

Obituaries

Agnes Charlotte Winter

After qualifying, she had a busy life as a farmer's wife and a part-time vet. Later, a major career change saw her return to Liverpool, where she ultimately became head of veterinary clinical sciences.

EMERITUS Professor Agnes Winter (née Mason) died peacefully, aged 83, on 1 December after a short illness. The veterinary profession lost one of its greats on that day.

Agnes was born and raised on a small farm in Addingham near Ilkley in Yorkshire, where she played her part in day-to-day farm work, milking cows, lambing ewes and caring for the working horses.

From an early age she realised where her future lay and worked with the local vets, one of whose sons was Alastair Campbell, who later became Tony Blair's chief strategist, although whether Agnes had any effect on his future career is unknown.

During her sixth-form studies, the biology mistress at Skipton Girls High School took her class on a day trip to the University of Liverpool's Veterinary Field Station at Leahurst on the Wirral. There and then, Agnes decided that Liverpool vet school was the place for her.

In 1960, after a formidable interview with Professor JG Wright, she joined the veterinary course as one of six women students out of a class of 35.

After graduation, Agnes remained at Leahurst as a house surgeon for two years, after which she joined a practice in Mold, north Wales, where on her first day she met Tom, a local farmer, whom she married 18 months later.

Agnes kept her own flock of pedigree rare-breed Wensleydale longwool sheep on the farm. She had considerable success breeding and showing her sheep and their fleeces. She won champion fleece in the lustre wool class several times at both the Great Yorkshire Show and the Royal Welsh Show.

She spent 17 years as a part-time practitioner and farmer's wife until

Agnes Charlotte Winter, BVSc, PhD, DRAGS, DipECSRHM, DSHP, FRCVS, (b) 1942, (q) Liverpool 1965. Died 1 December 2025.

she embarked on a major career change, returning to Leahurst to undertake a PhD on colostrum-induced anaemia in lambs, under the supervision of Michael Clarkson. She remained at Leahurst until her retirement in 2008.

Both during and following her PhD, her collaboration with Michael Clarkson and Bill Faull could almost be described as the dawn of sheep medicine as a speciality in its own right. Together they developed undergraduate sheep medicine teaching at Liverpool, resulting in the production and later publication of the 'Green Book', known today to almost every practitioner with an interest in sheep. In 2024, one of us (DG-W) was privileged to be asked by Agnes to help revise and edit the book, aided enthusiastically by many of the farm animal staff at Leahurst. The eighth edition, 'A Handbook for the Sheep Clinician' was recently published by CABI. This was particularly gratifying for Agnes, although at the end of the process she vowed it would be the last time!

With a range of co-authors, including the late Jim Hindson, Judith Charnley and Clare Pythian, Agnes published a number of sheep books aimed at both vets and farmers.

At Leahurst, she developed and taught her sheep course to countless undergraduates and enthused a cadre of sheep specialists who have gone out and 'taught the gospel'.

One of her former students wrote: 'Agnes taught many students over many years at Liverpool vet school and became known as the sheep guru for many of us. We felt



very privileged and lucky to have been taught by, arguably, the most knowledgeable sheep lecturer in the UK and beyond. The difference wasn't just her knowledge, but the importance she placed on being able to communicate with farmers with confidence. Agnes emphasised that being able to competently turn a sheep, while having a conversation with the farmer, would place you in good stead to be trusted, far more than the sheep knowledge that you held at the time.'

Her role in the development of sheep medicine and, indirectly, sheep welfare, cannot be overestimated. At Leahurst, she established the first sheep residency training for vets, thus further advancing the sheep as a worthy subject for specialist study and practice.

Agnes considered it one of the highlights of her career when she became the first lady president of the Sheep Veterinary Society (SVS) in 1987. She was a founding diplomate of the European College of Small Ruminant Health Management, firmly helping establish sheep medicine as an internationally recognised veterinary speciality. Thus, her influence has been at both national and international level. She garnered

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many awards throughout her life, including the SVS' Alan Baldry Award in 1990; she was also elected an honorary life member of the society in 2005. She joined the Farm Animal Welfare Council in 1990, advising the government on matters such as lamb castration and the welfare of animals during transport. The National Sheep Association honoured her with the George Hedley Memorial Award in 1996. In 2005, she became a fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society. She was presented with the BVA's Dalrymple Champneys Cup and Medal in 2009 and RCVS fellowship in 2016.

