



ANIMAL TALK



SPRING EDITION/FEBRUARY 2008

www.rspca-wigan.co.uk

Avoiding a Holiday Tragedy



By Rose Marshall

Easter is only a month away and the supermarkets are full of chocolate Easter eggs for everyone.

At Gilmore Veterinary Surgery we would like to remind people that chocolate can be potentially fatal to dogs. The chemical theobromine which is contained in chocolate intended for human consumption is poisonous to dogs. The better

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Animal Welfare Education: Message For Teachers - Visit the RSPCA Education team at the Education Show from 28th February - 1 March 2008 at the NEC Birmingham - stand PZ-D38 (Hall 12).

Goodbye Malcolm & Derek



By Avril Fishwick

I am deeply sorry to report the deaths of two more friends. Malcolm Forrest, Rector of Wigan, and more recently, Derek Johnson, a very popular G.P., aficionado of dogs, particularly Basset Hounds, and wild birds.

Malcolm was a great supporter of animals and the RSPCA Wigan, Leigh & District Branch. Many people knew him as a dog lover because he always had a canine companion by his side, often in Church, too. These were nearly always unwanted dogs rescued by RSPCA people – one arrived via Geoffrey Shryhane, another from Jean Dunsby. However, he was also fond of wild creatures and cats. For example, in summer 1996, he helped Bill to trap, neuter, and return, over thirty feral cats and kittens at the Hall! A difficult job for Bill because Malcolm fed them so well they could not be enticed into the traps!

Earlier, in 1990, Malcolm bestowed a great honour on the Branch by agreeing to help us celebrate 150 years of Royal Patronage of the RSPCA. Queen Victoria was passionately against cruelty to animals, once describing vivisection as horrible, disgraceful and un-Christian. Cruelty in 1840 was rampant, and was the theme of my speech. The service coincided with St Francis' Day*, and attracted a lot of media attention. Malcolm ended up having to defend his support of animals against criticism from that anti-dog crusader Alan Beswick on Radio Manchester. Poor Alan, he was roasted and of course came out of it the loser!

I remember the service very well because I attended, in my capacity as High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant, to commemorate the Royal patronage with my late

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quality chocolate and dark chocolate contains a much higher concentration of the chemical than milk chocolate. Also, a tiny piece given to a Labrador may be harmless, but the same amount given to a Yorkshire terrier could be serious.

The first clinical signs are vomiting and diarrhoea. It also causes increased heart rate and convulsions.

We see an average of 2 cases per year. On these occasions the dog is admitted to the hospital immediately and we start supportive injections and intravenous drips. Fortunately, the last case the owners contacted us as soon as it happened and the dog made a full recovery.

What can at first appear amusing, that the dog has stolen the children's Easter eggs, is a very serious problem. Veterinary advice should be obtained immediately. So that the family pet can be part of the Easter celebrations it is best to buy the special Chocolates for dogs and keep chocolates for the rest of the family in a safe dog-proof place. ♦

husband, Tom. It was a beautiful, sunny Sunday afternoon, the Harvest Festival goods and flowers bedecked the altar, and animals of most species, from every area of concern**, were worshipped. In fact, most of them were in the Parish Church! Dogs sat next to cats and other small animals or exotic creatures, in suitable cages, of course, and there were horses, a donkey, lambs and calves in the car park. All well behaved, too, well nearly all... Malcolm had to remind riders of four ponies who trotted into Church that they were not there to re-enact the Apocalypse! On behalf of the animals you leave behind, Malcolm, we will miss your loud voice crying out for more compassion to be shown towards them. ♥

Animal 24/7 returns for a third series

The new series will be screened every week day morning on BBC1 at 9.15 from Feb 11th. Like the first two series it will follow RSPCA inspectors as they delve into the weird and wonderful world of Britain's animal life. ♥

Is Your Pet Rabbit in Danger?

