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# THE sniff

News from **Medical Detection Dogs**

Autumn/ Winter 2014



Photograph by Natalia Baker

Medical  
Detection Dogs

Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall



## Dogs saving lives

[www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](http://www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk)

## Medical Detection Dogs



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall

Registered charity in England and Wales No. 1124533  
and in Scotland No. SC044434

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With thanks to:

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Journalists, Jan Shillum and Natalia Baker

Everyone at Medical Detection Dogs would like to say a HUGE thank you to Royal Canin for the amazing support they have and continue to give us.



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**SAXOPRINT**

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Making a difference, one car at a time

## Commission a portrait of your dog and help Medical Detection Dogs



Bridget Wood has drawn this portrait of Cancer Detection Dog, Daisy.

Bridget bred Daisy who is owned and trained by Dr Claire Guest.

Bridget has previously undertaken commissions for the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, and the Rt. Hon Iain and Mrs. Duncan Smith.

Having worked in the past on "Survival", Anglia TV's wildlife documentary programmes and been a photographer of weddings, children and newborn babies at the Portland and St. Mary's Lindo Wing, Bridget now has more time to concentrate on her pastel drawing in her small studio in Kent.

Bridget is very kindly giving half of her profit to Medical Detection Dogs.

For any commissions. Email: [bridgetwood2011@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetwood2011@gmail.com)



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# Looking *forward*

## These are exciting times

The hard work, belief and passion of all who are involved in Medical Detection Dogs is paying off. We are now receiving recognition from many prestigious individuals, scientists, cancer specialists, endocrinologists and decision makers. The potential of our work seems limitless, we have so much to offer and can make such a difference.

The fantastic news of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall agreeing to become our Patron was a major milestone in our evolution. We were honoured to be invited to demonstrate at St James' Palace in March. It was a remarkable opportunity to present our work in front of their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall together with their prestigious invited guests. It was a tremendous memorable event, all went to plan and the dogs performed beautifully, despite the fact that it was the first time that the carousel had ever been out of the training centre. The carousel placed in the Throne Room was quite a sight to see and I think it would be fair to say there were butterflies in many tummies that morning! However everyone was made to feel so welcome by the Royal Household that nerves were soon forgotten and doggies were offered the opportunity to use the Royal 'facilities' in St James' Palace garden. One dog, a poodle named Patmore, showed no shame in using these facilities to the full (there is always one, no comment re the breed type!)

This most unique presentation opportunity and our Royal Patronage has already had a significant impact, on our recognition and acceptance. We are now considered serious scientists, albeit that we work with sophisticated bio-sensors with wagging tails. Our commitment to establish a clear evidence base for our work with peer review publications has provided a solid foundation which is leading to great things.



Courtesy of Janine Marwick Photography

DR CLAIRE GUEST AND CANCER DETECTION DOG DAISY

Some exciting news! After persistence the Ethics proposal for our breast cancer study with the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust has been accepted, samples are being collected, and the dogs will shortly start their training. We look forward to working on this most pivotal of studies. There is more hard work ahead now for a number of months, training and then the 'double blind' testing. We are working with a fantastic team of clinicians and everyone is very excited and committed.

We are also proceeding with the Ethics proposal for our prostate study in collaboration with Milton Keynes Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and hope to start dog training very shortly. Due to the importance of these big new studies and our ever growing Medical Assistance Dog team, there have been some alterations to the operational layout at our Great Horwood centre. We have now secured Building 3 and knocked-through to Building 2, gone are the days of fighting wind and rain to walk around the outside! An internal upgrade for the Bio-detection training area is in

progress. Our Medical Assistance Dog Programme continues to flourish with many new partnerships to welcome. We are constantly amazed by the reliability and dedication of our dogs and the bonds that form are inspiring. Watch this space for news of our new nut detector dog, Willow who is pioneering a new level of detection. One of the things I love most about this work is how much we are still learning, our relationship with the dog is maturing, dogs are so willing to help, we need only ask. The charity's no kennel policy is of huge importance to all who are involved in our work. Living and working together enables us to gain the full potential from our relationship.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last few months, volunteers, supporters and funders. It really has been a remarkable time. I look forward to seeing you all at the 'Thank you' party on September the 6th. This will be a real celebration of what we have all achieved, together.

### Dr Claire Guest

Chief Executive and Director of Operations

# Denise & Snowy

By Natalia Baker







Photograph by Natalia Baker

Smiling fondly at her labrador retriever, Snowy, laying happily at her feet chewing yet another toy to shreds, Denise Gillies tries to find the words to express how different her life is today. Three months ago, she was paired with Medical Alert Assistance Dog, Snowy, who is trained to let her know when her blood sugar levels spike and dip because of her Type 1 diabetes.

Even on the train down from Wirral to Medication Detection Dogs offices in Buckinghamshire, Snowy alerted Denise to prevent a full blown 'hypo' - a critical situation where her blood sugar drops dangerously low. "Without Snowy with me, I couldn't have made the journey here on my own."

Denise was visiting the charity's headquarters to catch up with staff who were thrilled to see her partnership with Snowy flourishing after just 12 weeks together. She

enjoys keeping a close connection with the charity - as do all clients and their fully qualified dogs - and during her summer visit took the opportunity to pick up a few extra tips from trainer, Helen Marsden.

Denise was introduced to Medical Detection Dogs as an urgent applicant for an alert dog, and it's not hard to see why. From the age of six, Denise has suffered from both diabetes and Addison's disease, a rare endocrine (hormonal) related disorder. She has suffered an

'Addisonian crisis' - a potentially fatal drop in blood pressure - and is dependant on steroids to manage her condition.

Life for Denise is dealing with several diabetes-triggered 'hypos' and 'hypers' per day, where blood sugar changes can lead to a loss of control over her legs without warning. She also experiences a confused mental state which makes it harder to help herself, like getting a sugary drink. Her blood sugar levels can swing wildly within a 24 hour period and with no early warning signs, she has collapsed in different places, often leading to hospitalisation. "I have had the police break in my front door to find me passed out cold in the living room," she recalls.

The impact of Denise's condition is profound, both mentally and physically. On separate occasions she has dislocated her shoulder and fractured her hip. These and other injuries make it even harder for her to keep control during a hypo or hyper and almost impossible to get up again without assistance.

Acutely aware of the dangers posed by her diabetes, Denise's daughters would phone their mother six to seven times per day to make sure she's ok. "If they didn't get a response from me, they would call a neighbour to come round." One daughter remembers standing on a chair aged five to open the front door and fetch a neighbour after Denise had collapsed.

Despite having managed by herself for most of her life, Denise, who has just turned 60, is finding she has had less control over her diabetes in the last 5 years. She experiences more hypos and hypers and had to retire early from her job as an embryologist, as she needs to spend so much of her time checking herself and going back and forth to hospital.

Facing constant threats to her health, Denise's confidence has been greatly affected. "Before Snowy, I wouldn't go out on my own. I was too scared of the consequences. When I'd go to the theatre with my friend, I knew she was watching me during the performance which took the edge off the enjoyment." She would also

**"I feel so lucky that my friend had heard of Medical Detection Dogs and wish there was more nationwide awareness of this amazing charity. Having Snowy has transformed my life,"**

worry about the effect on her daughters worrying about her all of the time.

The turning point came when her old work colleague (and theatre-going friend), Maureen, heard about Medical Detection Dogs as part of her work as a biochemist. Maureen had become extremely concerned about Denise, aware of the potential effect of constant low blood sugar levels on the brain, kidneys and eyesight.

An application form was submitted and Denise was fast-tracked because of her regular falls and living on her own. 18 months later, Denise was paired with Snowy, although the process of bringing them together had started long before. She met with three potential match dogs and felt an instant connection with Snowy on first meeting. "Honestly it just felt right. Even the trainers observing us commented after that

they also felt she was the best match for me."

Snowy herself, a happy-go-lucky lab of three years, came across to Medical Detection Dogs from Guide Dogs for the Blind. Over a two-year training period, Lydia Swanson took the lead as instructor, spending significant time with Denise and Snowy at the training centre and in various settings. They would be observed on an overnight stay, walking around the shops, being in a restaurant and other circumstances where Snowy's task to alert correctly would be improved and monitored.

Thankfully, Snowy started working effectively with her new owner from the start. "When Snowy first wants to alert me, she gives me this really intense stare, never breaking eye contact. Then she'll paw at me and fetch my testing kit as she's been trained to do," says Denise. Soon after being paired, Snowy helped avoid a serious situation by alerting Denise in a supermarket right before her legs gave way so she could seek assistance in time.

