

Man's best friend: the domestic



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The domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), is a subspecies of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), a member of the Canidae family of the mammalian order Carnivora. The term "domestic dog" is generally used for both domesticated and feral varieties. The dog may have been the first animal to be domesticated, and has been the most widely kept working, hunting, and pet animal in human history. ... The present lineage of dogs was domesticated from gray wolves probably about 15,000 years ago. Though remains of domesticated dogs have been found in Siberia and Belgium from about 33,000 years ago, none of those lineages seem to have survived the Last Glacial Maximum. Although DNA testing suggests an evolutionary split between dogs and wolves around 100,000 years ago, no fossil specimens prior to 33,000 years ago are clearly morphologically domesticated dog! wikipedia.org

Mankind's first dogs were actually self-domesticated wolves which were found to be extremely useful. It is unlikely that the domestic dog developed from the wolf as a result of intentional selective breeding but rather over time evolved in size, physiology, and behaviour through natural selection. This new environment favoured the survival of small, sociable animals. This can be read in John Bradshaw's recently bought title **In defence of dogs** which provides a radical new approach to canine psychology.

As man's contact with dogs evolved in early sites of permanent human habitation, we discover references in religion and folklore, and dog images in early art, which further illustrate the role they came to play over the years in people's lives. In the great trilogy of world religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the dog is

seldom mentioned and when it is, the reference is usually negative. However, in ancient Persia and China, early folklore and superstition abound with dogs and they were regularly used to participate in religious rituals. Dogs do participate in a number of early Greek legends, and even in the folklore of ancient Rome stories of dogs' courage and fidelity were found. The dog was found to be useful in matters of war, sport, and agriculture. More recently, it has become a theme for literature, art and films.

'Humans have had a longer relationship with dogs than with any other domesticated animal, but only recently has literature developed that captures the close friendship we have with this species. The oldest literature concentrates on descriptions of the function and needs of the dog. Fables in which the dog takes on a human character also exist in many cultures. Dog stories were originally written primarily for children, but in the last 200 years dog literature has developed for adults, captivating readers with its portrayal of the dog's unique relationship with mankind.' (**The encyclopedia of the dog** by Bruce Fogle, DK 1995, p.26.)

Courage, fidelity and devotion characterised 20th century dog literature, and this can be noted in the works of Jack London (**White Fang**) and Zane Grey. Even in JM Barrie's **Peter Pan** the children are looked after by a Newfoundland dog called Nana.

Dogs have been used over the years to provide entertainment for people. Hollywood's first canine superstar was Rin Tin Tin, a German Shepherd messenger dog found wounded in battle and adopted by an American soldier; Lee Duncan, who lived close to Hollywood. Rin Tin Tin starred in 22 films and set the trend for future doggy films such as the 1940 classic **Lassie come home**.

The role of the dog in human society continues to evolve and expand, reflecting changes in communities worldwide.

Anthropologists have observed that it is a universal human condition to want to feed and comfort young, furry animals. The dog is unique in its positive response. Because it shares a number of social behaviours with humans it gives comfort and security in turn. It is likely that the dog has provided warmth on cold nights and affection for its owners since it was first domesticated. It is only in the previous century that the dog's role as companion has become its most important attribute. This is especially so with regard to the elderly who sometimes do not have adequate social interaction with other people. While some people believe in the physical and emotional benefits of owning a pet, scientists are currently working to verify these ideas with medical studies. There is now a medically-approved class of what is commonly referred to as 'therapy animals,' mostly dogs that are brought to visit confined humans or to serve as guide dogs for the blind. Pet therapy utilises trained animals and handlers to achieve specific physical, social, cognitive, and emotional goals with patients. Walking a dog can provide both the owner and the dog with exercise, fresh air, and social interaction. Various books have appeared over the years that highlight this special gift of dogs. In **Endal: how one extraordinary dog brought a family back from the brink** by Allen and Sandra Parton we read how a Labrador played an important role in restoring harmony in the life of the author who suffered a severe head injury while serving in the Gulf War of 1991. In **A three dog life**, Abigail Thomas tells how she acquires two extra dogs for company after her husband, Richard, had been hit by a car while walking their dog Harry. The traumatic head injury he suffered did not kill him, but it rendered him susceptible to large-scale memory loss and wild rages and he was forced to be committed to an institution. **Angel dogs: when best friends become heroes** by Allen Anderson, offers readers a selection of inspirational stories of how dogs have acted as angels in peoples' lives.

