



NEWSLETTER

October 2016

From the Chair.....

Hello all,

So Winter is nearly upon us, the dark mornings and evenings have arrived, and the clocks will soon be going back. ☹️ The little people are not terribly amused by being turfed out in the dark, sometimes damp, mornings!

Many of you will have been, or are contemplating, clipping.....Willow, Rambo and Zebedee are all sporting crew cuts as they have Cushings and get very damp in their thick winter coats, so off it has all come (apart from their legs and heads.) Note of caution....always wear a hard hat when clipping as the unexpected can happen and a hoof make contact with the skull!! Luckily, the injuries were relatively minor in comparison to what could have been the outcome, (not me, by the way....my ponies wouldn't be able to reach that high!)

This will be the penultimate newsletter from me, as I have taken the decision to step down from the Committee at Christmas for personal reasons. It has not been an easy decision to make, but of course I will remain as a club member and be as involved as time allows. So it would be lovely, for the final newsletter from me, if you could send me photos, snippets etc for inclusion- it will be the final request I shall be making....phew, I hear you say?? Look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, which has been rearranged for the 9th due to pub refurbishment, and at the Christmas get-together for our quiz and nibbles ☺️

Ros & the little people

VHPRC

Dressage Series
starts 30th October 2016
@ Woodfield Stables

If you can help, or know someone who can, please get in touch
Contact: anyone on the Committee!!! ☺️

We hold our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month

FABULOUS FOOD!

Rose & Crown,

68 Parkfield Road, Pucklechurch, Bristol, BS16 9PS

Hello Winter.....

Ahhh, welcome back autumn. Hello, lovely crisp mornings and beautiful red leaves. Oh, hello, endless rain. We definitely didn't miss you. Here are 11 things we'd forgotten about our sometimes-favourite season...

- 1. The never-ending rug dilemma.** Is it too warm for a medium weight? Too cool for a light weight? Oh look, the sun's come out now, it's actually really warm – does he even need a rug at all? But it's forecast to rain later... ARRRGH! You are driving yourself mad.
- 2. Seemingly overnight, the fields and bridleways go from being rock solid to rivers of squidgy mud.** Which brings us onto...
- 3. Mud fever....** Oh, you're back are you? No offence, but we'd hoped we'd seen the last of you.
- 4. To wash or not to wash?** Some people swear washing the mud off your horse's legs after riding prevents mud fever. Others swear it causes it. Only one thing's for certain, the whole debate causes a lot of angst.
- 5. You've got a choice between grooming for an hour, or just brushing the worst of the mud off** in the bridle and saddle area, and hoping that passers-by just assume your grey pony is actually skewbald. Or brown. Or black.
- 6. Mare owners rejoice!** There'll be no more squirting, squealing and veering between being incredibly grumpy and ridiculously over-affectionate and needy. But enough about you – your mare's seasons are over for another year, hurrah!
- 7. Urgh, no more weekend lie-ins** now you're bringing your horse in every night and turning out every morning. (Just to clarify — by 'lie-ins', we mean the horsy definition of 'until 7am,' not the normal person definition of 'midday.' What a waste of valuable riding time!)
- 8. Break out the handcream.** You've only just started doing a daily muck out and your hands already feel like sandpaper.
- 9. Your monthly feed bill is enormous.** Good grass, we miss you already.
- 10. There are suddenly no kids at your yard any more.** Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing depends on your perspective but there are a few mums out there sighing in relief at being able to ride during school hours again – freedom at last.
- 11. What do you mean, you can't ride after work as it'll be too dark?** Hang on a minute – where did summer go?



On the more serious side... How do you choose the right rug for your horse? Is it needed?

If your horse or pony is elderly or prone to weight loss, or fit, lean and clipped out, he will need a warmer rug than a well-conditioned native breed or part-clipped equine getting little or no work. Consider your horse's environment, too. Is the field in an exposed position? Shelter, as well as access to forage, will affect his ability to maintain optimum body temperature.

What if you can't pop back to the yard and swap your horse's rug? What can you do to ensure your horse is comfortable regardless of the weather?

At certain times of the year, such as autumn and spring, you are having to rug for a wide range of temperatures. It's warm in the middle of the day, but cooler overnight and first thing in the morning, so rug for the median temperature.

Using a wicking sheet under winter rugs keeps rugs clean and draws moisture away from the skin. If your horse is too warm and breaks out, he won't be standing in damp, cold rugs. A breathable rug will also help with temperature control.

Neck covers and removable liners make rugs versatile and save time, and breathable rugs allow moisture to escape, stopping the horse becoming too sweaty. Modern rugs are very efficient and trap a lot of air underneath, so they are better at equilibrating the temperature.

