

Autumn 2021

IH



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Welcome to Autumn

Dear Readers



From forest rides beneath a canopy of honey-hued leaves to getting creative with fancy dress for my local riding

school's Halloween festivities – autumn might just be my favourite time of year.

Our autumn issue might just be one of my favourites, too! After all, it's got training articles and advice from top IH Trainers including Sandra Williams (p34), Nicole Golding (p24), and Sue Palmer (p22), expert tips from independent equine nutritionist Clare MacLeod (p30), and (thanks to another excellent IH webinar) bags of inspiration and insight from eventing legend Lucinda Green (p14).

Plus, I got to indulge my passion for horsey action movies as I interviewed stunt coordinator and stuntman Rob Inch for this issue's Big Interview (p18). His very impressive resume includes everything from Braveheart and Star Wars, to War Horse and Sleepy Hollow, along with just about every other movie that featured some spectacular and death-defying horseback stunt!

All of which reminds me of the time I learnt to ride as an adult... ok, I might be exaggerating a little bit (!) but you can read all about it on page 26, including why I believe that my lack of horsey beginnings actually made me a better rider and horseperson in the long run.

Did any other IH members come to riding later in life? I'd love to hear from you!

HAPPY reading!

Zoë

Zoë Smith, Editor

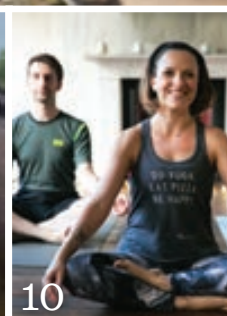
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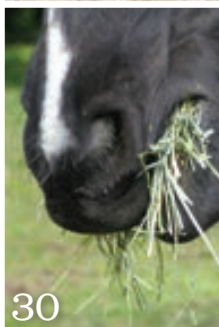
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Do you have a contribution for Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine?

Please phone, email or send your carrier pigeon to the IH office!

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ON THE COVER: Having some time out © iStock / Paul Grecaud

Whilst we endeavour to ensure that all articles in the Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine are compatible with broad IH principles, it should be noted that the views expressed by contributors to the Intelligent Horsemanship Magazine do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or Kelly Marks.

Photo Editor: Ele Milwright

Designed by Sarah Kingsley 07775584479 www.ethic-creative.co.uk

Printed by Premier Print Group

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By KELLY MARKS

MyWorld

Taking responsibility

If you don't care who will?


Obviously, all IH Members have excellent critical thinking skills. That's why they chose Intelligent Horsemanship. We have to remember, though, there was a time in history, that if you had a problem with a horse, there were only three 'normal' options – 'hit it, lunge it or turn it out for a year'. If someone had an unsound mare or one with a bad temperament, the 'obvious' thing then was to breed from her.

These were the days when if someone wore a suit or a white coat, we were brought up to respect their 'authority'. Whether with our finances, legal arrangements, or lives, it was accepted that we put it in their hands. People would overcome any doubts with 'Well they, must know what they're doing'** and the belief that everyone will 'have your best interests at heart'. This allowed people such as Bernie Madoff and Harold Shipman to, well, literally get away with murder. Back in the day, we didn't need to make those big decisions very often. It would only be way down the line we'd understand we'd made some very

bad choices. By which time it was too late. ** My family have this as a red flag or say it as a joke as there have been so many cases of people not knowing what they're doing... "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense." Buddha

Imagining this is a Dickens 'Christmas Carol' experience though; 'Ping!', we're now in the modern-day. We're in the modern-day and we have A Horse. Suddenly these big decisions about who to trust become everyday occurrences. Buying a

Suddenly these big decisions about who to trust become everyday occurrences



“ Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it... unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense. ” Buddha

horse, shoeing (or not), feeding, saddles (argh!), biting, lessons, transport, veterinary care. This is by no means a comprehensive list, and if you don't care too much, it won't seem a problem. However, if you do care and you've managed to stay sane and solvent, this is irrefutable proof that you are a high functioning human being (congratulations), and the bonus news is these skills are highly transferable. They may even save your life.

I used to believe that if you had a problem you needed solving with a horse, 'you find the best practitioner and leave it to them'. Nowadays, I believe better advice is; you need to do your research so you can make an educated decision as to who is the right practitioner. You need to know the right questions to ask. Yes, Google and Facebook can be a minefield, but as Equine Vet Dr Jessica Kidd said in the Summer *IH Magazine*, there are places to find reliable sources of information. Jessica recommended sites such as the Royal Veterinary College and Rosssdales.

While you wouldn't go on Facebook to find out what to do if your horse clearly has colic (you'd call the vet immediately), hearing others' experiences around a non-urgent area or having help knowing what questions to ask within a trusted group can be helpful. This is because you are intelligent. You are able to make discerning decisions. When someone tells you your horse has back problems because he was 'a dolphin in a previous life' (true story*), you are intelligent enough to be able to weigh the likelihood of that up against the possibilities of muscular or spinal discomfort.

*True Story – not because the horse was a dolphin in a previous life (difficult to verify), but Dr Kidd was actually told this by an owner once.

A time I didn't Google or ask on Facebook was when I was given a young female cat to look after for 'a few weeks'* *A year later and she's still here. One night she started wailing which was a real worry. I did what I thought was the sensible thing and booked her in to a local vet as early as possible the next morning. Thankfully they saw her quickly and my niece, Daisy, took her in. She was diagnosed with cystitis (the cat), and Daisy arrived home with pills and an invoice for around £120. It was THEN we thought we'd google 'Female Cat Yowling' and thought 'Oh My Goodness! So she's not spayed!' I'd wondered why neighbourhood cats had started visiting... I've never had an unspayed female cat before. I hadn't considered she wouldn't have been neutered and the vet didn't ask. I guess she thought any responsible cat owner would have arranged this previously. You live and learn, but you'll learn more quickly and less expensively if you know the right questions to ask and where to find good information.

I don't have recent personal equine examples because as this is my area of experience, over time, I've got together a Contact List of Really Good People. (Not infallible – just Really Good). Incidentally, you have access to some of those people through the IH Members webinars. When choosing your practitioner, though, they have to be right for you. I picked up my copy of 'How Doctors Think' recently. There was plenty of good information in there for doctors or indeed any practitioners including, you can't be expected to know everything. However much patients would like to put that on you, saying 'I need to get more information on this' is not a sign of weakness. A passage that also struck me on this particular reading was about the Doctor/patient relationship. In short, it said that if

you don't feel a doctor particularly likes you, it doesn't necessarily mean they are a bad doctor, or they can't successfully treat you. However, all the doctors questioned for this book agreed that personally, if that was the case for them, they'd change doctors.

When it comes to finding the right practitioner, the criterion the amateur horse owner generally uses is how local they are. This is convenient but doesn't necessarily guarantee you're getting the right person for you and your horse. Apart from finding the right expert. i.e. I'm not the right person for you to ask about the horse's digestive system. I can point you in the right direction, but that's not my area of expertise. Many of our webinar experts, including orthopaedic vet Warren Schofield, based in Ireland, have spoken about getting second opinions if you're not entirely comfortable with a diagnosis. He had some fascinating stories on this. Make sure you listen on the IH Members website. Lucinda Green said how it's actually taken ten years to find the best trainer (Gareth Hughes) to suit her daughter,

Lissa. No one said this was going to be quick and easy.

It's come up in my Horse Psychology course that people may feel 'embarrassed' or fear they may 'upset someone if they ask for a second opinion'. While I fully understand this, I think the question we need to ask is: 'Who is my priority here? The extremely busy practitioner who won't remember my name once I'm out the door? Or my horse/dog/cat/mother/child?' The earlier you can learn this lesson in life, the better. It will be useful in so many ways.

A few months ago, my brother had dizzy spells, blood in his urine, and he was losing weight. He had shooting pains in his leg. He had a flare-up of gout, so assumed that was the problem. He couldn't get an appointment with his GP due to

the Covid backlog. IH mindset gets you to ask, 'is there a better way of doing this?', so I found you can get private GP appointments online. 'Livi' can be free or you pay under £30, and you can talk with a doctor online in under 2 hours. This was really helpful and it justified using the priority number to get a next-day local GP online. They ordered tests. He was told he had kidney stones and a pulled muscle in his calf and to see them again in 3 months time. I think the NHS is wonderful, and I am a Fan Girl of the medical profession in general. However, this didn't seem right somehow. Have you ever had that feeling?

There's a saying in the medical profession that goes 'If you hear hoofbeats– think horses, not zebras'. It makes sense. You're so likely to be right; why bother even looking round? It all depends on the consequences of missing a zebra ...

So I booked him a full blood test with a private company. The results came back with a doctor's report stating clearly he had an infection and to get it checked out immediately. His GP ordered more tests now she realised this was serious. He was due for another test the morning when he had the stroke...

Heart and body scans, blood thinners, antibiotics; it was a scary time. 'Vegetative endocarditis' is a bacterial infection of the heart that causes blood clots. That was the pain in his leg, and he also had one in his brain. Thankfully, the amazing NHS have him back on track now.

My message is; with so many people overwhelmed at work, we each need to play our part in getting the best results. Are you prepared for any future Red Flags? What can you do to ensure best results for the future? 📧

☺ Fortunately I have a contact list of Really Good People. ☺



The incredible HorsePower Team headed by Professor Knottenbelt, photo by Dr Jessica Kidd

Photos courtesy of Kelly Marks



GET IN TOUCH! What are *your* thoughts on this? Are you an expert frustrated that people don't leave things to you entirely? Or do you have your own story to tell?

Straight from the horse's mouth...

The writer of our Star Letter wins an IH Membership for a friend



LETTERS & FEEDBACK from our members

More Real Riders write in!

Our IH debate "What Is a 'Real Rider'?" back in our Spring '21 issue still has you talking!



The debate feature "What is a real rider" was very interesting, and an often hotly debated topic.

My take on it is a real rider is someone who is able to ride any horse in any situation and get the best out of the horse whilst enjoying themselves and staying safe. Whether this is in an arena or at a competition or out hacking, each situation throws up its own challenges to both horse and rider and requires knowledge, training, and many different skills. No one type of riding should ever be seen as more deserving of reward or acknowledgment or more superior than another; they are just different.

Sue Fletcher, via email

Rather than polarising two possible types of 'real' rider, between the 'arena-beavers' and the 'happy-hackers', I thought about what lies behind them both. There is SO much to riding, as any rider will tell a non-rider!

You only gradually learn, over time and from experience, how little you yourself knew to start with (and perhaps how comparatively little you know even now!). It's a long, slow, hard-won transition from an 'unconscious incompetent' to an 'unconscious competent'..... via an awful lot of 'conscious incompetence'!

The way I have come to look at it, a real rider is someone who has come to understand that how they ride is vitally important – that what the rider/ driver does either helps or hinders the horse, to a greater or lesser degree. And they understand that it's not only the physical, the technical (weight, balance, aids, tack, etc.) but also, and even more-so, feel, timing and, above all, the relationship. And from here on, this thirst for understanding, knowledge and skill often becomes the whole raison d'être for real riders, above competition, above ego, above even career and money, above everything.

And of course, this real horsemanship could be found on the back of a horse (a real rider), in a carriage (a real driver), or on the ground (a real handler). And it could be found just as well in an arena or out on a hack, in a competition or in leisure, or in a place of work. It's never about what you do, is it – but about *how* you do whatever you do with a horse.

Lynda Thompson, via email

HAPPY FEEDBACK!

Just a quick message to say that the Summer IH Magazine is the best one you've ever done in my opinion. You've even got the Wim Hof method in it (I do it every day)!

Marcus Kilvington,
via email



Help from Hartsop

With lockdown, I was unfortunately watching my horse going nowhere with his training. My trainer Kathy Witham suggested I take him in for restarting with Ian, Sandy, and Jake at Hartsop. I must admit I was a little apprehensive, thinking it was perhaps too 'professional' for my little Clyde cross, but I needn't have worried. They looked after my horse so well, restarted him thoroughly, and taught him so much.

They have worked with him to help overcome his spooky behaviour, introduced him to traffic and even umbrella-proofed him! They have taught him how to stand like a rock to be mounted, how to walk, trot, canter and pop a jump calmly, how to hack out. Jake is a brilliant rider, firm but so kind, and Dougie has responded so well and grown in confidence.

I've enjoyed watching videos of his training and it's amazing how far he's come. I was very nervous, the day I went to ride him, but they put me totally at ease and even as an older, returning rider, I felt safe not silly. Dougie felt like a different horse, he no longer felt like a jittery time bomb, but solid and confident. To say I'm over the moon is an under-statement!

Diane Walsham, via email

Regal Realm by Natasha Herman

WIN OUR IH CARTOON! To enter the draw to win this great cartoon by IH member and gifted cartoonist Natasha Herman, just send your details to editor@ihhq.net with 'Cartoon Competition' in the subject line.





In other news...

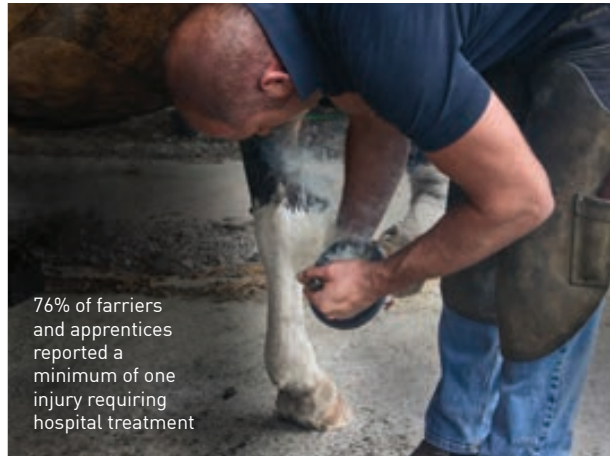
IH updates and other news from around the equine world

Don't let YOUR horse put your farrier at risk!

A survey taken earlier this year by the British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association (BFBA) has highlighted the risk and frequency of injury to farriers whilst working, prompting a new safety campaign.

The results of the survey of 349 farriers and apprentices showed 76% reported a minimum of one injury requiring hospital treatment, and 32% had visited hospital three or more times. When asked to consider the most serious injury they had sustained, 60% stated equine behaviour as the cause.

Noting that farriers are getting injured on a fairly frequent basis, BFBA president Mr D'Arcy noted "some think that's a normal behaviour for that horse" adding "the unfortunate thing is as professionals – farrier, vet or physio – we've got to deal with that behaviour". The BFBA plans to launch a campaign highlighting these risks to encourage careful risk management by farriers, and also ensure owners take responsibility for their animals' temperament and management.



76% of farriers and apprentices reported a minimum of one injury requiring hospital treatment

Photo © Elin Milwright

Farrier Mark Aikens DipWCF noted that communication is vital between farrier and client to reduce injury to horse, handler and farrier, adding "I strongly advocate that all parties are in agreement to achieve this with the horse's welfare the prime concern."

From an IH point of view, we would absolutely agree it is not the farrier's responsibility to train your horse – it is the owner's. If you are struggling with your horse being shod or trimmed, or wish to start training your youngster so he is confident with foot handling, IH is here to help! Get in touch with your local IH Trainer for some hands on training, or come on one of our popular courses. Other top tips for your farrier to love you is always present your (beautifully behaved) horse with clean, dry feet, have a suitable area of hard standing (with cover from weather if possible) and always offer a mug of tea!

REMEMBERING PAT BURGESS MBE

The Burgess family are inviting all who wish to join them to come and celebrate the life of the wonderful Pat Burgess.

