

THE CASPIAN

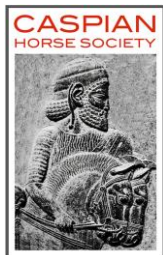
THE MAGAZINE OF THE CASPIAN HORSE SOCIETY



SPRING/SUMMER 2014

THE CASPIAN HORSE SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1076026.



PATRON: Mrs Ateshe Firouz-Larssen
PRESIDENT: Mrs Jane Holderness-Roddam CBE, LVO
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Dr Shahram Dordari
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Mrs Vicki Shortis (Co-Editor)
Ms Janet Dedicoat (Council Member)
Ms Barbara Smathers (Council Member)
Mrs Helen Thirlby (Council Member)
Ms Penny Walster (Council Member)
Mr Chris Fluskey (Council Member)
Mr Farokh Khorrooshi (Council Member)

ADVISORS TO COUNCIL

Mrs Brenda Dalton (International Chairman)
Kay Taplin (International Registrar)

Dear Members...

I am sure all Caspian owners are heaving sighs of relief that one of the wettest winters on record is finally over, so that wellingtons can be hung up, and we can look forward to the show season! Of course this dreadful weather has been one reason for the 'Equine Crisis', where we simply have too many horses to properly care for. I have been hearing about this at two meetings of the British Horse Society Breeds Committee. There is new legislation for local authorities dealing with 'fly grazing' and stray horses in Wales. But the UK government does not feel the necessity for this, despite fly grazing horses now appearing in Hampshire and Surrey!



Our Caspian breed has of course been affected by last year's welfare case, and we are therefore going to make an appearance at the Emley Agricultural Show in Yorkshire (details later in the magazine) to help restore the reputation of the Caspian in that part of the country.

We are again holding classes at Ashby Show (its hundredth!) so please pull all the stops out to bring your Caspians (and come and support the society if you do not have a Caspian).

Then we have the exciting Caspian Calendar 50th Anniversary project: it is turning into quite an adventure for photographer Colin Barker, our own Farokh Khoroooshi, and Louise's daughter, our Patron Ateshe Firouz-Larsen. (Read more later in the magazine). At the end of May we will again be at the Suffolk County Show, keeping our fingers crossed for fine weather. So we all have plenty to look forward to in the coming (hopefully!) sunny summer months.

Finally, much work on our new website has been going on over the last few months and pretty soon after you read this, you should find the new website up and running. You will notice, on both website and magazine, that we have chosen a new and rather special logo. We think that showing the ancient connection with the Caspian gives a truer picture of the antiquity and importance of the Caspian to equine history.

The new CHS website will have a new fresh look, many new photographs and more information and articles. Although this initial stage is the work of a very few people (and I would particularly like to thank Farokh Khoroooshi here for his huge input in time and skill), it will depend on all of you to keep it up to date. We will need reports of what you are doing with your Caspians, breeding news, new and better photos (come to the AGM in August for professional tips on photographing your horse!) - indeed anything you think might be of interest for the site! So you can continue to support the society in many ways - I thank you in advance!"

Ruth

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY, 2014

SHOWS:

MAY 28th & 29th (Wed. & Thurs) **SUFFOLK SHOW**, Trinity Park,
Ipswich – CHS stand, Ridden Caspian Demonstrations.

JULY 13th (Sun.) **ASHBY'S 100th SHOW**, Heather, Nr.Ashby de La Zouch,
Leics. Classes for pure-bred and part-bred Caspians
Grand Parade of Caspians and part-bred Caspians

AUGUST 2nd (Sat.) **EMLEY SHOW**, Factory Farm, Emley Moor,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire (HD8 9TE), CHS stand, possible parade.

COUNCIL MEETINGS:

MARCH 16th (Sun.)	Spring meeting, Shawell Village Hall, Leics
JUNE 22nd (Sun.)	Summer meeting, Shawell Village Hall
OCTOBER 19th (Sun.)	Autumn meeting, Shawell Village Hall
JANUARY (Sun.)	Winter meeting, usually Skype, (tbc)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Thursday 21st August,
At Great Horwood, Bucks..

OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER:

1ST APRIL	Annual Subscriptions due
	Copy date for Spring Magazine
1ST OCTOBER	Copy date for Autumn Magazine
31ST DECEMBER	Last date for Stallion Returns
	Foals should be registered, micro-chipped and passported by 6 months of age or by 31 st December, whichever is the later.

EDITORS - Vicki Shortis and Liz Webster

Welcome to the latest Spring / Summer copy of The Caspian. After the wettest winter ever, it's nice to have some warm spring days, to be dry and not have any mud to wade through. Once again we have a variety of news and articles from around the world, a big thank you to all who have sent them. Without your help the magazine would not be so interesting, so please remember to keep sending any items of interest.

