

# DICK VET

## news



## PRINCESS PLANTS FIRST TREE

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# MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

This is the first edition of our "new look" Dick Vet News. I do hope you like the magazine's more contemporary design.

By the time this reaches you, we will have had our 2008 AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) visitation. Accreditation from AVMA is very important for us now that a significant proportion of our students come, already with a first degree, from the USA. Not only does this allow us to reach a sustainable size, the addition of international students to our undergraduate body truly enriches the cultural and social mix. I will report the outcome of the AVMA visit in the next edition. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Our Patron, The Princess Royal, visited us in October and planted a tree to mark the start of construction on the new teaching building. About 100 of our friends and alumni joined us for this landmark occasion and we now look forward to watching the new £42 million building taking shape.

In the last newsletter I mentioned our focus on building relationships with external partners. I am pleased to share with you that we are now a "Sister School" of Colorado State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, one of the top five vet schools in the USA. Dr Sherry Stewart, Assistant Dean and Dr Terry Nett, Associate Dean represented CSU at the official signing of the International Memorandum of Understanding on October 7. We believe this is the first such relationship between a European Vet School and one in the USA.

In a further collaboration, we are also delighted to announce an alliance between St David's Poultry and the School. Led by Dr Barry Thorpe, this will provide a specialist poultry service, as well as offering a poultry elective for students (see page 7).

Reinforcing the progress we have made in the range of CPD the School offers, we recently received confirmation from RCVS that we are accredited to assess a substantial number of RCVS CPD Modules (also on page 7). This is consistent with



our mission of promoting lifelong learning and we are planning future developments in this area. I do hope our alumni will take the opportunity to maintain strong links with us by participating in our courses.

We hosted our annual Dick Vet Lecture in London this year, at the fabulous venue of the Apothecaries' Hall (see page 8). Nick Henderson was central in organising this event, and I am very grateful to him for contributing to its success. The feedback we received from alumni has encouraged us to continue to hold other events away from Edinburgh in the future.

On April 7, the Easter Bush Research Consortium was launched at the EICC and was attended by a wide range of participants from students to politicians (see page 4). The Consortium extends the research arm of the Dick and will represent one of the largest groupings of veterinary and animal scientists in the world.

Please do feel that you can come and visit us on our growing Easter Bush Campus – either during one of our reunions, or independently when you visit Edinburgh. Visitors remark on the "buzz" on Campus and the staff and I are all keen to share our vision for the future with alumni, clients and friends of the School.

May I finish by wishing you all a very Happy Christmas, and a successful New Year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine'.

**Professor Elaine Watson**

## Colorado State University SISTER SCHOOL



Professor Elaine Watson is pictured signing the International Memorandum of Understanding with colleagues from Colorado State University, Dr Sherry Stewart (left) and Dr Terry Nett (right)

An International Memorandum of Understanding between Colorado State University and the Dick Vet was revealed as the Princess Royal planted the first tree at the new teaching building site at Easter Bush. The "Sister School" status with CSU, one of the leading Colleges of Veterinary Medicine in the US, is set to create a powerful veterinary science base spanning two continents, and opening up unrivalled opportunities for staff and students at both institutions.

As she signed the memorandum, Professor Elaine Watson hailed the agreement saying it would greatly assist in the School's mission to provide veterinary research and education on a global scale and gives both vet schools access to each other's expertise and resources.

Student clinical externship and vacation project exchanges are due to start in 2009.

Ultimately it is hoped there may be the opportunity for joint research studentships, staff exchange programmes, and even joint faculty appointments.

Dr Terry Nett commented "It is very exciting to be a part of the first Sister School relationship between a US and a European veterinary school. I think this demonstrates the forward-thinking of both institutions. It is an opportunity to enhance the already excellent education that students in both institutions receive."

Professor Watson added "This creates a very powerful precedent for international collaborations between top veterinary schools. The formal collaboration with CSU is great news for staff and students alike."



## PRINCESS ROYAL PLANTS FIRST TREE

On October 7 Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal marked the start of construction of the £42 million new teaching building by a ceremonial tree planting

**The three-storey building for 1,200 students and staff will contain state-of-the-art lecture theatres, seminar rooms and laboratories, as well as an innovative teaching studio and learning landscape, and will be located alongside the Hospital for Small Animals.**

The addition of the building will finally unite all veterinary teaching and practice at The Dick. It will form part of a wider £100 million development on the site, which will include a new research building for The Roslin Institute, now part of the Vet School, and a £3 million cancer treatment centre equipped with advanced imaging and radiotherapy facilities for animals.

These bespoke facilities, together with the highly praised and innovative new curriculum, are set to equip Dick Vet graduates with the training and skills essential for the significant challenges

veterinary medicine will face in the 21st century.

Also, over the next 10 years there are plans to relocate the Large Animal Surgical Suite and Hospital, placing it alongside the Hospital for Small Animals.

Head of School, Professor Elaine Watson, commented on how fitting it was that the Princess Royal should be planting the first tree. "The Dick Vet has reached many milestones in its achievement over the last 17 years and our patron has been at our side throughout. Over the next five years the Easter Bush site will be transformed from the Veterinary Field Station to the Easter Bush Campus. We are hugely grateful for the Princess Royal's support for and interest in our work and delighted that she was able to be with us today as we prepare to enter this latest phase in our development."

## Double Boost for Dick Vet Research

# OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE ROSLIN INSTITUTE AND THE EASTER BUSH RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Research at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies has been given a massive boost following the integration of The Roslin Institute into the University of Edinburgh, combined with the launch of the Easter Bush Research Consortium

**The Roslin Institute, famous for Dolly the Sheep, has now joined with the Dick Vet and becomes the research arm of the school. The new organisation was officially launched by Ian Pearson, Minister for Science and Innovation, on 7 April 2008 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. Mr Pearson heralded the union as creating an “international powerhouse”, saying it placed The Roslin Institute and the Vet School at the forefront of global science.**

Once The Roslin Institute's new £58.5 million building and the new £42 million teaching building are finished in 2010, all the Dick Vet activities will be located at the Easter Bush campus. The integration of The Roslin Institute with the Dick Vet creates an organisation with around 50 research groups in the fields of Genetics and Genomics, Infection and Immunity, Neurodegeneration and Developmental Biology.

Professor Elaine Watson, Head of the R(D)SVS, welcomed the news saying it would undoubtedly bring great opportunities for all involved. “The R(D)SVS is already an international centre of excellence and bringing top class clinical, research and teaching activities together creates unprecedented

opportunities,” she said. “We are beginning an extremely exciting new phase in our development.”

The Roslin Institute is set to recruit over the next few years with the aim of attracting around 10 more research groups. This will see The Roslin Institute take its staff numbers to 500. Some £40 million of research funding from the BBSRC over the next five years will help attract new groups to the Roslin Institute.

### RESEARCH AT THE ROSLIN INSTITUTE

Director of The Roslin Institute, Professor David Hume, is clearly excited by the possibilities presented by the new venture and is in no doubt that Edinburgh is the right location. “Something like one in 100 people on the streets of Edinburgh are biological scientists,” he explains. “It's an incredible community. Animal science is an area in which Scotland can be a world leader and I'd like to think that we're starting to build the greatest institute in animal sciences in the world.