The celebration event is being held on Tuesday 21st September 2021 from 3pm to 7pm at Wilton RDA, The Pembroke Centre, Home Farm Road, Wilton, Salisbury SP2 8PJ.



It will be a very informal event with a couple of speeches and plenty of opportunity to share stories over tea and cake and commemorate Pat's life.

Please email patatherda@gmail.com if you are planning to attend, to help RDA gauge an idea of numbers.

(See our Spring issue for our look back over her amazing career and influence on riders from Olympic champions to young RDA riders experiencing their first pony ride.)

NEW IH AWARDS

News just in as we go to press – the new IH Awards are being launched from August 2021!

The categories will be Perfect Manners, Perfect Partners and Perfect Confidence, with Bronze, Silver and Gold levels in each category. There will be a points system for a Championship and two Special Awards at the end of the year. Some of this will be judged online, some by your local IH Trainer.

We asked Kelly Marks for her top tips for success; "If you want to start practising now for the basic Bronze Perfect Manners and onwards, make sure your horse: can walk politely with you – his cheek level with your shoulder; has 3 gaits of walk – slow, medium and fast; will stop when you stop without any pressure; can back up 10 strides in a straight line; can lower his head politely when asked (not just to eat grass!); and you can stand 3 metres in front of him and he will stand still on a loose line. That's as much as I know for now! You heard it here first! xxx". IH

Encouraging children into the saddle

The BHS are launching a new campaign, Pony Stars, to help encourage children under 12 to experience riding and horse care, and engaging them with equestrianism and the country way of life.

Pony Stars aims to "ignite a passion for ponies, build knowledge and cement friendships that will last a lifetime". BHS director of education Alex Copeland hopes the scheme will also benefit riding centres that have struggled throughout Covid.

A small-scale launch has been running through a limited number of BHS approved centres this summer, with the full rollout in September – an ideal time, when many parents will be deciding their children's term-time activities.

Mr Copeland explained that this scheme goes much further than just riding lessons, with dismounted activities that can be done at home, so equestrianism becomes part of their life, not just a weekly lesson, encouraging a feeling of being part of a community.



Photo © 123rf.com

The new campaign will help encourage children under 12 to experience riding and horse care

Children can progress up the Pony Stars levels, working towards badges and achievements, helping to capture a whole other market of families that may not feel 'horsey' enough for the Pony Club, but still want to enjoy everything that ponies can bring.

IH MEMBERS' PICTURES

Thank you for sending us lots more lovely photos of yourselves with your horses and ponies. The winning photo gets a canvas wall-art of their photo. Congratulations go to Jo and Bella, our winners for this Autumn issue.

1 Rosie & Tess: IH member Izzie tells us: "This is my mum Rosie with her rescue pony RSPCA Tess, who decided she could be her twin!! Tess was started by Monty back in 2016 and she has gone on to be a very safe, loveable pony. They hack out and compete at agility and dressage."

2 Jo & Ville: Jo sent in this lovely pic of her ex-racehorse Ville, who was 21 when this photo was taken last year.

3 Sarah & Eleqtra: Sarah sent in this photo of her Arab filly, Eleqtra and tells us: "I love this picture of her as it really reflects her cheekiness!"

4 Jo & Bella: "This is my 11-year-old mare, Bella, who came sixth in the CHAPS coloured horse class at Royal Windsor last Saturday. She was started by Jim Goddard as a 4-year-old."

5 Kelly & Jeng: "This is my rescue boy Jenga who is 9yrs old. We love cementing our relationship and gaining confidence with IH and working with Sandra Williams on horse agility. Jenga has overcome a number of fears and gradually he is gaining confidence under saddle. We would not be where we are today without IH."

6 Barbara & Bluebell: Abbey Barbara's 4-year-old Irish Draft mare, Bluebell Abbey, had to have 6 months off ridden work due to a locking stifle, but in the meantime she tells us: "I have been doing lots of in-hand work using IH methods to build muscle and strength and also to improve our relationship and build trust. She is so much more relaxed now and I feel that our relationship is growing stronger. She is ready to re-back now and I am excited to see what the future holds for us both."

7 Lorne & Hildago: "This is my boy, Hildago aka Neddy, catching a quick 40 winks! He's a 4-year-old American Paint Horse who has a very inquisitive nature and loves assisting everyone with their jobs; he trots alongside my livery

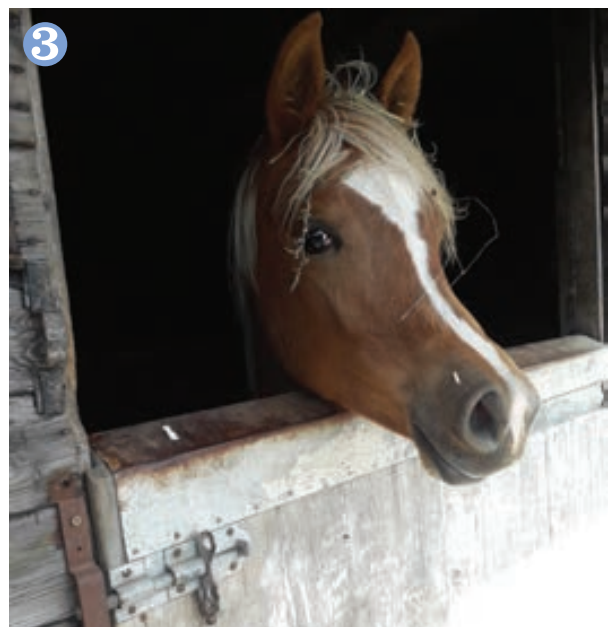
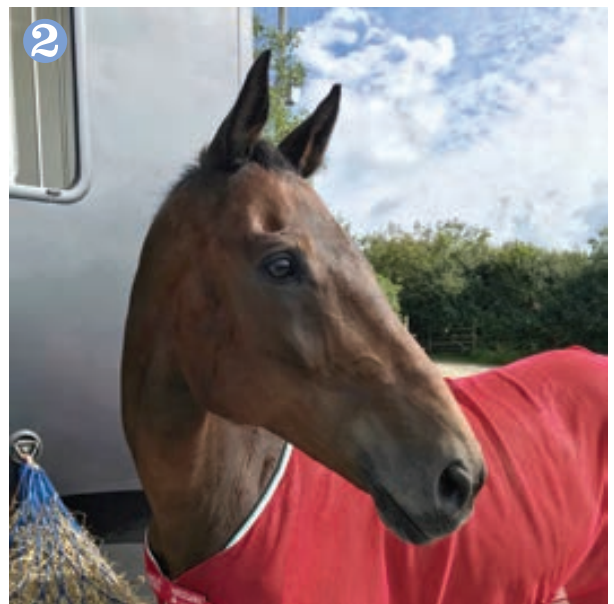
owner, Beverley, when she goes out for a jog! We've just started our riding journey, we're taking it slowly, and he's proving to be a quick learner and takes everything in his stride."

8 Natasha & Phoenix: "This is my beautiful Friesian X, Phoenix. He's really got me through some tough times recently with my Dad being very poorly with bowel cancer – we even got my Dad on-board as you can see in the photo. Phoenix can be very selective with his hugs but has known just what I needed recently."

9 Lauren & Henry: "This is my lovely daughter Lauren with the new addition to our family, Henry, a 17.2hh Shire x ID. Henry came to us very underweight, with numerous medical issues that we are working on and is currently waiting for a kissing spines operation. He is such a gentle horse and wants to please all the time."

10 Janina & Tina: Janina tells us that 29-year-old Tina is her "mare of a lifetime!"

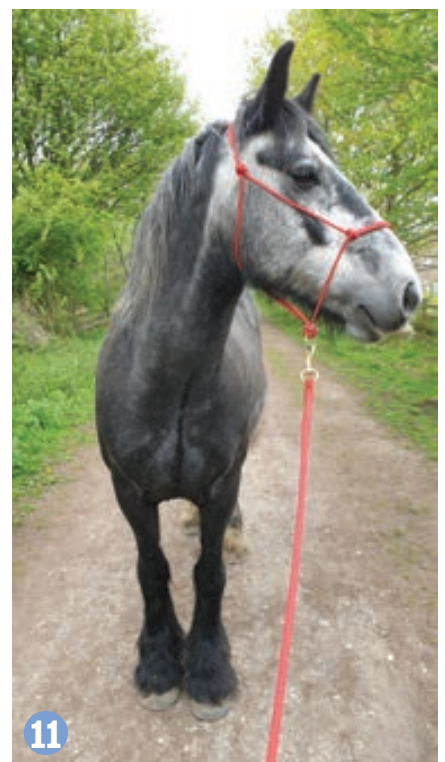
11 Alison & Tom: Tom is a 5-year-old cob X Percheron and Alison said she gained the confidence to buy him through the many IH courses she has attended. "He was bought when I was 55, as my first ever horse! He came from Hitch In Farm Working Horses who trained him to be ridden and driven. He loves to know what is going on and enjoys being with people. He has experience as a therapy horse as he is very placid and takes everything in his stride." **IH**



HOW TO ENTER
Please email your photos to editor@ihhq.net
Photos need to be at least 3-4Mb in size – for more information on how to check your file sizes, see the Members' area of the IH website



CANVAS
WALL-ART
WINNER





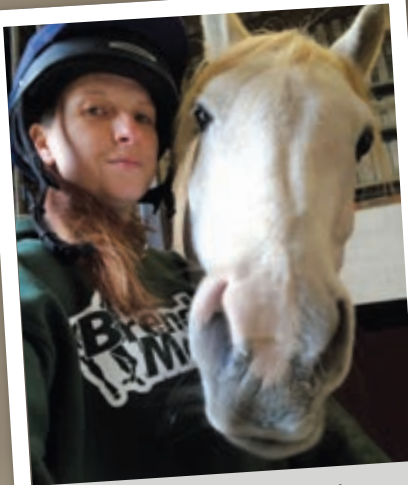
Meg Jackson

YOGI & PONY MAD PR GURU



“...there’s an instant connection that comes about when you meet someone else who just ‘gets it’”

All photos courtesy of Meg Jackson



Meg Jackson, 43, lives in Swindon. She is a Yoga Teacher and works in PR and Communications for the Bristol charity, Horse World



"I'm very much a real person, trying to incorporate yoga's amazing teachings and practices into her real life"

Did you have a horsey childhood?

When I was around 2 years old my Mum made the mistake of letting me have a ride on a pony at the church fete. Apparently, I then insisted on spending the whole day going from pony to queue, to pony to queue... So five years later when she found herself losing hours of her life sitting outside a riding school every Sunday afternoon, watching this real-life Thelwell drawing come to life, she really only had herself to blame!

I was incredibly fortunate in that we lived in a village where, at the local livery yard, there were a bunch of people who had never had the heart to sell their first pony. So over the following years I had a succession of ponies on loan; as I grew out of one I found that I'd grown 'into' another! It was the perfect scenario as my parents could never have afforded to take on the financial burden of buying my own.

Sadly, when I hit my late teenage years I made the fatal mistake of thinking that boys were better than ponies, so my affections wavered for a few years. After leaving University I went back to having the occasional lesson, but it wasn't until joining the PR and Communications Team for the Brooke (a charity which works to improve the welfare of working equines overseas) in 2000 that the pony-mad genes really kicked in again. And they've never switched off.

Do you have your own horse?

Despite never really ending the lamentable cries of "but I NEED my own pony" to anyone who will listen, I still don't have one. However, since moving to Swindon in January 2020, I've been so lucky to have weekly lessons at Overdale Equestrian Centre with brilliant Ride With Your Mind Accredited Coach, Karin Major.

There, I've also fallen in love with a 15.2hh Arab mare called Tillie. This new obsession is fairly radical for me. I was a confirmed cob-lover prior to her; the hairier, chunkier, and more chilled-out the better, as far as I was concerned. Yet here I am totally besotted with one of the most sensitive, opinionated, demonstrative (and, it must be said, beautiful) horses I've ever met. It's safe to say that every single moment with Tillie is a learning opportunity for me – from how I'm breathing, to where my gaze is, through to which bum-cheek I've unintentionally clenched. She really is remarkable.

As well as having my own little yoga business, I also work in PR and Communications for the equine charity Horse World in Bristol. So, on the days when I'm in the office I can also get my horsey-fix by wandering out and stroking a nose or two of the hundred (or so) equines we have on site at any one time.

When did you first hear about Kelly Marks and IH?

You know how people say that they can remember where they were when pivotal,

world-changing events happened, like when JFK was shot? I can remember exactly where I was when I first read 'The Man Who Listens to Horses'.

I was working a summer job during school holidays as receptionist for a local radio station. It was BTI (Before The Internet) so after I had organised stationery, stacked notepads, and dusted plastic plants, I was left to read and read and read. I finished 'The Horse Whisperer' in around a week and was absolutely fascinated by the fact that there was a REAL LIFE human out there who had these mystical powers, so it was inevitable that I went straight out to the bookshop and bought Monty's story.

It was devoured in just a few days. If I thought that 'The Horse Whisperer' had been amazing, now I was totally overwhelmed.

During those years when I had ponies on loan, I was surrounded by adults who "Knew What They Were Doing With Horses". Whilst some were fantastic sources of inspiration and guidance, I also watched women (who were, I now realise, fighting their own inner demons) physically fighting their horses; kicking them in the ribs when they wouldn't stand still for grooming, or twitching their lips when they were terrified by clipping. I had first-hand experience of using various yard equipment to force petrified horses into horseboxes, and ponies being beaten with whips to 'show them who was boss'. Hitting, shouting, swearing were all acceptable ways of treating their 'beloved' animals.

So, when Monty's story came into my life it felt like the biggest lightbulb in the world had been lit up over my teenage head! But I never would have dreamt it was something I could actually do.

Just when my Mum thought her days of sitting freezing cold whilst I went and satisfied my insatiable appetite for all things equestrian were over, she found herself coming with me to any demo that was remotely accessible and patiently listening to me as I went on and on about Monty. And Kelly. And Pie. And Join-Up*...

Have you been on any IH courses?

When I was working for the Brooke, I was given the opportunity to participate in one of Kelly's Foundation Courses. I think I almost exploded with joy and suffice to say the experience was everything (and more) than I thought it would be. Actually, it changed my life.

I've done the Five Day Foundation course twice, Horse Psychology, Feeding and Nutrition, Horse as an Athlete, and Leading and Loading.

What's the most valuable thing for you about being an IH Member?

'Community' is an over-used word these days, but there is something so genuine about the generosity, kindness, and support that's out there within this amazing group of like-minded people. I love that I can jump into the Facebook group and ask a question without fear of judgement or criticism. I think I've come away from every single course I've done with at least one or two new friends, as there's an instant connection that comes about when you meet someone else who just 'gets it'. >>



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» Plus, the quality of the coaching on the courses always blows me away; the nurturing environment they create in which everyone can

find the confidence to try something new, or ask a question, or challenge a long-held belief, is amazing.

Tell us about Real Life Yoga

I began practicing yoga almost twenty years ago – purely to get arms like Madonna. Yeah. Not for spiritual enlightenment. Or inner peace. Or even because I wanted to be a better person. I wanted Madge's biceps and I had heard somewhere that she got them through a thing called 'Ashtanga Yoga'.

So I went. And I hated it.

I thought I was going to die in my first Downward Dog. And trying to stand on one leg was so frustrating I wanted to punch someone.

But I kept going.

