

Newsletter 2025



Kennel Club Reg 2045



Welcome to your 2025 edition of the Wye Valley Retriever Club Newsletter.

We do hope you find the Newsletter informative and interesting. We have aimed to give information about the Club, information about the events the Club is planning for 2025 and a chance to look back on events which took place in 2024.

The Newsletter is issued free to all our members registered for the year 2024 to 2025 - our membership year runs from 1st February each year – and to new members joining in 2025.

I am extremely grateful to everyone on the Committee who have supported me. Good luck with your training, tests and trials and have fun with your dogs!

Chris Peers – Secretary

Wye Valley Retriever Club Committee 2025

Mr Luke Thompson-Coon - President

Mr Terry Dukes - Vice President

Mr Michael Gough – Vice-President

Mrs Veronica Harris – Chairman

Mrs Sarah Akehurst – Vice Chairman Secretary

Mrs Christine Peers - Secretary

Mrs Nicola Pointer – Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Mrs Anna Crampton - Field Trial and Working Test Secretary

Mr Sean McGrath - Training Secretary

Mrs Jean Tidmarsh

Mr Morton Redpath

Mr Tony Griffiths

Ms Rachel Massey

Mrs Jennie Dimmock

Dates for Your Diary 2025

Saturday 26 th April	Working Test at Garford Farm, Yarkhill – Open, Puppy, Special Puppy
Tuesday 29 th April	Training at Westhide starts with Assessment session. Eight week course including Assessment and End of Term Test and Social
Tuesday 6 th May	Training session at Westhide. Every Tuesday until the End of Term Test and Social on 24 th June
Thursday 8 th May	Annual General Meeting to be held at the Plough Inn, Stoke Lacy at 7.30pm
Saturday 12 th July	Working Test at Ravenhill Court Lulsley,- Novice, Novice Dog/Novice Handler, Veteran and Junior Handler
Friday 18 th July	End of Term Annual Dinner
Tuesday 2 nd September	Stubble training - Westhide
	Novice Field Trial, DATE AND VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED
	Open Field Trial, DATE AND VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED

Website and Facebook

Wye Valley Retriever Club have a website www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

You will find lots of useful information on the website including

- the history of the Club
- information on forthcoming working tests and field trials including entry forms and schedules
- Conditions of Entry for our working tests and field trials
- results of working tests and field trials
- membership application form and standing order form
- our Data Protection and Privacy Notice

- our Rules and Regulations
- our Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessments

Wye Valley Retriever Club are on Facebook for members only. We regularly update our Facebook site with posts containing news, reports, photos and requests. Please visit us and like our posts and photos

The dates and venues for our events will be posted on our website and Facebook. Please do check them regularly.

Contact Us

Wye Valley Retriever Club can be contacted by email at:

info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

One of our Committee will be pleased to respond to your emails.

If you are unable to email us or unable to access information on our Facebook site and website, please phone our Secretary (01432 860584) and we can arrange to get you the information you require.

Membership Fees 2025

	Single	Joint	Junior
Annual Membership	£10.00	£15.00	No fee
Joining Fee	£10.00	£10.00	No fee
Training Fee per Dog	£90.00	(8 week course)	

Membership application forms for new members and membership renewal application forms for existing members are available on our website www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk under the heading Forms.

Training Courses 2025

Wye Valley Retriever Club will be holding their usual training classes again in 2025 for members 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), beginners, novice, and open.

Our trainers are volunteers and the guidance and advice they give for gun dog 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 training 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 requirement for dogs in training, except beginners, are as follows:

- Walk to heel on a loose lead without pulling
- Simple recall
- Sit quietly/sit and stay off the lead – i.e. no noise, 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. The classes run for eight weeks on Tuesday evenings from 6th May, starting with an assessment session and finishing on 24th June with a test and social – an eight-week course. The classes will take place at 4.30 to 6.00pm and 6.00 to 7.30pm.

The End of Term Test and Social (including food) is for those who have completed training together with trainers and helpers.

There will be 2-3 away days with guest trainers over the summer and (if we can continue to beat the tractors with their ploughs!!) walk up training in the stubble at Westhide in September – so a full season of training!

Please let us know if you want to take part in our training classes. Contact details are on Page 3. You will be made most welcome and we are sure you will find the classes enjoyable and instructive.

Chairman's Report

Another year has flown by and it's time to look back on 2024 and forwards to 2025. Membership of the Wye Valley Retriever Club continues to grow far beyond that of our original expectations and we are delighted to have the reputation of being such a friendly club. Your committee works tirelessly to provide tests, trials and training throughout the year. In 2024 we provided Working Tests in March and June and Field Trials at Dunclent and Batsford in November and December. Training at Westhide was well subscribed as always,

and in addition Sean McGrath and Anna Crampton organized away days for training in different locations. One thing I would like to say is that if you sign up for a training class, please see it through to the end. By leaving halfway through you have deprived another member of a place. We all have good and bad sessions and it's only by practice and perseverance you can make progress. Wye Valley training classes are not a quick fix but should be seen as a step on the ladder to success.

