

# Training Your Stafford



Whatever your reason for choosing the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the most important consideration must be that of a family pet, indeed in today's society it makes sense to teach your dog both social and basic obedience skills.

The Stafford is not a breed usually associated with Obedience and other dog/owner related activities many Staffords however are regularly competing in these disciplines and doing very well.

Whilst I would be the first to agree that not all Staffords could or indeed should compete at this level, we owe it to this great breed to teach them social skills. Many people do not understand the Staffords temperament, that they are second to none with people and yet their interaction with other dogs can leave a lot to be desired, the way forward for our breed is as 'Good Citizens'.

Dogs are creatures of habit and learn by repetition and association, remember that YOU are the main ingredient in the pie, you must understand your dog, think like your dog and know what you want to achieve and to make sure that you do get the result.

Although not a traditionally working breed, your dog can be taught almost anything you purely need to break each exercise down into small components. The Stafford can be a very stubborn breed but it is the Staffords great desire to please that is

the key, and it is this desire that needs to be channeled into training.

## Collar & Lead Training

Firstly ensure you have a suitable collar & lead, I find that a leather standard style collar with a 6' lead with adjustable clips is the most appropriate, a good leather lead will last you many years.

Many people think that a short lead gives more control in fact you will have far less control and your Stafford will pull more, the chain link style leads are not suitable for any breed.

Begin by getting your puppy used to it's collar, perhaps initially by introducing it just before a meal, your puppy may well scratch at it, just ignore the behavior, remove when your puppy has accepted the collar. This exercise should be repeated as often as needed, ensure that the collar is removed should your puppy need to be crated.



## Basic Obedience Training

The earlier your puppy commences his training the better, from the moment your puppy arrives home he is learning from you. A puppy copes remarkably well considering the huge transition he has gone through.

I would suggest training on an empty stomach, this will ensure that you have your dogs undivided attention, initially keep training sessions short especially for puppies, always end on a good note, forget training if you don't

feel well, think about what & how you want to teach a particular exercise.

In the following exercises I have given the commands that I use, if you don't like them use your own word and stick to it.

### Watch

Teach your puppy that being with you is a nice thing, one of the first things I teach is 'Watch' this is the basis of all future training, you are basically teaching your puppy to give you his attention, it is very easy to teach and yet so often overlooked. This can be achieved anywhere, by just using the command 'Watch' gaining puppies attention, leave for 3 seconds and praise, gradually building on the time.

### Walking To Heel

Whilst realising that not everyone wants competitive heelwork, with your dogs head glue to your left leg, you should however be able to walk with your dog reasonably close without any undue pulling and to ignore any distractions.

Begin with your dog on your left hand side, holding a slack lead in your right hand, your left hand is used to correct. You need to gain your dogs attention, using the command 'Watch' then command 'Heel' before stepping of on your left leg, ensure that your enthusiasm spills over into your dog, should your dog go wide, try stepping away from your dog, calling your dog to heel.

Remember to talk to your dog, this is so often overlooked, you cannot initially expect your dog to know what you want of him. When turning left, I use the command 'Back' my left hand would then go down the length of the lead to slightly pull the dog into place before turning, when turning right, use the command 'Close' and encourage you dog round with you, keep it happy.

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# “Dogs are creatures of habit and learn by repetition...”

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Don't walk for too long in the same direction, your dog will bore easily, break this up with left or right turns, try changing your pace from normal pace to slow and then to fast. Break the heelwork up with a little play session, then same happy mood back into it again.

Eventually when walking at heel, get your dog to sit when you stop, in time your dog will do this automatically, which will be invaluable when walking your dog besides a road, stopping to give someone directions or even buying an ice cream!

## Sit

Using a titbit raise your left hand over your puppy's head and command 'Sit' you will probably find that he sits

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**...KEEP YOUR VOICE LIGHT  
AND TRY CALLING HIM TO  
YOU WITH TOYS OR  
TIDBITS...**

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automatically, If not using your right hand push his bottom down and repeat the command, still leaving your left hand above puppy's head. When your puppy has sat, bring your left hand containing the titbit down and reward, reinforcing the command. Ensure that you push the bottom and not your puppy's back.

## Down

Using a titbit in your left hand put it in front of puppy's nose before bringing it down to the floor in front of puppy, command 'Down', again puppy will probably go down automatically. If not using both hands on either side of puppy's chest push backward repeating 'Down', reward and praise when successful

## Come

Many people do not let their dog off lead for fear of them running off into the horizon, training your dog to 'come' should be started from as early as possible. When feeding your puppy call his name and add the command 'Come' he is learning to come at the very fundamental beginnings.

