

Erin News

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Welcome to the 22nd edition of Erin News- find out what has been going on behind the scenes as we head towards homing our 1400th hound.

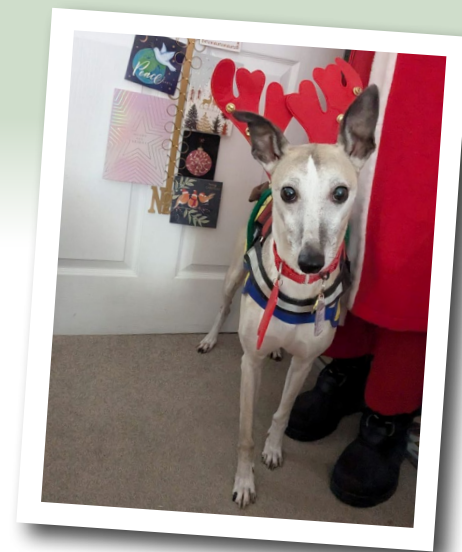
Christmas cheer

Breffni and Nigel, Breffni's adopter, visited the Childrens' Ward at Macclesfield Hospital on Christmas morning, with Nigel dressed as Father Christmas. He was not allowed to call Breffni 'Santa's Little Helper' as that is trademarked by TV's "The Simpsons" so Breffni went by the name of 'Santa's Reindeer Dog'!

They said hello to the couple of children that were still there as most of them had gone home for Christmas

and were due back in after Boxing Day. Having said that, the nurses and doctors were very pleased to see Breffni and he got plenty of attention, which he loved.

This is the second year he has 'volunteered' to be there on Christmas morning and they are hoping that he will be able to do plenty more in the future. His name is already down for Christmas 2026!



Is your dog an oenophile?!

No- your dog is acting on instinct and is a wee- nophile. Have you ever noticed your dog pull a funny face when they smell an area where another dog has urinated – somewhat reminiscent of an oenophile (wine taster)? You may also have seen the same behaviour in horses or cats. If you watch closely next time they do it, you will note that they curl their top lip to

expose the teeth and inhale for a few moments or lick the area and hold their head up high as though appreciating the bouquet of a vintage claret. Dogs have a special organ called Jacobson's organ which lies above the roof of the mouth and is connected to the oral cavity by a duct located behind the upper front teeth. The organ is involved in their ability to detect pheromones and

hormones arising from the excretions of other animals so they know who is about and what their breeding status is. These chemical compounds are non-volatile so require direct contact, hence the licking. Let your dog enjoy checking their wee-mails on their walks as I am sure you would not like to be yanked away from your inbox.



Spreading the love

The first time I laid eyes on 'Columbo', as he was then known, I just knew he loved everything and everybody. He bounced along the road bringing his foster dad to meet me and our other dog and our early walks just proved it. He had to say hello to everyone; people, children, dogs, vets and even the odd brave cat.

He only has one fully working eye as the other was damaged in race training but far from allowing it to hinder him he very much uses it to his advantage! I very often get a 'sorry mum I didn't hear that as I'm deaf in that eye'. Nothing stops him, he just takes everything in his stride and loves new adventures. We walk with a few friends most Sundays and Colin is always getting introduced to new dogs, including a very young rescue puppy who has just arrived across the road. He is so calm and the puppy immediately chills out around him. He is always the calming influence on the walks.

I'd read about Pets as Therapy (PAT) & thought he'd be an ideal candidate. I completed the paperwork and arranged a meeting with assessor, he was just himself and walked straight up to her, put his head in her hand and said hello. She did a few tests on him (making noises behind him, checking his reactions with others etc). We were in a busy environment and he just took it all in his stride, putting his head down to say "hi" to a puppy who wanted a kiss and allowing small children to cuddle



something to take their mind off it. He and their other therapy dog have their own postbox in school so if any of the children have any worries or problems they can pop a note in and they know it will be read in private by one of the dogs.

He has also visited Newcastle-under-Lyme College on their 'Freshers Week' and their Mental Health week, Crewe Ambulance Station on their staff mental health day and a few visits to health clubs for their events. He's also a great Ambassador for the greyhound community attending regular fundraising events.

At our school visit today he was introduced to a pupil he had never met but who suffered with a type of autism. The child wasn't sure if he liked dogs or wanted to meet Colin but as some of his children had gone off on a residential we had plenty of spare time. I got

him (all of which we knew he would do gently). He passed with flying colours and soon afterwards we started our weekly session at a local school. We visit every Monday in term time to listen to a few of the children read and we also called in every morning around the SATS testing time to give the children

Colin to lie down so he wouldn't look too imposing and the lad came to the door. He had been told he just go to the door and look at Colin and decide if he wanted to meet him, but as Colin was lying down with his head on his paws he came straight in and started to pat his head, he then carried on down his back and up again to his head. I asked him if he wanted Colin to stand up and he said 'yes'. Colin stood next to him and in typical greyhound style gently leaned against him. I admit to having a lump in my throat, especially when I looked at the door and saw the Deputy Head and several teachers looking on in amazement. When he finally left 'Colin's office' he said he definitely wanted to come back and see him next week and he was going home to tell his dad he wanted a dog of his own!

He also gained another fan a few months ago, who has become a regular visitor, a non-verbal pupil who again wasn't sure about dogs but we used to meet him on the way out of school. At first, he hid from us, then wanted to touch Colin but nowhere near the front and only when he thought Colin wasn't looking, now he's always our last visit and insists on cuddling Colin for a while and then holds his lead as we walked out.



I am so, so proud my beautiful, gentle giant, he loves everyone and they love him, and I couldn't be happier to show him off as a wonderful example of what a fabulous nature dogs (especially greyhounds) have. Just to add that he completed the 'Stand Up To Cancer' walk doing 3 miles each day throughout April and also received lovely thank you tributes at the end of the school term.

Jen & Colin

To Jen and Colin,
Words cannot express how grateful we are for you both visiting us in school for the past two years. Your kindness, calm and gentle nature has had an extraordinary impact on our children. You have both made a lasting impression and will never be forgotten. We hope that Colin will enjoy lots of naps and doggy treats.
All our love,
the staff and children of
Saint Nathaniel's Academy
x x x

Running for their lives

On a roasting hot 26th April 2026, Helen Swan, adopter of Xena, completed the London Marathon in 4 hours 42mins and smashed her target of raising £500 for Erin Hounds. Thank you to Helen and all who supported her.



We are very grateful for your support

Thank you very much to the late Robert Charlesworth who left a legacy of £1500 for Erin Hounds, to Simon, Gisella, Pete and Paul who donated their proceeds from the Didsbury Hound Walk, to Grey2K USA who donated £800, to Frocks for Freedom, to Sue who auctioned off paintings in aid of Erin Hounds and to High Peak Comps

Community who donated £500. We were also very touched to receive donations from Robert, Rose, Lloyd, Lorraine, Janet, Pamela, Rachel and Tegan, John, Phoebe and Benji, Shirley, Angus, Nick, Nicola, Stephen and Megan to name but a few.

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

We need fosterers urgently as we prefer homes to kennels.



www.erinhounds.co.uk

Mobile: 07903 549306 **Email:** email@erinhounds.co.uk

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