Some dog stories refer to dogs in a time of war such as Jay Kopelman's **From Bagdad with love: a marine, the war, and a dog named Lava**, telling of a marine's efforts to transport a stray dog back to America. In **It's all about Treo: life and war with the world's bravest dog** by Dave Heyhoe, a dog is awarded the animal version of the Victoria Cross due to a successful career in finding hidden roadside bombs in Afghanistan.

Other books refer to dogs on tour such as in **Boogie up the river** by Mark Wallington, where a dog accompanies his master on a trip to seek the source of the Thames river. A local title that received a lot of attention is Joanne Lefson's **Ahound the world: my travels with Oscar**. It tells of the author's adoption of a stray dog from the SPCA, naming him Oscar and setting off on a world tour to make people aware of the plight of homeless dogs. (Unfortunately he has recently died in a road accident *Argus* 17 January, 2013 – a memorial service was held for him in Cape Town on 25 January.)

Some dogs received fame as celebrities, such as a rescue dog called Chandi who, together with her owner, Tina, through their dancing became Crufts champions and television stars.



Read about this in **Chandi: the rescue dog who stole a nation's heart** by Tina Humphrey. We can also read about the dog star from the Oscar-winning movie **The artist** in **Uggie the artist: my star**.

Author Jon Katz has written a number of books covering his experiences and his life with dogs. These are alternatively hilarious and heart-warming. Another author, almost forgotten, is Sheila Hocken, who wrote a series of titles about her dog Emma.



An important title on dog behaviour is the Jan Fennell title called **The dog listener** where the author, inspired by Monty Roberts (of **Horse whisperer** fame), develops her own unique system of dog training. **The dog owner's question and answer book** by Don Harper provides the answers to 300 commonly asked questions.

Of all animals, dogs have the longest history of friendship with humans. If dogs had never been part of our world, the human race may never have reached its present state of civilisation. They have protected our lives and property from enemies, helped us hunt for other animals that provide sustenance, and helped us out of trouble, sometimes sacrificing their own lives. Few other animals have been as important to humankind as dogs. The love of dogs is as universal as the desire for world peace.

There are many more titles to consider which will at best be provided in a select bibliography.

Selected booklist

General non-fiction

- Bradshaw, John. **In defence of dogs**.- Penguin, 2012.
 Flint, Elsa. **Understanding your dog**.- New Holland, 2003.
 Fogle, Bruce. **The encyclopedia of the dog**.- Dorling Kindersley, 1995.
 Harper, Don. **The dog owner's question & answer book**.- Blandford, 1999.
 Horowitz, Alexandra. **Inside of a dog: what dogs see, smell, and know**.- Simon, 2012.
 Palmer, Joan. **Dog facts**.- S. Paul, 1991.
 Tetsu, Yamazaki. **Legacy of the dog**.- Chronicle Bks., 1995.
 Whitehead, Sarah. **The dog: a complete guide**.- Silverdal Bks., 2001.

Caring and health

- Bauer, Nona Kilgore. **Adopting a great dog**.- TFH, 2003.
 Bush, Karen. **The dog expert**.- Expert Bks., 2010.
 Green, Martin I. **The South African home pet vet guide: dogs**.- Coombes, 1985.
 Maritz, NG. **Your sick dog: the owner's guide to understanding and managing breeding, illness and injury**.- Swan Hill Press, 2004.
 Meadows, Graham. **The dog owner's handbook**.- New Holland, 2001.

