



NEWSLETTER Summer 2019

From the Chair.....

Hi everybody hope you are all enjoying the glorious weather & the flies are not affecting your ponio's too much. Although I don't think the horse flies are as bad this year, maybe we are lucky here.

Hope you are all getting out & about to the shows & enjoying competing. The teams have done really well this summer, am so proud of our members who are representing the club, we are one of the smaller clubs & I think we do really well against the clubs with huge memberships.

I hope you will all be pleased to hear that I am riding again & look forward to getting out & about again when I am fitter.

Enjoy the summer & your horses.

Jane & Coco.

VHPRC Open Show
Leyland Court
Sunday 29th Sept 2019

*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

**Bitton Sports and Social club
(BS30 6HX)**

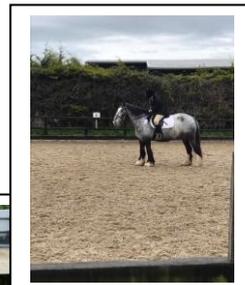
**Opposite Fonthill Garden Centre
Bar available but only snacks**

VHPRC Dressage Championships 28th April 2019

The championships were held at Woodfield Stables and was very well attended. The competition was fierce and results had little between them, so huge congratulations to all our champions. And also everyone in the Club would like to say **THANK YOU** to Deb Vickery for organising the series, and all the members who have supported her, giving up their time. We would also like to express thanks to Mike & Sue Fews for letting us hold the competitions at the yard.

Results

<p>Class 1A Intro C</p> <p>1st Maddie Bundy Little Gem 2nd Makayla Green Fly 3rd Ellis Jarvis Derryeen Boy 4th Brooklyn Daw Bella 6th Nicky Jenkins Blossom</p> <p>Class 1B</p> <p>1st Linda Knight Trooper 2nd Tila Winstone Miro 3rd Emma Lovell Mollie 4th Tila Winstone Ferdinand 5th Jon Clare Collie 6th Keira Winstone Rosie</p>	<p>Class 2 Prelim 13</p> <p>1st Tila Winstone Ferdinand 2nd Tila Winstone Miro 3rd Emma Lovell Mollie 4th Keira Winstone Rosie 5th Isabella Kendrick Ballyanny Buttons 6th Elizabeth Abbott CoCo Reef</p>	<p>Class 3 Prelim 14</p> <p>1st Elizabeth Abbott CoCo Reef 2nd Charlotte Alford Josie 3rd Rowena Baker Penpont Emin 4th Susan Fews Ringo 5th Christine Saunders Greylands Alleycat 6th Lucy Kendrick Clayhill Chillout</p>																														
<p>Class 4 PYO</p> <p>1st Charlotte Alford Josie 2nd Claire Phipps McFluffy 3rd Tila Winstone Oscar 4th Claire Phipps Dizzy 5th Katie Smith PferdeStud Irish Cream 6th Elizabeth Abbott CoCo Reef</p>	<p>Points Championship</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">1st Keira Winstone</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Rosie</td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: right;">33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2nd Maddie Bundy</td> <td>Little Gem</td> <td style="text-align: right;">24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3rd Brooklyn Daw</td> <td>Hollybrook Astra</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4th Tila Winstone</td> <td>Miro</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5th Laura Barwood</td> <td>Jack</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6th Ellis Jarvis</td> <td>April</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7th Emma Lovell</td> <td>Mollie</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8th Mishila Fotheringham</td> <td>Valerie</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9th Katie Smith</td> <td>PferdeStud Irish Cream</td> <td style="text-align: right;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10th Olivia Pocock</td> <td>Hollybrook Astra</td> <td style="text-align: right;">11</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1 st Keira Winstone	Rosie	33	2 nd Maddie Bundy	Little Gem	24	3 rd Brooklyn Daw	Hollybrook Astra	20	4 th Tila Winstone	Miro	19	5 th Laura Barwood	Jack	15	6 th Ellis Jarvis	April	13	7 th Emma Lovell	Mollie	12	8 th Mishila Fotheringham	Valerie	12	9 th Katie Smith	PferdeStud Irish Cream	11	10 th Olivia Pocock	Hollybrook Astra	11
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Catching Up with Sallyanne

Quite a while ago we were favoured by an inspiring talk by Sallyanne Haigh, and some of our members volunteered to help her with her aspirations to become a para dressage rider. Perhaps it's time to have a catch up from her blog....

