

# Erin News

www.erinhounds.co.uk



Welcome to the 7th edition of Erin News- find out what has been going on behind the scenes as we head towards homing our 275th hound.

## Smoke and Mirrors

Trying to establish the numbers of greyhounds bred for racing and their fate is nigh on impossible and there is no way of knowing the number of greyhounds associated with hare coursing as regulation is non-existent. (Hare coursing is illegal in the UK and for good reason, Ed) Greyhound Data ( [www.greyhound-data.com](http://www.greyhound-data.com)) is a voluntary database where information about some greyhounds' racing and breeding may be found. If you know your greyhound's race name, you can look up their pedigree under "Dog Search". The odd coursing meetings are there but in an anecdotal manner only. While on the site, take a good look round at the classified advertisements, kennels and adoption pages (As you are stunned by the sheer numbers, reflect that these are not statistics but individuals just like your own greyhound, Ed.) Dogs will generally not appear on Greyhound Data unless they have run a valid race at a registered track, therefore races run on the numerous flapping (non- registered) UK tracks or most coursing events are unrecorded.

If your dog is not on the Greyhound Data website.... go to the website of the Irish Greyhound Racing Board (IGB) at [www.igb.ie](http://www.igb.ie) and look under the heading "All things racings" then "Trainers and Owners" and then "Greyhound Search". While you are on the website don't bother looking for death rates, injury rates, export rates, doping statistics or convictions under the Irish Greyhound Welfare Act as you will be wasting your time. In the "welfare" section, read gems like "Any dog loves treats but greyhounds REALLY love treats! Don't overdo it, though, an overweight greyhound is an unhappy, unhealthy, short-lived greyhound" (Surely no unhappier or shorter lived than most Irish racing greyhounds? Ed.)

Now to the Irish Coursing Club (ICC). There is no free way to access information about most coursing dogs as this is a private amateur body but if you register and pay 50 Euros you can look under "Find a Greyhound" on [www.irishcoursingclub.ie](http://www.irishcoursingclub.ie). The ICC hold a stud book in which all matings and

litters (but not individual pups) are registered. IGB stewards tattoo the puppies using numbers from the ICC then the information about which dog has which tattoo goes back to the ICC (hence you can check for unregistered coursing dogs, their parentage and whelp date).

When a greyhound is trialed at 12-15 months, it may be registered with a name (this requires a fee of which many are deemed unworthy) and that gets sent to the IGB. Thus no records exist for the total number of greyhound puppies bred as all those born but not registered, cease to exist both metaphorically and usually in reality. The Greyhound Board of Great Britain [www.gbgb.org.uk](http://www.gbgb.org.uk) publish details of all whelpings in their newsletters to trainers/owners so it is possible, but the IGB and ICC simply don't want to be accountable for the blood they spill. If you can't find your dog in these publicly accessible records, you can see why.....oh and this is just about greyhounds, lurcher statistics are a contradiction in terms, there is no such thing for these unfortunate "field sports" dogs.

## A bit of R and R

Our top fundraising duo have come up trumps again for the hounds. Rick has secured a four figure donation from Lehvoss UK and Rosey has co-ordinated our team of volunteer knitters resulting in very saleable toys and novelty goods as well as coats. Thank you Dorothy, Gill, Joyce, Della, Hazel, Janet, Margaret, Andrea, Waggy Woolies and Dogs and Roses for putting their handicraft talents to such good use.

# Happy Endings

Last year, our family suffered a great loss when our dog, Jack, was sadly put to sleep at the grand age of 14. I swore blind that no more dogs would come into our home as the pain of losing him was very deep and raw. My friends, Jane and Nikki who both have Erin dogs were determined to change that as I often walked with them and had attended a few Erin fundraisers which introduced me to sighthounds.

Our home check was completed and my son started to see which dog he liked the look of. I had fallen hook, line and sinker for a little lurcher, but Nick liked a greyhound called Emma. With Elisabeth, her foster mum's, guidance and love, this little girl stole our hearts. What a change Emma has made to our lives....as a family we are complete again.

She was a little nervous at first, but even on her first night, bedtime was bedtime, no crying or howling, she just settled down on her bed to snooze the night away. In the mornings, we would be greeted by her at the stair gate and as the weeks have gone on, the wag in her tail is so huge – if a tail could smile, hers would! She eats well and her cheeky side is starting to emerge! We have been introduced to Kangaroo dog as she follows the squirrels in Marbury Park and Ninja Dog as she steals cake and kills her toys! Her and Diddy Dog are a pair and we are all learning to duck as toys fly over our heads. You cannot help but laugh!

Seeing me perched on the edge of the sofa with my foot on the floor to stop my being pushed off, my partner said Emma must think all her Christmases had come at once. Who rules the roost? – Emma of course!!

