

# AUSTRALIAN VETERINARY HISTORY RECORD



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**Dr. Bob Taylor, one of the founders and the foundation President of the Australian Veterinary History Society and long-time curator of the Australian Veterinary Historical Collection, died on Sunday 5 March. An appreciation of our esteemed colleague will be published in the next issue of the Record.**

**Annual Meeting  
of the Australian Veterinary History Special Interest Group  
Hobart, Monday 22 May 2006**

8.00 – 8.30 am	Registration
9.00 – 9.45 am	Dr John Auty, The convict and the friend: Jorgenson and Backhouse and animal production in Van Diemen's Land.
9.45 – 10.30 am	Dr Ian Parsonson, The Tasmanian contingent in the Boer War
10.30 – 11.00	morning tea
11.00 – 11.45am	Dr Peter McKean Island practice in Tasmania
11.45 – 12.30 pm	Dr Michael Heynes The development of the veterinary act in Tasmania
12.30 – 1.45 pm	lunch

1.45 – 3.15 pm	PLENARY Global Veterinary Defence Professor Richard Whittington
3.15 – 3.45 pm	afternoon tea
3.45 – 4.30 pm	Dr Mary Barton The role of the laboratory in wildlife research
4.30 – 5.15pm	Dr Tim McManus The veterinarian and whale rescue.
5.15 – 6.00 pm	Annual General Meeting of the Australian Veterinary History SIG
7.00 pm	Annual Dinner of the Australian Veterinary History Group

**Australian Veterinary History Special Interest Group of the AVA  
15th Annual General Meeting  
Hobart, 22 May 2006 at 5.15 pm**

1. Present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 14th AGM of the AVHS  
(These minutes were published in the Australian Veterinary History Record,  
no 43, July 2005.)
4. Business arising from these Minutes
5. Report of the President, Dr JT Faragher
6. Report on Membership & Financial Report of the Honorary  
Secretary/Treasurer, Dr JH Auty
7. Report of the Honorary Librarian of the Australian Veterinary History  
Library, Dr R Roe

8. Report of the Honorary Editor of the Australian Veterinary History Record,  
Dr IM Parsonson
9. Election of Office Bearers  
President  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Librarian  
Editor  
Committee - three members
10. General Business
11. Location of next meeting of the AVHS  
[The AVA Conference in 2007 will be held in Melbourne, VICTORIA]

#### **ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS**

##### **The Convict and the Friend; Animal Husbandry in Van Diemen's Land. John Auty**

Fifteen years after the European settlement of the colony of New South Wales, Britain commenced colonies in Van Diemens Land (VDL) in the north and the south of the Island. This delay meant that the colonists were in a better position to begin the husbandry of European livestock than were the Sydney pioneers.

Livestock were imported from Sydney and from overseas and the techniques evolved were adequate to enable the VDL entrepreneurs to develop an animal export trade to Mauritius, South Australia, Port Phillip, Swan River and New Zealand.

Diseases were imported with the carrier livestock. However, the predator that initially caused so much direct and indirect loss on the mainland, the dingo, was absent.

Bushrangers who came from the kangaroo hunters that were employed by government to feed the infant settlement took the dingo's place.

Distance did not limit the visits involuntary and voluntary of writers interested in examining the early settlement. At ends of this spectrum were Jorgenson, adventurer, convict and boozier; and Backhouse, friend, balance observer of the new society and encourager of a civilization.

The journals of these writers will be used to flesh out the story recorded in the reports of governors and other government officials as VDL grew to become a favoured region of livestock farming.

## **The Tasmanian Contingents in the Boer War : Ian Parsonson**

In 1899 many Australians could see little relevance in fighting a war in South Africa against South African farmers – (the word Boer means farmer). Over the three years of the war to 1902 the British Empire, including 16,715 Australians fought against these small Boer Republics.

Men and horses from Tasmania that served in South Africa were sent in five contingents. Total Men 857. Total Horses 759.

On 1 September 1900 near Warmbad, Transvaal, 20 of the Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen under Lieutenant Wylly assisted by 20 men of the Army Service Corps were out looking for cattle when a large enemy force waiting in ambush attacked them. Despite several members of the Tasmanian group being wounded and their horses shot they rescued their wounded under heavy fire and provided cover for the retreat back to camp. For this action the Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen Contingent was the most highly decorated Australian unit during the war receiving 2 Victoria Crosses, one Commander of the Bath, 2 Distinguished Service Orders, and 3 Distinguished Conduct Medals.

## **Whale Strandings in Tasmania: Tim McManus.**

Despite the fact they have been happening since time immemorial, cetacean strandings evoke public responses like no other naturally occurring mammalian event. The desire to 'save the whales', regardless of feasibility, or cost to the taxpayer, is much enhanced in this modern anthropomorphic era.

Tasmania shares with New Zealand, the distinction of having more cetaceans strand on its shores than anywhere else in the southern hemisphere.

In the course of 40 years with the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry, the author dealt with many whale strandings, both individual and mass, baleen and toothed. Euthanasia was often necessary, and post mortems were conducted whenever practicable.

Notwithstanding various wild theories advanced by self-styled experts on the reasons for cetacean strandings, it was usually possible to denote a specific cause of each event investigated.

The paper will expand on this theme, as well as outline the historical changes in the approach to local cetacean strandings in the last 50 years.