Incredibly, Snowy is already beginning to alert Denise before her blood sugar gets near the danger zone. She can detect the drop early enough that Denise has enough time to take preventative measures.

Aside from her extraordinary working skills, Denise and Snowy are close companions who adore each other. Anyone can see the bond between them is very special. When asked about Snowy's personality, Denise replies grinning, "She's very mischievous! She just loves to work and desperately wants to please."

Denise loves nothing more than watching Snowy enjoy a free run around their local countryside. In the evenings, she will lie down on the living room floor next to Snowy and they will often fall asleep wrapped around each other with the TV on. Denise's family are so reassured by Snowy's protective presence, they now call for a regular catch up than to check in on her, and she can enjoy theatre trips to the full. Needless to say, Snowy is a huge hit with her young grandchildren.

"I feel so lucky that my friend had heard of Medical Detection Dogs and wish there was more nationwide awareness of this amazing charity. Having Snowy has transformed my life," she says, her eyes glistening. To prove her newfound independence and regaining of confidence, Denise is looking forward to her first holiday in 5 years.

Her greatest joy is feeling herself again. "People close to me tell me I'm more relaxed and less stressed now. They say I'm 'me' again."

## Meet Nimbus...

Nimbus is a friendly, bold, sociable and outgoing pup who loves life. He is food mad and meal times can never come quick enough.

He is very responsive to commands and especially good with his recall. Nimbus is definitely currently going through a chewing stage, this can be anything from tissues to my paperwork!

His favourite trick is emptying my handbag in search of treats if he thinks I'm not looking or go out the room.

He has been on various modes of transport such as bus, train, car and the underground. London was a new experience for him but was not fazed in the slightest. Overall he is a delight to live with!

*Fiona (socialiser)*



Photograph by Emma Jeffery



Photograph by Joe Mill, The Open University.

# ‘Dog’s-eyed-view’ technology

Medical Detection Dogs have teamed up with experts in Animal-Computer Interaction at The Open University to develop new technology to enhance their cancer detection research.

The new technology, designed by Dr Clara Mancini and her colleagues at the Animal-Computer Interaction Lab, was unveiled at the Royal Society Science Exhibition in July.

Open University technology experts have created a piece of equipment which can measure how confident the dog is about its decision.

The equipment consists of a metal pressure pad below the tube which holds the sample. The dog presses this pad with its nose when it smells the cancer, before signalling to its handler a positive finding by sitting down.

The sensors underneath the metal pad mean that a computer can record the level of pressure the dog used, which indicates the level of confidence the dog has. Over time the data can be analysed to confirm the link between a high pressure detection and an accurate result.

Dr Claire Guest, CEO and Director of Operations of Medical Detection Dogs, commented: “This is a very exciting new piece of technology to assist us in our cancer detection research.”

“The more data we can gather about the process of a dog detecting volatile substances, the more confident we can be about our work and the results we are currently achieving. This will mean that any second line screening using dogs will offer the highest potential in accuracy.”

“In the future electronic noses may do this work, however currently, the electronic noses are only 60 per cent reliable, far behind the dogs. The dogs are capable of cognitive thinking, so they can tell that although a patient’s form of cancer is slightly different to those they have detected before, it is cancer nevertheless.”

“The electronic noses in contrast, are less intuitive and programming these noses is a very complex long process.”

Visitors to the Exhibition were able to watch the dogs using the prototype technologies, and attempt to perform tasks wearing dichromatic goggles and boxing gloves to imitate paws to give them a ‘dog’s-eye-view.’



# Living with PoTS



**I was diagnosed with Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS) in 1999 but had suffered blackouts since the early 90's. Since diagnosis my symptoms worsened and over the last ten years they had a more noticeable effect. During the past four years I have suffered a particularly dramatic decline.**

Until December 2012 I was working but, in truth I struggled to work for over four years. After reducing my hours it was evident I still could not manage. I would get home exhausted frequently passing out, often injuring myself and unable to do anything other than go to bed.

PoTS causes me to collapse and become unconscious for anything from minutes up to an hour. I frequently convulse, drifting in and out of consciousness before I'm aware and able to communicate.

I struggle after blackouts and sometimes am unable to move much or speak for the rest of the day, I have been told this is because speech is not a survival need and my body is still in crisis trying to recover.

I also suffer from hyper mobility syndrome (HMS), my joints are twisted and muscles too stretchy. As I get older my HMS worsens and the stiffness in my joints increases. I often freeze when walking and can't move my legs, even mid stride! Daily struggles mean I can't get out of chairs or even have strength to open a door.

HMS is common in people with chronic PoTS and the symptoms of each worsens the other.

I also suffer from chronic fatigue and sudden lapses of tiredness which makes day to day very difficult. I'm often too exhausted and 'wobbly' to prepare meals meaning my partner has to care for me as soon as he is home from work. I have applied for, and am now on the waiting list for

an Alert Assistance Dog. I know this will make a huge difference to my life. I am currently completely unaware when I am about to become unconscious and consequently housebound!

I have been given an emergency alarm however, as I'm paralysed during and after blackouts I am unable to ask for help, but a trained dog could get me the help that I need and be a comfort. Having a pre-alert will also allow me to get to a safe place instead of falling on the stairs or floor.

I will be less lonely with a Medical Alert Assistance Dog and, have the confidence to go out knowing wherever I am I will be warned if I am in danger.

*Sam*

## What is PoTS?

PoTS (Postural Tachycardia Syndrome) is an abnormal response by the autonomic nervous system to becoming upright. There is an abnormally high increase in heart rate and altered blood supply to the brain on standing. It results in a large number of symptoms, the commonest of

which are dizziness, fainting, tiredness and palpitations. There are many causes and, in some cases, no cause can be found. Although patients can be very disabled by their symptoms, many get better without treatment. However, some patients will have problems over many years.

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# Rebekah & Ash

**Ash really is my best friend and has given me the confidence to do so much more than I have before.**



REBEKAH AND MEDICAL ALERT ASSISTANCE DOG ASH ENJOYING A PICNIC IN THE PARK

I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes not long before my 13th birthday. It came as a complete shock to all of us because, as far as we were aware, it doesn't run in the family. From the very start I took charge of my own care, keeping to a strict diet and insulin regime, but no matter what I tried I could not stop the daily hypos, which would come on without warning or any symptoms. My blood sugar levels would get to as low as 1.1 and I still wouldn't have any signs, which made it quite scary.

After a few years we heard about diabetic alert dogs in America and started to do some research into whether or not we could do the same in the UK. We came across Medical Detection Dogs and got in touch about four and a half years ago. We were hoping to train up a family dog who had once belonged to my grandad but after months of conversation and planning he had to be re-homed and we were back to square one. This turned out to be for the best.

Last year I received a call saying I was at the top of the waiting list

and they were just waiting to discuss my lifestyle and start searching for a match. As I am at university, studying for a full time photography degree, it was an unusual environment to take a dog into so we had to make sure the dog I was matched with was just right. I met two beautiful dogs beforehand, but once Ash walked into the room I knew he was the dog for me. He has so much character and affection, and is definitely the most entertaining and unusual dog I have ever met. He is incredibly focused when it comes to doing his job and has made a bigger difference than I ever thought possible.

I was amazed at how quickly we formed a strong connection. Even from the very first meeting he was making signs of an alert without any personalised training to do so, and from then on he has just been getting better and better. Not only is he a great companion, but on a daily basis he prevents me from having dangerously low blood sugars and has made me feel a lot

more confident when I am by myself. He has also helped my family relax more with me being away from home and I'm finally not getting 100 phone calls a day making sure I'm up and about and I'm ok!

I am now 23 years old and the truth is that Ash has made everything so much easier. I no longer have to worry about where I'm going and what might happen if I'm there alone. I don't have to test every minute of the day to make sure I'm not going to collapse at any given moment. He goes everywhere I go and that has included trips to the cinema, theatre, London, pubs, hotels and much much more, never once getting in the way or making me regret my decision in the slightest. Yes, taking on a dog is a huge responsibility, but for me it is one of the best decisions I have ever made. Ash really is my best friend and has given me the confidence to do so much more than I ever have before.

*Rebekah*



# The NOS(ES) have it...

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**And the ‘eyes’ too of course — seeing was believing when Peers, MPs and CountryClub guests were given a Medical Detection Dogs demonstration at the House of Lords in May — Jan Shillum was there too.**

Julie Spencer, editor of CountryClub UK, had a great idea. She was arranging a special event at the House of Lords and having read about Medical Detection Dogs decided to turn the evening into a fund raising event, generously donating a proportion of the proceeds to our cause. “Our members mostly live in the country” she explained, “and are interested in country sports. They know all about the sympathetic relationship you can build with dogs and they understand the incredible abilities they have and I knew Lord Mancroft would love it. To have two Cabinet Ministers and a Peer here is really exciting for our guests — one has come all the way from Sweden especially and another from Jersey.”

