

Dr Peter Rossdale OBE

The degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Peter Rossdale OBE at the Faculty of Science graduation ceremony held at 4.00pm on 26 October 2007.



The Chancellor Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO conferring the honorary degree upon Dr Rossdale, *photo, copyright Memento Photography.*

Citation

Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dr Peter Rossdale, OBE, for the admission to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science *honoris causa*.

Peter Rossdale graduated from Cambridge, Trinity College, and the Royal Veterinary College, London, becoming a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in 1952. After a short period in general practice in his native Kent he moved to Newmarket, the centre of the Thoroughbred breeding industry in the UK, and began a unique career as a specialist in equine and studfarm medicine. He worked for five years in the leading equine practice of the day before setting up his own practice, Rossdale and Partners, in 1959.

Working on the studfarms around Newmarket in the 1950s stimulated his interest in the newborn foal when there was almost complete lack of knowledge of equine neonatal and paediatric medicine. From practice he undertook some critical and extremely innovative studies including the recognition of a fascinating condition of convulsive foals, later known as Neonatal Maladjustment Syndrome. He presented this work in a thesis in 1966 for a Fellowship of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and published his findings in *Nature* and in a series of articles in the *British Veterinary Journal*. In addition to his many other contributions to the veterinary profession and the racing industry, equine research has remained a top priority for over 50 years.

Peter Rossdale became the leading figure in establishing equine perinatology as a scientific discipline, and in doing so stimulated research collaboration around the world. He has published over 200 peer-reviewed research articles and many books on aspects of late gestation, parturition and maturity of foals. He applied his early clinical findings on the neonatal maladjustment syndrome to the development of methods of therapy that are currently used in practice. He also developed a model of prematurity in foals and investigated the adaptive response of newborn. His other enormous contribution to research has been his long time editorship of *Equine Veterinary Journal*, the leading scientific journal for equine research.

These achievements are all the more remarkable as they were all undertaken whilst he was active in veterinary practice. Rossdale and Partners was established in Beaufort Cottage Stables in 1959, and has

now developed into one of the most prestigious practices in the world with 25 clinicians on two sites, supported by top class facilities and laboratories.

It was a visit to Sydney in 1968 by Dr Rossdale that provided the impetus for the successful operation of the Post-Graduate Committee in Veterinary Science in The University of Sydney (now the Postgraduate Foundation). A request by Dr Rossdale to meet a few people with interest in the horse industry resulted in a gathering of around 100 veterinary surgeons for what turned out to be the first of many such gatherings under the umbrella of the Post-Graduate Committee. The reputation of Dr Rossdale was such that his initial visit to Australia had this great impact and he continued to contribute to the activities of the Post-graduate Committee in Veterinary Science in later years.

Dr Rossdale has received many prestigious awards and prizes in the 55 years he has been a veterinarian. These include honorary doctorates from the Universities of Edinburgh and Berne, the Dalrymple Champneys Prize and Cup, the Duke of Devonshire Award for contributions to the British Breeding Industry, the J H Steele Memorial medal from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the Tierklinik Hochmoor International Prize, induction into the University of Kentucky's Equine Research Hall of Fame and the Order of the British Empire for services to equine veterinary science.

Chancellor, I have great pleasure in presenting to you, for admission to the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science, *honoris causa*, an extraordinary veterinarian, dedicated researcher and 'father' of equine perinatology, Peter Daniel Rossdale, and I invite you to confer the degree upon him.