

## "HEARING MATES" SOUTH HAMPSHIRE BRANCH

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The South Hampshire Branch of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is always looking for volunteers to help raise funds, become Puppy Socialisers, fundraisers or sponsors for any of the dog training needs listed on the charity website.

If you feel able to help in any way connected with support for Hearing Dogs do please contact Secretary, Barbara Pink. Your help, however small is always greatly appreciated by the Deaf or hard of hearing recipients of the dogs who are trained to help them.

**Next Hearing Mates - Spring 2011** - please send your items no later than  
**Monday 28 March 2011**

Send to the editor

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**Email:** [ann@circularsound.co.uk](mailto:ann@circularsound.co.uk)

*Disclaimer - 'Hearing Mates' has been produced by the South Hants Fundraising Branch of Hearing Dogs, and the views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Charity.*

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is a charity that trains dogs to alert deaf people to sounds such as the alarm clock, doorbell and smoke alarm. The dogs alert by touching with a paw – then leading their owner back to the sound. For sounds like the smoke alarm the dogs alert then lie down to indicate danger. As well as practical help, hearing dogs give increased confidence, security and independence. They are free of charge to the deaf applicant. Whenever possible, the dogs are selected from rescue centres. They are also donated by breeders and members of the public, with the remainder coming from the Charity's own breeding scheme.



**Hearing Dogs**  
*for Deaf People*

Registered Charity Number 293358

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## "Hearing Mates"

Autumn 2010

SOUTH

HAMPSHIRE

Issue Seventeen

HEARING DOGS  
for  
DEAF PEOPLE

BRANCH

### Greetings to Everyone from the Chair.

This year we have had a memorable and busy high summer and hopefully will have an Indian summer lasting at least until half term!

Welcome to the branch all the new socialisers and a new speaker in Alton who has moved into the area from up country, it will be great to have someone to cover the most distant talks. I look forward to meeting you all at some of our future events.

An initiative from the Grange, implemented and financed locally by our Regional Fund Raiser Sue Pellow, was a Paws for Coffee event as a Thank You to all our volunteers and supporters; it was great that so many of you were able to come. Apart from being a very happy occasion it had a bonus of encouraging more people to hold their own Paws for Coffee, which we hope will become annual events.

Thank you everyone who supported the 16th Branch coffee morning and special thanks to Simon Batten - guardian and erector of our tents - who lent several gazebos to keep stallholders and their wares protected from both rain and sun. We were really glad to have the protection and hope they will be available next year. We were delighted to have Margaret Tillyer, Jean Lacey and Betty Roesler with us because all were founder members of our Branch. Margaret and Betty were also recipients of very early Hearing Dogs. The flowers presented to Betty were to celebrate her 90th birthday. (Photo page 3)

I've recently been involved in research by an M. A. student into the best ways of following up the satisfaction of people newly fitted with hearing aids; the options being face to face, telephone or written interviews. Thank you to the local volunteers who agreed to be involved. I'll let you know the result in the next issue of Hearing Mates!!

Not recommended but an interesting experience is to do a collection alone. It was a financial and PR success, which I attribute to the pop up a really useful piece of equipment.



## Report from the Chair (continued)

Thank you to the supporters who helped with the distribution of Assistance Dog door stickers in West End and Hedge End. The activity is now "on hold" as a new design is being produced but we have not seen them yet.

At the time of printing our supporter sheets we didn't know the date of the Winchester Charity market; we have been given 12 and 13 December. If you can help for a couple of hours please let Dianne know as soon as possible as lots of help will be needed! Best Wishes and continue the good work.

## News of Friends

Dorothy Hardcastle was an early S.H. H.D treasurer and for many years was present at most shows and collections having been driven to the venues by husband Dennis, who usually stayed around and helped. Sadly Dennis died earlier this year so we send our sympathy to Dorothy and all the family.

Sheila Sparrow with H.D. Hester used to come on the monthly walks until Hester became poorly and sadly had to be put to sleep. We know Sheila is lost without her trusty companion and we all send our sympathy and hope it will not be too long before Bill can have a rest from being Sheila's full time replacement ears.

Barbara Budden, a very successful, if sometimes unorthodox, socialiser came to Hearing Dogs after many years of puppy walking for Guide Dogs for the Blind, is at present a patient in Southampton General Hospital. We send our love and best wishes and hope Barbara will be up and about very soon.

If you have news of Hearing Dog Friends do please send to Ann for inclusion in the Spring 2011 edition of Hearing Mates.

