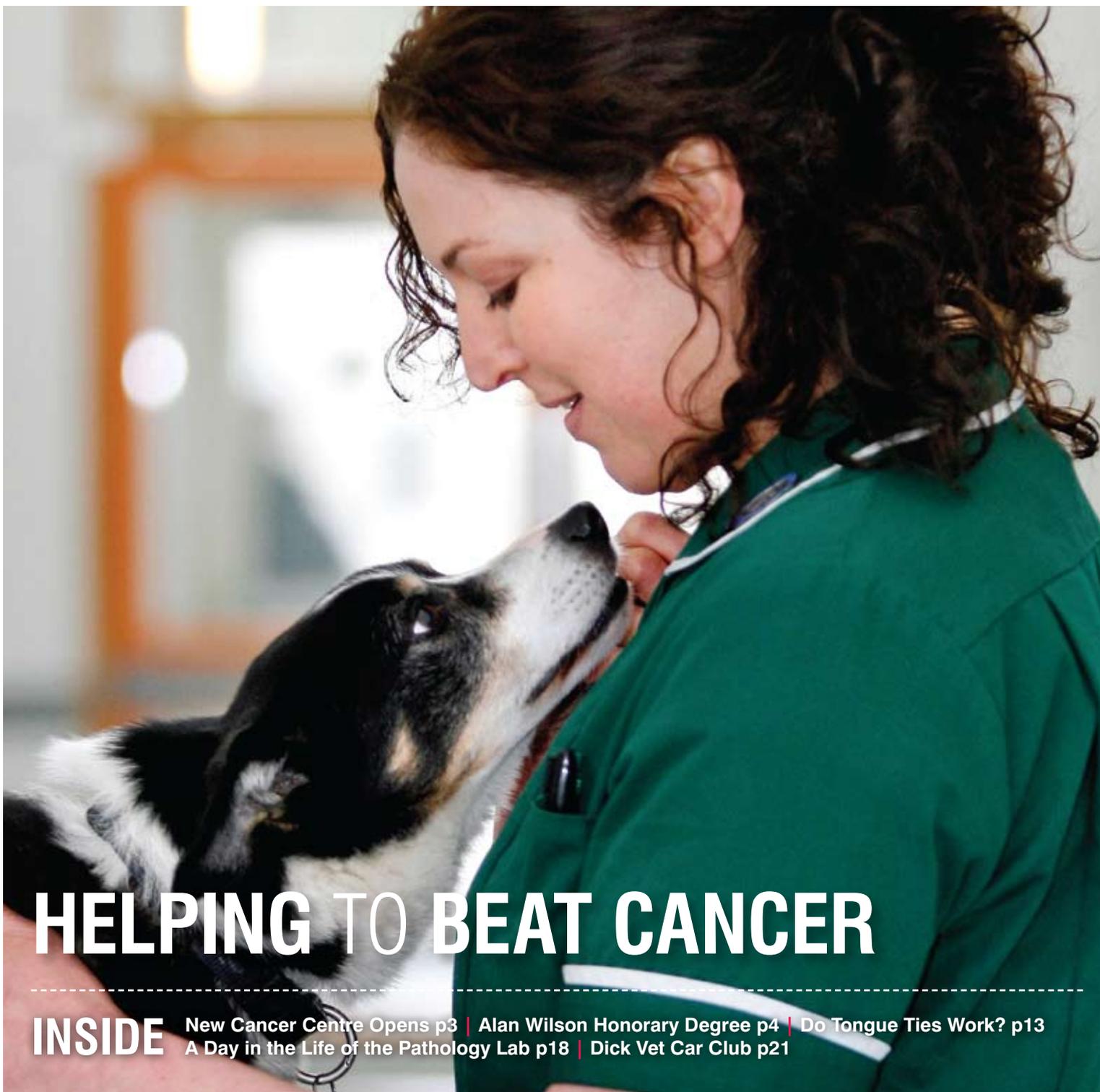


# DICK VET

## *news*



## HELPING TO BEAT CANCER

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Cover Image: Linda Roberts, Veterinary Cancer Nurse

If you have any ideas or feedback for the **Dick Vet News** email Neil.Wilson@ed.ac.uk

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to the November edition of Dick Vet News. Life has been action-packed since the Spring edition with the opening of our new Oncology and Imaging Centre (page 3) and an intensive programme of visits in Australia and the United States in June, Alan Wilson's Honorary Degree in July (page 4) and Richard Leakey's landmark William Dick Memorial Lecture in September (page 7).

The frames of the new teaching and research buildings are now erected and visible from my office. You can view the building work real-time on web cams installed on site (<http://www.easterbush.estates.ed.ac.uk/cameras/>). There is now an element of good-humoured competition between the contractors working on the teaching and research buildings as to which will be taller and which will be finished earlier. Both are still on schedule for completion in early 2011.

Fundraising for the new buildings is on track, and our new Director of Fundraising, David Rider, is now looking for class gifts to fund seminar and tutorial rooms. Each of these has a cost of approximately £30,000, and for a class of 60, this would mean only £500 each, and it's tax deductible. The room would be named "Class of 19XX", and there would be a plaque with the names of all the individuals who had contributed plus their graduating class photo. Indeed, as we approach the move to Easter Bush, Neil Wilson has now set aside four weekends in 2010 for Alumni who wish to visit Summerhall for a final time (dates on page 24).

Planning never stops at the School to keep our facilities second to none in Europe. We are now developing a detailed 10 - and 20 - year vision plan for the Easter Bush campus to act as a guide for the location of future buildings, including an options appraisal for relocation of the equine hospital as the equine surgery unit nears the end of its functional days.

However, facilities will always come second to the quality of our staff and students, and we continue to attract the best possible school leavers and graduates onto our



programme, some of whom are featured in this edition, and to employ staff who are world-leading in their clinical or research fields. This issue includes details of the high success rate that our younger staff continue to achieve in specialist Diploma exams (page 9), helping to ensure the UK's next generation of Specialists in veterinary medicine.

I do hope you will enjoy this latest edition of the Dick Vet News, and that you will share as much in the School's future as you have played in maintaining the School's proud tradition and heritage in the past.

**Professor Elaine Watson**

■ For further information on our fundraising activities please visit [www.vet.ed.ac.uk/fundraising](http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/fundraising), email [vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk](mailto:vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk) or call David Rider on 0131 650 8833.

## CANCER CENTRE LAUNCH

Riddell-Swan Veterinary Cancer Centre opened on 9th June.



Professor David Argyle, Professor Elaine Watson, The Duchess and Duke of Hamilton and Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

The Riddell-Swan Veterinary Cancer Centre was opened on 9th June by the Duchess of Hamilton. Located at the Hospital for Small Animals at Easter Bush, the Centre is treating up to 20 cases of animal cancer a week.

State of the art equipment, including a CT scanner, will make it possible to scan large and small animals. As well as treating cancer patients, the Centre will conduct research looking at issues such as environmental risk factors and cancer causing genes.

Centre Director, Professor David Argyle said: "The Centre will have the most sophisticated diagnostic procedures, followed by comprehensive cancer therapies for pets, including a linear accelerator to provide radiotherapy."

"Our understanding in treating cats and dogs of how cancer takes hold will also pave the way for comparative research, relating what we know about the disease in animals to humans to improve treatments for all."

Around one in three dogs and one in five cats will develop cancer, and the disease is the main cause of mortality in household pets, although new treatments have led to better survival rates.

Specialist staff at the Centre will include a Veterinary Nurse specialised in Cancer Care. The nurse will replace Linda Roberts, pictured on the front cover. Linda was the first specialist veterinary cancer nurse in the UK and is soon to move on to another post after five years at the Dick Vet.

The Cancer Centre forms part of the £100 million Easter Bush re-development, which includes a research building and teaching building. Fundraising support from individuals, Trusts and corporate partners play a key part in this investment.

The Centre is named the Riddell-Swan Veterinary Cancer Centre after the Class of '48 Alumnus, John Riddell-Swan, whose widow, Minnie, has made a major gift to ensure the project came into being.

