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

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

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2008/9

WELCOME...

to this issue of our Newsletter.

In this issue:-

Reptile Care...more training needed for Vets

Staff News...a new member of staff and find out about CPD for our vets

What's New?...waiting room display

Kids Corner...meet Katie's musical guinea pigs!

Star Pet...Ben the charming Cavalier

The Thyroid gland...conditions in the dog and cat

Exotic Spot...frogs by Kelly Adams

REPTILE CARE

A recent report in the Veterinary Times states that research by Federation of British Herpetologists (FBH) suggests that reptiles may now be more popular as pets than dogs. It also states that many reptiles die within the first three months of purchase due to poor husbandry. There was a call for Vets to receive more training about these kinds of creatures and to communicate with specialists in this field.

Mr Lawton is an RCVS recognised specialist in Exotic Pet Medicine and all of our Vets are well used to dealing with reptiles and can advise on their husbandry and care. If you have any questions about the health or proper living environment for your reptile please do not hesitate to make an appointment to discuss this with one of the Vets.

STAFF NEWS

Gemma Byrnes has moved on to complete her Nursing Portfolio and we welcome another Gemma who joins us as a Nursing Assistant.

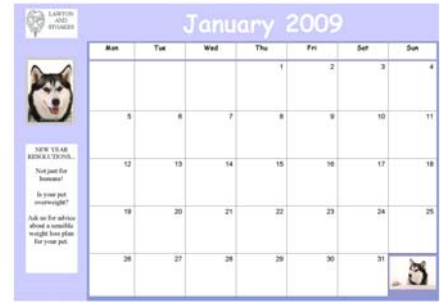
Gemma Hosford has a 7 month old puppy Staffordshire Bull terrier and a rescue cat at home and hopes to go on to do the Nursing Course.



Kelly is about to start her second year of the Veterinary Nursing course having completed the First year Portfolio and Jamie has embarked on his first year of the Veterinary Nursing course last September. Miss Schiele will be away in January attending the North American Veterinary Conference, in February Mr Lawton will be attending the Western States Veterinary Conference, Las Vegas and in April Miss Stoakes will be attending the British Small Animal Veterinary Conference in Birmingham. This Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is supported by the practice in an effort to maintain the high standards of veterinary Care at Lawton and Stoakes.

WHAT'S NEW?

The Lawton and Stoakes Calendar 2009 was a great success and we managed to raise £.....for the Zebra Foundation. This foundation was set up to assist Veterinary students and Veterinary surgeons to gain more knowledge of exotic species of animals. We would like to thank all those people who sent in photos of their pets to make this calendar possible and for all of you who bought a copy and helped us reach this total. We hope Calendar 2010 will be even better...watch out later in the year for how your pet can be a Calendar Pet!!



Watch out too in 2009 for our **digital display** which will be situated in the waiting room. This will show a continuous display of information about the practice. We will be able to take you on a “**virtual tour**” of the wonderful facilities we have “backstage” which are not usually seen by clients. You will also be able to “**meet the team**” with our introduction on all staff members and their role in the practice. In addition we can show you the **equipment** that the practice partners have invested in, which enables us to give you a first rate service. We will also eventually include information on preventative health care and other medical conditions, which we hope our clients will find useful.

KIDS CORNER



This issue Kids corner is from **Katie Twedde**. Katie sent in this wonderful composite photo that she put together herself using photos of her 6 guinea pigs for our calendar. We liked it so much we felt we wanted to show it off in our newsletter too! Katie is a musician and this has obviously inspired her artwork. Katie is just 12years old and she wins a £10 WHSmith voucher.

If you would like a chance to show off some artwork or a poem or story just send them in to us either by post or email and remember we give a prize to any we publish!

STAR PET

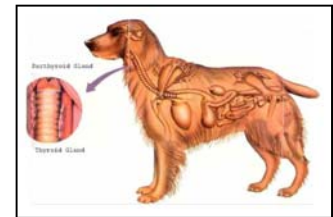
Ben is 11 years old. His first 6 years were spent with a family, however they had to rehome him because



a family member was allergic to his fur. Ben is a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and he has a heart condition which is common in the breed. He is currently on 4 medications a day. Because his heart cannot pump properly his tummy fills with fluid and he has to have this drained at regular intervals. Despite all this he never complains or growls or shows his teeth. He greets every passer-by with a gentle wag of his tail when he is out for his walk. At home he likes to watch TV with Wildlife programmes being a favourite!