*Jeanette*

## Puppy Walks

The second Tuesday continues to be the date of our walks. In October we meet by the farm entrance in the Upper Hamble Country Park at 10am, but in November we start our winter schedule of meeting in the tea room car park of the Victoria Country Park Netley, at the later time of 10.30am. Both venues are accessed from junction 8 of the M27. Socialisers, recipients, supporters and their dogs are all welcome. Do join us.



NB Visits to the farm animals at Manor Farm will be on the 4th Tuesday during the winter.

*Jeanette*

## REGULAR FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

### Keep collecting used stamps



For used postage stamps **ONLY** send or take to:  
Barbara Pink, Branch Secretary address back page,  
or to any committee member.



Mark the envelope - **USED STAMPS**

Put foreign stamps in a separate envelope

**Please do NOT include** other correspondence / monies etc.

### PRINTER AND LASER TONER CARTRIDGES - but NOT EPSON

Instead of throwing your used cartridges away in the general rubbish please keep them in their original boxes and either:

- Give to a member of the committee who will see they are taken to Headquarters or..
- Contact Hearing Dogs on: 01844 348100 (voice and Minicom) or..
- Contact: Reclaim-It - Telephone: 01635 876900 who will provide free containers and collection.



### CHARITY FLOWERS DIRECT

**Ring: 0990 300 600**

15% of the retail price of every order goes to the participating charity. **To support Hearing Dogs quote HDD when ordering.**

Order online at: <http://www.charityflowers.co.uk>

### MILK BOTTLE TOPS - any colour but must have a '2' inside a recycle



triangle. Take to Moorland Farm or give your tops to a committee member who will pass them on.

**N.B.** Traces of milk must be washed from the tops.

**Please also note: caps from other products are not acceptable.**

### LOTTERY

Raise funds by playing the

Lottery Game or the Great Weather Lottery Game; simply complete the leaflet and send to the enclosed address or visit to play at:  
[www.hearingdogs.org.uk](http://www.hearingdogs.org.uk) or [www.theweatherlottery.com](http://www.theweatherlottery.com)



Search the Internet with  
<http://www.clicknow.org.uk/>  
**HearingDogs**

And every time you search you will be raising money for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Average use of CLICK NOW generates around £50 per person per year.



## Fundraising, events & collections for 2010

### Sat / Sun 09/10 October

Collection at The Range Gosport

### Saturday 20 November

Romsey Charities Fair  
Crosfield Hall

### Thurs 2 / Fri 3 / Sat 4 December

Christmas Tree Festival,  
Fareham Methodist Church

### Sun 12 / Mon 13 December

Winchester Christmas Market

### Kennel Club Awards since last Hearing Mates:



#### Bronze

Margaret Conrad  
Sandra Lee  
Ken Manchip  
Dianne Hatfield  
Maggie Rumble

Bonzo  
Alfie  
Daisy  
Snowy  
Hugo

#### Silver

Margaret Conrad  
Nikki Page  
Janey Devine

Bonzo  
Lara  
Yarrow

### Puppy Update

We have reluctantly taken the decision to drop the puppy update from the magazine. We have two socialising trainers: Lucy is at full capacity and with the amount of new socialisers coming on board Mandy will soon be the same.

Trying to keep track of all socialisers and puppy movements has become extremely difficult with puppies coming and going and, if circumstances warrant, being moved around between socialisers.

### PASSED FINALS



Giggsy Maureen Heasman  
Sweep Dianne & Lyndon Hatfield  
Reena Dianne & Lyndon Hatfield, Margaret & George Conrad, Kay Vinen

Reena has been placed locally with Caroline, they join us on our monthly puppy walks and it has given us all great pleasure to see the bond between them grow.



Seated at the Botley Coffee morning is Betty Roesler who will be 90 in September. Standing on left is Jean Lacey and seated on right, Margaret Tillyer with Teasel her third Hearing Dog.

Betty and Margaret had their first hearing dogs in the 1980s and all 3 worked very hard to get the charity known in South Hampshire. Volunteers in burgundy shirts show how the branch has grown.

Report of our Botley coffee morning on the web:  
<http://www.dogs-blog.out-and-about-with-your-dog.com>  
Great picture of Bonzo and others.

Dianne

Thanks to Solent Life magazine - <http://www.solentlife.co.uk/> who sent a reporter to the coffee morning. Their article is too large for Hearing Mates, so I have put a PDF on the magazine page on the branch website for all to read.

