

Where there's a will there's a way...

DENISE Moore wanted to be a veterinary surgeon from a very young age but her education was disrupted at the age of 16 when she suddenly had to leave home and, sadly, school earlier than planned.

"I commenced work as an animal nurse initially in St Albans, Hertfordshire, and then joined the RSPCA Animal Hospital in Putney, London, when I was just 17.

"It was there where I developed my interest in eyes. Assisting a veterinary surgeon in the repair of an injured eye one day, we recovered a dog from

surgery having preserved that eye's vision. I knew from then that was what I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing. The delicate surgery and the skill involved were the key factors in making this career decision."

It was not long before Denise got a place at the Cambridge veterinary school and, she says, "I carried that interest in eyes through my veterinary training. This interest was reinforced in my final year when David Williams, who was working at the Animal Health Trust in Newmarket at the time, came to the veterinary school one evening a week for several weeks as our final examinations approached and showed slide after slide of animal eyes to a very eager bunch of students. To this day I am indebted to David for his so very entertaining and enthusiastic talks!"

Having graduated from Cambridge in 1990, Denise spent several years working in mostly small animal practice before returning to university to pursue her interest in ophthalmology.

Shortly afterwards she took up the personal challenge of running an ophthalmology referral service for the Goddard Veterinary Group in London: one evening every week from 1991 until March 2005. "During those years

I visited ophthalmologists both at home and abroad as well as attending many ophthalmology CPD courses."

Denise obtained her Certificate in Comparative Ophthalmology whilst working at Goddards in 1995.

"I have worked purely as a veterinary ophthalmologist now since 1998 when I started a Comparative Ophthalmology Residency at the RVC in London.

"I continued to work at the RVC

JOHN PERIAM meets up with veterinary ophthalmologist Denise Moore who from an early age wanted to be a vet and now runs an ophthalmology referral service in south-east England



for a further five years, initially as a clinical assistant in the ophthalmology service and later as a consultant in veterinary ophthalmology, and studied for the Diploma in Comparative Ophthalmology during my time there.

Enthusiasm

"I very much enjoyed my time at the RVC, especially the teaching of students. I always hoped that my enthusiasm for this subject would encourage some of the students just as David William's enthusiasm encouraged me in my Cambridge days!"

In January 2004 Denise left the RVC and looked to the south coast to set up a Comparative Ophthalmology Referral Service. There was already an ophthalmologist in Emsworth, so she headed further east and found the Grove Lodge Veterinary Hospital in Worthing.

"When I approached the now



Denise relaxing with Ellie and (right) at the RSPCA in 1978.

John Periam is an equestrian/veterinary and nautical photojournalist with over 300 features published. He has two books on Amazon Kindle: *A Veterinary Tail Up Hill and Down Dale* about his veterinary sales experiences in the 1970s and *Shelley The Lifeboat Labrador* about his time as an RNLI Lifeboat crew member linked by his then dog.



owner of this practice, Andrew Ash, to start a referral ophthalmology service from his hospital, he was very supportive and has continued to be so after all these years.

"The hospital is in an ideal location for a referral clinic, with easy access from most parts of the country; the nursing team is superbly trained and extremely friendly and the animal care is second to none.

"The ophthalmology facilities there are first class, including ERG and phacoemulsification for cataract surgery."

Most of Denise's small animal work is performed at the hospital though occasionally she will see cases for local practitioners if their client is unable to travel there.

"I also see equine cases for equine practices across Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Kent, usually at their own premises – I am not sure that Andrew Ash would be too happy if a horse box tried to squeeze into the car park at his hospital!"

"My special interests in veterinary ophthalmology include cataract surgery and ocular pathology. I have been lucky enough to spend time over the years with some of the best veterinary cataract surgeons in the world and with one of the world's leading veterinary comparative ocular pathologists, Richard Dubielzig, in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, who is now

a dear friend.

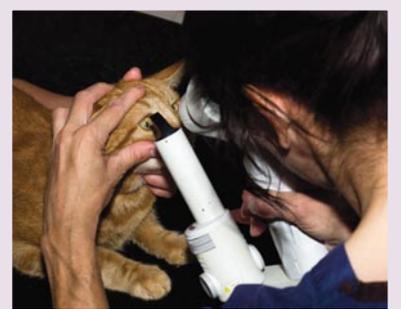
"When I am not seeing eye cases I am walking my German Shepherd Ellie or dinghy sailing, cycling, even trying to windsurf! I also sing in a jazz band."

Denise had been part of a small group formed at college and her love of jazz and singing has stayed with her to this day.

What about the future? "I hope to be able to continue to do my job to the best of my ability for as long as I can. I love what I do.

"The quality of animals' lives is much improved if I can relieve their ocular pain and preserve their vision. Cataract surgery is especially rewarding since there is no better feeling than to make eyes previously 'blinded' by cataracts see again. Owners of such dogs after surgery often proclaim 'You have returned a puppy to me' or 'I had forgotten how naughty my dog could be!'"

■ Denise can be contacted at dmoore@veteyes.co.uk or on 07771 621457.



Ophthalmologist at work...

