



RCVS

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

news



JUNE 2006

PROMOTING AND SUSTAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

RCVS DAY 2006 – OPEN TO ALL

All members are welcome to attend this year's RCVS Day – our Annual General Meeting and award ceremony - taking place on Friday 7 July 2006 in the Prince Albert Suite at London Zoo, Regent's Park, London.

London Zoo is a division of the Zoological Society of London, the charity devoted to conservation of animals and their habitats. The zoo houses over 650 species, including reptiles, fish, invertebrates, birds and mammals and communicates vital messages to visitors about sustainability, lifestyle and conservation, as well as taking part in breeding programmes.

Following the AGM and presentation of awards, Andrew Routh MRCVS, Senior Veterinary Officer of the Zoological Society of London, will talk about conservation projects being carried out

by the society, focusing on the declining population of vultures in India.

Andrew Routh qualified in 1981 from Liverpool University. After over a decade in general practice he joined the RSPCA as veterinary manager for one of its wildlife hospitals. Since 1998 he has worked with zoo and wild animals on four continents. He now has primary clinical responsibility for the animals held in the collection at London Zoo and also works with vultures in India. Mr Routh teaches on the Royal Veterinary College's MSc in Wild Animal Health and is an Honorary Lecturer in the RVC's Department of Pathology and Infectious Diseases.

Following the lecture, guests are free to explore the zoo at their leisure before enjoying lunch on the terrace of the Prince Albert Suite, weather permitting.

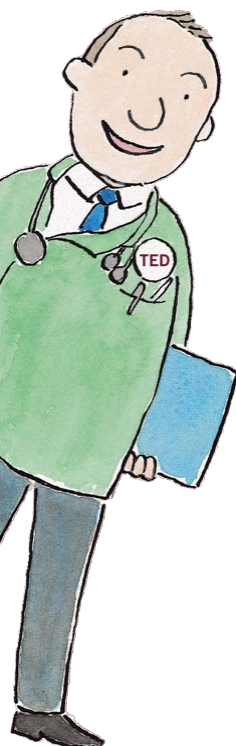


Andrew Routh tending to Lucifer at London Zoo.

To apply for tickets, please contact Fiona Clark, Communications Officer, on (020) 7202 0773 or by email to f.clark@rcvs.org.uk by 23 June.

Photograph: Claire Cunningham, ZSL

We launched the Practice Standards Scheme to the public in March - find out more on page 2.



RCVS
ACCREDITED
PRACTICE

10.00am	AGM and presentation of awards
12.00pm	Andrew Routh BVSc CertZooMed MRCVS Senior Veterinary Officer, Zoological Society of London 'Conservation work of the Zoological Society of London, focusing on the vultures of India'
12.30pm	Time to look around the zoo
13.30pm	Drinks and lunch

JERRY DAVIES ELECTED TREASURER

Dr Jerry Davies has been elected RCVS Treasurer and will serve on the Officer team for a three-year term. Dr Davies has been an RCVS Council member for five years, and currently chairs the Preliminary Investigation Committee.

Dr Davies (pictured) graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in 1974. He then spent two years in the Department of Surgery as a House Surgeon. After a brief spell in general practice he returned to the RVC gaining a PhD and a DVR. He held the posts of Lecturer in Veterinary Radiology and then Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Surgery. Subsequently he became a Diplomate of the ECVS and the ECVDI. He is an RCVS and European Specialist in Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging and a RCVS Specialist in Small Animal Surgery.

In 1998 he founded Davies Veterinary Specialists in Bedfordshire. The practice now employs over 100 staff including 30 veterinary surgeons.

"My five years on PI Committee have been an enormous learning experience and I see my term as Treasurer as an opportunity to gain new skills. I know that the permanent staff in the College and the others in the Officer team will support me as I face these new challenges. It is a great privilege to have been elected Treasurer."

Dr Davies will take up his new role on RCVS Day, 7 July 2006.



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

WISH YOU WERE HERE?

What does the future hold for the veterinary profession? A one-day symposium to be held at the RCVS on Friday 16 June has enlisted a range of thought-provoking speakers, from both within and outside the profession, to find out.

'Postcards from the Future' aims to fast-forward to the year 2020 and discover what the profession might look like – who will be its members, where will it work, what technology might it use and what will be the role of the State.

The line-up of contributors includes the CVOs for Great Britain, Wales and Scotland, members of the practice team, the BVA president, veterinary surgeons from academia, the chairperson of the British Dental Association, the managing director of Vets4Pets, *Farmers Weekly's* livestock editor and the veterinary director of the Food Standards Agency.

The event aims to build on the findings of the 2006 *Survey of the Profession* and assist with the development of a long-term strategy for the profession, as President Lynne Hill explains:

"We are keen for this to be a constructive event. Either we have a potentially negative future but there are things we can do to prevent it, or there are positive opportunities on the horizon and we need to plan to make them happen," she says.



"If we don't take a proactive approach to future-planning, those gloomy visions that we all hear from time to time may become, by default, self-fulfilling prophecies."

Attendance is by invitation only but there are a few places available. Space is limited, so please register your interest by 9 June with Fiona Clark, Communications Officer, on (020) 7202 0773 or by email to f.clark@rcvs.org.uk.

- A report of Postcards from the Future will be available on RCVSonline.
- Look out for a special issue of *RCVS News Extra* over the summer, containing the full findings of the 2006 *Survey of the Profession*.

PRACTICE STANDARDS GOES PUBLIC

With nearly one in two practice premises coming under the ambit of the Practice Standards Scheme by March 2006, the time was deemed right to raise public awareness.

The public communications campaign was kicked off by a launch event on 27 March. It was a busy day – by lunchtime, the President and Junior Vice-President had recorded interviews broadcast on 22 regional radio stations. The interviews, which reached a potential audience of 2.3 million, gained coverage with an equivalent advertising value of approximately £30,000. Some included chats with those on the Scheme, which added local interest and a valuable sense of what RCVS accreditation means in practice.

Presentations were then made at Belgravia House to an audience comprising the media, members of the profession and representatives from animal-owning organisations. The afternoon saw a new departure for the College – an online chat. President Lynne Hill was filmed answering questions about the Scheme that were submitted by pet owners. The footage was streamed live on the internet and viewed by a potential online audience of 9.3 million. It was archived after the event and can be viewed on www.webchats.tv.

Based on the findings of research commissioned by the College towards the end of 2005, our messaging focused on the RCVS Accredited Practice logo and what it meant to owners.

We encouraged people to 'look for the logo' to see if a practice had met standards agreed by all of the main veterinary bodies in the UK.

A range of supporting materials was produced to help communicate these messages, including posters, literature and window stickers for practices to display or hand to clients, together with online information. To date, over 200 practices have requested further materials, suggesting these were well received by pet owners.

