

## Practice News

### Longest serving...

Karen Highland, secretary, accounts and payroll assistant, will complete thirty years' service in August. Thank you for your dedicated and loyal hard work.

### Welcome back...

Hadleigh sees the return of Sam Hampson to our reception team and Brantham has two members of staff back. Gemma Oliver becomes a regular part time vet following the birth of William and Becky Hodgetts, who did two years' work experience with Hadleigh, joins the staff as a full time trainee veterinary nurse.

### Congratulations...

To Emma and Tom Forsyth who are now proud parents of James Henry. Emma, who worked at Hadleigh for over seven years, has decided to leave the firm to enjoy her new responsibilities.

To Lucy Mitchell, one of our Cliff Lane vets, who is expecting her first baby in October. We wish her and Dick well.

We also congratulate Catherine Roberts from the Hadleigh nursing team who is also expecting her first baby in July.

### Another examination success...

Teresa Driver, one of our Ellenbrook receptionists, has passed the ANA nursing qualification and has been awarded the accolade of Student of the Year.

### Retirement...

Ronnie Dawson retired at the end of March after eighteen years at our Brantham surgery. She started off as one of two part time receptionists in a converted wooden "portacabin" bank when the practice was only open for consultations for some 20 hours a week, no air conditioning and before computerisation. She successfully transferred to the new purpose built surgery which rapidly became a full time operating centre, now the busiest of the four. As well as facing a dramatic change of pace of work since 1999, Ronnie has also seen the introduction of computers as well as enjoying the benefits of full air conditioning.

She has handled a lot of change at work which has been admirable especially since Ronnie also saw her beloved daughter Carla lose her fight against cancer some eight years ago. She has since dedicated her private time to Carla's memory in raising funds for various charities. A recent garage sale alone has raised £4,000.



Ronnie will be missed by many, both within the staff and local clients. We wish her a long and happy retirement.

**24 hour Emergency cover - 01473 822704 (Hadleigh, Brantham), 01473 216042 (Ipswich)**

## Nursing my rabbit through Myxomatosis

**Sue Kite, receptionist, Cliff Lane**

My rabbit Major is 8yrs old. In October 2010, I noticed that his eyelid was slightly swollen. I took him to see the vet who confirmed my worst suspicions - that Major had Myxomatosis. I discussed my options with the vets at Cliff Lane - Guy and Lucy - and decided to give supportive treatment whilst he was still eating but we all felt that due to his age and previous surgery, the prognosis was very poor.

The treatment regime was very intense; even though Major was still eating the vets advised giving him a food supplement three times a day as well as antibiotics (by mouth) twice daily and a painkiller in the morning. There was also an eye ointment - twice daily - to protect the eye. Finally, a soothing cream to go on the lumps (to stop them drying out) which covered his body, legs and head.



I cleaned his hutch out twice daily and gave him a deep bed of hay to keep him warm (it was felt bringing him indoors would stress him out too much).

Over the first three weeks lumps and nodules appeared all over his head, legs and body, it wasn't until about the fifth week that I started to see an improvement, the lumps started to dry up and fall off, and he was more interested in life. There was a swelling over his right eye, which by this time had gone black and hard. Both Guy and Lucy thought Major might not have any sight in that eye. However on the eighth week the scab fell off and amazingly revealed an undamaged eye!

Over the eight weeks I kept to the same treatment regime which proved demanding, and at times very upsetting.

Nine months later he has made a full recovery. He has a small scar near his right eye and it is slightly closed, but otherwise his fur has grown back, he has full sight, and is back to his usual lively self.

I am so glad that I persevered and would like to thank the vets for their advice and support. It seems he had a 1 in 100 chance of survival but without his vaccination he would have died; my colleagues at Cliff Lane have said that it is amazing he survived and feel it is mostly down to my hard work and dedication.

## Donations

From time to time the practice receives donations from clients as a token of their appreciation for the help and care we have given their pet. One such recent donation was in memory of Pepsi who had sadly passed away. Brantham surgery have used the funds to buy some equipment. We thank Pepsi's owner and indeed all clients who have contributed this way.



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VETERINARY PRACTICE

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## An interview with... Anna Kendray

**How long have you been working for Highcliff and how long have you been a Veterinary Nurse?**

I started working for Highcliff 4 years ago as a qualified nurse and am now Nurse Co-ordinator for the nursing team at Brantham. I spent the 4 years before this training towards the vet nursing degree, during which time I completed several placements at Cliff Lane and Hadleigh as well as at vets in and around London.

**What responsibilities do you have within your role?**

Day to day responsibilities range from preparing animals for anaesthesia to ensuring any inpatients have their medication to checking stock levels to making sure the washing is done! The nurse team at Brantham rotate between theatre, kennels and out-front duties (nurse clinics, reception, insurance), so responsibilities are fairly shared out between us.

