

THE FLATCOATED RETRIEVER SOCIETY

PUPPY PAGE



The Flatcoated retriever makes a wonderful and loyal family pet. Originally the Flatcoated Retriever was bred as a gundog to retrieve dead and wounded game. They were bred for their kind and biddable nature and a soft and gentle mouth, both being essential for the task.

As well as being excellent family pets and fulfilling their function as gundogs, flatcoats have also been used for search and rescue, guide dogs, pat dogs, hearing dogs and dogs for the disabled.

Most flatcoats are highly intelligent with unfailing cheerfulness making them ideal companions for families with children, it needs to be noted that by nature flatcoats are lively, sometimes boisterous especially with children.



They are fun loving and never seem to grow up – they are often described as the ‘Peter Pan’ of retrievers. Flatcoats tend to be very lucky, they love to give and receive lots and lots of affection and attention. At times flatcoats can be very demanding of attention they will not be content to sit in another room whilst you are at home, they like to be with you often lying at your feet just touching you. As family pets they can be taught to compete successfully in obedience, agility and working trials as well as in the show ring.

There are several things that need to be considered before deciding to purchase a flatcoat puppy. Owning a puppy is a responsibility requiring a serious commitment from all members of the family for the lifetime of your flatcoat - a partnership that can last anything up to 10 - 12 years.



Flatcoats are water babies and mud lovers they have an inbuilt instinct for finding all the muddiest puddles. All flatcoats love water, if it is there your Flatcoat will find it and then get fully immersed in it.

Always carry an old towel in your car – for those watery encounters.



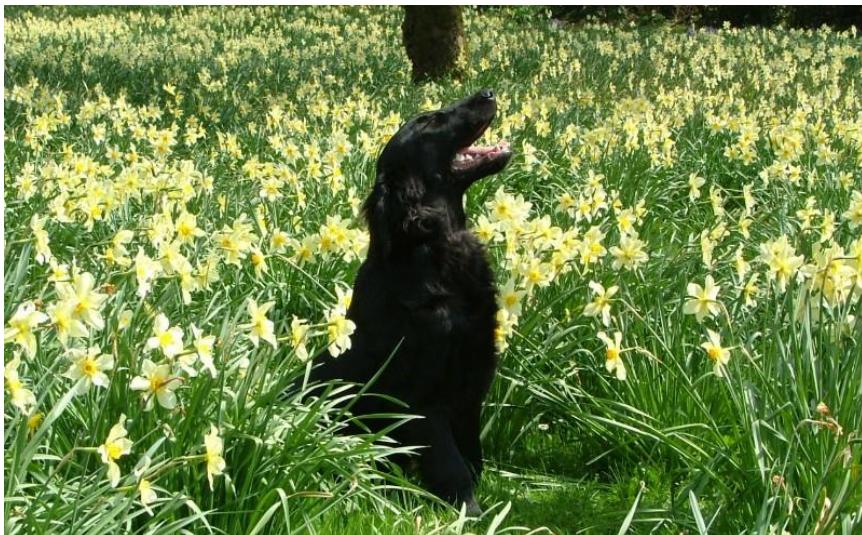
Faeces are a by-product of all dogs, which we all have to dispose of responsibly. It is one of the more unpleasant facts of dog ownership. As a responsible dog owner you must always clean up after your dog. Flatcoats are extremely outgoing and friendly by nature and you will need to train your puppy / adult flatcoat not to rush up to everyone and everything they meet – some people do not like dogs and not all dogs are friendly when greeted by an enthusiastic flatcoat.



A well-bred and properly reared puppy will cost upwards of £700 and this is only the beginning. Veterinary fees are expensive, so it makes sense to insure your dog, indeed most breeders will insist you do so.

A male Flatcoated Retriever will mature into a large dog, reaching 24" or more at the shoulder and can weigh anything up to 90lbs – adding up to a considerable lump that is quite likely to climb on your lap for a snuggle.

Flatcoats do not make good kennel dogs, they hate being away from you – they will not enjoy being shut in another room – mostly they enjoy following you around and settling at your feet or at your side. One of their most endearing traits is that they are always absolutely delighted to see you and the greeting you get will be full of enthusiasm.



Flatcoats are notorious for eating things they shouldn't – small clothing items such as socks must be kept safely away from your flatcoat – if swallowed these items can cause an obstruction in your flatcoat's

intestine which can cause the dog to become very sick, requiring lifesaving emergency treatment. Vigilance with small items of cloth and clothing is essential – a laundry bags for these smalls is a good safety measure.

One last vice - some Flatcoats seem to have inherited a ‘goat gene’ and will eat chunks out of your lawn, some like to nip the heads of your prettiest flowers and some like to empty the bird bath - if your garden is your pride and joy, a flatcoat may well put pay to all your hard work. You should always supervise a puppy in the garden as they can get into all manner of trouble if left to their own devices. Care should be taken not to allow your puppy access to poisonous plants and the garden must be securely fenced.



CHOOSING YOUR PUPPY:

Always buy from a breeder where you can see the mother with her puppies. This will give you an idea of how the puppies will turn out. It should be possible to meet the father of the puppies – this may entail a visit to his home, but it will be well worth it.