Other events we have been involved with include Countrytastic at the Three Counties Showground. This is an outdoor event in March and such a good way of introducing children to the countryside and country pursuits. We also participated in the Ludlow Dog Day, a charity event where we were overwhelmed by visitors wanting their dogs to complete two water retrieves. It was a very hot day and the majority of dogs had never retrieved on land or water. I shall just say it was unforgettable, exhausting and fun.

Our 2024 AGM was a great success enhanced by a talk by Chris Dixon of Wye Valley Vets. We shall aim to provide a similar evening for our 2025 AGM. Please join us on this occasion – for the Club to continue we need your support at all events, not just at tests and trials.

Finally I must say thank you to our landowners – we couldn't manage without you and we are truly grateful; to everyone who has helped in any way at our events in the past year; to the members of our Committee.

Our Committee meet at least five times each year and communicate frequently with each other at other times. If you feel you could contribute to the Club through the Committee please contact me. We welcome new thoughts and suggestions which are the life blood of any club. Steve Lax resigned from the Committee at the last AGM and we miss his contribution to our meetings. We are delighted to welcome Jennie Dimmock.

Veronica Harris – Chairman

Treasurer's Report

The clubs accounting year runs from the 1st of February 2024 to the 31st of January 2025 in order to cover the shooting season.

The club currently has a healthy reserve of funds which are considered adequate to cover any foreseeable expenses, and audited accounts will be presented at the AGM.




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The club has continued to support charities which are approved by the committee and during 2024 we made a significant donation to the Pet Blood Bank which is always looking for support and is a very good cause.

Membership remained steady throughout the year and we currently have approximately 340 members we hope that everyone has enjoyed the events that have been put on by members of the committee.

Club membership application forms for new members and membership renewal application forms for existing members are available on our website www.wyvalleyretrieverclub.co.uk under the heading Forms.

Wishing you all a prosperous 2025.

Nicola Pointer – Treasurer

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Rules and Regulations

All Working Tests and Field Trials run by the Club are conducted in accordance with the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations (Section J) together with the Rules of the Wye Valley Retriever Club. All participants in Working Tests and Field Trials should be fully conversant with the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations.

The Club's Rules and Regulations can be downloaded from our website where there is also a link to the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations (Section J).

Field Trial & Working Test Secretary's Report

My thanks again to everyone who has stepped forward to help at our tests and trials, again so often without having to be asked. Stewarding, catering, marking, game carrying, dummy throwing – whatever you did to lend a hand, thank you very much. So often an army of helpers is needed for a very few to have fun, so we are all very grateful to you.

For our trials, we are extremely fortunate indeed to have two very supportive landowners, Michael and Jane Gough at Dunclent, and Lord and Lady Dulverton at Batsford. Our grateful thanks go to them for allowing us to compete on their ground this season, and to their keepers who work so hard for us. Thank you too to our guns.



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ACME ALPHA

For our working tests this year, our thanks go to Richard Edwards at Felton Court, and Patrick Wrixon at Devereux Wootton. The weather was even worse than last year before our first test and we had a lot of mud to contend with. Well done everyone for keeping a sense of humour!! We were very thankful for the hard standing in the yard.... But the sun shone on us in June at Devereux Wootton, which made it all a lot easier. Thank you to both Richard and Patrick, for all your hard work before the test day and your patience on the day!

Thank you too to all our judges (thank you for making my day by saying yes!!), and to Skinners for their continuing support. We've had vouchers from Sporting Saint this year for helpers, and goody bags for helpers' dogs at our trials from Angharad Durham, Canine and Equine Services. Our thanks to them too.

Congratulations to the winners of our trophies. Whether it is your first time holding the silverware or you have done it many times before, well done that all your hard work paid off on the day. There is an old saying – "The harder I work, the luckier I seem to get" and I think there is a lot of truth in that!

Finally, thank you too to Andy, my long suffering husband, who puts up with my long hours at my laptop, my days away from home, throws dummies when we need him to, fills the hot water pump pots at 5am for trials and cleans the starting pistols for tests so there is a chance they just might work correctly!

Anna Crampton

Working Test Results

Felton Court, Felton, Herefordshire on Saturday 23rd March 2024

We held our first working tests of the season at Felton Court, by the kind invitation of Richard Edwards. We are extremely grateful to him and his family for their kind support.

