

Bertram de Verve.

It was interesting, that first weekend. It started when they took me to the house with the garden. The two young men seemed very keen to get to know me but they were obedient and followed the instructions that the Carers had given them. They did not fuss over me too much. I hate fuss, I really do. I like calm, order and quietness.

The young men showed me their garden and I took them at their word and marked my territory. I was pleased that there were no other recent calling cards. I looked around slowly and carefully noted everything. It seemed to be very suitable.

'Well, Billy, what do you think of it? Will it suit you, living here?' said Ewen.

'Yes, I'm sure it will suit him just fine.' said Keiran. 'Look how relaxed he is, so calm and still.'

I sent them a t-mail then watched to see if they read it correctly.

'Did you hear that Ewen?'

'Yes. That's amazing. I've heard about canine telepathy but to tell you the truth I didn't actually believe it - until now, that is.'

'Right Billy, time for Walkies, is it?' said Keiran.

I just stared. I do hate these silly doggy phrases like "Walkies" but obviously they were trying to do the right thing by me and so I let it pass. I've found that humans need to be taught slowly or they get mixed up. It was early days and so I left it at that.

And they did seem very suitable.

After a bit of a learning curve with my muzzle, off we went for our walk. They were a bit nervous about me and cats. I did see one peeking out from under a car. I decided to ignore it. They seemed to want to share my lead and kept swapping about from one to the other. They had bags for my droppings and I duly obliged, providing one for each of them.

From the number of pee-mails I picked up this area is used by quite a few dogs but no other Regals, not that I detected. Wisely they kept me away from the other dogs. I don't like to admit it but I'm a bit of a snob when it comes to mixing. It's not a breed thing, really it's not. It's all about common interests and not yapping drivel all the time. I suppose it comes of being a Regal. Anyway, that first walk went well and thankfully it was just the three of us most of the time.

ooOoo

On the Saturday evening I heard them talking about going out for a drink. They were worried about me, partly about the house, in case I might 'do' something; but mainly they

were concerned about me, in case I would be upset at being left alone. That was very touching. I sent them another t-mail.

'Did you get that Keiran?'

'Yes I did. That was as clear as a bell.'

'Amazing. Wait till I tell Mum and Dad.' said Ewen.

'Eh, maybe not. They might think you are going totally loopy? Best just keep this to ourselves, just the three of us?'

I stretched out on the rug into my languid photo-negative pose and closed my eyes.

'Bye-bye Billy, see you in about an hour or so.' said Ewen.

In fact they were away for nearly three hours.

While they were out I took the opportunity for a quiet look around. They had left all the doors open: this was unnecessary as I can open most doors if I put my mind to it. I did not go into the rooms: I merely stood at each doorway and looked in. Everywhere was clean tidy, orderly, calm and quiet; very suitable.

When I heard them come home I adopted my previous position and they assumed that I had not moved a muscle during their absence.

'Well Billy, it turns out that the manager at "The Den" is happy to accept dog visitors, but only during day hours when they are not so busy. What do you think of that?'

In reply I yawned, widely. Obviously they seemed keen on this notion but well, I decided to wait and see what developed. I can be quite stubborn, in a quiet way, if I don't want to do something. It was the plural in "visitors" that was putting me off.

The rest of the weekend went along fine. We walked and I listened to them as they talked, mainly about me. It was "Billy this" and "Billy that" and "if he is allowed to come next weekend then we will take a week off to help him settle in". Clearly my strategy was working.

I wanted to 'tell' them to "relax, don't worry, I'll make it all happen" but I decided to say nothing, realising that being slightly anxious would be part of the fun for them. And so from time to time I stood up, stretched and yawned then settled down and pretended to go back to sleep.

ooOoo

Bertram de Verve.

The visit ended well. The Carers came back for me and I stared hard and sent them a t-mail:

"Yes, this is the place for me, thanks."

I saw the Carers relax. They told Ewen and Keiran that I would be given a final check by the Vet and if all went well I would be 'delivered' back to them on the next Friday.

The week flew by. I sent Keiran and Ewen a few t-mails, just to keep them on their toes. The second one was about cheese, just in case it was not in my file about how much I like cheese. I heard the Carers saying that the men had telephoned the Office twice, just to check a few things ahead of me coming back to them.

ooOoo

I have been with them for a few days now and well, yes, it's all very suitable; very, very suitable. They are responding to my training quite well, and for mere humans they are relatively quick. They have even started sending me t-mails, which can be enjoyable because they do not know how to do it properly yet and some are hilarious. It is hard not to laugh but to do so would be rude, ungentlemanly.

There has been just the one bit of 'waywardness' so far. It was a natural reaction, really, and not actually my fault. I had better get it out of the way: this is what happened:

It was a pet shop, a large pet shop, where they allow humans to go in with their dogs. I had quite a nice time directing their minds so that they bought only the things that I wanted and not the other rubbish which these places sell.

Anyway it went well until we were just about to leave and there they were! Rabbits Galore! I got so excited. They were in a big see-through box at the Check-out. For a split second I believed they were real and my prey instinct took over and well, frankly, I lost it and lunged at them. But it all blew over quickly and I think Keiran and Ewen will be more aware in future. I hope they have learned a lesson.

I am a hunter: my family motto is:

"See prey, chase prey, catch prey."

There is an older chap who lives next door called John who thinks he used to be a Bumblebee; I know, you are thinking, what next? Anyway, this John the Bumblebee seemed to pick up on the t-mail idea right away and this has proved helpful. His mind has proved very easy to control.

I had been trying to get the message across to them about my real name which is not "Billy". My true name is quite illustrious, due to my lineage, being a Regal. It is "Bertram de Verve" or for short, "Bertie". Keiran and Ewen had managed to get the "Bertie" part but not

John Bonthron; for Bertie and the Boys. May 2013.

Bertram de Verve.

the rest so I took control of the John's fingers and got him to type out this little story, just so that they would know about me being a Regal.

I think John the Bumblebee could be helpful in the future too. He said that when he is not on holiday that he will pop in and take me for a walk when I need 'relieving' as they seem to want to call it.

I think he might be quite a bit easier to train than my own young men. He had a dog one time before, it seems. It was not a Regal, of course, just a Border Collie, and apparently quite bright but very talkative, by all accounts.

And the verdict on my new abode?

Well, so far so good. It seems to be very suitable. In fact very, very suitable indeed.