



To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier

## NEWSLETTER

No. 12. July 2006

*'The past we inherit, the future we build'*

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### EDITORIAL

I am very pleased to report that Lynne Witheyman is now back with the team after major surgery.

A first and positive meeting was held between WHI and the Committee of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of GB in March. Lynn Carter, on behalf of WHI identified an area of work that could be carried out by WHI in co-operation with the Club of GB. Hopefully there will be more to report in future Newsletters.

Five members of the steering group were present at the Open Forum held by the British & Irish Breeds Preservation Trust at Shenstone on the 11<sup>th</sup> June. The main speakers in the morning session were Dr. Jeff Sampson, Canine Genetics Co-ordinator with the Kennel Club, Maud Hawkes, Skye Terrier owner and an expert in the field of endangered breeds, Paul Keevil of the KC Vulnerable Breeds Committee and Lynn Carter representing WHI. See Page 2 for a transcript of Lynn's talk which incorporates the thoughts behind the inception of WHI in 2003.

WHI have pledged to make a series of three donations to the AHT and a message was received from Dr. Cathryn Mellersh thanking us for the first one recently sent.

The AHT are working hard using their expertise to identify the genes responsible for hereditary diseases in other breeds. It is hoped that when enough blood samples are available for the experts to begin a research programme for Wheatens, some of this research may possibly help our breed

Newsletter 10 mentioned that the amount needed by the AHT to start a meaningful two year research programme would be £68,000. There is some confusion in that although this cost has been mentioned to cover two years, this doesn't necessarily mean that a solution will be found in that time, it could take less than this, or maybe even longer.

Don't forget you can raise money for the AHT every time you search the web. **ClickNow** searches the web using some of the main search engines. Half the proceeds of sponsored results are donated to the AHT. Visit website [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk) and follow the link on the Home page. Add to your favourites for easy access.

You can also help by recycling empty inkjet cartridges. By sending these to EAH the AHT receives a generous donation for each one. Call EAH Recycling on 01473 658161.

Newsletter No. 11 contained the article '*Understanding Protein-Wasting Diseases in Wheaten Terriers*' reproduced by kind permission of 'Benchmarks', the publication of the SCWT Club of America. Whilst these diseases are a global problem, it has been pointed out to the team that reference was made in the last paragraph to '*Irish*' Wheatens. As this article is subject to copyright we are not at liberty to alter it in any way. However, It is worth noting that in some countries around the world the breed is referred to as the Irish Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier.

Sara John distributed a Questionnaire '*The importance and Variety of Play in Dogs*' to all attendees at the WHI Seminar in November last year. The returned copies have now been analysed and Sara has given her permission to include her comprehensive article covering this study, together with the results, in our Newsletters. (*Part 1 - Page 5*)

Tickets for the draw for **GT** will now be available until December. This draw has been postponed until the LKA Championship Show as we have found that the planned date has clashed with a draw the SCWT Club of GB are holding at their Championship Show in September. (*See Page 2*)

Sales/Fundraising : Our publications, i.e. Newsletters, health information, etc. are available to all, however, donations to cover printing costs etc. are always welcome. There are various items for sale to raise funds, details later in this Newsletter.

It is always a disappointment to me that we cannot include many photos in our Newsletters. However this is not possible at the moment as the majority are sent electronically.

Since owning my first Wheaten in 1982 my passion has been collecting memorabilia, together with facts and figures, on the breed. During recent months I have collated information from many sources towards building a complete history of the breed in the UK show ring, from 1975, when Championship status was first awarded, right up to the end of 2005. I have now compiled '*A Comprehensive Guide to Wheaten Winners*' book. This consists of 213 pages, text only - loose leaf format, incorporating full details of Champions, in alphabetical order and date of gaining title, all Challenge Certificate, Reserve Challenge Certificate, Junior Warrant and Show Certificate of Merit winners, Top Stud Dogs and Brood Bitches, together with explanations of the various awards. At £15, plus £2 p&p all proceeds from the sale of this publication will go towards raising funds for research into the health of the SCWT. At this point £189 has been raised for the **Genetic Research Fund**.

I hope your dogs have not suffered too badly from the intense heat experienced recently. Enjoy the summer and please remember that the team are always available to answer questions, or help in any way possible.



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## TREASURER'S REPORT

The bank balance, minus the **GR Fund** and that pledged to the AHT, stands at £1581.10.

The **Silent Auction** which closed at the end of February, raised £612.54

## GENETIC RESEARCH FUND

This now stands at £1392.00 and will soon be transferred into an interest bearing account.



*Many thanks from the steering group to all those who have sent donations to help further our information and education objectives*

## CALENDAR

We are planning the compilation of a Calendar for 2007 and need your photos. They can be of Wheatens in any pose, comical or otherwise. You may even like to indicate when the dog's birthday is so that it can be used for that month.

Please send photos to Lynn Carter  
Email : [chloeanco2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chloeanco2000@yahoo.co.uk)

or by post to -  
1 Grove Orchard, Highworth, Wilts. SN6 7LB



## GT

is raising funds for Wheaten Health. He is one of a kind and will be regularly "campaigning" throughout the year. And he could be **YOURS!**

We will now be selling raffle tickets at shows up to and including LKA in December when the draw will take place. The lucky owner of the winning ticket will Claim this unique little chap.

