

Dear friends,

With Easter just around the corner and bluebells poking through the ground, Spring is finally here! So, this month we're featuring our fabulous Easter product range and kick start Spring with a look at the power of aloe vera in a pet's health special. And, with the ever increasing rise in dog bites, we discuss how misunderstanding dog's behaviour can lead to being bitten. Plus, we've all our usual news and reviews for you. If you've got a story you'd like us to feature, do email us at info@walk-the-dog.net



Happy reading!

Hanne and the WTD team

Misunderstanding can lead to dog bites

In February, the NHS released statistics showing over a four year period the number of patients under 18 years treated for dog bites in London had more than doubled. In the Midlands the figure rose by 80 per cent. And since 2006, dog attacks have risen overall by more than 40 per cent to nearly 3,800 a year, and these are just the ones being reported. So, why are we seeing an increase?

In my role as a behaviour specialist, I'm often called into homes where owners have been bitten by their dogs; understandably this is very distressing and confusing for owners, especially when they believe there was no clear warning, but was there? My job is to help owners understand why this happens, how to reduce the risk of this happening by teaching them how to adapt their behaviour, help them to manage their environment and make them aware of the 'warning' signals to look out for.

Dogs communicate all the time through a combination of visual, verbal and olfactory cues and signals. Like humans, much of dogs' communication is sent through their body language, particularly facial expressions and body posture. Yet in the language of 'dog', there are no language barriers; dogs from different countries and different breeds will typically recognise the visual and vocal signals of another dog when it is feeling upset, anxious, fearful, tired, disinterested, frustrated, excited, happy and playful. Dogs can also demonstrate through these communication signals whether they're dominant or submissive, so canine communication indicates the dog's emotional response to situations, their social status and it enables the dog to express his needs. The language of dog can be subtle ranging from a glance, tensing of muscles or a slight shift in the dog's posture to something more obvious, such as a play bow or a loud bark. And, canine communication can be complex; a given gesture may have multiple distinct meanings depending on the situation and the accompanying behaviours.



Warning signals; notice how this dog leans away, his tongue comes to the front and there is licking. His ears are flat and he averts his eyes. This dog isn't happy about being hugged.

For example, many people believe the gesture of a **wagging tail** is the sign of 'friendliness and approachability', however, a dog can bite you hard when he's wagging his tail. Many owners, especially children will hug their pets. Yet, **hugging** is an action only performed by humans and primates as an act of love and friendship. So, when an owner hugs a dog, there's the potential for misunderstanding because dogs simply don't hug! And, many dislike being handled in this way especially those sensitive to touch. The two most common contexts in which children are bitten are; when a child approaches a dog that's tied up because he wags his tail and "looks friendly", secondly when a child hugs a dog. Often children want to touch or hug a dog as a way of expressing affection, yet the dog may easily misinterpret the well meaning intentions of the child. Like many adults, children are often unaware of the visual signs of an anxious dog, and often the irresistible urge to caress the dog overrides that individual's ability to accurately 'read' the dog. Below are common signals to look for, which we call the 'Ladder of Aggression'.

1. Blinking, lip licking, nose licking, yawning
2. Looking away, turning head away, panting
3. Sitting, paw lift, turning body away
4. Walking away, creeping back
5. Standing crouched, tail tucked under
6. Lying down, leg up
7. Stiffening up, staring
8. Growling, snapping, lunge then bite



Warning signals; notice the whites of the eyes are seen as he uses his peripheral vision to watch the approach from the right. His ears are flared up and outwards, head directed away and his mouth is tense. He's saying "back off, it's my stick."

New faces to Walk the Dog

A warm welcome to our new WTD pets; **Brian, Poppy K, Angus, Shaun, Cleo, Scooby, Alfie, Clayton, Tilly B, Poppy C, Vinnie, Lola, Moshi, Fizz, Zola, Seamus, Keeley, India, Nelson, Toto, Darcy M, Wilf and Mable.** If your pet isn't on our picture gallery yet, please send us their picture, so they can join our animal hall of fame. Email us at info@walk-the-dog.net

Sad farewells

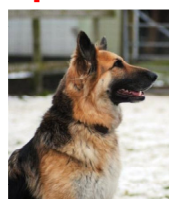
It's with a heavy heart we say goodbye to the following WTD pets, who we so loved working with; **Sandy, Digby, Kiri and Humphrey.**



Great reads 'When cats reigned like Kings'

By Georgie Anne Geyer - a foreign correspondent with a vast knowledge of world affairs, lends some of her globe-trotting expertise and connections around the world to pursue the origins of domestic cat. Full of great stories; a must for all you cat lovers.

