



Hoofing Around



Summer 2017

Hi Everyone!

I hope you are all enjoying this beautiful weather—although the flies are maybe not quite so beautiful!

I hope you have all enjoyed the events and clinics you have attended this year. Our Autumn clinics are now in place—with a few ideas up our sleeve for others—so keep an eye on your emails, Facebook page and our website!

There have been a couple of changes on our committee—please see later in the newsletter. My thanks to all the committee members for their time and effort in making the Club run so smoothly.

Thank you also to our contributors to the newsletter—we really appreciate your time and effort in making our newsletters so informative and enjoyable.

Have a good summer of riding everyone—and I hope everyone has a good camp next week!

Sam



CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING DAY SATURDAY 19TH AUGUST

NAYDON EQUESTRIAN, Somerton TA11 7BT

One and a Half Hours with Kim Pitman— in both sessions all jumps will be 1'6" - 2'3"

Four in a session at £35 per combination

10am—11.30am

Noon—1.30pm

Clear Round Show Jumping on Grass at Hill Farm, East Pennard

Tuesday 25th July

Wednesday 23rd August

You pick the time and height you want to jump—just email Anne Pearse on annepearse@live.co.uk with your details.

Anne sometimes has trouble with internet connection—if she does not reply to your email please phone her on 01749 890255 to book

£3 per round with a rosette for each clear

£10 for Four Rounds—pay on the night



Evening Flatwork Clinic with Gill Longhurst at Kingfisher Equestrian

Tuesday 15th August

6pm—7pm—Full

7pm—8pm - **2 places left**—contact Jo

£20 per combination

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Debbie and Buzz's Wobbleberry Challenge



I am 52 years old and gave up riding 16 years ago following an accident, I started riding again just over 3 years ago and thoroughly enjoyed myself.

About 18 months ago a friend of mine put a photo on Facebook of a horse she had picked up for breaking, I fell in love and knew he would be for sale shortly afterwards. It turned out he was an 8.5 year old Welsh Cob x British Sports horse, hardly touched and had seen and done nothing. He was delivered to me 160 miles away about 8 weeks later.

Last Autumn I got to hear about the Wobbleberry Challenge, raising money for Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity by competing in a BE80 event. It was aimed at people and horses that had not competed at this level or had issues to overcome. With my history and Buzz's I figured we well qualified and applied to take part, we were accepted.

Let the journey begin, we could not canter in a school, never seen a jump and travelling was a major issue. Lots to overcome but I am inspired by Hannah to complete this challenge.

Over the winter we have been working on his loading and think we are getting there, we are having lessons with Sarah Flower and Buzz went away to start his schooling with Naomi Carter in February. Since then we have done a couple of Intro dressage tests and been away to Adult camp at Pontispool, he is coming on with steady progress.

We are aiming to complete our challenge at Pontispool in September and our progress can be followed on our own Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/Debbie-and-Buzzs-Wobbleberry-Challenge-517701991770653/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

I also have a just giving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Debbie-and-Buzz-Wobbleberry-challenge>



For those of you who do not know what the Wobbleberry Challenge is check out their website at www.wobbleberries.com.

We quote: A challenge for middle aged wimpy riders to compete a BE80 by Autumn 2017—all to raise money for Hannah's Willberry Wonder Pony Charity. Interested?? Check out the website to register your interest for 2018!

Most importantly—Good luck Debbie and Buzz—we know you can do it!!

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Jenny Henderson

BSc BVetMed MRCVS
Stables Equine Practice
<https://www.stablesequinepractice.co.uk>



Sweet Itch: More than just a mosquito bite?

Warmer weather, longer days and shorter nights; whilst a blessing for most horse owners, this can become a nightmare for our four legged friend who suffers from sweet itch.

Sweet itch, the term used to describe the signs of the severe unpleasant sensation from a hypersensitivity reaction to the *Culicoides* midge. Virtually all breeds can be affected, from Shetland ponies to heavyweight draught horses, although the condition is rare in thoroughbreds. About 5% of the UK horse population are thought to be affected. Horses that develop sweet itch usually show signs of the disease between the ages of one and five and it is common for the symptoms to first appear in the autumn. Sweet itch can be a devastating disease and poorly managed affected individuals can show marked changes in temperament.

