

Bi-Annual Newsletter



Animals in Science - Education Trust

Message from the Trust Chairman



The recent heightened demand for bursaries has served to confirm the wisdom and foresight of those in the IAT who decided back in 2010 that AS-ET should be set up as an independent educational trust. It has now become an organisation of which I am proud to be Chair. Nonetheless, I am very conscious that we cannot afford to be complacent about increasing our annual revenue if we wish to meet the ever increasing education and training needs of those working in the field of laboratory animal technology. This field, which crucially underpins much of the UK's internationally acclaimed biomedical research, obviously depends on the experience, skill and commitment of all those who work within it. It is therefore in the interest of everyone wishing to benefit from ever increasing quality of medical care to ensure that our laboratory animal technologists continue to have access to the most up-to-date education and training.

Finally, I should like to wish all our supporters and helpers the very best for the New Year, and express the hope that being generous to AS-ET will number among their resolutions.

Sir Richard Gardner

Five Years of AS-ET

The IAT Congress 2015 will mark the fifth anniversary of the launch of AS-ET and it seems an excellent opportunity to review our activities during the first five years and to mention a few of our plans for the future.

As you will know the Animals in Science Education Trust (AS-ET) is a charity registered under UK Charity law with the objective of advancing education and promoting excellence in the care and welfare of animals used in science. AS-ET was established by the Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) to fill a gap in funding for the education and training of people employed in this area of work. The financial gap arose because of a change in government funding

for further and higher education and the increasing cost of vocational education and training. Although it was set up by the IAT, AS-ET now operates as an independent charitable body run by a board of five trustees.

At the time of writing AS-ET has distributed, or is committed to distribute, over £63,000 in grants to support education and welfare activities. The bulk of the grants are in the form of bursaries to enable individuals to attend courses and workshops to improve their knowledge and skills, which we sincerely believe will increase the levels of care and welfare for animals used in science. These courses and workshops range from specialist short courses (e.g.

licensee training, cryopreservation, animal behaviour) to longer, formal ones such as those leading to the IAT further and higher education qualifications.

AS-ET has also made grants to support research projects, the development and provision of short courses and educational meetings. In addition we have established a special travel bursary and a congress bursary. We co-sponsor the Andrew Blake Tribute Award as well as three educational prizes.

Our income has come from four main sources, corporate sponsors, official supporters (individuals who give regularly by standing order), fundraising events and the IAT. We are grateful to all of our donors without whom we would not be able to function. We are also grateful to those committed individuals who help us with fund raising activities.

Requests for our bursaries are increasing. In fact over 70% of our spending has been in 2014. This substantial increase is due to AS-ET becoming better known and because of the successful development of the IAT higher education qualifications. We anticipate this increase in the need for our help in the years ahead will continue and are therefore planning an ambitious fund raising programme to enable us to meet the increasing demand. This programme is detailed below.

£50,000 and 500 Official Supporters

During our 5th Anniversary year we have two aims, the first is to raise £50,000 and the second is to increase the number of official supporters to at least 500. These are big targets but we feel they are achievable with the help of our supporters and sponsors. If we reach our targets, AS-ET will be in a far stronger position to meet the demands that are likely to be made on us in future years.

We hope you will be able to come and support our anniversary events and we would be delighted to hear from you if you have any ideas on raising funds. Current supporters can help us by trying to sign up new official supporters. Official supporters sign a standing order form to give a specific sum each year.

The minimum amount for new supporters is £12 a year (that is £1 a month) there is no upper limit and the average donation is £24. Application forms can be downloaded from our website.

Anniversary Events

AS-ET Young Presenters Symposium

17th February 2015

This will form part of the IAT West Middlesex Branch Technician Trade Day held at University College, London.

IAT Congress 2015

17th – 20th March 2015

There will be a Silent Auction, AS-ET Sponsored Platform Session, AS-ET Reception for Sponsors and Supporters, Plenty of opportunities to become Official Supporters.

AS-ET Fund Raising Ball

5th September 2015

To be held in London (for more information and to book a place please contact us at: elaine@lbs-biotech.com)

Other events will be organised around the country, these will be announced early in the year.

Bursaries and Prizes

While we have been planning for our anniversary celebrations the day-to-day work of AS-ET has continued as usual. As mentioned above we have seen an increase in the number of bursary applications in the second half of 2014.

In all we agreed bursaries to a value of approximately £40,000 during the year.

