



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

From the Chair.....

Hi All

I felt that I should let you all know the situation with our club & Covid-19, we are following BRC guidelines & this means no BRC activities until the end of June. All BRC Qualifiers & Championships between now & June 30th have been cancelled. This means no monthly meetings, rallies, camp, dressage.

To try & give everybody something to look forward to we are going to try & organise some online dressage & showing, with our usual fabulous rosettes. When this is finalised we will send details out to everyone.

This is a very worrying time for all & a lot of us will be struggling with health & wealth issues. As a club we will try to support you if needed but this will obviously be limited if/when lock down happens.

I would ask that everyone is kind to others & please try to accept all that has & is going to happen, if we all pull together we will get through. Life as we know it is going to change.

Stay safe & well.

Jane

VHPRC Dressage Series
@ Woodfield, Cann Lane

We are planning to hold the Championships as an on line competition. More details to follow.

We hold our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month

Bitton Sports and Social Club
(BS30 6HX)

Opposite Fonthill Garden Centre
Bar available but only snacks

TO BE
UPDATED ON
WEBSITE RE
CANCELLATION

Nicky Burston

Our February speaker was Nicky Burston, one of our members, who came to talk about her role as a massage therapist. She started by giving her background and how she came to be where she is today, and then discussed what she does. Some basic facts started (in a mini quiz): The number of muscles in a horse = over 600; They account for over half the horse's body weight; They are built in layers around the horse's body –

- Fascia
- Superficial
- Deep

The main functions of the muscles are:- initiate movement, temperature control, stabilise joints, maintain posture, form organs – heart, lungs, uterus, intestines. Muscles work in groups and are connected.

Nicky then moved on to the benefits of massage: healthy tissue moves to maximum capacity, improve quality of gait & more efficient movement, more efficiency means increased stamina, more supple which decreases chance of pull or strain, improves stress on joints, ligaments & tendons, eases discomfort, improves circulation, glossier coat, reduces oedema, forms an early warning system & splint reaction and avoids further potential issues developing. She showed before and after pictures of a horse (Bedlam) she had treated which showed a 'lopsided' stance initially....

Further benefits of massage include: Assists rehabilitation,
Improved blood flow helps healing,
Encourages tissue to regenerate & repair,
Breaks down scar tissue, better return to function,
Helps with circulation in the less mobile horse,
Reduces tactile defences,
Helps horse to relax,
Releases stress & tension,
Releases endorphins,
Improves well-being of the horse.



Blake



Lemmy



When might massage be needed?? Performance Issues:- favouring 1 rein, striking off in canter, stopping, reduction in stamina, dip in enthusiasm / behavioural change, changes in gait, reluctance to jump, hind drag / squaring of toes, unwilling to take up contact and loss in suppleness are all potential signs. Further signs/ situations which are indicative include: gait change, rehab / returning from injury, boxed horse / restricted turnout, muscle twitching / saddle issues, uneven development / posture, tense, nervous, anxious and when working alongside other medical professionals.

Know your therapists!

Massage Therapist: Will have L3 equine massage or above, work on soft tissue only, work all the muscles in a session with an emphasis on maintenance.

Physiotherapist: Will give a diagnosis, give topical treatment, suggest rehabilitation, have a range of equipment and will be highly trained – human to equine – IRVAP.

Osteopath (Title is protected by law): Looks at the body as a whole, gives soft tissue & joint manipulation, includes cranial work, and is human – equine trained.

Chiropractor: Works on the skeleton, provides manipulation and is human – equine trained.

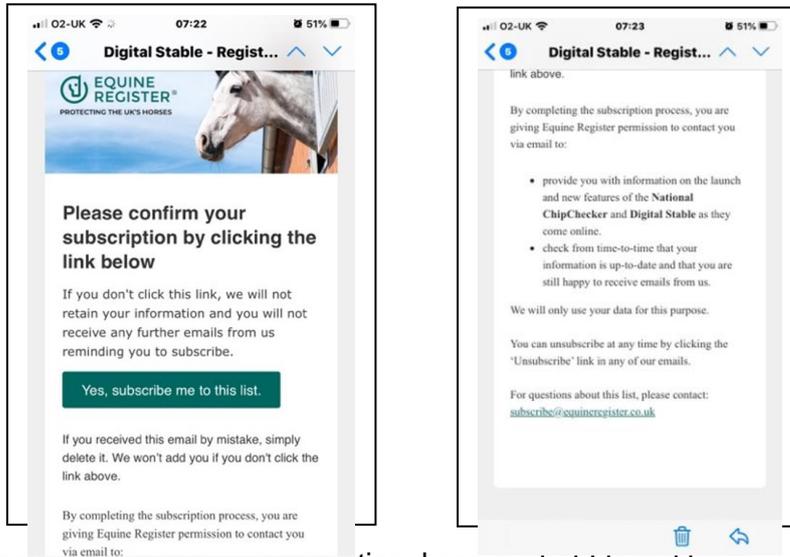
A good therapist **WILL:** Have qualifications, is fully insured, will ask for vet consent, have accreditation, obtain CPD (continuing professional development), meet criteria, pay to join and keep up to date on developments and law.



