



WHI Newsletter

The Independent Breed Health Group



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A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself.

Josh Billings

"To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier"

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The WHI "Breed the 'Perfect' Puppy Seminar" Feb 2012
Full reports of the speakers presentations included in this edition

Viewpoint

Could I Be Poisoning My Dog?

A study of Xylitol poisoning in dogs

Contributors: Kate Watkins, Barbara Penney, Lynette Hodge of Stormchaser Leonburgers and Lynn Carter

A long time treat for many dogs has been to lick out the almost empty yogurt pot after we have finished eating. But now, because of a change in ingredients, instead of giving them a treat, we could be putting them in real danger. Over the past few years, manufacturers have been quietly replacing artificial sweeteners in sugar free and low sugar products with a substance called Xylitol. The danger is that Xylitol is highly toxic to dogs.

This warning was first aired by WHI in Newsletter 14 back in spring 2007.

As long ago as July of 2010, the British Veterinary Association was warning dog owners of the danger that this artificial sweetener, can pose to their pets. Xylitol is not considered harmful to humans, but if ingested by a dog the substance triggers a sudden release of insulin which causes a dramatic drop in blood sugar (*hypoglycaemia) and can lead to liver damage.

Even small amounts can cause hypoglycaemia-induced seizures and larger amounts can lead to liver failure.

One to two pieces of Xylitol sweetened chewing gum can pose a concern for the development of hypoglycaemia in a 20 lb (9.1 kg) dog.

These signs can develop quite readily, at times less than 30 minutes after ingestion of the product. However, Dr. Eric Dunayer of the Animal Poison Control Center of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has said that with smaller concentrations of Xylitol, the onset of clinical signs could be delayed as much as 12 hours after ingestion.

Therefore, it is important to stress the need for veterinary care if a dog is thought to have eaten something containing Xylitol and becomes ill while being monitored at home. Signs such as vomiting, ataxia (uncoordinated movements) or depression warrant an immediate trip to the veterinary clinic.

Xylitol is wonderful from a human perspective. It is a sugar alcohol -- an artificial sweetener created from natural extracts of birch tree bark, raspberries, plums and corn. Xylitol tastes better than most artificial sweeteners, actively inhibits dental disease and best of all, for the manufacturers, it is considerably cheaper than other similar products.

It used to be found mainly in sugar free chewing gum, mints and breath fresheners but because of the cheapness of Xylitol in comparison to other artificial sweeteners, it is slowly replacing them in many other

products. A health conscious public is increasingly demanding more, low calorie products. Diabetes is on the increase and demand for a wide range of low sugar foods has led manufacturers to respond by adding Xylitol to sweets, jams and low calorie goods such as cakes, biscuits and even bread.

Xylitol is increasingly used as a sweetener in things such as dental hygiene products and is also found in many medicines. Of particular concern are the sugar substitute products that contain Xylitol, which are used in home baking, as well as in manufactured goods.

Reviews of Xylitol being used in this way in human food are positively glowing but unfortunately your dog may bear the cost.

The biggest danger to our dogs is not only that it is being used in products labelled sugar free or suitable for diabetics, it is also being used in many of the everyday products which we have all used for years. The problem is that the manufacturers have not announced these changes and vets may not yet be fully aware of the dangers these products pose.

(cont)



Could I Be Poisoning My Dog? (cont)

Children's cough mixtures and other paediatric elixirs which some vets suggest we give to our dogs when they have a cough or a temperature may now contain Xylitol. Pills may be coated with Xylitol for palatability. Owners may not be aware of these dangers and even their vets may not associate clinical deterioration with the ingestion of these foodstuffs.

At the time of the BVA warning in 2010, the past President of the Association, Nicky Paull commented, "While most dog owners are now aware that foods such as chocolate and grapes can be toxic to their pets, few are aware of the dangers if their dog eats a cake or muffin containing Xylitol."

Make sure you read labels carefully. The VPIS (Veterinary Poisons Information Service) has said they would like to see manufacturers of products containing Xylitol provide some visible warnings and information on the packaging and to inform the retail outlets they supply, of the potential risks to dogs.

Alexander Campbell, Head of Service at VPIS, said at the time of the BVA warning in 2010, "With the increasing number of products containing Xylitol on the market, the VPIS recognises the extreme importance of raising awareness of the danger to dogs of ingesting this substance. This is yet another instance where a food or food additive deemed safe for human consumption, proves to be dangerous for other species. Pets should really only be given foodstuffs formulated for them."

However, with regard to products produced specifically for pet consumption, even scrutinizing labels, may not

provide the reassurance you seek. Manufacturers of veterinary medicines do not have to notify changes of ingredients. In fact it appears that they don't have to list the ingredients at all. Because of the proposed benefits of Xylitol in demonstrating a reduction in tooth decay, it has even found its way into at least one dental hygiene product for dogs!

If you think your dog may have eaten something containing Xylitol, please **contact your veterinarian immediately** and be ready to provide information on what has been eaten. If it has only just happened and the dog is not yet showing any clinical signs of poisoning, your vet may advise inducing vomiting to expel the Xylitol item(s).

Veterinary treatment involves close monitoring, supportive care and treating the resultant low blood glucose and possible low potassium levels. Because of the propensity of Xylitol to cause a rapid drop in blood glucose it is extremely important to manage Xylitol ingestion to prevent hypoglycaemia. Administration of small, frequent meals for approximately 8 - 12 hours after exposure may aid in preventing or minimising the development of hypoglycaemia in asymptomatic dogs.

Clinical signs which may indicate poisoning could be:

- Vomiting
- Weakness
- Ataxia (uncoordinated movements)
- Depression
- Hypokalemia (decreased potassium)
- Seizures
- Coma
- Liver dysfunction and/or failure

It appears that the only way to try to ensure the safety of your dog, is to read labels very carefully, discuss your concerns if you visit your vet and be extremely careful over what you give your dog for a treat!

**Hypoglycaemia - blood sugar level drops too low to provide enough energy for the body's activities.*

Related Reading and Resources:

- [Hypoglycemia following canine ingestion of Xylitol-containing gum](#)
Abstract: Journal of Human and Veterinary Toxicology
- [Raisin and Grape Toxicity](#)
By Janet Tobiasen Crosby DVM, Guide to Veterinary Medicine at About.com
- [Xylitol information from Wikipedia](#)
- Canine dental mouthwash
<http://www.veterinarypartner.com/Content.plx?P=A&A=2875>
- <http://www.truthaboutpetfood.com/articles/reminder-Xylitol-ingestion-danger-for-dogs.html>
- <http://www.avma.org/onlinews/javma/oct06/061001b.asp>
- <http://www.bva.co.uk/newroom/1941.aspx>
- The BVA Animal Welfare Foundation and the Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) have an easy reference guide to keeping pets safe from harmful substances. The 'Pets and poisons: keeping your animal safe' leaflet can be easily downloaded at <http://www.bva->

You enter into a certain amount of madness when you marry a person with pets.

Nora Ephron



A dog teaches a boy fidelity, perseverance, and to turn around three times before lying down.

Robert Benchley



An attendee's thoughts on the WHI Seminar



I attended the very successful WHI Seminar "Breed the 'Perfect' Puppy" held at Weedon Bec Village Hall, Northamptonshire on the 4th Feb. It must have been a considerable worry for the steering group beforehand as to whether this would need to be cancelled due to the weather forecast, and although it was a bright sunny and frosty morning on the way to the venue, signs on the motorway repeatedly gave severe weather warnings. However, with over 70 people registered, the day went off without a hitch, with just a few absentees; who must have been disappointed not to attend due to the risk of encountering a major problem returning home. I was lucky and on my return journey the worst bit was the slip road from the M4 for Bath, plus a mile or so on the adjoining main road, but this improved on the downhill slope. I understand that those travelling north had more to encounter.

Reception was at 10am with refreshments and each attendee was provided with a seminar pack, plus a calendar, pen & diary etc courtesy of Royal Canin.

Several stalls were set up, one with Gwen Bailey's books and information; Linda Salisbury displayed full details of all the exciting things available to do with your dogs at 'Dogs Unleashed' to be held at Bakewell Showground on the

23rd-24th June 2012; Amanda Naylor brought her range of 'Aloe Vera' products; Lisa Gosling displayed a wonderful array of doggie delights from 'Daisy's Dog Deli' on her stall so beautifully, Zoe Carter manned a handicrafts stall and Liz Harrison came with her 'Phoenix Trading' card stall.

