

SOUTH ISLAND GERMAN SHEPHERD LEAGUE



Tayla & Mako

Newsletter

Autumn 2021

Committee Members 2020 - 2021

President:	Andy Connor	021 448 622
Vice Presidents:	Giuliana Petronelli g.petronelli@hotmail.com	021 136 1168
	Liz Wilkinson	
Secretary:	Katrina Prendergast sigsl1965@gmail.com	
Treasurer:	Maureen Toland	
Club Captain:	Sandra Van Kempen info@sigsl.org.nz	021 2107 984
Show Secretary:	Deb Bannan	027 450 1065
Membership:	Maureen Toland	
Trophy Stewards:	Deb Bannan & Liz Wilkinson	
Plant Managers:	Blue Gardiner & Evan Rahurahu	(Evan) 0274 700 906
	Blue Gardiner	03 3440390
Sponsorship:	Andy Connor	
	Wayne Middleton wayne@onsiteelectronic.co.nz	0274 326 102
	Lea Connor	
	Rosie Petronelli	
	Marianne Middleton	0274 839 405
	Jane Dalzell	
	Simon Rayner	
	Ania Malecka	

Club Solicitor:

Christine Eastgate Ph:03 327 8159
Corcoran French
P O Box 15, Kaiapoi 7644
Email: info@corcoranfrench.co.nz

K9HQ Dr Kirsten Wylie

693 Marshland Road
Ouruhia
Christchurch
Phone: 03 741 6276

Club Address:

South Island German Shepherd League
PO Box 2133 Christchurch
Phone: 022 140 6142

Club Grounds:

Canterbury Agricultural Park
Curletts Road Sockburn.

Tayla & Mako

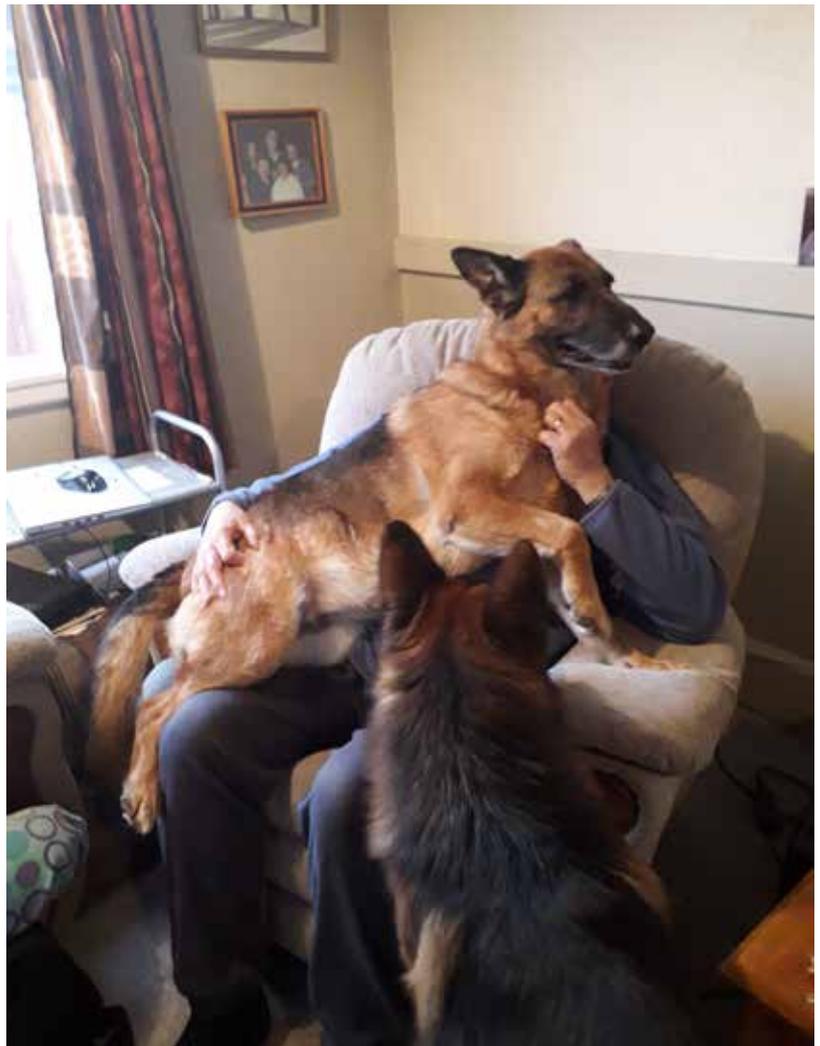
Tayla, Sonnenschein DeQuila bred by Natasha, Lea & Andy Connor in 2012

Tayla came to live with us in Oxford where as a young puppy she got introduced to lots of cold white stuff that covered all of the ground (snow) She soon learnt it was fun to play in with her other kennel mates, Caz, Ben & Murphy. Then coming inside and curling up by the fire, competing against the others for the best spot.

