**ROCCO’S STORY**

By Jessica Beesley

Rocco is my little boy’s 10 year old beautiful pink pony. He was diagnosed with grass sickness on the 28th May 2017 by Hird and Partners Equine Hospital. He stayed in hospital for 3 days where they had him on fluids and were able to remove an impaction. They then sent him home to start his recovery.

It was super hard work and we drenched him for 8 weeks with a lamb hand feeding bottle, using veteran vitality and pureed prunes. There were days when we spent all day cooking different purees: carrot, apple and cabbage, and garlic, apple and molasses mint rolls, pretty much anything at all that might tempt him.

We kept a daily diary of his food intake and his amount of stools. We also listened to his gut sounds with a stethoscope. 3 per 60 seconds is said to be normal.

18th December was the first time in the field with his pals, he cantered off shaking his head and of course we all cried. We had tried to take him out numerous times but he refused to leave the barn, a lot of the time he spent wandering around whilst I mucked out, almost like a yard dog.

18th February back on board! 2 figures of 8 in trot and a wander down the lane. Taking it extra slowly and again letting Rocco lead the way. He eats grass and manages a small bayonet in 24 hours but his hard feed kept him alive. 50kg a week some weeks and he is 11hh. We continue to love and cherish our survival pony.

Some days he would show signs he was struggling to swallow so we massaged his neck. Turmeric powder in 40ml of sunflower oil every morning helped keep him going to the toilet regularly.

His first time out (his choice) was a walk around the farm on the 15th October.

If he pooed we had a party! He started to eat after around 11 weeks. Sloppy, soup consistency food.

We have let him lead the way and he was trying to get out of the stable. Human contact, especially with his best friend Oscar, played the biggest part in his recovery. Oscar spends time eating his dinner in Rocco’s stable, sharing his sandwich and brushing his sore and skinny bones.

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**Feeds we tried:**
- Veteran Vitality
- Mint rolls
- Ready Mash
- Prunes
- Veg kebabs
- Cabbage and garlic
- Carrots, apples, mints, ginger nut biscuits
- Saracen Releve
- Competition mash
- Speedi-beet
- Live yogurt
- Molasses

**OUR DO’S AND DON’TS**

**DO:**
- Try anything
- Feed little and often
- Take the days they eat a mint as a positive
- Love them, cuddle them, keep them warm
- Keep a diary
- Look after YOU
- Approach feed supplier for samples

**DON’T:**
- Expect too much
- Take it to heart when they won’t eat
- Give up
- Stop trying
- Stop reading other case studies. They may have your pony’s answer.
BHS Scotland and The BHS Welfare Department have joined forces with the Equine Grass Sickness Fund (EGSF) for a platinum ride in 2018 that celebrates 70 years of The British Horse Society and 30 years of the EGSF. This year the event will have a few added touches to be revealed shortly aimed to raise the profile of the work being done to combat grass sickness and educate horse owners as well as entertain in a genteel, royal fashion.

Both charities are delighted that Her Majesty The Queen has granted permission for a sponsored ride to take place at Balmoral on Sunday the 27th of May.

BHS Scotland Chairman Sarah Jayne Bowers said: “The wonderful thing about Balmoral is the beauty of the route we are planning it follows wonderfully surfaced estate tracks into the foothills of Lochnagar and returns through magnificent ancient Caledonian Forest. The views of Royal Deeside are stunning and it will just be a spectacular day out for everyone who takes part.”

There is a choice of routes one 15km in length and one 5km. The ride is in aid of the Equine Grass Sickness Fund.

Details on how to enter the ride can be downloaded from www.bhsscotland.org.uk or send an SAE to BHS Scotland, Woodburn, Crieff, Perthshire PH7 3RG

Princess Anne meets EGSF Supporters

We were delighted to receive some very special guests to meet our Patron, HRH Princess Anne. All of these supporters have offered us tremendous support, either in terms of fundraising or research, and we are extremely grateful to them.
Welcome: Professor Julie Fitzpatrick OBE, BVMS (Hons), MSc, PhD, DSc, DipECBHM, DipECSRHM, DLSTM, FIBiol, FRAgS, MRCVS, FRSE