**GT** has been on his travels. He spent a day at Crufts where he was interviewed on Crufts FM, a dedicated radio station for the world's greatest dog show, broadcast worldwide by GlobeCast, the largest international satellite TV and radio content distributor, and photographed with many visitors and well-known faces. He also met Gill Stevenson with Bertie, the Yorkshire Terrier, who was nominated by Hearing Dogs for Deaf People to take part in the 'Friends For Life' parade which took part just before Best in Show. A booklet full of photos and details of his travels will go to his new home with the winner.



This lovable puppet has now raised £343.50 for the **GT Fund**.  
**All proceeds to WHI health projects**

**GT** was kindly commissioned and donated by Barbara and Steve Bradford

## Transcript of a talk given to the Vulnerable Breeds Forum, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2006 by Lynn Carter on behalf of Wheaten Health Initiative

I am not a vet or a statistician but I will try to be as accurate as possible in the information about my breed which follows – no doubt I will be told soon enough if I get something wrong!

### Is the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier "vulnerable"?

In many ways Wheatens are probably not typically what you might expect of a vulnerable breed. Our yearly registrations do fall within the KC definition, however, the numbers have been stable for many years and are in fact on the increase. In 2005 there were a total of 54 litters bred, producing a total of 314 pups and in the first quarter of this year there have already been 18 litters bred producing 103 puppies.

We are also fortunate that there are usually prospective Wheaten owners waiting for a puppy to be available. In fact we have almost reached point where supply is being dictated by demand and really that brings us to the first point of vulnerability for the breed, producing puppies to satisfy demand may mean not enough care is taken in breeding!

It may mean people come into the breed whose motivation is profit rather than the welfare of puppies or the breed as a whole.

It may mean people who are still relative newcomers to the breed, may be encouraged to breed whilst they are not fully aware of the health issues.

The second point of vulnerability in our breed, in my opinion, is our small gene pool.

According to our recorded breed history, there were approximately 8 breeding pairs of Wheatens and 3 single males in the early 1930's. From these dogs, most of the Wheatens worldwide, are descended.

Because this history is so relatively recent, it is probably evident that the emphasis should not be how **many** Wheatens are being bred at the present time but more

importantly, the fact that they are all comparatively closely related, genetically.

#### So the bottom line is:

When problems arise in any Wheaten lines – whether in the same country or on opposite sides of the world – it is everyone's problem!

#### What can occur as a result of this type of vulnerability?

In our breed, this is illustrated by the onset of Renal Dysplasia in the late 1970's and 80's. This is a disease causing the malformation of the kidneys before birth.

Breeders became aware at this time that many puppies were dying of kidney disease, sometimes whole litters. It was sometime before the scale of problem was recognised and by then, unfortunately, dogs carrying the disease, had already been exported, and used in breeding programmes overseas.

A pro-active stance was taken by the SCWT Club of Great Britain and together with, firstly, Dr F G Kelly, pathologist at Liverpool Veterinary College, and then Dr Andrew Nash (now Professor Nash) at the University of Glasgow Veterinary School, guidelines were developed for the diagnosis and containment of the spread of RD. Examination of the spread of affected dogs meant that carriers could be pinpointed and the conclusion was drawn that the mode of inheritance was through a recessive gene.

With co-operation from breeders, the problem was largely overcome due to the strict observance of breeding guidelines. Cases of RD are now thankfully rare.

Even at the time that all this was happening there were suggestions that there was more than one type of kidney disease, however, the experts at the time thought this was unlikely.

#### A new threat?

In the early 1990's there were reports from the USA that they were seeing something that they considered distinct from RD in that it was a late-onset disease, not seen in young puppies but becoming evident at around 5 to 7 yrs.

There is a much larger Wheaten population in the USA and therefore more awareness of problems developing. Ultimately, thanks to Dr Meryl Littman's research at the University of Pennsylvania, the diseases were identified as PLN, (Protein-Losing Nephropathy), where protein is lost through the kidneys and PLE, (Protein-Losing Enteropathy), where protein is lost through the gut.

Dr Littman's original research was based on a study of 222 affected dogs and she identified from that study, a common male ancestor. This is hardly surprising because of the nature of our small, gene pool.

Meanwhile in 1992, in the UK, the breed club carried out a health survey on litters born between 1977 & 1989.

365 of the 565 dogs involved replied – representing approx 63% of dogs born during that period.

Of the 365 dogs belonging to owners who responded - 101 had died. Of those approximately:

- 10% had died in accidents,
- 10% of cancer,
- 20% as a result of aggression,
- 3% of parvo,
- 2% of distemper,
- 12% from individual causes such as; heart attack, stroke, poisoning etc.
- just over 10% of paralysis or spinal problems,
- 3% with bowel or bacterial problems
- and 27% of kidney problems, of which 8% were confirmed RD, 10% were suspected of being RD and 9% were non-specified kidney failures

In addition the club had been notified of another 12 cases of death from kidney problems or RD in dogs which were not amongst those who had responded to the survey.

