



IWHG



winter

Winter Edition

Patron: Trudie Sumner

Find us on



Welcome to our Winter Newsletter.

In our 2020 Winter edition we said we hoped that 2021 would be a better and a more normal year!! While things have improved, we are still dealing with Covid-19, and a great many people have been affected in some manner.

We are all pleased that shows have started up again and we must thank all those involved in getting these up and running during 2021. It takes so much effort and organisation to get these in the diary so thank you to all the Breed Clubs and their Committees. While the Covid restrictions were in place it was so good to have the option for an on-line show. Thanks to PAWS (Practical Aid for Wolfhounds) who have kept us all involved - brilliant job.

In this edition, we have a very interesting article from Dr Maura Lyons, a personal article having had the unenviable position of having a hound with GDV.

Wendy Heather has been working with our cardiologists and venue hosts during 2021, and together with Anne Vaudin, have organised, so far, 22 sessions enabling 261 hounds to be Heart Screened which is amazing. We must say thank you to all involved for their hard work. See the Heart Screening update later in this issue.

Caroline Sheppard is spearheading the re-launch of the FCE survey (Puppy Paralysis). If you have ever had a puppy that has been affected by this, please take some time to complete the survey. The more we know the better we can support and help the owner and the hound. The focus of our attention is on rehabilitation and identifying what works best for these puppies.

2021 should have been a Seminar year, but given the unsteady situation for planning ahead, we opted to try a

Webinar. This was the first time we had organised an event like this for the Health Group and we were extremely pleased that Dr Jean Dodds, one of the founders of Hemopet, agreed to do a talk on vaccinations. It was a fascinating and informative session, very well received and we hope to have a second session titled "The Microbiome" in the early part of next year.

We also have in this edition an end of year summary report of our 2020 accounts.

We are delighted to welcome Denise Pateman & Ann Donaldson to the Health Group. You can read more about Denise and Ann later in this issue.

As you are all aware the IWHG is involved with or helps to coordinate various different research projects in Irish Wolfhounds. Many are still ongoing and we continue to need your help. Take a look at those listed at the end of the Newsletter and if you can, please contribute.

Thank you.

We hope you enjoy reading this Edition.

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An Emergency Trip to the Vet - Myrtle's Experience with GDV.

Myrtle is our oldest wolfhound – on 19th August she was 10 years, 6 and a half months. She'd been slowing down on our walks, and we were even taking her on slightly shorter, slower paced walks while we took the younger girls out on longer marches, but aside from that she was fit and healthy, and I had no reason not to think she wouldn't see her 11th birthday.

All that changed on 19th August 2021. We went to bed as normal, but around midnight she woke us up – pacing, uncomfortable, trying to vomit but not producing anything... I knew what these symptoms meant. I immediately phoned our vet and told them I suspected bloat. They told us to come in immediately and they would meet us at the surgery.

We got to the practise before the vet and the wait was torture. We had 10 minutes of thinking about what the hell we were going to do. The vet arrived and let us in for the exam and he agreed that it was likely bloat. He wanted to x-ray Myrtle to see if the bloat had caused a GDV (or twist in the gut) also. Her stomach was not distended like you would see with a typical bloat, so it was sensible to check.

We discussed the options and the vet asked, 'How far do you want to go? I knew what he meant but felt that we had to give her the best chance. Although the pandemic had meant that she hadn't attended a heart screening since mid-2019, we knew that throughout her life her heart had been very healthy, as we had previously attended the IWHG screening every year.

I was realistic and told the vet that if he opened her up and there were other signs of disease, like tumours, then to phone us and we would discuss further. With that we left the clinic to wait at home for news.

We got a call a little later to confirm that the x-ray had shown GDV and that he had called in extra help to perform surgery.

Then we waited hours, watching nonsense on the TV because we were never going to sleep. Around 5.15 am we got the call to say that surgery was over and that there had been no complications, it had gone as well as could be hoped for, but now we just had to wait and keep our fingers crossed.

Knowing that we went to bed for a couple of hours to try and sleep. The attending nurse kept us updated a few times that day. Every time the phone rang, we braced ourselves for bad news, but there were always small improvements, and the vet was so happy with her progress we were allowed to collect her and bring her home at tea-time on the Friday, a little over 12 hours since she had been admitted.