Biography: Julie Fitzpatrick, a vet qualifying from the University of Glasgow in 1982, is the Scientific Director of the Moredun Research Institute and Chief Executive of the Moredun Group. She also holds a Chair in Food Security in the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences at the University of Glasgow. Julie’s research interests focus on livestock health and disease in the UK and in developing countries. She was Vice-Chair of the Board of G4United, a public private partnership, funded by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and DFID, focusing on neglected diseases in developing countries. Julie sits on numerous scientific advisory bodies within Scotland, the UK and internationally. She is Co-Chair of the recently-formed Scottish Food Commission and is Chair of the UK Animal and Plant Health Partnership, helping to co-ordinate strategies to deal with infectious diseases threatening animals and plants throughout the UK. She has also been appointed as Chair of the Animal and Plant Health Agency’s Science Advisory Board (APHA) and as a Non-Executive Director of APHA. Julie was recognized for her contribution to animal medicine and research through the award of an OBE in 2014 and was awarded The Royal Smithfield Club Bicentenary Trophy for contributions to agriculture in 2016.

Speakers introduced by EGSF Chairman Keith Mason

Biography: Keith spent much of his career as Senior Veterinary Surgeon for the Hong Kong Jockey Club and was instrumental in founding their veterinary department at the beginning of the professional racing era, helping bring the first ever UK bred racehorses to Hong Kong. Closer to home Keith was also heavily involved in setting up the Weipers Equine Centre project at Glasgow University, as well as working in Scotland and the North of England as Veterinary Officer for the British Horseracing Authority for many years. As well as his position on the Moredun Foundation Board, Keith has been heavily involved with the Equine Grass Sickness Fund. Keith joined the Equine Grass Sickness Fund (EGSF) committee in 2012 and became Chairman in September 2013.


(Elspeth Milne, Scott Pirie and Bruce McGorum, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh.)

Biography: Professor Elspeth Milne BVMS, PhD, DipECVCP, FRCPath, FHEA, FRCVS, Head of Veterinary Pathology and Personal Chair in Veterinary Clinical Pathology, University of Edinburgh

Elspeth graduated from the University of Edinburgh, in 1979. She was an equine medicine clinician at Edinburgh from 1986 to 1996 where she developed an interest in equine grass sickness, especially pathology and management of chronic cases. In 1996 she joined the Scottish Agricultural College Veterinary Investigation Service where she became a Centre Manager. She returned to Edinburgh in 2002 and was appointed Head of Veterinary Pathology in 2004. In 2002 she became a Diplomate of the European College of Veterinary Clinical Pathology and in 2011 a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists. She is active in undergraduate and postgraduate education in this specialty. Elspeth has wide research interests, particularly in clinical pathology and equine pathology.

Presentation: Equine grass sickness (EGS) is characterised by degenerative changes in the parts of the nervous system controlling involuntary functions (autonomic

**EGSF merchandise will be on sale during the day**
nervous system). Mortality is high, but with nursing, approximately 50% of chronic cases survive. Residual signs are present in some, but not all, recovered cases. How some survivors maintain intestinal function for many years is unknown. Over the past 20 years, suitable tissues have been collected from 15 horses, up to 18 years after recovery.

The study is ongoing, but initial results indicate that there is a significantly lower number of neurons (nerve cells) in the cranial cerebral and cerebellar Sommerfeltian ganglia of recovered EGS cases compared to age-matched controls. In the intestinal tract, the number of neurons in the small intestine was lower in recovered cases than controls but no significant difference was present for the large intestine.

Staining for intestinal “pacemaker” cells and fibres showed that the number was significantly lower in the nerve network between the two muscle layers of the lower small intestine (ileum) in recovered cases compared to controls, but was not significantly different within the two muscle layers themselves. A mainly intact pacemaker cell network in the ileal muscle might therefore aid in the maintenance of gut motility in the recovered cases. Neurons in the ganglia and intestine were also stained for beta amyloid precursor protein (BAPP) which increases in several neurodegenerative diseases in humans and is known to be increased in acute and subacute EGS. However, BAPP staining was not increased in recovered EGS cases, therefore ongoing degenerative changes, at least involving this metabolic pathway, are not evident. The study has been generously funded by the Equine Grass Sickness Fund.

