

Erin News

www.erinhounds.co.uk



Welcome to the 13th edition of Erin News- find out what has been going on behind the scenes as we head towards homing our 550th hound.

Healing paws

One of the joys of rescue is knowing that Erin Hounds' dogs enhance the lives of those who adopt them. We would like to share one of those tales with you:



Sophie

.....Aged fifty seven, unfit and overweight. An increasingly sedentary job; stressful, long hours and a long commute in heavy traffic to boot. The company "fit scan" revealed high blood pressure and a metabolic age equivalent to someone in their seventies. This was not how I envisaged my life and I reckoned I might not even last until retirement without some serious changes. I am an outdoor girl at heart so I decided that I would work for myself running a tutoring

business based at home and this would free up time to have a dog and a healthy, happy life. I had previously successfully run my own business and had saved up some contingency funds, so it wasn't as big a stretch as it sounds. I duly handed in my notice and over the following five months started saving hard! And of course, I spent a lot of time researching dog breeds on line and ogling dogs advertised for adoption.

Which breed of dog would best suit me? There are lots of beautiful dog breeds out there, with different behavioural traits. I wanted one that was fairly small so I could carry it over stiles; one that was OK walking reasonably long hikes and rambles but would be happy to go between walks without being destructive or disruptive; friendly towards children, people and other dogs and also a confident one that wouldn't be put off by crowds and loud noises, as I play in a brass band at village fayres and carnivals throughout the summer months. The most promising candidate for me seemed to be a lurcher.

Who to adopt from? Again, I trawled the internet for rescues who dealt with lurchers and Erin Hounds came into the frame as a small but very caring and supportive rescue with the very worthy aim of drawing

attention to the plight of the huge numbers of greyhounds and lurchers bred for racing or hare coursing and subsequently abandoned by uncaring people who beat them, chain them up outside in the cold with no shelter, leave their injuries untreated, starve them and throw them out of moving vehicles onto roads. My heart went out to these poor dogs and I resolved to adopt one. So I filled in the on line form in an odd five minutes at lunchtime.

The volunteers were kind and helpful from the outset. They got back to me the same day with a phone call and an email with lots of information. As I had never had a dog before, the Erin Hounds team wanted to be sure I would be happy having one and would cope. A lovely lady came to visit me with her two lurchers in tow. She looked round my house and garden, talked through the logistics of dog ownership and patiently spent a while teaching me about the habits of lurchers in particular – the running, chasing small animals, issues with recall, jumping fences and stealing food from anywhere they can find it and how to cope with them in general. I seemed to pass muster and soon afterwards had a call from one of the volunteers when we discussed my taking one of their lurchers for a walk to see how it felt for me. I met them at a local kennels and took a lovely dog out for a walk. Of course, I instantly fell in



love with her, but it was too early for me, as I was still working. They kept in touch with me as to my availability, which kept being delayed, so I was probably stretching my credibility, but they stayed with me.

Then one day they emailed me to say they had got a possible dog match for me. Described as "a hairy lurcher called Asafa who likes to hop up on sink n worktop to help herself." Well, that bit hadn't actually been a specific requirement, but she sounded promising anyway.

The photograph showed the most beautiful little dog. She had been found stray in Galway city – very underweight and with mange but had now fully recovered and was spayed. I went to see her a couple of times - met at the kennels again by the ever patient, helpful and kind Michaela and her partner, John. I fell in love with her instantly and the rest is history.

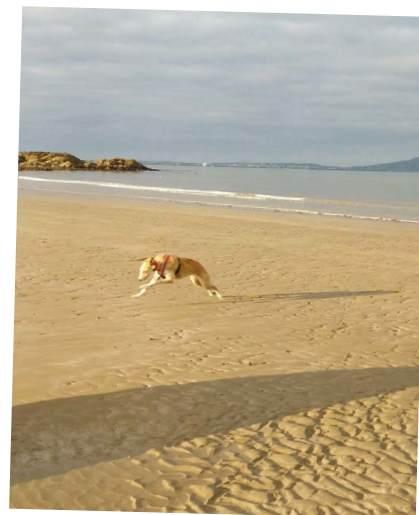
Asafa was about 15 months old when I got her. I renamed her Sophie (an Irish name meaning beautiful and kind) and have now had her for over 6 months. She has come out of herself, learned to play, learned some commands and some doggie etiquette. I have learned a lot too. Sophie is thoroughly

laid back and has been brilliant out on band jobs, through crowded streets, away in the caravan and practically everywhere else. We have had such fun! Sophie is a real joy to have.

Now she has grown her adult coat, Sophie is even more beautiful than before (but then I am slightly biased) and has that elegant dignity that sight hounds all seem to have. We have had



Sophie



Sophie at the beach

and overcome a few "heart in mouth" moments - one that almost involved a team of Erin Hounds volunteers being mobilised in a search party at night. (Yes, they do care and support that much!) Sophie has put on a couple of kilos of muscle, and I have lost two stone.

