

Mark Maltman MRCVS
Josie Cosham MRCVS

with nurses:
Cindy Winter RVN (Head)
Mandy Chard RVN (Deputy Head)
Emma Akehurst RVN (Deputy Head)
Rebecca Norman RVN
Kerry Blight RVN
Mel Langdridge (Student)

and
Claire Martin
Laura Betchley

PRACTICE NEWS:

Our most significant news is that Cindy Winter, nee Wedd, is expecting her first child on 18 February and so will be leaving for Maternity Leave on 23 Jan. We will dearly miss Cindy, as we are sure will many clients, but we are delighted that she plans to rejoin us following her leave. We wish her and her husband Ant well for the forthcoming months with the new addition.

We have recruited two new members of staff, Kerry Blight and Mel Langdridge, as we realise we are now at a level to require extra nurses even without Cindy's imminent leave. Kerry is a qualified nurse and has been nursing for 6 years in Crawley, whilst Mel joins us from a practice in Brighton and is in the final stages of her training as a vet nurse having previously worked as a Police Officer with Surrey Police.

Meanwhile, we have also been joined by Laura Betchley who is an Animal Care Assistant to support the nursing team with the basic care of the in-patients; in time, Laura hopes to train as a nurse herself.

OPENING TIMES:

Mon 0800-1930

Tues 0800-1800

Wed 0800-1800

Thurs 0800-1930

Fri 0800-1800

Sat 0800-1200

And of course in an emergency you can be seen 24/7—simply ring 01403 791011



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Holiday time! - travelling with your pet - changes to Pet Passports

The New Year brought changes to the Pet Passport Scheme on 1st January 2012 with dogs and cats now being able to travel to and from Europe with fewer restrictions than ever before. They still need to be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies, but there is now no need for a blood test and 6 month wait. Instead they may now travel to and from any EU country once a mere 3 weeks have elapsed from the rabies vaccination. A blue Pet Passport (right) is issued by the Vet. The need to find a vet abroad to treat your pet for tapeworm before returning to the UK still exists, but the time frame has been eased so that owners now need to do this between 1-5 days before returning rather than the previous 24-48 hour window. Meanwhile, the legal requirement for tick treatment has been dropped. However, there is a

concern that relaxing the previously strict system may send the message that travelling with your pet poses no risk. In reality, there are diseases not seen in the UK which are present in Continental Europe and one should take steps to prevent these. Ticks still pose a threat to both canine and feline health by carrying the diseases *Babesia* and *Ehrlichia*. These are bacterial diseases which cause fever, severe anaemia and problems with blood clotting. *Leishmaniosis* is a disease carried by sandflies and found in the Mediterranean coastal regions of Southern Europe. It causes a wide variety of problems including weight loss, fever, skin disease, anaemia, kidney problems and arthritis. *Heartworm* is carried by mosquitoes, once again with a higher prevalence in Southern Europe. Adult worms live in the right side of the heart,



leading to cardiac failure and malaise. Prevention of all these diseases is very important, both for the health of your own pet and to prevent the infections becoming established in the UK. A combination of insecticidal collars for tick and sandfly control, traditional spot-on preparations for ticks and heartworm and oral wormers for the legal requirement of tapeworm prevention is required. Please ask your vet to tailor a prescription for your individual pet.

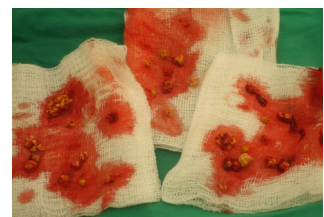
Zubin—the Dalmation with stones as well as spots!



Zubin is a young Dalmatian who made an appearance in Josie's surgery one Monday morning. He was struggling to urinate and could only manage a small squirt of bloody urine. Xrays

and ultrasound showed that he had numerous bladder stones, some of which had fallen into his urethra meaning that the pipework to the outside was blocked so he could not relieve his bladder. His stones were found to be of the urate variety, something which is seen in Dalmations because they often lack the enzyme required to metabolise the compound that makes up the stones. Zubin underwent surgery which re-

moved nearly 30 stones from his bladder and now lives on a special diet and a drug called allopurinol to minimise the chance of recurrence by moderating the urine pH and helping to break down the urate.





