



The Veterinary History Society

Newsletter June 2024

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the Veterinary History Society which we hope you will find interesting. It provides updates on the society and highlights some recent (and not so recent) additions to the literature relating to veterinary history.

Do feel free to pass this newsletter on to any colleagues who may be interested to know more about the society.

Meeting Report

In May 2024 the VHS held a meeting at the Hunterian Museum, at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Despite the inclement weather and an alternative 'attraction' at nearby Aldwych House, members and their guests had a most informative visit. Exploring the recently refurbished Hunterian Museum provided an immense breadth and depth of immaculately preserved specimens, ranging across the species, from amphibians to mammals. Of particular interest was the genital tract of a 'freemartin', dissected and described by John Hunter in 1779.

The museum is not all about anatomical specimens, and has on display numerous fine paintings of animals, including several by George Stubbs (himself a good friend of John Hunter).

Many attending the visit felt a need to return to the museum to fully appreciate the full extent of the collection. The Museum is open to the public, free of charge, from Tuesday to Saturday:

<https://hunterianmuseum.org/visit>

In the afternoon the VHS was pleased to welcome Dr Gavin Gatehouse who spoke about the life of Griffith Evans (1835-1935). His new book, 'Griffith Evans, Veterinarian, Pioneer Parasitologist and Adventurer' had recently been published (University of Wales Press) and Gavin provided us with some remarkable insights into Evans' career and contributions. These included being both veterinary and medically qualified, visiting the medical front-line during the American Civil War, meeting Abraham Lincoln, becoming great friends with William Osler and working in India where he was the first person to recognise and record the pathogenic nature of trypanosomes. In 1935, aged 100, he received a congratulatory scroll, in person, from Sir Frederick Hobday, and was able to recall his time at the RVC over 80 years before, having been taught by Charles Spooner, John Simmons and William Morton. All in the audience were agreed

that the veterinary profession has failed to remember Evans and were grateful to Gavin for his research and writings. The book is available at:

<https://www.uwp.co.uk/book/griffith-evans-1835-1935/>

As a final part of the visit, members were able to visit the odontological collection and view the 'edentulous' skull of a Canadian Black Bear, (*Ursus americanus*) called 'Winnie'. The bear, which lived in London Zoo from 1915 until her death in 1934, was the basis for the character of 'Winnie the Pooh' by AA Milne. Winnie herself had come to England from Canada with Captain Harry Colebourn, a veterinarian, serving with the Canadian Army in World War 1. After the war, Winnie remained in the zoo, whereas Colebourn (who obtained MRCVS in 1919) returned to Canada.

The VHS is most grateful to the Hunterian Museum, especially Ms Carina Phillips, for facilitating our visit, and to the President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England for his help in organising the meeting.

Cambridge Meeting: 'Eyes of Sighs'

Our next one-day meeting will be held on **Wednesday 4 September 2024, at St John's College, Cambridge**. Commencing at **10.30am**, it is organised by Robin Bone and David Williams, and will have as its theme 'Reflections on the history and developments in veterinary ophthalmology.' Topics will include the 'history of cataract surgery', 'a veterinary ophthalmologist's recollection over half a century', 'Irish Setter, inherited eye disease and its control' and 'testing for eye conditions in America.' A range of speakers, from home and abroad, will provide their own insights across a range of species affected by ophthalmological issues.

Application forms for the meeting will be sent to members in July, but in the meantime, please place the date in your diary.

World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine, September 2024

The conference will be held from **18-21 September 2024** at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Campus de Vegazana, University of León, Spain.

Registration is open until 31 July at:

<https://www.historiaveterinaria.org/inscripcion-congreso/>

And the congress programme may be found at

https://www.historiaveterinaria.org/congresos/programa-congreso-daily-schedule-xlvi-congreso-internacional-xlvi-international-congress-wahv_78.htm

For further details and information please contact the President of WAHVM, Dr Alison Skipper by email: alisonmskipper@gmail.com.

World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine, 2022.

The abstracts from the WAHVM meeting in 2022 have just been released and are available at

https://storiamedicinaveterinaria.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/119-e28093-2024_wahvm-e28093-proceedings-of-45th-international-congress.pdf

This is an extensive publication and will serve as a useful reference to those with a interest in veterinary history.

The Journal

The editor, Teresa Johnston, has, as ever, been working hard to edit the journal and has been grateful for the range of manuscripts that have been submitted, from a number of countries. It is hoped that the next edition will be distributed to members in August this year.

Please consider submitting material for publication, it does not have to be a 'full paper', any material related to veterinary history (perhaps a picture of an 'old instrument') would be welcomed. If you are aware of recently published books relating to veterinary history she would be keen to know about these, and perhaps include a review in the Journal. Authors do not have to be members of the society....although we would encourage them to join. Contact Teresa at teresajanejohnston@gmail.com.

Books, Something Old and Something New

We would like to highlight two books that might be of interest to members.

Firstly, 'Memoirs of a Veterinary Surgeon' by Reginald Hancock (1954). A graduate of the Royal Veterinary College (1913), he served with the Army Veterinary Corps where he recalls spending time with HRH Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), including the two sharing bathing facilities in a beer house in France. Hancock had a varied career after the war and in 1947, whilst working for the RSPCA, was responsible for establishing the first animal hostel/hospital at London Heathrow Airport. For those wishing to obtain a copy, it may be best to try one of several 'online' booksellers.

Secondly, a new history of 'the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (1962-2021)' by Lieutenant Colonel Chris Ham, MBE, L/RAVC. This overlaps with, and follows, the History of the RAVC (1961-96) by the late Robert Mares. This new book is very different: lavishly illustrated, it covers in great detail the people of the corps and their activities whilst serving. It includes a great range of personal recollections and views. A high quality and impressive addition to the veterinary literature, published by Crest Publications.

Feedback

If you have any questions or feedback, then please do not hesitate to contact us at veterinaryhistorysociety@gmail.com

And finally: Veterinary Eponyms

Johne's Disease

A wasting disease of ruminants, caused by mycobacterium and first described by Heinrich Albert Johne (1839-1910) in 1895. He was the son of a veterinarian and worked at the Dresden Veterinary School, where he was later appointed Professor of Pathology. The initial description of the cause of the disease was made with the aid of an American collaborator, Langdon Frothingham, DVM (1886-1913) a graduate of the Harvard Veterinary School. Initial suggestions that the condition should be called 'Johne and Frothingham's Disease' were rejected as being considered far too cumbersome; it would become known as Johne's Disease.