13th ANNUAL IAVE MEETING
Baden-Baden, Germany
8-9 June 2016
Twenty-five years as a veterinary editor: Silver medal or wooden spoon?

Dr Andrew Higgins
Honorary Editor-in-Chief
The Veterinary Journal
The British Veterinary Journal

Professor Archie Laing (1919-2009)

Chairman Editorial Board 1984-1989
The British Veterinary Journal

Professor Archie Laing; Editor 1960–1984 (Chair Editorial Board 1985-1989) (d. 2009)

Professor Jack Payne; Editor 1985–1988 (d.1988)

Dr Brinley Morgan; Editor 1988-1991 (d.2009)

Dr Andrew Higgins; joined Board 1989
Deputy Editor, 1990
Editor, 1991 (sole until 2005)
Editor-in-Chief 2006-2015
Honorary Editor-in-Chief 2016-

Sandra Tatum
Librarian AHT
Assistant Editor TVJ
1990-2005
The Veterinary Journal

History

• Founded 1875\(^1\) by Professor George Fleming (1833–1901); the first Editor

• Farrier; distinguished army career ending as Principal VS to the army; the first President of the NVMA/BVA; five times President RCVS; voluminous writer and veterinary thinker

• Fleming was an energetic and controversial figure of considerable importance in veterinary history\(^2\)

\(^1\)1875: Disraeli had just succeeded Gladstone as British Prime Minister with Queen Victoria on the throne; Ulysses S. Grant was the 18th President of the United States, Aristides won the very first Kentucky Derby; Dr. Robert Koch was still to publish his pivotal paper which proved that anthrax was caused by an infectious micro-organism

The Veterinary Journal and Archives of Comparative Pathology
George Fleming

• Title implies awareness of the importance of ‘one medicine’

• Opening Editorial in 1875\textsuperscript{1} – ‘The Veterinary Journal has been founded…to represent and develop the veterinary profession independently, protecting animals from disease as well as curing them, and maintaining an attitude of humanity’

• According to Major-General Sir Frederick Smith (1927)\textsuperscript{2} Fleming ‘was modern in every sense of the term and adopted views on glanders and tuberculosis which were greatly in advance of the veterinary thought of his day’

\textsuperscript{1} Fleming, G. 1875. The Veterinary Journal vol. i, p.1
\textsuperscript{2} Smith, F. 1927. A History of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps 1796-1919. London, Baillière Tindall & Cox
The Veterinary Journal and Archives of Comparative Pathology

George Fleming

He played a crucial role in the passing of the 1881 Veterinary Surgeons Act (against much opposition) that protected the title "veterinary surgeon", gave statutory recognition to the profession and (in Fleming’s view)\(^1\) established veterinarians as ‘educated and scientific’

By 1881 when the Act was passed, *TVJ* was ‘already an important part of 19th Century veterinary evolution.’ Fleming’s vision was ‘to create a science-based profession’\(^2\)

---

\(^1\) Fleming, G. 1880. The Veterinary Journal 11, 22.

Despite his many qualities and devotion to veterinary science, Fleming was outspoken, opinionated and did not tolerate opposition. His ‘weaknesses were an incurable optimism, extraordinary impetuosity, a love of popularity and insatiable ambition’….and in 1889-90 there was ‘a lamentable affair’

Fleming published a novel technique for ‘roaring’ (laryngeal hemiplegia) in horses that had not been adequately tested and was ‘a disaster’. He was also publically criticised following a paper on the Physical condition of horses for military purposes (although ‘the Proceedings were carefully edited’)

3 The Veterinary Journal 1889 vol. xxix, pp. 42-46 and 115-127
The Veterinary Journal and Archives of Comparative Pathology
George Fleming

An outstanding veterinarian of his generation

He published prolifically for 19 years in The Veterinary Journal and countless other journals, books and periodicals

In 1894, Fleming resigned the editorial chair of The Veterinary Journal and died in 1901

In 1927 Smith¹ (not his biggest fan) wrote: ‘…The creation and conduct of this journal was not the least of the great services he rendered to his profession…’

The Veterinary Journal: The Anglo-American Review of Veterinary Science

In 1900, a ‘new series’ was started and ‘Archives of Comparative Pathology’ was dropped.

1906 – for one year only the subtitle ‘The Anglo-American Review of Veterinary Science’ was added to the main title page although the issues were titled Veterinary Journal.

From 1907-1948 the subtitle was: ‘A monthly review of veterinary science’.
The Veterinary Journal becomes The British Veterinary Journal

1949 - Joint Editors, Professors Thomas Dalling and James McCunn

The title was changed from The Veterinary Journal to The British Veterinary Journal

“...As the Journal is produced in Great Britain and contains contributions very largely by veterinary surgeons and others within the Empire, the inclusion of the word 'British' in the title will mark the origin of the publication”

1 Dalling, T., McCunn, J. 1949. The British Veterinary Journal 105, 1-3
The British Veterinary Journal becomes The Veterinary Journal

Forty-eight years on, in 1997 (Editor, Dr Andrew Higgins) -

The title was changed back to The Veterinary Journal….

