

# Erin News

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Welcome to the 16th edition of Erin News- find out what has been going on behind the scenes as we head towards homing our 800th hound.

## Storm Dennis - February

Greyhound Mommas in North Wales held a Facebook poll inviting supporters to nominate their favourite sighthound rescue to receive donations from their fundraising efforts. We were chosen and the gutsy Mommas were not put off by storm Dennis and while it raged in February, raised £300 for Erin hounds with their craft fayre and refreshments. One of our volunteers was delighted to win this beautifully decorated cake at the event.



## Radiant Beauty

**Belle means “beautiful” in French and is also the name of my daughter’s favourite Disney princess. Belle was originally named Luce meaning “light” in Italian. Both names suit my gorgeous saluki cross perfectly as she is beautiful – and is told so by passers-by on a daily basis. She has also brought light, not only into my family’s life but into that of those with whom I work (and those she meets on the train to work) but also, via her Pets as Therapy charity work, into that of many children and elderly people.**

Belle has been gentle and sweet natured from the start and seems to lift spirits in the office when I take her in but it was when she patiently let a blind gentlemen feel all her features while his wife described her to him that I thought about whether I could share with others my fortune at having found her. I read an article about Pets As Therapy (PAT) and decided to apply. Having filled in several forms and had a chat on the phone we met a gentleman in a park in Macclesfield for an assessment. This involved several elements such as how gently she took titbits, reacted to loud noises, coped with children etc. but also the relationship between us eg how aware I was of what she was doing and how she coped when I went to get a cup of tea (apparently it was good that she watched me all the

time but didn’t get anxious). Anyway – we passed with flying colours and once our paperwork was processed we started visits.

As I work full time, we don’t do nearly as much as many other PAT dogs but we do visit

a school for children with autism where the children love to take it in turns to groom her and walk her around the classroom.



We also go to a care home for those with dementia which is hugely rewarding.

Emotional memories are apparently the last to go and so, for those who loved dogs, stroking Belle brings back the happy feeling they associate with the beloved canine friends they have lost. Belle is even more placid and gentle than normal during these visits and is very tired afterwards. She definitely knows she is ‘working’.

For me it is hugely rewarding, so thank you Erin hounds for finding me my beautiful girl and giving me a chance to bring some light into the lives of those less fortunate.



# Covid lockdown- March 2020- thanks for coughing up!

The pandemic put a temporary halt to our ability to transport dogs and has halted all fundraising events for the foreseeable future so we send our warmest thanks to everyone who is thinking of us and enabling us to continue saving hounds, including Colette, Barry, Joan, Maria, Clare, Janet, Cathy, Jane, Helen, Julie, Rebecca, Janette, Shirley, Susan, Adrian, Vanessa, Gemma, Angela, Digby, Pamela, Sandra, Rosey, Rick, Deborah, Ed, Vashti, Barbara, Claire, Richard, Audrey, Jos, Bob, Briony, Rose, Jenny, Margaret, Verena, Catherine, Rachel, Paul, Sara, Mary, Robin, Nicola, Carla, Sarah.



Our innovative supporters stepped up to the plate with safe new fundraisers. We send out heartfelt thanks to Alison Wright whose Zoom yoga class raised £590 and Yvonne and John's virtual Grand National which raised £40. North Wales artist Tommy Baker

donated his wonderful oil painting which we auctioned on Facebook and made £230

Pre- Covid, we were touched to receive £150 from Nicki and Gary's wedding and say a huge thank you to Ron, the father of a lady called Hazel who fosters hounds in Eire, Grey2k USA, The Great Global Greyhound walk, Maureen from South Wales, a Dogs Today magazine reader who made two very generous donations after seeing a feature on Erin Hounds, Footstools for Sighthounds, Ecclesiastical movement for Good awards (June 2019), Pooch fest organised by Early Paws (Sept 2019), GreytGreysGifts, Vanilla Ivy Art and "Team pointy" greyhound and lurcher walks.



## Pandemic- what pandemic?

In the Covid-19 pandemic, the greyhound industry in Ireland has shown disregard both for the seriousness of the pandemic and for the industry's own Covid-19 protocols.

In early March, when Ireland went into lock-down, greyhound racing was allowed to continue on a "behind-closed-doors" basis. On the very day after the Irish Government updated its guidelines on social-distancing and after the Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) issued its own statement that only one person per dog could be admitted for the "behind-closed-doors" racing, the IGB's chief executive officer was photographed in a gathering of people celebrating a greyhound's winning race - a photograph subsequently published by the industry itself.

As the pandemic progressed, greyhound racing stopped and strict travel restrictions both within and without Ireland were implemented BUT such restrictions were soon relaxed for greyhound breeders and sales transporters as the selling and transporting of greyhounds for continued breeding was deemed essential business!

The industry itself, along with the many politicians with interests in greyhound racing called on the government for an earlier than proposed, return to racing "behind closed doors", despite many publications by the industry itself revealing obvious failures of compliance with Covid-19 protocols!

Racing "behind closed doors" was allowed to resume and the industry made no attempt to hide their flagrant

breaches of basic Covid-19 safety measures, mirroring their attitude to the years of breached regulations on breeding, registering, racing, selling and exporting greyhounds stipulated in the Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011.....

Under the 2011 Act, a greyhound bitch can have six litters. Two further litters can be allowed if a veterinary surgeon will certify that there would be no health and welfare issues for the bitch. Such a certificate must also be given to the Irish Coursing Club (ICC), who legally must register all eligible greyhounds bred and named for racing/coursing.

