

Catherine Walsh tells Charlie's Story -

"Born March 17th 1992, in a litter of seven pups, on Christmas Day 1995 he started to howl with pain, and we could not figure out what was wrong with him. Gradually over the next few days we noticed that the problem was with the left side of his body, his front left paw, left ear and surrounding areas. Over the next two years, he had multiple X-rays, ear examinations, allergy and blood tests, teeth extracted, surgery, and changes of diet. The list of drugs prescribed is too long to list here. But all to no avail. Over a two-year period we saw at least one vet each week and travelled in excess of 20,000 miles in Ireland in the hope that someone could help us. We went to the Vet. College in Dublin, where he was seen by visiting vets from New Zealand, Australia, and Europe but they all thought it was either a behavioural problem, or that he may have had an ear infection sometime and got into the habit of scratching his ear.

We were still not content with this diagnosis. An attack would sometimes be triggered by his getting excited, possibly on a windy day, by rubbing his left ear or left paw, or just by eating and drinking. We checked with his breeder who gave us the names of the families who had taken the other pups from Charlie's litter, and also of a second litter from the same mother and father two years later. We visited all of these families and Cavaliers (except for the one living in the US) but none of them showed similar symptoms. When Charlie was about 7 years old, a friend of mine told me about an article which Janet Ireland had written about "Rosie". When I 'phoned her, I realised that at last here was someone who could explain what was wrong with my dog. The search had taken four years! Even though we knew that he had a major medical problem, it was such a relief to know that we were not alone any more.

Charlie was 12 years old in March 2004. We last reported in 2002 that he had not got any worse though still scratching his ear and over his head many times a day. Some days were better than others, but because we had found out what to do. He still enjoys his walks which tend to be walk, scratch, walk, scratch, walk, I am the only one allowed to touch his left ear, and this only once a month or so to trim the hair there. His water-bowl is raised so that he can drink without bending his head, and we spoon-feed him his meals. This allows him to sit down or stand up to eat with the minimum movement required. We leave his collar very loose around his neck on walks, and try to prevent his getting over-excited. The problem has been with us for the past 8 years. It is a normal part of our everyday life. Despite everything, Charlie is a really happy dog and we would not swap him for any other Cavalier in the world. If you think that you're dog show similar symptoms and you want to contact someone in Ireland to discuss the problem. Please feel free to contact me, Catherine Walsh, by email at walsh.c@euro.apple.com"

Charlie's Story Updated August 2005

In August 2005 we received the following message from Catherine which we will reproduce in full -

You may download a pdf text version of Rupert, Peaches and Philippa by clicking on [charliewalsh2.pdf](#)
[charliewalsh2.pdf](#)

"To those of you who knew Charlie from Ireland, my little boy received his angel wings at 20:20 on Sunday July 31st.

We were away for the weekend, and he really had a great weekend, he was sitting up looking out at the sights while we were travelling, barking at people passing when we stopped up, demanding food and treats, walking and enjoying the sunshine. On Sunday evening, he was sitting on my lap at the door of the camper at 18:00 hrs, while I had the dinner in the oven, lots of people were passing by commenting on the cute puppy - and coming over to rub him, he

always loved been the centre of attraction. We sat down for dinner about 19:00 hrs and Charlie ate his Chicken and Tuna without a bother - followed by his medication and almost half a bowl of water. I washed up the dinner ware and he was watching me waiting for me to put the tea towel down as that is his trigger to go walking - we went out at 19:45 and he was sniffing, walking, tail held high wagging at knots an hour - his eyes were sparkling, and where we were walking there was a river running along side, he could hear the river but there was a high bank, so I lifted him up to the top of the bank so he could see over and into the river, - as he was now chest height to me, he turned around and licked my face. We had been remarking all weekend how happy he appeared to be and this walk was no exception.

We returned to the camper at 20:15 - and I lifted him onto his seat, he sat there waiting for his treat, because that was his routine, he ate his treat, and I turned around to get some cold water out of the fridge to fill his bowl again, and just as I was at the fridge, Charlie lay down on the couch, gave 5 loud barks, Phil was right next to him and thought some of his treat had got caught in his throat, I came back up to him, and put my hand under his head and he looked straight into my eyes then I could see the sparkle drain from his eyes, I put my hand on his heart and couldn't detect a heart beat, then he moved his back paw forward and back once, and fell into his deep sleep - this all happened within 15 seconds. It all happened so fast I just picked him up and held him in my arms for over an hour, We called out the Emergency vet, who confirmed his passing, he was so sweet, he was with us within 15 minutes, and we had never seen him before but there were tears in his eyes as he verified Charlie's passing.

Monday morning, We got a beautiful little casket from our own vet and even when he arrived and saw Charlie he said he looked so at peace just sleeping. The casket was lined with velvet, and it was so soft to touch - We put Charlie inside and a little cushion beneath his head, We had a little Cavalier soft toy with a heart which said I love you, and we put that between his front paws, we pinned his St. Francis medal to his blanket, and put in his ball and his favourite treats, then kissed him for the last time before securing the lid.

We buried him yesterday, in a lovely spot, where he will remain undisturbed forever, and we can go visit him whenever we want to. The house is now so empty without the pitter patter of our little boys paws across the timber floor - and the void he has left in our lives really meant how special he was and how much our lives revolved around him for the past 13 and a half years.

He is now free from all his suffering, his SM and his heart murmur, he enjoyed his life up to last second, he went as he lived without a bother, and he ensured that both his Mum and Dad were right there with him so we knew he didn't suffer. He is now catching up in person with Chad and all of his buddies that have gone before him, and as he flies over us all with his Cavalier wings.

Sleepy tight little buddy. You are our forever dog. We will love you always. Catherine

The End