

VET TIMES (Jan 26, 2009)

Duo offers guidance for getting started in profession

TWO young clinicians have launched a guidebook for budding veterinary surgeons that sold more than 400 copies on its day of release.

Oxford-based practitioner Christopher Queen (pictured right) and writing partner Matthew Swaffield (pictured below) penned *Vet School – Getting Your Foot In The Door* to provide help for aspiring veterinary surgeons faced with a sometimes daunting and complicated application process.

Mr Queen graduated from the University of Bris-



tol in 2007 and now works in small animal practice, while Mr Swaffield is currently a third-year veterinary student at the same school.

The book contains advice from the pair on work experience placements, applications, entry requirements and college choices, as well as student life and options after graduation.

INTERVIEWS

The book also has a number of interviews and profiles of people working in the profession, including Richard Dixon, founder of Vets Now.

Mr Queen said the pair had often advised prospective students and thought that producing a guidebook was the next logical step.

He explained: "The same sort of questions kept being asked and we thought 'isn't there a decent book out there answering most of these?' There wasn't really, or at least not one that was written by people who had been there and done that.

"I would have just liked for there to have been something that gave a great overview of veterinary work as a career option, and also spoke honestly about salaries, when I was applying to vet school."

He advises those keen on a veterinary career to do their homework and get applications in quickly.

"Try to start the process as early as possible. There is so much to do to really maximise your chances of getting that hallowed place that the earlier you can start even thinking about it, the better."



Mr Swaffield said that the pair's own experiences made them keen to help others who were interested in the profession.

"Having all of the information presented in what we feel is a logical way, as well as giving hints as to where else to look, should hopefully make the lives of future applicants easier," he said.

"Both Chris and I are in the fairly unique position of being able to write from recent personal experience. The memories of applying to vet school, both its ups and downs, are still very fresh in our minds."