



NEWSLETTER

February 2016

From the Chair.....

Hello all,

Well, what a dreadful winter we have been having....torrents of rain, cold snaps and then more rain.....poor Mother Nature doesn't know whether she is coming or going! And of course, we have all had to cope with the elements every day when attending to our equines- whether it be riding, competing or simply maintenance. Yet again, the poor folks at the Meadows were inundated- just when everyone thought it would be safe this year....Beth sent me this photo ☹ Clearly no rallies until that went down again!



Hope you all had a good Christmas- Jane had a nasty scare with her eye, but fingers crossed, she is slowly mending and it was great to see her at the last meeting. I celebrated my 60th just into the New Year- free eye tests, free prescriptions and lots of health checks offered- clearly expecting me to go downhill from now then! After all the rich food, I certainly need to get back into shape though!

Once the weather is a little more clement it will be a busy time- Pringle and Frodo both need breaking in ready for the summer season, and Truffle will be having her first proper season in the show ring. They are all a little stir crazy at the moment....at least one escapee a week at the moment, which is entertaining for everyone at the yard!

Ros & the little people

VHPRC

Winter Dressage Series

Woodfield Stables

WE ARE SEEKING HELPERS

If you can help, or know someone who can, please get in touch

Contact: Laura Hayden

We hold our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month

FABULOUS FOOD!

Rose & Crown,

68 Parkfield Road, Pucklechurch, Bristol, BS16 9PS

This article was sent by Ann Fay.....

My Rosie (to distinguish her from Big Rosie)

Bought for my 13 year old daughter as perfect. Our first horse so we were totally ignorant. After she threw Sue off, refused to go where she was told, stood on her feet deliberately and humiliated her in front of friends and Pony Club we bought a lovely agreeable pony for her and I took on Rosie.

She carried on with all those behaviours. People came out to get me round corners because we were stood in the road outside their house for so long. She bucked me off when we cantered. My feet were black and yellow, she never missed with her feet. She was petrified by tractors and big lorries and bolted regularly. She barged out of the stable over anyone who stood in her way and once had my husband and me trapped in our small yard by kicking out when we tried to get to the gate. I eventually climbed over the wall at the back and rescued Mick.

We bought her locally and when out riding I would meet people who said, 'Is that Rosie? I rode her once.'

We bought a trailer. Would she load? Well, eventually, when she decided she was bored with messing about. We were always last to load up after pleasure rides and the advice we were given by interested onlookers was very varied and all useless.

Mick said, 'sell her.' I said, 'I can't tell the lies necessary'.

However over the next 14 years we came to an understanding. We did nearly a hundred pleasure rides, competed at trec, went on many holidays, riding nearly 100 miles on the Ridgeway, round Exmoor and followed the Jack Mytton Way. We also enjoyed several Bridle Ride holidays besides hacking out regularly for hours at a time. We rode from Coalpit Heath to Badminton, Hawkesbury, Marshfield, Thornbury, Easter Compton and all points in between.

We taught each other a lot. I was new to riding and she was new to discipline. At 22 her hind legs gave out and after a short retirement I made The Decision as she seemed unhappy and I was always afraid she would go down and be unable to get up.

I stayed with her as she was injected and went to sleep and said farewell as she was taken away. She was certainly a full on introduction to horse keeping and life has been a doddle since those horrendous, wonderful years with My Rosie.

Thank you for sharing this with us Ann 😊

Who Am I?

Another member of the committee has given us some clues.....

I went to school at Keynsham grammar and it changed in the 3rd year to a comprehensive.

At age 11 I played the violin at Bath Abbey for the Bath music festival

I have 2 children

I started riding at 40

I have been up in a balloon and microlight aircraft and flown a glider.

In 2004 we were part of a relief convoy taking supplies to Croatia and Serbia after the war .

2 years ago I was interviewed by a Russian film company about leisure activities, politics and royalty as part of a Russian TV series.

Any ideas? Let us know....you might win a prize!

