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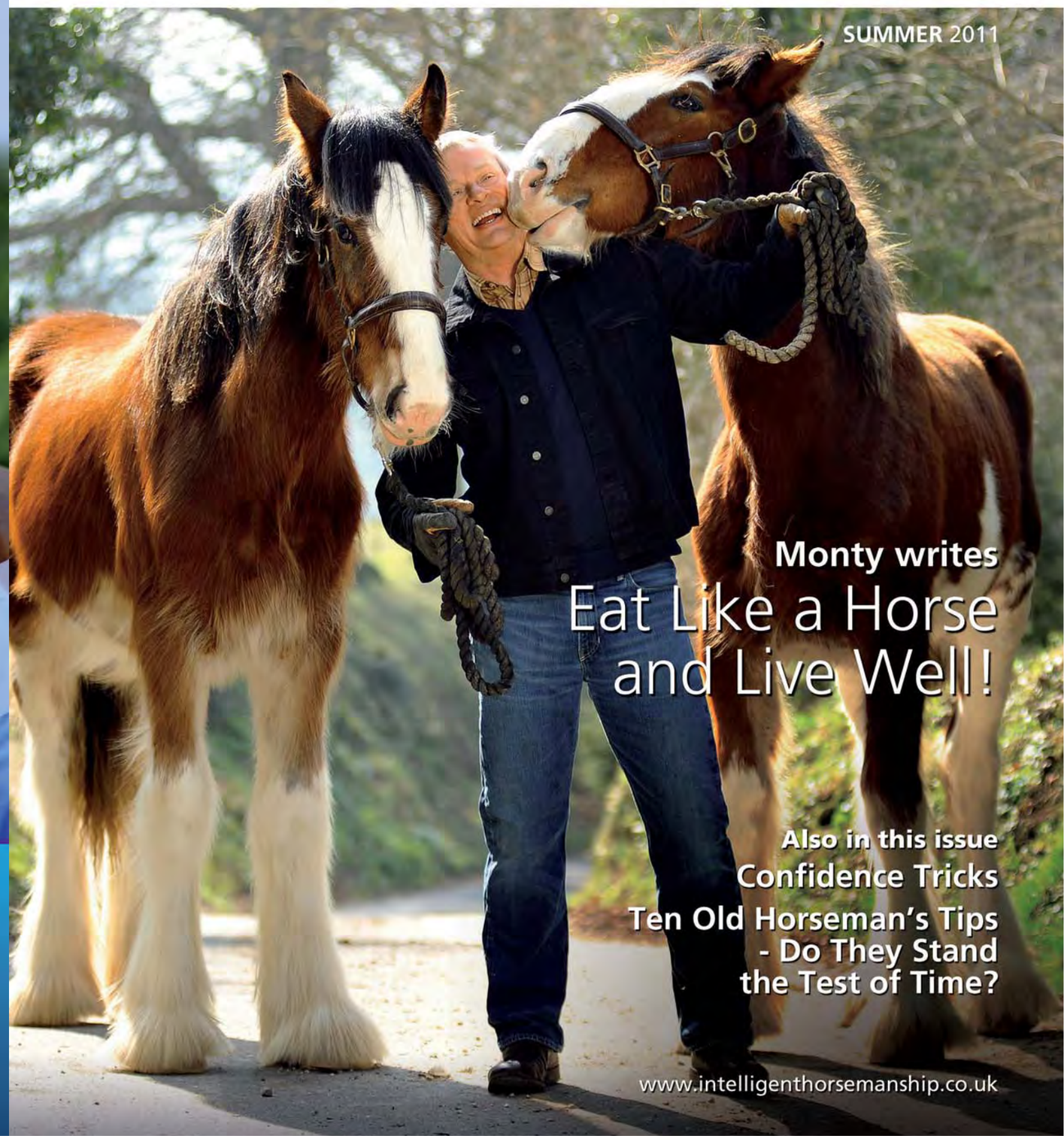
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The Listening Post

Magazine for the Intelligent Horsemanship Association

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SUMMER 2011

Monty writes
Eat Like a Horse and Live Well!

Also in this issue
Confidence Tricks
Ten Old Horseman's Tips - Do They Stand the Test of Time?

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As featured in 'Your Horse Magazine' January 2011 issue

5 Day Semi-Feral Foal Handling Course

The Dartmoor Pony Training Centre
Widecombe in the Moor, Devon

24th - 28th October 2011



Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associate, **Sarah Weston**, will be running the above course to introduce students to her ethical and gentle methods of training semi-feral and domestic foals, as outlined in her highly acclaimed book, No Fear No Force.

Training will cover skills appropriate for everyone involved with horses including: pressure and release, body language, clicker training, lateral thinking and dividing training into tiny, incremental steps.

Instruction will be given through Sarah's demonstrations of her methods, using foals born on the moor in 2011, and plenty of hands on experience for students under the careful guidance of Sarah and her team of experienced trainers.

In order to provide individual tuition student numbers will be limited to ten. The foals will be available for purchase at the end of the course.

Price: £250 which includes 5 days tuition, refreshments and a copy of Sarah's book, No Fear No Force.
For further information please contact: Kathryn Hulland at The Dartmoor Pony Training Centre on: 07751 218093, or email her at: dartmoorponytrainingcentre@yahoo.co.uk
Visit our Blog Site at: http://dptc.blogspot.com/ or Sarah Westons at: www.sarahweston.co.uk

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Letter from Kelly



Corky can be a bit lazy sometimes!

Hi Everyone,

You'll probably have guessed from the Listening Post, as well as my Facebook page, that I'm loving 'mentoring' my different young horses even if it's sadly impossible to keep them all at home with me at the present time. It's such an important job giving young horses a great start to their careers because it gives them the best chance of a really good life.

I wonder how many eventual neglect or cruelty cases started off with a nice young horse that got ruined in the 'breaking' process – or even before that? It would be easy to become cynical about causing horses to trust people whilst having grave reservations about how many people in the horse world truly deserve to be trusted. I hold on to the hope that education is the key.

The more that people understand what creates a willing and safe horse, the less likely they are to use pain, force, illogical and sometimes downright crazy methods. As Gandhi said 'Be the change you want to see' so let's start with ourselves and our own horses. I think this Summer Issue of the Listening Post magazine will give you plenty of ideas – don't forget to pass your copy on to friends if you think they could do with a little help too!

Kelly x

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Do you have a contribution for The Listening Post?
Do phone, email or send your carrier pigeon to the IH office!

Intelligent Horsemanship Office:
Address: Lethornes, Upper Lambourn, Hungerford RG17 8QP
Phone: 01488 71300 Fax: 01488 73783
Email: editor@ihhq.net
Website: www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk

On the cover: Martin Clunes and Clydies. Photo courtesy of Mike Alsford

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

Archie's Tales

By *Sharon Stephens*

Archie's summer show tips



Make sure everything is sparkly clean.



Travel Safe and Sound.



Above all enjoy yourself.

Winner of our Amazing Article Competition

‘Bitting Young Horses –The Western Way’

By Susanna List who wins £200 worth of IH Vouchers to put towards any of the IH courses



In the modern horse world bits are unfortunately often seen as fashion accessories. Many horse owners seem to happily accept that their horses are ‘strong’ in the mouth.

There are many reasons why an equine who starts out being ‘light’ in the mouth, can eventually end up with a hard mouth and no respect for the bit; one of the most common reasons being the fault of the rider over a period of time. However, it could be argued that there is a large proportion of horses that are not bitted ‘correctly’ in the first place, and hence they never have the chance to learn to respect the bit, let alone develop any reliable brakes. I feel it may be valuable to take a leaf out of the Western horse trainer’s notebook and develop and improve the way we bit young horses.

It goes without saying that the Western horse world is a broad, varied and controversial place. In amongst the variation however, there does seem to be one fairly reliable thread, and that is the topic of bitting.

Firstly, the bit chosen for the beginning of a Western youngster’s ridden life is generally a simple loose ring snaffle (see Photo 1). It is worth noting here that there is an option to use this snaffle with a combination of D-ring and O-ring, which would eliminate the chance of pinching of the mouth which can be a problem with a loose ring snaffle.



A loose ring Western snaffle

For English equitation, it would be correct to say that the choice of bit in the same case would generally be the eggbutt single jointed snaffle. Of course there are many variations to the snaffle mouthpiece such as the number of joints and the addition of rubber and similar coverings, but the straightforward eggbutt single jointed snaffle is the most commonly known. The main difference between a Western snaffle and an eggbutt snaffle is the thickness of the bit itself, the Western snaffle being only 9-10mm at its thickest point. The Western snaffle is also more often than not made out of sweet iron with copper inlay to increase salivation and hence to create a more relaxed lower jaw, which can be seen as very important when first training a horse. Conversely, the eggbutt tends to be made out of stainless steel which is heavier than sweet iron and does not encourage salivation so readily (rubber or polyurethane are often used as alternative materials for the actual mouthpiece of the eggbutt, as it is thought they have a softer feel for the horse).

Secondly, the Western snaffle is positioned quite a lot lower in the mouth than the traditional English position. The old guide to ‘pull the bit high enough to create 3 wrinkles in the corner of the mouth’ is disregarded and is instead replaced with no wrinkles in the corner of the mouth (see below). The bit is dropped low enough so that no wrinkles can be seen, but high enough so as not to tap against the teeth.



Position of bit

The benefits of a much thinner, lighter, lower positioned bit are as follows:

- There is no constant pressure on the corners of the mouth caused by the bit itself, as there is with the ‘3 wrinkles’ approach. This therefore helps the horse to differentiate between ‘contact’ and ‘no contact’.
- Being only 9-10mm thick at its thickest point, the Western snaffle is less invasive to a naturally highly sensitive place. Imagine placing a pencil in your own mouth in the same way a bit sits in a horse’s mouth, and then imagine swapping the pencil for a big fat marker pen!
- It could be said that when there is no rein contact, there is also no ‘pressure’ in the mouth as such, only a presence or feeling. When contact is taken up on one rein, the pressure applied will be absolutely minimal in order to create an increased feeling to the horse and therefore generate a reaction/response. If however, the bit was already causing a certain amount of pressure by being positioned in the traditional way (high enough to cause 3 wrinkles in the corners of the mouth) a considerably larger amount of rein pressure would need to be applied in order to generate a similar reaction/response. The 3 wrinkles approach subsequently demands much more force to be applied by the rider through the reins to encourage a response from the horse, when really this could be avoided.

The thinness of the Western loose ring snaffle coupled with its positioning and married to the sweet iron and copper inlay, make for a very suitable first experience of bitting for the young horse. Continuing on from this, slobber straps (or rein leathers) can also be added as a bridge between the bit and the reins to help increase communication in the lightest way possible between horse and rider. Slobber straps are made out of leather and their main purpose is to help provide an instant ‘release’ through the reins to the horse when training. They also give both the horse and the rider time to think, for example when a rider asks the horse to turn left, the rider will pick up the left rein and make a contact first to the slobber straps and then to the bit (see photo).



Example of Slobber Straps

The movement of the slobber strap is a warning or a ‘hello’ to the horse before any real contact on the bit is made. This in itself gives the horse a chance to respond to the lightest of pressure through the reins, and hence the rider the chance to reward that response with an instant and obvious release. It may be useful to note that, when training a horse for Western riding, there is normally no contact at all on the bit through the reins if it is not needed i.e. unless for a change of direction or other signal. In other words, Western riders endeavour to ride on a loose or almost completely slack rein permanently. Therefore, when training a young horse, the slobber strap can often need to be moved through an angle of at least 45 degrees before any contact on the bit is made.

For the slobber strap to be of any use to the English rider, the Western rein position would have to be adopted and a loose rein encouraged for the early days of training at least. For the majority of horse owners in this country, all that is needed for them to feel safe and happy when riding their horse, is a certain level of ‘control’. However, more often than not this control is gained purely through the reins, bit and subsequently the horse’s mouth. The ‘Western way’ focuses entirely on control being gained through the use of the whole of the rider’s body with a minimal amount of communication through the reins. It is taught from day one of a horse’s training and is a vast and complex subject. The choice of bit and use of the reins is just the beginning of a good partnership between horse and rider. If a young horse is bitted as described above, a change of bit may never be needed - as long as the horse’s mouth continues to be treated with the greatest of respect and the rider rides with their whole body, not just their hands.

Although riding with a loose rein is not suitable for all English disciplines, for the majority of riders who simply hack out for enjoyment and/or compete at low levels, riding with a loose rein similar to that of the Western rider is not totally out of the question. This is not to say that those competing at high levels are automatically entitled to use harsher bits whether they need them or not, or that those just hacking out are wrong to use a more severe bit. The point being made is that if a horse is started using the method described above and the mouth is never abused, then there is no doubt that a horse can enjoy a long ridden life that includes competing in English disciplines, by wearing a simple snaffle bridle and being ridden with a loose rein.

Other bridling options for training the young Western horse are bosals and side pulls and both are very popular. Both are bitless bridles and may be used at the beginning stages of a horse’s training to help introduce the foundations of the early stages of work under saddle. Indeed, many Western trained horses are permanently ridden in some form of bitless bridle. One can also compete in Western disciplines to a respectable level with the use of just the simple snaffle bridle. The addition of shanks to the loose ring Western snaffle transforms the bit into what is commonly called a Western ‘curb’. Curb bits are generally only used for refinement in a horse’s training i.e. for reining horses competing at high levels; they should never be used as a starting bit. Curb bits come in different shapes and sizes and it is mostly the angle at which the shank is swept back that affects the feel of the bit and the action it has on the mouth and head. The generic design of a Western curb is relatively constant, unlike the impressive (but confusing) pool of bits available on the ‘English’ market, which vary immensely in appearance, mechanics and severity.

By no means is this article trying to imply that the eggbutt snaffle should not be used or that the common English way of bitting young horses is wrong – we all know that it is the hands that hold the tools that make them harmful or not. The aim of this article is to educate the ‘English’ horseperson on a slightly different approach to bitting (and indeed riding) youngsters. It goes without saying that the subject of bitting is only one small piece of the puzzle that eventually leads to the complete picture of a soft, light riding horse; but there is no denying that it is a great place to start.

Susanna List lives in Suffolk and is an IH member. Now aged 30, horses have been a big part of her life since she was 5 years old. She owns two Welsh Section Ds - one of which she rides totally Western. The other is due to foal any moment now. She says, “I am a dedicated IH follower and I plan to remain that way for the rest of my horsey days!”

Understanding equine stereotypical behaviour

Dr Veronica Fowler, BSc (Hons) MSc, PhD

An abnormal behaviour is one that differs in its pattern, frequency and context from the normal behaviour of the species. For it to be significant, the abnormal behaviour must be either quantitatively abnormal, i.e. more frequent than in wild animals, or qualitatively abnormal, i.e., not observed in wild animals, e.g. weaving.

Abnormal behaviour is either:

a) Failure of function (horse can no longer act in a biologically functional way)
b) Anomalous reactivity (horse fails to show the normal level of response to a stimuli)
or
c) Stereotypical (repetitive behaviour expressed invariantly)



Windsucking: Photo courtesy of Sheila Reed



Windsucking device: Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston



Fence Walking: Photo courtesy of Liz Pitman

Stereotypical behaviour

Stereotypical behaviour is always considered abnormal and is defined as a repetitive behavioural pattern with no obvious goal or function. Stereotypical behaviour in horses is generally either oral or locomotory. Oral stereotypical behaviours include cribbing, windsucking, tongue/lip movements and self mutilation. Locomotory stereotypies include head movements, weaving, fence/box walking and pawing.

Stereotypical behaviour is believed to be an adaptive behaviour used as a coping strategy. They are not apparent in feral/wild animals and they must therefore be an adaptation to domestication. Stereotypical behaviour may have various causes, such as frustration, pain, disease and inadvertent training, or a combination of them.

Behavioural frustration

Since we know that maintenance behaviours (eating, drinking, sleeping) are controlled by motivational forces (thirst, hunger, exhaustion) which interact via appetitive (goals seeking) and consummative (goal achieving) behaviour, one possible cause of stereotypical behaviour may be when the horse is either trapped in an appetitive state or where the consummative state has been satisfied too quickly. In Figure 1, the horse, when seeking companionship, starts looking for other horses (appetitive phase). If he cannot find them, he will remain in the appetitive phase (i.e. keeps looking for companionship). When the horse finds company, he enters a consummatory phase which decreases behavioural motivation. His appetite for company sated, he can now engage in other behaviour. If, however, the horse is stabled away from others, he may become behaviourally frustrated since he is trapped in the appetitive stage (seeking companionship). As he cannot enter the consummatory stage (finding companionship) he may box walk or weave instead.

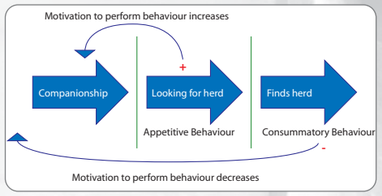


Figure 1. Motivationally driven companionship behaviour.

We know that horses have evolved to be trickle feeders, so the appetitive and/or consummatory phase is generally long lasting. If we provide concentrates in place of forage we artificially shorten the consummatory phase leading the horse to seek an alternative behaviour (Figure 2). A horse in this situation may begin wood chewing or he may perform a completely different behaviour since he needs to fill his day doing something. Any imbalance in the appetitive and consummatory phase may thus lead to behavioural frustration.

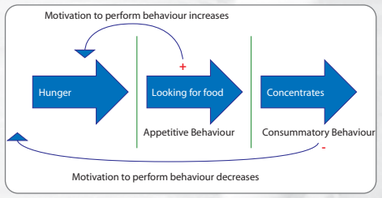


Figure 2. Motivationally driven feeding behaviour.

Pain and Disease

Stereotypical behaviour may be physiological or disease driven. Stereotypies such as headshaking may be due to an underlying disease, whereas cribbing and wood chewing may be a response to physiological stress such as gastric ulceration. Although certain stereotypies are associated with gastric ulceration, there is no evidence to suggest that they cause this condition. It is more likely that a common factor causes both gastric ulceration and the stereotypical behaviour.



Mouth movement: Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston

Inadvertent training

Stereotypical behaviour such as pawing the floor can be accidentally trained. For example, a horse may paw the floor and then receive his food; if this happens again and again the horse will learn to paw the floor for a food reward. Repeated pairing of these events would lead pawing to become the response to feed room noises even in the absence of food. This repeated pawing may look like a stereotypical behaviour as a result of frustration but it has in fact been trained.

Reducing the risk and treatment of stereotypical behaviour

As stereotypical behaviours should be considered as a sign and not a diagnosis. Successful prevention and treatment depend on addressing all of the causes for that horse. Understanding the causes was not of primary concern in the past and as a result numerous methods have been developed to control stereotypies, including:

- Drug therapy
- Surgery
- Physical prevention (e.g. cribbing collars and anti-weave bars)
- Aversion therapy (collars which produce an electric shock)

Stereotypical behaviours have long been considered as vices and detrimental to the horse's health, and as such reduce the value of the horse. However, preventing stereotypical behaviours in this way has welfare implications. If stereotypical behaviours are in fact a coping mechanism and we deny horses the opportunity to perform them then we may be compromising their welfare further.

Research has begun to highlight specific triggers in relation to weaving, box-walking, crib-biting, windsucking and wood chewing. This is far from being a comprehensive list but trigger factors which have already been identified are:

- Less than 6.8kg of forage per day
- Bedding types other than straw
- Boxes with minimal social interaction
- Absence of a paddock on the yard
- Lack of field turnout
- Method of weaning
- Presence of disease
- Presence of physiological disturbances
- Highly predictable management routine

Thus, we are better informed on how to prevent stereotypical behaviour and how to manage those horses that have already developed them in a humane manner. Current recommendations include:

- Ensuring the horse is disease, pain and injury free
- Identifying if the behaviour is a true stereotypy or whether it has been accidentally trained
- Changing the management regime
- Environmental enrichment
- Behavioural therapy
- Re-educating owners

Pain, injury and disease

Sudden changes in behaviour are commonly associated with pain, injury or disease. Accordingly, horses should be thoroughly checked before other management strategies are altered. In the case of headshaking, the only current treatment which has shown a reasonable degree of effectiveness is the wearing of a nose/face mask.

