

Puppy Training in a Motorhome Our Experiences (so far...)



www.threegotravelling.com

Introduction

A bit about us and this book

Three go Travelling is myself, Sarah, my partner Ric and our Border Terrier, Reg. When we set off travelling in 2019, we had our Border Terrier, Albi, with us. Albi was 10 years old, when he passed away in Spain in January 2020, after an incredibly short illness. His death was hard for both of us, and our families, as he had been with us since he was three months old, and had travelled with us on all our holidays and trips. In his lifetime he had been left with family only four times - each one nighters!

Prior to setting off travelling in 2019, we had previously travelled around the UK and Europe, in tents and our Bilbo's Celex Volkswagen Transporter, before setting off full-time in a Motorhome. Our trips are available to read about on our website and Facebook and Instagram.

In March 2020, we bought a new puppy. Reg is another Border Terrier. Our lives and travels weren't the same without a dog.

Reg is one of the reasons we chose to write this book, the other was a suggestion by our friends at Motoroaming - Karen and Myles www.motoroaming.com

We are not dog trainers or puppy experts, these are our experiences and thought we'd share some of the things we've found useful.

We are currently off the road from our travels and parked up outside our rented flat, due to the current COVID-19 Travel restrictions. Luckily, our lovely tenant has allowed us to use the garden and some facilities, but we are trying to stay socially-distant as much as possible.

Puppy training takes on a whole new level, when you're in a Motorhome, normally, let alone in Lockdown.

All Rights Reserved.



Reg

Spain January 2020

After Albi died in Roquetas, we knew we needed to take some time to decide whether we would have another dog. We carried on our trip following the same route we would have done with him, but as time went by and the closer we got to home we realised we needed a dog in our lives.

France March 2020

As we got to the English Channel, we started looking on [pets4homes.co.uk](https://www.pets4homes.co.uk) for a Border Terrier Puppy. Knowing when we would be back in the UK, we found a local(ish) dog and contacted the Breeder, paid a deposit and arranged to collect him.

England March 2020

Back in England, we had a couple of things we needed to get done to the Motorhome, so suggested that we collect him when he was a little older than the minimum 8 weeks old; then, the country was hit with Coronavirus - COVID-19, and we didn't know whether we would have a lockdown, as other European countries did, so arranged to collect him at the earliest possible time.

We bought a bed, toys and food, along with a collar and harness, ready for his arrival.

We collected Reg, from the Breeder and took him back to Sussex, while we waited to find out what might happen with COVID-19. We had friends who had changed their plans to go to Italy, just before Italy shut its border, so knew what the worst case scenario could be.

Reg had had his first set of vaccinations and microchip inserted before we collected him and we made arrangements with our Vet to have a Puppy Check and second set of vaccinations.

We were being careful Reg was on his lead and being walked close to the motorhome, just to allow him to toilet, for any longer walks, he was carried. He saw people, horses, dogs, cars, caravans, motorhomes, cows as we tried to get him used to things and experiences.

On 23rd March, the UK went into Lockdown, campsites were closing along with all non-essential businesses. We headed back to our home, which we'd rented out, but knew we could park outside and use the electricity, water and garden, as we'd agreed with our tenant. Reg would have a garden to play in.

On 30th March, the Vets phoned us and cancelled Reg's appointment, on Government advice, we did not have a date to get his Puppy Check and second vaccination done. It would now take longer for him to be able to socialise, we were so disappointed, but safety first.

Vets were allowed to stay open, but only for Emergencies, food and medication.

April 2020

Reg continued to grow and become more adventurous. Thank heavens for the garden, To top it all, the weather was great. Easter came and went, Reg has managed to go through the night without needing the toilet. We do have puppy pads, just in case!

We have started to train him, too. We've managed sit, but only when he wants to! He does sit before his food. We're trying come, stay and leave - these are important ones, but not the easiest for him to pick up, yet.

We were advised that the Government Restrictions for Vets and puppies would be relaxed, slightly. We contacted our Vet, but no answer, so we tried another and they would see Reg. We had an appointment for 17th April, (three more days) and then hopefully another fortnight and he would be able to go out and socialise.

We took Reg to the Vet and he had another vaccination, but it's a different type of vaccination and he has to wait four weeks for the next vaccination, and then another week, before socialisation.

