
THE CFTC NEWS

JUNE 2017 | NEWSLETTER | 25 YEARS



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FROM THE CHAIR

BY JORISNA BONTHUYS

Dear Members

This year marks a special year for the Cape Field Trial Club – we celebrate its 25th birthday!

Our Club has a proud history that should be celebrated. It is a great achievement that we have managed to survive through thick and thin in reaching this milestone. But now is also the time that we should probably be blowing the stop whistle and think about the direction we are taking in 2017 and beyond.

Currently, we are under-resourced, membership is dwindling, and too many members are not pulling their weight. Access to venues are becoming a major issue, and the cost of game is rising. There is also the small matter of dealing with the game in the absence of a gamekeeper.

For a Club to work for its members, its members must work for the Club. It is imperative that we get new club members and the committee has already made an effort in this direction. We have put out feelers for new venues and have already been to new places. We are trying out new strategies and need your support.

Luckily, fierce passion for gundogs and this crazy, frustrating, wonderful sport of ours is the currency that will keep this Club going. I believe we have the passion and the determination to catapult our Club into the next 25 years of its existence.

The more everyone pulls their weight, the more opportunities we can create for you and your dog(s).

With the 25th anniversary of our field trials coming up I am hoping we have a great event this coming September. We are looking forward to making this a memorable one.

Many thanks to the new committee who has hit

the ground running. A special word of thanks also to Dale (Fabian) and the previous committee for all their support in getting us going.

Good trialling to all in 2017!

Jorisna Bonthuys
CFTC Chairperson



YOUR COMMITTEE

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LETTER FROM BILL

BY BILL CLIFFORD

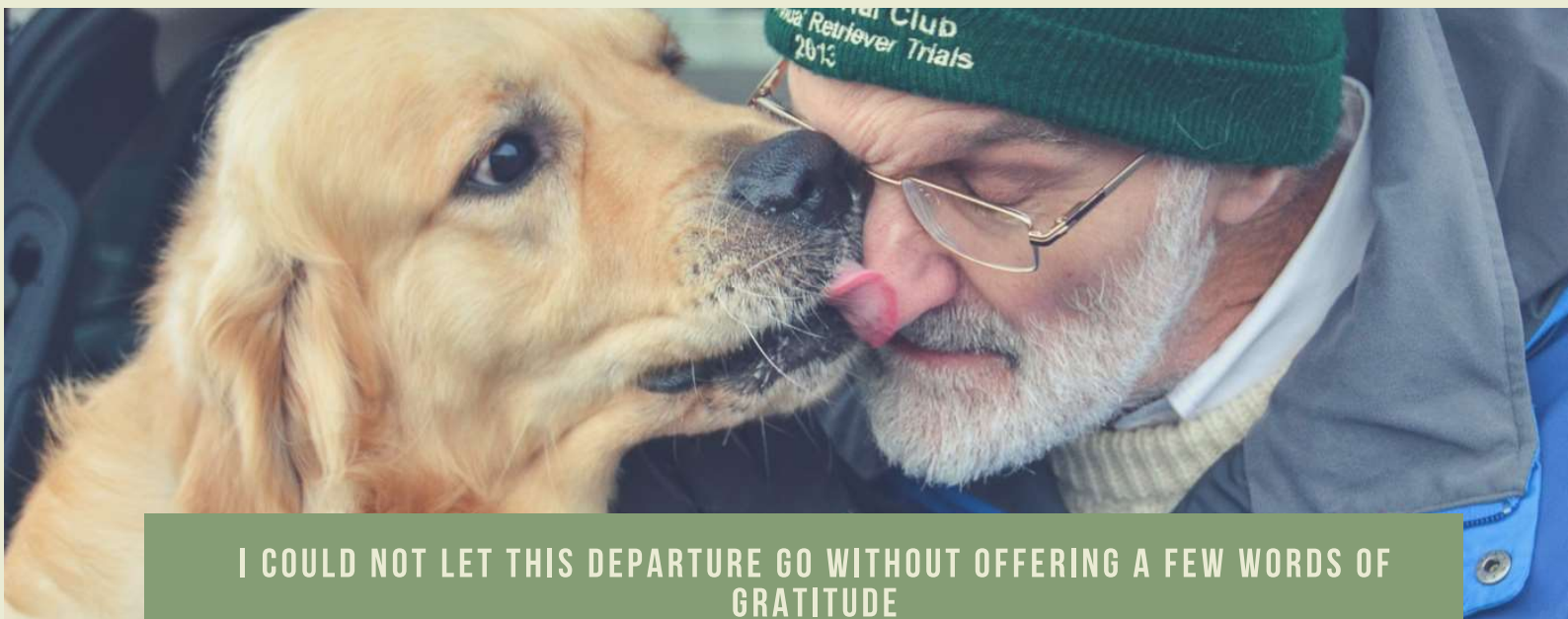
This year, on the occasion of the Club's 25th Annual General Meeting, three members of the committee, Dale, Irene and Annerie, are standing down and not offering themselves for re-election.

I could not let this departure go without offering a few words of gratitude to all three for the contributions they have made, not just to the committee but also to the Club as a whole, over very many of those 25 years.

When I took over as Club Chair, quite a while ago now, I very soon became acquainted with the

importance of the Margarine carton – I was new to high finance but I very rapidly realised what an excellent job the carton's handler, Irene, as Club Treasurer was doing. Balancing the books in a club where subscriptions don't always arrive on time, where bar bills aren't always paid (at all in some cases!) and yet food, game and a multitude of other items has to be bought throughout the year, is a job that would tax the most skilled international financier but Irene did it superbly and even came back for more in recent years!

Irene's previous departure as Treasurer a few years ago allowed Dale to step into the role and she also displayed amazing talent at financial control, this time without the Flora box, as we tiptoed into the era of online banking. Subsequently Dale took over the role of Chair and doubled up as keeper of the



I COULD NOT LET THIS DEPARTURE GO WITHOUT OFFERING A FEW WORDS OF GRATITUDE

game – neither role being at all easy, I recall. During this period the Club has gone from strength to strength and I am sure you will all agree that Dale's contribution to that success has been exemplary, not just as Chair but also as a very active member – and I have heard that she breeds a decent Lab too!

Annerie is listed as an “official” on the committee. To some that might seem not quite as grand as being Chair or Treasurer, or even Secretary, but to my mind it ranks every bit as highly. It says Annerie is one of those vital people who “does things”, who steps up and volunteers and achieves success in our events, often without the recognition that is deserved. Believe me; the existence of “officials” on the committee makes the job, as ex-Chair, as Vice President, and as just plain “Bill”, I want to recognise the contributions made over many years by Dale, Irene and Annerie and offer my warmest thanks for everything they have done to keep the Cape Field Trial Club successful, solvent and superb.

As we say up here in the Highlands of Scotland – Slàinte (pronounced Slan –Cha) – or good health to you all.

DB'S CORNER

BY DALE FABIAN



*Ch Bardale Storm Lantern FQ NHR (Melissa) – Kusa
National Labrador 1998*

BARDALE LABRADORS 1978 - 2016

I don't have enough news to fill two A4 pages but maybe a little more about my Labradors might be of some interest.

After 38 years in the breed it is quite difficult to write something spanning that time period. What were the highlights? It is easy to brag until one realizes that whatever you have achieved is all built on the shoulders of others. They have given you the solid foundation with their knowledge of breeding and research. A lot of luck goes into wins as well as a lot of hard work. However even the bad times and mistakes go towards breeding, showing and trialling the good ones. Yes, one tries to breed a three generation line, which is a great achievement and sometimes one must also buy in especially in this country as our gene pool of top Labradors is very small.

However some people decry those who buy in good ones. I am reminded of the words of Mary Roslin-Williams (Mansergh) when she wrote in “Advanced Labrador Breeding” – “I have found throughout the ages that buyers are usually rather despised by the breeder. They say with a sneer when their dog is beaten: ‘But he is a buyer. He doesn't breed his own’. I can tell them from experience that a buyer who can keep at the top has to have a very good eye for a dog and not only that but has to be a better judge than the breeder who only offers his second best to the buyer. If the breeder is right, then this is no use to the buyer who wants a top-class animal with which to win, therefore he has to be able to spot the good ones.”

I have had many beautiful champions over the years and some with FQ's and Sahr titles. Also many of them received their CGC awards. Others would have got their field qualifying certificates but lack of time and money got in the way.

My first dogs came from Rose-Marie Cabion of Sleepy Hollow Labradors. Without her constant encouragement I would not be where I am today. I remember showing my first dog from her: Ch. Sleepy Hollow Stormer FQ (Sacha). When he was two years old he looked like a pavement special. If there were five dogs in a class he would stand 5th. We were always last. I told her that I should give up as I was always last and wasting my time. She told me he would come into his own and to keep trying and sure enough at 3 years old he started to beat all the rest. And that is now history. He had the most fantastic reach of neck and shoulders which enabled him to pick up a bird on the run without stopping. A swoop was all it took.

Champion Sleepy Hollow Sweettalk of Bardale FQ (Charmer) was the most exquisite bitch winning under UK specialist Kay Holmes in the company of 7 other champions. She was not flashy but everything was just perfect when you looked at her properly. This was told to me by many judges.

Ch. Bardale Little Storm FQ (Rachel) was also one of those exquisite bitches. Winning Best Puppy in Show and 2nd Best In Show Puppy the next day at All-Breeds shows. She won under many UK breed specialists and also was BIS at CGC Championship show. At the age of 10 she won the CC under UK All- Breeds judge Liz Cartledge, who said of her that she had the best movement she had ever seen in a Labrador. Praise indeed. Many other champions followed.

Ch Bardale Rebecca Brown (Rebecca) was also one of my girls with the sweetest of natures



Another joy to own was Ch Inyoni Memories of Bardale (Lillah).



In the last few years doing everything alone and a lot more for field trials there has not been the time to put enough work into my dogs and to showing. I enjoy judging different groups at Show Championship level and also as a Best-In-Show judge. Add being a Senior A Panel judge for Field Trials and a lot is drawn from one's energy.



Now a little star has descended on the Bardale kennels and that is Bardale Parisienne (Paris) who has been doing so well this year. Winning the Gundog Group Puppy and 2nd In Gundog Group over one weekend in June Championship shows was a nice surprise. Best Puppy in Show at KA Open show and three Best Labrador Puppy wins at the October shows with three RCC's in the company of many good dogs. Paris qualified for W.C. Top Dog puppy.

Then we come to my field trial dogs. What a joy they are. How totally different to the show dog - Highly athletic and immensely biddable! If bred right there is not much you need to train as they just do it. What a moment of truth when you realize how much thought has gone into breeding them right. In the same way a show dog is bred to have beautiful feet and head, strong bone, correct otter tail and harsh outer coat, so has the working dog been meticulously bred to game-find, to deliver to hand, to be very easy to train and to jump over high obstacles with ease. What a privilege for me to have judged a working test in England with John Birkett and Sam Seale, to attend the UK Championships with Lynne Minchella as well as a Grouse Field Trial on the Yorkshire Moors and a Partridge Trial In Lancashire with the Halsteads of Drakeshead kennels. A real learning curve!

Derek Brown approached me with regard to getting good dogs from overseas with strong working abilities. In came Ft Ch. Abbeystead Into Africa at Bardale GMHR (aka Trooper) - A little dog with a big heart. All thanks to Lynne Minchella. His championship title was achieved by Derek, but his breeding is in all my field trial dogs.



Delta (Abbeystead Frolic at Bardale). A real character, with lines going back to Ft Ch Willowyck Ruff (Winner of the UK Championships) she has great potential.

