

RSPCA MEMBERS'



# WATCHDOG

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Newsletter number 97 May 2003

## RSPCA COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Each year since 1987, we have recommended candidates for Council. The recommendations have been based on our knowledge of the candidates' commitment to the aims of the Society, to freedom of expression, a more open Society and to fair and impartial treatment for members against whom accusations have been made. This year we recommend to you -

**CELIA HAMMOND**

**David Mawson**

**DAVE WELTON**

Celia Hammond has been awarded the Pride of Britain Award by the Daily Mirror for services to animal welfare. It is a disgrace that she has not yet been given an RSPCA Award.

The Council makes bad mistakes in the giving of awards. This downgrades the value of an award to those who deserve to be publicly praised for the work they do. Anyone who has supported, whilst on Council, the stifling of freedom of expression should **NEVER** receive such acknowledgement. We believe that the time is long overdue for the Awards system to be abolished.

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## FREEDOM FOOD

May I through Watchdog, appeal to the RSPCA to provide Inspectors at Cattle Markets, where a great deal of suffering is endured by animals through unsympathetic handling by a number of drovers and transporter drivers. Many animals will spend up to 10 hours in the market, standing in crowded pens without water or the opportunity to rest. The level of noise is appalling created mainly by the clanging of metal gates and the shouting of drovers and drivers whilst they attempt to load the animals onto vehicles. The indiscriminate use of sticks gives further cause for concern. It is unbelievable that under Animal Welfare Legislation, the time an animal spends at market is regarded as "rest time".

The Local Authority provide a Trading Standards Officer who is responsible for the implementation of Animal Welfare Regulations but due to an ever increasing amount of paperwork he/she is unable to devote as much time as he/she would wish to the welfare of the animals.

Brutality is rife at Cattle Markets and the presence of an Inspector would help to curb the worst excesses of those who impose unnecessary suffering upon animals. Their ill tempered and aggressive behaviour towards these frightened animals who are suffering high levels of stress, is intolerable.

**FREEDOM FOOD cont**

Following the item on Freedom Food in the last newsletter, we received a report (see page 1) on cattle markets from an RSPCA member who wishes to remain anonymous in order to protect visits to cattle markets by observers. In the accompanying letter a recent visit to a cattle market was described. We publish it below. We have not identified the market or the date but the information will be given to the Director General if requested.

"We spent yesterday at ---, it was dreadful, 1400 sheep there, some of them arrived at 6.30am and were still there when we left at 4.15pm. Many were very tired and were lying in their own and others waste products. The raceways were filthy and the sheep were falling over as they were driven to the transporters which were taking them on their final journey to a slaughterhouse. Some travel as far as Cornwall. What a nightmare it is."

**COMMENT** Food animals have to endure cruelty on the farm, in transit and in markets and in the slaughterhouses. There is ample evidence supporting this statement in the Reports on slaughterhouses by VIVA and Animal Aid, the reports from individuals who visit cattle markets. The Hillside Animal Sanctuary Investigation team produce many critical reports about Freedom Food Farms, the most recent being on a Freedom Food duck farm. We quote -

"We filmed shed after shed where literally THOUSANDS of ducks exist in unimaginable conditions. The stench of ammonia surrounds hundreds of crippled, blind, injured and dying birds as they are left to linger on in the hope that they will draw breath long enough to make it to the slaughterline for the extra bit of profit.

After viewing our evidence the RSPCA agreed that our film showed disturbing scenes of suffering and neglect and immediately agreed to inspect the offending farms. However, inspectors are obliged to inform Freedom Food (which is wholly owned by the RSPCA) of any complaint made against a FF approved site and, within three hours of us confirming one farm's location, a clean up operation had been organised - the first we had seen in our five weeks of filming! Our response to this was to advise the RSPCA that their planned inspection would be fruitless and their raid was aborted. However, just one week later we found that conditions were as bad as ever! On presenting this new evidence, the RSPCA agreed to raid again. Despite another 'clean up' attempt that resulted in 300 ducks being culled (we filmed the fresh bodies dumped in skips outside), the RSPCA still found a number of dying and suffering ducks, and had to kill a further 100 on site. The duck producer has now been suspended by Freedom Food from their scheme and we are currently in discussion with the RSPCA who are taking positive steps towards bringing a successful prosecution!"

