

## THE PACK

The other day I walked my six dogs in a fairly remote area with miles of snow covered fields with hardly any tracks. As I wandered along I felt as if we were cut off from all civilisation and began to think about the jobs my dogs would undertake if we were really on a trail to some far distant place, like in the old cowboy films, with unknown, unseen dangers all around us.

Rogan, a confident strong Alpha male, would be the Scout. He always runs ahead and disappears, rarely in sight. Barney the Shepherd/Collie Cross would be the Messenger. He loves to follow Rogan but keeps coming back. Tyler, strong, never tires and would be ideal as an Out-rider, he seems to travel at the side at quite a distance but just keeps in sight most of the time. My Jack Russell, Riva, obviously takes the part of the Hunter, although I'm not too sure she'd bring the prey back to base but there is a slim chance I could get a rabbit or two. Dixi, a young Working Sheepdog, definitely is the Guard Dog. She barks at anything that moves. Lastly Chica, at twelve years of age would be the Companion and Helper, never leaving my side.

Okay, only musing but when I'm out with the dogs I nearly always see something to smile about – Like when I decided to take an interesting track through a large opening in a hedge. I called the dogs to let them know I was going in a different direction. Chica immediately stopped and let the other five charge through the opening, in her maturity, that's self preservation. Rogan immediately disappeared into the long grass but the young males Tyler & Barney ran full pelt, barking at each as they ran along the track and over the hill. I called them back (not knowing what was over the hill) and they came, still barking and racing each other when Rogan stepped onto the track about 50 yard in front of them and just stood looking at them. Tyler & Barney immediately slowed down and walked quietly and sedately passed him before racing back to me. It looked just like the Headmaster stopping the unruly school children from running down the corridor with that withering look all teachers seem to have. Rogan is definitely 'in charge', well apart from me of course.

Jean Meeking