



Hoofbeats



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Prez Sez

Hello WRC members,

Wow—the year has flow by, and I find it hard to believe we're nearly at our end-of-season prize-giving and AGM.

The Club continues to grow, and this season we saw our membership boost to 270 members. It's testament to the hard work of our committee members that came before us, and to those who keep that vision moving forward.

We're also extremely lucky to have growing support from sponsors. Just recently, for example, Burmester Realty came to us and offered to provide a \$500 lesson scholarship for one lucky member this season. You can check out the details on p9; as well as a generous \$150 member giveaway from Dan at TowEzy Trailers on p12.

You'll find all our wonderful sponsors listed both on our website and here in every issue of Hoofbeats. Please remember to thank them and support them.

We also love to celebrate the great things our members are doing in the horse community. You can ready about Shelley Thomson in our feature article on p4, and our very own 'equestrian eco-warrior', Renee Rushton! (on p7)

I don't need to point out the realities of winter; it's wet, the fields are mucky and motivation can seriously wane at this time of year. But we are officially

half way through winter, and now's the time to start planning for spring. It's a great time to sit inside with the fire roaring and think about what you'd like to achieve next season. Or perhaps a chance to clean out the tack room and attend to the chores we are all too busy for when we're out enjoying the forest or beach!

I am stepping down at President this year. It's been both a challenging and rewarding year, and after 8 years on and off the committee, I am looking forward to a move down country soon.

We are so fortunate to have such an amazing adult riding club, with a no-pressure environment and members who are so supportive of one another. I encourage all our members to continue to support the Club and its endeavours. I wish you all the best; we are a lucky bunch to be able to follow our passion!

Jessie



UPCOMING EVENTS

AGM & ANNUAL CLUB DINNER: Saturday July 21st, Soljans Estate Winery, Kumeu. Arrive from 6.30pm, dinner at 7pm, AGM from 7.45pm.

DRESSAGE CLINICS WITH MELISSA STEED: Day 1 is Sunday July 15th, Day 2 is Sunday July 29th. Venue is Limbury Park, 529 Coatesville/Riverhead Highway.

We've got more fantastic events lined up for 2018/2019; so make sure you update your membership for the upcoming season. It only takes a few minutes to complete your membership online - jump on the [Membership page](#) of our website.



SEE YOU AT THE AGM ON JULY 21st!

Our AGM is always a great night out. It's a chance to meet your fellow riding buddies out of their riding gear (and minus the 'hat hair!') Partners and friends are welcome. Soljans put on a delicious buffet, and WRC is subsidising everyone's meal. Tickets are just \$30 (usually \$49). Or it's free, if you'd just like to come to the AGM which starts at 7.45pm. A cash bar is available (no BYO). Jump on to our website [Events page](#) to register.

LATEST RESULTS

SHOWHUNTER ROUND 1: March 25th, see [WRC website](#)

DRESSAGE DAY 3: April 4th, results on [Equestrian Entries](#)

INHAND & RIDDEN RIBBON DAY: May 5th, results on [WRC website](#)

DRESSAGE DAY 4: May 19th, results on [Equestrian Entries](#)

SHOWHUNTER POINTS RESULTS: June 23rd, results on [WRC website](#)



“A life’s work”: meet occupational therapist Shelley Thomson

Early in life, WRC member Shelley Thomson achieved every little girl’s dream – winning her own pony in a radio competition. Nearly 30 years later, she’s again living her dream...as the owner of **Headway Equestrian**, a therapeutic riding school that helps children and adults discover the joy of horses.

Shelley (now 36) grew up in the North Shore suburb of Browns Bay, in a non-horsey family.

“My first experience of riding was a padded tree branch that my grandparents bumped up and down in their backyard!”

But she had a “very special auntie and uncle” who lived in Kumeu and trained racehorses, and Shelley would beg her parents to go and stay with them. The late Ron and Valerie Langsford were the original owners of Kumeu Grain, and Shelley remembers mixing feed into sacks as one of her holiday jobs.

At 10 years old, Shelley secretly entered a competition through Lynn Mall Shopping Centre. The prize was a pony, gear and weekly lessons for a year at Fruitfields in Coatesville.

