



Animal *Health* Trust

NEWS

Leading science and care for animals

**YOUR CHANCE TO WIN UP
TO £25,000 AND SUPPORT
THE WORK OF THE AHT**



Animal *Health* Trust

CHARITY
Lottery



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Help more animals by joining our new lottery!

How it works

The draw takes place every Saturday and each entry costs just £1. When you join the lottery you're allocated your own six-digit Unity lottery number. A random winning number is drawn - the aim is to match the winning number.

What are the prizes?

If you match...

- Three numbers you win five more entries in the next draw
- Four numbers you win £25
- Five numbers you win £1,000
- Six numbers you win £25,000

These prizes are won every week, and you will automatically be notified by Unity if you win.

Do you have a white cat that is deaf?

We want to understand more about why some cats are born deaf, especially completely white cats, and the prevalence of this in different breeds.

We are offering free BAER hearing tests to litters of kittens where one of the litter is fully white, and have extended this research to apply to non-pedigree cats, too. We are particularly keen to see litters of British Shorthair, Norwegian Forest, Maine Coon, Russian, Turkish Van and Vankedisi, Devon Rex, Sphynx and Persian. Kittens must be between nine and 15 weeks old to take part in the study.



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Where does the prize money come from?

Unity, our charity lottery partners, are responsible for paying out prizes. We are guaranteed to receive a minimum of 50p in every £1 played for the Animal Health Trust.

unity

Sign up!

Visit www.aht.org.uk/lottery where you can either sign up online or download a form to fill in. **If you sign up between 15 April - 15 May 2018 you have a chance of winning a Marks & Spencers voucher worth £50!**



The test is completely safe and the kittens do not need to be sedated. The owner remains with the kittens throughout, and each kitten will receive an official certificate.

If you think you could help this research, please get in touch by emailing: julia.freeman@aht.org.uk

www.aht.org.uk

Meet Matthew - our first ever dedicated Physiotherapist

We are delighted to have Veterinary Physiotherapist, Matthew Scott, as one of our team in the Small Animal Centre.



Matthew graduated from Harper Adams University with a BSc (Hons) degree in Veterinary Physiotherapy after four years of study, including a six month work placement at an equine rehabilitation yard in Warwickshire and a six month work placement at the RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals.

It was during his time at the RVC that he discovered his passion for using physiotherapy in the rehabilitation of pets with neurological and orthopaedic conditions within a referral hospital setting.

Now, as a graduate member of the National Association of Veterinary Physiotherapists and working at the AHT, he is keen to pursue this further. Our enhanced physiotherapist service will provide patients with a range of treatment options, including:

- Manual therapies such as massage, range of motion (ROM), stretching and fascia release.
- Electrotherapies such as transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) and pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) therapy.
- A range of different remedial exercises, compiled into a plan that is tailored specifically to a particular patient and designed to help them improve their function and quality of life.



Physiotherapy can help patients suffering from a variety of neurological and orthopaedic conditions, hospitalised surgical and non-surgical patients, as well as those suffering from osteoarthritis. It can also provide performance enhancement for athletic and working dogs.

Matthew will also be working closely with our well established hydrotherapy team and their award winning facilities, to ensure we can give every patient the best possible rehabilitation and care.

Calling all Labrador owners! Can you help our cancer research?

Our scientists are studying genetic risk factors that predispose some Labrador Retrievers to mast cell tumours, the most common form of skin cancer in dogs. In order to continue these studies, we need specific samples from affected dogs, very early on in their treatment.

We know this is a very sensitive time for any dog owner so we would not ask unless it was crucial to our research.

In order to study these tumours effectively, and help dogs to fight this cancer in the future, we need a mast cell tumour biopsy, as well as a DNA sample (in the form of a cheek swab)

from affected dogs shortly after they are diagnosed.

The biopsy would be collected by your vet as part of your dog's standard treatment - we would never ask for an unnecessary operation to be carried out.

We would then need your vet to send the biopsy sample to us, following specific instructions which we would provide to your vet before the surgery. This is to make sure that we will be able to use the biopsy in our research.

