



## **PUPPY SCHOOL REPORT 2019**

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This report has been produced to summarise the key developments and achievements within Puppy School Ltd during the year 2019. It is intended as an information document and should not be reproduced or shared without express permission from Puppy School Ltd  
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# Summary of events for 2019

by Gwen Bailey

2019 was a busy year for Puppy School. We started the year with another weekend preparation course for tutors hoping to join the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, run by Nicole Harris and Rachel Butler in January. Many of the attendees went on to take and pass their assessments to join the APDT later



APDT pre-assessment practice

in the year. In February, a number of tutors attended the four-day WOOF conference where a series of eminent speakers presented interesting new research and developments. It is a long 4 days that start early and finish late each day but we get so much out of it as well as a chance to catch up with each other in breaks and in the evening if we are not too tired.

At Crufts this year, we were invited to train puppies on the Natures Menu stand so Rachel and I braved the crowds and welcomed several puppy owners with their lovely puppies to the stand for two demonstrations



Rachel with some of the team at the Crufts demo

of positive training on Thursday and Sunday. In addition, PS tutor Sharron Byarrd and her lovely Red Setter, Phen, got involved in a photoshoot to publicise their campaign involving a giant pooh bag to attract attention.



Sharron and Phen at the Crufts photoshoot for Natures Menu

We held the PS Spring tutor training courses in March and April, and the Autumn course in September and October run by myself and Catherine Tomlinson, giving us a total of 18 new tutors and associate tutors (Associate Tutors are fully trained tutors who work on another tutor's territory). The practical courses for these new recruits were held in May and November at Cheltenham Animal Shelter by Rachel Butler and Claire Luscombe, and, as usual, were a great success for both us and the dogs we helped to train. Our tutors receive great experience in training and handling skills as well as helping to give those dogs unlucky enough to be waiting for a new home the chance to learn some very useful cues and manners to help them get and keep a new forever home.

Work with rescue dogs on the practical training course



Our new behaviour course programme



The Teenage Tearaways Behaviour course Spring 2019

continued this year with courses on Teenage Tearaways in April, focusing on all problems associated with adolescence, and Shy Guys and Sensitive Souls in September, taking a look at how we can help puppies and young dogs with fears and anxieties of various sorts. Huge thanks are due again to Nicole Harris, Lauren Watts and Claire Luscombe for sharing their knowledge and expertise. The 'real live' puppy problem case continues to be popular and, this year, one of the puppies we helped went on to improve so much that he was able to attend the demo of positive training at the National Pet Show. We will need to find a new venue for next year's behaviour courses since the village hall we used to use has banned the off lead exercises of dogs on the field behind. Despite us arguing that it was good for dogs and children to play together, the committee were adamant that it was dangerous to have dogs running free. It was ironic perhaps that on the last day of the course, a man playing football with his son

broke his foot. It was far safer for humans when dogs were allowed to share the field!

In May and June, we ran three weekends of the Puppy Zone at Dogfests in Hertfordshire, Cheshire and Bristol. This was a new concept that was incredibly well received by puppy owners at the show. We rang a Move & Discover area where pups were gently encouraged to tackle various obstacles and tunnels, a Chill & Relax area where puppies and owners could rest and get away from the busy show, and a Train & Play area where owners could ask us to help with any problems they might be having with their puppies. We staffed all of this with volunteer PS tutors and associate tutors and, although it was really tiring, it was very worthwhile. It was lovely to see the puppies exploring and relaxing. We tackled a great deal of 'problems' that had a quite easy fix but which could have grown into bigger issues unless tackled at this early stage.



Amazingly we had two First Aiders and a Police Officer on the course to help the injured man, as well as a space blanket and a big piece of vet bed for him to lay on.

Early in June, our new Central Booking System went live, made and operated by Justice-Roche Ltd. This time there were hardly any teething issues and the whole



One of our 'real live' puppy cases on the Spring Behaviour Course



The Move & Discover course all ready to go at Dogfest in June

system is now running perfectly. We found some tweaks and changes that we wanted to make and these were implemented effortlessly too. Our numbers are up since we started using the new system and this could be due to us not losing anyone at the booking stage now that payment and other procedures run smoothly. We are very happy with the new system.

In August, Rachel, myself and others took part in a social media course to bring us up to speed with the latest trends and to help us plan a social media marketing programme. As a result, Rachel has taken control of the PS social media for now, including our public FB forum, Instagram and Twitter accounts. We look forward to making more of this in the new year.

We introduced our long awaited Individual Branded website package in the Autumn.

This gives new and existing tutors that ability to buy a fully-functioning website and domain from Puppy School at a competitive price. The site is set up with all the information they need to advertise their classes already programmed in. Since the website comes prefilled with all their details and the website has a similar design to the main website and is fully branded, it save a new tutor a tremendous amount of time and mental effort to get their website up and running. The information can be changed and customised by the tutor and these sites represent a very easy way to get started with a business website. Given that 32% of enquiries for classes come from on line searches, this development gives our new tutors a head start when it comes to marketing.



