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JOHN PARKER ELECTED JVP



John Parker

John Parker, a veterinary practitioner from Aylesbury, has been elected Junior Vice President of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. Mr Parker, who was one of two candidates to stand, will take up office formally on RCVS Day in July.

After qualifying from Cambridge in 1963, Mr Parker worked as an assistant in Yorkshire before returning south to start his own practice in Buckinghamshire. Thirty-two years later, he retired as senior partner of what had grown to be a ten veterinary surgeon practice. He remains equine consultant to his former practice, in

addition to providing expert opinions for other practices, insurance agencies and legal bodies, and maintains a working interest in general practice.

Mr Parker has been involved in RCVS activities for some years, both politically and academically. An RCVS Fellow since 1995 and an equine orthopaedics examiner for several years, he has chaired both the RCVS Specialisation and Further Education Committee and the Fellowship Board. Having been elected to Council last year for the second time, he is currently RCVS Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. He has also been a long-serving member of BEVA Council including a year as President and four as Treasurer and is currently chairman of BEVA's Prior to Purchase Examination courses.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Parker said, "I am greatly honoured that Council has given me this opportunity to help direct the RCVS in its increasingly broad range of activities. As a general practitioner, I believe in the fundamental, traditional and statutory role of the College and am keen to ensure that the grassroots of the veterinary profession do not lose faith in, or contact with, its professional body. I am particularly interested in the continuing work of the ESSG and the VSA working party and look forward to being able to working closer with the BVA."

RCVS CONSULTS ON ITS FUTURE

In what may result in some of the most fundamental changes to the veterinary profession in recent years, the RCVS has asked its members for their views on the future of veterinary self-regulation.

The issues for discussion are set out in a consultation paper published on 5 February.

Government is expected to introduce new legislation to replace the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 within the next few years.

Much of the College's work is carried out under the Act, and it gives the RCVS power to charge the registration and retention fees which account for most of its income.

RENAL TRANSPLANTATION GUIDANCE APPROVED

A debate that has exercised the collective minds of RCVS and BVA Councils and Committees over the course of many years has now been brought to a conclusion following RCVS Council approval of guidance for renal transplantations in cats. At its February meeting, Council accepted that this veterinary treatment would not be unethical if done in accordance with certain strict safeguards. This procedure must only be carried out by a team of suitably qualified veterinary surgeons that should include those with Diplomate or Board Certified qualifications in medicine, soft tissue surgery and anaesthesia and qualification or experience in microvascular surgery.

The guidance includes provision for source animals, which should only be

RCVS DAY 2003

RCVS Day will be held at Church House, Westminster, London, on Friday 4 July 2003 from 10am. A lecture will be given by Professor The Lord May of Oxford. Please contact Dawn Wiggins (020 7202 0761 or d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk) for further information and tickets.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The March 2003 Regional Meetings will be held in South Wales (Plough Inn, Rhosmean, nr Llandeilo) and the West Country (Hilton Hotel, Bath) on the 18 and 19 March respectively. A buffet supper is provided from 7pm (so there's no need to miss an evening meal!) and the meetings start at 8pm. Further details are available on the website (www.rcvs.org.uk) - all are welcome!

PRACTICE STANDARDS WORKING PARTY

The PSWP is hoping to issue a consultation document in the near future and will be seeking members' views on proposals at a meeting at this year's BSAVA Congress (11am, Friday 4 April in Hall 6). In the first instance the consultation document will go up on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk) with hard copies available from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789).

MALE APPLICATIONS TO VET SCHOOL DROP FURTHER

Following the article in the November 2002 edition of *RCVS News* (*Manpower Survey Reveals Increase in Womanpower*) which reported on the increasing proportion of women in the veterinary profession, figures published recently by the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service make interesting reading. From the number of applicants that UCAS received for admission to UK universities in 2003, veterinary medicine received a total of 1,382 applications for the six veterinary schools - a rise of 2.5% on the previous year. However, the number of men who applied was just 280 (20%) compared with 315 (23%) in 2002. In comparison, applications for medicine and dentistry have increased by around 28% and 15%, with applications from men comprising 40% and 43% respectively. Details of university applications can be found on the UCAS website at wwwucas.ac.uk.