Preventing and treating a variety of animal diseases caused by different pathogens will form a major strand of The Roslin Institute's Research. Its work also has many implications for human health, including understanding how pathogens



“WE ARE BEGINNING AN EXTREMELY EXCITING NEW PHASE IN OUR DEVELOPMENT”





*Pictured at the Launch of EBRC are (from left): Maggie Gill, VP Steve Chapman, Elaine Watson, David Hume, Ian Pearson MP, John Brown (Roslin Trustee), Nigel Brown (BBSRC), Bill McKelvie (SAC), Julie Fitzpatrick (Moredun)*

may move between species, investigating food safety issues, and understanding the genetic mechanisms of health and disease in animals, which can in turn enhance human medicine.

The Roslin Institute also focuses on animal growth, reproduction and development and the welfare of animals within their environment. In addition to this the Institute investigates how improvements can be made in the care and productivity of livestock and the treatment of diseases in companion animals.

### **EASTER BUSH RESEARCH CONSORTIUM LAUNCHES**

The Easter Bush Research Consortium was launched at the same event, in parallel with the launch of the newly merged Roslin Institute within the

University of Edinburgh. This also represents an exciting development for the Dick Vet. The consortium is made up of members of The Roslin Institute and the Dick Vet joined by the Scottish Agricultural College and the Moredun Research Institute.

With such a weight of expertise and experience behind it, the EBRC will be ideally placed to streamline research on effective disease controls and treatments, food safety, animal welfare and sustainable management of farm animals. The consortium will focus on animal and human health, identifying new and emerging diseases that can pass from livestock and wild animals to humans and understanding the ways in which these diseases work.

## **WHY THIS IS GOOD NEWS FOR UK RESEARCH**

“The joining together of the Roslin Institute and the University of Edinburgh is incredibly exciting. Both organisations are renowned internationally for their research and such a union will only serve to enhance and build on that.”

**Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea, Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh**

“The merging of The Roslin Institute with the Dick Vet takes us to a new plane in our ability to deliver the School’s philosophy of One Biology, One Medicine. Having a world class research institute located right next to our clinics and practices presents us with boundless opportunities for our patients, and ultimately human beings, to benefit from the translational and comparative research being carried out right next door. Our students will also benefit from unprecedented exposure to top quality research, addressing the global shortage of veterinary trained researchers.”

**Professor Elaine Watson, Head of the R(D)SVS**

“The pooling of resources and expertise between Roslin and the University will provide a significant boost to the work of the Institute and herald the start of a period of expansion, with research that has implications for both human and veterinary clinical medicine. It will further cement the position of Scotland as the world’s leading centre of animal sciences research. The Easter Bush Research Consortium will create one of the largest concentrations of experts in animal life sciences in the world. It will bring together a wide-range of expertise from different disciplines, with a view to fostering new ideas and streamlining research.”

**Professor David Hume, Director of The Roslin Institute**

“The quality of Scottish science is held in the highest regard around the world. Our strengths in agricultural and biological research are vital in developing effective disease controls and treatments, with important implications for both animal and human health. It is great to see Scottish scientists working together through this consortium to play a leading role in understanding the ways in which these diseases work. This is an important step forward for animal health and welfare research.”

**Maggie Gill, the Scottish Government’s Chief Scientific Advisor for Rural Affairs and the Environment**



George Gunn signs the Register of Honorary Graduands. From left: VP Geoffrey Boulton, George Gunn, Elaine Watson

The degree of Honorary DVM&S was awarded at the July 3 Veterinary Graduation Ceremony and was presented by Vice Principal Professor Geoffrey Boulton with a lauration address from Professor Elaine Watson, Head of the Dick Vet.

George was born and brought up on a farm on the Shetland Islands, where his father was a shepherd and it was this closeness to animals and the land that was his first inspiration to become a vet.

"There was only one vet on Shetland in those days," he explains, "and he was so important to the community. I suppose I wanted to be like him."

In September 1968, George left Shetland for the first time to study at the Dick Vet, with the ambition of becoming a large animal practitioner.

"I often say it was the best five years of my life," he says. "In those days Shetland was so isolated and coming to the Dick Vet and being in the City of Edinburgh was amazing!"

On graduation in 1973, following three years in practice, George moved to the Ministry of Agriculture as a Veterinary Officer. For six years he worked on the control of various endemic diseases such as Sheep Scab, TB and Brucellosis, and this experience fired a passion in George for disease control.

The result was a position in the

## SHETLANDER, GEORGE GUNN, HONOURED BY SCHOOL

"It was the most amazing thing!" exclaims George Gunn, speaking from his Swiss home about his honorary degree. "It came completely out of the blue and it was very emotional – I just never expected that a little lad, from Shetland, like me, would get to that point."

pharmaceutical industry, which eventually led to him joining the commercial side of Johnson & Johnson where he successfully managed businesses across Europe.

His next move was to the US to become President of Pharmacia Animal Health, based in Michigan before moving to Switzerland to Novartis to lead their global Animal Health business. George is the current Chairman of the International Federation of Animal Health and has earned many industry and corporate accolades.

However, at both George's graduations, forty years apart, one significant person was missing from the onlookers – his mother.

"For my first graduation my mother was not able to travel from the Shetland Islands – there were no planes for a 3-day period because of fog," he explains. "This time round my mother watched the graduation on the web cast – how times change!"

Times have also changed for the 2008 cohort of new vets graduating alongside him.

"There are twice as many as there were in my day and 80% of them are female," he says. "Also now a vet degree is not seen as automatically vocational, it's also a foundation degree for going off and doing other things. The role these young vets will fulfill is more specialised, but it's as crucial as ever."

# MEETING DEMAND FOR POULTRY EXPERTISE

New partnership to tackle rise in demand for Poultry Vets



Toasting the birth of St David's at the Dick Vet are (left to right) Dr Alan Benyon, Dr Elspeth Milne, Prof Elaine Watson and Dr Barry Thorp

"There are currently around 140 vets registered with the British Veterinary Poultry Association and the needs for poultry vets are increasing," explains Dr Barry Thorp, from St David's Poultry Team, one of the country's largest poultry and game veterinary specialists. He continues "Work as a poultry vet can vary from dealing with a client who may have around 10 chickens to a client with around 500,000 chickens."

Thanks to a ground-breaking collaboration with St David's, the Dick Vet's Veterinary Pathology Unit can now offer a dedicated poultry service focusing on disease diagnosis and poultry pathology.

Dick Vet Students will also be the first undergraduates in the UK to have the option of specialising in poultry disease

and welfare. The school is running an optional course for final year students to cater for a rising demand for specialist vets for poultry, one of the country's largest livestock sectors.

The intensive full-time elective course lasts three weeks initially and will provide theoretical and practical knowledge to undergraduate students on poultry care.

Welcoming St David's to the Dick Vet, Professor Elaine Watson said: "Commercial poultry and game birds make up a large part of the livestock industry and contribute significantly to the rural economy and employment. Running this course will not only give veterinary students greater skills but it will also respond to needs of the agricultural sector."