The team for the Puppy Zone at Dogfest in Bristol



Puppies, owners and tutors at the demo of positive training at the National Pet Show in November

The last thing on our Puppy School calendar this year was two visits to the National Pet Show at the NEC to do demonstrations of positive training each day with 10 -12 puppies and owners from our classes in front of a packed audience. The puppies got to experience life at a show and the owners showed off their training skills and were very proud. We were justifiably proud of our training and the audience were able to see just what we are all capable of with very young puppies.

# Key Puppy School Statistics for 2019

## Tutor Numbers

At the end of this year, Puppy School is comprised of 100 full tutors and 43 associate tutors. We have 5 resting tutors/associates (those not currently active - on maternity leave or taking a break). We have 15 provisional tutors and 14 provisional associates currently working on their correspondence course whilst there are already 6 people waiting to undertake their tutor training course in 2020.

## New Tutors and Assistants

We had new 9 tutors and 11 new associate tutors train with us during 2019. Congratulations to those who completed their correspondence course this year and best of luck to those who are in progress of completing their training.

A big Puppy School welcome to:

- Amelia Smith
- Bethany Weeden
- Carly Fawthrop
- Caroline Monk
- Cheryll Partington
- Deb Bennison
- Fi Friend
- Gillian Irving
- Jennifer Nolan
- Luke Orrell
- Lydia Francis

- Lyn Davis
- Marta Dubowik
- Marta Patajewicz
- Melanie Sainsbury
- Naomi Alesworth
- Steve Bull
- Suzy Fithern
- Tina Buxton
- Zoe Guest

## Puppy Numbers

The number of puppies going through our Puppy School classes in 2019 is a staggering 9,016. This a 3.6% increase compared to 8,701 puppies in 2018.

This brings the total number of puppies passed through the hands of Puppy School tutors in to 74,488 during the 17 years we have been running! What an achievement, we should all be very proud of our efforts and the difference we are making to families and puppies who benefit from our work.

## Top Tutors

Within our hub of hard-working tutors at Puppy School, there are five tutors who stand out for training the most puppies/owners in 2019. They are:

1. Rachel Butler and the team at Happy Dog Team - 291 puppies trained
2. Sam Price - 255 puppies trained

## WOOF! Conference 2019

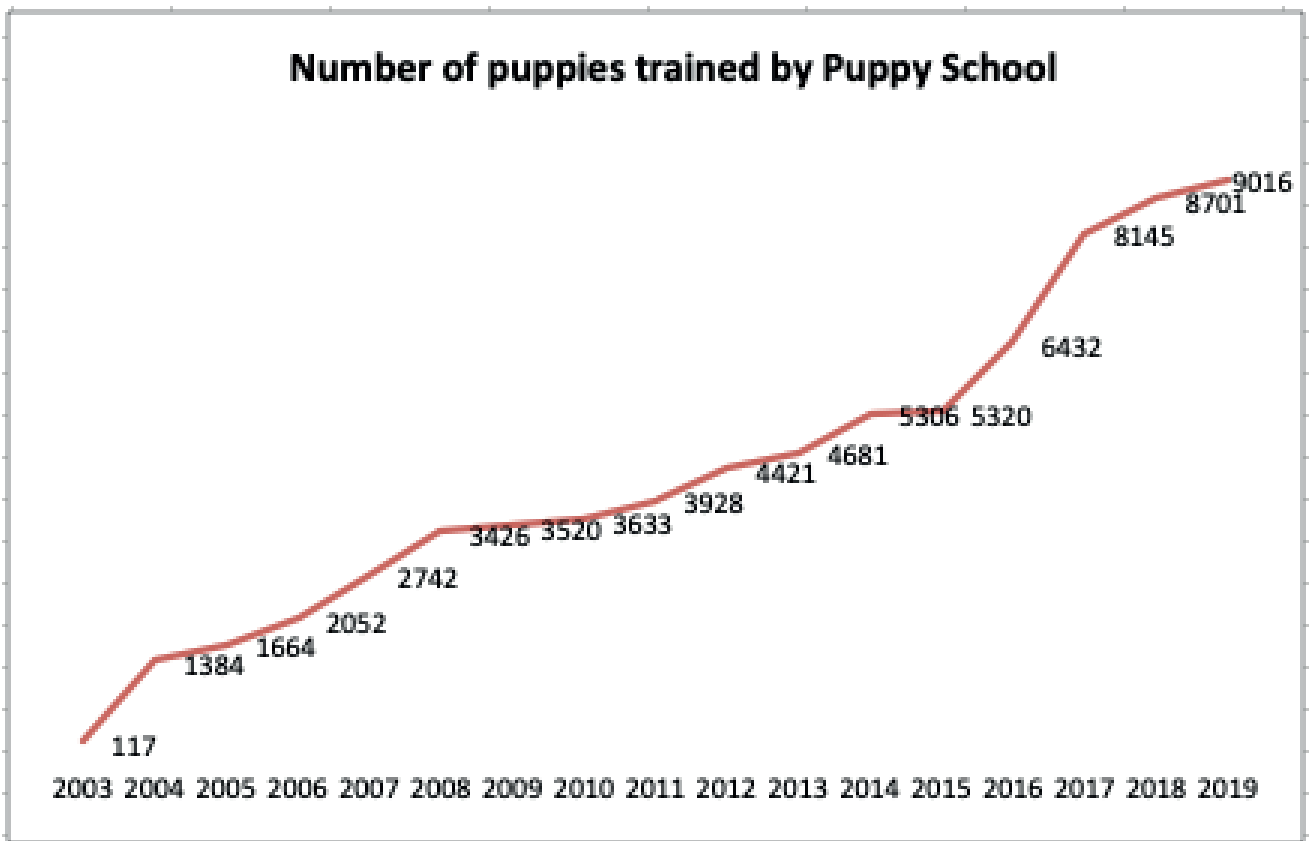


- 3. Louise Williamson – 231 puppies trained
  - 4. Delia Graham – 222 puppies trained
  - 5. Catherine Tomlinson - 212 puppies trained
- (Figures for each tutor calculated up until 3rd December 2019)

Alex Smith, Alice Crick, Amanda Blatch, Catherine Pleasance, Carole Carruth, Caroline Duder, Cheryl Holden, Claire Luscombe, Cushla Lamén, Debbie Taylor, Elin Best, Eleanor McCall, Emma-Clare Dunnett, Emily Mazon, Jenny Green, Julie Hilliard, Hannah Liebeskind, Karen Andrews, , Karen Boyce, Lauren Watts, Louise Taylor, Michelle Cleary, Sandie Dallow, Stephen Jones, Suzanne Moores, Tamsin Peachey, Vicky Fitch-Taylor

A further 29 Puppy School Tutors registered over 100 puppies this year (as of 03/12/19) – big congratulations to:

Well done to absolutely everyone for continuing to work so hard to make such a difference to owners and puppies' lives.



Autumn New Tutors Course



# 2019 Highlights from our Tutors

## Practical Handling Course at Cheltenham Animal Shelter



From Fi Friend: "My time with Rachel and Claire at the animal shelter was brilliant. The dogs; Woody, Jasper, Indie, Rival, Blacky, Pumkin and Betty were all gorgeous and completely different. That meant we had so much to learn from each dog as well as the things they learned from us. Rachel and Claire made it really relaxed

and a great environment to learn in. I fell in love with all the dogs, especially Blacky and Rival, the greyhounds. Sadly the only two who haven't yet found homes, if they had been cat friendly..... The whole experience taught me loads about working with different breeds, with rescue dogs and most of all really helped with my confidence because it was such a supportive environment".



From Melanie Sainsbury: "I honestly went along to Cheltenham not really sure what I would get out of the three days but I came away feeling as though I had learnt so, so much in the short time I was there. It really gave me confidence in working with adult dogs and having the opportunity to finesse some skills, such as the loose lead walking with both my fellow students coaching me and having Rachel and Claire popping over occasionally to offer some praise or advice.





# Target sticks and Tiger Training

This year Louise Taylor, Suzy Barrott and Jacki Clifford had one very special CPD course at Heythrop Zoological Gardens training all sorts of species. Jacki relays her experiences of training tigers for us:

From Jacki Clifford: "I have the best husband ever, or maybe a husband who wants me away for the weekend, hmm, I'm not sure now. Anyway, on my birthday this year I was presented with the BEST EVER present. It was a 2-day unique opportunity to develop my handling skills with Heythrop Zoological Gardens in conjunction with Educating Animals. What an amazeballs experience it was and even more lovely to share it with gorgeous PS Tutors Louise Taylor and Suzy-Anne Barrott. We interacted with a grass snake, a skunk, penguins, ponies, foxes, zebra, rhesus monkeys, squirrel monkeys, Vera the Raven and Khan the Tiger.

Along with my two partners in crime, we worked with Khan the tiger under protected contact and went armed with a tennis ball on a stick, lumps of meat on a spear and a clicker. Using positive reward based training, shaping and luring we taught Khan to jump up onto a platform and lie down, and we even got duration from him - go us.



The time at the shelter helped me to appreciate how hard novice puppy owners may find various exercises – as trainers, I think we take it for granted that 'sit' is just 'sit', and recall is just recall, but when working with a difficult

dog (and adult dogs who have already learnt some particular habits!), it really helped me to understand how to break down each element and make it as easy as possible for both the dog and owner.

All the dogs we worked with were fabulous and it was fascinating seeing what they had already learnt in their previous homes (if anything!), how they felt about human interaction, how responsive they were to treats and watching them develop and learn in the brief time we had with them.



Swapping dogs so regularly not only provided experience of various dog sizes, personalities, breeds and ages, but also helped me not to get overly attached to any one in particular. Although, I did have my firm favourite of 'Woody' – a beautiful 10-month-old Beagle x who was so keen to learn and eager to please. Luckily, he was already reserved so I wasn't making room in my car for him on the final day!!



takes off to her cage. Timing was sooooo crucial and I thought chickens were quick).

And then there were the very cute squirrel monkeys who would station themselves for us on an upturned log to receive a delicious wriggly mealworm or a higher value waxworm. We held out the worms on a flat hand and they were so gentle and tickly when they took them.

