

Newsletter 2024



Kennel Club Reg 2045



Welcome to your 2024 edition of the Wye Valley Retriever Club Newsletter.

We do hope you find the Newsletter informative and interesting. We have aimed to give information about the Club, information about the events the Club is planning for 2024 and a chance to look back on events which took place in 2023.

The Newsletter is issued free to all our members registered for the year 2023 to 2024 - our membership year runs from 1st February each year – and to new members joining in 2024.

I am extremely grateful to everyone on the Committee who have supported me. Good luck with your training, tests and trials and have fun with your dogs!

Chris Peers – Secretary

Wye Valley Retriever Club Committee 2024

Mr Luke Thompson-Coon - President

Mr Terry Dukes - Vice President

Mr Michael Gough – Vice-President

Mrs Veronica Harris – Chairman

Mrs Sarah Akehurst – Vice Chairman and Minutes Secretary

Mrs Christine Peers - Secretary

Mrs Nicola Pointer – Treasurer/Membership Secretary

Mrs Anna Crampton - Field Trial/Working Test Secretary

Mr Sean McGrath - Training Secretary

Mrs Jean Tidmarsh

Mr Morton Redpath

Mr Steve Lax

Mr Tony Griffiths

Ms Rachel Massey

Dates for Your Diary 2024

Saturday 23 rd March	Working Test at Felton – Novice, Novice Dog/Novice Handler, Veteran and Junior Handler
Thursday 2 nd May	Annual General Meeting to be held at the Plough Inn, Stoke Lacy at 7.30pm Talk and slide show by Chris Dixon of Wye Valley Vets, Hereford, about his life in veterinary practice and his work in Hong Kong.
Tuesday 30 th April	Training at Westhidge – 8 week course
Tuesday 18 th June	End of Term Test and Social Evening - Westhidge
Saturday 8 th June	Working Test at Deveraux Wootton – Puppy, Special Puppy and Open
Friday 12 th July	End of Term Annual Dinner
Friday 8 th November	Novice Field Trial, Dunclent

The dates and venues will be posted on our website so please look at our website for the latest information.

The Field Trial schedules and entry forms will be sent to members and posted on our website and Facebook.

Please do check the website and Facebook regularly for details of our events and to download Schedules and Entry Forms.

Social Media and Website

Wye Valley Retriever Club are on Facebook. We regularly update our Facebook site with posts containing news, reports, photos and requests. Please visit us and like our posts and photos.

Wye Valley Retriever Club have a website

www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

You will find the following information on our website

- a brief history of the Club

- information on forthcoming working tests and field trials including entry forms and schedules
- Conditions of Entry for our working tests and field trials
- results of working tests and field trials
- our Data Protection and Privacy Notice
- membership application form and standing order form
- our Rules and Regulations
- our Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessments

We hope you will take a few moments to visit our website and use it as a source of valuable information about the Club.

Contact Us

Wye Valley Retriever Club can be contacted by email at:

info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

One of our Committee will be pleased to respond to your emails.

If you are unable to email us or unable to access information on our Facebook site and website, please phone our Secretary (01432 860584) and we can arrange to get you the information you require.

Membership Fees 2024

	Single	Joint	Junior
Annual Membership	£10.00	£15.00	No fee
Joining Fee	£10.00	£10.00	No fee
Training Fee per Dog	£90.00	(8 week course)	

Membership application forms for new members and membership renewal application forms for existing members are available on our website www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk under the heading Forms.

Training Courses 2024

Wye Valley Retriever Club will be holding their usual training classes again in 2024 for members and their dogs. Our experienced trainers aim to give help, guidance and advice individually to dog handlers who want to improve the way they interact with their dogs, whether for picking up, competing in working tests and field trials or just for fun. Training takes place in small groups of up to eight arranged in accordance with ability – puppy (up to 18 months old at the end of the course), beginners, novice, and open.

Our trainers are volunteers and the guidance and advice they give for gun dog training is based on their personal experiences and achievements.

Members may only handle one dog in a class. Please make sure that you attend your class with a lead, whistle (attached to a lanyard), dummy bag or training vest and poo bags. We reserve the right to offer your training place to someone else if you miss two lessons without notifying your trainer of a valid reason. There will be no refund of training fees.

Please see the training application form for further information. Minimum requirement for dogs in training, except beginners, are as follows:

- Walk to heel on a loose lead without pulling
- Simple recall
- Sit quietly/sit and stay off the lead – i.e. no noise, whining, barking or interfering with other dogs.

We recommend taking dogs to obedience classes to attain this standard.

Training classes take place at Westhide Estate, about five miles north east of Hereford. Please contact us if you need directions.

The classes run for eight weeks on Tuesday evenings from 30th April to 18th June at Westhide – an eight-week course. The classes will take place at 4.30 to 6.00pm and 6.00 to 7.30pm.

There will be an End of Term Test and Social Evening (including food) for those who have completed training, on Tuesday 18 June.