## FREEDOM FOOD cont

It has become clear over the years that more effective protection of food animals could be achieved by ending financial support for Freedom Food and by having more better paid RSPCA inspectors and fewer overpaid HQ staff. We know that Council members have voted to continue with Freedom Food and this is disgraceful. Those who voted in favour should be named and their reasons should be given to members. This is important so that members have full information about candidates for Council. Watchdog would like to know if it is ignorance that reigns on Council about Freedom Food - a project which is in conflict with the aims of the Society and the welfare of animals.

## A MEMBER WRITES

"I feel that, sadly, the RSPCA is becoming far more interested in keeping its administrative staff drawing their large salaries than dealing with the reason it was formed, that is to prevent cruelty to animals, domestic and wild. It makes me furious when I read that salaries offered to Branch Development Advisers, who I believe to be spies for head office, are between £20,000 and £25,000 as I understand it, coupled with a car and a telephone, along with a mobile phone. The Inspectorate is certainly not so well paid; it is they who see cruelty at first hand and who must do what they can with their hands tied behind their backs due to stupid outdated laws.

I was quite horrified when I discovered the large salaries paid to the office workers at Horsham and more so when I discovered the final account for the building of the Southwater office. I am sure that those who donated monies would have preferred it to have been spent on animals."

**AN animal shelter facing a fight for survival has passed the £10,000 fund-raising mark.**

Generous residents have so far collected £11,364.85 to keep Chesterfield's RSPCA animal shelter open.

But, unless a massive £75,000 can be raised by July, the centre will be forced to close.

Richard Woodward, centre manager, said: "I'd like to say a big thank-you to people in the Chesterfield area for enabling us to reach our first £10,000, however the giving has slowed down and we are still a long way off reaching our £75,000 target."

CHESTERFIELD EXPRESS

5/03/03

The branch's financial problems have been blamed on rising expenses and a sharp downturn in income, particularly legacies, over several years.

The centre has launched a Save our Shelter appeal and staff are now urging people to help secure its future.

Cash can be sent to the centre at 137 Spital Lane, Chesterfield, S41 0HL.

People can give on-line donations via the branch website at [www.chesterfieldrspca.co.uk](http://www.chesterfieldrspca.co.uk)

Anyone interested in setting up a standing order or finding out about other forms of regular giving, can also contact the centre on (01246) 273358.

FROM A  
CHESTERFIELD  
MEMBER

# Animal tests help scientists perfect chemical weapons

From: Elizabeth Sigmund, Home Park, Trebulet, Launceston.

I am writing to comment on the debate currently taking place in your columns about the use of live animals for experimentation. With the exception of one letter (Pauline Balland) none of your contributors appears to recognise that hundreds of thousands of animals of many species are used for developing and testing weapons in this country. Ministry of Defence research establishments do not come under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, and therefore no facts are known about the exact extent or type of experiments carried out, or the conditions under which they take place.

My area of expertise is chemical and biological weaponry, and I know that experiments have taken place over four decades using live apes, goats, sheep, monkeys, dogs, cats, rabbits, rats and mice to test nerve gas, mustard gas, riot control gases and a variety of biological weapons (i.e. lethal diseases) at Porton Down in Wiltshire. No inspectors are allowed in because the

whole place is top secret under the MoD. The breeding farm and laboratories are answerable to no one.

I have seen a film of a beagle bitch driven mad by psychochemicals, a rabbit injected with nerve gas, dying in convulsions, and rows of mice clamped in metal tubes being gassed. All this, not to save suffering or prevent death among humans but indeed to perfect suffering and create sufficiently lethal substances to kill mankind.

The excuse given is that this enormous toll of agony is to perfect antidotes and protection for the Services. Yes, but not one politician has ever claimed that the ordinary people would be protected. The Home Office wrote to me saying "it is not possible to provide protection against such weapons for civilians."

Two MPs have started a group called PAWS, Peace and Animal Welfare. I am speaking at their inaugural meeting in Cardiff on February 14. Their object is to stop the use of animals for such purposes. Anyone interested should contact me. (Tel. Coeds Green 522).

