



# June 2017

# IWHG



# Newsletter

PATRON: TRUDIE SUMNER

## Welcome

Welcome to this summer edition of our E-Newsletter – the fourth - and it's a year on since we decided to launch one. It's gone so quickly and no sooner have we published one edition than we're thinking about the next. It's all made possible by Gary Bogart, our Editor, who designs the newsletter and keeps us all on target to deliver to his deadlines – I'm sure he had no idea what he was taking on when he came on board, but we're very lucky to have him!

Since our last edition, as many of you will already know, we've had a recent change of officers as two of the roles came up for election as part of our regular terms of office. Our former Chairman, Tim Finney, decided to step down after six years and as the New Chairman, I would like to thank him for fulfilling that role for us so well, steering us with a calm and

confident manner. Tim is a founder member of the Group and served as Secretary before becoming Chairman and both he and Marion, as representatives for the IWC of Northern Ireland, have dedicated an enormous amount of time, energy and expertise to the Group. I'm very happy to report that he's remaining on the Group and I for one look forward to his continuing balanced and measured input.

I would also like to thank Jackie Watson, our former Treasurer, who has decided to stand down from the Group completely as she has too many other commitments to dedicate the time now needed as the Group has grown. Jackie, we will miss you enormously and your sensible, well thought out, no-nonsense approach – you took on the task at its most challenging time and you made a great job of it and we are very grateful to you. Much as we don't want to lose you, we know you're still

supporting us in spirit and we wish you every good luck with your alpacas and the Wolfhounds - keep posting your news and pictures!

Stepping up to the plate, we're delighted to welcome Steven Ritchie, who comes to us with a wealth of financial experience, (no pun intended!), and unfettered enthusiasm – long may that last! You can find out a bit more about Steven [here](#). He's already on board and working hard and making a difference.

## What else is new in this edition?

Well, Summer has definitely arrived and after sweltering in the record heat for the last few weeks, a change in air pressure and wind direction has been a welcome relief for many of us, both two and four legged. We've seen a range of really helpful tips and guides on how to keep your dog cool in the

hot weather and how to recognize when it's getting too hot for your dog so we've pulled a few of them together at the end of this edition [here](#).

There have been some new research programmes that are generating interest and discussion, so we're taking an initial look at them to see how they might influence the breed - The Pro-BNP Blood Test for diagnosing early heart disease in dogs is reviewed [here](#) and the new PUPscan Project which is researching hip and elbow disorders in all breeds of dogs with an aim to identifying the processes that lead to atypical joint development by scanning young puppies can be found [here](#).

A big Thank you to veterinarian Ian Finney, (son of Tim & Marion), who has written the article reviewing

the new PUPscan Project. Ian has recently been appointed by the IWC of NI as their Health Representative and we'd like to congratulate him on this and look forward to working more closely with him in future – it's always good to have a good vet on hand!

We've also been informed that the Irish Wolfhound Club (GB) has also appointed a new Health Representative from their committee, Dr Pinak Das, and we'd like to congratulate him on this new role as well – we are looking forward to working with Dr Das again and we're sure he'll be making an important contribution to the breed. Don't forget to check out the remaining heart testing

dates [here](#).

If you need to book heart testing, please don't wait to the last minute as places get booked early. And remember that you can also publish your heart test results to the website [here](#).

We're already looking forward to the next Seminar and hoping that many of you will be able to make it. I know November sounds like a long way away, especially in the middle of Summer, but we've had bookings from overseas as well as the UK and numbers are limited due to the hall size, so don't leave booking to the last minute. Details for hotels and how to book can be found [here](#). In the meantime, have a wonderful summer and stay cool.

*Rebecca Peek, Chairman*

## Steven Ritchie

### IWHG Treasurer

I was delighted to be invited to join the IWHG in May 2017, taking over the Treasurer role from Jackie Watson. I'm the most northern of the IWHG committee members, living in rural Aberdeenshire in the north east of Scotland with my wife Denise and our two children, Thomas and Emily.

Our first Irish Wolfhound, Torfhinn, came into our lives in June 2013 and I immediately developed a strong affinity with the breed. Our second Wolfhound, Thor, joined us in July 2016 and has started his show career under our affix "Torrffionn", being the Scots Gaelic translation of the Hill of

Fare, which rises 1,500 feet above our village.

Our most recent addition, Luna, joined the Torrffionn clan in June 2017. I'm a qualified Chartered Accountant with over 20 years' experience in the oil and gas industry. I'm currently Chief Financial Officer of an oil and gas engineering company, but have held several other senior finance positions during my career which have allowed me to travel all over the world and experience many different cultures



and customs. It's always good to come home though, especially to the greeting of our wonderful Wolfhounds.

I also serve on the committee of the Irish Wolfhound Club of Scotland.

# Hidden dangers in the home

by **Miranda Brace**

There are various things which have been developed to make life safer for humans which have made life much more dangerous for dogs - and cats.

## Xylitol



The first of these is Xylitol, a sugar replacement which is highly toxic to dogs. This is a sugar alcohol extracted from corn and corn fibre, birch, raspberries and plums. This is used in a wide range of products such as sugar free gum and mints, nicotine gum, chewable vitamins, some prescription drugs, dental hygiene products and some bakery items.

It can also be purchased in granulated form as a sugar replacement for tea and coffee, to sprinkle on fruit and cereals and anything else for which you wish to add sweetener. In the USA Xylitol poisoning in dogs is reaching epidemic proportions. It is not found in pet food but in many other products tempting to dogs, such as peanut butter, sweet biscuits etc. It is also found in health and beauty products, over the counter drugs,

food products and some prescription medicines.