Out of consideration for our type-setter (Liz) – who says that obtaining your contributions on time (and thus meeting printing deadlines) is always a problem - please could you send future articles in a little earlier?! We publish the deadlines for each issue, 1st April and 1st October, which is when we would like to receive them. Thank you!

Inside you will find information on what is happening this year. We do hope you will make every effort to visit some of the events as an exhibitor - or please come and help.

Farokh Khorrooshi has again offered to host the AGM in his film studio; this proved a very popular and entertaining event last year, so please try and come. We shall look forward to seeing you.

TREASURER – Ray Austin

All subscriptions are very gratefully received, but if you don't already pay by Standing Order it's perhaps worth considering. It means that the society can plan ahead with more confidence, quite apart from the convenience for everybody concerned. Tax paying members in the UK can Gift Aid their subscriptions so that we can claim back tax from the Government, at no extra cost to ourselves. It's a benefit especially designed for charities and a significant fund-raiser. If this applies to you and you did not fill in the Gift Aid section of the membership form when you joined CHS, Pat Bowles can send you the form again.

MEMBERSHIP – Pat Bowles

We have welcomed several more new members this year, thanks to some of our members recruiting friends and people likely to be interested in Caspians. This is so good! I would love it if some more of you could do likewise. We currently have 96 members, so let's try to make it 100 this year!

I too would like to thank those that pay by Standing Order. It is so much easier - and cheaper - if you can pay by Standing Order. I can send you the form if you contact me.

I have sent out reminders that Subscriptions were due as from April 1st for the coming year. If you are one of the ones that pay yearly and you have not already sent it to me by the time this goes to press, can I remind you again please?

Thank you all for being members and supporting our precious breed.

SECRETARY / BREED LIAISON – Dr Rosemary Harris

Rosemary has still not returned to her duties as Secretary or Breed Liaison Officer and asks that you wait patiently for the next magazine to hear from her. She is apparently making steady progress. I'm sure we all wish her a speedy recovery.

REGISTRAR – Ruth Staines

There is not generally a great deal of registration work in the winter months, but I am kept busy, post horsemeat scandal, by the new DEFRA Minimum Operating Standards (MOPS) with regard to Equine Passports. These include more detailed information to go onto the new website, to make procedures clearer for breeders and owners.

The society will be purchasing a new binding machine to comply with new EU regulations, which, although not yet ratified, will come into force on January 1st 2015. These will also require changes to passport layout, the addition of serial numbers and an additional page for amendments such as castration.

The aim is, of course, to try to combat fraud. DEFRA's MOPS are already in operation and Passport Issuing Organisations are now required to report breaches of the regulations to enforcement officers - generally Trading Standards, including signs of fraudulent applications or tampering with passports and cases where passport applications and amendments are made outside the specified time frame. The officers will then decide whether to take the matter further.

As ever therefore, I make a plea to breeders and owners to keep their paperwork correct and up to date. It may save much trouble later, possibly for a future owner, so do not think you can ignore the paperwork. Also breeders should note that as from January 1st 2015, DNA parent verification will be required to register a foal. Details will be available from the registrar later in the year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM will again be held by kind invitation of Farokh Khorooshi in his film studio, at Bywater Meadows, Pilch Lane, Great Horwood, Bucks. on Thursday 21st August. Lunch will be provided and we hope you will come and enjoy another interesting day out. Our thanks go to Farokh for his generosity.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPONSOR THE MAGAZINE?

We are looking for a sponsor for the magazine, to cover the printing and rising postal costs of sending it to all members. 'The Caspian' is a vital link between worldwide Caspian lovers and we think people would prefer to hold an actual magazine in their hands rather than only read it on-screen.

If you or a friend would like to advertise your business on the back cover or be acknowledged in the magazine, please contact vshortis@sizzel.net to discuss the many ways you can help.

The ICS would like to thank Ruth Staines, Pandora Best and Brian Smith-Boyes for their help and advice last year. Although decisions are always made by vote, the advice of non-officers is extremely valuable. Anne Marie Scrivener and an appointee from Australia will step into their shoes for 2014. Brian Smith-Boyes will continue to assist us with IT issues.

It is unfortunate that Norway has decided to split from the ICS. The ICS rules are still basically the same as they were originally, but we understand that times change and that we must change with them. However, no two people will ever agree on everything and unless we follow a democracy, the breed cannot survive as Louise intended it.

From January 2015 DNA parent verification will be required for all registrations.

