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Robin P. May AWCF

The March 2024 issue of *Forge Knowledge* contains the article:

#### • Quantification and definition of a new hoof balance paradigm

*By Uno Yxklinten PhD and Yogi Sharp DipWCF, BSc (Hons), PGDip*



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Contributions in the form of articles, reports, letters and photographs are welcomed.

# President's address

This year seems to be galloping by already! How did it go that quickly! The weather seems to be holding everyone back and fields are really wet here in Oxfordshire. This damp and wet weather we all have had seems to have not just put the dampener on clients but horses also. Everyone is definitely ready for some spring sunshine - we have had a few sunny days, and the difference it makes is astonishing! It definitely makes the hard work easier, and horses seem to be happier with some sun on their backs too.

It has been a hard winter for all of us and speaking for myself, with the way that the economy around us and the media seem to focus on the doom and gloom I have taken huge relief in spending time working with other farriers and paraprofessionals, and engaging in CPD. This has helped me by not just up-skilling me but also given time to share and support each other. We all deal with problems and issues daily, but sometimes having that person that understands the problem (clients or horses!), and who can be the wall to bounce ideas off can be such a relief.

I also find that working with others can bring a big dose of goodwill, and from a mental health perspective can be a great head leveller. Humans, like horses, are a herd animal and sometimes too much time on our own and lost in our own thoughts can have a negative impact on us. Mobile phones and social media get close to making us feel more connected, but actually spending time in each other's company can be the golden ticket to being happier and feeling less down or frustrated.

This winter I have had some great days with other farriers and allied professionals. I always love working with other farriers, as this means I don't have to plan or run a work day and can just do what I'm told and also have the time to chat and see other's point of views and work. There are many ways to skin a cat, let alone shoe a horse! I learn so much from being out with other farriers (even if it's how not to something!!) I also had a few younger farriers come to spend a couple of days with us and see a different side of shoeing. It's amazing the topics that get discussed, from business and charging to how we protect our personal lives from the demands of the job. The apprenticeship is a great training program in the UK, but it doesn't help to get us ready to start our business and be ready for everything that life has to throw at us! It was awesome to see the guys that came out go home enthused, and give them some advice and business pointers that took me years to realise.

I also spent a fascinating day with Team GB squad Master Saddle Fitter Mark Fisher looking at equine biomechanics and the effect of saddle fit on them. I came away with a real different perspective on how horses and their gait can be affected (positively or negatively) by the rider's position and the saddle fit. Fast forward to being on a yard a few weeks later, and one of my owners asked me to look at a horse of theirs we had shod which seemed lame or "un-level" on the left fore when being ridden. This is always the worst thing to hear, as we all know that the obvious answer is going to be "it must be the shoes!" As we walked round the corner and watched the new yard rider schooling the horse, it did

as stated look lame on the circle but was much more sound on a straight line. As I had spent some time with Mark, I tried to not just focus on the feet but the rider too, and the overall picture of the horse and rider. As the horse then turned and came in a straight line towards me, it was evident that the rider's foot and stirrup was about 4 inches lower on one leg than the other! Looking at the rider, they were also sat skewed across the horse with all their bodyweight on the left shoulder. The saddle had slipped, the stirrup leather was longer and the rider was crooked... no wonder the young horse was asymmetrical when it was trying to work in an outline!



This was a situation that would have undoubtedly been a possible conflict point as it was not long shod, and the obvious uneducated answer would be that it was a result of the shoeing. In actual fact, the new rider had been using their saddle (as they preferred it), not the owner's that had been fitted to the horse. As a result, not only had the saddle slipped badly but the horse was then compensating for the rider hanging off one side! Making sure that the correctly fitted saddle was being used, and the rider being more aware of their body position transformed the horse back to being "sound" again!

I am just a farrier but having that time with Mark gave me a valuable new tool in my toolbox. Being aware and having the skill to look at horses and their performance issues from another perspective helped me to not just solve a young horse's lameness issue (that wasn't actually a lameness) but importantly, highlighted to my owner why they used me AND cemented the respect we have for each other.

For me, the take home from this story is that CPD doesn't have to be boring, but it can seriously save you from being the fall guy (or girl) and at the same time can actually be a big mental health boost. In the depth of a long, wet, dull, and hard work winter it makes such a difference.

We have already had a few positive things this year in the BFBA, including a new team of volunteers joining up in the Forge Magazine Committee. We have the newly appointed Liam O'Hara AWCF stepping up to take over the chairmanship from Mark Aikens DipWCF. Mark has done a wonderful job of steering and supporting the Forge magazine and the EC and myself would like to thank him for all his hard work. The new editor Sarah Shephard has already got some great ideas, so watch this space - there's a new look planned for the magazine with interesting and up-to-date articles being planned!

Don't forget we have the AGM at Stoneleigh on 18th May, so please do register if you would like to come along and either represent your branch or just have your say. It is always a great opportunity to see how much work has gone on behind the scenes and also be able to give us your input as to how we can help you - our members.

**Ben Benson, AWCF, Master Farrier, ATF  
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# Across the Pond: the Hoof Care Summit in Cincinnati, US

Words by Daniel Harman, AWCF, Grad Dip ELR, Master Farrier.

I've always wanted to visit the Hoof Care Summit in Cincinnati USA, and since organising the clinicians at Focus for the past 2 years, I thought it would be a good idea to see how others do it (and an opportunity to gain some more CPD points!)

So, last March I bit the bullet and took advantage of the American Farriers Journal's early bird saving and booked my place. An added bonus was that British Airways now fly direct to Cincinnati, so this made logistics a lot easier.

However, my trip didn't start off too well. My wife dropped me off at Heathrow's Terminal 5 and started driving off... with my suitcase still in the boot of the car! Luckily I managed to stop her, retrieved my bag, and headed to check-in and security. It wasn't until I was inside security and loading my electricals, shoes, and belt etc. into the tray when I realised that I had also left my phone in the car, which was now heading round the M25 and on its way back to Buckinghamshire!

After a bit of panic, a friendly security guard's help and an understanding wife, I was reunited with my phone and made my way to the bar to meet fellow farriers, Mark Aitkens and Chris Carrel for a well-earned beer.

9 hours later and we were in Cincinnati. We were met by American vet/farrier Katy who drove us to the hotel, and after a couple more beers and some food we headed for bed as the Summit was starting early the following day.

The Summit was held at a huge convention centre conveniently located next to our hotel. They only use part of the conference centre, consisting of two massive halls (one for the lecture theatre and one for the trade show.) There are also several smaller lecture rooms.

The first day at the Hoof Care Summit is always a quieter day, and so after registration we went to one of the smaller lecture rooms for a demonstration by Glue-u. In this practical demonstration we were shown the application of the Glue-shu bonded rubber horseshoe. I have applied these before, but I didn't realise that there was a pre-fix glue method. This method would make it easier for horses that aren't comfortable holding their foot up for any length of time, as the main glueing element can be done when the horse is weight bearing.



The Glue-U Trade Stand



Dr. Kit Miller's presentation

After lunch there was an interesting Q&A session with a panel of racetrack farriers sharing their experience of working in the racing industry. As I don't shoe any racehorses, this opened my eyes to what a racetrack farrier has to deal with in their everyday work.

