

Many happy returns!



This year, The Labrador Rescue Trust is celebrating its 20th birthday – something for which 7,000 rescue dogs are very grateful indeed

THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER has consistently been one of Britain's most popular breeds of dog. The breed's excellent working abilities, coupled with its outstanding temperament, makes the Lab a favourite with all sorts of dog owners, and the breed is known as an ideal family pet.

Kennel Club registrations confirm the breed's widespread appeal. In 2006, 45,700 Labradors were registered - more than twice the number of the second most popular breed, the Cocker Spaniel. Of course, the actual Labrador population is much greater than this and with so many dogs it is inevitable that a certain proportion will need rehoming at some time in their lives. Therefore, sufficient breed rescue provisions are essential.

There are many reasons why a Labrador might find himself looking for a new home and luckily there is a team of dedicated Lab lovers in the south of England to help.

For the past 20 years, The Labrador Rescue Trust has helped thousands of dogs find new, loving homes. The majority of these dogs have come from puppy farms or dealers, council dog pounds, found as strays or given up by people who could no longer look after them for whatever reason.

Founded in Bristol in 1988 by John Cowell MBE, The Labrador Rescue

Trust initially had no money, but after finding new homes for a few dogs, the donations began rolling in and the trust then organised fundraising events. By the end of its first year The Labrador Rescue Trust had handled 157 cases and in November 1991 The Duke of Wellington agreed to become the trust's patron and continues to be so today. The trust grew from strength to strength and in 1993 it became a registered charity and the next year it celebrated handling its 1,000th case.

Over the past 20 years, the trust has grown considerably and now has more than 100 volunteers covering Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Herefordshire, Bristol, Bath and surrounding areas as well as the Isle of Wight and western parts of Hampshire and Berkshire. By the end of 2007 the trust had handled its 7,000th case and is set to handle around 650 cases this year.

Sheila Pratt is one of five area coordinators and has been a volunteer for The Labrador Rescue Trust for 10 years. Sheila's role is to match dogs with the most suitable owners in Somerset, Bristol, Hereford and parts of the Forest of Dean and Worcestershire. Along with her husband, Richard, Sheila travels to shows and raises the trust's profile by

making people aware of the scale of the problem.

Sheila said, "The majority of the dogs coming to us are being rehomed through no fault of their own. The main reasons for people giving up their dogs are marriage break-ups, having to go back to work full-time, perhaps the owner has died or had to go into a care home or cannot cope with a lively dog. We do take in a few strays and these are assessed thoroughly before we place them in homes."

Sheila's own two Labradors, Bo and Bracken, came to her through the trust. Four-year-old Bo (right) found himself in rescue at just 18 months old when his owner could no longer cope with his lively nature, as he had a habit of escaping from the house in pursuit of mischief. Twelve-year-old Bracken (left) had two litters before she was two years old. When her owner found there was a problem with her eyes, Bracken was given to a gamekeeper.

Sheila said, "The gamekeeper found that Bracken was absolutely petrified of loud noises and so was useless as a gundog and she was given to the trust for rehoming. After we adopted Bracken 10 years ago we became volunteers with The Labrador Rescue Trust. Bracken has been a wonderful ambassador for the trust, helping at collections, attending shows and visiting potential homes."

Labradors like Bo and Bracken are lucky to be given a second chance of happiness thanks to The Labrador Rescue Trust, but it is only possible because of its dedicated team of volunteers and continued donations from members of the public. Labradors make wonderful pets and the trust is always on the look-out for dog lovers who could provide stable and loving homes for rescued dogs.

"People should consider rehoming a rescue Labrador, as there are so many needing good homes," said Sheila. "Labradors in particular do rehome very well. They do not seem to pine for their previous home as long as they are loved, fed, well exercised and content. They make wonderful companions and settle quickly into their surroundings."

To celebrate the trust's 20th anniversary year, there will be various events taking place in the areas covered by the trust. Details of these will be published on the website www.labrador-rescue.com when finalised. ::

If you run a rescue service and have a long term resident you are having difficulties finding a home for, please send us all the details, together with at least two different good quality photos and we will try to feature them on this page. Send your details and photos to 'Hardest to Rehome', *Dogs Today*, Town Mill, Bagshot Road, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8BZ or email editorial@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk



HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE LABRADOR RESCUE TRUST

Dorset, west Hampshire and Isle of Wight
Mr & Mrs Bryan and Gloria Jones, tel. 01202 245691

Somerset, Bristol, Hereford and the Forest of Dean
Mrs Sheila Pratt, tel. 01278 685815

Devon
Mrs J Lock, tel. 01752 210612
Mrs C Newton, tel. 01803 402180

Cornwall
Mrs R Reeves, tel. 01840 213120
Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, west Berkshire, south Oxfordshire, north Hants
Mrs Christine Warman, tel. 01793 487346



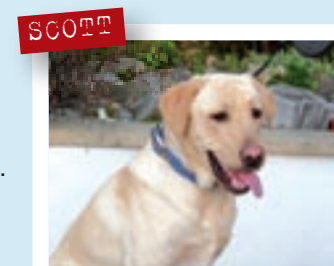
Can you offer a home to any of these Labradors? If you are interested in any of these dogs, please telephone Sheila Pratt at The Labrador Rescue Trust on 01278 685815 or 07791 519084



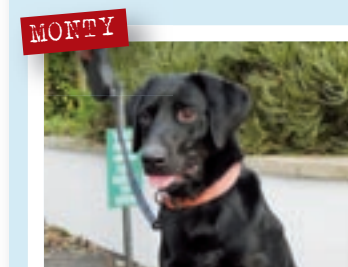
BELLA is a three-year-old entire bitch and KATE is a seven-year-old entire bitch. They need to be homed together, as Kate relies on Bella for confidence. Both are quiet and friendly dogs, but would be best suited to a family with older children (although they would be happy to have small children visiting the home).



BEN is a two-year-old entire dog. He was returned to his breeder, who asked the trust to help find him a new home. He is a little wary of new people and can bark at them initially. He is a biddable, friendly dog when he gets to know you. He is best homed in a rural location with no cats.



SCOTT is a 14-month-old entire dog. He is big and needs training, as he does jump up. He would be better being homed to a family with older children, as he can be quite boisterous.



MONTY is a 13-month-old neutered dog. He is lively and needs training, as he is rather boisterous. He would be best homed to a family with older children and no cats.



To raise funds for its valuable work, The Labrador Rescue Trust has produced a calendar for 2008, featuring rescued Labradors - including these three beautiful dogs. The calendars, priced £7 each, can be ordered by downloading an order form from the website www.labrador-rescue.com or by telephoning 01934 842740

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