We had a cocktail of drugs to manage alongside trying to get her to eat, to ensure her digestive system would get back to working properly. We weren't quite out of the woods yet. She had an 8" incision on her tummy, which had been securely sutured and her poor body was fairly bruised. But she was certainly happy to be home and we were happy to have her.

We had Tralieve (tramadol – pain relief), Omeprazole (stomach protector to ensure she didn't start overproducing acid), Clavaseptin (antibiotic) and paracetamol (pain relief) to manage, so we organised a written schedule to make sure we knew when to give which drugs. In between times we were trying to encourage her to eat – this usually isn't a problem with Myrtle, so we knew if she refused chicken then she really wasn't feeling very well. We kept a diary of what she ate (or didn't) and when she went out for a toilet break, even taking note of what she produced too.



Myrtle when she first came home – tired, sore but happy to be home.

She was feeling so rubbish she didn't move very much for the first day and we took it in turns to sleep with her in the living room. She ate reasonably well initially, and we were offering her lots of different things fed by hand to try and get her to eat little and often. By Saturday evening she was beginning to seem uncomfortable again and was refusing food. I assumed it was because the last of the anaesthetic was leaving her system and she was feeling the full force of her pain. Eventually, she settled down and slept peacefully.

According to her schedule she was due to get another Tralieve around midnight. We decided that as she was sleeping peacefully it seemed foolish to wake her and upset her again, if she was sleeping then she wasn't feeling the pain, so we decided to let her sleep until she decided to wake up. She had a very peaceful, long sleep and when she woke, she seemed brighter, happier, and more alert. She ate her breakfast at 5am (3 sausages) and went out for a wee.

At that point we decided to remove the tramadol from her meds list. She seemed so much better off it. So, from just 36 hours after that major operation, she was only getting 1 paracetamol twice per day for pain relief. I have to say she didn't appear to be in unbearable pain, and I was glad to think that she was still being careful when moving about or getting up from a lying position.

We have had tramadol previously for a hound who needed rest to heal a groin strain, and we have found it really knocks them for six. I don't know if it

offers any pain relief, but it certainly seems to create a zombie confused dog. It's a drug I use with caution.

My vet seems surprised that we always have this reaction as it seems well-tolerated by the rest of the dog population, so perhaps it's a wolfhound thing – maybe that's a question for a future project?



The operation site

During Sunday (day 3) her improvements continued. Her appetite came back which made getting drugs into her much easier as we would hide them in a lump of pate, which she particularly likes. She was moving a lot more easily as well and managing to get herself up without help from us.

At 4.30am on Monday morning she produced her first post-op poop – a milestone!

By the Monday we were weaning her onto small meals of tinned food (Butchers Tripe), and it was clear she was well on the road to recovery. By this time, she was freely wandering about the house and garden, mostly by herself just with us keeping an eye in case she needed help. We began to feed her meals of tinned food from her bowl four times a day, and we were slowly increasing her meal size until she was eating a normal amount again.

By the Thursday (day 7) she was doing so well we stopped keeping the diary. The course of antibiotics had finished, and she was eating fairly normally albeit with smaller more frequent meals.



Myrtle getting comfy on the settee

As I work from home most of the week anyway, I was lucky to be able to change my routine and work for the full week from home and make sure she had a full-time nursemaid to keep an eye on her during her recovery.

We went back to the vets on the Friday for a check-up and they were very impressed with her progress. We just had to take her back again the following week to have her stitches removed.

I'm amazed how well she has recovered, and I can honestly say that we considered (for a split-second) 'not putting her through' such a large operation at her age. Was she fit enough to cope with the recovery? Could we take time off work to help nurse her through it? Could we afford to pay the bill? These were all questions we asked ourselves and I'm fortunate we could answer 'yes' to them all. (For those who are wondering – Myrtle isn't insured, and the bill was just over £2000)

With hindsight there was nothing that would have obviously caused the bloat episode except that as they were finishing their dinner (and Myrtle does get fed on the inside of the front door) we got unexpected visitors. That did cause some commotion as the girls couldn't decide whether to bark or continue eating – they clearly thought both jobs were of equal importance. We didn't feed her any differently than we have fed her for years. They do eat from raised feeders and we feed good quality kibble alongside tinned meat.

