

# DICK VET NEWS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL (DICK) SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



3 Friends of the Dick Vet



5 Large Animal Hospital update



6 The reconstruction of William



Lifting from the plinth.



Arriving at Easter Bush.

Photos: JM Hackel

## *Oor Wullie's made the move*

On Thursday 15th July this year, the statue of William Dick made the six mile journey from his exposed outdoor location at Summerhall to the Easter Bush Veterinary Centre. It is now back indoors in a more protected site, positioned inside the recently extended front of the main building. The freestone statue had originally been unveiled on 24th October 1883, underneath the clock inside the 'yard' of the then Clyde Street home of the College. *The Scotsman* of 19th October 1883 reported that the "colossal statue of the late Professor Dick...[has] a striking likeness...with details carefully and effectively worked out to

give expression to face and figure. [He is] in a sitting position, attired in his ordinary frock coat...the right hand rests on the knee and holds the fetlock bone of a horse." The piece was sculpted by the well-known Edinburgh sculptor, John Rhind ARSA, one of the dynasty of Banff stone masons established in the early 18th century. By removing him gently from his plinth and transporting him out into the country and back indoors he will be protected from the city weather and the enthusiastic attentions of his admirers which has taken its toll at Summerhall over the last eighty-three years (*see page 6*).

## NOT THE DEAN'S COLUMN



Not to worry, despite the change in the photo, Professor Hugh Miller has not been usurped. He remains Dean, with another 18 months left of his tenure in the Faculty office. However, he has allowed me to act as an interloper and take over his space in this issue of the Dick Vet News.

Perhaps some readers will feel it is not appropriate for a non-veterinary sort of person (and a foreigner at that!) to address the alumni and friends of the Dick Vet in this way. But I do have a unique perspective on the students, staff, and activities of the College. As Faculty Officer of one of the smaller faculties at the University of Edinburgh, I seem to end up with my finger in nearly every pie of the Faculty. During the week in which I've written this column, I have overseen or done the following: attended meetings of two

*The staff and students of the Dick Vet are without a doubt the friendliest at the University.*

University level committees on behalf of the Faculty and Faculty Group; organised the papers for the winter meeting of Faculty; generated extensive papers for the Dean's Advisory Group on income and expenditure over the past five years; talked to several students about AVMA approval (see the article on page 4); spoke to my equivalents at four other UK vet schools about intercalating students being able to go to any of the UK schools; attended the annual Christmas Carol Concert in the Main Hall (singing quite off-key, but those around me were very polite); discussed Health and Safety implications of the new Virology section (see page 5) with the technical staff of Veterinary Pathology; edited a paper on the long-term plans for the Faculty; and chatted to several potential students who were in the school for their

admission interviews. Oh, and I baked 400 cookies for the Christmas concert goers. Pretty much a typical week.

Being the Veterinary Faculty Officer is not without its frustrations and challenges (not that I don't respect our academic staff, but some days I do wonder how they managed to get through university). However, it is a job with many rewards and benefits. The staff and students of the Dick Vet are without a doubt the friendliest at the University. The support staff in the Faculty Office and the departments are always willing to go the extra mile to help those students and staff. And although I expect many of you have never seen it, the veterinary Faculty Officer's office is acknowledged by all the other University admin staff as the nicest on campus (mind you, they do always add "Of course, she does have to work with the Vets" with an oddly pitiful tone to their voice).

With a well-deserved reputation as a wanderer before I arrived in Edinburgh, my family and friends still ask when I'll be leaving. However, after seven years, I think I'm becoming part of the buildings. I also believe the next few years are going to be crucial in the Dick Vet's history for all sorts of inter-related reasons (including student numbers, knock-on effects from the developments in the Medical School, a continued shift towards young women in the gender split of students, and research discoveries in animal welfare), and as I have grown to love the old place I'm not going anywhere just yet. Deans may come, and deans may go, but this crazy American will continue to be hovering around somewhere for the foreseeable future.

