

Text for Tuesday 7th December 2004

By Nick Horniman

Pets Barn Animal Hospitals, Gloucestershire

Holly, a friendly West Highland White Terrier, and her owner Heidi liked nothing better than to run through the Forest of Dean at the weekend. They drove from their home in Lydney to the centre of the Forest and would spend hours walking and running along the many paths. Heidi would throw sticks for Holly and sometimes Holly would disappear for several minutes, chasing through the trees whilst her owner stayed on the paths.

Last Sunday was no different. After about an hour of exercise, Heidi decided that it was time to turn back but couldn't find Holly anywhere. She called and called and eventually Holly came out from the trees, limping very badly. She could hardly put her front left foot to the floor.

Heidi carried Holly back to the car, thankful that Holly was a terrier and not a German Shepherd. At the car she phoned Pets Barn Forest of Dean and got through me on my mobile. She explained the situation to me and we agreed to meet at our Cinderford Animal Hospital in 20 minutes.

Holly's foot was swollen and would not walk on it at all. It was difficult to feel what the problem was so I treated the pain and swelling by quick acting injections and placed the foot in a suitable dressing. Holly had a comfortable night and was seen by veterinary surgeon Rosalind at Pets Barn in Cinderford on the Monday morning.

All our Animal Hospitals are fully equipped with blood testing machines and X-ray equipment so Holly's problem could be properly looked at. Holly had a blood test then an anaesthetic so that detailed X-ray pictures could be taken of her foot.

Without X-rays, the broken toe would not have been seen. Holly had broken her outer most toe in two places. This can happen when dogs land awkwardly or hit a tree stump in the woods. It was possible to re-position the broken ends of the bones so that they would heal together. Holly received more pain killers and will not be allowed off the lead for about six weeks so that she can heal properly. She will make a full recovery but her owner is still uncertain how she broke her toe.

With the start of December come Advent Calendars so please be aware that the ones with chocolate in them are very tempting to dogs. Pets Barn has already seen a dog this week that ate not only the chocolate but also the cardboard and tin foil too. Luckily the dog was sick and no medical treatment was needed. Keep those calendars out of your pet's reach.

Pets Barn Longhope at Harts Barn Farm 01452 830086

Pets Barn Animal Hospital at Hartpury College 01452 700086

Pets Barn Forest of Dean in Heywood Road, Cinderford 01594 826688