Please let us know if you want to take part in our training classes. You can contact us by emailing our Training Secretary. You will be made most welcome and we are sure you will find the classes enjoyable and instructive.

Chairman's Report

It is a privilege to have been elected as Chairman at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. I have been a member of WVRC since its inauguration and have seen it grow from a handful of members to the current 350 plus. In the late 1990s, before I had a dog of my own, it was my husband's hobby, and I spent most training sessions sitting in a car with Mick Baker (Claire's grandpa) learning a great deal about dogs and their handlers. I then progressed to a lesson with my new young bitch and Alan Thornton. I will never forget him asking me what my shortcomings were, to which I confidently replied there was very little I

needed to know. Within half an hour I knew how wrong I was! And it's gone on from there.

Back to the Club today and as usual we have had a busy year with training, working tests and field trials. We have a very committed group of people on the committee who work tirelessly to put these events on. We are also extremely grateful to our wonderful landowners, without whom there would be no events.

I must take this opportunity to thank not only all those involved with the running of the Club, but also mention the dummy throwers, those who help with the catering, those who help mark birds in the trials and so many other small functions which are absolutely essential. We occasionally provide a demonstration team for different events, and are always grateful for offers of help at all events. So please don't hesitate to get in touch if you can spare a little of your time and, hopefully, have an enjoyable day whilst helping.

Veronica Harris – Chairman



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Treasurer's Report

The Club's accounting year runs from 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024 in order to cover the shooting season

The finances of the club remain healthy, which is helped enormously by the generosity of the land owners who allow us access to their land to hold our events and helps us keep our costs to a minimum.

As always, we endeavour to support charities throughout the year and a donation was made to the Dogs Trust which does such wonderful work with our canine friends.

Details of the accounts to 31 January 2024 will be published at the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Plough Inn, Stoke Lacy at 7.30pm on Thursday 2nd May.

Membership numbers continue to increase and it is always nice to see new faces at our tests and trials. We hope that everyone has enjoyed the events that have been put on by members of the Committee and the Club

Membership application forms for new members and membership renewal application forms for existing members are available on our website www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk under the heading Forms. We would prefer membership payments to be made by Standing Order and therefore a Standing Order Mandate Form is included on the membership forms.

Nicola Pointer – Treasurer

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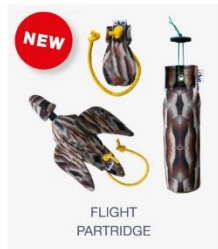
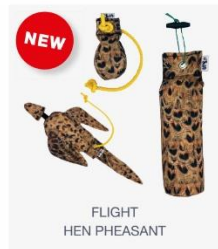
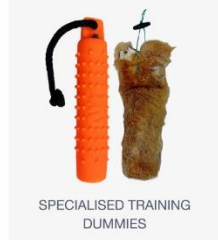
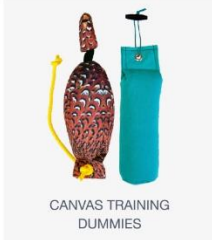
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Rules and Regulations

All Working Tests and Field Trials run by the Club are conducted in accordance with the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations (Section J) together with the Rules of the Wye Valley Retriever Club. All participants in Working Tests and Field Trials should be fully conversant with the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations.

The Club's Rules and Regulations can be downloaded from our website where there is also a link to the Kennel Club Field Trial Regulations (Section J).

Field Trial & Working Test Secretary's Report

Once again, I have to say that our club is just amazing. My thanks again to everyone who has stepped forward to help at our tests and trials, so often without having to be asked. Stewarding, catering, marking, game carrying, dummy throwing – whatever you did to lend a hand, thank you.

For our working tests in 2023, our thanks go to Edward and Clare Pearson Gregory at Dairy House Farm, and Patrick Wrixon at Devereux Wootton. The weather was certainly very unhelpfully wet at our first test and for Edward and Clare this was a first experience of having a test on their ground, so extra credit to them for their patience with it all. Patrick is an "old hand", the weather was kinder, but we know it is still a lot of work for the landowner to accommodate us. Thank you!

For our two field trials, we are extremely fortunate indeed to have very supportive landowners, Michael and Jane Gough at Dunclent, and Lord and Lady Dulverton at Batsford. We are very grateful to them for allowing us to compete on their ground this season. Our thanks go to them, and their keepers who work so hard for us. Thank you too to our guns.

Thank you too to all our judges, and to Skinners for their continuing support.

I'd also like to thank Andy, my husband, and all the other loyal husbands/wives/partners out there, who help even when this is not their 'game,' or pick up the pieces at home when we are out from dawn till dusk putting on these events. They are the unsung heroes. I hope the bottle of wine our volunteers take home gets shared!

Congratulations to the winners of our trophies. Whether it is your first time holding the silverware or you have done it many times before, well done that all your hard work paid off on the day.

My first year as Field Trial Secretary was complicated by Covid, my second by Avian Flu. So far this year there hasn't been a virus to cause me angst – fingers crossed that continues!!!