Keep your voice light and try calling him to you with toys or tidbits, always make a fuss of him when he does return, in the early stages train in a confined room, before moving on to an enclosed garden. Should he disobey, do not shout – simply go to your dog, hold him by the collar or attach his lead take some steps back repeating the command and praise.

Coming back to you should be a pleasurable experience, when on a walk practice calling him back to you and praising, many dogs associate being called back as the end of their walk, so by doing this you will have a dog happy to return to you.

Should your dog decide that the horizon is where he wants to be and makes a run for it. You must of course go after him but should your dog eventually return to you, he must be praised.

If he needs to be chastised then you must go to him. Mostly when my dogs have done wrong they are ignored, they crave attention and I find that this works.

However should they need to be disciplined then do this as the bitch would to her puppies, by the scruff of the neck, and a few choice growled words will usually do the trick.

## Stay

'Stay' means that you are commanding your dog to stay in one position until you return to your dog, which is different to 'Wait' which means wait until I call you to me.

Begin in your dog's favorite position either the sit or down, use the command 'Stay' in conjunction with your outstretched hand in front of your dog's face. Only do as much as you can, building up slowly, the main objective being that the dog understands what 'Stay' means, even if initially you are only working 12" away and literally holding the dog in place.

Gradually work further away, but remember to build up slowly, don't use your dog's name during this exercise, when returning to your dog wait a few seconds before praise, this will stop him anticipating when to move, additionally you could return to your dog and then step away again.

Should your dog move, do not scold simply step back into your dog, replace him in his position repeat the command and step away again, try standing side on to your dog this way he won't confuse it with a recall.



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# Dogs love to use their noses...

Continued

Additional options can be brought into the training, alter the distances you leave your dog, add distractions such as walking round your dog, throwing a toy or people walking past. But remember never be afraid to go back a stage, my own bitch, Tammy regularly trains for 10 minute out of sight stays amongst many other breeds, but she would soon become stale if that is all we trained for, so use your imagination and vary the exercises.

## Nosework

Dog's love to use their noses, nature has given them a powerful tool and unfortunately many do not get to use theirs to their full potential, you will really see you dog come 'alive' when they get the hand of scent training.

Begin with yourself kneeling on the floor with a favorite toy or piece of titbit hidden very easily, (in respect to the toy ensure this is a special toy that the dog loves and only bring it out during training). Let your dog watch you hide it and then send him to 'Find' when your dog finds the object lots of praise and play. Always ensure that your dog finds the article, should he struggle, help him and then lots of praise when he eventually finds it.

Ensure the toy is well handled before hiding it, gradually you can hide the toy further away with your dog still watching. Building upon this as your dog understands just what 'Find' means.

Initially you will need to offer your dog lots of encouragement but as your training develops when sending him out after the initial command, keep quiet and let him work, only offering encouragement when needed.

Use your imagination with Nosework training try hiding his toy in another

room, then move on to hiding his toy in your garden, as your training develops try hiding many different articles but remember all must be well handled before being hidden.

## Basic Road Training

Many Stafford's do not seem to display a fear of traffic, I remember a story of a Road traffic accident where the car came of worse, when in collision with a Stafford. Thus said, tragically many Staffords are killed on the road every year.

Always have your dog on the lead when near a road or any traffic, time spent teaching your dog road manners may well save your dogs life.

I always take my puppies road walking to accustom them to traffic, just like all the other experiences I want them to be comfortable with. Begin by teaching your dog to walk by your side without any undue pulling, then move on to teaching your dog to sit at the kerb before you cross the road. You will need to ensure that you do this overtime, the more you put into your dog the better your dog will be, your dog needs to be well socialised and taught to ignore pedestrians, cyclists, bins and many other day to day distractions. Remember to carry your pooch bags and teach your dog to sit quietly whilst you pick up the necessary's.

## **Training For Other Disciplines**

### Agility

The objective of Agility is to complete a course of designated numbered jumps and equipment in the fastest time hopefully without incurring any faults.

The equipment is made up of jumps, tyres, rigid and collapsible tunnels and the weaves as well as contact equipment such as the see-saw, dog walk and 'A' frame, these have painted contact areas which the dog must make contact with at the start/end of the obstacle. Such things as missing a contact, knocking down a pole from a jump, or missing a weave pole will incur faults. As well as that you can also be eliminated for taking the wrong course or fouling the ring. It is also well to remember that during competition titbits are not allowed and to remember that all collars must be removed. I recently lost out on 1<sup>st</sup> place due to not remembering to remove Tammy's collar and was eliminated, even though she completed the course in the fastest time with an otherwise clear round.

