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Celebrating World Animal Day by Remembering the Best Friend I've Ever Had

Posted By [Ryan O'Meara](#) Date: 3/10 Posted Under: [Canine Columns](#), [International Dog News](#), [View From The Editor](#), [World Animal Day](#)

Tomorrow (October 4th) is World Animal Day. I am very much privileged to be the [UK Ambassador](#) for this wonderful event.

I will be celebrating World Animal Day by speaking to various media about the incredible role animals play in our lives and in societies all over the globe.

Animals are special. That we should take a day to recognise them and promote the need to cherish and respect them seems to me to be an incredibly worthwhile idea. As such I wanted to take this opportunity to share a personal story. This is the true account of how I got my first dog and how the day changed my entire life forever.

—

" *Every boy should have two*

Contributors

- [Alison Green](#)
- [Freelance Writers](#)
- [Ian Gill](#)
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Categories

I had finally got the green light to get a dog and even though I was no longer 10 years of age, I felt like it. I had spent my whole life preparing. I knew what type of dog I wanted, I knew what I was going to call it, I knew what I'd be doing with it every day.

First clause of the 'dog contract'. I had to be 100% responsible for this dog. I had to raise the money to pay for it and I would be responsible for looking after it forever (and ever). No problem. The same day I put all my worldly goods up for sale and waited for the phone to ring.

After a week, I had the cash and the 'right' to and get that dog I'd always dreamed of.

I wanted a Labrador. I'd already been to see the litter I was picking from but finally the day arrived when I was going to pick out MY puppy and bring him home. I was at the gates of the kennels before they were even open, waiting to go in and choose my dog.

After several pacing sessions up and down the blocks of kennels where these 8 Labrador puppies were all paired up I made my choice. Or more to the point, he chose me. I'd tired all the pups out with my dalliance. They went back to their beds after the excitement of my initial arrival had died down. All bar one puppy. He was still just as excited.

I called him Jackson and he, without a shadow of a doubt, changed the entire direction of my life forever.

I spent every waking (and sleeping) hour with him. I had dreamt about what it would be like to be a dog owner but I didn't think for a second it would be as good as I'd imagined. In reality, it was a thousand times better. Me and Jackson were inseparable.

The day I finished my exams at school I wanted to leave full time education there and then. I knew I hadn't done well. I never tried at school. I wanted to be a dog trainer and could never work out how fractions and French was going to help me achieve it. I was told by my parents that I could leave school providing I immediately looked for a job. So as soon as I got home I went straight to the jobs section of the local paper. Tucked away in a little corner of the ads page: "Dog trainer wanted". To this day I've never seen an advert like it in my local paper. If there is such a thing as destiny, it was on my side on that day.

I decided I didn't need a CV when I went for my interview. After all, I had no experience. All I had for my 'portfolio' was Jackson. He was evidence of my work. I took him along and showed him off. I pleaded for the job. I stressed how important it was to me and I even said I'd do the job for no pay. I'm pretty sure offering to work for nothing was proof of my commitment but it was Jackson who was proof of my connection with canines.

I got the job. I became a dog trainer. Life was perfect.

After a couple of years I got a promotion from my dog training job. Jackson, along with some new charges,

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won some competitions and I actually got pretty good at what I was doing. I moved to Suffolk to work under the guidance of one of the world's most successful dog trainers in his field. I learned more and I improved my techniques. I met thousands of dogs. I trained all day. I was living my dream with Jackson alongside me. He and I had the perfect lives together.

However, fate dealt me an unwanted twist. I was diagnosed with Chrons disease. A debilitating condition that affected my stomach. It stopped me in my tracks on regular occasions. Many stays in hospital, a few by way of ambulance, more drips, injections and blood samples than I care to remember and all round a thoroughly unpleasant experience.

I knew I would have to consider my long term health. Doing a physically demanding outdoor job was going to be a struggle. So I started to look around. I thought long term the best thing I could do is become a kennel owner. If I could run the business rather than be the relied upon hired help, I could have more control over what I did.

It was in doing this research that I discovered something. There was very little in existence in terms of magazines, websites or general information for people who are into dogs. A light bulb moment. I'll become a publisher of pet related media.

And I did.

In 2008 K9 Media Ltd is the largest independent publisher of pet content with a portfolio of two national magazines and 37 websites aimed at pet owners.

The business took an award in 1999 and has gone from strength to strength in terms of audience and financial growth.

