

### DENTAL CARE

It is equally important for our horses to receive regular dental care as it is us - if our four legged friends are not looked after then dental health can become a real problem.

Horses teeth are classed in two groups, the incisors and the molars and pre molars. The incisors are designed to pick up and cut grass, these are the teeth that are found at the front of the mouth.

The pre-molars and molars are designed to chew and break down forage making it easier to swallow and digest the food. These are found at the back of the mouth and are difficult to see without the use of a dental gag.

Unlike human teeth, horses' teeth continue to grow and erupt. In the wild a horse will be grazing and chewing for up to 20 hours a day, keeping teeth at an acceptable length and free from sharp edges. Domesticated horses often find themselves eating hard feed and less forage, so need assistance to keep their teeth 'rasped' down.

Ideally your horses' teeth should be checked every six months, and certainly left no longer than a year.

In the UK you don't need any formal qualifications to call yourself an Equine Dental Technician and perform basic dentistry procedures, (such as rasping), which is why it is really important to get your equine vet, or someone who is qualified and registered to check your horses' teeth.

A qualified person will have been correctly trained, have insurance to cover their work and have the knowledge and understanding about how the horse's teeth can affect the welfare of your horse. Additionally over 30% of horses will require sedation to do a thorough job without causing injury or distress to the horse and handler. Certain dental procedures are still an act of veterinary surgery and experienced equine vets will be able to perform all aspects of dental work for your horse.



Not having your horses teeth checked regularly can lead to all sorts of problems including

- Dropping half chewed food (quidding)
- Increase in time taken to eat hard feed
- Head shaking while eating
- Putting hay in his water bucket - some horses will soak the hay to make it easier to chew and swallow
- Head shaking whilst being ridden and reluctance to work on the bit
- Behavioural problems
- Sudden dislike of having bridle put on
- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Excessive drooling
- Nasal discharge (usually caused by infected tooth roots)
- Sores on tongue, lips and/or gums
- Swellings on the face or lower jaw
- Tongue sticking out of mouth
- Weight loss
- Diarrhoea

With regular dental examinations problems can be spotted and treated at an early stage, often preventing the need for extensive treatment.

### OFFER OF THE SUMMER

IN JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST RECEIVE A **FREE DENTAL CHECK\***

WITH YOUR HORSES' VACCINATION - CALL THE OFFICE FOR MORE DETAILS

\* THE INITIAL CHECK IS FREE, ALL WORK CARRIED OUT WILL BE CHARGED AT OUR USUAL COMPETITIVE RATE.

# Loch Leven EQUINE PRACTICE

## Summer Newsletter 2008

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our new look newsletter - we hope you enjoy it! It is packed full of information, case studies, a summary of the feedback we received from the questionnaires, our latest offer, our forthcoming feed talk, news and much more.

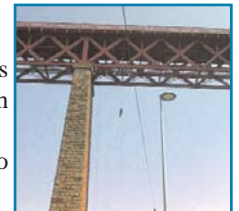
Summer is finally here! As the midges and fly sprays come out for another year we can get out and really enjoy our horses, but be careful to watch out for hard ground and too much grass!

It has been good to see many of you out and about competing at some of the events we have been sponsoring, collecting lots of rosettes!!

### NEWS

#### DARE DEVIL PATTY

Many of you will know Patty from chatting to her on the phone, but that's not where her talents end! Last month brave Patty abseiled off the Forth Rail Bridge to raise a fantastic £705 for Alzheimers Scotland. Many congratulations go to Patty on her fantastic achievement in raising so much money.



#### CENTRAL SCOTLAND HORSE TRIALS



We were proud to be able to sponsor a section at the Horse Trials, held at Scone Palace, Perth, in May. Our many congratulations go to Craig Anderson (left) and Fair Trade who finished on a score of 42.5 to win the Novice Section J.



NEWS CONTINUED

GANNOCHY SADDLE CLUB ROXBURGHE HOUSE SHOW

Our many congratulations go to all who took part and organised the Gannochy show jumping and dressage show at the end of May. The event was held to raise money for Roxburghe House, a purpose built hospice which is required to meet the needs of patients requiring Specialist Palliative Care in NHS Grampian.



