Osteopathy and the Treatment of Horses
Osteopathy and the Treatment of Horses

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Julia Brooks
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Contents

Foreword vii
Preface viii
Dedication ix
Acknowledgements xi
About the Authors xii
Disclaimer xiii

1 Introducing Osteopathy for Horses 1
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

2 Horse Anatomy for Osteopaths 4
   Julia Brooks and Anthony Pusey

3 Neurophysiological Basis of Osteopathic Medicine 40
   Julia Brooks

4 Making a Start in Animal Practice 52
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

5 Case History 55
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

6 Static Observation 59
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

7 Observation of Active Movements 67
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

8 Palpatory Examination of the Unsedated Horse 76
   Annabel Jenks

9 Palpatory Examination of the Sedated Horse 91
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

10 Osteopathic Treatment – Overarching Principles 100
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

11 Osteopathic Treatment Without Sedation 106
   Annabel Jenks

12 Osteopathic Treatment of the Sedated Horse 154
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

13 Examination and Treatment under General Anaesthetic 171
   Anthony Pusey and Julia Brooks

14 Post-treatment Care and Management 191
   Annabel Jenks

15 Differential Diagnosis 200
   Christopher Colles

Glossary 208

Appendix A: Safety Aspects for Treating Horses, Unsedated and Sedated 214
   Annabel Jenks

Appendix B: Referral for Osteopathic Treatment 217
   Julia Brooks

Appendix C: Owner Consent Form for Osteopathic and Sedation Procedures 218
   Julia Brooks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix D: Information Sheet, Osteopathy in Practice</th>
<th>219</th>
<th>Appendix G: Static and Active Examination</th>
<th>225</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia Brooks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annabel Jenks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E: Case Sheet</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>Appendix H: Drugs Used in Treatment with Sedation and Treatment under Anaesthetic</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Brooks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annabel Jenks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F: Case History Questions</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annabel Jenks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

Having inherited the ‘horse addiction’ gene, I’ve always consumed horse books with alacrity. In the early days it was Black Beauty, moving on to the Pony Club Manual of Horsemanship, and eventually to the classical veterinary texts. University era textbooks still inhabit my bookshelves but over the years they’ve been joined by new books describing the latest technologies and techniques. *Osteopathy and the Treatment of Horses* will certainly find a place among my favourites.

The contents of my bookshelves are a testament to how much the world has changed within this one lifetime – a time of incredible scientific and technological advancements that have affected all aspects of our lives and our horses’ lives. Horses are no longer utilitarian servants; they enrich the lives of their owners and trainers as valued companions and highly trained athletes. Breeders responded to the demand for high quality equine athletes, different breeds became highly specialized for specific sports and, consequently, competition performances improved dramatically. At the same time, equine sports medicine developed as a specialty area that caters to the special needs and problems of athletic horses. Veterinary practices acquired sophisticated diagnostic equipment and practitioners learned to use new therapeutic techniques including the application of complementary and alternative treatments. Many techniques that are now applied routinely in animals were learned from colleagues trained in the human medical specialties and it became obvious that collaboration between veterinary surgeons and human health care professionals could yield great benefits.

Having experienced the benefits of osteopathy at first hand, it was easy to appreciate the potential value of osteopathic treatments in horses. In fact, I’ve been eagerly awaiting the publication of *Osteopathy and the Treatment of Horses* for several years and am pleased to see that the final product exceeds even the highest expectations of a comprehensive text on equine osteopathy. The contents represent the collective knowledge and experience of three highly trained osteopaths, all of whom have a special interest in horses, and a renowned veterinary specialist in equine orthopedic surgery. The reader is taken on a journey that encompasses a historical background of osteopathy, a tour of the basic sciences of equine anatomy and physiology, some helpful advice for setting up an animal-oriented osteopathic practice and regulations governing diagnosis and treatment of animals. The later chapters describe the essence of osteopathy with detailed descriptions and copious illustrations of the osteopathic evaluation and therapeutic techniques.

We learn in these pages that Andrew Taylor Still is known as the father of osteopathy – surely the title of father of animal osteopathy belongs to the first author of this book. I regret that I never met Anthony Pusey. I certainly knew of his reputation and had hoped that one day our paths would cross, but it was not to be. It is a great shame that Anthony could not have seen this book in print but it is gratifying to know that his substantial contribution to animal osteopathy has been recognized in the publication of *Osteopathy and the Treatment of Horses*.

