



WATCHDOG

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Newsletter number 98 July 2003

"The general census among Head Office staff is that the only way out of this mess is to dissolve the council and start again. " (The Guardian 13/05/03)

Since the last newsletter was circulated, there has been extensive coverage in the press concerning the financial crisis and internal divisions in the RSPCA. Unnamed members of the HQ staff have been quoted attacking the Council in vicious terms. Ex Council members and an anonymous Council member have been quoted attacking the new Director General, the Council and staff.

Such turmoil is not unknown in the history of the Society as you will see from the article below. In the early 1970's the turmoil was so serious that on 29 June 1973 the Council resolved to appoint an Inquiry into the affairs of the Society. The Inquiry was conducted by Mr Charles Sparrow QC (a leading Counsel), Sir David Barrett (Industrialist) and Mr Peter Hunt CA (Charities Management Consultant.) In their introduction to the Report they wrote -

ROWS in the upper echelons of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are nothing new. In 1931 the society's affairs made national news for weeks when uproar at the annual general meeting led to the chairman Sir Robert Gower being charged with assault.

Sir Robert, the leading citizen of Tunbridge Wells, an alderman, several times mayor and a Member of Parliament, had been targeted by the powerful Left group, described as "100 per cent animal caring" who put up a Scots author Alasdair McGregor to lead their attack. Although only a recent member of the RSPCA who never before attended an annual meeting, he was judged to be a vigorous speaker who would not be easily put down. The manner in which McGregor was thrown out of the meeting led him to bring a charge of assault at Bow Street magistrates court.

Sir Robert Gower belonged to the Right group, described as moderates concerned only with cruelty to beasts of burden. They clashed when McGregor and his sponsors led by Lady Corr - she attended court on all three days wearing a heliotrope hat, silk coat and double row of pearls accompanied by fashionably dressed friends - planned to keep speaking until about 5pm when they judged the "foxhunters" would leave to catch their trains back to the country.

McGregor spent two hours in the witness box vowing to "clean out the RSPCA's Augean stables". At the RSPCA annual meeting Sir Robert al-

"There can be no doubting the need for this Inquiry. A great Society, with a noble purpose, had become notorious for ill-natured bickering. This state of affairs had somehow to be put right so as to safeguard the reputation and the very work of the RSPCA."

The Sparrow Report made 30 recommendations. It is a tragedy that although 29 of them were accepted by Council on 21/11/74 most of them were not implemented. CONTINUED

TONBRIDGE COURIER 05/04/03 'NOSTALGIA'

lowed him free reign until he challenged the chairman's right to decide who should be allowed to speak. When ordered to leave the room he refused and Sir Robert asked RSPCA inspectors to escort him out.

In court McGregor claimed that he was "thrown out" on Sir Robert's instruction by a group of burly men. He complained that he was held by the throat, thrown to the ground and injured while the chairman stood by and allowed this to happen.

The magistrate Graham Campbell, who did not disguise his increasing irritation at having his court occupied by this squabble for three days,

rebuked McGregor for persistently referring to the RSPCA chairman as "Gower". He was told it had to be Sir Robert or the chairman.

Lady Cory said: "Suddenly five men who looked to me enormous men hurled themselves upon Mr McGregor in a most brutal way. He might have been an anarchist who was going to throw a bomb."

She blamed Sir Robert for not allowing people to speak and "hammering so hard upon the table that no one could hear what was said". She added that there was "too much treachery and vested interest" on the RSPCA council.

In his evidence Sir Robert said when he called for elections to the council some 50 or 60 people among about 1,000 tried to delay the vote until "the foxhunters and vivisectionists had caught their trains". His witnesses included the Countess of Wick who said the officials were only "helping Mr McGregor out of room". An RSPCA inspector told Mr McGregor had "gone off his head". At the third hearing the magistrate ruled that the prosecution had failed and dismissed the summons, adding "The less I say about this unfortunate case the better." He refused costs to Sir Robert.

Continued

When a review of the governance of the Society takes place, we hope that the following recommendations of the Sparrow report will be implemented. We give the numbers of the recommendations and the reasons why they should be implemented.

no 4 There must be a drastic reduction in the number of members of Council to about 20. (This will discourage a proliferation of committees and will improve administration.)

Nos 15 and 14 Branch Officers should retire from Branch Office upon election to national office.

Branch Chairmen should serve for a limited period and should have a retirement age. (These two recommendations would help to control personality problems in branches would encourage more voluntary workers and would allow Council members to concentrate on their duties as trustees.)

