

# SPRING 2019 Paws & Hooves

The magazine of the Royal Veterinary College Animal Care Trust

Help  
our  
heroes

## BLOOD DONOR BOOST

And other fundraising stories about  
how your support makes a difference

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Improvements in our  
hospitals thanks to  
YOU!

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Who knew cows love  
massages as much as  
we do?

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Heaps of fun events for  
you to get involved with!



## Welcome to Paws&Hooves

**T**hank you to everyone who has supported the Animal Care Trust. Your donations, dog walks, marathons and memory tree leaves all make such a difference to the thousands of critically-ill animals treated at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC).

This Paws and Hooves will give you just a snippet of the impact your generosity has on the RVC. You have collectively funded even more equipment that we ran out of space to feature! So here's a couple of other vital developments you've made possible:

- Transoesophageal probe for our cardiology team – used to ultrasound the heart and surrounding structures to better guide our heart surgeons when making surgical repairs of the heart.
- High Flow Oxygen Therapy – provides oxygen to patients with significant breathing problems, without the need for anaesthesia.

We hope you enjoy reading the wide range of news and stories from around the Royal Veterinary College and its hospitals, all made possible by your incredible support.

Thank you for everything that you do.

### RVC is voted no 1 vet school in the world

We are thrilled that the RVC has been ranked as the world's number one veterinary school in the prestigious QS World University Rankings 2019. This is the first time the RVC has occupied the top spot in this league table, and the first time a UK vet school has achieved this position. The RVC was listed as number one out of 401 institutions offering veterinary sciences.

"The result is testament to the commitment of all of those at the Royal Veterinary College to advancing veterinary science and making a difference to the lives of animals and humans worldwide. It is a privilege to lead the RVC and humbling for us to be held in such high esteem by our peers around the globe." Professor Stuart Reid, Principal of the RVC.



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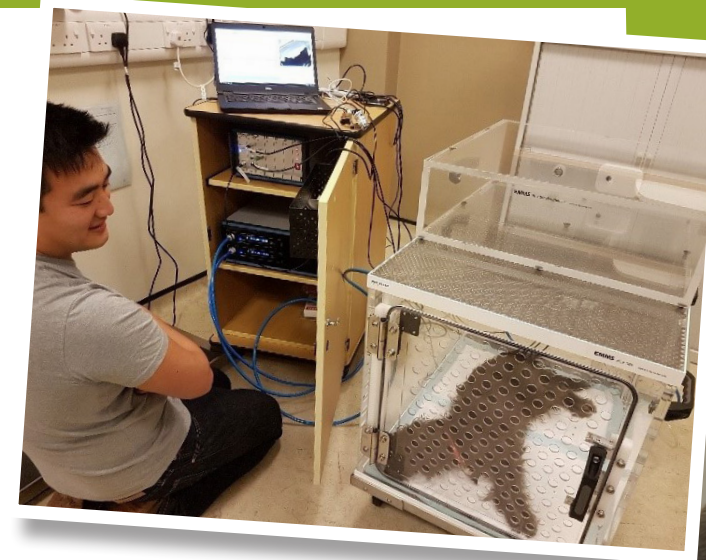
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Fundraising events

Follow us online via our website and social media for the very latest news, stories and events.

Website: [rvc.ac.uk/act](http://rvc.ac.uk/act)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/rvcact](https://facebook.com/rvcact)  
Twitter: @animalcaretrust

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## Breathing easy

**T**hanks to your donations, RVC vets are now better able to diagnose, treat and research respiratory conditions in cats and dogs.

ACT funds have purchased whole body plethysmography equipment, which can accurately, and non-invasively, assess respiratory function in cats and dogs. This will enable RVC vets, for the first time, to precisely measure disease severity, disease progression and response to treatment in pets with respiratory diseases.



This is vital for brachycephalic (shortnosed) dog breeds which are growing in popularity in the UK – with the French bulldog recently voted the nation's favourite breed. The RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals (QMHA) runs the only specialist clinic in the UK for brachycephalic dogs.

Brachycephalic dogs can suffer from long-term health problems that affect their breathing, so an accurate measure of their lung and airway function, rather than relying on owners observations, will help assess and improve the health of these ever-popular breeds.