## Marbocyl Award 2008 WINNER CREATES EXOTIC TEXT BOOK

Dick Vet alumna and staff member Lesa Longley, MA BVM&S Cert ZooMed MRCVS, has scooped the Marbocyl Achievement Award 2008. The judges chose Lesa, a third year resident in the Exotic Animal and Wildlife Service, for not only combining residency training with a part time PhD and sitting her Diploma in Zoological Medicine, but also writing a high quality textbook.

The book "Anaesthesia of Exotic Pets", published by Elsevier Saunders in April 2008, is the first of its kind and is selling well. "People expect more treatment for an exotic pet nowadays, with full work ups, X-rays and also surgery," explains Lesa. The book covers everything from parakeets to fancy pigs, rabbits, hamsters, birds and reptiles."

Hugh Gibson, Vetoquinol's Regional Manager, presented Lesa with her award and a cheque for £2,000. The Marbocyl Achievement Awards were created to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the best selling antibiotic, Marbocyl, in the UK.

## CPD WINS RCVS ACCREDITATION

In September 2009 The Dick Vet became accredited to assess more than 60 modules of the new RCVS certificate, including many small animal, equine and production animal modules. Assessment will be open to any MRCVS and all will have access to an online community to allow discussion, support and interaction.

Our first online course in Companion Animal Behaviour started this Autumn and Small Animal Medicine Courses are planned for next year.

To help Veterinary Nurses to meet their new Register Targets for CPD we have introduced some new courses in both behaviour and exotics we hope they will find interesting.

We want to make CPD from the Dick Vet more accessible to vets in practice, so as well as developing our online courses, we have set up courses suitable for us to take to you in your own veterinary practice.

■ For more information see  
[www.vet.ed.ac.uk](http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk)



*Bruce Vivash Jones in the Apothecaries' Hall*

## WILLIAM DICK LECTURE 2009 – INSPIRATIONAL LECTURE FROM THE “LEAKEY DYNASTY”

Next year's William Dick Lecture will be delivered by Professor Richard Leakey on Friday 18 September at Assembly Hall, New College, Edinburgh.

Despite being subjected to intimidation and physical violence, Professor Leakey continues to campaign for political justice in Kenya. He is a popular lecturer on environmental themes and is involved in many wildlife conservation projects.

■ For event details and tickets see our website or contact [Beverly.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Beverly.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk) early in 2009

# VETS AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

John Bonner reports on the William Dick Memorial Lecture July 2008 given by Bruce Vivash Jones

**Veterinary surgeons will stand in the front line of the UK's defences against any future deployment of biological weapons, according to Bruce Vivash Jones, a leading authority on germ warfare.**

Delivering the annual William Dick Memorial Lecture in London on July 3, the retired industry veterinarian warned that the risk of attack from such unconventional weapons was ever present – more likely from a terrorist group than a hostile government.

Mr Vivash Jones developed his interest in biological warfare while working as a consultant in the animal vaccine industry and travelling frequently to the former Soviet Union where there was an active weapons research programme.

He pointed out that biological weapons have been a feature of warfare from ancient times when Persian armies used corpses to poison wells. Although the 1925 Geneva protocol banned signatory

countries from using biological weapons, many states continued to carry out research in this area. The main attraction of these weapons to governments is that they are a highly cost effective way of killing an enemy's military or civilian population.

## BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS HAVE BEEN A FEATURE OF WARFARE FROM ANCIENT TIMES

As with nuclear and chemical weapons, the main factor preventing the use of weapons by governments is the fear of retaliation. During the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussein did have such weapons available but chose not to deploy them against Coalition forces. However, mankind has never invented a weapon

that has not been used, he warned.

Al-Qaeda is known to have plans to develop a bomb loaded with anthrax spores while the renegade Japanese cult Aum Shirinkyo actually sprayed anthrax into the atmosphere in Tokyo. Fortunately its scientists had committed a 'schoolboy error' of using a harmless vaccine strain.

Anthrax and many of the other organisms frequently used as potential biological weapons, such as *Clostridium botulinum*, are zoonotic agents that are probably more familiar to a veterinarian than a human medical practitioner.

Mr Vivash Jones urged that the veterinary profession should be closely involved in any contingency plans to deal with a biological weapons' incident as they are already trained in the recognition of clinical signs. Vets also had an important role in developing and using the sensor technologies that would be vital in allowing a prompt and effective response to an attack.

# SCIENCE IN FOCUS

Tricia Hart of the The Roslin Institute reports from the Annual Research Emphasis Day

**The Dick Vet again demonstrated the strength of its research at this May event organised by Professor Jonathan Lamb.**

The highlight of the day was the Charnock Bradley Lecture delivered this year by Dr Ilaria Capua, an international authority in Avian Influenza and Newcastle Disease at the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, Padova, Italy.

Dr Capua presented a tour de force of the current state of play in the field of avian influenza (AI) as a demonstration of why it is vital that scientists be more willing to share their data in order to halt the progress of new worldwide epidemics.

The unprecedented spread of AI [H5N1] through different species (including humans) and across three

continents has made it a moving target requiring resource and coordination. Dr Capua highlighted a number of tools for control that should be developed: increased training and investment in knowledge, a strengthening of responses, improved biosecurity and well managed vaccination programmes.

Concluding her inspiring lecture, Dr Capua issued a request for common research policy that will maximise the outcome of efforts in both the animal and human avian influenza fields. Her lecture was a fitting end to an extremely interesting day.

The poster award for the best poster by a Graduate Student in their Final Year went to Jeanette Bannoehr for her poster on the genetic structure of the "staphylococcus intermedius" group.

**DR ILARIA CAPUA, AN INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY IN AVIAN INFLUENZA AND NEWCASTLE DISEASE AT THE ISTITUTO ZOOPROFILATTICO SPERIMENTALE DELLE VENEZIE, PADOVA, ITALY**



## DEMENTIA RESEARCH ON CATS LARGE AND SMALL



Researchers from the Dick Vet now believe half of all domestic cats over the age of 15 and a quarter aged 11-14, are suffering from "geriatric onset behavioural problems" like Alzheimers.

However, is not just household cats who may be affected by the curse of dementia. The University of Edinburgh and Royal Zoological Society of Scotland are seeking funds for a further study, to find out whether non-domestic felids such as lions can be affected by the disease.

Dick Vet clinician Lesa Longley said: "We want to study the brains of lions stored by the Zoological Society of London to see whether these diseases are present, and whether the kind of environment they are kept in and the level of stimulation they get makes a difference to the likelihood of dementia."

Daniëlle Gunn-Moore, Professor of Feline Medicine, said: "The risk of dementia in cats was rising because, like humans, cats are living increasingly long lives. When we look at cats of all ages, we believe about 10% will be affected, which represents about one million cats in Britain" she explained.

Her team of vets are embarking on a major new study in an attempt to uncover which factors increase the risks for elderly cats, and how best to prevent the onset of dementia. Her research will examine whether particular breeds of cat are most at risk, and the impact of different lifestyles, other diseases and treatments with different vitamins and drugs. It is hoped the work could even help in the development of treatments for the 700,000 people in Britain suffering from some form of dementia.