Signs of Xylitol poisoning can develop from 30 minutes to 12 hours after ingestion; these include vomiting, signs of hypoglycaemia, inability to control movements and seizures.

Please read labels very carefully when shopping, especially if you share your teatime bickies with your canine companion.

## E-cigarettes

The next thing to beware of is e-cigarettes and particularly the replacement nicotine for these. The nicotine in e-cigarettes is even more dangerous than second hand tobacco smoke. Most regular cigarettes contain between 8 and 40 mg of nicotine; e-cigarettes contain up to 80 mg of nicotine per teaspoonful. Many now contain flavouring agents which can make them even more attractive to pets. The refill bottles



are the greatest threat as not only is there the very real danger of poisoning but, if crunched, can perforate the dog's throat or intestinal tract. Liquid nicotine is so dangerous because it can be absorbed through the skin and the mucus membranes of the mouth.

When a dog eats a cigarette, the liver gets rid of most of the nicotine before it enters the bloodstream. When absorbed through the skin or mucus membranes it bypasses the liver and goes directly into the bloodstream. This of course means that more nicotine gets into the dog's system than if it ate a cigarette - or even a packet of them!

**This is a real emergency and if you suspect - or know - that your dog or cat has ingested liquid nicotine or any form of nicotine replacement such as gum or patches, call the vet immediately.** The effects are very rapid so there is no time to waste.

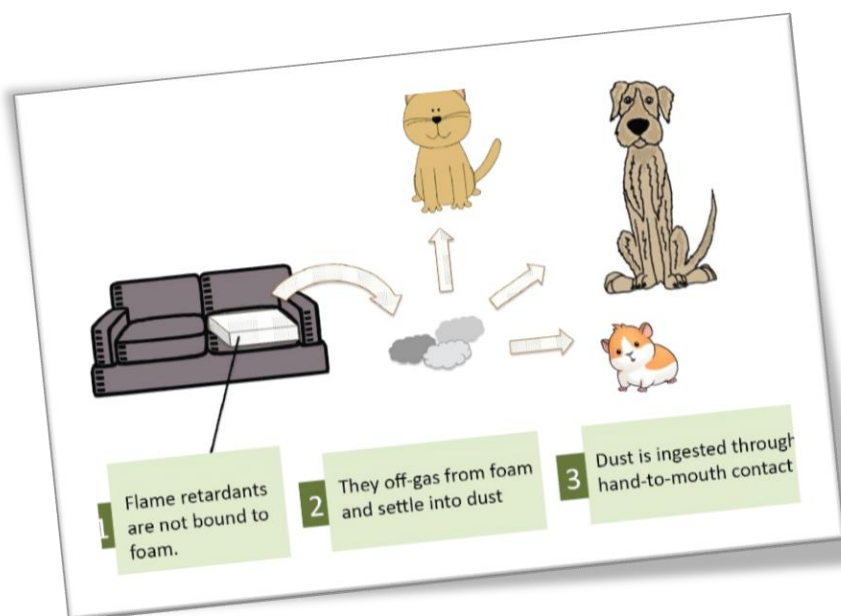
## PBDEs

Another thing to be aware of is the flame retardant chemical compound in furniture and many other products. Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are to be found in foam furniture, such as sofas, chairs and mattresses and some electronic products. A 2007 study at Indiana University found levels of these 5 to 10 times higher in dogs and an earlier study found levels 20 to 100 times higher in cats, than in humans in North America. This is because the chemicals are known to leach into the

atmosphere. The researchers also measured the levels of PBDEs in commercial dry dog food and these were found to be much higher than levels found in meat and poultry for human consumption. This was thought to be due to the processing and packaging, rather than from the base ingredients. In addition to PBDEs other flame retardants, including Dechlorane Plus, decabromodiphenylethane and hexabromocyclododecane were found in the blood samples of the dogs in the research programme. These newer flame retardant compounds are similar in structure to organic pollutants already linked to environmental and human health effects.

toner cartridges. The chemicals leak when electrical appliances heat up during use, when a mattress is slept on and when foam furniture starts to break down.

Laboratory studies show the compounds to be neurotoxic as well as neurobehavioral and developmental toxicants. They are also carcinogenic and they affect the liver and thyroid of all animals. Even exposure to minute doses at critical points in development can damage reproductive systems and cause deficit in motor skills, learning, memory and hearing as well as changes in behaviour.



Exposure can come from polyurethane foam products - upholstered furniture, mattresses and pillows, carpet underlay, vehicle seat covers. Kitchen appliances, fans, water heaters and blow dryers, mobile phones, TV (and the remote), video gear, computers, printers copiers, scanners, faxes and even

Researchers at Nottingham University Vet School have determined the fertility in dogs has decreased markedly over the last 30 years. Their study suggests the quality of sperm in adult entire male dogs has fallen significantly over a 26-year period. They have discovered hormone disruption chemicals in the dogs' testes and sperm in concentrations

high enough to have a harmful effect on sperm function. These same chemicals can be found in flame retardant products and some commercial dog foods (see above). The researchers suspect these same chemicals may play a role in the decline in the quality of human sperm as well. Cats are also very badly affected by these chemicals, in fact much more severely.

### Some dos and don'ts

- Replace rather than reupholster any item of furniture in which the foam is exposed or misshapen.
- Use only a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Remove old carpets with care as the underlay will contain these chemicals.
- When buying a new product, ask what type of flame retardant it contains. Avoid anything with BFRs (brominated flame retardants).
- Choose less flammable materials such as cotton, wool and leather.

This is very important when buying pet beds. Currently, I only know of one product which has no flame retardant chemicals and is made from natural, low risk materials. Sadly, this is not available in shops over here.