• Location of journal was becoming increasingly unimportant (some bias in USA)
• Content, citations (and now downloads) confer credibility
• Increasingly international Board, reviewer base and submissions

In both 1949 and 1997, the editors claimed that the wide circulation throughout the world created a powerful case for changing the name to boost readership¹

The Veterinary Journal/
The British Veterinary Journal
Publishers

• Baillière Tindall

Medical and scientific publishing house founded in Paris in 1818 by Jean-Baptiste-Marie Baillière (1797-1885) when aged 21
The Veterinary Journal/
The British Veterinary Journal
Publishers

- 1869 Albert Alfred Tindall and William Cox purchased the London business to form Baillière Tindall & Cox

- 1875 The Veterinary Journal launched

- For 124 years, between 1875 and 1999 TVJ continued to be published under the subsidiary imprint of Baillière Tindall
By ca. 1960 Baillière Tindall & Cox had become part of the British publisher Cassell and traded as Baillière, Tindall & Cassell.

1982 Cassell was acquired by US TV network CBS.

1986 The book-publishing business of CBS was bought by US publisher Harcourt Brace Jovanovich that also owned W.B. Saunders.
The Veterinary Journal/
The British Veterinary Journal
Publishers

- 2001 The Harcourt Group was bought by Reed Elsevier
- 2002 Ken Plaxton took over as publisher of TVJ
- 2003 The Elsevier imprint first appeared
The Veterinary Journal/
The British Veterinary Journal
Publishers

Elsevier

- Founded in 1580 as The House of Elzevir, a small Dutch family publishing house of classical works
- In 2016 employs over 7000 staff
- Publishes over 2000 journals
- 20,000 books
- Holds 25% of the science and technology publishing market
- We are a very small cog in a very big wheel
141 years

1875-2016 covers the start of two new centuries:

1900 - Editor, William Owen Williams (1860-1911)\(^1\)

2000 - Editor, Andrew Higgins

\(^1\) Established the Liverpool Veterinary School and was the University’s first Professor of Veterinary Medicine
The Veterinary Journal
First Centenary

1900 – Editor, William Owen Williams

• “We find ourselves, through the courtesy and enterprise of our publishers, in a position to address a very wide audience”

(a free copy was sent to every registered veterinarian in UK, the British Empire and the USA)

• An impressive marketing feature to “help towards the federation of the profession”

1900 Editorial: Our new year salutation; The Veterinary Journal NS1,1-2
The Veterinary Journal
First Centenary

- Pass on your copy or send it abroad to the “eager readers of our Journal in the Colonies”
- Appeal for more reports and communications and reflect on “the thrill when one thinks that one’s words may be read by thousands of readers”

1900 Editorial: Our new year salutation; The Veterinary Journal NS1,1-2
“Electronic publishing.....post reports instantly and universally not only to the scientific community but to virtually all browsers”

.....no need for hard copies, just click on web page or “hard copies can be faxed or mailed for a fee”

“.....soon, electronic publishing will be the standard and papers will be published on the web virtually as soon as they are accepted”
The Veterinary Journal
Second Centenary

- Will electronic publishing lead to the demise of hard copy?
  “...Whether by hard copy or through cyberspace, the need to disseminate information widely and as fast as available technology permits will be as important in 2100 as it was to the editors of The Veterinary Journal in 1900 and 2000”

- On peer review: “...peer review will be on the web with solicited reviewers’ comments published alongside the authors’ responses and the observations of anyone else who wishes to contribute”

The Veterinary Journal
2016

• Joint Editors-in-Chief, Annette Litster (USA) and Adrian Philbey (UK)
• Seven Scientific Editors (Japan, Australia, Italy, USA, Netherlands, Belgium and UK)
• Advisory Board of 50-60 international workers
• Hon. Editor-in-Chief, Andrew Higgins (UK)
• Journal Manager Jake Holdridge (Elsevier)
### The Veterinary Journal – 2015

**Submissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original articles</td>
<td>813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned review articles</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited review articles</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Communications (includes those converted during review process from FLA to SCO); Case Reports are not considered</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-peer reviewed (Editorials, Commissioned Guest Editorials, Book Reviews and Personal Views); no Letters to the Editor</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1204</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Includes one Special Issue
In 2015, TVJ accepted 326 articles:

- 168 (52%) Original articles
- 39 (12%) Reviews
- 57 (17%) Short Communications
- 34 (10%) Editorials or Guest Editorials*
- 6 (2%) Personal Views*
- 22 (7%) Book Reviews (e-only)*

* No peer review only editorial discretion
Rejections

- 800 (66%) were rejected (half of these by the handing editor on submission)
- 62 (5%) were withdrawn by the authors during the review process
- A small number of articles were rejected for welfare reasons
- Aim to require compliance with relevant reporting guidelines (e.g. CONSORT, STROBE etc.) increasingly available for a broad range of study designs ⇒ better transparency, accuracy and completeness\(^1\)

\(^1\) More, S.J. 2010. Improving the quality of reporting in veterinary journals: How far do we need to go with reporting guidelines. The Veterinary Journal 184, 249-250
The Veterinary Journal
Welfare