There were tests for any variety retrievers Novice, Novice Dog / Novice Handler, Young Handler, Veteran.

The weather, especially for farmers, has been very challenging recently and we were thankful for a concrete yard to park all the vehicles in and a lovely dry barn to have as HQ! The wet weather continued off and on all morning but thankfully was better in the afternoon.

Thank you to our judges Phil Bruton, Helen Chatterton, Nicky Waddington and Mark Schiller. They coped with a very large entry with patience and good humour all day.

Our stewards kept the competitors well organized. Well done Chris, Jean, Sarah, Carla, Rachel and Nicola. Thank you too to our dummy throwers and placers – standing out there with the rain lashing down so other people can

have fun! Nicola, George, Morton, Isaac, Steve, Shayne, Andy, Terry and Betsy.

I'm sure everyone appreciated the pocket goody bags done by Veronica and thank you to Jean Tidmarsh and Sarah Akehurst for organizing the catering and providing delicious cakes (along with Chris Peers) that everyone was very grateful for at the end of the day.

Thank you to Sean McGrath, who helped set up everything with me the day before and provided ideas for the tests for the judges.

Thank you very much too to our sponsors Skinners, who provided prizes to our winners, and to Sporting Saint who provided vouchers for helpers and goody bags for all the Young Handlers. Their support is very appreciated.

And thank you too to all our handlers who were a credit to the spirit of friendly competition.

Novice

1st	Gingerfox Firecrest Of Severncrest	Lab/Dog	Carla Gibson
2nd	Bellesbank Shooting Star Of Berlastone	Lab/Bitch	Emma Champion
3rd	Constanigree Seren Star	Lab/Bitch	Nick Swan
4th	Fletchingly Langamull	Lab/Bitch	Nessa Gilham
COM	Merakibea Frieda	Lab/Bitch	Karen Pinker
COM	Mynydd Du Iceman	Lab/Dog	Paul Edmunds
COM	Chinnordale Comet	GR/Dog	Bryan Davies

Novice Dog / Novice Handler

1st	Kenzduo Aquamarine Of Redvalci	Lab/Bitch	Catrin Owen
2nd	Rupertbear	Lab/Dog	Radana Hlinikova
3rd	Dealminster Duster	Lab/Bitch	Dale Pointer
4th	Idawood Twig	Lab/Dog	Nicholas Howse
COM	Mavisflight Lucky Star	FCR/Bitch	Nicola Radtke
COM	Fellmarch Sweet Vernal Suzy	Lab/Bitch	Judith Haynes

Young Handler

1st	Dealminster Drew Of Hassycott	Lab/Dog	Isaac Hawkins
2nd	Swiftlands Austin	Lab/Dog	Austin Nunneley
3rd	Swiftlands Hela	Lab/Bitch	Austin Nunneley
4th	Swiftlands River	Lab/Dog	Heidi Nunneley

Veteran

1st	Fletchingly Annraidh	Lab/Bitch	Nessa Gilham
2nd	Millerise Jacob	Lab/Dog	Janice Miller
3rd	Constanigree Shooting Star	Lab/Bitch	Nick Swan
4th	Millerise Jemima	Lab/Bitch	Janice Miller
COM	Swiftlands Dora	Lab/Bitch	Austin Nunneley
COM	Pinedale Sage	GR/Dog	Christine Peers



Novice Winners with the Judges



Novice Dog / Novice Handler prize winners with the judges.



Young Handler prize winners with the judges.



Veteran prize winners with the judges.



The Young Handlers with their goody bags from Sporting Saint (plus some chocolate added by Anna!!)



Jean Tidmarsh presented the prizes in the morning - we were on her nephew's farm



Terry Dukes presents the "Terry Dukes Veteran Shield" to Nessa Gilham

Devereux Wootton, Norton Canon, Herefordshire, on 8TH June 2024

We held our second working test day of the season at Devereux Wootton, Norton Canon, Herefordshire, by the kind invitation of Patrick Wrixon. We are extremely grateful to him for his generous support in letting us have a test on his ground and for all the hard work he put in beforehand cutting tracks etc. And then throwing dummies all day too!

Thank you to our judges Wayne Skett, Paul Egginton, Clare Gould and Jean Tidmarsh.

Our stewards (Jean, Veronica, Chris, Sue, Jane and Sarah) kept the competitors well organized and moving promptly between tests. Thank you too to our dummy throwers, Andy Crampton (despite the one lost in the hedge!), Tom Bennellick (who came despite his broken foot), Terry Dukes, Steve Lax, Shayne Price, Julian Gallimore. Thank you to Jean for organizing the catering and providing cakes that everyone was very grateful for at the end of the day, Chris for the delicious coffee and walnut cake, and Veronica for the helper goody bags (Jammy Dodger Minis are amazing!!).

