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THE Sniff

News from **Medical Detection Dogs**

Spring/ Summer 2013

Royal Visit A day to remember



A proud day for the charity as Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall visits Medical Detection Dogs.
See pages 4 -6

Medical
Detection Dogs



Dogs saving lives

www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Welcome



Welcome to the spring and summer 2013 edition of The Sniff.

With wonderful public support and an invaluable team of volunteers Medical Detection Dogs moves forward in a very positive way. The Sniff team continues to grow and I am very grateful to everyone that helps to create what we hope you will find an interesting read.

Enjoy!

Claire Akehurst

Editor

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If you would like to
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Save the Date

Andy Rouse is multi-award winning professional wildlife photographer and conservationist who is a larger than life character. His Wild About Animals tour showcases his latest work from around the world and the UK. Great pictures, funny anecdotes, irreverent chat, toe tapping music, it's all in his action packed show, which is suitable for photographers and animal lovers alike.

9 October 2013

The Waterside Theatre,
Aylesbury



It's a great night out and on the 9th October he will be doing a special fundraiser for Medical Detection Dogs, which is his official charity for 2013. All proceeds from the ticket sales from the night will be donated towards buying and training two Medical Detection Dogs puppies, Yoda and Dai, to be used as alert and bio- detection dogs. In addition there will be a special fundraising raffle with some great prizes.

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Hogan

Over the last year we have had lots of support from Neil Ewart and OurDogs when they chose Medical Detection Dogs as their charity of the year.

As a thank you a puppy has been named Hogan after the OurDogs Managing Director Vince Hogan.



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Looking *forward*

**2013 is going to be a very exciting year for Medical Detection Dogs.
So much has happened already...**

At the end of 2012 we completed the Royal Canin bio-detection trial that we are doing in collaboration with Lincoln University. The results are currently being analysed and promise to reveal some exciting new information about canine olfaction. We were amazed by how much we learned during the threshold training and have so much to tell. Olfactory thresholds vary more than we thought between dogs, and dogs have an ability to improve detection through learning more than we ever imagined.

The New Year started with a double page spread in the Daily Express on the 1st of January and a BBC News 24 interview following a documentary 'In Dogs we Trust' which was shown in Scotland just before Christmas.

We have a number of TV appearances planned for the New Year and I am sure that these will continue to raise the profile of the charity, this will assist us with fundraising and also enables those who can benefit from our help to hear of our work.

Those who have visited the centre recently will know that all the alterations to the front building are now complete and we have an operations and client area which enable staff and clients to work in a more tranquil environment. This was much needed as our operations continued to expand rapidly.

In February we were honoured to receive a visit from HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. This was a very high profile visit, which will have long reaching positive effects through media and our own members and followers.

We had wonderful support from volunteers and clients with their dogs who had come to welcome the



TANGLE

Duchess. We also had a number of very eminent consultants and oncologists present including Professor Karol Sikora and Alan Makepeace. Please see pages 4-6

After the completion of the Royal Canin Olfaction study, I retired Tangle the BMJ cancer detection dog as he is now ten and a half years old. I can't believe so much time has passed so quickly since this first study. Tangle has retired from working on the carousel but will be assisting Midas and Lizzie on the bedbug detection programme which is now underway and promising to go well. I was delighted when Tangle's breeder donated a pup to follow in his footsteps. Tangle is great uncle T to Jobi (Sniff) who is showing great promise and will work on the next cancer detection project. See later on in Sniff an update of our cancer detection projects and our plans for the future.

We were visited by three senior representatives from Cancer UK. They attended an open day and watched Daisy working on prostate cancer samples. It was a fantastic opportunity to discuss our hopes and aspirations for this work and to discuss possibilities for the future. It was a historical landmark for the charity and one we are proud of.

Progress in the medical assistance dog programme is excellent and we have many new recruits progressing well with their puppy socialisers. The team are working hard to reach the placement target of 12 this year. I am delighted to report that at the end of 2012 we placed our first dog in Scotland. Many of you will recognise Milly, who features on our puppy sponsorship leaflet, the little Yorkie who came from Wood Green Animal Shelter.

So much work to be done and I know that there is much more excitement ahead in this incredible journey. It is hard to think of new ways to say thank you to everyone who helps make this possible.

Without you and your input it would not be possible, puppy socialisers, speakers, fundraisers, event organisers, car park attendants, cake makers, phone answerers, dog walkers, donors, sponsors and many more. Without you none of this could happen.

Thank you.

Claire Guest

Chief Executive and Director of Operations



CLAIRE GUEST AND JOBI

“I am incredibly impressed and staggered
by the work that is done here.”



Royal Visit

A day to remember

By Jan Shillum

THE DATE: Wednesday 20th February 2013.
The time: 11.30am. The occasion: A visit from Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall. Tails wag, catching the unwary with an unexpected slap across the back of the legs in this crowded small space at Medical Detection Dogs HQ; noses twitch with excitement as Medical Detection Dogs of all shapes, sizes and shades gather with their owners alongside the charity's staff, patrons, trustees, sponsors and volunteers for this momentous occasion.

The Duchess arrives promptly at noon and is whisked away by Chief Executive Dr Claire Guest to meet Honorary Medical Director Dr John Church, eminent oncologists Professor Karol Sikora and Dr Alan Makepeace, medical advisor Dr Carol Tang, diabetes specialist Dr Vicky Hordern and so many others without whom the charity would not be able to function. Her Royal Highness is shown the training carousel where dogs learn to identify cancer in urine samples, watches a demonstration of expert Daisy in action.

At 12.30pm our wait is over, The Duchess is here. She is fashionably and suitably dressed for the chilly February weather in a tailored slate blue coat with toning scarf tucked into the neckline and long brown leather boots.

Little Alena who has Type 1 diabetes and a Medical Alert Dog called Maisie has been guarding a bright posy of red roses and yellow daffodils all morning and now presents them to The Duchess. Next in line is actor Lesley Nicol our celebrity charity ambassador, The Duchess can't resist a cuddle with Patmore the pretty apricot poodle, named for Lesley's character Mrs Patmore the cook in the popular ITV series Downton Abbey and confides she enjoys the programme.



DR CLAIRE GUEST EXPLAINS TO PROFESSOR KAROL SIKORA, DR ALAN MAKEPEACE AND HER ROYAL HIGHNESS HOW CANCER DETECTION DOG DAISY WORKS



DR CAROL TANG AND DR VICKY HORDERN CHAT TO THE DUCHESS



ALICE EXPLAINS HOW MEDICAL ALERT DOG HOLLY SUPPORTS HER



ALENA AND MAISIE WAIT FOR THE DUCHESS WITH ACTOR LESLEY NICOL



HER ROYAL HIGHNESS ENTERS THE ROOM



STAFF MEMBER LYDIA INTRODUCES PATMORE THE POODLE



THE DUCHESS MEETS MAX AND MEETS HIS OWNER MAUREEN



TONY AND MEDICAL ALERT DOG SSAFA



THE DUCHESS MEETS REBECCA AND SHIRLEY



THE DUCHESS SAYS HELLO TO CHARITY TRUSTEE BETSY DUNCAN SMITH AND HER HUSBAND IAIN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS



HER DUCHESS UNVEILS A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

“You can read about these things but you have to be able to see it to believe it.”

The room goes quite when Claire Guest announces a demonstration of blood sugar alerting by Pippin a yellow Labrador in training and everyone applauds a job well done. Ssafa, a sweet Jack Russell is curled quietly on the knees of her owner Tony, who has acute spondylitis and arthritis. Ssafa is the only official pain alert dog in Britain.

Tony and his wife Tina talk to The Duchess while she gently strokes Ssafa's head. An unashamed dog lover, Her Royal Highness recently rescued two young Jack Russells, Beth and Bluebell from Battersea Dogs Home and tells Tony she is really pleased to know that people realise how well small terrier breeds can be trained. Tony says simply that Ssafa has changed his life since alerting him to pain before it becomes too intense has meant three years without hospitalisation.

