

BVCS CONFERENCE 2012

It was a small, but highly enthusiastic group of BVCS members who gathered for the BVCS conference on the outskirts of Swindon over the 11th and 12th November 2011. Plans to hold sessions in the Touchbase Centre had to be hastily re-organized when it closed with no prior warning, but luckily the adjacent Hilton Hotel was very obliging and provided excellent conference facilities.

Guest speaker for the weekend was Karen Baum, otherwise known as Lil Doc, from Virginia USA. She runs a large animal practice, with camelids forming a large part of her caseload, and also breeds her own alpacas and llamas, so has a wealth of knowledge to pass on.

The theme this year was the compromised camelid, so Karen concentrated on the neonate, rearing orphans and the downer animal, in addition to a session on herd management, passing on many practical tips. She has an easy lecturing style, inviting questions and comments throughout her presentations, which led on to many interesting discussions. In addition to telling us about the work of the Alpaca Research Foundation, she also gave us details of how she uses camelids in the social setting to bring joy to those with physical or mental difficulties.

Karin Mueller and Heike Köhler-Aanesen were the two BVCS members sponsored by BCL to attend the International Camelid Conference in Oregon earlier this year and between them they presented a selection of topics from that conference. We also made space in the packed programme for practitioner case studies on mushroom poisoning, cervical trauma and camelid dentistry - all good examples of what might be encountered in the field.

Lunch and break times were good opportunities for socializing and catching up on news in the camelid world and as a bit of light relief we all went bowling on the Saturday night, followed by a delicious Italian banquet.

