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The Pet Professionals

Anthony J. Viganò (Paterson) & Associates.
Veterinary Surgeons

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The Irish Wolfhound: Road Test



Inside this Issue

Road Test: The Irish Wolfhound	Page 2
Cats Corner, the Cat's Ensuite	Page 3
The Puppy Plus Package	Page 4
Adopt-a-cat Program	Page 5
The Killer in the Garden	Page 6
Baby Boom At Swanbourne	Page 7
Kids Corner	Page 8



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Swanbourne Veterinary Centre

2 Devon Road Swanbourne 6010	Monday to Friday: 7.30am to 7.00pm
Tel: (08) 9384 2644	Saturday: 8.00am to 4.00pm
Fax: (08) 9383 2846	Sunday: 8.00am to 1.00pm
	Public Holidays: 8.00am to 1.00pm





Road Test: THE IRISH WOLFHOUND:



The world's largest sighthound, this dog is the original gentle giant, which is just as well as they can stand over 7 feet tall on their back legs fully grown and weigh over 80kg. Originally bred to chase wolves, elk and wild boar they lost favour in the 1800's when wolves vanished from the British Isles and were resurrected as a breed in the 19th century by a British Army Officer who worked with the few remaining dogs and introduced Great Dane and Deerhound blood

to re-establish the breed.

HISTORY:

As with many ancient breeds there is considerable variation in opinion as to how this breed arose. They may have descended from dogs brought to Ireland by the Celts in 1500BC (the Cu), or from old breeds indigenous to Ireland. Other opinion suggests they started as a cross between the Irish sheepdog and the Arabian greyhound and still others who claim they were derived from Deerhound to create a breed to hunt and kill wolves.

In any event they all but vanished in the 18th century only to be rescued as a breed in the 19th century and now are used as a companion dog.

APPEARANCE:

These are a massive, muscular dog which can reach the size of a small pony being one, if not, the tallest breed in the world.

They have a rough, shaggy coat which can be grey, brindle, liver, black or white (though grey is most common), and their signature apart from huge size are their wiry, bushy eyebrows.

They have large round paws, arched toes and curled nails, a long head with moderately pointed muzzle, arched neck, deep chest and strong shoulders.

They have a dignity and grace in their movements on the one hand though can appear clumsy on the other (like an AFL ruckman compared to the nimble on ballers).

The tail hangs down with a slight curve and their ears are generally carried back (as with other sighthounds).

They grow 71-90cm in height, and can weigh 40-80kg. Regrettably

they are short lived..... between 6-8 years being the norm.



CHARACTERISTICS:

A sweet tempered and patient dog they are intelligent and dignified. Excellent with children, other dogs and pets generally they are not a guard dog though their sheer size can be a deterrent!

They bond strongly to their human family and are very loyal, are quite easy to train and require a firm but gentle hand. In fact care needs to be taken as they can lack confidence during development so consistency and a positive approach is essential.

They grow very rapidly and so must not be over exercised during this growth period which may go on for 2 years as they reach their full size. A carefully prepared growth diet is essential to avoid deficiencies and hence growth abnormalities during this growth period.

WHO SHOULD HAVE ONE:

Excellent with children, they are friendly to a fault with strangers, other dogs and pets generally so they make an ideal family pet. However, they are not for everyone as space to manage and house a dog of this size is the main issue in every respect. Everything about them is big, so a large house, backyard, car, and so on are necessary. They do not need huge amounts of exercise but it must be regular and if possible in an enclosed space as being a sighthound they will chase and forget you if the occasion arises.

The rough, medium length coat needs regular and thorough grooming and as with other wire haired breeds the coat needs to be plucked rather than clipped every so often. They are an average shedder of hair.

VETERINARY PROBLEMS:

This is unfortunately another draw back with them in that they suffer from a variety of conditions.

Cardiomyopathy (a weakness in the heart muscle), bone cancer (osteosarcoma being the commonest), bloat (dilation/torsion of the stomach following eating, which leads to emergency surgery), PRA and cataracts (eye problems), Von Willebrands disease (a blood clotting defect), hip dysplasia (an hereditary, early onset, arthritic condition of the hips), hygromas (elbow and hock bursae), hypertrophic osteodystrophy and osteochondritis dessicans (joint and growth plate anomalies of the bones during development), are just some of the documented problems.

