

Animal *Health* Trust News



Issue 77 | Autumn 2014

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Guide Dog 'Buntie' able to walk again thanks to AHT expertise

Buntie, a six-year-old black Labrador guide dog, was referred to the AHT small animal hospital after she became progressively weaker in all four legs.

The loss of strength made it impossible for Buntie to carry out her duties as a guide dog and also difficult for basic functions such as eating, drinking and going to the toilet. On arrival at the AHT, Buntie was only just able to walk, stumbling and having trouble balancing.

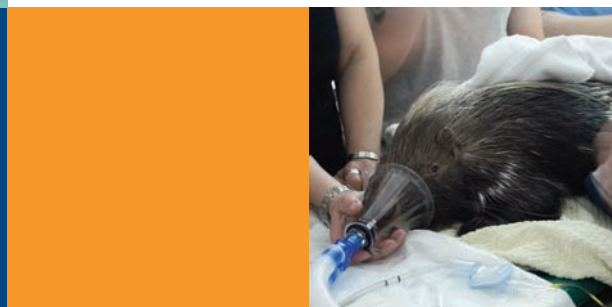
Buntie was assessed by Anita Shea, Clinician in Neurology and Neurosurgery, who noticed that the biggest abnormality on her neurological examination was that Buntie was weak on all four limbs. Buntie also had decreased reactions to basic reflex tests, indicating multiple nerves were not functioning properly.

Following a series of blood tests, imaging of her chest and abdomen and specific tests to look at the function of her nerves and muscles, our vets confirmed that neither her muscles nor her nerves were working correctly. Following further tests, we suspected that an unknown kind of toxin exposure was the cause of Buntie's immobility.

Unfortunately, because toxin exposure was suspected, a form of medication was not going to cure Buntie. Physiotherapy was going to be the most important part of Buntie's recovery to rebuild her strength through muscle and nerve stimulation. Buntie underwent intense daily physiotherapy with our nurses, which was later complemented by a course of hydrotherapy treatment in our award-winning Hydrotherapy Centre.

Unable to support her own weight, the weightless environment of the hydrotherapy pool was chosen as the best therapy. After three weeks of pool sessions twice a week, Buntie progressed onto the underwater treadmill to build muscle and improve the co-ordination and placement of her feet, continuing to use the pool to warm up and cool down.

After less than a month of hydrotherapy treatment, Buntie was able to



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stand up unaided and take small steps around the pool house. With her resolved determination and support from both AHT hydrotherapists and her owners, Buntie's health continued to improve.

Eight weeks after being referred to the AHT, Buntie has recovered and is back on her feet, once again a working guide dog to provide her delighted owner with the daily support that she needs. During her time in the clinic, Buntie became a firm favourite of all the staff involved in her care and recovery. Even in the early stages when she had difficulty in standing, Buntie had a positive and motivated attitude, and appeared determined to get back to the duties she was trained to do.

Watch Buntie's story unfold in our latest YouTube video - visit www.youtube.com/ahttv

AHT infectious disease group receives NEF commendation

The Animal Health Trust Infectious Disease Group received the Sir Colin Spedding Award at the National Equine Forum (NEF). This special commendation was given in recognition of our outstanding work on disease research, surveillance and management, to help protect and safeguard the future of every one of the UK's horses and ponies. It was received by Dr Andrew Waller, our Head of Bacteriology (pictured right, with HRH The Princess Royal), on behalf of the AHT.



We have been providing veterinary services to the equestrian industry for more than 60 years. Although our leading scientific research and surgical expertise are world-renowned, the work of the AHT Infectious Disease Group is less publically known but no less laudable.

The group comprises a team of outstanding scientists and vets that watch over the UK's horses day and night, 365 days a year. We operate the centre of excellence that supplies the detail and data to help the nation's veterinary surgeons and research analysts make the right decisions. Our team also provide the expertise that could well save the nation's horses, especially in the event of a catastrophic outbreak of any of the serious infectious diseases that could so easily find their way to the UK's shores.

