



# Orchard Veterinary Centre

Your Best Friend's Best Friend

# NEWS

AUTUMN 2008

## Welcome to Natalie!

A big welcome to Natalie, the latest to join our nursing team. Natalie gained her BSc (hons) in Veterinary Nursing Science at Hartpury college in 2005.

When not caring for our patients, Natalie spends much of her time looking after her own family of six cats, two guinea pigs and two gerbils. A keen craft worker, Natalie is very creative. Her other big interest is watching films; she has a collection of around 700!

For her holiday this year (how does she find time to holiday?) Natalie is off with Zoe, one of our other nurses, to Egypt.

## Fire Work Season

With bonfire night fast approaching together with the Hindu Diwali festival, some of our noise phobic pets are about to enter a very scary period of time!

The good news is that we can do lots to help them to overcome their fears once and for all. The key to this is to tackle the problem well before the onset of the festive season. For more information please ring our surgery and speak to one of our nurses.

## 10% OFF our Cattery Gift Range!

If you present this newsletter to the Cat Shop staff at our cattery, 'The Cats Whiskers,' Home Farm, Harborne, you will get 10% off any item in our gift range. This offer ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

### SURGERY NUMBERS

Oldbury: 0121-544 8951  
Wednesbury: 0121-556 6890  
Harborne: 0121-428 1777

Web site: [orchardvet.net](http://orchardvet.net)

## New Surgery Opens at Wednesbury

Many of our clients will be aware that we have moved to our new surgery in Wednesbury. The surgery is now situated at Holyhead Road, in the former Lloyds Bank building. We can provide the complete range of our services from this superb, fully equipped, state of the art surgery.

Full diagnostic and treatment facilities are available, supplying all your pet's healthcare needs from one convenient centre.

The classic *art deco* building has ample parking space and easy disabled access.



Many of you will already be familiar with our caring and friendly staff. Why not give us a call and arrange to view our facilities and meet the team!

The Wednesbury number is 0121-556 6890.



## Start now if you are planning a trip for 2009!



DID YOU know many owners are now taking advantage of the Pet Travel Scheme and taking their dogs and cats on holiday and to live in other countries with no need for a stay in quarantine on the way back?

Now is the time to start planning as it takes 7-8 months to fulfil the requirements of the scheme. Your pet will need to be **microchipped, vaccinated against rabies** and subsequently **blood tested** to prove that sufficient immunity has developed. You additionally need to allow six calendar months to elapse (from the date of the successful blood sample) before your pet can re-enter the UK under the scheme, and then only after certain **tick** and **tapeworm** treatments have been carried out and certified before arrival in the UK.

Please contact us for further information or advice – but don't delay!

Pet photos: Jane Burton Cartoon: Jenny Hole

Join the Orchard Pet Health Scheme for free treatment, vaccination and more

# Arthritis: is your pet affected?

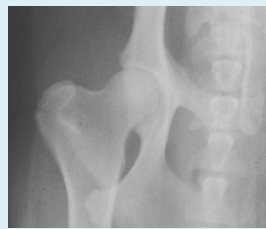


**NORMAL** joint function is something that most of us take for granted in our pets. However arthritis (or degenerative joint disease) is a relatively common problem, particularly in older pets.

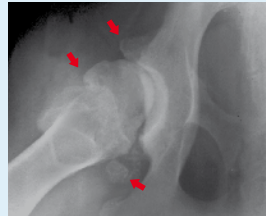
In the majority of cases arthritis occurs secondary to a lifetime of wear and tear on the joints. Arthritis may also occur following joint trauma or due to malformation of the joint, for example hip dysplasia – see above right for x-rays.

The joints that are most susceptible to arthritis are those associated with limb movement; these joints are called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by very smooth articular cartilage. The joints are also lubricated with synovial fluid – allowing friction free movement.

Arthritic joints typically show progressive breakdown and thinning of the cartilage lin-



Normal hip joint



Arthritic hip joint in a dog with hip dysplasia. Secondary new bone (arrowed) can be seen around the joint

ing the ends of the bones and formation of secondary new bone around the joint. Affected joints usually appear stiff, swollen and painful. Typical signs include: difficulty in getting to their feet after rest, and (for dogs) problems getting in and out of cars and often a reluctance to go on walks.



Feeding a balanced healthy diet with regular exercise and active weight management can make a huge difference to your pets mobility

## So what can be done?

Even those pets that are only mildly affected can benefit from treatment, and the most effective approach involves several factors. Weight loss alone can be effective for animals that are overweight; this along with a combination of regular gentle exercise and massage is also helpful. Special diets can help to slow the progression of the disease and food supplements containing glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate may help to reduce pain and inflammation.

Finally, many pets benefit from pain relief given by medication, and with a number of medicines available, we can choose the right one for your pet.

So, if you suspect that your pet may be suffering from arthritis, come and discuss this further – we can help you to help him!



## Autumn Alert!

ONCE again, the shorter days and cooler weather signify the beginning of the Autumn months. However this time of year holds many potential hazards for our pets.

Despite the cooling weather, **fleas** unfortunately do not take holidays and are still a major problem at this time of year! So now is definitely NOT the time to lower your guard against these irritating tiny pests!

**Harvest mites** are another cause of irritation in later summer / early autumn. They are active in long grass and will swarm onto passing pets where they tend to congregate on the eyelids, ears, feet and abdomen. They are easily identified as bright orange “dots” adhering to the skin, and are often the cause of great irritation.



Harvest mite (x 50)

As the weather cools down, **bees and wasps** become dozy and are easily caught by dogs and cats. Unfortunately they can still give nasty stings to your pets.

**Antifreeze** is also a potential hazard for many pets at this time of year. When getting the car ready for the winter, any spilled antifreeze should be cleared up promptly – it’s very tasty but extremely toxic.

Remember also to keep pets indoors in the evenings to avoid **firework** injuries. Dogs with noise phobias may benefit from medication to help relieve anxiety associated with fireworks. Habituation to loud noises over a long period of time can also be helpful.



Finally, turning to **rabbits**, if you haven’t had your rabbit **vaccinated** against **Myxomatosis** and **VHD** yet, act now! These usually fatal illnesses can easily strike in the Autumn.



Ginger cat: Jane Burton

## Pet Insurance: are you covered?



YOU look after your pets and make sure they have regular health checks, vaccinations, appropriate diets, worming and flea control. But what about **pet insurance**?

It’s a worrying fact that in an average year, one pet in three will require veterinary treatment for some form of illness or accident and with the cost of diagnosis and treatment

for a variety of conditions running into three and even four figures, pet insurance has never been more relevant. With appropriate pet insurance we can hopefully ensure that decisions regarding the best course of treatment for your pet can be made on the basis of **need** rather than **cost**. **Don’t take any chances – get your pet insured today!**

Although we tend to think of traumatic **surgical** events



(such as a fractured leg), as the main reason for pet insurance, many **medical** conditions (such as skin infections, ear disease, kidney or heart disease – to name just a few!), can also be very costly to treat.