Special appeal – dog of the month



Sadie is a stunning 3 yrs German Shepherd. She was rescued by Every Chance Rescue and has been personally fostered and cared for by best selling author and dog expert Jan Fennell. If you can give Sadie a loving home, with the full support and advice from WTD, contact us today on 01442 878628 or email info@walk-the-dog.net

Meet the Guinea-pig whisperer!



Name: Charlotte Towler
Age: 11
Born: Washington D.C, USA
Pets: 9 fish, 2 guinea pigs - Patches & Pepper, 1 loan horse called Ariel

Love My Guinea Pig is a website aimed at guinea pig lovers and owners. The site's the brainchild of eleven year old Charlotte Towler. We caught up with Charlotte for a chat.

How long have you kept guinea pigs? I've kept guinea pigs for just over a 2 years now, but like my mum always says I do know quite a lot about them.

What makes guinea pigs such a good companions? Guinea pigs make great companions because they've so much love to give and can become very attached to their owner(s). For example Patches comes out to meet me each morning when I feed them, he waits on the step when I go to get their hay.

What factors should you consider before getting a guinea pig? Consider whether you have the time, space and the money, like any pet, and whether you feel prepared to care for an animal like this for the rest of its life.

What are your top tips for being a great owner? Always keep them in at least a pair because in the wild they live in family groups and are very sociable. Get ones from the same litter otherwise they might fight. Never keep them with a rabbit, as the bunny may hurt a guinea pig with their powerful back feet. Clean them out at least once a week, otherwise they get extremely dirty. Finally, unless you want loads of tiny guinea pigs running around, get the same gender!



Charlotte's website is www.lovelyguineapig.com

In the news... Follow us on Twitter under "WalktheDoguk"

Hitting the headlines

Walk the Dog has had a busy couple of months with the media what with our **Dressed to the K9's** competition causing a stir. From BBC Breakfast, documentary filming to a guest spot on Talk Sport, Hanne's been talking about dog behaviour and our competition. Check out our press page to see some of our editorial coverage at www.walk-the-dog.net



K9-9K in April

The Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, is holding a doggy challenge to help raise much needed funds. The K9-9K is a sponsored event being held for the Hospice in association with the Lions of Berkhamsted. Stroll through the Berkhamsted countryside on Sunday 18th April, starting at 11am from Ashlyn's school. For more information call Tony Bellemly on 01442 875417 or visit www.berkhamsted-lions.co.uk

Luxury dog beds and much more



Furnivall Finecrafts is a Hemel Hempstead based wood craft business that creates bespoke furniture pieces. Simon Lambert from Furnivall Finecrafts has an impressive portfolio which includes luxury pet beds. If you fancy a four poster or sleigh bed for your pet, call

Simon on 01442 268705 or visit www.furnivall-finecrafts.co.uk

A taxing time



In recent years, the number of behavioural cases where money worries for business owners have had a direct affect on the pet's stressful behaviour is increasing. With the forthcoming changes to income tax and predictions of hyper-inflation circulating ever more, it's important to have a good accountant at your

fingertips. One such company is Rickaby & Co based in Hertfordshire. A number of our clients have been helped by Rickaby & Co and they've certainly secured themselves a reputation, not only for excellence in accountancy but excellence in customer service, caring for their clients and looking at ways to make their clients' businesses more profitable. Unlike the grey suits we tend to think of with accountants, Rickaby really are unlike all the rest. Find out more, call Liz Baranov on 01442 873236 or visit www.rickaby.co.uk

Inspirational Easter pet gifts

Show your pet how much you care with our fun and inspirational Easter gifting from cat and dog toys to edible Easter bunnies! Postage and packaging is absolutely **FREE**. To order, log onto www.walk-the-dog.net