JANET HACKEL,  
VETERINARY FACULTY OFFICER

We are delighted to welcome **Dr Declan McKeever** who, on 1st August, took up the Moredun Chair of Veterinary Clinical Sciences in the Faculty. The chair is jointly funded by the Faculty and the Moredun Foundation - a first for Veterinary Medicine. Professor McKeever came to us from the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi and has a research interest in ruminant immunology, specifically protozoan parasites.

Another piece of very good news just in. The University is to award an honorary BSc (Vet Sc) in July 2000 to **Mrs Anne Irons**, who chaired so successfully the fund-raising appeal for the Small Animal Hospital.

## *Friends of the Dick Vet*

The Council of Friends of the Dick Vet was established by the then Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Sir David Smith FRS in 1991. The main objectives of the Council were to monitor developments at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, advise on priorities and raise funds to assist in the initiation of major schemes. Alumni were invited to become Life Friends or Friends and the response was very encouraging. Approximately £160,000 was raised in this way and that sum included some very generous donations. The top priority was given to the appeal for the building of the Hospital for Small Animals, which was officially opened by H.R.H. The Princess Royal on 14th May 1999. People who have seen over the new Hospital will appreciate what an outstanding building it is and the enormous contribution the facilities make to teaching, research and clinical excellence. The Council of Friends donated £50,000 towards the running of this Appeal.

Over the last two years another Appeal has been running in parallel, to raise money for the development and expansion of the Large Animal Hospital which includes an Equine Unit. The final fund-raising dinner will be held on the 4th of May and the opening of these new buildings is scheduled for the same month. Council recently supported these developments by allocating a further £50,000.

These impressive developments at the 'Dick Vet' and the many high academic

*These impressive developments at the 'Dick Vet' and the many high academic achievements... make it even more important for alumni to demonstrate their support for the School in the future.*

achievements in teaching and research by the staff, make it even more important for alumni to demonstrate their support for the School in the future. There is an obvious and easy way to do this – become a Life Friend or a Friend of the Dick Vet. By doing so, you will contribute to the future of the School and keep in touch with the developments which lie ahead. Details can be obtained from the newly appointed Veterinary Alumni Administrator – Mrs Beverley Montgomery, Tel 0131 650 6178.

During the year 2000, there will be opportunities for Friends and Alumni to meet. For instance, there is the Gala Dinner on 4 May and, later in the year, as part of the University's Alumni 2000 celebrations, from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd September, there will be the Peter Wilson Lecture. It is hoped to arrange a 'Dick Vet' alumni dinner during the same weekend. To the Friends who have given their support we say 'Thank you' and it is hoped that many more Dick Vet Alumni will join us in the year 2000.

**Brian Singleton,  
Chairman,  
Council of Friends of the Dick Vet**

Clients coming to the new and flourishing Small Animal Hospital will see this beautiful building set against the spectacular backdrop of the Pentland Hills. Just before entering the airy and spacious reception area they will pause before the bronze statue of a 'sprinting Afghan hound' sculpted by Mathew Lane Sanderson. It commemorates the memory of a very special woman, Olive Smith, VN, MBE. She was head nurse at the Dick Vet from 1971 to 1996. Her concern for the animals in her care

and her role in the training of veterinary nurses and veterinary undergraduates are well captured and commemorated in this lively sculpture.

Work in the exotic and wildlife wards, like that in the small animal referral side is expanding and new staff appointments are being made. As well as providing excellent animal treatment and teaching facilities, the new hospital provides a learning and personal study environment second to none. The quiet study area upstairs, for example,

provides a beautiful environment for learning and contemplative reflection on case material. We congratulate Forum Architects, Newmarket for the very fine way they designed different kinds of space for the work of ourselves and our students. The aesthetic appeal to the students and staff is continued on the outside of the building. Their view of the statue of a 'sprinting Afghan hound' is the 'flip side' – full of veterinary educational relevance.



