

Autumn 2014



Setting foals up for success

Sycamore poisoning
– be aware this autumn

HOME STRAIGHT:
TAKING ON AN
EX-RACEHORSE

TRAILER LOADING

You can do it alone!

CLICK HERE:
Reward-based training in horses & dogs

Harry Meade

The Big Interview:
His incredible return to the saddle



IH
**MEMBER
SPECIAL
OFFER**



Monty Roberts Dually Training Halters

£5 off Dually Halters
until the end of September!*

Use the members-only discount code
DHMEMBERS and save £5 on the Dually Halter
now at www.intelligenthorsemanshipshop.co.uk

*Offer valid for current Intelligent
Horsemanship Members on Dually Halters
purchased before 30th September 2014.
Discount code must be quoted to claim offer.



STOP IT Naturally with

Ruggles & Stopitall

...products utilising the **Power of Nature**, inside & out



equine • pet • farm • human • plant

- ◆ Joint Care/Ageing issues ◆ **Protexin Probiotics** (equine, human, pet) ◆ Digestive & Weight issues ◆ Vitamin D3 ◆ **Maxavita** Green Lipped Mussel ◆ Omega 3 oils/capsules/treats ◆ Colds/Flu, Immunity
- ◆ Superfood Barley Grass ◆ R&S Natural Skin/Haircare ◆ **Ruggle-it**

See web for **100's** of testimonials

Ruggle-it

1 Product - 18 Issues

equine • pet • farm • human



*+, Natural Vegetable Oils Blend
plus Soap-free Ultra Mild Shampoo.

Absolutely NO Tea Tree or Harsh Chemicals

- ◆ Midges/Mossies/Flies ◆ Mites/Lice/Ticks ◆ Mud & Wet Issues ◆ Scabs ◆ Mystery Itching ◆ Head Lice ◆ Fleas ◆ Itchy Pets ◆ Scaly Leg ◆ Hair Loss/Crusty Lumps ◆ Scurf/Irritated Skin ◆ Minor Cuts...

"Beats the Scottish midge & no more fly rugs" • "3 years of mud issues, leg mites, stamping – gone" • "Dog's & cat's hair grew back, no fleas & it saves on spot-ons" • "Ruggle-it REALLY works on multiple issues" • "Love the spray-shampoo trick – great in the cold & wet" • "Bugs do U-turns" • "I was sceptical – but not now!" • "Ruggle-it saves me a fortune" **Used by Vets**

www.karenruggles.co.uk | 01823 259952

Ruggles & Stopitall Ltd - utilising the **Power of Nature**

Bows 4 Shows

Delivering quality rosettes and
show supplies at fantastic prices



Find us on



email: sales@bows4shows.com
website: www.bows4shows.com
tel: 01262 604 031 / 07841 1377 187

37 St John Street
Bridlington
East Yorkshire
YO16 7NN

I have been extremely impressed with
your company in terms of efficiency,
courtesy and professionalism
Sue Webb, Bristol

quality equestrian buildings



Jon
William
Stables



Elite Stabling / American Barns /
Mobile Shelters / Garaging ...and more

For further information visit:
www.jonwilliamstables.co.uk

OR CALL US NOW ON
01380 850 965

Netherstreet • Bromham • Chippenham • Wiltshire • SN15 2DW

Welcome to Autumn

Dear Readers



Welcome to our autumn issue! I can hardly believe I'm writing that, although the blustery conditions outside my office window have a distinctly autumnal feel to them.

This issue is packed with interesting

articles as usual, so make sure you set aside some 'me time' with a cup of tea (or something stronger) to enjoy reading it. Our Big Interview is with eventer Harry Meade, who suffered horrendous injuries in a fall last year but has come back in great style – IH member Mary Tapping asked him how he did it.

Luckily, Harry didn't have to contend with confidence issues as well as physical ones, but for many riders a bad fall can mean more than just broken bones. IH case files (pages 38-40) looks at riders (and a horse) who faced up to their fears and came out the other side.

Our training section (pages 19-29) features everything from handling foals to hands-on therapy, as well as a step-by-step guide to trailer loading alone. There's also an interview with leading dog trainer Philippa Williams on reward-based training for dogs and horses.

This year is the 10th anniversary of the Karen Cunningham scholarship, set up in memory of one of Intelligent Horsemanship's first RAs who sadly lost her fight with breast cancer. This year's recipient of the scholarship is a passionate teenager from our chosen charity, Shy Lowen – read all about her on pages 34 -36 in an IH Kids special.

Finally there's some practical advice on pasture management as we head into the colder months as well as a topical piece on sycamore poisoning (atypical myopathy). The latter is a distressing affliction that has made the headlines all too often recently.

As ever, we love hearing your thoughts on the articles in the magazine, so please do get in touch via e-mail at editor@ihhq.net. Don't forget as well that there are fabulous IH rosettes to be won for the best member's picture, as well as our featured Meet a Member and IH success stories – get in touch if you would like to be considered!

Liz Falkingham, Editor



04



08



09



16



21



28



32



34

Contents



ON THE COVER

- 04 Kelly Marks – My World: Time for a horse update
- 06 Letters and feedback
- 07 IH Out & About
- 08 Members' pictures
- 09 Meet a member
- 10 Sycamore poisoning: be aware this autumn
- 12 The Big Interview: Top British event rider Harry Meade
- 16 Visit to America: Meeting of minds at Flag Is Up Farms
- 19 IH TRAINING: Born ready! Setting foals up for success
- 21 IH TRAINING: 'L' is for loading: Trailer loading alone
- 25 IH TRAINING: Mind your own... Starting an equine business
- 26 IH TRAINING: On the right track: Taking on an ex-racehorse
- 28 IH TRAINING: Training for life with gundog trainer Philippa Williams
- 30 Learn & Win
- 32 IH Success Story
- 34 IH Kids Special: The Karen Cunningham Scholarship
- 37 Charity Update: Shy Lowen
- 38 From the Case Files
- 41 IHRA client feedback
- 42 Spotlight on Bridget Colston
- 43 Intelligent Horsemanship Courses

Do you have a contribution for Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine?

Please phone, email or send your carrier pigeon to the IH office!

BY POST: Intelligent Horsemanship, Lethornes, Upper Lambourn, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 8QP

PHONE: 01488 71300 FAX: 01488 73783

EMAIL: editor@ihhq.net

WEBSITE: www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk

ON THE COVER: Pony in the New Forest at sunrise. Photo romorgan / istock.

Find us on

Whilst we endeavour to ensure that all articles in the Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine are compatible with broad IH principles, it should be noted that the views expressed by contributors to the Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or Kelly Marks.

By KELLY MARKS

Amber and George completed their first One Day Event at Berkshire College with clear cross country and showjumping recently



Photo courtesy of Paul Smith

MyWorld

Time for a horse update...

Corky (Charleville Cavalier) has found his forever home with Amanda Dwain from the Lake District in Cumbria. I do hope Monty and I will be able to visit him on the way up to Carlisle, as he was always a very special IH horse.

He came to us at the age of three and left aged eight, having given several of us here great fun hacking, showing, eventing and even being a 'War Horse' – as seen on Horse and Country TV!

I've had two reports from his owner: "Corky has now been out for two hacks and seems to have enjoyed exploring his new area. He was a little shocked by the steepness of some of the hills!"

"He was delightful [and] never put a foot wrong. As you would expect he was forward, preferred to lead and only put in one sudden stop to have a closer look at the grit bin."

And then ... "I just wanted to give you a quick update. Corky and I have had a lovely week; we have continued to go out and about exploring."

"Corky has met our neighbours in the shape of pigs, Highland cows, donkeys, goats and hundreds of sheep [and] he has calmly dealt with every new situation. We went for our first dressage lesson on Thursday and again, he was calm and professional at all times and loaded perfectly well."

Amanda also reports that her 12-year-old daughter has "fallen head over heels in love with Corky!"

“Corky and I have had a lovely week; we have continued to go out and about exploring.”

George (Caville Rouge) George, now seven, has spent most of this summer with local young event rider, Amber Woodhouse, who has done a super job carrying on from the early education and rehab he had with IHRAs Rosie Jones and Sam Austin and here at IHHQ. George has the sweetest face but if he doesn't want to do something he has a very determined 'NO!'

I first discovered this on the day my sister and I went to collect him from Devon. We abandoned loading attempts and drove the three hours home horseless after we realised it was not going to be straightforward and of course, we weren't prepared to risk him getting hurt (that day added to our education about 'going to pick up a young horse for the first time').

His successful pick up took place after some good Dually training, in suitable weather,

the horsebox placing 'set up for success' and our secret weapon – PIE as lead horse/companion!

Amber has also experienced George's more challenging side, when he took to rearing if he was asked to leave other horses. Quiet consistency seems to have overcome this particular challenge.

If a horse gets into a tantrum or emotional state (and, worst of all, the rider does too) you're heading for disaster. Of course, in the perfect world the horse would never rear at all, and the training and riding would be such that the horse never practises this trait, but with young athletic horses like George things can escalate very quickly.

If they *do* rear, one effective way to deal with this is to stay relaxed and, when he comes down from the rear, hold his head round to his shoulder until his heart rate comes down. This is a good start to getting your horse to see there is no pay off and you are not going to get embroiled in his drama. Oh and don't forget your out breath and SMILE of course! (yes, I know, easier said than done).

Dramas aside, Amber and George completed their first One Day Event at Berkshire College with clear cross country and showjumping recently. Definitely a case of watch this space where George is concerned.

.....

Pie (American Pie)

is very happy. He's probably not too enamoured with his grazing muzzle during the day and diet paddock with 6-hour soaked hay at night but he's looking very well, particularly as he's now 18.

He had the Cushings Test two years ago and, although Prascend is expensive, his half a Prascend a day has given him a new lease of life. He was showing signs of being a 'grumpy old man' but now it's like he's 10 years younger.

It does mean he's back to those days of putting the odd mini spook in if he sees a rock in the wrong place. I'm sure that's excellent for my core stability though.

IHRA Sandra Williams and I are looking forward to taking part in the Blenheim 10-mile sponsored ride with jumps on September 14. My niece, Daisy Smith, took him to a couple of shows in July for some fun and he won the Working Hunter each time.

What can I say? The boy's still got it.

Pie is very happy.... he's looking very well, particularly as he's now 18



THE FLAG IS UP: CALIFORNIA INSTRUCTOR MEETING AND DR ANDREW MCLEAN

IHRA Rosie Jones and I flew out to Flag Is Up Farms in time for Monty's 79th birthday on May 14 (see page 16). It can get very hot out there!

I was honoured to be presented with a special Master Instructor award from Monty, along with one of my earliest students, Maya Horsey, who was Chief Instructor at Flag Is Up until recently when she's taking some time out from teaching to enjoy time with her (also horse-loving) partner.

Rosie and I enjoyed meeting up with Dr Andrew McLean again. We had previously been guests of his at his facility near Melbourne, Australia.

When I first read Andrew's McLean's book *The Truth About Horses*, I did not like him at all. I felt there were frequent sideways remarks at Monty's work and 'horse whispering' and I felt it seemed to insinuate that scientists had all the answers whereas practical horse people were on the whole bumbling idiots.

I also felt his view, along with many of those who describe themselves as the equine 'scientists', (although aren't we all scientists in IH? Wikipedia defines a scientist, in a broad sense, as 'one engaging in a systematic activity to acquire knowledge') made everything far too black and white.

With these prejudices, I have to admit I never imagined we would ever talk, let alone become friends. When we happened to recognise each other at a chance meeting at Heathrow airport (and yes I'm the first to admit that is ODD!) he was the opposite of the arrogant, close-minded person I was expecting.

In fact, he is very in tune with Intelligent Horsemanship; passionate about discovering the best and fairest ways to treat and train horses and eager to collaborate without ego to do so. I'll make a note for the future that I should attempt to actually meet people before judging too harshly!

After our Australian visit it was great to meet Andrew again in California, where he came to do a lecture/demo for Monty. His demonstration was alongside one by Maya Horsey, both showing what could be achieved in a limited amount of time (20 minutes) with a young horse.

These demonstrations confirmed for me that whatever technique you use, they will succeed or fail on the feel and timing of the handler. The second confirmation was that the most important thing you can do with a horse in the first five minutes is to develop trust and understanding.

This initial bonding may not be visually exciting; it may just look like 'faffing around'. But when that little breakthrough comes with the horse – everything else is going to be so much easier.

I admire the fact that Andrew is very open about his learning journey and I'll be following his future studies and work with interest. None of us have all the answers; the more we collaborate with like-minded people, the better it will be for the horses and people too.



Selfie courtesy of Daisy Smith

Kelly's niece, Daisy, took Pie to a couple of shows in July and he won the Working Hunter each time

.....

“ He was showing signs of being a 'grumpy old man' but now it's like he's 10 years younger. ”

.....

In your next IH magazine George has a complete physical check up – from thermography to x-rays! ☑

Straight from the horse's mouth...

A copy of *Perfect Confidence* by Kelly Marks worth £16.99 goes to the writer of our Star Letter



LETTERS & FEEDBACK from our members

Use of food in horse training

Regarding 'Pleasure or Pressure' (IH Magazine, summer 2014); for me, using food to reward, in the context of clicker training, is not about giving your horse food randomly – which is entirely different. Random food is a 'treat', and I agree is best avoided because the horse does not know when, or if, it is coming.

With clicker training, the food treat is a 'reward' and horses very quickly learn that they have to do something to earn it. Yes, you do sometimes get frustration when the horse is learning something new and trials previous behaviours to earn a reward, but you most definitely get an 'ah ha!' moment when the right behaviour happens and is rewarded.

The 'click' allows you to tell your horse that NOW it is right, so timing is everything. When used correctly click/reward is hugely powerful in helping horses to know when they have something right, and in my mind works perfectly well alongside pressure/release training. Why does it have to be one training method or another when they can be effectively combined to suit the horse?

The question was raised in the article about why food-based reward trainers do not exhibit their training at events. With clicker, this is possibly because the horse first needs to learn that it has control over the click by altering their behaviour and earning it.

While this does not take that long to learn, it is not best suited to a half-hour demo under possibly stressful conditions. It would of course be possible to take an already clicker-trained horse and teach it something new at a demonstration event.

Susan Osborne, via e-mail

(Ed., – see pages 28 & 29 for our interview with clicker trainer Philippa Williams)



MOLLY ON FLYING FORM

To say that Molly and I have been flying since we overcame our loading 'issue' thanks to Kelly and (IHRA) Bronwen Packham is no lie (Molly came along to The Hand demo in Somerset). See no feet on the ground...FLYING! Seriously though, if it wasn't for us now being able to go places, me and my girl wouldn't be having this much fun, so thank you Kelly and your team once again.



