

Do you have a gundog sharing your home?

I don't mean a working gundog that goes out on shoots, I mean a Labrador, a goldie, a spaniel, you know a pet gundog.... if so Lez Graham, who specialises in training pet gundogs has something that you may find of interest.

Whatever it was that drew you into the world of the gundog, you are now sharing your home with a high energy working dog; don't kid yourself if you haven't got the working 'type', the mere fact that it's one of the gundog breeds means somewhere down the line it was bred to help you feed your family..

Lez says "The gundog has been bred to be biddable, to want to work alongside their owner or handler and bring back the spoils from the hunt; however, the term 'biddable' shouldn't be confused with being a push over... as well as breeding them to want to be with and work for people, they've also been bred to be intelligent, problem solvers and independent.

"There are many gundog owners who struggle to manage their dog's behaviour, perhaps because they don't understand its inbred traits. A fairly high proportion of gundogs end up being re-homed because their owners can't cope."

Recognising this Lez, who has just published her first book "The Pet Gundog", has developed a series of gundog training classes leading to the Kennel Club's Working Gundog Certificate.

Working in conjunction with The Pet and Working Gundog Organisation (PAWGO), Lez's new classes will be running in Marlborough from January.

The training covers in depth, all aspects of the skills required by the Kennel Club in their Working Gundog Certificate and is structured into manageable chunks, each increasing the complexity of the exercises learned in previous courses.

These newly acquired skills will be assessed as a way of building confidence in the handlers and giving you something to aim for on the road to having a well trained gundog and an obedient companion suitable for the shooting field or working tests or even for just showing off to friends and family.

"It doesn't matter whether or not you are interested in the shooting field, gundog training



harnesses your pet's natural abilities, satisfying their instinctive behaviours and channelling their energy into useful behaviour. All in all, this will lead to a happy well-behaved pet, who does what you tell it, solving a lot of the issues owners experience with gundogs. And besides that it's fun!" says Lez

Don't be put off at the thought of handling birds; all of the courses, including the Working Gundog Certificate will be taught using dummies; each handler then has the choice of what they'd like to retrieve as part of the actual assessments.

The classes start with the 6 week Foundation course which is centred on obedience for good mannered gundogs. Next up, it's the Bronze award which focuses on the basics of steadiness and retrieving. The Silver extends the steadiness of your dog and introduces direction control as well as teaching your dog to hunt on command. The Gold award builds on Bronze and Silver and covers more complex exercises including stopping on the whistle and the introduction of shot.

The final course covers retrieving from water, is taught as a simulated shoot on dummies and polishes the handler and the dog for the Working Gundog Certificate which is recognition from the Kennel Club of yours and your dog's ability.

With the exception of the foundation course, all courses are run over ten weeks with a week off between weeks five and six.

Classes start 11th January 2011... Please contact Lez Graham for further information or to book your place; Lez@thepetgundog.co.uk or call 07927 420 049.

Lez is a full member of the Canine and Feline Behaviour Association (CFBA) and a Master Trainer with the Guild of Dog Trainers (GoDT). She has just published her first book 'The Pet Gundog'.

NEW for 2011

Gundog training classes in Marlborough

Starting with a good manners foundation course, you can train your gundog through a series of awards culminating with the Kennel Club's Working Gundog Certificate.

Foundation class is all about obedience and good manners. Classes start the 11th & 12th January

The Bronze is where the retrieving is introduced as well as basic whistle work.

The Silver award extends the retrieving skills and brings in direction control, hunting in cover and more advanced whistle commands.

The Gold introduces the jump pen and the gunshot as well as working your dog in cover at distance.

The Working Gundog Certificate is taught as a simulated shoot and retrieving from water introduced.

The awards are run and assessed in conjunction with the Pet and Working Gundog Organisation.

The Working Gundog Certificate is assessed by qualified Kennel Club assessors and presented annually at Crufts.

Contact Lez for more information about these exciting training courses

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