

AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY HISTORY RECORD



JULY 2003 — NUMBER 37

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**Please take the opportunity to visit the AVHS web page
<www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/avhs>**

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Dr. Paul Canfield
Dr. John Fisher**

The Australian Veterinary History Society is a Special Interest Group of
the Australian Veterinary Association. All who are interested
in any aspect of veterinary history may join. Annual subscription is \$15.
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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AHVS
Canberra 2-7 May 2004
Australian Veterinary History Society
Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting Cairns, 26 May 2003

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.
Present: Eighteen members.
Apologies : K.Baker, R.Taylor.
Minutes of the 11th AGM were accepted with out change.

Report of the P resident Dr. JH Faragher 2003

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 12th annual meeting of the Australian Veterinary History Society and join with other members of the executive committee to report to you on our activities during the past year. The Annual General Meeting of this small Special Interest Group of the AVA was held at the AVA National Conference in Adelaide on Monday 6 May 2002. Office bearers were re-elected after reports of the president, secretary/treasurer, librarian and editor had been accepted by the meeting. Members of the AVHS and the AVA enjoyed six papers that were presented to the meeting. Abstracts of these papers were published in the Australian Veterinary History Record no. 33. The meeting awarded honorary life membership of the Society to Dr Peter J Mylrea for his services to veterinary history and to the AVHS in particular.

The AVHS is providing short biographies of eminent Australian veterinarians and milestones in Australian veterinary history to the Veterinary School of the University of Sydney to print on the back cover of the 47 or so handbooks that the staff are writing for their undergraduates. Members have written 18 biographies of eminent Australian veterinarians and 22 milestones in Australian veterinary history that have been provided so far or this project. These 40 vignettes of our past are also published on the AVHS web page <<http://www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/avhs>>, which is a further collaboration with the School. This collaboration was originated and has been organised by Dr Keith Baker, who will report separately on this venture.

The catalogue of the Australian Veterinary History Library has also been added to this web page, where you can see a listing of this asset. However, the contents of the library are available only through the good offices of the honorary librarian, Dr Dick Roe, as these remain in "temporary accommodation" in a lock-up storage unit in an industrial area of Canberra. Recently, and 18 months after your committee began to prod the AVA Board to exhume these riches for display and access on more appropriate shelving, some progress is being made. On 3 April 2003 in the Gilruth Library at

University of Melbourne, Professor Ivan Caple, Ms Helen Newton, several of your committee and Ms Margaret Conley, AVA CEO met to discuss the possibility of moving the Library to the Melbourne Veterinary School. A proposal that is still be considered includes that the AVA would retain ownership of the library which would be on a long-term loan of 15-20 years, the minimum period that the University of Melbourne will entertain. All books can be identified with a distinctive AVA bookplate or similar, and access can be restricted to books of rare or special value. Books on open shelves in the university library are available for use, including borrowing and photocopying, by students and staff. AVA members would have access this collection, including borrowing on request. If the number of requests for borrowing by AVA members became large then charges additional to postage may be imposed. This proposal may not be an ideal solution, but some progress to conserve and access our library is underway.

The AVA Historical Collection suffers a similar fate and uncertain future in the same storage unit in Canberra. Meanwhile, the curator of the collection, Dr Bob Taylor continues to look after and increase the collection and to arrange a display of interesting items at the successive AVA conferences. Many AVA members appreciate this glimpse of the collection.

Dr Ian Parsonson has, as honorary editor of the Australian Veterinary History Record, published three excellent issues of our journal this year containing much of interest from past and present. Ian will always welcome contributions from you for publication.

Our history is not static, nor should be the means of exploring that history. To this end, we are seeking means to preserve as an electronic archive the contents of all 36 published issues of the Record. We have developed a proposal with the great assistance of Jane Barton, Manager, Veterinary Education and Information Network (VEIN) at the University of Sydney, for the most appropriate and accessible way for reformatting the published issues to create searchable, archived digital files of the Record. The files will increase access in the following ways:

1. They will be publicly available on the web and access will be free of charge.
2. The 'searchability' of the digital files will increase access to the content of the journal.
3. The digital files can be linked to the abstracting database History of Science, Technology and Medicine, further increasing access to its content.
4. The archiving of the digital files will be stable, with ability to migrate to future platforms, therefore ensuring future access to the journal.

The outcome of this project will be to preserve the Record and to make its contents more accessible to all AVA members and beyond to those who are interested in Australian veterinary history. This will communicate widely the origins and role of the profession and the AVA in context of the work and achievements of Australian veterinarians, who, having looked back at their origins can then look forward with more assurance.

The project involves sending copies of the published pages to a specialist contractor and an application for a grant of \$3,633 to cover costs was made to the AVA Communications Fund. This Fund has recommended and the AVA Board has approved the grant, which will enable the project to be realised later this year. Links from the AVA website and the AVHS web page will enable direct access to the archive. As current issues of the Record are now produced in digital form, further funding should be minimal.

Our honorary secretary and treasurer, Dr John Auty, quietly maintains a stable financial ship, which enables our continuation. Both Ian and John will shortly give you their accounts of their good work on your behalf.