Paige Poss was the final lecture of the day. I was lucky enough to watch Paige dissect some feet when she was last in the UK, and she is an expert in her field. Her lecture not only displayed her in-depth anatomical knowledge and skill with a blade, but also her amazing close-up photography.

In the evening, the education continued in the lecture rooms back at our hotel. Here, several 'round table' discussions took place and you could choose what subject you had an interest in.

The jet lag started to kick in at this point, so we headed to the bar to perk ourselves up.

We met up with some more fellow Brit farriers that had also made the effort to travel over the pond. We quickly realised that the bar was full of farriers, and soon we had all made some new friends and met some old ones!



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Following a huge American breakfast, we were back for day 2. The lectures start at 8am and I was amazed to see that the 600+ seat lecture theatre was pretty much full for Dr Kit Miller's presentation on using various technologies to improve hoof care. It was interesting to see the different types of gait analysis systems available to show mild lameness, as I'd used similar systems during my Graduate diploma.

The lecture theatre remained at full capacity for the familiar face of Dr Simon Curtis who discussed mediolateral deformities, not only in foals but also in mature horses.

Unlike Focus, the trade show at the Hoof Care Summit is only open at certain points in the week. This was a great idea to ensure that you never miss a lecture when you're shopping. There were a lot of the usual big companies in the trade hall, but also some smaller independent ones.

Derek Poupard's 3D Hoof Care booth stood out with his multi-coloured 3D printed limbs and pad inserts. The new orthotic inserts were being printed on the stand and looked to be a great addition to his already popular pad. They simply clip into the original pad and allow for either more graduation, spiral lift, or a frog recess. Derek was also showcasing his new teaching aid by using virtual reality goggles. I had a go, and it showed a close up tutorial of a 3D pad being fitted.

Unfortunately, I missed the afternoon lecture due to an extended lunch in a sports bar/ brewery, and Liverpool drawing to Fulham!

Thursday's lectures started with Patrick Reilly, who shared his research on the kinesiotherapeutic horseshoes and their effect. His conclusion was that their effect is limited - this was of particular interest to me as I put a lot of these types of shoes on in my practice.

Stuart Muir then spoke on laminitis and how it manifests in three major forms. Within his lecture he used a case study of a mare he worked on for over a five year period, and documented the different stages.

After lunch and more shopping in the trade show we then saw the latest inductions to the International Farrier and Veterinary Hall of Fame. The new inductees were Derek Poupard, Patrick Reilly, Billy Lewis, Henry Asmus and Ron Genovese (veterinary). Congratulations to them all!



Paige Poss's second lecture was fascinating as it concentrated on the path of the palmer digital nerve within the hoof capsule and how its position may affect the horse's soundness. Again, this was shown really well in her photography.

The final day of the summit and penultimate day of my trip started with a lecture from Cornell University farrier Steve Kraus titled, "The Foot of the Day - the Good, the Bad and the Ugly". Steve showed lots of pictures of horses he'd worked on and treated. Many of these pictures looked horrendous, and I'm glad to say I don't see many of these in my practice.

Steve also showed us his method to make a hospital plate using a spider bar insert. This looked much easier than my method, and I look forward to trying it out.

Patrick Reilly's Presentation



3D Hoof Care Virtual Reality Goggles







*Nigel Fennel's sculpture of 'Magico', made from rasps and shoes*

The final lecture I went to was not directly farriery related, but a subject that is very important to farriers and is often overlooked.

Tiffany Gardener, a Farrier and instructor at the Pacific coast horseshoeing school spoke about 'Avoiding Isolation'. This subject is particularly important for farriers who work alone and showed us how to self-reflect and push ourselves out of our comfort zone to avoid isolation.

Tiffany also spoke and shared pictures of her recent trip the UK on the Edward Martin Cultural Exchange programme, sponsored by both the British Farriers and Blacksmith Association and the American Farriers Association.

On the Friday afternoon, 7 of us decided to go to a local shooting range. On our way, we stopped at a huge outdoor store to whet our appetite. I have never seen such a big display of pistols, shotguns, semi-automatics, knives, and bows and arrows all available to purchase!

Now on to the real thing.. after our safety briefing, we chose the guns we wanted to use, starting off with a 9mm pistol and quickly moving onto a semi-automatic rifle. Considering a few of us hadn't really shot a gun before, we all did pretty well (even up against one of the group who had served in the Household Cavalry.)

Obviously, Kentucky is famous for bourbon whisky, so on our final day we visited a Bourbon distillery where we learnt the process of making Bourbon - with some sampling, of course!

Then we were off to the airport to take the overnight flight back to Heathrow.

I would highly recommend for anyone to go to the Hoof Care Summit. It was such a well-organised event with some great lectures. The social side was very good too, and I got to meet some great people!

After many years in Cincinnati, the Summit is moving to Kansas next year and I hope to visit the new venue.

## International Hoof Care Summit 2025

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[www.americanfarriers.com/ihcs](http://www.americanfarriers.com/ihcs)

*Some of the UK farriers*



*A group of us at the shooting range*



# A helping hand in India from the Flying Anvil Foundation

Words by Bernard Duvernay, Founder of the Flying Anvil Foundation

In India, the Flying Anvil Foundation is working on a new challenge.

Can we change the working habits of blacksmiths when these are not based on knowledge resulting from an apprenticeship with masters?

It is not easy to help or even train farriers to improve their working techniques if they have no alternative but to use shoes that are not suited to the needs of the horse.

You should know that most street or rural farriers shoe horses cold - their only act of fitting is to open or close the shoe. To shoe cold, as we see it, you need to have good cold malleable shoes, to have a good stall-jack or a light anvil, and to have good trimming tools to make the hoof balanced and flat. To bring together all these conditions in modest environments in India, the challenge is significant.

In December 2023, in collaboration with Brooke India, we created a course for blacksmiths taught at our school in Dundlod, Rajasthan. Our first class included 5 craftsmen aged 30 to 65, who had a good number of years of experience, but had never really had a chance to think about the real needs of the horse.

The shoes that we find in the villages are made by blacksmiths who adopt the habits of their predecessors. They are totally unaware that their profession has remained stuck with a very poor knowledge base, and which has probably even regressed in recent years due to their isolation.

It is time to think about them and see if we can educate them, give them better knowledge in anatomy, physiology, pathology, trimming and shoeing. As we know, good basic knowledge is necessary to understand how to achieve good hoof protection. We discovered that some of the participants had never been to school during their childhood, and none of them were aware of the existence of our farriery school in Dundlod.



*First day at school: fascinated by our course material*

At our school we already work with street and rural farriers integrating them into our classes. Our course gives them a fairly comprehensive basic coverage of anatomy, the pathologies, of trimming and shoeing. However, we were not really prepared to train blacksmiths and we had imagined different scenarios.

First of all, to put them at ease, we started with a discussion in the class room to introduce the teachers. Franck Barboni, highly qualified French farrier, had been invited to lead the practical part of the course. Sandeep Shelar, the school manager, and I took care of the theoretical part and assisted Franck during the work in the forge.