Anna Crampton

Working Test Results

Dairy House Farm, Monnington on Wye, on 1st April 2023

We held our first working test of the season at Dairy House Farm, Monnington on Wye, on 1st April 2023 by the kind invitation of Edward Pearson Gregory and his wife Clare. We are extremely grateful to them for their kind support and I hope their first experience of holding a working test on their ground was enjoyable! The dreadful weather in the days leading up to the test and on the morning itself were unhelpful to put it mildly and resulted in one of the tests having to be relocated for the afternoon on safety grounds.

Thank you to our judges Lisa Harris, Clare Gould, Carolyn Jenkins, and Iris Wright. They coped with a very full large entry.

Our stewards kept the competitors organized. Thank you to Sarah Akehurst, Bella Brown, Sue Goring, Rachel Massey, Nicola Pointer, Cherry Smith, Jean Tidmarsh and Jane Williams, who all worked hard to ensure we didn't finish at midnight! Thank you too to dummy throwers Tom Bennellick, Lee Burdett, Andy Crampton, Terry Dukes, Julian Gallimore, Tony Griffiths, Steve Lax, Dale Pointer, and Duncan Smith. I don't think those dummies got any lighter as the day went on... Thank you to Jean Tidmarsh for organizing the catering and providing cakes (along with Chris Peers) that everyone was very grateful for at the end of the day.

Thank you very much too to our sponsors Skinners, who provided prizes to our winners, and to Sporting Saint who provided vouchers for helpers. Their support is very appreciated.

Novice

1st	Lucky Lupin of Nantygollen	Lab/Bitch, 24/08/2020	Shayne Price
2nd	Tweedshot Faustus	Lab/Dog, 10/01/2020	Steve Lax
3rd	Nantffrwd Denzil	Lab/Dog, 04/09/2020	Terry Dowman
COM	Breckmarsh Emeric	Lab/Dog, 22/03/2018	Cherry Smith
COM	The Love of Eros	Lab/Dog, 04/06/2017	Sue Goring

Veteran

1st	Turpingreen Acuna of Corsemalzie	Lab/Bitch, 02/05/2014	Carol Probert
2nd	Manormynd Vision of Wickmoor	Lab/Dog, 02/03/2015	Michelle Cox
3rd	Howgillhay Fennel of Gillhays	Lab/Bitch, 17/05/2014	Debbie Polley
4th	Gooseberry Hill Gus	Lab/Dog, 21/03/2014	Terry Dowman

Novice Dog / Novice Handler

1st	Sorrelcott Superior	Lab/Bitch, 02/09/2020	George Davies
2nd	Thalia Aphrodite of Redvalci	Lab/Bitch, 30/12/2020	James McKenzie
3rd	Manus Radiant Redstart	Lab/Bitch, 21/07/2019	Moira Charlesworth
4th	Gallyoak Alfie	Lab/Dog, 09/08/2020	Tom Davison



Novice winner Shayne Price with Lucky Lupin of Nantygollen and judges Lisa Harris, Clare Gould, Carolyn Jenkins, and Iris Wright.



Novice award winners with the judges



Veteran winner Carol Probert with Turpingreen Acuna of Corsemalzie with the judges



Veteran award winners with the judges



Novice Dog / Novice Handler George Davies with Sorrelcote Superior with the judges



Novice Dog / Novice Handler award winners with the judges

Devereux Wootton, Norton Canon, Herefordshire, on 1st July

We held our second working tests of the season at Devereux Wootton, Norton Canon, Herefordshire, on 1st July 2023 by the kind invitation of Patrick Wrixon. We are extremely grateful to him for his generous support in letting us have a test on his ground and for all the hard work he put in beforehand cutting tracks etc.

Thank you to our judges Steve and Paula Cullis, Claire Raymond and Morton Redpath. They coped admirably with a very large entry.

Our stewards (Jean Tidmarsh, Sue Hallett, Rachel Massey, Moira Charlesworth and Jayne Coley) kept the competitors well organized and moving promptly between tests. Lunch wasn't even late! Thank you too to our dummy throwers – some threw nearly 120 dummies during the day! Sterling work from Andy Crampton, Tom Bennellick, Nick Eden, Cherry Smith, Dale Pointer, Terry Dukes, Steve Prosser, Ann Bracegirdle.

Thank you to Jean for also organizing the catering and providing cakes that everyone was very grateful for at the end of the day, Chris Peers for more cakes, Veronica Harris for the helper goody bags and Nicky Pointer for helping me with scores and other jobs.

Thank you, Sean McGrath, chief steward, for helping me to set everything up, outlining suggested tests to the judges and for your indefatigable energy and good humour throughout the day, whizzing about on the buggy problem solving and distributing water. I suspect a few competitors have gone away to buy a bolting rabbit....!!!

There is a lot of talk about the lack of helpers at the moment and I am very grateful to all our team, and to those competitors who helped during the opposite half of the day to when they were competing. Well done for offering and thank you.

