



Rosie is crashed out, exhausted, after spending the afternoon with Janine out walking and playing with her canine pals.

Rosie has been with us since April last year, when we picked her up from a rescue charity. She's a sweet natured, Border Terrier cross, affectionate with all three of us, and especially our 7 year old son who doesn't leave her alone for a second, but when she's out walking on the lead, it's another story. Rosie growls, and snaps at any other dog that comes up to her.

Our first few walks were fraught, the approach of every dog had me and my husband anxiously yanking at her on the lead, and apologising profusely for the snapping and snarling. We took to shouting out to other dog owners as they approached that ours wasn't friendly, and could they please call their dog off?

We turned to training to sort out the problem. It was a relief to discover that Rosie wasn't a killer, it's just that she doesn't know how to behave when she's out on the lead and the techniques we learned helped. Armed with cocktail sausage, we now set out on Rosie's walks. We turned her away from other dogs, distracting her and luring her with the meaty treat.

Training courses helped, but we didn't have many friends with dogs, so socializing her was difficult. Over time, Rosie did seem to get a bit better, but we wondered if we'd ever be brave enough to let her off the lead, fearing that her behaviour would be just the same when she encountered dogs off the lead, and without one of us to control her. Even the vet advised us not to let her off until we could be sure that she wouldn't go for another dog. But how would we know?

And then we heard about Woodland Dogs and I rang Janine and had the first of many lengthy chats. Janine explained that she socialized dogs by taking them out for walks with twenty or so others. I couldn't quite imagine our snappy Rosie in this set up, but thought it would do no harm if Janine came to meet her. Janine got the measure of her right away, and had her obeying commands in a way that still makes me envious. And so a date was set. Rosie was booked in for a day out with Janine. I had second thoughts, what would happen if Rosie picked on a Staffie, a Rottweiler or a German Shepherd? I rang Janine, who reassured me, explained her techniques and told me about other dogs who had come to her with similar problems. So we were back on.

I was here the day Janine picked Rosie up, and watched from the window nervously as Janine put her into the van. An hour later, Janine sent me two pictures by text - Rosie, racing at the rate of knots with Henrietta, the Boxer, and the second of her trotting happily behind a Rottweiler, and followed by a Husky. We haven't looked back. Rosie goes out with Janine every week. Even though it is just the once it's reassuring to know that she gets to play freely and happily with her doggie mates. And it's given us the confidence to let her off the lead too, and walking the dog is so much more fun. We have to keep her on the lead a lot of the time, because the park where we live is flanked by roads, she's still snappy, but knowing that it's something about the lead, and not something about her character has made all the difference.