Her favorite place to sleep after running around playing was on her dad's knee, this she still does today, at 8yrs of age, although his knee seems smaller than it used to be.

Don't know why but she thinks it's great to chase bees. Getting stung when she chomps them makes her want to chase them even more. She has been known to get distracted when in the show ring by a bee, and Debbie has had to hold on tight. She has amused some judges when this happened.

Tayla had 5 years competing in the show ring, and was graded excellent 21 times. These days she is the happiest when she is at home with her Dad, Mum, and Mako. Sleeping on the bed with mum when dad's away, playing with her egg toy, getting lots of titbits, and rarking up Mako.



Mako, NZ CH Aimsway Conan Destroyer Imp-Aus. Bred by John and Lee Martens in 2016

He was imported to NZ by Neil Shelley. But came to live with us later on that year. His then name was Biff, um, a decision was made to change this. It was decided that Mako was a more suitable name, and I am sure he agreed with us.

OMG what a rat bag he was and still is lol

Some of the antics he has gotten up to;

Gets Mum's passport and quickly runs outside with it. Thankfully I caught him before he destroyed it, as we were flying out of the country 2 days later.

Take a very expensive set of 6 crystal glasses that were in a fancy box, and take it outside to chew/play with. Still don't know how they managed to stay in one piece.

Totally destroyed TV & Sky remote because he was left at home, (pay back)

Pissing mum off by bringing bark, sticks or anything that makes a lovely mess inside when chewed up.



Chewing up Dad's socks, shoes or anything else left lying around.

When he is not being mischievous, he loves to be at our side just chilling.

2018 he became a NZ Champion and passed Breed Survey with a Class 1.

Graded excellent 17 times in the show ring.

Website: sigsl.org.nz

General Information

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: (including newsletter)

Subscriptions due 31st March each year

New Single membership: **\$45.00**

Renewal: **\$40.00**

New Double/Family Membership: **\$50.00**

Renewal: \$45.00

Junior \$10.00

Training / Joining Fee **\$80.00** once only fee for the life of your dog.

TRAINING:

Breed Presentation (Show)

Obedience

Agility

TRAINING at:

Canterbury Agricultural Park

Curletts Road

Sockburn

Wednesday evenings from 6.00pm

Sundays mornings from 9.00am at the South Island German Shepherd League Clubrooms

Contact:

Blue Gardiner Ph 03 344 0390

Giuliana Petronelli Ph 021 136 1168

Disclaimer:

The editor and the South Island German Shepherd League (Inc) accept no responsibility for the accuracy of the claims made by advertisers. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the South Island German Shepherd League (Inc) or the editor.

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Presidents Ramble.

Hi again to all of our members and their awesome dogs, humans pass on my regards to your K9 mates!!

It's a huge welcome to new members and a giddy to existing members and all your dogs.

Well, what a year 2020 was and it seems 2021 may carry on from where 2020 left off. As I write this, Auckland is in lockdown to Covid at Level 3 and the rest of the country is at Level 2. While there may be a few of you who are not happy with this situation, we all must think of our country and what we have had, freedom while the rest of the World is not. Our Specialist and All Breed shows are running and we just maybe the only Country to be able to do this. Kiwis are a resilient lot and have done well to date, don't let that hard work and sacrifice go without a fight. Carry on just be careful and scan, scan, scan!!!

Our next show is not far away, Saturday 17 April and Sunday 18 April 2021 at the Club grounds in the A&P Assoc. grounds, Curletts Road Sockburn, it would be great to catch up with members at the show. For those who have been to a show, thanks for coming, for those who have not come along....." where ya been????"

We will have the rings active with pacey dogs and tired handlers and also the Agility and Obedience group will be jumping ramps and weaving posts while the dogs just watch, doubt that really!!

It's the club's chance to promote ourselves to the public so if you have a sound dog, bring it along for a walk and look. Start time both days 8.30am.

Later in the year is the Queen's Birthday Triples, a show run by the 3 South Island clubs, SIGSL, Otago German Shepherd Club and also Southland German Shepherd Club.

