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Editorial Merry Christmas to one and all, and a Happy and (dare I say) Prosperous New Year!

I apologise for not having seen many of you over the past few months and I am grateful for my colleagues keeping the practice ship-shape as M&S EVP builds form strength to strength. We have a keen veterinary team who are dedicated to you, the clients, and to their patients, your horses and ponies. Soon, not only will there be two Anna's, but two Will's as well. I ask you. We're hoping new Will's trousers ride higher.



The BEVA President in action

I am two months into my one-year presidency of the British Equine Veterinary Association, an organisation of 2,500 horse vets in the UK and Europe including almost all British equine vets. I try and do at least one day a week at the clinic, but this has proved difficult. Since September, I have been to conferences in Copenhagen, Texas and Southport, attended countless meetings in London and Newmarket, made videos at Pachesham (thank you, Linda), and lectured all over the country – from Glasgow to Hereford to Lincoln. I thank you all, clients, colleagues and staff for bearing with me, with continued loyalty and support. After the Olympics, September 2012 sees the BEVA Congress in Birmingham, with some 1500 vets attending over 3 days, and the end of my term as President. I am already looking forward to it, and to returning to normality with my practice work. I now fully realize what a wonderful job I have!

Finally, donations for the moustache growing efforts are still being gratefully accepted at the practice where there is a box. Movember is now over and my German film roles with it. Prostate Cancer Research will greatly benefit, but the sacrifice has been immense – just ask my wife.

Ben Mayes



The Movember Growth

Client Evenings

We have held two well-attended meetings this autumn in our conference room at the Practice. The presentations were the same at each – the first date having been over-subscribed. Judy spoke on "Lameness and How We Approach It" and Ben spoke on The Olympics. The first meeting ended somewhat precipitately when one poor lady fainted, (probably due to Ben getting carried away with his subject) but thankfully the second evening proceeded without mishap.

Fainting events notwithstanding, we are hoping to host more of these evenings and will re-run those where interest exceeds conference room capacity.



Greenwich cross country



Greenwich arena

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our clients, patients and friends!



Elephant Vet

As some of you may know, I've been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to move to Laos, SE Asia to work as part of an international veterinary team working with wild and domesticated Asiatic Elephants (www.elefantasia.org).

Once known as the 'land of a million elephants,' Laos is now home to less than 1000 wild elephants with numbers steadily falling. The average yearly salary in Laos is \$300, so it's easy to see why the illegal wildlife trade, with elephants exceeding \$5,000, is still drawing a number of hunters. This constant threat, combined with the pressures of human development and the degradation of primary rainforest, has forced many remaining elephants into conflict with villages as they venture onto cultivated land.

However, it's not all doom for the Asian Elephant population! The 500 domesticated elephants working in Laos, mainly in logging, generate income for over 10,000 people and as such are an integral part of many people's lives. Mahouts are often paired with their elephant when only 8 years of age. The rural human life expectancy in Laos is only 58, and that of the elephant is 50, so they can spend almost their whole lives together.

Breeding is the way forward for the Asian Elephant, but due to the high risk of damage during the precarious event of mating, lost income throughout pregnancy and poor knowledge of husbandry, baby elephants are

It's amazing how fast time passes. It seems that having only just been introduced in the last newsletter it's time for me to say goodbye in this issue. I can't say that I'm sad to be leaving these cold days and long nights, yet the cup of coffee proffered as a warm welcome will be sorely missed...

a rare event indeed. When coupled with the fact that there are only two vets in the entire country (apart from the Elefantasia team) and the lack of even basic medicines to support an ageing population it's clear that the situation is not sustainable.

This is where I step in - as part of a mobile veterinary unit (or 'Jumbo Ambulance') I'll be visiting logging camps, tourist sites and remote villages to provide veterinary care and education to mahouts. Each mission lasts 5-10 days, in which time I'll be able to treat roughly 50 elephants, all free of charge. Without prompt veterinary treatment of common conditions such as abscesses, wounds, parasites and exhaustion, elephants can quickly succumb in the fetid tropical environment.

Living in the rainforest, in a country where English speakers are scattered few and far between, without access to running water or any electrical appliances will bring its own challenges... but none that the clients of Mayes & Scrine haven't prepared me for!

