

# EQUINE NEWS

## *Equine Grass Sickness Fund*

Patron - HRH The Princess Royal

Chairman - Mrs James Gammell

Autumn/Winter 2010

## Fair City Vets Grass Sickness Evening

Fair City Vets in Perth organised a Grass Sickness information evening on 2nd September at Strathallan Castle, Auchterarder by kind permission of Anna Roberts. It was attended by 165 people, many of whom had had a case.

The guest speaker was Professor Bruce McGorum from R(D)SVS in Edinburgh who gave the audience all the latest information on grass sickness, distribution, diagnostic aids, nursing, and scientific progress backed up by an informative and technical presentation and all the latest data. He answered the many questions raised by the audience.

Mrs Philippa Gammell, chairman of the Equine Grass Sickness Fund gave a short presentation on how the Fund committee works and how the finance raised by fundraisers is managed and targeted. Fair City Vet Group generously sponsored the evening with Boehringer-Ingelheim Ltd, veterinary medicines, so all funds raised will go towards grass sickness research.



L-R: Fiona Humphries, Professor Bruce McGorum, Anna Roberts, Philippa Gammell, Andrew Humphries, Tim Bentall.

Fiona and Andrew Humphries who run the Perth based Fair City Vet Group said "We see a number of cases of grass sickness in the practice each year and we were keen for our clients to have an opportunity to have access to the latest information about the disease and support such a good cause at the same time."

The event was a great success and raised £804 for the Equine Grass Sickness Fund plus an additional £455 being raised through the sale of EGSF Christmas cards, raffle tickets and donations. The money will be put towards the next scientific project that receives approval.

### Report ALL Grass Sickness Cases

We would remind you to report ALL cases of Equine Grass Sickness to the EGSF using the case form on our website. An accurate record of case distribution will be important when the vaccine field trial is planned so we need your assistance. Do not assume someone has reported it for you. It is better to have it reported twice than not at all. If you need a case form posted out please let us know.

### Vaccine Update - AHT appoints Research Co-ordinator

Miss Jo Ireland, MRCVS joined the Animal Health Trust (AHT) on 4th October 2010, as Equine Grass Sickness Research Co-ordinator; a position funded by joint donations from a charitable trust and a private benefactor

The position will require Jo to co-ordinate equine grass sickness (EGS) surveillance and research activities internally within AHT and externally with key collaborators at the Universities of Liverpool and Edinburgh and the Equine Grass Sickness Fund. This will be with the specific aim of better facilitating a future EGS botulinum vaccine field trial being conducted in the UK, although any subsequent vaccine field trial will require further additional funding being sought.

Jo will also work with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the manufacturer of a candidate botulinum vaccine in preparing an Animal Test Certificate (ATC) license for the product and a protocol for the proposed field trial. She will also look to establish an assay for serological testing of the equine immune response to botulinum. Jo qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 2000 from Glasgow University and having recently completed her RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, is currently completing her PhD studies in Equine Geriatric Health and Welfare in the UK at the University of Liverpool.

## From the Chairman

I am sure all of you have had a very busy summer with the vagaries of the British weather continually challenging riders and event organisers. It is sometimes too wet, too dry, too warm, too cold. As they say "It is never the wrong weather just the wrong clothes". As we lurch from sunscreen and fly creams back to scarves and rugs, and some very wet weather, the summer is definitely over.

The trauma that owners (and their horses) experience when grass sickness is diagnosed is very well known and understood. What is perhaps less apparent but no less keenly felt is what a treating vet experiences when called out to a grass sickness case. It is not easy for a vet to give their client the worst news possible, for the vet to have to euthanize a horse or pony that may have been known to them since birth. It is very upsetting,

frustrating and saddening for vets not to be able to offer their clients or their horse a better outcome. As one vet recently said "Grass sickness is an occupational hazard for owners. If you have horses, there is a risk that one day you may have a case of grass sickness."

Whatever you are doing with your horses and ponies these autumn and winter months enjoy it.

**Philippa Gammell**

## Harness Racing Collection



A new venture for us this year was to attend the 2 day Scottish Harness Racing meeting at Musselburgh racecourse in July to promote awareness of the disease and take a bucket collection on each day. Some of our local supporters kindly came along to help with the collections and enjoyed watching a bit of racing and finding out more about the sport.

