

# WYE VALLEY RETRIEVER CLUB



## **SPRING NEWSLETTER**

2026

[www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk](http://www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk)

email: [info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk](mailto:info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk)

President – Luke Thompson Coon  
Vice Presidents - Terry Dukes and Michael Gough  
Chairman – Veronica Harris  
Vice Chairman – Sarah Akehurst  
Secretary – Jennie Dymock  
Treasurer and Membership Secretary – Nicola Pointer  
Field Trial and Working Test Secretary – Anna Crampton  
Assistant to FT and WT Secretary – Rachel Massey  
Training Co-ordinator – Sean McGrath  
Assistant to Training Co-ordinator Sue Hallett  
Christine Peers  
Jean Tidmarsh  
Morton Redpath  
Tony Griffiths

*Reminder – membership fees are due by 1<sup>st</sup> February  
Annual membership £10.00 single £15.00 joint  
Joining Fee £10.00*

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

It has been my pleasure to be Chairman for the past three years. I have been a member of Wye Valley Retriever Club since it began and have always enjoyed the training and being involved with Tests and Trials. You never cease learning and helping is such a good way to learn. We were so sorry to have to cancel our second Working Test in 2025 and hope to make up for it this year – weather permitting. At the time of writing I am looking out at a snowy garden and can hardly remember the heatwave of last July. Our training classes were as popular as ever and the “end of term” test was great fun, especially as it was followed by a pig roast supper.

I cannot say a big enough thank you to all those members who help at our tests and trials. We always need more “volunteers” to set up and even more importantly help at the end of the day. Wye Valley is a very friendly Club and we welcome everyone to get involved. This applies to the Committee as well. We meet four or five times each year and are looking for vibrant enthusiastic members to join us – its not a huge time commitment but to continue we need some new blood. Think about it and if you have any queries please get in touch with me

*Veronica Harris*

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

As I write this, the shooting season is coming to an end and I only have two more picking up days to look forward to. The season whizzes by so quickly (more quickly each year, I think!) and it seems impossible that it is over so soon. My dogs can have a well deserved rest for a few weeks and then we shall start on training again.

I was elected as Hon Secretary of the Club at its AGM in May 2025 and, although it's not over yet, I have enjoyed my first year. During this time, we have updated the Rules of the Club which had not been looked at for a while, and we are currently working on updating the website.

I attended nearly all of the training sessions from the end of April to mid-June. The idyllic Westhide estate was the setting for these evenings of serious training coupled with fun and friendship. Like many others, I am looking forward to the 2026 training sessions. Our volunteer trainers do a terrific job and are very much appreciated. Don't forget to get your application in early – it's first come first served !!

Work is already under way to organize the Club's 2026 activities. Please read the schedules carefully when entering Tests because the Royal Kennel Club's updates to the Working Test regulations come into effect in February 2026. This revision has been long overdue and a few quite significant changes have been made.

Field Trial regulations, as usual, also have some updates.

The Club is fortunate indeed to have such friendly and hard working Officers and Committee members, ably led by the Chairman Veronica Harris. Volunteers to join the Committee are always welcome and if you would like to become a member of the team please get in touch. Enthusiasm is the main requirement coupled with a willingness to work hard for the Club and its members.

*Jennie Dimmock*

## **TREASURERS REPORT**

I hope everyone has had a good Christmas and New Year.

The club accounting period runs from the 1st of February to the 31st of January in order to cover the shooting season.

The finances of the club remain healthy, which is helped enormously by the generosity of the land owners who allow us access to their land to hold our events and helps us keep our costs to a minimum, and auditor inspected accounts will be presented at the AGM

Membership numbers continue to remain constant and it is always nice to see lots of familiar faces at our tests and trials.

As always, we endeavour to support charities throughout the year and donations were made to a variety of good causes.

Wishing you all a prosperous 2026

*Nicola Pointer*

## **TRAINERS REPORT**

Once again, the Wye Valley Retriever Club has been busy doing what it does best, bringing dogs and handlers together in the name of good training and good fun.

Thanks to the kind permission of Mr Luke Thompson-Coon, training took place at the lovely Westhide Estate in Herefordshire. With four classes running from puppy to Open, there was something for everyone, whether you were discovering that

retrieves are *very exciting*, or polishing skills for the higher levels. As always, it's a pleasure to watch partnerships grow over the season, with some partnerships going on to enjoy success at GWTs and Field Trials.

