

Man Trailing

(article written by
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We have two Standard Parti's, Dillon, (Dill), is almost four years old; and Florence, (Flo), is two and a half years old, their dad is Sara Bingham's dog Pepe, Dill's mum is Michelle Crawford's bitch Maybe, and Flo's mum is Jill Smith's bitch Pepper.



Dill is on a mission !

Dill and Flo are both very busy dogs, enjoying a multitude of activities including:

- Agility;
- Hoopers, (to help with agility distance control!);
- Parkour for Dill - he really doesn't know he has back legs at times with the agility equipment, and this has really helped with his confidence;
- Scentwork;
- Trailing - this is a relatively new past time which is growing in popularity. Any dog, any age can do it...

So, what is man trailing all about?

First though, why is your dog's nose so good?

Your dog's nose is incredible and far more powerful than yours as it has more than 100 million sensory receptors in their nasal cavity compared to the 6 million in ours. Also, the area of the dog's brain devoted to sniffing is about 40 times larger than the corresponding section of the human brain.

Dogs also have a special scent organ called the Jacobson's organ, located between the roof of the mouth and the bottom of the nasal passage, containing receptors that focus on detecting pheromones. This organ is found in only a few animals such as snakes, cats, and horses.

Dogs use scent to see the world as a 3D pattern of smells, it really is their primary sense; they can see where we have been and how long ago, and therefore how old the scent is, and it's using these amazing skills that enables them to identify and follow individual scent trails.

So, what are they sniffing for when they are trailing?

Everyone has a unique scent, made up of particles such as sweat and skin cells that cascade off our bodies as we move, creating scent-rafts of odour before settling on the ground. You even have scent permeating through the soles of your wellies at a micro molecular level !!!

When you ask a dog to search and find a person, it is these scent rafts that the dogs are trying to locate and follow. It isn't only humans that this applies to, but any animal potentially can be tracked as they all have a unique scent. We have tracked dogs in our lessons, using a piece of bedding for the scent sample. Dogs can use their nose to follow scents which are days old, we have tracked trails over 24 hours old very successfully, while some search dogs have followed trails weeks later.