Many of these problems arise from their huge size, deep chest and rapid growth phase, so in taking on an Irish Wolfhound you need to be friends with your local vet and regrettably be prepared not to have them much over 6-8 years.

In summary, temperament wise there is not a gentler animal and in all those respects they make a great family pet. In reality the sheer size of the dog creates major logistical problems for most would be owners.

As vets we seen very few of these magnificent animals for mainly these reasons.



The Cat's Ensuite....

putting the cat out at night is a thing of the past for responsible cat owners.

Putting the cat out at night is a thing of the past for responsible cat owners.

Most accidents that happen to cats occur at night, whether they be road accidents or cat fight injuries, and cats that are confined at night are more likely to live to a ripe old age than cats left at large.

Many Australian cat owners now choose to keep their cats confined for their cat's safety or to comply with local government curfews. In Lorne in Victoria which backs on to a national forest cats have to be indoors by 6pm and also have to be microchipped for identification with heavy fines for breaches of these conditions.

Cats have a natural instinct to bury their faeces and will readily use a litter tray and this makes the cat an ideal house pet. Kittens will start using a litter box at 4 weeks old and a house cat with access to a litter tray, unlike a dog, will not require its owner to take it out for "toilet breaks" on a regular basis.

Cat toilet trays containing ash or sand were used for decades up until 1947 when an American cat owner complained to her neighbour that her cat tracked the ash through her house. The neighbour worked carting sand and gravel in the family business and gave the cat owner clay pellets, used to absorb grease, as a substitute for the ash. This worked so well that he decided to sell it and distributed his "kitty litter" from the back of his car while travelling around the country and even cleaned the cat boxes at cat shows in return for space to demonstrate his "kitty litter".

Since then the search for the perfect cat litter has continued. Today there are many choices-clumping litter, silicon litter and litters made from organic or recycled material as well as the original clay-based litter.

While you may think you have found the perfect litter your cat will certainly let you know if the litter is unacceptable by refusing to use the tray.

Some products are perfumed but what smells good to you may not smell good to your cat. Fragrance may deter some cats from using the litter box-either because the cat doesn't like the scent or because the scent may



mask the unpleasant smell of a dirty litter box.

The best way to get rid of an odour is to remove the cause by scooping or changing the litter.

Some points to remember when providing a litter tray:

1. the most common cause of cats refusing to use their litter tray is a dirty tray
2. cleaning a tray with a strong smelling or perfumed disinfectants may make the cat reluctant to use the tray
3. some cats have a strong preference for certain types of litter. An abrupt change in the type of litter used can actually make a cat reluctant to use the tray
4. some cats prefer a covered litter tray
5. cats like privacy when using a tray and the tray should not be placed in a "high traffic" area
6. putting the tray near food or water bowls or sleeping area will deter the cat from using the tray
7. putting the tray near a noisy appliance, such as a washing machine, may scare the cat and make it reluctant to return to the box
8. multi cat households should have more than one box available to the cats. Three cats should have two boxes.
9. if your cat is elderly, a shallow cat litter tray is best since the deeper ones require the cat to climb or hop in and out
10. don't automatically assume your cat no longer likes its litter if it begins to urinate and /or defaecate outside its box. Your pet may have a medical problem unrelated to the litter and you should contact the clinic for a checkup if this occurs.





The Puppy Plus Package:

The most important thing you can do for your new puppy is to properly socialise him/her particularly in view of the stringent new application of the Dog Act.

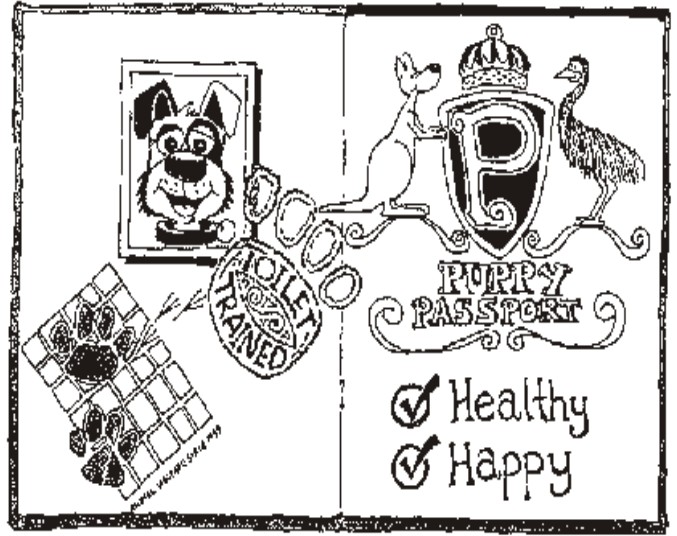
Legislation however is only a small part of the story and the benefits you will obtain from a well mannered dog in later life are far more important.

