



**vetlife**

Annual Review

2015

[vetlife.org.uk](http://vetlife.org.uk)

Veterinary Benevolent Fund is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 153010 Charity Registration No. 224776.



# Foreword

From our Patron, The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior

'It gives me great pleasure to see **Vetlife developing to meet the changing demands of the veterinary profession** and working so closely with other veterinary organisations.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the volunteers who help to run Vetlife's support services.

As always, the charity is grateful for the donations which allow it to deliver its support services to the veterinary community.'

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior'.

The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior



# What we do

## Our Vision

A UK **veterinary community** with high levels of physical and mental wellbeing.

## Our Mission

Vetlife provides **support** to members of the UK veterinary community and their families who have emotional, health or financial concerns, whilst seeking ways to prevent such situations in the future.

## How we do it

Vetlife funds and manages three support services in order to achieve this:



### helpline

**Vetlife Helpline** provides confidential emotional support by phone or anonymous email via the website.

Support is provided by trained volunteers; vets, VNs, and others who have knowledge of the veterinary profession.

It is a completely confidential, non-judgmental listening service, which gives people time and space to talk. People calling are supported to access specialist help where appropriate.



### health support

**Vetlife Health Support** provides professional support for mental health issues, including those related to stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol, drugs and eating disorders.



### financial support

**Vetlife Financial Support** provides financial and other assistance to veterinary surgeons, and their dependants, in the form of regular monthly grants or one off special gifts. We may also fund professional advice on issues such as debt and State benefits.

For younger people, this support can mean that they don't have their homes repossessed or that they are enabled to deal with their physical or mental health problems and return to work successfully. For the elderly or those unable to return to work, the support provides them with an improved quality of life.

# Our People

## Vetlife Board of Directors



**John Moffitt**  
President



**Graham Dick**



**Bill Mavir**



**Nick Coulson**  
Honorary Secretary



**Jo Dyer**



**Katie Moore**



**Geoff Little**  
Honorary Treasurer



**Emily Folwell**



**Jade Statt**



**Rosie Allister**



**Magda Jaszczak**



**Mary Thomson**

## Vetlife Area Representatives

### Yorkshire & Humberside

Agnes Winter

### Cornwall

Jo Dyer

### Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway

John Moffitt

### Devon

Bob Hooper

### Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire

Hilda Jackson

### Nottingham, Derby, Leicester & Lincolnshire

Ewan McNeill

### Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northants, Bucks & London

Hazel Bentall

### Kent, Surrey, Sussex & Essex

Paul Ripley

### Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, Staffordshire & Shropshire

Barry Johnson and Magda Jaszczak

### East Scotland

Rosie Allister and David Rimer

### West Scotland

Mauraid Anderson

### North-East England

Linda Clarke

### Northern Ireland

Perpetua Mcnamee

### Somerset, Avon & Gloucestershire

Peter Clark

### Dorset, Hants, Wilts & Oxon

Nick Coulson

### Wales

Bob Stevenson

### Hereford & Worcester, West Midlands, Worcestershire & Warwickshire

Kenelm Lewis and Vicky Gower

### Bungalow Liaison Officer

Nick Coulson

### Mentoring/Recent Graduates

Austin Kirwan

## Vetlife Nominated Representatives

### SPVS

Karmen Watson

### AVS

Hannah Mason

### BSAVA

Julian Hoad

### RCVS

Kit Sturgess

### BVA

Robin Hargreaves

# Vetlife's impact in 2015

**29,800**

visits to the **Vetlife website** for information and advice

**280**

Facebook posts

**288**

Tweets

**2,655**

followers on Twitter



**962**

direct acts of **support** to the veterinary community

**8**

individuals provided with specialist debt and benefits **advice** funded by Vetlife

**20**

home visits **delivered** by area representatives to discuss financial and other support

**65**

veterinary surgeons and dependants given financial **support**

**207**

individuals **provided** with professional mental health & addiction support

**662**

phone or email conversations with our **helpline**



# Financial Support

'Vetlife stayed there for me, when even my own family did not. I will be **forever grateful** for their unstinting support.'