Australians have much to be proud of in their veterinary heritage. Your committee has worked to justify that pride and maintain that heritage for the enjoyment, education and use by all Australian veterinarians. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute on your behalf towards this end

Trevor Faragher

REPORT of the Hon Sec/Treasurer, 2003

Membership Report

Membership has remained static and there is an obvious need to grow this. Perhaps each member could enlist one new member in the next twelve months. The annual subscription is more than returned by the cost of the Record.

At the last meeting I suggested that members should write and include a CV with their will to act as a basis for an obituary. This is most important for older members whose peer group is small. Obituaries are an important tool in writing and understanding our past.

Financial Report

Our finances are healthy, we have increased our balance by \$1000. We might consider increasing expenditure. The Record has been continually upgraded, it represents our image to the world. A further expansion might be envisaged, and this would and should include payment of secretarial assistance for the editor.

It is recommended that the annual subscription remain \$15.

Trust Account

As indicated above this has increased \$1000. Interest earned is at a low level.

The Australian Veterinary Association Ltd
Annual Financial Return for the period ending 31-Dec-02
Name of Division- Historical.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets

	2002	2003
Cash at bank	677	750
Interactivity account with AVA National	6,182	5,112
Receivables		(11)
GST Paid	40	56
Total Current Assets	<u>6.898</u>	<u>5.907</u>
Non-Current Assets	0	0-
-		
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>6.898</u>	<u>5.907</u>

CURRENT LIABILITIES

GST collected	3	0
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TOTAL LIABILITIES	3	0
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NET ASSETS	<u>6,896</u>	<u>5,907</u>
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ACCUMULATED FUNDS

Retained surplus brought forward	5,907	5,227
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Current year surplus	989	680
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TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS	<u>6,896</u>	<u>5,907</u>
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BANK RECONCILIATION

PART A	2002	2001
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Cash book opening balance 01-Jan-02	750	934
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Add: Receipts		4,467
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Deduct: Payments	(74)	(4,651)
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Cash Book closing balance 31-Dec-02	<u>677</u>	<u>750</u>
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PART B

Bank balance from statement 31-Dec-02	677	750
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Add Unbanked income	0	0
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Deduct Unpresented cheques	0	0
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Cash Book closing balance 31-Dec-02	<u>677</u>	<u>750</u>
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE	2002	2001
INCOME		
Membership subscriptions	1,266	350
Sales of goods and services		352
Conferences	2,701	
Interest	152	134
Other		4,030
TOTAL INCOME	<u>4,119</u>	<u>4,866</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Conferences	734	
Publications	1,355	
Committee	300	
Business services	120	
Other	621	4,186
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>3,130</u>	<u>4,186</u>
SURPLUS current year	989	680
Accumulated Funds brought forward	5,907	5,227
Accumulated funds	<u>6,896</u>	<u>5,907</u>

I confirm that the information provided on all pages of this Annual Return is in accordance with our books and records.

Signed: J.H.Auty 23.3.03
Honorary Treasurer

REPORT of the Hon. Librarian 2003

The past year has been a relatively quiet one for the library in terms of borrowings and inquiries. The main developments in relation to the library during the year have been the inclusion of a listing of the books in the library on the AVHS web-page and discussions over the relocation of the library to a more suitable site.

A short note about the Veterinary History Library had previously been prepared for the AVHS web-page. During the year arrangements were made for a full listing of the holdings in the Library to be added to the web-page. This can be accessed at: www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/avhs/

After more than a year of correspondence between the President of the AVHS and the AVA Board, some progress appears to be being made in having the Veterinary History Library housed in more suitable accommodation than the present lock-up storage unit in the light industrial area of Canberra. A meeting was held in Melbourne on 3 April 2003 between the Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Melbourne, the Librarian at the Gilruth Library in the Veterinary Faculty, the new Chief Executive Officer of the AVA and members of the Executive Committee of the AVHS. Agreement in principle was reached for the library to be relocated to the Gilruth Library in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Parkville. The AVA would retain ownership of the library but an agreement would be entered into for its long term loan to the Veterinary Faculty where it would be under the care and management of a qualified librarian. These arrangements are subject to an inspection by the Librarian from the Gilruth Library and agreement of the Dean.

This is a positive step in resolving the present unsatisfactory situation where the collection is housed in unsuitable premises and is little used because of difficulties in accessing it. Under the proposed arrangements the library will retain its identity, will continue to be owned by the AVA, be properly housed and under the care of a full-time qualified librarian.

If the proposal to relocate the library proceeds, it is suggested a recommendation be made to the AVA Board that it revert to the name Max Henry Memorial Library. The books in the library are all identified with a bookplate bearing the name Max Henry Memorial Library. The name Australian Veterinary History Library was adopted following the AVA Board's decision to disband the Max Henry Memorial Library. The current collection comprises books that were retained in the custody of the AVHS after disposing of the foreign language journals and books considered of no relevance to veterinary science in Australia. To revert to the name Max Henry

Memorial Library would again honour this eminent Australian veterinarian who, as the first Honorary Editor of the Australian Veterinary Journal, was responsible for starting the library in 1931 with books received by the Journal for review. Max Henry died in 1959 and the library was named in his honour in 1961.