And then there were the ponies, I had Comanche and he bit me (my fault of course as I was told to offer a flat hand with food and I didn't). So, after receiving first

During the two days we taught Vera, the very clever Raven, to pick up and drop a number of small hoops on a post (you gotta work quick for this sweet girl otherwise she

aid and filling in the accident book, there is always one, Apache decided to take me on. Fortunately for me, Apache was very gentle and quite nervous of hands coming towards him (previous learning history) so I spent my time working very slowly with him, building up positive associations with hands and food and tennis balls on traffic cones to target.



Ever walked a fox on a long line? It's great fun and fast. Talk about dancing with foxes. I can now see how pet owners might find using a long line difficult with their dog.

The whole experience was so awesome and I thank the beautiful animals I worked with over the two days and I hope I provided some nice mental stimulation for them.

The collaborative pair at Educating Animals are putting together a 5-day experience where trainers will be placed with specific animals and with expert coaching. On this course we'll teach our specific animals a new behaviour from start to finish. I can't wait!

# Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) Pre- Assessment Course

After its successful launch last year, our Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) Pre-Assessment course was again hosted by Rachel Butler and Nicole Harris back in January. This weekend course is designed for tutors who are preparing to take their APDT assessment and it is intended to include a good mixture of theory and practical work.

The course allows for the three different elements of the APDT assessment – the written paperwork, the class assessment and the post-class interview to be rehearsed and practiced. Attendees were given the opportunity to take part in the running of an entire one-hour class under assessment conditions.

We are delighted to say that Katie Van Zyl, Hayley Cornick, Tamsin Peachey, Julie Hilliard, Caroline Duder, Karen Andrews, Emma-Clare Dunnett ..... (drum roll please) passed their assessment this year with flying colours!!

Here's what Caroline Duder had to say about the course:

From Caroline: "Rachel and Nicole's course was practical and informative at just the right level. The background information on the APDT and expectations was spot on. We delivered part of a class and were under a similar kind of pressure that we would feel in the real thing, so great practice!

We were tested on our theory in groups too. Following this was the all-important feedback, which is always given in a positive and constructive manner. I left knowing exactly what work I had to do in preparation for the assessment. I also left feeling that I was nearly ready and with an air of confidence which I certainly did not have before!

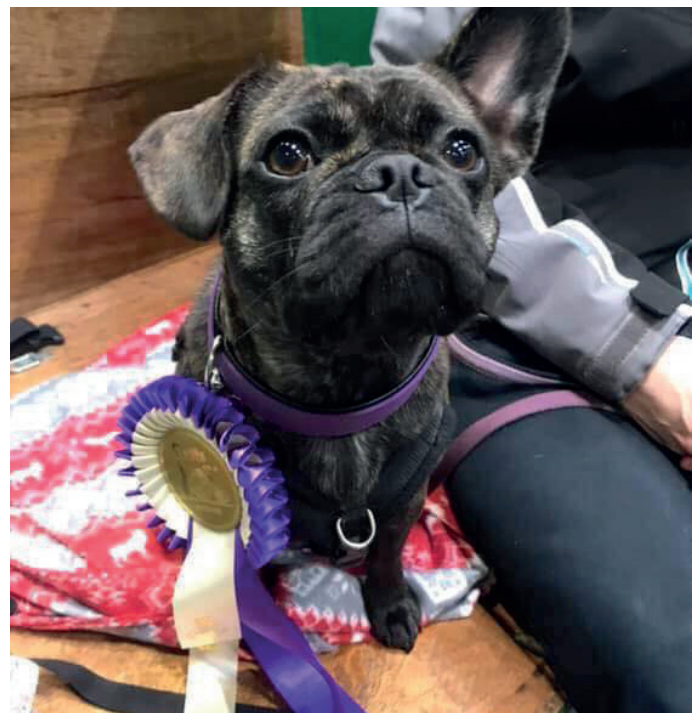
I always drive home feeling good after a course delivered by the Puppy School crew! I

couldn't have done it without the course, and the just short of two years of Puppy School and Puppy University teaching that I have done'. Thank you, Rachel and Nicole!"

## Puppy School Demo at Crufts 2019

From Alice Crick: "Attending our Puppy School demo on the Natures Menu stand at Crufts 2019 was an absolute highlight for Evie and I. Alongside some of Rachel's lovely clients, Evie and the rest of the puppies did a little demo of all the exercises we teach at our Puppy School classes and all the pups and owners really did us proud.

For Evie, Crufts was a once in a lifetime experience and although I was pleased to take her, I was a little concerned regarding how completely mad the NEC is with the sheer mass of people and (sometimes unpredictable) dogs, but we protected her well and she did brilliantly. Not once did I worry about her, she rested when I needed her to and walked so well by my side to avoid people and oncoming dogs. I was very proud of her that day and I brought her a fake 'Best in show' rosette to mark the special occasion".



# Rita the Rescue Dog

Imogen Haley runs classes in Richmond, Hampton and Walton. Imogen recently rehabilitated an ex-intensive breeding dog 'Rita' who came from a puppy farm in Ireland. Here's Imogen's account of all she and Rita have learnt along the way.

From Imogen: "In August this year after a six-month search for a sister for my French Bulldog 'Albert', we were lucky enough to both be matched to a lovely little Boston Terrier who I named 'Rita'. Rita was in foster in Warwick and after close contact with the charity Many Tears Animal Rescue whom had taken her in, I decided to take a three-hour drive to meet her.