2. Joy Leng: Exploration of the faecal bacteria and biomarker discovery in equine grass sickness.

**Biography:** Joy is a post-doctoral researcher at the Veterinary School of the University of Surrey. She spent three years carrying out a PhD based at the University of Reading looking at the link between equine grass sickness and gut bacteria and urinary metabolites. After this, she spent the last three years developing a lab based model of the bacteria found in the large colon of horses. This utilises fermentation of faecal bacteria within the model with the aim to study gut bacteria without the need for invasive or post-mortem sampling. Her research interests include the effect of diet, disease and drugs effect the gut bacteria of horses and how bacteria influence the metabolites of horses.

**Presentation:** Equine grass sickness has been linked to the bacteria Clostridium botulinum for the last 100 years, although the evidence that supports this is not conclusive. The ideal biopsy usually taken to diagnose grass sickness involves an operation that is invasive and costly. This study aims to characterise the faecal bacteria and metabolites of horses with grass sickness and compare this to those found in healthy horses grazing in the same field. Urine and faeces were collected from a total of 40 horses over two years with the help of Philip Leverhulme Equine Hospital at the University of Liverpool. Horses with equine grass sickness were found to have an imbalance in their faecal bacteria with an increase in Bacteroidetes and a decrease in Firmicutes bacteria compared to healthy horses. We identified four metabolites that were changed in concentration in the urine of horses with grass sickness compared to healthy horses. The combination of the concentration of these urinary metabolites could potentially help identify horses with grass sickness as part of a non-invasive test.

3. Luanne Hunt - Do Mycotoxigenic Fungi Cause Equine Grass Sickness?

**Biography:** Luanne graduated from the R(D)SUS in July 2000 and spent three years in equine practice before undertaking a large animal internal medicine residency in the USA and an equine surgical residency in Ireland. Following on from this, she spent a further 7 years in referral equine practice primarily in Scotland; but also Yorkshire. Areas of interest and research include equine muscular disorders, soft tissue surgery and gastroenterology. Luanne started a PhD in 2016 looking at the potential involvement of mycotoxicogenic fungi and equine grass sickness. She is a Diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM).

**Presentation:** Equine Grass Sickness (EGS) has been recognised for over a hundred years and continues to be a predominantly fatal disease of grazing horses. Similar disease entities and pathology are seen in a number of other species (namely cats, dogs, llamas, rabbits and hares). Despite a number of proposed aetiologies and extensive research, the cause remains unknown. The current hypothesis and research is focused on the potential role of a neurotoxin produced by a pasture derived fungus – ingested directly from the pasture or potentially released from ingested fungi within the gastrointestinal tract.

In The Horse Trust funded project based at University of Edinburgh, we are identifying fungi within the gastrointestinal tract of horses with grass sickness, and cats with the feline form of the disease (FD - feline dysautonomia) and comparing the results with those from control animals. We hope this will identify the fungi which we believe causes EGS. Given the limitations of conventional fungal culture, we have employed a metagenomics approach. DNA was extracted and a barcoded library prepared from a variety of representative samples (gastrointestinal contents and soil/herbage samples from confirmed EGS cases, co-grazers and control horses; gastrointestinal contents and food samples from confirmed FD cases and controls). Sequencing was performed using the Illumina MiSeq platform and reads referenced using UNITE (Unifiram system for the DNA based fungal species) database to identify and compare fungi across the different sample groups. Information gained from this pilot screen was used to identify potential candidate fungi (consistent with the previous epidemiological, clinical, pathological and histological findings of EGS and possibly FD cases). Further targeted screening on gastrointestinal and feed samples is proposed for expression of mycotoxin biosynthetic genes associated with the production of specific mycotoxins. Methods that utilise in vitro neural cell culture techniques and the ability to induce the pathological changes seen in EGS cases following mycotoxin exposure would then give evidence to support the candidate fungal aetiology.

A mock fungal community with a standardised DNA content was developed to act as a standard for any future metagenomics work on samples from EGS cases. This work was done in collaboration with Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. This is primarily based on a fungal endophyte population, commonly found within grasses on grazing pastures. Grass samples were collected from a variety of fields and locations. Fungi were extracted and cultured using a standard technique. Initial identification was based on culture morphology. Fungal DNA was subsequently extracted, sequenced and bioinformatics performed to confirm identification. A total of 18 fungal species were identified.

