

Newsletter 2025



Club Training

We had another year of brilliant trainers Colin Pelham and John Stubbs taking taking our monthly sessions and would like to say a big thank you them. Not forgetting our committee and helpers for throwing dummies etc. We are looking forward to another year featuring guest trainers every month.

Thank you to all who came along to training and supporting the club, we hope to see you all back next year.

Training takes place on the second Saturday of the month from February to July. 14th February, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May, 13th June & 11th July. Please see Club calendar. All sessions begin at 10.30 and end around 12.30. Please do not arrive earlier than 10.00!

Membership

Membership fees of £10 are due on the **5th January**. A few are paying their membership in December. If you could alter it to January it would be much appreciated – as it creates extra work for our treasurer. Anyone paying less than the membership subs will be treated as having made a donation to the club and will no longer receive information about the club. If you need a form or account details please contact Penny Davies by email (membership@kvgt.org.uk) or check on the website or Facebook page. Anyone not having paid by the AGM will not be eligible to vote on any motion.

Charity

This year we have made two donations of £100 each. One to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance, who are the charity that gives everybody in our community the best chance of surviving and recovering from an emergency. Bringing hospital-level care to you by land and air anywhere in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, their team are highly trained and ready for any eventuality. Giving you the best chance when the worst happens. The other being the Thin Blue Paw Foundation, who are a national dog welfare charity which protects, celebrates, supports and rehabilitates both serving and retired police dogs from across the UK. Police dogs dedicate years to serving their communities and helping fight crime. Once retired, police dogs do not receive a pension or any other financial support from the government or the police force they served with, meaning that the responsibility for their care and the cost of their vet bills falls solely on their ex-handler or new owner. They ensure all retired police dogs across the UK have access to support when they needed it.

Committee & AGM

This year we have had some new committee members join and would like to say a massive thank you to them for giving up their time for free, without them the club wouldn't be able to run.

Our AGM will be held on Sunday 22nd February at 2:30pm at Burghfield Village Hall.

Away Training

Training Coordinator, Helen Sanderson, organised another year of some brilliant away training days. Giving our members the opportunity to train on different ground to practice or learn skills on challenging terrains. Keep a look out on our facebook page and website for some exciting training opportunities to come in 2026!

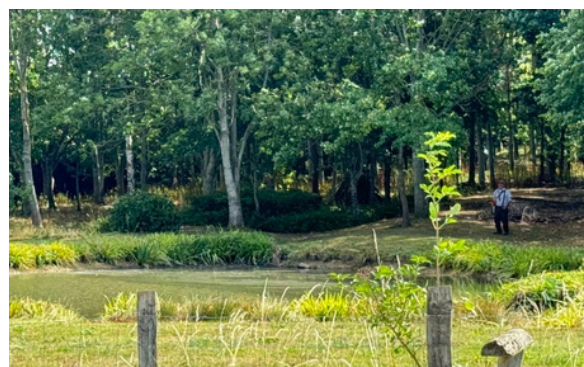
First there was a day with Colin Pelham at his ground, which had NDNH in the morning and Novice/Intermediate in the afternoon. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and gained a lot from Colin's expertise.



Karen Handley & Ed hosted a day at South West Gundog Training Centre in Devon. Karen helped everyone improve in areas they needed help with at the purpose built training ground.



On some fabulous ground near Newbury, Mike Jones put the dogs through their paces and set up some challenging scenarios that helped dogs and handlers grow as a team.



Paul Truby helped push everyone out of their comfort zone and tackled some challenging exercises, building up retrieves over multiple barriers which stretched the dogs, making great use of the training ground.

Working Tests

Another successful year of tests thanks to the committee, landowners, volunteers and judges. These tests would not be able to happen without the volunteers so if you aren't running your dogs please think about helping on a test or two, it would be much appreciated so we can all continue to enjoy this sport which we all love. If you can help on any of the dates below please email coral.meakes@kennetvalleygts.org.uk

Test Dates for 2026:

Open & Intermediate - Saturday 28th March
Puppy, SP & NDNH - Saturday 27th June

Novice & Veteran- Saturday 2nd May
Walked up - Saturday 8th August

The Intermediate will have limited runners.

The entry fee for all tests is £12 for members and £24 for non-members.

