

Dogs For Christmas



“A dog is for life, not just for Christmas”

We have all heard this slogan which was originally created by Clarissa Baldwin in 1978, who at the time was the Chief Executive of the National Canine Defence League (now known as Dogs Trust), but what exactly does it mean?

The slogan was created to help raise awareness to people who were considering buying a dog or puppy for someone at Christmas time. This is because many rescue centres all over the UK saw an increase in puppies or dog's being returned between the months of January - March, even though they had only been rehomed or bought during the month of December. Since this increase, rescue centres and responsible breeders, decided to place a ban on dogs being rehomed or bought throughout the month of December. Prospective owners are welcome to visit the breeders and centres to find a dog they love, but they are not permitted to take them home until the month of January, when the Christmas period is over.

This policy was put in place due to a number of reasons. When a dog or puppy is welcomed into a new home it can be a very stressful experience for the new addition. They have a new environment, a new family, and a new routine to accustom to. Every dog is different but it can take some dogs weeks, and even months, to become comfortable in their new home. If a puppy is the new addition then they will take even more of an owners time due to their complete lack of training. This period of adjustment is stressful enough under normal circumstances, but imagine what it would be like welcoming a dog during the Christmas period.

The majority of family homes are decorated with a variety of items such as tinsel, balloons and banners. There is an indoor christmas tree with different coloured bright lights that flash and play music. The tree contains hanging ornaments that occasionally fall off and hit the floor with

an almighty crash (incredibly scary for a new dog or puppy). The house is filled with friends and family all laughing and having a good time whilst an excess amount of food and alcohol is consumed. Children are screaming and laughing whilst running round the house with the brand new toys they have received (which also flash and play music).

This is an exciting, and fun time for everyone in the household, except the new addition. How much time is being spent ensuring that they are settled and comfortable in their new surroundings? Sadly not much because the owners have so many other things they need to worry about. If the new addition is a puppy, who is carrying out the house training?

There are many things that need to be considered when welcoming a new addition. By bringing a dog or puppy into a household that is noisy, bright and chaotic, you are creating a very stressful environment with no means of escape, and this can lead to immediate behavioural problems which unless resolved, will deteriorate over time. It is due to this poor introductory process that leads to many dogs or puppies being taken, or returned, to a rescue home with behavioural issues. However, these issues may have never arisen if the dog or puppy was welcomed into a calm and settled environment.

Our relationships with our dogs form such a huge part of our lives, and it's a relationship that so many owners would never want to be without. Sharing your life with a dog should be an enjoyable experience for both parties, and by starting off on the right foot can really help towards creating an amazing relationship between a dog and its owner.

This article was not written to put prospective owners off buying a puppy, or rehoming a dog, but it is more about ensuring that people consider their options before rushing into a decision. If you are considering owning a dog or puppy and you are serious about your decision then why should it matter if you have to wait a few more weeks? Spend some time researching the different breeds and which one would be most suitable for you and your lifestyle. Never select a breed because you like the way they look because they may not be compatible with you. The more research you put in beforehand, the more chance you will have of finding a suitable breed, that complements you and your lifestyle, and this is half of the battle to living your life with a well balanced dog. When a decision has been made and you welcome your new addition into the home, remember to spend some time attending training and socialisation classes to help provide you, and your new dog or puppy, with support and guidance for living in harmony with one another, and most importantly to have fun!

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!



Please visit our website www.exclusivelydogs.co.uk for additional information and free advice sheets on common behavioural problems. There is also a useful checklist that you can print and take with you when visiting breeders that asks questions that you may not have considered.