

Spring alert!

This Easter, with lots of human treats around, it is important to make sure you are aware of common items in your home that are poisonous for your pet, and where possible, avoid any exposure.



Dogs are very susceptible to **chocolate** toxicity. The stronger the chocolate, the more dangerous it can be and it may cause fatal neurological signs.

Dogs also enjoy a good snuffle through handbags and often find packets of gum and tablets. **Sugar free chewing gum** containing **xylitol** can cause life threateningly low blood sugar levels.



Xylitol is also used as a sweetener in home baking, and cakes made with it, could prove lethal to dogs.

Sultanas and raisins – found in hot cross buns, fruit cakes and the like, are also toxic for your dog. They can cause symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea and, in severe cases, kidney failure.

Cats are less vulnerable to poisonings but they can still occur.



Lilies are beautiful but very toxic to cats. Chewing the leaves or grooming pollen off their coats can lead to severe kidney failure.

Anti-freeze (ethylene glycol) is another, often fatal, toxin. It has a sweet taste, but even in small amounts, will cause kidney failure.

Permethrin spot-ons: Many canine spot-on flea products bought from supermarkets and pet shops contain permethrins. While these are safe for dogs, they should *never* be applied to cats, since they are **extremely** poisonous to cats.

Signs of poisoning can often be vague so contact us at once if you notice any signs of unusual behaviour or illness.

Rabbit photo: Warren Photographic



Tom operating in Habu

Vetting in Botswana

by our vet Tom Doyle

I'm often amazed by what our clients get up to, and the stories I hear about their lives. One great example is the work of a Wadhurst client with a charity called Maun Animal Welfare Society. MAWS works in Botswana to improve the lives of local dogs by neutering, vaccinating, worming and treating them for infectious disease. Botswana is at the front line of conservation, and Maun sits on the edge of the Okavango Delta, a huge flood plain

with incredible biodiversity. Domestic dogs threaten wildlife, not just by hunting for food but also by transmitting diseases such as Rabies (transmissible to all warm-blooded animals) and Canine Distemper (which can devastate lions), so that improving their health and controlling their number has a wider benefit to the environment and people.

That wonderful client challenged me to get involved and so in December I visited Maun for 2 weeks to work with MAWS. The work of the charity is organised by a UK Vet Nurse (another example of how Vet Nurse skills change the world) and most of my time was spent in her clinic.



A happy patient

Most of our workload was neutering (spaying and castrating) dogs, and although the operations were the same as I've been doing for nearly 18 years, the patients and environment were very different. Our typical operating morning for a Culverden vet might have one dog spay, typically a healthy, 6-month old, well-nourished, clean dog, treated against parasites and carefully examined before surgery. At MAWS it was not unusual to spay eight dogs a day. My patients were very varied, from elderly females, old characters that had had many litters, to puppies 3 or 4 months old. Some were relatively fit, but many were thin, often with spectacular parasitic disease – so many ticks and worms! Most had what we would consider life threatening infections with a blood parasite "tick fever" which meant that they were anaemic and had problems clotting their blood, so it was not unusual to stitch

up an abdomen filling up with blood, something that would never happen in Culverden.

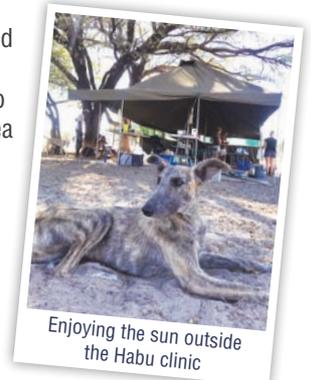
We also worked in the bush on "outreach", in a tiny village called Habu, where the Chief was working with NGO's to improve the environment and encourage tourism. Part of preparing for this was improving the health of local livestock and dogs. We set up our clinic under an awning next to the village assembly field, with two theatre tables, prep and recovery area and (not quite to our design) points from which local people, especially children, could watch what we did. The heat was incredible and many of the dogs in very poor condition, but we worked our way through the dogs that local people brought us for neutering.

I learnt a lot in Botswana and MAWS, and not just to appreciate the working environment in Wadhurst, Crowborough and Tunbridge Wells. The clinical challenge was huge, with more anaesthetic near-misses in one week than in years working in the UK. But despite that, we lost none of the 80 odd dogs we neutered. The team at MAWS was amazing, especially our Botswana nursing assistants, who's efficiency and organisation was inspiring. It was only the over-heated, under-hydrated volunteer vets like me held them back! And finally, the dogs, such wonderful dogs, none of them aggressive, all of them responding to the gentle kindness that vets and vet nurses everywhere know works so well.