Horses are tuned to avoid adverse stimuli (which induce pain/fear), so abnormal or avoidance behaviour can arise in an attempt to avoid it.

Accidental training

Where behaviour which appears stereotypical in nature is in fact a trained repetitive behaviour this is easily resolved by removing or changing the association, or altering the consequence of the behaviour.

Management systems and environmental enrichment

The aim is to provide social and physical environments in which the horse can engage in as much normal behaviour as possible, together with multi-sensory access to other horses, alternative species or artificial measures such as mirrors. This can be commonly achieved through environmental enrichment and ensuring quality of space rather than quantity.

For example, welfare would be improved if a horse is kept in a smaller field which allows direct contact with other horses rather than a larger field from which the horse can only see others. However, a horse kept in a larger field in sight of other horses is better than a horse stabled with no access to others. Turnout per se is not always the best solution - a horse turned out in a paddock on its own may have reduced welfare compared to stabled horses with equine company and unrestricted hay.

Environmental enrichment also includes bedding and foodstuffs, including quantity and method of provision. It aims to ensure that horses' diets are suitable for their needs. Using straw as a bedding material can reduce certain stereotypical behaviours, and feeding hay from the floor can promote more natural behaviours.

Behavioural therapy and re-educating owners

Behavioural therapy is a means of encouraging a horse not to perform the stereotypical behaviour or training him to perform the behaviour in more suitable circumstances. This therapy should be used with caution and only after all possible trigger factors have been addressed (i.e. the horse is physically well and the yard has the best environmental and management regime possible). Behavioural therapy should involve both the owner and the horse. The owner should understand the realistic outcomes of this training and change their perception of stereotypical behaviours. In cases where behavioural therapy is not possible or has failed, re-homing the horse should be considered as another way of addressing stereotypical behaviours. The horse is trained by either redirecting the behaviour or increasing behavioural competition (counter conditioning).

Redirecting the behaviour

Redirecting the behaviour means training the horse to perform the same undesired behaviour but in a more acceptable way. Horses that wood chew or crib-bite can be trained to do it in a place that minimises damage to their teeth and to stable doors/fences, e.g., a suitable log can be provided for wood chewers.

Increasing behavioural competition

Some behaviours are incompatible with others. Pawing the ground is incompatible with walking, and grazing behaviour incompatible with resting behaviour. Behavioural competition is not trained but instead makes uses the horse's maintenance behaviour; it often goes hand in hand with environmental enrichment. Providing other activities can 'naturally' reduce stereotypical behaviour. Box walking, for example, may be reduced by providing feed balls or companionship. For behavioural competition to work the new activity must be of greater significance to the horse than the stereotypy. A good example of this is with horses that chew wood. If turned out in paddocks with poor grazing and no social opportunities, the horse will continue to chew wood.

Seeking advice

Please contact Veronica for a consultation and management plan tailored to your own horses needs at:
veronica@thesmilingthoroughbred.co.uk
or on **07990575659**

Windsucking: Photo courtesy of Emily Gredley

Meet a member (or two!)



Pete, Lad and Delia

Pete Phillips and Delia Williams, known as 'The Bees', both IH members and students from Amroth, near Tenby in Wales.

How did you first hear about Intelligent Horsemanship?

We first came across Monty's methods 15 years ago and in 2007 learned about the Intelligent Horsemanship courses when we attended a Monty Demo at Hartpury.

What involvement have you had with Intelligent Horsemanship?

Since 2008 we have both done the 5 day course and the Psychology Course and Pete has done the rest of them too. After the Psychology Course lots of the puzzle started coming together for us.

What's the best thing about being a member of The Intelligent Horsemanship Association?

Being part of a movement of people who really care about the deep understanding that can be achieved with horses without any form of cruelty. Also, being able to help out at demos and courses to assist in spreading this knowledge.

Do you have horses?

We have Lad, a Welsh Cob Section D gelding aged eleven and a six year old Welsh Section D mare called Tina. A ten year old coloured Irish Draft called Millie, then there's Sam, a four year old coloured Cob and finally a three year old Cob cross Thoroughbred called Erin. We've also got one or two more staying with us!

I first saw Lad at a horse market in the autumn of 2008. He was standing outside with harness on. What struck me initially was his quietness and ability to stand still with everything going on around him. He and his companion, Tina, were delivered to our farm and set free in the field that same day.

We let them settle in and then tried to catch him and found that he was not having any of it! He was off up the field as far away as he could get.

We decided to remove the filly from the field and replace her with an old, gentle Thoroughbred mare we had. After a few days they became firm friends. Pete was keen to try out his IH techniques and so first we built a temporary round pen from wooden stakes and roadwork netting and led the old mare in there with Lad following. With the mare outside, Pete tried a very gentle Join-Up which was achieved easily and without fuss. Lad was just looking for a friend; 'Follow Up' was a case of Lad sticking his nose on Pete's arm and not allowing any gap to develop!

After a couple more Join-Ups over the next few days we had no further trouble handling him or putting on tack of various sorts. Catching him was easier too. However, he still had a sour and jaded appearance. We bought Kelly's book, 'Catching Horses Made Easy' and tried her methods. When removing the Dually we 'blurred the edges' by slipping it off very quietly whilst distracting him with stroking so that he didn't realise at first that he was free. We eventually managed to go a few steps up the field with nothing on his head; a breakthrough moment.

Eventually we tried him in the exercise cart as he was supposed to be a driving pony. He panicked! He was no driving pony! So we started from scratch.

Pete took him out in hand to get used to traffic and gradually he would follow him past anything; big lorries, buses, noisy motorbikes and tractors. Next I did a lot of long-reining along tracks and later on the road.



BDS Show Carmathen

The spring of 2009 saw us putting Lad back into the cart, slowly at first with lots of leading. We took him to the beach at Pendine in the trailer to find scary things - dogs, signs, people, cars, kids, balls, the sea and the waves. He was so brave. His trust overcame his fear and the more things he conquered the braver he became.

The year of 2010 fulfilled all my dreams of driving Lad. We took him to various driving events during the summer, a beach drive on the world land-speed sands, a drive around the Welsh National Botanic Gardens, and a Trec competition. We came last but had a great time.

I don't use a driving whip but suddenly had to carry one to enter a class at out local BDS show! Lad coped with this but when will people learn that some horses are trained without one?

I strive to become the owner Lad needs and would choose, and have learnt so much thanks to Monty, Kelly and the team and with Pete's help and support.

Lad's emotional scars from his past will always be with him but I have learnt how to respond to him. His jaded appearance has all but disappeared and we have become good friends and willing partners.

Photos courtesy of The Bees

The Listening Post would love to find out more about our members! If you would like to be featured here please email: **Send to: editor@ihhq.net** for a questionnaire.

Intelligent Horsemanship Course Dates

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

Please telephone the office to confirm availability on courses before sending in your application: 01488 71300 Numbers are limited on all courses.

Late spaces do sometimes become available. Please email us on brenda@ihhq.net or ring 01488 71300 if you would like to go on our waiting list.

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Horse Psychology £170
November 26th-27th 2011

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August 15th - 19th 2011
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Intermediate Course: Leading and Loading the Less Easy Horse £250
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Intermediate Course: Handling the Untouched Horse £250
November 28th - 29th 2011

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Perfect Confidence In-Hand and Under Saddle

With Julia Fisher, Linda Ruffle, Dido Fisher (Recommended Associates and IH Course Tutors)

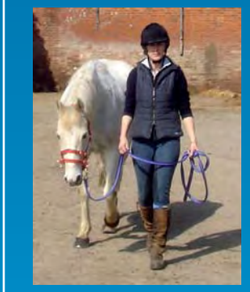
June 4th/5th 2011
July 23th/24th 2011

at Hartsop Farm IH Members £265 • Non Members £285

For information on these dates and further dates from August through to October please contact Julia on 07950965099 or perfectconfidenceinfo@googlemail.com

For more information call Julia Fisher (RA) 07950 965 099

Feedback on the five day Stage 1 Course



Dear Kelly, Linda, Ian and Rosie

I had to send you the photo below as I can't believe the difference the Dually headcollar, and my newly learnt body language and eye contact skills have made to Wispa and me!! Since Monday she has followed me about like a lamb! I am now back to catching her and leading her down the lane with no barging, pawing the ground or mini-rears and best of all, I don't need a Chifney! When I look at the photo I feel Wispa is telling me "Thank God I've got a leader, I can relax now!!!"

I can't thank you all enough for your support over the five day course. It is the best £550 I've spent in a long while. I was in such a bad place with my groundwork and ready to give up riding, so it is wonderful to be back in a good place and feeling more confident.I am now looking forward to my next challenge of loading.

Kelly you are an inspiration and your course is fantastic; your instructors are brilliant and so supportive. A week I will never forget!

Much love, Tracie xxx

Praise for the Perfect Confidence Course

I would like to say a big thank you to you all. Everyone concerned with the course was friendly, supportive and positive, giving encouragement and praise throughout the two days. I was never pushed out of what I felt was my comfort zone but through the group discussions and working with different horses, including my own, I was shown different techniques to tackle a variety of worries. There was no 'you should be able to do this' but more of 'you could be able to do this'. The three RAs brought their own unique skills to the course. They did not offer a magic button to cure one's anxieties but instead they gave everyone an individual framework in which to work and build on. Therefore, if anyone has confidence issues, no matter what they are (ridden or on the ground), I would highly recommend this course.



J. Jones



The weekend was wonderful and a big thank you to Linda, Dido and Julia who worked extremely hard to give us their wisdom, skill, understanding, support and lots of laughs. It was an amazing journey and I'm sure I can speak for all on the course, that it became a discovery of why we can develop that seemingly irrational loss of confidence. I came away with an insight into my own reasons and some of the skills needed to manage situations in the future. It also made me realise that we can often use our relationship with our horse to fulfill some need or ambition in ourselves. In doing so we can lose sight of what having a relationship with a horse should be - developing trust and understanding and even more importantly - fun!! I can recommend this course to anyone - even if you think you don't need it, as it will really open your eyes and you will gain some great friends!

J. Meredith

Attention – Aspiring Stage Two Students!

Video footage of your Join-Ups needs to be submitted for assessment to Liz Pitman, IHRA, at the following address: Mrs. L. Pitman, High Clere, Tudwick Road, Tiptree, Essex CO5 0SA



Leaving your emotions at the yard gate

By Liz Falkingham

Photo courtesy of Hannah Steedman

How many times have you heard – or even said – that riding your horse is the ultimate stress buster? And yet what if dealing with our emotional baggage as well the ordinary demands we place on our horses is simply asking too much.



Merlin and Tabitha

Before I escaped the corporate rat-race, I often brought my work home with me. Unfortunately, I also brought it to the yard as well – I have vivid memories of trying to tack up my horse and take a phone call from my boss at the same time, struggling with the girth as my hands shook with stress.

If there's one phrase that sums up that era for me, it's 'I don't have time for this!' It's what I said when my horse decided to be difficult to catch, or put his head in the air when I tried to put his bridle on, or spooked and fooled about out hacking. I'm sorry to say that I often shouted at him, when all the time he was trying to tell me something very simple: 'Leave your emotions at the yard gate'.

We must accept that the way we feel affects the way we ride or handle horses. As a child, I was often told that horses could 'feel your nerves coming down the reins' – and certainly the type of contact we maintain through the bridle (or lead rope) sends clear signals to the horse.

But our hands are just one of many ways we inadvertently 'tell' our horses how we are feeling. As herd animals, horses are attuned to picking up the subtlest physiological and behavioural signals from their herd mates – after all, in the wild it can save their lives. So it's hardly surprising that they can read us like a book.

Intelligent Horsemanship's Kelly Marks says something as simple as holding your breath can put up a horse's heart rate and start the vicious cycle of tension. "Telling people to breathe sounds obvious, but it's one of the first things I teach. It makes an immediate and noticeable impact on the horse's way of going," says Kelly.

This doesn't only apply when riding. During a Join Up session on the 5-day IH course, I was struggling to get a horse to slow down until I realised I was holding my breath; the simple act of breathing out allowed the horse to drop back from canter to trot – from 15ft away!

Psychology studies undertaken by IH students have scientifically assessed the impact human stress can have on horses. One found a raised heart rate and adrenalin level (created in the study by churning over angry or negative thoughts) in a human caused test horses to refuse to be caught and react badly to simple tasks like saddling up.

"...something as simple as holding your breath can put up a horse's heart rate..."

Another by Stephanie Heeran, now a newly qualified Recommended Associate (RA), used a heart rate monitor on both human and horse subjects. The results were startling: raised human heart rates were immediately mimicked by the horses and those humans who admitted to being nervous or fearful of horses had a raised heart rate the entire time they were with the horses.

Take both of the above and then imagine stomping out to the paddock to catch your horse, muttering under your breath about how you hate the traffic/your boss/housework and fretting about how little time you have to ride your horse (I have no trouble imagining this, I did it a lot). Then ask yourself why your normally co-operative horse decides to high tail it off to the other side of the paddock.

It's not just about anger, of course – fearfulness and nerves are very common, even if they can be hard to admit to and they have an immediate impact on your horse.

RA Sue Palmer recently worked with an owner having problems out hacking – the horse was happy to walk in front when other horses came with him, but became fearful and spooky when asked to hack on his own. They hadn't hacked out for four months because she didn't know how to cope with his spooking. "I assessed them, and the rider's emotional state of mind (fear) shone through clearly in her body language - she had the horse on a tight rein, and didn't believe that she could achieve. I asked her to hack him down the lane with me walking behind, past wheelie bins and a skip which she said that she knew he would have a problem with."

"...we actually start unintentionally flagging up things for him."

"She was amazed when he walked straight past both the wheelie bins and the skip - I knew it was because she was more confident because I was walking behind her (I was too far behind to have an effect on the horse). We got back to the yard and I got a flag out my car to see his reaction to a potentially spooky object - she tightened her reins and her seat up straight away, with a strong spooking reaction from her horse."

It's easy to be so busy worrying about what might cause our horse to spook, we actually start unintentionally flagging up things for him. This turns a pleasant hack out into something more akin to an advanced driver training course, where you spend the entire time looking for potential hazards.

This kind of reaction can then translate into the 'what if' syndrome. So, for example, your horse naturally shies when a pheasant suddenly flies out of a hedge under his feet when riding down a grass track, but instead of seeing it as a natural response you start to imagine 'what if ... he spooks like that when we ride down the road. I could end up under a bus!'

In response to this, riders often tighten the contact and adopt a rigid posture. For Sue Palmer's client, just moving her hands forwards so that they were level with her breastplate, relaxing the hold on his mouth, improved the situation.

"He just stood, and then walked with a much slower stride when she asked him to walk on, instead of rushing."

Several horse owners I spoke to admitted to suffering from 'what if' syndrome.



Photo courtesy of Liz Pitman

Yorkshire-based Laura Hislop says the ill-advised purchase of an ex-racehorse set off the problem.

"I'd been warned the horse was a handful, but I'd ridden all my life and felt I could cope with a TB. Oddly, while she did whip round several times and once reared, she never actually did anything truly awful, but I was suddenly more aware of what might happen if she did decide to go nuclear!"

She sold the horse to a more experienced rider but found her nervousness about hacking was not so easily dealt with.

"The first time I rode out my new horse, a lovely cob with no issues, I felt literally sick with nerves and even had a stiff drink before I went! Fortunately, he was very good and I've gradually improved, but if he does spook a bit, I still find myself freezing in the saddle."

Even the most experienced riders and trainers can get caught out however. RA Demelza Franssen says she's taught herself to 'shed emotional baggage and become the focused sympathetic leader' when around horses, but it wasn't until a dangerous rearing incident with her own horse, Dream, that she realised she had allowed the stress of a divorce to bleed through into her riding.

"It didn't influence my work with other people's horses, but strangely enough my own mare slowly but surely became an insecure, nervous and highly strung individual which she had never been before. It wasn't until I stopped to take a long hard look at myself, my emotional and mental health, that it dawned on me that Dream was continually picking up my vibes and reacting to them."

"Obviously I was not leaving my problems at the gate before going in to her, and if I thought I was then she just knew me too well and I wasn't fooling her. I had to learn to be deadly honest with myself and be brave enough to walk away and leave things

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alone for a while before going back to Dream," says Demelza, who has since rebuilt her relationship with Dream but admits she felt 'a failure' over the issue at the time.

RA Julia Fisher says things can get so bad that it is actually dangerous to keep riding; in this situation, she helps her clients deal with the issues on the ground first. Sometimes, hard though it may be, you have to say 'not today – I'm just too stressed to ride' and perhaps just spend time grooming your horse instead, she says.

Trainer, judge and management consultant Jane Owen says many riders struggle with the impact of negative emotions, particularly when competing.

"My favourite is the old Morecambe and Wise classic 'Bring Me Sunshine'..."

"Most are focussed so strongly on a negative image of them not being able to achieve their goal that they cannot get past this and can even inadvertently sabotage themselves."

She has some rather unusual methods for relaxing the rider, including telling jokes to make them laugh or getting them to sing.

"Performing almost any song that has a good rhythm while doing rising trot helps both the rhythm and the cadence of the trot and takes the rider's mind off the horse and onto themselves. The horse's way of going automatically improves.

"My favourite is the old Morecambe and Wise classic 'Bring Me Sunshine'; it works with a pony stride as well as a horse and I've had many riders in stitches, singing this and then magically realising the horse or pony is going along, ears pricked, working well," says Jane.

And that is the crux of the matter – a happy, relaxed rider will generally mean a happy, relaxed horse, and one more able to perform to his best.

"There is a massive trend towards biomechanical analysis of equine movement and although I can see value in this study, I think it badly misses the point. It matters more how the horse feels; if he feels the right way, he will produce the biomechanical goods," says RA Adam Goodfellow.

"It is interesting to me that the advice of French classical master, cavalry general L'Hotte, is to train the horse in the following order: calm, forward, then straight. This is just as true for riders. We centre all our work on the calm interchange between horse and rider. It's an irreplaceable foundation for all good work."

IH member Liz Falkingham is a freelance journalist and public relations consultant who writes regularly for Horse and Hound, as well as running a small showing yard. She is working towards her MRPCH.



Bucking: Photo courtesy of Jim Crouch

Practical techniques for dealing with stress

• The importance of stillness is something RA Sally Hamilton teaches her clients. She begins with a ground handling exercise, getting the owner to ask the horse to stand still for the count of 10, then a minute, then five minutes. This is then repeated when riding: "The rider gets in the saddle [and then] they stand still, often for as long as two minutes. This is the time when horse and rider begin to listen to each other, and suss out each other's feelings.

"I know from my own experience this is the time when I relax and really concentrate on that amazing feeling of no longer being just a human, but now a 'horse person', with four legs instead of two, and two brains and hearts working together."

Sally then asks the rider to move on using a long rein for five minutes – or sometimes 10-15 minutes: "So your horse's expectation when the human gets on is first stillness and, second, relaxed walking."

• RA Liz Pitman recommends the 'bag' technique: "It works best if the person has a physical bag of some sort - I'm not sure why. The method is to visualise packaging up each issue that is bothering you and then go through the motions of putting that issue in the bag.

"The bag never, ever comes into the yard/field/working area, so by putting the problems in the bag, you are in effect banishing them too. If, somehow, a problem creeps in while the person is with their horse, I ask them physically to take that problem and put it in the bag.

I think it works on the level of making the person aware of how much they would otherwise burden themselves and their horses with, and also gives them something actually to do about it."

