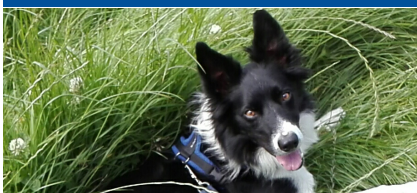
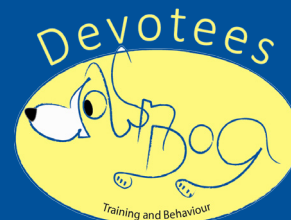


Down Dog Digest

No. 5



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Why Carol became The Doggy Doctor



As a child, I only wanted two things. The first was to be a doctor. The second was to have a dog - but my parents said no.

I had to console myself by spending as much time as I could with friend's dogs, taking them for walks and trying ham-fistedly to train them to do tricks.

Luckily there were lots of dogs in our neighbourhood, nearly all good-natured mongrels. The neighbourhood dogs often joined us when we played in the local parks, woods and recreation ground.

I worked hard to achieve my first aim and proudly qualified as a doctor in 1981. The next few years were a bit of a blur. In those olden days, no-one had ever heard of a working time

directive, so most of our waking hours (and many of our supposedly sleep hours too) were spent working. There was no chance of me having a pet, even a goldfish.

Somehow Himself and I managed to find time to get married and we were finally able to have a dog. Ben came into our lives in 1983.

I wanted to learn how to train Ben properly, so I joined a local dog training club. We learned and made many mistakes together but we had great fun trying to improve week by week.

In 1984 the club asked me to join the training team and two years later I became lead trainer. I've been lucky enough to work with some of the best trainers in the world, including John Roger-son, Sarah Whitehead, Ian Dunbar and Chirag Patel.



Dealing with Problem Pooches

One particular problem dog led me to want to learn all I could about dog behaviour, so I completed many courses. Meanwhile, I had our two wonderful daughters and continued to strive to be effective as a senior doctor in the NHS.

But 1996 - 2008 was a time of huge upheaval and change in the NHS with seven NHS reorganisations in that time. Each one of these changed the organisation and the structure I worked in. I had to reapply for my job every time.

The final reorganisation in 2007 took too great a toll on my mental health. I still loved the job but I struggled to cope with the changes. So in 2008 I retired from medicine and we moved over here to the beautiful Ards peninsula.

Wanting a new challenge, I turned my dog training hobby into a business and Down Dog Training and Behaviour started in May 2008.

I've pursued being the best I can be at this job too, with various qualifications. Watching dogs behaviour is rewarding, challenging and fascinating and it's become my abiding passion.

My 35 years experience and knowledge helps me to teach people how to understand, train and help their problem dogs.

My medical background has helped more than I at first realised as well.

Being a doctor, you need to develop great diagnostic skills. Diagnosis is all about learning to spot subtle signs that all is not well and working out what is wrong.

It's the same with dog behaviour.

Doctors also need in depth knowledge about suitable treatments and the skills to apply the right treatment to each case.

It's the same with dog behaviour.

Finally, doctors need to be experts at working with the patient and their family to make sure they can easily follow what you've agreed with them is the best course of action.

It's the same with dog behaviour.

That's how I became The Doggy Doctor.

If you're struggling with your dog's behaviour, then let me help you.

Enter the Doggy Doctor surgery at doggydoctor.co.uk (or via the downdog.co.uk website) to book an online Consultation Call or an in-person House Visit.

My teachers - my dogs

Every dog teaches me something new

Ben, a pedigree Border Collie from show stock, came into our lives in the summer of 1983.

He was an amazing dog and I have such fond memories of his antics - he was a real character. Being the perfectionist that I am, I wanted to do things right, so I enrolled in a puppy class at our local Kennel Club dog training club.

The training then was all about yank and jerk and using check chains. I didn't know any better. My trainer had competed in obedience, so I decided to have a go at it.

Ben had other ideas. He hated obedience and found it boring.

He tried to tell me but I didn't realise - until he took matters into his own paws and started eliminating in the ring. Once this happened three times I realised what he was trying to tell me - I can be a bit slow.



My teachers - my dogs

Every dog teaches me something new

We moved on to working trials, which he and I adored. We were quite successful, qualifying at Working Dog level and competing at the top levels, Tracking Dog and Police Dog.

