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B B C Worldwide

Vets in Practice Series 7

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Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

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BBC Worldwide

Vets in Practice Series 7

The hugely popular show that made stars of Trude Mostue and Steve Leonard

Healing sick animals is a vocation

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

BBC Worldwide

Vets in Practice Series 7

Introduction

Vets in Practice originally began by following 10, newly qualified, young veterinary students through the first few years on the job. Seven series later, it is now a prime-time favourite in the British schedules and the students are now seasoned vets practising all over the world.

As the young vets do their best to heal sick and injured animals, this fly-on-the-wall series has millions of British viewers hanging off the edge of their seats with its warmth, honesty and sometimes heart-stopping moments.

Vets In Practice is not just a showcase of interesting animals. It also brings us closer than ever before to those who care for them and provides an insight into the human aspects of the job. It has also created a few stars: Norwegian Trude Mostue, Mike Sandiford, who works in Botswana, and Steve Leonard, voted one of *Company Magazine's* 50 most eligible bachelors. Trude and Steve have also gone on to star in spin-off series, *Vets in the Wild* and *Vets to the Rescue*.

In Series 7, vet Emma Inglis has to operate on her own dog Badger, Tom Leonard is called out to attend to a ewe that has gone into premature labour while his brother Steve discovers that llamas have very sharp teeth. Heavily pregnant Maria Lowe treats an electrocuted collie, while Keith Leonard castrates a horse. New vet to the series, Sam Robinson treats a traumatised kitten, Steve Leonard starts in a new practice, Fiona Green is in the Bahamas and Trude has a new love in her life – Brian, otherwise known as the Great Dane.

Other patients include a koi carp choking on another fish, a hamster found in a cat's mouth, a poisoned puppy, an injured kestrel and a dachshund with a swollen leg.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

Production Credits - check with rt

Directors

Tuppence Stone (Episodes 1, 10)

Colin Naphine (Episodes 2, 8)

Isabelle Pritchard (Episodes 3, 5)

Carole Lochhead (Episode 4)

Rachel Pinnock (Episode 6)

Debbi Moore (Episode 7)

Trevor Hill (Episode 9)

Series Producers

Amanda Reilly

Executive Producer

Tessa Finch (*Au Pairs*)

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

Episode Synopses

1. One of the Family

Vets In Practice returns with a splash when Trude Mostue's first patient is a koi carp choking on another fish. It's an unusual case, so Trude has to improvise by bubbling the anaesthetic through a bucket of water before she can attempt to extract the carp's spiny lunch – without Trude or the nurse succumbing to the anaesthetic themselves. Eventually, using a pair of tweezers, Trude reaches into the carp's mouth and pulls out the little fish.

Emma Inglis has a difficult day ahead; she must operate on her own dog. A lump has developed on Badger's ear and it could be skin cancer. Emma must remove a wedge of flesh and skin to be sure, if it's cancer, it won't spread. Emma takes the scalpel to Badger, while Badger's soul-mate, Pan, pines on the stairs outside the operating theatre. Everything goes smoothly and, as Badger comes round from the anaesthetic, Pan is there to greet him. Emma sends the tumour off for analysis – only time will tell if it's benign or more serious. Meanwhile, husband Joe is at home getting into his latest routine as a house husband. Trude's best friend, Maria, is also busy with a dog with possible cancer. Christie is a Boxer cherished by owner Dave Beech and his family. She has a large swelling on her jaw and a profusion of worrying lumps in her mammary glands. Maria is immediately worried about the prognosis. Mr Beech is given antibiotics to tackle the abscess on her jaw and has to make a tough decision for his dog.

2. Water Babies

Tom Leonard is called out to attend to a ewe that has gone into premature labour. Both lambs die and there's a real danger that the farmer will lose the mother too. Sheep are notorious for losing the will to live, but Tom knows that the best way to save her is to find a lamb for her to adopt. The farmer's wife advertises for one at the local livestock market and waits to see if she gets a response. Meanwhile, Tom's brother, Steve, has decided to take a year off from full-time vetting to do some travelling and fulfil some of his other ambitions. To support himself, he is doing some freelance locum work and today he's been called out to see an animal he's never come across before; a llama, which he quickly discovers has very sharp teeth.