**What changes do you anticipate seeing in practice over the coming years?**

Things are always changing in the veterinary profession. I think generally in vet practice we will continue to see a wide range of treatment options being developed and hopefully some becoming more affordable at non-referral vets. I think our pets are already treated as 'part of the family' and I hope this view will encourage more and more people to insure their pets and keep on top of

preventative health care. It would also be fantastic to see the Brantham practice extended sometime in the years to come, similar to the Hadleigh and Cliff Lane developments.



**What is the best thing about your job?**

The best thing about being a nurse is being involved in on-going cases and getting to know both the pets and the owners. It is great seeing poorly animals get better too and know you have been a part of their care. Also, variety is the spice of life and working with animals you never know what will come through the door next!

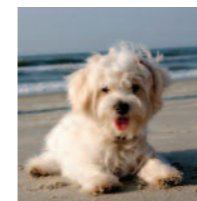
**What is the worst thing about your job?**

The worst thing about being a vet nurse is seeing animals in pain or suffering in some way. I don't think anyone will ever get used to this aspect of working with animals but you somehow learn to cope with the not so nice bits of the job, which always encourages you to do your best for every case.

**How do you fill your spare time?**

I often fill my spare time reading, watching films and sleeping! I also have lots of fun entertaining my three nieces, spending time with my animals and fiancé and going horse-riding.

## Heat, Stings & Flystrike



We're sure everyone has seen the posters 'Dogs Die in Hot Cars' but its not only dogs and not only in cars where we see problems. Vehicles act like a greenhouse and even with an open window inside temperatures soar. The same applies to bird and hamster cages left near a window with the sun on them and a rabbit/guinea pig hutch in a garden, without adequate shade becomes an oven.

Heatstroke can also occur in dogs exercised in the 'heat of the day'. Remember if it's hot for us it's worse for your pet running around in a fur coat! Early morning is the best time for walks and make sure you have plenty of cool water available at home.

Other seasonal problems are grass seeds, from uncut grass, that cling to the long hair around ears and toes and work their way into the ears and skin. So trimming long coats and avoiding long grass is a wise move over the summer months.

Insect stings are usually not problematic long-term. We are often presented with dogs with a swollen face/head - which can occur as little as 20 minutes after the sting. Anti allergic drugs and pain relief may be needed so seek veterinary advice.

If you are holidaying with your pet this summer, remember to find out about the arrangements for out-of-hours emergencies at a local veterinary practice before you go. Veterinary surgeons across the UK are required to make provision for out-of-hours emergency veterinary treatment but it is the responsibility of animal owners to know what to do and where to go in a veterinary emergency.

## Nurse Clinics

At Highcliff we run daily nurse clinics across our three main surgeries and on Tuesdays at our Ellenbrook branch. These clinics can be of great benefit to our patients and their owners, and provide a much appreciated service.

Appointments with a veterinary nurse can be made for;

- 6 month puppy checks - a chance for the owner to discuss behaviour, diet and neutering for their puppy amongst other topics relevant at this stage of their life.
- Post-operative checks - to remove stitches, change dressings and monitor the patient's recovery from their operation.
- Post dental check ups and advice on dental care.
- Weight clinics- advising and supporting the owner with a weight reduction programme for their pet, often with excellent results!
- Flea and worming advice and administration of treatments, very useful for difficult customers!
- Nail clippings are also very popular as this can be a tricky task.

Clinics are generally run after morning surgery at a time to suit the owners.

The clinics can be beneficial to us as nurses also, providing an opportunity for us to meet and interact with our clients; they can give us job satisfaction and a chance to use the skills and knowledge we have learnt whilst training and picked up over the years! It can provide us with an added interest in our jobs, and an opportunity to further our knowledge if we want to specialise in a particular topic, such as elderly patients or exotics, for example.

If you are interested in our nurse clinics please speak to one of our receptionists.

## Watch out for the fleas!



Fleas are the most common parasite in pets and every dog and cat is likely to be infected at some stage in its life. However, with the advent of modern products it is possible to prevent fleas from becoming a problem in your household.

Fleas are small, reddish brown insects that live on your animal. For every flea that you see running through your pet's fur, there may be hundreds of young fleas waiting to jump aboard a passing pet - or if you are unlucky - onto you.

Adult fleas lay eggs in the pet's fur. Each female flea can produce dozens of eggs every day. The eggs do not stick to the fur and soon fall off onto the floor. After a few days, the eggs hatch into maggot-like larvae which feed on dust and the droppings of adult fleas. The larva spins a cocoon in which it develops into an adult flea. They may stay in this resting stage for several months. The adult flea breaks out of its cocoon and crawls out of its hiding place to look for food. If it cannot find a pet it will hop on to any warm-blooded animal that passes by, including humans.

Fleas are commonly the cause of skin disease in pets and allergies appear most often in summer when the flea population is greatest. If you suspect your dog or cat has fleas or has an itchy skin condition, please seek help from your veterinary surgeon.