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Black Dog



"I think this man might be useful to me – if my black dog returns. He seems quite away from me now – it is such a relief. All the colours come back into the picture."

-Sir Winston Churchill



The 'Black Dog'

What is the 'black dog'?

The 'black dog' is a metaphor that can be traced and is recognised in the 20th Century from Sir Winston Churchill, who was the UK Prime Minister twice from 1940 - 1945 and 1951 - 1955. However, a few theorists believe the 'black dog' came centuries before, yet to this day the metaphor is still heavily linked to Sir Winston Churchill. The metaphor can be noticed via conversation amongst people, as Churchill's quote provides a good example of it being used or mentioned (on the previous page). Some people might state the following that is used today, such as, "I have the black dog", "The black dog is following me" or "The black dog has come to visit". Churchill suffered for years from severe depression and episodes - known as Manic Depression or also known as Bipolar Disorder. In the present day, the 'black dog' is still a metaphor for depression. Depression can be alternatively referred to the colour 'black', or 'a black cloud' emphasising the same sense of gloom.

What is depression?

Clinical depression lasts for at least two weeks or more and affects a person's behaviour and well-being physically, emotionally and cognitively. It can interfere in one's ability to work and impact upon satisfactions in personal relationships. The neurotransmitters - chemicals in the brain - affect the serotonin levels (that elevate moods) and dopamine levels (that increase motivation).

Perceptions of Depression

Depression has developed a stigma, like many issues in today's society. Depression has centuries of myths associated with it and it is perceived that those who suffer from it don't fit into the 'normality' of society causing perceptions of 'weakness'. Negative attitudes towards dogs have occurred as well, from superstition and the connotations of the 'black dog' metaphor - funnily enough! However, dogs actually have many benefits to humans, physically and mentally, by offering comfort, joy, happiness and a mutual better quality of life.




A man with a shaved head, wearing a dark t-shirt with 'CASTELLI' printed on it, is sitting on a patterned sofa in a pub. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the foreground, a black dog with a white patch on its face is sitting on the floor, looking up at the man with its mouth wide open, showing its tongue. On a table in front of the man, there is a glass of beer and a glass of iced tea. The background shows a pub interior with a menu board on the wall and a window with curtains.

Henry and Michael







A photograph of a man with a shaved head, wearing a dark t-shirt, sitting at a table in what appears to be a pub or cafe. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. In front of him, a dark-colored dog is sitting on a red and white patterned carpet. The background shows a window with curtains, a laptop, and some papers on the wall.

Henry and Michael have been together for fifteen years, since Henry was rescued as a pup from a centre by Michael. Henry provides great company for all the family. Michael's children especially have learnt a lot of responsibilities from having Henry - someone has got to make sure where the next bowl of food is coming from! There is a therapeutic benefit of having Henry in Michael's life, especially after a bad day. Henry is always pleased to see Michael evident by the show of affection given. Michael also loves his loyalty and how that makes him feel. Both enjoy walking to the local pub (which is about 10-15 minutes) where Michael enjoys a lovely cold pint and Henry enjoys his cheese crackers!



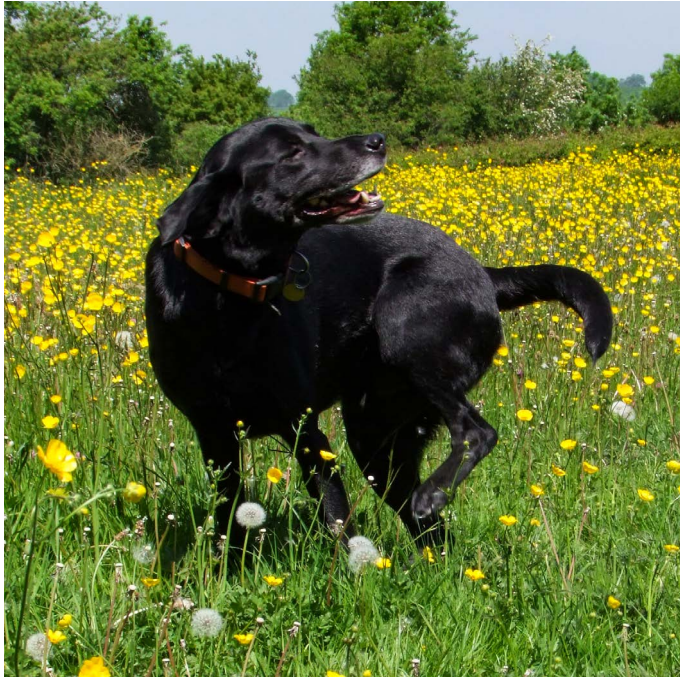





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, is kneeling in a lush green field filled with tall grass and numerous small yellow wildflowers. She is smiling and looking towards a black dog, which is standing and looking back at her. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant outdoor setting.