Thank you very much too to our sponsors Skinners, who provided prizes to our winners, and to Sporting Saint who provided vouchers for helpers. Their support is very appreciated.

Congratulations to everyone in the awards.

Open

1 st	Minstead Reacher	Lab/Dog, 08/04/21	Victoria Stanley
2 nd	Craigmaddie Nevis	Lab/Dog, 04/05/17	Victoria Stanley
3 rd	Slingley Black Beauty At Minerskiln	Lab/Bitch, 02/06/21	Shane Gilliver
4 th	Geordieland Tilly	Lab/Bitch, 16/05/16	Ruth Warner
COM	Kilpen Nightcap of Waterford	Lab/Dog, 22/03/20	Jayne Coley

Puppy

1 st	Gingerfox Firecrest Of Severncrest	Lab/Dog, 17/06/22	Carla Gibson
2 nd	Mynydd Du Iceman	Lab/Dog, 19/02/22	Paul Edmunds
3 rd	Alltfracith Chief	Lab/Dog, 04/03/22	Paul Edmunds

4 th	Kenzduo Bohemian Rhapsody Of Corsemalzie	Lab/Bitch, 30/03/22	Carol Probert
COM	Namtresa My African King	Lab/Dog, 21/03/22	Mike Holman

Special Puppy

1 st	Fletchingly Langamull	Lab/Bitch	Nessa Gilham
2 nd	Kenzduo Aquamarine Of Redvalci	Lab/Bitch	Catrin Owen
3 rd	Hectorkirk Garsdale Of Flypatch	Lab/Dog	Tim Brain



Open award winners with the judges.



Puppy award winners.



Special Puppy award winners

Field Trial Results

Dunclent Farm, Kidderminster Friday 10th November 2023

We held our 16-dog novice field trial on Friday 10th November 2023 at Dunclent Farm, Kidderminster, by the kind invitation of Michael and Jane Gough. We are extremely grateful to them and their family for their very generous hospitality and support, and for all the hard work that they, and their daughter Helen and son in law Mark, contributed to the successful running of the trial.

Firstly, the thank you's. I am extremely lucky to have such an amazing team of volunteers, giving up their time on the day (and in some cases, before the trial too), so that a lucky 16 people could compete their dogs. I'd also like to thank the competitor who had a problem with his dog early on so pulled her out and then stayed on to help. True sportsmanship.

Thank you to our judges John Yarwood, Judith White, Phil Goulden and Charlotte Wilkinson, Chief Steward Iris Wright, judges' stewards Julia Redpath and Claire Raymond, game carriers Steve Lax and Rachel Massey, Red Flag Dale Pointer, markers Terry Dukes, Sue Goring, and Dani Seabright, and Official Pickers Up Nicola Pointer and Veronica Harris.

Thank you to Sarah Akehurst for the catering. She did an amazing job with her "field kitchen" again, with competitors and helpers all grateful for the refreshments she provided. Thank you too to Jean Tidmarsh for the cakes and Veronica Harris for the "goody bags" to keep judges and helpers going through the day!

Thank you to the guns (Michael Gough, Stan Howes, Patrick Kennedy, Guy Needham, Richard Needham, Morton Redpath and Mark Stinton) and to Steward of the Beat, Mark Nicholls, whose team presented the birds excellently

and were very patient between the drives helped by, I understand, more than one bottle of Port!!

Thank you too to our sponsors Skinners and it was lovely to have Laura Peakman attend the trial. She is the Skinners Area Sales Manager for the North West, Midlands & Wales and is a very useful source of advice on feeding dogs.

Once again, the weather gods were kind to us, and the day was dry after a long spell of wet. We started with the Home Drive, right below Michael's house, with the guns shooting ducks and pheasants. Some fell into Michael's garden so dogs required handling through a gate to find these birds, which proved tricky for some. We then moved on to Tin Hut, a pheasant drive. Our eventual winner achieved the first of his eye-wipes here, on a runner well tucked into the crop.

We then had a break for refreshments – and a happy, lively time it was! There seems to (generally!) be great camaraderie in the field trial community.

Seventeen Acres, which finished the trial, was a banked field, going wild after an earlier harvest, and was a beautiful mass of red poppies, very poignant for a trial held the day before Armistice Day.

Down to four dogs towards the end, our winner achieved a two-dog eye-wipe and also retrieved a pigeon shot by our host Michael right above his head at amazing height – definitely the shot of the day! The second placed dog did a very nice job of a very lively runner that had scuttled down the field, across the stream and into the woods, having been brought from the far side of the line to take on the challenge. George Davies' little bitch was very unlucky at the end but her work on this drive was consistent with her excellent work throughout the day and earned her a very deserved Gun's Choice.

At the presentations, Richard let slip it was his 70th birthday, so it was definitely a special day for him!

A very big thank you again to everyone who contributed to the day and to our sponsors Skinners for their support. Many congratulations again to Richard, Christopher and George.