Working Test Results

Open Test

Judges: Sue Berman, Peter Castleman, Jill Gardner & Bob Marcham

1st Gwidigada Affinity At Dipplelodge handled by Barbara Kuen

2nd Meridenred Devils Desire handled by Jos Evans

3rd Abbotsann Firefly handled by John Scott

4th Valleyend Kamalane by Liz Taylor

CoM: Peterspond Wader handled by Karen Handley



Intermediate Test

Judges: Sue Berman, Peter Castleman, Jill Gardner & Bob Marcham

1st & winner of the Bratton Splash trophy for the highest placed novice dog:

Tyrian Nightingale handled by Barbara Kuen

2nd Drumtochty Brodie Of Copperburn handled by Helen Burnie

3rd Mountain Mystique handled by Terry Souter

4th Abbotsann Brightwater handled by John Scott

CoM: Artistryn Eddy handled by Pearl Tickell

A few words from Barbara Kuen:

Kennet Open and Intermediate Test held at East Garston on Saturday 29th March.

Four tests were organised for the Day. The Open Dogs and the Intermediate Dogs ran the same course with the Intermediate competitors taking the tests at a shorter distance.

The first test for Florrie (Int) Affie (Open) and I was with Jill Gardner. This was a four dog walk up with memory mark retrieves in front of the line and retrieves behind. The memory mark was lost over a brow so although not overlong, nonetheless proving tricky.

We moved on to see Bob Marcham who was judging a long double mark just into woodland. It was long for the Intermediate and for the Open tricky as the fall of the dummy could barely be seen. However, the dogs enjoyed the length and were obviously pleased with being stretched.

Onwards to see Sue Berman. Here we faced a long blind retrieve at a 45 degree angle to us. The dummy was placed up in front of a hedge line taking the dogs over white and assorted grasses. On the dog's return, a shot was fired and a distraction thrown. If the dog didn't acknowledge the shot or mark the fall, this too became a blind. My own Intermediate dog didn't mark it but my Open dog caught site of it and made a neat job. Handler well chuffed!

Lastly off to see Pete Castleman. Here we faced a double blind. First retrieve over a slight brow with a fallen branch and bedecked by close woodland. It was easy to lose sight of the dog and there didn't appear to be much scent coming off the dummy. Upon the dog's return, we were turned 90 degrees for a blind up a hill towards disused cover crop. Again, very easy to lose the dog into the wood, and testing for both grades.

All tests complete. Wiped brow, because we were fortunate not to pick up a zero during the day and so back for tea to await results. I was delighted to learn that I came first in the Intermediate and then completely taken aback when awarded first in the Open also. All in all a 'good day at the office'!

Well done Team Kennet. A tremendous day and they made super use of this terrific ground.

A huge thank you from all us competitors taking part.



Novice Test

Judges: Jo Horton, Lisa Murrell, Francesca Prentice & Nikki Urquhart

- 1st Idawood Limo handled by Kerry Wallis
- 2nd Downfarm Cognac of Quardrum handled by Judy Venables
- 3rd Bondekirefu Pegasi handled by Audrey Howie
- 4th Downfarm Martell of Janfran handled by Jane Trowell

CoM's:

- Abbsotsan Brightwater handled by John Scott
- Bellaroyal's Star Cracker handled by Amy Jobson
- Dulcet Dora handled by John Bryce Malcolmson



Vetran Test

Judges: Jo Horton, Lisa Murrell, Francesca Prentice & Nikki Urquhart

- 1st Troddenmills Filthy Blond handled by Elizbeth Bridger
- 2nd Riverlily Sunny Sunshine of Galicombe handled by Harriet Newcombe
- 3rd Mitforton Neon handled by Michael Crutchley
- 4th Laurinco Black Jack handled by Sarah Meakes

A few words from Kerry Wallis:

The KVGTS Novice test at Lord Benyon's Englefield Estate was our first Novice competition of the season. After some success in Puppy the previous year, we'd aged out and moved up.

Our first test was a four-dog walk-up—our first at this level, having only competed in two-dog walk-ups previously. The challenge lay in the positioning: the mark was off to the right, requiring us to turn the dogs at the shot and send them into an area of grass reeds. Wilf handled it well.

