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Team spotlight

Find out more about Georgia Fuke with our fun, quick fire question.



on Facebook:

[facebook.com/halevet-groupequine](https://www.facebook.com/halevet-groupequine)



Check out our website:

haleequinevets.co.uk



Season's greetings

from all of us at
Hale Veterinary Group - Equine

As another year draws to a close we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, during these challenging times.

May the spirit of the festive season fill your home with love and laughter.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Christmas & New Year opening hours

Saturday 24th December
8.30am - 5pm

Thursday 30th December
8:30am - 6:00pm

Saturday 25th December
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Friday 31st December
8:30am - 5:00pm

Sunday 26th December
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Saturday 1st January
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Monday 27th December
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Sunday 2nd January
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Tuesday 28th December
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Monday 3rd January
CLOSED (out of hours cover)

Wednesday 29th December
8:30am - 6:00pm

Tuesday 4th January
8:30am - 6:00pm

Our news and updates

Welcome to the team Georgia

We are delighted to welcome **Georgia Fuke** to the equine team as our new full time veterinary technician. Georgia has a wealth of experience working with horses and in the veterinary industry, she is incredibly organised, very friendly and is already a huge asset to our equine team.



Sadly, the necessity for a full time vet tech meant we had to say goodbye to Naomi, who previously filled this role on a part time basis and was 'shared' between us and Avon Farm Vets. We're happy to report that Naomi hasn't gone far though, as she is now full vet tech time for AVF!

Turn to the last page to find out more about Georgia in our team spotlight section.

The pitter-patter of tiny feet

Our vet **Katie** has now started her maternity leave and would like to welcome baby Jamie Micheal Blakiston to the world! We send our heartfelt congratulations to Katie and family. We'll miss Katie over the next few months but we're very much looking forward to cuddles with Jamie when they call in to visit, and to Katie re-joining the team next year.



Out-of-hours update

In order to continue to provide second to none service for our patients and clients whilst some of our team members have very young families, we have enlisted the help of additional emergency out of hours vets. This may mean that you see a new face occasionally and will ensure that the rest of us remain bright eyed and bushy tailed and fully equipped to provide the high standard of service we are proud to provide.

New dental equipment

We are currently investing in new dental equipment which will enable Anna and our team to take on more specialised dental procedures.

Gastroscopy

After considerable delay due to COVID we are very happy to announce that our gastroscopy service has been up and running for a few months; please don't hesitate to speak to one of our vets if you are concerned your horse or pony is exhibiting symptoms of gastric ulcers.

The team

The rest of the team remains the same with vets **Anna, Charlie, Emma, Nikki** and **Peter** still on the road, caring for your equines big and small. Anna is available Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Charlie is Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Emma is Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Nikki is Wednesdays, Thursdays and Friday mornings, and Peter is Mondays and Tuesday/Wednesday mornings.

Karen, Sharon or Georgia are your first point of contact on the telephone.

Our new website

Have you checked out our new website. You can visit it here:

haleequinevets.co.uk

Caring for your horse at Christmas



Christmas can be a very busy time of year and so it is wise to plan ahead. With this in mind, we have put together some tips and advice on caring for your horse at Christmas.

Maintain a normal routine over the festive period

Horses need to be in a routine as sudden changes can increase the risk of colic. During this time of year, there may be times when a horse's exercise and diet are often changed. Any management changes should be introduced slowly to ensure your horse stays healthy and happy.

Enjoy the festive period with your horse

- Get some fresh air and exercise whilst enjoying some lovely hacks with your horse
- Learn a new skill with your horse, such as clicker training
- De-stress yourself and your horse by spending some quality time grooming. Grooming your horse can be relaxing and therapeutic for the both of you
- Head to the beach with your horse and blow away those winter blues



Are you giving your horse a Christmas holiday?

