

M&Ms!

A Golden Celebration

January through June 2012 in Central Otago saw many gold-related events celebrating the discovery of gold 150 years ago. One event in the Gold 150 celebrations appropriately included our Golden MD puppies, plus *Fleur*. The Oamaru Ordinary Cycle Club began cycling from Riverton. They continued their five day ride cycling a section of the new Otago trail system and finished at puppy-raisers June and Eric Simpson's for lunch.

A portion of the participants' lunch fee was donated to the Trust. The puppies, plus *Fleur*, had a marvellous time romping in the spacious gardens and showing off to the cyclists some of their MD tasks. A big thank you goes to June, head chef, and Eric and to Wendy Simpson, Club Coordinator, for organising this golden benefit for the Trust.



A Mobility Dog may be useful after a long ride on a penny farthing?



June & Eric Simpson leashed to their own gold rush

Global Golden

The SLD puppies in training plus Ambassadog *Fleur* are going global these days as tourists from all over the world take home our dogs' photos in their iPhones, cameras and iPads. A common sight at Skyline Sunday buffet lobby is dogs lined up in picture perfect poses and a mob of tourists excitedly gathered around snapping photos. After the photo session and a quiet down-stay under the lunch table, our 'celebrities' are ready to board the gondola down the mountain and reap their much-deserved reward: a refreshing dip in Lake Wakatipu.



Lined up at Skyline for global photography



Down stays under the table

Welcome Pam

SLD club members, dogs and *Koko's* new family recently welcomed Pam, Manager of Canine Programmes, and *Koko* as they arrived at Queenstown Airport. This was an opportunity for Tony and Viv, who raised *Koko*, to welcome him back to the Southern Lakes District. After *Koko's* adoption papers were signed and he and his family headed to his new home in Wanaka, a light lunch was enjoyed by all at raisers David and Kim Wright's home. It was a good opportunity to welcome Pam and farewell *Merlin* who later in the afternoon boarded the plane with Pam to begin the next chapter of his Mobility Dog training.



Puppy-raisers Viv & Tony with *Koko*



Mobility Dogs lineup greets Pam & *Koko* at Queenstown Airport



New home for *Koko*

M&M sisters: puppy-raiser reports

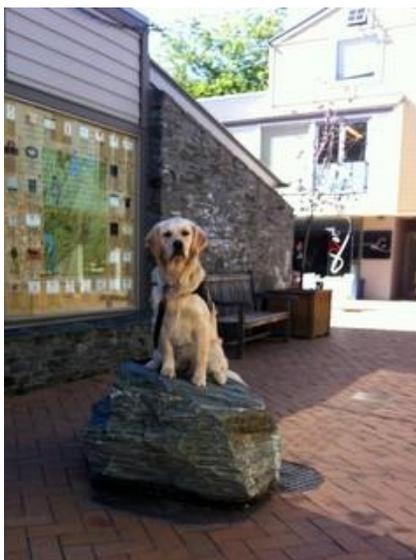
Mobility Dogs *Maya* and *Meg* are sisters, raised by David and Kim Wright and Eric and June Simpson respectively.

Maya by David Wright: *Maya* continues to be an absolutely sweetie and I'd have to say that she is fully socialised now. She's been to shows at theatres, in buses, on boats, in supermarkets, lifts, restaurants, banks, VTNZ garages while they inspect cars etc. She is a little doll and NEVER fails to impress people. *Maya* is down in Arrowtown just about every morning and we work on her tasks and commands. There are four things that seem to really impress the passersby:

1. On command *Maya* will jump up, rest her front paws on the ATM machine and extract a card from the slot. She is just about 2/3cm too short to reach the card of her own at the moment so I support the card with my finger but - to all intents and purposes - she gets the card, jumps down and then gives it to me on command. I was doing this one day and a lady said to me, "Wow a dog that can use an ATM - that's neat". I said, "Yes maam - but I'm not going to give her my PIN number!"
2. I can also leave my wallet on the ATM and walk some 20m away when I suddenly realise I have left it behind. I stop, point back to the ATM and tell *Maya* "get it" and she trots back to the machine, jumps up on the ATM, takes the wallet in her mouth and brings it to me. I've sat down on a chair so as she approaches I say "lap" and she then hops up onto my lap and with a "give" she releases the wallet in to my hand.
3. *Maya* will happily "jump on" the large rock in the small Arrowtown Mall and "sit" on command. I issue a "stay" command and then I then disappear out of sight around the corner and she just sits there looking cute on top of the rock. So many tourists have taken her photo in that position I've lost count. *Maya* allows people to walk past and some even stroke her but she never moves until I either (a) go back and get her or (b) give her a whistle recall from around the corner and she immediately comes to my side and sits.
4. When walking down the street I will simulate accidentally dropping something (other than her leash) that makes a sound when it hits the ground. I can use, keys, notepads, a wallet - anything that makes a sound. *Maya* immediately stops and looks back to see what has been dropped and, of course, this makes me stop too. I then give her the "get it" command and she will retrieve the dropped item and bring it to me and release on "give". I was doing this one day and had dropped my wallet. A guy on the street saw this happen and *Maya* brought it to me and he came over and said, "Mate, that is impressive. Do you think you could teach her to find wallets for me ?" I said, "Sure no problem ... BUT ... all the ones she brings me are empty!".