• "'Kelly's candle' is another good one, more for tension than a mind full of problems", says Liz Pitman. "I call it that because Kelly showed it to me once. You hold your index finger up in front of your face, pretending it's a candle with a steady flame. You then blow the candle just enough to make the flame flicker but not enough to blow it out. That should get you breathing out from deep down but without totally deflating yourself."

• Amanda Barton, an NLP and horse trainer that RA Sarah Weston worked with, taught her to use positive visualization, taking the 'bad picture' in your mind (invariably in colour and in motion) and changing it to a small black and white still at its least disastrous point.



"She then asks you to create a new picture – one perhaps of you riding your horse through a beautiful wood with the dappled light coming through the trees. The horse is always wearing some sort of bling – in my case my horses have Masai browbands – and his head and neck are relaxed and happy. Whenever the bad picture intrudes, you just have to minimise it again."

Horses, Horses, Horses By Kelly Marks



Corky!

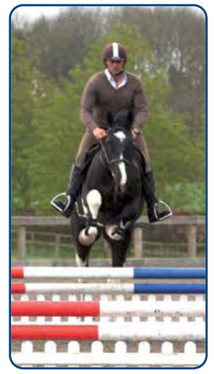
Corky, five this year, is the second of the 'giants' I bought from Ireland. He was featured on the IH gift DVD with local IH member, Sarah Bowen. Unbelievably, straight after Sarah had completed the nice introduction and had been filmed riding him up the road, she rode him down a bank where he slipped on some leaves and landed on his side! Using the thermography camera we could see exactly where he had wrenched a muscle. Although he was quite sore he was not hopping lame. I kept him on box rest and he was given anti inflammatory pain killers for five days. Then, as he was moving reasonably well and it was October, it seemed a good time to turn him out in my big hill paddock to let it repair itself naturally.

In late December, Equine Physio, Sue Palmer, came to see Corky for treatment and to give him the final 'all clear'. Although he was absolutely sound, he was a bit stiff through his neck and was not bending particularly well. The first time I tried the apple stretches he told me categorically that he could barely turn his head and yet within a couple of weeks he had learned how to get right round to his hips. It's good yoga for horses.

By coincidence, Sarah was due to have an operation on her ankle (not horse related!) just two days after their 'mishap' so they both retired for 2010 at the same time.

Corky came back at the beginning of the year and, after some fittening work, he went to Irish horseman Rory Gilesenan for a month. Rory and his partner, Vanessa Roberts are in the fortunate position of living right next door to Addington Equestrian Centre where Rory introduced Corky to his first ever show jumping course - he went clear naturally! He also took part in a Show Hunter Class for experience. Anyone who knows anything about show hunter classes will know that Corky wouldn't be er... *quite* what the judges are looking for – there's definitely a colour prejudice! However he moved up a place after the judge rode him because he was such a good boy!

"he went clear naturally!"



Corky has now gone to stay with my niece, Daisy O'Halloran, in Hambledon (an idyllic village where the Vicar of Dibley was filmed) near Henley-on-Thames in order to continue his education.

Sarah Bowen has started riding again and has been really helpful riding Pie so that I can ride new boy, George, who has had an entirely IH start.

I did tell you about George didn't I?!

New Boy George!



IHRA Linda Ruffle bought, Blue, the grey horse at the same time that I bought George, the bay. What a nice temperament they must have to be able to wait patiently together in a small stable while we prepare to take them home.

George is Romi's 'replacement' from Solland Stud. He is 4 years old, by a Thoroughbred sire out of an 'Elite' Dutch Warmblood dam. Before he came, George had never been away from the stud or had any formal training at all. However, the human contact he has had has always been calm, fair and consistent so that although George was very 'green' he wasn't at all complicated. As you'd expect, my initial training was to teach him to lead correctly on the Dually. Then I taught him to tie up by putting a long line through a tie up ring to his Dually and asking him to move forward. It's important not to tie horses up properly until they fully understand how to come forward easily when they feel a pressure.

The next stage was to teach him to be led at the same time that I was riding Pie – so called 'ponying'. I think this is a great way to introduce horses to the countryside and to various hazards. They become accustomed to seeing someone above them and to being touched from above. You can not only walk but also trot, canter and even jump as long as you are sensible! You can observe their reaction and decide whether you feel ready to ride your youngster through those reactions or instead to continue with more desensitising work.

"this is a great way to introduce horses to the countryside and to various hazards."

Pie is excellent at this job and it's so handy because I can get them both exercised at the same time.



Without a lead horse I would walk a young horse out in hand, which is also valuable for building up confidence, before long lining and finally riding them.

What's new Pussycat?

If you have any news you would like included in the next Listening Post, please send it for the attention of Pussycat the Pony at **editor@ihhq.net**

Barefoot Environment

By Gillian Bradley, IH student and holder of MRPCH

Snicker, my 5 year old bay gelding, has never been shod. I bought him when he was 2 years old and decided that I wanted to try to keep him barefoot as I could never understand how having iron shoes nailed onto a horse's foot could be of benefit except perhaps to offer some kind of protection on rocky ground.

He was living out 24 hours a day in a field with 5 other horses and with access to a field shelter. In the harsh winter months he had the use of a stable at night. His feet were trimmed by a farrier every 6 weeks but despite this he had quite severe cracks appearing in his feet until eventually his left hind had a crack virtually the whole way up the hoof wall.



After about a year I moved Snicker to a livery yard. He had the most beautiful 12ft x 12ft stable and plenty of turn out during the day. Unfortunately the environment

"...he was quite nappy in his behaviour and was refusing to go forwards over stony ground."

surrounding the livery was very stony and wet and it wasn't long before Snicker was showing signs of weakened and bruised hoof structures and was struggling. As a consequence he was quite nappy in his behaviour and was refusing to go forwards over stony ground. I decided to do some further research and looked more into the whole process of barefoot care.

At the time I was receiving some guidance with Snicker from Recommended Associate Adam Goodfellow and he recommended that I contact Lindsay Cotterell, DAEP. Lindsay is a qualified Applied Equine Podiatrist with the institute of Applied Equine Podiatry founded by KC La Pierre. She has also completed many of the Intelligent Horsemanship Courses – `perfect'!

"The cracks began to seal and he was much more forward going..."

Lindsay immediately suggested a plan of action. Firstly, I bought Snicker some boots to protect his feet whilst hacking out, then I bought some Solemate Therapeutic pads which I cut to fit inside the boots. The pads moulded to the shape of his feet aiding the return of proper function whilst supporting weakened structures when used in conjunction with the appropriate exercise, preventing further trauma. Every day I either walked him out in hand or rode him for 20 minutes. I also made sure I picked out his feet twice a day, applying Colloidal Silver spray and zinc oxide cream to help create a healthy environment.

Lindsay visited and trimmed Snicker's feet with the High Performance Trim Method every 4-5 weeks.

Over the months Snickers feet began to improve. The cracks began to seal and he was much more forward going, but we still knew that he would have a struggle in this environment as there was no real foot conditioning surface available. As a temporary tool Lindsay suggested applying the `Perfect Hoof Wear Wraps'. These can be used as long as you have trained your horse to stand still!

Basically it looks like a black bandage which is very light and sets using water. It moulds to the hoof but allows for distortion on all dimensions of natural movement which a shoe cannot do. This ingenious invention from KC La Pierre allowed us to maintain the improvement that we had worked so hard to achieve until a more suitable environment could be found for Snicker.



Eventually I was lucky enough to rent some land directly behind my house and was able to make a purpose built foot conditioning surface area. After discussions with Lindsay and being guided by Snicker's `Spectrum of Usability' (an ongoing record of assessment of Snicker's hooves), we set about providing an environment that would be conducive to healing and maintaining health.

An area measuring approximately 75ft x 35ft was created directly on top of part of an old road and broken up World War II Nissen hut base which lay beneath a shallow grass surface. A membrane which allows water to pass through was laid. Then 12inch stakes were hammered or drilled where necessary, 6inches into the ground at equal distances. 5inch boards were then screwed to the stakes. This created an edge to hold the surface in.

Next, 4 inches of type one sub-base was spread evenly and packed down firmly using a 'whacker plate'. Another layer of the membrane was then laid over this to stop any of the larger sub-base stones from working their way to the top, although if they did, they would easily sink through the 6mm to dust layer on contact with the horse's foot, avoiding any pin point pressure on the hoof.



Finally, 2 inches of 6 mm to dust stone was spread evenly over the top and packed down firmly. Post and rail fencing was erected to contain the surface area, a pedestrian gate added at the side for easy access, and a larger gate fitted to allow the horses direct access to their fields.



Generally I encourage Snicker and his 3 buddies (also barefoot) onto the surface for 8 to 12 hours a day but this varies according to weather conditions and the time of year. They usually use the surface overnight in the winter, and during the day in the spring and summer, sometimes with the gate open so they can decide for themselves. It can also be used as a 24 hour all weather turnout area, especially useful for controlling weight in the spring or for safe turnout on frosty or ground freezing days when the going is dangerous. It is also great for looking after the fields when it is wet and muddy by giving the ground a chance to rest. The surface is really easy to poo pick with a shavings fork and means that you have less poo picking to do in the field each day which is harder work!

I have made several hay feeding and water stations on the surface to encourage movement and a small area of wood bark chippings to encourage them to urinate in one place which works really well. I put down a number of rubber mats to give them the choice to either lie down or stand on something softer. They have an 18ft x 12ft field shelter on the surface as well.

I would like to stress at this point that if your horse is just coming out of shoes and making the transition to barefoot, or is already barefoot but not with very hardened or conditioned feet, **then the time spent on this surface type should be built up very gradually.** I was able to put Snicker straight on there for quite long periods of time at the start due to his feet having been conditioned by the 'Perfect Hoof Wear Wraps', but generally you would start by introducing it to their feet for 30 minutes and then 1 hour, gradually building it up from there. A DAEP with the horse's `Spectrum of Usability' record sheets would offer the correct guidance as to how much the horse can cope with initially.

I am not sure what I would do without the surface now as it has helped so much to condition and exfoliate Snicker's hooves, and with Lindsay looking after his feet for the past 2 ½ years, they have gone from strength to strength. I am indebted to Lindsay for all her commitment, inspiration and dedication

"He copes well with road work of which I do a minimum of 20 minutes three times a week..."

and for always being so helpful and understanding. Snicker's cracks have all sealed up and I no longer need to do `pad walks' as the surface does all the hard work for me, and he no longer needs to wear boots to hack out. He copes well with road work of which I do a minimum of 20 minutes three times a week, and ride as much as work commitments allow.





I envisage that his feet will continue to improve. I now realise that the environment, combined with correct hoof balance, is what provides the correct stimulus to optimise a return to a healthy foot which is the crucial deciding factor as to whether a domesticated horse has a fair chance of succeeding barefoot.

I know that a lot of people think it is just a cheaper option not to have traditional shoes on their horse's feet, and tend to `give it a go' by simply removing the horse's shoes, and leaving their horse in a soft, wet, muddy field. This invariably creates problems for the horse's feet which become weak and vulnerable to infection, and so they give up.

"...through research, education, determination and commitment I believe I have found a great way forwards ..."

I can honestly say that it was a great deal of hard work initially for me, trying to cope with improving my horse's bare feet in a traditional environment, but through research, education, determination and commitment I believe I have found a great way forwards for both Snicker and myself.



For more information about the science of Applied Equine Podiatry visit Lindsay's website:
www.appliedequinepodiatrist.co.uk

Eat like a horse and Live Well

By Monty Roberts



The Less Full Monty!

One of my aspirations in later life is to be a positive role model. I'll keep working on this but one area (of I'm sure many!) I am well aware I haven't always been successful has been when it came to my body weight.

Injuries caused by my father's brutality created spinal fractures that have caused me great pain throughout my adult life. Eventually CAT Scans and MRI's identified seventy-two bones broken before the age of puberty. I was a competition rider, worked hard, stayed fit and ate a lot. As pain took my adult life over, I significantly reduced the physical activity, but my appetite remained in place.

One would not believe the list of excuses I utilised to justify the big appetite with reduced physical activity. "Oh I'm very heavy boned." "I really don't eat that much, but my metabolism has changed." "I carry my weight well, and it doesn't bother me." "I am drinking diet beverages now." I used all these and more. The facts will show that I was obese but even more importantly my horses told me and, feeling it was out of my control, I started to believe that my more athletic riding endeavours had come to an end.

As many people do I tried to persuade myself into believing 'a few extra pounds' (in reality stones) wouldn't really affect the horse. It's strange I should do that when I well know in the racing industry there is a category called 'the handicap division'. Races within this segment provide for the horses to run with various weight assignments that they are to carry on their backs. I have heard world-class trainers scream to high heaven when an official assigns two or three more pounds to their horse than they believe appropriate given the competition for the day. However, it is the goal of the official handicapper to apply weight to the horse in an attempt to cause each individual in the race to reach the finish line at the same time. This method significantly increases the gambling potential on the race. Typically, the race official works with approximately ten to twelve pounds (5.44kg) in this effort. One might ask "Is a horse really that sensitive?" They are. Over centuries racing people have come to know that as little as two or three pounds can make a huge difference.

It's not just the weight on your horse's back that makes a difference to his comfort though. Until I lost the weight I hadn't realised some of the aches and pains I'd previously put down to 'aging' where actually directly caused by the excess pounds I'd been lumping around. It's much easier and more comfortable for a horse to carry a fit person with good muscle tone and if you have the opportunity to be that person you owe it to yourself and your horse to get in shape.

Obesity has been declared by virtually every form of scientific study to be a condition that clearly reduces the quality of life but the length of that life too. Make this the day you resolve to do something about it. I so wish I'd done something sooner now I realise how much better one feels at a healthy weight. If that doesn't persuade you I'd like to remind you again – do this for your horse; he needs you around for a long time to keep looking after him!

Would you believe that my life insurance was more expensive at the age of 63 than it is today at the age of 76? Why do you think that is? It's because the computers at the various medical offices in charge of examining me concluded that I have a better chance to live through the span of my policy than I did 13 years ago. The medical community is overwhelmingly impressed with this outcome. If you act sooner rather than later you won't have to make the very radical dietary adjustments that I did because I'd got myself to such a critical stage.


Monty before weight loss


Monty riding after weight loss

I had to make significant changes to my diet but I can drink anything I want and as much as I want, just as long as it's water! No alcohol, fruit juice or sweet drinks, only water. My diet consists of steamed, boiled or raw green vegetables, brown rice, and white chicken or white fish. Any spices or seasoning are okay. That's it, three times a day, seven days a week, with the only snacks being cashews or almonds. I admit to enjoying British curry houses (Indian restaurants are very rare in California) as Rogan Josh suits my requirements perfectly.

Whilst onions and tomatoes are not green, they are allowed in my meals. The doctors told me to eat this food with a significant amount of water. This constituted soup, or some might call it a stew. Each meal consists of approximately one litre of these ingredients. That's a lot of food, which means I'm eating like a horse.

Love Changes Everything

Love is a wonderful thing, and I firmly believe that each of us must begin with loving ourselves. Many horsemen like the Dorrance brothers and Ray Hunt expressed the theory, "You'll never get your horse right until you get yourself right." I whole heartedly agree with this statement. I also believe that we will never get ourselves right until we succeed in liking ourselves.

Once we love ourselves we open the door to loving not only the people closest to us, but our horses as well. We owe it to ourselves, our loved ones and our horses to maintain health to the fullest extent possible so we need to assist our bodies to remain vital for the maximum amount of time. It is not only length of life that should concern us but the quality of life as well.

The horses that I ride now, and I certainly ride more than I did at the time of the before picture, like me better and perform far more generously than when they carried that extra 75 or 80 pounds (5st-7, 36.29kg). I feel sure that I did my body significant damage with years of obesity. I am just as sure that I am adding time to my existence since coming to my senses and choosing a better quality life.

The joy that I feel for having made this decision should encourage every reader to think hard about their goals for life and certainly the best interest of their horses if they are a rider. I am working harder than I've ever worked in my 76 years, but I don't consider it 'work'. I am having more fun than I have ever had as well. I love what I do and this means that I never have to 'work' another day in my life.

As I travel the globe on my mission to remove violence from all training, it is my hope that I am, in fact, acting as a good role model for the younger generation. The horses have certainly been good role models for me. I would be so pleased if I could repay them for all of us by leaving the world a better place than I found it for horses and for people, too.

Monty Roberts
©2011

My incredible stats!

In May 2006 I was diagnosed with near lethal type 2 diabetes. A score of 12 on the A1C scale for blood glucose is described as extremely dangerous. A score of 16 on the same scale is virtually unheard of; I was in trouble.

BEFORE	AFTER
On tour in Germany April, 2006 One month before diabetes diagnoses	**In California September, 2010** 4 ½ years after diagnoses
Weight: 268 (19st-1, 121.56kg)	Weight: 190 (13st-6, 86.18kg)
Blood pressure: 180 over 100	Blood pressure: 104 over 53 (Av. for 1 month in 2011)
Pulse: 80 range, at rest	Pulse: 47 range, at rest (Av. for 1 month in 2011)
Blood glucose: A1C 16 A 5.8 score for A1C is perfect An A1C score of 12 is critical	Blood glucose: A1C 5.8 (perfect) (Av. for 1 month in 2011)

Eat like a horse and Live Well

By Kelly Marks

All IHers are well aware of the dangers of obesity in their horses. No one would be so cruel as to neglectfully let their horses stuff themselves to obesity and face the pain of laminitis and metabolic syndrome diseases. No one would ever want their horse to lug around fat that wasn't necessary – but what about if it's our own? If anyone else would like to join their horse in keeping healthy and fit this summer then read this advice carefully – and follow it!

There can be so many benefits to caring for ourselves as much as we care for our horses. Monty's been an incredible example of this over the last few years. So here are tips from me on how to eat like a horse... and lose weight.

1. As with your horse, focus on the health benefits rather than making it about appearance. As addiction expert Gillian Riley writes in Eating Less, "if we only think about how we look we'll always find a way of why it's not worth bothering". Once people realise it for themselves or their horse, that's it's their whole quality (and length) of life that's affected, they are more likely to make the necessary changes.
2. Face the facts! Be brave and hopefully scales will be sufficient and you don't need a weighbridge. Weight loss should be gradual – aim for no more than 2 lb per week and as it's comfortably achievable you won't feel deprived and you'll stay motivated to reach a healthy weight.
3. Caring horse owners don't feed their horses high sugar feed any more. They know it's harmful and likely to cause metabolic syndrome (roughly the equivalent to diabetes in humans) – and we also know it's addictive - once you start eating sugar you start craving more. Remember it is not an accident that some foods are seemingly addictive; scientists have been put to work to make it so.
4. While a small amount of 'good oils', i.e. Omega 3s, are necessary for health, generally we only feed extra fat to a horse in order to put weight on him. In the same way, any time we take in extra fat in our diet it will put weight on us. Throw away the frying pan and use the grill or steam vegetables in future. Many processed meals are deep fried, then dried out and deep fried again to maximise the sugar/salt/fat combination.
5. Grain/cereals are essentially used to put fat on stock animals. They may be used up as 'energy' on for instance a racehorse. So how far are you running each day to use up this energy?
6. Another way to put fat on stock animals is milk powder. Be aware that a Cappucino coffee is not a break it's a meal. Add a flapjack and that's two meals.
7. Don't starve or deprive yourself. Studies have shown horses that if you starve them for a period of time, then turn them out on grass, they'll just make up for it by eating twice as fast and twice as much as they would have done.
8. Keep meals simple. You know that the bulk of your horse's feed should be vegetable fibre (no we're not suggesting you just eat hay!) but feel free to bulk up your meals with plenty of non-starchy vegetables.
9. One of the many important things you learn in Ian Vandenberghe's Feeding and Nutrition course is forget the marketing - READ THE INGREDIENTS LABEL and ANALYSIS. When you go to the supermarket if you feel you absolutely must have a ready meal – read the label – you'll be shocked at how much fat some contain – sometimes as much as 75%! You should make 10% your maximum and 5% your aim.
10. Get educated – for your horse go on Ian's course, for yourself read 'The End of Overeating' by David Kessler. The man who took on the tobacco industry, exposes how modern food manufacturers have hijacked the brains of millions by turning our meals into perfectly engineered portions of fat, salt and sugar, turning us into addicts in the process. Kessler reveals how our appetites have been and are increasingly hijacked by hyper-palatable foods that encourage us to keep eating - all the time.
11. Don't have your horse cooped up all day – he's mentally and physically healthier if he can keep his body moving and include some specialised exercise as well. Do the same for yourself x- it's mentally cruel to be tied to a computer all day!
12. When you travel your horse you plan his meals ahead. You don't think 'Oh we'll see what we can find him to eat as we go along; there's bound to be something at the service station if he's hungry." Don't do that to yourself either - it's bound to end in dietary disaster! If you're planning to eat healthily you need to decide and pack in advance the meals you're going to eat on the road.
13. Fresh, clean water should always be available!



