



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Approximately three and a half years ago I fell asleep during the AGM of the New Zealand Society for Parasitology. My doziness was not because of the quality of the presentations – rather it was due to a significant lack of stamina on my part.

Upon waking up, I found that I had become Vice President of the Society, largely thanks to Ian Sutherland.

"Its great" he told me "as VP you don't have to do much other than give me a hand".

Since this less than auspicious start, I have really enjoyed being part of the Committee whose primary focus is to ensure we have a well run society, with organisation of the annual conference as focal point of activities.

In October this year however, my time on the Committee will be over, and I would like to take this opportunity to encourage other members to consider putting their name forward for nomination for election to the executive. Ian wasn't quite correct when he said you don't do much – things do have to be done, however it is certainly not onerous and the enjoyment gained from working with the other committee members makes it very worthwhile.

If you are interested please contact any of the current Executive - Ian Scott, Dean Reynecke, Caroline Costall or myself.

Failing that, please make sure you get a good nights sleep before the AGM.

Colin

NEW MEMBERS

This month we have bios for the Society's Secretary and a new Australian member:

Caroline Costall [caroline.costall@agresearch.co.nz]

I can honestly say I haven't ever had any real interest in parasitology, but I have met a few fine and interesting parasitologists over the last six years working in the Hopkirk Research Institute. The (sick) humour of some of you lovely people is a nice fit with my own. No one intends to have a career in administration, in fact, I started out training to be a psych nurse (so don't think you can fool me). I left that to sell car parts, left that to join the territorial army, got kicked out of that (honourably) to help market NZ's first BankCard, left that to teach sewing and design at Polytech, worked in a pub and then left to see the world. I spent five years kicking

round London and other interesting places and while overseas peeled shrimp and cut cod in Iceland, got searched at gunpoint in Tel Aviv (and again in a country that no longer exists), lived on a beach in Greece, climbed Mt Sinai, got a diploma from a London secretarial college, assisted at the official launch of Baileys (yes, the drink) did a few other amusing things and came home. When I arrived, DSIR wanted me to type for them, and soon after, when CRIs were invented, I settled into the life of a PA at AgResearch, got married and had babies (yes, in that order, but only just). I now share my home with the aforementioned babies (both now well

Executive

President:	Colin McKay	colin.mckay@novartis.com
Vice President:	Ian Scott	I.Scott@massey.ac.nz
Treasurer:	Dean Reynecke	dean.reynecke@agresearch.co.nz
Secretary:	Caroline Costall	caroline.costall@agresearch.co.nz

over 6 foot), a small, strange dog, a lilac Burmese and assorted pond life. When I'm not at work I paint pictures, work in my garden, read everything in sight and collect porcelain. This is me, and the pic pretty much sums me up - give me a beer and a nice pink handbag and I'll be happy. I'm delighted to be elected Secretary of the Society and look forward to meeting you all, so please don't hesitate to contact me if I can help with anything.



Rob Woodgate [rwoodgate@csu.edu.au]

I graduated from the Veterinary School at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia in 1991, and have been involved in livestock health and production research and extension ever since. My main current professional enjoyment comes from giving livestock producers and other agribusiness meaningful practical advice about the management of internal and external parasites.

In January 2012, I joined the School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, NSW as a senior lecturer in veterinary parasitology. At CSU, I am looking forward to the interaction with veterinary and animal science students (including refreshing my mind about companion animal and other parasites!), and also growing the parasitology services as part of our recently commissioned, purpose built Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Before CSU, I was part of Brown Besier's group within the WA Dept of Ag and Food, based in Albany on the south coast of WA. This included research and extension responsibilities centred primarily on the control of sheep nematodes, blowflies and lice. I was also the national coordinator of the WormBoss website – www.wormboss.com.au I have also worked as a research veterinarian in Armidale NSW, with Veterinary Health Research, Australia's largest private provider of contract animal health pharmaceutical research

RESIGNATION

Brian Boag is still going strong ...