Apart from a general raffle two 'specials' were on offer. The first was for a Wheaten model now out of production, donated by Christine Poyser and won by Bill Lambert of the KC Assured Breeders Scheme. The second was a signed litre bottle of Whisky donated by Rob Watkins and described as a 'Collector's item' as the signee was the boxer Barry McGuigan, one of the best boxers of his generation. Barry who of course is Irish, owned two Wheaten Terriers in the 1980s bred by Maureen Holmes under the 'Holmenocks' affix. The winner of this was Karen Francis who I believe has hidden it from prying eyes for the time being!

The first speaker was Gwen Bailey BSc.Hons, Director of 'The Puppy School', accompanied by her Beauceron for demonstration purposes. He was such an amiable dog and wandered freely round the room until required to do his bit! Gwen's talk with the use of videos and her dog, was extremely informative and interesting, giving plenty of time for questions.

Following this was the now eagerly anticipated lunch from the catering team of Pam & John Clarke; a delicious feast of lasagne, salad and garlic bread appeared at 1 pm, followed by apple crumble and custard, which was excellent and so well organised!

Dr. Jeff Sampson BSc.DPhil, recently retired from his position as the Kennel Club's Genetic Consultant, took the afternoon slot, and although much about Genetics can go over my head, Jeff always manages to make his talks interesting enough to hold the attention of the audience with question time following.

The message coming through from both these knowledgeable speakers was 'Education, Education, Education'.

The meeting ended at 4 pm and was followed by tea and a splendid array of cakes. WHI celebrated nine years since its inauguration on the 16th February, and Lynn Carter had made a special cake topped with Wheatens made from golden icing for the occasion.

I look forward to reading a full report of the day in the newsletter.

It was then all systems go for the return journey as with darkening skies the snow was beginning to fall.

My thanks to the Steering Group of WHI and all those who helped towards making this event very special.

Barbara Penney



The WHI “Breed the ‘Perfect’ Puppy Seminar” 4th Feb 2012

GWEN BAILEY (BSc Hons)

Gwen is a well-respected author and the Director of "The Puppy School", whose presentation "How to raise a problem free dog", covered the crucial period from birth to six months.

Gwen pioneered the use of animal behaviour knowledge in the rehoming of unwanted pets while working for a large animal welfare charity, where she was Head of Animal Behaviour for 12 years. She is a member and past Chairman of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors

Gwen began her talk with a question, "Are all puppies perfect by the age of six months?"

She said that the answer was down to a variety of influences; firstly genetics, secondly socialisation and thirdly, individual experiences. During the first six months the puppy's developing brain is 'malleable' and what the puppy becomes as an adult is greatly affected by what happens during this period.

Gwen pointed out the shocking statistics that between 27% and 33% of dogs coming into rescue have behavioural issues. Approximately 20 dogs a day in the UK are euthanized, according to the Dog's Trust 2011, in other words one almost every hour of every day.

It is also interesting that families with children under the age of 6 yrs, who acquire a puppy are statistically significantly more likely to give it up to rescue or re-home, than families with older children.

Owners needed to consider carefully before buying a puppy. The first thing to establish is whether the breed characteristics are right for their lifestyle.



The purchaser needs to ensure that the breeder has bred from sound genetic lines, carrying good temperament as a priority.

A further consideration is whether the individual puppy in the litter is the right one for that particular owner and here again Gwen said that a good breeder should be able to advise on that.

The owner then needs to establish how the puppies have been raised during their early life with the breeder. Gwen described the process of **socialisation** as a puppy getting used to the 'living' part of the environment, and **habituation**, as the familiarity with inanimate objects in the environment such as washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

Both of these processes are vital to the puppy's ability to become a well-balanced dog.

Gwen referred to a study of 605 puppies monitored for 6 weeks by 14 experienced Puppy School Tutors. All the puppies were between 12 and 20 weeks of age.

They were assessed according to a set of agreed criteria and 87% were described as, 'normal', 9% were assessed as having 'minor' temperamental problems and 3% as having 'severe' problems.

Whilst this may seem a relatively small proportion of dogs, if these statistics are related to the number of puppies which are registered by the Kennel Club in one year, it would mean that around 9,000 puppies every year fall into the 'severe' bracket; an alarming thought!

Gwen quoted the Jesuit motto, "Give me the child until he is 7 and I will give you the man." She said this equally applied to dogs between birth and 6 months of age.

Gwen assesses that 1 week for a baby puppy equates to approximately 4 months for a human child, so that the first 3 weeks are approximately the same as 1 year for a child and a puppy at 8 months is at much the same stage of development in its life as a 14 year old child.

Research in America in the 1940's found that puppies between the ages of 3 and 12 weeks were particularly sensitive to environmental influences.

Attachments made during this period can form life-long preferences for the puppy, for example, whether the pup prefers female humans to males, will tolerate cats or other animals etc.

Choosing the right breed has a fundamental effect on the success or failure of a puppy to become 'perfect'. Gwen gave the example of Daisy, a Chesapeake Bay retriever.

The owners had no experience with the breed and believed that as she was designed to be a working dog, she should not be given toys to play with.

As a result the small children in the home had become Daisy's toys and she was biting them!

The owner's solution was to lock Daisy by herself most of the time, making the situation even worse.

The age and physical capabilities of the prospective owner is also an important consideration when choosing the right dog i.e. avoiding choosing dogs that need a lot of exercise or grooming or need taking for long walks or are too strong to handle.

Gwen said it was a Breeder's responsibility to explain to prospective owners what their dogs were originally bred for.

Many novice dog purchasers will only go for the look of the
(cont)



Dogs love their friends and bite their enemies, quite unlike people, who are incapable of pure love and always, have to mix love and hate.

Sigmund Freud



The 'Perfect' Puppy - GWEN BAILEY (cont)



Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea.

Robert A. Heinlein

dog which appeals to them and discount what the dog's requirements might be.

Knowing the historical background of the breed would inform the prospective owner which traits the dog might have.

Knowing the breeder's priorities when planning the litter may also inform a prospective owner's choices.

Puppies bred very much for show potential, where a dog may have that extra quality in breed 'type', could also mean they are bred with the 'showmanship' to attract the judge's eye; this may have the effect of producing a more difficult dog for a novice owner to handle in a domestic situation.

So having settled on the right breed, finding the right breeder is the next hurdle for the prospective owner to deal with. Gwen explained how difficult this was to establish for most people seeking to buy a puppy and that even a 'puppy-farmer' could be difficult to identify, especially for a novice would-be owner.

This was beautifully illustrated by two of the many video clips which Gwen used to illustrate her presentation.

Firstly we saw a prospective purchaser looking at a litter of puppies, which had obviously been cared for as far as their physical needs were concerned. They were housed in a room away from the main part of the house and they were put out into the garden for the purchaser to view. The puppies were obviously unused to the surroundings and were hesitant about being on an unfamiliar surface. Some adjusted to this more quickly than others and began to play but in all cases there was virtually no interaction with the humans present; the puppies chased each other but were either uninterested or in some cases showed they were frightened by the

presence of people and avoided any interaction.

In the second clip of another litter of the same breed and at roughly the same age, the puppies were kept in the house with the breeder and family. The pups were confident in their trip out to the garden, which they were evidently well-accustomed to. Each pup confidently approached the humans present, even those whom they had not met before and were eager to play with them and to be handled.

These puppies had met all the usual domestic situations such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, televisions etc and behaved very differently from those in the first clip. Appleby (*Vet Rec. Apr6;150(14):434-8*) stated that dogs raised in a home environment were far less likely to develop aggression.

Gwen elaborated on the period of greatest sensitivity for developing puppies. She said that from the moment that the pup's eyes were open, an instinctive 'self-preservation' fear would kick in and the puppy would begin to show caution of new things in case they were 'dangerous'.

It is vital that between 3 and 8 weeks lots of new experiences are given in an appropriate, positive way. Between 3 and 5 weeks, a puppy will happily approach an unfamiliar person. After 5 weeks puppies will become increasingly wary of strangers or unfamiliar situations.

