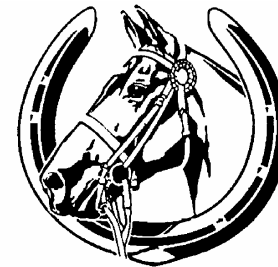


Events Diary 2007

- Tuesday 23rd Jan 2007 – BHS Dressage Evening at Rodbaston – informal and fun (See page 5)
- Feb/March 2007 – Horse Owners Certificate Level 3 Course – A course of talks/practical demonstrations – Rodbaston. (See page 8)
- Saturday 17th February 2007 – Trailer-driving course – brush up on your skills. (See page 9)
- Sunday 29th April 2007 – Pleasure Ride
- Sunday 8th July 2007 – Summer Show
- Sunday 30th September 2007 – Pleasure Ride
- Tuesday 16th October 2007 – BHS Staffs Area Annual Meeting

STAFFORDSHIRE BHS



The British Horse Society

Registered Charity No. 210504

WINTER 2006 NEWSLETTER

What's the BHS doing in your area?

- *Welfare Update + Ragwort Campaign*
- *Riding & Road Safety Update and Info*
- *Events Diary*
- *Trailer Skills Course*
- *Horse Owners Certificate Course*
- *Dressage Evening*

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e-News?

Would you prefer to have your copy of the BHS Staffs Area Newsletter emailed to you rather than sent in the post?

If so, email BHS Staffs with your name, address and email address to: omnyerhoss@aol.com

Something to Contribute?

Do you have an article or news item you would like to submit to BHS Staffs News?

If so, email BHS Staffs at: omnyerhoss@aol.com

Whilst we can't promise to use it, but if we have space, we will try to include all relevant items.

Winter Welfare

When you mention 'Welfare Concerns' to anyone, usually an emaciated, dejected horse fills our thoughts. For the benefit of this article I'll assume as a BHS member your horse is well fed and pampered, so lets look at horse welfare in a more sophisticated way.

Winter often brings with it turnout problems. Many people on livery yards are forced to keep their horse stabled for hours on end due to poached ground. A feral horse, as a herd animal, would naturally seek out company of its own kind, and be on the move, grazing for up to 20 hours a day. A domesticated horse is at the mercy of our care. The least we can do is bear in mind its inherent needs as **a horse**.

It has a psychological need to chew. It chews once a second, or 3,600 times per hour. If for example, you 'maintenance feed' a 500kg horse, equating to 2 ½% of its bodyweight, you would provide it with:

12.5kg food

1kg hay = 4,600 chews

12.5kg hay = 57,000 chews

This equals 16 hours of chewing. (Dr T.Hollands 2006)

Fibre restriction compromises this need, and horses on low forage diets spend more time chewing wood. (A.Walters 2002) Horses that wood chew are at higher risk of simple obstructive and distension colics (M.Hillyer 2002).

Horses only produce saliva when they are chewing, which protects against acid in the upper stomach. So as well as being necessary for its psychological welfare, it's necessary for physical welfare too. Consider the effect of a horse being deprived of forage to eat or companions to engage with, and ask yourself if this is entirely satisfactory. By making a few changes we can improve a horses stabled life. Why not provide stable toys, feed from a horse ball, which ensures trickle feeding and provides entertainment, and feed ad lib hay. Give a horse turnout in a schooling area if a field is off limits. Question everything you do and look at horsecare from the **horse's** point of view.

Oh and don't forget...if you feel a horse's welfare is a concern, phone the BHS.

Happy Christmas!

Wendy Webb, Staffs Welfare Officer - email: wmwis@hotmail.co.uk

Riding and Road Safety Report

This year has seen continued progress, with the number of tests in the area rising and the pass rate remaining high. The Area training for examiners and trainers was held at Wheaton Aston in August during the monsoon season, but as we are used to training and examining in all weathers we smiled bravely (partially due to being filmed for the new BHS video on safety).

HQ are going to provide every county with new warning signs for tests - easily portable and car-friendly this time, which will be most welcome. The mileage rate for examiners has been increased in line with that of other examiners, which will be welcomed, but as 90,000 miles are clocked up per year, the exam fees will be increasing in January, as will the one-off Risk Assessment fee for new test centres. We have probationer examiners starting their training, but will as always be glad of any new recruits as, at present, we only have three examiners for the county.