Then the participants introduced themselves and we were able to locate their villages on the map and hear about their professional career.

*FAF outreach teaching materials*





*Listening to Franck at the blackboard*

For them it was the big leap into the unknown. They had been selected, and were financially supported by Brook India. Everyone had left their village for the first time, and none of them had met each other before.

Following this first discussion which had already relaxed the atmosphere, we then went to the workshop and asked them to forge a shoe from a round concrete steel bar  $\varnothing$  12mm, as they would at home. The result was, without much surprise, exactly what we find on the feet of street and rural horses: these shoes constituted our starting point on which our course would develop.

To begin with, we had to approach the situation tactfully. The next morning in the classroom we commented the creation of their shoes and the quality of their skills in blacksmithing. To address the errors, we had to start with notions of anatomy, explaining the sensitive and insensitive parts of the foot, and very quickly, we sensed a fantastic interest in what we showed them with simple but precise explanations - and that they had never seen from this angle before. We had just brought them knowledge of hooves in a way they had never imagined. The questions abounded and we could see from the attention they paid to these topics that they appealed to them!

From there on, it was easier to present the consequences of certain errors in the realisation of their shoes (such as the shape of the toe, location of the nails holes, contact surface of the shoe with the hoof, length of the shoe).

All these elements seem obvious to us, because we received an education on the anatomy before shoeing, on trimming before applying the shoe, and that we had masters who guided our eyes and hands.

Imagine working for many years alone without guidance and without method and suddenly realising that you are making mistakes! What a shock that must have been, but our students reacted admirably by being passionate about what we presented to them.

Franck then made a shoe with the same material but corresponding to our criteria and our knowledge. It didn't take much time for the students to adjust their hammer to Franck's without much difficulty.

**"Imagine working for many years alone without guidance and without method, and suddenly realising that you are making mistakes."**



*We even shod a pony with their shoes*

Over the next few days we continued to introduce them to numerous topics, always supplemented by visuals and answering their questions. This four day course passed very quickly - friendships were created between the students, and a festive but studious atmosphere allowed them to discover our profession and gave them a sense of belonging to the farrier family. Today, thanks to the internet and social media, farriers can interact with each other easily, and our trainees immediately created their own WhatsApp group.

This first course confirmed that we can help people who at first glance do not show much interest in changing their routines. To succeed in this challenge you must show respect, passion and knowledge.

We could see that working in small groups enhances intense work, brings them closer, and puts them much more at ease.

At the end of the course, our participants were able to follow the progress of their own work and judge for themselves the shoes they had made over the four days.

The course will be repeated this year 2024 and we will try to keep in touch with our students by answer their questions and their knowledge expectations. To be continued...



*Friendly atmosphere during the course*

## The Flying Anvil Foundation

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# A Tour of the Veterinary Museum in Skara, Sweden

By Chris Linssner, EFFA Registrar

Since my last scribble, I have been asked about the veterinary museum in Skara so I will show you what pictures I have and explain the museum a little more.

The Veterinärmuseet is housed in a small mansion-style building on the campus of the Swedish University of Agricultural sciences. This building once housed Sweden's first veterinary school and now is home to the only Veterinary Museum in Sweden.

The veterinary school opened in 1775 and was the result of one man's hard work. The museum is dedicated to the memory of Peter Hernqvist who, after completing his veterinary studies in France, started the school in this same building where he lived and worked.

The museum shows Henqvist's Pharmacy which has a large collection of unique jars and utensils, some of which are from the original set up of the school in the late 18th century.

The information page shows the medicaments and their purposes with actions to cure all types of livestock.

For the more gruesome of you, 18 short films show surgical procedures of the time and you would probably have enjoyed the specimen of the two headed cow...





In the early days, farriery had a central role in the education of veterinarians, and it is highlighted in the permanent exhibitions. Horseshoes are in abundance as you could imagine and run from medieval through to Victorian, including mule and oxen shoes.

But the highlight for me was a horse force plate designed to be attached to the horse's hoof and measure the footstep of the horse. This was made in the Victorian era, and is a cumbersome thing with wires running all around it.

I have no idea if it could have worked, but it just goes to show what innovation was being achieved here in Sweden and how there is nothing new in the world. Very sadly I have no pictures of the said apparatus.

There is so much to see here and if I am ever in Skara again, I will gladly spend a happy couple of hours rummaging through the museum!

Put it on your bucket list to visit.



**The Veterinary Museum  
Skara, Sweden**

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If, like Chris, you've been somewhere that you think other farriers would find interesting, why not share your story with us for possible inclusion in the magazine?

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# Tips and Tricks on How to Keep your Shoeing Knife Razor Sharp

By Mike Smith DipWCF of Manor Knives

Mike Smith is a farrier based in Somerset, who started knife making as a hobby at the beginning of 2017 - a hobby that quickly turned into a business. Mike's creations include the Yeti knife, a hand-crafted farrier's knife that has a replaceable blade, enabling farriers to simply replace the blade once worn out rather than the whole knife. In the meantime, though, to keep your shoeing knife as sharp as possible and doing the best job for your clients, it's important to take good care of it. Here's Mike's tips on keeping your knife super sharp:

Over the years I've tried numerous methods of sharpening my shoeing knives but I've settled on the following as I find it works best for me. The key though, is little and often. Stropping once a week, or even once a month, will leave you with a tool that just can't perform and a real problem with the cutting edge which will take ages to restore if you can at all. Once a day at least is what you should be doing to keep these work horses razor sharp!

For my Yeti and indeed all my farriers knives I use a 12mm x 8" Hard Sisal mop with grey compound, 8/10 cut rate which allows me to make just 6 or 7 passes across the blade to keep it razor like. If you strop your knife throughout the day I would use a less aggressive compound, perhaps white, 3/10 cut rate.

I sharpen mine every evening ready for the next day. I don't shoe as many horses these days though so I find stropping my knives once a day sufficient.

The 8", hard sisal mop from [bolgers.co.uk](http://bolgers.co.uk) is suitable for use with buffing machines and converted bench grinders via a pig wheel. The tightly stitched green sisal mops have been treated to make them harder, which means along with its narrow width it doesn't generate huge amounts of heat. That said, you still have to be mindful of what you are doing. Theoretically though, as long as you don't heat my blades above 190 degrees celsius you won't affect their temper. I can't however, speak for other manufacturers.

If you hate sharpening your knives or you just can't get the edge you want, try some or all of the following...

## 1.

To help you see where you are holding the blade against the wheel mark the inner edge of the blade with a sharpie (Fig 1).



Fig.1

## 2.

To minimise the buffing wheel grabbing the spine of the blade, hold the knife slightly pointing towards the ground (Fig 2).



Fig.2

## 3.

If you find you are only removing the sharpie as in Fig 3, that's incorrect.



Fig.3

## 4.

You need to be holding the knife against the wheel so you are right in the belly of the blade, as in Fig 4. That way you are reducing material higher up the blade as you go, not just on the cutting edge.



Fig.4

## 5.

With medium pressure, make passes across the wheel keeping the blade cool and until you see a burr on the back edge (Fig 5).