If you would like to help us fight this cancer, thank you. Please email: oncologyres@aht.org.uk or call: **01638 751000 ext. 1214** - before talking to your vet - so that we can make sure your dog will be able to help this project and can provide you with all the necessary information.



Vets4Pets DNA Research Assistant at the AHT

Hattie Wright, from Cambridge, is the newest member of the Animal Health Trust's canine genetics research group. Hattie has joined the AHT in a newly-created position, generously funded by the Vets4Pets Group.

Hattie has a degree in Zoology from the University of Reading and a Masters in Veterinary Science from the University of Cambridge, where Hattie spent a year researching the candidate genes for brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome (BOAS) in Pugs, French Bulldogs and Bulldogs, as well as the facial morphology of these breeds. Hattie is passionate about animal welfare and veterinary science, and research which aims to improve the health of dogs.



known to suffer from painful and debilitating slipped discs. With Hattie's help, it is hoped the AHT will be able to speed up its genetic investigations, resulting in more DNA health tests which breeders can use to select the best mate for their dog, in order to breed healthy, happy puppies free from known inherited diseases.

Hattie said: **"I found researching breathing difficulties in brachycephalic breeds during my Masters to be really interesting and rewarding, and I'm very excited to be able to join the AHT team to start working on a wider range of diseases affecting dogs."**



This role will support all of the AHT's canine genetics research, with a primary focus on lens luxation in various breeds of dog and intervertebral disc degeneration (IVDD) in Dachshunds, which are

"I've always loved dogs, although I don't currently have a dog I grew up with a mad but completely lovable English Springer Spaniel. I currently have two house rabbits and am hoping to get a dog of my own one day."

Poppy's story

Poppy is a beautiful four and a half year old, tri-coloured Beagle. She has the typical Beagle traits of being cheeky, clever, loving and hungry! She has been known to pinch an ice bun out of her Grandad's hands and even gate crash a BBQ whilst on a walk! She likes nothing more than to pinch a sock, tissue or tea towel. Life is never dull when she is around!



Sadly for Poppy, she hasn't always been this bright and bouncy bundle of energy. She has been seriously ill twice, needing the AHT's clinical expertise on both occasions.

In 2014, when Poppy was just eight months old, she became seriously ill and was referred to the AHT. Dr Luisa De Risio, our Head of Neurology, saw Poppy and diagnosed her with steroid responsive meningitis/arthritis (SRMA). Poppy spent three days at the AHT for treatment and observation before she was well enough to go home. Since then, Poppy has been on life-long medication for her SRMA, a

neurological disease which appears to be more common in certain breeds, such as Beagles. Research is being undertaken at the AHT to try and understand why this is, however SRMA is a very complex disease to research.

In January of this year, Poppy was referred to the AHT for the second time after suffering severe cluster seizures. Poppy had the seizures over three days. Her vets tried everything they could but when they couldn't get the seizures under control, the only thing left to do was to seek the help of a veterinary neurologist.

Poppy's owners, Adrian and Ashley Howes, said: **"For us, there was only one place to go when Poppy needed to see a specialist. Elena Scarpante and her team at the AHT looked after Poppy during what was a really scary time for both Poppy and us. We brought her home with a bag full of medicines and lots of new information to take in. We are slowly getting used to Poppy's new medicine regime and glad to say she is getting back to her cheeky self!"**





“Beagles are known for being hungry; we now have a hungry Beagle on two types of medication which have the side effect of making her hungry! Sometime after her SRMA diagnosis we were advised that Poppy needed to lose weight. She successfully managed to lose 5kg - and we’re determined for it not to all go back on now. Poppy is our first dog and loved totally. We can never thank the AHT teams enough for the loving, expert care they have given her over the years.”

Poppy was diagnosed with idiopathic epilepsy, which is most likely an inherited disorder. With treatment, we hope she will have a normal and happy life. To reach this diagnosis

we had to exclude other potential causes of her seizures: Poppy needed multiple blood tests, an MRI scan of her brain and we had to analyse her cerebrospinal fluid (known as a spinal tap). Because these tests didn’t show anything remarkable, we have been able to rule out other causes and started Poppy on treatment for idiopathic epilepsy.

