



winter

Edition

IWHG



Patron: Trudie Sumner

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Welcome to the Winter Newsletter. We hope you and your hounds had a great Christmas and here we are, not just beginning a new year, but a new decade in 2020.

2019 rounded off with the Health Group's Biennial Seminar which was a tremendous success. The topics covered included skin conditions and vaccinations both of which generated much discussion. Dr Steven Dunham, the IW Club and the Health Group are hopeful that a vaccination study will be carried out in 2020 and we will keep everyone updated on the progress of that. Another topic covered was that of dentition and the development of teeth and jaw in our breed. Caroline Sheppard did a superb presentation on this providing the audience with picture evidence of examples she has come across during her study into this area. If you weren't able to join us on the day you can check out all these and other slide presentations via the Health Group Website [LINK](#)

The end of the year also saw a change in personnel with Chair Rebecca Peek standing down for a well-earned time out break, having been on the Health Group since its inception 15 years ago. Jean Timmins was the group choice to follow Rebecca in this post. Also departing were Tim and Marion Finney, who again have been members since the inception of the Health Group. They have represented Northern Ireland tirelessly supporting the Health Group and its projects. Tim and Marion will continue hosting the NI heart testing sessions, and we are very fortunate to have Ian Finney MRCVS joining us as consultant veterinary surgeon. We shall miss Rebecca, Tim and Marion and we are heartily grateful for all their work and dedication to the Health Group over the past 15 years.

One of the items on our own To-do lists for 2020 is to ensure we have updated the health history of our hounds for Nottingham University. If you have had a hound swabbed in the past for any of the research projects, will you please update your record by following this [LINK](#)

The samples they hold won't have the same value without the health history of the hound, so if we can all pledge to update this – it would be a tremendous help.

The heart testing dates will start being released soon so watch the website for those and the booking form is online. Super Veterans i.e. hounds 8 years and over can still be tested free of charge and this year the Irish Wolfhound Club joins the Health Group in covering the cost of this, and as ever hounds placed through the Rescue Trust are also eligible for a free test.

Don't forget, we're here for you, so do let us know if you have a particular topic you want to raise.

Remember the HG website has had a page for publication of results for some time, it is completely voluntary and we know it's all too easy to forget about this, but please do send your results in – the route to publishing your results is very easy just follow the [LINK...](#)

Happy Reading!

In This Issue

[2019 Seminar Overview](#)

[An Owners Experience](#)

- [Jane Littlefair](#)

[How Can You Contribute to Research?](#)

[Heart Testing Update](#)

[In the Pipeline](#)

[Treasurers Update](#)

[The Longevity Programme](#)

[Breeding for Longevity](#)

- [Lin Ashton](#)

[BLOAT STUDY – needs more contributors](#)

[Publications](#)

[Surveys](#)

[Contact Details](#)

[LATEST HEART RESEARCH PUBLICATION.](#)



IWHG

2019 Seminar Overview

On a cold and rather wet and miserable day, St Peters Church Hall in Balsall Common became the unlikely hub of an exciting meeting of like-minded Wolfhound owners and breeders keen to learn. The biennial IWHG seminar was very well supported by our own breed and by others, making for a well balanced mix in the audience.



The day was introduced by Chairman Rebecca Peek, who gave the housekeeping round-up and introduced the topics and speakers to be heard later in the day.

The first presentation was simply bringing everyone up to date about all of the different projects with which the IWHG is involved. This list is becoming rather lengthy so it was great to get a round-up from Maura Lyons of where we're at and what we still need to work on. This included a detailed update on the genetic risk factors for osteosarcoma from Mike Starkey of the Animal Health Trust, and a full presentation from Angela Bodey on the pneumonia study.

There followed an explanation of the BetterBred breeder management software tools and how they can be used to help preserve the genetic diversity available in the Irish Wolfhound. There was also a rather exciting announcement of the funding of twenty diversity tests which had been agreed by the IWHG and what this could mean for the breed.



Caroline Sheppard then gave a fascinating insight into the dentition and growth patterns of young Wolfhounds, based on information provided to her as part of the ongoing IWHG project.

This evidence will be used to make a case to the Kennel Club regarding the wording of their Breed Watch scheme. It is hoped that Wolfhounds under the age of 18 months

will be exempt from being recorded as having misplaced lower canines, since this could simply be due to immaturity.

