



Hooting Around

2016—Issue Number 2

Chairmans Comment

Spring has not come particularly early this year but the resilience and enthusiasm of our members shows more 'spring in the step' than any Easter lamb or bunny!

The interest and demand for our first annual camp and bookings for spring clinics are truly inspirational and I know that I am speaking on behalf of the whole committee when I say how much we are looking forward to seeing all of the progress and fun that our members are going to have with their horses this year. Helping our members to gain more enjoyment from their equines has always been the main goal of EMRC and it is thrilling and exciting to see the club taking shape.

Now is the time of year to set your goals – so if you are yet to attend a clinic or social event on foot or on horseback please make May the month you book your first outing with EMRC – we look forward to seeing you.

If you have any plans which you would like to share with other members please let us know as it would be fun to follow the triumphs of several members throughout the year.

Sam

Summer Events

22nd May—MBBA Stourhead Ride
28th May—Trec Taster Day—East Pennard
5th June—Show Jumping on Grass—East Pennard
17th June—Pilates—Develop Your Seat
8th—10th July—CAMP—WOOHOO!
30th July—Festival of Flatwork on Grass —East Pennard
August—Cross Country Clinic
19th August—First Birthday Party

Check out our Website—www.eastmendiprc.com for full details of the above events.

Don't forget to go to [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/eastmendipridingclub) and "like" our page—please feel free to comment on there as well!

If you want to book in for a clinic or event, just email Jo at:

www.eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com.

Full details of the events and how to pay are on the Events Schedule emailed to you.

Mendip Bridleways and Byways Association
The Stourhead Forest Ride
Sunday 22nd May—start between 9.30 –11.30am
Bonham Airfield—BA12 6QJ
9 miles of tagged and signed tracks and lanes through ancient forest
Entry form and full info at www.mbba.org.uk

U Hoofing Around U

BHS ROAD SAFETY EVENING—5th February

A wake-up call to us all! On a cold evening in early February a group of hardy EMRC members gathered at Doultling Village Hall for what proved to be a highly informative talk on riding and road safety given by Julie Garbutt, our British Horse Society area representative.

We have all had 'near misses' we would rather forget or know of someone who has had a serious accident. This talk really brought home just how easily a serious accident can happen with dreadful consequences for ourselves and our beloved horses and the steps we can take to avoid this eventuality.

In a world where the gap in knowledge between non-horsey drivers and riders is ever wider it was a real opportunity for everyone to take stock and consider how we can improve our safety. Some of the key points arising from the evening were as follows:

- Visibility is an absolute must. By wearing Hi-Viz a driver will see you up to three seconds earlier. For a car travelling at 30mph this can literally be the difference between life and death.
- Communication between riders and drivers is the key to encouraging greater consideration of riders' needs. The importance not just of clear hand signals, but of ALWAYS thanking drivers with a sincere smile and wave if appropriate is the best way of encouraging horse friendly driving. Do not ever lose your temper – it will achieve nothing.
- We must take full responsibility for our conduct on the road – so no mobile telephones or not paying attention to other road users and their needs.
- Think about your route – are there any blind spots where drivers cannot see you? Are there places where something such as a dog or dust bin could spook your horse out into the line of traffic? If so plan evasive action before hand.

The meeting and lively discussion afterwards gave us all food for thought and I think we all came away with ideas about how to improve our own safety. Most of us also came away with some great stirrup reflectors – a simple but highly effective to attracting attention to our width at driver height.

Anne

Pilates Taster Session—Friday 11th March

When I told my partner I was attending a Pilates session, he thought I said a Pirate session and assumed I would return home with a patch & a parrot on my shoulder!

I have never done Pilates but I have tried Yoga, where if I remember a lot of farting takes place (!). I wrongly assumed this would be the same sort of class!

How very wrong I was! Clare Hoddinott an EMRC member and fully qualified Pilates instructor, did a fantastic job and had all us ladies doing manoeuvres which we could all feel, especially with the spikey balls! (Don't ask!!)