The Rt. Hon. the Lord Mancroft was our host for the evening and opened proceedings in the Cholmondeley Room with great panache luring people in from The Terrace where we’d been enjoying a glass of champagne and admiring the magnificent vista of the Thames and South Bank, including the iconic London Eye.

“As a Member of the House of Lords”, he said, I’m very good at talking about things I know nothing about. But I do know about the relationship between men, women and dogs. Dogs have the most extraordinary abilities to communicate; when we see what they are capable of during this evening’s demonstration, it’s not too

far fetched to imagine that one day one of mine may be able to bring me a Bloody Mary for a blinding hangover,” he joked. “It’s the first time I’ve ever introduced dogs into The House of Lords, though we did have a politically correct discussion once about a crèche. Apart from a



THE RT. HON. THE LORD MANCROFT





GUESTS ADMIRING THE MAGNIFICENT VISTA OF THE THAMES AND SOUTH BANK

few there aren't too many Peers of childbearing age so I feel kennels would be much more useful and of course we do have sniffer dogs here all the time."

Rob Harris, Bio Detection Manager and Assistance Dog Instructor Lydia Swanson from Medical Detection Dogs put two beautiful black Labradors, Lucy and Ulric, through their paces for the admiring audience, they never once faltered in that hot and crowded room with more than 200 people watching, sitting immediately to indicate the presence of VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds, generated as cancer and other diseases progress) in one of a number of urine samples lined up. Randomly chosen, some were completely clear, some from donators with different diseases, some from renal or prostate cancer patients. It was very similar to the demonstration given earlier this year to the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall at St. James's Palace, which resulted, along with HRH's visit to Great Horwood last year, in the Duchess becoming our Patron.

As CEO Dr Claire Guest explained to an audience that was largely unaware of Medical Detection Dogs's important work: "The current PSA test used to diagnose prostate cancer has an accuracy rate of one in four but it is the best test currently available. Dogs like my Daisy can detect it accurately 93-95 per cent of the time and it can be done quickly and for all cancers. The

wonderful thing is that there is no threshold, once they understand what you want them to do the dogs just keep getting better and better."

"The value of this work is beyond belief, think of the money the NHS could save if dogs like these were to be in all hospitals," declared Betsy Duncan Smith, a Trustee of Medical Detection Dogs when I spoke to her after the demonstration. Her husband, the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, agreed and told me "I've made sure, Jeremy Hunt [Secretary of State for Health] knows all about this, he's very interested and Defra [the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs] is too, they want to look

into the possibilities of dogs detecting tuberculosis in cattle."

Everyone there that evening now appreciates just how vital this work is. Artist, Bridget Wood, brought along copies of the lifelike portrait she's done of Daisy, Claire Guest's star detection dog and is offering to donate half her profit from commissions to Medical Detection Dogs. (see page 2 for details) Claire Moon told the audience how her recently qualified alert assistance Golden Labrador, Magic, who she calls 'the blond bombshell' has completely changed her life.

Peers and MPs, CountryClub guests, Political commentators, reporters and movers and shakers, grateful Medical Detection Dogs clients and their canine companions, staff and volunteers — all united to help and support a cause that is growing in importance and credibility every day.

The last word though, must go to the friendly PC on duty at Black Rod's Garden Entrance to the House of Lords. When we showed him our invitations at the start of the evening he said: "Are you here for the dog charity event? You know, those dogs shouldn't need charity, they do such wonderful work; they ought to be funded by the Government."



CANCER DETECTION DOG ULRIC SITTING TO INDICATE THE PRESENCE OF VOCs IN FRONT OF AN ADMIRING AUDIENCE





# Karen & Coco

It's really hard to believe that in July it was five years since Coco came to live with me.

I'd met him about a month earlier for a matching visit, and couldn't wait for him to arrive. It was strange at first, learning to live with a little shadow who followed me everywhere, including into the bathroom! Now, it's strange when Coco isn't by my side.

Although I went out and about before I had Coco, I would often be taken ill when in public places, this was so embarrassing and severely dented my confidence. People who didn't

understand why I was unsteady on my feet, needing to lean against something or someone, vomiting etc would often mistake me for being drunk; apart from being unsympathetic, their harsh words at times when I was so unwell and going into Addisonian Crisis used to upset me a lot.

Before Coco, I could only travel away from home with someone who knew my medical history in case I collapsed and when I went on holiday we used

to need to research nearby hospitals just in case, which often meant I needed to stay in larger towns and cities.

Coco's alerts are like an early warning system for me, so I don't get caught out with sudden collapses as I used to. When he alerts me, I'm able to take oral medication and if that isn't enough, and he continues to alert, then I can take an injection. There have been times when Coco has alerted and I've had an infection





A TRIP TO WIMBLEDON

which has caused a Crisis, and I've been treated in resus at A&E, and each time they've told me that my health deteriorated so quickly, if it wasn't for the early warning Coco gave, I would not have survived.

All of the medical staff who treat me are fans of Coco; not only because he's a great looking dog with a lovely personality, but also because they've seen how my health has become more stable, and in turn how I have become happier and more confident in myself.

Not that long after I got Coco I needed a hospital procedure; an endoscopy. As sedation was to be used, the staff were unsure about how the procedure would affect my cortisol levels. In the time it would take for a blood test result to come through, I could have already seriously deteriorated, so the staff asked if Coco could wait at the hospital with a friend while I had the procedure done. Then, as they brought me from the endoscopy



CARRYING THE OLYMPIC TORCH 2012

room, before going to the recovery area, they wheeled me on a trolley to an area where Coco was waiting. I was very groggy from the sedation but I remember him poking his nose in my face and checking me over to see if everything was ok. The staff were apparently watching intently, but Coco didn't alert as my cortisol levels were good. I was then wheeled into the recovery area to sleep off the sedation, before being reunited with Coco again when it was time to go home.

Unfortunately, I have been in hospital several times since I got Coco, but these were admissions due to infections or times I needed surgery. Coco has never missed an approaching Addison's Crisis, and due to his alerts I've been able, with the advice of my hospital consultant to reduce the amount of steroid medication I take on a daily basis, which I'm really happy about as like many medications, there are side effects which I don't like.

Coco is a really happy dog, we now go to all sorts of places together. Whereas before I needed to be near a hospital, in recent years I've been able to go on a few road trips in USA, travelling through mountains, plains and other remote areas with the reassurance that Coco was looking out for me.

On one trip we went to Graceland in Memphis (yes, Coco really has been in Elvis' living room) and a week long stay on a Cherokee Indian Reservation, even watching Bison on the plains in Nebraska, the sort of things I could only dream about before.

We've also travelled in Europe and Coco was guest of honour at European Pet Night in 2010, the same year we were also finalists in the Friends for Life feature at Crufts.

2012 was a really fabulous year for us both as we were selected to carry the Olympic Torch and I was a Gamesmaker at the Paralympics, with Coco by my side of course.

Although it is fantastic to be able to do lots more things and spend quality time with my family and friends now thanks to Coco's help, it's the day to day sense of security that he brings me that I really appreciate most.



VISITING THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES IN GLASGOW 2014

He wakes in the morning and the first thing he does is poke his nose under the bedcovers and sniff my breath, if I'm fine and he doesn't alert, he will wait for a cuddle and settle down for a few more minutes before I get up. He's a really persistent character, so, even if I'm half asleep and he alerts, he will keep on licking me, or pawing at me until he gets a response. This persistence also applies to his tummy! If he thinks it's dinner time and I haven't noticed, he'll go and sit right in front of the TV and stare at me until I mention the D word, then he dances around the room with excitement!

I don't think Coco has any idea of his importance or value to me; but every one of his alerts is preventing a situation which could develop into a life threatening Addisonian Crisis.

I love Coco so much, he's changed my life immeasurably in these last five years, and I'm tremendously grateful to him for that.

He's come so far, from being given away as a puppy, needing lots of training to catch up with other dogs of his age, to qualifying as a registered assistance dog, and working ceaselessly to keep me safe. Without Coco and Medical Detection Dogs I don't like to think where I'd be now, he really has been my life saver.