And so, yoga and I began this long, sometimes dysfunctional relationship. We have had our differences but despite our emotional rollercoaster, yoga and I decided to make it official. In 2007, I qualified as a yoga teacher. Since then, I've taught internationally, working with all sorts of people; from those who have never attempted anything yogic, to folks who can become a human pretzel at the drop of a yoga mat.

But these days I'm angry about yoga for different reasons.

And it's not because I hate back bending (even though I still do).

I've been increasingly p*ssed off with the portrayal of 'yoga' as something you can only do if you're female, skinny, dressed totally in Lycra, standing on a beach/in front of a sunset/next to a temple and love eating nothing but kale. The promotion of these images does nothing but fuel perceptions that only a certain type of person can do yoga.

I also became more and more aware that the qualities I had previously seen as holding me back from being a kick-arse teacher were actually things that made me a kick-arse teacher. I'm NOT naturally bendy, so every pose I can do I've had to really work for, and I don't think my feet have any intention of ever going anywhere near the back of my head. I don't have 2 hours every day to spend on a yoga mat, I really like drinking wine and singing power ballads, and I don't want to change my name to Moonflower.

I'm very much a real person, trying to incorporate yoga's amazing teachings and practices into her real life, finding out how I can be happier and healthier, and I figured that there are probably a few more people like me out there too. So that's why I created Real Life Yoga – a movement to help real people bring a little (or a lot) of yoga into their real lives.

“...the skills we learn in one are absolutely integral to the other.”



Photos courtesy of Meg Jackson

Top: Arab mare Tillie – Meg's new obsession. Bottom: Meg qualified as a yoga teacher in 2007 and since then has taught internationally and started her own business 'Real Life Yoga'

Are there any parallels between what you teach in yoga and horsemanship?

Oh so many! In my head there's a huge Venn Diagram of yoga and Intelligent Horsemanship, and the skills we learn in one are absolutely integral to the other. Whilst having long hamstrings may not help your Join-Up®, knowing how deep you are breathing (or if you're not), where your right arm is in relation to the rest of your body, if you're clenching your jaw, are all things that you can start to learn on a yoga mat.

When you watch Kelly (or any of the amazing IH Trainers at work) you'll see that they are in the midst of a mindfulness practice. They're not distracted by thoughts of whether or not the cat needs worming, or if Dave was being passive-aggressive

with yesterday's email... they are in this moment. And that's the first fundamental step in so many yoga practices; can you be here, in this moment?

What is your proudest achievement?

Oh goodness. This is when I get all British and frightfully bashful. Around ten years ago I left the UK to be the Resident Yoga Teacher at a luxury health and fitness resort in the Caribbean. I didn't know anyone there, had no idea what I was letting myself in for, and just took myself off and did it. It was one of the most intense experiences of my life; from highest highs to feeling incredibly low... But taking that step into the unknown is something I've never regretted doing. It also gave me the courage to create Real Life Yoga, through which I've had the privilege of teaching and meeting some brilliant people.

What is the next goal or dream you are working towards?

I am fascinated by that IH/Yoga Venn Diagram so would love to delve more into it. I think there is a realisation amongst us horsey folk that we can do so much to improve our relationship with our horse, both on a practical level (e.g. more body awareness helps with more effective riding position) and emotional level (e.g. going straight to the yard to clip your nervous horse after having a heated debated with Customer Services in Sainsbury's may not end well).

What are your other interests or hobbies, besides horses and yoga?

I'd say that I enjoy running and HIIT but that's a lie. I enjoy it when I've stopped and know that I don't have to go out and do it again for at least 24 hours. I also enjoy wine and chocolate; ideally consuming both whilst propped up in front of Ru Paul's Drag Race or Gardener's World. (What can I say? I have eclectic tastes!) Before The Pandemonium hit, I also loved going to see live music in really small venues. Particularly an artist called Frank Turner whose fans know all the words, and any gig involves A LOT of jumping up and down in very close proximity to people who will become your temporary best friends. ☑

• Find out more about Meg at www.reallifyoga.net

AN IH WEBINAR WITH...

Lucinda Green

June's IH Zoom webinar with Lucinda Green fell prey to technical problems meaning that the recording didn't work. Don't worry if you missed it though – Kelly Marks has all the details...

IH
WEBINAR
REVIEW
by
Kelly Marks

“As I was about to enter the start box at Burghley – my Dad pinched my thigh and said: ‘Don't forget girl – you do this for fun’”

Part of the fun of the interview was to get the feel of a different era

Among her many accomplishments Lucinda Green is the only rider to have won Badminton six times, on six different horses: Be Fair (1973), Wideawake (1976), George (1977), Killaire (1979), Regal Realm (1983) and Beagle Bay (1984).

My webinar in June with Lucinda Green was a welcome hour of delight. When I discovered that the recording hadn't worked, at least I could be grateful that it was so interesting I'd remembered most of it! IH Teamwork meant that others had taken notes to make up for areas where I may have lapsed and I hope we've managed to capture the essence of the inspirational interview with Lucinda.

These Zoom webinars feel so personal; like a one-on-one chat with a close friend. While I always have questions from IH Members, there is always the odd question that just comes into my mind too. Sometimes they surprise even me!

THE EARLY DAYS

Part of the fun of the interview was to get the feel of a different era.

Lucinda started riding as a small child in the idyllic county of Hampshire in the late 1950s. In those times children would be riding ponies bareback and perhaps going off for hours at a time. No mobile phones, no Instagram. There was a storybook feel as she talked about these early days. I was instantly transported to that beautiful countryside; the picnics, the ponies, the 'lashings of ginger beer.'

Lucinda's parents said she must learn to ride before she could have her own pony. So, Lucinda had twice weekly lessons with a legendary local riding teacher called Betty Skelton. I thought maybe Betty Skelton was considered legendary because she taught Lucinda but then I read Mrs Skelton's incredibly obituary*. Maybe the learning point here is to give your child the best chance to be a safe, strong rider; find them an excellent riding teacher right from their earliest days. So many children are put off riding by bad early experiences on unsuitable ponies. This will save their parents a fortune; but that's not the point I'm looking to make here.

**Betty Skelton is definitely worth a google. For instance, she gave her husband flying lessons, so during the Second World War, having been seconded to the RAF, he could fly bombers out of the UK. She was going to join him but they felt it unfair on their only*

child, Jennifer, if both her parents were on such dangerous missions.

Lucinda's first pony at the age of 8 was Jupiter. There wasn't the money for expensive ponies and Jupiter cost very little. Jupiter taught Lucinda that if she touched his mouth over a fence, he wouldn't jump the next one. This was a valuable lesson towards her becoming such an exceptional rider.

I related to Lucinda as she pointed out that the family had to sell each pony as she grew out of them, if she wanted to have the next size up. For most of my twenties and thirties, I only rode other people's horses. Pie was the first horse

their best with tape and putty to get the hoof to work. Although it never looked perfect, remarkably it never really caused a problem.

It was this £500, 'three-legged horse', called Be Fair, who took Lucinda from the Pony Club to the Olympic Games. He also took her to her first Badminton victory.

I asked Lucinda to tell us about her relationship with trainer Pat Burgess*. Pat was a wonderful rider and instructor who came over from South Africa because her husband was a vet and decided to work in England. Pat was teaching local people and Major General Prior Palmer (Lucinda's father) asked Pat if she would

teach Lucinda. Pat replied 'No'. He asked why not, and she said, 'because she won't listen'. I remember being told this story by Pat herself. Soon after, Pat and Lucinda's father witnessed Lucinda have quite a fall. The Major General said, 'She'll listen now'. Pat and Lucinda formed an incredibly rider/coach relationship that lasted many years and a friendship that lasted to the end of Pat's life. Because Pat was so successful with Lucinda, she was asked to coach the Olympic Event team.

“Your judgement grows, you know when to ask a question of a horse...”



Lucinda competing Cry Freedom in the CIC*** at the 2013 Houghton International Horse Trials

Photo © Henry Bucklaw

ON HORSES...

? When would you start a young horse jumping?

Lucinda: As soon as you can steer, stop and go – which are

essential. Pop over a log, just 6 inches or a foot high. Let the horse find its feet. Always allow them to have their head but be careful on the other side though as they can buck! Do things early, get them enjoying it early.

For Cross Country you need to introduce them to everything. Badminton questions, but at mini height. Sunken roads, corners, Trakehners, drops. Yes and lead them over things, walk them around, lunge jump them.

If horse is just left in the field until 5 years old their tendons, muscles, ligaments aren't prepared. They will benefit from exercise and different surfaces. Start early, but it's fine for them to have a few days or weeks off. Let it work in with your life.

Your judgement grows, you know when to ask a question of a horse, when you >>

I knew I could get to keep for life. Once Jupiter moved on, some friends recommended Lucinda's parents buy a lovely dun pony from Ireland and he went on to be a local star. When he was sold they were able to buy a more expensive horse. A part thoroughbred, in fact. When she went to try him there were no jumps in the paddock so she jumped him over the post and rail at the entrance at the yard. The smile on her face meant her mother bought him for her. He cost £500.

Her father had been away at the time working in Australia to keep the family finances going. When he came back and saw the horse they'd bought he said 'you could have bought one with four legs'. They were mortified they hadn't noticed that an injury to his coronet meant one hoof wasn't growing properly. They did

IH WEBINAR REVIEW by Kelly Marks

>> might have rushed them and you know to go back a little. I like to make the fences so small in the early days, because I don't want the horse to learn to stop or run out. I teach mine to rein back. So if they won't go over, I'll rein back 10-20 strides and then stand a moment. Then I'll give them another chance to pop over it from a trot or even a walk it will be so low.

Kelly: I've found it so interesting that in every webinar, our veterinary experts included, speakers have said about the advantages of starting horses off young and the physical and mental disadvantages of starting horses later in their lives. Yet you would think from general Facebook posts that no horse should do anything until they are seven. One poster even wrote 'we don't send our children up chimneys at 7 years old anymore' rather exaggerating her point. I think the 'secret' here is balance in all things and an intelligent approach. No, we don't send children up chimneys at 7 but equally it's not a great idea to let them lie on the sofa until they are 16. Horses under the age of 7 (sometimes older) may not be physically mature and shouldn't be overworked with a heavy rider. However, equally, not mentally and physically stimulating them in those growing years isn't good for them either.

Note though Lucinda also adds: "Some horses, when they're growing don't have that zest. Just look at a schoolboy! They are growing. Give them time. Know your horse."

ON RIDING

🔍 How did you get that amazing leg position!

Lucinda: I'm chinning so I've always liked to be that little bit behind! At the time when I started competing the forward position was the fashion but I ignored everyone saying you had to be forward when coming into a fence. I always preferred to have lower leg glued on and I'd sit back a bit so I'm prepared if a horse stumbles or something happens, particularly downhill.

Kelly: Although I'm not prepared to let it be said Lucinda was ever chicken (!) I admit, for myself, that now a much greater sense of preservation has kicked in, I sit further back coming into a fence than I did in the early days.

“You can't pluck confidence out of the air. You have to develop it.”



Lucinda riding Wide Awake, one of her first Badminton winners

ON MENTAL TOUGHNESS

Lucinda: You can't pluck confidence out of the air. You have to develop it.

🔍 How do you handle your nerves before the big competitions?

Lucinda: In the cross country, the base of you has to be that you're not going to be beaten by any jump. There was a jump once that none of us riders knew how we could tackle – and I was drawn first to go. Little Kildaire was so nifty. It was a bounce fence which was 15 feet in those days (they are 12 feet now) he was so agile he managed to get a stride in the middle and clear it!

How you deal with your nerves to a degree determines how successful you are. I went quiet. Like going into a den of my own. I think every successful person feels nerves.

The nerves never get any less. When you perform you mustn't let your mind go to 'what ifs'. I always imagined 'that voice'

was a nasty man who sat on my shoulder voicing my worse fears. As I came to the final treble in the showjumping at Badminton one time that nasty man was saying 'if you have the first part down, you'll have the second part down and third ... this is going to be a disaster.'

Kelly: What happened? What did you do?!

Lucinda: I imagined punching him in the face to get rid of him. Then, I concentrated on the fence. We cleared all 3 parts and won.

🔍 Do you believe in a 'higher power'?

Lucinda: Definitely! I certainly don't believe the world begins and ends with me! (Laughs)

I always prayed and I always try to remember to say thank you. But you never ask 'can I win?' You just ask 'please can I do my best?' Sometimes your best is good enough to win. Sometimes not. When I was hot favourite for the Los Angeles Olympics, the horse and I did our absolute best, but it wasn't good enough and we came 6th. I was delighted but others were disappointed.

Although I didn't know about breathing techniques then, I've always done something which is now more familiar with sportspeople and called visualisation. Before I competed, I'd lock myself in the loo or find any quiet space and in my mind I'd run through every fence, bush, blade of grass with the horse's ears in the front of my screen. It would plant it in my mind. It was really important I wasn't interrupted. I stopped doing it at night because it wouldn't work if I was interrupted, or I fell asleep. That's the fence I'd mess up.

🔍 What do you value most in a horse?

Lucinda: The relationship. I've been so honoured to have that. Because they can't talk, they sense you. Each horse is different. The only horse I never felt I made a connection with was Wide Awake. It was like he never wanted to let me in. Horses know when you're cross, frightened, when you love what you do with them.

ON TECHNIQUE

Lucinda: One of the differences between a good and an excellent rider is the quickness of your reaction. Plus, we all need a real understanding of how horse think. They've got to see a fence early and desire it. ALWAYS allow them to see the second bit and have the quality of the canter to allow them to pick up.

I love helping the up-and-coming riders. I was at the Bicton event recently and in



the cross country I thought that's one of the most difficult questions (the line from one fence to another) I've seen for a while and they just all saw their lines and did it. Well done them!

Some people have an obsession about striding. I never worried about that unless it's three strides or less. The main thing is the horse has a real desire to take you into the fence.

If they don't want to go into a fence or if a horse loses that, because they've either been over-jumped, over-faced or whipped, it's a hard thing to get back.

? How do you encourage that desire to 'lock on'?

Lucinda: The locking on is the focus. But the desire is they have to want to jump. Team chasing and hunting were amazing for creating that desire. Going round bends and up and down muddy tracks at speed were great training for footwork and self preservation. But now the horses have become such expensive commodities, they do less of that. It's actually meant the rate of accidents has gone up. If you don't have a lot of money to spend on a horse now, it's hard to get to the top.

? What's the hardest part of eventing?

Lucinda: (Groan) Dressage!!! There's so much heartbreak and it's a character shaper. You can't take anything for granted. You can't afford to be cocky. You love the relationship with horses and challenging your relationship by some of the best cross country courses in the world. It's never about glory or winning or money! It's certainly never about being famous.

? What's a memorable piece of advice?

Lucinda: My dad – at Burghley – pinched my thigh and said: "Don't forget girl, you do it for fun" which is the last thing you're thinking about at the time! 📖

"It's never about glory or winning or money! It's certainly never about being famous."

“You can't take anything for granted. You can't afford to be cocky.”

i
For more on
Pat Burgess, see the
Spring 2021 *IH Magazine*

If you haven't got a printed copy, remember you can look up all the past editions of the *IH Magazine* in the IH Members section at www.intelligenthorsemanship.co.uk

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By ZOË SMITH

Rob was a stunt double in *The Mask of Zorro*, doubling for Antonio Banderas

THE BIG INTERVIEW

Rob Inch

“ I’d been doing something similar in the circus, so I just said: ‘I can do that!’ ”

Q What is the thing you find most difficult or scary?