Photo courtesy of Liz Pitman

Horse Agility

By Sheila Reed, IHRA

After being given the honour by Kelly of becoming an Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associate in January 2010 I was flicking through a horse magazine when I came across an advertisement saying 'Horse Agility – a new exciting way to have fun with your horse without having to ride him'. I took a look at the website and thought what a fabulous idea – I knew straight away that I wanted to be involved.



I contacted the Club and found that the fact that I was an Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associate set me in good stead to become a Horse Agility Accredited Trainer. This new sport was launched in January 2010 and is now rapidly spreading across the country with Accredited Trainers in different areas running training/taster days and competitions.

During 2010 I had some obstacles made, got my equipment together, hired a school and ran my first training day and competition in May. This was the first Horse Agility event to be held in Gloucestershire. Participants were mostly from the local area and a few spectators turned out on what was the hottest day of the year so far. The oldest pony was a 22 year old Shetland named Garry who had to have an eye removed in the previous year. He is so confident with his owner, 72 years old Joan, that the pair have competed at several competitions and are now top of the national league table!

There is no ridden work involved in Horse Agility and so it is great for veterans, young horses and horses that cannot be ridden for any reason although they must be sound, and for people who can't or don't want to ride.

No special equipment except for a headcollar or training halter, a lead rope of at least 10 feet long and protective boots (where necessary) are required for the horse. No bridles, whips or sticks are permitted. Handlers must wear a hard hat and sturdy boots; gloves are also recommended.



There are five levels from Starter working up to Freestyle where the horse is loose and is directed through and over the obstacles; this is the ultimate relationship of trust and co-operation between horse and human. There are 10 obstacles in the competition with an obedience test of walk, trot and halt at Starter and First levels. Each obstacle is marked out of 10 with 5 points for effectiveness and 5 for style. Points are lost if you use your lead rope so the emphasis is really on your horse following your body language and energy levels.

I see Horse Agility as an extension of the Intelligent Horsemanship groundwork that I already teach and it is a fabulous way of helping horses and owners to build a more confident and close relationship with each other. As most humans are competitive the competition element just adds to the appeal. The minimum equine age for competition is 2 with no upper limit. The oldest equine member is a pony called Snowy who is 41!

All of my obstacles are situated at Castle Barn Farm, Upper Dowdeswell, where I run regular training/taster days and competitions for members and non-members; spectators are also welcome. As well as all the official obstacles such as bridges, tunnels, podiums, and curtains there are also other obstacles to help desensitise your horse to things that you may come across whilst out riding. These include road signs, bunting and balloons. If you would like to have a go but don't have your own horse I am willing to loan you a horse that for the day.

Days and sessions for Riding Clubs/Groups and Pony Clubs can also be arranged.

All photos courtesy of Sheila Reed

Sheila Reed is a Recommended Associate of Intelligent Horsemanship based near Cheltenham and covering Gloucestershire and surrounding counties.
Website is: www.sheilareedequine.com
Contact: sheilareed95@msn.com
Tel: 07780 668136







The mule lady

By Xanthe Jeffries, IH Member and holder of the MRPCH

> *"Oh yes, I know you, you're the mule lady!"*

I live in Mallorca, having moved there almost forty years ago. I became interested in Intelligent Horsemanship methods after reading about Monty Roberts in the press and then reading his book. After starting with the Five Day Foundation Course in May 2006, I passed my Stage 2 exams in November 2007.

The title of my psychology project was "What do Mules Think about IH Methods?" The reason I decided on mules was that I had ended up with a homebred one by accident! I bought a Hispano-Bretonne draft mare and she came with an unexpected present inside her. Ten and a half months later we discovered a male palomino mule running at foot. Xato (pronounced Chatto) was very shy at first but once I'd used all the usual IH techniques on him he soon realized that humans were very useful things for scratching and tickling the bits that he couldn't reach. I taught him to lead and to pick up his feet.



Xato Tom Carnachan

Everything was fine until he was six months old and had to be gelded. He was still suckling because I felt that he would get over the castration better if he was with his mother. I led him into the field next door so that the vet could perform the operation. He was given a general anaesthetic as donkeys and mules can metabolise drugs very quickly and suddenly wake up. When the vet left he said Xato would take an hour to get up yet just two minutes later he was up and heading for his mother. After the gelding he decided that he would not be led anywhere again. He was very polite, not violent in any way, but just refused to move. So I decided to combine my IH project with learning more about mules. Accordingly, I worked with Xato and in time got him leading anywhere, over all sorts of different surfaces, alone and away from his mother.

Xato had been attached to the shaft of his mother's cart ever since he was about six months old so he knew all about traffic, dogs that bark and lines on the road. Unfortunately he knocked himself playing the fool in the field and the x-rays had to be sent to the Newmarket Equine Hospital because the vets here had never seen anything like it. This meant I was unable to continue his formal education for a while. Hopefully I can start driving him as a pair with his mother soon as they are both Silver Dapple Dilutes (something I found out thanks to Liz Pitman's sleuth work and now confirmed by genetic testing) so they are very unusual to look at. Xato loves humans thanks to being brought up in the IH way. While I am filling up the water buckets he will very gently back up to me to request a good scratch between the legs. Other people find it rather frightening to find this rather square-shaped mule backing up towards them!



Xato's x-ray

During my IH training I was asked by the local animal refuge to go and help when their jack donkey was gelded so I prepared by making friends with him. Fortunately, pressure and release got his interest very quickly even in a huge field. He became a great fan of mine and whenever he saw me he brayed. On the day of the proposed gelding the vet gave Basilio the drugs to knock him out but nothing happened. He was one of those that some anaesthetics do not affect, so we had to postpone for a week and change the type of anaesthetic.

> *"Luckily you couldn't see the tears running down my face as this poor nameless mule Joined Up immediately and did it perfectly."*

I did one of my Join Ups for my examinations with a 30 year old mule who had only known violence all her life. Luckily you couldn't see the tears running down my face as this poor nameless mule Joined Up immediately and did it perfectly.



Dolores with Llorens

I also worked with a mule called Dolores who had a problem with her feet being handled. Whenever she was shod she had been drugged, tied up short, had the foot being shod tied up, wore a twitch and sometimes had her tail tied up. At the end of my project we could hot shoe all four feet with no problems whatsoever. Since then Dolores has changed hands and the new owner, Llorens, contacted me because he was having a problem putting her bridle on as she was very head shy. I went to see her and she seemed happy to work with me again. She opened her mouth for the bit with no problem but then laid her ears back as flat as possible. I just waited until after a couple of minutes she put one ear forward. I touched it and she did not shy away so I slipped it under the headpiece and went to the other side. The second ear came forward much more quickly and as soon as the bridle was on I took it off and started again. After five or six times of putting the bridle on and taking it off again, Dolores realized she could choose when to put her ears in the bridle and since then there have been no more problems.



Dolores accepting the bridle

The last mules for my project were Gwendoline and Caroline, two pony sized mules, daughters of a Shetland pony and a small donkey who had literally never been touched. I had the challenge of getting them touchable and then to train them to drive as a pair. I was not prepared for the enormous task that I took on. However, by the time my project deadline was up, Gwendoline was long-lining with a pad saddle on and wearing a snaffle bit. Caroline who was much wilder was also wearing a saddle but I did not manage to get her to long-line. I had hoped to continue working with these two characters but pressure of space caused the owner to sell them on.

Later in August, 2008 I bought a pair of small mules myself. They were starving and forced to eat their own dung as their main source of food. Tomeu and Jordi are full brothers out of an Appaloosa mare by a black jack and they have blanket spots almost all over. The elder one is in much better shape than the younger although he seems to be filling out at last. I have managed to get the older one to the point of pulling a tyre while working in chains (with a view to doing some harrowing on the farm). So far, the younger one has walked around with a full harness on.



Tomeu

I have studied what books are available on the market and it seems that bribery and corruption in the form of food is a good way to get to a mules heart. I do not advocate hand feeding in general but for mules with problems it can give you that little edge that will help you make a lot of progress quickly and gently.

I came over and helped at a Monty demo at Towerlands a couple of years back and whilst chatting to the other helpers somebody said "Oh yes, I know you, you're the mule lady!" so that is who I have become although I do help horses as well.

One of the most recent was a three week old filly. She was tied up the first time she had a headcollar on so that her mother could be taken away for the children to ride. It was hardly surprising that the foal went totally berserk and ended up on the floor several times. When I went to see her the first time the owner wanted me to perform some sort of magic and lead her straight away; I left him with homework of just scratching and rubbing her and instructions to leave her head alone. The next phone call was to say that he had led the mare and foal out and the foal had thrown herself on the floor when he pulled her. I went there every day the following week when I finished my 'proper' job and by Friday I was clipping on the lead rein and able to get her to walk forward a few steps although she was always looking for the pressure as a reason to explode. She's fine now.



The filly

I also tried to help the owners of a young Menorcan stallion bred to rear for the fiestas of San Juan. Although they had used Monty Roberts' methods to get him from being untouched to being ridden out in just ten days they then insisted on using a curb bit which caused him to start rearing. They had tried to get round this by getting on and taking off at a canter immediately!



Menorquin stallion

Last week I had a phone call from a friend of a friend asking for help with a 'crazy horse' - I wonder what I'm letting myself in for?!

Five fascinating facts about mules

- Mules wag their tails when they are thinking
- A mule has a donkey father and a horse mother and a hinny has a horse father and a donkey mother
- Most mules and hinnies are sterile but the occasional one may be able to conceive and carry a foal
- In the Himalayas the Indian Army breed and train mules to carry supplies up the mountain roads on their own
- If a mule wants to kick you or stand on your foot it will not miss so be aware of where its feet are!!

The Listening Post News

FREE GASTROSCOPY

Do you suspect your horse may have gastric ulcers? Jessica Kidd of The Valley Equine Hospital, Lambourn is offering a FREE GASTROSCOPY for one IH Member's horse during the week commencing 4th July, 2011.
Please contact editor@ihhq.net in the first instance.

The BETA show!


Photo courtesy of Simon Palmer

The British Equestrian Trade Association show took place in February at the NEC. It's the annual event that previews new exciting innovations along with regular top line vendors. Monty, Kelly, and Martin Clunes turned up for a little fun and prize giving. **There was much laughter as Monty and Martin started to play off each other.** Before a packed audience they explained how they met, and Martin's work with the charity Animal Care in Egypt - especially relevant given the transitional state of Egypt. The tourist industry has been very badly hit, which means that owners struggle to feed themselves and their horses and donkeys are left to starve: **www.ace-egypt.org.uk**

Monty talked about his new method of working with head-shy horses, featured for the first time in the UK on his Ferbuary tour. It demonstrated that this 76-year-old clinician is still learning and innovating.

BHS Chairman

Martin Clunes is President of the British Horse Society from June this year. Martin has an enormous passion for horses and the belief that cruelty in any form is not acceptable which makes him perfect for the post.



Go Jo!

IHRA and Monty Roberts' Instructor Jo Bond and her horse, Sana, finished 8th in the CEI* 90km international endurance competition at Montpellier on 27th March. "I'm certainly very proud of him! It never stopped raining from 6am when we saddled him until 4pm when we passed the final vet gate! The highlight of my day was riding through a 100m pitch-black tunnel where Sana had such faith in me that he never broke his stride in trot even though he had no idea where he was putting his feet."

Get it Whipped*

A study by the University of Sydney found that whipping had no effect on the likelihood of a racehorse winning or being placed. The research, funded by RSPCA Australia, showed that horses ran fastest in the part of the race where they were not whipped and that their speed started to decrease when whipping began and when whipping increased. The authors conclude, "This data makes whipping tired horses in the name of sport very difficult to justify."

Towcester race course has announced that as from October it is to ban the use of the whip behind the saddle. Jockeys will still be able to carry a whip but its use will be restricted to keeping a horse straight, i.e. a slap down the shoulder.

**Evans D, McGreevy P (2011) An Investigation of Racing Performance and Whip Use by Jockeys in Thoroughbred Races. PLoS ONE 6(1): e15622. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0015622*

Technokelly speaking

Find lots of great video-clips on her Facebook Page, 'Kelly Marks and Intelligent Horsemanship' featuring Pie and gorgeous George.

facebook

Punch!

Open Day Sunday 19th June, 2011
2pm - 6pm



Rare Suffolk Punch Horses are on view at the Chalkhouse Farm Open Day at Chalkhouse Green between Emmer Green and Kidmore End, near Reading. In addition there will be representatives of other heavy horse breeds and demonstrations of handling and horse logging. Enjoy a guided trailer ride on the ancient drover trail, wander through the beautiful gardens, and see working demonstrations of how our grandparents farmed with vintage farm equipment. End the day with a cream tea, honey from the farm's hives or swim in the covered pool. Admission £3.00 (children, wheelchair users, and carers free). In aid of the National Garden 'Yellow Book' Scheme and Soundabout.
Information Tel: 0118 9723 631

Purrfect People

IH Members, have we got your up to date and correct details? If you have changed address, telephone number or e-mail, please can you let us know?

Spring Competition Winners



The Horse Boy DVD/Book
The Genghis Khan Equestrian Statue is at Tsonjin Boldog.
Lee Ric-Hansen, Henley-on-Thames.
Debbie Patrick, West Bromwich.

I Am The Great Horse
Alexander the Great was the King of Macedonia
Martin Hennessy, London.
Samantha Davis, Carshalton.
Annie Norman, Spean Bridge.
Tina Hobbs, Tadley.
Iris Wilson, London.

IH Charity Update

Garden Party and Cake!

The IH members' Garden Party is hosted by Kelly Marks at her home in Lambourn, Berkshire on Saturday, 2nd July this year. The party starts at around 2pm and goes on until 6pm. The ticket price is £25 per person and includes refreshments and a raffle ticket. As Kelly personally funds all refreshments, **this year's charity, Horseworld, Bristol will benefit from the full proceeds of ticket sales.** Horseworld was nominated by IH members as this year's charity. Find out more about the charity in the article overleaf.

The 'Best Dressed Charity Shop Outfit' competition will be held again this year with costumes to cost no more than £20, and Kelly will pick the winner. Last year many ladies (and IH Recommended Associate Garry Bosworth) found some beautiful dresses. The Grand Raffle boasts some amazing prizes and additional tickets can be bought on the day. The party is very relaxed and everyone makes new friends and contacts. Let's hope we enjoy superb weather again this year.

If you are travelling a long distance and wish to stay overnight, there are many choices. The Malt Shovel pub next door to Kelly's does B & B and there are other B & B and guest houses locally. People may camp in Kelly's garden or park caravans in Pie's field.

Tickets can be paid for through Paypal or by cheque made out to "Intelligent Horsemanship Charity Appeal" to our new IH Charity organiser, Michelle Powers, at: shellandjack@yahoo.co.uk



New IH Charity Organiser



Michelle Powers knows that she has some extremely large shoes to fill following the retirement of her predecessor, Lorraine Luke, who has earned the label Goddess!!

Michelle, works as a consultant in resource and waste management, has lots of important initials after her name, and she wants to add MRPCH to that collection. She's also training to be a barefoot trimmer. She lives in West Sussex and owns a 7 year old Arab x Andulusian gelding called Talin.

Shy Lowen

Last year's IH charity, Shy Lowen, is enjoying its new found fame following the Channel 4 television programme and the final present from IH which was a very large wheelbarrow! A grand total of £3,875 has been donated by IH members to Shy Lowen.

"Thank you over and over. We've never owned anything like this before; most of our wheelbarrows are ones which have been used on building sites so they have a concrete coating. It's wonderful; it's our Ferrari wheelbarrow."
Bernadette Langfield www.shylowen.com



WIN a £20 IH Voucher

One £20 voucher will be given for the writer of the best caption for this photograph.
E-mail your entry to editor@ihhq.net by 26th July, 2011

IH Charity of the Year

In 1952 Mabel Cocksedge of Bristol became concerned about the plight of the working horses facing slaughter due to motorisation. She arranged a public meeting to discuss the situation. A dozen people attended and by the end of the meeting The Friends of Bristol Horses Society was founded to rescue working horses, ponies and donkeys and give them a happy retirement.

"HorseWorld is now responsible for over 150 horses, ponies and donkeys at their Bristol site and a further 300 that have been re-homed."

The first horse they rescued was Ben, an 11 year old black carthorse. Over the first few years the society expanded, rescuing carthorses, coal merchants' horses, milk delivery horses, greengrocers' horses and farm horses. HorseWorld is now responsible for over 150 horses, ponies and donkeys at their Bristol site and a further 300 that have been re-homed.

"They rescue, rehabilitate and re-home up to 100 abandoned, neglected or mistreated horses every year."

Today working horses are largely a memory, but there is still a very real demand for HorseWorld's work. They rescue, rehabilitate and re-home up to 100 abandoned, neglected or mistreated horses every year.

There are currently 50 members of staff (full and part time) who, along with volunteers, keep everything running, from dedicated Grooms in the Welfare Section, the Visitor Centre Team, Fundraising and Communications Team and the all important Café Team.



Romeo with Marco and Alice

Liz Goddard, Fundraising Manager, told us more:

Typically where do your horses come from?

Some horses arrive at HorseWorld because their owners can no longer look after them; others arrive through more distressing circumstances. HorseWorld works in collaboration with other agencies such as the Police, to ensure animals in desperate need are rescued and brought to our Welfare Yard. HorseWorld also helps to bring about the successful prosecution of owners guilty of neglect and wilful cruelty.

"HorseWorld works in collaboration with other agencies..."

Are there any criteria for which horses you take in?

We try to help every animal that we can, but animals which are subject to a judicial prosecution have to take priority. All others are considered on a case by case basis.

Tell us a bit about each stage your horses and ponies go through...

Assessment: Every animal that is taken in by HorseWorld spends three weeks in our Isolation Unit where they are fully assessed by a vet, dentist, farrier and a range of equine specialists to put together a tailored programme of care and training.

Rehabilitation & Training: We are not ruled by the time constraints which govern commercial businesses. This means that each individual horse can receive the best and most thorough training before embarking on their new life in a loan home.

Re-homing: We try to ensure that we find the perfect home, horse and loaner match. When a horse is ready to be re-homed we put it on our website where potential loaners can submit an online application which we will consider. Every potential home is checked fully and the prospective loaner is invited to meet the horse on a number of occasions. HorseWorld retains legal ownership of every horse that comes into our care. This means that we are able to visit on a regular basis; in the first year this can be three times or more if the horse has particular veterinary or behavioural needs. If we are not satisfied with the standard of care that a horse is receiving we will bring it back to HorseWorld.

Is there a minimum length of time each horse stays with you?

We don't set any time constraints as every animal is an individual. Sometimes horses arrive with us and then, after a period of assessment, go straight out to loan homes. Others need longer rehabilitation which can include specialist veterinary treatment, physiotherapy, dentistry, careful assessment and handling, as well as time, patience and love.

What training do you do? Are there minimum training requirements before re-homing?