Carole Negus
via email

To lunge or long line?

With regard to the article on lunging and long lining (IH Magazine, summer 2014) I long-line or lunge depending on the horse. Using [a single line and] Pessoa has helped my mare engage her hind quarters. I tried long lining but found the outside line tended to pull her quarters in, creating an incorrect position and preventing her going forwards.

I have very recently bought a four-year-old racehorse retrain for dressage. She didn't understand about moving away from me so I started her off with one line and gradually increased the distance she was away from me. I then added a second line and she quickly learnt to respond to my positioning for changing direction. **Angela Bishop via e-mail**

There was no mention of using two lines but passing the 'outside' line through the top ring of a surcingle. This still gives great control of the outside rein without losing a good deal of length of the outside line and is especially useful on a horse that objects to one line going around the back legs. **Tony Bell via e-mail**

ARCHIE'S TALES by Sharon Stephens Archie looks for buried treasure



IH Out & About

Ever wondered what keeps Kelly and her IHRAs busy when they're not working with owners and their horses? Here's an insight...

Big cat book from Simon Palmer

When IHRA Sue Palmer and her photographer husband Simon Palmer, of Into The Lens, originally went to Namibia in 2011, it was for Sue to work with some horses at the behest of the AfriCat Foundation.



Photo courtesy of Simon Palmer / Into The Lens

A percentage of the profits from the book will be donated to the AfriCat Foundation

"When AfriCat realised Simon was a photographer, they asked him to document the annual vet checks which happened to be going on the week they were there. This year, they asked him to go back to document their extended vet checks," says Sue.

Simon was given unprecedented access to the animals and, as a result, produced a photographic book (see www.cheetah.into-the-lens.com for details). It's being crowd funded through Kickstarter, so it can only be printed if enough money is raised through pre-purchase.

- A percentage of the profits will be donated to the AfriCat Foundation. Details on how to buy at www.kickstarter.com/projects/2055269985/cheetah-namibia.

New book from Charlie



IH member Charlie Avent, who you might remember was featured in Meet A Member last year, has brought a book out about his autism and how IH and Monty Roberts "saved his life".

- Available from Amazon, the book includes a foreword by Monty himself.

New hay feeder trials

IHRA Gill Bradley has designed a new hay feeder which she hopes to bring to market by the end of the year.

The HayLo feeder, which allows the natural nuzzling, ripping and grazing action used at grass and significantly slows eating rate, is due to be trailed in November time.

IHRA updates

Bridget Colston (see her Spotlight feature on p42) not only has a new surname (she was formerly Hughes) but also now covers the whole of East Anglia.

Jenny Major is now on maternity leave until further notice – good luck, Jenny!

Rosie Jones starts her PhD at Cambridge in October, where she will be studying how people interpret horse behaviour and the culture of British equestrianism.



Adam and Nicole

Adam Goodfellow and Nicole Golding got married in July. The photograph shows them with the scarf their mothers used to 'tie' them together as part of the ceremony.

Demelza Franssen and her partner, George, have had a baby boy called Damon (pictured). Demelza will back to her IHRA duties in October.



Demelza with baby Damon

SUCCESS AT SHY LOWEN TRAINING DAY



The horses used during the training day all came to Shy Lowen with problems – from bolting to being terrified of everything – and all proved to be incredible teachers as well as fascinating students

A training day held at Shy Lowen, Liverpool, in July raised nearly £500 as well as what organisers described as the added bonus of a 'huge pile of goodies' from Intelligent Horsemanship, including donated Dually halters, DVDs and books. IHRAs SARAH WESTON and LIZ PITMAN organised and ran the day.

Six students (all IH members), including one from as far away as Leicester, attended, along with Shy Lowen supporters and people with SL horses on loan. They worked with SL horses including coloured cob, Isaac, and Carneddau pony, Bambi.

"Sarah's demo was both educational and entertaining, and the hands-on participants in the afternoon found abilities and confidence to work with some very testing horses. These horses all came to Shy Lowen with problems – from bolting to being terrified of everything – and all proved to be incredible teachers as well as fascinating students," says Liz, who adds that every participant said they felt inspired afterwards.

"The whole Shy Lowen team send thanks for Kelly's unfailing generosity. It means a huge amount to us all to know we have the support of an organisation like IH," said SL's Bernadette Langfield.

Members' PICTURES

Throughout the year, we will be publishing a selection of our members' pictures.

In each issue we'll be awarding rosettes for the best member stories, feedback and pictures – snap and send to editor@ihhq.net. This issue includes mother and daughter act, Jane and Lauren, with Lauren and Wesley winning the fabulous rosette.



>> Jane Porter, who describes herself as 'too old', and her horse, Technic, 29, out and about enjoying Alresford Creek near Colchester, Essex, where, she says, a rustling dustbin bag was more interesting than the river and boats.



>> It looks as though Alfred has had quite enough of sunbathing here, even if his owner Catherine Ghebeh hasn't! "I think he was telling me to get up and take him for a peppermint sponge bath!" admits Catherine.



>> And here's Jane Porter's daughter, Lauren, with her horse, Wesley, on grass-collecting duty for Lauren's guinea pigs!



>> Here's Jessica Cox with her pony, Beauty, proudly showing off a rosette for completing her first ever spider ride for charity on the Isle of Wight.



>> Maggie Bromley credits IH and Monty's teachings with giving her a new understanding of her horses, including 18-year-old driving mare, Siyan. "This is me with my granddaughter, Alyssa – teaching the next generation!" says Maggie.



>> Liz Edwards sent in several pics of her with her horse, Blue – but the one that caught our eye was this one of Blue introducing Liz's husband to the joy of horse riding! (sorry Liz!)



>> Here's Anna Kenny enjoying some sunny schooling on her beautiful and aptly-named horse, Red. "It was the first time I had schooled him in the field so I was very pleased he was so relaxed," says Anna, who lives in Dorking, Surrey.



>> This beautiful horse is Emma Message's Grand Classique (Baby), a three-year-old warmblood, at the East of England's Festival of Hunting. She came home with a second in the 3yo Competition Horse class against tough, county-level competition. "IH methods have helped Baby grow into such a well-mannered animal; she is currently being backed and showing great potential! IH has given her the best start in life," says Emma, who is based in Boston, Lincolnshire.



Great advice

Emily Vine
27, Peterborough



Emily and Archie made their showing debut in spring 2014 and got placed in both classes

How long have you been a member?

I haven't been a IH member for long; I've always been aware of the fantastic work being done using the IH approach, but after going to watch Monty and Kelly it resonated more with me.

How did you first hear about Intelligent Horsemanship?

Looking back I can't pinpoint a time that I became aware of the IH approach, it was just always there. I started riding as a child and have been given some fantastic opportunities along the way; I think along with that came the 'common sense' approach that IH promotes and instils.

Do you have horses?

Until early 2014 I had two horses – a 16.2hh Cleveland Bay called Albert, and a 15.3hh Thoroughbred cross called The Artful Dodger, Archie to his friends. Albert was a true superstar; a 'golden oldie' I picked up from a dealer, and we had a fabulous time together.

He came to me undernourished and unloved but with some TLC he bloomed and taught me more than any other horse has from a riding perspective, he was truly remarkable. Albert went to his forever paddock this year, which was heart-breaking.

As all horsey folk can vouch, there isn't much to fill the void of losing your best friend – luckily for me, Archie managed just that. My 'overgrown dog' came to me as a two year old.

The dream was always to have a youngster and back/train them myself (having never done this before). I had gone to help a friend who was horse sitting when I saw him and fell in love, so naturally it was a dream come true when he came home.

I let Archie settle in for a few days before I started to work with him in the round pen and arena. On the ground, Archie loves doing pole work, barrel weaving and small jumps.

He has learnt to move round, backwards, forwards and halt by signals I give him and bags, flags and umbrellas are to be played with, not to be scared of. We made our showing debut in spring 2014 where he behaved impeccably and got placed in both his classes.

He made me particularly proud by following me straight onto a trailer and travelling when he'd never even seen one before, he'd only ever been in a lorry. With great support, I backed Archie; we can halt, walk on and steer, and have started simple circles and changes of rein. Archie has taken this all in his stride, he hasn't challenged me and is a very

genuine, relaxed horse; and this is down to his trust in me and mine in him. I'm watching him blossom and it's very exciting to think where we'll be in a few years.

How have Intelligent Horsemanship techniques helped you with your horse?

The techniques IH promote have been invaluable to me and Archie. It is important to me that we work as a team; he needs to know I respect him as much as he does me. We are learning from each other every day and I know, even when he needs some reassurance, he will try his hardest. It's very important to me that he is produced slowly and stress-free; horses are a lifestyle choice, and I have as much time as he needs – he is my forever horse and I want to make him the best he can be.

What's the best thing about being a member of IH?

The great advice! ☺

Emily says particular thanks must be given to her mum, Andrea, "for being a great stable fairy and for treating Archie as well as she does" and to Gail for her help from the ground with the backing process. "We have a good and appreciated support network around us," says Emily.



Sycamore leaf and seed pod



Be sycamore aware *this autumn*

Sycamore poisoning (also known as atypical myopathy) has been in the headlines in the equine press all too often lately.

As the high-risk period of autumn approaches, IH MAGAZINE looks at this distressing cause of horse death and ways to minimise risk

In May this year, the Blue Cross posted a warning on its website of the dangers of sycamore poisoning after losing one of their ponies, Heath, to atypical myopathy. Although there were no sycamore trees near Heath's field, flood waters had taken fallen seeds within reach.

Heath's story is one of many that have raised awareness among UK horse owners and sent them out checking trees within or near grazing fields to look for sycamores. As Heath's experience shows, however, it can be hard to cover off every avenue of potential risk.

ATYPICAL MYOPATHY: SYMPTOMS AND RISK FACTORS

Atypical myopathy (AM) is a muscle disease with high rates of mortality and researchers and vets believe it is caused by eating hypoglycin A, a toxin contained in seeds from the sycamore tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). In early 2013, research in North America linked hypoglycin A toxins from the box elder tree (*Acer negundo*) to horse deaths, a syndrome known as Seasonal Pasture Myopathy (SPM) in the States.

It's not a new phenomenon; the disease was first recognised in 1984 in Scotland. A paper in the *Veterinary Journal* in 2008 (Votion, D.-M. et al., *Atypical myopathy in grazing horses: A first exploratory data analysis*) reported that, since 1984, several outbreaks were identified in the UK and that outbreaks were noted in northern Europe from the late 1990s.

That paper also identified young horses in poor condition to be at higher risk, on pastures with sparse grazing. Incidence was highest amongst horses aged 1-3 years and other pre-disposing factors included:

- Pastures with a previous history of horse death from AM
- Sloping and/or humid pasture, particularly those containing a stream or river

- Access to piled up leaves/seeds in the autumn (although the presence of trees in or surrounding the pasture was not a risk factor)
- Harrowing horse manure into the pasture, rather than removing it (thought to be due to faecal contamination of the soil and subsequent toxin production)

Research carried out in the University of Liege, Belgium last year looked at 17 horses from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. In all cases, high concentrations of hypoglycin A were found in the horses and sycamore seeds were found to be present in the pasture of every horse affected.

Symptoms include signs of depression, muscle weakness, lying down, choke or colic-like behaviour and dark-red urine. If sycamore poisoning is suspected, it is essential to call the vet as soon as possible as the sooner it is diagnosed, the better the potential outcome.

Spring and autumn are the periods of highest incidence; one of the risk factors is horses kept on parched fields with low grass cover, making eating fallen seeds more attractive. Professor Celia Marr, editor of the *Equine Veterinary Journal* which published the 2013 Belgium study, advised that, for horses grazing near sycamores, it was 'imperative horses have sufficient feed, as this will minimise the risk that horses might be tempted to ingest seeds.'



Sycamore leaf with sycamore mite galls



Trunk of a young sycamore



Trunk of a mature sycamore

Photos courtesy of Liz Falkingham



Some horses may develop tolerance to eating sycamore seeds, explaining the fact that many horses graze in pastures with access to sycamore trees over periods of years without ill effect

“Spring and autumn are the periods of highest incidence; one of the risk factors is horses kept on parched fields with low grass cover...”

HOW DO I IDENTIFY A SYCAMORE TREE?

Sycamore trees are easily identifiable when covered in their distinctive winged seeds (often called 'helicopter' seeds), but how do you spot them otherwise? Forestry website woodlands.co.uk has produced this identification guide:

LEAF: Simple but large leaves; arranged in opposite pairs around the twigs/stem. Five distinct lobes to the leaves, with five veins radiating from the leaf base into the lobes. There is a somewhat ragged edge to the leaf, with lots of 'rounded' teeth. On the lower surface of the leaf, there are some hairs. (sycamore leaf). Sometimes the leaves are covered with small, red 'blobs' – these are galls caused by a mite.

BUDS, BARK & STEM: In younger trees, the bark is smooth and may be a pinkish-grey colour, but as the tree ages it becomes grey and scaly/flaky.

FLOWERS & FRUITS: The flowers appear at the same time as the leaves. They are yellow/green and there are separate clusters of male and female flowers; they are carried on drooping 'tails' or tassels. When fertilised, they form winged seeds. These occur in pairs and form a helicopter structure that helps dispersal. The seed and its wing-like structure is sometimes referred to as a 'key'; botanically speaking – it is a double samara.

STILL MORE TO LEARN

Despite the new studies into the risk posed by sycamore poisoning, researchers at the Universities of Minnesota and Liege are continuing their work to try to uncover exactly how the equine disease occurs.

Dr Jeff Gillman, of the University of Minnesota, believes it is likely that the most important contributing factors to horses becoming poisoned by hypoglycin A are the availability of seed in the field combined with lack of other feeding options.

“We know that seeds contain highly variable quantities from seed to seed, even within a single tree. We do not know yet how hypoglycin A levels vary seasonally, nor do we know how its abundance varies with different levels of stress to the plant, though this may well explain seasonal variability in the occurrence of the malady. It is possible that conditions that stress the plants may contribute to significant seasonal changes in hypoglycin A levels. At this point we just don't know,” said Dr Gillman.

It is also thought that some horses may develop tolerance to eating sycamore seeds, explaining variations in disease incidence and the fact that many horses graze in pastures with access to sycamore trees over periods of years without ill effect.

Interestingly, the 2008 Veterinary Journal paper found that horses which were regularly vaccinated and de-wormed were at a reduced risk of AM. Providing a salt block also had a protective effect.