REVISED CODE OF PRACTICE FOR NAMED VETERINARY SURGEONS - CONSULTATION

RCVS, LAVA and the Home Office have been working on revisions to the Code of Practice for Named Veterinary Surgeons (an annex to the RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct), and copies of the proposed revised Code are now available from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk).

Members, particularly those who work as either full-time or part-time Named Veterinary Surgeons, are encouraged to request a copy and provide comments for consideration by the Advisory Committee and Council.

The revised Code seeks to set out the key legal and professional responsibilities of Named Veterinary Surgeons and to be of assistance to practising members.

CHECK YOUR PRACTICE ENTRY!

If your practice details are in the Find a Vet section of the RCVS web site, or in the Directory of Practices, then it helps everybody if you keep them up to date. The recently redesigned Find a Vet service is now being used over 50 times a day by people looking for a veterinary practice so it would pay to ensure they are seeing the right information.

If anything about your practice has changed - your staff, the services you offer, or the address you work from - then let the Membership Department know by telephone (020 7222 2001) or e-mail (membership@rcvs.org.uk). Even better, visit www.findavet.org.uk to check your details and bring us up to date using the online form.

THE SINGLE HANDED PRACTITIONER

The single-handed practitioner is particularly vulnerable to the disruption that may be caused to their professional duties by stress and health problems. Being on duty 24 hours a day on a continuous basis is stressful. All practitioners have a duty to provide an emergency service at all times but there is no obligation to do this personally. It should be possible to come to a working arrangement with other neighbouring colleagues to ensure that the service is available but that each individual is given respite from being permanently on duty. There is no doubt that such an arrangement is dependent on all parties being prepared to compromise and is also totally dependent on mutual trust.

For confidential help and action on health problems, where early awareness can often be of enormous value, the *Veterinary Surgeons Health Support Programme* provides an invaluable service and can be contacted on 01926 315 119. Alternatively, the *Vet Helpline*, which provides confidential advice and guidance on emotional and financial problems can be contacted on 07659 811 118. Both numbers are printed weekly in *The Veterinary Record*.

VMD WARNING ON MEDICINES

Veterinary surgeons are reminded of the 'prescribing of medicines' guidance set out in the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's "Amelia 8" document, which is an annex to the *Guide to Professional Conduct, 2002 Edition* (available on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk).

The VMD has contacted the College expressing concern that "veterinary surgeons are continuing to use unauthorised products in preference to authorised medicines." and asking that members be reminded that "if there is a suitable authorised product available the cascade does not apply."

The VMD warns that if it continues "to receive evidence of either illegal use of unauthorised products, or misuse of the prescribing cascade, we will have no option other than to submit a report to DEFRA Investigation Branch with a view to instigating legal proceedings."

NEW GUIDANCE

GUIDANCE ISSUED ON THE LINKS BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE, CHILD ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Veterinary surgeons are one of a number of professionals who may see and hear things during the course of their professional activity that arouse suspicion of animal abuse and/or domestic violence and child abuse. Increasing evidence has indicated that domestic violence, child abuse and animal abuse may be linked and efforts are being made to raise awareness within the veterinary profession.

From time to time, veterinary surgeons may see injured animals whose clinical signs are unattributable to the history provided by the client. In such circumstances, recently approved Council guidance advises veterinary surgeons to include non-accidental injury in the differential diagnosis. If there is suspicion of animal abuse, *once an animal has been examined*, a veterinary surgeon should consider whether the circumstances are sufficiently serious to justify breaching the usual obligations of client confidentiality. Such action should only be taken when the veterinary surgeon considers on reasonable grounds that animals either *show signs of abuse* or are at real and immediate risk of abuse - in effect, where the public interest in protecting an animal overrides the professional obligation to maintain client confidentiality. A veterinary surgeon may contact the RCVS for advice before any confidential information is divulged.

The full guidance is available from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk) and can be viewed under **Advice on Specific Areas of Practice** on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk). It will be reflected in the Guide at the next annual update.

The NSPCC will shortly be publishing and distributing to all veterinary practices a leaflet called "*Understanding the Links: child abuse, animal abuse and family violence - Information for Professionals*".

Renal Transplantation Guidance Approved *continued from page 1*

ethanased if there is no reasonable alternative, and emphasises the importance of the immediate and long-term postoperative care of both the source and recipient animals. Centres intending to carry out transplantations may seek formal confirmation from the RCVS that the required standards are met.