Gemma with Polo, Alice with Holly, Karen with Coco, all clients whose lives are made infinitely better by their alert dogs. Sarah, a diabetic, tells me “I got Jimmy on Valentine's Day two years ago, he was the best gift ever.” Medical Detection Dogs Trustee Betsy Duncan Smith, here with her husband Iain, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, says, “it's amazing, the potential for what these dogs can do is huge.”

All too soon it's time to go. The Duchess unveils a commemorative plaque, a red Medical Detection Dogs dog coat substituting for the more traditional velvet curtain, then says a few appropriate and obviously heartfelt words: “I am incredibly impressed and staggered by the work that is done here,” she says, “you can read about these things but you have to be able to see it to believe it. More people should know about it, congratulations to you all.”



VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, CLIENTS AND SUPPORTERS ALL GATHER TO SEE THE DUCHESS

Southern Golden Retriever Display Team raise funds for Medical Detection Dogs



DAVID WIMSETT, SUE ASHLEY AND THE DISPLAY TEAM DOGS PRESENT CLAIRE GUEST WITH CHEQUES

A very special thank you to all the members of the Southern Golden Retriever Display Team.

Over the last year they have once again been tremendously supportive to the charity. This year at Crufts, along with those clever 'Goldies' they presented Claire Guest with cheques for almost £4000.

Please keep an eye open on the Society's Facebook page or Website for fund raising activities that you can support at www.southerngoldenretriever.com



Sponsored 12 mile ride Sunday 7 July 2013

Milton Keynes Eventing Centre, Buckinghamshire MK19 7HQ Starting at 10am



Please join us and help raise vital funds to support the development of a non invasive early cancer detection system.

For further information or a registration form visit: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

E: claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk T: 01243 839306

Nano the Allergy Alert Dog

By Natalia Baker

“Cheeky, playful and a wee bundle of energy.” That's how Yasmine Tornblad of Worcester describes her beloved dog, Nano - a three and a half year-old toy poodle who's small in size but huge in personality.



As well as being Yasmine's little companion, Nano serves a very special function in her life as a nut allergy dog. Yasmine, who has been allergic to nuts since childhood, recalls her first serious reaction. "About seven years ago, whilst on a business trip to China, I had to be hospitalised after eating nuts by mistake. This was my first experience of an anaphylactic shock, and just three weeks later, I was back in hospital after a similar episode at a festival in Germany."

Yasmine was immediately referred by her GP to an allergy clinic in Birmingham, where she was diagnosed with a severe allergy to peanuts (also known as ground nuts) and other common 'tree nuts' that we eat in Britain. As sufferers know too well, these types of nuts and their traces can be present in many places and products, often with no easy way to spot them from a distance.

For Yasmine, it is difficult enough navigating her way around such a minefield at work and in public without experiencing the apathy of others. "People often perceive you as overreacting or being difficult," she says, worried that without precautions, she is more likely to come into contact with nuts. She also notices how younger allergy sufferers can be affected. "Children with allergies sometimes aren't invited to parties because no one wants to take the responsibility."

Shaken from her two terrifying experiences, Yasmine was desperate for a way to minimise the risk of further reactions. At her employer's

suggestion, she looked online for help. "I found an organisation in Canada that trained allergy alert dogs and, since I already had a dog, I thought it was worth a go."

Further research pointed her to Medical Detection Dogs – seemingly the only option in Europe for this kind of work – and it wasn't long before her application was accepted as a trial study.

Nano has taken beautifully to his training programme, which has been developed by the charity. Thanks to trainer, Colin, he is now well on his way to joining a growing number of certified allergy alert dogs in the US and Canada. Yasmine and her partner, Stuart, also spend time putting Nano through his paces, though he is not being actively asked to 'work' as yet.

Even so, Nano is naturally beginning to show off his newly-learned scent recognition skills, alerting Yasmine to the presence of nuts in various environments, such as detecting nuts on her colleagues' desks and in drawers. Thankfully, her co-workers are understanding and accommodating. "They won't bring nuts into the meeting room, and when Nano occasionally barks in the office, no one blinks an eye!"

Nano's Medical Detection Dogs jacket is also having an effect. "The local pubs and cafés know why he is there and they take more care about what they give me. The woman behind the counter at the local deli recognised Nano and asked me if I wanted her to change her gloves to prepare my sandwich."

These gestures make all the difference to Yasmine. She can't wait for Nano to be fully trained when he will accompany her everywhere to double-check her food and surroundings. She'll be able to enjoy life, reassured that she can avoid potentially life-threatening contact with nuts.

If Nano's promising start becomes a success story for the pair once he is certified, it paves the way for other allergy sufferers to benefit from having an alert dog. Yasmine herself hopes to see children with allergy alert dogs and for their parents to be less anxious about their condition. And what better form of 'risk protection' than a four-legged best friend? ■



YASMINE AND NANO

According to the World Health Organisation, highly allergic individuals, sometimes from merely breathing airborne particles of an allergen, can enter a state of anaphylaxis - a condition that can affect the organs and central nervous system, potentially resulting in death within minutes.

Nature study

Jan Shillum talks to our Honorary Medical Director, Dr John Church who advocates the use of maggots and fish in medicine and believes we still have a lot to learn from the natural world — these methods he insists are not alternative but complementary...



DR JOHN CHURCH AND CLAIRE GUEST

At 82 years old Dr John Church is no less enthusiastic about his work than when he first collaborated with Medical Detection Dogs Chief Executive Dr Claire Guest in 2002 on research funded by Buckingham Hospitals Trust, publishing two years later, a groundbreaking study on the use of dogs in detecting bladder cancer.

Dr Church, a retired orthopaedic surgeon, is known as the 'Maggot Man' because of his pioneering use in the UK of maggots for wound cleaning. "You have to pick the right maggot for the job, he explained in a *National Geographic* interview, "some burrow deep into living flesh but the ones we use do one useful thing — recycle organic waste. In nature they go for naturally decomposing material, not living tissue. They're part of nature's scavenging

mechanisms that we largely take for granted. Nature is in the business of scavenging and we're just cashing in on that really, selecting the fly species with a good track record. The same species is used consistently throughout the world, it's exceedingly important.

"There is still an art to medicine and there's very much an art to using maggots, you must have a happy, hungry maggot or you will get no results. The environment in the wound must be what they would naturally seek out in nature."

Dr Church first saw the medical potential of maggots in Central Africa when patients brought in from the bush had survived for days without treatment because maggots had kept their wounds clean. The phenomenon was noted during WWI before the use of effective antibiotics and on battlefields for centuries before that.

This awareness of the natural world and its huge potential just waiting to be unlocked is a recurring theme through Dr Church's long and distinguished career and led to him being instrumental in setting up the International Biotherapy Society in 1994. The mission statement of the

Society reiterates all that he believes in: 'In an era when many folk remedies are being rediscovered and the use of natural drugs is increasingly popular, we also witness a revival of the use of bacteria, protozoa, invertebrate animals such as fly larvae, bees and leeches in medical practice. IBS aims to support the use of and understanding of living organisms in the treatment of human and animal diseases. The Society organises international conferences for the exchange of information and ideas on subjects such as maggot debridement therapy, hirudotherapy (using leeches), apitherapy (using bee venom and other bee products), and ichthyotherapy (using fish in skin cleaning).'

On this last therapy, Dr Church is positively lyrical. "We were on holiday in Bangkok," he tells me, "then went on to visit the Bridge over the River Kwai museum. To my amazement in the museum we saw a picture drawn by one of the prisoners of war: he was sitting in the River Kwai with his legs under the water and little blue fish cleaning up his ulcers. Today the therapy is available as a foot spa treatment and has gained a bad reputation, which I'm worried about as it really does work in medical terms.



"I went to northeast Turkey, up in the mountains, where they have set up a healing institution. They have open air, single gender pools, people go in with psoriasis, the fish nibble their skin and they come out pink and clean. I had a go myself and it was surreal but marvellous, the little fish cleaned up all our cuts and grazes. There's a clinic in Austria using the fish with excellent results too. As with the maggots, the key is to use the right kind of fish."