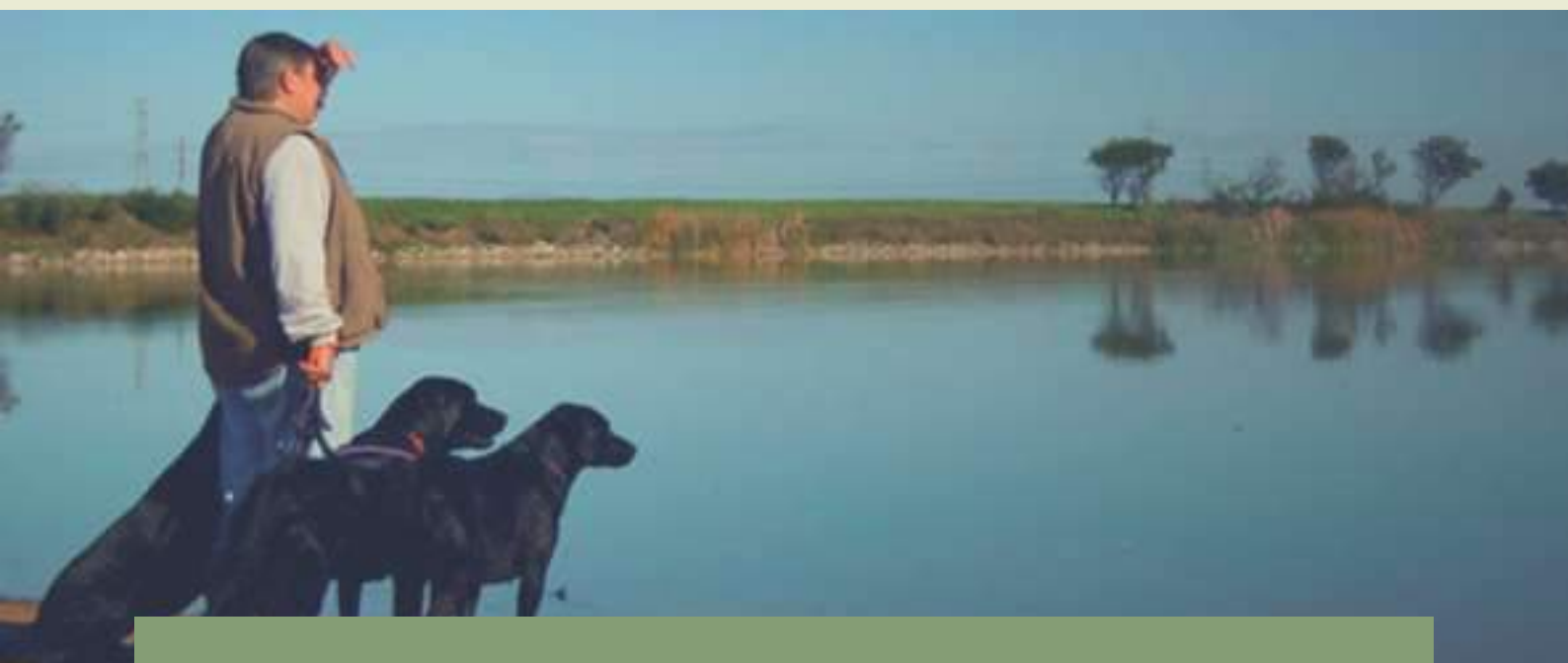
Maybe before my time runs out I will be able to put some training into the young dogs I have now at home. Only by going on proper bird hunting days can you appreciate what is needed in a working dog. Working my dogs when I had the energy to walk and hunt all day in Velddrift and Greyton areas with my dogs picking up for tourist hunts changes your outlook entirely. I sometimes think my breeding plans are pure luck, but I am glad that many people have great joy from their Bardale puppies. Sometimes things go wrong, but that is just to keep one humble. I am extremely indebted to the foresight of Derek and Rose-Marie and their support.

My future plans - To train my dogs!!

Ft. Ch Tasco Saxon (Sniper) and Pocklea Robb (Recce) (all UK bred from top kennels) have come together in my latest pups that have done so well for other people in trials culminating in the breeding of Jazz, Tess (*Bardale DB's Triumph of Walkabout FTA MHR*) and Cougar (*FT Ch. Bardale DB's Best Friend GMHR*) Cougar now 8 years old, won the bi-annual Field Trial Championships twice - a great achievement by Boris Vosgatter in the company of strong competition.

Another field trial highlight was Bardale Pillowtalk FQ FTA. (11 show CC's) Unable to travel much to shows Rhiannon never got an away CC hence not a show champion. However, she did win an Open Stake and qualified for the Championships, but life cast a shadow and she died two weeks before the Championships from pyometra.

One of my great dogs was Hunter (Bardale Beat About The Bush WHR FTA) He was a fox-red imported from Balrion kennels of Glenda Crook. To keep the field trial side running I imported



I AM GLAD THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE GREAT JOY FROM THEIR BARDALE PUPPIES

THE BEST OF THE BEST

GRAHAM COX AND DR GARETH DAVIES;
PUBLISHED BY PERNICE PRESS

A Review of the British International Gundog League Retriever Championship

Introduction

Whatever the form of sporting endeavour, there is almost invariably one event that establishes the pinnacle of achievement, be it for team, individual or animal related activities. Such a premier event confers the ultimate accolade for excellence on the winner – ‘the best of the best’.

Our Victorian forefathers instigated field trials in Great Britain as a form of competition to determine the relative merits of the different

Published in 2013, ‘The Best of the Best’, a History of the IGL Retriever Championship 1909 to 2011, researched and compiled by Graham Cox and Dr Gareth Davies gives an extraordinary account from the humble beginnings of the IGL through its centenary year up to 2011. Detailed research and analysis from inception provides some fascinating and revealing insight to the competitive record and patterns of excellence over the various periods, making the book an essential reference for anyone interested in working retrievers and breeding in particular.

The International Gundog League (IGL)

The IGL was founded in 1895 by William Arkwright along with some early supporters seeking to pursue the interests of pointers and setters which included the running of field trials. Amalgamation with the Sporting Spaniel Club came in 1899 and the following year saw the addition of The Retriever Society which became the third arm of the IGL.

There was some doubt as to the viability and benefits of Retriever Trials, particularly as Retriever breeds were still relatively new at that



THE DOG AND HANDLERS WHO COMPETED IN THE INAUGURAL IGL RETRIEVER CHAMPIONSHIP (KENNEL CLUB LIBRARY)

gundog breeds performing in their natural hunting environment. On the 9th of January 1909, a group of competitors with eight dogs assembled at Little Green, Compton near Havant in Hampshire in what was accepted as the first ‘Retriever Championship’ hosted by the Retriever Society of the IGL. The entry consisted of five Labradors, two Flatcoats and a Lab/Flatcoat cross. From that inaugural event a little over 100 years ago, the IGL Retriever Championship has been run annually with the exception of years lost due to the first and second world wars and then in 1967 due to the ‘foot & mouth’ epidemic that ravaged the UK.

time (Labrador Retrievers were only recognised and approved by the Kennel Club in 1903). The first IGL Retriever Society field trial meeting was held in October 1900 with ten dogs entered on the card, six Wavecoats and four Flatcoats. Entry was £2 and prize money was £20, £10 and £5, serious money in today terms.

Winner of that first IGL event was a liver Wavecoated bitch ‘Rust’ whose son, ‘Don of Gerwn’ was to win the IGL trial four years later. Since the canine authorities of that era used the term ‘liver’ to cover all the sandy colours from yellow to brown, had Don run in the IGL



Mr At Williams' Don of Germn Liver Coloured)

Championship 7 or 8 years later he probably would have been entered on the card as a Golden Retriever!

The 1904 IGL trial was also a landmark event with the first appearance of a Labrador, Hon. A. Holland-Hibbert's 'Munden Single' who was awarded a COM that day. Over the next five years and although very much a 'new' breed, the Labrador's popularity grew rapidly and entries at trials showed a similar increase. Along with the rapid growth of driven gamebird shooting, so the early retriever followers saw field trials "as a means of improving the education of gundogs... beyond recognition" (Charles Alington 1929).

The Retriever Championship

Qualification for the inaugural IGL Retriever Championship was to have a first or second place in any field trial recognised by the society during the previous season. As mentioned above, at the very first IGL Retriever Championship in 1909, five of the eight dogs entered on the card were Labradors. The winner was Dungavel Phoebe, a Lab bitch owned by the Duchess of Hamilton and a daughter of Major Portal's 'Flapper', the first Labrador to win an open stake and to become a FTCh. The IGL Retriever Championship was recognised as the premier field trial event for Retrievers, setting the standards and expectations for competition over the next 100 years and beyond.

The IGL rules require that dogs must qualify each year, including those dogs already made up as FT Champions. So as the numbers of societies and qualifying stakes increased, the IGL has been forced to raise the bar higher and higher in respect of qualification requirements. From the handful of trials run at the beginning of the last century, there were over 100 field trial stakes run in a season during the 1950s and by the end of the century the number had increased to over 700. Currently there are some 85 gundog clubs/societies accredited by the Kennel Club to run qualifying stakes for the IGL Championship.

Current qualifying requirements are a minimum of an A category win (1st place in Open qualifying 2-day stake, (min 20 Dogs)) or 3 x B category (2nd in 2-day stake (min 20 dogs) or 1st in 1-day stake (min 10 dogs)). Due to pressure of increasing

numbers, it is likely that this requirement will be raised even higher. Then there is the venue to consider and the generosity of owners of large commercial shooting estates whose ground must be prepared over a year in advance in order to can guarantee an abundance of both released and wild game for the guns over the three days. Not forgetting the logistics and facilities needed for officials, handlers and a gallery of over 300 people.

Quite simply, the IGL Retriever Championship has evolved to become the premier event of its kind in the world.

The Pattern of Excellence

It is no coincidence that throughout the history of the Championship, certain names come to the fore and it is interesting to note that just 18 handlers have won the IGL on 44 occasions of the 93 IGL Championships run since its inception. Between the wars, Lorna Countess Howe, founder member and successively the secretary, treasurer and chairman of the Labrador Retriever Club, dominated the event with wins in 1926 1928, 1929 and 1936. Her total of 23 Championship awards as an owner (19 as handler) is exceptional, not forgetting she won best in show at Crufts on three occasions.

There are others who hold a similar distinction but it is John Halstead (Snr) who stands supreme with 'FTCh Breeze of Drakeshead' by winning for three successive years from 1985-87 and again in 1992 with FTCh Raughlin Pete of Drakeshead. While Countess Howe and Lady Hill-wood can also claim four wins each, (the latter before and after the 2nd World War), Halstead is the only owner/handler to have won on four occasions. After his third win with Breeze, he was entitled to keep the Glen Kidston cup but he magnanimously handed it back to the IGL committee to remain as the trophy for the best of the best in perpetuity.



John Halstead, FTCh Breeze of Drakeshead

1986 CHAMPIONSHIP - JOHN HALSTEAD, FTCH BREEZE OF DRAKESHEAD AND THE GLEN KIDSTON CUP



The IGL records bring to light a remarkable consistency amongst certain accomplished handlers over the years. Many of the great handlers are also breeders and indeed a significant number could be classified as 'professional' in that breeding and training dogs is how they earn a living. Regardless, their achievements speak for themselves and it is not always about winning the coveted championship.

For example, June Atkinson, founder of the famous Holgate Golden Retriever kennel qualified some 20 different Goldens a total of 34 times and gained 13 awards, winning in 1954. David Garbutt of Pocklea fame qualified on 21 occasions with 13 different dogs and achieved 7 awards including two wins, in 1988 and 1991 respectively. David's most famous and popular black Labrador dog Pocklea Remus was placed 2nd in 1989, 3rd in 1990 and finally won the Glen Kidston trophy in 1991; talk about consistency!

