



# Animal Health Centre

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## NEWS

**AUTUMN 2016**

WELCOME TO the latest issue of our Newsletter designed to keep you up to date with what's happening in the practice.

### Practice facilities

- Appointment system
- Free Nurse's clinics
- 24 hour emergency service
- Modern surgical facilities
- In-house laboratory
- Full dental facilities
- Annual health checks
- Weight-watchers clinics
- Full range of diets
- Advice on buying a new pet

### Opening times

*Monday – Friday:*  
8.30 am – 6.30 pm

*Saturday:* 9 - 12

### Consulting times

*Monday – Friday:*  
9 -10 am, 2 - 3 pm  
5 - 6.30 pm

*Saturday:* 9.30 – 11.30

**24 Hour  
Emergency Service**  
☎ 0117 9059000

### Topics in this issue:

- *Autumn alert!*
- *When did your pet last have a check-up?*
- *Firework fright!!*

## Staff News

**We have very happy news to share in this newsletter edition.**



Elsa (Nicky's daughter)

Firstly Congratulations to Elsa, Nicky's daughter, on graduating as a vet from Liverpool University. Her five years there seemed to fly by and we are all very proud of her achievement. Elsa has started her first job as a mixed practice vet treating all species from cows and horses to llamas as well as the pet dogs and cats of Ross on Wye. We shall miss her here as she has been a part of Animal Health Centre all of her life but wish her well in her new career. Well done Elsa!!



Lulu and her pups



And congratulations also to Lulu who produced five fabulous pups in June. Too posh to push so needed a caesarian section, a more stressful than usual operation for Nicky but all went very well and Mum and pups have thrived. Cilla, Cliff, Tom, Elvis and Engelbert have all now moved onto their new homes. Lulu, meanwhile, is back in business at Animal Health Centre meeting and greeting.



Nicky and Elsa have completed their charity bike rides in Bristol and London and raised over £600 for the Blue Cross, thank you to all you have sponsored us. It was great fun and a unique mother/daughter bonding experience!

We are now starting nurse clinics to check up on our older cats (10 years +), our nurses will measure the blood pressure and urine concentration to help early diagnosis of thyroid and kidney disease. We recommend a check up six months after a vaccine, do call us for more information and to book your cat in and don't forget to bring a urine sample with you. We have special plastic bead cat litter if you need it for collection. Finally a reminder to come and see us as early as you can for firework advice and see over the page for some handy hints.

## Star Patient – 'Mr Cat' a toothy problem!

Mr Cat came in to see Sophie, off his food and dribbling. On examination of his mouth she could see that his upper canine tooth (fang tooth) was displaced and biting into his lower jaw so he wasn't able to close his mouth and could only drool.

There was no history of a trauma and Mr Cat was only seven years old with otherwise healthy teeth so we don't know why his tooth was so damaged. The only way to solve the problem was to anaesthetise Mr Cat and remove the whole tooth which came out in one piece. At the same time Sophie took a survey X-ray to check there was no other injury as we wondered if he had been hit by a car or fallen out of a tree, all else was fine. Mr Cat made a rapid recovery and was hungrily eating as soon as he woke up, pleased to be able to shut his jaw again.

If only he could talk, we shall never know quite how he managed to damage such a large tooth!



Our Star Patient Mr Cat



The culprit!

## Autumn alert!



Summer is sadly over! The weather is cooling and the nights are drawing in. It is time to hunker down and light the fire. However, it is not the time to take your eye off the ball with our pets!

**Flea alert:** Autumn is the favourite time of year for fleas! Although it is colder outside, the heating in our

houses turns them into flea paradises. Keep an eye out for these annoying pests and of course keep up your pets' flea treatments.

**Troublesome ticks:** Ticks also enjoy the Autumn as they thrive in the more humid conditions outdoors. Ticks live in long grass and woodland areas waiting to latch on to passing pets. Once attached, ticks feed on your pet's blood – often for several days.

The main issue with ticks is that they can carry diseases in their saliva which they can potentially transmit to pets:

- **Lyme disease** is the primary tick borne pathogen in the UK and Ireland and can affect dogs and humans, and is carried by a small percentage of *Ixodes* ticks. Affected pets often show signs of arthritis, fever, lack of appetite and lethargy.
- **Babesiosis** is a tick borne disease which may affect dogs (but not humans) travelling to and from mainland Europe. It is caused by a tiny blood borne parasite *Babesia* which destroys red blood cells. Signs include dark red urine, pale or yellow gums, lethargy and fever. A recent outbreak of Babesiosis on the UK mainland (in Harlow, Essex) marks a further development in the spread of Babesiosis. This recent UK outbreak is very localised but it is important to be vigilant when travelling into at risk areas.