Instead of a stressful situation whenever your dog interacts with other people and animals on those wind down walks in the park at the end of the day, it will become the pleasurable experience it should be.

Your heart rate is said to go down when you pat a dog but is this always the case if you best friend is hell bent on tearing out the throat of everyone he/she sees on that walk?

The answer is simple. Puppy Class is the place to start when your new companion is malleable and receptive to new experiences of the pleasurable kind and a good start here sets him/her up for life. The next stage however is as important and so we have positioned John Connell's Dog Obedience classes to follow on and compliment puppy class.

After 6 weeks on the beach front at Swanbourne (what could be more enjoyable, even on these brisk Sunday mornings than an hour spent with like-minded dog lovers under the guidance of big John) you and your dog should be set up with a real understanding that will set the pattern for the rest of your relationship (maybe the next 15 years).



For our part we are keen to be part of this and so offer you the third part of the equation - an affordable package which includes a discount on the sterilisation of your new pet.

Therefore if you have just acquired a new puppy and are about to embark on the road to responsible pet ownership by attending the Swanbourne Puppy Class, ask about our package of puppy class/dog obedience class and discounted sterilisation. This plus the Petpro card which gives you 10% on all your over the counter products (wormers, flea products, and heart wormers) plus dog food make owning a dog much more affordable.

Ask Dot at reception next time you visit the Swanbourne Centre.



Petpro Veterinary Centre
Swanbourne

Puppy Plus Package



This voucher entitles the bearer to:
10% discount on puppy class (4 class block), PUPi management (4 class block), dog obedience (6 class block) and sterilization package (within 6 months of issue).
**Not to be used in conjunction with other offers*

Authorised: _____ Expiry June 30th 2007





Adopt-a-Cat Program:

Now that the warmer months have arrived so have the kittens!!

As many clients will know we play an active role in helping the Cat Haven place dumped and unwanted kittens.

Many thanks to those clients who have given one of our orphans a home to date.

If you are planning to share your life and your home with a new kitten don't fail to ring us before you take the plunge as we generally have a litter on display and one in waiting most of the time during the warmer months. Cats come into season depending on day length and in Perth whilst it is not uncommon to see kittens in Winter the vast majority are born during the longer and warmer days of Spring and Summer.

There is no obligation of course and it seems we always manage to place these appealing little balls of fluff, but if you are in the market or are considering one as a gift all we ask is that you ensure the recipient of your gift is aware and willing and in the position to look after a kitten. Give it plenty of thought before you commit



yourself and talk it over with the family first.

Once that has been established then we are pleased to offer these orphans at 50% of the cost of sterilization, vaccination, deworming and microchipping.

Weekend and Public Holiday Hours:

As of immediately the Weekend and Public Holiday opening times will be as follows:

SATURDAY:

Office Hours: 8am until 4pm

Consulting Hours: 8am until 4pm

SUNDAY:

Office Hours: 8am until 1pm

Consulting Hours: 8am until 1pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

Office Hours: 8am until 1pm

Consulting Hours: 8am until 1pm





A Killer in the Garden:

Springtime is the time of the year when many dogs and cats meet an untimely death.....

Springtime is considered a time for new life-new growth of plants and the birth of baby animals and birds. Unfortunately it is also the time of the year when many dogs and cats meet an untimely death from snail bait.

Seedlings are a smorgasboard for snails and slugs and avid gardeners are very keen to protect their plants. If anything is more depressing than coming out to the garden in the morning and finding the seedlings trimmed to ground level it is finding the family pet dead or dying from snail pellet poisoning.

To be appetizing to snails and slugs, the snail bait must be more appetizing than the seedlings, and it is unfortunate that the same ingredients that appeal to snails also appeal to dogs.

All manufacturers of snail killers print on the packets warnings of the danger of the products to pets. Unfortunately every year many pets still die from snail bait poisoning.

Gardeners who own pets should take every care to ensure that their pet, or their neighbour's pet, does not have access to the areas where the bait has been placed.

