

## Stalham December 11, 2019

A total of 12 members joined the guest speaker, Graham Duncanson, for supper at Vera's Coffee on Wednesday, December 11. The salmon and lamb shank were equally popular choices. The chairman, Henry Alston, was unable to attend and vice-chairman, Chris Borrett, later joined the company.

### Welcome

Chris Borrett, vice-chairman, welcomed 32 members and guests and explained that the chairman was unable to attend. He also reminded members that entries for the grain competitions must be submitted as soon as possible.

### Apologies

These were received from the following - Henry Alston, chairman; David Moar, Tim Papworth, Nick Coller, Jason Cantrill, Robin Baines, Jonathan Deane, Christopher Deane, James Taylor, Becky Collen, Louis Baugh, Charlotte Hovey, Sir William Cubitt.

### Minutes

These had been posted on the website after the last meeting.

#### Secretary's report

Michael Pollitt, secretary, said a total of £325 had been donated to the East Anglian Air Ambulance following the highly successful visit in October. Members had also been extremely generous with an informal collection for the EAAA at the last meeting.

He also said that arrangements were in hand for inter-club grain competitions. The winning club barley sample would be judged against Holt & District Farmers' Club and a new contest was proposed for wheat involving Stalham and Stoke Ferry Agricultural Society.

### Guest speaker

A long-standing club member, Graham Duncanson, of Crostwick, took as his theme: "After 50 years as a vet, what to do before I die? He spoke with enormous enthusiasm and with great humour about his cycling expedition across Europe and through Africa from Hainford to Cape Town. He had been joined by fellow vets on various legs of the 8,000-mile journey including a number from the Westover Veterinary Practice, where he had spent the best part of 40 years. He recalled that as a newly qualified vet, he had been working in Kenya where his first task had been to take blood samples from 400 camels. First, he had to drive 620 miles on dirt tracks on his first "farm" visit. This encounter led to his acquiring a reputation as a camel expert.

He cycled through floods in the Netherlands and Germany in the early summer of 2016 as the River Rhine broke its banks. Then into Italy, where he even managed to add San Marino to his list of many countries visited as well as a flying visit to Malta before later arriving in Greece.

His memorable (and rather scary) encounters included a non-veterinary inspection of a lion, while sleeping in the bush and then cycling up a steep slope in South Africa, close pursued by a black mamba – the second most poisonous snake in Africa. When he realised that it meant business, his tired legs went into overdrive as he just managed to ride clear.

In an hour-long talk, he said that he had managed to raise £14,000 for the Newmarket-based Animal Health Trust. As a trustee of the charity, his target was £10,000, so he was delighted to have had a successful conclusion to his 11-month expedition.

He also pleased members by handing out copies of his various racy novels. He has self-published a total of 14 since starting with "Mating Lions" in 2015 as well as five veterinary books.

Simon Daniels thanked Graham on behalf of members and guests.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.