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Consultations  
by appointment  
Mon-Fri: 9am-11am  
12pm-2pm  
4pm-7pm

Sat: 11am-1pm  
3pm-5pm

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2011

### Staff News



Helen is starting on her second (final) year at Writtle and is hoping to qualify as a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) in July 2012.

Martin is attending the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO) Conference in South Carolina in October.



Noemie is attending the London Vet Show in November hoping to attend lectures on a wide range of topics both exotics and cats and dogs.

### Whats New?

Look out for our new letter heading already on client documents and soon to appear on the newsletter. We hope the new heading reflects our modern outlook although of course our aim is as always to provide a high level of traditional service.

Back by popular demand is the Lawton and Stoakes Calendar for 2012. Thanks to all those clients who sent in photos of their pets. The Calendars will be on sale in late October/early November at a price of £5.00 and as usual we will be donating some money from sales to the

Zebra  
Foundation  
Charity.



### STAR PET



Meet Harrison a very brave cat. Harrison gave her owner a scare by arriving home recently with a big infected gash on her tummy. She has had to undergo surgery and had regular visits to the surgery to have the wound flushed and never complains or struggles. Thanks to her good nature and her owner's perseverance she should be well on the road to recovery soon. We think she really has star quality!



## Cat Bite Abscesses.

Cat bite abscesses are a fairly common sequel to cats fighting when they meet other unfamiliar cats, and are frequently seen at the clinic. An abscess is a collection of pus trapped below the skin, and usually forms after a tooth breaks the skin, allowing the entry of bacteria deep into the underlying tissues. Cat's skin heals very fast, closing the wound and trapping pus under the healed injury. This sets up an infection, and a large pocket of

pus rapidly forms.

Abscesses can get quite large, and are noticed as large tender lumps, or, sometimes, if they burst, they will appear as a wound discharging a very smelly yellow-brown or blood-tinged liquid. Abscess can occur all over the body, but are frequently seen over the head, shoulders and paws, and, in the case of the losing cat, over the tail and back legs from wounds inflicted as they are running away! As an abscess can be painful, and often causes fevers, cats may be feeling very sorry for themselves – they may hide away, not want to eat much, and show signs of pain on handling the sore area.

Abscesses usually require drainage, either through a hole in the skin, or via a draining tube surgically attached to the wound, and medical treatment with antibiotics and pain relief. If you notice a scratch or bite on your cat, veterinary advice should be sought to prevent an abscess forming. A wound can be bathed in salted water to keep it clean until the appointment. Vaccination is also vitally important in keeping cats healthy, as bites can also transmit diseases such as Feline Leukaemia Virus.



## Microchipping

According to the Dogs Trust the number of stray dogs is at its highest with an average of 345 animals found every day. Last year a third of stray dogs were reunited with their owners thanks to a microchip. This represented a fall of 4% from the year before. To reduce the number of homeless dogs microchipping is recommended. This

procedure can be carried out during a consultation and the fee includes life-long registration on the database. Ask our receptionists for details.



## Hibernating Tortoises

Are you having problems persuading your tortoise that it is time to hibernate? This could be due to the recent warm weather experienced in late September/early October. It is important to check the health of your tortoise before embarking on a long hibernation period in this country. If you bring your tortoise along for a pre-hibernation check our Vets can discuss the pros and cons of hibernation and methods of safely getting your tortoise through the winter months.



Ah the perfect place to hibernate



# KIDS CORNER



## Bird Word Search

Have a go at our bird themed word search, and see if you can spot the words listed below.

