



## Practice News



### 387 Vets has a new receptionist!

A big welcome to Bethany Jones who joins the 387 team as our brand new receptionist. Bethany will be working alongside Jo, whose hours have now extended,

to create a new, dedicated reception team. Coming from her role as receptionist in a busy GP surgery, Bethany is well-experienced in dealing with health queries, booking appointments and supporting people through the lows – and celebrating the highs – that life can spring upon us medically. As well as being great with people, Bethany has lots of experience of working with animals. She has been an animal carer in a range of environments including volunteering at a cattery, but perhaps most excitingly, got to look after monkeys at a sanctuary in Cornwall for her Animal Behaviour and Welfare Degree.



### Familiar face

It was lovely to welcome our vet Carole back to 387 Vets after her maternity leave. Carole has been back in practice 2 days a week since the beginning of

October and is really pleased to be able to pet acupuncture again. Pets can really benefit from this treatment where conventional medicine is not managing their symptoms. Carole is also a real driving force behind clinical auditing in practice. This is where we monitor and assess how we are performing in specific clinical areas against current research and data with a view to benchmarking our own standards and driving positive change. In Carole's absence we've all been working on specific auditing projects including anaesthesia monitoring, puppy socialisation and body condition scoring. We're looking forward to sharing our findings and improvements with Carole over the coming weeks!

### Happy couple!

Huge congratulations to our vet Selenia and her new husband Matt! The couple were married at the end of the summer near Selenia's home in the town of Modena in Italy. After a weekend of celebration with family and friends, Selenia and Matt took some time to relax in a peaceful Italian mountain villa before returning to the UK. Here's to the happy couple, and especially to the new Mrs Hudson!



### Supplementing traditional medicine to combat pain

Arthritic pain can become more pronounced in our pets with the colder weather setting in. If you're worried that traditional pain relief isn't quite hitting the mark, why not improve your pet's quality of life by booking a course of pet acupuncture with us this winter?

Stan, a 10 year old Labrador, had developed arthritis in his left foreleg. He had had surgery at a referral centre, but had suffered chronic pain and mobility issues since. When he lost his brother, his symptoms became worse. Stan came to see Carole for acupuncture to give him some relief, and after each treatment, was more energetic and had a better

appetite. He was pain scored using the Helsinki Pain Index at the beginning and end of his 4-session acupuncture course. The pain index scores mobility levels, vocalisation and other signs of pain. At the end of treatment, Stan's pain score had dropped from 21/44 to 13/44 showing the acupuncture had worked as intended!

Whilst pain is one of the most common pet conditions that can be managed by acupuncture (especially long-term pain from arthritis) the therapy can alleviate symptoms in almost all chronic (long-term) diseases where conventional medicine is not wholly managing those symptoms. Be it muscular skeletal pain or medical conditions like inflammatory bowel disease, epilepsy – or even chronic skin allergies – acupuncture can be of great benefit. It can also be effective in treating pet anxiety and stress.

As a course usually creates longer-lasting relief than a single treatment, we recommend a minimum course of 4 sessions: a 45 minute introductory session followed by 30 minute sessions thereafter.

**If you feel your pet could benefit, please give us a call.**

## Winter hazards – beware!

Don't get caught out this Winter! Read our top tips on common winter worries:

**Winter walks:** Keep up the exercise for physical health and mental stimulation! But make sure your pets stay comfortable. Warm, waterproof jackets could prove beneficial for older pets or those with thin coats. If there is snow or ice, check pets' paws regularly: snow build up between the paws and any reaction from salt mixtures on paths can cause pain. Wash and clean pets' feet after walks.

**Toxic alert:** Anti-freeze poisonings are more common in winter. The fluid is sweet-tasting – cats will drink it readily, but even a few licks can kill. Check your car for leaks, attend to spillages immediately, clean the outside of anti-freeze bottles and keep the liquid out of reach.



**Outdoor pets:** Bring guinea pigs and rabbits in to a garage or shed (ideally heated), and provide lots of cosy bedding as well as fresh water morning and night. Check them daily to ensure they are bright, eating and well.

**Foliage alert:** Lily alert! Petals and pollen are toxic to cats! Watch they don't brush against them and lick the toxin off their fur. It can cause kidney failure.

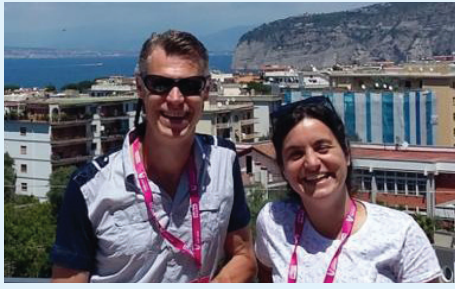
**Festive alert:** Tinsel, cooked bones, string round meat joints, sweetcorn kernels... a few festive items we've removed surgically from pets. Avoid your pet having to undergo life-saving surgery this Christmas! Keep these well out of reach, along with toxic foods like chocolate, Christmas cake and mince pies.