## **The Development of the Veterinary Act in Tasmania : Michael Heynes.**

The first Veterinary Act in Tasmania was enacted in 1918. The purpose of the Act was to control the practice of Veterinary Surgery and defined the responsibilities and conditions of registration. Some discussion of conditions before this Act and the Minister's objectives in presenting it will be discussed. Unfortunately records are scarce. It was amended four times, twice by procedural Acts and two affecting contents.

The next full Act was passed in 1987 after deputations and discussion for about seventeen years. The reasons for this long gestation will be discussed.

## **MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF AUSTRALIAN VETERINARIANS 1885-1940s: Dr Peter Mylrea 13 Sunset A venue, Camden NSW 2570**

Dr Ian Parsonson is the Editor of this journal and is also the author of a recently published book Vets at War. Ian is too modest to write an article for our journal about veterinary military history based on his book. As it is a worthy subject I have undertaken the task and, with Ian's permission, have based this article totally on his work. To this end I have retained the arrangement of chapters and give a brief summary of the contents of each. My emphasis is on the military activity of Australian veterinarians and I refer readers to Ian's book for the considerable detail he gives on many other matters.

### **Chapter 1 - Genesis of the veterinary profession [in Australia]**

For much of the nineteenth century there was a steady stream of Members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to Australia, for a total of about 100 in 60 years. The first two were Joseph Armstrong (London 1837) who arrived in Australia in 1839 and John Stewart (Edinburgh 1827) who came in 1839. Then in 1888 WT Kendall established the Melbourne Veterinary College from which about 60 men graduated up to 1909 when the College became the Veterinary School in the University of Melbourne

### **Chapter 2 – The first soldiers in the colonies**

British troops had been stationed in Australia from the time of the first settlement in 1788 until the practice was discontinued in 1870. Thereafter each colony was responsible for its own defence forces. Military units were formed and gradually veterinary surgeons became incorporated as part of the officer establishment.



In South Australia troops of cavalry were formed in the Volunteer Military Forces and veterinary surgeons were appointed to these units earlier than in the other colonies. James McDonald and Thomas Chalwin MRCVS (Edinburgh 1853) were appointed in 1865-66. In Victoria probably the first veterinary appointment was that of Graham Mitchell MRCVS (Edinburgh 1854) to the Victorian Mounted Rifles in 1886. In NSW William Scott MRCVS (New Edinburgh 1883) was appointed to the Reserve Corps of Sydney Lancers as Veterinary Surgeon. In 1889 he was attached to the Permanent Military Force and by 1896 he was the Principal Veterinary Surgeon at Headquarters of the Veterinary Department of the Military Forces. AP Gribben MRCVS (New Edinburgh 1892) and FW Melhuish MRCVS (London 1888) were appointed as Honorary Veterinary Lieutenants and later STD Symons MRCVS (London 1882) became Principal Veterinary Surgeon. In Queensland James Irvine MRCVS (Edinburgh 1870) was appointed to a mounted unit in 1885

The first veterinarian to join an Australian military force going overseas was Anthony Willows MRCVS (London 1874). He was a volunteer in the contingent from New South Wales which went to Sudan in March 1885. The troops saw little action and returned to Sydney later in 1885. On the return trip Willows became infected with typhoid and died.

### **Chapter 3 – The British Army Department and its influence on the Australian Army Veterinary Department**

This is a short chapter. It deals with the organisation of army veterinary services in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century and its influence on veterinary services in some of the Australian colonies in the 1890s.

### **Chapter 4 – The Boer War 1899-1902**

In October 1899 the war in South Africa between Britain and the Boers began. In Australia patriotic feelings ran high in support of the British Motherland. Contingents of troops from all six colonies, totalling 16,715 volunteers of all ranks, went to South Africa before the war ended in 1902.

Among the volunteers were approximately 25 veterinary surgeons from all States except Tasmania including eighteen graduates from the Melbourne Veterinary College. The names of these men, including details of their units, service and decorations are given on pages 27 and 28 and in Appendix 1.

The veterinary problems they encountered covered a range of conditions including African horse sickness, glanders, mange, lice, epizootic lymphangitis, ophthalmia, sand colic, debility and tongue diseases (now known as vesicular stomatitis and suspected of being introduced by horses from the Americas).

The veterinary organisation in the British Army was abysmally poor. After arriving in South Africa the Australian officers, including the veterinarians, were deployed on a regimental basis under British officers with little support from trained subordinates. This system proved to be quite unsatisfactory. However, in the area of military practice the Australian experiences in South Africa were valuable precursors to the problems which unfolded on a vastly greater scale little more than a decade later.

## **Chapter 5 – From Federation to World War I**

In 1901 the responsibility for the defence forces in Australia was transferred from the Colonies to the Commonwealth Military. Each State was designated as a Military District and a Senior Veterinary Officer was appointed to each district. Ian gives the names, qualifications and ranks of many of the senior officers appointed during this period.

In the early 1900s there was a Veterinary Department organised under the Director-General of Medical Services. It was a militia unit and had 23 officers made up of one Lieutenant-Colonel, twelve Captains and ten Lieutenants. From 1902 all such officers had to hold a degree or diploma from a recognised veterinary college.