Photo courtesy of George Wotherspoon

£5500 was raised during the weekend, bringing the overall total to a fantastic £12,000 raised by Gannochy Saddle Club in the past two years.

We were once again proud to sponsor two classes through out the event, our congratulations go to Elsie Pollock-Smith and her 15 year old mare Lerone, winners of the Novice 28, and to Aimee Brown and Libby X, winners of the 70cm show jumping. The 1st aid kit was won by Alicia Phillips from Forteviot. For more information visit www.gannochysaddleclub.net

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 19th - 22nd June: Royal Highland Show, Ingleston - www.royalhighlandshow.org
4th - 6th July: Scottish Game Fair - www.scottishfair.com
14th July: Loch Leven Equine Practice Feed Talk with Independent Registered Equine Nutritionist, Clare MacLeod MSc RNutr, to get your tickets call 01577 840022
1st - 2nd August: Perth Show - www.perthshow.co.uk
3rd August: Strathearn Riding Club Annual Show, Strathearn Castle - www.strathearnrc.org.uk
9th - 10th August: Central Scotland Horse Trials, Scone Palace - www.centralscotlandhorsetrials.co.uk
9th August: Kinross Show - www.kinross.cc
26th - 28th September: Scottish Horse of the Year Show, Gleneagles Equestrian Centre - www.gleneagles.com/activities/equestrian

INSURANCE

Buying a new horse is an exciting time - but it is important to think about the practicalities involved as well. It is often advisable to make sure that you can insure your new pride and joy before you get him home.

Having your horse insured can be invaluable. In the case of an accident, or emergency situation, being insured for third party liability cover and vets fees often means that you have the luxury of making a decision.

Speak to other people who have had experience claiming from insurers - was it straight forward and were they good at paying out when a claim was made? Depending what you want your horse covered for hugely reflects your premium.

For a number of reasons it is always advised to get your potential new horse vetted - many insurance companies will not fully insure your horse with out a valid pre-purchase vetting certificate. Don't rely on someone else's vet certificate as legally you will have no redress and make sure you use an independent vet (not the clients own vet) for the vetting.

Its nice knowing that if the worst did happen I would be able to make a decision, rather than have it made for me.

Many policies will not cover the horse for vets fees during the first 14 days - check with your insurer and if this is the case speak to the seller and try and arrange for the horse to be delivered after that period of time is up.

Here is what one of our clients had to say "It is important to me to have my horse insured for vets fees and third party liability. In the case of an emergency, i.e. if he needed colic surgery, I want to know that I can make the best choice for him - there is no way I would be able to afford the surgery, but by having him insured its nice knowing that if the worst did happen I would be able to make a decision, rather than have it made for me."

If the horse is moving to your premises on a trial period make sure he is insured - even if for a short period, you never know what may happen while he is in your care. Shop around for the best insurance quotes and deals.

Table with 3 columns: Case 1 (15hh 10yo bay mare), Case 2 (15.2hh 9yo bay TB gelding), Case 3 (16.3hh 15yo WB gelding). Rows include Sum insured for, Cover, Third Party Liability, Vets Fees, and Cost per month.

# Loch Leven

## EQUINE PRACTICE

TEL:  
**01577 840022**  
OR FOR OUT OF HOURS  
CALL  
**07789 684245**

ARE PROUD TO PRESENT AN EVENING WITH  
**INDEPENDENT REGISTERED EQUINE NUTRITIONIST**  
**CLARE MACLEOD** *MSc RNutr*,  
AUTHOR OF

**"THE TRUTH ABOUT FEEDING YOUR HORSE"**  
ON MONDAY 14TH JULY AT 7.30PM  
AT THE DEWARS CENTRE, PERTH

## FREE ADMISSION

OPEN TO CLIENTS AND NON CLIENTS

GET YOUR TICKET BY CALLING: **01577 840022**

LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS AVAILABLE, BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.  
MAXIMUM 2 TICKETS PER PERSON

ALSO IN JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST RECEIVE A  
**FREE DENTAL CHECK\***

WITH YOUR HORSES' VACCINATION.