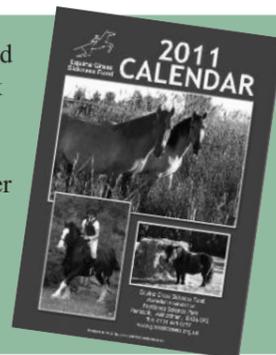
Steven Gilvear from Stirling lost his

good young horse Doyle's Connection to the disease in 2009, following attempts to save him at the 'Dick' Vet hospital. He had shown a lot of promise in his first season and was winner of the 2009 SHRC 2yo Futurity. Other owners at the racing reported having lost horses too which highlights, once more, that grass sickness affects horses from all disciplines within the horse world.

## Nominate Our Charity

Many societies, clubs, companies, riding stables and racehorse trainers hold an event each year and nominate a charity to benefit from it. EGSF would be pleased to have their support and would ask you to put our charity's name forward whenever you can. Not only does it raise vital funds for research but also highlights what the Fund does and informs the public about the disease.

We may be able to bring along a stand to the event, depending on the location, and will publicise our involvement with it on our website or newsletter and supply leaflets for distribution at the event. To discuss this further please phone 0131 445 6257 or email [joyce.mcintosh@moreun.org](mailto:joyce.mcintosh@moreun.org).



## Christmas Cards and Merchandise

Our range of merchandise this year includes two Christmas cards, an EGSF calendar 2011, sweatshirts, books, and a selection of useful gifts and stocking fillers. We hope you like the Christmas cards by Jacqueline

Stanhope and John Trickett and that you will support our work by buying some. They can be purchased on our website, by phone or by returning the order form in the Christmas brochure. All the profit from merchandise sales comes directly to the Fund.

## Evaluation of an enteral feeding system for managing chronic grass sickness

By Bryony Waggett HND, BSc, MSc. EGSF Research Assistant

Many chronic GS (grass sickness) patients are anorexic and in a catabolic state. Inadequate voluntary intake of nutrients is therefore a major determinant of survival. During the first two weeks of the disease, dramatic weight loss occurs and unfortunately many horses are euthanised due to profound weakness. Appetite may further decline in association with the development of rhinitis sicca which likely has an influence on olfaction (sense of smell). Bolus feeding via wide bore nasogastric tubes has been attempted at the R(D)SVS with minimal success. We are currently evaluating the effectiveness of a continuous enteral feeding system to attenuate the dramatic weight loss and improve the horse's prognosis. Re-feeding syndrome (sometimes fatal metabolic disturbance) has been documented in scientific literature for both humans and horses, so close monitoring of blood electrolytes was required.

Two chronic GS cases (12 year old, 450kg Cob cross mare and a 10 year old, 400kg, Anglo Arab mare) were admitted to the R(D)SVS following onset of clinical signs for confirmation of diagnosis and treatment. Enteral feeding was initiated on day 10 (Anglo Arab) and 15 (Cob) following onset of clinical signs when there was a noticeable decline in voluntary feed intake.

Fresubin® HP Energy liquid tube feed specifically designed for catabolic human patients was used. The feed was assessed by nutritionists at Dengie and deemed safe to feed to horses at the proposed rate. The protein content was high and potassium levels were considered appropriate for horses, all other vitamin and mineral levels were considered deficient for horses. The feed also contained no fibre.

A narrow bore (Mila 18 French) nasogastric tube was used for this feeding system. To ensure that the nasogastric tube did not interfere with eating from a bucket, the tube was inserted through a small incision in the skin over the nostril and advanced into the stomach. Pharyngeal endoscopy was performed to ensure passage of the tube into the oesophagus.



**Figure 1:** Insertion of feeding tube via false nostril

The tube was secured externally using a Chinese finger trap suture pattern (Figure 1).

A consistent and continuous rate of liquid feed infusion was achieved using an Applix® Smart pump routinely used by the National Health Service for enteral feeding of human patients. Due to the possibility of re-feeding syndrome, a fourteen day feeding programme was devised.

