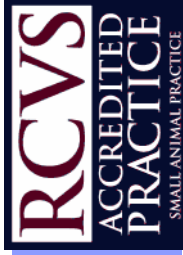




RVG News

August 2008

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Rainsbrook Veterinary Group Ltd and Hydrotherapy Centre
Small and Large Animal Veterinary Surgeons

Welcome to another Rainsbrook Newsletter. If you have any suggestions on articles you would like, or if you and your pet have a story, please contact Stacey Hammond via email on sch@rainsbrook.com or in writing to the Leamington Spa surgery. Thanks!



Congratulations to David Walker and Philippa Chudley who had their marriage blessed at All Saints Church in Harbury on Saturday 14th June. The weather held out and it was an unusually (!) sunny day, allowing David and Pip to enjoy a horse and carriage ride, without fear of soaking, from the church to the reception. Guests enjoyed great food and dancing, and I dare say, there may have been the odd drop of champagne. During the reception, vet Christel and nurse Charlotte had to leave and visit a local farm to perform a caesarean section on a cow. The farmer commented that she had never had such glamorously turned out veterinary support before! All in a days work....

We would like to wish David and Pip all the best for the future.

Well Done Charlotte!

One of our student vet nurses, Charlotte Glasbey (right), has had her final marks for her Veterinary Nursing degree and she was awarded a Distinction! Her standard of work was extremely high and by being such a high calibre of student, she was one of few awarded this high accolade. We are all extremely proud of her achievement. Liz Rothen, our Head Veterinary Nurse and Assessor (left), should be congratulated too. Charlotte passing her nursing studies maintains Liz's 100% trainee success rate. The assessors role in the training of a new nurse can go unnoticed, but is through mountains of paperwork, encouragement, knowledge and persistent nagging (!) that Liz helped make sure all work was completed within time limits, portfolio and practical work was up to standard and revision schedules were stuck too. Although all hard work, the success of another student becoming a Registered Veterinary Nurse should make it all seem worth while.



Charlotte is already making her mark on the Leamington surgery with the promotion of free nurse weigh clinics. These clinics have been running at our Hillmorton practice under the watchful eye of nurse Becky Boag for some time with great success. If you are concerned about your pets weight—you are not sure whether they are too heavy, or too light, you would like to know whether you are feeding them the right food, whether changing their food would be beneficial to them, or any concern you have regarding your pets body condition and feeding regime—contact your local surgery and book a free nurse appointment.

Good luck! Veterinary Nurse Becky Pearson is now on leave for just over 3 weeks for her marriage to fiancé Tom Sidwell and subsequent honeymoon in Bali. After many months of planning and organising, frayed nerves and sleepless nights, the special day has finally arrived! We would like to wish them both all the best for a fantastic day, glorious honeymoon and very happy life together. We are very much looking forward to all the photos!



Mid-Warwickshire Branch
Contact: 01926 334849
Email: midwarwickcats@hotmail.com
Website: www.midwarwick.cats.org.uk

Rugby Branch
Contact: 01788 570010
Website: <http://rugby.cats.org.uk>

The Mid Warwickshire Cats Protection have over 80 kittens and many older cats needing loving homes. Please see their website for pictures and information of just some of the delightful characters available.

The following information is a CP Rugby branch cat needing a home: **Dipsy**.



Dipsy urgently needs a new home as her people are emigrating at the beginning of September and she has nowhere to go. She is a very chatty and companionable cat, who comes to meet and say good bye in the mornings, and loves a fuss (especially having her ears rubbed) and to be near her people. She is afraid of dogs, other cats and young noisy children but would be OK with older quieter children. She can be playful and has regular "mad half hours" chasing round a room but also enjoys sleeping, especially in the warm sunshine. She loves regular routine and would probably suit an older person or couple with a quiet home. She is used to a catflap and her health is good but she will need vaccinating. She is neutered, with a brown brindled tabby coat, and 10 years old. Contact Rugby CP: 01788 570010

If giving a permanent home is not something you can manage right now, but would love to help, the Cats Protection are always in need of foster carers who temporarily look after cats in their own home until new 'parents' can be found. This is just one of the many volunteer positions available. If you would like to be an absolute star and help your local Cats Protection branch, please contact them on the above numbers.

Thank you.



CAPTION COMPETITION!

Up for grabs is up to £50 worth of **dog or cat goodies** (depending on winner's preference) for who can come up with the best caption for this photo of vet Christel's Dogue De Bordeaux, Fergal, who managed to get his head stuck in the lid of the kitchen bin....again.

Write your caption below the photo, along with your name and contact details, and hand in or post to your local branch. Last date for entries will be Saturday October 4th 2008. The winner will be contacted shortly thereafter and the caption published in the next newsletter. Good luck!