VETERINARY ADVICE ON REDUCING RISK INCLUDES:

- Clearing sycamore seeds, leaves and young saplings from grazing where possible
- Fencing off or limiting access to areas where sycamore seeds may come down into grazing, or be carried in via streams/rivers
- Regularly inspecting fields (this could identify seeds which have been carried in by wind or flood water) and horses which are out all the time
- Putting out extra forage or reducing the number of horses in the grazing to ensure there is enough forage/grass available
- Ensuring extra forage is fed either from hay racks or haynets, rather than from the ground, to avoid contamination with seeds
- In extreme circumstances, reducing turnout and/or stabling overnight. [\[4\]](#)

By MARY TAPPING

A bone-crushing fall at Wellington Horse Trials in August 2013 could have ended eventer Harry Meade's career. Instead, he has fought back to fitness with the help of his two- and four-legged support team. MARY TAPPING reports

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster, and treat those two imposters just the same...' Poet Rudyard Kipling's words could have been written for Harry Meade, one of Britain's top event riders. Last year, Harry stared disaster in the face after a spectacular fall shattered both his elbows but less than 12 months on he took an amazing third place at the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials.

This incredible return to the saddle and top form has seen him selected to represent Great Britain at the World Equestrian Games in Normandy. Harry credits much of his success to a dogged determination that compels him to leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of excellence.

"I like to look at all the small details in order to obtain marginal gains. Rather than concentrating on one thing and making it five per cent better, I try to address every minor aspect of performance in order to get half a percent of improvement in each area.

"It requires attention to detail as well as being very analytical and boring!" admits Harry.

This maxim means he prefers to sacrifice short-term gains in favour of a sustained programme of meticulous management, where every aspect is closely monitored. The aim is to recognise long-term potential in a horse.

"Every training session and every short-term goal is geared around producing the horse in the best way. The simple question is 'will this make the horse a better or worse horse in two years' time?' – if the answer is better, then do it," he says.

His current high flier, Wild Lone, is a case in point. Bought as a green four-year-old nine years ago, Wild Lone has been with Harry throughout his rise to equestrian stardom.

"I was riding a mare for a breeder for free on the basis that, when we sold her, we would split the proceeds. She was sold for £20,000 and I put my half into this gangly, raw four-year-old which I bought out of a dealer's yard.

"Wild Lone was advertised as a possible hunter but I liked his type and athleticism. By the time he was six, I was pretty sure that he would one day be a 4* horse.

"He's honest, trusting, consistent and reliable – everything you would want in an event horse. He's gone on to exceed all expectations." >>

THE BIG INTERVIEW

Harry Meade

Harry Meade at home with Wild Lone who has "...gone on to exceed all expectations."



“ Wild Lone is honest, trusting, consistent and reliable – everything you would want in an event horse. ”

Harry Meade

>> Taking on raw or challenging horses is nothing new, however; Harry's partnership with Midnight Dazzler (Bobby) – who many will remember for his appearances at Badminton – played a major role in his way to the top and was a challenge.

"When Bobby came to me, he'd already been ridden by a lot of experienced riders and was known for being difficult, so I was advised not to take him on. His jumping could be erratic but he had character, class, speed and was probably the scopiest horse I will ever sit on. He was the horse that made my career.

"I've always believed that for everything there is a way forward. If one way doesn't work, you try something else until you find something that does," says Harry, who describes himself as the consummate 'can do' person.

Like dressage rider Carl Hester, Harry believes in allowing horses to be horses and regular turnout is part of an enviable level of care and management at his yard. Some are turned out overnight while others may have two periods of turnout each day to fit in with their work programme.

Harry analyses everything, with extensive graphs of each horse's weekly weight gain, their fitness work and their blood counts. All this adds an extra dimension to the horsemanship he developed growing up.

This care and attention doesn't just extend to the horses, however; Harry's own self-disciplined approach speaks for itself. A rotational fall from Shannondale Santiago at the Wellington Horse Trials in August 2013, however, was to test his resolve to the limit.

His outstretched arms not only broke his fall but shattered both elbows as they hyper-extended when he hit the ground. The bones in his elbows were so badly damaged they were 'virtually reduced to powder' and, although he was fortunate to avoid injury to his head and internal organs, the damage to his elbows was so severe it seemed unlikely that he would ever ride again, even at basic level – never mind compete at the top of his game.

Despite a series of operations, one of his elbows showed no sign of healing and Harry was offered a prosthetic elbow but made an eleventh-hour decision to pull out of the procedure – characteristically preferring to deal with the injury on his own terms. Setting his own targets, and mindful of the fact that a prosthetic elbow might have put an end to his successful eventing career, he threw himself into a rehabilitation programme in order to maximise his chances of recovering, bleak as they were.

This meant spending much of the winter wired up to a micro-current machine when not in hydrotherapy pools, massage rooms or a cryotherapy chamber. The latter involves standing in temperatures of minus 140degC in order to increase blood flow and aid healing; champion jockey AP McCoy had already successfully tested the theory, so it seemed worth a try.

Did he have any (quite understandable) confidence issues to deal with alongside the physical rehabilitation? "Fortunately I didn't have confidence issues but I was open to the idea that I might," admits Harry. "You never know until you try and, if I'd felt shaky I was prepared to address it, but as things turned out it felt great to be back out; cross country is what I grew up with and I feel at home with it. It's what I do."

After months of doubt and minimal signs of healing, however, Harry began to face up to the prospect that his career in eventing might be over. Still, he was determined to exhaust every option before giving in.

"Five months after the fall my arms were still broken and in braces, but I said to my wife, Rosie, that I wanted to get on a horse and see if I thought it would be realistic to still be aiming to ride again. I was

lifted on rather unceremoniously and had a walk around on a horse, and it didn't feel too bad, so I made the decision to push on with renewed enthusiasm."

The first big test was to come not in the saddle but in his own home, though. When Rosie went into labour with a brother for their daughter, Lily, a 999 call resulted in Harry being told he would have to deliver the baby himself – and that it just what he did, bringing Charlie safely into the world.

Meanwhile, though he hadn't discussed it openly, Harry was planning to resume his eventing career. With his sights naturally pointing in the direction of Badminton, he was quietly assessing whether he had the potential to compete again.

His first attempts convinced him that the drive to compete was as strong as ever so it was time to implement his preparation for the big occasion. This began by gradually building up the time he spent in the saddle – his arms heavily strapped – to address his own fitness, while his team took care of Wild Lone's fitness regime; the thoroughness and attention to detail paid off.

"There were rumours that Badminton was going to be really tough this year and, having been out of the saddle for so long, my own fitness preparation was going to be just as crucial as Wild Lone's," says Harry, adding it was remarkable they made it onto the start list.

In the event, the horse produced his best dressage test to date, despite heavy

rain, and they were lying eighth overnight after the punishing cross country in hostile wind and rain. Harry was hoping for a difficult show jumping course to allow Wild Lone to shine and he wasn't disappointed; while many of the other leading riders produced a cricket score and fences fell like nine-pins, the horse jumped superbly to finish third overall.

As a fairy-tale comeback, it could hardly have been better; a fitting testament to Harry's relentless 'can do' attitude and meticulous preparation, plus the tough rehab regime set by the English Institute of Sport.

"My wife sometimes asks do I really HAVE to do a particular thing. While I don't strictly have to do it, I believe it's the best way for the good of the horses and to achieve good results." 🐾



Harry took an amazing third place at the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials

“I've always believed that for everything there is a way forward.”

“ Fortunately I didn’t have confidence issues but I was open to the idea that I might. ”



Sharing a hug with daughter, Lily



Cross country schooling one of the string – an essential part of building fitness and confidence in the young horses

WALKING HIS OWN PATH

As the son of eventing legend Richard Meade, you might imagine that Harry would suffer the same hang-ups as the offspring of some other celebrity parents. Not a bit of it!

Far from being in the shadow of his famous father, Harry Meade is a man who has carved out a niche based on his own, very individual, philosophy for life and work.

“My father had already finished competing when I was very small. We started off with little white fluffy ponies and my brother, sister and I hunted and went to Pony Club -- but our parents weren’t overly keen that we should do anything with horses other than have fun. We certainly weren’t taken off to lessons every week; we just learned to ride naturally.”

Despite being a grade A student and gaining a degree from Bristol University, Harry set his heart on a career in eventing early on. His parents made it clear they were not going to fund a string of expensive horses and he would have to pay his way – after all, even the young Mary King (then Mary Thomson) cleaned toilets at her local camp site in order to fund her horses.

Undeterred, Harry spent five years working his way through the ranks at other people’s yards, including a spell at William Fox-Pitt’s yard from 2003-2004. That quiet determination has seen him become the youngest rider to be awarded the Armada Dish for five Badminton completions and wide respect in the equestrian world for his sympathetic style of riding.

Now he looks set to climb to the very top of his career, ably assisted by wife, Rosie, who takes care of all the admin plus the comprehensive website www.harrymeade.com as well as caring for the couple’s two young children and working part-time as a school teacher.

By IHRA ROSIE JONES

Australian equine scientist Andrew McLean received an award for his work from Monty



Meeting of minds at Flag Is Up Farms

There was plenty to learn at this year's meeting of Monty Roberts' Instructors in California.

The weather was piping hot, the company was great and the speakers were fascinating. IHRA ROSIE JONES reports on some of the subjects under discussion

If you've read Kelly's My World piece (pages 4 & 5), you'll know that Australian scientist Andrew McLean was at this year's meeting at Flag Is Up Farms. I have met Andrew before, with Kelly, at his Australian Equine Behaviour Clinic in Melbourne, and it was lovely to see him again.

His passion is applying his academic mind to the training of horses; as such, he is keen on teaching and clarifying learning theory and equine psychology through his books, talks and demonstrations. Many of the concepts that are key to his methods are familiar to us at IH also, and those of you who have done the Horse Psychology course would have recognised concepts such as negative reinforcement and classical conditioning.

Andrew was absolutely generous with his knowledge, as well as retaining a humility and openness to learning, and so it was a real

pleasure to listen to him and talk with him. I picked up a few things that were new to me:

BARO RECEPTORS

We all know that lowering a horse's head lowers his heart rate – but I have never known why. Andrew explained that when they graze, the horse's head is low and blood pressure in the head is raised; this means that, if the heart rate rises, there is actually a risk of brain embolism.

Horses have a way of monitoring the blood pressure going into their head (called baro receptors, like barometer – pressure measure) at the top of their neck. This means when the head is lowered, the baro receptors tell the heart to lower the heart rate to prevent the high blood pressure risk.

Brilliant to have the physiological explanation for something we have seen working in practice!

“...cognitive dissonance is what is going on when you are able to hold two or more opposing views as ‘true’ at the same time.”



Instructors from around the world gathered at Monty Roberts' Flag Is Up Farms, in Solvang, California, to discuss equine science, research and learning

NOT ALLOWING FLIGHT

Andrew has been exploring the flight response in horses and how damaging it is for their training if they run away from things they are afraid of. If they are able to get distance from something by moving their legs, their fear of that thing is reinforced even if it caused them no harm.

We know this practically, for instance on our Handling the Untouched Horse course, we work with horses in small pens rather than round pens or paddocks, because we know from experience that if they are in a space that allows full flight, training is much more stressful for them and slower to progress. It is really in the horse's best interests to have them in a slightly smaller space, where they are less likely to blast away, and so do not go through the reinforcing effect of flight.

It was also wonderful to see some video footage of Andrew's work with elephants. Through his HELP program, he has been helping to teach Mahouts in India how to train elephants without putting them through the ordeals that are part of traditional training methods there.

Previous training would involve shutting young elephants in a crate and poking them with sharp instruments through the crate, as well as beating them with sticks until they finally give up resisting or trying to get away. Andrew has been teaching the Mahouts the principles of learning theory, using positive reinforcement as well as negative reinforcement to maximise the elephants' ability to learn.

It was very interesting, though not that surprising when you think about it, that elephants seemed to get on much better with food training than horses often do – they were able to reach up to the rider to get a peanut with their trunk. Andrew described them as something like a horse crossed with a dog in terms of training attitude!

Motivational interviewing

Bill Miller is the social scientist responsible for 'Motivational Interviewing', a system and attitude primarily for working with people to help them overcome addiction, although it can be utilised in all sorts of ways. The key elements of Motivational Interviewing struck many chords with the ways in which we like to work with horses, as well as the ways we like to work with our students and owners.

Bill's approach centres around respect, support, and encouraging intrinsic learning. That means setting up a situation where students can take lessons on board themselves, rather than trying to force them round to your way of thinking.

DEALING WITH COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Bill explained that cognitive dissonance is what is going on when you are able to hold two or more opposing views as 'true' at the same time. For instance, you might believe it is bad for you to smoke, but also that it is best for you to keep on smoking.

You are able to balance these two views in your head, a bit like a precarious seesaw that is teetering on the balance point. If someone comes along and jumps on one end – for instance, telling you how bad it is for you to smoke, the balance is upset and this is distressing.

You instantly find yourself resetting the balance by arguing on the other side of the point – but it is best for you to keep smoking for now. The effect this has is that it puts you on the wrong side of the seesaw to be able to make any changes – now you are arguing against change!

Bill tries to talk to people in a way that allows them to explore 'tipping the seesaw' and finding a new balance. I really like this way of thinking; I might try it for one of my lovely friends who, we both agree, has an addiction to hand feeding her horse!

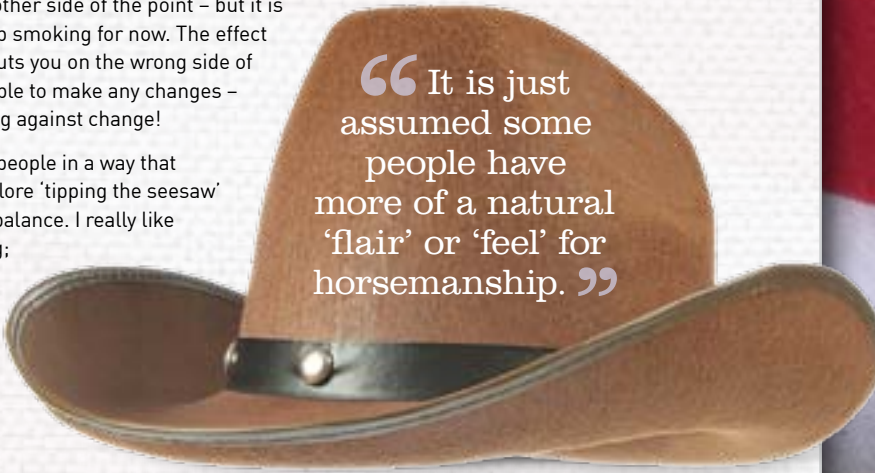
WHAT AND HOW

Bill also emphasised the importance of not only what is said, but how it is said. I absolutely think this applies to our horsemanship as, so often on the IH foundation course, we have students who have read about pressure and release, or body language, or Dually work – but it is only when we teach them in person that we can really unleash the potential of the exercises.

