

DICK VET NEWS

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



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All smiles as hospital opens



Jonathan Littlejohn, Visual Resources

A horse has its teeth examined by Kirstie Pickles.

The William Dick Large Animal Hospital has been rebuilt. A series of interlinked and carefully designed buildings now form the modern facilities of our new Equine and Farm Animal Hospitals. We now offer the best veterinary facilities in Europe. These purpose built areas for the care of large animals are providing state-of-the-art facilities for the training of veterinary undergraduates, and for the provision of continuing professional development of veterinary surgeons and nurses. Teaching is being conducted in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, while at the same time providing for hands-on experience without risk of injury to either patient or student. The facilities have been designed to support a veterinary service devoted to the treatment, care and welfare of horses, ponies, donkeys and farm animal species such as cattle, sheep and goats, as well as more exotic species such as alpaca, llama, camels and water buffalo.

We now offer the best veterinary facilities in Europe.

The new hospital was opened by the Principal, Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland, on the 1st of September this year. He warmly acknowledged the generous contributions from the many individuals, clients, riding clubs and horse societies, companies and charitable trusts, and our hard working students, that helped make our aspirations such a fine reality. The contributions from the Home of Rest for Horses, the Crighton Charitable Trust, the Friends of the Dick Vet, Faculty endowments and the Development Trust of the University gave encouragement for the University to approve the project and allow it to go ahead. Substantial donations were also received from the Marjorie Coote Animal Charity Fund, The Barry Green Memorial Fund, Miss AM Pilkington's Charitable Trust, the PF Charitable Trust, the Mainhouse

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THE DEAN'S COLUMN



Contributed

...the new millennium finds William Dick's Veterinary School in a healthier state than ever before.



Colin Warwick

Alan Rowland in disguise as William Dick.

I am not sure whether the appropriate term for a Dean who leaves office for six years, and then returns is a 'recycled Dean', or a 'reincarnated Dean'. Whatever the correct term, it is certainly a privilege to be back at the helm.

Much has been accomplished in the last six years. Dreams of a new state-of-the-art Hospital for Small Animals have become a reality, and its first year of operation saw a 36% increase in the number of referral patients that we were able to help. September of this year saw the formal opening of the new Equine and Farm Animal Hospitals. These are equally impressive in terms of patient care delivery, and the ability to teach in a learner-friendly environment. No longer do students have to stand in the rain or snow, desperately trying to determine the origin of lameness in an uncooperative horse! None of this would have been possible without the support of the University and of our commercial and charitable sponsors, and without the generosity of our alumni and our clients.

The funding of higher education continues to pose serious problems, however. Over the past ten years, the 'unit of resource', which is the amount of money we receive for teaching each student, has declined in real terms by some 40%. To compound the problem, the veterinary unit of resource in Scotland is now lower than it is in England. One is forced to ask when, if ever, this decline will end. Its result is that we must teach more students, just to maintain our current staffing levels. We are in a relatively strong position at the Dick Vet, with a steady base of some 20-30 full-fee students from home and overseas, in addition to the 70-73 funded by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. But the numbers will have to increase if we are to meet the financial projections over the next five years. Our colleagues in the other veterinary schools are faced with the same challenges, with London now admitting 166 students into their first year. A major concern is to ask at what point will our ability to deliver a training programme of excellence be compromised. And when will this trend lead to an oversupply of graduates, which is the situation in a number of European countries? We have no answers to these

questions, but equally we have no alternative but to respond to the challenges in the manner that we are.

This is the main reason for our need to seek accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). A significant number of US citizens leave the country each year to study abroad. A number have come to the 'Dick Vet' in past years. However graduation from a veterinary school that is not AVMA-approved poses great difficulties for them on their return — including a minimum of one year of additional supervised experience, and extensive (and expensive) additional examinations. The AVMA visit will take place in two stages, in December of this year, and in May of 2001.

Research is, of course, another of our key academic objectives. April 2001 is the deadline for submission of our data for the Research Assessment Exercise. The results of this will determine the magnitude of approximately one third of our funding. With some key research appointments, the continued emphasis on the development of interdisciplinary links, and the increasing productivity of our current staff, we are confident of an excellent result.

So the new millennium finds William Dick's Veterinary School in a healthier state than ever before. The interaction, support and advice of our alumni have played a pivotal role in this, with the major conduit being the Friends of the Dick Vet, and its Council. The Chairman of the Council, Brian Singleton, has stimulated and served magnificently since its inauguration some ten years ago. Brian felt that with the achievements noted above now made, this was an opportune time to step down. We are enormously grateful to him for all his enthusiasm, wisdom and counsel over the years. His place will be taken by Alan Rowland, who has taught pathology to many generations of Dick Vet graduates. Alan is equally committed to ensuring that the partnership between the School and its alumni continues to strengthen. This will be ever more important as we face the uncertainties and the challenges ahead. Feedback is important, and any comments on our achievements and on our plans for the future will be most welcome.

