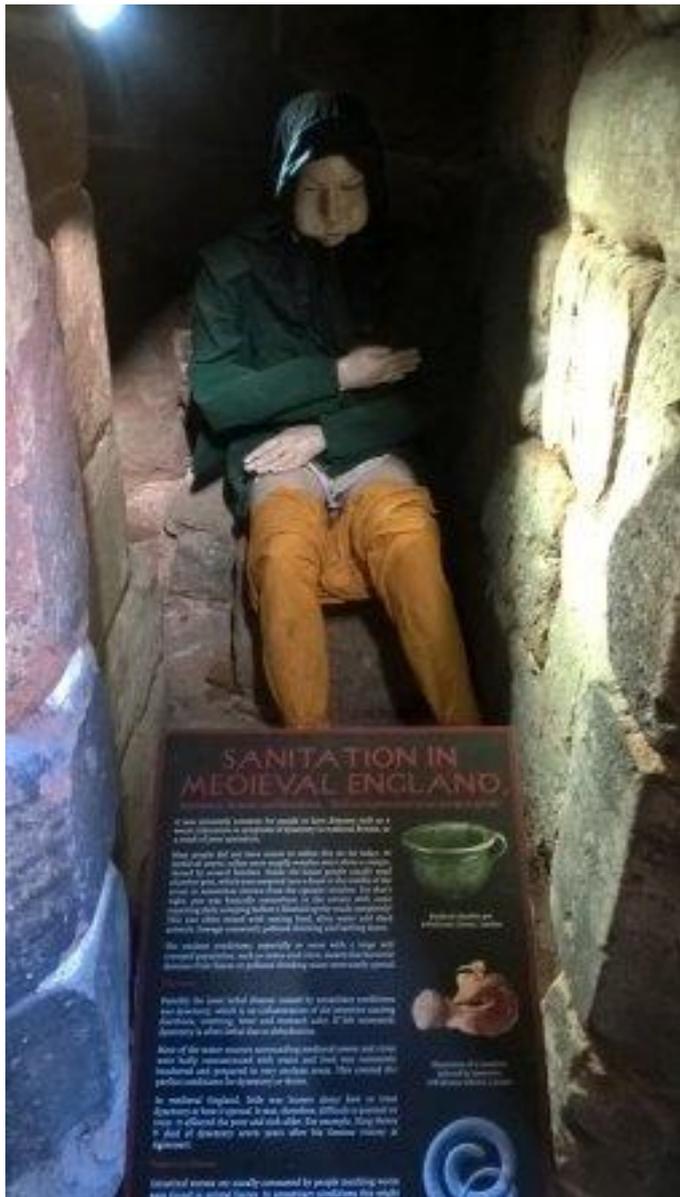


This year's conference was held in mid November in the beautiful, historical town of Chester. Those who had time to spare beforehand could stroll around the City Walls to get an overview before heading off to pursue their own interests – Cathedral, river, shops (including the famous Rows), canal, zoo, market, museums or a range of intriguing restaurants and pubs. In one of the stone towers built long ago when Chester was a busy port, was an excellent exhibition called Sick to Death (the Gory Story of Medicine through Time), which began with a graphic illustration of mediaeval sanitation, complete with realistic sound effects!



The conference venue was the original Victorian railway hotel, so it was well placed for those who arrived by train, especially those who flew into the UK from Denmark, Sweden, Germany and America. Principal guest speaker Andy Niehaus comes from Ohio State University's Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences and he was in great demand over

the weekend, splitting his time between the veterinary delegates' two day conference and the one day owners' stream.



Veterinary delegates at the 2016 BVCS Conference. Principal guest speaker Andy Niehaus, front row left.

This year the theme was geared towards surgical topics, and Andy covered orthopaedic and dental issues at differing levels for the two groups, in addition to sessions on castration, emergency surgery and when things go wrong for the vets, whilst the owners were updated on common procedures & nursing care for the surgical patient.

Further topics for the vets were contributed by case studies from Jo Oultram and Amy Coates: one on anaemia secondary to haemonchosis and the other involving dog bite injuries, whilst Rebecca Edwards described rhododendron poisoning in an alpaca. Karin Mueller spoke on upper respiratory tract problems and Eva Rioja Garcia provided a comprehensive overview of camelid anaesthesia. Two BVCS members, Jenny Grewal and Emily Rainbow, were sponsored by British Camelids Ltd to attend the International camelid health conference in Ohio earlier this year, and between them they concentrated on several of the topics covered there which they thought would be of most interest.

They also gave a modified version of this talk to the owners, then Shirley Bettinson and Graeme McPherson covered what should & does happen with regard to bTB testing. The owners' day was concluded by Claire Whitehead talking about the responsible use of drugs.

Overall, a very useful and informative time for the 24 vet delegates, and 15 owners who attended.

One of the great joys of the BVCS conference is the informal atmosphere with everyone mingling and chatting, a great opportunity to socialise over tea/coffee breaks, lunch times

and the Saturday dinner. A nice touch from the hotel was the beautifully decorated dessert plates:



After dinner, President Claire Whitehead thanked the speakers and presented Andy Niehaus with an engraved King's shilling glass bottomed tankard along with the hope that he would return in the future, safe from the prospect of being press ganged into the Royal Navy. She also presented BVCS secretary Janet Nuttall with a beautiful engraved crystal glass bowl for 'selfless service to the BVCS for 12 years (maybe more), with our thanks, 2016'. The truth is, no one can actually remember when this role was transferred from Roger Windsor many years ago.

Entertainment consisted of a game where each took turns trying to say a short phrase whilst wearing a plastic mouth dilator, which prevented the lips from meeting. Some were funnier than others (pictures kept on file for future use!) but the star turn was Graham Duncanson who, whilst speaking, managed to eject his mouthpiece not once but twice in the direction of a nearby cleavage! However, we were all pleased to see Graham, who after 50 years in practice as a large animal vet, is celebrating his retirement by cycling from his home in Norfolk to Cape Town, raising funds for the Animal Welfare Fund. For more information see <https://vetduncdares.wordpress.com>.

It was great to meet up with old friends, as well as welcome new attendees and work has already started on the 2017 BVCS conference, which is likely to be in the Chippenham area.