Top handlers of more recent times include people such as Alan Rountree who has qualified on 23 occasions with nine dogs and whose Tasco kennel is known here in South Africa via ChFT Tasco Saxon (Sniper) a yellow dog imported by Derek Brown and Dale Fabian, the winner of the KUSA Retriever Championship in 2004. Tess Lawrence of the well-known Willowyck kennel qualified 21 times with nine dogs and won at Windsor in 2007 with FTCh Willowyck Ruff, sire of Pocklea Rob (Recce) the last dog Derek brought into South Africa. Recce sired the current SA Champion and two-times winner of the KUSA Retriever Championship, ChFT Bardale DB's Best Friend (Cougar) owned and handled by Boris Vossstätter.

But the Halstead family will always hold a unique place in IGL and Labrador history, John (Snr) having qualified dogs 39 times, wife Sandra 29 times and son John Jnr 46 times. John (Jnr) has qualified at least one dog annually since 1992 and has been runner up on five occasions. It took until 2009 for him to win the Glen Kidston Trophy (with FTCh Roberto Rannaldini of Bolton Abbey) but if that was not enough, he also handled the runner up, FTCh Cherwood Ace of Spades. He gained his second Championship win in December last year while handling four other dogs in addition to the winner!



JH Jnr with 2015 winner with FTCh Asterix Aguzannis of Chatsworth

The Dogs

Analysis of Championship records over 100 years offers some fascinating and revealing insight. In terms of Retriever breed it comes as no surprise that the Labrador has dominated in UK Retriever trials and the Championship for over a century as illustrated in table 1 below.

TABLE 1 IGL QUALIFIERS 1909-2011 - BREED AND COLOUR

Period	Black Lab	Yel Lab	Choc Lab	Golden	Flatcoat	X-Breed	Total
1909-1938	260	30		33	25	17	365
1946-1983	698	131		160	9		998
1984-2011	832	206	1	91	2		1132
Total	1790	367	1	284	36	17	2495
%	71.74	14.71	<1	11.38	1.4	<1	

The near absence of chocolate Labradors tells a story, although there are many chocolate labs now working as shooting companions and in picking-up teams across the UK. The gradual increase in yellow Labradors competing and indeed winning the IGL over time has and indeed winning the IGL over time has helped lay to rest the 'old school' perception that "the only good lab is a black lab"! Long ago Flatcoats lost the pre-eminent position they enjoyed in the late 1800s while their cousins the Golden Retrievers have managed to hold their own. Indeed these numbers quite closely reflect the relative popularity of the different breeds in terms of KC registrations.

Breeding for Success

The debate whether dogs or bitches perform better is answered slightly in favour of dogs by the fact that over the history of the Championship, some 61% of the total number of qualifiers were dogs who secured 66.7% of the wins. Not much to be read into this other than lost trials due to bitches in season. The relative probability of bitch winning the event is essentially the same.

One of the original objectives of field trials was to identify the best working bloodlines for breeding purposes. What the IGL statistics indicate is that breeding the best to the best is not always a guarantee of success as illustrated in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: PARENTAL STATUS OF IGL QUALIFIERS AND AWARD WINNERS

Parents	Progeny	%	Awards	%	Winners	%
FTCh to FTCh	366	15.1	87	12.4	8	9.1
1 x FTCh	1238	51.1	334	47.4	50	56.8
None	817	33.8	283	40.2	30	34.1
Total	2421		704		88	

The statistics are most useful in the identification of dogs of distinction and the links to best performing bloodlines. Over the 102 years of the Championship, nine dogs have sired over 10 progeny that qualified one or more times for the Championship and gained awards. Two

dogs stand out well above the others as sires in terms of progeny qualified and awards gained. View Table 3 below.

Obviously bitches of distinction are fewer in number and whereas a dog can be put to many

bitches and produce offspring to compete, it is much harder for bitches to compete at top level and still have more than one or two litters.

TABLE 3: SIRES OF DISTINCTION

Sire	No. of Progeny	X Qualified	Awards	1st Place
FTCh Pocklea Remus (Lab)	27	54	13	1
FTCh Swinbrook Tan (Lab)	19	38	15	2
FTCh Greenwood Timothy of Holgate (Lab)	15	31	6	0
FTCh Tasco Dancing Brave at Willowyck (Lab)	12	16	2	0

Accordingly only a few dams emerge and progeny numbers are lower. View Table 4 below.

TABLE 4: DAMS OF DISTINCTION

Dam	No. of Progeny	X Qualified	Awards	1st Place
FTCh Glenpatrick Eve (Lab)	9	21	5	0
FTCh Drakeshead Gypsy (Lab)	5	13	6	2
FTCh Musicmaker of Yeo (GR)	5	11	6	1
Mackland Honeysuckle (Lab 1950s)	4	9	7	3

The importance of bloodlines is well illustrated through the links between the top dams and the top sires. Drakeshead Gypsy was the dam of Pocklea Remus, top sire of all times who in turn is grand-sire of Glenpatrick Eve! Furthermore, Swinbrook Tan is great grand-sire of Tasco Dancing Brave of Willowyck who happens to be grandsire to Willowyck Ruff, IGL winner in 2007. Ruff was the sire of Pocklea Robb mentioned earlier, who came to our shores in 2005 and whose offspring are making an impact in SA field trials and the shooting field today.

The Future

Challenges lie ahead for the IGL as for the past few seasons, the Committee has been grappling with ever increasing numbers of qualifiers and the consequence that at least

three days were needed to run the IGL championship event. Perhaps the Kennel Clubs recent purchase of the 7.550 acre Emblehope Estate in Northumberland will provide a long term solution. However there seems little doubt that with its 100 year history, the IGL Retriever Championship will continue to represent the pinnacle of achievement for working retrievers.



David Garbutt and Pocklea Remus 1991

BEST LABRADOR COLOUR

PUBLISHED BY THE FIELD MAGAZINE
3 MAY 2016 USED WITH PERMISSION

Best Labrador Colour: Does colour make a difference

Some like them black, others yellow and a few Americans even prefer their labs silver but David Tomlinson thinks that when it comes to the best labrador colour, performance trumps coat.



Movie, Spey and Charlie from Fernshot Gundogs, Norfolk. Credit: Andy Hook

The best labrador colour is a controversial and much discussed subject. While the shoot fraternity favour blacks, judges like the yellows and current trends are bringing back fox-reds. And are chocolate labs really as untrainable as some handlers claim? David Tomlinson investigates.

Regardless of what the best labrador colour is, labs are the most popular breed in the world. Ben Fogle celebrates our favourite four-legged friend, read Ben Fogle: our love of labradors.

BEST LABRADOR COLOUR

We all know the saying that a good horse can't be a bad colour, but few people agree that the same principle applies to labradors. When it comes to the best labrador colour, the general rule among the shooting fraternity is that black is good, yellow acceptable, but chocolate is strictly for the show bench. Black has always been the dominant colour in the shooting field and in trials. A telling statistic in *The Best of the Best*, a history of the IGL retriever championship, is that in the period 1909-2011, 1,790 black labradors qualified to run, compared to just 367 yellows.



Popularity of yellows labs was boosted in 1924 by the foundation of the Yellow Labrador Club.

In the beginning, which with the labrador means the later years of the 19th century, all labradors were black. The first two yellow puppies appeared in a litter bred by Captain (later Major) CE Radcliffe in 1902. One was a dog called Ben, the other a bitch. It is generally believed that all yellow labradors are descended from Ben and his son Neptune. There are no colour photographs of Ben but the few surviving black-and-white shots depict a dark-furred dog, suggesting that he was what we now call fox-red. I can find no record of when the first yellow labradors made their debut in the shooting field but they were first exhibited in the show ring at Olympia in 1913.

Yellow soon became popular as the best labrador colour, boosted in 1924 by the foundation of the Yellow Labrador Club. The Club remains active nearly a century later. It was formed to encourage the breeding of pure-yellow labrador retrievers and to conserve the best type of working dog, principles it remains faithful to today. It still holds a novice, an all-aged and an open-qualifying stake each year, with its trials

reserved exclusively for yellows. Discrimination on the grounds of colour remains acceptable in the world of dogs, at least with labradors.

BEST LABRADOR COLOUR: CURRENT COLOUR TRENDS

Quite what the founding members of the Yellow Labrador Club would have made of the current fashion for pale-lemon labradors is another matter. Show enthusiasts are rarely satisfied with what they have, and always want to change and improve on the best labrador colour, which goes a long way towards explaining why the early fox-red labradors fell from favour as breeders, encouraged by judges, sought to produce paler and paler dogs. In recent years there has been something of a backlash, as traditional fox-red animals have become increasingly popular in the shooting field if not on the bench. The UK breed standard is flexible, allowing the colour to range from light cream to fox-red.

The resurgence in enthusiasm for fox-red dogs as the best labrador colour isn't surprising. It is, of course, the ideal colour for a wildfowling dog, providing natural camouflage, and is a very acceptable colour for game-shooting, too. In contrast, the pale yellow dogs appear totally out of place in the shooting field – they look best wearing tartan coats while being walked in the park.

In 1941, Major Radcliffe wrote an article for *The Field* in which he described a strain of pure white labradors, bred by Mr Austin Mackenzie of Carrisdale. They were described as very handsome dogs but, perhaps fortunately, this was one variety that never caught on. Equally intriguing are the Hailstone labradors from the Solway. These were black-coated dogs with white spots, a sort of reverse Dalmatian. A keeper even showed one at Crufts, where it gained the approval of Lorna, Countess of Howe, one of the most

Lorna, Countess of Howe, one of the most influential of labrador people between the wars. She qualified no fewer than 24 dogs for the Retriever Championship between 1920 and 1936, and won it three times.

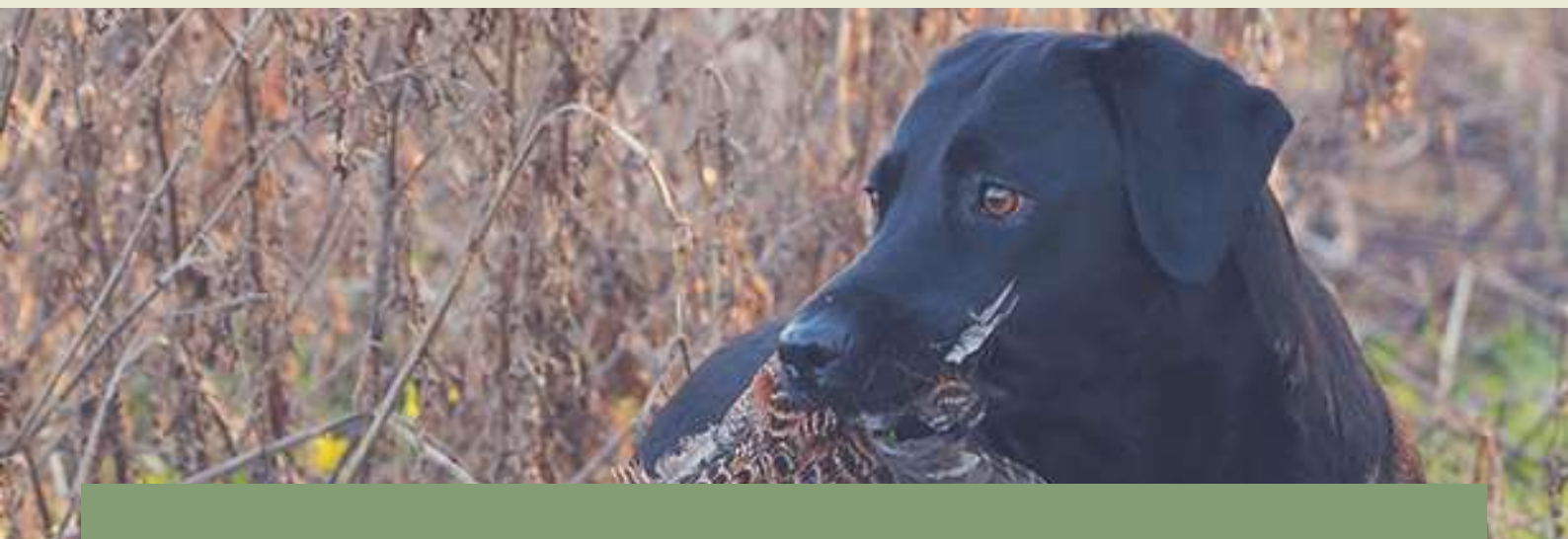
BEST LABRADOR COLOUR: CURIOUS COLOUR STRAINS

So many hundreds of thousands of labradors have been bred since the breed was first recognised in 1903 that it's not surprising that a number of curious colour varieties have appeared. Black-and-tan dogs are bred occasionally. According to the Kennel Club, Gordon setter blood was introduced to the breed at one time, possibly in the Fifties, which might explain this colour variant.