Professor Elaine Watson presents a cheque to Jeanette Bannoehr

Inaugural Lecture:

# PROBLEMS WHEN THINKING OUT OF THE LITTER BOX



“It took me a long time to match the lipstick to the robes,” quipped Professor Daniëlle Gunn-Moore as she took to the podium, clad in her red and purple PhD gown, to deliver her inaugural lecture as the third professor of feline medicine in the world.

The lecture that followed was full of the original thinking, humour and, above all, passion for her chosen species, which characterises Daniëlle’s work.

The lecture was far-reaching, covering many aspects of her work in feline medicine, from viral-immune system interactions, through a number of breed-



AS OUR CATS LIVE LONGER, DEMENTIA IS BECOMING MORE COMMON

related disorders, to tuberculosis and other mycobacterial infections.

She discussed causes of cystitis and explained how stress is the most common trigger. This stress is frequently associated with group living, which does not come naturally to cats and, can cause significant problems.

In relationship to dementia she explained that as our cats live longer, dementia is becoming more common. It is now affecting 28% of cats aged 11-14 years and 50% of cats older than that. Recognition and management of the condition, for example using antioxidant-rich diets, and environmental control are becoming increasingly important.

■ For more on feline dementia see page 9.

## NEW MARKETING MANAGER

Neil Wilson, formerly Corporate Marketing Manager with Scottish Enterprise, has joined the School as Marketing Manager. This new post has been created to ensure a high profile nationally and internationally for the Dick Vet.

In his previous post Neil managed a team of six, delivering Strategic Marketing Communications for Scottish Enterprise working closely with other partners including the University. Neil worked on Edinburgh BioQuarter, brand definition for the School of Informatics, the Launch of Edinburgh Science

Triangle and other projects such as MTV Europe Music Awards and Glasgow Edinburgh Collaboration.

Neil is a graduate of Strathclyde University, and also studied at Queen’s University in Belfast, Heriot-Watt University and the University of Augsburg in Germany.

Neil says “I am thrilled at being given the opportunity to join the team at the Dick Vet. The School’s powerful brand, and the buzz in the School and beyond from current developments make this appointment a marketer’s dream job”.



## TREVOR BLACKBURN AWARD FOR RABIES EXPERT

Veterinary Epidemiologist Sarah Cleaveland has been awarded the third Trevor Blackburn Award by the British Veterinary Association in recognition of her contribution to animal health and welfare in developing countries.

For the past 12 years, while based at the Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine, Dr Cleaveland's research has

had a particular focus on rabies. This was triggered by concerns about the rabies threat to wild dogs in the Serengeti and has developed into a wider involvement in rabies control throughout Africa and Asia.

Dr. Cleaveland has recently moved to a position at the University of Glasgow. Her former colleagues at the Dick Vet wish her well in the new post.

## NEW HONORARY PROFESSOR FOR THE SCHOOL: BRIAN PERRY

Brian Perry has been made an Honorary Professor at the Dick Vet by the University of Edinburgh. Kenya-based Brian graduated from the School in 1969, and then went on to complete two tropical degrees in CTVM, and a DVM&S.

His long research career has focused on the resolution of animal health issues affecting developing countries, in particular through integrating quantitative veterinary epidemiology and agricultural economics to inform policy on disease control and poverty reduction.

Speaking of his appointment he said "It's an enormous honour to be made an Honorary Professor, it means an awful lot to me. I have great respect for the Vet School and for its research and I'd really like to help create opportunities for the University of Edinburgh and the developing world."

Brian has published over 250 scientific articles in refereed journals, books and proceedings. He has acted as a consultant on projects in many countries, from Australia to Zimbabwe.

He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and received an OBE for "services to veterinary science in developing countries" in 2002. In 2004 he won the International Outstanding Scientist Award from the Washington-based Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research.

■ To read more about Brian, turn to Alumni in the Spotlight on page 23.

## PROF LAWRENCE TO TEACH ANIMAL WELFARE

Professor Alistair Lawrence, currently an Honorary Professor in the R(D)SVS, is to take up a joint SAC/R(D)SVS teaching post. He will co-ordinate animal welfare teaching as a continuous thread through the curriculum from day one in Vet School.

He currently heads the Animal Welfare Team at SAC and is responsible for coordinating SAC's research into livestock welfare. He also has an interest in developing wider public understanding of

animal welfare particularly in young people.

Professor Elaine Watson, Head of the School, says "I am absolutely delighted that Alistair has joined forces with the School. I have known Alistair for a number of years and I am confident that his breadth and depth of knowledge, combined with the interests of the rest of his research group, represents a huge stride forward in placing animal welfare at the centre of teaching at the Dick".



A growing passion

## WORKING IN EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE

In recent years the face of Out-of-Hours veterinary provision in the UK has changed dramatically. Vets Now have been at the forefront of this shift in the profession. *Veterinary Surgeon Jenny Walton*, who graduated from Edinburgh talks about why working in emergency critical care has re-energised her enthusiasm for veterinary medicine



### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING FOR VETS NOW AND HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THEM?

I have been working for Vets Now since November 2002. I rang up to find out about the Out-of-Hours service as myself and my husband (also a vet and a Dick Vet alumnus) were looking into opening a practice and were not prepared to cover all of our own Out-of-Hours. I had just had my first little girl and had gone back to work at the mixed practice I had been at for two years, but was finding the transition to part-time work difficult for both myself and the practice I worked for. I spoke to Richard Dixon, the MD of Vets Now who advised I speak to a vet who had been in a similar situation to myself. By doing this I gained real insight into how Vets Now clinics worked and how someone who had been used to working days at a mixed practice, and not seeing many small animal emergencies on a frequent basis, would adapt to the job.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING FOR VETS NOW?

Vets Now as a company is a refreshing change within the veterinary profession. I liked what I had heard when I joined the

company in 2002 and have been there ever since. They listen to their staff and are constantly striving to make things better for both the profession and their employees. They capture their employee's enthusiasm to progress, nurture their strengths and back their staff in every way possible to achieve their own targets whatever they may be. The flexibility of working Out-of-Hours gives me the ability to juggle a very busy life and have precious time to spend with my young family. I enjoy feeling that by offering the service that we do we are making a difference to the clients and pets that we advise and see.

### WITH REGARDS TO TRAINING, ECC (EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE) IS AN EXCITING NEW AREA OF THE VETERINARY PROFESSION. TELL US MORE ABOUT THE TYPE OF CPD YOU'VE RECEIVED SINCE JOINING THE COMPANY?

Vets Now's onsite training programme is a unique and simply invaluable source of training and this type of commitment to training reflects the ethos of Vets Now. Training is given at the clinics, provided by an experienced ECC vet who visits the

clinics at least twice a year to provide on the spot, practical, hands on and theoretical training tips and advice to enable you to do your job better. Vets Now Congress has been running now for five years and is unrivalled in its ability to offer up to date, relevant and practical CPD in ECC. I have been able to attend this congress every year and have been actively supported to do so. I have attended and been funded to attend European and international conferences in the field of ECC and traveled to Michigan State University ECC facility in order to spend time working with some of the most up to date small animal criticalists in the world.

### WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE OTHER VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS THINKING ABOUT NEW CAREER PATHS TO WORK FOR VETS NOW?

I would encourage those who would like a flexible job that enables them to have more time to spend doing things that are important to them or who feel frustrated and unable to progress in their current position, and who enjoy a challenge to consider a career with Vets Now.