Here are some tips to keep your horse happy and healthy whilst they are having some time off:

- Keeping your horse out to grass 24/7 can help with their physical and mental health and has been found to reduce the risk of behavioural problems which are often associated with stabled horses
- Water troughs/drinkers can freeze over and prevent horses from drinking enough, which can lead to complications such as impaction colics. Drinkable water must be available at all times, and 'soup' mashes can help to increase your horse's water intake
- Continue to poo pick regularly to help reduce worm burden on the pasture
- Having routine farrier care is essential to maintain healthy feet and ensure you continue to regularly pick your horse's feet out
- Feed according to the amount of exercise your horse is doing



Do you have enough of your horse's repeat medication to last the festive period?

As the Christmas holidays are upon us, we would like to give our clients plenty of notice regarding ordering repeat medication for their horses. Please don't forget to order enough medication to last your horse through the festive season, as soon as possible.

We cannot guarantee the post so we advise you to collect your medication from the practice, to make sure you don't run out over the holidays.

Please allow us 48 hours for authorisation by a veterinary surgeon and to process and post your prescription request.



Are you going away for the festive period?

Prior to going away, please call us to discuss who has authority to act on your behalf, whilst you are away. This can save valuable time that could save your horse's life.

Ensure you have someone you can trust (whilst you are away) to make decisions about your horse and discuss with them your emergency plan options and insurance information etc. You can then go away knowing your horse is covered.



Treating your horse over the festive period

We all love to spoil ourselves over the festive period but we urge you not to indulge your horse.

Whilst horses enjoy a good old fashioned apple or carrot as a special treat, make sure you give them in moderation.

In large quantities, even a healthy snack can become unhealthy, adding extra calories that most horses do not need.



Sky lanterns - warning

Please spare a thought for horses and other animals whilst celebrating the festive period. Sky lanterns are becoming increasingly popular at times of celebrations. Whilst they look beautiful floating in the sky, please consider the after effects. When they land they can cause animals horrific injuries and even death.

Our advice to horse owners is to be extra vigilant and regularly check your horse's paddock and hedges, plus try to discourage people from using the lanterns.



Christmas hazards

Did you know holly leaves and berries and mistletoe are toxic to horses? Whilst horses tend to not be interested in these plants/berries, they may accidentally ingest them. Therefore, it is best to avoid horses from grazing anywhere near them.

If you are decorating your stables with festive lights and tinsel etc, ensure they are kept out of reach from horses. Not only will some horses try and eat them, the lights could be a fire hazard if not inspected properly.





An introduction to ultrasonography

What is ultrasonography?

Ultrasonography is a valuable and widely used diagnostic tool in horses, which diagnose and evaluate a number of conditions.

An ultrasound captures live images from inside the horse's body and unlike some other imaging techniques, it does not use radiation.

How does it work?

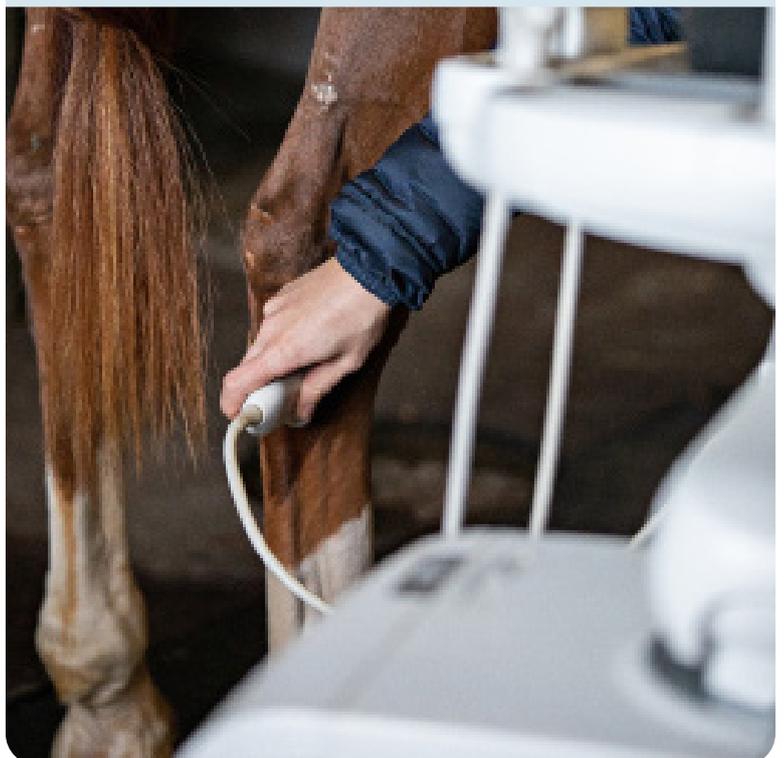
Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves that pass through the body before reflecting and bouncing back to the handpiece. This echo is transformed into a picture by the computer.

