



Puppy School Report 2021

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This report has been produced to summarise the key developments and achievements within Puppy School Ltd during the year 2021. 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 2021

By Gwen Bailey, Founder and Director of Puppy School

In 2021, despite the pandemic still raging around the globe, our world of puppy classes returned to live teaching. At first it was hesitant, with many tutors and pupils preferring the safety of online teaching until the vaccine programme was rolled out to more of the population. Eventually, as the UK returned to some sort of normality, Puppy School tutors went back to live classes, outside at first for the Summer, and then indoors as halls opened up and the weather turned colder and wetter.

In Spring, we ran our new tutor training course online for the second time. With refinements made from feedback from the previous Autumn, this ran more smoothly. While we can teach most things online, there are some things better taught face to face, and this includes actual practical work with puppies. Due to the pandemic, we had a lot of catching up to do with live work with our new tutors, and so we ran four practical courses with four live weekends and had a total of 17 new tutors/associates graduate this year, as well as having 13 tutors and 10 associates still working on their correspondence courses at present.

With so many pups purchased in the pandemic remaining untrained because their owners weren't able to take advantage of our excellent online classes,

we decided to change our booking system for tutors who wanted to run classes for pups older than 20 weeks. We saved this for our most experienced tutors since running classes with adolescent dogs is not easy, and imposed special restrictions so that older pups and very young ones could not end up in the same class together. This worked so well that we decided to extend the system indefinitely for those tutors who are willing and able to run classes for older pups.

Since the beginning of Puppy School, we have handed out evaluation sheets at the end of every course and asked clients to fill them in. In order to make this system more efficient, and paperless, and to give the chance for anonymous feedback, we put this online. The central booking system now sends these out automatically at the end of each course. We are all still adapting to this new process and will continue to tweak the question wording and the formatting until we reach something that is useful and effective for all concerned.

Due to the continued pandemic restrictions on numbers in a gathering, the postponed PS conference, due to run in June, had to be postponed again until next year. June 2022 will also be Puppy School 20th year, so we are planning big celebrations for then!

Below: Spring 2021 Tutor Training Course



Our Regional Manager meetings continued online, and since we couldn't hold the Behaviour course for tutors as normal (Behaviour 6 is planned for Spring 2022), we held an online learning week instead. This consisted of one hour-learning sessions every evening for a week and also on Saturday, with two external speakers and six of our own tutors with specialist expertise in subjects, such as 'appropriate exercise for puppies' from our resident Galen Therapy expert, Cushla Lamén. Later in the year, we also had a talk on nutrition by our very own Melanie Sainsbury from *Natures Menu*.

So it was a semi-busy year for Puppy School that kept on going despite the frustrations and re-bookings needed to achieve anything useful. The puppy boom, which started during the first lockdown, continued, and more puppies than ever before were taught by our excellent tutors... There is always a silver lining :)

Key Puppy School Statistics for 2021

Tutor Numbers

At the end of 2021, Puppy School now comprises of 92 full tutors and 45 associate tutors teaching Puppy School, Puppy University and SuperPup courses. We have 10 resting tutors/associates (those not currently active, either on maternity leave or taking a break). We have 13 provisional tutors and 9 provisional associates currently working on their correspondence course and there are already several keen new applicants waiting to undertake their tutor training course in 2022.

New Tutors and Associates

We had new 5 tutors and 11 new associate tutors train with us during 2021. This year was a little different as the tutor training courses were split part practical and part taught online via Zoom. We

found these 'live' Zoom lectures accompanied by the practical puppy handling in Tewkesbury make a great new way to continue to teach our new Puppy School recruits going forward. Well done to those who managed to complete their correspondence course this year and best of luck to those who are in progress of completing their training. A big, warm Puppy School welcome to:

- Sue Lackenby
- Alison May
- Deborah O'Kane
- Kaitlin Reynall
- Catherine Le Chevalier
- Jessica Caddick
- Livie Barber
- Jenny White
- Emily Panter
- Bella Sanders
- Kate Jaffa
- Nicole Jesuthasan
- April Bunce
- Sam Negus
- Lilly Bell
- Pip Jones