# Thank You to our Fundraisers

By **Steven Ritchie**

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our fundraisers for their continuing efforts and the fantastic work they do in raising funds for the IWHG. People give in many different ways, whether through Easyfundraising, loose change tins, personal donations, merchandise sales, or participating in



raffles and auctions, and every penny is very much appreciated.

162 people are now signed up to EasyFundraising, which raised £459 in the first quarter of 2017, a fantastic figure and we would encourage anyone who shops on line to sign up at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/iwhg/>

if you haven't done so already.

Thank you to everyone who collects loose change in the tins provided by Wendy Heather, which has raised a substantial sum already this year whilst giving the counters an excuse to meet up, chat and eat cake when counting up the coins. If you don't have a tin but would like one (or yours is getting full), please contact Wendy and she'll get one to you.

A quick reminder that old style £1 cease to be accepted by banks later this year, so if you have a tin containing any of these please return your tin to Wendy or one of the other committee members before the end of October.

Personal donations by standing order are increasing in popularity, and we convey our gratitude to those who make regular donations in this way, as well as to those of you who make personal donations in other ways.

We'd like to express our thanks to Mandy

Addington for her unrelenting energy in raising money for the IWHG and the Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust through her merchandise sales at <http://www.irishwolfhoundcommunity.co.uk/our-merchandise/>, whilst also providing a valuable service to

Irish Wolfhound owners with an extensive range of branded items and customised clothing.

A special thank you is also due to Helen Ward for her generous donations from the sale of her beautiful Posh Collars, which are available at <https://www.facebook.com/PoshCollars/>.

Thank you also to everyone who participates in raffles and auctions, whether as an organiser, donator of items, or as a ticket buyer or bidder - these really are a fantastic source of funding and are so well supported by all of you, so thank you. And finally, a thank you to all of those who contribute in other ways, in terms of your time, effort and willingness to get involved.

On joining the IWHG as Treasurer, I was struck by the enthusiasm and commitment displayed by so many people in supporting the IWHG, something a monetary value can't be placed on but which is invaluable to the group.



# Mad dogs and Englishmen ....

By IWHG

The British Weather, a popular topic of conversation for most Brits, is renowned for its unpredictability. At the time of writing this article, the temperature has dropped from a record 35C of high humidity with no air flow, to 15C with torrential rain.

So, a British Summer when it does arrive, (however briefly), can take us all by surprise; when the sun makes an appearance, it can quite literally put us under its spell.

As we head outside in the heat of the day, it's easy to forget that our four legged companions cannot tolerate the heat as well as us; they can't sweat and can only lose heat by panting and a tiny amount through their paws and ears.

Unsurprisingly, dogs tend to let common sense prevail and prefer to stay out of the sun, minimise their activity to prevent getting overheated in the first place and generally try to chill out.

**Once overheated, dogs cannot cool down as quickly as us, they are very susceptible to heat stroke and this can become a killer very quickly.**

BUT they are very, very willing and when you suggest a short trip in the car to the shops, or that walk in the lovely midday sun, they are only too happy to do as you ask and then can't

tell you when it's all too much for them.

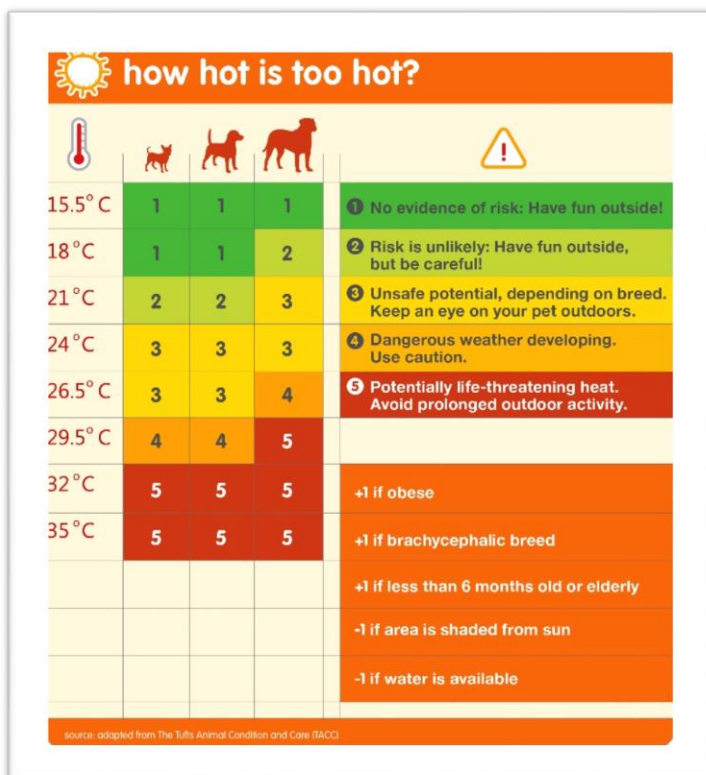
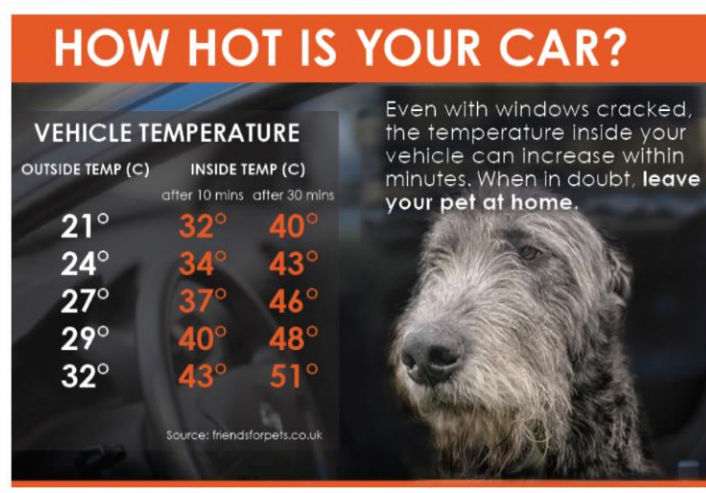
As with all things, prevention is better than cure and whilst our readers are probably already aware of the dangers, many people aren't and it is always

worth reminding people of some basics and encouraging them to share with less well-informed friends.

