



Italian Greyhound Rescue Charity

Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2007 Issue 3

PATRON: Katie Boyle

www.italiangreyhoundrescuecharity.org.uk

ANOTHER BIG HELLO TO ALL OUR FRIENDS

Welcome to the third edition of our Newsletter which we hope you will enjoy reading. On behalf of the Trustees I would like to thank all our Friends and supporters for their continued support which is greatly appreciated. Enclosed is a "Friends" Renewal Form for 2008 which we hope you will complete and return to continue your valuable support of the Charity.

Update from our Chairman - Helen

Donation

Good news for the Charity arrived this spring from Mrs Julia Smith who along with her husband Dr David Smith founded the first Rescue for IG's in this country back in the early 1970's. Julia and David have donated a substantial sum of money from the legacy left by the late Mrs Rose Holland, for Italian Greyhound Rescue, to the Charity. Their commitment ensures that the money left for the rescue of Italian Greyhounds will be safeguarded and put to good use by the charity. The security of having income from the interest of this legacy, ready to deal with the next emergency enables the trustees to focus on other important aspects of the charity, rather than worrying as much about funding.

Welfare

One of the Charity's primary objectives is the research into diseases affecting the breed. The Charity has instigated research into epilepsy in the breed to help eradicate this distressing condition, for both dog and owner from one of our oldest Toy breeds.

We are delighted that Scientists at the Animal Health Trust are joining forces with other scientists from across Europe in an exciting project to investigate the genetic basis of epilepsy in canines and in particular in Italian Greyhounds. If we are to be successful we need DNA samples from large numbers of Italians both affected and non affected dogs.

The DNA can be provided by the owner as a simple cheek swab. Sample collections from different research groups will be pooled and used collectively to identify the mutations responsible for epilepsy. The project is likely to take several years to complete but the first, and arguably most important, step is sample collection. So far, 78 samples have been returned giving a return rate of 43% of the kits already given out. If you have an unused kit please use it, they cost both the AHT and the Charity money, which will be money well spent if we can help eradicate this distressing condition from the breed. All adopters of IG rescues will soon be sent a testing kit for them to take their IG's DNA sample, however, anyone else who owns an IG and would like to help by taking their dogs DNA, please contact our Secretary, Mary Turney Tel: 01608 652017 email: mary@tarka7.f9.co.uk for a sample testing kit which is free of charge.

Christmas will soon be upon us again and we had a fantastic run up to Christmas last year thanks to all your enthusiastic buying which helps rescue and, to the kind person who managed to source the last of the lovely tapestry cushions with an IG crest for us. Sadly no more for this year, but we are proud to feature thirty of our rescued IG's in a full colour calendar which is sure to give pleasure to so many people all year round. Our talented Secretary, Mary did the artwork in between taking pictures for a new Christmas Card which is one of three new designs. Gifted artist, Bridgette Lee has most generously painted a delightful 'Festive Fun' scene featuring fourteen IG's which we have made into a very unique card for the charity this Christmas. The love of these little hounds really does bring out the best in people; Bridgette a complete stranger, decided to donate her design to the charity for this year and prints of the card can be purchased from her after Christmas. The third card is by popular request, 'Christmas Rose' and features a fawn sitting IG surrounded by red roses. These and other new items are available from me; the details are on the flyer included with this newsletter.

Rescue & Rehoming Seminar

In March, Shirley, our Co-ordinator of Rescues and myself attended on behalf of the Charity a Rescue & Rehoming Seminar organised by The National Gundog Club. We both found this a fascinating insight into how other breed rescues manage and we picked up useful information from the Canine Lawyer, The Dogs Trust and other professionals who gave informative presentations.

Used Stamp Collection

Please don't forget to save all the stamps from your Christmas post, leaving the perforated edges intact, with just a small amount of paper round them. Please send them to: Miss M Hall, Tolgallow, St Day, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 5PD who will be delighted to receive them. Margery raised £60 last year from the sale of used stamps for the charity and she cannot do this without your help. It might interest you to know that many of the stamps used to send correspondence into the Inland Revenue in Newcastle, find their way to Margery thanks to Linda an IG owner who coordinates the collection of these stamps for IG Rescue!

Fun Day

The Charity took part again this year in the Italian Greyhound Club's Fun Day, held in July. The rain held off just long enough for it to be an enjoyable afternoon for all who attended. Grateful thanks to Frances Hickman, who ably assisted Mary with a sponsored sit and a rescue stall, raising £155 for the charity. Frances is currently recovering from a knee replacement operation and we hope she will be running alongside her band of IG's soon.

