

100% Equine Practice

Newsletter October 2015

It was a dark and stormy night!

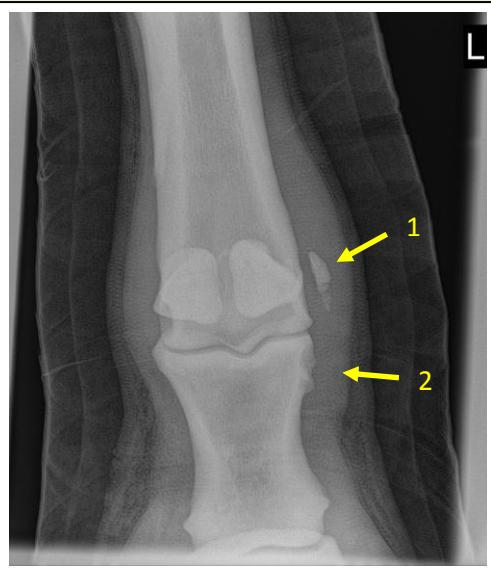
As a vet you never quite know what your next case is going to be. However when a call came in at 5pm on a dark and stormy November night to go and see a highland pony called Charlie that had gone acutely lame out on the hill, it was clear this was not going to be a routine visit.

Jim took his car as far as possible and then had to transfer his first aid kit into the keeper's vehicle to continue up the hill. They still had to walk about a mile across boggy ground to reach the injured pony. By this time it was pitch black but when they reached Charlie standing patiently with the pony-man, Charlie was unable to put his left foreleg to the ground.



It's customary on many estates that still use ponies, to let the ponies go once they have finished for the night to find their own way down the hill. Unfortunately on this occasion Charlie set off a little too quickly across some fairly rough ground and must have put his foot in a hole. On examination his fetlock was extremely unstable and was collapsing when the horse tried to bear weight.

The DR X ray system we have is extremely portable but even that was no use up there. Rather than giving up, Jim opted to apply a fibreglass cast to stabilise the leg and then after giving some pretty strong painkillers Charlie was able to start walking with care. A trailer was brought up as far as possible and after leading Charlie across some boggy ground and a couple of streams, he was loaded up and transported down to the nearest stable.



With his cast on, Charlie was pretty comfortable after the journey and bearing weight on his injured leg, so we arranged to go back and radiograph him first thing the following morning.

The DR X ray system really comes in to its own when confronted with a patient with a severe non weight-bearing lameness. We can obtain images on the spot within 4 seconds of setting up and taking a radiograph. There is no need to go back and forth to the surgery to process images. This allows us to take as many images of as many angles as necessary to obtain a diagnosis.

In this case four images were taken. If you look at the image on the left you can see Charlie's radiograph taken through the cast. On the outside of his fetlock there is a displaced piece of bone (1) and the top of the pastern bone looks abnormal (2). Charlie had torn the collateral ligaments supporting his fetlock and a piece ...

... of bone had broken off from where the collateral ligament joins the pastern. This is an extremely painful and serious injury and not one we encounter every day! The beauty of the digital x ray was that we could email the pictures directly to Dr John Marshall, one of the orthopaedic specialists at Glasgow University and get instant advice whilst still with the pony.

Despite the extreme instability of the joint, John was reasonably optimistic and gave two options for treatment. We could send Charlie to Glasgow and they would operate and attempt to screw the fragment back on to stabilize the joint. Alternatively, although the cosmetic result would not be as good, John felt Charlie had a reasonable chance if we box rested him and kept him in a fibreglass cast.

We opted to keep him in a cast checking and changing it as necessary and Charlie was an excellent patient. On removal of the cast, Charlie was still pretty lame but we gradually allowed him more and more exercise over the following summer and by the end of last season, Charlie was reintroduced to work. This year he has been one of the main working ponies on the estate and when you consider he is used to carry stags weighing up to 17 or 18 stone across some pretty rough and steep terrain, this is an excellent result. Jim was delighted to see Charlie looking well and happy when he visited another of the stalking ponies last week.

Invitation

You are invited to a Practice talk on Wednesday 18th November 7pm at the Banchory Business Centre

"GETTING THE BEST OUT OF YOUR HORSE"

The talk is aimed at all of you who own or ride horses for pleasure, competition or both. Topics covered are "Response to treatments for lameness" Jim Dukes

"How do common medical conditions affect what you do with your horse" Hannah Gray

"Practical ways to get the best out of your horse" Natalie Sim

The talk is free and includes refreshments. To book a place contact linda@dukesvets.com or ring the office. There will be a collection for Bloodwise which funds Leukaemia research.

We have enclosed a poster. Please feel free to put this in your tackroom or on your yard notice board.

 013398 87010

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Email linda@dukesvets.com

Practice News

Since becoming a purely Equine practice at the beginning of the year we have been pretty busy. As well as the usual run of cases we are getting more and more referrals and requests for second opinions from other veterinary practices in the area.

Our new vet Natalie Sim is doing a great job and this has given Jim and Hannah more time to undertake these additional cases.

Our special offer on dentistry has been extremely popular this year and we have seen a big increase in our dental work. We will continue to give a 10% discount if a vaccination and routine dentistry are done at the same time and also if three or more horses are done together.

As the practice quietens down for winter we are catching up on our continuing professional development. Jim is going to Glasgow at the end of this month looking at their new MRI machine plus equine rescue techniques. In November Hannah is going to Gloucester for a BEVA equine ophthalmology course and Natalie is going to Newmarket for a BEVA equine dentistry course.

Equine Events Calendar

We have started publishing a monthly events calendar on facebook. We are working on making the information more visible on your phone next time. If you have any equine related events you want added to the calendar send them to Hannah who is coordinating the information.

Free visit

For a trial period we are offering a free visit if you book five or more horses in at the same time on one premises. The visit can be booked at a time to suit you and be for any veterinary work from vaccinations to lameness exams and dentistry.

To take advantage of this special offer organise five or more horses from your yard that can be seen at one time and then phone the office to book a date and time. Subject to availability you can book any vet from the practice for this visit. If less than five horses are seen then the normal visit or shared visit charges will apply. No other special offer may be used concurrently.

Dukes Veterinary Practice Limited
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