A major change took place in 1909 when the Australian Army Veterinary Corps (AAVC) was established and it was to remain in existence until the 1940s. It replaced the Veterinary Department. Its role was to maintain and ensure that the health and care of the army's animals was the best that could be provided. Again it was a militia corps. However because the permanent army had horses in its mounted forces and artillery batteries it became necessary to establish the AAVC (Permanent Forces) to care for these animals. Officers of the AAVC (Permanent Forces) were also responsible for training farriers and NCOs in the care of horses and veterinary first aid. Just before the outbreak of World War I the establishment of the Permanent AAVC was two Captains and three Lieutenants and that of the Militia AAVC two Lieutenant Colonels, eight Majors and 32 Captains.

## **Chapter 6 – To Egypt**

World War I began on 4 August 1914. The first contingent of the AIF left Australia on 1 November 1914 and consisted of approximately 20,000 men and 7,843 horses. There were nineteen veterinary officers in this contingent and these were the first of about 125 veterinarians who were to serve during the war. Ian gives details of all these officers in Appendix 4.

In September 1914 two Veterinary Sections were formed, one centred in New South Wales and the other in Victoria. Each consisted of two officers and 113 other ranks and was designed to treat 250 sick horses. Later they were amalgamated to form a veterinary hospital in France. Two Mobile Veterinary Sections were also formed and consisted of a veterinary officer and thirteen other ranks. Their role was to collect and give first aid to sick, disabled or debilitated horses and transport or move them to hospitals or safe areas behind the front lines. During the war more mobile veterinary units were formed and details of these are given in Appendix 5.

On arrival at Alexandria the units disembarked. This marked the beginning of prolonged and bloody campaigns in the Middle East.

## **Chapter 7 – Gallipoli**

It was planned that horses would be used in the Gallipoli campaign and there were 6,100 horses on 30 transport ships waiting to be landed. However it became apparent early in the campaign that there was little role for horses. Few were landed with most of the horses going back to Egypt. Four veterinary officers were involved for short periods during the campaign. Captain George Heslop landed at Gallipoli 10 days after the initial landing and was followed by Captains AO O'Neill, AH Robins and John Kendall.

## **Chapter 8 – The Reorganisation in Egypt**

After Gallipoli divisions were reformed in Egypt in 1916. In the veterinary area a mobile veterinary section was attached to each division and there were advanced veterinary hospitals, base veterinary hospitals and convalescent horse depots.

## **Chapter 9 – Transfer of AIF Divisions to France**

After a short rest on return from their campaign at Gallipoli, the infantry divisions were reorganised in Egypt. The 1st to 5th Divisions were transferred to France in April to December 1916 where they served till the end of the war.

Most of the information in this chapter deals with the activities of the 5th Division, perhaps because of the detailed writings of Lieutenant-Colonel Max Henry. Considerable emphasis was placed on the diagnosis of glanders by the intrapalpebral mallein test. Hundreds of divisional horses were tested and positive reactors found. All positive animals were slaughtered. Overall, in efforts to ensure that horses of the Expeditionary Forces (British, Australian etc) were kept free of glanders one and a half million doses of mallein were used during the war.

Captain Hindmarsh of the 1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade gave more details of veterinary conditions. These included bullet wounds, colic, kicks, greasy heels, catarrh, debility, enteritis, and mange while saddle and shoulder galls and picked –up nails were often present. Most cases were cured, the others being sent to hospital via the mobile veterinary sections.

One of the most serious problems encountered was that of mange which had severe side effects on the health and well being of the horses. In late 1916 the first cases of erosive stomatitis (vesicular stomatitis) were reported. It was imported with the horses from the United States and afterwards gave many units much trouble.

In April 1917 an Australian Veterinary Hospital was established near Calais. The hospital could accommodate 1,250 horses and had an establishment of seven officers and 459 men. Twenty five thousand animals were treated during the eighteen months of its existence.

## **Chapter 10 – The Offensives of 1918**

Ian describes the involvement of the 5th Division in the Allied offensives in the concluding months of the war. In a gas attack on the Division on 24 April about 250 horses were lost. Apart from battle casualties there was little sickness in the horses in the Division. During this offensive the Mobile Veterinary Section was constantly on the move as the Division moved forward.

## **Chapter 11 – Causes of Animal Wastage and Diseases**

Animal wastage resulted from animals killed in fighting or having to be destroyed for a variety of reasons. During the greater part of the service of the AIF in France battle casualties were from shell and bomb wounds and from poisonous gases. Adverse climatic and environmental conditions also determined the incidence of animal wastage. Other losses were from conditions which occur under normal conditions but were more severe during war.

Among these were picked-up-nails, sore backs and rope galls. An indication of the extent of these losses is shown in a report from the Somme in the winter of 1916-1917. Out of an animal strength in the Fifth Division of between about 3,500 and 5,500 the wastage was 2,478 horses.

Infectious conditions occurred and probably the most dreaded was epizootic lymphangitis. The disease was quite incurable and highly infectious. Discovery of a case in a unit necessitated extensive and rigorous control measures and all diagnosed cases were immediately destroyed. Mange was a perennial problem and very detailed instructions were issued for control and prevention. The third condition of significance was glanders but the availability of the Mallein test allowed effective diagnosis of cases. It was not a problem in World War I whereas in the South African War 1899-1902 it had devastating consequences.

