

★ SEPTEMBER 2005 ★ 'Blacky Starkey'



Blackey was brought to the surgery when he suddenly collapsed on a walk and was unable to breathe properly. His gums were blue – a sign that there was not enough oxygen circulating in his blood – and he was profusely salivating.

The vet immediately admitted Blackey to the hospital and he was given an anaesthetic for a full examination.

Under the anaesthetic, the vet was able to see that Blackey's larynx – the opening to the windpipe – had collapsed, therefore breathing had been made very difficult. A tracheostomy tube was placed. This is inserted through the skin and muscle on the throat, directly into the windpipe/trachea to help Blackey to breathe properly.

Tracheostomy tubes involve a lot of care to ensure a minimal amount of bacteria is allowed to enter the lungs. After a few days stay in the practice he was allowed home and his owners nursed him until he was well enough to have a full operation.

A week later, Blackey was back for another anaesthetic. This time to perform an operation to 'tie-back' the larynx to allow it to remain permanently open. This type of surgery, and the outcome, is not without risk, as it means the larynx cannot fully close over the windpipe so was carefully considered by both the vet and Blackey's owners. However, he stabilised quickly following the operation, and now, over a month after the surgery, he is doing remarkably well and at the grand age of 12, is back to behaving like a puppy.