

Abbey Vets MONTHLY MIRACLES

Blade of grass causes big problems for Bess

Each month Abbey Vets highlight a pet that's made a good recovery after going through a difficult time. Our OCTOBER MONTHLY MIRACLE is Bess, an 11-year-old Labrador.

Bess's owners, Jean and Paul Beal, were concerned when Bess developed a persistent cough and was gagging and retching. Fearing that she may have swallowed a splinter from a stick they brought her to our surgery.

After anaesthetising Bess we used a tiny camera called an endoscope to check Bess's windpipe – the airway between the voice box and the lungs.

The upper airway proved to be clear but travelling further down the windpipe we could just see the tip of a blade of grass sticking out of her left lung.

Using the pincers on the end of the endoscope we gradually removed the grass. It was a very stiff blade measuring nearly nine inches in length.

Vet Jenny Aspey said: "I certainly wasn't expecting to see a blade of grass in Bess's lung and I don't recall ever seeing anything like it before. We do get pets brought to us that have swallowed plant material but it usually doesn't travel so far and generally gets stuck at the back of the throat."



"If the grass blade had gone all the way into Bess's lung it could have taken days or even weeks to break up. If it had gone undetected there was a very high risk of serious infection and bronchial pneumonia developing, which at Bess's time of life could have been fatal," she added.

Jean Beal said: "It's a mystery how Bess happened to get the grass blade into her lung but we will be keeping a careful eye on her in the future. We were very fortunate that the grass blade was visible so that it could be removed."