Social media is a good platform for this and has seen some great reminders posted and shared. These are just a few to leave you with, just in case the British Summer does return:

Temperatures can rise very quickly and what is pleasant for us can be dangerous for your dog.

**Don't Take dogs in the car unless well air conditioned or absolutely essential and NEVER, NEVER leave dogs in cars – hot cars can kill very quickly.**





Providing cool water for your dog to lie in and drink is great, but as with humans, immersion in ice cold water can cause shock and drinking ice cold water can also be inadvisable, cool is fine, ice cold isn't necessary, although playing with ice cubes, (which is controlled) and sharing an ice cream with you is not considered a danger



If the air temperature is high, the pavement temperature is going to be even hotter – if you wouldn't go barefoot, don't ask your dog to!

## HOW HOT IS THE PAVEMENT?

### TEMPERATURES:

25°c	→	52°c
30°c	→	57°c
31°c	→	61°c



AT 51°c skin destruction can occur in 60 seconds  
At 55°c an egg can fry in 5 minutes

The main thing is to keep your dog hydrated and cool, out of the sun and in a breeze if possible.

And don't forget, you can get a cool coat for them here:

<http://www.irishwolfhoundcommunity.co.uk/our-merchandise/>

Created by Wolfhound people, it's designed to act in the same way sweating does for us, once wetted, it draws heat away from the dog as the water evaporates and dries.

At £25.00 it's a small price to pay for their comfort and all profits go to the IWRT and the IWHG – now that really is cool!



# Kennel Club Breed Health Co-ordinator (BHC) June 2017 Update

by **Rebecca Peek (Breed Health Co-ordinator)**

## Introduction of a new Large and Giant Breeds Working Group

In February this year, the Kennel Club invited a specific group of BHCs to a pilot meeting in London to discuss a possible new initiative in breed health for large and giant breeds. As some conditions and concerns are shared by several large and giant breeds they were exploring bringing these breeds together for a **Large and Giant Breeds Working Group** with a view to providing a regular platform for discussion and further dedicated resources and support.

The meeting was well attended and it was interesting to note that at this stage there were only two breeds represented from the Hound Group, both sighthounds, Irish Wolfhounds and Deerhounds, (BHC Sarah Helps), the rest were from the Working Group and so were of the molosser/mastiff type. I would think these will be the majority of attendees in future, but although these breeds are constitutionally very different to the sighthounds, there is still a commonality in concerns and conditions that affect us all. So it is

relevant to be part of this Group and to have an opportunity to discuss issues directly with the KC and other relevant parties.

It was agreed that the meetings are worthwhile and that they should take place three times a year so there will be regular updates in the Newsletter and the Minutes of the meeting will be posted to our website under the **KC Matters menu button**. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, and I have asked for the latest Breed Watch Results to be added to the Agenda and hope to be able to discuss the queries we raised in my last update.

## Breed Health Conservation Plans Project

A priority of this first meeting was to introduce the new **Breed Health and Conservation Plans** project. In September last year, the Kennel Club launched the initial research phase of what was described as a dynamic new resource that will be aimed at Breed Clubs and individual breeders - **The Breed Health and Conservation Plans Project**. The purpose is to ensure that the health concerns of each KC breed is identified through evidence-based criteria. The aim will

be to provide breeders with useful information and resources to support them in making balanced breeding decisions that make health a priority.

It was outlined that the breed health & conservation plans will bring all the information available on each breed together, enabling a prioritisation of health concerns, which will enable support with health improvement, education and funding for research. The meeting raised concern that these plans should be developed in close consultation with the breed and were reassured that this would be the case.

17 Key breeds have been identified as the first to collaborate on a BHCP and this is now underway. These are the High Profile breeds: Basset Hound, Bloodhound, Bulldog, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Chow Chow, Clumber Spaniel, Dogue de Bordeaux, English Setter, French Bulldog, German Shepherd Dog, Mastiff, Neapolitan Mastiff, Otterhound, Pekingese, Pug, Shar Pei and the St Bernard. It is hoped that these breeds' initial Plans will be complete by the end of 2017, but all other breeds are being encouraged to start looking at developing their own already – this is one of the purposes of the Large & Giant Breed Working Group.



The project will involve collaboration across a broad spectrum of stakeholders including the veterinary and research community. Breed Health Coordinators will be responsible for communicating and identifying a breed's health concerns and risks to the KC, having consulted with their breed clubs. Our breed is very lucky to have been working collaboratively between all the breed bodies and the veterinary and scientific community for some time now, so we are already ahead in developing our plan. Work will begin soon in establishing what is needed and consultation with the breed bodies will be a central part of this.

More general info on the project can be found [here](#):

## Key Health Concerns

The Annual Health Reports (2016) for the breeds represented at the meeting indicated a number of shared health concerns. The most commonly highlighted were (not necessarily in ranked order) 1.