If you have not joined us yet on the clubs Facebook page, please do so at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/777382859304423>, we have over 1250 people on board, hope you are one of them.

There has been a huge demand for pups recently and there have been several for sale on TradeMe. If you know someone who is looking for a pup, contact the club first for some info on what they should be looking at and what not too. Your new pup should be health checked completely and the club would recommend this. There is a new scheme to be created for German Shepherds ensuring people make good choices for their K9 mate and that scheme will be administered by DogsNZ but under the control of the Pedigree German Shepherd community. If you would like info, contact me through the club or via the Facebook page.

There is a court case concerning a breeder of German Shepherds from the North Island coming up soon. The case, shown on TV some time ago, is being driven by the SPCA, and I, as an individual support them with this case. You will see/hear/read about it so please don't be too alarmed, it's been going on for almost 3 years and may still yet take some time to fruition. As a lover of the German Shepherd, I am a supporter of the SPCA in this action.

Now don't forget training, Wednesday nights from 6.00pm and Sunday mornings from 9.00am, great time to learn from your club's best trainers. There is a cost so please ask at training, it's well worth it.

Love your dogs, care for your dogs, treat and play with your dogs, socialise your dogs and you will have the most awesome German Shepherd Dog, just the best!!

Thank you and see ya at the Shows!!!

Regards

Andy Connor

President

South Island German Shepherd League

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Reminder

Membership Subscriptions are due on or before
31st March.2021

New single membership \$45.00

New Double membership \$50.00

Junior \$10.00

Renewal of single membership \$40.00

Renewal of double membership \$45.00

Training Fee \$80.00 once only fee for the life of your dog.

Bank account details : South Island German Shepherd League (SIGSL)

02-0842-0081118-000

Please use your name and Initials as a reference

Fun Day 13th September 2020



Awards



Congratulations to Josh and Luna who were 2nd in Novice and
Giuliana and Malizia who were 3rd in Jumpers C at CCOC
Well done

Annual General Meeting

Date 14th July 2021

6.30pm – Election of Officers and Committee followed by Annual prize giving and General Business finishing up with Supper and a chat.

Please attend and show your support for the club.

Clubs do not run on fresh air, sunshine and good intentions.

One of SIGSL's main sources of fundraising is sausage sizzles and we are fortunate enough to have been given the following dates for a sausage sizzle outside Mitre10 Papanui.

16th May 2021

11th July 2021

12th December 2021

We just need helpers to run these
Text Lea on 022 1004 537 – we need you for just 3 hours or the full day.

17th and 18th April 2021

Championship Show Open Show

Saturday Judge: Bruce Anderson

Sunday Judge: Lenore Halliwell (Peer Judge)

5th – 6th and 7th June 2021

In conjunction with Otago and Southland German Shepherd clubs

Saturday Judge (Otago) – John Walsh – Peer Judge

Sunday (SIGSL) – Viv McCambridge

Monday (Southland) – Ashleigh Donaldson-Rodgers

Obedience – Jo-Anne Donachie

Agility – Meridith Evans

Obedience and Agility Elementary entries on the day. All other classes entry via Dogs NZ website as per the schedule closing 5th May

Any queries to Liz Wilkinson Ph 0274278644

30th October 2021 – 31st October 2021

Open Show

Judges TBA

Training Report

Jane Dalzell

Wednesday nights and Sunday Morning training

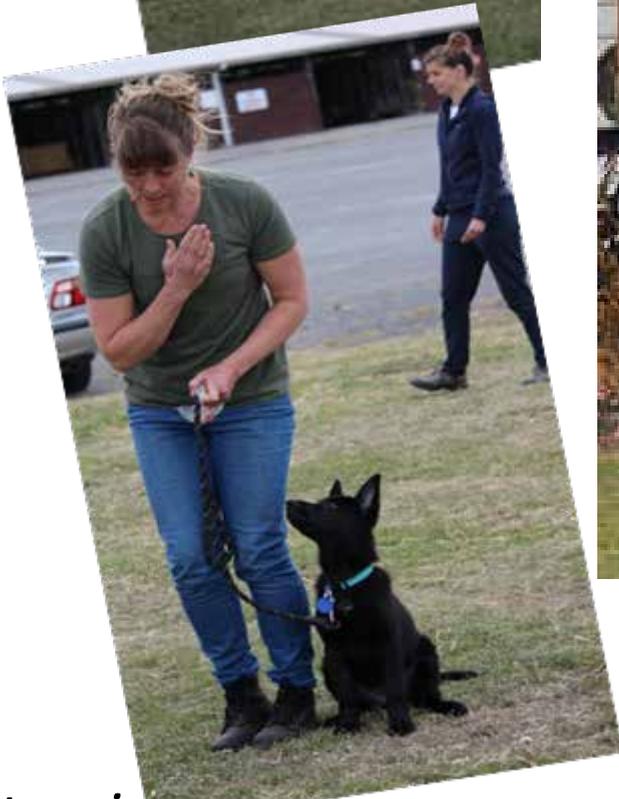
People attending training has increased slowly over the last 18 months or so and we now have around 40 owners and dogs coming to training.