Commenting on the donation, Minnie said "I am really thrilled that the Centre has been named for John, especially this year, which would have been our 50th wedding anniversary."

■ If you would like further information on how to support the School please contact [vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk](mailto:vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk) or call 0131 650 8833.



### JOHN RIDDELL-SWAN OBE

John Morrison Riddell-Swan was born in Wigtownshire in 1926. After completing his education at Stranraer High School, he entered the Dick Vet College, graduating in 1948. After a spell in large animal practice at the Dick Vet, Biggar, and in Stranraer, he moved to Hong Kong in 1952 to take up a post in private veterinary practice and Consultant to the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club.

John became a Veterinary Officer in the Hong Kong Government in 1956 and in 1980, after serving as Deputy-Director, he became Director of the Hong Kong Agriculture and Fisheries, and also Director of Marketing for the Country Park Authority. He served as a Government-appointed Member of the Legislative Council between 1980 and 1983. In 1981, he was awarded an OBE.

In 1986 John retired to Runaway Bay on the Gold Coast of Australia, where he had spent his honeymoon with his new wife, Minnie, 27 years earlier.



Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, Alan Wilson and Professor David Hume following the Graduation Ceremony.

## ALAN WILSON HONORARY DEGREE

The man they call the "White Monkey King" honoured by School.

The degree of Doctor Honoris Causa was awarded to Class of '63 alumnus Alan Wilson on 7th July at the Veterinary Graduation Ceremony, with a laureation address from Professor David Hume.

Alan was born in Malawi, the son of Geoff Wilson, a 1926 Dick Vet alumnus and Professor of Tropical Veterinary Medicine at the Veterinary School in Utrecht. On graduating from the Dick Vet in 1963, Alan embarked upon a research career first in Africa and then in Australia, receiving a PhD from the University of Edinburgh in 1968.

Alan has a passion for cricket and received the prestigious Lifetime Service Award from the International Cricket Council, East Asia-Pacific. He is widely acknowledged as having made cricket what it is today in Indonesia.

"We've been involved in the development of cricket in Indonesia since

the 1990s and the game has really taken off all over the country," he explains.

Alan has also maintained contact with his graduating year at the Dick and has organised many reunions. One enthusiastic attendee reports back that the "Dick '63 Reunion Trophy" presented in 2003, is possibly the most sought-after title in Bali cricket.

He has lived and worked in Bali for many years and is a prominent figure in veterinary medicine, conservation and higher education circles. In 1994 he set up the Indonesia International Rural and Agricultural Development Foundation, which by 1998 had expanded into a major Foundation that established eco lodges, poultry feed mills, solar power, and other environmental activities. Following the Tsunami in 2004, the Foundation had workers in Aceh within 48 hours and

raised more than \$1 million in two years to assist in reconstruction.

Following the graduation in July, Alan was part of a back-up team crossing the Sahara to support his son, Geoff, also a vet, who was successfully attempting a world record for crossing the desert by wind power alone.

Affectionately known as the "White Monkey King" by many Balinese, Alan has devoted the latter years of his life to poverty alleviation and conservation of habitat and wildlife. He has achieved this through the Foundation and private sector activities resulting in job creation, use of renewable energy and conservation of habitat in Indonesia.

When asked if he might consider taking things easy he laughs: "We have no retirement plans, we just plan to continue working until we're not able to work any longer."

## MILESTONE FOR A NEW TEACHING BUILDING

A landmark phase has been reached in the construction of the new teaching building at Easter Bush.



Professor Elaine Watson completes the final part of the floor.

Builders have now put in place the final structure of the £42 million bespoke building, which will provide 11,500 square metres of floor space and accommodation for 1,200 staff and students. To mark the progress in construction, a "topping out ceremony" was carried out on 24th September, when a fir branch was hung from the tallest point in the building to symbolise good luck.

The new Vet School building, which is being constructed by Balfour Beatty and due to be completed in early 2011, will provide state of the art facilities for students and staff.

It is sited next to the Hospital for Small Animals, enhancing clinical training among students, and will include two 200-seater lecture theatres fitted with multi-media technology, a library, restaurant and seminar rooms as well as teaching and research laboratories.

Professor Elaine Watson, Head of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: "This marks a significant stage in the construction of the new Vet School building which, when complete, will further enhance



Dougie Hanley of Balfour Beatty hangs a fir branch from the tallest point of the building for good luck!

our worldwide reputation for veterinary teaching and provide students and staff with a learning environment second to none."

The new Vet School forms part of a £100 million development on the Easter Bush site, which will also include a new research building.

Some 90% of the funding for the new campus has been secured and a campaign is underway to raise the final tranche.

Everything within the new teaching building will be at the cutting edge of teaching technologies to ensure the



Guests in full protective equipment at the ceremony.

best possible experience for today and tomorrow's students and to future-proof, as far as possible, the investment.

The funding of the latest technologies is only possible through the generosity of a wide range of supporters and friends of the Dick Vet. Various grant-making Trusts have been very excited about the plans and are investing to help ensure the funding goal is reached.

A number of alumni representatives are also coming forward to organise collective donations for their class year, country of birth or retirement. These donations are being recognised by naming rooms after the group and honouring them with a permanent plaque and, where possible, photographs.

To celebrate the success or to honour a loved one, seats within the new lecture theatres are available to be individually named for a modest donation. This area of the campaign has been of particular interest to current and recently graduated students and their parents. These are only a few of the ways in which much needed support can be recognised.

■ If you would like to support the School please visit [www.vet.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/) fundraising, call David Rider on 0131 650 8833 or e-mail [David.Rider@ed.ac.uk](mailto:David.Rider@ed.ac.uk) for further details.



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# A WORLD WORTH INHERITING

Professor Richard Leakey delivered the 2009 William Dick Memorial Lecture on 18th September. Professor of Molecular Biophysics, Jeremy Bradshaw, reports.

Spend less time in the shower, reduce waste! Richard Leakey's message urged that we can all take practical steps to reduce the impact of environmental change on the world's dwindling wilderness resources.

Richard Leakey, author, TV presenter, former politician and currently Professor of Anthropology at Stony Brook University, New York, started by questioning the commonly-held view that the environment is a single entity. Ask the coelacanth, he suggested, whether it has experienced any change in the ocean depths in recent years? Yet the evidence from polar weather stations is clear – the

temperature is getting warmer and the ice-sheets are getting smaller.

The impact of humans goes far beyond global warming. The few wilderness areas that remain tend to be small with hard edges. The species they contain are often unable to leave. Even with the creation of buffer zones and corridors to allow free migration, the animals cannot carry with them the rest of the complex ecosystem of which they are a part.

Professor Leakey believes that Africa is now more susceptible to drought than at any time during his lifetime and that the resulting depletion of wildlife is far greater

than realised. He went on to argue that this is one type of climate change that can be addressed. There is widespread wastage of water across the developed world, mostly in agriculture, but also by domestic consumers. This is something that individuals can change.

The pace at which the world is losing its wilderness is already too rapid to slow down in Professor Leakey's lifetime. So is it worth doing anything? Yes, was his message, and he concluded with some positive observations.

Even if it takes a hundred years for new initiatives to take effect, this would be a mere blink in the sight of evolution. Humans have been around for 70,000 years, what is a mere hundred? Even a lifetime is too short a time to be worth sacrificing the planet for. We need governments to take steps to preserve and restore areas of wilderness. Vets have a special role in preserving species and reintroducing them to repopulate wilderness areas.

The real problem is that politics operates on a much shorter timescale. Why do we allow our politicians to get away with negligent handling of the world? Recent history has witnessed the end of slavery, non-universal suffrage and apartheid in much of the World. All have fallen due to public pressure. If heads of state can now be tried for torture, why not also for abuse of the world's resources? Is that not also a crime against humanity?

It is the unborn generations' right to inherit a healthy planet. Change is do-able, possible and realistic on a fifty-year time scale. Even if it takes a hundred years, we should not be deterred from leaving a world worth inheriting to our grandchildren.