At the end of the evening training sessions, the club organises an end of term test and social gathering (yes, there is food!!). This is to allow handler and dog to experience a first entry into a gundog working test and for the more experienced partnership the opportunity to test and evaluate themselves.

**End of term test results:**

<p><b>Puppy</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Emma Davis. Otta</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Nicola Pointer. Esmee</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Andy Massey. Freddie</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Sam Massey. Bertie</p>	<p><b>Novice 1</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Matilda Thompson-Coon. Fraser</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Emma Moffett. Archie</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Paul Walker. Ruby</p>
<p><b>Novice 2</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Steve Prosser. Meg</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Veronica Harris. Sonny</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Dale Pointer. Mila</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Paul Egginton. Erin</p> <p>CoM Steve Lax Charlie.</p> <p>CoM Charlotte Drake. Havoc</p>	<p><b>Open</b></p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Claire Raymond. Mabel</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Wrixon. Rigby</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Sue Everitt. Islay</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> Sue Goring. Pippin</p> <p>CoM Jennie Dimmock. Danny</p> <p>CoM Graham Beck. Flint</p>

Our host, Luke Thompson Coon, presented the rosettes at the end of the evening:



Luke with Emma



A proud dad with Matilda!



Steve Prosser Novice 2 winner



Claire Raymond Open winner

None of this would be possible without our fantastic trainers, who generously give their time, knowledge, and patience (often while pretending not to notice the weather). Their commitment allows the club to deliver training that stays true to its aim of promoting responsible gundog ownership through positive, confidence-building methods.

Training dates for the year have now been published, including this year an **assessment day** on **14 April @ 6pm**. This helps **new members** and those new to the sport find the right class, saving everyone from being in the *slightly too ambitious* group.

Away days with trainers have also been organised, giving dogs and handlers the chance to experience new grounds, fresh ideas, and the gentle reminder that training looks different everywhere.

As always, the club is looking to help and support **young handlers**, so if you know any please get in touch, as the sport needs the future bringing through.

**We look forward to another great season—where training improves steadily, confidence grows, and everyone agrees it was definitely the handlers fault.**

**Wag. Work. Win.**

*Happy dogs, happy handlers, happy results—what more could you ask for?*

*Sean McGrath*

## **TEST & TRIAL RESULTS 2025**

All results, photos and reports are attached to this Newsletter as a separate document

*Anna Crampton*

# TRAINING 2026

Wye Valley Retriever Club will be holding their usual training classes again in 2026 for handlers and their dogs. Our experienced trainers aim to give help, guidance and advice individually to dog handlers who want to improve the way they interact with their dogs, whether for picking up, competing in working tests and field trials or just for fun. Training takes place in small groups of up to eight arranged in accordance with ability – puppy (up to 18 months old at the end of the course), novice and open.

Our trainers are volunteers and the guidance and advice they give for gundog training is based on their personal experiences and achievements.

Members may only handle one dog in a class. Please make sure that you attend your class with a lead, whistle (attached to a lanyard), dummy bag or vest and poo bags. We reserve the right to offer your training place to someone else if you miss two lessons without notifying your trainer of a valid reason. There will be no refund of training fees.

Please see the training application form for further information. Minimum requirements for dogs in training are as follows:

- Walk to heel on a loose lead without pulling
- Recall – verbal or whistle
- Sit quietly/sit and stay off the lead – i.e. no whining, barking or interfering with other dogs.

We recommend taking dogs to obedience classes to attain this standard.

Training classes take place at Westhide Estate, about five miles north east of Hereford. Please contact us if you need directions.

There will be an assessment evening on **14 April** commencing at **6:00pm** for those dogs who have not trained with WVRC before. Classes will run for eight weeks on Tuesday evenings from **28 April to 16 June** at Westhide – a 7 week course with an unlicensed working test and social evening with food on the 8<sup>th</sup> week for those who have completed the course. The classes will begin promptly at **4.30pm to 6.00pm and 6.30pm to 8.00pm**.

If you would like to take part in our training classes, please complete the training application form and return it to the Training Secretary together with your payment. You will be made most welcome and we are sure you will find the classes enjoyable and instructive.

There will also be additional “**Away Day**” training at an extra cost for advance novice and open dogs. The dates for these are: **13 June & 18 July at Phil Bruton's in Gloucestershire and 29 May at Ricky Moloney's in Oxfordshire**. Full details will be emailed to eligible members in due course.

