

BOURNEMOUTH ECHO 11.2.14

Dog dies after suspected case of Alabama Rot poisoning at St Catherine's Hill in Christchurch

5:40am Tuesday 11th February 2014 in [News By Darren Slade](#), Chief Reporter



TOXIN FEARS: St

Catherine's Hill woods near Christchurch

A HEARTBROKEN pet owner has lost a dog to the latest suspected case of a killer toxin.

Five-year-old flat coated retriever Erin – who was only ever walked at St Catherine's Hill in Christchurch – was put to sleep after suffering acute kidney failure.

Her death is feared to be the latest case of Alabama Rot – the condition which has been linked to the deaths of 12 dogs in the New Forest since December 2012 and seven elsewhere in the country.

A further five deaths are suspected to have also been caused by the illness.

Owner Tracy Graham noticed a sore on Erin's foot on Sunday, February 2 and took her to a PDSA emergency vet, where a blood test showed no sign of problems.

The following Friday, a still poorly Erin was sedated and re-tested at her own vet's clinic.

She was then sent to specialist Anderson Moores, of Hursley near Winchester, suffering from acute kidney failure.

She was put down yesterday after being taken to London by her owner for dialysis.

Tracy urged other pet owners to watch for the symptoms.

"Look for sores on legs, feet or the face. If there are any, contact the vet straight away – it can

mean life or death," she said.

David Walker, head of medicine at Anderson Moores, said the clinic was awaiting the results of pathology tests.

"All we can say at the moment is that Erin had lesions between the toes on her paw. She had sudden onset kidney failure. That truly is as much as we can know at the moment," he said.

He stressed suspected cases of Alabama Rot were very rare but urged people to watch out for unusual skin lesions.

"If you do see a skin lesion and you don't know what the cause is, pop down to your local vet," he said.

Christchurch council said Erin's was the only reported case of a dog being taken ill after walking at St Catherine's Hill. It urged people to check any unusual skin lesions.

Research fund for pet fatalities

A GROUP of dog lovers has set up a fund to promote further investigations into the spate of dog deaths from kidney failure.

New Forest Dog Owners Group (NFDOG) started the fund with a £2,000 donation.

Research has been aided by [New Forest District Council](#), the [Forestry Commission](#), Bridge Pathology and Anderson Moores Veterinary Specialists, who are leading the investigation.

Interested scientists have also done a 'large amount of work' on a goodwill basis.

Heather Gould, chairman of NFDOG, said: "We want to get this off the ground quickly and do something to show we care about the problem and the very worried dog owners, not just in the New Forest, but around a number of areas in England."

Kate Hurcombe, who put the idea forward to the committee, said: "We just have to do something, and if every dog walker in the forest gave a small donation we would be off to a flying start."

David Walker from Anderson Moores said: "We are incredibly grateful to NFDOG for all they have been doing to raise awareness of this disease. This fund will greatly help us in trying to identify the underlying cause."

Donations can be made online at newforestdog.org.uk or by sending a cheque payable to NFDOG Research Fund, to Hon Treasurer, Woodcote, Balmer Lawn Road, [Brockenhurst](#), SO42 7TT.