No 6 People with expert knowledge or technical qualifications must be attracted to the Council. (The job of the Council is, in the judgement of the Sparrow Report, one for a smaller more effective body operating selectively and accurately with the full benefit of trained competence.)

Nos 2 and 3 Every effort should be made to introduce into the leadership of the RSPCA a person of national standing as well as the qualities for leading the Royal Society - preferably as Chairman or through a President and Chairman working together.

(We consider Richard Ryder to be a person of national standing.)

There must be less secrecy about the work of the Council, more information given to members, freedom of expression for members and an ending to the very unfair and unprincipled treatment of members.

A MEMBER WRITES

"I'm appalled at what I read about Freedom Foods. We had a very convincing chappie who came to talk at our Animal Rights meeting when the idea was first conceived. He begged those of us who were sceptical to give it a chance. I did, I supported it for several years hoping it was the lesser of two evils. What treachery. I should have known that all the secrecy surrounding the farms boded ill.

" "We are not allowed to know what goes on at Porton Down but from what little knowledge we have, we realise that the suffering to which the animals are subjected is horrendous. we are angry and distressed but powerless to do anything about it."

A MEMBER WRITES

A major international meat processing and marketing project is underway in West Wales which, as well as providing much needed local jobs, will give Welsh farmers another valuable livestock outlet.

On a hillside overlooking Lampeter, construction work is at an advanced stage in building what will be a £2.1m-plus capital investment into a brand new, state-of-the-art abattoir and processing plant, as well as an associated livestock and waste disposal incineration centre.

Crucial to the success of the venture is a British Government sponsored trading link-up with Albania, which has roughly the same geographical area and population as Wales.

Trade missions between the UK and the emerging Balkan country have resulted in a realisation that much needs to be done to modernise the country's agricultural production and the quality and health sta-

By
Barry Alston

tus of the meat currently being produced there or imported.

Agreement has been reached with the ruling King Leka Zogu that Britain is best placed to assist in the agricultural restructuring and, because of an affinity with Wales, that Welsh livestock and meat is the best choice to spearhead the operation.

With Albanian meat imports currently running at around 40,000 tonnes a year and what beef and lamb being produced on its own farms of low quality, the financially 'water-tight' contract is being seen as excellent news for the Welsh livestock industry.

Not only will the venture provide a considerable new-found, export market for Welsh lamb and beef, but it also means, because of the abattoir's overall size, capaci-

ty will also be available to meet the needs of local butchers and farmers who currently have to travel considerable distances to have stock slaughtered and processed.

there will be immense potential for Welsh breeding stock, particularly sheep, Welsh Black cattle and, because of Albania's love of horses, Welsh pony breeds as well. The initial plan for meat exports is to source only Welsh-bred stock, slaughter and process at Cwmann and then ship out primal cuts to Albania. Purpose-built refrigeration and further processing facilities will then distribute cuts and joints not only within Albania but right across the Balkans - providing a top quality product and

also creating jobs there.

As far as Cwmann is concerned construction work is well advanced with the main structure already in place and the latest in specialised slaughtering and processing equipment due on site within the next few weeks. It is hoped the plant will be fully operational by August.

There will be three killing lines - one for sheep, one for cattle and the other pigs - with a throughput capability of 300 lambs an hour and 150 to 200 cattle a day.

"With the current vast level

of over-production capacity within the UK slaughtering industry this development could well be regarded as possibly the last large abattoir to be built for some time, but it does have a major advantage over others," said Mr Carter.

"On site there will be all the facilities needed to dispose of all the waste products, therefore producing much lower operating costs. All de-boning can be carried out on-site, eliminating the costly business of having to dispose of waste from each individual butcher's shop."

Next month, Mr Douglas, a former Welsh rugby international, will be going to Albania to tie up arrangements. Mr Carter is convinced not only will the Albanian link-up provide a considerable new market for Welsh meat but

ty will also be available to meet the needs of local butchers and farmers who currently have to travel considerable distances to have stock slaughtered and processed.

For the family behind the venture, which has operated a fallen stock business over a 60-mile radius for the past 40 years, it has meant confidence to invest.

A special King's Envoy, Zenel Hoxha, and Alf Carter, managing director of British-based Meat Projects, who has put the deal together on behalf of the UK's Department of Trade and Industry and is overseeing the entire project, were on-site at Cwmann, on Tuesday, to meet Mark Douglas, one of the four brothers running the family-owned business.

ANIMAL WELFARE?

"This can be likened to a car production line.

In fact it is industrialised killing, which could also be ritual slaughter.