Wishing all readers and their hounds a 'pawfect' Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Update from Our Rescue Co-ordinator - Shirley

Where has the year gone? It only seems a few weeks ago that I was preparing something for last years Newsletter. I hope that all our Friends have had a good year and seen more sunshine than we have seen in the North West of England. Our four Italian Greyhounds, Oliver, Winston, Winnie-the-Pooh and Lizzie got very excited in April when they spent a lot of time in the garden enjoying the sunshine. Sadly, apart from a few days, we have seen very little of it here since!!

Thankfully, it has been a good year so far this year with only three Italian Greyhounds finding themselves in difficulties; plus an Italian Greyhound/Bedlington Terrier cross breed and "Reggie", who turned out to be far too big for the travel box taken to put him in for the journey from his former home. Despite the family claiming he was an IG he is in fact a lovely and well behaved whippet. We have found him a very nice home where he is loved greatly. We also homed earlier in the year a little mongrel whose owners were sure that she had some IG in her.

Sadly, one of the IG's we helped in February turned out to be a very ill nine month old puppy. She has required two major operations and a huge amount of general care. We are indebted to Chris, this little ones devoted foster carer, who has been truly magnificent in her care of such an ill dog, not to mention the numerous visits the pair have made to Cambridge University Veterinary School Hospital. The final operation took place last month and it is hoped that this plucky little girl will soon get a clean bill of health from her specialist Vet. Without this little dogs courage, and the devoted care of her by Chris and her Mother, "Sapphie" would not be alive today, and certainly would not have a future to look forward to which she now has. "Sapphie" recently had her first birthday, a special day for her and the first of many birthdays we hope.

We are delighted that "Sapphie" has a most generous sponsor; this kind lady shows such an interest in all that "Sapphie" is doing and everything that is happening to her. Her sponsor has ensured that she has everything she needs, and we pass on photographs and regular updates on her progress. This gives "Sapphie's" sponsor a continued interest in the breed at a time when age is not on her side to own another IG. Sponsoring an IG lifts the heart again for those smitten with the breed. Incidentally, "Sapphie's" picture adorns the front cover of our 2008 calendar of rescues featuring 30 re homed IG's which we have helped over the years.

Last year I told you about the single minded "Figgy"; I am pleased to say that slowly but surely he is getting better, although he still objects strongly to having his nails clipped or feet touched. "Figgy" has enjoyed a couple of holidays with his family in Wales, and in the 2008 calendar of rescues there is a small picture of "Figgy" in the holiday cottage seeing off a rather persistent sheep!!

We were saddened earlier this year to hear of the death of Lily, a Friend of the Charity, and the lady who adopted the very first rescue which I re homed in 1997. I wrote in the last Newsletter about the death of our very first rescue, "Milti" on the 27th February, 2006 and how Lily had devoted her life to this little dog. She found life hard on her own without him and on the first anniversary of his death, the 27th February, 2007, Lily joined her beloved "Milti". Lily was a great supporter of the Charity and I miss our regular chats.

I had a very nice day last month when Daphne and Peter, who live in Wiltshire and have rescue "Jessie" and "Elle" another IG, rang to say that they were all on holiday in the Peak District and would love to come and see us one day. It was a very pleasant day, and a thrill to meet "Jessie" and "Elle" and of course Daphne and Peter.

There are six rescues who have been on the sick or injured list this year, and a couple of owners who have not enjoyed the best of health during 2007. Pleased to report that most are on the mend, and we send our Best Wishes to all the dogs and the owners who have not been well.

There has been a considerable Welfare input so far this year, covering a wide range of issues. These are headed by the increasing number of Italian Greyhounds advertised for sale on the internet. We have had calls from puppy purchasers about the conditions some puppies are kept in, the psychological state of others, and complaints re the misleading advert descriptions of some puppies and adults for sale. All we can say to these callers is be careful before you part with your money. Potential purchasers have been disappointed when the promised puppy does not materialise or the puppy they have purchased goes on to develop epilepsy.

The Charity currently has in it's care, 57 re homed dogs. We are very fortunate to have so many kind, caring families looking after these special Italian Greyhounds, thank you all. A big thank you to Chris our main foster carer who has worked so hard with all the rescues she has been involved with, particularly little "Sapphie". A big thank you to Kay and Sally who for the past two years have given, free of charge, snuggle beds, collars and leads for every re homed IG, we really appreciate their generosity and the dogs certainly do when they get snuggled inside an envelope bed!!! Thanks also to Mary for all that she has kindly given the Charity for the little dogs. There have been a number of other acts of help, every one very much appreciated, thank you all.

