

Amanda's Diary



We continue our monthly update with RGT co-ordinator Amanda Ainsworth on some of the issues that she and the headquarters staff have been tackling in recent weeks.

It was all hands to the pump for one of the last big shows of the year, Discover Dogs, at Earls Court in mid November.

Amanda said: "The show is over the weekend, but the preparation starts two days earlier with getting all the stock together, we then need another couple of days to return unsold stock and amass all the paperwork."

The whole operation is time consuming and costly - put simply - can it be justified?

Amanda said: "We think so, though we are examining the whole concept to determine whether we are maximising our opportunities.

"Basically, we attend the shows for two reasons. One, we sell merchandise, and two, it enables us to raise awareness of the breed.

"The problem that we have is that we are trying to do both but aren't equipped to do either as well as some of the other big charities and suppliers.

"Our stall, which costs in the region of £2,000 in rent, is not big enough for the main charity area where you will find the

likes of Dogs Trust, Blue Cross and the RSPCA who have enormous stands.

"Our stand is among the retailers, though again, we are completely overshadowed by some of the bigger companies with huge impressive displays."

So why bother?

Amada said: "Although our merchandising doesn't cover the rental cost, it does help to offset it, and it brings people to see us, and the dogs. That is what makes it all worthwhile

"It is hard to generalise, I suppose we might average 20 warm inquiries per day which would lead to around 10 homes being found.

"However, there is an additional benefit in the number of people who get to see the dogs first hand, totally unflustered by all the hullabaloo associated with the show.

"You can often get enquiries from people years later who you spoke to at one of these shows and they eventually come back to you when their previous pet is no longer around."

★If you have any spare shelving or display equipment for a presentation stand, Amanda would be delighted to hear from you.

AMANDA Varley's decision to relinquish her licence is the last huge challenge for RGT headquarters.

Amanda (Ainsworth) said: "There were 46 runners up for re-homing

of which we have taken 40.

"Those numbers are just too big to simply absorb into the system in one hit. For example, even the transportation around the country will cost in the region of £1,500.

"I believe there are 23 males among them, all bar three are either black or black and white.

"It will take anything from two months up to a year for them all to be processed and found homes."

Among the 40 is the Aug '04 whelp Coolangatta Duke who was entertaining BAGS punters up until March of this year when he retired with 187 races on his card.

Amanda said: "What a wonderful old boy and good servant to still be racing at six and a half.

"The retirement age of dogs seems to be going back to what I remember 15 years ago when most dogs coming into the kennels were between four and five.

"We had a period when the average age dropped to three.

"It might not seem a lot but that year makes a huge different when you are homing thousands of dogs."

With new year licence renewals approaching, what will you do if any other large kennel decide to close down and offload the RGT with dozens more dogs?

"I really don't know" says Amanda. "We would cope, we always do, but it really doesn't bear thinking about."

THE Canine Defence League - now the Dogs Trust - originated a brilliant and memorable slogan 'a dog is for life, not just for Christmas'

Does Christmas bring problems for home-finders?

"Yes" replies Amanda "but not in the 'get rid of the cuddly puppy once he starts to grow up' scenario.

"Christmas brings its own problems. In December we have a peak with the 'auntie is coming to stay and she doesn't like dogs' scenario.

"We are conscious that Christmas is quite a frenetic time so we deliberately try not to place dogs in new homes immediately before it.

"As a result we then sometimes



Retirement Plans

get a slight boost in early January with people who have been waiting for a dog.

"Then of course there is 'Divorce Monday' or whatever the newspapers have labelled it.

"Couples have spent too much

time in each other's company over Christmas and decide they can't stand each other.

"We are guaranteed phone calls requesting us to take dogs back sometimes years after they were first homed."

Super Six Card Game Reduced! Was £5.50 now £2.50

The fast and furious fun family card game!

Price includes P&P within the UK.

Price: £2.50



Tie Gold and Navy pure silk tie with embroidered Homer Logo.