2007 has seen an increase in the deadly myxomatosis, a viral disease that affects Rabbits. Not only can this disease decimate the wild rabbit population it also poses a serious deadly threat to pet rabbits too. Some wild rabbits have a certain amount of immunity to the virus since it first appeared in the UK 50 years ago but pet rabbits having never been exposed to the virus will almost certainly die if infected.

The virus can be transmitted by

- Bites from mosquitoes carrying the Myxoma virus.
- Bites from fleas carrying the Myxoma virus (fleas can survive for many months in hay, and also from foxes that may visit your garden)
- Myxomatosis can also be spread by Cheyletiella fur mites which can be found on Dogs, Cats and Rabbits.

Classic myxomatosis starts with runny eyes and in the very early stages can be confused with other causes of conjunctivitis. However, myxomatosis differs as the genitals are also swollen. It rapidly progresses to a severe conjunctivitis which causes blindness and is accompanied by lumpy (nodular) swellings on the head, plus lumps on the body. Excessive amounts of thick pus discharges from the nose and swollen eyes (which are often sealed shut).

There are also two atypical forms of myxomatosis: one causes pneumonia and a snuffles-like illness; the other ("Nodular myxomatosis") mainly affects skin and carries a better prognosis.

Therefore it is essential that pet Rabbits are inoculated against the myxomatosis virus, as well as VHD. This can be done at your local vets and will need a yearly booster vaccination thereafter. Even if your rabbit is vaccinated, you must also take steps to prevent biting insects getting to your rabbit.

- Try to buy hay from farms free of myxomatosis
- Fit insect screens to outdoor hutches and runs
- Eliminate standing water from your garden (and preferably from any neighbouring gardens as well!) where mosquitoes could breed.
- Be especially careful if you have a dog or cat that hunts wild rabbits, as they could bring rabbit fleas home on their noses!
- Make sure that rabbits living outdoors cannot make contact with wild rabbits or hares.
- If your rabbit has any signs of Cheyletiella fur mites (e.g. "dandruff" on the back of the neck, take him/her to the vet for prompt treatment. ♥

Ratatouille: 'For the love of rats'



By Jo Parker,
Hon. Branch Secretary

It's happened before and it will happen again. A new film gets released, it happens to be about an animal and, all of a sudden, everyone wants one of those animals.

The latest film to spark this reaction is Disney-pixar's 'Ratatouille', the story of 'Remy' the rat who gets separated from his family and ends up under the streets of Paris and the 'gusteau' restaurant. Now Remy is no ordinary rat, he is a rat who likes to cook! So he befriends the garbage boy at the restaurant and they then have a full-on culinary adventure.

Now in real life, believe it or not, rats cannot cook, but you can form the best friendships with them, so before you go buying a rat 'because you saw it in a film' please consider the following:

Do you have time for a rat? By this I mean you cannot just buy one and keep it in its cage all day, it will need at least 1 hour's free play outside its cage everyday.

Do you have room for a rat? Rats should never be kept alone, always buy 2 rats of the same sex, and preferably the same age. Rats are very social animals and need the company of their own kind much more than they need the company of humans!

They need a cage mate. The only exception should be when a rat has had surgery; you may need to separate the rats so that wounds can heal properly. Of course, if a rat is particularly difficult to live with, and rats can be like people, sometimes they do not get along with others.

Will you have room for a big enough cage? Please remember that the new Animal Welfare Act requires animals to be given the five basic freedoms. One of these is the right to express natural behaviour and movements.

Will you have money for food/vet bills? Though they are relatively small animals, rats still need to go to the Vet every now and then. They can get very ill, they can develop tumours and cancer, they can get chest infections and colds just like us, these things are very common in rats. This is why they are used as 'research models' in many medical experiments. So be prepared, try and keep an emergency Vet fund.

Last but not least, be prepared for the worst. A rat's life

A rat's life span is usually between 2-3 years old, but if your rat reaches 2 years of age without accident or illness, it is very lucky.

