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3pm-5pm

## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2009

**WELCOME TO THIS EDITION OF  
OUR NEWSLETTER  
INSIDE:-**

**STAFF NEWS  
ANNOUNCING THE LAWTON AND  
STOAKES CALENDAR FOR 2010  
ESSEX WILDLIFE...** How to encourage  
our native animals  
**GERIATRIC PROFILE...**What is it and  
what is it for?  
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Scarsbrook

### STAFF NEWS

Lynne Stoakes and her daughter and sister “ran” in the Race for Life on 21<sup>st</sup> June at Hylands Park raising £200 between them for Cancer Research UK. It was a glorious day and quite overwhelming to see so many women taking part for this important work to continue. Thanks go to everyone who sponsored us!  
Kelly continues in her studies at Level 3 of the Veterinary Nursing Course and Jamie has important exams coming up in July so I’m sure you will join us in wishing him all the best of luck. We’re sure all his hard work will pay off and he will then be able to move on to the Second year in September.  
Lynne Stoakes gave a talk to the “Just me and my Tortoise” group in Keston in Kent in June entitled



### LAWTON AND STOAKES CALENDAR 2010



Following the success of the Calendar last year we are producing another for 2010.

We need **your photos** of **your pets** to make this possible...

**So why not get snapping and send us by email or post your silly, seasonal, or just darn cute pics of your pets of any species.**

**Closing date is October 31st 2009**

**2010 is a very important year for the practice as we will have been open for 25 years!**

**Why not help us to celebrate by being a part of our Calendar for 2010.**

“Tortoises, Terrapins and Turtles: they are what they eat”. About 90 people attended including those who had owned tortoises or terrapins for years and those who had just acquired a tortoise or terrapin for the first time. There were plenty of questions raised as many opinions abound on the correct feeding of these interesting species and there was a guest appearance by a baby Aldabran Toroise (weighing in at 15kg!)

**Donations were requested for the Zebra Foundation and thanks to people’s generosity £32 was raised.**



## WILDLIFE IN ESSEX



When people think of Essex it is often in the context of the Essex girl or Essex man jokes or of the car and electronic industries. However as you travel from West to East through Essex it becomes apparent that much of the county is rural in nature. There are a range of habitats for wildlife from the woodlands of Epping to the 350miles of coastline including the Thames Estuary and its Salt Marshes. This range of habitats supports a diverse wildlife population.

The woodland areas are home to many species of bird such as the Green and Greater Spotted Woodpecker, the Barn Owl likes to hunt at the edge of the woodland preying on small mammals such as mice and are an important ally of local farmers for this reason. The Cuckoo can be heard each spring in wooded areas of Essex although its numbers are declining. The many species of birds found in Essex Woodland is testament to the wealth of insect life to be found here. Oak trees in particular support the greatest number of insect species. Many mammals also make the woodland their home for at least part of their lives. In the trees the Dormouse lives on Hazelnuts and likes trees covered in Honey-suckle. The Pipistrelle bat the smallest of our native bats also likes ancient woodland such as that found in Epping Forest. On the ground Fallow deer live and can sometimes be seen grazing beside the busy A12! Foxes and Badgers also live in these areas as well as the Grey Squirrel. Britain has few species of reptiles but of these the Slow Worm (a legless lizard), grass snake and Adder can all be found in Essex. Amphibians such as the Common Frog, Common Toad and several species of newt including the endangered Greater Crested Newt live in the many small seasonal ponds within the woods. Bedfords Park in Harold Hill boasts the greatest range of habitats of any Country Park. The large expanses of mud flats that are exposed at the estuary mouth at low tide are home to many wildlife species. Worms love the protein rich mud and snails can be found on its surface. Many wading birds come here to feed in flocks.



**If you would like to find out more about Wildlife in Essex then contact the Essex Wildlife Trust ([essexwt.co.uk](http://essexwt.co.uk)) and enquire about becoming a member. You will then be notified of all the Wildlife events taking place in Essex.**



### **STOP PRESS!**

**Havering Council have agreed in principle to increasing the parking restrictions in Oak Road and Fitzilian Avenue by introducing **DOUBLE YELLOW LINES****

**with a few parking meters at the top of Oak Road. This would mean that it would be illegal for clients to park outside the surgery.**

**Please help us to STOP THIS MADNESS by signing the petition at the reception.**



## THE GERIATRIC HEALTH SCREEN

A Geriatric screen will test for underlying health problems which can occur in our elderly patients such as kidney, liver and heart disease. The sample is processed in our own laboratory which means we usually have the results on the same day. Below is a list of the parameters we are able to measure and what each one means.

**UREA** This is a breakdown product from the digestion of protein. It is formed in the liver and excreted by the kidneys. If it accumulates in the blood it can indicate that the kidneys are not performing this function adequately. Urea can also be affected by a recent protein rich meal or congestive heart failure which would increase the level.

**CREATININE** This is also a protein breakdown product, excreted by the kidneys. It tends to increase later in the course of kidney disease and is less affected by diet and heart disease. Therefore by looking at both of these parameters we get a good picture of the condition of the kidneys.

**CALCIUM and PHOSPHORUS.** These minerals are very important for nerve and muscle function and are usually found in the ratio of 2:1 (Calcium Phosphorus). Kidney disease can upset this delicate balance increasing the phosphorus and decreasing the Calcium resulting in brittle bones.