Results:

Winner:	Lovehayne Dixie, handled by Richard Edwards
2 nd Place:	Brooke Sunrise of Windriver, handled by Christopher Bennett
Guns' Choice:	Sorrelcott Superior, handled by George Davies

Our winner was also awarded the John Jones Memorial Trophy for the best retrieve.



Award winners with the judges



The field at Seventeen Acres



Richard Edward eats his lunch, while his dog doesn't look impressed that he's not sharing it



Everyone is smiling, apart from the dogs!



More smiles, despite it being very cold in the shade



The field at Seventeen Acres



Michael talking to the field about his conservation work



Helen Goodwin with Michael Gough



Our guns



Richard with his trophies



George with his trophy

Batsford Estate, Moreton-in-Marsh Monday 15th January 2024

We held our 12-dog open field trial on Monday 15th January 2024 at the Batsford Estate, Moreton-in-Marsh, by the kind invitation of Lord and Lady Dulverton. We are extremely grateful to them for their very generous support, and for all the hard work that head keeper Matthew Farmer and his team and guns contribute to the successful running of the trial.

Our judges were Mrs Judy Rainey [A], Mr Barry Taylor [A], Mrs Vikki Stanley [B] & Mrs Liz Taylor [B].

Chief Steward was Iris Wright. Judges' stewards were Nicky Pointer and Claire Raymond.

Game carriers were Alex Cox and Paul Egginton. Dale Pointer carried the red flag. Marking birds down were Elizabeth Bradford, Zena Churchward, Rachel Massey, Peter Bradford, Terry Dukes, Shane Gilliver, Steve Lax. Official picker up was Helen Goodwin.

Catering was provided by Sarah Akehurst. It was a very cold day (but thankfully dry!) so competitors and helpers were all grateful for the hot refreshments she provided. Thank you, Jean Tidmarsh, for the cakes and Veronica Harris for the "goody bags" for people's pockets to keep them going!

Steward of the Beat was Matthew Farmer. His team presented birds excellently over the guns and were very patient between the drives while the trial progressed – helped by a large bottle of Port. Well, as I said, it was a cold day...!!

The guns were Mr Alex Badger, Mr Tom Ford, Mr Michael Gough, Mr Stan Howells, Mr Martin Parkinson and Mr Tony Stanley. Thank you, Gentlemen, for staying put at the end of each drive to help the markers with their work. It really helped since it was a particularly tricky job for them this time – the fields were so even there was little to use to mark the birds down.

There were two drives. We walked to the first, Boram Belt, which featured a long copse with fields either side. On the left the field was grass showing ancient "rig and furrow" and then we walked through a gate in a hedge and into a field of low cover crop. On the right of the wood was a field of similar low cover crop. The competitors were divided into odds and evens and sent either side of the wood. Three guns were each side too. The birds fell at the edge of the wood, into the cover crop and over the hedge into the rig and furrow field. Competitors were challenged by dogs disappearing into the wood out of sight and the cold conditions producing little scent, particularly demonstrated where birds had fallen into the "furrows" of the grass field. The strong low sun also meant on the right side it was hard to see dogs against the dark wood.

We then went back to the yard for hot drinks and biscuits (and a quick dash to the loo!!) before setting off in the trailer / cars to the second drive, Poplars up Hill. Unlike last year, we didn't lose the judges – well done Barry!! The five remaining dogs were sat up in a field of old stubble. Partridge and pheasant were driven over a hedge towards the guns and tended to fall at the edge of the field into some rough tufted grass.

At one point in the drive, a hare bolted across the field, straight down towards the competitors, and ran along the line of dogs. In the gallery, our hearts were in our mouths – would we lose the trial??!! I dread to think what the competitors

were saying to themselves!! But we need not have feared, all five dogs remained steady. Well done them.

After further challenging retrieves, the judges conferred again, the trial was declared over and we headed back to the yard for the presentations.

Michael Gough presented the winner with their cards and trophies. Nathan Laffy received the Agrigame Cup as our winner and Matthew Gould received the Legges of Bromyard Trophy as Guns' Choice.

Matthew Farmer presented Matthew Gould with the John Jones Memorial Trophy, for the best retrieve.

A very big thank you to everyone who contributed to the day and to our sponsors Skinners, for their prize cards and vouchers for those in the awards, and to Sporting Saint for their vouchers for helpers (although some still prefer the wine option!!). Many congratulations again to Nathan, Steve, Steve and Matthew.

Well done to you all, judges, guns, beaters, helpers, and competitors alike, for an atmosphere all day of happy camaraderie (as well as total professionalism) that makes all the hard work putting these trials on worthwhile. Thank you.

