

# Colne Valley News

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**your friends  
are  
our concern**

*Highlights of this issue:*

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Staff pet p 2



**Who? Where? Why?**  
See over the page for all  
the answers!

(‘Meet the staff pet’ has  
moved over the page  
again)

## Summer hazards

Tremendous thunderstorm last night (15<sup>th</sup> June) is a timely reminder of some common summer hazards:

**Grass awns** – We have already had two dogs with classical inter-digital cysts: a fluid swelling between two toes, each yielding a grass awn. Another common site for finding awns is the ears (indicated by violent head shaking and pain) and eyes. A dog suddenly sneezing may have inhaled a grass awn.

**Hot cars** – Never forget how quickly the interior of a car can

heat up. Treating a dog with heat stroke is a real emergency situation, and heart-breaking when unsuccessful. Try to avoid leaving your dog in the car on a hot, or even warm, day.

**Fleas** – We can advise flea control in every season because fleas are a year-round problem. They certainly love warm weather when it is warm in houses and outside. Don’t give them a chance of a foothold because they really are better avoided in the first place!

## Clinical conundrum

Have you kept the last newsletter with the photographic puzzle? I can reveal that there is a curious white circle lying above the end of an upside down letter R (a marker used to show that the patient was lying on his right hand side).

X-ray film behaves rather like toast: the more x-rays hitting it, the darker it goes. So, lungs

appear black when they contain air, and dense white shows where x-rays have been prevented from reaching the film, often by metal.

So, the white object is a circle of metal: a wedding ring swallowed by an inquisitive puppy! The ring was retrieved a day later from a pile of the puppy’s poo!

## Friends Of The Ferals



*A favorite family phrase  
or slogan can go here.*

*Ben and Lynsey in  
action – a very  
different situation  
from spaying a cat  
at our Hythe  
premises!*



*Clare Hogston's Burmese cat  
Mr P was found with seious  
injuries after being hit by a car  
twelve years ago outside a  
wine shop, so his full name is  
Thomas Peatling!*

Lynsey writes: Devon-based Valerie Sinclair set up the charity 'Friends Of The Ferals' to send volunteer vets and vet nurses to Spain and Tenerife to neuter feral cats. The feral cat problem has improved greatly in recent years with the help of people like Valerie who aims to run two trips per year: in March/April and again in October/November when it is cooler and just before the cats' breeding seasons. My first trip was to Campello last year, and I went again this April, accompanied by Ben this time. Valerie has to raise at least £3000 for a trip to go ahead, to cover the cost of air fares for all volunteers including trappers, vets and vet nurses, van-hire while abroad, drugs, and accommodation if necessary. She also relies on donations from drug companies and veterinary surgeries for sourcing the necessary equipment and materials.

Ben and I travelled to Marbella. Our team comprised two vets, two vet nurses, a trainee vet nurse and two trappers. Everyone on the trip gives his/her time free of charge. Team members are found through word-of-mouth, repeat volunteers and voluntary vet organisations such as the Worldwide Veterinary Service.

We worked at a British expat's villa. Trappers went out late evening and early morning to trap cats from feral colonies whose whereabouts were passed on by the locals who were feeding them. Some

colonies were as large as 300, others just 20 individuals. Cats trapped by locals were also brought to the villa. All cats and baskets were labelled to ensure each cat was released back to the correct place of origin.

Each cat was transferred into a crush cage with as little stress as possible. A drug combination was injected to induce and maintain general anaesthesia. Once asleep, each cat had five other injections: pain killer, antibiotic, multivitamin, and two de-worming drugs.

An important step after castrating or spaying was to surgically remove the tip of the left ear, so that cats can be identified from a distance as having been neutered. Once sprayed for fleas and ticks, the patient was put back into his/her cage to recover. The cats were fed and watered, and kept overnight to allow a wound-check before release the following day.

I was privileged to go out to a colony to see at first-hand how the cats coped back on the streets after surgery. They all looked well, seemingly unfazed by their experiences of the previous day.

We managed to treat 250 cats in total - our maximum in one day was 55! The days were long, from 9am and some not ending until 7pm, but the hard work was definitely worth it. It is great to be able to use your skills to give a little bit back to the cat populations desperately in need of help and control. I will definitely be going on another trip with Valerie in the future, as will Ben.