

## **SOUTHERN RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK ASSOCIATION**

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People often ask us how we work regarding rescue/rehoming, so we have put together an information sheet which we hope you will find interesting and helpful.

The SRRA is a recognised Kennel Club Breed Club and, as such, act according to their Rules and Regulations. Over the years it has become apparent that there is a specific need for specialized Ridgeback rehoming services and, due to the increased popularity of the breed, the number of dogs coming forward for rehoming appears to be increasing year on year. All the work done by myself and other Ridgeback owners is done on a voluntary basis.

When we are approached by somebody requiring their dog to be rehomed, or by somebody wishing to give a Ridgeback a home, we send them quite a detailed questionnaire. We also ask them if they are able to make a small donation towards our administrative costs. People adopting a Ridgeback have to complete an Adoption Form which primarily relieves us of any liability should the Ridgeback do any damage, at the bottom is a section for them to complete regarding a donation. All donations we receive are kept solely for the purposes and expenses of Ridgeback Rescue/Rehoming. For instance, one youngster needed to be kenneled for 7 weeks, he required a lot of one-to-one specialist training before he could be rehomed and he was transported from Surrey to Hertfordshire. Another case involved a 7 month old puppy who needed an expensive operation which the SRRA paid for. The £20 donated by his previous owner (who, by the way, did not tell us of his condition) did not even make a dent in the veterinary costs! Another puppy had an operation to repair a broken leg but required 6 weeks of specialist care before being rehomed. Other expenses would include fostering, transporting, kenneling and the ever increasing telephone costs. People who have Ridgebacks know what a wonderful breed they are and most are only too happy to assist wherever possible, many give their time and costs willingly and freely.

There are occasions when we do not ask for a donation such as when rehoming older Ridgebacks, if anyone is willing to give a loving home to a dog over 9 or 10 years of age then we are truly grateful that they are prepared to do so as it is extremely difficult to find homes for oldies. Rehoming these dogs usually involves considerably more time and expense for us than rehoming a younger animal. I myself only claim back some of my telephone costs and postage, I do not get paid nor do I charge for my time or computer sundries etc.

As and when a Ridgeback comes up for rehoming we look at what the dog has come from and assess what he/she needs. From our list of potential new owners we try and find the most suitable home we possibly can. We take great care to ensure that we are doing the very best for the dog in question, for example, we had two bitches that needed to be placed together, but it took 3 months before we found the right home for them. Even though we had plenty of people waiting for a Ridgeback none could offer the home the bitches actually needed. As you can imagine, their kenneling costs soon mounted up.

The SRRA, along with all other rescue/rehoming organisations, do not divulge the whereabouts of the new home. This is normal practice. In order to ease the loss of a much-loved pet we are always available to contact the new owners and obtain an up to date report. Often the new owners send us photographs to forward onto the previous owners. This way

they can see that the dog is happily settled, these pictures frequently show the dog lying belly up on the sofa or asleep in front of the fire!

People ask us what sort of donation they should make. The size of the donation is purely up to the individuals adopting a Ridgeback, however, the average for a young dog would be somewhere in the region of £250-300, and as previously mentioned, all donations are used to help needy Ridgebacks.

One worrying point is peoples' attitude towards Rescue dogs' ages. We are not here to "supply" Ridgebacks to order, we rehome Ridgebacks in need of a new home, we do not know what their ridge is like, what colour they are or any other cosmetic element. If you want a young Ridgeback then go and buy one and pay the going price, people discover how expensive puppies are and then think that by going through the Rescue they can get a dog for less money and at the same time "are doing us a favour"! We are NOT a source of cheap Ridgebacks. One of the questions we ask is "Would you consider any age of dog?" You can imagine our response when answers to this question are along the lines of "6 months or less", "preferably under 12 months" or "not over 3" etc. Whilst following up a recent rehoming I was somewhat shocked and amazed to be told that the dog in question "was not like his previous one", he criticised the dog and complained of the time it was taking for the dog to bond with him. However, the dog had bonded extremely well with other members of the family and this man appeared jealous of that fact. When adopting a Ridgeback new owners MUST be prepared to take on the dog complete with any "baggage" that comes with it. Wherever possible, we find out as much about the dog as we can prior to any rehoming but we can only go on what the previous owners have said. Dogs that are rehomed via Kennels or who come in as strays are an "unknown" dog, new owners must accept and understand that rehomed Ridgebacks require patience, understanding and in some cases tolerance.

If you have very young children in your family it is unlikely that we will be able to place a Ridgeback with you as the only dogs that could be considered would be ones that had come from families with children where the dog had had GOOD child experience. As you can appreciate, dogs with this background do not come up for rehoming very often and you may well be better considering getting a puppy. However, if you do not have the time needed to correctly rear a puppy then please put your plans on hold until your children are a little older.

**A condition of Adopting a Ridgeback via the SRRA is that ALL dogs must be neutered by the new owners if they have not already been done. In the case of a young Ridgeback this will be done at a time agreed with the SRRA. The cost of neutering will be IN ADDITION to the donation given by new owners, however, the SRRA will refund the neutering costs upon submission of the vet's invoice. The refund will be a maximum of £150 for males and £200 for bitches, details of this are on the Adoption Form.**

We trust this helps you understand the way the SRRA work and answers some of your questions. If there is further information you require then please do not hesitate to contact us as detailed above. There is just one final thing we would like to say - **Please do not waste your time or ours if you are not prepared to rehome a Ridgeback for the right reasons.**