Leanne and Frankie









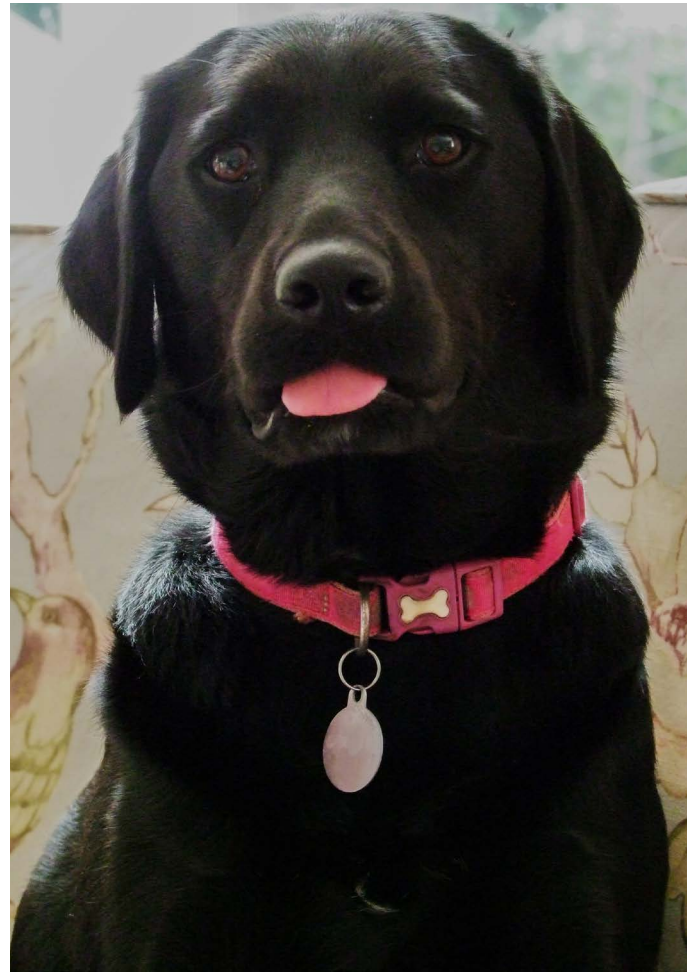
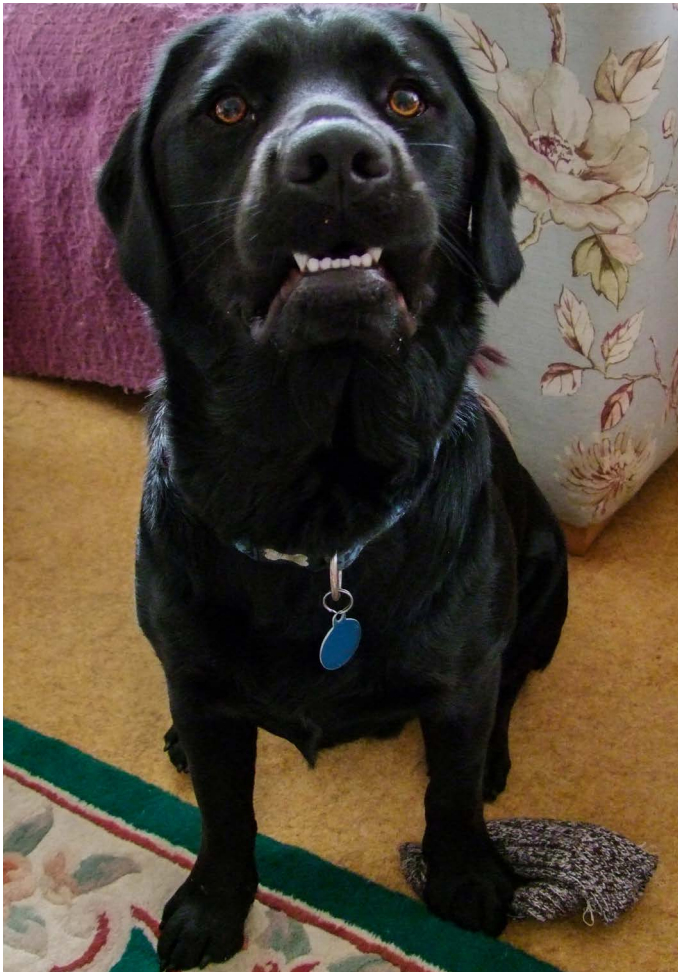
Leanne rescued Frankie from the Dog's Trust Charity. She enjoys the outdoors (which made sense in getting Frankie) that in turn gained extra benefits and enjoyment by seeing different places together. In addition Frankie keeps Leanne happy, physically active - giving her a reason to get up in the morning and gaining a lot of fresh air. He did take a lot of training, and still suffers slightly from his previous experiences as he is not keen with men in baseball hats - something about hiding of the face. Regardless of this, Frankie has pawed through where he loves interacting with Leanne's horses, chasing butterflies and birds! He adores fuss, attention, with full spirit of energy and life!




