

Sara Hawkswell



I first saw dogs doing Agility at Olympia in the 1980's having been a horse addict as a child and a teenager. I immediately went home and taught my Cavalier King Charles Spaniel to jump garden canes balanced on wellies!! It was many years later before I got a chance to give Agility a real chance when I started Agility by going to classes organised by Broxburn Agility Club with my young Border Collie Scroobs. It wasn't long before I was addicted, moved from a tent to a caravan, booked every weekend up in the season and now Agility, in way or another, dominates my life.

I've taken on most roles involved in running Agility shows. Starting off by helping on rings, I progressed to scribing and scoring. In 2010 I took my first judging appointment at Clyde Valley show – partly a success and partly a disaster, I misjudged my course time for Grade 6-7 Large Agility and only the winning grade 7 dog made it within the time. Today I still feel guilty about the winner of grade 6 who's win didn't count towards progression because of my mistake (measuring wheels and experience have solved that problem for me)

Currently I take on several judging appointments each year, often do champ scoring (yes I like computers) and occasionally scribe. I also help run the club show (I was show secretary for the last three years). I love the challenge and privilege of judging - it gives me great pleasure designing a course and watching dogs and handlers tackle it and you get the best position to watch all day. However when not judging my favourite job at a show is pole picking!

This year I became the Scottish Kennel Club Agility Coordinator which means, among other things, I organise and I am Show Manager for our Championship and Premier shows each year. I am one of the trainers at Woodside Agility Club teaching all grades and abilities. I currently attempt to compete with my two Pyrenean Sheepdogs – I love doing agility with my older girl Fiz, who is a star in training but struggles with the atmosphere at shows, my young girl Abi has great potential and I fear will struggle to put up with my body failing to keep up with brain. I've recently

had to retire my old collie from veterans – definitely can see a new big lad joining the crew relatively soon.

I have been studying dog behaviour, have a keen interest in canine nutrition and have also recently started a dog training business (not just Agility). Outside the dog world I keep sheep and chickens and am gradually starting to train them as well.

So what do I bring to the Agility Liaison Council? Well I have a good knowledge of the Agility community and shows in Scotland. I have a wide range of experience in the issues facing clubs and managing shows. I am good at listening and communicating and am prepared to represent the community's views even if they don't match my own. I am willing to put time and effort into developing good communication channels and into the work of the Council – even though it means going down to London at least twice a year.