Make sure that both the sire and the dam of the puppies have the appropriate health checks and that the results are satisfactory, and ask to see the certificates.

☺ Please click here for an explanation of the health schemes. [https://www.flatcoated – retriever-society.org/health/health-testing](https://www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org/health/health-testing)

Reputable breeders will have their puppies checked out by their veterinary surgeon prior to sale. You may be asked to sign a sales contract which will suggest that you get your new puppy checked by your own vet as soon as possible.

It is very important to give very serious consideration to pet insurance. Most breeders will provide a 4-6 week cover-note for your new puppy – it is recommended that you take out insurance for at least the first year of life.

It is important to give consideration to which sex puppy you would like – Before looking at puppies it is a good idea to contact the Flatcoated Retriever Society and find out who your area representative is or identify a reputable breeder in your area and go and visit some adult dogs to get an idea of what to expect when your puppy grows up.



When you visit the litter have a good look at the puppies' living quarters. It should be scrupulously clean and spacious enough for the puppies to have a rough and tumble. It is important to establish that the breeder is making sure the puppies are well socialised.

The puppies should be bright and active, with clear eyes and no signs of illness. They should be bright, friendly and confident when awake – remember puppies tire very quickly, so do not be surprised if they suddenly go off to bed to sleep.

If yours is a family with very young children, do not go for the cute, shy puppy sitting on his own in the corner. Opt for the middle-of-the-road puppy that interacts well with his siblings, is lively and happy without being too dominant, bold or brash. A Flatcoat puppy should be confident and interested to explore his surroundings.

Be guided by the breeder about each individual puppy's characteristics. The breeder will have spent many hours with the puppies and will be able to advise you about each puppy's temperament. What may appear to be a quiet puppy may be the life and soul of the litter who has just had a mad half hour and worn himself out! It is worth remembering also that individuals behave differently whilst in the litter their natural behaviour will develop over the first few weeks.

Make sure you are given all the Kennel Club documentation and copies of all appropriate health clearances with the puppy. In addition a reputable breeder will provide an advice sheet and a diet sheet. Stick to the

diet suggested by the breeder until the puppy has settled well into his new home before you make any changes.

It is always a good idea to buy (borrow from the library) all the books you can on Flatcoats and puppies in general. Flatcoats are quite an unusual breed and only about 1,200 are born each year. As with all breeds there are unscrupulous breeders out there – bide your time – do your homework – get in touch with one of the breed club's litter secretaries – in short be prepared to wait for the right puppy.

CARING FOR YOUR NEW PUPPY:

Training should start as soon as you arrive home. Have one set of rules that the whole family adhere too. Puppies, like young children, need routine and firmly established ground rules.

Flatcoats are good with children, but they are playful and have needle sharp teeth – your puppy should be supervised by an adult when playing with young children or other dogs. It is important to make sure your children are taught to be caring and responsible with dogs. A puppy is not a toy and should be treated with respect.

Provide the puppy with its own bed and do not allow the children to disturb the puppy when it is sleeping. The bed should be the puppy's own private space where it can rest in peace and quiet. Do not allow young children to pick up the puppy.

Make sure they are sitting on the floor and then the puppy can be placed in the child's lap for a cuddle. Do not allow young children to feed the puppy or disturb the puppy while it is eating. Do not allow yanking, pulling or tugging, a young puppy's bones are delicate and not properly formed until it is several months old. Damage done at this stage could have disastrous effects for the rest of the puppy's life.



THE FIRST NIGHT:

The first night is always a little fraught. It will be the first time your puppy has been separated from his mother and siblings, so expect him to cry a little and do not be unduly alarmed when he does so. Be calm and matter of fact, do not excite the puppy and make sure it has relieved itself before putting it to bed.

Most breeders will have given you a small piece of blanket with the scent of the litter on it, that you can put inside his bed and which will help to settle the puppy. Provide a warm comfortable blanket such as Vet Bed, which is hard-wearing and easily cleaned. If you have purchased a blanket or bed for your puppy most breeders will be happy to place this in with the litter for a day or so before you collect your puppy.



Place the puppy's bed in a comfortable, warm place that can be easily cleaned, such as a kitchen or utility room. Dogs are den animals and so prefer their bed to be tucked in a corner. Some puppies will already be 'paper trained' by the breeder. A couple of sheets of newspaper near the door into the garden will give your puppy an idea of where to 'go'. Don't expect him to be clean overnight.

HOUSE TRAINING:

As a rule Flatcoats learn quite quickly and most are house trained by around 4 – 5 months. Puppies are not really capable of controlling bladder function much before this time, so anticipation and vigilance on your part is of prime importance. As soon as you arrive home with your new pup carry him straight to the spot in the garden and stay with him until he has performed, then make a fuss of him, then he can go and explore his new home. The odd accident is an inevitable part of house training your puppy - Remember, prevention is better than cure - View accidents as a lack of vigilance on your part.

Times to watch are after a sleep, a bout of play and after a meal. Take the puppy outside to his spot in the garden. The use of a key word like 'wee wee' helps. The actual words are irrelevant; it's the association of the act and repetition that matters.