Jet, Jane and Jenna







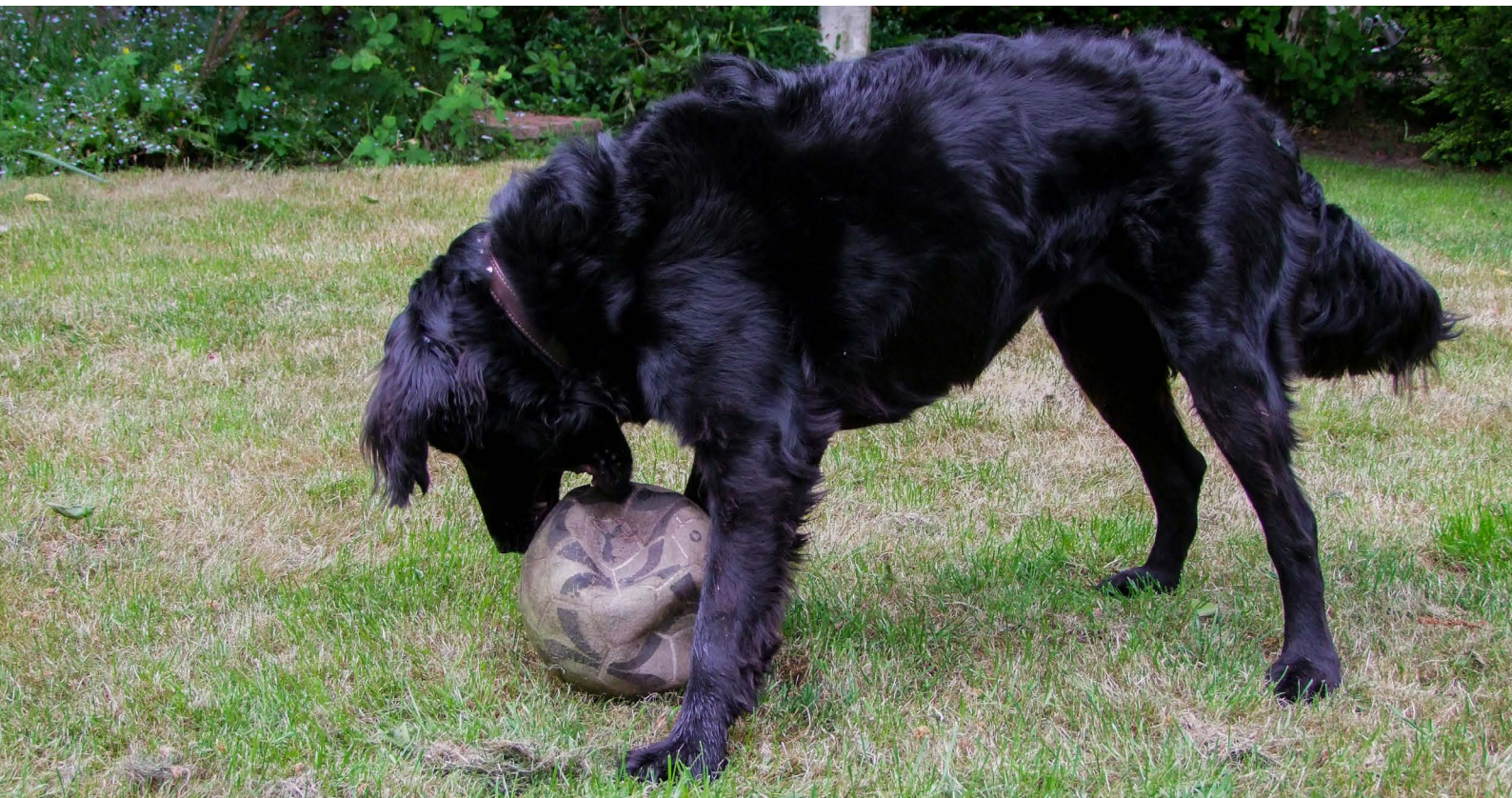
A woman with blonde hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and patterned pants, is sitting on a green and white floral patterned rug. A black dog is standing next to her, looking towards the camera. In the background, there is a red plastic bin filled with toys, a white radiator, and a bed with a patterned coverlet. The scene is set in a room with light-colored walls and curtains.