There are subtleties about exactly how things are done: the feel in the line, the breathing of the student etc., that are as important to the training as the core techniques. When you use your reins, it is not just the position of your hands or the timing of your aids that is important, but the feel that you transmit down the rein.

Often, in more mainstream horsemanship, people who are very successful have some understanding of what they are doing, but not always a comprehensive knowledge of how they are doing it, and so this rarely gets passed on from teacher to student. It is just assumed some people have more of a natural 'flair' or 'feel' for horsemanship.

In the same way, Bill said that some people have more of a natural feel for MI – but all of us can maximise on that by focussing on the 'how' as well as the 'what'. >>



“It is just assumed some people have more of a natural 'flair' or 'feel' for horsemanship.”

Meeting of minds at Flag Is Up Farms

>> I wrote a piece over a year ago now for IH Magazine about Leigh Wills, when I visited her and Sally King and watched them work with TB foals in New Zealand.

It was wonderful to catch up with Leigh and watch her lecture/demo as she worked with a sparky little Quarter horse foal at Flag is Up Farms.

In addition to everything I learned last time, there were a few key concepts that I brought away from watching Leigh work this time:

THE RIGHT AGE

In the first couple of weeks of life, most foals will spend 90% of the time very close to mum. However, by three to six weeks, they are spending more like 60% of time close to mum and beginning to explore the world and learn about things.

This is the age that Leigh and Sally choose to give the foal her first handling session, as she is still small enough to make things manageable yet it does not interfere with her natural early life bonding with mum during those first two weeks.

USING SALT LICKS

The mare is given a salt lick to keep her happy and relaxed while the foal is handled. This is a great idea as it doesn't encourage nipping and mugging in the same way hand-fed treats do, but it is a positive association and it encourages the mare to lick and relax her jaw.



Leigh's work shows that foals stay physically close to their dams in the first three weeks of life. Once they begin to be more confident, at three to six weeks, they are ready to start interacting with human handlers without risk of damaging the dam/foal bond

“ Leigh has handled thousands of foals and so we are not simply talking about anecdotal evidence! ”

Since returning from California, I have tried using a lick instead of food in the trailer for difficult loaders, and I am impressed with the results. Horses are less likely to 'grab and run', and it seems to raise adrenaline less than hard food, while still giving a positive association and helping get the horse to relax.

GETTING CLOSE TO THE FOAL

Leigh showed that, at first, when the foal was nervous, she stood very close to the mare, pressing against her side. Leigh had found it was best to mimic this distance and begin handling very close to the foal.

Even though this seems counter intuitive, the foal quickly began to relax as Leigh put her hands around her chest and quarters and stood with her hips pressed against the foal's side. Gradually, as the foal got braver and was able to stand more in her own space, Leigh also took more distance from the foal for the handling.

Finally, it was interesting how all three speakers' points merged together when I was watching Leigh. She, like Andrew, had found that it was better not to allow the foal to run away but to hold her still around the chest and quarters if she was going to worry.

This way, very quickly, the foal was able to realise that she could cope with handling, whereas if she had been allowed to run away, the stress would continue or escalate. Leigh explained that in her earlier work, she didn't used to restrain the foals in the same way, but it was clear from her results that this system was more successful and less stressful and dangerous – she has handled thousands of foals and so we are not simply talking about anecdotal evidence!

However, as I watched Leigh, it occurred to me that Bill's concept of 'What and How' was also very much coming into play. I can imagine that someone could try to close down the flight response of a foal without the right 'how' and cause all sorts of problems.

Leigh's body is highly tuned to the work she does; her contact with the foals is firm but relaxed, and when she needed to 'stop a response down' it was calm, soft and gentle – yet she was also absolutely unmoveable. She just seemed to be able to absorb all the foals worried wriggling, rather than try to battle with it and force it to stop.

While Andrew may be right about the science of not allowing flight response, watching Leigh work was more like watching an artist, and so I think the perfect illustration of Bill's 'What and How'.

WELCOME TO THE IH TRAINING SECTION

In this issue's IH Training section, we look at getting foals off on the right foot, taking on an ex-racehorse and chat to clicker trainer Philippa Williams about reward-based training.

The handy pull-out and keep is on trailer loading alone

“In an ideal world a foal would have plenty of time to just be a horse and to be with other horses.”



In an ideal world, foals would spend time in a mixed herd and be weaned gradually to minimise stress

Photo courtesy of Liz Falkingham

By IHRA Sarah Weston

Breeding your own foal from a special mare can be immensely rewarding. IHRA SARAH WESTON, author of *No Fear, No Force*, a gentle and ethical approach to training unhandled and semi-feral foals, looks at setting foals up for success

We all marvel at a foal's ability to stand up, feed, and move at all paces within hours of his birth. A foal is born to be a horse and nothing but a horse and it knows instinctively that it is the most vulnerable to predation in the herd; as foals grow older, they need to practise their survival skills through play and posturing.

It's very important to remember that a foal is simply a young horse, and that behaviour that is cute and heart-warming while it is a foal may not be so convenient when it is a big horse and one that you'd like to be able to ride. A horse will not grow out of a natural behaviour that it would not naturally grow out of; accordingly, you need to think carefully about the way that a foal is handled in order to set him up for the future.

In an ideal world a foal would have plenty of time to just be a horse and to be with other horses, preferably in a mixed herd where he

BORN READY!

would learn social skills and be able to play. At the same time it is good to be able to set him up with straightforward, un-taxing training that teaches him the basic things that he needs to know as he grows older and is ready to begin proper work.

We have all felt uncomfortable watching a foal be treated as a plaything which teaches him to demand attention. We've also seen those foals which have never learned that humans are safe, and use their strength and speed to avoid all contact – it is all a question of a happy balance and it is the quality of training rather than quantity that counts.

BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT

Stand back and think what are the horse's behaviours that I would like to keep? His natural paces, his inclination to co-operate, his character, natural curiosity, and ability to learn, for example.

What are the behaviours I need to lose? These might include his instinct to flee when

he is afraid, to kick, bite, push or pull in order to influence those around him, and his sheer power and athleticism if he wants to say no to something; there are times when we need to ask a horse not to be a horse.

The foundations of this work can begin from the outset through regular handling rather than any formal training sessions. As the foal approaches weaning and once he is weaned you can start to gradually increase the amount of work that you do and training sessions can become a little more focussed.

The training may be influenced by what you intend to do with him so that foals that are going to be shown, or those that need to be graded, may need their training much earlier. All foals now have to be micro-chipped, and most will need their feet attended to, to be wormed, brushed and so forth, and the more accustomed they are to human contact the easier that will be.

However be aware that training driven by financial or competitive imperatives may compromise welfare. Beware also of people who tell you what you should or ought to be able to do with your foal by now – there are no set rules!

Continued overleaf >>

BORN READY!

The basics and beyond

There is no fixed list of things that a foal should be able to do but your checklist may well include being caught easily, being led, picking his feet up and being groomed. You need to be consistent and clear and he needs to be soft and confident.

All the time you are working with a foal you need to think about the underlying, long-term relationship you want to create – trust along with a readiness to accept direction.

Weaning

There are no set rules about when you should wean your foal although, generally speaking, the longer the foal spends with his mother the easier the



Care must be taken with early handling – behaviours that are cute in a foal can be unhelpful or even dangerous in an adult horse

weaning process should be both emotionally and nutritionally. However, if the foal is growing too quickly, placing strain on his bones, or the dam is struggling to maintain a healthy weight, it might need to be sooner than you would like.

Traditionally weaning took place abruptly at six months and was achieved by separating the mare and foal completely, often stabling

the foal. This could be very stressful for all concerned even if it kept both horses safe.

In an ideal world, the mare and foal will have been integrated into a herd which includes other youngsters so that bit by bit he becomes more independent of his mother and then they can be gradually separated so that they are grazing in adjacent (and well-fenced) fields.

TEACHING TO LEAD

ESTABLISHING LEADING FROM THE NECK FIRST



Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston

Introduce a foal to leading using gentle guidance from the neck rather than head first – a soft scarf or similar works well

“All the time you are working with a foal you need to think about the underlying, long-term relationship you want to create.”

Make sure you are working in a safe environment and, using a soft and stretchy scarf, make sure that your foal is happy to accept this around his neck.

You can rub him with it first so that he enjoys the sensation of it. By using a very gentle pressure and release on the ends of the scarf and making sure he has a space to come in to you, you can start to lead him in very small circles.

The pressure needs to be a gentle vibrating pressure rather than a good pull or a jerky movement. At first you are only asking his ear to come towards you – and then give a gentle release.

Next, ask him to turn his face towards you, and release. If he pulls away, don't attempt to restrain him with the scarf just start again and try halving the pressure rather than increasing it – make sure you are not looking him directly in the eyes too.

Once he understands that he needs to move towards the pressure, rather than instinctively away from it, you can start to ask him to move his front feet. The instant he moves one of his feet towards you take the pressure off again.

Make sure that you keep at an angle towards him so that he is moving sideways – this is much easier for him than trying to move forwards in a straight line. Give him a lovely, deep flat rub on the shoulder for doing this.

In no time at all, you should find that your foal becomes really light in the hand. Once this is all established you can attach a lead rein to the side of his headcollar and you should find that he moves towards you just as easily.

Once he understands the concept of following a pressure you can start to work in a larger area and ask him to take more steps in one go before giving him a release in the line. At some stage he is likely to go into pressure and pull away from you; it's helpful if you don't over-react, allow him a little more line and apply a steady but elastic pressure.

Ten key points about training very young horses

1. Keep training short and sweet
2. Introduce training as part of regular routine
3. Repeat sessions where needed but make it interesting
4. Make it very, very easy for the young horse to do the right thing
5. Always work in a safe environment, keeping Mum near if the foal has not been weaned. Allow the foal to feed when he indicates that he wants to
6. Do everything with love but don't over-pet your foal
7. Be consistent
8. Don't be pressured by other people's expectations
9. Plan ahead and do things incrementally
10. Let the foal enjoy his foal-hood

• More information about Sarah Weston's work can be found at www.logicalhorsemanship.co.uk



All photos courtesy of Sandra Williams

“ I tell the horse (in a calm, confident voice) what a good boy he is (as long as he is offering standing still... ”



To construct a mock trailer you can use jump poles with fairly low jump wings



‘Standing still’ and ‘ground tying’ are going to be the stability for this exercise overall

TRAILER LOADING ALONE

‘L’ IS FOR LOADING

Step 1 – Ensure both you and your horse feel completely confident with the exercises in Kelly’s book *Perfect Manners*.

The ‘L’ shape is going to hold you both in good stead here, while ‘standing still’ and ‘ground tying’ are going to be the stability for this exercise overall. [Ed. – *Perfect Manners* is available from www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk and, on page 2, you’ll find details of the other merchandise available online]

Step 2 – Construct a mock trailer – here I have used jump poles with fairly low jump wings. Make sure there is nothing for you or your horse to get caught on.



Make sure there is nothing for your horse to get caught on

Your horse needs to feel comfortable standing in this space while you move around him. This is one of the few times I talk to my horses with training in mind.



Your horse needs to feel comfortable standing in this space



Praise the horse in a calm, confident voice

I tell the horse (in a calm, confident voice) what a good boy he is (as long as he is offering standing still; if not, then I don’t speak but return quickly to his head and ask again for standing still) and that I am just about to appear behind him.



Let horse know you are about to appear behind him >>



TRAILER LOADING ALONE

Step 3 – You'll see here that I've used pipe lagging to create breast (front) and breach (back) bars. It's an ideal product to use as it's so light and soft; practise lifting them up and down – especially the breach bar as it comes up behind your horse.



Use pipe lagging to create breast and breach bars



Practice lifting the breast and breach bars up and down

Step 4 – Setting up your trailer for success: I find having a number of short bungee straps or quick release ties can be really useful for holding partitions and doors back or closed without being shut.



Having a number of short bungee straps or quick release ties can be really useful for holding partitions and doors back or closed

Step 5a – You may find it easier to ask one of your competent horsey friends if they would be happy to support your horse in the trailer for the first couple of times. This can make it really easy for your horse to understand what is expected of him.

Remember, you must have practised this outside away from the trailer but now it is time for generalised learning to start taking place. He was able to see you walk to the back of him while he stood between the poles but this next stage means he will feel more alone – this is also where your calm and confident voice can help, using the same few words you used in step 2.



This next stage means he will feel more alone – this is also where your calm and confident voice can help

Step 5b – Ask your helper to stand in the very front of the trailer holding the long 30ft line with a 'smile' (loose, incomplete loop) in it. If your horse starts to walk backwards, the helper needs to ask your horse back towards the breast bar.

If the horse is really unsure and backs all the way out, ask the helper to let him and then ask him back in, ensuring the long line stays over the breast bar so no fingers become trapped. If the horse is repeatedly backing out, it may be you attempted this stage without enough preparation and earlier steps need to be revisited.



If your horse starts to walk backwards, the helper needs to ask your horse back towards the breast bar

Step 5c – Make your way backwards out of the groom's door – something you must have practised before working in the trailer with the horse – while keeping contact via the long line. Keep your eyes on your horse's eyes in order to say "do not follow me", then close the door but do not shut it entirely.



Keep your eyes on your horse's eyes in order to say "do not follow me"



Make your way backwards out of the groom's door

This is where a bungee strap or similar can help to secure the door – otherwise, park your trailer so the lay of the ground helps to assist the door swinging closed without the need to shut it. Make your way to the back of the trailer, reassuring your horse that you are still there and about to appear behind him.



Make your way to the back of the trailer, reassuring your horse that you are still there

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Ensure you manage your long line so you don't get it caught under or around anything like mudguards!

TRAILER LOADING ALONE IH Training Section

Step 6a – Step up on to the ramp and lift the breach bar into position. Step off the ramp and, standing to the side, smoothly raise the ramp and secure it shut.



Bring the rear partition into position if you have one



Lift the breach bar into position



Smoothly raise the ramp and secure it shut

NOTE: Before you are ready to load, always check that the ramp is free from debris so when you lift it into position your horse is not startled by it clattering down the ramp and possibly landing on him. Keep ramp springs lubricated so it is nice and quiet when lifting and lowering.

Step 6b – An alternative to 6a is to walk down the empty side of your trailer to raise the breach bar before leaving through the groom's door. The downside to this can be if a horse attempts to drop down and back out, thus potentially becoming trapped under the breach bar.