**Orthopaedic**, such as hip and elbow dysplasia, Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD), cruciate ligament and arthritis, particularly in young dogs 2. **Cardiac**, specifically Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) and Subvalvular aortic stenosis (SAS) 3. **Cancers**, specifically Histiocytic sarcoma, Osteosarcoma and Lymphoma 4. **Lifespan** with average lifespan at less than 10 years a key concern. **Please note** that some conditions mentioned are not necessarily specific to or common in our breed and are conditions more common to some of the Working Breeds and some that we consider

important to us do not appear on this list, (such as Bloat). This information was collated for the purpose of the meeting to identify where there are overlaps between the breeds present – our key issues remain specific to our breed. Interestingly, bloat is a condition that does affect many breeds and I am sure will come up for discussion within this group.

## Surveys

Surveys are considered an effective way of generating data and many of the breeds present had already conducted breed specific surveys for various purposes – as many of you already know, the Irish Wolfhound has a number of breed specific research surveys ongoing. However, it was good to hear that we are not the only breed that is worried that owners might be experiencing research/survey fatigue. The group shared the problems with undertaking surveys previously, such as getting people to fill them in and the subjectivity of the information provided, and concluded that recall biases can be difficult to overcome as well as honesty being vital in surveys. The group felt that closer communication with the veterinary community, especially through projects such as VetCompass, is important in collecting accurate and factual veterinary information across breeds.

## Annual Health Reports

Previously **Annual Health Reports** have been submitted by breed clubs,

now the information is to be collected by the breed health coordinator, consulting with breed clubs, with the survey being completed by the breed health coordinator each year. Historically our AHR has been produced by the BHC/IWHG for the secretary of the club to submit with their annual KC returns, so there is little different here for us, except that the BHC now returns the Report. It was confirmed that the survey will be sent out in August for completion by September.

## BHC Symposium

Since the introduction of BHCs, the Kennel Club has held annual BHC Symposiums, conferences specifically for all breed BHCs comprising a combination of presentations from KC and associated speakers in the morning and working group sessions in the afternoon. This year sees a slight departure from this format as the Symposium will now be available to non-BHC delegates to attend, once the BHCs have been booked their seats. The additional spaces will be on a first come, first served basis at a cost of £25.00 and can now be booked through this link: <https://www.thekennelclubshop.org.uk/collections/events/products/breed-health-symposium>

# The ProBNP Blood Test

by Gary Bogart

There has been some discussion in our Facebook Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWhealthgroup/> regarding a blood test that is available to detect heart disease.

There are very mixed opinions about this test, with some reporting that they have had very good experiences with this test, while others are saying that it is unreliable and can produce artificially high readings when there is no underlying problem.

The IWHG is currently investigating this and other approaches that may be available to the breed to help diagnose and treat heart disease. We are mindful of the differing opinions within the veterinary cardiovascular community, and amongst owners, and are looking at the possibility of setting up a study that will allow us to measure the performance of this test in comparison to, and as part of, traditional diagnostic methods.

At this early stage, we have gathered some information relating to the test that may help owners understand how it works.

## Pro BNP

The blood test is to check for a substance called proBNP. BNP is shorthand for brain (or B-type) natriuretic peptide. The name itself is rather misleading, as BNP has nothing to do with the brain. BNP is a naturally occurring signalling

hormone in the blood, and is produced by the heart muscle. It was first discovered in the brain tissue of pigs, however and the "brain" term has persisted.

Anything that increases stress in the heart or irritates heart muscle will trigger the heart's pressure receptors to release BNP into the blood. Increased BNP causes the body's arteries to dilate (by relaxing blood vessel linings), while reducing blood pressure, blocking adrenaline release, and triggering the kidneys to release sodium and water into the urine. Urinary excretion of sodium is a protective response that relieves increased blood pressure. When the heart muscle stretches excessively, ProBNP is released into the bloodstream

BNP thus acts as a safety mechanism to counteract the effects of increased heart muscle stress. BNP is synthesised as a prehormone (proBNP) and when released into the circulation, separates into the biologically active BNP and the inactive terminal fragment NT-proBNP. NT-proBNP has a long half-life compared to BNP and is therefore

more easily detected in the bloodstream.

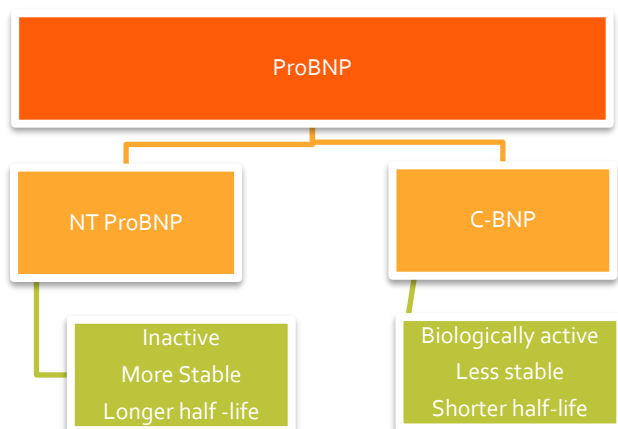
Various studies have shown a correlation between cardiac disease and the levels of NT-proBNP levels in the bloodstream. In humans, a low NT-proBNP value has a good predictive value for the lack of cardiac disease as the cause for a patient who presents with clinical signs of respiratory distress and shortness of breath. High values make cardiac disease 'very likely'. In a large number of human studies, the level of BNP has been found to correlate to disease severity. Levels can also give prognostic information.

A test for NT-proBNP has now been developed for use in dogs where cardiac disease is suspected and it may also be useful as part of an initial clinical assessment. NT-proBNP can also be used to distinguish between cardiac and non-cardiac disease as the cause of difficult breathing and/or coughing in dogs.