Stunt work!! I think people think of stuntpeople as daredevils, but I’m definitely not a daredevil. I’m a risk-taker. I understand the value of a calculated risk, and I can assess it and figure out the best way to do it. You need to have a healthy fear about what you do so that you can understand how to do it without getting hurt. If I thought I wasn’t going to come out the other side of it, I would probably say no.

Rob Inch THE BIG INTERVIEW

>> Of course, Rob's story doesn't end there. Filming those horseback battles in the Scottish Highlands might have confirmed his movie-making ambitions, but next came the challenge of getting on The British Stunt Register. It took months of training, funded by a day job performing trick riding at Camelot Theme Park in Preston, and a host of qualifications (Rob's chosen disciplines were swimming, scuba diving, hang-gliding, fencing, horse riding, and trampolining), before he finally received his title of 'probationary stunt performer'.

It wasn't long before he got his first gig as a registered stuntman. Simon Crane (the stunt coordinator on Braveheart) was working on a new film, Titanic, and Rob soon found himself: "in Mexico, jumping off a sinking ship for four months!"

Name-checking blockbuster movies is part and parcel of a conversation with Rob Inch – after all, almost every film he's worked on has been a big budget or star-studded affair – and even though he seems to take it all in his stride, he's also rightly proud of everything he's accomplished.

"I've been fortunate enough to have a very varied career," he tells me. "I've done Bond movies, Star Wars movies, big car movies. I did all of the Mummy films..."

He pauses, as if running through the highlight reel in his head, then apologises jokingly: "Sorry, my memory's not great because I've landed on my head for a living!"

It was his affinity with horses and knack for horseback stunts, however, that really propelled his career forward. "Horses were the thing that really got me established in the stunt world, and having a good name for that gave me a leg-up in the industry overall," Rob tells me. "People wanted to hire me for other stunt work because they needed me for a horse stunt, and so I did loads and loads of horse movies." Among the most memorable was Robin Hood, doubling for Russell Crowe, and The Mask of Zorro, doubling for Antonio Banderas, which Rob admits was: "kind of amazing!"

In recent years, he's progressed from stunt work into stunt coordinating and 2nd unit directing, which means directing the stunt and action units. Rob explains how it works: "Typically, I would be brought in on an early draft of the script to read through, look at the action and start proposing some sequences. Then, about 12 weeks out on a movie, I would start working with my stunt team to design and interpret what's on the written page and then break those pieces down into action that can be shot.

"I would then previsualise them, which means I would shoot them myself, cut them together, and edit them to work out how they will actually look when we film them. Also, part of my job as a stunt coordinator is training the actors and looking after any of the on-set safety and rigging."

One of his first movies as stunt coordinator was War Horse, a film that horse fans will be more than familiar with (in fact, Monty Roberts even got involved with the theatre version). "I was the stunt coordinator, and also I ran the horse side of it, and to be able to do that with a seriously A-list director, Steven Spielberg, was pretty special," Rob enthuses. "There were so many moving parts. I think we ended up with about ten Joeyes and ten Tophorns – ones for driving, ones for riding work, and ones solely used for loose liberty

work. They weren't all the right colours, so we had a massive makeup department for the horses too! But when you look at them on the screen, you'd never tell they weren't all one horse."

Of course, filming with horses isn't just about what happens on set; there's a huge amount of work that goes into selecting and training the horses behind the scenes too. Choosing the right horse for the job is essential, and breed, temperament, and looks also all count when it comes to movie work.

Friesians are a popular choice, Rob tells me, but he often uses Spanish or Iberian horses: "because they have a very good nature, they are beautiful with naturally long manes, and they have a very high knee action which makes them they look like they are going a million miles an hour even when they aren't! Plus, they are pretty easy to train, so they are easy for actors that can't ride very well, or if we need to put the horses into a different situation on set."

"Film horse training is very much like police horse training," Rob reveals. "We try to desensitise them so that they are exposed to things that most horses would find scary. But people always ask: 'how do you get a horse used to an explosion?', and I don't think you can ever get a horse used to an explosion, because when the bang goes off, it's still a shock. However, there are lots of different things we might use on a movie to help desensitise the horses a bit, for example, ear guards made to muffle sound.

"For stunts like people getting shot off a horse or where you see the horses getting shot and falling over, there's a massive amount of training that goes into that, so that it's something that is repeatable, and most of all, that the horse feels comfortable with it because if the horse didn't feel comfortable with it, it wouldn't happen."

When stunt coordinating, his preference is to use the Devil's Horsemen, not only because of his long-standing personal connection with the group – "Gerard, Dan and Camilla are like family" – but because their horses are particularly suited for film work. "They have a massive turnover of horses, and a lot of the young horses go out and do live shows, so they will be doing chariot racing, jousting, and trick riding very early on, and it becomes a natural environment for them."

Working with horses on set can be a challenge, but Rob explains that while

there's a lot of planning and preparation that goes into the stunts themselves, the most important aspect when on set is ensuring the horse's welfare: "they need to be looked after as a cast member because that's what they are". This might mean setting up portable stable facilities and groom's quarters close to set, logging their working hours, and briefing the crew and actors to ensure that the horses are left alone to relax in their downtime. Most movies have a representative from the American Humane Association (AHA) on set to ensure all these standards are met, and a lot of thought goes into how best to travel or manage the equine cast too: "For example, for Wonder Woman 1984, which we filmed recently, we flew the horses into Fuerteventura, because we didn't want them to be on a long boat trip."

With so many advancements in digital technology and CGI, I wonder whether this will replace the need for live horse stunts, but Rob insists that nothing compares to live-action, especially where horses are concerned. "That's one thing that in the digital world they haven't

“...if the horse didn't feel comfortable with it, it wouldn't happen.”



Clockwise from top left: the War Horse stunt team; stunt work for War Horse; stunt coordinating on Prometheus; clearing a blue screen training jump as the Zorro stunt double.

Q What piece of advice would you give your younger self?

Finish school! That would definitely have helped me now in my stunt coordinating career. In my performing career, I'd say: trust your instincts. I've never gone wrong when I've trusted my instincts.

quite got right yet. When you see an animated horse, you can tell. On War Horse, for example, everything in that is live horses, apart from just a few scenes, and if you look closely at those scenes, you can tell it's digital."

However, there are stunts that they prefer to do using a mechanical horse, a polystyrene body moulded off a horse – "stuffies, as I call them" – that is sent down a train track and ejected. "For example, in the movie Outlaw King, where you see horses galloping down and falling or flipping into ditches, those were all mechanical horse falls, we never did one live, and you'd never be able to tell. We'd have live horses run alongside it, so it doesn't hold your eye too long."

Rather than replacing live-action, Rob thinks that the greatest benefit to digital technology is that it increases the scope of live stunts by making them safer and more sustainable. "It's enhanced what you can do dynamically without making it a digital shot. It means I can go to visual effects and say, 'look, I can do this crazy stunt off this roof, and I can do it all for real, but what I need to do is put a little crash pad there on that ground, just in case

something went wrong, so can you then digitally remove that crash pad?' Or the fact I can put wires on people and fly them to the ground. It's increased the possibilities."

So, what's next for Rob? "I want to keep stunt coordinating because I love it," he tells me, and he's also excited about an upcoming project as 2nd unit director on a Marvel streaming series. Equally important is "being a role model to my three sons", one of whom is hoping to follow in his Dad's footsteps.

Professionally, Rob says it's the variety that he enjoys most: "I could be helping design a stunt show for the theme parks at Disney in America one minute, then trying to work out how to flip a car on a runway in the middle of London the next!" The excitement of Hollywood hasn't made him forget where he came from, though. Recently, he filmed The Last Duel, the latest of many collaborations with director Ridley Scott, which took him back to his jousting roots. "I loved making that movie. We made it in lockdown, and to go back and make a jousting movie was a really proud moment. After all," he reminds me, "that's where I started out". And what a long way he's come. **EH**

Rob's wife is also a stunt double



ROB'S HORSEY HIGHLIGHTS

Just some of the many film credits Rob has amassed over the years – check out his **IMDb page at www.imdb.com**

STUNT COORDINATOR:

The Last Duel (2021) • Black Widow (2021) • Wonder Woman 1984 (2020) • Transformers: The Last Knight (2017) • Rogue One: A Star Wars Story (2016) • Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom (2018) • War Horse (2011) • Quantum of Solace (2008) • Robin Hood (2010)

STUNTS:

Sherlock Holmes (2009) • The Bourne Ultimatum (2007) • Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2007) & Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (2011) • The Legend of Zorro (2005) • Johnny English (2003) • Black Hawk Down (2001 – uncredited) • Band of Brothers TV Mini-Series (2001) • Sleepy Hollow (1999) • Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace (1999), Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones (2002), Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens (2015), & Star Wars: Episode VIII – The Last Jedi (2017) • The Mummy (1999), The Mummy Returns (2001), & The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor (2008) • Saving Private Ryan (1998) • Titanic (1997) • Braveheart (1995) • The Three Musketeers (1993)

BECOMING A STUNTMAN

The British Stunt Register is the leading association of stuntmen and stunt coordinators in the world.

If you want to work as a stuntman (or woman) in the UK or internationally, getting on the register is essential.

In order to be accepted, stuntmen and women have to achieve a series of physical competency tests and/or qualifications in a minimum of six disciplines across five different skill groups, as well as clocking up a certain amount of work on film sets or live performances, and attend a BSR recognised drama course. Skill groups include fighting (boxing and martial arts), falling (trampolining/high diving), riding and driving (horse riding, cars and motorcycles), agility and strength (gymnastics, rock climbing, and Parkour & Free running), and water (swimming and scuba diving).

“Horses were the thing that really got me established... and having a good name for that gave me a leg-up in the industry overall.”



Welcome to
**THE AUTUMN
TRAINING SECTION**

In this month's Training Section, IH Trainer and ACPAT Chartered Physiotherapist Sue Palmer considers when it's **the right time to stop riding your veteran horse** (p22), IH Trainer Nicole Golding shares her **secrets for incorporating positive habits into daily life** (p24), and our editor Zoë Smith (that's me!) offers advice for **learning to ride as an adult** (p26). Plus, there's a new **horsemanship recipe** from IH Trainer Sandra Williams (p34) and **what you really need to know about feeding your horse** from equine nutritionist Clare MacLeod (p30).

By Sue Palmer



Photo © Sue Palmer

Sue Palmer MCSP is an author, an ACPAT and RAMP registered Chartered Physiotherapist, an IH Trainer, and a British Horse Society Stage 3 Coach in Complete Horsemanship.

• You can find out more at www.thehorsephysio.co.uk

SOUND OR COMFORTABLE: WHICH MEASURE DO YOU USE?

IH Trainer and ACPAT Chartered Physiotherapist Sue Palmer considers when the right time is to stop riding your veteran horse, and how to make that assessment.

They'd shared so many happy times. At 23 years old, Polly's coat still shone, but her joints grumbled. Jane agonised over the decision – should she keep riding?

As a Chartered Physiotherapist I treat horses from all walks of life, including older horses. A question I hear on the regular basis is "Do you think I'm okay to keep riding him/her?". I feel really strongly about this, and so I wanted to take this opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Each horse is an individual, and should be treated as such. Safety is always the number one priority. That's safety for you, as well as safety for your horse. I always stress that if your horse shows a change in his behaviour, and equally importantly, if he starts to trip regularly, then you may need to rethink your options.

“...if he seems keen to do what you're asking of him, then is the soundness actually an issue?”

SOUND OR COMFORTABLE: WHICH MEASURE DO YOU USE?

The thoughts I'm expressing here are in relation to older horses. It's a very different situation with a younger horse or a competition horse. Perhaps it might help to consider what you would ask of a person at different ages. What would you expect of an 8-year-old, a 28-year-old, a 48-year-old, a 68-year-old, or an 88-year-old? Where does your horse fit into this equivalent timeframe?

The clients asking these questions are usually asking them in relation to soundness. The conversation might go something like:

- > "I'm not sure if I should keep riding him, what do you think?"
- < "What is making you unsure? What are you worried about?"
- > "I'm not sure if he's sound."

This leads to a discussion around soundness, and how we look at whether our horses are sound as a measure of whether or not we should be doing what we're doing with them.

So what's more important, that your horse is sound, or that he is comfortable? Could he be unsound, and yet comfortable? Or could he be sound, yet uncomfortable?

My thoughts at this time (and I'm always open to new learning) are based on current research. This seems to be demonstrating more and more that actually, there probably is no such thing as a 'sound' horse. They all have asymmetries (differences between left and right). That might be differences in muscle bulk, muscle tone, or movement, for example. Most horses use their left fore differently to their right fore, their left hind differently to their right hind.

To be honest, we've all got asymmetries. And actually, that's normal. The difficulty is in knowing whether or not that asymmetry is pain related.

I wonder whether rather than thinking about whether or not your horse is sound, could you instead think about whether or not your horse is comfortable? Are they the same thing? However, I'm not sure whether these are easier questions to answer, or harder?!

I think at the moment, the best piece of research that we've got around this is the Ridden Horse Pain Ethogram from Dr. Sue Dyson and her team. This research suggests that if your horse shows eight or more out of the 24 listed behaviours that indicates that there's likely to be musculoskeletal pain. (For more on this, check out Sue Palmer's review of Dr. Sue Dyson's Ethogram in our Spring '21 issue).

What is clear to me is that a lame horse, one that is clearly limping, won't necessarily show eight or more of these 24 behaviours. And it's perfectly possible for an apparently sound horse, where there is no sign of limping, to clearly demonstrate musculoskeletal pain.



It's possible for an apparently sound horse to clearly demonstrate musculoskeletal pain

TIP ✓

Watch closely for changes in your horse's behaviour over time, and do your best to listen to what he is telling you through his behaviour

Again, you can relate this to people. Some people will stop working at the slightest ache, others will keep going with a broken arm or leg. We all have different sensitivities to pain, and different attitudes to work and to discomfort. The same applies to our horses.

What you're asking of your horse is very relevant here. As I said earlier, safety is paramount, and I am discussing the older horse here, not the young horse or the competition horse. If your horse is sore in front, for example, then he might not be safe to be ridden downhill, or over poles. If he is more sound on one rein than the other, then asking him to work evenly on both reins might be too much. It's likely that jumping will put too much strain on the older body, with too great a risk of injury, but again this is an individual decision, and I recommend that you are guided by the team that you have around you and your horse.

In general, if it's safe to do so and you both enjoy it, I think that gentle hacking is a great form of exercise, even if your horse is slightly unsound. If it stimulates his mind and mobilises his body, then in my opinion, there are clear benefits to keeping the older horse in work.

Depending on the strength and condition of the horse, this may be hacking in walk only, or it may include walk, trot, and canter. You might need to stay on the flat, or you might be able to include hill work. It might be that riding every day suits you and your horse, or perhaps once or twice a week would be better. Avoid him getting tired where possible, because this is likely to lead to discomfort.

If pain relief has been recommended by your vet, then have a chat with them about how you could best use this to support keeping your horse in ridden work. Watch your horse closely to figure out whether he is sore after you've worked him, or whether he feels more comfortable having loosened any aches and pains. For example, does he move more freely at the beginning of the ride, or at the end? How is he to catch, to tack up, to mount? Watch closely for changes in his behaviour over time, and do your best to listen to what he is telling you through his behaviour.

Just to be clear, I'm not talking about hopping lame horses. If your horse is hopping lame, then absolutely soundness is the most relevant issue. But if your older horse is maybe one or two tenths lame, or unsound, or unlevel, or uneven, or asymmetrical, but he seems keen to do what you're asking of him, then is the soundness actually an issue?