The training committee has reworked the training night and brought in structured times and classes. On Wednesdays we run a 6pm class for younger pups and we run 3x 6.30pm classes for the more advanced dogs and ones interested in competitive obedience. We also often have agility sessions – fun tunnels and weaves for the wee pups and a full course or training stations for the older dogs. On Sunday we run 4 different classes starting at 9am. We have more of a focus on Agility and every second Sunday we have the privilege of Darron Willet (Agility Instructor) coming along to take the class.

A few weeks ago we had a train the Trainers evening with Kate Winters from Eazy Peazy Puppy Training. This was great to learn new ideas and ways of training. We have a good team of trainers and we are in the process of developing a training course manual that will bring more of a structured consistency to our classes.

Our dedicated team of trainers are Blue Gardiner, Giuliana and Rosie Petronelli, Ania Malecka, Sandra Van Kempen, Darron Willett, Stephen Brown-Thomas and Jane Dalzell – Simon and Abe are trainers in training. We do need more help – If you feel you might have something to offer in this area, please come along and chat to us or text Giuliana on 021 136 1168.







**SOUTH ISLAND
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Snapshots

Candid photos of our members dogs just doing what dogs do best – being awesome!!

Loki





Yosef



Tinka



Lexi



Michael



Maggie



Luci & Mackenzie



Bosco



Lilly



Indi



Indi



Anouk



Senna & Peppia

Blaze



Zeus



Nala



Coco



Hanna



Collin



Nala



Show Photos 31st Oct 2020



Agility 30th Sept 2020



**SOUTH ISLAND
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Obedience 30th Sept 2020



Welcome to the New Members

Clayton & Jeni Smith	J R Hurunui and Ripeka Tamanu-Hurunui
Lee Sarson	LJ & LL Marriott
MP & C Morgenstern	Elizabeth Heitkonig
GL & Alex Marquet	Neville Wynn
D Keeley	Luke Chum
Jason Jarvis	James Curline & Lovena Erickson
Alex Hopkins	Miss S Y J Kim (Lucy)
Xavier Harper	Kirsty & Martin Brennan
Tim Fine	Clinton Smith & Dana van den Broek
Bryce & Julie Johnston	Jessica Curtis
Jessica Curtis	Bryce and Julia Johnston
Simon Gooding	Brittany Gilmore
Anne Saunders	David and Leeann Kinning
Paola & Steffano Pessina	Rachel Sullivan and Paul Orlandea
Nikhil Makan	Gary Wallace
Jamie Pilcher	Gavin Wellwood
Peter Borodin	Paul and Tania Milkin
Sophie Hooper	Krystal Paix and Chris Calderwood

Returning Members Welcome Back

Barry Black
Candyce Orchard & family
RENGA DEBBIE & AJ & TAYLOR SPARKS

Committee Member Profile

Ania Malecka

Since I was a little girl my dream has been to own a German Shepherd. I always watched those beautiful dogs next to police officers, soldiers and border patrol. The work those dogs do still blows my mind away.

Everyone has THAT one dog who changed their life. Mine is definitely Michael. We first came to SIGSL for some general "good pet" training. Within a few weeks of watching dogs do agility my focus quickly turned to that. I was hooked. I loved seeing the connection between the handler and their dog. I knew that I wanted to compete with Michael in agility. I then started watching the obedience training and thought that it would be nice if Michael could do that too. So here we are training competitive obedience.

Michael is very forgiving and often when I teach him something and we can't get it right I have to retrain the same thing in a different way. And he's just like "ok let's try this way". Every day this dog helps me improve as a trainer, and for that I will always be grateful to him.

The teenage phase has been a bit of a nightmare for us leading to a lot of tears; however, with commitment and the club's support we have more good days than bad. I don't think he would be THAT one dog without the club's help and reassurance that it is just a phase and he is not a bad dog.