Jane has two pups named, Jet and Jenna - who are brother and sister. Both are mischievous being from the same litter. Having Jenna and Jet brings companionship, entertainment and makes Jane more thoughtful. The duo keeps her active and are very responsive when one of the family members is feeling down by providing more cuddles and affection — don't forget a sock and lick for good measure too! Jenna is shy but loves all the fuss she can get, that in turn makes Jet extremely jealous (which works every time). Jet, on the other paw, loves showing off how handsome he is!



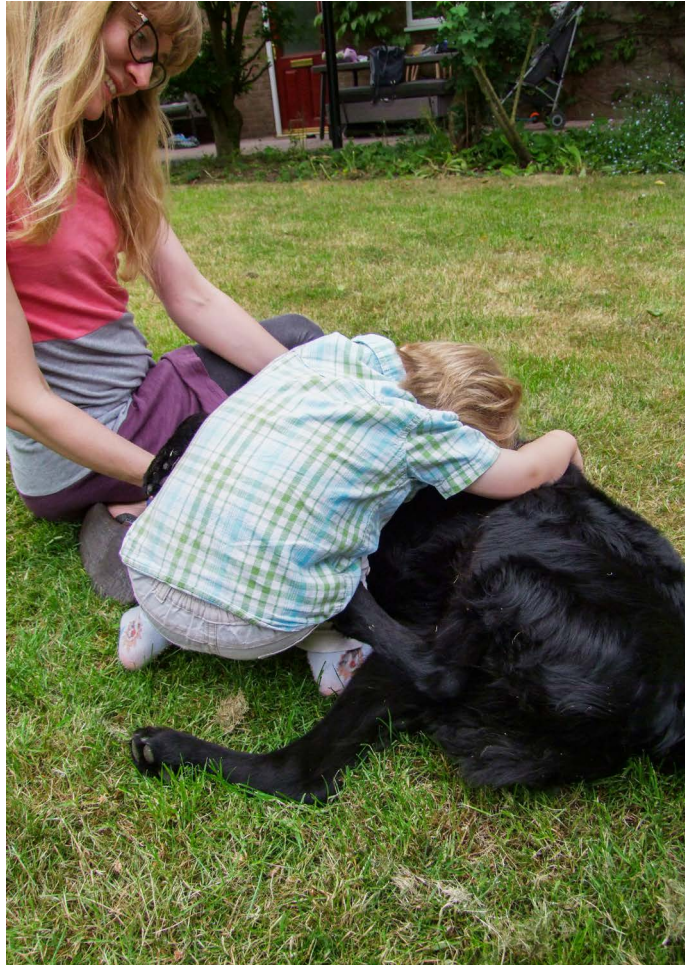
A woman with long blonde hair and glasses, wearing a pink shirt and grey pants, is sitting on a grassy lawn. She is holding a young child with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and white pants. The child is holding a pink stuffed animal. To the left, a large black dog is lying on the grass, looking towards the woman and child. The background is a dense green hedge.


Felix, Cassie and Rebecca









A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a pink t-shirt, is sitting on a grassy lawn. A young child with blonde hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is sitting next to her. A black dog is sitting between them, looking towards the woman. The woman is holding the dog's paw. The child is holding the dog's tail. The background is a green lawn with some bushes in the distance.


Cassie has really helped Rebecca and the family as going on walks has enabled increased socialisation with new people, and Cassie is lovely company when Rebecca has been off work due to health problems. Seeing their children play with Cassie improves their mental health too by lifting their moods. The walk/jogs that Rebecca and Cassie go on help with Rebecca's daily chest physiotherapy required for her bronchiectasis, which in turn helps her cardiovascular fitness when she becomes unwell. This time allows Rebecca to create a good headspace and a mindful opportunity in the day that is invaluable. Rebecca in turn overcame her phobia of dogs too with the aided paw of Cassie!

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and dark pants, is crouching on a stone patio. She is smiling and reaching out to pet a small, scruffy grey dog lying on its back. Another similar dog is sitting on the patio to the left. In the background, there is a green door, a wooden fence, and some potted plants.