During days one to seven the feeding rate was increased daily by 60ml per hour such that by day seven the horse was being fed maintenance level nutrients for its weight (Table 1). The pump and feed bag were housed in a small back pack which was attached to an "anti-cast" roller to enable the horse to move around freely and be taken to grass whilst being continually fed (Figure 2). Due to the dramatic weight loss and likelihood of recumbency, it was considered important to have the "anti-cast" roller well padded. A numnah was used for the withers area and a girth sleeve was cut in half and positioned in the girth area on both sides of the horse.

Day	Flow rate (ml/hr)	Total Volume (ml)
1	61	1464
2	120	2880
3	180	4320
4	240	5760
5	290	6960
6	350	8400
7 to 14	415	9960

**Table 1:** A 14 day enteral feeding programme for a 450kg chronic GS case



**Figure 2:** Continuous enteral feeding system in situ, with pump and liquid feed housed in blue back pack

Placement of the nasogastric tube was non-problematic in both horses. The tube was well tolerated and did not hinder the horse eating from a bucket. The liquid feed was infused continually with few problems. On one occasion the feeding tube blocked due to failure to change the feeding bag before an air lock occurred. Flushing with bicarbonate of soda and warm water resolved the blockage.

### Results for horse 1 (Cob)

In the first horse the enteral feeding programme was initiated at 10am and by midnight the horse's feed intake from the bucket had increased and she continued to eat all feeds

offered during the five day duration of the enteral feeding programme. The feeding programme was stopped at day five since the horse was eating extremely well from the bucket and she had also discovered how to remove the feeding tube herself. Fecal output increased and fecal consistency remained soft but fully formed; no diarrhoea developed. Serum electrolyte levels remained stable and the re-feeding syndrome did not occur. The horse remained in the hospital a further six weeks after which she was sent home.

### Results for horse 2 (Anglo Arab)

Prior to initiation of the feeding system this mare had difficulty passing faeces and had not passed faeces for four days. Once on the feeding programme she passed one pile of faeces every day and fecal consistency became softer, but remained formed with no diarrhoea occurring. Unfortunately feed intake from the bucket did not increase during the time on the feeding system. The mare remained depressed and would only pick at feed and grass when taken out. The feeding system was stopped at day eight since the mare discovered how to remove the tube and did this repeatedly. This mare liked to lie down at night and so the feeding system was adapted and hung on a drip system and not on the "anticast" roller and this system seemed to work well. Serum electrolyte levels remained stable with no evidence of re-feeding syndrome occurring. Despite continued attempts

to encourage eating after the enteral feeding system was removed this mare unfortunately did not survive.

### CONCLUSIONS

- The enteral feeding system was well tolerated and did not interfere with grazing or eating from a bucket.
- Electrolyte levels remained stable indicating absence of re-feeding syndrome.
- Increased faecal output with faeces of a soft but formed consistency.
- Close monitoring is required to ensure feeding tube does not become blocked or pump dislodges if the horse lies down.
- The horse was able to graze with the feeding system in place, which helped with the horse's demeanour.
- While initial results are encouraging, further evaluation in other cases is required.

A scientific poster was presented by Bryony Waggett at the 5th European Workshop on Equine Nutrition on 20-22nd September 2010.

We would like to thank both the Bossy Boots Memorial Fund for funding this project and also the Equine Grass Sickness Fund for continuing to finance the EGSF Research Assistants post at the R(D)SVS.

## Grass Sickness and Autoimmunity

By Eve Callaghan



**Fig. 1:** Case of chronic grass sickness showing severe weight loss, typical of the disease

Grass sickness (Equine Dysautonomia) is characterised by very specific clinical signs during the duration of clinical disease (fig 1) and clearly defined findings at post mortem examination. However despite this, extensive attempts to identify a definitive causal agent have failed. Dysautonomias are not, however, unique to the horse. In fact they are seen in a variety of species including humans.

