

Animal Health Trust *news*



Issue 60 - Autumn 2006

Buster O'Grady – celebrity patient!

Paul O'Grady's celebrated dog, Buster, is one of the most famous pets in the country, with regular appearances on his owner's TV Show. However, his most recent appointment was at the Animal Health Trust's Unit of Comparative Ophthalmology.



Paul O'Grady collects his dog 'Buster' from the Animal Health Trust

Picture courtesy of Jan Berendy / Rex features

Buster arrived at the AHT as an emergency case on Saturday 30th September. He was seen by Miss Jane Sansom, Head of the Unit of Comparative Ophthalmology. Following a full examination of Buster's left eye she diagnosed what is known as a 'melting ulcer' - a serious condition requiring urgent attention.

Intensive medical treatment was started immediately. In order to save his eye, Buster needed to have antibiotic drops to bring the infection under control and stop the melting of the corneal tissues. Buster's condition was monitored constantly for 3 days, at which stage Miss Sansom decided that surgery was

required. The infection had responded well to treatment but had eaten away a large and deep area of the cornea (front window of the eye). Thankfully, the specialist surgical team at the Trust were able to anaesthetise Buster and graft a patch of conjunctiva over his eye to prevent it from rupturing.

Nursing during this period was critical and Buster was kept comfortable with pain killers. Ophthalmology Nurse, Sarah Gray, said "He may be a celebrity but he was the perfect patient. He was always so pleased to see everyone and seemed to quite enjoy his stay with us. He is such a character and we were all delighted that we were able to treat him so successfully."

He stayed at the Trust for a further two weeks until he was well enough to return home on 12th October. Paul O'Grady came to the Trust himself to collect Buster and was obviously thrilled to be re-united with him. "It's been so difficult not having him around" he said "but it was a great comfort knowing that he was in such good hands. The work that the Trust does is fantastic and I am so grateful to them for saving Buster's sight."



Buster and the nursing staff from the Animal Health Trust

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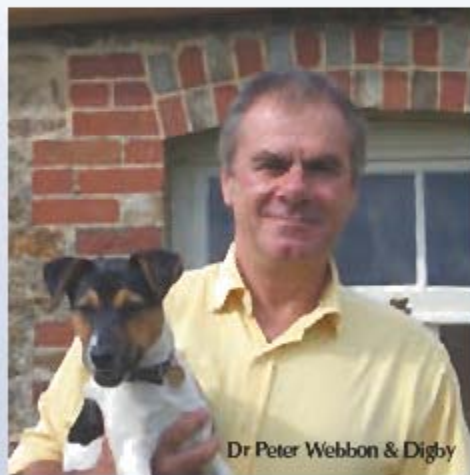
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2 Spotlight on new CEO...

...Webbon sees bright future for Animal Health Trust



Dr Peter Webbon & Digby

Dr Peter Webbon has been appointed Chief Executive of the Animal Health Trust with effect from 1st January 2007. For the last 6 months, following the retirement of Ted Chandler, Dr Mark Vaudin has been acting as Interim Chief Executive and will continue to do so until the end of the year, when he will take up the post of Assistant Chief Executive.

Dr Vaudin said "I have had enormous satisfaction from the experience gained in the interim post and I am greatly looking forward to my new, permanent position and to working with Dr Webbon. This is a very satisfactory outcome in that, when I do hand over the reins, I will continue to have a

senior administrative role within the directorate while, at the same time, being able to give adequate attention to managing the genetics research activities which are so important, both to me and to the Trust."

Dr Webbon has been Chief Executive of the Horseracing Regulatory Authority since its inception earlier this year. Prior to that he was with the Jockey Club for 10 years, initially as Chief Veterinary Adviser and subsequently as Director of Veterinary Welfare and Science.

Lord Kirkham, Chairman of AHT's Executive Committee, who convened the Appointment Panel commented "Peter Webbon brings with him the ideal combination of managerial experience and scientific expertise. The Trust needs a strong leader who can maximise its potential. Animal welfare is at the core of our objectives and he has a proven track record in this field."

Dr Webbon's early career was based around veterinary academia. He graduated from London's Royal Veterinary College and became a Horserace Betting Levy Board Research Training Scholar, managing to combine his veterinary skills with his passion for racing.

He then became a lecturer in Radiology, where much of his work focused on canine orthopaedics. Following a period as Senior Lecturer in Equine Medicine and Director of the Sefton Equine Referral Hospital at the RVC, he joined the Jockey Club in 1996.

