

# Living with Schipperkes

BY KAREN BUGG

As a breed the Schipperke has been described as a large dog in a small body with the instincts of a guard dog – protective, devoted and courageous.

**When the Schipperke breed originated, dogs had to be useful to survive. So, the Schipperke became the guardian of the household, and like all guarding breeds, they possess a great sense of responsibility towards the home and everything in it and are very loyal and devoted to their family.**

They thrive best with an active way of life, and love to be with their owners whatever they are doing, from a hike in the country, a walk along a city street, or even a lazy day at home. Nowadays, I work from home, so I have lots of toys available for them to amuse themselves. Most days, they are happy to lie at my feet or snuggled on a chair while I am working. But the moment I switch off my computer, they are up and ready to go!

They are generally easy to house train and keep themselves clean. Their coats are easy to maintain and require little grooming, but once a year, they do shed. Due to their size, they can live in a house as well as a flat; they are economical to maintain and will do well on any food – raw meat or a complete kibble. Mine like raw vegetables, so when I'm preparing a meal, they are there in a flash, waiting for any bits I might give them – they especially like carrots and broccoli stalks!

Schipperkes are good communicators. My boy tells me that the water bowl is empty by scratching in it, and then, if no one takes any notice, he lifts it and throws it on the floor!

Blue, my male goes to work with my husband to his office in the Coventry Canal Basin – very apt for a barge dog! He started taking him to the café in his lunch break and Blue was given a sausage as a treat by the

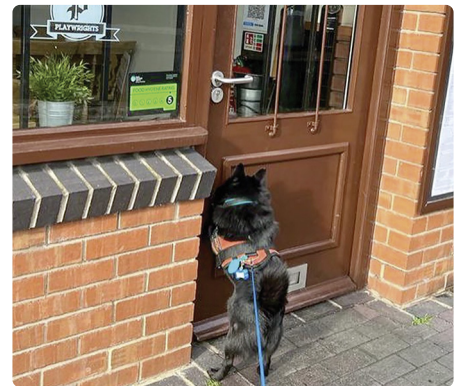
staff. But now he expects one every time he passes and is most put out if he cannot go in.

Schipperkes are full of character and very intelligent, full of fun and mischief. One of my old girls, Carat, 'trained herself' to fetch my slippers when I walked through the door. She had noticed that when I came home, I would swap my shoes for slippers. I don't know if she was being helpful or making sure I was not leaving the house again!

With their inquisitive nature, nothing around their home escapes inspection. My eldest, Lilly, enjoys peeking through the blinds and alerts me to all visitors expected and not. They are a lovely breed to own and I wouldn't be without one.



Down by the canal watching the barges that Schipperkes used to work on. **Janice Philpott**®



**Top:** Blue remembers his way back to where the tasty sausage came from, but can't quite understand why the door won't open.  
**Above:** Lilly on duty. **Karen Bugg**®

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