

The Gordon Setter Club of NSW Inc

NEWSLETTER



*Stevie G, Int Ch/Sh Ch Carnoustie Let The Game Begin (AI) (Imp Aus)
(Mr J & Mrs R & Mrs S Newton & Cornum & Timmermann)*

Autumn 2024

Editor's wanderings

In this issue I'm very pleased to highlight two very special Gordons with strong connections to Australia and to dogs we know well.

The first is an article about Stevie G, Int Ch/Sh Ch Carnoustie Let The Game Begin (AI) (Imp Aus), (Mr J & Mrs R & Mrs S Newton & Cornum & Timmermann) submitted by Steve and Carolyn Bennett, Sarah Auld, and James Newton (UK). A fascinating article about Stevie G's upbringing and travels and I hope to hear more of his show wins from the US over the next few months.

The second article is very different a;n introduction to Dougal, Raritan's Down Under Dream AKC SAR-W, CGCA, TKA, who has as sire local Lochtay Dark and Stormy (Bramble). Dougal is The Gordon Setter Club of America's First Certified Search and Rescue Dog (SAR-W). This article has been written particularly for us by Dougal's owner and trainer, Sherry Loy after an article about Dougal appeared in the US Gordon Setter News. My huge thanks to Sherry for her efforts in writing this article for us, it is always humbling to correspond with such wonderful people, connected as we are by our love for our Gordons.

It looks like all those who attended the Gordon Setter Club Winter Walk at Lizard Log Park, in Western Sydney, enjoyed themselves greatly and judging by the pictures, the event was well catered—perhaps people needed a second walk after the lunch.

Lastly, a big thankyou to all who helped with the Gordon Setter display at the recent NSW Dogs on Show 2024 day.

Hope everyone enjoys this issue. Ian

Meet Dougal

The Gordon Setter Club of America's First Certified Search and Rescue Dog (SAR-W)



Photo: Three Dog Photography, Cass Rocha, Ohio, USA

Raritan's Down Under Dream AKC SAR-W, CGCA, TKA

(Australian Supreme Ch Lochtay Dark n Stormy "Bramble" x GCH Raritan's Radiant Empress "Ziva")

Breeders: Peggy DaValt, Dawn and Sam Hamilton

Owners: Sherry Loy and Mark Bowen

A lifelong dream for me to own, train, and handle a Search and Rescue (SAR) Dog, then have that dream become a reality by training a Certified Search and Rescue and then awarded the first American Kennel Club ("AKC") SAR-W title for a Gordon Setter has propelled us beyond anything I ever thought possible. The unimaginable amount of outreach, interest, support, and encouragement, especially from the international community of Gordon Setter owners worldwide, have touched us in indescribable ways.

What an honor and privilege to share our *Search and Rescue* (SAR) journey with you, fellow Gordon lovers, and members of the Gordon Setter Club, New South Wales, Australia.

When I started this journey, I had no prior knowledge nor experience in *Search and Rescue* or how to become involved with a team, nor could I find a trainer. I just knew this much: I made a promise to a special Gordon boy, Drifter, a gift from Peggy DaValt, to figure out how to train a Gordon Setter for SAR. And, no matter what, I was going to fulfill my SAR dream.



"A puppy is the most loving gift in the world." ~ Kevin J. Nierman

I believe fate set my SAR dream in motion through a series of synchronistic events. In March 2021, Australian Supreme CH Lochtay Dark n Stormy, Bramble was bred to GCH Raritan's Radiant Empress Ziva. On May 17th, 2021, orange boy, puppy number 6 out of 8, whom we named Dougal, made his grand entrance into this world.