Most contentious of all the labrador colours is silver, virtually unheard of here but causing controversy in the US, where a number of kennels specialise in breeding silvers.

The first brown-coated labradors on record were produced in the Buccleuch kennel in 1892. At that time black was the desired colour, so it seems probable that non-black puppies were culled at birth. It wasn't until the Thirties that brown labs – then called liver – started to be seen more often but they remained a tiny minority until the Sixties, when the first liver-coloured show champion was made up. An astute move was to call them “chocolate”, a name that not only stuck but made them more appealing to the general public.

Though they became increasingly popular in the show ring and as pets, the shooting world generally avoided them, and they acquired an unfortunate reputation for being less intelligent than their black or yellow cousins. I once asked a professional handler if he had ever had a dog that was untrainable. “Yes!” was his emphatic reply. “A chocolate labrador! I sent it back to its owner as soon as I could.”



BLACK HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE DOMINANT COLOUR IN THE SHOOTING FIELD AND IN TRIALS.



Silver labradors have been causing waves in America..

Some like them black, others yellow and a few Americans even prefer their labs silver but David Tomlinson thinks that when it comes to the best labrador colour, performance trumps coat.

BEST LABRADOR COLOUR: CHOCOLATE LABS
Genetically there's no reason for a chocolate to be any less bright than a yellow or a black, but as few chocolates ever made it into the shooting field there was a tendency for many to be less trainable, having had their working instinct bred out of them. For shooting man and labrador enthusiast Ged Leeson this was a challenge. Leeson decided that as the chances of his ever winning the Retriever Championship with a black dog were remote, he would have a go with a chocolate instead.

Most of the trialling community thought that he was mad even to contemplate competing with a chocolate dog but thanks to perseverance, skill and a touch of cussedness, he succeeded in qualifying his dog Pintail Hector of.

Styleside (Coke) for the 2008 Retriever Championship. He was the first chocolate labrador to run in the Championship.

Leeson's other ambition was to make Coke the first-ever labrador of his colour to become an FTCh. He narrowly failed. The problem was getting sufficient runs in open trials to gain the second victory that would have given Coke the coveted title; he did manage a second, several thirds and certificates of merits but not that elusive first place.

Two years ago I joined Leeson and his team of five chocolate labradors (including 11-year-old Coke) for a day's picking-up. They performed magnificently. A bitch, Zeta, performed a remarkable retrieve of a hen pheasant totally submerged in a stream. I was impressed. I suspect that if it weren't for a touch of colour prejudice among judges, Leeson would have made up his dog to become an FTCh but that is a

controversial issue. Few judges have had the chance to assess a chocolate. But the popularity of yellows continues to grow, and the 2010, 2012 and 2014 winners of the Championship were of this colour.

BEST LABRADOR COLOUR: GENETICS

You can still meet handlers who claim that yellow labradors are less trainable than blacks and others who believe that yellow dogs have more brains than blacks. Both theories are, of course, nonsense, as a study of labrador genetics proves. The colour of the coat of a labrador puppy is determined by the genetic make-up inherited from its parents. Though the black gene is dominant, there are nine different labrador genotypes, allowing a number of different possibilities. For example, if you mate two yellow dogs you will get only yellow puppies. Two chocolate dogs can produce yellow puppies, while two black dogs can potentially produce black, chocolate and yellow puppies. It's a complicated subject.

It's essential for labrador enthusiasts who breed for a certain colour to have a detailed knowledge



I SUSPECT THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR A TOUCH OF COLOUR PREJUDICE AMONG JUDGES

of genetics, and to understand the effects of recessive genes. It's possible to have your dog tested to discover its genotype and thus be able to predict with some accuracy the colour of any progeny. The American company VetGen even offers what it calls a "Coat Color Prediction Service, so you can reveal your dog's hidden color genes and then optimise your ability to breed the colors you want".

Choice of coat colour really comes down to a matter of preference: we all get on best with what we like most. My enthusiasm for fox-red dogs is simply explained: they are much the best for photography. In contrast, black dogs are a nightmare. There is, of course, one other disadvantage to owning a black dog, for they do tend to look the same. I've never forgotten the embarrassment of two friends who took the wrong dogs home after a day's shooting. They were blissfully unaware until their wives voiced their suspicions. (www.thefield.co.uk)

GUNDOG GURUS PART 1

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Six of the Best

With centuries of experience and literally dozens of Field Trial Champions between them, these are undoubtedly six of the best gundog trainers of our era. Will Pocklington spoke to them about their glittering careers so far.



John Halstead Snr.

Arguably the most celebrated and highly regarded gundog trainer of his generation, John's achievements are varied and many. Together with his wife Sandra, he runs the famous Drakeshead Kennels which has made up over 30 Field Trial Champions. He has won the British Retriever Championship four times, and captained the England gundog team for 15 years before his retirement.

Why labradors?

After spending most of my youth with lurchers, trapping rabbits and hare coursing, I developed an interest in duck shooting.

I did some research and bought a black labrador puppy called Ribblesdale Randy from a keen wildfowler. Randy was a great success and a good bag filler, but I must admit by today's standards of training she was pretty wild. I haven't looked back since.

Your most memorable moment in the field?

My dog FTCh Breeze was competing in his fourth consecutive Retriever Championship, which was being held at Sandringham in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen. As a very young dog, Breeze was awarded a Diploma of Merit in 1984. In 1985 he went on to win it

at Welbeck Abbey, and then again in 1986 at Arniston in Scotland. Could he win again at Sandringham and become the only dog ever to have won three Championships, and consecutively, too?

Right at the very end of the Championship I knew we were in the frame to win. Just as the judges were getting together to compare notes, they were told that Her Majesty would like to have a word with them. She had apparently seen a shot partridge fly on and out of our sight. She gave the judges the direction of the wounded bird, and Breeze was sent. It was a very long retrieve, but Her Majesty's directions were spot-on. That retrieve clinched Breeze's third consecutive win of the Retriever Championship. I retired him shortly after, undefeated and before his sixth birthday.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

People pushing their dogs on too quickly and taking them into the shooting field before they have a comprehensive grasp of basic training.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a retriever, what would it be? You would not take your car onto the highway unless it could perform the three S's: start, stop, and steer. The same criteria should apply to your dog.

Always try to establish one lesson at a time, working within the dog's capabilities and being sensitive to its enthusiasm. You should always stop a training exercise before the dog loses interest in it.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

Keeping busy is never a problem; I have about 30 acres of ground with woods and ponds which I have to maintain. When I get a spare moment, I tend the garden or try to get in a little pigeon shooting, which I love to do.



**YOU SHOULD ALWAYS STOP A TRAINING EXERCISE
BEFORE THE DOG LOSES INTEREST IN IT.**



Billy Steel Jnr

Winning his first trophy in a field trial at just 14 years of age, Billy has since gone on to make up nine Field Trial Champions and now runs Broadlaw Gundogs in South Lanarkshire. He has qualified for the British Retriever Championship 20 times, winning it twice and being placed second and fourth, and winning two Diplomas Of Merit. He has also represented the Scottish gundog team on numerous occasions.

Why labradors?

My father always trained labradors and used them when he was a gamekeeper, so I grew up with them. As an all-round gundog they are one of the most versatile breeds, lending themselves to all types of shooting due to their eagerness to please, ability to be trained and excellent temperament. I enjoy the challenge of breeding and then training a labrador to a standard capable of becoming a Field Trial Champion and excelling in the shooting field.

Your most memorable moment in the field?

My most memorable moment in the field is undoubtedly from the 1996 Retriever Championship at Holkham Hall, with FTCh Linksvie Jet. We were asked to pick a runner that had made it to over 200 yards away. Without hesitation, she marked it, followed the line and then picked it. This was the retrieve that helped us to go on and win the Championship that year. It was very special.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

Skipping through the basics in training is a common mistake. People are often keen to move forward too quickly with their dog before the foundations are properly established. Being overly eager to increase distances, introduce game and over-complicate things before the dog is ready to cope can result in the training going backwards rather than forwards.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a retriever, what would it be? Keep things simple to start with and only move

on when the dog has fully grasped each stage. This way you have a greater chance of your dog learning what is required, and avoiding confusion on his behalf and frustration on yours. Only train for a duration in which the dog can stay keen and focussed, otherwise he will become bored and disinterested.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

When I'm not training dogs I enjoy clay pigeon shooting, which is something I have done since my early teens (Billy represented Scotland in the past). I also enjoy my game shooting and following hunts in my local area. Recently, I have taken up snowboarding at the newly established and nearby Lowther Hills Ski Club, as we get more than our fair share of snow up here.



Ben Randall

Ben runs Beggarbush Gundogs in Herefordshire, where he breeds and trains dogs for the shooting field. He is a two-time winner of the Cocker Championship, an A Panel spaniel judge, and was voted Gundog Trainer of the Year in 2013.

Why cockers?

I'd actually struggle to choose between springers and cockers. Spaniels can do everything – they are the Jack of all trades. Whether you are stood on a peg, sat in a pigeon hide or in the beating line, they are just so versatile.

Your most memorable moment in the field?

It has to be my second run in the 2012 Cocker Championships at Conholt Park. I was the last competitor on our side of the line to run, it was freezing cold and there must have been over 200 people watching – they sounded like wildebeest on the frozen ground behind us. A hen bird was flushed, clipped and started running like a stag as soon as it hit the ground. I sent Fatty (my bitch and winner of the Championship the previous year) and she made the perfect retrieve, like a bullet through the brambles. Just watching how much she enjoyed the whole process – flushing, sitting, marking and retrieving – was very special. When she returned with that bird, I knew we were in the running for the trophy again.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

People wanting to do the 'fun things' with their dogs before the foundations are in place.

Generally speaking, it takes three years to train a gundog to a very high standard, but just a couple of weeks of doing the wrong things to ruin it.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a spaniel, what would it be? Good luck! In all seriousness, though, my advice would be not to shut yourself away when you're training a dog. Seek as much help from experienced trainers as possible, and join clubs and classes where you can watch other dogs and train alongside other handlers. If your dog becomes accustomed to lots of other dogs and gets used to training and doing what is asked of him/her in an exciting environment, this will serve you well in the long run, particularly in the shooting field.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

Rugby is a big passion of mine. I'm a qualified RFU coach and take great pleasure from teaching younger players at the local prep school (my two sons included), and watching them develop and improve.

Your first gundog?

My uncle was a professional gundog trainer, specialising in labradors, and I helped him out as a dummy thrower for years. I got my first dog when I was 14 years old, a three-quarter trained black and white spaniel called Grouse. He was a cracking dog and we won a number of open novice tests together.



Simon Tyers

With over 30 years of experience with a variety of breeds, Simon runs Hawcroft Gundogs in Staffordshire. He is an A Panel Kennel Club judge for spaniels, has made up 13 Field Trial Champions as well as many novice and open stake winners, has represented England on seven occasions and won back-to-back Cocker Championships in 2007 and 2008.

Why cockers?

