



The British Horse Society
Registered Charity No. 210504

BHS Warwickshire County Committee Newsletter

February 2009

Issue 2

Looking after your horse's back

Prevention is always better than cure, so what can we do to help protect our horses' backs and prevent problems occurring? Here are a few simple pointers:

1. Always mount from a **safe mounting block**.
2. Ensure your horse is **fit** for the work required of him/her.
3. **Warming up** and **cooling down** your horse is essential to avoid injury.
4. Ensure your horse has a **varied workload**; e.g. hacking, schooling, pole work/jumping, ground work, lungeing.
5. Book a **routine back check-up** with a qualified practitioner before a problem develops.
6. Have the fit of all the **saddles** you use on the horse regularly checked by a qualified saddler.
7. Have your horse's **teeth** checked every 6-12 months by a qualified person.

Rachel Molloy, a qualified McTimoney and massage therapist based in Warwickshire has written an article to tell us a little about the technique and some tips on how to look after your horse's back. The full article can be found on the county pages of the website at www.bhswm.org.uk



You are advised to seek veterinary advice before embarking on any particular course of treatment

Chairman's Message

Welcome to the second newsletter - something we are delighted to be sending following the success of our launch issue last Autumn. Following our appeal for access, website and welfare volunteers, I am thrilled to be able to report that we now have five additional committee members (see our 'The Committee Expands' article) and that we are already seeing the benefits of having them on board.

It is difficult to believe after the dark and gloomy months that we will soon be enjoying spontaneous evening rides - but so it is! Now is the time of year we all think about what we would like to do with our horses in the year ahead:- perhaps you would like to give some purpose to hacking out or set yourselves a new challenge? You could train for the **BHS Riding and Road Safety Test** (email us on safety@bhswarwickshire.org.uk) or take part in a great new type of competition - 'BHS Trec' which

involves enjoyable rides across varied terrain, route finding, and negotiating natural obstacles and hazards.

We are holding a series of BHS Trec events during the spring including an **introductory demo** and a **competition with a class for beginners** and we would love to see you there. *For more information or discounts on entry prices email us on enquiries@bhswarwickshire.org.uk or visit the website and follow the links.*

Most of us are feeling the effects of the credit crunch but on a positive note, spring and summer can offer us opportunities to cut down on stabling and feed costs. Now is a good time to re-evaluate your horse's needs and you can see the BHS' tips, 'surviving the credit crunch', on www.bhs.org.uk.

Enjoy the summer!

Debbie Koster
Chairman

Upcoming Events

Wednesday 18th March 2009
BHS Trec Indoor Demonstration

Sunday 19th April 2009
BHS Trec Indoor competition

Thursday 21st May 2009
BHS Trec Introductory Talk—the map reading phase

More details on the back page.





The Committee Expands

We are pleased to welcome five new faces to the committee since the last issue of the newsletter; Phil Nichols, Ian Kingston and Gillian Spicer responded to our plea for access officers. Ali Gregory, Webmaster for the West and East Midlands websites and all counties within the regions, has relocated to the area and taken up the role of Secretary. Sarah Shackleton, an

employee of the BHS, has also joined the Welfare team.

The new committee members are pictured below; from left to right they are Sarah Shackleton, Phil Nichols, Ali Gregory, Gillian Spicer and Ian Kingston. The Committee would like to take this opportunity to welcome them all!

Opportunities exist on the Committee to fill the role of Riding Clubs Liaison Officer. If you would like to get involved within these departments or any others then please contact the Chairman Debbie Koster (debbie@bhswarwickshire.org.uk) to find out more details.



Report from the new BHS Warwickshire Access Team



It's amazing how appealing an appeal can be!

BHS Warwickshire Committee's first newsletter carried an appeal from the Chairman for a volunteer to fill the post of Access Officer, a position that had been vacant for some time.

This obviously rang a bell with the Warwickshire membership and Gillian, Ian and Phil all put their names forward for consideration and all were subsequently accepted as access officers both by the Warwickshire committee and the Access Department in BHS HQ at Stoneleigh.

The main task of the Access Officer is ensuring that bridleway Rights of Way are passable to riders with the minimum of danger and that they are accessible from

the general road system. Obstructions can be natural, thick mud and potholes, low branches and/or fallen trees, etc, or man made in the form of locked gates or loose barbed wire and the like.

Since the new team took office, three cases, (two of deep mud and one of dangerous wire), have been reported by riders and successfully dealt with in conjunction with Warwickshire council, who are the responsible highways authority. One case, at Pitern Hill, is ongoing and demonstrates the potential for lengthy and convoluted legal processes. The County Access Department expects this particular case of restricted access and unclear legal responsibility to take as long as ten years to resolve!

A task this year for the team is to investigate the opening up of an entire new route, by linking existing bridleways, as a county trail. The Council have an unspent budget for this and it is hoped in the early spring to canvass views from Warwickshire riders about where and in what format, i.e.

circular or linear, the route should take.

Anything which provides additional recreational access for riders and carriage drivers is welcomed, so watch this space!!!

If you have any concerns about access in Warwickshire, please let the team know. They are riders themselves and are keen to promote equine access for all and keep riders and their mounts away from dangerous roads and get them into the beautiful Warwickshire countryside.

Contact the team via email on access@bhswarwickshire.org.uk



Get set for Spring!

Finally the nights are starting to draw out, the mornings are becoming a little lighter and life should be starting to get a little easier for horse owners! Spring of course brings new problems, particularly for owners of horses and ponies prone to weight gain and conditions such as laminitis and sweet itch.

