

# Happy birthday Geoff Sumner-Smith from all your friends and colleagues around the world!

## Laudation

*On Churchill's eightieth birthday in 1954 a young man was sent to take his photograph. Full of awe, he breathed, 'Sir Winston, it is wonderful to take your photograph on your eightieth birthday and I do look forward to taking it again on your hundredth birthday'. Kindly, the great man replied, 'Young man, you appear to be in good health and sound in wind and limb. So I see no reason why you should not'*

This special issue of *VCOT* is a gift to you, dear Geoff, from your Consultant Editorial Board and Board of Referees, and a tangible expression of the high esteem in which you are held by them. The idea of the special issue to commemorate the eightieth birthday of our much loved Editor-in-Chief was first discussed with Mr Dieter Bergemann and Dr Andrea Schürg from Schattauer when I met with them in Munich in September 2007, to talk about the future direction of the journal. Mr Bergemann, as the Publisher of *VCOT*, very generously agreed to underwrite the production of a special issue of the journal for 2008, giving us five issues for the year instead of four, and we are tremendously grateful for his support. It was also agreed that this would act as a nice transition for the journal into 2009 when we will be publishing six issues a year. Since we wanted this to be a surprise, this activity had to be carried out 'under the radar'; and so with the willing

help of Dr Schürg and Ms Amanda Godsell, invitations were sent out to the entire board of referees in late 2007 to ask them to consider submitting a manuscript for publication in the special issue. The enthusiastic response was particularly heartening, considering the short deadlines that had to be imposed by Schattauer to put this issue in print by June 2008. Naturally, all of the submitted manuscripts were subjected to the usual intensity of rigorous, scientific scrutiny with each one being peer-reviewed by three reviewers to ensure that the high standards that have been established by you over the last 21 years were maintained. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous help in manuscript processing and editing given to me by Ms Amanda Godsell at Schattauer. An unforeseen fringe benefit has been that I had the opportunity to practise being an 'editor' and develop a great working relationship with Ms Godsell. The net result had been the compilation of 17 manuscripts which we hope that you will enjoy reading, as much as we have enjoyed their preparation. By happy chance the subjects of these papers are diverse and indicative of the breadth of expertise and scientific interests of your review board. Unfortunately, due to time limitations, some additional manuscripts did not make it into this



Engrossed in conversation, Geoff Sumner-Smith and Editor-in-Chief designate, Ken Johnson.

issue but will appear in a later issue of *VCOT*.

Geoff, our relationship spans many decades and I will remember our first meeting in Sydney, Australia, in 1978. At that time you were a visiting Professor at the University of Sydney, and delivered lectures on the topic of the management of non-union of fractures. Subsequently, we met at AO courses and orthopaedic meetings, in various places. It was in December 1986 that I was amongst a small group of colleagues who were summoned by you to consider an invitation. Rather it was two invitations; would we like to join you in a glass of vintage port from a rather rare bottle that had somehow come to be in your possession, and secondly, would we consider joining you in the enterprise of launching the new journal *VCOT*, as members of the board of referees. Since those early days, the journal has gone from strength to strength. I feel an acute sense of privilege to be handed the huge responsibility of becoming the new Editor-in-Chief, as you retire. Even though you must enjoy your retirement, you can be sure that I will be calling you often to ask for your advice and wisdom as issues arise. So on behalf of the entire Consultant Editorial Board, Board of Referees and the team from Schattauer, I wish you a very happy birthday and many good years to come in the future.

*Kenneth Johnson*  
Editor-in-Chief, Designate

#### Greetings from the SETOV

In many day-to-day situations, for example, in our work, our friendships, in sports and politics, we usually have people to guide us, who end up influencing the way we do things, either consciously or subconsciously, in a very apparent way. These are the type of people who, due to their character and way of thinking, feeling and acting, become leaders, sometimes without even actively seeking it. We could say that in the field of small animal traumatology and orthopaedics, one of those personalities has been, and continues to be, our dear colleague and tutor, Geoff. Sumner-Smith. Those who have been fortunate enough to meet him either during courses or conferences will have felt this sensation. His ex-

ceptional dedication and great professional honesty have made him a mentor and an example to follow for many who are beginning in the field of small animal traumatology and orthopaedics. We would like to pay homage to our colleague Geoff. Sumner-Smith, when some of us, who have already reached maturity at a personal, as well as at a professional level would like to thank him for not only having taught us the scientific aspects of our specialty, but also for having infected us with his enthusiasm, his respect towards our patients, and ultimately, his professional honesty. On this note, we would like to send him a heartfelt embrace from Spain and our foremost desire that he will point us in the right direction for our so-respected specialty for many years to come.

*Josep de la Fuente*  
President

#### Birthday wishes from the BVOA

The officers and members of the BVOA wish you, dear Professor, a very happy eightieth birthday. You, along with Prof. Lesley Vaughan, were the Society's first honorary members and somewhere in the archives is a picture of you receiving your certificate. However, we have found a much more appropriate image (see below). Do you remember the AO course that was orga-



Geoff Sumner-Smith with his great friend, Dieter Prieur, former director of AO Vet Centre.

nised by the BVOA and held at the Royal Veterinary College in 1987? Or perhaps the question should be 'do you remember the banquet in Hatfield House?' I'm sure Dieter (Prieur) could help with the answer.