You might think 'well, OK, I'll lift the breach bar into position and then step out and lift the ramp' but the problem with doing it this way is that your 30ft line is now going through the length of the trailer and out over the ramp,

which could potentially be more awkward for you now getting back to the groom's door without having to let go of the line.

Once you have repeated Steps 5a, 5b, 5c, 6a or 6b several times it will be time to politely remove your helper to just outside the groom's door. This time, when at Step 5c, you take the 30ft line with you.

Your helper can always step back inside the trailer should your horse still need that extra reassurance. If he starts to step backwards you can give an encouraging squeeze on the line from outside the trailer to ease him back towards the breast bar.

The groom's door needs to appear closed at this stage but not shut, as you need your 30ft line to be able to run smoothly. Again, ensure you manage your long line so you don't get it caught under or around anything like mudguards.



Return to your horse through the groom's door

“ You may find it easier to ask one of your competent horsey friends if they would be happy to support your horse in the trailer for the first couple of times. ”

Never tie a horse up until the ramps are secure to ensure he cannot pull back and panic

Step 7 – Return to your horse through the groom's door and secure your horse on a short lead rope, removing the long 30ft line.



Secure your horse on a short leadrope and remove the long line

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Never tie a horse up until the ramps are secure to ensure he cannot pull back and panic. If he decides to pull back with the ramp securely in place, he will automatically be 'bumped back' by the ramp itself.

Step 7a – Step backwards out of the trailer and secure the groom's door ready for your journey. >>





TRAILER LOADING ALONE

“ Walk back to your horse’s head and clip your long line on, unclip your tying-up rope so that your horse is now fully under your hold. ”



UNLOADING

Step 1a – If you have a front unload trailer, you may prefer to unload by lowering your front ramp. Step up in to the trailer and lower the breast bar that is NOT in front of your horse.

Clip a lead line on to your horse and unclip your tied-up rope, ask him for a step backwards and lower the breast bar down. Using a bungee or alternative, secure your partition back to avoid it swinging back onto your horse as he exits; keep yourself to the side and ensure you watch his hips as he exits.



You may prefer to unload by lowering the front ramp



Ask him for a step backward and lower the breast bar



Using a bungee or alternative to secure your partition back to avoid it swinging back



Keep yourself to the side as he exits

Step 1b – To unload using the back ramp, enter the trailer through the groom’s door and walk along inside of trailer and lower/remove the breast bar. Walk back to your horse’s head and clip your long line on, unclip your tying-up rope so that your horse is now fully under your hold.

Exit backwards through the groom’s door as you did when loading, ensuring that it appears closed to your horse, and make your way to the back ramp. Release trailer from opposite side to your horse first.

When you step back across to release the side closest to your horse you are then ideally positioned to ask your horse forward should he start to back out. Then confidently walk back to the groom’s door to enter the trailer; you are now in a position to ask him to back out slowly as you duck under the breast bar, passing your lead line over so as not to trap any fingers.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Ensure you manage your long line so you don’t get it caught under or around anything like mudguards!

IH ADVICE

IH ADVISES THAT GLOVES, A HARD HAT WITH FASTENED HARNESS AND SUITABLE FOOTWEAR ARE USED by all those participating in handling horses during groundwork exercises such as these. IH





"The legacy, I hope, will be 'Jill Blake's School of Equine Shiatsu' and that it will still be here in 20 years' time," says Jill



Rupert has a background in business management which made him the perfect foil for Jill's equestrian ambitions

NEW FEATURE
**MIND YOUR OWN
business...**
Equine Shiatsu

By IH member
Mary Tapping

Starting up your own equine business is a dream many of us have, but it can be a daunting prospect. In a new series, IH Magazine looks at people who have taken the plunge

"I've lived and breathed 'horse' for more years than I care to admit," says Jill Blake, co-founder of the School of Equine Shiatsu. "When I first started out on this journey, I just wanted to spread the word about shiatsu for horses and to run a few workshops for local horse-lovers."

This was to be the beginning of the School of Equine Shiatsu, based at Upper Beeding, West Sussex. Now, 10 years down the line, the school has already trained over 250 students from throughout the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe, and has recently established a base in Croatia to serve Italy, Austria and the Balkan States.

It is very much a family business; Jill met her husband, Rupert, in 1975 and his background in business management has made him the perfect foil for Jill's equestrian ambitions. He now runs the office, handles marketing and keeps the students rolling in.

"It did seem we would make a dream team. Well, I guess we knew that already; we just hadn't applied it to running a business," says Rupert.

"Once Jill no longer needed to work and we were in a position to start a family, I knew she would devote a large portion of her life to working with horses. I was enthusiastic about the opportunity of working from home with Jill; I'm not sure she was that keen to start with but, once she realised I could look after the jobs she didn't like doing, she knew it made sense!"

Many people were impressed by the effect shiatsu, which is Japanese for 'finger pressure' and uses similar points to those used in acupuncture, had on their horses so Jill developed a one-day workshop for people who wanted to treat their own horses. Inevitably, this wasn't enough and a three-day Foundation Course quickly followed.

By this time, Jill had developed a two-year Diploma Course* which she had advertised as best she could within the limits of technology at that time.

"Bear in mind this was before the Internet and emails began to rule our lives and, of course, long before Facebook and Twitter – so we were reliant on local advertisements and word of mouth. Incredibly, in our first year of running the Diploma, we were able to launch courses in Sussex and another one in Devon.

"Many of the students on these courses first heard about us from flyers we had distributed at riding schools and feed merchants. I'm not sure we would have the energy to spread the word in that way today," admits Jill.

The School's mission statement is simple but effective: "Our philosophy is to bring together a group of like-minded individuals of all ages and from all walks of life, with one common goal; to enhance their relationship with the horse and with one another with a view to going out into the community and sharing their training and experience with others."

So what of the future? "Rupert keeps telling me that organisations, large and small, need to constantly re-invent themselves and inject new energy and passion," Jill explains.

"There's a bit of 'watch this space' at the moment as we have two groups progressing through Second Year and Post Grad, with a new group scheduled to start in October 2014. The legacy, I hope, will be 'Jill Blake's School of Equine Shiatsu' and that it will still be here in 20 years' time."

*** THE TWO-YEAR DIPLOMA COURSE now has an extra six-month Postgraduate element for successful students to hone their skills. More details at www.schoolofequineshiatsu.com**

TRAINING with

TAKING ON AN EX-RACER IH Training Section

Taking on an ex-racehorse has become increasingly popular, and they can be a hugely rewarding horse to own.

They can also come with physical and behavioural baggage. In the first of a two-part series, LIZ FALKINGHAM talked to the Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Centre's KATH PININGTON about choosing the right one for you

“TBs which have raced have the additional issues that can come from being worked hard as immature animals.”

Member research we did last year revealed (unsurprisingly) that lots of IH members have ex-racehorses. The combination of an enlightened, sympathetic owner and a sensitive, intelligent TB can be very rewarding; IH techniques can also be very useful when dealing with some of the challenges that can be part and parcel of an ex-racehorse.



Kath Pinington out competing with her own TRC horse, Midge



These horses need to learn to bond with a person; many racing yards simply don't have the time or staff to allow a trust bond to develop

Photo courtesy of the Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Centre

ON THE RIGHT TRACK || TAKING ON AN EX-RACEHORSE

The Thoroughbred Rehabilitation Centre (TRC), based at Whinney Hill Farm, Aughton near Lancaster, is one of the UK's leading centres for rehabilitating and retraining TBs from a wide variety of backgrounds, including racing. With around 30 horses on site at any one time and hundreds of others out on loan, what better place to go to get an insight into these amazing horses?

Kath Pinington is yard manager and trainer at the TRC; she works with the horses from the moment they come to the centre, as well as going out to do initial assessments. She is passionate in her belief that ex-racers can make fantastic leisure horses given the right training and owner.

“Like any other breed, they range from laidback to very sharp but TBs which have raced have the additional issues that can come from being worked hard as immature animals. A lot of what we do here is about dealing with physical and behavioural issues as a result of that, or from poor conformation, but also then finding the right person to take each individual horse on,” says Kath.

She says the most common physical issues tend to be tendon injuries and pelvic problems. The former ranges from mild thickening of the

tendon tissue as a result of injury repair through to more severe scarring and even pin or bar firing.

“Tendon injuries result in scar tissue, which is what the thickening is; the more severe the injury, the more extensive the scar tissue. This can lead to a loss of elasticity so these horses might struggle to higher level jumping, for example, but it doesn't mean they couldn't do it at lower level or enjoy life as a hacking horse.

“Pelvic problems tend to present as a lack of power – these horses don't always look unlevel as they can adapt to cope, but they have that ‘flat-tyre’ feel. Most TBs that come to us from racing have pelvic problems, ranging from muscle tears to asymmetry and even broken seat bones, caused by stall injuries or jumping at speed, for example,” says Kath.

All the horses taken in by the TRC undergo extensive health assessments to treat or rule out any physical issues before training work begins. This is one of the reasons taking a horse on loan from the TRC is recommended, as owners are not then faced with trying to pinpoint and treat what can be major problems.

The horses at the TRC come in for a variety of reasons; those direct from trainers are usually not fast enough, or have had their career ended

through injury. Others come indirectly from racing via private homes – sometimes people's circumstances have changed, or they are unable to deal with an issue which arises.

"Sometimes a horse will come in because it won't jump or has misbehaved repeatedly out hacking. Dealing with these problems means having an understanding of the horse – it may not be able to jump because it simply has no core strength or topline muscle to allow it to do so, for example.

"Some ex-racehorses will always struggle to hack alone, or be in any situation where they don't have the confidence that being with other horses gives them. These are horses which have been on busy yards and worked in strings all their lives, so it takes time to re-educate them.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Taking an ex-racer on permanent loan from a centre like the TRC means much of the hard work has already been done (plus they can be returned) but Kath has these pointers for those sourcing horses straight from training:

1. CHECK THE HORSE'S CONFORMATION STATICALLY;

look for lumps, bumps and scars and consider whether these may cause problems in the future for what you want to do with the horse

2. SEE THE HORSE WALKED AND TROTTED UP ON A HARD SURFACE;

you're not just looking for signs of lameness but also to see how straight (or not) the horse moves. Very crooked movement can be an indicator of underlying physical issues

3. ASSESS FOOT CONFORMATION AND HOOF QUALITY.

TBs are not known for having great feet and this can be compounded if the horse has been turned away with shoes and additional nutrients for some time. In these cases, Cavallo boots or similar may be needed to allow foot growth and repair

4. WATCH THE HORSE BEING RIDDEN –

don't expect the horse to be responsive to the aids and going in a nice outline, but look at the movement and general attitude

5. FINALLY, IF POSSIBLE, RIDE THE HORSE YOURSELF;

don't expect those coming straight out of training to be capable of working on tight circles in an outline, but it should give you an idea of whether you 'fit' with the horse

"Try and get them straight onto plenty of fibre such as grass and haylage, and avoid sugary feeds. Remember that lots of ex-racers have never had proper turnout so use your common sense when first introducing them to paddocks," advises Kath, who adds that all the horses at the centre are turned out but some need special provisions (cribbing bars, or multiple short sessions rather than long periods, for example).

"These horses need to learn to bond with a person; many racing yards simply don't have the time or staff to allow a trust bond to develop. Many will not enjoy being brushed in the stable or having general interaction with people; this is why groundwork and good communication is so essential, as it allows that bond to develop."

• In the second part of this feature in the winter 2014 issue, we will look at how the TRC rehabilitates and retrain ex-racers ready for a new life as a leisure horse. For more information on the work done by the TRC and how to apply for one of their horses on permanent loan, see www.thoroughbredrehabilitationcentre.co.uk

TOP TIPS

MANY EX-RACERS HAVE GASTRIC ULCERS; TRC uses a supplement called Equine 74 for those with lower grade ulcers, alongside GastroGard where vet advice recommends it. A forage-based, low sugar diet is also essential

EXPLOSIVE BEHAVIOUR IS OFTEN RELATED TO CONDITIONS such as kissing spine or hind leg suspensory ligament injuries, so make sure you rule these out as a cause

DON'T PANIC IF YOUR VET FINDS ARTHRITIC CHANGES –

it's quite common in ex-racers of 10 years old and over, due to the overuse of their hocks for straightline speed. Kath says most learn to cope with this once core strength has been restored



All Thoroughbreds which come to the TRC undergo a full health assessment before any training work begins to prepare them for their new life as a leisure horse

TRAINING *with*

INTELLIGENT HORSEMANSHIP

Photo courtesy of Maxine Fumantiz



Philippa with her gundogs, including the latest addition, Sunny, sat on her knee and bred from her 2013 IGL trials finalist, Mango (far right, back row)

Training FOR LIFE

Philippa Williams is one of the leading gundog trainers in the UK and is a regular fixture at Crufts, giving displays over the four days. She's also a vocal proponent of clicker and reward-based training, which she has successfully used for both dogs and horses. LIZ FALKINGHAM talked to her

You might not think clicker-training a Labrador as the foundation to becoming a successful gundog has much relevance to training and riding show horses, but I'd beg to differ. When I decided my life wasn't complete without the former, despite doing lots of the latter, it led me to Philippa Williams and a new insight into reward-based training.

With Philippa, the click-and-treat aspect of training is used to create a solid foundation. The clicker is used to mark desired behaviour, with the reward reinforcing it, and – as with the pressure/release of IH – timing is critical.

"Clicker training doesn't just train the dog, it trains the owner too – which is probably more important. It teaches people to stand back and observe, rather than just pitching straight in," says Philippa.

"By getting people to stand, look and identify the right behaviour before marking it with a click, it teaches them to understand their dog's behaviour better. The beauty of this is that, hopefully, they learn to take advantage of what I call 'freebies' – when the dog does something right without necessarily being asked.

“Yes, it takes effort to understand how animals think and behave, but the rewards are so much greater.”

“As people learn to do this, their sense of timing is sharpened and they can then work on shaping behaviours as part of incremental learning. So, for example, you might want your dog – or indeed horse – to learn to stand square in a certain place; the very first step of that might be rewarding the animal for putting one foot in the correct place, or even just moving towards the right place.

“What I’m aiming for is to get people to reward what is right, instead of punishing what is wrong. That way, you are setting the animal up to succeed,” she says.

Although she now just has dogs – a veritable pack of beautifully-behaved and highly successful working cocker spaniels, Golden Retrievers and Labradors – Philippa was a keen rider and trainer in the past. She used clicker training with her horses – “I taught my kids’ ponies some tricks then wished I hadn’t!” and sees parallels with reward-based training for dogs and horses.

