

# Animal *Health* Trust News



Issue 72 | Spring 2012

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## Deaf and blind rescue dog is given gift of sight by AHT

Dodger, an 18-month-old Staffordshire Bull Terrier and RSPCA rescue dog, who was born completely deaf and with severe cataracts in both his eyes, has been given the gift of sight by AHT vets.

Dodger's story hit the headlines after his owner was caught hitting him, and the footage was posted online. His owner was subsequently prosecuted for animal cruelty and banned from keeping dogs for 15 years.

Following his rescue the RSPCA team sought advice from the AHT's Ophthalmologists to see if Dodger's sight problems could be rectified.

Claudia Hartley, our Head of Small Animal Ophthalmology, said: "Dodger is the most adorable dog. As soon as he arrived I fell in love with him and it wasn't long before he worked his charm on the rest of the vets and nurses here!"

The AHT's vets initially performed cataract surgery on Dodger's right-eye and it became apparent very quickly that he was able to see again.

Kirstyn Gaunt, Deputy Manager at the RSPCA Block Fen Animal Centre, where Dodger is currently staying, said: "Dodger is such a loveable character, and when it was discovered he was deaf and unable to see clearly, we wanted to do all we could to give him a second chance. We were all in tears when we heard the AHT could carry out the operation for him and give him the gift of sight again – we are so extremely grateful to them for their help."

Dodger returned to the AHT in February 2012 to have his left-eye operated on and initial signs are very good.

Claudia said: "Both of Dodger's operations went very well and we're confident he now has sight in both eyes. It's an absolute joy to be able to help dogs like Dodger who will now, hopefully, have a much brighter future.

"Dodger won the AHT team over with his charm and affectionate nature. I have two Staffies of my own and if I had room for another I'd

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Animal **Health** Trust

Lanwades Park

Kentford

Newmarket

Suffolk CB8 7UU

Telephone: +44 (0)1638 555648

Fax: +44 (0)1638 555604

Email: [info@aht.org.uk](mailto:info@aht.org.uk)

Website: [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 209642

certainly be taking this lovely young chap home! We all hope he finds a forever home that deserves a dog as special as him."

The RSPCA team will now begin the process of looking for a very special new home for Dodger. Kirstyn Gaunt, added: "Although Dodger can now see, he is still completely deaf, and he'll need a special owner who can understand his very specific needs. He has started to take on some basic sign language and he is a fast learner. Everyone who meets Dodger is bowled over by his loveable nature and character, but he is still young and has a lot of energy! We know that somewhere out there is the perfect home for him, where he will be able to enjoy a fantastic life with a loving family."

You can watch a video about Dodger's story at [www.aht.org.uk/ahttv](http://www.aht.org.uk/ahttv)



Gemma & Sponge on the treadmill

## Paddling Paws celebrate opening of new Hydrotherapy Centre

Two doggy paddlers have officially opened our brand new state-of-the-art hydrotherapy unit for small animals.

The Centre houses a 14 feet by eight feet by four feet hydrotherapy swimming pool and an electronically-programmed water treadmill. Both aid in the treatment of a wide range of painful conditions, as well as helping to ease pain and stiffness.

AHT patients, Sponge the Collie-cross and Mitch the Labrador officially opened the new centre, ably assisted by Mrs Barbara Cozens, a long term supporter of our hydrotherapy service.

Jo Handley-Howard, Head of Hydrotherapy at the AHT, said: "We've offered hydrotherapy to dogs and cats at the AHT since 2005 but this is the first time we've had a purpose built facility housing both the pool and the water treadmill and all the other support items we need. We're grateful to all those who have helped make this possible and are looking forward to helping many more dogs and cats using the facility."

Hydrotherapy also builds muscle strength and joint mobility, providing patients with a better range of movement and a greater level of fitness.

It is one of nine referral disciplines the AHT's Small Animal Centre offers and is often used as a way to help patients who have had spinal or neurological problems, such as a stroke, get back on their feet.

Within the new Centre there are internal and external ramps in and out of the pool, along with an overhead hoist to help larger recumbent patients in and out of the pool or water treadmill.

