



STOP PRESS:

It is pleasing to report that a young lady, the Deputy Chief Instructor from Hornsby Dog Training club competed with her Golden Retriever for the first time in novice and gained the highest score at the trial on 198 points.

Congratulations, Pauline Dickeson.

She is a smart lady as her dog is almost three years of age, which shows she could have competed earlier but chose not to put her dog in until he was properly trained.

I think we will hear more in the future from Pauline.



Above: The late Garry Brennan who was recognised as a world champion dogman, thanks his dog "Maid" after penning his sheep at an exhibition trial in New Zealand

The Theory About Dogs:

We all have companion dogs but do you train yours correctly irrespective of whether it's a show animal or an obedience one?

First, the most important part of your dog is the inside of the animal. DO you train him in all types of places where there are distractions and other things your dog may like to investigate?

If you are like me you shouldthat's if you have a competitive nature and want to win.

Always remember your dog, whatever its breed is a complex animal, full of different emotions and different instincts. It's hard to put into words but you need a very special type of feeling towards your dog. He's special because he is yours and after a time you realise he looks upon you as his pack leader and is not really happy unless he is near you – and can (I think) smell your wonderful scent.

But when you first brought him home, he was an unknown dog, you were nothing to him, but just someone who fed him. However with time, I hope you received enjoyment by

watching him come to treat you as something special. Everything changes when you and he become pals in canine terms. Put another way, we cry when we lose a great dog, but we don't cry when a relative dies. That's putting it roughly, but readers know what I mean. When you find it easy to communicate with your dog everything changes, you enter another world, you have a dog's trust, its confidence. I often, as I just did, move my finger and my new dog came up and licked my arm. Put another way he told me he loved me – and at my age that's a great plus. Each of my two dogs are different but both have that hard to explain feeling that I am all they want in life. And I think that makes them easy to train because they want to please me.

Looking back, the only problem I have with the above, is that it takes yonks to learn (and I don't think you learn it, it comes from within). It's how to have what I often mention, canine fingers.

Am getting into deep water, will leave you to work out what probably you all know, but would express it differently.

Age Attracts Dogs.

Forty years back I wrote for The Land Newspaper – the subject, sheep dog. I had spent many holidays on sheep stations owned by relatives. As well as that I was invited to many of their homes, especially in New Zealand in the North Island.

The Land sent me to many sheep dog trials – and after the trials we all spent the evening in a tent discussing dogs – I had a tape-recorder. One thing amazed me, all the top sheep dog triallers were over 50 – some in their seventies. The young fellows never won.

It took me many years to understand why. The answer is simple, dogs generally are attracted to older people – even though kids turn them

on. The reason is, after you spend years with dog and top dog triallers you develop a flair or canine fingers. Don't smile – it's true. I could name dozens of people with canine fingers who have had top wining dogs, most being over 50.

Most dogs seem to recognise that by the way they behave when you handle them. That often includes "one person dogs", too.

Dogs generally identify people with a dominant attitude and accept that because it's their inborn nature to want a leader. When one studies that it becomes easier to understand. I just mention this little aspect on dogs because I've never seen it in print.

Not all breeds are easy to train!



Who Loses the Most Points?

It is often not always understood or mentioned why a handler can lose almost as many points as the dog.

The handler's work is also being judged and with a clever handler it makes it difficult for some judges.

And now that this is in print, we all hope future final scores will improve. We must not forget that dog and handler are working as a team and both are being scored.

Here are some questionable things.

Giving very loud commands.

Signals must be a single gesture with arms and hands only – the body shouldn't move.

Any unusual noise or motion should be considered a signal and it's called "body English".

Adopting pace to Fido is a penalty and is common.

If a handler continually adapts pace to suit the dog it's a non-qualifying score, this often happens in the figure of 8.

Having a hesitation when making turns, this shows up on about turns. Beware of military type turns.

Handlers must accelerate immediately on the command "fast pace". There must not be any

hesitation. Turns must be sharply executed.

Avoid affectations of the up and down movement or motions of the body and feet that aid the dog.

In heeling normal pace must be "brisk" and this also applies to the figure of 8.

In retrieving the dumbbell only the hands and lips should move. The body, arms and legs should not move to aid the dog.

In the broad jump, the handler must turn when the dog is in flight, (mid-air) not when it lands.

Deductions apply for any excessive motions by the handler in turning.