



ST DAVID'S EQUINE
VETERINARY SURGEONS

ST DAVID'S EQUINE PRACTICE

NEWSLETTER

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MOBILE PHONES

Please, please, please could you let us know if you change your mobile number! We may need to contact you to



let you know that a vet is running late or with some labora-

tory results and we currently have a lot of wrong numbers on our system. Please notify us of any changes to your details by phoning 01392 876622 option 2. This will enable us to offer you the best possible service and avoid you being inconvenienced unnecessarily if a vet has been called away on an emergency and is running late.

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AUTUMN LECTURE SERIES

St David's Equine Practice is pleased to announce their Autumn Lecture Series for 2007

Wednesday 14th November 2007

Equine Gastric Ulceration Syndrome: Incidence, Causes and Diagnosis

Emma Batson, Merial

Wednesday 5th December 2007

Equine Behaviour

Dr Hayley Randle

All lectures will take place at The Maltsters Arms, Woodbury at 7.30pm

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. If you would like to attend, please phone the equine office on 01392 876622 ext. 2

A donation to the British Horse Society and Animal Health Trust Strangles Appeal will be requested on the evening



Christmas Equine Fair

Come and visit our stand this year at Westpoint on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th November to talk to our staff and for a break from all that shopping! Highlights this year include Mary King and Lucy Wieggersma whilst we will have mince pies and a free competition!

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER!

Currently our equine newsletter only goes out to those clients who have had work done in the month preceding the newsletter issue. Obviously most clients don't have us out every month so if you enjoy reading this newsletter and would prefer to receive it in PDF format via e-mail, please send an e-mail to alison@stdavids-vets.co.uk putting **newsletter** as the subject.

SO YOUR HORSE IS HAVING AN ANAESTHETIC

The thought of your horse having a general anaesthetic can be very worrying. This article aims to answer the following questions. What is it? What do we expect from you? What happens during anaesthesia? How do we do it? What are the risks? How do we limit them?

A general anaesthetic involves the administration of a combination of drugs that induce a state of anaesthesia that aims to produce analgesia, muscle relaxation and unconsciousness. This allows complete control of the horse for invasive or intricate procedures including surgery inside body cavities, treatment of orthopaedic injuries, debridement of large wounds etc.

If your horse/pony/donkey is booked in for surgery, we usually request the animal is admitted the day before the surgery. This allows time for us to examine the animal after it has settled down to look for more subtle problems that may affect the animal's suitability for anaesthesia. The main concern is any other underlying disease; particularly diseases of the respiratory system or electrolyte imbalances. If we are concerned, we may offer you a blood test to check organ function. This is not routinely offered for a fit healthy animal but if you are concerned we will do a pre-anaesthetic blood screen. The animal should also be starved for at least 12hrs. This will empty the stomach of food which will prevent regurgitation of food while the horse is being anaesthetised. It will also slightly reduce the hind gut fill which will reduce the weight of the guts so when the animal is positioned on its back there will be less pressure on the horse's diaphragm. We will also ask you to remove the horse's shoes. This will protect the padded room that we use to induce anaesthesia and will also prevent injuries that may occur when the horse is trying to stand in the recovery room.

An ideal anaesthetic regime is one that involves all of the following:

- Loss of consciousness/ lack of reaction to external stimuli
- Loss of pain sensation
- Muscle relaxation

Unfortunately there is no one ideal safe drug that can achieve this in the horse so our anaesthetic approach relies on several different drugs at different stages in the anaesthetic. These include anxiolytics, sedatives, ketamine, benzodiazepines, opioids, inhalational drugs and local anaesthetics.

The usual combination of drugs we use is:

- Pre-medication
- Induction agent
- Maintenance agent
- Local blocks
- Intraoperative analgesia

A pre-medication is used to calm the horse and also has the added effect that it protects the heart against arrhythmias that may occur during surgery. At this point we will place a jugular cannula. This allows us direct access into a vein to allow rapid administration of drugs with no fuss. Before induction we give a sedative to allow for a smooth induction (the transition from standing to recumbent). After induction we place a tube into the airway so we have complete control of their breathing and can administer a combination of gases into the airway to continue anaesthesia.

To aid us during anaesthesia we have modern monitoring equipment based on a human set up. We routinely measure:

- **Invasive blood pressure** - This is measured by placing a cannula into an artery, normally under the chin. As the horse is such a large animal and is not



designed to lie for long periods on its back, it is vitally important that we maintain adequate blood pressure during the whole of the surgery. This allows good blood delivery to the muscles.

- **ECG (electrocardiogram)** – This measures the electrical activity in the heart.
- **Airway gasses** - To include oxygen, carbon dioxide and the amount of anaesthetic gas in the horses lungs.
- **Airway pressures and tidal volume** - particularly important if the horse is on a ventilator.
- **Tissue oxygen saturation**

We also have a state of the art operating table which allows proper and safe placement of the patient with minimal pressure points.

On a recent survey of veterinary practitioners across the country, the current mortality rate of healthy horses undergoing anaesthesia is about 1 in 200. In comparison to human medicine this is a high rate and is partially due to the size of the animal and its flighty behaviour as a lot of the deaths are due to catastrophic limb fracture during recovery. We try to limit this risk by having dedicated recovery rooms which are fully padded and fully trained staff that are experienced in recovering horses. Other problems are heart failure often due to inadequate blood pressure; this is why we place the arterial cannula.

All our anaesthesia is carried out by dedicated vets who have post graduate anaesthesia training and a lot of experience.