Jo added: "We are in discussions with a nationwide hydrotherapy trainer about using the new Hydrotherapy Centre as a UK 'Centre of Excellence' training centre for animal hydrotherapists. This would mean that we would not only be helping the hundreds of patients we see through the AHT on an annual basis, but dogs and cats in need of hydrotherapy across the UK."



Barbara Cozens cutting the ribbon



Jo & Mitch the Labrador in the pool



## Lanwades Park

On Saturday 17 March we opened the gates to our grounds at the weekends again and we hope that you will come and join us for our second season!

In the early part of the season we will begin installing a small children's play area here at Lanwades Park. We are also delighted to tell you that from spring 2012 we will be offering Lanwades Hall as an exclusive, bespoke wedding venue and to launch this new venture, will be holding a wedding fayre here on Sunday 6 May.

For further information about Lanwades Park, please visit our website at [www.lanwadespark.co.uk](http://www.lanwadespark.co.uk)



## AHT research provides advice for London 2012



Mechanical hoof

With many horses increasingly working on arena surfaces, there had been little research into the health implications of working on them.

British Dressage recently funded our questionnaire based study investigating risk factors for injury and whether there are any links between lameness and characteristics of arena surfaces.

The results showed that wax-coated sand or sand and rubber surfaces were associated with a lower risk of injury than sand, sand and PVC, woodchip or grass. Woodchips should be avoided if there are concerns about slipping and sand should be avoided if there are concerns about tripping. Horses exercised on large outdoor arenas are less prone to injury compared to horses exercised on small indoor arenas.

The results also showed that arenas without a base increase the risk of injury; limestone is recommended, whereas crushed concrete should be avoided. Fine sand performs better than coarse sand, and small rubber chunks are associated with less tripping than large strips.

Arena maintenance is very important, especially with more horses using an arena per day, and problems are less likely to occur if the arena is privately owned. It is essential to train on a variety of surfaces to appropriately condition bone, tendons and ligaments.

The London Olympics and our Olympic team horses are benefiting from this research. Our research (funded by UK Sport lottery funding for the British Equestrian Federation World Class Programme) is being used to advise on the management and training of horses leading into the Olympics, and also on the surfaces used within Greenwich Park for the London 2012 Olympic equestrian competition.

## The Kennel Club joins fight against cancer



The fight against cancer has moved on in leaps and bounds since our last newsletter! We're delighted that the Kennel Club has agreed to provide us with an interest-free loan of £1.5 million to help with the fight.

The loan has enabled us to push forward with building our new state-of-the-art radiotherapy facility, as part of the Kennel Club Cancer Centre.

In November 2012, our President HRH The Princess Royal visited the build site, along with Rosemary Smart of the Kennel Club and long-term AHT supporter Tom Scott to see how work was progressing (pictured left).

The Centre now houses a bunker, which will contain the linear accelerator, where radiotherapy treatment will be carried out. This bunker is built with solid concrete walls, measuring more than eight feet in width, to prevent any

radiation escaping the bunker. The foundation, walls and ceiling of the bunker had to be continually poured to ensure there were no joins in the fabrication. To pour just the roof of the bunker took 50 lorry loads of concrete!

We are very grateful to the Kennel Club for its generous loan, but we are still busily fundraising to help pay back the loan and purchase the essential equipment needed to treat animals with cancer.

We have raised £200,000 towards purchasing a linear accelerator but still need to raise a further £100,000. This piece of specialised equipment will enable us to deliver high doses of radiotherapy tailored to the shape and size of each tumour. It targets the tumour, preserving the healthy cells and gives pets the best chance to make a full recovery.

**If you would like to know more about how you can help, please contact the Fundraising Department on 01638 555648 or email [fundraising@aht.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@aht.org.uk)**

With your support, we hope that the Cancer Centre will be helping patients from the latter part of 2012.

## Guardian Angel appeal

A big 'thank you' to all our supporters who made a donation to our Christmas Appeal. We had a fantastic response and the appeal raised more than £15,000! We'd also like to thank Karen and Patrick Schalbetter for allowing us to use Tiggy (pictured opposite) as our case study.



## Celebrating equestrian excellence

More than 400 people from all walks of the equestrian world attended the Animal Health Trust's United Kingdom Equestrian Awards in November 2011.

