



PRESIDENT'S PIECE

I hope that you have all enjoyed some summer sunshine and that life is settling into a more normal pattern as peak holiday season has passed. It is always a tricky balance in practice to manage the glut of holiday requests at the time when there is not a locum to be found.

The autumn isn't only signalled by falling leaves – it is also the second veterinary Congress season of the year with BEVA, BVNA and BCVA in quick succession. I was at BEVA last week and went to a lecture stream called 'Adapting to Changing Times' which had speakers from the House of Commons, BEVA, the RCVS, Defra, the NGOs and the vet schools. I don't claim to have a great interest in politics but with Brexit imminent and permanently in the news, concerns over the likely impact of a no deal or hard Brexit on animal welfare and the veterinary profession were a recurring theme. Countless horses are transported between the UK and the EU, including the Irish Republic, every year (the figure in 2016 was 25,000) and border checks plus a lack of vets to certify exports will increase journey times and welfare worries.

Currently fifty per cent of new RCVS vet registrants qualify outside the UK and vets are not on the shortage occupations list. The threat to the workforce and the availability of veterinary medicines has pushed the RCVS into being more political.

The profession also has challenges other than Brexit with developments such as telemedicine, low cost genome sequencing, Big Data and human level AI just a few years away. We certainly live in interesting times! Speaking of Congresses, have you seen the fliers for our VMG/SPVS Congress to be held on the 24th to 26th January 2019? Booking is now open with an early bird discount until 31st October so don't miss out. Once again we have five streams of non-clinical lectures and a fabulous social programme all under one roof at the 5-star Celtic Manor resort. And don't be shy if you are coming alone or haven't been before as you will soon make new friends!

If you would prefer some more local CPD and networking, don't forget that we have VMG Regional meetings and our joint VMG/SPVS CPD programme. Take a look at the VMG website for the full programme – we'd love to see you there.

Kind regards,

Julie Beacham BSc(Hons) CVPM • VMG President

REGIONS REPORT • SEPTEMBER 2018

Like many of you, the VMG Roadshows took a little breather in August, to fuel up the wagon and enjoy the amazing sunshine.

But following on from the success of Roadshows 1 & 2 WE ARE BACK!

VMG Regional Roadshow 3 starts this month, in Scotland, and has an exciting trip to make between now and the end of November 2018! Don't miss out! Check out what is going on in your Region and book your place!

VMG REGIONAL ROADSHOW 3

CLIENT RETENTION DURING PET LOSS BY BLUE CROSS PBSS accompanied in many regions by PREPARING FOR RECRUITMENT with Caroline Pearson!

Recruiting and then retaining a veterinary team for your practice is proving increasingly difficult. The RCVS and BVA are working hard to understand and improve the situation within the profession. However, what can you do in practice to ensure you are addressing the changing employment market?

Within this workshop, Caroline Pearson, Attract Recruit Retain, will set the employment scene and challenge you to consider what changes you may need to implement. She will discuss how to be prepared for recruiting a veterinary practice team, exploring ten essential steps to help you manage and predict your people requirement. If you know what you will need, how do you raise awareness of yourself as an employer and turn this into interest? More importantly, how do you strategically connect with those people who you want to be employees of the future?

Come armed with your experiences for an interactive and informative brainstorming session!

NORTH EAST • Thursday 11th October 2018

Flexspace, Incubation Centre, Durham Way South, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6XP

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

PLUS Attract, Recruit, Retain with Caroline Pearson MRCVS

YORKSHIRE • Thursday 25th October 2018

Medivet Thurnscoe Referrals, Barrowfield Road, Thurnscoe Business Park, Thurnscoe, Rotherham S63 0BH (Was Animal Medical Centre).

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

PLUS Attract, Recruit, Retain with Caroline Pearson MRCVS

CHESHIRE/DERBYS • Thursday 8th November 2018

Stockport Masonic Guildhall, 169 Wellington Road South, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 3UA

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

REGIONS REPORT • JULY 2018 CONT.

VMG REGIONAL ROADSHOW 3

EAST ANGLIA • Tuesday 13TH November 2018

Dick White Referrals, Station Farm, London Road, Six Mile Bottom, Cambridgeshire CB8 0UH

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

EAST MIDLANDS • Wednesday 14TH November 2018

The Hare & Hounds, The Green, Fulbeck, Grantham NG32 3JJ

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

ESSEX • Thursday 15TH November 2018

Chase Forest Centre at Broadfields, Pike lane, Upminster, Havering, RM14 3NS

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross PLUS Attract, Recruit, Retain with Caroline Pearson MRCVS

NORTH WEST • Thursday 22ND November 2018

Rutland House Veterinary Centre, Abbotsfield Road, St Helens, Lancashire, WA9 4HU

Client Retention during Pet Loss by Blue Cross

PLUS Attract, Recruit, Retain with Caroline Pearson MRCVS

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER:

www.events-by-vmg.co.uk

- choose 'Roadshows' top right.