Just 12 seconds to kill a sheep - how can welfare regulations be observed in these conditions?"

"I do hope that our appeal for Inspectors at markets will not fall on deaf ears. I enclose a copy of the Bicester sheep sale. Trading Standards Officers cannot possibly supervise a sale of this size."

FARMERS GUARDIAN

APRIL 18, 2003

FORWARD NOTICE FROM
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A Member Writes continued

Dear Watchdog,

I would like to respond to your correspondent who wrote under the heading of "Member" and in particular address their opinion that Branch Development Advisors are grossly overpaid and "spies for head office"
I have been in business all my life, which may give me a different perspective.

Our BDA is value for money; she has steered us through some very tricky situations and sees herself (as we do) as a bridge between the branches and the Society. I can't be much fun for her attending our committee meetings and hearing her employers criticised (slagged off may be a better description) at length. She does not attempt to defend the indefensible but does aim to get the person at H.Q. to explain themselves directly.

We have seen the stress caused to the whole Regional team by endless suggestions that our Region is to be disbanded. It can't be much fun if you have a family to support and a mortgage to pay not to know if you have a job next month. This has been going on for nearly a year. £20,000 p.a. may seem a big salary but lots of secretaries earn more with none of the hassle.

It is my view, and that of my committee, that Freedom Foods should be closed immediately. It has made no impact on the public. As a vegetarian I avoid meat counters but I don't ever remember seeing a freedom food sticker or reading anything in the press.

We all get so involved with the problems that sometimes we miss the big picture. For example why on earth did the Society spend all its capital on building its own headquarters building. With a blue chip tenant like the RSPCA there are plenty of big development companies that would have built to our specification and granted a ninety nine year lease. Commercial organisations don't bury all their working capital in buildings why should charities?

The Society has to make £8.2 million pounds worth of savings. That means a lot of job losses, there is no other way to save that sort of money. The next year is going to be painful for everyone. It is my sincere hope that H.Q. try and take the branches with them by genuine consultation. My fear is that they will try and implement 'Option Three', relegating branches and their committees to the role of area teams with all decision making centralised. Sadly this would mean most volunteers would walk away mostly in the direction of their solicitors to change their wills.

I am quite happy if you publish my name. If anyone from H.Q. reads this they will learn nothing new. As a branch we communicate our views frequently and vigorously to the senior management team at Horsham.

Frances Lindsay Hills
Frances Lindsay-Hills
Chairman Mid Sussex & Brighton Branch.

‘ Baboons were imported from Africa to Huntingdon and died in steel cages the size of toilet cubicles ’

WHAT HAS THE RSPCA DONE FOR ANIMALS IN HLS?

To the dismay of animal rights activists, the documents reveal how primates were used in the search for a solution to the chronic global shortage of human organs for transplant. Baboons were transported from the African savannahs to die in steel cages the size of toilet cubicles. The documents show that a quarter of the primates died from 'technical failures'.

Researchers describe how monkeys and baboons died in fits of vomiting and diarrhoea. Symptoms included violent spasms, bloody discharges, grinding teeth and uncontrollable, manic eye movements. Other animals retreated within themselves, lying still in their cages until put out of their misery.

Baboon W201m died of a stroke after two days of suffering from limb spasms and paralysis. Baboon W205m was 'sacrificed' after 21 days. A genetically modified pig's heart had been welded to the vital arteries within its neck. Researchers noted the heart was swelling way beyond its natural size. Strange yellow fluid was seen seeping from the organ.

Others never even made it to HLS, suffering painful deaths en route. Faxes from global wildlife dealers reveal how

Early in April 2003, Uncaged Campaigns, the Sheffield based Animal Rights group, had an historic legal victory. The group defeated the injunction imposed 30 months previously by Imutran and Novartis to suppress the release of papers describing what had been done to animals in Huntingdon Life Sciences. Many of the 1,274 pages of documents now released reveal a litany of failings including the failure of the Government to enforce the law.

Information on this page has been obtained from The Observer on 13/04/03.

It is amusing to note that in the Spring 2003 edition of the Research Defence Society news it is claimed that Animal Rights Protests Decline!

at least 50 baboons were taken from the African plains for the experiments. In one shipment the creatures spent 34 hours in cramped transport crates - 10 hours longer than approved by the Home Office, which chose not to take any action.

In another shipment, three monkeys were found dead with blood oozing from their nostrils at a Paris airport. The animals had not been able to turn and lie down naturally.

The Government's involvement in the xenotransplantation programme - the most high-profile animal experimentation ever conducted in Britain - is made clear in the documents, along with its failure to adequately regulate a project that the Home Office believed would deliver major benefits to society.