*\* SEE PAGE 12 FOR MORE INFORMATION*

[www.lochlevenequine.co.uk](http://www.lochlevenequine.co.uk)

OFFICE: SOUTH KILDUFF, KINROSS, KY13 0PN

CALL: 01577 840022

**DEDICATED TO HORSE AND OWNER**

[www.lochlevenequine.co.uk](http://www.lochlevenequine.co.uk)

OFFICE: SOUTH KILDUFF, KINROSS, KY13 0PN CALL: 01577 840022

## FEED TALK

Amongst other comments on the questionnaires it was noted that many of you would like more information on nutrition.

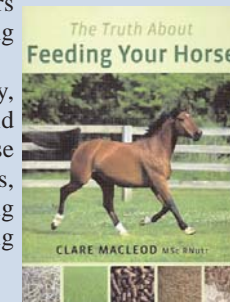
We have enlisted the help of Independent Registered Equine Nutritionist, Clare MacLeod, to do just that.

Clare will be joining us for an evening talk which will take place on Monday 14th July at 7.30pm at the Dewars Centre, Perth. The talk is open to clients and non-clients and is absolutely **FREE!!!**

Clare is a highly experienced Equine Nutritionist with expertise in sports science. She will be providing practical advice on feeding and nutrition for all equine animals, whether you have a companion donkey or an elite racehorse.

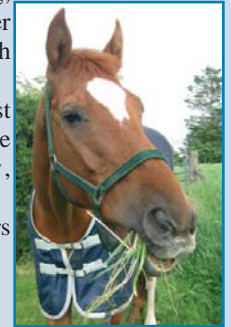
### About Clare

Clare graduated with a first class BSc honours degree in equine science in 1997. Working first for a leading horse feed company as their nutritionist, she then spent several years working for a leading horse feed and supplement company, giving nutrition and dietary advice to horse owners, yard managers, and vets, formulating products, and writing articles.



During 2001/02 she independently achieved her Masters degree in human and equine sports science with distinction at the University of Essex. Clare's first book 'The Truth About Feeding Your Horse' was published in February 2007 by J A Allen. Clare has an avid interest in fitness and

health in both horse and rider and tries to practise what she preaches with running, resistance training, Pilates and riding. Her enthusiasm for health and fitness has promoted an interest in feeding the horse more naturally, which results in less disease and disorders and more optimal performance.



In addition to providing nutrition and feeding advice to horse owners, Clare works as a consultant to leading feed and supplement companies, and she maintains an awareness of the products available to horse owners.

Using an independent nutritionist who is registered means you will get the best possible service with advice that is honest, unbiased, up to date, and in the best interests of you and your horse/s. No products will be pushed nor will misinformation about products be given.

For more information on Clare go to [www.equinenutritionist.co.uk](http://www.equinenutritionist.co.uk)

### Tickets

To get your ticket all you need to do is give us a call on **01577 840022**. The talk is open to clients and non-clients and is absolutely **FREE!!!** Max 2 tickets per person.

## GRASS SICKNESS

We sent Liz Burton along to the 20th Anniversary Seminar of The Equine Grass Sickness Fund at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies to find out the latest news, developments and the possibility of a vaccine against this horrific disease.

**Speakers from all over Europe gathered to present their findings, with presentations made on the new Equine Grass Sickness Surveillance Scheme, clinical signs, diagnosis, nursing care, reducing the risks, pathological findings, botanical pathogens, and the progress of the vaccine trials.**

While many of us may have heard about Grass Sickness it is often not until we have had the experience of seeing a horse with the disease that we realise just how horrendous it is. The Equine Grass Sickness Fund work hard in raising awareness of the disease, providing support and advice for owners, vets and nurses and raising money to help fund the research currently taking place across the country.



