



# Veterinary Woman Role Model Profile

## Amanda Boag

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### DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY:

My various roles involve a lot of travelling and diverse responsibilities so its difficult to describe a typical day! Equally earlier in my career when I did full time clinical work at one site, there was rarely a typical day either - one of the things I love about veterinary careers.

It's all changed a bit since Covid! At the moment I work fully from home. I will get up at 7am and wake the kids - one of them is always wide awake, the other takes a bit of encouragement - there's then the usual breakfast carnage relating to the toast being cut the wrong way. I would always try to walk them the 10 mins to school and now will always try to do a 10-15min walk with them instead to get some fresh air to start the day. Work is now mainly from the office at home which will be a mixture of Teams meetings, chats with people, phone calls, teaching via zoom/webinar, reading and evaluating "stuff" and preparing "stuff" of my own for others to read and evaluate! Although I am now rarely hands on clinical as a primary clinician, my clinical thinking is used all the time. I aim to get out of my office by 5-6pm and head straight into doing something with the kids (another walk/game), cooking dinner and other tasks of domestic joy. Reading with the kids at bedtime is still sacrosanct (and thankfully the books have got more interesting over the years) and then it's time to sit down and have a chat with my husband or enjoy an episode of the latest box set we have on the go.

Pre Covid I was away from home usually 2 nights a week and then the days were even more variable although I always tried and fit a call home in at breakfast and early evening. Weekends are much more flexible - they tend to start with Fri movie night and takeaway with the kids and, although in my younger years I often did some work at weekends, I now keep that to an absolute minimum - it's time to get outside with the kids and our Labrador, catch up with friends and let my brain wander.



### CAREER SO FAR:

Grew up in a small Yorkshire village with lots of pets and milked cows every Friday night; part of a large noisy family!

Married with two fabulous daughters (currently aged 8 and 10) and an assortment of dogs, cats, rabbits, hens and fish at home.

Graduated as a vet from Cambridge in 1998

Small animal internship at the RVC (1998-99)

followed by a second small animal internship at the Veterinary Hospital, University of Pennsylvania (1999-2000).

Internal medicine residency following by an ECC residency at RVC 2000-2005; became an ACVIM Diplomate in 2003 and an ACVECC Diplomate in 2005.

Lecturer in ECC at RVC 2005-2008 developing ECC service and teaching undergrads, nurses, interns and residents.

Clinical Director of Vets Now 2008-2019 when moved to become Group Referral Director of IVCEvidensia.

Elected council member of the RCVS 2012-2020 - lots of different committees (!) including being President RCVS 2018-2019.

President of the European ECC society (EVECCS) 2011-2014.

Founding President of ECVECC (European College of Veterinary ECC) 2014-2018 and member of the EBVS board; currently chairing an EBVS working group on flexible routes to specialisation.

Inaugural chair of the Major Employers Group (2013-2018).

Avid bookworm, traveller, occasional cake decorator and very occasional hillwalker

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR TOP SUCCESS AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THIS?

Success can be measured in so many ways - on a professional level I still remember patients where I made a good call. The day I heard ECVECC had been approved as a specialist College and the day I became RCVS President are up there as days I will remember feeling a great sense of happiness and pride. But actually the top success is the day to day interactions where people - whether it's one of my daughters, a friend or a colleague - talk to me and share things they are worrying about.....sometimes I can help practically, sometimes I can just listen - but the fact that someone trusts you enough to share their worries represents more success than any chain of office.

## DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN A SENTENCE:

This is actually a really hard question.....I guess I'd describe myself as always trying to be the best mum, wife, friend and colleague I can be whilst forgiving myself constantly for the fact I know I never quite get there!

## HOW WOULD OTHERS DESCRIBE YOU:

Well my husband says I am curiously indispensable 😊.....I think most people would say I was a good listener and supportive friend/colleague who loves gin and designer shoes

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE, SETBACK OR FAILURE AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME IT? HOW DID YOU GROW OR CHANGE AS A RESULT?

The biggest challenge has been learning to reconcile all the different areas of my life that are important to me and accept that in all areas, good enough is genuinely good enough. As with many of us I have battled a tendency towards perfectionism at work and definitely had times in the past when I gave work (and the time I spent at work) too much prominence in my life.

Recognising and acknowledging that tendency was the first step to learning to find a better balance. An important revelation was realising that failing to delegate not only had a negative impact on me but can give others a sense that you don't trust them and prevent them developing .....this was just as relevant when I was doing primary clinical work as it is in the roles I have now. Failure wise.....I am ashamed to admit that after several attempts to learn I still can't swim.....there's always another challenge....

## WHAT COMPROMISES HAVE YOU HAD TO MAKE AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD HAVE HELPED?

Compromises are such an inevitable part of life and I am constantly compromising. In one fantasy world, I am a stay at home Mum who runs 5 miles a day, volunteers with the local PTA and cooks the kids' dinner from scratch. In another fantasy world, I don't have a family to consider and can focus more on work, spend more time with my colleagues, contribute more to the profession and animal welfare and am doing a Masters in clinical research. But acknowledging that neither of those worlds would be better than the messy muddle I live in means that I think compromises are the best thing ever!

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE GIVEN TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF, THAT YOU WOULD NOW GIVE TO OTHERS WANTING TO FOLLOW YOUR PATH?

Take opportunities as they present to you, even if they scare you, and work how to make it happen later.....and make sure you know what you stand for as a person and that you put yourself in environments where you can be that person.

## I COULDN'T HAVE GOT WHERE I AM TODAY WITHOUT...

...saying yes to things I wasn't sure I could do....

## WHAT ARE YOUR THREE TOP LIKES?

1. Eating takeaway on a Friday night while sharing classic films from the @80's with my daughters ("Ferris Buellers Day Off" anyone??)
2. Having a view of the Scottish hills from my bedroom window
3. Knowing I do a job that makes a difference

## WHAT ARE YOUR THREE TOP DISLIKES?

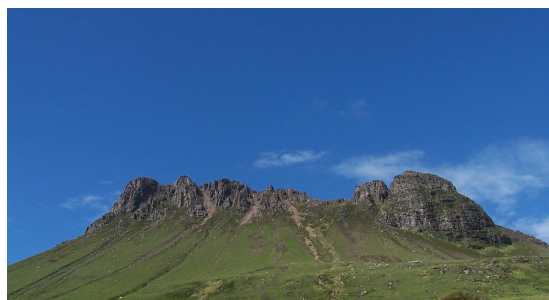
1. Whinging (from anyone!)
2. Getting out of bed on a Sunday morning to go for a run (although I always feel better once I have done it!)
3. The current state of world politics!

## WHAT IS THE MOST HELPFUL BOOK YOU'VE READ AND WHY?

Ooooooh - good question.....anything by Atul Gawande has to be up there....and Matthew Syed's "Black Box thinking" is really valuable.

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER RESOURCES YOU'D RECOMMEND (BLOGS, WEBSITES, TED TALKS, COURSES ETC)?

Remi Eddo-Lodge "Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race"  
And the RCVS Edward Jenner leadership Mooc of course 😊



Many thanks to Amanda for sharing her story to **inspire** veterinary women to **aspire** and **grow** into their full career potential.

If you would like to share your story please get in touch at [info@veterinarywoman.co.uk](mailto:info@veterinarywoman.co.uk)

Visit the website for more information and resources at [www.veterinarywoman.co.uk](http://www.veterinarywoman.co.uk)

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