

## Staff News

There's a lot of exciting changes happening at Brentknoll this Autumn/Winter; you may have noticed the first which is our growing team of staff.



We would like to welcome our new Client Care Team members; Firstly **Kate Kitchener**, Kate has previously worked as a dental nurse and receptionist so is looking forward to learning about a new industry.



Secondly meet **Rosie Burge**, who has a background in retail and was previously a Brentknoll client with her Pug cross "Penny." She loved the friendly atmosphere at Brentknoll so much that she wanted to be a part of it.



Finally welcome **Tanja Klein** to the team, Tanja worked as a Veterinary Nurse in Australia for several years before coming to the UK, where she has worked as a Veterinary Receptionist.



We are also expanding our Nursing team, the first new team member is **Abi Vaughn** who joined the team in August as a Consult Assistant. Abi has a passion for animals and has quite the collection at home including an African Grey Parrot.



Secondly meet **Sarah Davies** who joins us as a veterinary nurse, she has moved from Manchester to Worcester where she was previously working for another large practice.



We would like to congratulate **Gemma Nichols**, who in August received some fantastic news. Gemma has been with us since 2010 and has spent the last 3 years completing her Nurse training, we are proud to announce that she has successfully passed her training. Well done Gemma from all of us at Brentknoll.



[www.facebook.com/brentknollveterinarycentre](http://www.facebook.com/brentknollveterinarycentre)

## Client News



It seems the dogs of Worcester can't get enough of the water! Congratulations are in order for "Oscar" Jones who successfully completed his 100th swim. "Oscar" has been a regular in our Hydro pool since March 2009, when he was initially a little anxious; it didn't take him long to find his feet and we hope he continues to enjoy the benefits from his regular swimming.

Sharon runs our hydrotherapy clinic on Tuesdays and Saturdays, it's great for exercise and weight loss as well as rehabilitation after illness or injury. Don't forget that our heated pool is open all year round so even though the winter is fast approaching, your dog can still enjoy the benefits of Hydrotherapy. Call us on **01905 355938** to find out more or to arrange an appointment.

## Insurance – is your pet covered?



With continual advances in veterinary medicine and surgery, we can now diagnose and treat more conditions than ever before. But how prepared are you if your pet requires more in-depth treatment?

To take a couple of examples, a common injury in medium and larger breeds of dogs is rupture of the cruciate ligament. Surgical treatments for this condition can easily cost upwards of £1,500. And to take a feline example, there are a range of treatments for an overactive thyroid gland, from lifelong medication to radioactive iodine

treatment – which can cost in excess of £2,000. These are just a couple of examples – but they illustrate the sort of treatments available for pets.

With appropriate pet insurance we can hopefully ensure that any treatment decisions are made on the basis of *need* rather than cost. So don't take any chances – get your pet insured today!

## Aches and pains – is your pet affected?



Cold damp weather can unmask signs of arthritic change in dogs and cats, and now is a great time to take a good look at your pets and make sure they are comfortable. Do they seem stiff or lame? Do they have difficulty getting up or lying down? Does it take a while for them to get

going in the morning? If so, your pet will benefit from a check over to identify any problems and work out how best to treat them.

The joints that are most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting free limb movements – called *synovial* joints. The ends of the bones that meet at these joints are covered by very smooth articular cartilage and lubricated with synovial fluid.

In pets with arthritis, this protective cartilage is damaged and worn away, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone causing pain and inflammation. Secondary “fluffy” new bone is commonly deposited around the joint and may be seen on xray. Affected joints commonly appear stiff, swollen and painful.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, there are several things we can do to help.

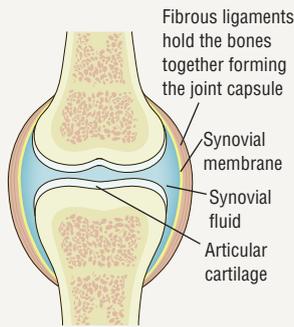
- **Weight control:** overweight pets tend to struggle far more with stiffness and arthritis than slender ones, as the extra weight puts more strain on diseased joints and weight loss can really help.
- **Exercise regimes** can also make a difference. Most stiff dogs benefit from two or three shorter walks every day than one long one from time to time. Other forms of exercise may also be helpful, and hydrotherapy may be useful in some cases.



- **Food supplements and medication** may also be required. We can advise on appropriate food supplements such as those containing EFAs (essential fatty acids) and glucosamine, and can prescribe anti-inflammatory treatments as required.

If your pet is showing any signs of arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up today.

### Diagram of a synovial joint



### Joint X-rays



The top xray shows a normal healthy elbow joint, whilst the bottom xray shows a very arthritic one with lots of “fluffy” new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint.



## It's cold out there!

With winter nights drawing in, it's important to take good care of all our pets so here are a few seasonal tips:

**Outdoor pets** such as rabbits and guinea pigs will need extra bedding and food, and hutches should be moved into sheltered areas and covered for frost protection. Keep a regular eye on their water container to make sure it doesn't freeze up.



Turning to dogs, whilst many dogs love the cold and snow, slim fine coated breeds such as whippets find it hard to conserve heat and will benefit from dog coats in cold weather.

In the home, ensure pets have warm comfortable sleeping areas but remember that **fleas** also love their creature comforts as well, so don't drop your guard during the winter!



The festive season brings with it a huge range of hazards for our pets! Items such as **ribbon and tinsel**

are very attractive to mischievous pets and, if swallowed, may lead to a serious intestinal blockage.

Whilst on the subject of edible items, don't forget that **chocolate** can be very toxic to dogs – in general the higher the cocoa content the more toxic the chocolate. Additionally **grapes, raisins or sultanas** are all toxic to dogs, making Christmas cakes, puddings and mince pies a serious hazard.

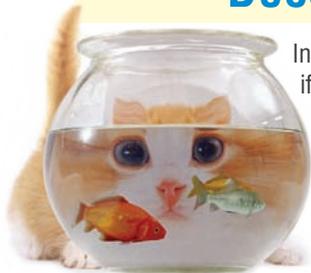


Many pets also love chewing **house plants** however some of these are very toxic! **Lilies** are a particular hazard to cats, with all parts of the plant being toxic.

**STOP PRESS: electronic cigarettes** pose a very serious risk to dogs that chew them, due to high concentrations of nicotine within.

If you have any questions on keeping your pet healthy – please just ask!

## Does your pet drink like a fish?



Increased drinking is a very common early sign of a range of diseases, so if you are filling up the water bowl more frequently, it's time to stop and work out which pet is drinking too much and make an appointment!

Excessive thirst can indicate diseases ranging from liver or kidney disease, to diabetes and other hormonal conditions (including Cushing's disease in dogs and hyperthyroidism in cats). Infections can also cause increased drinking, particularly pyometra (a womb infection in an unspayed bitch which also causes signs of illness and lethargy).

So if you think your pet is drinking more than normal, please bring them in for a check-up. As well as giving your pet a thorough clinical examination, urine and blood tests are usually very helpful in making a diagnosis. Radiography and ultrasound of the abdomen may also be of help, allowing an assessment of the size, shape and internal structure of the organs.

The good news is that we do have treatments for many of the conditions mentioned above which will hopefully ease the symptoms and prevent or slow the progression of the disease. Please call us if you are at all worried about your pet!