A great gift! Dry clean only. Price includes P&P within UK. Price: £4.50

DECEMBER EVENTS		
Event	Date	Branch
Christmas Tree Festival - Fakenham	Thursday 1	Coastal
Meet & Greet, Shifnal	Saturday 3	Shropshire and Borders
Promenade Shop. Centre - Bridlington	Saturday 3	Bridlington
Christmas Greyhound Walk - Oxford	Saturday 3	Oxford
Webbs of Wychbold Awareness Road.	Saturday 3	Birmingham - Perry Barr
Xmas Fundraising Night - Belle Vue	Saturday 3	Lancashire & Belle Vue
Webbs G. Centre, West Hagley Road.	Saturday 3	Birmingham - Hall Green
Bag Pack, Stan's Superstore, St Martins	Saturday 3	Shropshire and Borders
Just 4 Pets Bromsgrove	Saturday 3	Birmingham - Hall Green
Greyhound Walk - Ripon	Saturday 3	North Yorkshire
Xmas Bazaar/Open Day - Barley Kenn.	Sunday 4	Essex - Waltham Abbey
Meet n' Greet - Hornsea	Sunday 4	East Riding
Pets at Home, Harrogate	Saturday 10	North Yorkshire
Hounds and Carols - Conover	Saturday 10	Shropshire and Borders
Mell Square, Solihull	Saturday 10	Birmingham - Hall Green
Christmas Fayre Hessele	Saturday 10	Hull
pets@home	Saturday 10	Bridlington
Pets at Home, Harrogate	Sunday 11	North Yorkshire
Christmas Market - Crewe	Sunday 11	Cheshire
Christmas Walk & Bazaar - Rubery	Sunday 11	Birmingham - Hall Green
Old Town Festival - Bridlington	Sunday 11	Bridlington
Pastures Day Centre	Thursday 15	Hull
Barnett Hill Garden Centre - Clete	Saturday 17	Birmingham - Hall Green
Meet & Greet - Bar Hill	Saturday 17	Milden, Suffolk & E Cambs
Wisbech Christmas Market	Monday 19	Wisbech
Market Stall - Beverley	Saturday 24	East Riding
Greyhound Walk - Studley Royal	Tuesday 27	North Yorkshire

RGT reception: House of Commons - November 2



RGT chief executive Peter Laurie's speech was very well received

Attendees included journalist Jim Cremin (left partly hidden), Len Ponder snr (centre) Derby winning owner Ray White (second from right) and Lenny Ponder

"I have to be honest, when I was told that there would be a reception about retired greyhounds held at the House of Commons my first thought was 'what is the use of that.' But I was wrong."

Amanda's confession to some hasty back-peddalling came as a result of the get-together in Westminster on November 2 of roughly 65 people with widely differing interests in ex-racers.

She said: "I know that these things are supposed to be good for 'networking' but I had never seen a lot of point in them.

"As it was, it gave us a chance to explain what we do to a variety of people of influence, but in a very convivial atmosphere."

The meeting had originally been arranged by RGT trustee Andrew Rossindell MP.

But when he was forced abroad on Government

business, it was left to greyhound-loving fellow MP Ian Lavery to host the meeting.

The guests included politicians, bookmakers' representatives, owners, trainers, track promoters, the press plus RGT trustees and staff.

Amanda said: "I think that the opportunity to visit the Palace of Westminster is a big draw for many people, myself included, and once there, with a drink and a couple of canapés, a lot of barriers are broken down.

"Under normal circumstances, you don't get the opportunity to explain the various issues to these people and it is important that we get and maintain as much support as possible.

"Although this is not the sort of thing that the RGT has traditionally been strong on, other charities find these get-togethers of great benefit,

including of course, as a 'thank-you' to some of their benefactors.

"The whole evening was sponsored and I would like to thank Chelsea Glass, Pet Plan, the accountants Gallaghers, and Bristows the solicitors, for their support.

"It is certainly something that I can imagine us doing again in the future."



(l-r) Nottingham promoter Rachel Corden, RGT Dr Andrew Higgins and owner Lee Johnson



Ian Lavery MP



(l-r) Pensions minister Iain Duncan-Smith MP, the RGTs Dr Andrew Higgins and GBGB chairman Maurice Watkin



GBGB chief executive Barry Faulkner (left) & Lord Donoughue