



December 2020 Newsletter

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Find us on 

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GENERAL MEETING 8pm Tuesday 1st December 2020

All members are welcome to come along - Southern Hotel - Gawler (next to Cafe Nova)
Come early for tea – 7pm

MEMBERS FOR 2021

The Club currently has 42 members with a constant number of riders enquiring to possibly join.

Welcome Returning member: *Kylie Bryant from Tanunda and*

New Members to the Club: *Caroline Roberts from Uleybury,*

Kylie and Belle Fotheringham from Shea-oak Log.

Karen Suhrcke of Eudunda

Di Thorpe of Aspley Vic (soon to jump the border !)

Wishing all newly joined & our current members, continued happiness riding & socialising together.

Your Club President and Committee wish everyone a Safe and very Happy Christmas

LAST MEETING – NOVEMBER 3RD

Meeting discussion included:

- Ride Calendar / Preparation of 2021 rides – Confirming Dates and Hosts (ongoing).
- Ride debriefs.
- Christmas Dinner Event 5th Dec
- Christmas Ride 12th Dec
- Confirmed, updated Club Policy has been sent to all members – for all riders to note.

NOTE There will be no January committee meeting.

Kath McCullagh

Secretary – Gawler Trail Horse Riders Club

ATHRA ANNOUNCEMENT - MEMBERSHIP 2021

NOTE THIS FOR YOUR FRIENDS!!!!

ATHRA exists to serve the common interests of its members so in response to comments and suggestions made by our clubs and members; the ATHRA Board has decided to kick start 2021 with a one-off membership offer as detailed below:

- *For all existing 2020 members who joined prior to 30/9/20, your memberships have been automatically rolled over for the 2021 year – your membership will now expire on 31/12/21. You should have received your membership confirmation via email. If for some reason you have not, please contact gawlerTHRC@gmail.com*



- **For your friends and family who are either new or previous members, if they join between 1 Oct and 31 December the ATHRA component will be reduced by 50%. So, encourage your friends to join up and take up this offer because on 1 January 2021, our normal membership rates will then apply.**

COMING EVENTS

Club Christmas Gathering – Gawler - Saturday 5th December 2020

Host Gayle Bates Ph 0426 622 405 Conveners – Gayle and Di Schaefer

Ph Di on 0437 165 016

Cost: \$10 per head **RSVP by Sunday 29th November**



Members & family, past members and special friends of the club are invited.

Arrive at 5pm and we will enjoy each other's company and a meal over the next four hours. We will have our function on the banks of the South Para River – a nice relaxed setting. I believe there are carp too in the river and you are encouraged to bring your fishing rod and catch a couple, you might even win a prize for the biggest and I am assured they are WHOPPERS. But you have to take your catch home and feed it to the cat or dispose of it at your place.

All tables, chairs, plates, cutlery and serviettes are supplied. You only have to bring your own drinks and a glass in your esky.

Dinner will be served at 6.30pm and we plan on having a variety of Pizzas. Please advise when you RSVP if you have any dietary requirement – ie gluten free etc. We will try our best to cater for everyone.

The Kris Kringle gift exchange will be happening again this year as it is always a winner and keeps the entertainment going. Please keep your gift \$15 or under and clearly mark the parcel if it is for a male or female. Before you head down to the river, place your gift on the table provided. If you prefer not to be involved with the gift giving that is fine... just let Gayle or Di know so that they can remove your name at the time of Kris Kringle craziness.

Dress is casual and girls please wear suitable shoes as you have a little way to walk down to the river setting from the car park. The function will be totally outdoors and maybe bring your jumper in case the evening comes in cool. There is an open shelter if the weather is not good and if it is really bad we will have to head up to the shed.

As stated above we are having pizzas followed by a fruit platter. Nibbles will be served upon arrival.



PAYMENT: Those who RSVP to come to this Club gathering (phone direct to Gayle or Di – see their phone numbers above), payment will be required via electronic money transfer to a nominated bank account that will be given to you when you phone, as will directions to the venue. (Communication via text or email for privacy etc). or pay cash to Di / Gayle.

NOTE – if you intend on coming - your money must be received prior to the event as purchases need to be made – it is not appropriate not to do so.

Looking forward to seeing you all for a very happy night by the river !!

December Ride – Rosedale – Saturday – 12 Dec 2020

Host – Lisa Crinion Trail Boss TBA

RSVP to gawlerTHRC@gmail.com by 9th December 2020.

Saturday – Arrive 8 am for a 9am start (8.45am pre-ride muster without horses) - Ride 2-3 hours

Invitation from our kind hosts to stay afterwards for a BBQ

Directions: Rosedale area – full directions to those who RSVP.