Other safety aspects of riding come under our broad umbrella. There are negotiations going on concerning the new road surfaces that are far from horse friendly, and any incidences of these new surfaces causing problems should be reported either to me or to the safety office. In fact, anything relating to safety is of interest, from approved footwear, to hats and their fitting. With Christmas approaching, maybe it is time to think of replacing a hat that has seen better days or had one too many bumps. The need for bright clothing becomes apparent as the evenings darken. There are ranges of reflective gear for rider and horse in a variety of bright and fluorescent colours to suit the most fashion conscious. If you have to ride out on the roads at any time, the addition of reflective bands/tabards etc, by making you more visible, may well be a life-saver. The sobering thought is that in the majority of horse-related accidents, the collision is from the rear, and usually it is the horse that comes off worst, so the more visible you are, the greater chance there is that a motorist will see you in time.

It is hoped that it will become compulsory for licensed schools and yards to have their riders equipped with fluorescent gear when riding on the road, but until then would it not be a good New Year's Resolution to improve your visibility. Should anyone not have taken their Riding and Road Safety exam it may be worth considering booking a test before the end of the year to avoid paying the increased fee.

Eileen Foy, Area Safety Rep Tel: 07710 749457 email: foyeileen@hotmail.com

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Well I'm pleased to report it's been a busy period since the last newsletter, the main event being the BHS Summer Show which took place at Marquis Drive in July. It was great to see so many there enjoying the range of classes on offer and particularly to see so many having a go for the first time and receiving help from our hard working team. The show jumping, clear round, showing and dressage were all well supported and I can't thank everyone involved enough for all the hard work that went into putting on the show.

Busy period also for the other areas your county committee covers with record number of road safety tests being taken and much activity in that area at our various road safety test centres. Brian Smith and his team continue their sterling work up and down the county sorting out access and bridleway problems and cover many miles supporting, investigating and responding to members needs and queries in this area.

Whilst we do not want to be busy in the welfare dept, Wendy and Natalie have had a handful of cases to deal with that are all reaching positive outcomes. They have also been very pro-active in talking to people at shows and events and generally promoting good practice and knowledge for horse owners.

Plenty of dialogue exists between our team and the forestry commission on Cannock Chase. Much has been achieved in working with cyclists and the commission in making the chase a safe, accessible place for all, including the change on maps to more clearly show designated routes for cyclists and horses. Many thanks to Doug and Lesley for leading this.

Much is planned in the future with a supportive dressage evening in January coming up for those who want to have a go, training days on trailer towing in February and Horse Owners Level 3 certificate training following previous years positive level 1 and 2 training. We will of course be running our popular pleasure rides with the first one at Easter.

On a regional note, it looks likely that we shall be hosting a Diamond Jubilee celebration Ball in the County so watch for details on that! Keep an eye on the BHS website and don't forget we stand by to help and support where we can. Thanks to all those who have helped and supported and attended the many events in 2006.

Happy Christmas, and a great 2007 to you and your horses!

Marcus Clinton
County Chairman

It's Pantomime Season – “he's behind you!”

The majority of accidents between horses and vehicles involve the horse being struck from behind, often with fatal results. When riding, looking behind not only ensures that you can see what is coming up behind you, but makes the driver of the oncoming vehicle aware that you have seen him/her.

As a rider you are aware of the noise of vehicles approaching, the swish of the cycles, or the rumble on the pavement of skateboards or roller skates. Most drivers however, enclosed securely in their tin boxes even without a blaring radio or heaven forbid, a mobile phone, are insulated generally from the noise generated by other vehicles, and so have no perception of the awareness of other road users to which the rider is privileged.

Similarly, even though some drivers may have used hand signals (some more polite than others), today's drivers expect brake lights and indicating lights between one to two metres above the surface of the road within their line of vision. There is a danger therefore if approaching at speed looking straight ahead they may not see a rider's signal unexpected as it may be, and even if seen may not fully understand it. All riders' signals need to be clearly visible - wearing light coloured gloves is an easy, cheap solution. When signalling, the movements should be slow and deliberate, counting three slowly in your head is a good rule of thumb.

A reflective/fluorescent hat-band will make a rider's observation of approaching traffic much more obvious to the drivers. Reflective/fluorescent leg bands and tail guards will emphasise any movement and give the drivers three second more thinking time which could be vital.