Scottish Centre for Genomic Technology and Bioinformatics

The Centre will be the first in Scotland to feature DNA microarray technology, which is revolutionising biomedical and clinical research.

The recent award by SHEFC of a £2 million grant for a microarray facility led by Professor Tony Nash and Dr Douglas Roy (Veterinary Pathology) and Dr Peter Ghazal (Medical Microbiology) will be based in the Veterinary School at Summerhall.

The Centre will be the first in Scotland to feature state-of-the-art DNA microarray technology, which is currently revolutionising biomedical and clinical research. This technology enables the production and analysis of thousands of genes simultaneously on microchips, thereby enabling gene function in normal and abnormal (diseased) cells to be analysed. This will open up new areas in diagnosis of genetic disorders and diseases such as cancer, and neurological disorders. The Centre will also look to build on current developments in computer and physical sciences to introduce a new generation of 'intelligent' bio-chips and data analysis packages.

The award under SHEFC's Research Development Grant scheme underpins collaborative research programmes involving the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrew's, Aberdeen and Strathclyde. The

facility will provide Scotland with a major focal point for the biomedical research community and provide opportunities for exchanging ideas, sharing technology and training staff.

Veterinary Medicine is set to capitalise on this technology in a number of areas. Already projects have been formulated involving the development of DNA chips containing sheep genes important in host defence. Genetic resistance of animals to certain infectious diseases is a major area of development, and one project at the School is already under way exploring the resistance genes of pigs to African Swine Fever virus. Other applications include analysing the virulence determinants of Salmonella and E.coli 0157 involved in food poisoning, studying the molecular epidemiology of viruses and bacteria and uncovering genes linked to host evasion by parasites.

This new technology is only part of the Centre's activities and future programmes will involve a major commitment to bioinformatics as a prelude to harnessing the huge amount of data emerging in this post-genomic era.

Inaugural lectures

Following the successful inaugural lectures given last session by Professor Mark E J Woolhouse (*Chair of Veterinary Public Health & Quantitative Epidemiology*) and Professor John Hopkins (*Chair of Veterinary Immunology*), five new professors will give inaugural lectures this session. On Monday 6 November, Professor Elaine D Watson (*Chair of Veterinary Reproduction*) began the series with a lecture entitled: "Equine Reproduction: more than just fickle fillies and dud studs" and on Tuesday 28 November, Professor Padraic M Dixon (*Chair of Equine Surgery*) will give a lecture entitled: "Equine

Airways — from the nostrils to the alveoli — always some problem or other"

In the new year there will be lectures by Professor Declan J McKeever (*Moredun Chair of Veterinary Clinical Science*) on Thursday 8 March, by Professor Gordon D Harkiss (*Chair of Veterinary Immunopathology*) on Thursday 15 March and by Professor Vincent Molony (*Chair of Animal Welfare*) on Thursday 17 May.

Further information concerning these open lectures can be found at the Faculty web site: www.vet.ed.ac.uk/news/Lectures/Inaugurals.htm

CTVM in the East African Bush

Tuberculosis is a growing problem in Tanzania, with over 40,000 new human cases diagnosed each year. It has also now been recorded in giraffe, buffalo, wildebeest and lions, with clinical disease associated with both *Mycobacterium bovis* and *M. avium*. The status of buffalo in the Serengeti is a particular concern, because numbers have been steadily declining from 70,000 in the 1970s to a present level of 16,000, disease being a factor in addition to illegal hunting. Numerous potential sources of infection and routes of transmission exist between livestock, wildlife and people. The situation is further complicated by the widespread HIV infection in people, which raises the potential for human-to-human and human-to-animal transmission of *M. bovis*.

Vets from the Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine, Moredun Research Institute, Sokoine University of Agriculture and Tanzania National Parks, together with medical colleagues from the National Institute of Medical Research in Tanzania are working as a collaborative team to identify specific risk factors for bovine tuberculosis in people and cattle in northern Tanzania. Close collaboration between veterinary, medical and wildlife sectors is essential, not only because people in the study area live in close contact with their animals, but also because



their cattle and goats graze in close proximity to wildlife.

The field work in Tanzania includes trace-back studies of human patients infected with *M. bovis*, extensive tuberculin-testing of cattle and prevalence surveys of tuberculosis in wildlife (through post-mortem surveys in local hunting camps and serological sampling within the parks). Zoonoses are clearly an important component of human infectious diseases in the country and collaborative proposals are being developed for additional work on rabies and hydatid disease in pastoralist communities. An integrated approach is clearly important for developing successful strategies to investigate and control zoonotic diseases. In this respect, Tanzania is providing a leading example of veterinary-medical collaboration.