His belief in Biotherapy led on naturally to experiments with Biodiagnosis. "It's always better to prevent disease rather than cure it. We can use living organisms to detect disease while it's still treatable in all sorts of ways. It's just a flight of fancy now but in theory insects could be used to detect cancer. Male insects will dance when they sense pheromones. If we select an insect that will dance to a particular tune that we have pre determined, anchoring a molecule of cancer to a molecule of their pheromones then set up a system to measure the dancing electronically it should be quite simple to detect cancer from human samples. It's pure surmise of course, tomorrow's therapy, no-one's doing it yet."

Not so with our wonderful medical detection dogs of course, who are already able to detect cancer with amazing degrees of accuracy, Dr Church explains: "We have struggled to find enough clinical material for the proof of principle study on prostate cancer. We needed two hours with each of 400 patients, we've got to find them then take them aside at a time when they are already

ill and worried, we need a huge amount of goodwill.

"There's tremendous complexity, not all of the samples will be from cancer patients and any treatment drugs in the urine samples will confuse the dogs but our research is statistically robust though cancer charities and pharmaceutical companies are exceedingly sceptical. We had it again and again with the maggots but that is proven now and the therapy used all over the world. People don't want to be told that dogs are quicker than machines and more effective, it sweeps the ground from under their feet.

"I am exceedingly sceptical myself but you shouldn't restrict horizons. A machine will come along one day that will recognise the keynotes the dogs can recognise but we don't know what they are yet. It could well be certain molecules that indicate cancer in general, or be much more specific about different types of cancer. Then of course, no two patients ever have exactly the same disease. The spectrum of expressions of cancer is far more complex than we know. With prostate cancer, most men over 60 have it but it's either dormant, the 'pussycat' or aggressive, the 'tiger'. It must be a high priority for the dogs to pick up the tiger — we haven't got there yet.



"Dogs recognise given compounds at an extraordinary degree of dilution. It's like identifying a Monet painting from half a water lily leaf. At Medical Detection Dogs we now have cameras on the training carousel so we can see a dog's response to each sample, the behaviour isn't always the same, it's very subtle. We'll probably never get a machine that will match nature, there's no way modern technology can better what nature does. Show me an aeroplane that can match the many ways insects fly, they are nowhere near as versatile. Nature always got there first, it behoves us to see why and how and take on board the mechanism. Let's have machines and dogs and work alongside nature, integration is the key. I am a passionate believer that animals have a huge amount to teach us." ■





Steven & Molly

By Natalia Baker

To anyone, 10 year-old Steven Courtney and the family pet dog, Molly, are like any little boy and his best friend. But there's much more to their playful, inseparable relationship than meets the eye.

Steven, from Ambrosden, near Bicester, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 3, a condition that has been difficult to keep under control.

After a chance encounter with Medical Detection Dogs, Molly, the family's 2 year-old working cocker spaniel, was trained as a Medical Alert Dog. Today, Steven and his family are enjoying a fuller, more relaxed life knowing that she is there to watch over him. This is their heartwarming story.

Steven's mother, Serena, describes the period after his diagnosis in 2006 when her little boy would become very lethargic and thirsty. "It was a frightening time and a steep learning curve for us. We stayed in hospital for a few days whilst we learned how to test blood glucose levels and inject insulin."

Following his hospitalisation, Steven would worry about going anywhere new in case he became unwell. "He relied completely on me to be with him at all times, and became

anxious if I went out even for a short time and his Dad was in," says Serena. Steven looked for constant reassurance about his blood sugar levels, changes in which would make him grumpy, unfocused, thirsty and tearful. "He wanted my help but, because of his low mood, would resent me checking him so often.

It was by chance that the Courtneys encountered the notion of a diabetes alert dog. "Ours is not a classic pairing story," says Serena. "We had

Molly as a puppy and Steven took training classes with her as she was quite the mischievous pup!" Medical Detection Dogs gave a talk at the club, and the presenter, Susie, came over to talk to Steven about his diabetes. It surprised us all when she told us she thought that Molly might know when Steven was low.

Serena admits she was sceptical at first, as Molly had never been trained in this way, but as we watched her over the next few weeks, we noticed that she would become unsettled and more attentive to Steven when he was hypo, though not consistently. "We placed a training application with the charity and it really made our Christmas last year when we were invited to Headquarters to find out we'd been accepted."

Steven and Molly already had a good bond – helped by the fact he'd taken responsibility for her training from the first day – and their Medical Detection Dogs programme has really cemented the partnership. According to his Mum, the pair adore each other and Molly worships Steven.

Part of Molly's training has focused on rewarding her for correctly alerting. Serena says, "She finds the whole thing exciting, especially the 'high value' rewards we give to make it clear when she's done a good job – for her that's a cocktail sausage!"

With Becky and Simone from Medical Detection Dogs visiting the pair at home to support the training, Molly's accuracy at alerting has increased steadily through the programme. Serena would also make detailed notes of Steven's hypos, Molly's reactions and tests given to track progress.

Public access training also took place under Becky's instruction, helping Serena manage holding the lead as well as handling money and shopping, which at first was quite nerve-racking. Sometimes Molly

had other ideas, showing particular interest in any cuddly toys spotted while out and about. Much to their neighbours' amusement, the family had to put Molly through a 'teddybear avoidance exercise' by lining them up along the street and walking up and down until she ignored them!

Molly qualified in her training in September 2012 and now confidently alerts to Steven's hypo and hyperglycaemia (low and high sugar levels), meaning he has a much better control over his diabetes. "We're catching rises and falls much quicker due to Molly's alerts," says Serena. "We very rarely have issues with him being irrational or falling now."

Before Molly, Steven's parents would worry most about him not waking from a hypo during the night, and potentially having a seizure. Serena would wake up every two hours to check his levels, putting her under significant strain. "For a time I thought about nothing but blood glucose levels, alarms, patterns and doses. Steven would become anxious and upset, so I'd often sit by his bed and end up falling asleep exhausted in the early hours."

Molly now sleeps with Steven in bed – which they are both equally pleased about – and he is more relaxed at night having her to cuddle. For Serena, this has put her mind more at rest and she is now able to get more sleep. "I still need to do routine checks and tests when she alerts but I'm not constantly wondering what will happen or what his levels are."

Molly does a fantastic job out of the house too, joining Steven for shopping, days out, playing sport or trips to restaurants. Steven remarks, "She knows when she's working and is very serious when wearing her red jacket!" Molly has even managed to alert him from the sidelines while he was playing football.



THE COURTNEY FAMILY AT DISCOVER DOGS

Serena believes that any family in similar circumstances would benefit from a trained dog who can provide invaluable alerts. Steven now spends less time in hypo and experiences fewer drops in the first place as Molly is spotting them early.

"Knowing that he spends more time than ever 'in range' is incredibly reassuring for us at all times of day and night. Having a Medical Alert Dog has made us more confident in doing what needs to be done for both Steven's short and long term health."

She adds: "Molly is a very clever, cuddly and loving dog who makes our lives so much better. I can even go out for a couple of hours now without Steven getting anxious. We are a much calmer household thanks to Molly!"

Serena wanted to say a big thank you to everyone at Medical Detection Dogs for all their hard work in training these dogs to make such a big difference. ■



Pet Insurance
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JENNY FROM BUDDIES
WITH PUPPY DAN

Buddies Pet Insurance

supports our puppy sponsorship scheme

Catching a report on BBC radio while driving, was enough to grab the attention of Marianne Metaxas, managing director of Buddies. Marianne was amazed to hear about the work of the charity and keen to see if she could provide further support.

Buddies has been working with pets and their owners for over 10 years and understand the important role dogs play in society. Through the company's well respected Puppy Guide, which goes out free of charge to

hundreds of thousands of new owners each year, Buddies is able to communicate the wonderful achievements of detection dogs to a sympathetic audience who may go on to make a donation.

In addition to the Puppy Guide, Buddies is also helping to publicise the work of the charity through its vet and breeder network. The company is leading by example and now sponsors five puppies which it hopes will play a crucial role in helping their owners lead a full and active life.



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By sponsoring our puppies and young dogs you can make a real difference by helping to support their care and training which enables them to change and save lives.