The term

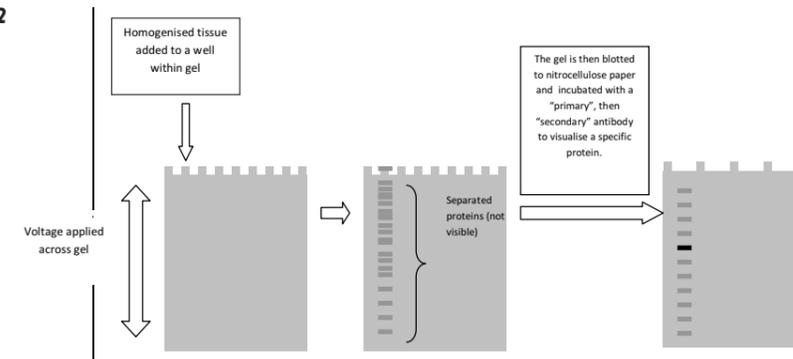
dysautonomia is used to describe diseases, such as grass sickness, in which there is dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system which controls a variety of functions such as digestion, bowel motility, heart rate and sweating. It has been suggested that some human dysautonomias are, at least in part, due to the individual's own immune system targeting their own autonomic nervous system structures, a phenomenon termed autoimmunity. Autoimmunity is increasingly being recognised in human medicine as an

important process in the development of a variety of diseases, with Diabetes Mellitus and even stomach ulcers all having a proposed autoimmune component.

Applying this theme to grass sickness, there are a number of areas which would fit with the idea of an immune system malfunction. Firstly, there is no definitive agent which has yet been identified and isolated exclusively from horses suffering from this condition, despite over one hundred years of research. This reflects the likelihood that grass sickness has a multifactorial underlying cause. A variety of risk factors have been associated with the development of grass sickness. These include, amongst others, dietary changes, worming, young age and recent movement to a new yard. It is possible that these factors, in susceptible individuals, result in a fundamental change in the horse's gastrointestinal system with subsequent detrimental results. Within the gastro intestinal tract, the horse has an elaborate array of microbes, including bacteria, fungi and protozoa. These facilitate efficient digestion of food and maintenance of intestinal health and are largely protected from the immune system as they remain within the intestinal barrier. It is feasible that some of the risk factors linked to grass sickness reflect an association with a compromise of this barrier, with subsequent exposure of the immune system to certain intestinal derived proteins. Such an occurrence could potentially result in activation of the immune system against the horse's own tissue.

There are many variations on this theory and therefore

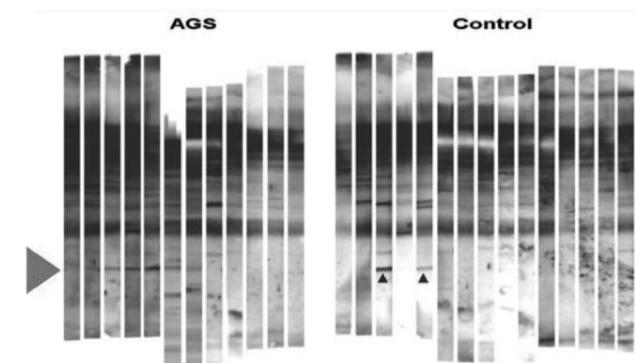
**Fig 2**



**Fig. 2** homogenised tissue sample is added to a well within a pre-prepared gel across which a voltage is applied. (b) Proteins migrate along the length of the gel and settle at different points depending on their molecular weight. (c) The proteins are then transferred to nitrocellulose paper to allow incubation with firstly a "primary antibody" directed against a particular protein in the gel, and subsequently a "secondary antibody" directed against the primary antibody. The binding of the secondary antibody can be visualised by a variety of means and this shows up as a distinct band.

study of this phenomenon in relation to grass sickness was warranted. A technique known as 'Western Blotting' was used to identify the binding of antibodies to specific sites in certain tissues. The principal behind this technique is summarised in Figure 2.

This technique is most commonly used to identify specific proteins within diseased tissue, with the primary antibody being specifically targeted at these proteins. In this series of experiments, the proteins of healthy nerve tissue were separated and the primary antibody step was substituted with sera from cases of grass sickness. This technique was used to determine whether the blood of horses with grass sickness contains antibodies directed against healthy nerve tissue, thus investigating a potential autoimmunity mechanism leading to the very specific nerve damage seen with this disease. Comparisons were made with serum obtained from non-grass sickness horses (both healthy and diseased).