All of our training is based on Intelligent Horsemanship techniques. A lot of our horses and ponies have suffered forms of neglect and abuse which mean that their training programmes have to be specifically tailored to meet their individual needs. All animals that are to be re-homed are trained to an appropriate level according to their intended future role – we are usually looking for tractability and easy handling at the minimum. Ridden animals must be safe and predictable.

Are any horses not suitable for re-homing? What happens to them?

There are some who cannot be re-homed. In these circumstances we will guarantee that they have a home for life at HorseWorld.

Tell me a bit about the team, it sounds like each trainer is a bit like a social worker with their own caseload, taking their horses from rehabilitation all the way through to re-homing?

That's right – the trainers do tend to work with specific horses so that they get to know them well and build a strong bond with them. We find it's easier for the horses to learn to trust people in that way. Also, this means that the trainers notice the smallest changes as they happen.



"We really couldn't continue our vital work without the generosity of our supporters."



Kayleigh with Prince

"HorseWorld is funded entirely through public donations and legacies..."

What are your sources of funding?

HorseWorld is funded entirely through public donations and legacies – we rely completely on the generosity of the general public to continue our vital work.

As a rough guide only, what does it cost to run the centre for a year?

It costs us in the region of £1.2 million a year to keep HorseWorld going however this is rising all the time. The rise in the price of hay has hit us particularly hard.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

Definitely the knowledge that every day we save horses, ponies and donkeys from pain and death and give them a safe and secure future.

What is the most frustrating?

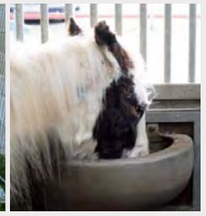
Not getting seizure approval for animals very clearly in need of help.

Other than the obvious donations, is there anything else our members can do to help?

There are many ways that your members can get involved and support our work from attending or organising an event, adopting a horse, to making a regular donation or including us in their will. **They can simply text the word HORSE to 70007 to donate £3.**

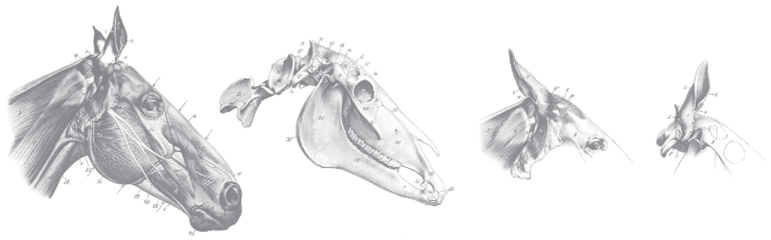
We would like to say a huge thank you to you and your members for nominating us as your charity of the year. It's a real honour and hopefully it will help raise awareness of the work we do here. We really couldn't continue our vital work without the generosity of our supporters.

HorseWorld has a Visitor Centre which is open all year and hosts a calendar of events. On 20th August they will be hosting a Safari Tour of the Welfare Yard where visitors can see behind the scenes. For more details check out their website: www.horseworld.org.uk

Horse's name	**Buddy**
Age	Yearling
Height	11.3 hh
Colour	Skewbald
Breed	Cob
How did Buddy find his way to you?	A local resident called on us to help herd a group of ponies out of her garden after they broke through the fence looking for food. Buddy was in an emaciated state and was scouring, so we contacted the RSPCA. A 24 hour notice was served on the owner to find him a stable and get veterinary attention. When this wasn't complied with Buddy was seized.
What did your initial assessments find/what state was he in?	  Buddy was pretty much at death's door, weighing about one third of his proper body weight and close to Condition Score 0. He had masses of emerging red-worm. He was anaemic and dehydrated with a high temperature and pulse rate. He collapsed regularly and it was three weeks before he was able to stand unaided. He had sores wherever his bones had rubbed on the ground. The only shining light was his spirit and determination to eat everything in sight!
What rehab/veterinary care was required?	Intensive veterinary treatment for the first few weeks. On the worst day he spent hours collapsed and on a drip, and then received a blood transfusion. He had weeks of steroids and different antibiotics, electrolytes and probiotics. His diet had to be carefully planned to ensure his digestive system wasn't further affected.
How long has he been with you?	5 months
Has he undertaken any training? If so how's it going?	Buddy is now much stronger. He is turned out with other colts and has started to be led. The next step is leg handling. He acts very coltishly; amazing when you think that for his first foot trim he had to be supported with a blanket under his belly!  Buddy having his feet trimmed
How is he now/ what stage of the process?	Buddy will now be turned away to mature but handled when necessary. He will be castrated later this year.  Buddy in May 2011

If you are interested in re-homing any of our horses, ponies or donkeys you can find out about them by visiting our website **www.horseworld.org.uk/rehome**

Buddy photos courtesy of Russell Sach



Dissection

By Lara Neighbour

Equine Touch Practitioner and National Instructor Lara Neighbour attended The Whole Horse Dissection Course run by Ivana Ruddock who is one of the co-founders of Equine Touch at Hartsop Farm home of IHRA Ian Vandenberghe. Here she reports on her experience.

The Inside of a Horse

"If the thought of attending a whole horse dissection course is not something you'd ever entertain, then let me tell you you're not alone," explains Lara. "Aside from the fact I prefer my horse friends alive and well, I am an exceedingly squeamish person who avoided all dissections at school (bull's eye, worm and the rat) and who has been known to faint just visiting people in hospital. However, these courses really are a fantastic opportunity, rarely available outside academia, to gain a literal insight into what an amazing animal the horse is. I learnt so much and I would encourage anyone to attend such a course."

Fellow ET Practitioner Ruth Millican adds, "The horse we were working on was a long-retired polo pony. In her 20's she had become consistently lame and the decision had been made to put her to sleep. I found I could cope with the carcass for, whatever one's beliefs there is no soul there, just a body. By the end of the first morning we were all so engrossed in the course that we forgot that we were working on a horse."

"...recent research indicates changes to fascia have been observed after as little as four days of immobility."

Fascinating Fascia

Ivana started by peeling back the skin so that we were able to see the fascia and understand it continuous character. Equine Touch Practitioners work directly on the superficial fascia of the horse. The small moves made during an ET Session travel a long way around and through the body.

Fascia provides structural support and protection in the body: it is found everywhere, surrounding muscle, bone, nerve, blood vessels and organs, essentially a membrane wrapping everything from top to toe and from inside out. It has three components: cells called fibroblasts, collagen fibres in parallel bundles and an intercellular matrix of proteins and carbohydrate. Healthy fascia allows the muscles to freely contract and relax, nerves to correctly signal their commands to all other systems, and blood and lymph fluid to flow around the body.

Figure 1: Fascia

Changes can occur in fascia through chronic overload, immobility, injury and trauma.

- Injury and trauma may cause contractions in the fascia as a scar forms from an aggregation of collagen fibres, thus reducing the fascia's flexibility.
- Ivana reported that she has seen damage to fascia resulting from castration in geldings and, as a consequence, there could be some discomfort in hind limb movement for the horse.
- Overload and overworking of the body can cause more fibrous tissue to form, thus reducing the fascia's pliability and function.
- Immobility has a similar effect to overloading, as the intercellular substance thickens and the fibres form cross-bridges, again reducing flexibility and function. We were told that recent research indicates changes to fascia have been observed after as little as four days of immobility.

Where the fascia around the horse's muscles was healthy, Ivana was able to isolate the muscle by simply running her hand along the edge to split the fascia holding it to the adjacent muscle. Where the fascia was unhealthy a knife or scalpel was needed and a lot more effort had to be applied – these muscles were, for want of a better word, stuck together and no doubt there would have been an adverse impact on how they performed their functions.

If your horse has an injury or experiences a period of box rest then you could consider using bodywork to keep your horse's muscles and fascia as flexible and as healthy as possible in order reduce scar tissue formation. This would need to be discussed with your vet.

"The importance of worming your horse and of washing your hands was graphically illustrated..."

Life on the inside: bots and tapeworms

The importance of worming your horse and of washing your hands was graphically illustrated in the digestive system when we encountered bot fly larvae in the stomach and a tapeworm cyst in the liver.



Figure 2: Bot Larvae
(Photo courtesy of Professor Derek Knottenbelt)

The adult tapeworm lives in the intestines of predators such as dogs and foxes and these host animals excrete eggs in their dung. Intermediate hosts, such as grazing animals, are infected by ingesting these eggs. Larva hatch in the intermediate host's gut, penetrate the gut wall and are carried by the bloodstream to organs. In these organs the larva turn into cysts, and on the death of the animal the organ including the cyst, may be eaten by the predator host. The cyst opens and the cycle begins again. However, cysts can burst within the intermediate herbivorous host with fatal consequences. Humans can also be infected should they come into contact with the eggs via hand to mouth contact. You could be sitting, relaxing on some grass with no knowledge of what had left muck there previously and be in danger of infection. Needless to say the cyst was carefully observed, photographed, then left well alone as we did not want to cause it to burst and infect us!

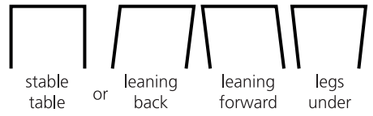
Is your horse a 'stable table'? The stay apparatus

Ivana uses the phrase 'stable table' to describe a horse standing with all four legs perpendicular to the ground. In this stance the horse's efficient and effective system of 'stay' apparatus in the hind legs (using the stifle joint) and the forelegs (using various tendons and ligaments) ensures that the horse can stand while expending the minimum amount of energy.



Figure 3: Stifle

The stay apparatus in the front leg involves a chain of various tendons and check ligaments routed down the legs which prevent joints from overextending and keeps the legs straight. At the top of this chain the biceps brachii muscle wraps over the joint of the ulna and shoulder blade pushing against the joint thereby preventing the '<' shape collapsing. As a muscle you might expect that it had to expend a lot of energy through working continually – but not so. A hard fibro cartilage plate on the muscle presses against the joint and, because there is a tendon which runs the length of the muscle, supports the joint with minimum effort. A genius bit of engineering by nature.



Next time you look at your horse check whether it is a 'stable table'. If your horse typically stands like a wonky table then you need to consider why. He has the anatomy to achieve the correct position but why is he choosing not to? He may be trying to take weight off his heels or toes, or he just can't find a comfortable position to stand and finds the 'wonky' table the compromise to ease discomfort. We need to appreciate as a 'wonky table' his muscles are being used more and he'll become tired, ultimately causing or increasing negative behaviour and discomfort.

The Shoulder Blade

Several things about the shoulder blade were memorable:

- the shoulder blade is well named, the edge of the cartilage around the top of the scapula bone was surprisingly sharp;
- in reality this cartilage is very large in comparison to drawings in books where it is shown as an extra inch or so perched on the scapula rather than arching round and enclosing the top of the bone; and
- the extent of the damage that can be caused by poorly fitting saddles.

Figure 4 shows healthy undamaged cartilage with a nicely curved and smooth edge. The thought of this sharp edged cartilage, moving with the horse's extension of the forelimbs being damaged by a badly fitting saddle, made us all wince.

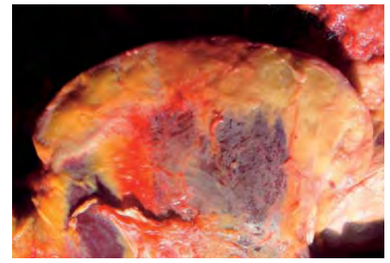


Figure 4: Healthy Scapula

Fat – the yellow peril

It was surprising to see how much superfluous fat there was under the skin and also around the internal organs. The subject horse didn't even look particularly overweight. We hear endlessly about the 'obesity epidemic' in humans, horses and dogs. The Blue Cross and World Horse Welfare have led various campaigns on the subject and are encouraging horse owners to body condition score their horses.

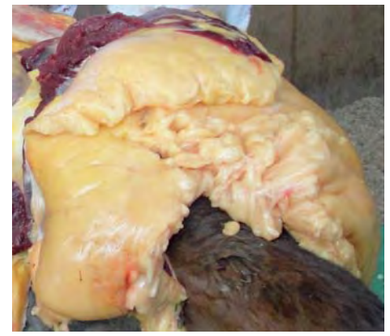


Figure 5: Fat!

In conclusion the horse is an incredible creature and a hugely complex one. We had an enormously educational and intense three days. The knowledge gained supports the need to worm our horses effectively, to ensure that they have regular checks for saddle fit, understand that bad behaviour could indicate discomfort or pain, dispassionately review our horse's condition and weight, and have our horse's backs and muscles checked.

www.learningequinetouch.com

Monty's Tour

"...one of the most exciting tours to date..."

This became one of the most exciting tours to date with Monty demonstrating his innovative technique for solving the problem of ear-shyness. IHRA and tour rider, Rosie Jones reports:



Rocky was big and strong, and his muscles became solid with tension and adrenaline the moment the attention was paid to his head. Monty, who was riding Copy, led Rocky around whilst putting his hands on him. There was an unbelievable transformation as Rocky accepted touch on both of his ears, poll, face, and the top of his neck, without pulling back or rolling his eyes. Everyone was pretty emotional. Rocky seemed to let it all go and just relax. I went into the pen on foot and put my hands next to Monty's hands and kept rubbing. With four hands now stroking him, Rocky's nose started to twitch and he began to groom Copy's mane! After the demonstration, I felt really lucky to be able to witness Rocky's owner standing stroking his head and ears again and again and again much to the amazement of people who knew the horse from home. The results of this technique are dramatic and long lasting and seem to overcome the major part of a horse's phobia in one session.

Martin Clunes made a guest appearance too with his two Clydesdale youngsters, Ronnie and Bruce.



Photo courtesy of Simon Palmer



Photo courtesy of Simon Palmer

What I do on tour?

By Simon Palmer, Into-the-Lens, Tour photographer

The tour is like an extended family gathering for me. The first date is spent catching up with everyone and getting back into 'tour mode'. This involves finding a location for the scaffold tower near the round pen. Once the round pen is up I can get the scaffold erected and start setting up the cameras. My big headache is then checking and hoping that the lights are OK! Some venues don't seem to look after their lights, and when there are a couple of them not working, it really affects the film. Next is the now traditional 'family album' photo of all the helpers with Monty and Kelly, and then it's down to business. I often film the afternoon session where the horses are checked so that Monty will have a before and after comparison of the horse for his own use, to study and learn a bit more about the behaviour of the animal, or for use on the on-line University. Once the horse checking is over I get my own stand set-up with my pictures on it. By this time there is only a short while before the main show so I then go and terrorise a few people like Dan, who does an excellent job on the sound, to make sure he is ready too!

Once the show starts at 6.30 pm, I'm up the scaffold tower for the majority of the evening. I get the best seat in the house! I see everything that happens in the arena, and every magic moment. Horses which had phobias about cows, donkeys, bikes, tractors and even washing lines - I've had the pleasure of watching them shed their problems and shed the occasional tear myself!

Spotlight

Spotlight on Recommended Associate (RA)

Listening Post meets Joanne O'Neill



LP: How long have you been involved with horses?

Joanne: I left school and went straight into training with horses, working towards my BHS exams. There was nothing else I wanted to do and it seemed absolutely the right thing for me. I have been riding since I was 7, and have owned horses from when I was 11.

LP: Why did you decide to qualify as a Recommended Associate?

Joanne: Shortly after my Foundation Course I was invited to help with a hot-headed Welsh Section C who was so unmanageable that her experienced owner dared not let her trot in hand. Seeing that pony transform into a paragon of virtue was so magical I knew I wanted to be an RA. And that's when the work really began!

LP: What is a typical day for you?

Joanne: It's hard to describe a typical day as the job is so varied. Recently I have dealt with a pony that wouldn't leave the yard, a clipper-phobic Lusitano, a yearling to be taught about rugs, and a horse whose erratic behaviour proved to be caused by a brain inflammation. I don't have my own yard so travel out to see clients' horses, and I'm always happy if passersby watch – it all helps to spread the word. After the visit I send the owner a full report of what we did and how to continue the work.

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



Joanne: My priority is to show the owner that I will be supportive, never judgmental. I spend some time listening to her and meeting the horse, and then explain how I propose to help. Once the owner has given me the go-ahead, I am conscious that she might have had little prior contact with what could seem like extraordinary concepts, and so try to explain fully yet without bombarding her with information.

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

Joanne: The problems I am asked to help with are varied but a common thread running through many of them is that of owners struggling to trust their horses and keeping them on a short contact at all times. Just as many riders feel the need to give a leg aid with every stride of their horse in case he just stops, so many handlers seem to hold on in case the horse makes a break for freedom. When they discover their horse will walk and halt nicely on a slack line they are frequently astonished and jubilant.

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

Joanne: Well, it has to be to eradicate cruelty, but how? Banning whips has been mentioned previously by RAs, so I'll take another line. As humans, we depend so heavily on our sense of sight that it is easy to ignore anything we cannot see, and we cannot see inside a horse's mouth when he's being ridden. I believe there are many riders who never think about the action of the bit inside their horse's mouth and who would be horrified if they realised what is happening to the horse's tongue, for instance, when he is ridden on a tight contact in even a relatively 'mild' bit. So I would remove and then delete all memory of nosebands designed to prevent a horse from expressing his discomfort by opening his mouth, and I would have all riders learn the basics of how bits work.

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

Joanne: First piece of advice: be clear in your mind what you want from a horse of your own and then work out what sort of horse would best provide this, instead of going for what other people have. Second piece of advice: take a wise friend to offer support,



to talk things over with, and to keep you grounded. (Oh, and take the IH courses, obviously!)

LP: What is your favourite type of horse work and why?

Joanne: I love working with unhandled or extremely shy horses, but probably my greatest satisfaction comes from what I call 'pleasure' horses, by which I mean horses kept primarily for hacking and companionship rather than for competition and where the relationship is the most important element. It is so rewarding to help an owner 'find' her horse when she has been struggling with confidence, communication and trust.

LP: What are your plans for the future?

Joanne: To carry on learning. To carry on searching for the best way to help my clients to learn. To enjoy all the new people and horses I will meet in this amazing career!

Joanne O'Neill is IH Recommended Associate for Berkshire, Middlesex, Surrey, North Hampshire
Tel: 01344 421762 or 07889 422996
joanna@newleafhorsemanship.co.uk
www.newleafhorsemanship.co.uk

To find your local IH Recommended Associate visit:
www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk
and click on 'Horse Help Here'

Ask the Experts

Sarah Weston

IHRA for Hampshire and Friend of the Hampshire Animal Rescue Team

Q: Last Friday I went to feed my horses and arrived at the yard to find my 17.2 Clydesdale x lying flat in the mud and not moving. We called the Fire Brigade to help us to get him up. Praise to the firemen, they did a very good job in a very muddy field, but it was a close call! Is there any way the IH team can offer the various fire brigades an insight into horses and the rescue of them?
Bruce Honey, Oxfordshire



Ben and Norton: *Photo courtesy of Russell Sach*

A: Jim Green and Anton Philips of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service have been the pioneers for Animal Rescue techniques and the development of specialist equipment in this country. The position used to be (and in some areas most definitely still is) that animal rescue was an optional extra for the Fire Service. They did it as a public service and out of the kindness of their hearts; there was no real obligation for them to do any of it.



Norton: *Photo courtesy of Russell Sach*

However Jim and his Team recognised that there was a huge public safety issue where people were getting killed and injured attempting to rescue animals (not always their own) and statistics show that something like 80% of people will put their own lives at risk in order to save the life of an animal. On this basis he has been able to persuade his senior officers to set up the Animal Rescue Team who take a specific (and in his case almost obsessive!) interest in animal rescues. Indeed, you may have seen him on the programme Real Rescues. Jim has also been instrumental in setting up training courses of an extremely high standard for other fire services and vets across the country. These are British Equine Veterinary Association approved. Officers attend an intensive three day course at Lyndhurst Fire Station here in the New Forest which involves theory and practice. You will be pleased to know that IH has been involved with these courses on a practical level both in giving advice, offering experience and even acting as hapless horse owners for the practical exercises which are taken extremely seriously. Nevertheless, the level of expertise across the country does depend on the priority it is given by the service in the 'home area' and the level of funding granted for the provision of specialist equipment.