After a short tea break, Steve Dunham spoke to us about vaccinations. He took the time to explain to those present what vaccinations are, how they work and the different kinds of vaccinations available. Maternal immunity in large breed dogs was compared to that of small breeds and



vaccination timing for large breed puppies was considered. There was a very lively discussion afterwards, which included a short explanation of the recently launched vaccination attitudes survey by Megan Robson. This study is only running for a short time and can be found here – it only takes a few minutes to complete, so please go ahead and fill it in.

Miranda Brace and her helpers worked hard all day providing tea, coffee and a sumptuous lunch which was much appreciated by all.



Mandy Addington had Christmas Cards and Calendars on sale created from the photographic competition held on the Irish Wolfhound Community Facebook page, the proceeds of which the Health group is one of the beneficiaries, so thank you again Mandy for all your hard work.



Next were treated to a thought provoking presentation by dermatology expert Dr Rosario Cerundolo, referencing the various skin disorders that might be encountered by Irish Wolfhounds and their causes. Some case studies which had been previously submitted were discussed in more detail, along with potential diagnoses and treatments. Food related allergies versus environmental allergies were also explained in fascinating detail. This proved to be a very informative and interactive talk, with plenty of participation from an appreciative audience.



The day was finished off with an overview of actionable ideas and plans for the future which had been identified throughout the day.

A selection of wonderful cakes was offered for the afternoon tea break by the fabulous kitchen ladies, including a special celebration cake donated by Rebecca Peek to mark the IWHG's 15th birthday!



The raffle prize winners were drawn, with everyone keen to win the lovely prizes so generously donated by our faithful supporters, all of whom we say a huge thank you. The raffle

raised £940 which is just amazing and thank you to everyone who purchased tickets on the day.

Rebecca Peek then announced her retirement from the IWHG and welcomed her successors: firstly Jean Timmins, who is taking over the role of IWHG Chairman and secondly Maura Lyons, who, alongside her current role of Research Coordinator, will be taking over as KC Breed Health Co-ordinator, an appointment which has been approved by all the breed bodies.

Rebecca was then surprised by being presented with a beautiful portrait by talented artist Anne Combe, commissioned by members of the group and breed bodies in appreciation of the tireless devotion she has shown to the IWHG over the last 15 years.

The day finished shortly after 4pm and everyone was in agreement that it had been a huge success.

It was a very full day with lots of information and ideas being circulated and discussion between different breeds, sharing experience and knowledge. It really was everything a health seminar should be.



The presentations from the day are on the IWHealth Group web page and can be accessed [HERE](#)

BLOAT STUDY

Thank you everyone who has already contributed to this – there are currently 300 responses. BUT, they need around 500 to progress the study. If you have ever lost a hound to bloat, would you please complete the survey

Follow the link here [LINK ...](#)

Peri and Ruby came to me at 10 ½ weeks old on the 3rd of December 2016. Beautiful, healthy, well reared puppies that I adored. I was determined to do everything right by them, to keep them as healthy as possible, rear them well, and give them the best life I could.

They had both had their first vaccines, for DHP and Lepto 2, and the next were due, it said on the card, between 2 and 3 weeks after. I discussed things in detail with my vet as I wanted to make sure we gave the same make, Nobivac, and that we stayed with Lepto 2 as I was aware of adverse reactions to Lepto 4. We duly went to the vets when they were 12 weeks old; I felt I had done the right thing and the vets were happy with the timing.

A few weeks later, it became apparent that Peri couldn't tolerate certain foods, as he kept getting runny poos. This was very strange as he had arrived with his treats which he enjoyed, and I had kept everything the same regarding diet. He also developed a few problems. He got a sty on his eye that quickly seemed infected, for which he needed antibiotics, then a couple of weeks after that he suddenly started to wee blood. This was very frightening, but the vets put it down to a water infection and it did clear up fairly quickly. We started to avoid certain treats, but continued with the same diet until he was around five months when it just didn't seem to be agreeing with him, so I started the switch to raw.

His bowel movements improved, but we were still careful with treats, as certain ones would set his runny poos off again.

At six months we went to their first show, both were calm puppies who slept all the way there and back and were totally chilled whilst at the venue.

The next outing to the PAWS charity fun day at eight months was a bit of a shock. Peri became upset whilst travelling, and even more upset when there. He was also itching, which everyone thought was puppy pyoderma, and he had a watery eye. I had him checked by the vet the next day, and we started with soothing creams for the skin, which I was assured was puppy pyoderma.