This test has been found to be of use in screening selective populations of dogs which are high risk breeds for cardiac disease, in particular cardiomyopathy where ventricular alterations occur (Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Doberman Pinscher, German Shepherd, Bassett Hound, Boxer).

In humans, doctors typically test BNP blood levels to assess complaints of breathlessness, chest x-ray abnormalities, oedema and heart muscle dysfunction in an effort to determine whether increased heart pressure from heart failure is present.

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As you might expect, this can lead to more questions. There are many factors that can trigger stress in the heart and therefore increase the levels of BNP. An increased BNP level does not always signify heart failure, and a cardiologist would need to investigate further to determine the cause.

**Common reasons for increased BNP levels include:**

- high blood pressure, diabetes, liver cirrhosis, hypoxaemia, sepsis, COPD

**Common reasons for decreased BNP Levels include**

- Obesity, diuretics, ACE inhibitors, beta blockers

Since many factors can alter BNP concentration, interpreting blood levels of BNP can be difficult. Most experts now agree that it is appropriate to use two cut-off values in assessing BNP levels—a lower value that reliably excludes heart failure, and a higher value that accurately confirms heart failure. The concentration of ProBNP is usually measured in picomoles per litre (pmol/L)

### IDEXX laboratories interpretive criteria for the concentration of ProBNP

**For Dogs Suspected of Heart Disease (Murmur or At-risk Breed)**

**NTproBNP <900 pmol/L**

NTproBNP concentration is not compatible with increased stretch

and stress on the myocardium. Clinically significant heart disease is unlikely at this time.

**NTproBNP ≥900 pmol/L**

In dogs with a murmur, NTproBNP concentration is compatible with increased stretch and stress on the myocardium. Clinically significant heart disease is likely at this time. Additional diagnostics are recommended to diagnose and assess severity of the disease.

**For Dogs with a Murmur and Clinical Signs Consistent with Cardiac Disease**

**NTproBNP <900 pmol/L**

The likelihood that clinical signs (i.e., respiratory and/or exercise intolerance) are due to heart failure is low.

Consider other differentials to determine the cause of clinical signs.

**NTproBNP 900–1,800 pmol/L**

There is increased stretch and stress on the myocardium at this time. However, results in this range do not allow reliable differentiation between clinical signs due to heart failure versus those from other causes. Additional diagnostics are recommended.

**NTproBNP >1,800 pmol/L**

There is evidence of increased stretch and stress on the myocardium. The likelihood that clinical signs (i.e., respiratory and/or exercise intolerance) are due to heart failure is high. Additional diagnostics are recommended to

diagnose and assess severity of the disease.

**For dogs with NTproBNP results 900 pmol/L or higher**, additional diagnostics to assess cardiac health include thoracic radiographs, electrocardiogram and an echocardiogram. Echocardiography generally provides the most accurate information regarding cardiac structure and function.

Higher BNP levels indicate that a more serious disease process is at work, and is less likely to be caused by other processes. In effect, the heart experiences higher pressure because of the backup of residual volume in the heart, and BNP blood levels increase. The higher the BNP, the more severe the heart failure, with levels sometimes reaching into the thousands.

As with most other diagnostic tests, cardiac biomarkers are not 100% accurate. A low rate of false-positive and false-negative results could be experienced. The results should always be interpreted by a specialist Cardiologist who has access to the hound's clinical history, physical findings and imaging studies, if available.

Cardiac biomarkers should not be used as stand-alone tests. NT Pro-BNP may be used as a first test, particularly in screening for heart disease in the silent stage. If the NT Pro BNP level is elevated, further diagnostics are needed.



If a dog has a high pro-BNP level then the next step is for a cardiologist to examine the heart. An echo ultrasound is considered the gold standard for this, and the images need to be interpreted by an experienced cardiologist.

A cardiologist will be able to measure your pet's heart valves thickness and shape; how far the valve is pushed into abnormal position as the heart beats, and the increased volume of a

weakened heart.

The ultrasound examination is required to confirm any diagnosis of heart disease.

In summary, based on the current available research, studies suggest that NT-proBNP measurement may be used in conjunction with other diagnostic tools, including physical examination, radiography and echocardiography to help detect

cardiomyopathy in asymptomatic dogs.

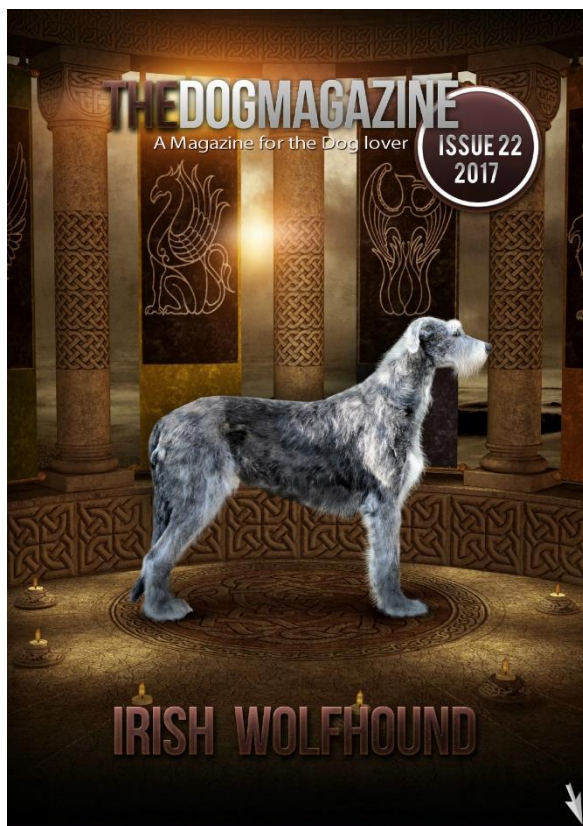
**We will continue to update you on progress and if you have any thoughts on this please let us know, we're keen to hear everyone's views.**

## The Dog Magazine

Issue twenty-two of 'The Dog Magazine' is dedicated to the Irish Wolfhound.