13th April: 'Its 3 years since my horse riding accident when my horse fell on top of me at a x country rally. I broke my back from T11-L2 and sustained a spinal injury. Paralysing myself from the waist down. I spent 7 months in hospital, it has been a life changing injury. For me and my family and everyone close to me knows how hard the last 3 years have been.

I always knew I wanted to get back in the saddle. This has been one of the hardest things I have done a huge challenge for me, I am so lucky to have the help and support from Beth Hobbs BHSII and the Lone Oak family, as none of this would be possible without every single person who supports me. Right from the beginning Beth supported me, offering one of her own horses Flynn to be trained for Para Dressage if I wanted to get back in the saddle. Super Flynn as he's known at home is one of the most amazing horses I have ever been around. I am so lucky to be able to ride him. But it's not been plain sailing, even in walk! I have to ride by balance, core strength and determination!

So I have been working towards doing a dressage test, we have entered some online dressage competitions for practice and decided it was time to do our first test. Well me, Flynn and the para team went to Avon RDA to do our first ever competition. We only entered our first competition and won!!! It was so overwhelming for me and it opened the floodgates!! I think the actual realization of what I've achieved hit home... it was the most amazing feeling in the world. I have so many people to thanks for actually making this possible.'



5th May: Nothing was going to stop me reaching for that dream that one day I could attend and take part in a competition!! Being selected for British Dressage at the ICC was a dream come true.

The para team attended and we won a first place and a championship rosette with the BD south west para team. I was physically and emotionally overwhelmed. I still can't believe that I managed to ride a test independently. None of this would have been possible without the team that help me every week Jo, Tess, Jane and Rowena, and Lyn Miller for driving the lorry so we could attend the venue and be able to have the rider hoist there on the back of the lorry.

I really appreciate the help and support that each and everyone gives me to actually make this happen.



Sallyanne is now raising money for a good cause-

Black Tie charity Ball in aid of Great Western Air Ambulance (GWAAC) 28TH SEPTEMBER 2019

'3 years ago I was involved in an equestrian accident where I sustained a spinal injury and was left paralyzed from the waist down. The air ambulance attend many equestrian accidents. As a horse rider I was so lucky to be air lifted to hospital by this amazing charity.'

'Every single penny going to support GWAAC (Great Western Air Ambulance Charity) who attended my equestrian accident in 2015!! It's time to give something back!! Help me raise lots of money ♥'

Details are on our VHPRC facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/363732833695080/permalink/2090836404318039/>

Some interesting reflections from social media- food for thought?

'Am I a good rider?' She asked, pensively,
sat upon her 14.2 cob, covered in poo stains that she couldn't quite get out before her lesson, that she had persuaded her mum to buy a year ago for just £400. (It wasn't wanted anymore)

'Why do you ask that?' Her instructor replied,
for she knew how this young girl felt,
her eyes often lingered somewhere in-between her horses ears or the other side of the school when teaching.
'Because I want to be one'

Her instructor pondered on this for a good few minutes, whilst reassuring the nervous cob in front, and then said,
'A good rider is not someone who buys flashy horses and competes every Saturday and makes it to the top within a year.
A good rider is not who jumps the highest jumps or owns the fastest horse.
A good rider isn't made just because they've been riding since they were 3.
A good rider is not someone who can move their forward horse forward...
no

A good rider is that pony clubber you see fall off every time she gets on something new, yet still gets back on with a smile on her face,

A good rider is that girl who cries in the tack room because of how her horse behaved and how hard it's been to cope watching everyone else be successful, but to her it seems like she is the only one failing, yet still rewards her horse with a treat and a smile because at least he was better than last time,

A good rider is the boy with the angel horse, yet doesn't claim any of its successes for himself
"It was all him", he would say, "I just sat to it"

A good rider listens

A good rider is soft

A good rider makes sure the horse is always happy,

As a matter of fact, a good rider often has nothing to do with the riding,

If you love it, and you try, and you try again, even when you fall off and it was your fault, even when people point because your seat isn't quite as deep as they'd prefer,

if you never give up,

That's what makes a good rider'

Written by Daisy Henderson https://www.facebook.com/The-Broken-Eventer-2140214982700066/?eid=ARD5mwRucHBiFcFGkzCiq7MJJa7JqfRN_Y_JRxPr0FsW7GnbxSBYasE3IG2O8cam0Q9dszTCZkr8NRSRi

And for all of us that have loved and lost ❤️

"I'll ride tomorrow"

Tomorrow

Tomorrow

There's no more tomorrows

No more rides

No more cantering down your favourite track. No more listening to his hooves as you trot down the road.
No more Sunday afternoon walks. No more "us" time.