Some say these may be contributing factors but we have done that all of Myrtle's life, and she has actually always had a very strong constitution – she has never been a fussy feeder and has never been prone to diarrhoea or even soft stools – in fact it doesn't seem to matter much what we feed her, she is always keen to eat, and it always comes out the other end in the same firm consistency, lol. Throughout her life we have often commented on her robust digestive system.

We don't know what caused this episode or whether there will be another. The vet performed a gastropexy so we can at least hope that if she does have another bloat, that won't escalate to a full-blown GDV.

Myrtle turns 11 years old on 10th February 2022, I'm tentatively hopeful she reaches that milestone.



Myrtle enjoying some sunshine in the garden just a few days after her operation

If you have experienced a hound with bloat please take part in the Health Group Survey
<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>



RE-LAUNCH OF THE IWHG SURVEY INTO THE TREATMENT AND CAUSES OF FCE

You may be aware that there has been a year-long campaign in the UK to raise awareness and funds for Irish Wolfhound puppies who have suffered from fibrocartilagenous embolism (otherwise known as FCE, or puppy paralysis).

This fundraiser was kindly run by a supporter of Practical Aid for Wolfhounds, who was prompted to discover more about the condition, after a friend's puppy was affected. PAWS has already been able to offer practical assistance and advice to several owners whose puppies have been stricken by this distressing condition and these extra funds will enable that support to continue.



The campaign received support from members of the UK breed bodies and IW causes. The IWHG is therefore hopeful that the interest generated, will prompt people to help us gain more insight into why Irish Wolfhounds are unique in being the only breed to be affected by this condition as puppies.

Although many Irish Wolfhound owners and breeders have been aware of "puppy paralysis" for several decades, its root cause has still not been effectively determined. Meaningful research is not possible without sufficient information from owners/breeders of affected puppies.

The IWHG has been attempting to gather information on incidences of any unexplained sudden onset paralysis in puppies, for some time now, but the response so far has been somewhat disappointing.

To encourage participation, we have re-designed the questionnaire and are re-launching our survey here-

[FCE \(Fibrocartilagenous Embolism\) aka 'Puppy Paralysis' - Questionnaire \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com)

If you, or anyone you know, has owned or bred a puppy that was suspected of having suffered FCE, we would encourage completion of this online questionnaire. All information received is treated with respect and remains confidential.

Once enough case studies have been collected and the information analysed, we hope this will not only help determine the most successful treatment protocols but may also give some insight into the cause and whether there is anything that breeders and owners can actively do to help safeguard against it.

If sufficient questionnaires are received, the IWHG can then approach a veterinary research team to make further investigations and recommendations.

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Heart Screening Update –

Wendy Heather



Extremely pleased that we have been able to organise 21 sessions so far during 2021. A total of 252 hounds have been heart screened. Thank you to our venue hosts – we can't do this without you.

Unfortunately, we were unable to organise sessions for Ireland and Northern Ireland during 2021 mainly because it has been difficult to locate a cardiologist who was prepared to work with the HG to organise sessions but, we hope that for 2022 this may be different.

We have been very fortunate to continue to have some very loyal Cardiologists who have been willing to undertake sessions for us during 2021: Angela Bodey, Dave Fisher, Sheena Milne, Dave Dickson, and Serena Brownlie. We included a new venue in Anglesey this year and have also been able to organise a session at Nottingham Vet School. This venue has always been a very popular session and being able to arrange one in 2021 bodes well for 2022 where hopefully we can organise our usual 2/3 sessions per year.

We have again been very fortunate to have Anne Vaudin as the IWHG Booking Administrator. She has been in this role for 4 years now and has been key in ensuring the administration runs smoothly for this Health Group role. The role has been much more involved due to the Covid arrangements so thank you Anne for all your hard work.

Super Veterans will still be paid for by the Health Group for their first test. The second test for that year the Irish Wolfhound Club will pay for half of the screening cost. Hounds rescued through the Trust are paid for by the Trust, unless classed as Super Veterans whereby SV subs apply.

