

Professor Louise Jackson claims her dogs were kept in "disgusting" conditions

Quarantine kennel 'holding injured dogs to ransom' in hygiene row

by ANDREW DON

TWO dogs are being "held to ransom" in a quarantine kennel that has already been closed once by Government inspectors, the animals' owner claimed today.

Professor Louise Jackson plans to return to Canada as soon as she can recover her dogs from the kennels in Hertfordshire where, she says, they have developed sores and lesions as a result of insanitary conditions. The kennels' owners are demanding £2,500 before they agree to release the dogs.

Professor Jackson, an anthropologist who emigrated to Canada and then decided to return to England, placed Hetty and Houdini, a Dalmatian and a whippet, with the Greenveldt International Five Star Dog And Cat Hotel when she planned to return to Britain from Vancouver five months ago.

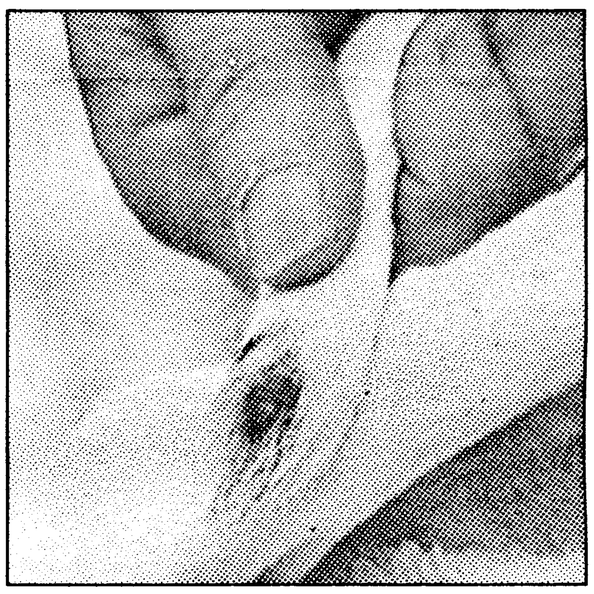
Her first chance to visit the animals at the kennels near Hitchen came two weeks ago, and she says she was appalled at what she found.

She told the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which accredits quarantine stations, that blankets provided for the dogs stank, and that she found large patches of stale urine on their bodies and rawness on Houdini's belly. "I have never seen them in such a pitiful or disgusting state," she said. "The stench of urine in the entire quarantine area was astounding." Hetty had sustained a tail injury and had an abscess beneath her eye, she claims.

Maff told her that it has no powers to act unless quarantine regulations are being breached.

Professor Jackson tried to move her dogs to another kennels, but Greenveldt told her that the animals could not go unless she paid £2,500 — the cost of the full six months' quarantine.

Greenveldt refused an offer to pay £515 to cover a month's accommodation — the normal condition of transfer — even if the rest was to be paid later.



An injury that Houdini is said to have suffered at the kennel

the second time. She said: "My dogs are being held to ransom. I've had it. I'm not having another five months wondering how they are or whether Hetty will have to have her tail amputated. I want them out and safe. I'm getting out of the country.

"Even if it means three more days in that place, that is the least stressful thing for them. They are pretty resilient, but there is a limit, and I have reached mine."

Her claims are supported in a written complaint to Maff by a former Greenveldt employee — and by a Maff vet interviewed by the Evening Standard.

The former employee said there were mouse and rat droppings all over the food preparation and storage areas, and that toys and litter trays were so dirty that they had to be washed in bleach.

John Cousins, a veterinary superintendent required to visit Greenveldt, said: "I would not want to put my dog in there if I had a choice in it. There are times when the smell is really unpleasant. They do receive regular complaints. I do not think it would be difficult to make a more plush kennels than this."

It is not the first time Maff has heard such stories about Greenveldt, but the kennels are still operating.

In 1995, when the kennels were run by husband and wife Lawrence and Jeanette Green, the ministry brought a prosecu-

relating to the operation and management of the premises. The trial was adjourned when Mr Green suffered a heart attack.

A Maff spokesman said: "By the time a new date for the hearing had been fixed ... it was considered not in the public interest to revive the case."

In March 1996, the ministry withdrew its authorisation for Greenveldt. According to the Evening Standard's sources, there had been 77 complaints about the kennels prior to the closure — although Maff says it is unable to confirm this. Only 13 months later, Maff reaccredited Greenveldt after an application from the Greens' sons, Wayne and Mark.

A complaint about poor hygiene at Greenveldt was upheld last year, and the ministry promised further inspections. Another complaint is being investigated. One of the conditions of Greenveldt being reaccredited was that Lawrence and Jeanette Green should play no part in the running of the business. However, Professor Jackson says her contact with Greenveldt has been almost always through Lawrence Green.

Last year, members of the campaign group Passports For Pets visited the kennels, posing as prospective clients. They claim that they were met by Lawrence Green.

When the Evening Standard attempted to contact Wayne Green, he refused to comment.

His father Lawrence at first denied the claim about mouse droppings, but then said: "Wherever you get animals, you are liable to get vermin. For that reason we put poison down around the boarding kennel, the food preparation area and in certain places. We used to have a rodent man ... He retired so we carried on doing the same programme."

He said bedding was washed and changed twice a week.

His son, Mark, said: "What you are saying astounds me. All I can do is refer you back to the Ministry of Agriculture. Anything