Between 6 to 8 weeks they are at their peak of sensitivity. It is vital that the puppies are therefore exposed to the right type of experiences at the right times to ensure they can cope with anything they might come across later in life.

During the sensitive period, Gwen believes that for optimum social development, the pup should meet at least 10

people including men, women, the elderly, toddlers, children of school age and teenagers; people wearing hats, glasses etc and people of different ethnicity.

They should also meet other dogs and puppies, other pets, livestock, household appliances, noises (particularly loud, sudden ones), cars and traffic. At this point Gwen mentioned the positive use of 'sound' tapes, which can help the puppy become accustomed to noises that may not be around its current environment at the time, such as aircraft or fireworks.

(www.soundtherapy4pets.com)

All of these experiences should be carefully managed so as not to over-stimulate the puppy and perhaps produce a negative effect. Probably 2 sessions a day is adequate, as long as the puppy can cope.

When feeding puppies in the litter, Gwen felt it was better practice for each puppy to have its own bowl as this avoid puppies competing for food and then possibly becoming possessive over food. She also emphasised that the puppies should have plenty of toys around so that there is no need for them to become possessive over toys.

Gwen spoke of the need for a puppy to have a reliable attachment figure during the sensitive period; they must have enough love and attention each day; sometimes this is difficult in a very busy family with young children. Puppies need stability and to learn to be 'humanised' in order to replace the position of its mother and littermates.

Pups that experience love and care are calm and happy puppies. In a study of wolves in 1967, it was observed that once properly socialised as cubs,

(cont)



The 'Perfect' Puppy - GWEN BAILEY (cont)

adult wolves remain so, despite long periods of isolation from humans.

Conversely, young wolves lacking in socialisation experiences from the age of 6 – 8 months, quickly regressed again into normal wolf behaviour.

It is important that the puppy is taught how to be alone by gradual desensitisation; the puppy is removed for very short periods of time from its littermates and firstly put into a separate enclosed space where it can still see its littermates, then over a time, to where it can no longer see them but can still hear and smell them, until finally it can tolerate short periods away by itself.

Care must be taken that the puppy does not have a bad experience during that time.

Gwen is firmly of the opinion that play is vitally important to the development of the puppy and to fostering the correct bonds between owner and pup. The 'Puppy School' has found that around 80% of novice owners either do not play enough with their puppy or do not know how to play positively. She said that play fulfils 5 vital functions, if done correctly:

- It helps to stop puppies play-biting.
- It helps to build positive relationships between humans and dogs.
- It uses up excess mental and physical energy.
- It helps to teach the puppy self-control
- It helps to teach the puppy control in times of excitement, such as chase and recall

Ideal toys for playing with young puppies are large soft toys.

Get down to the pups level and be exciting and fun. Move the toy unpredictably like a prey animal. There should be no pressure for the puppy, let it win the toy occasionally.

Tug only gently on the toy when the puppy has it in its mouth. Always play for short periods and try to stop whilst the puppy still wants more. Don't put in controls or restrictions and stop if you become frustrated or the pup transfers its attentions to biting your hands

Developing sensory awareness is also important, allowing them to take in different smells for instance.

A puppy brought up without games will develop a poor relationship with its owner and display a lack of focus and willingness to work with them.

From 8 weeks of age to 6 months and beyond, it is important to keep working with the puppy, introducing it to new experiences and situations.

Exercise is necessary but shouldn't be over done at this time because young bones and joints are in development.

However, if not allowed enough exercise opportunity, a young dog may become more of a problem. There should be short periods of free activity, off-lead in a safe area. Lead walks should be interspersed with periods of play.

Concentrate on establishing your leadership without force. Dogs respect a leader who is in control but this can be taught by simply controlling the resources.

It is important to insist on good behaviour for the puppy to 'earn' necessities such as, food, freedom, play, attention and exercise.

Gwen listed most of the basic

commands that can be taught in play sessions and added a few more challenging ones like drop, wait, fetch, turn around, catch, reverse, cross paws, roll over, speak and bow down, all of which she demonstrated with the help of her dog, Spider, a Beauceron.

Train for good manners by preventing bad behaviour before it happens, for example, holding their collar when meeting visitors will discourage them from jumping up at strangers. Distract the dog if it is about to do something unwanted.

Make sure you go through doorways and gates before the dog does. This can be taught quite simply by approaching the gate/door with the dog on a lead, as you start to open the gate, if the dog moves forward, close it again, repeat this until the dog finally stays where it is and allows you to move through first, when you can praise him and reward his behaviour.

As with all training, consistency is vital and all humans interacting with the dog need to follow the same 'rules'.

Encourage good behaviour by rewards. Provide safe outlets for natural behaviours such as chewing by giving appropriate chew toys/ bones etc. Always train when you have the time to do it properly and will not be frustrated if the dog is not cooperative.

Gwen believes that ideally you should spend 30 – 40 minutes each day in contact with your puppy. Time spent establishing rules when it was young paid dividends. Trying to get an older dog with no training to do the same thing would take at least two years.

Look, for a good puppy class, such as the Puppy School ones. Classes should be well run and
(cont)



*Whoever said you
can't buy happiness
forgot about
puppies.*

Gene Hill



The 'Perfect' Puppy - GWEN BAILEY (cont)

To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs.

Aldous Huxley

not chaotic. There should be an emphasis on 'kind' training methods rather than harsh corrective ones. The "Reward for good behaviour" method, uses treats whilst the puppy is learning and then gradually reduces this until the dog is able to respond to commands because it is eager to please its owner.

Many more tips on finding the right class can be found on the website, www.puppyschool.co.uk where there are also plenty of training video clips and other information.

The timing of getting puppies out and about is often a great concern to many breeders and owners.

Most Vets will recommend that the puppy should be kept

confined until after vaccinations have been completed. It is, however, interesting to know that the Guide Dogs For the Blind organisation take puppies to begin their training at the age of 6 weeks (much earlier than the optimum time for the majority of breeders for pet or show dogs) when their vaccination cover is still far from complete.

Apart from not putting the puppy down on an area of ground which has obviously been used as a toilet area by the local dog population, the Guide Dog puppies begin their training and are introduced to all kinds of experiences and to other dogs from the age of 6 weeks.

If you are using parks to socialise your new puppy, Gwen cautioned that you need to be aware of the temperament of the dogs the puppy is likely to meet in that situation, to avoid any bad experiences. Young puppies are easily overwhelmed by larger dogs rushing up to them or even crowds of children for that matter.

Between 6 to 8 months, puppies can regress and start to become fearful again, so it is important to put as much effort as you can into socialising it before then, so that it can come through that stage as a well adjusted dog.

Gwen summed up her presentation by saying that the 'perfect' puppy will be owned by the 'perfect' owner and that will be the one who:

- ...has carefully chosen the type of dog that is suitable for them and their situation, i.e. the right breed for their household and lifestyle.

- ...is prepared to find a "good" breeder, i.e. one that breeds for temperament and health and carries out the necessary socialisation and training until the puppy is ready to leave to go to with its new owner.
- ...will have realistic expectations of the puppy
- ...is prepared to give "time" to producing a well adjusted puppy, with love and attention every day and socialisation, socialisation....
- ...is prepared to carry out the necessary training and be referred to or look for a good puppy training class in the area that uses positive training methods.
- ...will teach it to tolerate isolation, to develop good manners and to respect the boundaries that you make for it and always teach the cues positively.

Gwen's final comments were that we must remember that society's expectations of dogs have changed. Things are very different today than in the past.

Whilst it is a good thing that in most places dogs are no longer left to roam the streets whilst owners are out at work, dogs are also living lives that are less than desirable spending long hours in isolation.

We also needed to be aware of the issues relating to modern methods of feeding and how diet can also affect the behaviour of our dogs!

Ian & Lynn Carter



The 'Perfect' Puppy – PROFESSOR JEFF SAMPSON (BSc. DPhil)

Professor Sampson was delivering his final presentation having recently announced his retirement as the Kennel Club's Genetics Consultant.

He trained originally as a biochemist but his career evolved over the years, and he became more and more involved in the genetics of dog breeding.

The session began with a short powerpoint slide presentation showing a beautiful Wheaten puppy.



We learned from the slide that the puppy was 4 months old, yet weighed only 8 lbs – approximately the weight of a Wheaten puppy at 8 weeks of age.