Most Staffords will fit into the Mini (1'3" or under at the shoulder) or Midi (1'3" - 1'5") categories, you will probably have seen coverage of Crufts Agility on the television, this however gives a very blinkered view of the sport as there are many breeds competing not just collies.



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# The more you put into your dog, the better your dog will be...

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There is quite a number of Stafford's regularly competing and they generally do very well. The biggest problem they have is they have no respect for the equipment, my own bitch Tammy has broken poles with her head and not even altered her stride.

Your dog needs to be at least 12 months old before beginning Agility training. Tammy was 17 months before she started training for Agility. The intervening time can be used socialising your dog and training basic obedience skills, as they will need to be trusted off lead with other breeds. I would recommend working through a puppy socialisation class before moving on to a regular basic obedience class. Ideally your dog should know all the basic commands such as come, sit, stay and wait, the more obedient and attentive to you your dog is, the easier the introduction of Agility classes will be, but above all your dog must be of a temperament to be trusted off lead with other dogs.

Should you find that competitive Agility training classes are not for you, why not trying making some equipment for your garden. Keep the jumps to a height of 15" and I would suggest investing in a book such as 'Agility is Fun' by Ruth Hobday which has instructions for making equipment in the book as well as other training tips for the complete beginner.



I have given Agility demonstrations at both the East Anglian and East Midlands Staffordshire Bull Terrier Clubs and all the Staffords really seem to enjoy having ago on the course after the display.

## Working Trials

Trials are split into stakes the first two being CD and UD, it is from these that it is possible to qualify a 'small' dog as there are height allowances in the Agility section. To qualify you have to score 80% or higher and what's nice is that you aren't in competition with anyone else - if you achieve the marks, you qualify. After qualifying your dog, this then entitles you to add letters after your dog's name ie; CDex, UDex.

Dogs are not permitted to compete in any trial until 18 months of age, as before I would suggest using the intervening time to instill good obedience skills in your dog. The exercises are split into sections, from which you have to obtain a minimum amount of points per section to qualify overall.

## Agility Section

6' Long Jump (for dogs upto 15" at the shoulder - this changes to 9' for dogs over 15")

2' High Jump (for dogs upto 15" at the shoulder - this changes to 3' for dogs over 15")

4' Scale (for dogs upto 15" at the shoulder - this changes to 6' for dogs over 15")

These are completed under control conditions, the dog having been sent over an obstacle has to wait in that position until rejoined by the handler.

The long jump is made up of 4 elements, which range from 3' to 3'8" wide, each element graduates in height from 4-11". The long jump at 6' is rather punishing for the Stafford. My own bitch is 14.5" at the shoulder

and is not exactly an athletic build, but because of her Agility training she will attempt to jump anything put in front of her. Should she not manage the jump and hit the last element, it is usually because she has taken off too soon and not that she cannot do it. However with careful training all the jumps in this section are possible.

The 4' Scale and 2' high jump should cause no major problems for any dog used to jumping, however care should be taken so as to avoid any accidents. I would disagree with training for the Agility section for Working Trials before 18 months, as the section is very tough, especially with our breeds construction.

However time spent in the intervening time will be invaluable, initially begin to feed your dogs enthusiasm for jumping with maybe poles laid directly on the ground, they can then gradually be raised, remember not to over phase your dog too soon, it must be fun!

## Control Section

Heelwork on lead

Heelwork off lead

Recall

Sendaway

The heelwork is very different to obedience in that your dog should walk naturally, reasonably close to the left knee. The sendaway is where your dog must be sent towards any marker a minimum of 30 yards away, although in practice it is normally a much longer distance and the marker could well be a bag tied in a tree or a telegraph pole in the distance.

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# Both stays are done out of sight...

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Nosework Section  
Search Square  
Retrieve with a dumb-bell

The search square is a 15-25 yard square, where a set number of small items are hidden, your dog must find and return all the items in the stipulated time, the ground can be anything from stubble to grass of any length.

Stay Section  
10 minute down stay  
2 minute sit stay

Both these stays are done out of sight, all the dogs competing for the stake will be in the group, the dog must remain in the position until the steward ends the exercise, any movement is penalized.