I am very grateful to all our team, and to those competitors who helped during the opposite half of the day to when they were competing. Well done for offering and thank you.

Thank you very much too to our sponsors Skinners, who provided prizes to our winners, and to Sporting Saint who provided vouchers for helpers. Their support is very appreciated.

The Open was hotly fought at the top and it was very encouraging to see so many excellent puppies - another high scoring competition. Well done all the handlers who came that were new to the sport.

Congratulations to everyone in the awards.

Open

1 st	Greyhill Velvet At Bucksbrow	Lab/Bitch, 13/06/2021	Elizabeth (Sid) Davis
2 nd	Cornstraw Snipe	Lab/Bitch, 26/02/2020	Ruth Warner
3 rd	Klato Isaac Of Flypatch	Lab/Dog, 01/06/2020	Tim Brain
4 th	Nobsquinton Teasel Of Croftferry	Lab/Bitch, 26/03/2017	Steve Prosser
COM	Kenxtwen Date With Destiny At Omachie	Lab/Dog, 11/07/2020	Alan Rees
COM	Crystlstream Harris	GR/Dog, 06/06/2016	Mary Jarrod
COM	Diglake Napravnik	Lab/Bitch, 16/02/2018	Dawn Scott

Puppy

1 st	Bellesbank Pintail	Lab/Dog, 01/05/2023	Steve Lax
2 nd	Ashport Kenelm	Lab/Dog, 26/05/2023	Veronica Harris
3 rd	Nortnewydd Blooming In Bala	Lab/Bitch, 21/04/2023	Geraint Ellis
4 th	Jinkster Jollyboy	GR/Dog, 06/04/2023	Mary Jarrod
COM	Balbirnie Solo	Lab/Dog, 20/04/2023	Karen Vere- Hodge

COM	Crofferry Brie	Lab/Bitch, 13/03/2023	Steve Prosser
COM	Mynydddu Robey	Lab/Bitch, 22/12/2022	Kathryn Robey
COM	Diglake Constance	Lab/Bitch, 21/02/2023	Annabelle Dodd

Special Puppy

1 st	Kenzduo Calm Before Storm	Lab/Bitch, 27/06/2022	Pat James
2 nd	Therlbriar Xavier	Lab/Dog, 21/06/2022	Nicky Wellfair



Open award winners with the judges.



Puppy prize award winners.



Special Puppy award winners.



Steve and Veronica, 1st and 2nd in the Puppy Class



Steve demonstrates to the assembled the left signal that won the puppy class!

Field Trial Results

Novice Field Trial Held at Dunclent Farm, Kidderminster Friday 8th November 2024

We held our 16 dog novice field trial on Friday 8th November 2024 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 Dave Field, Clare Wood, Clare Gould and Shane Gilliver, and all the others who worked so hard to make the trial run so smoothly - Chief Steward Iris Wright, judges' stewards Julia Redpath and Jennie Dimmock, game carriers Sean McGrath and Callam Sale, Red Flag Dale Pointer, markers Paul Egginton, Steve Lax and Tia Darby, Official picker up Nicola Pointer. We are very lucky as a club to have so many volunteers. Thank you too to Christopher Bennett who took over game carrying duties when Sean had to leave early.

Catering was provided by Sarah Akehurst and Jean Tidmarsh – absolutely delicious food at the end of a very long day! Thank you for your hard work, and patience too, waiting for everyone to come back!

Thanks too to Veronica Harris for the “goody bags” to keep judges and helpers going through the day. We missed the Jammie Dodgers Minis from your summer goody bags though!!!

Thank you to the guns (Michael Gough, Stan Howes, Patrick Kennedy, Guy Neadham, Richard Neadham, Morton Redpath, Mark Stinton) and to the steward of the beat, Mark Nicholls, whose team presented the birds excellently and, as ever, were very patient between the drives.

Thank you too to our sponsors Skinners for the cards and vouchers presented to the award winners, Sporting Saint for the vouchers for helpers and to Angharad's Canine and Equine Services for the goody bags for helpers to take home to their dogs, full of all sorts of tasty treats.

The weather was kind to us and the day was dry and thankfully a bit cooler than some recently. By the end of the day, however, we were all wishing it had been warmer! Dave and Clare G judged on the right, with Clare W and Shane 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, where some of the birds also fell. This drive produced plenty of pheasants and a pigeon, which caused quite some trouble. Luckily the judges couldn't find it either!

