

Animal *Health* Trust **News**



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Top treatment for Little Big Foot!

The Animal Health Trust in Newmarket is recognised as a veterinary referral centre for cats, dogs and horses. Visitors were therefore somewhat surprised on a grey January day when a one-year-old Wallaby arrived for treatment!

Little Big Foot, as he has been christened by his carers at Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital, was found in the pouch of an adult female Wallaby which was brought in by their rescue team. Unfortunately, the mother had contracted chronic mandibular osteomyelitis (commonly known as lumpy jaw) and, despite intensive veterinary care, she did not survive.

Thanks to a dedicated nursing team, and a committed foster mother, Little Big Foot developed into a healthy young Wallaby. It was particularly sad, therefore, that his sight subsequently became severely impaired and, on examination, he was found to have cataracts in both eyes.

At this point, the Animal Health Trust was contacted as world leaders in veterinary ophthalmology. Following an initial consultation, Jane Sansom, the Trust's Head of Ophthalmology, performed surgery to remove the cataracts from both eyes. This was done using a technique known as 'phacoemulsification' which involves breaking the cataracts into tiny pieces which are then sucked out. Jane said "It's quite a common operation, we do it all the time on cats and dogs. Performing the operation on a Wallaby is very unusual but not unique."

Following this procedure the patient returned to Tiggywinkles, near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, and is doing very well. It is hoped that much of Little Big Foot's vision will have been restored although it may be some time before this can be fully assessed. However, it has been reported that he has definitely seen one of Tiggywinkles cats!

Little Big Foot – limbs swathed in bandages to prevent scratching.



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Spotlight on...Alison Hayes BVMS MSc (Clin Onc) CertVR

Alison graduated in veterinary medicine from Glasgow University in 1991 and spent 5 years in general practice in the north of England. In 1996 she joined the AHT as our first oncology (cancer) resident, sponsored by the Blue Cross, and has been with us ever since!

The oncology unit works very closely with other teams at the Trust including diagnostic imaging (x-ray, ultrasound, MRI scanning, scintigraphy), anaesthesia, surgery, internal medicine, pathology, haematology and neurology to be able to provide an accurate prognosis and offer realistic options in the form of a treatment plan for each patient.

"Cancer is a descriptive term, not a diagnosis, and covers hundreds of different diseases, each with its own unique prognosis and treatment and, surprisingly to many people, it is the most curable chronic disease in dogs and cats. Of course, in some cases the cancer is not cured but it can often be managed very successfully for long periods of time through chemotherapy and radiotherapy," says Alison.



The AHT's oncology unit is exceptionally busy throughout the year and it is clearly not a discipline which can have a long waiting list. *"Our oncology unit sees over 500 cases of cancer per year! Although the team is always busy, continuity of client care is very important to us and, once a case has been referred, we encourage owners to call us, even for what may seem like minor worries. We know how difficult it is for both pet and owner. Although an empathetic approach is vital, animal welfare must come first and all of us in the oncology team must remain professional and keep the best interests of the animals at the centre of all decisions that are made. It is very upsetting to lose patients to cancer but it is an inevitable part of the job. However, we couldn't do our job by remaining too remote from the case – it's a journey that you make with the owner and their pet"*.

Alison's research interests include feline oral tumours, mast cell disease, chemotherapy and the human animal bond. This research is carried out here in the UK often in collaboration with other institutions but presentations are given in many different countries so that vets worldwide can benefit from the expertise that has been developed at the AHT and the knowledge that our special case load can bring to improving cancer care for animals everywhere.

Cancer care continues!

We would like to extend an enormous 'thank you' to all those who have supported our Cancer Appeal. Due to the tremendous response from both individuals and charitable trusts we have now raised £78,000 towards our shortfall in Oncology funding. We only need to raise another £3,000 to reach our target of £81,000.



"This money will support the current work of our research scientists, who are working closely with our clinicians in trying to develop improved methods for predicting how tumours will behave and respond to treatment. We hope that this research will assist our clinicians to decide how best to treat dogs with cancer."

My sincere thanks for helping us continue to find new and better ways to improve the health of our pets."

Dr Mike Starkey
Head of Molecular Cytogenetics, Oncology Research Group

If you would like to make a donation towards our Appeal, simply fill in the donation form enclosed and post to us in the envelope provided.



You can raise money for the AHT every time you search the web. **ClickNow** searches the web using some of the main search engines. The only difference is that half of the proceeds of sponsored results are donated to the AHT. Make **ClickNow** your main search page today by visiting our website www.aht.org.uk and following the link.

Recycle and raise funds

Please keep up the good work by sending your empty inkjet cartridges to EAH Recycling by using the enclosed freepost envelope – every cartridge is much appreciated as the AHT receives a generous donation for each one.