Jim Green came to talk to Monty, Kelly and the Recommended Associates at the RA Conference and the majority of the RA's were willing to offer their local services help/advice where needed. I have to say that there has been little of any note that I could teach Jim about horse psychology as he was already very up on it! The safety of the officers involved at rescues also depends on them being totally clued up and that's the message that the training seeks to get across. Monty and Kelly have been very generous also in giving lots of free tickets to the Fire Service to attend various demos.

Finally, we are endeavouring to set up a Charity to support our local Animal Rescue Team which should in turn benefit teams nationwide as Jim is very generous in passing on his knowledge and expertise including instructional DVDs. When you have recovered from your ordeal you might like to have a look at the Facebook Page 'Friends of the Hampshire Animal Rescue Team'.

Dressage markers

Q: I have heard all sorts of explanations for why dressage arenas are marked out as they are and it is still a mystery to me. Can anyone explain?
Jane Reeves, Wellow, Hampshire

A: Sue Whitmore, replies:
Forget the lovely fairly tales we have all heard about Prussian palaces, doorways, gateways and lines of precedence. These are just myths, created to bamboozle and wrap mystery around things that are quite obvious if looked at in the proper context. The big mistake we all make is to look at the markers clockwise - then they really make no sense at all.

Dressage tests have to be considered in the context of the military, or to be precise, the cavalry. So to understand the lettering convention for markers, you need to understand how the military mind worked a hundred years ago. The US has the best documentation, and one of their re-enactment societies kindly sent me all their mounted exercises performed by the cavalry troops which were scanned from the originals.

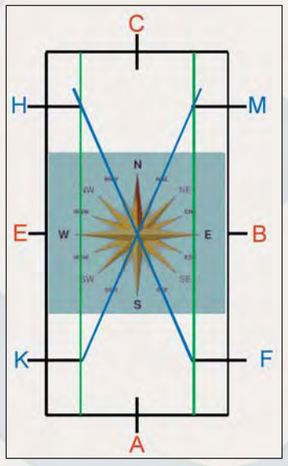


When dressage was first performed at the Olympics in 1912 there were no markers at all, but the competitors were all cavalry officers. The markers in a military school were javelins stuck in the ground. If the movement was, for example, 'incline left at the quarter marker', it would always be at the next logical place. On the left rein, it would be the equivalent of H to F or F to H.

The one thing every military officer would be intimately familiar with was the compass and compass points have a strange naming convention. They start at the ordinal points - the quarters of the circle - and the half points, then the quarter points, which are quarter of 90 degrees. North is always 'up' so you would always work, notionally, south to north. Outdoors in the Northern Hemisphere this would ensure that the sun wasn't in your eyes. Military riding schools were usually only 13 - 15 metres wide, not 20, as this was the largest span that could be built economically prior to steel girder technology.

Dressage markers are named alphabetically according to points of the compass.

They are sequential if visually distinct - hence D is omitted because it is visually similar to C and later G and J. The 'spare' letters are 'used up' in the imaginary markers on the ground lines. X always marks the centre of a circle as in 'X marks the spot'.



Dressage markers are named in a sequence that is logical for ridden exercise.

Most horses are softer on their left and the convention was always to warm your horse up on its soft side first. Thus when a military ride entered the school, it would track left, which is anti-clockwise.

Putting this in action in a 13 x 40 metre dressage arena with quarter markers…

Enter at A (south). Track left.

Name the ordinal points on the first circuit (South, East, North, West) **A B C E.**

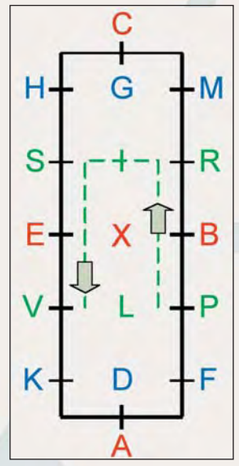
After A, incline left from the quarter marker, which in a 13m school, intersects at exactly SSE, the quarter of the quadrant and at around 6m. An incline is 22.5 degrees, so the rider would always end up at the other marker.

This gives you **F H** and puts you on the right rein.

After A, incline right from the quarter marker (SSW) giving you **K M**

At A, turn up the centre line to X noting the imaginary markers **D** and **G**.

The 20 x 60 metre dressage arena is a stretched 40m with the extra 20 metres added to the middle. The 6 metre markers are too useful to lose, as 6 metres is approximately two canter strides – a safe stopping distance. Thus a second ordinal circuit is named sequentially still on the left rein, giving you **P, R, S, V.**



It may seem very complex to us today, but these officers lived by compass bearings; it would be natural and automatic to them.

Cardinal points Left rein 40m school						Left incline Quarter markers					Right incline Quarter markers							Inner circuit Left rein - Half markers 60m school					
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	X
			D			G		I			L												
			Centre line Advance 40m school					Centre line Retire 60m school																

Like many ardent horse-lovers, Sue had to wait until she was an adult for her first horse, when she was able pay for it herself. She's made up for lost time ever since, owning and managing BHS & ABRS approved riding schools and now breeding Lusitanos. She has found the very best tools in her lifetime quest for horsemanship have been the questions, "Why?" and "How?".

Have you seen?

Mini Practice Arenas available from Easy Dressage (www.easydressage.co.uk) enable you to practice and memorise your test in the comfort of your own home! **Easy Dressage are offering free postage and packaging for arenas ordered before 30th June, 2011.** For details of how to claim email sales@easydressage.co.uk with 'IH offer' and you will receive details of how to claim the free P&P. Free templates are also available to download from their site.

Top five tips for remembering your dressage test by Lydia Ebdon of Easydressage.co.uk

1. **Learn your test strictly step by step**
2. **Recall it often to refresh your memory**
3. **Make your visualisation vivid**
4. **Practice in different places on your horse or feet**
5. **Think ahead as you ride**

No flash photography!!

By Kelly Marks

Dear Kelly,
I'm passionate about horses and horsemanship. As you may recall, I phoned your office about an advert in the Listening Post which featured a flash noseband. This piece of equipment doesn't fit into my idea of horsemanship; these images tell people that its ok to strap a horse's mouth closed. If we want to give horses a better life, we must move away from strapping them down and riding them hard. Images are powerful. It's the image you portray that leads others to copy. I see these devices used all around me – it's very upsetting for the horse and in my opinion quite unnecessary. I wish you all the best. You are an amazing lady. But I won't be rejoining this year as I don't want to look at images like this in a magazine.
Sue S

Thank you for your letter. I understand your point of view and you of course have every right to decide what you do and don't want to see in a magazine. In discussion with the Editor Sarah Weston, we've agreed that we want this to be a 'feel good' magazine, with the ambition for the future that the front covers will be so attractive you'll want to frame them all! However this seems a good time for us to examine a little more fully 'what is Intelligent Horsemanship all about?' and so I'll make the most of that opportunity!

With any large group, and we now number well over 3,000 members, there will be differences of opinion about what the aims and objectives of IH should be, and perhaps some people who would like to move the organisation in a different direction altogether. I totally believe that IH should evolve but I also think we should remain true to what we originally set out to do – to bring the best ideas about horsemanship together from around the world to promote understanding and fairness to horses.


Photo courtesy of Cirque Arlette Gruss

Primarily we're about education and getting people to think about whether there are better ways to handle certain horsey issues. However, it's always been my ambition to achieve these aims *within* the horse community rather than set up against them in a 'we are right and everyone else is wrong' type of way. If we make too big a statement that flash nose bands are 'wrong' as well as any other auxiliary equipment, not only do we alienate practically the whole equestrian competition world for a start but also the many people who ride at a 'weekend' standard; those who still enjoy themselves immensely, love their horses and work hard to give them the most comfortable life possible, often making sacrifices in their own lives to do so.

While I totally believe there are certain things to which we should aspire, my vision of IH is that it is practical and deals with a real world that includes people with a variety of ambitions and horses which may have had a less than ideal upbringing. In the early days of IH, I heard from a student who although she wanted to help horses stated that she would refuse to work with any horse or human involved with hunting, polo or show-jumping. I am sure she had various other criteria too! I didn't interfere with her decision however, and can happily report that she has become a wonderful Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associate who is doing really good work with all of these different disciplines, making incremental changes to benefit the lives of horses and their owners too.



Even though I can happily hack Pie and my new 'baby', George, all over Lambourn gallops in the Dually halter, I am unwilling to dismiss all martingales, nosebands and the more 'interesting' bits because for some people they are the difference between being able to ride out in the countryside or not - even if their main contribution is to add to rider confidence. Intelligent Horsemanship is now coming up to 12 years old and, in that time, I've seen people try to persuade others (on our excellent Intelligent Horsemanship Discussion Group) that 'people are cruel' if they compete in any form at all, have shoes on their horse, trees in their saddles, bits in their horse's mouths, so much as carry or hold a whip, vaccinate their horses, trim any part of their horse's coat and use anything other than positive reinforcement. One person even said that, "no horse should ever be tied up to be groomed or saddled!"

None of these discussions were wasted because 12 years ago a lot of these ideas were totally new and many of us had never even considered them before. Personally I think the best changes came about incrementally with people trying out new ideas, monitoring what happened, seeing how things worked for them and making any necessary changes. I remember at the start of the 'barefoot movement', there were RSPCA prosecutions because owners who meant well for their horses, through lack of knowledge and experience, actually ended up doing them harm.

Monty will be the first to admit that he's been learning and adapting over his 76 years as well! **Intelligent Horsemanship was not formed to tell people what to think but to help people make their own minds up about what is fair for the horse.** I think what is the case with every IH member, is that they think carefully about ***why*** they are using each piece of equipment, assess the costs and benefits and make an informed decision. They've not got their horse in a three ring gag, drop


Kelly and Pie

noseband or any other piece of equipment just because the most successful person in their riding club has one so 'therefore it must be good'!

I feel we should also make it our aim not to be hypocritical and have open eyes as to what is actually going on in general training terms as well. Sometimes watching a horse perform an activity like standing on his hind-legs or being ridden bridle-less, seeming to read his rider's mind, can look effortless and natural; something to aspire to. It's not immediately obvious that to achieve these objectives has, in reality and in some cases, taken hours and hours of tough training.

"People tend to admire what they don't understand"

When I was in Melbourne, Australia watching the 4 day Equitana Event last year, I felt pretty uncomfortable watching a horse being taught to be ridden bridle-less by means of dressage whips used either side of his face as a signal to get him to turn. Another clinician was teaching his horse from the ground to move his head around by using some pretty smart-ish slapping to the side of the face. I was interested to hear that US clinician John Lyons decided not to continue with bridle-less riding, which used to be his signature piece, as he concluded that the extra use of the legs that this required was more irritating to the horse than a more conventional style of riding.



In Australia I learned more details of 'whip training' from the ground, although nowadays it is rarely called that. The paying public prefer to imagine the horse is 'playing' and not simply responding to whip cues. I am not criticising people who earn their living from creating shows or performances with their horses and I am sure that there are horses who get enjoyment from performing – providing they are taught without pain by an understanding and sympathetic trainer.

We owe it to horses to fully understand how various trainers get results and not simply believe that for instance, a horse which circles around the trainer, watching his every move, is doing so because he 'loves' him. If the trainer is holding a long whip one needs to ask the question, "What does the long whip with a long lash have to do with love?" These seemingly magical results are achieved, as with most things in life, with a great deal of hard work and effort. You can usually tell if violence has also been in the mix by the attitude of the horse and where he is directing his attention.

The trainer usually starts by working the horse on a long line, driving the hind end away and only taking the pressure off when the horse brings his front end towards him. The horse learns that a flick from the whip to the hindquarters means that he should face the trainer. With sufficient work, the horse will no longer distinguish between being attached to the line or being off it. Where more than one horse is involved other trainers on the outside of the circle will be utilised to drive the horse back to the correct trainer.

Some of these trainers will choose to work with a foal in order to start this programming early. The end results can be incredibly impressive and there's no doubt that these trainers are dedicated to what they see as an art form. With the right music it can be very entertaining to watch - but would you necessarily judge that these horses have better lives than the horse of 'Jane Smith' who hacks around the countryside with her horse in a flash noseband and martingale?

I'd like to state that you are under no obligation to agree with anything I've written here! However, if this piece has caused you to consider things even a little differently, I feel that it has served its purpose! So if any members would like to continue to explore these ideas, you may do so on the Members Forum of the Discussion Group at ***www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk***

IH in Business - Apsley End Polo Club

Intelligent Polo for Intelligent Ponies

By IH Member June Scott

The first Monty demo I attended was in the early 90s. My husband, Peter, and I had just started learning to play polo, and Stephanie Powers was at the demo describing how Monty had helped her with her polo ponies. I'd never had to deal with behavioural issues as I only came into contact with riding school horses that I rode for an hour a week. However, in years to come, Monty's ideas were invaluable to us as we built up our own string of polo ponies and then formed our own polo club.

In 1996 we bought a polo pony called Tobiana. She lived at the polo club where we were members. At a polo livery yard, the arrangement is a little different to a 'normal' livery yard in that just about everything is done for you from general care, to exercise, to tacking up, helping you to mount, and even adjusting your girth and stirrups. However, I'd often go down to the polo club early since I enjoyed spending time with the ponies. Tobi would be standing in the pony lines not taking much of an interest in anything. It seemed a little odd, but she was a polo pony, and all the polo ponies behaved in much the same way. I assumed they were just all like that.

At the end of the summer polo season we moved Tobi to a local yard which had nothing to do with polo. When we arrived I was asked what she ate. I was told that the other horses got breakfast, lunch and tea. I decided that breakfast and tea would be enough for her as she was a pretty good doer. She was given some sweet smelling molassed cereal mix twice a day and seemed to be fine on it. How times change! She started to show an interest in the goings on around her. She soon recognised the sound of our car and was looking out for us when we arrived. It became quite apparent that she had a lovely personality.

Owning just one pony meant that we couldn't ride together, so along came Chardonnay, quickly followed by Escondida. Each player in a polo match needs a minimum of two ponies, therefore we went in search of a fourth and found a nice youngster called Bel (her real name is Beryl but we couldn't bring ourselves to call her that - with apologies to all Beryls out there!).

She turned out to be quite a handful as she bit, kicked and had attitude. Our other ponies were so easy to deal with that this came as quite a surprise. I had no idea how to deal with this behaviour so I called our local RA, Julia Fisher. She arrived on a very cold winter's night, heavily pregnant, and gave me some pointers on how to establish some boundaries. Those ground rules were invaluable. She also thought that Bel had probably been kept short of food at some point in her life as she was at her most aggressive when food was involved. She advised us to leave Bel alone when she was eating and after that we got along amicably.

Ria was pony number five. She had been destined for top level polo, but strained a tendon while being trialled by an 8 goal polo player (that's a David Beckham level of player). After eight months rest we started bringing her back into work, exercising her in an arena. Because she has been out of work, she had no shoes on. When it came time to start playing Ria on grass though, I asked the farrier to put front shoes on. He said that it would be a shame to put nails into such lovely feet, so we gave it a go with no shoes and had our first barefoot polo pony. These days all our ponies are barefoot.

At that time, I was a portfolio manager managing a $1bn healthcare fund and Peter ran his own consultancy



Girthing up



Ria aged 19

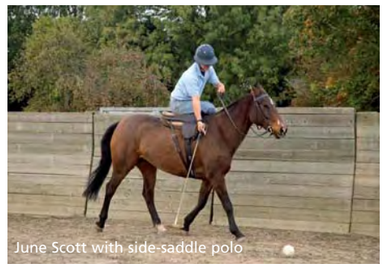
which raises finance for renewable energy projects. By now we were getting the train back from London every evening and arriving at the yard sometime after 7p.m. We would get out of our City suits and try not to get too many cobwebs or horse hairs on them, ride a couple of ponies each and head home to grab something to eat. We'd then get some sleep for the early start each day. It was pretty tiring so we decided to look for our own property to buy where we could keep our ponies at home. We finally found a place in 2000.



June Scott

I rang Julia again to see if she would come and do some ridden teaching. Those first few lessons were a revelation. For years instructors had asked me to feel which of the horse's legs were where and I could never really feel it. After the first lesson with Julia I could feel where every foot was. I was left wondering why no one had been able to explain this to me before.

Bel was quite a backwards thinking pony. Julia asked me to use a wip-wop rope coupled with a kissing noise whenever I wanted an upwards transition, rather than using a bigger leg aid. By the end of the first session we could get upwards transitions from just the kissing noise. Bel went from being a switched off pony to a very responsive pony. It became easier to praise her. These days we use some clicker training too, but back then we had fewer tools to motivate a pony. Bel became a fun pony and a good polo pony.



June Scott with side-saddle polo

She is now 20, retired and lives out 24/7. Our friends from whom we rent a field, comment on what an affectionate pony she is – a far cry from the Argentinian grooms who called her the white lion because she was so fierce!

About 3 years ago I left the City, intending to take a 6 month break. I haven't felt any inclination to go back! Our yard continued to grow, and next we imported some ponies from Argentina by sea. They travelled in containers converted into stables on the deck of a refrigeration ship carrying oranges for one of the big supermarkets. Their departure date wasn't certain as the 'Man from Del Monte' had to say "yes" to the harvest of oranges, but 22 days later they arrived in England. They looked surprisingly well - a lot better than the ponies we'd previously imported by air. The ponies had been chosen for us by an Argentinian professional player we know who plays over here in the summer. We'd seen photos and had descriptions of the ponies, but had never ridden any of them. Thankfully, they all turned out to be good ponies, although the one described as 15.2 h.h. and suitable for beginners turned out to be only 4 years old, clearly not suitable for beginners, and finally stopped growing at 16.1 h.h. which is a little tall for a polo pony!

There was a further surprise in store for us when two of the ponies started to look a little fat. The vet confirmed that they were in foal, and the two foals arrived in September within a day of each other. We'd never planned on breeding ponies so there was some hasty research to do. Julia's skills were again invaluable as we taught the foals to lead, have their feet trimmed, and do the things that ponies are expected to do. They are now both five years old and one of them was backed a couple of months ago. It was totally uneventful, just as it should be. They've been brought up with IH methods and their preparation has included in-hand and long lining work as well as clicker training with Becky Holden. We came across her via IH and Heather Moffett. Both ponies are happy, confident and pleasant to have around; proof of how well IH works in the real world.

I love spending time with all of the ponies. I find the training side of things a lot of fun. All the IH concepts about training being incremental, every time you are with your horse you're training it, the training you do today is for tomorrow and so on are so true. Horses are pretty willing creatures and, if they aren't doing what you want them to do, it's generally a case of explaining it in a different way. Just yesterday I was working on turns on the haunches with one of the polo ponies. It took me 10 goes before I worked out that I had to let the weight drop down my back in order to anchor his hind end and hey presto, a beautiful turn on the haunches.



The Polo Club itself was formed in 2005 and grew by gentle osmosis. Originally we just had an arena and played winter polo with a few friends. Then the local farmer sold us some more land which was flat and big enough for an outdoor pitch. Now we have the facilities to play polo all year round. We offer twice weekly chukkas on a full size pitch in the summer months and on a 55m x 25m arena during the winter. We also offer pony hire, livery with turn out fields, and an exercise track. Beginners are welcome as well as experienced players and the club can offer polo lessons with friendly coaches.

If anyone is interested in having a go at polo they can find their nearest club via www.hpa-polo.co.uk under the "Find a Club" button.

Can **blood tests** help my horse?