Thanks also to our many "Friends" who offer assistance both practically and financially, they undertake home checking, transportation of rescues and fund raising, all vital for our continued success in the re homing and welfare of Italian Greyhounds. Yes, you do all make a difference to these IG's as can be seen on the happy faces of those featured in the 2008 rescue calendar.

Best Wishes to everyone, human and canine, for Christmas and the New Year, and thank you all for your support throughout the year.

DOG'S RULES FOR CHRISTMAS

From Ellie & Jessie

1. Be very patient with your humans during this time. They will be more stressed-out than usual, but oddly, may not want to spend time in long comforting dog cuddles.
2. Instead, they will spend long hours writing Christmas cards. Let them do this, but insist that you accompany them to the post box to post them.
3. They will come home with large bags of things they call gifts. Do not assume all the gifts are yours.
4. Be tolerant if your people put decorations on you. Even fake antlers won't kill you - except perhaps through embarrassment.

5. At some point they will bring a large tree into the house and cover it with lights and decorations. This is their tree and they are very protective of it. DO NOT PEE ON THIS TREE! Don't drink the water in the container that holds the tree. Don't even wag your tail near it.
6. Soon after this your humans will start wrapping presents. However fascinating this is, do not stand on the wrapping paper while they are doing it. Especially, do not walk off with the presents.
7. Next, the wrapped packages will start appearing under the tree. Leave these alone – even if they have your name on them.
8. Your humans may invite lots of strangers to come and visit during this season. These parties can be great fun, but remember that not everyone will want to share the couch with you.
9. Likewise, your humans may take you visiting. Here your manners will also be important: don't pee on your host's Christmas tree.
10. Above all, remember this: on Christmas Eve a big man with a white beard and a very loud laugh will emerge from your fireplace in the middle of the night. DO NOT BITE HIM.

HEALTH & WELFARE TIPS

By Helen Lister

Colitis (Rumbly Tummy)

I am often contacted by worried owners whose IG's suffer from colitis, painful stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhoea sometimes containing blood and mucus. This condition affects other breeds to and is distressing for both owner and dog.

In mild cases a change of diet may help and the owner of a miniature poodle has managed to give her relief by feeding her dog canned Butchers Tripe, that is with no other flavouring other than tripe and Webbox complete biscuits (green bag which is lower in protein) and is available from major supermarkets such as ASDA. She used Dorwest Herbs, Tree Barks and Slippery Elm powder, before the change of diet and it helped to calm her dogs system down.

More regular bouts can be helped by a natural remedy recommended by a vet, of 500 - 700 mgs Glucosamine daily, obtainable from a chemist or health food shop. This supplement is more commonly taken to help painful joints, however a couple of IG owners have been delighted with the results of using Glucosamine over a number of months as it has kept their IG's attack free.

To help with fear of loud noises (fireworks) or separation Anxiety

Sandra an adopter of a rescue IG and a longstanding IG owner, tells me of a natural treatment to help dogs that have a fear of loud noises and in particular fireworks. She says it is so simple and works well, keeping her elderly IG stress free around Bonfire time. **It is known as a Dog Appeasing Pheromone. (D.A.P.)**

Pheromones are chemicals produced by all animals to communicate with others of their own species. The best known are those given out by all animals to attract mates. A bitch exudes a special pheromone when she has puppies. Once the puppies begin to explore, they can easily become terrified.

The pheromone calms them, tells them everything is OK, not to worry, Mum's here, and they rush back to the bitch for safety, and are re-assured. Inevitably, they then leave her, and go into an environment where there is nothing like that to help them. Those sold too young suffer most, but all do suffer.

This pheromone has now been synthesised, and is sold in a diffuser, which plugs into an electric socket and unlike some other products designed to help problem dogs there is no way in which it can do the slightest harm and is invisible to humans who cannot smell it. The D.A.P is available from Veterinary surgeons and costs in the region of £16, however Sandra says it last for 6 months and refills are available, although she finds she only uses the D.A.P. in the winter when fireworks are troublesome.

CRUFTS @ HOME by Angela Cobban

Ernie and I had the pleasure of being invited guests at Crufts a couple of years ago and it was the first time we had attended without dogs. The atmosphere was totally different, and we missed the excitement of showing, nevertheless, it was a good day and we met several old friends and saw lots of dogs we had not seen before.

There are four old dogs in our household, one Whippet and three Italian Greyhounds. Their ages range from don't know to 15. March is always a cold month and the dogs were more than happy to stay at home. We tucked them up in their duvets and promised we would be back as soon as we could.

We have a courtyard garden and I thought that an artificial lawn would help provide peace and tranquillity and a lovely vista from the sitting room. The dogs would love something soft underfoot too.

