



## NEWS LETTER AUGUST 2015

From the Chair: The lead article this month was submitted by Charles Pietersen of Chadrecami Bullmastiffs and is well worth going through. Thank you Charles for your contribution.

The CBC promotes and supports all the KUSA Disciplines – CBA, DMA & APT, Obedience, Agility & Canine Good Citizen and would like to see more Bullmastiffs involved in these sports.

### Why I Train My Bullmastiff.

I wonder how many people have actually thought or uttered these words. If one is to judge by the number of dog owners who take their dogs to training then millions of dog owners must believe these words as they certainly practice this policy.

I was born the eldest into my human family, who owned four very different cross-breed dogs when they brought me home. From that day to this, almost 70 years later, I have never been without the company of a canine sibling or friend. In fact as a child I thought that every child was born with a dog somehow attached; owning a dog was that natural to me.

Formal dog training back in those days was very scarce in the good old Union of South Africa and non-existent north of the Zambezi where I grew up. Yet every farmer and every hunter had his trained dog, my father was no exception so the concept of training dogs for me was as natural as training a child. Every dog I ever owned was trained a-la my methods and standards.

When my children came to school going age a great amount of effort went into selecting the correct school, subjects, sports etc., etc. This caused me to give some thought to the training of my dogs: was their training correct, was it efficient, why not go to dog school or, horrors, at least send them there; after all they were entrusted with my precious children as playmates, protectors and yes as tutors. Where else would "Townie" kids learn anything about animals?

After much thought and research, coupled with the fact that after years of saving, we, as a family, owned our first pure bred dog, a male Bullmastiff, a breed we had researched and that I had a secret love affair with since I saw my first specimen at the age of 9 years old, a magnificent fawn male with a head the size of a milking pail. I was hooked! The decision was made I would engage in formal training of my new pal and I would receive training at the same time. The task of finding a school was now at hand, bear in mind that the internet was still many years in the future and this search proved to be no mean task, especially as I was selective about training methods and I wanted to receive training as well. Eventually a school was located but, "..... You are welcome but Bullmastiffs are a bit thick (Speaker is being as kind as she can) and we have never had much success and they cannot stay the course anyway it is too much for them". The thought immediately crossed my mind

that she sounded like my old high school principal commenting on my educational prospects at a parents function. Well I had proved him wrong and I will prove this person wrong, the Bully snorted in agreement.

We went to the school which turned out to be a very good one and we rewrote their thoughts and training programme. The theoretical programme was 6 months but only very few dogs of selected breeds ever achieved this the rest took a year or more. Not only did Bully crack the course in 6 months, he did it cum-laude and set records still to be beaten. This started a love affair with formal dog training that still exists after more than 30 years and 11 trained Bullmastiffs. It has resulted in formal and informal study of the subject and afforded huge challenges and joy.

### 1. Why train a dog.

In reality this is like saying why educate a child, why indeed. Training a dog, your best pal, is far more than just so that he will go outside on command or stop scratching in company when he is instructed to desist. All dogs exist in a formal structure that is very disciplined and mostly not understood by the majority of dog owners. Training addresses this in helping the dog owner to better understand his canine. The benefits not only accrue to the owner but also to the dog, the dogs love training as they get to spend undivided time with the entity in their lives that they are prepared to die for. Beat that for commitment if you can! Training of a dog is every bit as important to his future as education is to a child's future. There is something special in watching a dog do what he is trained to do and even more fixating, is watching a trained dog do what he was bred to do, watching the instinct combine with training deliver the expected result.



Zulu and our three month old granddaughter. Of his own initiative he assumed the role of guardian and would stay alongside her whilst she was in the garden. He slept in the doorway of her bedroom when she napped during the day and again at night. She is today at the age of 4 years old, totally fearless of large dogs and comfortably handles the huge animals.

### 2. Who should train the Bullmastiff?

The Bullmastiff makes an excellent family dog as he accepts the whole family and is particularly good with children and tolerant of their antics. This said and done the Bullmastiff will consider one person as his master. Whilst not a true one-man-dog in the strict sense of the term the Bullmastiff comes very close to that concept. It is vital to successful training that the Bully is trained by the one he considers to be his master. Having said this, it is the exceptional handler of the feminine gender who successfully trains a male Bullmastiff. In my experience most ladies do not have the physical strength or the level of dominance required for the task. Ladies very effectively train Bullmastiff bitches. For the same reason this is not a dog to be trained by a child. Once trained he can be handled by ladies and children very successfully.