**If in doubt about your pet's health, please don't hesitate to call us.**



## Vets attend Cat Congress in Italy and bring new learning home



In June, Hamish and Emma attended the International Society of Feline Medicine's 2018 European Congress in Sorrento on Italy's beautiful Amalfi Coast. They had the most amazing time – for lots of reasons! Read on to find out why they went and what they gained from their time abroad.

### Why is the ISFM Congress particularly good to attend?

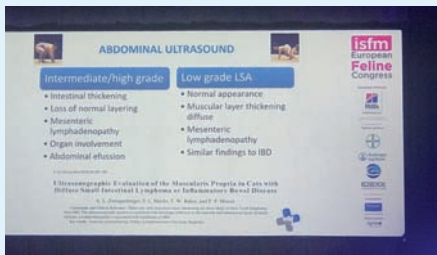
It's the only feline annual congress in Europe. And it's totally cat-centric. It's all about why cats should be treated differently to dogs in practice – as their own unique species – and how we do that. It's great for learning about the latest research and for getting new ideas to prevent as well as manage cat conditions. It's really multi-national too so you get the best shared learning. There were vets from 35 countries and we personally met delegates from Hong Kong, America, Austria and other European countries as well as from the UK.

### What's the structure of Congress like?

It's a 4 day congress and it's pretty full-on. Lectures run from breakfast to evening meal time. There's just the one lecture stream which means you don't miss anything. And even though there were around 500 delegates, there was lots of really useful interaction between speakers and delegates, and it felt really personal and accessible. If you had a question, you could easily get an answer.

### What was the main topic focus?

This year it was oncology, cystitis and kidney disease. The lecturers are all world leaders in their field. We heard Spanish and US oncologists talking about the latest in chemo treatment for cats, and medics from the Royal Vet College in London and Norway speaking on urinary issues. And there was a great session on cat handling in practice too. You could catch lecturers at coffee time if you wanted to chat more. Amazing opportunity to speak face to face to the best in the field.



### Did you do any networking?

We went to a beautiful networking dinner on our first night, set in the lemon grove of our hotel. And over the course of congress we chatted to people running their own feline centres in Oxford, London and the USA, as well as lots of vets who are the feline vet within their practice. A highlight was chatting with the 30 vets presenting their PhDs on specific feline research. We caught up with them at coffee breaks between lectures.



### What inspired you?

There are a few drugs we've been really inspired to use, like trying anti-anxiety medication for particularly anxious cats

before vet visits. And we're going to be working on encouraging people to come to nurse-led cat clinics specifically to learn about stress reduction for cats in their home environment. Being aware of and dealing with cat stresses at home can really help cats suffering with stress-induced recurrent cystitis. Given the focus of the congress, we're also really keen to work on new protocols around improving quality of life for older cats suffering from longterm age-related illness.

### What changes have you already made in practice?

We've purchased – and now use – a 'stress-free' blanket when we handle particularly anxious cats. Swaddling the cat reduces the cat's stress and keeps us safe as practitioners from bites and scratches. We have also already put into practice new safer chemotherapy practice, which is better for cats – and us!

### What changes do you still plan to make?

We're always interested in continuing to make improvements to our already gold standard feline care, but the congress has really motivated us to specifically look at how we can better manage care for the older cat. And to keep owners informed and in touch.

### Sum up your congress experience in 5 words!

Educational, enlightening, motivating, propelling and enjoyable! We would definitely go again!



## Owner action to reduce feline stress



Jodie, our nurse Cat Friendly Clinic Advocate, is currently undertaking an 18 month Diploma in Feline Nursing with ISFM. As well as

improving her own knowledge in a field she adores, each practice meeting, she shares pertinent learning with the rest of the team. Here are some great tips she's shared with us to help owners so you can minimise your cat's stress on their next visit to the vets.

### Familiar smells will reduce stress

- Leave your cat's carrier open and around the house so your cat becomes familiar with it. Encourage your cat to sleep or be fed in it so it is not always associated with a vet visit!
- Put treats inside and comfy bedding that smells of home.
- Rub a cloth round your cat's face and then rub the cloth round the inside of the carrier. Familiarity gives comfort.
- Spray the carrier with a pheromone treatment 30 minutes before leaving, to mimic the scent cats release when they feel calm.

### Minimise the fear of new sights and sounds

- On route, cover the carrier with a blanket to help your cat feel cocooned and safe.
- Place the carrier in the footwell of your vehicle so it cannot move.
- Carry your cat's carrier into the vets by the box itself (not the handle) to avoid unnecessary bumps. Keep the cover on.
- Use our cat friendly waiting area (or let us know if you'd prefer to wait in the car).
- Place your cat's carrier off the floor in the waiting room so they feel more secure and are away from other pets.

**FREE CAT BEHAVIOUR CLINICS!  
NOW AVAILABLE AT 387 VETS!**