■ View the Lecture on our website  
at [www.vet.ed.ac.uk/2009WDML.htm](http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/2009WDML.htm)



Professor Richard Leakey at the William Dick Memorial Lecture in the Assembly Hall, New College.

## FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN ALUMNUS HONOURED



Jotello F. Soga with his Scottish wife Catherine courtesy of Jesse W. Lewis.

The Veterinary Science Library of the University of Pretoria was named on 5 May 2009 by Professor Nkuhlu, the Chancellor of the University, in honour of the first South African to qualify as a veterinarian, Dr Jotello F. Soga, who graduated from the Dick in 1886.

Jotello Festiri Soga was born in 1865 at the Mgwali Mission, in the former Transkei, South Africa as the fourth son of Reverend Tiyo and his Scottish wife Janet Soga (née Burnside). Reverend Tiyo had been in Scotland for religious studies in 1846.

Jotello Soga was, at the age of 21, the first South African to qualify as a veterinary surgeon. In 1886, newly qualified and with a gold medal distinction in botany, he returned to the Cape Colony.

Six years later Dr Soga revisited Scotland and married Catherine Watson Chalmers with whom he had three daughters. On his return to Africa he studied the toxicity of plants and their

effects on animals, using plant remedies in his practice.

He went on to pioneer inoculation of cattle against lung sickness. Then in the late 1890s the fight against Rinderpest became Dr Soga's main concern. He was central in measures taken to combat the devastating outbreaks that swept Africa.

The Dean of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria, Prof Gerry Swan, pointed out: "Dr Soga played an important role in combating rinderpest and lung sickness as the first qualified South African veterinarian. Yet he is better known as a pioneer researcher in the study of toxic plants and their effect on animals."

Jesse W. Lewis, an American journalist living in Cape Town and father of a recent Dick Vet graduate, has written articles about Soga and is currently making a documentary of his life. Filming will start in Edinburgh this autumn.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR DAVID COTTRELL

A Memorial Service was held for the late Dr David Cottrell, senior lecturer at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies on 30th September in the Main Hall at Summerhall.

David was a well liked and respected teacher, colleague and friend of students and staff, until his very sudden death of a heart attack on 15th June. Colleagues and students, past and present, joined together to share thoughts, music and poetry at the memorial, which included one of David's own poems "Spring above Tiverton".

## CORNELL PRIZE FOR DICK VET STUDENT

Final year student Stuart Davenport has won the 2009 Leadership Program Prize from Cornell University. This summer, Stuart took part in the research-based program, which aims to provide vet students with a unique learning experience that clarifies and strengthens their commitment to careers in science.

The program has had thousands of applicants but only 24 made the grade in 2009. The Dick Vet was well represented as undergraduate Lizzie Slack also gained a coveted place at Cornell alongside Stuart.

Delighted by the prize, Stuart said: "I'm really pleased my work has been rewarded in this way. Cornell is an amazing intellectual environment and it was a privilege to spend the summer there. I would wholeheartedly recommend the program to anyone interested in research." Head of School Professor Elaine Watson presented Stuart with a copy of Molecular Biology of the Cell on his return.



Stuart receives his prize from Professor Elaine Watson.



Five members of Dick Vet staff were awarded RCVS Diplomas this summer. They are, left to right, Nicki Reed (Diploma in Small Animal Medicine – Feline), Lesa Longley (Diploma in Zoo Veterinary Medicine – Mammalian), Geoff Culshaw (Diploma in Veterinary Cardiology), Susan Hammer (Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing) and Safia Barakzai (Diploma in Equine Soft Tissue Surgery).

## SHOWCASE AT THE HIGHLAND SHOW 2009

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies teamed up with The Roslin Institute this year to host a stand at the 2009 Royal Highland Show at Ingliston. There were up to 1000 visitors to the stand during the four day event, many of them school children with veterinary ambitions. The stand gave visitors an insight into the veterinary services available and the research of The Roslin Institute. Visitors were also interested to find out more about the substantial redevelopment of the Easter Bush Campus.

## EUROPEAN DIPLOMATE CERTIFICATION SUCCESSES

Staff and residents have shared in exam success at the prestigious European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ECVIM).

Staff members Nicki Reed and Nick Bommer have gained the European Diploma in Small Animal Internal Medicine (DipECVIM).

Melanie Craven, formerly a resident in Small Animal Internal Medicine now working on a PhD in Gastroenterology at Cornell University, has also achieved the European Diploma in Small Animal Internal Medicine (DipECVIM).

Another former resident, Yolanda Martinez Pereira, now working as a Small

Animal Cardiologist in Stirling has been awarded the European Diploma in Small Animal Internal Medicine (Cardiology).

Current resident Chiara Penzo has gained the European Diploma in Small Animal Internal Medicine (Oncology) and former resident, Ana Oliveira, has gained the European Diploma in Veterinary Dermatology (DipECVD)

Recognising this success, Professor Daniëlle Gunn-Moore, Head of Companion Animal Sciences said: "We are extremely proud of these achievements. By passing these difficult exams these clinicians will become our next generation of specialists."

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## WOODROW AWARD FOR DANIÈLLE GUNN-MOORE

Professor of Feline Medicine, Danièle Gunn-Moore has won the BSAVA Woodrow Award 2009. The award is presented by the BSAVA (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) to a member for their outstanding contribution in the field of small animal veterinary medicine. Professor Gunn-Moore is pictured here with BSAVA President Professor Ed Hall at the BSAVA Congress in Birmingham.

## ZOO MEDICINE SUCCESS

Simon Hollamby, of the Exotics and Wildlife Service, has just become a Diplomate of the American College of Zoological Medicine (ACZM), an international speciality organisation recognised by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

ACZM is recognised as one of the hardest American board specialities to obtain, with a rigorous examination process covering all aspects of zoological medicine in a qualifying examination, followed by a certifying examination in one of five areas: general zoo animal, avian, reptiles and amphibians, aquatic animal medicine and wildlife medicine.



Simon has qualified in the wildlife speciality and is one of approximately 120 ACZM Diplomates, worldwide and the only one in the UK.



## INAUGURAL LECTURE FOR CHAIR OF VETERINARY EDUCATION

Professor Susan Rhind, who has been much lauded for her leadership of the Dick Vet's innovative online and virtual learning programme, gave her Inaugural Lecture entitled "Let Sleeping Dogs Lie - why change veterinary education?" on 2nd June.

In the Lecture, Professor Rhind explained that by the time today's students reach their fourth year, sections of their courses are being delivered by e-learning with a virtual farm and virtual clinics with voice-overs from teaching staff.

Professor Rhind is adamant that new ways of learning are not leading to the baby being thrown out with the bath water.

She explains: "In what I would call 'blended learning' we do still use traditional techniques of lectures, face to face tutorials and hands on practical classes."

"New technology has also given us the tools with which to respond to the different learning styles of students, some of whom are more linguistically inclined, while images are sometimes the best way to get the message across to others," she added.



## EVENING CLINICS AT HOSPITAL FOR SMALL ANIMALS

Pet owners with busy lives can make the most of extended opening hours at the Hospital for Small Animals.

Clinic times are being extended for the Exotic and Animal Wildlife Service and the Rabbit Clinic from 5pm until 7pm three nights a week.

The extended hours have been made following a client survey, which showed that many clients were interested in clinics outside normal working hours.

Bridget O'Farrell, manager of the Small Animal Practice, said: "There was a need

to increase our hours as our days were getting busier. This move should provide clients with a greater choice of when they wish to bring their pet to see us and the evening surgeries mean that our clients will not need to take time off work for their pets' appointments. The reception will also be open for clients collecting repeat prescriptions and food."

Evening clinics will take place on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, appointments can be made by contacting reception on (0131) 650 7650.

## REPTILE HUSBANDRY EVENING

A group of 75 reptile owners, zoo keepers and pet shop staff enjoyed a three hour evening event discussing the care of their reptiles. Some attendees had travelled up to four hours to attend the meeting.

