

# Newsletter

April 2022

## Dog Training Club, 53 years in Knightswood

### Jim McIntosh a true community hero!

The Dog Training Club in Knightswood was started 53 years ago by Jim and his late wife Sandra to help the community look after their dogs. Their first venue for the club was in the old Community Centre on Dykebar Avenue in 1969. When the new Knightswood Community Centre opened round the corner in 1970, Jim's was one of the first groups into the venue.

Jim and Sandra went to dog training classes in Govan in the 1960's. They were run by the charismatic trainer Nancy McLaren



*Members of the Dog Training Club 2022*

who had classes all over Glasgow mainly in community centres. He learned his dog training techniques from Nancy.

Jim and Sandra stayed in Knightswood for 35 years before emigrating to Bellside in North Lanarkshire. He moved principally to get a house with more land, so he could train his dogs. However, he continued to return to his spiritual home of Knightswood every Thursday for his dog training classes hail, rain, or snow. Sadly, Sandra passed away in 2006. However, Jim continued with the Club, "it is what Sandra would have wanted." Jim has now three very able trainers; Mary, Ethel and Shona who help him with the club.

The club for Jim ***"is not just about dog training but about creating a family atmosphere where people can chat, become friends, and swap dog stories."***



## KNIGHTSWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

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***Jim and Harley (Collie) got a third place at the Crufts 2022 Dog Show.***

Jim will be 80 years young in December and is still going strong. We wish him many more happy years with the Dog Training Club.

When not training dogs, Jim has had a varied and interesting working life. He has worked in; the Hillman Imp factory in Linwood, Drysdale Pumps, John Browns on the QE2, Yarrows on submarines and warships. When the shipyards closed, he became a 'clippie' (ticket collector) on the buses with the Glasgow Corporation, then graduated to become a driver. His final job was a van driver with Morton's Rolls in Anniesland. Jim has a lifetime of stories to tell, one that is particularly amusing and interesting happened when he worked for John Brown's Shipyard. When a local church needed a large cross for outside its building, the church members, and good workers of John Brown duly obliged and made one for the occasion. This saintly act was kept quiet from the management and smuggled over the back wall of the shipyard. A true gift to God! Twenty years ago, just after retirement, Jim suffered a major heart attack and his 'ticker' actually stopped. He was in Wishaw General Hospital where he was "thumped back to the land of the living" by a vigilant nurse who gave him CPR and saved his life.

He remembers with fondness some of his champion dogs, Kes the German Shepherd, Dallas, and Breeze - all Collies. He has represented Scotland eight times at Crufts at the NEC Birmingham. Most recently when Jim and Harley (Collie) got a third place at the Crufts 2022 Dog Show.



Jim has travelled the length and breadth of the UK going to dog shows and competing. Jim says he loves going to dog events, not just for the competition but to meet old friends. He states that "meeting other owners you learn more about dogs in general and canine behaviour and taking your dog to events or classes helps them to keep better socialised. A lot of dog events are run in aid of a good cause, and often support a charity of some kind." Jim jokes "you and your dog get to go somewhere interesting, and you meet all kinds of people and wonderful dogs. Dog shows are a great way of keeping you up to date with things that are going on in the canine world."

*Jim with his beloved Harley at Crufts 2022 winning a very deserved third place*

Jim has been training and showing dogs for most of his adult life. He is a well-known and respected trainer who has kept up with the modern methods of training dogs. Jim remembers the days of Strathclyde Regional Council when he was involved in the Road Safety Campaign and dog competitions involving over a hundred people. Donald Dewar the MP for the area (former First Minister of Scotland) used to present the prizes for the high standards of excellence achieved by dogs at an annual dinner dance in Knightswood Community Centre.

The Knightswood Dog Training Club has Kennel Club Championship status, one of only 5 clubs in Scotland with this honour. They do their own certificates for their 8-week courses as well as the more advanced Kennel Club Puppy and Good Citizens Bronze, Silver and Gold courses. **The Dog Training Club is on Thursday 7.00 – 9.30pm at Knightswood Community Centre.** For more information, please contact: Jim McIntosh on 01698 860358.

## Personal Profile of Val Gray (Treasurer of Knightswood Community SCIO.)



Val first came to Knightswood Community Centre in 1996. She joined the KCA Step to Health Group where she made good friends and Val still meets up with them. She was soon asked to become the treasurer of the group which she did for many years. One year later Marion Lamont the treasurer of the Centre's Advisory Group retired. Val was immediately headhunted for this post. She became firm friends with Rita the secretary of the Advisory Group who showed Val the ropes.