The second drive was the Home Drive, right below Michael's house, with the guns shooting ducks and pheasants, quite a number of which fell into Michael's garden. We finished with Seventeen Acres. Plenty of pheasants were shot here, which was just as well as the judges were finding it very hard to split the dogs and there were still plenty in contention at this stage. A well-hidden hen bird in a ditch of water caused plenty more trouble, before some lovely retrieves off the main field allowed the judges to pick their award winners.

Clare Baker was particularly pleased to receive the John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve as she had been one of the many youngsters to whom John had given so much time to help with their dogs.

A very big thank you again to everyone who contributed to the day and to our main sponsors Skinners for their support. Many congratulations again to Nigel, Karen, George, Keith and Clare.

Results:

Winner	Withyrose Islay of Llangynidr, handled by Nigel Probert
COM	Sorrelcott Superior, handled by George Davies
COM	Movenne Acorn at Peterspond, handled by Karen Handley
COM	Cornwood Glorification, handled by Keith Broomfield

Guns' Choice	Movenne Acorn at Peterspond, handled by Karen Handley
John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve	Arcklebear First Blood, handled by Clare Baker

The standard of the dogs was very high and it was difficult to separate them at the end, resulting in the photo of the award winners being taken in the dark!



Our prize winners with the judges

Open Field Trial held at Batsford Estate, Moreton-in-Marsh, 16th December 2024

We held our 12 dog open field trial on Monday 16th December 2024 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.

Our judges were Paula Cullis [A], Steve Cullis [A], Laura Marsh [B] and Reuben Mort [B].

Chief Steward Iris Wright. Judges' stewards were Nicola Pointer and Jennie Dimmock.

Game carriers were Steve Lax and Shane Gilliver. Dale Pointer carried the red flag. Marking birds down were Alex Cox, Tia Darby, Lisa Murrell and Luke

Nightingale. Official picker up was Killy Pennell, with her lovely mixed coloured team – one yellow Lab, one black Labs, and a chocolate Cocker!

Catering, that very important job, was done by Sarah Akehurst and Jean Tidmarsh, with an extra cake from Cherry Smith. Goody bags for our pockets to keep us going during the trial, were provided by Veronica Harris.

Steward of the Beat was Matthew Farmer. His team produced the one amazing drive that was all we needed! They were very patient while the trial progressed – despite Matthew leaving their bottle of port back in the yard!!

The guns were Michael Gough, Andrew Holloway, Ian Miller, Steve Prosser, Stuart Reid, Tony Stanley. They really enjoyed the drive, “filling their boots” and skilfully put enough birds onto the ground for the trial to finish with just that one drive.



The guns with Matthew

It was a very lovely day (thankfully dry and no stormy winds!) but driven trials are always cold! The field was split between two fields of a young crop, with a hedge line between them with a deep strip of white grass in front. We therefore ran under the odds and evens system. Paula and Laura were judging on the left, Steve and Rueben on the right.

We had the one drive, of pheasants and partridge. And they just kept coming! The excitement proved a little too much for some. As one competitor said (showing true sportsmanship with a big smile), it was a lovely retrieve, just not in the right numerical order (or sent by the judge)....!

The field was combined on the right to complete the second round and start the third and then on through further rounds to finish the trial. Dogs were sent for birds out on the field and in the white grass. With so many retrieves, our game carriers were certainly loaded down with birds! There was one anxious moment

for two competitors whose dogs had both worked an area very hard without finding. Luckily the judges didn't have better noses so they didn't find either!!

Eventually the judges called the trial over and we went back to the yard for the results and presentations, and much needed hot soup.

Results:

Winner	Jarailstar Hogen of Stauntonvale, handled by Laura Hill
2 nd Place	FtCh Skovagers Six Mile Woodcock, handled by Louise Munchaus Adsboel
3 rd Place	Marstonprior Grenadier Of Wedgnock, handled by Steve Richardson
Guns' Choice	Marstonprior Grenadier Of Wedgnock, handled by Steve Richardson
John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve	FtCh Skovagers Six Mile Woodcock, handled by Louise Munchaus Adsboel



Our prize winners with the judges.
Photograph by Chris Lawrence of Earthdog Photography



The gallery, led by Red Flag, Dale Pointer



Matthew presents Laura, our winner, with her award © Earthdog Photography

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, and to Sporting Saint for their vouchers for helpers and to Angharad Durham (canine and equine services) Angharad Durham (Canine and Equine Services) for the goody bags for our dogs so they forgave us when we got home!

I'd also like to thank Rachel Massey, my wing-person – having Rachel at my side makes all the difference as there is always so much to do! And thanks too to everyone who helped serve food and helped clear up afterwards. Great teamwork.

Thank you too to Phil Bruton, who gave up his day to talk through the trial to a group of aspiring trialers. We hope they will have the confidence and inspiration to take part themselves in the near future.

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.

