

## WATER DOG TRIALS

**The next Water Dog Trials will be on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July at Vila Real.**

As usual we do not have precise details of location. It seems that the Beauty Contest is normally held in a prominent place, ie main sea front area. This starts at approx 10.30am. We usually find them by searching for many black water dogs and some barriers.

Everyone then moves on to a previously arranged location for the actual water trials----- we just follow the crowd!! This usually happens at approx 12.30pm depending on how many dogs are being shown.

Cleo and Izzy will be going. Laura and I have bravely decided to get them both cut in the official Lion Cut for this event as this is the official show and trial cut. The Lion Cut has a reason:-----the short coat on the back of the body and back legs is to aid with swimming. The longer coat over the chest is to protect all vital organs when they dive. The FLAG on the end of the tail is specifically so that you can always see the dog when swimming in the sea. I have to admit that Cleo swims with her back end so low you can never see her tail and I am always convinced that she is sinking!!! Knowing the reason for the cut makes it a little easier to understand.

The trials are generally based on what these dogs were originally bred for, helping the fishermen. There are different classes for the different ages, they have three tasks to perform. Swimming---the course is a triangle from land to two bouys. They are graded on their general behaviour, the speed between the bouys, their style and rhythm and obedience. This test originated from the Water Dog being used to deliver messages from ship to ship. Much more fun than a mobile phone, but maybe not as reliable!!

Recovery of a floating object----this has to be retrieved and swum back to the beach then returned to the owners hand, it must be in the dogs mouth at all time , dog then returns to the left of the owner. This test originated from the Water Dog recovering objects that fell over the side of the ship, fishing nets and even human beings.

Diving to recover objects-----the dog must dive and must get the whole head wet, retrieve the object, swim to shore, return object and again return to the left of the owner. This test originated from retrieving objects which had sunk.

The dogs are given points for each section of the task set.

There are other more advanced test as they progress and improve.

Cleo has been practicing in the pool but has only had a couple of visits to the beach-----I expected her to 'freak out', but she was much better than I had ever expected. I do not expect miracles. Cleo loves to swim, she is regularly jumping and diving into the pool after her last big dive last week.

I will briefly update you next week on whether she actually went round the course or whether I lost her out to sea, this is my main panic!!!!!!!!!!!!!! At least we know that Izzy will complete the course.

Protect your pet with knowledge

Jan Cobley

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