Dr Webbon, who has worked in collaboration with the Trust on many occasions throughout his career, commented "this position will allow me to utilise all of my previous experience and expertise. The Trust has enormous potential and I am greatly looking forward to the opportunity of working closely with the equine and small animal industries to ensure that it remains a leading provider of vital services as well as a top class research institute. Mark Vaudin has done sterling work in his post as interim CEO and we have already started to discuss our plans for the future direction of the Trust."

Peter Webbon's high profile positions in racing have established his reputation as an exceptional communicator, effective strategist and resourceful general manager. John Bridgeman, Chairman of HRA, said "our loss is definitely the Trust's gain".

Christmas Cards & Stocking Fillers

Enclosed with this Newsletter is our Christmas flyer and order form for stocking fillers and Christmas cards. Please make sure all orders reach us before 11th December to ensure delivery before Christmas. Alternatively you can call us on 08700 502380 or visit our website at www.aht.org.uk where you can view all our merchandise and purchase online.



3 AHT Fundraisers

Running for the Trust



We still have places available for the the Flora London Marathon 2007, so if anyone out there is interested in running for the Trust, please call 08700 502380 or email fundraising@aht.org.uk for further information. This year the Marathon raised an amazing £9,875 for the Trust so thanks go to all those who sponsored our runners this year.

New Technology - Standing MRI In Equine Orthopaedics

We are delighted to inform our supporters that we are now able to offer both high-field magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), performed under general anaesthesia and low-field MRI, performed under standing sedation for our equine orthopaedic patients. Our Standing MRI Suite is now in use having completed the commissioning phase.

Our sincere thanks go to The Jean Coubrough Charitable Trust for their substantial donation, The Clarke Charitable Settlement, and all other donors for this specialist piece of equipment.



Jumping for the Trust



Our thanks go to Jayne Harman who did a parachute jump and raised £837 for the AHT. Jayne wanted the money to go to our Cancer Research Programme after her dog Winnie was treated successfully in the Oncology Unit.

Twilly Memorial Companion Dog Show

A huge thank you to Yvonne Cox who raised £1,790.28 by holding the Twilly Memorial Companion Dog Show. Yvonne said "We would like the donation to be split between the neurology department & the cancer research appeal as both of these causes have great significance to us personally. In 2003, our dog Zak received life saving spinal surgery following a complicated disc herniation performed by Dr. Garosi at the AHT. The dedicated team of surgeons & nurses undoubtedly saved Zak's life and gave him a

second chance; nearly 3 years on, Zak is still with us. On 18th April 2006, our beautiful little girl, Twilly, died from lymphoma; she was just 3 years old and had been undergoing steroid & chemotherapy treatment for almost a year.



Sproughton Bowls Club

Our thanks go to Sproughton Bowls Club and John Thompson and family who raised a fantastic £1,880 for the AHT. The family's beloved Boxer, Amie (pictured), was saved by vets at the Trust last year. Tragically, John's wife Sheila died of cancer this summer and the cheque was duly presented to us in memory of Sheila's charitable work and love for animals.



Sproughton Bowls Club presenting cheque to Andrew Simmonds

4 Ollie's Story



Ollie now

Ollie our red and white Irish setter came to us at 8 weeks old. He was a normal playful puppy until around the age of 6 months when he started showing symptoms such as nausea and lethargy and he was unable to walk properly and would fall over. One day he got so bad that he collapsed and we rushed him to the emergency vets who suggested that the symptoms could lead to a disease known as Addison's disease. The vet gave him a steroid injection which seemed to help as Ollie started acting better.

He was then taken to our local vets, where he was tested for Addison's disease and given another steroid injection. The results for the test for Addison's disease were negative so more tests were carried out on Ollie's vital organs. When nothing was found our vet decided that the problem may be neurological and arranged for Ollie to be seen by specialists at Bristol University.

Ollie went to Bristol University where we discussed the possibility of a small bony lump on the top of his head and that the lump could possibly be growing inwards. The staff organised an MRI scan of Ollie's head which revealed that the lump was growing inwards, as suspected, and was significantly larger on the inside taking up the majority of his brain space, putting an immense amount of pressure on his brain.

They explained that Ollie would have to have surgery to remove the lump and that he would have to travel to Newmarket to the Animal Health Trust to be operated on by Simon Platt, Head of Neurology.



Ollie in a sling

MRI Scan

When we took Ollie there Simon Platt explained all about Ollie's problem, how it would be operated on and the possible complications that could occur during surgery such as the possibility of his brain haemorrhaging. We were told that Ollie had to overcome three hurdles on the way to recovery. First of all he would have to come through the surgery, which he had a 25% chance of doing. The second hurdle he had to overcome was the next 72 hours in ICU where he was looked after by the nurses at AHT. The third hurdle was finding out whether the lump was benign or malignant which involved dissecting the lump. Thanks to the brilliant staff at AHT Ollie was able to overcome all of these hurdles and was able to come home after 2 1/2 weeks.