### Swanmore Brownies

Lyndon Hatfield gave a talk to these Brownies and they had collected about 4 bin liners full of milk bottle tops!  
Many thanks indeed for the great effort.



**Thanks to all donors for their generosity and to all the hard working volunteers**



### It Started at Netley!

When we launched this years Paws For Coffee at Netley, Sadie, Receptionist at Village Vets came along and was inspired to hold an event at the surgery.

The great day came in July. For once the weather was kind and we had a good turn out, raising about £220.

Many thanks to Village Vets and Sadie's enthusiasm!

While we had so many people present, including several socialisers and puppies, a Certificate was presented to our vet, Patrick Bullen, thanking him for his excellent care of our puppies, and the fundraising he does for us. He is a vet in a million, and our thanks go to him for all that he does for Hearing Dogs. It has been a great year for Paws for Coffee in our area, well done to all those who held events!  
*Margaret Conrad*

### Socialiser's Picnic at Carron Row, Segensworth

Thanks to the kind auspices of Ken Manchip and his fellow members at Carron Row, Lucy's puppy groups had a delightful picnic there on a very warm afternoon in August. There were, for very obvious reasons, no model trains running, but the layout and landscaping were very impressive none the less. The puppies particularly enjoyed the boating lakes to cool themselves down and this resulted in us all going home very pleasantly tired - and somewhat wet - in some cases! It was lovely to see so many children and grandchildren of all ages there too, so we look forward to going there again next year, please Ken??

Closely followed by

### Socialisers Lunch at 'The Old Forge', Shedfield

Lucy and Mandy, our Hearing Dog Trainers, arranged a pub lunch for us all *without any dogs* - which actually made a pleasant change to be able to talk - without worrying if your dog was behaving itself! It was really nice to see both Lucy's and Mandy's groups getting together and once again lots of children, friends and family came along too.

'The Old Forge' did us proud and we had a huge 'carvery' - followed by homemade apple pie while the heavens opened outside - obviously someone was looking down on us and managed to give us right weather for both of these events! Thanks to Mandy and Lucy yet again.  
*Chris Seward*

A Little Dog's Prayer  
A Master who is firm and kind  
and understands a 'doggie' mind  
A Walkie and a meal each day  
That's all I ask for when I pray.



\*\*\*\*\*

*The Dog* makes no distinction between the great and the humble;  
Between the rich and powerful;  
or those who have nothing to offer him except their company.

*He* walks with Kings and to our delight with our Queen;  
*He* protects the lonely and leads the blind;  
*He* sports our follies, our triumphs, our disasters, our homes and  
our families.  
Through the dog we enrich our lives and in return he asks only  
that we give him what he gives us - friendship.

*Thanks to Dianne for these 2 items that belonged to her Mother.*

### Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

An old, tired-looking dog wandered into my garden one day. I could tell from his collar and well-fed tummy that he had a home and was well taken care of. Calmly, he came over to me and followed me into my house. Slowly he walked down the hall, into the sitting room, curled up on the hearthrug and fell asleep. An hour or so later he went to the door, and I let him out. The next day he was back, greeted me in my garden, walked by me into the house and again slept for an hour or so in the sitting room.

This daily visit with a nap continued off and on for several weeks. Curious, I finally pinned a note to his collar: "I would like to find out who is the owner of this wonderful sweet dog and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap."

The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar: "He lives in a home with six children, two under the age of three - he's trying to catch up on his sleep.

Can I come with him tomorrow?"

*Thanks to Romsey Abbey magazine "Open Door".*

## TAILS OF WOE!

Hello everybody, I read in the Echo about a small dog who was killed by a fox, be aware and be warned that foxes can kill small dogs or cats.

Regards Mary Herbert.

\*\*\*\*\*

## WARNING

Perhaps as a result of the warmth in June and July there are more adders around than usual. If you suspect that your dog has been bitten take it immediately to the vet. Adder bites often are fatal to dogs

Jeanette

\*\*\*\*\*

## SLUG PELLETS

Last week one of our Hearing Dogs started to have convulsions and was rushed to the vet. The convulsions were so severe that he had to be kept sedated for 24 hours. It was touch and go for this time and although he has recovered it remains to be seen whether he has any lasting liver damage.

The cause of all this was that he had ingested PET FRIENDLY slug pellets.

Even pet friendly products can be dangerous. The vet has suggested we contact trading standards.