Trooper

As Bertha is now nearly 20 and I am nearly 60 I always thought I would probably have another horse before I hung up my stirrups. In my mind I pictured myself getting an older horse around 12 to 14 years about 15 hands who was sensible and able to do a nice dressage test. So back in August 2015 I bought, from a friend in the riding club, a 4 year old 14 hand traditional coloured cob called Trooper. Not sure what quite possessed me to do that as I am not the most confident of riders and have never brought on a youngster before – but I saw a picture of him, liked the look of him and I just thought he looked like something I could have a bit of fun on. So back in August I brought him back to the stables as Marksbury and introduced him to Bertha. He seemed keen to make friends but Bertha being a mare soon put him in his place pulling ‘piggy’ faces at him and keeping him in his place. He seemed undeterred and after a couple of weeks they were soon grazing amicably side by side.

So our education together began. He was already backed and quite laid back and pretty much a blank canvas. I rode him in the arena and out on short hacks which he took all in his stride passing the biggest of tractors and lorries seemingly unperturbed. Steering seemed to be our biggest issue at the beginning. In trot in the arena he was very on the forehand and so instead of turning the corner he would lock his neck and plough into the corner and come to a halt. Gradually though with the help of my instructor we both became more balanced and achieved circular circles and not bad straight lines.

Now up to this point I hadn’t attempted canter as he (we) still seemed a little unbalanced so with the help of my friend Julie riding Bertha and me on Trooper we set off on a hack which would take us up a hill through a nice field where we could try to have our first canter. Along the rode we approached a farm with all the usual farm noises and he seemed to be getting faster and faster (still in walk so I wasn’t too worried although slow down didn’t seem to be working) – then the farmer came out of a field on his tractor and it was all too much for Trooper. We took off down the road in canter without brakes! Fortunately my brain was still working and I knew there was a field entrance along the road to the left up ahead. If the gate was shut he would stop and if it was open we could go in the field. ‘Phew’ my plan worked. I turned him round and we trotted back to Bertha as though nothing had happened although it did knock my confidence somewhat. Not quite what I was expecting for my first canter!

Back to schooling and in the arena he is getting better and better and hasn’t really done anything wrong until the other weekend. I had been out for a hack on Bertha with my friend and then popped on Trooper in the arena while my friend led her horse and Bertha up to the paddocks for turn out. Trooper spotted them straight away and had what I can only describe as a tantrum. He thought he should be going with them and proceeded to canter round at speed to watch them whilst throwing me out of the side door. Ouch – I didn’t bounce I went thud – not much fun at my age! Winded and bruised I sat in the middle of the arena wondering about my sanity in taking on a youngster – another knock to my confidence. Too sore to get back on Julian then rode him and he didn’t put a foot wrong!

Anyhow we will both persevere with ‘our’ education and with the help of friends and instructors we will both improve. I will take things slowly at my pace and not be rushed into things I am not ready to do yet. It is still early days and we have lots of time. I will keep you updated.



Linda

Spanish Riding Horses

Our speaker for February was Julie Chuter Nicholas. She explained that she started out with Highlands, but these didn't get big enough so she started riding pure Spanish horses. It appears that Spanish horses are not simply Lusitanos and Andalucians....there are actually 16 different breeds, including Menorcan and Hispagnole Arabs!

She gave us some historical context...paintings of horses have been found going back to prehistoric times, but it was Philip II who formalised the breed standard. They became so popular that they became difficult to come by. He followed a humanistic format for high school dressage- many rules today have been based on this. The horses became a diplomacy tool- the best stallions were given to kings. In the 12th century Charles IV gave a horse to Henry VIII as a wedding present when he married Catherine of Aragon. In the 19th century the breed was hit by wars and illness, nearly becoming wiped out. The Carthusian monks hid the surviving horses and saved the breed. Some horses still have vestigial 'horns' like unicorns.