Congress Bursary Competition

This bursary competition is restricted to technicians who have just gained their IAT level 2 Diploma in Laboratory Animal Science and Technology. Entrants

submit a 1000 word essay on a given subject and a panel of judges select the winning entry. The prize covers the cost of attendance at and travel to and from IAT Congress 2015.

The Trustees were very disappointed at the low number of entrants this year but are delighted to announce the winner is Danielle Webster of Agenda Resource Management.

Special Travel Bursary Competition

In the last edition of the Newsletter the Trustees announced that Jan Bilton of Leeds University was the winner of the Second Special Travel Bursary. Jan's report of her trip to AALAS is attached to this newsletter. Two of the Special Travel Bursary essays, including Jan's winning entry, have been published in the December 2014 edition of the IAT Journal, Animal Technology and Welfare.

AS-ET Higher Education Prizes

The winner of the AS-ET / Tecniplast prize for the IAT Higher Education Diploma in Laboratory Animal Science and Technology 2014 is Jolene Hammonds who works at King's College London.



Jolene Hammonds, winner of the AS-ET / Tecniplast prize for the Higher Education Diploma with Prof. Sir Richard Gardner (Chair of AS-ET Trustees) and David Spillane (of co-sponsors Tecniplast).

The winner of the AS-ET / IAT West Middlesex Branch prize for the IAT Higher Education Certificate in Laboratory Animal Science and Technology 2014 is Nicola Goodwin of the Sanger Institute.

The Trustees would like to offer our congratulations to both winners.

Other Activities

IAT Graduation Ceremony

During the year AS-ET was pleased to help sponsor the Ceremony to mark the graduation of students on the IAT Higher Education Diploma and Certificate Courses. The certificates were presented by Prof. Sir Richard Gardner FRS, Chair of the AS-ET Board of Trustees.



Prof. Sir Richard Gardner FRS addressing the graduates

The Trustees feel it is important to support this event because it acknowledges the achievement of the students but also because, by publically celebrating their success, we hope others will be motivated to follow their example.



Graduates of IAT Higher Education Certificate and Higher Education Diploma 2014

IAT Christmas Council Reception

In December the IAT Council held a Christmas reception to which they invited AS-ET Trustees and some supporters. We were very pleased that our Patron, Lord Walton, was able to join us.



IAT Council Members and Guests at the Farmers Club Reception.



AS-ET Patron Lord Walton talking to Gemma Marshall of Edstrom at the IAT Reception

I was absolutely delighted to find out that I had won the AS-ET Special Travel Bursary prize in 2014. The bursary prize is aimed at animal technicians below management level and enables a technician from the UK or Ireland to travel to the annual AALAS meeting, the largest laboratory animal science meeting in the world.

So in October 2014 I headed out to San Antonio, Texas along with two IAT delegates from the UK, looking forward to seeing what AALAS had to offer. With over 4000 registered delegates I knew it was going to be on a larger scale than anything I had attended before.



From right to left Jan Bilton, Wendy Steel (Vice Chair of IAT Council), Margaret Skeoch (winner of the PMI Technician of the Year award) and Ken Applebee (Secretary of AS-ET Trustees).

The Year Ahead

2015 is going to be a busy year for AS-ET as we celebrate our anniversary and raise enough money to continue our work in the years ahead. We will keep you informed of events during the year.

The trustees hope to see you at some, if not all, of our celebrations during the year.

Special Travel Bursary



Jan Bilton was the winner of the second AS-ET Special Travel Bursary Competition. The prize was a trip to San Antonio, USA to attend the AALAS National Meeting. This is her report of the visit.

The Henry B Gonzalez Convention Centre was huge, with a large exhibition hall full of trade stands representing all aspects of our industry from new synthetic skin devices to state of the art caging and cage wash systems, all the way through to novel database systems, education organisations and public outreach groups. It was great to be able to wander around the wealth of trade stands meeting people with such varied expertise and knowledge of the environment we work in. It was also good to put faces to names when coming across representatives from the UK who supply so many of us with our everyday needs.

Although days could be lost in this small city of displays and trade stands, the varied array of the educational programme was what I was most interested in, keen to get the most from my time at AALAS.

From Monday through to Wednesday I spent the majority of my time in one of the twenty plus boardrooms and ballrooms listening to speakers from all over the world. Seminars started at 8am so an early start was necessary but there were topics to suit everyone from industry reps, researchers and facility managers to veterinarians and animal care staff. A little forward planning was needed to make sure I didn't miss the seminars and platform sessions that I was most interested in and that were most relevant to me and my work.