## Cats in comfort

**T**hank you for your incredible support of our Cat Ward appeal. Almost £42,000 has been raised to help cats needing expert veterinary care at the QMHA and the Cat Ward nurses are thrilled!

Your kind gifts will ensure the sickest cats can recover in the best possible environment, with top-of-the-range kennels (as pictured right), igloos and toys to help with mental wellbeing and a private examination area to reduce stress and startling when receiving care on the ward.



With the number of cats requiring hospitalisation on the ward increasing year on year, your support will be so beneficial in ensuring the ever-growing numbers of feline patients are relaxed from nose to tail.





# Help our heroes

221 dogs and cats are saving lives every day at the RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals (QMHA). These wonderful animals come with their owners to donate their blood for use in a variety of complex treatments that save the lives of other poorly pets.

Sick and injured animals are referred to the QMHA for the RVC's extensive veterinary expertise. The hospital is the largest veterinary facility in Europe and treats conditions in small animals from severe trauma to autoimmune blood disorders, critical infections to toxicities. Cutting-edge surgeries involving the heart, brain and replacement of joints are performed regularly.

However, none of this would be possible without the four-legged lifesavers whose donated blood is essential to the success of the RVC's veterinary interventions.



As RVC vets and scientists devise pioneering new treatments, the demand for blood within the hospital grows. The only commercial supplier of pet blood in the UK is unable to keep up with the QMHA's demand so the hospital has to source its own blood from volunteer donors. In 2018 the QMHA's donor cats and dogs made 416 blood donations, which were used in 657 blood transfusions – almost double the amounts donated and transfused just five years ago.

The team who look after the donors and process their donated blood are busier than ever. They urgently need investment to enable them to keep up with the increasing demand for blood products, whilst still giving our valued donors the calm and quiet experience they need. With more blood being donated, it is also important they have the equipment to safely and efficiently process donated blood and ensure it can be stored to benefit as many sick animals as possible.

## Teca's critical Christmas

Teca was severely ill when she was admitted in December last year. Her immune system had started mistaking her red blood cells for something dangerous and was destroying them; a condition called Immune Mediated Haemolytic Anaemia (IMHA). Her packed cell volume was dangerously low at just 14% in comparison to the normal 55% and without new blood that her body would tolerate she would not have survived.

In two weeks Teca received 10 blood transfusions from donor dogs - including Archie pictured top right. Two of Teca's transfusions were performed on Christmas Day! Our vets also performed three cycles of therapeutic plasma exchange (TPE) using the ACT funded cell saver machine. This involved removing Teca's blood, separating out her plasma and replacing it with donated plasma.

Teca is a small dog only weighing 5kg, so the ACT funded tube welder meant that donated samples could safely be split into smaller units suitable for her tiny body, without compromising the rest of the donated blood in the unit. After these intense treatments, only possible thanks to ACT donations and donated blood, Teca is now recovering well at home.



Teca

## The plans...

Your previous support has enabled the service to grow to meet the demands of the hospital and we need your help to continue this growth. Donations to support the team enable them to purchase vital new equipment needed for safer and more efficient processing and storing of blood.

New equipment also facilitates the team's pioneering research studies, which are developing and refining safe blood transfusion practices to improve the care of both blood donors and blood product recipients. The findings of their work serve as a resource of new information and training in the area of transfusion medicine so that vets and nurses all over the world can use the vital information they discover and emulate their success.

Their most recent studies have made some incredible advancements in transfusion medicine, including the

ability to store feline blood, the use of canine blood in cats and collecting cat blood without sedation.

As well as the costs of growing the service and purchasing new equipment, detailed right, there are ongoing costs involved in the team's high standards of donor care. All of the donors are given full health checks before donations and a full blood screening is performed free of charge annually. We also give our donors a special blood donor tag to recognise their support and each receives a special gift when they retire, which all incur costs.

We would be incredibly grateful if you were able to help our superhero donors and support the blood donor team's work. Your gift will ensure these lovely lifesavers are well looked after, whilst also ensuring their blood is used in the best possible way to save even more lives.