Different tissues reflect the ultrasound in different ways and this allows us to visualise structures in great detail.

Additionally, colour doppler ultrasound uses the way ultrasound reflects differently in moving blood to show how it is flowing.

Advantages of ultrasonography

- Non invasive process
- Painless
- Ultrasound images are real-time, so you are able to see direct visualisation
- Ultrasonography does not use radiation
- Doppler ultrasound can measure the speed of blood flow
- Ultrasound captures images of soft tissue that don't show up on an x-ray
- The equipment is mobile
- Ultrasounds are usually quick, with most sessions lasting around 20-30 minutes



What can be seen?

Musculoskeletal system

Ultrasonography is used extensively in lameness investigations for the scanning of tendon and ligament injuries as well as assessing wounds, joint surfaces, fractures and soft tissue swellings. Ultrasonography may also be useful for the detection of back and pelvic injuries.

Heart and vascular system

Ultrasonography of the heart is important to assess the chambers and valves of the heart and is invaluable in the assessment of the significance of many types of heart murmur. Colour flow Doppler is used to assess dynamic blood flow through different parts of the heart. Ultrasonography may also be useful for assessing thrombi and peripheral blood vessels.

Abdomen

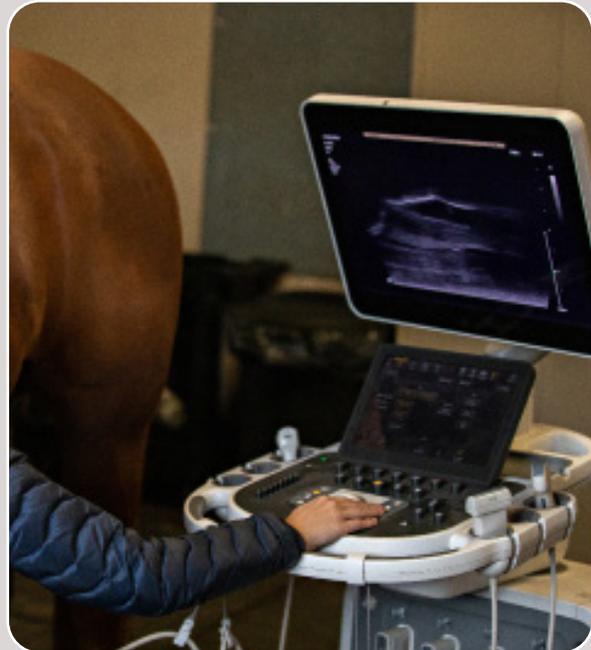
Ultrasonographic examination of the intestines and other abdominal structures (eg. liver, kidney and spleen) is an important diagnostic tool in the investigation of horses with colic, weight loss or diarrhoea. Ultrasound guidance is frequently used to allow safe and precise biopsy of internal structures such as the liver, lungs and kidneys.

Reproductive Tract

Ultrasonographic assessment of the ovaries and uterus is important in the management of brood mares to assess the reproductive tract, stage of oestrous cycle and pregnancy diagnosis. Regular ultrasound scans of the ovaries are performed (every few hours) of mares undergoing artificial insemination (AI) to ensure that insemination is performed at the optimal time. Early pregnancy diagnosis is important to ensure that a mare is not carrying twins

Thorax

Ultrasonographic assessment of the thoracic cavity, including the lungs, is important in the assessment of horses with pneumonia, lung masses or pleurisy.