Steve has always wanted to learn how to scuba dive so he's taking a course at a swimming pool in North Wales. It's a little different from the sea around the Bahamas which is where his classmate from vet school, Fiona Green, is currently diving for a living. She's also taking a year off from vetting and she and her boyfriend, Nick Allinson, are working for a dive centre on the island of New Providence. Nick's job is to hand-feed Caribbean reef sharks for the benefit of visiting divers while Fiona films him. It sounds more dangerous than it is, but they both have to wear chains on their arms in case they get bitten. In her spare time, Fiona's is doing voluntary work at the Bahamas Humane Society. A stray puppy is brought in with nerve damage to his leg. Eventually, a new home will be found for him, but first, Fiona needs to build up his leg muscles. Swimming is the best therapy for him, so a trip to the beach is just what the doctor ordered.

Back in England, Steve has some alternative therapies in mind for one of his patients too. He has been asked to perform some acupuncture on a boxer dog called Hogan who is suffering from chronic arthritis in his back legs. The treatment works well but swimming is useful too. A trip to the sea isn't an option in cold and rainy Lancashire, so Hogan pays a visit to a local specialist hydrotherapy centre where he can splash about to his heart's content.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

Episode Synopses

3. Lovesick

Heavily pregnant vet Maria Lowe is anxious to leave work on time to pick up her toddler, Jack, from nursery. But first, she must deal with two serious cases. Sweep, a Border Collie, needs treatment for severe shock after being electrocuted on an electric cattle fence. Then DJ, a Springer spaniel, needs an operation to remove the three stones he's eaten – but finding them in the abdomen proves to be more of a problem than Maria first thought.

In Anglesey, Wales, Keith Leonard is also working against the clock. A shepherd brings in a ewe who has been struggling to give birth for two hours. With the two unborn lambs at risk from dying at any time, Keith decides their only hope for survival is an emergency Caesarean, an operation which costs almost as much as the lives at stake – it's touch and go whether the farmer will decide it's worth it. Keith also has to treat a horse whose hormones need controlling. Majestic Prince has become aggressive, so his owner decides castration is his best option. The pressure is on Keith, who has just 15 minutes to carry out the operation before the anaesthetic wears off.

Off duty, Keith revels in being a single lad on a day's trip bridge-swinging with his mates, while Maria enjoys spending time at home with Jack and pondering on her plans to set up in practice with Trude while she has a young family. All that Trude has on her mind, however, is the new love in her life... her Danish boyfriend Brian, otherwise known as the Great Dane.

4. New Kid on the Block

At the Swanbridge Veterinary Hospital in Hull, Sam Robinson (who is new to *Vets In Practice*) has not one, but two emergencies to deal with. Ten-month-old Tigger has been hit by a car and has suffered a broken jaw and swollen eye. Tigger is in so much shock that even just putting him on a drip is traumatic for both cat and vet. While Tigger settles down, Sam's next patient is waiting for immediate treatment. Sasha, a whippet, has run into a barbed-wire fence whilst chasing rabbits and has a huge gash in her side.

Sam has a busy morning dealing with small animals, but Swanbridge is also a thriving horse practice. John Levison runs the practice with girlfriend, Liz. She has five horses of her own and one of them, nine-month-old Monty, has started to gulp air, which can cause colic and weight loss, while chewing on fences. John decides on radical surgery to put a stop to the wind-sucking. Helping John is Sam and a recently graduated vet, Sally Kingsley. Sally was drawn to Swanbridge because she has always wanted to work with horses and she's put in charge of the anaesthetic while John and Sam press ahead with the operation.

Sam's loyalty to the practice hasn't gone unnoticed and John rewards her with a new car. In time, Sam's new colleague, Sally, hopes to be rewarded in the same way, but first she has a professional mountain to climb. She's got to remove a mammary tumour from Scruffy the guinea-pig, but these are uncharted waters for her.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

Episode Synopses

5. Eaten Alive!

Steve Leonard is on his first day at a new locum position in Widnes and he doesn't exactly get off to a good start. First, he arrives late. Then, after being promised "nothing out of the ordinary", he is confronted with Ig, the bearded dragon, who has been attacked by his own food – a cricket.