**Wag, Work, Win – Happy Dogs, Happy Handlers, Happy Results!**

*Sean McGrath*

*Sue Hallett*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Training assessment day 18<sup>th</sup> April

Training 28<sup>th</sup> April – 16<sup>th</sup> June

Away Days 29<sup>th</sup> May Ricky Moloney, 13<sup>th</sup> June & 18<sup>th</sup> July Phil Bruton

## working tests 2026

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April – NOVICE, NOVICE DOG/NOVICE HANDLER, VETERAN and YOUNG HANDLER to be held at Monnington on Wye

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June – OPEN, PUPPY and SPECIAL PUPPY to be held at Dunclent

## field trials 2026

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August – MOCK FIELD TRIAL (using dummies) to be held at Norton Cannon

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November – 16 DOG NOVICE FIELD TRIAL to be held at Dunclent

*Further information (including our Open Trial) will be posted on ftms and on our website in due course*

*Anna Crampton*

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 7.30 p.m.**

Plough Inn, Stoke Lacy HR7 4HG

This is an opportunity not just to have a say in the running of your Club but to meet up with other members and talk training, tests and dogs. We always try to make this more than a business meeting and this year our guest speaker will be **Sam Walker, Regional Officer BASC**. Supper will be provided so please let us know by emailing [info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk](mailto:info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk) if you will be attending

## .... AND FINALLY



At the end of January it was Terry Dukes' 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. So a group of his gundog friends took him out for a celebration breakfast and Newton Court Café gave him a celebration cake

Terry is one of our Vice Presidents and has been a member of the Club since its inauguration. He was an A Panel Judge and helped with Club training for many years.

***If you have any queries or want to contact any Committee member please send an email to [info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk](mailto:info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk)***

# WYE VALLEY RETRIEVER CLUB

## WVRC Working Tests held at Garford Farm, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### For AV Retrievers – Open, Puppy and Special Puppy

We held our first working tests of the season at Garford Farm, Yarkhill, Herefordshire, by the kind invitation of James and Helen Parker. We are extremely grateful to them for their kind support in letting us have the tests on their ground.

Thank you to our judges Nicola Rudgard, Carolyn Jenkins, Claire Raymond and Richard Edwards.

Thank you to all the team - our stewards (Jean, Chris, Veronica, Nessa, Nicola and Sarah) who kept the competitors well organized and moving promptly between the tests; our dummy throwers, Andy, Cherry, Dale, Shayne, Steve P, Steve L, Terry, Tom, and especially John, who came to watch and ended up helping! ; Jean for organizing the catering, Veronica for the helper goody bags and thanks to both Jean and Chris for the cakes that everyone was very grateful for at the end of the day. Thank you Sean for setting the tests with me earlier in the week. Thank you Laurie for the loan of your generator so we could all have hot drinks!

I am very grateful to all our team, and to those competitors who helped during the other half of the day when they were not competing. Well done for offering and thank you.

Thank you very much too to our sponsors Skinners, who provided prizes to our winners. Their support is very appreciated.

We had a perfect day weather-wise – no rain and warm enough for the handlers but not too warm for the dogs.

For the Open dogs, test 1 was a short and long of blinds down a track alongside a field of rape. This proved to be quite tricky for some, with their dogs disappearing off into the crop rather than staying on the track. Test 2 was a pair of blinds at quite a tight angle in a wood with ground cover, and was generally done well. Test 3 was a blind across an orchard with a distraction to shot at an angle from the blind. This proved quite tough as well, with some preferring the more exciting mark first! Test 4 was a two dog walk up with a mark to shot in front into some cover crop, then a behind across more cover crop - the mark in front was collected by the first dog, then the mark behind by the second dog, and then swap. The mark behind caused trouble for dogs that wouldn't take a line.

The Puppies and Special Puppies had the same tests as each other, apart from in test 4, but were judged as separate groups. For test 1, their short and long of blinds were down a different track with a much less tempting field of potatoes alongside it. The short was just in sight, the long just over a rise. Most did this well. Test 2 was a mark and replace in the wood. Test 3 a double mark at very wide angle in the orchard and test 4 a walk up – two dogs for the special puppies and one dog for the puppies. They both had a single blind to collect from three in the cover crop in front, indicated by a shot.

The judges commented on the high standard and promise of the young dogs. The winner of Special Puppy only dropped 1 mark and there was a run off for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, both dogs having lost only 2 marks!