Erin Hounds have followed us up to make sure all is going well and to offer further help and advice as needed. I am one very happy dog owner. Thank you Team Erin.

Run and run

Other running enthusiasts who support us include Greenfield Greyhounds Running Club who donated £600 which is a fantastic amount that will help us bring the hope to incarcerated hounds in Ireland that they too will one day be free to run for pleasure.

If you would like to see your dog run off lead in a safe enclosed area in Macclesfield and at the same time raise money for Erin Hounds why not contact Dogs Allowed, Penningtons Lane, Macclesfield SK11 9QH (find them on Facebook or telephone them on 07899731581). They make a donation for each booker who mentions Erin Hounds. If you plan on going out in the cold with your skinny hound, why not order a bespoke hand knitted dog coat from Lynn at www.lynnsknitteddogcoats.co.uk who gives the profits to dog charities such as Erin Hounds.

It just doesn't add up for hounds:

Greyhound Rescue Association Ireland (GRAI) was founded in 2010 to promote greyhound adoption in Ireland and to lobby for improvements in greyhound welfare. They have collated racing industry/ Government/Local Authority figures – ie from the Irish Coursing Club (ICC) Stud Book, Local Authority Dog Pound statistics, Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) / Irish Retired Greyhound Trust (IRGT). As you read the figures below remember each represents a beautiful, sensitive, innocent just like your greyhound so please support GRAI (of which Erin Hounds are a member) by letter writing, attending protests, promoting welfare and of course fostering / adopting Irish hounds as pets.

Breeding/Pound Figures Litters registered (ICC average 6 pups per litter):

2010 – 3,003
2011 – 3,272
2012 – 2,980
2013 – 2,736
2014 – 2,801
2015 – 2,709
2016 – 2,520

Put To Sleep (PTS) figure in Irish dog pounds

2010 – 672
2011 – 546
2012 – 404
2013 – 427
2014 – 245
2015 – 203
2016 - (not available as of February 2017)

From when GRAI was founded in 2010 to 2016, at least 120,126 greyhounds were born in Ireland. 108,372 were named at racing age (thirteen months old) – these figures are from the 20,021 registered litters. (Irish Coursing Club average 6 puppies to each litter – only litter figures and named figures are supplied)

In the years for 2010 to 2015.....2,896 greyhounds were surrendered to Irish Dog Pounds. 2,497 greyhounds were destroyed in Irish Dog Pounds. 399 greyhounds were homed/collected via Irish Dog Pounds.

2014 and 2015 dog pound figures showed a noticeable decline in greyhounds destroyed and a noticeable rise in greyhounds being transferred to welfare groups.

There are still huge concerns that hundreds of greyhounds are being destroyed in dog pounds, and there is documented evidence to show that perfectly healthy greyhounds are among those abandoned with very little chance of escaping death.

The decline in greyhounds accepted into dog pounds for the years 2014 and 2015, compared to previous years, raise further concerns of what is actually happening to those greyhounds turned away. The decline does not balance with any raised homing figures – far from it.

Irish Retired Greyhound Trust

Figures given show that for the years 2011 to 2013, the IRGT directly homed 966 greyhounds, and assisted in the homing of 741 greyhounds – the majority would have been homed outside of Ireland.

The 2014 IRGT Report, submitted to the Charities Regulator, show that the IRGT gross income was €202,864. The total IRGT expenditure in the reporting period as supplied by the charity: €206,249.

Although IRGT spending for 2015 was higher than the previous year, €224,924, GRAI are concerned with the IRGT 2015 fall in income, compared to the previous year, of €182,079.

The fall in income was due to the reduction in IGB prize money – money contribution to IRGT is taken from prize money and then further matched by the IGB. GRAI would like to see such IRGT contributions made via IGB funding/finances elsewhere – funding for greyhound adoption(s) must not be damaged because of declines in prize money paid in future IGB austerity-measures.

In 2015 the IRGT homed 444 greyhounds directly, and assisted in the homing of 325 greyhounds.

In 2016 the IRGT homed 517 greyhounds directly, and assisted in the homing of 374 greyhounds.

Government Funding

Government funding to the Irish Greyhound Board for 2017 is set at €16m - a rise of €5.2m since the 2010 funding of €10.8m.

2010 - €10.8m
2011 - €11.4m
2012 - €11.2m
2013 - €11m
2014 - €10.8m
2015 - €13.6m
2016 - €14.8m
2017 - €16m

Doping Figures

The 2014 Indecon Report into "Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon" reported that there had "been an increase of over 50% in the number of

tests in the two years from 2011 to 2013" - however 2015 saw a massive drop in samples taken compared to 2013, 2016 saw a continued decline in samples taken:

2016 – 5,383
2015 - 5,632
2013 - 7,307

Samples taken in other years

2011 – 4,807
2012 – 6,983
2014 – only first six months published 2,822 (from January 1st to June 2014)

Despite the fall in samples taken, 2015 saw a big rise in the actual number of positives returned.

