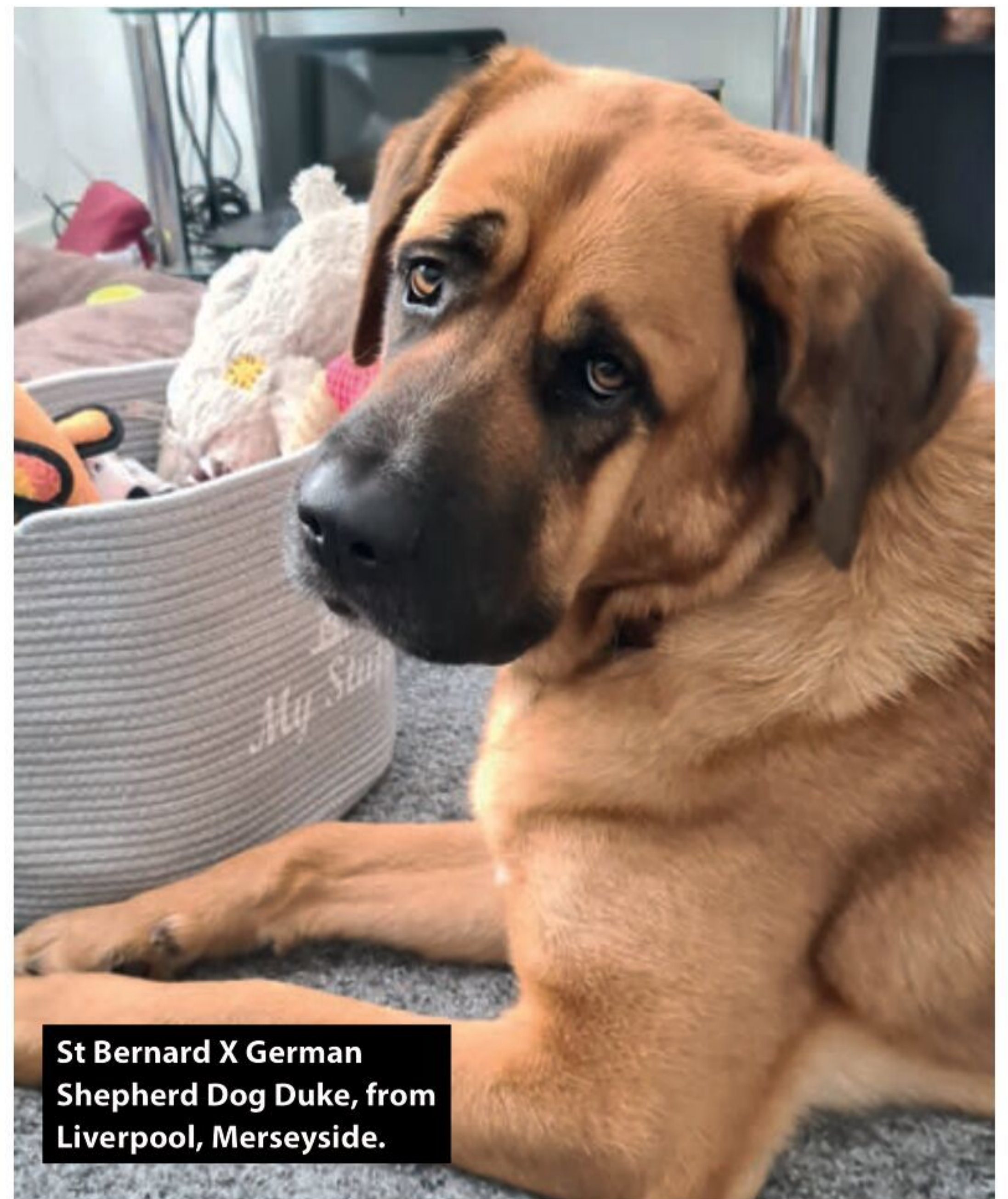
Tibetan Terrier Albert and Double Doodle (Goldendoodle X Labradoodle) Hugo, from Barnsley, South Yorkshire.