# BHS SCOTLAND HELP BATTLE STRANGLES

The British Horse Society (BHS) Scotland has presented the Dick Vet with a video endoscope to assist in the battle against equine strangles

BHS members raised £15,000 with the help of a £5,000 donation from the Dziniak Charitable Trust. This massive fund-raising effort saw volunteers hold barn dances, gymkhanas and even a sponsored parachute drop in order to raise the money.

The specialised equipment is an 8mm diameter digital video endoscopy system. It permits both visualisation of, and sample collection from, the guttural pouches of horses, the primary sites of prolonged infection with the bacteria that cause strangles.

"Having a separate endoscope for strangles outbreak investigations will greatly facilitate the investigation of cases of strangles, particularly with respect to the identification of carriers, many of which do not exhibit any clinical symptoms and pose a major risk to other horses on a



From left: Mark Weston, Scott Pirie, Helene Mauchlen, Loraine Young

"THE VET SCHOOL IS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO THE SCOTTISH BHS MEMBERS"

yard" said Dr. Scott Pirie.

"The Vet School is extremely grateful to the Scottish BHS members, who have contributed to this enormous and vitally important fundraising exercise," he continues.

The presentation of the endoscope

took place at an international strangles conference held at the Dick Vet. BHS Scotland Chairman, Mrs Loraine Young said: "Let's hope that this endoscope along with the knowledge accrued in the past week will consign strangles to history."

## HUGH FRASER FOUNDATION FUNDS TEACHING STUDIO

The Hugh Fraser Foundation, established by Sir Hugh Fraser in 1960 with shares in House of Fraser and other investments, has made a generous donation of £50,000 towards a teaching studio in the new school building.

This facility, for up to 50 students at any one time, is designed to encourage student-centred learning, group and team working in a supportive and collaborative environment.

Working in a small group is often beneficial for students and it is anticipated that these facilities will be used for project-



The new teaching building

based work, for teaching specialist subject areas, for small-group discussions and for academic seminars.

There will be a plaque mounted in the teaching studio to recognise the gift.

## ROYAL HIGHLAND AND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY SUPPORTS NEW BUILDING

In 1823 William Dick was able to establish the Dick Vet as the first veterinary school in Scotland thanks to patronage from the then Highland Agricultural Society.

The 185-year tradition of support continues today and the school has just been awarded £30,000 from RHASS towards the new school building.

## CASE STUDIES

### BRITAIN'S BIGGEST HORSE

Digger, who is believed to be Britain's biggest horse, recently underwent surgery at the Dick Vet



*Digger in surgery*

Digger, a Clydesdale who at the age of five has already grown larger than 19 hands, was brought into the Dick Vet by World Horse Welfare. Following X-ray examinations, he was diagnosed as suffering from osteochondrosis, meaning there was a disturbance in the normal differentiation of cells in growing cartilage, possibly caused by the rate Digger was growing.

Osteochondrosis, which has a genetic component, is diagnosed in a range of breeds but is particularly prevalent among Clydesdales. Digger's size meant that anaesthesia posed a greater risk than surgery on a smaller horse. The arthroscopic

surgery lasted more than an hour and Digger is now recovering and enjoying life back at the World Horse Welfare's Belwade Farm in Aberdeenshire.

Eileen Gillen, centre manager at Belwade Farm, said: "Digger is a gentle giant. He just grew too big and as a result there is always concern that this will have long-term health effects. Luckily we were able to get to the expertise of the Dick Vet and while he needs a period of rehabilitation, Digger is well on the road to recovery."

The case attracted the attention of BBC Animal 24/7 and is scheduled to air on November 27.





## NEW ENDOSCOPICALLY-PLACED FEEDING TUBE SAVES WILLOW THE CAT

New technique helps fragile patient avoid surgery

Seven-year-old Willow arrived at the Dick Vet Small Animal Practice with sudden weight loss and poor appetite. On examination, she was found to be extremely jaundiced, lethargic and had an enlarged liver. She was immediately admitted for intravenous fluids, supportive treatment and investigation.

### WILLOW WAS FED VIA THE TUBE AND STARTED TO IMPROVE RAPIDLY

Her owners were warned that her condition was so serious she might not pull through. Blood tests and ultrasound-guided liver biopsies showed that she had severe liver disease due to fatty liver (hepatic lipidosis) and inflammation (cholangiohepatitis).

"Willow wasn't really making significant progress and was still refusing food," explains Senior Clinical Scholar in Internal Medicine Nick Bommer.

"She was fitted with a new feeding tube which took less than fifteen minutes to place via endoscopy into her stomach. This minimised anaesthetic time and prevented the need for surgery in such a fragile patient."

Willow was fed via the tube and started to improve rapidly. After a two-week stay in hospital, Willow has made a full recovery and has now had her feeding tube removed.

Says Nick Bommer "The combination of intensive high-quality nursing care and ready access to state-of-the-art equipment and specialist expertise is something extra we can offer our clients at the Dick Vet Small Animal Practice, and certainly benefited this great little cat!"



## FERN'S A REAL SURVIVOR

A Border Collie treated at the Dick Vet after becoming impaled on a 10-inch stick has been named PDSA's Pet Survivor of the Year

Fern, aged six, was selected from eight finalists across the UK after suffering two broken ribs and a collapsed lung when a stick impaled her after jumping into the river near her home in Nairn in the Highlands.

The stick had penetrated her diaphragm, rupturing her liver and intestines and left debris in her chest and abdomen, with the need for two operations and a blood transfusion.

Owners, Barry Butcher and Clare Molyneux were referred to the Dick Vet's Hospital for Small Animals.

Clare said: "As well as being a fantastic working dog, Fern's a member of the family and we couldn't bear the thought of losing her. The vets said her injuries should have killed her, but she's a fighter."

Since the operation Fern has gone onto make a full recovery and has given birth to five puppies.

The PDSA Pet Survivor of the Year competition was run in conjunction with leading women's weekly magazine, Chat. Members of the public voted for the winner, with the money raised from telephone voting lines being donated to The PDSA.

# POSTCARD FROM MONGOLIA!

Pip Beard's sabbatical has taken her from a senior research fellowship at the Dick Vet, to the State Central Veterinary Laboratory (SCVL), the national veterinary diagnostic institute of Mongolia in the capital Ulaanbaatar

As I write this article I can see the hills surrounding Ulaanbaatar, from my apartment window. The Trans-Siberian Express is just heaving itself off on the five-day journey to Moscow. It's a far cry from the suburbs of Edinburgh!

My role at the SCVL is to improve the tests currently used in Mongolia to diagnose disease in livestock and to introduce new tests. I am also helping to set up collaborations between Mongolian and overseas veterinary researchers, and assessing the veterinary diagnostic pathology services available in Mongolia. This last goal has involved two very memorable trips to visit the regional veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

Mongolia is the most sparsely populated country in the world, half the population lives in the capital Ulaanbaatar, the rest is scattered around the vast emptiness of the Gobi desert in the south, the steppes in the east, and the forest and mountains in the north and west of the country. Livestock are reared by nomadic herders who live with their families in traditional white gers, or tents, which are dismantled and moved up to twelve times a year in search of good pastures. For some 150,000 herding families in Mongolia, life is almost exactly the same as it would have been 1,000 years ago, except maybe for the motorbike and solar panels beside the ger.

