

## 'Master Baggins Esq. & me'

Linda my first 'Dog for the Disabled' a wonderful golden lab/retriever, has now retired and living in Banbury with a wonderful lady also called Linda. It took Linda very little effort to master being a pet dog, and now enjoys long walks in local woods.

I miss her dreadfully, and when Linda first went to Banbury people in Marlow wanted to know where she was, was she ok - nothing about how I was, and was I ok! The house was so empty without her, I had to fetch my own post, things I had dropped - emptying the washing machine with a 'helping hand stick' is a very time consuming task. There was no one to share my ice cream with, whilst I walked in the park and by the river. In February 03 I filled in my application form for another dog to share my chores with and .....

Late one Monday afternoon last October Duncan rang to ask if was going to be busy the next morning as he would like to introduce someone to me!

About 11.00 am the next day through the door came Baggins, a bouncy chocolate Labrador with character.

He was not the least bit shy, and explored the house from corner to corner, and having counted the fish in the pond he then came into the house and peacefully lay on the floor between Duncan and myself whilst we discussed his good and bad points! At that stage Baggins would have told me that he did not have any bad points only good and that even if he had any bad points I would hardly notice them!

Duncan arranged to bring him back to stay for the weekend complete with teddy bear and overnight bag, we had a great time and Monday came far too soon - Baggins left to undergo some further training and would be back to stay for good in 2 weeks time.

Since Baggins has come to live with me he has attracted a great deal of attention in both Marlow, but also at the various meetings that we attend. His habit of lying on his back gives much amusement, especially in the middle of the aisle in Waitrose on a Saturday morning or at council meetings. Baggins clearly has strong views on politics, as he is prone to grumbling during meetings! He causes great delays in the Nat West Bank whilst the Manager, a rather tall blonde lady comes over and strokes Baggins's tummy

We had fenced some of the garden off to encourage Baggins to use different areas at a time; this has failed mainly because Baggins decided to practice all the things he had been taught in the agility class at dog club, and had no trouble clearing them in one go! He loves lying on the garden bench in the sunshine waiting to be groomed, as you gather it is a tough life being an assistance dog and Baggins goes to great pains to show us just how tough it is.

Baggins does earn his keep though, and I have included a CD with some video footage and images of him working for you to share with us - and thank you for teaching him such good manners, he is always a perfect gentleman and steps back whilst holding the door open for me to go through.

On the CD are some pictures of Baggins both at work and play for you to see how grown up he has become, and enjoys nothing more than a run in the park beside the River Thames in Marlow and his toy box of friends to keep him company at rest time. He did let me down one day, we were in the park and Baggins went over to say hello to a grandmother lounging on a rug watching her granddaughter play, at that point Baggins leapt with all 4 paws off the ground and landed in the middle of her rug - that was in itself was bad enough, but the rug also contained the families picnic!!!!

Thank you all once again for creating such a wonderful hound - but don't tell him I said so he is vain enough as he is.

With very best wishes



Alison & Baggins