Never say you'll ride tomorrow, because you never know how many tomorrows you have left. You'll never know when will be the last time you land a perfect round, or that perfect square halt.

You'll never know when the last time will be when you amble down those beautiful paths in the summer sun. You'll never know when will be the last time you reach for the saddle.

So ride. Ride like every time is the last time. Like ever canter, trot, walk, jump and halt is your last. Come home smiling from ear to ear, even if the ride didn't go as planned.

Give him a pat, a treat, a hug, a kiss. Tell him that he was amazing and you love him. Because even when it doesn't go right, it may be the last time you get to dream of your goals on his back.

What I'd give to be able to ace a jump course, a perfect halt, to canter down our track, to hear his hooves beat against the road. To reach for his saddle.

So ride it like you stole it. Because each time, you're stealing back a tomorrow.



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Garry Parker

Garry Parker came to our May meeting to talk about his experiences in the King's Troop and his Help for Heroes ride in Australia.

He served as mounted gunner in the King's Troop 1975- 1978. From a news article Evening Standard 2012:

"Thousands watched the mounted unit, which fires gun salutes for the Queen, shut the stable door on its St John's Wood barracks for the last time, and ride to Hyde Park.

There, at midday, it gave a 41-gun salute to mark the official start of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, before heading to Woolwich and its new purpose-built home.

Hundreds of former gunners and officers were invited back to bid farewell to St John's Wood, and there were emotional scenes in a packed high street as schoolchildren and locals watched the troop pull its six 13-pounder First World War guns.

A veteran, Garry Parker, was a gunner between 1975 and 1978, with duties including the Windsor funeral of Field Marshal Montgomery in 1976 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee a year later. The King's Troop provides the gun carriage used in all royal and state funerals.

Today, for the first time in more than 40 years, Mr Parker met a former colleague who saved his life. He told how, while in an army unit standing in for firefighters during a strike in about 1977, he had fallen between two rooftops in the Isle of Dogs but was helped to safety. Had his colleague not saved him, Mr Parker would have fallen 40 feet onto railings.

He said it had been an honour to perform a royal salute. "In our small way, we are honouring our country. The hours of blistering hard work that go into getting this equine circus on the road is an amazing logistical achievement.

"If we go back 100 years men were doing exactly the same as today, but they were going to war. They were going to use those guns. We are honouring those men that did go to war."

The Ministry of Defence decided not to renew its lease on the St John's Wood site, which will be demolished for housing. Mr Parker said: "It's a heartbreaking experience for anybody who was in the troop or associated with it."



Garry was the first British rider to attempt the 5,330km Bicentennial National Trial in Australia, set up by the saddler RM Williams in the Seventies, from Cooktown in Queensland Australia to Healesville near Melbourne to raise £100,000 for Help for Heroes. The patron of the ride is Brough Scott.

Garry had his 4 legged companions, 'Brumbies' from Guy Fawkes National Park. Heritage Horses (often misnamed Brumbies) are the foundation stock of the original Walers & have significant heritage value. As Australia's living history, they are kind, inquisitive, loyal & steadfast, free moving, strong & sure footed, suiting all disciplines, environments & abilities.

Garry carried all his equipment on his second horse and slept under canvas miles from anywhere. He had a few close shaves, running out of food and water several times and having to hitchhike into towns hundreds of miles away to restock with supplies.

'The bush out there isn't a forgiving place and I learned a lot about how to survive,' he says. 'Sometimes I'd just sleep on a pile of rocks at night. At one point I went without water for myself and my horses in scorching heat. I had to hitchhike into a town which took me a day and a half and then hitchhike back again to get food for them.

'I met some incredible people along the way, who were kind, generous and incredibly enthusiastic about a pom going out to Australia and doing this.'

Sadly both one of his horses and Garry himself became very ill during the journey, forcing him to abandon the trip.



The **Bicentennial National Trail** is Australia's premier long distance, multi-use recreational trekking route, stretching an extraordinary 5,330 kilometres from Cooktown in tropical far north Queensland to Healesville in Victoria. In 1999 the NSW government recognised the significance of the Trail, and established a Coordinator to work with the government agencies and the community in NSW to develop and incorporate access agreements.