Midges are found in abundance at this time of year, especially at dawn and dusk and on humid days particularly in fields near a water source or on the edge of a forest. Not all horses react in the same way to a midge bite. Horses which suffer from sweet itch have an abnormal inflammatory reaction to the midge saliva. When the midge bites, it injects some saliva into the skin which acts as an anti-coagulant to help it feed. A mild inflammatory response would be normal outcome of this, resulting in a small mildly itchy lump, which settles within 24 hours. A horse which suffers from sweet itch has an exaggerated inflammatory response, leading to mass release of histamine from mast cells, making the skin red and tender, with a marked itch sensation. This mass release of histamine leads to an increased blood supply to the area, increased permeability of the blood vessels (they become leaky) and irritated local nerve endings causing a pain response. The affected horses often develop severe skin reactions as a result of self mutilation in attempt to relief the itchiness. In turn this causes further damage to the skin and the condition self perpetuates. Over time, this constant inflammatory reaction can lead to the formation of blisters, thickening of the skin with fibrous tissue and secondary infection of the damaged skin. Furthermore, unfortunately, this damaged skin, with a better blood supply becomes an even more attractive target for the midges.

Classical signs of sweet itch are largely the result of self inflicted trauma, these include:

- Mild to severe rubbing and biting, especially along the mane and over the tail head.
- Alopecia (loss of hair), erythema (reddening of skin) and crusting.
- Areas of sore, broken skin which may ooze and occasionally bleed.

Treatment

Unfortunately, there is no cure for sweet itch. Multiple management strategies need to be put into place to keep the itch under the threshold level at which the horse is going to self-traumatise itself. Treatment is aimed at minimising exposure to the causative agent (*Culicoides* midge), maintaining the skin barrier and treating secondary infection. In a horse known to have sweet itch, it is crucial that these management strategies are put into place before there is a visible problem - i.e. prior to the midge season.

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Minimise exposure:

- The prime season for sweet itch is from March through until the end of November. During this time preventative measures should be taken:
 - Avoid grazing near a water source, especially at dawn and dusk when midges are most active (they dislike strong daylight).
 - Invest in a boett rug, or similar, which covers the horse from head to tail. This particular blanket is made from a purpose-designed fabric, (not a mesh) which midges cannot bite through. It offers complete protection to all parts of the horse that it covers and the soft fabric does not damage the hair. This can be worn under a rain sheet if necessary.
 - Twice daily application of a fly repellent. DEET has shown to be highly effective.
 - Covering the horse in show sheen/ mane and tail conditioner, making the coat more slippery can help prevent the midges settling on the skin.
 - Use a fan whilst the horse is stabled: Midges are poor fliers and will avoid areas with strong wind.

Maintaining skin health:

- Keeping the skin hydrated is essential. Not only will this provide a degree of relief, hydrated skin is much less likely to ooze and crust over. Oozing skin will further attract midges.
- Any discharge and crusting should be cleaned daily using a pH neutral, unfragranced wash.
- Skin health can be aided by including omega 3 in the diet and using a topical application of an oil based hydrating agent.
- Benzyl-benzoate is an insecticide and can help to create a protective skin barrier. This should be thoroughly worked into the skin in the susceptible areas every day. Benzyl-benzoate will aggravate inflamed skin, therefore daily application should start before symptoms develop in the spring.

Medication:

Medication with corticosteroids can reduce the immune response to the midge saliva and help provide a certain degree of relief whilst management strategies are being implemented. It is important to understand that without management changes, the condition will return as soon as the medication wears off. Unfortunately corticosteroids can have undesirable side effects if used long term and such use is not advocated. Some horses will benefit from antihistamines throughout the midge season, although in most cases this can prove costly and it can be difficult to fully assess the benefit. Secondary skin infections need to be treated appropriately with antibiotics.