Sprinkling the bait around the garden, rather than placing it in small heaps, can prevent the pet from eating a mouthful.

Placing the bait inside an upturned terracotta pot with a small "doorway" broken into it to allow the snails access, or placing the bait down a plastic poly pipe placed on its side can also lessen the chances of a pet eating the bait.

However, none of these methods should be relied upon as a safeguard against poisoning.

Gardeners who wish to keep their pets safer at the same time as kill snails would be better to adopt one of the non toxic methods.

Snail traps can be built by placing a terracotta saucer of beer in the garden patch.

The snails are rather partial to a drop of ale and will climb the sides of the saucer to reach the beer, drink their fill and then fall in and are unable to climb the sides to get out again.

Uprturned terracotta pots and other dark places will entice snails in to sleep and these can be checked daily and the snails destroyed.

Encourage the children to go out on a snail invader hunt and collect them.

After dark go out with a torch and patrol the vegetable garden and collect and destroy snails and slugs.

Pets which have eaten snail bait will begin to salivate, tremble and finally convulse. They should be brought into the clinic immediately so that an emetic can be given under controlled conditions in an attempt to empty the stomach. A gastric lavage or stomach wash under an anaesthetic may be necessary if the symptoms have become too advanced and at this stage recovery is unfortunately touch and go.

The best method of treatment is prevention such as mentioned above.

There is a local product known as 4S which has a copper substrate as the active principle and is non toxic to pets but effective in ridding your garden of snails.

Ask us about it when next you visit the practice.

Visit our new revised web site
for up to date information about everything at Petpro

www.petpro.com.au

Information
offers
all about us
breed road tests
links to other sites
and much more.



UPDATED EVERY DAY





The Baby Boom (continued):

As promised earlier, January/February have been big months for present and past team members at Swanbourne.



It all started at 3.56am Friday December 22nd!

Claire and Adrian McCallum (now residing in Canberra) announced the safe arrival of Campbell Jonathon weighing in at 7lb 9oz.

Claire spent four years at Swanbourne between 1999 and 2001, and then 2002 to 2004. Married to Adrian a serviceman we all hoped they would settle in Perth but with glaciers being Adrian's speciality and passion, this would seem unlikely particularly with global warming! Congratulations to them both and we look forward to meeting Campbell.

Then, on January 5th Ellie and Ryan Drynan were blessed with Ruthie Hui Qi arriving at 3.5kg. At 6 weeks of age, and as I write this, I am assured she is on top of the world.

Ellie, a Sydney graduate joined us in a part time capacity in late 2005. She filled in as a full time team member when Deanne was away on maternity leave and we look forward to Ellie's return in 4



months. Husband Ryan, also a veterinary surgeon, works at MPEC, the after hours facility at Murdoch University Veterinary School.

Well done both of you and no prizes for guessing Ruthie's future career!



January 17th was the day that Ella Skye chose to make Pauline (Hoskin) and Justin proud parents of their first born and she weighed in at 3.19kg. Pauline was a full time team member between 2003-

2005 and then worked weekends in 2006. She is now with the Agricultural Department and after her maternity leave will hopefully find herself posted to Merredin where Justin helps farm the family property.

Congratulations to all three of you from all of us here at Swanbourne.

Bree Charlotte Vigano-Skinner:



It is with much pleasure that Tony announces the safe arrival of his third grandchild

Bree Charlotte Vigano-Skinner on January 10th.

Bree is the third daughter of daughter Mietta and Bryce, and joins Rori (3 years) and Zoe (18 months) making up the beautiful threesome.

Like Rori and Zoe, Bree was born at the Mt Barker hospital (Mietta and Bryce farm a property with Bryce's parents Michael and Heather in Woogenellup), weighing in at 3.78 kg and she is doing just fine.

Bree is doted on by nannies Rori and Zoe who talk of little else when Tony rings to check on the brood.

Well done Miet, you are a great mother and the kids are perfect (and so is Bryce!).

And then came Riley....



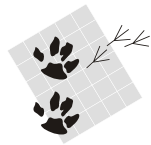
To complete the frenetic two months we have had at Swanbourne amongst family, and past and present staff, it is with pleasure that proud

grandparents Tony and Jennifer (Vigano) announce the safe arrival of Riley John Foster at 6am Sunday February 18th weighing in at 3.64kg.

