

## Charlie Goes To Orkney!

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Charlie, a six year old cairn dog, came into Rescue on the last day of 2014 with something of a reputation of ' Hee, Hee you can't catch me' ( familiar to many Cairn lovers!) so had to be exercised on a lead. After a short time in kennels, a wonderful new home presented itself - on a tiny island off the coast of Mainland Orkney. It seemed ideal - people who knew and understood dogs, an island where everybody knew everybody so if he DID escape he wouldn't get far! The only problem was how to get him from Edinburgh to Orkney. There were two alternatives - an eight hour drive, two hour ferry then a further ferry trip of one and a half hours, or by plane. The journey by road in January wasn't really an option but the logistics of air travel were not exactly straightforward either - I discovered that budget airlines don't allow unaccompanied dogs - only those travelling with a 'named passenger'! So ... there was nothing for it! I had to 'force' myself to have a day in Orkney!

Almost exactly a month after he came into Rescue, Charlie was put in an airline approved crate and trundled on a trolley to Check -in. It seemed all the FlyBe staff on duty were dog lovers so he got a lot of attention and 'oohing' and 'aahing' before being taken away to be loaded onto the plane - quite a celebrity! The plane was delayed by an hour but when I finally reached it, I was assured by a nice man in a yellow jacket on the tarmac that 'the wee dog' was fine - " I've been speaking to him!" Just over an hour's flight ( a beautiful clear day with wonderful views over snow capped Cairngorms ) and we reached Kirkwall where I was met by the Reception Committee of the new owner and Dave Gunn, a Cairn Club member who had offered to ' look after me' for the day ( my return flight wasn't until evening). Charlie was wheeled off the plane and into the arrivals lounge minutes after me and seemed none the worse of his new experience. A quick outing with Dave while I completed paper work and

Charlie was taken off - first port of call a beach walk! Later he had the final leg of the journey - another ferry - but finally reached his destination that evening. He has settled in well, and beach walks are the daily norm. He is a lucky wee dog and hopefully his wandering ways are now a thing of the past!

As for me - I had to 'suffer' a lovely meal in a hotel overlooking a beautiful loch, a dog walk along the coast where I saw the biggest breakers ever, lots of dog talk and wonderful fresh crab salad before my chauffeur returned me to the airport. Hardship indeed! The things one has to 'suffer' as a Trustee!! Thanks Dave for your help and for 'looking after' me so well. It was amazing to escape to such a paradise - seemed as though I had been away for longer. Thanks too to Fran who nobly held the fort here and looked after my dogs in my absence. I had a wonderful day, made the more worthwhile by the knowledge of another wee dog reaching his 'for ever' home. Happy beach combing, Charlie!