For extra envelopes please call EAH Recycling on 01473 658161

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT RECYCLE THE FOLLOWING:

- EPSON OR EPSON COMPATIBLE CARTRIDGES
- LASER OR TONER CARTRIDGES
- NON-VIRGIN CARTRIDGES – CARTRIDGES WHICH HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY REMANUFACTURED

Strangles remains the most frequently diagnosed infectious disease of horses. Clinical signs typically consist of a raised temperature, profuse nasal discharge and abscessation of lymph nodes in the head and neck. The swollen lymph nodes may restrict the airway and it is from this condition that the term 'strangles' arose. The lymph node abscesses often erupt through the skin to release highly infectious pus containing the bacterium, *Streptococcus equi*. Despite the dramatic clinical signs of disease, most horses make a full recovery. However, up to 10% of horses that recover from strangles remain long-term carriers of the disease. These may intermittently shed the bacterium, which can then infect other horses and initiate new outbreaks.

The continued need for improved vaccines to prevent strangles has galvanised specific research programmes at the Animal Health Trust. Our work has benefited enormously from the *Streptococcus equi* genome-sequencing project, sponsored by the Home of Rest for Horses, at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. This information has improved our understanding of the genetic makeup of this bacterium, allowing us to identify new genes critical to the way in which it causes disease.

Thanks to continued support from the Home of Rest for Horses, scientists at the AHT are currently exploiting these genes to develop blood tests capable of identifying long-term carriers of strangles. This will enable us to reduce disease spread. These genes are also being used to design safer and more effective strangles vaccines that can be widely used throughout the equine community for improved disease prevention. One such vaccine product from our research is now undergoing safety studies funded by the British European Breeders Fund.

Another important area of our research utilises new genetic typing methods that can track the spread of disease and potentially identify more dangerous forms of this bacterium. These techniques have now identified four distinct groups of *Streptococcus equi* that infect horses in the USA, Japan and Europe. Any new vaccine or diagnostic test must be effective at preventing or identifying strangles caused by each of these groups and we are using this new information to direct our vaccine and diagnostic research programmes.

Our research aims to reduce the suffering caused by strangles. However, the vigilance of horse owners will continue to play a critical role in disease prevention.



Zeus - my bright shining light of heaven

Zeus came from Battersea Dogs Home when he was about 5 months old. He was very underweight, under-socialised and lame. By the time Zeus was a year old I had put him in most everyday situations and being a professional dog walker he had learnt to interact with a variety of different dogs of varying sizes and dispositions! He was still intermittently lame, which was later diagnosed as arthritis in all four legs.

Over the next couple of years, Zeus really settled down and passed his Bronze, Silver and Gold Kennel Club Good Citizen Certificate with flying colours. On several occasions he was a blood donor for the RSPCA and was tested to be a PAT dog and given top clearance for his patience and temperament. I was so proud of my big black bear who had started life so badly in the dog's home at such an early age.

Then in January 2005, at just 7 years old, life changed dramatically. Zeus collapsed and could not stand. After a full examination I was told that although he did have severe problems in his joints, he had a life-threatening neurological problem. I was advised to contact the Animal Health Trust, and on February 14th Zeus had an MRI scan and was diagnosed as having slipped a disc in his neck, which required immediate surgery. Although the surgery was successful and Zeus was allowed home after 10 days, we had a major setback after Zeus had been home for just 2 days and he had to be rushed back to the AHT and re-admitted into intensive care for a further 11 days. I have no doubt that it was the dedication of the staff, in particular Zeus's neurological surgeon, Lara Wiczorek and her hands-on aftercare during his stay that got him through this most difficult time.

Now Zeus is doing extremely well despite his arthritis, but with plenty of regular walking, TLC, massage, medication and his new girlfriend Jet, he has a good quality of life.

As a thank you to the AHT, Zeus, Jet and a number of his dog friends went on a 9-mile fundraising walk (I went with them!) and with the wonderful support of my friends and customers we raised an amazing £1,200. I am so grateful for all the help from the AHT and to the 78 people who sponsored us.

The operation was only 9 months ago and the feeling of walking to raise money for the AHT and having Zeus by my side is one that I will treasure forever.

Benita Leon



Zeus and owner Benita Leon presenting a cheque for £1,200 to Dr Lara Wiczorek

Carley Jervis completes the Great North Run



I was one of the 49,000 people that ran the Great North Run on 18th September 2005. The feeling of achievement after running the half marathon course made the blisters and gallons of sweat worth it. It took me two hours and four minutes to complete the 13.1 miles and the plan next year is to finish in less than two hours! Thank you to everyone who sponsored me, the money raised has gone to the Animal Health Trust where I work as a Virology Technician.