Two trained Bullies handled by ladies in protection work. Both of these dogs were lethal if their handlers were threatened. The red is a bitch and the fawn is a dog. He developed a very respectful reputation amongst the guards at the security complex where he lived yet here he appears almost disinterested

### 3. Why is the Bullmastiff considered less trainable?

The short answer to this is “I do not know”. My dogs have been pitted against most breeds in South Africa in the training field and they have not only held their own but out-trained as many breeds in the obedience field and out-worked all of them in the protection field.

It is important to understand the breed regarding training. This is a breed of dominant character, strong willed and at times obstinate with a pain threshold that leaves many other breeds far behind in the dust. It is a waste of time trying to train this breed with harsh methods, beatings simply indicate that the dog has won and you may as well give up.

Do not confuse strong willed with lack of intelligence. The Bullmastiff is both intelligent and strong willed and can at times be a challenge to train because he out-thinks the trainer.

Be realistic in what you expect from your Bullmastiff. He was never intended to be as agile as a Border collie, as fast as a Greyhound or to jump as effortlessly as a Rhodesian Ridgeback. He can do all these, but within his ability and subject to his build.

### 4. Let's start training.

4.1. You have just brought home your 10 week old puppy. Everyone is oohing and aahing and making the most ridiculous noises and puppy loves it. This is good but must end there. Remember where this pup will be in 10 months' time. He will weigh very close to 50kg and stand close to three quarters of a metre high! Much too late to start training. Training for this adorable pup starts on day one when you bring him home. Show him where he sleeps; he needs a warm, dry, draft less, comfortable place to sleep either indoors or out of doors. This is his permanent place. Show him where his water is and where he will be fed. Introduce him to the rules of the family and home. The trick here is consistency, consistency, consistency 24 hours per day every day of his life. Add to that love in abundance and scrupulous fairness. In the company of other pets respect their inter-pet hierarchy do not attempt to impose your hierarchy on the pets. The temptation is to cuddle him on the sofa but when he weighs 60kg and cuddles up to a VIP guest on the same sofa it may not seem too good an idea!

4.2. The next task is to house train if that has not been done. This must be carried out in the same attitude that will be applied to his later training. Give him a hefty clout whilst bellowing OUT and you have lost him for good.

4.3. Help him to understand who his Alpha-person is. For this breed this is vital as this is the person who will ultimately train the dog, his “Master” if you like. The easiest way to accomplish this is via the food bowl. Let puppy work for his food. Initially this will only

be waiting until he is told to eat and as he makes himself at home the working becomes more involved, say sit, down, roll etc. The idea is to imprint on his mind that his master, not the children or house help, controls the food and is thus at the top of the needs triangle, in our terms he is alpha. The Bullmastiff, if not “Dominated” in this way, will very quickly take control and run the family. I have seen this happen with a 9 week old pup that totally dominated and terrorised the family.

Please do not attempt to bond the Bullmastiff with a child as “master”, with a view to the child doing the training. It will not work. A 25kg child cannot hope to handle a 50 to 60 kg dog during the training phase, nor does a child have the inbuilt level of discipline and dominance required to master the dog. Our two year old granddaughter easily instructs our dogs to go outside and they obey because they are already trained.



Monty at 10 months and our 4 year old granddaughter.

Monty is still in training and whilst he obeys her instructions and loves to play with her there is no way that she can train him

- 4.4. The Bullmastiff needs extensive puppy training. This training should commence as close to 6 weeks of age as possible and must include socialisation with other dogs, other animals and other humans. This is a very important period in the life of a dog and is largely neglected in the training sphere. This phase of a dog’s life sets him up for life and determines his demeanour to a very large degree. A well socialised dog is comfortable in the presence of other dogs, humans and other noisy chaotic surroundings. The school where my dogs are trained offer a training prospective starting with puppy training, which lasts at least 3 months, right up to advanced obedience, advanced protection work, and all the field work disciplines. The Bully is capable of excelling in all of them. Contrary to popular concept despite having a short muzzle the Bully has a well-developed sense of smell and successfully copes with tracking by scent
- 4.5. Whilst all the above is on-going the pup must be trained to a lead. Do this as soon as possible in short stints of only a few minutes at first getting longer and longer until the pup is comfortable to walk on the lead. Once this stage is achieved the pup is ready for formal puppy classes. This should take place no later than 3 to 4 months of age. Serious obedience training can follow the puppy training, with the dog being no less than 6 months old.
5. What training methods should be employed?