Keep a close eye on weight

Horses have evolved eating a variety of grasses, plants and shrubs, the nutrient content of which is often much lower than the improved pastures we use for grazing our horses and ponies today. The nutrient value of spring/summer grass tends to be higher and grass growth is generally faster during the warmer months. Monitoring weight is of course essential all year round, but particular attention should be given at this time to prevent animals becoming overweight, therefore increasing the risk of health problems such as laminitis.

Laminitis can affect any horse or pony at any time. Preventative action, such as monitoring and controlling weight and grass intake, is essential. The best and cheapest way to monitor your horse or pony's weight is with a weight tape. Veterinary attention should ALWAYS be sought immediately if laminitis is suspected. Generally the animal should be immediately removed from the pasture and bedded on deep supportive bedding such as shavings. Clean hay with a low nutritive value should be fed. Soaking the hay also helps to reduce the nutritive value. The horse or pony should never be starved as this can lead to serious health problems.

Sweet itch affects many horses and ponies, it is largely a seasonal complaint as biting midges are most active between March and November. The complaint arises as a result of an allergic reaction to the saliva of midges and some other biting

insects. Preventative action is essential to avoid the horse suffering intense irritation resulting in persistent scratching, hair loss and weeping sores. Specialist sweet itch rugs are widely available and provide the most effective method of preventing insects from biting. Many insect repellents are available as well as topical products to help soothe irritation. Stabling at times of the day when midges are most active can also help, however a management regime combining the above methods is most effective. Veterinary advice should always be sought if the condition persists, as medication may be required.

Don't forget you can contact your County Welfare Representative or the BHS Welfare department for advice welfare@bhs.org.uk 01926 707807.



A severe case of sweet itch



A horse suffering from laminitis will rock back onto his heels to avoid putting weight on his toes



Riding and Road Safety news

Increasing daylight hours mean that riders are more likely to ride out in the evenings so now is a timely reminder of wise precautions to take before heading out on the tarmac with your steed.

DID YOU KNOW...?

There are:

- over 2.4 million riders in the UK
- over 26 million registered vehicles on the road today
- approximately 8 horse related accidents every day
- on average 5 rider deaths each year

The BHS:

- runs Riding and Road Safety training and tests for all riders
- publishes the BHS Riding and Road Safety Manual
- sells a good range of fluorescent/reflective accessories for you and your horse

- publishes a free leaflet, "Road Sense for Riders"

The free leaflet contains a checklist of points to ensure that you and your horse are safer on today's busy roads. A few key points from this are:

DO thank motorists who are courteous to you; a smile and a nod are enough if your hands are full

DO wear protective headgear to the current approved standard. Make sure that it is correctly fitted and secured at all times

DO check your tack before you set off

DO make sure you can be seen by drivers at all times of the day regardless of the weather conditions

DO NOT ride more than two abreast on the road

DO NOT trickle over a major crossing; always cross in a group.

For a free copy of the full leaflet or to enquire about the Riding and Road Safety test contact the Safety department of the BHS on 01926 707700.

We are still looking for new examination centres—especially north of Coventry. If you think you may have a suitable venue, please contact Fran Penn, County Safety Representative on 07792649450 or Nikki Inglis, Committee Member and Examiner on 0781515781



Highway Code Rule 50: Help yourself to be seen



Recent Events

Oct 08 — AGM & Shiatsu and Horse physiotherapy demonstration

An informative talk followed by demonstration on Shiatsu & Horse physiotherapy

Nov 08 — BHS Trec Indoor Demonstration

A demonstration of the winter indoor version of the sport by novice and experienced horses

Reports on both of these events can be found on the website (www.bhswm.org.uk).

Feb 09 — Ragwort week

A BHS Welfare department event; for more details visit www.bhs.org.uk



Upcoming Events

Wednesday 18th March 2009

BHS Trec Indoor Demonstration

Pitern Hill Stables, Kineton, South Warwickshire

Learn about BHS Trec — a demonstration of a sample of the indoor obstacles

Sunday 19th April 2009

BHS Trec Indoor competition

Waverley Equestrian Centre, Cubbington, nr Leamington Spa

Indoor competition (obstacle phase only) including Newcomers class.

Thursday 21st May 2009

BHS Trec Supper and Introductory Workshop — the map reading phase

The Waterman, Hatton, Warwick

BHS Trec introductory talk with interactive exercises on the map reading (POR) phase, dinner included.

For further details and updates on all county events see the website (www.bhswm.org.uk) or join the email contact list (via the website or email enquiries@bhswarwickshire.org.uk).

For more information on BHS Trec visit www.bhs.org.uk.

Stop Press: We are looking for venues for meetings, training and indoor and outdoor competitions. If you have a venue for hire please contact us.

Communicating with the committee

The committee has changed its email address. Each team now has an address so you can choose where to aim your message. The team addresses are:

enquiries@bhswarwickshire.org.uk,
access@bhswarwickshire.org.uk,
welfare@bhswarwickshire.org.uk and
safety@bhswarwickshire.org.uk.



Please note, the email addresses in the yearbook will still function.

Updates on events, opportunities for **DISCOUNTED EARLY ADMISSION CHARGES** and key news messages will also be sent via a distribution list; **email the committee** on enquiries@bhswarwickshire.org.uk to be included.

Tea break Sudoku

5	7		8	4				
	9		7				2	
		2		6		8	5	
	1							6
9							7	
	2	3		8		1		
	4				9		8	
	6			3	5		4	2

The views expressed in this newsletter by contributors are not necessarily those of the BHS.

Contact us on:
enquiries@bhswarwickshire.org.uk

We're on the web:
www.bhswm.org.uk