

a word from the boss... Improving the Level of Care

One of the great changes in veterinary practice over the past 20 years has been the development of specialist referral centres, where we can send our more challenging cases for expert evaluation and advanced investigative techniques. The range of diagnostic and treatment options for our pets is now on a par with those available in the human field. However, this can prove to be costly, which has prompted the further uptake of pet health insurance, and the great majority of animals undergoing expensive treatments are now insured.

With the demand for specialised services, many consultants across a wide range of disciplines, now provide an in-house alternative. They will attend a client's own practice to carry out the consultation and investigation on-site, discussing the treatment options with the client and the practice vet. This service has a number of obvious advantages.

- Avoids extra travelling for the pet and owner to a referral centre.**
- It is more cost-effective resulting in lower fees to the client.**
- The continuity of practice care is enhanced by providing more services in our own clinic.**

Ophthalmology - Ultrasonography - Cardiology We are fortunate in having a number of specialists and colleagues we can call on, who have developed specific interests and advanced skills in their fields.

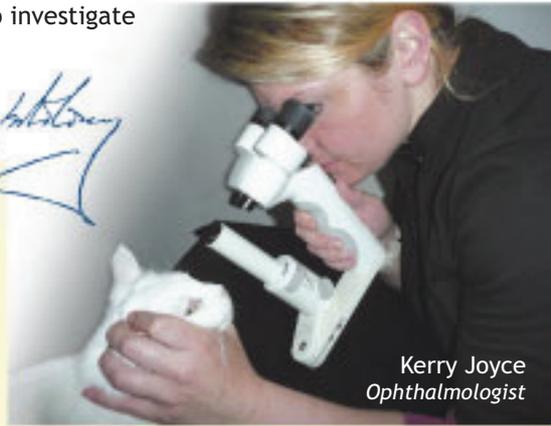
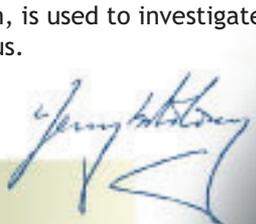
Our own vet **Kerry Joyce**, uses her **ophthalmology** qualifications and specialized equipment to provide a second opinion service in managing difficult eye conditions here at Marks Farm, and also to other practices.

For a number of years, **Monica Merlo**, our highly experienced **diagnostic imager**, has been carrying out advanced ultrasound scans on a second-opinion basis. This has greatly helped us to diagnose conditions where x-ray techniques and medical investigation have been insufficient.



Monica Merlo
 Diagnostic Imager

An even more specialized form of ultrasound evaluation, an echocardiogram, is used to investigate heart disease in our patients, and **cardiologist Paul Smith** regularly assists us. He generally has a consultation with the client, and then proceeds to a full cardiac work-up of the patient. This has proven to be extremely helpful in many cases, as you will read below in our special client and pet feature.



Kerry Joyce
 Ophthalmologist

Shanimarle Bellona.....



was born on 28th May 2004, and has been visiting our practice since she was a puppy. Also known as Maggie, this splendid Irish wolfhound has a very 'laid back' approach to life, loves being around her human family and if feeling a little tired, just affectionately leans against them for a little light relief.

Life for her in general was very happy. That was up until November 2009, when purely by chance, Maggie was found to have a serious heart condition. On a leisurely walk with her owner Peter Merifield, she unfortunately suffered a nasty bite from a rather unfriendly dog, so was brought to Marks Farm for treatment. During her examination, we found that she had an extremely rapid and irregular heart beat, which was of great concern to us. Further investigations were required and cardiac specialist Paul Smith was called in to assist. Following a heart scan and an ambulatory ECG used to monitor her heart rate over a 24-hour period, Maggie was diagnosed with two major problems; atrial fibrillation, where the heart beats too rapidly and inefficiently, as well as

degenerative mitral valve disease where valves on the left side of the heart are diseased and leaky. This resulted in her heart struggling to effectively keep the circulation going. A build up of back-pressure was occurring through blood vessels in her lungs, causing fluid congestion in her chest. By calling on our cardiologist, we obtained a rapid and accurate diagnosis of Maggie's problem, and with the correct medication prescribed, her quality and longevity of life have been greatly improved.

