

The Wylie Centenary Flyer

June 2008

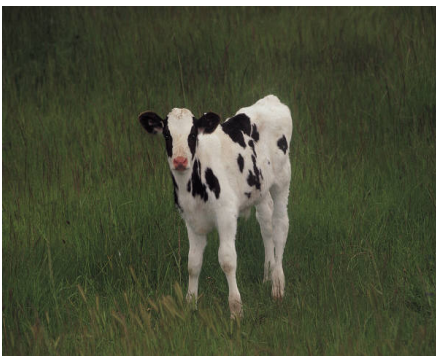


100 Years To Celebrate!

Even by today's standards we are extremely fortunate to have our own on-site laboratory, and our full-time Laboratory Technician, Tracy. Although some of our tests have to be sent away, most are completed at our Upminster surgery. This means we can get results very quickly, and speeds up diagnosis and treatment.

In 1908 veterinary laboratory work was in its infancy, but a new Chair of Pathology and Bacteriology had just been formed. Everything was new and exciting, even agar plates. These modern day laboratory necessities were made from a Chinese seaweed and did not exist in Europe before 1859!

Procedures and ideas were changing fast and you ignored them at your peril. A British vet wrote disparagingly of American and Continental colleagues who were advocating passing an India rubber tube into the stomach of horses 'by way of the nostrils'. 'One cannot help thinking that authors who advise this procedure cannot be in the front rank as clinicians or practitioners'. He must have had cause to regret his words, for, as anyone who has ever had a horse with colic, or read a James Herriot book will know, this is now the only accepted way of performing this procedure!



Other things around 100 years ago have also stood the test of time. In 1908 advertisements extolled the benefits of new obstetric pulley blocks for aiding difficult calvings. The manufacturer was Arnold and Sons, a company that veterinary practices still deal with today!

This month, on Sunday the 22nd June we are holding our very special Centenary Open Day. Please join us and help us celebrate. There will be lots of prizes, special gifts, and hopefully fun to be had by all!

Also, on Saturday the 28th June our Wylie Centenary Ball will be held at The Mount Avenue Banqueting Suite in Shenfield. This year, as well as good food, great company and dancing, there will also be a casino and a roving magician! The aim is to transport ourselves back to the glamour of a bygone age and we'd love you to come with us! Ask at reception for more details.

Editor: **Kathy Beasley**

Is Your Pet At Risk From A Pyometra?!

In 1908, as interest in canine and feline medicine grew, veterinary surgeons began to recognise a condition they described as 'Purulent Metritis'. The Veterinary Record described cases in a cat, a French Bull terrier and an Aberdeen terrier. All showed signs of increased thirst, abdominal distension, and frequent vomiting, none had ever given birth, and the affected females were all 'aged.' It was stated that 'no attention is given to it in text books'. Also, it was a 'much commoner condition than one would suppose and often passes unrecognised'. Individuals had 'never borne young' or it would 'appear a few months after parturition' (birth). 'All breeds of bitches' could be affected but 'white cats are more prone'. Another correspondent disagreed, having seen the condition 'only once in a very old cat and never in grey or white', despite 'white being more likely as they are weaker.'

It was realised that the best treatment was surgical 'but unfortunately' 'the animal is not in a fit condition' so 'one has to direct attention to combating the gastric symptoms. Bismuth chlorotone and other stomach sedatives afford temporary relief, whilst limiting the diet to milk and enforcing quietude'. Also 'placing the hinder parts of the animal in very warm or hot water' promoted 'the escape of some of the uterine contents'.

Cats could live for 'years whilst affected' although 'ultimately they succumb to a septic intoxication' 'and death ensues'. However, in the bitch, death 'may occur very suddenly', the bitch 'appearing in fairly good health a short time prior to its demise'.

We now call this condition a 'pyometra'. As many cats and dogs are neutered at a young age it is far less common than it was, but, should it occur, an operation is still the best treatment, and these days is far more likely to have a successful outcome!

Life Was Tough In Those Days!

Just like today, in 1908 'the most earnest wish' of every surgeon was that 'safety and painlessness may be combined together'. Morphia was recommended for many canine operations as it was safer than the anaesthetic available - chloroform. Unfortunately it first caused vomiting and defaecation, and so care was needed if it was 'administered in a carpeted room'! Hopefully, no-one today would deny that the spaying of bitches and the castration of dogs necessitates a full anaesthetic, but in 1908, although some veterinarians 'found morphia very useful', it was not 'entirely necessary, as the use of a good local anaesthetic', was 'all sufficient'. Even worse, one individual felt, when operating on skin growths, that 'dogs were not really very susceptible to pain', local anaesthetic was not necessary, and 'distilled water was quite sufficient if properly applied'! Things have certainly changed for the better!

Sadly a large part of our work is caused by road accidents. Both pets and wild animals stand little chance on our fast busy roads in the 21st century, although many can be treated and make a full recovery. In 1908 you might have imagined that animals were less likely to become road victims, but casualties still happened.

A man was sued £10 for the loss of a collie outside a farm. It was alleged that the car was 'driven by the defender's servant at a speed alleged to be excessive'. The car was accused of going 'very fast' 'at about 15 miles an hour'. The driver estimated the speed at 'about 10-12 miles an hour'. It was decided that 'on all occasions the driver of a motor car, like the driver of every other vehicle, must have his vehicle under complete control, so as to be prepared for any contingencies', whether they be 'a child or a dog running out'. The law required the speed to be 'regulated accordingly' - if not, 'it would involve the close confinement to the house of children, with consequences to their health not difficult to foresee'!