## *Merging Medical and Veterinary Microbiology in the University of Edinburgh*

*The objective has been to bring like-minded research groups together in order to give critical mass to important areas of medical and veterinary science.*

Research in the Faculty Group of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine has undergone a radical change in the past year with the creation of Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IDG's) and Interdisciplinary Research Centres (IDC's). The objective has been to bring like-minded research groups together in order to give critical mass to important areas of medical and veterinary science. One such grouping has been centred at Summerhall. The Department of Veterinary Pathology is hosting an IDG in basic and clinical virology. This brings virologists from the Department of Medical Microbiology to link with those in Veterinary Pathology. Thus the Laboratory for Clinical and Molecular Virology (LCMV) began its existence in October, and has over 70 staff occupying six floors of the Tower. The LCMV has over £7M of research grant income directed to programmes on: herpesviruses in man and animals; Hepatitis virus (Hepatitis C); retroviruses in man and animals; Scrapie in sheep; Viral vectors for gene therapy and vaccination, and CNS virus infections. This new grouping has created one of the largest centres for virus research in Europe.

In order to accommodate this merger, a large amount of refurbishment of the Tower was necessary. The classroom on the ground floor was enlarged and re-equipped to serve both biochemistry and pathology practicals, thereby optimising the use of classroom

space. A large open plan research laboratory was created on level 2, with additional rooms for tissue culture and molecular studies. New laboratories have been created on levels 3, 4 and 5, and office accommodation has been centralised at level 1. The Tower houses sophisticated equipment for research in cell and molecular biology, including DNA sequencer, fluorescence activated cell sorter and microarray technology.

In a reciprocal move, bacteriologists from Veterinary Pathology have moved their research groups to Teviot Place, to link with Medical Bacteriologists. The recent award of the MAFF fellowship on the pathology of food-borne zoonoses, links medical and veterinary staff working in a new laboratory on zoonotic and animal pathogens. Research areas involve antibiotic resistance, zoonotic pathogens, porcine proliferative enteropathy and pathogenesis of bacterial diseases of the respiratory tract.

Whereas, these are early days in the evolution of the new research structures, joint projects have emerged in virology, to tackle the Borna disease virus, and in bacteriology on *E coli 0157*. It is hoped that centres of excellence like these will lead to creative ideas and the emergence of new programmes benefiting both medical and veterinary sciences.

**Tony Nash,**  
Professor of Veterinary Pathology

Sprinting Afghan hound by  
Mathew Lane Sanderson.

Photo: Bob Munro



## Large Animal Hospital update



The signs to follow.

Photo: Bob Munro

Phase I of the LAH rebuilding plan is complete and fully functional. This consists of about 30 equine boxes under cover with two treatment areas and a colic box. Each of the treatment areas and the colic box have purpose-built stocks and associated benches and cupboards. A temporary pharmacy, and feed, tack and store rooms are functioning. The Isolation Unit also is finished and ready for use. This consists of two horse boxes with adjacent prep/gowning/store rooms and

enclosed yards. The unit is situated on the site, but as far away from the rest of the Hospital as possible. The old Teaching Blocks are now demolished and the ground cleared for building Phase II, the Ruminant Hospital (with separate equine lunge area). The foundations for this complex have been laid and the steelwork for the building is erected and completed at the time of going to press. Demolition of the remaining old hospital yards commenced early in December and once this is completed, the second half of the equine hospital will be erected to provide teaching, treatment and outpatient facilities. Completion date is likely to be May 2000.

On the financial side we have raised £1,507,360 towards this project. The fundraising was 'jump-started' by over one third of that sum from The Home of Rest for Horses. Faculty endowments, the University of Edinburgh Development Trust, the alumni through the Council of Friends of the Dick Vet,

charities and commercial concerns have all contributed towards this sum. We are particularly delighted with the total of £23,000 raised thus far in small sums of money from students, staff, cleaning ladies, individual alumni and friends, and the members of horse societies and clubs. We still need £33,000 to complete phases I-III. Phase IV which is presently at the planning stage, consists of a new reception area, consulting rooms and accommodation for the large animal practice, and will require £350,000 of extra funding.

Is this having an effect clinically? To date we have had 986 new clients this year. In 1998, we had over a thousand new clients, with almost that number making a return visit, plus food animals admitted via the large animal practice teaching unit (LAPTU). Improvements in our facilities are leading to improvements in our teaching, contributions to understanding and treatment of ailments, and increased service to the profession in general.