Rats are the best pets I have ever had; I will be having pet rats for the rest of my life. It is painful losing them, but the pleasure I get from keeping them outweighs the pain. If you think that you can give a rat all the love and care that they need, then please contact our RSPCA Branch website, www.rspca-wigan.co.uk, and see if there are any abandoned rats in our care, or contact Rodent Rescue on 0161-724 6048. If not, then please do not go out and buy a rat from a pet store just for the sake of it, the only thing that will suffer is the rat.♥

LOST

Freda-Black with white chest & paws



From Whitley, Wigan.
Wearing green collar & Green I.D barrel
chipped & spayed, any info tel-01942-824165

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LOST PETS

If you are a pet owner you will need to know what to do in the event your pet is lost or stolen. You can register your pet by calling 01942-824165 or by E-Mail: contactus@rspca-wigan.co.uk and we can list your pet on our website at www.rspca-wigan.org.uk

We Will be featuring advice and tips on what you can do to help to find your pet in the event it is lost in the next issue of Animal Talk.

In the meantime you should make sure your pet is micro-chipped and all contact details are up to date. Report your loss to the police and get a log number, also check all surrounding vets/shelters.

Grand Easter Raffle Appeal

The Only Lottery That Benefits Wigan, Leigh, Skelmersdale & District's Animals
From our Treasurer Pat Abbott

“Please try to buy, or sell, some of our raffle tickets this time. We really do count on support from every one of you in order to keep the Branch’s animal welfare services going. Raffles, plus donations from readers of ‘Animal Talk’ are a main source of funds for us. The RSPCA’s anti-cruelty work and, therefore, the animals we aim to help, do not benefit from lottery grants or State Aid unlike other bigger charities.

The Prizes on offer this time are listed below:

1. Giant Easter Egg, from Hazel Hall
 2. Wigan Monopoly Game, from Avril
 3. Remote Model Helicopter, from Frank Welch, Central Heating Installers
 4. £40 Marks and Spencer’s Vouchers, from Tom Bennett
 5. Cuddly Easter Rabbit, from Pat Abbott
 6. Hamper Full of Dogs Goodies, from Yvonne Langton
 7. Simnel Cake, from Jo Parker
 8. Bankers’ Lamp, from Ian Marshall
 9. Thornton’s Continental Chocolates, from Avril
 10. Electric Can Opener, from Rose Marshall
 11. Large Tin of Shortcake Biscuits, from Avril
 12. Standard Patio Candle
 13. “Who Do You Think You Are Kidding?” by, and from, Colin Bean!
 14. Set of Yardley Luxury Soaps, from Doreen Ashcroft
 15. ‘Glow by JLo’ Jennifer Lopez Perfume/Shower Gel, from Gillian Roughley
 16. Boots Bath/Body Set, from Alison
 17. Mystery Prize No. 1, from John Ashcroft
 18. Mystery Prize No. 2, from Cynthia Forster
 19. Mystery Prize No. 3, from Bill Stubbs
 20. Mystery Prize No. 4, from Geoff Abbott
- Plus other prizes still to be received. Your chances of winning are very high – and much larger than winning the other Lottery! Good Luck and Thank you, too, for buying and selling tickets in previous Draws.♥**

To Be Drawn Maundy Thursday, 20th March 11 a.m.

Thank You

We would like to thank the following local businesses for their support in sponsoring our annual Dog show at the W o W Festival held on 5th August last year. Many thanks to:

- Speedy Hire Centre
 - H.J. Heinz Co Ltd
 - Ancer Homes
 - Express Electrical
 - Laycocks Timber
 - Savoy Timber & DIY
 - P.W. Walford Electrical Contractors (NW) Ltd
- Who donated a grand total of 330.00 pounds !!

GREAT NORTH RUN 5th October

Ian Marshall has very generously offered to apply to run for the Branch again! This is a very strenuous race and we would like Ian to know that fellow Wigan animal supporters are behind him if he wins an entry place in the race. His wife Rose and his dog Bobby will be cheering him on both on the day and on his many cold and wet training runs. Please contact either Gillmor's vets or us with your offers of sponsorship or if you would like to receive a sponsorship form.

