

DOG PAWS ON THE MOORS

By Pamela Butler

A drama script for 4 actors

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CAST LIST

MEGAN	Welsh collie
TOM	Megan's human, outdoor type, keen on birds.
BINGO	Border terrier
BINGO'S HUMAN	
KIPPER	Hearing Dog, small mixed breed
KIPPER'S HUMAN	
BARNEY	Adolescent, collie-cross, rescue dog
BARNEY'S HUMAN	
TESSA	Cocker spaniel, gun dog

NOTES

This is a rougher first draft than the podcast script. Most events and dialogue remain the same, however. I think I've made this work (as it stands so far) for 4 actors – supported by one off-stage props person doing sounds.

All scenes take place outdoors either on the moors or in the woods. I decided not to attempt the obedience class - instead, its effects can be reflected in BARNEY'S improved behaviour.

The acting should be much broader than on the podcast, really aim for broad slapstick comedy, elements of farce as the dogs run back and forth. Good timing required. Lots of body language. I have put some really bad dog jokes in – if you want to do some really broad comedy, but take them out if you want.

Reverse the conventions – we are adoring but slightly patronising of our dogs. In this play the dogs are the sharp clever ones, the humans can be slightly daft and sappy

Idea for props: 4 trees - these could delineate the stage, the boundary between moors and woodland, and be the woods and the weaving poles for the forest activity trail. Trees can also be used to emphasise the issue of owners picking up dog poo then flinging the bags in trees – as raised by the Rangers. At first I wasn't sure how to handle this issue but – since everyone, particularly children, loves a good poo joke – I have put it in as a running joke for Bingo's human to constantly have a bag of dog poo that they mean to collect on the way back but always forget about. There is a bit of dialogue associated with it, but perhaps it might be better handled as a visual joke?

HUMANS

Tom is the only human who's a distinct character. It might be easier if the other humans were quite broadly indicated by props like anoraks, bobble hats etc?

TOM wears binoculars, does a lot of waving his arms around, gazing round at nature

BINGO'S HUMAN bit of a bumbler

KIPPER'S HUMAN needs looking after

BARNEY'S HUMAN well meaning but knows nothing about dog training

NOTE ABOUT THE DOGS

Dogs could wear very large collars, possibly with their names on their tags? Dog tags can be bone shaped, heart shaped, disc etc. Get some burgundy fabric from the Hearing Dogs to make Kipper's collar, borrow a lead?

Wear deely boppers for ears

I have tried to select distinctive dog types. Each dog moves differently, has a distinctive accent. Google the breeds for pictures. Descriptive quotes about the dogs are from www.kennels.co.uk, quite a good source of info, has a picture of each breed with brief notes about its characteristics

Dog body language, pack theory – maybe seek advice from Kennel Club adviser? Dogs, being pack animals equipped with murderous weapons (teeth) have evolved all sorts of ways to defuse aggro and live peaceably together. Dog body language is a lot about this – giving off the right signals to other dogs. I've got a book with photos of dogs in action doing these signals and can photocopy it. It's important to get this right as an audience of dog owners will recognise dog body language, even if they are not aware exactly what it means.

THE DOGS

MEGAN Welsh collie, well trained. Collies are herding dogs – they use their eyes to 'fix' onto the sheep. If you've ever watched One Man and His Dog, you see the collie lying low in the grass staring at the sheep, moving fast when needed, but not dashing about in the way a scent-led hunter does.

I have lived with 2 collies and this 'collie eye' follows you around the room from the dog bed in the corner or the long grass in the garden. Incredibly intelligent dogs, they are supposed to have the intelligence of a 12-year old child. They can form an especially intense bond with their humans.

BARNEY Has all the above characteristics, but they're not under control yet.