Tim Brigstocke, Chairman of the NEF, said: "Equine disease poses a growing threat to all of our horses, which makes the work of the AHT Group ever more important, and hence we wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you."

Dr Andrew Waller said: "I am delighted to accept the Sir Colin Spedding Award on behalf of the AHT's Infectious Disease Group. Our work has considerably improved the health and welfare of horses internationally and we are grateful that the National Equine Forum has acknowledged the important role we play in protecting horses from infectious disease."

Some of the AHT Infectious Disease Group members...



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A spine-tingling story!

When zoo handlers at Chessington World of Adventures Resort noticed that a porcupine's eye had become blurry, they immediately contacted experts at the Animal Health Trust for advice.

The damage to Mwoiba's eye is believed to have been caused by one of her housemate's threatening spines during an 'argument'. Despite the severe trauma caused to her left eye, Claudia Hartley, AHT Head of Ophthalmology and the clinician tasked with treating Mwoiba, said she was lucky that her retina had not detached during the scuffle. This would have left her blind in one eye.

On arrival to our small animal clinic, Mwoiba was examined under anaesthesia and then intubated – a difficult procedure kindly carried out by Steve Philp from International Zoo Vet Group. This enabled Claudia to perform an ocular ultrasound to identify the exact damage to the eye.

With Mwoiba already under anaesthetic, Claudia performed the necessary surgery to try and restore her vision: "We removed her cataract and could see the trauma had scarred the retina above the optic nerve, but that some normal retina was still present." Seven weeks after the cataract surgery, Mwoiba was reintroduced to her mate and put on a weaning dose of medications.

On the success of the surgery, Claudia Hartley says: "We're thrilled to see that vision has returned to Mwoiba's left eye again, and we hear from her handlers that she is back in rude health. She is a real character, and we at the AHT are all thrilled to have been able to help her see clearly again."



3,000 horse and pony owners needed!



More than 3,000 horse and pony owners are needed to collaborate on a new web-based research project, named '**CARE (Creating Awareness and Reporting Evidence) about laminitis**', that aims to help all horse and pony owners reduce the threat posed by equine laminitis.

The four-year study, being undertaken by the AHT in partnership with the Royal Veterinary College, and generously funded by World Horse Welfare, is being conducted by PhD student, Danica (Dee) Pollard, based at the AHT. It will take a closer look at management factors which may contribute to the development or recurrence of laminitis within the British horse and pony population.

Dee said: "This is an exciting opportunity for equine owners in Britain to actively take part in scientific research and contribute towards a study that seeks to improve the health and welfare of British equines. **We need input from as many owners as possible, so please register your animal(s) today. Each and every horse and pony is an eligible candidate and**

can join the study, regardless of past or present health status."

How horse owners can help

Through a dedicated website, www.careaboutlaminitis.org.uk, Dee Pollard and the '**CARE about laminitis**' team aim to recruit more than three thousand horse and pony owners throughout Britain, in order to get a representative sample of the population and allow application of the study results to real-life situations. Dee explains: "We need owners of any horse or pony, regardless of whether or not they have a history of laminitis, to register their animals and complete a detailed online baseline questionnaire. This will provide general information about their animal, their management and previous and current health."

Dee states: "It is essential that we gather a large amount of data on individuals that will and will not develop laminitis, so that we can compare the two groups and establish whether the laminitic animals were more or less likely to be exposed to certain factors when compared to those that never developed the disease."

Horse owners interested in taking part in the '**CARE about laminitis**' research project can register at www.careaboutlaminitis.org.uk, or for more information email danica.pollard@aht.org.uk.

60 seconds with...

Stephen Joyce (Chief Operating Officer)

How long have you been at the AHT? I joined the Trust on 14 July 2014, having previously worked as Assistant Chief Executive at Uttlesford District Council in Essex. I've been made to feel very welcome and I feel inspired by the passion shown by all the new colleagues I've met and their dedication to the work of the Trust.