Rita had been described as needing to be placed in a home with another calm resident dog. However, when we arrived, her foster carer said that she'd had a rough few days where due to her being partially sighted, she had been getting into fights with the other foster dogs because she was so frightened of them.

I wanted to do things properly and give both dogs the best chance on their first meeting so popped Rita on a long line so she could feel free to run away if she wanted but was also free to wander around us in her own

time....luckily after a good old sniff of Albert's bum she just potted off for an explore in the bushes and I was able to walk both her and Albert alongside one another on their leads back to the house ....and so it was decided, we'd work on all becoming friends from that point on!

When Rita first arrived home, she was suffering from autoimmune disease and her badly ulcerated eyes, which had left her almost blind, had almost no tear production at all. She was also underweight and suffering from dermatitis and malnutrition and had some bald patches and scarring on her body from previous injuries. Despite all this Rita has gone from being a reserved and withdrawn introvert to a happy and loving member of our family in just under three months...she's even developed her own Bambi style skip which she does when she's enjoying a walk!

She is achieving new milestones each week and is now able to join us on off-lead walks and also now understands that Albert and I have her back at all times, rather than being the enemy.

Rescuing Rita has been such a special experience and one which continues to teach me so much...not just about the challenges of training with a partially sighted older dog, but also about how dogs have an inner depth to them which, regardless of how they may have been treated in the past, still allows them to dig deep and find a way to trust again.

It take time to heal six years of abuse and neglect but at the rate Rita is going, I'm sure she'll soon get there and then continue to enjoy living out her best life with Albert and I in leafy Surrey."

For more updates on Rita's progress you can follow Imogen's Instagram #ritatherescuedog



# PS Dates for your diary: 2020

## **25-26 February**

Craig Ogilvie's Interactive Play workshop

## **28 Feb – 1 March**

Part 1 – Spring 2020 Tutors Training Course

## **17-19 April**

Part 2 – Spring 2020 Tutors Training Course

## **28-29 April**

Behaviour 5 (The Human on the end of the lead)

## **2-3 May**

Dog Fest – Hertfordshire (PS demo team)

## **12-14 May**

Practical Handling course at Cheltenham Animal Shelter (for new tutors)

## **13-14 June**

Dogfest – Cheshire (PS demo team)

## **19-21 June**

Puppy School Conference

## **4-6**

## **September**

Part 1 – Autumn 2020 Tutors Training Course

## **9-11 October**

Part 2 – Autumn 2020 Tutors Training Course

## **20-21 October**

Behaviour 6 (Dog Dilemmas)

## **3-5 November**

Practical Handling course at Cheltenham Animal Shelter (for new tutors)

## **7-8 November**

National Pet Show – NEC Birmingham (PS demo team)

# Behavioural courses for tutors and associates

Our three-day behavioural courses taught by APBC members Nicole Harris, Lauren Watts and Claire Luscombe were well attended this year.

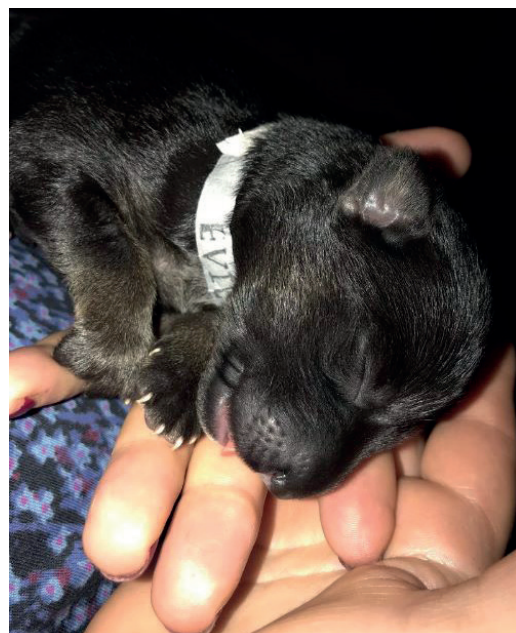
From Rachael James: "I thoroughly enjoyed both of the behaviour courses this year and have already put learning into practice both in the classroom and in private visits. These courses have been vital to my development as a trainer".

## Karen's German Shepherd litter

Karen' Boyce's lovely GSD Jasmine had a litter of puppies this year and Karen is keeping 'Little Evie'. Here's a little snippet from Karen all about the crazy world of puppy rearing:

From Karen: "The Boyce household has a new family member with little Evie being born on the 5th September at my local vets, as Jasmin my pregnant German Shepherd decided to produce only one pup naturally, while the rest needed some help.

Evie is one of only four pups and we were really relieved to have her as her mum had been seriously ill in





Dogs! Owners are just not getting their GSDs out into the world soon enough and it has a huge detrimental effect on how they will cope for the rest of their lives. Not my Evie though. She has seen and done more by nine weeks than most pups do by sixteen weeks. Thank goodness"

## Dogfest 2019

From Naomi Alesworth: "I learnt a lot through spending time with both Gwen and Claire, first watching them take the pups through the different surfaces in 'Move and Learn'.

I got a fun photo of Gwen and Noel, there was just so much media buzz when he arrived!