The next caption told us that the puppy had been diagnosed with Renal Dysplasia and although he looked perfect from the outside, the genetic illness that affected him would inevitably mean his life was to be cut short. With this powerful image in mind, Prof Sampson began his presentation.

Note: the owner of the puppy, purchased in an American pet shop, had been searching the Internet for help when she came across the WHI website. Thankfully WHI was able to ensure she was given accurate information and put in touch with the key researchers to establish the diagnosis and offer her appropriate support.



Prof Sampson started by explaining the basic information regarding the inheritance of diseases. (For detailed background information please refer to [//www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com/Pages/genetickeyfacts.html](http://www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com/Pages/genetickeyfacts.html) and related pages)

He described those transmitted by Autosomal Recessive (AR) genes, which he said accounted for approximately 70% of all diseases in dogs. These are unfortunately often described as 'late-onset', in other words, by the time the dog shows signs of disease it may often have already been bred from.

Disease is transmitted as a result of a fault in a single gene; if the offspring inherits the same faulty gene from both parents, they will be affected. It can be on any chromosome other than the sex chromosomes, which determine whether the puppy will be male or female.

He then described Autosomal Dominant (AD) genes, as single gene mutations which require only one copy of the mutation to be inherited in order for the offspring to become affected. Sometimes these genes may be described as being 'of incomplete penetrance' meaning that the presence of the gene may not necessarily lead to the development of the disease.

Recessive (R) mutant genes can be carried on the sex chromosomes (eg the disease haemophilia in humans).

Familial (F) Not much is known about these at present, other than that they appear to occur along family lines or within a breed.

Polygenic (P) These are complex and may also involve environmental influences. (As further research takes place many of the mutations

classified as (R) may move to the (P) sector

Jeff went on to describe the dilemmas facing breeders with genuine understanding, having been involved with his wife in breeding dogs. He identified that for many breeders, preserving type is a priority, with temperament and health close behind. He also described the historical background to dog-breeding with all breeds being largely 'engineered' by breeders seeking to 'fix' type by the use of 'line-breeding' techniques.

Jeff admitted, that had he been aware at the time of his own involvement in dog-breeding, of all the knowledge that he has acquired as a geneticist since, he would probably have done things very differently; a succinct reminder to us as breeders, that we can only act in respect of the knowledge that we have at the time and that hindsight is indeed a wonderful thing!

The increasing availability of health screening tests now gives breeders the opportunity to select **against** disease and **for** desired traits.

He explained that Genetic screening for such diseases has to be immeasurably better than clinical screening and Jeff then went on to illustrate this point with news of developments in the assessment of hip dysplasia.

Jeff spoke of how x-rays could be limited in their accuracy as to the likely inheritance of disease. It was not possible for the x-rays to be accurate in separating the inherited component of the disease

(cont)

*He is your friend,
your partner, your
defender, your dog.
You are his life, his
love, his leader. He
will be yours,
faithful and true, to
the last beat of his
heart. You owe it to
him to be worthy of
such devotion.*

Unknown



*Man is a dog's idea of what
God should be.*

Holbrook Jackson

The 'Perfect' Puppy — Jeff Sampson (cont)



Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful.

Ann Landers



from the environmental influences and therefore could be potentially misleading.

Recent studies have shown much more can be assessed about an individual dog's genetic health regarding its hips by examining those of its offspring.

The offspring will share the genetic inheritance of the parents but will have probably been subjected to very different environments by living in different homes, perhaps even different countries, having different diets, exercise etc. Therefore the environmental influences can be stripped away and the genetic inheritance from the parent more accurately assessed.

Once the ability to produce a test which can screen at a genetic level is available, it will supersede even this advance and offer the best accuracy of all. Jeff believes this kind of development is not far away.

Jeff also touched on the sometimes controversial subject of breeding from known carriers of disease.

He described in positive terms the circumstances that could lead to the mating of a carrier of a genetic disease to a dog which was genetically clear, as selecting **against** the diseased state, as the resulting progeny would not be affected by the disease themselves, being at worse, carriers of it. Such breedings may be necessary in certain circumstances, to avoid depleting a gene-pool even further.

Prof Sampson dealt with many questions throughout his presentation as attendees had specific concerns they wished him to address. He then turned to the latest initiatives by the Kennel Club and the Animal Health Trust, talking firstly about the development of the 'Mate Select' programme, designed to be a tool for people to access when planning matings.

The Programme assesses the Co-efficient of Inbreeding (COI) for a whole breed as well as for individual dogs or planned litters.

The inbreeding coefficient is a calculation of the probability that two copies of the same gene would be inherited from a common ancestor i.e. an ancestor that is common to both parents; *"The lower the inbreeding coefficient, the lower the probability (risk) that this will happen"*.

<http://www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/services/public/mateselect/>

The current COI for the Soft Coated Wheaten breed is given as 7.1%; probably a reflection of our relatively small gene pool. However, it is also possible through the KC website to calculate the COI for any existing individual dog, or for the puppies produced from a hypothetical mating.

If a proposed mating had a COI of 12.5%, there would be a 1 in 8 chance that a puppy would inherit the same version of a gene from an ancestor common to both the sire and the dam of the litter. If this gene should carry a defect, then obviously there would be an increased risk of the puppy inheriting it. Litters born as a result of mother to son, father to daughter or brother to sister matings are no longer registered by the KC because the COI would be at least 25%.

However, there are also matings which may appear to be from more distantly related dogs but where the COI is just as high or even higher and therefore may carry the same increased risk of inheriting a defective gene. Jeff indicated that planned litters should attempt to fall below the current breed COI and that breeders should also make use of the 'Health Test Result Finder', which allowed Breed Registrations to be searched to show any of the breed's recorded health tests on any

given dog in a pedigree.

This is obviously limited, at present to recognised health tests recommended for each particular breed but will expand as health testing schemes develop.

Jeff talked about how the 'Mate Select' system is to develop, to provide information on such things as the over-use of a particular stud-dog and its potential effect on genetic diversity within a breed.

Although Jeff indicated it was an over-simplification to suggest that a numeric limit to the use of all studs was the answer to all problems, and there could be occasions when the repeated use of one dog might be justified, he said it was still important to recognise that this type of situation could 'shrink' the gene pool to the point where inbreeding depression became a reality.

Editor's note: C A Sharp on the Canine Diversity Project website: <http://www.canine-genetics.com/Price.htm> provides a detailed description of the problem, which includes the following definition:

"A common result of inbreeding is 'inbreeding depression,' typified by small litter size or difficulty producing or rearing young. Bitches from families that consistently produce small litters may be suffering inbreeding depression. Animals which can only be bred or raise their puppies if they receive extraordinary human assistance are poor breeding candidates. This is not to say that people shouldn't properly house and care for their animals, but if a dog is indifferent to bitches in standing heat or a bitch needs to be physically restrained to keep her from resorting to fight or flight in an attempt to prevent mating, or won't settle without veterinary intervention, or is apt to kill or damage her puppies through intent or neglect, these are signs of inbreeding depression and that animal shouldn't be bred."

(cont)



The 'Perfect' Puppy – Jeff Sampson (cont)

Jeff also referred to the 'Effective Population Size', which is the number of individuals in a population who contribute offspring to the next generation.

This can be of much greater significance than the number of puppies produced in each generation and is an important concept in the management of threatened species.

If the Effective Population Size goes down in relation to the size of the population as a whole, inherited genetic mutations increase. This is because of the increased risk of mating related animals, which may both be carrying the same genetic mutations.

At this point Jeff discussed another tool soon to be available for breeders to use, 'Estimated Breeding Values' (EBVs), which give the estimated genetic liability of inheriting a particular disease. This is undergoing further development at the Animal Health Trust.

Genetic Diversity, EBVs and some of the newly available screening tests for genetic disease, were addressed in the KC Breeder's Symposium in November 2010 and were reported in issue twenty of the WHI newsletter published in January 2011 and available at: www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com/Pages/pdf%20files/news2011.pdf pages 3&4.

Jeff acknowledged that developments are happening at such a rapid rate that it is easy to become overwhelmed and that Breed Clubs needed to be involved in helping to prioritise the issues facing their breeds.