Ride Description: This ride will be 2 to 2.5 hrs. Ride track consists of white metal roads/ dry weather only roads, vineyard tracks.

Ride Grade: easy to moderate.

Traffic – Some vehicles possibly – Mostly country gravel roads not busy. And riding off roads.

Slightly undulating, no steep hills (other than the driveway) ☺

Ok for seasoned barefoot.

Walk / trot ride.

Hazards Very likely will be kangaroos & stock in paddocks & vineyard equipment.



As in the past, Lisa and her generous family wish to supply a healthy BBQ lunch after the ride for those who would like to stay and enjoy.

Riders are asked to bring a plate of sweet or savoury food to contribute to our BBQ lunch (as per Covid19 regulations, serving of food by one person will be required).

(Club to supply cutlery/ plates & cups) for this meal. Perhaps members bring a camp chair to use in case a large number of riders are present.

NB: Lunch will go ahead regardless of weather.

Cost- ATHRA member \$2 Ride fee. Non ATHRA member riding visitor fee \$30/day (please be advised that if you are not a member of ATHRA you will need to be sponsored by an ATHRA member to ride & pre-register as a day member 3 days prior with ATHRA online - \$20 direct to ATHRA & \$10 to club on the day).

Please bring the correct change & place in tin at sign on book

RIDE CALENDAR FOR 2021

Are you able to host a Club ride?

- We are seeking ideas from our riders for the 2021 year's trail rides.
- If you are able to host a ride or think of one that you would like to go on (we will arrange for the particular ride to take place) please let the committee know so that we can start to fill the calendar.
- Contact a committee member or email your thoughts and ideas to gawler.thrc@gmail.com

Rides can be Saturday or Sunday

Some of the ride areas and types of rides that the club has had are:- Beach rides, Birdwood, Tarlee, Leisingham, Mt Crawford Forest, Kapunda, Barossa Winery Tour, Humbug Scrub, Tungkillo – all suggestions will be welcomed.

As not all members can travel/camp the camp nominations are mostly scheduled as additional weekends (~5th weekend of the month or 1st if we have nominations) we also try to schedule road rides in winter (forest rides have to be when ground is not too wet or fire bans in place) - camp weekend dates are negotiable

Camp destination examples: - Catninga, Benson Park, Melrose, Bendleby Range, Morgan, Bria-Glen, Truro Gorge, Waterloo, Flinders, Peechera Hills.

We will be continually discussing our monthly ride calendar for the next couple of months, **so get those ideas & dates to the committee** ...Please make suggestions of rides that you would like the club to do and maybe some new rides, pretty rides, bush, forest, country or just a favourite ride you would like to share. Remember it does not need to be from your home, but the start of the ride needs to have parking of floats. So give it some thought and let us know. Or even just let us know which of the rides the club has done that you would like to do again.

Remember it's your club, so vote for a ride you want to do & we will find a volunteer to host

Rides are usually held on the 3rd weekend (Sunday calculated) & 5th Sunday of the month (if there is one).
Camps held ~1st or 5th weekend of the month (negotiable) Meeting dates are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month

The following is a work in progress – dates, location & hosts to be continually confirmed

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Ride Date 2020	Location	Host	Club Meeting Dates for 2020
Dec 5	Christmas celebration gathering	Gayle Bates/Di Schaefer	1 Dec
Dec 12	Rosedale – Christmas ride	Lisa Crinion	
<i>Happy Christmas Everyone here's to a great year ahead with our ponies!!!</i>			
2021	Location	Host	Club Meeting Dates for 2021
Jan 17	Pt Parham Beach		No meeting
Jan 23	Twilight ride	Maria Pearce	
Feb 21	Osborne Beach		2 Feb
March 21			2 March
April 18			6 April
May 16			4 May
May 30	Camp TBA		
June 20			1 June



Ride Date 2020	Location	Host	Club Meeting Dates for 2020
July 18			6 July
Aug 15			3 Aug
Aug 29	Camp Mt Belvidere	Richard Grimson	
Sept 19			7 Sept
Oct 17			5 Oct
Oct 31	Camp TBA		
Nov 21			2 Nov
Dec 12	Xmas ride TBA		7 Dec