Emma Inglis is also confronted with a victim of violence. Bobby the hamster is brought in, having been found in a cat's mouth. While Emma thrives on making animals better, she has nevertheless reached a point in her career where she has become disillusioned with some aspects of veterinary work. After qualifying four years ago, there are some cases she feels uncomfortable about treating. When Seth the parrot's owner comes in, enquiring about having his wings clipped, Emma decides it is not something she wants to do, but she is happy to give Seth a general check-up.

For Emma's husband, Joe, there's a change on the horizon. After several months of being a general locum and a house-husband, he's found a new job near Oxford. His first case, Snowy (an elderly Westie), is too sick to walk and is transported to the surgery by wheelbarrow.

Emma needs all the help she can get with her last patient. After jumping from a first-storey window, Bess the dog is brought in with a dislocated hip. Following various unsuccessful attempts at putting the ball back in its socket, it's nurse Julie Irons who turns out to have the healing hands.

6. Foreign Bodies

After living in Britain for 10 years, Norwegian vet Trude Mostue has finally decided to put down roots in England. She has seen a flat she would like to buy, but before she can turn her attention to domestic matters, she is faced with one of the most difficult experiences of her veterinary career. Desmond, a baby rabbit, has the largest abscess Trude has ever seen. If she is to save Desmond's life, Trude has no choice but to hold her breath and remove all the poisonous, stinking pus.

Meanwhile, Maria Lowe has to treat Basil, a Jack Russell puppy, who has eaten slug pellets wrapped in sausage meat. They'd been laid on a footpath by someone who wanted to kill badgers but Basil mistook them for a tasty meal. Basil's day goes from bad to worse as Maria tries to extract every last bit of poison.

Desmond the rabbit's abscess seems to be healing well, so Trude takes some time off to show her Danish boyfriend, Brian, the flat she'd like to buy. However, on the day of her move, Desmond is back – his abscess has returned. Trude has to resort to surgery to cut the site of the abscess away from the rabbit's back. It's a major operation for such a small bunny and there is no guarantee that Desmond will pull through.

Trude finally gets away from the surgery and picks up the keys to her new flat. Champagne corks fly as Trude and Brian settle into their new home.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

Episode Synopses

7. Fighting Spirit

Trude Mostue has a very early appointment at Longleat Safari Park with a lion cub which needs to be inoculated. Unfortunately, the cub's mother has other ideas. After her eventful trip to Longleat, Trude is glad to return to her small animal surgery. Waiting to see her is Desmond the rabbit. Ongoing problems with his abscess have flared up yet again, creating further complications, and she's faced with some tough decisions.

In Hull, Trude's old classmate, Sam Robinson, has a far less troublesome patient to deal with. Rasi, an Arab stallion, has a hernia in his abdomen and needs immediate surgery. Sam is now an accomplished horse vet but, to everyone's surprise, her ambitions have changed. After gaining more experience of small animal surgery, the thrill of horse work is wearing off. However, to give up horses would mean her moving to a non-equine practice, which has left Sam seriously considering whether it's time for a change of job.

8. Change of Heart

Sam Robinson has been offered a new job working at a hospital for small animals in Nottingham. She's not looking forward to telling her current boss, John Levinson, and her friend and colleague, Sally Kingsley.

However, first she has a patient to attend to: Martin Cuthbert's horse, Fritz, has a problem that won't go away. Fritz has been coming to the Swanbridge practice for almost as long as Sam has worked there, but none of the treatments have been successful in getting rid of his equine sarcoids, a form of skin cancer. Martin has already spent £2,000 hunting for a cure and, although the condition will almost certainly eventually kill Fritz, Martin is happy for Sam to cut off the latest lump which is growing on the inside of his thigh and interfering with his movement.

