

Leslie W Hall

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1927-2010

Dr Leslie Hall, often known as the 'father of veterinary anaesthesia' died on April 20th, 2010, after a long illness. His contribution to veterinary anaesthesia and analgesia as scientist, clinician, teacher and author was enormous, and a detailed appreciation of his work will be published in the next issue of *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia*.

Dr Hall was brought up in Sutton, in Surrey, and educated at the local grammar school, to which he gained a scholarship. In 1945 he joined the RAF and began to train as a navigator, but after a few months left to study at the Royal Veterinary College. In 1950 he obtained his BSc degree and qualified as a veterinary surgeon (in those days by separate examination for the MRCVS). He stayed at the Royal Veterinary College to do a PhD under the supervision of Professor Amoroso. He together with Barbara Weaver, whilst working at the Royal Veterinary College was the first to realise that animals needed the same (or better) care under anaesthesia as people, and carried this idea forward into the development of veterinary anaesthesia to the speciality it is today. Previous to this time, most animal anaesthesia had been by a massive overdose of the few drugs available, with no specific intra-anaesthetic care. Leslie developed suitable dosage regimens, endotracheal intubation, gave oxygen, ventilated if necessary, monitored during and after anaesthesia, and very important, gave post-operative analgesia - something not considered necessary in animals at that time as the general attitude was that animals did not feel pain.

After this initial work, Leslie moved to what was a very new veterinary school at Cambridge, where initially he had to 'multi-task' but soon was able

to follow his anaesthetic speciality, both as a clinician and as a teacher. At this stage he worked tirelessly to 'set up the speciality'. From the start he liaised with the medical anaesthetists, through meetings at the nearby hospital, Addenbrookes, membership of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland, membership of the East Anglian Society of Anaesthetists (eventually becoming President) and, demonstrating his love of science, being a member of the newly formed Anaesthetic Research Group (now Society). The medics appreciated the standard of his work, provided invaluable advice and assistance in developing the speciality and in 1977 he was awarded the Faculty Medal of the Faculty of Anaesthesia of the Royal College of Surgeons, the first veterinary surgeon ever to be given this prestigious award. In 2001 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of Anaesthetists.

Particular highlights of Leslie's work for the speciality were:

- (a) The foundation, in conjunction with six of his colleagues, of the Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists (AVA). This was initially of Great Britain and Ireland, but the founder members' vision, together with that of colleagues elsewhere in Europe, most notably Evert Lagerweij of Holland, Claus-Henry Hansson of Sweden, and Urs Schatzman of Switzerland, means that the Association now is of Europe and is the base for the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (ECVAA). He was made a life member, and later, on his retirement, an Honorary Fellow of AVA.
- (b) Leslie, again together with Barbara Weaver, was the main force behind the development of the Diploma of Veterinary Anaesthesia (DVA) of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. They organised a suitable syllabus and a robust examination, ensuring standards by including a medical examiner on the panel. The DVA itself is no more - but provided the basis for the standards of the current Diploma of the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia. When America decided to set up specialisation

in anaesthesia they used the DVA as a model and Leslie later was awarded an Honorary Diploma from the American College of Veterinary Anesthesiology.

(c) At Cambridge Leslie provided training in anaesthesia through research scholarships but also through a clinical position of University Assistant Anaesthetist, a post I was lucky enough to hold for a time. Many universities and referral clinics throughout the world now have such training programmes, albeit now termed 'Residencies'.

(d) Leslie used his influence to establish a career structure for those took the speciality; he convinced surgeons that they would do much better with a trained anaesthetist, and veterinary schools that future veterinary surgeons needed a high standard of anaesthesia training before venturing into practice. As a result university positions of Lecturer (and later, Professorships) in Veterinary and Comparative Anaesthesia started to appear.

(e) In 1982, under Leslie's guidance, the first International (now World) Congress of Veterinary Anaesthesia was held in Cambridge, and these Congresses are now held every 3 years. Leslie made contributions to the next eight such Congresses, and although he could not attend the most recent - at Glasgow in October 2009 - many of his friends who had come to the UK for it, took the chance to visit him at his home.

