

Erin News

www.erinhounds.co.uk



Welcome to the 14th edition of Erin News- find out what has been going on behind the scenes as we head towards homing our 650th hound and celebrate our 10th anniversary.

Paying it forward

You may have heard the phrase 'therapy dogs' or seen local news reports which show the good that dogs do. Dogs can help children build confidence with their reading, help patients reduce stress and anxiety and have even been shown to lower blood pressure. Likewise, dogs can help dementia sufferers improve their motor skills by reaching out to stroke dogs, as well as helping to stimulate conversation and memory recall.

they are large, small, furry or bald, what matters is that they are calm, healthy and happy dogs, who are pleased to meet new people and be handled. It doesn't even matter if they are not particularly good around other dogs, as long as they are good with people.

Erin Hound greyhound girl Coco (was Cola/ Sheeaun Flyer) is a registered therapy dog with Therapy Dogs Nationwide (TDN).



Coco working

TDN is a nationwide charity providing a network of 'visit volunteers' offering their time for free to a wide range of establishments, such as schools (primary and secondary), nurseries, hospitals, care homes, disability and community groups, hospices and prisons etc. Visits can be regular or one-off events; the visit opportunities are endless.

We have always referred to Coco as a 'cuddle monster' she simply adores people, new places and lots of fuss. Everywhere we go, she draws a crowd, people always commenting how beautiful, calm,

placid and friendly she is; how they could stand and stroke her all day – and she would let them. But, how calm does a therapy dog need to be?

After some research, we came across TDN and found the initial eligibility criteria, such as, you must have owned the dog for over 6 months and the lead must be attached to the collar (unless a harness is used for medical reasons).

Each dog is then temperament tested to gauge their presentation (clean & healthy), their behaviour when meeting people for the first time (not jumping up, pawing or excessively licking), being stroked and handled (ears, mouth, stomach and tail) by a stranger, how they take a treat, their reaction to sudden loud noises and their behaviour when being ignored such as when the handler is talking for 5-10 minutes.

We were interested to find out more, but greyhound eccentricities came to mind:

- Sighthounds have longer nails than other breeds.
- Sighthounds don't generally sit easily, they find it uncomfortable.
- Sighthounds - well Coco at

But what sort of dogs are therapy dogs and how do you go about seeing if your dog can be a therapy dog?

Well, in short; any type of dog can be a therapy dog, it doesn't matter if

least, wouldn't countenance sitting / lying on a cold, hard floor.

- If it's cold or raining, Coco would need to wear a coat or jumper.

Basically, I seemed like a crazy greyhound woman. However, these things are important and I didn't want to set Coco up for a fall. Fortunately, TDN are very sighthound savvy and fully appreciate these beautiful hounds and all my questions were promptly and reassuringly answered.

Before the assessment, we practiced walking with the lead on the collar – Coco wears a harness as she used to “statue” when we first adopted her, but now she

prefers the lead on the harness. We also practiced taking a treat nicely, although, I do not let anybody feed her during visits,

as a windy aftermath can occur (not part of the assessment criteria).

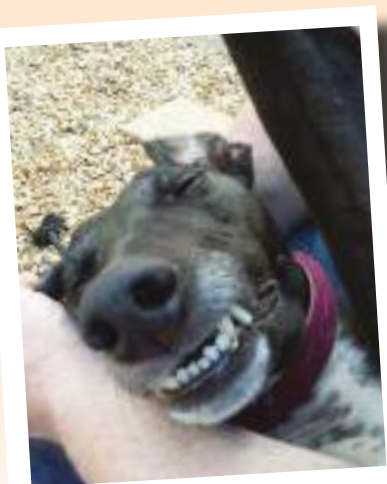
Erin Hounds have followed us up to make sure all is going well and to offer further help and advice as needed. I am one very

happy dog owner. Thank you Team Erin.

So, armed with treats, rain coat, cool coat and blanket, she flew through the assessment with flying colours. TDN then applied for references for me.

Coco visits two residential care homes, meeting people with dementia and their carers. It costs nothing for the establishments to receive visits, all they ask - is your time and to share the joy of seeing and stroking a dog. The reward is to see people's faces light up at the sight of a dog and to reach out and stroke Coco as she approaches.

