

# Lawton and Stoakes

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## STAFF NEWS

Martin attended the American Conference for Veterinary Ophthalmologists in Idaho in October and Moira attended a two-day course on rabbit surgery in November. Noemie McDermott returns to join the veterinary team in December after her maternity leave. She will be working on some Saturdays and will cover when any of the other Vets are away we're sure you will join us in welcoming her back!



Angel managed to get her silver Kennel Club Good Citizen Award despite barking at the examiner!



And Buffy has been awarded her puppy foundation certificate and will soon be working towards her bronze.

They both have a very proud mum!

## STAFF

### VETERINARY SURGEONS

**DR MARTIN LAWTON** B.Vet.Med;  
Cert.V.Ophthal; Cert.L.A.S; C.Biol; M.S.B;  
D.Zoo.Med; FRCVS

**DR LYNNE STOAKES** B.Vet.Med. MRCVS

**DR NOEMIE MCDERMOTT** B.Vet.Med.  
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**Dr MOIRA KELLY** MA VetMB MRCVS

### RECEPTIONISTS

**JULIE AUSTIN** (Administrator)  
**CORAL WILKINSON**

### NURSING STAFF

**FIONA GORDON** RVN Head Nurse

**JAMIE BIGGS** RVN

**RACHAEL BROWN** 1st Yr Trainee

**GEORGIE CALIXTE-HOLDSWORTH** 1st Yr

Trainee

**LAURA BOUCHIER** Nursing Assistant

## WHAT'S NEW?

The Practice celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversaryiversary at the end of October. Lawton and Stoakes first opened its doors to the pet owning public on October 21st 1985. In the intervening years there have been many changes to the Practice premises and also to Veterinary Science. Although we now have a large premises incorporating 8,10 and the original 12 Fitzilian Avenue with state of the art equipment our aim has always been and continues to be to give a personal service to our clients and their pets.

We now have new and updated care sheets for many species of exotic pet. If you would like to request one for your pet please email [Secretary@vets.uk.net](mailto:Secretary@vets.uk.net) for a copy. If we do not have a care sheet for your particular pet let us know and we will endeavour to produce one!

# TOXOCAROSIS IN PEOPLE DO YOU KNOW THE RISKS?

*Toxocara canis* and *Toxocara cati* are the dog and cat round worm respectively and these parasites can be transmitted to humans to cause serious disease.

## Toxocara Lifecycle

The adult worms live in the host's small intestine and eggs are shed into the faeces. These eggs are not infective until they become embryonated, a process that takes 2-7 weeks in the soil. Dogs may become infected by eating the embryonated eggs, but a more important route is via the placenta during pregnancy and also via the dam's milk. Dogs can also become infected by eating small mammals and birds, that may have ingested the embryonated eggs. Cats do not become infected in the uterus and hunting is a more likely route of exposure for this species.



Human Toxocarosis can take several forms:-

### Visceral Larval Migrans

Migrating larvae lodge in lungs or liver causing signs of disease in the affected organs.

### Ocular Larval Migrans

The best known of the possible consequences is blindness caused by the parasite larvae migrating to the back of the eye and causing retinal problems

### Neurological Larval Migrans

Larvae migrating to the brain lead to changes in behaviour or seizures

### Covert Toxocarosis

Mild signs of fever, lethargy, itchy skin and rash can be associated with the discovery of antibodies to the parasite in people but the association is not clear.

Approximately 2 cases per million people in the UK each year are diagnosed.

How to reduce your risk:-

### Worming puppies and kittens

Puppies and kittens should be wormed every 2 weeks from 2-12 weeks then monthly until they are 6 months old.

### Worming adults

Adult dogs and cats should be wormed every 3 months as this has been shown to reduce the number of eggs shed into the environment. In households with at risk people monthly worming is recommended.

### Environment

Picking up after dogs and making use of dog waste bins will reduce the number of eggs in the environment. Covering sandpits so that cats do not use them as litter trays is also recommended.

### Hand Hygiene

Wash hands after handling dogs and cats, after gardening and before eating will significantly reduce your risk.

Research is still ongoing to establish the role of cats in this condition as well as the relationship between the presence of antibodies in the blood and their relationship to disease signs.

A happy and healthy Christmas to all our clients and their pets. Remember if your dog's food isn't dog food it might be dangerous!

Mouldy food scavenged from bins, sweeteners, onions, toys, raisins, chocolate, medicines, plants and flowers can all spoil the holidays for you and your pet!



## Pet insurance

Owners are reminded of the importance of thoroughly reading the terms and conditions of their pet's insurance policy before taking out or renewing a policy. Every week vets are approached by owners who had thought treatment for a condition would be covered by their insurance, only to find out that the technicalities of their policy negates their claim.

Rather than just looking for the lowest monthly payment do ensure that you understand what types of conditions the policy will cover you for (for example some won't cover congenital conditions (those from birth), skin conditions, dental disease or obesity related disease); and ensure that when taking out or renewing a policy you have provided full and honest medical records for your pet- and check with the company whether there are now any conditions that are no-longer covered by the policy.

