



# The Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Great Britain



Founded 1996  
President: Sig. Gilberto Grandi  
Proud to be the Club that pioneered the Lagotto Romagnolo outside of Italy

# NEWSLETTER

*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year  
to all of our  
Members and their  
lovely Lagotto*

*We look forward to  
seeing you in 2020*



Finn O'Malley-Catherall

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December 2019

The COPY DATE for the next edition will be 6<sup>th</sup> June 2020. You can contact our Editor by e-mail at: [s.shepherd@ntlworld.com](mailto:s.shepherd@ntlworld.com) or by post to Stephanie Shepherd, 59 Lime Avenue, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2BH

## Editor's Comments:

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed articles for this edition, it's great to have your support. But we do want to hear from all Club members. All Lagotto owners have stories about their dog, we'd love you to share them with other members via this Newsletter.

We'd also like your ideas for articles, just email me. After the last edition someone suggested an article about feeding so I'm looking for an author for that for a future edition. One thing you won't find in these pages is the results of the survey about shampoo. I only received two replies and statistics are like swallows, you need more than one or two. Thank you anyway to the two people who took part.

In this edition, and on the website in due course, you will find the latest calendar of events for 2020. I've had a sneak preview and it's a hugely varied programme. As well as Gundog training at all levels from absolute beginner upwards and our usual shows, we have another Truffle Experience, a Hoopers Training event (your chance to find out what Hoopers is all about) and Lagotto Walks will be taking place around the country as usual. We hope to see you and your family in the course of the year.

Events don't run themselves and we always need more volunteers to help. You don't necessarily have to be an expert in that particular event. I spent a day at the Rally weekend this autumn and got roped in to add up the scores. Let's just say that my mental arithmetic had improved a lot by the end of the day. But the point is that it was my first time at a Rally event and I was still able to make a useful contribution to it, freeing the experts for more complex tasks. If you look at the events list and think you would like to attend a particular event why not contact the organiser and offer to help. The more volunteers we get the easier it is. You might spend just half an hour running refreshments at the June show, for instance.

I hope you enjoy this edition, and I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

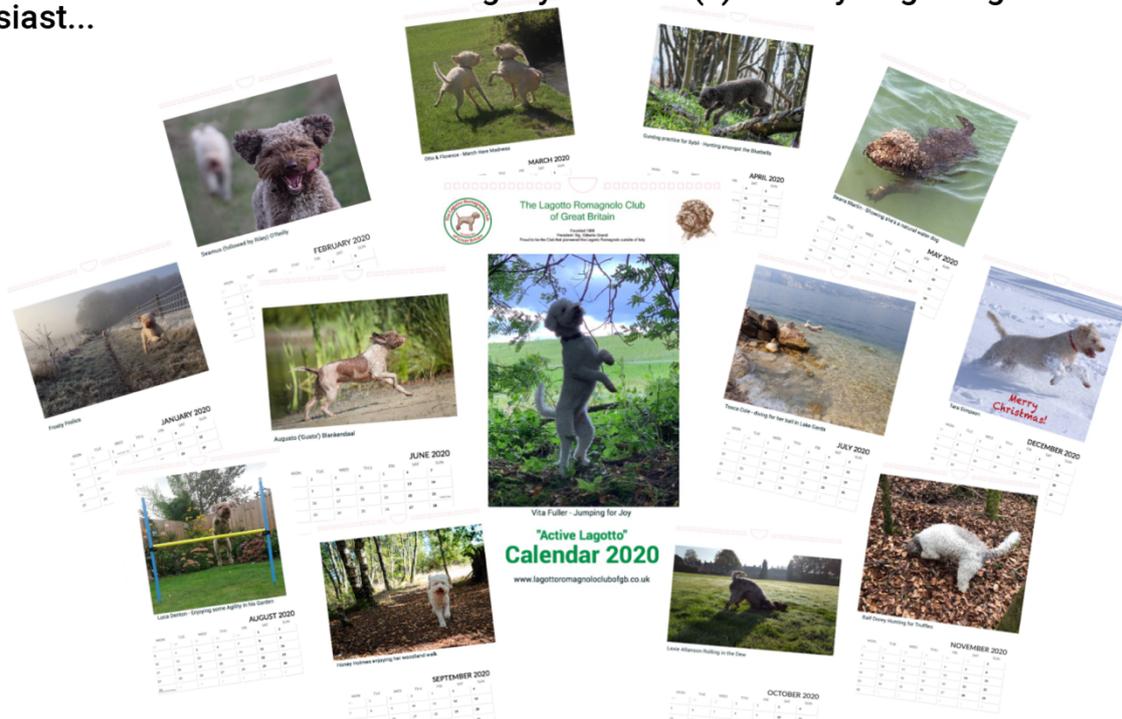
Best wishes, Stephanie

***The Committee of the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Great Britain will not necessarily endorse any views, comments or inaccuracies within articles printed in this Newsletter***

## LRCGB Calendar 2020

Our Club Calendar 2020 is available to purchase in the Merchandise section of our website. You may own or know some of those featured, and you will certainly recognise the many faces and positions of Lagotto in action!

Only limited numbers are available so get your order(s) in early. A great gift for a Lagotto enthusiast...



