

# Dog Tails

*Newsletter for Bury and District  
German Shepherd Dog Club*

Issue 9. April 2011

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**Plus a Bit More .....**

## *An Instructors Tale – Why you should rule with your head not your heart!*

Have you ever had one of those moments, you've struggled all week trying to teach your dog something, then your instructor takes your dog from you and instantly your dog does what you have been trying to accomplish all week, and I can bet a pound to a penny you'll either say or think.... 'Why won't he do that for me?'



I had, shall we call it an incident the other week, that made me realise there is a simple way to explain this to you and will also demonstrate that if your instructor says, 'I know how you feel' or 'I have problems with my dog' they actually do, you may see the instructors out with their dogs before training and think they have no problems because their dogs seem so well behaved/trained

I'll start off with a brief history on my dog Fergus, for those of you that don't know him. Fergus is a rescue dog who was abandoned along with his siblings as a pup, he was extremely timid, in fact he was scared of everything including his own shadow! I kid you not, it took me 4 weeks to get him to cross a road. I had to put a lot of work everyday to get him to be the

confident LOOKING little boy that he is now, and he will always need help to keep him the way he is, I still have to work with him as he lunges at dogs, with absolutely no intent, when he is nervous, basically saying go away you scare me.

Most of the time Ferg is fine, sails through life dealing with what life throws at him, but very occasionally something will spook him, usually he bounces back quickly and forgets all about it.

Now to the tale, the incident that would leave me in tears, yes, us instructors are human to ha ha. We were in the kitchen on the Saturday, I was milling round and Fergus was having his Tea when the pan I had washed slipped on the draining board, Fergs nervous side showed and he flinched and went to run to his bed, I told him to finish his tea, which he dutifully did. The next day he ran and played with Sammy in the morning before training, had a mill round the car park on his lead then went off for his usual snooze in the van whilst I took my class.

When I got him out for his run with Sammy after training he was very clingy, not just that he wouldn't play with Sammy but he wouldn't leave my side, I even commented to Steve and Karen on how clingy he was, he wouldn't even run with Xal either The rest of Sunday continued as normal, except for one thing, we went home, Fergus went to bed and I did some housework, while I was washing up I dropped a pan on the draining board, yes, I am clumsy before you all say it, I thought nothing of it, Fergus was asleep in his bed, it was only HOURS later that I realised he hadn't been out of bed and usually he likes to keep a check on what I'm doing, so I called him, no response, Ferg ALWAYS comes when I call him, so I called him again, and asked him if he was hungry, this is the command for come and get your tea, he would not budge from his bed and his body language was telling me he was scared to move from his bed, I coaxed him out with some food, but there was no way he was gonna come into the kitchen, I quickly realised that the pan incidents of the last two days were having an effect on my boy, so I let him be and did not force him to come and eat.

Come bed time he needed to go out for a wee which meant he had to go across the kitchen to get to the back door, with much encouragement and treats thrown across the kitchen he ran to the back door like a high speed train, it was the next thing that left me in floods of tears, it

was to be the first time in 2 years I had had a reminder of what a frightened little puppy I use to have, I've always known he'd have some problems, but I never dreamed he would regress so far back so quickly, he went out for a wee, he was AGES and he never stays outside for long on his own, so I went to see where he was, he was lay in the cold huddled up by the gate, and he wasn't for budging, he was too scared to come back in to go through the kitchen, the scene of the scary noise. Eventually I got him in and across the kitchen, he looked so sad and scared as he lay in his bed.

As an instructor I could tell you exactly what to do with your dog at this point, but I turned into one of you, yes, at home with our dogs we are just pet owners and have all the same feelings and emotions about our dogs as you guys, we are very emotionally attached to our dogs, so what did I do?..... Sat and cried, brilliant, this was so not helping my dog, he's a very sensitive boy, so I managed to make him even more upset!!!! Lucky for me I have a good group of friends who many of are instructors and behaviourists, so I put the word out to one particular friend who knows Ferg and is a behaviourist, the word was HELP the reply I got back was you can read a dog, you know crying is not helping..... GO TO BED you can do nothing unless you are calm, as Manda said these words to me, I suddenly knew myself that I was doing all the wrong things, but I love my boy so much and hate to see him suffer so I simply couldn't think straight, so off to bed I went, not that I slept much but I was determined that tomorrow I would get up, he would be a bit better and I would be calmer.