However because of the damage to his brain he was initially unable to walk properly so the AHT provided us with a harness and sling to help Ollie walk. He was given anti-inflammatory and anti-seizure medication to take while he was at home. He is now starting to walk much better on his own although not yet fully stable but is progressing day by day. He is back to his usual playful character all thanks to the incredible work by the AHT and Bristol University as well as our local vet's practice for which we are all extremely grateful.

Nigel & Natalie Smith

AHT National Car Draw

If you would like to buy raffle tickets for yourself or to sell to family and friends and help raise funds for the AHT, contact the Fundraising Office on 08700 502380. Tickets cost £1 each or £10 for a book of 10. The draw for this exceptional prize will be held on 30th March 2007.

ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST NATIONAL CAR DRAW



WIN one of these great prizes

1st Prize Subaru Legacy Sports Tourer 2.0R
2nd Prize 12" HD Ready LCD TV
3rd Prize Cash Prize £250

www.aht.org.uk

Closing Date for entry 21st March 2007
Draw Date 30th March 2007 held at Lutonville Park Head office

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5 Millie's Story

Millie, our spaniel cross, is a very special dog. We 'rescued' her from the RSPCA many years ago. After a sad start to her life, we adopted Millie and she slotted into our lives immediately. Over the years, she has been an excellent companion to our flat coated retriever Harry, and then, after he died of cancer, our black Labrador George.

Millie has always been pretty robust and healthy in spite of failing kidneys in recent years which we have managed with drugs. But in May this year, a few days after slipping as she was jumping into the landrover, she woke up in excruciating pain. We rushed her to our vets who quickly referred her to the Animal Health Trust. Within a day she was having a life-saving operation to remove two discs from her spine.



Millie after the operation

After a successful operation, performed by Head of Neurology, Simon Platt, she remained at the AHT for about a week and when we collected her, we thought she might burst with excitement having clearly decided that we had abandoned her for good. (A rescue dog never forgets...). Following instructions from AHT staff, she was kept quiet in a puppy crate for a month and only walked in the garden with a sling.

Her recovery was rapid and she was soon whizzing about the Suffolk countryside again. Our only concession to her operation is that she is now lifted in and out of the landrover - an indignity she suffers with bad grace. In August, we entered her in our village fun dog show. Having come second in the veterans' class she was eligible for the Best in Show class and was therefore up against puppies and young dogs alike. The judges decided that they would run the Championship class as a Dog Agility course, complete with tunnels, jumps and weaving poles. As we had done two years of dog agility classes with Millie she wiped the floor with an enthusiastic, obedient and fast display and walked off with Best In Show - at 12 years old and only a couple of months after a life-saving back operation!

Thanks to the Animal Health Trust and the care of Simon Platt and his nursing staff, we have a happy and pain-free Spaniel back at home to enjoy her twilight years with the family she adores - and she continues to give the rest of the dogs in the village a run for their money!

Caroline and Matthew Byatt



Millie with her rosette

Cat Health Leaflets

The Animal Health Trust has a new range of cat health leaflets providing basic information about a range of illnesses and diseases in cats. These are available free to owners.



Leaflets available in the cat series are:

- Cancer
- Cancer Treatment
- Chronic Kidney Failure
- Feline Asthma & Chronic Bronchitis
- Feline Lower Urinary Tract Disease
- Hyperthyroidism
- Hypertension
- Polycystic Kidney Disease

To request any of the leaflets, please call 08700 502380 or visit our website www.aht.org.uk where you can view them as pdfs or order them online.

Click Now!

Thank you to all our supporters who are using our Internet search engine provided by Click Now. So far we have raised over £550 for the AHT. This really is a simple way in which you can raise money for us at no cost to you or the Trust.

Please visit our website at www.aht.org.uk and click on the Click Now logo to start raising funds through this innovative search engine.



6 AHT Funday

Celebrating The Queen's 80th Birthday



Happy Birthday
Ma'am!

Her Majesty The Queen is Patron of the Trust and very kindly selected the AHT to be one of only four charities specially chosen for 2006, to benefit from fundraising events throughout her birthday year.

To mark this, the AHT held a Fun Day on Sunday 8th October which was a huge success.

Thanks go to those who sponsored the event and our loyal supporters who attended to help make it such an enjoyable event for all.

We raised £5,000 so a further thank you to all those who made donations. Watch this space as plans are underway for a bigger and better event next year!