At Crufts in March this year the KC will provide an educational opportunity for all who want to find out more in the "Breeding for the Future Zone" This will be in Hall 3 and you can meet the experts and have your questions answered. Topics covered will be DNA testing Schemes, Health screening, Mate Select and the Assured Breeder Scheme.



Wheaten Health Initiative – Website statistics and successes



According to Google, as of 14th February WHI website pages took, on average, 0.9 seconds to load. This is **faster than 93% of sites**.

The chart opposite represents the spread of visitors to our website between 12-17 Feb this year. It is great to know how far our information travels!

Our web master, Malcolm, reported that there have been over 220 downloads of the Autumn 2011 Newsletter to date, this is in addition to the ones that were posted out, which is excellent news.

Every download of the Newsletter, rather than a request for a hard copy saves us a massive amount in terms of time and money.

If you are as yet, unaware of this fact, you can make money for WHI, virtually without any effort!

If you want to purchase anything from Amazon, all you have to do is access Amazon from the link on the right hand side of our Home page.

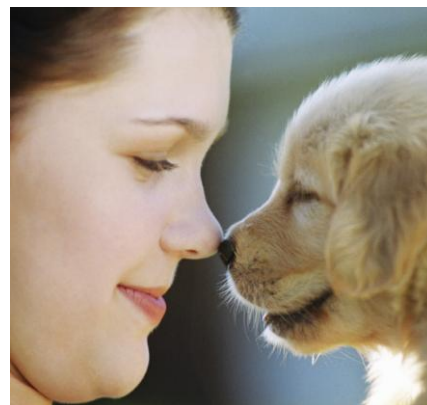
Anything you go on to purchase at Amazon generates a small amount of commission for WHI.

Sales so far, have generated commission of over £46!!! It may not seem like a great deal of money, but in these hard times we have to raise funds wherever we can to promote Wheaten Health and this is such an easy way

LOOK OUT FOR MORE DETAILS OF THE NEXT REPORTING DATE FOR pANCA PARTICIPANTS LATER IN THIS NEWSLETTER!

Sandra Jeffries reported an improved response to the bi-annual pANCA questionnaires this time with a return of about 60%, which is fantastic.

This makes the success and accuracy of the continuing longitudinal study so much more achievable.



Caring For Your Aging Dog

Cat's motto: No matter what you've done wrong, always try to make it look like the dog did it.

Unknown



If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went.
Will Rogers

The wild ancestors of our modern day pets would have been extremely lucky to die from natural causes; most died early from disease or injury, before the afflictions of old age could manifest themselves. Our modern day pets are luckier; protected from the problems faced by dogs in the wild, they are living longer and longer lives. However, this longevity means that the inevitable aging process will cause our dogs to develop much the same problems of old age as we humans do. Jacob Mosier, Professor of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University, says that the signs of senility in dogs are similar to those in man and there is a condition called Canine Cognitive Dysfunction. Studies on geriatric dogs with symptoms of CCD have found developing brain lesions similar to those found in humans with Alzheimer's Disease.

As humans, we can talk about our failing eyesight, hearing loss, poor memory and aching bones but our pets rely on us to recognise their symptoms and give them the extra care which will help to make the next stage of their lives as happy and healthy as possible. Although there is nothing that can be done to stop the aging process, there are things we can do to minimise its effects.

In his book 'The Dog's Mind', author Bruce Fogle says, "There is almost undoubtedly a biological clock that governs the aging process in dogs and this is genetic in its origins. This is why the life expectancy of some breeds is dramatically longer than others."

He goes on to suggest that environment can have a significant effect on the aging process and although we cannot alter the genetic clock, we can provide a lifestyle and environment which will extend the lifespan of our dogs and keeping them fit, healthy and

mentally stimulated, plays a vital part in this process.

Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers can live as long as 15 or 16 years. In the show ring a dog is a veteran at 7 years but Wheatens are so full of 'joie de vivre', the onset of old age may not be apparent until they reach around 10 years of age or more. In most dogs, the first sign is a few grey hairs around the muzzle but our Wheatens tend not to look old because the greying hairs are not so apparent in their wheaten coloured coat. Their first signs may be stiffness when waking, lower energy levels or a change in eating habits. However, the signs of approaching old age, and when they appear, will vary from dog to dog.

Because aging causes both physical and metabolic changes which can also occur in dogs that are sick, it is good practice to have twice yearly medicals for an aging dog, to ensure the changes are due to age and not illness. Never assume any changes in your dog are simply due to old age, there could be medical reasons for them which are easily treatable.

An adult dog's character and temperament is a result of his early experiences as a young puppy. From the day he was born, every new encounter, every lesson learned, played its part in shaping his brain, determining the adult dog he would grow into. He learned to rely on his senses providing him with information to decipher the world around him. When increasing age brings about deterioration in these senses, he is no longer receiving accurate information about familiar situations and changes in his behaviour can result. These changes can be either physical or mental or a combination of both. For instance, loss of house training can be due to a physical cause such as kidney problems, or to mental deterioration when he

simply 'forgets'.

SENSORY DETERIORATION

As the body ages, organs become gradually less efficient. In the heart and lungs, this means reduced blood flow to the brain and therefore lowers oxygen levels, causing a reduction in brain function. Small haemorrhages in the blood vessels of the brain cause mental processes to slow down, affecting a dog's behaviour. The dog takes longer to react to commands and short term memory is affected. The changes in brain function can lead to unusual behaviour. Sometimes older dogs appear disorientated and will stand and stare at the wall, they seem to forget that they need to turn around in order to move and have to be gently turned to remind them. Some go down to the bottom of the garden and then forget how to get back to the house.

Eyesight weakens, hearing is less acute and some dogs may become a bit grumpy and appear depressed or lethargic. Their sleep during the day becomes deeper and longer and if they have any loss of hearing, they may growl or even snap at family members or other pets, if woken suddenly.

The deterioration in their hearing is also thought to explain why some elderly dogs appear to bark for no apparent reason, often during the night when the house is quiet.

Many dogs lose their appetite, needing to be coaxed to eat, whilst others may forget that they have been fed recently and ask for dinner several times a day. If your dog is one of the latter, it's a good idea to split their daily food into several small meals rather than feed once or twice a day. Sometimes reluctance to eat can be caused by pain in your

(cont)



Caring For Your Aging Dog (Cont)

dog's neck or spine from arthritis. A raised feeding bowl on a stand can help to make eating a pleasure again

PHYSICAL DETERIORATION

ARTHRITIS affects some older dogs, causing stiffness and pain. The physical causes are varied and genetics can also contribute to the likelihood of your dog developing symptoms. Some causes can be avoided during your dog's early years by not allowing him to become overweight and giving regular exercise to keep his muscles and joints strong and healthy. However, injuries to joints, caused by accidents or sprains and strains, will increase the chances of developing arthritis so exercise should be tailored to the age of the animal.

Puppies that are over-exercised can develop muscular and skeletal problems which are likely to cause arthritis when they reach old age and just like human athletes, dogs who take part in agility, or working dogs, herding sheep and cattle, are at more risk of injury and also have a higher risk of developing arthritis.

Changes in your dog's behaviour and mood may indicate the onset of arthritis. Taking longer to get out of bed in the mornings, stiffness after exercise and being a 'bit grumpy', are all signals which need investigation.

A visit to your vet is needed for diagnosis and he will probably suggest pain killers and anti-inflammatory medication to alleviate the symptoms.

You could also consider magnotherapy, using either a magnetic collar on your dog or buying a special pad containing magnets which is placed in his bed. There seems to be no definite, scientific explanation as to why this works, just that it does; relieving pain and stiffness without the need for

drugs. Both humans and animals have been helped by the use of these products which are widely available and can be purchased online.

<http://www.magnet-healing.co.uk/>

<http://www.amazinghealth.co.uk/pets-health.htm>

There are other measures you could take to reduce the incidence or severity of arthritis:

- Keep an eye on your dog's weight to reduce pressure on the joints.
- Feed a well-balanced diet and increase vitamins and anti-oxidants. There are supplements available specifically for older dogs.
- Make sure he has a comfortable bed out of draughts.
- Because he's not able to move so quickly any more, place his bed away from family traffic but make sure he is still able to see and hear everything that is going on.
- Two or three short walks a day are better than one long one.
- If you have tiled or wooden floors, provide 'stepping stones' of rugs so he can walk around the house without any danger of slipping.
- Gentle massage is good for stiff joints.
- Playing games is not just for young dogs, suitable, gentle games for your oldie will keep him mobile and provide mental stimulation.