Legal advice obtained jointly between RCVS, BSAVA and the RSPCA suggested that the procedure might breach the Protection of Animals Act 1911 on the basis that any suffering of the source animal might not be considered a benefit to the source animal or society as a whole. However, RSPCA has indicated that compliance with RCVS guidance would influence the likelihood of an RSPCA prosecution.

This guidance is available from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk) and may be viewed under **Advice on Specific Areas of Practice** on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk). It will be included as an Annex to the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* in the next annual update.

PETS REUNITED? MICROCHIP GUIDANCE ISSUED

Microchips are implanted in companion animals to assist with their return if lost. Veterinary surgeons are frequently the first point of contact for those owners whose animals are missing and therefore will often be able to help reunite an animal with its owner.

In some difficult cases a microchip is unexpectedly encountered and ownership may be disputed. A client may even refuse to allow his or her name and address to be released to the owner revealed by the microchip. Council has approved guidance that allows a veterinary surgeon to breach client confidentiality in such circumstances and pass the client's name and address, and details of the animal and microchip, to the Petlog Reunification Service

(Tel: 0870 6066751 or e-mail petlogadmin@the-kennel-club.org.uk). This service will then liaise between the two parties to seek to reunite the animal with its original owner or update the registration details as appropriate. It is recognised that in most cases there will be no ownership dispute and all parties involved will be anxious to reunite an animal with the undisputed owner.

This guidance is available from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk) and may be viewed under **Advice on Specific Areas of Practice** on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk). It will be included as an Annex to the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* with the next annual update.

DATA PROTECTION - A REMINDER

The Office of the Information Commissioner has recently confirmed to the RCVS that the Data Protection Acts do apply to clinical records held by veterinary surgeons.

Clients may make a subject access request for copies of clinical records relating to their animals, for which practices may charge up to the statutory fee of £10.

The Office of the Information Commissioner states, "Under the 1984 Act data subjects often expect to be able to request 'all the personal data held about myself' and many are aware that their rights now extend to paper records. Should an organisation receive such an application, and further information needed to locate the personal data is not forthcoming from the applicant, the data controller is only reasonably obliged to search their records by the criteria they have been provided, e.g. under the person's name and address."

Previous advice on Data Protection was issued in the March and November 2000 issues of *RCVS News*, which may be downloaded from the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk).

LET US HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESSES

The RCVS would like to keep its members better informed of ongoing activities that occur in between issues of *RCVS News*. An effective way of doing this is to send monthly email updates with links to content on the RCVS website. Would you like to be kept up to date? If so, visit www.rcvs.org.uk/emailform.html and fill in the few details required.

CHANGES ACROSS THE BOARD AT FVE

Following an EGM in February 2003, FVE has seen its Officer team resign and an interim Board set up comprising "Caretaker Manager" Marc Janssens (Belgium) and the four sectional Presidents. New Officers will be elected at the AGM in Zagreb in May 2003.

What does the RCVS do for you?

Visit the RCVS Stand (C16) at BSAVA Congress on 3-6 April and find out! Officers and staff will be on hand to answer any queries.

PTP PILOT TAKEN OFF WELL AND ON COURSE

As reported in the November 2002 issue of *RCVS News*, volunteers who graduated from each of the six UK veterinary schools last summer have been taking part in the first phase of a pilot for the professional training programme (PTP), using paper-based checklists of skills and competences to record their early experiences in practice. Feedback to date indicates that many have welcomed the structured approach to recording their skills, and helpful comments have been received to enable the lists to be fine-tuned ready for use in the next phase of the pilot.

Much of the comment received on the ESSG's proposals for PTP last year centred on the need to minimise bureaucracy, and these concerns are being taken seriously. With support from the RCVS Trust, the RCVS is therefore working with the Veterinary Business Liaison Unit (VBLU), which runs the national EMS practice database as well as the 'Vets Reunited' website at www.vetschools.ac.uk, to develop a secure on-line recording system for PTP competences. The new on-line system will be tested out during the next phase of the PTP pilot starting this summer. The aim is to design a system that is both simple to use, and which new graduates will find useful as a tool to record their developing clinical skills and experience.