In the process of enjoying this new career I have seen and experienced things I never would have dreamt of when I was wasting my time at school preparing to become a dog trainer. I never would have thought I would get to appear on TV and radio shows to talk about dogs, I never would have thought I would publish a magazine that has made fans of celebrities such as Mariah Carey, Carmen Electra and even a member of the Royal Family. I never would have dreamt any of it. But more to the point, I never would have DONE any of it had it not been for Jackson. He did, genuinely, shape my entire life. Everything I have today, everything I've enjoyed thus far in my life is because of Jackson.

I still remember the nights where I'd be doubled up in pain, suffering with my stomach during a Chrons flare up, Jackson would, somehow, make it more bearable. I still remember relying on him when I'd literally be unable to walk upright. I still remember him doing what dog's do and somehow understanding whenever I was ill and acting in a more considerate way around me. I always dreamt of what it would be like and my

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imagination was filled with images of fun. I never dreamt that having a dog would also get me through the darkest times in my life.

In November of 2005, on a dreadful Saturday afternoon, Jackson died. I was the last person he saw. He didn't suffer and he didn't even leave me having to make that traumatic life of death decision of having to have a loved pet put to sleep. He woke up in the morning his usual self, a lively – albeit more pedestrian – 13 year old Labrador. By six o'clock in the evening, he was gone. As long as I'm alive, no person could ever have the impact on shaping my life as much as that dog did.

In 2007 I launched a website by the name of DogsBlog.com. The aim was simple. To try and help get more homeless dogs out of the UK animal welfare shelters and into new, loving, permanent homes. By April of 2008 over 1700 dogs had found new owners as a result of DogsBlog.com. If just one of those dogs can have the impact on someone's life that Jackson had on mine then Jackson's impact will continue much farther and wider than I could ever have imagined on that day when I went to pick him up from the kennels. He threw up on me on the car ride back home. It was the best day of my life.

www.worldanimalday.org.uk



My best friend. Ever.

Author Details

Ryan O'Meara is editor-in-chief of K9 Magazine, the lifestyle magazine for dog lovers. He lives in the East Midlands with his own two dogs, Mia and Chloe. - [See this author's webpage](#)

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Friday, October 3rd, 2008 at 8:01 am and is filed under [Canine Columns](#), [International Dog News](#), [View From The Editor](#), [World Animal Day](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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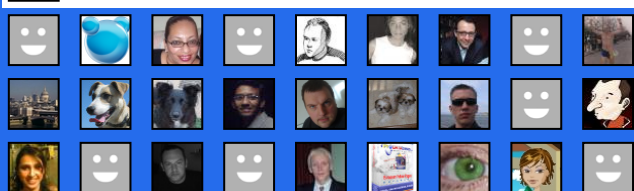
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- [Katie](#): hi, i watched a preview of the show on the internet and thought that this documentary would be great for my...
- [Snoringbear](#): time to withdraw cc's till they get their house in order
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1. Fletch - 5 year old male Collie cross German Shepherd
2. Kushai - 2 year old female Japanese Akita
3. Jacko - 8 month old male Japanese Akita
4. Peanut - 18 month old male Lurcher
5. Eddy - 18 month old male Japanese Akita
6. Ember - 5-6 month old female Lurcher
7. Delta - 3 year old female Greyhound
8. Lola - 3 year old female Greyhound
9. Toby - 5 year old male Greyhound
10. Tyson - 6 year old male Staffordshire Bull Terrier



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8. Cat Wees in the House
9. Coping With the Loss of a Cat
10. Feline immunodeficiency virus



1. Tabatha - 3 year old female Domestic Short-Haired ...
2. Sizzler - 7 year old male Domestic Short-Haired Tabby ...
3. Marvin and Lucy - 6 and 12 year old male and female ...
4. Sooty and Millie - 7 and 21 month old male and female ...
5. Punch - 1 year old male Domestic Short-Haired Tabby Cat
6. Timmie - 4 year old male Domestic Short-Haired Black ...
7. Brandy - 2 year old female Domestic Short-Haired Black ...
8. Molly Polly Lolly and Sam - 6 week old male and female ...
9. Victor - 12 week old male Domestic Short-Haired Black ...
10. Lyam - 4 year old male Domestic Short-Haired Black and ...



1. Six year old dog just developed serious food guarding ...
2. Anyone know any cheats for The Sims Pet Stories?
3. dog attack - no charges against owner
4. People from the US...help!
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6. Making the most of the autumn sunshine....!
7. Tipping his water bowl.....!!
8. The sit command
9. Trophy - Holistic wet food.
10. A dog's concept of time



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