Dr. RT Roe

After Dr. Roe's report was accepted there was a resolution: After the transfer of the library to Melbourne it be recommended to the Board of the AVA the name of the library reverts to Max Henry Memorial Library. The resolution was agreed to unanimously by the meeting.

REPORT of the Hon. Editor 2003

During the period July 2002 to March 2003, three Australian Veterinary History Records Nos. 34, 35 and 36 have been produced. Our members have provided much of the material used and I would stress how important this is for the recording of Australian veterinary history. An example of the need to write our history was provided by a paper on the early history of veterinarians in the poultry industry by Dr. John Evans that prompted a letter on the development of the Pullorum test by Dr Len Hart who was then in his nineties. Sadly, both these members died soon after their articles were published. The sands of time are running out for the older members of the profession and it is important to record their contributions to the profession. As a start, I am hopeful that there will be several papers for publication from the speakers at the meeting today. The Australian Veterinary History Record provides a unique venue for veterinarians and other people interested in veterinary history in Australia to record the stories of the past. The AVHR now has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN number, 1445-579X). Individual copies of the Record are held by the National Library of Australia in Canberra. Our History Record is exchanged with the Journal of the Veterinary History Society of Great Britain and I am hopeful that overseas links will be established with like-minded groups in the USA and Europe.

I M Parsonson.

There was some discussion about exchanges of the AVH Record with other Veterinary History Societies. It was agreed that this should be encouraged.

Australian Veterinary History Society

Life Membership

Dr R I Taylor

Dr RI (Bob) Taylor graduated in veterinary science from the University of Sydney in 1939 and joined the AVA in the year of his graduation. He has had a distinguished career in veterinary practice.

Bob Taylor has made an outstanding contribution to the veterinary profession in many areas over a long period. He served on the Postgraduate Committee of the University of Sydney for 15 years and was an external examiner in veterinary medicine at the University of Sydney for 20 years. He has been active in the affairs of the AVA in many capacities. He served on the NSW Divisional Committee in the 1950s, was the Foundation President of the South Coast and Tablelands Branch in 1957 and Foundation Secretary of the Southwest Slopes Branch in 1982. He was an AVA Councillor between 1950 and 1960. From 1968 through until 1974 he was the Convenor of the AVA Working Group on the Veterinary Benevolent Fund. He went on to become a Foundation Trustee and the Secretary of the AVA Benevolent Fund in 1975, and continued in these roles through until 2000.

Bob Taylor has been accorded many honours in recognition of his service to the veterinary profession in numerous areas. He was made a Fellow of the AVA in 1975 and became a Life Fellow in 1984. He is also a Foundation Fellow of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists and is now a Life Fellow of both that College and of the AVA. The Australian College of Veterinary Scientists accorded Bob Taylor the honour of naming the Kendall Oration after him in 2001 in recognition of his service to the veterinary profession.

However, it is Bob Taylor's contribution to veterinary history in Australia and to the Australian Veterinary History Society in particular that he is awarded Life Membership of this Society. Bob has been the Curator of the AVA Historical Collection for over 25 years and continues in this role today. The Collection contains veterinary instruments (approximately 100), photographs (approximately 350) and printed materials (approximately 450). On the establishment of the Australian Veterinary History Society as a special interest group of the AVA in 1991, Bob was elected its Foundation President and he held the office of President of the AVHS until 1999.

Dr R.I.Taylor is a most worthy recipient of the award of Life Membership of the Australian Veterinary History Society for his service to veterinary history in Australia and to the Australian Veterinary History Society in particular.

JT Faragher
President

JH Auty
Secretary/Treasurer

The Australian Veterinary History Society

Milestone Project

2003

I am pleased to report that 18 biographies of eminent Australian veterinarians and 22 milestones in Australian veterinary history have been submitted to the Veterinary Faculty of the Sydney University. Advice has now been received from the Faculty that printing of these articles commenced in the second semester of 2002 on the back covers of the Unit of Study handbooks that students are required to obtain as part of their course at the University.

The Faculty hopes that these articles will provide students with a sense of history and perspective of the profession and will undertake enquiries to ascertain whether students have found these interesting and informative. Suggestions have been made to the Faculty that the biographies of the prominent veterinarians should include a photograph of the subject and appropriate graphic illustrations with the milestones.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those authors who have responded to my requests and who have promptly submitted these interesting and informative articles as a written record of Australian veterinary history. These can be viewed on our web page <www.vetsci.usyd.edu.au/avhs>. This project has given our Society an opportunity to record a nucleus of Australian veterinary history as well as hopefully stimulating an interest in the prospective members of our profession. I am still waiting on a few articles that I have requested and would remind members our Society would still appreciate any relevant articles to be added to our program. The details of the format can be viewed on our website or failing that I can be contacted (tel 02 93273853) and will be only too pleased to pass on such details.

Following is a list of the ten milestones and biographies so far published by the Faculty.