# BLOOD DONORS

SINCE ACT FUNDING STARTED IN 2013

**140% ↑**

the Blood Transfusion Service now has more than double the number of dog blood donors and more than triple the number of cats

**DONOR NOS**



**DONATIONS**



**2X**

our nurses now process double the number of blood donations from our donors a year

**657**

donated blood was used in 657 blood transfusions in 2018 - a 50% increase on 2013

**TRANSFUSIONS**



**FUNDING**

**£250K**



has been granted from the ACT to the service to help donated blood be used more efficiently to save more lives

## The costs...

- New vet bed and mattress = £500
- Quieter suction machine = £1,022
- Table-top centrifuge for serum eye drops = £2,000
- Additional tube sealer = £2,850
- Larger fridge to accommodate feline blood = £3,000
- Annual screening and gifts for donors = £5,750
- Increasing staff resource = £27,000

To help our heroes please visit [www.rvc.ac.uk/act/blooddonors](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/act/blooddonors)



## Remembering Olive

**O**live was a little dog who made a big impact, bringing a group of nearly 600 dogs and their owners together for as much fun as you can have on four little legs.

After Olive was attacked by a larger dog as a puppy, her owner Christine set about finding some other little sausages for Olive to hang out with.

"Just my friend and I turned up at the first meet up, but then we met a lovely lady called Pam and her chocolate dachshund Dennis and gradually by word of mouth we now have nearly 600 members who meet at different locations monthly. I have met so many lovely people through this group, people who have different lives and interests; it's the dogs that have brought us together."

Sadly Olive passed away at the end of August last year and Christine organised a memorial walk to remember Olive; the dog who brought so many people and dogs together. Christine organised a collection in her memory for the Animal Care Trust, as Olive had previously had an operation on her back at the RVC from which she made a full recovery.

Thank you for raising a fabulous £200 for the ACT Christine!



## Celebrating your pets

Our beautiful Memory Tree raised over £18,000 for the RVC's specialist animal hospitals in its first year. This has funded £7,000 of equipment for our blood transfusion service so that more dogs and cats can safely donate their blood, in the most efficient way, to help as many extremely sick animals as possible. In addition, £3,500 has been invested in equipment for the QMHA's cardiac surgery team who perform ground-breaking treatments to save critically-ill animals. The remaining funds have been allocated towards the Cat Ward expansion project (see page three).

Each gold, silver and bronze leaf on our unique sculpture can be engraved in loving memory of a pet, or to celebrate pets who are still with you. If you would like to honour your much-loved pet on our beautiful Memory Tree please visit [www.rvc.ac.uk/memorytree](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/memorytree).



*"Bella was part of our family for 16 years and it was lovely to be able to do something meaningful in memory of her. We are very proud of her little gold leaf." The Hale Family*



**Thanks for helping us bag a massive cash boost from Tesco.**

We were delighted to be chosen as one of the charities to vote for in the Borehamwood Tesco's Bags of Help initiative during April. Thank you to everyone who voted for us in store and helped us win a grant of up to £4,000!

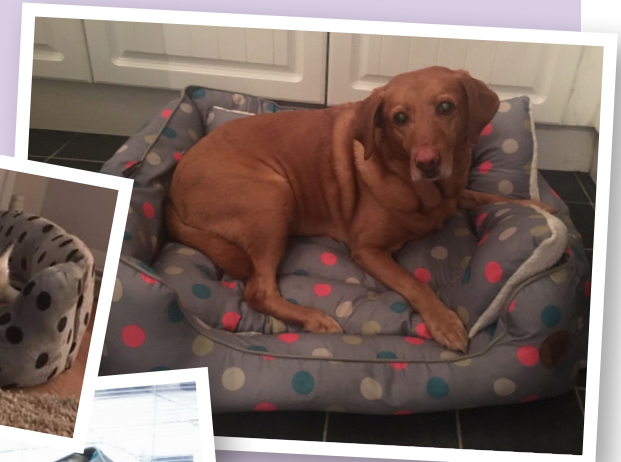
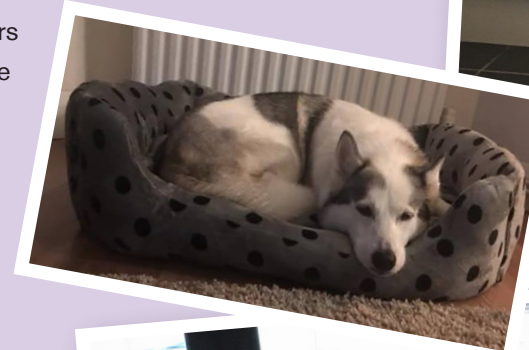
Many thanks to everyone who also helped us to receive donations of over £300 from both Barnet and Welwyn Garden City Waitrose stores through their Community Matters scheme.