## Chairman's Letter:

Well, Christmas is nearly upon us again and 2019 has flown by! It has been a busy year for the Club, we have got through an exciting and comprehensive calendar of events. A big thank you to all of you who have supported our events this year, we enjoy seeing you and your lovely Lagotto and appreciate your help and involvement. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members to the Club, If you haven't managed to meet other members yet or attend any of our events we hope to meet you next year.

If you have joined in the last year it may suggest that you have a Lagotto puppy, if so I do hope you are having lots of fun with them. I am only too aware of the work involved with bringing up young puppies, particularly lively young Lagotto pups! Remember that Lagotto are bred to be working dogs so you need to occupy their minds. Time invested in training them whilst they are puppies will pay dividends in future and is the very best way to build the wonderful bond between the two of you that every dog deserves. I suggest you have a look out for your local Good Citizen class, ringcraft class and/or puppy level gundog class. They are held all over the country and will prepare your puppy to be a well mannered and sociable dog. The skills learned at these classes will enable your dog to turn its paw to many activities including obedience, showing or gundog work. Our Club Committee Members are always available to answer questions about suitable activities or if you have any problems or concerns we are all keen to help if we can.

I'm pleased to tell you that, thanks to our working Secretary Lyn Monk and her husband Jeff, we held our first KC affiliated Working Test at the end of August. This was an ambitious and exciting milestone for the Club and, as we opened it to the other Working Minority Breed Spaniels, a clear demonstration that Lagotto can and do compete on the same level as more established gundog breeds. We awarded many new trophies at this event, most of which were won by Andrew Parker from Yorkshire with his Clumber Spaniels. Some of you may remember the LRCGB Raghill Cup that was historically awarded to the highest scoring Lagotto at our then annual water test. At this year's WT it was awarded to the highest scoring Lagotto of the day, Massimo Augusto di Amici Eterna (Gusto) and his owner Fabienne Blankendaal from Holland. Fabienne joined the LRCGB earlier this year after coming across the LRCGB website when she couldn't find a club in the Netherlands that would enable her to compete with her dog in working gundog competitions. She had to go to the trouble of registering Gusto with the Kennel Club in order to qualify for working competitions in the UK. Many congratulations to them both, Gusto was a very worthy winner of our precious Raghill Cup!



Whilst on the subject of gundog work, I am led to believe that many from the Midlands and further North have expressed interest in taking part in gundog events. Lyn Monk has asked me to appeal to LRCGB members to suggest potential venues and trainers based further North. Would those members who would like to be involved with organising or taking part in gundog events, particularly in or north of the Midlands, please contact Lyn, your help would be much appreciated! Lyn's details can be found on the contacts page of the LRCGB website. Please don't wait for us to organise events, find your local gundog trainer and take regular classes, your dog will love it!

Another first was our Truffling Experience weekend at the end of September when we were lucky enough to welcome from Switzerland Denise Stalder, dello Spirito del Bosco, who runs truffling courses both in Europe and worldwide through her Trüffel Akademie Schweiz and is co-author of the book 'Lagotto Romagnolo & Trüffel'.

We held two courses over the weekend with 10 dogs and handlers plus a few spectators on each day. I am not going to go into any detail about the event because it has been comprehensively reported on by

Jo Denton later in the Newsletter. I will, however, extend our sincere thanks to Denise for taking the time to come over to share her knowledge and love of the sport with such enthusiasm and good humour.



*Denise celebrating with Truffles*



*Denise and Sasha (with Denise's Truffling book)*

Thank you also to Sasha Dorey, our UK truffle expert, for demonstrating her dog Ralf's skills as a truffle dog]. I am delighted to announce that Denise has agreed to come again next year and we plan to hold the event further North so that more of you can enjoy the experience!! Denise has left us with lots of ideas for future truffle themed events so do look out for them in our calendar of events for next year.

Can I draw your attention to the fact that we have a very attractive 2020 Calendar for sale? Many thanks to all who contributed photos and apologies if your photo didn't make it to the final selection. Next year we will be looking for ideas for a theme for our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary calendar in 2021!

As you all prepare for the fun and festivities, I would just like to remind you all to be careful to keep all those Christmas goodies that we humans enjoy containing dried fruit and grapes, chocolate, alcohol, macadamia nuts and the sweetener Xylitol well out of reach of your canine loved ones! An emergency trip to the vets will spoil everyone's Christmas!

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Louise**

### **Emer O'Malley**

It is with deep sadness that I announce the death of Emer O'Malley, owner of Finn whose photo is on the front cover of this Newsletter. Emer, her partner Mark and Finn were struck by a vehicle earlier this week. Mark and Finn are recovering slowly.

On behalf of the Club Committee and Members of the Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Great Britain, I send our deepest sympathies to her family and close friends.

If any of you wish to send your own personal condolences please forward to either Julie Nelson, our Secretary, or myself. Our contact details can be found on the Club's website.