Sam's fellow vet-school graduate, Fiona Green is working at the Humane Society in the Bahamas where she has become an expert in diseases that were barely mentioned at vet school. One of the most common is a deadly tropical parasite called heartworm, which is transmitted by mosquitoes and grows in the arteries around the heart, blocking them like cold spaghetti. One dog, called Rocky, has tested positive for heartworm, but it looks like Fiona has caught the disease in time and will be able to treat him with a course of injections and pills.

Fiona's next patient, a dog called Scamp, is also a victim of heartworm. His condition is so severe he can't even walk into the surgery. All Fiona can do for him is to make him more comfortable and send him home.

After much thought, Fiona is considering a moving back to Britain. Her old boss in Reading has offered her a job and she decides it's time to leave the Bahamas and head for home.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

Episode Synopses

9. Brothers In Arms

Tom, Steve and Keith Leonard all followed in their father's footsteps to pursue careers as vets. Tom, the eldest, is a farm vet with a steady job in rural Lancashire where he values the ongoing contact with regular clients. Steve and Keith get work where and when they can as locum vets, which allows them greater freedom to pursue their travel interests.

Farmer Peter Heaton has more than 2,000 pigs and every three months, to satisfy Government regulations, the farm has to be inspected by an approved vet. Tom pays Peter a visit for the required checks on hygiene and animal welfare. While he's there, Peter's wife, Louise, asks Tom to look at Duke, a horse who has been lame in one leg since getting new shoes, and Charlie, a donkey who's due for a check-up. Keith is faced with some difficult and emotional decisions. A 12-year-old Rottweiler called Holly has a cancerous growth on her chest. It would normally be removed under general anaesthetic, but this would be too risky because Holly also has a weak heart. Steve, meanwhile, has a much more clear-cut case on his hands. Pebbles the cat has been involved in an accident which has severed the nerves in his tail. Steve will have to remove it.

Across the courtyard from Sam in the small animal surgery is the Swanbridge surgery's newest veterinary recruit. Sally Kingsley is dealing with a rather unusual patient: a local highways inspector has found an injured kestrel which has fallen prey to the traffic and it's Sally's job to take the bird under her wing. A couple of days later, Sally is faced with a rabbit called Cocoa who needs a delicate operation to remove a severely infected eye. This is Cocoa's last chance as he hasn't responded to antibiotics and the infection will soon spread through his body.

10. Well Bred

A builder rushes in a stray cat which has been left for dead in a rubbish skip. Trude finds a microchip under his skin, enabling her to locate his owners and discover that his name is Bertie. Bertie's owners arrive to be reunited with their beloved cat, but they can't take him home as he has a badly dislocated hip.

Maria Lowe makes a rare home-visit. Miss MacSweeney, 89, is too frail to get to the surgery and is concerned about her Dachshund Sheena's swollen leg. Maria believes that the swelling could be caused by the distorted anatomy of Dachshunds' short, squat legs, but hopes that a course of anti-inflammatory pills will solve the problem. But the pills do not work, and Sheena is brought into the surgery for exploratory x-rays. While Sheena is under anaesthetic, Maria finds a lump in her armpit and decides to take a biopsy tissue sample to send away for analysis.

Like Trude and Maria, who are working towards their dream of setting up their own practice, Emma and Joe Inglis are also building for the future. At their Cheltenham home in the Cotswolds, the bathroom and garden are being gutted and rebuilt, and the couple are busy at work too. Emma's challenge is to give a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel called Zack a face-lift. Zack is normally a bubbly dog, but a mouth infection has put him off his food. Emma believes that Zack's problem is due to his breed's characteristic short snout and heavy lips. The only surgical solution is to remove some of the excess skin and make him more tight-lipped.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

