



Hoofing Around



Spring 2017

www.eastmendiprc.com

eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com

Hello Everyone !

We are really proud that we have had not only a really good return on our annual membership but lots of new members—welcome to everyone.

The first quarter of the year has mainly been about keeping our training clinics going for you and I can see how popular they are with full houses (more later!) and reserve lists. If we can find a way of offering additional training clinics, we will do so. Thank you so much to all of those who volunteer to help with these clinics—your help is much appreciated.

We will continue our training events until the beginning of June and then with Camp (woohoo!) and other events, they will stop, starting again in September.

Happy and safe riding everyone!

Sam

Training Clinics Spring 2017

All clinics are held at Kingfisher Equestrian BA7 7PS. Each session is £20 per horse/rider combination but if you have to cancel five days or less before the event, we do reserve the right to keep the fee to help us with our costs.



Sunday 9th April—Show Jumping—places available

Sunday 14th May—Flatwork—full but reserves being taken

Sunday 28th May—Show Jumping—places available

Sunday 4th June—Flatwork—places available

CHECK OUT OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY LATER IN THE NEWSLETTER!

If you can help at any of the clinics—particularly 28th May please let Jo know.

TRAINING CLINIC SURVEY

The committee are looking to potentially put on additional training clinics during the week to help as many members as possible.

We have recently sent a one page survey out via email. Please do fill this in and return it to: eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com putting Survey in the subject line.

We won't be acknowledging receipt of the surveys individually so for those of you that have already returned their surveys — THANK YOU!

If you haven't received the email—do let Jo know and she will send another copy

Your Committee

Sam Moody—Chairman

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Jo Rossiter—Secretary

Tel: 0787 429 5077

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Anne Pearce

Sarah Fogden

Sarah Clarke

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U Hoofing Around U



A little about life with horses in Spain.

Jo and Jess Mackenzie

Before returning to the UK a couple of years ago, my family and I lived in the centre of the island of Mallorca. I say centre of the island because people who haven't visited often think of Mallorca in terms of package holiday resorts full of high rise hotels and packed beaches. These do exist of course but the island is very diverse and beautiful.

A ridge of mountains, most higher than Ben Nevis called The Tramontanas rises from the sea in the North and forms a spine from East to West and below these to the south is the Pla or flat lands and this is where our finca (small farm) is.

The Pla is mainly vineyards and sheep farming and although the red soil is very rich the terrain is harsh and rocky. By Easter what little grazing there is burns away.

So, what's it like keeping horses in a place like this? Well many things are very different. My Husband Scott and I bought a tumbled down ancient farm house with about 10 acres of land. Most of our old dry stone walls had been robbed over the years to build barns etc and our first job was to fence it.



This proved to be a marathon. Every post hole had to be dug out with a jack hammer and the cemented in place, each one could take a morning depending on how deep the bed rock was. It took a whole year.

Hay is unheard of in southern Spain, it's simply too hot to grow any so horses are fed on Garba De Avena, oat straw with the heads left on. We would feed this sopping wet in summer and at least four times a day. Watering is also very different. Put a bucket of water out in the shade in summer and an hour later it will be too hot to touch and they will not drink it. Plus every wasp, rat, snake or mosquito in the area with head straight to it. Auto waters with heavily insulated pipes are the only practical way to go. Horses will happily drink 70 litres and more a day so lugging buckets about is not an option if you have more than one horse.

The Spanish are mad about horses and nowhere more so than Mallorca which has the highest ratio of humans to equines in Europe.

Trotting, Doma Classica (High school dressage) Doma Vaquero (the dressage of the bull ring) and Show Jumping are all very popular.

As a family, we all rode and our children started out by in a sling in front of me then a felt saddle up behind either one of us by two and at aged three they were onto Lester our naughty, fat, lead rein Shetland. After a while the locals got to know us and we were invited to join The Cavalistas de Mallorca a group of riders who help to keep the ancient bridle ways and pilgrim routes open by using them regularly and stopping rich foreigners locking gates to rights of way. Groups of up to 600 hundred horses with at least 25% of them stallions will regularly meet and ride the tracks on the island.

U Hoofing Around U

A little about life with horses in Spain.
Jo and Jess Mackenzie

It's with this group that we were asked if we would like to join the parade to bless the animals. The Spanish bless their horses every year on the 16th of January on the feast of St Anthony. We felt very honoured to be asked and I duly arrived at the meeting point with kids and horses scrubbed and polished. In those days, my husband had a horse called Sobi a Campero horse used for herding the wild bulls in the fields a hot headed and very flashy Lusitano. As Scott was a way I decided I would take him as I would feel more the part on Campero with all the fancy Spanish tack, than on my own sane warm blood.

