

# AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY HISTORY RECORD

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Camden Serials

636.0890609 3

Australian veterinary history  
record.

27

**MARCH 2000**

Number 27

The Australian Veterinary History Record is published by  
the Australian Veterinary History Society in the months of  
March, July and November.

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## ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE 6 May 2000

The Australian Veterinary History Society's Conference and Annual General meeting will be held in the Clunies Ross Lecture Theatre at the Sydney University Veterinary School on Saturday, 6 May, commencing at 1.00PM.

Four papers will be presented followed by our AGM. A dinner is being arranged in the evening at the adjacent Veterinary Science Conference Centre and on Sunday morning a visitation to the veterinary facilities at the Taronga Park Zoo is being organised.

Speakers presenting papers will be:

Dr Robin Giesecke: Ann Flashman – The first woman to enrol in the Sydney Veterinary Faculty.

Dr John Fisher and George McFarlane: History of Blue Cross Veterinary Products Pty Ltd.

Dr Arthur Webster: The Webster Business – The Long Distance Race

Dr Peter Mylrea: New Australian Veterinarians and the NSW Veterinary Surgeons Board.

These diverse papers should make for an interesting afternoon of veterinary history. Last year a successful dinner followed our afternoon conference and we are anticipating a successful occasion this year. Those attending the conference are therefore cordially

invited to attend or dinner at the veterinary Conference Centre. You will not have far to travel!

There are no registration fees. The cost of the dinner will be \$45.00

For catering purposes please contact Dr Chris Bunn 02 6272 5540 or for further enquiries or bookings myself. on 02 9327 3853.

Keith Baker. President

### HISTORICAL PAPERS

#### **The formation of the Australian Veterinary Association and its progress to incorporation under the New South Wales Companies' Act in 1932.. W.A.N.Robertson. Part 2 1918 to 1925**

[Part 1 of this series appeared in Australian Veterinary History Record Number 26.]

With the return of the soldiers from the war, interest in the veterinary associations revived. In Sydney the first post-war meeting was held in August 1919, when F. Whitehouse was elected Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. This was the first appearance of an Australian graduate in an official position in the New South Wales Association. It indicated a turn of the tide, for the growing strength of this Association, and indeed of all the veterinary associations in Australia, was to come from the graduates of the Australian schools. The Victorian Association resumed its activities on March 31, 1920. This was regarded as an ordinary meeting and also as the First Annual General meeting of the Association formed in December 1913. In South Australia the Association met again on May 7, 1920 whilst in the same year in Perth the West Australian

Association was born at a meeting of five graduates in a private home.

On his return to his position in the Department of Agriculture in New South Wales, Max Henry, as Organising Secretary of the Australian Veterinary Association, began his task of arousing Australia wide interest in the formation of a national association. He wrote to the secretaries of the State associations and to representative men in States where there was no association, asking that delegates be appointed to attend a meeting that was to be called in Melbourne. This meeting was held in the lecture hall of the veterinary school of the Melbourne University on January 12, 1921.

Before proceeding to the formation of the association there was a preliminary meeting at which the Organising Secretary called the meeting to order and outlined the events which had led to the meeting. It had been proposed that the inaugural meeting be held in Hobart at the same time as the meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science and this was not found convenient. Professor H.A. Woodruff was then elected to the chair and he immediately called for the appointment of a committee of three to examine the credentials of those present and of any proxies held by them. The meeting then proceeded to the election of members in accordance with the resolution of the conference held in 1914 as modified by the authority of the State associations. for the inaugural meeting. The proposed rules were dealt with seriatim. The objects of the Society were stated to be:- "The promotion and advancement of veterinary and allied sciences and the maintenance of the honour and interests of the veterinary profession by" and there followed a number of clauses detailing means to the desired ends. In all, the constitution contained forty-one clauses. Those eligible for membership were:-

- a. graduates and licentiates in veterinary science of Australian universities

- b. members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons of London
- c. holders of the diploma of G.M.V.C.
- d. persons holding a degree or diploma approved by the AVA on the recommendation of Council

There were two methods of application for membership, viz, directly to the AVA and through a State association. State associations were not divisions or branches of the AVA but were completely independent organisations. It was not necessary to be a member of a State association to join the AVA and State association members were under no obligation to join the AVA. Four members each to represent the States of Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland were elected to Council. There is no reference to the presence of a Queensland delegate at the meeting so that the nomination must have been made by post or by proxy. No nominations were received from West Australia or Tasmania. The officers elected were:-