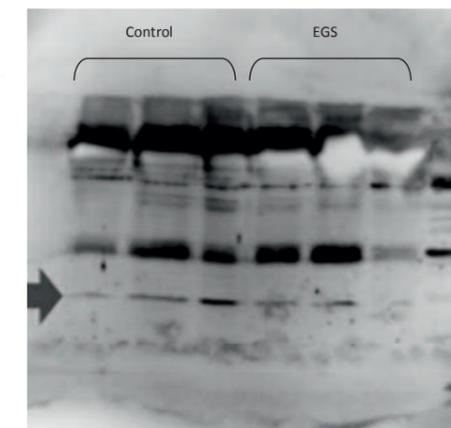
**Fig 3:** Western blotting results showing band of interest (red arrow) in 8 out of 12 Acute Grass sickness Cases (AGS) and 2 out of 12 control cases (blue arrows).

A total of 33 serum samples (primarily acute grass sickness cases and control horses with some samples drawn from the sub acute and chronic forms of the disease) were tested. A summary of the results obtained from these tests are depicted in Figure 3. This revealed that a particular band (indicated by the red arrow) was present in 75% (8/12) of the grass sickness cases. However, this band was

also seen in 2 out of 16 control horses (blue arrows). Interestingly, the 2 horses from which these serum samples were collected exhibited many clinical signs consistent with grass sickness; however they were later confirmed not to have the disease. In summary, this part of the study demonstrated the presence of autoantibodies in grass sickness cases. However, as these were not identified in *all* grass sickness cases and were also seen in a small number of control horses, the findings do not wholly support a simple autoimmune basis to this disease. It is possible that nerve damage attributable to another agent could result in either exposure of proteins otherwise hidden from the

immune system or a change in the structure of certain proteins. This could result in the production of autoantibodies in some cases following, but not preceding, the initiation of disease.

More recently, this same technique has been used to demonstrate that the protein recognised by antibodies within the majority of the analysed grass sickness sera appears to be consistently present in nerve tissue derived from other horses, both control horses and grass sickness cases. Whereas Figure 3 reflects the results obtained when a single nerve tissue source was exposed to sera from multiple sources, Figure 4 reflects the results when various nerve tissue sources (3 grass sickness cases and 3 control horses) were challenged with serum from one single source (acute grass sickness case).



**Fig.4:** Western blotting results demonstrating the same band (arrow) as that highlighted in Figure 3 when serum from a single acute grass sickness case was used as the primary antibody source and applied to nerve tissue from 6 different sources (3 control horses and 3 grass sickness horses [EGS]). From left, 3 control ganglia and 3 grass sickness ganglia all showing banding indicated by green arrow. The extreme right lane represents a series of molecular weight markers.

Currently, we are attempting to identify the likely nerve tissue proteins involved in this interaction with antibodies in grass sickness serum which will likely help to guide future studies.

I gratefully acknowledge the Equine Grass Sickness Fund for their sponsorship of this work and Scott Pirie, Alan Pemberton, Bruce McGorum and Bryony Waggett for their assistance and advice.

## Lucky to be Alive



Jet suffered Chronic Grass Sickness in 2006. He is a Fell pony that I started breaking for a great friend of mine, Charlie Simpson, who had bought him the previous year. Charlie is retired now and I hope he will forgive me for wondering if he thought I would bounce more easily than him if I was to be deposited at any time!

Charlie had left me instructions to keep an eye on Jet whilst he was away on holiday for a fortnight. Within a couple of days Jet started showing signs of colic and my vet suspected colic and treated him accordingly. The colic pains seemed to be severe one minute then not so bad, but he was losing his appetite and condition and, try as I might, I struggled to get him to eat anything. As time passed I was becoming less convinced that it was colic but not having any knowledge of grass sickness I was unaware of the gravity of his illness!

When Charlie returned from holiday more veterinary visits followed and chronic grass sickness was diagnosed eventually. Neither of us had any real knowledge of this illness and other horse owners advised that we put him down. Needless to say neither of us was prepared to do that unless there

was no hope for him. I phoned around and eventually spoke to Joyce McIntosh, secretary of the Equine Grass Sickness Fund, at around 10.30 at night. I will always be grateful for the kindness and advice she gave to me especially at such a late hour. She said to try to find something Jet would eat - no matter what - and remember that what he wouldn't eat in one feed he might choose to eat in the next one and just keep persevering.

