



Hoofing Around



Autumn 2015—Issue Number 1

Chairman's Comment

A big warm welcome to "Hoofing Around" - the first edition of our EMRC newsletter. The aims of the newsletter are to keep everyone up to date with how clinics, events and socials are going, hopefully to inspire you to "have a go" and to provide a sense of horsey community throughout our area.

As we go to print (or should I say email!) most of us will be getting to grips with the onset of winter, dark nights, muddy boots and wet horses. Winter can be a tough time for horse owners but I would hate to go through it without the companionship of our four legged friends.

Please send us articles which we can include, especially feedback on clinics and club events so the newsletter truly reflects what all of our members are up to with their horses. If you have your first go at dressage or jumping or reach one of those landmark events with your horse, please tell us about it.

I look forward to meeting you at the clinics and events planned in the next few months.

Sam

CLINICS, EVENTS AND SOCIALS!

Saturday 5th December

Flatwork Clinic - Kingfisher Equestrian
With Fiona Skipper

Friday 11th December

Meet and Greet Christmas Pub Night
Waggon and Horses , Cranmore

Saturday 12th December

Show Jumping Clinic - Kingfisher Equestrian
With Kim Pitman

Website

Our website is up and running and will have all the details of our events and clinics. We have also recently added a For Sale/Wanted page which is free to members to advertise on. If you have anything you want to add to the page please email Jo on eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com.

Facebook

Our Facebook page is well and truly opened and is regularly updated with details of clinics and events as well as with other horsey information which we think you will find of interest. Please go to our page and "like" us and "share" us with your friends!!

Contact Us:

www.eastmendiprc.com
eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com
Jo: 0787 429 5077
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Flatwork Clinic Caroline Taylor riding Percy

We held our first Flatwork clinic at Divoky Riding School on Sunday 4th October. Caroline Taylor was one of attendees and she has kindly put together a couple of paragraphs to give you a flavour of what happened.

Arrived in good time for the first flatwork clinic with East Mendip Riding Club. Met Jo and Liz who were also taking part in the session. We went into the school and had a chance to go into the school and have a walk around and let the horses get familiar with the surroundings. Fiona arrived and after a brief introduction about each horse and rider, we got started.

The lesson was very informative and there were some really good positives and achievements from all three of us in the session. The youngest horse was 5 and mine was the oldest at 27. Fiona was able to accommodate all three horses and able to give advice and instruction on any issues we had. If there was only one thing from that lesson that I remember that would be to "look up"!! Would definitely book another lesson with Fiona.

Note from Jo our Secretary—she would like to apologise to Caroline and Percy, Liz and Basil for her horses dreadful behaviour! He has never bucked like that in the school before and was clearly feeling very well for himself having been on new grass for the week and with no shoe and no work. Fortunately normal service has resumed and Sunny is now himself. ! He promises to behave next time out!

Show Jumping Clinic 2ft Club show jumping lesson—Emma Miller riding Ellie

I have had several 'accidents' over the years resulting with me being fired into the ground at great speed so after a break from competition, because life gets in the way sometimes, I now have a healthy respect for jumping ! We have been working on my confidence and although we can jump bigger than 2ft I wouldn't say we are very stylish or know what we are doing so this lesson was right up our street.

Kingfisher is a lovely venue so that was a good start and after the initial ridiculous issue of getting through the arena door (there was a puddle in it !) we were fine. Everybody was super friendly and it was great to meet some new people and horses.

After a quiet warm up Kim got us in one by one to find out what we had been up to and something I wanted to achieve – we were very different but all wanted to get better at what we did and have a lovely time so really we are all aiming for the same thing.

We did canter poles and then a few small jumps which was great fun - Kim has a wicked sense of humour and seems to be able to read any horse like a book !! We then did 'anti-social jumping' which meant we all jumped past each other to teach our horses to cope with anti-social behaviour seen in areas such as a collecting ring! I was fairly sure Ellie would be quite stroppy about this as she is the most important person she knows but she surprised me by totally ignoring the 'rude' person jumping and cantering past her, in fact all of the horses were really very good about it.

Towards the end we were all sweating and jumped on an angle and then around the school to jump in a straight line, it's fair to say this lesson really made my inexperienced horse think and has given me loads of confidence, there was an obvious improvement in both of us after the hour and I will be the first to sign up for the next lesson.

Thanks for organising it and thanks to Kim for a super lesson.

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2ft Show jumping lesson—Marianne riding Fizz (by name and nature!!)

After a couple of years of not jumping my ex racer, and having never attended a clinic or riding club in my life I felt that not only would it be good for my riding but my confidence as well. I duly wrote the cheque and then began to shake..... I need not have worried, Kim soon put us at ease with her warmth, kindness and hearty cackle!! The hardest part was overcoming the embarrassment of getting things wrong and feeling as though I was too old to be starting at ground level..But that was the whole point of the clinic. With only 3 riders it felt as though we were having individual lessons and whilst we were there to learn we weren't being judged or criticised.

I think we all came away from today feeling positive, more confident and happy that we had done our best, learnt something we didn't know and having felt inspired and encouraged to not only try harder but to also sign up for the next clinic!!! Thank you Kim for your time and encouragement and thank you Jo for organising it



The photograph is courtesy of our lovely member Sharon Gray, who is an amateur photographer. Check out The Snaffled Snapper on Facebook—massive thanks to Sharon . She took some amazing shots and videos and was a great help during the session.