Tracking  
The UD stake also includes steadiness to gunfire and a track from which the dog needs to follow a 30 minute old track set by a track-layer and find 2 articles, as the stakes get higher the tracks get longer and older.

Obedience  
Stafford's as I said earlier are ideal to train as they so want to please, this with their love of food can hopefully be channeled into training. The problem with competitive obedience is not in their lack of ability but in the Stafford's construction. The chest being very broad and the neck being so short makes it almost impossible for both the dogs head and shoulder to be in contact with your leg.

Thus said some Stafford's are doing very well at Obedience and whilst presently there aren't any Obedience Champions in the breed who knows what the future may bring.

Obedience shows are held at all levels from classes scheduled at exemption

shows, through to Limited, Open and Championship shows. Classes start with the relatively simple pre-beginners class through to class C.

Exemption shows are a great way to learn it is at such as show that I first saw Biggles (Arad Llewelyn Bren of Copyhold) with Marney Wells competing in a scent discrimination exercise and executing it perfectly.

There is nothing natural about pedigree dogs, they have all been bred for a reason. The Stafford has been designed along quiet different lines than typical working breeds, thus said Staffords work very well and with enthusiasm and it must be said without the 'drone' type execution often seen in other breeds. The Staffords wonderful outlook and temperament is because of it's past not despite it, and we should be proud.

Kennel Club Good Citizen Scheme  
This test is part of the UK's largest dog training three-part programme, which has been developed to provide participants of the scheme with well-rounded and practical knowledge and skills necessary to become 'Good Citizens' and responsible dog owners. The scheme is divided into three parts, Bronze, Silver & Gold, each successful participant is issued with a Certificate and 'Good Citizen' rosette those who don't succeed are simply deemed 'not ready' so that no one fails.

The scheme contains many basic common sense exercises varying in difficulty through the three stages consisting of situations one would meet in the normal day-to-day activities.

Bronze  
These exercises are all at a very basic level from ensuring that every handler is carrying some form of poop scoop

and that the dog is wearing a suitable collar and lead with the appropriate identification tag.

From here the test moves on to a walk on lead through people and dogs with a control at a door or gate, the examiner will be looking for a dog that is by their owners left side, without any undue pulling, the owner should be able to negotiate a gate or doorway without the dog barging through first, the dog must also be able to wait in a relaxed manner whilst the handler holds a conversation for at least 1 minute, where the owner will have to answer some general knowledge responsibility and care questions.

The owner must also be able to demonstrate that the dog can be released within a restricted area and will return when called. The remaining parts of the test are that you are able to show how and with what you groom your dog and that you are able to present your dog for examination, showing the mouth, teeth, throat, eyes, ears and feet this exercise again shows the commonsense aspect of the test. Lastly the dog must be able to complete a 1 minute down stay the owner having to be 5 paces away from the dog.



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# The dog must be able to wait in a relaxed manner...

Continued

Silver

To take part in this test, you must have passed the bronze test. The exercises again are all commonsense.

You should be able to demonstrate that your dog will play with you, if using a toy this must be readily given up by the dog, a very important exercise as this demonstrates an extra dimension to the dogs life and makes training fun.

A road walk is incorporated into this exercise, your dog should be walking naturally by your left hand-side, the test will include crossing over a road and executing a turn, any distractions should be incorporated into the test such as passing pedestrians and the highway code should be observed.

**THERE ARE QUESTIONS ON RESPONSIBILITY AND CARE OF YOUR DOG AS WELL AS A FOOD MANNERS TEST...**

The test then incorporates leaving your dog for at least 10 paces before calling your dog, which should return when instructed to do so. This test being so important showing that your dog will return to you when off the lead, again a problem so many people have is that their dogs will not come back when let of the lead.

The down stay for the Silver award is slightly longer than the Bronze award and is for 2 minutes with the handler at least 5 paces away.

Part of the test is carried at the owners vehicle the object is for the dog to get in and out in a controlled manner and when the car engine is started with the owner and examiner sitting in the car that the dog remains quiet, relaxed and under control.

Again a very important exercise showing how imperative it is to make sure your dog is properly controlled whilst travelling on the roads.

The dog must be able to be examined by the examiner who will need to inspect mouth, teeth, ears, throat, eyes and feet rather like the vet would need to do, you will also need to answer some more general questions on your responsibilities and duties for caring for your dog.