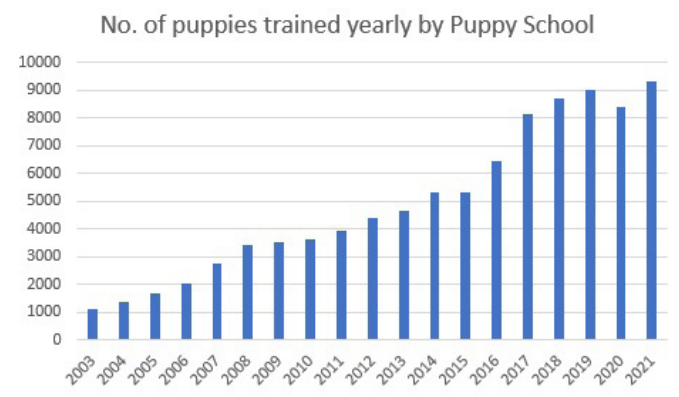
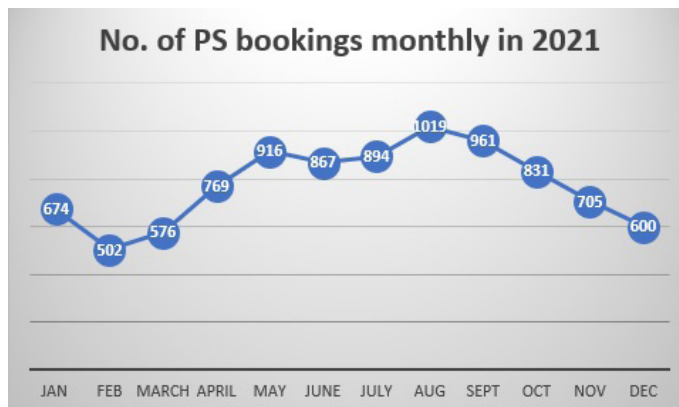
Puppy Numbers

Despite the pandemic bringing us all a difficult couple of years, the number of puppies going through our Puppy School classes in 2021 has absolutely rocketed with an estimated 9,314 puppies completing our classes this year. (estimated figure as of 07/12/21). This is our highest yearly figure of puppy attendees to date! (This figure includes the 507 SuperPups and 152 Older PS class bookings taken in 2021).

Our overall figures are up 9.6% compared to 2020 and we have a 3.2% increase in our number of bookings compared to 2019.

This brings the total number of puppies passed through the hands of Puppy School tutors to 92,218 during the 19 years we have been running. This is a huge achievement! We know this year hasn't been easy what with the additional

work needed to run COVID secure businesses, but we are really proud of all our tutors and associates for making 2021 the best year to date!



Top Tutors

Within our wonderful hub of hard-working tutors at Puppy School, there are five tutors who stand out for training the most

puppies/owners in 2021. They are:

1. Louise Taylor, Neal Otter and team at Surrey and *South London Dog Training and Behaviour* – a staggering 483 puppies trained
2. Rachel Butler and team at *Happy Dog Training Company* - 359 puppies trained
3. Imogen Haley and team at *Lady and the Hound* - 358 puppies trained
4. Louise Williamson and team at *South Coast Dog Training* – 327 puppies trained
5. Michelle Cleary and team at *Cleary Canines* – 283 puppies trained

Figures for each tutor calculated up until 7th December 2021 and include client cancellations

A further 4 Puppy School Tutors registered over 200 puppies this year (as of 07/12/21) – congratulations to: Alice Crick (253), Karen Boyce (251), Caroline Duder (242), Claire Luscombe (235).

23 Puppy School Tutors registered over 100 puppies this year (as of 07/12/21) – big congratulations to:

Amanda Childs, Catherine Tomlinson, Delia Graham, Eleanor McCall, Sally Hammond, Sarah Treagus, Emma-Clare Dunnett, Julie Smith, Carole Carruth, Pen Higgs, Claire Mcknespiey, Claire McRae, Jenny Green, Sarah Smith, Vicky Fitch Taylor, Chrissie Pargeter, Jacki Tinning, Julie Hilliard, Sandie Dallow, Nicole Harris, Tammy Dwight, Cheryl Holden and Vanessa O’Carroll.

A big well done to absolutely everyone in our Puppy School family for taking on another challenging year what with the ever-changing COVID regulations and alterations to the running of businesses. We are so proud of you all, you kept going through it all and your work really does make such a difference to owner’s and puppies’ lives.

2021 Highlights from Puppy School

Launch of Puppy School's puppy treats

This year saw the launch of a special puppy treat packet from *Natures Menu* branded with our own Puppy School logo. We worked with *Natures Menu* to help create a thinner treat than their normal range, which is a better size for most puppies, but still with the same great semi-moist consistency and smell that puppies love to work for. These meaty treats are made with 95% real chicken and pork.



Available in the vast majority of pet shops and stores as well as online, our Puppy School logo on the packaging is another great way for puppy owners to learn about us and get our brand well-advertised and endorsed.

In March this year, we saw some changes to *Natures Menu* in the discontinuation of 'True Instinct' in favour of 'Natures Variety'. All our literature was changed accordingly including the insert in the PS Manual, the logos on £15 off voucher and

the logo on our £5 off shop redeemable voucher. *Natures Variety* offers our clients a choice of dry, raw, wet or freeze-dried dog food that uses natural ingredients with no aggressive processes or artificial ingredients.

August 2021 saw the discontinuation of our *Natures Menu* Puppy Welcome Box. We thank our sponsors for all their time and efforts on these but we are pleased to announce that from January 2022, that along with the manual, voucher and literature, there will be an inclusion of 1 x pack of *Natures Menu's* new Country Hunter Superfood Bites for Puppies, Chicken with Venison (70g) for puppies to enjoy.