“On Christmas Eve morning, I heard my name being announced on the radio as the winner of a pony called Dixie. I was meant to give Dixie back after a year...but they took one look at my face, and said ‘okay, you can keep her.’”

When she was 14, her uncle Ron gave her an off-the-track grey thoroughbred called Mork, who she trained up herself; as well as developing another horse up to 1-star .

Throughout her childhood and teenage years, Shelley struggled with dyslexia; which affected her academic progress, friendships and self-esteem.

“My love of horses made those years easier, and became my stability. My horse was my best friend.”



- Eventing “Mork”, as a teenager.

Shelley spent several years volunteering with RDA; as well as a stint working with children and horses as part of Camp America in Texas. These experiences – along with the happiness and serenity she had experienced with horses – began shaping her future life’s goal.

"I knew I wanted to help other people benefit from the enjoyment of being with horses. And give children with difficulties the same opportunities I'd had."

To launch her professional equine therapy service, Shelley needed the right qualifications. She went to AUT to complete a Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy), followed by specialised training in Hippotherapy in Perth, Western Australia.

Two years ago, she proudly opened the doors at Headway Equestrian, based at a property in Silverdale. She has a team of eight horses – ranging from a miniature pony to a Clydie cross.



- One of Shelley's team of horses, Gregory the "pocket rocket"

"Each is special in its own way, with unique quirks and character. Some of my horses have had past trauma. Through being consistent with my approach, they have all developed trust and a bond with me. Each has had specific training, often several months, before being used for therapeutic riding."

Headway Equestrian caters mostly for children, but also some adults, who gain both physical and emotional benefits from their interaction with horses. The horse has unique multi-dimensional movement that provides significant physical

benefits for clients with disabilities such as fibromyalgia, arthritis and/or a mobility, balance or sensory impairment. Equine therapy also benefits those with life stresses and anxiety.

Children who have had traumatic experiences, or have inhibiting disabilities, find their "happy place" when on horseback.

"Riding helps them to be in the moment and forget their problems," says Shelley.

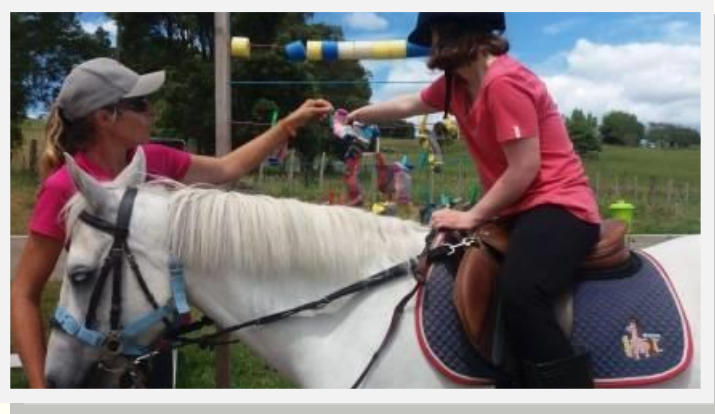
"They gain confidence and a powerful sense of achievement."

She can list many heart-warming success stories. One recent example is a young woman with Down's syndrome, who has been a client of Shelley's for the past year.

"Five years ago, she had suddenly stopped speaking. During a recent riding session, she started counting the hoops she had in her hand. Since then, she's been making leaps in her verbal communication, both with her family and at school. This was one of the moments that make all the hard work worthwhile."

Another young boy, who'd had an especially difficult start in life, came to Shelley with unpredictable behaviour and erratic emotions.

"He has since developed a close bond with his pony, and now lovingly grooms him and talks to and cuddles him. In learning that calmness and respect work best for his pony...he's gained self-esteem, success and confidence."



Another one of her students, a teenager called Jacob, is competing in the Special Olympics competitions, as well as also volunteering at Headway Equestrian.

“I’m always super-proud when Jacob improves his dressage tests and places in his grade. We’re currently working hard towards his next qualifying event in the Bay of Islands in August.”



- Shelley on board Nero, her gorgeous Clydie-cross

Like most equestrian-based businesses, Shelley has an incredibly busy schedule – combining care of her horse team, working with clients, and running the admin side of her business.

She also makes time to coach senior rally at Coatesville PC, which she’s done for the past eight years.