Boo, Nikki and Bruno





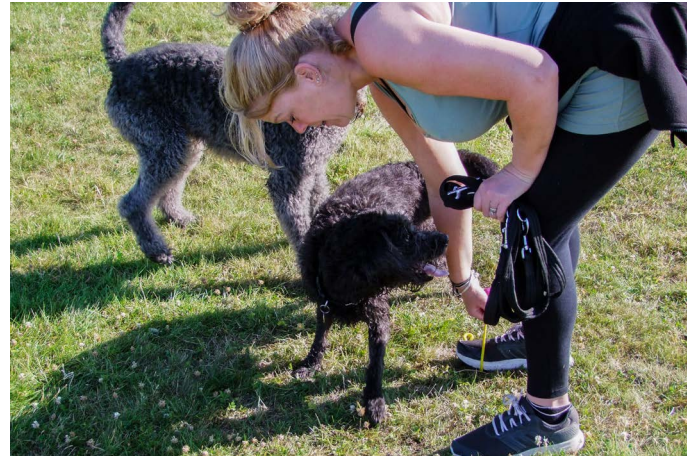
A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, stands in a garden. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. To her left, a small black dog is sitting on a wooden chair, holding a green ball in its mouth. In the foreground, a larger black dog is running towards the camera, also holding a green ball in its mouth. The garden has a wooden fence in the background, a brick wall, and a white stone wall with a green door. The ground is paved with grey and red bricks.


Boo and Bruno came from a rescue centre with a fostering element before dogs are re-homed. This eased training issues for Nikki and her husband, before having the dogs full-time at their home. Nikki walks the duo for about half an hour every day and more on the weekend, bringing happiness and a calming influence for her. They all love new adventures and meeting all the neighbours too. Boo and Bruno are extremely friendly, loving, cuddly and fussable! So much so that the puppies know they can get away with anything - even hogging the sofa, resulting in the humans of the pack to sitting on the floor!

A woman with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a light green tank top and dark leggings, is leaning over a grassy field. She is interacting with two dogs: a large, fluffy, grey dog on the left and a smaller, black dog on the right. The background features a chain-link fence and tall grasses. The text "Mandy, Dash and Oz" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Mandy, Dash and Oz





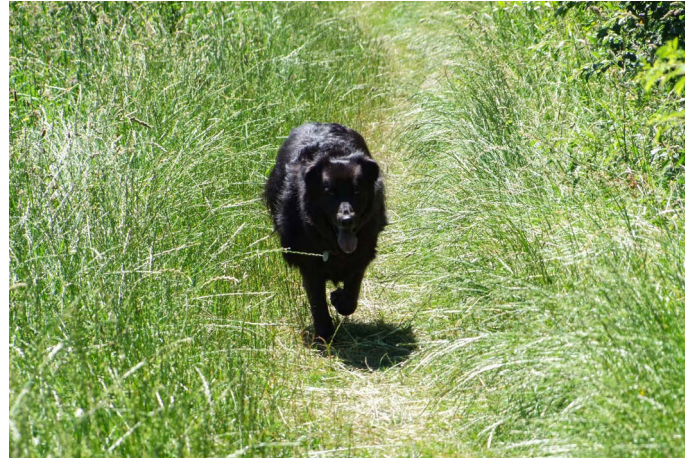



Mandy, Dash and Oz have a fantastic bond. Mandy first got Dash to help her with her depression and anxiety. She didn't want to leave the house or get dressed, but Dash motivated her to get up and to get out. Mandy's depression has eased and her anxiety is managed a lot better. Oz cannot be separated from Mandy on their walks together, he must have her in sight and at a reasonable distance too! Mandy in return makes sure Oz and Dash have the best life possible by giving long walks and lots of love! Dash and Oz get an additional reward for keeping her motivated to do the necessary daily tasks, by receiving cuddles at night - in her bed!

A photograph of a man and a dog on a dirt path next to a pond. The man, on the left, is wearing a plaid shirt, shorts, and glasses, and is holding a black hat. The dog, a black long-haired breed, is standing on the path looking towards the pond. The background features a pond, tall grasses, and trees under a bright sky.

Zac and Gary





A person wearing a plaid shirt and camouflage pants is walking a black dog on a leash on a dirt path. The dog is looking down. The background shows grass and a dirt path.