Keith Baker

May 2003

Publication of Veterinary Historical Notes

- 2002 Animal Husbandry 1B VETS1019 Unit of Study handbook
Herbert Robert Seddon DVSc 1887-1964
- 2002 Cell Biology 1B VETS1018 Unit of Study handbook
The Australian Veterinary History Library
- 2002 Professional Practice 1B VETS 1017 Unit of Study handbook
The first half of the twentieth century
- 2002 Professional Practice 3B VETS 3036 Unit of Study handbook
The nineteenth century
- 2002 Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 1B VETS 1020 Unit of Study
handbook
The nineteenth century
- 2002 Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 2B VETS 2016 Lecture Notes
Origins and early development of the veterinary profession
- 2002 Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology 2B VETS 2016 Unit of Study
handbook
John Anderson Gilruth, DVSc MRCVS FRSE, 1871-1937
- 2002 Veterinary Conservation Biology 2B VETS 2015 Unit of Study handbook
Alfred Lionel Rose OBE AM BVSc 1989-1980
- 2003 Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare Science VETS 3018 Unit of Study
handbook
Contributions by veterinarians in developing the Mules operation for
control of breech flystrike in sheep
- 2003 Animal Husbandry 1A VETS1006 Unit of Study handbook
The early development of the Australian veterinary profession: the first half
of the twentieth century

Election of Office Bearers

The incumbents were elected unopposed

President: Dr. T. Faragher

Secretary/Treasurer: Dr. J. Auty

Librarian: Dr. R. Roe

Editor: Dr. I. Parsonson

Committee:

Dr. K. Hughes, Dr. P. Canfield, Dr. J. Fisher.

A FRESH LOOK AT JAMES HERRIOT

Jimmy Wight

Jimmy Wight, BVMS, MRCVS, reassesses his views on his father Alf as an internationally renowned author, and reminisces on life in the practice.

The paper was presented to a meeting of The Veterinary History Society held at "The World of James Herriot", Thirsk on 14 July 2001.

I am a little ashamed to say that I did not fully appreciate James Herriot's books until after his death. I had always looked upon Alf Wight, the real James Herriot, as a father and a veterinary colleague rather than as a world famous author. I console myself with the thought that, being such a down-to-earth, modest man, that was exactly how he wished me to regard him, but nevertheless, I still have a regret that I failed to realise just how skilled a writer he really was.

In 1996, I was persuaded to write his biography. Having written my last English essay at school in 1959, feelings of panic began to set in throughout that year and it was then that I made one of the best decisions of my life, to read my father's books again with the aim of picking up some tips from the master. Whereas previously I had simply laughed at the stories, being a veterinary surgeon myself as well as knowing the characters in them personally had added to the enjoyment, but now I tried to appreciate the finer qualities of the writing.

It was then that I began to understand. The easy, flowing, conversational style, the rich characterisation, together with vivid descriptive powers, all contributed towards a final product that gave pleasure to millions of readers. As well as being a great ambassador for the veterinary profession, James Herriot has preserved in print a wonderful account of the profession as it used to be. He worked from the 1940s through to the latest 1980s, a period that saw massive changes and progress within the profession. Herriot's books are history, exceptionally readable history.

Our local authority, Hambleton District Council, certainly appreciated the impact James Herriot had upon the local economy and the result is what you have seen today: a \$1.4 million visitor centre dedicated to his memory. The opportunity to purchase the now famous veterinary premises at number 23 Kirkgate arose following our departure in 1996. Many practices, to keep abreast of the times, have had to move from older town centre premises to more modern custom-built surgeries. Parking near to 23 Kirkgate was becoming impossible, a problem I feel sure that has been shared with many of my colleagues. To give our clients the service they

deserved, we just had to move out. It was not long after our move that Hambleton District Council purchased the old house and began to convert it into the fine centre you have seen today.

I am the only one of my family who remembers what it was like to live in 23 Kirkgate. We left in 1953 when I was ten years old but I have vivid memories of the place. The fine walled garden in which I used to play and the winding stone corridors along which I used to run as a small boy are accurately described in the Herriot books. One of the reasons for running was to keep warm. Not only were the winters much colder in those days, with white frost on the windows inside and out, but my father was a big believer in the virtues of fresh air and exercise. The air in the old house was certainly fresh, with only a coal fire and a temperamental anthracite stove to combat the numbing cold, and to my complaints of feeling cold his answer was, "You are feeling cold Jimmy Well then...run". I covered miles along those corridors, all of it in short trousers.

In those days, my father's work was almost a hundred per cent devoted to the farm animals, and for the first ten years of his life in practice he worked almost every night and weekend. The only telephone in the house was in the corridor downstairs. The strident sound of its ringing in the dead of night could be heard in his bedroom, following which he would leap out of bed, run downstairs and take the call standing barefoot in the draughty, cold, stone-flagged corridor. This would be followed by a lightning return to the equally cold bedroom, an even quicker donning of his clothes and a long walk down the garden to the garage where he would climb into his primitive, unheated little car. There was little comfort in 23 Kirkgate but his experiences there would provide wonderful material for his books. The display of early veterinary instruments at The World of James Herriot, many of them donated by practices from all over the country, is particularly interesting. Every time I see this array of formidable looking veterinary aids, I give thanks to my maker that I was born just late enough not to have to seek their assistance. Today, the veterinary obstetrician has the option of caesarean section but the display of embryotomes and other calving aids in the centre remind me of the days when the veterinary surgeon did not have the luxury of this approach. Some of my father's most vivid memories of his days in practice were of long, back-breaking sessions on the end of a rope or guddling desperately in the recesses of the bovine womb, fighting to deliver calves that never seemed to want to be born. One entry in the practice daybook for November 1940 gives an idea of the state of the profession at the time, where just to be in a job and making any money at all was deemed a privilege:

Mr. Smirthwaite, Topcliffe Parks
Visit calve cow – 6 hours
Pessaries, 1 bottle Universal Cattle Medicine
1 injection strychnine.
\$2.0s.0d.