4. Jo Ireland, Nationwide EGS Vaccine Trial

**Biography:** Jo graduated from the University of Glasgow in 2000. Following a short spell working in a large equine referral hospital in Sweden, Jo worked in equine first opinion practice in the UK for seven years, with additional time spent as a volunteer veterinary surgeon in The Gambia for the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust. In 2010, Jo obtained the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (Equine Medicine – Internal) and completed her PhD in equine geriatric health and welfare at the University of Liverpool in 2013. In October 2010, Jo joined the Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance group at the Animal Health Trust in 2010. Initially, her role at the Animal Health Trust involved analysis of the EGS Surveillance Scheme database, in preparation for the vaccine trial. In 2012, Jo started the EGS vaccine trial programme, with a pilot trial completed in 2013, leading to the launch of the full nationwide trial the following year. In January 2017, Jo returned to the University of Liverpool as a Lecturer in Equine Practice, where her role is split between equine first opinion practice and research.

**Presentation:** Despite decades of research, we do not currently know definitively what causes EGS. Almost all cases of EGS occur in horses with access to grazing, therefore it is probable that the disease is caused by exposure to some form of neurotoxic agent present in the soil and/or grass. It has been hypothesised that EGS may be caused by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum (C. botulinum) type C, which is found commonly within soil and previous studies of EGS have demonstrated a protective effect of natural immunity to C. botulinum type C. It is not possible to assess the efficacy of a candidate vaccine for the prevention of EGS experimentally, as it is not possible to artificially reproduce the disease. Therefore, a field vaccine trial represents the only available method of evaluating the preventive effect of vaccination and testing the hypothesis that C. botulinum type C toxico-infection causes EGS. Utilising protocols based on human clinical trials, a nationwide randomised triple blinded placebo-controlled field trial was launched in March 2014. The aim of this trial is to determine the efficacy of C. botulinum type C vaccination in preventing EGS, by comparing EGS incidence between groups of vaccinated and placebo-treated horses/ponies.

On each premises, enrolled animals were randomly selected, using computer generated random numbers, to receive a primary course of three injections at 21 day intervals, followed by a booster injection at 12 months, of either the C. botulinum type C toxoid vaccine or a placebo at 1:1 ratio. Unfortunately, recruitment of the required number of horses/ponies took considerably longer than anticipated, and the incidence of EGS amongst enrolled animals has been low. Therefore the study period was amended to include extended follow-up into an additional year, with a further annual booster injection administration. Data collection for the trial was completed in early 2018, and final data analyses are on-going.

A total of 120 EGS-affected premises met all trial inclusion criteria, of which 52.5% are located in England and 47.5% are located in Scotland. The majority of trial sites were the owners’ home premises (51.7%), or rented/private yards (20.0%). A total of 1,029 horses/ponies residing on these premises were enrolled, of which 924 commenced the treatment phase of the trial. The average age of enrolled horses/ponies was 8 years, and the most common breeds were Native/Native cross (18%), Welsh/Welsh cross (16%), Irish Draught/Irish Draught cross/Irish Sports Horse (16%), and Cob/ Cob cross (14%). There were 84 participating veterinary practices, undertaking all the trial injections and health checks. Following each injection, owners undertook
daily observations for a seven day period, including thorough visual inspection and palpation of the injection site, together with assessment of appetite and demeanour. There was a low incidence of injection site reactions or other post-injection adverse events, and the incidence was not significantly different between the two treatment groups. Only 8 EGS cases have occurred amongst enrolled horses/ponies, with a further 13 cases occurring during the trial period on participating premises affecting animals not enrolled in the trial.

5. Lisa Henderson: If, where, how and when - Nursing the chronic grass sickness patient.

**Biography:** Lisa graduated from Edinburgh College/Glasgow University December 2006. She worked in a local mixed practice until December 2013 when she moved to the Dick Vet to fulfil her dream of working within the equine veterinary industry. Her current role includes all aspects of general nursing, out of hours/emergency work and she works primarily with the medicine team within the hospital. Medical nursing has always been where her interests lie, right back from day one in small animal nursing and now onto large animal medical cases. She has always worked closely with the grass sickness cases since joining the University but recently took on the role of Grass Sickness Nurse in October 2017. In her spare time Lisa enjoys hill walking, mountain biking, running, bagpiping and looking after her furry family of 3 dogs, 3 horses and a cat.