Fig.5

## 6.

Then, with one or two passes on the back edge, remove the burr, as in Fig 6. This is critical - if you don't remove this burr the knife will not hold its edge as long as it should.

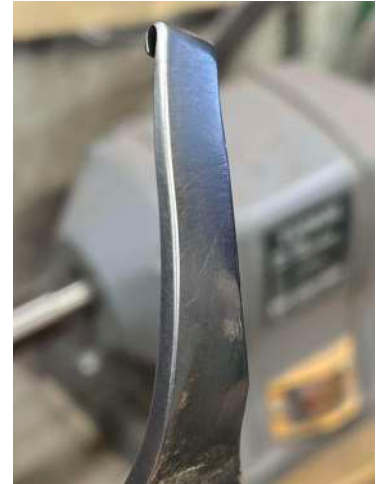


Fig.6

Please note: safety glasses should be worn at all times and I do not use or advocate the use of this sharpening system for any of my stalking, bushcraft, kitchen or any other knife for that matter. That is a whole different story altogether, and maybe one for another day!

## Manor Knives

For more info on the Yeti farrier's knife with replaceable blades, handmade by Mike using UK-made SF100 stainless steel and a quick video of Mike sharpening a farrier's knife, visit [www.manorknives.co.uk](http://www.manorknives.co.uk).



# Shoeing and Shoe-making competitions at the Great Yorkshire Show

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Class 4: 1st and 2nd Year Apprentice Shoemaking  
Sponsored by Strömsholm

Class 5: 3rd and 4th Year Apprentice Shoemaking  
Sponsored by Mustad

Class 6: Heavy Horse Shoeing  
Sponsored by Londonderry Forge Supplies Ltd

Class 7: Surgical Shoemaking  
Sponsored by Richard Ash Horseshoes

## Entries Close:

Thursday 30th May

Entry form available at:  
[greatyorkshireshow.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/shoeing-entry-form-2024.pdf](https://greatyorkshireshow.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/shoeing-entry-form-2024.pdf)

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# 2024 Blacksmith World Championships

Spruce Meadows, Calgary  
Alberta, Canada

4th - 8th September 2024

Entries are now open for the 2024 Blacksmith World Championships competition at Spruce Meadows.

Talented farriers from more than 12 countries will gather to vie for the prestigious top prize. Prepare for an international showdown of skill and craftsmanship!

The Blacksmith World Championship is held during the 'Masters' at Spruce Meadows.

The 'Masters' is a CSIO 5\* FEI international show jumping tournament that features competitions on the International Ring and the All Canada Ring.

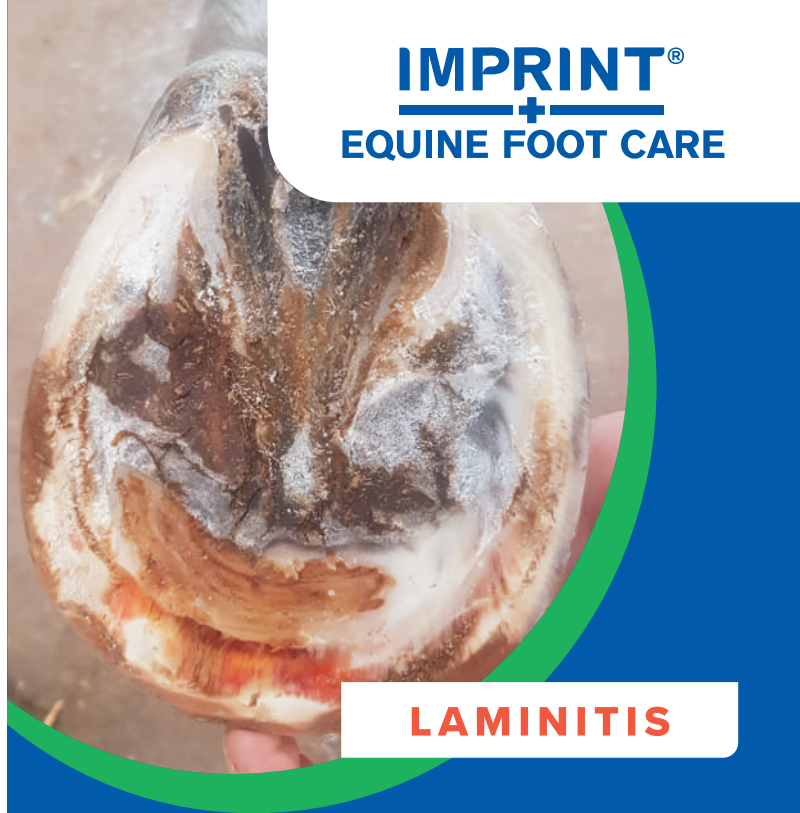
To learn more about the 'Masters' at Spruce Meadows, visit [sprucemeadows.com/masters](http://sprucemeadows.com/masters).

Competitors from the 2023 Blacksmith World Championship have the first right of refusal on entry - the deadline is 1 March 2024.

On 4 March 2024, entries will be open to all farriers.

**To enter, email:**

[worldchampionshipblacksmiths@gmail.com](mailto:worldchampionshipblacksmiths@gmail.com)



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# The fight to keep traditional steelmaking alive in Port Talbot

Tata Steel's plans for making greener steel have left the future of the UK steel industry uncertain, and their recent announcement to close the Port Talbot Steelworks by the end of the year will see 2,800 job losses in the town. A group of documentary and film producers are now desperately trying to preserve the story of the communities of Port Talbot who have relied on this single heavy industry for generations. However, with the decommissioning process set to begin in April 2024, the group are racing against time and are now looking for crowd-funding help to finish their project before it's too late.

For over 100 years steel has been created in the Town of Port Talbot, South Wales. It has remained the heart of the town for over 5 generations, employing thousands of members of the community and supporting countless families and businesses.

Joe Cornick, Maddy Chisholm-Scott, Sian Adler and Dave Evans are the group behind *Steel: The Blood of Us*. They began the project almost three years ago with a commitment to raising awareness of the fight to maintain traditional steelmaking in the town of Port Talbot, and also to create a physical historical document that captured the intrinsic connection between Steelmaking and the close-knit community.

On Friday 19th January 2024, Tata Steel announced that the two blast furnaces will be closed at Port Talbot's Steelworks by the end of the year. Media outlets publish the figure of a minimum of 2,800 job losses in Port Talbot. However, this decision will affect every corner of the community, and continue well beyond South Wales, increasing job losses well over the predicted figure. Current Tata plans are to construct an electric arc furnace by 2027, reducing the workforce down to less than 1000 people and decreasing the quality of the steel produced dramatically.

In the final months prior to the closure, it is imperative the film is finished. Joe and Maddy's Kickstarter page says, "Our paramount goal is now to safeguard the narratives, legacies, and livelihoods of those intricately linked to the steel industry. By doing so, we will empower not only individuals across the UK but also future generations to grasp the profound impact that this sector has had on the community of Port Talbot.

"It is high time for a rallying cry that resonates with the values of solidarity and social justice, one that sheds light on the struggles within the remains of our last bastions of strategic industries. This film is our tool to awaken collective consciousness, offering a poignant testament to the vital role these industries have played in shaping the lives of working-class individuals."