Many congratulations again to Laura, Louise and Steve.

One final picture – an “out-take”, as Laura’s dog decides he needs a big hug for being a such clever boy!!



© Earthdog Photography

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY FOR FIELD TRIALS

PLEASE NOTE: Any existing member whose subscription has not been paid in full by 31st March in the current season will be treated as a non-member in the draw (currently 31st March 2025). It is up to members to check carefully that their subscription has been paid. No exceptions to this rule will be made. The Committee recommend payment by **STANDING ORDER**. Your subscription must be paid by 31st March 2025 to compete in the 2025/26 field trial season.

Training Report 2024

Wye Valley Retriever Club held their usual training classes again in 2024 for handlers and their dogs, at Westhide Estate, by the kind permission of our president, Luke Thompson Coon. Ali Leake, Sean McGrath, Claire Raymond, Clare Gould and Morton Redpath, with Jean Tidmarsh as the “super-sub”, took beginners, puppy, novice and open classes, giving help, guidance and advice to members who wanted to improve the way they interact with their dogs, whether for picking up, competing in working tests and field trials or just for fun. Thank you very much to them all for their time and expertise.

The series of 8 classes finished with an “end of term test” and social evening, also at Westhide, with a delicious hog roast organised by Jean.

The winners were:

- Puppy – Veronica Harris, Sonny
- Novice 1 – Charlotte Drake, Havoc
- Novice 2 – Dale Pointer, Mila
- Novice 2 – Cherry Smith, Fred

They were presented with their trophies at the annual dinner. Well done everyone for the progress you made this year.

The club also organised three guest trainer days this summer. We started off in June with Dave Field at the Goodrich Estate Shoot (by kind permission of Nigel Roper and Andy Crampton).



Dave directs Sean across the dog's lake



A method for stopping 'creep'



Paul trying to avoid his dog's shake!

Dave's theme was challenging the handlers to think about why they did things. He spent time observing the dogs – they don't lie!! The big message, once again, was attention to basics, patience and slow it up. Anna Crampton took notes throughout and these were provided to the handlers afterwards.



Nicky, Dale and Nick



Dave works on delivery out of water



Tea and cake very welcome by most at the end of the day – except Sean doesn't look like he is enjoying it!!

A group went to Paul Truby in July. Handlers enjoyed their day and were full of praise for Paul and his methods.

In August we went to the Welsh moors for a day with Graham Home. And it rained. And then rained a bit more! Graham set challenging exercises for the dogs using the unique terrain up there, with all the dogs gaining in confidence as the day progressed.



Chrissie, Nick, Patrick, Sue, Graham, Nick, Sue, Jane – all still smiling!

In September, Sean took two walk up training sessions in stubble. Using a mixture of automated dummy launchers, thrown dummies and placed blinds, the retrieves were set to stretch the dogs and handlers and build on what they had learned at club training.



Training in the stubble



More training in the stubble

Annual Dinner

The dinner was held at the Bay Horse Inn just outside Hereford on Friday 12th July 2024. It was well attended by members and their guests including the club president Luke Thompson-Coon.

Everyone tucked into a delicious meal. The awards were presented by the president after the meal. Awards were given for the end of training tests.

An enjoyable evening was had by everyone.

Ludlow Dog Day

On 28th July 2024 the Wye Valley Retriever Club once again ran a water scurry at the Ludlow Dog Day, Stokesay Court. We met some lovely people and their lovely dogs. The dogs were keen to go in the water on such a sunny day. Unfortunately, as we found before, not all were so keen to come out! The event is very well organised by the Rotary Club as their main charity fund raiser. There were lots of things to see and do all around the lovely grounds of Stokesay Court.

Thanks to our helpers and to the show organisers for looking after us so well. Thank you also Sporting Saint for donating great prizes.

Sadly, the Ludlow Dog Day will be taking a break in 2025, but we hope to be invited back in 2026. It's a great day out for dog lovers and the Club has enjoyed being part of it.



Ludlow Dog Day at Stokesay Court

The Gamekeeper's Dog



Keeper. Holkham.

I took a picture of this photo hanging in the museum at Holkham Hall. It was there as part of the story of the Coke Hat (also known as the Bowler), invented in 1849 by Lock and Co for Holkham's gamekeepers, to ward off low-lying branches and poachers (and still issued to this day). What struck me, however, was the dog looking at the camera, out through history – a Flatcoated Retriever.

Spaniels go back many centuries, used for flushing, but it wasn't until the 18th century, when firearms arrived in the shooting field, that sportsmen began to feel the need for a specialist retrieving dog because very many more birds were being shot. Initially any type of dog that showed any skill at retrieving game was called a retriever – the word described the function and not the breed.