## Helping People Back to Work

Vetlife has continued to support 'at risk' veterinary surgeons, when consent was given for Vetlife Health to contact them, to enable some individuals to remain in work. This can prevent potential hardship, and ensures continuity in their professional lives.

Vetlife has also helped veterinary surgeons who have been off sick for a period of time to return to work by arranging for them to see practice in a sympathetic environment, gain access to CPD and receive financial assistance to get back on to the practising register of the RCVS.

## £109,247

to **36 veterinary surgeons** (or dependants) as monthly grants

## £20,230

to **60 veterinary surgeons** (or dependants) as one-off gifts, usually at Christmas time

## New Cases 2015

## 42

enquiries

## 11

**new applicants** were given financial support

## £20

**£20** could fund a home visit to a vet in financial difficulty

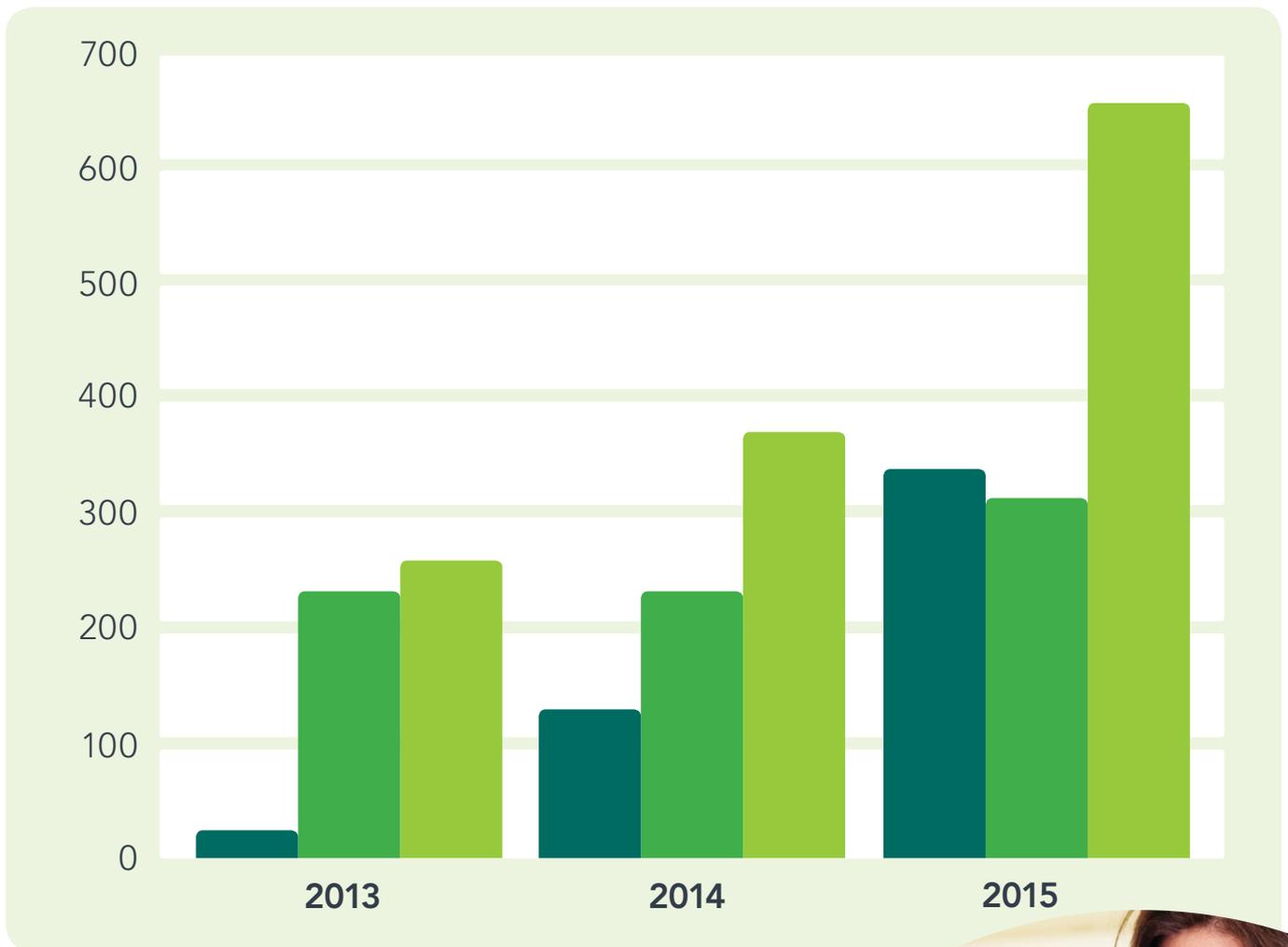




# Vetlife Helpline

**'Getting good help is essential.** From personal experience, I can applaud Vetlife Helpline for getting me through my own dark periods. I feel that, because so many factors relate to events specific to veterinary work, to have someone at the end of the phone who knows our industry is reassuring.'