## Put your paws up!

**R**etired blood donors are relaxing in style thanks to Petface who donated the plush dog beds pictured right.

Retiring blood donors are given a donated bed when they leave the programme as thanks for their support. We love these photos of them relaxing with their paws up!

Petface also gave toys for our current blood donors which made great Christmas presents from us at the RVC. Many thanks to Petface for these kind gifts.



## Raise funds for the Animal Care Trust whilst on holiday!

Planning your Summer sun getaway?

Have a look at Riviera Travel for all of your holiday needs. They offer a range of exceptional holidays, from short breaks to escorted tours and luxury cruises. And the best bit is they donate 10% of your holiday cost to the ACT.

Simply mention the Animal Care Trust by name at the time of booking, and payment will be made to the ACT, for everyone that travels on that booking, the month after travel. Please visit [www.rivieratravel.co.uk](http://www.rivieratravel.co.uk) for more information.



**If you or your company would like to fundraise for the Animal Care Trust please contact the team on 01707 666237 or [act@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:act@rvc.ac.uk) - we would be happy to help.**



## RVC to the rescue

**T**he ACT has funded an equine rescue mannequin and associated rescue equipment to train the RVC's staff and students, as well as the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, to deal with horses in emergency rescue situations.

The UK Fire and Rescue Service responds to at least 5,000 incidents involving large animals each year. In Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Essex the majority of

large animal incidents involve horses, including horse transporters involved in road traffic

collisions, horses hit by traffic and horses trapped in mud, rivers and ditches. These incidents require veterinary attendance to improve the safety of rescue personnel and the welfare of the animal casualty.

The new training equipment will therefore be extremely valuable in enabling vets to be effective responders to incidents involving large animals, alongside the emergency services. It will also equip them to respond to incidents in the clinical arena, for example recumbent horses in stables, fields and transport vehicles.

### Equine mannequin



## Who doesn't love a good massage?

**C**ows seem particularly keen on them. Cows often rub their bodies against hard surfaces such as trees and fences to remove dirt or just because it feels good. However trees and fences can harm the cows and are not ideal for really scratching an itch.

So the RVC's Boltons Park Farm have installed mechanical brushes to pamper the itchy animals. The automatic brushes allow our 170 strong herd access to 24/7 massage sessions which result in cleaner skin, improved blood circulation and, most of all, stress relief.

The specific brushes chosen for the RVC herd clean both the cow's back and down their sides. They are fixed rotating brushes which maintain a consistent pressure and can access difficult to reach areas such as the base of the tail.

Animal welfare scientists are increasingly recognising that good animal welfare involves promoting positive emotional states and experiences and not just avoiding negative states, so these brushes really do have a huge benefit for both the physical and mental wellbeing of the cows. Thank you to our charitable trust supporters who made this possible.

[www.rvc.ac.uk/act](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/act)



...aaaaand relax!



## STORIES FROM OUR HOSPITALS

### Oh so exotic!

**T**he RVC's Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital (BSAH) has the only exotic pet service in Central London with vets qualified to a specialist level and, thanks to ACT funding, the specialist facilities and equipment to treat them. Which is good news for patients like Flash and Squeak....



### The tortoise and the....duck!

**F**lash is a gorgeous 44-year-old spur-thighed tortoise. She presented to the Exotic Team with decreased appetite. Their investigations, including blood sampling and ultrasound, revealed a condition called follicular stasis.

This common condition in reptiles is caused by the ovaries making lots of yolk-like follicles which build up inside the body so much that they compress on other organs.

Flash was placed under general anaesthesia and her shell was cut to take out these follicles, then the shell piece was reinstated. Her shell will take over ten years to fully heal, but she's recovering well so far.



**M**eet Squeak - a four-year-old female Indian runner duck who was found by her owner with a broken bill. Sadly there is no way to get a broken beak to grow back, so the BSAH team's care for Squeak centred around initial pain relief and control of infection until the wound had healed.