Content of our Puppy School Welcome Pack:

- 1 x Country Hunter Puppy Bites (70g) (to be implemented from 01/01/2022)
- 1 x Puppy School Manual
- 1 x £15 off Natures Menu online voucher
- 1 x Pawsome Puppy Booklet – also contains vouchers for online/in store use
- 1 x 'Best Friends' NM leaflet



Puppy School YouTube Channel

This year we worked really hard on creating new and interesting content for our Puppy School YouTube channel. Since YouTube is owned by Google, these videos can help improve our SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and overall brand awareness. This fantastic resource will help Puppy School reach a much wider audience and generate more traffic to our website.

With the fantastic help of *Association of Pet Behaviour Councillors* (APBC) registered behaviourists and experienced Puppy School tutors Nicole Harris, Catherine Tomlinson, Emily Mazon, Louise Taylor and Lauren Hewitt-Watts, we created lots of unique content this year, which is easy for our clients to watch and share. We reached out to many of our tutors asking to be sent some content for the videos and they did not disappoint, giving us some great material to work with.



Above: Screenshot of YouTube video



Above: Emily Mazon, YouTube Video

When looking at creating the content for these videos, the online team picked topics that they knew our puppy owners could relate to and may need some extra help with. The topics chosen and discussed this year were often questions tutors get asked at their Puppy School classes and include:

- “Why won’t my puppy walk on the lead?” An informative guide to helping desensitise puppies to their new world and how to help them cope with new experiences by Catherine Tomlinson.
- “Why does my puppy playbite my children?” – A comprehensive guide to why puppies playbite and mouth and how to help owners create a harmonious household by Emily Mazon.
- “Why won’t my puppy come back when there are other dogs around” – A fantastic guide to recall from puppy play and recall with young puppies on the cusp of adolescence by Lauren Hewitt-Watts.
- “Confidence Building for Puppies” – A lovely video on why some puppies may be cautious in new environments with some great ideas on how to build bravery by Louise Taylor
- “Learning to be alone” Puppy School’s informational video on isolation training by Gwen Bailey.

In selecting specific topics of interest, we can really connect with our puppy owner audience and bring them that much needed advice and guidance in a quick, easy and concise way. We really value the input of our excellent tutors on creating these videos, as well as the tutors that sent in video footage, so thank you everyone who was involved in their creation.

Check us out by searching ‘Puppy School UK’ on YouTube or visiting: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-cxI3uoXnxVnBaQ6_K9fEEQ - Join us and subscribe today!

Puppy School Market Research

In January 2021, we collaborated with a marketing company to gather some research to see if our puppy-owning clients might gain benefit from an interactive, online platform with informative advice and guidance as part of their Puppy School experience.

We contacted a selection of previous class attendees and sourced twenty (fantastic) people to participate in a week-long online community. Over the week, we discussed:

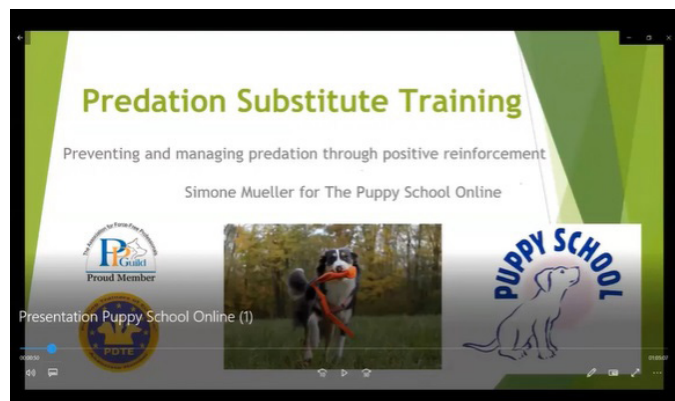
- Feelings and emotions associated with owning a puppy
- Challenges and rewarding moments associated with owning a puppy
- Initial responses to various potential features of the online proposition
- A more detailed exploration of re-worked features

The results were very interesting indeed and we really were able to note how much first-time puppy owners struggle with the basics on helping puppies sleep at night, and how to work with, cope and manage with the inevitable playbiting and mouthing. Here at Puppy School HQ, we are still considering how we might be able to generate an online platform in a professional and cost-effective way. Watch this space!

Puppy School's Online learning week

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our bi-annual Puppy School conference again this year due to the pandemic but to counter this, we ran a wonderful online learning week in June 2021 for all our tutors and associates.

This wonderful variety of webinars were put together for us by our very own Puppy School 'inhouse experts' as well as some professional and well esteemed external speakers.