INCONTINENCE can be a problem, especially at night. Age can make dogs lose their previous house training but it is more likely to be due to failing kidneys or a urinary tract infection.

It would be a good idea to ask your vet to test your dog's blood and urine to check his kidneys are functioning well. If they are, the vet may prescribe Propalin syrup which can help in some cases of incontinence.

There are other things you can do to cope with a 'leaky' dog. Regular trips out to the garden can help remind your dog that 'he needs to go'.

Many older dogs leak a little urine whilst sleeping and you can use special absorbent pads on their bedding or you can get specially designed pants with a differently shaped pad for either female or male dogs. They can be purchased online at:

<http://www.dog-nappy.co.uk/>

If your dog gets very wet around the nether regions, a dry shampoo on the wet hair is kinder than having to be continually bathed.

GROOMING is very important for elderly dogs, not just to keep them clean and tidy, but because it stimulates circulation all around the body. Just as brain cells need a good supply of oxygen to function well, the skin, which is the dog's first line of defence against parasites, fleas, wet and cold, also needs a healthy circulation and gentle grooming and massage will help.

- Grooming also allows you to keep an eye on your dog's skin. Check for lumps and bumps and anything suspicious can be referred to your vet before it becomes serious.
- Grooming is a good way to give your oldie some special attention and love. Gentle combing will add to his sense of well-being and give him the close physical contact he needs from you.
- During grooming, check for dry skin patches or hair loss which could indicate a hormonal problem.
- Keep nails trimmed short. Long nails will affect the way your dog walks and could lead to muscle and joint problems. You should also keep the hair between the pads trimmed to avoid him losing his grip on slippery surfaces.

(cont)



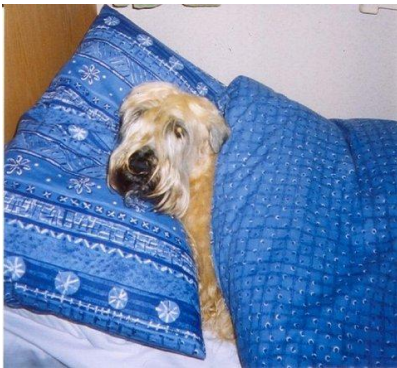
I wonder what goes through his mind when he sees us peeing in his water bowl.

Penny Ward Moser



If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man.

Mark Twain



Pet Passport Changes

Pet travel rules changed on 1 January 2012 when the UK brought its procedures into line with the European Union.

All pets can enter the UK from any country in the world without quarantine, provided they meet the rules of the scheme, which will be different depending on the country or territory the pet is coming from.

Step 1 – Have your pet microchipped.

Step 2 – Have your pet vaccinated against Rabies

- There is no exemption to this requirement, even if your pet has a current

- Keep a check on your dog's ears. A build up of wax or too much hair in the ear canal can cause loss of hearing (although by this age, your dog may simply have developed 'convenient deafness').
- Elderly Wheatens benefit from having their coats kept short. This makes grooming times shorter and less stressful and tiring for the dog.

LOSS OF EYESIGHT is something dogs cope with remarkably well in familiar surroundings. They use their noses much more than their eyes so just don't move the furniture.

A HEALTHY MOUTH AND TEETH are vital for your dog's well-being. He needs to be able to eat efficiently to maintain health. Caring for the teeth should begin at the puppy stage. There are toothbrushes and pastes on the market designed for dogs and you should get your pup used to having his teeth brushed daily.

Human toothpaste is not suitable as it contains foaming agents and fluoride which are harmful.

There are also several products on the market which work in slightly different ways; some need to be added to the dog's water, there are gels or sprays which can be applied to the dog's teeth and do not require brushing and there are products you can add to the dog's food.

If your dog will not have its

teeth cleaned, the following should help:

- Rawhide chews help keep the teeth clean and there are special dog dental chews available at pet stores. A note of caution though, never leave your dog alone with a rawhide chew; after they have been chewed for a while, they become sticky and soggy and if the dog tries to swallow them whole, they can get stuck in the throat.

Get your dog used to having treats like this taken away before they can cause problems.

- RAW bones are excellent, particularly if there is still some meat attached. Some people are nervous about giving them to their dog but just ensure the bones are of a suitable size and never leave them alone when they are chewing on one. As with rawhide chews, you should get your dog used to letting you take it from him. Remember; never give cooked bones of any kind.

If the dog's breath is very smelly or the gums are red you may need to ask your vet to clean them properly, although as this needs to be done under general anaesthetic.

Prevention is definitely better than cure. Many vets are unwilling to carry out teeth cleaning on elderly dogs because of the high risks involved in anaesthesia.

At each stage in our dogs' lives, our relationship with them changes. The adorable puppy, so easy to love in spite of the puddles on the floor and the chewed furniture; the young dog who made us proud as he learned new skills; the mature dog, a well-trained companion and a joy to live with. But this relationship changes again during old age; it can be a difficult time but also very rewarding.

Now is the time for you to show the full extent of your love for your dog and to repay all the years of devotion he has shown to you and your family.

Throughout his life you have made many decisions on his behalf, his life has been held in your hands.

You decided what and when he would eat, when it was time for a walk, when he needed grooming and when it was time for bed.

We all have to make decisions which affect the health and well-being of our dogs, from worming and vaccination to whether they are allowed to reproduce or not. However, with increasing old age, you may be faced with the hardest decision of all. If your dog is in pain or the quality of his life is poor whether from old age or illness, the final decision you will make on his behalf is the greatest demonstration of the love you have both shared and the responsibility you accepted when he first came into your life.

Kate Watkins

rabies vaccination. Rabies boosters must be kept up to date. The length of the waiting period before entry to the UK is 21 days after the first vaccination date. A waiting period is not required for subsequent entries into the UK, provided rabies boosters are kept up to date. If the vaccination is in two parts

the 21 day wait will be from the date of the second vaccination.

Step 3 – Get pet travel documentation

- For animals being prepared in an EU country, you should get an EU pet passport.

Step 4 – Get Tapeworm treatment

- The treatment must be administered by a vet not less than 24 hours and not more than 120 hours (1-5 days) before its scheduled arrival time in the UK.

Step 5 – Arrange for your animal to travel with an approved transport company



Out of Hours Veterinary Services

This is a story you have perhaps heard somewhere before or you may have experienced something similar yourself. My story began one Saturday morning in January last year. Chloe, our 11 year old bitch, came inside after her morning toilet, and walking slowly lay down in a corner, curled up and shaking. This had happened before but usually with Prokaolin paste and a smaller breakfast, the situation had resolved itself.

At 2.30 pm. Chloe had a similar session but we were undecided on what action to take. Our vets close at 12.30, but didn't feel that the problem was so severe as to make any contact; could have been tummy troubles or perhaps could have slipped on icy pavements causing pain. We decided to see how events developed.

10.30 pm. shaking again and in obvious pain, phoned our vet whose answerphone redirected to Vets Now, the Out Of Hours vet. They suggested a consultation, quickly adding that the cost is £137.39, which consists of an out-of-hours charge (after 11pm fee) and the emergency consultation fee.

Vets Now is about 15 miles away and in view of the snow I decided to drive through Sheffield, as opposed to the motorway route, assuming that the roads would be clearer. With more snow on the way, I got lost in Sheffield and arrived at Vets Now just after midnight, 50 minutes after setting out.

Treatment consisted of blood tests, a pain killing injection, medicine (Metacam) to take away and instructions to see our own Vet the next day. Total cost £312.46.

Expensive? Yes, but it is an out of hours service and the Vets Now leaflet does state:

'...please note that the emergency out of hours fee, together with the emergency

consultation fee, are payable at the time your pet is seen'.

As the cost of these fees are detailed when a telephone call for an appointment is made and again before any treatment is given, prospective customers are (or should be) well aware of the charges.

I decided to see what others thought and started with Google. Perhaps not the most totally unbiased viewpoints flashed up in the results, with (it seemed) ever increasing amounts of money being paid for treatment provided by the out of hours vets. Some of these amounts ran into thousands of pounds. There was also the plea for the return of the 'trusted vets who provided 24 hour cover' but with the advent of Out of Hours vets it is clear that most of these are rapidly disappearing from all parts of the country.