A full end of year report will be included in our next Newsletter in 2022.

Treasurer's Report –

Steven Ritchie



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The 2020 accounts have been audited and will be issued in the very near future.

As I said in the last newsletter, the efforts of our fundraisers were phenomenal in 2020 with direct donations increasing by 150% to over £2,000 with donations from the Irish Wolfhound Club and many other generous private donations.

Mandy Addington raised the amazing sum of £2,910 so huge thank you to Mandy and her supporters in the Irish Wolfhound Community group for all the amazing fundraising work they do for the IWHG and the other breed support groups, the IW Rescue Trust and PAWS.

The 2021 accounts are in the process of being prepared and I'll give an update in the Spring newsletter. It's obvious our fundraisers have been very busy again this year, so we'd like to say a big THANK YOU once again to all our fundraisers and supporters, we sincerely appreciate all your efforts and generosity.

A really easy way to donate is via Easy-fundraising which turns your everyday shopping into free donations for the IWHG. Just use this link to start your online shopping first and then shop as normal and each time you spend the IWHG will receive a donation.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/iwhg/>



Denise Pateman & Ann Donaldson



My husband and I were fortunate to get our first Wolfhound from Dagmar and Kathy at Peters's Farm in 1998. I remember clearly going to meet their 'hounds' for the first time and being shut in a run with a lot of friendly and bouncy Irish Wolfhounds. We were politely sent away with suggestions of reading material and told to contact them again in six months if we were still interested.

Eventually we came home with our first wolfhound, Patrick, who was the most wonderful, kind and gentle dog. We by this stage had a mixed pack; a retired racing greyhound and two lurchers. When we lost Patrick we realised that the Irish Wolfhound bug had truly bitten and we went back to Peter's Farm and Arthur came to live with us and we started to think about showing.

We moved in 2005 so we could share our lives with more Irish Wolfhounds! Tina and Janis soon joined us and this was when we really started to learn about our breed. Janis developed meningitis at 18 months and we were very lucky she survived. Over the intervening years we have lived with many hounds and were encouraged to heart test from the very beginning. We have benefited from the Heart Screening scheme and in later years I have appreciated the Health Group website information leaflets which I have been able to use for various emergencies over the years.

I am delighted to have this opportunity to give something back to our breed if only in a small way.

Denise Pateman



Being born on a farm, I was bought up with the usual farm animals and pets. When I left home in 1972, I bought my own Old English Sheepdog puppy. He lived to be over 13 years old.

In 1986 on a holiday in Wales, I saw a magnificent Irish Wolfhound and fell in love with this wonderful breed. After doing much research I was introduced to Liz Thornton who taught me so much about the breed and offered me my first puppy. Eventually Liz introduced me to Jan Pain through whom I owned some lovely Ravensbeece hounds. During that time back in 1986 I also met Diane and Dennis Redfern and have shared many years of hounds and fond friendship.

From then on, I have loved and owned this amazing breed. Now I am the proud owner of two lovely girls. Over the years I have shown my dogs and always followed our great kennels with keen interest.

I am honoured to be on the committee of the Irish Wolfhound Society. Currently I hold the position of Show Secretary. Giving us a chance to monitor and hopefully preserve the breed for the future.

Currently I judge our breed at open show level and continue to learn and understand more about our Irish wolfhounds.

I am now retired and hope to prove to be a genuine asset to this important group.

Ann Donaldson

How Can You Contribute to Health Research in Irish Wolfhounds?

Dr Maura Lyons, PhD, IWHG Research Co-ordinator

The IWHG is 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 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 screening 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 Pneumonia Study – Dr Angela Bodey & 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;

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

FCE “Puppy Paralysis” Research – 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.

www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/puppy-paralysis.html

Livershunt/Epilepsy & 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/liver-shunt.html>

Dentition Survey – Caroline Sheppard

Caroline has been collecting examples of jaw growth in wolfhound puppies 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>

Veteran Survey – 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 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/iwhg-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...

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>

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., Livershunts 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

BetterBred Genetic Diversity Project – Dr Maura Lyons

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

Congenital Blindness Survey – Jean Timmins

From time to time we hear of a puppy who was blind or had some degree of sight loss from birth. It does not appear to be something that is particularly common, but we would really appreciate hearing from anyone who has experienced congenital blindness in puppies and hear what diagnosis they were given and also how they and the hound coped living with the condition to allow a full and active life.

