

# Rupert's back working at Letham Gallery - by Annie Write, The Write One

To the uninitiated Rupert is a run of the mill 13 year old black Labrador who lives with owner Anna Woodroffe, of Letham Gallery in Ponsonby, Auckland but Anna says there is more to Rupert than meets the eye.

"He is in fact the resident meeter, greeter and guard dog at the gallery. In addition he acts as an unpaid assistant to the psychologist who has a waiting room at the gallery by both soothing patients with a wag of his tail and accompanying them to their chairs. He encourages patients to pat him and relax before seeing the psychologist and, apparently offers a listening ear for the psychologist himself who occasionally needs someone reliable and discreet to talk to."

In May last year Rupert had a nasty experience when he was attacked by a local dog while out walking with Anna. He sustained nasty bites which then became infected.

"It was a dreadful experience and initially he seemed to recover, but 24 hours later developed an infection and a high temperature.

I quickly took him to my local veterinary clinic. He was kept there overnight, and when no improvement was seen the next morning and a low white cell count was discovered, Rupert was referred to VSG"

VSG Internal Medicine Specialist Darren Fry examined Rupert. Rupert underwent blood tests, imaging studies and a bone marrow aspirate. Immune-mediated neutropenia was diagnosed and he was treated with immunosuppressive drugs. There was a good response to treatment but Rupert developed side effects from the initial therapy. Because of this, Darren prescribed cyclospora which is a drug normally given to human patients who have had an organ transplant.

Anna says after some worrying times her beloved Rupert is happy and well again and is back carrying out his duties at the gallery. "I can't speak highly enough of the team at VSG - they are wonderful. Right from the lovely German intern who was there to the veterinary specialists and nurses themselves; - they looked after us both with care and compassion. While Rupert was the patient and received exemplary care, everyone made sure I was kept up to date and well informed as to his progress."

She says while VSG is a high tech environment it also has a caring and compassionate atmosphere which makes you feel comfortable and well looked after - "I know of other veterinarians who also refer their patients there so that's high praise indeed."



*Rupert resting up*

