

Working Trials Association

Newsletter April 2002

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Dates to remember:

Our AGM was held on 10 March. Our new Committee for the WTA is as follows: Ursula Chairman, Sheila Vice Chair, Allan Lester and Gladys treasurers, Ilse secretary and Joyce Lester and Chantelle Bissett as members. We are looking for good prizes for a raffle to be held over the June weekends. Please open your cupboards and find something and pass it on to one of the committee please. Remember everything is getting more expensive and we need to boost our funds. Membership of the WTA is so cheap compared to all other clubs. We will have to increase that next year. Our next show will be June with a double Obedience and DJ Shows on 1 & 2 June. Two weekends later we are holding the Working Trials of the club: 15 & 16 June. We are planning a fun day sometime this year and this might include a brunch to make it an all day of training for dogs and handlers.

Was in Bulawayo towards the end of March to judge Working Trials on Saturday and Obedience on Sunday, and was amazed at the amount of dogs that were entered. In working trials there were 2 in CD, 2 in TD 1, one in TD 2 and three in TD 3. This is a good entry for Zimbabwe. The TD 1 dogs tracked very well the TD 2 dog encountered a rabbit and that was her concentration gone. It was amazing how the dogs tracked if you can imagine the grass covering. Bulawayo has not had any rain for the past three months. As it is, the grass is very sparse and to top that no rain and so no green grass to be seen. To make it even more fantastic that these dogs tracked was a near gale force wind. This is not to compare with Harare where we have a vast difference in the grass coverage, which is good and hardly any bare patches to be seen. To compare this with Europe, none of their dogs could track here! Obedience again was well attended and the dogs could beat the lot here in Harare. Especially in Novice there were 9 entries and all could have qualified with only losing 5 points. Even a little fox terrier and a dachsie did amazingly well. Six of the others were German Shepherds and two of these had very new handlers. Three others were handled by experienced handlers and worked with a near 100% focus. Could hardly fault them on the heelwork. Harare could take a sample to that!

How to teach and start Tracking?

Well in this country to start the area search can be done in your own garden. Choose an area, which is reasonable clean, i.e. has not been walked on for some time. The best time would be early in the morning, as the garden has had time to become 'clean' overnight. Have your dog on a lead and tie him to a post. Take a big step into the area you want to use. Trample on it, to make a square as big as two long feet and three wide as the width of your shoes. Make sure you stay in that area and put down about 12 pieces of the best food [biscuits] your dog likes. The pieces must not be bigger than a fingernail and make sure they are hidden in the trampled grass. Only then jump out of this square, so that this area is: trampled and contains food. Outside this square there must not be trampled grass, nor any food. You then can take your dog to this area and as he arrives, throw about two pieces into the area [he must see you throwing it in!] and give him the command to seek. You will find that he soon will know: trampled means food, outside no trampled area no food! This is the beginning of teaching tracking. Try it.

Memories of past achievements

Eight years ago September 1994 Saxon von Kirschtal came into Zimbabwe to stay here for one year and compete in the various tests. Saxon was born on 17-10-1989 and he died on 3 March 2002. His father was the well known Sieger 'VA' Eiko von Kirschtal, SchH 3, FH and his mother was 'V' Yeza von Kirschtal who managed to qualify 15 x in SchH 3. Saxon competed in the various Obedience shows, qualified in Novice, competed several times in Working Trials and IPO and achieved CD Excellent and qualified IPO I. He also was shown in the breed and was graded 'V' and got a CC in the breed. He sired four litters in Zimbabwe.



Von Kirschtal kennels are very well known in Germany and Herr Fuller breeds his dogs mainly for the work they can do: herding sheep. Once a year they have the world 'Leistungshutte' competition where the German Shepherd competes in the various aspects of this Championship show. It is an eye opener what these dogs can do with a herd of about 300 sheep, and between 20 and 30 Shepherds compete each in their own provincial out fits, some with lots of silver buttons on their capes. Their dogs often have the vonKirschtal lines in their pedigree. I have been fortunate to see two of these competitions, where Karl and his son competed. They always end up in the top of the competition, once Karl managed to come first for three years running. His well known dog Eiko von Kirschtal also became the Sieger in the Breed show in Germany. Most of his dogs are very well balanced and good-

looking animals and they all can work! Not all beauty dogs are achieving this.

Championship DJ & A Show on 17 March 2002

This was a record with entries from lots of people and we hope this trend will carry on. It is hard work to set up the jumps, but with every one helping work will be made easier. We had 11 dogs competing and all had a good time. MSDA organized an Obedience and DJ Championship show this last Sunday 5 May and again lots of dogs entered, a total of 34 in the various classes. We had some very good working dogs from Sectra and we all could take some advice from them the way their dogs worked.

Most embarrassing moments:

Priceless

One of the funniest "most-embarrassing-moment" stories I've come upon in a long time was about a lady who picked up several items at a discount store. When she finally got up to the checker, she learned that one of her items had no price tag. Imagine her embarrassment when the checker got on the intercom and boomed out for all the store to hear, "PRICE CHECK ON LANE THIRTEEN, TAMPAX, SUPERSIZE." That was bad enough, but somebody at the rear of the store apparently misunderstood the word "Tampax" for THUMB TACKS." In a business-like tone, a voice boomed back over the intercom. "DO YOU WANT THE KIND YOU PUSH IN WITH YOUR THUMB OR THE KIND YOU POUND IN WITH A HAMMER?"