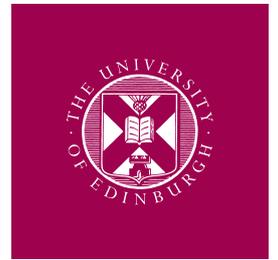


# THE ROYAL DICK SCHOOL OF VETERINARY STUDIES



## THE DICK VET EQUINE HOSPITAL

0131 650 6253 [www.DickVetEquine.com](http://www.DickVetEquine.com)

### WINTER 2012

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- Facility news
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#### CONTACT

##### The Dick Vet Equine Hospital

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies  
The University of Edinburgh  
Easter Bush  
Midlothian  
EH25 9RG  
UK

**tel:** 0131 650 6253  
**out of hours tel:** 01223 849 763  
**fax:** 0131 650 8824  
**web:** [www.DickVetEquine.com](http://www.DickVetEquine.com)  
**email:** [EqH@ed.ac.uk](mailto:EqH@ed.ac.uk)

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### Welcome to our Winter Newsletter

**As 2012 draws to a close, we'd like to wish you a Merry Christmas and to thank you for your support and good will over the last year.**

The summer has been a difficult year for us in the hospital with lots of change to deal with, while we continue to be busy with the clinics, teaching and research.

You will no doubt have heard of the extremely sad news that Dr Martin Weaver passed away after a long fight with cancer; an obituary is included in this newsletter.

Safia Barakzai decided to leave us at the end of October after 12 years in order to pursue other interests. Safia has contributed much to the equine hospital, rising through the ranks of resident then lecturer and senior lecturer and will be sorely missed. Finally Russell Parker left us after his stint covering clinics for Sarah Taylor. Russell did a great job and will be missed, but family reasons have construed to keep him away from us. We wish him well in his new post at Scott Dunn's equine practice in Berkshire.

### Staff success stories

Professor Paddy Dixon was awarded the 2012 PetPlan Scientific Achievement Award. This is well deserved recognition of Paddy's achievements in advancing our understanding of disease of the head and neck.

Caroline Sheridan has been successful in her Equine Veterinary Nurse training, taking our team of qualified equine nurses up to three.

Looking to the future, we have been busy sorting out a new surgery team, headed of course by Professor Dixon.

Mr Richard Reardon took up the post of Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery in early November. Richard did his residency at Glasgow Vet School, is a Diplomate of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons and has a wealth of experience and interests; he is just completing a PhD investigating risk factors for injury to Thoroughbred horses during racing at the University of Glasgow during which time he has worked closely with the British Horseracing Authority. Richard enjoys all aspects of equine surgery and has research interests in both soft tissue and orthopaedic surgery, which he is keen to develop in his new role.

After her stint as maternity cover at Liphook Equine Hospital in Hampshire, Sarah Taylor is returning to us briefly for a couple of months prior to heading off on maternity leave herself!

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Caroline has a long history with the Vet School as her father worked in the yard for many years. Caroline worked with us as a nurse technician for over 8 years before starting equine nurse training in 2010 at Myerscough College. She has excelled in her training often gaining the highest marks in her class. We are delighted that she passed her examinations with flying colours in October this year.

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# Dr Martin Paul Weaver

## Born 29th July 1962 in Glasgow

## Died 28th September 2012 in Edinburgh

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Martin Weaver was born in Glasgow and had an English father (the noted expert cattle veterinarian Dr David Weaver) and a German mother, factors which influenced his career greatly. Martin qualified as a veterinary surgeon from Glasgow in 1986 and for the first 2 years after qualifying worked in general practice in Dunoon, Scotland and then Thirsk, North Yorkshire. Due to his knowledge of the German language and his German heritage, Martin next became an Intern in Munich University between 1988-1990 and during that time he obtained a Doctor of Med Vet from that University. For the following 2 years Martin worked as an Intern in Bernhard Huskamp's famous Tierklinik Hochmoor Equine Clinic in Germany.

On returning to Britain, Martin was awarded a HBLB Scholarship in Equine Diagnostic Imaging at the University of Cambridge from 1991 and 1994. During this residency he obtained both the RCVS certificate of Veterinary Radiology and later the RCVS Diploma in Veterinary Radiology. Martin then moved to the Royal Veterinary College, London during which time he performed a PhD on the pathology of equine navicular disease. In 1997 Martin moved to the Veterinary Faculty of where he was a University Lecturer in Large Animal Surgery with a continued strong interest in imaging, and also in zoo animal medicine. Martin spent 4 years at University College Dublin until in 2001 he joined the Equine Department of the R(D)SVS, where he was a Senior Lecturer in Equine Surgery specialising in imaging and orthopaedics, until his untimely death in 2012 at the age of 50.