Kevin Eatwell, a lecturer at the Dick Vet and one of only two people in the UK to hold a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Diploma in Reptile Medicine explained important aspects of captive care. This covered the importance of providing the correct temperatures for reptiles, ultraviolet lighting, vivarium design and suitable substrates. Free ultraviolet light testing and a display

of products on the market were also available at the event. "Appropriate captive husbandry of reptiles is critical to their wellbeing and the numbers of people keen to take their care to the next level just shows how times are changing," Kevin said. "The number of questions and discussion after the meeting continued well into the night." The Exotic Animal and Wildlife Service hopes to continue providing evening meetings for owners of exotic animals in order to promote the health and welfare of their pets. Further details of future events can be found on their website [www.dickvetexotics.com](http://www.dickvetexotics.com)

## INFORMATION PACKS FOR VETS IN PRACTICE

The Dick Vet Hospital for Small Animals and Equine Practice are supplying Information Packs to Veterinary Surgeons to provide comprehensive details of the services offered. The Packs, which will be distributed in early 2010, contain a range of literature with details of how to access clinical expertise and how to refer clients to the Small Animal or Equine Hospitals. Director of Veterinary Services, Ronnie Soutar said: "We have good relationships with our referring Veterinary Practices and are seeking to create stronger links so that Vets in practice are fully aware of what we can offer and how to access these services".

"We are planning further information updates to referring vets to let them know about the new developments, such as the newly opened Cancer Centre and the specialist cat ward."

## GERIATRIC CAT CLINIC

The first specialist geriatric cat clinic in the UK will be at the Hospital for Small Animals on Saturday mornings, run by Edinburgh based feline vet and author Dr Sarah Caney. The clinics aim to identify treatable problems which are common in older cats (10+ years) such as kidney disease, thyroid problems, arthritis, high blood pressure and dental disease. Once diagnosed, many of these problems can be very effectively treated, not only giving owners longer with their much-loved pet, but also a much better quality of life.



# TONGUE TIES – DO THEY WORK?

Funding from the RCVS Trust to Safia Barakzai gave Catherine Finnegan, a fourth year vet student, the chance to investigate the use of tongue ties in racehorses.

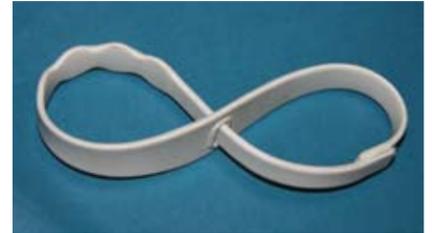
Dorsal displacement of the soft palate (DDSP) is a disorder that occurs in horses running at speed, where the palate flips up and causes a marked obstruction of the upper respiratory tract. Affected horses struggle to breathe normally, make a loud 'gurgling' sound and usually have to pull up to a slower speed. Tongue ties are commonly used in racehorses to try and prevent DDSP from occurring, and also for steering purposes in some racehorses. Their use is controversial, with some people believing them to be a welfare issue. However, thus far, there is little scientific evidence to support either the ongoing use or restriction of this equipment.

The first hurdle to cross was to quantify the extent of the problem and find out how many horses were potentially affected by tongue tie use in the UK. We performed a study which found that the prevalence of tongue tie use in racehorses

in the UK was 5.0%. This equates to at least 500-600 individual horses running repeatedly with tongue ties every year.

We then tried to ascertain if tongue ties actually enhanced racing performance by setting up a case-control study which compared the prize money earned in five races before and after horses started racing with a tongue tie. We found that if horses only ran once or twice wearing a tongue tie, they did not tend to improve their earnings. However, if they ran in three or five consecutive races wearing a tongue tie, they had a significant increase in earnings and were up to four times more likely to improve their earnings than matched control horses.

In other words, individual horses which performed well initially when wearing a tongue tie were likely to continue to race with it in place for several consecutive races. In these horses, the tongue tie appears to have exerted a significant



beneficial effect on racing performance. The result of this study has important implications for the racing industry. It should be noted that whilst tongue tie use appears to enhance performance of selected horses with a perceived soft palate or behavioural (bitting) problem, we certainly do not advocate the use of tongue ties in normal racehorses as a performance enhancing aid.



# RESEARCH SHOWCASE SEEKS TO WIN INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Major event fosters relationships between scientific researchers and industry.

Researchers from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, incorporating The Roslin Institute, created a lively event on 17th April. Presentations included:

- Potential applications of stem cells from livestock and companion animals
- Generation of appropriate models of disease to refine therapeutic strategies
- Studies looking at how genetic variation in production animals can be exploited by breeding for improved disease resistance.

Professor Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland, who spoke at the event said, "Scotland has an enviable record in terms of the quality of its research. Now, more than ever, it is vital that research is partnered with business acumen through industry collaborations.

This will help ensure that the high quality translatable research carried out at The Roslin Institute fulfils its potential to impact on and improve health, both in Scotland and internationally."

Representatives from 50 companies and other organisations such as Pfizer Ltd, Novartis Animal Health, Aviagen Ltd, Scottish Enterprise and Midlothian Council attended the event aimed at promoting collaboration and partnerships.

Dr Tom Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer of CXR Biosciences, is an existing industrial partner of The Roslin Institute. He spoke about how the collaboration has been using state of the art technologies to develop new tools to assess the safety of drugs and chemicals.

He said: "The Roslin Institute has an enviable position in the field of animal biotechnology and through its restructuring now has the opportunity to build on this and be a significant player in the animal bioscience sector."

Professor David Hume, Director of The Roslin Institute and Director of Research at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: "Research at the School aims to enhance the lives of animals and humans through improved health and welfare. In order for us to have the best chance of applying our research outputs to achieve our aims, it is critical that we work closely with industry and this event has been an exciting step forward in that process."

## RESEARCH STUDENT DAY

The annual Research Student Day event was held at the Easter Bush Veterinary Centre on Wednesday 1st April. The presentations showed a great level of diversity with all the final year students presenting their research.

Research at the Dick Vet spans an exciting array of subjects from assessing host-pathogen interactions across a broad spectrum of infectious diseases to cancer research, neuroscience, genomic analysis of disease and epidemiology amongst other subject areas.

Professor David Hume, Director of Research at the R(D)SVS noted that the oral and poster presentations were



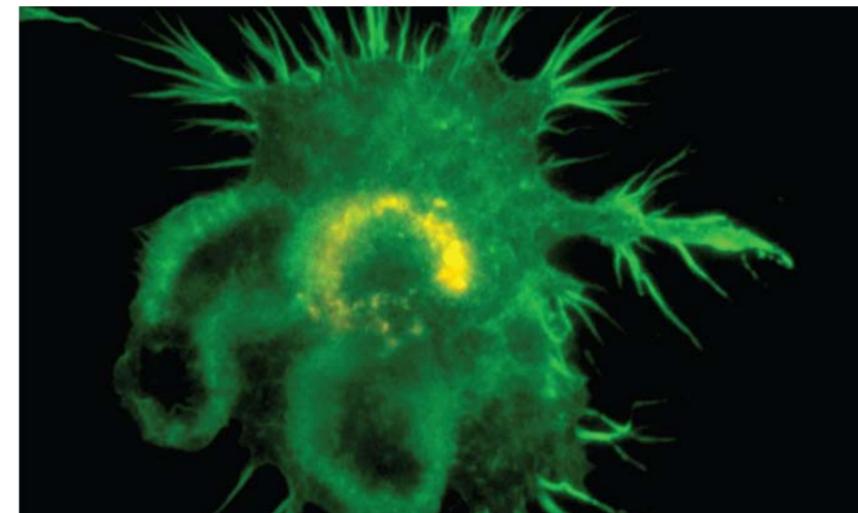
Pictured with their certificates are prize winners (left to right): Jennifer Gill, Wandee Kongkaew, Laura Bailey and Katherine Staines.

of such a high standard that the judges had found it very difficult to make a decision. Professor Hume said: "We have some really excellent students at The Roslin Institute and R(D)SVS working on a very diverse group of subjects and it was good to see that so ably demonstrated at the Student Day."