*Karen*

# Medical Detection Dogs given the go-ahead for first ever canine breast cancer detection trial

**Medical Detection Dogs have spent the past eighteen months preparing an application to the Buckingham NHS Trust ethics committee for permission to begin the trial that will use breath samples collected from volunteers in Buckinghamshire.**

Although it has not been determined categorically what it is the dogs detect, it is thought that volatile substances emitted by cancerous cells are present in the urine of cancer patients and give off an odour perceptible to dogs.

Dr Claire Guest, founder and CEO of Medical Detection Dogs, who will be Principal Investigator of the trial, in charge of its day-to-day running, hopes to find volatiles also present in breath samples collected from breast cancer patients.

Dr Guest commented: "This is such a fascinating area to study. It doesn't seem necessarily logical that breast cancer should lead to volatile substances to be present in breath samples, but we have seen sufficient anecdotal and minor trial evidence to feel confident this is an avenue well worth pursuing.

"If it works, it will revolutionise the way we think about breast cancer.

"In the long term, we hope to assist scientists to develop E-noses, that is to say electronic systems that are able to detect the odour of cancer through cheap, quick, non-invasive tests. If we can prove the principle that breast cancer is detectable on a person's breath, machines could eventually detect that odour."

Latest figures from Cancer Research UK show over 50,000 people are

diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the UK and just under 12,000 die.

Dr Guest, who was alerted to her own breast cancer by her dog, added: "Under current procedures for detecting breast cancer, many women have to wait until they are fifty years old before they are invited in for their first mammogram. As someone who has had breast cancer significantly younger than fifty, I am painfully aware that would have been too long for me to wait before being scanned for cancer for the first time.

"After fifty, women are invited to have another mammogram every three years. This means a woman could have breast cancer for two years without ever finding out, by which point the tumour could be well established.

"The problem is, it is not good for women to be scanned more regularly than that because of the exposure to radiation.

"So, if we succeed in proving that dogs can detect breast cancer on breath samples, younger women and women such as myself, who have had breast cancer and need regular checks to ensure the tumour has not returned, could simply breathe into a tube and find out safely and quickly their state of health.





# A Pink Success

Horse riders help raise vital funds to support the work of our Breast Cancer Detection Dogs

  
**CANTER FOR A CURE** 2015  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



This year's 'Think Pink' Canter for a Cure sponsored horse ride held in July was a fantastic day. The sun came out as a record number of riders, horses and ponies of all shapes and sizes rode 12 miles across beautiful parts of the Buckinghamshire countryside. Finishing at Milton Keynes Eventing Centre's cross country course. Riders and their horses creatively wore pink to show their support for our breast cancer detection dogs and their valuable work.

Between them they raised over £27,000! What an amazing amount of money, thank you so much to everyone that took part and made the day the success it was.

## *Diary Date:*

**Canter for a Cure 27th and 28th June 2015**

**For further information please contact  
[claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](mailto:claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk)**

## Sooty Cancer Detection Dog



Sooty is a 2 year old black working cocker spaniel. He has been a part of the team since he was 10 weeks old and lives with Simone our Client Support Manager and her family. When not at home enjoying family life, Sooty will be having fun with the Bio-detection dog team at the centre. He has received some basic training in odour discrimination and has been waiting in earnest for the ethical agreement on the breast cancer study to be passed. We now look forward to starting work in the coming few months.

Courtesy of Emma Jeffery







# A woman of contrasts

Jan Shillum talks to actor Lesley Nicol about her life, loves and support for Medical Detection Dogs.

The week after we spoke Lesley Nicol was flying off to China to raise awareness for another animal charity she supports, Animals Asia. "There are some 130 Moon Bears being kept in cages with tubes attached to their gall bladders draining their bile, on what's called a bile farm. We're negotiating with the owner to turn that farm into a sanctuary", she tells me. "The sicker animals will be taken to one of the charity's two existing sanctuaries in Cheng Du and Vietnam. We went last year and found the majority of staff are Chinese and also hate this dreadful treatment of animals."

Her passion for animals explains the reason why, in 2012, Lesley also became an ambassador for Medical Detection Dogs. "I do love animals, except, maybe snakes," she laughs. "I have two dogs, a Tibetan terrier called Bertie and Freddie, a shy miniature poodle, who was rescued from a horrible place in Wales."

When detection dogs did a demonstration recently at St James's Palace for the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, Lesley was there: "The Prince was impressed but maybe not quite so emotional as the Duchess who had tears in her eyes," she remembers. "The Duchess subsequently became our patron so it was a momentous occasion. The dogs were so eager to begin, they love their work and were only once distracted for a tiny second by the press's flash photography."

You can't miss her enthusiasm for Medical Detection Dogs's work as

she goes on, "Alerting is so touching, the dog goes up to the owner and licks their hand while staring fixedly into their eyes, then goes and gets the necessary medical kit. There's a boy called Steven whose dog, Molly, can alert from the side of a football pitch when he's playing. Then she'll get the kit from his back-pack, and that involves choosing the right bag from about ten others then opening a zip—how about that!"

Lesley's own pets have helped her understand just how clever dogs can be. "Bertie was out with us on a walk along the river bank, quite a way from the pub where they usually keep a bowl of water for dogs. He kept pulling on the lead and I said 'he wants a drink' and he absolutely did. When we finally got there they'd moved the bowl to the other side of the pub but he kept going round until he found it."

"Then there was another weird one with Benji, a terrier cross I had in the 70s when I was rehearsing for the Bubble Theatre. The rehearsal room was a short car ride from Hampstead Heath so I'd give her a quick walk there. One day she got lost and eventually I had to go home without her; two hours later a friend popped into the Theatre and there she was having walked from the Heath to the rehearsal room. She wasn't too clever at roads and had never walked that route with me — how do they do that? I can only think she must have watched from the car window and learned the route that way."

Apart from animals, Lesley's other passion is naturally for acting. "It's the diversity I love," she explains. Does she have a favourite role I wonder? "Well Downton of course, that's been wonderful. It took me two years to get a boyfriend for Mrs Patmore, I kept nagging Julian Fellowes for some love interest, I wanted to investigate what would happen to a lady like that, I thought it could be quite touching and would also have comic potential. But then she fell for a rat bag and her affair with Joe Tufton ended almost before it had begun. In the future I'd love to do a scene with Maggie Smith 'upstairs' and perhaps some singing with Daisy [the maid played by Sophie McShera who starred in Annie as a child]. Then I loved playing Rosie in the stage version of Mama Mia [Julie Walters played the role in the film] and Auntie Annie in East is East [at the Royal Court Theatre] that led to my film debut in 1999 and then to West is West."

Recently, apart from Downton, Lesley has done a voiceover for an animated film Free Birds in the USA and now spends half of each year in LA where she eschews the humble image of Beryl Patmore, driving around in a Jaguar Vanden Plais lent to her by Matt Sorum of Guns N' Roses fame to whom she was introduced by her friend Jill Robinson who founded Animals Asia. "It is quite an old car," she laughs, "but it's sweet of him and far classier than our old Toyota. She's also worked on a CBeebies' cartoon, Sarah and Duck and remembers:

PICTURED LEFT: LESLEY AND CANCER DETECTION DOG DAISY MEET THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES THE PRINCE OF WALES AND THE DUCHESS OF CORNWALL AT ST JAMES'S PLACE



“I am truly desperate for the Medical Detection Dog story to be widely heard”

LESLEY AT THE MEDICAL DETECTION DOGS DOGGIE PADDLE UP THE THAMES.  
PHOTOGRAPH BY DIANNA BONNER WWW.WORLDTVPHOTOS.CO.UK

“the whole Downton cast did voiceovers when Disney Junior set an episode of Doc McStuffins in the UK.”

Born in Manchester in 1953, Lesley grew up in a small Lancashire town, the daughter of a Scottish GP and a Welsh actress who worked in TV. As a shy 16-year-old at St Elphins boarding school in Derbyshire she’s on record as expressing a desire to “go out and see the world”, not as an actress, but to “kiss boys.”

During her A-levels she earned a handsome £1 per week for a tiny role as a 12-year-old boy in *Androcles and the Lion* for Manchester Library Theatre. She began her musical career in the first production of *Jesus Christ Super Star* then “sang my way around the theatres of Britain”.