DogFest was so much better than Crufts - everyone, dogs included, looked more relaxed and there far less growling by the end of the day from exhausted, stressed dogs.

I think my favourite bit, aside from PS, was the pool, watching the dogs jump in after the ball and some not wanting to get back out!"



the middle of the pregnancy. Evie is a little miracle.

I guess because of my puppy exposure at work, Evie has, along with her siblings, had a slightly different lifestyle to the average litter. Our front room was the puppy nursery so settling down of an evening to watch TV with pups and mum snoozing at your feet was the norm (as was having our shoelaces pulled). Giving the pups freedom of the whole downstairs can obviously have its issues! Treading in not so nice things being one of them but having them integrated wholly into the family does raise really human-orientated pups. It's also helpful having really good instructors come and visit for the initial handling sessions.

Evie's litter was out driving around with me at four weeks and by the time they went to their new homes had probably completed 30 or 40 hours of travel. At five weeks they started to visit, and continued to visit, my Friday daytime classes and also had a couple of secondary school visits under their belts; to meet my daughters' friends. A little run around after Puppy Cub at six weeks was really pleasing as they were not fazed by finding themselves in a completely new and different environments.

The other end of my spectrum of work is reactive dogs and the largest percentage of my clients by breed are German Shepherd





From Pen Higgs: "I had a lovely time at DogFest - it is always a highlight for me. The Puppy Zone worked really well. I was in the chill out zone and the train and play zone mainly and got to play with lots of dogs with outfits on!! Unfortunately, I didn't get to meet Noel".



# 'Move and Discover' with Vicki Watts

Vicki Watts runs classes in Somerton, Somerset and has just started a new course 'Move and Discover'.

From Vicki Watts: "'Move & Discover' was inspired by Claire's wonderful course and Gwen's idea for the name at DogFest, and I started up these classes as I was struggling to fill my follow-on classes. I have tweaked the obstacles here and there, and I try to ensure I have progression bits for those who have proved to be confident. I always end each 45-minute session with my full-sized agility tunnel - owners really enjoy this, especially if their pup has the tunnel extended.

I get emails from owners saying how much they themselves and their pup enjoyed the session, and have had a few repeaters. I do get a lot of owners who think their pups are confident, and when their pup struggles with a certain obstacle (which they may have deemed as easy) they're shocked and I think it gives them a better insight to their dog and its capabilities.

I have found a lot of dogs have struggled to get "in" a box or low sided rubber bucket, or stepping over the gap of a set of toilet steps. I don't let the pups off lead, which sometimes would be easier, but likewise it would be mental!!

I have a maximum of 4 pups and bracket the by age - 3 to 6 months, 6 to 9 months and then 9 to 12 months which works brilliantly.

We work for about 15 mins (after hall and obstacle intro), have a break and then have another go (with "harder" obstacles) and finish on the tunnel.

Obstacles used are things like banana boxes (free from Tesco's), mini see saws, trotting poles, tunnels, a mini dog walk, hula hoops, pathways, and a ball pool. I have to say, I love doing it, and I love watching the puppies making progress I just wish I had a vehicle big enough to load all of the equipment, instead of trying to work out a chinese puzzle to get everything back in!





# My 2019 by Gwen Bailey, Founder and Director of Puppy School

2019 started well with the arrival of kitten, Mia. It took Otto, who is now 2 years old, a while to learn she was not prey or to be jumped on, but we got there in the end, thanks to some very helpful advice from Claire (Luscombe). Inky, who is now 12, was not very keen on Mia either at first but he tolerates her now and has stopped hissing whenever they pass in the corridor. Our lovely old house with its 5 acres of land is a



paradise for cats and there is plenty to do, especially when the oat field next door was harvested and a plague of mice came our way. Many displaced rodents were brought in by the cats and I spent a lot of time in the Autumn gently ushering them into a Wellington boot for their safe removal outside.

The WOOF! Conference was well attended again this year and its good to get most of your CPD done in one hit as well as catching up with lots of old friends too. The Puppy Zone at the three Dogfests took up a huge amount of time but was very worthwhile. Writing my last and final book has kept me busy most of this year, and I got the chance to write a piece about Puppy School for Edition Dog, thanks to Mel at Natures Menu. In August, we went to Peru for three weeks for my partner's big birthday. I was struck by the free-living lifestyle of the dogs there and how happy they all seemed – Peruvians are kind to their children and animals – no evidence of negative training there which was very refreshing.



A workshop with Kay Laurence in the Summer about 'clean training' was very stimulating, as was a tracking day with Pat Tagg in Dorset. I did another summer camp this year with Otto and Helen Phillips. Otto and I love the gun dog training, especially with Helen, but I don't enjoy any of the hunting aspects so I stay well clear in the Winter. This year, instead, we joined a local training class, just for fun, and Otto passed his Bronze GCDT. His Silver test is coming up early next year and for that he has to approach the judge without being too enthusiastic – oh dear!