PAST EVENTS

November Ride – Barossa Winery



**SAD THAT THE CLUB RECENTLY COULDN'T HAVE THIS RIDE.
 BUT WE WILL TRY AGAIN LATER.
 THERE WERE 18 EAGER RIDERS WANTING TO JOIN IN THE WINERY FUN.
 ~~~~~ THANK YOU LISA ~~~~~  
 FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND EFFORT PULLING THIS RIDE TOGETHER.  
 OUR MEMBERS WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO AGAIN LATER !**

**October Combined Camp – Mount Pleasant**



The southern ATTHRA group arrived at the Mount Pleasant Showgrounds and were pleasantly surprised with the amenities for them. Our president Julie J looked after them well all weekend assisting with rides and socialising. It was hilarious to see 7 riders & their horses all camped up in the cattle pavilions (fully enclosed from the weather all weekend), all very cosy with kitchen and bed setups laid out opposite each other. Some of our club members also joined the group to have a pub dinner Friday and Sat nights & also enjoy riding with them. – A very successful camp away weekend for his Southern Group. – Thank you to all our members who joined with them to meet & socialise.



## October Camp – Peechera Hills

### Summary from Jackie Ladhams and Chris Holt

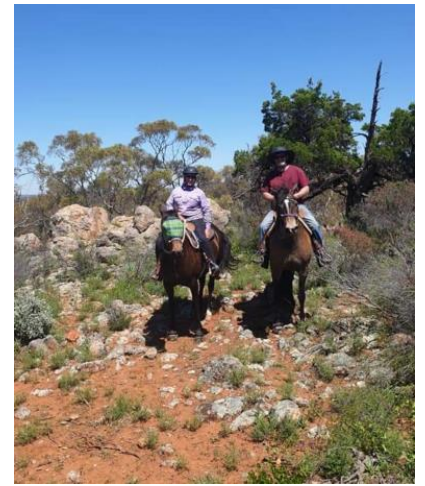


From the newcomers Chris and Jackie - What a weekend our first camp with the club.

What can we say the people were fantastic. Thanks Chris for the help with our yard building and native lemongrass bread.

Thanks to all the ladies now we have a special calibrated piece of twine. We will treasure it. Chris says all the ladies are very special but not as special as his horse Evie of course!!!

The rides and weather were perfect along with all the wild flowers. Well done Kath the trail boss for finding our way around the tracks. We can't wait for our next mission. From.....Chris and Jackie



### Summary from Kath McCullagh



Peechera Hills near Oodla Wirra (on the way to Broken Hill) has been in drought for 7 years but I was not surprised to see green when I arrived considering we had to cancel our "reci" ride due to flooding the previous week. But I was surprised at the number of flowers to be seen popping up after the rain ☺. At our camp Ruth & Lisa were already set up next to the yards & then Lainie & Maria with happy hubbie Chris were quick to follow to get sorted before our first ride on Friday.



We headed out to explore to the east & north of the camp in the wind, as usual it was a case of "what do I wear" & "is it going to rain"? We opted for coats & lucky we did, it didn't rain but the wind had a chill that went straight through us. 5 headed off with several of the horses being a bit "frisky" keeping us on our toes for a short, rocky pretty ride of ~12k & 2 hrs but we were all happy to get back to camp to be joined by Tamara, Chris & Jackie to socialise around the camp fire for the evening.

Next morning we woke to no wind but no Ruth either, who had departed due to a restless night next to the horses ☹.



7 of us headed off for the day of riding to explore the hills to the South of the camp. We went up, down, through & over the hills & creeks, did some bush bashing & followed some lovely trails, saw the "lion on the hill" & relax at lunch time next to a beautiful rocky creek. We had a great day with all the amazing colours & sites greeting us along the way. Our ponies never cease to



amaze me in their willingness to explore with us. We were out for about 6 hours & 22k. Just perfect ☺ Another evening of chat & laughter around the campfire in lovely weather.



Sunday the 7 riders opted for an easy ride following the abandoned railway line to "Skull Rock". It was a bit of a question on where the said rock was but eventually we discerned the correct rock & then it was clear to see 😊, the ride back to camp was a new expedition as some of us chose to follow the line all the way home & had to force our way through as it was overgrown in places. Tamara & I had a bit of a meander home as drags collecting railway spikes, fossicking for history & looking at the flowers lovely. Again great horses, great company & beautiful scenery for about 3hrs & 15k.



Lisa, Chris, Jackie, Maria & Chris headed home after the ride but Tamara, Lainie & I stayed on for an extra night to spend time with our ponies, veg out, talk and maybe one or two more wines. 😊

A great weekend in a great location. We will return to Peechera Hill after the rain again to explore the superb red earth, rock formations, pretty scrub & undulating hills from the other campground 😊



Summary from Lisa James-Wake

**Day 1**



To begin with the weather forecast wasn't looking that great with the threat of lightning and thunder Friday, but mother nature was very kind and only a few sprinkles of rain and a bit of wind was all we really had. Great weather for a campfire and campfire chit-chat. Our little ride out on Friday had us get a bit of a glimpse of fence lines and gates and tracks to explore the next day. We did see some lovely cactuses that were flowering bright yellow. All the horses were very well behaved despite the bit of rain and wind, although Maria and Ted were displaying some lovely dressage moves. (side passes and piaffes) for part of the ride.

We arrived back after being out for no longer than 2 hours to find our two new members Chris and Jackie setting up yards for their horses. Upon closer look I realised there were two mares!!!! My first thought was panic LOL, 2 mares amongst the geldings. How will my horse behave on a ride out the whole next day with a couple of mares.....!!!