Martin had a very kind, mellow personality and a great sense of humour. He loved teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate students and obtained the highest student teaching appraisals, including for his regular voluntary tutorials after normal working hours with final year students. Martin's talent as a teacher were also due to his great ability as a story teller. He never tired of telling his famous "Gorilla Story". When working in University College Dublin, he had to treat a gorilla in Dublin Zoo – first needing to anaesthetise it with drugs fired from an anaesthetic dart rifle. However, whilst aiming the rifle through the bars of the cage, the gorilla suddenly shot across the cage and pulled the rifle out of Martin's hands – after an anxious pause, the gorilla then bent the rifle in two and handed it back to a partly grateful Martin!

In addition to his undergraduate teaching - Martin was also very supportive of younger staff members and ran imaging and surgery rounds for them in the morning before normal working hours.

Martin was treasurer of the Dick Vet Students' very successful Exmoor Pony Trekking Society, helping enormously with its administration and financial stability for many years.

Martin had many outside interests including hill walking in his beloved Scotland and on the continent, and latterly sea kayaking. He sang in the Heriot Watt University Choir (although a University of Edinburgh Staff member!) and was deeply involved in contemporary literature, spending holidays at book festivals.

At the end of 2010, Martin found out that an illness that he had been receiving treatment for a prolonged period was in fact cancer that now had metastasised and was untreatable. He bore this illness bravely without complaint, continuing to work at the Veterinary School until just 3 days before his death.

Martin's colleagues and present and former students will always remember his great contributions to our Veterinary School over the last 10 years - especially his absolutely outstanding teaching. We will also miss his friendship, serenity and loyalty.

The packed congregation at Martin's funeral service at Mortonhall Crematorium on the 8th October 2012 included his colleagues and friends from Germany, Ireland as well as the UK and all were privileged to hear renditions by the Heriot Watt Choir.

Our sincere condolences to Martin's wife Jane, his parents David and Ruth, siblings Christoph and Annette and their families.

PM Dixon

## Two years with the over-ground exercising endoscope at the equine hospital

The arrival of the new over-ground exercising endoscopy equipment in 2010 has allowed us to perform examinations of the upper airway of horses at work in their own environment and ridden in a style more akin to their normal daily work routines, both competition and pleasure horses alike (Fig. 1). Exercising endoscopic examinations had previously required the horse to be worked on a treadmill at the equine hospital, which despite many years of excellent service, always required the horse to be transported to Edinburgh and didn't allow rider interventions that may affect the prevalence of some conditions.

We have been keen to use this new over-ground endoscope to its full potential, crucially performing long-term exercise follow-up on horses that have had surgical interventions such as the tie back (laryngoplasty) procedure. Tie-backs have been performed since the early 1970's, but no one had previously examined the effect of the procedure on the upper airway at exercise, other than in horses considered as surgical failures. This key clinical research study has already led to three scientific papers and four presentations, which have won awards at two consecutive European College of Veterinary Surgeons conferences in the process.

Forty-one owners, trainers and horses took part in the study, resulting in us travelling from Inverness to Bradford, Whitehaven to Sunderland. A surprising number of minor airway abnormalities were observed in post-surgical horses despite them being able to perform well and the rider being unaware of a problem. Only one horse however was considered to have a severe enough problem that needed any further attention.

Other important questions addressed were:

### Does residual respiratory noise remain?

In some cases the owners and trainers reported continued respiratory noise, which in certain competition disciplines would be regarded as unfavourable. The study found that when a Hobday (ventriculectomy) had not been performed the horses were nearly five times more likely to make noise when exercising.

### Is the tie-back abduction maintained long term?

In the tie-back procedure, one side of the larynx is fixed (Fig. 2), and the degree to which this is held back out of the airway often decreases slightly following the surgery. The degree of abduction is routinely monitored short term at a re-examination 6 weeks post operatively. In this study we found that further loss in abduction was unlikely after 6 weeks, meaning if the surgeon is happy at the 6 week re-examination then there should be no further compromise of the airway by that side of the larynx.