The Animal Health Trust Special Award was presented to The Lord Kirkham CVO in recognition of his 25 years supporting the charity. During this time Lord Kirkham has brought passion, commitment and drive to the Trust enabling the charity to continue its groundbreaking research and make a vital contribution to animal welfare across the world.

Other winners included:

- The Duralock Racing Award** – Prince Khalid Abdullah
- The Dressage Award** – British Gold Medal Team comprising of Carl Hester, Laura Bechtolsheimer, Charlotte Du Jardin and Emile Faurie
- The British Showjumping Award** – Nick Skelton
- The Jacksons (C.I.) Limited Eventing Award** – Mitsubishi Motors
- Petplan Equine Vet of the Year** – Chris Pearce from Dorset
- The Litovet Equine Scientific Achievement Award** – Dr Peter Clegg from the University of Liverpool
- The South East Essex Insurance Brokers Voluntary Service Award** – Bunny Roberts

Desi Dillingham, Chairman of the Equestrian Awards Organising Committee, said: "The Equestrian Awards is a fantastic showcase of the equestrian talent in the UK. 2011 has been a wonderful year for our equestrian sports and the awards really do celebrate all of the incredible achievements. With London 2012 fast-approaching we're incredibly excited about next year's event and hope to have several equestrian athletes to honour!"

The annual fundraising event raised more than £50,000 for our vital work.



**Back row (left to right):** The Lord Kirkham CVO; Phillip Mitchell, General Manager of Juddmonte Farms, on behalf of Khalid Abdullah; Lance Bradley, Chief Executive of Mitsubishi Motors UK  
**Bottom row (left to right):** Dan Skelton on behalf of his father, Nick Skelton; Bunny Roberts; Chris Pearce; Emile Faurie

Dr Peter Clegg, (pictured right)



## Charity dog walk raises funds for SCI investigation

A series of sponsored dog walks is helping to raise hundreds of pounds for the AHT's SCI investigation.

Mary-Ann Sherwood-Clarke of Holiday Dogs, (pictured left with her Cockerpool Eric) organised the walks after she heard about the illness in 2011.

The first walk took place around Felixstowe, Suffolk in December with more than 30 people and their dogs attending. It raised nearly £300. A second walk took place in Rendlesham Forest at the beginning of March.

For information on future walks please visit [www.holidaydogs.blogspot.com](http://www.holidaydogs.blogspot.com)

For the latest information on SCI please visit our website at: [www.aht.org.uk/sci](http://www.aht.org.uk/sci)



## AHT at Crufts 2012

## Jodie Prenger visits our stand!

### Donating £2012 in 2012!

Long-term AHT supporter, and stalwart of the Stafford Club, Mrs Jean Loughborough recently presented us with a cheque for £2,012.

The money raised comes from sales of a limited edition book detailing the Staffordshire Bull Terrier which was written to celebrate 75 years of the Stafford Club.

Thanks for your ongoing support Jean and team!



David Levy (left), Southern Counties SBT Society President and Jean Loughborough (right), editor of The Stafford Magazine with Mark Vaudin of the AHT

Jodie Prenger, BBC Radio 2 presenter and winner of BBC1's 'I'd Do Anything' TV talent-search, visited the Animal Health Trust stand during Crufts 2012.

Miss. Prenger, who can currently be seen starring in 'One Man, Two Guvnors' in London's West End is a huge animal lover and was delighted to visit the world's biggest dog show.

Jodie said: "I love dogs. I have four of my own and I'm so pleased to be able to come to Crufts to support the Animal Health Trust and the great work it is doing."

Jodie was at Crufts to support the AHT's Deputy Chief Executive, Dr Mark Vaudin, as he heads a team of nine runners competing in the 2012 London Marathon. The team are running to raise funds for the AHT's work treating and researching cancer.

Jodie added: "The AHT is a great cause. I fully support its work to fight cancer in animals and I wish all of its brave marathon runners all the very best for April!"



Jodie Prenger on AHT stand at Crufts with Bruce

## National Trainers Federation's Charity of the Year

The AHT has been chosen as the National Trainers Federation's (NTF) charity of the year!