Well morning arrived I was tired and still a little emotional and sadly Fergus was no better, after 30 mins of hard word I got him into the kitchen, but now he wouldn't go near his food bowl, which is stainless steel, so I decided the best plan of action, leave him to eat if he was really hungry he'd eat, but he didn't so no food till tea time, come tea time he was hungry so had to face his fears and he ate his tea then shot off to his bed.

After 4 days of trying things, that didn't seem to be working I moved onto phase 2, just leave him to his own devices and carry on as normal, just let him deal with things in his own time, so Ferg was ignored and if he stayed in bed he did, if he got up and came into the kitchen that was fine, I just let him mooch round saying hardly a word to him. Come Fri he was off to the kennels for the weekend while I went away to my friends for the weekend, he LOVES it at the kennels. So Fri morning he was bundled into the van and off we went, he was a happy boy to be there pawing at the gates to get in, he got a bit miffed when I realised they didn't open till 9am and I thought it was 8am they opened, not very patient my boy! When he went in we just let him run round the courtyard for a bit and to my delight he went and found a ball, he hadn't played with a ball all week, then Alan arrived, Fergus was a little nervous so Alan waited till Ferg approached him, I told him the problems I'd had and while we were talking Fergus got more and more settled going and getting all the toys out, I could be quite offended at how happy he was to be at the kennels after being such a miserable boy all week! They are really fond of him and were surprised to see him nervous so the lucky boy got to stay in the house with them all morning ..... Ferg looked like he was finally on the road to recovery.

So, what's the moral to this tale, well there's a few,

1. You can NEVER work with your dog and achieve anything when you are stressed and/or upset because they pick up on it
2. Don't try and over analyse problems, you only end up thinking there are more problems than there are
3. sometimes it's best just to leave your dog to sort there own problems out, we all have off days when things get us down, then after a day or two, when you've thought about it, you just get over it

4. Don't bother trying to work out what has caused some problems you'll never know, thinking back I realise that now it could be that something happened while I wasn't even around! but I'll never know!!!

## **DOG TRAINING IN NEW ZEALAND**

New Zealand has been in the news recently because of the earthquakes they have experienced in and around Christchurch, South Island. The appalling loss of life, homes and livelihood in the most recent quake has been pretty grim.

I went to stay with my daughter, Alison and son-in-law John after the September quake and saw some of the damage in Christchurch and where they live (only 3km from the fault-line). I also felt some of the frequent aftershocks. Although bad enough, it was nothing compared to the devastation there now.

Ali and John help at the local RSPCA centre. While I was there I visited the centre and also went to a couple of dog training sessions with their dogs.

There are a lot of working dogs in NZ, helping out on the large sheep stations and with other livestock. These dogs are not treated as pets at all and seem to be trained as such. It was not considered good practice to praise, stroke or fuss them.

Dogs could often be seen in the back of pick-up trucks, occasionally in a cage but usually completely loose. It should have come as no surprise that one of the things taught at the training was 'what to do if your dog jumps out of the car window or back of the truck'. Apparently an everyday occurrence!!! The advice was a version of a recall.

Although the training was similar, in that they were teaching the Good Citizen Dog Scheme, there were some differences in methods. I felt that they were rather more reliant on punishment and less on praise and reward although this wasn't universal. It did seem to be accepted that you could throw your dog to the ground and pin it there. This may work for Cesar Milan, with all his experience behind him, but what I saw was a bewildered dog in an agitated state being flung to the ground and then let up, while still agitated, with absolutely no idea what was going on and why.

Dogs are not allowed at all in many city centres and must be on a lead in a lot of other areas. There are, however, dog parks where they can run around and mix with other dogs and generally have a great time.