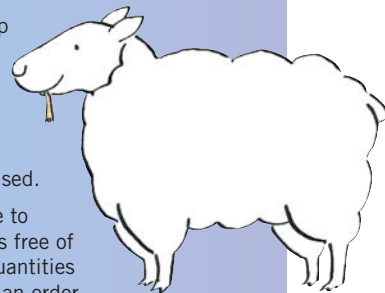
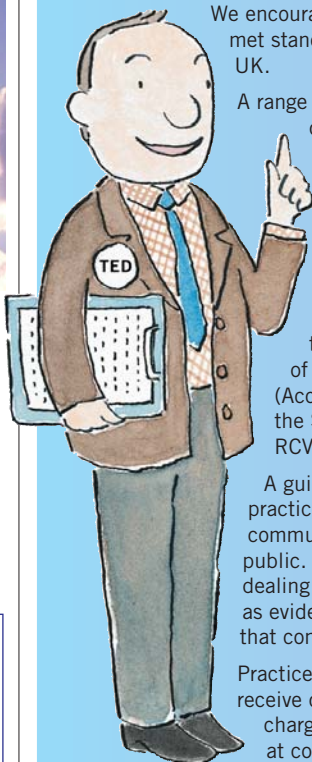
The information featured a cartoon character to help make the Scheme more accessible – it is easy for those within the profession to forget that awareness of veterinary regulation among the public is very low. (Accredi)Ted the Vet (pictured) acts as a friendly face for the Scheme and helps to explain the benefits of using an RCVS Accredited Practice.

A guide was also produced to help practices within the Scheme communicate its benefits to the public. This included advice on dealing with the local media which, as evidenced by the press coverage that continues to appear, was well used.

Practices on the Scheme are eligible to receive certain promotional materials free of charge, and to order additional quantities at cost. Visit www.rcvs.org.uk for an order form.



RCVS President Lynne Hill, Colin Lindsay MRCVS and Claire Bessant (Chief Executive, Feline Advisory Bureau) all spoke at the launch.



EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

RCVS HONOURS AND AWARDS – CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are now invited for the RCVS honours and awards detailed below. Please submit any nominations to the President by **Friday, 1 September 2006**, so that they may be considered by the Nominations Committee at its meeting on 19 October 2006.

All nominations must be accompanied by the following information:

- Name of nominee
- Honour/award for which the nomination is made
- Relevant qualifications of nominee
- Age of nominee
- Nominee's date of registration as an RCVS member (if applicable)
- Nominee's current post/projects
- Nominee's career history
- Particular reason why the honour/award should be conferred (maximum 300 words)
- Written supporting statements from two referees (at least one of the referees must be someone who is **not** a working colleague of the person nominated)
- Contact details for the nominator/referees



The summaries provided will form the basis of a citation for the ultimate award winners at the Annual General Meeting in 2007. In default of such summaries being submitted, the nomination cannot be considered.

Nomination forms may be obtained from Dawn Wiggins in the RCVS Executive Office (020 7202 0761 or d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk).

Honorary Associates

Honorary Associates need not be veterinary surgeons. This award may be made to persons by reasons of their special eminence in, or special service to, the veterinary profession, but Council has agreed that the award should be restricted to persons not eligible for election as Honorary Fellows. The present Honorary Associates are listed on page 312 of the *RCVS Register of Members 2005* and, in addition, this honour will be awarded to The Baroness Byford and The Countess of Mar in 2006.

Honorary Fellowship by Election

Under the byelaws, this award may be made to not more than three persons in any one year in respect of their special eminence in, and service to, the cause of veterinary science. A recipient must be a member of the RCVS and have been a member, or possessed of a registrable qualification, for a period of at least 20 years. The present Honorary Fellows by Election are listed on page 313 of the *RCVS Register of Members 2005* and, in addition, this honour will be awarded to Dr T J Fletcher and Dr J G Murray in 2006.

ALL CHANGE AT BELGRAVIA HOUSE

Some of the names of RCVS Committees are due to change, with effect from July. Council has approved changes to the bye-laws to revise the terms of reference of the main RCVS Committees and in most cases there will be a name change to emphasise the new role.

In general terms the overarching objective is to position main committees to operate at a more strategic level, leaving operational matters and detail to sub-committees and boards and using ad hoc working parties to develop new ideas.

The most radical change is the merger of Education and SFEC (Specialisation and Further Education Committee) to create one Committee (Education Policy and Specialisation) to oversee the whole spectrum of lifelong learning.

External Affairs Committee will undergo a more subtle change and become Public Affairs Committee, but with a clearer focus on policy and the activities of parliament whether in Westminster, Edinburgh, Cardiff or Brussels. Our communication activities will be overseen by a more informal Board, which will have the flexibility to address communications issues as they arise.

Finance and General Purposes Committee will become Planning and Resources Committee to emphasise its role in coordinating both strategy and delivery. Advisory Committee will not change its name but will take on formal responsibility for providing advice on professional conduct for veterinary nurses as well as veterinary surgeons.



3

MEET THE TEAM

If you want to know what goes on behind the scenes at Belgravia House, there are plenty of opportunities to find out.

Council meetings are public, with anyone welcome, space allowing. The Members' Room is open to all members, providing the ideal space for a meeting with colleagues or a quick coffee and email-check while you are in London.

For a more in-depth look at what goes on, you could join one of our regular Meet the RCVS Days. Held three or four times a year, these open days provide the opportunity for a small group of veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and others involved with the profession to hear first-hand from the President what's currently on the RCVS agenda.

Delegates also meet heads of department to understand more fully the role and

remit of the College. We have received positive feedback on previous events – 'it was a real eye-opener' being a typical view. Forthcoming dates are:

- **Wednesday 25 October 2006**
- **Tuesday 23 January 2007.**

If you would like to be invited to a Meet the RCVS Day, please contact Fiona Clark on 020 7202 0773 or f.clark@rcvs.org.uk.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

DISCLOSURE OF CONVICTIONS

Veterinary surgeons have now been included in the Notifiable Occupations Scheme, which provides for police disclosure of convictions to regulatory authorities. Such police disclosure is considered to be in the public interest, and outweighs the normal duty of confidentiality to the individual in a profession or occupation that carries special trust or responsibility.

Veterinary surgeons have been included in Category 2 of the Scheme, which means that notification will not be automatic, but will be subject to the judgement of the police that the conviction is relevant for disclosure to the RCVS.

As a result, the College should now be notified by the police of veterinary surgeons' convictions when these are serious or might affect a veterinary surgeon's fitness to practise.

The Scheme is described by the Home Office (Circular 6/2006) and may be viewed on the Home Office website at: www.circulars.homeoffice.gov.uk.

