

## **The Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine – Spotlight IH RT Paddy Gracey**

**How long have you been involved with horses? And how did you get involved with them?** I've been involved with horses for 23 years, it all started when my wife who grew up with horses decided that our daughter was going to have a childhood that would keep her occupied and away from boys. She was only 3 and she'd never sat on a pony but it turned out to be a good move as she dedicated her life to horses. We are still in touch with the pony after we sold him on 18 years ago.

**How you came to be involved with Monty and Kelly?** My wife took me to a demo at Osbaldaston for my 40th birthday and I said to my wife " I can do this " of course she thought I'd lost the plot, but it was a light bulb moment for me especially when Monty connected children and animals, the rest is history. I can recite Monty DVD chapter and verse as I played it every morning afternoon and evening, to say I was hooked is an understatement. I was lucky that I had connections with an Emotional Behaviour school and could do a pilot trail that was successful.

**Why did you decide to qualify as a Recommended Trainer?** I loved the concepts of Montys and for me there was no kinder way to help them so when the opportunity came up I embraced the challenge and never looked back.

**What is a typical day for you?** A typical day for me usually starts with me answering my emails, texts and social messages before breakfast. I then travel to my first horse of the day. I try to make my first client for around 10.30am as I hate being stuck in rush hour traffic, it's wasted time and it frustrates me. I can work with as many as 6 horses in a day. I try to fit in clients who are geographically close so as to avoid long journeys between horses but I do sometimes find myself in the same area 2 or 3 times in a week if someone is desperate.

**What's important to you when you see an owner and their horse for the first time?** In a lot of cases the owners are frustrated and are at their wits end so it's important for me to use my Irish charm to put them at ease and to explain everything that I'm doing. I've usually got a full rundown of the problem before I get there, the hard part is getting the owner to have faith that the problem will be solved.

**What are the common challenges you face in your work as an RT?** The common challenges for me are changing the owners conventional approach and converting them to the IH concepts especially when they are old school. First time horse owners tend to accept IH concepts without question.

**If you could change one thing in the world of horses what would it be, and why?** If I could change anything it would be I'd ban the whip, as it's not a bond or partnership if the horse is responding to your request due to fear.

**What would be the first piece of advice you would give someone looking at buying/loaning their first horse?** Make a list of what you want from a horse, don't buy a sports horse if you want a happy hacker. And remember to do your background checks a genuine vendor won't take offence to this .

**What is the most common issue you have to deal with when working with horses?** Loading is the most common issue I deal with, people have usually tried everything else and are at their wits end by the time I visit.

**What are your plans for the future?** My future plans are to do lots of clinics and demonstrations as far afield as possible as I've had lots of interest from all over the world.

**What three things should everyone practice with their horses?** The three things that everyone should practice is teaching your horse to respect your personal space, standing still and leading.

**Do you have any memorable or funny stories of working with Kelly/Monty?** Monty and Kelly made a personal appearance to my therapy centre in Wigan. Monty did the honours of opening it up, all the community were present it was a wonderful day the video is on you tube of Montys speech it was an honour to have Monty and Kelly in my home.

**What's the best bit of advice you've ever been given?** The best advice I was given was by Monty at Myerscough college. I was loading a horse after a demo and the horse was pulling down the ramp during a loading session, Monty and Kelly were walking past Monty had his cowboy hat on and in his Californian accent he said "whoa there Paddy you never allow the horse to move your feet, let the line go squeeze and release " I took his advice and the horse loaded without any further issue.

**What would your advice be to someone hoping to become a Recommended Trainer?** For anyone wanting to be an RT my advice would be volunteer for any courses. As a helper, you will not only learn from the teachers which are the horses, you'll also learn from the students, there is no pressure on you and Kelly and her team will support you.

**What has been the proudest moment/biggest achievement in your career?** Pearly King HOYS Supreme Champion had an accident in a box and his owner thought his showing days were over, so I trained Pearly King to travel safely again, it was a proud moment for me when he went back to HOYS again and won.