



# ShetlandVets

Bixter, Shetland • [www.shetlandvets.co.uk](http://www.shetlandvets.co.uk) • SUMMER 2015

## Extended Surgery Hours

### Scalloway Consulting Times

Mon: 9am - 11.30, 3pm - 4.30pm  
Tue: 9.15am - 11:30, 3pm - 4:30pm  
Wed: 9:00am - 11:30, 3pm - 4:30pm  
Thurs: 9:00am - 11:30, 3pm - 4:30pm  
Fri: 9.15am - 11:30, 3pm - 4:30pm  
Sat: 9:30am - 12:30pm

### Surgery Open Times

Mon: 8:30am - 5.30pm  
Tue: 9:00am - 5:30pm  
Wed: 8:30am - 5:30pm  
Thurs: 8:30am - 5:30pm  
Fri: 9:00am - 5:30pm  
Sat: 9:00am - 3:00pm

Telephone 01595 880 000

Email [scallowayvets@gmail.com](mailto:scallowayvets@gmail.com)

### Bixter Consulting Times

Mon: 9:30am - 10.30am, 3pm - 4pm  
Tue: 9.30am - 10.30am, 3pm - 4pm  
Wed: 9.30am - 10.30am, 3pm - 4pm  
Thurs: 9.30 - 10.30am, 4.30 - 5.30pm  
Fri: 9.30am - 10.30am, 3pm - 4pm  
Sat: 9.30am - 12noon

### Surgery Open Times

Mon: 8:30am - 5:30pm  
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Thurs: 8:30am - 6:00pm  
Fri: 8:30am - 5:30pm  
Sat: 9:00am - 3:00pm

Telephone 01595 810 456

Email [office@shetlandvets.co.uk](mailto:office@shetlandvets.co.uk)

## Topics in this issue:

- Staff News
- The trouble with ticks!
- Kennel Cough – is your dog vaccinated?
- Just the jab!
- Guinea pig care!
- Fact file: Ear disease

## Staff News

Shetland Vets are delighted to announce that we now have a new qualified Veterinary Nurse in our team, Sian Bryant. Sian has been a Student Vet Nurse at North Highland College, Thurso, for 2 years as well as being trained at the Practice by our Nurses and supervised by Pam Williamson. She passed all of her exams & assessments along the way, and in August travelled to Lancashire for the much-feared Practical Exam set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and she passed with flying colours. Sian will be a great asset to Shetland Vets, and is well-known for particularly liking the more unusual types of pet. She has a menagerie of animals, along with the usual Dogs, Cats, Ferrets and Gerbils she keeps the more exotic kind including a Royal Python called Pythagoras.



## The trouble with ticks!

With the onset of warmer weather, something to be on the lookout for when grooming or stroking your pets is ticks! Ticks are generally found in areas of woodland, heathland and grassland, waiting for an animal or human to brush past them so that they can jump on and feed. They attach using their mouthparts and will feed on blood from their host for several days before finally dropping off.

Ticks can cause problems in two main ways:

- **Local tissue reactions:** Firstly they can sometimes cause a marked tissue reaction at the attachment site.
- **Tick borne diseases:** Secondly, and more importantly, ticks can carry infectious diseases which may be transmitted to pets and humans. The most common one is **Lyme Disease**, caused by the tick borne pathogen – *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Although Lyme disease has been reported in a wide variety of mammals, dogs and people are more susceptible to the disease.

So how can you minimise the risk of Lyme disease in your pets?

- Daily monitoring for ticks and careful removal of ticks with a tick hook within 24 hours of attachment. This approach works because a tick infected with *Borrelia* has to feed for several hours and often 24-48 hours before disease transmission occurs.
- Chemical tick protection – there are a range of products that rapidly kill or repel ticks and which are very important in reducing tick feeding and therefore Lyme disease exposure. Spot-on, collar and tablet products are all available, offering you a wide variety of effective options for your pets.

In addition to Lyme disease, pets travelling to continental Europe also risk exposure to other tick borne diseases such as Ehrlichiosis and Babesiosis – both very serious infectious diseases and a key reason to adopt the tick control measures listed above.



Attached ticks with buried mouthparts are often found whilst grooming your pets



### Tick removal: do's and don't's

✓ A simple twisting and pulling action is all that is required to remove the tick while minimising disease risk. Specially designed v-shaped tick removers that remove ticks by rotation are very effective at removing ticks



Close up of removed tick complete with mouthparts

✗ Stress placed on the tick by burning, freezing, covering with Vaseline and physical squeezing will lead to regurgitation of the tick's stomach contents resulting in an increased risk of disease transmission

✗ Similarly, detachment of the head, leaving it in situ will also lead to increased risk of disease transmission



Find us on Facebook!

Our 24 Hour Emergency Service can be contacted by phoning (01595) 810 456

## Kennel Cough – is your dog vaccinated?



Kennel cough is a highly contagious infection of the upper respiratory tract of dogs and in fact, unlike its name, can be caught anywhere that dogs meet – out on walks, training classes, dog shows, and of course boarding kennels.