Another cause of wastage was from poison gas. While the wastage of horses from gas attacks was not great they resulted in debility and caused lesions that were very difficult to treat. Naturally the gas attacks were considered dreadful experiences for the people and the animals and as a result the Veterinary Officers of the Divisions in which animals were affected were given advice to deal with, and methods to minimise, the effects of the gases.

## **Chapter 12 – War in the Middle East**

This chapter gives a detailed account of the fighting in the Middle East up to March 1917 with limited mention of Australian Veterinary Officers

## **Chapter 13 – Changes of Leaders in the Desert**

General Allenby took command in July 1917 and reorganised the troops into the Desert Mounted Corps, which contained the 1st to 4th Australian Light Horse Brigades. Much of the chapter deals with campaigns up to the Armistice with Turkey on 31 October 1918. In this chapter Ian provides a background against which the veterinary units had to function.

## **Chapter 14 – Veterinary Officers Reports Middle East**

Ian records the work of Major SA Mountjoy of the 8th Mobile Veterinary Section. Horses handed over to the Mobile Veterinary Section were taken from the area of conflict as rapidly as possible to safer positions behind the lines.

From the first aid posts horses were treated and their wounds dealt with before going back to hospital or to remount depots. The chapter also contains information on the 6th and 9th Mobile Veterinary Sections between March 1916 and 1919.

### **Chapter 15 – The Disposal of Horses and Other Animals Following the Armistice**

On the cessation of hostilities the AIF had in France, Egypt, Palestine and the United Kingdom approximately 25,000 horses, 8,000 mules and 100 camels. It was decided that for quarantine and economic reasons none of these animals would be sent to Australia. Of the horses in France the best were given to British forces, other suitable horses were sold to French and Belgian farmers and the remainder sold for meat. In the Middle East the troopers had become very attached to their horses and did not want them to be sold to those who would not care for them. Because of this the Australians shot their own horses.

### **Chapter 16 – The AAVC in Australia During and After World War I**

The provision of veterinary officers for the AIF was a heavy drain on the State Stock Departments and university teaching staff, but those in charge adjusted to the problems and carried on with reduced staff. Only by their efforts was the AIF provided with sufficient officers to maintain the establishment of veterinary staff. In 1916 the Army Veterinary Corps Reserve was formed. Members of the profession still in Australia were enlisted in the Reserve and became available for home service as required.

In 1920 the Commonwealth Military Forces were reorganised into five infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions. This necessitated the formation of ten mobile veterinary sections. One section was recruited from students at the Sydney Veterinary School and others from Gatton and Roseworthy Agricultural Colleges. In the 1930s there were Militia Light Horse units and these were serviced by veterinary officers in the Militia Army Veterinary Corps.

### **Chapter 17 – The AAVC in the Second World War**

At the beginning of World War II the army had been brought to full war establishment on a horse basis but it was decided to convert to a mechanised army. The Second World War presented a markedly different picture of the AAVC from that of the First World War. During the latter, the majority of AAVC officers were engaged overseas, many more horsed units were in action, and the work usually was at a much higher level of activity, often under enemy fire.

By contrast, during the Second World War most veterinary units served in Australia, with only a few overseas. Those in Australia were busy at full strength in the early months of the war in Veterinary Hospitals and in Light Horse Regiments, but this activity only lasted for a comparatively short period. The main overseas veterinary activity was in New Guinea with the two Horse Pack Transport Companies.

Ian concludes this chapter and his account of the AAVC with the following words:

The Australian Army Veterinary Corps is all but forgotten – even the exact date of its disbandment is unknown – yet throughout its relatively brief history it played a critical role in caring for the animals that were so important in keeping the military forces in the field.. For that service it deserves an honoured place in the annals of Australian military history.

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#### **Appendix 1 – Veterinary Officer List South Africa 1899-1902**

This gives the names and qualifications of the 31 veterinarians who served in the South African War.

#### **Appendix 2 – Details of Colonial Contingents to the South African War by States**

All colonies sent contingents of troops to South Africa. In summary these comprised: New South Wales, 6 contingents, 305 officers, 5,969 men; Victoria, 5 contingents, 248 officers, 3393 men; Queensland, 3 contingents, 139 officers, 2713 men; South Australia, 6 contingents, 85 officers, 1439 men; Western Australia, 6 contingents, 62 officers, 1167 men; Tasmania, 5 contingents, 37 officers, 821 men. In total there were 876 officers and 13502 men.

#### **Appendix 3 – Horse Shipments [World War 1]**

Thirty four shipments of horses were sent overseas. This table gives details of the shipments and the names of the veterinary officers in charge of each shipment.

#### **Appendix 4 – Veterinary Officer List 1914-1918**

In 15 pages Ian gives the names of 123 veterinarians who served in World War I, together with details of war service and military decorations. He also records the deaths of Captains W.J. Ridley and C.R. Seelenmeyer MC both of whom were killed in action and of Captain H.M. Baker who died of disease.

### **Appendix 5 – Veterinary Sections 1914-1918**

This appendix gives information on 11 Mobile Veterinary Sections and two veterinary hospitals including the dates and places of their formation.