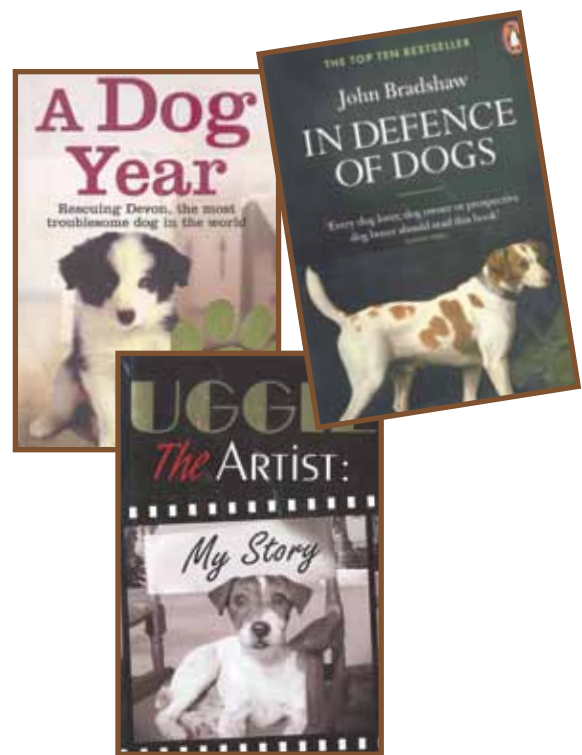
Messonnier, Shawn. **The natural vet's guide to preventing and treating arthritis in dogs and cats.**- New World Library, 2011.
 Oberem, Pamela. **Cats and dogs: a guide to animal diseases in South Africa.**- Briza Publ., 2008.
 Vaughan, Cathy. **How to start a home-based pet-sitting and dog-walking business.**- GPP, 2011.
 Woodhouse, Barbara. **The A to Z of dogs and puppies: all you need to know about buying, breeding, diseases, exercising, feeding, house training, inoculations, injuries, the law, sharing, vices, etc.**- B.Woodhouse, 1981.

Training

Davis, Caroline and Davis, Keith. **Dog training in a weekend: the easy way to train your dog.**- Hamlyn, 2003.
 Fennell, Jan. **The dog listener: [learning the language of your best friend].**- HarperCollins, 2000.
 Fennell, Jan. **The practical dog listener: [the 30-day path to a life-long understanding of your dog].**- HarperCollins, 2006.
 Geller, Tamar and Cagan, Andrea. **The loved dog: the gentle way to teach your dog good manners.**- Vermilion, 2007.
 Killik, Robert. **Dog showing: from beginners to winners.**- Collins, 2003.
 Ray, Mary. **Dog tricks: fun and games for your clever canine.**- Hamlyn, 2005.
 Simes, Graeme. **The dog whisperer: how to train your dog using its own language.**- Headline, 2008.
 Smythe, Stella. **Collins dog training handbook: a 10-week training course.**- HarperCollins, 2001.
 Woodhouse, Barbara. **Dog training my way, and difficult dogs.**- B.Woodhouse, 1981.
 Zeigenfuse, Mary Ann Rombold. **Dog tricks step by step.**- Howell, 2003.

Popular readable non-fiction

Badger, Louise. **Todo in Tuscany: the dog at the villa.**- Hodder, 2012.
 Carter, Hazel. **A dog in a million: my life with Connie.**- Preface, 2009.
 George, Isabel. **The dog that saved my life: sacrifice, loyalty, love beyond all bounds.**- Abacus, 2010.
 Herriot, James. **James Herriot's dog stories.**- Pan, 1992.
 Hocken, Sheila. **Emma and I.**- Gollancz, 1982.
 Hocken, Sheila. **After Emma.**- Gollancz, 1988.
 Katz, Jon. **A dog year: rescuing Devon, the most troublesome dog in the world.**- Ebury, 2008.
 Katz, Jon. **A good dog: the story of Orson, who changed my life.**- Ebury, 2009.
 Katz, Jon. **A home for Rose: how my life turned upside down for the love of a dog.**- Ebury, 2009.
 Katz, Jon. **Saving Izzy: the abandoned dog who stole my heart.**- Ebury, 2010.
 Martin, Peter. **A dog called Perth: the true story of a beagle.**- Orion, 2002.
 Masson, Jeffrey Moussaieff. **Dogs never lie about love: reflections on the emotional world of dogs.**- Vintage, 1998.



