



EARLSWOOD VETERINARY GROUP

The Staff of Earlswood wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year



Newsletter

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Client's Stories – Meg's Story

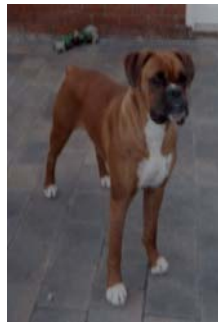
Mrs. H. Duce



Hi, my name is Meg, and I am a 5 year, 3 month old Boxer. I live in Newtownards with my mum and dad. I love it there and everyone knows me.

The first five years of my life have been so much fun: I've been on a canal boat and even the HSS, when I went to England for my holidays. I had lived my life so far to the full, but then suddenly everything changed.

It happened on the 3rd of September 2009. I went to get up in the morning, and my legs just wouldn't work! I was very scared. I was taken to Earlswood where I met a super vet called Greg. He told me he would do his very best to help me recover. My mum and Dad were told that surgery would not be able to help me, I was going to need a high level of skilful



nursing care, medical treatment and time to heal.

I stayed at Earlswood for two weeks and

when I was ready I commenced a course of acupuncture and aqua treadmill hydrotherapy which I received throughout my stay I also got



lots and lots of love from everyone. Finally I was well enough to be discharged and Greg let me go home to my mum and dad. I was very pleased because I wasn't expecting to get home so soon. It has been a few weeks since then, and now I am back at the

park and the beach at Groomspoint. I still go back twice a week to Earlswood for treadmill and acupuncture because I have one leg that is not just right yet, but Greg hopes it will be OK by Christmas. I want to say a big thank you to



everyone at Earlswood for helping to make me better, so I can get on with the things I still have to do.

Lots of Love

Meg, xxx

Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease

Greg Dunlop MA VetMB Cert SAS MRCVS



Cranial cruciate ligament disease is a degenerative process that results in tearing of the ligament and instability in a dog's knee. This is the most common orthopaedic condition in dogs that requires surgery. The injury often happens acutely during normal exercise but there may also be more chronic intermittent symptoms. Diagnosis is made by examining the instability within the knee joint, with your hand and fingers. This may require sedation in tense animals and survey Xrays are normally taken at the same time.

There have been over 100 described techniques for treating cranial cruciate ligament tears. This suggests that historically there is no one technique which is reliably successful in all cases. Small breed dogs can be treated conser-

vatively in some cases. As the knee joint degenerates, the soft tissues become thickened so that there is a degree of stability and the dog can then weight bear to a greater or lesser extent in the long term. However, even small dogs will normally function better and more quickly after surgery.

Should you wish the inside of the joint to be inspected for damage to other structures, it can be done elegantly with a MRI scan, minimally invasively using arthroscopy (small camera) or simply and cost effectively by opening the joint at surgery. These days most surgeons in general practice will perform a lateral suture technique which provides a false ligament on the outside of the knee joint. There are many modifications of the technique and it works well in 85% of cases in the hands of a skilled surgeon. We use this technique routinely in small dogs unless there are individual anatomical problems on Xray which would increase the failure rate. In active medium and large

breed dogs, specialist techniques which alter the geometry of the knee joint are more appropriate.



At Earlswood we use the tibial tuberosity advancement procedure which was developed in Switzerland eight years ago. This involves the advancement of the insertion of the kneecap ligament with a titanium cage which is then held in position using a titanium plate and fork. Success rate is over 90% and most dogs are walking well within a couple of days of surgery. This procedure is also very useful for dogs that have had previous failed surgical repairs. Rehabilitation for all surgical procedures takes 8-12 weeks. Many dogs will benefit from physiotherapy and controlled swimming or treadmill exercise.

Pet Tips for a Happy Christmas

Ian Millar BVMS, CertVOphthal, MRCVS



Christmas can be as exciting for a pet as it is for a child and there are a few things to remember so that things go problem free. Always remember that vets are always available for emergencies day or night through-out the Christmas period and it is good to know the number to ring before the holiday, just in case.

Please don't buy a pet for Christmas no matter how



tempting it is. You can buy well before and settle your pet in, or better still leave it until after the Festive Season when all has settled down and you have plenty of time to pay close attention to training and rearing the new addition.

There is a lot of activity on Christmas Day and sometimes a pet can be pushed to the background. Many people involve their pet by buying them presents and there is a huge market which caters for that. However, be careful in your choice of gift. Some small balls can be swallowed or choked upon, sharp edges in toys can cut the mouth and food treats can upset the stomach. Large rubber

or plastic toys are probably most resilient and safe. There are a lot of rich and strange foods around the Christmas period and you have to be careful. It is best to limit titbits and just give your pet its normal food. Turkey is harder to digest than chicken and many dogs can react to it. The last thing you want is a sensitive stomach, doing things you don't want to see just as you are all sitting down at table.

The bones of the carcass can be dangerous, and so it is wise to avoid giving them to your pet. Also be careful giving your pet chocolates, toxic effects especially from dark chocolate and quality cooking chocolate, can be seen.

Both cats and dogs can be just as frightened by Christmas crackers and Party Poppers as they would from fireworks, so bear them in mind when planning the celebrations. Sometimes it is good, during all the excitement, to have a quiet room available so your pet can retire to it if all is getting too much.



Many people may light an open fire except at this season of the year, so make sure there is a fireguard in place. An open fire is a most interesting thing to a pet that is not used to it and burns are not unusual.

Carina for your Guinea Pig



Like cats and dogs, guinea pigs require care and attention, and being the sociable animals that they are, they tend to enjoy it and you

will also benefit from it. Points to be aware of when looking after your guinea pig

- Keep the hutch clean – guinea pigs enjoy a clean environment. It will also eliminate smelly odours from your home.
- Make sure the guinea pig's bedding is comfortable. Guinea pigs enjoy snuggling up in straw or wood shavings. Always buy bedding from a reputable

pet store.

- Exercise – Like any other pet, guinea pigs need freedom and room to run about. Providing a run with playthings, ensures your guinea pig gets the exercise it needs and has fun too!
- When handling your guinea pig, crouch in front of it, let it come to you. Place a hand across its shoulders and a hand under its back end, then slowly and calmly lift it holding close to your chest.
- Gently talking to your guinea helps them feel at ease. Guinea pigs love having other guinea pigs to socialise with, but make sure you have a hutch big enough for more than one. Fe-

Jeanette Gallagher RVN

- males together are fine as are males together, but a group containing more than one of each, may result in tension between the males. One female and one male will live happily together, but in this case, neutering is advised.
- Finally, register your guinea pig at a local veterinary clinic. Although guinea pigs are tough they can have some problems: dental, abscesses and skin irritations, so if you become aware of any of these problems, be sure to get advice from the vet.

Meet our Staff



Greg Dunlop MA, VetMB, Cert SAS, MRCVS

Gregory qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Cambridge University in 1994. He worked in a mixed and equine practice for 2 years before concentrating on companion animals and moving to London to develop his interest in surgery. Gregory

married an English girl, Rachel bringing her home to Northern Ireland in 2002 to open Hollygate Veterinary Clinic in Carryduff. Hollygate was merged with Earlswood several years later allowing Greg to further develop his special interest in orthopaedics and spinal surgery. He recently gained the RCVS certificate in small animal



surgery and is one of only 3 people in the province to hold this qualification. Gregory and Rachel live near Ballynahinch with their children, Sophie and Luke, 2 cats, 2 dogs, 7 hens and a lame horse.