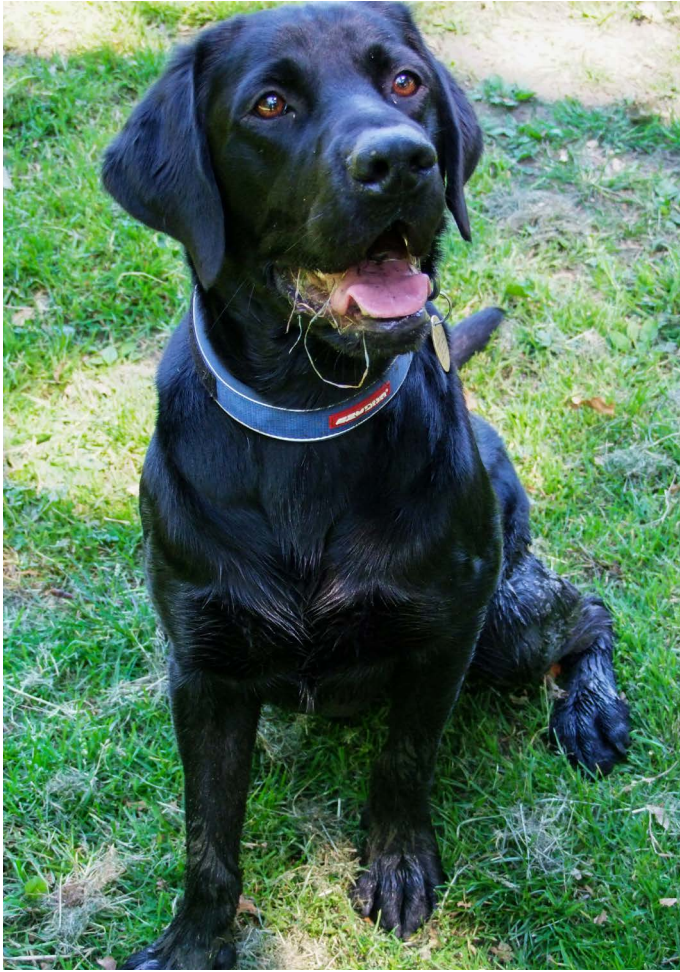
Zac and Gary are best friends, companions, and enjoy their walks together spending about an hour at a time three times a day. This allows Gary to socialise with other dog owners and other people, the conversations never stop - it's like a secret society! Walking stops Gary from getting lonely, as people are willing to listen - it is also a fantastic time for Zac too! Gary enjoys fussing Zac as it reduces his stress levels, lowers his blood pressure and keeps his depression and anxiety manageable. Zac doesn't actually like water, or going in water which is ironic as he went to have a drink from the canal, bent too far and gently rolled into the water. Zac did not find this amusing, especially being photographed too!






Sarah and Olly







A black dog is shown in profile on the left side of the frame, looking towards the right. A person's hand is visible on the right, holding a clear plastic water bottle and pouring water into the dog's mouth. The background is a grassy area. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.


Sarah wouldn't have considered walking in nature if it wasn't for her loyal companion, Olly. Olly loves his ball being thrown - you become his next best friend once you start! Having Olly improves Sarah's positivity about her mental, physical and emotional state. Sarah is partner in a business that offers holistic therapies for dogs and cats, as well as dog sitting services and training classes; it is clear she is passionate about animal welfare. Sarah and Olly are very connected as both are intuitive to one another's needs. Olly is very good at letting Sarah know when she needs a long walk, or a lovely duvet day!

Bear and Amie

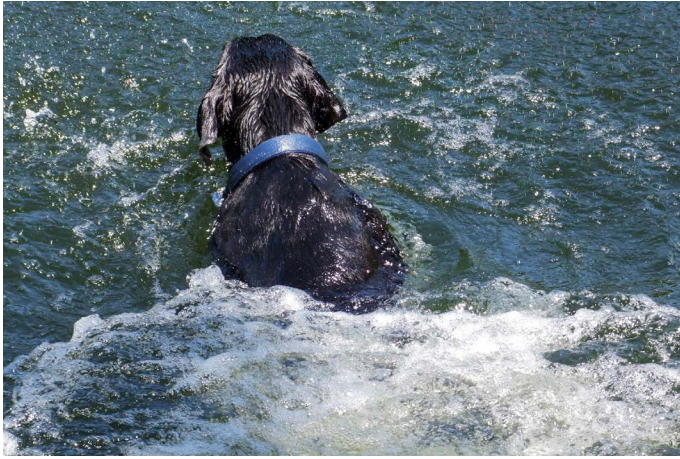






A black dog with a white patch on its chest is looking up at a person's hand holding its paw. The dog is wearing a black collar. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Bear is Amie's best friend. From day one he followed her around like a shadow. Bear gives her a reason to get up in the morning, to go to work, plan weekends ahead and gives her motivation. Before Bear, she had been suffering with major depression (for about ten years); Bear altered her focus, which she switched to him entirely rather than the negatives in her life. Walking him every night helped clear her head. Bear is her rock, he knows when she needs him by her side to make sure she is all right. Amie and Bear can walk up to 3 miles - both enjoy so much especially in new places! After the grand adventures, (at home) both have a quick half an hour nap, followed by tea and biscuits!