I have a passion for all gundogs, but cockers caught my interest in the early 1990s. Through careful and selective breeding they have become one of the top breeds in the field. I love their character and style, but above all their intelligence. Our line of Timsgarry cockers have proved to be very trainable and loyal, and are widely used in both field trials and the shooting field.

Your most memorable moment in the field? I have so many, from making up my Field Trial Champion, Sandford Black Mamba, through to



MY ADVICE WOULD BE NOT TO SHUT YOURSELF AWAY WHEN YOU'RE TRAINING A DOG

winning the Championship. If I had to pick one, it would be my second consecutive Championship win, again with one of our own bred Timsgarry cockers. It was at Sandringham and the Queen was presenting the awards, which made it extra special.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

There are many mistakes made by both novices and more experienced trainers. One which I see very often is handlers not making a steady transition from training to the shooting field and rushing to get their dog out too early.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a spaniel, what would it be? Start as you mean to go on and be clinical in what you expect. Above all, don't let a young spaniel run free for too long for exercise before you have established control.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

My other great passion is falconry, and from September onwards – right through the season – I fly two falcons at game as often as is possible with my other favourite breed, a pointer bitch.

Your first gundog?

My very first gundogs were German shorthaired pointers. Back then I was into hunting with goshawks and shooting, and GSPs were the best for both at the time. I soon moved on to spaniels through the job I had as a gamekeeper, and have since run and trained most working breeds of gundog.



Richard MacNicol

The man behind the renowned Gerensary pointers, Richard has made up 13 Field Trial Champions, two of which are International Champions, including 11 pointers, one English setter and one Irish setter, and has won the British Champion Stake five times and the Irish Champion Stake twice. He has been an A Panel judge for 25 years.

Why pointers?

They kennel well together, are quiet, and are probably the easier to train of the bird dog breeds. They are very loyal and a wonderful sight to behold when they are working.

Your most memorable moment in the field?

After a lifetime of trialling and shooting over pointers, there have been several memorable moments. Winning the British Champion Stake and the Irish Champion Stake in 1997 with Sutherland Sadie has to be right up there, though. She was an outstanding pointer.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

Quite simply rushing the training, not instilling the basics and moving on to advanced training too quickly.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a pointer, what would it be?

Select your pup carefully before you start. Do your homework and evaluate the pedigree – make sure you invest in the pup that is right for you.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

Away from my dogs, I enjoy rugby union (only watching now!) and cooking with a wee glass of Sauvignon!

Your first gundog?

Although I had been brought up around gundogs, I never owned one of my own until I was given an English pointer by my father when I was 19. This pointer was partly show-bred and kick-started my love affair with the breed.

**START AS YOU MEAN TO GO ON AND BE CLINICAL
IN WHAT YOU EXPECT.**



Dom Goutorbe

Dom Goutorbe runs Upperwood Kennels – world renowned for both their show and working strain English setters. Dom is the only person within English setter circles who is approved by the Kennel Club to judge at senior level at both

setter and pointer field trials and championship shows. He is also the president of the English Setter Club.

Why setters?

English setters have been a part of my whole life and have been a part of my family's life for several generations on my father's side. I love the breed. They are fun dogs but have a very serious side. Their keenness to find game is second to none. They also have an amazing ability to adapt to different terrains, conditions and people.

Your most memorable moment in the field?

It would be impossible for me to pick out a single memory as there have been so many. I take a huge amount of pride in the number of people that have shot their first grouse over my dogs. They will be memories that those guests will keep forever.

What is the most common training mistake you see being made?

Starting them too early and not letting them have a puppyhood. Another mistake that is often made is only ever following the dog straight into the wind. The dog must be able to handle all wind directions if it is to succeed in the long term.

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE TRAINING A DOG AND NOT PROGRAMMING A ROBOT.

If you could offer one piece of advice to somebody training a setter, what would it be? For training an English setter, I always find myself giving the same advice – keep a sense of humour. You have to remember that you are training a dog and not programming a robot. And a close bond with your dog is essential. Having a wide-ranging dog that isn't biddable is a nightmare.

Away from gundogs, what else do you keep busy with?

My life pretty much revolves around English setters and the grouse moors. When I'm not doing that, my boarding kennels and a three-year-old son keep me out of mischief.

Your first gundog?

I acquired the first dog I could call my own at the age of 13. She was actually a springer spaniel from a family friend in Arbroath. I named her Tweed and she was an outstanding dog. I won many junior scrambles and scurries with her. At the age of 16, I left school to help my mother out due to my sister passing away, and I kept an English setter pup from a litter that had just been born. He was a runty dog pup that no one wanted and I named him Banjo. If I had that dog again now, I'm sure he'd be winning trials left, right and centre. I never instilled in him the discipline

needed for trialling, but he still won a lot of awards purely because of his natural ability. Every English setter pup I breed will go back to him, and some of my shooting guests still speak about him to this day – albeit not always in a positive way as some of the walks we had to points were good, long ones!

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HIP AND ELBOW DYSPLASIA

BY GENEVIEVE ALBERTS, LABRADOR RETRIEVER KENNEL CLUB

HP & ED in Labradors Genetics VS Environment

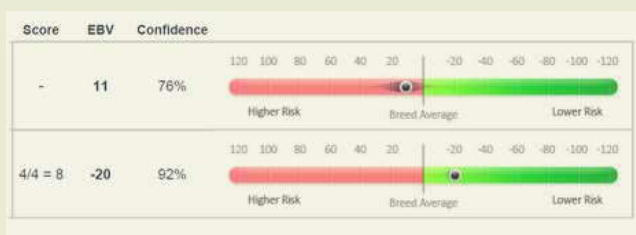
Background

In the 2015 edition of Lab Lines, we announced the commencement of a project in collaboration with Professor Kirberger at Onderstepoort to analyse and statistically manipulate the elbow- and hip dysplasia scores of approximately 1,000 Labradors scored between 2008 and 2015. The purpose of the exercise is to confirm the extent of hip- and elbow dysplasia among our Labrador population, determine whether or not our scores are improving and get a sense of how our scores compare internationally. It is hoped that we can use the data and conclusions drawn to implement a breeding guideline or protocol to assist our members with future breeding decisions. The statistical evaluation is complete and Prof Kirberger is currently writing his paper. It is hoped that the paper will be published in the during 2017.

Allied to this exercise, we hope to encourage KUSA to better utilize the data they have on our dogs by introducing Estimated Breeding Value ("EBV") software, which could further assist us to assess hip and elbow health when making breeding decisions. EBV's are already used by many kennel clubs around the world. Basically, it is a mathematical method of predicting the "breeding value" of a dog relative to all the other dogs in a population when measuring a specific trait such as hip scores. The software takes into account the hip scores or elbow scores of ALL the dogs in a particular pedigree, including all ancestors, siblings and progeny, considers the relationships of the dogs in the pedigree with one another and then presents a conclusion of the dog in question's relative value as a breeding subject. Obviously, as more of his family are scored over time, the EBV for this dog becomes more and more accurate.

Given we do not know the genetics of our dogs and whether or not poor hip scores are due to genetic or environmental factors, EBV's enable breeders to more accurately evaluate genetic risk by distinguishing between dogs with bad hips and dogs with the genes for bad hips, essentially separating the potential influence of the environment from the underlying genotype that the breeder is really interested in. This means that fewer animals will be removed from the gene pool, because dogs with a bad phenotype (visible expression of a trait) but good genotype (genetic code) for the trait of interest can be kept in the breeding stock for potential use.

Here is an example of an EBV for a dog registered with the UK Kennel Club:



One would always want to use a dog that has an EBV score for its hips and elbows that is better than the breed average. Therefore, in the example above, you may be satisfied with the EBV for his hips but you would probably exclude him from your breeding plans based on his elbow value. Remember these values are determined after considering the available hip- and elbow scores of his entire extended family and are a comparison relative to the rest of the population. If you want to further explore EBV's in practice, copy the following link into your browser. Note that you need the exact name of a dog you want to evaluate.

Prof Kirberger's paper will focus on the genetic aspect of hip- and elbow dysplasia, so the article that follows will consider the role that the environment plays in the development of dysplasia, what we as breeders can do to reduce the impact of environmental factors and furthermore, what recommendations we can offer to puppy buyers to further protect their puppies' developing joints.

What Does Environment Mean?

In this context, "environment" refers to everything that could affect an animal that is NOT genetic, for example, the amount of food eaten by a puppy, how much exercise it gets etc. Before we consider the various environmental factors, let's first understand their relative impact on dysplasia. If you are going to change or improve a trait using selection, the trait must be genetic, and the degree to which genes play a role in the expression of the trait is called heritability.

(<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/ebv/Default.aspx>)

The incidence and extent of hip and elbow dysplasia is influenced by both genes and environment, and it would be very useful to know the relative roles of genetics and environment in determining phenotype. How much can you improve a phenotype like hip score by selective breeding? How much can you improve it by controlling the environment? When you are selecting potential dogs for breeding, it would be very handy to know if the "better" dogs have better genes or just got lucky and had a better environment. This is heritability. The variation in a trait, not the trait itself and heritability is an attribute of a population, not an individual, because you need to measure multiple individuals to determine variation. Heritability is a proportion which is expressed as a value between 0 and 1, or it can be expressed as a percentage (0% to 100%). Heritability tells you how much of the variation you see in a trait in a particular population of animals can be attributed to genetic differences in the animals.

The Heritability of Hip Dysplasia

If genetics accounts for most of the phenotypic variation, then selection of a particular dog based on phenotype will have a good chance of picking a dog with "good" genes for hips. On the other hand, if the heritability of a trait is low (e.g., 0.2, or 20%), that means that much of the variation you see in the trait among individuals (80%, in fact) is due to the environment (non-genetic factors) and not genetics. An analysis of some of the studies on heritability of hip dysplasia is only modest at best and non-genetic ("environmental") factors are responsible for a considerable amount of the variation. Similar studies on heritability of elbow dysplasia also indicate an environmental component (although there is a distinct genetic link).

Risk Factors for Hip Dysplasia (Hips are perfect at Birth)

INCREASED RISK	DECREASED RISK
large size at birth	smaller size at birth
poor traction in whelping box	slower growth rate
faster growth rate	good traction in whelping box
over nutrition	food restriction
joint laxity@2 weeks	exercise on uneven ground
stairs before 3 months	no joint laxity at 2 weeks
vigorous nursing	off leash exercise at 12 months
born in fall or winter	reared on farm/rural area
spayed/neutered	born in spring or summer

Carol Beuchat believes that, because non-genetic factors can account for such a large part of the variation in hip phenotype, you might be able to substantially improve the hips in your puppies if you understand what those factors are and how to reduce their negative impact. This has received much less attention than genetics for some reason, but it should be possible to dramatically reduce hip dysplasia if we can deal with some of the non-genetic factors that seem to matter. The list below summarizes some of the key factors identified in research. Remember all hips are perfect at birth!

Carol Beuchat, PhD – The Institute of Canine Biology (the author has completed an online course on canine hip and elbow dysplasia conducted by Carol Beuchat through the ICB and would highly recommend the course to anyone wanting to learn more on the subject)

Food Consumption and Obesity

Food consumption and (therefore) the body weight of the puppy has a profound effect on the risk of developing hip dysplasia. The Purina Study is a 14-year-long multi-institutional project funded by Nestlé Purina that followed the lives of 48 Labrador Retrievers. Labrador puppies from 7 litters with lines known to have a high prevalence of hip dysplasia were paired at 8 weeks of age by gender and weight and then randomly assigned to two different groups. One group were allowed to "free feed" and the other group were fed 75% of the quantity consumed by the free feed group. Allowing puppies to free-feed from 8 weeks resulted in an increased rate of growth and a higher adult body mass compared with dogs on a restricted diet, who weighed 25% less from 1 year through adulthood.

