



## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT ABOUT WORKING DALMATIANS**

### **The Dalmatian's working heritage**

One of the Dalmatian dog's historic roles in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was as a carriage dog. They guarded carriages, protected passengers, reassured the horses and killed vermin in the stables each night.

### **The Dalmatian's special abilities**

The reason Dalmatians were chosen for this role was because, as well as their attractive appearance, they have a conformation built for trotting, a constitution of considerable stamina, an affinity with horses, and an ability to focus on their work. Dalmatians are also very close to their humans and see themselves as part of a working team when they are out with their owner and horse. Some Dalmatians have such strong instincts to work in this way, that they will run under or behind a carriage with no training at all – it is an inherent trait in these dogs.

### **The Dalmatian's conformation**

The Dalmatian is well known as the ultimate endurance dog. It is of medium size and weight, has a short neat coat, powerful musculature and tight feet and pads with a strong capacity for shock absorption. They have a highly efficient gait and when trotting a fit Dalmatian is easily able to cover long distances.

### **The Dalmatian's temperament**

The Dalmatian is well known for its exuberance and love of life. It is an intelligent and headstrong breed, a combination that requires sensitive and knowledgeable handling. Like many breeds, it benefits from a training regime to keep its brain occupied, focused exercise to promote healthy growth and obedience, and free running. The Dalmatian is happiest when working with its owner in ways that play to its strengths and instincts.

### **The modern working Dalmatian**

The British Carriage Dog Society exists to preserve and promote this working heritage of the Dalmatian. Each year it runs a national Carriage Dog Trials. This is a competition which tests the modern dogs' ability to demonstrate the qualities required of a working carriage dog. Competitors do a basic obedience test with their dog, from a ridden horse or carriage, followed by an endurance run of six, twelve or twenty-five miles. Dogs are vetted prior to each trial to ensure they are fit enough to participate and then half way through and again at the finish. Dogs may earn the title of Road or Carriage Dog bronze, silver or gold, depending on the distance covered.

### **Training a carriage dog**

The Society encourages responsible training of its members' dogs and publishes a series of guidance leaflets on the subject. In particular, people are advised to take care not to over exercise young dogs and to build up any endurance training gradually. Today's carriage drivers invariably have to exercise their horses and dogs on the roads and safety of the whole team is of paramount importance. We strongly advise that dogs are never tied to carriages and although many dogs would never leave their carriage, for safety and control, members usually run their dogs on a light lead held by a passenger on the carriage. Members riding with their Dalmatian are more likely to be able to work off the road so may less often be seen by the public, but again may use a lead in the same way for the same reasons. Members are advised to work on their basic obedience 'on the ground' before attempting to ride or drive with their dogs.

For further information see [www.carriagedog.org](http://www.carriagedog.org) or contact the Hon Secretary Chris Cleland 01323 833732.