**Day 2**

7 of us rode out Saturday morning, Lainie, Maria, Kath, Tamara, Jackie, Chris and myself. What a fantastic ride we had.....those mares I was worried about...well they were just gorgeous, I'd make them my own in heartbeat.



The tracks took us up to LION lookout where we could see across for miles. The lookout was actually marked with a stone Lion statue, great landmark! Then with Kath's Map and inbuilt GPS we tracked our way through the scrubby hillsides and flats. Found a Dam for the thirsty horses, some more beautiful flowering cactuses, a lovely rocky creek bed and a then also followed a rocky off-track animal track that gave the ride a real middle of the outback feel.

After losing our direction a little bit (and turning heads to "the TOWER" we came to a fence line that we followed along until we came to the very rustic homestead. After winding through a couple gates and heading in the direction of the TOWER (general direction of camp) we weaved our way back.



Arrived back at camp with a lovely fire that had been prepared and started by Maria's champion husband. But not only that, he also went on to use the fire to cook an awesome campfire loaf of bread. I'm sure I vouch for all campers...it was to die for.

Another fun night at the campfire with lots of banter and laughs.

**Day 3**

I woke up thinking that I'd the last ride. I'd packed up reassured by the others and a quick call to home to The sun was shining and it glad I went. The ride line out and it was the best thought so anyway. assortments of flowers and tracks that lead us to "Skull Kath got us there, she's photos were taken, we then route but it was just as Thank you to all the riders weekend!!



perhaps start to head for home and not do most of my camp the night before.....But that it would only be a 2 or so hour ride make sure all was good, I decided to ride. was beautiful riding weather. I sure am started with us following the old railway strip of country on the property...well I Flowering hops and a few other eventually led us back to some scrub Rock". To this day I have no idea how one heck of a map reader. After some headed back to camp, taking the same spectacular. and their horses, it was a fantastic

Summary by Maria Pearce



What a great few days relaxing with our friends and horses. So peaceful & filled with oodles of laughs. Good food, wine & a great time catching up with members that you don't ordinarily get to spend time with. Fabulous to have new members Chris & Jackie join the group – such an interesting lot of stories they had to tell us of their life together. I want a Morgan pony too!!... what a pair of fabulous ponies they had. Well – we all had wonderful horses carting us around up & down hills, through creek beds, thick scrub and rock formations. It was such a rewarding time for each of us I think to spend this time with a safe caring group of riders and our precious horses.

The owner of the property came along to see us and brought some wild lemon grass that's growing on the property to show us (just gotta know where to find it) & which we then experimented by chopping up in a fresh loaf of bread.

I was so grateful to be just wandering along with the leaders of the group who knew just where they were all of the time and had all the confidence to take us over this property (I had no clue at any given time!!) – & we only rode over a portion of the property. Yes we'll have to go back again some time. My horse was a real trouper & just went where ever I wanted him to go – all our horses

were simply terrific.

A huge thank you to all of you who were on this camp & to Hubby for joining & doing plenty of chores for me & us!



**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The deadline for any items that members want printed in the **January 2021** newsletter will be **Monday 23 December** so please ensure that your emails reach Maria Pearce on [gawler.thrc@gmail.com](mailto:gawler.thrc@gmail.com) before that date to avoid disappointment.



## HORSE HEALTH

### *How can I detect if my horse has Colic* -extract from "www.thehorse.com"

Colic can range from mild to severe, with horses showing a multitude of signs when afflicted with gastrointestinal pain. Horse owners should be familiar with their horse's normal vital signs and behaviour, so they are quickly alerted if a colic episode arises.

Horses are incredibly stoic animals. In nature, as a prey species, any vulnerable horse affected by illness or injury may mask outward signs and this can occur when mild abdominal pain – the first level of colic – develops.

In its earliest stages, mild abdominal pain may only be noticed by a slight change in behaviour, such as increased time spent lying down, failure to finish a meal or a variation in manure output. If you suspect colic early, it's best to check your horse's vital signs for any changes.

Listed below are the normal vital signs for horses:

- Pulse: the normal resting pulse rate should be between 32-40 beats per minute
- Respiration: the normal respiratory rate should be between 8-20 breaths per minute
- Temperature: a rectal temperature between 37.5-38.5 degrees celsius is considered normal

Any sudden spike in heart rate, respiratory rate or temperature may indicate a health problem, such as colic, and you should call your veterinarian immediately to discuss the situation. The absence of gut sounds is also cause for concern.

