

Dick Vet News



Newsletter for the Alumni & Friends of
The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, The University of Edinburgh

Issue No.17 Summer 2006



4 AUVEC



5 Bird Flu



5 Queen's Award

Vision unveiled and celebrated



The Princess Royal unveils drawings
of the new teaching facilities.

Picture: Paul Dodds

On Monday 12 June, in the grandeur of the Playfair library at Old College, our Patron, The Princess Royal, unveiled the exciting plans of a brand new teaching facility for the Dick Vet. This is being designed to bring our teaching, research and veterinary practice onto one site at Easter Bush. Our gathered guests saw examples of how the rich and international heritage of our previous staff and students has contributed to the continuing traditions of the highest quality in staff

expertise and student learning. They also learned of the new 500-person research institute soon to be built next to the Dick Vet at Easter Bush. Taken together, these new buildings will enable us to continue the implementation of our plans to create for our students and staff an environment in which they can flourish in the twenty first century. See the coloured insert for further details of the event.

HEAD OF SCHOOL NEWS



Our Veterinary Teaching Organisation received the excellent news that our Virtual Learning Environment ...had won a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education.

Last year I shared with you our intention for the School to move to a single site beside the excellent clinics at Easter Bush. Detailed planning is progressing, led by myself and the School Facilities Coordinator, Dr Tudor Jones, and the architects have produced outline plans for the new school. These will now be subjected to extensive scrutiny and revision following a series of consultation exercises with teaching staff and students.

The Dick Vet is being ably assisted by our dynamic and enthusiastic College fundraiser, Chloe Kippen, in raising the School's target for donations to this project of £8-10 million. We have several high profile events planned over the next three years, and we will encourage all of you to join us in this ambitious journey. Our first event, specifically for alumni, will be **22-24 June 2007** to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first BVM&S graduates. We look forward to seeing you there for a weekend of fun, events, entertainment, and education!

At the end of February we received excellent news from the BBSRC. They will provide £35 million towards financing a new 500-person research institute next to the Dick Vet at Easter Bush. The University has agreed to add another £12 million to this project. This will house 100 of our own researchers, as well as researchers from the Roslin Institute, the Institute for Animal Health's Neuropathogenesis Unit and the Scottish Agricultural College. The research undertaken will benefit the health and welfare of animals, as well as shed light on zoonotic threats to the human population. This development will be in close association with the Moredun Research Institute, and will represent one of the largest concentrations of animal bioscience research in the world. It should also be placed in the context of other major projects within the University. These include capital development at King's Buildings to house the Dick Vet's prestigious Centre for Infectious Diseases, refurbishment at Teviot to house our world class Centre of Neuroscience Research, and investment at the Medical School at Little France, including a Centre for Regenerative Medicine, led by Professor Ian Wilmut. Our educational

programme will benefit greatly from this proximity to world-class researchers, and we plan to address the global shortage of trained veterinary researchers by closely involving our undergraduate students

Our Veterinary Teaching Organisation (VTO), led by Dr Susan Rhind, received the excellent news that our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) together with that in the medical school had won a prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education. Our VLE is supported by a dedicated team from the College Learning Technology section and is key to the development of our new curriculum, due to roll out in 2007-2008. For the 2006-07 session, the School will introduce a bespoke four year Graduate Entry Programme, tailored for students who already have an appropriate first degree. Featuring a case-based approach to learning, this course will equip graduate entry students to enter the same third year as students pursuing the traditional five year course. In line with our commitment to undergraduate education, we now have an Educational Development Manager, two Teaching Fellows dealing with projects including curriculum mapping and e-assessment, and an e-learning development officer.

In March, the School received full accreditation from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons after a formal visitation in spring 2005. The report praised all of our staff, and the facilities and clinics at Easter Bush. The visitors were unanimous in their view of the high international standing of the Dick Vet. We continue to have full accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association, with special commendation in 2005 for our plans to move to Easter Bush, for the new research institute, and for our outcomes-based approach to curriculum revision.