With his changing emphasis Brian Boag has regretfully resigned from NZSP which he joined in 1992. Brian continues to be a zoologist with a passion for parasitic nematodes and, unlike most, spans both those of both plants and animals. Brian did his PhD on nematode parasites of sheep with R.J. Thomas in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Thomas' next PhD student was Peter Waller) and from that time began an enduring interest in nematodes of rabbits. He has an almost complete monthly series of autopsies of rabbits from the Dundee area with careful records on the intensity of infection with each nematode species from 1977-2010. For his day job Brian was employed by the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute (later Scottish Crop Research Institute and now reformed as part of the Hutton

Institute) working on plant-parasitic nematodes. Initially he worked on nematodes of forest and woodland trees but this soon developed into a grid survey of plant nematodes in Britain and he had particular interest in the spiral nematodes (*Helicotylenchus*, *Rotylenchus*), the criconematids and the virus vector nematodes *Xiphinema* and *Longidorus*.

After initial contact in the 1970s concerning spiral and virus vector nematodes Brian obtained British Council 'link funding' to visit New Zealand over three years from 1991. He not only worked with Gregor Yeates collecting *Xiphinema* and *Longidorus* but also made contact with the Rabbit and Land Management Group, a connection that ultimately led to him being a consultant to MAF (NZ) on rabbit calici disease/rabbit

haemorrhagic viral disease (RCD/RHVD) in New Zealand. Problems with the European rabbit introduced to New Zealand was just one side of the work as Britain was coming to terms with the emergence of New Zealand terrestrial planarians as they feed on their native lumbricid earthworms and could potentially become both a serious ecological and economic problem. He still monitors their spread in Britain for the National Biodiversity Network (NBN). Brian's New Zealand connection provided a fruitful source of information on the interaction between the planarians in their native New Zealand where it was the European lumbricids that were the exotic invaders.

Brian's new distribution records for virus vector nematodes in New Zealand supported not only biogeographic studies but also analyses of the potential of climate change on their distribution and economic impact. It has since been found that the greatest response among soil nematodes to elevated carbon dioxide in the FACE trial at Flock House was in *Longidorus elongatus* and molecular studies have shown that population to be indistinguishable from populations Brian has studied in Scotland.

As a zoologist Brian worked with Gregor Yeates in assessing how nematode body size increases during development – being relatively large, longidorid virus vectors 'asked' to be studied. That naturally led to a phylum-wide study of female size based on molecular-clades; determination of body size in all developmental stages of animal parasitic nematodes remains a problem.

Although he has been retired for 8 years Brian continues cooperative research with various groups on nematode, bacterial and viral infections in rabbit populations, genetic variation in *Teladorsagia circumcincta* in sheep and the effect of host and parasite infection intensity in *Trichostrongylus retortaeformis*. Since retirement he has had grants from the Leverhulme Trust and the Human Science frontier Programme to continue his work on rabbit parasites where his publications now span over 40 years. Neither retirement nor resignation from NZSP hinder Brian's work on nematodes!

...from Gregor Yeates

2012 CONFERENCE

Conference venues in the Blenheim area are being investigated for this years conference. Dates are likely to be in the latter half of October (week of 22 – 26).

Conference organisers, Robin McAnulty and Paul Mason look forward to any suggestions for symposia or other suggestions for the format of the conference.

Robin McAnulty Robin.McAnulty@lincoln.ac.nz

Paul Mason masonp@earthlight.co.nz

OTHER CONFERENCES

**ASP Annual Conference
Launceston, Tasmania**

2 - 5 July 2012

Country Club Tasmania

<http://parasite.org.au/arcnet/>

**XI EUROPEAN MULTICOLLOQUIUM
OF PARASITOLOGY**

25 - 29 July 2012

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

<http://www.zooparaz.net/emop11/>

**30th World Congress of Biomedical
Laboratory Science**

**18 – 22 August 2012
Berlin, Germany**

www.ifbls-dvta2012.com

**24th International Conference of the
WAAVP**

**25 - 29 August 2013
Perth, Western Australia**

<http://www.waavp2013perth.com/>

NEWS FROM THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

★ **2012 Medals and Awards**
Closing date: 30 June 2012
<http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/programmes/all/>

★ **New President Announced**

The Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand today announced the appointment of Professor Sir David Skegg as its new President effective from 1 July 2012.