Congratulations to everyone in the awards, and to everyone else for turning up and having a go. I know a lot of you were very new to tests so very well done.

## Results:

### Open

1<sup>st</sup> Nobsquinton Teasel Of Croftferry, Lab/Bitch, Steve Prosser

2<sup>nd</sup> Ffynongain Judge, Lab/Dog, Mark Stevens

3<sup>rd</sup> Alltfracith Chief, Lab/Dog, Paul Edmunds

4<sup>th</sup> Kenxtwen Date With Destiny At Omachie, Lab/Dog, Alan Rees

COM Boggwater Bombay Sapphire, Lab/Bitch, Andrew Lines

COM Lucky Lupin of Nantygollen, Lab/Bitch, Shayne Price

COM Hawksgarth Heidi Of Nantygollen, Lab/Bitch, Shayne Price

COM Nantffrwd Lally The Tranch, Lab/Bitch, Paul Hobbs

### Puppy

1<sup>st</sup> Laggengill Loganberry Of Oakholland, Lab/Dog, Lauren Oakes

2<sup>nd</sup> Tugford Digby Of Rumrumour, Lab/Dog, Imogen Scotford-Jackson

3<sup>rd</sup> Irwellspring Good Hope, Lab/Bitch, Karen Burgess

4<sup>th</sup> Creccamarsh Hawker Of Severncrest, Lab/Dog, Carla Gibson

COM Cottershot Middleber Sike, Lab/Bitch, Branwen Greenaway

COM Tregearavean New Providence, Lab/Bitch, Michael Brown

### Special Puppy

1<sup>st</sup> Liechryd Katherine At Peterspond, Lab/Bitch, Karen Handley

2<sup>nd</sup> Gillhays Aston Gorse, Lab/Dog, Debbie Polley

3<sup>rd</sup> Henleywood Corvus Corax, Lab/Bitch, Sue Lander

4<sup>th</sup> Dream Boyfriend of Oakholland, Lab/Dog, Lauren Oakes

COM Bellesbank Pintail, Lab/Dog, Steve Lax

COM Ashport Kenelm, Lab/Dog, Veronica Harris

COM Arymydd Eider, Lab/Bitch, Kathryn Robey



Open award winners with the judges.



Puppy prize award winners with the judges



Special Puppy award winners with the judges.

## Wye Valley Retriever Club Novice Field Trial At Dunclent

### Results

Winner: Cleestangate Majestic At Maddistream, owned/handled by Gill Awty  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Burrendale Jack, owned/handled by Nicola Reynolds  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Chaysehollow's Andy, owned/handled by Robert Seaman  
4<sup>th</sup>: Astraglen Quiana, owned/handled by Ian Waddington  
John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve:  
Burrendale Jack, owned/handled by Nicola Reynolds  
Guns' Choice: Cleestangate Majestic At Maddistream, owned/handled by Gill Awty



### Report

We held our 16 dog novice field trial on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at Dunclent Farm, Kidderminster, by the kind invitation of Michael and Jane Gough. We are extremely grateful to them and their family for their very generous hospitality and support, and for all the hard work that they, and their daughter Helen and son in law Mark, contribute to the successful running of the trial.

Thank you to our judges Barry Taylor, Liz Taylor, Karen Handley and Morton Redpath, and all the others who worked so hard to make the trial run so smoothly - Chief Steward Jennie Dimmock, judges' stewards Julia Redpath and Veronica Harris, game carriers George Davies and Steve Lax, markers Paul Egginton, Tia Darby, Sue Hallet, Nicola Radtke, Rachel Massey, and of course Malcolm Awty, "press-ganged" at the last minute. Official pickers up were Nicola Pointer and Danni Seabright.

Catering was provided by Sarah Akehurst – absolutely delicious food at the end of a long day! Jean Tidmarsh did three wonderful cakes – the snag with that is we had to have a slice of each one!!

Thank you to the guns (Michael Gough, Andrew Crampton, Richard Hollingsworth, Stan Howes, Guy Neadham, Steve Ogden, Mark Stinton) and to the steward of the beat, Mark Nicholls, whose team presented the birds excellently and who were very patient between the drives. We had pheasant,

partridges and duck to test the dogs - out in grass, on ponds, in woods, in cover and in mixed clover. Even in Michael's garden!

Thank you too to our sponsors Skinners Dog Food for the cards and vouchers presented to the award winners, and Field and Fang for the dummies for the award winners and the leads for all the helpers.