James Herriot looked back on his earlier days in practice as “harder but more fun.” Perhaps it was not always so much fun at the time!

Another instrument on display, one that I had the dubious privilege of handling, is the probang. I have lost count of the number of times that I have watched my father expertly inserting the long, snaking rod into the mouth of his frothing and blown bovine patient and propelling an offending piece of potato or turnip down the oesophagus and into the rumen, giving instant and satisfying relief. Horror stories of vets ramming the probang off course and into the animal's thoracic cavity, followed by blood, convulsions, death and the hasty writing of big cheques, almost always resulted in my taking the less spectacular but quieter option of inserting a temporary hole into the rumen. Some of the instruments on display seem like something from the Spanish Inquisition but in the right hands they could be more effective and humane pieces of equipment.

In my early years of working in practice in the 1960s, I had a taste of the veterinary surgeon's life that James Herriot wrote about; the days of twenty or more visits a day to small family farms treating individual animals here and there. The demise of so many of these farms is a sad reflection of our modern, high-pressure world, as is the disappearance of the unforgettable characters who worked on them. Many of the characters in the James Herriot books had their origins in these people. A successful book needs good characters and my father's were ready made for him. He was a great observer of human nature, with the ability to see the funny side of things and the dry sens of humour exhibited by these people, gave him plenty of material.

I remember an acquaintance of ours called Alan Dickinson who worked for a local farmer, one Bill Shepherd. Alan walked on to the farm one morning to find his employer in a foul temper. The local hunt had thundered over his land the previous day, resulting in two terrified ewes leaping into the River Swale and drowning. “Ah'll 'ave them buggers!” yelled Bill, “chargin' across my fields and damagin' ma good stock! Who the bloody 'ell do they think they are with their bloody great 'osses wreckin' our farmland! Ah'll 'ave em...A'hm tellin' yer! God 'elp 'em if they come near ma spot again!”.

Bill was in such a dangerous mood that Alan just quietly withdrew. He returned to work the following morning to find his boss in a distinctly sunnier frame of mind. There was a good reason for it. The Master of the hunt, having heard of the tragic drowning of the two ewes had promptly visited the farmer, expressed his apologies and written him a large cheque for a sum of money far in excess of the value of the two animals.

“Did you get any satisfaction from the hunt about those two ewes, Bill?” asked Alan delicately.

“Aye! Ah did!” The farmer reached slowly into his back pocket before taking out the cheque. He waved it gently in front of Alan’s eyes. “They can come ageean!”

It was not only the farm characters who provided my father with such good material for his books. The profession was rich with interesting personalities too, none more so than Donald Sinclair his partner, immortalised in the Herriot books as Siegfried Farnon. He was one of the funniest men I have ever met, providing us all in the practice with many hilarious memories, made all the funnier as Donald, although having a good sense of humour himself, often did not see the funny side of his antics.

His golden rules for we assistants were “Always attend!” and “Paint a black picture!” and “Always park the car with the nose pointing out of the farm!” These are fondly remembered but one incident that occurred in the early 1980s remains firmly fixed in my memory. Our new assistant had been sent by Donald to see a heifer with foul in the foot. It was a full two hours before the young man returned; unfortunately for him Donald was in the surgery when he arrived back. “Where the hell have you been all this time?” asked Donald. “I only sent you to inject one animal with foul!” Donald, never one to waste time with preliminaries, had a way of getting straight to the point.

“Well Mr Sinclair” replied the assistant, “the heifer broke out of the crush and into the farmyard; a gate was open and she shot into a field, we cornered her but she jumped the fence, we chased after her...”

“All right, all right” interrupted Donald, “but you should have come back home! You must realise that I cannot pay you wages to spend your time chasing beasts across Yorkshire!” He paused and looked at the rest of us in the room. He adopted his patient look. “Listen, boys!”, he continued, “we are a four man unit in this practice, part of a team and we cannot carry passengers! I have calculated that if we do not make 30 pence per minute, we could go to the wall!”

While I didn’t believe these wild calculations of Donald’s, they had, as with my father before me, the unfailing ability to twist my stomach into a little ball. Donald forged on. “So, don’t forget, every man must pull his weight! EVERY man in this

practice has to earn their crust or we will be in big trouble!”