With the benefit of hindsight, unless there was a good sound PM in all cases, it is possible that some of the kidney cases could have been due to PLE/PLN and indeed some of those attributed to heart attack/stroke/bowel/bacterial problems, or even those with no cause given at all, may also have been protein-losing diseases.

PLN can cause a blood clot to form and bring about a sudden death, which can easily be attributed to a cause such as stroke or heart-attack, in the absence of a specific diagnosis.

There is possibly further evidence to support this view in the committee minutes of the breed club - September 1994, when the results of the survey were being analysed.

It was recorded that the statistics on the average length of life showed something totally unexpected, which was an unexplained peak in deaths at around the age of 4 to 7 years.

It can only be conjecture at this point but this finding would certainly fit with the average age of death from protein-losing disease. I can find no record that an explanation of this phenomenon was found.

#### The incidence of Protein-losing disease in the UK

In 1994, there was the first recorded death of a British born Wheaten dying of PLE. However, 10 years later, in April 2004, the Veterinary Record carried an article about a case of PLE in a Wheaten, which the researchers involved **also** believed to be the first recorded this country.

There were also reports of sporadic cases over the years, some diagnosed as glomerulonephritis or even PLE or PLN but many people believed that these were individual cases and distinctly different from the protein-losing diseases seen in America.

This belief was apparently founded on the fact that cases here were few and far between and there was no evidence of close family members being affected but, as a breed, I do not believe we were actively looking for those links.

### Deafness and Retinal Folds

Attention was also drawn away from this by two other health issues which surfaced during the 90's. Some Wheaten puppies were found to be deaf. The Club of GB was quick to act and with goodwill from many breeders, in the testing of stock, it was established that this was a hereditary form of deafness and seemed to occur when a particular dog from quite a long way back in the pedigree appeared on both the dam and the sire's side.

Once again breeding recommendations were followed and some litters deemed to be high risk were screened with the BAER (Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response) test before leaving the breeder. To my knowledge, since then, no more deaf Wheatens have been born.

At routine eye-screening clinics during the 90's some Wheatens were found to have retinal folds. As yet, there has not been any indication in our breed that this is a condition which leads to the development of problems in the future.

However, once again, the breed club responded quickly to the situation and in consultation with experts, the recommendation was made that all puppies should be screened at the age of about 5 weeks, as the folds are generally gone by the time the puppy is a few months old. It is also recommended that those puppies found to have folds should not be bred from.

As there is no requirement for retinal folds to be officially notified and published as, for instance, hip scores are, and no-one knows how many Wheatens are still not screened as puppies, it is perhaps not possible to have a clear picture of the current state of affairs.

Perhaps as a result of the deafness issue and the retinal folds which were both quite high-profile in the publicity they received, people may have been reluctant to start chasing yet another health issue.

Our breed is after all a relatively healthy and robust breed, the deafness issue involved quite a small number of dogs, the significance of the retinal folds is also uncertain – the battle with RD had been fought and largely won – perhaps people were just too weary to bring yet another problem to the fore.

However, all that is needed for a hereditary disease to flourish, whether it is due to an oversight, complacency or fear, is a lack of action. In this country there was a general belief amongst many people that the isolated cases of protein-losing disease which had occurred were not a cause for anxiety.

The fact that we do not know the mode of inheritance of PLE and PLN or how important environmental triggers may be, in causing the disease to be expressed, was not understood by many

people, who simply thought that no-one would want to buy a puppy from anyone who admitted to having had a problem.

I can honestly say from my own personal experience and that of others, that this has simply not been the case – quite the reverse, in fact, because people have more confidence in you.

### The Formation of Wheaten Health Initiative

Against this background, our independent group; Wheaten Health Initiative, was born just over three years ago. We adopted as our mission statement: *“To provide a platform for the reception and transmission of information about the health and well-being of the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier”*

With the very best intentions breed clubs are sometimes hampered by their very own structure. Committee members are often over-worked and under-valued. They have to work with all kinds of constraints and restrictions. They are also frequently worried about making unpopular decisions and the reactions of their membership.

The 11 founding members of WHI were well aware of all these limitations. Many of the group had served on the breed club committee; some for long periods of time.

One had been on the committee for 9 yrs, part of that time as health secretary and another for 12 yrs, most of that time as the editor of the club's Bulletin.

Initially, we were driven by a desire to know more, ourselves, about the diseases which could affect any Wheaten.

Several of us have made trips to the US for Wheaten Health Conferences.

We had made good contacts with Wheaten owners, breeders and health researchers around the world which we wanted to put to good use and make accessible to other Wheaten owners and breeders.

### The Influence of a Popular Sire on a Small Gene Pool

We were also acutely aware of our shared genetic inheritance. For example, although Dr Littman's "common male ancestor" was born in the US in 1970, he was, technically speaking, almost entirely Irish in origin, being bred from the original Irish imports.

However, in examining the 417 puppies born in the UK from 2005 to the end of the first quarter this year, he was in the eleven generation pedigree of all but 6 and may be in some of those pedigrees too but further back.

He is also not in these pedigrees just once but on multiple occasions. His percentage of ancestral influence over 11 generations is therefore quite high – in several cases he is more influential than a great-grandparent.