I think, like everything, it depends on the individual, on the relationship between you and your horse, and on what you are asking of your horse.

Watch IH webinars with both Sue Palmer and Dr Sue Dyson in the members' section of the IH website, or get in touch with Sue Palmer, ACPAT Chartered Physiotherapist:

- www.thehorsephysio.co.uk
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- Tel: 07976 413488 📞



THE POWER OF CUMULATIVE EFFORT

WHAT COULD YOU DO FOR 10 MINUTES EVERY DAY THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR LIFE?

Even five minutes a day adds up

By IH Trainer
Nicole Golding



Photo courtesy of Nicole Golding

IH Trainer Nicole Golding explores how building positive habits into your routine can help you achieve your horsey goals.

In February 2019 I accidentally started learning Italian, and for reasons not entirely clear to me, I have never stopped.

I was checking out a well-known language learning app to see if the kids might like to use it. I chose Italian, probably because I like pasta.

I missed two days in a row on my 50th birthday, and my run reset, but since then I have consistently learned some Italian every single day. As I write this, I'm on day 636.

Me, February 2020: "If only I could have a week to see and nothing to do. I could really get the house sorted"

Also Me, June 2020: "Nope, that wasn't the issue".

This approach harnesses the power of "streaks", or "don't break the chain". Comedian Jerry Seinfeld engaged this, when he undertook to write a joke, every single day, no exceptions. Some authors do this, too. Sure, some of what you produce may not be very good, but even a very small effort every day mounts up and you quite quickly find yourself well on the way to learning to play a musical instrument, or having a Perfect Partner or a good repertoire of jokes.

If you were able to actually throw an hour a day at something, you would hit mastery much sooner than you might imagine.

The advantage of doing something every single day is that it's easy to keep a track of. Did you wake up today? If yes, then these things are on the list to be done. There's no wondering if today is a working-out day, or a ride your horse day, it's just part of what you always do. There's real freedom in not having to decide.

TIP ✓
If you are struggling to incorporate a habit, it's worth working out why that is

Even five minutes a day adds up

It has to be admitted, this is an easier approach to take if a) you don't have to consider other people, b) you are a person of leisure, and/or c) the things on your daily list are quite easy to achieve and don't depend on feeling great, or your horse being sound, for instance. In the real world, we have lots of competing demands on our time.

Emergencies happen, other people want and need our time and attention, and employers want us to prioritise coming into work over hacking out through the woods on a sunny morning. It may not be possible to ride your horse for an hour a day, especially if your horse lives some distance away from you and has a life-long love affair with sticky mud. Instead, it may help to broaden your definition of "ride". If your horse isn't as up for riding every day as you are, you could work on your symmetry on a gym ball, do some mental rehearsal, tone up your thighs, learn a dressage test, or read a good book on the subject. And it doesn't have to be an hour, it could be 10 minutes.

It's not always about a lack of time, but this approach can help both when your life gets very hectic, and also when there is so much time sloshing about that you don't know what to do with it all. I don't imagine I am the only person who has wished for vast expanses of unfilled time so that I can get on with the things I have been itching to get to, only to discover that too much unstructured time is as hard to deal with as not having any.

There is definitely a sweet spot, and it's different for different people at different times. As a society we value being busy so highly that it can feel like quite an act of courage and rebellion to claim the right to be unbusy. You may also find yourself struggling with a long-term health issue, in which case what's on the Streak list has to be achievable and adjustable.

Set a schedule for success!

A daily chain is easier to keep track of, but the chain could be made up of bigger loops, such as every other day, or weekly. It may not just be difficult to fit in riding every day, you may not actually want to. There may be some things that you just want to do "more often than never". That's absolutely fine.

When we're trying to shape our lives in constructive, helpful and memorable ways, an alliterative approach (you know, where the starting sound of each word in a sentence is the same) can help. You might have, for example, Massage Mondays, working through Sue Palmer's excellent book, or Mapping Mondays, where you sort out the plans for your week. Or Media Mondays where you look through all your horse photos and discard the ones where your horse looks like a camel (no offence to camels).



Be inventive as to how to fit things into the days of the week

Or Mending Mondays, where you fix rugs and fly masks, or your own clothes, or fences. Maybe Money Mondays if you've got the stomach for working out how much your horse costs you and why you haven't had a holiday in 20 years.

You get the idea. Part of the fun is in coming up with what you would like to incorporate into your life on a regular basis, and being inventive as to how to fit them into the days of the week. Or even the months of the year. January could be for Jobs around the yard, you could have Fencing February, March could be mud-wrestling, June could be jumping (if the ground isn't too hard). You are only limited by your imagination (and the alphabet).

Finding your "why"

There are a few things it's worth clarifying before you commit to attempting to accumulate impressive "Streaks". Probably the most important is to find your "why".

Spending some time exploring the "why" is really important. If you are struggling to incorporate a habit, it's worth working out why that is. It could be that you just forget, in which case a Streak tracker can be extremely useful. Perhaps you don't want to do something because you just don't like doing it. Or there might be some fear involved. Committing to riding every day is going to be challenging if your horse scares you a bit (or a lot). Perhaps you think you don't deserve to. Perhaps you don't think your horse really likes it. It's worth "smoking out" these objections, because if they aren't identified they can really sabotage your efforts.

Often some pain/negative outcome that you would like to avoid is a highly motivating factor. About a year ago I tweaked my back a little whilst checking the horses. I didn't think much of it and cycled the 10 miles home without incident, but then I couldn't get off my bike. My lower back/pelvis had gone into spasm and I could barely move for 2 days. I lay in bed and did the tiniest

mobilising movements until eventually it released and I was basically ok. But I vowed there and then to do *something* good for my back every day, whether it be a full-on all-body workout, yoga, pilates, or just lying on the floor in neutral spine doing a few bridges and gentle rotations. The desire to never have that spasm happen again has been a very strong motivating factor and I have kept that promise to myself ever since.

"They" do say that moving away from pain is a stronger motivator than moving towards pleasure, but if perhaps you originally committed to really focussing on your horse's health and well-being because you wanted to avoid injury or re-injury, you may find all sort of possibilities opening up to you, and then you can work towards the pleasure of the fun ride or the long riding holiday, or whatever appeals to you and your horse.

It might also be that you have unrealistic expectations of how enjoyable you should find something. If you look after your horse yourself, you know you have to see to their needs every day, even if you don't much like breaking the ice on the trough, soaking hay, mucking out, whatever it is involved in your situation. It might be that you love cardio workouts or weight training, but it might be that you have hated every type of exercise you have ever tried. That's ok. You don't have to love it; you just have to do it. Be kind to yourself, but work out what kindness means to you. Sometimes it might be the kindest thing to give yourself a break while you regroup, perhaps after an illness or trauma of some kind. Other times it's kinder to keep doing the things that benefit your life, and reap the continued rewards of consistent effort.

• Nicole and Adam are launching online learning support to help you achieve your goals, desires, and/or dreams with your horse. If you would like to find out more, see page 38 or visit www.whisperingback.co.uk/onlinelearning



LEARNING TO RIDE AS AN ADULT

By Zoë Smith



Every time someone asks me 'What age did you start riding?', I feel my stomach flip.

The thing is, I didn't learn to ride until I was an adult. There, I said it. And now I find myself scrambling to explain, to make excuses for the fact that I wasn't riding before I could walk, that I don't have tales of childhood ponies and a wall of pony club rosettes to show off.

After all, I'm editor of Intelligent Horsemanship magazine! I've completed my Monty Roberts Introductory Certificate of Horsemanship, attended clinics and lessons with a host of incredible trainers, and had the chance to interview legends like the late Tim Stockdale and Clare Balding. I've ridden, trained and competed dozens of horses over the years, and I'm proud of everything I've learnt and achieved along the way (even if I'm still constantly humbled by how much there is left to learn!).

But despite all that, there's still a part of me wondering whether you'll judge me for my lack of experience or question whether I have the right to write about horses and horsemanship when my life with horses adds up to little over a decade.

Sadly, for some reason, this is still a question asked of riders all the time, as if it's the only mark of your equestrian knowledge.

REMEMBER!

It's not the length of time that you have been doing something that counts – it's the quality of that time

It's taken me a long time to realise that it's not the *length* of time that you have been doing something that counts – it's the *quality* of that time. My years with horses may have been limited, but my passion has been all-consuming and I feel like the lessons I've learnt along the way have just as much value as those I would have learnt at Pony Club.

The truth is horses did have a fleeting role in my childhood. I took lessons for a year or two, learning

to ride on a motley crew of riding school ponies. But I was the kid who would arrive early to brush every pony and then burst into tears when it was time to get on. I was painfully shy, scared to make a fool of myself around the other kids, and terrified of falling. My parents knew nothing about horses and so had few words of comfort, plus it was an expensive hobby even for a kid who didn't spend most of her time crying. And so, my



“...there’s still a part of me wondering whether you’ll judge me for my lack of experience...”

Zoë taking part in Trec with her horse, Ckaliq



Zoë riding an Icelandic pony whilst on holiday in Iceland

REMEMBER!

The lessons you learn along the way are invaluable too

In my early twenties, I lost my job in the London music industry when the studio I worked at was sold, and, in an attempt to figure out whether this was really what I was supposed to do with my life, I bought a backpack and set off to travel solo around South America. I was supposed to be gone for six months, but in the end my escapades turned into years of living, working, and travelling over different continents, during which time I started a whole new career as a travel writer, learnt new languages, and undertook that age-old journey of ‘finding myself’. It was during one late-night, admittedly half-drunken conversation with a fellow traveller that the question came up ‘*what’s the one thing you always wanted to do?*’. I didn’t hesitate: ‘*learn to ride a horse!*’

And so, my passion for horses caught back up with me and I decided it was better late than never. I headed off to Australia on a working holiday visa and figured that this was as close as I’d get to fulfilling my Wild West cowboy (girl) fantasies. I started volunteering on horse ranches in outback Australia and soon picked up the basics – thankfully, at 25 years old, I no longer burst into tears every time my nerves took hold (I am still prone, however, to the odd bout of pre-competition tears, so this didn’t completely go away!).

I then lucked out by landing a job mustering goats on horseback. Each morning, I’d wake up at 5am, pack my breakfast into my saddle bag,

and set out with the ranch’s border collie and a herd of 100 or so goats and kids. My task was basically to keep the goats away from the roads, ensure they didn’t get up to any trouble while grazing on public land, and then bring them all safely back in before the blistering midday sun started beating down.

Having somewhat exaggerated my riding experience (which was more ‘capable of staying on’ than anything else), I was assigned a hardy little quarter horse mare, Bubba. She was a retired polo cross and reining horse who, thankfully, knew how to herd goats, because I clearly had no idea what I was supposed to be doing. During the three months I spent at the farm, this mare taught me to ride through trial and error. Mostly error.

I would wait until the goats settled, then spend my time trying to canter circles or sit to the trot out along long stretches of dusty outback plains. For the first few days, I clung to the saddle horn in desperation as my attempts to steer or stop yielded unintended results like spins and sliding stops.

After one very spirited attempt to canter, I found myself bucked off and spitting dust while Bubba looked down on me with a look of pure exasperation (using the reins to balance myself while cantering was a definite no in her book!).

Continued overleaf >>

riding lessons stopped before I could master sitting to the canter (after all, it’s hard to sit still and relax when you keep bursting into tears every time your pony goes faster than a walk!) and my love of horses was redirected to role-playing with my collection of *My Little Ponies* instead.

But it turns out, some things are just meant to be...

LEARNING TO RIDE AS AN ADULT

<< Continued from previous page

Finally, I swallowed my pride and asked the ranch owner to teach me to ride. "Bubba knows what to do, that's why I gave you her," she told me. "You just need to learn to sit quietly and stay out of her way."

Despite the pitfalls (and actual falls), I credit that ranch owner and Bubba with teaching me how to ride and by the time I left the ranch, I was decent enough to pick up a string of other horse-related jobs, including exercising endurance Arabs at another Australian farm and later, working as a trail ride leader at a private farm in New Zealand, where I stayed for around 8 months. It was years later before I even set foot in an arena or took a proper riding lesson, but this early training formed the foundation of everything I've learnt since. It turns out sitting quietly and staying out of the horse's way is pretty good advice across the board.

Incidentally, it was this same ranch owner who lent me a copy of Monty Roberts' book "The Man Who Listens to Horses". I devoured it in a weekend and came back to her with a million questions. As always, she encouraged me to figure it out for myself. She pointed me in the direction of one of their youngest horses, a gorgeous 2-year-old quarter horse, Roxy, and told me to go put "my new horse whispering skills to the test" and try and catch her.

I used Monty's approach and retreat techniques (or at least my own far clumsier version of them), and after about an hour, she finally let me put the headcollar on. It was with Roxy that I later experienced my first ever Join-Up® (again, my version of a Join-Up® because I still hadn't had any proper training by this point) in their round pen. The moment I felt the warmth of her nose nuzzling the back of my hand, I was hooked.

Best of all, Roxy didn't care one bit that I hadn't grown up around horses; all she cared about was that I'd mastered her language (ok, definitely not 'mastered', but in that euphoric moment of connection, it at least *felt* that way!).



Zoë with quarter horse, Roxy

“...this early training formed the foundation of everything I've learnt since.”

IH Training Section



It's never too late to do something that you love

THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING TO RIDE AS AN ADULT

Even years later when I finally started taking proper riding lessons, going out to competitions, and eventually, bought my own horse (my 31st birthday present to myself!), I still felt for a long time like I'd missed out by not having a childhood of horsey experience to fall back on. But looking back, I realise how lucky I was to have started out on this path of intelligent horsemanship right from the start. After all, I learnt from the best teacher there is – the horse – and the first lesson was made very clear: trust and respect is something that you have to earn, and it works both ways.

Time and time again, I hear stories of riders and horse owners who spent years doing things the 'wrong way' or receiving terrible advice about how to solve their horse's 'problems'. Many of the 'learnt to ride before I could walk' riders I know inevitably suffered from the long-ingrained teachings and traditions of the equestrian world, many of which, as we now know, are less than ideal.

One definite benefit of coming to riding later on was that I knew from the start that there was a kind, non-violent way to approach every challenge (even if I didn't always know what that solution was!), no matter what anyone else said. When I think about that little girl who burst into tears every time I was told to give my pony 'a good kick', I can't help feeling that waiting to learn to ride was the best thing I did. (Of course, let's hope today's generation of young riders get the best of both worlds!)

Learning to ride as an adult came with its challenges, however. Physically, it's both easier and harder to learn to ride as an adult. Easier because we have the self-awareness and understanding of our bodies (hopefully!) that comes only with age, but also much harder because our brains all-too-often override our instincts. I had to consciously train my brain to feel before reacting and reprogram my muscle memory to relax into the movement, instead

of tensing and resisting. When taking lessons, I've been embarrassed far too many times by children performing acrobatic stunts (yes, I consider 'around the world' an acrobatic stunt) while I wobble around trying to lift my knees above the saddle at a walk.

But sometimes understanding makes it easier. While co-ordinating my limbs and achieving true independence of the aids is a constant challenge, understanding the biomechanics of both horse and rider has allowed me a greater feel for what is going on beneath me. Developing the groundwork skills that so many young riders miss out on gives me an edge when it comes to riding a young horse for the first time or working with a sensitive or 'difficult' horse. Being inquisitive and asking questions has afforded me a greater depth of understanding, and I don't think I would have had the confidence to ask when I was younger.