COMPETITION

|| The first reader to reply with correct answers wins ||
|| a five pound gift voucher for our two charity shops. ||

	Competition Question No. 1: *When is St Francis’	
	Day? Competition Question No. 2: **What	
	are the four main areas which involve cruelty to	
	animals that the RSPCA is concerned	
	about?	

|| Send answers to address on back page. ||

Get this off Pat! i.e., memorise it:

“In order to make sure that the animals of your Town receive your donations, standing orders, direct debits or bequests, please write in full ‘Wigan, Leigh and District Branch’ after ‘RSPCA.’” From Pat Abbott, Hon Treas.

Supporter Derek Bramhall has also suggested that readers should phone or write to their solicitors to tell them about this very important point too.

An Appeal from Our Editors:

“Please, please send us your items for inclusion in future newsletters. It really makes our voluntary work interesting to read them, and to see photos or sketches of your animals. New ideas are welcome, too. Don’t forget that our newsletters, including your articles, will be posted on the Branch website: www.rspca-wigan.org.uk”♥

R S P C A WEEK

beginning 28th April Collections of donated pet food and donations at Tesco superstores in Wigan, Hindley and Atherton. Will you run a stall, hold a tin or help to regularly empty food baskets?

Do you think you could organise a supporting event like ~ A Sponsored Walk with or without dogs?

Last year friends at Gilmore's Vets raised hundreds of pounds to support the Branches endeavours.♥

COLLECTION AT JJB STADIUM.

Saturday 19th April

Home game against Tottenham Hotspur.

Please hold a tin for a couple of hours to help save an animal suffering. A free ticket's) for the game may be available.

EASTER RAFFLE DRAW

Maundy Thursday 20th March.

Donations of prizes, Ticket Buyers or Sellers needed.

Can you stuff our newsletter envelopes at our shop too?

‘And now, the end is near....

It falls to me, as Hon. Chairman, to thank you all for reading this ‘Animal Talk’ through to the end. In the next issue, I will have a lot to say about an exciting future Development Plan for the Branch, so I will keep this Easter address on behalf of the Branch brief. Thank you to everyone who works for animals in Wigan and District for sharing our caring, and particularly to Bill, Diana, Mary, and Tracy for editing, compiling and distributing Animal Talk to us readers.

Have a Happy Easter’♥

John Ashcroft, Hon Chairman

Sammy the Cat



Sammy and his Doggie friends Scamp and Peggy were taken into the care of the RSPCA after their owner was forced to hand them over to prevent them from suffering abuse. The owner had been subjected to harrassment from neighbours but mainly from their children.

If you can give Sammy, Scamp or Peggy a good home please telephone 01942-824165

DOG SHOW AT THE WOW FESTIVAL

Sunday 3rd August 2008

With help from Wigan Canine Society.

Always a fun event for happy dogs and their owners.

Helpers needed for us to microchip pets and issue neutering vouchers to needy owners. We also run information and fundraising stalls.

Branch Annual General Meeting:

Monday, 12th May 2008, Quality Hotel, 8 p.m. All supporters welcome. If you are a Member (please ask for a form if you are not), you are able to vote, and to stand for election to the Branch Committee. New Trustees are always welcome. Let our Hon. Secretary, Jo Parker, know if you are interested.

Volunteers Welcome, Too:

Jo would also like to hear from any reader who would like to help the Branch in any way. Hazel Hall, our Fundraising Secretary, is hoping more people will volunteer to help collect donations of money, pet food or goods during RSPCA Week. See the Events List.♥

Important news-Dogs Trust Neutering Vouchers

Sadly due to high demand last year of the Dog's Trust neutering vouchers in conjunction with The Dogs Trust Partnership Scheme with Branches, The Dog's Trust will be ceasing The Dogs Trust Partnership Scheme with Branches for the time being with immediate effect.

The branch will honour existing vouchers. But cannot unfortunately issue new ones.♦

STRIP OUT FOR OUR CHARITY?