I hope that you will feel the same enthusiasm for these developments at the Dick Vet as we do here at the School. I look forward to seeing many of you at the events we are planning so that you can keep up-to-date first hand with the changing face of the school in the 21st century, whilst retaining strong links with our wonderful heritage of the past two centuries.

Professor Elaine Watson
Head of School



Todd Booth with the Duchess and Duke of Hamilton.

MRI scanner benefits horses

Lame horses from throughout Scotland and the north of England are benefiting from sophisticated scanning equipment which was unveiled at our Large Animal Hospital last November by the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton. The Hallmarq MRI unit allow us to image bone and soft tissue structures in very fine detail, helping us to make a clear diagnosis as to the cause of a horse's lameness. This unit is invaluable for improving the care and welfare of horses in Scotland and the north of England. It is also a wonderful teaching aid for our Veterinary students and provides a fantastic service for owners and referring vets, so everyone benefits.

The new equipment, the first to be installed in a Scottish vet school or animal hospital, has been designed so the horse only has to be sedated and

walked up to the scanner. Traditional MRI systems require the horse to be anaesthetised which carries some risk to the patient and increases the cost of examination.

Dr David Taylor, Executive Chairman of Hallmarq Veterinary Imaging says, "We are very proud to have our system installed in one of the most respected veterinary institutes in the world. It is only through working with such a high profile centre of veterinary excellence that we can further progress the acceptance of MRI as the diagnostic tool of choice in equine lameness. It is very exciting to be the unique provider in this field and to be part of this revolution in diagnostic imaging and seeing the benefits of new treatments that are following."

Cancer Care Centre

The Hospital for Small Animals has developed a clinical cancer unit which will be extended to include a major new cancer and imaging centre. The new facility, built as an extension to the Hospital for Small Animals will house a linear accelerator and facilities for CT scanning small animals and horses. The total project will cost in the region of £2 million.

This ensures that the Dick Vet will soon be able to offer the most comprehensive range of cancer therapies. The accelerator will enable us to offer cancer treatments to an increased number of patients, achieve better cure rates and long term remissions for

patients. We will also be able to offer palliative treatments to patients who would normally be put to sleep. Further, our belief in the concept of 'the one medicine' alongside our existing and proposed facilities make us best placed to offer research in companion animal cancers as a model for cancer in people.

The Veterinary Cancer Centre, headed by Professor Argyle, will be one of the most advanced veterinary cancer centers in the world and will contribute to maintaining the Dick Vet's position as one of the best clinical, teaching and research facilities internationally.

African Education Network & CTVM

Seven sub-Saharan African veterinary faculties, from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, have recently joined to form the new African Universities Veterinary e Learning Consortium (AUVEC). Spearheaded by our Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine (CTVM), supported by this College's Learning Technology Section and funded by the DFID Animal Health Programme, the initiative will strengthen veterinary undergraduate, postgraduate and CPD training through e-learning. The vision is to have a common e-learning framework, which will develop, deliver and share learning resources across the African veterinary network in order to improve the quality of delivery of animal health and production services for the poor. Key to these developments will be the development of animal 'virtual patients', simulations of clinical encounters to enable students to explore and experience examples of valid praxis, view case histories, see videos of and notes from clinical examinations,

request blood tests and receive results, carry out staged diagnosis, prescribe treatments and see the results, etc. Our Computer-aided Learning in Veterinary Education (CLIVE) packages were donated to the African faculties as part of the agreement. AUVEC members will initially work closely with colleagues in Edinburgh in the development and delivery of the new CTVM online MSc in International Animal Health. In the longer term they will deliver their own online courses, with outreach to countries such as Malawi that have no veterinary faculty. Further support has been given by the Commonwealth Commission, which awarded 15 full scholarships for the MSc in 2006 to students from developing Commonwealth nations in sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information contact Mark Eisler (mark.eisler@ed.ac.uk) or Sue Welburn (sue.welburn@ed.ac.uk) at CTVM and visit www.auvec.com and www.internationalAnimalHealth.ed.ac.uk.