### **Appendix 6 – Abbreviations**

### **Appendix 7 – Vet Degrees or Registration**

### **Appendix 8 – Glossary**

### **Appendix 9 – Imperial Measures**

**Bibliography – This shows the extensive range of sources used by Ian.**

### **Index**

#### **The Establishment of Veterinary Practice in Western Victoria Dr Robert P Knight, 6100 Glenormiston RSD, TERANG**

The western district of Victoria extends some 400 km westwards of Melbourne to the South Australian border and is bounded by the Southern Ocean to the south and the Dividing Range to the north. It is predominantly volcanic in origin, the plain being one of the largest areas of its type in the world. The whole plain is marked with extinct volcanic mounts, craters and lakes.

The region supports many aspects of primary production, the most important being production of wool and prime lambs, dairy produce, beef cattle and hay. The region boasts greater production from all of these enterprises than other regions in Victoria except for dairy produce which is in greater supply in the irrigated districts of northern Victoria.

The Veterinary Register has the registration of veterinarians over many years beginning in 1888. It has been published annually since; listing registrants in various towns in the district but it was not until after the Second World War that the situation changed with a continual availability of personnel. Many veterinarians began practice as employees of dairy companies, state wide, which at the time was illegal. However the Veterinary Board was considered a "toothless tiger" and action was never taken on this issue. Currently that law has changed since the Board was reconstituted as the Veterinary Practitioners' Board in 1997.



Sections of the dairy industry deserve a tribute for the foresight of employing veterinarians, which, in effect, stimulated the establishment of rural veterinary practice in many parts of Australia.

In Geelong, Robert Wardle (B.V.Sc Melbourne ca 1916) began practice following discharge from the army after World War 1, remaining there for six years until joining the Department of Agriculture in 1926. He was later appointed as Director of Veterinary Hygiene in 1939 in the Commonwealth Department of Health. Douglas Sefton graduated from Melbourne in 1919 and entered practice in Wangaratta. After a short period there he moved to Geelong remaining in practice until his death in 1952 by which time his son, Daryl (BVSc Sydney 1950) was also involved. Douglas was President of the Victorian Division of the Australian Veterinary Association in 1936. In 1948, Peter Fallon and Gerald Swinburne began a practice in Geelong as well, with Peter subsequently specialising in work with horses. Both of these graduates had come from New Zealand, having been in the initial group joining second year at the Sydney school in 1944, finishing with Bachelor Degrees in 1947. Today there are many veterinary practices in and around Geelong.

In Colac, an Alfred McCure was registered in 1893 as a registered veterinarian. (Editors note: Alfred McCure was a Registered Veterinary Surgeon in 1916 list registered at Nhill). No further details are known until Howard A. (Dusty) Rhodes (BVSc Sydney 1950) settled there in 1951. He was an ex-pilot from the Royal Navy and like the other ex servicemen of the time had greater presence than those of us without that experience. He is also a New Zealander and later became involved in the Victorian Division of the Australian Veterinary Association and was elected President of the Division in 1959 followed by membership of the Veterinary Board of Victoria. During his term in office he was vitally involved in the politics of the re-opening of the Melbourne Veterinary School that came to fruition in 1963. Dusty's son now conducts the Colac practice. Many years later Susan Swaney set up in practice at Birregurra a small town 20 km east of Colac.

Next town west is Camperdown, the centre of an area that had forward thinking farmers who began a system in the 1930s to employ graduates and which they called the Western Districts Research Association. The first veterinarian employed was John F. Filmer (B.V.Sc Melbourne 1916) who was employed in 1936 and left in 1938 to become Director of Animal Research of the Department of Agriculture in New Zealand. He was followed in 1938 by Dr W.A.Carr-Fraser (B.V.Sc Sydney 1925) who also lasted two years. He resigned from the position and set up in

practice in Camperdown that was soon thriving according to his obituary. Carr-Fraser did not enjoy good health and passed away in 1944, aged 44 years leaving a young family. No registered veterinarian was in residence in Camperdown until 1952 when Jim Pitney (B.V.Sc Sydney 1951) arrived and set up in private practice. A few years later he took time off and travelled to Cornwall and accepted a position there for about a year during which time Bruce Paine (B.V.Sc Sydney 1950) stood in as locum. Jim remained in Camperdown for many years before retiring to Melbourne.

South of Camperdown is the town of Timboon in which Barry Tredinnick (B.V.Sc Sydney 1954) established practice with the moral support of the Cobden Butter Factory in 1955 where he remained for about 12 months before it was transferred to Richard Coward (B.V.Sc Sydney 1953) who ran the business for many years before moving to Belmont. Subsequent to the establishment of this practice great areas of the Heytesbury forest nearby were cleared and settled as dairy farms. This massive increase in new farms was a great boost to the Timboon practice.

West of Timboon is Warrnambool which is the biggest town in the area. The register shows different people over many years registered with a local address but it is assumed none lasted very long. An A.W.K. Tuck GMVC, was registered there in 1932. I recollect a farmer telling me in 1949 that Tuck had conducted practice from

Warrnambool travelling in a horse drawn sulky. Nestles have a factory at Dennington, just out of Warrnambool with many suppliers. Recently this has been transferred to other owners. After World War 2 they began a system of employing veterinarians with the aim of servicing their suppliers with veterinary attention. Nils Sjogren (B.V.Sc Melbourne 1931?) accepted a position in 1944, after demobilisation from active service, as their Senior Veterinary Surgeon. Shortly afterwards Leon Duckett (D.V.M Czechoslovakia 1935) was appointed as his assistant but after a couple of years resigned to accept a position as veterinarian with Kraft at Allansford on the eastern side of Warrnambool. About that time Nestles had graduates in other centres nation wide. These included John Chalmers (B.V.Sc Sydney 1942) at Maffra, Les Freeman (B.V.Sc Sydney 1944) at Yinnar, both in Victoria, and Dick Strakosch (B.V.Sc Sydney 1943) at Smithtown in New South Wales Dick Strakosch remained in their employ until he retired.

