

DROVE

VETERINARY HOSPITAL

170 years
in Swindon
and the surrounding villages

A little bit of history...

Drove Veterinary Hospital traces its origins back to 1839 and over the years has changed hands and locations several times.

In 1890 the practice was situated at 30 Marlborough Road and still to this day on the right hand side of the gable end there is a crest of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons carved out of stone.

John Hewer Snr joined the practice in 1912 and served in Mesopotamia (Iraq) throughout the war. 1932 saw the practice move to The Grange in Drove Road, with **John D Hewer Jnr** joining his father in the practice, remaining there until his retirement in 1977, between them having completed 65 years in the practice.

The 'Hewers' were very well known throughout Swindon, with local people recounting numerous tales of their visit to the Grange.

David Spriggs joined the practice in 1949, after qualifying in London in 1939. Times were hard for vets as countless animals were put to sleep as owners went off to war, and he was out of work for six months. He gained his first job over the telephone, when he was asked 'How tall are you?' and on replying 6ft 2ins was offered the job immediately with a salary of £273.00 a year, five guineas a week! He joined the Ministry during the war, working on fertility and milk production to ensure food supplies were maintained throughout rationing, and became somewhat an expert, publishing articles and winning coveted prizes for his work in this field.

Peter Wilson joined the practice in 1952 after qualifying at The Dick, Edinburgh in 1939. Throughout the war he served in Burma in the Army Veterinary Corps, and upon John Hewer Snr's retirement the practice became Hewer, Spriggs and Wilson, with assistants and veterinary nurses completing the team.

Mr Hewer and Mr Spriggs are both alive and well. They are 92 and 91 years old respectively and have many a tale to tell about life as a Veterinary Surgeon.

In 1967 **Ron Sismey** joined and along with **Bob Cooper** the practice became Sismey, Cooper later joined by **Rupert Hibberd** when the practice became Sismey, Cooper and Hibberd, then later as **Tim Western** and **Peter May** joined became Sismey, Cooper, Hibberd and Partners.

Ron Sismey performed the first-ever hip replacement in a dog at The Grange in 1976, and also invented surgical instruments to assist in orthopaedic procedures, which were patented in his name.

Expansion was on the cards and in 1984 our first branch surgery was opened at 10 Moredon Road and then in 1988 the practice moved to its present location at 252 Croft Road, Swindon, beside the bridge crossing the M4 towards Wroughton and became known as The Drove Veterinary Clinic.

In 1993 and 1994 respectively, **Jacoba Veenland** and **Andrew Turkington** joined the partnership.

The purpose-built hospital provided an exciting future for the practice and in line with our commitment to providing local veterinary care in the local community, along with the peace of mind of a highly equipped Veterinary Hospital for internal referrals and critical case management, a network of fully equipped surgeries throughout Swindon and the surrounding villages was established.

The practice evolved in 1997, when the trademark Fur, Feathers & Scales logo (below) was adopted and the practice became The Drove Veterinary Hospital.



Major growth continued with the opening of our Stratton surgery within the Pets at Home

store in the same year. The practice doubled in size when the Abbey Meads surgery was opened within the housing development on the northern expansion in 1999, followed by the purchase of the JP Gambles practice at Wootton Bassett and County Road upon his retirement in May 1999. Further expansion was seen when the Holden & Reader practice in Marlborough & Pewsey was purchased in April 2002, and the Pewsey surgery re-located to 14 River Street in the heart of the village, to purpose-built premises in March 2004.

The practice has always been mixed, dealing with Farm, Equine and Small Animal, but over the years the ratios have changed places, with small animals now being the greater part of our work, although we provide a comprehensive service to all of our clients with vets specialising in all areas of both small and large animal medicine.

2005 was a momentous year for the practise heralding the launch of a new, fresh up to date logo with "the" being dropped from the title. **Kate Brodie** and **Lynne Gaskarth** joined the partnership and with the birth of our long awaited hospital extension and refurbishment we have moved into the future full of anticipation and hope.

2006 saw a new branch surgery open at Taw Hill and the launch of a new and highly successful dog behaviour, puppy and adult dog training service.

2008 We are Proud to announce our new branch surgery at 19 High Street, Lambourn, Berks, our ranks have been increased, and our range of services enhanced by the addition of a cat Behaviourist and Laboratory Technician.

Our state of the art hospital with its sensational facilities, enables us to offer our clients unrivalled excellence in the local area and we look forward to a long and happy future with local people and their pets.

Thank you Wiltshire for all your support over the last 170 years!