For further information please contact Richard King, press officer for Greyhound Rescue Association Ireland Email: grai.profficer@gmail.com

Celebrating a milestone

At the tender age of 13, one of our volunteer's nieces, Caitlin Bailey, is an accomplished artist. Now doing Art GCSE two years ahead of her peers, her big passion is portraits of animals. When we homed our 500th hound Tiger (now Ted) in the spring, Caitlin asked if she could include him in her exam portfolio. Says proud aunt Rosey: 'She'd already done Georgie for us in charcoal some time ago so we were thrilled when she made the suggestion. Ted's a good looking lad though we felt his face would be difficult to capture as it is very sooty and 'smudged'. But we were flabbergasted when she showed us what she has done to date. Caitlin's been crazy about wildlife and dogs since she was tiny and really gets into the soul of the animal through the eyes.'



A selection of Caitlin's animal artwork has been made into cards which she has donated for sale by Erin Hounds because she's passionate about animal rescue (she will keep a percentage to buy expensive art materials so she can try new media – Ed). You can buy these at our Meet and Greet in November. Watch this space for the finished portrait of Ted our 500th homed hound and enjoy this example of Caitlin's work.

Rest and rescue

Why not have a well-earned break in a dog friendly holiday cottage near Tideswell in the Peak District? The owners adopted a lovely lurcher from us and make no charge for a visiting dog but ask those bringing their dog to make a donation which is then split between Erin Hounds, the Soi Dog Foundation and two Spanish sighthounds rescues. See www.hulmesvalefarmcottages.co.uk.

A fitting tribute

Jerry Tucker, the father of one of our volunteers, was an athletic coach for many seasons at Southend on Sea Athletic club and Altrincham athletics club, even coaching Mark Smith who won a commonwealth gold medal. When he sadly passed away recently, both clubs and many others whose lives he had touched, made donations to Erin Hounds. His memory will run on in our long legged friends.



Every which way but lose

Having been homechecked, we met Jumanji (now Sully which is Gaelic for keen eye) and though we had had 5 rescue dogs before, we had never had a sighthound. We wanted a dog that we could take anywhere with us, was good with people and other dogs. We took him home in the car, he travelled well, was house trained and slept all night without a peep. What a perfect little dog we thought. The next day we took him for a walk and he walked perfectly on the lead until he saw things that scared him which unfortunately included people, other dogs, cycles, cars, motorbikes and joggers! Then he would rear up, twist round, lunge or growl and produce a loud piercing bark which was quite scary. As his reactions were unpredictable, we muzzle trained him which he took to no problem and it made us feel safer and more confident.

Another problem we had was in the home with my mum and grown up daughters, he was perfect with us but would jump or growl at them. We did lots of research and turned to behaviourists for help but this seemed to make matters worse. Jo at Erin Hounds gave us some good advice on how to deal with this and it seems to have worked.

We took him to training classes but because of his behaviour, he couldn't stay in the group so he had 1-1 in a separate room with a trainer who saw a dog who was very clever and quick to learn but who was also very scared. We finished the 6 week course but didn't continue as we realised it was too stressful for him and us.

12 months on we are seeing vast improvements and are so glad we stuck with him as many times we thought we couldn't cope but we understood that he was a lovely young dog who had had a bad start in life through no fault of his own and just needed understanding and guidance. He is not happy with street walking but he loves the country park where he is free to meet other dogs and their owners in a safe way. We found that daily training has been very beneficial with wait and leave (impulse training) helping the most, especially out on walks. Another good thing has been using a crate as his bed as when we have visitors he sees this as a safe place to go with his frozen filled Kong.

When we first had him, he didn't know how to play which was really sad for a dog of only 12 months old but now he is so excited when we get his bowl of toys out for him to play with. We make him wait and then tell him "OK" and its lovely to see his excitement and tail wagging as he searches through the bowl and gets them all out, one by one, to play with.

We have never given up on any rescue dog (none have been so hard work though!) and have adopted the mantra : "We never lose, we either win or learn". We have certainly learned a lot about dogs in this last 12 months and he gives us so much pleasure, so many laughs and we are all a lot fitter. Just to see how much happier Sully is makes us realise it has all been worth it. (They meant every word as they went on to adopt another Erin hound called Corona, now Boo which is a fantastic happy ending for all, Ed)



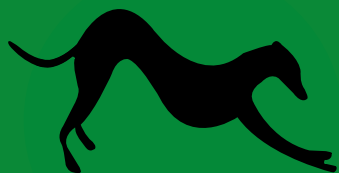
Sully

Thank you once again

A massive thank you to all our supporters including Wilmslow social work team who raised money with a bake sale, The White Lion, Barthomley, Creature Comforts in Sandbach who donated money raised from carrier bag sales, the Royals and Coldocks who sell at car boot sales and Sue Makin who opened her lovely garden plus those who make donations for holiday cover arranged through Erin Hounds Dog Sitters group as well as Audrey, Geoff and those who use our Just Giving text facility

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

We were simply dogs before humans messed up our lives and then we became "rescue dogs"- how is that our fault?



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