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To sponsor our puppies online visit:
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for further information:

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CANCER DETECTION



Research so far

In a recent study Cornu et al. (2011) evaluated the efficacy of prostate cancer detection by a trained dog, a Belgian Malinois, on human urine samples. After a learning phase and a training period of 2 years, the dog's ability to discriminate urine from cancer patients from control urine was tested in a double-blind procedure. The dog correctly selected the cancer samples in 30 of 33 cases. Of the three cases wrongly classified as cancer, one patient was rebiopsied and a PCa was diagnosed. The sensitivity and specificity were both 91%. The authors concluded that dogs can be trained to detect the odour signature of PCa by smelling urine with a significant success rate.

A Japanese study by Senoda et al. (2011) on colorectal cancer using breath and faecal samples showed equally promising results. Sensitivity was at 0.97 with a specificity of 0.99 for faecal samples, while sensitivity

was at 0.91 with a specificity of 0.99 for breath samples. The accuracy of canine scent detection was high even for early cancer. Canine scent detection was not confounded by current smoking, benign colorectal disease or inflammatory disease. The authors concluded that a specific cancer scent does indeed exist and that cancer-specific chemical compounds may be circulating throughout the body. These odour materials may become effective tools in colorectal cancer screening.

McCulloch et al. (2006) evaluated the ability of trained dogs to distinguish exhaled breath samples of 55 lung cancer patients from those of 83 healthy controls. Among lung cancer patients and controls, overall sensitivity of canine scent detection compared to biopsy-confirmed conventional diagnosis was 0.99 and overall specificity 0.99.

Additional evidence of a dogs ability to detect lung cancer from a breath sample was published by Ehmann et al. (2012) who found that sniffer dogs can identify lung cancer with an overall sensitivity of 71% and a specificity of 93%. The authors anticipated that a robust and specific volatile organic compound (or pattern) is present in the breath of patients with lung cancer.

In an additional study in 2006, McCulloch et al. also tested the dog's ability to distinguish exhaled breath samples of 31 breast cancer patients from those of the 83 healthy controls. Dog handlers and experimental

observers were blinded to the identity of breath samples, obtained from subjects not previously encountered by the dogs during the training period. Among breast cancer patients and controls, sensitivity was 0.88 and specificity 0.98. This evidence opens the door of VOC detection for cancer diagnosis and suggests that the conditioned dog should be used in the near future to validate candidate molecules emerging from metabolomic screening. The results provide a new insight in the field and further work with more dogs is now required to further investigate and validate this work. If an electronic nose with sufficient accuracy can be developed for GPs to use in the surgery the benefits will be truly vast.

Future of this work

Whilst these studies show huge promise there is still a long way to go. Much of this work has been with one dog and on a very limited number of samples. In some cases there has been repeated use of controls in testing and controls have been from younger healthy individuals and not from aged matched symptom matched individuals. This would result in much higher accuracy levels from the dogs that may not be replicated in a more detailed clinical trial. Further research is required with a larger group of dogs, much larger sample sizes and robust double blind testing with age matched symptoms matched controls. This can be done but requires funding as ethics and patient consent must be passed and all sample collection can be a lengthy process. However the

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING



value of studies such as these to follow up these initial proof of principle studies would be invaluable.

Prostate cancer research



The charity is now working in conjunction with Professor Karol Sikora, mass spectrometry scientists and medical statisticians in the detection of prostate cancer from human breath and urine. There are massively powerful reasons for such a study.

Prostate cancer is a major killer and the current test, the prostate specific antigen test [PSA], is so unreliable that many GP's are reluctant to use it. If dogs can sniff prostate cancer from a urine sample the chances are high that from the results of the dogs' sniffing research, a test can be developed that is far superior to the PSA test. The results would indicate the existence of a potential odour signature of prostate cancer that may correspond to one or, more likely, multiple VOC's. These molecules should then be assessed by specific gas chromatography/mass spectrometry analysis.

Breast cancer research

With regard to further studies, we now have a collaborative team including local clinicians and are preparing to do a Medical Detection Dogs proof of principle study into the detection of breast cancer from a breath sample. We are currently preparing an ethics proposal for this project. We have secured some funding for this study which will hopefully be repeated next year if we are able to match fund over the next twelve months.

In broad terms the proof of principle study will be similar to the original BMJ paper. For guidance on how the study will be conducted please refer to the BMJ article regarding the bladder cancer study by visiting the internet at <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/a/bridged/329/7468/712>. This study will be conducted on very similar lines. We propose that a proof of principle study is completed with a minimum of 5 dogs some of which may be dogs previously trained to sniff cancer from urine. However we would on this occasion use computer software to enable the dogs to be rewarded after detecting a sample. This system has now been used successfully in our other odour detection studies. Dog training and testing would take an estimated 8 months. Careful records would need to be kept on computer and video tape.

Cancer detection in Italy

There is much work to be done. We are working with colleagues in Italy, Medical Detection Dogs Italy (MDD.I) and have already developed our knowledge and have the opportunity to work on samples in a true clinical setting.

During the a trip to Italy, we also had the opportunity to work our dogs on samples in a hospital in Trento run by the chairman of MDD.I. This was a fantastic experience and we were able to ascertain from the samples provided, that both our cancer

detection dogs Daisy and Lucy were able to indicate bladder, prostate and two types of renal cancer from a urine sample. As mentioned in the last Sniff during our first trip we were asked to screen a sample from a patient who had a recent biopsy of the prostate that had been negative. There were concerns due to this patient's fluctuating PSA. Both dogs indicated positively on this sample. The clinician observing this response recalled the patient back for a second 21 needle biopsy. This second biopsy revealed cancer...

These developments together with additions to our team supported by Professor Karol Sikora will give our project impetus and lead to further discoveries in the potential of this work.

Specialist dogs trained to detect cancer volatiles can provide valuable information that will assist in the development of new ways to detect and diagnose cancer in the future. Dogs with their incredible sense of smell can detect the minute odours now understood to be associated with many cancers. Hopefully with the knowledge the dogs provide, scientists will be able to develop an electronic system which can mimic the dog's nose and open the way for new non invasive methods of screening for cancer.

This is just the beginning...



So lucky to have Lucky

By Brian & Sharon

Our story with Lucky starts back in 2010 when Brian and I were visitors to Paws in the Park in Kent.

We had been looking on and off for a long time for a dog to join our home, visiting various breeders and rescue centres and never being able to quite find 'the right one'.



At Paws in the Park we first met Simone, tucked away in a little gazebo. To this day I do not know what made us enter, but thank goodness we did!

As we started to listen we realised very quickly that this was a charity we should really be paying some attention to, especially as Simone was explaining how they were training and homing dogs with clients that had very brittle Type 1 diabetes. This I came to understand was exactly what Brian was now suffering with. Obviously I knew Brian was diabetic, he was diagnosed at the age of six, but in recent years his blood sugars had become extremely erratic and he had very little (if any) awareness of low or high blood sugar.

It then took us a few months to actually fill out the application, mainly because we had to make sure we were ready to become a doggie household, but also as Brian is partially sighted we had previously considered the possibility of applying for a Guide Dog later down the line. We had to consider our options, but it was very clear that the diabetes was what was adversely affecting Brian the most. So the application was sent off.

An interview was arranged and Brian was then put on the waiting list. Eventually we were called and asked if we would like to meet a dog they thought might be suitable. That dog was Polo; now partnered with Gemma.

Our meeting with Polo came with mixed emotions as I loved him and

connected with him instantly, but he seemed somewhat aloof and unbothered about Brian. A beautiful dog with a lovely soul, but the bond with Brian just did not seem to be there and everyone kept stating how important that is; of course you have to bond with a dog that will potentially be saving your life! So we came home wondering if we had done the right thing. Had we given away our one chance at having a Medical Alert Dog? Was it just because Brian was worried about the enormity of the situation? Could we cope? Was there something within us that made this not work out? All these questions...

From that first visit to the centre I saw a change in Brian. Just being in the presence of the dogs had brought a spark to him that I had not seen for many years, so if nothing else I knew a dog was going to make a positive difference to our lives, even if we did not end up with a Medical Alert Dog.