In hindsight, learning to ride as an adult was a blessing and I wouldn't swap my experience for any number of happy childhood memories. Now rather than being embarrassed by it, I'm proud of it, and I would encourage anyone, at any age, who has a passion for horses, to stop being put off by the nay-sayers and give it a try. It might be a cliché that it's never too late to do something that you love, but sometimes clichés become clichés for a reason.

SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS: PREPARATION IS KEY

In my opinion, it shouldn't matter if you learn to ride at 5 or 55, or even in your 70s (in fact, when I worked as a trail ride leader in New Zealand, I took a 70-year-old woman on her first ever ride and she told me: "Well, I've always said I wanted to learn to ride and I figured I'd better get a move on!"). That being said, there are differences when you come to riding late in life, so make sure you set yourself up for success.

1 Start with the right attitude

Learning something new is challenging at any age, but attitude is everything!

Don't put yourself down or tell yourself you're too old, you'll 'never get it', or fall into the trap of comparing yourself to other riders (especially those who've been doing it for decades longer than you). Instead, feel empowered by the fact that you are bold enough to try something new and follow a passion regardless of your age. That's already an amazing achievement in itself!

2 Find the right teacher(s)

In this issue's My World (p4), Kelly Marks talks about building a team of trusted experts to turn to and this is never more important than when learning to ride.

Find an instructor and a style of teaching that works for you. We're all different and we all learn differently, so don't be afraid to try a few different teachers before you find the right fit.

A good instructor should be sympathetic to your needs and adapt exercises to suit your level, they should build your confidence up



Photo courtesy of Sandra Williams

Groundwork to build your confidence around horses before getting in the saddle can be invaluable

8 TIPS FOR LEARNING TO RIDE AS AN ADULT

rather than tear it down, and they should be patient enough to explain things to you in a way that you understand. As an adult rider, it's a good idea to take some private lessons or join group classes specifically tailored to adults or returning riders. British equestrian has some good resources to get you started: www.britishequestrian.org.uk/getInvolved/participation/get-back-to-equestrian

3 Choose a suitable horse

Equally important to finding the right teacher, is finding the right horse.

Not only do you want a horse that is a suitable size, age, and breed for your riding level, but as a beginner, you want a horse that will fill you with confidence and teach you. Booking lessons on a quiet and experienced school horse will give you time to build up your skills before committing to loaning or buying your own horse.

4 Build your confidence through groundwork

No matter how much you love horses, handling half a ton of animal can feel quite intimidating if you haven't grown up around them.

Arm yourself with knowledge and build your confidence up through groundwork on one of the IH courses. The Perfect Manners course is ideal for beginners and open to all ages (although under 16s must be accompanied by an adult). If you're not ready to take the reins quite yet, you can also attend as a spectator or take part in our online courses and webinars.

5 Surround Yourself by the Right People

Having the right attitude and getting the right training goes a long way, but if you're constantly surrounded by people who make you feel as if you're too old or inexperienced to be riding sooner or later you might find yourself believing it.

Instead, choose to surround yourself by positive people who encourage you, offer helpful advice when asked (and never make you feel stupid for asking), and support your successes. All of which is another reason to attend an IH course or join our IH Members' Facebook group (just saying!).

6 Focus on fitness

Riding is a sport and while there's a considerable difference between a quiet hack and galloping around a cross-country sport, you'll still need to work on your balance, suppleness, core strength and cardiovascular fitness

Improving your overall fitness (both on and off the horse) will go a long way to making riding more enjoyable, comfortable, and safer for both you and your horse. Check out our article on Resistance Training for Riders in our summer 2020 issue – or try out some of the Yoga for Riders exercises in this summer's issue.

7 Be Patient

Just like learning to swim or ride a bike often takes longer as an adult, so will learning to ride, but that doesn't mean it's not achievable.

IH Trainers are always taught to break each task down into easy manageable chunks, and this step-by-step approach works for riders too! IH also teaches us that progress isn't always linear, so don't be discouraged if you have a bad day, make mistakes, or feel like you need to take a step back. We all learn at our own pace and as long as you are still enjoying it and staying safe, a few setbacks are all part of the process.

8 You Don't Have To Ride to Be a Rider

OK, I suppose you do have to ride to be a rider... but you certainly don't have to ride to be a great horseperson or to enjoy having horses in your life!

If you're passionate about horses, there are plenty of ways to get involved if you feel unable (or simply don't want) to ride. You can enjoy activities such as driving, groundwork, and horse agility without having to get in the saddle, or you could even rehome a non-ridden horse (read more about that in our article on rehoming in the Autumn '19 issue).

DID YOU START RIDING AS AN ADULT? Do you ever feel intimidated by those who have been riding 'their whole life' or are you proud of being a latecomer? I'd love to hear your experiences. Get in touch at editor@ihhq.net IH



Horses respond to nutrients, not to feeds

“The marketing of feeds and supplements is actually way ahead of the science, so do not believe everything you read.”

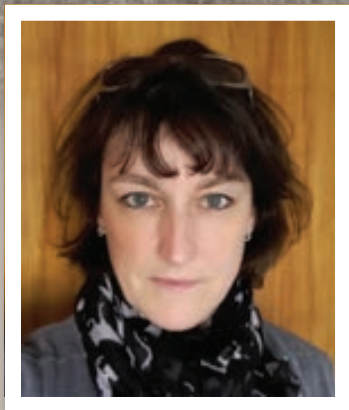


Photo courtesy of Clare MacLeod

By Clare MacLeod
MSc RNutr

When did feeding our horses get so complicated? With so much choice not only of products but also of feeding systems, it is little wonder that horse nutrition and feeding has joined training, footcare, saddles and tack as a subject that can be a source of stress due to the question of ‘what’s the best way’?

The very fact you are reading this article shows that you care about your horse, and you care deeply that you are doing everything you can to keep them as healthy and happy as you can. You are likely to worry that you are getting your horse’s nutrition just right. Read on to find some peace of mind about your horse’s nutrition.

INTELLIGENT FEEDING

Why is feeding so complicated nowadays?

There are some good reasons that horse feeding and nutrition seem very complicated:

- Scientific evidence for nutrition and feeding strategies is scant, which drives a large variation in different feeds and feeding systems
- Actual individual requirements vary widely, so there is art to feeding, as well as some science
- Marketing is very clever nowadays. Its whole purpose is to make sure you doubt what and how you are feeding so that you are tempted to buy different products, or into a different system

Despite the fact there are some scientific studies showing horses’ nutrition requirements and the best ways to feed, there is nowhere near enough to be sure, so there is still an art in feeding well; it’s not just science. The marketing of feeds and supplements is actually way ahead of the science, so do not believe everything you read.

There are a number of reasons why little scientific evidence in horse nutrition exists, including:

- Nutrition research trials are very expensive to run; therefore if may not be financially viable for

a company to fund trials (they would not be able to make the money back from selling products)

- Horses are so individually different, that a large number of animals are needed for research trials to give significant (meaningful) results
- Somewhat unfortunately, because the marketing is already ahead of the science, there is – in some cases – no point in companies funding research as they would have nothing to gain commercially

Marketing of horse feeds and supplements has become much more sophisticated in the past decade or so, and this is having exactly the intended effect – to make you, the consumer doubt what you’re doing and feel compelled to keep looking for a better feed, a better supplement, a better feeding system, all in the quest to fix your horse’s issues or just do the best you can for them.

Don’t forget that there is a limited number of ingredients that horse feed (and supplement) companies can use, so feeds may not be as different as you may think. Many feeds are very similar (you’ll realise this if you start reading ingredient labels), and many more deliver very similar nutrients. And after all, horses respond to nutrients, not to feeds.

Photo © Ele MIlwright

i Think for yourself, get educated, then trust yourself

No-one knows your horse like you do or can assess your horse's response to changes in diet, management, or other intervention like you can.

If you are a relatively new horse owner then you're right to question your judgement and you may need to take advice and learn about all aspects of horse care and management including nutrition. But be very careful where you get your advice and your education, because there are plenty of resources that come across as informative, educative, and/or scientific but are actually codswallop!

THERE ARE A FEW GUIDELINES YOU CAN BEAR IN MIND WHEN TRYING TO LEARN:

- **Never take advice from someone on social media who you don't know no matter how believable or self-assured they sound (in fact, often the more self-assured they are, the less they know)**
- **Never take advice from someone who isn't walking the walk – if in doubt, ask them to show you their horse/what they feed/how they manage them**
- **Take advice with great care from someone trying to sell you a product**
- **Look for articles with authors, and check the author's credentials**
- **Good, reliable nutrition information will be authored by a Registered Nutritionist**
- **Look for textbooks; some are heavy to read, but just read a few pages at a time if you are not a big fan of reading**
- **If you prefer listening, check out podcasts, but look for educational rather than commercial**
- **Make the most of the wonderful resources available to Intelligent Horsemanship Members, including the webinars by eminent experts**

Experts know that there is much to learn, so expect the truth to involve some uncertainty, and words like 'usually', 'generally', 'often', 'may' and 'monitor'.

I encourage you to *think*. It may sound silly, but we often don't think for ourselves enough, and that's because correct thinking is actually very hard work. It takes time and uses up a lot of energy! Critical thinking is, according to the Oxford Dictionary 'the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgement'.

6 EASY STEPS FOR FEEDING YOUR HORSE

I've put together a simple but thorough guide about how to feed, called 'How to Feed Your Horse Correctly in 6 Simple Steps' which can be found in the Equine Nutrition Learning Centre (ENLC) on my website. Here are the steps, which are explained more fully in the article in the ENLC:

1 Assess your horse's condition

to determine if you need to keep energy (calorie) intake the same (body fat level just right), reduce it (too fat) or increase it (too thin).

2 Choose appropriate forage and feed in appropriate amount

(includes grass as well as hay, haylage etc). Choose higher energy early cut forages for hard working horses and others with higher energy requirements, and lower energy later cut forages for horses at rest or in light work, good doers and those who need to lose weight. Restrict grass if necessary.

3 Balance with a suitable product:

a vitamin and mineral supplement or a balancer or a concentrate compound feed (or straights plus vits/mins) – depending on energy and protein needs

4 Offer salt block and add salt

to feed for working horses – 1 tablespoon for a 500kg horse in light work up to 3 tbsp for hard work with heavy sweating

5 Add therapeutic supplements

if required – only after the diet is balanced

6 Ensure clean fresh water is available



REMEMBER!

No-one knows your horse like you do or can assess your horse's response to changes in diet, management, or other intervention

“...educate yourself with quality information, then trust yourself!”

You may need to restrict grass if necessary

When assessing a change in diet, you'll need to change one factor at a time so that you can assess that factor accurately and not end up assigning something to the wrong factor. In practice, this may be difficult. For example, say you start feeding a muscle supplement at the same time as implementing a muscle building exercise regime for your horse. You will never know how much effect the muscle supplement had, but on the other hand you might want to add that supplement 'just in case'.

For specific help with an individual horse, contact a Registered Nutritionist and ask about a Consultation. You'll find details of one

to one Nutrition Consultation Packages on my website at equinenutritionist.co.uk.

If you do have some experience and have had some success with keeping horses healthy /working through health conditions/have educated yourself with quality information, then trust yourself! I work with many clients who are already doing a good job with their feeding regime and management but who don't trust themselves. They lack confidence and question themselves, yet they often have a good level of horse sense and a good understanding of basic nutrition.

Continued overleaf >>

<< Continued from previous page

“If you monitor consistently, you will be able to adjust the diet early and avoid wide fluctuations in weight.”

REMEMBER!

Keep a record of your horse's weightape measurements so you can easily identify if they have lost or gained weight

✔ Monitor, monitor, monitor

The most important factor in feeding well - which is commonly missed - is to monitor your horse and adjust their diet as soon as there are any changes, for example in condition (body fat covering), temperament, and any health issues related to diet.

Condition-score your horse for fat covering, and use a weightape for an objective measurement. Weightapes are not accurate for actual weight but they are very useful for monitoring changes in body fat so can tell you if your horse is losing or gaining weight (fat)



If you find a diet that suits your horse, don't just adjust for the sake of it!

before it is obvious by eye. Do write your horse's weightape measurement down and ideally make a table to hang in the feed room or keep a spreadsheet so that the empty box is there waiting on the measurement.

I recommend the 0-5 system for body condition (fat) scoring, which is relatively simple to use and gives a good guide to the fat level of your horse and whether or not they need to lose or gain weight. There are plenty of resources online to learn how to condition score, including from the charities (World Horse Welfare, Blue Cross) and my Equine Nutrition Learning Centre.

Check the signs of good health, including the eyes, legs, hooves, muscles, temperature, pulse and respiration (breathing rate), behaviour (general, under saddle and during grooming, tacking up and suchlike), and appetite.

✔ Adjust the diet accordingly

If you monitor consistently, you will be able to adjust the diet early and avoid wide fluctuations in weight, and diet-related health issues.

Don't just adjust for the sake of it! If you find a diet that suits your horse, they are doing well and you know that their health and performance is optimal, don't be swayed by marketing to change things up. There are very many ways to feed correctly - there is rarely just one - so there is no need to change if nothing is broken.

Many owners get into the habit of thinking that they haven't quite 'got' that way of feeding that is the best for their horse, that 'if only they could find that one best way' then they could relax



How much salt your horse needs depends entirely on the level of work, sweat rate and their environment

THINGS TO CHECK FOR SIGNS OF GOOD HEALTH INCLUDE:

- Eyes
- Legs
- Hooves
- Muscles
- Temperature
- Pulse
- Respiration
- Behaviour
- Appetite

Photo © Elea Milwright



Ensure that clean fresh water is always available

TIP

If you change your horse's diet, give it at least 2 weeks before reassessing

about it. But in most cases this is self-doubt or uneasiness that is perpetuated by companies selling products because they want you to buy theirs. When your horse is well and their diet is balanced but you get that feeling of 'is their diet good enough' remember that there is more than one way to feed well.

If you aren't happy with your horse's current diet, want to try something new, or realise your horse's diet hasn't been well balanced, implement the change, give it at least 2 weeks, then reassess.

The most important factor to adjust is the horse's calorie (digestible energy DE) intake, which is done depending on the condition (body fat level). Feed less calories for weight loss, and more calories for weight gain. Be sure to look at the forage – including grass, hay and haylage – more closely than the bucket feed since forage is the largest component of most horses' diets.

Consider whether you need to change the type of bucket feed, whether your horse needs the low calorie option; simply a vitamin and mineral supplement, a little energy and extra protein; a balancer or significant extra energy and protein from a concentrate compound feed (or concentrate straights plus vits/mins).

Changing the chaff you use won't make much if any difference to your horse, if you feed just a couple of handfuls.

Salt amount depends entirely on sweat rate, so depends on the level of work and the environment.

Only add therapeutic supplements after the diet is balanced correctly, since basic balancing may improve the health issues you were looking to support or fix. A good example of this is hoof issues – a diet short of zinc and copper will cause suboptimal hoof health and balancing the diet correctly may be enough to help the hooves without adding the high levels of biotin, zinc and methionine found in hoof supplements.

Never skimp on cleanliness of all feeding utensils, bowls, slow-feeders, mangers and water buckets and troughs. Replace stable water every 24 hours regardless of whether



Condition-score your horse for fat covering, and use a weighttape for an objective measurement

Photo © Elea Milwright

or not it looks dirty, and scrub out field troughs/buckets regularly.