We found the stand exhibiting artificial lawn and I gave the measurements in Imperial. The assistant worked it out in Metric. "I am sure that's too much", I said. "I only need 2 strips of grass. One in the main garden, and the other beneath the rose arbour". The assistant assured us that this was the amount we needed. I felt confused, I had never got to grips with Metric even though I worked in a Maths Department! The assistant asked, "Would we like part of the Main Ring?". "Well, yes, why not! That will be fine", we said.

The new lawn duly arrived. I asked the delivery man to leave the roll in the garden. I could see that he thought I had lost it. "What, right here?" "Yes, that will do nicely", I said.

I signed the slip and he left. A few moments later he was back. He said "Would you mind telling me what I have just delivered?" "Yes", I said, "It is part of the Main Ring at Crufts". His eyes widened, "Crufts", he said. "How exciting. I did not know you had dogs. Can I see them?"

We walked back to the house. Louis poked his nose from beneath the duvet and I hauled him out. He wasn't interested in the delivery man. He looked away, showing the full profile of his Roman nose. I call this his haughty look. The head turned, proud and reserved. The delivery man went to touch him, Louis pulled away as though he was dirty. "He doesn't mix", I said. "It's in the breed". The other dogs did not stir.

The delivery man couldn't believe his eyes. He'd never seen anything like Louis before. It was his first drop for the day and this had made it. He was in awe. He virtually skipped back to his lorry.

The new lawn lay rolled up in the garden for some weeks and in the end I decided to put it down myself. It was heavy and as it unfurled across the flagstones, it was clear that we had purchased far too much. Instead of two strips, we had ended up with wall to wall.

I placed topiary and terracotta pots in strategic positions and I have to say it looked amazing. I noticed that the chalk marks for 1st, 2nd and 3rd were clearly marked. It really was our bit of Crufts! Our friends arrived. "Like your new lawn, very nice!" "Mmmn, glad you like it". We all smiled.

Each morning I would summon the dogs into the Main Ring. "Take your places please". The chalked places are barely visible now, but we had endless fun over this. Every time we let the dogs out into the garden we were hysterical.

My dogs could smell other dogs on their new lawn and they loved it. "Who is going to be Top Dog today", I asked. "Oh, Pip is Reserve, Lucci has taken 3rd place". How we laughed. "Alice has won the cup today". The net curtains twitched next door.

There was only one problem. The lawn was too perfect. If a rose petal dropped on it I had to pick it up. Unlike a real lawn where petals would naturally decompose in the grass, this did not happen on the artificial stuff. I spent much of my time on all fours picking up rose petals, watering and brushing, until it was perfect.

In the end, it did not work for us, with so many dogs. I became obsessive over cleanliness and I could not keep it clean. We ended up taking our bit of Crufts to the allotment where our neighbours marvel at the neat strips of grass between the vegetables and flowers. Out comes the lawn mower. "Just mowed the grass", I say to Ernie. "It looks bloomin marvellous, how do you do it!"

I hope you have as much fun as we do with our dogs.

A letter from "Teeny's" Mum

"Teeny" came to live with us three years ago last June, she was six years old. Before she was re homed with us she had lived with her owners and eleven other Italian Greyhounds.

We wondered how well Teeny would settle with us after being in such a large family of I.G.'s but we had no need to worry, apart from looking a bit puzzled at times, she quickly became part of our family and has been a much loved pet ever since. Not many people seem to have heard about Italian Greyhounds, so there has always been interest shown in her wherever we go.

Several months after being re homed with us, we found a small red lump on "Teeny's" tummy which seemed to be growing quickly. The Vet. removed it under general anaesthetic and it was found that "Teeny" had a cancerous condition called Haemangiosarcoma. Other lumps have followed and been removed, but now there are so many little growths on her tummy, the Vet. has declined to remove any more. However, Teeny is very fit and well, we feed her on a Holistic brand of dog food and vegetables, especially broccoli and in the summer we limit her time outside when it's very sunny, we also put a strong sun block on her when she does go out.

On a recent visit to the Vets for her booster jab, the Vet. told us what an amazing little dog "Teeny" is. Most dogs that get Haemangiosarcoma are not expected to live more than a month after the disease has been diagnosed.

We hope she will be with us for a lot longer yet.



Benson is chilling-out and sorting through his Christmas toys. On behalf of our Patron and Trustees I would like to wish all IG's and their carers a very Merry Christmas and a happy and exciting New Year.

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TRUSTEE CONTACT DETAILS

Coordinator of Rescues - Shirley Penrose-Hansell tel: 0161 428 0142
Secretary - Mary Turney tel: 01608 652017 Treasurer - Stuart Dunham tel: 01803 712714 (Until 4/08)
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