Sarah Cleaveland

Numerous potential sources of infection and routes of transmission exist between livestock, wildlife and people.

Alumni plaques going up

In response to the tremendous support by both our alumni and the public to our fundraising drives for the small and large animal hospitals, the Life Friend Roll of Honour plaques are to be updated. These plaques are located at the entrance to Summerhall and list

all the Life Friends of the Dick Vet to date. Those donors whose support is sufficient for their names to go up on the plaque will soon be receiving a mailing from the Faculty Office.

Thank you, everyone!

Staff News

New Director of the Centre for Tropical Veterinary Medicine

Professor Ian Maudlin, manager of the DfID Animal Health Programme was appointed director of the CTVM on the 1 August of this year. Professor David Taylor is on secondment as Deputy Director General of

the International Livestock Research Institute.

Olympic Vet

Campbell J Thompson ('87) traveled to the Sidney Olympics this year as the British Showjumping Team Vet.



Andrew Swanson, Photo Express

Reunions

In addition to the University-wide alumni reunions we have had note of several Dick Vet reunions this year with quite a number of alumni coming to see the new large and small animal hospitals. For example, the class of 1963 came with their partners early in October. They brought with them a garden bench that they donated to the Dick Vet Easter Bush site in memory of one of their year, Don Eden, and his wife Joyce.

We also highlight another group, the graduates of 50 years ago shown in the photo, who returned on Saturday 23 September.

These visits are a stimulus to us and are very welcome. They enable us to show what we are doing for our students today, and to hear the stories of how life at the Dick Vet used to be 'yesterday'.



Glyn Warwick

George retires

George Costello joined the uniformed staff of Edinburgh University in June 1971. He spent sixteen years in various departments before moving to the "Dick Vet" on Monday 23rd March 1987 where he took up the post of Janitor. "I never thought that my 'tour of duty' would last twelve enjoyable years. The college, to my way of thinking in those early days, was very much a family concern. It had its own identity separate

from the University. Everyone enjoyed the climate they worked in, and the traditions of the College were held in very high esteem". George has now retired, and we wish him all the best.

If anyone would like to contribute to George's retirement present, please send a cheque by 31 December 2000 to: The University of Edinburgh, c/o Ms Janet Hackel, The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

Bedding donation



The Advertiser, Midlothian

Young and old contribute to the ongoing success of the large and small animal hospitals. For example, this group of young pupils from Kilgraston Grange Junior School, Bridge of Earn, delivered to the Small Animal Hospital a minibus load of 'bedding' in the form of newspapers they had collected. These efforts are typical of the kindness we greatly appreciate. Many thanks.

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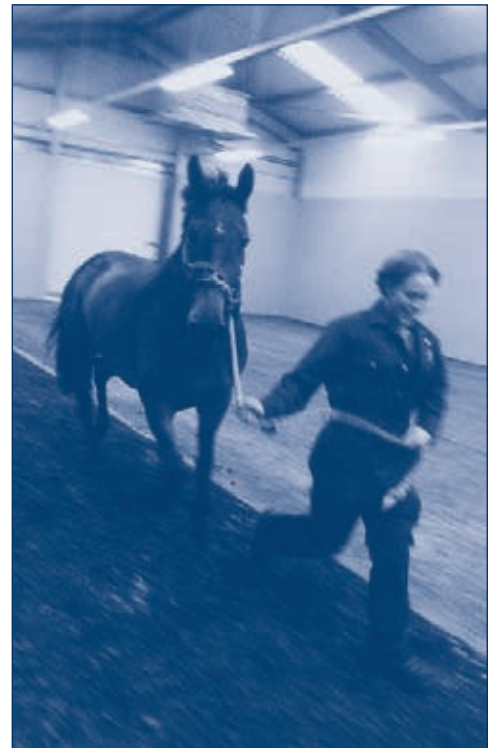
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Charitable Trust and Loddon Livestock Equipment Ltd. The Principal also gave credit to all those who had worked on the complexity of the construction project, Dr David Doxey, Professor Joe Mayhew, Mr Bob Prentice who did the initial design work, and Mr John Williamson who supervised the work through to completion. Dr David Doxey and Ms Janet Hackel in the Faculty Office worked tirelessly to raise the funding for this excellent facility.

Students are now being trained (safe from the weather) in the new hospitals. Clinicians and clients are delighted with the vast improvements. The former report "they make it easier to teach students and look after animals". The latter enjoy watching the clinical examination and care of their animals from positions of comfort and safety. The final phase of the project, the reception block, is due to be built within the next 24 months. Three hundred thousand pounds are still needed to reach this achievable goal. We are working to find the funding to secure project completion. Naturally, every offer of assistance will be most appreciated.

The Principal, Sir Stewart Sutherland, and Prof Hugh Miller at the opening of the building.

A horse is put through its paces in the new facilities.



Jonathan Littlejohn, Visual Resources

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