May 2020

We are still waiting for the Vet appointment (we're hoping it doesn't get cancelled) so we can get him outdoors and socialising.

We are currently walking him on a lead and harness on the roadway, partially to wear down his claws, as they were getting quite long. He hates his harness and actually runs and hides (seriously, we're in a motorhome!) resulting in a game of chase and putting a harness on a wriggly puppy!

He has to keep it on for an hour at the moment, just to get him used to it, hopefully when we're out and about he'll be less concerned about the harness and more involved in his walk. It's also essential he gets used to it for travelling, as his seatbelt attachment secures to it.

We're playing outside with the ball in the sunshine, Reg loves chasing it.

Reg is growing and getting more adventurous, he's taught himself to climb up on the bed, he's learnt to climb and descend the stairs.

He's sleeping through the night from 22:00 - 07:00 (touch wood we've not had any accidents for a fortnight).

We'll have some more updates on our web page...

These are some of the things we have done so far...

Choosing a Puppy (or Dog)

All puppies are cute and little.

It is important to make sure that the breed you want is suitable for your lifestyle and the size of motorhome you have.

Border Terriers are small, but lively. They have a great personality, but require plenty of exercise and stimulation. They have a lovely temperament, most of the time, but can have a quick temper, which on occasion earns them the title of Border Terrierists!

Border Terriers are perfect for our lifestyle and the accommodation we have chosen.

Albi spent time with us at home, in tents - both big and small backpacking, the Bilbo's Celex VW and our Etrusco T7400 QBC Motorhome. In addition, we have taken him on a boating holiday in Scotland and with us to hotels.

What do you need for your Puppy?

Understandably, a motorhome does not have the same space you have in a house and we had to downsize a lot of Albi's toys and equipment before we set off. Reg hasn't had the luxury of having a big toy box like Albi had, but he's not deprived!

The items we have for Reg are:

- **A Bed** - it's small enough for him at the moment and should see him right for a couple of years. It has a removable cushion and deep sides, so he can feel snug. It's his space and somewhere he can feel safe. The whole bed is washable and he can travel in it with his harness and seat belt.
- **Food and Water Bowls** - we bought a stainless steel combination with removable bowls. It's easy to clean and small enough for the amount of food he's having at the moment. His water is topped up as required. We did put a plastic mat under it, to protect the carpet, but he was like Bambi trying to balance on it.
- **Collar, Lead and Harness** - we bought a small soft puppy collar for him, while he's relatively little it is adjustable and can easily be made larger as he grows. We will invest in a better quality one once his growing spurt slows. His lead is an extendable ribbon lead (we found the cord ones hurt when they get caught around you). We do also have a stretchy lead - I used to use it with Albi when we

ran, but Reg is too little at the moment. He also has a harness, it won't last him too long and we'll need to get a larger one, but we're trying to train him with it. A harness attached to the seat belt attachment means he's secure when we're driving.

- **Toys** - Reg has a teething toy and pull, a squeaky toy, a couple of balls (we buy proper tennis balls as they last longer - the dog tennis balls usually last about an hour before being destroyed), and he had a soft teddy, which he did destroy about two weeks later. Knowing the terrier breed, we try to buy toys we know will last, or inexpensive ones! Puppies have sharp teeth and do like to chew, so a toy is always better than you or your motorhome fittings.
- **Towels** - we have a selection of old towels, we use for the dog(s), drying after a rainy walk or bath, snuggling up into, makeshift beds on campsites with gravel or hardcore pitches or if the bed needs washing.
- **Food** - Ideally, the Breeder will have given you a supply of food to start you off. If you need to change food over, we had to change it about a month in, you should do it slowly, introducing the new food to the old until the bowl is just new food.
- **Treats** - these are good to incentivise training, but should be suitable to the size and age of the puppy.
- **Puppy Pads (or newspaper)** - we had always thought Puppy Pads were a waste of money, but in the motorhome they have been superb. We also bought bed incontinence pads (in France on our way to the UK as they are cheaper and in the supermarkets). These are about twice the size of the puppy pads. We leave a puppy pad in the space where he chose to wee when we got him and the incontinence pad by the door - he knows this is where he goes out!
- **Patience** - Puppies will not learn everything overnight and even when you think they've got it, something may detract them. Keep enforcing the commands and make sure everyone uses the same command. Use treats if it helps, some dogs will just respond to attention and cuddles (Albi wouldn't take a treat on walks).