In Riding and Road Safety exams, the most common causes of failure are poor observations and poor signals. As most drivers have no knowledge of horses, the driver's expectation of horse's reaction to any situation is probably misguided at the least, so any information the rider can impart to the driver has to be advantageous. By helping the driving public to know what you as a rider are about to do wherever possible could well diffuse a potentially hazardous situation. Should drivers be considerate to you as a rider please reward them with a smile so they may realise that we as riders are also normal mortals – well, relatively. As daylight hours shorten and Christmas draws ever closer, remember as in the pantomime – he's behind you, so make sure you see him and he sees you seeing him, and be safe!

TRAILER SKILLS COURSE

Staffordshire BHS is holding a trailer skills course at:

Rodbaston College

on

Saturday 17th February 2007.

The course is designed to provide basic awareness of trailers, their use and handling.

The instructor will be a qualified ADI (Advanced Driving Instructor).

Start time is 10.00am and the cost is £35 per head. Places will be limited so get in quick!

Towing vehicles and trailers will be available.

If you are interested contact Doug Smith on 07771 915020 or

doug@smith1950.freeserve.co.uk

Horse Owner's Certificate Course

Starting in February 2007, BHS Staffs is running a five-week course on all aspects of horse care, in preparation for the Horse Owner's Certificate, Level 3.

A combination of lectures and practicals will provide both text-book knowledge and hands-on practice at developing skills in all aspects of horse care for the ordinary horse owner.

For those who would like to complete the Horse Owner's Certificate (Level 3), there is an exam at the end of the course. Nonetheless, you are not obliged to sit the exam if you sign up for the course. You may just want to refresh your knowledge, or come along to have those basic horse care questions answered which you've been afraid to ask.

The sessions will be scheduled weekly, every Monday evening. There are five sessions in total. The fee for the whole course is £50. If you wish to take the exam at the end of the course, there is an additional £14 entry fee.

Topic areas to be covered are:

- First aid and shoeing
- Grass keep and land management
- Stable management and feeding
- Saddlery safety and fitting
- Buying a horse & insurance
- Riding safely on the road

For more information, contact David Wheatley:
Tel: 01543 502381,
E-mail: dwwheatley@imgroup.co.uk

BHS Dressage Evening - Tue 23 January 2007

Indoor arena at Rodbaston College

This is particularly aimed at those wanting to have a go and without much experience within an informal and supportive event.

Class 1 - Walk and Trot Test A

This can be found on

<http://www.cadora.ca/Tests/tests.html>

Class 2 - Prelim 1

Entries

Either by post to:

Marcus Clinton
c/o Rodbaston College
Penkrige
Stafford
Staffs
ST19 5PH

Or via email to: marcus.clinton@rodbaston.ac.uk

Entries to be received: via email, Sun evening 21 January;
by post, Fri 19 Jan.

Please just state horse and rider details and which class.

Charge is £5 to BHS members – please state membership number on entry – and £6 to non-members

Times available on Mon 22 January from 2.00 -5.00 on 01785 710529 or on the Rodbaston website from Monday 2.00 pm - www.rodbaston.ac.uk/extranet look under equine shows.



Ragwort Campaign

Every year thousands of horses die from Ragwort poisoning. So here we are again. Here to remind you all about how important ragwort control really is!!! The BHS are currently in the midst of a Ragwort Campaign so listen up!!!!

Ragwort is a common weed that grows throughout the British Isles. It has always been a problem but it has recently become apparent that the weed is out of control, and potentially posing a threat to the horse population.

'Prevention is better than a cure!!' is what they say and they're right! Prevention of ragwort poisoning is the best option. Control methods for ragwort such as pulling, spraying and cutting should all be viewed as short-term methods. Maintaining or improving the quality of pasture should be the long-term priority to ensure the prevention of ragwort growth. Ragwort can be controlled. And there is no excuse for letting horses graze in infested pastures.

For more information or advice go to:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/horses/topics/ragwort.htm> or just give us a ring!! We're here to help!

Speak soon
Your friendly welfare representatives, Wendy and Natalie

Natalie Gill
Tel: 07980 260234
nataliegill0327@hotmail.com

Wendy-Myra Webb
Tel: 07967 711240
wmwis@hotmail.co.uk



Senecio jacobaea

Common Ragwort

A, plant; B, a lower leaf; C, flowering branch; D, disc flower; E, corolla of disc flower, partly cut away to show the stamens, and the style; F, mature achene from disc flower – some of the pappus cut off. *Not to scale.*