“As with horses, dogs need to know there is a leader in the partnership and that leader is you. There are so many people with dogs who have no knowledge of animal behaviour and have just watched or listened to others and then applied various methods – often harsh ones – without an understanding of how the animal learns.”

When I raise the issue of food causing biting or other undesirable behaviours, Philippa says there needs to be clarity between the role of food as a reward and not as a bribe.

“For dogs or horses, the food rewards the animal for selecting and then offering the right behaviour. I want the animal to be a curious learner; to think about what the result of each behaviour offered might be and so become calmer and more confident in their own ability to solve a problem.

“If you get that strong foundation in place, then a lot of the time the animal will make the right decision. And, if they offer the wrong behaviour, it doesn’t become a huge issue.”

She is clear that she will offer a correction for inappropriate behaviour – much in the same way that Monty might use the Dually – and says in some ways this is more difficult when working with gundogs than horses.

“Usually, with a horse, you have a close physical proximity, so it’s easier to offer the correction immediately so the horse understands what the correction is for. With gundogs, they can be three fields away when the problem comes – any correction applied when they come back to you is useless because all you are doing is telling the dog you don’t like it, rather than you don’t like the behaviour,” warns Philippa.

Time and again while we chat, she comes back to the crucial early days and weeks in an animal’s life. Philippa believes strongly that those first experiences set the tone for how an animal will learn and approach life; her latest litter of puppies watched field-based training sessions for older dogs from a small pen that encouraged them to romp about in a strange but safe environment.

“You need to start equipping them with the skills they will need to cope with the world right from the start. For dogs and horses expected to work closely with humans, you’re not doing them any favours by delaying their introduction to the real world.

“I also think owners need to learn how to progress an animal’s training through each stage of its life, in the same way you would with a child. What we expect of babies isn’t the same as we would expect of a toddler, or a teenager, for example – but if each stage

of learning is done correctly, the challenge of moving up isn’t as great.”

Like many horse and dog people, Philippa is forthright in her views and has needed a thick skin to weather the criticisms of more traditional trainers. Despite competing at the very highest level – she qualified dogs for the prestigious International Gundog League Championships in 2008, 2011 and 2013 – and being the first Kennel Club Accredited Instructor (KCAI) in the UK for her work with both working gundogs and Field Trials, she says people still tell her clicker and reward-based training doesn’t work.

“Frankly, people who say that are just ignorant or, for their own reasons, would rather punish a dog than reward it. Yes, it takes effort to understand how animals think and behave, but the rewards are so much greater.

“An old school gundog trainer will punish a dog for moving away from him when it should be at heel; we reward our dogs when they choose to stay close to us. I know which method the dogs prefer!”

• More information on Philippa’s work and dogs can be found at www.dogsforlife.co.uk or her Facebook page. See page 31 for a competition to win her latest mini clicker training manual. 📖



Philippa in 1989 riding Welsh sec D, Sion, who had a ‘very tough first few years of life’

“When we first got him, he was frightened of his own shadow and had a self-destruct button which led to more than one near-death experience. He was an amazing ride and I only wish I had the knowledge that I have now back then.”

Photo courtesy of Philippa Williams

Electric fencing allows grazing to be closed up for hay/haylage production, with horses then allowed onto the aftermath to tidy up grass not accessible to the mower



LEARN & WIN

“ Getting grazing management right is about more than just sufficient space per horse and safe fencing.. ”

Pasture management ...is the grass always greener?

Most people would agree (hopefully!) that access to pasture is essential to the physical and mental well-being of horses. Getting the best out of your grazing means careful management; IH Magazine looks at what that means...



Weeds such as docks can be removed by digging them out or spot spraying with herbicide. Topping docks and thistles before they go to seed also helps reduce their proliferation

Getting grazing management right is about more than just sufficient space per horse and safe fencing. Understanding how grass grows and how best to manage it gives you a far better chance of utilising what you have effectively.

Nor is grass just grass – there are many different species, all of which offer different nutritional and growth properties. Some species are tougher than others and, therefore, more capable of withstanding the punishment horses mete out.

Grass species and growth

Generally speaking, older pasture (often called meadow or unimproved pasture) is more suited to horse grazing. It tends to be species rich, with grasses such as Timothy, creeping red fescue and smooth stalked meadow grass, as well as wildflowers and herbs; often, it has not had artificial fertilisers or herbicides used on it.

Pasture like this has a lower nutritional value than that used for cattle grazing, which is often based on ryegrass species. Modern grass mixes designed for dairy cattle are usually too rich for horses; they are high in protein and sugar, with less of the coarse, fibrous material required by horses.

Older pastures also have the benefit of good ‘carrying’ capability. Long years of grazing and no ploughing produce a thick, dense sward which is less likely to break up under wet conditions.

All grass species, however, follow a seasonal growth pattern with which most horse owners will be familiar. Once the cold temperatures of winter have passed, grass begins to grow vigorously during the warmer, wetter conditions of spring; sugar and protein levels are also at their highest during this period.

It can be useful at this time to close off some of the grazing to cut for hay or haylage; the remaining pasture can then be grazed more intensively to keep on top of growth rates. Once grass growth reaches a plateau in late June/early July and then begins to taper off, grazing density can be reduced to match the available grass.

If you can’t cut the grass in this way, you may find it necessary to top pastures with a mower to stop areas of mature, long-stemmed grass taking over. Horses will often reject this kind of grass as too coarse, unless there is really nothing else to eat.

Keeping paddocks clean

Most horse owners know how important removing droppings from pasture is; not only are they a source of parasites, droppings also create sour patches where horses refuse to eat surrounding grass. This can create large, no-go areas, effectively reducing the amount of land available to graze.

Weeds can also reduce the effective grazing capacity of pasture, although not everything which is not grass should be considered a weed (herbs, for example, can be very beneficial). Those which should be removed include nettles, thistles and docks, as well as all poisonous plants such as ragwort. The latter should be dug up with as much root removed as possible and the plant taken away for burning, as it is more poisonous (and palatable) when dead. If you prefer to spray rather than dig up weeds such as docks, choose ones safe for horses and spot spray the individual plants rather than blanket spray the field (many dock sprays will also kill clover, for example).

Sheep can be useful field companions on horse pasture – they will often graze down areas rejected by horses and ‘hoover up’ parasites (which do not affect them). If you don’t have access to a mower to tidy paddocks up, it can be worth ‘borrowing’ sheep from a local farmer or smallholder for this purpose.

Feeding your fields

Nitrogen is rarely needed on horse pasture and can cause grazing too rich for horses. This doesn’t mean that other nutrients don’t need topping up; phosphorus, potash, magnesium and sodium are some of the important trace elements which might be needed.

There are specialist companies who can do soil and plant testing to assess nutrient levels and advise what needs to be applied. Similarly, there are companies offering pasture management services who can apply fertilisers (as well as other jobs such as topping), or it can be worth asking local farmers if they are able to do the job.

Dealing with damage

Ideally, a low stocking density and rotating paddocks to allow pasture to rest (three to six months if possible, although even relatively short periods of two to three weeks can help) should be used to prevent field damage. This can be hard to manage in practice, particularly where horses go out during the winter.



Poaching in gateways and other areas during wet weather can lead to grass being replaced by invasive weed species, lowering the grazing value of the land

TIPS FOR MINIMISING AND REPAIRING DAMAGE INCLUDE:

- Move ring feeders or licks regularly to prevent the ground becoming severely cut up (poached) by horses during wet weather
- Remove shoes if possible, as these increase the poaching of wet ground
- Reduce stocking density as far as possible
- Repair damage in the spring by harrowing, rolling and ‘stitching in’ new grass seed to damaged areas and allowing them to recover



CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BEST REFERENCE BOOKS ON LOOKING AFTER GRAZING,



Managing Grass for Horses is a comprehensive guide for those looking to keep their fields (and horses) in tip top order.

Just answer the following question to be entered into the draw:

Q. Which farm animal is considered to be a useful grazing companion for horses?

Send your answer along with your name and address to editor@ihhq.net with Pasture Competition in the subject line.

WIN!
a copy of
Philippa Williams's
LATEST
MINI CLICKER
TRAINING
MANUAL

WIN A COPY OF
PHILIPPA WILLIAMS'
LATEST MINI CLICKER
TRAINING MANUAL



Produced in association with Honey's Real Dog Food, this manual is packed full of tips and training exercise; it is a great introduction to clicker and reward-based training.

TO ENTER just send an e-mail with your name and address, with 'Clicker Manual' in the subject line, to editor@ihhq.net

About Philippa....

Philippa Williams has owned and successfully worked a range of dogs in Agility, Flyball, Obedience. To find out more about Philippa's training techniques visit www.dogsforlife.co.uk

SUMMER ISSUE
COMPETITION
WINNER

Congratulations to BRENDA MILES, OF MIDDLEZOY, SOMERSET, the winner of our summer issue competition to win a signed copy of Carl Hester's autobiography, Making It Happen.





Slowly but surely: getting to grips with Kayla

IH Success Story

My mare, Kayla Beech, is a European warmblood chestnut mare of around 16.3hh but she's BIG with it! I purchased her unbacked and unhandled as a 3-year-old, having just had a foal; her life to that point was one where she had always been in charge.

To say she was a challenge is the biggest understatement imaginable; she had all the traits of a lead mare and was very positive about the fact things would remain that way. I happened to be in touch with a lady who knew IHRA Sue Palmer very well and she advised me to get in touch with her – Sue was pregnant at the time so passed me on to IHRA Sandra Williams.

Initially, on the ground, Kayla would stand and refuse to be led, together with refusing to go near a trailer or lorry. When she had tack on she would, for as long as a year, refuse to move forward from any aid.

If you were silly enough to ask she would buck so high that a few select people got to see the underside of her belly as her hind end was so athletic! A friend of mine, who is a dressage instructor, gave me a 50/50 chance at best of working through her issues; he thought I was bonkers and told me so.

She also head-shook violently – to the point where on many days you couldn't take her out. A large part of this I have since found out was due to hormones and stress.

Sandra and I started to work slowly and steadily with Kayla on ground handling and slowly progressing to loading and long lining. There was so much to cover and, with a mare like her, we couldn't rush it.

After a year, the ridden work started to improve, in that she no longer just tried to buck you off and would accept a person on her, but she was still reluctant to move forward from a ridden aid. I was still achieving this through voice command, which had been established on the long lines; if you relied on any other ridden stimulus, I and my ridden instructor were convinced Kayla would become sour and I would become sore!

By last summer, Kayla was becoming lovely to handle on the ground and I was starting to enjoy

time with her on the long lines and leading, and was able to load her successfully and reliably. We decided to try a Join Up in Sandra's round pen.

This was a big challenge for Kayla as she really objected to being anything other than in charge. We were able to move her away and turn her but I couldn't get her to turn in – she would stick on the outside of the pen.

However, over the winter we worked on the ground and did weekly long-lining and leading work. Kayla went from strength to strength and was growing into a rideable, easy-to-handle mare.


She has blown away my instructor, who says that he never thought she would turn into the horse she is now. Kayla has started competing and is achieving some really exciting results; the most recent was qualifying for Scope Festival at 1m.

She loved her day and tried her heart out for me; we felt like such a team I had a tear in my eye when we finished. She concentrated on her jumping but was also a pleasure to handle and load.

Recently, I have been able to remove the nose net and there has been no head-shaking and, while it will always be something I have to manage, I truly think that her stress has dissipated due to finding enjoyment in her relationship with me and Sandra. This in itself has been a huge journey of discovery and one in which IH methods have played a huge part.

In July, we went back into the round pen and tried a Join Up again. She followed me in from the outside of the pen and on our second, follow-up circle she was right at my shoulder; WOW – what an emotional moment!

She has an amazing life ahead of her (she is now 6), as she will stay with me and be ridden by me, but I could easily see her turning into my daughter's horse in a few years' time as they have quite a bond now too (she has started doing some sessions with Sandra). If it wasn't for Kayla Beech, I wouldn't have found IH and for that I am eternally grateful.

I'm also very grateful to Sandra – to say she changed the life of my mare and me is an understatement. Kayla will always have the ability to waggle her head in a slightly indignant way and will always be ready to take over the role of lead mare from any person/handler who allows it but through the practices of IH and Sandra Williams what seemed like miracles were worked. 



“A friend of mine gave me a 50/50 chance of working through her issues; he thought I was bonkers.”

“ I truly think that her stress has dissipated due to finding enjoyment in her relationship with me and Sandra. ”

Mel and Kayla with
IHRA Sandra Williams



“ We slowly introduced her to a Dually halter and this built an amazing bond between us. ”

Kezzie didn't want anything to do with anyone She acts like a youngster now, despite being 21

Giving Kezzie her sparkle back

IH Success Story

My success story starts with my first riding lessons at a riding school, where I met and fell in love with a 14.2hh Connemara cross named Kezzie, who was 16 years old at the time. She was a great teacher, a fantastic jumper and had a sweet personality; she gave me huge confidence.

Unfortunately, a few years on, I dislocated my elbow at the riding school quite badly which resulted in me not being able to ride for a while, and I did not go back. About a year ago, I heard Kezzie was being retired – there were rumours she may put down due because of her age and the fact she was on the verge of becoming sour.

I visited her a few times and she was grumpy – she didn't want anything to do with anyone. She'd also picked up some bad habits such as biting whenever she was touched, having rugs and tack being put on/taken off or having her feet picked out; generally, she just didn't like human presence.

We contacted the yard saying we could give her a good retirement home. After several months of waiting, she finally arrived, which was an absolute dream come true for me – my childhood pony that taught me so much, was mine!


She settled very quickly, however her biting habits were still apparent. We slowly introduced her to a Dually halter and this built an amazing bond between us; she really listened to me.

After every session with the Dually, a bit of successful Join Up (which she had never been exposed to before), and long lining, I would pick up her feet using pressure and release. Every session, the signals of aggression became smaller and smaller, I was actually getting somewhere!

Her personality started to shine through; it was the pony I fell in love with! However, her stable manners were still slightly aggressive; she would try to bite whenever I went near her feet, so I tried using pressure and release in the stable as well.

In the space of a month, she became the pony I used to know; now, you can pick her feet up with no trouble, and she will even pick them up for you! Her behaviour improved so much that we decided to take her to a local fundraising show.

We entered an in-hand class and she was incredible. She has gone from a grumpy, aggressive and irritable pony, who had no love for anyone, to a bright, happy, energetic pony who absolutely adores my attention and greets me every morning.

She acts like a youngster now, despite being 21; I think learning new things has rejuvenated her! This is my first ever horse; I am 17 years old, and this is a huge achievement for me. 