Eventually (probably when people got fed up with their birds being chewed by terriers and beagles and the like!) some judicious selection and crossing of spaniels, setters, water dogs and sheepdogs produced all sorts of "proper" retrievers. But they were all still one "breed", the Retriever.

There was also the St John's Water Dog, also originally known as the Lesser Labrador or the small Newfoundland. This breed came out of the traffic of dogs between Britain and Newfoundland by fishermen and timber traders. There are even theories that the St John was mainly developed in Britain during the first half of the 18th century and imported back into the coastal districts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Even the Newfoundland dog itself is believed to be of European ancestry. This means that when British sportsmen were eagerly

importing the St John back to this country as something foreign and special, they were actually bringing it back full circle to where it had originated!

Towards the end of the 19th century, the St John was mixed with British Water dogs, English Water spaniels (both now extinct like the St John), setters, setter/Newfoundland crosses and collies. The result was the Wavy Coated Retriever. The St John's was also the origin of the Labrador Retriever.

During the mid-1800's, Mr S.E. Shirley, of Ettingham Park, near Stratford-upon-Avon, decided to improve the Wavy (also called Smooth Coated), to distinguish them from the Curly Coats. His breeding of setters (eg the Gordon Setter), collie types and the St John produced the Flatcoated retriever. The breed was used by both guns and gamekeepers alike – flushing game or picking up on the peg, working on land or in water.

If you know your dog history, you may recognise his name for another reason – Mr Sewallis Evelyn Shirley MP was the founder of the Kennel Club, in 1873.

So, if I'm stretching things and being cheeky, the founder of the Kennel Club took a Labrador and improved it to make a Flatcoat!!

The breed was the favoured breed from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. The Flatcoated Retriever was simply known as the Gamekeeper's Dog.

So, little wonder then, that the dog looking out at me over the centuries from the picture at Holkham, was a Flatcoat.



Tiffin © Chris Lawrence and Earthdog Photography

Footnote

The Labrador was not recognised as a separate breed until 1903. The first Retriever Championship was held in January 1909 and was won by the Duchess of Hamilton's Labrador, Dungavel Phoebe, leading to a swift rise in the breed's popularity....

(With thanks to help from "A Review of the Flat-coated Retriever" by Nancy Laughton)



Tiffin © Chris Lawrence and Earthdog Photography

Anna Crampton

Research News

A quarter of Labrador retriever dogs face a double-whammy of feeling hungry all the time *and* burning fewer calories due to a genetic mutation!

This obesity-driving combination means that dog owners must be particularly strict with feeding and exercising their Labradors to keep them slim. The mutation is in a gene called *POMC*, which plays a critical role in hunger and energy use.



Around 25% of Labradors and 66% of Flatcoated retriever dogs have the *POMC* mutation, which researchers previously showed causes increased interest in food and risk of obesity.

The new study follows on from our 2016 paper and reveals more about how the mutation profoundly changes the way Labradors and Flatcoated retrievers behave around food. It found that although they don't need to eat more to feel full, they are hungrier in between meals.

In addition, dogs with the *POMC* mutation were found to use around 25% less energy at rest than dogs without it, meaning they don't need to consume as many calories to maintain a healthy body weight.

"We found that a mutation in the *POMC* gene seems to make dogs hungrier. Affected dogs tend to overeat because they get hungry between meals more quickly than dogs without the mutation," said Dr Eleanor Raffan, lead researcher now based at the University of Cambridge's Department of Physiology, Development and Neuroscience who led the study.

She added: "All owners of Labradors and Flatcoated retrievers need to watch what they're feeding these highly food-motivated dogs, to keep them a healthy weight. But dogs with this genetic mutation face a double whammy: they not only want to eat more, but also need fewer calories because they're not burning them off as fast."

The *POMC* mutation was found to alter a pathway in the dogs' brains associated with body weight regulation. The mutation triggers a starvation signal that tells their body to increase food intake and conserve energy, despite this being unnecessary.

Raffan said: "People are often rude about the owners of fat dogs, blaming them for not properly managing their dogs' diet and exercise. But we've shown that Labradors with this genetic mutation are looking for food all the time, trying to increase their energy intake. It's very difficult to keep these dogs slim, but it can be done."

The researchers say owners can keep their retrievers distracted from this constant hunger by spreading out each daily food ration, for example by using puzzle feeders or scattering the food around the garden so it takes longer to eat. We have brought together some advice about how to feed your foodie dog on www.pdn.cam.ac.uk/research/canine-weight-management.

In the study, 87 adult pet Labrador dogs - all a healthy weight or moderately overweight - took part in several tests including the 'sausage in a box' test.