Fellow actor Anne Reid told her, during her time in *Mama Mia*, “you have learned to put your arms around an audience.” Certainly

Lesley has fulfilled that promise, becoming a familiar face on our TV screens in favourites such as *Casualty*, *Heartbeat*, *The Bill*, *Holby City*, *Touch of Frost*, *Dinner Ladies*, *Blackadder*, and in the BBC’s 1988 adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

A woman of contrasts who is as comfortable on stage playing the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella* or singing in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore*, as she is touring in *The Vagina Monologues* or doing a series of TV Commercials for Tetley Tea; who’s been shot by Bruce Weber (a *Downton* fan) for *German Vogue* and who, when Gordon Ramsay (another fan) asked her to appear on his Christmas Show admitted that even though she plays a famous cook in *Downton* she can “hardly boil an egg”.

On a personal level, she married her husband Da’aboth, (his professional name as a Reiki Practitioner and Martial Artist), eight years ago this September, a first marriage for them both and one that obviously brings them great happiness. He teases her that she has a Stage Fighting Certificate — “but I haven’t used it much”, she laughs.

Lesley Nicol has certainly ‘put her arms around’ her many and varied audiences and also around the charities she works for which are never far from her mind and heart. “I am truly desperate for the Medical Detection Dog story to be widely heard,” she says, “I think of it as a box that is bursting at the seams. Currently there’s a three-year waiting list for Medical Alert Assistance Dogs, and many people haven’t even heard yet about the wonderful work they do. Imagine what the demand will be like when everyone knows about it — we really do need to spread the word and get them the money they so desperately need.”

Go to [www.animalsasia.org/uk](http://www.animalsasia.org/uk) for more details of Jill Robinson’s campaign to stop bile farms and rescue moon bears.



# Molls on Hols

We have just returned from a lovely week on holiday in Devon with Molly by Steven's side the whole time, from motorway services for breakfast to beaches, harbours and cafes.

We have walked on hills overlooking the sea, played on the beach and in the water. Molly has supervised Steven swimming and body boarding in the sea and raced free across the sand, in and out of the waves when it was her playtime. She also had to have a go at putting her paws on one of the body boards – I'm sure she thinks she is one of the boys, so thought she should have a go too.



She has been confused by everyone looking over walls at the view, so put her paws up to join in. She was fascinated by the boys trying to catch things in the huge rockpools and watched Steven very carefully.



We spent hours in Ilfracombe harbour talking about Medical Detection Dogs to shopkeepers, then to some other interested people walking by. We stopped to watch a procession and chatted to more people about what Molly does, and a couple who recognised Steven and Molly from Crufts – Fame at last!

We met a lady who lost her husband last year and she was amazed by what Molly can do, she told us she had to be the "alert dog" for her husband. She was quite emotional when she realised just how good Molly is at telling us Steven's blood glucose levels. It was a good job we paid for a full day on the car park, not just a few hours!

Molly went on her first boat trip on this holiday. She was going to lie quietly under



the benches, until she got wet from the quite choppy sea coming in through the slots in the side of the boat and realised she was lying in a puddle. She then decided sitting on my feet was a better option. Her nose was vertical quite a bit of the time, taking in all the new smells.

She supervised Steven, Charlie and me having a go on a zip wire after climbing a tall tree. She stayed safely on the ground with Paul for that one, I don't think they had harnesses for dogs! We also did some cycle rides along off road trails. We kept them fairly short considering Molly trotting along with us, but she showed no signs of tiredness even at the end!

We often have problems with night time hypos on holiday with all the excitement and activity, but not so with Molly on duty. She gave her alerts clearly as usual, new environments don't seem to alter her wonderful ability, and so I could sort out his levels.

So many people ask if Molly is ever needed to alert and I know other people are asked similar questions. Rarely does a day go by that she doesn't need to alert. She alerted us most places we went, and certainly every day, most nights too, either to highs- probably from guessed carbohydrate values in cafes, or lows due to excitement and activity. We had a very busy, very enjoyable holiday, but probably the most relaxed ever for me. I really realised just how much we rely on Molly and what faith I have in her now. I only worried about Steven's levels if Molly warned me to. The rest of the time, he got on with enjoying himself and so did we. Molly seemed to enjoy herself too, there were plenty of new places to walk and time for her to run and sniff, in between her working times wearing her jacket.

Thank you Medical Detection Dogs and all those who support training these amazing dogs.

*Serena*

Written by Jan Shillum



# Kelly & Theo

I was diagnosed with narcolepsy when I was 15 but I'd had the symptoms since I was 12 years old. It took a long time to find out what was wrong with me and eventually the diagnosis came purely by chance. A friend of my dad's was watching TV and saw a piece about a girl who, just like me, kept falling asleep and who went to the sleep clinic at Guy's hospital. He told my dad and eventually I went there for tests too and was diagnosed within two weeks.

It was hard to diagnose because at 12, when the symptoms first started, I'd just begun secondary school so when I came home and went straight to sleep everyone thought it was quite normal, or maybe something to do with my hormones. Then I started dropping [falling], it could happen anywhere with no warning. A paramedic saw it happen in the street once and told me I looked just like a puppet when its strings had been cut.

No one else in my family has narcolepsy and there's no history of it, doctors tell me it's more of an auto immune thing, it seems to come out of nowhere though apparently it is already in your body, waiting to happen. They are doing a lot of research into it now, there's no long-term cure but the symptoms can ease in time and there is medication to help.

Theo and I once went to a Narcolepsy Association annual event with Medical Detection Dogs and I

learned a lot about narcolepsy then. For instance it could have been puberty that brought mine on, pregnancy could make the symptoms better but on the other hand, it could make them worse. There were 200 people there and no two people had the same symptoms.

I spoke to one girl whose cataplexy was triggered by laughter\*. I think mine is brought on by stress and Theo really helps with that, I've had a lot less falls since I've had him. I was always worried about falling



wherever I went out, and the more I panicked the more I fell. I don't even think about it when we go out together now. I've been surprised by how much he helps me with the emotional as well as the practical side.

Finding Theo was through another coincidence. My mum works at a special needs school where they often have assistance dogs come in to see the children. One had been trained to alert for epilepsy and mum thought it was similar to narcolepsy. She contacted Dogs for the Disabled and after being referred around to a few different places she found Medical Detection Dogs.

"I'm 22 now and I've had Theo, my gorgeous little black cocker spaniel for three and a half years. He has helped me in so many ways: He wakes me up when I fall, it's really good because now I don't have to worry and can go out on my own. I can work; do pretty much everything 'normal' people do."

It can be so embarrassing if you fall when you're out because people gather round and try to pick you up or call an ambulance, which isn't necessary. Theo wears his Medical Detection Dogs coat so people can see he's an assistance dog and that he knows exactly what he is doing. So now they just stand back and ask me if I'm OK.

I have to take two lots of medication during the night, with a three and a half hour interval in between. The medication makes me sleep really deeply, so I used to sleep through the alarm — and if I miss taking it I'm really sleepy the next day which would affect college or work. Theo wakes me up by nudging me but if that doesn't work he'll paw me, then bark or as a last resort go and find someone to help. He's so strong he can even turn me right over if it's necessary.

I did have a job as a clerical assistant, it wasn't very exciting, but

**"It's really good because now I don't have to worry and can go out on my own. I can work; do pretty much everything 'normal' people do."**

I'm now looking around for a new job while doing a four-year part time course in counselling. I'd love to find work as a counsellor eventually but I'm still undecided about what kind I want to be as I've only just completed my first year and that covered quite a wide range of topics. Every time I learn about one I think 'oh I'd love to do that', then change my mind when I find out about something else.

I'm still living at home at the moment because my fiancé Craig and I are saving up to get married in 2016 — it seems such a long time away, but it's not cheap so we just have to wait. We've booked the church, caterer and a beautiful barn, which is exactly what we wanted, for the reception but it's a bit too early for anything else — I'm getting really impatient.

I'm having six bridesmaids and two of them are my sisters. They are difficult to please so I've given them a range of colours to choose from for their dresses but I'm not sure they'll ever find one they'll agree on!

There is another important thing we've decided on though; Craig wants to buy Theo a special coat and a bow tie to match because he says the three of us are just like a little family. We both want him to play a very special role on our big day.



Narcolepsy is a rare neurological condition affecting the brain's ability to regulate the sleep-wake cycle and can cause a range of symptoms such as excessive sleepiness, cataplexy and more. There is no specific cure but several treatments can help manage the symptoms depending on type and severity.

\* Cataplexy is an episode of muscular weakness triggered by strong emotions such as laughter, anger or surprise. Loss of muscle tone ranges from a just perceptible weakening of facial muscles through weakness at the knees to total collapse on the floor. Speech is slurred; eyesight impaired but hearing and awareness remain undisturbed. About 75 per cent of patients with narcolepsy have cataplexy, a symptom only found in narcolepsy, so its presence makes diagnosis more certain.