The following evening, one of the assistants was smiling at the daybook as he perused the list of calls that had been completed. “Take a look at Mr. Sinclair’s contribution for today” he grinned. A quick glance at the list revealed that he had completed one call, which read:

Mrs Stevenson, Tranmire Close
Visit Budgie (dead on arrival)
No Charge

Had we challenged Donald over this he would never have considered the incident as out of the ordinary. As my father very perceptively said to me, “Donald is a true character because he does not think he is!” This probably explains Donalds reactions to his portrayal as Siegfried in the Herriot books. Not realising his eccentricities, he disapproved strongly, in marked contrast to his younger brother, Brian, who was delighted to be depicted as Tristan.

We could never have foreseen, back in 1970, when the very first Herriot book *If Only They Could Talk* was published, that it would all result in such worldwide recognition, with a visitor centre being established in memory of Alf Wight.

Whenever I look into the reconstructed living room that later served as our waiting room, I am reminded of the days when the waiting room was thronged with tourists from all over the world, especially the United States, all coming for a glimpse of James Herriot himself. My father never did revel in the celebrity status that was thrust upon him but always kept his feet firmly on the ground, never losing his sense of humour. One afternoon, the clamour coming from the old waiting room was especially intrusive. Following on from my remark that we were in for an afternoon of good business, my father stuck his head round the door of the waiting room, took a look inside and strolled back into the office. “Don’t get too excited boys,” he smiled, “I have just counted two hamsters, one Yorkshire Terrier and forty-five Americans!”

I hope you have all enjoyed looking around the centre, with its glimpses of our veterinary past. The profession has seen many changes since the war and nobody experienced more dramatic transformation in his professional life than my father, Alf Wight. Fortunately, through his writings, he has left us a legacy that we can all enjoy. Tens of thousands have already visited this centre, from every corner of the world and many return for second and third visits. The calibre of James Herriot’s books is such that they can be read and enjoyed many times over. It seems that “The World of James Herriot”, here in Thirsk, has that quality too.

Top Racehorses traced to one Arab Stallion

Jenny Booth in the Sunday Telegraph (UK) 30 December 2001

According to modern genetic research the lineage of almost all male racehorses in Britain can be traced back to a single stallion. Scientists at Trinity College, Dublin, have found that at least 95 per cent of male Thoroughbreds are descendants of the Darley Arabian, which was imported into Britain from Syria in 1706. They traced the lineage of a million British horses dating back two centuries, in the largest analysis of pedigrees made.

Historians of the Thoroughbred have previously named three horses as the founding fathers of the breed: The Byerley Turk, the Darley Arabian and the Godolphin Arabian, all imported from the Middle East in the early 18th Century and bred with English and imported mares. The offspring of these three stallions, and up to 200 other horses imported from Turkey, Syria and Persia about the same time, evolved into the Thoroughbred breed – the fastest and most valuable in the world at the heart of the racing industry.

For two centuries it has been assumed that all the imported horses played a role in the development of the breed, but the work at Trinity has singled out the Darley Arabian as the dominant horse. Paddy Cunningham, the geneticist who led the research said, "About 150 years ago the Darley Arabian's genes raced away from all the others".

Thomas Darley bought the Darley Arabian as a colt in Aleppo in 1704 for his father, Richard Darley of Aldby Park, near York. The horse was a bay with a white blaze down his face and three white socks, and was comparatively small at about 15 hands high. The younger Mr. Darley was concerned that the horse would be seen as a novelty in England. He wrote to his brother John in 1705 as he was arranging the horse's transit: "Hope that he will not be much disliked, for he is highly esteemed here where I could have sold him for a very considerable price, if I had not designed him for England". The Darley Arabian was put out to stud privately, and although he did not serve many mares he sired Flying Childers, the founder of the Eclipse Line.* His Y-chromosomes are now found in more than 90 per cent of all male Thoroughbreds.

Hamish Anderson of Weatherbys, the company that has kept a stud book of the pedigree of racehorses since 1791, said that the reason the Darley horse's genes were so wide spread was that the horse owners and breeders wanted to mate their mares with the best possible sire and that meant the offspring of winners. "The only measure people were interested in was getting past the winning line," said Mr. Anderson.

(Editors note)*Eclipse, was the most influential racehorse of the 18th Century. Eclipse was foaled at Windsor during the solar eclipse on 1 April 1764. He was descended from both the Darley Arabian and the Godolphin Arabian. He was the sire of 335 winners and his life spanned the time of great improvement of livestock in Britain between 1764 and 1789.

In 1829 the Henty family arrived in Australia with five Thoroughbred horses carrying Eclipse bloodlines chosen from the Egremont Stud listed in the British Stud Book, volume iii, 1832.

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY VETERINARY SCHOOL 1936 EARLY DAYS

Geoff Fewster

In November 1935 the Premier of Queensland, Mr. W. Forgan Smith, announced that a Faculty of Veterinary Science would be established in Queensland and that the first students would be admitted in 1936. Gregory, Helen. (1987) Vivant Professor, Fryer Memorial Library, Occasional Publication No. 7. University of Queensland Library, p. 41.



UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND FACULTY VETERINARY SCIENCE First Year 1936

Standing
Sitting

A. Bell, G.E. Fewster, G.R. Moule, A.M. Thomson, R. Bond.
L.G. Newton, Professor H.R. Seddon (Dean), O.H. Brooks

Prof. E.J. Goddard, B.A. DSc, McCaughey Professor of Biology had for some years, been actively promoting the need for Schools of Medicine and Veterinary Science to be created within the Queensland University. A study of Goddard's career reveals his

active involvement both publicly and within University circles with issues related to teaching of the sciences at tertiary level. In 1927 he led the move to establish a Faculty of Agricultural Science. He next directed his energies towards the University offering a diploma course in Dentistry. This course commenced in 1932 and was soon followed by the establishment of the Faculty of Dentistry in 1935. Mainly through Goddard's manoeuvres, Schools of Medicine and Veterinary Science came into being in Queensland in 1936.



UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND FACULTY VETERINARY SCIENCE... 1937

Standing Back Row: A. Bell, A. McDowall, C. Stewart, D.V. McLean

Middle Row: R. Butler, J. Alderson, O. Brooks, W. Brown, F. Norman, R. Salibury

Front Row: G. Moule, Ola MacPherson, W.G. Bennett (Lecturer), Professor H.R. Seddon,
G.R. Brettingham-Moore (Lecturer), L.G. Newton, G.E. Fewster.

My first knowledge of the proposed Vet School was in January 1936 when on a two day visit to Brisbane with my father, we learned during a chance conversation of the Premier's announcement in November. We contacted the University for confirmation and received an invitation to meet the University Registrar, Mr. C. Page-Hanify, in his office at the Old Government House in George St. This was a very productive meeting.

Page-Hanify assured us that the Veterinary Science School was currently enrolling students, that my Victorian Secondary College Leaving Certificate was adequate for entry into any of the Science faculties, and that he would arrange for us to meet the Acting Dean, Prof. E.J. Goddard later that day. The Acting Dean was occupying an office on the ground floor of the Department of Agriculture and Stock in William

St. We were impressed by Goddard's enthusiasm for the new School. He explained his position as Acting Dean, stating that Dr. H.R. Seddon, Director of Veterinary Research, NSW, had been appointed to the Chair of Veterinary Science and would be taking up his position in March. We had previously visited the Sydney Veterinary School on our way to Brisbane and been informed that Victorian students were required to take Science I at Melbourne University. Even then there was no assurance that they would be admitted to the Sydney Veterinary School. A class-mate at Wesley College, Melbourne, Peter Rudduck, who had passed Science I at Melbourne University, was having difficulty in gaining admission to Sydney University.

In student circles Goddard was always a popular figure. Prior to the first lecture in 1936 the six Veterinary Science undergraduates then enrolled were invited to Goddard's office in the Biology Department. When welcoming us to the University he indicated that date on which Prof. Seddon would take over as Dean and stated that a further one or two students were expected to join us. A.M. (Sandy) Thomson, a Gatton College Diploma graduate, put in an appearance a week or so after lectures had commenced. Following the meeting in Goddard's office, we proceeded to the crowded main Biology lecture theatre where all students taking first year Biology were introduced to the teaching staff.

Goddard was a fine public speaker, blessed with a strong voice, he had the capacity to ensure that few of his audience dozed off during the first lecture after lunch, a hazard in the Brisbane climate. Amongst first year students, he was sometimes known as "Interdigitate" a word he alone used when bringing together a number of salient points. Uttered at appropriate intervals, it resounded like the crack of a stockwhip as he walked across the podium towards the nodding undergraduates. With six of the seven students in First Year being graduates of Gatton College, it did not take long for us to become a close knit group. George Moule took up residence in Emmanuel College, through him we became aware of student pre-term activities such as the procession of faculty floats through the main streets of Brisbane. In an attempt to lift the standard of material displayed on these floats, the Senate appointed a review panel of four, headed by Prof. T. Parnell to inspect and pass every float before the parade got underway. A student from each faculty had to be nominated as the responsible person. Fewster won this honour unopposed. The theme chosen for the Vets' float was 'BIRTH OF THE SCHOOL.' In retrospect the artwork, captions and items strewn on the floor of the float went well beyond permitted Senate limits. The Vet float was one of the last inspected by the Parnell Committee. Within seconds of their arrival, Tommie Parnell called for the person responsible and banned the float. It took some quick hard talking to get this ban lifted. The apron around the table top of the truck was confiscated, about half the

display material disappeared and a very forlorn float was allowed to proceed at the rear of the parade. Before the procession was given the order to start, Tommie Parnell, using a loud hailer, gave the Vet Students a proper roasting. It is believed that this was the last procession of University floats to traverse the main streets of the City of Brisbane.

On a more successful note, the students had collected a sum of money to meet expenses. Left with a surplus of funds, the University of Queensland Veterinary Students Association (U.Q.V.S.A.) came into being with a small but healthy bank account. Minutes of this meeting held nearly sixty years ago in the Geology Department, dealing with the formation of the UQVSA were recorded and confirmed, one wonders if these minutes have survived.