One of the reasons that dogs are more restricted is that when NZ was colonised people were accompanied by dogs, cats, rats, deer, possum etc which had a very detrimental effect on the numerous flightless birds and other native animals some of which now only survive in reserves and on islands where their predators have been eradicated or excluded

Ali tells me that the RSPCA has been very busy since the earthquake. Pets have been lost, traumatised or abandoned and ended up there. Also people who have suffered damaged to their homes have gone to stay with friends or relatives and had to put their

pets in kennels or boarded with the RSPCA. Some of our dogs are frightened by thunder; just imagine how terrifying an earthquake and the continuing aftershocks would be.

Liz Doyle

### *A perfect weekend away – The story of 6 dogs and a BIG decision.*

I had got a call from a friend in need, she had to have an op and needed a friend to go look after her and her 6 dogs for the weekend, so when she asked I jumped at the chance, I could do with a weekend away anyway. Sadly



I couldn't take Fergus with me, although he would've loved it, her bitches were in season and her dogs would instinctively protect the females from a young male coming into their pack, so Ferg went to the kennels for his little holiday.



After dropping Ferg I set off to North Wales, hoping I wouldn't have to ask for directions as I couldn't even pronounce where I was going ha ha ha I'd put all my warm dog walking clothes in as

it had been really cold of late, it was looking like that was a mistake, when I arrived it was warm and sunny, ah well at least I had one T shirt! When I went in I was greeted by all the dogs, even Toby the Springer who I had not met before, apparently Toby doesn't usually go to everyone but he took an instant like to me. Mandas hubbie took me and the dogs out to show me where they walked them before he set off to his weekend away, I couldn't believe my luck, they own 3 acres of land and wood land that was all



mine to walk the dogs in, I was so gonna be in my element, 3 acres and 6 dogs, RESULT, I needed some time away and this couldn't be more perfect, peaceful and restful all you could hear were the birds singing, this was just what I needed.



It sounds like quite a task to look after six dogs, but six well trained dogs are easier to look after than one untrained dog,

although feeding time took a while. One thing I find about dogs is that they are very therapeutic, they ask nothing of you, except to be fed and have somewhere to live, be exercised and to be shown considering what they give in looking after them I came we walked a lot, but no more Sunday night the dogs were walked the usual amount of Fergus but they played with made my decision, one that I was going to get a friend for

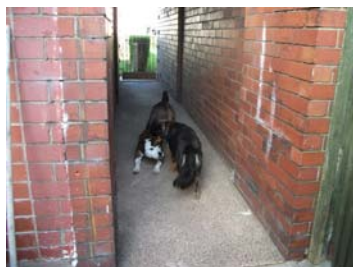


love, not much really return, so after 3 days of back rested and peaceful, yes, than I walk my one dog. By exhausted, they had been time and distance I walk each other. This was what had pondered long and hard, I Fergus, it had to be the

perfect dog for him, being a nervous dog he needed a confident little Missy. My original plan was to get a Springer Spaniel so I contacted North West Springer Rescue and the search began once I'd been home checked and vetted. I also spoke to my friend who I'd been staying with and she put me onto Many Tears Rescue and on their web site I found Debbie Magee, she sounded perfect for Fergus, apart from her name, there was no way on Gods earth I was having a dog called Debbie Magee, after once again being home checked etc we went for a play date to see if they got on. It was a text book meeting, they sniffed, then



ignored each other, then came back and sniffed then played, it looked like Fergus had found a sister, so Debbie Magee became Jayda and came home with us. I had actually turned down 5 dogs and if I was honest, Jayda would not have been my choice, I just

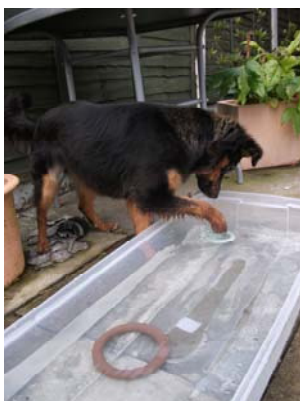


don't do small dogs, but it had to be Fergus's choice, so now I have my mini pack of dogs and all is well they settled in well together and we are all having a lot of fun, they play I train Jayda, who is a quick learner, or maybe I'm just good ha ha ha and I am looking forward to the many years of happiness my dogs will bring me