Not having attended, or indeed ever having seen a blessing of the animals before I decided the girls and I would go at the back so that we could see what to do.

We were a group of about 80 horses and as we approached the town of Bunyola in the mountains an official asked us to turn into a steep side street and wait to be called to ride into the town center. A host of other animals from goats, pot belly pigs, chickens, cats etc. filed towards the church where the priest stood in his shining gold robes waiting to bless them. This is when I got it all terribly wrong. When the official came back he asked us to turn around and instead of being last I was now at the front of the parade of horses.

The noise was deafening, sheep bleating, people clapping and shouting Ole, a band playing it was mayhem and the horse I was sat on was seriously losing it. Thank fully the kids were having a great time and their little 12.2 ponies were perfectly behaved. The more my horse reared up or cantered on the spot the more the people cheered. It's tradition to touch a horse's chest when it rears on parade especially when it's wearing the cross of San Juan on its breast plate. Which of course it was because that's what you do when you have a Spanish horse in Spain, buy all kit. A serious case of all the gear and no idea! Little did anyone realise that Sobi's rearing was me out of control.

The road became so crowded that it was impossible to do anything but sit tight and hang on. As we approached the church the girls went first, the priest handed them a prayer card, made the sign of the cross and splashed holy water on the rump of each pony, and my two daughters smiling like butter wouldn't melt, trotted a head with not a thought or backwards glance for their mother behind them.

My turn came and bang on cue Sobi reared just as I took the prayer card which I had no option but to shove down my cleavage, the priest looked as though he didn't approve of that at all but I really needed both hands to control him. I am not sure if any of the holy water ever hit his rear end as he bolted straight through the crowd scattering pet pigs and chickens in his wake.

The horse was never quite the same after that and my lovely, warm blood enjoyed her annual blessing, dressed in her best English tack for many years to follow.

U Hoofing Around U

Lofty the Therapy Horse April Kibby

We started our therapy visits completely by accident a couple of years ago. We bought a 2yr old 34" American Miniature gelding called 'TF Crow Feathers Heart-breaker' as a companion for my 15hh cob gelding 'Bertie'.

My husband, Steve, immediately nicknamed him 'Lofty' and the name stuck! (He was supposed to be a miniature show horse...but that never happened!)

My father-in-law was in a Nursing Home and we decided to take Lofty in to visit him and the other residents, knowing that they had always enjoyed it when we'd taken our dogs in previously. They did love it...and so did the staff! So we got invited back to attend the Summer Fete! The rest, as they say, is history...it all started from there!

Lofty really took to it and really enjoys all the fuss and attention. Another Nursing Home heard about our visits and invited us to visit them a couple of times,



we visited the local St Margaret's Hospice, after a friend who was very poorly asked us to pop in to see her, then our local Hospital asked us to visit patients throughout the summer in their Dementia Garden, then also on to one of the Wards inside the Hospital, which got filmed/reported on BBC Somerset Sound and on Facebook...and Lofty never did get to do any more showing...instead he became 'Lofty the Therapy horse'!

We never charge, we run entirely on donations and sponsorship...for which we are always very grateful. And it never ceases to amaze us how generous people and companies can be... which is so wonderful!

U Hoofing Around U

Lofty the Therapy Horse

Every penny that we receive goes into continuing the therapy visits...to hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, nurseries, schools, special needs, etc – we have so many new enquiries coming in on almost a daily basis.

We had a very special donation given to us just before Christmas...an 8 year old 32" American Miniature mare called 'White Tails Trigger Shez Just Dandy', or 'Star' as she's known at home!

So 'Lofty the Therapy Horse' is soon to become 'Lofty Therapy Horses' as we hope to be taking Star out on her first visit very soon!

Our visits bring comfort to those with a love of animals, they rekindle lost memories and they create a conversation topic for the residents, relatives, visitors and staff.



Lofty is small enough to work around furniture and medical equipment. He is trained to use the lift, allowing access to all floors. He is house trained...but we always have my husband Steve on hand with a little bucket...just in case...to catch anything if his tail goes up and the need arises!

One of our sponsors is 'Teddy Mountain UK' – they very kindly provide the little (teddybear) trainers Lofty wears which allows him to work on laminate floors and also helps prevent any damage to carpets/flooring...and they are the single most talked about thing when we are on our visits – everyone is always amazed at his cute little shoes!