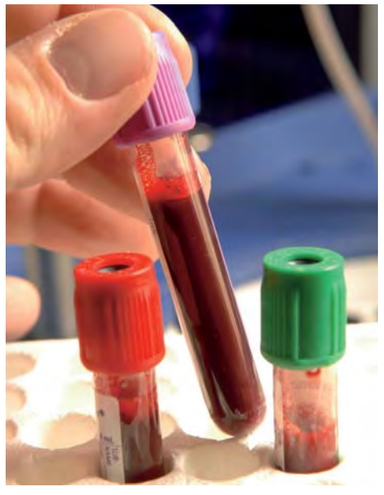
By Dr. Jessica Kidd, BA DVM Cert ES (Orth) Diplomate ECVS MRCVS

If your horse doesn't 'seem right' or has developed 'behavioural problems', and other physical examinations haven't revealed any likely triggers, a blood test may reveal information such as inflammation as in the case of gastric ulcers or parasite damage or infection, such as pneumonia or peritonitis, or even liver or kidney problems. It may show your horse has an iron deficiency (which is actually quite rare in horses) or other mineral imbalance such as low copper levels. Putting these matters right will ensure the horse is given the very best chance of recovery.

Emphasise any concerns you might have to your vet. Describe the signs which are concerning you. Say which aspects of the blood you would particularly like examined and listen to what they advise. Get your vet to confirm what the price of the analysis will be for what you require. It is possible to run a portion of a screening panel and if that does not show a definitive answer the remaining blood can be tested further, making it more cost-effective. It could cost £30 to hundreds of pounds depending on the tests requested - which means sequential tests can be a good idea.



Blood tests are commonly run in horses for a variety of reasons and to look for different conditions. They can be used to confirm or reach a diagnosis although sometimes they give no indication of a problem. A common reason for running blood tests is when a horse seems dull, is off their feed, lethargic or has a variety of signs which are not specific to one condition.

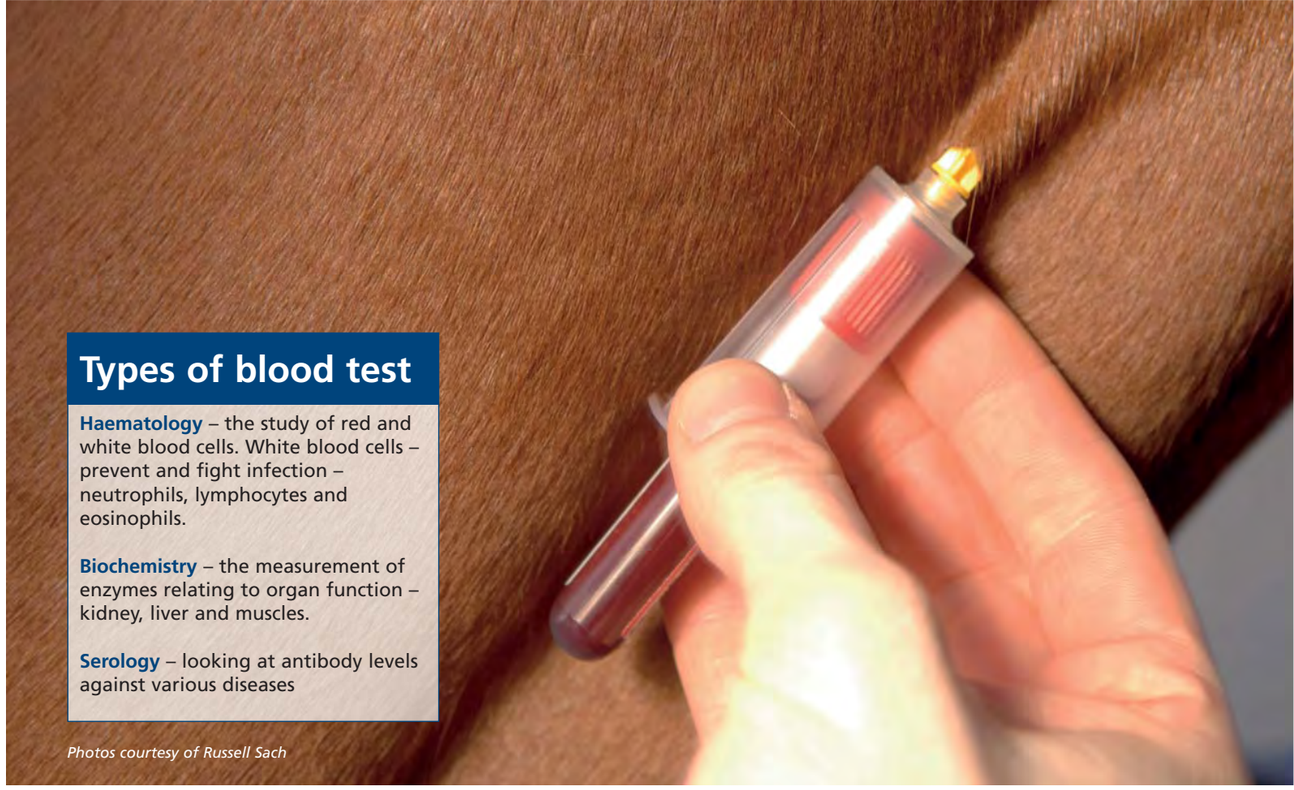


The most commonly run tests are haematology and biochemistry. Haematology is the study of red and white blood cells. The white blood cells main function is to prevent and fight infection so white blood cell counts often give information about the presence of infection within the body and the body's ability to fight the infection. White blood cells can be destroyed while fighting infection and if the need outweighs production the horse will have a low white blood cell count. A low

"A common reason for running blood tests is when a horse seems dull, is off their feed, lethargic..."

white blood cell count can also result from the body's inability to produce them, but this is much less common. A high white blood cell count suggests that the body is producing more white blood cells to meet an increased demand such as infection and is managing to produce more white blood cells than are being destroyed fighting the infection. A normal white blood cell count does not mean that an infection is not present because if the white blood cells are being consumed by fighting the infection at the same rate they are being produced by the body, the white blood cell count can remain in the normal range.

This is where the differential count is very important. There are a number of different types of white blood cells, each having a different function in fighting infection. Neutrophils are the 'front line troops' and are the first cells to reach an infection and are also the first cells whose production is increased in response to an infection. Lymphocytes are also white blood cells but are the 'second line troops' and move in to provide a mopping up function after the neutrophils. These distinctions are useful when looking at a differential; the percentages of each type of white blood cells making up the total white blood cell count or WBCC. So in a population of 100 white blood cells, if 56 are neutrophils and 44 are lymphocytes, this will be reported as N56:L44 or 56% neutrophils and 44% lymphocytes. Normally the ratio of neutrophils to lymphocytes is roughly 60:40 so imbalances in this ratio can suggest infection. An increase in the relative proportion of neutrophils suggests an increased need and therefore an infection. These ratios are not foolproof however as overwhelming infections can use up



Types of blood test

Haematology – the study of red and white blood cells. White blood cells – prevent and fight infection – neutrophils, lymphocytes and eosinophils.

Biochemistry – the measurement of enzymes relating to organ function – kidney, liver and muscles.

Serology – looking at antibody levels against various diseases

Photos courtesy of Russell Sach

neutrophils faster than they can be produced leading to decreased numbers of neutrophils, and stress at the time the sample is collected can alter the differential. Less commonly seen white blood cells include eosinophils, which can be indicative of parasitic diseases but can also be increased by tumours and allergic reactions.

"Blood tests may also be a gateway to other testing your vet may recommend and can be used as a screening tool."

Fibrinogen is also reported on a haematology report and is an indicator of inflammation or infection. Normal values are less than 4 g/l but fibrinogen takes 48-72 hours to rise so a recent infection may not have caused the fibrinogen to rise yet. Fibrinogen is also useful to monitor resolution of infection or inflammation. It is important to recognise that a raised fibrinogen may only indicate inflammation and not infection and cannot distinguish between the two although, as a rule of thumb, the higher the fibrinogen, the more likely it is that infection is the cause.

Haematology also describes the red blood cell population. The PCV (or packed cell volume) is a representation of the proportion of the blood volume which is taken up by red blood cells. In other words, a PCV of 36% means that in a given volume of blood, 36% of the volume is taken up by the red blood cells and the remainder is fluid. Haematology can indicate anaemia (commonly over-diagnosed in horses) or dehydration; the latter is indicated when the PCV rises so there is less fluid and more red blood cells in a given volume of fluid.

Biochemistry is the measurement of various enzymes related to organ function. So biochemistry can be useful to assess the health and function of different organs in the body including the kidneys, liver and muscles. The liver must have lost more than ¾ of its functional capacity (ability to work) before the biochemistry is abnormal so it is possible to have organ dysfunction with normal biochemistry. This underscores the importance of a clinical examination of the horse; a horse showing signs of jaundice or other signs of liver disease may indeed have liver disease without any abnormalities on the blood work.

"It is important to recognise that a blood test is a snapshot in time and is only relevant to the moment it is taken."

Other less frequently performed blood tests include serology, which is looking at antibody levels against various diseases, or virology which is a test to isolate a virus from a blood sample. A recently devised but extremely useful antibody test is a test for the presence and amount of the tapeworm parasite, which is difficult if not impossible to ascertain by other tests. This test is very cost effective and can help target a de-worming program for your horse.

Blood tests may also be a gateway to other testing your vet may recommend and can be used as a screening tool. For instance, if your horse's blood test shows elevated kidney enzymes, your vet may ask for a urine sample from your horse in order to pinpoint the cause of the elevated kidney values. These values can rise if a horse is dehydrated and an insufficient amount of fluid is reaching the kidneys for filtration. This is known as a "pre-renal azotaemia". Normally functioning kidneys can concentrate the urine if the horse is dehydrated to retain as much water in the body as possible. In renal failure, the kidneys lose this ability and the urine is very dilute even in the face of dehydration. This is measured as USG or "urine specific gravity" in the lab. If a horse has a very high USG showing that the kidneys are functioning to conserve water and the horse has elevated kidney values, then this horse has a pre-renal azotaemia and the body is functioning to preserve water.

It is important to recognise that a blood test is a snapshot in time and is only relevant to the moment it is taken. For this reason, vets will often take serial samples because trends give much more information than a single blood test. Having a past report of blood values for a particular horse can help increase the accuracy of interpretation of the current results.

Dr. Jessica Kidd, European Specialist in Equine Surgery – Surgeon. Head of Surgery, Valley Equine Hospital Ltd. www.valleyequinehospital.co.uk

VETS WITH HORSEPOWER 2011

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WHO ARE WE?

Vets with Horsepower is a team of motorbiking vets dedicated to raising money for charity through delivery of high quality educational talks. In 2011 we are raising money for WORLD HORSE WELFARE and SPANA by delivering talks on equine veterinary topics to owners.

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HALL FARM (World Horse Welfare)
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TUESDAY 19th JULY 2011 at 9.30 am

BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE
Beverley, HU17 8QG
WEDNESDAY 20th JULY 2011 at 9.30 am

OATRIDGE COLLEGE,
Broxburn, West Lothian, EH52 6NH
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PROGRAM

* "Lumps, bumps and itches" - skin problems in horses
* Colic - the guts of the matter
* Strangles - where are we now?
* Wounds: "don't panic - the vet's on the way"
* Worms and deworming: the straight poop
* 'Tubby or not tubby - fat is the question'
* Muscle diseases - they aren't all tied up
* How CT/MRI/scintigraphy can help your horse
* The Navicular Bone - no foot, no horse
* Headshaking - headaches for all

SPEAKERS:

Prof Derek Knottenbelt OBE
The University of Liverpool
Prof Josh Slater
Royal Veterinary College
Dr Jessica Kidd
Valley Equine Hospital, Berkshire
Dr Alex Dugdale
The University of Liverpool
Mr Andy Crawford
The Arundel Equine Hospital, Sussex
Dr Caroline Hahn
The University of Edinburgh
Mr Mike Shepherd
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Read All About It...

In the next edition of the Listening Post

- Bring it on! Can young horses develop a Work Ethic?
- Seeing Ghosts! Ten amazing facts about horses eyes
- Would you know if your horse had gastric ulcers?
- Expensive because it's horsey. How to buy better and cheaper!

Saving Mississippi



We have 5 copies of this wonderful book to give away thanks to Chicken House Publishing. To win a copy just answer this question: *In which country is the Mississippi River?*
Send your answer to: editor@ihhq.net
Closing date: 26th July, 2011

Pony mad Emma is spending her holiday with her grandmother and a houseful of rescue animals, including Aldo the horse. When Emma arrives, everything is as normal (or as normal as it can be in grandmother Dolly's upside-down household). Little does she suspect that she is in for a great adventure: a fight to save her very own horse, Mississippi.

The Listening Post asked IH Kids member Sophie Wright to read Cornelia Funke's new book, Saving Mississippi, and tell us what she thought.

"I thought it was exciting," says Sophie, "because once the story got going you didn't know if they were going to keep Mississippi or not. I really wanted Emma to keep her. Emma was a really caring person. I liked the bit when she slept with the horses in the stables to make sure Mississippi was safe."

Sophie liked most of the other characters in the book, too. Not only is there Emma's grandmother - a decidedly eccentric person with some equally colourful friends - there is also vet Mr Knapp whose determination to save Mississippi starts the whole story off, and brothers Leo and Max. "They're very nice too," says Sophie, "especially Leo because he helped Emma when she needed him to."

She didn't, though, much care for the villain of the piece, Albert Gosling (known as The Alligator by Emma and the boys). When Gosling discovers an urgent need to keep the horse he has just sold to Dolly, and will stop at nothing to get her back. Sophie agreed that he was pretty horrid and very mean. "He didn't care about the horse at all, only about money."

For a pony mad reader who likes a fast moving story full of suspense, Saving Mississippi is a good read. Sophie says she'd definitely recommend it to others. "It's exciting, you don't know what's going to happen next. And the ending...," ah, well, we're not going to tell you what she said about the ending. If you want to find out, you'll just have to read it yourself.

Whoops a Buttercup!

By Lyn Dixon, IHRA

The plant family Ranunculacae encompasses many wild and cultivated flowers. It includes monkshood (one of our most poisonous plants), anemones, old man's beard, the crow foots, lesser celandine, king cups, spearworts and buttercups. There are a number of different buttercups in Britain – corn, meadow, pale hairy, small flowered, jersey, bulbous and creeping. The creeping buttercup is the most invasive in horse pasture, though the methods described in this article for eradication will work for all land buttercups.



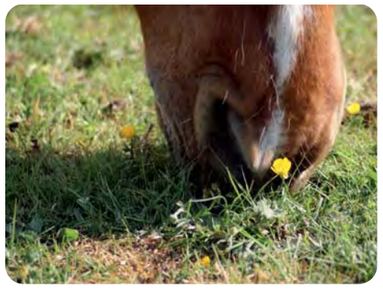
Photo courtesy of Jim Crouch

A field of buttercups in bloom can look striking; a carpet of golden yellow. Its effect on stock is not so pretty and can result in such things as gastro intestinal irritation, blistering of the mucosal lining of the mouth and of underlying pink skin on areas such as the muzzle and legs, and it can compromise the liver.

Creeping buttercup is quick to establish itself because it not only spreads by seed but also by runners, rather like strawberries. It will establish even more quickly in ideal conditions. Pasture left un-grazed or uncut will quickly revert to scrub and ultimately to forest. Any bare soil is vulnerable to erosion and nature's favoured pioneers are quick to germinate and spread, covering and protecting ground rapidly. They are also rejected by grazers and browsers. Nature discourages grazing through the presence of

"Plants that discourage grazing through bad taste or smell are often toxic to a greater or lesser degree."

thorns (usually on nutritious tasty plants), an unpleasant smell or taste or very little taste at all. Plants that discourage grazing through bad taste or smell are often toxic to a greater or lesser degree. These include the buttercup. Horses have an innate awareness of what is wholesome and what is not, and will avoid the occasional buttercup. However, where they are surrounded by them, buttercups are hard to avoid. Don't worry if you have a healthy sward with just a few buttercups, but keep an eye on the situation and stop them from spreading before they take over.



Think for a moment about how you would provide ideal conditions in order to convert healthy pasture into a glorious swathe of buttercups. Ideally you would have wet clay soil (although buttercups seem pretty happy anywhere), then you would tip the Ph. balance right over to the acid side, weeding out or constantly cutting back any other plants or grasses to create some nice bare areas to send runners and seeds. Add some good organic manure and stand well back! Horses are the perfect buttercup gardeners. They weed and cut back the grasses, acidify the soil and provide valuable nutrients with their urine and faeces and they poach the land with their feet.

"We need to change those conditions in order to deter the buttercups and favour the beneficial herbs and grasses."

We need to change those conditions in order to deter the buttercups and favour the beneficial herbs and grasses. In permaculture there are three ways to eradicate noxious weeds. In order of preference they are biological (being eaten), mechanical (being pulled or cut) and chemical (specific and approved weed killer for horse pasture). The latter is seen as a one off hit in extreme conditions where the other methods are impractical, and should not be repeated but followed up with biological and mechanical methods.

"In nature, multi species grazing is the norm..."

In nature, multi species grazing is the norm as on the African savannah. In contrast, many horses graze on fields only ever grazed by horses. Over grazing with horses leads to stunted and compromised grass cover and a proliferation of what horses do not like to eat (makes sense really!). On sheep pasture almost the opposite occurs and here diversification of species is compromised by a predominance of a few grasses, as the flowering herbs and tastier grasses are sought out and eaten (in effect, weeded out) by the sheep. Mixing sheep at a very low ratio, ideally two to one, with your horses will inhibit the growth of both buttercups and ragwort because the sheep will eat them (biological control). Alternatively, resting the pasture for a season can also give the grasses a chance to out-compete the buttercups and restore balance to the sward; again, biological control. Mechanical control in the form of cutting or topping can help, especially before seeding, as this will give the grasses more light and a chance to grow before the buttercups can get going. Chemical control through an application of lime will help redress acidity as will the avoidance of sulphur treatments which can encourage acidity (ask your local friendly farmer for advice).

'Stacking in', as it is known, a complimentary grazer such as sheep, does not deprive the horses of anything. In fact it is to the benefit of both grazers and the pasture. On my own land the most effective and easiest methods have been to rest the pasture and to take a late hay crop where the drying process deactivates the toxins in the buttercups. This is followed by the inclusion of sheep at the same time as, or in rotation with, the horses. Make sure that you don't have a sheep chaser; some horses will do this and may even bring the sheep down. On the areas where my sheep don't graze, buttercups abound. I have no ragwort even though it grows in the forest around us.

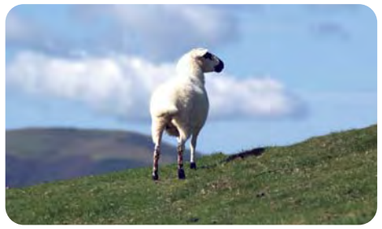


Photo courtesy of Sarah Weston

Of course each field is different. Nevertheless I hope this article will help you to decide which method of control will produce the best results for you, your pasture and your horses. Trial different methods at the same time of year and share your findings with the rest of us.* Take into account all the variants including changes in the stocking rate, the time of year when the pasture was rested and levels of rainfall.

Lyn Dixon is an RA based in South Snowdonia and runs courses on the horse and the environment, and their effect on each other. This incorporates the principals of Permaculture Design. Please see **www.konsk.co.uk** for permaculture and e-mail Lyn on **lyndixon@phonecoop.coop** for course details.



Buttercups may bring your horse out in spots, but not this kind!
Photo courtesy of Dominic Old

Plant family: Ranunculacae

Monkshood, anemones, old man's beard, crow foots, lesser celandine, king cups, spearworts and buttercups.

Buttercup

Corn, meadow, pale hairy, small flowered, jersey, bulbous and creeping



Meadow buttercup: Photo courtesy of Ifan Pugh

Biological

Grazing by sheep

Mechanical

Topping

Chemical

Application of lime or weed-killer

**Kelly reports that she applied Equine Calcified Plus (www.simplesystem.co.uk) to her paddocks last year and feels that there has been a definite reduction in the number of buttercups present this year.*

In the next edition Lyn tells us all about the deadly Dropwort

10 old horseman's tips

Do they stand the test of time?