Why do you do, what you do? My wife and I are the proud owners of six Hungarian Vizslas, two of whom have been successfully treated as patients at the Trust. I think the Trust is a wonderful organisation that provides brilliant services and does an enormous amount of good. I am hoping to use my experience of developing financial strategy and leading corporate support services to help ensure that the Trust remains a prosperous, successful organisation for many years to come.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? The six Vizzies are obviously a huge part of my life. They are all girls and we have five self-bred generations ranging from Great Great Granny (age nearly 13) to a four month old puppy. As well as walking and cuddles I go to a few dog shows each year. I'm passionate about music (especially progressive rock and heavy metal) and enjoy going to gigs. I play drums in a rock band called FLIGHTPLAN (www.flightplanband.info) and with the AHT House Band, Half Man Half Dogbiscuit (!). I'm a qualified cricket umpire officiating in the Cambridgeshire leagues, and I dabble in creative writing.



Karen Sweet (Equine Groom)

How long have you been at the AHT? I joined the AHT in 2009, having moved from running my own competition yard in Surrey.

Why do you do, what you do? I wanted to work in the orthopaedic clinic, so that I can enjoy my passion for riding, and combine this with an interest in the veterinary side, which entails working closely with the clinicians feeding back to them what I feel when riding a client's horse. Every day is different and I enjoy meeting new clients as well as the clients that return with their different horses.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? As I have my own horse I do not have much spare time!! I used to compete a lot both in dressage and eventing, my own horse is semi-retired, so I now ride other people's horses. I enjoy a very busy social life, with many friends that I met through being in Newmarket.



Fabio Stabile (Clinician in Neurology and Neurosurgery)

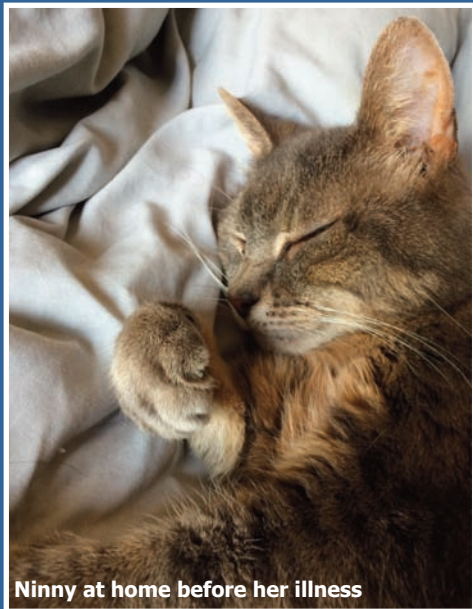
How long have you been at the AHT? I joined the AHT in 2009 for my three-year residency, before becoming a Clinician in Neurology and Neurosurgery in 2012.

Why do you do, what you do? In 2003 I got a bronze medal at the Agility World Championship with my Border Collie, Rush. Suddenly a year later he stopped wanting to train anymore. I had a hard time finding out what was wrong with him until I met a Specialist in Neurology and Neurosurgery who helped my little champion. At that moment I promised myself that I would become a veterinary neurologist and neurosurgeon to help other owners who feel as scared and helpless as I did.

Dealing with paralysed animals and seeing them walking toward their owners at discharge always makes me smile. We are lucky to have so many facilities at the Trust to provide our patients and clients with the highest standard of care. Our 1.5 Tesla MRI is one of the most powerful in Europe and the availability of a CT scanner and radiation therapy will allow us to help more and more patients affected with brain tumours.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? I love sports, I go to the gym, train my dogs in dog agility and I love to cook. I enjoy reading and wish I could read more, but that's often hard with the demands of the job! Beach, sun and sea are a must during my annual leave, and this is when I can easily get through three books in a week.





Ninny at home before her illness

Ninny the cat given ninth life

Ninny, an eight-year-old female domestic short hair cat, has received emergency life-saving surgery to remove a brain tumour.