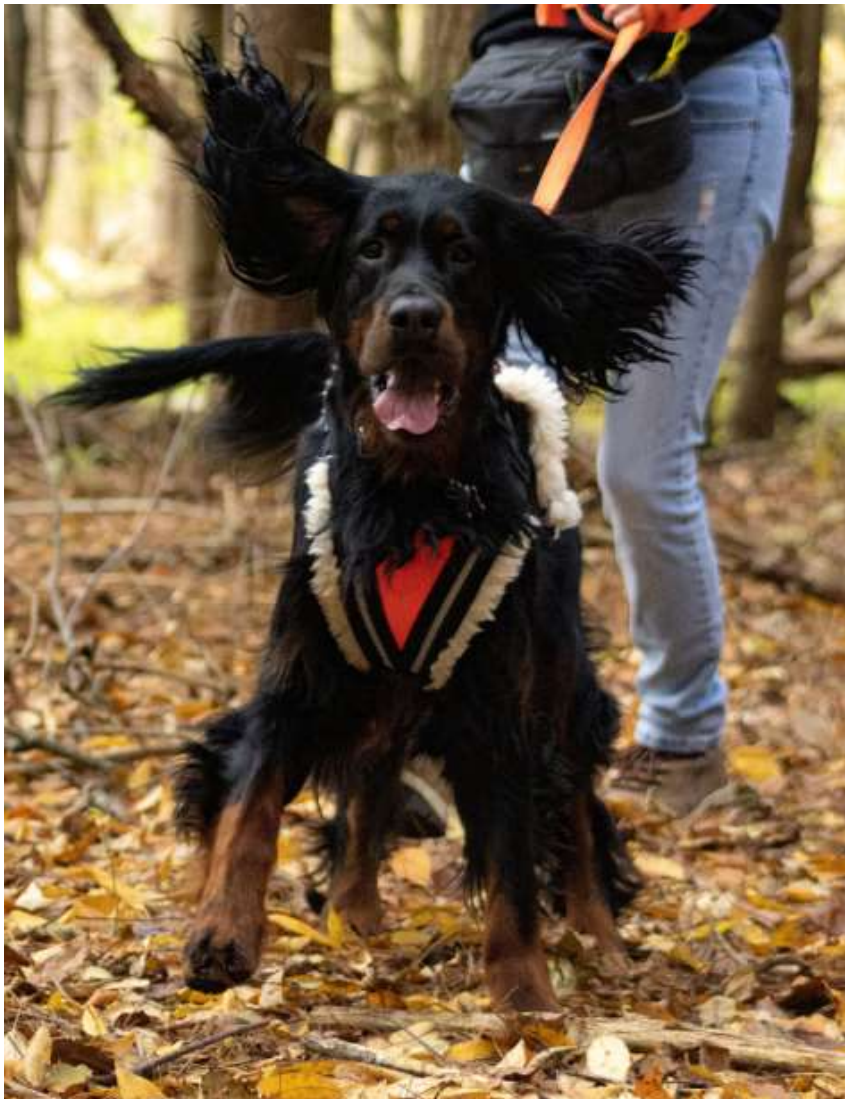
There was something special about that little orange boy; our bond formed the first time I watched him on Raritan's puppy cam. I can't explain it; not having any experience nor guidance on what traits to look for in a potential SAR puppy, it was as if fate had taken over and gifted me the natural ability to trust my raw instincts. There was something extraordinary about that Orange Boy, and from that moment forward, Dougal and I started our journey together and our bond has been unbreakable ever since.



"Suddenly, you know it's time to start something new and trust the magic of new beginnings." ~ Unknown

SAR dogs are trained to locate subjects using their unique scent profiles, whether alive, lost, trapped, injured, or deceased. As we all know, Gordons are sturdy dogs with natural tracking instincts. They possess the necessary endurance for Search and Rescue and will work until they drop, if you let them. A dog's personality, temperament, behavior, and prey drive are crucial in SAR training. Still, training and achieving SAR certification takes significant dedication, determination, and financial resources.

Dougal and I started training when he was nine weeks old. The training methodology and training program for SAR is based on completing all core obedience classes before you can move on to the fundamental training, starting with Tracking 1 and 2, then moving on to the actual Search and Rescue training program. Reading and understanding the process on paper, as depicted in the linked Training Model is straightforward and seems simple enough; however, completing the actual physical training and passing each class, especially with a young, intact male Gordon Setter, is challenging beyond comprehension. The entire process took us 15 months to complete and was the most physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding training I have ever completed.