Edible Easter Bunny
£4.50



Edible Easter Egg
£8.50



Edible Easter Chick £2.25



Edible Easter Bun £2.25



Rope toys £4.50



Edible Easter Egg Card £5.50



Mouse with cat nip pouch toy £2.50



Cat toy £3.80

Office contact hours

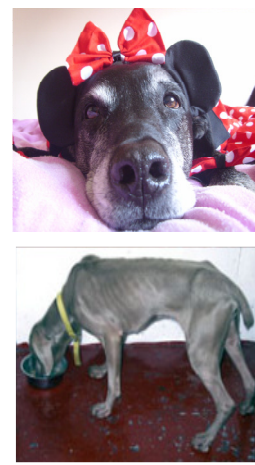


Please note our office contact hours are:
Monday-Fridays: 9am to 5.30pm, Saturdays: 9am to 12pm and closed Sundays.

How to contact us:

Tel: 01442 878628 / 07976 743 031 Email: info@walk-the-dog.net
Visit us at: www.walk-the-dog.net and www.doglistener.tv

Dressed to the K9's 2010



Our 'Dressed to the K9's' competition is well under way, yet we still need your **entries and donations**. Our annual competition is in aid of Every Chance Rescue, the dog rescue organisation run entirely by Jan Fennell Dog Listeners. This year our judge is the renowned artist and dog lover Christiane Kubrick.

ECR helps hundreds of unwanted dogs like Webster (*bottom left*) who was starved, beaten and understandably fearful of humans. Thanks to ECR, Webster is now fully recovered and looking for his forever home. For a chance to win fantastic prizes and donate visit www.dressedtothek9s.com and become a fan on our Facebook page "Dressed to the K9's".



Pet health special – Aloe Vera FOREVER

Pet health is of prime importance to us here at Walk the Dog, so we recently joined forces with Forever Living, producers of aloe vera and bee pollen products. For centuries, civilisations around the world have used aloe vera for its health benefits; it contains over 75 known active ingredients, included are 19 of the 20 amino acids required by the human body. However, many people are unaware of the benefits of aloe vera and bee pollen to their pet's health. Below are our top recommended items to ensure a healthier you and a healthier pet.

- **Aloe vera gelly** – all the WTD team carry this in our First Aid kit. Great for use on wounds, burns, any skin trauma and for skin diseases such as eczema and psoriasis. 100% aloe vera gel absorbs quickly and helps reduce scar formation. (118ml)
- **Aloe Vera Veterinary spray** – another WTD First Aid kit essential. Easy to apply spray used to soothe irritations, cleanse before applying dressings or applying Aloe Vera Gelly. Excellent for rinsing off wounds and to be used as a first application for skin diseases. (473ml)
- **Aloe Vera Methyl-Supphonyl-Methane gel (MSM)** - its high sulphur content and natural properties of Aloe Vera benefits conditions affecting the musculoskeletal system (e.g.) joint arthritis, muscle injuries, strains of tendons and ligaments. Also has a benefit when used to help skin infections and wound healing. (118ml)
- **Aloe Vera Gel** - this drink has a tonic effect, maintaining a healthy appetite, suppleness of joints and revitalizing energy levels. Also has a soothing effect, acting to reduce your animal's sensitivity to external irritants. Aids animal urinary incontinence. Available in Berry Nectar flavour. Pour onto your pet's food or in their water. (1 litre)
- **Bee Pollen Tablets** - Given in tablet form, bee pollen is useful for allergic respiratory problems such as hay fever, COPD and asthma. Beneficial in cases of bronchitis, rhinitis and sinusitis (heat shakers). Rich in all essential nutrients for life and a great supplement for animals recuperating from an illness. (100 tablets)



For more information about using these products or to purchase, visit www.walk-the-dog.net

Walk the Dog Puppies

Graduates



Our puppy school's popularity continues to grow with now 15 students regularly attending. We're delighted to congratulate the following pups who successfully completed WTD Puppies Stage 1 **Raffi, Patch, Ruby, Brian and Uki**.

Watch this space for more graduates!