Lofty is greatly received by those that are unable to leave their bed...he will rest his head over the bed side to be petted, or just to have a hand resting on his muzzle. He enjoys cuddles, kisses and strokes.

People find his visits both relaxing and calming for those who are anxious, and stimulating for less communicative people...often encouraging conversation (stories about horses of yesteryears), bringing a smile to the face, or words from someone, who hasn't done either thing in a very long time.

Research has shown that animals can promote relaxation and lower blood pressure, they are also non-judgemental and perfect listeners...which is also great for working with children to help engage with those who may be reluctant to communicate or have low self-esteem

LOFTY THE THERAPYHORSE

To donate or find out more about our work, please go to our Facebook page or contact us on
07799006109

U Hoofing Around U

HELP—I NEED SOMEBODY!!

(for those of you of a young age—that's a Beatles song—ask your Mother!!)

By Sarah Clarke



Our clinics really would not be the same without our lovely helpers. Lets face it, a cup of tea, a chocolate biscuit and a chat is what you need after an hour long lesson—or maybe a boost of confidence beforehand!

Our helpers do more than make tea though... they also keep our instructors fed and watered, help set up and tidy up poles and jumps and ensure that the arena is poo-picked in between classes! Current members really help with chatting with potential new members that turn up and members who are thinking about “having a go” at a clinic.

Effectively, helpers are really essential to the running of our clinics—and Club! Just as a reminder, it is a condition of your membership that you come along and help out on at least two occasions in any membership year. So, for example, we would ask if you are not a show jumper, that perhaps you come along to help out at a jump clinic and if you don't fancy flatwork, you help out at a poles or flatwork clinic—you will be surprised what you actually learn from watching—whatever your discipline!

Equally there are lots of other opportunities to help out at other events such as Tack Sales, Bingo, Le Trec, Camp etc. Even an hour is really appreciated and helps takes the pressure of those who organise the events for us.

Of course, if you a bring home made cakes and biscuits—that's even better!!

We are seeking to reward those members who have helped during the year. For those who offered us the most hours in 2016, you will all be contacted shortly with your thanks and our offer of a reward.

From 2017 we will look to present prizes and thanks for the time you have given over and above for the year. We genuinely do keep a note of everyone who helps at each clinic and/or event.

So perhaps everyone could check out their Events Calendar and offer up a few hours of their time at some point in the year—just email Jo with your availability at :-

Email:- www.eastmendiridingclub@gmail.com.

U Hoofing Around U

Pole—Work

Julie Braddon BHSAI Int SM

Pole work can be used for a number of different reasons to help horses on the flat and also as a progression towards jumping.

Any number of poles can be used at any one time, it just depends on the exercise being done. Poles can be ridden over in walk, trot and canter, they can be used to ride between and do transitions at and, when the exercises are ridden correctly, they help the horse to maintain balance, rhythm and energy throughout the exercise. They also encourage the horse to use his body & his joints more effectively. They help the horse work out where to put his feet & help the rider to maintain regular rhythm & power.



Pole work also adds an element of interest to the horses training session and can help both you AND them to concentrate as well.

Start off with a single pole on the floor & ride over it a few times. Make sure you are straight and central to the pole and DON'T look at it! Once you're both happy doing this, do the same in trot, ensure you come to the pole from both directions.

When you are ready to progress to more poles, go from 1 to 3 – don't use 2 poles alone as this can encourage the horse to jump them. For walk poles you should aim to space them 3 heel to toe steps apart. For the average horse, trot poles need to be approx. 4.5 heel to toes apart – you may need to adjust this depending on the length of your horses stride. Start with the poles in a straight line – not as easy as you may think! And once you can walk and trot centrally down a straight line of up to 6 poles give yourself a pat on the back!– but do ensure you only add 1 pole at a time.

It can be from walk to halt, walk to trot, trot to walk. This will help with your accuracy and make you think quicker by planning ahead and therefore make your horse more obedient.

The same can be done with 2 poles parallel to each other with a space wide enough in between to ride through. Practise halting between the poles, will encourage you to halt straight, make transitions as you go through the poles or you can trot to the end of the poles, make a walk transition & ride through the poles for 3 or 4 steps and back up into trot as you come out the other side.

Enjoy!

U Hoofing Around U



Jo Rossiter

Just over a year ago Sam and I went to a fund raising bingo evening for the care home my Mum had moved into. I had never been to Bingo but Sam had and assured me it was great fun. What I didn't realise is how competitive people can get!!
Whoa ladies!!