Thank you for allowing us to give Emma her forever home – she will be treasured and I must add a special thank you to foster mum Elisabeth, who is fantastic and gives them such a good start on their journey.

PS As well as fostering Emma, Elisabeth has raised over £100 by walking friends' dogs, come rain or rain (!) in aid of Erin Hounds.



*Little black beauty Emma (back) with new mum, Helen and from left to right: Molly, Diddy Dog and Brax.*

## The Most Wonderful Time of the Year?

Thank you to Heather who adopted one of our dogs, Callie, in 2012. At work, she nominated Erin Hounds as a charity to which staff could make a donation rather than send Christmas cards to each other and sent us the resulting donation of £25. Why not do the same? Many Irish dog pounds clear out for the Christmas holidays by putting all the residents down unless rescuers get there in time (Erin dogs, Captain and Flair, only just escaped this fate. Ed).

## A bit more R and R

Rosey and Rick Green are proud to announce their adoption of a new friend for Jack, their greyhound. Get ready to meet gorgeous greyhound girl, Georgia (GG) at our fundraising events (Can Jack have the odd day off now? Ed). Thanks to an Irish volunteer being in the right place at the right time just before Christmas, GG avoided being used to produce lurchers by a man who didn't even know what the "writing in her ears" was.

Thank you to the Pets at Home Altrincham branch for their ongoing support, to GREY2K USA Education Fund and the Brunner Mond Charitable fund for their generous donations and to a couple of our adopters who raised £100 from a collection at their 50th wedding anniversary party.

## Everything comes to him who waits

At Erin Hounds, we take great care to match the right dog to the right home. This can take time especially when the dog will be living with cats, be left longish hours or need to fit in with an existing dog. We are extremely grateful to enquirers that understand this (and that our volunteers have as much going on in their own lives as those who say they are too busy to volunteer! Ed). A Macclesfield couple who had all three of the above requirements, would be first to say that their wait was well worth it as they now have the ideal addition to their family.

We would also like to thank people like Nicki who adopt dogs like Tara (was Hope!) who have physical impairments having been innocent victims of racing or road traffic accidents.





# Reflections of an adopter

In the last newsletter, Anne may have had you welling up as she described her decision to adopt greyhound girl, Luna (was Saoirse) after losing her beloved greyhound boy, Neo. She refused to judge Luna against Neo or her sister's greyhound Dexter (Dexy), recognising that all are individuals and need time to "unpack their bags" but I'll let Anne continue: "Dexy has a sad face and plods about like a big gentle giant. When he arrived he was a little shell shocked and struggled with the hard flooring. He is quite vocal, muttering and chunnering all the time and may give the impression of being aloof but does love attention. Toilet training took a while but he sorted it.

Neo was timid, he had his comfort zones and his favourite people. He decided on the second day, he was not being left on his own at bedtime and galloped up the stairs. He was an intelligent dog and only needed to be told something once and that was it. He was certainly happy and could be an absolute clown. He loved and cherished his toys. He was almost like a bitch moving pups as he didn't like Dexy playing with them so would gently remove them and take them upstairs where he knew Dexy couldn't get them. He wasn't worried about being left alone and just used that time to snooze. Once again there were a few toilet accidents till he got sorted but he didn't like it if he had an accident and always let us know.

Luna was like a whirlwind after Dexy and Neo, full of energy and curiosity. On the first day, she was up the stairs and 'No' didn't mean anything to her except that she had your attention. In the first month, she destroyed every toy given to her, helped herself to anything she could reach (not food) on tables and had a couple of accidents in the hall. She is not as destructive with her toys now even though she still likes to throw them about. Her favourite game seems to be "Let's throw everything out of the toy box faster than the humans can collect them and put them back!" Another great indoor game is, when I am changing my bed, seeing if she can actually get inside the duvet cover - she is really funny. I don't mind because if told to get off the bed, she does and stands there grinning. She loves to play fetch but only with her air kong balls (that's how she lost both dew claws!) but she won't play it with any

other toy. She enjoyed Christmas, loving all the people coming and going as she is very people orientated and people absolutely adore her. We live near some older peoples' bungalows and they love to see her and make a big fuss. She has a favourite friend called Skip who is a guide dog. She gets on well with all types of dogs that we meet. The pushy, off lead ones can be a bit of a nuisance, she is ok with them - it's just me that gets grumpy! Luna walks well on the lead but she would like to be out in front especially when we are somewhere new, then she can be on a mission, so we have been using a Canny™ collar. (Gen Con™ collars are useful too, Ed). She is pretty much fearless and if she hears or sees something new she has to head straight for it and investigate.

After about 3 months, we suddenly realized how much calmer she had become and was no longer like Tigger on Red Bull™. She was still a very happy and confident dog but now felt settled as though she had found her place.