VMG Members £15 +VAT, Non-Members £30 +VAT.

Spaces are limited and uptake is expected to be high, so please do register soon.

ALL CHANGE IN THE VMG OFFICE!

THE NEW
VMG OFFICE POSTAL
ADDRESS IS:

**Lytchett House,
13 Freeland Park,
Wareham Road,
Lytchett Matravers,
Poole, Dorset,
BH16 6FH!**

The Office phone is manned
from 10am – 4pm.

Leave a message outside
of these hours and we will
call back!

07000 782 324

Online
Membership
Management,
Renewals and
Join-Ups are
coming!

All emails should be directed to
office@vetmg.com

Please share your news for the newsletter!

THE NEW
VMG REGISTERED
ADDRESS IS:

**Calyx House,
South Rd,
Taunton
TA1 3DU**

A new, website-based
E-group is coming with
improved functionality!

GOODBYE AND THANK YOU, MARIA!

Maria Barratt, a familiar name and face to everyone who has had any dealings with the VPMA and VMG over the last 20 years has just left for pastures new. It is certainly the end of an era.

For the first five years after the VPMA was formed in 1993, by a group of vets, the administration and enquiries were dealt with by the founder members. As the membership and the work grew, two ladies named Maria Barratt and Linda Marshall were appointed to take on the role as a job share and they became known as the Secretariat. That mysterious name had overtones of Big Brother but Maria and Linda proved to be two very helpful and knowledgeable ladies who have been the mainstay of VPMA/VMG ever since.

Linda left in late 2017 and was replaced by Cath Grimsey, Financial Director. Maria then decided to change career and left us at the end of August. Luckily she is staying firmly in touch and helping out in the short-term for which we are most grateful. Since our rebrand, we have also modernised the name of the VPMA Secretariat to the VMG Office. Cath is flying solo at the moment and we hope to recruit a second person over the next few months. Another change you may notice is that the VMG registered office address is moving.

As President and spokesperson for the VMG Board and membership, I would like to wish Maria every success and happiness in her new venture. Thanks Maria, good luck and grateful thanks for all of your hard work and input over the last 20 years. We will miss you.





CONGRESS 2019

HOCKEY STAR TO OPEN CONGRESS 2019

We're delighted to have Kate Richardson-Walsh OBE, who led the England and Great Britain Hockey Team for 13 years culminating in Gold at the 2016 Rio Olympics, as our Congress opener.

During the weekend, we'll be presenting five streams of interesting and innovative CPD content from speakers both within and outside the veterinary profession. This year the focus will be on recruitment, retention and strong leadership.

Register now to take advantage of our exclusive members-only early-bird discount available until 31st October. In addition, practices bringing three or more members benefit from a 15% group discount when registering.

To register and for full details of the programme and our sponsors, visit www.spvs-vmg-events.co.uk



REGIONAL CPD PROGRAMME

DON'T MISS THE LAST TWO CPD COURSES OF 2018 – WITH DISCOUNTED RATES OFFERED TO VMG MEMBERS

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BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND FOLLOWING STANDING ROOM ONLY SESSIONS AT CONGRESS 2018

CHIMP MANAGEMENT • Thursday 18 October 2018, Bristol

Contributor: Leonie Lightfoot, Chimp Management



Do you sabotage your own happiness and success?

Are you struggling to make sense of yourself?

Do your emotions sometimes dictate your life?

We all have an inner Chimp who can be our best friend or our worst enemy...this is the Chimp Paradox, a mind management model first devised by Dr Steve

Peters and applied to his work with elite athletes. Leonie will outline the model and will show how we can all achieve better balance, happiness and be more effective leaders by managing our inner chimps.

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NEW FOR 2018

MANAGING BEREAVEMENT AND END OF LIFE CARE

• Wednesday 31 October 2018, Coventry

Contributors: Suzen Gregersen, The Hospice Vet & Doug Muir, Compassion Understood

80% of pets will make their final visit to the vets for euthanasia and for many pet owners it is the only clinical procedure they will witness and one they will remember for the rest of their lives. It is not only an emotional experience for owners, but also for the whole team from reception to nurse to vet.