ILLEGAL IMPORTS

Members are reminded that the information on illegal imports provided by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate states:

'It is an offence to import veterinary medicinal products except under the conditions set out in the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005. The sale, administration and supply of unauthorised veterinary medicines are also offences... The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 give new powers that allow any veterinary medicine that does not comply with the Regulations to be seized and destroyed (see Veterinary Medicines Guidance Note 12)' (Improvement and Seizure Notices).

Under the Regulations veterinary surgeons may import any authorised veterinary medicinal product. *The RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* provides advice at Part 1E, 'Your responsibilities to the General Public', that:

'Veterinary Surgeons must... ensure that medicines are used responsibly, particularly in food-producing animals.'

MEDICINES AND CONTRA-INDICATIONS: A REMINDER

When supplying medicines, veterinary surgeons are reminded to advise the user on any warnings or contra-indications on the label or package leaflet. The following advice on retail supplies can be found at Part 2H of the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct*, 'The Use of Veterinary Medicinal Products':

- 14 *A veterinary surgeon who supplies POM-V, POM-VPS or NFA-VPS veterinary medicinal products must:*
 - a *always advise on the safe administration of the veterinary medicinal product;*
 - b *advise as necessary on any warnings or contra-indications on the label or package leaflet; and*
 - c *be satisfied that the person who will use the product is competent to use it safely and intends to use it for a use for which it is authorised.*
- 15 *Veterinary medicinal products must be supplied in appropriate containers and with appropriate labelling.*
- 16 *Veterinary surgeons may make retail supplies of POM-V veterinary medicinal products on the prescription of another veterinary surgeon (i.e. for animals that are not under the care of the supplying veterinary surgeon).*

BLOOD COLLECTION AND STORAGE

At its April meeting, the Advisory Committee considered the existing RCVS guidance on blood transfusions, following a specific request for clarification on the collection and storage of blood in light of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations, which provides for non-food animal blood banks.

Advisory Committee agreed the advice should remain essentially unchanged as:

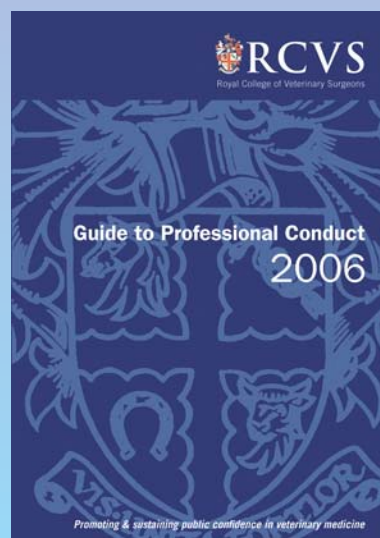
'Section 2(8) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 exempts procedures conducted as part of any recognised veterinary, agricultural or animal husbandry practice. Taking blood from healthy donors with the permission of the owner and with the intention of administering the blood or its products to a recipient is recognised veterinary practice where there is an immediate or anticipated clinical indication for the transfusion. Such a clinical procedure would be acceptable on the scale of an individual veterinary practice or between other practices in the locality. However, the collection of blood for the preparation of blood products on a larger commercial scale for general therapeutic use in animal species would require the authority of a blood bank licence under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations and may also require licences under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.'

NEW GUIDE PUBLISHED

The latest edition of the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* has now been published and was recently posted to all practising members. This edition replaces all previous versions and incorporates the Council-approved changes that members have received via the 2005 and 2006 updates.

We would recommend that members take time to familiarise themselves with this edition to ensure that they are fully conversant with the current guidance.

The annexes, together with the complete guidance, are available to view on RCVSonline at www.rcvs.org.uk/guide. Print-outs of the annexes may be requested from the Professional Conduct Department (020 7202 0789 or profcon@rcvs.org.uk). Additional hard copies of the *Guide* may be ordered from the Publications Department (020 7202 0762 or publications@rcvs.org.uk) or via www.rcvs.org.uk/publications.



EDUCATION

BRISTOL VISITATION PANEL AGREED

The panel of visitors for the RCVS Visitation to the University of Bristol's School of Veterinary Science has now been agreed as follows:

Chairman	Mr Stephen Ware BVMS MRCVS (past-president, RCVS)
Pre-clinical visitor	Professor Tim Skerry BVetMed PhD CertSAO FRCVS (University of Sheffield)
Para-clinical visitor	Professor Stuart Reid BVMS PhD DVM DipECVPH FRSE MRCVS (University of Glasgow)
Small animal visitor	Mr Tim Davies BVSc Cert SAS MRCVS (small-animal practitioner)
Large animal visitor	Dr Mogens Jakobsen DVM (EAEVE nominee, cattle practitioner from Denmark)
Veterinary public health visitor	Professor Frans Smulders DVM PhD (EAEVE nominee, Veterinary Medicine University of Vienna)

The panel will be visiting Bristol between 12 and 16 March 2007. To help inform their inspection, the visitors would welcome any comments on the veterinary training provided at Bristol from recent Bristol graduates and/or their employers. Please email Freda Andrews, Head of Education, at f.andrews@rcvs.org.uk.

CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA WRITTEN EXAMINATION DATES – 2006

Dates and venues for the 2006 RCVS certificate and diploma written examinations are as follows:

RCVS Diplomas:	Monday 10 July 2006
Venue:	RCVS, Belgravia House, 62-64 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AF
RCVS Certificates:	Tuesday 18 July 2006 or Wednesday 19 July 2006 (depending on subject).
Venue:	The Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street, London SW1P 3DW

The precise timetable for each diploma and certificate subject will be published shortly on RCVSonline, and each candidate will be notified separately. Dates for clinical, oral and practical examinations will be published and notified separately.

Enrolled certificate candidates may also wish to make a note of the following written examination dates confirmed for the next three years, depending on subject (diploma dates are still to be confirmed):

- Tuesday 24 or Wednesday 25 July 2007
- Tuesday 22 or Wednesday 23 July 2008
- Tuesday 21 or Wednesday 22 July 2009

LAST CHANCE FOR DERMATOLOGY DIPLOMA

It was recently reported to the Specialisation and Further Education Committee that the European College of Veterinary Dermatology has now received permanent recognition from the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation. This means that our Diploma in Veterinary Dermatology will now be phased out in favour of the European College Diploma (see *RCVS News*, March and June 2005).

The last enrolments for this diploma will be accepted up to 1 November 2006. Details of the requirements and applications forms can be downloaded from RCVSonline (www.rcvs.org.uk).

PROGRESS ON MODULAR CERTIFICATES

New bye-laws have just been agreed by Council for the modular Certificates in Advanced Veterinary Practice which will eventually replace our existing certificate examinations. We published information on the proposed new rules on RCVSonline in March (see *Latest News*, 1 March 2006) and also circulated it to the heads of veterinary schools.