A few months on another call came to say there was another black Labrador they thought might be suitable. So off we went to be greeted by a big, boisterous, slobbering, jumping Lucky!

I wondered how on earth I would cope with this creature, but could instantly see that Brian thought he was great, so I knew I had to put any worries I had aside and get on with whatever came! Funny it was another Labrador as Brian had always said he would never have one. Funnier still he was black because with Brian not seeing very well he said he would never have a black dog either!

We soon started training and were told it could take three to six months before full alerts start to happen, so we were very pleasantly surprised on the first night when Lucky shook his head, his ears and collar making enough noise to wake me at 4.30am. I found him wagging his tail and staring at Brian on the other side of the bed, so I got Brian to check his bloods and sure enough his sugars had dropped Lucky had done his first alert only a few hours after properly meeting him!

Lucky has continued alerting to the highs and lows on a daily basis with very little prompting and some days poor Brian has to check his blood sugars about twenty times because sometimes Lucky gives him a bit too much warning. I won't lie and say it's all been perfect, because it hasn't. ■

"From that first visit to the centre I saw a change in Brian. Just being in the presence of the dogs had brought a spark to him that I had not seen for many years"



We still have some fine tuning before Lucky gets his fully qualified jacket. He is an absolute joy to be around and makes us smile on a daily basis.

Everyone loves our Lucky dog and we feel so blessed and indeed, as the little girl said that named him, "lucky to have Lucky".



Yvonne's four-legged friend is a real lifesaver



CHILDREN AT GREENWAY SCHOOL MEET TINY PUPPY MILLY FOR THE FIRST TIME

Born at Wood Green Animal Shelter. At eight weeks old Milly arrived at Medical Detection Dogs in the hope she could, when the time was right, be trained as a Medical Alert Dog.

The name, Milly was chosen for her by children at Greenway School.

Hi I'm Yvonne and I have recently been teamed up with a little Yorkshire Terrier named Milly. Milly is a Medical Alert Dog in training – although I think it is I who am in training not her! She may be small but her personality is enormous and what a character she is.

I have brittle diabetes and suffer from extreme high and low blood sugar levels. I have no warning signs of when these episodes are about to take place even though I monitor my blood sugar levels regularly. I have had this problem since 1977 and now have further diabetic complications.

Until recently I have needed a carer to accompany me whenever I go out and sometimes stay overnight. That has all changed, suddenly I have a life of my own and all because of Milly.

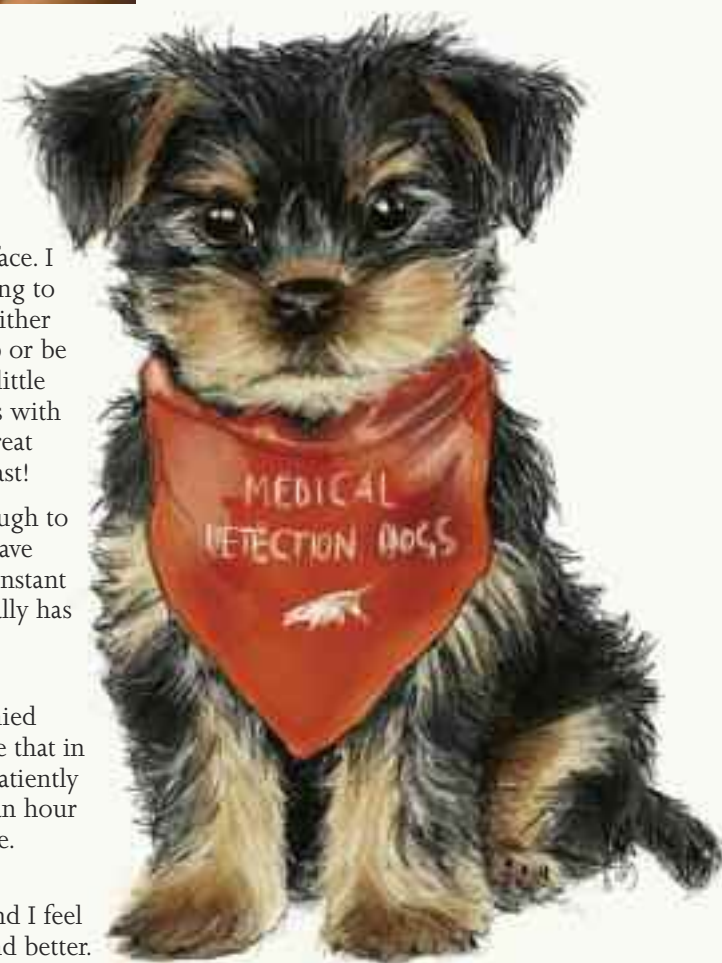
She has alerted me to highs and lows since the day I met her and now after years of uncertainty I no longer have to worry about a sudden hypo coming on. One of the biggest differences to me is the thought of being able to sleep safely at night without the fear of waking up feeling confused and unable to move. Milly will tell me before this happens by running up and down

my side and licking my face. I now look forward to going to bed knowing that I can either have a good night's sleep or be woken up by that lovely little dog and eating digestives with a glass of milk. What a great excuse for a midnight feast!

I now feel confident enough to go out and about and I have been told that I have a constant smile on my face. She really has changed my life.

I recently went to the hairdressers unaccompanied (I would never have done that in the past) where she sat patiently waiting for me for over an hour and even alerted me there.

This is just the start of a wonderful partnership and I feel we can only get better and better. My mum says Milly is a little angel sent from heaven and do you know I think she might be right. ■



MILLY BY AMY SAVILE-BARTON
www.illustrationsbyamy.weebly.com

What's sniffing?

Jan Shillum's latest news on the nose...



Dutch Cliff and C diff

A report in the online journal *bmj.com* last December revealed that researchers at the VU University Medical Centre in Amsterdam have trained a Beagle called Cliff to detect *Clostridium difficile*, the infective agent that is responsible for many of those notorious 'hospital acquired' infections.

Their findings support our own and other studies of dogs detecting various types of cancer and could have great potential for screening hospital wards to help prevent *C. difficile* outbreaks in the future.

Two-year-old Cliff was trained by a professional instructor to identify *C. difficile* in stool samples and in patients with the infection and was taught to identify the presence of the specific scent by sitting or lying down.

He'd never been trained for detection purposes before but after

two months the dog's detection abilities were formally tested on 50 *C. difficile* positive and 50 negative stool samples and he correctly identified all 50 positive samples (100 per cent sensitivity) and 47 negative ones (94 per cent specificity).

Cliff was then taken onto two hospital wards and correctly identified 25 out of 30 cases of *C. difficile* (sensitivity score 83 per cent) and 265 out of 270 negative controls (specificity score 98 per cent). The researchers reported that he was quick and efficient, screening a complete hospital ward in less than 10 minutes.

C. difficile infection most commonly occurs in older people who have recently had a course of antibiotics in hospital but it can also start in the community, especially in care homes. Symptoms can range from

mild diarrhoea to a life-threatening inflammation of the bowel. Early detection is vital to prevent transmission but diagnostic tests can be expensive and slow, which can delay treatment for up to a week.

Researchers in The Netherlands say using an animal as a diagnostic tool can be unpredictable and that there could be potential for spreading infections via the dog, so some questions still need to be answered but conclude that their research could have "great potential for *C. difficile* screening in healthcare facilities and thus contribute to *C. difficile* infection outbreak control and prevention" in the future.

Well-done Cliff.

Medical Detection Dogs are currently investigating the potential of training dogs to detect *C. difficile* in the UK.

On the home front...



ROBBIE AND BED BUG DETECTION DOG MIDAS AT WORK

Our own two brilliant canine detectives, Midas and Lizzie are still on the trail of bed bugs and continuing their training. An inspired piece of lateral thinking that could lead to a lucrative income for Medical Detection Dogs in the future from clients such as hotels and pest control operatives who need help in dealing with the increase in infestations from these pesky critters.

It seems there's no limit to what our clever dogs can tell us from the smell of things.

We always knew they could 'read the news' by snuffling their way around the turnings on their morning walks but the true value to society of those wonderful noses is, it seems, only now becoming apparent.