Ninny's owner became concerned when her vision became reduced and she started to suffer from seizures, so on advice from their vets, Ninny was referred to our Small Animal Clinic.

Courtenay Freeman, Senior Neurology Clinician at the AHT, who treated Ninny, said: "Ninny was initially referred to the AHT's ophthalmology specialists because of the loss of sight in her left eye. However, it was suspected at her first appointment at the AHT that she was suffering with a problem affecting her brain."

Because the AHT's Small Animal Clinic is multi-disciplinary and helps patients with eye, brain, spine and skin issues and also those with cancer, Ninny was able to be immediately transferred to our Neurology and Neurosurgery Unit for further investigation. On initial evaluation, Ninny was found to be weak on her left side and blind in her left eye. These findings, in addition to the seizure she

had suffered, suggested a problem affecting the right side of her forebrain. Ninny was admitted for an MRI scan of her brain to investigate the underlying cause.

A large tumour causing severe compression of the right side of her brain was discovered and diagnosed as a meningioma; the most common brain tumour in cats.

Courtenay explains: "Meningiomas are tumours that grow on the surface of the brain causing compression, neurologic signs, and sometimes seizures. They don't usually spread to other parts of the body and can be removed surgically, although they tend to grow back after a year or two."

Following discovery of her meningioma, Ninny's owners decided the best option would be brain surgery to remove the tumour. However, Ninny's condition began to deteriorate rapidly so she was rushed into the AHT's surgical suite for an emergency craniectomy to remove the tumour and relieve the pressure on her brain.

This surgery involved removing a piece of Ninny's skull to gain access to the tumour. Upon opening the skull, the AHT's neurosurgeon could see Ninny's brain was very swollen, but fortunately the tumour was visible and accessible. The tumour was removed and the compressed brain was able to return to its normal shape.

In the days following surgery, Ninny improved neurologically and became more alert and responsive. Initially, she required feeding through a feeding tube and support from the AHT's Internal Medicine Unit, but soon regained her normal appetite. Ninny remained hospitalised at the AHT for a week, improving remarkably every day and regaining her personality.



Ninny shortly after surgery



Ninny back to health & enjoying the garden!

Ninny was discharged to her owner's care eight days after she was admitted and has continued to improve at home. Four months after surgery, she is starting to enjoy her walks in the garden again.

Courtenay added, "Ninny has done so well to recover from her illness. It's wonderful to know we were able to remove the tumour and allow her to return to her normal happy self. These brain tumours are relatively common in cats and not all cats are as lucky as Ninny. Her owners will have to keep an eye out for any signs of another tumour, but we hope Ninny will be able to continue living a normal, happy and healthy life."

Along with the excellent clinical care the AHT offers, as a veterinary charity we are also committed to furthering knowledge and understanding of diseases which affect pets. Research into brain tumours is ongoing to improve our understanding of these tumours and improve treatment options for our patients.

Cinders climbs a mountain

Until shortly before her first birthday, Cinders was a typical Labrador puppy: full of bounce and affection, with an insatiable appetite. Then one evening, we found a lump. It was small, and easy to miss; when my mind wandered to cancer, I told myself I was being silly.

Two weeks, lots of tests and several biopsies later and we had it confirmed: Cinders had developed a Grade II Sub-Cutaneous Mast Cell Tumour. It was by no means a death sentence, but due to its position and depth, removal was not as simple as we had hoped.

What followed was surgery: removing the cancer itself, three centimetres of the tissue around it, and a little bit of rib, all necessary to give her the best chance of recovery. Possibly the bit she found the most humiliating was the extremely dodgy hair cut she was given, and she definitely wasn't a fan of the t-shirts we put her in to stop her scratching her bare skin and stitches!

Due to the muscle loss she suffered, it took around three months for her to be able to run around and exercise as she used to. Now that she is back to her bouncy self, Cinders would love to use some of her boundless energy to help other animals in their times of need, so took her humans - Steph, Charlene, Marc and Garrett - up Snowdon in August. All the money raised will go towards the AHT's cancer research programme.