Elena said: “Poppy is a lovely dog and always a pleasure to care for. She has responded very well to treatment so far and I really hope she will keep doing so for many years. Despite requiring daily medication and regular check-ups, thanks to her positive energy and her owner’s commitment, I am sure she has a long, happy and exciting life ahead of her.”

Changing the face of equine medicine

We are celebrating the anniversary of one of our long-standing members of staff, Dr Sue Dyson, with the release of the latest results of her eagerly awaited facial expressions and behaviour study.

As Head of Clinical Orthopaedics at the AHT, Sue has dedicated 35 years to treating hundreds of patients each year in the clinic, as well as advancing the knowledge and techniques in equine medicine through her pioneering research. Sue's aim is always to improve a horse's quality of life, whether that be returning to their previous level of competition, or being able to live pain-free.

Sue continues to change the face of equine medicine and is currently creating a method by which owners, trainers and equine professionals can recognise pain in their horses when



they are ridden by assessment of facial expression and behaviour.

This study evolved from Sue's extensive clinical work, recognising that too often poor performance has been labelled as 'naughty' behaviour or training problems, rather than pain. As a result, cases are referred to her too late when injuries have become chronic, so problems are well developed and the opportunity for recovery is compromised. **The third of four stages in this project has been completed; developing a visual aid for identifying pain and/or lameness by assessing the horse as a whole**, building on the success of facial expressions being a proven indicator. In addition to facial expressions, behavioural markers of pain included head tossing, unwillingness to go forwards, hurrying, toe dragging, crookedness, changing gaits spontaneously, and stumbling.

Being able to detect pain as early as possible using this visual guide and scoring system enables quick reactions, so that whatever is causing the horse pain (tack or injury) can be rectified, which greatly increases the horse's chances of a successful outcome.

Sue continues to investigate equine health and welfare, sharing her knowledge with the equine industry and owners to put into practice. "Our clinical cases are integral to our research. Without them and the willingness of their owners to contribute their data to our research projects, we would not be able to



advance veterinary techniques as comprehensively as we do now. At the AHT we have developed a cycle, whereby our clinical patients feed into our research, and in turn our research results are fed back into the industry to develop veterinary and owner knowledge to support the care of horses worldwide.”

For more information on Sue’s and the AHT’s extensive equine research visit: www.aht.org.uk/horses

Breakthrough in Strangles research

Newly published research shows how scientists have moved a step closer to developing a vaccine to protect horses from Strangles.

World-leading scientists from the AHT, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the Karolinska Institute and Intervacc AB, have developed a new protein-based vaccine to protect horses from Strangles. Strangles is caused by a bacteria called *Streptococcus equi*, which causes horses to suffer from large pus-filled abscesses in their throat and neck.

With an estimated 600 outbreaks of Strangles each year in the UK alone, the development of the new vaccine will have tremendous benefits to the health of horses around the world.

“Strangvac is an extremely exciting vaccine” explains Dr. Andrew Waller,

Head of Bacteriology at the AHT. “The vaccine was designed using information from sequencing the DNA of *Streptococcus equi* and highlights the potential that the genome-era heralds for improving the health of animals and people. Improving the health of horses is a core aim of the AHT and we are proud to have helped make this vaccine a reality towards finally breaking the hold this disease currently has on our horses.”

It is anticipated that Strangvac will be available for use during 2020.



60 seconds with...

...Jan van Dijk, Head of Epidemiology Research

How long have you been at the AHT?

I have been here for six months, but I already feel firmly embedded in the Trust. I feel lucky to have landed at our beautiful site in Newmarket and within our great Epidemiology and Surveillance team.