Since 1991, animal welfare has always been a high priority\textsuperscript{1-3} and since 2011 all accepted manuscripts are required to meet criteria based on the ARRIVE guidelines\textsuperscript{4,5}

The Guide for Authors is clear: ‘\textit{The Veterinary Journal will reject any paper where there is reason to believe that animals have been subjected to unnecessary or avoidable pain or distress}’

Reviewers specifically asked to comment on welfare implications or can suggest specialist advice is sought

\textsuperscript{1} Higgins, A.J. 1993. Science and suffering – the importance of standards. British Veterinary Journal 149, 401-402
\textsuperscript{2} Higgins, A.J. 2001. Animal research and publication ethics. The Veterinary Journal 162, 81-83
\textsuperscript{3} Higgins, A.J. 2008. Moving with the times. The Veterinary Journal 175, 1-2
\textsuperscript{4} Blomme, E.A.. 2011. The ARRIVE guidelines. The Veterinary Journal 189, 237-238
\textsuperscript{5} The ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of \textit{In Vivo} Experiments) guidelines to improve the reporting of research using animals by maximising information published and minimising unnecessary studies. See Kilkenny, C. et al. 2010. PLoS Biology 8, e1000412.
The Veterinary Journal - 2015
Worldwide submissions

- Papers were received from 65 different countries with the China in first place followed by the USA, Italy, UK and Brazil
- Countries with noticeably increased submissions in 2015 were Australia, Belgium and The Netherlands
- Sudden changes in national interest in TVJ are hard to explain but the top five have remained in the block for several years although they have varied in their positions
- Articles from Iran, India, Egypt, Turkey, Nigeria and other often enthusiastic groups continue to be submitted and sadly rejected. How can we help improve scientific rigour and publication of valuable articles?
# Science Citation Index Impact Factor
*('the currency of prestige of a journal’ – Really?)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>IF</th>
<th>5-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.755</td>
<td>1.978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.802</td>
<td>1.978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td>2.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.796</td>
<td>2.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.239</td>
<td>2.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.424</td>
<td>2.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.165</td>
<td>2.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.755</td>
<td>2.147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Veterinary Journal IF

![Graph showing the Impact Factor (IF) and 5-year IF for The Veterinary Journal from 2007 to 2015. The IF peaks at around 2.8 in 2009 and 2011, with a 5-year IF that follows a similar trend with a peak around 2.6 in 2011. The graph suggests a decline in both IF and 5-year IF after 2011.](image-url)
The Veterinary Journal
IF fall – Why?

• The publication of unsuitable Special Issues or Conference Proceedings? Or the timing of their publication?
• Are Guest Editorials, Editorials and PVs included by Thomson in establishing our rating?
• Should we only publish reviews?
• Is the increasing number of ‘open access’ journals affecting our position?
• Maybe the competition is getting better - or we are getting worse?
• But TVJ is not failing to attract good authors, good reviews, original science…
The Veterinary Journal
IF – do we need it?

- Fickle indicator especially on a 1-year basis and can be influenced by topical issues or ‘irrelevant decisions’ such as publication of Proceedings
- Do we want ‘good science’ or ‘citable science’
- Is it the role of the IF to compare journals or to assist marketing?
- As long as editorial judgement and discretion reflects the scope and ‘importance’ of journal it is reader appreciation that is the key metric
- Maybe the number of downloads is more important…
The Veterinary Journal IF

Downloads

The Veterinary Journal

Scope?

A journal of general veterinary science

‘The Veterinary Journal is an international journal of veterinary research that publishes original papers and reviews on all aspects of veterinary science. Contributions reporting investigative work in the scientific disciplines involving veterinary species are particularly welcome where they make a significant contribution to the field.’

But no journal can sit still....
The Veterinary Journal
New developments

• Digitisation of all issues to 1875 – promised and budget agreed for the first half of 2014¹ but still not completed
• Drive to publish electronically fast (final corrected article ‘in progress’ on line in < 5 weeks and a TPT of 13 weeks)
• Highlights, graphical abstracts, faster proof preparation
• Article based publishing decoupled from issues
• Elsevier and marketing: electronic Newsletter, social media, Press Releases, search engine optimisation, develop a specific marketing strategy etc., but...
• Let’s never forget that many editors are unpaid and their job is editing not marketing

The Veterinary Journal

Suggestions

• Look after the reviewers
• Quality not quantity of articles
• Wider adoption of reporting guidelines
• Continue to solicit and publish topical state-of-the-art reviews
• More Special Issues but (perhaps) no more Proceedings
• Annual Newsletter to database
• Surely the time has come to stop print copy?
• But who ‘owns’ a journal? Professional body? Scientific society? The Editors? The Advisory Board?
• For TVJ it is clearly the Publisher. Always keep a good relationship….
Writing of George Fleming as the founding editor of TVJ, Sir Frederick Smith wrote:

‘….only those who have held similar positions are capable of realising what twenty years of this class of work means; it is incessant drudgery¹’

However, for me, the editorship of TVJ has been exciting, challenging, rewarding and fun. It has been a great time.

The Veterinary Journal

1875-2016