Joe Cornick, Director of *Steel: The Blood of Us*

## The Goal

*Steel: The Blood of Us* will present life in Port Talbot through voices of the town's community, sharing their stories of life and work in the town, accompanied with striking portraits and vistas of the landscape and individuals that have kept steel at the heart of Port Talbot for generations.

From the project's conception, the final goal of the film is to become an archival document that captures the spirit and heart of the community of Port Talbot and their links of flesh and blood to the plant, where generations of the community have toiled to produce steel for British industry. The filming of the project has been entirely on physical 16mm film, which the makers feel imbues a look and tactile feel of the subject. Capturing this story on celluloid will enable it to be preserved in the National Archive in both London and Aberystwyth, and will stand through time for people to peer through generations of families who gave their lives to a single industry.

The group will use voice recordings from members of the community, which will build together to create a unified "symphony of voices". They have sought to show the incredible beauty of the town where its community lives alongside heavy industry that contrasts its natural surroundings. *Steel: The Blood of Us* will reflect the passion and love for the town from the heart it's community.

This would be the first and only arthouse documentary of its kind about Steelmaking in the UK and the loss of heavy industry. The narrative of the documentary is fundamentally the shared experience of thousands of people across the nation who have been forced from their communities by the loss of a single heavy industry, whether that is coal, steel or manufacturing.

**For the contributors, it's their story.**

**For the community: it's a shared experience and way of life soon to be lost.**

**For South Wales: it's the final heavy industry that once dominated its workforce.**

**For the UK: it's the final post in its long historical industrial past which has spanned for over 250 years.**

The group are now calling for support to finish producing *Steel: The Blood of Us* before it's too late. For more details and to support if you can, visit: <http://kck.st/4bnuuVM>

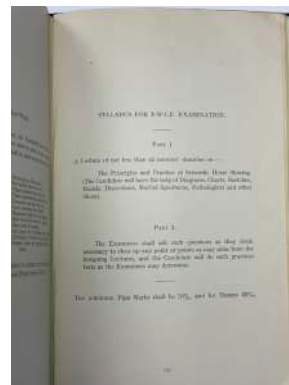
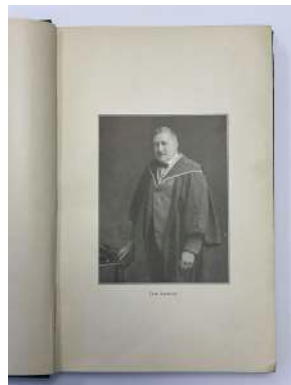
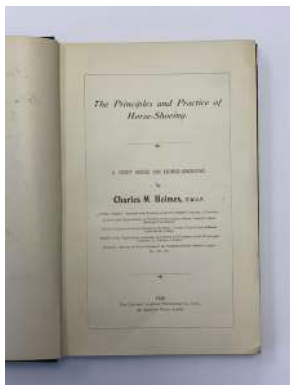
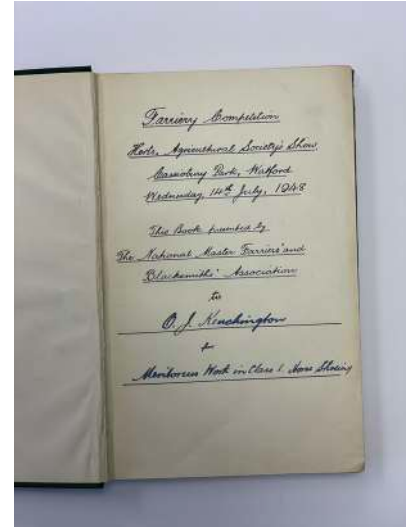
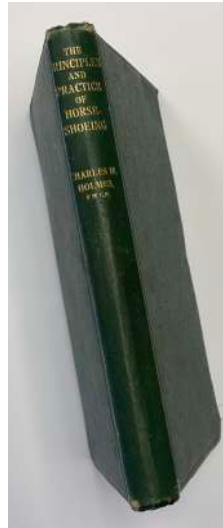
# Tales as old as time: the history of farriery through literature

This month we were alerted to the presence of a very interesting text book titled "The Principles and Practice of Horse-Shoeing", by Charles M Holmes FWCF.

The holder of the book had seen that it was originally presented at the Hertfordshire Agricultural Society's Show by the National Master Farriers and Blacksmiths Association in 1948 to O. J. Kenchington for meritorious work in Class 1 Horse Shoeing.

The book was originally published in 1928 and contains information and pictures to support the syllabus for the FWCF examination, covering topics including shoeing for spavin, sidebone, seedy toe, dropped soles, quarter sandcrack, navicular and ankylosis.

The book was kindly sent in to us so we could retain this piece of farriery history, and we wanted to share some of the images from the book for our readers to see. We'd like to say thank you to Jayne for returning this book to us.



Show us your books!

We'd love to do a feature on historical farriery books in an upcoming issue of Forge magazine.

If you've got any books that you think would be interesting for us to include, please do send in photos and a description to [forge.bfba@gmail.com](mailto:forge.bfba@gmail.com).

# Are you a dedicated farrier passionate about the future of your profession?

You are invited to participate in the Farrier Recruitment and Retention Survey led by the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC).

During the BFBA's Focus event back in September 2023, a group of NEWC members ran a pilot version of this survey and received an overwhelming response from 115 participants.

Now they are inviting you to have your say. By taking part in this survey, you have the opportunity to voice your concerns and contribute to the development of solutions that address the challenges faced by the farriery profession.

Don't miss your chance to participate in the survey today! For more information about the role of NEWC, please visit [newc.co.uk](http://newc.co.uk).

Scan the QR code to take part in the survey:



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# EFFA Update: Call for Additional Farriery Examiners

The European Federation of Farriers Associations are in the process of forming a list of farriery examiners who are of the AWCF or above qualification, in order to give accredited schools across Europe the flexibility to find an examiner who fits their exam timings. The list would also show availability for demonstrations or show judging.

A little ability to speak any European language would be beneficial for this role, but not necessary.

Next year, the EFFA is starting the Master EuroFarrier exam and they would also like to gain the services of some FWCFs who are not active on the present examining list, but perhaps retired and who would like to keep their hand in the trade. This is a big move for EFFA, and so there are unlikely to be any exams until the following year.

For more information on any of these roles or if you think you would be a good fit, get in touch with Chris Linssner, Registrar of the EFFA via the BFBA Head Office.

## Change to Pick-Up Truck Tax

The government has now announced a u-turn on its plans to change the tax treatment of Double-Cab Pick-Ups, in a welcome move for many who rely on these vehicles for work and leisure.

On Monday 12 February, HMRC had updated its guidance to confirm that from 1 July 2024, double-cab pick-up trucks would be classed as cars rather than goods vehicles. Previously, any double cab that had a payload of over 1 tonne was classed as a van and therefore benefitted from cheaper company car tax.

Since then, the government has said it has listened carefully to the views of various groups, particularly farmers and the motoring industry, on the potential impacts of the change in tax-treatment.

The government has acknowledged that the original court decision and resulting guidance could have an impact on businesses and individuals in a way that is not consistent with the government's wider aims to support businesses, including vital motoring and farming industries.

