

“It’s a busy life, but a lot of fun and every day is different.”



## SPOTLIGHT ON IH RECOMMENDED TRAINER Suzanne Halsey

IH Recommended Trainer Suzanne Halsey is based in Upchurch, Kent and covers the counties of Kent and Essex. She says her goal is ‘to help people reach new levels of understanding with their horses, and to make the time that they spend with them fun’.

### How long have you been involved with horses?

I have been involved with horses since I started riding at the age of seven, and owned my own pony from the age of 11. I left school and went straight into training for my BHS qualifications.

### When and why did you decide to qualify as a Recommended Trainer?

I had a horse that I really struggled with: instructors told me to sell him, that he was no good, but I felt like I was letting him down somehow, and I was keen to try a different approach. After seeing Monty Roberts do a demonstration back in, I think, 1996, I was intrigued to find out more – at that stage I was only looking to help my horse.

Once I had been on the first course and realised that you could continue on and become a Recommended Trainer, however, I decided to follow that path. That was in 1999; I qualified as an IHRT in 2000 and haven’t looked back.

### What is a typical day for you?

There is not a ‘typical’ day, every day is different. I have a lot of regular clients that I see weekly/fortnightly/monthly and I also do ridden coaching. I often find that once I start helping clients from the ground, they then look to continue with that help with their riding. Over the past 18 months, I have also been involved with some equine therapy, so we will visit day care centres, hospices and other events with two lovely Shetland ponies owned by a friend and colleague.

I have also done some work with young people that have been excluded from all main stream schools, due to their behavior, using horses to help them understand more about themselves and how they can change.

I usually start the day at the moment walking my new puppy, then hit the road seeing clients, and doing whatever the diary says I am doing that day! I am also a keen runner, and completed the London marathon in April, so most days include fitting in some running.

The training for the London marathon wasn’t always easy, but I found running a great way to forget about everything and I feel it keeps me

fresh, so although I can take my foot off the pedal a bit now that is done, I still like to keep my fitness and running up. Then there is the slightly never-ending challenge of keeping up with the emails and messages from new or existing clients – I like to give them the opportunity of keeping in touch, so that they have support there even if they haven’t seen me.

### What are the common challenges you face in your work as an RA?

I find fewer challenges these days, actually; some years back I would have said people that want a quick fix and an answer to endless problems in one session. Now, I generally avoid that situation, and have got better at reading people and what they expect.

If they are looking for quick fixes, then I will explain that I’m probably not the right person. The other slight challenge is the number of people offering ‘alternative training’ – people have slightly jumped on this and whilst it is really good that people have a wide choice, I often find people are confused.

I wish people would ask more about the experience and qualifications of the people offering it.

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

The over-breeding of horses, and the amount of unwanted horses we have. Too many horses are being dumped and it is heart breaking.

### What are your plans for the future?

Lots! It’s all very exciting: I sold my yard and property in 2015 as I decided that running a livery/training yard and doing all the outside work was getting too much, and I started to feel like I was spreading myself out too thinly and I didn’t want that to happen.

Since then I haven’t owned a horse of my own, which has been very odd! However that will all change as we have bought a barn that has 10 acres and we are converting the barn into a dwelling and will be adding stables and an arena, which means I can add a horse back into my life again.

I hope to run some courses there, and have people come and use the facilities, but I won’t be running it as a livery yard. The equine therapy work is ever growing, so I am keen to keep doing that. It’s a busy life, but it’s a lot of fun and I love the fact that every day is different.

For more information about Suzanne, visit [www.fridayfield.co.uk](http://www.fridayfield.co.uk)