From Michael: Hello, I am Michael you will most definitely hear me in the back of the car when we arrive as

I get SOOO excited that I can't stop barking. Quite often mum covers me in my cage so I can't see what's going on. Most of the time it works; however, sometimes I can smell you all and then I get excited and I try to tell mum to hurry up (mum calls it annoying barking). She then leaves me in the car! I think its mean!



Mum has been spending a lot of the time trying to train me and usually its good, until I see a dog and again I'm trying to tell mum that I want to go and play. I think we need to work on this language thing as she always ends up taking me further away from the other dog! I get the impression that mum doesn't like my barking but how else would I tell her that there is a dog there!

Mum is fun but makes me work and I am not allowed to do whatever I want to do, but my DAD is like the best human on the planet. He lets me lick his face, I get to chill with him on the couch while he gives me belly rubs and he lets me get away with a lot of things. Often, I see him playing his PS4 and the way he is holding the controller creates a perfect loop between his arms, so I go right in and then he stops playing that silly game and gives me cuddles. When mum tries to get him to stop playing he says in a minute, but with me he stops straight away. Told you he lets me get away with a lot. I wonder when I will finally cross the line, but I will worry about that closer to the time.

I do hope to gain some titles in competition just to show mum that I can do it and that I do appreciate all the time she invests in me... But she needs to wait, I have to mature first.

Ahh and BTW does anyone know what "we recommend you fix him" means? I hear people saying it to Mum... I asked Blaze about it, he knows what it means but he doesn't want to talk about it...

Liz Wilkinson



TAIERI DOG TRAINING CLUB

12th December 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Test B

Cantara Red-Roxy known as “Roxy”

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31st October 2020

OPEN

1st Test B



NELSON DOG TRAINING CLUB

19th & 20th September 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

1st TEST B

1st TEST B

CANTERBURY CANINE OBEDIENCE CLUB

26th & 27th September 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

2nd Test B

2nd Test B

NORTH CANTERBURY DOG TRAINING CLUB

4th October 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

3rd Test B

MID CANTERBURY DOG TRAINING CLUB

28th November 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Test B

29th November 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

3rd Test B

SELWYN DOG TRAINING CLUB

7th & 8th November 2020

CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Test B

2nd Test B

From the Past





Trials & Tracking

Karen Wilson

Hi South Island German Shepherd league folk 2020 sure was a year to remember OTA 'Obedience Trials Association' managed to run all our working trials & tracking trials that had been postponed due to COVID apart from NDOA that were to be held in Taupo & Levin which Luther was the team WD dog.

So in all we managed a very productive and successful year traipsing around the countryside. Feeling extremely lucky to be a kiwi. We also enjoyed running a beginner's working trials course we had the pleasure of watching the progress of 3 GSDs. Watch this space. They learned the ins & outs of UD the first level of working trials. Love sharing what's involved in this amazing sport with dedicated willing to learn & train handlers. Zeba & Luther loved showing how's it's done too.

Some of my highlights of the year. One has to be the September Lake Lyndon tracking only trial where Luther ran a TT2 track which is 2 hours old and cross tracks but he also had extra contamination with a four-wheel drive club Tiki touring across the track then getting out their vehicles and having a look at the view. Apparently he navigated through all the extra contamination without much fuss or checking. For this amazing effort he was awarded the most memorable track for 2020 he only lost 5 marks on a pretty challenging track with out the 4x4 club lol . Zeba also shone that weekend gaining the highest qualifier tt3a x2 on



completion of one of the tracks the judge and track layer were pretty puffed as they couldn't keep up with a little black rocket who zoomed around the track almost footstep perfect with me stumbling & bumbling along behind through the matagouri, Creek beds, shingle 4x4 tracks multi terrain surfaces the conditions were pretty tough to, track was laid at -6 degrees so lots of hard ice the wind came up which made no difference & she also achieved 240 points out of 245. TT3 is 3 hours old, the dog has to differentiate the correct scent in an area given then proceed retrieving 3 article's that can fit in the palm of your hand. The correct scent is given to the dog from a piece of cloth the tracklayer has held. The dog can't take Xtracks or decoy tracks. Go the GSD nose just amazing.