German Shepherd Dog Shelby, from Carnforth, Lancashire.



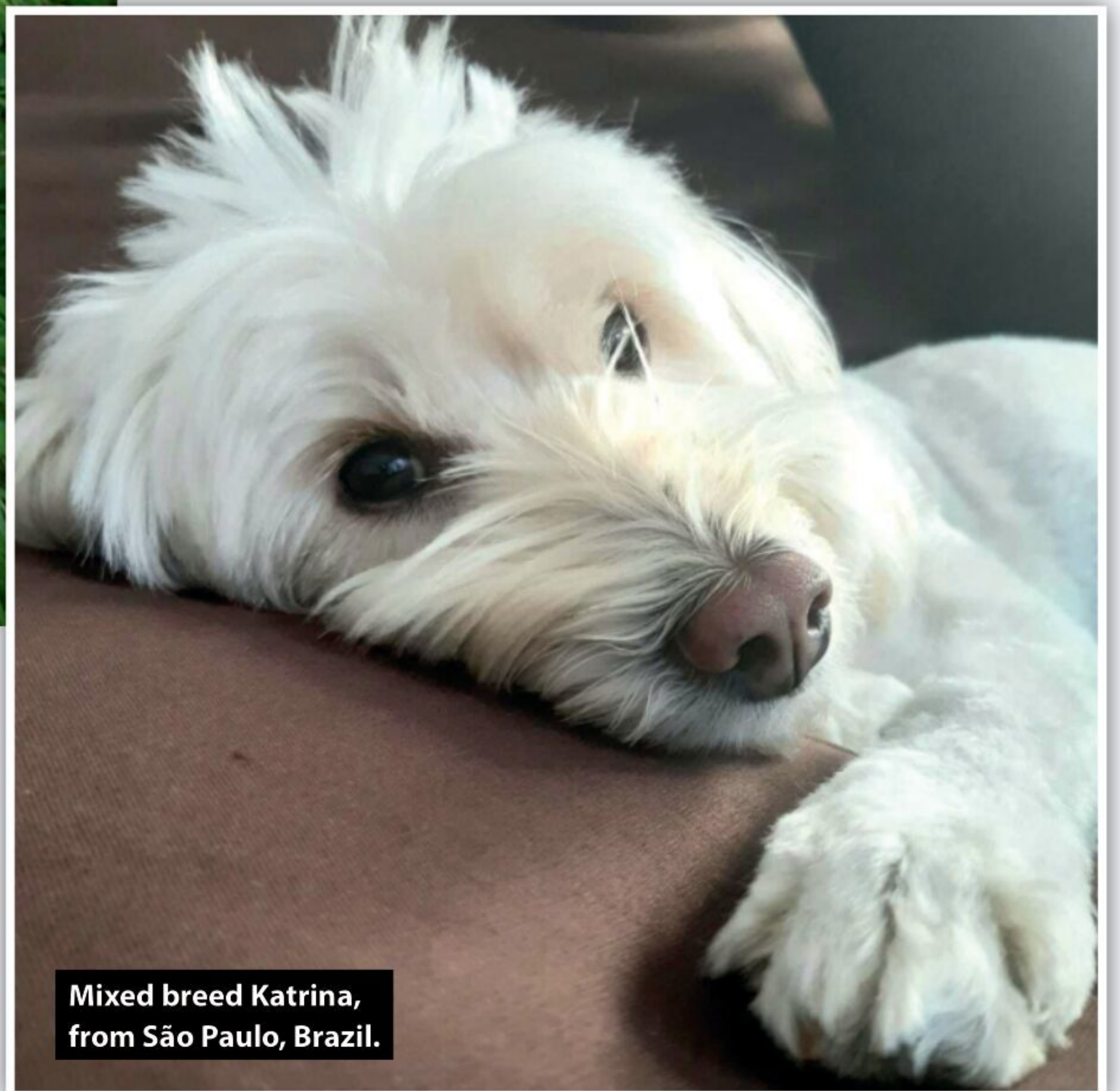