Dogs of all ages can be affected and signs include a harsh, dry, whooping-type cough. Whilst some dogs recover relatively rapidly, others may cough for weeks and some may get more serious complications such as pneumonia.

Prevention is much better than cure, because without vaccination, treatment of kennel cough can be a costly and lengthy process involving isolation and antibiotic therapy. Kennel cough is caused by a mixture of viruses and a bacterium – *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

Photo: © Shutterstock.com

## Just the jab!

With regular outbreaks of infectious diseases, the importance of routine vaccinations in dogs and cats can't be over-emphasised.



**Cats** are generally vaccinated against Cat Flu and Enteritis (diarrhoea) and the Feline Leukaemia Virus (which can cause cancer and weaken the immune system), all of which can otherwise be fatal.



**Dogs** can be protected against Parvovirus which causes bloody diarrhoea, as well as Leptospirosis, Hepatitis, and Distemper virus which can cause liver, kidney and neurological disease.

We have recently seen insured dogs, where the insurance company have refused to cover the cost of treatment if the dogs vaccine course has lapsed. When pets are presented at Shetland Vets for vaccination, we give them a full clinical examination, and discuss any health issues. Pets on repeat prescriptions can also have their prescription check at the same time, at no additional charge.

Please contact us for more information or to book your booster.

## Guinea pig care!

Guinea pigs, originally from the grasslands of South America, are sociable animals that make great family pets. They thrive on a mixture of hay, fresh greenstuff, fruit and vegetables and can be given small amounts of commercial concentrate. Relatively trouble free, they require no annual vaccinations but we do recommend regular health checks so their teeth and nails can be monitored. Problems to look out for include chest infections (that can follow bad weather or stress), diarrhoea (which can relate to infections or a diet change), skin disease and dental problems (usually associated with overgrown teeth).

If you would like any further information on any aspect of guinea pig care, or if you would like a check-up for your pet, please contact us!



**Skin problems** may occasionally occur and the most common of these is an infestation with a burrowing mite –



*Trixacarus caviae*. Affected guinea pigs are itchy and develop scaly skin, which is

often most obvious on the ear tips initially. If untreated, areas of hair loss, self inflicted wounds and skin infections can develop.

Guinea pig: Warren Photographic

## Fact file: Ear disease



Does your pet show signs of head shaking and ear scratching? These are commonly seen in dogs and cats and, combined with other symptoms such as ear redness and discharge – point to ear disease as a problem.

The ear is protected externally by a pinna (or flap). A narrow ear canal carries sound to the ear drum where it passes onto the middle and inner ear.

Unlike the situation in humans where middle ear disease is common, most of the problems seen in pets occur in the *external* ear canal – with an often very painful condition called otitis externa.

The key to diagnosing and treating otitis externa is to identify the *underlying* cause. These include:

- **Ear mite infestations** with *Otodectes cynotis* is commonly seen in puppies and kittens and are typically associated with a crusty brown discharge (see photo right). The mites can be identified under the microscope (see inset photo).
- **Foreign bodies** such as grass awns (see panel left) are a common problem in pets and typically present with sudden onset severe head shaking.
- **Allergic dermatitis**: since the ear canal is lined with skin, it can be affected by *localised* allergic skin disease affecting the skin lining the external ear canal. This is often seen as part of a more generalised allergic skin condition, typically involving foot chewing and face rubbing.

In order to effectively treat otitis externa it is very important to identify the underlying cause. Some, such as ear mites or foreign bodies are easily identified and treated. However, over time, the underlying cause is commonly obscured and made worse by *secondary* opportunistic bacterial and fungal infections. So – if your pet is showing signs of ear disease, such as head shaking, ear rubbing or just having a smelly ear, it is very important that we examine them and establish the *underlying* cause of the problem as soon as we can, since this will give us the best chance of a successful long term outcome. Call us today for an appointment!

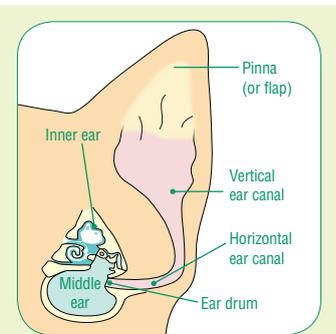
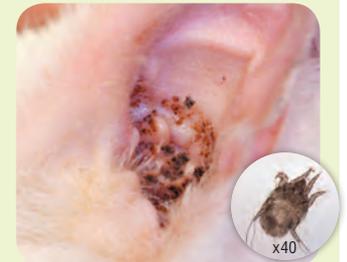


Diagram of the ear. Most problems occur in the vertical and horizontal ear canals



Opening to the vertical ear canal in a cat with a crusty brown discharge typical of **ear mites** *Otodectes cynotis* (inset)



Opening to the vertical ear canal in a dog showing redness and itchiness typical of **allergic skin disease**