The Karen Cunningham SCHOLARSHIP

Meg is a young person totally committed to working to make horses' lives better.

As one of the first Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associates, Karen Cunningham was to leave a lasting impact on people and horses, despite dying of breast cancer at just 37. In the wake of her death, KELLY MARKS and KAREN'S SISTERS, LYNNE and JAYNE, set up the Karen Cunningham Scholarship, now in its 10th year.

The scholarship funds a place on the IH 5-day foundation course every year for the candidate Karen's sisters feel would most benefit.

"We try and choose someone that we think Karen would have chosen – not just someone who is passionate about horses but also needs a helping hand financially. The scholarship is there to help someone realise their talent," says Lynne, who remembers Karen being "mad about animals" from a very young age. "Right from being a child, it was always about animals. She started with guinea pigs and Dad built her this amazing house for them – they were the best cared-for guinea pigs ever!"

As Karen went into her teens, however, it was horses that took over her life and she began working at a local stables. It was around this time that she began to read about Monty Roberts and his work with HM The Queen's horses, and booked to go and see him on tour.

"Straight away she knew then that working with horses in that way was what she wanted to do. They were her passion in life, nothing else mattered. She became one of the first RAs and, at that time, covered the north east of England and even up into Scotland. She had planned her new business, getting leaflets and cards made – it was called Alpha Mare," says Lynne.

Just as the business was about to be launched, Karen was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of breast cancer. She spent her last three weeks in hospital, with her sisters at her side.

"She kept getting calls while she was in hospital from people needing her help with horses. Eventually, we had to turn the phone off – but we realised what an impact she had made and what a need there was for her way of working with horses," says Lynne, who was with Karen when she died on May 29, 2004.

On the 10th anniversary of the scholarship, Lynne says this year's candidate, Meg Challoner, is the perfect choice; a young person totally committed to working to make horses' lives better.

"IHRA Liz Pitman nominated her and we could see she was very deserving. Meg really stood out and we hope the scholarship will help her realise her dreams," says Lynne.

• Nominations for the 2015 scholarship should be made in writing to Lynne Shepherd, 51 New Market Road, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 2JD by May 1, 2015



Meg riding Amber Jazz, the Shy Lowen horse with which she has a special bond

Photo courtesy of Deb Maxwell



Meg backing Welsh Section A pony, Merry, with Jasmine

Photo courtesy of Liz Pitman

"She couldn't have done it any better."

With 2014 being a special year for the Karen Cunningham scholarship, it is only fitting that it has been awarded to a special person. Winner Meg Challoner is indeed special, writes IHRA Liz Pitman

Meg joined the Shy Lowen team six years ago as an unconfident 12-year-old. Working with the horses in a team of other kids, she soon developed into a gifted young horse handler and trainer.

"When I first started Shy Lowen, I had an interest in horses due to a family member owning a few, but I didn't really have any real knowledge of them. Throughout the years, I have learnt many important skills ranging from basic knowledge such as mucking out and how to measure feeds/hay, to training and handling skills with a range of different horses and ponies," says Meg.

"This is also topped off with being trained to read horses' body language in everyday life to pinpoint things such as colic and lameness, which is a very useful skill to have."

"Being trained to read horses' body language in everyday life ... is a very useful skill to have."

As she grew in ability and confidence, she was given more responsibility, including that of teaching some of the younger volunteers. IHRA Liz Pitman recalls visiting Shy Lowen in 2012 and watching Meg working with new volunteer Jasmin to back Merry.

"I couldn't quite believe what I was watching," says Liz. "Little section A Merry was rather nervous; the girls worked so quietly but with a sense of confidence that gave Merry the support he needed during this big step in his life. Meg, then aged 16, would have matched or even beaten many an adult with her horse skills."

Shy Lowen's Bernadette Langfield had already singled Meg out as an exceptional person.

"Meg arrived as a nervous young girl, desperate to be with horses, but even more than that she had a real drive in her to understand the viewpoint of the horse. That is unusual in a 12-year-old child."

The following year, when Liz and Bridget Colston decided to offer a place on their groundwork skills course to one of the Shy Lowen kids, Bernie didn't hesitate in naming Meg as the person she wanted to send. Despite being well out of her comfort zone in a strange environment, amongst unfamiliar people (and suffering the after effects of dreadful car sickness), Meg more than justified Bernadette's faith in her.

"Not only did she work during the main body of the course with confidence and skill beyond her years, she also didn't hesitate when a volunteer was called for to load one of the horses at the end of the course. Blue had already shown what a tricky loader she could be when Bridget had worked with her earlier, so it wasn't just a question of popping a horse up a ramp," says Liz.

"Meg kept her cool, nailed her technique and got Blue onto the lorry calmly. She couldn't have done it any better." >>

Karen could not have a better legacy in the shape of helping this lovely young woman

The Karen Cunningham
SCHOLARSHIP



Meg working with Bridget Colston on an IH course last year

Photo courtesy of Liz Phipps

>> After talking to Bernadette and Meg herself about what Meg wanted to do when leaving school in 2014 ('become an RA'), Liz decided to apply for the Karen Cunningham scholarship on her behalf.

"It would have been a huge shame for both Meg and Shy Lowen if her more formal IH studies were blocked by financial constraints. When I heard that the application had been successful, I beamed with delight for the rest of the day."

Meg, now 18 and a Shy Lowen trustee, can't wait for her trip down to Hartsop Farm.

"I am made up* to be going on this course as it's such an amazing opportunity to be around such inspirational people and to

learn from them. This course will be the first step toward my dream of becoming an RA in the future, as well as my being able to take away all I have learnt and using it to help the horses and volunteers at Shy Lowen."

"This course will be the first step toward my dream of becoming an RA in the future."

She's not the only one who's excited; Meg's IH education will also benefit Shy Lowen. Bernadette summed up for everyone at the sanctuary:

"We all feel immensely proud that Meg has been chosen by Karen's sisters for this wonderful opportunity. I remember well the sad circumstances around this scholarship's beginning.

"Karen could not have a better legacy in the shape of helping this lovely young woman along her path to help horses and, as a result, people too."

Thanks to IH (for sponsoring the scholarship) and Karen's sisters, Lynne and Jayne, Meg's dream has come true and, in the process, the work of Shy Lowen is being supported.

*Scouse for very happy! 🇮🇪

"...it's such an amazing opportunity to be around such inspirational people and to learn from them."

SHY LOWEN CHARITY UPDATE

Two of life's LUCKY ONES

By IHRA Liz Pitman

When you're involved with a charity mainly through fundraising, it's sometimes easy to forget to emphasise what those funds actually go to. Yes, IH has helped buy new fencing and a proper round pen (woohoo!), but more than that we have helped some horses with serious issues to get back on track; two of those are Muffin and River.

Muffin is still only five years old; his first years are vague but his subsequent behaviour shows they weren't ideal. He was bought last year by a lady who had been assured he was a safe hack but, from the moment she got him home, he reared both in hand and under saddle.

She wisely sought help, only to be advised not to keep him as he had a lump on his throat that was probably the cause of his behaviour. She signed him over to Shy Lowen at the beginning of 2014.

He had scabby, scaly skin over much of his body and was indeed difficult to handle. When the vet arrived to examine the lump on his neck, Muffin was very scared and barged around – even when having photos taken of the lump.

The photos were sent to Prof Derek Knottenburg who gave his opinion free of charge and instructed our vets, Gillivervet Ltd, as to the procedure to follow. After a special fundraising appeal, Muffin had an operation on May 8 and came home on May 13; with careful nursing and wound management he has made a full recovery.

In the meantime, Muffin was taught to understand what was expected of him on the ground, and he is now a lovely horse to handle. Just a month after his operation, he also started his ridden retraining and progressed so quickly he was soon ready for a new home.

Shy Lowen's Bernadette Langfield tells the story of our second feature horse, Mythical River.

"River is an 11-year-old ex-racehorse. She was bought for £500 from a local dealer by a relatively inexperienced mother and daughter after they saw an online advert picturing a bay horse jumping a show jump type fence and describing a perfect all-rounder family horse.

They went to see her and tried her; she was quiet and they thought she was ideal. They owned her for three weeks; she reared when they tried to tack her up or lead her, and she wouldn't let them get on her – they brought her to us with all their dreams of horse ownership shattered.



Photo courtesy of Liz Pitman

Just a month after his operation, Muffin also started his ridden retraining and progressed so quickly he was soon ready for a new home




Photo courtesy of Shelley Irving

Mystical River's behavioural problems were all related to her desperate hunger; once that was resolved she transformed into a very calm horse

"On arrival, River had a body condition score of 1 and the people who brought her said she had put weight on in the three weeks since they got her. We were shown the advert that she'd been bought from; the horse pictured was a gelding and had different white markings from those River has.

"Her physical recovery was textbook and quick. Her behavioural problems were all related to her desperate hunger; once that was resolved she transformed into a very calm, steady and genuine little horse."

Sad stories, but they are now two of life's lucky ones. 

From the Case files

IH is designed to give you the tools to work with your horse, but sometimes we all need a helping hand.

That's why IH has a network of Recommended Associates around the country; people trained and endorsed by us to use non-violent, partnership-based methods.

From The Case Files looks at the work done by IHRA's to help two- and four-legged clients with all sorts of issues, including confidence. In this issue of IH Magazine, we feature a horse and two riders who all had their confidence badly damaged – and learnt to find it again

“The whole IH experience has made us as one; there are times that I get a little choked with a reminder of where we are!”



Charlotte now says she and Shikoba ride out happily together but, more importantly, have a great partnership based on learning and bonding together

Learning to love riding again

When **Charlotte Marsden** had a serious fall from her horse, it wasn't just her wrist that was shattered.

"I wanted to share my story as I'm certain many others riders have been, or are, in the situation I was nine months ago. I'm 36 and have been riding for nearly four years – I purchased my first horse nearly two years ago and had an awful experience with him from the start.

"He was very uptight and spooky and I had five falls from him; in the last, my wrist snapped so badly an operation with a metal plate and 12 screws was needed. I had lost all confidence and was an emotional wreck – I had to sell him as I was so scared.

"I did purchase a new horse, a beautiful mare called Shikoba. Her temperament was so different I thought I would be able to ride her however; once tacked up, I couldn't move; it was like my feet were frozen to a mounting block," says Charlotte.

While she enjoyed grooming Shikoba and handling her on the ground, Charlotte felt she was failing her by not riding. After watching a programme on Horse & Country TV about Kelly Marks and Monty Roberts, she felt she could ride again with the right help.

"I googled accredited coaches and I could not believe it when IHRA Suzanne Halsey from Friday Field Stables came up, as this was quite near where I lived! I told her my story and she was certain she could help me," says Charlotte.

Suzanne arranged for Shikoba to come to her for some in-house schooling, as she felt some more consistent work with Charlotte would really help.

“I had lost all confidence and was an emotional wreck.”

"I did Join Up with Shikoba and worked through groundwork exercises, initially to help Charlotte understand Shikoba more, and how what she did had a direct effect on Shikoba. We taught her how to long line with two lines, something that Charlotte announced she didn't think she would ever be able to do, but in no time she was a pro," explains Suzanne.

"With this new found confidence on the ground, it was time to get Charlotte back in the saddle. I rode Shikoba first and, although she felt green, she also seemed a very willing and genuine horse that was keen to learn. We talked through 'how'

we were going to mount Shikoba, with back up plans in place, if things didn't quite go to plan.

"Charlotte had never really been shown how to mount correctly, so this was a huge help to her. The day that Charlotte got on, Shikoba rose to the occasion, and stood totally still for her.

"From there we were able to discuss a lot about her position on her horse, and how with some changes she could sit more balanced, feel more secure and therefore be more effective," says Suzanne.

Charlotte now says she and Shikoba ride out happily together but, more importantly, have a great partnership based on learning and bonding together.

"The whole IH experience has made us as one; there are times that I get a little choked with a reminder of where we are! I was the one who nearly gave up with fear and now I am the one confident in dealing with my horse and reading her and understanding her needs," says Charlotte proudly.

• More information about IHRA Suzanne Halsey can be found at www.fridayfield.co.uk

From Storm TO NORM

Claire Nissel heard about Storm and subsequently bought him as a companion for her horse, Charles. He arrived at his new home emaciated, anxious and very shut-down and immediately Claire renamed him Norman, as her aim was “to take the Storm out of him”.

Norm's history certainly was a stormy one; he had been subjected to the shooting of air guns and had been badly burned on the underside of his jaws. He had also been terrified by a trap running away with him down a hill – unsurprisingly, he was known as an unrideable, nappy, bucking pony.

She waited until he was in a comfortable state of health and then called IHRA Gill Bradley for help.

“My first priority was to encourage Norman to want to interact with us and to gain his interest, trust and respect. His tendency when scared was to freeze and shut down rather than run away.

“Although extremely head shy, he was able to tolerate a Dually halter. Aside

from moving Norman's feet lots in every direction, I found that encouraging him to gently flex his head and neck from side to side using mainly my body language along with mere suggestions down the line, encouraged him to soften significantly and he started to really relax, lick and chew,” says Gill.

The head-lowering exercise played a huge part in helping Norman to relax and was a useful gauge, as it was several sessions before he was relaxed enough to lower his head fully to ground level. Gradually, the expression in Norman's eye became more awake and yet soft; he also started to look for interaction.

“Building on this trust paved the way for a wonderful journey ahead; Claire did a fabulous job working incredibly hard in between my visits. Embedding the value of ‘yes’ slowly encouraged him to want to move forward instead of his entrenched ‘planting’ response.

“Long-lining and spook busting were key to tackling his ‘trap’ experience by gradually conquering his fear of things approaching from behind. Over the summer, Norman learnt to lead beautifully, to be long-lined with a saddle on and even to enjoy having his ears stroked,” says Gill.

“Building on this trust paved the way for a wonderful journey ahead; Claire did a fabulous job working incredibly hard in between my visits.”

On a lovely autumn day in October 2013, Norman was re-backed, willingly accepting Gill as his first rider. Since then he has continued to go from strength to strength and Claire is enjoying a very willing and adorable partner who is happy to hack out without another horse or with his buddy, Charles.

“Watching Norman emerge from his very ‘shut down’, anxious and submissive state into an outgoing, interactive, confident and happy chap has been a great joy. Gill's understanding of horses (and their owners!) is second to none,” says Claire.

“Her very patient, gentle and incremental approach has been absolutely key to developing both Norman's confidence and my own, and the growing trust between us. Gill makes me and Norman feel like the bee's knees and that is exactly what she is to us.”