As the handler, you have to obtain various certifications. The National Association of Search and Rescue (NASAR) Academy oversees the educational part of the process and administers the SARTECH III exam. This course combines written information and your completed fieldwork and is designed to change how you think and react to situations. Throughout the entire training program, you spend a lot of time doubting yourself, your abilities, and your dog. You have this chaotic, tangled web of information floating around in your brain that you have learned along the way. When you start your coursework, all that information and acquired fieldwork and knowledge clicks, and makes sense. When this happens, you also feel the bond you have created and formed with your dog strengthen. You feel as if the two of you are melded together as one unit, and there is no greater feeling than the strong connection you cultivate and nurture with your Gordon.

"Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen." - Orhan Pamuk

Dougal has a crazy, charismatic personality with a deep, old, and intuitive soul. When you look into his beautiful eyes, it is as if you can see hundreds of years of Gordon Setter history, along with the depth of what has been bred into these magnificent black and tan creatures throughout generations - all that drive and the purpose for which they are bred comes through.



He loves to work and exudes so much confidence and beauty during searches; it is breathtaking to watch him. When he finds someone, he pays no attention to high praise or a toy for reward. Not Dougal, he has a job to finish, his tail goes way up, and he holds his head high; his reward is to escort that person back to safety. All of this comes naturally to him. You can see and feel it; finding someone is his true motivation. As my husband says, we indeed have a special boy.

"You see, but you do not detect them." ~ Sherlock Holmes

After obtaining my handler certifications, I took some time off from training Dougal for any new SAR disciplines. I was physically and mentally exhausted and needed time to enjoy and allow him to be a dog. Most recently, we started training again for Land, and Water Human Remains Detection. In June 2024, we passed Land Cadaver and obtained our certification in this discipline. Water Cadaver is the most challenging discipline. We plan to complete our training and earn our certification by the end of August 2024.

This year has afforded us a whirlwind of opportunities. I am genuinely humbled by all of these positive blessings starting with sharing our story in the *GSCA News* and with all of you. One of Dougal's SAR photos was also selected to be included in *The SAR Shop's* annual Search and Rescue Calendar. This calendar is distributed worldwide and can be viewed and purchased at:

<https://www.sarshop.com>.

We have a few speaking engagements scheduled, and I hope to earn his AKC Trick Dog Performer Title. Dougal's own website, *Dougal's Nose Knows - Tails of a Search and Rescue Gordon Setter*, has recently been completed.

I hope our story inspires and encourages others to harness the intelligence, natural abilities, and in-instincts bred into these beautiful Gordon setters to pursue training for Search and Rescue. Going through our training, I wish I had a "mentor" to rely on to address breed-specific issues when it comes to SAR training. If someone does pursue SAR, I am happy to impart the wisdom of my successes, failures, and lessons learned and support you in your journey in any way I can.

For the past 3 years, this intelligent, courageous, and beautiful boy and I have worked extremely hard. We have conquered some of the most arduous challenges with confidence and grace. We have enjoyed times of pure joy and celebration, yet others were heartbreaking. Throughout all of these times, I know that with my black and tan best friend by my side, there is nothing we can't handle or accomplish together, and we will be unstoppable.

Our story, which was published as the cover story in the June 2024 issue of the *Gordon Setter News*, published by the Gordon Setter Club of America, Inc. (an AKC parent club) chronicles our entire journey, training process, and path to becoming the first certified SAR and AKC SAR-W titled team.

For even greater insight into our journey, our story can be accessed, read online, or downloaded at: <https://www.gorsetterk9searchandrescue.com>, or *Dougal's Nose Knows - Tails of a Search and Rescue Dog*



Happiness is a 'few' good toys and plenty of bird scent on the breeze

If undelivered, return to
1 Wolsten Avenue, Turramurra 2074

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OF NSW INC



Dougal - Raritan's Down Under Dream AKC SAR-W, CGCA, TKA

Dougal Photos: Three Dog Photography, Cass Rocha, Ohio, USA