Clare made us all think differently about our riding posture, which in turn will help our horses or ponies. If you missed this session you really ought to give it a go, Clare is lovely and we all came away having learnt something. I never realised our skulls & brains weighed so much!

Clare will also be taking another one off session for us again at Doultling Village Hall in June—so watch for the email with all the details —and come and have a go—you will be really surprised at what you learn!

Sam

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Dressage Diva

Hello!

My name is Hazel Reynolds and I am 54 years old. I used to compete in a little show jumping but mostly Hunter Trials, One day Events and Team Chasing. Unfortunately in my late 30's I fell and slipped a disc, which not only took away my fitness but also a lot of my nerve as I cannot afford to have another fall that damages my back.

However I really miss competing so I have been having flatwork lessons for the last year both with East Mendip Riding Club and another instructor has helped me to sum up the courage



So in February this year I did an British Dressage Intro A Test at Kingfisher Equestrian. I was very nervous but with the help of Ginnie Jones and Jo Rossiter I got ready to do my test.



My horse, Filly, was great, she behaved beautifully and I could feel myself relaxing and then really enjoying it. Then to cap it all we were placed 2nd which was amazing.

I have competed several more times and in April I was not only placed 3rd in my class—but I qualified for the Kingfisher Equestrian Championship Show in July, which is just fab!

But then that day continued to get better because I also had a go at my first Preliminary test and was placed 5th!

You can't stop me now! My advice is just to get out there and Have A Go!!! Oh—and to enjoy it!!

Hazel

Would you like to write an article for the newsletter? Tell us what horsey stuff you have been up to—ridden or not. We are always looking for interesting information to share with our members—you are a mine of knowledge and we want to share it! Email Jo on [eastmendipridingclub.com](mailto:jo@eastmendipridingclub.com) with the details—we would love to hear from you!

The Snaffled Snapper— our official EMRC

Photographer

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Pilates for Horse Riders

Clare Hoddinott explains more about Pilates—we have no doubt all heard of it, but many will not really understand how it can help us and our horses:

Many fitness fads come and go, but Pilates has proven its staying power. This exercise regime will help you to find focus and build a strong core, excellent posture, and a balanced, aligned body. Pilates' classes are now so popular they can be found in most gyms and village halls!

With our modern lifestyles, long working hours, commuting and daily habits our bodies are compromised. We often hold our bodies in one position for extended periods of time. For example driving, or sitting or standing at work, then bending for mucking out, sweeping and other yard duties.

The body adapts to these long term positions and this becomes your new posture. With our skeleton out of alignment and muscles 'out of balance' we are less able to move efficiently and effectively. We are often fatigued and develop aches and pains.

Sadly no person (or animal) is perfectly symmetrical - there are several reasons for this from the positioning of our internal organs as well as having right or left handed preferences, these affect how we subconsciously choose to perform various activities.

Below are just a few examples of your body lacking in core strength, symmetry and flexibility:

- * Have you been told you have a dominant right hand?
- * Does one leg lie correctly on your horses' side and the other has a mind of its own?
- * Can you easily leg yield or turn on the forehand in one direction and find it tricky in the other?
- * Are you constantly being told to 'sit up' or 'put your shoulders back'?
- * Does the thought of sitting to the trot fill you with dread or give you back ache?

If our bodies are crooked then our own horses' will be too!

When we are riding and schooling our horses, we need to communicate with them as to direction rhythms and speed, we do that through our bodies - through our seat, legs, hands and often just body weight. If we are not level in our pelvis or perhaps collapsing through our waist on one side, we will be negatively affecting our horses' 'way of going'. Imagine giving someone a piggy back and they are constantly leaning over to the right - what would you have to do to stay balanced and walk in a straight line?

So how can Pilates help my riding? Pilates is a movement therapy - ensuring the body can move well, via precise and efficient movements. These carefully executed conditioning exercises strengthen the core and postural muscles while rebalancing the musculature.