## Is Your Parrot Sleep Deprived?

A recent article in Parrots Magazine is warning parrot owners of the problems encountered when their pets don't get enough sleep. With modern day living it is common for owners to relax after a day at work and watch TV often into the early hours. Many people cover the cages of their birds in the belief that this will enable them to sleep. According to the author of the article this is wrong and birds rarely enter deep sleep during the day or when there is activity in the room at night. Some birds may be prone to night frights when they suddenly thrash around in their cages. This is thought to be due to disturbances such as car headlights shining into the room or vibrations from passing traffic. The result is a chronically tired bird that may become aggressive or develop other behavioural problems such as feather picking.

It is recommended that owners spend some quality time with their birds in the evening and then instigate a regular bed-time routine. Having a cage for the bird to sleep in which is situated in a room away from human activity is a good idea. This should allow for a 12hour day/night cycle or as close as possible to this. Special bird lamps, which emit Ultra-violet light (UV) are useful as birds can see into the UV range and this will better simulate day-time light levels.

Owners who followed this advice found that their birds' behaviour improved quite quickly.

We are learning so much about the behaviours of the animals that share our lives and "problem" behaviours as perceived by owners are often caused by our lack of understanding of our pet's needs.



## Sniffer dogs ratted out!

Man's best friend has long held the title of smartest-nose-around, with dogs being employed to use their strong sense of smell to identify explosives, detect drugs, help in disaster rescue operations, track criminals and identify early signs of medical emergencies such as diabetic episodes and seizures. However, they may soon lose their place as top-dog as trained rats are being deployed in areas of Africa such as Mozambique and Tanzania to help detect and clear land mines, responsible for maiming and killing 15-20,000 people every year. These giant African pouched rats grow to around 3ft long (tail included) and are quicker and cheaper to train than their canine counterparts; as well as having the added advantage that weighing-in at only 1-2kg they don't trigger the land mines and are therefore safer to work with! When fully trained these rats take only 20 minutes to clear an area of land that would take humans with metal detectors 5 days! It's hoped that their work with can be extended worldwide both in detecting land mines and in other types of work where their small size may be advantageous- for example finding people in collapsed buildings.



## STAR PET

Max is a lively 5 year old Labrador who has been coming to us since he was a puppy. Initially he was fearful of coming into the consulting room and we used to have to conduct our examinations in the waiting room! But over the years he has become braver and now trots in happily. Just as well as he is a fairly regular visitor as he is prone to getting into mischief....not always of his own making! He is loved to bits by his family and with good reason!



## EXOTIC SPOT WATER DRAGONS by Dr. Moira Kelly

**Water Dragons** are semi aquatic lizards. The 2 most common species in this country are the **Chinese Water Dragon** (*Physignatus cocincinus*, green in appearance with vertical slanted stripes across the body and a yellow or white belly) and the **Australian Water Dragon** (*Physignatus lesueuri*, brown with light coloured band markings on their body; males typically have red bellies while females usually have creamy white). Water Dragons can reach up to 3 feet in length (females being slightly smaller) and have a maximum life span of about 18 years in captivity.



Water dragons require a lot of space- the larger the enclosure the better, as too small a tank can lead to aggressive behaviour and increased risk of wounds and infections. As a semi-aquatic lizard they require a dry, basking area as well as a pool of water for daily soaking and swimming. The water should be changed daily or have a filtration system as these lizards often defecate in their water and dirty water may lead to skin infections. There should also be a hiding box and possibly a few branches/logs for the animal to climb on.

Given a water dragon's tropical home they require a UV light and heat source. As they are reptiles, a Water Dragon's metabolism is dependent on the external temperature and their enclosure should be kept at around 30°C with a basking spot at 32-35°C. Humidity should be maintained at 60-85%.

Water dragons are omnivorous. They can be fed on a variety of insects like locust or crickets, and worms such as meal-or wax worms. Pinky mice or day-old chicks can be fed to larger individuals. In addition to this, water dragons require some greens everyday like romaine lettuce, dandelions, mustard and watercress. A Calcium supplement should also be dusted onto their greens daily, and any live food gut-loaded with calcium. An incorrect diet can lead to problems such as deficiencies in Vitamin A (causing swollen eyes and oedema) and Calcium (resulting in insufficient calcification of the skeleton which can lead to bone deformation and even fractures). Overfeeding can also cause problems mainly associated with obesity and liver damage.

A water dragon's tail makes up more than 70% of its body length and is used for balance and leverage when climbing, as well as whipping potential predators. Another cool anatomical feature is the "third eye" (or pineal body)- a small, shiny spot between their eyes on the top of their head. The pineal is thought to help water dragons, as well as a number of other reptiles, sense differences in light, allowing better thermoregulation by helping the dragon determine where the best basking spots are.

### Kids corner

One night a Viking named Rudolph the Red was looking out the window when he said, "It's going to rain."  
His wife asked, "How do you know?"  
"Because Rudolph the Red knows rain, dear."