Under the 2011 Act, it is unlawful for a greyhound bitch to have a ninth litter and unlawful for that litter and any progeny of a ninth litter to be registered by the ICC in the stud book and therefore they cannot be used for racing/breeding/selling within the industry.

Irish Greyhound Spotlight (IGS) identified two recent cases where there was use of unlawfully bred greyhound litters to provide the Irish industry and UK industry with greyhounds.

Despite publication and notification to the industry of this serious breach of the 2011 Act, the greyhounds in question continued to be allowed to race, instead of being stood down from racing and made available for adoption. Tellingly, the public records of greyhound litter reports then became unavailable for nearly three weeks. (This is in addition to regular blocking of race videos where dogs fall and are injured, Ed)

The unlawful litters come from greyhound bitches, still being bred at 9 and 10 years old. It's no surprise that these litters are bred by an industry-respected and often celebrated breeder/trainer.

The Irish greyhound industry falls under the remit of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

Those involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of greyhounds are well aware of the flaunting of the law and held their breath as the new Minister for DAFM was due to be announced.

The announcement came in late June that Teachta Dála (TD) or Member of Parliament, Barry Cowen would be that new Minister.....a man who had previously been employed in the greyhound industry and had raced and bred greyhounds! One of his greyhound bitches had eight litters starting from age 2 until age 8 and a half. Ministers for DAFM are regularly asked questions by TDs concerning greyhound welfare issues and the new Minister's record of self-interest for the greyhound industry was published in the Irish Examiner.

At the same time, further revelations of the new Minister's past came to light across the Irish media, and after just over two weeks of being appointed he was sacked from the Cabinet - this was good news for greyhounds or was it?..... Barry Cowen's replacement was Dara Calleary, a man who, in June 2016, was among the 114 TDs, including Leo Varadkar, who voted against a bill seeking to ban hare coursing. One of the first questions raised by TDs to Dara Calleary was about the unlawful breeding and registering of greyhounds. The reply was that the Irish Greyhound Board denied any knowledge of such a breach of the Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011 to him and his department. Dara Calleary, resigned on 21 August 2020 after just one month in the post, having attended a function which breached Ireland's Covid lockdown restrictions.

(Is it any wonder frontline rescuers despair? Please spread the word and support them in whatever way you can. Thank you, Ed)

(Article from Irish Greyhound Spotlight- find them on the internet)

## Buddy's story

**As you read the articles above and below, reflect on the fact that for 2020 the Irish Government have allocated another €16.8 million to allow the greyhound racing industry to continue in business. Too many of the political hierarchy are involved in the racing world so there is no will to enforce any welfare conditions for the racing greyhound in Ireland and even worse no will to prevent export of greyhounds to countries with even poorer or non-**

**existent welfare protection for these gentle dogs. Once in these countries, these greyhounds are not only out of reach for rescue but are bred from.**

Because of Ireland's indifference, there is barely a country in the world without



Irish greyhounds including Spain which already has a massive galgo welfare issue closely followed by Portugal. There are Irish greyhounds in India, Pakistan, several Eastern European countries and even South Africa. The biggest disaster for Irish greyhounds after Spain is of course, China. This worldwide horror is caused simply by greedy, uncaring owners and politicians, predominantly in Ireland. Sadly, the lack of anything but what appears to be derision from those in power for the rescuers on the front line in Ireland picking up the pieces with no end in sight, leads to demoralisation and exhaustion.

Born in Aug 2017, Buddy was one of a litter of 10 registered. He last raced in Ireland in June 2019 and his reward for winning his last race was to be shipped off to Spain. Within less than six months and now carrying a leg injury, this beautiful black boy turned up in a small rescue in Spain, past his "use by" date.

Most of our supporters will be aware of the overwhelming battle that Spanish rescues face with the torrent of galgos and greyhounds in need and our greatest respect goes to them. Through a mutual connection, Erin Hounds were asked to help find Buddy a home where he would no longer be treated as a commodity but as a sentient being. It is Erin Hounds' mission to help Irish dogs and if their misfortune is to have been flung far, we must still try and as you will understand when hearing from Buddy's new owner, who speaks from the opposite end of greyhound ownership.....

"I was lost from the moment we went to meet him! We sat down on the sofa at his foster mum's and he immediately jumped on between me and my partner and tucked his head under my arm! I was his from then on! Buddy, came to us on 22nd March, the day before lockdown! How lucky were we! This gentle lad (unless you're a squirrel, a rabbit or a cat!!) charms

everyone he meets. His aristocratic poise and slightly aloof air gains admiring looks. How lovely to walk a dog that doesn't pull on the lead! He goes to bed at 10pm and gets up after 7am. He tells us when he needs something, beginning politely with a whisper but growing louder if we don't get what he means. That said, if we say "No" he will lie down with a deep "harumph", like a disgruntled teenager which makes us laugh. We didn't know what a rescue greyhound would be like, but it's been a joy and a delight to get to know him. He is calm in the face of yappy small dogs or barky big dogs. He loves trips out in the car and holidays in the caravan. He is happy to be where we are. For all the horror he has been through he has a trusting and beautiful nature".

Buddy has been through quite an ordeal in his short life but what of his siblings, particularly the 3 showing no racing history and his brother who shared the same owner and last raced a week before Buddy??



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

*If you adopt a beautiful rescue dog, it comes with a beautiful feeling. Those who buy puppies must understand there is nothing beautiful about breeding dogs for money. Open your heart, not your purse and adopt.*



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