Mongolia has given me opportunities to investigate diseases I would never come



Pip Beard with a Mongolian colleague

“IT HAS BEEN A FANTASTIC SIX MONTHS, I HAVE THOROUGHLY ENJOYED WORKING WITH MY MONGOLIAN COLLEAGUES”

across in the UK, including glanders of horses, rabies, and brucellosis. This year we have formed collaboration with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in the UK to enable the SCVL to compare the different diagnostic tests for brucellosis and work out which are best for Mongolia.

I recently went to the western regional veterinary laboratories in Bayanhongor, in the north of the Gobi desert. Traveling in Mongolia is quite a disorienting experience. There are no road signs, and the road itself is often little more than two tyre tracks in the dust ahead – you need an experienced Mongolian driver and a lot of faith!

I arrived in Bayanhongor to be met with a request to do a post mortem on a suspected rabies case that had been submitted to the veterinary laboratory just that afternoon.

As a pathologist I am always happy to do a post mortem anytime, anywhere, and I'd never done a necropsy on a

rabies case before so that added to the excitement. But I wasn't sure which precautions I should be taking. So from the middle of the Gobi I was able to ring one of the pathologists at the Dick Vet and quickly check the rules – wear two pairs of gloves, a facemask, and be careful! I suddenly didn't feel quite so far from home!

It has been a fantastic six months, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with my Mongolian colleagues who are enthusiastic and generous and very patient with my terrible attempts to learn their language! The word for dog and the word for husband are very similar in Mongolian, and this has led me more than once to make unintentionally insulting comments.

I look forward to the next six months as we begin to develop the cell culture laboratory and broaden the scope of the immunohistochemistry, and I travel to the four veterinary laboratories in the mountainous north of the country.

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# A VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

By Dr Andrew Higgins, CTVM alumnus, Editor of The Veterinary Journal and former Director of the Animal Health Trust

Looking at my fading photos from 1976/77, a Tardis-like wave of nostalgia sends me back to my year as one of the Dick Vet's post-graduates – a year that can never be shaken off for, as the then Dean stated with almost Jesuitical fervour, “once an alumnus always an alumnus”.

I spent my year at the Bush living in a one-bedroom cottage called Crowdieknowe in Milton Bridge. The cottage was named after a poem by Scots poet Hugh MacDiarmid about a Borders graveyard in which “the deid come lowpin owre the auld grey waas”. This might have been a tad intimidating for a guy in his mid-20s, but the cottage was cosy (at least in the summer) and my neurotic German pointer helped to defend us from any “deid lowpin owre” Milton Bridge.

In good alumnus tradition, I am still in touch with some of my classmates who came to Edinburgh from 14 different countries as postgraduates in Tropical Animal Health and Production. We seem to have ended up with a pretty diverse set of careers in the public and private sectors, ranging from senior government positions to professorial chairs from Bangladesh to Barbados. The one thing we all have in common is the Dick Vet.

The Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine (CTVM) started in the 1930s when the University established a course to train British veterinary surgeons to work overseas.

By the time I was there in the 1970s, the emphasis was changing and the MSc and diploma courses tended to attract more overseas students wanting to increase their knowledge to help develop their own countries.

As former CTVM Director, Professor Morley Sewell put it in 2002, the strength of having the centre in Britain was to “bring people from all over the world, to learn the problems of the whole world”.



The 1976/77 Tropical Animal Health and Production class on a field trip (Dr Andrew Higgins, middle).

“IN GOOD ALUMNUS TRADITION, I AM STILL IN TOUCH WITH SOME OF MY CLASSMATES”

In my own case, I really believe my year group all left Edinburgh with the wider vision and the greater empathy and understanding to which Morley Sewell aspired.

To me, this is what being a Dick Vet alumnus is all about. An intangible thread that links us, post-graduates as well as graduates, with staff and students, to a special centre of excellence. It is hard to define what it means to be part of this extended family, but I suppose it must be

a combination of shared experiences, good friendships, stimulating science, happy memories and professional satisfaction, all merged of course with the uniqueness that is Edinburgh – City and University.

The CTVM has evolved into a research centre with a focus on distance learning, including an online MSc in International Animal Health, and offering in-country training courses, reflecting changing needs, aid funding resources and a new emphasis in education and support.

The huge building programme that the School is now embarked upon is mind-blowing and the partnerships with the Roslin Institute, Moredun and the Scottish Agriculture College creating the powerful and important Easter Bush Research Consortium will firmly position it as one of the world's leading veterinary centres.

# DONKEY DENTISTRY OPENS DOORS

A PhD in donkey dentistry led Nicole du Toit to a new job as veterinary pathologist at The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth

The Donkey Sanctuary was very generous in funding my full time PhD on donkey dentistry and I wound up spending a fair amount of time at the sanctuary. I rapidly developed close links with people that work there. In particular I became quite fond of spending my time helping out with donkey post mortems where there was always something new and interesting to get involved with.

So when The Donkey Sanctuary veterinary pathologist retired I jumped at the chance to apply for this post. The main duties of the job are to perform post mortems on all the donkeys that are euthanized at the Donkey Sanctuary and to run the clinical pathology laboratory.

The laboratory provides a haematology, biochemistry and parasitology service to all the donkeys in the UK free of charge. It is hoped that we will also be able to provide a cytology service to donkeys in the near future. Furthermore, there is scope for non-invasive research as The Donkey Sanctuary has a veterinary developments and projects department that is closely linked to the pathology laboratory as a lot of the projects often entail some pathological data. An extensive computerised data system, that has individual records of all the donkeys that have been at the sanctuary since the 1970s, will also provide the basis for lots of retrospective analysis.

As I had become well acquainted with the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College equine clinicians and pathologists during my residency and PhD, collaborative projects between The Donkey Sanctuary and University of Edinburgh have already been discussed. In particular, we are keen to investigate the pathology of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. This is commonly seen in the donkey, believed to be secondary to respiratory herpes virus infections, which is likely to be relevant to



*Nicole at the Sanctuary in Sidmouth.*

idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis seen in west highland white terriers and humans.

Many other ideas for laminitis, lameness and cardiac disease studies have been highlighted and should be easier to implement because of our close ties. I am really looking forward to

starting my new post at the Sanctuary and hope that the close ties with my colleagues from the University will enable us to continue with more projects that will help to improve our understanding of donkey disease conditions.

# UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH'S KENYAN LAB

As most of us are trying to find somewhere to dry our umbrellas, Mark Bronsvort, R(D)SVS, tells us about the lab work he has been undertaking in hot and humid Kenya

My research group works on infectious disease epidemiology in the tropics and I'm involved with a number of international projects. Over the last 18 months I've been managing a large cohort study of cattle diseases in indigenous cattle of Western Kenya known as the Infectious Diseases of East African Livestock or IDEAL. The project is a collaboration between myself and Prof Mark Woolhouse in Edinburgh, Prof Koos Coetzer in Pretoria and Prof Olivier Hanotte in ILRI, Kenya.