Young dogs have a 'socialisation window' in the early months of their development when they are unafraid and intensely curious. Intelligent humans make sure their puppy is safely exposed to as many different experiences as possible during this period so that it grows into a relaxed and confident dog. If dogs miss this exposure, they can grow up to become nervous and distrustful of new things and it's hard work to overcome. Barney could be a bit borderline, a bit jumpy when he encounters new things? – but he's still got that intense puppyish curiosity plus young collie wildness.

HEARING DOG KIPPER a small mongrel, Kipper was a rescue dog. From being a discarded, unwanted, non-pedigree on the scrap heap, Kipper has become the ears, companion and best friend of his/her human. A modest, unassuming little dog, KIPPER is immensely proud of his / her job and grateful for the chance that life has given him/ her.

BINGO Border terrier "A smart workmanlike little terrier with a harsh and dense weatherproof coat, the ability to keep going steadily all day. Makes a good pet for an active family but if he doesn't get the exercise he needs he will take himself off. Good natured and cheerful, but has a strong working instinct and does like to be busy" – so Bingo never stands still, always sniffing, always moving. Terriers have quite a 'stiff legged' gait, they don't bend the paw at the ankle in the way other breeds do.

TESSA Cocker spaniel and gun dog "the working type, not often seen outside shooting circles is a steadier and more independent dog (than the pet cocker). .. They are a busy breed, they always seem to be bustling about, particularly when they pick up a scent...Any Cocker Spaniel owner would recognise the picture of a nose apparently glued to the ground, ears draping his head being followed by a steadily moving body and a merrily wagging tail"

Crufts winning pedigree dog. Posh country type, brisk and kind – think Penelope Keith.

SCENE 1

THE MOORS , A COLD EARLY SPRING DAY, LATE AFTERNOON

Enter TOM and MEGAN. Tom well wrapped up and with rucksack and binoculars

TOM Well that's it then Megan girl, we've said goodbye to the moors, eh? Birds start nesting tomorrow, no more walks unless you're on a lead.

[MEGAN wags tail. Gazes adoringly at TOM while TOM pats her head, rubs hands together]

Brr, it's been cold today in that wind, you wouldn't think spring was here.

[Tom looks up, spots bird]

Hey! Hey, what's that?

[puts binoculars to eyes, gazes upwards]

Curlew? Golden plover?

[Tom wanders off, binocs still glued to eyes, following the flight of the bird]

MEGAN [addresses audience] So its goodbye to the heather moor for a few months now while the birds get their nesting done and raise their families. He does love his birds my Tom. If I want to run off the lead, we'll be taking our walks in the woods or maybe a trail. I like the trails, lots of other dogs to wag hello to.

[follows TOM off]

BINGO'S HUMAN [in the distance at first faintly, overlapping slightly with

MEGAN'S last words, moving from one side of stage to the other, calling,

whistling, clapping hands] Bingo, Bingo here boy, Biiinnnnnggggooooo where are you,

Bingo Bingo.

[A red rubber ball. bounces across the stage]

BINGO appears, like his human he's searching for something, running from one side to the other. Takes no notice of his human, BINGO is intent on his own search. BINGO and BINGO'S HUMAN always move in opposite directions across the stage, if BINGO is going left to right, his human is going right to left and vice versa.

BINGO Lost. On the moor, Saturday. One red ball. Round, made of rubber. A bit chewed but much loved. If found, please return to Bingo. ***[Runs off]***

[Enter KIPPER, wearing a burgundy collar and on a burgundy lead, with his/her human who is hearing impaired.

BIRD CALL (GOLDEN PLOVER) Kipper stops dead and points, human reacts to Kipper's response, not to the sound.]

KIPPER'S HUMANWhat is it Kipper? What can you hear? ***[turns in the direction Kipper is looking/pointing?]***

(LOW) Oh. Wow. A golden plover. Is it really? Yes I'm pretty sure it *IS* a golden plover. Kipper old pal, you're a star.

[Enter BINGO, looking satisfied (he's just done a poo) scratches backwards 3 or 4 times very firmly

BINGO Ahh. That's better. ***[spots KIPPER]*** Hey there mate! Wags to you. Bingo's the name, running's the game!