For more info, or advice on whether massage would help their horse, Nicky has a VHPRC members offer of £40 for a treatment-
Contact her on: nickyburston@Hotmail.com or
text / call her on:
07764 372229

Micro chipping

Beth Bracey recently asked for her horse Willow to have a microchip- and received a bit of a surprise! She said, "I asked my vet to chip Willow but she has a chip number on her passport, so I tried to find out if she was registered and it said unregistered. There seems to be a new central equine register but it asked me to show interest and it will let me know when it's up and running, so I am a little confused and the vet wasn't very helpful. Maybe we can try and find out more about it and pass this on in the newsletter." She received the following:



Rather a mystery, here is what I found from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/compulsory-microchipping-to-improve-horse-welfare>

"From October 2020 it will be mandatory for all owners to microchip their horses, ponies and donkeys. The new Central Equine Database (<https://www.equineregister.co.uk/home>) will then allow local authorities and police to track down the owners of dumped horses and make sure they are punished and the animals are given the care they deserve. It will also mean lost or stolen horses will be reunited with their owners more easily.

The Central Equine Database logs all domesticated horses, including those required to be microchipped by October 2020. This will offer a practical solution to the pressing animal welfare issues which arise when horses are abandoned, making it easier to rehome the animals more quickly and effectively and has been welcomed by charities such as the RSPCA.

We are working closely with vets and the British Horse Council (<http://www.britishhorsecouncil.org/>) to highlight the change in regulations, explaining that horse owners have until October 2020 to make sure that all horses are microchipped. This extra time will allow horse owners to combine microchipping with a routine visit to, or from, their vet with the procedure costing around £25-30.

If horse owners do not microchip their horses by October 2020 they could face sanctions from their local authority including a compliance notice and, as a last resort, a fine of up to £200."

Interestingly, only the RSPCA and British Horse Council appear to have commented- is this another money making scheme? Who remembers the now defunct NED (National Equine Database)? NED was launched in 2008 to centralise horse data in the UK. There were some issues with duplicated/missing horses and costs to users. But when it was shut, all NED services — including horse search, lost and stolen register, horse associations, pedigree, progeny and performance reports and passport check — were no longer available and no costs refunded.

A new central equine database and a tightening of equine traceability were called for in the wake of last horse meat scandal (2013) and is backed by the British Equestrian Federation. However, this was being imposed by the EU (in 2015), so in light of Brexit, what happens now?

In the meantime, have you checked if your equine has a chip, and whether it has been registered?? It might be relevant if you didn't breed the horse/pony in the first place!

Information from: <https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/potential-new-equine-database-uk-428208>

DID YOU KNOW?

☆ □ ☆ □ ☆ □ Foot Abscesses ☆ □ ☆ □ ☆ □

- 👤 Foot abscesses have lots of names - pus in foot, seedy toe, poison foot, to name but a few.
- 👤 Foot abscesses usually cause acute, sudden, severe lameness. Occasionally horses will get more chronic manifestations, but this is less common.
- 👤 Foot abscesses can occur at any time of year, horses who are unshod are at higher risk, particularly if they have any cracks in their hooves.
- 👤 Shod horses can get foot abscesses soon after shoeing, bacteria can get up the white line when the foot is trimmed, then sealed in place with the shoe, or occasionally bacteria are introduced via the nails.
- 👤 Generally foot abscesses need attention urgently, if shod the shoe needs removing, then any tracts or cracks in the hoof investigated carefully. A hot wet poultice is then applied to soften the foot and draw out the pus. Poultice dressing should only be used on feet, it actively softens hoof tissues and is not designed for use on the skin.
- 👤 Foot abscesses are very painful due to a build-up of pressure within the hoof capsule. Once the abscess is drained horses are generally immediately more comfortable. Draining the abscess and keeping the foot clean whilst the defect in the foot heals are generally curative. Pain killers and antibiotics are not usually required, especially once the abscess is opened up to drain.
- 👤 Recurrent abscesses can result from underlying conditions, these include Cushings (PPID), pedal bone infection and laminitis. If your horse suffers with recurrent abscesses, especially in the same foot X-rays may be beneficial.



A small but important job.

Did you know that all tyres are date stamped with a manufacturing date?

