



# NEWS

Animal *Health* Trust

*Leading science and care for animals*

## **A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR PETS LIKE FREDDIE**



### Freddie's story

Freddie was given just weeks to live when he was diagnosed with gastrointestinal lymphoma. It was feared that he wouldn't finish the standard 16 week CHOP chemotherapy treatment, but Hannah, Freddie's owner, knew she had to try everything.

Hannah drove several hours from her home each week to bring Freddie to the AHT for chemotherapy treatment, in the hope that it would extend the time they had together. "Freddie is a very brave, loyal and trusting dog which I believe has helped him get this far" says Hannah. "Treatment was very tough, as our whole lives changed."

Freddie has completed a course of chemotherapy and is now in remission. He has amazed all of our vets by making a fantastic recovery. Two and a half years after his diagnosis, Freddie is living a normal



life. He has gone back to showing and even won Best in Show - beating 8,000 other dogs, at the Leeds Championship Show in July!

Hannah added: "Freddie is my best friend, soulmate and shadow. I had not long lost my father to cancer when Freddie got diagnosed. Freddie was there for me through the hardest times of my life, and I was sure that I would do the same for him. I am forever thankful to the AHT for everything they have done. Freddie would not be here without them."

## AHT Cancer update

### Research towards new tests for mast cell tumours and B-cell lymphoma

**Dogs are affected by around 200 different types of cancer and we are currently engaged in research into some of the most common, serious cancers, such as mast cell tumours and lymphoma, which affect many breeds.**

Mast cell tumours (MCTs) are the most common skin cancer in dogs.

There is currently no way of predicting whether a mast cell tumour will spread, making it difficult for a vet to determine the best treatment. Our researchers have identified 25 'genetic markers' present at different levels in tumours that spread and tumours that do not. We hope that one or more of these markers will lead to a test that, in the future, will accurately predict if a MCT will spread in order to help get dogs the best treatment.

Lymphoma is the most frequent life threatening cancer in dogs and B-cell lymphoma is the most common type

of lymphoma. There is currently no way of predicting whether a B-cell lymphoma will respond to CHOP chemotherapy, the most effective treatment. To screen for genetic markers in B-cell lymphomas, we are collecting fine needle biopsies of tumours from patients that did, or did

**We are the only UK charity with a dedicated cancer treatment centre and a canine cancer research team**

not, completely respond to CHOP treatment. If we are able to discover genetic markers that are only found in the B-cell lymphomas that responded to CHOP, we would be able to help vets identify which dogs are most suitable for this treatment in the future.

### Leading the way for cancer treatment in horses

**Dr Anna Hollis, the AHT's Equine Oncologist, is expanding the cancer service available for horses through the effective introduction of Strontium-90 plesiotherapy; a form of superficial radiotherapy.**

Plesiotherapy is proving to be an extremely effective treatment, with the

ability to deliver very high doses of radiation to the tumour without affecting the surrounding tissues. Plesiotherapy is a form of radiotherapy where the radiation source is applied directly to the surface of the tumour, as pictured below. Depending on the location of the tumour, this may be performed under heavy standing



sedation or via general anaesthesia. Only a few specialist institutions have access to Strontium-90, and the AHT's Cancer Centre is one such centre of excellence. Dr Hollis will be observing the effectiveness of this treatment and sharing her findings and best practice with the wider veterinary profession for the benefit of horses and ponies.

### Leading the way for 75 years

We are very proud to be the leading veterinary and scientific research charity dedicated to the health and welfare of your animals, and since 1942 we have led the way in preventing disease and injury.

Simply put, without the AHT, more animals would be sick, suffer and die

prematurely. Every penny of profit we make treating animals is re-invested to improve the health and wellbeing of countless more.

**Our timeline overleaf highlights some of our greatest achievements over the past 75 years...**





**1942**

Reginald Wooldridge, President of the National Veterinary Medical Association (now the British Veterinary Association), forms the Veterinary Educational Trust, which later becomes known as the Animal Health Trust.



**1959**

Her Majesty The Queen becomes Patron of the AHT



**1972**

Champion racehorse, Mill Reef, is saved for stallion duties after operations are carried out on his shattered cannon bone and fetlock by AHT surgeons. Mill Reef enjoyed a very successful stud career until he died in 1986 and was buried at the National Stud.