Peter Webbon, AHT Chief Executive, said: "So much of the research and surveillance work we do helps the Thoroughbred industry behind the scenes, so we're delighted that the NTF has decided to honour us in this way."

You can find out more about the work of the NTF at

[www.racehorsetrainers.org](http://www.racehorsetrainers.org)

## Lord Leconfield Pony Club wins Pony Power prize!

Congratulations to the Members of the Lord Leconfield Pony Club Branch who have won the exclusive Pony Power eventing clinic with Lucy Wieggersma and cross-country course builder Eric Winter.

Branches and Centres simply needed to raise £100 for our Pony Power campaign during 2011 to be eligible for the draw. More than 70 Branches and Centres were entered into the draw but it was the branch from West Sussex that came out on top!

We are extremely grateful to all Members of the Pony Club who have supported us as the charity of the year during 2010 and 2011. The efforts of 185 Branches and Centres have raised more than £50,000 and this will help us to help many more horses and ponies.

## Dates for your diary

27 May: Greyhound Extravaganza, Lanwades Park

30 June: AHT Gala Raceday, Newmarket's July Course

28 September: A Night at the Opera, Tattersalls, Newmarket

1 November: Equestrian Awards, Lancaster London

For more information on any of the above events, please call 01638 555648 or email [fundraising@aht.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@aht.org.uk)

## A day in the life of Kirstin Holmes, Groom at the Animal Health Trust



My day begins around 8am, when I get to the yard and find out about that day's cases. I really enjoy my job and look forward to going into work!

At the start of the day, everyone – vets, interns and grooms – get together and discuss each horse. This includes its history, condition and what plans we have for it for the day. Each person in the equine centre has a vital role to play in the care of each patient. I enjoy the variety of work I do, from the usual yard duties, to nursing, riding and helping out with imaging, a crucial aspect of the AHT's diagnostic work.

This is one of the most unusual parts of the job. As grooms, we play an important role in the acquisition of images from all modalities. This includes radiography (x-ray), where we position the horse and the x-ray plates, ultrasound, scintigraphy (bone scanning), where I'm actually trained to acquire images, and MRI.

MRI scanning is an imaging modality which is commonly used in horses, dogs, cats and people! This technique uses a magnet to create detailed images of bones and tissues. At the AHT, we have two MRI scanners. One is a high-field scanner, where the horse undergoes a general anaesthetic. As a groom, I assist in 'dropping' the horse after induction (not literally of course – it's a term we use for helping the horse fall easily to the floor!) and then hoisting it up on to a specially crafted table to then position it in the magnet. This requires skill, precision and teamwork.



I'm particularly interested in the riding part of the job, which is often part of the clinical assessment. As a rider, I have to assess how the horse goes if it's a performance issue or whether I can feel any lameness. Sometimes lameness may only become apparent when the horse is ridden, and it's important to be able to describe what you feel when you're riding.

I love working with Dr Sue Dyson, she's so well renowned in the veterinary world. She has a wealth of knowledge, and when she shares this I try to soak up as much as possible! She does an amazing job here at the AHT and she fully appreciates the support of the team.

My day will typically finish at around 5.30pm, although we have to be flexible and will often work overtime and be on call for emergencies. Being a groom at the AHT is a fantastic job and I think I'm very lucky to work somewhere I love.





## Social Media

Towards the end of 2011, we launched our new website. We hope you like the new look and have had the chance to have a good look around. The new website includes our own online TV channel where you can watch videos about our work!

We are also now on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube so if you have accounts on any of these sites please follow us to get the latest updates. You'll find us at:

[www.facebook.com/animalhealthtrust](http://www.facebook.com/animalhealthtrust)

[www.twitter.com/ahtofficial](http://www.twitter.com/ahtofficial)

[www.youtube.com/ahttv](http://www.youtube.com/ahttv)



## The Queen's Diamond Jubilee 2012



The Queen's Coronation

To mark 60 years of the Queen's reign the Diamond Jubilee will take place in 2012. The celebrations will centre around an extended weekend in 2012 from 2-5 June.

Since being crowned 60 years ago, the Queen has rarely been out of the public eye attending many functions all over the country. However, Newmarket can boast of a strong link with the Queen as it has received more royal visits than any other town of its size!