Puppy School's Online learning week schedule included:

- "Spinning Plates with Puppies" – All about focus and engagement hosted by Claire Staines
- "Appropriate Exercise for Puppies" – Introduction to puppy exercise hosted by Cushla Lamén
- "Hunting Substitute Training" – Preventing and managing predation hosted by Simone Mueller
- "Free Work for Anxious or Reactive Dogs" Confidence building via freework activities with Karen Boyce
- "Additional Needs for Additional Needs" – Informative information all about families taking on support dogs hosted by Amy Thomson
- "Looking after Your Sanity" – a fantastic insight into how to take care and look after our mental health hosted by Nicole Harris, Chrissie Pargeter and Catherine Pleasance

What a great week of continued professional development to boost our brains over lockdown! It was so nice to see so many of the Puppy School family 'virtually' (on screen) from the comfort of our own homes.

Despite us being all so far apart this year, it really felt as if we were back together learning on our behaviour courses again. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this, it was a great success!

New Tutor Training Course combines online learning and practical puppy training

After the success of our online run tutor training courses in 2020 when we were no longer able to teach in person face-to-face, we have developed our Spring and Autumn 2021 tutor training courses to be a mixture of in-person practical workshops and online 'live' lectures.

The in-person workshops revolve around everyone meeting and getting to know each other as well as some practice on public speaking and puppy handling. The practical handling side of the course is now hosted with puppy clients and puppies themselves over in Tewkesbury.

This new format gives new tutors and associates the chance to work with real-life scenarios that will be similar to those that they will experience in their own classes. The online 'live' lectures hosted by Gwen Bailey, Rachel Welch and Catherine Tomlinson on practical theory, gives attendees the chance to learn from the comfort of their own homes with less travel time and travel expenses.

Here's what a few of our 2021 attendees had to say about their experience of our new tutor training courses.

From Emily Panter:

" I enjoyed meeting other people that also loved dogs and loved to talk about them, so didn't feel like a crazy dog lady! I enjoyed learning about dog behaviour, motivations and rewards. It was good that we could use our skills and knowledge in real life settings, with owners coming in with their puppies. And although it was scary to lead a small group of puppies and humans in a class setting. It really helped me feel accomplished and build my confidence. Thank you Puppy School!"

From Alison May: "I really enjoyed the course and learned so much. The most interesting thing I learned was the importance of socialisation and how important a good breeder is. My favourite part was the practical handling, working with all the gorgeous puppies and also being with people who are as mad about dogs as me. The course really did cover everything that's important to know about puppies and the best way to train them in a kind and helpful way".



Above: Practical Tutor Training Spring 2021

From Sam Negus:

"All my life I've wanted to work in dog training, but was scared to jump out and do it alone. Finding out that Puppy School existed was amazing to me. From the very start, everyone welcomed me and have been supportive and encouraging. Doing the Zoom meetings was a first for me but allowed me to fit training in around my personal responsibilities in a way that was easier than if I had had to travel to get take part. I enjoyed starting the training with the two-day face-to-face course so that we all got to meet each other and establish bonds. This worked well going forward on the Zoom calls as we weren't strangers!

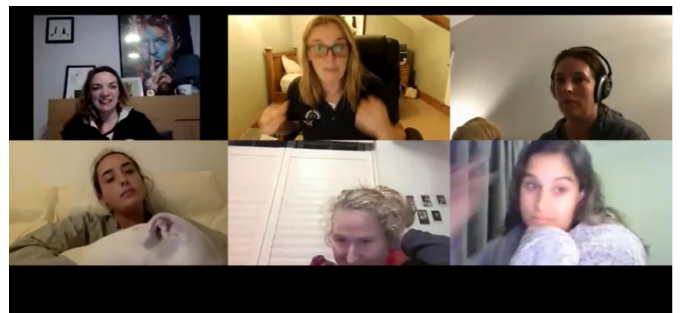
I really enjoyed that the Zoom calls were live and not recorded as I would not retain or be as engaged if I was sent videos to watch and learn from alone. For me, the most interesting part was learning skills and techniques/helpful tricks to try and help the puppies succeed in what they are doing. I also really enjoyed the practical at the end and getting to speak to and work with the owners. Working with dogs in kennels is one thing, but having to establish a rapport with the clients was a new experience and mostly a lovely one. I am super excited to continue my Puppy School journey and look forward to doing my classes as well as learning and developing my skill set every day!"



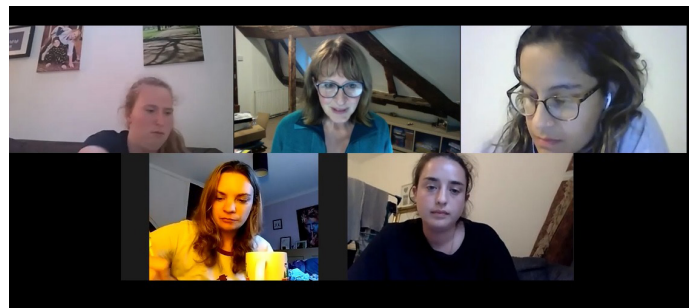
Practical Tutor Training in action



Spring 2021 practical in Tewkesbury



Above and below: Autumn 2021 Online Zoom TTC with Catherine Tomlinson and Gwen Bailey





Spring 2021 Practical Tutor Training course in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire

Puppy School's Buddy System

This year we created our Puppy School Buddy System. This was implemented to help those new tutors who had just passed their correspondence courses get some experience from our long-standing tutors. In matching our newbies to our experienced tutors, we were able to create a little support system for those new to us and our syllabus.