The water test was cleverly designed—a short mark onto water, followed by a blind taken first alongside the water up a track. Though it sounded straightforward, we were sending from a setback position in thin woodland, meaning the dogs needed a good line to hit the track at the right point. Added pressure: the judge was Wilf's breeder. Fortunately, we didn't embarrass ourselves!

The third test was a double blind up a hill with no shot. Both distances were long. The first required some handling, but Wilf went straight to the second, which pleased me—reports suggested many struggled there. Our final test featured a long mark straight up the field, followed by a blind through a gap in the hedge to the

right. The mark went smoothly, but the gap had proven tricky for many competitors. I knew accuracy was crucial if we were to navigate it cleanly. Wilf responded well and delivered the difficult blind.

It was an excellent day—great company, weather, tests, and judges. At the end, a runoff was announced. I was delighted just to be in contention for an award, but absolutely thrilled when Wilf was announced the winner—perfect icing on the cake. Thanks to the KVGTS, judges, and landowner for the fantastic ground.

Novice Dog/Novice Handler Test

Judges: Abbie Reid, Colin Pelham, Harriet Newcombe & Lesley Scutter

- 1st Beggarbush Image handled by Rob Chandler
- 2nd Idawood Twig handled by Nicolas Howse
- 3rd Hydebridge Dauntsey handled by Sophie Lines
- 4th Barweston Annie handled by Kim Jameson

CoMs:

- Leadburn Farrah handled by Sheila Lovegrove
- Kenxtwen Bega handled by Natalie Riches
- Kentwone Jasper Glow handled by Rona King

Judges choice for the dog they would most like to shoot over (ND/NH): Leadburn Faye handled by Robert



Special Puppy Test

Judges: Abbie Reid, Colin Pelham, Harriet Newcombe & Lesley Scutter

- 1st Carrigvale Ollie handled by Emma Mills
- 2nd Wauniago Isla handled by Mary Hogg
- 3rd CorbieLodge Honour handled by Susan Carlyle



Puppy Test

Judges: Abbie Reid, Colin Pelham, Harriet Newcombe & Lesley Scutter

- 1st Taldenian Gibson handled by Jacqui Crew
- 2nd Bramble Thorny Spire Of Downfarm handled by Moira Robertson
- 3rd Maple Shining Dasher handled by Coral Meakes

CoMs :

- Holly Berry Jen Of Downfarm handled by Moira Robertson
- Clarencehart Kaden handled by Simon Robinson



Open Walked-Up Test

Judges: Colin Pelham & John Stubbs
Steward of the Beat: Barbara Kuen

- 1st Connisbrook Rothesay handled by Alex Cox
 - 2nd Meridenred Devils Desire handled by Jos Evans
 - 3rd Lyebreach Golden Eagle Of Riverlily handled by Abbie Reid
 - 4th Hintonbreeze cote D'azure handled by Lee Burdett
- CoM:
- Idawood Limo handled by Kerry Wallis
 - Lucky Billy Boy handled by Jessica Webster



Novice Walked-Up Test

Judges: Colin Pelham & John Stubbs

Steward of the Beat: Barbara Kuen

1st Cornwood Glorious Twelfth handled by Lesley Scutter

2nd Mountain Mystique handled by Terry Souter

3rd Phreymont Black Diamond handled by Brighid Humphreys

CoM:

Gallowridge Blackthorn Of Khaki Feather handled by Sammy Elliott

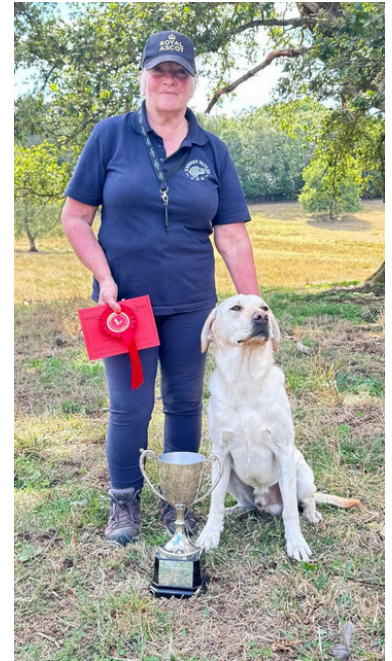
A few words from Lesley Scutter:

By Kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Wellington and Head Keeper Gary Keep.

