



Wagging Tails

IRISH THERAPY DOGS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2012

Our Patron

We are very happy to announce that Proinnsias Ó Duinn has agreed to become a Patron of Irish Therapy Dogs.

In 2003 Proinnsias Ó Duinn was appointed Conductor Laureate of the RTE Concert Orchestra after holding the position of Principal Conductor since 1978. Shortly after being invited to take the position with the RTE Concert Orchestra, he became Music Director and Conductor of Our Lady's Choral Society.

Originally a cellist, Proinnsias was appointed Conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra in 1963. After this he held the position of Music Director and Principal Conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador. He has conducted both the RTE Concert Orchestra and the RTE National Symphony Orchestra in a wide-ranging repertoire on CD for Marco Polo and Naxos and Lyric labels. As a composer he has written music for most genres from chamber music to symphonic, T.V. and stage.

The seven hour T.V. epic production "Strumpet City", for which he composed the soundtrack, has been transmitted worldwide and more recently issued on DVD. His musical "Stuff & Nonsense" was premiered in the NCH and is based on the life and writings of Edward Lear. He is also in demand as an arranger and orchestrator.

Proinnsias has always been aware of the special relationship between man and his dog and the more recent research indicating not only the unconditional loyalty but the sensitivity and therapeutic value



Proinnsias Ó Duinn

of the dog for humans is no surprise to him. He greatly appreciates and admires the work Irish Therapy Dogs are doing throughout the country and is delighted to be associated with them.

We are honoured to have such a distinguished musician as our Patron, and look forward to making him welcome.

Volunteers' Meeting - February, 2012

Bwleys Hotel, Leopardstown, was the venue for our annual volunteers' meeting; and what a positive event it was!

The board members and co-ordinators reported that Irish Therapy Dogs continues to grow from strength-to-strength. We now have a total of 260 volunteer visiting teams in all counties.

Alison Reynolds, Research and Training Manager for Pets as Therapy (P.A.T.) in the U.K. was our guest speaker. She gave an absorbing presenta-

tion, beginning with the use of dogs in Ancient Greek temples (where they licked wounds) to the present day, highly specialised role of pets working in numerous animal assisted therapy programmes.

Afterwards, everyone stepped out into a glorious Spring-like afternoon. It was an appropriate end to a day of constructive debate and enthusiastic discussions. If you haven't yet attended one of our meetings, please make a special effort in 2013 – you won't regret it!

Our thanks go to...



... Luas, Irish Rail, DART and Dublin Bus for allowing our members and dogs (who must be in identifiable full uniform) to travel on their public transport networks. We are especially grateful to Luas for generously waiving its fare for our Volunteer Visiting Teams. This is a clear indication that Irish Therapy Dogs' work is being acknowledged in the wider community

Je m'appelle Boru

Hello, I'm Boru and I'm a Golden Retriever. A French golden retriever in fact, so it should be 'bonjour', I suppose.

I was born on a farm in the north of France, nearly ten years ago, but soon ended up in a Parisian pet shop. I spent two days there being terrorised by a terrier before my owners rescued me. Well, I say owners, but that's only a technical term. "People I choose to share a house with", would be more appropriate.

Anyway, I have had a most exciting time since then. I lived in Paris for nearly four years, and had a wonderful time visiting bars and restaurants. My favourite was in a big hotel called 'The George V'. The waiters brought my water (in a silver bowl), before the humans got their wine! I have also been to the Alps several times, and love going up in cable cars and running down the mountain after skiers – and searching for food in snow drifts.

In total, I have visited 21 countries. I have been on a boat in Barcelona, up in a big wheel in Zurich, on a metro train in

Budapest, on top of a volcano near Naples, down ancient wine cellars in Vienna, in vineyards in Chianti, on a cheese farm in the Pyrenees, in the Rhine for a swim, up in an aeroplane to Switzerland, in a beer hall in Brussels and at a café on St Tropez harbour. And to celebrate my twentieth country, I was fed some spare ribs and lay down by the Danube in Bratislava. It hasn't been a bad life!

I now live in Ireland, near Kildare, where my favourite pastimes are swimming in rivers, rolling around in mud during my walks at Punchestown, and playing with my adopted family, which includes my (human!) sister, Rebecca, and little baby Jacques. And then last year, I was in a pet shop in Naas, where Irish Therapy Dogs was running a competition. I proceeded to win the waggiest tail award (naturally), and celebrated by destroying the balloon display on the stand. I am not sure that Brenda was too impressed, but she must have forgotten, because she allowed me to become a Therapy Dog, and every week I



Christian and Boru

head off to Suncroft Nursing Home near the Curragh. I have a great time! I wag my tail (of course) and entertain as many people as possible. I have even won-over a lady who said she only likes cats. I soon made her see how wrong she was. A couple of licks, a few happy groans of affection and a longing stare from my big dark eyes, and I had her eating out of my paws.