At Nelson in November Luther gained 2 more WDXs. One of the day's he was on fire didn't put a foot wrong on his track. Full points awarded. His nose didn't come off the track. Was a little high in Heelwork so lost a point being gay. The long jump we lost a point as the dick wanted to keep looking at me & clipped the edge of the 2700 mm jump. Can't remember where he lost the other points but qualified WDX on 344 points out of 350. So now he is at the top level in working trials TD. Better get training for CDX now for working trials champion. No rush we have time on our side as he's not 3½ yet. Who else is up for this

challenge?

Writing this, getting excited as we are off to Invercargil to our first tracking trials of the year can't wait.

So feeling pretty proud of my black dogs.

Get intouch if you're up for a challenge with ya dog & have land to train on time & dedication to do the hard yards or want to come watch what it's all about.

If you're on Facebook like the Obedience trials Association page. The dates of our 2021 trials have just been posted.



The History and Origin of the German Shepherd Dog



Dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*)

Other names for the German Shepherd Dog

Alsatian

Berger Allemand

Deutscher Schäferhund

GSD

Schäferhund

Traits

Weight: Male 35–43 kilograms (77–95 lb)

Female 25–33 kilograms (55–73 lb)

Height: Male 60–65 cm (24–26 in)

Female 55–60 cm (22–24 in)

Coat See Description section below

Colour Most commonly tan with black saddle

Litter size 5–10

Life span 9-13 years

The German Shepherd Dog is a breed of large-sized dog that originated in Germany in 1899. As part of the Herding Group, German Shepherds are working dogs developed originally for herding and guarding sheep. Because of their strength, intelligence and abilities in obedience training they are often employed in police and military roles around the world.

Origins



In Europe during the 1850s, attempts were being made to standardise breeds. The dogs were bred to preserve traits that assisted in their job of herding sheep and protecting flocks from predators. In Germany this was practiced within local communities, where shepherds selected and bred dogs that they believed had the skills necessary for herding sheep, such as intelligence, speed, strength, and keen senses of smell. The results were dogs that were able to do such things, but that differed significantly, both in appearance and ability, from one locality to another.

To combat these differences, the Phylax Society was formed in 1891 with the intention of creating standardised dog breeds in Germany. The society disbanded after only three years due to ongoing internal conflicts regarding the traits in dogs that the society should promote; some members believed dogs should be bred solely for working purposes, while others believed dogs should be bred also for appearance. While unsuccessful in their goal, the Phylax Society had inspired people to pursue standardising dog breeds independently.

Max von Stephanitz, an ex-cavalry captain and former student of the Berlin Veterinary College, was one such ex-member. He believed strongly that dogs should be bred for working.

In 1899, Von Stephanitz was attending a dog show when he was shown a dog named Hektor Linksrhein. Hektor was the product of few generations of selective breeding and completely fulfilled what Von Stephanitz believed a working dog should be. He was pleased with the strength of the dog and was so taken by the animal's intelligence, loyalty, and beauty, that he purchased him immediately. After purchasing the dog he changed his name to Horand von Grafrath and Von Stephanitz founded the Verein für Deutsche Schäferhunde (Society for the German Shepherd Dog). Horand was declared to be the first German Shepherd Dog and was the first dog added to the society's breed register.

Horand became the centre-point of the breeding programs and was bred with dogs belonging to other society members that displayed desirable traits. Although fathering many pups, Horand's most successful was Hektor von Schwaben. Hektor was inbred with another of Horand's offspring and produced Beowulf, who later fathered a total of eighty-four pups, mostly through being inbred with Hektor's other offspring. In the original German Shepherd studbook, Zuchtbuch für Deutsche Schäferhunde (SZ), within the two pages of entries from SZ No. 41 to SZ No. 76, there are four Wolf Crosses. Beowulf's progeny also were inbred and it is from these pups that all German Shepherds draw a genetic link. It is believed the society accomplished its goal mostly due to Von Stephanitz's strong, uncompromising leadership and he is therefore credited with being the creator of the German Shepherd Dog.

Popularity

When the UK Kennel Club first accepted registrations for the breed in 1919, fifty-four dogs were registered, and by 1926 this number had grown to over 8,000. The breed first gained international recognition at the decline of World War I after returning soldiers spoke highly of the breed, and animal actors Rin Tin Tin and Strongheart popularised the breed further. The first German Shepherd Dog registered in the United States was Queen of Switzerland; however, her offspring suffered from defects as the result of poor breeding, which caused the breed to suffer a decline in popularity during the late 1920s. Popularity increased again after the German Shepherd Sieger Pfeffer von Bern became the 1937 and 1938 Grand Victor in American Kennel club dog shows, only to suffer another decline at the conclusion of World War II, due to anti-German sentiment of the time. As time progressed, their popularity increased gradually until 1993, when they became the third most popular breed in the United States. As of 2009, the breed was the second most popular in the US. Additionally, the breed is typically among the most popular in other registries. The German Shepherd Dog's physique is very well suited to athletic competition. They commonly compete in shows and competitions such as agility trials.