Suzen Gregersen has been leading a movement to better end of life and palliative care for many years and she makes the business and welfare case for starting and preparing this process earlier in the pet's life with planned management of terminal disease and old age as well as preparing for the final highly emotional consultation. Doug Muir will discuss how to embrace the whole bereavement journey, helping your clients through the stages of loss, showing how the whole veterinary team can support this. As well as helping you provide a better service, Suzen and Doug will apply their combined knowledge and experience to help you reap the benefits both in repeat business from grateful clients when they get a new pet and from reduced staff emotional fatigue.

For information and to book both courses visit www.spvs-vmg-events.co.uk

Meanwhile, back in the real world... news from our colleagues in the veterinary industry



NEW PRESIDENT FOR BEVA

Renate Weller, a professor for comparative biomechanics and imaging at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London and the new Director of Veterinary Education at CVS Group plc has been appointed as President of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) for 2018/19. She took over the role from Jon Pycock at the end of BEVA Congress 12-15 September 2018. Tim Mair, of Bell Equine Veterinary Clinic and editor of EVE becomes President Elect.

During her Presidency Renate intends to embrace the fact that equine vets belong to an international profession and are part of an international community, all working for the common cause that is the health of the horse. She is also looking forward to launching BEVA's new career coaching initiative.

She said:



We are part of a wonderful but challenging profession and our new career coaching enterprise will provide peer-to-peer support, giving members access to help with career planning. I am excited to have played a formative role in developing this important service and to be at BEVA's helm when it is rolled out to our members. ”

MANAGERS, PROTECT YOUR HIGH PERFORMERS FROM BURNOUT

When a high performer on your team burns out, you might think it's their problem to solve. But as a manager, it's your job to help employees keep their stress under control.

You can protect your stars from burnout by giving them some autonomy in choosing their projects. Don't just put them on your toughest tasks; letting them choose ensures they're working on assignments that excite them. You can also pair the person with another high performer on a hard project, which will help the two employees challenge and push each other. (You may be tempted to group high performers with low performers, but that's likely to increase the high performers' workloads and sap their morale.) These pairs should consist of employees at similar levels. Placing a talented entry-level employee with a high-performing leader won't have the same effect.

Adapted from
“How Are You Protecting Your High Performers from Burnout?,” by Matt Plummer.
Harvard Business Review Management Tip of the Day September 11 2018.

Health Assured provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) **FREE for all VMG Members and their family members.**

You can access advice, support and counselling for a wide range of mental and physical health problems as part of your VMG membership, through this programme. **0800 047 4097**
24-hour personal support service.

Over the last couple of weeks, VMG company members dsl (UK) have received a number of calls from veterinary practices affected by the closure of a different debt collection agency. Director, Mike Brooks, has written this article to help managers chose a suitable agency, and gives some tips to limit exposure in light of recent experiences.

In recent weeks a major player in the veterinary industry debt sector has informed clients that it is closing down its activity in the market. Managers affected by this sudden shutdown may be looking for a new debt collection agency, others may be concerned that the one they currently use is robust and best suited to their needs.

HERE IS A CHECKLIST THAT MAY BE USED WHEN SELECTING YOUR FIRST, OR REPLACEMENT AGENCY:

- Choose a specialist reputable company. Ask for references from practices that you know, request recent customer testimonials and/or talk to existing customers.
- Discuss your debt issues with potential agencies and ask how they can help you.
- Find out what collection processes they have in place and how that will fit into your organisational ethos.
- What add on services do they provide? For example: Legal action; court enforcement; High Court charging orders; attachment of earnings; corporate and individual bankruptcy; tracing; court judgment and property ownership searches; individual and company credit reports and good old-fashioned door knocking!
- What percentage paid in full success rate do they obtain for other veterinary customers?
- How can your customers pay the recovery agency? For example, do they offer debit and credit card payments? Standing order, direct debit, website, mobile payment apps, PayPoint Cash Card, Paypal etc?
- Communication between agency and practice is so important, so what is their reporting frequency, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, bi-monthly?
- How will you receive monies collected from your customers? Can they provide BACS transfer or will you have the hassle of a cheque?
- How often will you receive funds? Are payments weekly, monthly, six monthly or annually? To minimise exposure should the worst happen, insist on weekly remittance thus your total exposure is limited to 1 week's collection activity.
- Will collection costs be netted off or invoiced?
- How often will you pay collection and disbursement costs?

When choosing a debt collection partner price should rarely be the deciding factor. There are so many more important issues to consider and the check list above highlights some of those issues. After all, the agency you choose will become an extension of your business, so trust and professionalism have to be top of your list!

If you would like to discuss this issue in more detail, call **Mike Brooks** on **01527 543672** for a no obligation chat.