**AMYLASE.** This is an enzyme produced by the pancreas to digest starch. It can be increased in conditions that affect the pancreas or sometimes in kidney failure as it is excreted by the kidneys.

**ALKP** Alkaline Phosphatase is a substance released from many tissues when they are damaged or diseased such as bone, muscle, or the gut.

**ALT** Alanine Transferase is a substance which is released from Liver cells when they are damaged.

**TOTAL PROTEIN, GLOBULIN and ALBUMIN.** Albumin is the protein which forms the building blocks of the body. Globulins are the proteins found in antibodies and so an increase in this could indicate an active infection. These two proteins together make the Total Protein in the blood.

**CHOLESTEROL.** Dogs can suffer from high cholesterol just as humans do although it rarely causes heart disease in dogs.

**GLUCOSE** Will increase in cases of Diabetes Mellitus (sugar diabetes).

**HAEMATOCRIT.** This is a percentage of the red blood cells in the blood and a decrease can indicate anaemia. An increase can be found in dehydrated patients.

**WHITE BLOOD CELL COUNT** These cells are important for fighting infection so an increase can indicate an infective process. Leukaemia a tumour of the white cell producing tissues can also cause a marked increase in the number of circulating White blood cells.

All of these parameters together give us a good indication of the health of the internal organs of **dogs and cats** and can be useful to pick up disease early in its course. However, a normal blood screen does not completely rule out disease and your Veterinary Surgeon will take into account his or her clinical examination findings in conjunction with the blood test results thereby enabling us to advise on the best course of action/ treatment available for your pet. The procedure is quick (usually done during a consultation) and all that is needed is 2.5mls (half a teaspoon!) of blood.

**If you would like to take advantage of this service please speak to one of our receptionists who will be pleased to advise you.**

## STAR PET

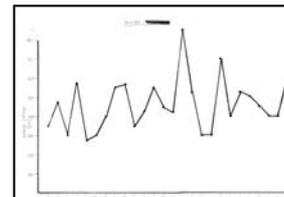


Gumbo is a 10 year old Staffordshire Bull Terrier. He presented to Lawton and Stoakes in March for a general health check. On examination he was in good body condition although his teeth had some tartar and a dental procedure under general anaesthetic was advised. As he is an older dog a geriatric screen (see article this Newsletter).was undertaken to assess his anaesthetic risk. This involved taking a blood sample in the consulting room and testing it in our laboratory. The results showed that Gumbo had raised Urea and Creatinine. As Urea and Creatinine are waste products from protein digestion and should be excreted in the urine this could indicate that

his kidneys were not working properly.

The normally functioning kidney filters out the protein and conserves it for use in the body. When the kidney is diseased protein leaks out into the urine and this is seen as weight loss in the animal. The kidney also has a role in maintaining the fluid balance in the body and when the kidney cannot conserve fluid the urine volume increases and the animal becomes thirsty as a result. The actual amount a dog needs to drink daily will be dependent on the type of food fed. Tinned dog food has about 70% water compared with dry dog food approximately 10%, so a dog on dry food will need to drink much more in order to maintain its hydration. We requested Gumbo's owner to monitor his water intake and provide a urine sample for us to test.

Gumbo's young owner made a graph of his water intake by measuring out how much water was left in his bowl daily. As you can see from the graph the water intake varied from 300ml to 800ml (on a particularly hot day). We can now use this as a guide to his condition in the future much more accurately than subjectively assessing his thirst.



We tested a sample of Gumbo's urine and there was a lot of protein present but no blood or glucose to suggest an infection or sugar diabetes. This tends to confirm that his kidneys are not functioning as they should despite the fact that he is very lively and energetic!

We have decided to leave Gumbo's teeth as the anaesthetic could worsen his kidney condition. Although there is nothing we can do to rejuvenate Gumbo's kidneys with dietary and medical care we hope to keep Gumbo happy and healthy for some time to come!

If your pet is drinking and urinating more than usual don't be afraid to contact us for advice.

## EXOTIC CORNER

Harris Hawk - ( *parabuteo unicinctus*) by Toni Scarsbrook



The Harris hawk originates from south west USA. They have a wingspan 43-47 inches, and weigh from 500grams to 1200grams.

Harris hawks have dark brown plumage with chestnut on the shoulders, wing linings and thighs. The tail has a white tip and they have yellow legs and cere. The females tend to be bigger than the males.

They can live up to 12years in the wild but in captivity they have been known to live up to 30years of age.

The Harris hawk is a carnivore. They will eat rodents, (rats and mice), chicks, quail, rabbits, small birds and some small mammals.

When kept in captivity they are tethered to a bow perch. This is done by the hawk having anklets around their ankles, and jesses threaded through the eye of the anklet. with a swivel attached to a leash. This helps with handling them safely for you and the bird.

A protective glove, also known as a gauntlet is worn when handling any birds of prey to protect yourself from their sharp talons and strong feet.

They are kept tethered in a muse with access to water in a large tray which they enjoying bathing in on hot days, after feeding and after flying to get rid of the dust on their feathers.

Harris hawks are one of the most sociable birds and are known to hunt in groups with the males flushing out the prey and the females going in for the kill.