As the mode of inheritance of protein-losing disease is still unknown, I am not suggesting that this dog plays any part in the spread of protein-losing disease. He only serves to illustrate our breed's shared genetic inheritance and the potential impact of a single dog on our small gene-pool.

WHI believe there is no shame in breeding or owning a dog with a health problem, the shame is in not sharing the information. We wanted to help to change the climate of opinion from “blaming and shaming” to one which genuinely applauded honesty and openness

We did not want to be seen as an “oppositional” force, we are still members of our breed club and we remain committed to finding ways of working together with them for the good of the breed.

### Making a Difference

Our first event was the organisation of a very successful seminar, a few months after forming. Our main speaker was Janet Petros from the USA, who had been deeply involved with the research into protein-losing diseases and gave her time and her travel expenses as a gift to our group.

The second major development came in response to feedback from other Wheaten owners and our growing awareness of the fact that many vets do not have an in-depth understanding of the health issues that could affect a Wheaten. We felt there were limited sources of accessible information for them to turn to.

We contacted Dr. Jeff Sampson, the KC Genetics Co-ordinator, and asked for his advice about how we could reach vets more quickly. He suggested that we produce a single A4-sized chart, comparing the major features of the hereditary diseases, which was then placed on the BSAVA site, where it can be accessed by all vets.

Following the appearance of the article on the Wheaten with PLE in the Veterinary Record, we contacted the one of the authors, Dr Ken Smith, BVM&S PhD FRCPath MRCVS, Head of Pathology at the AHT.

The AHT had agreed with our breed club to store Wheaten DNA samples some years ago. From WHI's contact with Dr. Smith came a very productive relationship which has resulted in a protocol for post mortem so that a cause of death can be accurately established and also the standardisation of a screening regime for all Wheatens known as the “SCWT Health Profile”.

The Health Profile is a collection of blood and urine tests specifically aimed at identifying the hereditary diseases in our breed. By carrying out these simple tests on a regular basis (usually annually) a baseline can be established of what is normal for each individual dog and signs of disease can be picked up at the earliest possible stage. This not only gives the dog the best chance of survival but also provides valuable information when planning breeding programmes.

We subsequently produced an AHT information pack for owners to give to vets. Some breeders have started to request these to give to each of their puppy owners knowing that the owners' vets will therefore have breed specific information even if they haven't come across a Wheaten before.

We have produced a Wheaten Health Handbook which has information on hereditary diseases, some of the other conditions

known to have affected Wheatens, an explanation of blood and urine tests and a glossary of medical terms.

We hope to continue to build on this handbook so that it eventually becomes a complete manual on the care of a Wheaten.

WHI put on a second successful seminar, this time featuring experts working in this country.

Dr Cathryn Mellersh BSc PhD, from the AHT, talked about genes and disease and we were also lucky enough to find Dr Karin Allenspach med.Vet.FVH,DECVIM-CA, from the Royal Veterinary College who is a specialist in internal medicine and has worked in the USA, with the scientists involved in researching health problems in Wheatens.

Dr Allenspach addressed some of the potential links between IBD (*Inflammatory Bowel Disease*) and protein-losing diseases and also talked about the pANCA test which she hopes might be helpful as a predictor for PLE and possibly PLN as well.

WHI were also instrumental in encouraging the use of the Heska ERD.-HealthScreen™ test in this country, which some members had seen on their trips to the US and learned to use. For those who don't know, this test can indicate a potential health problem up to two years earlier than conventional dipstick tests.

We collaborated with the American authors of a simple device called the “Health Tracker”, a computer programme, specifically designed to help monitor the blood and urine test results and track early signs of disease. A British version of the programme, based on the AHT lab values was produced and is marketed by WHI in this country at a minimal cost with money going once again to health projects.

There was such a good response following our last seminar with several people keen to see a fund established, to be used eventually for developing genetic tests for the hereditary diseases, that we have founded a UK Genetic Research Fund.

As part of our ongoing commitment to education, WHI also produce regular newsletters to an increasing readership around the world.

We wanted to show our gratitude for the help of the AHT and we have made the first of a series of three donations we have pledged to them.

We try to make all our publications such as newsletters, health information etc free to all. We don't want anyone ever to miss out because they can't afford it but we always hope that people will give a donation to cover the printing costs so that we can continue to provide material in the future.

We seize every opportunity to raise funds. Our latest fund-raiser is an adorable Wheaten puppet called GT (genetic testing), donated to us to raffle. He is making an appearance at most of the Championship Shows this year and, such is his popularity, that at present we have sold over £300 in tickets.

## Planning for the future

For the foreseeable future and as long as we are aware of the need for a group like ours, we are determined to keep going. We feel there is concrete evidence that we are making a difference. Cases of PLE and PLN are still the exception rather than the norm but that is exactly the right time to act, whilst the problem is still containable.

Certainly, many people are much more aware of the potential problem than they were three years ago and of what they need to do to monitor their dog's health. Our task is to try to reach the wider Wheaten community - all those who do not show but simply have a Wheaten as a companion. They are just as important in maintaining and monitoring the health of the breed.

One of our current focuses is the need for blood samples for both DNA storage at the AHT and for Dr Allenspach's pANCA testing. We have approached the committee of our breed club suggesting a collaborative effort and offering to organise testing sessions on their behalf.