Lastly a controlled greeting and food manners, which may be the hardest part of this test for the average Stafford. The examiner will greet your dog as might be done when a visitor enters your home, you dog should not jump up and should be able to be controlled should they do so, food will also be consumed while the dog is on a loose lead, the dog should not show any indication to beg or steal the food.

Gold

To compete for this award, you must have passed both the Bronze and Silver awards. The test incorporates the following exercises:

A lengthy road walk is incorporated into this test and you should be able to demonstrate that your dog will walk on a lead under control, you will be expected to cross a road and execute turns, the handler should be able to demonstrate slow, normal and fast pace any distractions should be incorporated into the test. The dog will also need to be walked off lead past other dogs and people although this latter exercise is not carried out near a road.

The dog will then need to be off lead with the handler a minimum of 10 paces away, before being called back to the handlers side and both handler and dog should then continue together for approximately 10 paces.

The down stay in this test is off lead, during the test the handler will be asked to move out of sight, but whilst in sight the handler should be at least 10 paces away from their dog.

The test also includes being able to stop your dog, which with your dog off lead at least 10 paces away, you will be instructed to stop your dog on the spot in any position.

The handler should provide the dogs bed which will be in a position determined by the examiner, standing approximately 10 paces away the dog should be instructed to go to it's bed, where it should remain until the examiner is happy that the dog has settled,

There are also questions on responsibly and care of your dog as well as a food manners test in which the dog will be offered food either by hand or in a bowl, the dog must wait for permission to eat, which will be given after a 3-5 second pause, the handler will be asked to give the dog an eating command.

Lastly another practical exercise so useful in a well mannered dog, your dog will need to be in isolation for 2-5 minutes normally shut in a room where it can be observed without being seen, the examiner will be looking for the dog to settle and not to display any behavior problems such as whining, barking or any disruptive activities.

Interested?

To participate in the good citizen scheme you will need to find a training club that supports the scheme, this can be done by enquiring directly with the club, alternatively some exemption shows hold the testing sessions, alternatively contact the Kennel Club Direct for details of participating clubs.

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# Dogs bark for many reasons...

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There is a similar scheme run in the USA called the Canine Good Citizen Program by the American Kennel Club. This is a 2-part certification program, which is designed to reward dogs that have good manners both at home and in the community, which is then recorded in the AKC's canine good citizen archive. In Australia they run 2 Good Citizen schemes based on the UK version, which is administered by the Australian Kennel Club.

## PAT Dogs

The Pets As Therapy visiting concept was originated and devised by Lesley Scott-Ordish, and they currently have over 4000 registered, active dogs (and a handful of cats) which with their volunteer owners make therapeutic visits to hospitals, hospices, nursing and care homes. Research continues to validate the very real value of this daily work.

Should you be interested you will need to contact Pets As Therapy direct. All dogs will be tested and their suitability to the role assessed. Your dog will need to be sociable and friendly without any overly boisterous behavior, the dog will need to be calm and gentle when being stroked and groomed and their attitude towards a sudden noise will need to be evaluated, such as a dropped walking stick.

There are many Staffords who have successfully registered as PAT dogs. At present there are 42 active Staffords that are working daily to help people by offering unconditional love, which is often one of the most missed aspects of a persons life which should help life be more bearable and to help speed recovery.

Then there are Staffords that show what the temperament is all about. Gus owned by Jean Bond, is a registered PAT dog and is a great

ambassador for the breed. Gus was rescued by the RSPCA from a dog fighting ring, where he was used as a bait dog, he had his paws slashed and then strung up for the other dogs to attack. He spent 6 months undergoing treatment before being rehomed and now lives each day to the full, making his daily visits to hospices and hospitals.

## **Behavior Problems**

### Chewing

I have never really experienced this problem with my Staffords, since all were crated as young puppies the situation was always monitored and never allowed to happen. However my German Shepherd did make quite a mess of my 3-piece suite, I have heard stories of Staffords, chewing through walls, so they can do a lot of damage.

Firstly remove temptation, don't expect your dog to know that chewing his toys are ok, but furniture, shoes etc, are not ok. Monitor the situation and don't allow it to happen, should your dog need to be left invest in a crate, properly used they are invaluable as your dog learns the house-rules he can have his freedom, initially that freedom should be restricted to one room in the house.

Use your common sense and don't give your dog an old shoe to chew, he should have his own toys. Invest in a Kong, which were especially developed for Staffords, these can be stuffed with food and are essential when your puppy is teething.

Only scold your dog when caught in the act, there is no use scolding after the event, think about what has happened it may well be your own fault.