Internationally respected virologist Professor Jim Neil of the Leukaemia Research Fund/Cancer Research UK Molecular Oncology Laboratory, University of Glasgow then delivered a lecture on "Retroviruses and cancer genomics: past, present and future."

A wine reception concluded the day and the winners of the poster and oral presentation prizes were announced. The poster prizes went to Katherine Staines (1st year) and Laura Bailey (2nd year) and the MVetSci/Msc by research student poster prize went to Bryony Waggett. The final year presentation prizes went to Jennifer Gill and Wandee Kongkaew. Prizes totaled £1000.

For the final year oral presentation prizes, first place went to Jennifer Gill, Wandee Kongkaew coming in second.



A macrophage cell with green highlighting the cell's cyto-skeleton and yellow depicting the cytokine Tumour Necrosis Factor alpha which is stored within the cell ready to be released. Controlling the number of these cells within the body is critical for avoiding pathological conditions.

## GENETIC STUDY OFFERS VITAL CLUES ON IMMUNE RESPONSES

New research into the way genes communicate with each other could lead to new treatments for diseases of the immune system.

The work was carried out by scientists at The Roslin Institute, working with an international team of researchers, and could lead to treatments for diseases such as myeloid leukaemia and arthritis.

The scientists, led by Dr Geoff Faulkner, Career Track Fellow in the Genetics and Genomics Division, focused on the immune system and examined the genes involved with white blood cells called macrophages.

When healthy, these cells cleanse the body of viruses and bacteria, but if they grow uncontrollably, they can turn against the body's own tissue to cause conditions such as multiple sclerosis, arthritis and emphysema.

It was previously thought that these cell growth processes were managed by a select group of master, or regulator, genes that give instructions to many other genes.

The latest findings show that instead there are hundreds of regulator genes, which all interact with each other to control cell development and growth.

The research explains why different people can develop a disease in different ways – scientists believe this may be because of variations in different parts of this genetic network.

The team hopes that identifying the weak spots in the gene network could provide clues on how to stop the growth of tumours or enable the growth of healthy cells.

Scientists plan to extend the project with new funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council to look at the way genes communicate to control immunity in livestock animals.

Professor David Hume, Director of Veterinary Research, said: "This research provides an incredible resource for the study of immunity and disease in humans and animals."

"This study has effectively shown us where the brakes are that could stop or slow down diseases like cancer and multiple sclerosis. We genuinely believe this could lead to treatments and cures for many diseases of the immune system."

## AREA EXPERTS DISCUSS 'THE NEXXT BIG THING IN ANIMAL SCIENCES'

In September, Nexus, the networking organisation for life scientists in central Scotland, in conjunction with Edinburgh Science Triangle, held the "The Nexxt Big Thing in Animal Sciences" event, hosted by the Moredun Research Institute at the Pentlands Science Park. The evening focused attention on the opportunities for Scotland to be a global leader in animal health sciences.

Julie Fitzpatrick, Scientific Director and Chief Executive of Moredun Research Institute (MRI) spoke about the future of livestock sciences, saying, "I believe the next big thing is infectious disease and what we're going to do about them."

David Hume, Director of The Roslin Institute and Research Director of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, discussed current research in enhancing animal health and welfare through knowledge of genetic factors affecting disease resistance. The Roslin Institute's projects aim to gain basic biological knowledge of livestock and to translate that information to make it applicable to human and animal health.

Nexus ([www.nexusscotland.com](http://www.nexusscotland.com)) promotes and supports research excellence, innovation and knowledge transfer within the life science community in central Scotland.



Professor David Hume addresses the meeting.

# SMALL ANIMAL PRACTICE SUCCESS

The Dick Vet Small Animal Practice (DVSAP) provides first opinion care within the Hospital for Small Animals. Here Nick Bommer reflects on recent successes.



Left to right – Karen Loughlin, Jane Brown, Bridget O'Farrell, Victoria Swift, Nick Bommer, Donna Macdonald.



The Dick Vet Small Animal Practice has access to state of the art equipment.

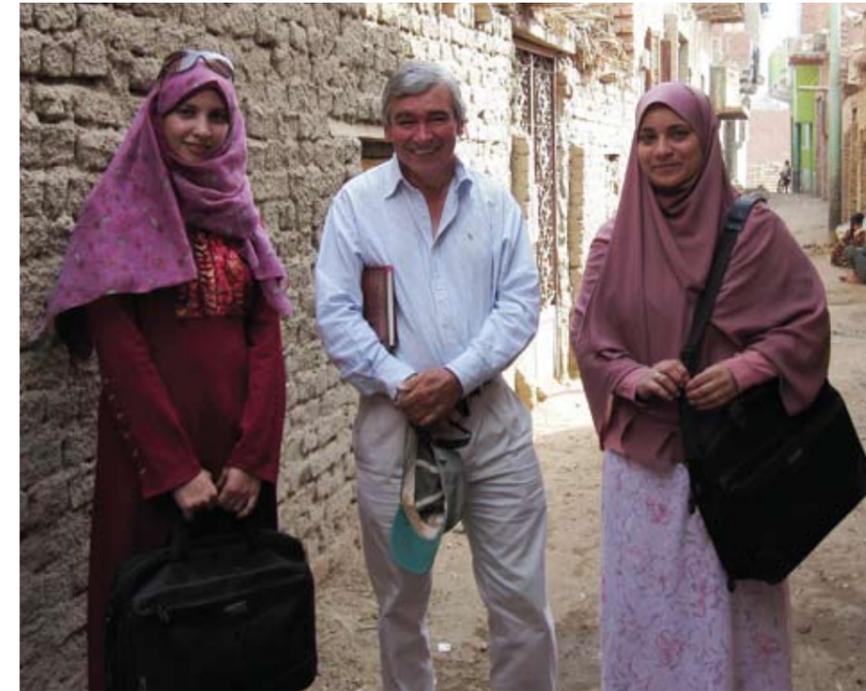
The last two years have seen the Dick Vet Small Animal Practice (DVSAP) go from strength to strength. Headed by its manager, Bridget O'Farrell, a strong and cohesive veterinary team has been built with myself, Nick Bommer, alongside Tori Swift and Jane Brown. We are seeing a significant increase in caseload and we are now able to give heightened continuity of care for clients as well as offering them access to all the high tech resources of the Hospital for Small Animals. We're committed to providing and teaching excellence in clinical practice. We also boast two dedicated, qualified and listed veterinary nurses, Donna Macdonald and Karen Loughlin.

The DVSAP provides its clients with quality, compassionate service, access to superior facilities and highly desired continuity of care. We have also recently been able to offer extended evening opening hours, making the practice more accessible and convenient for working pet owners. Nurse clinics have been introduced for puppy socialisation, weight control, mobility and dental care, and have proved extremely popular. These attributes have resulted in growth of the practice and a high degree of customer satisfaction, as evidenced by a recent independent survey.

The DVSAP also provides well-structured teaching for the final year students, providing them with the essential skills necessary for practice, in a supportive setting. This strong clinical grounding is highly regarded by the students and also contributed to the success of the recent American Veterinary Medical Association accreditation. The conducive learning environment is not only beneficial for the students but also for the staff; allowing Tori to complete her PhD in canine urinary incontinence, Nick to gain his RCVS Diploma in Small Animal Medicine and Donna to achieve her Pet Health Councillor award.

# OUR MAN IN AFRICA

Do vet services in Africa require an international zoonotic disease crisis to keep them alive? Professor Brian Perry reports from his base in the Rift Valley of Kenya.



Professor Brian Perry with two young vets carrying out surveillance activities for avian influenza in Fayoum Governorate, Egypt.

Animal health services in Africa have seen substantial changes since I graduated from the "Dick" in the late 1960s. Many declined dramatically in the years after political independence. This trend was exacerbated two decades later by the imposition of policy changes by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank on loan agreements. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) which followed were intended to reduce the borrowing country's fiscal imbalances. These precipitated cuts in public sector support to veterinary services. Some leading economists have argued that a shock to the system was necessary to stimulate private sector investments, but health services to livestock enterprises were the casualty.