*Hilary M. Clayton, BVMS, PhD, DACVSMR, MRCVS Mary Anne McPhail Dressage Chair in Equine Sports Medicine*
It is many centuries since Hippocrates advocated the use of physical treatment and over 100 years since Dr Still formalised a system of manual medicine known as osteopathy. Since then, osteopathy has developed into a wide-ranging discipline touching the lives of many, from childhood to old age, through sports and in the workplace. The treatment of animals is a natural extension to this field. In essence, it is hoped that this book will highlight the role of osteopathy in the care of animals, and stimulate interest and discussion both between disciplines and within the profession.

Despite having a dedicated and enthusiastic following, very little has been written on osteopathy for animals. This book is the distillation of the experience of a number of practitioners over an extended period. It covers aspects of the history, theory, ethics, diagnosis and treatment of horses under conditions ranging from work in the field to the clinic-based environment.

It seeks to stimulate those already working in the field to analyse the way they practise and to contribute to the body of knowledge. Equally, it aims to provide a framework for practitioners just dipping a tentative toe into the waters of animal osteopathy. In addition, for allied professions such as veterinary surgeons, physiotherapists, chiropractors, saddlers, farriers and equine dentists, to name but a few, it is an opportunity to look at osteopathy with a view to working with osteopaths to provide the best treatment for the horses in their care.
Dedication

Anthony Pusey was an osteopath of international renown who was instrumental in linking the many different strands of academia, medicine and veterinary science with his great passion, osteopathy.

He was born on 22nd January 1951 and entered the British School of Osteopathy in London in 1969. After qualification with the Clinical Prize, he maintained his links with the school through undergraduate teaching. He infected generations of students with his enthusiasm for his subject, through lectures and demonstrations. His commitment to education was to continue throughout his career and his crowning achievement in this area was the development of a Master of Science degree for osteopaths in the application of osteopathy in the treatment animals.

In the 1970s he moved his practice from Harley Street to Haywards Heath in Sussex, where he was able to develop his osteopathic skill in treating families. This family connection was further extended when he was asked by a patient to look at his large German Shepherd Dog. He combined forces with the veterinary surgeon to treat the dog. They went on to set up an osteopathic clinic for small animals, presenting the results of this collaboration to the British Small Animal Veterinary Association’s congress in 1986.

Whilst developing his human practice, one of the largest in Britain, his work with small animals inevitably led to larger species ranging from prize pigs to racing camels. This interest focused on horses in the 1980s when he met Dr Chris Colles, a vet with a research background at the Animal Health Trust, who was by then a partner in a large equine veterinary referral centre. Chris had noted that a proportion of cases referred to the hospital, with complaints such as stiffness and poor performance, had no demonstrable disease despite extensive tests. This exactly mirrored the cases Anthony was seeing in the human practice. The two of them decided to work together to investigate this phenomenon at Avonvale Veterinary Centre. This clinic had patients from the top echelons of the horse world including Olympic competitors from a number of different nations.

Dr Colles was interested in using infra-red thermography as an objective tool to identify problems and evaluate the effect of treatment. Anthony realised the value of researching the effect of treatment on animals in countering the placebo argument that had been levelled at human osteopathy. This resulted in a number of papers presented to international audiences.

In 1998 a lecture at the Army Remount Centre at Melton Mowbray led to an invitation to treat the horses of the Household Cavalry at Knightsbridge Barracks. Anthony loved working with these magnificent horses, and enjoyed the hospitality of the officer’s mess. It also led him into contact with the Crown Equerry, and his clinics came to include
Dedication

the horses at Buckingham Palace Mews and Windsor Castle. He often continued ‘case conferences’ over dinner at the Cavalry and Guards Club, which he considered affectionately as his London home. In 1999 he became a liveryman in the Worshipful Company of Farriers and a freeman of the City of London.

His infectious enthusiasm and his ability to listen and respect the ideas of the key players in many different walks of life meant that he was able quietly and inexorably to advance his ideas on the role of osteopathy in the medical and veterinary fields.

He died on 30th March 2007 of adenocarcinoma of the oesophagus. His memorial service was held in the Guards Chapel.

Adapted from obituaries in The Daily Telegraph 6th April 2007
Acknowledgements

This book is the distillation of years of osteopathic treatment applied to animals. None of this would have been possible without the significant input from the many veterinary surgeons, both at home and abroad, who were open to the idea of a different approach to musculoskeletal problems. These include Graham De Baedemaeker with whom the initial foray into working with dogs was made, and Dr Chris Colles whose knowledge, insight and enthusiasm for the subject have resulted in the continued evolution of osteopathic treatment in horses.