Anonymous, Letter to Veterinary Record June 2015



 Email
  Phone
  Total communications

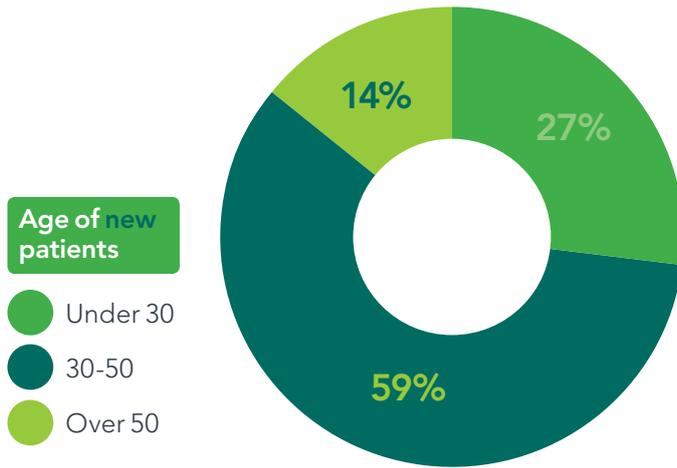


**£5**

£5 could provide vital support by email or phone from our helpline



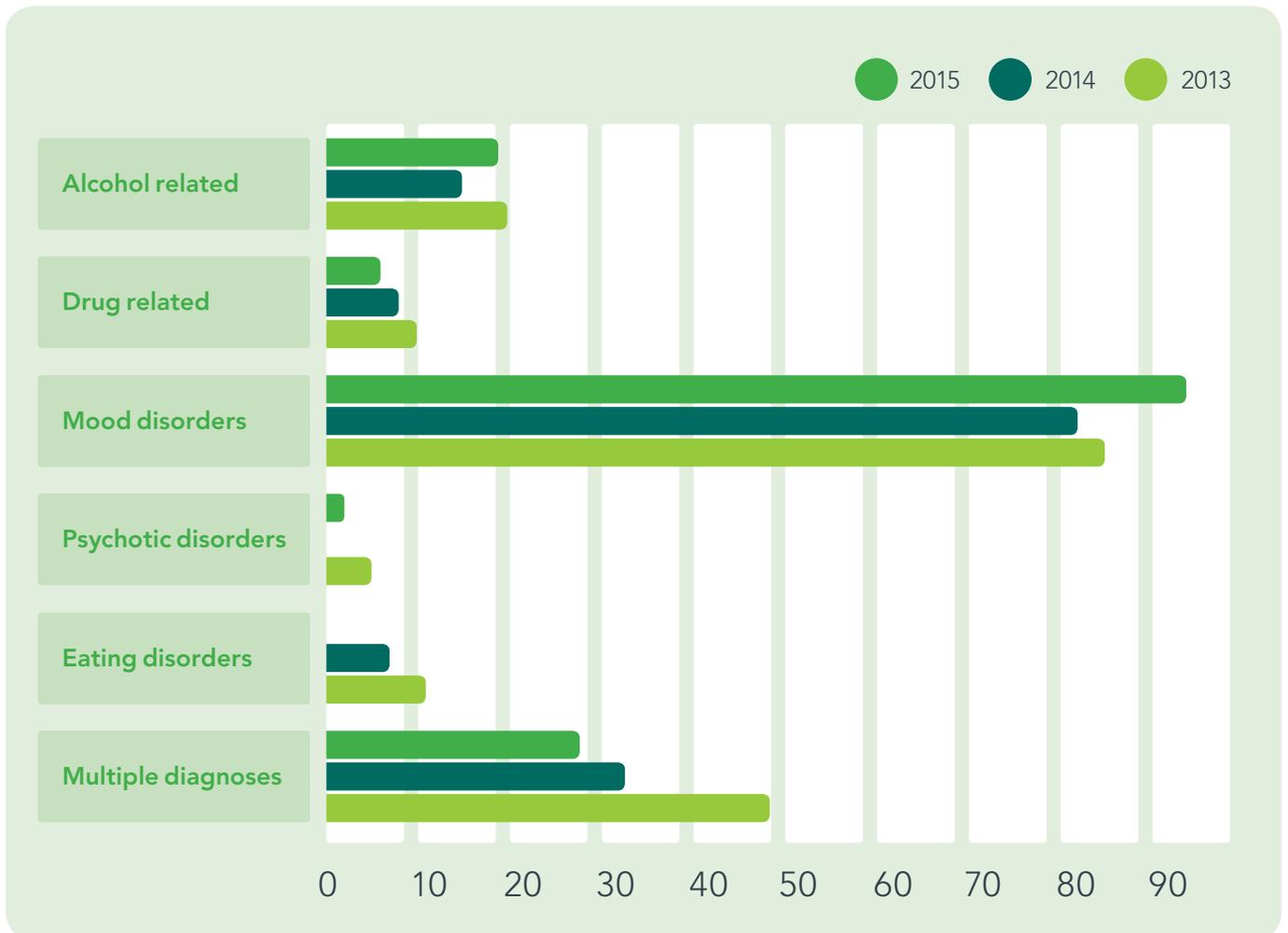
# Vetlife Health Support



**221**  
enquiries in 2015

**64**  
were taken on as new patients

**207**  
total number of patients at year end



\* Several patients had multiple diagnoses and so the percentages for each year do not sum to 100%

# Real Stories:

## My husband died by suicide

I cannot adequately describe the panic of finding out that my husband had died by suicide. From the police phone call after midnight, to my repeated vomiting with fear and turmoil while talking to the officer who came to my house.

**How was I to tell my beautiful children, sleeping, blissfully unaware for the moment of how their world would be catapulted into chaos, misery and despair.**

The hardest thing I've ever had to do was to tell my innocent children that their father had died, and by his own hand. A close second is my attempt at maintaining some semblance of normal life for years after when all around was grief, fear and fury.

Suicide is so cruel to those left behind. Children are devastated and will always wonder 'why' and 'why us', while the remaining adult is unfairly blamed for the death and is left to cope with absolute chaos. In a rural community, where my husband was the local vet, I had to endure hateful behaviour directed at me, the survivor. I can't describe the depths of grief my children experienced. We were living in a nightmare. Every minute of every day was a nightmare.

I can honestly say that the number of people who genuinely helped beyond the first two week period are few and far between. I guess people just can't cope with misery. Folk do not know what to say, or do, to help, and quite frankly, everything is upsetting anyway because no-one can understand the depth of trauma and despair. This is where Vetlife is crucial to the families left to cope with the aftermath of suicide. No-one else is equipped to deal with this particular devastation.

**I was phoned immediately by Vetlife when they received my application forms requesting financial help.** All my husband's bank accounts were frozen, so, in addition to dealing with traumatised children, I was immediately plunged into financial instability, with fear of repossession. I'll never forget their kind, reassuring words, telling me that Vetlife were going to help me financially. I was given monthly cheques initially for a three month period, which was then extended for another three months.