Hopefully I'll be boarding a plane to the other side of the world this coming March safe in the knowledge that the equine population of Sussex and Surrey are just a little bit healthier than when I arrived. Thanks to you all and you never know what the future holds, I may see you all again.

Will Thomas



Prescriptions

At Mayes and Scrine we are happy to provide prescriptions should you find you are able to source drugs more cheaply on the internet. The animal for which the medication is for has to be under our care – we have to examine the horse and re-examine it at least every six months to prescribe or dispense medication. We charge for the prescription as we are obliged to keep detailed records and the process involves significant veterinary and staff time. Please use an online pharmacy registered in the UK – be wary of any overseas pharmacies, apart from it being illegal to purchase medicines abroad, there is a significant market in counterfeit drugs. Many (for example those in Russia) promise the earth and deliver who-knows-what. We appreciate that there can often seem to be a large gap between prices found online and those we charge. We assure you that we do our best to source as cheaply as possible, but solely from trusted sources. Please be sure you are comparing "like with like". If you find a price that seems too good to be true – it probably is. We are in consult with our own and other wholesalers, as well as buying groups and drug companies, to try and keep on top of the situation and offer as good a deal as we can.

Not just Wormers, Antibiotic over-use too

Perceived over-use of antimicrobials in the veterinary sector is a hot topic. On the near continent it is becoming law for vets to prescribe medicines but not be able to dispense. Antibiotics cannot be used prophylactically, i.e. not to prevent infection or even if it is suspected, but only when disease is diagnosed. Similarly it is likely that the veterinary sector will be restricted in the antibiotics we can use, for example no fluoroquinolones. Also, for whatever reason, we are suspecting antimicrobial resistance in certain yards – some bacterial conditions becoming harder to treat and so on. Antibiotics are magic – but good hygiene and management, decreasing the risk of injury and infection, is best!

Choke: what to do before the vet arrives...

The word “choke” strikes fear in many of us, the most important thing to remember is ‘don’t panic’! A horse or pony with choke has a food impaction (obstruction) in its oesophagus (food pipe) and not its trachea (windpipe).



Choke is usually caused by dry food material swelling within the oesophagus. Un-soaked sugar beet is a classic cause.

Signs of choke:

Horses with choke are often distressed and coughing. They commonly have nasal discharge which can be slight or profuse.



Also, muscle spasms with intermittent bending and stretching of the neck. Sometimes it is possible to see a lump on the left hand side of a horse's neck.

Not all horses will have the sense to stop eating and further food will only worsen the problem.

What to do:

The first thing to do is to **remain calm**, move the horse to a stable with no feed or water and non-edible bedding.

The next thing to do is to **call the vet**, describe the clinical signs and how long they have been going on for. The vet can then give you some advice as to what to do next.

If possible **keep the horse quiet, with the head low**. This encourages saliva to come out of the mouth and nose and not to slip down the trachea into the lungs.

Most cases of choke will resolve by themselves without veterinary attention, although the longer the duration of obstruction the bigger the risk of complications. Complications can include aspiration pneumonia and oesophageal rupture.

When the vet arrives, they will examine the horse to confirm diagnosis and to observe parameters such as the horse's heart rate, lung sounds and assess the degree of obstruction. They will ask you about the circumstances of the choke, e.g. the horse had just come in from the field and was fed straightaway – the choke often starting after just a few mouthfuls. Or the pony had broken into the feed-room overnight – this can be more serious.

What the vet does next will depend on how severe the clinical signs are. The majority of horses will need very little treatment apart from sedative injections to relax them and lower their head.

If the obstruction does not pass after some time, more invasive treatment may be necessary. The vet may pass a stomach tube up the nose and into the oesophagus to perform a warm water lavage. This is not without risk.

You may be asked to monitor your horse's temperature and breathing rate for the next few days, as changes may indicate pneumonia.

It is important to remember that most cases will pass by themselves. Preventative measures include: regular dental care; feeding horse separately to eliminate peer pressure; not feeding immediately after coming in from the field; putting large stones or bricks in the feed-bucket to slow down their eating and feeding sloppy feed.