Louise

22<sup>nd</sup> December



# Gundog News

## An update from our Working Secretary, Lyn Monk

On the 31st August we were delighted to host our first Gundog Working Test which included a Water Test at Rickneys Gundog Training Ground in Hertfordshire with Judges Gordon Bowers (Panel Judge) and vet Vicky Payne. It was open to all Minority Spaniel Breeds - Field Spaniel, Welsh Springer Spaniel, Clumber Spaniel, Sussex Spaniel, American Cocker, Spanish Water Dog and Lagotto.

We had a great entry with 29 runners including 18 Clumbers, 2 Field, 1 Spanish Water Dog and 8 Lagotto. Competitors came from far and wide. One Lagotto travelled from the Netherlands!

Thanks to all the competitors who travelled to Hertfordshire to make the day a success. Huge congratulations to all the winners and particularly to the best placed Lagotto, and the winner of the Raghill Cup, LRCGB member Fabienne & Gusto who came all the way from the Netherlands, very well done! Full results are on the Club website.



Finally, a personal thank you to all those who helped and supported the Club to make this event happen. We look forward to welcoming more of you at future events.

If anyone would like any further information on competing or working your Lagotto in Gundog work please do get in touch.

**Lyn Monk, Working Secretary**



## Truffling Experience weekend 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> September

A report by Jo Denton

We were lucky enough to get a place on the LRCGB Truffle course on Saturday 28th September 2019. Denise Stalder from Switzerland came and gave us a brilliant seminar on Truffles in the morning, explaining all about the different types of truffle, what colours they come in and the different smells and more intricate details down to the cellular structure etc.

We were given a small black ball which resembled a truffle, it had a secret slide out compartment to put a tiny piece of truffle inside so that we could use it to train our Lagotto. What a brilliant device. After the seminar we all drove to the woods where we met up with Sasha Dorey who had come from Dorset to demonstrate how her dog Ralf finds truffles. It was so interesting, Ralf was moved away from the scene whilst someone went and hid some truffles so that he could show us how clever he is. He was sent off to find them, and find them he did, very quickly too. Once the demonstration was over we were all shown how to use our small black truffle

balls to train our dogs. They were first shown where we were hiding the balls and then asked our dogs to use the great Lagotto nose to find them, which they all did successfully.

We had a lovely break for lunch in the middle of the woods, and we were given a delicious Truffle Risotto with grated truffle on the top, salad and some smashing cakes to follow.



*Truffle Risotto Lunch*



*Denise burying Truffles*

After our practice with the training balls we went on to use the real truffles that had been brought over from Switzerland by Denise. They had been dug up by her own dog before she came. Denise took half of the group and Louise the other half. They initially buried a truffle where the dog could see it and we sent our dogs to sniff it out. Because the dogs had already been introduced to the truffle ball with the scent it was quite easy for them to know what we were asking of them. Then the truffle was buried out of their sight and they were sent to find it. Unfortunately some of them not only found them but had a lovely meal eating them, our Luca was one of those. I think he thought it was his reward for being such a clever boy. Everyone on the course got a turn with their dog both with the trainer Denise and Louise.

The training and information that Denise gave us on the day was brilliant, it showed us all that Lagotto are born to find truffles, it seems to come so naturally to them all. It has certainly left my husband Steve, Luca the Lagotto and I all wanting to do more.

We were so lucky at the end as we were allowed to take the truffle balls home with a small amount of truffle to use for training. We have, since being on the course, used the truffle ball in the house and garden for training purposes and will soon go into the woods to test our Luca with his big brown nose to try and find our own truffles.



*Luca (with Steve) finding the buried Truffles*

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Thank you LRCGB for a brilliant day.

**Jo, Steve and Luca the Lagotto**

## Show Report 2019 by Mandy Barker, Show Secretary

It's been a great year for Lagotto at shows, with an increased number of entries. Many Championship shows have now put Lagotto breed classes on. It's lovely to see Lagotto being judged on their own rather than being compared to other gundog breeds in the Any Variety Not Separately Classified (AVNSC) classes, and we hope that the remaining Champ shows will add breed classes in the near future.

The biggest show of the year was Crufts, obviously the highlight for all show dogs – there were 72 Lagotto entries and the winner came from Italy. It's always a great day out for both spectators and competitors and we always make sure we have a get together afterwards where everyone brings food and drink from their own country.

The LRCGB held its Single Breed Open Show in June at Kingston Blount, Oxfordshire which proved to be a very successful day and a great family day out. We were delighted that Sig.ra Manola Poggesi from Italy kindly accepted our invitation to judge our show. The Best in Show winner was Fullforge Floral Dancer owned by Ms V Williams & Mr J Carless and Reserve Best in Show was Mizani Diorbe of Slovakia ShCM owned by Ms P McAllister. Best Puppy went to Mizani Moon Spice owned by Mr S Mulhearn & Mr A Hobgen and Best Veteran went to Gaesten Just Jago at Joydon owned by Mr D Lightfoot.

Throughout the summer there were many more Champ and Open shows and this then brought us to the LRCGB Open Show in October which was held at Staffordshire Showground and held in conjunction with Midland Counties Champ Show. It's always a lovely day when you get two shows on the same day! Our judge was Eileen Hughes (Sonnenberg) who gave Best in Show and Best Veteran to Gaesten Zippy Zingo at Nelbekio ShCM RL4 owned by Miss J Nelson and Reserve Best in Show and Best Puppy went to Dario Della Caveja owned by Mrs L Ferguson (*a photo of BIS and RBIS with Eileen Hughes is shown on the right*).