• More information about IHRA Gill Bradley can be found at www.yourhorseandponymatters.co.uk

“Although extremely head shy, he was able to tolerate a Dually halter.”



Claire's first priority was to encourage Norman to want to interact with them and to gain his interest, trust and respect



Claire now has a willing partner in Norman, who happily hacks out with her

From the Case files

Finding confidence in Bali

No-one likes to give up on a horse, but when **Ruth Parry** ended up in A&E yet again after a fall from her 'incurable bolter', she decided to look for 'something a little less exciting'.

"I found Bali; she was eight years old with a very mature head on her pretty shoulders. Unfortunately I hadn't appreciated quite how severely I'd been injured by that last fall from the bolter; it was to be nine months after buying Bali before my carefully-reconstructed wrist finally came out of plaster," says Ruth.

"...thanks to IH and a great support network, I am now a competent rider and a far better horsewoman than ever before."

"I put all that I learnt there into practice and started slowly building some trust with this beautiful horse."



Ruth and 14-year-old Bali – "my beautiful, intelligent, go-anywhere horse" – doing a sponsored ride in the Vale of Belvoir

"In that time I had COMPLETELY lost my nerve. The very thought of sitting on Bali had me rushing to the bathroom, and on a couple of occasions I stood shaking on a mounting block with tears streaming down my face."

Ruth decided to start at the beginning.

"I had help from Debbie Glennan and IHRA Garry Bosworth to improve my communications skills. I had previously attended a Perfect Partners weekend and then I went on the Horse Psychology weekend, so I put all that I learnt there into practice and started slowly building some trust with this beautiful horse.

"Finally the big day came – the first hack round the block. My husband was on the end of a lunge line as we very cautiously set off down the drive. Half way round the three-mile circuit, he unclipped the line


as we ambled slowly along. I couldn't wipe the grin off my face for days."

The next few years was to bring lots of triumphs and many set-backs, and Ruth always turned to the IH Discussion Group for support and advice.

"The IHDG has been invaluable, as has the support of a fantastic, understanding and intelligent hacking partner. She and her lovely gelding have offered advice, encouragement and company as we tentatively moved from walk to trot and trot to canter; she also offered a husband with a trial bike to help Bali overcome a pathological fear of motorbikes.

"Confidence is a strange thing; if you've never lost it, you simply cannot understand the impact it has when you no longer have it. Once you have lost it, when you find it again, what you have is a very fragile thing liable to break at the whisper of trouble.

"I will never be the over-confident, under-skilled rider I once was but, thanks to IH and a great support network, I am now a competent rider and a far better horsewoman than ever before. Bali is 14 and the photograph is of us on a sponsored ride in the Vale of Belvoir – me and my beautiful, intelligent, go-anywhere horse," says Ruth proudly.

• More information about IHRA Gary Bosworth can be found at www.equineempathy.com 

IH RECOMMENDED ASSOCIATES

client feedback

While working with your horse to solve problems and build a better partnership is very satisfying, sometimes a helping hand from a professional can be essential. Here's what clients are saying about IHRAs:

▼ IHRA SUE PALMER *Staffordshire*



“We had problems with a strong pony”

Sue worked quietly and firmly to solve the problems we were having with a very strong pony. She very quickly demonstrated how to get him to listen and be respectful, and was brilliant at

making sure we could repeat her actions after she had left. I have yet to see a kinder, more sensitive approach to working successfully with horses and have already recommended IH to others.

Lisa Chappell, Derbyshire

▼ IHRA JENNY MAJOR *Somerset*



“To help start my filly”

Jenny was brilliant; from the moment we met, I felt in very safe hands. She is very calm and kind and extremely knowledgeable and helpful.

I would recommend Jenny to anyone wishing to develop a more effective way of communicating and looking for guidance with their horses. I look forward to working with Jenny in the future.

Amanda Cowley, Somerset

▼ IHRA LUCY MORGANS *Hampshire*



“I needed help with separation anxiety”

Lucy explained things extremely well. She gave me lots of really good advice – easy to put into practice with homework and plenty of support. I have already recommended IH to others, it is an excellent service.

Sally Lewis, Hampshire

▼ IHRA ZOE CHIPMAN *Surrey*



“I was having problems travelling my horse”

Zoe was very, very calm which gave me confidence which then channelled through to my horse. I feel on a massive high when she leaves the yard. I would DEFINITELY recommend IH to others.

In a silly way, I will miss her coming to the yard but obviously it's a good thing because we've overcome our problems. Thank you, Zoe.

Naomi Simpson, Surrey

▼ IHRA SUZANNE HALSEY *Kent*



“I needed help with my rescued youngster”

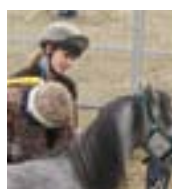
Suzanne was great! She listened, explained and demonstrated and her positive, calm and friendly manner put us at ease.

She recognised when my horse, Asa, and I, needed encouragement and praise.

She saw when Asa had had enough and checked it was okay with me to stop. I like that Suzanne wanted to hear how Asa and I are getting on, and the fact that she said to call or e-mail any time shows me she cares and it's not about making money, it's about making my relationship with my horse a better one.

Amanda Wolsey, Essex

▼ IHRA BRIDGET COLSTON *Suffolk*



“We wanted help with our yearling cob”

Bridget was fantastic; she explained everything in great detail and I saw results in my yearling instantly, which instilled the belief in me and in Buddy

of what we could achieve as a partnership with hard work. I've already learnt so much from Bridget in the two lessons I've had with her and, while I've got to reprogram myself from 'old ways' of working with horses, I am so looking forward to working with Bridget for the foreseeable future.

Sarah Hooper, Norfolk

▼ IHRA GARRY BOSWORTH *Lincolnshire*



“We wanted help to find a kinder approach to loading problems”

Garry is so kind and patient, explaining everything thoroughly. Everything worked just as in the books! Bolero stayed calm and was boxed within 10-15 minutes, which was

a great relief to me as we are all moving home in a few weeks. I would recommend Garry and IH to other horse owners.

Tara Harris, Lincolnshire

SPOTLIGHT ON

IH Recommended Associate

Bridget Colston

IHRA BRIDGET COLSTON (formerly Hughes) is based in Suffolk but covers the whole of East Anglia. A natural and inspiring teacher, Bridget says she is proud to have been described as 'clinically horse obsessed'!

How long have you been involved with horses?

Since I was six (30 years!).

Why did you decide to qualify as an IHRA? I have worked with horses most of my life but, having never been very 'conventional' in my thinking, I struggled to see where I fitted in to the horsey industry with some of the things I saw. So I went off and joined the Police Force, keeping horses as my hobby.

However, in 2006, the loss of a much-loved loan horse saw me searching for a 'project pony' with not a huge budget. I had worked with a few tricky equines with some success, but when I got Rebel home I realised I may have bitten off more than I could chew and called in professional help in the form of IHRA Sandra Williams.

I only had one session with Sandra but I genuinely had a lightbulb 'that's what I am supposed to do with my life' moment and left the Police a few months later, setting off on my path to IH enlightenment.

What is a typical day for you? A typical day is a long one! I take horses in for training (only one at a time usually) at my base at MRPCH holder Sarah Baker's yard in Suffolk, but I also cover the whole of East Anglia doing home visits, so I spend a lot of time in the car. I try to organize my time efficiently but it's not unheard of for me to be in Essex in the morning and Norfolk in the afternoon!

With my own two horses and the dog (and even the cat has to be taken for walks!) it's rare that I am home before 10pm in the summer and then I start on the e-mails and other admin.



“I want to make sure the foundations are solidly built.”

Photo courtesy of Kay Ballis

What's important to you when you see an owner and their horse for the first time?

I want to make sure the foundations are solidly built; I think all too often people are focused on the 'problem' when actually the specific problem is often a symptom of a wider issue. Sometimes, by making some tweaks to the relationship as a whole, the things that appeared to be the issue melt away.

I see my job as being to help owners become their own problem solvers, so I am a big believer in teaching the psychology behind the way we work, not just the techniques.

What are the common challenges you face in your work as an RA?

Not enough hours in the day?! I think one of the hardest parts can be telling people the last thing they want to hear – for instance, you suspect their horse has a physical issue or that the saddle they spent their savings on doesn't fit.

If you could change one thing in the world of horses what would it be, and why?

There are lots of things I'd like to change but if I have to pick one it has to be individual turn out, or solitary confinement as I think of it, because it is such a common cause of perceived 'behavioural problems', especially in young horses. I know there are individual cases of horses who have to be kept alone but it should be a rarity and not the norm, as it is fast becoming on so many livery yards.

What would be the first piece of advice you would give someone looking at buying/loaning their first horse?

Buy the horse you see in front of you not the horse you think this horse 'could' be. (This is very much do as I say and not as I do advice obviously!)

What is the most common issue you have to deal with when working with horses?

Lack of leadership; I so often hear owners say "I've never seen my horse look so relaxed before!" I sadly don't have magic powers, it's simply the horse breathing a huge sigh of relief that someone else has taken on the responsibility of being leader.

What are your plans for the future? Mostly to keep doing what I am doing and to keep getting better at it! I'm a member of Monty's UK Tour Team so I will keep doing that as long as Kelly and Monty would like me to. I also want to train as a Ride With Your Mind coach to add another feather to my cap.

I'm also running a two-day Groundwork Skills and Spook Busting workshop on September 13 & 14 (Ed. – there are two spaces left; see the IH courses page for details) [IH](#)

More information can be found at www.rebelremedies.co.uk



Bridget is running a two-day Groundwork Skills and Spook Busting workshop in September

IH Training

RECOMMENDED ASSOCIATES COURSES & EVENTS

'GroundHog' Days

Revisit, refresh and revise your Foundation Course learning in a small group via applied, practical days with IHRAs Linda Ruffle and Ian Vandenberghe at Hartsop Farm. Participants can specify the aspects they would most like to work on.

September 6 & 7, £150 per day or £250 for whole weekend.

More information from Linda at insight.equus@btinternet.com

Horse Agility Training & Competitions

Come along and discover how to have fun while training your horse with IHRA Sheila Reed, HAAT.

27 Sept, 25 Oct, 22 Nov, 20 Dec (Christmas fancy dress),

Horse agility members £30
Non-members £35, Spectators £5

Cotswold RDA Centre (indoor venue), Prestbury Park Racecourse, Cheltenham, GL50 4SH

Book online through www.sheilaredequine.com

'Groundhog Riders'

If you were inspired by your Foundation Course 'Rider Assessment' or wishing you had taken that option during the course – this is an opportunity to take it to the next level with IHRAs Julia Fisher and Linda Ruffle at Hartsop Farm. A perfect opportunity to bring your horse* and explore the detail involved in becoming the rider your horse would chose (school horses available).

September 5 (please note, restricted places available). £150 with own horse** £165 to include hire of horse

More information from Linda at insight.equus@btinternet.com

*PLEASE NOTE this day is not suited to the resolution of remedial ridden problems in horse; focus is on refining your effectiveness as a rider of a reasonably-trained horse.

**Livery fee will also be payable to Hartsop Farm if visit includes overnight stable



“ My horse and I had the pleasure of attending the Perfect Manners course and had the most amazing time. It did us both the world of good, thank you! ”



INTELLIGENT HORSEMANSHIP COURSES FOR 2015

Come and have the experience of a lifetime in 2015 with our expert tuition in the art of 'horse whispering' and equine behaviour. It will change the way you view not only your relationships with horses, but also the people around you and the relationship you have with yourself.

Horse psychology, £170

February 28-March 1, March 2-3, August 8-9 (Travel Saving Course)

Perfect Manners 2-day course, £325

March 7-8, June 6-7, July 11-12, July 25-26, August 22-23

5-day Foundation Course, £575

March 9-13, March 16-20, June 1-5, July 13-17, July 20-24, August 3-7 (Travel Saving Course), August 10-14 (Travel Saving Course)

Stud practice/handling the young foal with Ian Vandenburghe, £170 (£85/day)

July 30-31 (Travel Saving Course)

Feeding for good behaviour & health/Maintaining your horse's physical health for life with Ian Vandenburghe, £170 (£85/day)

August 1-2 (Travel Saving Course)

Leading & loading the less easy horse, £250

August 15-16 (Travel Saving Course), August 17-18

Reservations can only be made on receipt of a 50% deposit. You are also required to be a member of the Intelligent Horsemanship Association, which costs £25 per year and can be joined at the same time as booking a course. We accept Credit Cards and Switch/Maestro. You can phone us on 01488 71300 with your number.

Please telephone the office on 01488 71300 to confirm availability on courses before sending in your application. (Forms are available on the website: www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk)

“This was my first time seeing Kelly and Monty, and I can say it was the most inspiring event I’ve ever been to.” *LD*



Soulmate to Stablemate

MONTY
ROBERTS &
KELLY MARKS

AUTUMN
TOUR
2014

- >> Stress-free Loading – Kelly shares her NEW Strategy for Success
- >> Expert Tips from the Top – How Monty uses the Dually Training Halter
- >> Transform your Timing – Get yourself right to get your horse right
- >> Confidence Conquered – How Professionals Overcome Fear

DON'T MISS OUT on a fun, action packed and enlightening evening – BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!

5 OCT – MERRIST WOOD COLLEGE
Worpleston, Guildford, GU3 3PE

10 OCT – EASTON & OTLEY COLLEGE
Easton, Norwich, Norfolk, NR9 5DX

**16 OCT – ARENA UK, WILLOW
TOP FARM** Allington, Lincolnshire,
NG32 2EF

18 OCT – MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE
St Michaels' Road, Bilsborrow
Preston, Lancashire, PR3 0RY

**22 OCT – THE GRANGE
EQUESTRIAN CENTRE** Northlew
Road, Okehampton, Devon,
EX20 3DA

24 OCT – HARTPURY COLLEGE
Hartpury, Gloucester, GL19 3BE

30 OCT – GREENLANDS EC
Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 0RR

**1 NOV – GLENEAGLES EQUESTRIAN
CENTRE** Gleneagles, Auchterarder
Perthshire, PH3 1NF

Advance ticket offer – only £30 per ticket, otherwise £35 on door (if available). Main demonstration 7.30pm – 10.30pm (with 30 minute interval).

Doors open at 6pm for IH Members' Private Audience and 7pm for IH non-members (PLEASE REMEMBER to quote your IH Membership number to gain access to the Private Audience (and pick the best seats!))

We also have limited free spaces for volunteers so call us today.

For tickets and more information go to:

www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk
or call us on 01488 71300
(Mon-Fri between 9am and 4pm)

Join Kelly Marks & Intelligent Horsemanship on Facebook