The weather was kind to us and the day was dry, still and not cold, even at the end of the day. Barry and Karen judged on the right, with Liz and Morton on the left, running the odds and evens system. We started with a drive called Long Meadow, with the guns and field split into two fields with a wooded track between them. There was also a pond there, where some pheasants fell. One pheasant attempted to wipe out the gallery on the track! This drive produced both pheasants and partridges.

The second drive was the Home Drive, right below Michael's house, with the guns shooting ducks and pheasants, a number of which fell into Michael's garden. There was also a big pond at the end of the line, where a couple of ducks fell that caused rather a lot of trouble! We finished with Seventeen Acres. This was a magnificent drive and plenty of pheasants were shot here, enabling us to finish the trial. It also provided lots of picking up for competitors eliminated earlier as well as helpers who had dogs in their car.

We then walked back to the "Donkey Shed" for the awards and presentations.

A very big thank you again to everyone who contributed to the day and our sponsors Skinners and Field & Fang for their support. Many congratulations again to Gill, Nicola, Bob, and Ian.





Gill's speech appears to be very funny!

Thank you to Chris Lawrence from Earthdog Photography (<https://earthdog.smugmug.com>) for the photographs. More pictures are on his website.

## WVRC Open Field Trial held at Batsford, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### Results

Winner: Boggwater Bombay Sapphire, owned by Tracey Lines, handled by Andrew Lines  
2nd Place: Llangynidr Henry The Eighth, owned/handled by Nigel Probert  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Halorros Snipe, owned/handled by Craig Perry  
COMs: Nettlebridge By Your Side, owned/handled by Mark Burr  
Cornwood Glorification, owned/handled by Keith Broomfield  
FTCH. Valleyend Kate, owned/handled by Barry Taylor  
John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve:  
Halorros Snipe, owned/handled by Craig Perry  
Guns' Choice: Llangynidr Henry The Eighth, owned/handled by Nigel Probert



Our prize winners and the judges.

We held our 12 dog open field trial on Monday 15th December 2025 at the Batsford Estate, Moreton-in-Marsh, by the kind invitation of Lord and Lady Dulverton. We are extremely grateful to them for their very generous support, and for all the hard work that head keeper Matthew Farmer and his team and guns contribute to the successful running of the trial.

Thank you to our judges Phil Bruton [A], Helen Goodwin [A], Ricky Moloney [B] and Kate Smith [B], and all the others who worked so hard on a cold and often wet day - Chief Steward Jennie Dimmock, judges' stewards Nicky Pointer and Veronica Harris, game carriers Sean McGrath and Rachel Massey, markers Nicola Radtke, Andy Crampton, Zena Churchward, and Morton Redpath. And Dave Field, who stepped in to help too. Official picker up was Killy Pennell. I'd also like to thank Claire Raymond for helping in the line, Sarah Akehurst for the warming soups, Jean Tidmarsh for all the yummy cake and Veronica Harris for the goody bags for helpers pockets. Rachel Massey deserves an extra special mention for staying on at the end to help clear up!

Our grateful thanks go to the beaters, and well done the guns for getting plenty of birds on the floor (Alex Badger, Tom Ford, Michael Gough, Stan Howells, Martin Parkinson and Tony Stanley).

Pheasant and partridge fell into thick cover (scrub and brambles) and maize, as well as out in the fields. It was a rather a cold and drizzly day and we only just got back in before the heavy rain.

Everyone was glad to get back into the beaters' room where Michael Gough presented the winners with their cards and trophies.



Smiles in the line!  
Miserables?



Chief steward Jennie and Anna recreating a scene from Les



Ricky and Helen confer...



Marching on....



Smiley!



Alert!



Chilling out!



Happy to swim!! Despite the cold and rain!!



The anxious wait...



...but all is well, bird safely to hand!



Tea and biscuits!



The judges confer for the final time...

A very big thank you to everyone who contributed to the day and to our sponsors Skinners, for their prize cards and vouchers for those in the awards. Many congratulations again to Andrew (who came in as a reserve, from work, only that morning!), Nigel, Craig, Mark, Keith and Barry.

Well done to you all, judges, guns, beaters, helpers, and competitors alike, for an atmosphere all day of happy camaraderie (as well as total professionalism) that makes all the hard work putting these trials on worthwhile. Thank you.

Photographs by kind permission of Chris Lawrence, Earthdog Photography