The Bicentennial National Trail follows historic coach and stock routes, old pack horse trails, mail runs and country roads for over 5000 kilometres through Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. Wherever possible, along its great length, the Trail provides a living history of our country, following the routes of early pioneers and highlighting historic and heritage sites and artifacts along the way.

As it winds along Australia's eastern seaboard the Trail reveals some of the most spectacular scenery in the country. It traverses lush tropical rainforests, rugged mountains, valleys and gorges, remote dry plains, alpine meadows, snowfields and wilderness.

The Trail provides access to some of the wildest, most inaccessible country in the world and provides endless fascination for those interested in Australia's unique fauna and flora.

The Bicentennial National Trail was originally conceived as a route for the long distance horse trekker but is now enjoyed by cyclists and walkers as well.

It is not always possible to traverse the whole route, or even a large part of it, in a single journey.

History and tropical beauty come together in this very demanding and remote section which begins in Cooktown exactly where Captain Cook beached *Endeavour* in 1770. The Trail heads south from Cooktown through the tropical rainforests of Cedar Bay National Park to Daintree and Mossman before turning west into an area which, in stark contrast to the coastal areas, is harsh and dry. The dry season (April – October) is recommended for travel as many rivers and creeks are impassable during the wet. Crocodiles are a danger and water can be elusive inland.

Gunnawarra to Collinsville: Passing through vast remote cattle stations in the steps of our pioneers, travellers develop a special fondness for this isolated section of the Trail. It follows lonely roads along the wide stock routes to the ghost town of Ravenswood, and the massive Burdekin Dam, then follows the rivers to Collinsville, a large inland mining town. This section is mostly easy flat travelling but extreme care should be taken in the wet season when most rivers flood and flash flooding is common and in dry conditions when feed and water may not be available.

Kabra to Biggenden: Much of this section is through rugged, often dry terrain but the hardships are richly rewarded. After leaving the National Trust classified town of Mt. Morgan, the Trail follows the Don River to its head in the Calliope Ranges, past Biloela and into the seemingly impenetrable wilderness of the Kroombit Tops. Rainforest and rare native fauna occupy the massive gorges. Beyond Monto the terrain eases as the Trail follows roads and tracks to Mt. Perry then through the Goodnight Scrub to the Burnett River.

Biggenden to Blackbutt: In this area the Trail is mostly through forests along the coastal ranges. Many of the roads and tracks are the original pioneer routes.

Blackbutt to Killarney: A pleasant mix of forests and farmland, the Trail here follows the foothills of the Great Dividing Range and passes just to the east of Toowoomba. The BNT links to the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail at Blackbutt. South of Ravensbourne the Trail is mostly along quiet roads.

Killarney to Ebor: This section traverses rugged remote country just east of the Great Dividing Range, following the Demon Fault Line. The route is well watered but long climbs require a high level of fitness in walkers, riders and horses. There is a great variety of scenery and access to several national parks including Bald Rock, Gibraltar Range and the rainforest wilderness of Walshpool National Park is nearby. A special feature is the most remote part of the Trail, following the Guy Fawkes River through the Guy Fawkes National Park. The higher parts can be bitterly cold in winter and the best time is after the spring rains. There are no facilities on the Trail between Killarney and Ebor.

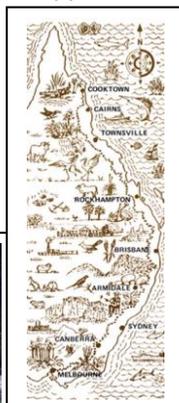
Hendra virus is a zoonotic disease, which means it can transfer from animals to people. Hendra virus can cause disease in animals and, rarely, in humans.

First discovered in 1994 at a racing stable in the Brisbane suburb of Hendra, it has caused the death of more than 80 horses across Queensland and New South Wales. It also claimed the lives of 4 out of the 7 humans infected between 1994 and 2014.

Flying foxes are a natural reservoir for Hendra virus, although they do not show any signs of illness when infected.

Hendra virus can cause a range of clinical signs in horses and should be considered where there is an acute onset of clinical signs and rapid progression to death associated with respiratory and/or neurological signs.

The mortality rate in affected horses is approximately 80%. Fortunately Garry's horse did recover!