Stephanie Harris

Cinders after surgery



Jumping in memory of Jessie

Well done to Corinne for an amazing achievement doing your skydive! Thank you for all your fundraising efforts which will be going towards our cancer research work.

I recently lost my cat, Jessie, to cancer. Jessie meant the world to me and I miss her so much.

I believe that out of everything bad, something good should come, so I have done a skydive as a great personal challenge (I am afraid of heights!) and to raise much needed funds for the Animal Health Trust's cancer research facility in Jessie's memory so that one day other pet owners will not have to go through what I have with Jessie.

Corinne Richards



The Bythams with Creton & Careby Sponsored Ride

This annual sponsored horse ride is run to raise funds to support the fabric of four Lincolnshire parish churches as well as one other worthy cause.

This year, the AHT was fortunate to be chosen as the external charity for the outstanding work it does to improve the health and welfare of horses and ponies.

The event was a great success and the committee awarded the Trust with a wonderful donation of £900.

Thank you to all those who took part in the ride and helped raise much needed funds.

Andrew Simmonds (AHT Acting Head of Development) receives a cheque for £900 from Pat Bowles (left) and Rosemary Player (right)



Prudential RideLondon Surrey 100 2014

On August 10th eight intrepid cyclists from the AHT cycling team took part in the 2nd **Prudential RideLondon - Surrey 100**. This event is a wonderful cycling sportive that takes place along the 2012 Olympic cross country route covering a challenging 100 mile course from London through Surrey, up Box Hill, Leith Hill and then finishing back in London along the Mall.

The day itself was rather eventful with the aftermath of hurricane Bertha wreaking havoc on the weather and cycling conditions. Despite this the atmosphere was incredible from both the crowds and the determined cyclists who would not let the continual rain and gale force winds affect their race! Despite the conditions, the eight members of Team AHT did very well and all completed the course in extremely admirable times.

It was an incredible journey for the team, not only through vigorous and dedicated training but with some excellent fundraising. This year we were honoured to have sponsors of our AHT cycling team including: Betfred, Agria, Aberdeen Asset Management and also Betsi.

The eight members of the team: Steve and Caroline Shore, Simon Wheeler, Mike Woodcock, Keith Woodcock, Steven Withey, Kieran Rose and Jane Shrubbs, managed to raise an astonishing: £8,231.71! Huge thanks to all of you!



Steve and Caroline Shore at the event

New AHT online shop now open!

Our new online shop is now open! Check it out for a fantastic range of gifts and essentials for pets, children, adults and the home and a selection of AHT branded items.

On the launch of the new webshop, AHT's Chief Executive Dr Mark Vaudin says, "We're thrilled to now be able to offer such a diverse amount of products to our supporters nationally, as well as locally. Previously we've only been able to supply these items through the shop in our Visitor's Centre on site in Suffolk. However, now we can cater for shoppers all over the country, who will in turn be giving a great gift back to this unique organisation."

Support the AHT - all proceeds from your purchases from www.ahtshop.co.uk or from our catalogue, support our work fighting disease and injury in animals around the world.

AHT Jersey Golf Day a huge success!

On Friday 19th September, 23 teams played in the Animal Health Trust Golf Day at the prestigious Royal Jersey Golf Club. The Stableford competition was won by the Moore Stephens team with 88 points.

The annual Golf Day is a firm fixture in the fundraising calendar for us and is organised by long term AHT supporter Bunny Roberts. Bunny has been closely involved in fundraising for the AHT for many years, and has helped to raise more than £2 million to date.

Corporate Fundraising Manager, Chloe Bowler, said; 'We are extremely grateful to Bunny for organising such a wonderful day. It has become hugely popular across the island and further afield, with many players and teams returning year after year. The AHT has a great presence in Jersey, with our ophthalmologists having recently operated on animals at both New Era Veterinary Hospital and Durrell Wildlife Park, so it is wonderful to have such a well-supported event on the island as well'.