At nine months old, I stupidly made the mistake of using frontline. They were both scratching and we thought they had picked a flea up. The next day he was very quiet but otherwise ok, the morning after he presented with breathing difficulties, and his temperature started to rise. We went immediately to the vets. The vet and I were both unsure of which way to go, neither of us sure if it was a reaction, or the start of pneumonia. We decided to treat for a reaction with a steroid, as if it wasn't, we were early enough to then start the pneumonia protocol. He was back to normal within a couple of hours.

I was by then trying various different lotions to stop the constant itching, but nothing was working. Three weeks later he had a really bad flare up with his skin, then two days later he went down

with breathing difficulties and a high temperature, which the vet diagnosed as pneumonia. The Health Group



protocol was followed. It was a very tough first week but then he did improve quite quickly.

Five weeks into the antibiotics he had a collapse, which we can only assume was a reaction to the medication as we couldn't find anything else as a cause. He was taken off them and was doing fine, apart from the itching. By now he had no hair on the bottom of his legs or under his tummy, he was bright red and itching constantly. As he was now recovered from the pneumonia the vets did allergy tests, which came back showing he is allergic to white fish, rice, potatoes, soy, cows milk and all grains apart from oats, also house dust mites and all grasses. Basically, everything he was eating or near at the time of his second vaccination!

After much discussion with the vets we decided to go with immunotherapy for the environmental allergies. The food was easily sorted as he was already on raw, I just needed to take out the mixer biscuit and the white fish, and any biscuit treats. We thought this a much safer way to go than just suppressing things, and this is probably the worst decision I have ever made.

The immunotherapy injections take a while to be made up to suit the patient, and it was about six weeks later when I was called to take him in, and he was given the very small starting dose.

He collapsed the next day with breathing difficulties, and a high temperature. The vet who came to see him diagnosed pneumonia and started him on antibiotics immediately, but they seemed to have no effect and his immune system was in overdrive, as was his temperature. On day three my usual vet came out and gave him a steroid injection to calm the immune system down. We very nearly lost him. He had a temperature of over 40 for a week, couldn't eat, could barely stand, and at one point was unconscious and we couldn't rouse him. An injection of Rapidexon brought him round. He was prescribed prednisone daily, and amazingly, within two days was back running round the garden with no sign he had ever been ill.

This was all rather baffling, to the vets as well as myself. We left him on a low 2.5mg daily dose of prednisone to give his system a chance. He was now fifteen months old and would have been due his 'booster injections'. We titre tested, and Ruby's came back as we expected, fully covered and antibodies nicely middle range, Peri's were sky high, as his immune system was overactive.

I should mention at this point that during all this he had frequently been off his food, and I was spoon feeding him most of the time.

He had another minor collapse the next May, by which time he was 20 months old, and I took him to see a vet who gave him a herbal tincture, which helped with his allergies, and she asked if he had been tested for Addison's Disease, which I knew nothing about. No one at our practice had mentioned it, and he was doing fine, so it was left at that, and we started to try to reduce the steroids.

He had another flare up in August, which we put down to the allergens being high.

It was during this time that his behaviour deteriorated. He went from travelling fairly happily, though sometimes a little stressy, to some days completely refusing to get into the van. I worked on this for a few months, coaxing him in and doing short journeys. We went to Drifffield Show, a short drive away, and where he had previously been enjoying showing, he was just completely hyper to the point where I could hardly hold him. I thought perhaps a bitch in season somewhere. But then he started to do this when at home walking. Even on familiar lanes he was totally hyper and I could hardly hold him. It was awful seeing him like this. We went on our holidays, which the previous year he had loved, and it took two of us to hold him on walks. I was distraught thinking I'd never be able to take him anywhere other than the garden. Then we came home and he stopped eating.

I put him back onto the 2.5 daily dose of steroid, and he gradually improved. I started to read up on Addison's Disease and badger my vet.

He had another major collapse the next March, at the age of 2 1/2, with breathing difficulties, a temperature of over 40, and dehydrated, exactly as he had presented the previous year. We gave him an injection of the Rapidexon and fluids, and he was fine by the next morning.

Shortly after this I was lucky enough to find a very good vet who had treated a few Addison's cases, and we went to see her. She confirmed atypical Addison's.

This is an autoimmune disease where the outside of the adrenal glands are destroyed and stop producing cortisol. For this to happen, an individual must have something that has triggered the immune system to malfunction and attack itself. In Peri's case this seems to have been his initial vaccinations which were done too close together. The vaccine first suppresses the immune system for two weeks, then it becomes overactive for the next two. Giving the second vaccine during this time has caused his system to act against itself. Had he been given the second vaccine after four

weeks this may not have happened. He was given it at three weeks, which is the norm for most vets. My vets have now changed their protocol to four weeks apart, or one injection (as per the norbivac data sheet) if over twelve weeks old, then titre to make sure the vaccine has taken. Had he been given the second vaccine after four weeks this may not have happened. He was given it at three weeks, which is the norm for most vets. Mine have now changed their protocol to four weeks apart.