For further information on our Bed Bug Detection service please contact:

bedbugs@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk



What a Medical Alert Dog would mean to me

By Sophie-Alice

I was born very early and had to have lots of brain operations at a hospital in London called Kings. I have a magical button in my head that helps keep everything in my brain afloat and it is very important that I do not damage it by banging my head.

I got poorly just before Christmas in 2011 and had to go into hospital. They told me I had type 1 diabetes and I was very ill. They made me better and I came home. I had to learn to inject myself four times a day. Sometimes my mummy and daddy help me, I have to do this otherwise I will be ill again and I don't like hospitals.

I cannot always tell when my blood sugars go low and sometimes my legs go to jelly and they wobble and I fall down, my mummy panics as she worries that I will fall over and bang my head which would mean another brain operation and spending months in hospital.

Sometimes I feel lonely and when I have a hypo it is scary and I get upset and cry, I don't like having

them. I wish I could have someone there to help tell me so I never have one again.

Having a Medical Alert Dog would change my world. I wouldn't have hypos any more as it would tell me or my mummy before I got too low. It would stop me banging my head which means it would stop me having brain surgery.

My mummy might get a chance to sleep as sometimes she checks my bloods during the night and gets very tired.

I wouldn't feel so lonely if I had a Medical Alert Dog as it would be my best friend and we would go everywhere together and I would look after it and it would look after me. I don't have a best friend at school and don't get invited to

people's houses as they are worried about me having a hypo, I feel very alone and sad and I don't like having diabetes, but an alert dog would take all the bad things away and it would make me feel special, we would be a team together and together we could do anything.

Sophie has hydrocephalus and a vp shunt (which is a pump inserted in her brain to pump her spinal fluid around), unlike other children with diabetes if she has a hypo and hits her head instead of an ambulance to A&E she would need airlifting to Kings College hospital and have to undergo intensive brain surgery so an alert dog for her would be 100% lifesaving in more ways than one. She has already had to have seven major brain operations so we really don't want her to have any more.

Jane (Mum)

Edward & Dizzy When things don't go to plan!

Edward and Dizzy had met on a number of occasions and both got on well. Unfortunately, on placing Dizzy it became apparent that he was not settling very well and was finding the busy family environment stressful. After very careful consideration, the decision was made that Dizzy would be happier to be a pet dog rather than an assistance dog, as we did not feel that he would suit the lifestyle that an assistance dog must deal with on a day to day basis. He is now a pet dog in the socialising family he was with beforehand and Ed has now been matched to another dog, who is due to be placed with him in early March.

It is very sad when things do not work out as intended, as the socialisers and trainers put in a huge amount of effort into socialising a dog ready for assistance dog training and it was of course a disappointment and difficult time for Ed and his family. However, we do feel that the right decision was made for both Dizzy and for the client which of course is paramount.



Staff spotlight - Lydia Swanson, Assistance Dog Instructor

I started with the charity in July 2012 as an Assistance Dog Instructor. Prior to that I had worked in rescue for five years, along with various other jobs. I had also done some travelling and worked with animal welfare charities abroad.

I still feel very lucky and privileged to work with charity. I volunteered with them for around a year, after hearing about the astounding job they do. I was taken aback with what the charity did and how ground breaking they are. I had to be a part of it!

My role is very diverse, which I really enjoy; no day is like any other. I cover the Bedford and Milton Keynes area for puppy socialisers and fosterers. Providing support and training to our dedicated volunteers who help raise future assistance dogs and

dogs who work on the bio detection side.

I also work alongside Simone, the client support manager. Although I am still learning and doing some training I will be helping to place dogs with our clients and supporting those with an existing dog to be trained as a Medical Alert Dog. I am still amazed how well people and their families cope with debilitating and distressing conditions such as diabetes, severe allergies and narcolepsy. What is even more remarkable is how life changing an assistance dog can be. It has been a long ambition of mine to work with people and dogs and I couldn't imagine a more pleasing and worthwhile job. Not only is it rewarding but I work with some truly inspiring clients and colleagues.

Lydia



Visit to The House of Commons

The benefits of pets to children was celebrated at The House of Commons in November 2012 and, we were lucky enough to be invited to attend.



Hosted by Neil Parish MP, chairman of the Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), this day provided an opportunity for charities and individuals to tell their own stories about how animals help children and young people with their physical, educational or psychological needs – and bring so much joy.

Representatives from Medical Detection Dogs chatted to guests and explained how our dogs can help save lives. They talked about the different ways our Medical Alert Dogs can improve and change the lives of so many

children living with life threatening and debilitating medical conditions.

Guests were also reminded that not all pets were looked after properly, and the importance of satisfying their welfare needs.

Mr Parish explained: "As the proud owner of a Labrador called Wilberforce I know that our pets really are members of the family. As such, it's important that we look after their health just as much as we do our own. That means not only caring for them when they're sick, but helping prevent this from happening in the first place."



SUE & CASPER, GEMMA & POLO, SARAH & JIMMY AND EVE VISITING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



Visit www.KONGcompany.com for more information about behavioural problems, chewing temperaments, lots of stuffing recipes and lots, lots more!

KONG® HAS 6 WOBBLERS TO GIVE AWAY

KONG Wobbler helps keep dogs fit and lean.



It's a fact that dog obesity is increasing. Fortunately KONG® has developed a product to help control this problem - The Wobbler. KONG® Wobbler is the extremely popular treat and food dispenser that encourages dogs to work for their food – when pushed by a dog's paw or nose it releases dry treats or food as it wobbles around the floor.

Fill with healthy treats such as KONG Stuff'N, Liver or Puppy, Snacks, and, for dogs who are overweight or eat too quickly, measure dry food into the Wobbler instead of a feeding bowl to help prevent food gulping. It makes mealtimes fun and provides exercise.

KONG® Wobbler provides physical and mental stimulation for dogs of all ages and sizes and is now successfully used by many Veterinary practices in their weight management programmes.

The Wobbler is great fun, it unscrews for quick and easy filling and cleaning - and dogs love it!

KONG® has 6 Wobblers to giveaway – please state which size you would like - Small for dogs up to 12 kilos and Large for 12+ kilos.

Visit our NEW website www.KONGcompany.com for further formation on the KONG® Wobbler, our full range of durable and fun interactive dog products and lots, lots more!

The first six postcards received will win a KONG®.

All KONG® toys are sized so please include in your entry the weight of your dog along with your name and address. Please send to:

Marketing, Medical Detection Dogs
8 City Fields Way, Tangmere, West Sussex
PO20 2WA

Good Luck!

Thank you

Medical Detection Dogs would like to say thank you to everyone that has supported us this year including:

Royal Canin

The Kennel Club Charitable Trust

The Garfield Weston Foundation

Sutton Place Foundation

The Leathersellers' Company

The Clothworkers' Foundation

The Drapers' Company

Ceva

Novo Nordisk

Kong

Have you any unwanted clothes? They are worth £4-5 a bag to us!

Medical Detection Dogs are now one of Ecosystems charity partners. We hope to raise lots of much-needed funds to help our valuable work over the coming months. If you have any unwanted clothes please just click below and visit the Medical Detection Dogs page on the Charity Ecosystem and request a collection bag. Charity Ecosystem will collect your donation of clothing on a day of your choice all free of charge.



Visit www.charity-ecosystem.org

We need your stamps!



Please collect your used stamps and help us to raise valuable funds. Stamps are worth about £6.00 per kilo so can make a BIG difference to our fundraising. Please just tear them from envelopes that come in the post. Leave your stamps on their original envelopes but trim them to leave about 1cm paper around each one. The face value of the stamp doesn't matter, they are all worth something.

Please send your stamps to the following address:

**Medical Detection Dogs,
Used Stamp Appeal,
Fords Farm,
HORSEY,
Norfolk
NR29 4EP**

School's charity quest breaks its £10k target



JOSH VISITS SAFFRON WALDEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

Saffron Walden County High School made their £10,000 target – less than a year after it was started by a group of school friends in memory of a former classmate.

Walden County High School launched a fundraising campaign in honour of 13 year-old Joshua Bysouth, who died in a car crash in September 2011.

