

From: Flatcoated Retriever Society david.savory@icloud.com 
Subject: FCRS Spring 2018 Newsletter
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To: David Savory david.savory@mac.com

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Hello David

Welcome to the first Society Working Newsletter for 2018.

The new training and working test programme is already in full swing and the available details for training days, working tests and other events are below. In addition to the details here, you can also access information via the Society website and Facebook pages. The links for the main pages are listed through the text and at the end so hopefully you can find what you need.

Training:

The training programme for 2018 has been published and can be viewed on the [Society website](#) or via Facebook [Flatcoat Training, Tests and Trials](#). This programme will continue to evolve as new events are organised so please keep checking if you want to get involved.

The majority of the training we are organising is day sessions and whilst these are obviously very useful for exposing handler and dog to new ground and training experiences, if we are going to get the best out of our dogs, there also needs to be regular, progressive training, ideally with homework! Regrettably, we cannot provide this training for most members but it is often available through many of the Gundog Clubs across the country, and from some trainers who provide regular retriever training. The added advantage is that this training is often "any variety", which can add to the experience.

The Area Working Test Organisers and members of the Field Trial Sub-Committee are here to help you so if you want to talk about joining a particular Club and attending their training, or anything else related to dog training, please get in touch. We are also going to provide a list of Clubs or trainers where we have knowledge of the training they provide, but if you are already taking part and can recommend some training, then please let us know.

Tests:

The Working Test programme has been published and can be found on the [Society website](#). Schedules will be posted for each event on the Society website, Society Facebook page and Flatcoat Training, Tests and Trials Facebook page, and the event entry forms can be found using the link below. Don't forget that we are always looking for helpers if you are not ready or able to run, so please get in touch.

Trials:

The reports on last seasons Field Trials can be found on the Society website via this [link](#). We are still working on organising the venues for this season's trials, and will publish the dates and venues as soon as we have them confirmed. The plan is to run three trials; a 12 (or possibly 14) dog Novice breed stake, a 12-Dog All-Aged Stake and a 12-Dog Open Stake.

To help you prepare, the training programme for this season will include a number of mock Field trials, cold-game and live-game training days to enable first timers to experience trialling, and for the more experienced to hone their skills. Some of these days will be subsidised by the Society (for members only), so if you are interested, please watch the training list. If demand exceeds supply then we will do our best to ensure that all wishing to attend get a fair chance at getting a place.

Shooting Dog Certificates:

The Flatcoated Retriever Society Shooting Dog Certificate, to give it its proper name, was devised in 1981 by the late Hon. Mrs Amelia Jessel. Designed to encourage people who had working Flatcoats with good game finding, temperament, biddability, quietness and a soft mouth, but had not trialed, to have them assessed in a non-competitive arena.

Mrs. Jessel's blueprint for Judges was "they should imagine they are looking for a good working dog to buy that is going to be a useful shooting companion for the rest of its life". She summed up the aim of the SDC as being "designed to find and to register those Flatcoats that are most likely to pass on the right inheritable characteristics to their progeny and to eliminate from the breeding programme those that display the major faults of whining, hard mouth, stubbornness or lack of desire to please". Nearly 40 years on, this is probably even more relevant to the Flatcoat, particularly if we are genuinely determined to maintain a dual-purpose breed.

Two SDC events were run during the last few weeks of the 2017/18 shooting season, in Kent and Hampshire. Unfortunately, it was not possible to run more, but we will try to rectify this for next season. Eight dogs and handlers received Certificates from the two events. Information regarding the Shooting Dog Certificate can be found via the [link](#). We are carrying out a review of this guidance and the rules but the basics of the assessment will be unchanged:

- Retrieve tenderly to hand a minimum of four head of game, live or dead.
- Be able to hunt and pick game from open ground or any cover normally encountered on a shoot.
- Retrieve fur or feather.
- Be steady and quiet whilst sitting in line at drives.
- Walk reasonably to heel.
- Readily enter water and swim.
- Be under reasonable control throughout the day.