Kim introduces *Maya* to public transport



Maya remains rock solid in her "stay"

Meg by Eric Simpson: The holiday period was a very interesting time for *Meg* as our home was full of family and friends so she was exposed to the noise and coming and goings of the crowd. The main concern was how was she going to cope with Alex (2 yrs old) and Siena (only weeks old). Well, we need not have worried as *Meg* got along with the very active Alex and tolerated most of his exuberant behaviour and she had a very quiet and gentle approach to little Siena, almost giving the impression that she knew that this was a very special "puppy".



Meg wonders if she'll fit in the paddling pool with Alex

Aside from the above, I have continued with *Meg's* training and she is responding well - she is a very "sharp" girl. There was an episode regarding grass seed which found its way into her left ear gave me some concern, however prompt action by the vet put things to right. Looking ahead to February, *Meg* will probably be moving on to greater things. I am sure she will do well as she is a very special girl. It will not be easy to let her go, but there it is. That is what we puppy-raisers have to face up to.

Finally, musings from *Merlin*

I arrived in the Southern Lakes District on 5th September 2011. I don't remember much because I was just a wee pup of 3 months. But I do remember loving pats, lots of sweet talk, stuffed toys of all kinds, a soft, snugly bed, a big woolly sister and playmate named *Fleur*, a lovely garden with green grass (possibly the greenest grass in NZ ed.) and flowers and snow! This was my home for the next year and a half.



The way we were - *Meg, Maya & Merlin*, April 2012

Wow! lessons with Grant started right away. I learned that if I wanted anything to eat, I had to sit and wait for certain words, and then if I wanted a tasty little extra bit of food, I had to go down. You can bet I learned the magic words very quickly.

The fun really began when I could go out and about and waddle alongside Grant. The magic word was heel and if I did it right, I might get a treat. Little did I know that walking in just the right place beside my master was so important. Later I learned variations of heel, like: back, come to side, behind. It was all exciting and fun because if I did it right, a big, gentle hand would stroke my head, and I would hear the words, "Good boy".

When puppy-sitter, Kathy, took care of me, she took me some place exciting every day, come rain or shine. We walked all over Queenstown, rode the Earnslaw steamship to Walter Peak, took the Skyline gondola, and she often took me to a lake to swim. I loved meeting people on all these excursions and when they would ask me to shake, I always heard, "Ohhhhh" and "Ahhhhh".



Puppy-sitter extraordinaire, Auntie Kathy, & *Merlin*

Often Grant would take me to Arrowtown town centre to train with *Maya* and *Meg*. We three 'M' pups would show our stuff as tourists stood by with big smiles and lots of questions. We felt very special, indeed, especially when all around us cameras and cell phones were snapping photos of us.

When I got older and became a big boy, training with Grant even became more fun as I learned how to open and close doors and drawers, open the refrigerator, take something out, take it to Judy, and then close the refrigerator. When the magic words are spoken, I can fetch the newspaper, get the phone, untangle my leash and bark.

On 23rd January my life in the Southern Lakes District became a sweet memory as I boarded the plane with Pam, Manager of Canine Programmes. It's been a 'pawsitively' fun journey so far. I wonder what exciting things happen now.



Merlin the magnificent



The toughest moment of puppy-raising ... Grant farewells Merlin

Gold Found in SLD!

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude to the SLD puppy-raisers and sitters. Standing out in the cold with a puppy in the wee hours of a winter morning waiting for the urge, mopping up 'accidents', and searching and finally finding a long lost slipper at the bottom of the puppy toy box are challenges we all know about. We salute our raisers and sitters for their dedication, patience, flexibility and sense of humour. We struck gold when we found you.

(and we struck gold when we found you Judy and Grant! ed.)

Judy and Grant Reid
SLD puppy club leaders & raisers
Arrowtown

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