The resulting void has been populated with several new approaches. Many veterinary graduates, no longer assured

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 "WE ARE REVERTING TO THE  
 OLD MAXIM THAT PREVENTION  
 IS BETTER THAN CURE."  
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of a secure job in government service, returned to their rural homes and started small pharmaceutical outlets, bringing them face-to-face with the demands and financial limitations of their smallholder clients. In pastoralist areas the community animal health worker concept took off, engaging with livestock keepers who had never received veterinary services. Innovations such as these have given rise to greater understanding of the needs of poor livestock keepers, but the modest funding received means that the impact on the quality of services delivered has been limited.

The vast levels of funding for avian flu demonstrate that crises can provoke the global community to dig deeper for animal health. And new calls are emerging to fund climate change mitigating actions in animal health, and for the "one world one health concept", a long established logic now repackaged to respond to emerging pathogens.

So do we need a crisis to support fundamental veterinary services in Africa? Sadly, we are in an era when this certainly helps. And will an overpopulation of such bandwagons, often instigated by the "worried well" in the West to counter perceived threats to them, mean that the apparently mundane but important issues get left behind?

Not necessarily, if such focussed responses bear in mind the need for strong relevance to the development processes of improving market access and reducing vulnerability.

Ironically, new economic thinking considers that animal disease control has broad public good impacts, suggesting that those SAPs sent us in the wrong direction. Disease outbreaks are now recognised as having much greater impacts on the economy; the most significant impacts of the 2009 swine flu in Mexico were outside the agriculture sector, on tourism and the GDP. We are reverting to the old maxim that prevention is better than cure, but this time on a truly global scale, and a belief that this prevention requires significant public sector investment. Furthermore prevention, particularly when part of poverty reduction initiatives through livestock, involves many players in the value chain, not just the livestock producer, whose capacity to play their respective roles needs understanding and supporting.

African livestock enterprises still need stronger private sector engagement, but the world is increasingly impatient for services that protect the public; is the pendulum swinging again?

# THE QUEST FOR DIAGNOSIS – FROM CATS TO WARTHOGS

Based within the Veterinary Pathology Unit, Anatomic Pathology is a busy post mortem and surgical biopsy service dealing with every kind of animal from domestic cats to warthogs. Sionagh Smith, Elspeth Milne and Pip Beard tell the Dick Vet News more.

The Veterinary Pathology Unit (VPU) at the Dick Vet, consists of three sub-disciplines: anatomic pathology, clinical pathology and microbiology services. We form a closely knit team considerably strengthened by our specialised technical staff.

The anatomic pathology service incorporates our post mortem and surgical biopsy services. There are four senior and four resident trainee pathologists on the team, focusing on the interpretation of morphological changes at the whole animal, whole organ and cellular level, with the ultimate aim of disease diagnosis.

## POST MORTEM SERVICE

Since our post mortem submissions mainly arise from the University's internal veterinary hospitals and practices, they cover a wide variety of species, from companion to farm animals. The existence of the Exotic and Wildlife Service within the Small Animal Hospital widens the species spectrum even further and we handle approximately 600 cases annually. We also accept post mortems from further afield, including referring veterinary surgeons.

Although the final goal is to find the cause of death, there are many underlying reasons for performing a post mortem. They are a valuable part of a health programme for any large collection of animals, whether on a farm, in a pet shop or a cattery. It may also help an individual owner to understand their pet's cause of death or help animal protection agencies to prosecute in cases of alleged animal neglect or abuse. Finally, post mortem examinations have immense educational value, particularly for undergraduate students and pathology resident trainees.



Pip Beard at her microscope.

## SURGICAL BIOPSY SERVICE

As with our post mortem examinations, most of our biopsy cases come from our internal hospitals but we also serve veterinary practices outside the University. Biopsies can be collected from virtually any area but most frequently, we receive biopsies from the more accessible parts, particularly the skin. Biopsies are often pivotal in the management of a case, determining whether a swelling or nodule is due to bacteria, fungi, cancer or another cause.

## TEACHING

Teaching is a major part of the work of the anatomic pathology section and of the VPU as a whole. The post mortem and surgical biopsy services provide a wealth of pathological material suitable

for teaching undergraduate veterinary students and postgraduate trainee pathologists. In their final year each undergraduate spends one week with the post mortem service, allowing them to develop their dissection techniques and consolidate their learning.

Postgraduate training in veterinary pathology generally takes three years. There are currently four trainees in the VPU's anatomic pathology section, all working towards their specialist examinations.

■ In the next issue of the Dick Vet News we'll be looking further at the activity of the Clinical Pathology Service. For more information visit our website at [www.ed.ac.uk/vet](http://www.ed.ac.uk/vet) and follow the link to the VPU area in Veterinary Services.

## WHAT DID YOU DO LAST SUMMER?

Hannah Johnson headed for our sister School at Colorado State University (CSU).

It was such a great experience visiting Colorado State University (CSU) this summer, I could never have imagined how much I would learn in just eight weeks. Working with the awe-inspiring Dr A. Simon Turner has been one of the best experiences I have had so far in the veterinary profession and I would recommend this programme to anyone.

All the staff members are extremely friendly and keen to teach, which reminded me of Edinburgh. For my project in particular, I was working with sheep in the Small Ruminant Comparative Orthopedic Laboratory. This lab is unique, as it is the only facility where ovine models



are being used on such a large scale to look at human orthopaedic conditions. I took part in every aspect of the lab such as treatments, radiographs, CT scans, surgery, necropsy and general husbandry.

I studied the effects of rhPDGF (recombinant human platelet derived growth factor) on the rate of spinal fusion in the lumbar region. Spinal fusion is a common method of treatment in

humans suffering from lower back pain caused by degenerative disc disease or spondylolisthesis. The current "gold standard" of treatment is the use of autograft. However, autograft harvesting from the patient's own iliac crest is associated with significant problems. It is therefore hoped that rhPDGF will provide a competitive alternative to autograft and other pre-existing treatments. The results are still pending, but it will be extremely interesting to see how effective rhPDGF will be and if it will become the new "gold standard" for spinal fusion.

Thanks to Dr Turner, in my spare time I also had the opportunity to visit different departments within the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at CSU. I also observed a variety of individual cases.

I tried to take up every opportunity at CSU. It has made me feel inspired to seek further education after completing my veterinary degree, whether it is an internship, residency or PhD. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who made this experience possible. I really could never have dreamt of experiencing such great things.

## CLINICIAN OR ACADEMIC – I CAN'T CHOOSE!

Hannah Geere tells Dick Vet News about life as a first year PhD student.



Hannah Geere chose to intercalate in her undergraduate degree but with a difference. Intercalating means taking a year out within the veterinary degree, usually after second year, to do the

equivalent of an honours year of another degree. The student then graduates with another degree in addition to their veterinary degree – zoology, pharmacology and neuroscience are popular choices.

While intercalating is not uncommon, Hannah chose to intercalate with a postgraduate masters rather than a second undergraduate degree. She was the first student to have done this, thus setting a precedent.

"I didn't want to intercalate with a bachelors degree because I felt that, after third year, I already had the equivalent of a Bachelor of Veterinary Science," she explains. "So I did a full time Masters by Research in Virology with Professor Tony Nash."

With such enthusiasm for academic study it was small wonder that after a couple of years working in a mixed practice, Hannah found herself knocking at the Dick Vet's door once more.

"I approached the Cardiology Dept in the Hospital for Small Animals. I never wanted to 'shoe box' myself as

a clinician or an academic, I always wanted to do both, so a PhD with link up with Cardiology seemed the right thing."

I'm now a year into my three year PhD," she enthuses. "It's good. My work is on adult stem cells in the dog that might be present in both human and dog hearts. In terms of therapeutic goals it's all about using these cells in regenerative medicine. I'm definitely in the right place at the right time being in Edinburgh, the University has a good standing for stem cell research."

