

Overseas Newsletter - February 2007

Recognition for work overseas – the Trevor Blackburn Award 2006

The winner of the inaugural Trevor Blackburn Award, Jack Reece, was presented with a traditional Masai carving and a certificate by the BVA President David Catlow in the presence of Mary Blackburn, BVA Overseas Group Chairman Laura Bowen and other members of the Group at a gathering at BVA HQ in December.



Jack has spent much of his career in Jaipur, in India, with Help in Suffering, a charity concerned with street dogs and methods of animal population regulation as well as other aspects of livestock care. He received the award in recognition of his contribution in the field of animal health and welfare in a developing country.

The award was instigated by the BVA's Overseas Group in memory of Mr J Trevor Blackburn, President of the BVA in 1984/85, of the Commonwealth Veterinary Association 1988/91, and of the World Veterinary Association 1991/95, who died in February 2006.

TAWS/BVA Overseas Association Seminar – 4 April 2007

The TAWS (World Association for Transport Animal Welfare & Studies) Seminar – held in conjunction with the BVA Overseas Association – is entitled 'Towards lasting solutions to foot and harness problems in working equines overseas'. It will take place on Wednesday 4 April 2007 at the Rural Crafts Centre, Herefordshire School of Farriery & Blacksmithing, Holme Lacy Agricultural College, Hereford. Registration from 9am; Rural Crafts Centre tour 9.20am; first presentation 10am. Cost: £25 (£10 for students) including lunch, tea and coffee. For further information contact TAWS at: Hardwick Court Farm, Hardwick Lane, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0AD, tel: +44 (0)1932 564366, e-mail: info@taws.org
NB: BVA Overseas Group will subsidise veterinary students' attendance at this seminar.

Overseas Group session at BVA Congress

We are finalising details for an overseas session to be held on Friday 28 September at BVA Congress in Belfast. Entitled 'Vets in the Wider World' it will focus on the importance of healthy animals to livelihoods in developing countries and will look at the contributions of UK vets working within local communities. The second half of the programme will consider the role of the vet in disaster management, looking at both 'natural' and 'man-made'

disasters.

For further information on BVA Congress visit: <http://www.bva.co.uk/congress/>

VSO placements

VSO anticipates some opportunities for livestock workers in Malawi from June 2007: although VSO has not had any definite news yet, it is likely that vets with large animal experience may be suitable for these roles.

VSO does have a vacant placement for a livestock epidemiologist in Mongolia, details of which are available at: http://www.vso.org.uk/volunteering/stepone/livestock_vet.asp

Volunteer vets needed - Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Sanctuary, Cameroon

Home to 57 chimpanzees, mainly orphans (victims of the illegal trade in bushmeat), the sanctuary is looking for experienced veterinary volunteers with a flexible attitude - although experience with primates is not a pre-requisite. There is a well-equipped vet clinic. Volunteers will be given accommodation and food on-site. The ability to speak French would be an advantage. For further information visit www.ida-africa.org or e-mail info@ida-africa.org

Helping Montserrat

The Government of Montserrat has acknowledged the help of the BVA Overseas Group in highlighting their vacancy for a Veterinary Officer on the island. They have now received a large number of applications – via the Overseas Association network - for the post and are in the throes of interviewing candidates.

The Overseas Group is also advising Montserrat on various aspects of disaster relief and management in the light of the island's imminently threatening volcano.

Aid for Sierra Leone

The BVA Overseas Group, together with SPANA and a number of other charities, has assisted Dr Gudush Jalloh of the Livestock Extension and General Services & Sierra Leone Animal Welfare Society, by coordinating a large collection of veterinary books and equipment and securing their safe shipment to Freetown through the generous support of the Department for International Development (DFID).

Public Relations - School of Veterinary Medicine, University of the West Indies (Trinidad)

John Cooper writes:

We have a new Director, Professor A A Adesiyun, at the School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM), Faculty of Medical Sciences, here at the University of the West Indies. Professor Adesiyun is keen to promote the existence and expertise of the School and to develop stronger links with colleagues overseas.

With this in mind, we have established a Public Relations Committee which will be available to provide information about the SVM and its work and to respond to enquiries about veterinary medicine, emerging diseases, animal-associated public health matters and allied subjects.

Please let us know if you would like to be kept informed of developments here in Trinidad or if we can help you or your colleagues in any specific way.

We look forward to hearing from you.