So, having had a fun evening, we decided to hold a Bingo night for EMRC— I sometimes wish we didn't have these good ideas! I had absolutely no idea of the work involved and I can't thank Sam enough for her help and guidance—she often puts on these evenings for her Carnival Club.

In the meantime, our lovely committee members agreed that all proceeds would go to Eady's Journey to help a local disabled girl and her family, rather than the club. I emailed information about Eady with the Bingo poster so you will understand what a great cause this is.

So a couple of weeks ago the process started by Sam and I going through the stuff I have collected over the years in my attic – mainly really lovely wicker hamper baskets which have been corporate Christmas gifts to Geoff and I—I had 10 of them! These were to be the Full House prizes—when we had filled them!

Then I needed money to fill the hampers with gifts and to provide smaller prizes for people who got all the numbers in one line and then those that got all the numbers in two lines. So with ten games to be played, that was a total of 30 prizes needed!

I spoke with the marketing manager at the company I work for and Old Mill kindly donated £100 in cash for us to use to buy prizes - as well a bottle of champagne as a raffle prize. Geoff's company happily matched that donation and my Dad gave me £100 in memory of my Mum with the proviso that some of the money was used to make up an Afternoon Tea hamper because my Mum loved nothing better than having a lovely cuppa with a piece of cake!

So a shopping Sam and I went—oh boy what fun that was! Then I came home and back down to earth with a bump when I realised I had to package it all up—I never want to see another bit of cellophane with dots on in my life!

In the meantime Sam had used her persuasive powers to various local companies, as had some of our other committee members and on the night we ended up with our 30 prizes plus around the same of raffle prizes.

Sam and I were delighted with the turnout and even more delighted to raise £882.84 for Eady's journey. Her parents were absolutely over the moon and the funds have enabled them to purchase an off road wheelchair which means Eady can now join in family walks and days out in safety. It really has made a huge difference to their lives and Sam and I are particularly proud of the part we played in this. Since then, a lovely lady in Coleford who couldn't come on the night has given a donation we have raised £900!!

I would like to thank all the EMRC committee and members who helped provide prizes and who turned up to play on the night. If you didn't come—you missed a good night and I would strongly recommend you join us the next time—if Sam and I have the energy to do it again!

It is also humbling to think that although we are a predominantly a riding club, we can use our status to help other local charities or organisations—and thus giving the general public a different perspective to us.

U Hoofing Around U

Acupuncture- What's the point?

Charlie Biggs

Charlie Tomlinson is an equine vet working in Wiltshire for the Hale Veterinary Group. She is also trained in chiropractic and acupuncture. As the director of Cadence Vet Rehab she treats both horses and dogs with chiropractic and acupuncture.



I was first introduced to acupuncture by my own physiotherapist following a severe head and neck injury in 2009. I would be the first to admit that I was sceptical about its potential benefits, but as hard as I tried, I couldn't explain away the amazing effects it had on my chronic pain and soon I became a convert. As an equine vet, I wanted to explore the possibility of achieving the same results in my own patients. In 2010 I trained with the Association of British Veterinary Acupuncturists and so my journey began!

First used over 2000 years ago, acupuncture has seen a recent revival as modern medicine has recognised its potential with more research into its actions and benefits.

How does it work?

Acupuncture is most often used in pain management. The perception of pain is a complex subject, but in a nutshell, we feel pain because an unpleasant stimulus activates certain nerves in the region that then send that message up the spinal cord to the brain. The brain then co-ordinates a response that includes the release of neurotransmitter chemicals, such as endorphins. Some neurotransmitters are strong natural painkillers and also give a sense of well-being and relaxation. The basic principle of acupuncture is that the placement of a needle can trick the brain into thinking something very painful has happened where the needle is placed thus causing the brain to flood both the body and the region where the needle sits with pain-relieving chemicals. These neurotransmitters have multiple effects such as muscle relaxation and improved blood flow.

What do we use acupuncture for?

The two most common indications for acupuncture are pain relief and to treat muscle spasm. That said, acupuncture can also be used to aid wound healing (by increasing the blood supply to the affected area), and for treating a wide range of conditions including chronic colic and infertility. In a lame horse, quite often the body reacts to pain by tensing muscles. A good example of this is the back muscle tightness which is secondary to a hind limb lameness such as hock spavin. Quite often these tight muscles produce "trigger points" which are intensely painful knots in muscle where blood flow is reduced and the muscle fibres are in a state of permanent contraction. These trigger points often persist long after the lameness is remedied. This is where a holistic approach to your horse's condition may help- treating the lameness with conventional vet therapies and adding acupuncture into the mix to relieve any trigger points that stubbornly hang on and prolong your horse's pain. In humans, trigger points can cause a depressing, debilitating pain which radiates

far away from the source. An example would be the blinding headaches that can come with neck pain. Placing an acupuncture needle into or close to a trigger point can deactivate it and release the muscle and remove the pain.