Squeak's food was provided via a feeding tube until she learnt to adapt and feed herself despite the injury. It took Squeak several weeks of supportive care before she was able to adapt and eat well enough to maintain her own weight. We are delighted to say Squeak is now getting on very well.



Paws & Hooves Spring 2019



# Fundraising events

Amazing people taking on big challenges for sick and injured animals

## Get moving and get mucky!

**Y**our 2019 is about to get a whole lot muddier! We have two fun events for you to get involved with.

**Saturday 21st September - Tough Mudder obstacle run in Crawley, West Sussex.**

We've got the chance for five ACT supporters to join RVC staff and students on our 2019 Tough Mudder team. The Barking Mad Mudders will once again take on the eight-mile obstacle course which is a challenge not to be missed!

**Saturday 5th October - Mucky Pup three-mile family fun run at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire.**

The Mucky Pup family fun run is back in the beautiful grounds of Hatfield House this year. Come along with your family and furry friends for a fun day out featuring optional obstacles, a tunnel of temptation and stalls selling goodies and refreshments.



## Get involved!



**Feeling inspired?! To get involved in any of these events, or to organise your own, please contact us on 01707 666237 or [act@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:act@rvc.ac.uk)**

## PRUDENTIAL RIDELONDON

Ride or run in London

## London's calling

**D**o you want to challenge yourself and raise money to help poorly pets? Fancy a run or bike ride around London's most picturesque parks and landmarks? Then we have just the events for you; Prudential RideLondon 100-mile bike ride and the Royal Parks Half Marathon (registration deadline is end of May for RideLondon).

These popular events always fill up through their ballots but we have a limited number of guaranteed places in both events up for grabs. Contact us on [act@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:act@rvc.ac.uk) for more information if you're interested.



## First aid fun

## Emergency information

**K**nowing what to do for your pet in a crisis is a great concern for many pet owners. Our range of first aid events for dogs, cats and horses have helped hundreds of owners feel better equipped to deal with emergency situations and give their pets the best possible chance of recovery.

Our fun and interactive sessions have run for cat and dog owners in both Hertfordshire and London as well as for horse owners in Hertfordshire, with a little help from the local Fire and Rescue service as you can see below.

*"It was brilliant, thank you to all of you involved in putting this event together. I'm sure I'm not the only one that found it really helpful and learnt some new things."*  
Lisa, equine client



Please keep an eye on our social media pages for information about future RVC First Aid events:  
Facebook: [facebook.com/rvcact](https://facebook.com/rvcact)  
Twitter: [@animalcaretrust](https://twitter.com/animalcaretrust)





Dear Bertie and family,

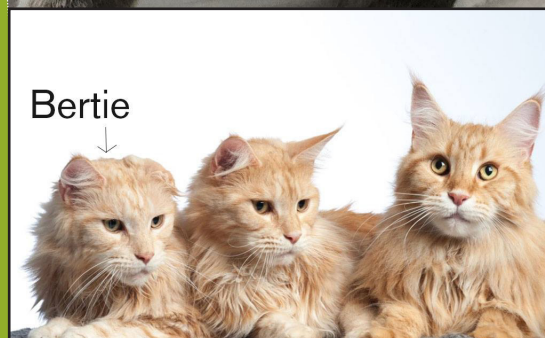
My name is Bounty and I am a 12-year-old Siamese cat. I am writing because without you I would not now be alive. I am eternally grateful for your precious gift of blood which saved my life.

I became ill in June 2018 with the worst type of pancreatitis called necrotising pancreatitis. It was so painful that I completely stopped eating and drinking. I went to the RVC where I had an oesophageal feeding tube inserted and was kept in isolation for tests (in case I was infectious to other cats). Then my blood cell count, both red and white, became dangerously low, but I was lucky enough to be able to have your blood given to me.

The day after I started improving and about two weeks later the RVC were able to discharge me to my home where my human parents kept going with the feeding tube to put nourishment and drugs into me. It took a few months, but I am delighted to report that I am now fully recovered.

So many hugs, licks and thank yous goes to you my friend, my life saver and of course to the rest of your family for allowing you to do this all for me and other cats.

Lots of love, Bounty, Mummy, Daddy and all my furry siblings  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



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