Mayle, Peter. **A dog's life.**- Penguin, 1996.
 Parton, Allen and Sandra. **Endal: how one extraordinary dog brought a family back from the brink.**- Harper, 2009.
 Pearse, Emma. **Sophie, dog overboard: the incredible true adventures of the castaway dog.**- Hodder, 2011.
 Thomas, Abigail. **A three dog life.**- Phoenix, 2008.
 Wallington, Mark. **500 mile walkies.**- Arrow Bks., 1987.
 Wallington, Mark. **Boogie up the river: one man and his dog to the source of the Thames.**- Arrow, 1994.

Dog celebrities

Anderson, Allen. **Angel dogs: when best friends become heroes.**- Penguin, 2009.
 Fleischer, Leonore. **The dog who rescued cats: the true story of Ginny.**- Simon, 1997.
 Grogan, John. **Marley & me: life and love with the world's worst dog.**- Hodder, 2006.
 Heyhoe, Dave. **It's all about Treo: life and war with the world's bravest dog.**- Quercus, 2012.
 Humphrey, Tina. **Chandi: the rescue dog who stole a nation's heart.**- Pan, 2012.
 Koperman, Jay. **From Baghdad with love: a marine, the war, and a dog named Lava.**- Bantam Bks., 2008.
 Lefson, Joanne. **Around the world: my travels with Oscar.**- Zebra P., 2010.
Uggie the artist: my story.- HarperCollins, 2012.

Adult fiction

Angus, Sam. **Soldier dog.**- Macmillan, 2012.
 Cameron, W Bruce. **A dog's purpose: a novel for humans.**- Pan, 2012.



Hiaasen, Carl. **Sick puppy.**- Macmillan, 2000.

Johnston, Linda O. **Beaglemania: a pet rescue mystery.**- Wheeler, 2012.

Koontz, Dean R. **The darkest evening of the year.**- HarperCollins, 2008.

Roberts, Nora. **The search.**- Piatkus, 2010.

Sheehan, Jacqueline. **Lost & found.**- Ebury, 2008.

Stein, Garth. **The art of racing in**

the rain.- HarperCollins, 2008.

Terhune, Albert Payson. **Lad: a dog.**- Dent, 1965.

Wilson, Susan. **One good dog.**- St. Martin's Griffin, 2010.

Wroblewski, David. **The story of Edgar Sawtelle.**- Fourth Estate, 2008.

Junior fiction

Baudet, Stephanie. **A dog in hiding.**- H. Hamilton, 1986.

Behrens, Andy. **The fastest and the furriest.**- Yearling Bks., 2010.

Brown, Bobby. **Greyfriars Bobby.**- Andersen, 1995.

Cook, Sue. **The totally true story of Devon, the naughtiest dog in the world.**- Red Fox, 2010.

Crisp, Marty. **White Star: a dog on the Titanic.**- Scholastic, 2006.

Daniels, Lucy. **Puppies in peril.**- Hodder, 2011.

Doder, Joshua. **A dog called Grk.**- Andersen P., 2005.

Fitzpatrick, James Percy. **Jock of the Bushveld.**- Penguin, 1976.

Grogan, John. **Bad dog, Marley!**- HarperCollins, 2007.

Lisle, Rebecca. **The dog in the diamond collar.**- Andersen P., 2006. London, Jack. **The call of the wild.**- Puffin, 1994.

Long, Jonathan. **The dog that dug.**- Bodley Head, 1992.

Martin, Ann M. **Everything for a dog.**- Scholastic, 2012.

Nash, Margaret. **Dog's new coat.**- Franklin Watts, 2010.

Pyron, Bobbie. **A dog's way home.**- Katherine Tegen Bks., 2012;

Richardson, Jean. **A dog for Ben.**- Methuen, 1988.

Junior picture books

Cooper, Helen. **Dog biscuit.**- Corgi, 2009.

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. **A dog like Jack.**- Holiday House, 1999.

Gormley, Greg and Angarano, Roberta [illustrator]. **Dog in boots.**- Gullane, 2011.

Hest, Amy and Bates, Amy. **The dog who belonged to no one.**- Abrams, 2008.

Kasza, Keiko. **The dog who cried wolf.**- Putnam, 2005.

Fine, Anne. **Ruggles.**- Andersen P., 2001.

Gravett, Emily. **Dogs.**- Macmillan, 2009.