The Basics

Vaccinations and Microchipping

All puppies need to have a two-course set of injections to protect them from preventable illnesses. Before they have had both sets, they should not be allowed to socialise with other dogs or use land frequented by other dogs.

When we collected Reg, he had been microchipped and had his first set of injections. We made an appointment with our vet for his second set and puppy review, then lockdown happened and all Vets were closed, and all non-emergency appointments cancelled.

Three weeks into Lockdown, we were told that the Vet could carry out puppy vaccinations and we found one, prepared to do the vaccinations and local, but we had to start the process again but he vaccinations have to be given four weeks apart, so we can not socialise Reg, for another month!

We have updated the microchip information to our details.

Toilet Training

There is no easy way to teach your puppy to go to the toilet, where and when you want him to! It is a matter of time, perseverance and patience.

When we first collected Reg, his Breeder had been using puppy pads, which he had started to destroy rather than use.

We bought puppy pads and incontinence bed pads to protect the Motorhome carpets and allow him a bit of normality. He only decides to destroy them once he's been out for his morning wee! Now, we have the challenge of removing them while holding back a wriggling mass of puppy.

We have placed the pads in the places where we think he's likely to wee (we have been proved wrong a couple of times, but mainly because we've missed his signs of wanting to go out)!

Reg's signs include scratching legs and sitting by the door. He also looks a little uncomfortable. We have also got used to the time that he might need to go.

We don't punish him if he does have an accident, if we notice he's about to wee (or poop) and we can pick him up and take him outside we do, and then praise him. We praise him each time he does it outside too.

To begin with, he found a little spot he liked in the garden and we still take him to this spot to encourage him.

We did find that after his vaccinations and worming tablet, he drank a lot of water and subsequently he didn't manage to go all night, but he did use the puppy pad. We will be more vigilant after his next injection.

Current Timings (a guide)

- 07:00 First Toilet
- 08:00 Breakfast ($\frac{1}{3}$ of his daily allowance)
- 09:00 Toilet
- 11:00 Toilet

- 12:00 Lead and Harness Training & Play
- 13:00 Lunch (next ⅓ of the daily allowance)
- 13:30 Toilet and Play
- 15:00 Toilet & Play
- 17:00 Play
- 18:00 Dinner
- 19:00 Toilet & Play
- 22:00 Final Toilet

All timings are approximate and not set in stone. We tend to play a lot as we can not currently walk Reg outside the garden.

Walking and Lead Training

Although Reg can not yet be walked out on the road, we have been taking time to get him used to his collar, harness and lead.

We walk him everyday with his harness on (which he hates, trying to get it off all the time, rolling on the floor or just lying flat on the ground). We also leave his harness on him for about an hour at a time. Once we can get out and about we think that seeing the outside world, Reg will have his mind taken off the harness and realise that it's an adventure and a big wide world, beyond the motorhome and the garden gates!

Teaching General Commands

We are concentrating on the ones we think are important.

It is important to try to remain calm and not over excite the puppy! Screeching a command in response to the puppy sinking his teeth into your toe, just makes him think it's a game and not let go! Yes, that is personal experience!

So far, we have taught him:

- **REG** - It might seem obvious but we need to get him to know who he is;
- **NO** - Patience is definitely needed here! Reg likes to grab anything that wafts in front of him, washing, bags, feet, towels, socks (his joint favourite, with underwear), and laces (a close second);
- **DOWN** - No-one likes an over enthusiastic puppy pouncing on them, and puppy claws are sharp - especially when you can't walk your puppy on hard ground;
- **SIT** - Again, it makes life easier when meeting people and we're getting him to sit before he has his food;

- **COME** - This is taking some effort, but we're persevering. It will be important, once we're able to go out into the world again;
- **BED** - Again, one he's not liking too much, but essential for motorhome life. When we're eating we want him in his bed and if we have visitors, they don't want to be launched at by a puppy (or fully grown dog), also, when we're driving he will need to know to be in his bed.