**Obesity awareness:** With the shorter days, the opportunities to exercise for both cats and dogs is less. So make sure you monitor their weight to ensure they don't put on a layer of winter blubber! Think about buying puzzle toys and feeders, these will keep them entertained and help get rid of some energy.

**Arthritis:** The cold can creep into the joints of older pets, making them stiff and sore. If you are concerned, come and talk to us about the medications and supplements that can help pets.



Additionally – watch out for falls of apples or conkers, both cause nasty tummy upsets if your dog eats too many. Also, if you need to use anti-freeze in the car, ensure there are no leaks and that the containers are well out of reach, as it is deadly to our pets.

Enjoy the Autumn weather and get in touch if you have any concerns!

## When did your pet last have a check-up?



When did your pet last see us for a check-up? Animals are extremely good at hiding signs of illness and pain and it can be very hard for owners to spot the subtle signs of problems. This is especially true of chronic conditions like arthritis, dental disease and kidney problems.

A good example of this is an older cat whose appetite has recently changed. An *increased* appetite is not an uncommon finding in older cats and should not be ignored since it may be a sign of hyperthyroidism; here an overactive thyroid gland increases the metabolic rate. Conversely, a *decreased* appetite may signal a range of underlying problems including dental and kidney problems.

The regular booster visit is a great time for us to give your pet a check over and ask you how things are going. So if we haven't seen them for a while, give us a call today!

### Check your pets for ticks!



Parting the coat reveals an *Ixodes* tick. These are widespread across the UK

and Ireland and may be infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the organism that causes Lyme disease in dogs and humans.



*Dermacentor* ticks can potentially carry *Babesia* organisms, the cause of

Babesiosis in dogs. These ticks are found in mainland Europe and parts of the UK.

### Effective tick control

Prevention of tick-borne disease in pets can be achieved by:

- **Daily monitoring for ticks** plus careful removal of ticks with a tick remover (see below).



- **Chemical tick prophylaxis** with veterinary anti-parasitic products that rapidly kill, repel or expel ticks are all useful in reducing tick feeding and therefore disease exposure.



## Firework Fright!!

The firework season is nearly here! The early nights are perfect for displays but if your pet finds them frightening, then night-time can become a nightmare for pets.

We recommend starting a desensitisation programme several months in advance. Podcasts of firework noises are available free from the Dogs Trust website. These should be played to your pets starting off quietly and building up the volume. Done correctly, it normalises the sounds for your pets and means they don't react to the real thing!

### So how can you help your pets on Firework night?

**Tire them out!** Give your dog a really good walk and a big meal, both of which will make them sleepy. Also, make sure you keep the cat flap locked and that all your pets are microchipped, just in case they take fright and escape.



### Provide a den!

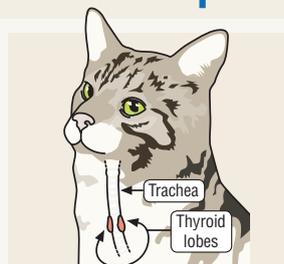
Animals feel much more secure in small spaces and it will help to

muffle the noises – as does keeping the curtains closed and the TV on.

**Use Adaptil and Feliway:** These are calming pheromone products that help to reduce anxiety. They are both available as plug-in diffusers, best positioned close to where your pet sleeps. Feliway also comes in a spray that can be sprayed on bedding and Adaptil as a collar. Ask us about them and how they can help!

Additionally, although we need to comfort our pets when they are frightened, it is important not to be too over-effusive because this can encourage attention seeking behaviour. The best time to praise them is when they are being calm and relaxed.

Finally, some pets simply cannot cope and they need sedative medications. If you think your dog or cat might benefit from these, please come and have a chat with us.



**Diagram:** showing position of the thyroid lobes and trachea

The thyroid gland consists of two tiny lobes, located on either side of the trachea (windpipe). The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormone which regulates your pet's metabolic rate. Excess thyroid hormone leads to an increased metabolic rate.