\*\*\*\*\*

## THIS PRODUCT IS HIGHLY TOXIC TO DOGS

**Liquid Potpourri** is a popular household item. Unfortunately it can be toxic to pets as it contains essential oils and cationic detergents. Cats and curious puppies are most commonly exposed. A type of potpourri sold in Walmart and made in India has been particularly implicated. In leaf form it has caused serious illness to young dogs, so its best to keep all such products out of reach of curious felines and canines!



Winter is just around the corner folks!

Perhaps we need to kit out our dogs like they do in Canada!



Amy

Hearing Dog Amy is sponsored by the South Hampshire Branch

Hello all you Hearing Dogs – it's the RSPCA Stubbington Hound here!

Just to thank you so much to my Hearing Dog friends for coming along to the opening of our new Stubbington Ark Charity Shop in Fareham on 12<sup>th</sup> July.



The legal eagles (or should it be Beagles?) finally got the lease (whatever that is) sorted out, it

was a boiling hot day and I had to go to Fareham Market with the RSPCA Cat and hand out leaflets - which was very difficult given the size of my paws. I was also told not to cock my leg on the Market stalls too!

Anyhow, just when I had about had enough of the heat (and that cat) when the Hearing Dogs girls came along to see what was happening. There was young Daisy who had spent some time at the Ark as she had been living in something called a 'flat', one of the clever girls at the Ark thought she may make a Hearing Dog, so Daisy went off to somewhere called 'The Grange' - not round here, I don't think? Daisy had some 'issues' but then came back to live a life of luxury with Julie in Cosham. Next in the queue of my fans there was the lovely Lara, the black labrador with Nicky who was very pleased to see me and then there was the beautiful cockapoo, Jaffa - with Debbie.

So, if any of you Hearing Dogs want to pop into the shop in West Street for what I believe you call 'socialisation' - I would love to see any of my fans there! Thanks again and woof woof to you all. *The Stubbington Ark Hound*



## Barbs and Mick Pink

Wedding Blessing - South Wonston Church 31 July 2010

Many of us were delighted to be invited to attend the service to celebrate and bless the marriage of Barbs and Mick. They have been married fifteen years this year and have been together for 30 years so indeed something to celebrate !!

Congratulations to you both from all your Hearing Dog friends.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Since the last issue of Hearing Mates in April, we have enjoyed a significant increase in fundraising and were able to send another £10,000 to Head Office in July and currently have £11,000 in the bank to pass on in October. This will make our contributions so far this year to just over £30,000 and that was the amount we raised during the whole of last year, which itself was a record. It looks as though we might even make £40,000 this year, but I should not tempt fate!

So where does it come from? From you of course and all the activities in which you engage, ranging over supermarket collections, attendance at shows and other public events where we sell our goods, donations (which we would not receive if you were not publicising what Hearing Dogs is all about), Paws for Coffee which you have arranged and supported, talks to a variety of groups and clubs, strategically placed collecting tins, gift aid contributions, proceeds from stamps and bottle tops and one off specials like the Botley Coffee Morning. This is an excellent variety of involvement and no doubt I have even missed some out! After five years as Treasurer, I shall be handing over the mantle at the AGM in February, so if any of you would like to take over the role (it really is very easy to do), please let us know.

Well done to you all! *Roy Stainton*



### Paws for Coffee 2010

As many of you know, 'Paws for Coffee' was re launched very successfully back in April at the Royal Victoria Country Park at Netley. This Hearing Dogs major initiative aims to bring in £100000 of income this year - with the added bonus of spreading the word about the work of the Charity.

To date, in excess of £2000 has been banked by the South Hants Branch with very popular 'Paws' events held by Steve and Chris Beal together with St John's Ambulance at Bitterne, Patrick Bullen, our Hearing Dog vet and his team at Village Vets in Chandlers Ford and 'Paws 4 Coffee on the Beach' at Hill Head.

Stella Simpson and her friends in Twyford raised £235 with about 30 friends and neighbours stopping by to Paws for coffee with delicious cakes and had a raffle in her garden. An amazing result - so thanks to Stella again and Chris Voller with her Spinole, Bruno, together with Issy 1 and Izze 2 for coming along to make the morning such a success.

Have you thought about running Paws for Coffee? Hearing Dogs provide lovely invitations and posters - if so email [pawsforcoffee@hearingdogs.org.uk](mailto:pawsforcoffee@hearingdogs.org.uk) or contact a South Hants Member for more information.