I, Bob Knight (B.V.Sc Sydney 1947), accepted a position with Nestle on graduation for location on the Nambucca River in New South Wales to service suppliers gained from an extension into that area and was to be regimented to company psychology at the Nestle establishment at Dennington.

On arrival at Dennington, in February 1948, I found employment with Nils Sjogren as chief, a Scot named David Brown (MRCVS 1946?) and an Irishman named Sam Green (MRCVS 1939) both fresh from overseas. My impression of both of these characters at the time was that neither was very happy in the service! Being February, not a lot of activity was available for that work force either! Sure enough, after I had returned north, both men resigned.

I returned to Dennington in March 1949 to find Nils Sjogren alone, dispirited, and desperate to have a holiday for which he then left. Sam Green had left and begun practice in Footscray, and David Brown had ventured further to set up in Hobart. I remained there until June 1949 assisting, and during this time, sought a position with the Glenormiston Butter Factory Co., in Noorat and was accepted to begin work in August 1949.

The difficulty of maintaining a work force at Dennington dispirited Nils Sjogren to the stage that he resigned from the position with Nestle and returned to Melbourne in 1950. Nestle did not endeavour to continue the service on his departure. Bill Coulthard (BVSc Sydney 1950) established private practice in Warrnambool in 1951 and ran a very tight business for many years with an amazing turnover of assistants. Many leading veterinarians of Victoria began their professional life on his payroll. In 1953, he employed Ted Liefman (BVSc Sydney 1951) who stayed there for many years before accepting a position with Commonwealth Serum Laboratories at their equine farm at Woodend. Bill Coulthard was a great businessman although a real loner, not wishing to be involved with the rest of us! He ran this tight ship until his death in the early eighties.

At Allansford there was a reasonable turnover of graduates but always manned. Leon Duckett left for Melbourne in 1950 to be succeeded by Ray Chatham (BVSc Sydney 1949). Ray left after a year or so to set up in Cohuna followed by John Carruthers (BVSc Sydney 1950) who also left after a year or so to establish practice in Benalla. Next on the list was Doug Fenwick (BVSc Sydney 1954) who had been a cadet of the Victorian Department of Agriculture working in Colac, who became a most popular member, coming in 1955 and later turned this service into a very successful private practice. After many years Doug left the practice and began life in academia at the Veterinary School of the University of Queensland involved in bovine medicine at which he excelled.

At Port Fairy, Jack Odbert (BVSc Sydney 1945) was employed by Glaxo Ltd about 1947. This was also converted to private practice after a few years.

Odbert left after many years, retired to Melbourne, and the practice closed. Further west at Portland, Jack Keogh (BVSc Sydney 1947) accepted a position with the Portland Butter Factory Company late in 1948, remaining there until he took a position in Canberra in 1951 to join the public service. It is unclear what happened subsequently but Jules Collard (BVSc Sydney 1953) appeared at Heywood and servicing Portland after this for a short period.

Peter Coultie (MRCVS 1954?) from Scotland accepted a position with a farmers' co-operative at Heywood in 1957 having previously been an assistant at Warrnambool. This folded in 1959 when he went into private practice that included meat inspection duties at Portland abattoir. In later years Lewis Hitchcock (MRCVS 1959) took over this practice when Peter Coultie became more involved in the meat business.

At Merino, Val Sloss (DVM Giesen ?) accepted a position with British United Dairies in 1953. He moved to Casterton in private practice in 1959 remaining there until 1965 when he accepted a position as lecturer at Melbourne Veterinary School specialising in veterinary obstetrics.

At Hamilton in the early fifties was a Major White, an MRCVS but details not known. Dudley Johnston (BVSc Sydney 1955) moved in following experience at Mount Gambier, thought to be 1956. This practice passed to Bob Steel (BVSc Sydney 1959), then Graham Cole (BVSc Sydney 1960) in 1963 to 1967 when Graham left to study for a PhD at ANU. Bill Riches (BVSc 1961) took over and remained there until 1978. Dudley was appointed lecturer in surgery at Melbourne Veterinary School on leaving Hamilton.

Meanwhile at Noorat (at the base of Mount Noorat which in geology parlance is a nested culdera, an extinct volcano) some six kilometres north of Terang, on the highway between Warrnambool and Camperdown, is where Bob Knight began in the employ of the Glenormiston Butter Factory Company in August 1949 to service suppliers of the company. Noorat's claim to fame is that Alan Marshall the author who wrote "I Can Jump Puddles" was born here and lived here for many years. The location was fairly central to the suppliers of the factory originally but as time progressed the small suppliers to the north decreased and dairying increased further south. It remained the centre of the practice, with the work to the north becoming more beef cattle oriented at the expense of dairy work. The practice increased steadily over many years. The soldier settlement scheme significantly increased the rural population and many of the settlers were grateful to have assistance available.