A	E	T	M	A	C	A	W	U	H
M	F	D	T	O	W	L	L	G	O
N	E	A	S	H	K	A	C	D	G
R	A	G	I	R	E	G	D	U	B
M	T	Z	B	C	J	N	K	P	E
V	H	G	K	E	R	I	L	Z	A
C	E	G	G	S	Q	W	I	L	K
V	R	C	A	N	A	R	Y	F	O

- 1) MACAW
- 2) OWL
- 3) BEAK
- 4) FEATHER
- 5) WING
- 6) BUDGERIGAR
- 7) CANARY
- 8) EGGS



Well done to Richard Shears who wins last editions kids corner competiton. Richard won a **£20 WHSMITH GIFTCARD** for correctly matching the animals to the groups they live in. If you would like to win why not enter the competition in this edition?

Answers to last edition competiton:-

- 1) Sheep — a) Mob
- 2) Baboons — b) Pack
- 3) Owls — c) Parliament
- 4) Kangaroos — d) Flock
- 5) Lions — e) Charm
- 6) Wolves — f) Troop
- 7) Finches — g) Pride

## The firework season

Soon the firework season will be upon us! Is your dog afraid of the noises or is he anxious? What can you do to alleviate this? There are many remedies on the market claiming to help calm nervous dogs. Traditionally Vets have prescribed anxiolytics for short term relief, however these can have variable effects in individuals and at low doses can even cause excitement! Sometimes a more long term solution is advisable. It is important not to punish the dog for being scared. Provide a safe environment by closing the curtains to block

the lights and playing music to hide the noise. Fussing over the dog may increase its fear levels, stay calm yourself and encourage the dog to come to you. If he does come to you then interact calmly with him. In the longer term you could try a noise desensitisation program or Pheromone devices. If your dog has suddenly developed a noise phobia then he may have a medical condition that has adjusted his anxiety threshold. The Vets are happy to discuss options available to you for the benefit of your pets by appointment at the surgery.

## EXOTIC SPOT

### **Russian Hamsters** *by Noemie McDermott*

The name Russian hamster is used to describe two subspecies of dwarf hamster, which can grow to an adult size of about 8-10cm and have a lifespan of about eighteen months to two years. These small animals can be quite social, and are happy to be handled after being gently acclimatised to human hands. They can also live in groups with other hamsters of the same sex if introduced to each other while young (be aware mixed sex groups can quickly multiply!).

Russian hamsters are best kept in a solid cage, such as a well ventilated glass or plastic sided vivarium, as they are known to occasionally be small enough to squeeze through metal-barred rodent cages. Their enclosure should contain a non-toxic absorbable bedding, a dark, enclosed resting area, wooden objects to gnaw on, and a means of exercise – hamsters have been reported to run up to 8km in a night, so a wheel in a large cage with tunnels and different levels is ideal.

They should be fed a good quality hamster food, which can be supplemented with small amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, seeds and dried fruit. Like their larger Syrian hamster cousins, they do store their food in their large cheek pouches, either to carry it to hide it away in their nest, or as a snack for later. They require constant access to fresh clean water.



## **AUTUMN ALERT!**

As autumn approaches and the nights get darker our thoughts turn to seasonal activities such as clearing the garden. This is a time for bonfires but before you light that bonfire please check for any small creatures that may have seen your pile of leaves and twigs as a good place to hibernate! Ideally burn the rubbish on the same day as you make the bonfire. Alternatively why not make a bin from posts and chicken wire to make leaf mold and at the same time provide much needed shelter for hedgehogs and slow worms and other hibernating creatures?



## **SHAMPOOING DOGS**

Many dog owners take it for granted that their dog smells and it may only visitors to the house that notice the smell. So what causes the “doggy” smell? Dental disease will cause a smell from the mouth, the anal area has many bacteria that will lead to smells and the skin itself can often produce intense odours. Often the cause is centrally heated homes which can dry the skin. How often should you bathe your dog? Well it depends on how smelly it gets! It is important to use the correct shampoo in the correct situation. You should not use human shampoos as human skin is slightly acidic at pH5.5-6.5 whereas dog skin is slightly alkaline at pH 7.5-8. Many dog shampoos are medicated for treating skin disorders. If you are concerned about your dog’s skin contact us at the surgery for advice.