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/health-surveys.html>

Quick Links to Surveys -

[PNEUMONIA](#)

[PUPPY PARALYSIS - Fibrocartilaginous embolism \(FCE\)](#)

[BONE CANCER TREATMENT – \(Osteosarcoma\)](#)

[BLOAT - Gastric Dilatation/Volvulus \(GDV\)](#)

[DENTITION](#)

[LIVERSHUNT/PRA/EPILEPSY](#)

[VETERAN](#)

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.ht>

Publications & Guides



DOWNLOAD FROM THE WEBSITE HERE

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

[Breed Guide - Introducing your new Irish Wolfhound](#)

[Guide to anaesthesia](#)

[Neutering factsheet](#)

[Bloat \(gastric dilatation volvulus, GDV\)](#)

[Puppy paralysis \(fibrocartilaginous embolism, FCE\)](#)

[Heart disease \(dilated cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation\)](#)

[Megaesophagus](#)

[Pneumonia for owners](#)

[Pneumonia for vets](#)

[Progressive retinal atrophy \(PRA\)](#)

[Dentition Guide](#)

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

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

[Livershunts Testing Forms](#)

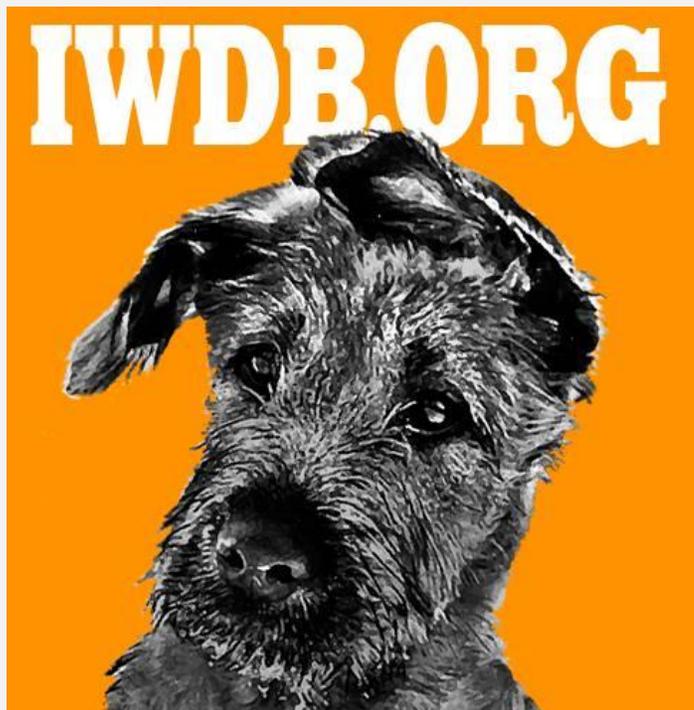
Useful Downloads

Covid-19 and Dogs

<https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/coronavirus-and-dogs>

Socialising dogs during lockdown

[How to socialise new puppies during the coronavirus pandemic - RSPCA](#)



The Irish Wolfhound Database is a free to use database of all Irish Wolfhounds of which its estimated around 98% of all hounds ever registered are in the database. The database is valuable to breeders but also of great importance to researchers that have projects involving the Wolfhound, providing them with a huge resource and pool of information to use and support their work.

How can you help?

The database when used for research is only as good as the information you provide, so if you have records of any hounds you have owned, bred, or puppies you have sold, please do consider enter the age and cause of death for each dog, your help is invaluable.

Email information [directly here](#)

Contacts ..

Chair Jean Timmins chairman@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Secretary : Wendy Reeves secretary@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Treasurer : Steven Ritchie treasurer@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Research Co-ordinator:

Maura Lyons

researchcoordinator@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Heart Test Co-ordinator:

Wendy Heather

hearttestcoordinator@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Heart Test Booking:

Anne Vaudin

hearttestbooking@iwhealthgroup.co.uk

Consultant Veterinary Surgeon:

Ian Finney DVM MRCVS

[Health Group Website](#)



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