Under the new system, universities will be accredited to assess modules, and candidates will collect credits through the universities towards a full qualification which will be awarded by the RCVS. Universities will be required to provide an 'assessment only' route, so that attendance on a particular course will not always be required.

With the bye-laws in place, we can now start to implement the new certificate system, starting with an invitation in June to universities to submit their proposals for accreditation in the autumn and throughout 2007. We hope that the first modules will start to become available for candidates from 2007.

We will welcome a broad range of assessment proposals from universities – from newer work-based methods of assessment through to the more traditional style of written tests and practicals, depending on the modules concerned. It is likely that there will be a variety of assessment methods available to suit the widely diverse needs and preferences of practising veterinary surgeons.

We will also welcome proposals for partnership arrangements between universities and other organisations, such as veterinary associations and other CPD providers, who will be able to combine the provision of courses or distance learning with quality-assured assessment towards a certificate. Over time, we hope that a wide range of different types of provision will become available, enabling practising veterinary surgeons to gain modules either on a self-study basis or as part of a structured course.

In the meantime, the existing range of certificates is still available, and examinations will continue to be held until such time as the last enrolments have expired. Candidates will have until 1 November 2007 to enrol on the current certificates.

NEW FACES ON COUNCIL

The results of this year's RCVS Council Elections were announced recently and, from July, there will be three new faces on Council. It is also the first time that three women have been elected in any one year.

Current Council Members Neil Gorman, Christine Shield and Geoff Skerrett have been re-elected to serve for a further four years, and will be joined by new members Jacqui Molyneux, Bob Partridge and Clare Tapsfield-Wright. All six will formally take their place on Council at RCVS Day on 7 July 2006.

Candidates in order of election (from left): Clare Tapsfield-Wright, Bob Partridge, Christine Shield, Neil Gorman, Geoff Skerrett, Jacqui Molyneux.



In total, 3,598 ballot papers were returned this year, an almost identical number to the 2005 elections. However, due to a rise in the number of registered members, the overall turnout dropped very slightly from 18% to 17.5%. There was, however, a significant increase in the number of spoiled ballot papers returned with 42 papers not counted compared with an average of ten over the previous five years. The reasons for this are unclear.

Commenting on the election results, Junior Vice-President Professor Sheila Crispin said: "It's encouraging that the higher turnout that we enjoyed last year has continued as the work of the RCVS affects the entire profession. I would hope that, next year, even more members will appreciate that they can help shape the future of the RCVS by voting in this election.

"I should like to thank all the candidates who stood for election this year, and pass on my congratulations to those who were successful and commiserations to those who weren't on this occasion. I look forward in particular to working with our new Council Members and helping them get to grips with the full breadth of RCVS activities."

Outwith the elections, an additional new member on Council from July will be Alistair Barr, who replaces Avril Waterman-Pearson as one of the Bristol veterinary school's two appointed members.

At their recent meeting, Council approved a revised Election Scheme which, amongst other things, makes provision for online voting and removes the provision for supporting statements from proposers. The whole Scheme has been recast in a more modern form and is now consistent with those of similar organisations.

Also included is a formal requirement for candidates to separate contact details, biographical information and a manifesto statement – something which was trialled informally this year to give voters consistent information to help them compare and contrast candidates. We hope the new Scheme will be approved by the Privy Council in time for the 2007 Council Election.

COUNCIL AGREES FEE INCREASE

At its June meeting, Council agreed a 5% increase in the registration and retention fees for 2007/8 (see table) which will now be submitted to the Privy Council for formal approval.

Council also agreed that non-practising members over the age of 70 on 1 April 2006 should continue to receive free RCVS membership, but only receive some of the RCVS mailings. It was confirmed that these members would continue to receive voting papers and the *Annual Report*, and any other publications that were included in these mailings (eg *RCVS News*). However, they would no longer be entitled to a free copy of the *Register of Members* and would therefore not receive the edition of *RCVS News* normally sent out with the *Register* in November.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	Fee
Home practising	£277
Postgraduate	£139
Overseas practising	£139
Non-practising	£46
Non-practising (70+)	Free
Restoration fee*	
Following voluntary removal	£139
Following non-payment removal	£277

*Plus relevant amount of retention fee

HEAD OF MEMBERSHIP RETIRES

RCVS Officers and staff gathered on Thursday 11 May 2006 to mark the retirement of Mick Sibley (pictured), who had been with the College for 13 years.

During his RCVS career, Mick was involved in our Charter 150 celebrations in 1994, the highlight of which was a reception at St James's Palace, and the move from Belgrave Square to Horseferry Road in 1995. A year later he assumed responsibility for registration – the keeping of the *Register* is one of the main reasons for our existence and ensures that animals are only treated by people who are properly qualified to do so.



Mick Sibley.

During his near ten-year tenure as Head of Membership, Mick made a major contribution to the development of the membership database, the means of carrying out our statutory duty to maintain a register of veterinary surgeons in the UK, and became an expert on registration criteria.

At a celebratory staff lunch at Belgravia House, RCVS Registrar Jane Hern expressed her gratitude and appreciation to Mick and presented him with a gift to mark his retirement, saying: "Mick has been the 'gatekeeper' of entry into the veterinary profession for the best part of a decade, and we wish him every happiness in his retirement."

Mick commented: "Although I am looking forward to retirement, especially being able to spend more time with my wife, I am sorry to leave a job I greatly enjoyed. I saw many changes at the College and it was always a pleasure to work with so many extremely able colleagues who were dedicated in their various fields to improving the services they provided to the veterinary profession."

Christine Fraser joins the RCVS in the new post of Head of Registration, responsible for the management of our registration functions, namely the registration of all eligible veterinary surgeons in accordance with UK and EU legislation; the temporary registration of veterinary surgeons in accordance with the criteria determined by RCVS Council; the listing of eligible veterinary nurses from the UK and overseas and the operation of the Practice Standards Scheme list.

Christine previously worked at the Law Society, monitoring the practice and conduct of solicitors and has held a variety of roles in Local Government.

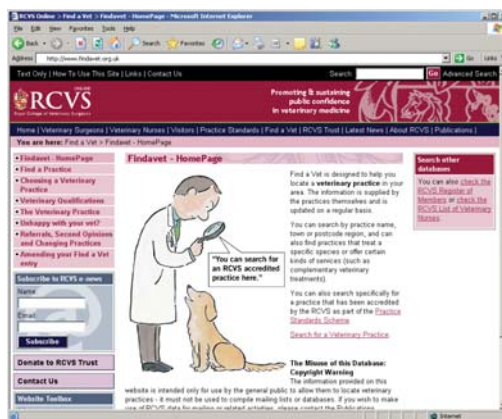
IMPROVED FIND A VET – COMING SOON

Find a Vet, our online veterinary practice search facility (www.findavet.org.uk) remains one of the most popular sections on our website, with 85,710 searches being conducted during the first four months of 2006 – around 700 per day. However, feedback from some of the site's users showed that it is not always as easy to use as we would like it to be, so some significant changes are currently underway which are due to be launched later in June.