If you are interested in finding out more about Therapy Dogs Nationwide, receiving visits to establishments or to seeing if your dog could be a therapy dog, please visit www.therapydogsnationwide.org, or email: enquiries@therapydogsnationwide.co.uk Alternatively, both myself and Coco are regular attendees at the Erin Hounds events, you are more than welcome to come and speak to us- she will be wearing her TDN bandana.



Coco

Raising the bar

Jem (was Domino), another Erin hound who is also a TDN dog (see Erin News- Spring 2017) has now added another string to his bow by passing the highest (Gold) level of the Kennel Club Good Citizen scheme, which includes demonstrating the ability to walk free beside the handler, return to the handler's side and stop when asked- no mean feat for a sighthound (maybe he started with the going to bed on command task to build his confidence! Ed).

Becks, an Erin lurcher was entered by his adopter into Grinshill Dog



Becks

Show and won best crossbreed and then best in show- non pedigree . He will keep a shield with his name engraved on it, for a year. Well done little lad!!

Alie (was Cairo) & Henry (was Bolero) attended an open day at Windyways Macclesfield, Alie came first in the prettiest bitch competition and Henry received a special award in the most handsome dog category. (They looked as thrilled as only sighthounds can. Ed!)



Alie



Henry



The life and limb lottery

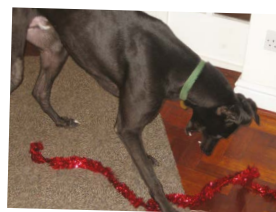
Q. Which of these greyhounds has broken a leg?



Blyss



Nessa



Tyson



Neo



Jack

A. ALL of them (BEFORE these photos were taken)! A soft tissue injury or broken bone is only a death sentence if your owner won't pay for treatment or even pay your board while you rest and recover since being put down is cheaper or even free. 3-4 greyhounds per night can be put down with treatable injuries at tracks like Galway. It is impossible to get insurance for a greyhound that is racing as the risk of injury is so high. It is monetary value that determines a racing greyhound's fate as the following two examples show:

Inslips Fizz, a female greyhound born in 2012. At just over two years old, she didn't finish her second ever race, at Clonmel track in Ireland as she sustained a leg injury and was put to sleep by the track vet. The Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) Welfare Manager reported this as being 'quite rare in greyhound racing'.

Boylesports Hero, a male greyhound born in 2012 was owned by the sponsor of the Irish Derby. He broke a leg at two and a half years old. Unlike Inslips Fizz, Boylesports Hero is from a regarded breeding-line so he received surgery so that he could be used for breeding which makes his owner money.

In February 2011, concerns were raised of the track safety at the, then newly built, Limerick greyhound stadium. Concerns continued to be raised until February 2014 when the IGB contracted out work to re-vamp the track's first bend. The IGB issued a statement saying they were 'aware of the issues (in October 2013)' and that greyhound 'collisions and injuries were a feature of the sport'. The IGB insisted that the re-vamp of the first bend had nothing to do with the welfare concerns persistently raised.

This not only shows contradictions on injuries between the IGB Welfare Manager and the IGB

media statements, it also shows a serious lack of concern for greyhound welfare and a lack of any prompt action on track safety.

Irish Greyhound Spotlight (IGS) actually recorded the greyhound race results of every Saturday night from all tracks in Ireland for 2014. It found that there were at least 717 incidents of welfare concerning the health/welfare/life of those greyhounds raced. In 2017 Irish greyhound injury data was released, for the first time, following questions raised to Minister Michael Creed (minister for greyhound racing). They were as follows (Spot the difference! Ed.):

2014 (July to Dec): 266 greyhounds injured, 69 put to sleep.

2015: 421 greyhounds injured, 122 put to sleep.

2016: 427 greyhounds injured, 139 put to sleep.

In IGB statements misleading statistics have been given to the media in Ireland. The injury/death figures were given in conjunction with an approximate number of '100,000 greyhounds' raced at tracks in 2016. This figure is not how many greyhounds were used for racing – greyhounds race more than once in a year. Also, these figures are of those recorded at the race track – injuries will be found the following day and will also occur at trial races.

As an example of greyhounds used for racing in Ireland: In 2013, 15,576 greyhounds were named and registered; 6,203 were sold to be used for racing in the UK. Not all of the greyhounds remaining in Ireland will race on tracks, and not all of those able to race on Irish tracks will race often or at all. Ireland also has a coursing industry which involves a huge number of those greyhounds named and registered.

The IGB know how many greyhounds are in their racing-pool, and how many are used – so why are the true figures not used in conjunction with the injury/death figures released?