Our veterinary surgeons have access to a range of mobile digital ultrasonography equipment, which means that some scans can be done at the horse's own premises.



The coughing horse

Many horses spend long periods of time stabled during the winter months, which may predispose them to respiratory diseases.

Respiratory diseases can cause a breathing problem known Equine Asthma, formerly known as Recurrent Airway Obstruction (RAO), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or heaves.

Affected horses will cough, especially when exercising and have discharge from their nose. Severely affected horses will wheeze, just like an asthmatic.

Leaving your horse out 24/7 is vital in controlling the problem of winter coughing. There is nothing better than breathing fresh air!

However, if your horse has to be stabled, changing to dust-free shavings or paper is key to the successful management of Equine Asthma. Maintaining a clean bed with the urine being taken out every day will also help as ammonia and mould can be an irritant to the lungs. Also, ensure the stable has good ventilation.

Mildly affected horses improve when their hay is soaked for around 15 minutes. However, more severe cases require haylage as they are unable to tolerate any hay at all.

If you are in any doubt as to the quality of your forage and bedding then it is wise to analyse it. This is relatively cheap and can look at both the nutritional and the dust contents of your hay and straw.

Medication is also available to speed up recovery and open up the lower airways which constrict during Equine Asthma. In severe cases, steroids are needed to reduce the inflammation.

However it must be stressed that although drugs will help, they are not substitutes for the important management changes outlined above.

More detailed investigation may involve endoscopic examination to visualise the upper and lower respiratory tract and collect samples (such as a tracheal wash from the windpipe or a broncho-alveolar lavage or deep lung wash from the gas exchange areas of the lung) for laboratory analysis.

More rarely horses may require ultrasound scans and x-rays of the chest followed by collection of fluid samples from the lung and chest cavities or biopsies.

A horse with a persistent cough, either while being ridden, or stood in their stable, could indicate a respiratory infection or inflammation. The sooner this is discovered the better the outcome will be.

If you are at all worried about your horse and would like some further information please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Fireworks & Horses!

Have you had a problem with fireworks?

We are at that time of year when there are lots of events to celebrate with fireworks. Fireworks can be stressful and frightening to even the most sensible of horses.

The British Horse Society are urging all equestrians to report all incidents involving fireworks, regardless of severity.

You can report the incident here: bhs.org.uk/our-work/safety/report-an-incident/report-an-incident

Reporting your incidents helps the BHS to better understand the rate of equine-related incidents across the UK.

It is vital each and every incident is recorded in order to be added to the national statistics.



For more information on the laws related to fireworks, please visit the Defra website: bit.ly/3It2Nl8

Team spotlight with Georgia Fuke

What do you like most about working for Hale Equine?

It is the variability of the job role that excites and interests me greatly. The team I work with also really make it, as they have been incredibly welcoming and are good fun.

What does your job entail?

All sorts! I could be out on the road with the van loaded up with various pieces of equipment assisting vets with x-rays, scopes, scans, dentals or I may be found cleaning the practice and pulling weeds. I might be running bloods or doing worm egg counts; creating documents or organizing the pharmacy; covering reception, or packaging kits and autoclaving them! The list goes on but I love to kept busy.

If you could meet anyone dead or alive, who would it be?

Freddie Mercury or William Mortan for I have a real interest in anaesthetics.

Do you own any animals?

There has never been a time where I haven't. Currently I have Monty the Welsh Cob, Squeak the miniature Shetland. Buddy the tortoise, Olive the African pygmy hedgehog and Moose my Great Dane X Springer who sometimes joins me on my rounds.

Who or what inspired you to pursue the career you have today?

I have always had a love and passion for animals and was drawn to horses from a very early age despite no one else in my family being "horsey". The real turning point was when my Spaniel, Bob, became paralyzed. Throughout his struggles and rehabilitation (primary done by myself), I really thought that helping animals was truly my calling. Bob has since crossed the rainbow bridge but our tough journey really shaped my career path and made me who I am today.

Name something on your bucket list?

Go swimming at pig beach in the Bahamas!