**For more information about narcolepsy go to [www.narcolepsy.org.uk](http://www.narcolepsy.org.uk)**

# A week

## in the life of a trainer

By Sophie Lines



### Monday

It's Monday morning, the sun is shining brightly and it all starts with a training class at Buckingham Park. The dogs are just arriving and looking rather subdued, probably due to the weather.

The session begins with practising to walk to heel on a loose lead in and out of the other dogs, with and without a head collar. The dogs do this very well with little correction from the socialisers who are obviously feeling brave today and continue to repeat the exercise with their dogs off leads. We move on to practise our 'wait' commands, sometimes calling them to come and sometimes going back to feed them for holding the position (known as proofing). To finish, we do some retrieve work with the dogs as this helps to give them focus when off the lead and assists with the final stages of their training, fetching a kit. Class is complete and some socialisers stay at the park, let the dogs have

a little run and share their stories from the weekend. For me, it's time to return a trainers telephone call that came through during the class and quickly eat my lunch in the van before going onto a home check in Milton Keynes.

I'm now en route to Milton Keynes to see a potential new socialiser. She explained that sat nav won't lead me directly to the house, so I am keeping a keen eye out to ensure I don't miss it.

Home check completed, they're a lovely welcoming family who are very keen to help, two children, one mischievous Labrador and two cats. I'm sure we'll find a dog for them in no time at all.

Successful day went smoothly and to schedule – just what I like! No drama, no chaos...but the week has only just started!

### Tuesday

Tuesday has begun and before I know it I am at Millennium Park & Forest centre for this morning's training walk. At a quick glance it looks as if most of the socialisers have arrived, I can see them dotted round the car park getting the dogs out and preparing their equipment for the long trek ahead – ha ha only kidding, we like to think of it as a leisurely stroll! Jett, my own dog (who is now currently training to be a demo dog, hopefully!) is joining me at work for the day today. I whispered in his ear this morning and told him he is to be on his best behaviour.

We congregate near the main entrance, everyone seems in high spirits for the walk ahead, or maybe they are really just looking forward to the cake I have brought for them to enjoy afterwards! As we set off I give a short explanation on what we will be practising, how we are looking for the dogs to behave (around members of

the public and others dogs) and what to do if the dogs don't respond as we would like them too. Most importantly, we're here for everyone to have fun and enjoy the dog walk as after all, isn't that what it's all about. The dogs won't learn if they are not enjoying it.

The dogs were all exceptionally well behaved and it was lovely watching them all interact so beautifully with one another. I love watching the relationships between the dogs and handler grow each and every time I see them. For the time being, jobs don't get much better than mine!

However, it's time for me to get back to the centre and complete the training reports for the dogs I have seen over the last week, perhaps not so enjoyable.

The afternoon seems to have flown by and I have been busy on the computer for at least a couple of hours. I'm now getting what is known as a serious case of brain ache. It's definitely time to take five and go for a little stroll with my handsome chap, that's my dog by the way, not my boyfriend!

- Training reports complete
- Calls to arrange training visits done
- Emails sent
- Diary all up to date
- Home check written up





## Wednesday

It's Wednesday, its midweek and it's an exciting day ahead for me. First task of the day is to pick up a gorgeous little puppy dog from Guide Dogs.

Can you tell I like collecting puppies!? I know it's a Labrador X Golden Retriever, 8 weeks old and male but unsure what colour, so I will have to wait and see.

I just arrived at Guide Dogs and I didn't get lost once, quite an achievement for me it has to be said. Off I go to sign in and collect our new bundle of joy.

It's a little black boy and he's is totally adorable. I can barely bring myself to put him the car crate to start my journey to take him to his new home. Last cuddle and we're off.

I have dropped off the new puppy and settled him into his new environment. Whilst I was there he had a jolly good explore around the house and the garden, then decided it was time for a sleep. My cue to leave! Puppy time over and it's on to see one of the dogs who really enjoys the freedom to explore on his walks, but as a consequence, not so keen on coming back when he is called!

Practised recall techniques to improve response, now it's time to drop the dog back home and give the socialiser a quick debrief of this afternoon antics.



## Thursday

Can you believe it, it's Thursday already! Where has the week gone? This morning I am at the trainer's monthly meeting. This gives us an opportunity to discuss dog movements, new socialisers, training classes, up and coming workshops, new forms, the list goes on. Today it is being held at one of the trainers' homes.

I have just arrived and the cake and biscuits are out already. Cakes and/or biscuits in my eyes are always a sign of a successful meeting, although for those of you who know me, will know my real weakness is chocolate.

I have consumed way too much cake so the gym is definitely on the cards for me tonight.

We worked through our agenda very efficiently and covered all points that needed further discussions. Dates were put in diaries for follow up meetings and for arranging to see dogs that may need a little more assistance.

I must add at this stage that it doesn't always go quite as smoothly as it did today.



It's time to see one of my little puppy recruits. During my last visit I noticed that the crate was starting to get a little small so I made a mental note to bring a bigger one. The socialiser also called to request the next collar size up as that was also going to be outgrown very soon!

Puppy visit complete. All is well, the pup is growing fast and new collar and crate were most definitely needed. The socialisers have been hard at work practising the commands I showed them the previous week and the puppy is now able to carry out various basic commands including a leave command away from food. How very impressive!

I have just collected a dog for a vet visit, only for routine checks you'll be pleased to know!

The vet was impressed with the weight and condition of the dog.

## Friday

It's Friday and the weather has made a turn for the worst. There are high winds and the heavens have opened, however, luckily for me the majority of my day is going to be indoors today.

I'm collecting a dog on my way into the office this morning as we're going to spend the day together. This enables me to get to know those of my dogs who are currently in socialising better, create a bond and work on any areas that may need improvement.

I am just arriving in Milton Keynes to meet a socialiser and the rain has stopped. We have planned to meet by Debenhams and do some town work with the dogs. This involves assessing how confident the dogs are around large amounts of traffic and people, steadiness up and down stairs, going in and out of lifts, maintenance of heelwork and their ability to settle in a café. It's time for them to strut their stuff.

The dogs have definitely been on their best behaviour and we received a lot of interest from the public asking what the dogs are working towards.



We treated ourselves to a hot drink whilst discussing how we are going to move the dogs forward in their training.

It's about time I got back to the office, take the dog out for a walk whilst continuing to work on recall, then finish off emails and finalise my plans for next week.

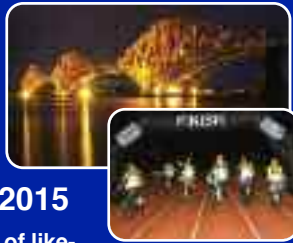
The sun is just appearing through the clouds and the rain seems to have passed so looks like a good opportunity to get out for a walk before it decides to change again.

Well... you could say we had a successful walk in training terms, however the little critter decided he wanted to try out a new aftershave 'Eau de Fox Mess' - great! Looks like I'm going to have to bath him before I take him home. Dogs, who'd have 'em!

Clean and fresh dog alert! Gosh that's much better, fox excrement really does get up my nose.

It's now that time to drop my furry companion back to his socialiser. ....and now it's home time for me & maybe enjoy a long hot bath of my own!

# Are **YOU** up for a challenge?



## 20th and 21st June 2015

Cycle 50 miles with a throng of like-minded cyclists, along the twists and turns of the streets of Edinburgh on our Night Ride – lit by the moon and lights of the city.

Taking in the iconic sights of this beautiful city – Arthur's Seat, The Castle, The Forth Road Bridge – our route has stunning night views of the city.

This is a rare chance to explore the nooks and crannies of the Scottish capital at a time when much of the traffic has abated – enjoy the merriment of city night life and the tranquillity of the Georgian streets as we pass through in the moonlight.

Jump on your bike and let's get cycling!

**Option A** - Registration Fee £39 + Min Sponsorship £160

**Option B** - Registration Fee £39 + Self Funding £60

**For further information please visit**

**[www.edinburgh-nightride.com](http://www.edinburgh-nightride.com)**



## 27th and 28th June 2015

Walk it, Jog it, or Run it - a **NEW** endurance challenge along a historic route. It's 100 km, 50 km, or 25 km on the Grand Union Canal towpath, a 'hidden green corridor' that winds its way from the heart of London out towards the Chilterns.

The scenery will surprise you – it's the Capital's best kept secret; the Challenge will inspire you - it's London's Great Escape!

For 2015, sign up to the 100km challenge for just £49!