After hearing about Medical Detection Dogs they decided to fundraise and sponsor a puppy, name him Josh and pay for his training.

Donations and offers of support flooded in, not only from the school but from Saffron Walden businesses, organisations and individuals.

Over Christmas they crossed the £10,000 target thanks to a £400 cheque from Church Street's Adams Harrison Solicitors, where Josh's mum Tracy works, a £1,645 contribution from Waitrose which chose the cause for its

monthly Community Matters charity scheme and money raised at County High's own Charities Week.

Tracy said: "I am overwhelmed by everyone's generosity

"I am really proud of all Josh's friends and my family have been touched by the support shown by the school and local community."

Teacher Lindsay Potter has worked alongside fundraising committee Rachael Sumner, Jordan Marchant and Elphie Hand ever since fellow pupil Thomas Skingley came up with the idea of supporting the charity.

She said: "The students worked hard during Charities Week, as they have throughout the year, and we are still counting up our final tally.

"But with the help of the community, the goal has been reached which is brilliant. All monies will go to puppy Josh."

Geoffrey Gower



Sadly we are announcing the death on Christmas day 2012 of one of our clients Geoffrey Gower following admission to hospital for a chest infection.

Geoff and his wife Sharon have always been great supporters of the charity and used to look after our charity dogs for overnight and holiday cover. Geoff was one of the charity's early clients and Buttons, a chocolate labrador

Medical Alert dog, was placed with him and gave him new independence. Geoff had suffered for a long time with complications of his diabetes and even with the restrictions that followed from later medical complications Geoff was very brave, never complained, he would always see the positives of a situation.

We will greatly miss Geoff and our thoughts are with his wife Sharon and family at this difficult time.



Burgess Wetnose Animal Awards 2013

Medical Detection Dogs walked away with the Best Service award at the annual Burgess Wetnose Animal Rescue Awards in Knightsbridge this week, honoured for their work in training dogs to help diagnose and protect their owners in their homes.

Claire Guest, who collected the award on behalf of the charity, said: ***"It's such a privilege to receive this award from Wetnose. It will raise greater awareness of our mission which will allow us to continue training the dogs and also research other medical conditions that they may be able to help detect. We can't thank you enough for recognising all our work and for your generous donation of £1000."***



CLAIRE RECEIVING THE WETNOSE BEST SERVICE AWARD AND CHEQUE FROM LESLEY NICOL AND RULA LENSKA

Your Legacy



Leaving a gift to Medical Detection Dogs is a way of ensuring we have the potential to help many people of all ages with life threatening health conditions.

We know that when making a Will, your first priority is to provide for your loved ones. But many people find that, even after they've done this, they can leave something to a cause they hold dear.

As a registered charity we rely totally on public support and legacies are a vital source of income. Without these gifts we would not be able to sustain and develop our life-saving work. So, whether you have already made a Will or not, please consider leaving a legacy to Medical Detection Dogs.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of leaving a bequest to Medical Detection Dogs please feel free to contact us:

T 01296 655888

E legacy@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

dog theft

By Neil Ewart



The best aid that thieves can be handed is complacency... "It will never happen to me!!"

Dog Theft has been in the news again. All owners need to be very aware that there are strong indications that this despicable crime is on the increase. Official figures remain very hard to come by but there is enough anecdotal evidence to tell us it is growing and dog owners need to be extra vigilant.

Why steal anyone's dog?

There has to be many reasons why a dog should be stolen as opposed to simply 'going missing'. I suppose someone may simply take a fancy to a particular dog and wish to keep it as their own.

In some cases they are obviously stolen to order, perhaps for breeding or fighting. These are often highly organised thefts and well-planned.

Then there are the cases where a dog is held to ransom. "Pay up or you will not get your dog back"

Many dogs are stolen for no apparent reason and are, so often, never seen again.

Readers of Sniff, I am sure, would be willing to hand over considerable amounts of cash to get their much loved dogs back.

I can not imagine what it must be like to have a dog go missing and not know what has happened to it. To have any dog put to sleep at the end of its days is very distressing but, at least, you know what happened to him and that his end was humane.

When a dog goes missing, for whatever reason, the priority is to get it back. Undoubtedly, without identification the odds are dramatically reduced.

We all know that it is illegal for any dog to be out in a public area without visible means of identification, i.e. a disc with a contact on it.

(Incidentally, never put a dog's name on a disc. It is known that some finders are more tempted to keep a dog if they know its name! Do not forget to put any mobile number on the disc as this is the most likely point of contact if you are out frantically searching! Also, if you are away on holiday, for example, your home number is of no use!)

Micro chips and/or tattoos provide an almost fool proof permanent means of discovering where the dog should be and dramatically increase your chances of getting the dog back.

A lot is said about the merits, or otherwise, of microchipping and I am not trying to push the concept. However, should a dog be stolen and then located, your chances of being reunited are undoubtedly increased.

Readers might be interested in a survey that I carried out with guide dog stock. About five years ago I had one thousand one year old potential guide dogs checked that had been micro chipped at around seven weeks. In total, just 0.1% of the chips had migrated. Of these, only one could not be found.

A repeat survey used eleven hundred young adults. Again, all had been chipped as young pups.

Of these, four chips had migrated and three could not be found. This is obviously three too many BUT as a percentage of the total it really is quite insignificant. ..Roughly 0.3% If dogs are checked on a regular basis

then any problem can be easily rectified.

ALL dogs are vulnerable to being stolen. In fairness, police forces generally do take the problem very seriously but a dog needs to be reported to them as definitely stolen, and not just "missing". Strenuous efforts are being made to tighten legislation and to get the judiciary to take the situation more seriously. In the meantime, simply assume that it could well happen and take simple precautions to minimise the chances.

Check List..

- Ensure your dog can be identified.
- Know where your dog is.
- Treat your dog like any other highly valuable piece of property.
- Never leave your dog tied up outside a shop.
- Try to avoid leaving dogs alone in a car- Unbelievably, they still get stolen even if the car is locked!
- Check and double check the fencing in your garden.

As said before, if you believe a dog is stolen, as opposed to simply going missing, then report it to the police and **insist** it is recorded as a theft.

Finally, and VERY important- In any dispute, could you prove in court that you are the actual owner of the dog if it is found? A copy of a pedigree or evidence of micro chipping may not be enough. Ensure you have a receipt even if the dog was a gift. Keep some photographs, in particular, of any special distinguishing features. Also, keep some receipts proving you have paid some of the food and vet bills. No dog owners should think they are immune.

For more information check www.dogtheftaction.com



The Dog for Dan Appeal



Dan sadly took his own life in 2011 after suffering from depression. Why? I don't think any of us will really ever know.

Julie

PUPPY DAN NAMED AFTER DANIEL UBBI. PHOTO BY NATASHA BALLETTA

Our year has finished and what a year it's been. From being freezing cold in Huddersfield, the wettest spring and summer on record, the September charity ball, and bonfire evening in November we raised more than we could of possibly hoped for, almost £11,000!

One of the biggest joys of the Appeal has been the support of Medical Detection Dogs client Carolyn, when Carolyn volunteered for us early last year this lady and her wonderful dog turned up, I think she thought we were all completely barmy. She has been



CAROLYN AND SIMBA

with us throughout and made a massive difference. I would like to think that the Appeal has made an impact on her as well, she's been the belle of the ball for the first time in her life!

We have been in pubs over the year with collection pots on the bar. We waded through mud at the Great Yorkshire Show, raised support from the people and traders of Harrogate when the show was called off after the first day.

We reached our target in November with Sopie Ogden's sky dive and are now hoping to make it to the 12k



GUESTS AT THE SEPTEMBER CHARITY BALL

mark, before we start preparing for the next Ball on the 28th September 2013.

With the help of a number of volunteers we have been fundraising around Milton Keynes and have had a huge amount of support from everyone including Jollies and local stores.

Dan's family have had the hardest job turning up to functions when I'm sure they would rather have been anywhere else!. We have laughed together, shed tears together, not understanding why such a special young man did something so devastating. Maybe

this was Dan's legacy to us all, to change our lives and with puppy Dan now in training we hope he will save a life in the years to come, I know his family and others have found inspiration, seeing what good can come from such a sad thing.