Any practices that expect to be recruiting new graduates from 2003, and are interested in taking part in the next phase of the PTP pilot, are invited to contact Freda Andrews, Head of Education, at f.andrews@rcvs.org.uk or telephone 020 7202 0702.

2003 SHARE-JONES LECTURE IN VETERINARY ANATOMY

Professor Jean-Marie Denoix has accepted the Share-Jones Lectureship, awarded to him by RCVS Council in October 2002. The RCVS is pleased to announce that Professor Denoix will give his Lecture, "Clinical Anatomy of the equine locomotor system" on Thursday 4 December 2003. In his original letter nominating Professor Denoix for the Lectureship, Professor Leo Jeffcott FRCVS wrote:

"Professor Denoix has been Professor of Anatomy at the Veterinary School in Alfort, France, for 15 years and his contributions to fundamental anatomy and equine research through his books, publications and presentations have been extensive. Not only is he an anatomist, but he is also an excellent clinician dealing with lameness and orthopaedic problems. His other forte is diagnostic imaging and he is probably the foremost authority on ultrasonographic examination of joint problems in horses in the world. He has given presentations and 'wet' labs in over 25 countries and his talks are always complemented by spectacular visual material."

RCVS will host Professor Denoix's lecture on 4 December at the RVC, Camden Town, London. The lecture will take place in the early evening and be followed by a reception. Further details and tickets will be available nearer the time.

REMINDER: REDUCED RETENTION FEE AVAILABLE FOR POSTGRADUATES

Members are reminded that, following a decision by Council in 2001, any member registered as undertaking full-time post-graduate courses with higher education establishments in the United Kingdom is eligible for payment of a reduced fee under the following circumstances:

- their course of study must lead to a recognised post-graduate qualification such as a PhD, MVSc, MA, etc;
- the reduced fee is not available to members undertaking residencies, scholarships or internships unless they are studying concurrently for a post-graduate qualification;
- members enrolled for RCVS certificates or diplomas are not eligible unless they are also studying for a European or American College diploma;

The reduced fee is available for a maximum of three years and is one half of the home member fee; payment starts in the April following commencement of the course.

Members who consider they are eligible for payment of the reduced fee should, in the first instance, contact Mick Sibley, Head of Membership, for further information (020 7202 0758 or m.sibley@rcvs.org.uk).

The Registrar is the final arbiter in deciding eligibility.

RCVS DISABILITY WORKING PARTY ESTABLISHED

The RCVS Disability Working Party met for the first time in December 2003 to prepare draft guidance for veterinary schools that receive applications from students with disabilities. The group is chaired by RCVS Junior Vice President, Professor Richard Halliwell and has representatives from Glasgow, Liverpool and London.

All higher education institutions are now required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act when considering applications from students with disabilities, and the schools have asked the RCVS to provide some guidance on the issues as they affect entry to the course and graduation with the registrable veterinary degree. Following recent consideration by Education Committee, the draft guidance is now being circulated

to the veterinary schools for comment before it is published.

Anne Tynan, the Student Disability Officer at the RVC and a member of the Working Party, is also leading a major project to look at the disability issues facing the veterinary profession. The DIVERSE project (Disability in Veterinary Education - Resources for Sustainable Enhancement) has attracted a £245,000 grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and has the following objectives:

- To evaluate the extent to which students with particular disabilities will be able to satisfy the requirements of veterinary degree courses, including work placements, and to identify accommodations, eg. special equipment, to enable them to do so.

2. To work with schools and staff to produce a range of information resources for supporting disabled students in veterinary schools over the next decade.

3. To develop a programme of staff development resources for staff at veterinary schools and veterinary practices used in placements.

4. To provide transferable resources for use in medical and dental schools.

It is hoped that lessons learned through the DIVERSE project will be reflected in further updates of the RCVS Disability Guidance. For further information, please contact the RCVS Education Department on 020 7202 0791 or at education@rcvs.org.uk.

EDUCATION

GLASGOW LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO WIDEN ACCESS TO VET SCHOOL

Glasgow Veterinary School recently played host to eight children and their parents at the first meeting of a new project called Vets2B. Resulting from an innovative partnership between the Veterinary School and Glasgow City Council Education Department, Vets2B aims to raise awareness amongst academically able children from Glasgow's New Community Schools that a veterinary



Derek Flaherty, Head of Clinical Anaesthesia, demonstrates Gerry, the Resusci-Dog.

career need not be beyond their reach. The eight Vets2B who enrolled aspire primarily to veterinary medicine, but the programme also highlights allied employment opportunities in the area of animal health, such as animal nursing and laboratory technical work.