This was especially important this year as this buddy system was implemented during the pandemic whilst we were all teaching online and couldn't get that face-to-face class experience. New tutors were able to benefit by joining existing classes held by their peers and therefore watch and learn from them. Now that we are mostly back to teaching our face-to-face classes again, we are looking at expanding the buddy system on a local level so that newly graduated tutors can attend

local classes with experienced tutors to gain some more knowledge and guidance before teaching their own classes.

Launch of Older Puppy School

Once returning back to teaching face-to-face at our venues, it became clear that so many puppy owners and their puppies had missed out on early training and support due to the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021; and that now, these puppies were too old to attend our Puppy School classes. In light of this, we decided to launch 'Older Puppy School' for those puppies over the age of 5 months (20 weeks) so that they could join a class with dogs their own age and benefit from learning the Puppy School syllabus. Since teaching a group class of adolescent dogs is a little more challenging than teaching young puppies, this option was only available to our more experienced tutors who took the chance to help those puppy owners who

needed some expertise and guidance. 'Older Puppy School' has been successful in reaching the demand of those adolescent dogs and helping them with these basic but important early life skills that our syllabus offers. We hope to continue to offer 'Older Puppy School' to our clients in 2022.

From Alice Crick: "I was grateful to offer this syllabus to my clients as so many were reaching out for help after the pandemic but I couldn't offer them a place on our Puppy University course, nor my other adult follow-on classes as they and their dogs had no basic knowledge of training. Older Puppy School provided the perfect solution, to teach the Puppy School syllabus but to an older group of adolescent dogs so that they had they key principles to training under their belt. Teaching Older Puppy School wasn't without its challenges but once we settled our adolescent dogs into classes and made sure they were happy and content in the environment, we found them to be wonderfully receptive to training and a joy to teach. The photo below is of my boy Zeus, a delightfully HUGE Collie x St Bernard who stole my heart. It was wonderful to see the progress he and his lovely owners made after attending Older Puppy School with us".



Puppy School for Older Pups

NEW

Do you have a puppy aged 20 weeks to 12 months old?
Did your puppy miss out on training due to lockdown?

Don't worry, we are here to help. Due to the increased number of older puppies, we are offering our brilliant Puppy School format to older puppies in a brand new course of their very own.

Same content, same great trainers, same results



To find out more, visit www.puppyschool.co.uk to find your nearest Puppy School tutor and enquire about Older Puppy classes

Puppy School articles in *Natures Menu's* Newsletter

This year, our sponsors *Natures Menu* launched our joint newsletter which contains articles written by our very own Puppy School tutors.

These monthly newsletters go out to all our previous clients who opted in to receive mailings from us. We are really proud of these newsletters as they provide clients with exciting and informative news and stories and remind them of their time training with us (another big 'win' for our brand awareness).

This year, our newsletter content has included:

- January 2021– A Success Story by Alex Smith
- February 2021 - Socialisation and Habituation in The Young Puppy Part 1 by Karen Boyce
- March 2021 - Socialisation and Habituation in The Young Puppy Part 2 by Karen Boyce
- April 2021 - Preparing for Summer Trips by Sarah Owen
- May 2021– How to keep Dogs Cool by Sarah Smith
- June 2021 – Finding a Good Groomer by Karen Barnard

- July 2021 – Being a Puppy Socialiser for *Veterans with Dogs* by Jacki Tinning
- August 2021 – Nail Clipping by Ruth Morris
- September 2021 – Hoopers by Cheryl Holden
- October 2021– Canicross by Cat Le Chevalier
- November 2021 – Scent work by Sandie Dallow
- December 2021 – Preparing your Pup for Christmas by Claire Mcknespiey



Thank you to each and every one of our tutors who have contributed to these. Some articles have made it onto our 'advice' section www.puppyschool.co.uk and we are pleased to say that we are continuing our newsletters into 2022. If you would like to receive the *Natures Menu* Puppy School newsletter each month, please email Melanie Sainsbury at Natures Menu direct at: melanie@natures-menu.co.uk and request to be added to their mailing list.

Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) Pre-Assessment Course is back in 2022

After its successful launch in 2019, our *Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)* Pre-Assessment course will again be hosted by Rachel Butler and Nicole Harris next year. This 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. This practical and informative course allows for the three different elements of the APDT assessment to be practiced and rehearsed. That is the written paperwork, the class assessment and the post-class interview. Attendees to this course will be given the opportunity to take part in the running of an entire one-hour class under assessment conditions. This will give everyone a chance to put all they have learnt into practice and to have that all-important feedback from Rachel and Nicole which will no doubt be given a positive and constructive manner.