KIPPER Wags.

BINGO Love that purple collar!

KIPPER It's not purple, its burgundy.

[Enter BINGO'S HUMAN swinging a plastic bag of poo (plasticine) which he hangs on a tree.]

BINGO'S HUMAN We'll just leave it there for now, pick it up on the way back.

KIPPER & KIPPER'S HUMAN both react to this. **HUMAN** looks disgusted. **KIPPER** looks at **BINGO** who shrugs, he's used to this but it's still a weird thing that some humans do. Dogs could all recoil as they spot it?

KIPPER Why's he do that?

[BINGO Shrugs]

KIPPER It's not to do with the birds nesting is it?

BINGO Don't think so. He's always hanging it up somewhere. Always says we'll pick it up on the way back, always forgets. Humans! They've got some funny habits. Where'd that bird go? **[Runs off as]**

[...Enter BARNEY. Only recently rehomed from Battersea Dogs Home, BARNEY is a collie-cross, late-puppy stage. Bursting with adolescent enthusiasm, BARNEY is utterly ecstatic about his new life. He is discovering the moors for the first time. He runs around the stage filled with delirious joy, greeting everyone in the audience]

BARNEY HELLO!! Hello, hello, hi there, I'm Barney, Barney from Battersea, hello O wow, this is sooo wonderful. Anyone else from the Dog's Home? Hi there, I'm Barney. She's brought me lock, stock and dog basket out to the country. It's a long way from Battersea, who'd ever have thought there was sooo much space? **[Spots Kipper, rushes up to Kipper. Dog good manners require a younger dog to greet an older dog much more tentatively and respectfully, but Barney has no manners. However, Kipper good-naturedly makes allowance for the youngster. (KIPPER'S**

HUMAN still holding Kipper's lead, gazing happily round at the moors?) Oh hey, hi there, hi, good to meet you. I'm Barney. You're not from the dog's home are you?

KIPPER Ye ...

BARNEY Isn't this moor just great? Wow, that purple outfit! It's wicked! Dude, that's totally cool. **[KIPPER won over by BARNEY'S admiration.]**

KIPPER Its not purple, its burgundy. And I'm a Hearing Dog, we all wear burgundy collars. **[Proudly]** I wear a burgundy coat when I'm working, but today's our day off.

BARNEY Wicked. **[cocks his ears, listening, he doesn't understand 'Hearing Dog']** Hearing Dog? All us dogs hear don't we?

KIPPER I'm his **[lovingly indicates HUMAN]** ears.

BARNEY What's a Hearing Dog do then?

KIPPER Well, what don't we do. Right now I'm an Exercise Dog and a Nature Dog. I just showed my human a golden plover ...

BARNEY Wicked! What's that then?

KIPPER A bird, quite a rare one actually, so **[laughs modestly]** you could say I'm a Bird Watching Dog

BARNEY'S HUMAN [offstage] Barney, Baaaarneeee

BARNEY Oh wow! **[he's not quite used to responding yet]** That's my human. Got to dash. Wags. **[Charges off, back the way he came.]**

KIPPER Well I think we've seen the last of the birds...

[ENTER TESSA very alert, brisk, looking round]

TESSA Wags. Thought I heard a golden plover ...

KIPPER Wags, and so you did. I was just telling my human about it but there's been a right pair of daft mutts chasing about, they'll have scared it off.

TESSA Don't they know it's the middle of March? Bird nesting season started 2 weeks ago. That's a rather fine purple collar by the way.

KIPPER [*Kipper must never sound exasperated, he/she never gets tired of telling others about being a Hearing Dog*] It's not purple, it's burgundy, all Hearing Dogs wear them.

TESSA You're a Hearing Dog! How interesting. I'm a gun dog. I can see we share a love of nature, but what does a Hearing Dog do exactly?