In a statement, HMRC has said that its existing guidance will be withdrawn, meaning that double-cab pick-ups will continue to be treated as goods vehicles rather than cars, and businesses and individuals can continue to benefit from its historic tax treatment.

Double-cab pickups are a popular choice for many farriers who use them to double up as a commercial vehicle as well as for personal use.

While this is welcome news for many farriers, be aware that the update is only with reference to double-cab pick-ups with a payload of one tonne or more. Double-cab pick-ups with a payload of less than one tonne continue to be treated as cars.

Visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for the full story.



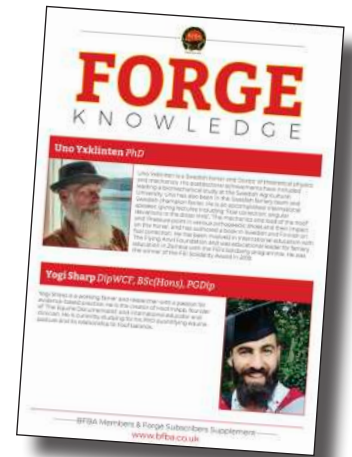
# In the March 2024 issue of *Forge Knowledge*

*Forge Knowledge is a member-only benefit offering an opportunity for gaining CPD.*

In March's issue of Forge Knowledge, hear from Uno Yxklinten PhD and Yogi Sharp DipWCF, BSc(Hons), PGDip on the quantification and definition of a new hoof balance paradigm.

There is continuing debate among farriers on what is 'correct' when balancing horses' hooves. An agreed definition of 'a balanced hoof' is also lacking.

In this article, Uno Yxklinten and Yogi Sharp propose a balancing point for the hoof at midstance supported by a quantitative analysis using classical mechanics and measured data during the stance phase. They also offer a new definition of a balanced hoof.



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- Huw Dyer AWCF -



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# The Abnormal Weather of 2023: Effects on the Hoof Wall and a Treatment Protocol

*The unusual weather conditions experienced in the UK in 2023 caused chaos across the country - including wreaking havoc on our horses' feet. With the weather predicted to be more unsettled as the effects of climate change materialise, it's important to be aware of the effects the environment has on horses' feet and consider these in any potential treatment plans, as Liam O'Hara AWCF explains.*

In 2023, I experienced a higher rate in cases of Keratolytic diseases of the Zona Alba (KDZA), and therefore decided to investigate the possible causes. These are reported within this article, along with my preferred treatment plan.

## Definitions

KDZA (sometimes called seedy toe) is a degeneration of the hoof wall, due to microbial infection (Curtis, 2018).

Keratolytic – the process of breaking down or dissolving Keratin; a specialised protein which forms horn cells.

Zona alba – the unpigmented, axial area of the stratum medium.

Sarah Logie FWCF describes KDZA (called "seedy toe" at the time of her thesis in 2017) as an invasion of pathogens into the inner layers of the hoof wall. Sarah separated the condition into two pathologies:

Type 1 – Structural seedy toe, where an insult or weakness occurs in the hoof, through a fundamentally isolated mechanical cause.

Type 2 – Systemic seedy toe, with an environmental or systemic cause, presenting as poor-quality hooves with a brittle, outer layers of horn and/or signs of blackening around the nail holes or around the white line in general. Poor shoe retention, lame, or 'footy' and/or chronic laminitic. (Logie, 2017).

For this article, we will be investigating Type 2 Systemic seedy toe/KDZA.

## Summary

The climate of 2023 has been a challenge from a farriery point of view. In particular the dry start to the year, when the hooves had little moisture from the ground to absorb, meant they became dry and brittle very quickly. Later, into the summer months the weather became very wet, warm, and then humidity increased, which created a breeding ground for the anaerobic bacteria which affect the stratum medium (hoof wall). Incubation of anaerobic bacteria increases with humidity (Diakakis N. DVM, 2013). While anaerobic means to thrive without oxygen, it must be noted that anaerobic bacteria can in fact survive in oxygen, from between 8 and 72 hours (Bush 2023.) This may explain why hoof quality deteriorated so rapidly.



*Fig. 1 A typical broken up foot, a result of the humid weather we had in 2023. Pictures like these keep me awake at night.*

In the early months of 2023, the dry weather was abnormal for the time of year. I found hoof moisturisers a useful prescription for my client's horses - applied daily, twice if possible. This rebalanced the moisture levels to maintain the integral strength of the horn cells, which improved hoof health for some time. However, some horses had naturally thinner walls which could not withstand how dry they became. Some had lost shoes, which then led to further damage of the hoof wall.

Later into the summer months, the conditions changed to wet and warm, creating a greater humidity (more so than I have seen in 10 years of being qualified). This increased bacterial growth, penetrating any cracks and blemishes of the hoof. Scientifically this process is termed "microbial anaerobic growth" (Biology Online, 2022). The process particularly affected horses that had lost shoes, therefore with a greater number of old nail holes, or generally cracked up feet and horses with a naturally thin wall.

Following this, nailing and fitting became difficult and led to further degeneration of the wall. Eucalyptus oils did appear to keep the bacteria at bay, but obviously it did not fix the problem of the compromised integrity of the hoof wall.

## The Anatomy of the Hoof Wall

Here's a quick recap of the anatomy affected. KDZA affects the Stratum medium (the hoof wall) and the Zona Alba (fig. 2).

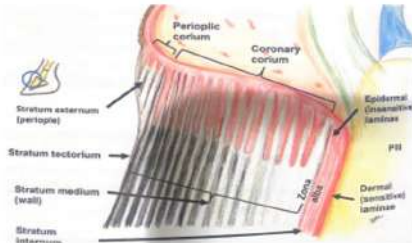


Fig.2 (S Logie FWCF Advance Farriery Knowledge 2023) By kind permission

## The Anatomy of the Horn Cells

There are 3 types of horn cell:

- **Tubular horn cells.** These grow parallel to the third phalanx. They provide stiffness to the hoof capsule. They are 6 times stronger than intertubular horn cells, which relates to moisture content as it has been proven that hydration weakens inter-tubular but not tubular horn.
- **Inter-tubular horn cells.** These bind the Tubular horn cells together. They are found perpendicular to the Tubular-horn cells and third phalanx. They are a 50/50 ratio with the Tubular horn cells.
- **Intra-tubular horn cells.** These grow inside the Tubular-Horn cells and act as moisture conveyors. They are seen as little black dots through a microscope. Axially to the third phalanx, the horn tubules are less densely packed, and therefore the Inter-Tubular horn cells are easily accessible to bacterial invasion.

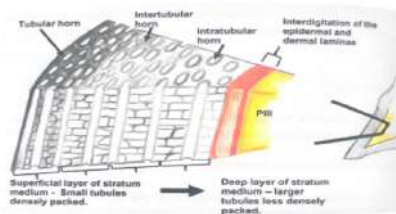


Figure 40. Horn tubule density.