Kennet's annual walked up test day judged on Field Trial lines fell on an extremely hot day. Scent was fair in the morning but as the day wore on and conditions dried even more, it seemed to disappear. Our Judges John Stubbs and Colin Pelham were very fair in the assessment of the dogs work.

Running in the Novice in the morning we lined out with a judge either side of the valley, retrievers in front to start soon became across the line retrievers as the judges worked through the rounds. Some dogs struggled with the lack of scent in the marshy grass either side of the ditch, there were opportunities for 'runners' and eyewipes. The retrievers co ordinated by Steward of the Beat Barbara Kuen resembled as closely as possible situations that would occur at a trial. The judges took six dogs forward to a drive which became even more like the real thing when the first two dogs to try flushed the real thing, poult which had been tucked up in some marshy grass. The last retrievers were in or over a ditch which again was a very realistic shoot situation.

To win with Billy aka Cornwood Glorious Twelfth was very poignant, our first two labradors, the start of our line and resulting in Billy were both Stratfield Saye bred dogs.



Inter-Counties Team Event

Judges: David Field, Geoff Dobb, Steve Crooks, Tim Brain & Steve Richardson

Kennet Valley Team consisted of 3 Open Dogs:

Aaron Wright running Garethhall Toddy (Dog A)

Arthur Cook running Charmpark Fisher (Dog B)

Sharon Dingle running FTCH Bellspaddle Mungo (Dog C)

On Saturday 19th April held at Osberton estate organised by Dukeries Gundog Club.

What an amazing day and the running of the event was seamless. There were 5 tests, and each test really stretched the handlers and the dogs.

Test 1 judged by Dave Field

This was a Walk-up exercise. After a long slow walk Dog C had a long mark in front which was picked quickly. We then walked on and dog A was sent left-handed through a dyke and across cultivated ground to a marker flag, the dummy was within a 5-meter radius of the flag, the dog made the distance and worked the wind to locate the dummy. Walk on again and dog B had a mark in front which was nicely executed. Walked on again and dog C was sent right through some rushes to a flag and again the dummy was with a 5-meter radius of the flag, the dog handled well and quickly picked. We then walked on again, dog A had a straight mark in front. We then walked on again and dog B was sent left-handed through a dyke and across cultivated ground to a marker flag, the dummy was within a 5-meter radius of the flag, the dog handled well and quickly picked. Once the retrieving aspect of the exercise was complete, we then turned around and had to heel all the way back to the starting point.



Test 2 judged by Geoff Dobb

This was a static exercise. We stood in our allocated positions and were told that there would be a shot and mark in front, a shot and mark to the left and a shot and blind to the right. We had to mark everything as at this point we did not know which retrieve was going to be allocated to which handler. Dog B was sent for the mark straight in front into the wood land. The dog got straight to the area and worked the wind to pick. Dog C was sent for the blind retrieve to the right. The dog took a lovely line straight across the pond which was hidden from view by the undulating ground and picked with minimal handling. Dog A was then sent for the long mark to the left. The dog did not see the mark but handled into the area and picked.

Test 3 judged by Steve Crooks

This was a static exercise. We stood in our allocated positions as the judge explained the exercise. There would be 3 marks, Dog A to pick on the right, Dog B to pick in the middle & Dog C to pick on the left. Once picked these would be replaced and the dogs would be sent to another location to pick a blind replacement (e.g. Dog A to pick from the area dog B had the original mark). Dog A was sent for the 1st mark and went straight to the fall and picked. Dog B was sent for the 2nd mark and went straight to the fall and picked. Dog C was sent to the left, some handling required but quickly picked. The second retrieve of the test Dog A was sent blind to the middle, the dog took a good line, stopped on the whistle and hunted to the left and picked. Dog B was sent blind to the left, this took a little bit more effort to handle the dog into the area but was soon picked. Dog C was sent to the right and picked straight away with no handling required.