If you're looking for an animal charity to support, then MAWS is well worth considering.

www.maunanimalwelfare.com



Enjoying the sun outside the Habu clinic

Grand Designs Crowborough



Our new cat ward

Thank you for bearing with us while our long-planned renovations have been underway in Crowborough!

We decided to blitz our consulting rooms, kennels, theatre and prep room to make better use of the space we have, and so improve the care we can give. It's been a more complicated and long-winded process than we (perhaps naively) thought, working

to improve an already much improved building. The early stages felt more like Channel 4's 'Time Team' as decades' worth of old flooring was removed - we thought we were going to find Roman mosaics in the end!

The biggest change is the accommodation we can offer our patients.

We now have a calm, quiet cat room for our feline day patients, tucked away from their more rambunctious canine fellow patients. Our cat "condos" are specially designed to provide a peaceful environment for each patient, out of view of other cats, with lots of room to stretch out and for nurses to work with them. Our dogs also benefit from new, larger kennels and we're especially proud of our **new walk-in kennel for our larger patients – especially useful for animals recovering from long surgeries, or with mobility problems.**



Zoe and Claire demonstrate the new walk in kennel

We've revamped our consulting rooms too, so that both are now large enough to work in comfortably, whatever the size of our patient. You'll notice our digital x-ray machine in the main consulting room, so that we can show you radiographs from our new digital x-ray machine. Behind the scenes our prep room and theatre have been reorganised, with lots of little improvements to help us work more comfortably and efficiently, and we've made more room for using our high-tech ultrasound machine.

Thanks again for your patience throughout the project and for putting up with a busier than usual practice! We're hoping

to arrange an open day later in the year, but if you'd like to see our renovations feel free to ask.

Phil, Hilary, Tom, Claire, Claire, Kim, Melissa, Lotte, Zoe and Kay.

Our Health Plan is Even Better!



The Culverden Health Plan is the ideal way to ensure your pets get all the preventative treatments they need. For a convenient monthly payment it includes their vaccinations and annual health check, parasite control to suit their needs and an extra consultation every year, as well as free nurse clinics and nail clipping and generous discounts on food and neutering - all with a substantial discount.

Recently we've made it even better, giving you:

- a choice of parasite control to suit your animal's needs, including **added tick protection** and tablet based treatments
- our new **Feline Friendly plan**, with the minimum number of treatments, avoiding tablets
- a **full kitten or puppy vaccination course**, with the second vaccine included free of charge.

Drop in or give us a call if you have any questions, or have a look at our website!

Appointment Times

Tunbridge Wells: 01892 520296

Monday to Friday: 9–11am, 2.30–4.30pm, 5–6.30pm

Saturday: 8.30–11.00am

Crowborough: 01892 661650

Monday to Friday: 9–11am, 2.30–4.30pm, 5–6.30pm

Saturday: 8.30–11.00am, 2.30–4.30pm

Wadhurst: 01892 782382

Monday to Friday: 9–11am, 2.30–4.30pm

Monday and Thursday: 5–6.30pm



Follow us!



Like us!

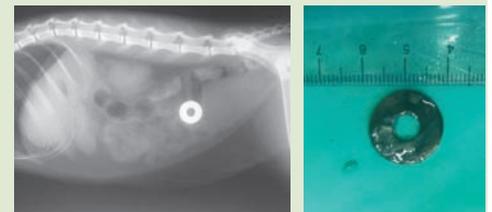
The assurance of insurance: is your pet insured?



Knowing that your dog, cat or rabbit is insured can be a weight off your mind, especially if your pet has a sudden accident or illness and you are faced with an unexpected vet bill.

There are different types of cover to choose from. The top cover is a **lifetime policy** where your pet is covered for a condition for life, usually up to a certain amount of money per year. A **time-restricted policy** means that you can claim per condition, usually for 12 months only. If your pet has an on-going condition such as diabetes or arthritis, the cover expires after the time period. A **condition-restricted policy** means that you can claim up to a certain amount per condition. **Accident only insurance** is a basic cover only. Insurance won't cover a condition if it has occurred before the policy was started. This means it is useful to choose good cover for your pet as soon as possible.

We highly recommend insuring your pet since there are a huge number of surgical and medical conditions that can be very costly to treat.



Pets commonly swallow items which require surgery to remove them, however it's not every day that a kitten swallows a washer! Happily, surgery resolved the issue for this young cat.

In addition to the need for unexpected surgery, many *medical* conditions (such as skin infections, ear disease, kidney or heart disease – to name just a few!) can also be very costly to treat.