I have successfully trained all my dogs using “Positive Reinforcement” methods and highly recommend this method for training the Bullmastiff. Only one of my dogs has been trained by this method using food. Remember it is the reward that is given for doing something

correctly that counts. Food is only one method of reward. It is my experience that although the Bullmastiff is a powerful, tough, hard headed, hardnosed dog he responds particularly well to the gentler side of human nature. Harsh training measures quickly get his back up. Do not confuse harshness with firmness. Firmness and love are two prerequisites for training this breed.

- 5.1 Be aware of the dogs disposition during training. The breed is not well disposed to mindless repetition. As soon as I perceive the dog to be bored I slip out of the class and play, only to return 5 minutes later.
- 5.2 The Bullmastiff is an intelligent animal and will grasp most exercises at least as quickly as his handler, once he can do it he is bored and wants to do something else, so training exercises must be varied regularly. As the dog progresses so boredom becomes less of an issue. It is important for the handler to discern between boredom and obstinacy. Both are characteristics of the breed. I remember in a test on an occasion being left walking around the field on my own as Bully dear had had enough and decided to remain in the down position despite all my commands to the contrary. This was pure obstinacy and was rectified by a drill session on lead to reinforce my dominance



Kiara at the stand.

Kiara is advanced obedience trained to be fully off lead. She loves the agility course is good at "Squaring" and learning to track by scent. She is capable of "send away" exercises but only does them under protest as she does not like them. She is protection trained.

Possibly just a word here; It is a waste of time trying to force a Bullmastiff to do something, at best you will become frustrated and disillusioned at worst you will need the services of the orthopaedic surgeon to sort your back out. The better way is to create a diversion, get his cooperation and then move on.

- 5.3 There is a very distinct "challenging of authority" stage that occurs at around 11 months of age. It is almost as if the dog knows he is a teenager and he should be difficult. Here patience and perseverance is the order of the day as it does not last forever. At around two years of age he gets his "brains" and is the most lovable, co-operative and welcome dog to have around. By this time he is well trained and only needs to be spoken to quietly. I have my dogs in advanced protection work and only need to command them in a normal speaking voice if they are working close at hand.

6. The advantages of training.

I cannot think of having a Bullmastiff, a giant breed of immense strength, highly intelligent, capable of amazing feats of strength and courage and not training him.

- 6.1. One of the spin offs of training that I discovered was companionship. No I mean COMPANIONSHIP! No matter where I go I have a retinue of dogs behind me, go to

make a cup of tea, dogs in tow, go to the toilet, dogs lie outside, walk to the gate, dogs in tow. On one occasion whilst working under the Land Rover I had to yell for assistance as I was totally surrounded by dogs and I could not get out as one had attempted to crawl on top of me to see if I was OK, we both became jammed.

- 6.2. Peace of mind. I know if I walk down the street that I can talk to the dogs and have them under total control should another dog be met or a stranger approach. One of the advantages of having a protection trained dog is that no matter where we go together I have a trained, capable and effective Commando force on hand in disguise should the need arise. I have had the occasion to see my dog in full attack with all paws off the ground. Whilst in this condition I called him off. The miscreant was struck on the chest by 55kg of dog at full speed, was flattened and could not prove to the Police that he had been bitten as there were no teeth marks.
- 6.3. At home. When trained the level of obedience makes for very peaceful living. The dogs can be allowed privileges and can be easily controlled thereafter. My dogs are trained to come by name and fetch their bones on a Saturday afternoon they then spend the afternoon having a close communal chew. We have never experienced any aggression by any of the dogs.