2021 highlights from our tutors

Returning Puppy School client – 17 years later!

Long standing and much valued Puppy School Tutor Claire Luscombe has had a number of returning puppy parents over the last couple of years, where their original dogs have now sadly passed away and their new arrivals have joined the Puppy School family. Claire received a lovely photo at the end of 2020 where a family had kept their previous dogs' certificate and took a photo next to their recent puppy graduate.....since then, they have taken on a second puppy and graduated with her in October 2021!



Claire comments: "I always feel so privileged when puppy parents return with their new additions, but knowing how much time has passed for some of them is starting to make me feel very old!"

'How to successfully integrate a new multi-dog household and how it isn't always easy!' from Puppy School tutor Cheryl Holden

Cheryl Holden, an experienced Puppy School tutor in Somerset has had her year taken over by the chief management of her new multi-dog household. It's been a difficult year which needed some delicate management. Cheryl recites her experiences for us below:

From Cheryl: "In October last year, we lost our beloved Mastiff Nellie. It was all very sudden and left us reeling. We felt we 'needed' another dog but something very different as Nellie was just so unique and irreplaceable. We never envisaged that new dog would be a cockapoo, but along came a young dog needing help with resource guarding issues having bitten his family members when training methods used were inappropriate. He was a project to take my mind off of Nellie and I needed that, and he needed me to help him (he didn't know that though!). We picked him up during the November 2020 lockdown, and our world has been upside down and somewhat chaotic ever since and 2021 has been a whirlwind!

Resource guarding were not Fidget's only traits - we have experienced vehicle chasing, selective dog reactivity, barrier frustration, noise sensitivity, stealing, counter surfing, inability to settle outside of his cage, tail chasing...the list goes on! We spent every day trying to help him but he didn't take the move very well, he didn't particularly want to spend time with us, had no interest in social praise and only responded to food luring. We tried hard to build a bond but were looking forward to the critical 3-month time that seems to be a rescue dogs "settling in period", we were counting the days to February when we were hoping we'd start to see a little bit of his personality.

And then at the beginning of February we went completely mad: we bought a Kromfohrlander puppy! I knew it was a really crazy thing to do as Fidget was basically an 18-month-old baby puppy at the very beginning of his training and had so many issues, but it was a breed we had wanted for years and as there are only 50-60 in the country the chances to own a Kromfohrlander are few and far between. We thought long and hard about it, before deciding to go for it and brought home a 9-week-old puppy who we named Jumble.

Fidget hated her on sight! I was prepared for a little bit of work to introduce them carefully but his extreme response to her was a massive shock. When he heard her even yawn his reaction was to throw himself at the door barking frantically.



We spent two months living in separate rooms with a dog in each room and poor Wilbur our long-standing saint gravitating between the two. Every day I took him into the kitchen on a lead while Jumble was cradled in my husband's arms and did some desensitisation using chicken, we walked them on opposite sides of the road gradually getting closer over the course of a few weeks. It slowly got better and we began to allow them off lead together in open spaces to form a relationship, but still had to manage them very carefully in the house.



Fast forward nine months and they have formed a good relationship, there are still moments of inappropriate play and they still need to be managed carefully. Fidget still has a lot of issues but we are making headway with him every day. He has done a scentwork course (and smashed it!) and we are currently attending monthly gun-dog training sessions together.

Jumble has hit adolescence head on and is experiencing some fear and dog reactivity, but Kromfohrlanders are a naturally sensitive breed so we are working carefully on this. She's a funny little thing and is interesting to train: she doesn't really like food so using toys is key, we can't do too many repetitions as she gets overwhelmed and shuts down and her latent learning is amazing - you think she hasn't understood an exercise at all but when you return to it a few days later she has it

nailed! So in short the last year has been dominated by dogs....pandemic? What pandemic?! We've spent a year with our heads down focussing on our mad dog-house!"

Well done Cheryl, this is a huge achievement and a credit to you and your family. Long may this happy, healthy relationship between all your dogs continue!

PS Dates for Your Diary 2022:



12-13 February

Spring 2022 Introductory weekend with new tutors

Selected dates 22 February – 7 April

Parts 1 and 2 of Spring 2022 Tutor Training course Online

21-23 March

Puppy School Behaviour Course 6

18-20 April

Spring 2022 practical handling puppy training (for new tutors)

24-26 June

Puppy School 2022 Conference!

3-4 September

Autumn 2022 Introductory weekend with new tutors

Selected dates 6 September – 20th October

Parts 1 and 2 of Autumn 2022 Tutor Training course Online

24-26 October

Autumn 2022 practical handling puppy training (for new tutors)

2-3 December

Puppy School Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) preparation workshop

My 2020 by Gwen Bailey, Founder and Director of Puppy School

As lockdowns and restrictions continued, it soon became apparent that our wedding, planned for 1st May 2021, was not going to happen as planned. Restricted to only 30, we decided to postpone completely for a year and go for May 2022 instead. This, together with having to postpone the Puppy School Conference in June and the disruption we all felt while trying to get back to normal but being thwarted at every turn, was hard to cope with. In March, the CEVA animal welfare awards, for which I am a judge, had to be held online, and it was a very muted celebration. It was not a great start to the year.

