The **Fue** Variable Girth System

Each one of these horses and a myriad of others require a unique saddle fitting solution.

Take a careful look at all these pictures and consider these points: the slope from croup to wither base, the rib cage width relative to shoulder width, the position of the girth groove relative to the back of the shoulder blade, the curvature of the abdomen from the hind leg through the front legs and the symmetry of the shoulders. Each element will contribute its own significant force effect on the position of the saddle as soon as the horse starts to move. Some forces will balance others out but some may conspire together to impair the rider’s balance and the horse’s freedom of movement.
For forward girth groove horses or those where the saddle slips forward easily use the front and rear fittings in 1 above to start with (note that the longest girth is fitted to the front strap). If the saddle slips back move the front strap by one hole at a time, as in 2, and test ride, especially at canter, and move again if necessary. Sometimes the best hacking position may be one hole back from the best dressage position (shoulder movement is the key especially in dressage). The aim is to have the saddle positioned as in picture 4.

Picture 3 illustrates the girth position for a conformation which tends to push the saddle too far back with the result that the front edge of the panel sits behind the shoulders and the rider is tipped forward.
Star completing a two day 160 km at Red Dragon 2010 uses the VGS adjustments in picture 2 on previous page.

Star does not have a defined girth groove and previous saddles have marked the back and caused wither hollows and blocked the shoulder.

Jasper is using the VGS adjustments in picture 1 on the previous page on a 3 day ride.

He has a wide rib cage narrowing into his shoulders and upward sloping under-line.
If the saddle still slips forward under normal working conditions with the most forward position of the V-girth then it becomes necessary to use the VGS in the T-Girth rather than the V-girth position.

Eskar is the highest FEI ranked endurance horse in the UK at the end of 2010. His conformation, with the high croup, rising under-line between the front legs and shoulders which provide no forward support limited his abilities as all saddles moved forward blocking the shoulders or the crupper pulling hard on the dock. The rear girth of the T-Girth placed around the rise of the belly to the rear with the front girth close to the elbow counter acted the forward slip and allowed him to perform at his best.
Boris is short backed with a high croup and a wide ribcage, in addition the girth groove is very far forward.

A crupper had too much pull as did the breeching with the saddle moving over his shoulder. With the T-Girth he’s a different horse and the saddle stays in place.

This year he won the ROYAL LORD TROPHY in Endurance GB

Awarded to the horse/pony, 8yrs old and over, competing in their first Open Season, for the whole season at Open level and gaining the most points in Graded Rides of less than 65km
Convert an earlier \textit{FunE} saddle to VGS

Remove the panels but keep the adjusting screw settings (you can then copy nut positions to the new panels). Then remove the bridging piece (when removing the M4 screws at the points push and turn gently until they release or use a power driver with a torque setting, set low and build until the screws release pressing hard into the screw head all the time). Fit the new bridging piece using the thread locker on the M4 screw at the points and don’t over tighten just all the way home and snug. Place the rear of the bridging piece in the same place as the previous bridge.

Items are arranged next to the item/holes they are associated with.

The thread lock is essential for all the metric thread screws and is available from most hardware stores.

This is how the newly fitted bridge should look

The new panels with the variable girth fitting can now be fitted. Copy the adjustment screw lengths from the old panels to the new panels prior to fixing and remember to secure the locknuts.
Ready for panel pad

Use Velcro release tool to cover front Velcro strip so pad is easy to pull on.

The panel girth strap location strip sits over the panel pad cover

After closing rear zip remove the Velcro release tool