A woman with blonde hair in a dark jacket is leaning over a black dog in a grassy field. She is holding a green apple in her right hand and touching the dog's collar with her left hand. The background shows a green field and trees.

Katie and Fionn







A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark jacket, is smiling and petting a black dog in a grassy field. The dog is wearing a collar with a silver chain and a green bone-shaped tag. The background shows a line of trees under a bright sky.

Fionn is about five years old, and loves chasing a ball. Fionn is a very vocal dog and barks to get attention from Katie just to make sure she is aware that he is still there, and to hurry up to throw the ball! Fionn is very bouncy and also enjoys sniffing for treats that are thrown by Katie. They enjoy chasing each other around too. Katie loves coming home after a busy shift, being a carer for others, to be greeted by Fionn at the door. The walks they have together help clear her mind from the busy day and in preparation for the next day ahead.




A woman with short dark hair, wearing a red and white patterned sleeveless dress, is sitting on a green lawn. She is leaning over a black dog that is lying on its side. She is petting the dog's head and neck area. The dog is looking towards the camera. The text "Tinker and Joanna" is overlaid in the center of the image.

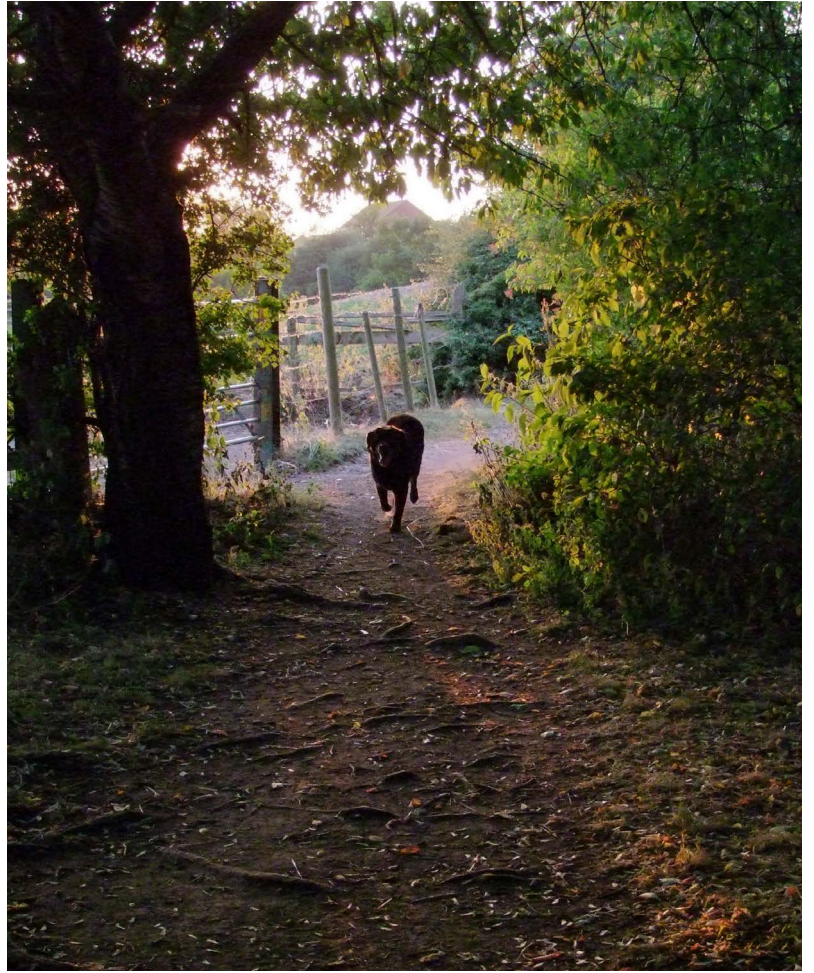
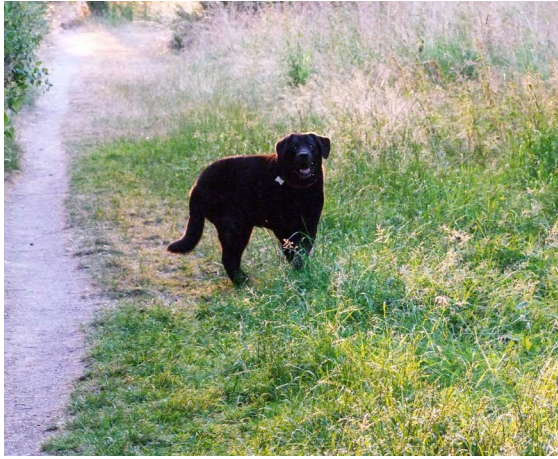
Tinker and Joanna