Our hope is that all those, or at the very least a significant number of you, who use your Flatties for picking-up will come and take part in a SDC next season. We have a few names who registered an interest last season but who didn't get to run for various reasons, but if you are interested, and so we have an idea regarding numbers, please let us know.

The Game Fair, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire 27-29 July 2018 - Novice Scurry and Sporting Dog Pavillion.

The Society has been invited to run the Novice Scurry on all three days of the Game Fair. We need a team of people to help with booking in, throwing dummies, firing shot and time keeping, at least 5 people at any time and a session will be either the morning or the afternoon. In return you will receive a free pass to the event for the day you are helping and a meal voucher. If you would like to volunteer please email Heather Harley at hanharley@aol.com stating your name, preferred day(s) and preferred job.

In addition, Charlotte Wear is organising the Flatcoat stand in the Sporting Dog Pavilion and is looking for volunteers to do two hour shifts on Friday 12noon to 2pm and 2pm to 4pm, Saturday 12 noon to 2pm and Sunday 10am to 12 noon, 12 noon to 2pm and 2pm to 4pm. It is a chance for the public to meet the dogs and find out more about our breed. Your dogs will need to love attention (not usually a problem for Flatcoats!) as they will get lots of it. You will get your pass for the day, or days, and we can arrange camping passes for anyone who would like to do more than one day, on a first come first served basis. If interested, please email Charlotte at shmu@totallyott.co.uk for further information and if you are interested in attending.

We will be able to make quite an impact as a breed with representation in the Sporting Dogs Pavilion, with us organising the Novice scurry, and Charlotte also doing a working demonstration in the gundog arena each day; a real chance to promote the working ability of the Flatcoated Retriever.

If you plan to be there anyway, make sure you come along and say hello!

and finally...

If none of the above is what you want to do with your Flatcoat, then there are plenty of other options. We have recently published a short leaflet entitled "The

Active Flatcoat". This sets out other activities that you might want to consider. Within the Society we have some experts in a number of these fields who will be very happy to offer guidance and advice.

A copy of the leaflet is attached - happy reading.

Links:

- [Flatcoat Training, Tests and Trials](#)
- [Society Facebook page](#)
- [Training dates](#)
- [Working Test dates](#)
- [Working Test entry form](#)
- [Shooting Dog Certificate Guide to Handlers](#)

Visit the website: www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org

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The Active Flatcoat



Welcome to the Flatcoated Retriever family. As a new, future or existing owner there are many activities available for you and your dog to enjoy.

The Flatcoat was developed as a game finder, a job at which he excels both on land and in water. During the early 1800s only spaniels and setters were used as gundogs but with the improvement of shotguns and the advent of the big game shoots a different type of dog was required and so the 'retriever' came into being. Originally known as the Wavy Coated Retriever which was developed from setters including the Duke of Gordon's black setter, spaniels and the Lesser St John's Newfoundland, the breed evolved into the Flatcoat by introducing further dogs to get a flatter coat, a longer muzzle and to reduce some feathering.

So what can you do?

There are many activities that you can enjoy with your dog so here are a few for you to consider.

- ♦ **AGILITY.** An activity where the dog and handler follow a set course negotiating obstacles along the way - jumps, tunnels, seesaws etc. This is the fastest growing sport for dogs.
- ♦ **CANICROSS.** Dog and handler are attached by a bungee line and take part in cross country running. An activity that will definitely keep you fit!
- ♦ **COMPETITIVE OBEDIENCE.** A highly skilled activity incorporating heelwork, stays, recall, retrieve, scent work etc. This is 'doggy dressage', very precise and satisfying when done well.
- ♦ **FREESTYLE.** An extension of heelwork to music in that the handler and dog can work away from each other and they can also use 'props' - boxes, cones, hoops etc.
- ♦ **GUNDOG WORK.** Flatcoats were bred as gundogs so this is what they naturally enjoy. You could simply enjoy the training or advance to a high standard if you wish.
- ♦ **HEELWORK TO MUSIC.** This is based on obedience heelwork but set to music. Handler and dog work in close proximity in any direction with the dog at the side, front or behind the handler and can incorporate twists and turns etc.