If you are considering getting another dog there is a lot to consider, your first dog must be well trained, dogs pick up each others bad habits a lot faster than the good habits! It has to be the right dog for your first dog, NOT you, your first dog should be between 2 -3 if you are getting a younger dog, 2 mad dogs will create mayhem in your home and finally cost, insurance, inoculations, worming, food, kennelling, extra beds, toys etc, it soon mounts up and time, you will need extra time to train your new dog as well as keep up the training with your existing dog. So think long and hard before you make a new addition to your home, yes they bring you a lot of pleasure, but sometimes one dog may just be enough for you!

### [Hot days and Dogs](#)

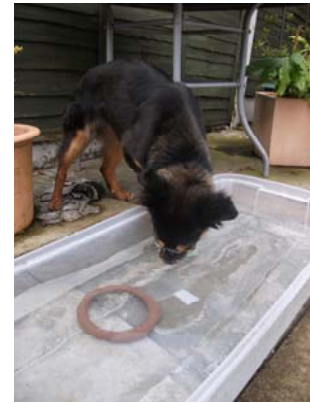
Long hot sunny days, we all love 'em, but it does make life difficult for our dogs, you can't always exercise them as much as they need because of the heat, especially during the day, so what can you do to both entertain them and keep them cool? A lot of people spent £20 - £30 buying kids sand pits and fill them with water, but not me, off to Wilkinsons I went and got 2 underbed storage boxes, the smaller one (32L) was £3.50 and the larger one (72L) £7.49, so that was keeping



them cool sorted, but what about occupying their minds, which will tire a dog as much as a walk! Well I dropped all the dogs nylabone chews and hard plastic balls in the water and let them work out how to get them out, as you can see Fergus pondered for a long time then just went off and found another toy after having a



paddle, but Jayda was more adventurous first using her paws then eventually just dunking her head right in, both dogs enjoyed it, in their own way.... Jayda by getting stuck in and Fergus by watching Jayda get stuck in then licking her dry afterwards! Both dogs kept cool and most importantly did not get bored until it was cool enough to take them out for a walk. So, the moral of the story is you don't need to spend a fortune just think laterally.



### [Prestwich Clough Fun Day, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2011](#)

To all members and anybody else that may be interested. This year Bury Dog Club have been invited to put on a display to show what we do in the training of obedience for all breeds of dog. We will therefore be holding our training classes at normal time that day at St Marys Park, Prestwich instead of Phillips Park, if travelling from Whitefield the park is on your right off Bury New Rd through Prestwich village, if you get to the traffic lights and there is a park on the left you've gone past it! **Can all members park on the rd and take the path on the left as you enter the park**, if you're staying for the day it means you will have best parking space. And believe me it's hard to park on the day once the fun day opens!

**If you wish to give your dog a good run before hand there is a park slightly down the road on the left with a big field.**

We intend to do classes and display's throughout the day, and hopefully encourage other dog owner's to join in and get a feel of what we do, have some fun, and even get them to become members. If you are interested in joining in on that day, with either training or helping out with our stall or activities, then please let one of our instructor's or committee members know, so we can get things organised. On the day, there will be lots of other attractions, animals, entertainment and stalls, of which there are too many to list, so plenty of things to keep all the family occupied, all day long. This is your chance to have a lot of fun, while promoting your club, and if it is anything like last year, it will be a massive success for Prestwich Clough and Bury Dog Club. So let's see you all there.