The one thing we could get him to eat was cabbages, along with small amounts of hay, and after months of early starts for Charlie and late nights for me, I'm thrilled to say that Jet pulled through and is still going strong.

There were many days throughout the illness when we wondered if we could be doing more harm than good by trying so hard to keep him alive, but I think the fact that he is now looking so well and has been ridden out since overcoming grass sickness has proved our faith in this pony without a doubt. He fought it all the way!

My only wish is that all equines were so lucky!

**Mahala Guy (Cumbria)**

## Prize Draw Tickets

We have some lovely prizes for our raffle this year and we hope you will take some tickets to sell. Prizes include a 2 night stay for 2 at the Hilton Craigendarroch, a days fishing on the Teviot and Tweed with lunch, 2 tickets for Olympia Horse Show, a Sanyo Xacti HD camcorder/camera and 2 season tickets for Blair Castle Horse Trials 2011. The draw takes place on 16th November. There are 10 tickets in a book and they cost £1 each ticket. Please email me at [joyce.mcintosh@more dun.org](mailto:joyce.mcintosh@more dun.org) to let me know how many books you want or Tel: 0131 445 6257.

## Some Fundraising News

The Heavy Horse annual ceilidh at the Highland Show was even more successful than last year raising £781.39. Thanks go to all the Simpson Family and everyone who supported the event.

Peebles and District Riding Club organized a pleasure ride in August which raised £175.

A stud walk at Dawn Cunningham-Reid's Balleroy Highland Pony Stud in Berkshire raised £215.00. The Highland Pony Breed Show BBQ in August raised £690. Thanks are due to Morven Campbell, Anna Roberts and Sally Coutts who organised it.

Marjorie and Gordon Hamilton from Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire held an Open day at their Tyrie Shetland Pony Stud raising £100.

## MOVED HOUSE?

If you have moved please let us know your new address and your old one, so that we can continue to send you our mailings.

## Win a Parelli™ Horsenality™ Report

Alison Christie from Fife has set up a page on [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) to give horse owners, but particularly Parelli™ followers, a 1/200 chance to win a Horsenality™ Report for their equine partner for only £5. Alison has decided to donate the report due to her as a Gold member and is running an informal prize draw with all the proceeds going to The Equine Grass Sickness Fund. She hopes to sell 200 tickets and the draw will take place either when the 200th ticket is sold or on the 31st October, whichever date comes first.

Alison says "This charity is very important to me as it is closely linked to why I started my Parelli™ journey.

2005 was a roller coaster year for me, with a couple of family deaths one of which was an horrific riding accident. Just after this settled down I lost my three horses to grass sickness in the

space of 2 weeks; they were between the ages of 3 and 5, all home bred, and were either just started or about to be. After a lifetime with horses I had had enough, my nerve was in pieces and quite frankly I didn't care if I never saw another horse, let alone handle and ride one.

However, my middle son was desperately keen to ride and loved horses, so I immediately bought myself a new pony because I knew if I didn't I would never do so. I needed something new to rekindle my reason for being with horses and that led me to Parelli™ Natural Horsemanship.

I have had an incredible journey. I am now a level 4 student and have recently started a young horse for myself. My children Julia aged 8 is an L2 student, Donald 12 has passed L2 online and Colin who is 10, the very keen one, is working in L3/4. To see a video of him

playing with his pony Jack go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB Rr1X41U3k> As a family we have never looked back since we started our Parelli™ journey.

I would like to help an organisation that supported me with the awful deaths of my horses and help them with their quest for finding a cure and a cause for this horrible disease.

Please support me with my goal to raise £1000 for Equine Grass Sickness, enjoy the chance of winning a Horsenality™ Report for your special Equine Partner and pray that you and your horses never have to experience grass sickness first hand."

This is being run and organised independently of The Parelli™ Organisation, but with their full approval.

