1. Suggestions for preliminary reading

It is unwise to buy many books before you come up to Cambridge, for your final choice will be influenced by the advice of your supervisors in the various subjects, and their views will almost certainly change from time to time as new books become available. Furthermore most of the subject matter of the courses will be new to you, and it is disheartening to read textbooks without the guidance of lectures, practical and supervisions. My main advice would be consolidate on the science work that you have done at school, and if you have not taken Biology. If you feel you need a help on biology please email me. Saying this, one thing that can really help your early days here is to become familiar with the ‘anatomical directions’ that enable us to describe the locations of muscles, nerves, organs etc. The first page of any veterinary anatomy book will show you these, along with the sections planes. The more familiar you are with these the easier it is to follow those early lectures. Again, I am VERY happy to help if you want direction.

You will notice that the reading list is divided into two main sections. Most of the books in the first section are enjoyable to read. None is essential to the course here, but some may help to provide a general background (a) to Veterinary Medicine and (b) to the curious customs of agricultural and veterinary life. The second part of the list is ‘the rich aunt’ section. This contains expensive books which you will need to consider buying at some time during the first two years. Should you be lucky enough to have inherited a rich aunt who wishes to further your professional career, persuade her away from the usual Christmas socks or birthday hankerchiefs to one of the books in this part of the list. However, it is often the case that students in the latter years wish to ‘shed’ their growing library and you can often get (surprisingly!) pristine copies!

Suggested Reading List

Part 1: General Background to Veterinary Medicine

Herriot, James Let Sleeping Vets Lie, It Shouldn’t Happen to a Vet etc. These books, if by any chance you have not heard of them, are highly amusing to read. Veterinary practice has advanced considerably since the time at which Herriot’s adventures took place, but the clients have not changed very much.

Artmeier, J, Boyle, F Pet hates: The shocking truth about pets and vets. Argyl publishing 2006. This is a very cynical (but funny) book about the veterinary profession. As a vet reading it, they are only views you share after a very bad day, but it is a good way to see that we are involved with the human aspects of the profession every bit as much as the animals.

Abraham, M Vet on call: my first year as an out of hours vet. Ebury press, 2011

Roberts, M The horses in my life. Headline, 2006. While I personally disagree with Monty Roberts descriptions about how his methods work (and risk the wrath of a subset of the horse world in doing so), there’s no doubting his ability.

Horses

Rossdale, P D and Bailey, M. The Horse from Conception to Maturity. California Thoroughbred Breeders Association, 2002. (UK distributors J A Allen & CO). This is an excellent book, which caters for all levels of interest.

The Domestic Horse: The origins, Development and Management of its behaviour. CUP 2009

Small animal

Turner D, Bateson P, The Domestic Cat CUP 2000

Serpell D, The Domestic Dog: its Evolution, Behaviour and Interactions with people. CUP 1995
Both books cover the domestication of wild felines and canids, and how this process influences their behaviour.

**Neuroscience**


Ramachandram, V *Phantoms of the brain*, Fourth estate, 1999

Both are very readable books on how our conscious and unconscious brains can play tricks on us, and how disease conditions have helped illustrate how the brain works.

**General Medical science**


Bateson, P *Design for a life*, Jonathan Cape, 1999


**Part 2: Books which you will almost certainly need at some time during the first two years**

*These are available in the college library but many choose to buy copies of some. I find that people gravitate towards a certain anatomy text book, and so it is better to look at them all, and then decide your personal favourite.*


Various *Colour Atlas of Veterinary Anatomy: Volumes 1-3. Large Animal/ The Horse/ The Dog and Cat*. Its probably only worth choosing the one for your chosen interest.

Pasquini, C, Spurgeon, T & Pasquini, C (?1995) *Anatomy of Domestic Animals: Systematic and Regional approach*, Sudz Publishing (9th edition). Worth trying to find a second hand copy on amazon marketplace for around £50-60! It was only released in the states but a real favourite of mine and students. Expensive, but holds its money if you do need to sell it.

Hildebrand, M, Goslow, G (2002), *Analysis of Vertebrate Structure*, John Wiley

It’s a very interesting book and the evolution of body plan and organs in all vertebrates. Interesting, but definitely Marmite appeal.


A dissection guide, rather than a ‘map’ per se.

Saunders Veterinary Dictionary, Saunders.

**2. Farming Experience**

The regulations will require you, since starting the course, to spend a total of 12 weeks on a farm or farms, working with the larger animals. Although these requirements do not have to be completed until the start of the first clinical year (i.e. your fourth year in Cambridge), in practice I would advise you to complete the farming period as soon as conveniently possible, once you start the course. You will find as you progress through the University many other things will keep you occupied during the vacations, and 12 weeks farming can prove an irksome burden unless you organise your time efficiently. We have a booklet of information and certificates, which are issued on your arrival.

As the object of farm experience is to get you used to handling animals, it is best to avoid the haymaking and harvest periods. Autumn or winter is a good time to work on a dairy farm, for then you will not only be involved with herd milking, but also with calving and calf husbandry. Sheep are best seen at lambing time. Pigs are perhaps less important, but you should aim for at least a fortnight on a pig farm if at all possible. Good experience with horses is the most difficult to obtain: grasp any opportunity which comes your way. Please be aware that the horse owners and Livery yards have a range of views, not all are based in science. Listen to all, form your own opinions, but perhaps heed to your own (internal) views on the subject.
Getting a place on a farm can also be difficult. If you offer yourself at the farm door you may well be taken on, but it is most unlikely that you will be paid. Many of our students have advertised for jobs (Horse and Hound, Farmers Weekly, Farmer and Stockbreeder, local newspaper) with some success. They have found that key phrases are “pre-veterinary student” and, if applicable, “car driver” and “some previous experience”. It is certainly useful to get as much experience as you wish, but the formal counting cannot start until you arrive here.

3. Getting Advice

As your Director of studies I am your one stop shop for advice. However I’d also be really happy to pass you all the email addresses of the current first years if you’d like a contemporary opinion. Please feel free to email me for their addresses.

If you have a school dissecting kit bring it with you. If you are without one you can buy any instruments you may need from Veterinary Anatomy when you come into residence.

If you have any specific questions about the veterinary course which require an answer before you come into residence, please do not hesitate to email me. I am assured I am very approachable and I am desperate to help you.

I am so excited to welcome you all to Eddies!

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