Anna Etherton BVSc MRCVS

First Aid Course Wounds! Colic! Choke! Haemorrhage!

We all hope it never happens to our horse...
but would you know what to do? When to call the Vet?



We're running a half day course on first aid and triage covering a variety of topics including a practical session. Perfect both for those of us who 'flap' and the experienced horse owner alike!

WHEN? Thursday 29th December

WHERE? Mayes and Scrine EVP Clinic

HOW MUCH? £30pp – including comprehensive course notes and refreshments

Course numbers limited, book early to guarantee your place!

Will McFadzean will be joining the practice in February, when Will Thomas goes pachyderm in Laos. Like Sarah, Will joins us from Lambourn, is a keen horseman (polo) and will bring new ideas and expertise to the practice.



Alex Erskine is joining the practice vet team with several years of equine veterinary practice behind her. After graduating from the Royal Veterinary College, Alex started in mixed practice in Hampshire before working in dedicated equine practice first in Australia, then back in Hampshire. She particularly enjoys working with sports horses, but is looking forward to a wide variety of equine work in ambulatory practice around Surrey and Sussex. In her spare time, she can be found playing "canoe polo" or out eventing "Daisy", a 7 year old mare Alex bred herself who has joined Alex in the area as a livery.

Anna and Guy are expecting



Anna Etherton is soon to leave us, albeit temporarily, for the happy reason of going on maternity leave. Her baby is due in February. We wish Anna the very best of luck with this new chapter in her life. Anna is hoping to continue clinical work until the end of December and then to return to Mayes and Scrine at the end of her maternity leave period.

Vale Laurence

Very sadly, we have had to say goodbye to Laurence as he has made the move from equine into small animal veterinary practice.

Laurence recently become engaged to his American girlfriend Toni, also a vet. Laurence is concentrating on taking the American vet exams, which may be the reason for the switch to small animal practice. Thankfully, it is not "au revoir" as he will be able to carry on being our in-house surgeon for elective procedures such as neurectomies, rig ops, fractured splint removals etc. Where surgery requires more complicated equipment, such as arthroscopies, we have been lucky enough to be able to bring Matt Smith down from The Newmarket Equine Hospital. We will continue to develop our surgery facilities to allow us to carry out more elective surgical procedures in house, using the surgical expertise of both Laurence and Matt, and our experienced in-house anaesthetists.

Clinic Development



As well as having an intern living on site, we are continuing to upgrade our other facilities.

The practice has excellent RCVS Practice Standards Tier 2 facilities, and the facilities have Tier 3 (Hospital) capability. As well as

extraordinary in-house experience and skills with Judy focusing on lameness and Anna Hammond on Medicine, we have visiting experts, for example surgeon Matt Smith from Newmarket. We are shortly to have not just one but two digital radiography units, reducing the need for equipment transfer between the vets, allowing us to take quality radiographs both at the clinic and at yards.

Sam and Ben Tie the knot... Congratulations!

Sam Wallington, née France, has been in the office for several years and ably supports Jane in practice administration, diary management and is first rate at handling that awkward caller! In September, Sam married her childhood sweetheart, Ben, and is enjoying married life immensely. Well done, Sam.



Sarah Smith will be filling the gap left by Anna. Having qualified from Cambridge Sarah worked at Valley Equine Hospital, a large equine practice in Lambourn. Sarah has already been with us for a couple of months so many of you will have met her already. A keen skier and tennis player, Sarah is adding a GSP puppy to the ever expanding practice canine menagerie.

Website, Social Networks and Email... what next?!

We now have a new computer team in place to continue to try and drag Mayes and Scrine kicking and screaming into the new virtual age of equipment named after fruit and all words beginning with "i". Part of this revamp will include redoing the website as it has become rather dated. We are also now on both Twitter and Facebook – please follow us on Twitter @mayesandscrine or Facebook at www.facebook.com/MSEVP.Admin

Also, we are developing our email database. So we can send reminders, letters, reports, insurance forms, and information on disease outbreaks etc to you all quickly and easily. The office staff are often busy on the phone, so please email us from a reliable email address and we'll add it to the database – which is quite secure. Please do not email for requesting visits however, especially emergency ones.