“I love to follow the progress of the riders I’ve taught... watching some of them go from C-certificate to Horse trials or similar.”

On her rare days off – roughly one Sunday per fortnight – she takes her own horses out to local competitions, beach and pony club. She also has regular lessons with Lee Gabriel.

Demand for Shelley’s services continues to grow, and she has “a waitlist as long as my arm”.

“I’m self-employed, so don’t have any staff to help. But I have a few volunteers that help when needed, and very dedicated parents, who are my main support.”



We asked Shelley is there was any support she would welcome from the WRC community. There are a number of ways you can help:

- * **Volunteers** to help with client lessons are always welcome; weekdays or weekends.
- * **Any donations of pre-loved gear** are greatly appreciated (“it costs a lot to keep eight horses in covers and bridles!”).
- * Spread the word regarding Headway Equestrian’s **school holiday programmes**, and lessons for casual riders. See the website, www.headwayequestrian.co.nz, for details.
- * **Help support the sponsorship programme.** Some families struggle to pay for therapy – particularly if they have two children in the family with disabilities. Shelley is currently looking at developing a sponsorship programme that will fund either a term of sessions, or an individual child. To find out more, and go on a ‘supporters’ list’, please email Shelley at info@headwayequestrian.co.nz.

CALLING ALL ECO-EQUESTRIANS!

As every horse-owner knows, there's plenty of 'consumables' involved in our hobby—whether it's hundreds of feed sacks and baylage wraps, or those ripped-beyond-repair synthetic covers.

No-one wants to imagine this clogging up the landfill, or impacting on our oceans. So we can we reduce, re-use and recycle as much as possible? WRC member Renee Rushton has launched **Eco Equestrian NZ**, a new Facebook group for horse-owners with a green conscience.

It was the heart-breaking You Tube video that circulated last year—showing a sea turtle having a plastic straw removed from its nose—that prompted Renee to adopt a 'reduce, reuse and recycle' philosophy.



"But I still felt a bit frustrated that I wasn't making enough impact on my own...I needed an outlet to share the important message of reducing plastic usage."

Renee shared her views with a few other like-minded people; one of which was friend and riding coach Kirstin Kelly.

"Kirstin is a real eco-role model, with her passion and efforts towards protecting the environment; she even has an electric car."

Renee soon realised that the equestrian community was an obvious place to start spreading the message.

"Equestrians love animals, and the outdoors...and many of us describe a beach ride as an absolutely joy, so why wouldn't we want to save our amazing sea life?"

So the Eco Equestrian NZ page was launched in April this year. Although the page is still in its infancy, it's currently focused on equestrian-specific ideas on recycling and repurposing, along with general everyday life alternatives to plastic use. It also showcases eco-conscious New Zealand equestrian and agricultural businesses.

"I also use it to bring home the message of how serious the issue is, both in New Zealand and globally, by sharing information from Greenpeace, 4Ocean and others."

Although she feels very passionately about the topic, Renee recognises that a softly-softly approach to encouraging others works best.

"I don't want to jam information down peoples' throats, otherwise it becomes less meaningful. So I stick to a daily post at the moment."

"If the page is making people change one thing in their life to reduce plastic usage, it's serving its purpose. None of us are perfect, and the main message is 'those who do small things consistently are the ones who make the biggest difference.'"

The group currently has 192 members, which is relatively small in Facebook terms, but that's fine with Renee.

contd overleaf...

“It’s a closed group, and I’d rather take time to build members who want to join because they feel it’s important, rather than just on a whim. I’d love to have more enthusiastic people join and contribute their ideas or thoughts, and suggest ethical businesses.”

Renee says now is a great time to join, as she has accrued a few little prizes and giveaways for the coming months. She’s also recently purchased the property of her dreams—with plenty of fruit trees, a vege garden, space for a few chickens, beefies, and of course horses.

“I’m going to delve into a bit of research and experimentation on creating a more sustainable lifestyle for beginners...and of course I’ll be sharing those ideas too!”



- Renee and her gelding Rata Mill Dali, a previous WRC Young Horse Cup winner

Renee’s top tips for eco-enhanced equestrians.