There is possibly a sensitivity somewhere, but more likely that the uptake of the first vaccine with him was so good he didn't need the second, which is all to do with the maternal antibodies. We do know he has an extremely strong system to have survived this. Had we lost him during either episode of 'pneumonia' then we would never have known.

The antibiotics that he was given have also contributed, and the final straw will have been the immunotherapy, which I am aware many use safely, but his immune system was already damaged by the vaccine. To know this was avoidable is heart-breaking.

His sister Ruby is absolutely fine, and through all this has helped me to look after him.

The good news is now we know what is wrong, and we can treat him accordingly. When an Addisonian dog is balanced, the disease becomes invisible and the dog is no longer ill. He needs medication to replace the cortisol his body isn't producing. We have him on a herbal tincture to help, and have also used homeopathy under the direction of his vet. He is finally back to being my calm, happy boy, who likes nothing more than to gallop, but also likes to go out in the van, and will eat anything given to him, though we do still have to avoid the things he is allergic to.

We went back to Drifffield show this year, and not only did he win best special beginner and then get third in the special beginners group, my wonderful brave, calm boy passed his Good Citizen Bronze test in the middle of the showground!

This week we have again, just over three years after their puppy vaccines, had them titre tested and I'm pleased to say that both are covered for DHP, so no vaccines needed, not that we would ever be able to vaccinate Peri again, but it's nice to know. His immune system has calmed down and his levels are now the same as Ruby's, between four and five. We have also sent bloods away to check for lungworm, which were negative, and poo samples for a worm count, also negative, so no chemicals needed. They were last wormed at nine months old.

I have learnt so much over the last three years. In the future I would always make full use of titre testing to see when the best time to vaccinate would be, and try to give only one vaccine. If two were necessary because a puppy had been vaccinated early, then I would make sure they were done at least four weeks apart, and if Lepto was required then would give that at a separate time to minimise the stress on the immune system.

How Can You Contribute to Health Research in Irish Wolfhounds?

Dr Maura Lyons, PhD, IWHG Research Co-ordinator

The IWHG are involved with or coordinating various different research projects in Irish Wolfhounds, many are still ongoing and need your help. This is a list of the current projects. Take a read through the following list and see if you and your hound can help contribute to research helping to maintain and improve the health status of the breed.

Nottingham University Osteosarcoma longitudinal project – Dr Mark Dunning

We have around 900 wolfhounds recruited for this study and currently NVS have said they don't need any further swabs. For those dogs already swabbed for this project **please remember to complete the health update surveys annually.**

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/nottingham-university.html>

For anyone who has experienced bone cancer in their dogs in the past, whether the dog was swabbed or not, there is a Treatment Survey to determine which treatments are offered by primary care vets and which are most successful. There are also two further surveys, one for wolfhound owners who have decided to amputate for reasons other than osteosarcoma and also owners who have never experienced either amputation or osteosarcoma.

Survey 1 – please complete this survey if you have experience of amputation in your wolfhound but it was for a reason other than bone cancer: <http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IW-amputation>

Survey 2 – Please complete this survey if you have never experienced either bone cancer/osteosarcoma or amputation in your wolfhound: http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/canine_amputation1

If your swabbed wolfhound gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer –

Whilst it is hoped that no wolfhound ever suffers from bone cancer again, if your dog is swabbed and gets a confirmed diagnosis of bone cancer, please get in touch with Mark to see how you can help. This is a large project with many angles and full details can be found on the webpage link above.

Nottingham University Heart disease research Prof. Malcolm Cobb and Dr Serena Brownlie-Sykes

By taking part in the IWHG Regional Heart Testing scheme you are contributing to this ongoing project, possibly the longest running veterinary research project ever! The results of your wolfhound's heart test are recorded in the database and used by the team at Nottingham University to unravel the specifics of wolfhound heart disease. To book a slot and contribute to this valuable research whilst also looking after your own dogs heart please find a session closest to you and get in touch with Anne Vaudin. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dates-and-locations-.html>