"Today I replaced 4 wheels and tyres. They were dated 3408. This means they were made week 34 2008. I suspect they were the original tyres. Now 11 years old. Tyres should be replaced when worn or damaged or too old. Rarely do we find worn out tread. Now this trailer had been regularly serviced. Old tyres should be reported on the condition report. Have you been advised of old tyres? Old tyres crack and tend to split and dramatically fail. We fitted some 2119 tyres. Check your dates. Anything over 6 years is old...."

taken from

<https://www.facebook.com/TheHorseBoxHandyMan/posts/2270874693242896>

I have also been advised to check my lorry tyres for the same reason by my mechanic- VOSA are now checking at plating!!



Do we need to have a “last clip of the year”?

Traditionally, we were always taught that the last clip of the year needed to be by 31st January. This was to ensure that clipping didn't interfere with the change of coat as the old winter coat gave way to a new summer one. Some traditionalists will still never clip after the end of January, but many will happily clip all year round, or judge the timing of the last clip depending on the type of coat and competitions that they are doing.

Comfort should be of prime consideration, and with the dynamics of equestrianism changing, many horses are expected to compete during extreme conditions, which will necessitate clipping during the summer months especially if competing abroad. You may have noticed an increase in the use of clippers during the summer months over the last couple of years due to the better weather here in the UK. Competition horses need to be turned out to a high standard and look good, but the necessity for perfection in their coats is not as extreme as in the showing world. A few lines left on a show jumper or an event horse, would not be frowned upon in the same way as in the show ring.

Different breeds will grow varying densities of hair, and the re-growth on natives can be tricky. Timing for clipping these types are paramount to ensure that they enter the ring with a gleaming summer coat. The only way to assess this correctly is knowing your horse and how his coat reacts during the winter months, and then being able to time it accordingly for the last clip. This can be any time between the end of January to even as late as April depending on the colour and coat conditions.

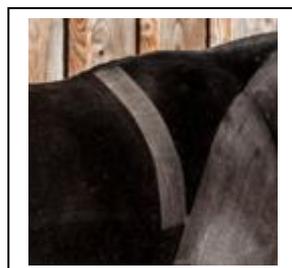
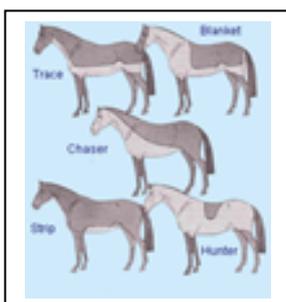
As an example, our native welsh ponies will often need clipping by February to give time for the coat to come through with no signs of lines. Darker colours can sometimes get away with being done a few weeks later. Shetlands, Exmoor and Dartmoor ponies if wintered out, and have a double coat, need careful timing, and may be better given their last clip in early January to enable the natural colouring of the coat to grow through.

Heavier breeds, especially cobs, are prime candidates for being clipped regularly all year round. During the winter, it wouldn't be a surprise to be clipping every 3-4 weeks, with legs and hogging every two weeks. This usually carries on through the summer, and with careful blending techniques, the main body of the horse can sometimes be left longer but with legs and hogging being done every two weeks to blend in with their existing coat.

When clipping a summer coat, to get the finish required for the show ring, bear in mind that the colour will take a 7-10 days to re-establish. Hot clothing is a great way to encourage the shine back into the coat, and if this is done on a regular basis and additionally before and after clipping, this will give it a real boost and give highlight to a dull coat. Hot clothing provides a soothing and refreshing means of grooming as well as applying extra shine. Hot clothing accentuates the natural shine of a horse in good condition as well as moisturising and conditioning the skin. Using this method both before and after clipping will re-generate the natural oils within the coat by massaging and applying heat directly to the skin.

Rugging up well before and after clipping will also help keep the coat in good shape. Fortunately, there are now specialist blades, such as Lister covercote metal socket blades that leave 5mm of hair. that skim over the coat and these are perfect for taking off the cat hairs and for not interfering with the base layer. These have become popular with the showing world, particularly prior to the later shows in the Autumn such as Horse of the Year Show.

So, to answer the question does the last clip have to be at the end of January? That clearly all depends on you and your horses' individual needs. If you need to clip, then clip. If you are lucky to have a horse with a fine coat that can carry you through the year without seeing a set of clippers at all, then happy days!



Adapted from:

<https://www.clippersharp.com/article/89-do-we-need-to-have-a-last-clip-of-the-year?fbclid=IwAR37t2cwqFA7axguoGfvEipl-3rStYsB47ytaOilTyBdQfKqAQi5r2ztURo>

Top 8 Oldest Horses in History that Lived to be Very Old

So how old can a horse actually get, in the best case? Most horses live to be around 25-30 years old, but some have lived well past 50 years. This isn't common, but it can happen. Several horses throughout history have far surpassed the average life expectancy for an equine. Some of the most intriguing cases have been recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records, and even memorialized in museums.