What to expect?

Firstly, I do not wish you to think that acupuncture is for every horse...it's not. For some it works a treat, but some may not tolerate it and in others it may not work at all. Unfortunately you will not know which category your horse fits into until it is tried! Acupuncture is on the whole a safe procedure, but it should be known that it is seen as an Act of Veterinary Surgery, and as such it can only be performed by a veterinary surgeon or a qualified veterinary nurse under direct supervision of a vet. Even though some chiropractors and physiotherapists are trained to use acupuncture on humans, they are not allowed to perform it on animals. A session may typically last 30-40 minutes and includes a thorough clinical exam on your horse- looking for trigger points and perhaps using traditional points that are known to be effective in providing relief. The frequency of sessions varies for each individual and your practitioner will be able to discuss your animal's needs to come up with a suitable rehab programme.

U Hoofing Around U



East Mendip Riding Club is part of the British Riding Clubs Area 12 and there are events and training put on for all members from the area to join in if they wish.

Area 12 have their own Face book page (BRC Area 12) as well as their own website (www.brcarea12.org.uk) and all the events and training they put on are on shown. As paid up members of the British Riding Clubs, you can enter these events or training clinics if you wish so do check out the details. We would encourage you to check out the Facebook and website regularly for information relating to both Area 12 and British Riding Clubs.

Newsletter

We publish our newsletter once a quarter—with the next one being due at the end of June. We try to put varied articles in each time and include information from members, horsey professionals and just general articles of interest. If you have an idea for an article, or could write one for us, please let Jo know using the usual email address

www.eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com.

Even better, if you are au fait with Publisher and could help us put the newsletter together each quarter we would really appreciate your help. Please contact Jo.



U Hoofing Around U



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

Here are some of the events East Mendip Riding Club are putting on over the summer, along with details of other events you may find of interest. Jo will email around to remind you and gain entries before each Riding Club event.

Saturday 15th April—GARSTON VETS WILLBERRY FUN RIDE— Mendip Plains

Eight miles of private farmland with optional jumps. 9.30am—Midday Start. £20 per entry—all proceeds to Willberry the Wonder Pony.

Saturday 22nd April—SHOW TURNOUT ADVICE DAY, Hill Farm, East Pennard

Anne will show you how to plait and trim your horse, the tack and equipment you will need for you and your horse for the big day. Hands on practise where possible! 10 am to 1pm with light buffet lunch at the end. £5 per person. Places limited.

Sunday 30th April —HAVE A GO DRESSAGE—Thornhill House, Bruton

Warm up in the arena, ride your test, get Judges feedback and ride the test again. Rosettes for all. Just come and "Have A Go". £20 per person. Places limited. Intro B or Prelim 1.

Sunday 21st May—MOUNTED TREASURE HUNT—Hill Farm, East Pennard

A nice hack through lovely countryside with clues hidden for you to find. Answer the questions at the end and the winners get lovely prizes to take home. Light buffet lunch included. Teams of two riders (we can pair you if you don't have anyone to ride with) but bike riders allowed as well. No more than 4 in a team. £12 per person to include lunch.

Saturday 17th June—MBBA EQUINE FUN DAY—Kingfisher Equestrian, Hornblotton

Eqwine Womp with Wocket Woy', Dressage to music, juniors from Wyle Valley pony club games team, The race-horse Sanctuary and the Steam horse Stunt riders plus lots more! Tickets on sale from May 1st. Reduced prices for MBBA members who will be given early booking preference. Tickets are limited to 200 tickets so do keep an eye on the MBBA facebook page.

Friday 7th to Sunday 9th July

Camp at Downlands. Limited to 10 horses only. Further details will follow but if you want to register your interest with Jo now, please do so.

NEWSFLASH!!!!

EAST MENDIP RIDING CLUB MERCHANDISE

You will have seen some members wearing East Mendip Riding Club tops. Well, our own merchandise is going to be launched soon to include, polo shirts, hoodies, and rugby shirts. Prices will range from around £16.00 and have our logo on.

We will email around with full details later in April—just ready for you to buy for the summer! There maybe some merchandise for sale at some of the events we are holding for you look at quality and sizing.