Your caption:

- PRACTICE SERVICES
- Appointment system.
- Convenient appointment times.
- Ample parking.
- 24 hour emergency service provided by our own team of vets and nurses.
- Tier 2 RCVS Accredited Practice
- Nurses living on sites.
- Annual health checks.
- Orthopaedic and Small Animal Medicine referral services with certificate holders.
- Modern surgical facilities.
- In house laboratory (Rugby).
- Nurse clinics providing expert advice on tooth care, diet, preventative health care.
- FREE puppy parties (Rugby).
- Hydrotherapy pool and water walker (Leamington)

OFFICE HOURS:
Monday to Friday
8.30am to 7.00pm
Saturday
9.00am to 12.00 noon

SURGERIES
83, High Street, Hillmorton,
Rugby, Warwickshire.
CV21 4HD
Tel: 01788 542221
Fax: 01788 562242

1, Craven Road,
Rugby, Warwickshire.
CV21 3JX
Tel: 01788 562844
Fax: 01788 553642

(and Hydrotherapy)
12, Upper Grove Street,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.
CV32 5AN
Tel: 01926 422592
Fax: 01926 334084

www.rainsbrookvets.co.uk

24 hour emergency service - call your local surgery direct and follow the instructions.

HOME INVASION!

Cat flaps to prevent those unwanted visitors...

The market is now full of so many different types of cat flaps at such varying prices and functions that it is difficult to know which one is best for you and your cat. From my experience, buying the wrong one can be a costly mistake, so do your research before you buy—online reviews can be invaluable in their advice. Having been through the majority of the types of specialised cat flap on the market today, I thought it would be a sound idea to pass on what I have discovered so far. My comments are purely mine alone and through the experience I've had with the types of cat flaps. I haven't delved into the fitting of these cat flaps—if in doubt consult a professional and research, research, research!

So, for all those security conscious cat owners out there, here we go:

Electro-Magnetic:

The cat flap that was ahead of its time was the electromagnetic cat flap. The CatMate magnetic cat flap (right) has been around for many years, this was originally the benchmark for secure cat flaps. Users of this would wear a magnet (middle right) on their collar which would disengage the locking mechanism on approach into the house. Once the magnet has passed through, the cat flap would lock itself.

The advantage of this cat flap above the normal bog standard lockables is: no magnetic means no entry. All well and good, but what if your cats are anything like mine and they have a habit of losing their collars? This has become especially worse with the latest influx of collars with safety release features. Replacing a collar is bad enough, but when the magnets go missing too, it becomes a costly enterprise. You are also left with a highly frustrated resident cat head-butting your backdoor to get in.

These cat flaps were once quite elite, not many people were quite willing to spend £80+ on a cat flap, however, with the introduction of newer technologies over the years the price has come down to around £30. This reduction in price has resulted in more installed electromagnetic cat flaps, more cats wearing magnets, and resulting in reduced security as any magnetic will open any electromagnetic cat flap! Even if you have a CatMate (middle right) or a Staywell (bottom right), the magnet of either will open the other!

Infra Red:

The next stage up from a magnet cat flap is the infra red ones produced by Staywell (right). These retail for around £50. These work on a similar principle in that the cat flap will only allow cats through who wear a special 'key' on their collar. This tackles the problem of the magnetic cat flap and the universal nature of the collar magnets, the infra-red cat flap can be programmed to specific coloured 'keys'. There is around 5 different colours, so if your neighbour happens to have the same cat flap, negotiations can ensue to make sure different coloured 'keys' are used.

Through my experience there were just too many fiddly things going wrong with this cat flap to warrant the hefty price tag and just not enough days when it worked well. The cat flap itself was flimsy plastic, with a weird double door thing going on which confused me, never mind my cat! The 'keys' had to be facing away from the cats body for the cat flap to recognise it and allow access. I had to resort to soldering the 'key' to my cats collar to ensure it was always facing forwards. I also noticed that if the 'key' was knocked around too much its efficiency at opening the flap was much reduced. If a key was lost, a hefty price tag of over £12 to get a replacement. What really ruined this flap for me was my cat developing an interesting entry technique due to the 'key' not functioning all the time: she would use her paw to hook under the door, pull it towards her and enter that way. The general quality of this cat flap was, in my opinion, poor.

Radio Wave (RFID):

Now we are getting in the really expensive cat flaps. The CatMate Elite range are cat flaps that use radio frequency identification (RFID) technology. Your cat wears a circular tag on his collar which has a chip embedded in it and this provides a completely unique identification. Tags have to be programmed individually into the cat flap resulting in a very secure system. You do not have to worry about batteries for the tags and they double up as identification discs. There are 2 cat flaps in the range: Selective (approx. £75) and Super Selective (approx. £95).

The Selective (top right) is the base model which can be programmed to let in up to 7 cats and has easy to use locking mechanism. The Super Selective (below right) can be programmed for up to 8 cats, and has the special feature of showing which cats are in and which are still out and the times which they exited and returned. A timer can be programmed to lock the flap at certain times if you need to keep your cats in, or if you just want to make sure they stay in during rush-hour.