### CLINICAL SIGNS

Labelled into three categories, acute, subacute and chronic it is only the chronic cases that stand any chance of survival. In acute cases owners will see a sudden onset of clinical signs, the major symptoms relating to a partial or complete paralysis of the digestive system which leads to signs of colic (including rolling, pawing at the ground and looking at the flanks), difficulty in swallowing and drooling of saliva. Foul smelling nasal discharge, paralysis of the upper eyelids, muscle tremors, sweating in patches and constipation may also be present. Subacute cases will often show the same clinical signs but less severe. In both cases the disease is fatal.

Although still very serious the clinical signs for chronic Grass Sickness develop slower and are not as acute. Mild, intermittent colic, difficulty in swallowing and a subsequent loss of appetite results in rapid and severe weight loss. The horse may appear tucked up and be shifting their weight, suffer from general muscle weakness, increased heart rate and temperature, depression and sometimes have inflamed nasal passages with dry crusts present, known as Rhinitis Sicca.

### DIAGNOSES

The biggest challenge for vets is the diagnosis of the disease. With not all the clinical signs always present chronic cases may look like other forms of colic or weight loss, and with no conclusive non-invasive tests available the only way to get a 98% accurate diagnosis is to surgically remove part of the small intestine for testing, (an option which requires the horses abdomen to be opened, therefore requiring a general anaesthetic, which has obvious financial implications).

### TREATMENT

Treatment of chronic cases is usually undertaken if the horse can be kept comfortable and can eat a small amount - although this is by no means a guarantee of recovery. Horses are closely monitored during this time - with the recovery period usually taking a matter of months and requiring hospital treatment. Getting them to eat is often the biggest challenge, so food should be made as palatable and be as high in energy as possible. Human interaction such as gentle grooming, and toys to stimulate them, along with very short walks are also encouraged. Recovery is a long slow process with not all horses returning to previous form, although some do go on to make a full recovery and lead active lives.

### REDUCING THE RISKS

It is still not proven what causes grass sickness and how to prevent it. There are thoughts that premises with previous reported Grass Sickness cases are at a higher risk, with young horses and the over-weight



A horse with chronic Grass Sickness

also deemed in the slightly higher risk category. Removing droppings by hand (as oppose to machine picking) and supplementing the horses intake of grass with hay/haylage is thought to slightly minimise the risk.

### RESEARCH

Studies are ongoing with the Grass Sickness Research Team largely looking at the theory suggested by Tocher, a vet who carried out a study in the early 1920's, which showed that Clostridium Botulinum was the cause. Recent work supports this theory with the Animal Health Trust's preliminary studies in creating a vaccine looking positive. Testing of the vaccine on ponies will commence later this year, with a large scale field trial remaining a realistic possibility - an encouraging step forward in combating this horrific disease.

For more information on Grass Sickness and to support the research go to [www.grasssickness.org.uk](http://www.grasssickness.org.uk)

## QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

Thank you to everyone who took the time and effort to fill out the questionnaires - we were thrilled with the response and the feedback we got. We have taken all of your comments on board and hope that we continue to improve our service to you.

Here are some of the comments we received and any action we are taking.

### What you like most about the Practice

*"Everyone is really friendly, helpful and reliable - really happy with the service"*

*"Knowledge and honesty.... I can ask for a bit of advice over the phone - it is very reassuring"*

*"Nothing ever seems to be too much trouble"*

*"The knowledge, facilities and mobile equipment, and Hugh's willingness to explain everything carefully"*

*"You are not left feeling stupid about asking basic questions.... Things are thoroughly explained"*

*"Your level of charges! ..... cheaper than my previous vet"*

*"I like very much the "can do" approach and excellent standard of treatment"*

*"LLEP are probably the best vet practice I have ever dealt with"*

*"Follow up call is good PR..... made me feel my horse and I were important to you"*

*"Absolute trust in their expertise"*

*"They feel like our friends as well as a very good veterinary practice"*

*"The optimism, professionalism and respect shown on every visit, and from every member of staff"*

*"Flexibility, reliability, friendliness, experience, knowledge, quality of care. I can't praise Hugh and his team enough"*

*"Thank you for providing the best possible care I could wish for my horses"*

### What you like least about the Practice

We have tried to cover most of the areas that came up in this section, however if I have missed something please give us a call at the office - 01577 840022

*"Premises too small ..... would like to bring the horse in to you"*

We do have facilities if you wish to bring your horse over to us. We are able to take horses in for intensive nursing, fluid therapy, artificial insemination, tooth removal, monitoring colic cases and lameness examinations.

