

KICK OFF WITH TRAINING DAY by Anna Jones

Wye Valley Retriever Club started off their 2011 training season with a Bumper Boy+Training Day held on Roger and Claire Raymond's excellent ground near Bromyard. The club is very grateful to Roger and Claire, and to the others who loaned us their (very expensive!) dummy launchers. (Claire, John Jones and Sporting Saint who are the UK distributors for the machines). Grateful thanks also to our other sponsors for the day, Skinners Pet Foods and Chandelle Kennels.

This was the second year the club has successfully staged this type of training, and provided that there is sufficient ongoing interest this may become an annual event.

There were four layouts, and groups of 5 or 6 dogs and handlers spent three-quarters of an hour at each one, enabling the trainers to correct any faults the dog or handler may have had. Trainers introduced some variations dependant on dogs' abilities, but generally the exercises consisted of:

- 1) Five retrieves each, consisting of a bumper boy seen and a launcher seen and 3 blinds, the dogs having to fetch a blind first then the bumper boy seen then another blind and then the launcher seen and finish off with a blind.
- 2) A seen bumper boy and two blinds over a fence, over a ditch and up into some trees, again fetching a blind first making sure the dog went and came back over the fence, then the seen bumper boy and finishing off with another blind this time placed not too far from where the bumper boy was launched. For those dogs who tried to come back through an opening, John spent extra time making sure the dogs would come back over the fence.
- 3) A really long bumper boy mark landing well out of sight of the handler to simulate a shoot day where the dogs had to hunt and then a launcher distraction on the way back, and a seen and a blind behind, the dogs having to fetch a blind just over a fence before they went for the seen.
- 4) A walk up with a seen bumper boy behind and a mark in front which had to be fetched first, this caused a problem with a lot of the dogs because the fence was alongside a gate and they were more keen to go through that than over the fence. Claire was very good at this session and spent time with the dogs who wanted to go through the gate, by moving them nearer the fence to make sure they did it. Then the exercise was reversed and the dogs sent back over the fence for the seen that was launched earlier.

After an hour or so break for a fantastic buffet lunch organized by Julia Redpath, helped by Margaret Owers and Pam Mullens everyone received a goody bag donated by our sponsors for the day. Those wanting more then spent another hour in a walk-up with Bumper Boy and seen retrieves, all participants together this time.

Trainers for the day were Terry Dukes assisted by Anna Yates and Bernard Pound, Julia Redpath assisted by Tanya Lowther, Brian Lambert and Morton Redpath, John Jones assisted by Roger Wiggins and Steve Prosser, and Claire Raymond assisted by Kelly Stringfellow and Jean Tidmarsh.

A great friendly day was had by all. Many thanks to all the committee who put on this fantastic day.