Many people I know are now already thinking about Crufts 2020 and clipping and preparing their dogs. Please come along and watch us at Crufts or any other show, especially if you are thinking of showing your dog(s) and would like to learn more – please feel free to contact any of the Committee if you would like more information.

We are already planning our show for June next year and information will be available shortly. It's always fantastic to see so many people there with their dogs so please come along and enter – it's just a fun day out and you may go home with a rosette!

**Mandy**

**Extra Information:**  
The two titles quoted after the dog's name in the above article stand for:  
ShCM Show Certificate of Merit  
RL4 Rally Level 4

# A Trip to the Club Italiano Lagotto's Raduno Bagno di Romagna, Italy - October 2019

By Rebecca DeBlasi

When I tell non Lagotto people that I'm taking a week off to go to Italy the response is usually 'How lovely, where are you going?' When I answer 'To a dog show' you quickly see the expression change from 'How lovely' to 'Are you mad?' Quite often they say 'Oh I thought you were going on holiday' but for me what could make a better holiday than Lagotto, Italian food, like minded company and beautiful scenery?

The Raduno isn't just any dog show. Put on by the Club Italiano Lagotto (CIL) it is simply THE biggest Lagotto show of the year. To put it into context, at Crufts this year there were 72 Lagotto entered. At this year's Raduno there were 216. Held in October and spread over three days, showing Friday and Saturday and then a working trial on the Sunday, it's a full-on weekend.



There are so many reasons to want to go. It is a great opportunity to see how the breed is developing around the world as entries come from all over the globe. For those of us that show and breed in Britain, it is fantastic to see how our dogs compare, particularly to the Italian dogs. To be judged in that situation by breed specialists gives you a good indication of strengths and weaknesses. All dogs that are shown are given a grading and a critique so even if you don't get a place there is still feedback for every dog. As well as the showing and working there are opportunities to learn. Much can be learnt from watching the

judging and this year the CIL put on lectures on grooming, colour genetics and nutrition. Last but not least there is the opportunity to socialise, meeting people from all over the world who share our passion for Lagotto, and who doesn't enjoy Italian food!

Planning for the Raduno begins early on and the first thing to do is find out who else is coming! This year we had a strong LRCGB contingent with a team of 10 people travelling with 9 dogs showing. The Messenger group was set up in April for us to make plans. Dog friendly accommodation in Bagno Di Romagna, where the Raduno is held, gets booked up quickly as people from all over the world descend on the town with their Lagotto in tow. By the end of April we had our accommodation booked and early plans for travel in place, including passports for dogs and people. With all of the early organising done it was then a case of waiting for autumn to come around, with lots of Lagotto fun to do over summer the time flew by.

Over the years we've done the journey various ways. I'm fortunate enough to not be too far from Folkestone, so door to door the trip is approximately 980 miles and travelling via Switzerland, it works out at roughly 8-9hrs driving a day. We split the driving over two days with an overnight stop in France. It's easy to find a pet friendly hotel and we picked Colmar as our stop point. It is definitely worth driving via Switzerland and past Lake Como for three reasons:

- 1) It works out cheaper to buy a Swiss Vignette than to stay on the French toll roads and go via the Mont Blanc Tunnel
- 2) The scenery in Switzerland and Lake Como is absolutely stunning
- 3) Switzerland has the best motorway services in the world! (Seriously they are amazing!).



It is a long time on the road for people and dogs, however we leave early so we can make frequent stops for walks and refreshments, and I think we had probably packed enough 'road snacks' to feed ourselves for a month! After 2 days of driving we arrived in Bagno on the Thursday evening and settled in to the beautiful farmhouse apartment in the hills that would be our base for the next few nights. It had stunning views and was so peaceful, absolutely perfect for the dogs. The other apartments were let out to some of our fellow LRCGB travellers so it was like our very own base camp!

After a good night's sleep it was time to head to the show early Friday morning. This year it was the first time I was taking dogs to show at the Raduno since my first Raduno experience in 2011. Having only watched for the last couple of years I was excited to be taking part. Although classes weren't starting until 10am parking can be tight and we wanted to be sure of a good spot.



*Each of the UK dogs shown over the two days*

The first day is for puppies and veterans. The class age limits are slightly different to home, meaning Friday's classes were 'Cuccioli' (4-6months) Juniores (6-9months) and Veterani (Over 8yrs) all being judged by Katrien Van Gemert.

Team LRCGB had two dogs showing. First in the ring for us was Julie Nelson and her own Gaesten Zippy Zingo at Nelbekio (Ricco) in the Veteran Dog class. Ricco was graded 'excellent' which is the highest grade given. Next up was myself with my

youngest dog, Marleydown Dimensional Dot at Mianatra (Winnie) entered in the Cuccioli Femmine class. At home puppies can only enter the ring at 6months so at 5½ months old this was Winnie's first ever show. It was a big class but her concentration held and she was graded 'Very Promising' which is the highest grade for a puppy. I was thrilled with how she coped with the occasion.