TICKS!!!! A SUMMER MENACE

Recently one of my ponies Phoenix had an nasty encounter with a tick (in fact more than one as it turned out!) which resulted in a rather expensive outcome as said ticks decided to feast on his sheath which was quite a vulnerable area on a very little pony! As a result, he was extremely swollen for several days and had to be sedated to remove the last one (he really wasn't inclined for anyone to try without!), and had to be put on a course of antibiotics in case of Lyme's disease. They are particularly found in long grass so can attach to dogs and other animals too, so be alert and check regularly!



Ticks are related to spiders, mites and scorpions. There are many different species of tick living in Britain, each preferring to feed on the blood of different animal hosts. The one most likely to bite humans in Britain is the Sheep tick, or Castor Bean tick, *Ixodes ricinus*. Despite its name, the sheep tick will feed from a wide variety of mammals and birds. Bites from other ticks are possible, including from the Hedgehog tick, *Ixodes hexagonus*, and the Fox or Badger tick, *Ixodes canisuga*. However the ticks that my pony probably encountered were likely to have been spread by deer which are prevalent in our fields and woods.

There are four stages to a tick's life-cycle: egg, larva, nymph, and adult. Larvae, nymphs and adults spend most of the time on the ground protected by leaf litter, leaving this protection to find a meal. They feed only once in each stage, staying attached for a few days, then dropping to the ground to moult into the next stage or overwinter. The whole life cycle from egg to adult lasts around 2 years.



To the naked eye the larvae look like minute pale spiders, not much bigger than a full stop. Nymphs are slightly larger and darker, pinhead or poppy seed size. Larvae have six legs and nymphs and adults eight. It is the nymph which is most likely to bite you.

Ticks feed on the blood of other animals. If a larval tick picks up an infection from a small animal such as a mice, when it next feeds as a nymph it can pass the infection to the next animal or human it bites.

They cannot jump or fly, but when ready for a meal will climb a nearby piece of vegetation and wait for a passing animal or human to catch their hooked front legs. This behaviour is known as questing. The tick will not necessarily bite immediately, but will often spend some time finding a suitable site on the skin, so it is important to brush off pets and clothing before going inside.

Once a tick has started to feed, its body will become filled with blood. Adult females can swell to many times their original size. As their blood sacs fill they generally become lighter in colour and can reach the size of a small pea, generally grey in colour. Larvae, nymphs and adult males do not swell as much as they feed, so the size of the tick is not a reliable guide to the risk of infection. If undisturbed, a tick will feed for around 5 to 7 days before letting go and dropping off. The bite is usually painless and most people will only know they have been bitten if they happen to see a feeding tick attached to them.

The risk of infection increases the longer the tick is attached, but can happen at any time during feeding. As tick bites are often unnoticed, it may be difficult to determine how long it has been attached. Any tick bite should be considered as posing a risk of infection, particularly Lyme's Disease. However they can also transmit Babesiosis and Rickettsiosis which are more rare.

It is really important that you do NOT use eyebrow tweezers to remove a tick as this may squash it. **Use a proper tick removal tool.** If you try to smother a tick eg with Vaseline, it will regurgitate its stomach contents before dying, which will transmit disease.

For more information: <https://www.lymediseaseaction.org.uk/about-ticks/>

Try something new in 2019 — horseball Any takers for this exciting sport??

Described as a mixture of mounted rugby and basketball, horseball is a relatively new team sport which is fast gaining in popularity in the UK.

It involves a special ball fitted with handles, and mounted players lean down to pick up the ball, pass it to each other and attempt to put it through the goal hoops without being tackled by the opposing team. It's fast, furious, and — according to players — tremendous fun.

British Horseball Association coach Hayley Garner (pictured on the grey below) has been riding since she was 11 and has competed in dressage and showjumping as well as horseball. She's been playing since she was 12 and has competed in the first (pro elite) division as well as representing Great Britain.

“Picking up the ball is actually a lot easier than it looks — once you have the initial confidence to slide down the side of the horse, it soon becomes second nature and before you know it, you're picking the ball up in canter,” says Hayley. “Over the years I've trained a lot of riders who have lost their confidence, and playing horseball has in fact really helped and encouraged them to keep riding.”



Sarah Hudgins has ridden since childhood and competed in multiple disciplines. She was always heavily involved with ex-racehorses and first discovered horseball at a Retraining of Racehorses (RoR) 'have a go' day. Four years later, she now plays in the second division with The Nottingham Knights. She agrees with Hayley that initially horseball can take a bit of getting used to!