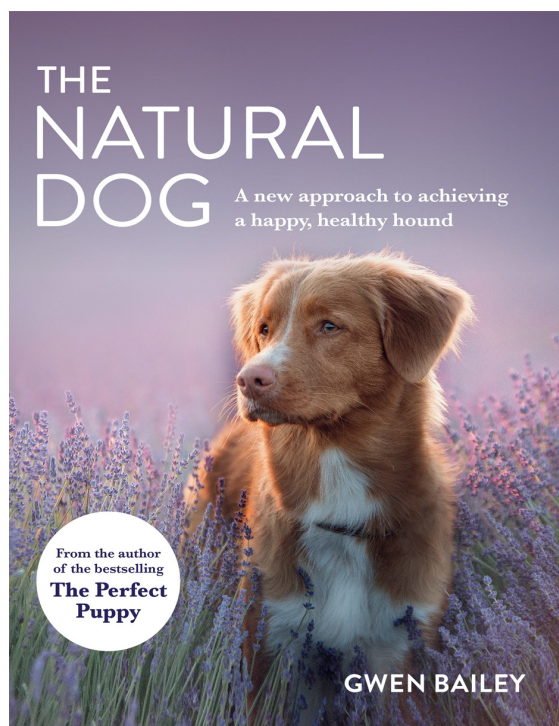
In May, Lilli, a 10-month-old rescue Vizsla came into our lives. A sulky, out-of-control, and unresponsive teenager at first, she was soon won round with a combination of more exercise than she had ever known, games and training. Otto was a very good big brother and role model, and I was so grateful for his calm responses to requests when Lilli was going through one of her 'I'm not listening to you' phases. I simply ignored her, and gave Otto lots of praise and treats, and she soon came over to see what he was getting! We took her on a prearranged walking holiday to Hadrian's Wall, and although she had to stay on lead due to a non-existent recall, she enjoyed it and seemed to love being part of a family when we all slept in one room together.



I trained her in the gun dog exercises that Otto does to keep him active and busy. In October, amazingly, she passed Grade 1 & 2 of The Gundog Club tests with 100% in each! She is now good with our cats and a lovely, happy, well-trained young dog that we are proud to have in our family. Otto gained his Grade 4 and, although I hadn't noticed a pronounced improvement over the years, when compared with Lilli, he is very wise and so good.



In July, my new book, 'The Natural Dog' was published in the UK and USA. I've tried to include all the smaller things that I've learnt about dog care of the years that have such an important effect on their wellbeing. I hope lots of people will read it and have happier dogs as a result.



More new additions to our family came in October in the form of three pregnant alpacas, due to give birth next July/August. They are dear little things, and although a bit wild and unhandled at the moment, they are curious and will come right up to visitors, or if we are doing anything in their field. When you go into their feed store to make up their feed, you turn around to go out, and they are standing right in the doorway, jostling for position to be the first to see what you are doing. We love their gentle natures and the little humming noise they make to keep their herd connected, and we are going to take our time to teach them we mean them no harm.



My 2021 from Rachel Welch, Puppy School's Operations Manager

What a funny old year it's been! A year of highs and excitement but also a feeling of never quite getting back to the 'norm' that we were all promised. Well, I might as well start with the best bit (for me at least), I got married – on a beach in Barbados, the wedding we'd been hoping for, despite two delays and changes of tropical island venue. Eventually, it didn't matter which island or which date as long as we got to go ahead. It was a truly magical experience, just the two of us (well, excluding all the people sitting on the beach watching, they don't tell you that bit when you are booking your dream wedding) and I am now very happy to

be Mrs Welch with an expanded family of two step children in addition to my own two. Life is busy but full of laughter and I couldn't be happier.



From a Puppy School perspective, it's been a year with less drama than the last but also with a feeling of being ready to look onwards now and enjoy some planning for the future. I was gutted that we had to cancel the Puppy School Conference in June; we really did try to hang on but it was just never going to be the celebration that we wanted it to be. And so, once more, the date has moved but the plans are on-going and we are looking forward to what promises to be the biggest and best one yet – after all, we all deserve a bit of fun (oh, as well as all the wonderful learning that will take place too).

I have really enjoyed our updated version of the practicals for the new tutors. Having considered how we could make these even better, we turned to my puppy owners and their wonderful puppies to help us to fulfil our commitments to providing hands-on training. Over several courses, Claire (Luscombe), Jacki (Clifford) and I helped to facilitate some wonderful learning experiences for our tutors, thanks to the wonderful array of lively, fun, inexperienced puppies who took part in the sessions. I am sure everyone will agree that it was a hugely valuable learning experience and has proved to be a format that we will keep for the future.