# My 2019 from Rachel Butler, Puppy School's Operations and Business Development Manager

Another year, another annual report. Six years for me now, working for Puppy School, and it's been another great one although I can't quite believe it's at an end already. My highlights for this year have undoubtedly been the DogFest events, where we ran our very first Puppy Zone. This took quite some vision, to be able to get our heads around how to run something that would appeal to the public but within the realms of our high welfare expectations. I think we pulled it off in spectacular style thanks to a dream team of tutors and some amazing teamwork. It was Puppy School at it very best, for everyone to see.

I've also enjoyed running the practical courses once again with my partner in crime, Claire (Luscombe). We always have such a ball at these workshops and it's a real privilege to see both the new tutors and the dogs grow and develop over the three days. At our most recent workshop in November, little Pumpkin the 5-month-old Newfie cross was a real hit and her joy at being able to spend time with, and learn from the team was a pleasure to see. I hope to see more of her as she and fellow canine attendee Aggie (now renamed Indy) will be joining my Adult Dog Beginner course in the next few weeks – I know all of my team, Fi in particular, will be so keen to see them!

developing a taste for trying new things, from stand-up paddle boarding to surfing (not my forte but I will continue to try), treetop adventures and weekends away to new places. A year of getting to know my new extended family has meant a step back from



many of the dog activities that I've enjoyed in the past but I've kept my canicross ticking over ready to join lots of Puppy Schoolers in the forest for some early morning runs at the 2020 Puppy School conference.

My team at Happy Dog continues to run amazing classes in our name and I feel so lucky and proud to have them to depend upon. A huge thanks to every one of them (Jacki, Kim, Sue, Karly, Tania and new addition Fi) for being quite so brilliant and offering outstanding training to our ever-increasing database of clients and puppies.

Onwards and upwards to 2020, who knows what is around the corner but I am looking forward to it with my Puppy School family.



On a personal note, it's been an interesting year of firsts for me. Having settled into a new relationship at the start of the year, I (or should I say we) have been

# My 2019 from Alice Crick, Puppy School's Operations Assistant

It's now been three years since I joined the Puppy School Operations team and time has really just flown. It's a real pleasure to add just a small input into the general day-to-day smooth running of our brilliant organisation.

I've been busy behind the scenes with some great projects including our nearly completed Individual PS branded websites. Most of my focus is on routine work such as registering tutors as Animal Training Instructors with the Animal Behaviour Training Council, sorting out dedicated puppy school email addresses, managing the master document and overseeing the bookings for tutor training courses as well as sorting out franchise agreements and the handling of the intranet. I work closely alongside Melanie Sainsbury from our sponsors Natures Menu in helping with the delivery of our Puppy boxes. This frees up a lot of Gwen and Rachel's time so that they can concentrate on bigger projects for us all at Puppy School.

We have been in our new house for just over a year now and decorating is coming along nicely. Stripping wallpaper is the bane of my life but I am getting better at painting. With all these adjustments, we are really pleased to finally call this house our home.

Evie is now out of adolescence and is turning into the cheekiest but most loveable little soul and we are so lucky to have her. We had a great short break to Wales this year



where she surprised us both by braving the waves and having a little dip in the sea. She continues to amaze me with her funny little antics and her willing to give any task I throw at her a go – she is truly awesome.

This year we have stood in as 'stooge' clients for people in APDT assessments and have tried our hands at all sorts of new things including some agility, scent work tracking and Hoopers. My favourite activity this year was some Gundog training with Helen Phillips. Thanks to everyone who welcomed us into the crazy world of gundog work and gave us so much encouragement and support– I can't wait for the next time!

My Positive Dog and Puppy School business continues to do well thanks to the huge help of the fab team. We have all had our ups and downs this year but thank you to each and every one of you for being so supportive of each other. I am truly very lucky to work alongside you all.



I am still yet to meet many of you in Puppy School so please come flag me down at the conference next year, it would be great to put faces to names!

Here's to a great 2020, really looking forward to continuing to work with you all.

# Puppy School Plans for 2020 by Gwen Bailey

Puppy School is running well with sufficient tutors and associate tutors to make us an important group, but it is not so large as to be unwieldy or unfriendly.

Rather than push on to increase tutor numbers further, we have decided to keep our family feel and to put our energies into making the most of the clientele we have. This will be done by developing and promoting an added value service. We are calling it 'Puppy School Extra' and we are not sure about the exact form it will take yet. We have some ideas and we plan to involve all our tutors (and associate tutors) in the project to make the most of all the amazing knowledge and skills within Puppy School. More about that in the future.

Goals for 2020 include:

- To continue to develop the Regional Manager team and support them in providing regional events and more regional tutors team networking.

- To continue to work with our sponsors, Natures Menu and to ensure that the level of sponsorship they currently provide is as beneficial for them as it is for us.