So 3 dogs of the same breed with 3 entirely different personalities. Anyone thinking of adopting a dog cannot go wrong with a greyhound, but as with any dog, not just an adopted dog, you have to have an open mind and not expect too much of them too soon. It can take weeks or months for you to get to know them and for them to understand what you expect of them. Give them time, and you will learn their signals for 'I need to go outside' or 'I'm hungry' or 'Play with me'.

Having the Erin community around you when you adopt a greyhound is fantastic as the simple fact that someone is only an e-mail away is great. No matter how silly a question (and I've asked some) or what problem you feel you are having, there is someone out there who has been through the same thing or can give you advice. Every dog is different so people shouldn't give up, a bit of advice, a bit of patience, a bit of time and the reward is a contented dog and a happy owner. I find my greyhound to be quite calming on stressful days and highly amusing a lot of the time, I could not be without her. She is absolutely wonderful and we are blessed to have her in our lives, so thank you." (No, thank you Anne, you are a tonic! Ed)

## Fast Work

Tia - this keen girl knows what she wants and pursues it single mindedly! In the last edition, we reported that Tia had passed her Bronze Award Kennel Club Good Citizen Award. She has been busy over the last few months, not only achieving her Silver and Gold Award but also securing herself the best prize of all... a forever home. Go Girl!



# In sickness and in health

Two greyhounds this year had their owners scratching their heads when, instead of the usual ailments, they came down with two very rare conditions. Read their stories (and get your hound insured Ed!).

## **Fibrocartilagenous Embolism (FCE):**

We fetched our little baby girl in September 2013 from her Erin Hounds' foster parents. Such a happy girl but timid of the wide world and afraid of so many things.

Her name was Ebony but she became Lottie. She came to live with a grumpy cat, a very old guinea pig called Mabel (who we have just lost), three Campbell ducks with attitude and Boris the greyhound, who loves every minute of his retirement from a very long racing life and now loves Lottie too!

Lottie is such a good girl. She loves her family, does well in her training, is happy with life and has grown in confidence. Her cheeky side has developed as well and she makes sure she gets cuddles, loves and treats!!

In late November, she was playing in the garden when she suddenly yelped, stopped moving, arched her back and did not move for several seconds. I was close enough to go up to her and as I did she suddenly walked around, came back to me, gave me a lick and danced back into the house.

Within 45mins Lottie was screaming, panting, in a state of shock, her back legs had collapsed and she could not move.

It was so distressing for Lottie but also for us as we had no idea what was happening to her. Our vets work late so we took her round, they mentioned that it could either be FCE or a spinal disc damage. Because of her symptoms they felt it was FCE. We had never heard of this but it is when some of the soft centre of an intervertebral disc spins off into a blood vessel, obstructing the blood supply to part of the spinal cord.

She stayed with the vet overnight and the next morning we took her 40 miles to a specialist vet hospital for an MRI scan to confirm the diagnosis. Lottie stayed there for five long days.

When Lottie came home she had had the FCE spinal stroke confirmed and we started a programme of physi-

otherapy, massage, manipulation, obstacle training, continence therapy and above all, confidence training and harness work. She has been such a good girl and has worked so hard. At first we didn't always notice the improvements but as the weeks passed we began to notice how much stronger and stable she became.

It is now 10 weeks since Lottie had her spinal stroke and we now have our little girl back to her playful self.



We are continuing her training and Lottie is bouncing around again. She is still weak in her back legs and it is felt she always will be.

This is apparently a very rare occurrence which can happen to any dog at any age. It usually happens when they are running and playing and it follows just the same pattern as it did with Lottie ie your dog is out having a good time

when they suddenly yelp loudly, stop moving and arch their back but within a few seconds, carry on as before. Usually within 30-60 minutes, the hound is in distress, and loses the use of one, two, three or four limbs.

Lottie is such a determined character, which has helped, but if it ever happens to you, or a

friend, please don't despair. It is very rare but if you understand what is happening it makes it so much easier to help your hound. The first few weeks were a roller coaster of emotions for us and physically demanding but we still have our beloved Lottie. Above all stay positive and believe in your dog. Getting your dog back on their paws as soon as possible is vital and we found being confident and not too emotional aided Lottie in her recovery. Boris was so good with Lottie in the first few weeks, so gentle and understanding of all the attention she was getting. We are now back to two happy, playful hounds. Life throws some rubbish at us sometimes doesn't it? (Thank goodness Lottie's dedicated owner threw it back! Ed)





## Symmetrical Lupoid Onychodystrophy (SLO)

We first noticed something was amiss at the Erin Meet and Greet event at Trentham Gardens in April 2013 (not guilty Ed!). Lily had been 'worrying' one of her back paws the evening before and one of her claws split that day. She was bright and appeared well in herself, but limping and so she was carried to the car.