So far, our clinicians have completed over 100 over-ground examinations with the new equipment, in addition to the many hundreds performed over the last fifteen years using the treadmill. This new over-ground technology allows us to maintain a level of expertise in respiratory disease that is world renowned, with our clinicians regularly being called upon to speak in Europe, the USA and beyond.



RHS LHS

**Figure 2:** An endoscope picture from the over-ground exercising endoscope equipment, showing a horse following a tie-back on the left side (arrow), this cartilage is held permanently in an abducted position.



**Figure 1:** Two racehorses exercising as part of their regular training regime in Yorkshire, the one closest to the camera has the over-ground endoscope in place.

## Welcome *(cont.)*

*Continued from front page*

Sarah is expecting her first child and we wish her the very best both during and after the pregnancy. Sarah's place will be taken temporarily by Eugenio Cillan Garcia who you will remember as a previous surgery resident. Eugenio has been working in a large equine practice in Gloucestershire treating everything from ponies and donkeys to hunters and racehorses. We are really glad that we managed to tempt him back to us; he has a great interest in general surgery, but especially in problems of the horse's foot. Long term he will be slotting into a role that encompasses both first opinion and referral work

Other news starts during the Summer include Douglas Callahan who joined us in June as an equine veterinary nurse. Douglas who hails from Lanark spent 3 years at Liphook and qualified as an equine veterinary nurse. Douglas is also taking on the role as first point of contact for the equine grass sickness cases, a crucial role for us here. He is a keen carriage driver. We also have a new face and voice in reception in the form of Joanne Smith who hails from Dunbar joining our long serving team of Morven and Trish.

## Facility news

### Gamma camera

We are delighted to be finally updating our gamma scintigraphy equipment. After 12 years, our current system was starting to show its age, making a new system a priority for the clinic. Our new scintigraphy set up, provided by Southern Scientific Ltd. should give us enhanced image quality with the advanced motion correction software application that is incorporated. Scintigraphy is of course often crucial in evaluating the musculoskeletal system, giving us information about active bone turnover so that we can correlate with findings from other imaging modalities.

## Staff profile: The Nursing Team



Along with our trainee equine nurses and nurse technicians, the nursing team, headed by Paula Thompson play a crucial role in holding the hospital together!

Our nurses form the lynchpin between the vets, the yard staff and the students. Paula Thompson is our head nurse, assisted by Caroline Sheridan and Douglas Callaghan (both also trained equine VNs); and Amy Garden who has just started her nurse training.

## New surgical facilities

We are excited to announce that a new surgery and intensive care suite, along with an advanced imaging facility at a later date, have been ranked as a "priority development" within the Easter Bush Campus.

A feasibility study has recently been undertaken, and next year there will be a fundraising initiative which seeks to raise the capital required for this development.

Those of you who have been here lately will have noticed the vast change that has occurred in the site over the last 5 years.

The New Vet School building is a great success admired by all and the integration with the Roslin Institute has given us access to world class research Facilities.

We are committed to providing and fostering first class equine care at the Dick Vet Equine Hospital and a new surgical facility will allow us to do that well into the future.



**All the best for 2013,  
from all of us  
at the Hospital**

## Our Clinicians

### Medicine

**Professor Bruce McGorum**  
BSc, BVM&S, Cert EM, DipECEIM, MRCVS

**Dr Scott Pirie**  
BVM&S, PhD, Cert EM, Cert EP, DipECEIM, MRCVS

**Dr John Keen**  
BVetMed, PhD, Cert EM, DipECEIM, MRCVS

**Dr Karen Blissitt**  
BVSc, PhD, DVA, DipECVAA, MRCVS

### Surgery

**Professor Paddy Dixon**  
MVB, PhD, MRCVS

**Dr Sarah E. Taylor**  
BVM&S, PhD, Cert ES (Orth), DipECVS, MRCVS

**Mr Eugenio Cillan-Garcia**  
DVM, MRCVS

**Mr Richard Reardon**  
BVetMed (Hons), MVM, Cert ES (Orth) DipECVS, MRCVS

## Our Residents

**Claire Stratford**  
BVetMed (Hons), MRCVS

**Tim Barnett**  
BVM&S, MRCVS

**Lucinda Meehan**  
BVSc, MSc, MRCVS

**Justine Kane-Smyth**  
BVM&S, MRCVS

**Rachel Jago**  
BVM&S MRCVS