Results:

Winner:	FTCH Think Twice Zero to Hero, owned/handled by Nathan Laffy. Golden Retriever dog, born 21/05/2017, by Kaliture Finn ex Think Twice Go Get It, bred by Laura Lazzaretto
2nd Place:	Westerkames Elder of Tagabea, owned/handled by Steve Cullis. Labrador Retriever dog, born 6/07/2019, by FtCh. Levenghyl Malusi ex Westerkames Sweet Reason, bred by K J Cousins
3 rd Place:	Marstonprior Grenadier of Wedgnock, owned/handled by Steve Richardson. Labrador Retriever dog, born 17/04/2021, by FtCh. Sothebys Choice Of Wedgnock ex Kytewycke Woodcock Of Marstonprior, bred by Helen Maynard
Gun's Choice & the John Jones Memorial Trophy for the Best Retrieve:	Mitforton Tout De Suite of Hawkerline, owned/handled by Matthew Gould. Labrador Retriever bitch, born 10/05/2020, by Fendawood Harold ex FtCh. Mitforton Onour, bred by Louie Robertson



Award winners with the judges



Official Picker Up Helen Goodwin



Mitforton Tout De Suite Of Hawkerline



Iris trying to see what's going on!



Steve Richardson waits....



Bird safely back!



Steve Cullis takes delivery.



Steve Richardson works his dog while Judy Rainey and Vikki Stanley look on



Steve, Nathan and Steve



Paul Egginton models his new string game carrier, as well as a traditional one



The return!



Alex Cox and Betsy Bradford



Michael Gough takes a break!



Michael presents the Agrigame Cup to the winner, Nathan Laffy



Michael with Steve Cullis (2nd)



Michael with Steve Richardson (3rd)



Matthew Farmer presents the John Jones Memorial trophy to Matthew Gould



Michael Gough presents the Legges of Bromyard Trophy to Matthew Gould (Gun's Choice)

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY FOR FIELD TRIALS

PLEASE NOTE: Any existing member whose subscription has not been paid in full by 31st March in the current season will be treated as a non-member in the draw (currently 31st March 2024). It is up to members to check carefully that their subscription has been paid. No exceptions to this rule will be made. The Committee recommend payment by **STANDING ORDER**. Your subscription must be paid by 31st March 2024 to compete in the 2024/25 field trial season.

WVRC Open Field Trial held at Batsford, 16th January 2023

We were unable to include in our 2023 Newsletter, the results of the Open Field Trial held at Batsford on 16 January 2023. Here are the results of the Field Trial held in January 2023 at Batsford.

Winner & Guns' Choice:	FTCH Think Twice Zero to Hero, owned/handled by Nathan Laffy (Golden Retriever dog, born 21/5/2017, by Kaliture Finn ex Think Twice Go Get It, bred by Laura Lazzaretto)
2nd Place:	FTCH Berrysshot Bernie, handled by Jason Mayhew for Steven Berry (Labrador Retriever dog, born 19/05/2015, by Quarnford Grouse Of Rufriver ex Geordieland Ninja, bred by Wendy Berry)
3rd Place & Best Retrieve:	FTCH Brockaghs Forba, bred, owned and handled by Jim Collins (Labrador Retriever dog, born 03/04/2015, by FTCH Calderhey Adder ex Brockaghs Dervla)
4th Place:	Ticefield Ramble on to Elmertown owned/handled by Angie Townsend (Labrador Retriever bitch, born 22/01/2016, by Oakvalley Black Shot ex Saintcyres Chelsea, bred by Keith Broomfield)



Our January 2023 Open Field Trial award winners and the judges, with our club chairman (Jan 2023) Michael Gough.

Training 2023

Wye Valley Retriever Club held their usual training classes again in 2023 for handlers and their dogs, at Westhide Estate, by the kind permission of our president, Luke Thompson Coon. Ali Leake, Sean McGrath and Claire Raymond, with Jean Tidmarsh as the “super-sub”, took puppy, novice and open classes respectively, giving help, guidance and advice to members who wanted to improve the way they interact with their dogs, whether for picking up, competing in working tests and field trials or just for fun. Thank you very much

to them all for their time and expertise. Thank you too to Julian Gallimore and Andy Crampton for dummy throwing.

The series of eight classes finished with an “end of term test” and social evening, also at Westhide, with a delicious hog roast organised by Jean. Luke and his daughter Mathilda joined us and it was a very enjoyable evening.

The winners were:

- Puppy – Paul Hutton, Ginger
- Novice 1 – Claire Raymond, Mabel
- Novice 2 – Carolyn Jenkins, Bracken
- Novice 2 – Nick Eden, Pican

They were presented with their trophies at the annual dinner. Well done everyone for the progress you made this year.

The club also had a guest trainer day at Westhide this summer. Mell Brooks held a very informative session for 9 handlers with their good novice/open level dogs.



Mell demonstrating to the group



Mell and Cherry working on marks



Mell and Sue working on delivery



Sue Goring working on delivery



Mell demonstrating "stop the shake"



Hard work this training!

The big take-away from the day was "attention to detail", but Mell worked with all the handlers to improve some of their dog's particular problems. Marks and blinds were dealt with in the morning, and then water retrieves in the afternoon. Anna Crampton took notes throughout and these were provided to the handlers afterwards.