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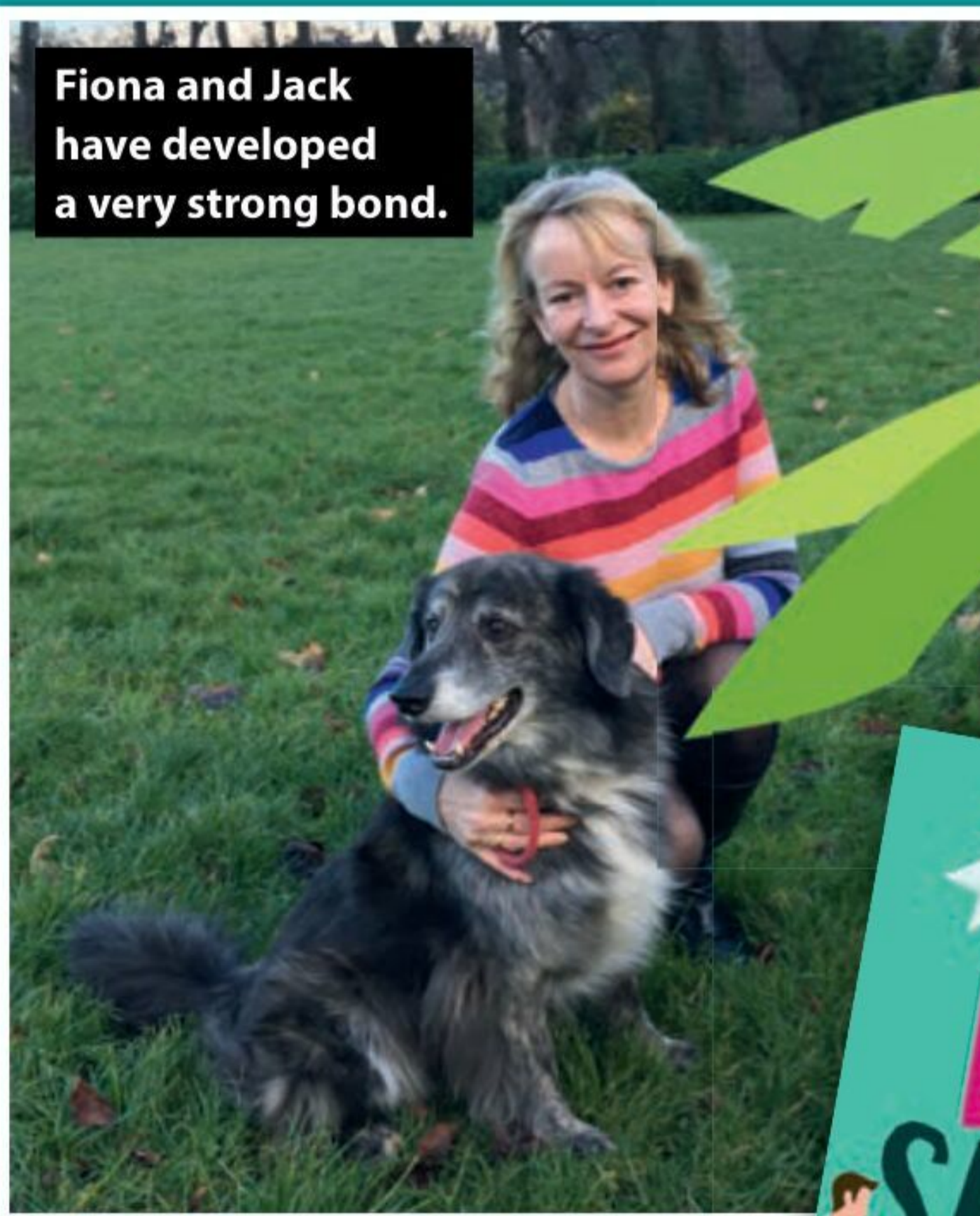
Canine

castaways!