- To continue to develop and rejuvenate the Puppy School behaviour courses, concentrating this year on courses 5 and 6, to bring them up to the same high standard we achieved in 2019 ready for accreditation in the future

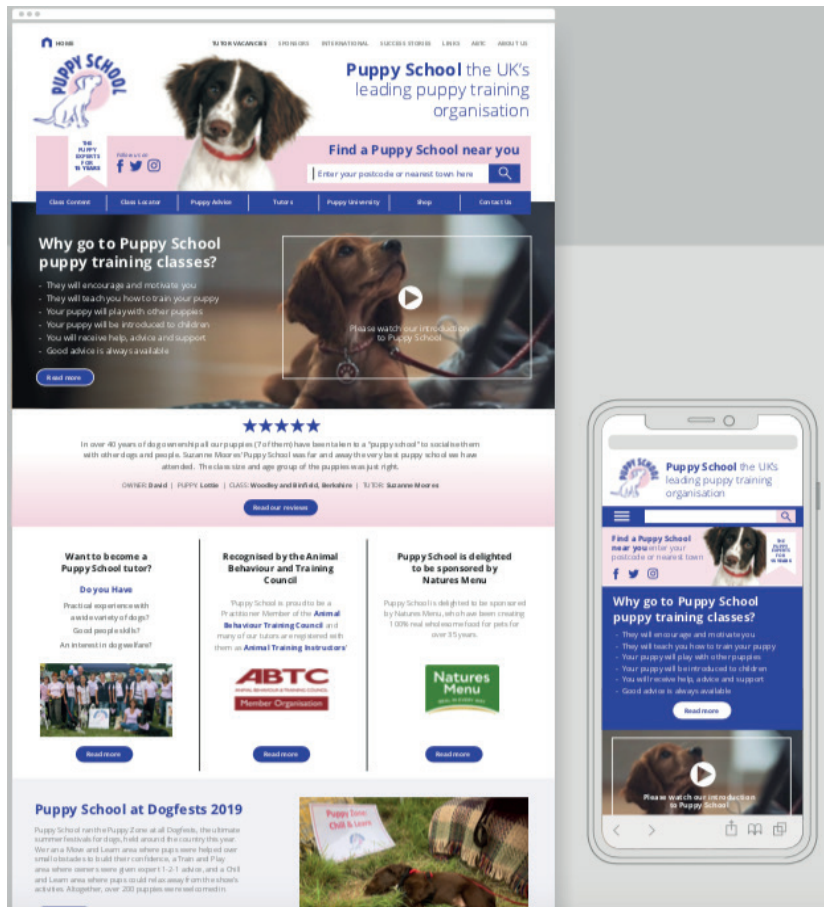
- To apply the new phone-friendly design (see below) to the main [www.puppyschool.co.uk](http://www.puppyschool.co.uk) website and also to the Individual PS Branded websites

- To work on new social media ideas to promote Puppy School amongst the pet owning public

- To run another PS Conference in June, two new PS Tutor Training courses, two brand new PS behaviour courses, two 3-day PS practical courses, a new practical course, and one APDT preparation course

- To work on the development of Puppy School Extra

- To develop new practical courses that will give tutors the ability to run different workshops for their clients to improve and extend their training



It looks like it will be another busy year ....!

# **From Melanie Sainsbury, Puppy School's Contact at Natures Menu, Veterinary Education Manager, RVN Dip. Animal Nutrition Ass. Mem. CBC Member of BVNA**

Melanie qualified as a Veterinary Nurse in 2003 and worked in small animal practices throughout the South East for 15 years, until she joined the Natures Menu Veterinary Division in 2014. Her passion for raw feeding started shortly after acquiring her own puppy when she really had an excuse to start looking more in depth into pet foods.

After a lot of reading and research, she switched to a raw diet for her dog and has never looked back. Melanie is now in charge of education at Natures Menu and spends part of the week travelling around the South East conducting lunch and learn sessions for veterinary practices to teach them about the benefits of responsible raw feeding. She is passionate about behaviour and training and she thoroughly enjoys teaching her Springer x Labrador, Herbie, new tricks and spreading the message about positive training methods and mental stimulation for all types of dogs.

From Mel: "I have been working directly with Puppy School through my position at Natures Menu for just over a year and a half now and it's been a whirlwind of developments, progression, updates as well as some (shall we say) small issues! I hope everything is now running smoothly for you all and we can continue to grow both Puppy School and Natures Menu together.

From the beginning of our sponsorship, I was very keen to become part of the Puppy School relationship as I've seen how difficult it can be for non-doggy people to fully understand the Puppy School concept and how they can under-estimate the great potential our relationship could have. Being a fan of Gwen for many years, I knew of the Puppy School tutor training program and have always wanted to take part myself, as training and behaviour have been a passion since my early college days. I've experienced so many 'bad'

trainers over the years, it was a relief to see a program incorporating everything I had learnt about dog learning abilities and positive reinforcement methods.

After working with Puppy School and attending the conference last year as part of Natures Menu, I finally signed up and have now completed my practical Puppy School tutor training sessions! Just the final bits of the CC to go now!

I try to attend Zoe Taylor's classes as often as my time allows and this has really made me realise how much I miss my doggy contact; I just love to be around dogs and their people. Watching Zoe teach has been a great way of learning about demos, explaining exercises and in some cases, exercising a lot of patience! Zoe is a great teacher and such a lovely influence on both myself and her clients, it's a pleasure to play a small part. Watching puppies and owners develop as a team, learn skills and achieve exercises is such a positive reinforcement (excuse the term!) in itself and encourages me to continue with my work, and hopefully become a fully-fledged tutor soon!

Thank you for being such a lovely group of like-minded people and I hope to continue both as a tutor and your Natures Menu contact for a long time to come!"