Ben Crisp

PRACTICE NEWS

WELCOME TO RICHARD FROST

Richard Frost joined St David's Equine Practice at the start of October this year. Richard heralds from Shropshire but is lucky enough to have a 'midlands twang' to his accent after many years of schooling in Wolverhampton. Before starting his veterinary training at the Royal Veterinary College, London, he gained an Honours degree in Animal Nutrition and Physiology whilst studying at Leeds University.

In 2002 Richard qualified from Vet school and returned to Shropshire to work as an equine vet in the practice that he had gained valuable experience as a student. During his 5+ years there Richard was responsible for, amongst many other things, all of the equine anaesthetics and for promoting to clients the important role of the vet in equine dentistry. These are interests that he hopes to pursue at St David's and he is also relishing



the opportunity to do most of the 'donkey work' at one of the Donkey Sanctuary outposts.

Richard is married to Kate, a small animal vet whom he met whilst at University in London. They have a wonderful little boy called Harrison (Harry), a Golden Retriever called Tamar and a cat called The General.

Outside of work Richard's life revolves around Harry and Kate and walking Tamar at the beach but he also loves surfing and his annual snowboarding holidays. He used to be a keen runner but since the arrival of Harry he's lapsed in his training; something he intends to rectify with a promise to run the London Marathon next year! Richard is also a keen footballer, albeit with a rather unpredictable first touch. So if there are any football teams out there that need someone to miss penalties for them just contact the practice!

PRACTICE ACHIEVES TRAINING PRACTICE STATUS

St David's Equine practice has recently achieved Training Practice Status. This enables us to train our trainee nurses in conjunction with a day-release equine veterinary nurse college course. Sarah Woolloff, one of our trainee nurses has started her training at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire this September and Janie MacDonald will hopefully start next year. Ben Crisp, one of our equine vets is currently studying for an NVQ in Course Assessing at Hartpury. He will be our internal assessor and will help Sarah and Janie with their training by providing support, training and seminars. Equine veterinary nurses are an essential part of our practice and provide the high standard of care your horse receives when it comes to stay at our clinic. Janie and Sarah also run our in house laboratory, set up and maintain our theatre for surgery, dispense equine drugs and perform many other duties which help the practice run smoothly.



ALISON REED OFF ON MATERNITY LEAVE



I officially leave St David's Equine on 16th November to go and have my first baby! It's due on 4th January so my Christmas will be spent beached on the sofa while my husband and family run around doing everything for me (in my dreams). I hope to return to work late next year. I also plan to continue editing the newsletter from home so please continue to e-mail me if you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail. My e-mail address can be found on the front page. Also if you have any suggestions for articles or topics you would like covered either in the newsletter or in our lecture series and seminars please let me know and I will see what I can do! Thank you to the staff at St David's Equine for their support during my pregnancy and I look forward to coming back to see my favourite clients, horses and donkeys!



SPONSORED RIDER UPDATE

PAULA LEE



King Solomon is still on top form and has had a wonderful season. Now 19 and still as fit and sound as ever, an amazing achievement in its self after all the mileage he has done in his career!

His year started on a high by coming 6th in the Medium Open at the South West Winter Regionals. Then going on to Qualify for the Summer Regionals, the Hickstead Dressage Masters, the 2008 Winter semi finals and the Petplan Area Festival .

Hickstead

I had two major dilemmas. One was that the competition had been rescheduled from July to August due to the adverse summer weather. This meant it ended up being 3 days before our Regionals - should I do Hickstead, Regionals or both?! In the end I decided Hickstead was a wonderful opportunity and one not to be missed, but I would also enter the regionals and see how Solly felt. The second was whether to travel up on the day or the day before, and stable overnight. Eventually I decided to go up on the day as Sunday would be the better day to travel and after seeing the stables we definitely made the right decision!

The day started bright and early and we set off from Nutwell at 3.30am. After only 10 minutes on the road we got stopped by the police who thought we were illegally moving cattle, after some checking they were happy we weren't and we went on our way! We had a great journey up with no other hold ups and arrived in plenty of time, We were luckily on early in our class as it turned out to be a very hot day. Solly produced a very solid test and felt just great. He stayed in 3rd for a very long time but eventually ended up in 7th, I was so chuffed with him as it was seriously good competition and he really held his own! We just missed out on the mounted prize giving which was 1st – 6th a bit tight I thought – poor Solly, he loves the prize givings!

Summer Regionals

Solly felt so good after Hickstead that I decided to go to the Regionals. I had given him Monday off after Hickstead, hacked him on Tuesday and then his Regionals were Wednesday.

I worked him in lightly as I thought he might be tired - Big mistake! He went into his test with a spring in his step, we went down the centre line feeling like we were about to go around Badminton! We managed to halt at X beautifully square but as we moved off to start our test he could contain himself



no longer!
Our first few movements were performed sideways in canter – not quite what was required! The rest of the test was

spent containing him, it was really quite funny and I couldn't help but smile, he was clearly enjoying himself and at his age he deserves to! Horses are such great levellers.

Petplan Area Festival

This was held at The Grange E.C. one of my favourite venues. Solly had Qualified for the Advanced Medium class which was a small but quality class. I had already decided that as Solly's flying changes aren't his strongest point, that I would pick up my marks where ever I could and just enjoy the outing. Solly did a lovely test, he was very accurate and really seemed to enjoy it. It must have showed as he ended up winning! What a star! This now quali-



fies him for the Petplan Finals, part of the British Dressage Winter Championships in April which are to be held at Hartpury College for the first time. We then went on to do our first dressage to music test, he really danced to the music and came second with a 72% and qualified for the Regionals in Febru-

ary. I don't think I've ever enjoyed competing so much, it was just a wonderful day.

Mary King was over the moon with Solly's success, and loves to hear all about his competitions. She still visits him regularly and will be borrowing him for the Equine Fair at Westpoint on November 24th & 25th.