I've enjoyed getting more heavily involved in the online tutor training cours-

-es, a format that seems to work so well, and also relished the challenge of putting together an interesting series of speakers for our online learning week, which was well received.

The challenge of putting together the online evaluation forms was real, and we are all too aware that there is still work to do in this area, in order to really be sure, we are gaining the most useful feedback possible. I can relate to the feeling of dread when the inbox pings and the 'course evaluation received' emails sit, waiting to be opened. However, on the most part, the reviews are hugely positive and leave me feeling confident that my team and I are doing the absolute best we can to provide the service we all strive to offer.

My own business has weathered the storm well and we are back to full strength, although I am enjoying the smaller classes and the gaps between courses, that were implemented as a result of covid but are welcome to stay. When not working, I have rekindled a passion for horse riding, thanks to my 10-year-old daughter discovering ponies for the first time. What with that, a little canicross when I get the chance and a busy family life, as well as Bramble and Moss to entertain, life is never dull!

My 2021 from Alice Crick, Puppy School's Operations Assistant

It's my fifth year at Puppy School HQ and honestly, I don't know where 2021 has gone? - I feel like it has flashed before my eyes at lightspeed!

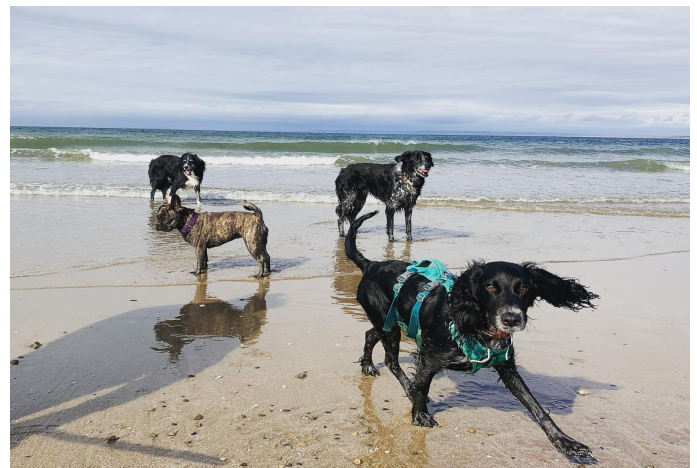
I've been beavering away this year but I've mostly been working on routine work so as to free up Rachel and Gwen's time for more important projects. I work closely alongside the lovely Melanie Sainsbury from our sponsors *Natures Menu* and I register tutors as Animal Training Instructors with the *Animal Behaviour Training*

Council. My routine tasks include managing the master document, doing the yearly ABTC annual audit, helping to take the bookings for tutor training courses as well as the overall maintenance of the intranet.

We sadly lost our dear, gentle little Olive this year, goodness knows how old she really was but she passed away quietly and peacefully in her sleep. My family and I miss her terribly but we know we gave her the best last years of her life. Of course, we all know Cavaliers are renowned for being sensitive souls but how she slowly learned to trust us after what she went through in her early life, I will never know. It took a very long time for her to become the dog she eventually became but she really was very special and I'll always remember her.



We managed to get in some short breaks to Wales with my family and all our dogs this year which was just brilliant. Spending quality time with loved ones again is a special feeling I just can't describe!



Evie is now three and she's really now turned into a lovely, calm little girl who is always a delight to take everywhere we go. She's been a constant companion in the garden and an excellent little vegetable patch digger (digging in all the wrong places until we made her her own little dig box!). Evie and I have been practising hard on our Gundog work ready to return to Helen Phillips' *Clicker Gundog* workshops next year. I think we are going to brave it and book the proper assessments this time around!



As COVID restrictions lifted, we were finally able to make it to our festivals this year which were epic - I shan't take dancing about in a field for granted ever again - how I've missed live music and loud bass!

My Puppy School classes have been running with full force as business regrows after the year that shocked us all! Huge thanks to the Positive Dog team who have all worked so hard to make this year such a success. I've returned to teaching my puppy parties at my local vets now too which is great as it's really beneficial for local business. I feel so lucky to have such a great team in Gloucestershire - we are all so supportive of each other and it's a real pleasure to work with you all.

I am very much looking forward to the

coming year, it's all set to be a big one with the return of our behaviour courses and finally, the hosting of our long-awaited Puppy School Conference! I am really looking forward to seeing you all and catching up then!

My 2021 from Gail Hutchman, Puppy School's Administrator



That's another year nearly done, how fast did 2021 go? We are still adapting to the ever-changing rules but I am so happy that Puppy School has stayed strong through it all.

One massive achievement (well massive for me anyway), is that the PS storage unit (a shipping container where we keep all our rosettes etc - nothing glamorous!) has finally been cleared out and tidied up and I no longer put my life at risk of being trapped by boxes of stock when I go there.

A big thank you to Gwen, Rachel and Alice for coming over on that lovely sunny, hot day to help with this.