Escorted Hacks—Calling All Happy Hackers By Anne Pearse

So far we have had a great autumn—with predominantly dry weather and plenty of bright sunny days encouraging us to enjoy spectacular autumn colours, the smell of the apple harvest and ride down green lanes of blankets of rustly gold leaves which sometimes resemble a carpet of gold coins. EMRC are promoting “Escorted Hacks” to enable members to enjoy amazing diversity and beauty of our countryside alongside the companionship of like minded riders. Our first guinea pig to test the idea was Liz Lukins on her young horse Basil. I escorted Basil and Liz on my experienced hunter Chance who is known to keep his head whatever happens and we went out on quiet roads and bridleways. This was to encourage Basil to enjoy new surroundings, but without it being too challenging. Liz picks up the story:

“A lovely autumn morning and the prospect of a hack on Basil, what could make it even better? Well—an opportunity to hack along quiet bridlepaths with great company for me in Anne and a sensible grown up friend for Basil (thank you Chance!). Afterwards Anne offered a most welcome coffee and yummy cake. Thank you both—this was a great way to see a new area and give Basil a positive fun experience.”

So if you would like to come and enjoy some spectacular hacking, or lead a hack or near you, please get in touch. Anne will be contacting people who have already expressed an interest in the next few weeks. All we ask is a donation of £5 per rider to the Club. The long term aim will be to develop small groups of people which can be escorted on rides on the Quantocks, Exmoor, Mendips—wherever you like!

So contact Anne on AnnePearse@live.co.uk and let's go hacking!!

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Winter Proofing Tips For You And Your Yard Anne Pearse

I once heard some very wise words to the effect that 'In its own way, every winter is a hard winter for horse owners regardless of how cold or mild it proves to be.' This remark will resonate with every horse owner struggling to keep their spirits up on the dullest, wettest and coldest of short, dark winter days. Personally, I believe that Somerset is the 'Land of the Summer People' and we enjoy long summer days in our county's lush and beautiful countryside, whereas in winter we have to 'hunker down' and work out the best ways of coping with our winter climate. Certainly, despite the hard work, horses have to be the very best way of lifting our spirits at any time of the year.

Every year I try to improve how I get myself, my own horses and those of my clients through the winter in an easier way than the previous year. Part of the motivation for this, I must admit, is concern that in my advancing years, winter will seem more arduous whilst I am sure that my passion for horses will always remain. However, the real benefit is that I see ongoing improvements to the yard and grazing which help everyone and create an environment which is a fun place to spend time in. Previous little projects and ideas are listed below. If anyone can add some more please let me know as I am always looking for more:

- A covered bucket of salt with a feed scoop where anyone coming onto the yard can scatter it to ensure their route is not slippery when ice is about. I also put salt down the evening before frost is expected.
- If large areas are covered in snow and ice and horses need to walk on them, put stable waste onto the route where horses walk to improve their footing.
- I put ribbed heavy duty rubber mats on concrete areas that just get wet and therefore could be slippery and make extra openings into electric fenced paddocks for use if one area gets boggy.
- Have enough water containers and buckets to store 24 hours worth of water in the event of a really deep frost with frozen pipes. Big blue plastic barrels with the top cut off are great for this.
- Always have some rechargeable lights or a wind up torch in case of mains electric failure.
- Make sure you have barrier cream or powder in stock ready to prevent or combat mud fever and cracked heels.
- A bit of vegetable oil brushed through your horse's tail or on the legs will do wonders to stop mud sticking. Old fashioned pig oil and sulphur is also very good but always make sure that your horse is not allergic to anything you use.
- Instead of using saddle soap every time, occasionally oil tack with a non-staining oil such as Hydrophane to waterproof it and provide extra protection from mud.
- A kettle and a microwave in the tack room will make life more pleasant for you and your horse. Remember that some horses do not like drinking freezing cold water and a bit of added hot water will take the edge off it.
- Look after yourself with plenty of pairs of gloves and socks – always good as Christmas presents!. Thermal over socks are great in Wellington boots. On the subject of boots, I normally wear old leaking wellies in the summer – but remember to invest in non-leaking boots at this time of the year. Treat yourself to a really great warm hat – I like to have a waterproof one as well as a furry one.

In the meantime, when you are struggling in wind and rain and longing for a mug of cocoa in front of a warm fire, always keep a good sense of humour and remember just how many of us are all doing exactly the same thing!

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Helping Hands and Hooves!!

Another new initiative from EMRC!!

Do you ever have the feeling that... if only I had a tiny bit of help and moral support I could ...

- Take my horse to that show/do my first dressage test if someone could call it out and help me
- Practise loading my horse
- Get good at lunging, long reining
- Learn how to plait

Well now you can because EMRC will help you! "**Helping Hands and Hooves!**" is a new initiative from EMRC— simply, we want to help you achieve these things. How it works is that you email the club asking for help including letting us know the type of help, date, time and duration and we will try to find your helper. Please always ensure that your helpers safety is of prime concern—so don't ask your helper to back your horse!

All we ask is that you give the helper a gift—maybe wine or chocolates (or both!) and make a donation to the club—maybe £5/£10—as you see fit.

Helping is great fun—not having to ride still being part of a horsey event is great socially and means that other people can also realise their dreams. Also, you never know when you will need some help yourself!

Newsletters

We are looking to publish a newsletter each quarter. If you have any ideas for articles, any pictures of you and your horse you want us to put in or can offer to do any write ups for us we would love to hear from you.

If you have any ideas of events/demonstrations etc you would like us to look into putting on—let us know. This is your riding club, we really want and need your input to make it work.

Usual contact—eastmendipridingclub@gmail.com

