

Tribute to Flint - A life Remembered



This is a tribute to my dearly loved, and now sadly missed Great Dane.

He came into this world on the 12th of October 1997 at Bolney in Sussex, the first-born of his litter of eleven; the largest of all the pups, with pale-blue eyes, great big feet and legs covered with "wrinkly stockings" of fur.

He arrived at my house looking totally lost, all his litter-mates gone, and slumped into a corner of the kitchen in a dejected manner. He was so forlorn that I lay down on the floor, and after a minute he wandered over to me, half climbed on my chest - and went to sleep! Bonding had begun.

Flint grew rapidly - over the next few months his legs rose like beanstalks; all that wrinkled fur stretched out; his body filled out, and that great head looked at all and sundry with intense eyes that had changed to the colour of wheaten gold.

An inveterate escape artist at every opportunity, he got up to all sorts of adventures that culminated with him falling over an eighty-foot cliff and somehow managed to come up smelling of roses (seaweed, anyway!). How he survived that beats me, but that's my Flint.

His favourite game was tug - so much so that he would do this for an hour at a time until I was exhausted. "Come on master - don't be a wimp" his eyes would say. All this exercise produced muscles like Sampson, and he would swagger around looking for all the world like a professional wrestler.



Wherever we went, he turned heads and questions would be asked - What? How tall? How heavy? What does he eat? (whole sheep the usual answer!) And, boy, isn't he handsome.

Foreign tourists would ask to pose with him and take his picture - he must appear in albums all over the world (especially Japan).

Life was good for Flinty, and he made the most of it, travelling around a lot of Britain, and to both Ireland and France.

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He created quite a stir on Mont St.Michel - I may as well have had a chained leopard walking beside me for the effect he had on all the tourists!

Flint was really a minor celebrity in his own time, and I was just the pleb who kept the admiring hordes at bay. No autographs today!

In 2006, about the time of his ninth birthday, Flinty developed a rasping cough, and a visit to the vet brought bad news - something was wrong with his heart. Flint went for some further tests and it was confirmed - he had Dilated Cardio-myopathy (DCM), his lungs were filling with fluid and basically he was dying, albeit slowly. A devastating blow.

The vet thought he had a few months to live, and put him on a regime of drugs to keep his heart going. One of these drugs was highly toxic, and the effect it had on his appetite was marked, but more of that later. We were referred to a cardiac specialist, Chris Little, who did some in-depth tests and monitoring, and so with all this we kept him going.



The toxic drug's effect on Flint's appetite caused him to gradually lose a lot of weight, and muscle tone and so the wrestler's physique from all those tug games was reduced to the point that his hind legs were very weak.

But, we did not give up - we got him a chariot, and so for the latter half of 2008 he trundled around most of Thanet. He would quite happily run over anyone's foot - he wasn't fussy!

Early in 2009, the DCM began to take its toll on him and he became weaker, but even in this state he still weighed about eight stone and so was not easy to carry around. I realised that a difficult decision was going to have to be made, but then he took that decision away.

Two days before the end, he had almost stopped eating - only a few pieces of home-made liver-cake. And, then he collapsed and shortly after became unconscious. A vet was called and the deed was done - Flint died in my arms, and I hope he just knew that. It was 1215 on the 27th of February 2009.

He was eleven years, four months and fifteen days old - the first born and the last to die, as we learned from his breeder. I cried like I had not since I was a child - and inside I still am.

It was only for your indomitable strength of spirit, Flint that let you stay with me for over two years longer than the vets thought possible. I have lost a mighty friend.

Where ever you are Flinty, to me the biggest, strongest and most handsome Great Dane in the world, your call-sign is "Blue Dog One" and you are clear for take-offPhilip