

Liz Yuill and Ripley

Ag Ch Illoura Ripley ADM ADO JDM JDO SDX GDX SPD

Career Highlights:

Agility Championship May 2017 AND the
1st ADC 600 Dog to achieve Agility Championship.
2016 Nationals (South Australia) – ADM Finals
2016 Nationals (South Australia) – JDM Finals
2017 Top 10 RQH Agility and 2nd Place
2017 Top 10 RQH Jumping and 2nd Place

Ripley was born on 29th May 2011 along with his five siblings, four females and two males (including Ripley). The two males entered Police puppy training where Ripley was given his name, Rabs. Apparently, the intake were all named after footballers, in Ripley's case Ray (Rabbit) Warren. I have no idea what the plan for Ripley as a Police Dog was, but at 13months he returned to his breeder followed by his brother a short time later. Obviously neither had what it takes to be a police dog.

I met Rabs at the Bathurst trial in 2012 where Vicki Priestley, who has two of his sisters, said something like "this is your next dog". And so, about a week later Rabs was on trial to see if he would become my next dog. Tony, my partner really liked him, my Koolie bitch, Summer, thought he was great and Scott (BC) completely ignored him and continued to do so for about two years. Rabs was quiet and obedient, and I felt that he really needed a forever home. So, he stayed and was given his new name, Ripley. I think it took about three or four months before Rip settled into his new home. He used to chew things, usually useful, expensive things like prescription sunglasses, GPS holder and library books. It stopped when he seemed to relax and accept that this was his home.

A few traits stood out, he loved his food and treats, he was a great tugger, not so good at letting go, loved ball games, was a great traveller in the car and loved water. He was good with people and other dogs. He didn't like getting things wrong. He was and still is very sensitive to my mood and tone of voice, something I have had to learn to be very aware of in his training. Nine months after starting his agility training, we started trialling.

Rip has never been a super keen agility dog. I have always had the feeling that he does it because I ask him to. The up side is that he seldom made mistakes unless I did, and he was fast enough to make the times. Hence, he had his JD title one year after he started agility training and his AD a month later. As the courses got more complicated, Ripley's confidence deteriorated. I was pushing too hard and expecting too much. I was training and running the dog I wanted, not the one I had. It took a while, but we got back on track. Some on line courses, workshops and seminars and some really great instructors and training friends have been essential in my journey with Ripley.

In 2015, I took Ripley to the ADAA Grand Prix, expecting nothing and came home with a big smile and so proud of my dogs. Last year we went to the Nationals in South Australia, once again with no expectations. The competition was going to be way outside our league. Unbelievably we made a final. All his agility and jumping runs except one were clear and a first place got him into the finals. We ended up with a DQ but his run was beautiful, and it was all so much fun.

Ripley's other achievement was to be part of the winning ADC team at Agility Festival last year (2016). I get too nervous to run in team events, so Vanessa ran him. I think he would rather run for her than for me sometimes!

This year, I realised it might be possible for Ripley to get his Agility Champion Title. We did it! On 7th May we got our last Agility points at the Hawkesbury Trial. Ripley achieved it with all placings and most were first places. I have to thank Vanessa for getting 45 of those points at the Canberra trial while I was judging at an ADAA trial. Sometimes when you least expect it wonderful things happen. Four and a half years ago when Ripley came into my life, I had no idea of how much joy and pleasure this dog would bring me. Love you to the moon and back, My Rippy!

(Border Collie)