A small section of the AALAS Exhibition Hall

The range of subjects covered was broad and interesting. During one day, I could move from a seminar by a US researcher highlighting the importance of nesting material in rodents to an introduction to a facility that has taken to using disposable caging with a special lecture on the successful reintroduction of a beluga whale calf in between! There were too many lectures to mention all those that I found useful or enjoyable (or sometimes just very interesting even if not something I'm directly involved with) but some of the many that stood out included the importance of thermal comfort in mice, how to create a virtual tour of your facility, how to retain and progress cage-wash staff, the use of robots in a cage wash facility and the use of 'mock' boxes to encourage technicians to be more observant and attentive.

Some of the seminars were of particular interest to me as they targeted problems we were having in our own facility back in the UK and I was keen to see what others were doing in response to these problems, specifically a session presented by the University of Chicago who are having problems with

cage leaks on automatic watering systems. It was a great opportunity to take plenty of notes and relay the information back to my colleagues in the UK.

Away from seminars about facility logistics or animal care and welfare, I also enjoyed the lectures about our industry as a whole, the issues we face due to public perception and what we can do to improve our reputation. A seminar named 'Time to Talk' about the importance of being open and championing the work we do and also a presentation entitled 'Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement' were both thought provoking.

On Thursday, some of the delegates from the UK were lucky enough to be invited to visit the Keeling Centre, a two-hour drive away in Bastrop. It's always interesting to visit different facilities and this one, part of the MD Anderson Cancer Centre, was no exception. Here they had a variety of primates, including chimpanzees that, due to the mild weather (30 degrees on the day we visited), are housed in large grassy outdoor enclosures. It was great to see the chimps in such a natural environment with large structures to climb and swing on and living in well-developed groups. The chimps were clicker trained to present different parts of their body for inspection to avoid having to restrain or anaesthetise them; notably we were shown how a diabetic chimp happily comes forward and presents his finger for a small blood sample in return for a treat. A few of the chimps had also been trained in co-operative feeding where they would sit back quietly and allow the others to receive their fruit in return for an extra piece of fruit for themselves at the end. It was impressive to see.

We also saw rhesus, squirrel and owl monkeys that were kept in male and female pairs and used for eye and pre-eclampsia research. It was a great trip out and nice to hear other technicians explain their work and daily tasks that were so different to my own.

Besides the educational programme during the day, I was lucky enough to be invited to many social events in the evenings. This was a great opportunity to see more of San Antonio which was a lovely city with a great nightlife and also a brilliant way to meet new people, talk to others in the industry and put faces

to names that I've heard mentioned over the years at our facility.

It was lovely to be invited to these events by the UK companies and representatives at AALAS who made sure I was always well looked after. I attended an awards dinner to celebrate the US and PMI European Technician of the Year, a Margarita evening on the river, a social gathering at the Texan Museum of Culture, the 'Brits' night at a fabulous BBQ restaurant, as well as others.



Relaxing with the British Delegates at AALAS

On the last day I had some free time to sight-see, visiting the famous Alamo and walk the length of the popular Riverwalk before my flight home.

Attending the AALAS meeting was a fantastic opportunity for me and I'm really grateful to AS-ET for awarding me this bursary. With so much to learn, it's a unique chance to see what is happening in animal science all over the world and I'm looking forward to sharing some of the ideas and methods with the team back at my own facility.

The days were long and could at times be tiring with so much to see and do, but there was so much to be gained that it was a very valuable and worthwhile week.

The social element was also great fun! And it was lovely to make new friends and contacts for the future as well as getting the opportunity to visit a great part of the world.

Special Travel Bursary 2015

We hope Jan's report has inspired you to enter the 2015 Special Travel Bursary. Details will be announced on the AS-ET Website (www.as-et.org.uk) and in the IAT Bulletin in March.

Acknowledgements

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Charity Ball

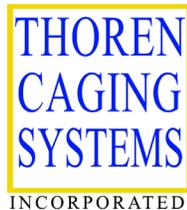
Raising money for the Animals in Science - Education Trust

Saturday 5th September 2015, 7pm
~ Hilton London Metropole ~

- Glass of bubbly on arrival
- 3-course Gala Dinner
- Guest Speaker
- Disco and Band 'til late



For more information and to book your place, please contact:
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For details of how you can support AS-ET please visit www.animalsinscienceeducationtrust.org.uk



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