## Highpasture Stud Success

Sue and Nigel Cowgill from Ripon have had a very successful season with Hawlmark Classic Twilight, their two-year-old part-bred Cleveland Bay filly. By the successful thoroughbred stallion Classic, out of the Cowgill's homebred Cleveland mare Highpasture Hawlmark, this filly is unbeaten in hunter classes this year and has notched up a string of wins and championships in partbred Cleveland and Sport Horse classes too. She rounded off a good year when she was joint national winner of the two-year-old Hunter Youngstock award at the National Hunter Supreme Championships in September.

Twilight's dam, Highpasture Hawlmark, was champion Cleveland Bay at the Great Yorkshire Show as a two-year-old in 2000 but she became a victim of chronic grass sickness two years later. Sue Cowgill nursed the mare for many weeks and she gradually recovered. The Cowgills were unsure if they would be able to breed from her but she has had three foals in the last eight years. She produced a full brother to Twilight in June and he looks likely to be one to follow in the future.



*Hawlmark Classic Twilight winning the partbred championship at the Great Yorkshire Show*

Following the success of her daughter Twilight in the 2009 BEF Futurity where she gained a First Premium - Highpasture Hawlmark has been awarded the BEF Breeding Diploma.

## DONATIONS

We acknowledge fundraising donations received from the following:

Avonvalley Tidy Memorial Show  
 Rob Roy Martin Currie Challenge - Sarah Chambers and Friends  
 RHS Heavy Horse Section Ceilidh  
 Tandem Sky Dive - Katherine Rennie  
 Karen Keen Stable collection  
 Ladbrokes, Galston  
 Supersave, Castle Douglas  
 Town and Country, Fordel  
 Scottish Harness Racing collections  
 Highland Pony Breed Show BBQ - Morven Campbell, Anna Roberts & Sally Coutts  
 North-East HPEC  
 HPEC Pennine Area  
 Fair City Vet Group Grass Sickness Evening  
 Horseworld  
 Hexham Native Horse and Pony Show  
 Woodchip Stables - Marie Peat  
 Berkeley & District Riding Club

Tyrie Shetland Pony Stud Open Day - Mr & Mrs Hamilton  
 North-East HPEC Pleasure Ride - L J Machole  
 Perth racecourse collection - Mrs Gammell  
 The Malcolm Family Candle Party  
 Joyce Kent  
 Frank Tucker's Garage and Tracey Dunning  
 Kennford Post Office  
 Haldon Riding Stables  
 Mr Haywood – In memory of Freddie, William and Horatio  
 Balleroy Highland Stud Open Day - Dawn Cunningham Reid  
 Fleet Farm, Fleetwood  
 Stanley House Vets, Colne  
 Hapton Feeds, Burnley  
 Knaresborough Nags Riding Club  
 Janet Myers

We would also like thank, most sincerely, the numerous people who have helped with collections, sold raffle tickets or made personal donations to the Fund.



Fund Secretary, Joyce McIntosh, abseiling down Blair Castle Tower.

## Letters Home

Dawn Earl and Susan Haywood have written 'Letters Home' about Scheherazade (Sherri), one of Susan's Fell ponies. Scheherazade went to stay with Dawn to begin her education and Dawn e-mailed Susan regularly about Sherri's progress in the form of letters to 'Mummy Twolegs' and to which Susan replied. 'Letters Home' will make an ideal Christmas stocking filler for a daughter or grand daughter but no doubt parents and grandparents will enjoy it too!

Sherri, is a sister of one of Susan's Fell ponies who died from grass

sickness and niece of two others who also died from the disease. Susan and Dawn are keen for the Fund to benefit from the sale of the book, in memory of Horatio, Freddie and William. 'Letters Home' can be purchased through the EGSF Christmas merchandise brochure or at any time from the Equine Grass Sickness Fund for £9.00 including p&p.

**Happiness**  
 is.....  
 ..... a  
**heap of pooh!**

### PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO A FRIEND

If you require further information about the Fund please contact

**Joyce McIntosh, Secretary/Editor, Equine Grass Sickness Fund,  
 The Moredun Foundation, Pentlands Science Park, Penicuik EH26 0PZ**

Tel: 0131 445 6257 Fax: 0131 445 6235

or visit our website at [www.grassickness.org.uk](http://www.grassickness.org.uk)



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