Nottingham University Pneumonia research -Dr Angela Bodey and Dr Mark Dunning

If your wolfhound has ever experienced pneumonia or any other type of respiratory disease or any type of nasal disease (snotty nose) we are collecting case studies so that our researchers may evaluate the most

effective treatments and devise a recommended treatment protocol. We are very aware that wolfhounds are still dying of pneumonia, so please do all you can to help out, if you experience pneumonia with your wolfhound fill out the survey and let Angela know what treatment your dog received and what the outcome was. Please see all details and fill out the survey on the webpage here;

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/pneumonia.html>

Animal Health Trust (AHT) – Give a Dog a Genome/Osteosarcoma research –Dr Mike Starkey

Thanks to your support and donations, the IWHG have been able to fund participation in the ambitious Give a Dog a Genome project, as well as funding the whole genome sequencing of 5 wolfhounds. This has allowed Mike and his team at AHT to study in depth the differences between affected and unaffected dogs genomes; this has led to identifying several areas of the genome which may play a part in influencing the development of bone cancer in wolfhounds. An in depth report was published in the last newsletter and more details can be found here <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/animal-health-trust.html> and here <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/give-a-dog-a-genome.html>

FCE Research – Mrs Caroline Sheppard

Irish Wolfhounds appear to suffer from a unique form of FCE, one which affects them in puppyhood, which is why this condition is also known as puppy paralysis. It is hoped that by studying the experience of wolfhounds affected by FCE, this research could determine what causes it and the most appropriate treatment for a favourable outcome. Ellen Kroll has written a comprehensive article about FCE which is available on our webpage. If your wolfhound has experienced any form of puppy paralysis or FCE please fill out the survey and return it to <mailto:fce@iwhealthgroup.co.uk>. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html>

University of Utrecht Liver Shunt project – Dr Frank Van Steenbeek

Dr Steenbeek started his research project into liver shunt in Irish Wolfhounds as a PhD student studying for his doctorate. Since gaining his doctorate he is continuing to investigate the causes of liver shunt in wolfhounds. He is still collecting DNA samples from affected dogs and their parents – if you can help his research by providing a sample then please do so. Details of how to help are here; <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/liver-shunt-1.html>

AHT DNA Repository Scheme - Emma Hales

The DNA blood storage program is still available at the AHT. The easiest way to provide samples for this is for a breeder to collect an extra 1ml of blood from each puppy at liver shunt testing time. Thereafter each new owner should be informed to update the AHT with any health issues the puppy may encounter throughout its life. Full details, sample

submission forms and health status updates forms can be found at the webpage; <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/dna-storage-programme.html>

IWHG Liver shunt/ Epilepsy and PRA reporting survey – Dr Maura Lyons

This is a simple form to record incidences of Liver shunt, Epilepsy and PRA. This enables the IWHG to monitor the prevalence of these diseases within the IW population. If you have experienced these conditions in your wolfhound, please fill out the survey with your experiences. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-survey.html>

IWHG Dentition survey – Mrs Caroline Sheppard

Caroline has been collecting examples of jaw growth in wolfhound puppies in order to provide evidence concerning the eventual alignment of teeth in the adult wolfhound. The IW is on the KC Breed Watch list for instances of misaligned canines, the IWHG feel that if this is seen in a growing puppy there is every chance the condition could correct itself – either if left or with some targeted therapy. If you have experienced puppies with teeth issues, please contact Caroline to share your experiences. <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/about-the-study.html>

IWHG Veteran survey – Mrs Caroline Sheppard

The IWHG would like to hear about your veteran wolfhounds. If you have a wolfhound that has lived to over 7 years then please fill out the questionnaire. It includes details about lifestyle and environment in order to see if there is a correlation between any of these factors and longevity in wolfhounds. You can find the details and a link to the survey on the webpage: <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/veteran-study.html>

NVS Bloat Incidence Survey – Matthew Keane

Study investigating the factors influencing bloating and the development and outcome of GDV in Irish Wolfhounds in the UK. This project is based on owner reported incidences of bloat and GDV in their wolfhounds and comparison to dogs unaffected by bloating.

Please complete the survey here...

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IWH_GDV_Survey?fbclid=IwAR1o8XkAENiMOiwojG52EAnF41StixCY7CSS20P5kv0TKhyDbx4SHXPRneM

Megaesophagus (ME) In Puppies –

Although it is not believed that this condition is particularly common in the breed in comparison to other issues which affect our puppies i.e. Livershunt and FCE, there is sufficient interest to have generated an opportunity for research with Professor Jared Jaffey at Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine. It would be appreciated if anyone who has experienced ME in a puppy could contact Prof. Jaffey and provide details in order that an indication of frequency might be obtained. If anyone has an affected puppy being managed by diet, and would be prepared to submit a blood sample for the ongoing genetic research, again please contact Prof Jaffey and he will send instructions to your vet regarding preparation of the sample.