The Listening Post asked various experts for their views on whether these tips still have a place in modern times. Grateful thanks to Dana Green for submitting this list for consideration and to those who gave their opinions on them.

1

After work, wash the horse's back with warm water in summer or sponge with a warm damp cloth in winter.

A blast of cold water on a hot back can damage the muscles.



Photo courtesy of Dawn Harris

David Marlin independent equine scientific consultant who advised at the Atlanta and Beijing Olympics advises that the opposite is true. "There is no evidence whatsoever that using cold water to cool a hot horse is detrimental nor does it cause 'tying up'. Not only does it reduce temperature, sweat loss and hence electrolyte loss and dehydration, it makes the horse feel more comfortable more quickly, reduces the risk of heat exhaustion, and also has an anti-inflammatory effect." He recommends the use of cold and even iced water for hot horses, liberally applied to all parts of the body including the quarters where the largest muscles are used for movement. "It is not necessary to scrape off the excess water and it is important that the horse should be walked around between cooling periods," he adds.

2

Put a handful of salt in the hard feed.

This is rarely done nowadays, possibly because humans are told to avoid salt in their diets. However, there is virtually no salt in the horse's natural diet. In hot weather the requirement for salt is much increased as the horse loses so much through sweating. It is difficult to overdose horses with salt.



Photo courtesy of Lorraine Luke

Nicola Tyler, Nutrition Director for TopSpec Equine, explains, **"this tip would only be right on for good-doers given little hard feed,** i.e., about 1kg per day. However, compound feed and balancers all contain close to 1% salt. Therefore, a typical 500 kilogram horse fed 1 kilogram of compound feed/balancer will receive 10 grams of salt (sodium chloride), whereas a horse in hard work on 6 kilograms of hard feed will receive 60 grams of salt daily. This has to be set against the amount that the horse sweats, which is when he loses sodium and other electrolytes from his body." It is a complicated subject on which she prefers to give individually tailored advice especially when it comes to sports like endurance racing.

TopSpec free helpline: 01845 565030

3

Always use the inside track when riding in walk in a school.

This frees the outer track for others who are riding at a faster pace and stops the horse from leaning to the fence and becoming crooked.

Sue Palmer, wearing her Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Associate hat, says "It also means that the rider has to give more direction to the horse rather than allowing the fence to guide him. Many behavioural problems stem from the rider being unclear in their leadership."

4

Put rugs on front to back.

Always place the rug well forward and slide back into place so that the hair is kept lying flat. This is more comfortable for the horse and less likely to cause him to become difficult.



Photo courtesy of Lorraine Luke

British Horse Society training has a strict procedure for putting on a rug for safety reasons as well as comfort. This involves not only working from front to back but folding the rug and tying up the surcingle straps so that they don't knock into the horse.

Endurance rider Susi Rowe-French comments wryly: "Until I saw a thread about this on the Intelligent Horsemanship Discussion Group (www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk) I put rugs on as I had been shown ages ago – putting it onto the bottom and taking it forward. Cinny was always nipping me. Since changing to this method she has stopped trying to nip me at all – it works a treat!"

5

Take the chill off the water – winter and summer!

Drinking icy cold water when hot and sweaty or in the winter may increase the risk of colic. Add hot water to the bucket on cold days and in warmer weather fill the bucket before you go out riding so that the water is warmed by the ambient air temperature.



Photo courtesy of Lorraine Luke

Veterinary surgeon Jessica Kidd of Valley Equine Hospital says, "It is likely that the increase in colic cases in cold weather, is in fact due to horses not drinking enough because troughs and buckets are frozen rather than because the water is cold."

Susi comments, "During endurance events, we are happy if the horses drink full-stop. I encourage Cinny to drink from puddles, rivers and cattle troughs on course. The horses must pass dehydration tests at vet gates or they are eliminated."

6

Walk the first and last mile – or ten minutes.

This ensures warm-up and cool-down periods before and after any exercise. It could include riding loops, turns and leg yielding. It takes a minimum of ten minutes for a horse's muscles to warm up and loosen. Today's lessons often end on a high, energetic note and the horse is led away. Muscles need to cool down and relax to avoid the build-up of lactic acid and the horse needs to wind down mentally.

Sue Palmer, Veterinary Physiotherapist, says "Ideally, warming up should be done before you get on – and that includes warming yourself up as well as your horse! Grooming or massage, followed by in hand work or long lining – techniques that will do the job for both you and your horse! The same applies to the 'cool down' period."

Endurance rider Susi says that warming up is an important part of her training regime as it guards against azoturia (tying up). Her crew leads Cinny around between the pre-ride vetting (which takes place 30 minutes before setting off time) and getting fully tacked up. Cinny is always walked around in the 30 minutes before she is presented at the final vetting.

7

Do not use your horse as a chair.

The back muscles are used in motion, i.e. they are not stabilising muscles. In order to carry a rider's weight whilst standing still, the horse will either sag or brace his back. Keep walking in small quiet circles and take the opportunity to dismount if there is going to be a longer wait.

Sue Palmer comments, "there are many muscles in the horses back, some of which are involved in stabilisation, others of which are used in motion (and most are probably involved in both). Your horse needs to gradually develop the strength through his back to support the weight of the rider. Equally, the stomach muscles are very important in this role. Sitting too long in one position on your horse's back could lead to soreness or bruising, causing the back muscles to tighten and affecting the horse's ability to support your weight.

8

Loosen the girth and leave the saddle in place for five minutes after a ride especially on hot and sweaty horses and in strong sun.

This allows the blood circulation to return and prevents sweat drying and scorching the horse's back



Photo courtesy of Lorraine Dearnley

Sue Palmer says, "The circulation will return more easily without the weight of the saddle on the horse's back. Think about how quickly you'd like to remove your walking boots if you've been on a long trek! You can help this process by doing some stretches with your horse or by gently massaging the neck, back and quarter muscles."

9

Always cover a sweaty horse in cold or cool weather.

A fleece or light rug over the back and loins help the muscles to cool down slowly.

Dr. Marlin recommends, "Use dry fleeces only once the horse has been cooled if the weather is cool or if there is a strong breeze."

10

A horse under seven years of age is considered 'green'.

Very sadly now horses are started and seriously schooled at three or four and competing at four and five. Most horses do not mature mentally or physically until they are seven when all the growth plates have closed and the musculature has developed. It is important to take 'baby steps' in their education for example, a little schooling, slow steady hacking, pole work and small grids.



Photo courtesy of Emily Gredley

Sue Palmer feels strongly about this particular issue. She says "Whilst it is important not to overstress the young horse either physically or mentally, it is also important that they do have some early stimulation in both of these areas. **The body develops in relation to the stresses put upon it.** In order to have a strong, healthy riding horse it is important to gently introduce him early in life to the concept of work and some of the stresses that the weight of a rider will place upon him."

Recent research supports the idea that bone shape and mechanical and chemical properties can be affected by exercise or lack thereof from birth and throughout the life of the horse. **www.equinews.com/article/training-and-bone-development/13**

Veterinary Surgeons, Sarah Smith and Will McFadzean of the Valley Equine Hospital at Lambourn, examined the **established scientific findings on bone maturation in horses** for the Listening Post:

Growth plate	Fusion time of growth plates*
Short pastern/ middle phalanx	Proximal: 8-12m Distal: at birth
Long pastern/ proximal phalanx	Proximal: approx 1 year Distal: at birth
Cannon bone/ Third metacarpus	Proximal: at birth Distal: 6 months
Small bones of knee/ carpal bones	These are single centres of ossification with no growth plates. Fully developed at 18 months old.
Radius	Proximal epiphysis of radius: 11 to 24 months
Humerus	Proximal: by 36 months
Scapula	Cranial glenoid cavity with body: 5 months Supraglenoid tubercle: 12-24 months
Hock/ Tarsus	By 24 months
Femur	Distal: 2-3 years Head and trochanters: by 36 months
Pelvis	By 1 year
Proximal - closest to the body Distal - farthest from the body	

**Clinical Radiology of the Horse, third edition, pg 711. Butler JA, Colles CM, Dyson SJ, Kold SE, Poulos PW*

Dana Green is a McTimoney Chiropractor. She works with two and four legged patients and owns an Irish Draught cross gelding.

letters

Your letters

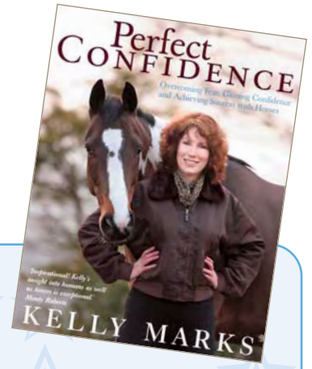
Thank you Miss Marks for your wonderful books! You have helped me build a better relationship with my horse Rambo and conquer some of my fear. I grew up around horses but I was never given riding lessons which is probably why I have been bucked off every horse I have ever ridden. Because of your books and watching the videos of myself riding Rambo I am now taking lessons and learning how to be a better rider. I also learned from your books that every horse is NOT out to get me or waiting for me to fall asleep so they can buck me off. I tell everyone about Monty Roberts and your techniques.

Amie J. Westlake. USA

Dear Kelly,
Thank you for the very useful and interesting thermography article. I thought you'd like to know that Bryony and I had the thermography lady out to our respective horses and found it very really helpful. For Bryony's horse x-rays based on the thermography results showed spinal processes very close (although not actually kissing); her horse will have injections and go from there. For Lyra the images clearly showed the shoulder area as problematic just as I had suspected. When Helen sent me the images she also sent an image of 'normal' shoulder – which made me feel very sorry for Lyra. Not a replacement for vets' fancy scans, but perhaps a useful tool for those of us with hunches about problems who can't afford a full body bone scan or MRI!

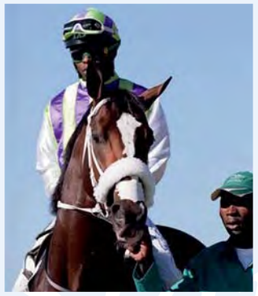
Lou Austin, MRCPH.

Do you have something you'd like to share with us?
If so, you can send your letters or comments to us at:
Lethornes, Upper Lambourn, Hungerford RG17 8QP
email: ***editor@ihhq.net***



From Robyn Louw who hosts Kelly's demonstrations in South Africa and has completed all of the IH courses:





Dear Kelly,
In A Rush went to a trainer in Port Elizabeth and has had two runs already, coming third in his first outing and winning his second run by 10.5 lengths! We retained a small share in him as he was the last surviving foal out of my dad's mare, so this is a really sentimental project for us, and my dad is thrilled to potentially be part of a 'big' horse. I'm pleased to say that the trainer and everyone who has anything to do with the lad just rave about his wonderful temperament and how easy he is to work with. That's Intelligent Horsemanship at work for you!! He's now being aimed at a big listed race in April and we're all hoping like mad that he does well.

In A Rush was a 2008 foal born at the Nutfield Stud where my Dad is the Farm Manager. Both my Dad and the Head Stud Groom attended Kelly's South African demos and are avid IH enthusiasts, so the little lad had the very best of starts in life. Dad put In A Rush in my care for his yearling sales preparation work. Fortunately he had had such a good start and had a kind and generous temperament, so our job was pretty easy really.



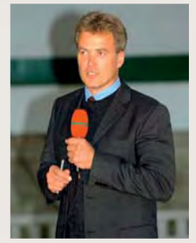
We took care of him on a day to day basis, doing the basics such as leading and installing the sort of manners every nicely brought up young man should have. We also had to feed and condition him to sales and give him the tools he'd need to survive a busy sales environment.

At the sales, the babies are more or less confined to a stable for the duration of the sales, only being allowed out for morning and afternoon walks and being expected to parade politely when prospective buyers ask to view them. You can imagine what that might be like for a highly fed colt! However, we employed our IH tactics and he repaid us handsomely and was easy to handle and easy to show.

The new trainer told me that In A Rush was one of the easiest horses he's ever backed and produced and still remains easy to work with.

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

Gerd Heuschmann
the other side of the coin?



Dear Editor

Having attended this event myself, I was interested to see an article on the Gerd Heuschmann seminar in the latest IH magazine. I agree with the writer that the morning session was extremely interesting and that Gerd was an excellent and informative speaker. I went to lunch really looking forward to the afternoon session as the programme had been well prepared, there was a helpful résumé for both the horses and their riders, and there seemed to be a wide selection of both. From here on I think that Ruth Parry and I were at different events. Firstly his ridden demonstrations and suggested exercises were exactly the same for every single horse. I had expected him to evaluate each horse (and they were all very different), explain to the audience some of the problems he was finding and how these may have come about, and show us some exercises whereby the horses could be helped to release the particular tensions they had. In the event each horse was put through exactly the same exercise – very slow lateral work, interspersed with periods of stretch. Nothing wrong in that, however he completely failed to release the pressure/cue when he got the required response. And when he didn't get the required response he used a totally unacceptable level of pressure (violence) with some of the horses. If he had been riding one of my horses, I truly would have asked him to get off.

It may be that some of the horses presented to him did have a very poor 'stop' response due to them having become completely dulled to mouth pressure but this seminar was not the time to tackle such fundamental issues – at no point should any horse be subjected to the treatment meted out by Mr. Heuschmann.

In my view Mr. Heuschmann rode to show off to the audience, not to improve the horses. Very upsetting.

Susan Osborne

I feel I must write down the concerns which were bugging me when I first read the Gerd Heuschmann article by Ruth Parry. I attended one of Mr. Heuschmann's clinics at Waterstock Dressage last autumn. I agree with everything Ruth says about the wonders of his technique, and I have even mentioned him on my website as an influence on my riding. However, there is a big BUT.

I saw him ride about nine horses in a row, and without exception, he hit them all with the full strength of his arm. Most of the horses bucked and leapt at this treatment, and before long they did move their inside hind leg across, and did arch beautifully at the neck, but it was a clear example of domination, and using pain to achieve a human's goals. He also subjected the owners to hitting the horse on the back leg when they were on board, and most of them turned an interesting shade of green as their horses protested at the treatment.

So much of what he says and does is good, but so much is bad. I find his work very interesting, but completely object to his use of pain in his treatment of horses. Should we be seen to be supporting a man like this?

Sally Hamilton IHRA

Ruth Parry responds:



I'm not all that surprised by the first letter - I saw someone with a light seat and amazing balance taking up and releasing a contact in order to try and get some very tense horses to relax and soften their muscles. And yes, one horse did resist pretty hard for a while, and it would have been very easy to take that time out of context. It wasn't particularly pretty to watch, but what I saw was someone pushing a horse beyond his comfort zone and getting a predictably unhappy response. Maybe Gerd pushed too hard, or went on too long; maybe he should have asked the question in a different way - I don't really know, and I suspect that in the audience there is an opinion at every end of that spectrum. Mine is pretty neutral - I doubt I'd have done the same, but I didn't see anything that made me really uncomfortable.

The bit I am a little surprised about is the comment about doing exactly the same exercises with all the horses - that had rather been the gist of his talk in the morning. The interesting thing was seeing four different horses react in different ways to the same exercise - some with considerably more resistance than others.

I really can't comment on the second letter as I didn't see that demo, and I'm pretty sure I would have had something to say if I'd seen someone hitting a horse as described. Gerd did use a schooling whip, but I don't recall him using it as anything other than an aid.

Ruth Parry

Praise for
IH Recommended Associates

Intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk



Anne-Marie Marek
Wales

"I was a bit stuck with Echo who is now a chunky 14.2 with an over sensitive panic button! I've owned horses since 1968 and have my BHSAI – so admitting that I needed help wasn't easy. Anne-Marie dealt with both Echo and me brilliantly!! It can be awkward when the teacher is so much younger than the pupil – but I never felt patronised or stupid. I joined IH as a result of buying Echo as a mishandled and traumatised weanling. I felt there had to be another way – having always used old fashioned 'basic' methods on unhandled colts. The moment when I finally slipped a halter on him using IH methods was utterly magical. I do my best to spread the word."
Liz Henderson, Shropshire



Suzanne Marshall
Kent

"Our new mare reared high the first time we mounted and had other ground issues".

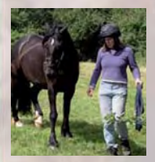
"Suzanne was clear and encouraging and made us feel we could do it. We weren't made to feel patronised which so often happens with 'horsey experts'. Tehya was relaxed and responded well. Suzanne obviously loves horses but in a no-nonsense, practical way. Coming back into horse owning after 20yrs has been like landing on a different planet. The advice received from Suzanne before and during the visit has helped us to anchor ourselves and believe we can do this again. I am completely happy with the service we received."
Sarah Rayfield, Kent



Rosie Jones
Sussex

"I needed help bring on my youngster who bucks".

"Rosie is brilliant! She is so good at spotting the tiny details and explains everything really clearly. She left me feeling really positive and with lots to work on. I find the Listening Post fascinating and have loved both the courses I have been on and the demos I have helped at."
Michelle Powers, West Sussex



Liz Pitman
Essex

"The training you gave me has really helped me to change Mikey's perception of the trailer. We have had several trips out and each time he has walked on like a pussycat after weeks of not going near the trailer. I cannot quite believe that after three years and numerous other people trying to help (usually 'help' meant 'force') I might have a horse that will willingly go out in the trailer. I wasn't very optimistic or confident that we would get there, and I thought that it would take weeks and weeks of practice before I would see results. Pretty much straight away with the help of the Dually headcollar (I use it all the time now) and my more positive way of leading him, he was different. It was the best time and money I have spent on Mikey."
Samantha Plumb, Cambridgeshire



Sheila Reed
Gloucestershire

"I had problems clipping my horse" .

"Sheila explained everything very well. We had already tried desensitizing but had forgotten about the toothbrush method which we will continue to work with. I have already recommended her to friends. Keep up the good work."
Gerri Garrott, Gloucestershire



Sarah Weston
Hampshire

"I needed help handling my 10mth old Colt".

"Sarah was brilliant! Excellent at training me and my foal! Clever, patient instruction and skill in training me. Good aide memoires, fun, patient and totally inspiring. Two hours work with Sarah and my horse has set us both up for the rest of our journey together. Brilliant follow-up notes. Just cannot thank Sarah enough for the help and advice she gave me. My colt was totally unhandled at the back end and legs."
Jan Waller, Hampshire

Val Pape
Invernesshire

"I needed help with my youngster".

"My 2½ yr old mare was bargy and totally unschooled. Val has done wonders with her in the one week that she had her. The fact that she also gets the owner to do ground work with the horse is great. I have learnt so much from Val, I'm amazed!! I shall be recommending her to anyone I know that is having problems. I am amazed that Val had so much patience with me and Nabraska. She has opened my eyes to a totally new way of Horsemanship. I can't believe the difference in my mare, a new, calmer youngster. Ready to learn! So Happy!!"
Mrs Taylor, Ross-Shire



Paddy Gracey **Manchester**

"Our Pony is afraid of traffic".

"I was extremely satisfied. I have owned my pony for 2 years and I never thought she would pass a tractor never mind eat a feed off it whilst it was running. It was amazing!! I can't wait for my next visit. I wish I had contacted you ages ago. What you do is truly amazing. I know this isn't a quick fix but have a feeling this is going to be life changing for Beau and myself."
Fay Berry, Derbyshire

To find your local IH Recommended Associate visit www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk and click on 'Horse Help'

Fabulous Photo Competition
and the winner is **Sam Fisk**



Sam won a place on the Special Horse Owners' Photography Course run by Simon Palmer from Into-The-Lens which took place on Sunday 15th May, 2011 in the New Forest. Sam will be reporting back in the next edition.

Her winning photo of Andalusian stallion, Toby (Gazarro Tobanus) was the most striking of all. In fact, Sam sent us four photos in total, and the judges liked all of them although one was the wrong shape!

Sam describes herself as, "A total novice. I just point and click the camera. Photography is just a new hobby for me, I am loving it - and the one thing I do know is horses! Toby is a character! I tend to forget he is a stallion because he's so gentle!"