**1992**

The AHT opens an MRI scanner unit and pioneers the use of the technology in veterinary medicine, especially in the diagnosis and management of problems with the brain and nervous system.

# AHT's Greatest Achievements

**1957**

Brian Singleton, of the AHT's Canine Research Centre, teams up with two other vets to create the British Small Animal Veterinary Association with the aim of advancing veterinary knowledge in small animals.



**1965**

160 foals are protected from an outbreak of equine flu with serum produced by the AHT's Equine Research Station.



**1991**

HRH The Princess Royal becomes President of the AHT



**1996**

The AHT's Small Animal Centre is opened. Since, tens of thousands of animals have been helped with a wide variety of life-threatening, complex and often long-term conditions.





## 2002

Working with groups in the USA and France, AHT scientists publish the most comprehensive genetic map of the dog currently available.



## 2011

With the Kennel Club, the AHT launches Mate Select – an online tool which helps dog breeders make well-informed breeding decisions in order to reduce inherited health problems across all breeds of dog.



## 2012

AHT vets advise the London Organising Committee on the design and maintenance of the 2012 Olympic equestrian arenas, playing a significant role in keeping the horses in the best of health.

*Celebrating some of our milestones from the last 75 years....*

## 2008

The AHT develops and launches a new diagnostic test for Strangles, the most commonly diagnosed infectious disease in horses worldwide. Since its launch, we have tested more than 80,000 samples



## 2012

The AHT opens a purpose-built state-of-the-art Cancer Centre offering radiotherapy to horses, dogs and cats with cancer, which complements our existing cancer treatment options of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.



## 2016

We launch Give a Dog a Genome, supported by the Kennel Club, to create the UK's largest canine genome bank containing DNA from 75 different breeds. This will help scientists to find disease mutations - and develop new DNA tests - faster.



### Puppy Awareness Week

**During Puppy Awareness Week in September the Kennel Club released worrying statistics that show people typically spend more time choosing a new pair of shoes or doing their supermarket shop than researching where to get a puppy.**

One in five people questioned admitted they had spent no time researching where to get their puppy from at all, and thought they had inadvertently bought from a puppy farm. This could have devastating consequences as pups are more likely to get ill and their owners suffer financial and emotional hardship.

### AHT Research

At the AHT, our team of researchers works hard to investigate genetic health problems in dogs and create DNA tests to help limit the number of puppies born with a known inherited disease.

Health tests, including DNA tests, can also apply to crossbreeds as well as purebred dogs, especially if the parent breeds share any of the same diseases - so don't be fooled into thinking crossbreeds don't need health testing.

Doing your research could make a big difference to your dog's health, and your experience as a dog owner. Good breeders will care about the health of the puppies they are breeding and will have engaged in all the health testing that is relevant to their breed(s).



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Health tests include clinical tests which are performed by vets, such as eye examinations, X-rays of the joints and hearing tests, as well as genetic tests which require a sample of DNA to be tested in a laboratory.

**Our researchers have discovered more than 20 disease-causing mutations in the dog and used this research to develop DNA tests for nearly 50 different breeds.**

These tests help breeders to reduce the number of dogs genetically affected by a wide range of inherited diseases, such as serious neurological or blinding conditions and therefore help prevent illness in countless dogs.

Through DNA health testing, we hope that over time the prevalence of genetic diseases will be greatly reduced, and even eradicated from a breed.

For more information about our research and available tests go to: [www.aht.org.uk/genetics](http://www.aht.org.uk/genetics)

### Funding from Vets4Pets

**Our Canine Genetics research team has been given a boost after it received significant funding to support its work.**

The funding, from Vets4Pets, will enable the team to recruit another research assistant to help increase the already lifesaving work they do for purebred dogs within the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust.



Cathryn Mellersh

"We're absolutely delighted to receive this research funding and we are very excited to be able to add another member to our research group," said Dr Cathryn Mellersh, who heads up the Canine Genetics team.

Dr Huw Stacey, Director of Clinical Services at Vets4Pets, said: "The AHT's Canine Genetics research team does a fantastic job in helping us better understand, treat and prevent inherited diseases in dogs. We don't see this as a one-year relationship, but one that can be built on over time to support and improve the health and welfare of dogs.

