

The Wylie Centenary Flyer

October 2008



Was That a Gun Shot?!

1908 was a time of change. The Veterinary Record of that year relayed the information that motorised public carriage vehicles were on the increase in London, and that there was also a great increase in street accidents. 8,508 of the motor vehicles were reported to be unfit, 4,862 were 'unduly noisy', 2,105 dropped oil or grease and 35 had fires! In comparison, out of the licensed horses of London, although 5,371 were reported unfit, 2,331 were later certified fit to work again, 95 were killed or died and 1,914 were sold or put to other work.

Amazingly, in this same year, not only was Arthur Wylie opening his new surgery, but Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid were thought to have been killed in a Bolivian shoot-out!



For many years there were rumours that it was not actually these outlaws that were killed, and that they had really survived into the 1930's. There was even a theory that Butch Cassidy had his face altered by a surgeon in Paris!

1908 was the year that SOS became the standard radio distress signal - while on a gentler note, the first ever beauty contest was held in Folkestone. Women at that time were still fighting for the right to vote, but in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, the UK's first ever female mayor was appointed!

Does your pet think some autumn evenings sound like a shoot-out in Bolivia? Loud fireworks could certainly be mistaken for gunshots, and they can really upset pets. As we get nearer to Guy Fawkes Night many of our dogs and cats have a miserable time, and can be quite terrified. Help them fight their fears. We can give lots of advice on helping them to cope. It's best to make an appointment before the problem happens, as some remedies, such as the DAP diffusers, need to be started two weeks before the animal is frightened to be most effective. Our clinic nurses have more information for you and they will have **free** Centenary presents as well!

Editor: **Kathy Beasley**

The History of Veterinary Nurses

Like any general veterinary practitioner in 1908, Arthur Wylie may have had someone to assist him at times, but he could never have imagined how the Wylie Veterinary Centre of today would depend on a team of qualified and trainee Veterinary Nurses, (VNs), to run efficiently. Veterinary nurses did not exist, yet a magazine published that year, *The Veterinary Student*, informed its readership of the existence of young women called 'canine nurses'. These girls were trained at 'The Canine Nurse Institute', which was established that year by a famous author and dog fancier. Her nurses, were 'strong and healthy', and were provided with a uniform. They were trained to 'carry out directions of the veterinary surgeon, meet a genuine need on the part of the dog owners, and at the same time provide a reasonably paid occupation for young women with a real liking for animals'. They would 'keep the dog in their room, look after it at night, prepare its food, give it the necessary exercise, and in every way care for it until its health was restored'. Fully qualified canine nurses were provided by the Institute for £1/5s a week, receiving board, lodging and travelling expenses from the owner of the patient.

Later, in the 1920's a Mayfair veterinary practice employed human nurses. The Royal Veterinary College was asked to institute an exam for canine nurses but this did not come into being until the 1960's, when, after completing a 2 year training period at approved practices, and passing exams, the 1st RANAs (Registered Animal Nursing Auxiliaries) qualified in 1963. The title changed to VN, (veterinary nurses) in 1984, and later further diplomas were introduced. Nowadays it is also possible for prospective VNs to get a degree in Veterinary Nursing. The last week in October is VN week.

Our nursing team is very important to us, whether assisting operations, caring for the sick in the kennels, or running clinics and puppy parties. Happy VN week girls!

Whatever Happened To Mole & Pals?

Kenneth Grahame's book 'The Wind In The Willows' is 100 years old this month. It featured the exploits of Badger, Mole, Ratty, Toad and the weasels. Unfortunately, despite being one of the stars of the story, moles in real life were always getting in trouble with humans, and still do, due to their production of molehills in otherwise perfectly manicured lawns. Well-fertilised lawns can have about 50 worms per square yard to feed on, which makes them very attractive to moles! In France they are thought to destroy agriculture, and people are allowed to kill them, hanging their bodies on trees like trophies. Meanwhile in the UK one method of control was strychnine, mixed with worms, and dropped into their tunnels! Happily this was banned in 2006.

As for the other characters - toads are now threatened by the introduction of larger American species, and badgers are believed by some to be responsible for the continued spread of tuberculosis in dairy herds.

Ratty is also in trouble. Ratty was a water rat, otherwise known as a water vole, and numbers of water voles have decreased by 90% in the last two decades. Their decline is due to loss of habitat, persecution (when mistakenly taken for rats), and the introduction of the American mink. Sadly, although water voles have well-defended dens with underwater entrance holes, these are no defence against mink, which have been known to wipe out entire colonies. Dredging can also decimate vole colonies, although it is now an offence to damage water vole habitat under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Good news is that water voles are known to be present on at least 41 RSPB nature reserves. Meanwhile I've personally seen the villain from the book, Weasel, on at least one reserve as well!