The Queen became Patron of the AHT in 1959.



Flanked by her racing manager Lord Carnarvon, the Queen is introduced to Dr Twink Allen, principal research officer at the Equine Fertility Unit.



A good example of "the Queen's weather". A rainy day in 1981 when the Queen opened a new virology unit at the Animal Health Trust just outside Newmarket.



Planting the memorial tree at the AHT in 2010 in memory of the AHT's founder Reg Woolldridge

If you are thinking of celebrating the Jubilee this year, why not raise money for the AHT at the same time?!

If you're having a street party perhaps you could donate the proceeds from selling your cup cakes to the AHT! Here are some great fundraising ideas for your day!

- Cake/biscuit/pudding competition...
- Bring & Buy/swap table or auction...
- Tug of war, skittles, swing ball...
- Cycle course, football, basketball...
- Best front garden / decorated front of house...
- Chalk drawing on tarmac...
- Dog show...



## AHT scientist named Young Scientist of the year

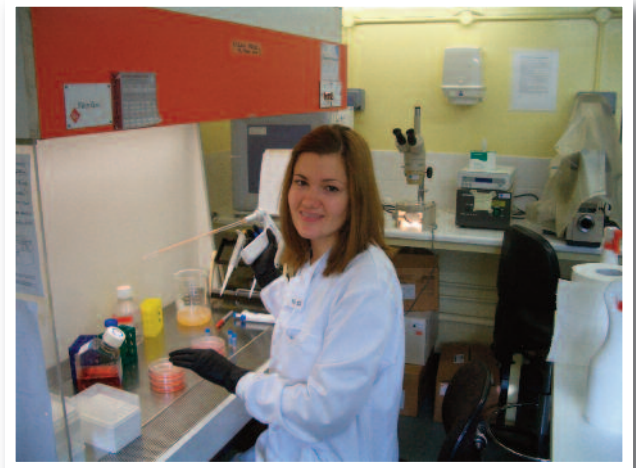
Debbie Guest, one of the AHT's researchers has been named IVRMS Young Scientist of the year.

The IVRMS (International Veterinary Regenerative Medicine Society) Young Scientist Award is awarded, by the IVRMS Trust, to a young, ambitious, scientist working in the field of veterinary regenerative medicine.

Debbie is the inaugural winner and was presented with the award at the IVRMS Conference in Leipzig, where she was given the opportunity to present her work.

In the last few years, Debbie has been determining if equine embryo-derived stem cells can aid tendon regeneration in horses and this award recognises the significance of this work.

Congratulations Debbie!



## Research scientist returns from Australia



Research Scientist Tom Lewis, of the AHT, has recently returned from Australia where he spent his Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship researching strategies for prioritising health in pedigree dog breeding.

Tom worked with quantitative genetics specialists at the University of New England. He learnt how sophisticated computer based tools may be applied to select against inherited disease in pedigree dog breeds.

Tom also spent time with researchers at the University of Sydney Veterinary School discussing collaborative research which would aim to deliver improvements in the accuracy of selection against hip dysplasia. Hip dysplasia is the most widespread canine inherited disease and is particularly prevalent in many popular breeds such as the Golden Retriever, German Shepherd and Labrador Retriever.

Tom hopes that his articles and seminars describing the tools developed and how to use them to breed healthy dogs, will further benefit the public and ultimately improve the health of many pedigree dogs.

## Our cancer research needs your samples!

In order to progress our cancer research work we need samples from both dogs with cancer and unaffected dogs.

A non-invasive cheek swab from your dog is the simplest way to help, or you could speak to your vet about supplying a surplus blood sample or a tiny piece of surplus tissue from a tumour biopsy if your dog has cancer.

Breeds which we are currently studying are Boxer, Bullmastiff, German Shepherd Dog, Golden Retriever, Great Dane, Greyhound, Irish Wolfhound, Labrador Retriever, Leonberger, Rottweiler, Shar Pei and Weimaraner.

We need samples from dogs of any age with cancer, and samples from dogs that don't have cancer and are at least seven years old.

If you own a dog of one of the above breeds and would like to help please email [mike.starkey@aht.org.uk](mailto:mike.starkey@aht.org.uk)