During these years of employ Alan Marshall (BVSc Sydney 1952) was the first assistant in 1953 and Jim Cosgrove (BVSc Brisbane 1952?) moved from Albany, Western Australia, where he had endeavoured to establish practice, unsuccessfully, in 1954. Alan later established practice at Ararat but after leaving the practice was killed in a motor accident in 1977 when he was District Veterinary Officer at Ballarat. Jim Cosgrove left to study medicine. Private practice was transferred to Bob Knight in 1956 and it continued to grow. The next assistant to come was Ron Peet (BVSc Brisbane 1959) in 1961. In the days before August 1949 it appears clients used both Geoff Fethers (BVSc Melbourne ) for the TB testing of accredited herds and Doug Sefton who apparently worked as far as the SA border. Bob Knight retired in 1985 and is still resident in Noorat. The practice was transferred to Terang a year or so later. The activities of the Glenormiston Butter Factory ceased in the late fifties with the result that Noorat is now a sedate little town.

A practice of a distinctly pastoral nature was established in Skipton in the mid fifties when a group of landowners advertised for a veterinary surgeon for this purpose. Peter F. Taylor (B.V.Sc Sydney 1953) accepted this position and performed the necessary duties for several years. Due to lack of activity he resigned from Skipton and moved to Echuca to set up private practice. No veterinarian has been based here since Peter left.

All of the remaining practices continue to flourish with many graduates involved, fortunately with a greater supply of veterinarians than in earlier years. Moreover practice in those early years was a lonely busy business. The work became constant for lone operators who worked hard and fast. There was no top speed limit on driving and we all made the best of that. I recall at different times pregnancy testing 1150 beef cattle on one day and on another TB testing 1500 dairy cows before heading off to Melbourne for a meeting. Involvement in the AVA was a must and a stimulation, particularly at the monthly meetings held at the Veterinary Research Institute, enabling veterinarians to discuss problems with somebody who could help. In later years Bob Knight became involved in affairs of the Victorian Division ultimately becoming President in 1968. Subsequently he also was elected to the Veterinary Board of Victoria on which he served as Treasurer for fifteen years. Perhaps this may be the reason we were all so busy in the AVA? The Western Branch of the Association was requested to provide a professional program for the meeting of the Division for November 1963 when four members presented papers. This was an outstanding meeting and the papers have been recorded in the Victorian Veterinary Proceedings 1963-64 for all to witness.

Contact with our seniors was to our advantage and at this stage I offer grateful thanks to the following for their kindness, their advice and their encouragement: Harold Albiston, Dan Murnane, Bill Stevenson, Murray Pullar, Sandy Sutherland, Doug. Blood, Colin Gorrie, Nils Sjogren, Dan Flynn and Jack Arundel, all wonderfully generous with help and advice. Many of these friends had been Presidents of the Victorian Division of the Australian Veterinary Association. In order they were H.E.Albiston 1934; D.Murnane 1938; C.J.R.Gorrie 1945; E.M.Pullar 1946; N.Sjogren 1955, D.M.Flynn 1957; A.K.Sutherland 1960 and J.H.Arundel 1966.

#### **Letter to the Editor:**

Dear Sir,

The article in AVH Record No 44 by John Wellington re brucellosis in pastoral practice has stimulated many thoughts and experiences associated with that disease in the practice at Noorat that boasted a greater bovine population.

Starting here in 1949, vaccination of heifers with strain 19 was in its infancy commenced by field officers (stock inspectors) of the Department of Agriculture. In short time they were keen to unload the practice and vaccination became a steady source of income in the veterinary practice during the drier months of the year. The income derived from vaccination of calves was not great but at least it was constant at a time when other work was minimal. As the years progressed we were able to reduce the overhead by arranging calf runs where about 12 to 20 farms were visited in turn for this purpose. The charge for vaccination was a constant item on every meeting of the South west branch of the AVA. It was an eternal headache as nobody had the courage to increase the charge to make a reasonable return. Despite this, vaccination of calves did provide much work. Abortion storms were infrequent as most stockowners did involve vaccination for many years.

Occasionally fistulous withers in horses did occur and if the horse proved positive to *Brucella abortus* on agglutination testing we used strain 19 as a treatment that proved to be satisfactory and less involved than resorting to surgery.

In the late 1960s I think it was, vaccination with strain 19 became compulsory and free of charge to the farmer. Dr Flynn as Chief Veterinary Officer of the Department had "negotiated" with a sub-committee of the Victorian Division of AVA and offered as little as possible per head with no allowance for travel. I can appreciate how difficult it would have been for the Wellingtons to make anything out of this duty with small numbers of calves spread over a large area.

To overcome the costs associated with travel we devised a scheme to vaccinate calves on organised runs and if an owner wanted any vaccinated in a hurry we offered to do this if they were prepared to pay the travelling. Many complained about the offer but were advised this was a cost for special service.

During the years in which we used strain 19 we were often confronted with calves showing signs of rye grass staggers, and lungworm infested patients due to *Dictyocaulis viviparus* and were always fearful of Blackleg that would rear its ugly head on occasions following vaccination.

Similar to the Wellington experience, we often had problems waiting for payments from the Department. On one particular occasion we were owed a lot of money for the busiest two or three months of the year when I plucked up courage to query

Dan Flynn at a meeting about the delay of payment. Great action occurred and payment was received within the week. It appeared the clerk responsible had put the claims in a drawer due to a query that had never been made prior to Dan Flynn's involvement and forgotten about the claims until pressured from above. Later, the chief clerk pleaded with me that if a similar problem did arise PLEASE do not confront Dan Flynn! We had no problems after that incident.