<http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/2012/03/12/new-president/>

★ **Council Elections**

Elections for three positions on the Royal Society Council will be held by electronic ballot in May 2012. The positions are those of the Vice-President (Biological and Life Sciences); and for two Elected Councillor positions (these are generic positions which have no specific portfolio attached to them).

We are now calling for nominations for these positions. Nominations must be received in the Society's office on or before 5pm on Friday, 27 April 2012.

Information concerning the elections and nomination forms are available at <http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/organisation/council/2012-elections/>

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

The Society has received a communication from a sufferer of Morgellons syndrome. The following is an excerpt from the email and is part of a letter sent to researchers in the USA. If anyone is interested in contacting the writer to undertake further research or consultation please contact Caroline.

"I have been suffering from Morgellons for approximately 9 years. I have seen a couple of skin specialists during this time and they have diagnosed separately 2 different problems, one being scabies. I have used the treatments they gave me to use, to no obvious effect.

Now I am 71, a retired Private Investigator & ex English police officer. Previous positions include Industrial Engineering, Packaging Consultant, IT Analyst. To say the least, a trained observer.

Observations are as follows;

1. Initially on my chest skin area, small red spots, slightly itchy as well as small dark flat spots. I began to notice black 'things' appearing on my skin, ranging in size from 0.75mm to 1.75mm in length and approx. 0.25mm in width, that appeared to be round or tubular in shape. My wife and I put one of these mini-organisms onto a clean white sheet

paper in a draft-proof room, marking its position and then observed it had moved over a 2 hour period, approximately 2mm and no further. Note: might not be able to survive without body heat.

2. I learnt very early on to open up the spots and to find a pore full of fibres. In the beginning I left them to see if they would heal. But they didn't, so I started to pick & pull the fibres out. I found that once the pore was cleared, it would heal albeit slowly. I also observed the fact that if I did not get all the fibres from the spot, the next day the mini-organisms have migrated sideways.

3. About 3 years ago on scanning the internet and finding there is little known in regards to a cure, I came across the use of Neutrogena Oil Free Acne wash as a possible product in helping to the reduce the incidence of spots appearing. Again I

have found this product to be useful, but it's not the answer.

4. Around 2 years ago, my GP agreed with me that I may well be a Morgellons sufferer and gave me Ivermectin 3mg tablets (similar to what NZ farmers give to sheep). This seemed to stem the appearance of the black 'things' until recently. They have since reappeared and consequently had some more Ivermectin tablets a month ago. Where I was down to 2 open spots a couple of months ago, today I have 14.

5. My observations concerning the organisms are that they are able to avoid interference and can move up to 5mm in 24 hours. They also have means to cling to tissue and resist you using tweezers in removing them.

6. I have just recently started using a product called Sudocrem Healing cream (Zinc Oxide 15.25% w/w). It looks promising, in that the spots are much calmer and not red & not so itchy. I have yet to see a spot healed due only to the use of it.

The final observation I wish to make is this. I moved to our present address, which is a lifestyle property 10 years ago. Our water supply is rain-filled tank from the house roof. I am a 24 year user of the drug Losec, which as you know kills off the acid level in one's stomach. In a internet item I read, it was suggested that the lower level of acidity in the stomach could cause certain mini or bio-organisms to survive. In my case, I believe this to be a strong possibility, due to the reduction in spots from the taking of Ivermectin."

Next Newsletter

June 2012

Please forward articles to

Caroline Costall

Email: caroline.costall@agresearch.co.nz