The study aims to address a number of major issues. Firstly, there's a widely recognised lack of baseline epidemiological data on the dynamics and impacts of infectious diseases of cattle in the tropics. Secondly there's a need to improve the



Mark Bronsvort is pictured with Kenyan colleagues.

understanding of interactions between multiple infections and their sequelae – the conditions that follow as a consequence of a disease. Lastly there's the "good-cow/bad-cow" hypothesis – do so called positive traits, such as resistance to infection, cluster in certain individuals?

Intensive weekly clinical monitoring of 600 Kenyan cattle from birth to 12 months is combined with state-of-the-art diagnostic support as well as screening for around 80 diseases and their sequelae. We are producing a unique data set and resource

for future research, which we hope will form a compelling evidence base to help attract international funding for development projects and applied research. As this study will indicate the potential impact of disease interventions targeted at livestock for improving animal health, and ultimately human welfare, we hope it will also encourage much larger scale initiatives in this area.

Our research is heavily dependent on having a group of dedicated scientists and technicians to perform the analyses. Two post docs, Dr. Olga Tosas-Auguet and the late Dr Magai Kaare, were joined by three PhD students working in areas of genetics, diagnostics and clinical decision support tools. Two of them – Mary Ndila and Sam Thumbi – are registered in Edinburgh and the third Ilana Conradie is co-supervised in Edinburgh. Finally, we been fortunate in having three excellent Edinburgh vet students, Katie Surguine, Ann Signorella and Anna Haw, who have done a great job contributing to various aspects of the project and integrating with the teams in the field.

■ <http://www.ideal-project.org/> in collaboration with ILRI and the University of Pretoria, funded by the Wellcome Trust.

*Dr Magai Kaare lost his life recently in a road accident, our thoughts are with his family, colleagues and friends.*

## A VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

South African born undergraduate Anna Haw headed out to Kenya for six weeks of her summer holiday to work on the project.

"A lot of the diseases you see in Scotland are to do with high density farming, where you get a lot of animals together" she explains. "In Kenya the big difference is that it's subsistence farming. A farmer might have nine animals or just one or two and the animals are all mixed up – cows, goats, chickens. An additional complication is that, out of financial need, farmers use a lot of natural home prepared

medications to treat their animals."

"I learned a lot about tropical diseases, I also learned that research is something I would like to go into. It was great learning to work with different people with different ideas and languages. There was a real family atmosphere on the project."

"At one point I had to retrieve a calf from the local police headquarters. From what I could gather from the conversation in Swahili, someone had stolen it because the farmer hadn't paid enough dowry money! Now that's not a situation you'd encounter in Scotland."



## EXMOOR PONY HERD TREKS ON

The Exmoor Pony Herd is a treasure unique to the Dick Vet, fourth year student Miriam Geraghty reports

**The students of the Royal (Dick) are uniquely lucky. As well as attending what is arguably the best vet school in the country, we have a rare asset – a herd of Exmoor ponies – left to us in the 1970s by the then Professor of Anatomy Jimmy Speed.**

To promote the conservation and use of Exmoor ponies as working animals, and to enable students to learn about their care and management in a natural environment, an organisation called the "Trekking Section" was formed, made up of students from the Dick and some from other subjects.

The Exmoor is a native British breed with eight million years of ancestry, now sadly as rare as the giant panda. The ponies possess hardy characters and can thrive in the remote wilderness of Exmoor in Devon, where a few wild herds still exist. The use of ponies in conservation grazing has helped to maintain the breed a little, but unfortunately their use as a working animal is being lost. Exmoors

are diminutive at only 12.2-13hh, but are sturdy and sure-footed mounts.

The Trekking Section students are responsible for the management and use of the Exmoors. In the past the ponies were used to teach students how to ride – all students at the Dick would be expected to confidently handle, ride and even

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 THE PONIES ARE USED  
 AS TEACHING AIDS AND  
 CAN BE OFTEN SEEN  
 AROUND EASTER BUSH  
 -----

break-in new ponies. Now the ponies are used as teaching aids and can be often seen around Easter Bush with students learning skills such as teeth rasping.

Currently we have a herd of 14 ponies, ranging in age from 4-21 years old. In term time they live close to the Easter Bush campus in the Pentland Hills just south of Edinburgh and in the summer

they move up to Glendevon in Perthshire. They earn their keep as trekking ponies, working at weekends during term time in Edinburgh, and six days a week in the summer at Glendevon.

Every year a new group of budding Trek Leaders spend their Wednesday afternoons out with the ponies learning how to take out safe, enjoyable treks. For the most dedicated there are various committee positions to choose from, giving students a great opportunity to work together to run what is essentially a small business.

From learning farriery and tooth rasping to trekking and competing, students and ponies work together at the Dick Vet. I would like all the students to remember that these ponies are ours, and encourage everyone to get involved in some way with the preservation of this fantastic tradition.

■ To find out more go to [www.exmoorponytrekking.co.uk](http://www.exmoorponytrekking.co.uk) or email us on [exmoorponytrekking@hotmail.com](mailto:exmoorponytrekking@hotmail.com)

## ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our alumni are all over the world using their expertise in so many ways from animal welfare to ensuring food safety



Class of 1952

### DOUGLAS MITCHELL

Born in Edinburgh, Doug entered the Dick Vet in 1947 in the footsteps of his grandfather, father, two uncles, a sister and two brothers-in-law!

Since then his career has taken him all over North America culminating in his Directorship of the Animal Diseases Research Institute (Western), the Western Canada flagship laboratory of the Canadian Food Production & Inspection Agency, located outside Lethbridge, Alberta.

Doug retired from Government Service in 1984 and accepted a position as Canadian Manager of a bilateral aid project between Canada and Indonesia to project manage design and construction of a veterinary diagnostic laboratory to serve the island of Java.

"Being at the Dick Vet as a student was an absolutely happy time, best five years of my life because they were totally carefree," he explains, speaking from his home in Canada. He confesses jovially that he wasn't the best academic.

"Maybe I'm the black sheep of the family," he quips, "but things were hard after the Second World War so North America offered opportunity. My grandfather graduated around 1880 my father in 1908 but there was no pressure to be a vet in our family – it happened by osmosis and family connections!"



Class of 1963

### HUGH CRAN ROSS

In 1966 he thought he'd stay a year. Forty-two years later, Hugh Cran Ross has written a book entitled "And Miles to Go Before I Sleep – A British Vet in Africa" about what kept him in Kenya. Dick Vet News spoke to him on his return from a trip to Nyarogongo, an active volcano in the Congo.

"I got back from the Congo yesterday, relatively unscathed although the volcano was a bit hyperactive and there were various encounters with primates," he explains with all the enthusiasm that has enabled him to make a success of a career where he has had to do everything from castrating camels to placating wild animals.

Having qualified at the Dick Vet, Hugh, originally from Aberdeenshire, answered a small ad to work as a vet in Kenya. "I'd been in Kenya for 18 months when a cow broke my leg," he mentions this as if it were just a routine event. "I was in hospital for six months and started the book. In it I talk about so many unusual cases."

"I was called to treat a tiger at an Indian circus and to have a look at their bear," he continues. "I've treated lame lions and on one occasion was asked to take a tumour off a lioness' mouth. My wife came too with our three-month-old daughter. The lions were very agitated and we asked if any of them ever got out. The guy only told us afterwards that one of them had got out just the day before!"