Unfortunately there is not a quick fix for managing sweet itch and a successful outcome is dependent on consistent practice of multiple different management strategies. Furthermore, it is often difficult to assess the benefit of a particular treatment, especially when midge numbers in the environment are continuously changing, therefore, some will depend on a degree of trial and error.

U Hoofing Around U

Mounted Treasure Hunt Hill Farm, East Pennard Beth Blair

So it was the time of year for the annual East Mendip Riding Club Treasure Hunt and what a fun filled day! Full of sunshine, maps, cryptic questions, laughter and lots of well-behaved ponies and riders!



The treasure hunt began at Anne's peaceful yard (well it was peaceful until we arrived!). It started with a quick cuppa and a briefing by Anne on the maps and what we were looking out for on our travels around the gorgeous countryside. Anne also gave us our first cryptic question of the treasure hunt before we left... "where on this treasure hunt would you expect to find the golden egg?" Well this left us all baffled and gave us something to think about on our journey.

Ponies tacked up and the team in the start box, we were off! Riding through the gorgeous terrain of the bridle paths and country lanes of East Pennard. We even managed to squeeze in a canter across the fields. The views were stunning, colourful fields, various farm animals and vintage cottages; we even got a sighting of the pyramid stage ready for Glastonbury! Following the map the questions were picked up, some general knowledge and about the history and current features of the local area.



Results were in!! The winning team received a gorgeous big hamper full of local food; cheeses, cider etc and a rosette. The teams that came in second and third place also received a delicious hamper and rosettes. A prize was also handed out for the funniest answer given within the quiz. "Name prince Harry's current girlfriend" Of course the answer was Mrs Brown!!.... well ok , apparently it's not.

And of course we were left with the baffling question we were given before we left to start the treasure hunt... "where on this treasure hunt would you expect to find the golden egg?" well the answer was "Forge Well" this is because there are two geese in the garden of this property... well needless to say I was too busy chatting to even notice!

So that was the East Mendip Treasure hunt done for another year, roll on 2018 when there will be new questions and more gorgeous scenery to share with fellow riders and friends!

Thanks to Anne for letting us use her lovely home as a base and for arranging the formidable quiz questions—and as always, putting the fantastic prizes full of really local produce together.

U Hoofing Around U Club News

Important Committee Information

There have been some changes to your committee recently and so we thought it prudent to let you know whose who:

Chairman—Sam Moody
mantymoody@gmail.com

Secretary—Jo Rossiter
gt007h2671@blueyonder.co.uk

Treasurer—Maxine Golledge
maxgolledge@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary—Debbie Owen
collio1010@live.co.uk

Health & Safety—Claire Knight
claireknight878@hotmail.co.uk

EMRC Important Dates for your Diary

Sunday September 10th—Trec Day—Format to be arranged—Hill Farm, East Pennard
Friday 29th September— Tack Sale—Coleford Royal British Legion Club—email sarahlfogden@aol.co.uk
to book

Other Important Dates:

Sunday 24th September—MBBA Glastonbury Ride—more information to follow
Sunday 22nd October—MBBA Greenscombe Ride— more information to follow

If you don't wish to do these rides but can offer help on the day, please contact gjones@mbba.org.uk—
help is always wanted and welcome!

If you have any ideas for events, clinics or news articles, please email Jo on
eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com.

If you are familiar with Microsoft Publisher and would like to help put together the quarterly newsletter please do let us know—you don't have to be on the committee and our newsletter are only published quarterly. All articles will be sorted for you—just put it together!



U Hoofing Around U

Riding a dressage test
Gill Longhurst

Who better to ask for tips on how to ride a Dressage Test than our very own flatwork instructor Gill Longhurst . Gill has kindly put this together to help take the mystery out of riding a dressage test.

The first thing I would say it is important that you know the test you are going to ride, you can have someone reading just to jog your memory but it is important that you can reserve all your focus on riding your horse not concentrating on what might come next.

To help with this start memorizing your test early on and practice the movements at home, then start putting the movements together this will help you to know how long it will take you to prepare for a transition or a turn and make your test look seamless.

