

10 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

Veterinary tissue bank, Europe's only tissue banking facility for pets, is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. In the last 10 years, we have supplied over 10,000 bone grafts for use in various orthopaedic and dental surgical procedures, helping many dogs and cats in need, both in the UK and further afield. Veterinary tissue banking has now become an indispensable service to our pets and vets alike.

Looking forward to the future we would like to extend our services. For example, there is an increasing need for cornea transplants in dogs and cats. Cornea can restore the sight and it gives a life changing experience to our pets. However, this service is currently not available due to lack of sufficient tissue donor numbers.

The subject of tissue donation is a difficult one to discuss at a time of distress. Registering the pet as a tissue donor in advance helps to overcome the difficulty and we encourage pet owners to do so. Tissue transplantation in humans is a growing service and our four legged friends deserve no less, but this depends on the generosity of pet owners as well as the help of veterinary practices. We are ever so grateful to them and hope that more and more pets will be able to receive much needed tissue transplants in the years to come.



VETERINARY TISSUE BANK

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Larry – a 15 year old Irish Lurcher from Taunton, Somerset provides a new lease of life for 83 other dogs!



“I loved him dearly, but also felt that when he died it was important to go on to help someone else”

Larry and Marion Davis, his owner, met over 13 years ago when Larry was brought over as a rescue dog from Ireland by the Blue Cross and found a forever home with Marion. They had a very close bond and her decision to sign him up as a donor was not taken lightly.

Marion, however, was aware of Larry's advancing age and so as his health began to fail, she carefully considered how she would manage his passing.

Being an organ donor herself, Marion recognised the importance of donating tissues to human healthcare and hoped to find an equivalent for Larry. She was surprised and delighted to find out about our Pet Donor Register, and the option of donating Larry's tissues to help other pets in need.

“I was realistic about Larry's aging process and knew that he wasn't going to be with me for much longer.” Marion commented “I loved him dearly, but also felt that when he died it was important to go on to help someone else – whether that be another human in our case, or another animal in their case.”

Larry's vet, Ian Macleay, praised how simple the donation process was for both the veterinary practice and the owner.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Marion, Ian and his team at Priory Close veterinary surgery in Taunton, and of course Larry, for helping us improve the lives of other pets. Larry's tissues went on to help 83 other dogs!

Dusty- a 4 year old, three legged, Springer Spaniel from Blagdon, Bristol is steady on her feet.

When Rob Purdew and Clodagh Tanner, Dusty's owners, noticed she was having trouble walking they were worried but little did they know the team at Chester Gates Veterinary Specialists would be willing to develop a whole new technique to ensure Dusty had the best quality of life possible.

Dusty has already had one of her forelimbs amputated as a puppy, and her owners were

desperately worried that losing the other forelimb would mean the end of the life for Dusty, as she would not be able to live a normal life.

Orthopaedic specialists at Chester Gates, Ben Walton and John Innes, diagnosed Dusty with Humeral Intracondylar Fissure (HIF), a condition where the bone breaks easily at the elbow. Dusty was treated using a donor bone and an implant designed specifically by the

Yondu- a 10 month old kitten from Plymouth, whose life was tragically cut short, goes on to help over 70 other cats.

Ten month old Yondu was severely injured in a hit and run road traffic accident. A kind hearted passer-by picked the injured kitten up off the road and carried him to a nearby vets, who scanned him for a microchip and contacted his owner, Verity Heyward.

Yondu was then taken to Ridge Referrals in Dawish for emergency treatment but, sadly, his injuries were so severe that he was unlikely to recover, and he was euthanised.

Verity's grief at the loss of Yondu was eased somewhat by the knowledge that his tissues could go on to help other pets in need. As a member of the human donor register, Verity is pragmatic about end of life issues and is keen to help those that are left behind. She elaborates "It is a great gift to help the living after your death. I am pleased Yondu has been able to do this. After the tissue and bone had been removed, his remains were individually cremated by an approved pet crematorium and were returned to us in a lovely casket. He was treated with respect and dignity throughout the entire process."

Patrick Ridge, of Ridge Referrals, sees first-hand how pets can benefit from the donor scheme. "The ability to use bone and tissue for grafts in injured pets is one of the veterinary worlds latest advances and can dramatically help improve the lives of recipient pets." On the subject of donation, he commented: "It's hard at such times to think about how this loss might help other animals, but in some cases the knowledge that a beloved cat's departure has actually been able to help other cats find a new lease of life can make the grief more bearable."

Our deepest gratitude to Verity, Patrick, the team at Ridge Referrals, and, last but not least, the lovely Yondu for helping us carry out our work.



"It is a great gift to help the living after your death. Yondu has been able to do this."

team for this procedure and 3-D printed, titanium alloy plate. The surgery was successful and she returned home in a few days.

"I was amazed to see her out of surgery, it was unbelievable." Said Rob. "The swelling went down quickly and although she limped a little initially she started using the leg immediately, and you wouldn't know there had ever been a problem."

"It's still early days, of course, and Dusty is only having short walks but we are so pleased with the progress she has made. We are grateful to the owner of the donor pet for thinking of helping pets in need at such a difficult, traumatic time for them."

We hope Dusty continues to progress well and has a long and happy life.



Pippin- a 6 year old Border Collie cross, with chronic osteoarthritis from Bude, Cornwall, is jumping for joy.

Pippin had been a successful agility dog but more than that, he has always been a much loved family member. He had previously suffered from OCD (Osteochondritis Dessicans) where cartilage in a growing joint develops abnormally in his shoulder, but the news that he had chronic osteoarthritis was the final straw for this owner Margaret Goulden.

Pippin was intolerant to many traditional medicines and unable to get much relief from the pain that came with chronic arthritis.

Dr. Patrick Ridge, of Ridge Referrals in Dawish, mentioned the possibility of stem cell therapy to help Pippin. Stem cells are a modern therapy, where cells are harvested from a patient by way of removing a small sample of fat from under the skin. The cells are then isolated and expanded in culture on our site in North Wales and, when they have reached the required numbers, are sent back to the practice for administration by the vet via injection in the affected joints. Patrick ridge explains: "It is a straight-forward procedure; Pippin only had to stay in hospital for a couple of hours while we injected the cells then he was able to return home. I did repeat the procedure a while afterwards and he is responding very well now. I am very pleased with the improvement."

Pippin had previously undergone two surgeries to treat the OCD in his shoulder, and Margaret was understandably becoming increasingly concerned about his discomfort and was keen to find a way to relieve Pippin's pain. She elaborates: "Pippin had the second injection in the autumn and after keeping him on a restricted exercise regime for a few weeks, he is now back to his old self but a better than old self version. He is running around like a puppy and has a new zest for life."

Margaret and Pippin have cut back on their agility competitions, but they are whipping up a storm in the Rally Obedience and Hooping competitions! Margaret concluded: "I hadn't realised how effective and simple stem cell therapy was in alleviating the pain of arthritis. I would certainly recommend it to anyone whose dog is suffering from arthritis pain."

"This energetic, pain free dog can often be seen fast asleep upside-down finding life a lot more relaxing."

Margaret sends the team here at VTBank updates via our facebook page, we love receiving them and seeing Pippin with all his ribbons! We wish them the best of luck going forward, and hope Pippin continues to be pain free!



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