Geoff, you have been a wonderful inspiration, and a great ambassador for British orthopaedics. You have supported the Association both through your outstanding editorship of *VCOT* and by attending our meetings, and you have remained the perfect English gentleman despite living on the other side of the Atlantic. We are delighted that you have reached 80 not out; take the rest in singles and we look forward to you reaching your ton!

*John Houlton*  
Past President

#### Many happy returns from the VOS

As the Veterinary Orthopedic Society (VOS) enters its 36<sup>th</sup> year, our membership salutes the contributions of Professor Geoff. Summer-Smith to the field of orthopaedic surgery and to the profession at large. Professor Summer-Smith has expressed in his work core values of scientific merit and collegial communication that will forever influence the practice of veterinary orthopaedic surgery. *VCOT* is the most significant forum of scientific communication in the field of veterinary orthopaedics today, thanks to Geoff's leadership of over two decades. As I have spoken to VOS members for this tribute, I would observe that Professor Summer-Smith has deeply influenced many of us at a personal level. Geoff. is an intellectual mentor to generations of veterinary surgeons. His commitment to science, to human culture, and to the importance of language extends well beyond the field of surgery and impacts us in our daily lives. We are all better people, for knowing Professor Summer-Smith.

*Charlie DeCamp*  
Immediate Past President

#### Happy birthday from the AO Vet!

When I first heard about Geoff Sumner-Smith, I knew he was one of the leading veterinary orthopaedic surgeons. Jean Meynard, my Master and one of Geoff's oldest friends, had told me this. Later I met him in

Davos if I am not mistaken and I discovered his British humour. But now after all these years, I have come to appreciate Geoff as a very pleasant man and a human. He moved from the Ancient World to the New World, was in academia and in the AO VET, met people and made friends in countries all around the globe, wrote a book with a subtitle, 'A study in comparative osteology', announcing the setting of his journal, *VCOT*. By these avenues, he strongly emphasised the need for collaborating with others; human and veterinary surgeons. At the end, a true link appeared in the most modern way when the journal was indexed in Medline. Happy birthday to this so contemporary man who spends his time creating these scientific and social links between all people involved in veterinary orthopaedics!

*Jean-Pierre Cabassu  
Chair Elect AO VET*

#### Warm wishes from the ESVOT

A large circle of friends have gathered today in order to congratulate Professor Sumner-Smith on his eightieth birthday and to thank him for his exemplary dedication over the years. This also holds true for the Executive Board and members of the European Society of Veterinary Orthopaedics and Traumatology (ESVOT). Since the foundation of ESVOT 21 years ago, Professor Sumner-Smith has not only injected his British sense of humour into our meetings as a popular guest speaker, he has also been a father figure and mentor to many of us as well. It was Professor Sumner-Smith's idea that ESVOT and VOS should have a joint meeting in Munich in 2002, the inaugural World Veterinary Orthopaedic Society. Also, thanks to him, there are eight veterinary orthopaedic societies that have a common publication organ, *VCOT*, which he has nurtured for it to become the highly respected journal that it is today. Thanks to Professor Sumner-Smith, numerous colleagues have been given the opportunity to publish their scientific findings and clinical research in *VCOT*, even when they struggled with the English language, as he took it upon himself to anglicise the texts. Despite the extra effort involved, he always remained the perfect gentleman when reviewing the authors' work



Geoff Sumner-Smith being awarded the official ESVOT tie by Herman Hazewinkel.

– in an exemplary, and yet at the same time, duty-bound manner. His compassion went beyond that, especially when it came to our animals, where the subject of pain therapy after orthopaedic and trauma surgeries was always particularly close to his heart. This is why, as Editor-in-Chief of *VCOT*, he selected publications using strict criteria. These are just some of the countless reasons why ESVOT is proud to have Professor Sumner-Smith as one of its three honorary members.

Dear Geoff, enjoy your new found freedom from *VCOT* with the passing on of the reins to Ken Johnson. We hope though that you will continue to be there for us whenever we are in need of your advice.

*Aldo Vezzoni, President  
Uli Matis, Director of ESVOT*

#### 'Alles Gute zum Geburtstag' from Dieter Prieur!

Geoff, when you reach old age, time seems to run away even faster from you. I still remember when our friendship first began, and I can hardly believe that more than thirty years have elapsed since we were sitting in that small pub near the Rijks museum in Amsterdam during the Spring Meeting of the Netherland Veterinary Association. Since that time we have managed to meet up nearly every year during the AO-courses in Davos and Columbus, Ohio, as well as in South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, just to mention a few other places. Both of us were extremely fond of our profession, enjoyed teaching and loved our dogs. We shared some wonderful times at your home in Everton and when you visited me in Wal-

denburg, and later on at my mill in the German forests. I thank you for your help and advice during my work at the AO Vet. We were fortunate to have many good friends during these years. I often think about Wade Brinker, Terry Braden, Ken Johnson, Marv Olmstead and many others. Sadly some of them have passed away like Bruce Hohn, Saki Paatsama and others.