“Many people find the hardest thing is letting go of the reins completely to throw and catch the ball, my coach can still often be heard shouting ‘two hands’ at us,” she laughs. “Also, the first time you see the huge, inflatable barrier you wonder how on earth your horse is going to cope but somehow, they just do!

“The key skill you need is balance and it's actually surprisingly easy to get the hang of. The strap that goes from stirrup to stirrup under the horse is what makes collecting the ball from the floor possible and you're pulling against yourself rather than the horse. Once you feel how secure the strap is, pick ups aren't nearly as scary as they sound! Tackling is great fun, and even the quietest rider gets competitive when they try to snatch a ball from an opponent.

“The best horseball horses tend to be forward thinking, brave and receptive to the rider's aids. It makes a fantastic second career for ex-racehorses, but you will see absolutely every type of horse and rider combination. In our team alone we have thoroughbreds, a coloured cob, a Connemara and an Irish Draught. You'll also see children of only four or five years old playing on Shetlands and Welsh section As! Horseball is so much easier and enjoyable on a well-schooled horse so often the more different disciplines your horse has done the better. From a personal point of view, the improved balance, flexibility and bond from playing horseball has improved my dressage enormously, and my horse and I competed at the RoR National championships at Aintree last year.”

Hayley agrees: “It's great for improving dressage, as it's definitely an advantage to be able to manoeuvre your horse around the pitch while constantly changing pace. You don't always have contact on the reins so you soon learn to ride with your seat!

Sarah adds: “If anyone thinks it's too hard, I would simply tell them that if I can do it, anyone can! I'm short, round, fast approaching 40 and the horse I ride is a 17.2hh ex- racehorse who stopped racing due to severe tendon injuries. Three years ago I had a bad arm injury (not horseball related!) and lost all my riding confidence, yet horseball with my team mates was the one thing that I could still do. When you're concentrating on trying to go in the right direction and catch a ball, there's no room for being scared! It's also incredibly good fun.”

So.....who's up for it????? New camp activity???

Or something slightly less energetic?

Horse-agility is a form of groundwork that you can do with your horse at home, and also an international competitive in-hand sport which focusses on clear communication and positive horsemanship. It helps you build a stronger relationship with your horse, and as its in-hand it's also suitable for horses who can't be ridden, or for older horses to keep them engaged and interested

Vanessa Bee, is responsible for launching the discipline as a competitive sport and popularising it across the world. She developed horse agility as an extension of groundwork, finding it particularly useful in working with young, unbroken horses. She set up the club in 2009, and now there are events and fun taster sessions across the UK.

“The beauty of it as a sport for me is that it's so inclusive,” says Vanessa. “From the beginning, I wanted to create a non-elitist equestrian sport with cheap or free obstacles. You don't need to be turned out to show standard — this is about good horsemanship, not looking good. We want everyone to have a chance to compete whatever their physical or mental abilities. We now even have online competitions for people who don't have their own transport to get to events. In fact, all you need to take up horse agility is a headcollar and a long rope. Bridles aren't allowed — this is about communication not control and we're always working towards taking all the equipment off and the horse responding to body and verbal cues. We don't allow any form of whip or stick either.”

Positive equitation and connection training coach Judith Edel started competing in horse agility when her riding pony retired. She'd already been working on some obstacles with her pony's field companion Pip, a rescue pony, and decided to take it a step further (seen pictured jumping through a hoop).

“Horse agility really is open to everyone and every horse (or donkey) — any age, any size, and any ability,” says Judith. “Pip is a small Welsh Mountain pony who was wary of people and far too sharp to be a safe riding pony for children, but he excels at agility. The sport has given us the motivation to really refine our communication, especially when working at liberty, and as the challenges change every month there is always something new to work on. Even my retired pony now enjoys it! In horse agility, everyone competes over the same course each month, but you can choose your own training approach. The aim is to guide your horse gently and kindly, with as little pressure as possible. I train all my horses and donkeys using positive reinforcement, which is completely pressure-free. I break down the behaviours I want into small steps and reward the horses for each step towards the final goal.

If you'd like to have a try at some of the obstacles at home, you'll need some basic arena equipment such as trotting poles and cones.

