

## German bitch takes Fang for walkies

**Withit Without, 28 December:** The Fangs have a new dog. Old Brutus was blind, diabetic and covered in suppurating sores. Presumably he got the needle, put down under the pretence of being cruel to be kind, his obvious suffering ending courtesy of a cocktail of chemicals squirted from the sharp end of a hypodermic.

Brutus was a kindly canine, a friend to anyone who allowed him to rub his runny nose in the general direction of their genitalia which made him slobber affably and wag his tail in a demonstration of perpetual happiness and devotion. Dogs are so stupid.

His replacement is a house-trained rescue thoroughbred, a handsome but rheumy eyed German Shepherd bitch of questionable intelligence flown in from Mannheim by British Airways. I hear the barking first and then Fang proudly emerges from his front door and the two of them make straight for the local watering hole.

Although chained together to exemplify the spiritual partnership between man and his best friend, it's difficult to determine who is taking whom for a walk.

When they return two pints later Fang's face is etched with rage. The new dog, Gerda, named for some unaccountable reason after Martin Bormann's widow, behaves extremely badly in the Pie & Strumpet and both man and mutt are expelled.

Not only does the mutt fail to respond to any of Fang's commands, but she micturates on the guvnor's blue suede shoes, bares her teeth at bar bore Major Mottle, jumps on the pool table sending balls everywhere and charges from one bar to the other knocking over the vicar and smashing five glasses and a jardinaire.

Fang says a bill for the damage is on its way. The vicar should recover in time to deliver his weekly sermon thanks only to supplies of bottled Guinness which Fang is paying for. The price of a standard filling will have to rise by double the rate of inflation.

He passes on his tale of woe making the point that the only thing Gerda was been trained for was to create havoc for as long as possible. While he's airing his views, the dog races from Fort Fang and bounds up to me, hell bent on mischief.

'Platz' I say moving out of reach. The hound obediently drops its front paws to the ground and when I add 'sitz' it does that, too. I snap a twig from Fang's quince tree, hurl it up the road and say 'holen'. Gerda races after the wood and brings it back.

'Aus' I say and she drops it on Fang's immaculately groomed front lawn. So bewildered is the village's favourite dentist that his eyes almost pop from his head as I explain that the dog is clearly not an English speaker and needs to be ordered about in German.

Next day Fang appears in Hugo Boss leather spouting Deutsche speak and goose-stepping his way to the Pie & Strumpet singing Lily Marlene. Say what you like, our dentist is quick on the uptake.

'Valkies, Ja, es ist ein Hundeleben, vot!' he shouts across to me.

'Let the dog have a run' I shout. 'Lass den Hund im Lauf'.

At the word 'lauf' Gerda takes flight as if possessed dragging Fang behind. Alas, this second outing proves even less successful than the first. In Church Street, Gerda catches site of Professor Pommies Frit and his French poodle Andrei and gives chase.

The two hounds end up coupling in front of the Pie & Strumpet dartboard and prevent the first team reaching the county final before last orders. Fang is now banned for life. Why he didn't order 'nein Kopulation' beats me.

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