The vision is to have a common e-learning framework, which will ... improve the quality of delivery of animal health and production services for the poor.

Departures

Recent months have seen the retirement of long serving members of staff:

Chris Bell retired in June after nearly 40 years service at the Dick Vet. She initially provided secretarial support to the teaching and diagnostic service commitments of Veterinary Pathology. Latterly she was the linchpin of the Veterinary Teaching Organisation, playing a vital role in the organisation and administration of the teaching across all five years of the undergraduate programme. Chris' friendly nature and calmness ensured that this complex exercise was carried out smoothly. She will be a hard act to follow. We wish her well.

Todd Booth came Edinburgh after completing an equine residency at Liverpool, and gained his Dip ECVS and an MBA at Edinburgh. These equipped him to become Director of the Large Animal Hospital. The work load and profitability of the large animal hospital greatly benefited from Todd's management and surgical skills. He and his wife have now returned to their native Australia where he has become a partner in an equine Practice. We wish them every success.

The third holder of the William Dick Chair of Veterinary Clinical Studies, **Joe Mayhew** was a New Zealand graduate who worked in many universities in North America, latterly in Florida then at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket before coming here. A pre-eminent equine neurologist he was instrumental in building the new equine hospital and in expanding the equine clinical work. He accepted a post in his native New Zealand last month. We wish him well.

David Veitch, a member of the technical staff for over 30 years, retired in December. Recruited from the NHS laboratories, his training in microbiology served the research and teaching activities of the School. Many undergraduate and post graduate students have been grateful for his expertise and knowledge. With well earned retirement David can concentrate on his hobbies of walking & golf.



Chris Bell



Todd Booth

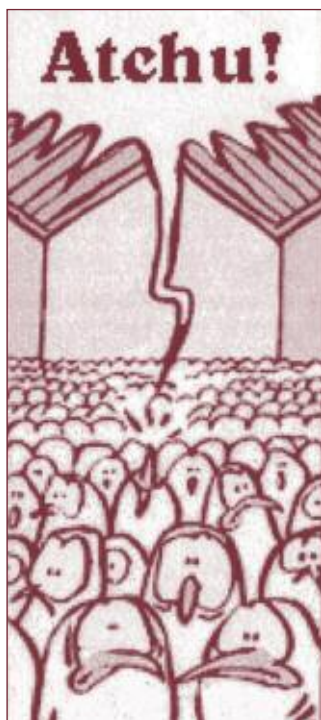


Joe Mayhew



David Veitch

Avian Influenza: contingency plans in place



With heightened awareness worldwide of the risks of highly-pathogenic Avian Influenza (AI), we have been working on our contingency plans. The focus has been on negating the risk to our students, staff, clients and patients while maintaining our full diagnostic and treatment capabilities. The Dick Vet is able to draw on considerable internal expertise of AI, across the range of our specialist disciplines. In addition, in March, we invited Prof. Thijs Kuiken of Erasmus University, Rotterdam to give expert lectures on the topic to students, staff and guests. Quietly confident of our ability to cope, our preparedness was put to the test in April, with news of the isolation of the H5N1 strain from a dead wild swan in Cellardyke, Fife – well within the area from which the Hospitals receive cases.

During the time that SEERAD restrictions were in place, we banned admissions of wild birds to our Exotic Animals & Wildlife unit. Clinicians from that Unit worked with SSPCA officers and

Edinburgh Zoo to tighten biosecurity procedures. We also met the Divisional Veterinary Manager of our local State Veterinary Services (SVS) to develop protocols for dealing with suspect AI in cats, which can act as sentinel species in AI outbreaks. Thankfully the Fife case was a one-off. We believe we're ready to deal with any future outbreak, in co-operation with our SVS colleagues, in a way which will not significantly affect our commitment to patient care.