**For more information visit**

**[www.grandunionchallenge.com](http://www.grandunionchallenge.com)**

## Ben Nevis Trek



### 19 Jun 2015 - 21 Jun 2015 and 2 Oct 2015 - 4 Oct 2015

The Ben Nevis Charity Challenge is an exciting team challenge set in the stunning Scottish Highlands. Teams of four are challenged to climb Ben Nevis, cycle 25 miles (on road) and canoe Loch Lochy. So why not support Medical Detection Dogs and enjoy a challenge in beautiful surroundings.

**Option A** - Registration Fee £70 + Min Sponsorship £490

**Option B** - Registration Fee £70 + Self Funding £245

**For more information visit**

**[www.globaladventurechallenges.com](http://www.globaladventurechallenges.com)**



The Brecon Beacons are the beautiful and stunning hills that run through the centre of South Wales and are the training ground of the SAS. As you can imagine, The Beacons route will provide you with an extreme physical workout and a psychologically taxing challenge. We will cross the highest peaks in the Beacons and South Wales including Pen y Fan (886m), Corn Du (873m), Cribyn (795m) and Fan y Big (719m) – we can guarantee a spectacular charity challenge!

Registration from £30 + Min Sponsorship £120

**For more information visit [www.trekfest.org.uk](http://www.trekfest.org.uk)**

## Hadrian's Wall Trek



### 12 Jun 2015 - 14 Jun 2015 or 11 September 2015 - 13 September 2015

Challenge yourself to trek for charity along 25 miles of Hadrian's Wall – one wall, one epic charity challenge in just one weekend!

Hadrian's Wall was built in AD122 on the orders of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, and stretched from the East to

West coasts of Britain, from Bowness on Solway in the West to Wallsend in the East.

This most ancient of charity treks takes us from Lanercost Priory to Brocolitia, encompassing some fascinating ruins. It is the most remarkable Roman monument in the country, and quite unique throughout the former Empire. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site – which cuts through Northumberland National Park, Hadrian's Wall attracts trekkers from all over, as it offers great challenging walks, filled with a stunning backdrop and history.

When will you plan your invasion? Join and conquer the Wall today!

**Option A** - Registration Fee £70 + Min Sponsorship £450

**Option B** - Registration Fee £70 + Self Funding £225

**For more information visit**

**[www.globaladventurechallenges.com](http://www.globaladventurechallenges.com)**



**Why not support Medical Detection Dogs and take part in one or more fantastic charity challenges across the country ...**

## LONDON2 BRIGHTON CHALLENGE

**23/24 May 2015**



**100 km - Walk it, Jog it, or Run it!** The London 2 Brighton Challenge is now one of the UK's greatest endurance events. Most will walk the 100km; some will jog it, and many will run it as an ultra - marathon. However you take it on, it's a test of determination and stamina. It's real, no gimmicks, no contrived obstacles, and is achievable. It could be the most rewarding experience of your life! There's also the half way 56km and 44km route options available too.

**For more information visit [www.london2brightonchallenge.com](http://www.london2brightonchallenge.com)**

## Snowdon Multi-Activity Challenge



**14th and 15th August 2015**

This exciting triathlon-esque challenge involves you cycling 17km, trekking 15km and kayaking 4km in a mere 12 hour day. Snowdonia National Park is home to some of the most rugged and challenging peaks in Britain giving its reputation as one of the best natural adventure play grounds in the U.K. This is a real mental and physical challenge as you test your entire muscle range over the course of a gruelling day. You will enjoy stunning views of the National Park, and a fantastic sense of achievement when you complete the trek.

Registration £95 + Min Sponsorship £495

**For more information visit [www.charitychallenge.com](http://www.charitychallenge.com)**

## Coast to coast cycle



**23rd to 26th April 2015 and 13th to 16th August 2015**

The aim of this charity challenge is as simple as its name suggests – to conquer the breadth of Britain by bike!

Starting with our rear wheels in the Irish Sea in the town of Whitehaven, our charity challenge encompasses some of the best scenery Britain has to offer! From the stunning mountains of the Lake District to the beautiful open moors of the Northern Pennines – our UK Coast to Coast cycle for charity will leave you wanting more!

Two coastlines, one objective. Raise funds for Medical Detection Dogs today on this awesome charity bike ride!

**For more information visit [www.globaladventurechallenges.com](http://www.globaladventurechallenges.com)**

## 24 Peak Challenge



**5 Jun 2015 - 7 Jun 2015 and 11 Sep 2015 - 13 Sep 2015**

This exciting challenge will see us summit an incredible 24 peaks in the Lake District, all over 2,400ft with a target trekking time of 24 hours!

The Lake District is one of the most beautiful areas in the UK, filled with breathtaking mountains and valleys – it is the perfect backdrop to this awesome challenge. The days will be long and the trekking tough, but the rewards of hiking into the heart of this amazing National Park and the accomplishment of conquering 24 peaks will make your efforts worthwhile.

**Option A** - Registration Fee £70 + Min Sponsorship £700

**Option B** - Registration Fee £70 + Self Funding £350

**For more information visit [www.globaladventurechallenges.com](http://www.globaladventurechallenges.com)**



**Sunday 12th July 2015**

Staged on the world's greatest road race route through the heart of central London passing many of the capital's truly world class historic landmarks.



Medical Detection Dogs have secured a limited number of places to take part. We do ask our supporters to try and raise a minimum sponsorship of £200.

**To book your place for this event please contact [challengeevents@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](mailto:challengeevents@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk)**  
**For more information visit [www.thebritish10klondon.co.uk](http://www.thebritish10klondon.co.uk)**

**For further information about challenge events please email: [challengeevents@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](mailto:challengeevents@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk)**

# ICTS UK Ltd joins forces with Medical Detection Dogs



BEDBUG DETECTION DOG MIDAS. PHOTOGRAPH BY EMMA JEFFERY

ICTS UK Ltd., a leading supplier of canine security services to a wide range of organisations, is joining forces with Medical Detection Dogs to extend their canine search services to include the detection of bedbugs.

Kelly McCartney, Commercial Director, ICTS UK commented: "Bedbugs are a growing concern, with the media recently reporting a rise in the number of bedbug infestations in built-up environments. If not detected and treated swiftly, bedbugs can often have crippling effects on businesses and communities.

"ICTS is an established company, with a broad client base developed during more than 25 years of business. In response to demand from pest control companies, the hospitality and education sectors etc., we are extending our services to include the detection of bedbugs via the use of specially trained dogs.

"We look forward to not only working in partnership with the

Medical Detection Dogs, but also supporting them in their valuable work. ICTS has nominated the organisation, as one of its chosen charities."

Jed Marshall, Head of Canine Security Services, ICTS UK commented: "Whilst ICTS is a leading provider of security services, we have developed a wide range of canine patrol and search services, including the detection of explosives, drugs, cash, firearms and mobile telephones. We are now expanding these services to include the detection of bedbugs.

"Dogs' heightened sense of smell makes them the most effective way of detecting the pests, as bedbugs, although visible to a trained human eye, are nocturnal and live in very small spaces such as under skirting boards, carpets and the lining of curtains etc.

"We look forward to expanding our services to prisons, domestic premises run by Local Authorities,

halls of residence, hotels, cruise ships and airplanes etc."

Medical Detection Dogs are acknowledged experts in the training of canines to a high standard and their training of the bed bug detection dogs has been carried out in conjunction with the Bed Bug Foundation and Surrey Police.

Alison Clare, Commercial Manager of Bedbug Scent Detection Service at Medical Detection Dogs, commented:

"We are delighted to be partnering ICTS to deliver this significant service to a wide range of their clients.

Our dogs already have an excellent record of detecting the early onset of the most pernicious disease in the developed world, cancer, as well as working with sufferers of diabetes to recognise and act upon dangerous falls in their blood sugar levels.

Now, in partnership with ICTS, we can also help a swath of travel and accommodation providers, to which bedbug infestations cause major difficulties and embarrassment.

By identifying the earliest signs of bedbugs, undetectable to the human eye, our dogs can prevent a far greater problem further down the line."

