

LIKE ACE VENTURA

Robert Kenny talks to **Cara Murphy** about his day and his work as a pet detective

MEET Ireland's answer to Ace Ventura! Robert Kenny is Europe's first pet detective, an unusual employment that means he is in high demand all over Ireland and Europe. Robert became involved with pet detection when he was on holidays in America two years ago.

While enjoying the California sun he saw a dog stranded on a piece of land cut off from the sea. He swam out to save the frightened furball and then attempted to locate it's owner. It took him two hours and when he did track down the grateful owner he was told that he had been just about to call a pet detective.

Robert saw a vocation-in-waiting, but one that is a far cry from his original employment in cost management and accountancy! Over a period of two years he returned to the United States on several occasions to train as a pet detective and learn the trade.

Happy Tails Pet Detectives was set up seven months ago, and already has nine employees, "Next to shopping I'd say that pet detecting is the biggest demand all over Europe." Robert is currently training more detectives and has plans to soon start up an academy.

So, how does one go about rescuing a lost pet? "I can't tell you that, it's a secret!" smiles Robert. But he will say that, "It's the same methods used as to find a person. You have to know their daily movements, the breed and their instinctive behaviour, once you know that then you can find the animal."

Happy Tails uses a variety of methods to find a lost animal, some high tech such as

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DNA testing or tracking the animal using sniffer dogs but most of it involves physically searching for the animal. He says that time is massive factor in finding a pet, "It's like with people, the first 24 -48 hours are crucial, and it's during this time that we are much more likely to be able to retrieve the missing animal."

On the day The Voice Magazine met Robert he had been up all night searching for a lost cat in Santry as, "cats are most easily located at night or in the early morning as that's when they're out hunting and scavenging."

After breakfast he is travelling to Terenure and then driving out to Kildare, "It's different every day, I could be out in Newbridge, County Kildare one day and Newbridge, Wales the next!" Whatever the day ahead of him brings Robert is up every morning by six am.

Robert clearly has a love of animals, a portion of every fee earned by Happy Tails goes to the ASH animal rescue in Kiltegan, Wicklow, and he has six dogs and three cats of his own in his home in Dundrum. He also regularly searches various internet databases to try to match lost and found animals and return them to their owners.

The majority of Happy Tails business comes via referrals including Doherty's vets in Tallaght Village. He says that Dublin is the busiest area for pet detectives and in an average week Happy Tails would receive between 200-300 calls a week and would deal with approximately thirty cases.

Only 22 per cent of people who lose their pets are able to retrieve them but using the pet detectives that number leaps to between 60 -70 per cent. If this isn't enough to keep him occupied Happy Tails also run seminars in schools and colleges throughout the country on animal awareness and treatment.

Robert says that the best bit about being a pet detective: "Is being able to return a pet to people who were really fretting about it being missing," and the worst thing is, "not having an answer for people.

If their animal has gone missing and you



To the rescue... Robert is hoping to expand his business and train more pet detectives

all is worse. We strive to always have an answer for people, just so they know what happened to their pet.

We always stress the importance of

For more information on Robert Kenny or his innovative business Happy Tails Detectives log on to www.happytailsdetective.com