The Flatcoat is one of the earliest retriever to be developed in the British Isles. Known as 'gamekeepers dog' he proved to be popular on many large estates the length and breadth of the country with his heyday in the Edwardian period. He lost popularity in the early part of the 20th century in favour of the later developed Labrador Retriever but with the dedication of a few enthusiasts he was saved from extinction and is once again a popular gundog today.



He is a highly intelligent dog that can be trained to a standard to run in Field Trials and Working Tests or to work up on shoots. However, he has many other talents and can be equipped with the abilities to shine in other activities.

The Flatcoated Retriever Society encourages owners to give their dog 'something to do' in order to occupy his brain as well as his body. A dog that has been bred to work will quickly become 'employed' if he has nothing to do, which ultimately get him and possibly his owner in trouble.

He is an elegant, energetic dog with an independent streak so training is important. Doing 'something' with your dog will not only satisfy his need to use his brain but will build a strong bond between owner and dog that is something to be cherished.

The Society works very hard to keep the Flatcoat a 'dual purpose' dog which means he can equally excel in the show ring or as a gundog. What if neither of these activities sparks your enthusiasm as an owner? Obviously it is important to find an activity that you can enjoy.

- ♦ **RALLY.** This is like a combination of obedience and agility. Again the dog and handler follow a set course but it is primarily the dog working closely with the handler incorporating specific turns, slaloms, stays, recalls, certain jumps, ignoring food and other distractions as you progress up the rankings.
- ♦ **SEARCHING.** It is possible to train your dog as a Search and Rescue dog. A dog with a good nose like the Flatcoat can excel at this. There are also courses available to teach your

How can you find out about these activities?

The Flatcoated Retriever Society is here to help. We encourage owners to join our 'club' where you will find help and support on any subject Flatcoat related.

The Society produces a comprehensive information booklet which will be sent to you upon membership being accepted.

Who to Contact?

- Flatcoated Retriever Society: www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org
- The Active Flatcoat: www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org/working/the-active-flatcoat
- Agility: www.agilitynet.co.uk/
- Canicross Trail Runners: www.canicross.org.uk
- Competitive Obedience:

dog to find a specific scent rather than a specific object - dogs love this!

- **SHOWING.** The Flatcoat excels in the show ring. Shows are held up and down the country virtually all year - fun shows on a village green through open shows to championship shows the pinnacle of which of course, is Crufts.
- **WORKING TRIALS.** Originally based on Police Dog work this is an activity that not only trains your dog to be obedient including heelwork, stays, recalls etc. but also incorporates particular agility equipment and trains your dog to use his nose to find objects and to follow a track laid by a human and to locate objects dropped along the way.



The Field Trial Sub-Committee, which co-ordinates all of the "working" activities of the Society, is your first port of call and along with the Area Representatives across the country there are many people who are ready and willing to give advice or to point you in the right direction if you are interested in trying something you and your dog might enjoy.

Most of these activities can be taught 'just for fun' but you can also compete if you wish.

So if we have whetted your appetite for working your Flatcoat, please get in touch. We have created a page on our website entitled "The Active Flatcoat" where you can find more information about the activities listed here, and contact details for the members of the Society who will be able to help.

We look forward to hearing from you!



www.obediencetuk.net

- **National Search and Rescue Dog Association**
www.nsrda.org.uk
- **Rally:**
www.rallynews.co.uk/
- **Talking Dogs Rally:**
www.talkingdogsrally.co.uk
- **Talking Dogs Scentwork:**
www.talkingdogsscentwork.co.uk
- **The Kennel Club:**
www.thekennelclub.org.uk
The Kennel Club hosts many of the activities mentioned in this leaflet and much information can be found on their website.

Produced on behalf of
the Flatcoated Retriever Society