Food

We were fortunate to be given a bag of food by the Breeder, that Reg had been weaned onto, but unable to find more, we have had to start to change his food over to another. We started with a small amount of new food mixed with the original slowly changing the percentages until we were left with just the new food. In the last couple of days, all the food was percentage portioned.

We've also been adding water to his feeds, to begin with it was because he eats it so fast we thought he would choke, and then to ensure he would have some water, he is now drinking more frequently, but the habit has remained.

By changing the food slowly, you should be able to prevent the puppy (or dog) from having a dodgy stomach. We had to do this with Albi on our travels as we couldn't get the same food we had in the UK in most places in Europe, and we couldn't logistically carry enough food for long periods of time!

We always place his food and water in the same place, where he is out of the way and can eat and feel safe.

It is worth remembering that when you go off on the road, to empty the water bowl (unless you have a non-spill one), as we have found out on more than one occasion, especially when you're going over speed humps!

Mishaps

Reg likes shoes and socks. We have to remember to remove them from his reach at night, when he's not supervised. He also likes pants and will steal them out of the laundry basket - dirty or wet!

In fact, we've had to Reg proof the Motorhome, so he can't get to anything that we don't want him to! One night, he found the kitchen roll and chewed through part of it, another time he chewed a plastic toy.

Like children, if it goes very quiet, suddenly, be afraid and find the puppy as quick as you can! Reg has taken himself off to the bedroom, where he has taught himself to climb onto the bed, raid the laundry bag or just have a quick wee!

Safety

Reg likes to chew and he loves cables, so we are constantly keeping them out of his way.

He likes to sit with us on the seats in the lounge area, they are covered with throws, but they are too high for him to jump down from with his young joints, so we are careful not to leave him alone on them.

He doesn't climb in or out of the Motorhome for the same reason.

All food and cleaning products are kept out of his reach - just in case.

Rain

We have had a few occasions, mainly with Albi, where the sun hasn't shone and we have had rain.

We have only had two days so far with rain, when we have had Reg. Obviously, we can not walk him outside at the moment, so trying to keep him entertained and his training on course has been essential. As we have mentioned he likes to chew and boredom does bring on his biting.

With Albi, we walked him rain or shine and we do have decent wet weather clothing, including trousers and wellies and walking shoes. We are waiting for Reg to be allowed out so we can get back in the swing!



Travelling with a Puppy (or Dog)

There is a lot of information available online, in books and from others about travelling with a pet. If you are planning to take your dog abroad, then the first point should be to check with your Vet and/or the Government Website for the country you are going to and the FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) at GOV.UK

We haven't travelled with Reg yet, as stuck in Lockdown, but we had travelled abroad with Albi, since 2014. We are going to share some of the information we know (or had found out) from our experience. These were correct when we travelled and no-one yet knows exactly what will happen at the end of this year for BREXIT, as we write.

Pet Passport

Due to the current COVID-19 Lockdown we can't get a Passport for Reg at the moment, but we did have one for Albi.

Once a dog is 12 weeks old, he can have his Rabies vaccination, which is essential for travel in Europe. We are having to wait for Lockdown to be lifted to be able to sort out Reg, and we need to get his vaccinations complete first.

Once a dog has had his Rabies vaccination, you have to wait 21 days to travel abroad.

As we were travelling with Albi in 2019, and the planning was started in 2018, we had a blood test taken for the Rabies Titer Test, in order for him to have a certificate to prove his immunity to Rabies. This was a precaution for a No Deal Brexit, as we might have been in Europe when the first (and then second) date was announced.

If the Titer Test comes back negative, you have to start the whole process again, vaccination, wait 21 days, blood test and results - about two weeks wait, depending on the day your vet sends off their bloods.

In addition, we have needed to take Albi to a Vet to have his worming treatment certified. This has to be done before returning to the UK (minimum of 24 and maximum of 120 hours before travel time) and before entering some countries in Europe. We have had to do this before entering Norway and Finland.

For Norway, you can have your dog treated every 28 days before entry - we had Albi seen the first time by our Vet twice before we entered Norway.

Finland, if you are entering from Sweden, you do need to see a Vet, before you enter - we had this clarified by the Finnish Government.