THE THYROID GLAND

The thyroid gland is a paired endocrine gland which is found either side of the trachea (windpipe) in the neck. It secretes hormones (T3 and T4 known as thyroid hormone) which governs the metabolic rate of other organs in the body. Thyroid disease is quite common in dogs and cats.



Hypothyroidism (underproduction of thyroid hormone)

This is seen in dogs, particularly middle aged Labradors, Golden Retrievers, Dachshunds, Cocker Spaniels, Boxers and Dobermans.

Signs include:- weight gain, lethargy, cold intolerance, hair loss on the flanks and backs of the hind legs. Other, less obvious signs are nerve disturbances and muscle weakness.

Diagnosis is by blood samples looking for thyroid hormone and its effects.

Treatment is by “hormone replacement therapy”! Synthetic thyroid hormone in tablet form is given and treatment will need to be continued for life.

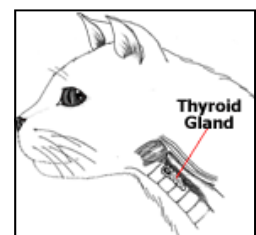
Hyperthyroidism (overproduction of thyroid hormone)

This is seen in middle aged and older cats. The cause is often a benign tumour (adenoma).

Signs include:- weight loss despite increased appetite, irritability and agitation and digestive upsets such as diarrhoea. If left untreated heart failure, kidney disease and high blood pressure develop.

Diagnosis is again by blood samples which will demonstrate high circulating thyroid hormone.

There are three treatment options. Tablets can be given to counteract the effects of the thyroid hormone, which will need to be continued for life or the tumour can be removed surgically. There are risks associated with surgery but despite this cats often recover very well in most cases. Sometimes a course of treatment prior to surgery is recommended to reduce the effects of the increased thyroid hormone. The third option is radiotherapy. This has to be carried out at specialised centres due to the health risks associated with radiation and the patient is kept hospitalised in isolation for the duration of the treatment.



If your pet is showing any of the above signs bring them in for a health check and the Veterinary Surgeon will advise you on the best course of action.

EXOTIC SPOT

African Clawed Frogs *Xenopus Laevis* By Kelly Adams

African clawed frogs are native to South Africa and are medium sized frogs that can grow up to about 12cm long. However, the males are much smaller than females.

They have a flattened body with strong hind legs and small front legs. Their hind legs have 5 webbed toes, with the inside 3 having claws that give the frog its name. The front legs have 4 un-webbed toes.

These frogs do not have a tongue or teeth and their ears are not visible. They have small eyes that gaze upwards and have no eyelids.

Their skin is very slippery due to it being covered in a thick mucous layer, which provides protection to the permeable skin.

The colour of their skin can be many colours including albino, brown, olive green, black and grey.

African clawed frogs are very good swimmers as this is an important skill when catching prey, and they spend most of their time in water, only surfacing to breathe. In the wild if their water supply dries up the frogs either migrate or bury themselves in the mud, leaving a small opening to breathe through, until the rainy season arrives. They can survive for up to 10 months like this.

These frogs are social animals so should be kept with at least one other of the same species.

Pets should be housed in a large fish tank with water at least 30cm deep and kept at a temperature of between 68 - 75°F. The pH range of the water must be 6.5 - 8.5. Clean treated tap water or spring water must be used in the tank and replaced regularly to ensure it stays clean. There must be good access to fresh air.

The tank should have a filter and a gravel substrate, however care must be taken when choosing substrate as the frog can accidentally swallow small stones. Ornaments, plants and hides are also an important part of the frogs home so that they can hide away and feel safe.

African clawed frogs are scavengers and will eat as much as they can when they get the chance.

They find prey by smell and touch and use their front toes to push the food into their

mouths. There is a variety of foods that can be fed to pet African clawed frogs including bloodworms, chopped earthworm, prawns, brine shrimps, and mosquito larvae. A vitamin and mineral supplement is important to add to the food to help keep the frog healthy.

African clawed frogs, as well as other frogs, should not be handled as their sensitive skin can dry out very easily. Their skin produces a chemical, which may cause an allergic reaction in some people.