No, we're not doing another boring Calendar Girls and Boys fundraiser! Not until the warmer weather comes anyway! But, we would like you to strip out your wardrobes for unused/unwanted good quality ladies and menswear. We can also quickly sell Bric a brac, small furniture, and are now able to test and sell electrical items. If you have any items only fit for our rags dealer, we will gladly accept those too. Please phone the Wigan Shop on 01942 248493, or Pemberton Shop on 01942 221635, to arrange parking (Or collection of bulky items).

Our New V.I.P. For Animals

By Diana

Our Branch is proud to welcome as a new Vice President...Mr Colin Bean.

Colin Bean has had an illustrious career in acting, His career spanning at least 3 decades and appearing in many Tv productions and the big screen.

Most famously for his role as 'Sgt Sponge' in Dads Army, His resume also includes 'Z Cars' 'The Liver Birds', 'Are you being served?', 'Cribb' and 'Hi De Hi' to name but a few, Not to mention the hilariously funny 'Up Pompeii' Starring such greats as Frankie Howerd and who could forget 'Michael Bentines Potty Time'? Not I, I remember those with very fond memories.

Colin was born, bred and buttered in Wigan and has never cut his ties with his hometown and still lives in Wigan. Unfortunately due to health problems Colin will not be able to play an active role for the Branch but is eager to help the animals of Wigan in any way he can.

Welcome aboard Colin!

FUNDRAISING ROUND-UP

Donations In Memory Of:

Doreen Turton - £245 to date, and Peggy Shryhane, Vice President - £210 to date.

Dog Show at WOW Festival. Sunday 5th August:
Heinz has sent £100 raising the Total to £875.

Great North Run, 30th September 2007:

Balance of Money received from this event up to today is £756.55. N.B. Ian Marshall has kindly agreed to run for the Branch again in

2008. But he needs sponsorship pledges from readers of 'Animal Talk' as soon as possible. Please phone Rose at Gilmore Vet's on 01257 426110

Sponsored Dog Walk/Dogs Day Out, Beacon Country Park:

Balance of Money received from this event up to today is £718.45

Bill's Personal Fundraising for the PAWS New Centre Appeal:

Bill's Birthday Presents so far have totalled £255

Christmas Newsletter and Raffle:

Total from donations and raffle tickets has exceeded £1,500 so far.

Thank you for all your support.

Hazel Hall, Fundraising Secretary.♥

ANTI-CRUELTY PHONE LINE

If you suspect animal abuse please report it!

RSPCA Headquarters have changed their telephone numbers from the current 0870 numbers to the 0300 number range, which Ofcom has launched as a Government/non-profit help-line only range.

When is this happening? Jan 2008

0300 numbers are already live, and both sets of numbers (0300 and 0870) will run side by side to the end of the year.

The RSPCA National Cruelty and Advice line will become 0300 1234 999 (Just to remind readers, the existing one is 0870 5555 999)

For information, the address of RSPCA HQ is still:

RSPCA,
Wilberforce Way
Southwater
Horsham

West Sussex
RH13 9RS

And their very informative web site address is:

<http://www.rspca.org.uk/>

After you have read your newsletter.....Don't bin it!!

Why not take it down to your local Doctors surgery or Pass newsletter on to friends, neighbours, family, or leave in a public place/Vets/Job centre/Council offices/Citizens advice bureau/work notice board to Recruit more supporters and spread the word.♥

Rabbits Need Homes too!!

Can you give a good home to a couple of Rabbits? Rabbits are social animals and need the company of each other otherwise they get depressed and lonely.



Forthcoming Events in 2008

At a glance

EASTER RAFFLE DRAW, 11 am, MAUNDY THURSDAY, 20TH MARCH 2008. Donations of prizes for all raffles we will hold during the year, and names of volunteer Ticket Buyers or Sellers, needed a.s.a.p.

COLLECTION AT JJB STADIUM. Saturday 19th April

R S P C A TESCO WEEK begins on 28th April
STREET COLLECTION – Will you please help?
RSPCA PET ADOPTION WEEK, 7th to 15th JUNE, 2008

DOG SHOW AT THE WOW FESTIVAL, 11 am SUNDAY 3rd AUGUST 2008,
With help from Wigan Canine Society.