Saturday afternoon is bone chewing time. Electra, a bitch develops a good froth chewing a bone

- 6.4. Be assured that an untrained Bullmastiff is easily capable of taking even a large, strong man where he does not want to go. Choke chains and what they are supposed to achieve has not yet been written into the behavioural handbook issued to all Bullmastiff puppies by their mothers when they go to their forever homes. I know this from personal experience having had to shout to the person, the object of the dog's attention, on a public street to please run away. He did so with alacrity thus avoiding a prospectively ugly experience.
- 7.0 See you on the training field – you may just be surprised at how much fun it can be!

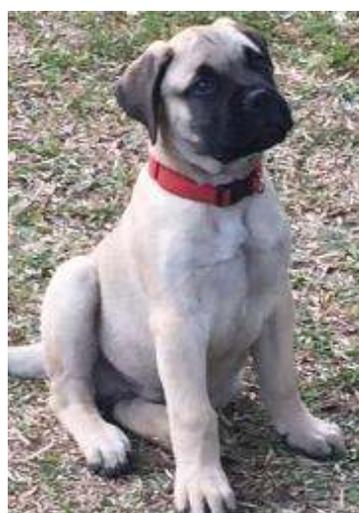
Charles Pietersen

August 2014

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# SALUTING THE FAWNS





"Gibbs"

"Bruce"

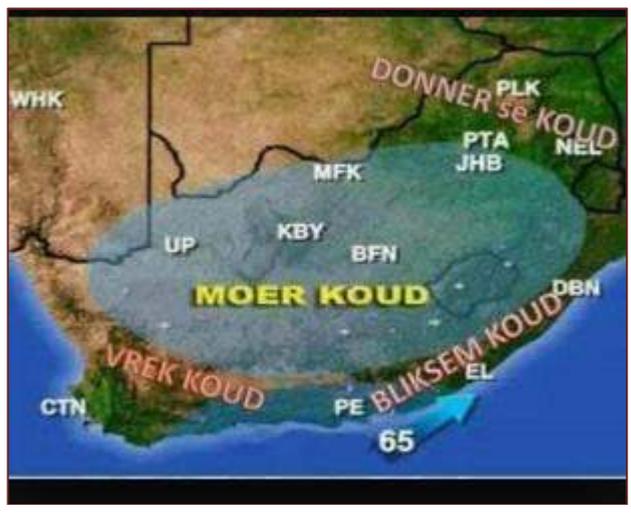
And welcome to new members Roslind Wesso with her pup "Gibbs" & Mark Linley's "Bruce"

### KZN JUNIOR KENNEL CLUB, ZULULAND KENNEL CLUB & N.NATAL KENNEL CLUB

Congratulations to Chizelhurst Checkmate of Haaita who earned himself 3 CC's, 2 BOB's & a Working Group 3<sup>rd</sup> position all in one weekend under both local & overseas Judges.



AND AS WE SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER – HERE IS A BIT OF LIGHT HEARTED AMUSEMENT



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### SHOW POINTS TO DATE

Western Cape:

Adult points:

Ch. La Gratitude Durango Duke BA	= 64
LaGratitude Atticus Earl	= 36
Sanniesebos Spooner	= 36
LaGratitude Boo Radley	= 11
Ch. Blue Violetjemma	= 4
Lee of Keera	= 2

Puppy points:

Zeus of Olympus	= 59
Sanniesebos Suri Sukani of Chizelhurst	= 28
McHelm Duke	= 5

**Mpumalanga**Adult points:

Ch. Bullsaints Elder Gjordur	= 144
Juohn Don Raphael	= 114
Juohn Lord Rufus	= 94
Juohn Donna Venelia	= 70
Ch.Juohn Donna Arabella	= 60

**Gauteng**

Chizelhurst Chinga	= 40
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**KZN**Adult points:

Chizelhurst Checkmate of Haaita	=139
Ch. LaGratitude African Dream of Haaita DMA	= 63

All participants are responsible for submitting their own points from the different Disciplines. There will be no credits without confirming documents.

*The information in this magazine is confined to its members. Statements or opinions may be expressed in this communication that is personal to the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the Club.*

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**SILENCE IS GOLDEN.....UNLESS YOU HAVE A PUPPY.....THEN SILENCE IS VERY SUSPICIOUS.....VERY VERY SUSPICIOUS**