1: Prospect Point- This Thoroughbred lived to be 38 years old (1978-2016). He was once raced successfully on the track and later bought to be used as a show hunter. He was owned by the same owner, Gail Earle, for 28 years.

While the age of 50 doesn't sound that impressive in terms of human years, if you consider the fact that a horse at 30 years is equivalent to a human of around 85 years, it makes it that much more impressive.

2: Magic- A Polish Arabian who at last report had reached 46 years (1969-Unknown), Magic competed in barrel racing and pole bending, bringing home seven awards at her last competition. Though Polish Arabians are known for their superior longevity, Magic is the oldest known Polish Arabian of all time.

3: Orchid- This horse is a Thoroughbred/Arabian cross who, depending on which report you get, reached 49-50 years old. Reports vary on the year of Orchid's birth, either 1964 or 1965, but passed away in 2015. Unfortunately, reports say Orchid was neglected and abused before being moved to the Remus Memorial Horse Sanctuary to live out her final days peacefully. She was the oldest mare to ever live.

4: Scribbles- Scribbles is a pony of unknown breed, but at last report lived to be at least 51 years of age. He was born in 1958 in Cornwall, England. His long lasting health has been attributed to his healthy diet consisting of a specialist food mix and cod liver oil. He was last owned by Alison Eathorne. Scribbles was retired in 2002 after working as a riding pony for 24 years at Strawberry Gardens Riding School in Camborne, England. Reports say he was already 20 years old when Jill Power purchased him for the riding school. The last public news of Scribbles was in 2009, when his current owner had initiated contact with the Guinness Book of World Records in hopes that he would outlive the last record holder, and it is unknown if he is still living.

5: Shayne- An Irish Draught with some Thoroughbred in his ancestry, Shayne lived to the ripe old age of 51. (1962-2013) The liver chestnut horse suffered from arthritis for an unknown length of time, but still enjoyed pasture time to the fullest.

He has roots in Brentwood Essex, England, and died at Remus Memorial Horse Sanctuary. He was put to rest after severe arthritis rendered him unable to stand in 2013. It is reported that he enjoyed the fresh air and sunshine up until his last day, living on a steady diet of sugar beet and chaff with some alfalfa nuts mixed in with cabbage for treats.

6: Badger- Another 51-year-old horse, this one of Arab-Welsh ancestry. (1953-2004) Badger still holds the official record in the Guinness book for the oldest horse. He died in 2004 after being rescued from a livery yard, where he was found near starvation from neglect. He was then brought back to health by Julianne Aston, the founder of the Veteran Horse Society in Wales. He was first owned by a Welsh riding instructor and entered a horse show under the name Little Boy Blue. He had two more owners before being left at the livery yard in 1997 where he nearly starved to death before being rescued and taken to the Veteran Horse Society. He was fortunate to be able to recover from the state he was in when Aston and her team found him, but he persisted in enjoying the remainder of his days. He lived out his last days happily retired at the Veteran Horse Society.

7: Sugar Puff- This pony is a Shetland-Exmoor cross who lived for 56 years (1951-2007) before collapsing and having to be put down. Sugar Puff is the oldest pony on record, coming from West Sussex, United Kingdom. He was used to teach many children how to ride and knew gymkhana and Pony Club well. Sugar Puff's last owner, Sally Botting, acquired him when he was already 29 years old. He taught Botting's daughter Clair to ride. He was reportedly such a member of the family in his last days that his owner, Sally Botting, brought the pony into the house every year at Christmas.

8: Old Billy – The World's Oldest Horse- Believed to be the world's oldest horse ever, Old Billy died on November 27, 1822, after reaching the age of 62 years. (1760-1822). Old Billy was a barge horse who worked well into his old age. No other horse is known to have lived as long. The Guinness Book had not yet become known for keeping world records in the stallion's lifetime, but it has become widely known and accepted that Old Billy deserves the honours of oldest horse to ever live.

Old Billy was from Woolston, Lancashire, England. His age and stamina made him a celebrity. He was memorialized in a painting by W. Taylor, which is still on display in the Warrington Museum and Art Gallery. Old Billy's skull was sent to the Manchester Museum where it is also still on display today. His skin was sent for taxidermy and his head is still on display at the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and Bedford Museums. His breed is unknown.



Why do Horses Live so Long?

Many factors can affect how long a horse lives, and though the average lifespan of a horse is 25 – 30 years, and 30-35 years for a pony the following horses have surpassed their life expectancy by over 20 years.

Though it is widely believed that the average horse might live to be around 30 years old, the age of horses without registration papers can be a little more difficult to track. Other methods for determining an accurate age might not be as reliable as we would like.

As horses grow older, it becomes increasingly more difficult to determine a horse's age by examining the horse's teeth because the changes in an equine's teeth which are used to determine age grow less pronounced as the horse ages. This means there might be some older horses out there that no one even knows about. However, the oldest recorded horses and ponies in history have lived well past 50 years – a remarkable feat for any equine. Reaching this advanced age would be equivalent to a human living around 140-150 years.