When these dogs were screened for hip dysplasia and secondary osteoarthritis (i.e., arthritis that arises as a consequence of hip dysplasia), about 12% were diagnosed as dysplastic at 1 year old, while in the restricted food group only about 3% were dysplastic. From there, the proportion of dogs with normal hips dropped quickly in the free feeding group; about 50% had hip osteoarthritis by age 6, and 80% by 9 years. In the restricted food group, only about 20% of dogs had hip osteoarthritis by 8 years, and only 50% by 12 years! The dogs' hips were all OFA scored at two years of age and there were distinct differences in their scores depending on which group they were in.

This is a very interesting result because the feeding experiment didn't start until the puppies were 8 weeks old and everybody had the same diet until then. The data show that food consumption after 8 weeks old had no effect on joint laxity, but it made a huge difference in the OFA hip scores. According to Carol Beuchat there is an interplay of two factors, laxity and body weight, in the development of hip dysplasia. Greater laxity results in earlier development of dysplasia, and greater weight is associated with more severe damage.

Body size & type

Hip dysplasia is often characterized as a "large breed" disorder, but the data reveal a different picture.

According to the OFA's online statistics for hip dysplasia (November 2015), there are many large breeds towards the top of the list - Dogue de Bordeaux, Otterhound, Neapolitan Mastiff, St. Bernard, etc - but sitting among them at #2 is the Pug, which is a toy breed (but 72% dysplastic!). There are also large breeds at the bottom of the list that have among the highest levels of excellent hips, including the Saluki, Borzoi, and Greyhound.

These basic data do not support the generalization that hip dysplasia is a "large breed" disorder. In fact, instead of size, it is body type - robust vs slender - that correlates best with the rankings for hip score. Breeds that typically have poor hip ratings are substantially

heavier for their height than breeds that tend to have excellent hips. It is this physiology that explains why Labradors have a worse than average risk of being pre-disposed to HD.

Substrate

There is evidence that the type of substrate puppies were on in the whelping box prior to weaning affects hip phenotype. In a study, Boxer puppies raised on a floor covered with a "slippery" material were 1.6 times more likely to develop clinical signs of hip dysplasia (van Hagen et al 2005). The definition of "slippery" in this study was a little loose, including both newspaper and tarpaulin, while "non-slippery" included carpet, rubber, blankets, sawdust, or straw. In addition, Krontveit et al 2012 found that puppies that were exercised from weaning to 3 months in a run with a soft surface (dirt or grass) had a lower risk of dysplasia than puppies exposed to hard substrates like wood, asphalt, or concrete.

Carol Beuchat believes that most substrates people are using in their whelping boxes provide inadequate traction for puppies. We expect puppies to be crawling for the first few weeks, so seeing them crawl doesn't register as "too slippery to walk." It is potentially the single most important thing determining the ultimate hip status of a dog if slipping results in damage to the round ligament that attaches the head of the femur to the wall of the acetabulum. Joint laxity at two weeks of age is a significant early indicator of the development of HD later.



The easiest way to tell if puppies are slipping is if you can see the pads on the underside of the paw. If the back feet are slipping, the leg will end up fully extended to the rear with the pad facing upwards. If the puppy is crawling, the front legs will be doing what looks like the breast stroke, with the legs stretched out to the side and moving to the rear but the pad is not on the ground.

Beuchat believes that substrates such as newspaper, wood floors, slippery tiles, blankets, sheets, towels and quilts are usually too slippery. The idea is to make sure the legs are under the body.

Riser noted that if hip laxity develops in a young

puppy (less than 3 or 4 months), it can be kept in a cage so it will spend more time sitting. Whilst not suggesting that a puppy should be crated all the time, encouraging a puppy to sit correctly as much as possible makes sense. If the legs are staying under the dog, the head of the femur stay where it belongs in the hip socket.

Exercise

The Krontveit study of large breeds found that the type of exercise the puppy was exposed to affected the risk of dysplasia. Puppies that lived on a farm from birth to weaning had a 30% lower risk of dysplasia than those from suburbia, presumably because of the sort of exercise they were exposed to. During the post-weaning period through 3 months, puppies that used stairs daily had an elevated risk of dysplasia, and those that got daily off-lead exercise in park-like terrain had a lower risk. Likewise, a study of adult Labradors in Sweden found that regular exercise chasing a ball or stick thrown by the owner more than doubled (2.2 to 2.6 times) the risk of hip dysplasia (Sallander et al 2006), and these activities have also been linked to development of osteochondrosis (Slater et al 1992). Why these particular activities increase the risk of developing hip dysplasia is unclear but perhaps it involves intensity or repetition.

In addition, puppies do not need long walks or vigorous exercise. Playing in the garden is sufficient for pups under 5 months old. If you take a puppy out on a leash, a rule of thumb often mentioned is no more than five minutes walking per day, for each month of age.

Endocrine & Spay/Neuter

This is a controversial area in rescue circles but bears mention. Spay/neuter status can be associated with differences in the incidence of hip dysplasia, but there are differences by breed, sex, and age. Various studies have found a positive correlation between early neutering (before 12 months) and incidence of HD. It is not clear why. Beuchat muses that it could be endocrine, or differences in body mass, or the timing of growth plate closure. Hopefully there will be more studies that shed some light on the factors involved but in the meantime, the best advice would be to postpone neutering until the dog is older than 6 months, or even better, once the growth plates have closed.

Nutrition

There is no evidence that nutrient deficiencies of any sort can result in hip dysplasia (Nap et al 1991), but excesses of some vitamins and minerals can contribute to development of skeletal disease. Improper levels of some key minerals and "over-nutrition" (excess caloric intake) can have huge effects, especially in puppies. Calcium and phosphorus (among other minerals) are required in the diet in specific amounts and proportions for proper bone development. Getting the proper balance of calcium and phosphorus in the diet is especially

critical in large dog breeds. Vitamin D is important for absorption of calcium and phosphorus from the gastrointestinal tract, so the control of calcium balance depends on the correct levels of vitamin D.

Hopefully by applying what we are learning about the impact of environmental factors on the development of HD and ED, we can educate our puppy buyers and in turn assist them to reduce the incidence thereof.

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CRANIAL CRUCIATE LIGAMENT DISEASE

BY LUCY EASTON PUBLISHED ON THE
LABRADOR SITE 1 6 MAY 2016

Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease in Labradors

Lucy Easton takes an in-depth look at Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease in dogs, interviews some veterinary experts, and talks to the owner of a Labrador who has been through the disease and come out safely on the other side.

Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease is something that all Labrador owners need to be aware of.

If your Labrador has hurt his back leg, is limping or appears to be lame, this will be one of the first things that your veterinarian is going to consider.

Because CrCI damage in Labradors is a big problem.

In this article we are going to look at what cranial cruciate ligament disease is, how it affects our Labradors and what can be done about it.

I have been talking to orthopedic veterinarians Dr Neil Embleton and Dr Veronica Barkowski, about the surgical management of cranial cruciate ligament disease in the Labrador Retriever: And they have been sharing their experience of CrCI disease, and some important information about an innovative new treatment.

We have also been speaking to the owner of a beautiful Labrador who has been affected by CrCI disease, who has kindly agreed to share her experiences of managing life with a Labrador suffering from it.

What Is the CrCI?

The Cranial Cruciate Ligament is also known as the CrCI. It is a ligament which connects the bone above the knee to the one below it.

Neil Embleton explains how this ligament should help your dog to walk freely and easily when it's functioning normally:

"The CrCI is a major stabiliser of the dog's stifle (knee joint) and it performs two main functions: limiting cranial tibial translation (forward shin bone movement), and controlling the amount of internal tibial rotation (inward shin bone rotation)."

What is Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease?

When a dog has cranial cruciate ligament disease, the joint stops working in the way it is supposed to.

"As the level of disease in the CrCI progresses, its ability to perform these functions decreases, leading to progressive instability of the knee joint. The consequence of which is pain, lameness, loss of comfortable range of motion in the affected limb and progressive osteoarthritis."

Are Labradors More Likely To Get CrCI Disease?

Dr Embleton and Dr Barkowski believe that there are proportionately higher rates of CrCI disease in Labradors, when compared with other breeds.

"Cranial cruciate ligament (CrCI) disease continues to be the most common orthopedic disease affecting the hind limb of the dog.

As a breed, Labrador Retrievers are predisposed to CrCI disease, it has been suggested that the incidence of CrCI disease in Labradors is two to five times more likely than the general dog population.

Although no genetic role has been demonstrated,

the frequency of disease affecting both hind limbs strongly supports a genetic link."

CrCI Disease Symptoms

The first sign of CrCI disease in Labradors is usually lameness.

The dog may have trouble putting weight on one of their back legs, or have a distinctive drag or swing to their gait.

There may also be swelling and tenderness in the area.

If you see any of these signs in your Labrador, then you need to take them to the veterinarian for a thorough examination.

If your Labrador is overweight he is more likely to suffer from ligament damage, or if you only exercise him in infrequent but very strenuous bursts, this is something to watch out for as well.

Diagnosing CrCI Disease in Labradors

When you take your Labrador to the veterinarian, they will want to establish the cause of the limp and whether it is due to CrCI disease.

They will do this by observing the way that your Labrador walks, by feeling his joints and by taking x-rays of his bones.

In some cases they may choose to use an MRI or exploratory surgery if it is an unusual case.

Common CrCI Disease Treatments

Your veterinarian will advise you on the best treatment for your Labrador's CrCI disease based upon their diagnosis of his specific condition, and based upon their own experience.

There are a number of surgical treatments available for CrCI disease, as Neil explains.

"There are currently many surgical treatment options for canine CrCL deficiency including extracapsular suture procedures using monofilament or multifilament braided materials and geometry modifying osteotomy procedures, including tibial plateau levelling osteotomy (TPLO) and tibial tuberosity advancement (TTA)."

Extra-capsular Suture Procedures

The extra-capsular suture procedure involves replacing the damaged ligament with man-made alternative. This is produced in the form of a stitch or suture, made of a monofilament or multi-filament braided material, similar to strong fishing line.

This holds the joint in a natural position, allowing the dog to move his leg correctly.

The aim is that scar tissue will eventually replace the use of the suture, and support the leg in this

manner.

It is thought to be a more successful option for smaller and less lively dogs, although it can be used on larger breeds such as Labradors.

If your veterinarian advises an extra-capsular suture procedure, then your dog will need to be on severely limited exercise for at least four months after his surgery.

Tibial Plateau Levelling Osteotomy (TPLO)

Another option for CrCI disease treatment is TPLO. It is a more modern procedure, which involves more invasive surgery.

A veterinary surgeon will make a circular cut in the tibia and realign the bone, to give a more stable base for the dog to walk on. This movement will be held in place by plates and screws.

This method is sometimes preferred for larger, heavier dogs or for more active personalities.

Again, a healing period of rest of at least four months is advised after surgery in order to get the best results.

Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA)

Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA) is similar in approach to TPLO. However, the bone is cut in a linear fashion, in order for the tibia to be moved to a different angle.

Like TPLO it requires plates and screws to stay in place initially, and although they are not required after healing they are rarely removed. It also has a long period of recovery, where you will need to keep your dog on limited exercise to reduce the risk of re-fracturing the bone before it has healed.

TTA Case Study

A friend of The Labrador Site, Julie Clayton, has personal experience of the TTA treatment, as her chocolate Lab Charlie was sadly diagnosed with CrCI disease as a puppy.

She has kindly shared her journey with us.

Charlie's Early Symptoms of CrCI

"Charlie was 8 months old, and he started limping on his hind leg. I took him to the vet who said lead walks (rest) for 10 days and anti-inflammatories.

CrCI Labrador

Charlie was 8 months old when he first showed signs of CrCI damage.

After 10 days, Charlie was still limping and hip dysplasia was suspected, so we did x-rays, and found out Charlie's hips were perfect.