**Presentation:** Factors affecting if progression to treatment is merited in an Equine Grass Sickness (EGS) case and selection of appropriate candidates for treatment. Pros and cons of nursing at home versus the hospital environment. Patient needs and how to nurse the chronic grass sickness case. Difficult times, welfare and decision making.


**Biography:** Rachel graduated from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, in 2006. She worked in multiple equine practices and hospitals before returning to the Dick Vet Equine Hospital for a further 4 year clinical training scholarship in equine internal medicine. During this time she also completed a Master of Science by Research in ‘Studies to increase the accuracy of diagnosis and prognostication for equine grass sickness.’ She has recently returned to Edinburgh having started a PhD.

**Presentation:** A proportion of chronic grass sickness cases, a milder form of the disease, can survive. However there are no objective criteria to help predict whether cases are likely to survive or require euthanasia on humane grounds. The aim of this study was to determine if the rate and magnitude of bodyweight change of chronic grass sickness horses can predict which horses are likely to survive to discharge from the hospital. Horses admitted for management of chronic grass sickness to The Dick Vet Equine Hospital, University of Edinburgh, between 1998 and 2013, were considered for inclusion in the study. Two hundred and thirteen horses were included in the study with 53.5% survivors and 46.5% non-survivors. On average non-survivors lost a greater proportion of bodyweight than survivors, but this was not always the case for each individual horse. The highest percentage of bodyweight loss for individual horses were comparable for survivors (36%) and non-survivors (37%), and consequently each case should be assessed on an individual case by case basis. Curves predicting the likelihood of survival of chronic grass sickness horses, based on the rate and magnitude of weight loss, were generated to provide data to help predict whether individual horses are likely to survive.

7. Scott Pirie: Managing the risk of EGS

**Biography:** Scott graduated from the “Dick Vet” in 1989 and returned following a 2 year period in equine practice in Ireland. Following a spell in the University first opinion clinic, he joined the Equine Medicine department of the Equine Hospital where he has remained since. His clinical activities include all aspects of equine internal medicine including over 25 years experience in the investigation and treatment of equine grass sickness. Throughout his career at the “Dick Vet”, Scott has consistently remained research active and has published widely in the veterinary scientific literature. His current research activities are focussed on equine grass sickness, post-operative ileus and innate immunity in the equine lung. He is a diplomat of the European College of Equine Internal Medicine (ECEIM) and recognised Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and European specialist in this field. In recognition of his contribution to the field of grass sickness, Scott was awarded Fellowship of the Royal Agricultural Society in 2012. His current position is Chair of Equine Clinical Sciences at the “Dick Vet”.

**Presentation:** EGS continues to be a highly emotive disease, a fact not only attributable to high disease related mortality rates, but also the associated disease susceptibility risks in all horses sharing a premises with a confirmed clinical case. Throughout the past few decades, a number of epidemiological studies have revealed a variety of disease-related risk factors at the level of the horse, the premises and the management practises employed by owners/managers. As well as being diagnostically beneficial and helping to support or refute various aetiological hypotheses, such risk-associated data has also been used to inform the design of various risk reduction strategies. Unfortunately, with the recent exception of the recent Clostridium botulinum vaccine trial, there have been no conducted studies which have prospectively and objectively assessed the potential value of single or multiple interventions designed to minimise risk. Consequently, when incorporating individual risk factors into a prospective risk avoidance strategy it is important to consider both the potential magnitude of risk reduction likely attributable to certain implemented changes and the biological rationale for such, an exercise partly based on currently proposed aetiological theories. This presentation will cover the main published risk factors for EGS, considering the biological rationale for, and magnitude of risk associated with, each factor and discuss their incorporation into risk reduction strategies.