With our showing done for the day we enjoyed watching the other dogs and listening to the talks put on in the afternoon. The CIL are very keen to safeguard the natural and rustic presentation of the breed so the grooming talk was particularly interesting. After a good walk for the dogs and a lovely meal at a local restaurant we head 'home' to recharge for Saturday.

Saturday is the main day of the show with two rings running simultaneously. In the first ring Serena Bernardi was judging males and in the second ring Sergio Scarpellini was judging females. Those of you that show Lagotto in the UK would probably agree with me in saying that somewhere around 8-10 Lagotto could be considered a large entry for a class. On Saturday at the Raduno the smallest class was 14 and the largest 27!

Showing today in the dog classes we had Julie Nelson with Il Granaio dei Malatesta Richard at Nelbekio (Gio) in Giovanni (9-18months) Mandy with her, Julie's and Louise Ferguson's Mizani Dioro over Savio (Savvy) in Open Dog. In the bitch classes we had May Bransby with Mikette Million Dreams (Margot) in Intermediate (15-24 months) and Nelbekio Be it Bambilina (Peggy) in a huge Open Bitch class, joining her in this Open Bitch class was Jeff Monk with Mizani Diorbe of Vienna (Sybil). I was



also showing two bitches, Mark Light's Moonreed Bella (Missy), and my own Mianatra Definitely Daisy (Daisy). We were in for a busy day!

After a long day's showing we were all thrilled with our results. All of the British dogs put in great performances to all be graded 'Excellent'. As well as all dogs getting top grading Peggy was selected in the final cut of 8 dogs in her Open class and Missy was selected in the final cut of 6 in her Intermediate class. Throughout the day dogs are also put forward by the judges to be considered for the special awards of 'Best Head', 'Best Coat' and



'Best Movement and Construction'. Sybil had been put forward for her head and coat and Missy for her coat.

After watching the top honours being awarded, Best in Show to a stunning Italian dog called Bruno, the showing part was over for another year. We headed off to another fantastic local restaurant to celebrate our day.

Sunday was another early start as we headed off to yet another stunning location for the Working Test where dogs are tested on their truffle finding ability. There are 3 classes; Not For Competition which is a class for young dogs and beginners to have a go, Junior and Open. With 117 entries the Junior and Open classes were split into several groups. Each dog is given a search area and 10 minutes to find truffles which have been planted in the run up to the trial. As well as being marked on their finds the dogs are also judged on their method and each dog is given a critique. Julie had

entered Ricco in the Open class which was a great experience for her.



*Our group after Julie's Truffling Test (unfortunately missing Lyn, Jeff and May)*

Once the truffling is over a large number of people head back to the show venue for the famous club lunch. A four course meal, plenty of wine and a great atmosphere. At the end of the meal awards were given out for the Working Test and also for the dog most successful in the show and working combined. To celebrate the true international nature of the weekend the Italian Chairman invited a representative from every country that had been involved in the Raduno to stand up and receive a token of appreciation for travelling to take part.



As well as ourselves from Great Britain there were people from all over Europe as well as America and Canada. Be sure to look out for our CIL milk jug at LRCGB events!

With full stomachs there was just time to give the dogs another well earned walk, then a quick trip into Bagno for one last gelato before heading back to the farmhouse for our last night. On Monday morning we were up early to start the long journey home. It was all so worthwhile and plans are already under way for next year! If anyone is free in October it's well worth considering the Raduno as an alternative holiday. Even if you don't fancy the drive with dogs it's a great trip to fly out and come as a spectator.

**Rebecca DeBlasi**

## UK Show Dogs in Europe



Over the past few years a group of us has visited both European Dog Shows and also any World Dog Shows that have taken place in Europe. This year, in addition to visiting Italy for the Club Italiano Lagotto October's Raduno, a group of LRCGB members (5 members with 5 dogs) went to Wels in Austria for the European Dog Show and Austrian Winner Show in June.

If anyone is interested in showing abroad, or coming along to learn or enjoy the atmosphere, just let us know – we don't always take our dogs (it is sometimes nice to observe); some people drive out with their dogs, others prefer to fly out and join the group as spectators.

In 2020 the prestigious World Dog Show is taking place in Madrid – with world renowned breed specialist Giovanni Morsiani judging Lagotto – a spread of 3 days of showing including the European Dog Show. Travel and accommodation plans have started – if anyone would like to join us for any part of the visit, you'd be very welcome.

Sybil, Mizani Diorbe of Vienna, celebrates her win in the Open Bitch Class and CACA at the Austrian Winner Show in Wels, Austria (June 2019). More usually seen in Gundog mode, Sybil astonished her supporters by winning at her first overseas show. Her owners Lyn and Jeff Monk had travelled to Austria in the hope of finding a suitable mate for Sybil. They followed this success with a visit to the Raduno in Italy in October where Sybil was graded Excellent and shortlisted for Best Head and Best Coat.

Lyn reports that they have now been well and truly bitten by the 'Showing Abroad' bug and plan to compete at the World Dog Show in Madrid as well as the Swiss Lagotto Club Anniversary Show and the CIL Raduno in Italy in 2020. They have also identified a short list of potential stud dogs.