I bought a base model of this range, and I still do not know whether it was just faulty, but whenever the lock disengaged when a cat approached, the unlocking mechanism made a sound just like that of a cat hissing! Needless to say, my cats refused to use it. As whether this is normal, I have yet to find out, so if anyone has one of these cat flaps, please let me know!

But I still like the idea of this range—especially the Super Selective where you can see who has been out and when, and PetMate generally make excellent quality products. An obvious disadvantage with this range is if your cat loses their collar, they lose the ID disc. They therefore can not get in and you will have to pay out for an expensive replacement.

I would recommend if you wanted to try one of these, is to set it up before you install it to ensure the unlocking of the door is a silent action—if it does produce a 'hissing' type noise and yours are scaredy cats like mine, I would return it and try another make.

Microchip Scanning:

The securest cat flaps now on the market are those which read the microchip that is implanted into your cat's neck. Not only does this mean they can enter the cat flap when they lose their collar, entrance is completely unique due to no two microchip numbers being the same. There are currently two microchip reading cat flaps available: Pet Porte and Sureflap. Both have their advantages and disadvantages. Of course, to use these, your cat needs to have a microchip—this is a small rice grain sized implant that is injected into the scruff of your pet's neck, which when activated by a scanner provides a unique and permanent identification number. Microchipping can be done in a consultation with a vet and are only £15!

Firstly, the Petporte (right) which retails at around £100. This is quite a large cat flap, so the more 'big-boned' of cats out there will not have a problem getting through. It also runs on the mains, so there is no need worry about having spare batteries. If there is a power cut, the flap remembers the microchips, so there is no need to reprogram them all in. During a power cut, it will automatically lock, not allowing any cat in or out.

On the outside of the door there is a porch which houses the scanning part of the cat flap, this sticks out from the door a fair way, so you will need to keep this in mind if thinking about installing it in your home. This cat flap also has a light sensor, and you can choose have the cat flap lock your cats in when dusk falls. Up to 12 cats can be programmed into this cat flap. Further details can be found at the following address: www.petporte.com. The one niggling thing I found with this cat flap is that the cat needs to get right under the outside porch for the scanner to register it. My cats had trouble with this as they tended to sit to the side of the flap and poke their heads round the corner leaving the scruff of their neck (where the microchip is) not underneath the porch!

The other make is Sureflap (right), and I have found this one to be very, very good, and also much cheaper at around £75. Differences between this one and the Petporte are as follows: the Sureflap uses batteries, can be programmed to allow up to 32 cats in and does not have a porch like the Petporte. More details can be found at the following website: www.sureflap.co.uk. Where to program the Petporte you need to push some buttons, then you have 30 seconds to wave your cat in front of the scanner in order for it to learn, all you need to do with the Sureflap is turn it on and it automatically goes into learn mode. Once your cat leaves through it, the microchip number is stored.

Both these cat flaps are quite selective in where they can be installed, ie. door, glazing, wall etc. And I know, for example, that the Sureflap does not have the biggest tunnel section and there are no tunnel extensions available yet. Please research first before buying. Both companies offer guarantees, and Petporte even offer a full refund 14 days after purchasing, even if installed when you buy from their website. The aftercare from these two companies is exceptional.

For those of you out there wanting a more kitty secure home, never fear, as technology has infiltrated the cat flap world. The key to selecting the right cat flap for you is research—use the internet, ask your friends, ask anyone! I have only covered a few basic details having not broached where and how they can be fitted—for this information contact the manufacturers or search online—the information is out there. Simply installing a secure cat flap can have the most profound stress alleviating affect on your cats and should be high on the list of things to do if you cat is showing signs of anxiety—such as spraying in your home.

THE RAINSBROOK TEAM



LIZ ROTHEN RVN
Head
Veterinary Nurse



ALISON COXON RVN
Hydrotherapist
& Veterinary
Nurse



BECKY BOAG
RVN
Veterinary Nurse



BECKY PEARSON
RVN
Veterinary Nurse



CHARLOTTE GLASBEY RVN
Veterinary Nurse



TRISTEN SMITH
Trainee Veterinary
Nurse



ELAINE MILLES
Auxiliary Nurse



MARIE GUNTON
Kennel Assistant



BEV BEACHAM
Hydrotherapy
Assistant



DAVID WALKER
Veterinary surgeon,
Orthopaedic certificate
holder and Director



SIMON DANIEL
Veterinary Surgeon
and Director



SIAN DAVIES
Veterinary Surgeon,
Small Animal
Medicine certificate
holder and Director



FIONA CLEGG
Veterinary Surgeon



MARY-ANNE FRANK
Veterinary Surgeon



HELENA KADOW
Veterinary Surgeon



CHRISTEL OINK
Veterinary
Surgeon



BECCI YOUNG RVN
Practice Manager