

Evening News

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Devil dog faces death after attack on gran and girls

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A GRANDMOTHER says a dog which subjected her and two young girls to a terrifying and painful attack should be destroyed.

Martha Thom was helping her granddaughters Shannon, ten, Lauren, eight, and Ashley, four, cross the road when a snarling bull terrier ran up to them, biting Martha on the ankle before sinking its teeth into Lauren's hip, leaving her bleeding.

The dog - a Staffordshire bull terrier cross - then launched itself at the girls' friend, Erin Scott, seven, biting her leg and dragging her into the road by her skirt.

The family was only able to escape when two motorists came to the rescue by bundling the four frightened girls into one of the cars and driving them to safety.

Mrs Thom suffered bruising and the two girls had bleeding wounds after the attack in Muirhouse Parkway on June 25.

Former administration assistant Mrs Thom, who retired early due to arthritis, described the incident as terrifying.

Mrs Thom, who lives with her husband James, 58, in Pennywell Place, said: "It was like something out of a horror film. The children were just screaming.

"It went for us one at a time. It was trying to bite my granddaughter on the head. It came running across the road but I didn't realise it was going to attack.

"It would have been a lot worse if the guy in the car hadn't stopped. I don't like to think what would have happened. It would have kept attacking us."

They were driven to the home of Martha's daughter, Jennifer, the mother of Shannon and Ashley, in Telford Drive. She then called the police and told her son, Lauren's father, who lives in Kirkliston.

Although none of the bites required hospital treatment, Mrs Thom, who owns two Jack Russells and a Yorkshire terrier, phoned NHS24 and dressed the wounds herself.

She said the children were left badly shaken and called for the dog to be put down.

She said: "We have been on holiday since and that has helped the children recover but they are still afraid to go outside the back yard. They keep asking if the dog is still there and if they are safe.

"I can not thank the men who helped us enough. I dread to think what would have happened if they hadn't intervened. The dog had no intention of stopping the attack."

The attack happened at around 2pm and lasted several minutes.

The animal was eventually restrained. Last night, a spokeswoman for Lothian and Borders Police said a 68-year-old man had been charged under the Dangerous Dogs Act.

She said: "He was interviewed by police and charged with not having a dog under proper control.

"A report will be sent to the procurator fiscal who will be consulted about the dog."

Scottish SPCA spokeswoman Doreen Graham said: "It must have been a very frightening experience because they are very powerful dogs. Yet Staffies are sometimes known as the nanny dog because they are usually good with children.

"It's an owner's responsibility to be in charge at all times. Invariably, with the attacks we are involved with, 90 per cent of them could have been avoided by people keeping in control of their dogs."

The Dangerous Dogs Act makes it an offence to allow any dog to be dangerously out of control in a public place.

If a dog causes injury and the case is proven in court, the dog can be ordered to be destroyed and the owner can face two years in prison or an unlimited fine.

This article: <http://news.scotsman.com/edinburgh.cfm?id=1026762006>

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Comments

1. **Martin**, Leith / 3:01pm 14 Jul 2006

The dog is always the individual who gets the punishment & the owner will get a slap on the wrist & the people who were attacked suffer the trauma. The one in this whole situation who should receive the maximum punishment in all of this is the owner of the dog. He should be held accountable for the injuries sustained by the victims. The dog should be removed from the owner permanently, but not destroyed. The dog is no different than the thugs who use knives in unprovoked attacks. Are they put down? No. They are given community service orders and let back out on the streets where they will injure and maim again. However when dogs attack they are given the death penalty. Should they not be given retraining so they can continue their lives?

2. **Ou Tjalie**, Edinburgh / 3:16pm 14 Jul 2006

The owner should go to jail and the dog re-homed with someone who actually knows how to train a dog.

3. **steven**, Edinburgh / 3:31pm 14 Jul 2006

most owners of staffies are law abiding people, who love their dogs, but there is a growing number of fools around the pilton/pennywell/muirhouse area, who seem to think that having a staffie is a status symbol, bring back the licensing of dogs, and vet those idiots, who don't think twice about letting their staffies off the lead and let them roam...ps i love staffies they are wonderful intelligent dogs who have the right to be brought up and nurtured properly, not by these idiots who use them as status symbols.....

4. **Martin**, Leith / 3:42pm 14 Jul 2006

I say give the dog a chance & retraining & let it have amnesty. LET THE DOG LIVE

5. **william**, Stenhouse / 3:56pm 14 Jul 2006

we owned a staffie for the last few years of her life ,her old owner used her for fighting it was rumoured and when we got her she was so placid and tame ,so they can change give the dog a chance, the weather is far too hot it should only be out as and when it needs to be and always on a lead ,jail the owner don't kill the dog give it to the staffie rescue in edinburgh,it deserves a second chance.