It is interesting to note that ponies tend to outlive their larger counterparts, possibly because of physiological differences. In short (pun intended), ponies don't go as fast as horses, resulting in better oxygenation in their blood which keeps them healthier. They can more easily match their breathing rates to the rate at which they use energy. Ponies also have stronger knee and leg bones, making it easier for them to do the difficult work of hauling, carrying, and pulling with less stress on the bones. Ponies are just physiologically more efficient.

The most common causes of death in geriatric horses and ponies include severe colic, dental disease, tumours, and pituitary diseases.

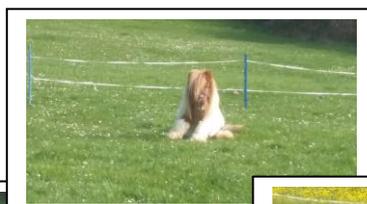
Though knowing how long your horse will live is just a guess because of outside factors as well as unknown circumstances, knowing the breed can give you some insight into how long horses like yours typically live. The chart below lists common horse breeds and their life expectancy.

Breed	Average Lifespan
Thoroughbred	25 - 28 years
Quarter Horse	25 - 35 years
Arabian	25 - 35 years
Appaloosa	25 - 33 years
Miniature Horse	25 - 35 years
Shire	25 - 30 years
Clydesdale	20 - 25 years

Although this chart is a general representation, often horses of each of these breeds live far past the expected lifespan. Advances in veterinary medicine have made it possible to help our equine friends live longer, healthier lives than they did a few years ago.

It is said that a horse year is equal to 6 1/2 human years for the first 3 years of the horse's life. Beginning around the age of 4, horse ages at a rate of at least two and a half years per human year. This means a 5-year-old horse is roughly 23 in human years. If your horse reaches 30-years-old, the human equivalency in years would be 85 1/2 human years!

So, since Rambo is 38 years (estimated- he might well be older) that would make him 105.5 years old in human years!!! Wish he'd act it 😊



DIARY DATES

There will be no monthly meetings until July at the earliest.

More information to follow once restrictions have been lifted.

If anyone has some ideas for speakers at our meetings, do please contact **Beth Bracey** with details.

Please also note that all BRC area competitions have been put on hold until at least July 2020.

QUALIFIER SHOW DATES: For this season.....

2020 Qualifiers:

On Hold



Dressage Series

The Championships scheduled for April will be an on line competition. More details to follow shortly.

**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**

What do YOU have in your First Aid kit??

I saw a post on FB this week, and some of the posts were quite interesting.... what do you have in yours??

- Sudocream is a must and lots of gauze and bandages (available in £1 shops)
- Aqueous cream and Manuka honey
- Nappies (nappies were a popular choice, particularly for poultices), epsom salts, strong duct tape, silver ointment, thermometer, golden eye ointment, hibiscrub, white soft paraffin
- Antihistamine for bites and stings
- Scissors, vet wrap, rubber gloves, syringes, vet cottonwool, small bucket, ice packs, bin bags
- Udder cream! Useful for lots of things... Mud fever, mites, small cuts etc... Large clean empty yoghurt pot for mixing salt water/diluted hibi scrub for cleaning and syringe for flushing out feet. I swear by silver feet or sole paint for thrushy feet. Clean sponges. Clean gauze. Can normally get basic bandages etc cheap online or in pharmacies. Duct tape. Poultice pads (I've never been successful with nappies 🐶 🐱 🐹) thermometer. Anthisan for bites and stings. Spray on plaster (for tiny cuts, don't use if you're calling the vet, same with sudocreme as they won't be able to see the wound properly) wondergel or well gel instead of sudocreme as it's clear (even used on myself/children 😊) arnica and witch hazel for swellings
- Manuka honey for cuts, udder cream for under tails and cleaning lady bits and I used it instead of sheath cleaner, baby fragrance free wet wipes
- Sudocrem, metanium, benzoyl benzoate, Epsom salts, duct tape, nappies
- Filta bac cream...Fantastic!!! It's a wound cream for minor wounds. It's also a great sunscreen. At our yard we all have a tube and call it magic white cream!!! Fixes anything!!
- Vaseline, zinc and castor oil
- Nappies, Ducktape & Epsom Salts for poulticing hooves.
- You can laugh but a packet of night extra long sanitary pads as they are always clean and individually wrapped and if there is a cut that needs an urgent pressure dressing they are easy to pop onto the wound and bandage on top in an emergency
- Fragrance free wipes. Ducktape. Nappies. Big scissors. Epsom salts. Stockholm tar. Vet wrap never ever enough 🤔 vaseline. Sudo cream. Purple spray. Iodine and caster sugar (for a mix) tea tree oil amazing for wound treatment. Hibi scrub. Cotton wool and loads of the stuff 😊 Back up head torch is the there 😊 flamazine, germoline. clipper oil because I forever forget with the clippers 🤔 box of disposable gloves. Sheath cleaner and silver spray and witch hazel and cotton pads to go with 🤔 think that's all apart from name ties and hairbobbles 🤔 🤔
- good pair of scissors
- Pink Hoof Clay
- The above plus stethoscope to listen for bowel sounds and heart rate.