The only limitation that we have is if your horse is going to require a general anaesthetic, we will need to refer you to a surgical hospital. Alternatively if you wish to just bring your horse over for their vaccinations and routine checks to save on our call out fee we are very happy to see you here at the practice.

Our long term aim is to expand the business so that we are able to build hospital facilities to save you travelling your horse south of the bridge. We will keep you posted on our plans!

*"No Flu vaccination reminders"*

We do send out regular reminders which should arrive with you about a month before your horse's vaccination is due. If you did not receive a reminder please let the office know and we will look into whether one was sent out or not.

One reason for this is that if you have registered with the practice after your horse was last vaccinated we won't hold the vaccination dates on our system and a reminder won't be generated.

In order to rectify this, in future we are going to start asking new clients the vaccination dates when they register.

*"Would like to use my own dressings if I have them, rather than having to buy through the practice"*

We are very happy for the vet to use your own bandages at your visit as long as they are suitable for the job required. Please let either Pete or Hugh know that you have some bandages of your own.

*"Would like a month to pay bills rather than two weeks"*

Whilst we would love to give our clients longer to pay our invoices unfortunately it is a matter of cash flow. As a small business we have to pay for our drugs and consumables on a very regular basis and have to carry a lot of stock both on the shelf and in the vets' cars. By asking for payment 14 days after receipt of your invoice we are able to keep the bank manager and our suppliers happy!

If you are having trouble settling your account we would much rather that you got in contact with us to arrange to pay by instalment, as regular payments are better than none at all!

*"2 ½ % interest a month on unpaid balance. Takes advantage of people in a bad situation"*

Please be assured that the last thing we are trying to do is to take advantage of people who are struggling to pay our bills. Whilst 99.9% of our clients are all fantastic at paying their bills we do have the odd account that goes unpaid for several months. By this stage we have already paid our suppliers for all of the drugs, consumables and general overheads that we incur.

Quite often because of the high rates that the banks and credit card companies charge the vets bill is at the bottom of the pile! As I said above we are very happy to arrange instalments if this helps people who are struggling to pay their invoice and would much rather you called us at 14 days rather than six months down the line after numerous surcharges and statements.

*"Bills seem large..... lots itemised....."*

Unfortunately we are very heavily regulated by The Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2005 which states that all invoices should be

itemised and detailed clinical notes taken.

*"Sometimes confusing billing system when having regular visits or course of treatment"*

*"The bills are not cumulative..... unpaid bills are not carried forwards"*

*"Would like to access my account online"*

Our computer software dictates the way that invoices are raised. However we are able to start sending statements out with the invoices to give you a cumulative balance if this makes it easier for those of you who have got outstanding invoices from a previous visit.

We have also instigated a new procedure to try to stop the confusion with invoices covering several visits. Please do let us know if you have any queries and we will try to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Our software company have just developed a web based system which allows clients to access their accounts via the internet. We have decided to wait until next year before upgrading to give them time to iron out any teething problems! So watch this space...

Over 90% of you indicated that you would like to pay at the time of your visit if we offered discount. Since this seems to be a very popular idea we will look to implement this by the end of this year and will keep you posted!

*"It would be good to know that we now have a stable and consistent compliment of vets for continuity of care. I am sure that the arrival of Pete Burton and his wife will ensure just that!"*

We agree! We are very aware that a high turnover of staff is never good for any business and are thrilled that Pete and Liz have joined us with the aim of settling here long term.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS OR WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ANYTHING PLEASE GIVE US A CALL - 01577 840022

CASE STUDY - NAVICULAR

Thomas

Thomas is an 8 year old show jumper who was becoming increasingly uncomfortable on his left fore.