DOGS DAY OUT/ SPONSORED DOG WALK, Beacon Country Park.
Register at 12 noon SUNDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2008

Christmas raffle winners list

1. Barbecue Set: Mrs C.M. Melling, 2. Hamper No. 1: Mrs Ball, 3. Helicopter, Mrs Brockbank, 4. Meal for Two, Mrs C. Fish, 5. £30 M & S: Mrs E. Ashton, 6. Toiletries: Mrs K. Mason, 7. £25 M & S: Brett Smith, 8. Hamper 2: James Whaite, 9. MP3: Mr F. Hampson, 10. Mystery Prize: Glenmorangie: Mr & Mrs J. Smith, 11. Games Compendium: Jessica, 12. Mystery: Cherry Brandy: B. Burns, 13. Brown Teddy: Ms H.J. Crawford, 14. Mystery: White wine: Mr Hodgson, 15. Cuddly Tiger: Mr T. Bates, 16. Port Decanter: John Ashcroft, 17. Quality Street: Mrs Swallow, 18. Mystery: Sherry: Mrs M. Ashcroft, 19. Mens Toiletries: Mrs M. Holland, 20. Christmas cake: Mrs G.A. Davies, 21. Biscuits and Pudding: Mrs Richards, 22. Dog Blanket: V. Glanfield, 23. Personal Organiser: M Roughley, 24. Mystery: Red wine: P. Wareing, 25. Mystery: White wine: Linda Sandland, 26. Crackers: A. Moseley,

Please send your Donations to: RSPCA, **Wigan, Leigh & District Branch**, 54a Market St, Wigan, WN1 1HX. **Registered Charity Number 232249.** Please remember to always quote all this information when making out donations or a legacy.

Name _____] Number of Tickets Sold _____ Amount £ _____
Address _____] Donation (if applicable) Amount £ _____

Postcode _____] TOTAL AMOUNT £ _____



N.B. Please sign and date your form:

You can make your donation worth 25% more to us, at no extra cost to you, simply by making the Gift Aid Declaration below. If you are a UK taxpayer and would like us to be able to reclaim the tax on the donations you make, please sign the declaration. Notes: - 1 - You must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims - currently 28.2p for each £1 you give. 2 - If your circumstances change, you can cancel this declaration by notifying the Charity. 3 - If you pay a higher rate of tax, you can claim further relief in your Self Assessment Tax Return.

I am a UK Taxpayer and I wish to Gift Aid any donations I have made or make to the RSPCA Wigan, Leigh & District Branch.

Signed _____ Date _____

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for helping local animals by donating goods for re-sale in our two charity shops. We can now test and sell your unwanted electrical goods and small furniture too. Remind friends we are a small Wigan charity (Charity Registration No. 232249), separate from RSPCA Headquarters, and we receive no grant or State aid.

Please remember to specify 'RSPCA WIGAN LEIGH & DISTRICT BRANCH' on any donations, Standing Order, Direct Debit form, or in your Will. This will ensure that animals of your Town will benefit in full from your generosity; enabling us to provide and maintain a Welfare Centre for them in the Wigan, Leigh and District area.

Simply complete the form overleaf and below and return it if you would like us to send you information in future. Our website www.rspca-wigan.org.uk has lots more information about the work we do.

Thank you for sharing our caring

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ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS,
WIGAN LEIGH & DISTRICT BRANCH



RSPCA Wigan, Leigh and District Branch
54A Market Street
Wigan
WN1 1HX
Website: www.rspca-wigan.org.uk

Registered charity no. 232249

E-Mail: contactus@rspca-wigan.co.uk

By giving us your name, address, telephone number and e-mail you are giving your permission for the above named Branch of the RSPCA to contact you by these means with news and information relating to our branch.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other: _____ Last name: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

E-mail address: _____ Telephone no: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

We sometimes allow other organisations whose aims are in sympathy with our own, or whose offers will benefit animal welfare, to contact our supporters. If you DO NOT wish to hear from them, please tick this box.