Remember that these dogs are retrievers, so it would be going against their nature if they were never allowed to pick things up. Many are great 'carriers' of household objects: toys or one's arm or sleeve. Your puppy will look the picture of innocence, but do not be fooled !

All puppies chew: It is a natural process that enables baby teeth to be expelled. Gentle removal of an unsuitable item and substitution of the puppy's own toy will leave your dog without any feeling of having committed a major crime. Your puppy is an instinctive animal. There is no point in getting cross if your puppy chews things if he is unsupervised for long periods. The Devil makes work for idle paws! If you do have to be away from home for more than a couple of hours, you will need to arrange for a puppy-sitter.

Though Flatcoats are usually extremely biddable and kind to people, children and other animals, as youngsters they can be lively and boisterous and appear to be in trouble more than they are out of it. We strongly recommend socialisation or obedience classes for you and your puppy to learn to become responsible members of society. If you are interested in working or showing your flatcoat you can attend gundog or ringcraft classes. Your breeder will be able to put you in touch with someone living locally who can advise you of local classes. You can contact the FCBS for details of your local area representative who will be able to advise you on all aspects of flatcoat ownership, alternatively you can look on this website for the list of area representatives.



The very first lesson should be for the puppy to learn his own name and to come when called. There is nothing more infuriating than a dog that won't do so. When the pup is feeling insecure in his new home, he won't venture far from your side. Call him and make a fuss of him when he bounds over and give him a treat reward. He will soon get the idea and learn his name and 'come'. Hopefully by the time he has gained the confidence to go off exploring, the lesson will have been learnt and the thought of a treat will bring him back.

If he won't come back, keep calm and praise him when he finally comes, even though it may have taken him ages! If he is told off at this point he will associate the punishment with coming to you, not the fact that it was in his own time.

NEVER hit a young puppy; violence solves nothing and your dog will associate pain to being with you and it will take weeks of patience to win him round again.

Teach your puppy to accept you as his new pack-leader and that what you say goes. Use short one-word commands, but try to make learning fun.

Exercise:

Initially, a play in your garden is quite sufficient for your new puppy.

After he has received his vaccinations, start with 10 to 15 minutes exercise off the lead in a safe area allowing him to set the pace.

Exercise can be increased as the puppy grows, but very gradually. Remember your puppy is growing at an alarming rate and over-exercise and too boisterous play can cause damage to joints and cartilage later on.



Take it slowly at first, and by the time your dog is 12 to 18 months old he will be able to take all the exercise you care to give him, and more.

FEEDING:

Most flatcoats love food and will eat almost anything so take care to keep hazardous items out of reach – like with small children they will open it and drink or eat it.

The breeder of your puppy should have provided you with a feeding regime and details of which food your puppy is used to. Continuing with this food is important for the first few weeks any changes should be gradually introduced.

An adult flatcoat should ideally have the daily ration of food divided into at least 2 meals. Flatcoats like most large deep chested breeds are susceptible to gastric dilatation and torsion (bloat) which is a life threatening condition.

- ☺ Please click here for information on torsion and how to avoid it <https://www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org/images/stories/health/bloat%20by%20chris%20hewison%282%29.pdf>
- ☺ <https://www.flatcoated-retriever-society.org/images/gdvnews.pdf>

VACCINATIONS:

Consult your veterinary surgeon, as vaccination programs differ between practices. Until the last injection has taken effect, the puppy should not be exercised in public places, but can be socialised in a variety of places whilst carried.

WORMING:

The breeder should have wormed your puppy at least twice.

Even so, it makes sense to be certain that children wash their hands after playing with the puppy and before eating. Worm again every couple of weeks until 3 months, then once or twice a year as a precaution. Ask your Vet for a recommended brand of wormer.

Grooming:

Groom your puppy every day. This not only helps to keep him clean, but also establishes a bond between the two of you.

Get your puppy used to having his ears looked at, his feet picked up and his teeth checked on a daily basis, so that any veterinary examination will not be too much of an ordeal.

SUMMARY:

With just a little effort and training, your puppy will mature into a wonderful companion and a fully fledged member of the family that you can take anywhere and whom you will be proud to own.
Don't forget to keep the breeder informed of your puppy's progress, a photograph is always appreciated.
Should the unthinkable happen and your circumstances change so that you are unable to keep your puppy or older dog, please remember to inform the breeder in the first instance.

FCRS LITTER BOOK – CONTACTS:

For information and advice about the breed and details of people who have puppies for sale please contact:

Jenny Bird – Tel: 0116 279 3203 – Email: shiredale1@btinternet.com

Or

Shirley Johnson – Tel: 01638 718231

Please note that this service is given free of charge to all people who breed a litter of Flatcoats (subject to fulfilling the health and welfare requirements on the FCRS code of ethics) any donation towards the FCRS Health Fund or Rescue and Rehousing would be gratefully received from the breeder and/or purchasers.

If you feel that you would like to give a home to an older dog, or if you are unable to continue caring for your Flatcoat, contact the Rescue, Rehoming and Welfare:

Jenny Morgan – Tel: 01686630692 – Email: tillytrouble@sky.com