Latest Blog from Sallyanne!!

So the date was set and we had about 4 weeks to work towards the RDA Walk and Trot test.

After discussion with my instructors Beth and Karen, I decided to ride the test on Flynn. I have been riding a horse called Robbie at the RDA, but I also ride Flynn who is owned by Beth Hobbs. They are both very different and it's great that I have the opportunity to ride different horses as they both challenge me in different ways

The reason I decided to do the test on Flynn is because I am a full Member with British Para Dressage (BD) and it's Flynn who I will be riding in these competitions in the future so it makes sense to progress the relationship with Flynn and especially to attend a competition. I need to get my confidence up in a competition environment. As many of you will know, horses do behave differently out than they do at home, so I need to get use to riding Flynn in different environments.

So, we took Flynn to the RDA centre to do some practice sessions before the competition so he could get used to the warmup arena and the big indoor arena. I had a couple of lessons with Karen and Beth working on my test. I had decided to do the test with a side walker as this would be my first trot test and I knew on the day that my nerves would be heightened, but in the practice sessions I trotted Flynn on my own - but Beth had to run alongside me!! I find this hard work, so Beth running must be even harder. Well good job she's fit. She will be glad when I am working more independently then she can actually teach from the side.

I have to say a massive thank you to all my para team and helpers as I know I couldn't do it without them. I was struggling to find transport to get me to the RDA this time, but a friend of Beth's called Letty took Flynn there for me in her lorry. I really appreciate this as prior to my accident I had my own lorry and could go where I wanted when I wanted and that independence, I took for granted as now I can't do any of this on my own. I get really frustrated at times and quite upset as this makes me feel so reliant on others.

Well the day came for the competition, I arrived at the RDA to find Beth and her mum Lynn already there. Flynn looked amazing - so clean and his plating was gorgeous. Beth takes so much pride in turning out her horses looking tip top!! As we had the lorry today, we had our hoist that was supplied and fitted by Dolphin Mobility - one of my sponsors on the Leg up for Talent program. This meant I could mount in the car park and go straight into the warm up arena. I love this hoist as it makes attending any venue easy as many arenas don't have hoist facilities.

Once on board we warmed up, and then it was my turn to dance, I entered the arena and this always fills me with more excitement than nerves. I was so determined to nail the trot and ride my corners today. I had learnt the test, but my instructor Karen called it just in case nerves set in. I rode the test well and was so pleased with my trot work; I nailed the accuracy and even scored a 9 for this movement. I lost activity in the corners, which I know is something I've got to work on as I think its confidence due to balance. Most of the scores were 7.5 and 8's and I was over the moon. With my overall score being 78.6% to give me second place. I was so happy to have finally achieved trotting and attending a competition. With the day over and a massive grin on my face we went home to plan our next adventure!!



To calm, or not to calm?

March's speaker was Malcolm Green from Equifeast, who spoke to us about the products his company have developed, and the issues of calmers. EquiFeast prides itself on being an innovator in the horse supplements and feed industry. Not satisfied to rely on almost completely unfunded equine science the company has invested heavily in its own research projects almost exclusively in conjunction with its customers. In 2014 it won the National FSB/Worldpay Award for Business Innovation primarily for the way it leveraged its close customer relationships into powerful data that informed both product design and customer service.



The firm's pioneering work has developed a completely new way of looking at magnesium. A while ago calcium was almost unheard of in horse calmers. EquiFeast's VCAL chelated calcium technology is now finding applications outside its starting point of behaviour and performance and research is ongoing in the areas of muscles, tendons and ligaments, bones, gut function, sweating, sex hormones and dopamine release. Beyond chelated calcium and magnesium the firm is pioneering incredibly powerful ways of supporting the immune system. It is the immune system's job to deal with allergies as well as infections.

Malcolm told us about the history of his company which actually started with birds, in particular parrots!

1994 Malcolm and Sally Green started The Birdcare Company and introduced chelated calcium to the UK cage and aviary bird supplements market.

1997 Market leader UK cage bird supplement supplier as The Birdcare Company.

1999 Started exporting bird products to the USA and Europe.

2001 Second firm to introduce the key ingredients for "White Cell Support" in any UK animal feed/supplement.

2005 EquiFeast was founded with flagship products, Cool, Calm & Collected™, Essential Daily Care, Easy Mover™ and Fight Back™. "White Cell Support" included as key ingredient in Fight Back™.