"As a group pet welfare and responsible pet ownership are our primary concerns and it's fantastic to be able to play a small part in this invaluable research."

### 8,000 puppies tested!

Health testing is such an important part of getting a new puppy - do your research and ask potential breeders which of the required and/or recommended health tests they have done and ask to see the certificates. It's important to know your stuff and ask breeders lots of questions before buying a puppy.



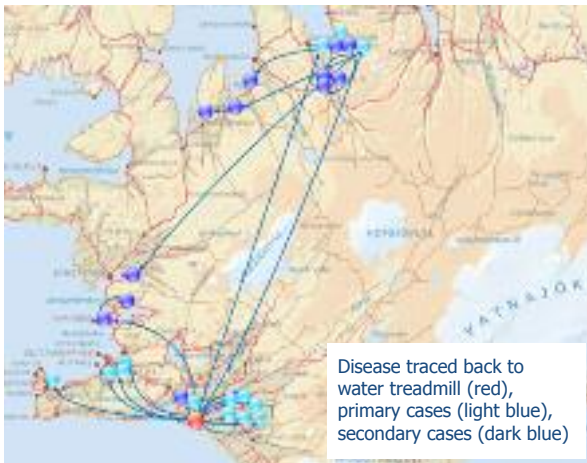
We've been offering BAER hearing tests for breeds which may be more likely to be born deaf since 1992 - and since then we have tested over **8,000 Dalmatian puppies** alone! We're especially pleased that the BAER hearing test was recently upgraded from recommended to required for Kennel Club Assured Breeders of Dalmatians. For more info on BAER hearing tests, please visit our website.

**All breeds vary, but information about health testing is available in the Breed Information Centre of the The Kennel Club website. You can find out what a breed is like and, under Breeding Restrictions, you can see which health tests are applicable.**

## AHT helps to solve mystery epidemic that crossed species in Iceland

Iceland suffered a nationwide epidemic of a mysterious respiratory disease in 2010. Affecting a population of 77,000 horses, the disease spread rapidly and caused significant economic cost to the country. Iceland is free of all major equine infectious diseases thanks to the ban on importing horses into the country in 1882. Enjoying a relatively disease-free environment for the last 1,000 years, the Icelandic horses are particularly susceptible to any new bacteria or virus that crosses the border, and so strict biosecurity regulations are in place to help protect them.

Unfortunately, a mystery bug did manage to enter the country in 2010 and it wasted no time in taking advantage of the vulnerable horse population, spreading across the country within weeks. **Not only did the disease affect horses, but dogs, cats and humans also fell ill.**



**“This particular strain was able to cross species boundaries, jumping from a coughing horse to a person.”**

Dr Andrew Waller, AHT Head of Bacteriology

The AHT and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute (WTSI) were brought in to investigate bacteria recovered from horses, humans, dogs and cats throughout Iceland. Dr Simon Harris from the WTSI explains; “To identify the culprit, we sequenced the DNA from 257 samples of bacteria in diseased animals. This showed that one specific strain of *Streptococcus zooepidemicus*, was likely to be the guilty bacteria.

The journey of the bug was retraced back to an equine rehabilitation centre where horses were exercised in a communal water treadmill.



The water is thought to have provided the perfect breeding ground for the disease; allowing the bug to be easily transmitted to the next animal if water was ingested.

"There are a couple of theories as to how the disease entered Iceland in the first place" reports Dr Andrew Waller. "The offending pathogen is able to survive outside a horse for a week or so, which means the import of contaminated equipment or clothing could have transmitted the disease to horses in Iceland. However, this particular strain may have even travelled to Iceland in a person, before transferring back to a horse

and sweeping nationwide. This investigation not only highlights the importance of biosecurity in protecting and preventing spread amongst animals, but to humans too" continues Dr Waller. "This particular strain was able to cross species boundaries, jumping from a coughing horse to a person. We are pleased to have helped uncover the identity of this mystery disease and we hope that raising awareness of the cause of this epidemic will encourage people to improve disease control precautions worldwide."