President	Professor J.D. Stewart
Vic President	Professor H.A. Woodruff
Secretary	Max Henry
Treasurer	S.T.D. Symons

In the first year of its life the association was not very active. Only two council meetings were held. Two matters which exercised the minds of members were the status of the Army Veterinary Corps and the need for legislative control of biological products. The first Annual General Meeting was held in Sydney from April 11 to 13 1922. Papers of professional interest read dealt with:-

Control of Bovine Pleuro-pleuropneumonia  
 Forage Poisoning  
 Warbles in Cattle  
 Stallion Registration  
 Control of Biological Products

That the newly formed association intended to play an active part in protecting the interests of the profession is shown by the large number of resolutions requiring representations to the Commonwealth Director-General of Health and the Departments of Agriculture of the several States. The most important of these referred to biological products. The officers elected were.--

President	Professor H.A. Woodruff
Vice President	Dr. L.B. Bull
Act.Hon.Secretary	G. Heslop
Hon.Treasurer	S.T.D.. Symons

The constitution in force at the time made it obligatory that all the officers be elected from the membership of the Council. This made the election of Dr.Bull-to the Vice Presidency and that of Mr. Heslop to secretaryship invalid because neither were on the Council. To put the matter in order, a special General Meeting was held in Melbourne on September 22, 1922. Curiously, although the amendment to the constitution carried at the meeting made provision for the secretary to be elected from the general membership of the Association it maintained the limitation of the election of the Vice President from the general membership of the Council. At this meeting Mr. Heslop resigned from the secretaryship and Mr. Max Henry was elected in his place.

At the next Annual general Meeting – the second but incorrectly referred to in the minutes as the third – was held on August 16, 1923 in Melbourne, the following officers were elected:-

President	Dr L.B. Bull
Vice President	Mr W.A.N.Robertson
Secretary	Mr Max Henry
Treasurer	Professor J.D. Stewart

Again no nominations to Council were received from Tasmania and West Australia. At this meeting attention was drawn to the provision of the constitution which laid down that election to Council must be by postal ballot, but so far no postal ballot had been held. The only solution which the meeting could find to this irregular situation was to decide that the rules dealing with this provision for the election be suspended, although the constitution made no mention of suspension of rules. In the course of the discussion Dr Gilruth strongly urged that the Australian Veterinary Association be made into a 'real association' instead of the existing conglomeration of State associations. However three years were to pass before agreement was reached between the States on the matter of closer union. At this meeting too, the first reference was made to the drafting of a code of ethics.

Again there was a lot of discussion on the control of biological products and the need to impress on various, governmental authorities the necessity to take action to ensure the purity, efficiency and safety of these preparations.

At the first council meeting after his election as President, Dr. Bull said that it was imperative that the AVA 'commence the issue a professional journal as the organ of the Association and that "we would probably find the best arrangement to be one association with branches in all of the States". As a result of his advocacy, Council instructed the President and the Secretary to report on desirable amendments to the constitution. It also appointed a committee with a membership of both Sydney and Melbourne members to report on the possibility of commencing the publication of an Association journal

The next Annual General Meeting was held on August 28, 1924 in Adelaide. The officers elected were:-



President	Mr. W.A.N. Robertson
Vce President	Mr. I. M Davidson
Secretary	Mr. Max Henry
Treasurer	Professor J.D. Stewart

This was the first occasion in which all the States were represented on the Council. The meeting discussed a recommendation from Council there be one veterinary association with branches in all the States. The discussion was long and animated. New South Wales members pressed for amalgamation of the State associations into one federal body and Victorians fought just as strongly for the retention of the *status quo* since they feared that the State associations would lose their individuality if they became branches. The division of opinion was so strong that it was feared that there would be a serious split in the AVA if the matter were decided forthwith and it was decided to refer the matter to the incoming Council for further investigation.

However, the meeting endorsed the action taken by Council for the establishment of a veterinary journal as the official organ of the Association under conditions proposed by the Council but limited the per capita obligations on the State associations to five shillings.

At the council meeting held in Sydney on 19 December, 1924 it was resolved "that in view of the fact that the majority of the State associations representing over four fifths of the membership of the AVA had accepted the proposals adopted by the Association in Adelaide on the recommendation of Council on the establishment of a journal, such establishment should be carried out". The recommendation of Council contained the provisos that no additional subscription to the AVA would be involved, the journal would be distributed free to members of the AVA and the State associations undertake to contribute on a per capita basis to assist if necessary, in defraying the cost of the journal. Regarding this

