We thought Ben would like some company (remember I didn't know any better then!), so Bill, a farm working collie, arrived in 1984. Whereas Ben liked to think for himself, Bill just wanted me to tell him what to do, so we competed successfully in obedience up to class A together.



Ben told me he was ready to go in summer 1996. So Bryn came into our lives – a home bred collie from a local village. We lost Bill 18 months later, so Bryn became our only dog. He was my heart dog with the most wonderful temperament. We lost him in a tragic accident in 2002 and I miss him dreadfully even today.



By then I'd taken on the lead trainer role at the dog club. I'd learnt a lot from the other trainers there and done a course or two. One day a lady came in to ask for help with her dog, a small terrier. She said he'd bitten her husband. I was talking with her when I saw the dog start curling his lip and crouching. He launched himself at me. I grabbed the lead to stop him getting too close. Luckily another trainer came up to help and neither of us got bitten. But the dog had put her

husband in hospital, we subsequently learned.

That incident, and Mac, a farm collie we obtained when Bryn was killed, led me into dog behaviour. Mac was terrified of everything. He wouldn't go out for walks or get into the car and he had severe fear aggression from 8 weeks old, all from a combination of poor genetics and lack of early socialisation, as I know now.

We needed help, so our vet referred us to David Appleby. Mac spent the hour-long consultation hiding under my chair. David's suggestion was "to counter-condition and desensitise EVERYTHING." True, but not especially helpful to us at that time as he didn't offer any ongoing help or support.



I worked really hard with Mac. We finally got him to tolerate going out for walks and being in the car, but we always had to be very careful with handling him and I never let anyone else get too close, as he couldn't cope with new people. He bit me several times and also bit four of our family members, but I learnt a huge amount before he finally left us in 2012 and we got Gus, our current dog.

Gus' story is already in print in my second book, *Chaos to Calmish: Diary of a Pesky Puppy's First Year* (available from the website and from Amazon) so I won't repeat it again here.

Suffice to say, he still teaches me things, every day. I'll never stop learning from every dog I have, see and meet - and that's one of the joys of being The Doggy Doctor.

Carol's Challenge

Each newsletter sets you a challenge. Sometimes it's a training challenge, sometimes there's a new or different game to play.

This time, your challenge, should you wish to accept it, is to read my first Problem Pooch book.

Problem Pooch to Perfect Pet: Book 1: Troublesome to Tranquil is an easy-to-read book, jam-packed with helpful advice and tips about how to deal with sixteen of the common problems you might face with your pet.



This first book in the Problem Pooch series is in two sections. The first looks at behavioural basics. It will help you understand:

- why dogs do the things they do,
- why they do some things that we humans find annoying or repugnant,
- why we focus on the things we don't like our dogs doing rather than all the good behaviours they show,
- why the Dominance Theory is dead as a dodo,

- why neutering is not a panacea for all behavioural ills and

- why punishment doesn't always work: and the scary downsides to using it.

This section finishes by explaining the two options for changing your dog's behaviour and outlines my three-step plan to success.

The second section covers sixteen common problem behaviours:

- six common problems in the home,
- six worries related to food and feeding, and
- the four most common issues you'll face outside your home.

You'll read real stories about owners, the problems they had with their dogs and how I resolved the issues.

For each problem, I explain the possible reasons why your dog might chose to act in that way, then give you a range of tips you can try to change that unwanted behaviour in your own dog.

You can buy the book through our website, downdog.co.uk, or from Amazon, either as an ebook or in paperback.

When you've read it, please leave me a review on Amazon and I'll love you forever.

If you get the bug, there's a behaviour course for owners coming soon - watch out for details...

We hope you've enjoyed this Down Dog Digest. Please feel free to share it with any friends, neighbours or family members you think might find it interesting.

If you'd like more information, tips, and advice about owning, training, caring for and enjoying your dog more, we've got a range of options to suit your needs. We've given you free advice and downloadable helpsheets on a wide range of topics. Get it right from the start with your new pup; book group or one to one training to suit you; and check out our Down Dog Devotee membership programme.

If you've got a Problem Pooch, why not visit the Doggy Doctor's Surgery for help, in person or online.

Details of all our services can be found on our website: www.downdog.co.uk