KIPPER What don't we do! I'm the ears for my human. Our day starts when I wake him/her up! You could say I'm an Alarm Clock Dog, a Doorbell Dog, an Errand Dog, a Fire Alarm Dog ...

[KIPPER could go on like this for a long time so TESSA interrupts]

TESSA That must take some training. Training's a bit of a speciality of mine – you can't go into the field with a badly trained gundog.

KIPPER Exactly the same for us!

BINGO [*scampers onto stage note – Bingo to come and go from one side to the other*] Wags all. Fancy a chase around?

KIPPER Wags. Got to look after my human.

TESSA Wags. [*sternly*] What about the birds?

BINGO Yeah! We can chase some birds if you want.

TESSA NO...

BINGO Oh, on the lead I see. Run wild, run free, that's my motto.

[OFFSTAGE] BINGO'S HUMAN Bingo Biiiiinnngggooooo. Bingo Here boy

TESSA & KIPPER [*together*] Isn't that your

BINGO Yer right, there he/she goes. Getting a bit barrel shaped so I'm taking him/ her for a good long run

BINGO'S HUMAN [*enters, completely ignoring bag of poo*] Bingo, Bingo, where are you boy? Bingo!

BINGO Well, better go eh?

BINGO'S HUMAN [*delighted*] Bingo!!

BINGO and HUMAN walk off leaving bag of poo hanging. TESSA & KIPPER could follow them off, holding their noses, pointing to bag, generally looking disgusted?.

SCENE 2 SUMMER

Enter TOM, carrying rucksack and climbing rope, and MEGAN on a long lead, not over 2m. TOM takes off rucksack, attaches MEGAN'S long lead to it. Pats her.

TOM On guard Megan.

[TOM walks off with climbing rope MEGAN sits alertly till he's gone, then stretches out/ sits contentedly, relaxed, yawns.]

MEGAN That was a good walk in. He's gone climbing, snooze time for me now, then I'll walk him home.

ENTER BINGO Wags, Megan. Hey! Funny bones! What d'you get if cross a sheepdog with a rose?

MEGAN Wags Bingo...Funny bones, I dunno, what do you get if you cross a sheepdog with a rose?

BINGO A Collie-flower! **[runs off]**

Sound of SHEEP off stage Baaaa Baaaa

ENTER BINGO'S HUMAN [from the other side, carrying another bag of poo]

Bingo. **[alarmed suddenly, calls much sharper]** Bingo! Bingo! No, come here. **[hangs poo on tree, walking briskly, turns and strides off]**

MEGAN [follows them with head, like at a tennis match] Now that's NO way to deal with sheep. Trrrrrouble, there'll be trrrrouble.

ENTER BINGO Hey! What d'you get if you cross a dog with a sheep?

MEGAN [raises eyes to heaven]

BINGO A sheep that can round itself up!

[Another BAA from off stage, BINGO runs off]

ENTER BARNEY *on lead and BARNEY'S HUMAN* *Barney is struggling to walk on the lead, but he keeps bounding away and getting jerked back]*

BARNEY'S HUMAN *(irritatedly)* Barneee! Heel. Heel Barney. *[jerks lead MEGAN winces sympathetically with each jerk]*

BARNEY Aarghh. Ouch.

[offstage SHEEP baa's. BARNEY turns round to head in that direction. MEGAN could jump up in alarm

BARNEY'S HUMAN *[shouting]* NO BARNEY!! Heel.

BARNEY What?

BARNEY'S HUMAN *[exasperated]* Heel

BARNEY What?

BARNEY'S HUMAN *[to Megan]* Hello doggy

[sits down on rock, gazes round at landscape – or walks off?]

BARNEY Wags, I'm Barney. *[a much more subdued greeting than before]*

MEGAN Wags darling, I'm Megan. That didn't look very nice

BARNEY My neck's sore. Megan?

MEGAN Yes love?

BARNEY She won't let me run. I have to stay on the lead cos the birds are nesting.