I am Dutch and qualified as a vet in Holland but I have spent all of my working career in the UK. Before moving to the AHT, I was teaching Liverpool undergraduate vet students how to monitor performance and diseases in farm animal populations. I did a PhD on the effect of climate change on parasites at Bristol University and worked in disease surveillance at DEFRA. I started off working in a mixed (mainly small animal and some equine) practice, moving on to ruminant practice.

Why do you do what you do?

As the above may suggest, I think it is important to keep feeling you are learning and developing in your job. Having worked with farm animals for a long time, it is great to be given the opportunity to study the epidemiology of diseases in small animal and horse populations, which are built up and linked together very differently. The strategies infectious

organisms adopt to survive in host populations fascinate me, so the AHT's strengths in infectious disease research and surveillance drew me in. But what I perhaps enjoy most in my new job is hearing about the research carried out by my colleagues and supporting the design and analysis of their studies.



What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I very much enjoy the company of my two sons, Felix (13) & Ruben (11) and getting involved in their activities – which they increasingly don't want me to do anymore! I enjoy most activities involving getting out and about on two wheels, especially motorcycling and mountain biking. In fact I have just purchased a road bike and urgently need to start training for the 100-mile 'Ride London' race! I am taking part to raise vital funds for the AHT!

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Ride London 2018

Prudential Ride London is the UK's biggest cycling event and takes riders through London and up the beautiful Surrey hills on the route made famous at the London 2012 Olympics.

This event is an important fundraiser for us and gives our supporters a

great opportunity to take on an amazing challenge and raise funds for the AHT at the same time.

We ask our cyclists to pledge to raise £500 in return for one of our Golden Bond places, so if you're up to the challenge, download an application form at: www.aht.org.uk/ridelondon

In memory of Dizzie

We were thrilled to receive this cheque for £2,614 in January from the lovely Sarah Mallett and Wendy Lee who have been raising money for the AHT in memory of Sarah's dog, Dizzie, who was treated at the AHT for meningitis over several years and sadly passed away last year.

Dizzie had become a regular patient of ours, well-known to all the staff (especially the receptionists!) as she often needed monthly treatments and regular check-ups. Dizzie and Sarah always received a warm welcome and Dizzie was never nervous about coming to the AHT. Below, Sarah is holding a canvas photo of her beloved



Sarah's customers and the local community coming together to raise funds for the AHT.

Dizzie, which is now proudly on display in our reception as a reminder of such a well-tempered dog who is sadly missed.

Sarah has asked for the donation to go towards our new MRI machine, as Dizzie had several MRIs during the course of her treatment. Most of the fundraising centred around activity in Sarah's pet shop and hydrotherapy centre, Katie's K9 Therapy Centre in Rochford, Essex, culminating in a special fundraising event and superb raffle. Sarah and Wendy have now got the fundraising bug and have plans to organise another event in the local community in the summer, and we wish them lots of luck with their fundraising in 2018!



Dr Luisa De Risio, our Head of Neurology, who helped to treat Dizzie over the years, is proudly holding the cheque which Sarah and her friend and co-worker Wendy (right, with Badger, a younger brother of Dizzie's) raised through a series of events. Next to Sarah is one of her other dogs, Indie.

SEIB Insurance support the AHT

SEIB (South Essex Insurance Brokers) have been providing specialist insurance services since 1963 and have supported the AHT for many years.

SEIB are specialists in many sectors and can insure your car, business, and if you have them, horses, horse boxes and stables!

If you transfer your household insurance to SEIB you could receive £5,000 extra cover for damage to your contents by your own domestic pets. In addition the AHT will receive a donation so everyone is a winner!

To receive a no obligation quotation and benefit yourself and the AHT, call SEIB on **0345 612 7474** or visit www.seib.co.uk

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INSURANCE BROKERS.

Over 50 years of excellent service



Pennies for Penny

I'm fundraising in memory of my best friend Penny, a beautiful labradoodle.

She was diagnosed with Lymphoma in November 2015 at the young age of five. She underwent chemotherapy for about 16 months (she did have a remission period in this time) which gave her a great quality of life. Penny was an amazing dog and baffled her vet by being full of life and energy, as if she didn't have the disease, despite the lumps still being very prominent.