When it comes to saving the planet, every little effort counts. Here are 10 things we can all start doing today:

1. Say goodbye to single-use plastic bags. Take your own bags to the supermarket, either with enviro bags or by re-using the plastic ones you have. Most supermarkets also have a soft plastics deposit bin in their entrance to dispose

of bags, glad wrap etc.

2. Avoid buying cheap plastic feed buckets. Especially if they keep breaking. Recycled rubber Trug buckets are awesome and the handles don’t break. A tyre feed bin is also good.

3. Drink wisely. Riding is thirsty work—but single-use water bottles, coffee cups and energy drinks are a key contributor to plastic waste. Invest in a reusable coffee cup, water bottle and/or metal straws. Soda stream with a little flavouring added are a great alternative for fizzy drink fans.

4. Invest in that beautiful leather halter. I shudder to think of all the discarded nylon halters in landfill. I have a leather halter that is 15 years old!

5. Buy from bulk stores. Visit the Bin Inn or bulk bin store. I buy fresh ground coffee (a favourite purchase) but also things like sugar, flour, dishwashing liquid. They even sell molasses!

6. Shop second-hand for gear. There are a lot of quality second-hand items about—you’re saving cash as well as avoiding all the packaging that comes with a new rug or plastic-wrapped saddle blanket.

7. Pay attention to packaging. Products as simple as horse-and-hound bars for everyday washing are a great alternative to shampoo bottles.

8. Get creative. I like positing innovative ideas on ways people have re-purposed old tack or adapted discarded items.

9. Plan ahead. You can avoid ‘emergency plastic purchases’ with a bit of planning. I now keep a kit in my vehicle with glass sushi containers, bags and containers of various sizes, metal straws, a drink bottle and wooden cutlery.

10. Start with just one change. And do it consistently. Every little bit helps!





CLUB NEWS & LOCAL VIEWS



WIN A \$500 LESSON SCHOLARSHIP

The WRC committee is thrilled to announce our new scholarship programme for the 2018/2019 season, sponsored by Burmester Realty. One of our members will win an amazing prize of \$500 towards lessons with an instructor of their choice.

How to enter:

1. Re-join (or join) WRC and pay your membership on or before 20th July 2018.
2. The winner will be drawn randomly on the night of our AGM (21st July).

Conditions:

1. The prize is non-transferable. Lessons must be completed and paid for within 12 months of the prize being awarded.
2. It is a condition of the prize that you must be willing to have photographs taken and provide ongoing feedback on your lessons, for inclusion in Hoofbeats magazine.
3. If you do NOT wish to enter this prize, please make a note in the additional comments section of the online entry form.

A massive thank you to [Burmester Realty](#) for their support of WRC. For all your real estate needs, get in touch with Jane and the team!



SUNDAY AUGUST 12th: OPEN DAY

Put the date in your diary—Sunday the 12th of August is an Open Day at Woodhill Sands. (It's also the Fiber Fresh Feeds Mini ODE Series final, and the weekend before the first Grand Prix show of the season).

Come along any time from 2pm for an informal presentation at 3pm, so you can find out what plans we have for our equestrian centre.

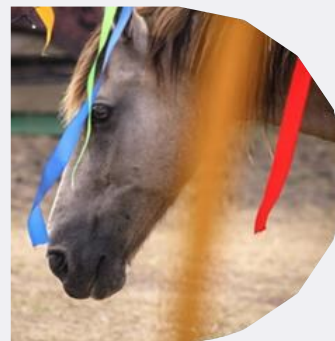
We will have a sausage sizzle and some spot prizes so will be well worth a visit!! We hope to see you all there!

www.woodhillsands.co.nz

DISCOVER DUNE LAKES LODGE

Keen to know what's happens at Dune Lakes Lodge? Book in for one of their complimentary showcases; designed to give a **sample of the different workshops, clinics and courses** run at the Centre. From 10am-12.30pm.

- Upcoming dates include:**
- * August 4th
 - * September 1st
 - * October 6th
 - * November 3rd



[BOOK HERE](#)

EVENT REVIEW: ANIMAL COMMUNICATION CLINIC

In April, WRC hosted an Animal Communication Clinic with the always-popular Suze Kennington from **Ridersmind.com**.

Thanks to **Hayley Drury** for writing our event review.