(f) He was one of the initial 'grandfathers' or founder members of the ECVA - the current European certification authority for the speciality - and was later made an Honorary Fellow.

Leslie was not just a clinician - but a brilliant scientist - indeed he believed strongly in what is now called 'evidence-based medicine'. Much of his work looked at various aspects of physiology, particularly of the anaesthetised horse. Many of his peer reviewed published papers are now considered 'classics', and indeed his 'wheel' is re-invented at regular intervals. Much modern research covers subjects that he investigated and, albeit it with more sophisticated methods, still gets the same results that he did 30 years ago. More details of his keynote works will be published in the 'appreciation', but

examples include the first demonstration of ventilation/perfusion mismatch in the anaesthetised horse, and recognition of malignant hyperthermia in pigs. His vision was far-reaching - he had many research students from all over the world, but often the total project from his vision was so extensive it took 3 PhD's to complete.

In addition to his scientific publications, Leslie was author/joint author of several books, including what for years was the leading text book on Veterinary Anaesthesia. When I left Cambridge I was honoured to be asked to be a co-author, and have been so for the last 30 years, together for the last edition with Dr Cynthia Trim.

Leslie was a charismatic and enthusiastic teacher of anaesthesia to the veterinary students and to post-graduate research and clinical students. As a 'Fellow' of a number of Cambridge colleges, in turn Trinity, St Catharine's, Wolfson and, last and dearest to him of all, Girton, and as 'Director of Studies' he worked tirelessly to help and advise the undergraduate students for whom he was responsible. His work in the 1970's with admissions tutors of a number of Cambridge colleges played a major role in increasing the number of veterinary students, and saving the School of Veterinary Medicine from the closure that had been threatened. As a student in the clinical years of the veterinary course, it was his enthusiasm as a teacher of veterinary anaesthesia that encouraged me to take up the subject. He was a superb clinician, a hard task master (expecting us to meet his exacting standards) and a workaholic but he would defend us to the hilt against criticism from any one else. At the end of the day we would meet as a group at the local pub for a beer and to sort out the next day's work - so much better than today's formal 'rounds'. I now realise that he was able to do this through support from his family - behind every successful person there is a supportive partner, and Leslie was fortunate in finding two wonderful and supportive wives.

Leslie was not a 'politician' in the sense that he did not advertise his own worth. He refused Professorships at other Universities, saying he preferred to remain Reader in Comparative Anaesthesia at Cambridge. Despite this reticence, he received many honours in the UK and elsewhere. Additional to those already mentioned these included (a) an Honorary degree from Utrecht (b) from the RCVS, the Francis Hogg Prize in 1956 for the most serviceable work for the advancement of small animal practice; the Livesey Medal in 1967 for the alleviation of pain and fear in animals and Fellowship by election in 1991; (c) the Blaine award in 1967 from the British Small Animals Association.

Leslie, although a workaholic, somehow found (a little) time for family, his dog, and for his hobbies. He married Barbara in 1953, and they had three children, Michael, Nicholas and Charlotte. Hobbies included fishing (mainly when on holiday in Scotland or Ireland), supporting Arsenal football team, and playing squash. His athletic ability was amazing as he lost a lung lobe to tuberculosis, caught when doing a bronchoscopy (via a rigid bronchoscope - no flexible carbon-fibre versions in those days) on a giraffe. One of his favourite stories was that when the doctors reported the source of infection - the 'powers that be' told them not to be facetious. Barbara's death from cancer in 1978 left him bereft, but in 1982 he was fortunate enough to find and marry Elizabeth, who, together with her five children, supported him academically, later in retirement and most recently in his final illness. Our thoughts are with all of his, now extensive, family at this time.

I would like to finish with a quote of an e-mail I received from one of his ex-post-graduate students, now a Professor.

' Leslie was responsible for setting clinical standards that were rigorous and science-based and those of us lucky enough to be taught by him were the

fortunate beneficiaries. Of course, Leslie's home made beer was also legendary !'

I, and many of my colleagues either directly or indirectly are such beneficiaries. Thank you Leslie.

KW Clarke

With assistance from Michael Hall.