Ratings

Episode	UK Txn Date	Channel	Time On	Viewers	Audience Share
1	14.08.00	BBC1	20.30	7.5 million	33%*
2	15.08.00	BBC1	20.30	6.1 million	27%
3	22.08.00	BBC1	20.00	7.5 million	38%
4	24.08.00	BBC1	20.00	7.0 million	37%
5	29.08.00	BBC1	20.00	7.3 million	35%
6	31.08.00	BBC1	20.00	7.9 million	37%
7	05.09.00	BBC1	20.00	7.0 million	32%
8	07.09.00	BBC1	20.15	6.1 million	26%**
9	13.09.00	BBC1	19.30	6.7 million	33%
10	14.09.00	BBC1	20.00	6.5 million	27%**

* The first episode of Series 7 topped the British documentary chart, knocking C4's *Big Brother* into second place

** Downturn due to *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* on ITV

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

What the Papers Say

"Vets In Practice looks like running for ever." *Mirror*

"Bertie the cat was left for dead in a rubbish skip. But he was rescued and passed to Trude Mostue who tended him and handed him back to his owners. Lucky Bertie. Who wouldn't like some loving care from Trude?" *People*

"Vets in Practice has just returned, with Trude Mostue promoted to *Radio Times* cover girl, and a fresh menu of choking carp and guinea-pig bladder stones to nourish us through the autumn evenings. What does this mean, beyond the fact that tedium need be no barrier to ratings success? Perhaps it signifies that a powerful means of tugging heartstrings was accidentally overlooked for years, and now television producers are making up for lost time. Then again, it may signify a shift in our thinking, a new relationship with the animal world – we're starting to take animals' suffering as seriously as our own, as philosophers such as Peter Singer have been saying we should." *Independent*

"Trude (Maria von Trapp meets Joy Adamson)..." *Guardian*

"It's got most of my favourite things. Cats, dogs, horses and an array of highly trained, intelligent blondes." *The Times*

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

What the Papers Say (Feature)

Daily Mirror: Trude Mostue

Trude's bizarre test to find her Mr Right

TV vet Trude Mostue reveals her unusual method of proving her boyfriend's love for her. It was the moment Trude Mostue had been dreading but she could put it off no longer. Bravely taking her boyfriend's hand and looking up into his eyes, she steeled herself to drop her bombshell. Then she calmly announced, "I think I'm pregnant." Unsure of his reaction, nothing could hide her joy as a huge smile spread across his face and he beamed, "Great!" The television vet was delighted. She wasn't really pregnant – she had pulled the extraordinary stunt to find out how committed her Danish lover Brian Povlsen was. "I was just testing him...as girls do," she admits. "But he said, 'Great' and I said, 'You can't say that.' He told me later, 'The scary thing was I was almost hoping you were pregnant'. That told me a lot about him, because I realised he's really committed and serious. I need someone like that in my life."

It is nine years since Trude first appeared on our screens as a dizzy student in *Vet School*. Despite her lack of confidence and mishaps, viewers took the young Norwegian to their hearts, whether she was clumsily castrating a bullock or crying over her dismal exam results. Her career rocketed with later series such as *Vets In Practice* and *Vets To The Rescue*. Today the blue-eyed blonde is a confident, glamorous television star who also runs her own veterinary practice in Bristol where she lives.

Although her professional life could not be better, Trude admits the ticking of her biological clock is starting to get louder. "I really think I should start having children soon," she says with a sigh. "I've been so into my work for the last 11 years that I haven't had a lot of time to think about my personal circumstances. But, God, I'm 32." With three broken relationships behind her, Trude is now happily settled with Brian, a computer engineer and part-time model. The pair met in Belfast last September when Trude was filming a TV licence commercial in which Brian was appearing as a "beefy extra". They were inseparable and, by the end of the year, the Great Dane had moved in with the animal-lover. "After Brian had known me for just 48 hours he said, 'Maybe it's destiny that we met each other on this shoot.' I thought, 'This is weird, how can this guy say that?' I'd actually decided not to get involved with him because he was very different from anyone I'd ever met. I wouldn't normally go for a guy like that, but then I never go for the same type anyway."