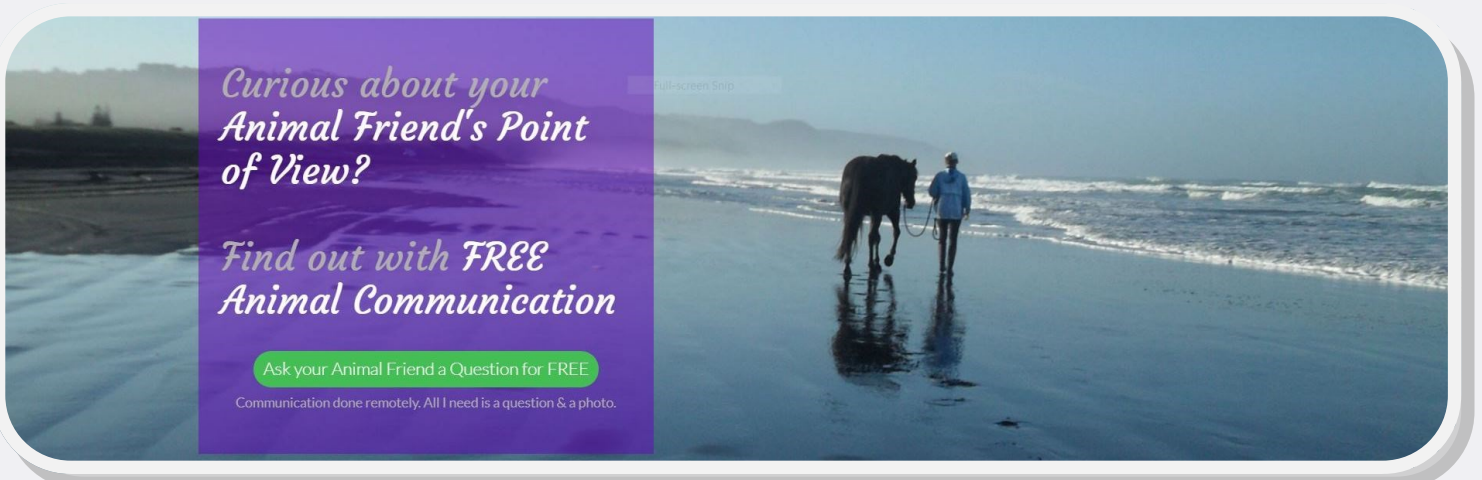
“The Animal Communication clinic with Suze Kennington was enlightening. Suze explained what Animal Communication was, and how to do it—anyone can!”

“We learned not only how to communicate, but how to recognise the difference between our imaginings and what the animals are actually trying to communicate to us, and how we can talk back. She then took us through three guided communication sessions with our chosen animals; each one a different method so we could see which worked best for ourselves.

“Many heard things they didn’t even realise...from young horses saying ‘I want to go out and do more, to greedy horses saying ‘cut up my carrots, they taste better!’ There were also tears as animals communicated messages that were totally unexpected and emotional.

“Suze also gave a run-down of different animal communication experiences she has had, and how we can practice to get better at it. She also suggested additional readings if we wanted to continue, and to look at her website for information. She is also offering her services for one free question for her to communicate with your animal.”

* **Like to know more?** Check out [Ridersmind.com](https://ridersmind.com), where Suze provides a host of information in her blog, and . You can also view some wonderful videos and case studies of horses who have shared their stories.



*Curious about your
Animal Friend's Point
of View?*

*Find out with FREE
Animal Communication*

Ask your Animal Friend a Question for FREE

Communication done remotely. All I need is a question & a photo.

“TIGHTENING UP THE RULES”: Where does NZ stand on noseband tightness?

There has been an ongoing debate around the world regarding the acceptable levels of noseband tightness for competition horses—and earlier this month, Dressage NZ has amended its rules. **Jody Hartstone** is a Waikato-based Grand Prix dressage rider, horse trainer and former member of the Council of the International Society for Equitation Science, who has been lobbying for change.



Jody made a submission to Dressage NZ at its recent annual conference in Palmerston North. Her remit was supported by Dressage Bay of Plenty, and the North Island Rider's Representative, Alicia Zee.

Based on a number of scientific studies, the International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) has produced a standardised taper gauge that makes it easy for stewards and riders to check their noseband tightness. Jody would like to see the gauge widely used here.