8. Discussion Panel ‘Where are we now, and where next?

**Chair John Keen, Royal (Dick) Vet**

**Biography:** John is a senior medicine clinician in the R(D)SVS equine hospital and Director of the Equine Hospital and Practice who, for many years now, has had a strong interest in improving the care of equine grass sickness cases; he follows closely the research of his colleagues at the Dick and others in this field.

Following graduation from the RVC in 1996, John spent 4 years in mixed and then equine practice before being appointed the RVCS Clarke and Sparrow Resident in Equine Studies at the ‘Dick Vet’ in 2000, where he has remained ever since. He gained an MSc, and PhD investigating the pharmacology and physiology of digital laminae microcirculation; became a Diplomate of ECEIM in 2007, and is an RVCS and European specialist in equine internal medicine. Clinical and research interests are varied but focus especially on cardiovascular disease, metabolic/endocrine disease, laminitis and the potential links between these disorders.

**Speakers as above plus:**

**Professor Bruce McGregor, Royal (Dick) Vet**

**Biography:** Bruce is Professor of Equine Internal Medicine and Head of the Equine Section at The Dick Vet Hospital where he has worked for longer than he cares to admit. He has had a long interest in the investigation and treatment of grass sickness. He is frequently awake in the small hours of the night thinking about this dreadful disease.

Bruce graduated from the University of Edinburgh as BSc (Veterinary Pathology) in 1983 and BVM&S with Distinction in 1985. After working for three years in mixed veterinary practice in Buckinghamshire, he returned to Edinburgh as the Horsecare Bettling Levy Board Resident in Equine Respiratory Diseases, under the guidance of Professor Padrac Dixon. He was awarded a PhD in equine chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in 1992, and has continued in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences ever since. He was awarded the Animal Health Trust Veterinary Achievement Award in 2004.

**Richard Newton, Animal Health Trust**

**Biography:** After graduating in Veterinary Science from Liverpool University in 1991 and working in mixed veterinary practice in Herefordshire and South Shropshire, Richard Newton joined the Epidemiology Unit of the Animal Health Trust in 1994. Since completing a Masters in Communicable Disease Epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in November 1998 he has worked on the epidemiology of a variety of diseases of companion animals, including grass sickness, EIPH and strangles in horses and influenza, including cross-species transmission from horses to dogs. He completed his PhD on the epidemiology of equine infectious respiratory disease in 2002 and in 2003 was awarded the Diploma of Fellowship from the Royal College Veterinary Surgeons. He is currently an Executive Committee member and Director of Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance at the Animal Health Trust. The group at the AHT currently has programmes on infectious disease surveillance in the UK for which it prepares quarterly disease reports for Defra and regular updates on global equine disease occurrence through the International Collating Centre. He also oversees dedicated programmes on grass sickness surveillance and vaccination and epidemiological research of equine laminitis.

**Roly Owers, World Horse Welfare**

**Biography:** Roly is a qualified veterinary surgeon and has been Chief Executive of the charity World Horse Welfare since 2008. He graduated from Cambridge University in 1992 and acquired his Master’s degree in Nutrition from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 1997. His previous veterinary roles included the Blue Cross and Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

Roly is currently Treasurer of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEV), Chairman of the UK Equine Disease Coalition, a member of the Steering Group of the British Horse Council, and a Board member of the European Horse Network.
A Special Day Out at Balmoral
In aid of Equine Grass Sickness Fund

You don't need to ride a horse to enjoy the Balmoral sponsored ride this year. Help BHS Scotland celebrate 100 years of equine charitable work and enjoy privileged access to the beauties of The Balmoral Estate.

100 Years of Helping Horses
Sunday 27th May, 10.30am - 4 pm

Enjoy inclusive free access to the Grounds, Gardens, Ballroom and Exhibitions at Balmoral.

Afternoon Tea on the lawn at Balmoral
The Working Ponies of Balmoral - a demonstration by Her Majesty the Queen's stud manager

Talks:
"Grass sickness; shedding light on a dark disease" by Professor in Equine Medicine Bruce McGorum
"The link between equine diet and health" by Katie Williams, Dengie

Admission: £20
Booking essential www.clubentries.com/bhsscotland
Entry only by pre-booked car pass

ALL WELCOME
Fundraising Roundup

To see your event featured here please email info@grasssickness.co.uk with details and a photo!