“An easy obstacle to try for a beginner is the S bend,” says Vanessa. “This is a labyrinth made of poles in which the horse has walk through corridor in the shape of an S without stepping out or touching the poles. This really teaches people to slow down and steer each foot of the horse individually. Other beginners' obstacles include walking through a curtain, through a narrow gap or over a tarpaulin. As you progress, the obstacles get harder. One of the most difficult is the pole back up. The horse must back up over a pole without touching it. It sounds easy, but it's not — you have to learn to establish a rhythm and encourage the horse to lift his feet over the pole. The obstacle where the horse steps into a hula hoop can be equally frustrating. People always think the big obstacles like seesaws or hoop jumping are tricky but these are easy once you have the trust of the horse.”



From Horse & Hound

DIARY DATES

Aug – Tracy Brimble and bare foot trimming

Sept – BBQ at the Rose and Crown (details to come)

Oct – Sally Anne Haigh – update on her progress

Nov – Gary's Australia ride continued

If anyone would like to compete for the club (dressage, show jumping, cross country etc) please contact **Rachel Hawkins 07814 561106** She would be delighted to hear from anyone, at any level!!

Next event...Sunday 21/7/19 - Area 9 Show Jumping at Rectory Farm

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

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

7th July - SWPA

14th July - Avon Vale Hunt Show

14th July - ODFRC Show

11th Aug - Brent Knoll Show

14th Aug - Beaufort Hunt Show

2020 Qualifiers:

14th Sept - Foxham Show

15th Sept – Timsbury Horse Show

More dates to follow.

If you hear of a show that would hold qualifiers at no cost to them, please contact Jane Andoniou

**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**

Did you know....

Horses sleep standing up by locking their joints, but only experience REM (Rapid Eye-Movement) deep sleep when lying down, requiring total relaxation of the muscles to enter this stage. Horses sleep for averagely 3 hours a day, with 30 minutes of those being REM. Those horses that don't get their required REM sleep suffer from sleep deprivation which effects cognitive function, health and performance.

Why do horses sleep standing up?

Unlike humans or other household pets, horses need very little REM sleep each day. This is the part of a sleep cycle that we recognise as being in a 'deep sleep' and can be spotted when horses lay down to nap. When your horse is enjoying REM sleep, you may notice that they move their legs whilst laying on their side. If this happens, it may be safe to assume that your horse is dreaming!

However, horses only have a few minutes of REM throughout any sleeping period. The other time snoozing is a light sleep and can be noticed when your horse sleeps standing up by altering their hind legs. Because horses are big animals, their blood flow can be restricted by laying down for long periods of time. This causes excess pressure on their internal organs, which is why they only lay down for REM sleep. This results in them sleeping while standing up at various points throughout the day.

Because natural instincts are still strong for many horses, you may notice that the multiple horses in your paddock sleep in a group. This usually happens with one horse watching over the other whilst they're in REM sleep to ensure that they're safe. The watcher will then swap places with the sleeper until all horses within the group have had their rest.

A horse that lies down will only do so in an environment in which they feel safe and secure, with sleep patterns varying on management. It is a very vulnerable position for a prey animal to be in, and one reason I don't like to halter a horse when lying down; if they have trusted me to approach and interact at their most vulnerable time, taking advantage of that isn't something I would morally want to do.

REM sleep is the stage of sleep needed to dream; I do wonder what horses dream of?

Ann Fay's Horseback Travels

Ann, one of our stalwart members, came to our June meeting to share her adventures on horseback. She started by explaining the different types of riding holidays. Some are run by companies that provide horses, guides, accommodation etc.- she described one such trip across Scotland with 'Highland Horseback' (though she opted for the shorter one, being her first long distance ride). The scenery was fabulous and the horses very agile- she said that one particularly terrifying episode was cantering along the side of a mountain on a very narrow track- and she didn't like heights! She also swam in a loch- though this had a down side as that was the day she had chosen to ride 'commando' (after reading that long distance riders don't wear knickers) so she had to swim in her jods- and then continue riding for another 3 hours! The last day was over a high range of mountains then steeply down to the sea and a wild beach ride.

Trans Wales Trails takes riders across Wales, over moorland, up through mountains and through forests, crossing 4 mountain ranges in approx. 110 miles. She mentioned that one does need to be fit enough to ride for substantial distances- a friend of hers sadly had to give up after one day as her legs were rubbed so raw- however in order for her family not to know, Ann took photos of her helping at each of the stops, so they never actually knew she hadn't ridden at all!