“I have witnessed first-hand dressage horses with permanent indentations in their nasal bone from restrictive nosebands. This has to be extremely tight and very uncomfortable, to cause the bone to remodel itself.

“I find it disturbing that the current FEI rule on noseband tightness states that as long as one finger can be inserted into the side of a noseband by a steward, then it is deemed to be acceptable.

“I set up an experiment at home that I videoed with my own horse—you can see first hand that even when the noseband is done up extremely tight to the point where you can't even get a finger nail under it, the FEI “one finger in the side” rule is still an easy target to make.”

To see a demonstration of this, check out Jody's video at:

<https://youtu.be/i6gTz7vQXns>

According to ISES, there is scientific proof that restrictive nosebands cause pain and discomfort to horses.

“This may seem a no-brainer for all animal lovers out there...but there have been a number of studies done over the past few years on the prevalence of tight nosebands and their effect on the horse,” says Jody.

Recent evidence suggests that horses wearing tight nosebands undergo a physiological stress response, are sensitised to bit pressure and may have reduced blood flow (McGreevy et al., 2012).

New Zealand's Animal Welfare Act, under the Code for Horses & Donkeys, also states that:

The use of restrictive equipment (e.g. harsh bits and over tightened nosebands) used for controlling a horse needs to be reduced to a minimum through the application of appropriate, effective and safe training and handling techniques so as to maintain the horse's welfare.

The new Dressage NZ rule, which comes into effect on August 1, states that:

4.10 No noseband may ever be so tightly fixed that it will harm the horse. It must be possible to place one finger comfortably between the noseband and the nasal planum (front of the nose).

What's your view?



If you have any comments or feedback on the issue of noseband tightness, drop us an email to info@wrc.org.nz, or start a discussion on the WRC Facebook page.

- The ISES taper gauge

WRC MEMBER GIVEAWAY!!

Win a \$150 prize from Towezy Trailers.

TowEzy Trailers is offering all WRC members the chance to win a \$150 free float service (including a WOF).

How to enter:

1. Visit TowEzy Trailers on Facebook and find the pinned post titled WRC Member Giveaway.
2. Enter your WRC membership number in the comments, along with a contact phone number or email. (You can find your membership number on our [website](#)).

The winner will be announced by TowEzy Trailers (and on the WRC Facebook page) on **July 31st**.

T&Cs: The \$150 prize includes a full float service (as listed opposite), and includes a WOF if required. Any additional parts and labour required to install will be charged as normal.

What's included in a full float service:

- > a complete check-over of the float, from the coupling through to the end of ramp
- > tightening any loose bolts or screws
- > re-tightening U bolts on suspension
- > check for any play in suspension and bearings
- > re-pack and tighten bearings where possible (if not, customer is advised on replacement)
- > check brake pads and brake operation
- > grease all points as required
- > check all lights
- > check chassis and other areas for stress cracks
- > check wear and/or corrosion on float
- > bleed and top up brake fluids (or for electric brakes, check they are cleaned out and free from brake dust to avoid over-heating)
- > check soundness of floor
- > check tyres and correct tyre pressures.

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**TOWEZY
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“A slippery slope”: managing mud fever.

It's one of the perennial joys of winter...ankle-deep mud out in the paddocks. Aside from the inconvenience of grubby horses and lost shoes (both horse and human!), there's also the dreaded mud fever to contend with. Thanks to our sponsor, **Vetpro**. You can read the full article, plus others, on their website: www.vetpro.co.nz.

* What is mud fever?

It's not really a fever, and has several different names: greasy heel, scratches, pastern dermatitis or dermatophilosis infection.

It is actually a skin infection caused by *Dermatophilus congolensis*, a micro-organism that is best described as a cross between a bacteria and a fungus. The organism is a normal inhabitant of the skin of horses. For an infection to occur, two predisposing factors must be present: persistent moisture on the skin, and damage to the skin.

It is usually found low on the legs of a horse, especially around the heels and back of the pasterns; from there it can spread up the leg. Un-pigmented skin (white socks) are more susceptible to mud fever because of the damaging effect of solar dermatitis. The often bare skin in the area under the back of the fetlock above the heel is quite pink and this is very susceptible, especially if it had any reaction to sun during the summer months.