2007 WINNINGEDGETM Launched. First top ten 4* eventing result.

2008 Secret trials of VCAL chelated calcium in horse calmers. First EquiFeast supplemented horse at the Olympics (Snip – Joe Meyer).

2009 Introduction of VCAL chelated calcium into Cool, Calm & Collected™ & WINNINGEDGETM. Patent application submitted for VCAL chelated calcium. 19 year old Midnight Dazzler 10th at Badminton Horse Trials.

2011 First blood trials on horses commenced. Changed company name to Calinnova Ltd (innovators with calcium).

2012 First Olympic medals (Gold and Bronze, Mistral Hjoris, Laura Bechtolsheimer). UK Patent granted. Further blood trials in UK. Mag FREE products launched. First Australian blood trials on horses and first EquiFeast products made and sold in Australia. Winner – Business Innovation Award, Stroud Life.

2013 Further blood trials in UK. Lo-Mag and Hi-Mag products launched.

2014 Australian and Canadian Patents granted. National Winner – Business Innovation Award, FSB/WorldPay Awards Finalist – Business Innovation Award, Stroud Life. Finalist – Customer Care Award, Stroud Life. Launch of first feed range, CORE&MORE.

Artificial added magnesium from feeds and supplements is probably doing your horse more harm than good. Equifeast are in the position of having conducted blood trials, collected years worth of data from customers and studied the science (which all supports us) yet the pro-magnesium lobby is so strong that they have been banned from a Facebook group for having the temerity to ask proponents of magnesium to support their arguments with science. They can't. So why are we they so concerned?

It is their view that horses sedated with artificial magnesium sources are less able to make safe decisions. The company policy is not to sell products that run a significant risk of making riding more dangerous. Excess magnesium interferes with a cellular process called calcium signalling (CS). CS is what switches almost every cell in our bodies on and off - so it is crucial.

Equifeast's unique chelated calcium technology supports calcium signalling. It is clear from years of monitoring customer feedback plus blood trials that chelated calcium works less well when artificial magnesium levels in the diet remain too high. The added magnesium in formulated feeds, supplements and calmers could be doing far more harm than good. Magnesium based calmers are by far the most common in the equine supplements market, yet experience from client feedback suggests that magnesium fails in far more horses than they help. A small trial conducted in 2008 suggested that magnesium calmers will only work in approximately 25% of horses. Grass and hay, even from low magnesium soils, almost always provides far more than the recommended level of magnesium, so adding more can actually create issues. Magnesium is a sedative. It has been used in anaesthesia in both horses and humans for decades. The mechanisms by which it has this effect are pretty well understood (blocking NMDA channels and calcium receptors). In effect it prevents the normal switching on of cellular processes inside cells all over the body. When this happens in the brain, the horse is sedated; think of it as a chemical brain impairment. It is because of these issues, injectable magnesium is on the FEI's prohibited substances list. Jess Dodd in Australia has gone a long way to suggesting we can. She measured how fast horses ran away from an acute scare and compared the effect of magnesium supplementation with the veterinary sedative Acepromazine (ACE, ACP, Sedalin). She then found similar results when using both 2.5 grams and 10 grams of magnesium.

So if you have a spooky horse and you give it more magnesium, you may well think that it is calmer. In fact, it is likely to be mildly sedated. Of course, some horses sedate really nicely and are fine to ride. However, research suggests many horses become more anxious and less able to cope with pressure when given surprising small amounts of supplementary magnesium. "Brain impairing" horse calmers create Jekyll and Hyde personalities that switch from sedated to dangerous; sometimes in the time it takes to click your fingers. Good horse calmers improve brain function and enable horses to understand their environment!

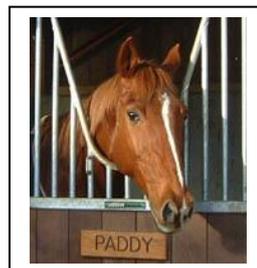
Without doubt calcium is a very important nutrient for brain function*. In simplistic terms the inside of a resting nerve cell is a calcium free zone. The animal invests a huge amount of energy in maintaining this. When the cell needs to fire, a pulse of calcium ions is pumped into the cell to 'switch it on'. Elegantly this calcium switches on many cell functions (like neurotransmission) but also it activates the pumps that shift it back out again. This is calcium signalling. The hypothesis that calcium in chelated form has an important role in this process, involving things inside cells called VDACs and removing the calcium ions from the cell cytoplasm and returning the cell to the resting state. However as yet the molecular mechanism is unexplained.