So the vet said more rest, and suspected a pulled



Charlie was 8 months old when he first showed signs of CrCI damage.

muscle etc.

After another 10 days rest, Charlie seemed fine, and the vet said we could return to normal.

The first time Charlie got off lead after the 20 days rest, he galloped round (as a young Labrador will) and suddenly stopped and was severely lame. We got him back to the car, and went to the vet.

We saw a young vet, not very experienced, who said it was a pulled muscle, gave more anti-inflammatories and said more rest.

As it happened, I had an appointment the next day to see a canine physiotherapist, she said Charlie had a torn ligament and told me to go and see an orthopaedic vet, which I did the next day. He diagnosed a ruptured cruciate ligament."

What Happened Next

"It was absolutely dreadful finding out this was the problem, and reading about the operation that was required and the length of the recovery period. And also the worry about what the outlook would be for such a young dog. Plus, the practical difficulties it was going to present.

At the time, both my partner and I worked, and we had dog walkers and day care arrangements in place - all of those were useless for a dog recovering from surgery and needing a long and careful rehabilitation.

I'd also just started to really get into gundog training with Charlie, and instead of continuing with all the fun training, I was looking at months and months of rest and major surgery.

It just felt like a nightmare, as anyone must feel who gets a puppy must feel when they get a diagnosis of something like this (or elbow or hip dysplasia etc)."

Waiting For CrCI Treatment

"As Charlie was only 8 months when this happened, the orthopedic vet recommended a very highly qualified surgeon, and these two vets agreed that it would be better to wait until Charlie was over a year old before doing the operation."



X-ray showing the result of one of Charlie's TTA operations, taken 8 weeks after it was performed

The surgical procedures of both TTA and TPLO involve cutting the bone to change the angle of the tibial tuberosity in the stifle, using an implant to hold the bones in a different angle while they heal.

The vets thought this was best done only after a dog had finished his bone growth and his growth plates had healed.

So Charlie was on lead walks for 5 months, until he was 13 months old, and then we booked him in for surgery."

Rehabilitation After CrCI Surgery

"It turned out that Charlie had a completely ruptured ligament and a tear in his meniscal cartilage. He recovered well, and I was very, very careful in his rehabilitation.

I absolutely did everything by the book, to the letter.

CrCI care

Charlie immediately after his op, being given PROMS and massage (left). Having an ice pack applied to his leg after a 5 minute post op walk (right).

"My vet was also quite cautious about the timescale for the rehabilitation, and Charlie spend another 3 months on lead, and then his exercise was built up very gradually over another two - then 10 months after diagnosis, we returned to normal.

The surgeon had told me, very clearly, that the

likelihood was that Charlie would rupture his other cruciate ligament, and he did, only 6 months after we had returned to normal."



Charlie immediately after his op, being given PROMS and massage (left). Having an ice pack applied to his leg after a 5 minute post op walk (right).

Charlie's Next CrCI Surgery

"This time, as soon as Charlie showed a tiny limp, I had him seen by an orthopaedic specialist the next day, who suspected a ruptured ligament.

We took the decision to operate, and Charlie had a 50% ruptured ligament, which would have completely ruptured left untreated.

Charlie recovered very well from the second operation, as he did the first, and we repeated the whole slow, careful rehabilitation.

He returned to normal slightly faster the second time, and was cleared by the vets to return to full exercise 4 months post op."



Charlie was exercised on a harness and long line during rehabilitation.

Charlie Post-Surgery

"Now, he is a year after his last operation, and shows very little sign there was ever anything wrong.

He isn't quite as good as new, his muscle mass on his back legs is good but not fantastic, and he'll sometimes mis-step if he tries to turn at high speed. But he exercises freely for 2 to 3 hours a day, and lives a happy and energetic life.



JOINT CONTACT MECHANICS ARE ALTERED BY ALL CURRENT TECHNIQUES AND A DECREASE IN RANGE OF MOTION (ROM) AND PROGRESSION OF OSTEOARTHRITIS ARE COMMON FINDINGS POSTOPERATIVELY

"Arthritis will be present in his legs, and will progress to some degree, but hopefully we won't see any signs of that for years yet."

New CrCL Disease Treatment.

Although as you can see the current treatments can have great success, veterinarians have come up with a new surgical technique which could be even more helpful, as Neil Embleton explains:

"There is currently no uniformly accepted best treatment of the canine CrCL deficient stifle. Joint contact mechanics are altered by all current techniques and a decrease in range of motion (ROM) and progression of osteoarthritis are common findings postoperatively."

This means that although they are helpful, the joint could experience further problems in the future even after surgery.

"Dr. Stanley Kim suggested that the optimal surgical treatment for the CrCL deficient stifle provides immediate stabilization of the unstable stifle joint while allowing normal joint contact mechanics and movement in all planes."

This was the premise that the Simitri Stable in Stride® procedure was based on."

Simitri Stable in Stride Procedure

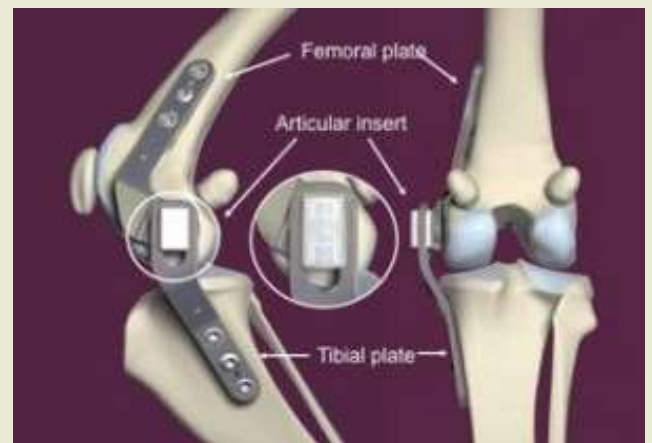
Our two veterinary surgeons explain how the Simitri Stable in Stride procedure came about, and how it works:

"Our goal was to design and develop an implant that would provide immediate and continuous translational and rotational stability while minimally affecting stifle biomechanics."

After six years of evidenced based research, the Simitri Stable in Stride® internal stifle stabilizing implant was developed. Based on an in silico

comparison using a 3D computer model, stifle joint biomechanics were improved in the Simitri-managed stifle compared to the CrCL-deficient stifle joint and the Simitri treated CrCL deficient stifle was predicted to return ligament loads and tibial kinematics closer to the state of the intact CrCL stifle than did the TPLO managed stifle.

The Simitri Stable in Stride® implant is comprised of two, surgical grade stainless steel plates; the femoral (thigh bone) plate and the tibial plate.



The femoral plate has a ball and stem that interconnects with the tibial plate via an 8 mm travel channel within the articulating insert.

The insert is composed of ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene (UHMWPE), this is the same material used in human total hip and knee replacements.

The plates are positioned on the inside of the affected leg and attached above and below the knee joint with six cortical locking screws.

The entire implant remains outside the knee joint, but under the skin and muscle.

The Simitri Stable in Stride® implant immediately provides continuous translational and rotational

stability while minimally affecting the normal function and movement of this joint. The implant is indicated as a primary repair method for cranial and or caudal cruciate ligament disease and as a secondary treatment for multiple knee ligament damage (stifle derangement).

The surgical procedure takes approximately 55-65 minutes to perform. No muscles or bones are cut during the procedure making it a less invasive surgery. A comprehensive postoperative homecare handout consisting of massage, passive range of motion and controlled leash walking is provided. Recovery, depending on age, level and duration of disease, generally takes four months.

The potential advantages of the Simitri Stable in Stride® procedure are: immediate and continuous translational and rotational stifle stability regardless of the position of the knee, or the phase of the stride, less invasive and less painful than procedures that require cutting of bone (TPLO, TTA), minimal effect on joint biomechanics, no osteotomy related complications and less restrictive postoperative management."

Getting help with Cranial CLD

If your Labrador has suffered from cruciate ligament problems, then you are welcome to share your experiences in the comments section below.

Cranial cruciate ligament disease must be diagnosed by a veterinary surgeon. Treatment options will depend on the dog, your surgeon will discuss these with you.

If you have any concerns about your Lab's legs or gait, or any other aspect of his health – always seek advice from a veterinarian.

Coping with a dog after surgery and during rehabilitation can be tough. But there is light at the end of the tunnel! Do join the forum where you'll find help, support, and sympathy during this challenging time.

<http://www.thelabradorsite.com/cranial-cruciate-ligament-disease/>

SIGNS OF CRUCIATE DISEASE

- LAMENESS (LIMPING) IN THE HIND LIMBS
- TOE TOUCHING' AT REST – THE DOG IS NOT PROPERLY WEIGHT BEARING BUT JUST TOUCHING THE TOE TO THE GROUND
- RELUCTANCE BY YOUR DOG TO WALK OR EXERCISE
- NOTICEABLE REDUCTION OF MUSCLE MASS (MUSCLE ATROPHY) AROUND THE KNEE
- WHIMPERING OR YELPING WHEN YOUR DOG'S BEARING WEIGHT ON THE AFFECTED LEG.

CRUCIATE DISEASE

BY LORREN BARHAM
OF PET WELLNESS WORX

Cruciate Disease Rehabilitation Exercises

Goals:

- * improve extension of stifle
- * improve limb function, increase muscle mass and strength
- * decrease muscle spasms
- * control pain

Usually follows a course of acute flare ups where animal is more tender and then remission where animal is more comfortable. During these periods of pain decrease exercise and concentrate on applying heat and icing knee and lumbosacral (LS) region and massage. It is NB to remember that this is a lifelong commitment. If rehabilitation exercises are discontinued your animal will deteriorate even faster.

Begin slowly with exercises and keep training periods short.

Apply Heat to knee for 10-15 min. NB only if area is not inflamed (not hot to your touch). PROM and stretching done immediately after this.

Passive range of motion exercises (PROM) - 10-15 reps, two to three times per day
Place animal in a quiet and comfortable area, massage muscles of injured limb for 2-3 min paying attention to the hamstrings and quadriceps muscles. Place one hand above knee and the other hand below. Ensure that leg is in a level plane and that entire weight of leg is supported. Try not to move other joints. Slowly flex leg until you see signs of discomfort and with hands in same position extend leg. Slowly continue to extend until you see signs of discomfort. One rep = extension and flexion of knee.

Stifle extension/flexion exercises - 15-20 reps, two to three times per day

Slow consistent leash walking - leash walking can now be increased for 30-40 minutes per day. While on leash, trotting in a straight line can also be incorporated starting with 5 minutes twice a day and increasing it slowly to 10 minutes.

Sit-to-stand 20-30 reps two to three times a day, remember to correct form when doing this. Place patient against wall with operated leg against it. Ask them to sit with treat and then to stand up again. Repeat. This will prevent leg from abducting (moving away from the body). As the

patient starts to become more proficient at this exercise, attempt stand to sit to lie down to sit again on unstable surface.

Stair climbing on a short leash, ensure that each step is taken. Start with one flight (7-10 steps) and slowly walk down, increase slowly to 2-3 flights. Do not allow your pet free access to stairs. Ensure that you have full control when you do this exercise.

Walking in circles to the left and the right or figure 8s starting with wide circles and then tightening them up. Work up to trotting in circles and figure of 8s with no sharp turns.

Treat to tail stretch-This stretch requires the use of training treats. With your dog standing and you on one side of animal, move the treat slowly in the direction of the tail, encouraging them to only turn the head. This will require animal to bend body into a C shape. Hold position for 5 seconds, then step to the other side and repeat the exercise. Do 2 or 3 stretches on each side.

Cavaletti rails, start with low cavaletti rails at the level of the carpus (first joint above the front feet) and then slowly increase height to the level of the hock (first joint above the hind leg). 10-20 reps twice a day. You can start with a ladder initially.