It was a special day when we founded *VCOT* in Stuttgart with Mr. Bergemann. Thanks to your work as Editor-in-Chief the Journal grew to become one of the most important ones in the veterinary profession.

Looking back all those years since our first encounter in the pub in Amsterdam, I thank you very much for your friendship. I hope that God will give us many additional years with you, allowing us the opportunity to see one another more often.

*Dieter Prieur  
Germany; emeritus*



Geoff Sumner-Smith and Dieter Prieur.

#### A final greeting from Schattauer Publishers

Geoff, I have no doubt that you could have gone on in your role as Editor-in-Chief for many years to come, but I think I can safely say that we all deeply respect your decision to step down, one that can not have been made easily. You have left a solid foundation for your successor, whilst at the same time a very large pair of boots to fill.

At the beginning of 2006, you gallantly rose to the daunting challenge of going elec-

tronic with Manuscript Central, but with this exciting change you have helped to catapult *VCOT* into a new era with an approximately 40% increase in submissions, strengthening *VCOT*'s position as a leading veterinary journal in this same field.

Of all of your acquaintances and fellow colleagues in the veterinary field, we possibly know one another the shortest amount of time, but through your very amicable and open nature and, of course, our shared birthplace in northern England, it was destined to be the start of a prosperous working relationship, and for this I would like to thank you.

And now you are about to start your well-deserved 'retirement', at least as Editor-in-Chief of *VCOT*. I will always have fond memories of the short time I spent visiting you at your cottage, and am now confident that you will certainly not be bored without *VCOT*.

So, on this note, I wish you happy reading of this special birthday issue to commemorate your incredible service to the Journal, and congratulations on becoming an octogenarian!

*Amanda Godsell*  
Managing Editor/*VCOT*

#### Thanks to a perfect and amiable Editor-in-Chief

When I joined Schattauer as a copy-editor in 1990, a very good friend of mine, Mrs. Bettina Nellen, was already the copy-editor for

*VCOT*. Hence I had to wait until she left the company to take over her duty. At that time, I already was convinced that working together with Geoff Sumner-Smith was one of the most pleasant jobs Schattauer could offer, not only because I had the chance to be one of the first people to read his sophisticated editorials, but also because copy-editing for *VCOT* could not be easier: all of the manuscripts came not only 'just in time', but mostly 'ahead of type-setting' and in a perfectly organized way. All of them were strictly numbered, carefully adjusted to good English diction, complete with all figures and tables. What more could a copy-editor wish for?

I was happy when I recognized how much Geoff liked to work with our present copy-editor, Ms Amanda Godsell. Being British like him, she probably shares similar experiences in what it means to work in a foreign country. And I felt even more relieved when I saw how smoothly both of them managed the change towards our new electronic manuscript submission system three years ago. Geoff really did a great job at that time – I know editors of a much younger age who still refuse to 'go electronic' with their journals!

Unfortunately, I never managed to visit Geoff in Guelph despite his many invitations. But I hope that we will stay in touch and I look forward to many nice postcards or photos to come. All the best to you, Geoff!

*Dr. Andrea Schürg*  
Managing Director of Journals

#### My dear friend, Geoff

The photo of the foundation of the journal and the first editorial meeting in February 1987 (*Vet Comp Orthop Traumatol* 2008; 21:(2) Editorial) shows us all as 'young men', and I have to admit today that, as the youngest in the group, I trustingly approached the project of the founding of the journal, *VCOT*. My colleague and mentor, Paul Matis, inspired by his daughter Ulrike, had explained the editorial objectives of the journal, and convinced me that a comparative veterinary medical journal in the field of orthopaedics and traumatology could be a scientific highlight at our publishers and would therefore be very appropriate considering the great emphasis we place on quality. This could only be guaranteed on the premise that you would agree to become Editor-in-Chief, assisted by Dieter Prieur and a competent Consultant Editorial Board/Advisory Board, which we were able to acquire thanks to your excellent connections. The editorial quality was thus assured and very soon the competence of the journal became known on an international level. After all, this was the foundation for a cooperation with scientific societies, of which in the meanwhile there are eight, for whom we were allowed to be the official scientific organ.

Unfortunately, expertise and scientific recognition do not always go hand in hand with economic success. We were on occasions sad that we also had to keep an eye on the financial side of things, but I always sensed your understanding for the necessary business decisions. In this way our relationship, which spans 25 years, was always marked on the one hand by your understanding of the economic concerns/issues of the Publisher's, and on the other hand by our sensitivity for an uncompromising quest for quality.

Many thanks Geoff for making the journal flourish, as well as for laying the foundations for quality. I thank you for finding a competent successor in Kenneth Johnson, organising and arranging everything so that we can rest assured that we can continue to publish a qualitative superior publication organ, jointly and on an amicable basis.

Sincerest regards,

*Dieter Bergemann*  
Publisher, Schattauer GmbH



Editorial meeting September 2006, Munich. (l to r) A. Godsell, K. Johnson, G. Sumner-Smith, A. Schürg, D. Bergemann.