Dan's death was a tragedy on so many levels, but look at what we have turned that into, and hopefully he and his family will be proud of what we have achieved in his name, and his story can be used as an inspiration to others that some good can come out of the darkest times, and there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Julie.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Charity Ball

Raising funds for
Medical Detection Dogs

Saturday 28 September 2013

**Novotel
Milton Keynes**

•
Delicious food

•
Live music

•
DJ

•
Auction

•
tickets are available from 1 April.

for further information please contact
Julie:

E dogfordan@gmail.co.uk

or call our marketing team:

T 01243 839306

Doggy Duvets *by Mags*

Mags has been creating doggy duvets for about six years and for the last three years she has made and sold them in aid of Medical Detection Dogs which has raised funds of £1500!

In the last year alone she has sewn around 195, that's some sewing!

Mags says 'Some years ago I made duvets for my own dogs and then quite a number of synthetic duvets were given to me so I decided to try selling them to friends and at dog training classes... and the idea just snowballed.' I use donated duvets which would have ended up in landfill, by cutting, washing and hemming them. The covers are made from duvet covers, sheeting, pillowcases and curtains. The greatest outlay is my time!!

Huge thanks to Margaret Codlin in Mablethorpe who collects unwanted duvets by the bin bag full!! (and sells some too.) Even bigger thanks to Sandra Jaines at Kenwick News, Louth who has sold countless duvets in the shop on a not-for-profit basis. Without them raising that amount of money would not have been possible.

Mags is looking for outlets slightly further away from home as she thinks every dog in her area must by now have had their quota of bedding!!

If you can help please contact:

E: claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk



South East Support Group

CONTACT

southeast.supportgrp@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk



SOUTH EAST SUPPORT GROUP AT PAWS IN THE PARK

Saturday 11th August 2012

Saw our first outing to a thoroughly enjoyable, Fun Day & Duck Race. This was run by The Britannia Pub near Hythe in Kent. It was beautiful weather and a great turn out. The organisers raised well over £3000 to be split between Medical Detection Dogs and the local hospice. So October 18th saw us being presented with a cheque for £1,800. An amazing amount for a small country pub! They will be naming a puppy - Barney.

September 22nd & 23rd 2012

We were at Paws in the Park. A ridiculous wet & cold weekend ensued, but despite being flooded outside and most of the stands leaving by lunchtime on the second day we still made over one hundred contacts through our Free Prize Draw idea and raised over £330.

October 12th 2012

Saw us at our local Medway Dog Training Club in Chattenden for their annual Quiz Night. We went along and joined in, I did about a 3 minute talk (unheard of from me!) as time was of the essence and then simply handed the collection pot around the tables. We ended up with around £60 in donations and then in December we were presented with a cheque from them for £500. They will be naming a puppy too.

October 13th 2012

We went to a Charity Ball. Held at the Three Rivers Golf & Country Club over the border in Essex. Again we took the stand and did a little talk. Sadly although an amazing evening of entertainment it was very loud, so the chance to talk in depth to people on a one to one basis was limited, which was a shame as there were about 90 attendees. I think we raised about £50 on the night, but Jane (the organiser) told me she thought the event would raise about £4,000 for the charity.

November 27th 2012

We went to the Golden Retriever Club in Wrotham

They did a sponsored 10 minute 'Down Stay' raising over £200.

December 12th 2012

We went to Greenwich to do a talk for Novo Nordisk at a Diabetes Conference. Magazines went out to nurses and diabetes specialists to place in their respective centres and clinics. Plus at least fifty members of the NHS in specialist diabetes care are now aware of the amazing work & research the charity does.

January 2013

We went to our local Active Retirement Association. Brian and I were amazed to find ourselves in front of an audience of around

seventy people. What a lovely bunch they were, and not least very generous. Between them they gave over £150, but yet again, it looks like we will get at least three other talks from this and we are now also recommended speakers for the whole of Kent's Active Retirement Associations. So I have a feeling we will be busy speaking at many of these this year!

We've managed to raise around £200 just by taking donation pots and a few pens, wristbands & bags etc. So our little region has raised well over £3,000 in five months (probably nearer £8,000 once outstanding monies are confirmed), just by attending and doing talks at events others have organised.

I now have a list of around 200 names and contact details to get stuck into over the coming weeks of people that have expressed an interest in the work of Medical Detection Dogs. Considering what has already been achieved I can see that if only a handful of those can help in some way in the future it is going to make a big difference in raising awareness and much needed funds.

We've had an amazing few months, and of course Medical Alert Dog Lucky is always the star of the show!

We look forward to seeing or hearing from some of you as we progress through 2013



LUCKY, THE STAR OF THE SHOW

Oxon and Cotswold Support Group

CONTACT

oxon.supportgrp@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk



December 2012 ended our second year as a fundraising group. Our first year produced nearly £10,000, so we set ourselves a target of £12,000 for 2012, and are really proud to say that we have achieved £12,748.48

We could not have done this without the help of several people who organised special fundraising events. Huge thanks to Debbie Shirley and her friend Martina, who raised over £1000 with a very popular sponsored walk; and to Helen Carrick who climbed Kilimanjaro, also raising over £1000. Thanks too, to Carol and Bridget for proceeds of their jumble sale.

The Doglympics organised by our Debbie and Mark, and the Nose in the Park treasure hunt, organised by Joan, were two important events. Big donations from the Chipping Norton Rotary club and the Stratford upon Avon DTC helped us on our way.

Joan and Heather have done 45 talks this year, and already have 20 bookings for 2013. Talks this year raised over £2000, and we have had some very rewarding feedback.

Debbie and Heather have taken Magic and Edward to two schools. Brize Norton Primary pupils were very enthusiastic, and have made their own 'sniff machine' to try and

detect hidden sweets. The children gave us over £80 from their Christmas fair stall. After our visit, a little girl was heard to say to her teacher 'I wish I was a diabetic'. Not quite the reaction we were looking for! We hope to visit more schools in 2013.

The magic Magic, who is being socialised with Debbie, is now a gangly teenager. His story can be seen on the site dogbooksonline.co.uk where Debbie records his progress with a monthly blog and lovely photos. Suzanne and Josh the Medical Detection Dogs spaniel puppy also support our events, and we are very grateful to the Courtney family with 10 year old Stephen's hypoglycaemic alert dog Molly. They turn out to help with fundraising whenever they can – it's SO brilliant to have a real working dog with a family who can explain exactly what medical alert dogs do.

We have added to our resources by getting a nice red gazebo, sponsored by the Carterton Lions club. We have also now got red tabards with the charity logo; makes us immediately

recognisable, and looks quite smart. Thanks to Elizabeth who made them for us.

We have really needed stickers to give to children on collecting days and school visits, but these are very expensive to print; we luckily got a special deal for our first 1000 from a friendly copyshop proprietor in Chipping Norton. We were prepared to be very frugal with these, but now are thrilled that we have been promised another 7000 by a very kind supporter, Margaret – so no worries for ages, and all the kids can have a sticker!

2013 EVENTS

We will be looking for volunteers in 2013. Please contact us if you'd like to help with any of the following. These are the definite dates so far; there will be more!

May 6th May Bank holiday Monday, Carterton, Sports day. Loads of help needed to steward different events. Will be very similar to the Doglympics of 2012.

July 7th (Sunday) Hailey near Witney, Nose in the Park treasure hunt.

July 30th (Tuesday) Teas for tourists, with craft stalls. Bourton on the Water, in partnership with Wyck Rissington WI. Waiters and stall holders needed.

September 7th (Saturday) Bag packing, Witney Sainsbury's. There are 25 tills! Loads of volunteers needed please.

*We are always collecting things for prizes and tombolas, and doggy items for dogs' lucky dip etc. Please contact Heather on email address above. We can also take used mobile phones and printer cartridges (not Epson) for recycling.

Our Medical Detection Dogs are trained to assist individuals and their families who live with life threatening health conditions.



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raise £££'s and help our dogs save lives

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old mobile phones
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for freepost donation bags or further information please visit
www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk and click on the [recycle4charity](#) link or contact:
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