MEGAN So they are, we can't run off the lead here till the baby birds have grown up.

End of July that'll be.

BARNEY But Megan, birds nest in trees, don't they? There's no trees here on the moor, so where are all the birds nesting then?

MEGAN Not all of them, there's lots nest on the ground, there's .. hold on, here's someone who knows all about it.

ENTER TESSA Young Barney! Wags, puppy, how are you getting on? Wags Megan.

MEGAN Wags Tessa.

BARNEY [*doubtfully*] Alright ... I suppose. Oh, wags. Sorry.

MEGAN and TESSA exchange glances.

MEGAN Poor Barney's human isn't very good at walking on the lead. Which birds is it again Tessa, that nest on the ground?

TESSA Ooohh, now, let me think – there's grouse, curlew, hen harriers, lapwings, short-eared owls, merlins.

BARNEY Really? All those?

MEGAN There's clever these gundogs are. Her dad won at Crufts you know.

TESSA [*pleased*] Golden plover's another ground nester; I've said grouse haven't I? Dunlin, that's another one. Y'know, if it wasn't for the birds our heather moor wouldn't be anything like it is today. Some of them, golden plover and grouse (did I mention them?) even nest close to paths.

MEGAN Spot on the scent there Tessa; see Barney, think of all the baby birds.

BARNEY [*anxiously*] I wont hurt them.

TESSA But you might scare the parent off the nest. Just an innocent sniff around to us – very scarey to a bird. Can't be too careful. Lambs too, got to watch out ...

MEGAN [*interrupts hastily*] Me and Barney's collies, if there's one thing we know about, it's sheep

BARNEYand running, and barking ...

MEGAN [*looks significantly at BARNEY*] ...and we're VERY good at obedience.

Barney's human's not very well trained see, not like my Tom. Very easy to train is Tom.

I'm lucky, he's ever so bright, very intelligent. I swear, sometimes he understands everything I say.

TESSA There's some very stupid humans about, that's for sure – and some very unlucky dogs.

BARNEY I'm not an unlucky dog am I Megan?

MEGAN No darling, she's a lovely human, got very bright eyes hasn't she? Real sweetie, I'm sure you can get her trained up. Tessa now, Tessa does lots of training, isn't that right Tessa?

TESSA Ah, now for us gundogs training's a game that never stops. We start as pups about 12 weeks old ...

BINGO [*racing across*] Training! get running, that's all the training a dog needs

[BARNEY bounds up, ready to run, he's stopped by firm looks from MEGAN and TESSA.]

TESSA As I was saying. Get your human into a good class – that Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog scheme.

MEGAN I hear they've got classes all over the place...ooh! [*starts to scratch, peers down at her belly, under her armpit*]

TESSA Megan? What's up? [*guesses what it might be*] Oooohh you haven't ...?

MEGAN Blast it, yes I have. Ticks – there's one there see?

BARNEY [*peering*] yeeurgh

[MEGAN and TESSA are completely matter of fact about this, but BARNEY (city dog) is horrified and gradually, as the conversation progresses, he gets twitchy, starts scratching]

TESSA You think it's bad now, wait till tomorrow when its full of blood

BARNEY [*makes exaggerated nausea / horror gestures*]

MEGAN There's bits of nature even me and Tom don't like.

TESSA Does he know what to do then?

MEGAN Tom? Course he does. We went to the vet first time it happened, Tom got the vet to show him how to twist them off.

TESSA Ticks, I hate em, it's a dogs life eh?

[MEGAN & TESSA laugh, partly at BARNEY who is scratching frantically by now]

SCENE 3 SUMMER

In the woods, the Forestry Commission Activity Trail. Poles on stands with tree shapes in cardboard? Or use other activities outlined in Steve's document

MEGAN and TOM are playing on the activity trail. TOM is shouting encouragingly and running alongside MEGAN as she weaves round the poles.

TOM Come on Megan. Weave. Weave. Weave. And again. Weave. Weave. Weave.