Fig.3 (S Logie FWCF Advance Farriery Knowledge 2023) By kind permission

As we can see from the weather graph in Fig.4, January, February, April, and May had a low amount of rainfall. Therefore, the hooves had less moisture absorb, following which they became dry and brittle. March was in fact the wettest in 40 years. However, with a lower water table from the previously low amounts of rainfall, the ground remained dry.

June, July, and August saw an increasing amount of rainfall and heightened temperatures - unnaturally wet for this time of year. This created a high humidity level, which became a breeding ground for anaerobic bacteria. The incubation of anaerobic bacteria increases with humidity (Diakakis N. DVM, 2013).

## Literature Search

There is a study which contradicts my observations of hoof hydration. The results of the study by Hampson et al (2012) clearly states that moisture content of the hoof wall is unaffected by excessive soaking through environmental conditions. However, the research finds that moisture levels of the sole aspect can increase in damp conditions. The study does in fact fail to mention the moisture of the zona alba and, importantly, the specific inter-tubular horn cells.

## A shoeing plan for the environmentally affected hooves

I now had "two issues in one" that needed attention: dry cracked feet from the earlier months of the year, which had then become bacteria ridden from the wet and hot summer.

An effective treatment plan was required for the horses affected. This would need to prevent any further damage from microbial anaerobic growth and additionally improve and support the integrity of the hoof wall, either for nailing of a shoe or for un-shod hooves.

For this chosen shoeing plan I discussed the options with the client, and we both felt it appropriate to act immediately and get on top of the conditions before the autumnal months arrived. I was in the fortunate position that the client did not expect an overnight fix and entrusted me to work how they felt best. The client had been treating the hoof wall topically with Swan's Anti-Bac<sup>1</sup>, and decided it was time to take further action with treatment.



Fig.5 The foot in question

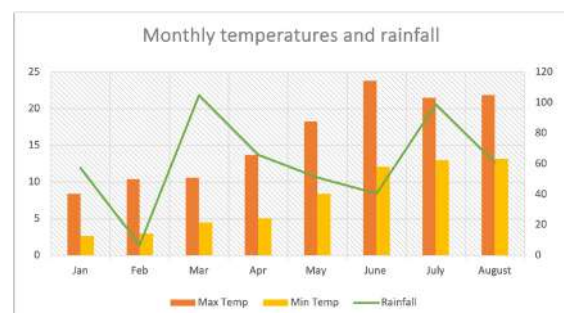


Fig. 4 Weather data collected for the Meteorological Office

**Treatment**

1. I have had previous success in the eradication of bacterial infection of the hoof wall with Red Horse products Artimud<sup>2</sup> packed into blemishes of the wall, or under shoes and pads. I rate this as it has the viscosity to remain sound for several weeks, therefore continually keeping bacteria at bay and executing bacterial presence.
2. 3D HoofCast Orthopaedic Casting tape<sup>3</sup> is a useful way to improve the quality of brittle, thin-walled, weakened feet. I have found this product to be effective in previous cases of damaged walls (Fig.6).



Fig.6

3. It was decided that I would debride any necrotic tissue. As you can see in Fig.7, this horse has a history of chronic laminitis - the damaged and stretched laminae will therefore predispose the horse to KDZA.



Fig.7

4. Next, I treated and packed the affected areas with Artimud to prevent bacterial growth (Fig. 8 and 9)



Fig.8



Fig.9

5. Next, with the use of 3rd Millenium methyl methacrylate shoe glue<sup>4</sup> paste the unaffected hoof wall. This glue is chosen for its reliability and user-friendliness. Ensure that glue is not applied to the Artimud or affected horn cells (Fig.10)



Fig.10

6. Cast the hoof with 3D HoofCast to protect the stratum medium and create a "prosthetic" hoof wall. This will also keep the Artimud in place. From this step forward, the horse could be shod or left unshod (Fig. 11)



Fig.11

7. The hoof cast was left attached for as long as possible. The weather had now cooled down (late September), so bacterial growth was expected to decline and therefore a lesser concern.

The shoe (fitted before the cast was applied) was nailed and clenched. A rolled toe seemed the most appropriate option, as clips would need cutting into the cast.

The lateral quarter had a loss of definition to fit to (Fig. 12)



Fig.12

8. However, from this picture of the solear view, I was pleased to note that we can fit a balanced shoe encouraging healthy foot function. Prior to application this would have been difficult. (Fig. 13)



Fig.13

In general, I consider the prognosis for using this technique to be good.

Following a healthy treatment and shoeing plan and communication with clients (along with some patience with the weather!), feet can return to a positively healthy condition.

#### Materials List

1. Swan's Anti-Bac - eucalyptus topical hoof treatment
2. Artimud Red Horse Products - clay-based cleansing hoof putty
3. 3D Hoof Cast - Orthopaedic casting tape
4. 3rd Millenium Hoof and Shoe Adhesive - Methyl methacrylate, bonding adhesive

#### References and Further Reading

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## Take Home Points

1. A horse's hooves will reflect what is happening in the environment.
2. Anaerobic bacteria thrive without oxygen. However, they may remain oxygenated from anywhere between 8 and 72 hours.
3. KDZA can have an affect any time of year, but heightened humidity will rapidly increase microbial degeneration.
4. Hoof moisturiser should be applied in drier months.
5. Eucalyptus oils are a good way to treat acute cases of KDZA.
6. 3D Hoof Cast creates a useful "prosthetic" hoof wall to fit and nail to. They will also hold Artimud in place.
7. Fit rolled toe shoes so it is not necessary to cut clips into the cast.
8. The 3D Hoof Cast / Artimud combination can be used for shod or unshod feet.

*This feature has been adapted from an original article written as a project for a FWCF course, hosted by Dr. Simon Curtis at Rossdale's Veterinary hospital. It is not financially endorsed by the manufacturers mentioned, which are of the author's preference.*

# Worshipful Company of Farriers Foot Balance Course

Friday 8th to Saturday 9th March 2024

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Spaces are limited. To book, email Linda Quinn at [craftsecretary@wcf.org.uk](mailto:craftsecretary@wcf.org.uk)

## Get Involved at the Monks Kirby Midsummer Country Fair

**Calling all farriers and blacksmiths: come and showcase your skills!**

The Monks Kirby Midsummer Fair organising committee would like to showcase rural skills at this year's event, and are looking for farriers and blacksmiths who would be willing and able to attend the event and provide a demonstration of their work.

**Location:** Newnham Paddock, Monks Kirby, Warwickshire CV23 0RX

**Date:** Sunday 23rd June 2024

**Contact:** Karen Lawlor on [karenlawlor315@gmail.com](mailto:karenlawlor315@gmail.com)

## The BFBA AGM: Date and Proposition

The date of the AGM is Saturday 18th May. Register to attend by emailing [headoffice@bfba.co.uk](mailto:headoffice@bfba.co.uk).

We have received the following proposition for the AGM, as follows:

"I propose a rule change to rescind any rules that prevent Office Holders or members of the Executive Committee of the BFBA from serving on committees of any other organisations."



# New study from the Royal Veterinary College identifies most common findings in pre-purchase examinations

New research from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has found that lameness is the most common prejudicial PPE finding in prepurchase examinations (PPEs) in horses in the UK. It was also found that horses with a higher purchase price are more likely to undergo a five-stage vetting (5SV), compared to a two-stage vetting (2SV).