The formation of New Community Schools is a radical Scottish Executive initiative to modernise schools, raise attainment and to promote social inclusion. There are a large number of such schools in Glasgow (generally in areas of socio-economic deprivation) from which the uptake to higher education is traditionally low.

Vets2B is an ambitious project, designed to build on and sustain the pupil's initial interest in a veterinary career. Practical experience is also provided from the beginning of Secondary Year 3 to the end of Secondary Year 6. The broad programme includes seeing practice, farm visits, talks by people working in all branches of the veterinary and allied professions, web-based projects and a research project during Secondary Year 5.

Each potential student will have both staff and student mentors to provide support throughout the four years.

The Community School Project extends beyond increasing access to higher education for young people; it encompasses community care through education of parents, as well as children, in health and hygiene issues related to responsible pet ownership. Further dissemination of knowledge takes place through a series of interactive educational modules (designed by Glasgow Veterinary School staff in association with Education Department staff) incorporated in the Primary School curriculum within the section entitled 'Glasgow's Health'.

Vets2B is the latest and most challenging initiative within the Community School Project, and the next four years in Glasgow will form the basis for what is hoped will become a rolling programme for Community Schools further afield. Further updates on the project will appear in *RCVS News* as the programme evolves.

CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA INFORMATION PACKS UPDATED

Updated information packs will be available on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk) for all Certificate and Diploma subjects from 1 April 2003.

If you are considering enrolling for a Certificate or Diploma, or if you are already enrolled and preparing to take the examination in 2004, you will need to ensure that you have the latest information pack before completing your application. For the first time, up to five years' worth of past examination papers will also be available online for a number of subjects.

The table below shows the relevant deadlines for applications, including those for Fellowship and for Recognised Specialist applications. **Please note that no late applications will be accepted.**

CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS

Diploma of Fellowship [new applications and progress reports]	1 August 2003
RCVS Recognised Specialists [reapplications for those first listed in 1994 and 1999]	30 August 2003*
RCVS Recognised Specialists [new applications]	19 September 2003
Certificates [new enrolments and applications for final approval of experience]	1 November 2003*
Diplomas [new enrolments and applications for final approval of experience]	1 November 2003*

* Where the date falls over a weekend, the deadline will be taken as midday on the first working day.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH RCVS ACTIVITIES
CLICK ON LATEST NEWS AT WWW.RCVS.ORG.UK

NEW COMBINED CERTIFICATE IN VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH

A new combined Certificate in veterinary public health has been devised to bring together the elements that are common to both veterinary public health and state veterinary medicine, and which will allow candidates a choice of electives between Food Hygiene or State Veterinary Medicine. The new Certificate in Veterinary Public Health (Food Hygiene or State Veterinary Medicine) will be available from November 2003, and will replace the two existing Certificates in these areas.

VETERINARY RADIOLOGY QUALIFICATIONS TO CHANGE NAME

At its meeting in February, the Specialisation and Further Education Committee agreed to change the title of the Certificate and Diploma examinations in Veterinary Radiology to 'Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging'. The change will take effect for new candidates enrolling from 1 November 2003, and for candidates taking the examinations in 2004. This reflects the change that has already been agreed for RCVS Recognised Specialists in this area and also mirrors the title of the European Diploma in Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging.

DISCIPLINARY HEARING

MRS DIANA CARR

For 12 days, 9-20 September and 16-17 December 2002, the RCVS Disciplinary Committee heard an Inquiry into Mrs Diana Carr (nee Knight) of Blaircourt Equine Clinic, Uplands Farm, Warren Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex. The Committee found Mrs Carr guilty on three of four charges of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect and directed that her name be struck off the register.

Charges 1 and 2 related to application forms for the registration of one foal. The first, an application to the Arab Horse Society, was signed by Mrs Carr as registered stallion owner, registered mare owner and breeder. She signed that the foal in question had been born to Brookvale Top Model and sired by Jobanker Mystic Mink. On this basis the foal was registered to her under the name of Blaircourt Crystal King. The second form, an application to the Welsh Pony and Cob Society, was signed by Mrs Carr as breeder and veterinary surgeon, but was not submitted to the Society.