Enter BARNEY running happily through the woods, startled reaction, BARNEY is amazed to see MEGAN weaving round poles.

MEGAN [*puffed*] Phew. Wags, fancy a go?

TOM carries on running off stage

BARNEY Hey! Wow! YES. [*charges forward, charges through the trees – turns round, bit bewildered, now what?*]

MEGAN Not like that, love, like this – in and out, in and out, [*walks slowly through*]

See?

BARNEY [*following, missing a couple out*] Wow, great! This is fun! Is this how we round up sheep?

MEGAN No, no, no. This is an Activity Trail for dogs – almost as good as a run on the moors eh?

TOM [*yelling from off stage*] Come on Meggy babes

MEGAN [*indulgently*] Listen to him! He is having fun! Better go, heaven knows what trouble he'll get into if I don't keep an eye on him. [*Races off*]

[OFFSTAGE peep peep of a dog whistle – the metal kind used by gundog trainers]

Enter TESSA [ignores BARNEY at first, races around sniffing, searching for something.] Oh, wags Barney. Here, help me find the dummy – there's one hidden

round here somewhere. [**BARNEY joins in enthusiastically and in completely the wrong direction – TESSA pounces triumphant**] Aha! [**seizes dummy and runs off.**

Peep peep of dog whistle again]

BINGO rushes across stage. Followed by HUMAN who hangs another bag of poo on a tree? (too much poo?)

BARNEYS HUMAN offstage Barney, Barneee.

BARNEY obeys instantly and rushes off

SCENE 4 SUMMER

[OFFSTAGE Sound of car engine, horn, screech of brakes.]

BARNEY'S HUMAN [off stage] Bad dog Barney, get in the car.

BARNEY [panting, jumping up and down – he's locked in the car]

Enter KIPPER Barney! What are you doing in the car? And on such a hot day too?

BARNEY I'm in trouble Kipper,

KIPPER What's up, where's your human?

BARNEY She's gone to get an ice cream, then we're going home

KIPPER What, no walk?

BARNEY She's really angry. Says she can't manage, says I'm too much for her on her own. Says I'm a handful.

KIPPER A handful?

What happened?

Enter TESSA

TESSA Shut in the car on a glorious day like this?

KIPPER He's in trouble

KIPPER & TESSA What happened?

BARNEY She let me off the lead

KIPPER Right.

TESSA Bird nesting's over now.

BARNEY We know. We were both really excited, planned a long walk.

KIPPER So what went wrong?

BARNEY I was so excited, I ran in front of a car. All the humans were shouting. It was horrible.

TESSA Car parks, I hate em!

KIPPER Worse than roads if you ask me.

BARNEY Yes, but ...

TESSA A dog doesn't know where to put her paws! Cars going in all directions: forwards, backwards; this way that way.

BARNEY It's worse than that ...

KIPPER And its not just the cars! There's all the other stuff!

TESSA Anti freeze, chocolate – deadly to dogs

KIPPER Ashtrays emptied, cigarettes chucked down and starting fires

TESSA A dog's just not safe – suffocating inside a hot car, surrounded by danger outside.

BARNEY Listen! She said I'm a bad dog. Said she can't manage on her own, said I'm a handful!

TESSA & KIPPER A handful!

BARNEY That's what they said the last time. Before I got sent to the dog's home.

[starts to whimper] oh please don't send me back! I love you, I really do. I've been trying to be good. It's just this lead thing. And the barking I suppose, and the running around.

TESSA Calm down puppy! Take that human of yours along to a good obedience class.

KIPPER Kennel Club, Good Dog Citizen – they're good. Lots of fun too.

TESSA Make sure your human takes good treats along with her – cheese or chicken bits –they make learning easier.

[BARNEY starts to cheer up]

KIPPER At Hearing Dog School they used to use sausages – cook em and cut em up in little bits. It's amazing how much we learnt in that class!.