As a horse's colic progresses from mild to severe, their behaviours may change as the pain and discomfort becomes more intense. Some of the common signs of colic include:

#### **Mild abdominal pain**

- Loss of interest in food or water
- Playing in the water trough, but not drinking
- Pawing at the ground

#### **Moderate abdominal pain**

- Frequently laying down and getting up
- Kicking at the belly
- Grunting

#### **Severe abdominal pain**

- Excessive sweating around the flanks or shoulders
- Continuous rolling
- Getting up and down violently

While this list of clinical signs is by no means exhaustive, it does show the variety of behaviours commonly associated with colic. If you have any concerns about your horse and the possibility of colic, you should contact your veterinarian urgently who can assess the situation.

Your veterinarian will be able to perform a complete physical examination of your horse, along with a thorough investigation of their paddock, bedding and stall to determine if there is evidence of colic. Diagnostic testing may also be necessary to identify the type of colic present. NB: If your horse is not Hendra vaccinated your vet may be limited in diagnostic test they can perform. Depending on their clinic Hendra protocol, some vets will not perform invasive procedures on any unvaccinated horses. Check with your local vet for their protocol.

## **Colic**

Colic is arguably the most feared disease of horses. It seems that every horse owner knows of a horse that has died from colic. Colic is potentially fatal for horses, however the far majority of cases of colic respond to simple treatment and very few colics are fatal. The term 'colic' in horses simply describes abdominal or belly pain and it is likely that most horses will have an episode of colic at some time in their life. Providing that veterinary advice is sought early and that the appropriate treatments are given, a good outcome is usually achieved.

## **Symptoms of Colic**

As horse owners it is extremely important that you can recognize the symptoms of colic in order to enable early veterinary intervention. In the mildest cases a horse may only show signs of depression and lack of appetite. With more painful colics the horse might turn and look at its belly repeatedly, they might sweat a little and curl their upper lip, and they may lie down more frequently than you would expect. Some horses with colic stretch out as if trying to urinate, and some dog sit with their hindquarter on the ground and forelimbs extended. As the pain worsens they may paw the ground with a front leg as if they are trying to dig a hole and if the pain gets worse your horse might roll about on its back on the ground, sometimes violently taking skin off from the sides of their head. These horses may distend in the belly, looking bigger and rounder than usual and they may or may not pass manure.







However, be aware that a horse with severe and serious colic can still pass manure as the problem in the gut may be well forward of the rectum; the transit time from mouth to manure can be days.

If your horse shows symptoms of colic you should call your veterinarian immediately. Most colics will require urgent veterinary intervention to prevent the condition worsening. While waiting for veterinary assistance, prevent the horse's access to hard feed and hay. If the horse is pawing the ground and wanting to roll about on his back then try walking them briskly to prevent them from going down until your veterinarian administers pain relief. Lunging can also help in some cases. There is risk that rolling around on the ground may result in a twisted bowel. BE CAREFUL with a violently rolling and thrashing horse. Do not put yourself at risk. If the horse cannot safely be kept on its feet, leave it



down until the veterinarian arrives. Very painful horses can injure owners. These horses can suddenly throw themselves to the ground and you can get caught underneath them. You should also never administer pain-relieving medications without discussing this with your veterinarian, as these medications can mask the severity of the colic making it difficult for the veterinarian to assess your horse accurately.

*Some horses dog-sit with their hindquarter on the ground and forelimbs extended*

## Causes Of Colic

The causes of colic are varied. Most colics are the result of gas build up in the gut, with distension and stretch of the gut wall causing pain. Others are due to increased motility resulting in excessive spasm of the gut. Conversely, some are the result of complete loss of normal motility, leading to distension and pain. Some are the result of simple blockages from feed or more rarely foreign objects like string, plastic bags or parts of hay nets. Other blockages can result from large stones that form over time in the gut, these are called enteroliths and the can be the size of a small football. Occasionally blockages can result from sand accumulations in the gut and as much as 20 litres can accumulate over time blocking the gut. More rarely the gut displaces, repositioning itself in the wrong place thus causing partial obstructions and colic. Less commonly, the gut can twist on itself or it can become strangulated around or through abdominal structures causing a strangulating obstruction and life threatening compromise to the gut's blood supply.