For Trude it is a happy ending to a turbulent few years. Despite the sackloads of fan mail and up to 10 marriage proposals she receives each week, it seemed that her love life would never be as successful as her career. Last summer she split with computer expert Patrick Evans. She later blamed work pressures for the end of their year-and-a-half-long relationship. Before Patrick, another 18-month love affair with sports journalist Hector Taylor ended, not helped by the attention Trude received from fans. Her first big love, a Norwegian engineering student, expected Trude to return to Oslo after her university finals and settle down to married life, something which Trude, on the brink of her TV career, was not prepared to do. At one point she even contemplated seeking professional help for her relationship problems.

"I did consider counselling," she says. "One boyfriend suggested it because he said I was too nice. He kept on treating me really badly and said it was because I was too easy-going and no challenge. I thought that was awful. I mean, I am easy-going, but people have to accept me for that."

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

What the Papers Say (Feature)

Daily Mirror: Trude Mostue continued/2

"Brian is totally unfazed by my TV work and fame," she adds. "I don't think Patrick was fazed either, but he found it hard to accept that the amount of time I have to spend working took a lot away from our relationship."

Because of her past, she is wary of being over-confident about her current romance. "I feel careful about hoping for anything," she admits. "With Patrick, I was saying things in the Press like, 'This is the one.' And when it was all over I felt really stupid. So when I started seeing Brian I decided to be careful what I said because I didn't want to put extra pressure on our relationship. "We'll just see how things work out. He might be able to put up with all the things I do. If he can't, he'll have to go. It's as simple as that. There will always be more fish in the sea. I can't be bothered messing around. I'm not interested in spending time seeing a bloke if I know it won't last. You don't want to waste too much time on the wrong person. I hate to sound like Ally McBeal, but that's how girls' minds work when we get to 30. That's why we can't be dramatic in getting over things. I can understand people who get married and have children at 23. If they've completed their education and feel settled then it might feel natural. But for me it hasn't felt natural, because of all the things I do."

Despite her reservations and her intention to be sensible about the future, Trude can't quite mask her belief that, this time, she might have found Mr Right. "I know he has a lot of qualities I'm looking for. And I can hear myself saying what I've said many times before, but this is different," she says. "To begin with, part of me felt that I was getting involved with him too quickly, but his determination won me over. He was so serious about feeling that there was something special going on, and he felt very attracted to the idea of coming over to England. Even the idea of living with him seemed a bit scary because that's a lot of responsibility for me. He was living in Dublin but he's moved over now. He's meant to find a place in London, but he's staying with me at the moment. I thought it was a bit fast, because it's not that long since I split up with Patrick, but then I thought, 'Oh well, he can stay. And if he doesn't like me and I don't like him, then we'll just have to call it a day!'"

In fact things have turned out remarkably well. "Brian is very romantic," she smiles. "He does sweet things like cook for me and always does the chores around the house. He is great at things like painting and decorating." At Christmas and Easter, Trude took Brian to Norway to meet her parents. There, her father also subjected Brian to a bizarre test. "Whenever I bring a new boyfriend home, dad puts them through this wood-chopping ritual," she says. "They both put on checked shirts and go out into the freezing cold to chop wood. That's how dad sorts out the men from the boys. But Brian is strong and can chop wood very well. I didn't tell my father this because I wanted to see his face, but Brian actually used to be a lumberjack, so this time the joke was on dad."

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

What the Papers Say (Feature)

Daily Mirror: Trude Mostue continued/3

Now based in England, Trude visits her parents whenever filming schedules allow. Her mum Tordis is a secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, dad Leif, and younger sister Lene, 30, are engineers, and elder sister Hilda, 39, is a district nurse. "Hilda and Lene were the sensible ones," says Trude with a chuckle. "And I was the rebel in the middle. I was the mad one going out partying, causing mum to shout and scream. Lene got a lot of attention because she was little, and Hilda because she was the oldest. As a kid I never felt left out but I think now that's what it was. Everyone says the middle child is often like that. I hate to label myself as an attention-seeker, but I wouldn't be doing what I do now if I didn't enjoy it."

Although family is important to her, Trude is not sure whether she is ready to settle down and start one of her own. "Sometimes I go through silly romantic periods where I wonder if anyone will ever ask me to marry them," she says. "I've never been close to a proposal. Usually marriage is mentioned by men after they split up with me, but then it's too late."