We also see the active co-operation of breeders as the major way forward. Encouraging breeders to test their dogs regularly, to store DNA from all litters before they go to their new homes and maintain close contact with their puppy owners throughout the life of the dog, is the key to efficiently monitoring the health of the breed in general.

From a vulnerable breed perspective, I would personally very much like to see more active encouragement of genetic diversification in our breed in this country. The Kennel Club's stance on AI could, perhaps, be more encouraging.

If we all care passionately about our breeds – then we must be prepared to be pro-active. We don't need to wait for permission. To stand by and do nothing is not an option and even the longest journey begins with just one step.

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## The Importance and Variety of Play in Dogs

By Sara John

### Part 1

#### Abstract:

Evidence of individual development (ontogeny) suggests mammals repeat the natural behaviour of their species (phylogeny). In the dog, concentrated socialisation between the ages of four and sixteen weeks has been suggested as the optimum age for allowing the dog to overcome its fear of different stimulus in the environment in which it will live (Fogle 1992, Coppinger 2002). A dog needs to learn from its play activities how to feel confident in and adapt to, the environment it lives in for survival (Woodcock 2004/5). However, there appears to be little written about the reasons why dog's need to develop through play, and a paucity about how this relates to their natural behaviours.

This survey was conducted to identify what age breeders generally encourage play in puppies and what toys are used throughout the dog's life at different stages. Participants

provided ideas of toys the different age groups used, which showed similarities across the two younger age groups, and more food orientated choices the older the dog became. A convenience sample of participants were used to gather the information, and provided an opinion on whether play can affect the dog's health, well being and intelligence.

The content of the resulting data is considered to be useful information for new puppy owners and breeders to be aware of. Useful because there appears to be firm evidence that puppies benefit from early activities to develop their potential within the environments they will be homed into.

#### Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of owners and breeders views of play through their experiences of interaction with their dog (s), and to ascertain what kinds of toys were used at different ages. When investigating the topic, it was evident play was considered an important part of their dog's life for both health and well being and the development of intelligence potential.

The study included a literature search, which explored the phenomenon of the background of play to determine exactly the origins and purpose of dog play. In reviewing the literature for this topic it was notable few canine books and articles, were found concerning the theory of play. Several books were found on ideas of games to play, but only one gave instruction about why the games were suitable.

Generally the literature agreed, a positive experience with play encourages greater control over the dogs behaviour for social and training purposes. Dogs appear to benefit from activities or toys, which provide activity and stimulus closely akin to their natural behaviour but adapted to an existing environment.

In order to find out more, a survey was conducted at a SCWT Health Seminar, with agreement from the Wheaten Health Initiative group. A survey questionnaire (copy in Appendix 1) was developed to analyse how the average dog owner played with their dog, what age they started and exactly what kind of toys were used. A comprehensive list of suitable toys for three different age groups was sought, with further investigation and analysis of how many dogs enjoyed playing with their owners and how many enjoyed playing with other dogs, and the frequency of this activity.

#### The theory behind play:

The literature search revealed play and stimulation is known to be essential throughout the dog's life, with a natural span from birth to old age. Play starts when puppies are around two and a half weeks old, as soon as they have their eyes open and are able to interact with each other. In these early days, play offers a means for learning *how* to interact and to develop the skills a puppy would need for survival, (Woodcock 2004 & 2005). Appleby (1997) breaks down these behavioural stages of play into four specific developmental stages of evolution for different breeds. From one extreme of mostly play behaviour wherein 'development can be analysed as being 10% hunting and 90% play' (p15), to the other extreme of 'about 90% predatory and only 10% play' (p16). Thus as soon as puppies become active

and interact with each other they start to develop a repertoire of skills from their activities.

Millar (1973) talks of play activities belonging 'to recognisable adult behaviour sequences' (p72). Examples being seen when observing a puppy stalking and pouncing, the evidence suggesting this is primarily innate. However, recognition of an object suitable to hunt, kill and eat is not inborn. Certain general characteristics of an object, such as movement, size and being in motion, is innately attention seeking. Millar (1973) suggests learning to discriminate what are and what are not appropriate objects to stalk, hunt and kill may be a specific biological use of play.

Many early activities relate to establishing a hierarchy within the family group. By learning the social rules of a family network, a cohesive bond is formed across the different generations within the group. Younger dogs instinctively learn through playing with adults when they fight or bite too hard, about touch and sensitivity. If the puppy is too rough the older dog will either reprimand it, or withdraw its attention.

Donaldson (2005) refers to this as 'ritualization' (p65); by acting out certain behaviours such as biting each other, puppies can learn bite inhibition, how hard to bite in play, or how hard to bite if conflict or predatory action occurs. Donaldson (2005) also suggests many of the problem behaviours that occur, is often as a result of early removal from the litter, preventing puppies from learning these social skills at the right age. If good behaviour is encouraged, the puppy quickly and effectively learns how not to behave and responds appropriately to the owner.

Establishment of social behaviour is a means of a puppy learning to interact with its owner in acceptable ways (Woodcock 2005), so using playtime as a reward after training frequently reinforces the developing bond. Playtime can also be withheld in the same manner as the adult dog withdraws its attention. Burch and Bailey (1999) refer to this as a 'response cost'. Response cost can be used when problem behaviour occurs, such as the puppy becoming over excited or biting too hard. Timing of the response is crucial, and should not be overused, and used only when the dog can make the association between problem behaviour and withdrawal of attention (ibid).