While teaching and clinical sheep work, for which she was known across the UK, were her primary joys, Agnes played an important role in administration at Leahurst, first as head of the Division of Farm Animal Studies and then as head of the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, until her retirement in 2008 when she was awarded an emeritus professorship.

Following her retirement, Agnes left the north west to live in central York. She retained her interest in both sheep medicine and veterinary education as a mentor for recent graduates through the RCVS professional development phase (now the graduate development programme). This allowed her to maintain contact with new graduates and keep up to date with modern veterinary practice. She spent 17 happy and fulfilled years of retirement in York.

Her customary Christmas cards depicting bucolic scenes of sheep in snowy settings were soon replaced by cards showing stunning photographs of uninterrupted views of York Minster taken by Agnes herself from the windows of her city centre penthouse apartment. The only sheep she had were in the paintings on her walls.

She discovered a new-found interest in history and became a volunteer guide at nearby Fairfax House, a Georgian home open to

the public. She was a keen member of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, York Civic Trust (which runs Fairfax House) and the Arts Society York as well as being a patron of York Minster.

Agnes requested a private funeral for close family and friends, with a memorial event to be held in York in April.

At her funeral service at York crematorium, the aria 'Sheep may safely graze' was played. We can reflect that sheep attended to by Agnes' students and vet colleagues are grazing more safely nowadays, thanks to her contributions in improving sheep health and welfare, both nationally and internationally.

Agnes will be remembered with fondness by the many people whose lives she touched, as a wonderful, softly spoken lady with a twinkle in her eye, gentle humour and a curiosity for life.

Dai Grove-White, Judith G Charnley, Philippa Page and Elaine Hargreaves



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Teaching and clinical sheep work were her primary joys

James Peter Jarvis

A devoted veterinary surgeon, family man and tireless servant of his community.

JAMES Peter Jarvis passed away peacefully at the age of 90 on 1 January 2026, after a short illness.

Born in Sudbury, Suffolk, on 9 July 1935, he showed an early love for animals that shaped the course of his life. He graduated from the Royal Veterinary College, London, in 1960 and remained a continuous member of the RCVS for an extraordinary 66 years, a testament to his lifelong commitment to the profession.

James (Jim) began his career working in and around London and Essex before realising his ambition to run his own veterinary practice. In 1977, he established his practice in Evesham, Worcestershire, where he became widely respected, not only for his clinical skill but for his deep compassion and unwavering ethical standards. Throughout his career he placed the welfare of animals above all else, often working with the PDSA to ensure that care was available to

James Peter Jarvis, BVetMed, MRCVS, (b) 1935, (q) London 1960. Died 1 January 2026.

those who needed it most, regardless of their means.

He retired from full-time practice in 2006 at the age of 71, but his dedication to veterinary care did not end there. He continued to work as a locum for a further four years, remaining active in the profession he loved.

Beyond his work, Jim was a man of great warmth, faith and generosity. He had a lifelong love of choral singing and was a devoted member of church choirs right up until his final months. He also gave freely of his time to numerous charities and good causes, quietly helping wherever he could.

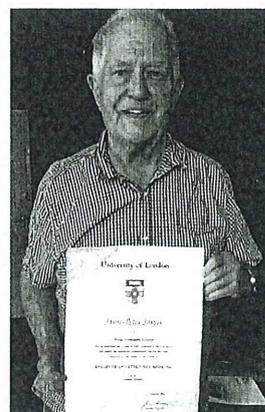
In 1960, Jim married Pat, his beloved wife and partner of 62 years; Pat predeceased him in 2022.

Together they built a happy and loving family and shared a life of devotion to one another. He is survived by their four children, nine grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Jim's passion for veterinary medicine and his strong professional ethics live on through his granddaughter Alice, who is in the final weeks of her BVetMed training – a source of great pride.

He will be remembered for his kindness, integrity, dedication to animal welfare and the countless lives – both human and animal – that he touched. His legacy will endure in the family he loved, the profession he served and the many people who were fortunate enough to know him.

Liz Stringer



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