Paul O’Grady: For The Love Of Dogs - Series 3

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Paul O’Grady is back at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, meeting the latest residents that need treatment, training and ultimately new homes.

In this new eleven part series, Paul visits homes at Brands Hatch in Kent and Old Windsor in Berkshire as well as the iconic Battersea site, meeting the happy-go-lucky dogs as well as the dogs that are lucky to be alive.

As always Paul helps to care for the canines, feeding them, walking them and accompanying them during treatment. He learns about how each dog ended up in the home, hearing stories that are heart-warming as well as heart-breaking.

Across the series, Paul meets a variety of dogs including a Bulldog called Lola with a bad eye, an old Shih Tzu with a multitude of health problems, a Bull cross called Whisper who is too scared to leave her kennel, a Bullmastiff that is rehomed to Denmark and a Lurcher who is badly emaciated.

In the first programme, Paul is in heaven when he meets four newborn puppies, he uses his powers of persuasion to cure an overweight dog of his cheese addiction and finds out about a family who think their lost dog is at Battersea.

Jack Russell cross, Gromit, is addicted to cheese and after eating as much of it as possible, he has ended up twice the size he should be. Paul meets Gromit at the Brands Hatch Battersea Dogs and Cats home in Kent, and has a serious word with him about his cheese addiction.

Paul says: “This cheese business has got to stop, started on Philly, and then progressed to cheddar and then the hard stuff, that blue stinky stuff from France. I’ve been there. I remember when I was on three rolls of Camembert a day. Things were bleak, I never went out the house, I didn’t even get dressed. You hear me – no more cheese! Your cheese days are over.”

Paul takes Gromit for a walk to help him burn off the extra weight and he is full of energy. But just a few days later Gromit’s health takes a turn for the worse. His
tongue has been turning blue, which Battersea vets say is caused by oxygen not circulating properly around his body. As well as being put on a diet, Gromit begins a strict exercise regime and the team at Battersea hope his health will begin to improve as he starts to lose weight.

Four one-day-old Labrador-cross puppies have been brought in to Battersea just hours after being born. Although the puppies are settling in well, their mum Ashley is not. She is wary of her new environment and is not coping with being a mum. She is only eighteen months old herself and needs a stress-free environment to look after her litter. When the puppies are a week old, Paul is delighted to get to meet them.

He says: “Well whoever gets them is very lucky, that’s all I can say. I would kill for them. Oh dear, I am getting out now. I am getting out before you can get me. Oh they are just too much, let’s not keep in touch gang.”

When the puppies reach five weeks old Battersea starts planning to rehome them so Paul takes one to the local pub to help acclimatise him to the outside world.

Paul says: “That is a road and you must never run on it. Come on, this is called a boozer. Shall we pop in?”

Also in the programme, Paul finds out about a family who have come to Battersea to see if a two-year-old Rottweiler cross puppy that is being homed there belongs to them. Leoni, Adam and daughter Madison saw a photo of the puppy on the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home website and think she may be the dog they lost a year ago called Roxy. The couple had left Roxy with a dog-sitter while they went on holiday but when they got back the dog-sitter had disappeared. Despite their best efforts they were unable to track Roxy down. Leoni, Adam and Madison wait anxiously to meet the puppy and find out if it is their long lost family pet Roxy.
Paul O’Grady - Interview

The last two series of the show have been a real success. What do you think the secret is?
“"I think it’s because it’s a feel good show. It’s like Long Lost Family, you might start off with a terribly sad story but then it finishes with a happy ending. I’ve learnt now from talking to the viewers and what they say to me, they like my relationship with the dogs and the animals. They like the fact that I’m very hands on. I don’t sit there and say this is a poodle, I’m lying on the floor with the poodle probably on top of me. But it’s a feel good thing, it makes you laugh, it makes you cry. It’s that sort of thing we all like.”

In this series as well as the Battersea South London site, you travel to sites in Brands Hatch and Old Windsor. How did that make things different?
“"Well I’m very attached to Battersea South London so it’s a bit alien territory for me going to other sites. But the other sites are beautiful; the one in Windsor is lovely as is the one in Brands Hatch. For the dogs they’ve got all these fields and parks to roam. The dogs are slightly posher in Windsor, a posher breed of dog and in Brands Hatch as well. I get all the sarf London dogs down in Battersea.”

What dogs really stood out for you across the series?
“"My favourites were Lola the bull dog, she had an eye problem, I loved her. Pepi the little old dog, he was a twelve-year-old Shih Tzu and had lots of health problems, also Freddie the dog who was rehomed to Denmark. I took him to the boat so he could sail to Denmark. I love them all really when I think about!”

In the second programme we meet an emaciated Lurcher called Soldier, how did you feel when you met him?
“Oh god love him, I mean it was heartbreaking his story. He was one that you go home and worry about, it doesn’t finish when you get in the car and go home. It made me angry, very angry, what people could do this?

“"Luckily they have great ability to recover and mentally recover as well and to forget about the past and trust humans again. It’s sad really you think they’d keep away after that, you think they’d learn and think, ‘I’m not going near those two-legged things again’. But they don’t and I think we have a responsibility really to care for animals that’s why we are here, not to abuse them.”
Do you get more used to seeing these neglected dogs?
“No not all. Actually this series I found it harder with some of them. And it’s the older ones whose owners have died, like Pepi, they kill me, they just kill me. They have done nothing and don’t know what’s happening. It’s heart breaking, really heartbreaking and that’s what upsets me the most.”

In the series you take a dog called Tyler and two puppies to meet the children at St George’s Hospital. How did the children react to your visit?
“The kids loved it, they really loved it and they were delighted. I felt like Mary Poppins that day when I sailed in, they all brightened up. They were all a bit shy at first, until you sit down and start yacking to them and then they’re all full of life.”

You talk about adopting dogs each series but in this one you actually did take a dog home called Tulip don’t you?
“She was a puppy, a few months old called Tulip. She was gorgeous, I mean really gorgeous. I fell for her hook, line and sinker as soon as I saw her. Tulip was such a good dog, she was good in the car, she was good with kids, she was good in the house but unfortunately it wasn’t plain sailing...”

What has been your personal highlight during filming?
“I liked taking Freddie down to Harwich. He was such good company. He was gorgeous, he was huge, he was like a donkey. It made me realise I’d love a big dog like that, who is so friendly, and so affectionate and trusting. I’m dragging him round this boat and he was great. That woman in Denmark who rehomed him is a lucky woman, he was lovely old Freddie.”

In one programme you take a dog called Krystal off to Coronation Street to appear as an extra. What was that like?
“She was as good as gold. In her scene Ken is preparing his car and caravan to go camping with Deirdre and he’s outside the Rovers fixing the engine. Krystal comes out of the Rovers with Ali, the dog handler, and walks over the road, it took one take, the dog was the star! I think it was my tutelage in the dressing room.”

“She’s one of these breeds that people say ‘oh no’ but she’s a sweetheart she really is. You have to look below the surface really. She’s just brilliant but because of what she is people say no, they’ve got such a bad reputation.”
“She gave the Barlows a run for their money, she upstaged the lot of them. That’s my girl, she’s a star!”

Notes to Editors

Produced by Shiver

The second series of Paul O’Grady’s For The Love Of Dogs averaged almost six million viewers per episode and won a National Television Award and a TRIC award.