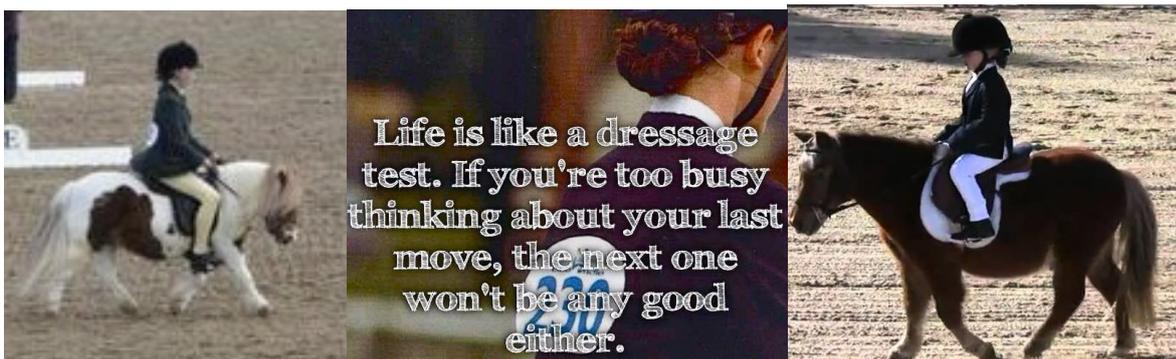
On the day of the test allow yourself enough time for your warm up. Everybody should spend a good length of time in walk to let the horse relax and get used to its surroundings. After that it is a case of know your own horse and how long it would take you for your own warm up program, in this every horse is different. You are trying to achieve rhythm and suppleness and you and your horse being relaxed before you are called forward on your time.

Once you have started to work around the outside of the arena use this time to your benefit. If your horse is tense then try to remember not to become tense yourself, this will only make matters worse. Remember to keep breathing and let your horse feel your calm demeanour through the reins. If your horse is a little behind the leg sometimes a little canter will get them thinking forward ready for your entry at A.

Unless your horse is particularly stiff on one rein I would usually advise turning in at A from the direction you must track at C, then ride a positive forward straight centre line looking up and smiling.

This is now where all your practice at home will pay off riding round circles, making good use of your corners and accurate transitions. And keep breathing, 4 minutes is a long time to hold your breath. Believe me I have seen many people trying it!

Good luck to you all and much success.



U Hoofing Around U

Saturday 17th June saw host to an equine extravaganza at Kingfisher Equestrian hosted by Mendip Byways and Bridleways Association.

The first act was the Steamhorse Stunt Riders, who showed us some of their amazing tricks and explained how they begin training their horses with a display from the smallest member of their equine team. After being heckled from the audience by Wocket Woy, TJ the lady stunt rider invited him to join in and have a go at some stunt riding, which he was only too keen to do. He was then promptly dragged around the arena by horse at full speed in a sack! He probably regretted getting involved in that!



After the stunt riders had exited the arena, we had a very interesting talk from the Rehoming Racehorses Charity on their work in rehabilitating racehorses into riding horses and a demonstration from a horse currently in training, Jack Cairo. Jack brought his buddy Gussie with him to keep him company as he showed how he was making the transition into a riding horse, demonstrating his flat work and show jumping skills. Graham explained exactly how the process works and there was lots of interest and questions from the audience. The charity does a wonderful job in introducing horses like Jack into our riding culture and enabling them to have a lovely life after racing.



This was followed up by a “weally sewious pwesentation” on road safety by Wockey Woy and the Pwducer, and although they were very comical the message they were bringing is important. As riders on the road we must all make sure that we can be seen, are careful, and thank those drivers who do slow down for us. I am sure we have all been guilty of forgetting one of those on occasion!

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After the interval, in which the raffle tickets were drawn (prizes ranging from Sunday lunch for two to riding lessons – very disappointed not to have won one!), the Wylve Valley Pony Club gave an exciting demonstration of their pony club games, with riders and ponies of all ages and abilities joining in. Their coach, Emma, gave us some insight into the Pony Club generally, as well as the individual riders who had come along for the day (and their very supportive and hard working mums!).