This represented an immediate safety net, releasing me from fear of repossession and of not being able to pay credit card bills. We also received wonderful, gentle, professional counselling from Vetlife Health Support. The National Coordinator came to our home and spoke to me and the children. I still phone him, years later, when I am concerned about an aspect of my childrens' behaviour, because even now, there are consequences to deal with and worries to talk about. On several occasions, he has talked me out of a panic with his calm reassurance. His words give me the strength to carry on when all I want to do is to hide away from worries.

**The kindness and empathy of the people in this organisation is overwhelming. Vetlife quite literally have saved me and my wonderful children.**

**'The kindness and empathy of the people in this organisation is overwhelming.'**



# Our plans for 2016



**Launch** a new Vetlife website



**Circulate** a new Vetlife Helpline sticker, specifically designed as a crisis intervention to be stuck on dangerous drugs cabinets, to every member of the veterinary community



**Expand** Vetlife Health Support with the help of funding from RCVS and VDS



**Recruit** and train more new helpline volunteers



**Raise** awareness of the help that Vetlife can provide related to CPD



As an independent charity we rely on the generosity of the veterinary community to be able to continue our work

## Vetlife's Five Year Strategic Objectives 2010 – 2015

**Expand health support** capacity to meet increased demand and to address the NHS shortfall in mental health care provision

**Increase** the number of Vetlife volunteers and offer other communication channels for accessing the helpline

**Continue** to review the financial support that the charity provides and how it is delivered

**Increase** representation at vet schools

**Strengthen** further the Board's decision making processes and governance

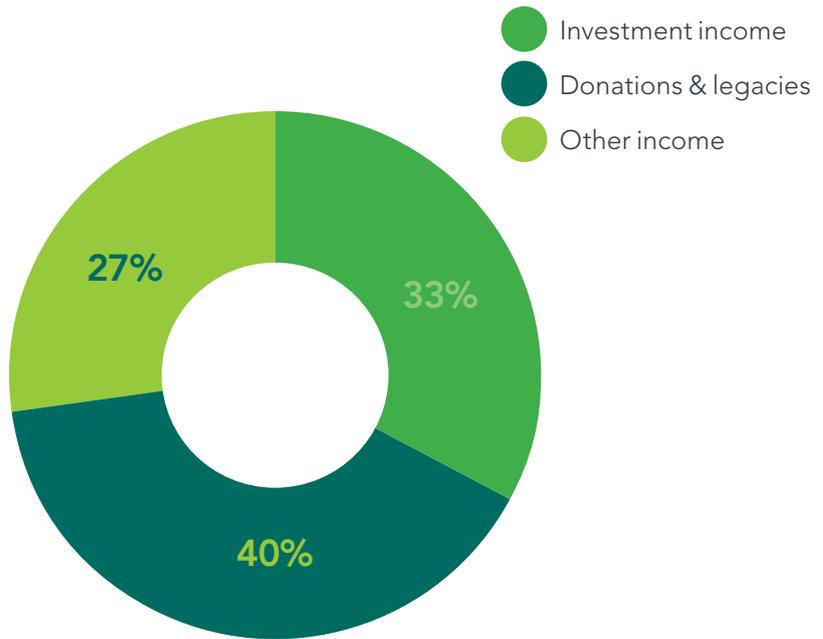
# Financial Summary

## Income

Total income in 2015 was  
**£687,068**

an increase of 28.8% on 2014 – mostly due to a one off gift from VDS of £150k to mark their 150th anniversary

Vetlife aims to add £100,000 per annum to reserves to ensure that adequate support will be available to the veterinary community in the future.

