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

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

## NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2011

### STAFF NEWS

**Lynne Stoakes** has attended the BSAVA Congress in Birmingham in April. This 4 day conference covers a wide range of veterinary topics. She has also given a talk on Reptile diagnosis and treatment to the British Herpetological Society at the Zoological Society of London and has been invited to give further talks to Tortoise groups in Kent and Norfolk in the near future. Together with her sister and daughter she completed a Sponsored walk from Paper Mill Lock along the canal path to Chelmsford, a distance of 7 miles in aid of Farleigh Hospice and thanks go to all those clients who kindly sponsored her.

**Helen Whitworth** has just completed her first year of training at Writtle College and is looking forward to starting the final year of her training in September.

### WHAT'S NEW?

The Practice has recently invested in a new Ultrasound Machine following the breakdown of the old machine. This new machine has digital probes and will enable us to ultrasound patients of all sizes for pregnancy diagnosis and diagnostic purposes.



In addition the Practice has a specialised high frequency ultrasound probe for diagnosing diseases of the eye. Recently we have increased our morning consultations by 1 hour. This means that on most weekdays we are consulting from 9am through to 2pm. Please telephone first to book an appointment with your Veterinary Surgeon. Saturday consults remain the same 11am-1pm and 3pm-5pm.

## Staff

### Veterinary Surgeons

**Martin Lawton** *B.Vet.Med:*  
*Cert. LAS: C. Biol: MI Biol:D. Zoo*  
*Med (Reptilian): FRCVS*

**Lynne Stoakes** *B.Vet.Med.*  
*MRCVS*

**Noemie McDermott**  
*B.Vet.Med MRCVS*

### Receptionists

**Paula Smith**  
**Julie Austin**  
**Joanne Cross**

### Veterinary Nurses

**Fiona Gorden** *VN*  
**Kelly Adams** *RVN*  
**Jamie Biggs** *RVN*

### Student Veterinary Nurses

**Helen Whitworth** (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

## IN THE NEWS

### A Hutch Is Not Enough by Kelly

Rabbits are a popular pet with adults and children alike, however they are often not thought about as much as they should be. Many rabbits live their whole lives in hutches, some being transferred to an outside pen for short periods of time.

Keeping rabbits in hutches has stuck since the Victorian times when hutches were used to store rabbits before they were killed for meat. However rabbits are not designed to live in such small spaces. In the wild rabbits cover the equivalent of 3 football pitches each day, running, exploring and foraging in large social groups.



Pet rabbits should be allowed to show the same natural behaviors as they would in the wild to keep them healthy and happy, so the bigger their accommodation the better!! It is often heard that rabbits should have enough space for three hops, but it is commonly underestimated just how far three hops is...the average sized rabbit can cover 6-7 feet in three hops!!

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 outlines an owner's legal responsibilities towards their pets ensuring that the pet's welfare needs are met in respect to environment, diet, normal behavior patterns, companionship (if appropriate) and protection from pain, injury, suffering or disease. For more information visit [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife) and [www.defra.gov.uk/pets](http://www.defra.gov.uk/pets).

### Poison Alert!

Practices across England have been asked to support the Campaign Against Accidental or Illegal Poisoning (CAIP) and to report



suspected cases to DEFRA. At this time of the year poisoning of pets and wildlife by slug bait

(Metaldehyde) is at its peak. Owners are asked to keep poisons (Rodenticides and Pesticides) locked away and clearly labelled in their original packaging and to use them in accordance with the instructions to minimise the impact on wildlife and pets. Better still switch to wildlife friendly or organic products or techniques to protect your veggie crops!

In addition the BVA and Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) have warned about the dangers of the artificial sweetener Xylitol to pets particularly dogs. Xylitol can be found in many products such as muffins and cakes and can cause low blood sugar, gastrointestinal haemorrhage and liver failure.