Typically in winter, the legs are often covered in wet mud; the moisture causes the skin to break down and open small cracks. It is this opening that allows the already-present bug, dermatophilus, to enter through the skin which then reacts to form a scab. The constant presence of wet mud on top forms a seal, which is the ideal environment for the bug to work away.



The constant presence of mud causes the skin to break down

'Rain scald' is another name given to an infection by the same organism; where the lesions are distributed over the body, neck and head (often on the back even if the horse has a cover on). The moisture from wet covers, or sweat, which is then kept covered is an ideal breeding ground for the bug.

* What are the symptoms?

The infection is characterised by crust (scab) formation, with or without swelling of the surrounding area. The crusts usually adhere to clumps of hair, so when they are removed, the matted hair comes with them. Often the skin below is inflamed and oozes serum. There is usually a swelling of the pastern and it feels warm. The horse may or may not appear lame. Many horses move stiffly and reluctantly due to the discomfort of sores in the skin. In severe cases, where there has been no remedial action, the infection may spread up

contd overleaf

the leg, causing swelling above the fetlock. This definitely requires veterinary attention.

* What can help to reduce the risk?

Firstly, a healthy horse on a good well-balanced diet—particularly with minerals and Vitamin E supplementation—will be less susceptible. But in long wet winters, prevention is not easy. Ideally, the horse is brought in from the paddock daily, the legs dried and cleaned, and checked for any signs of skin deterioration. Washing off the mud, drying the legs thoroughly and using an antibacterial wash (particularly one containing chlorhexidine), will kill any bugs around the area.

Covering the legs is not a good idea, as the legs will still get wet and then you have created the ideal environment for the bug to develop.

Generally, it is better not to clip the legs and leave on the feathers as these offer protection. (However once infection has occurred, it may be necessary to clip away the hair so you can get to the



scabs and resulting wounds in order to treat the area).

* What is the treatment regime?

Early detection and action will always produce a better result. Scabs may not always be visible under the hair, but you can feel them under your fingers. Make sure you run your hands over the pasterns and particularly around the heels and under the

fetlock joints; the lumpy scab will be obvious then.

The scabs have to be removed, and the easiest and kindest way to do this is to use a gentle shampoo, preferably a fungal cleansing shampoo. Work it into a lather which will soften the scabs. Often a towel is all that is needed to remove them, or sometimes you have to pick them off. It is very important to remove all the scabs, even if the hair is coming off with them.

Then clean and dry the legs, looking for signs of exudation (i.e. oozing fluid). Use a chlorhexidine wash or cleanser as this will kill the *dermatophilous congolensis*, which lives under the scabs. The horse may be sensitive to the scab removal, so go gently. (If you make him very uncomfortable, he will only get more difficult to treat).

Once the skin is clean, then basically the sores are treated as wounds, and an antibiotic wound cream is useful.

Ask your local stockist for the **Vetpro Mud Pack**; a grab-and-go pack to stay prepared for any signs of a mud fever infection. It contains: Equifix Skin Repair Cream, Fungal Cleansing Shampoo, and Robinsons Activ Scrub.



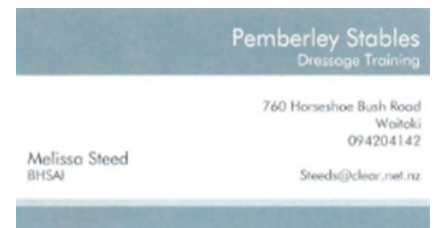
Here are some pics from our **Inhand Day, Showhunter Day 2 and Dressage Day 3**, all held at Woodhill Sands. Thanks to our photographers Martin Coates, Christina Bird, and Nikki Holmwood. More pics are available for free download on our Facebook page.





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who support our Club!

(To visit their websites, CTRL + click on the logos below).



(To visit their websites, CTRL + click on the logos below).



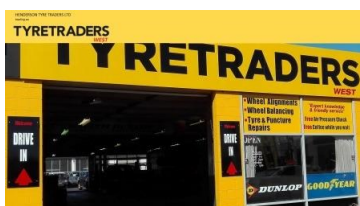
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jody@hartstoneequestrian.com

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Bill Noble

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lesson:*

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melanie.dougan@gmail.com*

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CONTACT US

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