

Evening News

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ANGUISH: Jane Sharkey with her heartbroken daughter Nicole, five. Picture: Bill Henry

Horror for family as bull terrier kills puppy

GARETH EDWARDS

A MOTHER today told of her terror as a stray bull terrier cross tore her puppy to shreds in front of her and her daughter.

The stray cross-breed Staffordshire terrier savaged tiny 16-week-old King Charles spaniel Michaela after barging its way into the living room of the family's home.

The dog then killed the defenceless pup after gripping it in its mouth and viciously shaking it.

Mother-of-two Jane Sharkey today told of the family's horrific ordeal and her fear for her five-year-old daughter Nicole as the blood-spattered dog turned and snarled at her.

Police have now launched a hunt for the terrier's owner. The dog is currently being kept at the Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home until a decision is made whether to put it down.

The horrific attack follows reports that Staffordshire bull terriers are being abandoned in record numbers as irresponsible breeders sell the dogs to inappropriate owners.

Student Miss Sharkey, 22, of Candlemaker Park, Gilmerton, said she had bought the King Charles puppy for Nicole just eight weeks earlier.



The young mum was on her way out the door just after 5pm on Wednesday to pick up her toddler son David from nursery when the bull terrier ran past her and went straight for the puppy, which was sleeping in front of the fireplace.

Miss Sharkey desperately tried to pull the dog back as her daughter screamed at her to "get the doggy off", but was beaten back by its strength.

Still shaken by the incident, she recalled how the animal had then turned to look at her daughter, the body of the spaniel still in its jaws, and had growled at her.

She said: "It had just gone straight for Michaela. It grabbed her by the throat and just tore her apart. I grabbed it by the neck and tried to pull it away but I just couldn't stop it. Nicole was really upset and she was telling me to get the doggy away. Then it turned and growled at her, still with my dog in its mouth."

Fortunately the noise had woken her partner, 22-year-old David McCalden, who rushed downstairs and, with the help of neighbours who had heard the commotion, helped grab the terrier and shut it in their kitchen.

The police were quickly on the scene, but the dog had to stay trapped in the kitchen for three hours as they arranged to have it safely transported to the Edinburgh Cat and Dog Home. The large golden-coloured cross-breed male, which was wearing a collar, is being kept alive at least until its owners can be tracked down.

Miss Sharkey said the dog had already run into the house 15 minutes earlier as she took rubbish out, and had sniffed at the puppy then.

She said: "I grabbed it and threw it outside, but it obviously waited there because later, when I went to pick up David from nursery, it ran in the house as soon as I opened the door and went straight for the puppy.

A police spokeswoman said: "This was a horrific incident and was clearly very distressing for the owner and her young daughter. We need to get information on who the dog belongs to and our investigations into this are ongoing."

The Scottish Staffordshire Bull Terrier Rescue group, run by the Duchess of Hamilton, Kay Hamilton, wants a national system of licensing to be brought in, to reduce breeding and consequently the numbers of abandoned animals.

This article: <http://news.scotsman.com/scotland.cfm?id=496702006>

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