# VICTIMS OF WAR

BY DAVID HARRISON  
Environment Correspondent

BARECHESTED commandos brandishing knives take turns to charge towards a live dog, tied and spreadeagled between vertical poles. They slash and stab the helpless, yelping animal until it dies. Then, in a grotesque act of military machismo, the soldiers eat the dog's heart and drink its blood.

The troops belong to the Peruvian army and the slaughter of the dog is the climax of a series of "bravery tests" to train them to be ruthless killers.

The barbaric ritual has been uncovered by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), a British charity which last night expressed disgust at the cruelty.

For the final challenge the soldiers run 20 yards towards the suspended dog, clutching an attack knife with an eight-inch blade. Some slash the animal just once; the more enthusiastic stab it repeatedly.

The mongrel can move its head but is otherwise utterly defenceless. It can only scream as the knives rip through its skin. Worse, the dog is a camp pet that belongs to the soldiers, an extra detail to ensure that these killers are rendered truly heartless, unhindered by emotion or sentiment.

Once the animal is dead and the soldiers have completed the test, they put their hands into the open wounds, pull out the innards and heart, tear them up and eat them.

The aim is to turn them into men who are not merely untroubled by the sight of blood, but positively relish it.

The brutal ritual ends with one of the soldiers putting the dog around his neck like a victory laurel and leading the troop on a "lap of honour" around the training ground.

THE SUNDAY  
TELEGRAPH

15/12/02

THE CAMPAIGNER JAN-APRIL 2001

## PORTON DOWN TESTS CONDEMNED

We are grateful to Liberal Democrat MP Norman Baker, who for years has raised the issue of the animals at Porton Down in Parliament. He has asked several questions on our latest findings".

Labour MPs Helen Brinton and Ian Cawsey tabled an Early Day Motion calling for a ban on "unnecessary animal experiments at the Ministry of Defence Chemical Warfare Establishment at Porton Down; is disgusted by the torture and slaughter of pigs subjected to mustard gas and marmoset monkeys injected with sarin nerve gas; is appalled that these experiments will continue despite admissions by the research scientists involved that they have discovered little of value..."

It was suggested in a letter to The Times (24/02/84 Graham Chainey) that instead of shooting animals (pigs shot with high-velocity bullets and clamped down monkeys being blasted with small arms) we might investigate humans to discover why war is necessary.

It is shocking to read the Peru Report by WSPA .

Has the RSPCA protested about the torture of animals in Porton Down? It surely cannot be of benefit to the moral attitude of humans to do such things.



## HARE COURSING and ROGER HELMER!

**IF there is a more obvious reason for the decline of the Conservative Party than the confused and out-of-touch nonsense of Roger Helmer on hares (February 28) I have yet to see it!**

Hare coursing is a disgusting and horribly cruel pastime which the vast majority of the British public agree is long overdue to be banned.

The spectacle of two dogs chasing down a hare and playing tug-of-war is about as far from pleasurable to Joe Public as you can get.

I have attended the Waterloo Cup myself with friends who were attempting to sway my very "anti" feelings towards the activity, but I have to say they failed miserably.

I am horrified that this

despicable practice continues with only poaching legislation to combat it. I saw the crowds cheer when a hare was caught and I heard the desperate plea from the public address system to allow any escaping hare through the crowd. This is because the Protection of Animals Act 1911 also protects any "captive" wild animal and the organisers are all too aware that the RSPCA will prosecute them for cruelty if they do not allow the fortunate hare to escape.

Hare coursing itself, as accepted by the blood sport community, is the weak link in the country cruelty portfolio. Unlike fox hunting, where the flimsy excuse of pest control is cited as a reason for it to continue, hare coursing is the deliberate act of setting two dogs on an animal which is gradu-

ally dying out in this country. The hares' diminishing numbers will soon lead to it being placed on the endangered list. For any person to advocate continued coursing is at the least misguided.

By defending the indefensible Mr Helmer only alienates the public further from the Conservative Party. Does he not understand that the political parties in this country are now so similar in their policies that huge numbers of the population can be swayed on single issues like this? The public do not like cruelty to animals!

Evolution is a very slow process, and for Mr Helmer to try to convince people that unless hares are coursed they will become "oversized gerbils" is ludicrous. I hope for the sake of the Tories that "dinosaurs"

are shown the door in the near future, as my vote will stay with Labour until obscenities like hare coursing and fox hunting are finally consigned to the dustbin of history.