Like the Wellingtons I did line up at several AGM conferences for a blood test and found the results positive on agglutination and complement fixation tests. The titres quoted however were never as spectacular as one would expect. I took the cake however in about 1972 when caught vaccinating a yardful of heifers on my own.

Due to one heifer lifting its head in a hurry it knocked my left hand upwards while reaching across it to vaccinate another standing beside it. The needle of the syringe penetrated the skin of the left index finger. I remember it being sore later in the day when calving a cow. This soreness was nothing to what followed as the finger swelled and became just stiff. After three or four days I visited the local medical GP who of course had no idea. Between us it was decided to use Terramycin as a treatment that made no difference. A further few days and I was unable to sleep due to a painful throbbing index finger. In desperation my wife telephoned Bill Stevenson for help. He was the state epidemiologist at the time and referred me to Fairfield Hospital. After a hurried drive to Fairfield I was horrified to be put to bed where I stayed for several days. Their first effort was to photograph the hand resting on a blue cushion with the bright red finger uppermost. Many, all over the world, have seen this photograph as the case was recorded. The diagnosis made was "brucella sensitivity" and treatment commenced using corticosteroids.

After the few days in bed with treatment the progress stopped and it seemed to be ages before the swelling began to recede. I was discharged with the finger in a splint and the left arm in a sling with advice to rest it for a month or so. Needless to say that rest time was greatly reduced as we had work to do.

Fortunately, thirty years on, I still have the finger albeit still tender! Eternal thanks are due to Fergus and Rosemary Irving for having carried the practice during this episode.

With regard to tuberculosis in local cattle I soon found it to be present in the district when I came here and with youthful enthusiasm felt testing could control it. Geoff Fethers had been testing two herds in the locality over some years for accreditation that were TB free. I began testing herds in 1950 and the herd, which, today, has the credit for being one of the leading Jersey herds in the state, was one of the first. Of 100 cows tested at the time 33 were positive to the single intradermal test and were condemned. I felt terrible about this result, but in later years the owner confided that this had been one the greatest things to have happened to the herd to stimulate progress.

On another occasion in about 1951 or 1952 we were called to a herd where calves of 2-3 months of age were dying. At autopsy, tuberculosis was diagnosed and testing of the herd recommended. This did take place and we condemned two thirds of the herd as reactors. Many calves reacted also and despite some not reacting to the test we condemned the lot. At the abattoir the collection of lesions in all animals was extensive.

Before farm collection of milk began in 1950-51 farmers delivered their milk to the factory in cans. After washing their cans they could obtain skim milk from the factory to feed their calves on return to the farm. By regulation the factory provided facilities to enable the farmer to boil this skim milk with the view of sterilisation. This regulation was not enforced with the result farmers did not boil the milk as it was too hot for the calves to drink when they reached home. So, TB was active and widespread. The local stock inspector developed reasonable ability in condemning suspect tubercular cows as he had plenty of practice.

One interesting episode occurred about this time in which we were not involved. At a beef raising property north of Noorat the stock inspector condemned a bull with TB and arranged to have the bull collected by the local knacker. The owners agreed to have the bull in the stockyards in time for the pick up. The knacker arrived as per the arranged time, shot the bull in the yards, collected it and drove off. It turned out that the owner had not complied with the arrangement made and the bull taken was their top animal. This bull was loaded with lesions of TB in any case. The owners then cut up rough and threatened legal action against the knacker, the stock inspector and the Department of Agriculture. Great activity was made by the Department to convince the owners that this bull was also full of lesions.

The same owners were difficult with David Fitzpatrick in later years when he announced suspicion of foot lameness in sheep. Even more strange stories could be told of how difficult these people could be!



By the time TB testing was compulsory the disease was well under control. A handful of herds had reactors at the time out of hundreds although two of those herds lost considerable proportions of their herds as reactors. All herds had been tested for the first time by about 1962 and very few reactors have been collected since. By the mid 1960s departmental personnel had taken over the whole programme.

As John Wellington has professed, the work on both diseases was hard, dirty, difficult and dangerous by any standards. Fancy being employed as an assistant to line up to such duty like the principals who must have been mad!

Yours etc.  
Bob Knight

**From:** WAHVM Congress 2006 <uleciv@unileon.es>  
**Date:** 16 February 2006 10:36:19 pm GMT+11:00  
**To:** (Recipient list suppressed)  
**Subject:** XXXVII WAHVM Congress León (SPAIN)

Dear Sir:

The Organizing Committee of the XXXVII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS of the World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine & XII SPANISH NATIONAL CONGRESS on the Veterinary History announces that these meetings will be held in León (SPAIN) from 22nd to 24th September 2006. All information about the Congress can be found at the web page: <<http://www3.unileon.es/congresos/wwuleciv>>

Enclosed we are sending the brochure of the Congress (1st announcement).

To contact Organizing Committee:  
E-mail: <uleciv@unileon.es>

Dr. José Gabriel Fernández Álvarez  
Secretary of the XXXVII WAHVM Congress  
Facultad de Veterinaria  
Universidad de León  
Campus de Vegazana s/n  
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