But how can any organisation make charges which seem so much at variance with normal expectation. I contacted Consumer Direct, the Government's Department of Citizen's Rights, and asked if there are any guidelines for fees and charges by organisations that provide a service out of normal working hours. Their response was: *"As long as they tell you what the cost of the consultation will be, there is nothing illegal – you either accept or go somewhere else."*

Have you ever asked a vet where you are not registered, if you can have a consultation at midnight on Saturday?

Another and potentially more worrying fact appeared on the internet forums, one of which I had not heard about before. Many of the Vets Now practice from the same premises as the PDSA who themselves provide a 24/7 service, but specifically for pet owners of limited means.

This shared service seems to work satisfactorily on an out of

hours basis, but Vets Now staff do not work during normal work hours. If your consultation is on a Sunday night and admission is required for essential treatment, then alternative arrangements must be made for daytime care when the PDSA begins its normal daytime work.

Fortunately we didn't have to face that situation.

For us the next step was to get to work on the insurance claim, thank goodness the premiums were up to date. Looking through the documents for a claim form I first checked the 'Policy Summary Key Facts sheet, prominent on the first page, under 'Exclusions': *'the cost of out of hours treatment unless your vet believes the treatment could not wait until normal surgery hours'*

Shock! And why had I not noticed that clause before and even if I had, would it (or could it) have influenced the decision to use the out of hours vet?

And how could I possibly have contacted my own vet when there was no one there and the answerphone is switched on?

I contacted my insurance company (More Than) and spoke to the underwriters.

To my great surprise the response was very conciliatory with the advice *"that I was not to worry, this was my first claim for out of hours treatment and as it is Vets Now who complete a part of the claim form, no doubt they would confirm that the treatment was necessary"*.

Well I suppose they would. At my next visit to my usual vet I asked if they had met this insurance clause with other clients, *"...of course, but we generally sign a claim form if that question is asked, as we usually know when a client has made a genuine visit."*

At this stage I assumed that there would be more organisations providing out of
(cont)

Outside of a dog, a book is probably man's best friend; inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.

Groucho Marx





I wonder if other dogs think poodles are members of a weird religious cult.

Rita Rudner



hours veterinary services, but, using internet searches, I could find none who had national coverage on the same scale as Vets Now.

Vets Now fees seem expensive, but they provide only emergency, out of hours service, so charges should not be compared with the service offered by 'daytime' vets. The RCVS guidelines state they have to be honest with their fees, so charges are not inflated for insured patients.

Here are one vet's comments about the separate provision of out of hours service:

"Before Vets Now started the Out Of Hours work at this veterinary centre, I took the view that we were going to sell the service as an enhancement of the facilities, which is exactly what it is. A letter was sent out to every client explaining the thought process we had gone through. I also invited anyone to ring and talk through any worries. A few did need the reassurance of a one-to-one chat, far more though were pleased with the idea of a dedicated service on call and waiting for any problems. Client acquisition has held steady at the same rate as pre Vets Now and perhaps, more significantly, income has changed very little."

"In terms of what my clients perceived of the service? If anything, it's better. They know that the on-duty staff is there for advice as well as emergencies. On occasions when clients have needed to take their pets to the clinic that they have been impressed by not only their thoroughness, but also by the practical advice and caring attitude."

Out of Hours Veterinary Services (Cont)

Since the launch of their first clinic in Glasgow in 2001, the growth of Vets Now has been rapid and they are probably the greatest provider of out of hours veterinary care. The following is an extract from details on their website:

Vets Now are dedicated emergency vets who work in partnership with veterinary practices across the UK to provide an Out Of Hours emergency clinic service to you, at nights, weekends and public holidays.

Vets Now has a wide network of clinics across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland treating around 65,000 small animal emergencies every year. We treat dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and other small furry animals who need emergency treatment Out Of Hours

Our clinics open at either 6.00pm or 7.00pm in the evening, through to 8.00am or 8.30am the following morning. All clinics open at 12 noon on Saturdays and operate continuously over the weekend until a Monday morning. At the time our clinic opens, Member Practices can then switch over their phones to us (usually this is by leaving an answering machine message giving their clients our contact number).

Comments from customers can be read on the Vets Now web site.

Is specialist out of hours veterinary care here to stay? Interestingly at least two of the vets in this locality are specifically promoting their 24/7 service:

"We are one of the few remaining practices in Sheffield providing our own out of hours service. This means that in the event of an emergency outside normal surgery hours you are guaranteed to be seen by one of our own vets, with access to your pet's medical records at the regular practices"

And, at a different practice:

"24 hour emergency cover by appointment at our Chesterfield surgery, no long drive to Sheffield in the middle of the night"

Clever marketing, or is the writing on the wall for the expansion of the OOH Vet network?

With the current situation of veterinary care split between normal working day and out of normal hours care, perhaps there are a few points to carefully consider:

1. If your vet currently provides out of hours service at his own practice, let him know your preference
- or, if out of hours care is already with you:
2. Make sure that your insurance premiums are up to date and read the policy summary carefully!
3. Get to know the location of the OOH vets and also what would happen if your pet had to be admitted for an overnight (or longer) stay.

Malcolm Jeffries



The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Lifetime Study

In Autumn of 2011, WHI were alerted to the need for more Wheatens to be volunteered for the "Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Lifetime Study" being conducted by the "National Human Genome Research Unit" (NHGRI), which is part of the "National Institutes for Health" (NIH) in the United States of America.

"The Canine Genome Project was developed under the guidance of Elaine Ostrander, PH.D. as part of the international collaboration of scientists working to build a comprehensive genetic understanding of the canine genome. The primary goals of the canine genome project are to map and identify genetic markers linked to inherited diseases, and to use this information to improve the overall health of the canine population and to further the understanding of the many complex diseases that arise in the canine genome."

http://research.nhgri.nih.gov/dog_genome/info_for_dog_owners/

Samples of DNA were to be investigated by a team at the Ostrander Lab, under the leadership of Dr Heidi Parker, from a minimum of 500 Wheatens, born between Jan 1st 2006 and Dec 31st 2010

The team would conduct a study of the candidates over a 10 year period by way of annual questionnaires etc. Mapping the Wheaten genome, finding the diseases prevalent in the SCWT and identifying the genes related to those

diseases is the ultimate aim.

So far, according to the NHGRI, *"More than 350 inherited diseases have been described across the recognized canine breeds. Often the high frequency of specific diseases within a breed reflects the small number of dogs used to found the breed and/or the subsequent inbreeding within the breed. The Canine Genome Project is working on projects to help reduce the incidence of these inherited diseases, and to understand disease patterns across the breeds."*

http://research.nhgri.nih.gov/dog_genome/info_for_dog_owners

This was, as far as we knew, the first genuine chance to map the entire Wheaten genome but it was going to be a missed opportunity without more volunteers. WHI was at the forefront of a drive to attract more volunteers and received Dr Parker's grateful thanks.

So it was that Ian and I, Kate and Sarah Watkins and a couple of other intrepid people found ourselves registering our Wheatens which fitted the required profile. Requesting the testing kits from the NHGRI was probably the easiest part of the process! The first hurdle to cross was the time delay in getting them to this country. The deadline for the project to attract substantial research grants was fast approaching and there was no way that samples could be returned within the required time-frame. Fortunately Dr Parker was able to negotiate special terms for her 'overseas' volunteers and we completed the paperwork side of the project by the deadline, with the blood samples to be sent on later.

Once the sampling kits arrived, vets had to be approached for their co-operation in taking the samples. Fortunately I certainly

had no problems with my vet and I believe it was the same for the other participants with their vets, too. Blood was drawn into the supplied phials very efficiently by one of the veterinary team and the three dogs I took, were very co-operative (Just as well as it seemed to me to be a fairly significant amount being collected!!)



But then we came to the final and almost insurmountable problem of getting the kits back to the lab in America, within a reasonable time-frame before the blood samples began to deteriorate. Each of the participating owners was given different information regarding the transport of blood samples overseas. It was even the case that when two different post office employees, in different parts of the country, contacted their national help-line for advice, they were given conflicting answers!