The Pura Rasa Espagnol is the modern native type- in this country they need careful management as they are unused to the rich grass and are prone to laminitis. They have a lighter body frame as they are bred for dressage- they don't finish growing until 9 and should reach 15.2 but are now getting bigger as they are being bred for sport.

Baroque horses are heavier, shorter and stockier, similar to a Highland with big mane and full feather. many dish as they were bred for displays and needed to be flashy- breeders are now trying to eliminate this.

The PRE Menorquina is always black and is rare in the UK. It was recognised in 1989 and there are approx. 2000 in Menorca. Rearing (on purpose and travelling forward) is a feature and the prices are high- one was recently on the market for €16,000. It is a sign of bravery to touch a rearing horse on its chest.

The working horses, Hispano Arab and Tres Sangre, are used mainly for bullfighting. However this 'sport' is now moving to Mexico due to changing attitudes in Spain. The pika, usually covered in armour and blindfolded, is used to tire the bull, and the matador's horse is Spanish.

Modern disciplines include:

Doma Vaquera- a working technique similar to that of cowboys. The saddle has metal stirrups to protect the riders feet. The bridle has a leather fringe. They have their own form of dressage.

Alta Escuela- a form of high school dressage (what Julie does). The bridles have fringes which are used to indicate levelness- they should not sway. Riders costumes are elaborate and are made in Spain.

The Spanish also drive horses- and many are exported. When being displayed they are covered in pompoms- these displays are usually horse fairs around the country from the end of May, starting at Jerez. All riders wear costumes and parade up and down lighted tracks at night, even attending specially made bars on horseback.

A new sport- working equitation- is becoming popular. It consists of 4 phases: dressage, obstacles, onstacles at speed and cattle round-up.

In the UK Spanish horses are used for films and in displays, such as jousting. There are specific rules guiding women's riding- they should not ride astride in a dress, they must sit behind the man.

In in-hand showing, stallions are not bitted- instead they have a metal nosepiece for control, with serrations which cause bad scarring. They are run on a lunge rope at speed to show extended paces. Ridden showing is either in costume or dressage kit.

It was a very interesting talk- Julie and her friends brought many pieces of equipment to show us and some of their costumes.



Horses in art history

The beginnings of the depiction of horses in art history, pre-date the written language of man. Artists began creating images of horses in prehistoric times and the inclination has been around ever since. The horse has captured the attention of man for longer than recorded art history or even just plain old recorded history.

We know that along with other animals, horses were depicted in many ancient cave dwellings in both Europe and North Africa. Whatever the motivation of these early artists might have been, such art history is proof of an early relationship between horse and man. At Niaux, Lascaux, Vallon-ont-D'arc and many sites across Spain and France, ancient rock art is to be found and roughly a third of it all is that of horses! 30,000 years before the birth of Christ, an artist was carving a horse amulet in bone!

Shortly after the domestication of horses, between 3000 and 2000 B.C., they played a key role in the expansion of civilization itself, as well as what has been and is, a role in the world of art. History clearly shows this wonderful animal has intrigued the artist as much as the horseman, from prehistory to the twenty first century.

Truthfully, knowing the artistic history, knowing how horses were depicted in this or that time period or place, tells us a whole lot about the culture of man in that period or place. From value as a food source, willing worker and explorer, a partner in work, sport, symbol of status, to a symbol of living essence and spirit, horses have marched through the centuries right along with mankind, most often in the role of helper or source of inspiration, and just as often as a guide to the deeper values within man himself.

A striking example of from 250 BC comes from the tomb of King Mausolus at Halicarnassus (coast of Asia Minor) and was known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World before being destroyed by an earthquake in the middle ages and later plundered. Pliny described a four horse chariot sculpture surmounting this huge tomb, and one of the remains today, is the front end of an over life size horse, with bridle.

By the time Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont in 334 BC the horse has begun its long cavalry career. Wall decorations and horse carvings and sculpture from the Parthenon make it clear that though still smallish, horses had become more refined in conformation.

From the fourth and fifth centuries, works of art depict the types of harness common to eastern Siberia and the Mediterranean.

The Hermitage in St. Petersburg contains treasures from provincial area of the early eighteen century gathered by Peter the Great which include a fourth century B.C. belt plaque featuring tamed horses in cast gold. The scene between horses and humans, relaxing and at ease, is one that is very common between horses and horsemen of today.

Horses in art of the ancient Persian Empire begun with King Darius in 521 BC, is shown in bas-relief carvings at Persepolis. Horses from different parts of the empire were depicted, falling into three distinct types, some of which were taller horses.

The Museum at Chatillon-sur-Sein, in France, contains a wine mixer from sixth century Italy - decorated with a frieze of eight horse drawn chariots. The bridles bear a strong resemblance to those of horses of the eastern Steppes.

One of the earliest representations of horses and chariots was found in the Assyrian palace at Nineveh where large wall slabs, carved bas-relief, depict the victories in war, dating from the seventh century BC. The horse was smaller then and not ridden to war, but the horse powered chariot remade the history of war. The chariot eventually became a tool of ceremony, burial and in Rome of high sport.

Horses in the art of the Classical Greek era achieved a kind of perfection later emulated by Rome and actually forming the basis of Western art. The frieze from the interior of the colonnade of the Parthenon sculpture of Phidias from the mid- fifth century BC) is one of the best known sculptures of this Golden Age.



In medieval times the horse played an essential role in the daily life of both rich and poor and horses in the art of this period reflected these essential roles.

In 5th century B.C., in the West Rome had fallen, and Islam expanded in the 7th century. The 8th century saw the empire of Charlemagne, uniting the Christians of Western Europe ruling Byzantium, and what is now modern Turkey and Greece, with in-roads into Sicily and southern Italy.

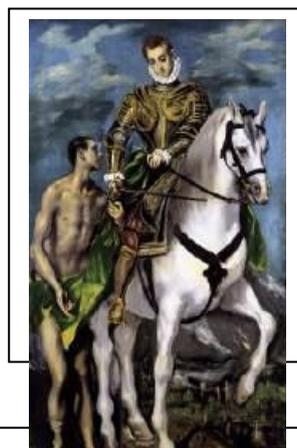
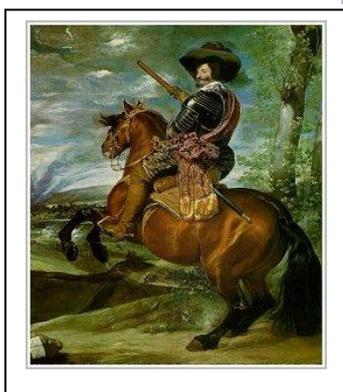
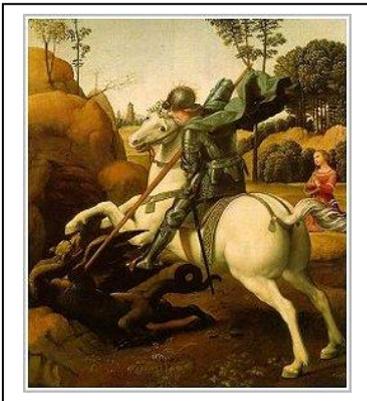
The triumph of Christianity after the fall of Rome and the chaos that followed, gave rise to the ideal of a horseman who combined the tasks of being a soldier with piety, gallantry and courtesy. A code of chivalry evolved and horses in art of the times often portrayed the heavy horses in ornate coverings as were riders, from knights in armour to lords and ladies with decorate mantles and other clothing. With religion playing the utmost role, horses were not a main theme of the arts, yet they did appear in such now famous painting as St Martin and the Beggar, St George and the Dragon and The Conversion of St Paul.

In the second half of the 15th century, at the time of the Reformation, engravings and woodcuts became a popular form of art and the horse was often included in the scenes of fantasy or contemporary life. Many woodcuts and engraved prints commemorated equestrian feats of the ruling classes, with both horses and riders well decked out in finery. Jousting was an aristocratic pastime, plus there were many professional performers. Durer, Hans Burgkmair and Lucas Cranach, among others, created art works of extremely ornate processional and jousting scenes.

In Medieval times, the romantic concept was depicted with heavy cavalry, until 1415 when the heavy French cavalry was struck down by the arrows of the English long-bowmen on the field of Agincourt. The heavy horse was used less and less in war and was eventually replaced by the light horse and mobile Hussars. Truly, cavalry was transformed by Frederick the Great and his cavalry general and in the 1700's the Earl of Pembroke promoted great change in England. The battle charge occurred with dash and speed, a technique for which the fox hunters of the country had a special aptitude!

While Protestant Europe saw the increase of the light horse cavalry, the French maintained their liking for manege as a more disciplined and aristocratic form of horsemanship. England's Duke of Wellington stated the French horses were more manageable, but there was no gainsaying the effectiveness of a headlong charge by light cavalry.

A theme often represented in the history of horse art of Medieval times was that of death, time and the Devil, and in these artworks the horse was included, often portrayed as scrawny or emaciated. Other art works show the horses and farmers ploughing the fields, a fact of life that barely changed until the invention of the tractor in the 20th century.



In the Eighteenth Century in England, horses in artwork flourished. Having begun in the 17th century, the 18th saw the formation of a school animal and sporting art. This was also the century in which the Thoroughbred was perfected as a breed.

The subjects' artists pursued were portraits of the wealthy, royalty included, and the things these patrons owned, like estate houses, pets and horses. In the 1700's and the early Eighteenth Century, artists began to paint the wealthy or their possessions, one of which was their horses.

The sports of horse racing and fox hunting created a demand that artists scrambled to fill. Patrons were looking for accurate portraits of their prized horses. John Wootton (late 1600's to mid 1700's), James Seymour (1702-1752) were two painters who were quick to follow the new trend.

However the most outstanding painter of the new genre of horse art was George Stubbs (1724-1806), whose lovely depictions are still very highly valued today in both museums and private collections. George Stubbs certainly knew the anatomy of a horse, from life, from dissection and from dedication. His book of anatomy compiled in the course of eight years of study and drawing was finally published in 1766 was the first book dealing with equine anatomy since 1598. These anatomical drawings are still a valued resource for artists today.

The number of paintings produced by this artist is large, and he owned the talent to paint large scale also. His talent and his knowledge of horses even allowed the successful and successfully received painting of horses without backgrounds, which allowed the entire focus to be on the horse. These compositions are very balanced, with horses in very natural postures, like a frieze of horses across the canvas. The generosity of George Stubbs and his sharing of knowledge, gave a vitality to the horse artworks of his century that has continued to make of him and his work a model for the artists of today. His graceful, anatomically correct and powerful portraits of individual horses captured the personality and uniqueness of each animal.

In the Eighteenth century, the depiction of horses flourished, yet it was also considered second class art since horses were seen as humble objects rather than elevated objects. Horse-artists were referred to as animal painters and their talents were not fully recognized. Thomas Gooch in the mid to late 18th century painted the popular carriage horses, wearing very stylish harness, for various patrons wanting such work.

Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), by choice more of a drawer than painter, loved drawing horses and along with more serious works also produced caricatures depicting the antics of riders and horses, as did Henry Bunbury. Rowlandson produced many works depicting the varied type of carriages on the roads of England and Europe during this period and into the 19th century which was to see an incredible improvement in carriages, along with the better road surfaces, and the popularity of the Cleveland Bay horse.



History of horse art in the Nineteenth Century was carried swiftly forward by the ground breaking work of George Stubbs in the previous century, and was also influenced in the wider field of art by the pastoral landscapes of John Constable and J.M.W. Turner, with their use of light and atmosphere and energy. The century opened with the publication, in 1805, of the poet-painter William Blake's sixteen "Ballads", the last of which he illustrated with a pen and tempera depicting a white horse, and the courage of a mother's love.

Claude Vernet, a French painter drew and painted horses during his long career as an artist, initially filling the demand of the Napoleonic years for battle scenes, including the Mamelukes who were the ruling chaste in Egypt at the time of Napoleon. Later Vernet painted many fine hunting scenes.

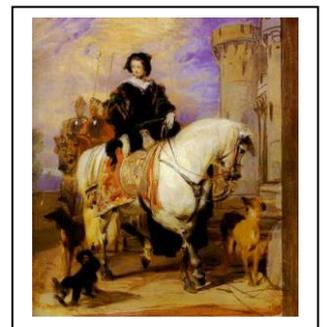
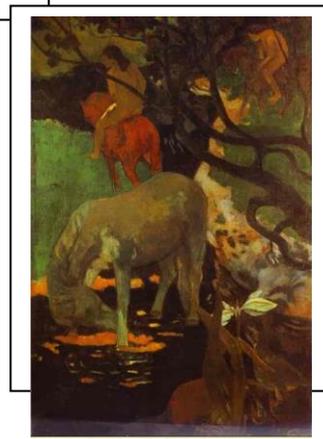
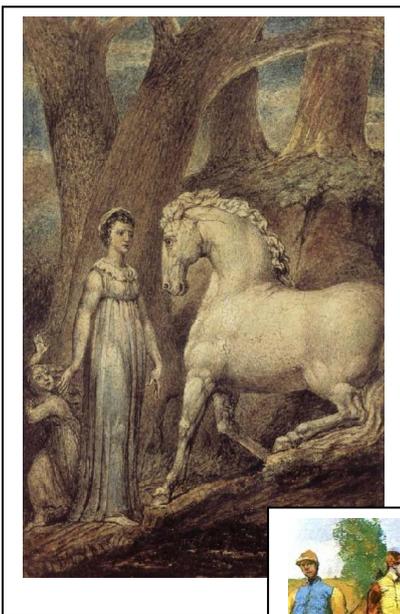
Horse art as a genre basically exploded into activity in England in the 19th century, with work by James Ward, Benjamin Marshal, Henry Bernard Chalon, John Ferneley, Edwin Cooper, David Dalby, James Pollard, John Herring, Sr. and later his son Benjamin.

When Theodore Gericault(French) visited England with his incredible and now very famous painting of The Raft of the Medusa and was exposed to the animal artists , he painted the Epsom Derby, capturing a drama of lighting in the work that was in contrast to the English painters. He continued to produce powerful and romantic paintings of the horse, both in the stable and in motion. Another famous French painter of the period was Eugene Delacroix. Both Gericault and Delacroix became the leading painters of horses in the French Romantic period of the latter part of the 19th century. These two, not only painted horses but were involved with horses, bringing the strength and energy of the horse to their canvases.

Following the Napoleonic Wars, the passion for horse racing in England spread to France and developed rapidly during the 19th century bringing a demand for artwork of horses.. Alfred de Dreuxand Rene Princeteau were there to oblige. A master of painting and sculpture was also available by the middle of the century – Edgar Degas. Degas began painting horse racing scenes when he was 27 and Classicism can be seen in lines reminiscence of Ingres. Degas was also a master at capturing movement and gesture in whatever medium he employed, be it sculpture, drawing, pastel, or painting.

With the invention of photography, painters like Degas, while producing "fine" art of the highest quality, used the invention to their advantage, for study and knowledge. Even Degas' early pencil studies show a mastery of line in his depiction of the horse that reflects the knowledge given to all through photography. In France the French Jockey Club was formed in 1833 and continued to grow and flourish throughout the century. and the Impressionistic Degas immortalized the racing scene with his painterly technique and fine discernment of horse movements.

All in all, the nineteenth century was one of great movement and increasing freedoms, from the beginning of the end of the war horse, the end of strict religious subjects of artists, improvement of roads and horse drawn vehicles, the grand genre of sporting art as activities opened to more of the population, and the art movements of Neoclassicism, Romanticism , and Impressionism, photography and ladies riding astride!



DIARY DATES

Feb 21st - dressage @ Woodfield
March meeting- towing with Bubbles
Mar 20th - dressage @ Woodfield
April meeting- B & W vets...winter ailments
Apr 17th – dressage Championship @ Woodfield

Dressage Riders Show Jumpers Eventers

If you would be interested in competing for the club at area competitions, please contact Laura Hayden, Team Co-ordinator.

Tack Shop Club Member Discounts

Did you know you are entitled to special discounts at local tack shops ? Think of all that money you can save ! Here is a summary of just some of the discounts available and the contact details:

Chris Puddy : <http://puddys.co.uk/saddlery/>
- Discount 10%

Wadswick Countrystore:
<http://www.wadswick.co.uk/> - Discount 5%

Patrick Pinkers:
<http://www.patrickpinker.com/?id=296> –
Discount 10%

It is also worth asking if you visit other tack shops, remember always take your membership card with you ! Please note these discounts do seem to be rather selective and some items are excluded, unfortunately this includes saddles.

Please keep checking the website for up-to-date news regarding speakers and rallies –
www.vhprc.co.uk

Any articles/ photos to Ros at rossteward@hotmail.co.uk

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL.....

If you've ever watched a pony storming round a 1.10m showjumping class in a jaw-dropping time, and winning, you'll already know that small is beautiful — not to mention bold, fearless and cheeky! Here are a few reasons why ponies absolutely rock.

- 1. They're amazing in a jump-off.** Horses may be able to jump bigger, but ponies are quicker. They can turn on a sixpence, jump clear from the weirdest angles, are braver than lions, and ridden by fearless Pony Club demons.
- 2. It's not so far to fall.** Also useful in a jump-off, if even your trusty steed can't jump from THAT angle, and you end up taking a flier!
- 3. They can live off fresh air.** No expensive hard feeds required. If anything, you might have to restrict their intake rather than the other way round. Ponies are (almost) cheap as chips to look after.
- 4. There's more cool kit for ponies.** From brightly patterned rugs to glittery browbands, there's loads of funky stuff you can get for ponies that just isn't available in bigger sizes. This is clearly because retailers think ponies are mostly ridden by little girls. Quite a lot are actually ridden by adults but shhh! Don't tell them that or they might stop doing the cool stuff!
- 5. They have that pony attitude.** It's like 'Napoleon Syndrome' in that ponies may be smaller, but they obviously firmly believe they're way harder and cooler than horses. Unlike Napoleon, however, they're not megalomaniac dictators (well, most of them) and really are way harder and cooler than horses.
- 6. Like the Duracell bunny, they go on forever.** Age ain't nothin' but a number — if you're a pony. He may be technically classed as a veteran, but he still thinks he's five — and he'll speed round the clear round jumping or cross-country course to prove it.
- 7. You can get on from the ground.** This is, of course, one of the biggest advantage of owning a pony — provided you're not too stiff (and let's face it, some of us older types aren't as bendy as we used to be), then you can hop on from the ground. You'll always be the one who has to open and close gates out hacking, but it's a small price to pay...

Read more at <http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/features/7-reasons-that-ponies-can-give-horses-a-run-for-their-money-525994#wdFCGzyWox1mtLck.99>

Meeting the little people....

Most people realise that I am the 'mad Shetland pony woman'...I even have T shirt and hoody with it on! But I thought it might be of interest to write about where they came from, as I cannot take credit for their breeding!

Windwillow Mischief (aka Willow) was the first I bought, primarily as a companion for Roisin, but went into the showing as she didn't really like him. He was followed 2 years later by Windwillow Zebedee (of Seva breeding), who required a home with lots of TLC, then Windwillow Megan, who I was asked to produce and eventually bought after 3 years and finally Windwillow Phoenix Fire, brought back as part of a job lot by Sue and bought as a Christmas present by my long suffering hubby! I also acquired along the way Rambo (as a companion for Willow but unregistered) and Frodo (from the Windwillow stud but unregistered- so they gave him to me- he quickly became well known as 'the naughtiest pony on the planet'!)

The Windwillow Stud was started nearly 30 years ago for the breeding of Welsh A & B ponies by Charles and Sandra Seward. Over the years the emphasis was on the Welsh Mountain pony and the stud enjoyed some successful years with numerous of their own bred ponies winning at major level including Royal Welsh.

About 13 years ago after quietly looking at various different bloodlines Charles and Sandra made their first purchase of two Shetland foals from the Rexon Stud in Devon. One of these foals was the colt Rexon Tobermory who when they moved to Wales they passed back to the stud as they had several stallions/colts and hardly any gates and fences!

In 1998 they bought the piebald filly foal Rexon Miss Moffat who has proved to be one of the best buys this stud has ever made. From an un-promising start when introduced to the show ring – she would only go backwards! – they left the unequal struggle until she had her first foal Windwillow Mischief who needs no introduction to the showing world. He was bought by me who has had tremendous success with him not only in-hand but under saddle, followed by Windwillow Zebedee. After W. Mischief Miss Moffat had 2 colts who are both stallions and a filly W. Megan who had reserve junior champion as a yearling at Royal Welsh in 2008 and has continued having major success in the showing and in dressage. Miss Moffat's own showing career began and she proved to really enjoy the show ring – enough to go Champion Shetland at The Three Counties 2004 and 2nd at the Devon Breed Show in the Coloured Section.

They have kept their stud small, about 12 breeding mares ranging from 35" down to 29" but do not breed from them every year. They enjoy seeing other Shetland enthusiasts showing their Windwillow ponies and find time now and again to show themselves, some of their latter successes have been with W. Phoeme, a small 29" skewbald mare, Windwillow Phoenix Fire's mother. Bloodlines included in this stud are Kerswell, South Sands and Berry.

I decided to branch out and try a new bloodline, and after advertising on facebook (where else) I was contacted by Karoline Thorp near Oxford who had just what I was looking for- a piebald filly, Blenheim Truffle! Sue, Carol and I rolled off to collect her and she soon made herself princess of the herd, much to Megan's disgust!

Blenheim stud was started in 1955 by Jill Evans and her husband Ewart Evans who bought a few Shetlands- two were grey and the bloodline has been maintained for 60 years- Karoline has a ninth generation bloodline in her homebred skewbald stallion Blenheim Proton. They have bred and sold ponies all round the world, including the Bahamas, Europe, Scandinavia and America. Currently they have 3 stallions: Blenheim Tonto (25 years old piebald), Blenheim Nightbird (piebald) and Blenheim Proton (skewbald), They have 16 mares and fillies, usually foaling 10-12 per year. They do not show much themselves but have had successes in coloured classes- there are many Blenheim ponies on the circuit. Hopefully Blenheim Truffle will be a credit to their stud in the future.

Finally I decided to go bigger....and again through facebook (I like to live dangerously) I found Allengrove Pringle, a 6 year old black Standard Shetland who had only just been gelded (I didn't know that at the time) and was unbroken.

Situated on the Northumberland Border in Cumbria, Allengrove Shetlands is a home of registered pedigree Shetland ponies of predominately standard size with the occasional miniature. Their ponies are mainly founded on Wells and Millhouse bloodlines. They have superb conformation, movement and an abundance of mane and tail. They currently have standing at stud for 2016, a Standard Black Shetland Stallion, Kerloch Emperor. He is jet black, stands at 40.5" and is 13 years old. Emperor has been shown successfully in the past three years and has won many Championships. He has tremendous strong bone, a wealth of mane and tail and fantastic movement. Emperor carries some well known bloodlines including Wells, Westpark, Lakehead, Netherley and Stow with his Sire being Stow Review and his Dam Kerloch Emmaline. He is the traditional type of Shetland Stallion with an exceptional temperament and oozes presence.