In September, Sean took two walk-up training sessions in the stubble at Westhidge. Using a mixture of automated dummy launchers, thrown dummies and placed blinds, the retrieves were set to stretch the dogs and handlers and build on what they had learned at club training. Proceeds from the 2 sessions have been donated to the Dogs Trust.

For 2024, we have invested in lots of new equipment to provide more variety in the classes. We are planning a fixed 'term' of training for each level again, including a beginner's class for those of you just starting out, whatever the age of your dog. There will be a test at the end with a social evening afterwards. There will be 2-3 away days with guest trainers over the summer and walk-up training in the stubble at Westhidge in September – so a full season of training!

Look out for further information and booking forms – everything gets booked up very quickly so make sure you get your forms in promptly.

Annual Dinner

The dinner was held at the Bay Horse on the outskirts of Hereford on Friday 11th of August. This was the first time the club had visited this pub. Nearly forty members and their guests sat down to a delicious meal. It was agreed the food was excellent, and the portions were extremely large.

After the meal the awards were given out to the winners of the End of training tests. A good evening was enjoyed by everyone.

Countrytastic at Three Counties Showground, Malvern

We were pleased to be invited once again to do a gundog demonstration at the Countrytastic event in April.

It was a lovely day with a great crowd and lots of attractions. The dogs did us proud and received many compliments from our audience. A really good day out. Thanks goes to our Chairman, Veronica Harris, who stepped in to help with last minute admin and provided a very professional commentary.



Ludlow Dog Day

We had a really enjoyable day running a water scurry at Ludlow Dog Day on 14th April. There were three categories – retrievers, spaniels and “others”. The “others” were a very varied group and one of the best retrieves of the day was done by a Patterdale Terrier, although a border collie won that group on a fast time. A lovely young Labrador won the retriever group and a smart cocker spaniel won the spaniel group. Each group had a goodie bag from Sporting Saint.

What really was apparent was the number of people interested in working their dogs and caring for their dogs. At the end of the day, we were able to give a little help and advice to people who struggled, and we raised a nice sum of cash for the charity of the day.

Initially we all thought we couldn't spare the time to get involved, but we all got a lot from it. We took it in turns to throw dummies and used our dogs to collect the dummies which hadn't been retrieved. What good training that was as our dogs

had to sit quietly and wait until they were sent. A big thank you to Jean, Sue, Tony and to Sarah who organized our involvement.

Well done Wye Valley team – a feather in your cap!

You should have seen the Leonberger after he found the mud at the edge of the pond - and he had to go home in the small family car. And there's always the dog that collects two dummies.



First Aid Course

Trainers, helpers and some committee members attended a First Aid course on 15th May run by Hereford First Aid.

We learned a great deal and had a lot of laughs. During the morning we practiced CPR and using our defibrillator. Then in the afternoon it was bandages and injuries. Claire and Sean made a good team and Sarah was an exceptional accident victim. We all enjoyed the day and surprisingly all passed the exam at the end.



From Little Acorns Grow Large Oak Trees

A brief history of the very early seedlings that were sown in Herefordshire from which your Club emerged.

The Wye Valley Retriever Club held yet another successful Field Trial in November 2023 at Dunclent Farm, Worcestershire (the home of one of your vice-presidents, Michael Gough and his family). I was fortunate enough to win and, in the time-honoured tradition, it was a pleasure for me to thank all of those who had a major hand in the success of the day. During that thank-you speech I happened to remark that the Wye Valley Retriever Club had always held a special connection to me as I was part of the very early training group that was to become your Club as you know it today. On the day that I and 'Lovehayne Dixie' won this Novice Trial, the 10th of November 2023, it was my 70th birthday and this was the reason why I was reminded of those early years and in particular of the help that I received from some very experienced and knowledgeable people as a result of training with that group.

The group of like-minded gundog folk used to meet at Westhide Estate in Herefordshire on a weekly basis in the summer for retriever training. It was the home of Mrs Kit Fraser and my invitation to join them was made possible through Daphne Philpott and Joan Gill and as a very green young man with an equally green but talented golden retriever bitch (Sansue Pepper of Lovehayne, later with a Ch Title), it was an honour. Attendance was strictly by 'invitation only' and I did feel that by going to these training sessions I was being invited onto hallowed ground and being there, amongst them, training with the best with

an almost 'academy' type status, I was being given a unique opportunity to learn. Our progress was rapid after that first summer and Pepper and I gained knowledge and confidence together.