Controlled tug-of-war for 5 minutes or according to how animal tolerates it. Important too only resist the movement of your dog. Do not tug side to side or up and down.

It is very important that animals are kept and exercises are performed in a safe non slip area.

Cryotherapy - ice pack

Cover ice pack with wet towel or place in pillowcase. Place over affected area for 10-15 minutes at a time twice daily. Do this after activity such as walking or PROM exercises.



Only 3-4 exercises per session. If you notice any lameness or discomfort with any of these exercises revert back to previous week's level of activity or discontinue that exercise.

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

Thank you to Lorren Barham of Working Your Way to Wellness
Pet Wellness Worx
www.petwellnessworx.co.za

MEMBERS MUSE & NEWS

Where we share, care and celebrate the general news and achievements of fellow club members.

RAVEN AND JASPER OUR TWO FLATCOATED RETRIEVERS

BY RAY AND JENNY BACON



Raven and Jasper our two Field Trials Flatcoat Retrievers

Both dogs competed in the CFTC Limit test held recently at Botriever and had a great day out in the field the CFTC committee are to be congratulated for organising such an enjoyable day together with the judges for setting the course and giving each entrant time and advice not to forget our throwers who were great on the day.

Raven was awarded first place in the limit stake and did us proud on the day.

Jasper (Raven's son) who regretfully his previous owner was unable to keep so with Cornelia's help we re-homed him with us joining Kiwi and Raven. Jasper who is new to Field Trials to our knowledge had never seen a dummy before we re-homed him three months ago. He has amazed us in how quickly he is learning Field Trials Cornelia is doing most of his training and he is progressing well in fact he was awarded third place in the CFTC Limit test so we are really proud of our two Flatcoats.

We now have Flatcoat, Dad Raven, Son Jasper, and Daughter Indy, all taking part in Field trials being true dual purpose Flatcoat Retrievers and doing the job they were bred for which they all love and enjoy so much.

TRIALS OF THE ROSES

BY MARGARET ROSE



Bardale DB's Gift of Roseryal CGC(SI) - Nash

Colin and I took the plunge and trekked off “north” to attend the TFTA, Lab Club, WRC and PMBG Kennel Club field trials in April/May. We were very kindly hosted by Sharron and Gordon at their lovely property and had the opportunity to attend a couple of training sessions with them and trainer Jenny Smith. Fortunately, Nash does not see the long grass as a barrier – thank goodness. With the other advice from some of our locals, we threw a dummy or three into a mealie field – again he does not see anything as a barrier.

TFTA – held on the beautiful Boavida Dog Training Centre, Hartebeeshoek.

I thought Nash and I would be out on the very first retrieve. Sat at the bank of the dam, to my surprise he sat rock steady for the first shot into the water. Then after a couple of re-casts on the second retrieve, we finished the first series!

On the second series, a double – saluted pigeon in the long grass and a live landing in the open. Unfortunately, we were out.

Lab Club -On to the little village of Val. Don't blink – you have just missed the High Street!

Again, the farms we worked on are really lovely. Under Estene Trollop, we had quite a long day. Series one and two under the belt we sat waiting our turn in series 3. Unfortunately, the series proved too difficult and numbers were dropping like flies! The judges decided to scrap the series. For the last series, we were sat out on the rock for a long time watching birds go up and down. Nash completed his walk up and blind. Then we

had the honouring. In a spectacular way – he broke! Managed to stop him right next to the working dog! Disappointed to have be put out but what a good experience. Used to having him dash off when the gun goes off!

WRC – Harrismith, the beautiful “Golden Gate” area!

In the pitch dark, the gravel road lit by the lights of the car. Nash and I walked for 20 minutes. Entering the stunning Buffalo Hills Private Game Reserve, we had to wait while the herd of Wildebeest ran across the road.

In the very first series I thought we would be on our way home. A split double, saluted Guinea up the hill to the left and then a live pigeon up the hillside to the right. After hunting and re-casting twice I thought we were going to be put out. Then the judge called to see the drop of the bird – it was in a hole! Second try – no bird! Throughout this he sat steady, much to my delight. Third time a charm, could not have asked for a better fall. Straight out and back.

Series two. Pigeon over the hill and a return, duck in the water. The eyeline of the dog is way above your head. So, (pass over a new set of vocal chords) I managed to stop him just before the water. Perfect delivery of both pigeon and duck. The day is going well!

Series three. A short walk-up towards the dam. A guinea flying out from the bush ahead and a pigeon into the dam. (the Judge quipped that if the dog went straight out through the gully to the dam, he might give a bonus point) Well, a perfect walk-up, guinea back in hand. I thought I'd try to get the judge to put the money on it and turned Nash and put him straight across the gully. The athlete that he is, took off and did the work!

Last series was in two parts. A blind and then working and honouring. Oh dear... that word again.

We had to stand in a hide while the gun shot and asked for a dog. A short walk forward and then setup for blind. Nash took a perfect line (second best of the day). Phew, first element down. Then to sit him on the left of the hide and had a double, saluted Guinea to the right and a duck to the left (with decoy ducks – a new feature). Perfectly executed! Then the dreaded honouring with a twist.

The honour dog was sat at the back righthand side of the hide, thereby not able to see the working dog. Nash sat perfectly. (heavy sit, stay command). As soon as the judge released us – a very firm “heel”. As his butt came off the ground and head swung across my knees I took hold of him and put the lead on him. WE HAD JUST COMPLETED OUR FIRST MAIDEN! Sharron was jumping up and down with excitement! The

congratulations from the gallery was fantastic.
(Thanks all!)

11 or 12 dogs finished on the day, of which 7 gained points. I thought we might have got a COM, but they came and went. Sharron was convinced that we were placed. I did not. Fourth, third, no- that's us out. Blow me down - we had placed second, and was given the Field Trial Managers award. Oh boy, was I up on a cloud. Just achieved what I wanted by attending the away trials - to finish. Only to do it in style.

Howick - Pietermaritzburg Kennel Club. Cold and miserable. We bombed out on the second series. A return double with two working dogs. Also held in beautiful farm areas.

Six weeks away from home - it was good to fetch the girls from kennels.

Since then we have had a trip to Oudtshoorn to show Ella. Then we attended the Malmesbury "Father's day" weekend of shows. Ella had a good time being Best Veteran in Group at the Swartland show.

MOOSHUS & POPPELAP

BY KOBUS LE ROUX



Bardale DB's TheWayWeWere MHR - Mooshus

During his recent trialling season Mooshus - Bardale DB's TheWayWeWere MHR was awarded 4th Place in the LRKC Open stake, a couple of COM's and his Master Hunting Retrieving title.

Artemis - Ch FT O m'anam Artemis GMHR achieved so much during the 2016 trialling season. She was awarded 3 x 1st Place, 2 x 2nd Place, 1 x 3rd Place, 1 x 4th Place and 5 x Gun's Choice. She came 4th in the Champ's and was awarded the trophy for Best Water Series. She can now proudly add the ChFt and GMHR titles to her name.



ChFT O m'anam Artemis GMHR CGC(Go) - Artemis

The Cherry on Top!

Artemis with her DogStar Award for the Top Field Trial Dog in the country for 2016.

Thank you Chris & Michelle for entrusting me with this magnificent Labradorable!

Thank you Amanda for introducing me to this wonderful sport.

Thank you Judges, Guns, FTM's and fellow competitors - love you all!

Thank you DOGGOBONE for ensuring Artemis is kept strong and healthy.

Thank you Lisa & Paul for bringing this trophy all the way down to the Cape!



CLUB SNIPPITS

BY NEWS DESK



Dale Fabian

The Labrador Retriever Kennel Club of SA has unanimously voted to elect Dale Fabian as a Patron and an honorary life member. Well done Dale!!! The Club owes you a great debt of gratitude for all your efforts to keep it going over the years!



Trudi Winter

Trudi Winter has been elected as Secretary of the National Field Trial Association (NFTA).

THE SHOT COLUMN

BY 'SPURWING'

Dogs and dog sports keep you young and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. How else can you explain the number of dinosaurs such as myself still involved in dogs! We love our dogs probably more than people, which stands to reason when you think about it, particularly in light of the lunatics we hear and read about daily in the farcical world of national politics that we now have to live in. Even the world of dog politics pales into insignificance when compared to our South African politicians and as Trevor Noah and other comedians have repeatedly said - "you could not write this stuff"...!

Talking of political shenanigans, it seems that even Field Trials are not immune. After the debacle of the proposed Spaniel SAHR awards last year, there was a spate of Club committee resignations only to be followed by one or two Judges 'boycotting' certain clubs.....for a moment it appeared even field trials had been 'Captured'!! Fortunately common sense prevailed and the FT community stood firm as only the FT community can and stalwarts stepped up where and when required so a good first half to season has been had by most if not all!

I have to admit to being quite amused by some of the antics of our own little political world of Field Trials and its KUSA appointed controlling body the FTLC. Comparisons to the 'Ruling Party' are not entirely out of place when one considers that amendments to the equivalent of two major Acts of legislation (read KUSA 5C schedules) were initiated by the 'executive' at a meeting where only 50% of Club Reps were present to support the motion. The changes were then sent out for 'public consultation' (read FT Clubs) who were given 14 working days to respond. To cap that, a nil response would be taken as approval! Democracy at work? Perhaps we need to call in a Public Protector for FTs?

The real positive out of all of this is that it triggered a revitalisation of the Working Spaniel Association with a new committee organising training sessions and plans to completely overhaul their KUSA 5C(2). For those who have never seen working spaniels do their thing in the field (both 'Cockers' and 'Springers') you are missing out on the 'pocket rockets' and 'commandos' of the gundog world. The enthusiasm, drive and energy of these dogs is a joy to behold.

The Transvaal HPR Club held a 4 day trial event in the Greylingstad area at the beginning of June and despite late rains and good cover, birds were hard to find with very few points. Fitness is

important if you want to play the HPR or Pointer/Setter game as witnessed by one of the guns who clocked 16 km/day on average over two days as a walking gun. A lot different to our retriever couch potatoes who can set up camp by the 'bar', pop out and run their dog when required and return to their G & T/'Bloody Mary' without the ice even melting!

Life would be so boring without a bit of controversy and of course this FT season has been no different. Let's be honest, you are never going to please all the people all of the time so hysteria over some not so well thought out series in a Retriever FT stake can often persist well after the event. The problem with us FT folk is that we are often under the illusion that our dog(s) is (are) brilliant and we are really good handlers. Sure....how often have you heard said that the dog worked well; shame about the handler! Judges are human and put up with a lot of cr*p. Sometimes a test is set that is a little ambitious and just does not work out. Get over it and move on! I know I am not alone in thinking that the last things we need is an over-regulated sport with tests set to a prescribed or pre-ordained formula.

To finish on a more sporting note and cricket analogy, the gallery were royally entertained at a recent Retriever open stake by a well-known and experienced dog handler, who was finally called up ('given out') just three shouts short of 100 voice commands (someone in the gallery had been counting). An equally well-known FT judge of long standing was then heard to quip, "good effort...but still short of the best of 108"!

Field trialling must rank as one of the greatest levellers of any sport. Hero one day and zero the

next. Those of us who have been in the game a long time know this only too well; those who haven't experienced it yet, then just wait, it's only a matter of time. We love it and that is why we keep coming back.

Best of luck to all for the second half of the season and remember, it's all about the dogs!

Happy trialling!

'Spurwing'

EVENTS 2017

EVENT	DATE
Live game training	2 June
CGC + HHKC Trials	15-23 July
Club training with David Padbury	29-30 July
Training (dummies)	26 August
CFTC + KA Trials	23 Sept - 1 Oct
End of Year Fun Day	26 November
Summer Newsletter	15 December
Deadline	



**BEST OF LUCK TO ALL FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE SEASON AND REMEMBER,
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DOGS!**