The centrepiece of the new search engine will be a "find my nearest" search. Search results will be ordered by their distance from the town or postcode entered which will make it much easier for members of the public to find a veterinary practice that is conveniently close to them. This easy-to-use search will also be able to isolate RCVS accredited practices, as well as those that offer veterinary nurse training or EMS placements.

In addition, an 'advanced search' function will allow the database to be interrogated much more thoroughly than at present, with users being able to search for a practice with an RCVS Recognised Specialist listed amongst their staff, and to search for practices whose staff have a specific postgraduate qualification. Searches for practices that treat a specific species will continue to be possible.

We are confident that this website will continue to offer casual users as well as dedicated searchers an efficient and useful service, and, as always, we would welcome your comments and feedback as to how we can improve RCVSonline.



RCVS NEWS – WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE?

We would like to remind you about the RCVS News reader survey that we distributed recently with the first edition of RCVS

News Extra (pictured). We feel it is high-time that our newsletter had a makeover, but would first welcome your views and suggestions on how best to revamp it.

Please send us your views either using the freepost form, or on RCVSonline at www.rcvs.org.uk/readersurvey by Friday 23 June 2006 (NB this deadline has been extended). Many thanks.



WASTE RESPONSIBILITIES

Veterinary surgeons risk falling foul of hazardous waste regulations if they don't take care to ensure their waste contractor is reputable and uses an authorised disposal site.



Last July, new Hazardous Waste Regulations came into force meaning that producers of more than 200kg of hazardous waste within England or Wales have to register with the Environment Agency (EA). Many veterinary practices fall into this category.

The new Regulations require hazardous waste producers to, amongst other things: classify hazardous waste and dispose of it correctly; notify (register) their premises to the EA; and fill in consignment notes with a premises code, consignment code and hazardous waste codes.

Problems arise when a waste disposal contractor deals with the waste in an illegal manner. In such cases, responsibility remains with the veterinary practice, as the waste producer, and they may be liable to prosecution.

Following reports that veterinary waste is being disposed of illegally, the BVA and the BSAVA have worked closely with the EA to develop guidelines for practices. These will be available on the BVA website (www.bva.co.uk) during June and interim advice can be found there now.

Veterinary surgeons are also advised to check the EA's list of authorised waste carriers on www2.environment-agency.gov.uk/epr/ and to telephone the waste disposal site used by the contractor to ensure waste has arrived. A list of registered hazardous waste incinerators can be found at www.smdsa.com.

Detailed information on the Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005 is also available online at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste or by calling 08708 502 858.

QUESTIONS WERE ASKED...

The Officers and staff of the College are always keen to answer members' questions, and doing this face to face is probably most effective. Recently there have been two opportunities for veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and others in the practice team to pose their questions to the Officer team.

About 50 delegates attended our Question Time session at BSAVA Congress to hear headline data from the 2006 Survey of the Veterinary Profession and pose questions to the panel of RCVS Officers. The survey results were the subject of much interest and other questions focused on CPD and the Practice Standards Scheme.

More recently, we held a regional Question Time meeting on 9 May at the Cheltenham Park Hotel. It was very well attended with a total of 63 delegates including a number of veterinary nurses. Topics discussed with the panel of Officers included medicines, VNs and anaesthesia, whether only veterinary surgeons can administer vaccinations to small animals and the VN diploma, amongst others.

The next regional Question Time will be held in the autumn. Make sure you are first to hear the details by signing up to RCVS e-News at www.rcvs.org.uk/enews.

PI COMMITTEE - LAY OBSERVER'S REPORT 2006



Tony Butler

This is the seventh annual report of the Lay Observers.

As in previous years, we are disappointed by the large number of complaints, which we have viewed at Preliminary Investigation (PI) Committee, where poor communication has aggravated matters. Often, letters to veterinary surgeons from complainants have either been ignored or not replied to in a timely or courteous manner. On other occasions, concerns genuinely expressed have not been responded to in a sensitive way. We are firmly of the belief that, in many cases, a timely, thoughtful and comprehensive response would have resolved matters at the outset.

Since our last report, we have been concerned about continuing difficulties with out-of-hours cover. Whilst appreciating the potential benefits to individual practices and clients of having a dedicated out-of-hours provider for an area, there have been concerns about the distance some animal owners have been required to travel in an emergency. On occasions this has resulted in assistance being sought from a local veterinary surgeon, who is not the owner's usual practitioner, simply because the location is more convenient to the owner than that of the out-of-hours provider. We hope that full consideration is given to this possibility by practices when making out-of-hours arrangements, so that other veterinary surgeons in close proximity are not unreasonably inconvenienced.

"A large number of complaints have been aggravated by poor communication."

Throughout the year, there have been a number of cases where seriously ill animals have been transferred between an out-of-hours provider and the primary veterinary surgeon at a time which might compromise the animal's well-being. It is to be hoped that the College's clarification of the responsibility of a veterinary surgeon for continuity of care, in the animal's best interest, will mean that this problem diminishes.

There continues to be a number of veterinary surgeons who are failing to provide copies of clinical records or x-rays, when requested by the owner, even

though there is a clear requirement in the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* for them to do so. This can result in a time-consuming intervention by the College to reinforce the requirement to provide such records.

Following our comments in last year's report, we remain concerned by complaints coming to the PI Committee, and requiring further investigation, which involve veterinary surgeons who have qualified overseas. We wonder whether there are extra training issues which need to be addressed for this and for other groups of veterinary surgeons and feel it would be beneficial to maintain detailed statistics on all complaints made to the College, which would include the main topics of the complaint, the location where the veterinarian qualified and the way that the complaint was finally closed by the PI Committee.

"We have been concerned about continuing difficulties with out-of-hours cover."

Complaints continue to be received about procedures which have been undertaken without the owner's consent or at a cost greatly in excess of the amount anticipated by the owner. In such cases, the form of consent that has been completed has tended to be deficient in many respects. It is to be hoped that when practices review their documentation, they consider using a form similar to that annexed to the *Guide*, so that not only are procedures fully identified but also a realistic estimate of the likely cost is given.

We are pleased that, in launching its Practice Standards Scheme, the RCVS has provided a mechanism whereby owners can be assured of the level of facilities which can be expected from an individual veterinary practice as well as giving a clear direction to the profession of the standards which need to be achieved and maintained.

"Forms of consent have tended to be deficient in many respects."

On occasions, members of the public have had cause to complain about facilities they have encountered at their local practice. Whilst the PI Committee will often deem it desirable to visit such practices, it

is regrettable that the College has no automatic right of access to business premises, so that the efforts to investigate a complaint in the manner deemed most appropriate by the committee can be thwarted.