## Our Journey: Diabetes ... and Alert Dogs By Carly Emms



On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 our world was turned upside down when our 8 year old daughter Madeleine was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Once we had got over the initial shock of the diagnosis, the reality of living with diabetes soon became our everyday normality.

With Type 1 diabetes, the body attacks the insulin producing cells in the pancreas so that it cannot produce the insulin needed to convert sugar/carbohydrates. Insulin therefore needs to be given by injection or by a pump infusion, and blood glucose then also needs to be monitored 'manually' to ensure that levels keep within an acceptable range.

Hypoglycaemia is when the sugar levels in the blood drop too low and can result in the person acting as if they were drunk, collapsing and if not treated going into a coma. Hyperglycaemia is when the sugar levels are too high, and in Maddie's case can result in mood swings, becoming very emotional. Occasional lows and highs are inevitable but if sugar levels are continually or repetitively high and not corrected, cellular damage can occur over time. This is the real danger zone, as the damage done at cellular level is to internal organs, eyes and limbs, and that damage will not be known for many years in the future.

To control the Hypos and Hypers Maddie needs to keep her blood sugar levels between 4-7, below 4 and she is Hypo and above 7 she is Hyper. The

only way to control this is to regularly check her blood sugar levels by finger prick testing with a glucose monitor, and then treating any lows with sugar and any highs with insulin. This is not as straightforward as it sounds!

Maddie normally pricks her fingers at least 10 times a day, injecting insulin every time she eats or goes high! That's a lot of sore fingers and injection sites!

And then there are the nights. Maddie can feel when she goes into a Hypo when she's awake, but this obviously doesn't not happen at night. So this has resulted in me getting up and checking her at least twice a night and I am sure you can imagine how that starts to catch up with you over time. It is not just the effect of interrupted sleep, but the worry you feel at night. If she has had a bad day, going to sleep for both of us at night can be a scary thing.

And this is where the wondrous creature that is the Diabetic Alert Dog comes in.

Manual blood glucose readings or glucose monitors only give a reading at the time of the test or intermittently, although some do show a fall or rise there is a slight delay. Often changes are only detected when the person starts feeling the results of their blood sugar being out of range. Dogs however can smell the changes in blood glucose 20 minutes, yes 20 minutes, before it hits the bloodstream and affects the person with diabetes!!

So Diabetic Alert Dogs do this amazing job! They are trained to alert to these two different scents, hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia. When they smell either they then alert either the diabetic, or in the case of children, both the child and/or the parent. This is in effect an early warning system to prevent the person actually going into a Hypo or Hyper.

Now, add this amazing advantage you have into your daily life living with diabetes and the impact can be massive. Now you are ahead of the game for the first time, and can treat preventively rather than always reactively.

The trained dog can reduce, if not eliminate, hospital admissions for Hypos, which can be very scary affairs, and for the first time give the child a sense of control and independence. They don't need to have a worried parent hovering over their shoulder repeatedly asking "Have you checked your sugars?" And the dog can also pick up the scent from another room, across a playing field and from the side of a swimming pool!

The most amazing gift that these dogs can give though is a night of peaceful sleep, knowing that if your child goes Hypo in the night the dog will smell it in their sleep, wake and alert you.

And this is where our story begins with Diabetic Alert Dogs.

Before Maddie was diagnosed we had a cracking Lagotto called Stacey. Maddie did so much with that little girl (aka the witch!!), showed her at Crufts, competing in Canicross (she ran in the demo in the main arena at Crufts) and agility. She came camping with us, out on the bikes and paddle boarding.



*Maddie with Stacey*

When Maddie was diagnosed, I soon started researching Diabetic Alert Dogs. Although Stacey was too old to be officially trained up as a medical alert dog (she had just turned 3) the Lagotto breed ticked all the boxes. So we decided to train her to alert at night as this was really the main time we would need her.

Then two months after Maddie was diagnosed, Stacey died suddenly of cancer. We were devastated, none more so than Maddie.

It was about this time that I had made contact with a wonderful charity, Hypo Hounds. This charity helps you train your own fully qualified medical alert dog. To put this into context, it is an approximately two year wait for a dog from the Medical Detection Dogs scheme, and you have to raise a very large amount of money. And as Maddie has Hypo awareness (she can feel the Hypos when awake) she did not actually qualify for one. The difference with Hypo Hounds is that they work with your dog, and you raise money that goes towards your training.

After researching the role I knew that the Lagotto was the perfect breed for the job, they needed to be alert, social, willing to work, able to work on a scent, it was like reading a description of the Lagotto breed!

Of course, nobody at Hypo Hounds had heard of a Lagotto, let alone worked with one so they were very curious as to what I was going to turn up with!

The search then began for the puppy, The Lagotto Club of GB whom I was a member of was great, putting me in touch with three litters that were born in the beginning of 2018 a week apart from each other! We visited two litters and after a lot of help and advice from the club, we made the really difficult choice of picking our new girl.

Picking this dog was the hardest thing I've ever done, I was picking a dog that ultimately could save my child's life! It is said that moving house and getting married are the most stressful thing you will ever do. After doing both of those, they had nothing on picking this pup!!