"I work on adult stem cells. My tissue comes from dogs that have been euthanased for another reason and with their owner's consent. It's a sensitive area, I'm a vet at the end of the day but science has to progress as well and benefit people and animals. It's a difficult part of the project."

"I've just presented at my first conference in Newcastle" she explains. "I hope I'll be able to be a cardiologist and to link my research into that. We'll see!"

## A VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

Dr Freda Scott Park (class of '79) is an expert in canine cardiology and former BVA president. Here she reminisces about her time at the Dick.

It's now the time of year when universities open their doors to next year's potential students and I was secretly rather pleased when my daughter put Edinburgh as a top choice on her UCAS form. Although she does not want to be a vet (perhaps growing up on a dairy farm has put her off?) we attended an Open Day in September and it brought back some wonderful memories of my time at the Dick.

Having accepted a place at Edinburgh in 1974 and thought little of it, reality bit home when the Dean welcomed us to the College at the Fresher's tea party held in the refectory, which at the time was in the bowels of the earth below the main corridor in Summerhall. Professor Iggo, a distinguished looking gentleman, bore a striking resemblance to my Uncle Jim; this meant that I always harboured a sneaky affection for him, which few seemed to share. His welcome was rather

stark and went along the lines of: "Well, there are 70 of you lot here today and we can only take 50 into the clinical years. Therefore we need to get rid of 20 of you before 3rd year..." I paraphrase, of course, but it was a bit of a shock to us all.

In fact, university was a bit of a shock to me, full stop. I'd found O-Levels, Highers and A-Levels easy and relied on a photographic memory for short-term retention. The 1st year anatomy and physiology alone overloaded the photographic microchip and a re-sit followed. I always warn potential vet students of today that you don't have to be super-brainy to be a vet but you do have to have superb retention skills to absorb the course work, which is why the vet schools are correct to take the cream of the academic crop.

Some of my most memorable times related to personalities; like Bobby Beck who knew everything about Soay

sheep, had come straight to teach from practice in the wilds of Scotland and was inspirational because his lectures were made up of real-life anecdotes. Sheila Crispin who completely failed to teach me to love (or understand) ophthalmology; I am sadly one of her main failures but I count her as a good friend. And Joe Fraser, an equine expert who recognised in me a non-horse person and yet showed astonishing kindness during an oral exam when I'd been left floored by the external examiner who exposed my lack of knowledge in... ophthalmology. I sat on a straw bale and contemplated the lame horse that was presented, looked at my thumbs (as Joe always encouraged us to do) and passed judgement that I couldn't see any problems, which received a tacit nod of approval – worth so much to me. And Colin Stead, whose dry sense of humour I only came to appreciate well after I'd left college and he became a next-door neighbour.

However the one person who made the most difference to my life was Peter Darke who ran the cardiology clinics on Wednesday afternoons. In an attempt to avoid any re-sits in final year, I gave up tennis and to my surprise found that I really enjoyed cardiology. I was reluctantly persuaded to do a PhD in canine cardiology and it has shaped my whole career. I now work as a cardiac consultant to the pharmaceutical industry reading ECGs from studies into novel medicinal compounds, a task I thoroughly enjoy.

I owe a lot to the Dick; achieving a BVM&S followed by a PhD, was great but to have been awarded an honorary degree in 2007 was just the proudest moment of my life. I welcome the opportunity to give something back by contributing to the Year 5 Curriculum Review group and ensuring that Dick graduates continue to be the best in the world.



Freda on top of Cul Beag looking across to Stac Pollaidh with her Border Collie, Skye.

## THE DICK VET CAR CLUB

Alumnus Alastair Watson (Class of '54) on the Rolls Royce that cost him £30.



In 1949 The Dick Vet Car club evolved around a few student enthusiasts with Gerald Dakin as President and myself as Honorary Secretary. We were a motley crew and the vehicles we owned reflected our parlous financial state and the fact that virtually no civilian cars had been made in the UK during the war years.

We would gather for events that usually required some map reading ability and lots of luck to prevent one getting bogged down and lost on the moors. On one such event E.V. Cock and I teamed up in his 1930's Austin London cab that had no protection for drivers but had a high canvas roof for passengers. At 30mph flat out downhill we had to be smart to stay with the crowd. We won the event and as usual the prize was that we had to buy the drinks.

Some members of the club had interesting vehicles. Dakin had a Bugatti 1.5 litre sports that was in beautiful condition. It ran on high octane and moved from zero to fifty in first gear which did not amuse the constabulary on point duty.

I had a number of interesting cars which I "did up" and sold including a 1932 Riley 9, a 1935 Riley Coupe and a 1936 Jowett. Lastly there was a 1929

Rolls Royce Laundernette by Mulliner in immaculate condition that cost me £30 in 1949. It had been laid up on blocks for seven years during the war, but when I started the 6 litre engine with the handle and it purred.

There was a local regulation that all vehicles had to have an audible method of attracting attention and Tony Brown in his Humber Coupe which did not have a working horn, had to rely on a blank cartridge pistol to get through the crowds on Princes Street.

In the 1990's, Gerald Dakin organised reunion weekends for old members of the Car Club and fellow ex-students. One was held near Worcester and the other in the Cotswolds. About 20 vets gathered for these happy reunions, which included a focus on a car of interest, such as an Aston Martin. Just like our student days.

## ALUMNI DOWN UNDER

Bill Howey, Class of '66, on Dick Vet alumni in Scone Valley, Australia.

The Dick Vet has been firmly entrenched in the town of Scone in the Upper Hunter Valley of NSW, Australia for nigh on 60 years. In 1950 a rural veterinary practice was established in the district by the late Murray Bain (Class of '37) in conjunction with two partners. A native of Stirling, Murray was enjoying a stellar professional and military career which had taken him all over, from Kentucky to New Zealand. Was it the association with Scotland which finally attracted him to Scone? Aberdeen is just 15km away!

History now records that there has been a 'Dick Vet' presence in the Upper Hunter Valley as a continuum since Murray's brave initial foray. There have been as many as five 'Dick Veterinarians' in Scone at one time and their presence is firmly embedded to this day! I myself arrived as a 'Ten Pound Pommy Migrant' in 1967 to be followed in quick succession by John Morgan (Class of '61) and Angus

Campbell (Class of '68). The Scone Veterinary Hospital emerged over the next two decades as the largest thoroughbred breeding practice in Australia.

David Railton (Class of '89) and Petagaye Railton (Class of '93) are active partners in the practice today. Allan Gunn (Class of '93) and spouse Vicki Brooks-Gunn (Class of '96) have added great cachet to the area. Murray, myself and now Allan have shared the burden – and the baton – of continuing education for stud employees. This has been an almost exclusive Dick Vet domain! Both Murray and myself branched out as 'authors' and I have compiled a history of veterinary practice in Scone. There exists a considerable cultural chasm for those unsuspecting debutants embarking on the pilgrimage between the hemispheres. The picture of Christmas at Scone 1969 chez Murray Bain emphasizes this gap. The previous year (1968) both Richard

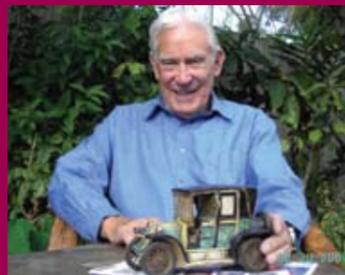
Greenwood and I turned up for Christmas Cocktails in dark grey 'ready-for-church' suits, white shirts and ties. It was about 40 degrees Celsius in the shade and all the locals were in Hawaii mode or equivalent!

■ **Calling all Dick Vets Down Under!**  
There will be an Australia Room in the new Teaching Building funded by antipodean alumni. For more details please email [vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk](mailto:vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk).



Christmas in Scone 1969 – Murray Bain, Sue Greenwood, Richard Greenwood and Bill Howey.

## ALASTAIR WATSON CLASS OF '54



The Dick Vet Car Club was Alastair Watson's passion while at the Dick (see page 21 for more) but Dick Vet News caught up with him at his home in Brisbane, Australia to find out about the rest of his fascinating life.