Alongside the vets, the efficiency and professionalism of the staff at Avonvale Veterinary Group and in particular Trish Thornton have eased the strain of busy clinics.

Working as part of a co-ordinated team brings innumerable benefits. Multidisciplinary clinics with professionals such as physiotherapist Amanda Sutton and vet acupuncturist Sue Devereaux as well as the many farriers, saddlers and equine dentists encountered along the way have led to the exploration of new ideas together in a clinical setting.

The variety and colour of the osteopathic experience have been greatly enhanced by working with the officers, men and horses of the Household Cavalry and the Royal Mews, especially Major Jo Holmes and Colonel Mark Morrison.

The input of fellow osteopaths such as Tony Nevin, Dr Tony Wahba, Steven Choy, Hilary Hubbers, Chris Fielding and Jonathan Cohen has proved invaluable. Unstinting support from nearer home in discussing the content and endlessly proofreading chapters was provided by Dr Bernard Brooks, Georgina Brooks, James Brooks, Rupert Pusey, Antonia Pusey and Commodore Richard Bridges. My thanks also go to the staff at Awbrook Lodge, particularly Brenda Keerie, Gillian Oldfield, Jill Guard, Susan Elliot, Betty Dann, Janet Saunders and Phil Ashman.

Annabel would also like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their assistance in the making of this book: osteopaths Sarah Howells DO, David Powers DO, Tony Nevin DO and Alison Tyler DO; international dressage rider and trainer Jill Day; Jessica and Stuart Jeffrey for their IT expertise; her sister Caroline for proofreading; her partner Tom Craig and the staff at the stables for all their patience and support; her horse Merlin who modelled for the photographs; and all the patients, horses, vets, riders and owners over the years who have helped her develop her osteopathic skills.

Finally, thanks go to the staff of Wiley-Blackwell and especially Katy Loftus for great patience and encouragement in bringing this book to its conclusion.
Anthony Pusey, an osteopath of international renown, has been instrumental in establishing the role of osteopathy in the treatment of animals. Qualifying from the British School of Osteopathy in London in 1971, he developed a large human osteopathic practice whilst also forging links with veterinary practices where he treated horses from the top echelons of the horse world, including Olympic competitors of many different nations. He also treated the horses of the Household Cavalry, The Royal Mews and Windsor Castle. He lectured nationally and internationally, as well as developing a Master of Science degree in the application of osteopathy in the treatment of animals. This book is a distillation of over 35 years of his work in this field.

Julia Brooks MSc DO qualified from the British School of Osteopathy in 1983 before joining Anthony Pusey in a practice that encompassed both human and animal osteopathy. She has lectured nationally and internationally at postgraduate level and has presented research papers on this subject as well as contributing to a number of veterinary and osteopathic textbooks. She has been involved in Masters programmes and postgraduate diplomas in both the development stages and as an external examiner for the University of Wales.

Annabel Jenks DO ND is an osteopath with over 25 years’ experience. She has a private practice in Essex, UK, treating a full spectrum of patients both human and equine, from Pony Club to Olympian. She graduated in 1984 from The British College of Osteopathic Medicine in London, where she has been a governor since 1997. She is a faculty member on the Masters Degree in Animal Osteopathy at the University of Wales. She has previously ridden in all disciplines but now concentrates on dressage, training and competing with her own horses from novice through to advanced level.

With contribution of Chapter 15 from Christopher Colles BVetMed, PhD, Hon FWCF, MRCVS, RCVS specialist in equine surgery (orthopaedics). Dr Colles qualified from the Royal Veterinary College, London in 1971. After spending 4 years in general practice, he joined the Animal Health Trust, Equine Clinical Unit (formerly the Equine Research Station) in 1975. He carried out research into orthopaedic conditions of the horse, and was awarded his PhD in 1982. In 1988, when head of the equine clinical department, he returned to equine practice since when he has been carrying out referral work at the Avonvale Veterinary Practice, a specialist equine practice in the Midlands. He was recognised by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons as a specialist equine surgeon (orthopaedics) in 1996, and was awarded an honorary fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Farriers in recognition of his research and teaching in farriery in 2000. Dr Colles has published widely in the scientific veterinary literature, and lectured on equine orthopaedic topics world wide. He is co-author of seven veterinary textbooks.
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