Another area of concern are the many examples where urine samples, given for dope tests, show greyhounds have been given pain killers/pain relief medication. This indicates that greyhounds are

regularly used for racing while injured. Such urine samples are only dealt with as a doping offence (as the pain killer will be a prohibited substance) and not as also a welfare offence. For coursing greyhounds, the Irish Coursing Club Directives, instructions and guidance notes allow for the coursing stewards to use their judgement on the running of injured greyhounds.

Source (Irish Greyhound Spotlight).

The next generation of sighthound guardians

Mushroom, a lurcher puppy was picked up with his mum, Fig, straying in a town in County Mayo which is notorious for stray lurchers. They were taken to the vets where they were put under a heat lamp and then were taken to a kennels with experience in looking after bitches with pups. Sadly all the other pups would have been traded by this stage.

It is important that children learn to care about animals and that future generations love sighthounds and will carry on our work, so we were

delighted when Katie, age 8, told us about her newly adopted friend, Mushroom:

He became part of our family in April and since then we have discovered that he is a very good humoured dog. He enjoys mad zoomies around the garden and is a great partner to run and play with. He loves going in the car because he knows there is a good adventure ahead like ball games in the park, running with my mum, walks round the reservoir or watching bike races. He won the biggest ears competition in our local dog show.

Mush can be a cheeky dog when you are not there; like sitting on the sofa, stealing plastic bottles out of the recycling bin, opening doors and jumping on things that he shouldn't but luckily our terrier Ziggy is a good mentor for him.



Mushroom & Fig



Mushroom



Mushroom & Ziggy

Waggy Woollies

One of our supporters found a new hobby through volunteering for Erin Hounds. Collecting second-hand books to sell at an event, her eye was caught by a book about knitting and crochet and her interest was sparked. This hobby grew into the phenomenon now known as "Waggy Woollies", selling crocheted



items to raise money for Erin Hounds. Projects have included hats, scarves and mittens, coasters, flowers, bunting, Christmas baubles and

even a stuffed bat (!) with all profits going to the hounds.

Look out for the woollies at our events.



Thank you for stepping up for the hounds

While we shelter under rain-soaked gazebos or stand on street corners with collecting tins, it is fantastic to know that kind people are also quietly keeping us afloat with donations including Anne, Elisabeth, Bob, Judith, Carol, Jon, Gillian, Nicola, Neil, Audrey, Sue, Lottie, Sylvia, Gemma and Margaret to whom we are very grateful.

We were touched to receive donations in memory of dogs who have sadly passed away; Bonnie (Holywell First), Brandy and Poppy and generous donations in memory of Elsie Wild and Paul Taylor. Friends and family rallied round to donate to Erin Hounds after Phil, one of our adopters, was involved in a very serious motorbike accident, as they knew how dear the charity is to him.

We were overwhelmed by the support received from Live Wires Flyball team, Early Paws Boarding kennels, Pets at Home and Creature Comforts pet shops in Sandbach and Congleton.

We also smiled on receipt of £40 from a supporter's dog, Reggie who gave up treats for Lent. Emily, a 10 year old keen baker and proud owner of Erin hound, Tess, arranged to make and sell delicious cakes at Didsbury Fete in aid of Erin Hounds. We did not foresee the £356 which came our way after Early Paws held a medium evening in aid of Erin Hounds but were most grateful.

Our very loyal supporters, Greenfields Greyhounds Running Club have generously donated an amazing £600 while Keats, our lovely young black greyhound has himself taken up running with his new mum, as an

honorary member of the Goyt Valley Striders running club. Getting over the frequent stiles was initially a challenge but he mastered it and has now inspired other members to enquire about adopting an Erin hound of their own.

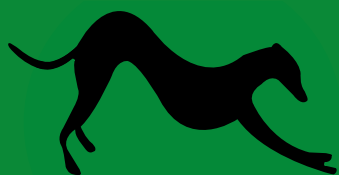
A winter fuel allowance was diverted to ensuring our hounds stay warm this winter, accompanied by this lovely letter.



Having finally achieved the status of "State Pensioner" it was a lovely surprise to also get a £200 winter fuel allowance!!
me + my little Ollie dog are always warm + snug in our bungalow, so we are giving the £200 to you to help keep your rescue babies warm this winter.

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

If breeders love dogs and are just trying to keep a breed alive as many breeders claim, why do they only part with their dogs for money?



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