Contact details are Jared Jaffey DVM, MS, DACVIM (SAIM), Assistant Professor, Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine.
Email : jjaffe@midwestern.edu

THANK YOU!

To stay in touch with everything health-wise:
Please sign up for notifications of announcements on our website here, <http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/home.html>



Join the Facebook discussion

Last issue we introduced the Better Bred project, designed to establish the genetic diversity of our breed, which in turn could help us maintain genetic diversity in the future by identifying dogs that carry less common genes, and avoiding future bottlenecks.

We believe this could be a very important project given that we know our breed has a limited gene pool, but to what extent is unclear. The diversity test when complete, will offer a breeder one more tool in their quest to breed healthy typical sound hounds.

If you would like to add your dog to the study, the price of a test is currently held at \$50 and can be obtained [HERE](#).

The heart testing scheme welcomed 5 cardiologists for 2019, Serena Brownlie-Sykes, Angela Bodey, Sheena Milne, Dave Fisher and Sue Roberts. We are totally indebted to our cardiologists who kindly offer their time to undertake these sessions for us and the benefit of the breed.

Anne Vaudin continued to undertake the daily running of the scheme and has done an amazing job organising the session planners during the year. 2019 saw an increase in price from £45 to £50 which was needed to continue to cover costs, taking into account Cardiologist fees.

In total we ran 22 sessions through the UK and 1 session in Ireland. The sessions were split between our 5 cardiologists as follows:

Cardiologist	Number of Sessions	Attendees
Angela Bodey	13	187
Serena Brownlie-Sykes	4	46
Dave Fisher	2	30
Sheena Milne	3	31
Sue Roberts	1	14
Total		308

In total there were 308 attendees, some of these included second bookings for the same hound. There was a healthy attendance of Super Veterans; 27 attendees with 1 hound tested twice making 26 individual Super Veterans tested through the scheme. Hounds aged over 8 years were again able to have their first test of the year subsidised by the Health Group.

Moving forward into 2020, we are pleased to announce that the Irish Wolfhound Club have kindly offered to subsidise half the cost of Super Veterans second test per annum. This is a great gesture and will be greatly received by owners and the Health Group.

The Health Group will continue to subsidise the cost of the first session per annum for all Super Veterans and the Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust are again able to cover the cost for any Irish Wolfhound Rescued through the Trust.

The year is in full swing already with sessions being finalised for 2020, dates will be published direct onto the website when confirmed. We will still be using the online booking form, which has proven a great success and makes the booking process

much easier and more efficient. The link for booking and dates is : [Link](#)

A reminder that the Health Group have facilitated the publishing of heart testing results. This is voluntary but a useful tool. To access it, if you wish to add your results from any year please use the [link](#)

Thank you to you all for your continued support of the scheme, which is for the benefit of our beloved Irish Wolfhounds.

Back in December 2019 Samantha Fousse et al. published a paper on the inheritance of Atrial Fibrillation in our breed..

Extract ...

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common arrhythmia in dogs. The Irish Wolfhound breed has a high prevalence of AF making them an ideal breed to investigate possible genetic contributions to this disease.

The aim of this study was to perform a heritability analysis in North American Irish Wolfhounds using phenotype data from cardiac screenings performed between 2000 and 2019 in order to determine how much of this disease can be attributed to genetics compared to environmental causes.

The second aim was to determine the disease mode of inheritance to help inform prevention and breeding practices.

[Read the full article HERE](#)

Review previous publications on this condition:

[Evidence for sex-disparity in the development of atrial fibrillation in Irish Wolfhounds By Brownlie S, Sykes R, Cobb M and Simpson S.](#)

[Multiple Genetic Associations with Irish Wolfhound Dilated Cardiomyopathy](#)

[Irish wolfhounds with subclinical atrial fibrillation: progression of disease and causes of death*](#)

Estimated Breeding Values for Heart Disease

As reported at the last seminar progress on EBV's for heart disease, a project first suggested at the 2017 IWHG seminar, was fairly stagnant.

For those who could not attend and were unaware the IWHG have for many years been encouraging the use of the heart testing data collected by Serena Brownlie over the past 30 years, in other projects. At the 2017 seminar Tom Lewis of the Kennel Club suggested that it may be possible to develop EBV's for the breed by utilising this data. Since then Serena and Tom have been trying to find time in their busy diaries to get together and eventually managed that meeting during December of 2019.

