

Text for Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2004

By Nick Horniman

Pets Barn Animal Hospitals, Gloucestershire

On Friday last week I had the pleasure of meeting Benjy, a friendly boxer dog belonging to a family from Highnam. At 4 years old, he was fully grown and one of those very well built boxers that are very strong and can be a handful if not trained well. Benjy had been very well trained so he trotted into the consulting room to show me his bad eye.

Earlier that morning, Benjy had come into the house from the garden with his left eye tight shut. It was watering and painful. Every time the owners tried to look at it, Benjy ran away from them.

He did the same with me and it took three of us to hold Benjy so I could try to examine him. Even when I put local anaesthetic drops into his eye, he would not open the eye at all. I then recommended that Benjy receive a general anaesthetic so that the eye could be examined and treated.

Under anaesthetic we found a thorn embedded into the front of the eye. The front of the eye is called the cornea and it is only 1mm thick. Benjy had probably picked up the thorn from the garden and it was working its way deeper into the cornea. If left the thorn would puncture the eye completely and the whole eye would have to be removed.

Using an orange dye we worked out how deep the thorn was embedded. Using specially prepared eye surgery equipment the thorn was removed, leaving a hole in the eye. This will heal over the next 2 weeks if infection and pain can be controlled.

In serious cases we can stitch the 3<sup>rd</sup> eyelid over the puncture wound to form a temporary eye patch. Contact lenses can also be used to protect the cornea whilst it heals naturally. The lens is stitched over the front of the eye and held in place for about three weeks.

On this occasion there was only minor damage to the front of the eye as the owners had acted so quickly. The thorn was removed, high dose antibiotics and pain relief were used and a buster collar was put on Benjy. A buster collar is like a large lamp shade that goes around his head to prevent Benjy rubbing his face and eye.

Benjy went home the same day, slightly puzzled by why he had a wear a plastic bucket on his head. But, true to his breed, so long as he was getting lots of fuss and attention, he was quite happy to go home and be part of his family again.

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

Pets Barn 24 hour Emergency Service 01452 830421