Dogs invite play by using body language, (DeGruy 2005, Fogle 1992). From early on in life, puppies learn to attract their sibling's attention by pulling, nipping, chasing and retrieving items. These actions help them learn how to interact, but also develop and stimulate their minds, (Peachey 2001, Sykes 2001). Problem solving developed in game playing teaches a puppy how to interact with its immediate environment, or in the case of some working breeds to make an early start into its career (Morris 1986, Fogle 1992). Game playing can also be utilised in providing stimulus for dogs which have to spend a great deal of time on their own. Toys filled with treats, not only access a dogs natural ability to seek out an item by problem solving how to do so, but also stimulate the dog to achieve a reward.

Fogle (1992) suggests, in breeding dogs for specific purposes, we have through evolution '*neotenized*' (p82) the dog, and thus taken on the role of being its parent, or life long protector. Through play we have encouraged the dog to use play out of

context for creating many of the natural instincts the dog still uses in certain situations. Fox (cited in Fogle 1992) states if puppies are encouraged to play more during the early socialisation period they are likely to grow up to be 'more intelligent and highly evolved' (p84). Coppinger (2002) suggests brains developed by an enriched environment will be larger and have more connections than those grown in impoverished ones. If puppies miss out on the period of learning from four to sixteen weeks particularly (Fogle 1992, Coppinger 2002), they are likely to be deprived of a whole range of social skills and may develop fear. Fogle (1992) also adds caution against playing too aggressively with more dominant puppies as he suggests the puppy could learn adverse responses and be more difficult to control in the future.

Through selective breeding certain widely varying breed characteristics are well established. Owners of dogs should take this into account when purchasing toys. Toys are in abundance in pet shops, but finding the right sort of toy for the individual dog is important (Woodcock 2005). For example, toys intended to be shaken, may be more appropriate for breeds that shake their prey to 'kill' it. Dogs that enjoy problem solving may derive greater enjoyment from toys that need to be undone or licked out to reap the rewards. The main rule of any toy should be safety and enjoyment, particularly if the dog is to achieve satisfaction from the toy if left for any period of time to play on its own (Taylor 1986).

#### **Survey Method:**

A survey questionnaire was chosen due to the timing of a Health Seminar held by the WHI in November 2005. Permission was granted by the organisers to undertake the study with a convenience sample of mainly SCWT owners and breeders who would be present. Ethical permission was not required, and participants had the opportunity not to complete the questionnaire. A total of 32 questionnaires were handed out with a response rate of 84.4% (n=27). Those owners who did participate had 62 dogs between them, of which there was a majority of 66.1% bitches (n=41) over a minority of 33.9% male dogs (n=21). Participants were asked to identify those dogs they purchased (55%), those they had bred (37%), and a miscellaneous group (8%) were either rehomed, or specified both without identifying the dog's origin. Details of which dogs were owner bred was intended to develop the data by highlighting the age breeders started playing with puppies and what toys they used. Age range across the data was from just a few months to seventeen, with peaks of numbers at 18 months (9), two and a half (5), three and a half (8), and seven and a half (5). The median of the ages was three and a half.

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#### **Acknowledgements:**

The Wheaten Health Initiative committee, who kindly gave permission for the survey to take place.

Judy Creswick, who kindly made the effort to find and send some articles and loaned a book on Games to Play.

Sara John, Dohoci Wheatens, February 2006

## NEWS REPORTS AND INFORMATION

### VETS SPOT FATAL DOG DISEASE

Researchers at Bristol University's veterinary school believe they've discovered the first British case of a tick that can prove deadly to dogs.

Dr. Susan Shaw, based at the University's Langford House believes she has identified the UK's first case of "Babesia". A dog was diagnosed with the condition at the research laboratory which is able to spot rare types of blood-borne diseases.

The disease is seen worldwide in dogs of all ages but the dangerous tick has not been found on the British mainland before.

Dr. Shaw said: "First, we don't know how widespread this tick is in the UK. Number two, we don't know how many dogs traveling under the pets scheme are coming back with these ticks."

The disease is believed to have become more common following the introduction of a 'pet passport' scheme in 2000.

Babesia is transmitted through tick-bites and causes severe and sometimes life-threatening anaemia, shock organ failure and jaundice, as well as fever.

Dog owners are warned to look out for signs of ethargy.

*Source – Bristol Evening Post 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006*

*Editor's note: The Times, Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006, reported that a British dog that had never been abroad died after being bitten by the rhipicephalus tick, known as the brown dog tick, which until now, has been confined to Mediterranean areas of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and other locations in southern Europe. The dog was regularly walked by her owner on a footpath near the Channel Tunnel terminal in Ashford, Kent where foreign trucks park in an adjoining lay-by. This tick can carry 'Babesia' and can affect humans as well.*

### Your Pet's Details

A publication has been issued, produced through a partnership between the Countryside Agency, the Kennel Club and English Nature with support from Panacur, 'You and your dog in the countryside'. Giving basic information as to where you can go with your dog, the Countryside Code, etc. the inside cover has a form to fill in with your pet's details and a space to attach a photo, for you to either photocopy or cut out and carry the information with you at all times.