Name

The breed was named Deutscher Schäferhund by von Stephanitz, literally translating to "German Shepherd Dog". The breed was so named due to its original purpose of assisting shepherds in herding and protecting sheep. At the time, all other herding dogs in Germany were referred to by this name; they thus became known as Altdeutsche Schäferhunde or Old German Shepherd Dogs.

The direct translation of the name was adopted for use in the official breed registry; however, at the conclusion of World War I, it was believed that the inclusion of the word "German" would harm the breed's popularity, due to the anti-German sentiment of the era. The breed was officially renamed by the UK Kennel Club to "Alsatian Wolf Dog" which was also adopted by many other international kennel clubs. Eventually, the appendage "wolf dog" was dropped. The name Alsatian remained for five decades, until 1977, when successful campaigns by dog enthusiasts pressured the UK Kennel Club to allow the breed to be registered again as German Shepherd Dogs. The word "Alsatian" still appeared in parentheses as part of the formal breed name and was only removed in 2010.

Modern breed

The modern German Shepherd Dog is criticised for straying away from von Stephanitz's original ideology for the breed: that German Shepherds should be bred primarily as working dogs, and that breeding should be strictly controlled to eliminate defects quickly. Critics believe that careless breeding has promoted disease and other defects. Under the breeding programs overseen by von Stephanitz, defects were quickly bred out; however, in modern times without regulation on breeding, genetic problems such as colour-paling, hip dysplasia, monorchidism, weakness of temperament, and missing teeth are common, as well as bent or folded ears which never fully turn up when reaching adulthood.

Description

German Shepherds are large sized dogs, generally between 55 and 65 centimetres (22 and 26 in) at the withers, with an ideal height of 63 centimetres (25 in) according to Kennel Club standards. Weight is 30–40 kilograms (66–88 lb) for males and 22–32 kilograms (49–71 lb) for females. They have a domed forehead, a long square-cut muzzle and a black nose. The jaws are strong, with a scissor-like bite. The eyes are medium-sized and brown with a lively, intelligent, and self-assured look. The ears are large and stand erect, open at the front and parallel, but they often are pulled back during movement. They have a long neck, which is raised when excited and lowered when moving at a fast pace. The tail is bushy and reaches to the hock.

German Shepherds can be a variety of colours, the most common of which are tan/black and red/black.

Most colour varieties have black masks and black body markings which can range from a classic “saddle” to an over-all “blanket.” Rarer colour variations include the sable, all-black, all-white, liver, and blue varieties. The all-black and sable varieties are acceptable according to most standards; however, the blue and liver are considered to be serious faults and the all-white is grounds for instant disqualification in some standards.

German Shepherds sport a double coat. The outer coat, which sheds all year round, is close and dense with a thick undercoat. The coat is accepted in two variants; medium and long. The long-hair gene is recessive, making the long-hair variety rarer. Treatment of the long-hair variation differs across standards; they are accepted under the German and UK Kennel Clubs but are considered a fault in the American Kennel Club.

Intelligence

German Shepherds were bred specifically for their intelligence, a trait for which they are now famous. In the book *The Intelligence of Dogs*, author Stanley Coren ranked the breed third for intelligence, behind Border Collies and Poodles. He found that they had the ability to learn simple tasks after only five repetitions and obeyed the first command given 95% of the time. Coupled with their strength, this trait makes the breed desirable as police, guard, and search and rescue dogs, as they are able to quickly learn various tasks and interpret instructions better than other large breeds.

Temperament

German Shepherds are highly active dogs, and described in breed standards as self-assured. The breed is marked by a willingness to learn and an eagerness to have a purpose. They are curious which makes them excellent guard dogs and suitable for search missions. They can become over-protective of their family and territory, especially if not socialised correctly. They are not inclined to become immediate friends with strangers. German Shepherds are highly intelligent and obedient.

Health

Many common ailments of the German Shepherds are a result of the inbreeding practiced early in the breed’s life. One such common ailment is hip and elbow dysplasia which may lead to the dog experiencing pain in later life, and may cause arthritis. A study by the University of Zurich in police working dogs found that 45% were affected by degenerative spinal stenosis, although the sample studied was small. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals found that 19.1% of German Shepherd are affected by hip dysplasia. Due to the large and open nature of their ears, Shepherds are prone to ear infections. German Shepherds, like all large bodied dogs, are prone to bloat.