The Committee heard that parentage testing proved, so far as was possible, that the foal's dam was Sandbourne Madonna, and the sire Walton Touch o' the Blues and not as signed for by Mrs Carr.

The case against Mrs Carr was that she had falsely stated the parentage so that she could keep the foal, which was otherwise promised to the former owner of Sandbourne Madonna. However, Mrs Carr said that Miss Philcox had been looking after Sandbourne Madonna and Brookvale Top Model at the time of foaling and must have misled her on the foal's parentage. Mrs Carr also said that much of Miss Philcox's evidence was a figment of her imagination, the stories a result of their falling out as friends.

The Committee heard evidence from Miss Philcox and former employees of Blaircourt Equine Clinic that Sandbourne Madonna had been at the clinic from 1994 until the foal had been weaned in 1995. In mid 1995 Mrs Carr sold the foal to Miss Philcox and began providing veterinary care to all of her horses. Later Miss Philcox looked after some of Mrs Carr's horses.

By late 1998 Miss Philcox was looking after or was the owner of Sandbourne Madonna (a dispute that led to the incident in charge 4) and had possession of the registration documents for the mare. Miss Philcox told the Committee it was when she compared these to the foal's registration papers that she knew Sandbourne Madonna was not registered as Brookvale Top Model and thus was not the foal's dam. She raised the matter with the Arab Horse Society and the RCVS.

The Arab Horse Society re-registered the foal to her under the name of Rupert and corrected the parentage. The RCVS did not pursue Miss Philcox's complaint in 1998, but did so in late 2000 when she resubmitted it with additional information.

After hearing both sides, the Committee found that Sandbourne Madonna had foaled at Blaircourt Veterinary Clinic and that it was "inconceivable" that Mrs Carr did not know the foal's correct parentage, and that therefore she had signed both application forms knowing that the parentage claims for the foal were false.

Charge 3 related to the certification of a vaccination of a horse and was not connected with the foal. There was again conflicting evidence and on this charge the Committee decided that facts were not proved. Mrs Carr was found not guilty of this charge.

Charge 4 related to an incident on September 4, 1998, when Mrs Carr attempted to regain possession of Sandbourne Madonna. The charge alleged that Mrs Carr, with others acting on her behalf, sought to resolve a disagreement between herself and Miss Philcox by unprofessional means including the use of intimidation and force.

On that day, Miss Philcox became aware that Mrs Carr was intending to take Sandbourne Madonna from the livery yard in question. Miss Philcox immediately went to the yard and took the mare elsewhere. The Committee heard that when Mrs Carr arrived at the livery yard and found that Sandbourne Madonna was not there, she seized two horses she knew belonged to Miss Philcox and lead them away across nearby fields. The police were called and intervened, and the horses were returned to the yard. Mrs Carr told the Committee she had taken the horses so that Miss Philcox could "be flushed out of the woodwork." After hearing the evidence, the Committee decided that the incident involved a degree of force and was perceived by witnesses as frightening and intimidating, and found the charge proved.

Mrs Carr did not lodge an appeal and her name was removed from the Register on 6 February 2003.

[During the hearing the standard of proof applied at disciplinary hearings was raised and the Committee, on advice from the Sir John Wood, the Legal Assessor, decided that although the proceedings were civil in nature the charges in the current case were essentially criminal and should be proved to the criminal standard.]