After the golf, everyone enjoyed a live auction with Richard Phillips, which saw some amazing lots raise even more money. The day raised an amazing £23,500 in total. Our thanks go to all who supported the day.



Mark Vaudin, CEO of the AHT, swinging into action on Jersey!

If you would like to take on a challenge on behalf of our charity, or simply want to support the fantastic work that we do, then please visit www.aht.org.uk/fundraise



www.facebook.com/animalhealthtrust



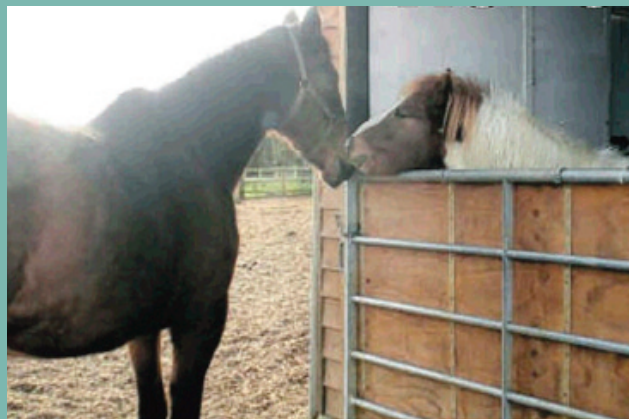
www.twitter.com/ahtofficial

Hor-see hor-see

A 15-year old Arab called Pippa, owned by Remus Memorial Horse Sanctuary, lost her sight in both eyes to cataracts during the autumn of last year. Pippa successfully underwent surgery on one eye and after a few months was able to go back into the paddock.



She loved her new life and found a boyfriend in Dickie - a most unlikely partnership! Unfortunately earlier this year the retina in this same eye detached, once again plunging her into darkness.



Pippa (left) with boyfriend Dickie!

AHT ophthalmologists immediately went to see her and the decision was made to try cataract surgery on her other eye. The operation went ahead and was a total success. Pippa coped wonderfully with this second operation and is enjoying having her sight back again.

Pippa has been with Remus for four years after her owners could no longer care for her. Remus founder Sue Burton said: "We were all devastated for her, as she had been enjoying her new life so much and it seemed so cruel to be snatched away from her but thanks to the second cataract surgery, her sight was saved".

Claudia Hartley, AHT Head of Ophthalmology, performing an electroretinogram on Pippa

New study into epileptoid cramping syndrome in Norwich Terriers

We're asking Norwich Terrier owners to complete a new questionnaire as part of an investigation to understand an emerging syndrome known as 'epileptoid cramping' being seen in the breed.

This syndrome is characterised by distressing episodes of "muscle cramps/spasms" affecting one or more body parts. The episodes generally last from a few to several minutes. Dogs are completely normal in between episodes.

The AHT's investigation, led by our Head of Neurology, Dr Luisa De Risio, aims to define the clinical characterisation and prevalence of the condition.

If you, a family member or a friend own a Norwich Terrier you can help to increase our understanding of this disease and possibly develop tools for breeders to use to breed future generations of Norwich Terrier that are less likely to be affected.

Luisa explains: "To find out more about the clinical signs of epileptoid cramping syndrome in Norwich Terriers, we have designed a questionnaire. This has been based on the examination of videos of previously affected Norwich Terriers and other information provided by the breed club and owners of affected dogs."

"We are appealing to owners of Norwich Terriers, to complete an online questionnaire regardless of whether your Norwich Terrier has ever been affected or not – it is important we collect questionnaires from Norwich Terriers unaffected by epileptoid cramping as well as affected ones".

Owners can request a printed copy of the questionnaire by calling **Julia Freeman** on **01638 552700** (Monday to Thursday 9am to 4 pm) or emailing **julia.freeman@aht.org.uk**

To complete the online questionnaire, please visit **www.aht.org.uk/norwichterrier**