**Cliff**, a Yorkshire Terrier, was socialised by Dianne and Lyndon Hatfield in 2005.

Cliff's partner is now living in a care home and Cliff is with him and still working for him. He is very popular with the other residents, and no doubt a great fuss is made of him. It is unlikely that they will take their Partnership finals as his recipient's health does not warrant it; but good to know he is still out there doing a good job.

One of his litter mates is Coaster who was featured in Favour and I believe may have been used in the breeding programme, but does anyone know what happened to the rest of the litter?? Sandy (socialised by Maureen Andrews) for instance?  
*Dianne*



### Donations received since Spring 2010 Hearing Mates

Captain Michael Freeman  
Mrs V Mason  
Beryl Day

1st Bishopstoke Brownies  
Ellie Wallwork

Bishopstoke Over Fifties  
Tadley WI

Guide Dog Pub  
Chris Lanegan

Audrey Evison  
Jill Burnett

Mattie & Doug Plant  
Joy Wallis

New Milton Rotary Club  
Bostin

Debbie Lammiman - In memory of Aunt  
Micheldever WI

Farnborough Deaf Club  
Meon Cross School

Crofton Lions Club  
Beryl Bourton

Fair Oak Over 55s  
Mr and Mrs T Ash

Jeanette Collett  
Barbara Pink

Sue and Roy Stainton  
Cathy Plumb

Dianne & Lyndon Hatfield  
Chris and Tim Seward

Ann Perrett  
Steve Beal

Irene Spencer  
Margaret Conrad

**Waitrose** - Waterlooville, Portswood,  
Havant & Winchester

### Membership

Ingamells, Dot George  
Britt Marie & Jan Leal

### Clamp Kiln Farm Newtown

Lucy O' Brien's socialisers have been very fortunate again this year to be offered the use of Clamp Kiln Farm, Newtown near Fareham for outdoor training by Laura and Mick Meech. Clamp Kiln is a working livery stable and we were able to accustom the puppies - and some of the socialisers - to some (rather large!) horses stabled there. On the lovely spring day that we visited the horses were 'turned out' in the fields and separated from us by a 'live' electric fence - Lucy gave us full instructions on how to let our puppies approach.



The horses are very used to having dogs around and stood quietly, but looked on in amazement as a dozen or so puppies entered their field! Some of the puppies weren't really sure to start with, but gradually became braver and got within sniffing distance by the end of the morning.

Many thanks again to Mick and Laura and we hope to have more training sessions next year – especially as there are now some cows in residence!



### Fareham College

This year South Hants Hearing Dogs have been nominated by the Hair and Beauty Dept at the College to be one of their two charities. The Department has held various fund raising events during the year, culminating with Barbs and Yogi - together Izzey (4) and me - being invited as Special Guests to their Annual Hair and Beauty Show at Ferneham Hall in May, where we met the Mayor - and Izzey managed

not to bark! The evening was very warm and the outfits, hair and makeup spectacular - so many, many thanks to Bev and Anita for all their help and support - and to all the students who have taken part during the year. Tara, the Hearing Dog cockapoo went to so many talks in all the various tutor groups that she almost got her own Student Union card, ably assisted by Snowy and Yogi - so thanks to them too.



Tim Seward



This event is Mandy's socialisers socialising in the New Forest with a pub lunch, following a rather muddy walk.

### Daisy Spaniel

A day in May saw me driving towards Exbury with a big grin on my face - why? A couple of weeks previously I'd received a phone call from Mattie, who with her husband Doug had rehomed Daisy the lovely lemon and white spaniel that I had socialised. (Daisy did well initially in training but unfortunately her chase kicked in again so she was withdrawn). They invited me to meet them at the cottage they were renting for a week - of course I couldn't wait!



Doug and Daisy were waiting outside the cottage for me, she certainly seemed to remember me jumping straight into her crate in my car and sniffing the back seat where Pepper always sits. She still responds to hand signals and is very loved, happy, and still as affectionate as ever, Mattie and Doug quite clearly adore her. I was then treated to a pub lunch to thank me for all I'd done for her. We arranged to meet at the summer fair at The Grange a few weeks later. The week before Mattie phoned to say that they had such a lovely week that they stayed for another, but unfortunately while at Lepe Daisy chased a rabbit and coming back to them ripped the inside of her back leg badly on some barbed wire, so a trip to the vets followed for stitches. Being greeted at the Grange by a very enthusiastic Daisy while she was wearing a Buster collar was a somewhat painful experience, the good news is she has healed very well and is racing around as normal.