Jessica Stammers

Many thanks to Lynn Stammers and her friends who held a dog show last year and raised an amazing £810 for the AHT. Lynn's Dachshund Jessica was treated at the Trust back in 2001 and as you can see from the photo is looking amazing at a grand old age of 13!



Maddie the Cat

Many thanks to Ginny Madden for organising a dinner dance at her local restaurant in aid of the AHT's Feline Unit. They raised an incredible £2,361. Ginny said in a letter to Dr Andy Sparkes our feline expert "I have always wanted to do something for the Trust, since you worked so hard to save my cat Maddie and finally I managed to do something worthwhile! I cannot say thank you enough, Maddie is my reason for getting up in the mornings!" Maddie had 'latent FeLV (feline leukaemia virus) infection' causing severe bone marrow suppression and profound anaemia. She was given a blood transfusion and drugs to help stimulate the bone marrow and is now doing well and full of the joys of Spring!



Cedar Veterinary Hospital

On the 20th November we organised a practice open afternoon to celebrate National Veterinary Nursing Day. The event was a great success and we held a raffle of donated prizes.

The money raised from the raffle was donated to two very worthy charities, the Animal Health Trust and the Feline

Advisory Bureau and we hope that our donation to the AHT will help in some way.

Kind regards on behalf of the nurses,

Michelle Richmond DipAVN(Medical) DipAVN(Surgical) VN

Coffee gets a break!

Last winter my 2 year-old cat, Coffee was diagnosed with polycythaemia vera, a form of bone marrow disease which makes the marrow produce red blood cells at an alarming rate. The percentage of blood made up by red blood cells in a cat is normally around 35%, Coffee's went up to 75% and her blood turned to treacle, stopping the blood flow to her brain and limbs. It took our vets a few days to work out what was wrong, then one night I got the call "You will have to drive her up to the Animal Health Trust. If you don't she won't make it through the night." Coffee held my finger through the bars with her paw all the way there, she had a number of seizures on the way, it was horrible.

When we finally got there it was as if we had walked into a private hospital for humans. The vet, Jon Wray, came rushing down, took Coffee and rushed off with a nurse closely behind.

One hour later he came out and led me through to intensive care. Coffee had tubes all over her, and had shaved patches everywhere. The vet told me the bad news but with regular chemotherapy and vet check ups every 3 months, her red blood cell count is within the normal range, (49%) and she is back to her old self, if not better. I know she will never be cured completely but thank God for my vets and the advances in medical science made at the AHT.

Gelli Graham



Clemmie Wilson

Dear Dr Garosi

Enclosed is my cheque for £600, being the purchase price of our little Clemmie and which was refunded to us by the insurance company.

My husband and I are donating this money to the Animal Health Trust to be used where it is most needed and where it will do the most good. Clemmie was a small, black Pekingese and sadly died last year following surgical treatment of atlanto-axial subluxation. I hope our sad loss will in some way help others to benefit.

Yours sincerely
Jane Wilson

Vet Martin Leith, rose to the challenge for the AHT!

Many of you may recall that last year we gave supporters the opportunity to undertake an experience of a lifetime fundraising expedition to raise money for the AHT. To mark his 25 years in practice Martin Leith, a vet at Leadon Vale Veterinary Centre, decided to take us up on the challenge and successfully completed the Inca Trail Trek in October 2005 raising a terrific £3,560 for the AHT. Martin, who overcame his loathing for camping to undertake the challenge said "I had a superb time and have achieved a lifetime ambition, thank you for giving me the opportunity to do the trek".



Holly Wootton

I have pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £200.46 being the amount raised by Daniel and Joanna Wootton through their tennis rally, held on 4th November. Daniel and Joanna chose the AHT, as their dog Holly has recently undergone several operations to remove mast cell tumours, the latest of which required her to lose her tail.

I am delighted that their response to this family sadness has been to try to help the general cause of animal health and hope that this money goes a little way towards some of your research.

Yours sincerely
Emma Wootton (Mother)



Marathon runners



Debbie Prittard
with Gus

Debbie Prittard

In April 2001 my dog Gus was diagnosed with having a mast cell tumour. Due to the size and location of the tumour I was referred to the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket. Gus subsequently underwent major surgery and a skin graft to close the wound.

All went well and Gus recovered from the surgery. However a couple of months later on a routine check we discovered that the cancer had spread to Gus's lymph gland. I decided to let Gus go with the dignity that he deserved. On the 29th Oct 2001 I said goodbye to my boy. Gus was more than just a dog, he was my partner and I still miss him very much. On 23rd April 2006 I will be running the London Marathon to raise funds for the Animal Health Trust.

It's too late for my boy, but please help me to help other animals.