Test 4 judged by Tim Brain

This was a static water exercise. We stood in our allocated positions as the judge explained the exercise. Dog A had to pick a long mark straight out in front on the water. Dog B had to pick a blind across the water to the right. Dog C had to pick a mark across the water to the left. We could pick these retrieves in any order and if all 3 dogs were in the water at the same time we would gain 20 bonus points, we had 30 seconds to decide our tactics. Unfortunately, things didn't go quite to plan. Dog B was sent first for the blind; however, he refused to enter the water and was quickly called up. Dog A was then sent out for the long mark. He had been showing signs of an upset stomach before the test and unfortunately left the water for the inevitable to happen resulting in him being called up. Dog C was not offered the opportunity to pick.

Test 5 judged by Steve Richardson

This was a static exercise. We stood in our allocated positions as the judge explained the exercise. There would be a delayed mark to the right for Dog B. There would be a shot in front where dog A would be sent for a delayed blind. Dog C would have a straight mark to the left. Dog C was sent and picked relatively quickly with a small amount of handler input. Dog A was sent out for the blind, due to the thick cover the dog was out of sight almost instantly. Once he re appeared he was pushed right-handed into the area, he quickly picked but, on his return, we were all surprised to see that he'd picked a pigeon. No bonus points unfortunately! Dog A was then sent back for the dummy which he very quickly returned with. Dog B was the sent for the delayed mark which he picked with ease.

It was not a day for awards but the team thoroughly enjoy the event. Huge thanks to Steward North and his amazing team for a brilliantly run day. Congratulations to Midland Gundog who won and will be hosting the event in 2026.

Southern Inter Club Team Event

Hosted by UGS Kent & East Sussex

Judges: John Stubbs, Colin Pelham, Alan Buckland, Kelvin Nettleingham & Mandy Smith

Kennet Valley Team consisted of:

ND/NH - Simon Tennyson Horler and Vicaragedean Boronia (Star)

Novice - Lesley Scutter and Cornwood Glorious Twelfth (Billy)

Open - Karen Handley and Movenne Acorn At Peterspond (Acorn)

I was asked to do a write up for the Southern Inter club event, this was a great opportunity to appreciate the ups and down, snake and ladders of gundog events.

This was Simon's first team event and both him and Star handled it really well. The ground at Issenhurst is amazing, with all types of cover, water and lots of bunkers. We had five really well thought out tests.

Our first test was two marks over a ditch off to the right, followed by a tricky mark to the front. We all did really well here which was a relief as we were all quite nervous.



Second test was a mark into water for ndnh, a mark across the water for the novice. When the novice dog was on its way back there was a shot for the blind on further along the bank for the open dog, which acted as a distraction for the novice dog. We all executed our retrieves well on this test.

Third test was a shot to honour a blind and then 2 very tricky marks. The first you couldn't really see the fall and the second mark into a pond behind us and was obscured by a tree. Not so good here as one of the front retrieves was picked in wrong order.

Fourth test was a walk up, 3 retrieves in different areas, followed by another 3 blinds. One very important note of the day, we had a joker to play which means you can double your points, we decided not to use it this time but wish we had as we had top marks on this one.

Well, so far we were doing really well and were beginning to think we were in for a chance of a placing.

Fifth test. Long mark out on a pond, followed by a mark on a strip of ground off to the right but had to swim to it, followed by a shot up in the wood for a blind. Oh yes and we had played our joker, hoping to double our points! Sadly Simon didn't make it to his, followed by Lesley not picking hers, oh no... followed by me not picking mine! Poor Simon was pretty disappointed, however Lesley and I took it in good humour and burst out laughing as we were so shocked. Then we realised not only had we got 3 0's but we had played our joker so we got 6 0's. So sorry Kennet Valley to disappoint as up until then we were doing really well. The peaks and troughs of gundogs. We had a brilliant day, thank you for the invite. Bit like my school report, next time we will all try harder!



Field Trials

Kennet Valley committee is proposing that the Society applies for Field Trial status and are requesting support from members. It is, of course, an immense undertaking but the committee feels that it is necessary to ensure the continuing viability of the Society both in terms of it's membership and make-up of the committee.

It is hoped that this will be a fitting development for when the Society celebrates its Diamond Anniversary in 2028 and the committee hopes you will give your support.

A text will be sent to you nearer the AGM.



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



The Committee would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! We look forward to seeing you all next year at training and tests.