Kim’s Madagascar Trek

11 years ago Kim Somerville’s daughter’s pony contracted grass sickness and through the amazing care at the Dick Vet, Rosie, a Welsh Section B, survived. Kim and family are eternally grateful for her recovery. To raise funds for grass sickness research Kim is setting off on a trek on the 24th October to Madagascar. It is a 5 day trek….once she gets there! Kim is a talented artist and as part of her fundraising effort she is selling greetings cards. These will be available from Kim or from the EGSF online shop shortly.

Emily Jones and Holly Clayton-Wright go Skydiving!

Back in spring 2017 Mac became poorly, he was misdiagnosed with a viral infection and despite taking medication he sadly died after two weeks without us knowing what was truly wrong with him. Two days after Mac’s death Herbie fell ill and was immediately diagnosed with Equine Grass Sickness. He battled this awful disease for four days, but he tragically died six days after Mac. We have decided to do this skydive (even though we are both terrified of flying!) to raise awareness of this awful disease as not enough is known about it. Without funds no research can be done and no cure will be found. The skydive takes places on May 3rd – good luck girls!

Michele’s Snowdon climb

When I was twelve I lost my pony, Little Bracken, to the acute form of Equine Grass Sickness. He was a much loved pony with whom I had had much fun & success at local shows & events. Two days before he died we had both been enjoying a cross-country schooling session. The following morning we awoke to find him suffering from colic & despite very prompt & assiduous veterinary attention nothing could be done to relieve his suffering & we had to make the difficult decision to end his misery.

Recently I was keen to challenge myself with the walk after a long battle with my health & decided to raise some funds for a couple of my favourite charities at the same time. I have been delighted by the response! Thank you to all at EGSF for the hard work which you are doing in trying to understand & find a treatment for this awful disease.

Balmoral ride by the Grampian Branch of the Scottish Endurance Riding Club

The Grampian Branch of the Scottish Endurance Riding Club closed their 2017 ride season with a lovely ride with wonderful autumn colours around the beautiful Balmoral Estate, by courtesy of H.M. The Queen. Everyone had a super day, and riders and helpers raised £126 towards EGSF.
### Donations

We gratefully acknowledge your generous support and donations, in particular those who sent small individual donations who are too numerous to mention here.

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<td>Mrs Helga Buck</td>
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<td>SERC Grampian and Balmoral</td>
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<td>Shaun McCarthy</td>
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<td>Stephanie Mutimer</td>
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<td>The Moredun Foundation</td>
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<td>Toni Robertson</td>
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<td>World Horse Welfare</td>
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<td>Yvonne Maclean</td>
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EGSF receives tremendous help and support, without which we could not continue to make progress with research. Our work is entirely funded by public donation, mostly from those whose horses and ponies have suffered the disease, and we cannot thank you enough for your support.

### Volunteers

**SOMETIMES YOUR HELP IS ALL WE NEED!**

If you would like to help at an EGSF event please contact Kate Thomson at the EGSF office:

- **Strathearn Eventing Hunter Trials (Jump Judges)**  **Sunday 27th May**
- **Balmoral Castle Ride (2 checkpoint volunteers)** **Sunday 27th May**
- **Royal Highland Show (Tradestand Assistants)**  **21-24 June**
- **Blair Castle Horse Trials (Tradestand Assistants)**  **23-26 August**
- **Perth Races (Bucket Collection)**  **27th September**

No experience necessary, just a smiley face!

### Shetland Pony Stud Books 1967 – 2011

We have been extremely fortunate to have been donated a valuable collection of Shetland Pony Stud Books from 1967 to 2011. This collection of 44 books has been cherished and is in very good condition. We would like to keep the books together by offering them as an entire collection. If a buyer for the collection is not found we will be selling them as decades or individually. If you are interested in this collection please contact Kate Thomson on 0131 445 6257 or info@grasssickness.org.uk

To receive Equine News by email please contact the office. Please pass your newsletter to a friend.

**For further information please contact**

The Administrator, Equine Grass Sickness Fund

The Moredun Foundation, Pentlands Science Park, Bush Loan, Penicuik EH26 0PZ

Tel: 0131 445 6257 email: info@grasssickness.org.uk

www.grasssickness.org.uk

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