One of the things that made this choice so hard was all the pups were so good, knowing what I know now I honestly think that any of them would have made great alert dogs!

The new pup, named Tracey, proved to be a typical Lagotto puppy, you all know what I'm talking about here. On our first visit to the

Hypo Hounds office/training centre to say that they were all intrigued by Tracey was an understatement. We went out for her first public assessment training session and she took it all in her stride, including the first time in a church, supermarket and general shops. I must admit I was slightly nervous when we had to walk past freshly baked bread in striking distance a Lagotto nose! But she wasn't fazed and didn't even attempt to steal any food!

The next session was to begin the scent work, which proved slightly problematic for the trainers. They normally work with working labs and spaniels, so their training methods were based on a dog that would normally enter the scent training room and just start smelling everything in sight, but not the Lagotto. We walked in, she sat by my side and looked at me as if to say "well tell me what to do then?" This resulted in the trainers having to devise a new way of getting her to work, but once they cracked it she was up and running.



*Scent Training Session at Hypo Hounds*

By the end of our first training session there was a lot of muttering from the trainers around what a cracking little dog this funny Lagotto thing was.

She has since passed her first public assessment. So now I can take her out in her training jacket and continue that side of her training, and the scent work is really progressing. We think she may have alerted twice now, she woke Maddie in the early hours one morning and

when she checked, she was Hypo; and again on another morning when she was Hyper.

We probably have had to take the training slightly slower than the more traditional breeds as Tracey can revert to using her brain rather than her nose, which the trainers think is rather cunning!!

Once (fingers crossed) Tracey is qualified she will have to be neutered as by law all registered assistance dogs have to be. This is a real shame as it limits the breeding from dogs that possess the skills required in a Diabetic Alert Dog. Looking to the future I hope to get another Lagotto bitch that I would love to breed from myself, with the intention of looking for the next generation of alert dog, if not for Maddie then to be donated to another child that needs this amazing gift.



*Maddie and Tracey featuring in Hypo Hounds promotional/advertisement shoot*

Hypo Hounds is a charity that does not receive any funding for the lifesaving work that they do. If anyone would like any information about Diabetic Alert Dogs or how they could help/support the Hypo Hounds charity then please get in touch.

**Carly Emms**

# TOP TIPS FOR BATHING YOUR LAGOTTO

By Louise Ferguson



1. Safety for you and your dog is the first consideration. Whether you wash your dog in the family bath, a large sink, a shower, under the garden hose or in a professional groomers dog bath, you must ensure that you and the dog are not in danger of slipping or falling. Most dogs, including water dogs, do not enjoy being bathed so it is likely you will end up wrestling with a slippery, wet and resistant Lagotto! You will need both of your hands free so put your dog on a lead and tie it to something secure such as the bath taps or a purposely fitted ring. It's a good idea to use a rubber bathmat and spread towels on the floor to absorb any water spillage. Make sure that you have everything you are likely to need in easy reach. Once you put your dog in the bath you must not leave it unattended to nip off and get something.
2. Reduce the chances of your dog having a good shake. Dogs tend to shake when their head and ears get wet so a good way to limit this is to wash and rinse the body before applying any water to the head. If you place a hand on the top of its head once the head is wet this will discourage the dog from shaking. I suggest you wear waterproof clothing because, despite the precautions I have described, the likelihood is that you are going to get drenched!
3. Frequency of bathing: People are always asking me how often they should bath their Lagotto. There is no clear answer to this but they will come to no harm if bathed very rarely. Most Lagotto, however, have the rather unpleasant habit of rolling in fox poo, or similar, and none of us like living with the aroma of "Eau de Fox". If this is a frequent occurrence with your dog please don't feel you have to do a full bath each time, just wash the soiled area. Overuse of shampoo or detergent will remove the natural oils in the dogs' coat and could cause irritation and skin problems.
4. Type of shampoo: There is a huge range of dog shampoos and conditioners on the market, I use professional brands such as Groomers or The Animal Health Company and buy in quantity. Although I don't have experience of other brands on the market nor have I used fairy liquid, I don't doubt that they all work perfectly well. The detergent in washing up liquid would certainly help break up the grease found in fox poo, Tomato ketchup is also a very effective aid to removing any unpleasant smells left by excrement and it is a cheap and found readily in most kitchens. A word of warning, if you have a puppy or have a dog with a skin condition or allergies, ONLY use a mild puppy specific shampoo or one that has been prescribed by your vet and stick to the recommend dilution.