Tom reports that he is hopeful they can progress this project with some meaningful data which Serena has been gathering. His time is short and he is pulled in many directions but it is one of the major tasks he hopes to complete in the first half of 2020.

Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) have been used to direct livestock breeding programs for many years, improving yield of stock incrementally by utilising values based on heritability of complex genetic traits.

The KC currently use EBVs for hip and elbow dysplasia where there is enough data available within a breed. As simple genetic tests cannot be developed for complex inherited issues it is hoped by utilising EBVs we can guide the IW population away from heart disease, but it will only be available because of the number of dogs tested through the IWHG scheme over the last 30 odd years, and is why it is so important to continue testing all our hounds through the IWHG scheme.

The UK Kennel Club have a page dedicated to explaining EBV's relating to hip and elbow scoring, but the principle behind it will also apply to our breed should there be success in using the heart testing data to create EBV's. [Click Here to go to the KC Page.](#)

IWHG Heart Testing Scheme

Another development from the Kennel Club is that discussions are being carried out between members of the VCS (Veterinary Cardiology Society) and KC with a view to possibly formalising our IWHG Heart Testing scheme.

This has come about after many years developing the CKCS breed heart testing scheme into a formal scheme between the KC and VCS.

These two official bodies are now beginning to look at other breeds with established schemes in place, like Irish Wolfhounds, to determine if these schemes can also be included.

More meetings are due to be held during the first half of 2020, and we will keep everyone updated once we have more news.

I know I've said this many times before but we continue to be astounded by the support we receive from our fundraisers and those who support them. In the last quarter of 2019 we received some amazing donations.

We were delighted to receive the very generous donation of £839 from the Irish Wolfhound Club from the Wolfhound of the Year event in October, an event which also benefited the other breed support groups, the IW Rescue Trust and PAWS.

Mandy Addington raised the phenomenal sum of £3,000 from the sale of calendars and Christmas cards which was shared between the breed support groups. The IWHG was delighted with its donation of £1,000 so a huge thank-you once again to Mandy.

The raffle at our own IWHG seminar in November raised £940.00 which was only made possible by the very generous prizes donated by many of our valued supporters who we can't thank enough.

Easyfundraising continues to be a great source of donations with £129 received in November, so thank you everyone who raises donations in this way. If you want to sign up for Easyfundraising and generate donations for the IWHG on your online shopping at no additional cost to yourself, please follow this [link](#) and sign up, it couldn't be easier.

Thank you to everyone who handed in loose change tins, those pennies soon add up. A special thank you to Kevin and Adele Campbell-Woodford for handing in a very heavy tin containing over £145!

Once again a big THANK YOU to all our fundraisers and supporters!



VEGETABLES TO IMPROVE DOG HEALTH

1. **CARROTS:** contain beta carotene that nourishes the optic nerve and promotes good visual health
2. **BROCCOLI:** nutrient-rich and contains cancer-fighting properties. Also features sulforaphane which helps boost the immune system
3. **CELERY:** helps to improve heart health and reduce cancer rates
4. **GREEN BEANS:** improves blood fat levels and protects against oxygen damage. They also contain heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, adding to the cardiovascular benefits of this vegetable
5. **SPINACH:** helps ward off inflammation and cardiovascular problems as well as helps to prevent cancer
6. **PUMPKIN:** improves intestinal health,

Longevity Recognition Programme - Celebrating Our Veterans

We've made a few changes to the Veteran Study questionnaires, which will enable the basic information on Veteran hounds to be shared (with owners' permission) to our Longevity Recognition Programme.

"VETERAN REGISTER" - For hounds who have reached 7 years of age.

CERTIFICATE HOLDERS REGISTER" - For hounds who have passed away aged 8 years or over.

Owners can now apply to join the **IWHG Longevity Recognition Programme** and have their hounds included on the registers, when they complete an **IWHG Veteran Study Questionnaire**. This streamlines the process and removes the need to complete separate forms.

We believe that longevity in our hounds should be celebrated, so we urge you to complete Veteran Study Questionnaires for all your UK Kennel Club registered hounds (past or present) who have reached seven years of age or more. The questionnaires now give you the opportunity to indicate whether or not you would like your hound to be added to the Veteran Register, or if you wish to apply for a longevity certificate.

[The Veterans' Register](#) acknowledges UK registered Irish Wolfhounds of seven years and over, while [the Register of Certificate Holders](#) honours our "Super Veterans", who have passed away aged eight years or over.

