

## Dulcie, Primrose, Quincey and Kira



**APRIL 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016** that fateful day I year ago when 4 of my precious dogs were stolen. It was Easter weekend, cold but a dry and sunny day.

We had been up early, been for a walk and all had been fed.

I decided to leave them all out in their day runs. I have a girl 'Shona' who works with my dogs all day Saturday. However, because it was an Easter weekend my Manageress 'Sarah' had asked if she could help in the boarding block for a while as they were so busy.

This meant she did not arrive at the house until around 11am. This meant there was a short period when there was no-one with the dogs.

Sometime later in my office I was approached by Sarah asking if I had any of the dogs with me, I hadn't.....

We all went down the paddocks thinking they had been left down there after their walk.

It soon became apparent that they were missing !! Even to write this, brings back the horror of that morning.

Searching the area we found a hole had been cut in the 6ft weldmesh fence, this had been their entry point. They had been stolen.....

We have a bridle way running alongside the property and this is where they parked and loaded the dogs

That Saturday is still a haze to me, I can only say I was in a state of shock, unable to accept the cruel fate I had been dealt.

My husband after informing the Police left immediately to the local travellers site this site was totally inaccessible as all of these sites are.

My daughter Carly was away on an animal chiropractic course in Bournemouth, my grandson contacted her and she left the course early to come home.

She then set about contacting groups that she felt would be able to help us via social media and a reward was set up.

The following morning was so hard. I got up around 7am and went down to let out run and feed, it was devastating without the girls and Quincey I was so grateful for the support of my family and staff on that morning.

The police arrived midday, took details but offered nothing in the way of reassurance with any hope of their return.

Carly complained to Thames Valley Police next day and a 2<sup>nd</sup> officer was sent out who was much more positive, she was a dog owner and understood our anguish and despair.

The following days were busy with posting posters everywhere, trying everything we could which would give us a lead to find them.

Our next ploy was to employ a pet detective, this proved to be fruitless and so very expensive. 2 days' investigations amounted to a bill of almost £1000!!

During this time, several hoax calls came through to Carly & Robs landline, saying that they knew where the dogs were and we needed to pay money into a bank account before he would reveal their whereabouts.

When they refused he later telephoned to say the dogs had been run over..... what kind of people are they? This is the realisation of who we had been dealing with

### **MID-WEEK**

Came a breakthrough

A lady doing her shopping at a retail park in Oxford had seen a white Spitz in a crate in a traveller's motor-home, she then phoned the dog lost group and Carly and Rob drove straight over to the retail park.

When they arrived, they saw Kira tied to some railings whilst the woman was cleaning her van.

The police were called and waiting a long 10minutes they arrived. The police officers approach the woman and took the dog. One officer and Carly took Kira into the Vets at home store where she was scanned and formerly identified.

The woman was arrested and taken into custody and Kira came home -Thankfully.

The next Saga in the story was a photo sent by phone from a woman from a council estate in Oxford, she had seen her neighbour load a Spitz and a cocker spaniel into a white van, the photo was taken from a distance so not very conclusive.

The woman wanted to remain anonymous, frightened of the come back on her and her son.

The photo was forwarded to the acting policewoman dealing with our case. The photo was never used and the arrested woman did not turn up in court and her case never pursued.

The following day came another breakthrough. A call from a Vets at a retail park in Nuneaton.

They had taken in 2 dogs which had been left tied to some railings in the retail park.

Carly set out straight away. The dogs had been taken to a holding kennels in Nuneaton by the local Dog Warden.

3 Safely back home... but no Quincey.

Over the coming weeks, fears grew for his safety. We tried every avenue we could think of Puppy Farms, informed every area Dog Wardens & Vets & rescue centres.

We followed every lead & siting's regarding Spitz to no avail.

Julie Edmonson was forefront on the media dedicated to Quincey's return. Her diligence & determination I am sure was the key to Quincey's return

My daughter Carly also, relentlessly following up leads, anything that was in the least hopeful.

A strong influence & support from friends helped me through this long and heart-breaking 6 months.

Adell, Kennedy, Richard, I am forever grateful. Lynne who camped out for almost a week in her car at Stow Fair watching every caravan and motor-home on site, but no sign of Quincey.

**ON OCTOBER 14<sup>th</sup>** 2016, late evening. Carly received a call from a Dog Lost group.

The story goes....A Traveller lady was walking in a park in Birmingham and this white dog followed her home ??

The group contacted a volunteer in the area, who went with a scanner and YEAH ! it was our Quincey , the waiting and hoping was over.

Carly & Rob set straight off. The volunteer had taken Quincey back to her house. When they arrived, he was well settled, but delighted to see Carly & Rob.

They arrived home with him around 11.30pm.

So, elated and beyond happy to have him back, his usual happy self with the wonderful smiley face.

Not stressed by his ordeal but grossly overweight and matted.

Nothing that could not be fixed, he was home that's all that mattered. I still can't believe it. I have to stop sometimes and give him a cuddle and ask him where he's been. !! if only he could talk.

It is certain that Irish travellers stole the dogs. On the Wednesday before the theft we had 2 young Irish boys around 16 years old arrive in reception.

They were trying to buy dog food with a £50 note. (a forgery) I became suspicious and told them we had no change. One of the lads saw a photo of a Spitz on our notice board and asked how much they were.

I said they would be too expensive for you and that I had none for sale.

Probably bad info, they then knew the dogs were worth good money. They left on foot, but I suspect they were parked in the bridleway and would have seen the dogs in the paddock through the fence.

(Now replaced with an 8ft solid fence)

It was the following Saturday the dogs were stolen, around mid-morning, right in front of the house. Their brazen attitude is beyond words.

I am so fortunate to have all my dogs safely home, for others the theft of their dog has devastated their lives and my heart goes out to them. Staying hopeful is difficult the longer the dog is missing.

They are much loved members of their family and the pain and distress of not knowing where they are being unbearable.

For me, this theft has damaged my outlook on life, years of a relaxed attitude, turned to 'neurosis' All dogs in the house behind locked doors at dusk, high fences, CCTV covers the house and business and all the dogs during the day. 2 Loud and daunting Bull Mastiffs guard dogs, who patrol overnight.

All doors are alarmed to the house and the boarding block. I am still uneasy never wanting to face the trauma again.

You can all help, write or email your local MP, asking them to up the profile & sentencing for Dog Theft. Tougher sentencing is required as some form of deterrent. Only 5% of thieves are prosecuted and none have ever been given a custodial sentence.

Dog theft is big business with an increase of 24% over the last 2 years, we are all vulnerable, 50% of dogs are stolen from back gardens THIS HAS TO STOP.

Be dog theft aware; Never leave your dog outside while you shop.

Be aware when out walking with your dog

Make sure your garden is secure.

### **AND TO THOSE WHO STEAL OUR DOGS**

If there is a good place that we go to when we die, you will not go there.

You damage people's lives, stealing their beloved pets You have no conscience and no compassion, you are wicked and evil. Your punishment will surely be forth coming, with the appropriate Karma.

Steph Bliss