"When I was younger I vowed I'd be married by the time I was 26 and have children by 28. Then, when I got to 28 and nothing had happened, I thought, 'Oh dear, something went wrong!' Nothing had gone wrong, of course, I just wasn't in the right stage of my life."

Now with a string of successful television series to her name, her own veterinary practice and a loving relationship, that right stage might be just around the corner. "Brian knows that my workload is temporary and it is not going to last for ten years," she says. "And he says even if it does, it's going to be worth the wait. He thinks in longer terms. "He knows that, even if he can't see me for three or four weeks if I'm out filming somewhere, we're still going to have another 30 or 40 years together."

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes

Vets in Practice Series 7

What the Papers Say

Express on Sunday: Steve Leonard

They are young, good-looking and single-minded in their passion. They travel by seaplane and speedboat and there's no expense spared when jetting them around to explore the planet's rarest and most exotic creatures... The new generation of highly qualified wildlife presenters are turning natural history programmes into some of the sexiest around. To entertain audiences who are more demanding and better-travelled than previous generations, wildlife presenters are competing to make their series the most adventurous, dangerous and fast-paced – with film effects that could have come straight out of Hollywood.

The new male presenters are laddish, brave and, in some cases, have physiques perfect for posing on the back of boats or emerging in wetsuits after Bond-like underwater missions. Their series – which invariably involve trying to track down lethal snakes, sharks or other man-eaters – have suitably adrenalin-pumped names like *Ultimate Killers*. What they all share, other than a childhood idol in David Attenborough, is a passion for their subject, their nomadic lives leaving little time for anything else.

A natural history talentspotter, *Wildlife On One* series producer Sara Ford says that, above all, presenters must be respected for their professional expertise; they just happen to be naturals in front of the camera too. "Audiences have said that they want presenters to be specialist. Steve Leonard isn't just doing it for thrills, he's coming at it from professional perspectives."

STEVE LEONARD

The 28-year-old square-jawed vet, who rose to fame with Trude Mostue in the BBC series *Vet School*, *Vets In Practice* and *Vets In The Wild*, is off hunting grizzly bear in Alaska at present. So Martin Hughes-Games, the producer of Steve's next series, *Ultimate Killers*, out early next year, explains the vet's appeal.

"He's very attractive to women and blokes like him too – without him being laddish. Some presenters are characters in their own right, the Jeremy Clarksons of the natural world. But Steve is more of a host – your conduit to the animals." For more information than you require, Hughes-Games adds that Leonard is single, teetotal, "but it's as if he's drunk all the time anyway" and he never washes his hair or uses soap "but always smells great".

The gist of *Ultimate Killers* is to pit Leonard against the world's fastest, deadliest animals. It sees him racing cheetahs, abseiling into a cave of man-eating pythons, jumping out of a balloon at 13,000ft to test a hawk and climbing 40ft trees in the rainforest to meet some deadly eagles. "He is very funny and gentle but he has a core of complete fearlessness," says Hughes-Games. "He has a lot of credibility as a qualified vet and has been offered his dream job, at Blackpool Zoo, at the end of this series."

That's if TV stardom doesn't seize him first. He's being plugged as the new face of BBC1 and he's one of four vet brothers (he's apparently the sensitive, cerebral one), so look out for the McGanns of the vet world.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes



Vets in Practice Series 7

Related Series

Vet School

6 x 30'

Follows eight veterinary students in their fifth and final year at Langford Vet School.

Vets in the Wild

8 x 30'

Trude Mostue and Steve Leonard on a field trip in Africa.

Vets in the Wild Special: Polar Bear

1 x 50'

Trude and Steve encounter danger and tragedy on a trip to the Arctic

Vets to the Rescue

30 x 30' or 15 x 50'

Trude and a team of animal experts set up a marquee in Chester Zoo.

Future Production:

Ultimate Killers (6 x 30' or 3 x 60'),

Steve Leonard pits his wits against the most deadly creatures in nature.

Documentary

10 x 30 minutes