John E Cooper - Chairman of the Public Relations Committee

E-mail: NGAGI@vetaid.net or ngagi@tsst.net.tt

Jim Creeves BVSc, BSc, MRCVS

John & Margaret Cooper write:

We have learnt with sadness of the death of Jim Crees on Friday 22nd December 2006.

Jim (Henry James Seward) Crees qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Bristol University in 1968. Most of his professional life was spent in the Tropics, especially East Africa, where his knowledge of animal health, his love for the area and its peoples and the welcome he gave to those from all backgrounds, was legendary. In late 1996, a medical emergency necessitated his evacuation by air from Southern Sudan to Nairobi, Kenya, and thence to St George's Hospital, London. From then on, he made impressive progress despite the severity of his condition, aided in part by the help of his many friends but largely on account of the support of Judy Roberts who nursed and cared for him.

Jim's death will come as a shock to his colleagues in the veterinary profession and the many people in Africa for whom he was a personal friend and advisor.

We have many happy memories of Jim and are very much aware of the contributions he made to tropical veterinary medicine. We are also conscious of the extraordinary care he was given, especially by Judy Roberts. We send our sympathy to his family.

Africa mourns Rosamund (Halsey) Carr

In tribute to Rosamund Carr, John and Margaret Cooper write:

The death of Rosamund Carr late last year (September) was not unexpected (she was in her 95th year and had been unwell) but was the passing of an era. Her name is familiar to all those with an interest in Rwanda and the mountain gorillas that inhabit the volcanoes of Central Africa. She was confidante and friend to Dian Fossey, a role immortalised in the book and film, "Gorillas in the Mist". More recently, she became internationally known for the remarkable work of her Orphanage, Imbabzi. To us, Roz Carr was a personal friend with whom we shared many happy times but also periods of grief. Prior to the start of the genocide in 1994, we sheltered with her in her plantation house when it was unsafe to travel back to the Centre Vétérinaire des Volcans in Kinigi. It was we who broke the news to her, on 6th April 1994, that the President of Rwanda had been assassinated and bloodshed had started. We were amongst those who urged her, when the killings intensified, to leave Rwanda and we were part of the welcoming party on her return, via Nairobi, when the fighting finished. We shared her sadness at the loss of friends and innocent people and we rejoiced with her when we discovered those, including some of her devoted staff, who had, after all, survived the genocide.

Those veterinary surgeons who lived and worked in Rwanda will never forget Roz Carr's kindness and the welcome she provided for them at her home. They will smile when they recall that, to Roz, being the "gorilla vet" was not enough. She assumed, rightly, that any visiting veterinarian should be able to advise her on the health of her dogs, her cat, her farm livestock and - when necessary - her staff. Many of us learnt afresh the importance of being able and willing to give such help, especially in a war-torn country where veterinary and other services were either non-existent or drastically limited in scope and quality. The RCVS's continued insistence that its Members should, in an emergency, give assistance to any animal may seem tiresome to some but to those on the ground during a disaster is a very sound concept.

We two shall remember "Madame Carr" for her for her courage, for her contributions to Africa, her friendship to ourselves and others who worked with the mountain gorillas and the times that we spent in her company.

Murakose cyani. Imana ibahe umugisha. Tutakukumbuka daima.

■ ■ ■ Reminders

BVA Overseas Travel Grants 2007

Applications are invited for the BVA Overseas Travel Grants (for veterinary undergraduates):

<http://www.bva.co.uk/profession/overseas/worldwide/grants.asp#overseas>

and the Harry Steele-Bodger Memorial Scholarship (for final and penultimate year veterinary students and for graduates who have qualified within the last three years):

<http://www.bva.co.uk/profession/overseas/worldwide/grants.asp#HSB>

4th Pan Commonwealth Veterinary Conference – November 2007

The 4th Pan Commonwealth Veterinary Conference takes place between 4 – 8 November 2007 in St Michael, Barbados, West Indies. The Conference is entitled 'Animal Health and Welfare: Constant Challenges for Veterinarians'. More information is available at <http://commonwealthvetassoc.org/Home/BarBados.htm>.

29th World Veterinary Congress – July 2008

The 29th World Veterinary Congress 'Celebrate our Diversity' will be held on 27-31 July 2008 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. For further information, visit: <http://www.worldveterinarycongress2008.com/>

World Veterinary Association – news

For up-to-date veterinary news from around the world visit the WVA website: <http://www.worldvet.org/>