Well, that's me for now. I am just off to check the travel brochures to see where to go next. Au revoir !

Thanks to Christian Andrée (one of the people Boru chooses to share a house with).

Lottie & Lulu

Our visits at Kinsale Hospital are fantastic! The patients love the "girls" – I could tell a million stories. There is a 95 year old lady who sadly can't talk as a result of a stroke but when my dog settles on her bed she lights up and cuddles her, she takes my hand and kisses it in thanks, beaming with joy. There is another resident who doesn't usually talk to anybody – if anyone approaches she shuts her eyes tight but when I take the dog to her she opens up like a flower and lectures me on taking care of dogs as she says she grew up with lots of dogs. There are men who "tell" my dog stories about dogs they have had to give up (sadly, in some cases put to sleep) before they came into long term care. My visits take two hours every week because I just sit as long as the resident wants to talk or cuddle the dog. Oh, and Lottie and Lulu love



Mary, Lottie and Lulu

it too. They now know that when I get out the dog shampoo from the press that it means "the trip" is next. They get all excited and as I only take one at a time I have to light the stove for the other one ! They sit proud as punch on the front seat of the car on the journey to the hospital and pull me up the stairs to the wards ! Lottie and Lulu were rescued from a very bad situation as was Cody, the sweetest king Charles imaginable – Cody was at death's door when he came to our home

– sad and broken – however, he hopes to become a therapy dog this year – from not knowing how to wag his tail to recently winning "waggiest tail at the show" he has

come a long way. Good always triumphs over evil.

Having rescue dogs and sharing their joy with Irish Therapy Dogs is so rewarding – It is the jewel in the crown for my three ex orphans – I am delighted to be associated with Irish Therapy Dogs and Kinsale Community Hospital who are so welcoming to us every week..

Mary Barry

Pictures from our Events

Pet Expo 2011



Fund Raising



Presentation



Finnstown Fun Day



Volunteers Meeting 2012



Juniors



I volunteer for Irish Therapy Dogs because...

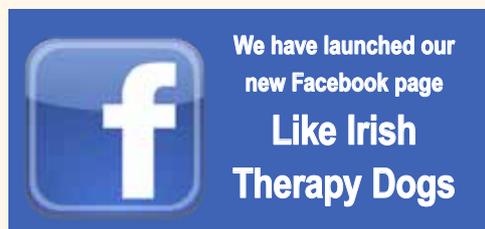


...it puts me in the privileged position of being a friend, and I get to hear thoughts that might not be expressed to someone else. I have laughed when I've had to raise my voice to exchange a conversation between two hard-of-hearing residents. One lady expressed her wish to have, "One more holiday" – a thought that was shared with me because Raz was sitting between us, bridging the gap.

Whenever we walk into the care centre, everyone smiles. Care-staff welcome us with open arms and high-pitched voices, only because Raz is the big deal. My little long-haired dachshund is a gentle soul and takes his job seriously, allowing his admirers to hug him, hold him and touch his lovely face.

Raz is patient and everyone knows his name. Sometimes people will call me, "Lovely Lady", because they don't know mine!!! I am the person behind Raz and I am very, very happy to have it that way. He brings comfort and peace to those that pet him. I've never had that effect on anyone!!!

Thanks to Annette Sweeney for sharing her thoughts.



Junior Awards 2012

Juniors continue to excel in promoting the work of Irish Therapy Dogs. Congratulations to Shauna, Emily (Kilkenny), Emily (Dublin), Sophie and Juliette seen here receiving their Level 1 Paw Point Award Certificates from



Chairman, Brian O'Sullivan.

Thomas proudly wears his Junior Achiever Badge. Congratulations to Thomas in achieving Level Two of the Junior Paw Point Award Scheme.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 4th 2012

Dublin Flora Mini Marathon. Why not run/walk for Irish Therapy Dogs? Sponsorship cards available from office Telephone: 2189302

June 23rd 2012

Westlife last concert in their farewell tour at Croke Park. Irish Therapy Dogs will be fundraising outside the stadium

September 16th 2012

Irish Therapy Dogs Sponsored Walk.

Starts from the grounds of St. Mary's Centre, Merrion Rd. and takes in the Sandymount Promenade. Sponsorship cards available from office Telephone: 2189302

October 7th 2012

Annual Blessing of Pets.

At 11.30 am Mass in St. Joseph's Parish Church, Glasthule, Co.

Dublin. Everyone and their pet very welcome to this happy event.

**Check our website www.irishtherapydogs.ie regularly for news on upcoming events
Remember – we need your support!**