**By providing this service Medical Detection Dogs are able to provide a revenue stream to train more Medical Alert Assistance Dogs that can assist individuals and their families.**

For more information about ICTS UK please contact:

**T:** 07825 430190

**E:** jed.marshall\_uk@icts.co.uk

**www.icts.co.uk**



**ICTS UK**  
Tavistock House  
Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9L



# Our Dog Casper



**I fondly refer to him as “Our Dog” but actually Casper the 4 ½ year old apricot Miniature Poodle is my mum Sue’s Alert Assistance Dog. Casper has been part of our family for 3 years now but before he arrived life wasn’t always plain sailing and it certainly wasn’t much fun.**



Mum has very brittle Type 1 diabetes and has lost all of her hypo awareness so she is unable to tell when her blood sugars rise to high (Hyperglycaemia) or drop dangerously low (Hypoglycaemia). Casper with his amazing sense of smell which is 100,000 times better than a human has been trained to sniff out changes in mum. He will jump up and alert her when her blood glucose level drops below 4mmol or goes above 11mmol so that she can take action to avoid a collapse and loss of consciousness. Before Casper mum was unaware of a sudden drop in her blood sugar levels and would collapse regularly sometimes requiring several paramedic call outs a week.

I was 11 years old and had just started secondary school. I would be in class and hear from other pupils that my mum had collapsed in another lesson somewhere else in the school or I would be called out of my lessons to help paramedics

suspend mums insulin pump. Every day when I returned from school I never knew if mum would be there or if I’d be met by my nan and informed that mum had been taken to hospital again. When mum had longer spells in hospital I would have to help take care of my brother who is autistic and get him ready for school and make his packed lunch in the mornings. He would ask me about mum and I remember him saying “Is she going to do that dying thing again”.

The whole family was affected by mum’s health. Dad would drive home from work to check on her if he telephoned and she didn’t answer. I would be worried about putting my key in the front door and finding mum on the floor inside. I remember at least two family holidays spent visiting mum in hospital and having to go home from holiday and leaving her behind in hospital. Night time was always the worst and although I could put

on a brave face during the daytime, I missed mum at night when I had time to think about it and would often cry myself to sleep with worry.

I knew that mum had applied to Medical Detection Dogs for an assistance dog but it had been a while ago and so I was really excited for her when in July 2011 mum announced that she was getting a dog. Casper bounded into our lives a few weeks later and he fitted right in, Mum had to do a lot of training with him and we weren’t allowed to give him treats but he was never short of love and affection.

It seems like we have had him for a lot longer than 3 years and he has had a major impact on the lives of every member of our family. Dad does not have to worry about mum being alone any more and he does not need to go shopping with her everywhere. My Brother Elliott and I have a lot more freedom as we don’t need to stay at home to be with mum at the weekends. I belong to a local youth theatre group and Volunteer on a Saturday at a drama group for young people with Autism. Casper and mum enjoy watching Elliott play for his rugby team on a Sunday morning. However the biggest change has been in mum who is back to the old mum we used to have. Fun and happy and always busy out and about. She is never in hospital anymore Casper has given her back her independence and her confidence.

Casper has changed all of our lives and allowed us all to relax a lot more and enjoy ourselves like a normal family. So I call Casper “our dog” with conviction as I do believe he has been a saviour not just for mum but for all of the family. I would like to thank Medical Detection Dogs for allowing him to adopt us as a family and let them know how grateful we all are for mum’s guardian angel.

*Carys*

# Out and about

raising funds for Medical Detection Dogs

Thank you to everyone that supports us



Christine, Grand Union Challenge



Greg, London Marathon



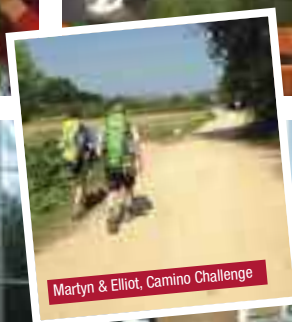
Carl, Emberton Triathlon



Susie, Fire Walking



Simon, Med Dog Rocks



Martyn & Elliot, Camino Challenge



Sydney (Simon), Skydive



AXA, Directors Walk



Graham, Dave, Si & Terry, Coast2Coast Cycle



Jane, Summer Ball



North Yorkshire NHS Diabetic Eye Screening Team, London to Paris Cycle Ride





# Christmas Cards 2014

Each pack contains 10 cards with profits from all sales going directly to fund our work.



**'An eye on Christmas'**  
160mm x 116mm



**'Tucked up Tight'**  
185mm x 84mm



**'Here we go again'**  
140mm x 140mm

The greeting message inside each card says  
*With Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year*

## ORDER FORM

| Design   | Quantity | Price per pack of 10 cards | Total    |
|--|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>An eye on Christmas'</b>                    |          | £3.99                      |          |
| <b>'Tucked up Tight'</b>                       |          | £3.99                      |          |
| <b>'Here we go again'</b>                      |          | £3.99                      |          |
|  |          | <b>Sub total</b>           |          |
| <b>Post &amp; Packing</b>                      |          |                            |          |
| 1 pack = £1.50 2 packs = £2.00 3 packs = £2.50 |          |                            |          |
| add 50p per pack thereafter                    |          |                            |          |
| <b>Post &amp; Packing</b>                      |          |                            | <b>£</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                   |          |                            | <b>£</b> |

\*Name .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Daytime tel. ....

Email .....

I enclose a cheque/postal order for ..... **made payable to Medical Detection Dogs**

☐ I am happy to receive substitute cards if my choices are out of stock

**I would like to pay by:**

☐ Cheque made payable to Medical Detection Dogs

☐ Credit Card ☐ Debit Card ☐ Visa ☐ Delta ☐ Maestro ☐ CAF card ☐ Mastercard

Card Number                 Valid From     Expires End

Issue Number   Security Number     
(Last three digits on signature strip)

**Please return completed form with your payment to:**

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

\*Your contact details will be kept on our secure database we will not share your details with any third party organisations.  
If you do not wish to receive news or information from Medical Detection Dogs please tick here ☐





Bawbags Dug's Baws £12.50

**Bawbags began their support of Medical Detection Dogs in early 2014 with the release of our Dug's Baws project and special edition boxers. They have donated £5,000 to help pay for the training of a Cancer Detection Dog.**

Their support is ongoing with a percentage of proceeds from every sale of Dug's Baws boxers going to support another dog in the future.

Bawbags Originals are deluxe cotton boxer shorts featuring our custom fit for optimal baw comfort.

- Deluxe Premium Cotton
- Frontside Access
- Custom Fit
- 3D Bawbags Jacquard Waistband

**Get yours at [www.bawbags.com](http://www.bawbags.com)**

## WE NEED YOUR STAMPS!



Please collect your used stamps and help us to raise valuable funds. Stamps are worth about £8.00 per kilo so can make a BIG difference to our fundraising.

Please leave your stamps on the original envelope but trim or tear the paper to about 1cm around the franking mark.

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**



Raise funds for Medical Detection Dogs by donating good quality, reusable and clean clothing!

When you're ready Clothes For Charity will collect from your home or workplace!

Request a bag at:

[www.clothesforcharity.org.uk/charities/medical-detection-dogs](http://www.clothesforcharity.org.uk/charities/medical-detection-dogs)



## Recycle

*and help our dogs save lives*

Raise £££'s by donating your

**Old mobile phones**

**Inkjet cartridges**

**Laser cartridges**

For freepost donation bags or further information please visit the Medical Detection Dogs page at:

**[www.recycle4charity.co.uk](http://www.recycle4charity.co.uk)**



**Recycle 4 Charity.co.uk**



# Medical Detection Dogs teams up with Will - Writing Service **The Goodwill Partnership**



Courtesy of Tony Cortazzi

The Will-writing service will allow Medical Detection Dogs to generate further legacy donations as well as offer its support-base low cost solicitor-written Wills.

The Goodwill Partnership offer home-visit, solicitor-written Wills. This makes the process of making a Will easy, in the privacy of your own home, and at a time to suit you. This allows individuals to leave a legacy to Medical Detection Dogs if they so desire.

The partnership with Medical Detection Dogs is the latest of a number of recent alliances by The Goodwill Partnership. These have included The National Autistic Society, Motability, World Cancer Research Fund UK, Action for Children, Care for the Wild and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Mark Jackson, Director of The Goodwill Partnership, says: "As a dog-owner myself, Medical Detection Dogs is one of the most inspiring charities I have ever come across. Not only is the charity helping researchers develop non-invasive tests for cancer, but their specially trained Medical Alert Assistance Dogs can warn individuals of oncoming life threatening events. We are thrilled to be assisting such an innovative and pioneering charity."

**The future of Medical Detection Dogs relies on legacies.  
If you would like to write your Will in the privacy of your own home  
please contact**

**The Goodwill Partnership on 0844 669 6148  
or visit [www.thegoodwillpartnership.co.uk](http://www.thegoodwillpartnership.co.uk)**

# Please sponsor our puppies

From only £4 a month

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.



For further information please contact Claire Akehurst

E: [claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk](mailto:claire.akehurst@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk) T: 01243 839306