Now eighteen months since her diagnosis, she is still responding well to treatment, and visits us for regular check-ups. Given the seriousness of her condition, Maggie is actually defying all the experts in her continuing strength, and is still very much enjoying her 'laid back' life and leisurely walks.

Peter and Maggie

A New Role

February saw the return of our head nurse Gail to the practice, following her maternity leave. However, we now welcome her back with a new title of Practice Manager. A valued member of our team since 1992, her extensive experience in nursing, and knowledge of all aspects of surgery life, mean she will fulfil this new role extremely well. Home life is busy with her young son Harry, so she will initially be at the surgery part-time, concentrating on such issues as health and safety within the practice, client care, staff and general management. We are very pleased to have her back in the 'family' again, and wish her lots of luck with her new position.



Gail and Flo

NEWS IN SHORT

❖ Our three student nurses Holly, Charlotte & Karine, are all currently training towards obtaining their Veterinary Nurse qualification. With our vet Denise Moloney as their mentor, and with lots of hard work coming from our trainees, we have the winning combination for successful results. Good luck!

❖ We'd like to say 'welcome back' to Lucy who returns to nursing duties following maternity leave. Baby Matilda is growing fast and will be celebrating her first birthday on 10th June. Where does the time go?!

❖ Cold weather and freezing temperatures of winter, took their toll on our premises and approaching road! A burst pipe in December caused a major flood inside the practice, and small holes in the road were turned into potholes. Thankfully all the damage has been repaired inside and out - so enjoy the now much smoother drive up to the practice doors!

❖ Late summer will see Jerry conquering the heights of Scafell Pike in the very picturesque Lake District. Fingers crossed for better weather than last year's Ben Nevis expedition!



Young Flo after her op

Staff Pets A part of our team

Jerry's three-year-old Dot is a calm kind of girl, who takes life very much in her own stride. She loves coming to work and can often be seen standing up at reception meeting our clients. But given the choice, she would be happy to spend all day long with Jerry in a field rounding up sheep! Dot has good Irish roots from her dad and granddad, but is actually an Essex girl, born in South Woodham Ferrers, where her mum was the resident sheepdog at Marsh Farm. Dot's ancestors were all working sheepdogs, and it's her favourite hobby too, in fact, one she's extremely good at! She began competing in East Anglian sheepdog trials in February 2011, and won her first competition in March. Jerry and Dot make a good team, who are both very hopeful of winning lots more rosettes, which she can show off to all her friends at the surgery.

Flo, a golden retriever, is a long and dedicated serving member of our team. For many years now, she has been doing a great job of ensuring the removal of empty crisp packets from the bin under reception. In addition, she is also able to offer plenty of reassurance to our patients, as when a puppy she had to undergo major surgery and treatment here at the practice. In 2003, at only six weeks old, Flo had a kidney removed, due to an infection caused by a leaky tube. For such a young one, she made an amazing recovery after the operation, and also from

further treatment to repair the problem completely. Eight years on, she is a strong healthy dog that enjoys life to the full, and will be helping owner Gail with her new role. So if you happen to see Flo busying around the place, do be sure to say hello.

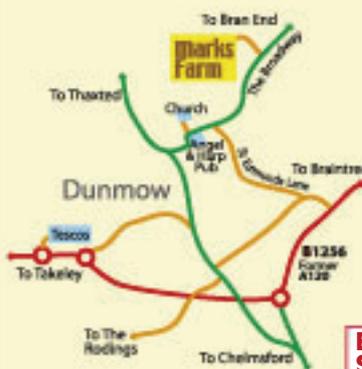


Dot working on reception

Relax You are Covered

Accidents and sudden illness can occur with your much-loved pet

when you are least expecting them and at such an anxious time, it is reassuring to know that we are here. However at times, treating your pet can incur expensive procedures, and the last thing you need is the added worry about costs. If your pet is not currently insured, you may wish to consider one of the many policies that are available. Instead of worrying about the financial expense of tests, operations and treatments, you can relax knowing that your chosen insurance company can help cover the cost. Please remember each policy is different, so it is very important to read them thoroughly to see exactly what they include before making your choice.



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