**Gas Colic** occurs commonly in the horse. Gas is a normal byproduct of microbial assisted digestion in the horses' large bowel. It is easiest to think of the horses' bowel as a large fermentation vat where potentially indigestible food sources are fermented generating a useable source of energy and gas as a byproduct. There is the potential for this gas to become temporarily trapped within the bowel causing colic. Gas colics can also result from increased production of gas from sudden access to a more highly fermentable food source. Pain associated with gas colic is a consequence of distension and stretching of the wall of the gut. It can be extremely painful. Providing there is not a complete obstruction of the gut, the gas will pass and exercise can help the process. There is the potential for a severely distended bowel to become buoyant and it can potentially twist on itself. This is an example of how a simple gas colic can turn into a surgical emergency.

**Spasmodic Colic and Ileus Spasmodic Colic** is the consequence of increased motility and spasm of the gut resulting in pain. Standing near the flanks of your horse you may be able to hear loud and frequent gurgling gut sounds. Spasms can come in cycles so your horse may have periods of colic interrupted by less painful moments. Ileus is the term used to describe lack of motility of the gut. With ileus there is an absence of gut sounds. Pain is associated with the distension of the bowel because ingesta is no longer moving through it. Ileus is particularly problematic for the narrow loops of the small intestine, which quickly become filled to capacity. This results in distension and pain which is usually continual and severe. Spasmodic colics and ileus can have numerous causes and often the exact cause is never realised. Potentially anything eaten that irritates the gut can cause these colics and they are not uncommonly associated with a sudden diet change. Less commonly considered causes include some medications and worm pastes, stress, infection, exercise, travel, worm burden and a change in routine.

**Food Impaction Colics** are the result of dehydrated food material compacting into concretions and obstructing the bowel at various narrowings throughout its length. Occasionally foreign material such as baling twine or plastic bags can be involved in the obstruction. Pain is the consequence of a complete obstruction of the gut with a build up of gas and ingesta behind this. Impactions can occur over days and colic pain can initially be mild, however worsening with time. The sooner an impaction is diagnosed and treated, the easier it is to correct. With time, the food impaction becomes more dehydrated and more concrete-like and consequently they are far more difficult to treat. Early impactions can be treated with repeat stomach drenches, while more severe cases require intravenous fluid therapy and occasionally surgery is indicated. Very fibrous feeds are more likely to be incriminated with impactions and dehydration often has a compounding effect. Poor dentition greatly increases the risk of impaction colics as these horses tend to not chew their food adequately resulting in increased fibrous content in the large bowel. There is no doubt that regular dental attention will reduce the likelihood of this type of colic. Also ensuring continual access to fresh water and allowing exercise will help to reduce the chance of impaction colic.



*Dental disease is a contributing*

**Sand Colics** are the end result of inadvertent ingestion of sand or loamy soil over a long period of time. The sand can accumulate in the horses' large colon and over time sufficient volume can build up causing colic. Mild colic can result from the mechanical irritation to the lining of the gut, such as the effect of sand paper. This can cause chronic episodes of pain over months or longer, and occasionally it is associated with diarrhoea. There is the potential for large volumes, sometimes greater than 20 litres to completely obstruct the

bowel resulting in severe colic. These colics are treated similarly to food impactions, with only recalcitrant sand colics requiring surgery. Some horses are known to eat sand due to boredom, however many accidentally ingest the sand while they are feeding off the ground. Consequently sand colic can be prevented by using hay nets or feeders or by restricting grazing on sandy, loamy soils. Feeding psyllium husks to at risk horses is of benefit as this will help move the sand through the horse. If you are concerned that your horse is eating sand then you can simply inspect the manure for evidence of this, sometimes it is very obvious. In more subtle cases sand can be detected by mixing manure and water in a bucket; the sand will sink to the bottom.

**Worms** can cause severe and potentially fatal colic. The worst offender of all is the strongyle group of worms. These parasites can migrate through the blood vessels supplying the gut of the horse. Excessive worm burden can result in thrombosis or clots to these blood vessels. Consequently, the gut can lose its blood supply resulting in the death of that section of gut and without surgery these horses have no chance of survival. Prior to the 'mectin' worm pastes this was a common cause of colic fatality. Fortunately, with the availability of effective worm pastes this disease is not seen in the regularly wormed horse population. Tapeworms are also thought to affect gut motility, which can lead to colic. Round worms have been reported to completely obstruct the gut of foals. Worming your horse regularly will definitely help prevent colic.



**Enteroliths** are stones that form over time in the gut eventually obstructing the horses' bowel. These stones begin as a small pebble or foreign body only a few millimeters in size. Over time, they are concentrically coated in minerals from the horses' diet and they can grow to the size of a small football weighing up to 12kg. Some components in horses' diets contribute to this laying down of minerals more than others. Diets high in protein and nitrogen such as those high in Lucerne can increase the incidence of enterolith formation, as can diets which alter the pH of the intestine. There can be multiple enteroliths in the one horse. These stones cause colic by eventually moving into a bottleneck narrowing within the gut obstructing it. A horse may colic on and off over months or years as the enterolith blocks the gut and then moves itself free again. Eventually these stones obstruct the gut permanently causing a persistent and severe colic. Surgery is necessary to facilitate removal of the enterolith.

*Enteroliths can grow to the size of a small football weighing up to 12kg.*

**Displacements** of the large colon will result in colic. A large portion of the horse's colon is not well anchored in position and it is potentially mobile. Occasionally the large colon will migrate from its normal position and this is known as a displacement. Displacements cause incomplete obstructions, manure is still passed but often it is lesser in volume and not of normal consistency. Colic symptoms can be mild or severe, and potentially colic can result over days or weeks. Some displacements are successfully treated medically however many require surgical intervention to correct the positioning of the gut and to resolve colic.

**Twisted or incarcerated bowel** is potentially the most fatal of all colics, and is the most feared by horse owners. These colics result when the free unanchored portion of the large colon twists around on itself or when the very long and mobile small intestine twists around its root, or wraps tightly around another structure in the abdomen. These twists are often more than 360 degrees. A similar affect can also result if the small intestine incarcerates itself through tight and narrow potential spaces. These types of colics are the most dangerous because they result in a strangulating obstruction to the blood supply of the affected gut, and consequently that gut suffers irreparable damage and it dies inside the horse. Many toxins are released as the gut dies and this results in endotoxic shock and death of the animal. There is often an opportunity to treat these colics surgically however the window of opportunity for intervention is narrow, with a delay in surgery reducing the chance of the horse's survival. In most cases it is a matter of hours that makes the difference.

**Infection of the gut can cause colic.** Peritonitis is infection of the belly cavity and it results in inflammation of the gut and hence colic. Horses also suffer a condition where the beginning of the small intestine can become infected and inflamed, this is known as proximal enteritis and it results in severe colic. Colitis is also a cause of colic. With this disease, infection of the large colon results in severe inflammation and profuse watery diarrhea. It is important to monitor the rectal temperature of horses and to consider infection as a potential cause of colic.



## Diagnosis Of Colic

The first decision to be made when assessing a horse with colic is whether the horse is suffering from a medical colic or a surgical colic. Medical colics are those that respond well to pain relief injections and stomach drenching, while surgical colics are those that require surgical intervention in order to give the horse the best chance of survival. Many things are considered when making this decision including the level of pain the horse is suffering, the duration of the episode, response to pain relief, the heart rate, gum colour and amount and quality of gut sounds. Changes in these parameters are also important. Other tests that may be performed include an internal rectal examination, the passing of a stomach tube to assess the amount of gas and fluid in the stomach or a belly tap where a sample of the peritoneal fluid bathing the gut is collected for assessment at the clinic. Other tests that may be performed at the clinic include a blood test to determine how concentrated the horse's blood is, indicating the severity of the disease, or an abdominal ultrasound to assess the size and placement of the intestine, particularly the small intestine. The results of these tests enable veterinarians to determine a possible cause for the colic as well as to formulate a suitable treatment plan.



*Ultrasound image of dilated loops of small intestine (black circles)*

## Treatment of Colic

The vast majority of colic cases respond to medical treatment in the field. The primary treatment of colic includes the administration of injectable pain relief and possibly sedatives to help stop or prevent rolling. Other treatments that may be performed for a simple medical colic include stomach drenching with electrolytes or paraffin oil. Most horses recover fully following this treatment. It is not completely out of the ordinary for a horse to require this treatment more than once, however as the duration of the episode becomes longer, other treatments may need to be considered. Occasionally more intensive medical treatment is required, particularly if the horse has failed to respond to standard treatment in the field or if a potentially life threatening impaction is suspected. This more intensive treatment includes intravenous fluid therapy to maintain the horse's metabolic state, frequent drenches by stomach tube to hydrate the gut and its contents and the administration of medication as required.



*Intravenous fluid therapy for food impaction colic*

For those horses that fail to respond to medical treatment or those who are considered to have a surgical lesion following the tests mentioned above, rapid surgical intervention is required. Fortunately these cases are few and far between. Surgical colics include twisted or incarcerated bowel, displacements of the large intestine, enteroliths and those impactions that fail to respond to medical treatment. Surgical intervention is a big undertaking both in terms of potential complications for the horse and costs for the owner however outcomes are often good and the only alternative may be euthanasia in some cases.

## Prevention Of Colic

Many cases of colic will result despite the best care. There is no doubt however that certain simple management strategies will help lower the incidence. Horses must be fed a minimum of 1% of their body weight as fibre, grain should be minimized and a constant supply of clean water is a necessity. Routines should be set and maintained as best as possible as horses are creatures of habit. Try to feed at the same time in the morning and evening and avoid rapid changes in diet. If grazing is unavailable, horses should be fed small amounts of food frequently to mimic their natural eating habits. Avoid feeding horses off the ground in sandy conditions or where there is not good grass cover. Regular, annual or biannual dental treatment is essential to prevent feed impactions, and regular worming every 6-8 weeks is also required.

## Conclusion

Horse owners need to be able to recognize the symptoms of colic and early veterinary intervention should be sought. Although colic is probably the most feared disease by the horse owning community, the vast majority of cases have a good outcome with appropriate treatment and care. Following a few simple guidelines to help prevent colic and seeking attention if a horse shows signs of being affected are the cornerstone of good horse management as far as colic is concerned.

**By Dr Nathan Anthony BVSc (Hons) & Dr Ann Blackburne BVSc (Hons)**





## POLICIES

A reminder to all members that our club has some policies that we endorse. These include a **NON SMOKING, SAFETY & HOT WEATHER** policy. These can all be viewed on the ATHRA web site, via the state page - [www.athra.com.au](http://www.athra.com.au).

Previous Newsletters, photos & club information can also be viewed at any time on the ATHRA web site.

## WEATHER

The ride host/leader for the day will have the final say regarding weather (including inclement weather).

The hot weather policy states, if the weather forecast in **ELIZABETH** for the next day is to be **over 32 deg** (as per the news the night before) the club rally/ride will be cancelled (unless the ride is scheduled to commence prior to 9am or after 6pm). This is for the safety of all riders and horses. Also, any club rides in **FOREST** areas on **TOTAL FIRE BAN** days will be cancelled.

Please check with the Trail Boss if in any doubt. They have the final word!

## CLUB UNIFORM

Our club uniform currently comprises of a lime yellow high-vis shirt (long or short sleeve), **club badges available for \$12. Gawler Club Members & their visitors are required to wear Safety Helmets whilst mounted - helmet must be no more than five years old from Date of Manufacture.**

## RIDE FEE & DAY MEMBERS

ATHRA members - a ride fee of \$2 per ride is applicable.

Non ATHRA Members (Day Members) – a ride fee of \$30/person/day is applicable (\$10 to club on the day & \$20 to ATHRA with pre-registration) (*Non-refundable fee, maximum 2 days as a day member*).

The important things to note:

1. Day Members must be sponsored and accompanied at all times by an ATHRA member during the ride or event.
2. The Sponsoring member must make the Day Member aware of ATHRA rules and requirements of the Code of Conduct.
3. They may only sponsor 1 Day Member per ride.
4. By participating as a sponsor, the sponsoring member acknowledges responsibility for the conduct and behaviour of the Day Member
5. Day Members must contact the trail boss to discuss attendance & then pre-register with ATHRA Online at least 3 days prior to ride.

## RIDE HOST CHECKLIST

A ride host's checklist is in the green bag, in which is kept the sign in book, ride fee tin, saddle bags, first aid kits, safety vests, etc. Trail Bosses are to check the list to make sure all is in order prior to your ride. It is also t

+he Hosts responsibility to ensure a ride report is arranged to be submitted to Newsletter Editor prior to next publication date.

## DISCLAIMER

The material in this newsletter is for the benefit and information of our members. The items are in the nature of general comments only and are not to be used, relied or acted upon without written permission of GTHRC. The club accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions or for any damage suffered as a result of any person acting without written advice. All opinions and views in the newsletter are not necessarily the view of the club, but are personal opinions only.