Find out more about our infectious disease work at

[www.aht.org.uk/research](http://www.aht.org.uk/research)

### Lightening the load for horses

There is an apparent growing problem of riders who are oversized for their horses. It has become a hot topic within horse circles and has thankfully drawn attention to the welfare risk to horses, which the AHT seeks to help resolve.

Riders who are too heavy for their horse or pony can cause chronic back pain and lameness, as well as giving the horse a negative association to being ridden as they pre-empt pain. There is therefore an urgent need to start to provide some evidence-based guidelines to the equine industry as to what constitutes excessive rider size, under different circumstances.

The study does not query what size or weight a rider should be, but will investigate the effect of different rider to horse weight ratios. This will

enable vets, owners and trainers to determine an appropriately sized partnership. No one wants to see a horse caused discomfort or pain, so this is a step towards a practical solution to an increasing problem.

**For further information about this study please visit our website and search 'load'.**



### Cycling to success

**The AHT was represented in one of the UK's biggest cycling events of the year, with 14 riders - including six staff members - taking on the 2012 Olympic cycling route in the Prudential RideLondon Surrey 100 challenge, all to raise vital funds in our 75th anniversary year.**

fellow rider along the way who had a dog treated at the AHT and was impressed by the challenge we had set ourselves. He went on to sponsor me when he got home, which was incredibly thoughtful of him and means a lot."

"I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has supported us as



£400,000 in total is needed to upgrade the AHT's current MRI machine. Over £87,000 has now been raised through this challenge and we are well over halfway towards upgrading the MRI machine.

Dr Mark Vaudin, CEO of the AHT, said: "There was an amazing atmosphere and I'm so proud that every one of our riders made it safely to the finish line. It was a long seven hours in the saddle for me but I was cheered to meet a

well as an additional thank you to the official AHT RideLondon kit sponsors: Agria Pet Insurance, South Essex Insurance Brokers (SEIB), Taylor Vinters, Taylor Keeble, FRS Roofing and RSM whose generous donations funded the team's eye-catching kit."

To make a donation to the MRI Appeal please either fill in the donation form enclosed or visit:

[www.aht.org.uk/MRI\\_Appeal](http://www.aht.org.uk/MRI_Appeal)

### Captain Jack Sparrow

“Captain Jack’s Charity Fundraising was inspired by Sparrow, our incredibly special young Collie who struggled with epilepsy for two years before we sadly had to say goodbye. Sparrow had such a happy character who through the hardest times still managed to make us smile.”

**Lucie Corrie-Hinchley**

A big ‘thank you’ to Lucie and all those involved for their amazing fundraising efforts over the last five years. They have exceeded their £15,000 target reaching an incredible £15,833!



Sparrow was treated by neurology specialists at the AHT and so Lucie wanted to raise funds for our research into Border Collie epilepsy in his memory.

For more information on our epilepsy research visit:

[www.aht.org.uk/epilepsy](http://www.aht.org.uk/epilepsy)

### Gundogs at Charlton Park

This year we were thrilled to be nominated as the benefiting charity of the Gundogs Working Test under KC rules at Charlton Park on the 11 June.

An incredible £740 was raised and prizes were awarded by Lady Suffolk. We would like to thank all those who supported us on the day. Our thanks also go to Tricia Honour for her beautiful photography of the event.



### My Midlife Marathon!

**In 2013, Earl, our then ten-year-old Border Terrier, was diagnosed by our family vet with cataracts to both eyes after we noticed him becoming more and more withdrawn every day; Earl was completely blind.**

Earl was losing weight and losing confidence, he no longer wanted to venture outside, and no longer enjoyed his favourite spot in his bean bag which overlooked our back garden.

Thankfully, the Ophthalmology Team at the Animal Health Trust successfully operated on Earl, and gave him a new lease of life. The AHT took such great care of Earl, treating him like a member of their family, and were there to support us 24-7. I am fundraising for the AHT to give something back in return.

2017 is a special year for the AHT as they are celebrating 75 years of leading science and care for animals.



Nikki and Earl

Earlier this year, Earl and I were invited along as VIP guests to their anniversary event. Whilst Earl, who looked very dapper in his bow tie, helped to cut the cake, I went behind the scenes to witness first-hand the fantastic work carried out by the charity; it was both very moving and inspiring.