Magnesium has over 300 jobs in the body but the most important for nerve and brain function, is the provision of energy in the form used at a cellular level. Insufficient magnesium leads to insufficient energy and poor brain function. Poor brain function leads to difficult behaviour as the animal is unable to evaluate its surroundings properly. Horses suffering from a magnesium deficiency will therefore be 'calmed' by a dietary increase of both magnesium and chelated calcium, as that leads to improved brain function. This approach to 'calming' can have a negative effect on behaviour. This is because excess magnesium blocks the calcium receptors in nerve cells, impairing normal function. This is known as magnesium being a calcium antagonist.

Equifeast's trials suggest that the provision of chelated calcium not only improves brain function in its own right but also helps the horse to control its blood magnesium level (up or down as necessary). But this effect is limited if nutritional intake of magnesium is too high.

One example Malcolm gave us was that of Paddy- Paddy was a typically spooky chestnut Thoroughbred with four white socks. Living on Cotswold limestone he could never have been calcium deficient, which was why it took Malcolm a number of years of wasted time with magnesium before he tried him on a chelated calcium supplement. In 2008 Malcolm had just had a frustrating spooky schooling session so he put Paddy in the stable and poured 1/2 litre of their expensive cage bird calcium supplement down his throat. 25 minutes later he let out a big sigh and went back to the school for a settled session with no spooks. And that was the beginning of trials using chelated calcium with horses.

Malcolm gave us further examples of horses and riders he has worked with, who have provided testimonials, available on Equifeast's website. It was a thought provoking talk and covered not only behaviour issues, but also using chelated calcium products for horses with EMS, Cushings and laminitis.



Further details: <https://equifeast-shop.com/>

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'People are ready for change': New calls for laws to protect horses on roads (from Horse & Hound)

Riders are urged to sign a new petition calling for laws to protect horses on the roads.

The petition, created by road safety campaigner Debbie Smith, is asking the government to make sections 163 and 215 of the Highway Code law. This would mean drivers must only overtake when safe to do so, pass horses wide and slow, at a maximum of 15mph, and abide by riders' requests to slow down or stop.

Debbie, founder of the Pass Wide and Slow (PWAS) Facebook group, told *H&H* if the sections were made law she hopes the police could prosecute more drivers who do not pass horses safely.

"At the moment the Highway Code only advises drivers – **there is no law to say people have to pass slowly,**" she said.

"Drivers can pass you at 60mph and if they're not breaking the speed limit, it's very difficult to prosecute."

The petition launched on Wednesday (4 February) evening and has reached more than 8,800 signatures so far. At 10,000 signatures the government must respond.

"The response has been incredible. The signatures have gone up so fast – it's made me feel like I'm not on my own on this," said Debbie, who successfully took a road safety petition to parliament in 2016.

"You would think people might get bored of petitions but the comments have been really positive and people are keen to get it done."

Debbie said the ultimate aim is to reach 100,000 signatures, which means **the petition will be considered for debate by parliament.**

"We need to get it into parliament," she said. '

"People are ready for a change. I think they saw the first petition get to parliament and have thought let's keep banging on about it. Some people said it wouldn't get there and it did."

Debbie hopes **the PWAS awareness rides being held across the UK on 10 May** will help raise awareness of the petition.

"We have 137 awareness rides planned so far. We've asked everyone who is hosting a ride to create an event on Facebook and share the petition," she said.

"Everyone needs to sign it and share it and help us get the law changed so riders are protected. You can't be confident we'll get to 100,000 as people can get bored but we've got to keep trying."

The petition link is: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/300122>

Highway Code Rules 163 and 215 to be made law. Pass horses wide and slow.

I am calling on the Secretary of State for Transport to make the following rules in the Highway Code actual laws:

Section 163 - Overtake only when it is safe and legal to do so.

Section 215 - Horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles pass wide and slow max 15mph and abide to our stop slow, signal

The Highway Code states:

Section 163: Overtake only when safe it is safe and legal to do so.

Section 215: Be particularly careful of horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles especially when overtaking. Always pass wide and slowly. Horse riders are often children, so take extra care and remember riders may ride in double file when escorting a young or inexperienced horse or rider. Look out for horse riders' and horse drivers' signals and heed a request to slow down or stop. Take great care and treat all horses as a potential hazard; they can be unpredictable, despite the efforts of their rider/driver.



And finally.....

We are living in unprecedented times in recent memory. It is increasingly unlikely that any equestrian events will be taking place in the near future as organisers quite rightly follow appropriate guidelines regarding Covi-19.

There is a facebook link below should you wish to keep up to date regarding this: Horse Show Cancellations & Postponed
https://www.facebook.com/groups/215159819688657/?multi_permalink=216114609593178¬if_id=1584518968109135¬if_t=group_activity

I hope all our members, many of whom may be self-isolating or working from home, stay safe, and look out for others that may be vulnerable in your local community. Please look at our facebook page and post if you need support!

Meanwhile....