BARNEY *[amazed]*, **TESSA** *[envious]*, **KIPPER** *[remembering]* Sausages!!

SCENE 5 SUMMER

OFFSTAGE sound of much baa-ing

BINGO *[runs back and forth]* Whee, bark bark, wuhay Who let the dogs out bark bark

[chuckling to himself]

[SHEEP offstage still **SHEEP** Aaaaah, aaaah

LAMB Maaaa, Maaaa

SHEEP Baaaabeeee, baaaabeeee

BINGO *[addressing audience as he runs around]* Wuhay!! Isn't this great? Come on, everybody, let's all have a chase.

ENTER BARNEY on lead and BARNEY'S HUMAN

BINGO Barney! Mate! C'mon!

SHEEP (off) Baaaa

BARNEY hesitates.

BINGO C'mon, a dog's gotta do what a dog's meant to do

BARNEY makes as if to join in. BARNEY'S HUMAN –must be really quick here, reacts instantly to the dog's movement

BARNEY'S HUMAN *[fiercely]* Barney! NO! *[pulls ball out of pocket, voice changes much more upbeat]* Here Barney, let's play.

BARNEY & HUMAN run off happily

SHEEP & LAMB *[off]* Faaaarmer!! Faaaarmer!!!

FARMER *[offstage, shouting]* OY! What you done to my sheep? Where's my lamb? Come 'ere darling *[sounds of bleating]*. What you done to her, she's terrified!

[sound of 2 shots. BINGO stops dead in his tracks, turns, runs away]

BINGO [*terrified*] Yiyiyiyi [*turns and runs off.*]

SCENE 6

AUTUMN

TOM & MEGAN [*TOM is wearing wintery clothes – bobble hat? Fleece etc? and binoculars*]

TOM What a day, eh Megan? Just look at all those geese [*looks up at sky, points*] heading off for the winter. Wonder where they'll end up [*wanders off still gazing up at the sky*]

Enter KIPPER

TOM [*wandering off*] Hello doggy, love that purple collar.

Then enter BARNEY [very calmly] Wags Megan, wags Kipper

MEGAN & KIPPER Wags!

MEGAN Well ...

KIPPER Bones and biscuits – you've calmed down a bit!

MEGAN So, how's it going, I hear you've started a class. Good Dog Citizen is it? Are you going for the Bronze Award?

BARNEY We're working hard. The humans get very excited about it and I get lots of bits of cheese and sausage. I'm getting the hang of walking on the lead, watch this [*He minces along, exaggeratedly 'good dog', with nose in the air. MEGAN and KIPPER applaud.*]

[Instead of standing still, MEGAN & KIPPER could join in, like a chorus line, all doing sits, downs, walking in formation]

MEGAN That's my boy!

BARNEY [*relaxes, back to his normal enthusiastic self*] I can do sits [*he sits – can you make this work?*] and downs [*he lies down*]. The other dogs are OK and our

teacher's lovely, she found my favourite tickling spot straight away [**indicates behind ear**] but I don't like that Tyson. He always swears at me when I walk past. 'Mongrel' he says. Sod him and his pedigree!

KIPPER Pedigree isn't everything Barney. Hearing Dogs come in all shapes and sizes. Lots of us are rescue dogs too, and no one bothers about our pedigrees, just how well we can do our jobs: Phone Dog, Human Fetching Dog, Ice Breaker Dog, Errand Dog, Oven Timer Dog, Best Friend Dog - that's our most important job, you know.

MEGAN Stick with it Barney, remember you're half collie and there's nothing a collie can't do.

