

your dog, but for you too, otherwise you won't be dedicated to doing it.

To help me focussed on what I want to achieve, either in agility or with general training I set myself 4 goals a year, 3 are relatively easy to achieve and one is much harder, but it gives me an end target and keeps me driven to succeed.

To finish up I would like to say that I am incredibly proud and honoured to be part of the Many Tears Team, but more than that the Many Tears Family, as that is what we are, we support each other and all work for the end goal. Many Tears could not run without all the staff, fosterers, home checkers, fundraisers, but most of all Sylvia and Bill, so thank you from all you save animals and humans!



Chaffords Chaos Theory



Theory is now a stunning 20mth old working collie. He has just started to compete in agility and I hold high hope for him to do very well, but more than that he is a best friend, companion and joker! This is his story.....

December 15th 2009: "Hi Leah it's your mum. I am on my way back from Ireland, Can you help me? I have 4 beautiful collie pups, they were born under a shed and are now 2 weeks old, but the farmer wants rid of them, they need handraising!", well bless mum, but if there is one thing she knows, is that I am a sucker for handraises and even more for collies, so of course I Said yes!

When they came they were pretty independent, eating for themselves and running around, but clearly not handled. As a couple of days passed the pups became lethargic and extremely quiet, over the next week 2 were put on drips and kept in at the vets. Sadly the little girl did not have the strength keep going. Taz, Teek and Theory fought for all their tiny little lives were worth and pulled through.

So at this point I guess I should say a little about handraising.... Each year I probably handraise around 20 puppies and 10 kittens (dependant on what needs doing), it's an incredibly emotional thing to do, each days huge highs and devastating lows, and of course you become totally attached! As a rule I try not to keep my handraises otherwise there will be no more space to help, but invariably it does happen and Theory is one of those!

I love doing agility and would aim to train my dogs to do that, but instead of picking an “agility” dog, I try to always take the dog that needs me! Sometimes that means they are more tricky/naughty or have issues, but these dogs do come right with the right time and patients.

Here are a few examples of this:



Link (now 12yrs old) working sheep dog (WSD): Link was rescued from a puppy farm at 1 week old, he wasn't eating and bitch had rejected him. He was on the verge of death! I handraised link and he was my first ever agility dog. His main achievement was that he came 2nd at Olympia (the best show of the year, and what all agility handlers strive for!) He was an uncomplicated dog to train, loves to do tricks and learn stuff.



Herbie (now 9 years old) wsd: Herbie was rescued from the gypsies at 14 weeks old. He had not been handled at all, would bite and thrash to get away from you. By the time I got Herbie I was obsessed by agility, I ate, slept, breathed it (very sad I know), and so to get a terrified pup, with no socialisation was crazy, but as it's said “you get then dog you need, not always the dog you want!” I worked incredibly hard with Herbie, taking him everywhere I could, school talks, town centres, shops, just to try and get him used to the world. Eventually all my hard work paid off. Herbie has now represented Great Britain 3 times at the Agility World Championships, and has won Individual Silver and Team Gold, he also was reacue dog of

the year 6 years running! He is the most loving, sweet, amazing dog, a million miles away from who I adopted!



Hex (now 4 years old) wsd: Hex is a handraise from a puppy farm; his whole litter had been mauled to death by a Saint Bernard litter, who used them as tuggies! He came to me with severe aggression issues with people, food and other dogs. Hex was just coming to me to be handraised, but his issues ran so deep I felt it would be irresponsible to home him on, as he would probably end up being put down. Finding what made Hex tick was the key to rehabilitation, you could not raise your voice or try to move Hex when he was in that mood as it would intensify his behaviour, but a ball could change everything! There was a very fine line between redirecting his behaviour and rewarding it, but I managed to get the balance right and now 4 years down the line I have a fantastic dog who is a great agility dog (taking off where Herb left up, winning rescue dog of the year), so amazing with other dogs that I now use him to help dog aggressive dogs rehabilitate. He is so wonderful with people that he demos with kids for agility and comes on school talks for me! He is amazing how far he has come, and now if ever unsure of a situation, or how to react, he will go find a ball and bring it to you to get praised instead.

And now I have little Theory, he has only done a few shows, but is running well and can't wait to train him more!

I guess what this whole article is leading to is that rescue dogs aren't always easy, but neither are bought dogs. Training, rehabilitation, settling in and routines all take a long time to establish, you must be patient, understanding and find what makes your dog tick. Training should always be fun, not only for