## American Veterinary Medical Association accreditation

For a long time the Faculty has discussed seeking accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Following the construction of the Hospital for Small Animals and now with the near completion of the rebuilding of the Large Animal Hospital, the Dean has formally applied for AVMA 'Approval'.

The process, which involves two visitations and extensive paperwork including a self-assessment document, will take nearly a year to complete. If the Faculty is 'Approved', it will mean graduates from the Dick Vet will be on equal footing with graduates from other AVMA accredited institutions in the

*Approval is formal international recognition of the well-known high standard of teaching and clinical facilities in the Faculty.*

United States and Canada, when wanting to work as veterinary surgeons in North America. Local requirements will still need to be met (for example passing the relevant State board examination) and non US/Canadian citizens will still need a work permit. However, in addition to the local and

national requirements, currently graduates from 'foreign' non-approved veterinary establishments have to sit and pass a very comprehensive (and expensive) clinical examination.

Approval is formal international recognition of the well-known high standard of teaching and clinical facilities in the Faculty. It will make the College much more attractive to North American students, thus helping us meet the University's (and the Government's) target of increasing international students, broadening our student base as well as improving career opportunities for all of Dick Vet graduates.

## CONTACTS

**Faculty of Veterinary  
Medicine**

The University of Edinburgh  
Summerhall  
Edinburgh EH9 1QH

*Dean of the Faculty*  
Professor Hugh Miller

*Associate Deans*

*Research*  
Professor Peter Brophy  
*Students*  
Mr Colin Stead  
*Teaching*  
Professor John Hopkins

*Admission Enquiries*

Undergraduate  
0131-650 6130  
Postgraduate  
0131-650 6134

*Faculty Office*

Fax: 0131-650 6585  
E-mail: Dick.Vet@ed.ac.uk

*Small Animal Clinic*

Easter Bush  
0131-650 7650  
Summerhall  
0131-650 6061

*Large Animal Practice*

0131-445 4468

The **Dick Vet News** costs £1.65 per copy, but is distributed free to over 3000 Alumni and Friends of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine world-wide. The next issue will be published in **Autumn 2000**.

*Dick Vet News*

Editor: Dr Alastair A Macdonald  
E-mail: AAMacdonald@ed.ac.uk

*Design and produced by*  
Visual Resources,  
The University of Edinburgh

*Printed by*  
Nevisprint on Elementary  
Chlorine free paper

## *The reconstruction of William*

When the statue of William Dick was inspected by Christa Gerdwiler of Croma, who was to undertake its conservation and restoration, it had a green surface appearance due to an abundant growth of algae. She found that many areas suffered from surface fragmentation and loss due to internal stresses compounded by the action of water, frost and pollution over the years.

Christa first cleaned the statue, and then raked out the old filled cracks. She consolidated these and the other cracks she found, pinning them if necessary before filling them with special resins. Parts of the

eroded left side of the face were built up, without remodelling the whole side of the face, to resemble the original features (as discovered on an old photograph of the statue taken in the late 19th century and found in our archives). She was even able to reconstruct the badly eroded left whisker and left ear in this way. Other parts that required similar treatment included the right hip, left wrist and sleeve, as well as the feet and back of the chair. How many students (and staff) have clambered up onto the plinth to be beside 'Professor Dick' over the last 116 years, we wondered?

Now repaired and restored to his former glory the statue is protected from the elements. A photographic record of the repairs has been made to facilitate any future conservation work. "Do not clean with water, chemicals or abrasives," says Christa. Dust should be removed with nothing more than a feather duster.

*How many students  
(and staff) have clambered  
up onto the plinth to be  
beside 'Professor Dick'  
over the last 116 years?*



Conservator  
Christa Gerdwiler  
attends to  
William's whiskers.

Photo: Bob Munro

*This issue of the Dick Vet News was sponsored by*

**THE MARY MILBURN BEQUEST**

Contact Ms Janet Hackel, Faculty Officer, for information about gifts and bequests, or sponsorship of the Dick Vet News on 0131 650 6150.