High blood pressure can lead to bleeding into the eye (top). Thyroid glands resected from a cat at Maltman Cosham recently (bottom) - both are enlarged but one much more than the other—a penny is shown for size comparison.

Hyperthyroidism in cats

An overactive thyroid gland is the most common hormonal condition which we see in cats, with 2-3 new cases being diagnosed each month. The majority of these cases occur due to a benign growth in the thyroid which starts to produce excessive amounts of the thyroid hormone, thyroxine. Thyroxine essentially drives the body's metabolism and when present in excess will make affected cats lose weight dramatically despite having a ravenous appetite. They are often rather hyperactive and may become more aggressive towards owners. Other diseases such as skin and urinary problems can become accentuated by the overactive cat and

high blood pressure can lead to complications with the heart, brain, eyes (top left) and kidneys. Hyperthyroid cats usually have a very characteristic appearance which we spot in the clinic. The diagnosis is confirmed by blood tests to measure the level of thyroxine. Treatment can be effectively achieved using one of three methods—tablets, surgical removal of the thyroid or a technique called radioactive iodine. Tablets block the synthesis of the hormone and, if they can be given to the cat, will give effective control but with time the thyroid may become resistant to treatment necessitating an increase in the dose. Surgical re-

section (bottom left) is less commonly undertaken these days due to the advent of radioiodine. One complication of surgery occurs when the adjacent parathyroid glands become compromised such that the body struggles to regulate its calcium levels. Meanwhile, radioiodine treatment is considered the treatment of choice nowadays—an injection of radioactive iodine is given which selectively destroys the abnormal thyroid tissue with excellent success rates and minimal side effects—disadvantages are the cost and the fact that the cat has to be hospitalised at a specialist centre for 2-4 weeks whilst the levels of radioiodine subside

"Independence and compassion in modern veterinary care"

This is always potentially difficult and it is vital to ensure that the resident cat does not attack the newcomer otherwise their relationship will be very difficult to repair. The chance of acceptance can be minimised by following simple guidelines. Allocate a downstairs room for the meeting and plug in a Feliway diffuser (available from the surgery) for one week prior to the introduction to infuse calming pheromones into the room. Put the older cat away in the bedroom. Let the new kitten out in the downstairs room and allow it to explore for a while so that it leaves its scent in the

room, then remove it again. Spray the room with a few squirts of Feliway spray and allow the older cat back into the room and give it time to adjust to the new smells in the room. After a while, bring the kitten back in but keep it in a larger cage (a puppy crate is ideal) so that the older cat cannot get to it. Allow the older cat to explore the outside of the cage. Offer both cats some food to positively condition the experience. After a few days or weeks depending on how things are progressing, allow the cats to have greater access to each other, by leaving the door of the cage open.

Do not worry if they ignore each other as, in actual fact, this means that they are not overly bothered by the presence of the other one. Make sure that the cats are separated at night and when you are not present until you are confident that they have adjusted to one another.

In time, most cats will accept the introduction of a new cat, but it does take time - sometimes several weeks and months - so be patient! Do not forget to give the older cat plenty of love and attention so that he does not feel left out and remind the kids to do so as well.

New vaccine for rabbits

MSD Animal Health are bringing out a new rabbit vaccine in March, which will combine protection against myxomatosis and viral haemorrhagic disease in a single annual injection. Currently, rabbits which have been previously vaccinated will need to continue with those brands of vaccine because the efficacy of the new vaccine may be reduced by previous vaccination, but rabbits starting their vaccinations for the first time will benefit as will their owners who will now only have to visit once a year rather than three times! With time, we will take advice as to whether older rabbits can take advantage too.

It's a dog's dinner...!

This is Murphy who has been seen by Mark several times. When his owner told Mark that Murphy likes to sleep on the dining room table, we simply had to have a photo! The table is Murphy's favourite spot and his owners will often come home to find him commanding a look out position from the table. We were so taken with the picture that we felt it worthy of inclusion without further ado and are pleased to report that, unlike most of the patients in our newsletter, Murphy is perfectly well. Do send us your own photos or even better post them on our Facebook site.