*And Miles to Go Before I Sleep – A British Vet in Africa* is available from Amazon and other booksellers.



Class of 1969

## BRIAN PERRY

Brian Perry, who has just been appointed as an Honorary Professor, is certainly no stranger to the University of Edinburgh, having graduated no fewer than four times

Speaking from Kenya's Rift Valley, where he lives, he jokes that it might show a complete lack of imagination doing all four degrees at Edinburgh. However a lack of imagination is not something that would characterise Perry's varied career, that has taken him to Ethiopia, Colombia, Zambia, the US and now Kenya.

"I've always considered myself extremely lucky," he explains. "I came in at the tail end of the Colonial Veterinary Service. DfID sponsored me to do a Master's in Tropical Veterinary Medicine at Edinburgh and then I did a further Master's in Tropical Veterinary Investigation. From there I got into epidemiology. I was in the right place at the right time and I had the

opportunity to learn about tropical diseases and be thrust into frontline situations."

Originally from Norfolk, Brian had to defy the wishes of his family to fulfill his wish to become a vet.

"My family had always been in farming and I was destined to follow the family tradition. But during my A-Levels I became fascinated by Zoology and decided I'd rather be a Vet. Then I had to break the news to my family!"

Alongside his demanding career Brian is an active polo player and Chairman of the Kenya Polo Association.

■ To read about Brian's appointment as Honorary Professor go to page 11.

Class of 1996

## TIM BAILEY



Between being Chief Executive of the SFQC, father of a one-month-old baby boy and husband to a busy farmer in the Borders, life generally moves pretty fast for Tim Bailey. But when the Dick Vet News caught up with him he was stuck in traffic.

"SFQC is an independent company that helps consumers know more about the food they buy," he explains. "We specialise in inspection and certification of food production, processing and services. I started with the company six years ago and things really took off from there. As the work developed I wound up running the company."

"If you had asked me back at graduation I wouldn't have believed I'd be doing this. It's taught me that if you let life evolve great things can happen," he quips.

Bailey is convinced that a Vet degree is ideal preparation for life in the world of business.

"It's not just being able to inject an animal, it's all the non-clinical things as well like communication. You can apply diagnostic skills to a business, if you're faced with a challenge you're looking for a root cause and a treatment. Analytical thinking is just as useful outside the clinical arena."

"The Dick Vet gave me a great Vet education," he continues. "And I loved Scotland so much I stayed!"

And as for what next? "Who knows! I'm keen to develop our business in the agricultural and food sectors – I shall evolve."

## VBF AWARDS ITS FIRST FELLOWSHIP

Dick Vet Alumnus, Mr Mark Wharton, became the first fellow of the Veterinary Benevolent Fund (VBF) at the fund's annual general meeting in July. The fellowship was awarded in recognition of Mr Wharton's 'outstanding and sustained service to the fund, and his distinguished contribution to providing support for the veterinary profession'.



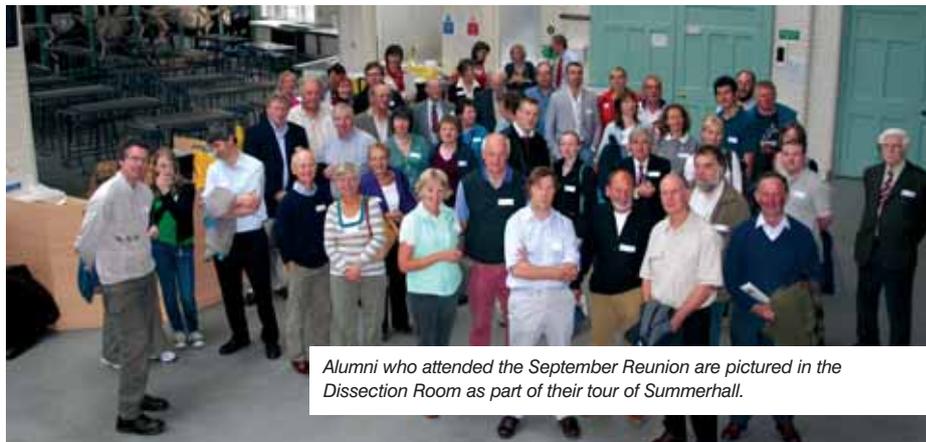
## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009

**Dick Vet Alumni Reception**  
BSAVA Congress, Birmingham  
April 2-5 2009  
Invitation will be by email only, so please make sure we have your current address.

**The William Dick Memorial Lecture**  
Professor Richard Leakey  
The Assembly Hall,  
New College, Edinburgh  
Friday 18 September 2009

**Annual Alumni Reunion**  
Saturday 19 September 2009  
Edinburgh  
Graduates of years ending in '4' or '9'

## ALUMNI MARKING MILESTONES



Alumni who attended the September Reunion are pictured in the Dissection Room as part of their tour of Summerhall.

For some it was the fifth anniversary, for others the 55th but it was a milestone year for the alumni who gathered together on September 6, as they all graduated in a year ending in a '3' or '8'.

There's now an annual reunion dinner and ceilidh for those graduates celebrating a milestone anniversary. And next year it's the turn of those who graduated in a year ending '4' or '9'.

This year's annual reunion kicked off with a visit to Summerhall and a lecture on the history of the Dick Vet given by Colin Warwick. With a staggering 46 years of service, Colin was the Dick's longest serving employee until he retired in 2005.

"His session was an absolute delight,"

said David Pepper, class of 1968. "It's always astonishing how getting together with classmates feels like you only left the Dick yesterday. The whole event was well-organised and worthwhile."

Alumni travelled from as far afield as Canada, Iceland, Switzerland and Denmark. Of particular note were John Cameron and Gordon MacLachlan, two 1943 graduates.

The 2009 reunion will be held on Saturday, September 19 to coincide with the William Dick Memorial Lecture held on Friday, September 18 (see page 8).

■ For further information contact  
**Beverley Montgomery 0131 650 6149**  
[Beverley.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Beverley.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk)

## BSAVA ALUMNI DRINKS RECEPTION

For the first time this year Dick Vet Alumni got together at a drinks reception at the BSAVA (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) congress in Birmingham. It was a great success with around 40 alumni attending and enjoying a drink together while they caught up on their news.

We hope to make it a regular event at BSAVA to help you all to keep in touch, so look out for us next year!

■ If you would like to be invited to this and other similar events, please make sure we have your up-to-date postal and email address. Send to [alumni@ed.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ed.ac.uk).

## NORTHERN IRELAND ALUMNI REUNION

A reception was held at the Dunadry Inn, Templepatrick, Co Antrim to celebrate the launching of the fund to create an "Ulster Room" in the new Dick Vet buildings at Easter Bush. After a buffet supper Colin Warwick entertained the audience with an illustrated talk on the history of the evolution of the Dick Vet from its earliest days in Clyde Street to the present day.

To date over £15,000 has been donated and Dr Ernie Logan who instigated the appeal thanked the alumni present for their generosity.

■ Donations can be sent to **Beverley Montgomery 0131 650 6149** [Beverley.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Beverley.Montgomery@ed.ac.uk)