Personalities from the dog world reveal which dogs they'd choose as castaway companions — and why.

FACT FILE

- **NAME:** Fiona Gibson.
- **OCCUPATION:** Author and journalist. Fiona's novels include the best-selling 'The Mum Who Got Her Life Back', 'The Dog Share', and 'When Life Gives You Lemons'.
- **DOG:** Jack.
- **BREED:** Collie-cross.
- **CASTAWAY CREDENTIALS:** Long-term experience of providing company and support; enjoys swimming; enthusiastic, fluffy cuddler.



Fiona and Jack have developed a very strong bond.

Fiona enjoyed creating a canine character in her book 'The Dog Share'.



"I'd take Jack to the desert island. Jack is about 12 years old. We don't know exactly because he was a rescue, but he's a senior boy.

"When we first got him, my husband and I still used to have the occasional cigarette. Once, when we had a date night, the children were with Granny, and we'd been to the butcher's and got two enormous steaks for our special dinner. Then, we stood at the back door having a naughty cigarette. When we came back into the kitchen, the steaks were gone from the worktop; Jack

had had them. They were mauled on the floor, in pieces — but it served us right for having cigarettes!

"I wrote a full book in lockdown and Jack would just lie on my legs while I was writing a lot of the time. We settled into this lovely, cosy routine; it's company but it's company that doesn't distract you, so it's kind of the best of all worlds really. As Jack's got older, he's become quite sedentary. He's still active when he's out and will run about chasing a ball, but at home he likes to lie squashed up as close as possible to one of his humans. He's very, very affectionate. If we're out walking and he sees one of our sons (because they don't live with us any more) he's delighted. Given the choice, he'll always be with somebody — on a bed preferably.

"When we got him, he was ▶



Jack has mellowed and calmed down as he has got older.

"Given the choice, he'll always be with somebody..."



terrified of water, but now he loves even the most pungent, putrid pond or lake, so we'd enjoy swimming together on the island.

"He'd be no help hunting for food. We've had mice in our flat, and I've seen him sitting in his basket while the mouse ran past him, and he just idly watched it go by. However, he'd keep me warm at night. He's got a really long, thick, heavy coat. He's very fluffy and he does like to lie on a person. He'd be like an incredibly lovely, hairy duvet.

"When it comes to island wildlife, the younger Jack would have definitely chased small animals, but now I think he'd probably be happy to coexist.

"He'd miss other family members because he's absolutely devoted to all five of us; we have three grown-up kids. I've spent the most time with him over the years because I've always been at home writing, so we've really bonded. He was a stray when we got him, and doesn't like being on his own.

"Jack really likes soft toys. He'd take one of his old, manky ones to the island, one that he could chew and gradually work all the stuffing out of. I love drawing, painting, reading, writing, swimming, and running — there are loads of things I could do, and if I had Jack with me I don't think I'd be lonely.

"A couple of weeks on the island would suit me. I wouldn't normally go on holiday for two weeks by myself, but finding myself in that situation would be quite nice. It would be a treat not having to cook for everybody.

"I'm used to being on my own quite a bit, and during lockdown we were all thrust together. Two kids came back to live with us for about a year; the flat was very full. I started to crave my own company and that little bit of head space.

"Jack actually goes away for two weeks to a friend in the country around Bonfire Night. Where we live in Glasgow, the fireworks go on for about two weeks and he



Jack has learned to love water so he and Fiona would spend a lot of time swimming on the island.

barks and gets so stressed, so we send him away for a holiday. When he's away, I don't do as much exercise; I don't walk as much. Usually, Jack forces me out of the flat three times a day and without that impetus I just don't move as much. The benefits of dogs are absolutely huge. I was the last person in our family to want a dog really — everybody else was desperate to have one — but I'm probably the one who has benefited the most, and got the closest bond with Jack. I think it makes a big difference having a dog in your life."

● **Find out more about Fiona at <http://www.fionagibson.com>**



Jack loves to lie squashed up as close to his humans as possible!



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