

Dundrum detective puts lost pets on shortlist



Robert Kenny, of Happy Tails Detective Agency, Dundrum

DUBLIN's answer to Ace Ventura is receiving over 60 phone calls a week from distraught animal lovers whose pets have gone missing.

Robert Kenny, of Happy Tails Detective Agency, in Dundrum, has taken on over 140 cases since setting up last March. He has even rescued two horses, and pulled a cat from a car engine.

"We get back between 65 and 70% of all animals that are lost. We work it on a scenario whereby we get the case history of the animal. Instead of you going and looking for an animal over four miles, I can narrow it down [to] over a quarter or half a mile," he said.

Kenny urged owners to be on guard against animal thieves. "We don't deal with stolen cases, because you can't get them back. Leave your animal indoors – at least, when you come home, it is going to be safe. There is a massive amount of cases of animals being taken from back gardens. Certain breeds of animals do get taken," he warned, citing smaller dogs as those more likely to be stolen.

Thefts aside, Kenny explained why animals go missing. "Animals are a bit like humans. If they get into a stereotyped world, they want a change. They go looking for partners or they go looking [for a new home] because they are not

properly maintained."

The pet detective issued a few simple guidelines to Dublin's pet owners.

"Animals that aren't neutered or spayed are 50% more likely to go missing. It is important not to have your dog out in the front garden unsupervised. Make sure that your animal gets enough exercise. You have got to look after the animal and feed it at proper times. You have got to spend time with it.

"No cat or dog wants to be lost. Most animals that are lost try and make their way home ... but they get further lost. People get overjoyed when they get their animals back. For us it makes it worthwhile, the effort and the time we put into it," Kenny said.

Kenny is a keen advocate of Wicklow-based rescue centre, ASH, which is holding an animal awareness day on August 4. "ASH takes in over 1,000 animals a year without any funding whatsoever ... and makes sure they get homes.

"We don't need sponsorship but, to help groups like ASH, we have a very marketable commodity. We have undertaken to sponsor them for the next 18 months. At the end of it, they should have a nice cattery," he said.

More information is available at www.happytailsdetective.com.