PI COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL FEBRUARY 2003

1. There have been three meetings of the Preliminary Investigation Committee since the last Council meeting (up to the end of January 2003), the most recent of which was dedicated to consideration of FMD related complaints. At the two non-FMD meetings a total of 24 new cases as well as ongoing cases were considered. Three of the new cases were referred to solicitors for investigation and preparation of formal statements. No cases were referred to Disciplinary Committee. There have been eight informal interviews since the last Council Meeting.
2. At the FMD dedicated meeting on 22 January 2003, the Committee considered a number of complaints including six out of seven made by one complainant. In total there have been 36 complaints to the RCVS relating to FMD of which two are subject to ongoing investigation.
3. A number of the complaints have been re-considered after further submissions from the complainants. In some cases complainants have submitted additional new complaints having heard that the Committee had closed their original complaint. One Committee decision has been subject to judicial review action and it is not yet known whether these proceedings will be pursued; nor is it known whether any other complainants will apply for judicial review.
4. The Committee indicated that it would be unlikely to entertain any further complaints relating to the FMD outbreak in 2001, which was some two years ago.
5. As soon as all of the FMD related complaints have been concluded (including any judicial reviews) a full report will be made to Council.
6. At its most recent meeting (which will be included in the next report) the Committee closed two complaints relating to veterinary surgeons who had had health problems and were being helped by the Veterinary Surgeons Health Support Programme. Each complaint was closed after a monitoring process lasting approximately two years. The Committee noted that in each complaint the veterinary surgeons' problems had been overcome without compromising public and animal protection.

RCVS Consults on its Future

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Some of the issues concern the constitution of the RCVS Council. For example, how many non-veterinary surgeons should there be on Council? How should the universities with veterinary schools be represented? Should the system for electing Council members be changed?

Other questions relate to the regulation of professional conduct, and in particular the arguments for the Preliminary Investigation Committee and Disciplinary Committees to have broader and more flexible powers to deal with complaints.

The consultation also seeks views on whether the Act should apply to a wider range of species, including fish, and on the definition of "veterinary surgery".

The RCVS was set up by Royal Charter and relies on powers in the Charter when awarding certificates, diplomas and fellowships. Should membership of the College be separated from the statutory licence to practise, with separate membership and registration fees?

The College also runs the veterinary nurse training scheme. The consultation asks whether it should continue to do so, and whether it should have additional powers to regulate the conduct of veterinary nurses and of other recognised paraprofessionals. A separate consultation paper will be sent to veterinary nurses.

The Government will want to hear what the users of veterinary services and other interested groups think about the way the veterinary profession regulates itself and what should be changed and DEFRA has indicated that it will consult later in the year. The profession needs to have its own debate, and there will be a range of views. The College would like to know what its members think.

The consultation paper is available from the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk) or from Jeff Gill in the External Affairs Department (020 7202 0735, or j.gill@rcvs.org.uk). **Replies should be emailed to consultation@rcvs.org.uk, or posted, to arrive by Friday 4 April.**

CHECK OUT THE EUROPEAN VET SCHOOLS

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education currently carries out the approval visits for the EU (and other) veterinary schools to ensure that their standards comply with those set out in EU Directive 78/1026.

EAEVE now publishes the list of approved schools on its website at www.eavee.org.

VETERINARY NURSING

LOSS OF VETERINARY NURSES

The number of Listed veterinary nurses continues to increase slowly year on year. At the beginning of 2003, 4,480 nurses were registered on the RCVS *List of Veterinary Nurses* - a rise of nearly 7% on the previous year. However, it can be seen from the table below that, despite this rise, 549 nurses (about 13%) left the pool of Listed VNs. This figure is consistent with trends in previous years.

Change in the VN List between 2002 and 2003

Jan 2002 total listed VNS	4,199
Number qualifying 2002	543
Total entering/re-entering List 2002	830
Lapsed owing to non-payment 2002	549
Jan 2003 total listed VNs	4,480

There are 4,009 student veterinary nurses currently enrolled as trainees. These are students currently within the five-year permitted period of enrolment. As the majority of candidates tend to complete training within two and a half years, it is estimated that about 1,200 are no longer in training and that a more accurate representation of trainees would be approximately 2,800.

It should be noted that a total of 543 student nurses qualified in 2002. Using the 2001 annual enrolment figure of 925, this represents a crude success rate of 59%, and thus a wastage rate of 41% of trainees. In view of the levels of commitment and expense involved in VN training, the factors involved in student and qualified VN wastage will be a primary area for investigation in the 2003 Veterinary Nursing Manpower Survey (see article below).

VETERINARY NURSING MANPOWER SURVEY 2003

Concerns have been raised recently about the apparent shortage of Listed veterinary nurses in practice, and the high wastage rate of student VNs before qualification (see article above). The underlying reasons for these trends are unknown, however shortage and wastage are both very important factors that need to be taken into account in VN training and recruitment.