Val moved with her family to Knightswood from Scotstoun when she was aged nine in 1963 and went to Knightswood Primary School then Knightswood Secondary School. She sat the last of her O' Levels on a Friday in May 1970 and started, on the following Monday, an office juniors post with the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) in Byres Road. Val recounts the story how she, aged 15, fell for one of the most common practical jokes, when she was asked to go a message for 'a long stand in Boots Pharmacy'. She was made to hang about waiting for 30 minutes in Boots, before someone let her in on the joke. After a few years Val became a teller with the RBS. In 1973, Val left and joined the Clydesdale Bank in the audit department. Her job involved resolving differences between inter-bank cheques and giro credits. She remained in the same department and was promoted to Office Manager supervising over 20 staff.

Val married Stephen at the Martha Street registry office on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1989. Val's wedding reception was at the Esquire House followed by a honeymoon in Turkey. The bride and groom arrived at a small remote town called Turgutreis, which in 1989 only had two hotels. Val was not a fan and would have preferred a more cosmopolitan resort like Bodrum with some nightlife and shopping! She did enjoy her trip to Ephesus, the most famous archaeological tourist attractions in Turkey. Val remembers walking down the well-preserved 2,000-year-old Roman streets, gazing at the monuments and marvelling at the Library of Celsus. Val is well travelled in Europe with trips to Tenerife, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. Her favourite UK travel destination is Northumberland where she has spent so many wonderful family holidays in the coastal villages of Seahouses and Beadnell. She loves nothing better than walking along the sandy beaches with views of Bamburgh Castle.



*Val and Stephen's Wedding Photo*

In 1991, Val had a baby boy who is called Ewan. After nearly 20 years with the Clydesdale Bank, she took a redundancy package to concentrate her energies on looking after her son. Once Ewan was at Bankhead Primary School, Val got a part-time job in Safeway supermarket in Knightswood Shopping Centre. The management recognised her financial skills and gave her a job in the cash office. However, the part-time job was beginning to turn into a full time commitment. Her priority was her son, so she moved posts within Safeway to a Checkout Operator.



Val's dad was called Patrick Fergusson whose family came from Balquhiddy in Perthshire, the resting place of the Scottish folk hero Rob Roy MacGregor. In the Balquhiddy Kirkyard there are many Fergussons and MacGregors; maybe Val is a distant relative of Rob Roy! Sadly, in 2006, Val's mum Morag became ill. For the next twelve years Val became a carer for her mum. In the later years of her life Morag unfortunately had dementia and Val remembers her mum, who was brought up in the Church of Scotland, "swearing like a trooper" which was so out of character. Val states "that dementia is so heart-breaking for families however it can have a few humorous moments". Managing to help support her mum to stay in her own home during those difficult years is something Val is particularly proud of. Val says that "my mum never wanted to go into a care home, and I am so glad that we managed to keep her in her own house, comfortable and safe".



*Val & Stephen at her mum's 90th Birthday*



*First Game of the season at Ibrox 2021*

Anyone who has met Val, knows she is a big Glasgow Rangers football fan. She inherited her brother's season ticket when he passed away in 2013 and she goes to every home game at Ibrox. Rangers winning their 55<sup>th</sup> Scottish League in 2021 and the team's progress and success in Europa League has been Val's high point in the past 12 months. For her there is no better atmosphere and excitement than when Rangers are playing at Ibrox in a European tie. Val laughs that the only book she has ever read was Stephen Gerrard's autobiography. That was of course before he became manager of Aston Villa.

To relax Val likes nothing better than watching at home the soaps, dramas and quiz shows with a cup of coffee. Her husband tells her to 'stop watching that rubbish'! She of course doesn't take him on and does her own thing. Val jokes "everyone knows that is what a successful marriage is about, especially one that lasts 33 years". Stephen has not been well recently, and Val is looking forward to him getting fit and healthy again. Especially envisaging another holiday to the picturesque villages and sea air of Northumberland.

Val has been the Treasurer of the Knightswood Community Centre for 25 years. She was involved in the lengthy process of transferring the building to community management by Glasgow City Council. She is a very committed community volunteer and Trustee of the Knightswood Community SCIO. "The Centre has been a large part of my life and it is great to see all the groups returning. Hopefully by the end of the summer we will have the Café opened up again" says Val.



*The beautiful beach at Bamburgh Castle*