

French Heartworm

This is a roundworm which appears to be on the increase and has been in the news recently. It affects dogs and lives in the blood vessels of the lungs where it can cause serious respiratory and heart disease. The main hosts are foxes who secrete larvae in their faeces. The larvae are then ingested by slugs and snails. Dogs can be infected by eating these infected intermediate hosts. French Heartworm has always been present in the south of England but it appears to be spreading northwards and cases have been reported in Cumbria and near Glasgow.

The standard three monthly worm tablets that we commonly use doesn't control this parasite. Currently, the only way to protect against it is a monthly spot on product. However, at the moment, the risk is sufficiently low that we are not recommending any changes to our normal worm prevention programmes but it might be worth considering a treatment for any dogs that are travelling to England.

Male Dog Contraceptive

A new drug has been developed to suppress the production of testosterone in male dogs, mimicking the effects of castration.

It is a contraceptive implant similar to a microchip which lasts for six months. It reduces circulation of testosterone, decreases libido and induces temporary infertility.

There are no significant side effects of the implant and no interactions with other drugs.

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss the use of the implant for your dog then Emma or Andrew will be pleased to provide further information.



We were going to explore the coastline with North 58 Sea Adventures in the hope of seeing a variety of wildlife.

We were all provided with matching outfits and safety gear and as we left the calm waters of the marina it suddenly struck me that the waves on the North sea were pretty choppy! We were out at sea for just over two hours and the coastline scenery was fabulous.

Unfortunately, there wasn't much in the way of sea mammals but we did see an amazing number of seabirds nesting and the highlight was sitting side by side with a couple of puffins.

Pet Smile Month

During September, Aurora Vets will once again be taking part in the national Pet Smile Campaign.

We will be offering free Petsmile oral health checkups for your pets.

80% of pets over the age of 3 are suffering from dental disease, most of which is treatable and nearly all is preventable. Pet Smile Month exists to raise awareness of the problems of dental disease and to try and encourage prevention.

In addition to the check-up, pet owners will also receive a Goody Bag containing samples of dental diets and money-off vouchers for owners to redeem in exchange for products such as Logic Oral Hygiene Gel, Royal Canin Dental Diets, Oral Bars, Pedigree Dentastix and Petplan Pet Health insurance.

Prevention of dental disease is better than treatment and Pet Smile Month is all about making pets healthier and happier and seeing the benefits that this brings to pets and their relationships with their owners.

Please phone Marcia to make an appointment for your pet's free Petsmile check.



Banff Boat Trip

On Sunday 1st June, Emma, Jenny, Marcia and Rachel met up with five other Aurora clients at Banff Quayside to experience a North sea boat trip.

Reptile Handling Evening

Spiders and snakes may have a lot of people running for cover but keeping reptiles and 'exotics' as pets is becoming more popular.

Providing you do your research first and pick a species suitable for you, reptiles can make excellent, fascinating and educational pets. Some are relatively low maintenance while others have very specific lighting, feeding and husbandry requirements. It is always recommended to carefully research your chosen pet before you buy. There is a wealth of information for you to refer to, whether it be from your vet, a specialist pet shop, books or the internet.

With that in mind, we decided to host a reptile handling evening at Aurora. Rachel and Andrew welcomed an enthusiastic group of people of all ages and everyone enjoyed a very informative talk from Jodie of East Coast Exotics Pet Shop. Everyone got the chance to handle a variety of animals including sugar gliders, corn snakes and bearded dragons and ask questions.

Everyone really enjoyed themselves, getting some great 'hands on' experience and the evening was a great success.



DAP collars help to settle puppies



Adoption is often a stressful time for a young puppy as its maternal bond is abruptly broken when it is moved to a new social and physical environment with new rules that it has to learn.

In the new home signs of stress often appear during periods of social isolation such as when the new owners are at work or when they go to bed. The commonest form this takes is vocalisation which can annoy neighbours and interrupt sleep. This can lead to owners letting the puppy into their bedroom at night which can break a rule they intended to maintain to prevent other behaviour problems.

Another problem is that owners can get up in the morning or return after a period out of the house to find their puppy has been to the toilet inappropriately while they have been away.

A very good study has recently been carried out in France, investigating the effect of dog-appeasing pheromone (DAP) in helping these problems. DAP is a natural substance released by nursing bitches during the first few weeks after they give birth and it has a calming and soothing effect on the young puppies. We use it quite widely in older dogs in a variety of stressful situations such as fear of fireworks, separation anxiety, and fearful behaviours. DAP comes in three forms – a plug-in which will bathe a room, a spray and a collar.

In the study the half the puppies were given a DAP collar and half were given an identical collar containing no DAP. The DAP collar greatly reduced distress vocalisations and contact seeking destructive behaviour. On day 3 in their new home 4 of 32 DAP collar puppies showed distress vocalisations compared to 27 of 34 control puppies. By day 15 only 1 of the 32 DAP puppies was still showing distress behaviour compared to 23 of the 34 control puppies.

The DAP collar made no difference to inappropriate toileting with 12 of 32 DAP puppies having an accident on day 3 compared with 13 of 34 control puppies. This suggests that the toilet accidents are perhaps less to do with stress and more to do with small puppies struggling to last long enough between toilets and not understanding what they are supposed to do.

Puppy Trafficking

A campaign to alert people to "puppy trafficking" is being launched by animal welfare charity the RSPCA.

Traffickers mainly trade pedigree dogs and often use the internet or newspaper adverts. Trafficked dogs could be sick or dying or have behavioural problems.

The RSPCA advises buyers to see a puppy with its mother, find out as much as you can about where the puppy has come from and never buy from someone who offers to deliver the puppy or