Many of the 1,274 pages of documents reveal a litany of failings that will serve to ignite further controversy over HLS, which last week won a ground-breaking injunction preventing animal protesters getting close to employees' homes. Fundamental questions over the value of vivisection itself will also be asked.

THE PAPERS reveal attempts to bury the true extent of animal suffering from experiments conducted at the HLS laboratories between 1994 and 2000. Serious incidents of unlicensed animals suffering were not adequately investigated and regulations were not enforced properly.

Breaches of the law even went unpunished in some cases, with the Home Office limiting itself to letters of 'admonishment'. One previously confidential paper reveals how the Home Office worked with Imutran - the for-

mer British subsidiary of multi-million drug giant Novartis, which was in control of the programme - to underestimate the suffering caused by the most severe experiments.

An Imutran report states: 'The Home Office will attempt to get the kidney transplants classified as "moderate", ensuring that it is easier for Imutran to receive a licence and ignoring the "severe" nature of these programmes.'

Wishful thinking?

The article says "The more radical part of the animal rights movement, ie the activists who go on demonstrations support SHAC, do home visits, etc, appears to be losing motivation and members."

Vegetarian or Vegan?

We are repeatedly told that the RSPCA is not a vegetarian Society. Why not? Surely, if you want to prevent cruelty to animals - you begin by not eating them? Would YOU like to be reincarnated as an animal and suffer the terrors of the slaughterhouse?

Once again the AGM will last only 2½ hours and a mere fraction of that time will be given for resolutions from ordinary members - that is if ANY non Council member is lucky enough to get a resolution accepted for discussion. Last year, only one ordinary member (Mrs A Knittel) achieved that distinction, When the AGM has been restored to a full day meeting and there is a more open Society, it might be worth attending.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The definition of 'welfare' in the Oxford English Dictionaries includes the word **HAPPINESS** as a requirement. It was interesting, therefore, to read a letter from Mrs RV Collingborn to Isobel Cowan. One sentence in particular stands out. It is "Our own cows are homebred, mainly Friesian and the average would be around 5 lactations, but some older cows would be on 10 lactations."

There was no mention of the distress and suffering caused to cows when their calves are removed. No mention of the cruel fate of the calves and their suffering. And no mention of what it is all for - namely to produce milk, butter and cheese which are of no benefit to humans either for their health or for the environment. Cows are sentient beings not milk machines.

Thank you for all your letters and phone calls. Your comments are welcome and help to open up the Society to **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**. We remain convinced that Jackie Ballard will be an excellent Chief Executive even though she is lumbered with the unsuitable title of Director General. We want to see members welcomed into the Society and into the Branches. Best wishes

THE WATCHDOGS

the cow

Idaho Gem crosses the line

The RSPCA is absolutely appalled by the announcement that researchers have cloned a mule and by the fact that the whole focus of attention appears to be on what this could mean for the racing industry (Idaho Gem, the world's first cloned mule, May 30).

Of the many reports of this so called "breakthrough" not one mentions the suffering of the huge numbers of horses, donkeys and mules that have been involved over the past five years in producing this one cloned animal.

The extremely low success rates of live clones in the project, which the researchers admit "basically came down to a matter of numbers", highlights the massive inefficiency of cloning and shows why this procedure should never be attempted for such trivial purposes.

Some scientists are immediately claiming a medical benefit for the research as a potential model for studying cancer, presumably because they believe this will gain wider public acceptance.

However, every month there seem to be reports of new ways to exploit animals in research that is driven purely by an "if it can be done it will be done" cavalier attitude, or as Professor Allen concedes in your report, by "scientific arrogance". Surely society values animals more highly than this.

Dr Maggy Jennings
RSPCA

THE GUARDIAN 31/05/03

The word 'cattle' derives from 'chattel' and simply means property.

The total number of cattle in the UK - including dairy and beef herds - is 11.9 million.

There is a highly developed bond between a cow and her calf. The mother will produce 8-10 litres of milk for her calf each day - a total of around 1000 litres per lactation. Weaning occurs naturally at between six and eight months.

On dairy (and most beef) farms, early weaning is routine, causing a painful separation for cow and calf.

The modern dairy cow is expected to produce 30-40 litres of milk every day and anything between 6,000 and 12,000 litres during each lactation period.

The pressure to produce such quantities takes its toll on her health and lameness and udder infections are common.

Her average lifespan is about 5 years, compared to a natural 25-30 years.

OUTRAGE
ANIMAL AID
FEBRUARY 1998