It's easier for horses to warm up than cool down, so it's preferable to be on the cool side. It depends a lot on the breed — fit thoroughbreds with thin skin and short hair need more rugs and feed to keep warm than, say, a hairy, fat cob who could probably survive the winter on his fat stores alone. One would want the muscles to be doing something. If a horse is too hot, he has to back off his metabolism because he has to stop producing heat, whereas he can easily make up the difference by producing heat if he's cold.

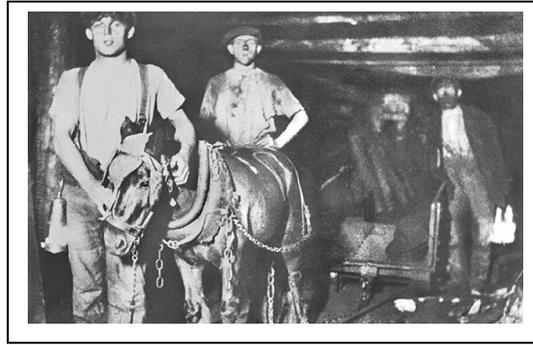
It's also advisable to rug your horse gradually, rather than piling rugs on at the first sign of autumn.

It takes a horse's metabolism 10 days to acclimatise to wearing a rug. The best thing is to rug slowly: start with a 100g rug, then work up. Don't slap on a 300g rug straight away."

How can you tell if your horse is the right temperature?

The easiest way to check is to place a hand under his rug by his shoulder. If he feels cold to touch, he's too cold and if he's hot and clammy, he's too hot. It's that simple.

Native ponies: what were they bred for?



From a fast but smooth walk perfect for ploughing fields or carrying large loads over great distances, to ground-covering trots ideal for shepherding sheep and hunting wolves, **this is what native breeds were used for in bygone years:**

Shetlands

Small but hardy, Shetland ponies were commonly used to transport peat from the bogs and seaweed to fertilise fields. Some also became pit ponies, or were used as pack animals.

Highlands

Highlands were bred to work on farms in their native Scotland. From carrying deer and game off the hills, to transporting timber and ploughing fields — these sturdy ponies are capable of hard, heavy work.

Fell

Native to the North of England, Fell ponies were used by the Vikings to plough and pull sledges, as well as for riding and pack work. Their fast but comfortable walk made them ideal for carrying anything from material and food to local metal ores. Fells were also used for shepherding and hunting wolves to protect the flock.

Modern Fell ponies are renowned for their ground-covering trot, and have been used for trotting races in the past.

Dartmoor

Native to Devon and recorded as living on Dartmoor since the Middle Ages, this breed's metabolism enables them to survive in tough conditions, ideal for working in the mines, carrying large loads as a pack animal and shepherding sheep. Their temperament made the ponies a popular ride, as they are today.

Exmoor

This breed dates back to when the Celts settled in Britain. The ponies were tamed and broken to pull chariots, as well as being ridden, used as pack animals and ploughing the land.

Welsh ponies

Section A: The smallest of the Welsh mountain ponies were useful for shepherding sheep, mining and riding, as well as being pack animals.

Section B: These ponies were also intended for pulling carts and carriages.

Sections C and D: All of the above, plus useful for farm work. Welsh mountain ponies could also be seen driving cattle.

Dales

Known for strength, hardiness, courage and stamina, the Dales pony has strong mining links. Evolved from the Scotch Galloway pack animal, the breed was used to transport lead, coal and ore from the mines of North Yorkshire, Teesside and Tyneside to the ports on the coast.

Dales ponies are capable of carrying heavy loads over long distances, and were also driven, ridden and used for farm work.

Connemara

This compact, surefooted and intelligent breed stands on short legs but covers a lot of ground. Still popular for riding with adults and children alike, the attributes of a Connemara has made them ideal for farm work and driving for years.

New Forest

Having roamed the New Forest, Hampshire, since the end of the last Ice Age, these fast and sure-footed ponies have been a popular riding choice for centuries. History shows them being used to carry large weights over long distances, plus hunting and farm work.

Stunt Horse Rider- Tila Winstone

Our October speaker was Tila, a local young lady who is well known to many of us, coming from an equestrian background. She came to talk about her career as a stunt rider, and although we experienced technical issues, it was a fascinating insight into the world of films.

The most recent film she was in was Ben Hur which was filmed in Rome last January. She travelled with 40+ horses from a yard in London, taking 4 days to travel there. There, a theme park was turned into an equestrian centre to cater for 96 horses in total, including some from Hungary and Italy. To film the chariot race, a 'circus' was recreated with cameras at points around the wall and with vehicles with an arm holding cameras which followed alongside races (for this reason some horses had to be blinkered which were then edited out).