Whilst it has been a requirement under the *Guide* for many years for veterinary surgeons to have professional indemnity insurance, or its equivalent, it is disturbing that there remain a number of veterinary surgeons who appear not to have such cover in force. This affords protection to clients, in the event of a claim for negligence, and it is disturbing that certain practitioners leave themselves and their clients financially exposed by failing to obtain this professional cover.

"The RCVS Practice Standards Scheme has given a clear direction to the profession of standards needed."

As in previous years, many complaints referred to the committee this year, if proven, would constitute negligence rather than serious professional misconduct. We acknowledge the efforts of the Professional Conduct Department in seeking to explain the limit of the RCVS's remit in this regard, as a failure to pursue cases of potential negligence continues to be a source of frustration to many complainants. We are grateful to the staff of the department for the comprehensive and sensitive way in which it has responded to them, often in difficult circumstances.

Throughout the year, we have had full access to all case papers and believe that the views we have expressed at the PI Committee have been fully considered by its members. We hope that, in the future, it will be possible to have more comprehensive lay involvement at the stage when complaints are initially screened, as this would reinforce the transparency of the complaints process.

We should like to thank the staff in the Professional Conduct Department for the high level of service it has provided to us, to the committee and to the many complainants throughout the year. The workload appears to remain heavy and we are therefore pleased that the high standards of the department are not only being maintained but even improved in several areas.

See PI Committee's response opposite

PI COMMITTEE - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNCIL 2006

There have been three meetings of the Preliminary Investigation (PI) Committee since the last Council meeting, during which 60 new complaints, as well as ongoing complaints, were considered. The PI Committee referred six complaints to solicitors for statements and six complaints to the Professional Conduct Department for further investigation, and has carried out six informal interviews and seven announced visits to veterinary practices. No complaints have been referred to the Disciplinary Committee. One complaint is reported to Council.

Informed consent

The complaint concerns a veterinary practice's alleged failure to:

- seek the client's permission for an alternative veterinary surgeon to undertake surgery in the place of the agreed clinician;
- inform the client that another veterinary surgeon had undertaken the surgery; and
- provide adequate care to the bitch.

On 18 March 2005, Mr C, the client, took his eight-month-old bitch to one of the practice's branch surgeries for a consultation prior to the bitch's routine hysterectomy operation. During the consultation Mrs A, the veterinary surgeon, said she used a technique of internal, not external, suturing when completing a hysterectomy operation and she was asked and agreed to carry out the surgical procedure. The receptionist booked an appointment for the bitch's hysterectomy to be carried out at a different branch, because Mrs A preferred the facilities there.

On 23 March, Mr C arrived at the other branch surgery for the procedure to be carried out. He completed the consent form and the fee estimate was explained

by a veterinary nurse, following which the bitch was examined by Mr B, another veterinary surgeon (not the requested clinician) who admitted the bitch for surgery and, according to Mr C, said that Mrs A was on her way.

Mrs A was at another branch, running late, and liaised with Mr B through the receptionists/nurses at the respective branches. Mrs A said she explained to her receptionist that Mr C wanted her to carry out the procedure and that Mr B should seek Mr C's permission to proceed with the hysterectomy. Mr B said he had been informed that he could perform the procedure. In addition, he said there were no notes on the computer indicating Mr C's preference and at no point that morning did Mr C request a specific veterinary surgeon.

Mr C called the following day at 4pm to collect his bitch, but was asked to come back. Later, the bitch was discharged by the branch practice's head nurse, with a dressing covering the wound and a collar. The practice said the bitch had recovered well, but Mr C said the bitch was unable to walk when discharged. Later that evening, at about 6.30, Mr C noticed that the dressing was blood stained and telephoned the practice's out-of-hours emergency service. Mr C was given Mr B's mobile number and called him and they agreed to meet at one of the branch surgeries. During the telephone conversation, Mr C said that Mr B told him this did not usually happen with Mrs A's work, a comment which Mr B denied. Mr B attended to the bitch at the branch surgery as agreed and observed that the bitch was distressed by the collar; he suggested that it could be removed while the bitch was under supervision.

On 26 March, Mr C returned the bitch to the practice. There was a build-up of fluid

at the site of the wound and antibiotics were prescribed. Later that day Mr C left the bitch alone, during which time the wound opened. Mr C telephoned the out-of-hours emergency service for a different veterinary practice, where the bitch was admitted as an in-patient for two days.

On 6 April, Mr C saw Mrs A for a post-operative check-up and Mrs A informed him that she had not carried out the hysterectomy. In the PI Committee's view, Mr C was understandably upset by this news; Mr C considered that as the procedure was elective it could have been postponed until Mrs A was available.

On the first issue, the practice accepted that Mr C's wishes had not been met and apologised for the breakdown in communication. The PI Committee acknowledged this and commented that if the anticipated veterinary surgeon is not available for a routine operating list, it is not uncommon for other veterinary surgeons in a practice to carry out the procedures.

On the second issue, the PI Committee noted the disputed evidence and considered that an indication of serious professional misconduct might exist, but only if Mr B had deliberately misled Mr C. The PI Committee decided there was insufficient evidence to support such an allegation against Mr B.

On the third issue, the PI Committee indicated that the different methods of suturing would not have affected the post-operative complications, which were unfortunate but not an issue of conduct.

In the circumstances, the committee decided that the complaint should be closed with advice to Mr B that when there is an agreement of this nature with a client, the client should give informed consent to any change.

PI COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE TO LAY OBSERVERS' REPORT

The PI Committee was sympathetic to the issues raised by the Lay Observers and expressed disappointment that some veterinary surgeons do not respond well to complaints; hoped that complaints concerning 'continuity of care' decreased following a reminder of RCVS advice in *RCVS News* (March 2006); agreed it was unfortunate when veterinary surgeons did not provide relevant clinical records to clients; and, expressed concern about complaints which alleged procedures had been undertaken without informed consent, or at a cost greatly in excess of the amount anticipated by the owner. The PI Committee agreed to publicise to the profession:

- recent guidance that clients should be provided with written information on the practice's complaints-handling policy;
- how veterinary surgeons should respond when things go wrong in practice;
- recent guidance giving clients access to their animal's clinical records (but not that animal's records when in previous ownership); and,
- the importance of specifying the procedures to be undertaken and the fee estimate on the consent form.

The Committee also agreed to consider greater lay involvement in the initial stages of the complaints procedure; agreed that formal powers of investigation

might be useful; commented on the concern that local practices' out-of-hours work may increase as a result of dedicated providers of 24-hour emergency cover that are not local; and, indicated relevant data on complaints would be kept, with a view to seeking statistical analysis of the data in the future.