### Barking

Dogs bark for many reasons, first you

need to distinguish why your dog is barking before you can begin to look at curing the problem. Although barking is a normal means of communication, in excess it can be a nuisance not only for yourself, but also for your neighbours.

Barking to deter people from entering your property is fine, but should the dog bark at every passerby, then it soon becomes a problem. Which unfortunately owners often attempt to cure by shouting at the dog, but as your dog does not understand English, your dog thinks you are joining in the barking. Some dogs discover barking makes their owner give them attention, if only to shout, often the dog will bark just to get a response from an owner, in which case your dog needs it's mind stimulated.

However most dogs are barking 'territorially' and this is reinforced as every person they bark at goes away. Your dog doesn't realise that they didn't want to come in anyway they assume that they have saved the day yet again.

Unfortunately in todays society there is a real risk of falling foul to the environmental health department. Because your dogs barking is annoying one of your neighbours, maybe he barks when left alone, your dog barks to call you back and miraculously eventually back you come, the cause of this problem is anxiety.

Maybe your dog barks excessively at visitors and in an attempt to stop the behavior you put a hand down to stroke your dog, you are simply reinforcing the behavior.

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# Clever Staffords

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Many Staffordshire Bull Terriers are regularly competing in Agility, Working Trials and Obedience.

When thinking of Obedience Sandra Stredwicks, Chelsea (Hadendale Eternal Flame) springs to mind, this little bitch excels at Obedience and is regularly placed at open shows and was at Crufts representing the Midlands Obedience in 2000.

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## MANY STAFFORDSHIRE BULL TERRIERS ARE REGULARLY COMPETING IN AGILITY, WORKING TRIALS & OBEDIENCE

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Marney Wells' 3 Staffords have done tremendously well, competing in all 3 disciplines, and excelling in Working Trials. Both Bertie (Cyclone Sweetheart of Copyhold) and Trilby (Libellula Lass of Copyhold) have their CDex and UDex qualifications, the dogs have also had their 15 minutes of fame appearing in 101 Dalmatians and all are registered PAT dogs. Lorraine Walchester with Jess (Jessica Joe Lighly) this little bitch regularly competed at Agility finals at Crufts and only this year was placed in the pairs competition at over 9 years old. Chloe Gardner who is now 80 years old still competes in Agility, but was known for Rosie (Roxstaff Helena) who was the Mini Agility dog of the year in 1987 and was a great ambassador for the breed and an inspiration for others to follow in her pawprints. My own bitch Tammy (Araidh Sweetest Taboo) competes in Agility, Obedience and Working Trials but it is in Agility that she excels, reckoned to be among one of the fastest mini dogs in the UK. She took to the sport with a passion and recently beat the fastest border collie over the same course by 3 seconds, she is also an Obedience demonstration dog at a local training club, one of only a handful of Kennel Club 'Gold' Good Citizens as well as a registered PAT Dog.

## HOW TO STOP THE BARKING

If every time your dog barks for attention you get up and walk out the room, or turn your back, your dog will eventually learn that barking is counter-productive. However more ingrained barking behaviourable problems may well take some well laid plans that may take many weeks to find a solution.

One of the simplest ways to teach your dog not to bark is to teach your dog to bark on command, by using 'Speak' the point is that after you dog associate this command with barking it is relatively easy then to introduce a word such as 'Quiet' while your dog is barking and then to reward the dog when the barking stops.

Reward is, of course, the best motivation, so it's important to praise the dog at the time it's doing the right thing, not afterwards. This means rewarding when it stops barking, and also remembering to praise when your dog doesn't bark in a situation which would normally set him off.

In the United States, Moose owned and bred by Margo Milde has recently gained an Obedience Trials Champion title or to give him his full title AKC OTCH Shady Grove's Enchantment UDX, MX, MXJ and is only a relatively short way from gaining his Master Agility title. A dual champion, quite an achievement. Hopefully with Agility Championship status shortly available in the UK, we will soon see our first Agility Champion Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

Whilst realising that not every Stafford could compete at this level. There are new dogs coming into the above disciplines that are showing what a versatile breed this can be. This coupled with Stafford clubs such as the East Anglian Staffordshire Bull Terrier Club and Western Staffordshire Bull Terrier Society taking the initiate and scheduling limited obedience shows, a Stafford penthalon and supporting the Kennel Club Good Citizen scheme, we are going in the right direction

Wendy Clewley

*Author of the 'Training your Stafford' chapter in The Ultimate SBT book*