

# SPOTLIGHT ON IH TRAINER Jim Goddard

Jim is based in Heathfield, East Sussex and covers the South of England



“Once we understand... we can set everything up to get the best possible results...”

## GET IN TOUCH

Jim is based in Heathfield, East Sussex and covers the South of England. Contact him via mobile 07540 607231 or email [info@jimgoddardhorses.com](mailto:info@jimgoddardhorses.com) Follow him on Facebook @JimGoddardHorses

**How long have you been involved with horses and how did you get involved with them?** I started riding as a young child in Africa, where we rode old polo ponies to get about, then I progressed on to Connemaras in Ireland and hunters and eventers in the UK. I was lucky enough to then work as a wrangler and stunt rider in Canada, before coming back to the UK and starting youngsters and working with remedial horses.

**How did you become involved with Kelly and Monty?** I started as a volunteer at demos, then started training with Intelligent Horsemanship and over the next few years I worked hard to learn everything I could until I took over managing the tours on the road and became an IH Trainer.

**Why did you decide to qualify as an IH Trainer?** I love the way Kelly works with horses and after volunteering for her and Monty on some tours I started to train with her. She opened up a new way of working in partnership with the horses I was training, and I knew that was the way I wanted to spend my time with them. I've always loved teaching and coaching and so becoming an IH Trainer was a no brainer!!

**What is a typical day for you?** Since we stopped training horses at home, I now go out and help people at their own yards. I get on the road early and see two or three clients a day depending on the needs of horse and rider/handler. I have a great body of regular clients whom I've developed really good relationships with and it's lovely to see their equine partnerships grow.

**What's important to you when you see an owner and their horse for the first time?** The most important thing for me is to take a good honest history. Once we understand all the needs of horse and rider/handler we can set everything up to get the best possible results. Then a good positive practical session so we can see if there's anything that we can do to understand the challenges in front of us.

**What are the common challenges you face in your work as an IH Trainer?** There are definitely a few of these! I think training peer pressure, facilities, and openness to new training options are all top of the list. Feeling confident enough to work at a pace that you feel comfortable with and sticking to your own training boundaries sometimes takes some courage in the face of peer pressure and it's our responsibility as trainers to support that and try our best to make those new training options workable and successful. Working around facilities is sometimes tricky, I've worked everywhere from very smart arenas to a communal garden!

**If you could change one thing in the world of horses, what would it be, and why?** As both a Western and English trained rider/trainer I would like to see more open dialogue and sharing of best practice across all disciplines. I have learnt so much from many different trainers, I'd love to see us all working together for the horses we love.

**What would be the first piece of advice you would give someone looking at buying/loaning their first horse?** Get the right horse for the job that you want them to do. It can be frustrating if you're a budding show jumper but the conformation or breeding of the horse you choose lends itself to a different job.

“Be patient both with the horses and gaining the experience needed...”

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

I think making sure our horses are fit, supple and experienced enough to be able to cope with the level of training we are asking of them. Sometimes as humans, we want the end result

so much we forget to give our horses time to develop the body and mind that they need to succeed.

**What are your plans for the future?** We are planning on developing our fun ridden clinics and letting people have a feel of how some slightly different riding styles can be incorporated into their general toolbox.

**What three things should everyone practise with their horses?**

1. Standing still, chatting to your neighbour, on a loose rein in different environments and locations. 2. Developing softness and suppleness throughout your horse's body, especially their barrel (torso). 3. Patience!

**Do you have any memorable moments/stories of working with Kelly or Monty?** I loved watching Kelly work with a tricky loader on tour once. She wasn't getting the answer that she was looking for, so she paused, had a think, tried something different and hey presto – success!

It really taught me to look and listen to the horses and that they are a part of solving the challenge in front of you – so pay attention!!

**What's the best bit of advice you've ever been given?** It's our responsibility to get our bodies breathing and understanding correctly, only then can the horse find the space to hear what we are asking.

**What has been the proudest moment/biggest achievement in your career?** Using IH methods in our Equine Therapy clinics to help military veterans and blue light workers with complex mental health needs.

**What would your advice be to someone hoping to become an IH Trainer?** Be patient both with the horses and gaining the experience needed to have a great big bag of tools! 🛠️