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REVIEW

The Journal of Comparative Pathology from 1943 to 2008

I. D. Aitken

Summary

The account of the Journal's first 53 years (Pattison, 1988), also reproduced in this issue, closed by noting the interruption of publication brought about by wartime exigencies and the death in 1941 of its founder and owner, Sir John McFadyean (Fig. 1). The present article considers the further development of the Journal from that time to the present day, a period of 65 years.

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A New Start

Though loss of the Journal was a matter of grave concern, plans had been laid for its restoration and in 1942 two significant announcements appeared in the *Veterinary Record*. One was a letter from the executors of Sir John's estate, his sons Andrew and Kenneth (McFadyean and McFadyean, 1942) to the effect that guardianship of the Journal had been transferred to four of their father's colleagues – Professor T. J. Bosworth, Dr J. T. Edwards, Mr R. E. Glover and Professor J. G. Wright – who, *de facto*, now constituted the Editorial Board. There was, however, an element of “keeping it in the family” as Dr Edwards was Sir John's son-in-law. The *Veterinary Record's* other item was a short editorial note (Anon, 1942) welcoming the forthcoming re-appearance of the Journal and encouraging submission of papers. “It is to be hoped that the profession will lend the fullest support to the

Board ... to produce without delay a first class journal which will be worthy both of British veterinary science and of the great tradition bequeathed by Sir John McFadyean” (Fig. 1). The note also drew a distinction between the Journal as an outlet for veterinary research and the *Veterinary Record* as a medium for professional matters, a distinction that may have been consciously pursued given that both publications were established in 1888. While the first of the four issues of Volume 53 of the Journal came out in 1940 the remaining three issues did not appear in print until 1943.

The preface to the second issue of Volume 53 laid out the criteria for acceptance of papers (the forerunner of today's more extensive “Notes for Contributors”) and also intimated a price rise to six shillings (30 pence) per issue and one guinea (£1.05) for a full volume of four issues, sums that seem trivial by today's standards. The volume contained 40 papers of varying length that were predominantly from authors in British universities, veterinary and medical research centres and government veterinary

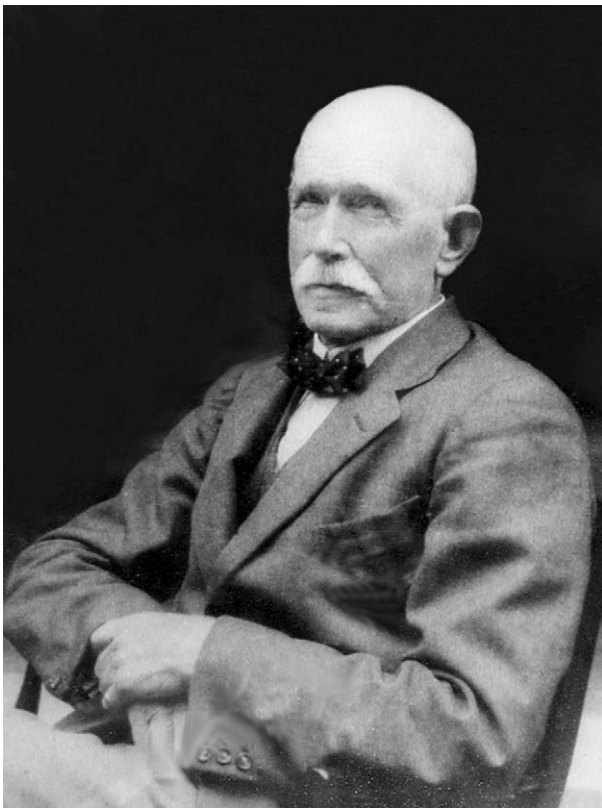


Fig. 1. Sir John McFadyean, founder of the *Journal of Comparative Pathology*. This image possibly dates from 1937, the year of publication of the fiftieth volume of the Journal as a *Festschrift* in his honour. Printed by kind permission of the Royal Veterinary College, London.

services, but of note also were a number of communications from overseas — from different regions of Africa, from Denmark and from Palestine — a notable achievement in the turmoil of the Second World War and testimony to the Journal's international standing. Three of the 40 papers were from single authors without institutional affiliation or personal address, presumably a policy of the time, but these papers were accorded a status no less than that of others. They dealt respectively with a review of allergy in domestic animals, with the influence of diet on resistance to tuberculosis in pigs and with infection of laboratory animals with *Mycobacterium johnei*, a diversity that would not be out of place in today's Journal.

Scope of the Journal

From the outset the Journal had a wider range of subject matter than its title might have suggested. Though "pathology" was its principal theme, the term was liberally interpreted with the intent that its content should be "wide-ranging over the whole veterinary scene" (Pattison, 1988). This position was confirmed under the new editors, the title page

of issue number two of volume 53 stating "The columns of the Journal are open for contributions dealing with veterinary science. Papers having a direct bearing on this subject are acceptable". The editors' Foreword to the issue noted that veterinary science had expanded in many different directions since 1888 and that papers might be submitted for their consideration without defining limits of the field.

Papers published over the next decade or so encompassed a wider breadth of subject matter than did those of later years. The later narrowing of focus may have been occasioned less by editorial policy than by the notable rise in veterinary research activity from the 1960s as well as by increasing specialization of the "pathological sciences", each sector of which now turned more to publishing in journals dedicated to their particular branch of science. Nor was "veterinary science" exempt from seeking further outlets for its burgeoning research findings. One early response was the introduction in 1960 of a new journal, *Research in Veterinary Science* (a sister publication of the *Veterinary Record*) to meet the needs of a vigorously growing veterinary research community, although *Veterinary Parasitology* (1975), *Veterinary Microbiology* (1976) and *Veterinary Immunology and Immunopathology* (1979) did not appear until quite a few years later.

The extended publishing opportunities for veterinary science did not significantly diminish the flow of papers to the Journal. While diversity of subject matter remained, a perceptible shift to pathology continued, perhaps presaged in 1965 when the original title of *Journal of Comparative Pathology and Therapeutics* was abbreviated to its present form. However, over time, exactly what "comparative pathology" was intended to encompass and how it related to "veterinary pathology" was a question periodically raised by intending contributors. To satisfy enquirers and to provide clarification, a 1985 flyer directed at new authors and subscribers contained the following response: "Research relating to the domesticated animal has always provided a major source of contributions to the subject of comparative pathology. The bulk of articles published has been and no doubt will continue to be concerned with disease conditions of the domesticated animal. However, readers will readily find in past volumes papers relating to diseases of non-domestic animals both captive and feral as well as those of man. Such studies frequently have implications extending well beyond the species on which they were conducted and it is the Journal's policy to provide an outlet for the growing volume of comparative work of this nature. The term "pathology" will likewise continue to be interpreted in a non-restrictive manner. Contributions to knowledge of, for example, comparative aspects of the

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