The Lay Observers remained concerned about complaints against veterinary surgeons who had initially qualified overseas; however, the data available for complaints, last year and this year, suggested that proportionately there were not more complaints against such veterinary surgeons as a group.

The PI Committee's full response is available on RCVSonline (www.rcvs.org.uk).

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE HEARING

MR DAVID C WILSON

On 3 May 2006, Mr David Christopher Wilson was found guilty of disgraceful conduct and reprimanded for failing to carry out his clients' instructions to euthanase and cremate their dog Indi, having taken payment for such procedures. Instead, Indi – a German shorthaired pointer – was re-homed without the owners' consent or knowledge.

The Disciplinary Committee heard how Indi had become a very strong and dominant animal that was aggressive to other dogs, and had attacked a spaniel. After lengthy deliberation, his owners had concluded that it would not be appropriate to confine Indi and, after their attempts to re-home him had failed due to his temperament, decided that he should be put to sleep.

During a lengthy and emotional consultation, Mr Wilson suggested a number of alternatives to euthanasia but the owners were adamant in their decision. The Committee was satisfied that Mr Wilson had agreed to carry out his clients' instructions and heard that the owners had signed a consent form for euthanasia and subsequently paid a fee of £41.90 for this and the cremation of the dog.

The Committee noted that Mr Wilson had been unhappy about carrying out the euthanasia of a young, healthy dog and when the opportunity arose later to re-home Indi, he took it, putting the euthanasia fee towards the cost of castration and care prior to re-homing. Mr Wilson agreed that he had not sought the owners' consent to re-home Indi as he believed he would not agree to it and would be further distressed.

Two years later, the owners discovered that Indi was still alive having been re-homed at least twice and possibly up to six times. The DC stated, "[the owners'] concern that Indi could not successfully be re-homed because of his behaviour appears to have been justified...a

succession of re-homings is unlikely to be conducive to a dog's well-being."

The Committee went on to emphasise that members of the public are entitled to place absolute trust in members of the veterinary profession in every respect, not only that the treatment given to their animals is competent but also that agreed procedures are carried out and that the client receives the service for which he has paid a fee.

It found that Mr Wilson had ignored Part 2D of the *RCVS Guide to Professional Conduct* stating: "Had Mr Wilson held a moral objection to carrying out the euthanasia of Indi he was entitled to draw this to the owners' attention in accordance with RCVS guidance concerning euthanasia, and arrange to pass the case to another veterinary surgeon in a sympathetic manner. Further, he ignored the guidance that the client is an important contributor to the decision, and that clients are capable of making informed and conscientious decisions concerning the future of their animals."

In deciding to reprimand Mr Wilson, the Committee indicated this was a severe reprimand, but that it had accepted testimonials to Mr Wilson's professional ability and good character. The Committee stated: "The episode indicated an error of judgement by a relatively inexperienced veterinary surgeon who did not appreciate the importance of being conversant with the *Guide to Professional Conduct*. He failed also to seek advice from a senior colleague when asked to undertake a procedure of which he did not approve."

Full details of
disciplinary hearings
are available at
www.rcvs.org.uk

FORMER VET SENTENCED

On 30 July 2004, Mr Alan Tait's name was removed from the *Register* on the direction of the Disciplinary Committee (see www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary).

During late 2004 and 2005, we received reports that Mr Tait was continuing to practise as a veterinary surgeon. We informed Oldham Trading Standards of this situation and then assisted with their subsequent enquiries.

On 19 May 2006, Mr Tait appeared before Manchester Crown Court and pleaded guilty to offences (charges 1, 2 & 3) under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 section 14(1) & 14 (1)(A), and practising veterinary surgery and using the title MRCVS having been removed from the *Register* (charges 4 & 5).

Mr Tait was given a six-month prison sentence, suspended for three years.

VETERINARY NURSING

VN COUNCIL ELECTIONS
– VOTING UP

The results of the RCVS Veterinary Nurses Council elections were announced in May with those elected to the Council including three veterinary nurses who have not served before.

Voting numbers were up by 67% on 2004's figure - at 823 returns compared with 494. There was no election in 2005 as there were insufficient candidates to contest the available places.



Successful VN candidates in order of election (left to right) Hilary Orpet, Josephine Yates, Margaret Moore and Elizabeth Branscombe.

Hilary Orpet and Josephine Yates gained the highest number of votes and will hold their VN Council positions for four years. Margaret Moore (who is an existing VN Council member) and Elizabeth Branscombe will serve one year each as they fill positions vacated mid-term by Wendy Busby and Sally Davis. All four will take up their places on RCVS Day, 7 July 2006.

VN Council is the interface between veterinary nurses and the RCVS Council and comprises eight elected veterinary nurses, three RCVS Council Members (veterinary surgeons), three non-RCVS Council veterinary surgeons and two lay members, one being the current Lantra (Sector Skills Council) representative. There are also invited observers from BVNA and BVA.

The Council has overall responsibility for all matters concerning post-qualification awards and the registration (listing) of qualified veterinary nurses. The NVQ is the responsibility of the RCVS Awarding Body, a separate body that is accountable to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as well as to the RCVS, its parent organisation.

VETERINARY NURSING

ENROLMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT VNS

From 1 August 2006 the entry requirements for student veterinary nurses will change. Candidates applying for enrolment after this date must have five GCSE passes including maths GCSE at grade C or higher (together with one other science, plus English Language and two other subjects). Those who have a science but not mathematics will be required to pass the Basis Skills Test in 'application of number' at Level 2.

Candidates with the 2006 Animal Nursing Assistant (ANA) certificate

(having passed their portfolio and examination) will be accepted until 15 December 2006, regardless of whether they have attained a maths GCSE.

Students who have successfully completed their portfolio, and have sat their ANA examination but are not sure of their pass status as of 15 December, will be accepted provisionally, although their places will not be confirmed until they have been notified of their exam results.

IMPACT OF VN LECTURERS' PAY DISPUTE?

We have advised providers of Higher Education awards (degrees) in veterinary nursing that only candidates whose course work and examination papers are fully marked will be eligible for RCVS veterinary nursing qualifications. This comes as some course providers make contingency plans for the possibility of examination and coursework scripts remaining unmarked during the current lecturers' pay dispute.

Where students might be given the option of receiving an award based on at least 75% of their work being marked, or to wait until the totality of their work has been marked, we would advise students to wait. Veterinary nursing qualifications can be awarded at any time of year; however, they will not be awarded to those whose degree result is based on unmarked work.

Whilst the majority of foundation and honours degree awards are not yet fully

accredited by the RCVS as registerable veterinary nursing qualifications (with most students still required to take the RCVS external examinations), these degrees should nonetheless be based upon full achievement of all assessed elements.