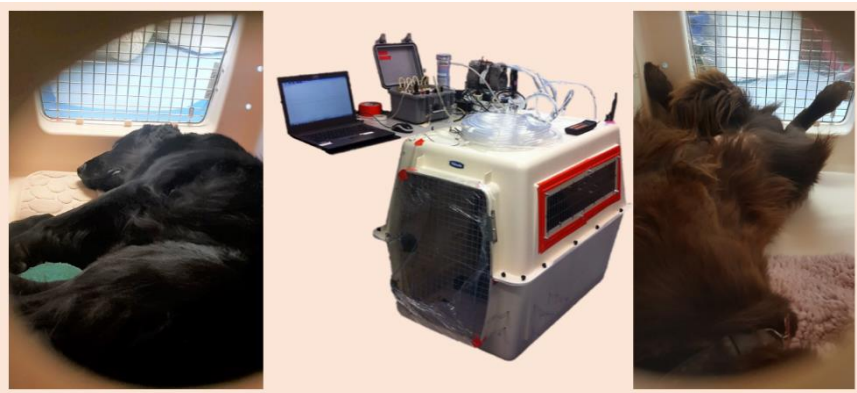
First, the dogs were given a can of dog food every 20 minutes until they chose not to eat any more. All ate huge amounts of food, but the dogs with the *POMC* mutation didn't eat more than those without it. This showed that they all feel full with a similar amount of food.



Next, on a different day, dogs were fed a standard amount of breakfast. Exactly three hours later they were offered a sausage in a box and their behaviour was recorded. The box was made of clear plastic with a perforated lid, so the dogs could see and smell the sausage, but couldn't eat it.

The researchers found that dogs with the *POMC* mutation tried significantly harder to get the sausage from the box than dogs without it, indicating greater hunger. You can see videos of the test in the link at the top of this news piece.

The dogs were then allowed to sleep in a special chamber that measured the gases they breathed out. This revealed that dogs with the *POMC* mutation burn around 25% fewer calories than dogs without it. We saw some crazy sleeping positions in the box!



The *POMC* gene and the brain pathway it affects are similar in dogs and humans. The new findings are consistent with reports of extreme hunger in humans with *POMC* mutations, who tend to become obese at an early age and develop a host of clinical problems as a result. Drugs currently in development for human obesity, underactive sexual desire and certain skin conditions target this brain pathway, so understanding it fully is important.

A mutation in the *POMC* gene in dogs prevents production of two chemical messengers in the dog brain, beta-melanocyte stimulating hormone (β -MSH) and beta-endorphin, but does not affect production of a third, alpha-melanocyte stimulating hormone (α -MSH).

Further laboratory studies by the team suggest that β -MSH and beta-endorphin are important in determining hunger and moderating energy use, and their role is independent of the presence of α -MSH. This challenges the previous belief, based on research in rats, that early onset human obesity due to *POMC* mutations is caused only by a lack of α -MSH. Rats don't produce beta-melanocyte stimulating hormone, but humans and dogs produce both α - and β -MSH.

The research was funded by The Dogs Trust and Wellcome. We would also like to thank all the dogs and their owners who took part as well as the vets and nurses who took time to measure dogs for us and our many collaborators on the project.

We also want to let you know that after a few years of very geeky genetics studies based at a computer, we have also been back working with dogs. We are investigating how neutering and genetics affect dogs' weight, activity and eating – that is work still going on.

The GOdogs Research Team

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The Committee of the Wye Valley Retriever Club is committed to ensuring that personal information is handled in a secure and confidential manner in accordance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018. The Club's Data Protection and Privacy Policy can be found on their website. www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

Can You Join our Merry Band of Helpers?

Help is always needed at our events and you could join us in making them enjoyable for all. We offer a free lunch and a bottle of wine or Sporting Saint voucher at most events if you volunteer as a steward, dummy thrower, tea maker etc. We also need photographers to record our events.

If you would like to help in any way, please contact the Club by email at info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

Helping at our events is a good way of getting to know everyone and making friends in the Club and we are sure you will be able to learn a lot by watching the dogs and handlers work.

WVRC Items for Sale

Wye Valley Retriever Club are able to supply items of quality clothing embroidered with the Club logo. We can supply Polo Shirts, Sweatshirts, Baseball Caps, Ties and Fleece. Please contact the Secretary if you would like to order any items.



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Health and Safety

The safety of participants, helpers, spectators and members of the public is a priority for the Wye Valley Retriever Club at its events. The Club has a Health and Safety Policy and has carried out risk assessments for its training, working tests and field trials.

A copy of the Club's Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments can be found on our website:

www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

We encourage you to take time to read this information. If you are unable to access these documents on our website, please email our secretary info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk (marked for the attention of Chris Peers) and we can arrange to get you the information you require.

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