BINGO'S HUMAN [**faintly, off stage**] Bingo, Bingoooo [**enters, addresses the 3 dogs then starts to move around to members of the audience. He's carrying a large version of the Paws on the Moors dog card with a picture of Bingo inside it (the actor in dog costume)**] Excuse me, looking for my dog. Little dog – can't have got far? I've lost my dog? Little brown terrier – anyone seen him? Disobedient rascal, but he's never been gone so long. Always comes back – eventually. Anyone seen a little terrier? Brown, rough coat, bright eyes, about so high? Never been out so late. I'm worried about my dog, maybe he's been run over? Maybe he's hurt somewhere? You haven't seen a little brown dog? About so high, means the world to me. Can't bear the thought of him hurt, or, or [**pulls torch out of pocket, switches it on, tearfully, keeps searching**] Bingo, Bingo boy, come on, [**wanders off**]

ALL THE DOGS TOGETHER Bingo, Biiiiinnngooo etc [**dogs go off in all directions still calling**]**SCENE 7 AUTUMN**

Enter **MEGAN** [**looks round, starts sniffing**] Bingo? Bingo, that you?

BINGO emerges from behind a tree

MEGAN Where you been? We've all been looking for you? What happened?

BINGO I'm never going to let him out of my sight again! I ran myself into a whole load of trouble – too much for this terrier.

MEGAN Oh Bingo, it wasn't ..., you weren't [*glances round, whispers*] not sheep, you weren't *sheep chasing*?

BARNEY [*walks on, very well-behaved until he spots BINGO, then starts to bounce around him, like he used to do*]. Bingo! Mate, where've you been?

BINGO I got shot at. I ran away and ended up lost!

MEGAN & BARNEY No!!

KIPPER [*trots on*] Bingo!

BARNEY Bingo got shot at! He ran away! He got lost!

BINGO The dog warden put me in a van, then I got put in kennels. They said I was "at large". How can I be at large? I'm only a little terrier.

KIPPER "At large" means being on the loose Bingo. You weren't scaring birds were you?

MEGAN Or chasing sheep?

BINGO Well [*scratches uncomfortably*] I was only having fun. I thought the sheep were having a good time! I didn't know the farmer would be so angry. Why did he shoot me?

MEGAN [*warningly*] Bingo!! The sheep were scared, not having fun.

BINGO I didn't mean any harm. That farmer, he meant business though. I was really scared.

KIPPER Sheep are his business.

MEGAN A prize Swaledale now, like those ewes on the moor, they can be worth hundreds of pounds to the farmer.

KIPPER Bingo, the humans would say he's got every right to shoot you.

BINGO Collies round up sheep, gundogs go after birds

MEGAN Yes, but they've been trained. It takes lots of training to work with sheep.

BINGO Training! That's all I hear about now – obedience classes, and walking to heel!

BARNEY Hey Bingo, walking to heel's not so bad! You get good treats. We can do figure of eights now – off the lead! [*he demonstrates, walking in figure 8s all around the other dogs*]

BINGO And I've been microchipped!

KIPPER I like to stay close to my human.

MEGAN You never know what trouble they can get into if you let them out of your sight.

KIPPER Just the other day I had to warn mine about a galloping horse coming up behind us so he could step out of the way. Early Warning Dog, Road Safety Dog – that's me

BARNEY Horses! Keep me on a lead please! Big scary things. They didn't have any horses in the dog's home! The first time I saw one, it came and stuck its great hairy nose right in my face. All my four paws left the ground at once!

BINGO ...He/She's bought an extending lead and a whistle!

KIPPER A proper dog whistle, now that's a really good way for a human to stay in touch with their dog. Better than all that shouting and arm waving you get from your badly trained humans.

MEGAN Less scary to the wildlife, a whistle. Cheer up Bingo. Hey! Funny bones! Have you heard the one about the farmer that sends his collie out to fetch the sheep in? The

collie brings 'em in, the farmer counts 'em and goes 'There's 40 sheep 'ere, I only had 37 last week. What happened?' The collie goes 'I rounded 'em up.'

[BARNEY falls over laughing. BINGO and KIPPER groan.

Calls from off stage]

Megan, come

Barney, come

Kipper, come

Bingo, come. Good dog.

[peep peep of a dog whistle]

ENDS