



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011

*"Caring for your pets
as we do our own"*

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- SVG at the Mid-Somerset show
- Firework survival tips
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Autumn is upon us, and at the practice we are all wondering if we actually had a summer this year! So we are looking back at some of the events of the last few months, and forward to the season of carnivals, bonfires and fireworks.

Shepton Vets Small Animal Team xx

Smiles all round at Shepton Show



As the last of the summer was passing us by in August, it was great to have a hot sunny day for the Mid-Somerset Show. We were delighted to attend the event once again this year and our stand's pitch offered us a lovely view of the dog show ring. The sense of enthusiasm from all the wagging tails was infectious and we were all really looking forward to the day.



What a busy day it was! It was lovely to see so many friendly faces at the stand, whether we were catching up with a valued patient and their owner or meeting a new pet owner for the first time. We were also pleased to speak to so many new local residents, recently moved to the area with their pets – great to see our thriving community growing. Countless four-legged visitors took the opportunity to get a quick weight check, with our nurses on hand to offer advice on keeping them trim (or getting them slim if they were a little on the large side). There was all sorts of advice and information on preventative healthcare, diet, weight management and the role of the vet nurse. And our pet chicken care display was the surprise hit, with our competition to guess the names of our two chickens proving a great talking-point.

The whole show was a great success and a credit to the organisers. With so much tasty food, entertaining displays, activities and animals of all shapes and sizes, it was an ideal day out for the family. And to top it all off we had a live soundtrack from The Wurzels as we packed everything away at the end. We hope you enjoyed the show too, and if you didn't get a chance to come and see us on the day, don't forget that we are always more than happy to help you with your pet care queries.



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Congratulations to Alex and Jess!

We have had some great achievements in our nursing team recently.

Alex Lomas has passed her final exams to become a fully-qualified Registered Veterinary Nurse.

Jess Tytheridge has completed the theory component of her final exams and has successfully passed these too.

Both have worked really hard and really deserve their success. **Well done to Alex and Jess!**

For further information or advice on any of the subjects covered in this newsletter please contact the practice

BONFIRE NIGHT BLUES?

It's nearly that time of year again! Bonfire night is generally something to look forward to, but if your pet has a firework phobia you might already be dreading it. Don't forget that there are lots of steps you can take to help your pet cope with all the fuss.

- Prepare as early as possible. Speak to the practice about useful methods for your pet.
- With a little time, sound desensitisation therapy can help reduce your pet's fears.
- Pheromone treatments can help your pet manage stressful situations.
- Special diets or supplements can help to maintain a calm state in the lead up to the festivities.



- Medication is sometimes useful in the short term for severe phobias.
- On the night, ensure your pet can get to a place they feel safe and try to act as normally as possible. Avoid fussing over them if you can.

Double trouble for unlucky Gayle

Twelve year old Weimeraner Gayle has had a lot to cope with recently. When she became lame in early June, her owners were hoping that the problem was nothing serious. However, when she was examined at the surgery she was found to have a very sore neck as well. With scuffed nails on her hindlimbs and her owners reporting occasional episodes of weakness it became clear that Gayle might have a problem in



Gayle recovers at home

her spine. She was given painkillers and rested at home but as her symptoms continued to worsen it was decided that she needed further investigations.

As a large breed dog, Gayle is considered a senior citizen at the age of 12 so she had some blood tests to check that there was no sign of other disease problems. She was then anaesthetised and had xrays taken of her neck, elbows and shoulders. Everything looked fairly normal, but a tiny abnormality in her spine gave a clue that Gayle could have had a 'slipped disc' in her neck.

Gayle was referred to Bristol Vet School's hospital at Langford for an MRI. This indeed confirmed a disc protrusion and Gayle underwent spinal surgery to stabilise the problem.

Although this is a highly complex procedure, Gayle recovered brilliantly and less than 2 months later was nearly back to normal. Her owners thought that her dramas were over but unfortunately one day Gayle became unwell again – she was suddenly uncomfortable and was trying unsuccessfully to be sick. Her owners knew something was wrong and contacted the practice immediately. Gayle was rushed to the surgery where an xray of her abdomen confirmed her problem – she had a twisted stomach. Also known as a GDV, this emergency



Gayle's xray showing her large, twisted gas-filled stomach (the gas shows up black)

condition commonly affects larger dogs. The stomach fills with gas and rotates, constricting its own blood supply. Gayle needed surgery right away to correct the problem and fix the stomach back in place.

The surgery was successful and Gayle recovered well. After an eventful few months her owners are really glad to have her home and well, and she is making the most of all the extra attention she is getting!