According to a recent survey in the UK, the median life span of German Shepherds is 10.95 years, which is normal for a dog of their size. Degenerative myelopathy (CDRM), a neurological disease, occurs with enough regularity specifically in the breed to suggest that the breed is predisposed to it. A very inexpensive DNA saliva test is now available to screen for Degenerative Myelopathy. The test screens for the mutated gene that has been seen in dogs with degenerative myelopathy. Now that a test is available the disease can be bred out of breeds with a high preponderance. The test is only recommended for predisposed breeds, but can be performed on DNA from any dog on samples collected through swabbing the inside of the animal’s cheek with a sterile cotton swab.

Controversy

The Kennel Club has been embroiled in a dispute with German Shepherd breed clubs about the issue of soundness in the show-strain breed. The show-strains have been bred with an extremely sloping topline (back) that causes poor gait in the hind legs. Working-pedigree lines, such as those in common use as service dogs, generally retain the traditional straight back of the breed. The debate was catalyzed when the issue was raised in the BBC documentary, *Pedigree Dogs Exposed*, which said that critics of the breed describe it as “half dog, half frog”. An orthopedic vet remarked on footage of dogs in a show ring that they were “not normal”.

Website: sigsl.org.nz

The Kennel Club's position is that "this issue of soundness is not a simple difference of opinion, it is the fundamental issue of the breed's essential conformation and movement." The Kennel Club has decided to retrain judges to penalize dogs suffering these problems. It is also insisting on more testing for hemophilia and hip dysplasia, other common problems with the breed.



Urban Search and Rescue Task Force dog works to uncover survivors at the site of the collapsed World Trade Center after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Use as working dog

German Shepherds are a very popular selection for use as working dogs. They are especially well known for their police work, being used for tracking criminals, patrolling troubled areas, and detection and holding of suspects. Additionally thousands of German Shepherds have been used by the military. Usually trained for scout duty, they are used to warn soldiers to the presence of enemies or of booby traps or other hazards. German Shepherds have also been trained by military groups to parachute from aircraft.

The German Shepherd Dog is one of the most widely used breeds in a wide variety of scent-work roles. These include search and rescue, cadaver searching, narcotics detection, explosives detection, accelerant detection, and mine detection dog, among others. They are suited for these lines of work because of their keen sense of smell and their ability to work regardless of distractions.

At one time the German Shepherd Dog was the breed chosen almost exclusively to be used as a guide dog for the visually impaired. In recent years, Labradors and Golden Retrievers have been more widely used for this work, although there are still German Shepherds being trained. A versatile breed, they excel in this field due to their strong sense of duty, their mental abilities, their fearlessness, and their attachment to their owner.

German Shepherd Dogs are used for herding and tending sheep grazing in meadows next to gardens and crop fields. They are expected to patrol the boundaries to keep sheep from trespassing and damaging the crops. In Germany and other places these skills are tested in utility dog trials also known as HGH (Herdengebrauchshund) herding utility dog trials.

In popular culture



Strongheart, one of the earliest canine stars.

German Shepherds have been featured in a wide range of media. Strongheart the German Shepherd was one of the earliest canine film stars and was followed by Rin Tin Tin, who is now acclaimed as being the most famous German Shepherd. Both have stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. German Shepherds were used in the popular Canadian series *The Littlest Hobo*. Batman's dog Ace the Bat-Hound appeared in the Batman comic books, initially in 1955, through 1964. Between 1964 and 2007, his appearances were sporadic.

Rex, a German Shepherd, is the eponymous police dog character of the Austrian television drama *Inspector Rex*.

The animated movie *All Dogs Go To Heaven* stars a German Shepherd named "Charlie Barkin". He is also the main character in the sequel and the TV series.

The 2003 Disney movie *101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure* shows Thunderbolt the German Shepherd, who is a television hero.

The 2007 Hollywood movie *I am Legend* starring Will Smith as virologist Robert Neville shows a German Shepherd Dog Samantha (Sam) as the only companion of Neville in the deserted New York City where a lethal strain of virus has spread. The movie portrays a close bond between the main character and his dog.

Article from German Shepherd Rescue Elite

<http://gsrelite.co.uk/the-history-origin-of-the-german-shepherd-dog/>



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