Lantra, the Sector Skills Council with responsibility for agriculture (which includes the professions allied to veterinary science) plans to undertake a major manpower survey of veterinary nursing in the summer of 2003. Lantra is currently consulting with the RCVS, BSAVA and BVNA with regard to the format and extent of the research, however, it is likely that a variety of veterinary practices will be included, along with all qualified and student nurses. The survey will address such issues as the nature of work undertaken by VNs; the appropriateness of VN training and the current Occupational Standards and RCVS syllabus to prepare VNs for their role; the level of job satisfaction among VNs and students; and, veterinary surgeons' expectations and perceptions of VNs.

The survey will be the first major manpower survey of VNs since 1987 and will provide extremely valuable information about the employment of VNs and their deployment as members of the practice team. The information should then help to inform the future of veterinary nurse training, both pre- and post-qualification. Further details will be posted on the RCVS website (www.rcvs.org.uk) when available and updates will be reported in *RCVS News*.

READ MORE IN RCVS VETERINARY NURSING NEWS!

More comprehensive news and information about veterinary nursing issues (including examination information) can be found in the next edition of *RCVS Veterinary Nursing News* - due out at the end of March. Published three times a year, VN News is sent to all Listed VNs and to Training Practice principals. If you do not receive a copy and would like to be included in the circulation, please contact the Veterinary Nursing Department (020 7202 0788 or vn@rcvs.org.uk).



RCVS TRUST

RCVS Library & Information Service



SAFEGUARDING your access to animal health information resources - and the future of the RCVS Library & Information Service

New Membership scheme

The RCVS Library & Information Service (LIS) has announced a new Membership scheme for users and supporters. The scheme is part of the Safeguard Appeal launched in the summer of 2002 and first donors to the Appeal have been automatically counted as LIS Members this year.

Key Membership benefit

LIS Members are given access to full library & information services at reduced charges, averaging 30% savings. A list of these charges is available on the LIS website at www.rcvslibrary.org.uk.

Tailor-made information services

Animal health professionals requiring tailor-made information services are encouraged to become LIS Members - and at the same time, to play a part in safeguarding the future of the service.

Annual rates of LIS Membership are:

Individual member	£50
2-3 vet practice	£100
4-9 vet practice	£150
10-19 vet practice & others	£200

These rates also apply to charities, hospitals and related groups. Larger practices and corporate bodies should contact the LIS for details of membership rates applicable to their organisation.

Increasing the value of your contribution

UK taxpayers can link their LIS/Safeguard contribution to *Gift Aid*, thereby increasing its value by 28%. Contributions are also more valuable if paid by *Standing Order* - saving you the bother of renewing your donation and helping to reduce our administration costs.

Visit the Library & Information Service - we're here to help!

Website: www.rcvslibrary.org.uk
Email: library@rcvs.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7222 2021

RCVS Trust contacts for Gift Aid and Standing Orders

Website: www.rcvstrust.org.uk
Email: trust@rcvs.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7202 0741

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ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES -

Recent news from the Library & Information Service

New Animal Welfare quarterly update now available

Need to keep up to date in a subject area? Swamped by masses of information? Too many names ahead of yours on journal circulation lists? If so, then our quarterly subject updates are ideal for you.

Updates are literature searches run on CAB Abstracts (the main veterinary and agricultural information database) in February, May, August and November. They are run on fairly broad subject areas, many corresponding to RCVS certificates and diplomas. Subscribers receive a list of journal articles, most with abstracts, which have been recorded on the database over the previous three months.

As well as the new Animal Welfare update, current subject areas include: Small Animal Nutrition, Small Animal Surgery, Diseases of Reptiles, Equine Orthopaedics, Equine Surgery, Veterinary Cardiology, Veterinary Dermatology, Veterinary Ophthalmology and Veterinary Radiology.

The quarterly charge is £25 per update for LIS Members, with further subjects charged at £15 per update. They are available throughout the year by email and photocopies of full articles can be supplied if required.

Why not contact the Library to view a sample update, see the whole range of update topics, or suggest a new subject area of your choice?

Full text online access to key veterinary journals

This service includes two essential publications — *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA)* and *Veterinary Surgery*. Simply contact library@rcvs.org.uk for your user ID and password to start up.

Why not email or telephone the LIS to find out which of our services will be most helpful to you? Or look us up on the web at www.rcvslibrary.org.uk.



Contacting the Trust

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