It was much more obvious whilst lungeing with the leg on the inside, and when riding a tight circle to the left at trot. Having started to affect his jumping, Thomas' owner asked Hugh to come and see him.

Diagnosing the problem

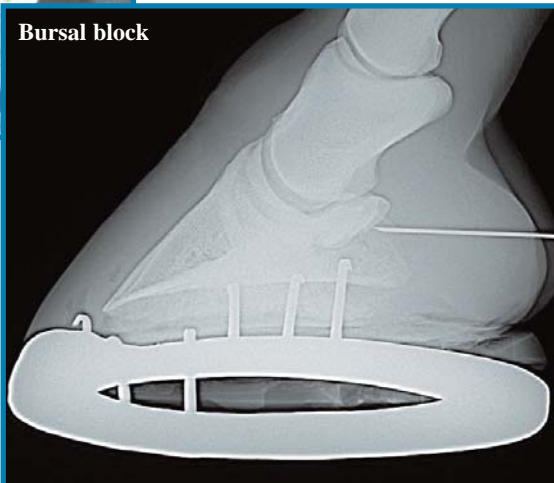


Nerve block

school there was now an appreciable degree of lameness - graded at 3/10. This was even more obvious when lunged on a hard surface.

A nerve block at the bulb of the heel was performed which made Thomas sound within five minutes, confirming that the pain was coming from the foot. X-rays taken at the yard showed a moderate amount of change to the Navicular Bone itself, but further tests were needed to confirm this.

With the assistance of x-rays, (to show that the long needle was correctly positioned all the way inside the foot), a Navicular Bursal block was performed. This desensitises just the Navicular Bursa, (including the soft tissues of the deep digital flexor tendon and supporting ligaments as well), which is a very specific block, as oppose to the nerve block which numbs a larger region of the foot.



Bursal block

The first change to be seen was in Thomas' feet. Over the past nine months they had begun to change shape so that they were no longer 'a pair'. The LF had started to become more upright with narrower heels, while the RF was now looking a little more splayed out with a larger foot. On a hard surface in a straight line he was totally sound when trotted up, and all flexion tests were negative. However when lunged in the

CASE STUDY

Outcome

Four weeks later, following a lot of walking in-hand and then restricted turnout, Thomas was sound at trot on the lunge and is now back in full work again without any return of the lameness. The main factor with this very successful outcome was that there was no concurrent soft tissue injury inside the Bursa - the treatment for horses with tears to the deep digital flexor tendon involves different shoeing, extended time of box rest and then much slower rehabilitation and unfortunately many can still have a degree of lameness afterwards. Now aware of his condition, we can help him with the type of shoes that we use, as well as repeating the medication before his lameness starts to deteriorate again.

Again, Thomas responded very quickly to this block confirming that the pain was coming from the Navicular region.

MRI scans

A relatively recent development (about five - six years) has been the use of MRI for evaluating horses' feet. Whilst the digital x-ray machine takes superb images of bone, x-rays cannot take images of the soft tissues. MRI scans can be used to look at the tendons, the fluid inside the bursa, as well as inflammation within the bone itself. Most insurance companies are now covering the cost of MRI scans, and fortunately Thomas was insured for this. His scan revealed that luckily there was no tendon or ligament damage and the cartilage lining the surface of the Navicular Bone was normal. However, the bone itself had an abnormal signal strength indicating pathology within the Navicular Bone.

Treatment

Thomas was treated with a steroid medication into the Navicular Bursa (again using the x-rays as guidance) and then he was given an infusion of 'Tildren' - a drug which slows down abnormal bone metabolism. One of the most important treatments was a change in shoeing to remedial type shoeing. Hugh discussed the diagnosis and the type of shoes that could be used to help Thomas with his farrier. It was decided that rolled toe, Egg Bar shoes should be fitted well back to provide enough support to the back of the foot - his owner found some superb over-reach boots to help prevent him pulling the shoes off!



A horse needs to feel his best in order to perform to his maximum