Contributions by veterinarians in developing the Mules operation for control of breech flystrike in sheep

AN Sinclair

JWH Mules was an Australian stockman, who had been an overseer at Clare in South Australia, A cattle stockman at Cooper Creek, Queensland, a property owner in central New South Wales then in Queensland where he was victim of the 1914 drought. He returned to South Australia as a property manager and was able eventually to acquire a small property where he reared Peppin Merinos for stud. He experimented with a method of strike control that involve surgically removing excess wrinkles from the crutch. Essentially, he clamped Burdizzo® castrating pincers over the breech wrinkles and cut off the clamped wrinkles with a knife so that urine 'scalding' is avoided. In 1931, HR Seddon, HG Belschner and CR Mulhearn of the Glenfield Veterinary Research Station in New South Wales published on work on a long-term approach to control of flystrike based on selection of plain-bodied sheep. This publication caused Mules to write to the Adelaide Advertiser on 16 June 1931, saying that he had discovered a solution to the problem of flystrike in ewes and offered to treat susceptible ewes.

Sir Charles Martin, Head of the Division of Animal Nutrition of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Adelaide, and LB Bull of the Laboratory of Pathology and Bacteriology at Adelaide Hospital, visited Mules who demonstrated his method and showed the visitors some sheep that had been operated upon some time previously. In a report published later that year, Bull described the demonstration and his observations on dermatitis of the excised folds of skin, and discussed the work of Seddon and his colleagues in relation to factors attracting blowflies. He concluded that Mules had shown the effectiveness of his method on his own flock and that those who hesitated to alter their breeding methods to eliminate wrinkles may adopt the method.

Few graziers adopted the method. many were repelled by the apparent cruelty and the crudity of the surgery. Others considered that it would militate against breeding for plain-bodied sheep. Mules' method appeared impracticable on stations marking many thousands of lambs in a period of 2–3 weeks. Moreover, evidence of the value of mulesing and its place in flock management was lacking, and jetting seemed a more promising method of control.

In 1933, Seddon and his colleagues operated on 100 lambs and reported that during the first and second years after the operation, about 75% and 50% less strike occurred in the treated sheep than in untreated sheep. In 1934, WIB Beveridge was seconded by CSIR to the Australian Pastoral Company, Noondoo, Queensland, and prevailed upon the manager of the company to invite Mules to demonstrate his operation. In 1935 at lamb marking at Noondoo, Mules and other operators treated 6844 lambs with Rolcut® secateurs, which made the operation as rapid as castration of male lambs. A similar number of lambs were untreated. Beveridge reported that the operation provided a cheap and practical method of removing wrinkles, that loss of blood was very small, well-being of the lambs was not noticed to be affected, and the wounds healed well. Wrinkles were not seen to have developed again in the treated sheep when examined six months later. However, ten months after the operation, NPH Graham examined a sample of the total and found that 20% of the treated sheep had been struck, compared with 25% of untreated sheep. Beveridge urged CSIR to give the operation the attention it deserved and IM Mackerras, who was in charge of CSIR research on blowfly strike, promptly visited Noondoo. Consequently several trials were arranged including further trials by Seddon, Belschner and WL Hindmarsh, and later by FHW Morley. While, for various reasons, including lack of strikes or of records, some trials were not satisfactory from an experimental point of view, the operation was shown to be practicable and effective and was gradually adopted.

A trial in 1937 by DA Gill and Graham showed the need for a more extensive operation – the Modified Mules Operation – that removed all breech folds that could become stained with urine. This trial also showed the importance of the length of the docked tail. About the same time, Graham visited South Australia and found that most graziers who mulesed sheep were using short-bladed "dagging" shears. Graham publicised the change, which was widely adopted.

About 1940, LL Manchester of Charleville, Queensland, patented an alternative method that he claimed was as successful as mulesing in preventing breech strike. A caustic preparation that was applied in the crutch area destroyed the wool-

producing follicles in the treated area. While the result was similar to the Mules operation, the operation was drastic and time-consuming, caustic seeped and damaged adjacent areas, and the period of healing was extended. this chemical treatment was discarded for practical reasons.

Throughout the 1940s, hundreds of demonstrations of the modified Mules operation, selection of plain-bodied sheep and improved jetting techniques were conducted in New South Wales and in Queensland. That the operation was adopted more widely in Queensland was due to the work of GR Moule.

Although the Mules operation was taken up by graziers, the sheep studs were reluctant to do so as they felt it might disguise wrinkly sheep for selection purposes. Mr Bill Sutton at Bundemar stud, who was one of the first to adopt it, began using the modified mules operation plus a tail operation, but a low rate of strike persisted. Sutton then removed more skin over the tail and also the skin between the tail and crutch operations. The Radical Mules Operation, as this method became known, gave almost complete protection against strike and has been widely adopted despite being a longer operation with slower healing. However, despite abundant information, and the attempts by extension workers to inform, train and aid farmers in applying a technique that could scarcely be more simple, cheap or effective, levels of adoption remained below potential.

While contribution by veterinarians in developing the Mules operation were considerable, full credit should be given to the originator of the operation and to the unknown grazier who thought of using short-bladed "dagging" shears. Beveridge has pointed out that he has received that rare honour of having his name adopted into the language as a word written without a capital letter.

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PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will coincide with the

AVA Annual Conference

in Canberra,

2 - 7 May 2004