Ann's favourite ride was with the heavy horses- Cumbrian Heavy Horses over fells in Cumbria and Adventure Clydesdale on Dartmoor. The Cumbrian horses were originally on Skye but were relocated to Cumbria- they decided to ride them down and give opportunities for people to ride 3-4 day legs. Ann rode one leg of the 'migration' across Cumbria's fells. Despite their size the horses are extremely nimble, scrambling up and down steep fellsides, sometimes with the riders on foot. They rode up Hardknott Pass, a steep twisty road to the highest point in Cumbria, passing cars stuck on the notorious hairpin bends. There are also the remains of a Roman fort part way up that can be ridden around. They also rode along the edge of Ullswater on a rocky bridleway above the lake- the riders actually had to walk so the horses could concentrate on their footing (and later we saw video footage of this trek- some of these sections looked absolutely terrifying!!)

Other rides she has completed are Welsh rides with 'Free Rein Wales' where they had to navigate themselves using maps to get to the overnight stops. Tricky not to get lost! All these holidays the rider is provided with a mount which needs looking after every day: catching in the morning, feeding grooming, tacking up and riding- then in the evening untacking, feeding, brushing, turning out, watching them roll, cleaning tack and, if unlucky enough to have got wet, spreading everything out to dry. In Scotland Ann shared a room with a South African lady who complained bitterly that she hadn't expected to do all this as at home 'her groom brought the horse to the door'!

Other holidays can be organised with your own horse. 'Bridle Rides' book accommodation and provide maps marked with routes. They can also transfer luggage though many carry their own. Ann's husband Mick sometimes accompanied her on his bike, which brought some issues such as getting entangled in a field of oilseed rape, and getting a puncture on the top of the Wiltshire Downs in torrential rain. Actually quite a lot of the rides seemed to mention rain....clearly waterproofs are essential!

Independent holidays can be self organised: a petal holiday is where you have a base and ride out each day in different directions, returning to base each night. Most horse friendly B & B's will provide maps to show local routes. Alternatively trekking holidays move from one place to another, carrying your belongings with you. Ann and her friend Lindsay have completed 3: the first was along the Ridgeway and Swan's Way starting at Avebury and finishing at Milton Keynes, experiencing hot sunshine at Barbary Castle and torrential rain another day, where they had to peel their clothes off upon arrival at their B & B. Their second ride was the Jack Mytton Way running through Shropshire for 75 miles. Part of it goes over the Long Mynd, a huge hill created by glaciation, rising steeply from the plain. There they encountered spectacular views, and also gliders, whose cables made a very loud whistling noise as they came down! Their third venture was a circular ride round Exmoor which was quite hilly- as Rosie was starting to have trouble going down steep hills, Ann had to walk her down, and then mount very quickly at the bottom before Rosie followed the others through the fords, not always in time! They made a detour to Tarr Steps to ride across the ford next to the Clapper Bridge, but got lost on the following part of the bridleway, having to retrace their steps several times and resulting a rather late arrival at their base. Another day they had a nasty experience when Rosie became stuck hock deep in a bog. Although she did manage to struggle out, it was a scare: apparently bogs can change position frequently so cannot be mapped, but local horses learn to recognise the signs and avoid them.

Clearly Ann is an expert in such holidays- so if anyone needs advice, I'm sure she would be only too happy to assist you! She brought some lovely albums of photos, some of which I photo'd (rather badly, sorry) to give a flavour of her memories.





And from Renee, our Health & Safety Committee member....

Safeguarding & Your Club – What you Need to Know

VHPRC take the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people very seriously. If you help out at any of our events you need to know the information that is in our Safeguarding Plan. This can be found on the VHPRC website <http://www.vhprc.co.uk/?q=node/209> , together with our policy statement and more detailed information.

The VHPRC Safeguarding Officer is Sue Fewes who may be contacted in the event of any safeguarding concerns on 07790 951515

- No children under 16 are permitted at any events unless they are accompanied and supervised by an appropriate adult (and stated in show schedule)
- VHPRC volunteers, judges or their representatives shall not be alone with children under any circumstances
- The Safeguarding policy and plan shall be made available in the Show Secretaries bus” in the H&S file. Together with the Safeguarding Officer’s certificate and contact details.

A copy of the Safeguarding Officer’s “Equestrian Advanced Safeguarding” Certificate is available for inspection and is included in the plan.

We have to comply with BHS guidelines and the supporting BHS references & resources can be found here if you are interested. <http://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/about-us-and-our-work/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/safeguarding-children>