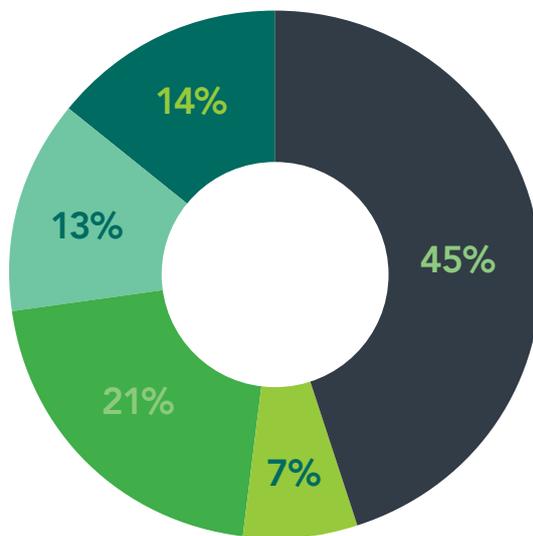


## Expenditure

Total expenditure was  
**£447,507**

an increase of 5.8% on 2014

- Financial support
- Helpline
- Health Support
- Website and promotion
- Cost of generating funds



# Thank you!

## Ways to support Vetlife

From signing up as a member/regular donor to remembering Vetlife in your will, there is a range of ways to support our work.

Find out more at [vetlife.org.uk](http://vetlife.org.uk)

Online donations can be made at [justgiving.com/vetlife](http://justgiving.com/vetlife)

## Sponsored Fundraising Events



Rosie Allister



Stuart Reid



Martin Hosegood

Thank you to those who ran the Virgin London Marathon (above) and to our other fundraisers (below).



James Mullarkey  
from the BVA swam  
the Thames



Meopham Vets



Ama Groza  
ran the Brighton  
half marathon

# Donations

The majority of donations to Vetlife come from over 500 veterinary surgeons that are Vetlife members and kindly give regular support or from veterinary practices that add a donation to Vetlife on their Veterinary Defence Society renewal form.

In 2015 we were also grateful for support from the RCVS's Mind Matters Initiative and the Veterinary Defence Society itself. The Veterinary Defence Society gave us a £150k donation to mark their 150th anniversary.

### Other individuals and organisations generous enough to support Vetlife with donations were:

Alresford and District Agricultural Show  
Association of Veterinary Surgeons  
Practising in Northern Ireland  
Ayrshire Veterinary Association  
Bell Equine Veterinary Clinic  
Keith Bellringer  
Stephen Borsberry  
Alan Brack  
Andrea Bradley  
British Cattle Veterinary Association  
British Small Animal Veterinary Association  
British Veterinary Association  
Richard Brown

Carl Boyde  
RV Bunce  
Cambridge University Veterinary Society  
Cedar Veterinary Group  
David Collins  
Cornwall Veterinary Association  
Fergus Coutts  
John E Cox  
Paul Duff  
Roger Green  
Ama Groza  
Robin Hargreaves  
David Hassall  
Heathside Veterinary Practice  
Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire  
Veterinary Society  
Martin Hosegood  
Meopham Vets  
Michael Hutchison  
Mike Jessop  
Stuart Johnston  
Murray Jones  
Ross Kelly  
James Kennedy  
Lincolnshire and District  
Veterinary Association  
London Veterinary Forum Ltd  
Aileen McCalman-Hart  
Medivet Group  
M R Minns  
North of England Veterinary Association  
North of Scotland BVA Division

Northern Ireland Veterinary Ladies  
Oakhill Veterinary Centre  
Niall O'Connor  
Pig Veterinary Society  
Priory Veterinary Surgeons  
Ratcliff Foundation  
Royal Veterinary College  
Nick Ryland  
South East Midlands Veterinary Association  
South of England Agricultural Society  
Southern Counties Veterinary Society  
Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons  
Surrey Vet Wives  
Sussex Veterinary Society  
Heidi Svensgaard  
University of Bristol Centaur Society  
Vet Dynamics (UK) Ltd  
Veterinary Defence Society  
Veterinary Northern Ireland  
Roland Vinkesteyn  
Western Counties Veterinary Association  
Jim Wight

### Donations in Memory

David Bee  
Louise Seddon  
Charles Wright

### Legacies

Pamela F Cross-Stern  
Charles James Frank  
Penelope Gillespie  
M A Swarbrick