The online version of the magazine is beautifully presented and contains over 120 pages of features, including interviews with breeders Jan Pain, Jocelyne Gagne and Pernille Monberg, and judges Marion Marpe, and Outi Piisi-Putta.

There is information on The Irish Wolfhound Rescue Trust, [IWDB](http://www.iwdb.org.uk) and stunning photography from Gabor Szalanczi.



The online version is free and the print version is available to order from the website for €24.

<http://thedog-magazine.com/publications.html>

Many thanks to Alex Riva for donating an advert to the IWHG, and for Ewa Larsen for designing it.

You can read his edition of The Dog Magazine via this link.

[Dog magazine Issue 22](http://thedog-magazine.com/publications.html)

# IWHG Seminar 2017

by **Linda Forret**



There are still places available for our next Seminar on:

**Saturday, 11 November**  
**at St Peter's Church Hall,**  
**Holly Lane, Balsall**  
**Common, Coventry, CV7 7EA**

The theme this year is 'Breeding for the Future', with talks on genetics, breeding and oncology.

- **Dr Tom Lewis** (Quantitative Geneticist, Kennel Club)
- **Dr Cathryn Mellersh** (Head of Canine Genetics, AHT)
- **Dr Mike Starkey** (Head of Molecular Oncology, AHT)
- **Dr Régine Vandamme** (Veterinarian and Breeder 'of First Avenue' Irish Wolfhounds)

Registration and coffee is at 9 am, and we hope to finish around 4 pm. Lunch is included in the fee for the day, which is £20 per person.

**Places should be booked** in advance, to ensure that you are not disappointed, and payment can be made by paypal or by cheque.

For those of you who are perhaps travelling some distance, we have arranged with some nearby hotels to offer preferential rates if you book with them and say that you are attending the seminar. These discounts will be applied to bookings on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>.

You will need to liaise directly with your chosen hotel, and payment will also be direct to them.

- **Nailcote Hall**, 1.9 miles distant, CV7 7DE, 02476 466174
- **Honiley Court**, 2.2 miles distant, CV8 1NP, 01926 484234 ref BK012528 (Friday) BK012570 (Saturday)
- **Strawberry Bank Hotel & Pub**, 5.5 miles distant, CV7 7NF, 01676 522117

- **Premier Inn** – (best rates on line), 1.5 miles distant, CV7 7EX, [Click here for website](#)

Anyone interested is welcome to attend this seminar.

To make sure you do not miss this opportunity, you can email me [lindaforret@gmail.com](mailto:lindaforret@gmail.com) or telephone 01383 860043 or 07918 088737.

Payment can be made by PayPal [paypal.me/lindaIWHG](https://paypal.me/lindaIWHG)

Or by sending a cheque made payable to **Irish Wolfhound Health Group** to

Linda Forret,  
 Moss Cottage  
 East, Aberdour. KY3 ORX.

If you have any enquiries or special dietary requirements, please do not hesitate to contact me.

# The PUPscan Project

by **Ian Finney** DVM MRCVS

The PUPscan project is an interesting and possibly revolutionary project being researched by a group of dog breeders, vets and a consultant (human) orthopaedic surgeon. The basic principle is the adaption of a technique used for human babies, where ultrasonography is performed on various joints and judged against several set parameters to diagnosis dysplasia, both to give a better future prognosis and to differentiate between hereditary or congenital causes or later environmental ones through upbringing.

Various breeds of dogs have had their hips X-rayed and scored for dysplasia by the British Veterinary Association (BVA) before breeding for over 50 years, taken after skeletal maturity. Elbows have also been regularly X-rayed in recent decades in certain, susceptible breeds. Despite the multiple generations being X-rayed for hip dysplasia, in many breeds the average hip scores have not improved. There is a certain (small) amount of subjectivity in scoring, and scoring doesn't attempt to diagnose the cause of hip or elbow dysplasia. If it was possible to judge if environmental factors from upbringing were the cause of the dysplasia, it shouldn't eliminate the dog from the breeding pool.

The PUPscan project hopes to be able to ultrasound the hips and elbows of a large number of young puppies, from 2 to 8 weeks of age, of several breeds. The puppies are

conscious and their hair is not clipped. The hope is to find breed-specific parameters and ideal age of scanning of different breeds. Then two years later the ultrasound results can be compared to be the traditional hip and elbow X-ray scores of X-rayed individuals and the success of the project may then start to be judged.



The major positive of this project is the possibility of in future the breeder being able to confirm that the puppy had no hip or elbow dysplasia according to the set parameters at a very young age, likely ruling out hereditary and congenital causes of dysplasia. This can reassure the breeder and puppy buyer that the puppy is dysplasia-free, allowing the dog a pain-free life from dysplasia and also if applicable, suitable for breeding. Any future diagnosis of hip or elbow dysplasia would be more likely from environmental factors, unfortunate for the dog but still should be suitable for breeding.

But this is a best-case scenario, it is still a research project, and it will be a

number of years before final results will be published. Irish Wolfhounds are generally not X-rayed for hip or elbow dysplasia without suspicion of disease, even though there is some evidence of elbow dysplasia within the breed. It is possible that this project will help us to understand the pathogenesis of elbow dysplasia in Wolfhounds as well as an early diagnosis, so it is of some benefit even to Wolfhound breeders.