In desperation, I turned to our wonderful Dr Allenspach at the RVC and she was extremely helpful. Ultimately, two different transport methods were employed by the participants, one being the Post Office and thankfully there appear to have been no hitches to prevent the safe arrival of the samples at their destination. We are simply awaiting confirmation that the research grants have been awarded and the study will go ahead.

We now proudly sport our special, 'I GAVE DNA' pins, given to us by the SCWTCA on behalf of the contribution made by our wonderful Wheatens, which will hopefully secure a brighter future for the breed.

Although there will be ten years ahead, of completing the necessary annual paperwork for each of the dogs, it will all be well worth it.

Lynn Carter

pANCA Participants Reminder

The RVC requests that you update your dog's health information between 17th March and midnight on the 31st March, using the on-line form on the WHI website (link below) or by downloading the form and posting it to the RVC. (Details on website)

<http://www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com/Pages/pancaquestionnaire.html>

Only the RVC pANCA Project Team have access to the data you submit.

After midnight on the 31st March, the reporting system will be closed until the next update opportunity in 6 months time

If you missed the last update opportunity, [please complete this update.](#)

For all of the technophobes with smart phones out there; you can actually complete the update form using the QR code below, simply scan to take you directly to the survey. Remember this will only work from the 17th March.



At our steering group meeting earlier this year the Treasurer presented his usual summary of WHI's financial position. The group took the decision to publish this summary, in the interests of transparency and also so that it can be appreciated that the group operates within quite tight financial restrictions.

We gratefully acknowledge the very generous support we receive from individuals in the form of donations, both of goods for fund-raising and of money. However, it is true to say that all the steering group members also subsidise WHI's activities to some extent, in order for it to remain financially viable.

Steering group members bear the cost of associated travel expenses, often also paying for consumables such as computer paper, ink, stamps and envelopes etc. In addition we pay the same for our tickets and food at WHI seminars, as everyone else does. So we are doubly delighted to make the following announcement!



“Breed the ‘Perfect’ Puppy” Seminar a Financial Success



We are delighted to report that the “Breed the ‘Perfect’ Puppy” seminar was a great financial success as well as having attracted a gratifying amount of enthusiastic feedback from the attendees.

It is always a really risky business for the steering group; planning something on this scale with limited funds.

However, we believe it is a vital part of our remit to provide a variety of opportunities for people to learn and to enjoy and we always anticipate we will regard it as a job well done if we manage to reach breakeven!

But on this occasion, taking total seminar receipts, plus donations and the profits from the raffles, less the expenses to date, this leaves us with a **profit** of just over £430!!!!

WHI ACCOUNTS

Summary for - 4 February 2012

	2012	2011
Cash at Bank 31 January	2,005.56	970.21
less cheques not yet presented	-1,078.37	
receipts not yet shown (incl. PayPal)	710.30	
Cash funds as at 4/2/2012	1,637.49	£970.21
GR Fund (Barclays)	2,051.48	£2,018.18
Total cash asset as at 4/2/12	£3,688.97	£2,988.39
Last bank statement date is:	31/01/2012	

Key factors	Year ended Feb 2012	Year ended 2011
Income		
Donations	£374.80	£178.22
Auction	£409.51	£535.59
Seminar receipts	£1,890.44	£299.37
Publications	£8.00	£10.00
	£2,682.75	£1,023.18
Expenditure		
pANCA sampling sessions	£0.00	£222.84
pANCA rosettes	£0.00	£146.65
Seminar costs	£1,395.26	£398.62
Newsletters	£309.39	£409.13
Web Hosting (biannual)	£203.95	£0.00
	£1,908.60	£1,177.24

Associate Accounts	Sales	Commission
Amazon - total sales to date but commission not yet received	£1,070.70	£50.09

All knowledge, the totality of all questions and all answers is contained in the dog.

Franz Kafka



OUR SEMINAR SPONSORS

WHI gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the following individuals and companies, who enhanced the seminar experience for our attendees and enabled us to achieve a financial success:

Royal Canin

Lisa Gosling – Daisy's Dog Deli

Andy – Basil's Dog Food

Amanda Naylor – Aloe Vera

Liz Harrison – Phoenix Greeting Cards

Zoe Carter – Wheaten Crafts

Pam & John Clarke - Caterers

And all who donated raffle prizes, cakes etc.

New Advertising Campaign – Is it clever or a cynical manipulation?

If your dog seems to suddenly respond to a television advertisement for dog-food producer, "Bakers", do not presume that he is impressed by the product!

Bakers have introduced noises above 17,000 Hertz (similar to the technology used in 'silent' dog whistles) into the soundtrack of the advert, along with audible sounds of whistles and excited barking, in the hope that pet owners, seeing their

dog's reaction to the advert, will be encouraged to buy the product.

Baker's is one of the market leaders of dog food and yet there have been many concerns raised as to its safety.

At least one dog food analysis site (address below) claims that the preservatives used in its production are known carcinogens, banned in human use for around the last 50 years!

www.dogfoodanalysis.com/dog_food_reviews/showproduct.php?product=426&cat=all

Another Opportunity to Own a Unique Wheaten Work of Art

Pam Clarke's work in the kitchen, catering for our WHI events, is already legendary – but did you know she is as good with her rag hook as she is with her pastry!

Just enjoy your first sight of this unique item – a rag rug, which Pam has made for us to raise funds for WHI.

Keep an eye on our website. We will be making an announcement in the near future, about how you might become the owner of this wonderful, unique work of art.

The rug is reversible and both sides are pictured here. As the pattern works from both the front and the back, Pam tells us that apparently, the custom was to call one the 'Sunday' side. The rug was turned over for that one day of the week, displaying the cleaner side!

Approximate measurements:
32" (81cm) x 30" (76 cm)



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Cancer Genetics Branch
National Human Genome Research Institute
National Institutes of Health
50 South Drive, MSC 8000
Bldg. 50, Room 5347
Bethesda, MD 20892-8000

February 1, 2012

Dear Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier owners, breeders and dog lovers,

We want to extend our deepest appreciation for your whole hearted support of the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Lifetime Health Study. As we approached the end of the sample collecting phase of the study last year, there was a united front to recruit new enrollments for our study and you responded with gusto. Our pleas reached beyond the United States to bring in new participants from across the ocean and beyond. This tremendous wave of support easily tripled our enrollment in the final 4 months. We now have a solid base of DNA samples as well as the enthusiastic backing of owners willing to provide information about their dogs in the years to come.

While the DNA samples provide the starting material for any genetic study, the information provided by all of the owners is really the backbone of the project. Your dogs represent a generation of Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers that we will follow for the majority of their lives, chronicling health issues, both the good and the bad, as well as physical stature and a nod toward behavioral patterns. In addition we will collect information about the environment that each dog is exposed to on a regular basis. This information will be used to assess realistic rates of disease development in the breed and to determine what fraction of the disease can be attributed to genetic causes. For those conditions or diseases that appear to be largely genetic, we will perform mapping and sequencing studies to find the underlying cause so that the information will be available to improve clinical treatments or to inform breeding programs.

As you can see, this is a major undertaking and we are pleased that you have chosen to join us in the cause. We appreciate the support that you have shown us by enrolling your dog for the long haul and by committing yourself to be part of this important study. We are looking forward to a decade of sharing information and finding answers.

Sincerely,

Heidi G. Parker, PhD
Senior Staff Scientist
The NHGRI Dog Genome Project



Wheaten Health Initiative

“To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier”

Ever consider what they must think of us? I mean, here we come back from a grocery store with the most amazing haul - chicken, pork, half a cow. They must think we're the greatest hunters on earth!

Anne Tyler



Some clipart provided by Free-Clip-Art.com

! pANCA Project !

Participants

The RVC request that you update your dog's health information between 17th Mar and midnight on the 31st Mar, using the on-line form on the WHI website

or

by downloading the form and posting it to the RVC

PLEASE



CONTACTS

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Malcolm Jeffries	(Treasurer)	01246 554742
	(Webmaster)	
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Lynn Carter	(Newsletter)	01793 765253
Sandra Jeffries	(pANCA Co-ordinator)	01246 554742
Sarah Watkins		01235 815053

Write:

Mrs K Watkins
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Burntwood,
Staffs
WS7 0EE

Email:

wheatenhealth@aol.com

Website:

www.wheatenhealthinitiative.com

Smart phone users - here is the WHI QR code to access our site directly from your phone:

