

The Alternative Dog

Incorporating the Alternative Cat and the Honey's Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2024

A few words from Jonathan, Honey's founder

Imagine how wonderful it would be if dogs were able to live much longer, healthier lives. An impossible dream? Scientists in America claim that in the future they will be able to create an antiaging pill for dogs, but they can't say when, or what the risks will be. I believe that there already exists an easier, safer, and more natural way: a change of diet. The connection between diet, health, and longevity in humans is, of course, well documented. According to a U.S. Burden of Disease Collaborators study, dietary risks are the number one cause of death and disability in America. In another study the drop in mortality risk among those with healthier habits (eating a good diet, moderate exercise) was equivalent to being 14 years younger. These findings were echoed in a third piece of research, which found that if you change to a healthier diet at age 20 it can extend your life by more than a decade, and at age 60 by an extra eight years. This could be the difference between living to 90 instead of the current average age, which is just 80. What's true for humans is also true for dogs. There is a growing volume of research to show what those of us who raw feed already knew: that a natural diet (and regular exercise) ensures longer, healthier lives for our four-legged family members. Who needs pills?



"THIS ISN'T MUCH FUN FOR US. EVERY 52 DAYS - BOING! - WE'RE A YEAR OLDER."

I am afraid this issue of *The Alternative Dog* is six weeks late. We produce it inhouse (which is why it has a slightly amateur look) and we were delayed first by a wave of winter illness and then by the unexpected offer of a stand at Crufts, which took a good deal of organisation. Anyway, my apologies. The newsletter has grown from a single A4 page to 56 A4 pages and we still don't have room for everything we would like to include. For example, I had hoped to run an article about our environmental and ethical policies – but I felt it was more important to include photos of Honey's dogs! If you would like to know about our approach to everything from our packaging to our ingredients, please don't hesitate to get directly in touch with me. By the way, we are ISO, organic, pasture for life and carbon neutral certified.



"He's a true friend and companion and, should it ever come to it, meat."

Changing the subject completely, over the page you will find details of the first Honey's Dog Nutrition Podcast. I say 'Honey's' only because we met all the costs of making it. In fact, the producers had complete editorial control and used it to interview over a dozen experts including Dr Ian Billingshurst, Dr Conor Brady, Professor Anna Hielm-Björkman, Dr Richard Doyle, Dr Brendan Clarke and Dr Conor O'Halloran, as well as dog lovers and, of course, dogs! The result is a lively, entertaining and highly informative series of programmes on canine health and nutrition with details of all the latest scientific research, which I hope you will enjoy.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your fantastic support. My colleagues and I do not take it for granted. If I can ever be of personal assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Very best regards,

Jonathan

Jonathan (Self)
Honey's Founder
jonathan@honeysrealdogfood.com

In this issue



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Keeping Dogs Stress Free



The Pet Detective
Robert Kenny finds missing dogs



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In Bed
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Shirley Baker
The famous photographer's dogs



Dr Stephen Dubin
Home care for your dog or cat



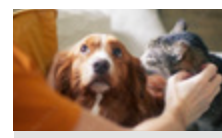
The President's Dog
The world's most famous dog



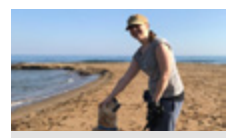
Dr Ilse Pedlar
Laser Treatment for animals



In Memoriam
Honey's fed dogs remembered with love



Going away?
Call in Homesitters



Wild venison
Benefits offered by this wonder meat

AND MUCH,
MUCH MORE BESIDES...



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HONEY'S NEWS



Crufts report!

For the first time in nine years Honey's took a stand at Crufts. It was very much a last minute thing – we were only offered a place in mid-February – but all the more enjoyable for being unexpected. The main reason for going after such a long gap was that we saw it as an opportunity to meet some of our customers and in this we were not disappointed! We had a special goodie bag for any Honey's customer who dropped by and we gave away almost 300 during the show. Thank you to everyone who came to say hello. We had far too many other special guests to name here but we must thank Dr Ilse Pedlar and Dr Vicky Adams who volunteered to come each day and answer questions about holistic healthcare and canine nutrition. Thanks are also due to the Honey's team – both those who came to Crufts and those who stayed back at base and handled a double workload. We were pleased to be joined by two members of our own production team – Guy (who is our head of production) and Adam (who recently joined us from Waitrose) – as they were able to explain to visitors where our ingredients come from and how our food is made. Members of our Healthcare Team were also in attendance.



Free healthcare advice

A quick reminder that our vets, veterinary nurses and nutritionists are at your service and at the service of your family and friends. They are happy to offer unlimited, free health and nutritional advice – there is no need to be a customer. Please call or email. All part of the Honey's service.



Please review us!

If you have a moment to review us on Trustpilot we would be very grateful. Tangibly grateful, in fact, since if you identify yourself, we will happily send you a little gift. A huge thank you, too, to all our past reviewers.



Zoom, zoom, zoom! Free seminars!

Are you a member of a dog club? Involved with a rescue centre? A veterinary professional in practice? Would your fellow-members/supporters/clients be interested in attending a short Zoom introduction to raw feeding? Jonathan (Honey's founder) and Jackie (one of our nurses) have developed a 40-minute presentation that they are happy to give, free of charge, to any group of dog lovers. If it's organised to benefit a charity Honey's will even sponsor the event. After their presentation, by the way, there is plenty of time for questions. For more information, please email js@jonathanself.com.

Honey's Dog Nutrition Podcast

Entertaining, informative interviews with dog lovers, vets and scientists

We are pleased to announce that the Honey's Dog Nutrition Podcast is now live. Over the course of seven, half-hour episodes, radio journalists Penny Boreham and Seb Masters investigate the world of dog food with the help of vets, scientists and nutritionists.

Interview subjects include Dr Ian Billingshurst, Dr Conor Brady, Prof Anna Hielm-Björkman, Dr Richard Doyle, Dr Brendan Clarke, Dr Conor O'Halloran, Dr Nick Thompson – a host of dog lovers – and many others.

It is lively, entertaining, informative series which will be of interest to any dog lover.

Search for 'The Dog Nutrition Podcast' on your favourite app or scan the QR below.



Please pass details on to anyone who you feel may be interested. Thank you.

Kindly note that the producers had complete editorial control although it was made with the support of Honey's.

Farm visits

It is Honey's policy to visit our producers. There is a strong social element to these visits. We love looking at farms and meeting farmers and we like to know where our ingredients come from. But there is another more important reason: farm animal welfare. We like to see for ourselves that our producers meet Honey's standards of care. There are other things we consider such as the size of the farm (we prefer to buy from small scale producers), and the farmer's commitment to sustainability.



A typical example of a farm visit would be the one carried out this spring by Dan Archer (who is second-in-command of Honey's production) and Adam Beaumont (who joined us from Waitrose). Their visit was to Llygadenwyn Farm, which you won't be surprised (given its name) to hear is located in the rolling Carmarthenshire hills. It is owned and managed by the Jones family who describe themselves as farmers and butchers and who have recently won a prestigious Slow Food award.



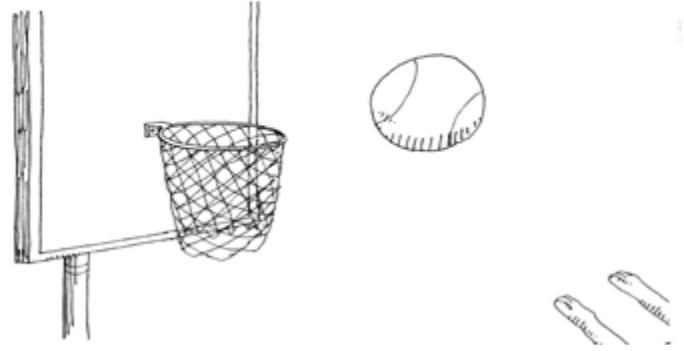
Llygadenwyn is a mixed farm with dairy, beef, sheep and poultry. Happily, it is only an eight-minute drive from the nearest abattoir. As the Joneses supply Honey's with lamb we were especially interested in seeing this side of the enterprise. The sheep are all grass fed which is supplemented with clover. When we visited there were around 300 sheep grazing in large, open fields, but by next spring they hope to expand the flock. Despite the rather variable weather the sheep all seemed happy and very well cared for.

The Jones family is committed to best environmental practice. Recent improvements include new and more effective waste management and a number of habitat restoration projects. The farm has, by the way played a pivotal role in the conservation of the Red Kite, which only has two breeding sites in the country.



Copies of Honey's *Ingredients Policy* are available on request and can be found on our website.

THE HOUND OF THE BASKETBALLS



New 'MY FAVOURITE TOY' Photo Competition.

Win a month of free food

The new Honey's Competition is simplicity itself: submit a picture of your dog (or cat) on the theme of 'My Favourite Toy'. First prize is one month of free Honey's (to the value of your most recent order) and there are 3 runners up prizes of either 6 packets of Beautiful Joe's or bones or biscuits to the same value. Rules? Barely any. You can submit up to three photographs and the judges' (appointed by Honey's) decision, no matter how unfair, will be final. Please email your entry to competition@honeysrealdogfood.com before 31st July 2024 or post it to Honey's Photo Competition, Darling's House, Salisbury Road, Pewsey SN9 5PZ.



Proud sponsors

We are the proud sponsors of the Pewsey Vale Under 7s Soccer Team



Arundawn Dog Rescue. Small but effective.

British rescue centres are struggling to cope with the post-pandemic flood of unwanted dogs on top of the usual demand for places. Many of the smaller centres find it especially hard as their lack of resources make it difficult to raise funds. One such centre that does amazing work is Arundawn Dog Rescue. It was founded 42 years ago by Elaine Barter. Elaine's father was a vet and as a child she was often out with him on his farm rounds which doubtless accounts for her love of and affinity with animals. The rescue has evolved over the years and has rehomed around 8000 dogs. At the moment, veterinary and food bills are really taking their toll – especially as Arundawn believes in feeding raw. The charity works closely with council pounds, police pounds and also takes local 'drop-ins'. We know that any support you can offer will be put to excellent use and will be greatly appreciated. <https://www.arundawndogrescue.co.uk>



Beautiful Joe's update

We've donated over £700,000 of treats

Thanks to you we have now donated over £700,000 worth of treats to dogs in need. Every time we sell a packet of Beautiful Joe's, we give treats away to one of more than 100 different rescue centres. The rescue centres use them to train the dogs in their care and, of course, as treats. Beautiful Joe's are made by hand in small batches, and we have just invested in new equipment allowing us to increase our production. With your support we hope to donate £1,000,000 of treats by the end of 2026.

If you aren't familiar with our treats, we offer two flavours: Tasty Lamb (£6 a packet) and Yummy Liver (£8 a packet). Both are completely natural – we simply air dry the ingredients to lock in the flavour. It is no exaggeration to say that dogs go crazy for them. You may also like to try one of our training tins (£4) – many people find a single shake is all they need to command their four-legged family member's total attention!

If you want to know more about Beautiful Joe's and to learn about the rescue centres we support then please visit www.beautifuljoes.com.

Finally, a HUGE thank you for helping us to help dogs in need.



Update: Honey's Bespoke

We officially launched Honey's Bespoke at Crufts and we were pleased to see that it was reported by a variety of media outlets including BBC radio and *Countryfile*. If you aren't familiar with the service we can now make food – raw or cooked – entirely to order and using whatever ingredients or supplements are requested. We always imagined that the majority of our Bespoke clients would be poorly dogs with health issues or perhaps allergies and perhaps half fall into this group. However, we are also making a number of older dogs and dogs with very specific food likes and dislikes happy! If you are interested the first step is a consultation with a member of the dedicated Bespoke team who will produce a detailed report and diet plan. If necessary, they will involve your own vet and/or our veterinary nutritionist. Please contact Honey's HQ for more information.



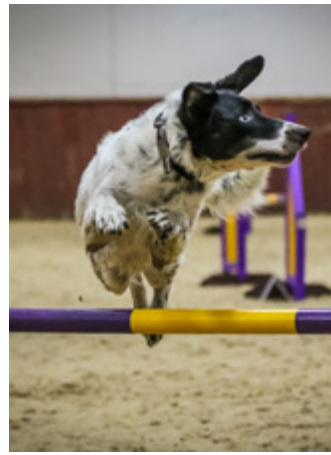
Princess Lola is the winner

The winner of the personalised Rock & Ruddle hairbrush was Amy Gibbs. Well done, Amy. Thank you Rock & Ruddle for supplying the prize. <https://rockandruddle.com>



Jak by Indie Wakeford





Poetry winner

In the last issue of *The Alternative Dog* we announced the winner of the competition to have a poem written about your dogs by Rosie Hammond. Here is that poem!

Hello everybody - we come as a pair
 I'm Skye and he's Breeze and he's just over there
 With his nose on a plant pot whilst sniffing out money
 He's a beautiful dog and he's terribly funny
 I just couldn't stand him when he was a pup
 But my fondness has grown for him since he grew up
 You could travel the world 'til your eyesight grew dim
 Yet you'd not find a fellow more handsome than him
 Or more loyal or affectionate - look at his eyes
 Their gentle contentment would win every prize
 But we don't want to share him and do beg your pardon
 But he's staying at home with us here in our garden
 If we're taken to swim in our estuary
 You'll find me with him and he'll be there with me
 When we lie there together when supper is eaten
 We discuss our dear Master, who cannot be beaten
 I know he prefers me but I wouldn't dare
 To tell this to Breeze cos it wouldn't be fair
 It's a secret I'll keep to the end of my days
 So I'll just stretch and yawn in a euphoric haze
 I might wrestle and roll feigning dominant play
 But everyone knows at the end of the day
 That Breeze was a gift from the heavens above
 And all of our family's completely in love

Hello! What's she saying, our dear little diva?
 If she tells you she can't do a trick - don't believe her!
 Our Skye has talent performing her tricks
 She deserves a great trophy that's held up on bricks
 She'll chatter and bark - she'll be giving it large
 But all of us know she's the boss! She's in charge..!
 I've known her a lifetime and find that it's best
 To let her go first and admire her zest
 There's four of us here in our family, you know
 My Mistress adored me from birth - rightly so
 My Master spends time with me playing all day
 And my sister, dear Skye watches tricks that I play
 I like to be paid for the effort I make
 So feel free to give me a fourteen ounce steak
 I'm trained to turn round on a sixpence and I
 Like some praise for my talent from Master and Skye
 I'll tell you a secret - a sweet canine whim
 But I'd love it if once, yes, just once, I could win
 Over Skye when retrieving my toys from the water
 She's just like a seal, like Poseidon's sleek daughter
 She doesn't need flippers - she forges ahead
 Making waves with her speed which go over my head
 But I have a heart like the softest marshmallows
 So just smile when I'm ambushed right there in the shallows

When all truth is told, when we're done with the fuss
 There are very few dogs who are more loved than us
 So we'll love you and leave you with saddest goodbye
 From sweet, handsome Breeze and his Great Diva Skye.

If...only (with apologies to Kipling)

If you can start each day without your morning caffeine shot
 If you can still stay cheerful, whether freezing cold or hot

If you have aches and pains, but never grumble or complain
 And never bore to death, or moan, or criticise, or blame

If you can understand when loved ones just seem to forget
 Or haven't time to call, but you don't ever get upset

If you can greet each day with joy, and look it in the eye
 And guarantee you'll never cheat, deceive, or tell a lie

If you can sleep at night without the aid of little pills
 And not blame stress at work or home for causing all your ills

And should it be you can relax without the help of booze
 Or need those funny smelling cigarettes that people use

If you can eat the same food every day and ask for more
 And not find that the same walk every day is quite a bore

If you can live like this each day and not find it a slog
 Then, unless a saint, my friend, without doubt you're... a dog!

Richard Alport



Cold car? Try this...

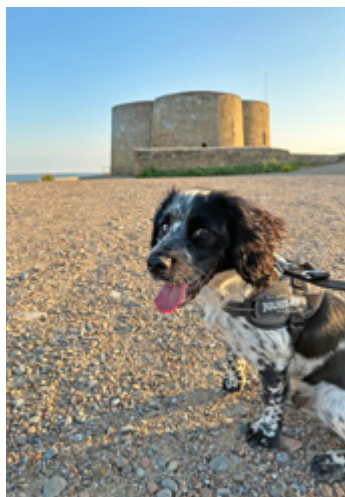
We are always on the lookout for ways that our insulation can be repurposed or reused prior to recycling it. One valued Honey's customer, Tereza Sterbova, has come up with the brilliant idea of placing it on her car seat to keep herself warm and dry. A huge thank you for the suggestion.

HONEY'S CUSTOMER STORIES

Beware of grass seeds

Jason Walton

Patch is the first dog that my husband and I have owned together. He is twenty months old and a sprocker spaniel: loving, caring, entertaining, intelligent, easy going but also mischievous and, frankly, sometimes a bit of a nutter! Still, he passed his Bronze Kennel Club training and I am sure he will have no trouble with the Silver or Gold. Recently, we took him away for a weekend break in Suffolk. We found a dog friendly hotel opposite the beach in Aldeburgh and visited all the local sights including Benjamin Britten's house in Snape, Snape Maltings, Sizewell beach and Sutton Hoo. We had a lovely time but for two incidents. First, Patch had a really upset stomach while we were staying in the hotel. I won't describe the results in detail but will just say that it took a great deal of clearing up (luckily I had materials left over from when he was younger on the car and the hotel was also understanding). Second, when we arrived back home Patch was clearly really distressed about something. He was lethargic and lacked any energy.



Patch on the beach after our evening stroll



Patch on our balcony looking out to the sea

We noticed that he kept shaking his head and when we took him to the vet it transpired that he had a tiny seed of grass stuck just by his ear drum. It was so close, in fact, that he had to be sedated before it could be removed. We can't really understand how it happened as Patch wasn't close to long grass over the weekend or, indeed, in the preceding period. Grass seeds have pointed ends and are exceptionally sharp, so they can become trapped in fur and due to their shape can only travel in one direction. This means they can often penetrate skin or move into ears. If left untreated, grass seeds can cause a variety of problems from minor irritation to conditions that require surgery. Grass seeds can also carry bacteria which can cause an infection if the skin of your pet is affected. The solution? Try and avoid long grass and check your dog's fur and ears regularly.



What the vet found in Patch's ear

Ketty and Vicky

Marie White

Ketty – a rescue German Shepherd Dog – was so wonderful, meant so much to me, that although I love the breed I have never been able to have another. I'd be making comparisons and that just wouldn't be fair. Her arrival in my life was a complete accident. I was sitting in our garden – I was brought up on the outskirts of Prague, in Czechia – when a passing stranger asked me if I recognised one of the dogs they had with them. She had been abandoned and despite their best efforts (checking for a microchip, going to the police and rescue centres) no one had claimed her. I had actually been working a summer job in the local supermarket to buy a Newfoundland puppy but when Ketty jumped up and licked my hand all I wanted was for her to come and live with us.



Ketty and me circa 1996

My parents, thankfully, agreed, and for the next eleven years Ketty and I were connected in a way that is difficult to describe. Before school we roamed the countryside for an hour and a half, after school we repeated the process for two or three hours. We swam together in a local river when the weather was fine enough. When she first came she was very nervous – heaven knows what terrible experiences she had had – and jealous if I showed interest in another dog. But over time she must have realised she was safe and loved. She never needed training, by the way, and could be taken anywhere without fear that she would misbehave or run off. She seemed to understand instinctively everything I wanted. We communicated without words. When we lost her I cried and cried and I still cry when I think about her. Which brings me to the other animal from that period: Vicky. Vicky quite literally saved my life. I was what back then was called a 'troubled teenager' and my psychologist arranged for me to rescue Vicky from a well-meaning woman who had rescued him from the street but who had tied him up because he kept damaging her flat.



Vicky as she began to recover

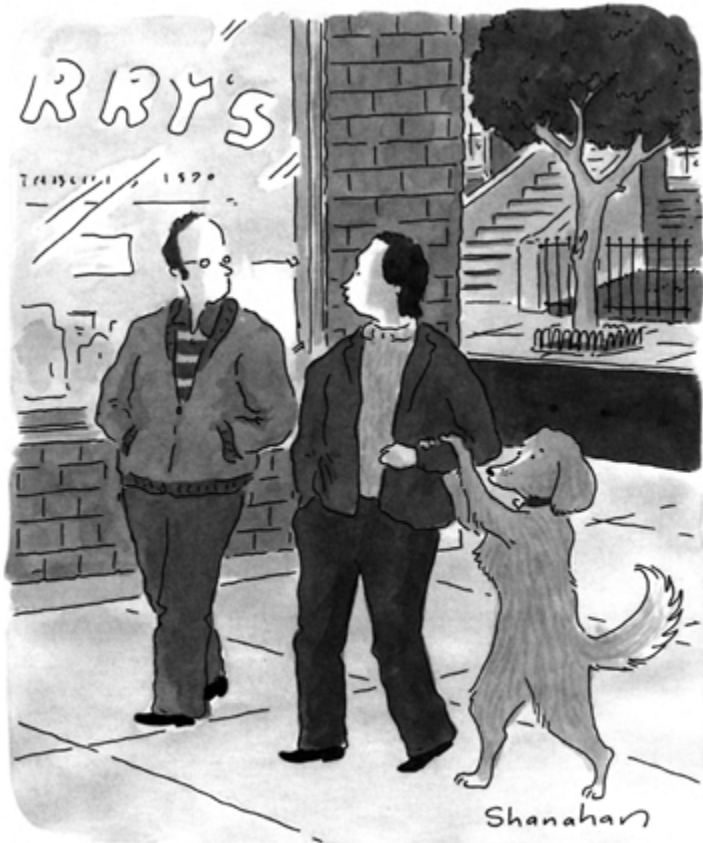
Looking after him changed my life. It was a responsibility and a challenge. On paper I was rescuing him, but, as I say, in reality he was rescuing me. He came to me in a state of nerves but within a few months he was a gentle and loving cat. We now have Goldie the cocker spaniel, Meadow the Maine coon cat, Daisy, Snowy and Midnight the gerbils, Millie and Gillie the axolotls, and also fish, crabs and shrimp. They all eat species-appropriate diets. It might be a bit more hassle and it requires some research, but they're all happy. Goldie is 5 and a half, Meadow is 8 and their health, including teeth, are spot on. I think of Ketty and Vicky often. Buddhism rings true with me, I feel Ketty and Vicky are still with me, and always will be. Their love, our relationship, all the wonderful memories - they are still here available to me. Precious. Some people would say 'just a dog' or 'just a cat', but they are so, so much more.

Honey's fed Bouvier des Flandres

Calm. Easy going. Intelligent. Polite. Affectionate. Strong. Energetic. Barrel chested. Touse-coated. Powerful. Workers. Strong willed. As their name suggests, the Bouvier des Flandres are a herding dog breed originating in Flanders, Belgium. They were originally used for general farm work including cattle droving, sheep herding, and cart pulling, and nowadays as guard dogs and police dogs, as well, of course, as being kept as pets. One doesn't see many Bouvier des Flandres out and about and at Honey's, we count ourselves lucky to be feeding several, including Nyak and Xion Gill. Xion, incidentally, is in the early stages of IGP (which stands for *International Gebrauchshund Prufung* or tracking, obedience and protection) training, which apparently suits his skills and personality.



Anyway, Hardev was kind enough to send us some wonderful photos of them both and we enjoyed them so much we thought we would share them. Quote: 'I have shared pictures I feel are worthy to grace the covers of the Honey's newsletter. The Obsidian K9 marked image of Nyak with drool in his beard and the one of Xion laid down on the concrete, staring into the camera. The other two are for you to oggle at some lovely Bouvier behaviour! Finally, the two of them together, in the living room, acting like they own the place – which they do, but don't tell them that.'



"She never took to the leash."

How to earn our eternal gratitude and a little thank you gift...

Thank you very much for your referrals. Do remember, we are happy to provide raw feeding and nutritional advice to anyone who contacts us, even if they never, ever plan to become a customer. If someone to whom you have recommended us does become a customer, however, we would like to say thank you with one of the selection of gifts shown below. For this reason, please don't forget to tell us the names of any new customers you introduce to Honey's (just to be on the safe side you could ask them to let us know, too).



A tree planted in the Honey's Wood



Two personalised dog tags



Our original Superdog Cape/Towel Thingie



10 packets of Beautiful Joe's treats + Tin



A personalised dog bowl



Two free shipping vouchers



Keeping dogs stress free

Anna Webb

In our modern world there's no escaping pollutants. Whether it's the air we breathe, the food we eat, or the water we drink, environmental stressors (or manmade chemicals) permeate our environment. Over time an accumulation through absorption, ingestion, or inhalation

can compromise health by increasing our 'body burden' not to mention that of our dogs. The list of potential contaminants can seem endless – plastic packaging, car exhaust, weed killer, household cleaners, air fresheners, shampoo, soap, detergents, polish – yet with an awareness of Phthalates, and other endocrine disrupting Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) we can make informed choices to use natural alternatives.



"It's my Environmental Impact Report. And where, may I ask, is yours?"

One of the most insidious environmental stressors, however, is often overlooked: emotional contagion or stress. In a bid to provide additional insight to our understanding of how dogs may interpret and interact with human psychological states, a ground-breaking study by Queen's University in Belfast in 2022 revealed that dogs can distinguish the odour of cortisol in human sweat and breath samples. It was the first ever double-blind scientific study that highlighted the fact that dogs don't need visual or audio cues to pick up on human stress. It is obviously a very useful thing to know when training a dog, but also sheds more light on human-dog relationships.

One of the reasons why Queen's University decided to carry out the research was the growing use of dogs to detect medical conditions. As early as 2008 the charity Medical Detection Dogs trained a chocolate Labrador called Coco to be an Addison's Disease medical alert dog. Coco was able to detect rising cortisol levels, alerting and deflecting his partner, Karen Ruddleston, from an impending medical emergency. This was the first acknowledgement of the adage that 'dogs can smell fear'.

Another interesting study was conducted recently by The Royal Veterinary College. It decided to look at people who had acquired dogs during the pandemic to see how those dogs were behaving. Intriguingly, many such dogs suffer from signs of anxiety such as pulling on the lead, lack of focus, excessive barking, jumping up and an inability to master recall. It was found that 80% of the dogs had been trained using 'aversive' methods, which are both stressful for the trainer and the dog. The College estimated that as many as one-in-three 'pandemic' dogs are suffering from anxiety. As an aside, there is extensive evidence that positive reward-based training methods eliminate stress or fear from the learning process in dogs.

Many first-time dog owners sometimes think their dog is a 'little person in a furry suit' attributing 'human' thought processes to their pooch. Sadly, this leads to messages being lost in translation, which can cause stress and anxiety both ways, compounding problems. A fascinating 2019 study in Sweden found that samples of hair from 'stressed' owners contained high cortisol levels. These levels were then matched to their dog's hair samples also high in cortisol. The idea that there could be long-term synchronisation in stress levels between members of two different species had never been highlighted before.

One of the most important skills anyone living with a dog can learn is how to read his or her body language. If you know when they are becoming anxious or stressed, you can take action to prevent it. With indoor environments already considered three and half times more toxic than outdoors, minimising stress is a good option! One easy thing to do is to ensure that your dog has regular exercise as this increases the release of endorphins. Another is to supply something for them to chew (ideally a bone) as this relieves boredom – which can also lead to stress. The role of appropriate nutrition and a healthy microbiome – supporting the body's natural ability to balance the fight or flight response and cortisol production – cannot be understated, either. Multiple animal studies have explored the relationship between the influence of gut bacteria on the brain, and specifically on emotions and behaviour. Home to trillions of bacteria, the microbiome is all about optimising its microbial profile as different bacteria create different chemicals that affect the gut / brain axis.

Speaking of food, studies have indicated that dogs fed on a raw diet for only a year presented a richer microbiome compared to kibble-fed dogs, paving the way for increased secretion of serotonin (happy hormones). Research carried out in 2019 by Oregon State University involved 31 American Pit Bull Terriers rescued from a dog fighting ring. The dogs were divided into two groups, those that were assessed as dog to dog aggressive and those that were not. Analysing the dog's stool samples, interestingly the group defined as aggressive contained very different bacteria to that of the group assessed as non-aggressive.

Clearly diet plays a crucial role in in both human and canine physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Moreover, it can help to promote a healthy immune system able to counter the wear and tear of modern living, notably oxidative stress.

One of the main reasons why people contact Dogs Trust and other rescue centres is that they can't cope with their dog's 'poor' behaviour. The cause of that poor behaviour is very likely to be anxiety and stress. Clearly, it makes sound sense to integrate nutritional and behavioural therapies for optimum wellness.

I began by talking about the role of pollutants in stress and this should not be overlooked.

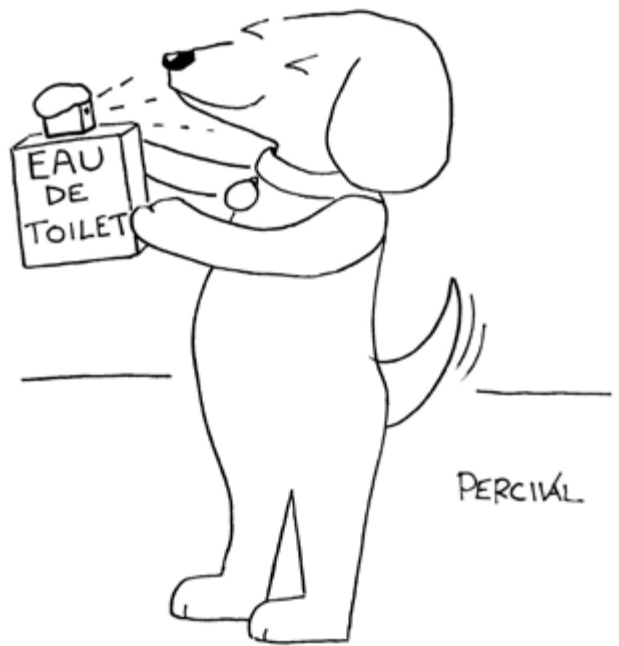
Indoor environments are three and half times more toxic than outdoor environments. More worryingly, we spend around 90% of our time indoors as do our dogs, cats and other pets. Toxins accumulate over time and are stored in almost every tissue, including our fat, skeletal muscles, joints, in organs, and in the brain. Scientists refer to this as the 'Body Burden'. There is no lack of scientific evidence regarding the health dangers of everything from plastics to synthetic bedding and from cosmetics to the flame-retardant chemicals found in furnishings but thanks to powerful lobbying by manufacturers the regulations remain lax.

Studies show that around 75% of products that have a fragrance contain Phthalates, known as endocrine disruptors, that can exacerbate allergic symptoms, respiratory conditions, even alter hormone levels. As candles burn or air fresheners release odours, phthalates evaporate into the air releasing chemical particles. These are called Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). These chemical particles become heavy and fall to the ground turning into dust that's easily inhaled as your dog goes sniffing around with their immense olfactory systems. Coupled with the sensitivity of their noses, any odour we can smell, like a scented candle, will be amplified by approximately one million times by a dog's sensory system. With faster metabolisms than us, dogs absorb these dust particles very efficiently through their lungs and into their bloodstream.

Sadly, there can also be dangers outside, especially in some gardens. If you use commercial slug pellets, weed killers or lawn treatments, for example, they will almost certainly contain toxic chemicals, not least

Organophosphates. These are a group of human-made chemicals that poison insects and mammals and can disrupt the endocrine system (affecting the hormonal systems) as well as distorting glucose modulation and even causing cancers.

In short, inhaling, digesting or absorbing synthetic chemicals through the skin can cause serious health issues. Despite this fact, there is still no regulation in the UK to list or ban such chemicals on products for the pet sector. The naturopathic way is to balance the onslaught of chemical stressors through diet, supplements, and making alternative choices. This includes opting for vintage furniture without flame retardant chemicals in their manufacture! In a bid to reduce the global challenge of chemical contamination in households, ironically our pets are sentinels, or bioindicators to monitor risk assessment to enable legislative change by global Environmental Protection Agencies.



5. Don't underestimate the potential of a high powered vacuum cleaner with a pointy nozzle attachment to suck up dust in crevices. Regular vacuuming and ventilation can improve your home's 'building biology' by over 50%.

6. Treat your garden with the age-old natural insecticide and pesticide known as Diatomaceous Earth. A way more cost-effective solution for the garden and one that's natural and non-toxic. Diatomaceous Earth is made from fossilized water plants and is a naturally occurring siliceous sedimentary mineral compound from the remains of algae-like plants called diatoms. It works by suffocating or de-hydrating pesky bugs, even kills slugs. It's also a preventative solution by digging into the soil. Organic Farmers embrace its potential in lieu of chemicals. I use the 'human grade edible' variety all over my garden. Avoid inhalation, but once it's settled into the ground it's completely safe and an underestimated natural resource!



Six stress busting tips...

1. Feed a fresh, wholefood, species appropriate diet to help counter disease, reduce inflammation and boost positive cellular expression. It will also promote the health and efficacy of the microbiome (where 90% of the immune systems resides).
2. Opt for natural skincare and grooming products for your dog like Sniffe and Likkit. Avoid commercially available or prescribed shampoos, which can harbour many undefined chemical agents.
3. Choose plant-based household cleaning products and washing detergents or, better still, investigate the power of using probiotics to not just naturally clean your home, but offer alternatives for topical ear, eye and dental care for your dog. I've been using the range of products offered by Ingenious Probiotics for several months and you'll find an article by the founder elsewhere in this issue.
4. Choose vintage furniture and natural cloth bedding for your dog, without synthetic fibres to emit VOC's, think creatively to use old untreated fabrics to cover modern sofas, reducing the risk of PBDE's emitting from flame retardant chemicals in furnishings. Opt for untreated wool or cotton rugs, bed linen even cushion covers!



"The dog's life is no longer the life for me."

As a Canine Nutrition and Behaviour expert, Anna combines her psychology degree, with study at the College of Integrated Veterinary Therapies (CIVT) and over 20 years experience. Host of the award nominated A DOG'S LIFE podcast, she lives in London, and is owned by Prudence, a Miniature Bull Terrier and Mr Binks, a re-homed English Toy Terrier. www.annawebb.co.uk

The importance of enrichment

Kate Mallatratt



When a week-old rubber backed dog toy failed to survive the spin cycle of my washing machine I decided I could make something much better myself! Combining my love of sewing with my work as a holistic canine behaviourist (I frequently used olfactory enrichment for behaviour modification), I designed a fleece (machine washable) 'forager'. What began as a hobby as turned into a business – PickPocket Foragers – offering a range of high quality foraging products for dogs of all shapes and sizes, including flat-nosed breeds (for whom enrichment products are somewhat limited). As the name suggests, the foragers are made up of pockets in which treats are hidden. Using heavyweight fleece combined with extra-strong thread and overlocked seams, the foragers are durable and will last many years. Crate foragers hang vertically and are useful for dogs in need of a few minutes weight bearing exercise post operatively for rehabilitation. These hanging foragers are a terrific distraction when brushing a wriggly puppy too. For dogs who like to explore rabbit holes, our foraging bag provides the perfect solution with pockets on the *inside* of a fleece bag. Other foragers lie flat on the floor and double-up as comfy beds. In fact, I'm sent many photos of dogs happily dozing on the foragers after snuffling, indicating that there is a positive emotional attachment to them.



"We need to channel his energy into something positive."

Enrichment can be defined as providing mental stimulation that results in an improved affective state due to the dog's physical, mental, and emotional needs being met. After any type of enrichment whether walking, playing, or foraging, your dog should ideally be relaxed. This is a good measure of whether the activity is indeed *enrichment*. Olfaction is truly enriching for our dogs, but why are dogs such enthusiastic sniffers?

Our dog's brains are hard-wired to sniff. A 20-minute stroll for us is 20-minutes of scenting bliss for your dog. (Patience is required whilst your dog 'reads the newspaper' and I feel sorry for dogs who are dragged away from an absorbing scent. I'm sure it is as frustrating as us watching a movie but not seeing the ending.) Given that our best friend can detect a teaspoonful of sugar in two Olympic sized swimming pools full of water, it's not surprising that their world looks and smells very different to ours. Foraging behaviour fires the 'seeking circuit', a reward system in the brain that drives dogs to search for food. About an eighth of a dog's brain is devoted to olfaction (dogs can even scent under water thanks to two tiny ducts in the roof of their mouth enabling them to draw scent without inhaling). There is no dog on earth who doesn't relish sniffing, and as their eyesight fails and hearing become harder, olfactory enrichment is remarkably beneficial to Golden Oldies. Just as we might complete *The Times* crossword daily to keep our mental faculties sharp, a few minutes searching for tid-bits is engaging and mentally stimulating - perfect for a senior dog who can't go for a walk. Foraging enrichment with PickPockets is perfectly safe for blind dogs too, and I am amazed at the speed at which they whizz through the pockets! And did I mention that PickPockets come with a waggy tail guarantee?

Turning to the issue of safety, when I first started PickPockets I wondered if dogs' chewing through the fleece would be a potential problem. Experience has taught me, it is not! Dogs clearly prefer to forage rather than chew. All dogs should, of course, be supervised with the foragers however if taught correctly, the risk of chewing is minimal. Some Einsteins will pick up and shake foragers to empty the treats out in one fell swoop! Apart from blatantly cheating, it is simply down to first learning success. Looking at this from the dog's perspective, they can't read the instructions, and whilst rummaging through the pockets appears obvious to us, your dog needs to be 'taught' how to forage with the PickPocket. Simply by luring them towards an open pocket and popping a large treat in a few times, they should be happily poking their noses inside the pockets in very little time at all.



"I'm sorry, he's not here right now, but I could get one of his socks for you."

Talking of tid-bits, what goodies are suitable for foragers? Beautiful Joe's of course! These are the perfect accompaniment because not only are they extremely healthy and great for the waistline (your dog's, not yours!) they can be broken into small pieces or left in larger chunks. Foraging 'difficulty levels' should be adapted to meet an individual dog's needs, with elderly dogs requiring larger treats than younger whippersnappers.

This year PickPocket Foragers has partnered with a new charity called Hero Paws, which helps to find homes and raise funds for veterinary bills for retired service and military dogs, as they receive no government funding after retirement from active service. We have teamed up with a military seamstress to make the foragers – in camouflage fleece of course! We are also continuing our affiliation with the Canine Arthritis Management organisation and supporting other deserving causes through providing free foragers for fund raising, giving donations from sales, and offering discounted trade rates to carefully selected and ethically aligned businesses.

Our company tag line is "enriching mind, body, and nose" and, as described earlier, enrichment should leave your dog feeling pleasantly relaxed and fulfilled. Watching my dogs snuffle through the pockets certainly gives me a sense of fulfilment, as does reading the label carefully sewn into every PickPocket Forager: machine washable at 40° C!

For more information please contact kate@pickpocketforagers.com

Win a complete Foraging Kit worth £83! Enter our PickPocket Forager free draw by emailing freedraw@honeysrealdogfood.com



The Pet Detective

Robert Kenny has helped to find thousands of missing and stolen pets over the past 17 years.

When I was on holidays in California in 2007, a dog was drowning and it got washed out to sea. I jumped off a cliff and got the dog but couldn't find the owner. The story went viral and the owner came forward – he thought the dog was dead. I got invited on a few television stations and they said to me, 'Why don't you become a pet detective?'



I took the idea back to Ireland and went on the next training opportunity I could find in the US. I'm Europe's only pet detective, certified at Missing Pet Partnership Worldwide, in the US. Pets are probably more important than people to people. When a pet goes missing and they can't find them, they call me. I'm the last resort.

I'm from south Dublin, and over the past 17 years I have retrieved probably 8,500 missing and stolen pets – mainly dogs, cats, horses, donkeys and ponies. The operation is based in London, and the UK is where I mainly work, because there are 30 million pet owners in the UK. One in two people in the UK owns a pet (it's 52 per cent of people in Ireland, according to CSO figures from 2021).

When a pet goes missing, I find out its age, gender, time of day it went missing, its previous history. I'm able to determine how far that animal would be able to travel if it went missing. For any missing feline, for up to two weeks missing, my recovery rate has been 67.4 per cent. For stolen dogs it's a lot less. Very rarely now will you get a lost dog. They're always stolen.

Depending on the case and the circumstances, I use DNA forensics if I think an animal has been hit at a certain point. We can also use a search dog up to four days after a disappearance, but that can only be used depending on the weather. If it's raining, the scent is washed away.

In 2013 I was hired to recover Sandra Bullock's kidnapped dog in the US, which I got back. Of course, that was very good PR. Since then, I have worked for Geri Halliwell of the Spice Girls, Angelina Jolie and Liam Gallagher. Most people who hire me, however, generally don't have money. The majority would be borderline working class. Pets just mean so much to them.

In an average month I would go to five or six different countries, including Ireland, the UK, France, Germany Sweden, Switzerland – all over, and the US a couple of times. When you're going on an investigation, you're meeting a lot of people door to door, and the crack you have with people is something else. The amount of friends I've built up around the world is unbelievable.

I don't do a lot of work in Ireland anymore. If I was travelling to Ireland from London for a case, it would probably cost the clients about €1,000, including travel.

There are an awful lot of pets stolen in Ireland, and coupled with little CCTV compared with the UK, there's no accountability. A lot are stolen to order. Organised criminals make a big living out of this. They follow

and target people and know exactly what they're getting when they break into a house to steal a pet. The dog could be worth €2,500-€3,000 and they'll already have a buyer for it in another country.

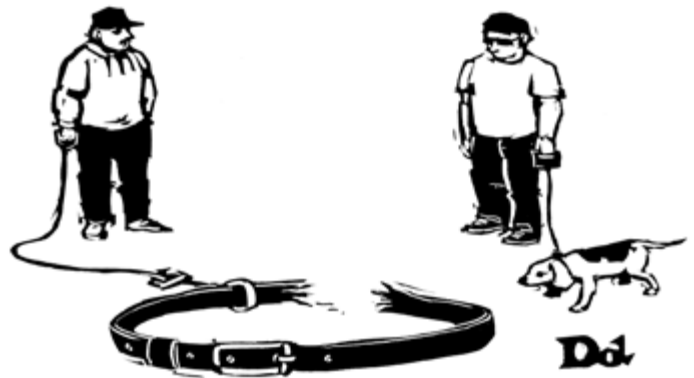
It's as dangerous as you make it for a pet detective. When I was working in Ireland more often, a few years back, I found it very dangerous. In the UK I have emergency touch buttons on my jackets and my mobile is connected to special branch detectives wherever I'm working. I've had people take machetes to me, firearms – whatever. I've been set on fire in a vehicle too. All of that skulduggery has always happened in Ireland, though, never anywhere else.



The majority of cases I've seen in the UK are by people of Irish descent stealing them and bringing them back to Ireland. They're supplying puppy farms. Ireland is the puppy farm capital of the world.

Always in the months of November and December, there's an increase in pet theft. Pets are stolen to order for people at Christmas, especially puppies. Criminals target puppy breeders across Ireland, and virtually all of them would be brought to the UK. They'll sell them online and will never advertise the real pet as the one that you're buying. They'll never ever arrange to meet you where there's a camera. They'll use addresses, for instance, where an elderly person has recently died to make sure nobody is living there, and when the buyer is on their way, they'll change the address at the last minute to somewhere off a motorway.

Nowadays, people never think it will happen to them. They leave animals tied up and vulnerable. If you've got a pedigree cat, you're better off having a run where the cat is enclosed and can't get nicked. With regards to dogs, if you love your pet enough, you're better off having some sort of deterrent such as a security camera, especially in rural areas. Most stolen dogs are lifted in rural areas.



In 2024, we plan to franchise out our company, Happy Tails Detective. We're going to do training in Ireland, Australia, Japan and South America. Our plan is to set up 'pet police departments' in different countries, which would allow people on social welfare a chance to work with animals. Twice a year we're going to do flash-training courses in Ireland, but we will only take about 10 per course. It'll be an awful lot crammed into one week for specialised training.

If somebody is interested being trained up as a pet detective, they can contact us at info@happytailsdetective.co.uk

In conversation with Conor Capplis. This article first appeared in the Irish Times.

The Restart Dogs Project

Prisoners in England are being taught to train assistance dogs for the community, gaining qualifications so they can set up their own businesses upon release. Paul Stafford reports...

Rachel Trafford unlocks a series of gates at HMP Dovegate, a high-security, Category B prison in Staffordshire, England. As she wanders deeper into the prison grounds, the barking of dogs can be heard. But these aren't the foam-flecked, clamp-jawed mastiffs of the movies, designed to strike fear into the marrow of a would-be escapee. These are puppies: the lively, tail-wagging students of the Restart Dogs project.



In November 2021, Dovegate became the first adult men's prison in England to run a full-time dog training course. Using a team of professional dog handlers (and foster volunteers who care for the dogs on evenings and weekends), the programme trains assistance dogs for the community. At the same time it gives men who are serving significant sentences the skills and qualifications to become dog trainers and handlers.

Assistance dogs support disabled people with daily living tasks, such as unloading washing machines and opening doors. The animals need to be highly trained, which can take up to two years.



Inside the prison, every weekday sees the programme's nine incarcerated individuals learn how to instil certain behaviours – such as carrying – into the dogs through positive reinforcement.

When Trafford, the animal behaviourist behind the project, talks about the psychology of dog training, she could be talking about the prison system: 'Punishment does suppress bad behaviours, but it doesn't help to create positive behaviour,' Trafford says. 'The only way to build a new neural pathway is to keep rewarding it.'

Dan is part of the inaugural intake. Previously a drug dealer inside prison, the opportunity encouraged him to give all that up 'overnight'. 'What's really going to reduce the likelihood of me reoffending is not wanting to reoffend,' he says. 'You need to reduce the want to use drugs with a meaningful activity. This keeps me grounded.'

The qualifications from the course and the skillset he is learning paint a picture of what a crime-free life outside the prison walls could look like.



'This is a group of prisoners now that we don't have to worry about,' says Trafford. 'They're drug-free, incident-free, easy to manage on the wings. Usually across the prison population, there's random drug testing. If they're on our programme, it's mandatory. If they have a failure, they're out.'

Despite that, only one prisoner was removed from the programme, in its earliest days. As Trafford puts it delicately, 'they needed to do a bit more personal work'.



The College of Policing's own guidance on prison inmate dog training programmes suggests that 'overall, the evidence suggest that the intervention has reduced crime,' based on the limited use-case information from Restart Dogs and a handful of similarly nascent programmes.

On the outside, the programme's first graduate dog, Nika – trained in part by Dan – was placed into the care of Alfred Peterken, a young man with autism, in 2022.

'Nika's brilliant,' says Alfred's mother, Tabitha Peterken. 'When she feels a meltdown happening ... if it's going on a bit too long, she'll just take him outside. We've been able to do normal things like sit in cafes and have drinks for the first time, which Alfred couldn't manage before.'

Trafford is expanding the programme to a third prison, Fosseway near Leicester, in November, and is setting up a charity to help newly released prisoners launch dog training businesses of their own.

With his sentence due to end in December 2024, it means there'll be an opportunity for prisoners like Dan to continue their work on the other side.

www.restartdogproject.com

This article first appeared in Positive News. Photography by www.phodographybywill.co.uk



The Cat That Got the Oat Milk

Kathryn Hughes

I have just corrected the final proofs for my new book and the relief is tremendous. It concerns cats. More

specifically, it concerns the cat, and deals with the moment at the end of the 19th century when the species was transformed from mouse-catching kitchen skivvy to pampered pet. One moment workaday tabbies were ambient pest-controllers and called things like Tom and Puss, the next they were lounging on cushions in the drawing room and answering to Lord Fluffy and Little Bunny Teedle Tit (yes, really).



This revolution in how we see our cats came home to me when I was staying with friends who discovered at 9pm on a Friday night that they had run out of 'cat milk' and that their cat, Oscar, was fixing them with an accusing stare. Oscar had been 'adopted' (to use the current parlance) as a young adult five years earlier from an animal shelter, having spent his early months on the streets where, presumably, he had not had access to specially bought 'cat milk'. Now, though, he was vocal about his need for his favourite bedtime tipple.

Could we not, I suggested, just pop round to the supermarket opposite? My friends looked appalled and so did Oscar. He likes one particular brand, which can only be bought from a shop far across town. ('Cat milk', by the way, is an artificially engineered product catering to the fact that cats are lactose-intolerant – the idea of 'the cat that got the cream' exists only in story books.) So, we all bundled into the car to get Oscar his night cap. On our return, he seemed not exactly pleased, but reassured that his needs and preferences had been attended to. After a couple of sips, he strolled off to bed to enjoy the heated blanket bought just for him.

All this put me in mind of Saki's wonderful 1911 short story 'Tobermory'. It concerns a cat who has recently learned to speak and has been summoned by his proud but anxious owners to the drawing room to demonstrate his skills. Lady Blemley asks if he would care for some milk, but her hands shake so badly with nerves that she spills some on the carpet. Tobermory looks unconcerned, merely remarking with a shrug: 'After all, it's not my Axminster.' Next, one of the houseguests asks the cat patronisingly whether it has been hard to learn to speak. He doesn't bother to answer but stares dismissively into the middle distance.

When another guest, Major Barfield, asks archly about Tobermory's 'carryings-on with the tortoise-shell puss up at the stables', Tobermory responds frigidly: 'I should imagine you'd find it inconvenient if I were to shift the conversation on to your own little affairs.' This is enough to send several other men, including one who is training for the priesthood, into a panic. The whole incident ends with Tobermory's owners deciding that there is nothing for it but to murder him by feeding him poisoned fish (sensibly he spots the ruse).

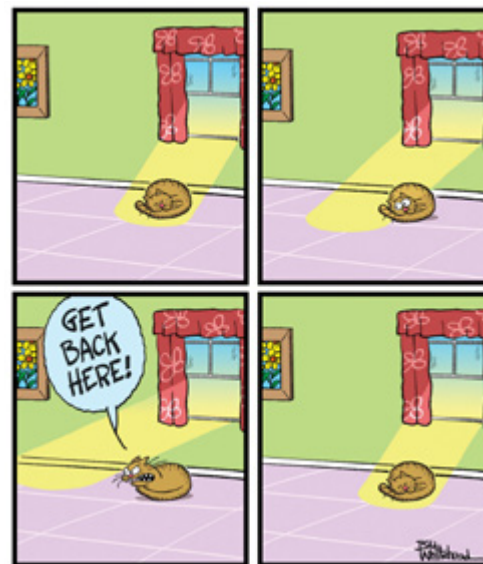
When I was growing up in the countryside in the 1970s, our animals didn't talk like Tobermory, although we thought of them as storybook characters. Our cat was called Tom, after the cat in Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Tom Kitten*, our mice were Hunca Munca and Tom Thumb from *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*, while our white rabbit was named Harvey after the titular character of James Stewart's film of 1950, which was based on a Broadway play by Mary Chase. Our donkey was inevitably called Eeyore (although, pleasingly, he always looked on the bright side). We loved them all, but we didn't run our lives around them. To do so would have been to place us in a category of the morally suspect who put the wellbeing of animals above that of humans. Once, at school, my friends and I collected money for a local petting zoo and were told coldly by our form mistress that our collective moral compass must be broken. The money would go to Save the Children instead.

And yet the truth is that in those far-off days we treated our animals in ways that today might leave us open to a visit from animal welfare inspectors. We didn't, for instance, worry much about what they ate. The cats had the cheapest tins from the supermarket and the food was of such questionable texture that at times we had nightmares that it was made of cats rather than for cats. If they didn't like it then they went out and caught supper for themselves, leaving an occasional mouse head on the kitchen floor as a pointed comment about what they thought of the home catering.



My cats, by contrast, are fed on a special kind of food bought from the vet. My gardenless flat has been stripped of houseplants in case Ted and Maud feel inclined to nibble on a cactus and immediately expire (our cats in the 1970s seemed to have an inbuilt sense of jeopardy and sensibly steered clear of my mother's ultra-toxic poinsettia). My brother's dogs, in turn, are on a gluten-free diet. No

animal was gluten-free in the 1970s and nor was any child. There were schoolmates who puked after every meal, but that was just a personal quirk, like having a boss eye or wearing blue hair ribbons.



I've also been instructed by the vet to clean my cats' teeth every night with a toothbrush and cat toothpaste, which as a child would have struck me like something out of a storybook – 'The Naughty Kitten Who Wouldn't Clean Her Teeth'. In the 1970s you just took it for granted that cats had no dentition beyond middle age, probably as a consequence of eating highly

processed cat food. But it never seemed to bother them, so it never bothered us. Our cat, Tom, who was no longer a kitten, was still able to catch supper with nothing more than his rock-hard gums.

To some, like my angry form mistress in the 1970s, all this is a sign of decadence, the preoccupation of a pampered bourgeoisie that doesn't have enough real things to worry about. For others, it suggests a more damaging psychological malaise. The charge is that, these days, we find human relationships so difficult that we rush to fill the emotional vacuum with animals on the grounds that they are less likely to disappoint or answer back.

I, certainly, am guilty as charged. I never dared to have children because I was terrified of how they might turn out. At least with Ted and Maud I know that they will never take drugs, flunk their A-levels or fail to visit me. On this last point, to be fair, they don't have a choice. They are kept indoors at all times and, despite their pleas, I have yet to issue them with house keys.

This article first appeared in the Literary Review. Kathryn Hughes's 'Catland: Feline Enchantment and the Making of the Modern World' is out now.

In Bed

Lisa Strömbeck

When I was young I suffered from a sleep-disorder so serious that I got hospitalised. The only thing I imagined could save me, was to get a dog. At that point I'd been living in big cities for fifteen years without animals. I was lost.

I was brought up on a farm. My parents had other jobs, so I suppose they weren't real farmers, but we were self-sufficient. We always had a cow, a calf, chickens, a sow who had piglets once a year, a few goats, rabbits, cats and a dog. The cow and the dog were my best friends. I remember how I used to stand close to the cow, belly to belly, to feel her calm breathing. Once or twice, I crawled up on her back to take a nap with her, but she didn't like it and shook me off. It didn't matter because I could just find my dog and lie down with her instead, body to body. When I was sad, she would give me the comfort I needed.

As we in the western world have become increasingly wealthy with more living space at our disposal, old people and singles live alone and children are expected to sleep in their own rooms. Maybe this is why we today own a record number of pets. We all need to feel close to someone, and other mammals work almost as well as other human beings. When we pet our dog, the production of the hormone oxytocin increases in the same way as it does when a mother holds her baby. Physical contact between humans and other mammals also accelerates the healing of wounds, stabilizes the blood pressure, lowers the level of stress hormones, and alleviates both physical and mental pain. All this happens simultaneously to both mammals, not just the human being. Your pets need you physically as much as you need them.

Before industrialisation, most people lived close to domestic animals. A hundred years ago my ancestors worked on farms and slept with the other workers in the stable with the cows and horses nearby. I imagine they curled up as close as possible to the cows during the coldest winter nights. Further back in the history of farming, human beings and other animals, all lived in one big room. And before that, when we were hunters, we were always watching animals. It's a recent development in the history of homo sapiens, that we don't have daily contact with other animals.

There are photographs from the early 1900s featuring Aboriginals from Australia lying close together in a circle formation, with the children in the centre, surrounded by adults and tame dingoes. 'A three dog night' is still a common expression in Australia, referring to the need for three dogs to keep you warm. The first image in my book, *In Bed*, features my late dog Ivan between my partner Niels's legs. It was Ivan's favourite spot in bed. Over the years, I took many photos of Ivan in that position. He was a constant inspiration and has starred in many of my works.

Most of my friends sleep with their pets in bed. I am thankful to everyone – human beings as well as dogs and cats – who have welcomed me and my camera, into their most intimate space, their bedroom.



To view more of Lisa Strömbeck's work visit www.lisastrombeck.com. Copies of her latest book, *In Bed*, from which the work here is taken, are also available for sale.



The joy of fostering

Lynne Smartt

I have loved every type of animal from an early age and over the years have given a home to many rescued cats, chickens and a few abandoned domestic birds. Apart from when my twin boys were young, I worked full time and for that reason never had my own dog. A little over ten years ago, however, members of my family became 'parents' to Delphi (GSP) and Rubin (golden doodle). Watching these two dogs grow made me realise how much I wanted to have a dog in my life when the time was right.

In 2019, as my working life was coming to an end, I finally contacted the Dogs Trust to enquire about fostering. My local branch invited me to a meeting during which I was impressed by how friendly and engaging all the staff were and also by their passionate interest in the dogs in their care. Dogs Trust then arranged to visit me at home in order to see where any foster dog would be living, to check on security and so forth.

My first foster dog came to live with me in February 2019. I admit it was nerve wracking to begin with, but the Dogs Trust staff were wonderful with their support. They are at the end of a telephone 24 hours a day (for medical or behaviour support). The Dogs Trust assess their dogs before going into foster care. I have never had an issue with any foster dog and the majority have ended up sleeping on my bed (personal choice - I love having a dog on my bed!).

Some dogs cannot cope with being in kennels and flourish within a household environment, especially older dogs, or dogs who have lost an owner through bereavement or timid/under confident dogs. So many dogs show their true potential and beauty by being in a loving household environment. Another good reason to foster, is that it makes a kennel available for another dog who needs to find it's forever home.

I am particularly lucky to live close to an old market town (with dog friendly cafes, pubs and garden centre) and where there are fabulous woodland dog walks.

In the last five years I have fostered numerous breeds of dogs (Yorkie, Frenchies, Lhasa Apso, Kelpi, Spaniel, Collie, Chihuahuas, Pugs, Jack Russells and many other beautiful crossbreeds) – the majority of whom I fell in love with. Each one had their own personality and I was always surprised how fantastic and individual each breed of dog can be. I feel quite bereft when a dog is rehomed. Don't get me wrong – it is always absolutely wonderful to see them go off to a new life. The bond which grows between a dog and human is massive and hard to express in words.

Dogs come into care for so many reasons and always through no fault of their own. It is totally heart-warming to watch a dog grow in confidence and show its true potential and characteristics. It always gives me immense satisfaction to help and support them. Often they need some basic training (toileting, walking on a lead etc), which I can also do. I just want to help them grow in themselves, become confident and become a member of another wonderful family. Some dogs arrive and they have never been walked before, have never been trained where to toilet, have never been shown how to play, or are grieving for an owner who has passed away.

In March/April 2022, the weather was atrocious and my roof had started leaking water into the house. At the same time, my elderly Mum (who lives three hours away) was poorly. I just have to say at this point how flexible the Dogs Trust are with fostering. It had been mutually arranged that I would collect my next foster en-route back home after seeing Mum. Having collected Maisie (my 39th foster dog) when arriving home, I was unable to park near my house because of scaffolding, builders vans etc. Opening the boot of my car to let Maisie out – well, anyone would have thought she was 'coming home' – tail wagging like mad. I took her around the back of my house and she gave every 'roofer' a kiss. I thought she was the bee's knees and loved her straight away. I contacted the Dogs Trust and was able to adopt her through their normal adoption process. I feel hugely lucky to have her in my life – she is 100% adorable.

It is nearly two years since Maisie moved in and I feel very privileged to still help the Dogs Trust when possible. Fostering is obviously not quite the same now with my own dog in the house. Some dogs who come

into the centre have not been fully socialised, so may not be suitable for fostering/sharing space with another dog. However, it is important to remember that although some dogs may not be able to live under the same roof as another dog, the majority still really enjoy being with doggie friends out on a walk.

The dogs I have fostered since having Maisie have either lived with another dog before coming into the Dogs Trust or would benefit by having a calm dog around. Maisie is non-reactive to dogs (even if they are feeling anxious, barking or jumping up at her). She will just walk away and chill, which seems to make the other dog feel more settled. I couldn't wish for a better foster partner. We have met many people over the last two years who have said she is the first dog 'their' dog hasn't become anxious with. I really think she sends a positive message to other dogs.



This is a photo of a young foster dog who literally wanted to be with Maisie twenty-four hours a day. Maisie was so diplomatic and calm. She would just jump up onto a chair or go to her own bed until the youngster had calmed down. After a few days, they did actually share a bed.

Dog's Trust Foster Programme

Our 'Home from Home' foster programme seeks temporary homes for our most vulnerable dogs. Sometimes we encounter dogs, who might not be suitable to live in a kennel environment, and would benefit greatly from the foster programme. These may include older dogs, injured or unwell dogs, puppies or dogs who may be finding kennel life a little overwhelming. Fostering a dog not only gives invaluable experience in caring for a dog but it plays a fundamental role in helping the most vulnerable dogs get back on their paws and have a better chance of finding their forever home, which is an incredibly rewarding experience for any dog lover. Fosterers not only help by taking a vulnerable dog into their home and caring for them, but this also frees up space in our Rehoming Centre so that we can save the life of another dog! Dogs Trust places a huge importance on matching the right dog to the right home environment to ensure the best experience for both the foster carer and the foster dog.



All foster carers must be over the age of 18 and have access to dog friendly transport for vet visits and to meet potential adopters; have a secure back garden as some of the dogs will not be toilet trained and may not be ready for walks; have experience with dogs or are willing to learn.

For more information visit: www.dogstrust.org.uk/rehoming/fostering



"If you're looking to adopt a dog that's good with cats, may I suggest Ruffus."

Living with Shelties

Linda Whittington

Linda has bred Shelties, showed Shelties and judged Shelties. Her champion Shetland Sheepdog, Holly, won best in breed at Crufts in 2011. We asked Linda to write about a life spent with this truly wonderful breed...

As a child growing up in London in the 1950s and 60s, I adored dogs but I wasn't allowed a dog of my own until I was ten as my parents felt I would be able to take some responsibility for its care at that age. In the meantime, I walked most of the dogs in the neighbourhood and dreamed of the day I would have a dog of my own. Lassie was popular at the time so a Rough Collie would have been my first choice, but my parents wanted a smaller dog. Then one day I spotted a Sheltie being walked around our local streets – a 'miniature Lassie' and so began my long love affair with this enchanting little breed.



Tip in full flight

However, money was tight in those post war years so when my tenth birthday arrived it didn't run to a pedigree dog, and I had to be content with a crossbreed from the local pet shop. She was adorable, really pretty and very similar to a Sheltie in size and appearance and she cost the princely sum of thirty shillings (£1.50). She did everything with me and I took her to training classes, finally entering the world of competitive obedience. But wonderful as my first dog was, she wasn't a Sheltie. I saved and saved and when I was seventeen, I was able to buy my first bitch. One Sheltie is never enough, of course, and after she was mated to a well known champion dog we kept back her daughter. Little did I know that when I first spied that Sheltie being walked locally it would lead to a life spent living with a whole sofa full of them!

The Shetland Sheepdog is one of the smaller breeds in the Pastoral Group (breeds bred to herd and guard livestock), and at shows they quite often feature in the top awards in the group, as nowadays they have a glamorous appearance, but their origins were much humbler. Hailing from the windswept Shetland Islands they were originally a crofter's dog and, in common with many animals originating from the harsh climate of these islands (think ponies, sheep and cattle) were small in stature. Their job was to herd livestock, certainly, but also to warn off intruders from the crofts and crops. This trait has persisted in the breed to this day as, although they are the perfect dog in so many ways, they do like the sound of their own voices. I once saw them described in a book about different breeds as enjoying 'recreational barking'. A bit harsh and I prefer to think of them as good watchdogs! They will definitely alert you to callers and some can take this to extremes. As a result you may need to explain to them that you don't need to know about every pigeon or squirrel in your garden and you REALLY don't need to know that a leaf has fallen off a tree!

The original crofters' dogs were quite nondescript in type and several theories abound about what breeds went into their make-up. The Scottish Collie from the Highlands was definitely in the mix and probably the Yakki dogs brought to the islands by the Greenland fisherman. One theory is that a King Charles Spaniel came to the islands and bred with some of the native Shelties. When the crofts began to amalgamate, around the turn of the century, the flocks became larger and a bigger dog was required. The Sheltie could easily have become extinct but in 1908 the first Sheltie club was formed in Lerwick and a year later the

10 reasons to foster

- 1. Fostering a dog brings love and joy into your home, and it's flexible.** According to research dogs really do make us happier.
- 2. Fostering can fit any lifestyle.** Fostering is a flexible way to bring a dog into your home for a limited period of time. It's not permanent unless you fall in love and adopt the dog!
- 3. You can help free up a space in a rescue centre.** For every dog that is fostered, there is one more space in a shelter or rescue for another dog that is awaiting its forever home.
- 4. You can give a dog the one-on-one attention they could not get in a crowded rescue centre.** Dogs often need special attention, especially those who have been injured or are experiencing behaviour issues due to their previous housing situation. Some dogs simply don't react well to a stressful shelter environment.
- 5. You can give a young puppy a safe place to grow until they are ready to be adopted permanently.** Puppies aren't ready for their forever home until they are at least eight weeks old. An experienced foster parent is able to take care of a puppy's needs until he or she is ready to be adopted.
- 6. You will help the rescue centre learn more about the dog so they can find the best family for the dog.** Is the dog shy or does he or she run to greet guests? Do they act strangely in parks, around children, or have a trigger of some kind that may limit their adoption chances? The key is to learn about your foster pup's behaviour and any training they may need to make sure he finds the perfect family.
- 7. You will get the dog used to being around people and possibly other pets.** When the foster parents have pets, the foster dog gets used to being around other animals and being part of a pack. Dogs learn a lot from each other!
- 8. You can trial whether you are ready to become a full-time pet parent by fostering a dog.** It allows your family to see what it's like to have a pet in the house and see if this is the right time for your family to adopt permanently.
- 9. Fostering will teach your children responsibility and compassion for animals.** Children will not only love playing with the dog, but they can learn about the responsibility of caring for a dog while fostering.
- 10. You might fall in love!** You may just fall in love with your foster dog and want to adopt him.

Scottish Shetland Sheepdog Club (still in existence today) was formed with the aim of preserving and standardising the breed. Both these clubs produced breed standards and the Kennel club recognised the breed in 1914, the same year that the largest club the English Shetland Sheepdog Club was formed.

Shelties started to fulfil a need for small fluffy dogs as pets on the mainland and the Rough Collie was introduced to improve the type. Although the Sheltie's general appearance is that of the Rough Collie in miniature, they are completely separate breeds, with subtle differences between the two, and their breed standards are not identical. Whilst the three main colours: Sable (in all its variations from pale gold to shaded with black), Tricolour and Blue Merle – all with white markings – are the same in both breeds, the Sheltie also comes in Black and White and Wheaten, colours which are not found in the Rough Collie and which clearly come from the Sheltie's island heritage. These were always rare colours but the Black and White and Bi-Blue (Blue Merle but without tan markings) are experiencing a revival at the moment and several breeders specialise in preserving these colours.

What makes the Shetland Sheepdog a perfect companion? Well, they are a handy size (14"–15") so will fit happily into most households. However, the long-ago addition of the Rough Collie means that there is often a bigish one in every litter meaning that if you wanted one a little larger than the ideal size but not as big as a Rough Collie your wish should easily be accommodated. They are sensitive little people, attuned to your every mood, so will quickly become your soulmate and will adapt themselves to most situations.

Shelties are generally a hardy and long-lived breed, most making it well into their teens. In my experience, they rarely suffer from health problems. Responsible breeders test for those that can occur and there is more information on the English Shetland Sheepdog Club website.

In terms of personality, they are supposed to be reserved with strangers but many haven't read this part of the breed standard and are friendly to everybody. We had a really pretty little wheaten girl, Willow, who I swear preferred complete strangers to her family as she would smile endearingly at anyone. This smiling trait is not peculiar to Shelties but it does seem to be passed on to future generations. Willow's granddaughter, Sherry has inherited the smiling gene but is much more discerning and reserves her smile for people she really loves! One of the most fascinating things about breeding dogs is to see personality traits repeated in future generations.



Jasmine and Lilly (Golden sables)

Although much less nervous than the early Shelties were (and breeders have worked hard to breed this original trait out), their sensitivity means that some can be easily spooked and may need watching on an off-lead walk. They are biddable, intelligent and willing to please which makes them ideal for training in the numerous working disciplines that are available to take part in nowadays. Shelties can be seen working in Obedience, Agility, Heelwork to Music, Rally, Hoopers, Scentwork, Trick Training – you name it they can do it! Mind you they are also adept at training you. Our oldest girl, Sherry now 15, has perfected a form of bribery which she has indulged in her whole life and that is to wait until a treat is offered before she will come in. I have tried to break her of this habit but her will is stronger than mine and she knows I will always give in! They can also herd sheep, although not many do, and there was a champion Shetland Sheepdog in recent years who regularly herded sheep on his owner's small farm.

The Sheltie's double coat, consisting of a soft dense undercoat and harsher, waterproof outer coat is easier to groom than you might expect. A thorough brush once a week is normally sufficient, although neutered Shelties will require more frequent attention as there is a hormonal effect which increases the volume and alters the texture of the coat.



Sweep (tricolour) and Bracken (Shaded Sable)

As a herding dog they need proper exercise and will walk as far as you want them to, but they are content to miss a day if the weather is inclement or you are indisposed. They are generally well behaved, don't pull on the lead and, although excitable, are not boisterous (they won't knock people over or trash your Christmas tree). We have holidayed all over the UK from Cornwall to Scotland, often with six dogs and sometimes even eight. We are often stopped and asked: 'Are they baby Lassies?' or 'Are they all yours?' One memorable journey home from the Lake District with eight Shelties was eventful. Our car broke down on the motorway and the dogs travelled back with us in the cab of the breakdown truck. A tight squeeze and terrifying as I spent the journey counting their leads, convinced I had left somebody on the motorway.



Ghillie (a Blue Merle)

My whole life has been Shelties and I have worked them in Obedience, shown them successfully, including winning Best of Breed at Crufts in 2011 with my homebred champion girl, Holly, and judged them at championship level. I was on the English Shetland Sheepdog Club committee for 15 years as Training of Judges Co-ordinator and then as Assistant Welfare and Rescue Co-ordinator and I am still involved in rehoming rescue dogs. I no longer breed as there may come a day when I can no longer take back any dogs I have bred, should the need arise, as age is catching up with me. I only have three gorgeous Sheltie girls now and the two younger girls go to some shows and attend weekly training classes to give them something different to think about and to progress through the Kennel Club Good Citizen tests. I dread the day I may not have Shelties curled up on my bed at night keeping me warm but I don't want them to outlive me so I fear there will be no more puppies for me. I expect I will give a home to a rescued oldie or two in years to come though. They are very difficult to give up!

The English Shetland Sheepdog Club website (essc.org.uk) has more detailed information about the breed.



Home care for your dog or cat

Dr Stephen Dubin V.M.D., Ph. D.

Introduction

After I finished my last article about taking care of our pets' teeth and toenails it occurred to me that there are several other procedures we can manage at home. What follows, by the way, reflects my personal perspective and may not always align with prevailing veterinary norms. It draws from insights gained not only from professional mentors but also from people in various roles (farmers, trainers, nurses, technicians, groomers, and kind folks involved in animal sheltering) within the animal care community. While I may discuss certain procedures that should be reserved for urgent situations, it's essential to recognise when professional veterinary assistance is warranted, particularly for serious or alarming issues.

The mini physical

One of the most valuable things anyone caring for an animal can do is perform a regular mini check-up and to keep written records of the results. These records will help you build up a picture of the animal's general health and can alert you to any changes. I am often asked if certain characteristics – everything from weight to blood results – are normal. I am wary of the word because it implies uniformity, whereas no two animals are the same. But you'll get a better idea of or about what is normal for your animal if you keep a record over time. Performing a mini-physical at home has another benefit: your dog or cat (or other pet) is likely to be much less stressed and/or distracted. This should make your observations and findings much more accurate. Speaking of the findings, I would urge you to make sure that your notes are as clear and accurate as possible. This may seem obvious but something that may seem obvious when you write it down could be trickier to interpret a year later.



What are we looking for?

So, what are we looking for when we perform a mini check-up? To begin with we should observe our animal's overall appearance, behaviour, and demeanour. How is the animal behaving? Are there signs of anxiety, withdrawal or aggression? Another thing to note is any changes in appetite, energy level, or activity; any signs of distress or discomfort both at rest and while active. Monitor for vomiting, diarrhoea, or other changes in bowel movements. Monitor for changes in litter box habits or grooming behaviour. Take note of their gait for any lameness, imbalance or disinclination to move. I recommend making a video of anything significant using your smart phone.

Weight

We should record our pets' weight as precisely as practical. It is useful for figuring medicine doses, deciding how much food to feed and is also an indicator of general health. For cooperative small dogs and cats, hold them, step on the bathroom scales and subtract your own weight. Larger dogs pose more of a problem and may require larger platform scales (a local business maybe able to help).

Palpation

Palpation (feeling) should begin rather passively with a light application of the open palm. At first, let the structures 'reach out to you'. This should be followed by progressively deeper and more assertive manipulation. Estimate your pet's body condition score by feeling their ribs and observing their waistline. You should be able to feel but not see the ribs, and there should be a visible waistline when viewed from above. Feel and then move the joints with particular attention to any stiffness, 'heat', swelling or discomfort. In a similarly progressive way, feel the belly. If possible, do this at different times; for example, before and after the dog or cat has urinated, so that you have an idea of the location, shape, and size of the bladder. As we (our pets and us) become comfortable with the process, we can begin to discern the kidneys (higher up toward the backbone), a pregnant uterus, bowel (Is it distended? firm? Filled with gas? Liquid?) as well as the belly's bony boundaries: the pelvis, spine, ribs and tip of breastbone.

Skin and coat

Another part of the general overview is the skin (largest organ of the body) and coat. Are there any signs of matting, dryness, flakiness, or excessive shedding? Look for any lumps, bumps, sores, sensitive places or lesions (anything that doesn't look like it belongs) on the skin. Gently lift a 'pinch' of skin and then let go. If our pet is well hydrated, the skin should return promptly. Check the coat for fleas, ticks, or other parasites (an illuminated magnifier can help). Detection of dermatophytes (ringworm fungus) on the skin and hair with an ultraviolet Wood's lamp. Not all ringworm spores glow in the dark but many do, and those are almost always of a kind that are likely contagious to people and especially children. Another aid in evaluating our pet's coat is discovery of small black flakes (like pepper) either on light coloured bedding or combed out of the fur. This can be evidence of fleas. Take photos of any findings.

Temperature

Infrared thermometers are not, in my experience, reliable and I prefer to take a rectal temperature as this part of the body is much more representative of our pet's core temperature. The core temperature generally reflects our pet's metabolism, in health, and also their reaction to infection or other unhealthy processes. Having a high temperature makes it more difficult for germs to grow in the body. However, pets may stop drinking and eating leading to dehydration. A significantly low temperature can, sadly, be a sign of 'giving up' and even losing the will to live. The statistically reported normal temperature range for dogs and cats is typically between 100.5F and 102.5F (38.0C to 39.2C). However, this can vary somewhat depending on the individual animal and their activity level. In a threatening clinical situation, it is not unusual for an excitable, sensitive pet to have a fever. If you haven't used a rectal thermometer before then you may like to ask a vet or vet nurse to show you or, of course, there are lots of videos online. I would begin by tucking the dog or cat's nose under my armpit. Apply a small amount of water-based lubricant or petroleum jelly to the tip of the thermometer to make insertion more comfortable for your pet. Using their tail as a handle, insert the thermometer about an inch and keep it in place for one or two minutes. We can use this opportunity to observe the anal sacculles – small glands near the anus in many mammals – which can become impacted or infected.

Pulse

Changes in the pulse rate, rhythm, or strength can indicate various health conditions. An irregular or weak pulse might suggest cardiovascular issues or other underlying health problems. The strength and regularity of the pulse can also provide insights into the health of blood vessels. Alongside other vital signs the pulse is routinely measured to assess a pet's overall health status. The use of pulse in medicine dates back thousands of years, with its origins in ancient civilizations such as those in China, India, and Greece. I am in awe of the sophisticated and internally consistent systems of pulse diagnosis that characterize the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of South Asia and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) of East Asia. The best place to feel a cat's pulse is the femoral artery on the inside of the hind leg, just above the paw. Gently place your fingers on the inside of the hind leg where the leg meets the body and press lightly until you feel a pulse. Be patient and gentle, as cats may be sensitive to touch in this area. Dogs have several places where you can feel their pulse, but the easiest is also the femoral artery on the inside of the hind leg, similar to cats. Another place is on the underside of the dog's tail, close to the base. This can be a bit more challenging and requires gently lifting the tail. It may take some practice to locate and feel the pulse, especially in heavily coated pets.

Blood pressure

Due to the conical shape of the limbs where larger arteries are located, encircling cuffs tend to shift down, making it necessary to place the cuff on a more distal (and cylindrical) extremity (limb or tail) with smaller arteries. This results in the absence of Korotkov sounds and requires the use of either a Doppler ultrasound detector or a plethysmographic system. Animal patients are often reluctant to accept these methods amidst the stress of the office setting. Consequently, the indirect measurement of arterial blood pressure, at least until recently, was rarely done. However, moderately priced pet blood pressure kits including several size of cuff have now become available for home use. Two important caveats. First, although much easier at home, it is still necessary to get our pets used to the procedure with patience and gentle handling. Second, because pet pulse rates (especially feline) tend to be faster than those of people, it is important to choose a unit that can handle this. In my experience, the cost of home blood pressure measurement is most justified for older cats (who tend to develop high blood pressure along with kidney problems), and dogs with previous diagnosis of cardiovascular conditions.

Respiration



We can evaluate our pet's respiration (breathing) visually and by listening. To listen, we can either put our ear directly on the animal's chest or use a stethoscope. Respiration should be checked when the cat or dog is relaxed and resting – ideally, when sleeping. If possible, record the number of breaths they take in one minute. Normal resting respiratory rates vary depending on the size and age of the animal. Generally, for cats and small dogs, it's around 20-30 breaths per minute, while for larger dogs, it's around 10-30 breaths per minute. Observe the pattern of their breathing. It should be regular and smooth. Take note of rapid shallow breathing, panting when not overheated, or laboured breathing with visible effort. Normal breathing should be easy and not laboured. Shallow breathing or difficulty taking deep breaths can indicate respiratory distress or other health issues. In particular, watch for signs of respiratory distress such as open-mouth breathing, wheezing, or flared nostrils. Pay attention to any coughing or sneezing. Occasional coughs or sneezes may be normal, but persistent or severe coughing could indicate respiratory problems or other health issues. Any signs of breathing distress should be taken seriously and warrant immediate veterinary attention. A video recording of the changed breathing pattern can be very helpful.

Head Region

Check your pet's nose for any discharge, crustiness, or discoloration. Note any sneezing, nasal congestion, or difficulty breathing. Clear discharge may be normal, but if it becomes thick, discoloured, or excessive, it could indicate an underlying issue such as infection. If an abnormal nasal discharge is consistently from one side, try to check the teeth in the upper jaw and also feel the cheek for tenderness (pain or sensitivity to touch) and heat (differential warmth). These may be sign of sinus troubles. In my experience a dry nose is not necessarily a sign of illness in dogs and cats, nor is a wet nose a sure indicator of health. This belief probably came from taking care of farm animals like cattle and sheep.

Moving on from the nose, check your pet's eyes for clarity, discharge, redness, or cloudiness. Note any squinting, excessive tearing, or changes in pupil (dark zone in centre) size. Use a penlight to see whether the pupils contract. Carefully check whether your pet responds to a startling movement or sound.

Examine your pet's ears for redness, swelling, discharge, or foul odour. Note any head shaking or scratching at the ears. Check for signs of ear mites or excessive wax build up.

With due caution, lift your pet's lips and examine their gums for colour, moisture, and signs of ulcers, inflammation, or bleeding. Check the teeth for tartar build up, discoloration, or signs of decay. Note any bad breath or difficulty eating/chewing. This is also a good opportunity to check CRT (capillary refill time). Moderate finger pressure on a non-pigmented (pink) area of the gum will blanch or decolorize the area. In good health, the colour should return within two or three seconds. A very slow CRT is a sign of possible cardiovascular shock or dehydration.



Urinalysis

Urine not only reflects the health of the kidneys and urinary tract; but also, because it is the route of elimination of numerous metabolites, many other body systems. It is now possible to purchase convenient point-of-care (POC) urinalysis tests. These employ disposable test strips which provide colour-coded readings for a range of indicators including glucose, blood, protein, white blood cells (WBC) and specific gravity. It is possible to purchase special test strip reading machines but personally

I don't think they are worth the money. A word of warning. Make sure the test strips you use are individually wrapped (with drying packet) as strips that have been exposed to the air for a period of time may give a false reading. In addition to the test results observe the colour of the urine, particularly if red, any cloudiness and, after standing, sediment. In addition, we should note the 'ease of delivery'. In particular, prolonged straining or pain should be noted and, if possible, videoed.

Of course, first we must obtain a proper sample. For dogs, this is usually easier than for cats. I have found that a plastic ladle with a longish handle to be handy to collect both from 'pointers' and 'setters'. Care with the ladle can both more aesthetic than pans or bowls, and less likely to inhibit the donor. For some (rare, in my experience) cats, we can try placing plastic wrap on the surface of the litter. More often, we need a non-absorbent substitute for the regular litter. I have worked at practices that sell packets of plastic beads. For the frugal, I recommend uncoloured aquarium gravel. Not only is this cheap; but also has more of the look and feel of regular clay-type litter. Either way, careful tilting of the container can provide a little puddle of urine for the dipstick or for collection with a dropper or syringe.

Blood

While not nearly so easy to collect as urine, many folks who have diabetic pets learn to collect blood and use home glucometers. In general, it is best to learn the technique first-hand from a vet, nurse or someone else who is already competent. Although some glucometers are promoted for pet use, I have found that human meters and strips are quite adequate for ongoing records to follow progress. They also serve well to detect very high and very low values. While the sample needed is just a small drop, collecting it and delivering it to the test strip in time can be the biggest challenge. Cutting a toenail short and use of a lancet on a pad have been, in my experience, too aversive for home testing. The least traumatic method has been with an open-ended very small gauge (25-27g) disposable hypodermic needle. The easiest veins to find are those on the front of the foreleg (by far) called the 'cephalic' vein; and those near the side of the hock ('lateral saphenous'). First just practice seeing and feeling them by wetting the fur and if needed, applying finger pressure at the inside of elbow or hock joint. A tourniquet (stout rubber band and hemostat) may be needed. Once our pet (caregiver, as well) is comfortable with this, needle puncture only long enough and only deep enough to get that precious drop. A second pair of experienced hands is very welcome at this point. I strongly recommend asking a veterinary professional to train you in this procedure.

Timing

When should we do an exam? If we suspect something may be wrong. Before a clinical event, such as a visit to the vet. Before travel, moving, rehoming or other lifestyle stress, At regular intervals to establish a baseline.

Final thoughts

Hopefully, I have provided a comprehensive yet practical guide for assessing your pet's health status at home. By employing this approach, it should be easier to identify any anomalies in good time.

The President's Dog

Duncan Fyfe

It was 1921. America, recovering from a bloody victory in the First World War, yearned to move on. Warren G. Harding had been elected the 29th President of the United States on a promise to restore the country to normalcy. The task ahead was immense, and the first meeting of Harding's Cabinet was just getting down to business when there was a knock on the door. It was an aide, bringing the President a dog.



'Look at this dog,' exclaimed Harding, holding the fluffy, seven-month-old Airedale Terrier. 'This is an amazing dog!' Harding immediately cancelled the meeting to go and run around with the puppy, which he named Laddie Boy. Of course, being the President, he couldn't really make a habit of leaving Cabinet meetings to play with a dog. So, he had a little chair made for Laddie Boy, so he could sit at the Cabinet table too.

As long as the United States has had presidents, those presidents have had pets. Since George Washington and his Staghounds, no supreme executive has lacked for animal companionship, with the possible exception of old sad sack 17th president Andrew Johnson. The closest Johnson got to having pets were some white mice scurrying around in his bedroom, which he hung out with and fed while he was being impeached by Congress. Even then, he only fed them plain flour. Not even something they would want.

In a sense, there was nothing especially notable about Laddie Boy. But the times in which he lived were crying out to anoint a celebrity dog. It was the Jazz Age. The aftermath of the Great War. And Harding, America's Jazz President, led a nation starved for fun stories of plucky dogs rather than tales of trench warfare.

Laddie Boy was a gift from an Ohio friend of the President's, and Harding fell head over heels. He wanted to share him with the country – and with the press. Reports of the presidential puppy's escapades headlined national newspapers:

LADDIE BOY CHASES CAT UP TREE

LADDIE BOY FETCHES MORNING PAPERS FOR JAZZ PREZ

Nothing was too silly. The *New York Times* wanted a photo op with Laddie Boy? They got it. A press pass to Laddie Boy's birthday party? They're on the list. An exclusive interview with Laddie Boy? Of course! But who should write the responses on Laddie Boy's behalf? Probably a junior staffer? 'No!' said Harding. 'That's a job for the President of the United States.'

Harding was smart. He'd worked in the newspaper business: getting his start in a newsroom when he was ten years old, at the paper owned by his father. Harding knew how powerful the media was and how beneficial – or destructive – their attentions could be to a presidency. He did everything he could to court the press and a First Dog of the United States? Reporters would eat that up.

Harding may have been cynical, but he did love Laddie Boy, and assumed everyone else would too. 'I want a thousand bronze sculptures made of this dog,' he ordered his staff one day.

'Uh... should it include,' they asked, 'you know, the penis?'

'Yes, you include the penis!' bellowed Harding.

Harding put Laddie Boy front and centre whenever possible. The dog led a grand Humane Society parade, championing animal welfare. And one year after the battle for women's suffrage delivered the right to vote, Harding met three hundred delegates of the National Council of Catholic Women in his office. Laddie Boy was there, too. As if to say, 'You are all women of astonishing dedication and resolve. Thank you for everything you've done for your country. I am so proud to shake your hand and finally call you, in every legal sense, my equal. Your hand will also be shaken by a dog.'

Laddie Boy was hot stuff. Men and women across America vied for the honour of having their own dog mate with him. Laddie Boy had a social calendar. Laddie Boy hosted children's parties. Laddie Boy's birthday was celebrated with a cake and a letter from his absentee father, which read, paraphrasing: 'Laddie Boy, you are a good dog, and I am so proud of you. Sincerely, your dog father.'

This was the power of Laddie's reputation: he had a brother, Dickie Boy, a Denver farm dog. One day Dickie Boy killed seventy chickens on a neighbouring property. Dickie's owner was taken to court, where he asked the judge, 'Come on, you don't think that a dog with a brother in the White House would stoop to chasing a few chickens, do ya?'

'No,' said the judge. 'No, that doesn't seem possible at all.'

America loved Laddie Boy. That was very clear. But inside the Harding administration, feeling towards him was more complicated. John Weeks, Harding's Secretary of War, for instance, was not exactly thrilled that news of his accomplishments was being drowned out by literally anything that a dog did.



Still, there were many, many others in the administration who loved it, because one more front page story about Laddie Boy was one fewer about the deeply criminal stuff they were getting up to. When Harding became president, he mostly appointed friends and campaign donors to his Cabinet and other high-ranking positions. It was an ethical roll of the dice that, more often than not, turned out catastrophically.

Harding's friend from his Senate days, Albert Fall, was Secretary of the Interior. Fall was jailed after taking extravagant bribes from private drilling concerns for access to Navy petroleum reserves. At the same time, there was Albert Lasker, a major donor to Harding's campaign, whom the incumbent president made Chairman of the United States Shipping Board. When the private sector expressed interest in buying some of the government's valuable cargo ships, Lasker told them to help themselves and just pay whatever they felt was fair. And then there was Harry Daugherty, Harding's campaign manager, who was made Attorney General, and who, when he was given the task of enforcing prohibition, just laughed and laughed.



"IF ELECTED I PROMISE TO FETCH,
BEG AND ROLL OVER."

Harding had stuck his neck out for all them – a trust that they almost immediately and pathologically abused. For the most part, Harding didn't even know what they had been up to and was deeply annoyed when he found out. He thought of himself as a loyal person, and his friends had repaid that loyalty by taking whatever they could for themselves and hanging him out to dry. Harding was the one blamed when these scandals came to light. And the press that Harding had coaxed so deliberately to his side turned on the administration.

Now nobody trusted Warren Harding. And Warren Harding trusted nobody. Except, of course, Laddie Boy. Everyone still loved Laddie Boy. So, to explain how he was feeling, Harding took to writing to magazines and newspapers as his beloved dog. A dog who happened to express a very dim view of so-called friends who exploited power for personal gain.

'I am only 18 months old, and I do not know many other dogs. I have heard the Chief talk about some of his dog friends, and I know that he chooses to be known as the friend of good dogs,' went one letter published in the magazine *Nation*. 'Sometimes the Chief acts as though he would like to sit down when he and I can be alone, and I can look at him with sympathetic eyes, and he fixes his gaze on me in a grateful way, as much as to say, 'Well Laddie Boy, you and I are real friends, and we will never cheat each other.'

'When the Chief looks at me this way, I know that he feels that I will never find fault with him, no matter what he does, and that I will never be ungrateful nor unfaithful.'

One year later, Harding was dead.

The Commander-in-chief died on a visit to California, likely from some sort of heart failure. Laddie Boy had not accompanied Harding on the trip, and back home in the White House, he howled for days. The First Lady, Florence Harding, prepared to vacate the building for Harding's successor, Vice President Calvin Coolidge. Florence gave Laddie Boy to a Secret Service agent, Harry Barker, because he had been the agent assigned to her and his name was Barker, and the First Lady liked to theme her bequeathments.



"How about, for God's sake, this one?"

Barker was transferred, and he, his family and Laddie Boy relocated to a quiet, Newtonville, Massachusetts residence, many miles from the nation's capital. In DC, Laddie Boy had had a seat at the table of the most powerful men in the world. Newspapers attended his birthday parties. Charities tried to book him for events. Magazines bid for the right to publish his correspondence. Then it was all over.



While nearly everything in Newtonville was different, Harry Barker and Laddie Boy lived next door to a familiar face: John Weeks, Harding's old Secretary of War, and still no fan of Laddie Boy's. Without Harding in the picture, Weeks was no longer under any obligation to find Laddie Boy adorable, and he frequently screamed at him to stay the hell off his lawn. That was life in Newtonville. There was no special treatment. No reporters. No fan club. Laddie Boy was just another nobody, and he got to live out the rest of his days like a regular mutt.

Duncan Fyfe writes about culture, history and mythology. His work has appeared in the Financial Times, Vice, Rolling Stone and Slate. He lives in England.

Expert opinion: how probiotics can support your dog's health

Joe Flanagan

We met Joe, the founder of Ingenious Probiotics, at Crufts and were so impressed by what he said about the role of probiotics in supporting canine health that we asked him to write it down for us – which he has kindly done. We have, by the way, been trying out the probiotic cleaning and topical pet care products he offers with great success.

Imagine your dog's body is like a fortress. Outside this fortress, there is an invisible 'Home Guard' called the 'external microbiome', a supportive army that has always been there to protect your dog. But who is protecting the protector?

Everything that you can see or touch, every surface in your life is covered with a 'microbiome'. This microbiome is made up of many different types of microorganisms including bacteria (both harmful and beneficial), viruses, mites, and fungi. These microorganisms occur naturally and are usually present in a healthy balance. All life on Earth originated from bacteria. Bacteria play a central role in both how our bodies work and how the world's ecosystems function in a healthy state. Around 14% of the planet's biomass is made up of bacteria; the vast majority are harmless and help to keep things balanced and healthy.

Science recognises that gut bacteria are integral to how we process food for our survival and well-being; neither humans nor pets would last long without bacteria aiding the absorption of essential nutrients from food. However, there are some important practical differences between the internal (gut) microbiome and the external (topical) one. The external (topical) microbiome covers all surfaces – including your dog's skin, teeth, blanket, feeding bowl etc. It can vary greatly in the health of its composition and have countless healthy variations.

The key point is that there should be a substantial presence of non-pathogenic (helpful) bacteria to help avoid and mitigate issues like skin irritation. For example, many people naturally have some staphylococcus on their skin, but don't have develop a staph infection problem. How is this possible? Balance is the key. Modern marketing often advocates eliminating all bacteria to ensure safety ('kills all germs!'). So, let's say we treat the skin with lots of anti-bacterial products and eradicate that small amount of staphylococcus. But, in doing so, we also kill all the non-pathogenic (helpful) bacteria too.

What happens next? How long will Mother Nature allow your dog's skin (or yours) to remain bacteria-free? The time frame will vary depending on what you come in to contact with and what is floating in the air all around us, but it will certainly be measured in minutes, not hours. And what replaces this healthy microbiome after it has been wiped out? Another healthy version? Yes, possibly. Or a less healthy version? Well, also yes, possibly. If a pathogenic type swoops in to colonise this newly available space after the previous inhabitants are killed off, and encounters reduced competition as a result, issues associated with pathogenic bacteria can arise.

This is where probiotics come into play. Probiotics are the superheroes of the bacterial world. They are the 'good' bacteria that outcompete the 'bad' ones. Think of them as little soldiers standing guard on your dog's skin and other surfaces, protecting them from harm boosts your dog's natural defences.

'Probiotics' is a general term for microorganisms that confer health benefits to the host. Simply put, they are non-pathogenic bacteria that outcompete pathogenic types through their behaviour. It's a simple matter of math and physics. The more beneficial bacteria you have occupying space and consuming resources, the less room and resources are available for pathogenic types.

Pathogens cannot develop resistance to starvation, and so their numbers diminish and fade. This approach also addresses and avoids the growing problem of anti-microbial resistance (AMR) – pathogenic bacteria mutating to become resistant to the chemicals and antibiotics used against them. So rather than wiping out the microbiome and keeping fingers crossed for a good replacement, we strategically use the right probiotics to restore the healthy microbiome directly on your pet's skin, teeth, ears, or even your kitchen floor!

Think of it as a healthy microbiome in a bottle. But probiotics don't just outcompete the bad bacteria. They also clean up organic waste and bio allergens such as dust mite poop and pollens. This can positively impact what you and your dog breathe in and what they ingest when they lick their coats and paws whilst grooming. In this way, probiotics help to enhance and fortify the wonderful topical/external healthy microbiome that protects us and all the animals who rely on us for their health and happiness.

Consider the health issues you have had to address for your dog. How many are microbiome related? You pay close attention to the food and nourishment you provide for your dog, as good dietary choices benefit the inside and then radiate to the outside. But just as with improving your own body, you can't out-train a poor diet – everything starts in the kitchen (or wherever you have the freezer with your dog food in it!). That's great and working directly on the external microbiome can enhance this. That external microbiome needs your support and protection.

For instance, pet plaque, tartar, gingivitis, and periodontal disease all stem from the proliferation of the wrong types of bacteria colonising their dental area. This can lead to an unhealthy oral microbiome, which can negatively impact the gut microbiome. Gum infections can spread through the body, putting pressure on internal organs and energy levels. Maintaining a healthier oral microbiome by applying dental care probiotics straight onto the gums and teeth helps to prevent this. We find that even dogs fed on raw, meaty bones can need a little help here. You will see more and more microbiome related articles focusing on the dental health in the coming years. Call in the dental probiotics and apply them directly on to the teeth and gums!

Treating ear issues with anti-bacterial and/or anti-fungal products can wipe out the microbiome of the ear, leaving the ear open to colonisation by pathogenic bacteria. These treatments can result in a new infection, which is also treated with anti-bacterial products, leading to a potential cycle of recurring infections. This seems more prevalent in dogs compared to cats. Use ear care probiotics to help establish a healthy, protective microbiome in the ear and prevent it becoming a breeding ground for the next passing pathogen. Muster the ear care probiotics to establish create healthy, protective microbiome in the ears!

The skin, often overlooked until problems arise, does a wonderful job of protecting animals from external elements (it keeps out the rain nicely!). Again, your dietary choices for your dog have a major impact here. However, what happens when the skin barrier is breached by the pathogenic bacteria? These unwelcome guests can lead to conditions like atopic dermatitis, eczema and generalised itching and scratching. While other factors can contribute to skin issues, addressing the skin microbiome is a great place to start. Applying probiotics directly to the skin will do just that. March in the protective skin probiotics!

There is an important difference between internal (gut) and external (atopic) probiotics and microbiomes. For gut work, prebiotics are sometimes added to provide nourishment for the probiotics. For topical /external applications, the organic waste that needs to be dealt with serves as the prebiotic. In the bottle, the probiotics are dormant, or in hibernation. When you spray them onto a surface, they encounter oxygen and food (organic waste, bio allergens), come out of their protective shell, and become active. If no food is present, probiotics can stay dormant on the surface for a period until the dirt arrives, kickstarting their activity (We all know that won't take long, especially with a dog in the house!). This activation starts a 3-day life cycle during which the probiotics release enzymes to help break down organic material, enabling them to consume it. In this way, for three days following the application of probiotics to your dog or your floor, they continue to work and clean the surface. The enzymes produced by probiotics are known as "postbiotics". Note, other kinds of postbiotics exist, too, such as proteins, fatty acids etc..

Each type of Provilan probiotic product contains several different probiotic strains. Each probiotic strain can produce different enzymes as needed to break down the different types of organic waste it meets. For example, one probiotic will produce the exact enzyme needed for dried blood molecules from raw food in the nooks and crannies of your floor near the feeding bowl, but different enzymes for a milk spillage or for mud on the floor. This combination of probiotic strains and multiple enzymes they can repeatedly produce enhances cleaning, without

relying on harsh cleaning chemicals. As with the skin, ears and dental areas of your dog, probiotics can enhance the microbiome of all surfaces instead of wiping it out. Using topical probiotics to reduce the reliance on pharmaceuticals and to reduce exposure to harsh chemicals can promote overall long-term health as well as alleviate issues at hand. So, the external microbiome is a wonderful and formidable 'home guard' protector on parade – but who is protecting the protector? How can you avoid products and other influences that disrupt the microbiome's balance (dysbiosis)?

Firstly, you are likely already taking care of the gut health through nutrition and diet, (which is why you are reading *The Alternative Dog* newsletter!). Secondly, look at any products you use to keep your dog and home clean and healthy – but that are designed to eliminate bacteria (or can do so by accident). Ask if their use is truly necessary. Chemicals in the home are linked to child obesity due to their impact on the gut microbiome. This highlights how outside influences can cause disruption not only in the external microbiome, but the internal one too. Could the same be happening with your dog? And lastly, remember the power of probiotics and consider the 'microbiome in a bottle' option. Probiotics are nature's way of keeping the peace in the microbiome and the microscopic world all around us. Think of where bolstering the microbiome can benefit your dog (and you!).



"WELL HEY, I HAVE TENSIONS IN MY LIFE TOO."

www.ingenious-probiotics.com



The Ingenious Probiotics Range for Pets

Wash Probiotic Laundry Detergent. 99% Natural; Supports Itchy Skin Allergy Management for Pets. **Pet Natural Coat Care.** Healthy Omega 3,6 and 9 Oils for Nourishing Condition and Shine. **Pet Probiotic Allergen-Free.** Protects Skin Health and Reduces Itching and Irritation. **Pet Probiotic Dental Care.** Protects Gum Health and Reduces Plaque, Tartar and Bad Breath. **Pet Probiotic Dermo (Wound) Care.** Removes Soil, Prevents Infection, Facilitates Healthy Healing of Hot Spots. **Pet Probiotic Ear Care.** Protects Ear Health and Reduces Inflammation, Infection and Itching. **Pet Probiotic Eye Care.** Improves Eye Comfort and Reduces Irritation and Tear Stains. **Pet Probiotic Odour Remover.** Removes Pet Smells Naturally, Without Harsh Chemicals. **Pet Probiotic Shampoo.** Gently Soothes Sensitive Skin and Greatly Reduces Itching. **Pet Probiotic Stay Cleaner Concentrate.** Protective, Pet-Friendly Cleaner for Sensitive and Allergic Pets.



Laser treatment for Animals

Dr Ilse Pedlar

Laser therapy is becoming increasingly popular in veterinary medicine for the treatment of a wide range of inflammatory and painful conditions, as well as to stimulate wound healing.

It works by using infrared light to stimulate tissue repair beneath the surface of the skin. It is a process known as Photobiomodulation. The photons of light stimulate the metabolism of cells which reduces pain and inflammation and speeds the healing process. The process is completely non-invasive, most animals find it very relaxing.

It is important to know that there are different classes of laser. The lasers that are discussed here are a type of low-level laser therapy (LLLT) as opposed to high power lasers used in surgery. Even within LLLT however there are different classes of laser. Laser classification is based on wavelength and maximum output in power or energy. Current classifications consist of Class I to Class IV

Class 1 lasers are very mild and safe. They include lasers used in everyday life; for example, those used in equipment that implements bar code scanning, such as cash registers at the supermarket.

Class 2 lasers are in the visible light spectrum (400–700 nm). Some therapeutic lasers and laser pointers fall into this class. Damage can occur if the laser is directed into the eye for prolonged periods.

Class 3 lasers include the commonly used therapeutic lasers. These lasers are further subdivided into:

- Class 3B lasers are either continuous in the visible to infrared spectrum, or pulsed in the visible light spectrum.
- Class 3R lasers are continuous within the visible light spectrum and have less power than Class 3B lasers.

Class 4 lasers are the strongest lasers, and mostly include surgical lasers. They have the ability to permanently damage the eyes or burn the skin.

Many vets are using Class IV lasers as they give a maximum effect with short treatment times. When using Class III or IV lasers, eye protection should be used at all times. You can see it is important that laser treatment is done carefully and safely by trained practitioners.

The types of conditions that can be helped include arthritis and joint pain, acute injuries such as ruptured cruciate ligaments and other strains or sprains, skin conditions like hot spots, lick granulomas and otitis, wound healing, cystitis and gum disease.

Some vets have also started to use laser routinely post- surgery to speed up the healing of wounds and also after dentals to reduce the inflammation in the gums.



The number of sessions will depend on the problem, but a common protocol is twice weekly for 2-3 weeks, then weekly for another two weeks and then monthly for long term management but all animals are different, so protocols can be adjusted accordingly.

Other advantages of laser treatment are that it doesn't require an anaesthetic or sedation, the hair doesn't have to be clipped and you can also stay with your animal while the treatment is taking place. Also a wide range of species can be treated; cats, dogs, horses and even rabbits and reptiles!

Many human physiotherapists use laser treatment as part of their protocols these days and there is growing evidence of its beneficial effects. Laser therapy is definitely an example of how veterinary medicine has learnt from and benefitted from developments in human medicine.

Dr Ilse Pedlar Bsc(Hons), MA, VetMB, VetMFHom MRCVS can be contacted by email: ilsepederholisticvet@gmail.com

Shirley Baker's dogs

Jonathan Self

The first time I became what you might call 'Shirley Baker conscious' was when I visited a show of her work – *Women, Children and Loitering Men* – at the Photographer's Gallery in London in 2015, about a year after she died. I bought a book of her work and visited another show in London a couple of years later. But it wasn't until the publication of *Dog Show 1961 – 1978* (Hoxton Mini Press) that I became aware that Baker, who is best known for her social documentary work, took many, many pictures of dogs. Her daughter, Nan Levy, who has kindly given us permission to use the images here, has also provided the brief biography.

About Shirley Baker

Shirley Baker (1932 – 2014) was a social documentary photographer. She was best known for her street photographs of working-class inner-city areas of Manchester and Salford, taken in the 1960s. Baker's curiosity and engagement with the everyday world around her resulted in many different strands of work, each of which confirms her acute observation, and visual humour. She was born in Kersal, North Salford. Her father had a family furniture manufacturing business in Salford. Baker took up photography at the age of eight when she and her identical twin sister were given Brownie cameras by an uncle. As a child she developed her first black and white film in the darkness of the coal shed. Her passion for photography continued and she went on to study Pure Photography at Manchester College of Technology. She is said to be one of few women in post-war Britain to receive formal photographic training. While Baker's street photography may epitomise her career, there are many other bodies of work. This small selection of photographs of dogs with their owners are equal in quiet poetic drama and everyday humour.



(c) Nan Levy for the Estate of Shirley Baker, 2024. All rights reserved Nan Levy for the Estate of Shirley Baker





Expert opinion: wild venison

Andrea Barden

Honey's recently joined the British Deer Society (BDS), a charity whose purpose is to make a difference for deer in the UK through education, awareness raising,

campaigning, advocacy, monitoring, best practice management training, and science and research. We asked Andrea, our contact at the BDS, to explain the benefits of venison and describe her work...

I am sure that I don't have to explain to any Honey's customer the benefits of using free range, organic or wild meat. When it comes to wild meat if you haven't already included wild venison in your dog's feeding plan then I hope what follows will persuade you of its benefits.

Packed with nutrition

As well as having a distinct and delicious taste, wild venison boasts an outstanding nutritional profile. It is rich in high-quality protein, low in fat, and teems with minerals and vitamins that are essential for dogs – including iron, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, B6, B12, riboflavin, niacin, and thiamine (B1). An abundance of omega-3 and favourable ratio of omega 6/omega 3 further distinguishes wild venison as a top raw food choice for dog well-being.



Supports a varied diet

Variety is a fundamental principle of any raw pet food diet plan as it helps to ensure pets receive the comprehensive spectrum of minerals, nutrients, and vitamins needed for optimal health. With its strong nutritional profile, including wild venison as a regular feature of your dog's diet is a sure way to help achieve a varied and healthy mix.

A highly ethical option

For anyone whose priority is animal welfare, wild venison is an excellent option. It comes from wild deer living in natural environments free of human intervention. Moreover, there is no live transportation or abattoir involved along with all the stresses they add. Research that has considered stress levels in wild deer indicates that clean-shot deer exhibit negligible stress responses with low levels of stress hormones.

A lower carbon footprint.

A Natural Capital (2009) analysis for Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot), indicated that the carbon footprint of wild venison was 38% lower than beef and 49% lower than lamb. This significant difference was largely due to the absence of the highly intensive resource requirements that are needed for farming. Switching at least some (though not all, as variety is still important) of your beef and lamb dog meals for wild venison would therefore make a significant impact on their (and your) total carbon footprint. Wild venison is often readily sourced locally, which helps lower carbon emissions associated with transport.



Supports natural ecosystems

Wild deer can, in places, fall out of balance with the natural habitats they live in. This is mainly thanks to the fact that we've eliminated all their natural predators, introduced four non-native species, and created a wider, highly human-influenced ecosystem across the UK that often encourages deer populations to grow.

When deer numbers become excessive, over browsing can prevent natural habitats from regenerating or expanding. What's more, excessive numbers of deer can also increase competition among themselves for limited resources or increase the likelihood of them coming into conflict with human activities. Such conflict might inadvertently lead to deer being seen as vermin and encourage illegal or poor practices. It even has the potential to reduce proper consideration for their welfare in legislation and policy development.

As a result, for both themselves as well as for our environment, deer require some management to maintain their numbers at sustainable levels and/or prevent further spread of non-native species. Wild venison is a by-product of this very necessary management. Its use helps cover the inevitable costs involved while providing a source of ethically sourced meat with all the many benefits mentioned above.

In the larger scheme of things, then, choosing wild venison for your dog's bowl helps support the regeneration and expansion of many of our natural habitats while actively supporting deer welfare.



Negligible risk of lead shot

I know that Honey's has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to lead shot and that this is a condition the gamekeepers and other producers it buys from must observe. In fact, all but a tiny percentage of deer managers have switched to non-lead bullets.

Worry about consumption of lead traces when feeding their dog wild venison may be a concern for some. In fact, the chances of this happening are negligible because of best practice standards in shooting, the highest hygiene standards, and because most deer managers have already switched to non-lead bullets.

The British Deer Society

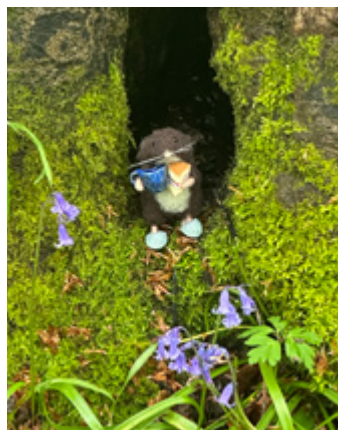
The British Deer Society (BDS) is the only charity in the UK dedicated to wild deer. We are a small team of dedicated staff supported by a few thousand passionate members and supporters. Together, we work to ensure that our wild deer are valued and respected, face minimal threats to their welfare and thrive in harmony with their environment. Our core tools are education, training, research, advocacy, and campaigning in all areas related to deer, their welfare, and their management.

If you'd like to help us ensure that wild deer are respected and managed with the utmost responsibility, and that wild venison always remains a highly ethical, sustainable source of food for your dogs (and yourself if you eat meat), then please do consider joining us as a member. Honey's already have, and we're excited to have them on board and build our relationship for deer, for pets and the environment.

To learn more about the BDS visit: www.bds.org.uk Andrea can be contacted by email: andrea.barden@bds.org.uk

Magical tales in wool

What is it that makes Karen Low's small, felt animals – mice, weasels, badgers, water voles, otters, rabbits, shrews and, of course, dogs – so desirable? Is it the expressions on their faces? The attention to detail? The tiny accessories? The fact that just looking at them brings a sense of peace and joy? Whatever the reason, every time Karen releases a new collection it is snapped up by fans. Karen, a valued Honey's customer, an author and an artist, lives in Monmouth. Not only does she make the animals, but she also writes books about them and creates little stop motion animated films in which they, quite literally, come alive. Very generously, Karen has donated a wool felt dog for us to give away as a draw prize. Meanwhile, if you need cheering up (or even if you don't!) why not visit her website: www.celestineandthehare.com. If you fancy anything then the code HONEYS will give you a 10% discount on your first order.



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Supporting a dog with Kidney Disease

Isobel Hunt

Jack is my 15-year-old Jack Russell. He is incontinent and has kidney disease. His average drinking peaked at over 500ml a day in late 2022 into early 2023. His overnight nappies were pretty wet during this time, and he wasn't always dry during the day. He topped the 600ml mark twenty times and his highest ever water intake was 670 ml in one day – excessive for a 7.5 kg dog. Supporting Jack with his incontinence and kidney disease has been significantly helped by integrated vet care, which treats him as an individual with his own specific needs. As well as a mix of conventional and complementary treatments such as herbs, homeopathy and nutraceuticals, this individualised medicine approach has included tailoring his diet. By October 2023, Jack's monthly drinking average had significantly dropped to 90ml a day. His incontinence was also much reduced as evidenced by nearly, if not dry, overnight nappies and barely any leaking during the day. He is living a good life. This article explains why and how we went about looking after Jack with the help of our lovely vets, nurses and their staff from Sue Armstrong Consultancy, Crieff Vets and Companion Nutrition as well as Honey's Real Dog Food.

Summer 2022 – an unexpected damp patch!

It was a lovely sunny day, and I was trying to convince myself that I could work in the garden without nodding off. Jack is a heat seeker by nature. Consequently, he was alternating between roasting on his bed in the full glare of the sun and heaving himself into the shade for temporary respites when it got too hot. As he staggered up puffing and panting, I did a double take. Was that a damp patch? I spent the next few minutes observing him only to confirm, that yes, there was a very occasional drip of urine emerging! Well, that was a surprise! But at 14 Jack was officially elderly so maybe incontinence was on the cards at some point.

Urine and blood tests

I thought maybe it was a one off as it didn't happen again until couple of weeks later. And then it became gradually more frequent, and his drinking increased. After the second dribble incident, on the advice of Dr Sue Armstrong, I took a urine sample into our local vet Dr Fern Fraser at Crieff Vets, and a blood test was done. An infection was ruled out, but Jack's urine was very dilute, and his glomerular flow was compromised. This could have been due to high blood pressure, chronic kidney changes, an incompetent sphincter, or a combination of factors. Jack's blood pressure was fine. Regarding his kidney parameters, his SDMA was up although this can be a marker of inflammation elsewhere. His creatine, urea and phosphorus levels were all OK. At this point we were looking at Jack having an incompetent sphincter causing urine to leak which was accompanied by increased drinking to make good the loss. He wasn't quite at the stage of kidney disease.

Facing up to reality

When something goes wrong like this, especially if it worsens gradually, it can take a while to accept and deal with it. For example, Jack sleeps on our bed and it took me a few weeks to put a nappy (belly band) on him. He wasn't leaking every night, and it was only ever a few drips at this point. I would wake up in the morning and hope for the best, washing bedclothes as necessary and trying not to be disappointed when there was dampness. Seems crazy now! Once you acknowledge and embrace something, it becomes a lot easier to deal with. Pretty soon the nappy went on every night, and it was a bonus if it was dry! As the incontinence got worse, we later added a (fragrance free) Tena lady pad (other brands are available) to reduce the amount of nappy washing.

Monitoring changes in drinking and urine

I began to record his drinking and how wet his overnight nappy was each day. I felt it was important to keep a careful note of this as I never remember exact details as much as I think I do! It turned out to be very useful in tracking overall changes.

Some initial treatments

Propalin Syrup and a couple of homeopathic remedies were tried but weren't useful in Jack's case. It might have been possible to help his incompetent sphincter, but he had a history of neuromyopathy, so the muscle weakness was likely to be the result of nerve degeneration which

Dr Armstrong had diagnosed some years before. In other words, it was always going to be very difficult to treat. Incidentally, the Propalin Syrup was used in order to try and get more information about Jack's health. It works by tightening up the muscles, but of course it doesn't just target the bladder sphincter. Poor Jack became wired within a couple of hours of the first dose followed by vomiting. Trust us to have one of the very few dogs it doesn't suit! It can, however, be a useful tool for most dogs with this diagnosis.

Some days are better than others

In common with many diseases or conditions, some days are better than others. However, there was an overall increase in terms of drinking and urine leakage over time. Jack has never continuously dribbled. He remains dry for a period of time before starting to drip. This length of time varies from minutes to hours. I learnt to accept his new normal. We always have a waterproof mat covered by vet bedding and a towel or blanket wherever Jack is likely to lay in the house to preserve the furniture! I also got into the habit of feeling for damp patches every time he gets up. It simply became our routine. We took blood tests again in November, March and June. (I have to say here that vets, nurses and admin staff at Crieff Vets are marvellous with Jack, who doesn't exactly enjoy going to the vets or being examined).

November 2022 blood test

Urea and creatinine levels were a little above normal, but they can be affected by other factors such as recent meals. He could have been Stage 2 according to the creatinine levels, but the SDMA was down to normal. This put him in pre-renal failure indicating that his body was managing OK at that point. If the SDMA is repeatedly up and/or keeps going up, then you need to do something. It is also important to keep an eye on phosphorus levels. If urea is normal, it suggests the animal is fine with protein levels. Jack was drinking as much as 520ml a day.

March 2023 blood test

There was no appreciable worsening of Jack's kidney parameters. The SDMA was still good, creatinine and urea were raised but the ratio was still normal. If he had a problem, the SDMA would be going up much more rapidly. Phosphorus was still normal. Furthermore, Dr Fraser was pleased to observe that Jack remained clinically good. Jack was still drinking in the 500mls plus range. It was important that he was seen to be passing plenty of urine (overnight nappies definitely proved this!) indicating that he was still processing things. His kidneys were coping at that point. You would expect / want a heavy overnight nappy if he's drinking 500ml plus a day.

June 2023 – kidney disease raises its ugly head

Jack's drinking went down in May, so his blood results were a bit of a surprise. Later I wondered if it was because we had stopped lighting the fire and the house was cooler. The SDMA was creeping up slightly, but more concerning was that creatinine and urea were both up. Phosphorus levels were OK. Dr Fraser felt Jack was going into Stage 1 renal failure which was not surprising given his age. He'd been hovering on the edge since November. She suggested adjusting Jack's diet to something more renal specific.

We altered Jack's diet over the following few weeks. Dr Armstrong suggested reducing the load on the kidneys at any one time by dividing his daily food ration into 4 or 5 little meals a day ensuring at least three hours between meals. She also suggested adding a little water or bone broth if needed. Although Jack's drinking stayed roughly the same (480ml in June and July), his overnight nappies became a bit drier. Presumably he was able to pee out a higher percentage when he wanted to rather than it dribble out overnight. He was also able to last all day without dribbling, and to be left up to three hours without a toilet break on most days.

At that point, Jack was eating a gently cooked, fresh food diet. I also took advice from Dr Alison Lambert. She suggested that since protein by-products might be building up it was advisable to reduce the protein content. She also emphasised keeping a particular eye on phosphorus and reducing that before it became a problem. We added butternut squash and sweet potato to reduce the percentage of protein. On incorporating this into his diet, Jack's drinking began to go down.

July 2023 – not the best of months!

Henry my son was on the phone: 'Jack's having trouble weeing and he's crying!' On rushing home, I saw he was also passing blood, so off to the vets we went! The trouble with Jack spending some of the time

in a wet nappy during the night is that he was in contact with stagnant urine – prime breeding territory for urinary tract infections, UTIs. It was bound to happen sooner or later. Jack was prescribed a broad-spectrum antibiotic. The pain passed almost immediately. Ten days later and Jack really wasn't well. He barely ate, if at all, for a few days. It may be that his kidneys were struggling a bit, making him feel uncomfortable and putting him off his food. Either way, another UTI was diagnosed so he had another course of antibiotics. Dr. Armstrong prescribed a short course of Thuja 30 to help fight the infection and a Berberis/Taraxacum kidney support remedy to be used daily from then on. Jack's bloods showed him to be in stage 2/3 kidney disease. For the first time his phosphorus was too high. Thankfully he rallied round and was soon back to normal in terms of eating and general health.

August 2023 – another UTI!

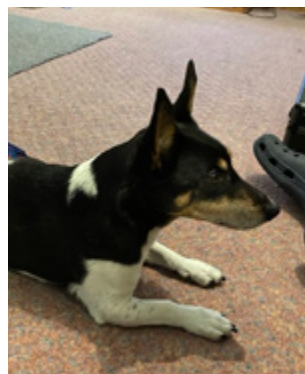
Vet Dr Lucy van Zwanenburg could see rod bacteria in Jack's urine under the microscope, so she sent the sample away for culturing. *E coli*, typically, was the culprit. More antibiotics and Thuja for Jack.

September – here we go again!

Yet another infection! This one was caused by a different species which is what can happen with repeated infections and antibiotics. Antibiotics and Thuja came out again. If there are repeated infections, it can get harder to tell if there is an infection as the dog may not show symptoms quite as much. A home urine testing kit proved useful to help monitor things. With Jack it was getting to the stage where we may have had to consider long term low dose ABs every day. In the meantime, Dr Armstrong added Urinaid (D-Mannose, Cranberry, Pomegranate, Ashwagandha) as a daily supplement to try and avoid this prospect. We haven't had an infection since this.

The fundamental effects of diet

Shortage of space does not permit me to go into detail but essentially we moved him from various other foods to Honey's with highly beneficial results.



Smaller and more frequent meals

When Jack first went into kidney failure, we changed from feeding him twice a day (plus a mouthful for supper to prevent hunger pukes at 4am) to five smaller meals in order to minimise the load on his kidneys. We observed that he more or less stopped dribbling during the day and was able to last longer without a toilet break. As Dr Armstrong observed, being dry during the day shows that by reducing the amount of protein in any given meal, his kidneys' ability to handle the by-products of protein metabolism is

not exceeded. Furthermore, his brain still had the control function.

Reducing protein

When we started to dilute his food and reduce the protein content by adding sweet potato and butternut squash his drinking went down even further and the overnight nappies were lighter on average.

A more radical change in diet – Honey's Real Dog Food

I heard about Honey's and booked a consultation with one of their in-house nutrition team, Vet Nurse Francesca Cates. We went through Jack's history in great detail. Kidney disease and acid reflux/laryngeal paralysis are the main factors driving Jack's dietary requirements along with a brief bout of (mild) acute pancreatitis four years ago. Francesca was very thorough. As Jack is a relatively complex case, she also referred me to one of their canine nutrition specialist vets, Dr Charlotte Gray of Companion Nutrition with whom I had a very detailed consultation. The key recommendations were:

- Getting phosphorus down to a normal level was key. This is particularly important for reducing the rate of calcium phosphate deposits. If it proved impossible, then the use of phosphate binders would have to be considered.
- Reducing meat levels whilst retaining high quality protein content and replacing with 'beige' foods that are inert for the kidneys (such as rice) is important.
- Sweet potato, rich in beta carotene, is good for dogs with renal disease.
- Vegetables and fruit can be used for antioxidants, fibre, water, reducing inflammation and to support the gut microbiome.

- For special conditions like renal disease, extra supplements are needed such as water-soluble B vitamins and high potency omega 3.
- Any vitamins and minerals should be in a highly bioavailable form.
- Lower fat meats are needed for a dog that's had pancreatitis.



At this stage it was important to go with a single recipe in order to ascertain the exact effects of diet on his kidney parameters. Another recipe could be added at a later stage if required. Dr Gray followed up with a very detailed and comprehensive recipe for Jack which also took account of the supplements he was already on (Adored Beast Apothecary Gut Soothe, Superflex Dog Deer Velvet and digestive enzymes). I could have sourced the ingredients and cooked the recipe myself. However, I chose to get Honey's Bespoke to make it as they have guaranteed high quality organic food

suppliers. Jack's special recipe is a mixture of organic chicken thigh; lean beef mince, kidney and liver; sweet potato; a mix of seasonal veg; sardines; and organic white rice along with several key supplements specific to Jack. It has since been given DEFRA approval!! I like to think there is a file saying Jack Hunt's Special Recipe somewhere in an official building!

Fantastic results

I introduced the new diet gradually over ten days in September and oh my goodness, the results have been amazing!

- Drinking went down even more.
- Overnight nappies became even drier if not dry.
- And...

The blood test performed on 20th October revealed that renal parameters were all down and phosphorus was significantly back within normal range. As vet Dr van Zwanenberg at Crieff Vets said, it isn't just about the blood results. Jack had remained fit and bouncy throughout (apart from the blip in July). However, I can't tell you how pleased I was when I heard the above results! Jack was considered to be in lower stage 2/1.

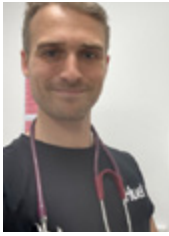
In summary

For Jack, integrative vet care (including a radical change in diet) has proven highly successful. Jack is drinking much less, his incontinence is dramatically improved, his kidney disease is improved and he is clinically well. This would not have been possible without the help of Dr Sue Armstrong and Jane Young of Sue Armstrong Consultancy; Dr Fern Fraser and Dr Lucy van Zwanenburg, all the nursing staff including Jack Russell wrangler Mhairi Townsend and everyone on reception at Crieff Vets; Dr Alison Lambert; Francesca Cates and the rest of the Honey's Bespoke team; and Dr Charlotte Gray of Companion Nutrition. Mention should also be made of veterinary cardiologist Dr Craig Devine of Borders Cardiova.



"The serotonin is deafening."

Isobel Hunt is a Co-Founder of CAM4animals. She has a background in wildlife conservation and writing, and is passionate about the importance of addressing animal welfare and environmental issues.



Obesity in dogs and cats, the role of diet and the microbiome

Dr Adam Burch BVetMed, PgC, SAS, PgC, SADI, MRCVS

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) has produced a couple of helpful charts to assess our pet's body condition. You can easily find it on their website: <https://wsava.org>



Obesity as a growing issue

At present in the UK there is a growing concern over obesity not only in the human population but now in companion animals such as cats and dogs. This is not surprising since our pets' eating habits often mirror our own. Two decades ago, between twenty and forty percent of dogs were considered obese. This reflected the situation in the USA at the same time. In California, for example, during the period 2005 to 2016 one-in-five dogs

visiting veterinary hospitals were identified as obese. Since then, the UK situation has become even worse. The most recent figures suggest that half of the dog population is either overweight or obese.

Obesity is of deep concern in and of itself. An overweight or obese dog will find it harder to exercise, may become overheated and have trouble breathing. However, these quality-of-life issues are secondary to the real danger: it can lead to a whole host of other diseases. Animals which are overweight suffer from a range of complaints including urinary tract infections (UTIs), pancreatitis, diabetes, heart disease, skin issues, low energy levels, depression and a range of orthopaedic issues. They also have, on average, a 20% shorter lifespan than a healthy weight dog would. For the typical Labrador, for example, this could mean three years off the typical lifespan of 12 to 14 years.

It is important for the health of our pets to understand when a dog is a healthy weight, overweight or clinically obese.

How to assess weight

It isn't necessarily what happens when your dog or cat steps nimbly onto the scales that determines whether they are a healthy weight. Obviously, keeping track of what they weigh is important, but since muscle weighs more than fat it can be misleading. Instead, one wants to use an additional measure: 'Body Condition Score' (BCS), which is the standard used by veterinary professionals. This gives us a better rule of thumb for how fat or thin an animal is. It doesn't account for visceral fat (fat around the internal organs), however as an outward gauge it can be very helpful. The key ways to assess BCS are:

- You should be able to feel the ribs easily with a flat hand on the chest.
- You should not have to push even with your fingertips to feel the ribs.
- You should be only just able to see the ribs if at all when looking at the chest. However, in flat faced dogs ('brachycephalic breeds' such as pugs, frenchies and bulldogs) being able to see the ribs easily is a better gauge to aim for, the reason being that these dogs struggle a lot to breathe, the less body fat therefore the less fat around their chest and airways that limits their breathing and the less insulation thereby preventing overheating in the summer.
- You should be able to appreciate a nice inward curve or tuck in of the abdomen as you move from the chest towards the back legs, a saggy abdomen could be fat building up.



What does obesity do to my pet?

Increased weight means increased forces going through joints, causing more wear and tear and arthritis. This can be seen at younger ages when the weight is significantly over normal. It means that animals have to start on pain relief earlier in life, which can be very effective and helpful but which comes with side effects. Obviously, if we can prevent disease it is preferable to having to treat it.

Fat is itself considered an inflammatory tissue. Fat produces chemicals, known as inflammatory cytokines (chemicals that induce inflammation) that promote inflammation around the body. This in turn leads to damage and scarring of organs such as the liver and inflammation in joints and other tissues which causes them to degrade. A further effect of this is that accelerates existing arthritis. A prominent fat inflammatory cytokine (also known as an adipokine) is Leptin, which can cause inflammation around the body, even altering an animal's immune system (more on Leptin to follow).

In humans it has been demonstrated that inflammation created by fat can produce insulin resistance causing inflammation in the liver and insulin deficiency (by causing inflammation in the pancreas). The evidence for a similar process is yet to be determined in cats and dogs however obesity remains a potential cause of diabetes in our pets.

Obesity in dogs has been linked not only to inflammation, arthritis, pancreatitis, diabetes, and insulin resistance, but also to cardiovascular disease, immune disease and neoplasia (cancer)

The fat hormone: Leptin

A particular hormone called Leptin is produced from fat cells, along with many other pro-inflammatory adipokines it has a whole host of different functions around the body, and if in too high numbers significantly badly alters the healthy function of many body systems.

1. Leptin increases inflammation around the body – this is caused by increasing the activity of immune cells, so that they attack and causing inflammation in different areas of the body. Leptin encourages white blood cells such as Macrophages to enter fat cells and set up inflammation.
2. Leptin alters the immune system and can lead to immune mediated diseases (diseases where the body attacks itself) – Leptin causes a cell called a T regulatory cell to leave the blood and enter fat cells.

T regulatory cells as the name suggest, regulate and manage other immune cells response to stimulus. Without them the immune cells can be left unchecked and cause inappropriate responses or attack areas of the body.

3. Leptin causes changes to heart function and structure – normal heart muscle produces and responds to Leptin as a hormone, however in excess it may cause heart muscle cells to become bigger, change their function, causes them to die or change the way they metabolise their energy.
4. Leptin activates the sympathetic nervous system and causes hypertension – in the body there are two nervous systems, the Somatic system (what we use to move our limbs) and the Autonomic system (what moves our intestines, regulates our heart beat), the autonomic nervous system is further divided into the sympathetic system (fight and flight) and the parasympathetic system (rest and digest). Leptin increases the sympathetic system activity, increasing adrenaline secretion and increasing blood pressure, when coupled with heart changes this can lead to increased blood pressure (hypertension). Hypertension is linked to many other diseases, such as kidney failure and retinal detachment to name a few.
5. Leptin can lead to pancreatitis – Leptin encourages immune cells to enter fat cells and causing cell death and inflammation, when this occurs in the pancreas then it can cause irreparable damage to the pancreas, causing severe abdominal pain, insulin resistance, vomiting and diarrhoea and multiple other issues.

On a happier note, as Leptin levels fall (i.e. with less body fat), the changes seen in the heart are reversible.



"You've gained five pounds since the last time you weighed me."

Diet, the gut microbiome, obesity and disease

There is a strong connection between the microbiome, obesity, inflammation and a variety of different diseases. By the same token, diet has a very strong relationship with the composition of the microbiome's bacterial population and variety.

The microbiome has a very good regulatory effect on anti-inflammatory and pro-inflammatory chemicals in the body, potentially countering the pro-inflammatory effects of fat tissue.

Conversely gut inflammation can significantly change the gut microbiome, this means that diseases not only obesity, but also inflammatory bowel disease amongst others can alter the way the microbiome works and the benefits it gives to our pets.

The microbiome will also play a big role in moderating, educating and maturing the immune system, there are actual dedicated regions in the gut called peyers patches, found predominantly in the ileum (one of three sections of the small intestines), these areas allow for maturation of white blood cells and prevent bacteria in the gut from becoming a

threat by moving from the faeces and into the blood stream. This could counteract the effects that obesity has on dysregulating and damaging the immune system.

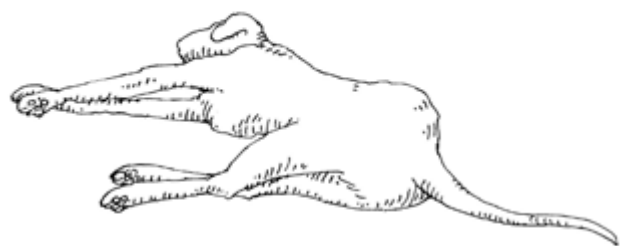
The gut and microbiome are also responsible in both humans and pets in producing most of our body's serotonin, the hormone that controls more than just being in a happier mood, it also regulates our digestion, sleep, bone and wound healing and how likely we are to have a stroke or have normal blood clotting function.

Experimentation with high protein, low carbohydrate or 'HPLC' diets (49.4% protein, 10.9% carbohydrate) have been performed in dogs and found that this induces a higher load of *Firmicutes* but fewer numbers of *Bacteroidetes* than other diets. This more stable microbiome may encourage better weight control. In humans a dysbiotic microbiome is associated with obesity and other diseases and HPLC diets have been promoted for weight loss for many years.

Bacteroides species are seen in greater abundance in obese dogs, along with *Faecalibacterium*, *Phascolarctobacterium* *Megamonas* and *Mucispirillum*, the theory is that a normal microbiome will encourage better weight and disease control.

Antibiotics are a huge part of modern medicine and have saved countless animal and human lives, this being said though they can cause devastating effects on the microbiome and therefore should only be used specifically when needed and not used routinely as this can lead to a domino effect with other diseases.

A GREAT DANE IN THE THROES OF FURIOUS ACTIVITY



Take home messages

1. Obesity is a growing concern in our pets.
2. Obesity causes a lot of other diseases such as immune disease, heart disease, cancer, inflammation and joint disease.
3. Fat itself produces inflammation hormones (such as Leptin) that cause multiple diseases around the body, some are reversible and some are not.
4. The microbiome has a moderating effect on inflammation and immunity and can combat the effect of obesity if properly looked after with diet and lifestyle.
5. Diet has a huge effect on the health a stability of the microbiome and can be helpful or detrimental to the microbiome health.
6. Similarly, antibiotics can severely damage the microbiome and should only be used if necessary to treat a specific disease, please always discuss antibiotic use with your vet.
7. High protein low carbohydrate diets encourage a microbiome to form that is associated with better weight control and overall health.

On a personal note, I have begun to feed my own two rescue dogs (previously on kibble) on Honey's raw food and have been monitoring their faeces and overall health. I have found the faeces to be more consistent in form, my dogs to be very happy and more readily eating their new diet (my girl dog is a bit of a fuss pot) and in the case of my male dog his skin allergies have settled down. All this is anecdotal but interesting to observe.

For more information and references, please feel free to contact me (silver_burch@hotmail.co.uk). I am intending to begin a YouTube series to better explain the canine and feline gut and provide more information about pet ownership in general. Search @Adamthevet on YouTube. As always hoping you and all your furry fiends are happy, well and living your best lives.



The Soi Dog Foundation

Guy Wrench

We asked Guy, who has written a very moving book about his rescue dog Knight, to tell us about the Soi Dog Foundation and its work.

Bringing up my children aside, my time spent volunteering at Soi Dog in Phuket has been by far the happiest time of my life. I first visited in December 2018 and then again in December 2019 and on both occasions I was overwhelmed by the love and care Soi Dog showed to the dogs and cats in its care, as well as to the thousands more on the streets of Phuket and further afield throughout Thailand. Indeed, if Soi Dog 'love' could be bottled and sold, the world would be a far better place for it!



As Soi Dog Foundation is something of a hidden gem in the world of animal rescue let me tell you a little bit about it. It was established in 2003 in Phuket, Thailand, by a Dutch national called Margot Homburg and a recently retired English couple, John and Gill Dalley from Yorkshire. These three were deeply disturbed by the state of the dogs and cats they encountered roaming the streets and vowed to help them. Initially they rescued the worst cases and took them to local vets and paid for their care out of their own pockets. Typically these animals would have been involved in road traffic accidents, disease-ridden, victims of human abuse and/or starving. Many were close to death.

Realising that the street dog population was out of control, Margot, John and Gill set up a sterilisation programme known as CNVR (catch, neuter, vaccinate, return). Street dogs and cats were caught, neutered, vaccinated and then returned to the exact spot where they were found, usually within 24 hrs, so that they could re-establish themselves in their pack/territory. Twenty years ago there were an estimated 70,000 street dogs in Phuket, today there are around 6,000, which will give you an idea of how successful the CNVR programme has been. Incidentally, Soi Dog now operates 16 mobile CNVR clinics across Thailand and has sterilised over a million street dogs and cats, more than any other organisation in the world. The knock-on effects of CNVR are fewer dogs, enough food to go around, fewer emaciated animals and, in Phuket, no rabies. Bizarrely there is no government support for this programme, it is all paid for by public donations and grants from animal charities such as the Dogs Trust and the Bridget Bardot Foundation.

But I am jumping ahead of myself, so let's return to the early days. In September 2004 Gill Dalley contracted septicaemia, caught while rescuing a drowning dog from a flooded water buffalo field. Tragically, it was necessary to amputate both her legs to save her life. She was released from hospital on 22 December and within a week, on 26 December, the coastlines of Southeast Asia were devastated by the infamous tsunami that killed an estimated 200,000 people. Despite being in a wheelchair Gill helped with the rescue operation, counselling the bereaved and seriously injured. Meanwhile her husband John went to Khao Lak, the hardest hit area, where he took on the grim task of sorting, identifying (where possible) and wrapping human remains.

Of course, the tsunami was headline news around the world for weeks on end and one of the many stories covered by news hacks was the displacement of tens of thousands of cats and dogs. Animal lovers everywhere, including vets and veterinary nurses, offered both cash and hands-on help. As one of few structured animal rescue services in Asia, Soi Dog became a focal point for this generosity and support. Ironically it was this terrible tragedy that enabled Soi Dog to become what it is today.

In 2006, Soi Dog was offered a government-owned dog pound in northern Phuket as its base. Lacking even basic facilities, Soi Dog invested £90K upgrading the shelter and installing a clinic... only for the government to reclaim the pound saying that it was inappropriate for an NGO to run a government owned site! Margot Homburg retired on health grounds, but John and Gill found themselves another site in Mai Khao (Northern Phuket) and bought the land ... this site being the home of Soi Dog to this day.

2011 saw the launch of the Trade of Shame campaign and Soi Dog has been at the forefront of the anti-dog meat trade movement ever since. Under Soi Dog's guidance, the Thai government passed a law banning the killing of dogs and cats for their meat and, as I write, Soi Dog is working at high government level in the Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam to achieve closure of the dog and cat meat trade in these countries.

From 2010 onwards, Gill Dalley devoted much of her time to the design of a magnificent dog hospital and in 2014 she laid the first cornerstone. The hospital opened its doors to injured dogs in 2016 and, in 2019, Soi Dog opened an equally impressive hospital for cats. Today this wonderful sanctuary for injured and/or sick dogs and cats houses two animal hospitals (the largest in Asia and possibly the world), an educational centre and a superb visitor centre. As well as this, there are sterilisation units, isolation units, numerous dog runs (designed to house approximately 30 dogs each) and the equivalent for cats. Soi Dog now employs some 450 staff, the majority of who are hands-on rescuing and looking after sick animals. In 2023 alone, the hospitals treated 4,895 sick and injured dogs and cats.



Tragically Gill was taken by cancer in 2017, aged just 58. After all that she had been through in her life, and all the love and kindness that she had so willingly given throughout her life, this seemed a particularly cruel fate. With so many dogs to care for, Soi Dog has become a haven for animal lovers wanting an 'alternative holiday' and, as a volunteer myself, I can tell you all that volunteering at the Gill Dalley Sanctuary is the best holiday experience a dog lover could ever have. Walking beautiful rescue dogs all day, followed by a refreshing swim in the sea as the sun sets,

all capped by dinner at a beach restaurant mixing with like-minded dog lovers from all around the world. It really is heaven on earth ... and so very worthwhile.

It was while volunteering in December 2019 that I met my best friend, Soi Dog Knight. Knight had been impaled on a stake in a derelict building for four days and five nights. We know this as the locals confessed to hearing a dog wail and cry for five nights. Unbeknownst to me, Knight was in the Soi Dog hospital fighting for his life during my first visit in 2018. In one of those strange twists of fate, I interviewed one of the hospital nurses that year, and she told me of this dog, with its chest torn open, its back legs lacerated and its body covered in multiple wounds and how it was hanging on, determined to live. When I returned a year later, I bonded with a very shy dog who spent most of his time hiding from humans but, for some reason, took a liking to me. This dog was scarred all over and walked with a funny gait and I had this overwhelming urge to take him home with me and give him a peaceful, safe, happy life. So I arranged to adopt him ... and only then did I discover his back story. My dog was the very same dog that Sarah the nurse had told me all about the year before. It was as if our stars were aligned and our destiny pre-set!

Soi Dog Knight and four of his friends arrived at my house on 6th August 2020, having travelled half way around the world. His four chums all had forever homes arranged and Knight stayed with me. Indeed he is sitting beside me right now as I type these words. Most nights I look at him all curled up and perfect and I struggled to connect his past to his present, but his past was very real ... and really quite terrifying.

A Dog's Tale by Guy Wrench – the extraordinary story of Soi Dog Knight – is available on-line from the Soi Dog merchandise store. **If you would like to volunteer, make a donation or fundraise for Soi Dog**, please visit the **HOW YOU CAN HELP** page on their website. Thank you. soidog.org



Going away? Who you gonna call? Homesitters!

Benjamin Irvine

One of the biggest issues for anyone with pets is how best to care for them when away. Ever since 1980, our family business, Homesitters, has offered a simple and cost-effective solution. We will arrange for one of our reliable, kind, trustworthy and experienced sitters to look after your pets. They'll follow your precise instructions, ensuring that your animals enjoy the same care and attention they'd receive if you were there yourself. Having a live-in pet sitter has another advantage – it ensures the security and maintenance of your home.

Before I explain how Homesitters works, I'd like to stress that we are a traditional family business. My father, Alan, (who is a retired doctor) is our managing director, my sister looks after our team of sitters (she is director of human resources) and I am the director of operations. We offer a genuinely personal, friendly service. Indeed, you may be interested to hear that almost all our clients come to us by word of mouth and that we have won several awards. We have invested heavily in what we do, too. We may have old-fashioned ideas about looking after clients, but we employ the latest technology and most up to date systems.

If I had to pick one reason why our clients come back to us time and again it is that we offer peace of mind. We have very, very high standards when it comes to selecting our sitters. Our vetting process is extremely rigorous and involves in-depth background checks, multiple interviews and contact with referees, amongst other things. Some of the key qualities we are looking for in a sitter include a love of animals, experience with animals, compassion, honesty, reliability, patience and intelligence. Many of our sitters are retired and, for one reason or another, often can't have pets of their own. Sitting gives them a sense of purpose. Indeed, they get huge enjoyment from pets, without having the long-term responsibility or expense of owning them.

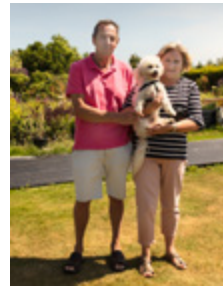
You might be surprised by the variety of animals we look after. Dogs and cats, as you would expect, but also poultry, horses, sheep, potbellied pigs, llamas, tortoises, spiders, snakes, fish... the list is endless. Which brings me to one of the most important aspects of our service: to ensure things run smoothly, we always set up a preliminary meeting to allow you to meet your sitter and discuss the assignment details – from the household management to the routines of their pets. Also, we provide our sitters with a 24-hour, 365-days-a-year support service.

There is no such thing as a typical Homesitter assignment. It may last for a few days or a few weeks. It could be in a studio flat or a mansion. In a city or the depths of the country. There could be one small pet to look after or a menagerie. What each assignment has in common, however, is that it allows our clients to head away without having to worry about pet care or home security.

If you are looking for a homesitter (or if you are interested in becoming one of our sitters) we would love to hear from you.

Five reasons to engage a pet sitter

1. It provides continuity for your pets. No change of routine. No change of diet. No change of location. Instead, the pleasure of being at home and looked after by an experienced animal lover who cares about their welfare.
2. It gives your pets security. Many animals become anxious and agitated when they see the suitcases coming out. But not when you have a sitter who they have already met and know.
3. It provides peace of mind about both your pets and your home. With a sitter in place, you don't have to worry about coming home to a burst water pipe or worse to find you have been burgled.
4. It is cost effective. You may be surprised at what value a pet sitter offers compared to the other options.
5. You will be able to really enjoy your time away. No need to worry about how your pets are managing or whether your home is alright.



A day in the life of a home and pet sitter

Martin and Kristine Bell, a retired couple from Nottingham, epitomise the home and pet sitting lifestyle. Following the loss of their 14-year-old West Highland terrier in 2017, the couple wanted to indulge their love for dogs without the long-term commitment. Undertaking ten assignments every year, the Bells say the experience is very fulfilling. Describing

a typical day Martin explains: 'We follow the dog's normal routine. We feed them the same time as they are usually fed, walk them when they are usually walked, play with them when they are usually played with.' Kristine says they ask for every possible detail. 'If Fido gets a little bit of toast at breakfast or is allowed to sleep on the bed or likes to watch television... then that's what we do.' The Bell's priority on any assignment is the home and pets, so although their contract allows them to leave the property for three hours in daylight hours and one hour after dark, they tend not to. Instead, they stay at home together – sitting in the garden, reading books, and doing puzzles. The Bells prefer homesits quite near their home to reduce travel time, but have ventured to Norfolk, Suffolk, and Yorkshire. They are good friends with many clients who give them regular assignments and feel like family friends when they turn up, with the dogs bounding up to them in excitement!



Our valued clients: the Nettleton's

Travers and Katie Nettleton have been using Homesitters for several years to look after their dogs, Archie and Herbert, and their home, when they travel. They turned to Homesitters because they felt

it was too much to ask a friend to look after two dogs and did not like the idea of kennels. Travers explains: 'We have found it very reassuring to meet homesitters before the assignment as it takes away any worries. The company is very professional and everything is documented, which puts our mind at rest. We like the fact Homesitters employs more mature homesitters, as we feel comfortable knowing someone responsible is staying in our home.' The Nettleton's take pride in their own garden and like to have someone staying in the house during summer who can water the plants.

They are also keen skiers and appreciate having someone in the house when they holiday during winter too so if there are any frozen pipes, power cuts or flooding there is someone to deal with it. Travers says: 'Everytime we have been away, we have returned to an immaculate home, happy dogs and even milk and bread bought by the homesitters. One homesitter even wrote a dog diary which was extremely sweet, and we enjoyed reading it when we came back.'



Homesitters can be contacted on 01296 630 730 or visit www.homesitters.co.uk

Comment: a damaged generation of dogs

Anna Webb

It is slightly over four years since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects are still being felt. One group that has been impacted in ways that may not at first appear obvious is the generation of dogs born just before or during the lockdown and its immediate aftermath. According to the PDSA 2011 Paw Report there were just under eight million dogs in the UK that year, compared to over 11 million by 2023. The Pet Food Manufacture's Association figures suggest that a total of 3.2 million households acquired a pet during the lockdown. In short, the pandemic generation of dogs runs to the millions. For some of the people who acquired a dog it was obviously a considered choice. But according to the PDSA 2023 Paw Report 20% of owners did no research before acquiring their dog, and only 18% looked into the cost of owning a dog. Clearly, as a result of the pandemic, there have been changes in the type of dog owner, where and how they purchased a dog, their experience, and their expectations.



Back to the statistics. Again, according to the PDSA's 2023 Paw report, 36% of all owners acquired their dog in the last three years. This accounts for a staggering 4.1 million dogs. Interestingly out of these, 41% or over two million dogs were first time dog owners. The PDSA investigation further highlight that these 'new owners' were mainly under 45, with a high household income and working full time. Also noting the main reasons for bringing a dog into their life, over 45% said for 'love and affection', compared to 31% saying for 'exercise'.

Despite animal agencies campaigning for years to stop people buying dogs and puppies online, (promoting instead re-homing and #AdoptDontShop), worryingly the PDSA confirmed that online purchases are now 'normalised' amounting to 72% of puppy purchases in 2023, compared to 53% in 2022. Sadly, unscrupulous breeders optimised the pandemic demand for dogs with the internet – a global shop window to sell puppies bred for huge profit in horrific conditions or 'puppy farms.' At the same time, the rise in demand and short supply of dogs, attracted criminal gangs as dog theft soared to record levels as a low risk, high gain crime under the Theft Act 1968.

Only a year ago news channels were flooded with dog bite incidents reaching an all-time high. With fifteen fatal dog attacks in eighteen months. Not so co-incidental perhaps bearing in mind the effects of the lockdowns, lack of socialisation and training, owners' limited experience, poor breeding, and owners' mistakenly assuming dogs are 'little people' in a 'furry' suit.

Science concurs how vital early socialisation is, ideally beginning at the breeders and continuing into homes that understand a puppy's development stages, offering appropriate exposures, enrichment and nutrition. Some experts believe that a puppy should ideally meet 200 different people before they're 16 weeks old. This may be an aspirational figure, but it was obviously totally unachievable during the pandemic!

So, how big is the problem? A study conducted by The Royal Veterinary College has recently revealed some shocking feedback on the pandemic fallout. Funded by Battersea, it features as part of an ongoing project following more than a thousand owners and their pandemic puppies purchased in 2020 under the age of sixteen weeks from breeders in the UK. They sought to identify risk factors linked to four areas: owner-reported problem behaviours; the use of training methods, and the expectations versus the realities of behaviour and training. The list of twenty four problem behaviours ranged from control behaviours (e.g., pulling on their lead) and attention-seeking behaviours (e.g., jumping up, clinginess) to aggressive behaviours (e.g., towards other dogs, people and guarding food), and fear/avoidance behaviours (e.g., anxiety/fear around other dogs, people, loud noises) and more. Almost all (97%) owners reported their dog displaying at least one problem behaviour from the list. The average number of owner-reported problem behaviours at twenty-one months was five, while 20% of owners reported eight or more. The three most common behaviours considered a problem were pulling on the lead (67%), jumping up at people (57%) and not coming back when called (52%). The most shocking feedback was that 80% owners had used aversive training methods to correct unwanted behaviours – jerking the lead, shouting, pushing, even hitting their dogs.



Science concurs that punishment-based methods cause stress and resentment in the long-term whereas positive reward-based training methods enhance the learning process building communication and trust both ways. I believe Government could do more to regulate dog ownership by bringing back the dog licence. In a form mirroring success in other countries, that would ring-fence funds, channelling them back into education, support and welfare. Last May Government shelved its much-anticipated Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which was heralded to stop illegal puppy smuggling, (curbing online sales), stop dog theft and raise the welfare standard for millions of animals. Instead, Government made a very different political statement by banning the XL Bully dog under the 'dangerous dogs act' of 1991. Despite history proving that the DDA and banning breeds, was kneejerk legislation, penalising dogs on their appearance and measurements, rather than addressing the bigger picture. The proposed Pet Abduction Bill is a ray of hope, not only crediting dogs (and cats) as sentient beings, it is bringing the penalties for pet theft into the twenty first century with five years' imprisonment and a hefty fine.

As the cost-of-living crisis bites harder rescues are seeing a monumental 92% increase in calls to relinquish their best friends. With rescues at bursting point many like The Blue Cross have set up pet food banks to help owners and dogs stay together. Despite many wanting to adopt a rescue the cost of living combined with soaring vet bills (four times higher than in the EU) are prohibitive factors, meaning there's a bottle neck and a dog welfare crisis brewing. If nothing else the Pandemic fall out is starkly highlighting that dogs deserve our understanding as a lifelong commitment. Dogs have created our history as man's best friend, not as fashion statements!

As a Canine Nutrition and Behaviour expert, Anna combines her psychology degree, with study at the College of Integrated Veterinary Therapies (CIVT) and over 20 years experience. Host of the award nominated A DOG'S LIFE podcast, she lives in London, and is owned by Prudence, a Miniature Bull Terrier and Mr Binks, a re-homed English Toy Terrier. www.annawebb.co.uk

Hero Paws

Sara Kernohan

What happens to military, police, prison and other working dogs when they retire? The services that employed them are under no legal obligation to continue looking after them and although highly trained many of the dogs are not used to civilian life. Hero Paws, a new Scottish charity, aims to solve the problem. Started in 2022 it is the only organisation in the UK that arranges for the decompression, rehabilitation and behavioural conditioning necessary for an ex-services dog to lead a happy, healthy retirement in a caring, family environment. Of course, some handlers are able to adopt the dogs they have been working with but for most job commitments, deployment, living in barracks and the sheer expense make this impossible. When you think that the dogs concerned have often performed dangerous work and saved lives this seems very unfair.



Before an ex-service dog can be found a new home her or she generally needs to be re-trained. There is a huge difference between living in kennels and often being in stressful situations than in living in a private home with a busy family. These dogs are highly intelligent, highly trained and used to a very particular sort of a life. They may be too old to work but they are not necessarily old (although some will be). Every year ex-service dogs are put to sleep because no one is available to help them transition. Incidentally, not only do the dogs need to be prepared for life on the outside, but the adopting families also need to be educated in what to expect.

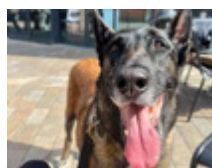
Three of the four trustees of Hero Paws are ex-military dog-handlers with a wealth of knowledge and experience. They have volunteered to oversee the work required to prepare the dogs for civilian life. As they all have full-time jobs, they are managing this in their own time.

In addition to preparing ex-service dogs for their new lives, Hero Paws handles the whole adoption process from finding suitable forever homes to introducing the dog and settling them in. To ensure success, Hero Paws offer continued support to each new home in the form of guidance and veterinary expenses, rehabilitation, legal aid, financial assistance for food and even insurance. No other re-homing organisation offers this level of service or support. The Hero Paws Aftercare Package can also include specific kit and equipment such as harnesses and leads to help walking lame, injured or reactive dogs.

Hero Paws steer away from adverse methods of equipment and encourage positive reward-based training. Whilst they acknowledge the power of conventional medicine, they also appreciate the use of more holistic approaches such as herbs, hydrotherapy, body-work, raw-feeding and even homeopathy and are assisted by a great team of researchers and practitioners. Their online shop provides a range of

species appropriate treats and herbal remedies. Because of the jobs they do, these dogs age much faster than a civilian dog and they endure other problems such as arthritis and cancer. Hero Paws work to try to mitigate these problems by encouraging raw feeding and using a holistic approach where possible and if suited to the individual animal's needs. This is new territory for many adopters, so Hero Paws assist closely.

Some early success stories



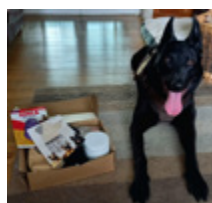
Tiaco

Tiaco is a retired Special Forces Protection Dog who suffered a spinal injury in the course of his work and who also required surgery to remove over a hundred stones from his bladder. He is now happily rehomed.



Zara

Zara, who served in the South Wales Police, already had a forever home but her new family was unable to cope with her behaviour and contacted Hero Paws for support. Happily, with re-training and support, Zara is now happy and well behaved.



Remo

Initially, Remo, a Scottish Fire Arms Support dog who had been injured in the line of duty and had to retire early, was adopted by his handler. However, the handler was still working and Remo was not coping well. Hero Paws found him a new, more suitable home, where he has now settled in.



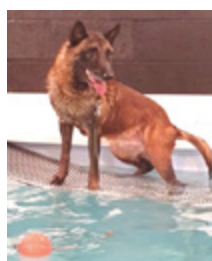
Bosco

Bosco, a retired British Army Search Dog, in need of surgery, was adopted by a veteran with PTSD who was struggling to cope. Hero Paws arranged medical care for Bosco and support for his new guardian and both are now doing well.



Anne

A former Search Dog, Anne suffered from renal kidney failure and her family needed support with raw food and supplements to help keep her happy and healthy. Hero Paws was able to ensure that Anne can look forward to a stable and secure retirement.



Amigo

Amigo, who had served in the Royal Air Force Police division could not settle in his new home. The RAF had no facility for taking him back and there wasn't a civilian rescue centre with suitable experience and facilities. Hero Paws took on Amigo, first arranging foster care and then finding a new forever home. He needed a great deal of decompression and retraining but is now doing very well.



How can you help? Please visit the Hero Paws website and make a donation to help with day-to-day expenses or perhaps to assist with the building of their planned retreat. There is also an excellent shop. Finally, maybe you would share Hero Paws on your social media. Thank you.

<https://heropaws.org.uk>

IN MEMORIAM

The following few pages are devoted to some extremely moving and deeply personal remembrances for much-missed, much-loved canine family members. They vary in length (some short, some long) and content (some factual, some full of stories and reminiscences), but they all contain a common element: they have been written from the heart. We will be dedicating a tree for all the dogs mentioned here, and for any other Honey's fed dog who has died, in the Honey's Wood. If you have lost a dog (even if it is some time ago) and would like him or her mentioned in the next newsletter, please email me direct. I will also arrange a tree dedication. Finally, if you are bereaved at the moment please accept my own heartfelt condolences.

Jonathan

Jonathan (Self)
js@jonathanself.com



Bracken Barrie
2009-2023

Piccolo Barrie
2005-2023

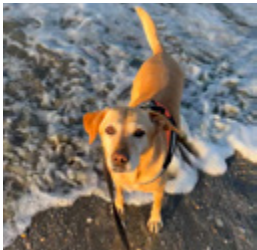
In memory of Bracken and Piccolo who were my beloved companions for nearly 16 years and left me in 2023. They were full of love and naughtiness and I miss them every day. Sleep tight my beautiful boys, you will never be forgotten.



Archie Atkin
2010-2023

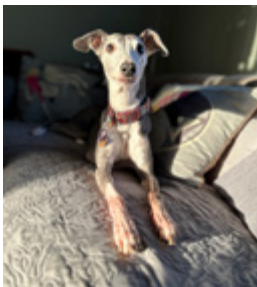
Archie was my first ever dog. I know everyone says this about their dog but he really did have a lovely temperament. He was never really interested in playing with other dogs. He just loved being with his favourite humans. He was spoilt rotten from the moment I got him and had a really happy life. I even took him on holiday with me for a month in France six months before he

died. He loved chasing pheasants, burying sticks, belly rubs and begging for food at the table. He grew old and smelly but I still loved him just as much. There is now a huge void in my life where he used to be and I miss him terribly and think that I always will.



Bailey Tumbridge
2013-2024

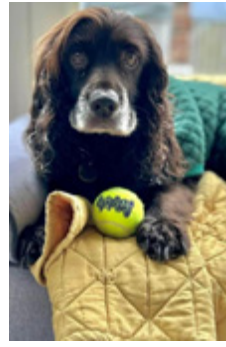
Bailey - my soulmate, my best friend, my greatest love



Daisy Palfrey
2012-2024

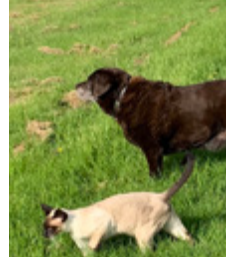
On the 5th March we lost our rescue girl sadly to cluster seizures. Very sudden and unexpected. She was eleven and a half. Daisy came to me as a foster and within a fortnight had won me over and I adopted her. She was the most intelligent, vocal and funny whippet I had ever had – we suspected her to have a little bit of Iggy in her. The

most perfectly behaved little dog you could wish for when taken to cafes, on holiday and she was even our bridesmaid and came on honeymoon with us too. A different girl to when she was at home with the other dogs where she was bossy and argumentative if allowed. She was full of life and her entertaining attitude won us over every time.



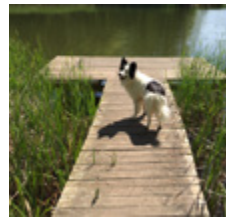
Poppy Palfrey
2009-2024

Poppy was my angel from day one of bringing her home at eight weeks old. A joy to train and live with, she taught me about owning a proper dog. Eager to learn and please and forever faithful and loving. I trained Poppy to the whistle and hand signals and took her beating and a little picking up on a small shoot ran by a friend. She was fourteen and a half when she crossed rainbow bridge. I cherish everyday she was with me. Sleep tight my angel.



Dora Wagstaff
2008-2024

Dear wonderful Dora was put to sleep on January 13th, just a few weeks shy of her sixteenth birthday. She is in our garden buried with her teddy given to her by her Mum when she left home all those years ago (and never once chewed, but always cuddled). She is, I hope, now enjoying a very long chin rest.



Gem Eardley
2013-2024

He was born on 14.06.2013 and died on 07.03.2024. 10 years, 8 months and 22 days. He spent his last morning in the sunshine with those who love him.

The words are from a song by The Kinks. Thank you for the days.

Those endless days, those sacred days you gave me

I won't forget a single day, believe me I bless the light

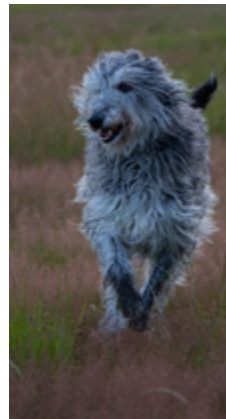
I bless the light that lights on you, believe me And though you're gone

You're with me every single day believe me.



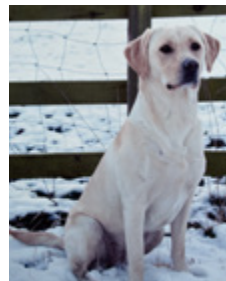
Gertie Perkins
2014-2023

Gertie was a our lovely sweet gentle girl who left us too soon just before Christmas. Rest in peace little one, we think of you every day, and you are forever in our hearts.



Ginny Darling
2013-2023

Ginny wasn't with us long enough. We adopted her eighteen months ago after her previous family couldn't look after her. She accepted us and her new brothers and sisters immediately and settled in as a big part of the Darling family. Like all Deerhounds, she was loving and stubborn, caring and awkward with a really big personality. She loved her walks with the gang and playing in the fields with them. Ginny had her special places in our home, where she slept after food and walks and she will always have a presence there, Ginny and her memories will live on forever our hearts.



Hettie Myers
2010-2023

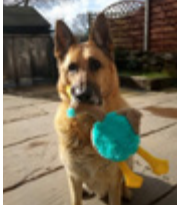
Hettie was a big part of our family for thirteen and a half years – we are all very upset and finding it very hard to get used to not having her around. She gave us all so much pleasure over her lifetime, whether it was going shooting, playing in the garden, walks in the countryside or just enjoying having her there to talk to and love.



Ira Hollies
2010-2023

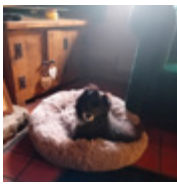
Ira was rescued from a life of baiting at seventeen months old. She showed the true beautiful nature of a pitbull type dog. A true soulmate to her owners and everyone who met her loved her. At thirteen and a half years old cancer struck and she had to pass. She really is perfect in every way: loving, protective,

calm and obedient. Until we meet again Ira, keep sharing your calming loving energy as always.



Jack Varley
2011-2023

My wonderful boy Jack, I miss you so much, I will always love you and never forget you, fly high sweetheart



Zak Varley
2010-2023

Zak you are Mummy's special little boy, troubled all your life but we got there in the end, my little iron man. Love you forever my beautiful Zak xx. I'd do anything to have you and Jack back with me.



Jak Wakeford
2008-2024

Jak came to us at seven from family who could no longer look after him. He lit up our lives and was the best big brother to our daughter. He was born in Austria, living half the year in a ski resort and the other half in Ibiza/England. While Wiltshire was not quite as showbiz, he loved the freedom the countryside gave him. He turned heads wherever he

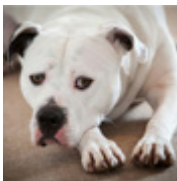
went with his dark eyes and cheeky face. Going on the Honey's diet turned him back into a puppy again and until his final few days he never seemed his fifteen years. Our best boy ever.



Lulu Moore
2016-2024

Lulu joined our family as a rescue at six months old. Very quickly her sassy playful attitude appeared. Lulu loved attention from everyone, and she loved to play. If you were willing to throw a ball continuously she would be your best friend. She loved sitting on laps for cuddles and liked to be where everyone was. Lulu would even sleep with one eye open (literally) to make sure she didn't miss out on any fun. She loved her boxer brother Bailey and they would often snuggle together on the sofa.

Lulu was a lively character who brought so much joy to our family and we will cherish all the happy memories we had with her. You will be forever loved, Lulu!



Maximus Sofianou
2009-2024

'A good dog never dies. He always stays. He walks beside you on crisp autumn days when frost is on the fields and winter's drawing near. His head within our hand in his old way.' *Mary Carolyn Davies*

We are devastated to announce the death of our beloved Max, our gentle giant who was loved by so many. At fourteen and a half years old, it was his time. He was ready, but we weren't. We are heartbroken.

The importance of Max in our lives cannot be emphasised enough; he made Andrew and I a family before we were blessed with our son Ethan. There's been no greater privilege than to be loved by him, and he will be greatly missed by us, our family members, and friends.

Goodnight, our gorgeous boy.



Monte Carlo Jackson
2013-2023

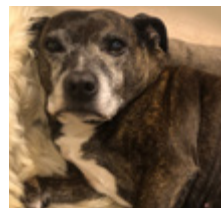
This is my beautiful Monte Carlo who I had to sadly say goodbye to on 4th October. He was ten years and nine months. Four years ago, I heard he only had between four and six months to live because he had mast cell tumours, one in his chest and one on his side. These were both removed and thankfully he recovered. Then in lockdown he injured his carpal hyperextension and had a plate and screws and his leg in plaster for 8 weeks. So, he had been through the mill. He was such a good dog through all of this even though he must have been in pain. Thankfully, he recovered well and we were given a few more years with him. But sadly the last few months of his life he suffered from Arthritis and in the end he told us it was time to go. So run free my beautiful boy. There will never be another Monte Carlo. Thank you for all the love you gave. I will miss you forever x



Oscar Rook (Shining Beau)
2010-2024

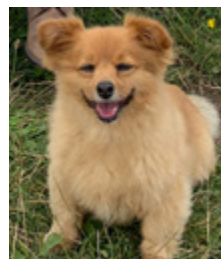
We are broken hearted that we had to say goodbye to our 'silver shadow' Oscar. Our blue eyed, long legged Weimaraner came into our lives 14 years ago and has been a loyal member of our family ever since. Together we have ran and walked thousands of miles in all weathers keeping us all physically and mentally

fit. Oscar started conversations and led to making friends for life that we would not have met if it hadn't been for him. From representing England at Cani cross, attending Crufts, pulling us to park runs pbs, winning best male dog at the local village shows to always being there for us all at the end of a long day. There was Christmas 'ham gate', balls and water bottles that were never reunited with their actual owners, wildlife a plenty for a fit gun dog, bins to upturn and having to deal with the aftermath on the odd occasion where he didn't much like his own company! In the last two years he happily shared his home, beds and toys and our time while we socialised hearing dog puppies. They have all benefited from his wise presence and good nature. He was loved by all who knew him. Oscar - our lives were better for having you in it. May you have an endless supply of water bottles, open fields in which to run and bags of your favourite treats. You will always be missed, forever in our hearts.



Pia Mackie
2011-2024

A treasured friend who made me laugh every day for eight and a half years. Dearly loved and missed by so many. An angel on claws!



Pippa Peebles
2012-2023

Pippa was a very special little girl who came to us when we were minding her for a friend who was a nurse who subsequently died. So Pippa became ours or rather we became hers. She was a joy to everyone, a very sociable girl who loved to visit our friends, she became important to quite a few people because of her friendly nature. We think that she was a mix between a Welsh corgi and a Pomeranian and had the most glamorous camel hair coat. Any visits to our house were met with a warm welcome from Pippa. When my husband Ken died Pippa was everything to me, so when she died a big part of me died with her, but I am so grateful for the comfort Pippa gave me and for the good times that we had together. I met lots of lovely people who would stop me when taking Pippa for walks.



**Apollo (Polly) Mair
2012-2023**

Our lovely golden marmalade cat, Polly, died suddenly on the Solstice 2023. He came to us in 2014 when Richard found him on the Cats Protection website and went to see him. Polly was at the door of his cage as if waiting for him. He moved towards Richard's hand and when Richard put his head in the cage he bit him very gently on the nose. Polly had chosen him. On the first day when we let him out, after two weeks acclimatisation indoors, he trotted down the garden, returned, climbed onto the

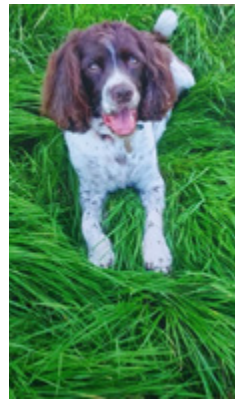
top of the roof of the house, via a fence and the slope of extension, then when he eventually came down, disappeared for two hours. He came back! He has been the most loving, kind and gentle cat, becoming very attached to us, so much so that we didn't feel comfortable going away until we found a good cat sitter – we worried even then. We had a few health upsets with him over the years, including a very nasty bite which wasn't discovered by the vets or us for some time and so he had some weeks limping painfully but never complaining. Once treated, this healed well and his graceful lithe movement returned, and he continued to climb trees and demonstrate his skill in catching things. He was always waiting at the top of the drive when we'd been out and greeted us with delight. As he grew older, he stayed even closer to us, perhaps because he had developed a heart murmur, though he didn't let this stop him enjoying the garden and playing with feet in thick socks! He also loved his (organic!) catnip mouse. He liked to be out there with us when we were gardening and would keep an eye on what we were doing. He loved lying on any materials spread to keep the soil warm, or under clothes, squashing plants. He often led us towards the catmint patch and waited till we rubbed his face vigorously with it. He liked to lie in Richard's arms, completely relaxed, looking up at his face. On his last day he went out not long after having his tea. We'll never know if he had a heart attack, or whether there was some other cause. He looked peaceful when we found him and his body was still warm, so we hope very much that his end was peaceful and swift. He gave us nine years of love, gentleness and kindness and when either of us was sad, he seemed to know and to offer comfort. Now, we often seem to hear his particular trill of greeting or catch the whisk of his tail out of the corner of an eye. He has taught us both so much, including an example of the ability to be still and content, and we are still learning from this, maybe even more now. We still feel his presence and he will always be in our hearts. As Spig Turner's person said in your last newsletter, we're learning through our grief for him, to be with sadness and that this is alright. And 'love is just love.'



**Skye Simpkins
2010-2023**

Skye was born in 2010 to a mix of show and working dog parents which proved to be a good combination. She was a clever, energetic, fast and quick learning dog. She had a fulfilled life enjoying great walks and visiting many places around the UK with the favourites being anywhere close to water as

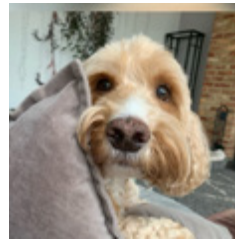
a keen swimmer. She especially liked the beaches of Cornwall. In later life she was diagnosed with heart disease which slowed her a little but she was still capable of a change of gear when needed. She enjoyed dignity and was bright and alert to the end.



**Splash Chapman
2013-2023**

In the words of our vet, who keeps springers herself, when he was two years old: 'He is impossibly handsome and the most intelligent, stubborn, strong-willed, most bloody-minded dog I have every met!' My sentiments exactly! *Nigel Chapman*

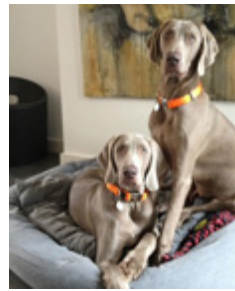
Our lovely Splash. Loyal, intelligent, clever and very naughty. Loved to explore and constantly roaming but always returning after much searching. Will always be missed and loved forever. *The Chapman Family*



**Wilf Brander
2012-2023**

We lost our Wilf on the 19th of November 2023. He fought a hard battle against aggressive lymphoma. He was as mad as a box of frogs. Loved to eat tennis balls, go for walks and roll in any kind of poo – he wasn't fussy! He wasn't just a dog. He was one of us. An absolute gem and we will miss him terribly.

RIP our lovely boy. You were the best.



Zephyr and Jack Buffone

Dear Daddies Frank and Dan,

We were just pups when we first met, we loved you from the start, you picked us up and took us home. We were a little scared at first, but being with you both, and holding us in your arms on the journey home made us feel very safe.

We remember the first night, you took us into your bedroom as we were too scared to be alone in the dark, we were so relieved and happy that we were with our dads sleeping in the bedroom. You placed us in your heart and that made us the happiest puppies on the planet, and we felt that. We were definitely the masters of stealing food, huh!, and we loved that you always kept a few things for us between meals.

Lots of great times together we had, but the years pass and our time has come to go. We know how much you both hurt and miss us now that we are gone, you always did the best for us and put us first, and even though your heart is now broken, you did rightfully send our spirits free.

So it's our time now to leave, we knew this time was coming, and we need you to be strong for us, we don't want you to be hurting and sad, but to remember the great times we had together, you need to now let us free. We love you forever, and we will be waiting for you both at the door when you come to the Heavens.

Love you forever, your boys,
Zephyr and Jack



**Bodhi Deery
2013-2023**

Bodhi was with us for a magical eleven years, he had a personality to match his size and was the most loving and devoted boy that we could have ever hoped to have in our lives and is very sorely missed. He definitely left some very large paw prints on our lives and will never be forgotten x



Bracken Raby
2010-2024

Bracken was a stud dog for the first few years of his life but just a few days after his fourth birthday I was lucky enough to rehome him. When my sister and I went to meet him for the first time he came over and jumped up to plant a big kiss on my face. Apparently, that was

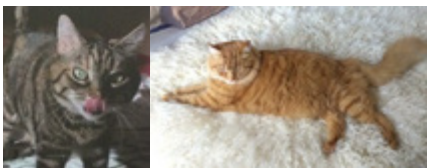
very unusual for him and from that moment I knew we were meant to be together. He was very timid at first as he wasn't used to the different sounds of life indoors or when out and about but with patience he soon settled in. He came to the office with me every day. He was as happy greeting clients as he was chasing a ball along the beach or retrieving it from the sea. Swimming was his favourite adventure. Bracken, also known as Bracky, Brax, The Braxter, Ken, Legend, he will be missed forever.



Daisy Scott
2009-2023

My Daisy
16.5.2009 - 29.12.2023

We have a secret, you and I
that no one else shall know,
for who but I can see you lie
each night in fire glow?
And who but I can reach my hand
before we go to bed
and feel the living warmth of you
and touch your silken head?
And only I walk woodland paths
and see ahead of me,
your small form racing with the wind
so young again, and free.
And only I can see you swim
in every brook I pass
and when I call, no one but I
can see the bending grass.
– Author Unknown



Dollie Ranauta-Crabtree
2006-2020

**Pawpawlando
Ranauta-Crabtree**
2012-2023

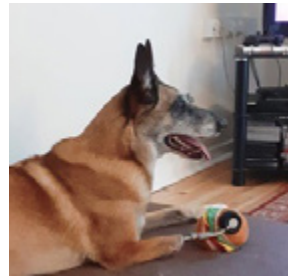
I'm heart broken, I miss him so much, I'm crying as I write this – at times I feel I can still hear him calling me to let him in at night through my bedroom window, where I've placed a ramp for him to climb in and out. He was my orange happiness – I just had to look at him and felt the warm glow of sun melting away all the BS of the day! Dollies and Ppl were my real family and they've left huge holes in my life!



Evie Elliott Lansbury
2014-2024

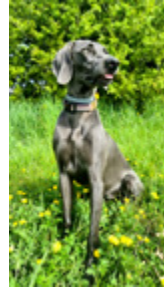
Evie-dog (aka pig) really was the most special girl; truly one in a million. She was a beautiful soul and we all miss her so very much. After her amputation last year I was utterly blown away by the courage, resilience and never ending

love she showed. She has taught me so much. Not all heroes wear capes!
Run free sweet girl. Xx



Fenra Doran
2009-2023

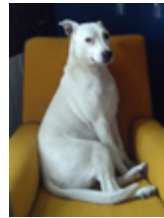
I spent fourteen wonderful years with our Fenra, a working line Malinois. Even though the first two years were spent struggling with an unruly teenager and the last three battling with cancer, if I could rewind the clock anywhere in those fourteen years, I would, without a second thought.



Indigo James
2020-2022

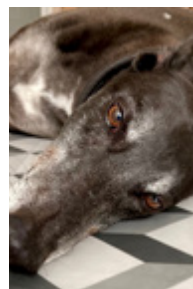
Here is our Indi, the cheekiest, sweetest, biggest lover of kisses and snuggles. We knew she was ours from the first photo we saw of her at six weeks old. Born with a heart condition that we knew would be life limiting, we were determined to make every moment count with her. She brought us so much joy, truly the light of our lives. So very deeply missed, not a day goes by where we don't think of her, and we know

she will be waiting at the rainbow Bridge when our time comes to be reunited. We love you Indi Mindi.



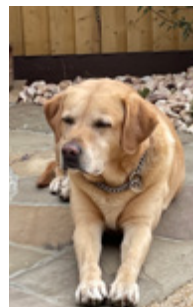
Jake Hinde
2016-2024

Jake a.k.a Pooky, Jackeroonie, Puppy, Smackers, Silk-head, Jackie, Sausage-head. Jake the dog died 14th January 2024. He came into our lives in 2017 when we found him at All Dogs Matter, a wonderful dog rescue charity in North London. He was a large gentle soul, a mix of Staffordshire terrier, Labrador, pit bull and German Shepherd. Such a hugely loyal and reassuring presence, he loved cuddles, lying in the sun and under the duvet, swimming and eating nasty things off the pavement. He hated foxes, loud banging noises and the smell of oranges. He loved his Honeys mixed up with Scotch Broth grain mix. Jake would always come and sit beside (or on) anyone sad or sick, and was endlessly patient with children and toddlers, bearing all kinds of hats, scrunchies, sunglasses without seeming bothered at all. He is much missed by all who got to know him in Crystal Palace, Bristol and Moray where he would enjoy many strokes and kisses from strangers. He is hugely missed by Laura, Cosmo and Rowan (aged 4) and his wider family, remembered for the way he touched our souls deeper than we ever knew possible.



Joe Pyke
2012-2024

Joe was a large greyhound, a retired racer who came to us at age three anxious and withdrawn but who soon blossomed into the sweet, goofy, and gentle soul we remember him as. He was well loved by all who got to know him and is greatly missed. He had a wonderful life here with us and we are so grateful he was part of our family for eight and a half years.



Kite Courteney
2010-2024

Kite was our fourth Labrador and we, long ago, had made a decision that he was going to be our last. Each of our dogs have been special in many ways but, having decided that we did not want another big dog, this made Kite even more special. He was soft and gentle. He loved everybody. He was patient. And he especially loved young dogs – he was great at teaching doggy etiquette. He was handsome. It is testament to how much he was

loved by people we met on our walks, that even two months on there are tears for him. In 2021, when we were still being constrained by the covid pandemic, we lost Kite's big brother Buzz and our cairn, Bridie. It was a sad time for us, but especially for Kite. He was lonely. So, we decided to get him a puppy. It had been a long while since we had a young one in our lives. Times had changed. We spent a lot of time researching

dog breeds (yes we ending up with a Cocker/Poodle/something!) and introduced him to Merlin. They became inseparable. Right up to the end he would not let us go out for a walk without him. By the last month or two, his arthritis was giving him a lot of pain and he was slowly getting signs of dementia. Our joy is that Kite had just over two more years, and one more puppy (Monty), of a happy fulfilled life. He has left us with two young dogs who are a testament to his teaching ways. He is now at peace and back with his beloved Buzz and Bridie.



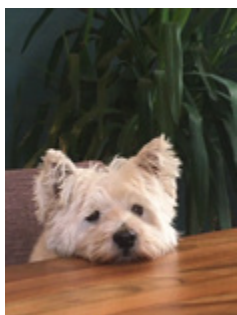
Loli Butler
2011-2023

Tippi Butler
2015-2024

Dad always longed for an Irish setter and in his 89th year he got his wish. Whilst recovering from illness and being looked after by his family this very special bundle of love became a very special member of the family. I remember picking Loli up and I couldn't believe how beautiful she was, she kissed my cheek and touched my heart immediately. She was our first dog for over twenty years. It was such a thrill and there were certainly a few tears of joy that day when Loli joined the household. A year later Loli was a very welcome guest at Dad's funeral and put many smiles on faces. Loli's gentle, loving and playful personality helped us all through a period of sadness.

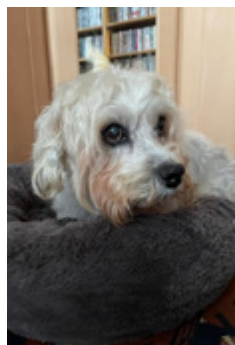
When Loli turned three a little sister came on the scene: enter Tippi. From the same breeder, I had a choice of two, I chose the other initially then I saw a look, a cheeky sideways glance and I just knew she was the one. So loved from day one, by her human family anyway, but not by Loli. Loli stayed upstairs for two weeks, dodging the puppy that was longing to play with big sis. The inevitable came when Loli chanced it. I have the most wonderful videos of that moment when Loli became mentor to an excited and confident but respectful Tippi. They became firm pals and never spent a day or night apart. They were a beloved pair and made many friends, turning heads, Loli for her glamorous, flowing locks and Tippi for frisbee catching prowess and athleticism, truly awesome both, one for show one for go.

Loli had Cushing's coped well for four years but sadly passed due to complications. Extra cuddles were given to Tippi which helped her and us. Tippi became big sis to Evie (another Irish). Tippi loved her mini me from the get-go. I'm so pleased Evie had Tippi, if only for five months. Tippi had a liver shunt. We are happy in our hearts knowing she had eight and half years of happy experiences, wonderful diet (thank you Honeys) and only a week of illness. It was very sudden, from chasing across hills, usual tinker to poorly and coma. Our little Evie, who is eight months is enjoying the company of her 3 puss cats, she has special puppy friends to play with. Let's see what fate has in store but another sister maybe forthcoming in the Winter. God Bless Loli and Tippi and thank you for sharing your precious lives with ours, you've made it all the more richer. Special memories. Be seeing you. XX



Lottie Holland
2010-2023

Lottie was a very characterful dog. She would smile when you came in, her nose wrinkling so much she would then start sneezing. She would also let out a loud howl, too. We had another Westie Puppy who brought her up and taught her how to use the dog flap. She would roll her down the hill in our garden with her nose. Pippy would sound the squirrel alarm and they would both dart out of the flap and up the garden. They got on really well and would play tag with the decking being 'safe'. Her favourite thing to do was sunbathe. She had several favourite places to sit. Our favourite photo of her is sitting at the top of our steps with full view of any squirrel action. She managed fourteen years and three months. Sad times for now.



Maisie Noble
2008-2023

It has taken me a few months to have the emotional strength to write this. Darling Maisie, the matriarch of our furry family, my little shadow and constant companion, the kindest and most gentle soul; the dog who taught me so much about life so others can now benefit from this knowledge. My Maisie, whose journey through her 15 and a half years was one of incredible kindness, loyalty and unconditional love. I miss you little girl, I have

dreamt of you...

We suddenly saw you in a crowd and you came up to us. You did not want to be picked up or touched, but you walked with us, steadily looking up with your beautiful dark eyes, showing so much affection and warmth. We walked and walked, there was a feeling of happiness and wholeness when suddenly you began to run. I called your name, you did not look back. You ran up the wall of a house, looked back, full of contentment and then you turned into a beautiful white statue at the side of the wall. We walked away, so terribly sad that you could not stay but in the knowledge that you would always be with us and visit us in different guises. We felt heavy and light at the same time.

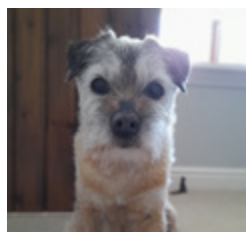
And then I woke up – heartbroken, though understanding that you would always be here, with me, and for that, I shall be forever grateful. It has been a privilege to call you my Dandie girl.

Maisie 21st April 2008 – 24th October 2023. Gone from our sight, but never our memories. Gone from our touch, but never our hearts.



Mariantha Highton
2009-2023

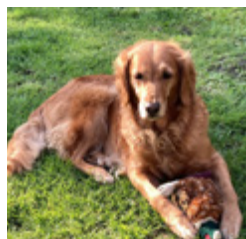
She was a blessing every single day of her fourteen years and she was my best friend in the world. I loved her for all of her life and I will carry her in my heart for the rest of mine.



Mikki Talma
2007-2024

My darling Mikki. How does anyone explain the love you feel for your dog. My life changed the moment we met. It was like we knew each other 'soul deep'. We had amazing times together. Every day for me, Mikki had a part to play. She was the sweetest girl always. She loved playing with her ball.

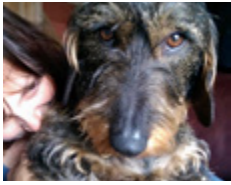
I would often hide her ball in her blanket. When she found it, she would put the blanket back over to carry the game on! She was always there to make me feel better after a stressful day in work. I think we saw our roles as looking after each other no matter what. She helped me be a better person, truly. I learnt so much from her. My darling girl reached the grand age of sixteen years and nine months. She was the very breath of me and I know she will always be a part of me. I have my wonderful memories and know if I just close my eyes, she is with me, always.



Minx Pearce
2015-2023

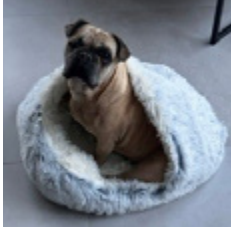
Minx was born in a litter of thirteen in the spring of 2015 to Ember and Bailey our pet and working Golden Retrievers. Both she and her litter brother Mason were chosen to stay and join the team and family. She had an especially playful character when training but was so quick to learn and a real credit and

greatly admired wherever she went. She enjoyed visiting pubs and cafes and was a pleasure to take on a shoot day or a walk in woodlands being her favourite. She was still hunting for dummies until two days before she was taken by canine lymphoma. I feel blessed to have been holding her lovingly on her first and her last day.



Murphy Ellery
2011-2024

Murphy was a standard wire-haired dachshund with a big personality. His favourite activity was simultaneous running and barking! He was much loved by his family and is greatly missed.



Ollie Whiting
2012-2024

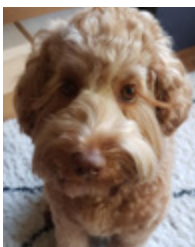
Ollie was a French Bulldog who had many allergies and health issues over his lifespan sadly. He was a lovable, gentle boy and was adored by his older brother, Stanley, from another litter who we lost last March, plus his new friends Mia and Lola. He was funny, affectionate and full of life and loved nothing better than his Honey's food or any crumbs left on the kitchen floor! Bath times were always enjoyed and he'd sit in the bubbles for ages lol! He had a real adventure after we lost Stanley last March and has been spoiled with holidays to Centre Parcs, a Christmas at the beach plus joining us at work meeting lots of people and being fussed over by all. He has left a huge hole in our family and the house is so much quieter without his snoring and licking off the floor but, overall, he was a quiet Frenchie who seldom ever barked but his death has left the house very quiet and still and we now need to vacuum more! RIP our lovely boy xx



Oscar Barr
2010-2024

We lost our gorgeous boy Oscar in December just one month short of his fourteenth birthday and we all miss him terribly. He had a wonderful character so gentle with children

and the elderly. He loved his walks and especially holidays in Devon where ran across the moors and went swimming in the rivers. Oscar was always great company and loved to be surrounded by people his head resting on a lap for a cuddle. Oscar would love having a tree planted in his name and if it happened to be near water even better as he loved to swim and then have snooze in the shade.



Poppy Cullen
2021-2023

Our Poppy Bear is gone.

Still so raw, our hearts are filled with love and gratitude for the time and love she shared with us.

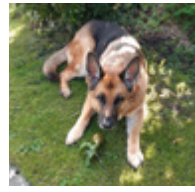
So loved. So missed.



Poppy Lipyeat
2007-2022

I'd just returned from walking our Staff Toby and was shaking his blanket outside the front door. I heard a little bark and didn't even look up as I thought it was my neighbour's dog who I often walk. When I went inside this little dog was sitting on my husband's knee!! She didn't have a collar. We live close to a park and I just thought she had got lost. After walking her around we didn't find her family. The dog wardens came, found she was

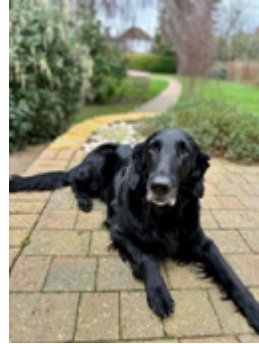
chipped, and said they would take her to the kennels while they traced the owner. Her name was Poppy, she was seven years old and she came from Fleet!! I didn't let them take her and told them to come back when you find them. They got no response from, they never came back and we had eight wonderful years with Poppy.



Ruby Wilkin
2010-2023

Ruby gave us thirteen years of joy, and our home feels entirely empty without her huge presence. We miss her humour, her chat (shepherds are so vocal), her intelligence, her personality and being so intuitive to how we were feeling. Oh, and steal-

ing pears from the pear tree. Thank you for taking care of us too, Ruby my dear, dear friend. Our only consolation is that you'll no longer be in pain. Goodnight, my friend, wait for us on the other side.



Ruby Young
2013-2024

Ruby, one of our Flatcoated Retrievers went on her final adventure on the sixth of February. She was the very best of dogs, gentle, kind, honest, willing and tenacious. She kept our other dogs in line quietly but firmly and they will, for a while, be quite lost without her. We first met when Ruby was just four weeks old and from the time she joined us at eight weeks of age Ruby was fed on Honey's. We never thought it was

possible to love a dog as much as we loved Jasper, our existing flatcoat and yet we met Ruby and immediately fell in love. Despite being the tiniest puppy, she somehow always looked and acted like royalty – demanding adoration from us at all times through the form of back scratches, belly rubs, and being brushed from head to toe – her second favourite thing (her first being food!). Even as a puppy Ruby felt she deserved the biggest bed, the best bone, the comfiest sofa spot and - once - an entire birthday cake all to herself. Happily, Jasper our existing flatcoat, was content to acquiesce and take the little puppy bed. Alongside her stately and often serious exterior, in true Flatcoat style, she had a goofy side and as a family we have the most ridiculous and adorable memories - such as how she would never pass up an opportunity to carry my car keys, how she loved to forage for wild berries, the way she always cleaned Merlin's ears before dinner and how she taught Sakura to play 'Bitey Face' and each and every time she violently head-butted one of us in the face with pure affection. Although she was our second flatcoat, I learnt so much with Ruby and had so many 'firsts' with her; my first working gundog tests, my first proper working gundog. I'm delighted that her name is with mine on a FCRS Novice Dog Novice Handler trophy. She also achieved her KC Good Citizens Puppy, Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards and had a brief foray into the world of agility, handled by our daughter. Ruby made double digits in March 2023 (a great age for an flatcoat) and had a wonderful 11th year Even at the grand old age of 10 she was out picking up on the shoot with us in December. However, in February she went downhill very quickly. We'd feared the worst and sadly our fears were confirmed. On her last morning our lovely vet came to us so that she's could be safe at home with us when she went on her final journey. She had a peaceful day with us the day before, had as many treats as she wanted and in the evening shared her birthday cake with Merlin and Sakura, albeit a month early. We have been blessed to have her by our sides for nearly eleven years and are bereft without her. So, know that you were loved, Ruby Tuesday, and go into the light. Jasper will be delighted to welcome you at the other side of the bridge. Ruby (Boriesile Arabella Allen for Larksburn) 4/3/2013 - 6/2/2024. Until we meet again.

Progress report: Honey's Wood

When we purchased a little over three acres of pastureland in Dorset two years ago so that we could plant our own memorial wood with a tree for every deceased Honey's-fed dog, we had no idea how complicated the whole process would be! First, there were delays at the Land Registry and then we had to commission an archaeologist's report to confirm we wouldn't be planting on medieval drainage ditches and then we had to employ a forester to advise us on the planting plan and then... but you get the picture. No actual planting date yet but once the wood has been established Honey's customers will be welcome to visit and to bury/scatter ashes. It's a very pretty bit of land, by the way, with a lovely little river running through it.



Rudi Burnard
2013-2024

Rudi (Ru) was with me from eight weeks old and was my loyal companion for ten and a half years. He was such a good-natured dog, seen by everyone who knew him as as a sweet natured boy who never reacted negatively to anyone or any other dog. If he encountered an overly bouncy, reactive or barking dog he would just give a glance that seemed to say: 'What is your problem? Just relax!' I used to call him my 'hippy dog' – all peace and love! A true pacifist. Other people have described him as kind, intel-

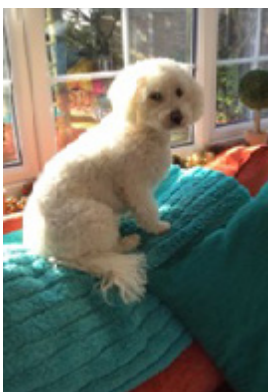
ligent, a rascal, fun loving. To me he was all those things and more. He was affectionate, and would curl up for a nap as close to me as he could get. He acknowledged the arrival of family and friends with his wonderful whole body waggiest greeting. He loved to play ball, but only in the garden- believing that a walk was just that, a walk and time for a sniff and meet his buddies. Ru - my beautiful boy. No words can truly express what you meant to me and how much I miss you, but I'm grateful for the joy you brought to me through those years. Taken too soon, too suddenly.



Sam White
2011-2023

Yes, there is still a very empty place where Sam used to be, especially when Minnie (my little 10-year-old whippet) and I walk in woods and fields where he used to run free – racing towards us with the widest grin on his face from pure joy. I was

so very lucky that a lovely lady thought of me when Sam was rescued at six months, deemed a complete failure because he was scared of the mechanism that drove the hare in racing. He had virtually no spacial awareness a pup; when he tried to put on his brakes he would end up bumping into people and fixed objects on a regular basis! But he grew up to be a handsome soul mate – always at my side through good and bad times, and always there to offer gentleness, love and devotion. At twelve years of age, he bore his health problems with courage and forbearance until the time came to say goodbye. I miss him terribly every day and thank that lovely lady who chose me to share his life for eleven and a half years. It was she, incidentally, who introduced me to raw feeding and Sam's love affair with Honey's food began!



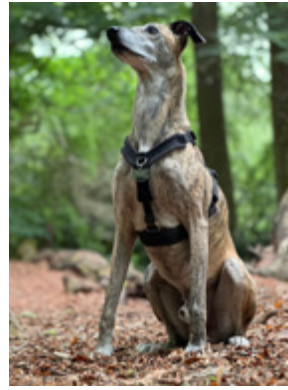
Scooter Fowler
2012-2023

This is a photo of Scooter Fowler in his favourite position, basking in the sunshine and keeping a close eye on the neighbours. After his rescue on the streets of Cardiff we had a lovely life together. He got his own way in everything, and that was as it should be. He died just before Christmas 2023, the house was horrible without him and luckily for me I found his successor just three days later at the Dogs Trust. Casper is so like him he could be his double.



Sidney Higgs
2010-2024

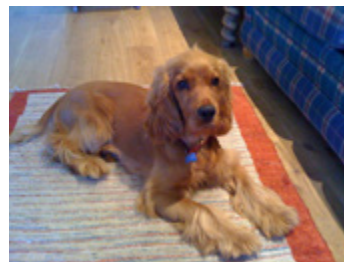
Here is Sid in his prime. Handsome but very dim. Absolutely obsessed by food – very well fed on Honey's raw food but would climb into the dishwasher to lick a plate and could never be let off the lead within a mile of a picnic. Such a character – much loved and much missed.



Tigger Cockrean
2013-2023

Tigger was my post cancer dog. I wanted to walk every day, come rain or Shine and change my lifestyle to focus more on wellness and less on work. I rescued him, as a seven month old puppy, from a working life he wasn't suited to and an abusive home environment. Little did I know then, how much he would positively impact, not only me and my family, but so many of our friends and acquaintances. He attracted attention wherever we went right up until a week

or so before he died. Not just because he was a supremely handsome, orange and black brindle lurcher, but because he simply exuded a calm, gentle energy that attracted people to him like a magnet. Complete strangers would place their hands on him and tell me how peaceful he made them feel and what a special dog I had. He seemed to know when people were struggling and would quietly sit or lie down beside them, resting his head in their lap. Of course, he had his playful and mischievous side and made us laugh every single day with his antics. He loved his walks, ran like the wind and had a ferocious appetite for Honey's Real Dog Food. He loved his PJs with the sheep on and Crusty Squirrel, his favourite toy. For ten wonderful years Tigger walked by my side, helping me to heal and keeping me well, bringing light and love to every day we spent together. My constant, devoted companion until the day he died, just a few days after it was discovered he had a very aggressive form of lymphoma. So many wonderful touching tributes followed his death. One friend told me recently that when she felt very nervous about giving an important presentation at work last month, she calmed herself by imagining Tigger standing at her side. Rest in peace, my beautiful boy. Know that you brought joy to so many while you were here, that we miss you every day and that you will never be forgotten.



Fudge Ewing
2010-2024

My name is Fudge.
I lived until I was almost 14.
I was a good boy.
A sweet boy.
A handsome boy.
My Mama's best boy.
She thought she was going to be okay when I was gone
But I knew she wouldn't be.
She cries and she sobs when she's on her own
And I can see her heart breaking every day at our parting.
Yet she tells me to run free and be happy.
I am now with Granny, Grandpa and Uncle Roy.
I am a good boy.
A sweet boy.
A happy boy, running free.
I am - and always will be - Mama's best boy.

We will meet again in a place where the sea meets the sky. Edelweiss until then...
All our love and kisses,
Faby & Anjali

Honey's Dogs

One of the best parts of being, as it were, in dog food, is that one has an excuse to look at dog photos and count it as work. We can't see enough dog photos! We oooh! and ahhh! and pass them around amongst ourselves. Here is just a sample of dogs we have been admiring since the last issue of *The Alternative Dog*. If you send your photos to Jonathan, he makes a note to include some free treats in with your next order. If he forgets then please remind him! jonathan@honeysrealdogfood.com. Finally, many of the pictures that follow are of new Honey's customers. A very warm welcome to you and your human companions and thank you for choosing Honey's.



Alfie Hodges



Billy, Ruby and Daisy Petchey



Clova McRuvie



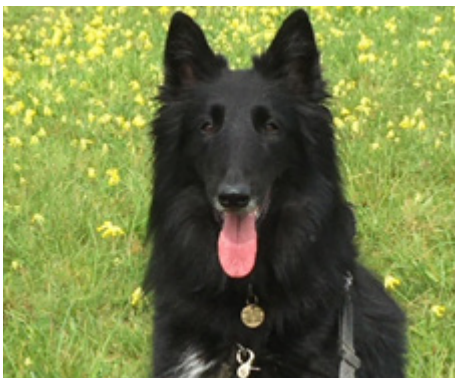
Amba and Crocky Firbank



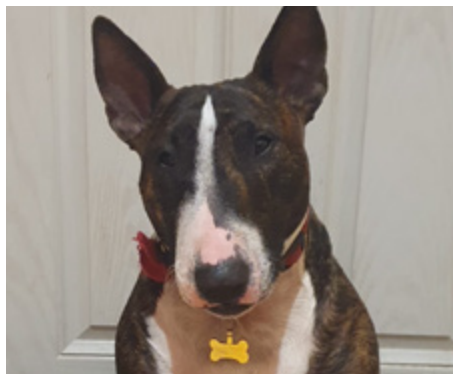
Biscuit and Kevin Burch



Daisy Hill



Asha Scott



Boo Tanin



Dora Wallace



Belle Lester



Bramble Whittington



Ernest Cunningham



Benson and George Collins



China Scott



Fig Mitchell



Gus McKnight (in blue)



Kash Enderlee and Friend



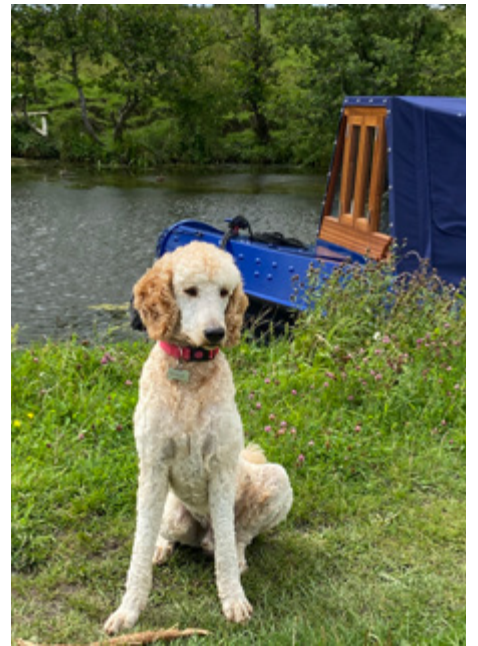
Maisie Smartt



Honey Franks



Kash Enderlee



Monty Fisher



Iris, Beau and Spike Jones-Kozlowski



Lily Whittington



Odi Kingsley



Jarvis & Jack Andresen



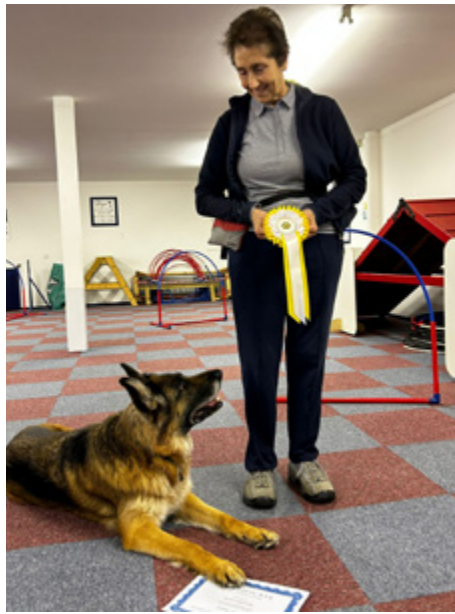
Maggie Edwards



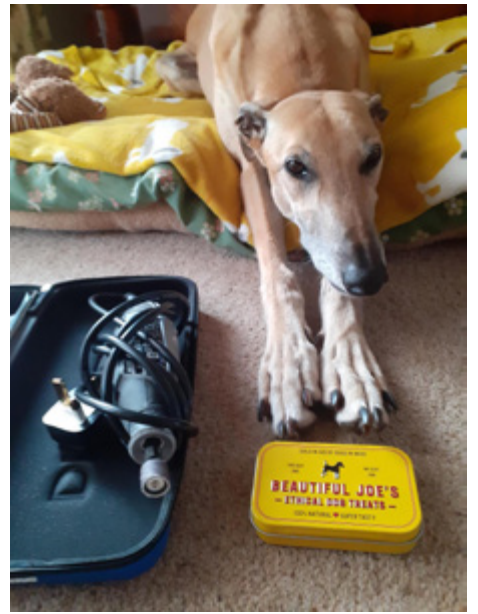
Fergus Tippett



Sherry Whittington



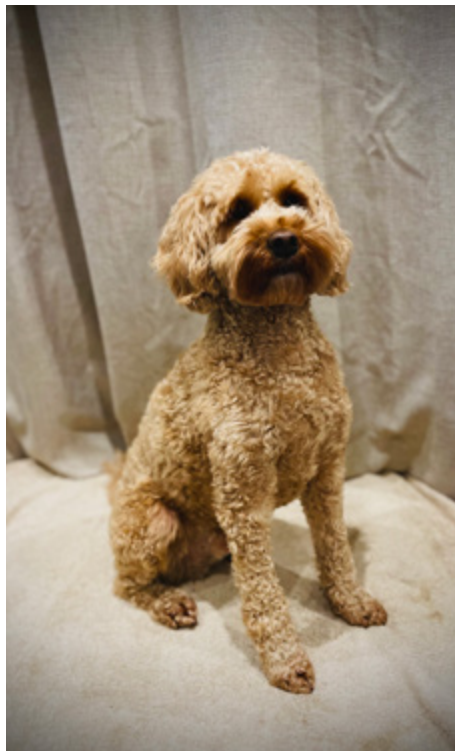
Kalli Vet



Tilly Hunphries



The Khayat Family



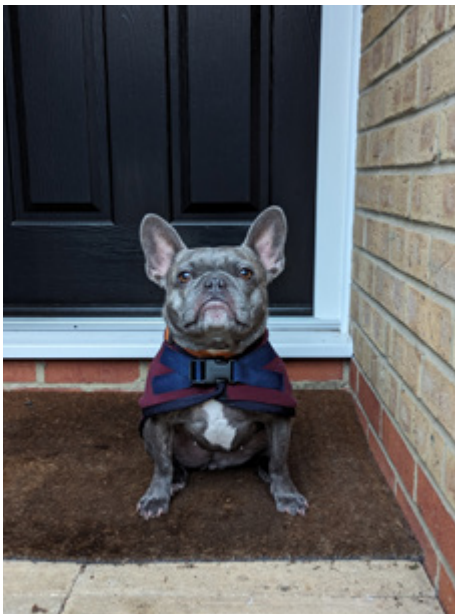
Merlin Englefield



Jessica Dinning



Treacle Cunningham



Olive Tan



Yogi Mack



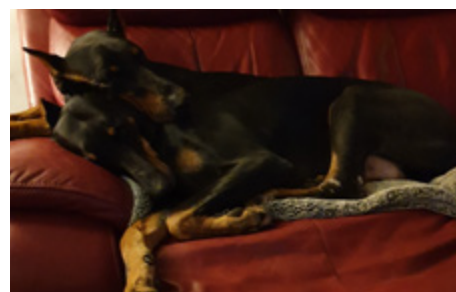
Nova Wheeler

Competition winners

In the last issue we held a photograph competition in which you had to submit a picture on the theme of 'Let Sleeping Dogs Lie'. The response was, as usual, overwhelming! We received hundreds of brilliant entries of which just a sample are featured here. Thank you, thank you to everyone who entered. We have made a note to include some free treats in with every dog's next order. If we have missed you it is a mistake on our part (well, on Jonathan's part because he was in charge and he can get a little confused at times) so please let us know in order that we can put it right. The winner, chosen with great difficulty, will receive a month of free food. The runners-up free treats. Thank you again! order that we can put it right. The winner, chosen with great difficulty, will receive a month of free food. The runners-up free treats. Thank you again!



Belle Lester



Ceaser and Cleo May



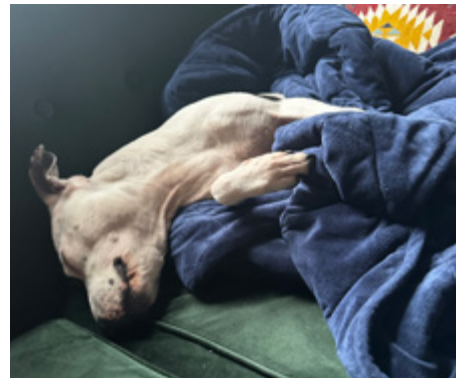
Bianca Bishop



Benji Blayney



Benji Weeks



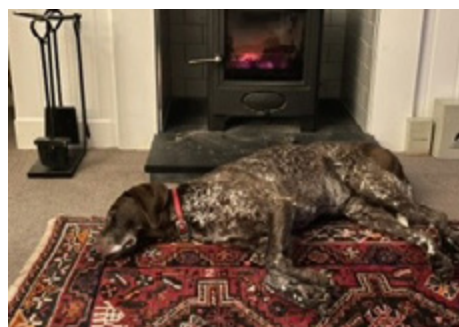
Bodhi Jones



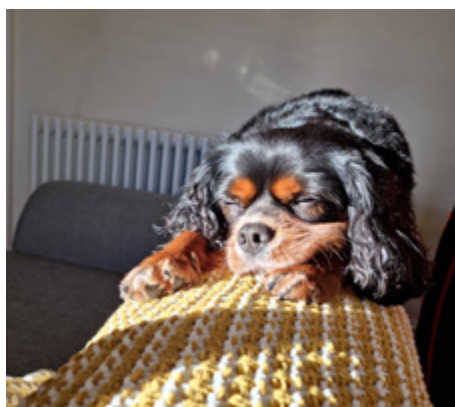
Odi Kingsley



Archie Townsend Green



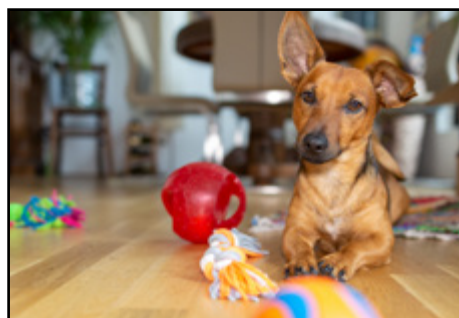
Clova Wood



Bertie Hill

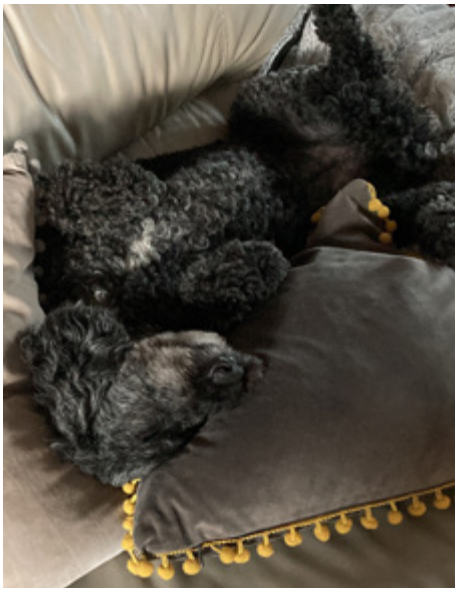


Caeo Peebles



New 'MY FAVOURITE TOY' Photo Competition. Win a month of free food

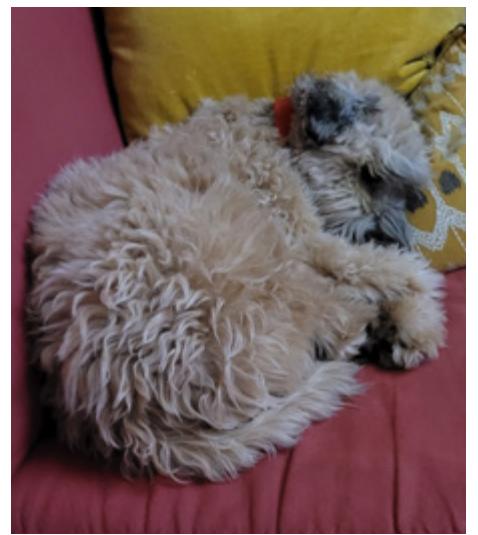
The new Honey's Competition is simplicity itself: submit a picture of your dog (or cat) on the theme of 'My Favourite Toy'. First prize is one month of free Honey's (to the value of your most recent order) and there are 3 runners up prizes of either 6 packets of Beautiful Joe's or bones or biscuits to the same value. Rules? Barely any. You can submit up to three photographs and the judges' (appointed by Honey's) decision, no matter how unfair, will be final. Please email your entry to competition@honeysrealdogfood.com before 31st July 2024 or post it to Honey's Photo Competition, Darling's House, Salisbury Road, Pewsey SN9 5PZ.



Betsy Bownes



Dexter Smith



Eddie Fagandini



Chickpea Valencia Powell



Dora Wallace



Evie Cookes



Dora Ward



Batman and Monkey Daly



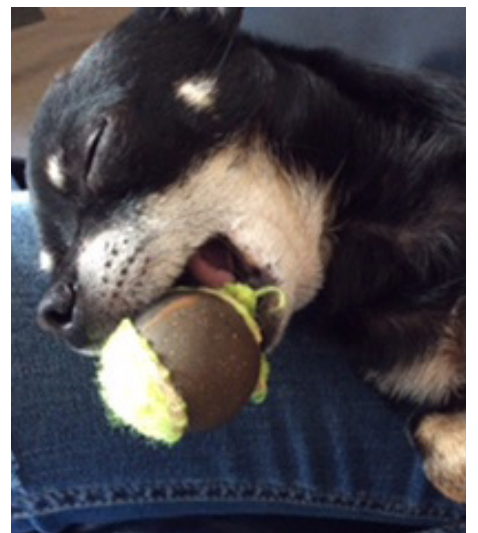
Evie de Rouk



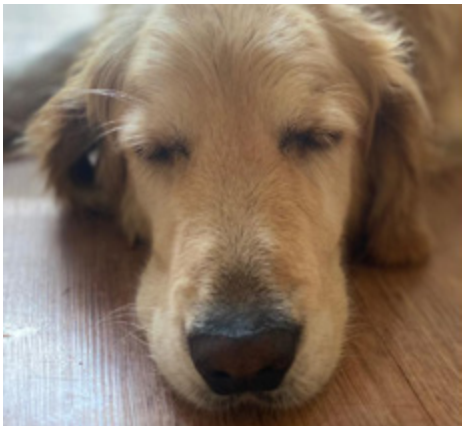
Bonny Devonport



Eddie Bowen-Jones



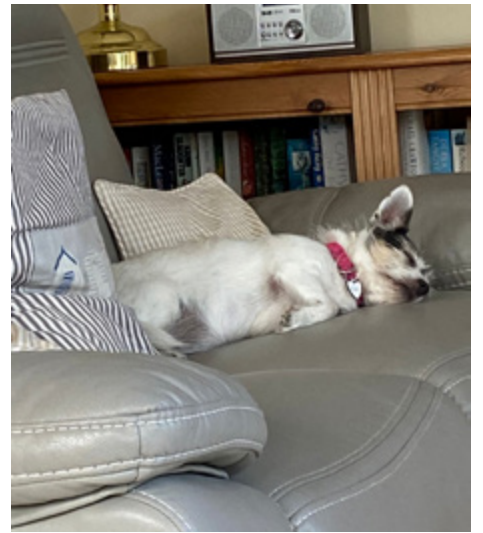
Fatoush de Rouk



Fonsie Briggs



Habib and Grace Boswell



Isabella Boo Halliwell



Frankie Key



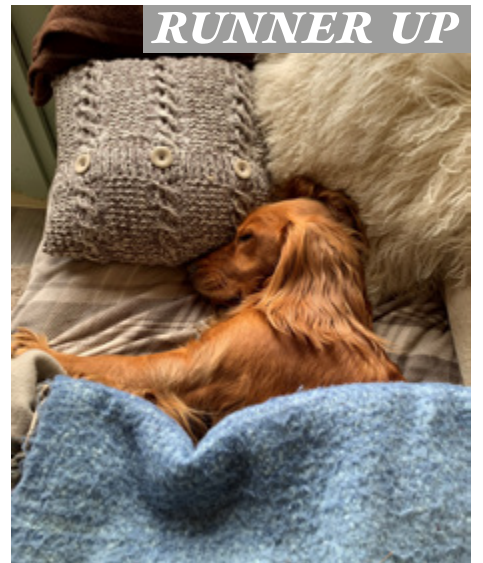
Harry Wright



Jack and Tapio Spurrier/Judd



Harvey Cope



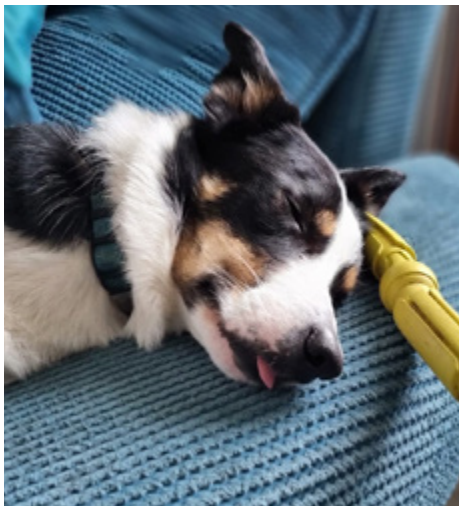
Jasper Warr



Frankie Wingrove



George Avenell



Hector Jones



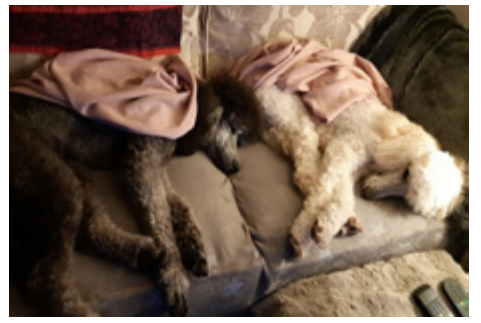
JoJo Hiscocks



Joy Devonport



Kathi Walker



Lola and Reilly Beckley



Kai Silverman/Woods



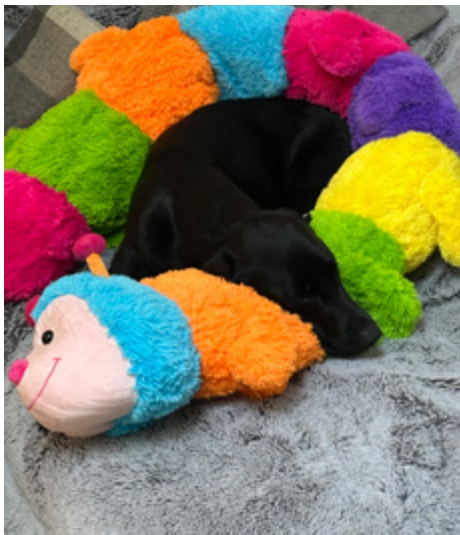
Kiera & Rollo Marle



Lola Foster



Kalli Vet



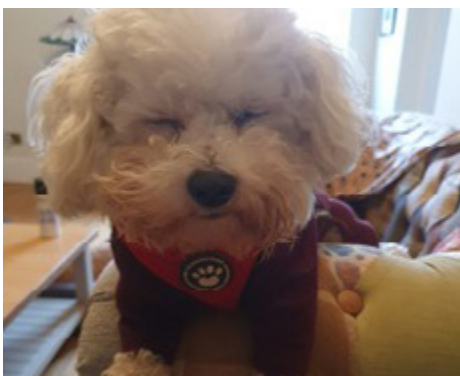
Leia St George



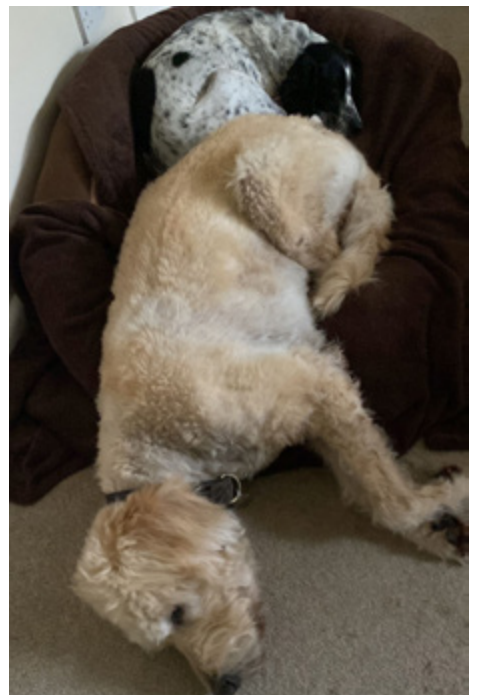
Luna Smith



Kash Enderle



Lily Smith



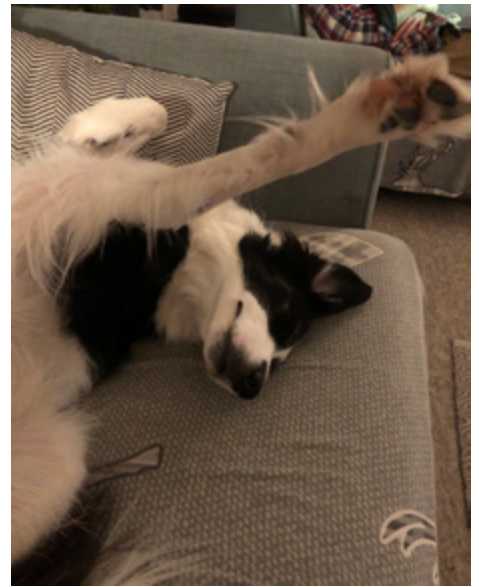
Maisie Smartt and Rubin



Syd Turnbull



Milo Spataru



Nelly Wilcox



Meg and Nelly Wilcox



Monkey and Kestrel Daly



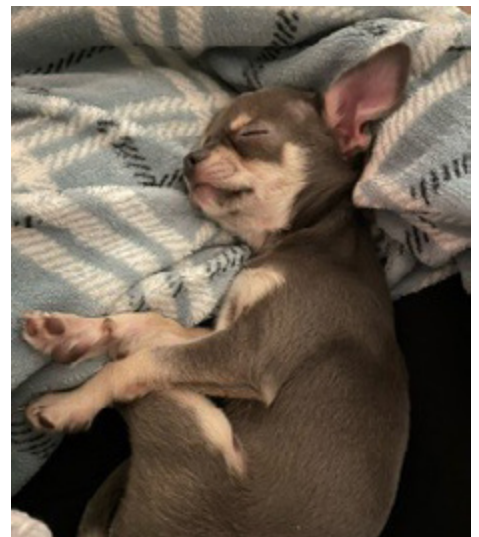
Archie Beacham Avenell



Meredith Whitbread



Mr Darcy Marin



Pablo Newman



Mollie Carlen



Tilly Humphries



Wilbur Forbes



Pickle Bury



Raffle Anderson



Rosie Goulding



Pippin and Tony Khayat



Riggs Silvester



Ruby Clark



Poppet Francis



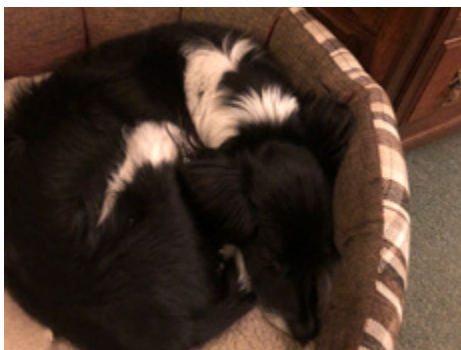
Riley Day



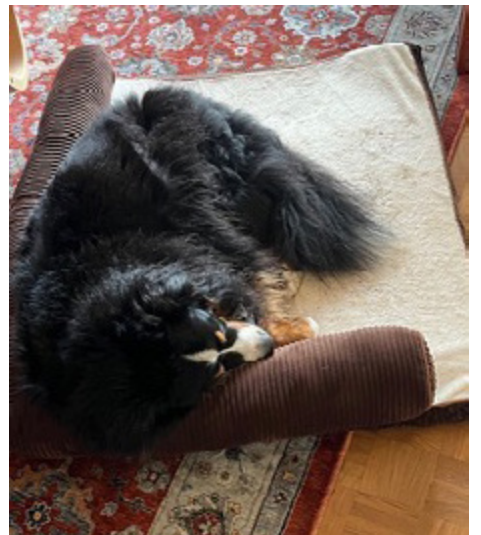
Ruby Petchey



Poppy Clark



Rixi Morris



Ruby Waterman



Teddy Simpson



Wren Driscoll



Tiffany Martin



Rupert Kennedy



Sidney Wood



Tala Avenell



Safron and Nutmeg Simmonds



Stella Chen



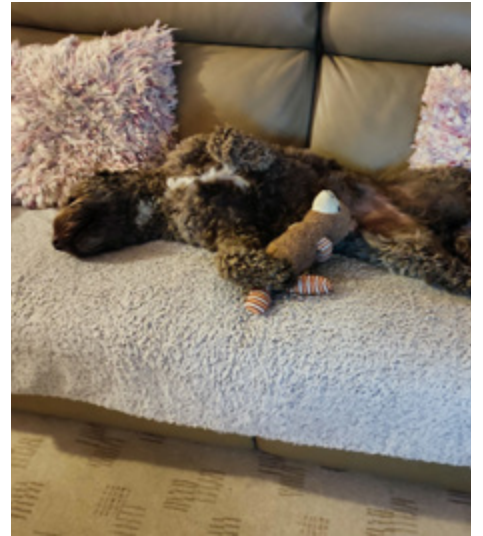
Tanner Eaton & Friend



Medlar and Belle Harvey



Susie Bishop



Ted Bennett



Sasha Balcombe



The Honey's Directory of Everything



Honey's Natural Feeding Handbook for Dogs

If you are looking for a plain-English, comprehensive, easy-to-follow guide to raw feeding look no further.

Honey's Natural

Feeding Handbook was written by our founder, Jonathan, and has sold more than 100,000 copies since it was first published in 2012. It was also the basis of a Channel 5 documentary (The Truth About Your Dog's Food). Subjects covered include:

- Why naturally fed dogs lead longer, happier and healthier lives.
- The benefits of raw feeding.
- How to switch your dog to a natural diet in three easy steps.
- Canine digestion made easy.
- A brief history of dogs and dog food.



Honey's Natural Feeding Handbook is the perfect introduction to raw feeding. £7.50 or free to download from the Honey's website.



A personalised Honey's Dog Bowl

A personalised Honey's Dog Bowl with your dog's name on the outside and Honey's on the inside. Price: £25 for small, £27 for the medium and £31 for the large BUT free, of course, if you recommend a new customer who orders from us!



Our original Superdog Cape/ Towel Thingie

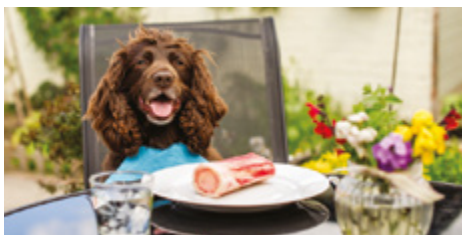
Is it a cape? Is it a towel? Either way, it is the perfect way to dry off a wet dog. It comes in four sizes but only one colour: black. Small £15. Medium £18. Large £21. X Large £25.50. XX Large £30. Matching towel £6.

We are very grateful for any new customers you introduce and have a small selection of gifts (As G B Stern said: 'Silent gratitude isn't very much use to anyone.') to offer you by way of thanks. Please ask for details.



Good things come in small sizes – 250g to be precise

A quick reminder that almost every single formula we offer is available in 250g as well as 500g chubs (the rather silly name used for our sausage like packaging). Please do ask for smaller sizes if it would be more convenient for you.



Please send us your photos!

We love to see pictures of our four-legged customers. Please email them to: info@honeysrealdogfood.com Thank you, thank you!



Gift Hampers

Don't say it with flowers, say it with Honey's! Prices for Gift Hampers start at £45 including delivery. We'll be happy to include a personalised card, too, and lots of little extras (such as book and treats).

%'s!
Each Honey's recipe has a different % of bone, offal and vegetable. To find the % that suits you best, please call!



Honey's Bespoke

We now offer a Bespoke service whereby we will make raw or cooked food entirely to order. Our own vets and nutritionists can devise recipes for you if required.



Beautiful Joe's

We offer two types of handmade, air-dried treats: Tasty Lamb for £6 (in a red packet) and Yummy Liver for £8 (in a yellow packet). We give away treats for every packet sold and since we started this ten years ago, we have donated over £700,000 of treats to dogs in need. We also offer a snazzy yellow training tin (£4.00), gift packs (from £10) and subscriptions (place a regular order and we will top it up with free treats).



The Honey's Working Dog Food Range

You want choice? We have choice! We make six free range recipes and four wild recipes. Most can be ordered with and without vegetable, and come in two sizes – 250g and 500g.

Free range Working Dog Food	With Veg 250g	Without Veg 250g	With Veg 500g	Without Veg 500g
Free range Chicken	£1.26	£2.07	£2.52	£4.13
Free range Duck	£1.41	£2.07	£2.81	£4.13
Free range Pork	£1.62	£2.17	£3.24	£4.34
Free range Turkey	£1.41	£2.07	£2.81	£4.13
Pasture Fed Beef	£1.56	£1.89	£3.13	£3.77
Pasture fed Lamb	£1.64	£1.87	£3.28	£3.73

Wild Working Dog Food	With Veg 250g	Without Veg 250g	With Veg 500g	Without Veg 500g
Rabbit	£2.40	£2.86	£4.79	£5.72

Game	£2.36	£2.69	£4.75	£5.30
Venison	£2.40	£2.86	£4.79	£5.72
Pheasant	£2.21	N/A	£4.41	N/A

Please note that all our food - especially our 'wild' range - is seasonal. Although we keep as much stock as we can in our freezers we can't always guarantee availability.

Active Working Dog Food	500g
Pasture fed Beef	£3.13
Free range Chicken	£2.52

Certified Organic Dog Food

Certified Organic Dog Food	With Veg 250g	Without Veg 250g	With Veg 500g	Without Veg 500g
Pork	N/A	N/A	£5.81	N/A
Chicken	N/A	£3.23	£4.94	N/A
Turkey	N/A	N/A	£4.94	N/A
Beef	N/A	N/A	£5.76	N/A

Please note we also offer organic pork tails, pork belly ribs and pork heart.

The Honey's Lean Recipe Range

Looking for something low in fat and/or low in protein? Our Lean range comes in four recipes.

Lean Dog Food	250g	500g
Lean, pasture fed Lamb	£1.96	£3.91
Lean, free range Pork	£1.92	£3.85
Lean, free range Duck	£1.67	£3.34
Lean, pasture fed, Beef & Washed Tripe	£2.12	£4.10



'Oh, great...here comes our crazy stalker again.'



Free range bones and wings

Looking for something that Fifi or Fido can get her or his teeth into? We offer a wide range of free range bones and wings. Bones are important for two reasons. Firstly, they provide vital nutrients including calcium, complex (good) fats and vitamins. Secondly, the actual chewing of the bones is what keeps a dog's teeth and gums healthy. Chewing and gnawing is also, believe it or not, excellent exercise and helps a dog to stay fit. We recommend giving your dog a fresh bone approximately once per week. Wings, on the other paw, are the perfect complete meal.

Free range bones and wings	
2 knuckle end pasture fed beef bones	£4.30
5 large pasture fed beef lollipop bones	£8.30
5 medium pasture fed beef lollipop bones	£8.30
2 medium pasture fed beef lollipop bones	£3.80
8 small pasture fed beef lollipop bones	£8.30
5kg of free range chicken wings	£16.95
1kg of 3 joint free range chicken wings	£3.90
1kg of free range duck wings	£4.90
1kg pasture fed lamb ribs	£5.45

DIY ingredients Save up to 33%

Why not make your own dog food using our ethically sourced ingredients? Not only can we supply you with wild, free range and organic 'makings', but we can also provide you with advice, recipes and support. We reckon that going the DIY route saves most of our customers between 25% and 33%.

Beef heart pasture fed per 1kg	£4.25
Beef tongue, pasture fed 1kg	£8.50
Beef liver pasture fed per 200g	£1.60
Beef tripe pasture fed washed in water per 1kg	£6.00
Chicken carcass free range per kg	£3.80
Chicken necks free range x 10	£5.45
Duck carcass free range per kg	£4.35
Duck necks free range x 10	£8.20
Lamb heart pasture fed per kilo	£5.80
Lamb trachea pasture fed x 4	£3.80
Pork certified organic pig tails x 6	£3.20
Pork certified organic belly ribs (750g approx.)	£6.90
Pork certified organic heart per kg	£5.45
Pork free range tongue x 2	£3.30
Pork free range trotters x 2	£4.35

Special DIY boxes Save even more

If you have the freezer space, why not take advantage of our special DIY boxes and save even more £££?

Special Offer Boxes – big savings!	
DIY taster box free range	£31.50
Duck carcass free range 14kg	£56.90
Chicken carcass free range 14kg	£49.25
Lamb ribs pasture fed 9kg	£43.80

Certified organic beef bone broth

Made using certified organic, grass-fed beef bones and filtered water with carrot, unrefined, unpasteurized and unfiltered apple cider vinegar aka 'with mother', thyme, turmeric and black pepper – all of which are also certified organic. 200ml £5.42. 500ml £10.90

Handmade Biscuits

We used to make our handmade biscuits at home but we got fed up with having to stay up all night baking, so now a local baker produces them for us. We use only the finest ingredients (including wholewheat flour) and, as you would expect, we have no truck with preservatives, sugar, salt, colouring or other chemicals. 100g of natural bone shaped biscuits or cheesy hearts will cost you £3.28.



THE SHEEPDOG TRIALS



Raw Proof

The results of our 24-month research investigation into a species-appropriate diet for dogs is now available. You can download a PDF from our website or ask us to send you a hard copy (free of charge).



Good Money: The Honey's Story

Honey's is part owned by its employees, deeply concerned about the environment and committed to farm animal welfare. Almost all our customers come to us by word of mouth. If you would like to know more order a copy of Good Money for £14.99

Our packaging is 100% recyclable. We use packaging that takes up 20% less space in a freezer than a tub and weighs 90% less.

Our books are also available as FREE downloads on our website



REAL DOG FOOD

Phone: 01672 620 260

(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Email: info@honeysrealdogfood.com
www.honeysrealdogfood.com



All Honey's literature is printed using vegetable based inks on FSC® approved paper. FSC stands for the Forest Stewardship Council.

10 good reasons to contact Honey's for advice (and maybe even for food)



1. Free, expert advice

We are happy to help with free, unlimited, expert advice, tips and diet plans even if you never, ever plan to become a customer. If you want to make the food yourself (which is surprisingly easy) we can explain which ingredients to buy and how to keep the cost down.



2. A diet designed specifically for your dog

We will ask you all about your dog – his or her age, weight, gender, breed (if relevant), allergies, health issues, likes and dislikes, level of exercise and more. We like a photo if it is easy. Then we will recommend a specific diet designed to ensure that he or she receives the optimum level of nutrition.



3. The Honey's Health Team is at your service

Diet can make a huge difference to health. Certain canine health conditions require certain diets. We employ a Health Team (which includes vets and vet nurses) to look after the poorly dogs we feed, and they are at your service. It is one of the reasons why so many vets in private practice recommend Honey's.

Free book! Available as a download or we will happily post it to you.



4. Honey's is made from organic, free range and wild ingredients

We only use the highest possible quality and freshest ingredients that would, if they weren't becoming dog food, be 100% suitable for human consumption. This is really important not just for ethical reasons but because high quality ingredients contain much higher nutritional values. Our meat is all certified organic, wild or free range.



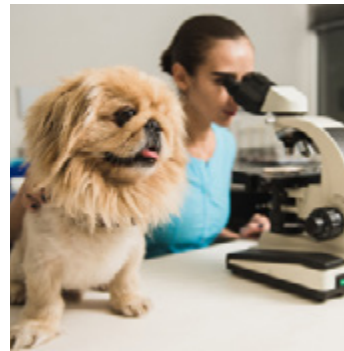
5. Our food is British and seasonal

All our ingredients come from British farms and are, therefore, seasonal. The artisanal nature of our production means that each recipe changes from batch to batch – much better for your dog.



6. Honey's food is complete

Our food meets all the most vigorous nutritional guidelines as set out by the European Pet Food Industry Federation (FEDIAF), the Pet Food Manufacturers Association (PFMA) and the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO). We achieve this without adding any supplements.



7. Honey's invests in scientific research

We've contributed to the growing scientific evidence that species appropriate (aka raw) feeding is the optimum diet for dogs by investing in major research. Please ask for copies of our research paper: *Raw Proof: The results of a 24-month research programme into a species-appropriate diet for dogs*, which was first presented to Fellows of the Raw Feeding Veterinary Society.



8. We campaign for better farm animal welfare

We visit all our producers regularly to make sure that they meet our exacting farm animal welfare standards (which we publish). We donate 1% of sales to Compassion in World Farming. By the way, we never turn any charity that approaches us away empty pawed.



9. Honey's works to minimise its environmental pawprint

We work hard to minimise our impact on the environment. We have achieved ISO 14001 (which is awarded to companies with high environmental standards). Our packaging is 100% recyclable.



10. Honey's is a small, family business

We are a small, family business (so small that the founder is happy to give you his personal email in case he can help with anything) and we believe in traditional service. Honey's has no sales function and no sales staff. We never try to persuade anyone to buy our food. When you talk to our team they are speaking from the heart.

Honey's is Carbon Neutral and we believe we have the most environmentally friendly packaging for raw dog food in the UK. We are members of 1% for the Planet and our founder is a trustee of the Rainforest Trust.

Why not all raw dog food is equal

It is definitely not our style to be critical of other raw dog food producers. On the other hand, we are concerned about much of the commercially available raw dog food. And, we are not alone. A growing number of vets agree. Indeed, the founder of the Raw Feeding Veterinary Society recently said:

The ideal raw food diet is varied, uses high quality ingredients and is properly formulated to make sure it includes all the necessary nutrition. One concern is intensively farmed meat, which may contain higher levels of antibiotics and other harmful chemicals. Another worry is formulations that contain too much or too little of certain ingredients e.g. rice or bone. A surprisingly high percentage of raw food diets (as differentiated from raw food meals, most of which are not 'balanced and complete' on their own) may not be nutritionally adequate. Variety, again, is key to providing all required nutrients appropriately.

You can be confident that Honey's is made from the finest quality ingredients and is 100% complete.