[Please see the website for more details](#)

Don't forget that "Super Veteran" hounds are entitled to subsidised heart testing within the [IWHG Heart Testing Scheme](#)

Owners of hounds who reach 8 years before they pass away, are eligible to apply for a Longevity Certificate, suitable for framing, to commemorate their hound's long life.

APPLY
[VETERAN STUDY questionnaire](#)

The hound's name and dates will then be added to the Certificate Holders' Register

When submitting your application to join the IWHG Longevity Recognition Programme, a photo of your venerable hound to add to our roll of honour, would be very welcome.



Super-Veteran Jasmine lifespan 11yrs 11mnths



Breeding for Longevity

by Lin Ashton

This has been a passion of mine all my life thanks to my father and grandfather and I am writing this in recognition of my beloved golden oldies Kiera, Bonnie and Neala.

Kiera "Nightwing Only Make Believe of Madalinca" reached 11yrs and 3 mths of age and heart tested every year from 2009.



As soon as I knew the pedigree of Kiera I knew she had to be mine; her mother "Molly" was a Nutstown girl and she went all the way back to my first wolfhound "Blackie" who was a Nutstown boy

I first saw a picture of Kiera when she was 8 weeks old and she was a double for "Blackie" same white marking on her chest and same 2 white tips on 2 toes! She had good longevity on her mother's side and from "Bailey" on her father's side. An accident and resulting shock took her from us before her time.

However, her Gt niece Soul "Bribiba Cuan Ghra Of Madalinca" has just had a litter and Bonnie's son was the father. Soul is exactly like Kiera but not as tall or as long but black and every marking identical same 2 white toe tips. So, in this litter I have, as was always planned two long living lines combined.

Bonnie "Can Ch Cnoccarne Anne Bonney Agh"



I loved the moment I first saw her at 2 weeks old and I already knew the longevity on her mother's side as I had done a lot of research into Canadian lines.

Bonnie's mother Niagh only died late last year at 11.5 yrs and her grandmother the year before and her great grandmother the year before that. I have a great picture taken of Bonnie and all her litter

with her mother, father, grandmother, great grandmother and gt grandfather Noble.

The same accident as Kiera took her before her time and nothing could save her from IMHA and even the Edinburgh School of Veterinary Science could not save her. I do thank Emma Ross for giving me access to her lines. She was 8 yrs old and superbly fit until her death chasing deer in our woods in the Glynn Valley in Cornwall. Both Kiera and Bonnie were super veterans.



Neala, was also chosen for the longevity in her lines. I have been given a picture with her grandmother Kate, her grandfather on both sides Bromley and gt grandmother Faith in the same picture. Her father Tuck died at 8 from pneumonia. Her mother Taffy only died a couple of weeks ago at age 11.5 yrs of age. I thank Sue & Glynn Humphreys for trusting me completely with Neala. We will always remain great friends.

Neala has joined the longevity study as she was 7yrs old on 5/10/19 and I was greatly saddened to see she stood alone on the 7+ veterans.

The Longevity Recognition Programme is a great way to honour our golden oldies, but also to create a record of how many of our wonderful hounds are reaching veteran ages.

Faith the daughter of Soul will one day be mated to a son from Brenn and this will combine 3 long living lines. I hope that my efforts to research the lines behind my dogs will pay off and help carry health and longevity forward to the next generation.

I was lucky to have been taught by my grandfather to never breed a litter until you knew the dogs behind your bitches i.e. how long they lived, when they died and why they died. Which I have strived to do for my litters and gleaned a great deal of information from very helpful people along the way.

I have already put on iwdb.org the date and reason for the deaths of Kiera and Bonnie. The more information we can add the much better it is for planning litters!!

Publications - All Free to Download

12

[Heart Testing Sessions Current Dates and Locations Available here](#)

[Heart Test Booking Form to book a session – click here](#)

[Guide to Buying an Irish Wolfhound Puppy](#)

[Down load the FREE Breed Guide](#)

[Livershunt Testing Forms](#)

[Guide to Neutering Your Hound](#)

[Find All Our Other Breed Health Guidelines Here](#)

Ongoing Surveys -

PNEUMONIA

PUPPY PARALYSIS - Fibrocartilaginous embolism (FCE)

BONE CANCER TREATMENT – (Osteosarcoma)

BLOAT - Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus (GDV)

[ALL SURVEYS CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND CAN BE FOUND HERE](#)

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[Health Group Website](#)



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