If you would like advice on developing AI contingency plans or wish to speak to one of our specialists, please contact Ronnie Soutar, Head of Veterinary Clinical Sciences (Ronnie.soutar@ed.ac.uk).

Further information may be obtained from:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/home.asp>

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/updates/en/index.html

Queen's Prize

Queen's Anniversary Award for Further and Higher Education



In February this year Dr Susan Rhind, our Director of Teaching, and Catherine Bennison, the President of the Veterinary Students' Council represented the school at the presentation to the university of the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Award for Further and Higher Education. These awards are given, every two years or so, to reward and recognise innovation, excellence and impact on the wider community.

The award was for the development of a Virtual Hospital Online as an integral part of the adaptable, home-grown Virtual Learning Environments, EEVeC and EEMeC for the veterinary and medical curricula. One veterinary example of the engaging aspects included in the project is 'The Virtual Farm', being led by Kay Aitchison and Michael Cockram from the Dick Vet and Michael Begg from the Learning Technology Section of the College.

The Virtual Farm was designed to increase student involvement in the every-day activities of the University farms. Students have been assigned an 'adopted' cow and calf, receiving data feeds on progress such as milk yields from their cow. Additionally there are newsletters, a farm tour, a discussion board and a webcam, which are being used to show selected events on the farm. It is proving very popular with students. Current plans for Virtual Hospital include the development of hospital cases in zoonotic diseases. We anticipate further exciting developments, in keeping with the Dick Vet's long established record of excellence in the use of educational technology.

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The **Dick Vet News** is distributed free to over 4,500 Alumni and Friends of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies world-wide.

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Dick Vet News

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All previous issues of Dick Vet News now on the web as PDF files at:

<http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/DVnews/Pages/publications.htm>

Alumni Reunions



From left to right: Graham Tudge, Peter Hill, Jim McDowell, Dai Thomas, Roger Gordon, Doreen Robins, Graham Purvis, Dan Bardsley, Jim Orr and John Ewing.

Many thanks to the Class of '65 (some shown above) who held their 40th reunion last September at Easter Bush, and marked this occasion with a class gift of £450 for our Historical Artefact Relocation Fund. Special thanks to Roger Gordon, Jim McDowell and Robin Scott for organising the reunion.

As mentioned by the Head of School, to help us celebrate 50 years of the BVM&S degree, we invite you all back to an Alumni Homecoming Weekend which will kick-off with the graduation and RCVS Ceremony of Admissions for our 2007 graduates on 22 June 2007. We will be writing to you in the autumn to give you further details of the exciting programme that is being planned. In the meantime, please circle June 22-24 in your 2007 diary.

15 July 2006, Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh
Class of 2001. Organiser – Sarah Taylor

5-8 October 2006, Edinburgh
Class of 1962. Organiser – Karl Linklater

6-8 October 2006, Edinburgh
Class of 1966. Organiser – Hugh Reid

21 October 2006, Crieff Hydro
Class of 1996. Organiser – Kirsty Dewar

10-12 November 2006, Peebles Hydro
Class of 1981. Organiser – Sally Stuart

7 July 2007, Edinburgh
Class of 1992. Organiser – Michael Stevenson

Student Recruitment

In February 2006, Colin Stead, our Director of Admission and Student Affairs, together with Neil Hudson visited the USA as part of our recruitment search for international students. In Portland, Oregon they were hosted by the Banfield Pet Hospital Group Headquarters. On the east coast, they held a reception at the American University in Washington DC (a University of Edinburgh partner). In both places potential veterinary

candidates and their families were invited to presentations given on Scotland, Edinburgh, the R(D)SVS, and the veterinary curriculum. These were followed by detailed question and answer sessions. The trip was a success. It generated a lot of good will, and particular interest in our new graduate entry programme. As a consequence we anticipate an increase in the uptake of offers for places at the School.