

Obituary

Dieter Prieur (16 January 1927–13 February 2019)David G. Clayton Jones¹¹ East Sussex, United Kingdom

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Wolf–Dieter Prieur, known universally by his friends and colleagues as Dieter, was born in 1927 in Breslau, Poland. Much of his childhood was spent on his grandfather's farm which generated fond memories for the rest of his life. Although a teenager during the Second World War, I only recall his mentioning it to me once. On seeing me attend to my bees, he recalled having to walk back home from the Eastern Front. Tired and hungry while passing an abandoned farm, he noticed some beehives. Realizing with his country upbringing that some honey might be available, he opened a hive and found a ham concealed under the lid. This enabled him to survive and he returned to the great surprise and welcome of his family.

Dieter qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Giessen in 1957 and opened a practice in Duisberg where he began to operate, becoming interested in orthopaedics. I met him for the first time when we both lectured at an International Joint Surgery Conference organized in Lyons, France, by Dr Francois Perot.

In 1976, Dieter was appointed to a new post as Secretary of the AO VET group (https://aovet.aofoundation.org/about-aovet/news/news-2019/2019_03-in-memoriam-wolf-dietter-prieur) at Waldenburg in Switzerland, holding this post until retirement in 1992. During this period, he spent his time suggesting, organizing and frequently attending and contributing to AO VET courses in many countries in Europe as well as North America and Australia. Through the Straumann company, he developed special drill and saw guides for his hook plates for his varisation operation for hip dysplasia and he performed many such surgeries.

In those earlier days, the main AO VET courses were held in Davos in December; with time allocated daily for winter sport, Dieter did not enjoy skiing, but preferred to take the ski lift to lunch and walk on the mountains during the middle of the day. Although he enjoyed meeting his many veterinary friends, he was also quite content with his own company. When visiting him in Waldenbug, I recall asking him if he had any souvenirs of his many foreign trips. His response was 'why I would have an ethnographic museum in my house?' At home in Waldenburg, he would go out in

snow shoes, enjoyed fishing and shooting and was amused by winning shooting competitions against the local farmers.

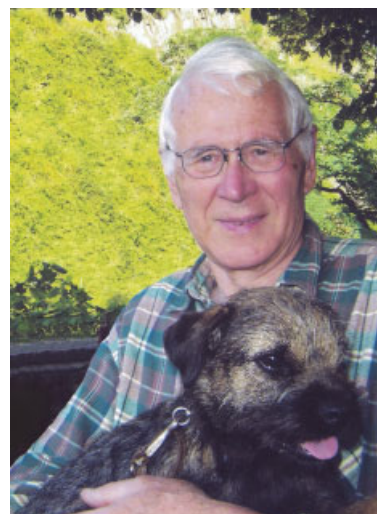
Dieter was involved in editing and contributing to the AO VET Small Animal Manual with Bruce Hohn, Wade Brinker, Terry Braden and others as well as an Orthopaedic and Traumatology textbook with Prof. Klaus Bonath.

Part of his job involved liaising with the current president of the AO VET group. The late Geoff Sumner Smith reported that Dieter would often phone him in the middle of the night –forgetting the significant time difference between Switzerland and Canada!

One idea was to run 1-day courses for undergraduate students, where they could repair fractures using AO instrumentation on plastic tubing and model bones, following short talks and videos before each exercise. In England, these courses were held over a week at the Royal Veterinary College for final year students of each of the four vet schools, thanks to generous technical support from the nearby Straumann company, who also paid for students' coach transport.

Dieter always came and stayed at our home for those weeks. I always asked him to give an opening talk on the History of AO and AO VET. This regularly contained spelling errors. One year, I offered to correct his text before he had the slides produced. At the subsequent lecture the corrections were present, but Dieter had now managed to insert new errors! I still picture Dieter in his brown pullover and corduroy trousers, spectacles pushed up over his forehead, enthusiastically discussing details of their repair with a small student group. Without fail, these were regularly reported to be 'probably the best day of their entire veterinary course'.

Dieter retired in 1992, moving to a rural old mill property in Germany with his partner Sabine. There, he was able to cultivate the land and look after a wide variety of animals, always including a small dog, while Sabine



Dieter Prieur

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continued in her practice. Each year we regularly exchanged letters. However, by 2007 they had parted, Dieter's letter explaining that their age difference had become a stumbling block. He maintained the farm on his own, although gradually finding it harder and needing assistance as he aged. In 2011, he moved to a retirement home, where he was able to be nearer to his son and to keep his dog. In 2016, he lost his great friend Geoff Sumner Smith with whom he had regularly communicated. Professors Uli Matis and Roberto Kostlin kept in touch with him but by 2017 Dieter had found communication in English to be very

difficult and he no longer replied to my letters or phone call. Sadly, the end came in February 2019 when searching for his dog who had run off, he sustained a femur fracture from which he failed to recover following surgery.

Dieter Prieur was a friend to many and instrumental in the promotion and development of AO VET. Those of us who became orthopaedic surgeons particularly through the 1980s have cause to be grateful for his continuing efforts and encouragement and without him many of our ongoing international relationships that we take for granted might never have developed.