

Review of Conference: 'Rescue and Rehoming – the challenge to find a loving and permanent home for every dog.'

Held at The Kennel Club Building, Saturday October 9th 2010.

The recent Conference hosted by The Southern Newfoundland Activity Group (SNAG) provided an opportunity to listen to five speakers talk on their respective approach to the challenge that confronts all involved in rescue and re-homing - how to find a permanent and loving home for every dog. Steve Goward and Jack Johnstone represented The Dogs Trust, Tania Holmes spoke about her work for Bulldog Rescue UK, Anne Carter provided an insight to Labrador Lifeline Trust while Dr David Lamb (Lecturer in Animal Welfare Ethics at The University of Southampton) presented and discussed the subject from an ethical perspective. A great deal of varied and interesting information was imparted by the speakers and all talks were accompanied by visual images. Steve Goward who is the Assistant Head of Behaviour for The Dogs Trust, also included a series of video clips depicting some dogs with certain behavioural issues, examples of training methods designed to help and evidence of overcoming the problems. In conclusion, he showed a picture of one of his own dogs, a Newfoundland cross bitch, who had arrived at one of their centres when she was 7 months of age after having lived in a flat.

The 'Question Time' that followed, provided an opportunity for a useful exchange of information and ideas between speakers and delegates. Amongst the topics discussed was the implementation of behavioural assessment and the need for veterinary input, methods of profiling prospective homes, ways and means that could be employed to reduce the number of dogs requiring help, following up procedure after a dog has been homed, the impact of the internet, the structure and financing of the re-homing 'team,' and, notably, the continued need to create opportunities for education relating to dog ownership. This was perceived as vital, given that the prevailing social and economic situation is placing more pressure upon rescue organisations and yet the number of dogs being bred is increasing.

SNAG wish to thank all delegates that attended Eukanuba, Royal Canin, Fish4dogs and kind traders from Richmond Dog Show. SNAG would like to also to thank Juliet Leicester-Hope and Pauline Bevis for their support and also Barbara Brookes who very kindly, together with her driver, collected and delivered to the venue a vast quantity of food.

The Kennel Club Educational Trust is pleased to support a successful topic of conference and would like to encourage other groups that wish to organise such events, to contact Carrie Acors for availability at the Kennel Club Building.