## Intestinal Foreign Bodies



Mason the 18month old Bull Mastiff was presented to the surgery by his owner as he had a sudden onset of vomiting. Fortunately his owner, knowing Mason's liking for chewing things, recognised the signs could indicate an obstructed bowel and rushed him to the surgery. A radiograph confirmed the presence of a round object in the abdomen and at surgery a small rubber ball was found in the small intestine. A day after surgery Mason was fit enough to go home.

Young dogs are fond of picking up objects in their mouths and playing with them. Signs to look out for include sudden onset vomiting which may be brown and look like diarrhoea. If the obstruction is completely blocking the bowel no faeces will be passed. Not all foreign objects are visible on radiography but the appearance of the gut can indicate a blockage and surgery is often indicated to find the cause.



## KIDS CORNER

Jamie has devised a devilish hard puzzle! Match these animals to the groups they live in.  
Its not as easy as you think!

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 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      |



Simply hand in your answers to the receptionist or send in to the surgery!

**Congratulations to Rachel Shears who won the last kids corner by completing the crossword puzzle. A £20 WHSmith Giftcard is on its way to her!**

Desert Rat  
Medical Bloodsucker  
Packs a long trunk  
Buries its head in the sand  
Lives in a sty  
Ape beats his chest  
Woolly mammal

		<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>		
		<b>L</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>			
<b>E</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>		
		<b>O</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	
			<b>P</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>G</b>				
<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>A</b>			
		<b>S</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>P</b>			

### DENTAL DISEASE

Does your dog have bad breath? Dental disease is common especially in older dogs and affects more than just their breath! Plaque is responsible and it is made of minerals, organic material and bacteria. If left untreated this will lead to gum disease and tooth decay. But the effects are not confined to the mouth, other organs like liver and kidneys become affected. So if your dog is less lively then it used to be it may be down in the mouth! Why not ask us for a dental health check for your pet?



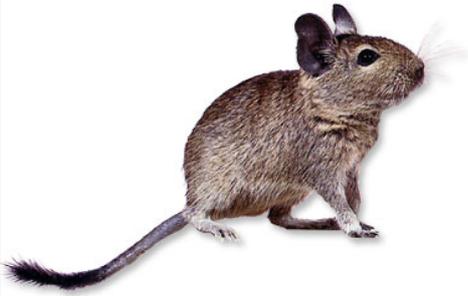
## EXOTIC SPOT

### Degus Noemie McDermott

Degus are members of the rodent family. They are small, sociable herbivores that grow to 5-7 inches (12-17cm) long with a tail the same length again. They make curious and inquisitive pets, and as they are used to living in groups they do well with a friend. They generally live between 5-8 years.

They should be kept in a large cage (24 inches by 18 inches by 24 inches tall [60 x 45 x 60cm] is the minimum size for a pair of degus), as they are very active and enjoy climbing and jumping. The cage should be made of wire, as they are good at chewing, but with a solid floor padded with bedding, and some solid ledges to rest on. They will need a nesting box for shelter, and this should be filled with pet-safe bedding, such as hay, straw, or paper. They will also need regular access to a dust bath to keep their coats in good condition.

Degus should be fed a good quality guinea pig or chinchilla mix, and have constant access to good quality hay. They also may enjoy a small quantity of fresh food, such as grass, dandelions, romaine lettuce, carrots and leafy greens. As a treat, degus like seeds, such as sunflower or pumpkin seeds, but these should be occasional, as they are high in fat. Degus need constant access to clean fresh water.



*Just Me and my Tortoise* have launched the Kent/London register for tortoises that are missing (lost, stolen, escaped etc) or found. This is a free service run by volunteer members of the group. The website is

[jmmtortoiseregister.webs.com](http://jmmtortoiseregister.webs.com)

## STAR PET

Meet Darren the ferret. Darren was presented earlier this year as he was unwell and wobbly on his feet. On feeling his abdomen a lump was discovered. This was found at surgery to be an enlarged spleen. The spleen was removed and Darren has made a remarkable recovery. His owners say he is very playful once again!