There were 8 teams of 4 horses racing, with very experienced drivers. The chariots were uncomfortable- drivers had to stand up and balance. Training took place beforehand for 2 months, and the race itself took 3 months to film. Apparently when 2 of the actors were interviewed they said that they had driven the horses, which wasn't actually true- where they had to be in shot, the stunt driver was squatting down in the front of the chariot, using a connector to drive the horses, while the actor used a dummy set of reins. Another trick was where 2 chariots/ teams of horses appeared to be stuck together- this was actually a 'giant chariot' being driven by one driver. All the drivers were professionals.

There were, unfortunately, accidents- a particularly bad one was where a hydraulic lift to tilt the chariot at one point was mistimed and the driver fell out of the chariot, and under the one behind it. Outriders were on hand to grab horses in the event of an accident- including this one.

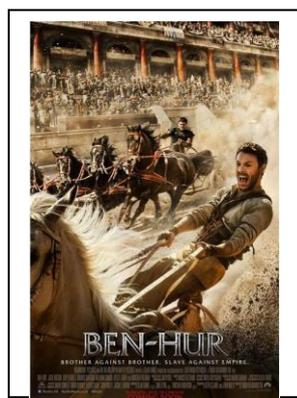
Tila worked behind the scenes during the making of this film- one incident she told us about involved the white horses- she washed some with purple shampoo but left it on too long (should be washed off within 2 minutes) and in some scenes you might detect slightly purple tails!!

However, when filming Cinderella in 2013, she was a riding double. It was filmed in Pinewood and Tila doubled for Cinderella in shots involving the golden carriage (now on show in Disneyworld). It was extremely heavy and had to be pushed by teams of men down very slight slopes to make it move.

She also had to ride a stallion bareback with no practice- she found it difficult to change the direction when turning corners at a gallop, so they had to do a lot of retakes. Another time, when allowed to take her corset off to eat at lunchtime, she ate rather too much and didn't have time to 'deflate' so started to feel faint due to the pressure.....they had to rip the dress off very quickly. As they couldn't restart filming for 2 hours, Tila wasn't very popular!

Other jobs Tila has undertaken include teaching actors to ride eg Benedict Cumberpatch, Lily James and Jack Houston, and she also trialled people for the film 'The Hollow Crown', to see if they actually could ride. Sadly due to breaking her arm last year, she missed out on filming Poldark.

She kindly sent her powerpoint that we couldn't start at the meeting, so here are some of the memories from her filming days.....





Raising money for Macmillan

Jess Hawes, a member of VHPRC, as well as competing her traditional horse in different disciplines, also runs competitively. This is no mean feat for an asthmatic, but she has completed quite a few 10km runs, including the delightfully named 'mud runs' and over obstacles during the past couple of years.

This year she decided to set her goal as the Bristol Half Marathon, quite an increase in distance, and chose MacMillan as the charity she would raise money for. Her Just Giving story was:

"I am running the Bristol half marathon in memory of my uncle Colin (Sid). Macmillian is an amazing charity who has not only supported my family but also offering support to many others. I feel honoured to be running this to support and give back to a charity that keeps on giving to others.

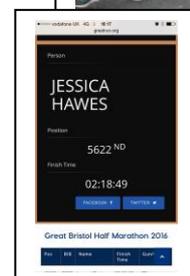
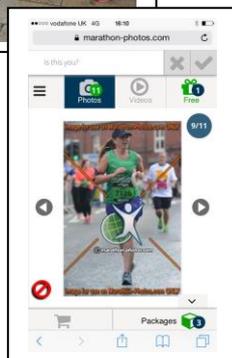
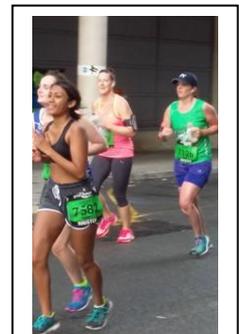
This is going to be a tough challenge for me and I would like to ask all my family and friends to support me in this and donate as much as you can afford to this amazing cause, and in return I'll promise you that I will make it across that finish line! (And maybe a few sweaty and in pain photos at the end). And to my uncle Colin, and anyone else who has or is suffering from this terrible disease, **THIS IS FOR YOU!!**"

Ironically only this month we heard that a cousin has also just been diagnosed with cancer, and I'm sure many of you will have been touched in one way or another by this cruel disease.

The morning was overcast and drizzly, perhaps not the best for warming up, but on the other hand at least not too hot for running. We all gathered in the Millennium Square, where there were different entertainers to keep the crowds amused. Jess, Stacey and Natalie were all running together, so proceeded to get themselves ready before walking down to the start line. I couldn't believe quite how many runners were there, the majority of whom were running for charities. Due to numbers, the runners were sent off in phases, with the faster runners at the front.