Wockey Woy and the Pwducer decided that it all looked too easy and borrowed two of the ponies to have a go at some mounted games, with varied success! It all ended with rosettes and lots of happy Pony Clubbers and a very happy Wockey Woy and Pwducer.

Fiona skipper was the next act and she gave us a demonstration of the finer point and more advanced dressage movements, as well as showing us her Dressage to Music routine. Wocket Woy and the Pwducer had an impromptu dressage lesson and then had to ride a “boring” dressage test—including shoulder in and canter half pass - with some unusual interpretations! The Pony Club folks judged the test with some, shall we say, interesting results!

Finally, the afternoon was wrapped up with a poignant reading of “The Horse”.

A brilliant day had by all and thank you the MBBA for putting on such a fun afternoon!

U Hoofing Around U

THE RACEHORSE SANCTUARY AND REHOMING CENTRE—Brewham, Bruton Hazel Wilson

In January of this year, the charity, The Racehorse Sanctuary and Re-homing Centre moved from Surrey to North Brewham near Bruton so that they could continue their excellent work, rehabilitating and re-homing ex -racehorses.

On Wednesday 26th April, horse racing enthusiast, much loved best selling author and Patron of the Racehorse Sanctuary, Jilly Cooper OBE formally opened The Peter O'Sullivan High Dependency Unit after the charity was pledged a major grant from The Sir Peter O'Sullivan Charitable Trust. This will now allow the Charity to have a specialist dedicated unit for the rehabilitation of High Dependency horses, those that need extra time before being able to be re-homed.

Mrs Ginnie Jones, MBBA secretary, received a very kind invitation to attend but due to a recent knee operation was sadly unable to go so I attended in her place. (Sorry Ginnie—you missed a good day!).

It was a super bright day although chilly and I was greeted very warmly by Trustee's Mr Colin and Mrs Pauline Passmore and their Team. Then I was introduced to founder Mr Graham Oldfield and after meeting him, I was introduced to some of the horses, many of which had won millions of pounds from their racing careers. I met some who will remain at the centre to enjoy their retirement and were already in their 20's and some who will be re schooled to continue their ridden lives.

Jilly Cooper OBE then officially opened the Unit and after the cutting of the ribbon and speeches, the guests and press were treated to a lovely buffet lunch. After that, we were directed to the large indoor school where we watched one of the horses, who is due to be re-homed shortly, be put through his paces on the lunge. He moved beautifully, graceful and well balanced and was a joy to watch.

After returning to the yard it was time to say thank you and leave. Everyone had been very friendly, informative and friendly. When there is so much bad press about how race horses are treated when they "don't make the grade" it was a pleasure to meet people who are determined to help these animals find a new job in life, a new loving home and to give them the time they need and so rightly deserve.

If anyone would like to know more about the work of the sanctuary, please do look at their website. www.racehorsesanctuary.org.uk

If you feel you can give them time voluntarily or help them to raise funds, I am sure they would love to hear from you.



U Hoofing Around U COMING SOON

Autumn Clinics

All held at Kingfisher Equestrian, Hornblotton, BA7 7PS

Poles for Dressage: September 2nd, October 7th, November 4th, December 2nd

Flatwork: September 17th, October 15th, November 12th, December 10th

Show Jumping: September 30th, October 29th, November 26th, December 16th

There will be three one hour session on offer 10am, 11am and Noon. £20 per combination. To book please email Jo on eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com. Don't forget that if you cancel five days or less before the clinic, we reserve the right to retain the session fee to help with our costs.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Horses have the largest eyes of any land mammal.
- When horses look like they're laughing, they're actually engaging in a special nose-enhancing technique known as "flehmen," to determine whether a smell is good or bad.
- You can generally tell the difference between male and female horses by their number of teeth: males have 40 while females have 36 (but honestly, most of us are going to use the much "easier" way!)
- Horse hooves are made from the same protein that comprises human hair and fingernails
- Horses can sleep both lying down and standing up
- Horses with pink skin can get a sunburn
- Horses have 16 muscles in each ear, allowing them to rotate their ears 180 degrees