"My family were long time members of the British Raj and I was born in Kashmir. I went to school in England and then spent seven years in the army, mostly in South East Asia."

"In 1945 I was injured in Palestine during policing activities and subsequently spent two years in hospital."

"Thanks to the UK Government subsidy for war veterans, I was able to attend the RDVC. I went into general practice in UK and then joined the NZ Government Veterinary Club program and became the first vet in the Raglan district – a pioneering experience for all!"

Although his disability never held him back professionally, large animal practice eventually defeated him. An opportunity in vaccine production in London beckoned in 1961.

Since then he has had a wonderfully varied career that has taken him into the fields of academia, intensive livestock production and biotechnology.

Since retiring he has qualified as a naturopath and herbalist. He still has an interest in vintage vehicles but his current car is rather smaller than the Rolls Royce of his student days!



## DAVID AND HELEN FRANKLIN CLASS OF '72

David and Helen Franklin (néé Urwin) met in their first term at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and have been happily married for the past 38 years. They were in practice together for many years. "The first time I took Helen out was when I was just a young boy in 1967, it was to Murrayfield to watch Scotland play the All Blacks at Rugby," reminisces David. "Bob Keddie who was at the Dick at the time was playing for Scotland."

"I suppose it was an unusual first date," adds Helen. "Still, we've lasted the course, we've been married now quite a long time." The couple live near Wolverhampton in the same area David is originally from and next door to David's father, a retired vet – both David's parents were vets. "My father was in a mixed practice in Wolverhampton and that's where I eventually joined," he explains. "The opportunity came up two years after qualifying, when my father's senior partner died – another Dick Vet Graduate, Major Frank Chambers. So I joined my father who was a London grad and his partner, Tam Chambers, who was also a Dick Vet Graduate." After a career break to have the couple's two children Abbie and Gavin, Helen also joined the family practice, taking over the small animal side of the practice leaving David to specialise in the equine side.

"It was quite hard in those days," she explains. "With the nights and the weekends it was very long hours. I retired early when I was 51 because I've always been keen on horses but never had much time with working and the children. So I went eventing for a few years which was great fun."

Meanwhile David stayed in the family practice until 1999, when he joined the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) as a claims consultant. "The VDS looks after vets who are sued in negligence. I try and fend off what can often be spurious claims of negligence and misconduct," he explains.

Both David and Helen are adamant that their time at the Dick Vet gave them the very best start in their careers and friends for life. "Apart from setting me up with a wife, which helped a lot," laughs David, "I made some very great friends at the Dick. It gave me a very good grounding in everything veterinary."

I learned to ride and that was hugely important. Every year I go back to the Bush to talk to final year students about the VDS. Apart from paying homage every year to the statue of William Dick, I have to go to the stables. I look at the stable where the horse I learned to ride on used to be. A horse called Border Reiver a fine horse – I love going back there."

## KIMBERLY AND CHRIS PALGRAVE – CLASS OF '07



Kimberly and Chris Palgrave had both taken atypical routes to get to the first day of third year at the Dick – the day they met.

Speaking from their home in Raleigh, North Carolina, Chris explains: "I started at the Dick Vet in 1998, did two years, then intercalated a BSc in Preclinical Veterinary Sciences at Summerhall. I enjoyed research so much that I got together with my supervisor and we drew up a plan for a PhD. Because I'd done my honours project on the same topic, I was already up and running and able to complete my PhD within three years. I then jumped back into third year of the Vet Course," continues Chris. "If I'd overrun, I'd have been out of sync, but fortunately it all went really smoothly."

Meanwhile, Kimberly was finishing her four year undergraduate degree in Animal Science at Texas A&M. "Vet School is a postgraduate degree here in the US," she explains. "So I was looking at various places to apply. My mother is from Broughty Ferry and she mentioned there was a good school in Edinburgh. So I

looked into it, discovered it was AVMA accredited, came and visited and fell in love with Edinburgh."

Kimberly did two years at Edinburgh, arriving into third year on the same day as Chris. Chris reminisces: "I'd been out for four years and I was trying to sneak into the lecture theatre slightly late. Everyone else was already there and it felt like they were looking at me like this weirdo who had spent four years doing a PhD in the middle of a vet course! Perhaps it's more accepted now, but back then it was a pretty unusual thing to do."

"Suddenly this gregarious girl in the front row jumped up, shook my hand and said 'Welcome to FYC (final year club) 2007!' She was the Class President and that was Kimberly."

It wasn't until about six months later they went out, but in the December of final year they were married in St Margaret's Chapel at Edinburgh Castle. Kimberly laughs: "It was a busy few weeks. Because of wanting to practise in the States we had to go down to London to

sit the NAVLE (North American Veterinary Licensing Examination), a couple of days later we had our December final year exams and shortly after that we got married. It was great fun!"

Chris and Kimberly then headed to the States and worked in practice in North Texas and Pennsylvania for year. Chris then got an opportunity to take up a position as a Pathology Resident at North Carolina State University and Kimberly is working in a practice just outside Raleigh.

"After graduating, I wanted to spend a year in practice rather than going straight into pathology and academia." Chris explains. "After all the clinical training, it was just something I felt I needed to do. As a pathologist, having been a 'real' vet helps me to relate to clients and clinicians, even though a year isn't terribly long."

"We're loving it here," they agree. "It's a great adventure, but our plans are definitely to return to the UK eventually."

## CARVING FROM DOWN UNDER RETURNS HOME



Professor Dick Barlow, (Class of '54) presents the carving to Professor Elaine Watson.

Melbourne-based Alumnus Professor Dick Barlow (Class of '54) has presented the School with a carving, entitled 'Mutual Respect'. The carving was handcrafted by Dick from an oak which had been felled on the site of the original Moredun Institute at Gilmerton, where he had worked for many years as an eminent neuropathologist.

Professor Elaine Watson said: "I was delighted to receive 'Mutual Respect' on behalf of the School. This was a very thoughtful gesture by Dick."

"We plan to put it in the Board Room in the new teaching building at Easter Bush, where it will take pride of place!"

## ALUMNI CELEBRATE LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY

Alumni from years ending in a 'four' and 'nine' celebrated their landmark anniversary at a series of events on Saturday 19th September. The day began with a visit to Summerhall to relive fond memories of their time there. The afternoon saw a visit to Easter Bush to tour the Hospital for Small Animals and the Equine facilities and the day concluded with a Dinner and Ceilidh at the University's John McIntyre Centre.



Alumni visited the Anatomy Lecture Theatre, as part of their tour of Summerhall given by Colin Warwick MBE.



The Class of '59 are pictured with Professor Elaine Watson, Professor Richard Leakey and Professor Sheila Crispin at their Reunion in Old College on Friday 18th September.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

We depend on your support to maintain our high standards and fund new developments. You can help us to deliver the future of veterinary medicine. Here's how to contact us:

### Donations and Fundraising

David Rider 0131 650 8833  
vet.fundraising@ed.ac.uk  
www.vet.ed.ac.uk/fundraising/

### Marketing and Alumni

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### Hospital for Small Animals

0131 650 7650  
HFSAreception@ed.ac.uk

### Equine Hospital

0131 650 6253  
lah@ed.ac.uk

### Undergraduate Admissions

0131 650 6178  
vetug@ed.ac.uk

### Postgraduate Admissions

0131 650 6287  
vetpgresearch@ed.ac.uk

Or visit our website at  
**www.ed.ac.uk/vet**



Hill's Pet Nutrition is pleased to support the Dick Vet News.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Four dates have been arranged for Alumni to visit Summerhall for what may well be the last time before all teaching activities move to the new building at Easter Bush.

The events will run from 10am to 12noon and will comprise a tour of Summerhall followed by a talk given by Colin Warwick MBE on the history of the Dick Vet. If you would like

to attend on any of the following dates, please contact Neil Wilson neil.wilson@ed.ac.uk or phone 0131 650 6261.

- Saturday 1st May 2010
- Saturday 5th June 2010
- Saturday 4th September 2010
- Saturday 2nd October 2010