Penny's treatments at the referral centre were very expensive and we quickly ran out of her insurance. After using all our savings I was worried that we wouldn't be able to afford her treatments, and I had to let her have them as she was still herself, full of life, the chemo was keeping her, her happy self! So I raised money online to put aside for when her insurance and our savings ran out. I raised £700 which is roughly the cost of one treatment. Unfortunately, I didn't need to use the money I'd raised



Delphi with her beloved Penny

because Penny became unresponsive to the treatment and I lost her on the 3 April 2017.

I am still heart broken, as Penny is my best friend. But the money raised needed to go to a good cause in Penny's honour. I am so pleased to have found the Animal Health Trust as a beneficiary charity for Penny who will use the funds raised to go towards their cancer research work.

Delphi McWilliam

How you can get involved and help support the AHT!

Become a Friend of the AHT by giving just £3 a month

Hold a collection box or charity tray at your office or business

Organise your own event such as a Coffee Morning or Pub Quiz

Join our weekly lottery with a chance of winning £25,000!

Take on a personal challenge while raising funds at the same time!

Leave a lasting legacy and remember the AHT in your Will

For more information please visit our website or get in touch using the contact details on the back page

My best friend Paddy

Unfortunately the best part of me, my lovely Labrador Paddy passed away from the effects of his haemangiosarcoma. He was two weeks short of his 12th birthday. Back in the spring last year our vet gave Paddy two weeks to live. At this point we decided to make this his best two weeks of his life doing all the fun things he loved.

So we went to St. Andrews beach where he loved to play and swim. We took him to Keswick in the Lake District for a few days, his favourite place in the world where he swam, swam, swam. He even managed to make it to County Donegal in Ireland, where he toured the Wild Atlantic Way and again swam.

Paddy passed away five months after being given only two weeks. He was a real fighter, I'm proud and honoured to have known him. I miss him dearly and I will never be whole without him.

I decided to run the Edinburgh 10k Men's Health for the AHT's cancer research work. I had never run before so it was a big challenge but I made it to the finish line and raised £650!

Malcolm Daghish



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With your support our Cancer Research Group can carry out research which will help vets to better diagnose, treat and cure more dogs and cats in the future. We hope that by identifying the underlying causes of cancer, it will be possible to reduce the numbers of animals that suffer from these diseases.

Find out more at:

www.aht.org.uk/cancer

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Mr Treacle

This year, I am giving up alcohol for the entire duration of 2018. Although it may not seem like a big challenge to undertake for some, I've historically not dealt with stress or grief very well, often turning to drink.

I've lost my best friend, and my first ever pet. So I intend to give up alcohol for the year to do both Treacle justice as well as myself. As a result, I'm hoping that those touched by Treacle's story will donate to this cause. For every time I would have gone out

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or stayed in to have a drink I'll be donating money to the AHT.

Mr. Treacle wasn't really a cat at all, he was my best friend. He did things like follow me to houses when I'd babysit - waiting on the step for me all night just to walk me home, race me down the stairs, lay in the middle of our kitchen floor whilst the roast was cooking just waiting for a sniff of chicken! He'd even walk me to and from my greenhouse every day, sitting patiently whilst I watered all of the plants, just so he could walk me back to the house again. I'd had him for the best ten years of my life.

Treacle was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer in mid December 2017 and

died a few days later on Christmas Eve. We were all devastated. It happened so fast, and there were no tell-tale signs at all, until just a few days before he departed.

I began looking in to UK based charities that fund research in to feline cancer and the AHT popped up. I'd never heard of them before, but I was blown away by their commitment, and decided to fundraise for them.

Everyone was so incredibly warm and genuine, and I've loved sharing stories about him. I am going to do all I can to raise money for something that will really make a difference to cats like Treacle.

Frances Emerton



Contact details



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01638 555648



fundraising@aht.org.uk



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www.aht.org.uk



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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.

If you don't currently receive updates on our work but would like to, please contact us using the details above and we can sign you up.

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

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

Registered charity number: 209642