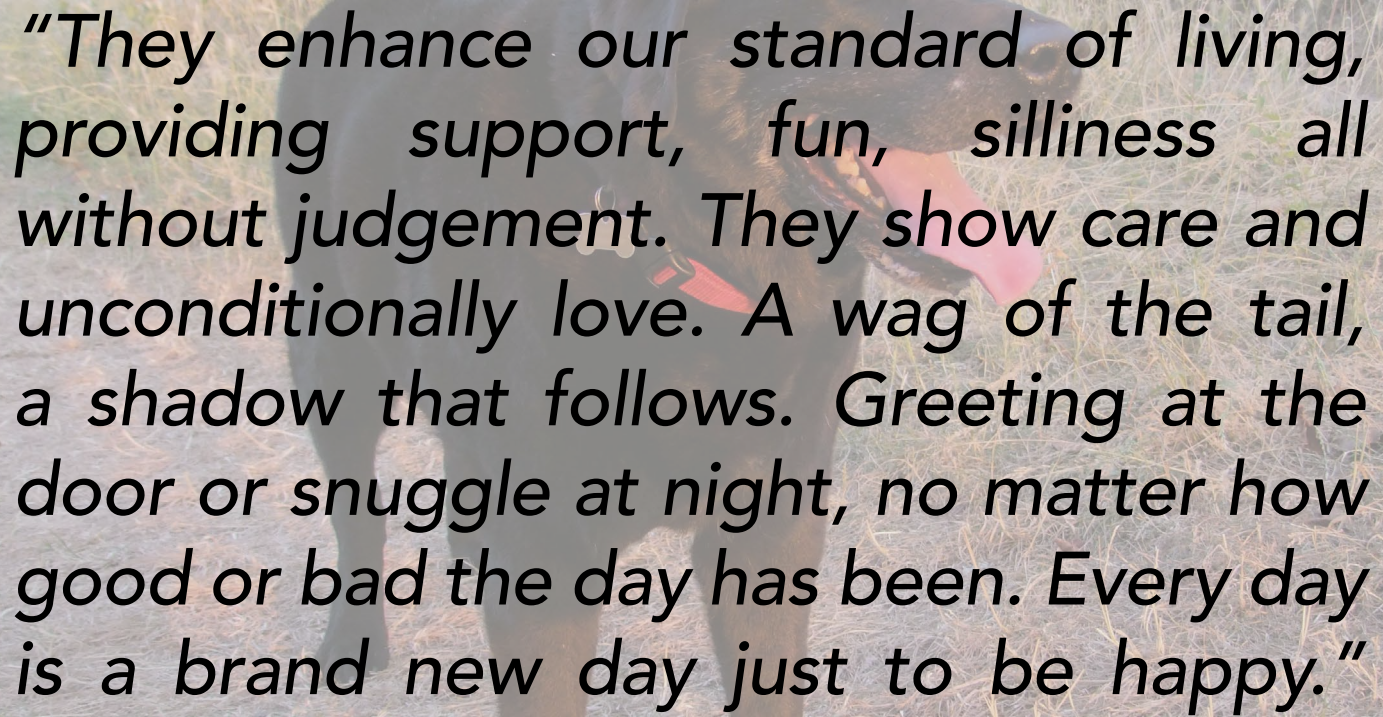




A woman with short brown hair, wearing a red and white floral patterned sleeveless dress, is sitting on a green lawn. She is leaning forward, petting a black dog that is lying down. The dog's front paws are visible, resting on the grass. In the background, there is a garden bed with green plants and yellow flowers, and a wire mesh fence. The overall scene is outdoors and bright.

Tinker has been in our family for thirteen years. When he was younger he lived up to his name by being an escape artist from the garden, to destroying a dictionary when the family was out! Despite his earlier flaws he has helped Joanna and the family. He keeps Joanna company whilst exercising, making her fit and active. He also provides love, care, and knows when she is upset or stressed, coming to her to get a fuss or be by her side. Tinker makes Joanna mentally alert when she has to work out what he is asking for - ten out of ten it's usually food and more food! Tinker makes the house a home and is simply adored by the whole family! He is the best dog that anyone could ever ask for!



A black dog, possibly a Labrador Retriever, is standing in a field of tall, dry grass. The dog's mouth is open, and its pink tongue is hanging out. The background is a soft-focus field of grass and some green foliage. The overall tone is warm and natural.

"They enhance our standard of living, providing support, fun, silliness all without judgement. They show care and unconditionally love. A wag of the tail, a shadow that follows. Greeting at the door or snuggle at night, no matter how good or bad the day has been. Every day is a brand new day just to be happy."

- Virginia Hussey