**EDWARD ARDAY  
Branston.**

■ Hare coursing is no different to fox hunting in many ways. They are both cruelly enjoyed by a minority who seek to dress their activities up in the name of benevolence for animal welfare.

Mr Helmer would have us accept that hare coursing was simply perpetrated and enjoyed by "working class" folk such as "miners". I do not doubt that there are many former miners who abhor animal cruelty as much as I do.

Mr Helmer derides foxes as

cruel and wanton predators of countless birds and mammals in attributing a destructive and rationally autonomous set of wants or needs to a wild animal simply following its instincts.

Mr Helmer would have us believe that a hare will adapt into an "oversized gerbil" if not hunted. I could barely stifle a laugh when I read this. Do pet cats need to be hunted down by pet dogs in order to maintain their wily edge? I think not.

Mr Helmer states that there is "overwhelming evidence that hare numbers increase on coursing estates where agriculture is managed in the interests of the hare" yet are in decline elsewhere.

The brown hare is the species of mammal which has undergone the greatest decline (after the water vole). In coursing hares are beaten on to a field where, should they be unfortunate enough to be caught, they will be pulled apart between the jaws of two dogs until a "picker up" (coursing official) removes the poor animal. The hare may still be alive at this point and officials who are unskilled may need several attempts to break the poor creature's neck in an attempt to end its needless suffering.

After the 2000 Millennium Cup event, the RSPCA arranged for the carcasses of five hares to be examined by an independent vet. This showed that none of these hares had died instantly and all had suffered injuries before being killed. Three had had their necks dislocated after being retrieved from the dogs.

These pursuits are cruel, unnecessary and appeal to a baser nature in society.

**RACHEL ASTILL-DUNSEITH  
Lincoln.**

LINCOLNSHIRE ECHO 8 MARCH 2003

### A SECRET SOCIETY IS A FAILING SOCIETY

These are not our words but those of an experienced senior manager. As we do not want the RSPCA to fail, we will continue to press for more openness about the actions and behaviour of council members.

It is very important for voting members to know how candidates behave when they are elected to council. It is impossible to judge from election addresses and promises.

We cannot emphasise enough how important it is for ALL members to be allowed freedom of expression.

In September 1999, Mr Lewis Page and Mr George Spencer proposed and seconded a successful motion (13 for 5 against and 1 abstention) to prevent council members and staff from giving information to RSPCA Members' Watchdog. As ALL council business is (quite wrongly) kept confidential, the resolution meant denial of free speech to council members and staff. Some council and committee work has to be confidential but very little. This resolution should be removed in order to obtain a more open, friendly and efficient organisation.

Any member refused branch membership should be given a reason for this and any council member who is on a branch committee who has rejected an application must ensure that this is done or leave the council.

**Did You Know? Is It True?**

(So many rumours are circulating within the Society that we would welcome verification.)

1.FACT From 1991 to 2001 the Council has given Freedom Food £8,226,000

2.FACT On March 21 the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA) announced the closure of nearly three quarters of its welfare centres. Up to 60 of the society's 229 staff face losing their jobs. The Scottish society was founded in 1936.

3. IS IT TRUE? that Mr G Spencer, Mrs E Chamberlain have not attended any Council meeting since the 2002 AGM? Mr Stubbs has also not attended but we understand that he has a valid reason for not doing so. If this rumour is true why has Rule VIII not been applied?

4. IS IT TRUE? that one Council member claims £2,500 a month for expenses? If this is true, would you consider this to be "reasonable" and in accordance with Rule VII?

There is also a rumour that the number of regions is to be cut to 7. Any reduction in bureaucracy and the number of council members MUST be beneficial.

The list of candidates' names has been supplied to the members of Council. Fortunately, the Electoral Reform Ballot Services Ltd have recommended that in the interest of fairness to all the candidates, the complete candidate list should now be provided to EACH candidate.

Quotation

*"to produce 2.2lbs of wheat takes 2,113 pints of water  
to produce 2.2lbs of beef needs 211,000 pints of water"*

Guide to Climate Change Dinyar Godrej

Thank you for all your letters, phone calls, press cuttings and cards. We hate to call on you again but we need help with the cost of postage. Thanks

Best wishes

**THE WATCHDOGS**