"We appreciate that the conferment of awards where a proportion of assessment remains unmarked may be expedient in some circumstances. However, such degrees will not be acceptable as registerable veterinary nursing qualifications," stresses Libby Earle, RCVS Head of Veterinary Nursing. "Our accreditation of veterinary nursing HE awards is agreed on the basis of the achievement of a whole award, and the competencies and knowledge inherent within it."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In May, VN Council debated the level of experience and training that the public might expect of a 'Head Nurse', following concerns raised by an external verifier who had seen a student nurse wearing this badge.

It was agreed that the use of such titles by student VNs or other unqualified individuals was potentially misleading for veterinary clients and therefore of concern. Whilst there is no legal protection of the term 'nurse', it was agreed that advice should be given to practices with the objective of standardising nursing staff titles and avoiding any misunderstanding. Suggestions are as follows:

Head or Senior Nurse	Experienced Listed VN
Veterinary Nurse	Listed VN
Head Nursing Assistant	The most senior nursing assistant in a practice
Nursing Assistant	Unqualified or unlisted nurse
Student Veterinary Nurse	A VN student enrolled as such with the RCVS
Student Nursing Assistant	An Animal Nursing Assistant or Veterinary Care Assistant Student

VN Council's recommendations will be submitted to the Practice Standards Working Group for consideration in September. In the meantime, all practices are encouraged to consider their nursing staff titles and ensure they are not misleading to the public.

NEW VN SYLLABUS

New qualifications will replace the existing RCVS Certificates in Small Animal and Equine Veterinary Nursing Theory from September this year, following a significant review of the syllabus.

The new awards have been shaped by several periods of consultation, which took account of feedback from over 60 Training Practices, colleges and centres and

place a greater emphasis on the delivery of appropriate nursing care rather than focusing purely on disease process, with less emphasis on laboratory work.

It is hoped that the addition of a new pharmacology unit (at Level 3) will qualify or better prepare students to register with the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority as Suitably Qualified Persons under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations.

Other new features include a single syllabus for the small animal and equine qualifications, the integration of exotic species throughout the small animal teaching modules and practical communications skills teaching.



New single syllabus for small animal and equine VN qualifications.

11

CHECKING REFERENCES

We have received reports of veterinary surgeons who have employed VNs whilst unaware of previous criminal convictions that may affect the VN's ability to carry out his or her job (for example, theft).

It is worth reminding veterinary surgeons and other practice staff of the importance of following up at least two job references for any potential staff and carefully checking CVs for any inconsistencies or 'lost time'.

It is also important to check that the VN candidate is actually Listed. Our figures indicate that over 200 VNs have passed their Certificates in Veterinary Nursing and yet have failed to List or maintain their Listing, making it illegal for them to carry out Schedule 3 procedures.

The List can be checked on RCVSonline.

RCVS TRUST



TRUST RELEASES SECOND TRANCHE OF FUNDING

In its Grants Round earlier this year, the RCVS Trust awarded just under £450,000 to innovative and high-calibre research and animal welfare projects in the UK and overseas, representing the second stage of a three-year investment of almost £1.3M across a comprehensive range of educational programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

On hearing the news of the award of an RCVS Trust Production Animal Residency to Orchard Veterinary Group, Glastonbury / University of Bristol, Professor Martin Green, (Orchard Veterinary Group and Chair in Cattle Health and Epidemiology at the University of Nottingham) said: "This is very good news. These residencies play a valuable role in the development of specialist farm animal clinicians and clinical researchers. In this case there is an exceptional resident, James

Breen, and an exciting research project that will improve the understanding of treatment of chronic intra-mammary infections in dairy cows."

Safia Barakzai, lecturer in equine surgery at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, is one of 16 successful applicants for RCVS Trust small project grants this year. Ms Barakzai said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been awarded this grant from the RCVS Trust. Recurrent laryngeal neuropathy is one of the most common upper respiratory tract disorders affecting performance horses. It causes the larynx to become obstructed during exercise and many horses are subjected to surgery to allow them to breathe more effectively. In some horses exercising on the treadmill, we can see that the vocal fold collapses in, whilst the rest of the larynx stays wide open.

"Our project hopes to prove that this is due to a dysfunction of a small muscle, the vocalis muscle, which is situated in the vocal cord. By understanding disease processes in more detail, we can try and target our treatments more effectively, and hence increase welfare for horses affected by RLN."

Gerri McHugh, Director of the Trust, said: "The RCVS Trust continues to make a significant investment in the development of veterinary education and animal welfare in the UK and overseas. This year we were able to fund one in three of the applications we received. As we grow we look forward to supporting even more of the high-calibre projects being developed by veterinary professionals at the seven veterinary schools and in practice across the UK."

COUNCIL MEMBER SCALES NEW HEIGHTS FOR TRUST

Dr Judy MacArthur Clark, RCVS Council member, successfully scaled Mount Kilimanjaro earlier this year in a bid to raise funds for the RCVS Trust and Plan UK. A former Trustee and RCVS past-president, Dr MacArthur Clark raised over £4,200 for the Trust, which it will use to develop its educational and animal welfare grants programmes.



Judy MacArthur Clark (centre) at about 4,500m, with another 1,400m to go.

Speaking about the success of her recent sporting challenge, she said: "It is honestly the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. The final hike to the summit takes about eight hours of constant struggle, but the view at the top, down into the crater, is stunning and makes it all worthwhile."

She added: "The RCVS Trust has a track record of funding animal and human welfare projects in Africa; I do hope my veterinary colleagues will feel inspired to support my fundraising efforts and ensure the Trust can build on its excellent work in Africa and other continents."

NEW TRUST AWARD FOR BRISTOL STUDENT

The RCVS Trust has awarded a new prize to the most outstanding of its 2005 EMS Research Vacation Scholars.



Philip Duffus and Kathryn Cosgrove.

The Dr Duncan Allan EMS Research Prize 2006 went to Kathryn Cosgrove, now in her third year at Bristol University's School of Veterinary Science. This new award has been set up thanks to the generosity of Dr Duncan Allan – a former Senior Lecturer in Immunology at Liverpool University and a long-

standing supporter of the RCVS Trust's activities – and particularly in view of the Trust's recent initiatives to encourage veterinary undergraduates towards a career in research.

On receiving her £300 cash prize Kathryn said: "I really enjoyed my summer research project and it has definitely helped cement my determination to intercalate in October 2006. I also found that the project on microbiology has helped me in the microbiology unit which we all have to take during third year."

Philip Duffus, Bristol's Professor of Veterinary Medicine, Farm Animal Science, and Chair of the RCVS Trust

Grants Panel, added: "Kathryn is an outstanding student currently in her third year at Bristol University Veterinary School. She completed an excellent research project last summer working on stress-induced diarrhoea in dogs using PCR and electrophoretic techniques to identify which individual bacterial species were involved. The RCVS Trust Vacation Research Scholarship definitely focused her mind on research as a possible career."

Contacting the Trust

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