Once they had made their way to the front and set off, we crossed over towards Queen's Square in order to catch them on their return loop (the course went off round the Portway and back before coming back into the city), and found an advantageous spot for pictures. Having waited for what seemed an interminable amount of time (but it had stopped raining), all of a sudden they were there, running towards us! In fact, they came round the corner so quickly, we nearly missed them. Jess and Stacey were still together at this point, but Natalie had sped off in front! Here, they hit the cobbles, and we could almost feel their feet protest, but gamely they carried on into Queen's Square and round to St Mary Redcliffe, before turning back to come up Baldwin Street (more pictures) and in to the final stretch, back where they started.

It took us a while to find them amongst the crowds of tired (in some cases exhausted) runners, but we eventually made our way to where they were doing cooling down exercises....and ensured some final medal pictures ! Personally I am immensely proud of Jess- despite the pain (and by the evening she could barely move) she raised over £500 for MacMillan through her Just Giving page and other sponsorship. Her final verdict? She was glad to have completed it, but wouldn't do another on. Why? It got a bit boring after halfway round- so she's going to go back to the 10kms!!



DIARY DATES

Oct- 30th dressage @ Woodfield
Nov meeting- B & W vets- winter ailments
Nov- 27th dressage @ Woodfield
Dec meeting- Quiz and nibbles
Dec 11th dressage @ Woodfield
Jan meeting- AGM, points presentation and mini auction
Feb meeting- Membership renewal night
Feb 19th dressage @ Woodfield
March 19th dressage @ Woodfield
April 30th dressage championships @ 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.

Sunday 23rd October – Winter Show Jumping at Hartpury which is a lovely venue to ride at. There are 80cm and 90cm classes for both team and individuals and I know lots of you are very capable of jumping 80cm so it would be lovely to get a team for this.
Saturday 12th November – Winter Senior Novice Dressage at Summerhouse

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

EVENTERS CHALLENGE

On Saturday 15th October, Laura Hayden and a team of 4 plus an individual, went to Mendip Plains for a BRC area 9 Eventers Challenge. Laura has worked exceedingly hard to manage an ever growing team of competitors and this perhaps was her biggest challenge yet. The competition involved a show jumping and then immediately moving onto the cross country, at a height of 80cms. They look huge!!

It was brilliant to hear that the team - Stewart Bowler, Rachel Hawkins, Charlotte Alford, Kathleen Griffiths- came 4th!!! With an Individual 5th for Stewart Bowler. Julian Minchin also did well in the 100cm class – although he did miss out one jump!!

Laura said “Fantastic day, well done team. Brilliant.”

Support from Debbie Vickery, Teresa Bowler and Lizzie Seddon was much appreciated and a huge shout out for Linda Knight and Kim McGarva-Owen for giving up their time for fence judging and Milli French on Fly collecting scores.

Well done each and every one of you...and we hope this will spur more of our members on to join in and have a go ☺



Charlotte and Rosie, plus munchkins who helped!



Royce with his rosette



7 reasons to love (and sometimes despair) the Shetland pony

The Shetland pony: a child's first best friend or miniature-mischief maker?

1. Mini but mighty

Did you know the Shetland pony can pull double its weight? They may be little but don't ever be fooled into thinking they can't rival their taller field-mates when they want to take you for a walk when they spot some lush grass!

2. Greedy guts

Shetland ponies absolutely love their food and laminitis can be a worry for these little creatures. Good dietary management is required and restricted grazing can be advisable during summer months.

3. Hardy

The Shetland pony originated in the Shetland Isles of the UK and is built to handle some of Britain's harshest weather conditions. They will grow a winter coat to rival a grizzly bear so you don't need to worry about a winter wardrobe. Though of course the dinky rugs and jumpers now available do look rather cute... if your cheeky pony will keep it on for more than a couple of minutes!

4. Escape artists

A Shetland pony can rival Houdini. Your pony will watch you secure your electric fencing tape and the minute you turn your back... charge! Duck and dive; your pony likes to demonstrate just how agile they are as they make their break for greener pastures and this is always followed by a victory lap of honour.

5. All-rounder

Often a first pony for a child as they are introduced to the world of horses; or perhaps broken to pull a cart; these super ponies have multiple uses. They can be a useful field companion perhaps if you keep your bigger horse alone at home.

6. Therapy pony

Perhaps less commonly known, the Shetland pony is now being used by some charities as a therapy pony to treat a range of conditions from PTSD to autism.

7. Shetland Pony Grand National

Have you chased your pony round the field trying to catch him? Perhaps he can keep up with your 17hh horse? Maybe he's the next Shetland Pony Grand National winner!