Judith Wall

Inspired by my mum after one of her WI meetings where they discussed not only the best cake recipe but the need to save our animals, I was persuaded to run on her behalf for the upcoming 2006 London Marathon as she was too busy milking the cows for a day off!

Being a born and bred farm girl growing up in the wilds of North Devon and with the fear of the WI in me I have chosen the Animal Health Trust as the recipient of my sponsorship.

This is an amazing and under-funded institution providing specialist veterinary services for all companion animals.



Judith Wall

Giselle Hampton

I live in Surrey with my husband, two teenage daughters, six Golden Retrievers and one cat. We used to have hamsters but they did not get on with the cat! If it involves any sort of activity I will enjoy it, from parachuting when younger, to skating and recently scuba diving. I first became involved in raising funds for the Animal Health Trust because a good friend of mine had a dog with a tumour. The support, care and treatment from the AHT were fantastic. It then became clear that many more people had animals with tumours so I decided to try and raise funds for further equipment and care in the oncology department.

I am looking forward to running in the London Marathon, the training is hard work and I have only had a few minor injuries. It will probably be a once in a lifetime event as I cannot imagine running 26.2 miles twice, and I hope to raise as much support as I can.



Giselle Hampton

Ben Trevail

This will be my first marathon and I'm really looking forward to the challenge. I'm a primary school teacher in West London and in my spare time love running, hiking and football. Another project of mine is walking around the Cornish coast path, I get down there as often as I can. I've been training hard for months now, so bring on the big day!



Ben Trevail



Tim Trevail

Tim Trevail

Ben's brother Tim qualified as a vet 18 months ago and worked in a small animal practice for a year. He came to the Trust last October to do a year's internship at the Centre for Small Animal Studies. He is an avid sportsman, with a keen interest in football, and runs to keep fit.

"This is my first marathon and besides wanting to set myself a personal goal, having seen at first hand the wonderful work we do here and knowing the limited funds available, want to do my bit to help."

Stephen Gilmore

I will be 44 at the time of the 2006 London Marathon. I am married to Pam who is also a vet and we have a 10 year old son. We have a busy small animal practice in Standish, Lancashire. I am only a part time jogger and have never run anything further than 2 miles so 26.2 miles will be a severe challenge! I feel well enough and fit enough to have a proper go at the marathon and consider the AHT to be a very worthy cause, particularly with the veterinary connection. I am finding the training to be hard work and with every run, I discover another part of me that aches. I find myself constantly analysing my pains - I am turning into a hypochondriac!



Stephen Gilmore



Countryside Race Day

The AHT has been selected again as one of the three organisations to benefit from the Newmarket Countryside Race Day. The others are the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and the main one, of course, the Countryside Alliance. The event will take place on 27th May 2006 at the Rowley Mile Racecourse, Newmarket.

If you would like to buy tickets in advance please telephone 01359 271386 or email enquiries@ncrd.co.uk

Zara Phillips and Lord Coe win at AHT Equestrian Awards!

The Animal Health Trust United Kingdom Equestrian Awards took place on Monday 17th October at the London Hilton on Park Lane. It was a star-studded affair with well-known faces from all spheres of equestrianism there to recognise the achievements of our leading equestrian stars.

Zara Phillips was awarded the Petplan Equine Eventing Award for her fantastic two gold medals in the European Eventing Championships at Blenheim and Lord Sebastian Coe was awarded the Martin Collins Special Award for his incredible contribution towards securing the 2012 Olympics to the City of London.

The proceeds from the evening provide much-needed income for the AHT and our thanks go to all sponsors and to those who contributed. This year's Equestrian Awards will be held on 2nd November at The Royal Lancaster Hotel in London.



The Martin Collins Special Award presented to Lord Coe



The Petplan Equine Eventing Award presented to Zara Phillips

Wish list



Capnograph - £1,900

Many of our small animal patients are referred with life threatening illnesses that put them particularly at risk when under anaesthesia or following surgical procedures. It is essential that our team of anaesthetists have a full range of equipment to ensure that the patients' condition can be monitored closely in these circumstances and any problems identified and managed effectively.

This portable piece of anaesthetic equipment is used for monitoring seriously ill patients in different areas of the clinic, particularly those in intensive care.

Infusion pump and stand - £600

Our Equine Centre offers a comprehensive referral service for orthopaedics, together with anaesthesiology and surgical facilities. When carrying out surgery, it is essential that our vets have a full range of equipment to ensure that the horse's condition can be monitored extremely closely.

An infusion pump is used for all equine surgeries to provide intraoperative fluids and drugs to maintain blood pressure during and post surgery and so reduce the incidence of serious problems such as myopathy (a disease of muscle tissue).

If you would like to make a donation towards either piece of equipment, please fill in the enclosed donation form and tick the appropriate box.