Owners who visit the Peak District moorlands can pick up a free card which enables them to record details about their dog to take with them. I also had one handed to me when visiting the Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire recently.

In the unhappy event that your dog should go missing, contact your local Dog Warden, also DogLost.Co.Uk Phone: 01302 743361 website: [www.Doglost.co.uk](http://www.Doglost.co.uk) Having details immediately to hand could save so much time. If you travel frequently with your dog it might be worth considering the 'Emergency Pack' I have put together. Full details – Page 9.

Barbara

### Blue Green Algae

With the heat wave we have experienced recently the highly toxic blue green algae has been found in stagnant ponds. Please be extra careful that your dogs do not drink from dirty or stagnant pools. The toxin is extremely dangerous and in the worst cases can be very quick acting.

### Fear of Thunderstorms

According to research being carried out by Dr. Nancy Dreschel and Dr. Douglas Granger at the Pennsylvania State University in the US, the presence of a caring owner does little to relieve the fears of a dog frightened by thunderstorms. However dogs that had the companionship of another dog not only showed reduced levels of fear but returned more quickly to a normal state than solitary animals.

A global study is being carried out by Professor Daniel Mills of the University of Lincoln. Anyone interested should access the website [http://www.hemswell.lincoln.ac.uk/~slawson/dogs\\_and\\_noise/](http://www.hemswell.lincoln.ac.uk/~slawson/dogs_and_noise/)

### Galileo Thermometer

Some of you may have a Galileo Thermometer in your house in which different coloured balls float to the top of liquid in the tube. Italian Greyhound Breed Notes in December carried news where a cat knocked one of these glass room temperature gauges off a high shelf on to a waiting dog below, where it smashed and splattered him with the oily liquid. Besides ruining carpet and wallpaper both animals managed to ingest enough of it to land them in the vets.

### Cool'N Dry PVA Pet Shammy

A must for the dog's bath time and for cooling on a hot day. An extremely durable and hydrophilic sponge polymer towel that loves water. Used wet it cools your pet on a hot day, or dries them off after a bath or sudden shower. Machine washable and supplied in a variety of colours at £9.99. Why use three towels when you only need a Cool'N Dry. Contact C.C.Products Europe : 01704 840496 [sales@ccproducts-europe.com](mailto:sales@ccproducts-europe.com)

### Leishmaniasis

The World Health organisation is recommending that dog owners travelling to the Mediterranean or who live in that region, protect their dogs against the potentially fatal disease leishmaniasis. It is a parasite carried by the sand fly and a special collar called a Scalibor worn during the summer can protect dogs.

*Source – Dogs Monthly*

**D.A.P® (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** is now available in spray form and has been proven to aid fear of travel. It can be sprayed in the car, in the carrier or cage, and on bedding, helping to reduce signs of travel sickness such as salivating, whimpering, nausea and vocalisation.

### Bee Stings

A letter in Dog World recently was sent to make people aware of the rare but potentially lethal effect a bee sting can have on a dog.

A four-month-old puppy was stung on her mouth by a bee. Within three minutes she had collapsed, urinated and defecated, suffering from anaphylactic shock. The owner managed to get to the vet within seven minutes where the puppy was given intravenous cortico steroid and an IV set up to rehydrate her. It happened so quickly and another five or so minutes delay in treatment could well have been fatal.



## SALES

### The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier HEALTH HANDBOOK

On the whole Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers are healthy and robust dogs but they do have genetic predispositions to certain diseases and owners need to be aware of these.

We hope this handbook, which covers hereditary diseases, genetics, and incorporating our previous publication 'Medical Terms', will help you to understand these known hereditary diseases.

At a later date other medical conditions which, as far as we are aware, are not hereditary but have occasionally been known to affect the SCWT, will be added to this handbook.

Copies available @ £5.50 inc. p&p from Sandra Jeffries

Section 3, covering Cushing's Disease, ectopic Ureter & Vulvovaginal Stenosis, Eyes, Deafness, Luxating Patella & Skin Conditions, is now available for those of you who already have Sections 1 & 2 @ £1 to cover printing costs, or a donation.

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### MONTGOMERY HEALTH FORUM TAPES

A set of five audio tapes covering the talks by Dr. Wendy Beers DVM, Dr. Meryl Littman VMD, DACVIM, Dr. Shelly Vaden DVM, DACVIM and Dr. David Williams, with a Panel Discussion, is available on loan to those of you who would like to learn more about the hereditary health problems that can affect the breed. There is also a book to accompany these tapes.

Please contact WHI to arrange collection.

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### Breed Specific Health Services available at the ANIMAL HEALTH TRUST

This booklet gives full information for SCWT owners and their vets about Blood and Urine Testing at the Animal Health Trust. This publication does cost WHI £2.50 to produce so donations for this would be much appreciated.