If anybody has a upcoming or new born litter of puppies, they can contact the project leaders about getting the puppies ultrasounded, there is no charge presently, they are only looking for donations. The more puppies they have to ultrasound, the more accurate the final project results will be (either positive or negative).

But it is only a research project, albeit a very interesting one, breeders should not be claiming that their puppies are “dysplasia-free” until final project results are published and ideally peer reviewed!

More information is available on their website: [www.pupscanproject.org](http://www.pupscanproject.org) and they run regular seminars throughout the UK and overseas.



# Give a Dog a Genome

by **Maura Lyons**

The Give a Dog a Genome project is a hugely ambitious initiative run by the Kennel Club Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust to create the UK's largest canine genome bank by sequencing the entire genome of one dog from each of 77 dog breeds.

It was launched early in 2016 and is co-funded by the KC Charitable Trust. You can read about it in more depth [here](#).

The IWHG has taken advantage of the KC offer to match-fund each sequence. For this project, the cost of sequencing one genome was set at £2,000; the IWHG have provided £1,000 while the KC have match-funded that amount to provide the £2,000 needed to sequence one Wolfhound genome.

The Give a Dog a Genome project will sequence one wolfhound with osteosarcoma, which the IWHG indicated was a major health issue in Irish Wolfhounds. The GADAG project sequence will be utilised

by Dr Starkey's osteosarcoma project. They will sequence a further 4 wolfhounds with osteosarcoma and one not affected by osteosarcoma and also not carrying the chromosome 11 markers identified by Dr Starkey's



team as increasing the risk of osteosarcoma development in American greyhounds, funded by the IWHG. (Read about the AHT osteosarcoma project [here](#)).

This will give them the entire genome sequences of six Wolfhounds to conduct genome-wide association studies (GWAS). Effectively, this will compare; 'affected by osteosarcoma' to

'unaffected by osteosarcoma'; the Wolfhound sequence to the reference Boxer sequence; and also the Wolfhound genome to breeds identified as being at lower than average risk of developing osteosarcoma from the GADAG project.

In June 2017, the Give a Dog a Genome project reached another project milestone, over half of the breeds involved have been sampled and those DNA samples have been sent for sequencing. However, Irish Wolfhounds are a bit further ahead of the game as we came on board so early.

**All the Wolfhound genomes have been sequenced, the data has been downloaded and pre-analysis processing is underway.**

Remember there are actually 6 wolfhound genomes involved including Dr Starkey's collaboration with the GADAG project, so the analysis will take a long time for us!

# Regional Heart Testing

## Dates and Locations

Updated to include sessions in the South West and the Welsh Borders

The cost is £45 per for each wolfhound under 8 years. This is for a three-part non-invasive screening, carried out by a qualified veterinary cardiologist, comprising of a stethoscope examination, an ECG, and an ultrasound scan. Wolfhounds aged 8 years or over, are subsidised by the Irish Wolfhound Health Group and there is no cost to the owner.

Wolfhounds that have been rescued by the IW Rescue Trust are subsidised by the Trust and there is no cost to the owner.

Day	Date	Region	Location
Saturday	8 <sup>th</sup> July	Midlands	Nottingham University
Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup> July	Wales	Bridgend
Sunday	20 <sup>th</sup> August	North East	Morpeth, Northumberland
Sunday	17 <sup>th</sup> September	North West	Crosby, Liverpool
Sunday	8 <sup>th</sup> October	South East	Milford, Surrey
Sunday	22 <sup>nd</sup> October	North East	Thirsk
Saturday	28 <sup>th</sup> October	South East	Fawkham, Kent
Sunday	29 <sup>th</sup> October	South/Central	Salisbury, Wiltshire
Monday	30 <sup>th</sup> October	South/Central	Salisbury, Wiltshire
Sunday	19 <sup>th</sup> November	South West	Axminster
Monday	20 <sup>th</sup> November	Welsh Borders	Hereford
Saturday	25 <sup>th</sup> November	Lisburn	Northern Ireland
Sunday	26 <sup>th</sup> November	Dublin	Ireland

Booking forms are available on the IWHG website

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/>

or by contacting Wendy Heather [wychwoodgrooming@btinternet.com](mailto:wychwoodgrooming@btinternet.com)

Telephone: 01993 868118

# Publishing your Wolfhound's Heart Test Results

by Gary Bogart

We have the facility for you to enter the results of your Irish Wolfhound's heart test on our website.

The more results that are entered, the more we will be able to build up a picture of heart disease in Irish Wolfhounds.

We are starting to receive copies of the heart tests and now have results on our website going back to 2010, including the following numbers for the past five years:

2017	37
2016	77
2015	40
2014	24
2013	17

*"It is good to see that the Health Group website now has the facility to publish results, but it is a pity that more people have not yet decided to use it. If I could change anything, I would beg people to be open and honest about their results."*

**Dr Serena Brownlie**  
(December 2016)

This is a good start, but we still need many more owners and breeders to enter details for their hounds.

You can enter the results online, just use your mobile phone to scan in your certificate and have it all done in a few minutes from the comfort of your sofa.

Alternatively, submit your results by post if you find it easier that way - but, whichever way you choose, please send in your records.

[Click here to enter your wolfhound's heart test results or to download a form for postal submission.](http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/publication-of-results.html)

If you are not sure how to include your results, please contact me and I will help.

## Please enter your wolfhound's heart test results today

<http://www.iwhealthgroup.co.uk/publication-of-results.html>





We'd love to hear your feedback on any of the articles or information in this newsletter.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWhealthgroup/>



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