Steve Bailey (Chairman)

### [Appropriate & Inappropriate play](#)

Having more than one dog or having your dog play with other dogs is great, they exercise each other as well as having fun, but sometimes play can be, well, shall we say a little exuberant, some dogs even bare their teeth and growl during play and when dogs are rolling round using paws, teeth and tails it's sometimes natural to wonder if everyone will survive. You should care that your dogs play is both safe and acceptable, and YES it is your job to make sure it is and if it gets out of hand step in before it escalates, excitable play CAN turn into a fight. But how can you tell what's boisterous fun and what is play that leads to trouble? (Above Left - Fergus exhibits a Play Bow, an Invitation to play)



Although there is a lot of variation in how dogs play, there are some specific behaviours you can observe to help you figure out if it is boisterous fun or starting to spiral towards a brawl.

**In appropriate play** all dogs are willing participants, as shown in the *picture below and picture below, right, although teeth are bared in the picture on the right both dogs are still engaging in play*, bared teeth is not always a sign of aggression it's just how some dogs play, as long as the body language is relaxed bared teeth are not always a cause for concern. If you are not sure their play is still really 'playful' you can gently separate them to see if they go back for more, if one dog slinks away you know the play was getting out of hand.



Normal play for dogs involves teeth and mouths, doggie play bouts are similar in one way or another to the wrestle play of children, where each participant tries to gain a physical advantage over the other, the primary difference is that dogs play bite each other more than wrestle each other to the ground.

Well matched dogs play with their mouths open a lot with play bites directed at the legs and paws, the bites are inhibited and don't stay attached for more than a few seconds, they will use their paws a lot to but without enough force to hurt each other.

**Inappropriate play** can take on many forms, but it almost always results in one dog becoming frightened, hurt or overwhelmed

**So what should you look for?**

If one dog is always on top and the dog on the bottom is trying to get away, if one dog tries to repeatedly get away and hide ie: under furniture.



Play bites should be just that, and should not last for more than a few seconds or be hard enough that they hurt, if the dog yelps this is a sign that the play is becoming too rough/inappropriate, it means that one dog is either in pain or scared. This is a clear sign you need to intervene. A brief yelp is acceptable as it may be an accidental collision, the equivalent of stepping on your partners toes, the other dog should stop immediately the dog yelps.

Escalating growls should be listened for, play growls can sound intense and there is no need to worry, but if they get louder and lower pitched you'd be wise to direct the dogs to doing something else for a while.

Also look for the dogs being consistently on their hind legs for more than a few seconds, trying to consistently lay their paws, heads or whole bodies across the shoulders of another dog, they may be trying to achieve social status or intimidate the other dog, these are all signs that you should intervene.

Even if the dogs are playing appropriately it is possible that too much of a good thing/excitement can lead to trouble and sometimes it's good to separate them and have them take a break, excessive play can lead to over excitement and that arousal can lead dogs from play fighting to actual fighting.

Finally it is reasonable to separate your dogs if they playing is driving you mad for example if you have a headache or they are getting in your way while to try to get things done, separate them and give them something else to do independently from each other, ie give them chew toys in separate rooms.

### *Tips for a smelly dog .....*

I haven't tried this myself, but I was given the tip that if your dog rolls in something smelly, ie: fox poo you should rub in tomato ketchup, you need to rub it in well and it doesn't matter if the ketchup is out of date, then rinse your dog well in the shower, remember to keep the water cool, hot water can make a dog over heat quickly in either the shower or the bath.

### *Editors Note .....*

If some of you have read this months Dog tails and thought, it's full of stories and pictures of Judi and her Dogs, well, you'd be right, and there's a very good reason for this, apart from Liz no one else sent anything in and I can only write about things that happen to me and my dogs if I don't know what you lot are up to, after all, I've got to fill the pages with something! So if you would like to read about something other than me and my Dogs in the next issue, and prevent Dog Tails being renamed Fergus and Jayda Tails ha ha ha send me something, it can be about you and your dogs or an interesting article you may have read that you think our members might find interesting or useful, it doesn't have to be pages long, it can be a brief paragraph, you can email it to me at [jmmra@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jmmra@hotmail.co.uk) I would like to say a big thanks to Liz for her contribution this month and look forward to hearing what you lot get up to with your dogs in the next issue

Judi x

[www.burydogclub.co.uk](http://www.burydogclub.co.uk)