Please contact Sandra Jeffries for a copy  
Email: [sananmalc@aol.com](mailto:sananmalc@aol.com)

*Editor's Note: WHI would like to make it clear that any test undertaken at the AHT is completely confidential between the AHT, the owner of the dog being tested, and their vet. WHI do not receive any printouts of these results. Owners should be able to obtain a copy of their dog's results from their vet on request.*

## WatchDog\*(UK) a Canine Health Tracker

The **WatchDog\*(UK)** Health Tracker is a customised version of a system first developed in the United States by Anna Marzolino and Janet Petros with the help of Dr. Wendy Beers DVM and Prof. Meryl Littman VMD, DACVM.

The Health Tracker uses a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to compare your dog's test results against a predetermined range set by the laboratory. This means that trends in test results can be easily and continuously monitored and used as an aid to assist early detection of health problems.

Some of the Excel spreadsheet operations have been automated to make them as user friendly as possible.

Other features available on the **WatchDog\*(UK)** Health Tracker are as follows:

- The format reflects the AHT tests which have been specifically profiled for the Wheaten Terrier.
- Automatic highlighting of high and low results against the laboratory reference range.
- Comment boxes provide a glossary of medical test terminology and descriptions, which can be printed as part of the test results.
- 'One touch buttons' give automated page previews.

This particular version is designed specifically for use with the Animal Health Trust testing, but this can be adjusted to display the formats for different laboratories.

You will need to have Microsoft Excel on your computer  
Full technical support is available

All for a minimum donation of £5.00 (cheques payable to WHI)

Orders to: Malcolm Jeffries, 31 Storforth Lane, Chesterfield,  
Derbyshire S41 0PP.

For further details Tel: 01246 554742 email :  
[malcalone@aol.com](mailto:malcalone@aol.com)

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### EMERGENCY PACK

Personal 'Emergency Information' Pack to carry in the car, or attach to car crates.

Size : 8¾"x 6" - Colours Blue or Black

This contains the following items:

- ❖ Contact details
- ❖ Useful tips
- ❖ Details of what a good Pet First Aid Kit should contain
- ❖ **Pet First Aid booklet** – *Quick Guide to Animal Emergencies*
- ❖ **Brochure identifying a SCWT** for use in situations where it may be difficult to recognise the breed
- ❖ Notebook & Pen
- ❖ Spring Clip for use if you have to fasten your dog safely to something quickly



Price £12.50 inc. p&p from Barbara

## PEDIGREE DATA – For Sale

There are over 25,000 Wheatens of global ancestry at present in the WHI database.

This data is compatible with the **Anim-All** computer software programme purchased separately from John Grierson 01204 300349 [www.griersoft.com](http://www.griersoft.com)

### All this data could be yours for just £75

*All proceeds go to the WHI Health Fund to continue our education programme*

**Data is restricted to pedigree information only**

This is a must for breeders. Having this data to hand can aid breeding decisions, particularly with regard to health issues

For further details please contact :

Sandra Jeffries on 01246 554742

Email : [sananmalc@aol.com](mailto:sananmalc@aol.com)

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### We are also able to offer the following :

#### WHI Pens

Maroon & Gold Plated Ball Point Pens £4 inc. p&p

#### 'A Comprehensive Guide to Wheaten Winners' Book

See Editorial (Page 1) for further details £15 + £2 p&p

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## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

### Member Benefits

Impartial, informed and sympathetic advice and assistance on health issues from the WHI team.

Should you ever find yourself facing a serious health problem, or any problem, with your Wheaten, there are experienced, caring, people at the end of a telephone who will share their knowledge with you, and who will do their utmost to ensure that you have all the information you need to make informed decisions.

Plus regular Newsletters dedicated to health matters.

- Do you care about the health of your dog?
- Do you want to belong to a group dedicated to resolving issues about your dog's health?
- Do you want to share your knowledge and experience with others?

***If you answer YES to all questions - then join us!***

Contact :

Malcolm Jeffries 01246 554742

E-mail : [malcalone@aol.com](mailto:malcalone@aol.com)

There is no membership fee, but any donation will be appreciated

to help with administration costs.

*(Please make cheques payable to WHI)*

## Contacting us:

### Telephone:

Carole Barnes-Davies	01245 231434
Ian & Lynn Carter	01793 765253
Karen Francis	02086 692255
Malcolm & Sandra Jeffries	01246 554742
Barbara Penney	01179 324297
Jan Thackray	01132 525206
Lynne Witheyman	02380 614508

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### Write:

Wheaten Health Initiative  
c/o 31 Storforth Lane  
Chesterfield  
Derbyshire  
S41 0PP



### E-mail:

[wheatenhealth@hotmail.com](mailto:wheatenhealth@hotmail.com)

### Web site:

[www.wheaten-health-initiative.co.uk](http://www.wheaten-health-initiative.co.uk)

*We would be grateful if all of those contacting us for more information can provide an electronic address (if possible) for future contact and dissemination of information*

*"You are never on your own with a Wheaten  
And never on your own with a problem"*

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*"We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare, and in return, dogs give us their all.*

*It's the best deal man has ever made."*

*M Acklam*



## STOP PRESS

The first edition of 'Wheaten Health News', published by the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America, Inc. has just been released. You can access this on :

<http://www.scwtca.org/pdf/606healthnewsletter.pdf>

The sharing of information, together with education, are the key factors to ensure a happy and healthy future for all Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers worldwide. Congratulations to everyone involved.