6. Disgruntled, Leith / 4:00pm 14 Jul 2006

Be very careful when quoting this Actfor most of last summer a local park in Leith was a virtual 'no-go' area because of a disfunctional family owning a large, powerful which was out of control and used as a weapon. Sections of the local community were being intimidated but having reported the situation many times, the police could do nothing, unless a witness to the behavior and if reported the instances where very low done their list of priorities.

To my knowledge the dog is still with the family, still seen off the lead in the local park - I don't use the park anymore....last year was enough!!!!

7. christine, edinburgh / 4:02pm 14 Jul 2006

unfortunatley this poor dog will have to be destroyed,because once dogs have had the taste of blood it will bite again.how sad when the owner will only get a silly fine or sentence(and be out in half the time)there are far too many strays in that area and dogs

8. Robert, Edinburgh / 5:01pm 14 Jul 2006

One can only wonder what was being done to the dog when it attacked the people.

9. christine, edinburgh / 6:31pm 14 Jul 2006

all the alcholics and addicts sit at muirhouse shopping centre and the dogs mainly staffies bark and growl and passers by this has been a problem in the area for years but nobody can sucessfully get rid of them the dogs can only go were the owners take them,the owners should wear the leads it's them that can't be controlled,the dog was maybe starving or trained to protect but it just went too far,i hope these kids can get over this and learn to trust dogs again because dogs have so much to offer.

10. Sarah, Stirling / 7:04pm 14 Jul 2006

This dog was named as a 'Staffie Cross'. So it may well have been anything, lots of dogs may look like a staffy but was it really? I mean people have reported attacks by staffies and it turns out the dogs were not. I feel awful for the people involved in this attack, it should never have happend. Why aren't people who allow their dogs to stray fined. Most people are hit hard when its from the pocket. I hope the dog can be re-homed. Why should death be the answer? As someone said previous, what about the murderers, rapists and paedophiles out there, they are given a reprieve after so long.....

11. Ron, Balerno / 7:46pm 14 Jul 2006

Dog owners always think that just because they like dogs every one else likes dogs. I hate dogs and would like to see all of them on leads and muzzled.

12. lisa, edinburgh / 10:17pm 14 Jul 2006

as a friend of the family that was attacked by this dog, id like to point out that the dog was not a

staffie as stated in the paper, it was a japanese akita which has a history of aggressive behaviour that unfortunately has never been reported, agree 100% that its the owners responsibility for the way a dog turns out. but that does not condone that this was a vicious dog in a vicious unprovoked attack on a retired woman and 2 small children.

13. peter, borders / 10:59pm 14 Jul 2006

the dog will have to get the chop. the elderly and young were at risk and terrified. in fact the whole breed should be abolished.

14. christina (mother of victim), kirkliston / 11:30pm 14 Jul 2006

i am the mother of lauren who was bitten. my friend has already pointed out that the breed of the dog was incorrect. i can wholly understand everyones point of view as to letting the dog live, but this attack was not only vicious but completely unprovoked. not only was it bad enough that the dog was attacking them but the owner witnessed it all and did nothing to call back or even try to restrain the dog, personally i think that yes he should be severely punished for this. it really is a tricky one about the dog but i have 2 dogs which i love very much but had it been mine then i would expect it to be humanely destroyed. especially now that my daughter a real animal lover is now very cautious and too frightened to go out to play at her grans, and flinches at times with her own dogs now.

15. casper, edin / 9:47am 15 Jul 2006

i refer to roberts comment no 8,...

what was being done to provoke this animal,,dogs like that dont need provoking,,they the dogs are like robert,, no 8,, thick as mince,,do they the owners of dogs like that really know what people think of them ,,,,they look complete and utter idiots.. they use the dogs as a status symbol,,ooo,,look at me i have a staffie,,the dogs have more charisma and brains than the owners,,and most of the owners should be put down,.....

16. Sarah, Stirling / 10:29am 15 Jul 2006

To Christina, I feel so sorry for your daughter. I hope she recovers. The dog owner should be fined a whole load of money for this! Thank you though for correcting the situation. Staffies get the blame for everything and as a staffie lover I hate seeing things like this.

To Ron, Most people in the whole of the world LOVE dogs, so just because YOU don't like them doesn't mean to say all dogs should be muzzled. On a lead in a public place yes, but muzzled, be reasonable.

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