In conclusion, first, educate yourself carefully, think!, take advice, and then trust yourself. Get professional help if you get stuck or have a complex case and use a Registered Nutritionist to ensure you get high quality advice (because anyone can currently call themselves a nutritionist).

Assess condition, choose appropriate forage then balance that forage with the appropriate product (vitamins, minerals, balancer or concentrate feed). Add salt for working horses. Then, monitor regularly and keep records. Adjust as necessary, and continue to monitor. Then relax, and enjoy your horse. 🍎



Be sure to look at the forage – including grass, hay and haylage – more closely than the bucket feed

Photo courtesy of Clare MacLeod

The Equine Nutrition Learning Centre

An exciting and unique Equine Nutrition Learning Centre has recently been launched by Clare, which provides members with an extensive library of horse nutrition information and advice, along with a Facebook Group private community for support, chat, discussion and sharing.

The Equine Nutrition Learning Centre by Clare MacLeod MSc RNutr gives you:

- Nutrition solutions
- Affordable learning
- Instant support
- Reduced confusion with clear, independent advice
- A route through the minefield of nutrition information





No. 6 Step-by-Step FITTING THE DUALLY®

When it comes to putting a Bridle on our horses, we already know to stand at the side of the face. This recipe is no different, it serves to assist you fitting halters, fly masks or a Dually® with greater ease and acceptance. Giving you a safer place to stand and your horse a comfortable place to learn.

UTENSILS:

- Dually® (now in 5 sizes: Miniature – Large, colour coded for size)
- 12ft/20ft Lead Line/Rope

INGREDIENTS:

- Observation • Stillness
- Breathing & exhalation
- Clear body language, mostly passive
- Mindfulness

Method: Before you start, ensure that you and your horse are in a comfortable space. A stable or similar size area is probably the best place to start. Have your Dually® halter with the nose strap (front and back) and buckles on the loosest holes. Avoid having your rope clipped on to the training ring as this will shut down the available space on offer to your horse. Either attach it to the under ring (tie up ring) or have it close by and ready to attach.

Comfort Zone: You are creating a comfortable place for your horse to find. By starting out with a loose fitting Dually® you'll notice how he comes to catch you. If you leave it buckled up tightly you are setting yourselves up for failure (it's too uncomfortable). This could lead to his head turning way and not wanting to be caught

Safety Point: Ensure you hold your lead line across the palm of your hand whilst fitting the Dually® or attach afterwards. It is too risky to loop it over your arm (you are not a hat stand!). Practise best practice even when you think it might not be necessary, as this will help your muscle memory for when it is.



1 Stand next to your horse, behind his eye on the nearside. Give him a wither scratch or neck rub whilst exhaling yourself.

2 Hold the Dually® in your left hand. Ensure you lay both nose straps across the palm and then hold the poll strap between your thumb and fore finger.

3 Place your left hand (now holding the Dually®) underneath his neck. Let out a calming exhale.

4 Put your right hand (empty) over your horse's neck, ensuring to exhale a nice out breath.

5 Release the poll strap into your right hand bringing it over and behind his ears.

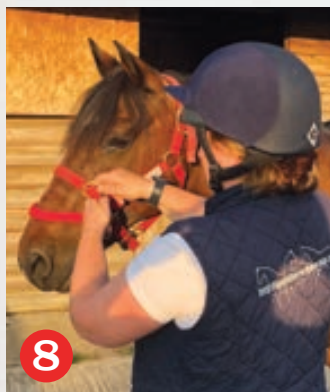
TOP TIP ✓

AFTER STEP 5,

you could ask your horse to take a sideways step towards you if you need to. This might be helpful if the space around you both is tight. It also allows the horse to recognise that you are able to request he moves his feet. Simply request the move by squeezing the ends of the Dually® towards you.

6 Use your left hand to guide the two nose straps up and over his nose, exhaling as you do this.

7 Secure the poll strap, ensuring that the Dually® is lifted up into the throat line (you could liken this to a cheeky facelift).



TOP TIP ✓

 Unbuckling your Dually® regularly also helps to keep it malleable and flexible

8 Tighten the front nose strap until it forms a backward facing L shape down the side of his cheek bone and around his face.

9 Tighten the nose strap behind the chin. This is also the time for an out breath and to give a nice positive stroke along his neck.

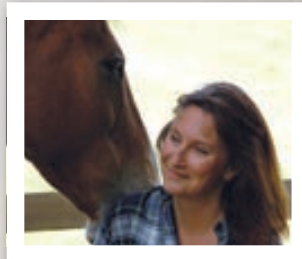
10 With your hands behind the horse's eyes, take hold of the Dually® each side by the cheek pieces and ensure as you give it a wiggle it does not twist around to his eyes.

11 Once you are happy with the fit, tuck the straps into the buckles and give another positive stroke along his neck.

12 Attach your lead line to the training ring and you are ready to go!

The next step...
 Over time you can consider reducing the slackening off to just the back chin strap, as this will still allow enough room for his head and face to fit comfortably.

• To get in touch with IH
Trainer Sandra Williams visit:
www.hearinghorses.com
Instagram: [ihrtsandrawilliams](https://www.instagram.com/ihrtsandrawilliams)
Facebook: Sandra Williams
IHRT



TOP TIP ✓

 Please avoid double backing the left-over straps through the buckles. This can increase unnecessary pressure points.





Regular IH Feature

Here at Intelligent Horsemanship, we love a good debate, and while we are all united behind the common values of non-violent horsemanship, that doesn't mean we have to agree on everything!

That's why we started this 'Intelligent Debate' section. In each issue, we tackle a different controversial issue that's rocking the horse world (or our Facebook feeds!) and we'll attempt to look at it from both sides. Names will be kept anonymous so that we can speak freely and say EXACTLY what is on our minds, and we won't be holding back!

THE DEBATE: Cancel Culture vs. Critical Thinking

THE DETAILS: It all started when Kelly posted a clip of a South American cowboy riding a galloping, bucking horse with no saddle, bridle or any other equipment on her Facebook page. While clearly stating her disagreement with the practice – and especially the rider's long spurs, even though he wasn't actively using them – she acknowledged his remarkable 'stickability' and stated she wanted her 'Horse Psychology students to see the ability with which some people can stay on'.

However, the video clearly divided IH members, with some vehemently opposed to Kelly's decision to share the post (after all, isn't showing it just as bad as condoning it?) and others defending the post, agreeing that there was still something to be learnt from it (after all, pretending something doesn't exist doesn't make it go away!).

So, who's right? Should we remove all traces of horse abuse and bad riding from our Facebook feeds in the hope that ignorance is bliss? Should we put our critical analysis skills to the test and learn from the mistakes of others? As always, there's no easy answer, but that didn't stop our debaters chiming in with their opinions...



THE DEBATE: Cancel Culture vs. Critical Thinking

FOR ➤ **CANCELLING THE WRONGS, CELEBRATING THE RIGHTS**

Animal welfare standards have undergone such positive changes over the past 200 years or so. After all, even just as far back as Victorian times, it was the accepted wisdom amongst many that animals were so 'dumb' that they couldn't experience pain or emotions. Popular entertainments, that are socially repugnant to us in the modern day included bear baiting and cock fighting. Horses were still the main form of transport; ridden, driven and pulling heavy goods, they were work animals and many suffered harsh conditions and little kindness.

In 1824, a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals was formed. Awareness was being raised, not least because of the interest and example of Queen Victoria, who in 1840, gave the Society her seal

of approval, known from then on as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). With public opinion now shifting, the welfare of animals would continue to come up for debate regularly. Nearly every year throughout the nineteenth century, Parliament was asked to pass some act to prevent cruelty to animals. Along with this groundswell of changing opinions, the plight of working horses was brought to public attention in Anna Sewell's novel *Black Beauty* (1877), written "to induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses".

Thankfully, science and cultural beliefs have moved on significantly since those more unenlightened days. And so should the accompanying outdated training methods and beliefs. Horses are sentient, intelligent, sensitive beings and deserve to be treated with respect, care and compassion.

It must be said that history has given us many gifted 'true' horsemen, whose wisdom and writings stand the test of time, continuing to educate and inspire (Xenophon anyone?). But there are many more who do not.



“ We are part of a movement that recognises that horses, indeed all animals, deserve compassion... ”

“ Anything forced and misunderstood can never be beautiful. ” Xenophon

When there are countless great examples of talented and ethical trainers and riders, why should those who are less so, (who use pain, dominance or brute ignorance), be given a public platform? I don't want to see a rider being praised for a perfect seat or balance if the horse is clearly in distress from a painfully tight flash noseband or being coerced by the use of a whip. Or experts celebrating a perfect piaffe or fastest time when that horse's welfare has been so shamefully compromised, kept in a stable 24/7, deprived of turnout or physical companionship of other horses.

Social media platforms are being challenged and expected to remove 'offensive' material, and the same should surely apply to videos, photos and accounts of those who use abusive practices, training methods or poor welfare standards? Why, as a society, would we wish to promote or

celebrate such behaviours? What message does it send out to impressionable followers, who may believe such behaviour is acceptable and try to copy and emulate their heroes?

It can no longer be acceptable to celebrate any level of abuse, when it deserves to be called out. I'm absolutely not talking of starting witch hunts or bullying of riders online. But a simple, open statement of facts.

As a society we no longer accept racism, sexism, bullying or abuse by prejudice – it is not tolerated and perpetrators are rightly being called out. And in the same spirit, cruelty surely cannot be tolerated either. Not just the obvious cruelties such as whip abuse or spurring, but the smaller, more subtle things – such as denial of the **5 freedoms set out by the Animal Welfare Act:**

- 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst, by ready access to water and a diet to maintain health and vigour.**
- 2. Freedom from discomfort, by providing an appropriate environment.**
- 3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease, by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.**
- 4. Freedom to express normal behaviour, by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and appropriate company of the animal's own kind.**
- 5. Freedom from fear and distress, by ensuring conditions and treatment, which avoid mental suffering.**

We are part of a movement that recognises that horses, indeed all animals, deserve compassion and ethical treatment. Open discussion and education is key to ensure cultural change for the best and fair treatment of our beloved equines. It seems incumbent upon us to only use the very best, shining examples to inspire and educate. Those who treat horses unethically, whose practices are harsh or unkind, must be recognised and unveiled. Such behaviour needs to be boycotted, not celebrated.

Everyone, from the media world of television, newspapers and publications, to individuals posting on social media, has a moral responsibility to only promote the best, and no longer allow abuses to be seen as 'the norm'. Leading by example (think Carl Hester and Charlotte Dujardin) is the most powerful tool to changing public perception and encouraging methodologies to change.

- Ayres, Brenda. *Victorians and Their Animals: Beast on a Leash*. London: Routledge, 2019
- Farm Animal Welfare Council October 2009

AGAINST

> IF WE'RE TOO QUICK TO 'CANCEL', HOW CAN WE LEARN?

2020 was the year of Cancel Culture. OK, it was also the year of Covid and lockdowns, and worldwide Black Lives Matter protests, and Brexit, and Australian wildfires harming more than 3 billion wild animals, and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle quitting the royal family (in no particular order!). So perhaps it is unsurprising that, in the wake of such a historically challenging year, we have little time and energy left to expend on negativity and defending wrongdoers.

To be honest, I can understand the urge to switch off the bad news, fill our lives (and our Facebook feeds) with a flurry of positivity, and celebrate all that is good in the world. Sometimes tuning out the horrors of the world is essential if we are to stay sane and happy, and there are absolutely circumstances in which giving too much attention to something negative can only serve to encourage it (a certain former US President springs to mind!). However, before we put on our rose-tinted glasses and start erasing all traces of our less-than-rosy history, it's worth considering whether this is really the best strategy.

After all, pretending something doesn't exist doesn't make it disappear, and although learning from the past might help us avoid making the same errors, it rarely avoids all future conflicts (if that was the case, we wouldn't have had a second World War). And while my co-debater has rightly pointed out that we no longer accept or tolerate 'racism, sexism, bullying or abuse by prejudice', we are surely all aware that these things sadly still exist.

One thing that cancel culture has taught us, is that many of us – and our most beloved icons – have made mistakes over the years. The question then becomes whether we should erase these mistakes (and the people who made them) and paint over history, or whether we learn from them, educate ourselves, and evolve our viewpoints and actions accordingly. Just because we disagree with something, doesn't necessarily mean we can't learn something from it. If we are too quick to turn off or delete a video, a post, or a person because it / they offend us, we might find ourselves throwing the baby out with the bathwater! >>



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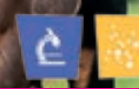


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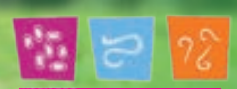
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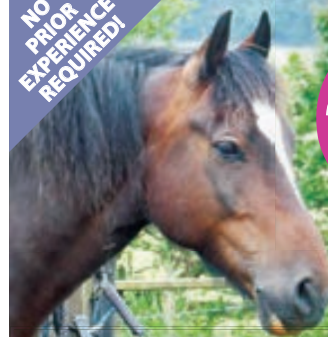


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Susan Clark

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» I can understand how, when anyone posts a video that includes less-than-ideal treatment of horses it brings up strong feelings. And it's good that this promotes discussion and conversation and therefore critical thinking. However, we all need to be aware of our own cognitive biases. Many, perhaps, most horse sports have their 'dark side', but does that mean you can't admire a rider's amazing position because you don't like the bit the horse is wearing? Perhaps someone is a brilliant horseperson but you disagree with them politically. Is all their work negated then? As Facebook makes society ever more divisive – 'you're either on the right side or the wrong side' – surely the intelligent way is to find the good knowing you'll never be using the things you don't like anyway.

“The important thing is not to stop questioning.”
Albert Einstein

The truth is, it's often easier to dismiss something entirely or boycott anything we deem as 'wrong', than it is to have the long and difficult conversations that need to be had to enact change. But if we avoid these conversations, not only do we miss out on an opportunity to educate ourselves, we also miss out on an opportunity to potentially educate and change the minds of others too.

Monty Roberts knows this all too well – he has been criticised in the past for



Photo © Shutterstock / Lightspring

if Intelligent Horsemanship has taught us anything, it's to keep asking questions

Find the good knowing you'll never be using the things you don't like anyway



Photo courtesy of Lynn Chapman

“The past can hurt. But, you can either run from it or learn from it.”

watching or working with trainers that use abusive methods, but by listening, learning, and meeting them on their level, he's proven time and time again that he can bring them round to his way of thinking and his non-violent methods. Monty's methods are now being put into practice all around the world – and this was only possible because he refused to close his eyes to the abuse going on around him.

IH Trainer Dr Rosie Jones McVey also wrote about this in her book *Globetrotting*. When travelling to different countries and cultures to work with horses, she was often confronted with uncomfortable situations and undesirable training methods. But by remaining open-minded and judgement-free, she too was often able to inspire a change of tact.

Of course, we're not all Monty Roberts, and sharing videos on Facebook might not change the world for better or worse. But if Intelligent Horsemanship has taught us anything, it's to keep asking questions (that's where the 'Intelligent' part of IH comes in). Horse abuse in its most vile and obvious form might be a thing of the past (at least in the UK, we hope), but there are still many smaller

and less-significant (but non-the-less consequential) forms of abuse and violence that are still perpetuated even though we now know there are better ways. But how do we expect to challenge and change these habits and outdated traditions if we close our eyes to it?

I've already quoted Einstein, so now I'll leave you with the wise words of another esteemed philosopher (!), Rafiki from *The Lion King*: “The past can hurt. But, you can either run from it or learn from it.”

