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## Graduate fulfils island dream

KAREN Harris is a veterinary graduate on a mission after getting the go-ahead to fulfil her ambition – volunteering at the Esther Honey Veterinary Clinic on the Cook Islands.

After qualifying from the RVC in July, Miss Harris (pictured) has arranged to begin her veterinary career on the tiny islands in the Pacific Ocean. The four-month trip will be the realisation of a three-year ambition, which started when the 22-year old completed an EMS placement in Thailand with Emily Wyson, a vet who had worked at the island clinic.

Miss Harris explained: “The clinic in the Cook Islands has been at the back of my mind for the past three years. I made a deal with myself that if I got through finals, I would look into volunteering there.”

The clinic, in the capital Rarotonga, is the islands’ only veterinary centre. It has treated almost 20,000 animals since it opened in 1995. Its founder, Cathy Sue Ragan-Anunsen, set up the centre to humanely reduce the number of street dogs and cats on the islands. Prior to the clinic’s opening, these animals were shot.

It has neutered more than 8,000 animals and treats a range of species including cats, dogs, pigs, goats, horses, birds, fruit bats and a seal.

Miss Harris hopes to take as many veterinary products as possible to stock the clinic. She is confident the trip will improve her experience

of neutering, suturing and wound infection treatment. She is also looking forward to seeing unusual cases, such as the stray cats and dogs that are often brought to the clinic with ciguatera poisoning after eating reef fish.

She said: “These cases tend to present with neurological signs and require intensive care. The charity tells me to expect at least one case a week. My intention is to get a good grounding in general practice. I am ultimately hoping to apply these skills to a career in overseas development in the future.”