There were a few people who used to be within this group who were key members of the 'inner circle' and to whom I held in high regard. Their knowledge and depth of experience was vast and they were more than happy to help me and others starting off in this sport. Kit's retired game keeper was the principal trainer, a no-nonsense chap called 'Hounslow' ably assisted by Terry Dukes (the Club's Vice President). I never knew if Hounslow had another name but that was what he was called and I remember well that he was very helpful to me. Occasionally Terry's father Ron, and his mother, known only to me as 'Mrs Ron', used to come along. Ron was a highly respected professional gundog trainer with both retrievers and spaniels. Others that used to go there were Judy Rainey with a well-made golden retriever and Jayne Coley with her first labrador, both are well-known and respected A panel judges today. Also attending were Andrew Jackson (Man of Ross fruit farm – Glewstone), Heather Whitaker, Jane Oliver and Gabriel Benson. Diane Wordsworth and Diane Wiggin (Brockweir). Jean Tidmarsh (on the current committee) and a few more that I have omitted because I cannot remember them all. Kit Fraser had many friends but the inner circle was the late Felicity Stevens who always wore long flowing skirts and a scarf and wellies, even in summer and Mary Greenwood. The trio used to visit The Three counties Showground on all three days of the show at Malvern and make a bee-line to the Golden Retriever ring to check up on my wife and I as we used to show and work our dogs in both spheres and Kit was especially interested, as I was now part of the Westhide training group. These three women were formidable, strong and sometimes direct, but always very helpful and kind at the same time.

Westhide was owned by the late Kit Fraser and her husband Peter and they also had a large estate in Western Australia near Perth called Hyden Wave Rock and Peter spent a lot of time in Australia as well as his interest in the farming at Westhide, which included a herd of Jersey cattle, hop production in addition to the arable side of Westhide.

We used to meet weekly in the summer and I used to take my bitch to work with me in Newport as we lived some 25 miles to the west of Newport. I would travel to Westhide, as soon as I could escape the notice of my employer, and drive to Westhide which is about 5 miles or so to the East of Hereford.

It was the sort of training whereby I could ask for advice and help after each exercise that Hounslow had devised for us and by pooling the suggestions and help from the group I would be able to devise a plan to find a better way to achieve success than I managed in the actual training session. Sound and

sensible advice, based on years of experience, was freely given with equal amounts of encouragement. Everyone was very positive and demonstrated a genuine interest in my progress. I will always be grateful to the early pioneers of the Club, that we now know as the Wye Valley Retriever Club.

Every year there was an annual rotating event, held in the form of a Working Test, between Westhide captained by Kit Fraser and Holway (Inpark) captained by June Atkinson, who many will know is Robert Atkinson's mother. I was never asked to attend, probably as I was not really good enough. I was reliably informed that whilst it was held on KC / FT lines, it was in reality a blend between a garden party and a working test with rules adapted by both ladies to suit their joint ideas. A sort of hybrid you might say.

Today, Westhide Estate is now the Herefordshire home of Luke Thompson-Coon who is Kit Fraser's nephew and also your President. Club training in the summer months sometimes takes place at Westhide and occasionally Luke invites the club to use the estate for Working Tests.

I last saw Luke a few years ago in Lyneham Estate, South Devon whilst competing at an Open Stake, as he was shooting on the day and he made a point of congratulating me on the success I achieved that day. He left his host and came over to see me and he was genuinely delighted that a member of his Aunt's Westhide group had done so well. The warmth of Kit Fraser's encouragement lives on in her family.

Thank you to those pioneers of the past who have been so kind and helpful to me and the many others in this sport. We will always be grateful for your time and expertise. Thank you, Kit. We did not know how special it was at the time. We certainly do today.

Richard Edwards



Left to right: Mr Ron Dukes, Dr Shuttleworth, Mrs June Atkinson, Mrs Kit Fraser, Mr A. Hounslow, Mr Andrew Jackson, Miss Jean Pilling.

Thanks to Mr Terry Dukes for the use of his photo.



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Data Protection and Privacy

The Committee of the Wye Valley Retriever Club is committed to ensuring that personal information is handled in a secure and confidential manner in accordance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018. The Club's Data Protection and Privacy Policy can be found on their website.

www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

Can You Join our Merry Band of Helpers?

Help is always needed at our events and you could join us in making them enjoyable for all. We offer a free lunch and a bottle of wine or Sporting Saint voucher at most events if you volunteer as a steward, dummy thrower, tea maker etc. We also need photographers to record our events.

If you would like to help in any way, please contact the Club by email at info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

Helping at our events is a good way of getting to know everyone and making friends in the Club and we are sure you will be able to learn a lot by watching the dogs and handlers work.

WVRC Items for Sale

Wye Valley Retriever Club are able to supply items of quality clothing embroidered with the Club logo. We can supply Polo Shirts, Sweatshirts, Baseball Caps, Ties and Fleece. Please contact the Secretary if you would like to order any items.



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Health and Safety

The safety of participants, helpers, spectators and members of the public is a priority for the Wye Valley Retriever Club at its events. The Club has a Health and Safety Policy and has carried out risk assessments for its training, working tests and field trials.

A copy of the Club's Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments can be found on our website:

www.wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk

We encourage you to take time to read this information. If you are unable to access these documents on our website, please email our secretary info@wyevalleyretrieverclub.co.uk (marked for the attention of Chris Peers) and we can arrange to get you the information you require.

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