Hopefully, we'd all rather learn from it. ☒

Get involved!

This isn't about who's right or wrong, or picking a winner – the aim is to get you thinking and more importantly, considering different points of view. So get involved and let us know your opinions! Did we miss a key point? Think we've both got it wrong? Got a great idea for a debate topic that you'd like us to discuss?

Let us know at editor@ihhq.net



SPOTLIGHT ON **Zoe Chipman**
IH TRAINER



All photos courtesy of Zoe Chipman

Above, clockwise from top left: Zoe works with horses of all shapes – and sizes; desensitising a client’s Highland pony; working with a rescue foal; working with the West Sussex Fire & Rescue team; Zoe showing as a teenager. Below, clockwise from top left: groundwork with a client’s horse; the Dually® is one of Zoe’s key pieces of equipment; Zoe helped dressage rider, Stephanie Morland, overcome mounting problems with her horse, Panni; in hand spook-busting; making friends with a foal; building trust is vital.

IH Trainer Zoe Chipman is based in Farnham, Surrey and specialises in working with reluctant loaders, tricky foals, difficult to mount, nappy, clipper or farrier-shy horses. With over 50 years of knowledge working with horses in many disciplines, she offers constructive, non-judgemental advice and hands-on help – working at a pace that both the horse and the owner can easily follow. Zoe also regularly helps Kelly at the IH demonstrations.

How long have you been involved with horses, and how did you get involved with them?

I first got involved with horses at the age of seven. I was a typical horse-mad child, and I think my parents thought that I would get it out of my system if they found someone willing to help me “scratch the itch”. I am forever indebted to the lovely local lady who let me ride her ponies and taught me so much. I carried on riding her ponies for years, even when I was working with horses for a living. I never have grown out of the “Hippopause” as my father calls it!

Why did you decide to qualify as a IH Trainer?

Having worked in Showing Yards, and passing my BHS Stage III, I had become very disillusioned with the way most people appeared to treat not only horses, but the other people involved with horses. I couldn't buy in to the “shout a bit louder, smack a bit harder” line of training. I knew there was a better way, but hadn't had the room to find it, so I got out of the industry, and decided to focus on working with cattle and sheep instead. Horses were still part of my life, but purely for pleasure.

In 1998, a friend bought me for Christmas, a copy of “The Man Who Listens to Horses” by Monty Roberts – purely because it had a horse on the front. I read the book with tears streaming down my face. THIS was what I had been looking for!

I liken Monty Roberts to the picture on the lid of a jigsaw box. I always knew I had all the pieces to the jigsaw; I just had no clue how to put them together until I read Monty's book and saw the picture. Having discovered that there was a person called Kelly Marks in the UK, and her Intelligent Horsemanship ran courses, I booked in for them all. By the end of the first day of the first course, I knew I wanted to make this my life. I knew I would be able to help horses and their owners to live more fulfilling lives together. I qualified as an IH Trainer in 2003.

What's important to you when you see an owner and their horse for the first time?

Safety. Both for the horse, the owner, and me. If the area isn't safe to work in, I won't work in it.

What are the common challenges you face in your work as an IH Trainer?

I think the biggest challenge, and sadly quite a common one, is probably having to point out to an owner that the yard that the horse is on is either causing or exacerbating the issues that I have been asked to help with. Actually, the bigger challenge is having to point out that both the owner and the horse could be happier if they parted company, but thankfully, that's not too common. Getting to the very bottom of an issue can be tricky, too. So many factors can be involved, and the manifested behaviours are frequently a symptom of an underlying cause – be that pain, or an emotional block in either the horse or the owner.

If you could change one thing in the world of horses, what would it be, and why?

Oh, a VERY big can of worms! The one thing I would change is to ask that horses would never again be bred to make mega money for humans. I know this is going to be a massively unpopular answer in many quarters, but if horses were not bred to go on to make big money, so much of the cruelty, neglect, and exploitation would eventually die out. I know this could never happen overnight, and I know it could come with its own problems, but many horses suffer greatly in the pursuit of money.

What would be the first piece of advice you would give someone looking at buying or loaning their first horse?

Spend as much time around horses as possible beforehand. Get your hands and boots filthy with poo-picking, brushing, tack cleaning, etc. Book some lessons on an Equine Simulator. Go on all the IH Courses. Read up on horse care and psychology until your eyeballs ache. Ask a trusted, knowledgeable person to go with you when you try out the horses that you think may potentially become your responsibility.

What is the most common issue you have to deal with when working with horses?

The most common work I have is helping owners with reluctant loaders. It's literally my bread and butter. I absolutely LOVE teaching the horses how to feel confident loading and teaching the owners how to work with their horses if the horse has a little wobbly moment at the bottom of the ramp in the future.

What are your plans for the future?

I shall continue as an IH Trainer as long as I'm physically able. Without horses in my life, I am nothing.

What three things should everyone practise with their horse?

Patience, consistency, and empathy. Don't expect miracles when working with your horse – nobody ever learned everything they need to know in

half an hour. Be VERY consistent and clear in your requests – if you ask in a different way each time, you will never achieve a consistent result. And look at everything from the horse's perspective at every move – how can you make it easier for the horse to see what you are asking as a good idea?

What's the best bit of advice you've ever been given?

“Work with the horse in front of you”. Ian said this on the Psychology Course that I attended in 2001. Also, “Never ask an animal to do something that you know they can't or won't do”. This was said to me by the very wise old chap who taught me shepherding many years ago.

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“ I knew I would be able to help horses and their owners to live more fulfilling lives together. ”
.....

What has been the proudest moment/biggest achievement in your career?


This may sound glib, but I can honestly say that I regard every single success that I have with a horse and owner to be a huge achievement. And becoming an IH Trainer was probably one of the happiest days of my life. Giving other people the opportunity to expand their love of horses in every way is a massive buzz. IH Courses are, literally, life changing. The learning is transferable to absolutely any walk of life where one is interacting with another sentient being.

What would your advice be to someone hoping to become a Intelligent Horsemanship Trainer?

If you want to do it enough, you will find a way to do it. A word of warning though, it is a good idea to have more than one occupation to fall back on in leaner times. Unless you have a yard and take in horses for training, the work can be very seasonal.

Please share some of the horses you have worked with that have gone on to compete successfully

I have worked with many competition horses who have gone on to compete successfully. Mostly because they had never been taught to load happily before, or because they were being asked to do too much too soon. However, I think the horse and owner who I was most happy for was Stephanie Morland and her horse Panni. I first met Steph because she was having problems mounting her horse, Panni. We sorted the problem, and Steph and Panni went on to compete very successfully in Para Dressage.

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• Zoe is based in Farnham, Surrey. To find out more visit her website www.equinemediator.co.uk 



The Taming of Mancha & Gato!

IH Member Hilary Charlesworth shares how IH methods helped her with her two colts, Mancha and Gato...



IH methods helped Hilary to halter train her new colts

I was lucky enough to be given my first young New Forest pony when I was 13 years old – over 50 years ago. Pepsi was just 2 years old, but had been handled and socialised, and of course, I spent every moment I could with him, so we soon became good friends. I had already been influenced by the training methods of Barbara Woodhouse (author of “Talking to Animals”) who used gentling techniques such as breathing into wild horses’ nostrils (in the same way as horses greet one another) and I applied these techniques to Pepsi, and several other youngsters over the years.

By purchasing foals and introducing them to as many experiences as possible, it has been a natural and stress-free transition to riding them when they matured. My last New Forest “foal” went into retirement some years ago and I felt that, sadly, my days of horse gentling were behind me... until Autumn 2019.

We are fortunate to have enough land to keep ponies on and gradually, the old urge to care for and bring up a youngster took hold of me again. I began searching for something suitable and eventually came across someone selling 8 foals from Bodmin Moor. Of course, they looked absolutely gorgeous!

With the help of a horsey friend, I chose two skewbald colts and the seller kindly agreed to deliver them. I named them Mancha and Gato after the two famous Argentinian horses who accompanied Tschiffely on his epic ride in the 1930’s.

The day finally arrived when we unloaded the trailer and the two colts were herded down to their new paddock. They arrived wearing headcollars and having been wormed in the trailer – something of a mixed blessing as it turned out.

Mancha was laid back and very calm right from the start. What we didn’t realise was that Gato had been thoroughly traumatised and would not let anyone near him – he spent all his time hiding behind his “brother”.

I tried all my usual techniques to make friends with him, but to no avail and I began to have sleepless nights worrying about how to

remove his headcollar which was now getting too small for him. By chance, I came across the wonderful Sarah Weston (IH Trainer and author of *No Fear, No Force*), who came and spent a cold and damp three hours working with Gato and removing his headcollar. I learnt a great deal from Sarah in that short time.

“...the rewards have been and continue to be amazing.”



Mancha and Gato enjoying their new life

My next task was to gain Gato’s trust and confidence in humans and I decided not to rush this process. Gradually, he allowed me to touch him using a soft scarf around his head. At last, the wonderful day came when I could put a headcollar on him and from then onwards I’ve caught him each day for grooming and touching.

Lockdown proved a blessing for training both ponies as I was able to work with them for short periods daily. During this time, Mancha has been gelded and had his feet trimmed. Gato is getting braver by the day and can now have his feet picked up, his tail brushed and be handled by different people. We are hoping he can be gelded this autumn.

Both ponies seem to have accepted me as their leader – they always come to me for attention, but because we don’t use food for training, they are not pushy or bad mannered.

We’ve had our moments of anxiety but the rewards have been and continue to be amazing. Mancha and Gato are a joy to be with and I feel lucky to be

involved in their development. Thanks so much to Sarah for setting us on the right path. 🙏

LEARN MORE

Sarah Weston’s book *No Fear, No Force* is available online in the IH Shop

INTELLIGENT HORSEMANSHIP TRAINERS

client feedback

Our Intelligent Horsemanship Trainers are specialists in training and understanding all equines – both young and old and those ‘with problems’. They are the only people Intelligent Horsemanship recommend assisting with the training of other people’s horses. Using established principles of psychology and equine behaviour together with years of experience this way of training has become increasingly popular. Sympathetic to both horses and people our IH Trainers have helped horses and horse owners achieve a better understanding and achieve their full potential all around the world.

Whether you have a young foal or weanling that needs handling; a horse that needs saddling, long-reining, backing; a horse who won’t shoe, catch, load, clip, needs schooling, hacking out, or anything else you can think of, our IH Trainers can provide you with a solution to get you heading in the right direction.

Here’s what horse owners are saying about our IH Trainers:

▼ IHT IAN VANDENBERGHE Oxfordshire



“We were looking for the best start for our new young horse”

I can’t thank Ian, Jake, and the team at Hartsop enough for the work they have done with our new horse, Coco, and I certainly recommend them and their methods.

I knew of Hartsop Farm from attending IH courses, so when my son and I bought an unbacked three-year-old Irish sport horse in the sales last December, it seemed the perfect place to send her to be started and we couldn’t be more delighted with the outcome.

Ian was kind enough to send regular video updates on her progress and I was able to visit Coco and chat about her with Jake and Ian. My son rode her, with help from Jake, at Hartsop several times before we picked her up, which helped us a lot.

She spent eight weeks at Hartsop and has come home calm and happy, ready to move on with life as a ridden horse and eventually start her eventing career.

Caroline Moore, Milton Keynes

▼ IHT JULIA FISHER Hertfordshire



“I was looking for support with my lovely cob, Harold”

I would like to share some really positive feedback on my experience with IH and Julia Fisher – after only one session with my lovely cob Harold.

Julia immediately made me feel at ease – working on me first and understanding the importance of presence and assigning purpose to my time with Harold.

I’ve been practising my groundwork and already Harold is responding to me – and both of us are demonstrating more confidence in each other when alone. Even at times when he couldn’t resist a squeal and a buck (he’s only 5 and wind can be exciting sometimes!) I felt comfortable to be able to bring his attention back to me, just by simply changing direction.

I can already feel a difference in our bond and I’m so grateful to Julia for these first important steps in our journey. Many thanks!

Kaitlin Jones, Barnet

▼ IHT LUCY NEWHAM Hampshire



“I was looking for help with picking my horses feet up, he would plant and lean”

Lucy was extremely helpful, offering advice above and beyond. She broke the problem down into bitesize pieces for me to work on. I love the approach – kind, practical, and

common sense. I think the only way to improve your service would be having more trainers.

Islay Crispin, Hampshire

▼ IHT SUZANNE HALSEY Kent



“I needed help with social distancing so attended a clinic with Suzanne”

If you mention social distancing to my horse, Kali, she would laugh in your face, literally right in your face! So close she would leave slobber – then body barge you as she turns round and demands that you scratch her. Mucking out the field is a challenge, she follows me round the field shoving me with her nose or walking “through” me demanding attention, twice now I have landed in a wheelbarrow full of poo, I’ve landed on Marbles, my Shetland numerous times, and been shoved into roads whilst waiting at junctions when Kali and I have been out for a walk in-hand. I realise now she sounds awful but she’s not – honestly, she does have a lot of good points!

Enter Suzanne, who asked me what I wanted from our session, erm... respect?! So, we started our session and at first, I was very aware we had a rather large audience. But then we got busy, we both worked hard. Kali was a superstar once she had stopped admiring herself in the school mirrors! The next morning, I actually managed to muck out the field without Kali’s “help” and no demands for my attention. Once I’d finished mucking out Kali walked calmly over to me, stood about a foot away and asked for a scratch, I nearly fell in the wheelbarrow on my own!

We’re still a work in progress but her improvement is amazing in-hand and in the field and I have noticed a difference when I’m riding her too. We’ve yet to test her behaviour in the pub car park. Thank you, Suzanne, Princess Kali’s royal subjects are very grateful!

Joanna Castle, Kent

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- Five Day Foundation • Horse Psychology
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- Handling the Untouched Horse

The IH courses offer some of the very best learning content and teaching available in a genuinely friendly and encouraging environment.

Do you have a bad loader that needs help? Email us to find out more: info@ihhq.net

Check the IH website for latest info & additional dates

2021 COURSES	DATE	LOCATION
Feeding & Nutrition/Horse as an Athlete	25-26 September	Hartsop Farm, Witney
Zoom Horse Psychology with Kelly Marks & Sandra Williams	28 September 8pm	Via ZOOM
Perfect Manners	2-3 October	Hartsop Farm, Witney
Handling the Untouched Horse	9-10 October	SOLD OUT
Handling the Untouched Horse	16-17 October	SOLD OUT
Monty Roberts / Intelligent Horsemanship Diploma week - Stage 2	18-22 October	By application only
Five Day Foundation	25-29 October	Hartsop Farm, Witney
Discovering You and Your Horse with Rosie Jones-McVey & Dr Veronica Fowler	20-21 November	Lethornes, Lambourn

REMEMBER, IF YOU'VE ALREADY DONE A FIVE DAY FOUNDATION OR PERFECT MANNERS COURSE IF YOU COME BACK FOR A SECOND TIME ON EITHER YOU GET £100 OFF. Simply email courses@ihhq.net to get a voucher code so you can book online.



COMING SOON! The IH Awards Pilot Scheme

To achieve the **PERFECT MANNERS STANDARDS AWARD** the horse being handled must complete 7 of 14 key groundwork exercises, with assessments by IH Trainers. The awards will be open to IH Members. More information and tips to achieve these will be coming soon!

Enjoyed a course and want to share the love? If you love us and love Facebook, we'd love you to leave a review and recommend us!

