



Sat December 9 2006

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## News

**Girl's arm is torn open by dogs**

**TWO savage dogs killed a girl's pet dog and then attacked the teenager, leaving her with severe arm injuries.**

The 13-year-old Hartlepool youngster was walking with her Jack Russell along Dalkeith Road, Owton Manor, when two Japanese Akita's attacked her.

Police said the dogs killed the Jack Russell and then ripped the girl's left arm open, leaving her with severe wounds to her forearm and elbow.

She is now recovering in the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

Police believe the dogs were not with their owners and had been left to roam the streets. And officers have issued a warning to people to be aware of the danger dogs.

Acting inspector Tony Green said: "We have been out searching for these animals, but so far have not been able to find them.

"They have killed a family pet and seriously injured a young girl. We need to find out where they are and who owns them as quickly as possible.

"Clearly we cannot have such dangerous dogs roaming the streets of Hartlepool and we would appeal to anyone who knows where they are to contact us immediately.

"Someone in Hartlepool knows the whereabouts of these dogs and that someone ought to be reflecting on the fact that they are in a position to prevent a child being injured or worse in the event of a repeat.

"This is no time for irrelevant allegiances. We must recover these clearly dangerous animals to ensure the safety of others."

Akitas have a reputation as quiet, gentle dogs but can become aggressive if they are left alone or if another dog stands up to them.

A spokesman for the RSPCA said: "We wish this girl a speedy recovery.

"All dogs, whatever their usual temperament, have the potential to be dangerous and there are various factors that can lead to aggression.

"Hot weather, noise, or change of home and owner can cause an animal to become suddenly aggressive and pack instant can take over if two or more dogs are together."

Officers said the girl underwent extensive surgery for her injuries and her condition is described as stable and comfortable.

Anyone with information about the incident, which happened around 1pm on Wednesday, is urged to contact Hartlepool Police on (01642) 302126.

**Akitas - the facts**

- Akitas are native to the island of Honshu in the Akita region of Japan.
- The Akita's ancestors were historically used as hunting dogs and Samurai warriors used Akitas for dog fighting.
- Recent DNA analysis has confirmed that Akitas are one of the most primitive breeds of dog.
- Akitas usually live to around the age of 12 and can weigh around 7st.
- They are known to be quiet, relaxed dogs. But if they are left alone they can become bored and destructive.
- During the Second World War, the number of Akitas reduced dramatically because of the lack of food in Japan. People also used their fur for warm army uniforms.

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The scene of the attack on Dalkeith Road.

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