This is the first child for parents Suzanne and Richard (Jennifer's eldest). Riley is just perfect and the apple of his parents' eye.



Kids★ Corner

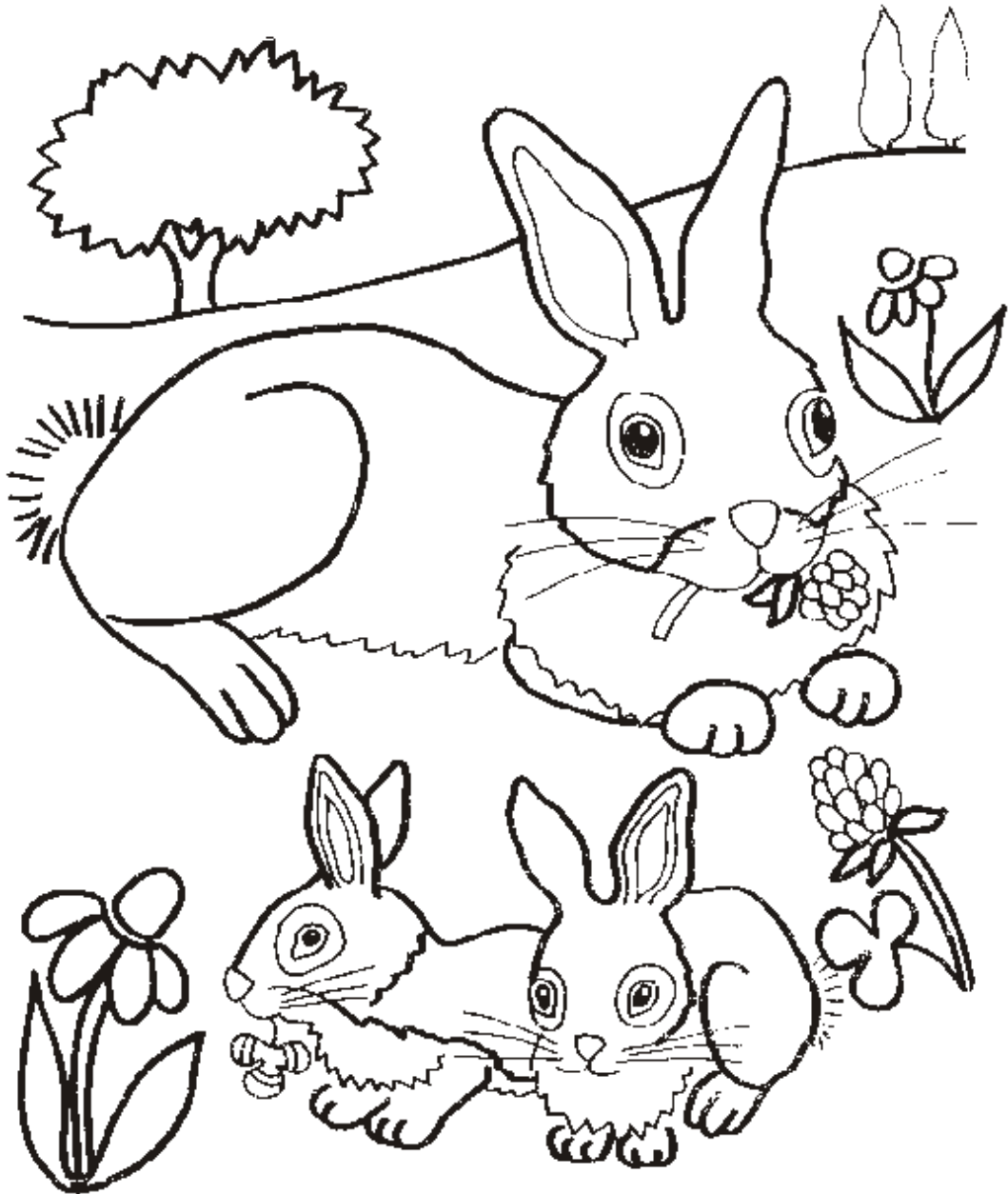


SWANBOURNE VETERINARY CENTRE

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Children up to 12 years are invited to enter our colouring-in competition. Please post or return your entry to Swanbourne Veterinary Centre by 30th June 2007 for your chance to win...*A years supply of Flea Control products for your pet!*



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Telephone No: *Good Luck!*