She was operated on the following Monday morning and we were expecting to pick up a sulking, groggy dog that evening with one paw bandaged so were a bit disconcerted to find both back legs fully bandaged. Whilst she was under the anaesthetic, our vet had checked her other nails and discovered a few others were 'crumbly' and loose in the nail beds and removed those at the same time, plus her dew claws which were also affected.

Realising they weren't just dealing with a case of a straight forward split nails, biopsies, bloods and cultures from the nail beds were taken. The waiting game started but we were told before any results came back, that they suspected either an autoimmune problem or a thyroid gland problem.

The results came back: definitely not thyroid, not cancer and no infection. At this stage the vet was a bit stumped (no pun intended) and had a 'practice meeting' to discuss Lily's case with all the vets. I like my vets and they're particularly greyhound-savvy, but I was starting to worry about Lily undergoing surgery twice in a relatively short space of time with her being an elderly girl and wanted reassurances that she wouldn't have to undergo further surgery. We were starting to have the conversation "can we put her through this again?" but then I noticed one of her remaining claws was feeling a bit loose and it was decided that all her remaining claws would be need to be removed.

When Lily was on the road to recovery and at long last was dressing free- we'd been having to go up to the vets about every three days to have them changed, we knew it was her immune system misbehaving but it wasn't until a friend saw an article in the Retired Greyhound Trust's Homer magazine that we had an actual name for it. I took the article up to the vets the next time I took Lily for a check-up and he agreed.

Lily is on vitamin

E which she'll take permanently but we hope that eventually the steroids will be stopped completely. She was originally on 5mg a day but now is on only 1.25mg every other day. She's in fine fettle, but understandingly doesn't love the vet too much these days.



Lily was fit and well, but she did struggle a bit with both her back legs bandaged and whilst we were waiting for more news, she started to lick her front paws excessively. She'd been prescribed antibiotics post surgery and was taking those twice daily. We took her back before her next scheduled appointment and the vet discovered that some claws on her front paws were loose too. They had checked them before and they'd appeared sound, but the next day she was back in and under anaesthetic. The surgery went ok but another 5 claws were removed and Lily now had all four legs completely bandaged. She actually coped a lot better with all 4 bandaged as opposed to two.

## Sleeping Beauty

Reggie looked a picture in his posh collar from the Erin Hounds shop but found competing against other leggy models to win Most Handsome Dog in the Greyhounds in Need Fun Dog Show, his first ever show, absolutely exhausting.



# Events

## Springtime Meet and Greet

Saturday 26th April 11am – 3.30pm at Trentham Gardens  
(Just off J15 M6, ST4 8JG).

Come and say hello to the team and our dogs looking for homes at the Shopping Village, North Entrance. Enjoy meeting the hounds we have homed and chat to their new families. It's a great place for a family day out with shopping, walks, restaurants and gardens. For more information on the attractions and facilities go to [www.trentham.co.uk](http://www.trentham.co.uk)

## Alderley Edge Fun Dog Show and May Fair

Saturday 17th May 11am-5pm.

Alderley Edge park, Ryleys Lane, Alderley Edge, Cheshire SK9 7UY . Dog show registration from 2pm, judging starts 2.30pm on  
For more information see [www.alderleyedgefair.com](http://www.alderleyedgefair.com).

## Bakewell farmers Market

Saturday 31st May from 9am to 2pm,

Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell DE45 1AH.

An exciting new venue for some fundraising and public engagement! In the heart of the Peak District, Bakewell Farmers' Market is the second largest in the UK, with 75 stalls and attracting up to 5000 visitors. There is plentiful parking and the attractive town centre is just a short stroll away.

## Didsbury Festival

Saturday 7th June 11am – 4pm,

Didsbury Park, off Wilmslow Rd, Didsbury M20 2RW.

Erin Hounds will once again have a stall at this popular event.

There is lots to do with a parade, funfair, entertainment, food and a fun dog show.

## Great British Greyhound Walk

Sunday 22 June

Tittesworth Water Tittesworth Water, Meerbrook, Nr Leek,  
Staffordshire, ST13 8SW. [www.greatbritishgreyhoundwalk.org.uk](http://www.greatbritishgreyhoundwalk.org.uk)

## A bit less of R and R

Having found his

fundraising Scooby Doo and Mrs Claus's costumes becoming a bit snug, by a strict diet and exercise regime, Rick has carried on raising funds out of season, by losing lbs for pounds.

Rick has lost a total of 31lbs since January 6th (2 stone 3 lbs)! Congratulations Rick - an amazing effort and you must be feeling very proud - both of your new trim figure and of all the money you have raised for the hounds. A big thank-you on behalf of all the hounds that will be helped by your efforts.



As ever, the hounds have the final say...

***"As the needle goes in, the final words we hear are "You can't save them all" but with our last breath, we reply "You can.....neuter and adopt, don't buy".***



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