(Photo courtesy of Doug & Mattie)

Cathy Plumb

South Hampshire Branch Website  
[www.hearing-dogs-southhants.org.uk](http://www.hearing-dogs-southhants.org.uk)

# Puppy News

## Poppy the Poodle meets the Terrible Terrier

Poppy is a black miniature poodle who joined our local socialising group aged 9 weeks. Her first home was shared with Daisy, a sweet little spaniel but before long Poppy was gathering up all their toys, growling and ruling the roost. Just before Bank Holiday weekend we had a call from our trainer Lucy. Daisy needed rescuing!

We agreed to “give it a go” and introduced Poppy to our small terrier Becky, an angel so fallen she is horizontal. Having started life living rough in Ireland, Becky was drummed out of Hearing Dogs at the end of her advanced training because she began to get grumpy with other dogs – a problem which we have always had to manage rather than cure. Never very patient with puppies, Becky was certainly not impressed by this small fluffy bath mat. Poppy saw at once that there was no vacancy for a Number One Dog and didn't attempt to argue. They are not yet great friends, but after a few stressful early days needing careful management, they are rubbing along fine.



Poppy is delightful, full of fun, into everything but learning fast and is a very confident little dog around town. She loves her toys, doing great wheelies round the park, and sleeping. She has had her first proper trim and looks much more like a poodle and Becky now only eats her, a little bit, if she is particularly cheeky.

*Maureen & Dick Heasman*

## Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

It's strange being a tourist attraction, but that is what happens when you are invited to a garden party at The Palace.

It had all started with an e-mail from The Grange, saying I had been one of the volunteer names to be drawn out of the hat to attend The Princess Royal's 60th birthday Garden Party at the Palace. I thought it must be a joke as I never win anything, but an official letter followed, so I was on my way. Finding an outfit to wear was a nightmare (not having any posh clothes in my wardrobe), Jeans are definitely not allowed!! My sister Maggie and Margaret Conrad were dragged around the south of England in my quest to find something suitable and I'm surprised they are still speaking to me!!



Eventually the 1st July arrived and I caught the train to London, cheered on my way by Maggie who surprised me by coming to see me off, which was much appreciated. It was busy outside the Palace, lots of tourists, many who seemed bemused by all these 'toffs' milling around, but taking photos in case we were important.

The young soldiers invited had a great time having their pictures taken with all the young female tourists. Then into the queue, in through the gates to have our identity checked and into The Palace. A small string quartet was playing as we walked through a couple of rooms to get into the gardens. I spotted Sue Pellow looking very smart with some other hearing dog people. As we went down the steps into the garden Ian Ford was waiting for us, all the chief execs having dined previously with the princess. He did look slightly bemused, since he didn't recognise some of us at first in all our finery but thought that we'd all scrubbed up well!!! We found some seats in the shade under the avenue of lime trees and sent Ian back to stand out in the sun to wait for the rest of our group (that's what chief execs are for).

The gardens were glorious especially the long borders and the rose beds, it was lovely to wander around with no mobile phones going off or cameras flashing, both of which are banned. Two bands play alternatively and they hoist a flag up and down when they swap. The oblong plates for the food are small and so are the portions, tiny cakes and rolls, being so hot anything with chocolate was melting and no serviettes are provided so lots of finger licking went on. (Thanks to Jeanette for the tip about taking wipes).

The Princess Royal duly appeared, wearing a green outfit with her husband Vice Admiral Tim Laurence and they spent over two hours talking to people. Luckily Ann Ramsden had Hearing Dog Max with her so drew Princess Anne's attention; she was telling us about an occasion when one of her Bull terriers tried to jump in the lake only to get stuck in the mud and come out completely black underneath and was very offended when they all laughed at him. She was very friendly and relaxed, and was talking to Faith, the Chair of Trustees about the litter of puppies just born that are being named for her mother, Lady Beatrice Wright one of our founders, who would have been 100 this year. It was a lovely relaxing day, chatting to people from various charities and people watching; lovely to see so many people who had made a real effort with their appearance, although I think we were all overshadowed by the beautiful saris worn by the partners of the Ghurkha soldiers.

It was over all too soon with Princess Anne thanking the bands and the guard of honour, a quick wave and thank you to us all at the top of the steps and she was gone.

Waiting for a taxi back to Waterloo the people in front of us, when asked their destination said Claridges, it does have a better ring to it than Waterloo!! As I kicked off my shoes on the train on the way home I reflected on what a great day I'd had courtesy of my favourite charity.

*Cathy Plumb*