

## **Their Stories**

**Rupert** was our first Cavalier. He was born on 11th June 1996 and has always loved everybody and everything, making friends wherever he goes. Unfortunately in 1998 he appeared to have become deaf. We wondered if the vaccination given in February of that year for kennel cough (which left him with a mild cough later diagnosed as bronchitis) might have caused this deafness. In August he underwent a full neurological assessment and hearing tests at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket where they diagnosed bilateral deafness. In all other respects he was fine. Rupert adapted well to his disability, and even carried on competing in local obedience competitions, having changed over to hand signals!

Rupert has always been sensitive around the head and neck. If a stranger fusses him in that area he will often cry out. Sometimes he also does this with people he knows well, especially if he becomes excited. His front legs are also sensitive and he is reluctant to be groomed in that area. His first episode of neck pain was February 2000. He was obviously in pain as he would not pick up a biscuit off the floor, and would scream if we picked him up. Our vet treated him with painkillers and we made him a collar from a woolen jumper sleeve to keep his neck warm. After a while he recovered, but had another episode in April 2001.

Our vet produced a news clipping called "Squeakers and Squealers" describing a syndrome in Cavaliers which seemed to fit Rupert's symptoms. We were unable to find any more information until the vet gave us your website address. From the clinical signs he believed this to be the most likely explanation of Rupert's problems. However, following further discussion with him we felt that it was not appropriate at that time to have an MRI scan done as Rupert was not too severely affected.

In July 2003 Rupert had another bad episode of neck pain prior to which he had been intermittently crying out for no apparent reason for a couple of weeks. He did not "scratch", but was very sensitive particularly when moulting when he worries and chews at his coat, much more so than other Cavaliers we have owned. We have raised both his food and water bowl and now use a harness rather than a collar. Following that episode we tried treating him homeopathically and this seemed to help him considerably.

### PHOTO

In May 2004, Rupert had his worst episode to date. It started just like earlier episodes but this time he refused to jump off the bed in the morning. When I lifted him down he cried out. In the kitchen he just sat down and started screaming. He is totally deaf and so we comforted him, stroking and cuddling him but our touching made him scream all the more, which was very frightening. When we took him to see our vet Rupert perked up seeming to understand that help was coming and he stopped screaming. The vet checked him over but could find nothing else which might be causing Rupert's pain. Despite being eight, he showed no symptoms of a heart murmur. Metacam (a NSAID) was prescribed for nine days and after a couple of weeks on this and his homeopathic treatment he returned to being our bouncy, waggly-tailed boy. It seems likely that Rupert is one of the known group of dogs who periodically experience infrequent but acute episodes of pain.

Possibly because Cavaliers are rare in our area, Rupert is the only syringomyelia case seen by our vet who is keen to learn all about the condition and was very interested to see our copy of Clare Rusbridge's video presentation to the CKCS Club.

### **Updated October 2005**

Rupert, now nine, has a little urine dribbling, he is going to be x-rayed in case its bladder stones, also have his prostate checked {although I suspect it may be due to the Syringomyelia}. He has two teeth, which need to come out as they are causing him pain, so will have it all done at the same time. He's going to have blood tests to check liver and kidney function too so I wanted to make sure things were OK. He has had some vomiting and loose motions for the last 24 hours, and the vet can feel a round object which appears to be moving through. We suspect that it is probably nothing serious as he is a bit of a scavenger! However, he is going in on Wednesday, so I will be a nervous wreck that day! He will go in with a list of instructions, about him being deaf and the Syringomyelia, so they don't put a slip lead on. The great news is that his heart is still clear!

## Rupert, Peaches , Philippa – Their Stories

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Despite his problems and our worries about him we feel fortunate to have Rupert who seems to be relatively mildly affected and is otherwise a happy, joyful boy.

**Fillipa** was born 20th October 1997. She came to us at seven months when it became apparent that she was not suited for the show-ring. While she was rather nervous of people she loved other dogs and was wonderful with us. She soon established herself as "Top Dog" in the household despite being the smallest! After Rupert lost his hearing she became his ears. Sadly, we lost our beloved little girl with sudden heart failure on 8th May 2003. She is still very greatly missed.

Last but not least, **Peaches** was born on 13th November 1998. She was almost three when she came to live with us as her first owner had returned her to her breeder when she was eight months old. She had been very poorly socialised and is still nervous of other dogs - except for Cavaliers. However she is a wonderful character, very loving and affectionate. Peaches has had a bad year health wise. In December 2003, she was diagnosed with MVD with a Grade 2 murmur (where on the scale of 0 to 6, 6 is the most severe) as well as with Cardiac Sinus Arrhythmia. Fortunately she does not currently require any treatment for these conditions as she is not showing clinical signs for either condition. To date, the murmur has not got any worse.

However, in January 2004, we took the opportunity, while Peaches was being spayed, of taking x-ray's of her back and hips, and also of her knees because she had been reluctant to go for a walk, was unwilling to run and did not want to jump on or off the furniture. The x-rays showed that she had luxating patellas (slipping kneecaps) on both knees. They were so loose that they were slipping in and out constantly rather than sticking which gives the distinctive "patella limp". She also had moderate hip dysplasia. The vet thought that without an operation, Peaches' leg muscles would bow and, exacerbate her hip problems, and so he recommended that both knees be operated on, and that the hip problem be reviewed in a year's time.

We started Peaches on a combination of homoeopathic remedies, kept her weight low and slowly increased her exercise to get her really fit. She was given two months to recover from her spaying before we booked her in for the first knee operation. By then, she had improved markedly, was enthusiastic about walks, and was running and jumping again. On examination, the vet could find no signs of bowing, so it was decided to postpone the surgery for now, and just monitor the situation.

All of these health problems were a shock to both us and to Peaches' breeder, as she was not aware of any such problems in her lines. We are now managing Peaches and Rupert's problems, and enjoy each and every day that we are privileged to spend with our two beloved doglets.

Nicki Hughes  
16<sup>th</sup> June 2004

#### **Peaches (23rd Jan 2006)**

During the latter half of 2005 Peaches became really miserable on the new drug Lanoxin which was intended to combat her MVD problem. She became very nauseous, refusing food. After a while the Lanoxin began to work and her pulse came down to 130 {from a record 176} To improve the quality of her life, the vet suggested halving the dose. Peaches, for a little while, became more happier and stable before sadly relapsing during January. Last week Nikki wrote with great sadness that "Princess Peaches was given her wings on 16th January after fighting so bravely against all her health problems and is now reunited with her beloved "sister" Fillipa, and all the Angels. She will always have a very special place in our hearts."

A favourite photo of Peaches in happy days.

You may download this story by clicking on the link [rupert&co.doc](#)

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