On 22nd April 2018, I will be running the London Marathon to raise money for the AHT. My Midlife Marathon [www.mymidlifemarathon.com](http://www.mymidlifemarathon.com) is a place for me to share my journey to the start line, and to raise awareness and funds for the AHT.

Sadly on 31st May 2017, we had to say goodbye to Earl after a sudden illness. We are devastated to have lost our little man, and miss him so much. Earl is the very reason that I am fundraising for the AHT and completing the marathon next year is now more poignant than ever, I will be crossing that finish line for Earl, and for every other animal that may benefit from the fantastic work carried out by the Animal Health Trust.

Nikki Stebbing



Earl at our Small Animal Centre ready for his check-up!



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**Nikki's Border Terrier, Red and Jack  
Russell, George getting ready for winter!**  
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Our thanks go to Nikki who is one of our truly fantastic fundraisers!

She is not only running the London Marathon 2018 in aid of the AHT but has already completed Run Norwich 10km and in the Nicholsons Lowestoft half marathon! She has even set up her own online shop to boost the fundraising! Go Nikki!

To support Nikki visit:

[www.mymidlifemarathon.com](http://www.mymidlifemarathon.com)

If you have a ballot place for the London Marathon 2018 and would like to fundraise for the AHT, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at [events@aht.org.uk](mailto:events@aht.org.uk)



## Robert's Charity Dog Walk

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**"Brownie is very special to me. He has helped me through some very difficult times and is always there for me. We have had lots of fun together at different dog events, as well as just messing around at home!"**  
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Here's proof that you're never too young to do something amazing... Robert is only 12 years old and organised a charity dog walk in the Suffolk countryside to raise money for the AHT and St Elizabeth Hospice.

Robert met the AHT at Crufts last year, where he had qualified for the Young Kennel Club handling finals with his Flatcoated Retriever, Brownie, who was bred by Robert's family. Robert was quite taken with our geneticists and how their research aims to help breeders like Robert's mum and dad to breed healthier puppies, and decided to raise money for our vital work. Sadly,

Robert lost his uncle five years ago to cancer, so he also chose to support the hospice who cared for his uncle.

Robert raised over £1,000 with donations still coming in. Well done Robert - we think you are an inspiration to all young fundraisers!

**If you would like to get involved by organising a fundraising event or by having one of our charity merchandise trays please contact us on 01638 555648**



### Riding for Jasper

**Following the loss of our 13 year old Cocker Spaniel, Jasper, last year from pancreatic cancer I wanted to use my passion for road cycling to help raise money for canine cancer.**

Despite having done several tough challenges over the last couple of years, the challenge I chose to ride for the AHT was my toughest yet - the iconic Dragon Ride - cycling 230km with 3,600m of climbing in South Wales. I rode it in memory of our beloved Jasper who gave us 13 years of pure pleasure and loyalty.

The last few weeks of Jasper's life were extremely difficult, and following surgery to remove the cancer we took the heartbreaking decision seven days later to put Jasper to sleep.



I have this unbearable feeling of guilt that I let Jasper down by putting

him through an operation at such an old age. The challenge pushed me to my limits to say a huge sorry to our Jazzy B, and raise just over £600 to support the AHT's cancer research.

Lewis Blood

### 75 Pet Portrait Challenge

Another fundraiser, Nia Corbett, wanted to celebrate our 75th anniversary and thank us for getting their three year old Labrador, Wilson, back on his feet again through hydrotherapy treatment.

Pet photo sessions worth £175 were offered free of charge by Nia & James Photographers in exchange for a £20 donation to the AHT. More than £1,600 was raised to help us help more pets like Wilson.



*Huge thanks go to all our amazing fundraisers!*

# Contact details



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www.facebook.com/animalhealthtrust

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## Keeping in touch

Your support saves animals' lives and we'd love to keep you updated with our news, activities and appeals.

Your details will only be used by the Animal Health Trust and we will never give your information to other organisations to use for their own purposes.

You are free to change your mind at any time by contacting us by post, email or phone.

### Post



Please tick the box if you would like to receive AHT newsletters, appeals and updates

### Email



Please tick the box if you would like to receive our email updates

### Third Party



The Animal Health Trust does **NOT** sell or swap your data with third parties