With 'Move Well Ride Well' you will develop awareness of your own movement tendencies and how to correct these. You will learn some exercises to take home and practise. Sometimes learning some muscle release techniques can help improve the freedom at the hips or flexibility of the shoulder. All will be related directly to your performance time or 'feel' in the saddle.

We owe it to our horses' to ride to the best of our abilities. The top riders work on their own posture and core strength as much as they do for their horses. Pilates can, and will, make significant differences to the way you and your horse perform together.

We have another taster session with Clare on Friday 17th June at Doultong Vilalge Hall and Clare is holding a six week course at the Cheese and Grain, Frome from Wednesday 18th May—check out her Facebook page—"Move Well Ride Well".

U Hoofing Around U

"Have A Go" Dressage Day

If someone told me a year ago that I would ride a dressage test on Baraka I would of laughed and thought they were very mad. However since joining East Mendip Riding Club and attending a few flat work clinics I decided to enter us in the EMRC "have a go" dressage day.

On the morning of the test I felt quite nervous. I had managed to learn the test on paper but when riding it sometimes my mind went blank and along with the stage fright I worried that on the day we would end up trotting all over the place. Thankfully another EMRC member offered to call out for us which allowed me to get a restful nights sleep. One of the great things about EMRC is that there is always someone who will offer a supportive hand to anyone who needs it.



A huge thank you to our lovely member Sharon Gray who is now our official photographer!

Check Out Sharon's Facebook page - The Snaffled Snapper for more pictures of the day.



When Baraka and I arrived at the venue we were welcomed by Jo and were made to feel instantly welcome and at ease. We were then invited into the arena and allowed 20 minutes to warm up and to allow Baraka to familiarise himself with his surroundings. We were then ready to start the test!

After we had finished Julie talked us through what went well and what we could improve for next time. Apart from a couple of fashion faux pas Julie's supportive feedback has set us with something to work towards. Surprisingly the day brought out a competitive streak in me and I have already arranged some riding lessons to improve for our next test.

Thank you to Julie and EMRC for showing us we can do it and for setting us some new goals for 2016!

Anna and Baraka

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Winter Championships
Fiona Skipper

You will be pleased to hear that our flatwork instructor Fiona qualified for The British Dressage Winter Championships at Hartpury in Gloucestershire. So on Saturday 9th April she travelled there with her horse Noble Nelson and this is her report for us—just to show us that dreams do come true.

So after lots of hard work, dedication, sweat and tears Noble Nelson and I qualified for The British Dressage Winter Championships at Advanced Medium Level. The championships are everybody's dream and held at the prestigious Hartpury College.

This has been extra special as Nelson is Homebred and has been home produced by myself since day 1. And it hasn't been without injuries as Nelson was virtually written off 2 years ago due to major injury and the vets thought he would never come sound again - thankfully he has proved them very wrong!

We drove up the day before and stabled over night so we could do an arena walk at 6.40am on the Sunday. My arena was next to the trade stands but due to his tension and sharpness we only walked for a few minutes and decided to leave it at that before explosions happened! I then worked him for a short time just long and low to relax him. He then had time to relax in his stable before competing.

Then it was my breakfast time (a must as food helps to get rid of nerves!) and then time for plaiting and grooming. We then tacked up and went down to the warm up to have our official tack check and then warmed up ready for the big off

We were then called (next lots of deep breaths to fill the lungs so breathing comes easier that's me!!). The bell went and it was our time.....

Nelson was fab I wasn't expecting much as he had only just done a handful of competitions at this level to date. We had a couple of mistakes but his lateral work was really good. I was thrilled and we finished about halfway in our class.

We even made it on Horse & hound Facebook page as they put a short video of us on!

All I can say from this is follow your dreams and they will happen—as I write this Nelson and I are 'going for it' and are moving up a level and about to do our first Advanced Test which includes Tempi Changes and Canter Pirouettes—so watch this space!