PPEs are performed for prospective horse buyers to identify any prejudicial findings that could make the horse unsuitable for its intended use – be that elite competitions, breeding or leisure riding. Although PPEs often follow a standardised process, the examination can only result in a recommendation based on the opinion of the veterinary surgeon at an isolated point in time. PPEs are therefore, in large part, a subjective process and often debated in the equine world.

Previously, there has been limited research into PPEs. However, it is hoped these new findings will encourage future studies into the merits of 5SV and 2SV PPE formats and the diagnostics used. This will, in turn, help to better inform prospective horse buyers when considering their purchase.

The RVC team, including Dr David Bolt, Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery; Dr Jason Tupper, Head of the RVC Equine Practice; and Annabel Shelton (RVC BVetMed 2023 graduate), analysed 133 PPE certificates of a mixed, non-racing population of horses, from three first opinion equine practices. The researchers assessed the examination format (i.e. 2SV or 5SV); any diagnostic imaging obtained (e.g. radiographs); the purchase price; animal signalment; the horse's intended use; the PPE outcome; and any prejudicial findings identified.

The key findings were:

- 57.1% of horses examined had prejudicial findings
- The most common prejudicial finding was lameness as the primary prejudicial finding (55.3%)
- Other common prejudicial findings included diagnostic imaging findings (14.5%); respiratory system findings (6.6%); skin conditions (5.3%); and cardiac abnormalities (3.9%)
- 68.5% of horses underwent a 5SV compared to 34.1% which underwent a 2SV
- Horses with a higher purchase price were more likely to undergo a 5SV
- Horses with a higher purchase price were also more likely to undergo pre-purchase radiography and more likely to have prejudicial findings identified.

Dr Jason Tupper, Head of Equine Practice at the RVC, and co-author of this research, said:

“A pre-purchase examination can discover a number of issues before buying a horse. This study reveals lameness to be the commonest issue. Few horses are perfect when it comes to temperament and health. The vetting process determines the issues and the vet can then help the purchaser weigh up their significance and decide if they can compromise and accept the issues or not. Further studies can now focus on the cost/benefit of radiology as part of the vetting procedure and the potential use of gait analysis.”

Dr David Bolt, Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery at the RVC, and author of this research, said:

“Although this study only reflects a sample of all horses undergoing PPEs in the UK, the findings were very interesting and hopefully result in further studies about PPEs which could provide invaluable advice for people who want to purchase a horse.”

For more information, visit [rvc.ac.uk](http://rvc.ac.uk).



*Dr Jason Tupper MRCVS, Head of Equine Practice at the RVC, conducting an equine exam.*

# Aston University scientists to develop mathematical model to improve liquid metal casting

A new project at Aston University has been set up to develop a mathematical model to improve liquid metal casting.

The method will be used to help prevent lightweight aluminium alloys corroding - or oxidating - very quickly when first exposed to air. A better knowledge of this could improve the emerging processes related to 3D printing and additive manufacturing of light metals.

Within the transportation sector, steel is gradually being replaced by lighter alloys. Although they don't rust like steel does, they oxidise very quickly when first exposed to external ambient conditions which affects their quality and lifespan.

Dr Paul Griffiths, senior lecturer in applied mathematics, will be conducting a 12-month project which will focus on the thin oxide films that develop on alloys which affect the casting process.

He has been awarded £80,000 from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) for the study 'Developing an accurate non-Newtonian surface rheology model'.

Dr Griffiths, who is based in the University's College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, said: "The aim of this investigation is to develop a mathematical model that accurately captures the two-way coupling between a liquid metal flow and the oxide layer above, with the latter behaving as a non-Newtonian liquid/gas interface.

"The objective of this project is to describe both the surface characteristics - velocity and shear profiles - as well as the important effects of surface curvature.

"The benefit of a more appropriate mechanical model for the oxidised surface of a melted metal flow would lead to a better understanding of the encapsulation process which affects the alloy."

The research is twinned with a project partner in Grenoble, France.



# Strip grazing delivers a steadier supply of nutrients than free grazing



Image courtesy of Sarah Shephard

A newly published study has shown that after rapid spring grass growth has stopped, strip grazing can deliver a steadier nutrient supply to horses than when they have free access to restricted grazing. This sheds further light on why strip grazing may be an effective weight management tool.

A previous study conducted in association with the SPILLERS™ brand has already shown that strip grazing can be an effective way of restricting grass intake to help manage the bodyweight of pastured ponies, although the reasons for this were not elucidated. This follow-up research highlights the advantages of consistent nutrient intake that may be offered by strip grazing.

Strip-grazing refers to the gradual release of limited amounts of fresh herbage within a pasture to animals via a moveable fence. The new work *Strip grazing: Changes in biomass, nutrient content and digestibility of temperate, midsummer pasture by strip-grazed or 'free'-grazing ponies, over 4 weeks* was conducted, in collaboration with the SPILLERS brand, and the WALTHAM™ Equine Studies Group, by Dr Annette Longland of Equine Livestock and Nutrition Services.

The results showed that strip-grazing delivered herbage of more consistent nutritive quality over the course of the trial compared to when the ponies had free access to the same amount of original herbage. The findings also reiterated the potential value of strip-grazing as an effective tool for weight management.

For more information, visit [spillers-feeds.com](http://spillers-feeds.com).

# New Thoroughbred genetic fracture risk scoring system developed by the Royal Veterinary College discovers collagen is contributing factor

New research from the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) into genetic risks of fracture in Thoroughbred horses has found that horses with lower levels of collagen type III have a higher risk of fracture.

Previously, there has been limited research into this disease with no specific genetic mechanisms identified. However, these new findings have enabled the RVC to develop systems to identify genetically high-risk horses. This will provide a greater understanding of how best to identify, diagnose and manage horses at high risk of fractures and contribute to greater health and welfare of Thoroughbreds.

Bone fractures are common in Thoroughbred racehorses, due to the forces the bones can experience, and are sadly a leading cause of euthanasia, with approximately 60 horses each year having to be euthanised on UK racecourses because of this disease. However, fracture is a complex condition, with both environmental and genetic risk factors affecting a horse's susceptibility.

Conducting the research, the team, led by Dr Debbie Guest, Senior Research Fellow at the RVC, developed a polygenic risk score, which provides a measure of disease risk due to a variety of genes, and used this to determine the distribution of scores across the general UK Thoroughbred population.

The team were then able to utilise this information to select cells from horses whose risk placed them at the extreme ends of the population with either very low or very high risk. These cells were then used in laboratory studies to establish a cell model and investigate the genetic factors involved in fracture risk.

The research found that collagen type III, a gene which is required for normal bone formation, is expressed at lower levels in bone cells from horses with a high genetic risk of fracture. This is because they have a change in their DNA sequence in the region which controls how much collagen III is produced.

Additional research is now being conducted to validate the risk-scoring system in another cohort of horses. Further studies using this system and cell model will help to identify other genes and processes to better understand why some horses are inherently more susceptible to fracture than others.

For more information, visit [rvc.ac.uk](http://rvc.ac.uk).

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