5. Comb through the coat. If you are wanting to maintain a good healthy and manageable coat, particularly if you show your Lagotto, it should be combed through every 2-3 weeks. It is particularly important if you have a dog with a good quality coat or a young dog that is going through the transition from puppy to adult coat, between the ages of 7 and 18 months. A great opportunity to do this is after a bath when your dog is clean and damp. You can use a dog conditioner or if you have coconut oil in your kitchen cupboard this is excellent for conditioning the coat and easing the removal of small matts. In my grooming room I spray an equestrian product called Mane and Tail detangler into all types of coat and I find it extremely helpful. Use a metal comb rather than a brush and, in the areas where the coat is knotted in particular, hold the base of the hair with finger and thumb to minimise the tug on the thin Lagotto skin. If the coat has got to the stage where it is felted the removal of matting will cause your dog too much discomfort so the only option in this case is to clip the coat off.
6. Wet clipping: A fully felted coat will clip off easily if it is still wet after a bath and shampoo. The blades will slide under the felting more readily and this technique will enable you to leave a little bit more length of coat than if you are clipping a dry, heavily matted coat.
7. Drying the dog: If you blow dry your Lagotto it will straighten the coat so simply towel dry and leave the coat to dry naturally. You can get absorbent coats to put on your dog to speed up the drying process if you so wish.
8. Checklist of what you need close at hand:

- Collar and lead
- Shower head or plastic jug for dowsing your dog
- A flannel
- Shampoo
- Conditioner (optional)
- Tomato Ketchup (if needed)
- A metal comb
- Plenty of old towels
- Waterproof apron or coat
- Grooming table for combing through (optional)

**Good luck!**

**Louise**





# The Lagotto Romagnolo Club of Great Britain

Founded 1996  
President: Sig. Gilberto Grandi  
Proud to be the Club that pioneered the Lagotto Romagnolo outside of Italy



## OUR CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Below is a list of events from our annual calendar. Please keep an eye on our Website/Facebook pages for new/additional events, extra information on existing events or any unavoidable changes. If in doubt, please ask! We look forward to seeing you during the year...

### 2020

Sunday, 9 February	<b><u>Gundog Training for Puppies/Beginners</u></b> – Lindford, Hampshire. Followed by <b><u>Informal Introduction to Truffling</u></b>
Saturday, 15 February	<b><u>Scentswork Workshop</u></b> – Tarporley, Cheshire. Training by Scentswork UK. Pre-booking and pre-payment required
Sunday, 23 February	<b><u>Breed Appreciation Day</u></b> – Kingston Blount, Oxfordshire. Breed Speaker: Gael Stenton
Thursday-Sunday 5-8 March	<b><u>Crufts – NEC, Birmingham</u></b> - See Lagotto Romagnolo in the show ring for breed judging on Gundog Day, Friday, 6 March <b><u>Discover Dogs</u></b> - Come and visit us on the Discover Dogs stand over the four days at Crufts
Saturday, 21 March	<b><u>Gundog Training Day for Novice Dogs</u></b> – Hook, Hampshire (open to other minor breed Spaniels) – in preparation for the April Working Assessment. Dogs need to demonstrate sit, stay, recall and walk to heel on a lead
Sunday 29 March	<b><u>Annual General Meeting</u></b> (for paid up Members only) – Kingston Blount, Oxfordshire
Sunday, 5 April	<b><u>LRCGB hosted Gundog Working Assessment</u></b> (open to other minor breed Spaniels) – Details tbc
Sunday, 3 May	<b><u>Lagotto Walk</u></b> – Peak District – details tbc
Sunday, 10 May	<b><u>Lagotto Walk</u></b> – Petworth Park, West Sussex. For Lagotto with their owners (prospective owners welcome)
Saturday, 6 June	<b><u>Lagotto Walk</u></b> – Formby Point Beach, Merseyside. For Lagotto with their owners (prospective owners welcome)
Sunday 14-June	<b><u>LRCGB KC Open Single Breed Show / KC Companion Show</u></b> – Kingston Blount, Oxfordshire
Saturday 20 June	<b><u>Agility and Hoopers Training Day</u></b> – Middlewich, Cheshire
Sunday 19 July	<b><u>Family Fun Day</u></b> – Trottiscliffe, Kent. Come to meet Lagotto, reunion for Lagotto owners, fun classes for all the family, merchandise on show/available
Sunday, 30 August	<b><u>LRCGB hosted Gundog Working Test</u></b> (open to other minor breed Spaniels) - Details tbc
Saturday / Sunday 19 & 20 September	<b><u>KC Rally Weekend</u></b> (Open to all breeds) – Daventry, Northamptonshire
Saturday 19 September	<b><u>KC Obreedience</u></b> - The Club is also hosting an Obreedience heat on Saturday, 19 September
Saturday / Sunday 17 & 18 October	<b><u>Discover Dogs</u></b> - ExCel, London. Come and visit us and our Lagotto during this t2-day event, or help to man our stand with your Lagotto
Saturday 24 October	<b><u>LRCGB KC Open Single Breed Show</u></b> – Stafford (in conjunction with Midland Counties Show)
Saturday 31 October / Sunday 1 November	<b><u>Truffling Experience</u></b> – Midlands. Workshop by Denise Stalder from Switzerland who runs courses worldwide and is co-author of 'Lagotto Romagnolo & Trüffel'
Date TBC October/November	<b><u>Lagotto Walk</u></b> – Studland Bay, Dorset. For Lagotto with their owners (prospective owners welcome)

**OTHER EVENTS (to be scheduled) – keep an eye on our Website and Facebook pages for updates**

#### **Additional Gundog Training Days**

Visit/man our Club stand at Game Fairs around the UK during the year (dates will appear on our Website)  
If anyone would like to host a Lagotto Walk around the country, please let us know – suggestions welcome 😊