

It must be May (5th April 2010)

Oh, you lucky people. You have the big advantage of knowing the result of the general election, whereas I'm having to write this piece at the end of April. I hope you all went out and voted and I would be surprised if David Gaulk didn't get back in as he has done a good job of keeping his head down (just like his predecessor) over the past 5 years. Whether we got the government we need, only time will tell.

Having got that out of the way, I just know you are all interested on how our dogs have got on so far in the agility season. No? Oh dear, what a pity. I'm gonna tell you anyway.

The season started at a new venue just west of Reading by the Thames in mid March. Roadworks on both the M4 and M25 coupled with a mystery tour round Reading ensured we got off to a good start. Being one of the first events of the season, meant a nice easy weekend with our eldest Sheltie getting a 1st and a 3rd with the youngster getting a lot of places. What do places make? Correct, a lot of rosettes! Naturally, being England, it didn't actually snow, but the heating did work well. The following weekend, saw us further down the M4 and checking out Newbury Show ground. The weather was just as chilly and both the Shelties managed to win at least one of the classes with a few more rosettes to boot.

The Bank holiday took us up to Winterton in North Lincolnshire, where not only was it still chilly, but the spring wetness followed us. This was another venue we were attending for the first time. It's surprising how these little places manage to have better facilities than Berkhamsted, still, I digress. The wet and cold meant that even a class win eluded the Shelties. I should point out that the two 'old boys' (James, the prate - 11 year old cocker - and the writer of this fascinating missive, ensured we kept warm and dry by being the logistics team and not getting involved in running and jumping.

The first weekend in April, saw us back at Shuttsworth for the 'Spring at Shuttsworth' event. Another 'chilly' weekend' with middling success with just few clear rounds and just one place (2nd for the GLR - aka gobby little runt!).

The following weekend brought forth a nice run to the Newbury show ground, a change in the weather with frost overnight and clear blue skys overhead. All helped by the airports being closed, lack of traffic on the roads and just a few propeller driven planes taking advantage of the commercial flying ban caused by Iceland extracting revenge for allowing their banking system to collapse by pushing volcanic ash all over Europe. The eldest Sheltie managed to run slower and slower with the last run just 20 seconds out of time. A good talking to was given during the week before the trip to the Lincoln show ground the following week.

This brought a change in the weather and a change in performance. Young Archie managed yet another 2nd place on the 1st day and as well as the usual rosette, a rather nice block of glass with 'Lincoln Agility Enthusiasts' together with a 3D town entrance and 2010 all embedded within. Makes a nice change from cups and tumblers. Flora, the eldest Sheltie, is back on form with clear rounds and no time faults.

The last weekend in April took us to Newbury show ground for three competitions. UK Agility on Friday and Saturday, up to Wallingford on Sunday for the Sheltie Club annual competition and back to Newbury on Monday for the Vyne Agility Club one day competition.

As usual the GLR acquitted himself as usual even to the extent of being offered a place in the Sheltie Club team which may (more likely not) to appearing at Crufts (available on Channel 4 or all day on the internet) next spring. On the other hand, Flora, (the elder sheltie), managed a third place - with 31 time faults, just to show you how difficult the courses were!