Next year is the 50th anniversary of the re-discovery of the breed. Everyone will have their own thoughts, memories or anecdotes about Louise and the little horse that she was willing to make so many sacrifices for. These will make intriguing reading and the ICS is hoping to publish a booklet of these. I would be grateful to receive as many of these as possible at daltonb@talk21.com Please subject-head them "ICS 50th anniversary booklet".

I have had several boxes containing Louise's papers in my possession for many years and still haven't found the time to read them all. How one woman found the time to write so much, whilst fitting so much into her life, is incredible. I hope to log them over the next year or two so that at some time in the future they can be made available for personal interest and research.

ANNUAL CHS MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2014

We very much hope that you have continued to help us preserve and promote the Caspian Horse! CHS relies on your subscription to help fund the projects you read about in this magazine. Council members are all volunteers, so every penny goes towards the promotion of the Caspian.

Many cheque-paying members have now changed to payment by Standing Order. It makes reminders unnecessary, so it's easier for everyone and simple to cancel. We even knock £2 off the annual subscription! Please ask Pat Bowles to send you a CHS form if you would like to change to Standing Order.

Please pay cheques to 'The Caspian Horse Society' and write 'Subscription' on the back. Send to: Mrs Pat Bowles, 22, Glen Road, Castle Bytham, Grantham, NG33 4RJ by 1st April 2014. However you pay, your support is very much appreciated, thank you.

If Membership Forms are needed, please contact pat.bowles@btinternet.com or telephone 01780 410908.



Penny Walster and her lovely stallion **BYTHAM JUSTIN TIME** (*left*) were last year's Performance Points winners with 96 points, boosted by his Championship win at Ashby. Hearty congratulations! The CHS Special Performance Points Rosette and Sash went to them at the end of last season.

Get your Performance Points card for 2014 in good time!

Any form of competitive activity by your Caspian or Part-bred Caspian qualifies for points. You get points for turning up in a class, even if unplaced! The main essential is to ask Helen Thirlby for a Points card at the start of the season and remember to fill it in, get it signed by show secretaries and send it back to her by October 31st!!

helenthirlby@gmail.com

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHOW, IPSWICH, 28th and 29th MAY 2014

Will it be third time lucky? We shall be at the Suffolk Show in the Equine Village at Trinity Park, Ipswich. Hopefully we are going to have some fine weather this year. Suffolk Show is a County Show, with a wide range of things to see and do. It's held on the 28th and 29th May, during half term and children under 14 get in free, so it makes a great family day out. We would welcome your support and if you would like to help out on the stand, that would be welcome too!

If you can help, please contact vshortis@sizzel.net.

ASHBY'S 100TH SHOW, LEICESTERSHIRE, 13th JULY 2014

Ashby's 100th show will take place on Sunday, the 13th July 2014, at Cattows Farm, Normanton Lane, Heather, Leicestershire, LE67 2TD, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The Caspian Horse Society has again been invited by Ashby Horse Committee to hold classes for Caspians following their successful inaugural appearance last year.

All Caspian owners will again be welcome to enter special classes for Caspian stallions/geldings; mares/brood mares & foals; Youngstock; Part-bred; Ridden

(including lead-rein). Any deviation or additions to these classes will be published on the CHS website nearer the time.

Special Ashby show rosettes and trophies will be awarded and there will be attendance rosettes to all entrants and double points for the CHS Points for Performance Scheme. It is likely that there will also be a Parade of Caspians and Part-bred Caspians with Commentary in the Main Ring, as last year.

Schedules and Entry Forms will be sent to all CHS members and can also be obtained by application to either the organiser, <lizwebster08@gmail.com> or Show Secretary, <j.dedicoat14@gmail.com>) from mid-May.

Dear Members - and all Caspian Owners and Supporters...

This year will be the 100th Anniversary of Ashby Show and huge efforts are going on to make this a memorable occasion, with some brilliant spectacles in store for the family day out.

The CHS has been invited back to the show and are proud to be part of this event. We too are going to make this a special year as part of the celebration. We invite as many of you as possible to join in and show your Caspians and Part Breds. We had some super exhibits last year – thank you for your support - and I look forward to seeing you there again. The schedule will remain the same and, after the success of the previous year, we would really like more of you to join us this time.

The BBC Persia coverage was very well received last year, giving worldwide viewing of our Caspians. They are intending to return again to follow our progress, so please come and support us. Even without a horse, we'd love to see you there.

Understandably, the running and travel costs are a major problem to horse-owners in getting to show venues and I am looking into the possibility of shared transport from the north and south. I would like to know if any of you are interested in this option. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are. For those able to make their own way to the show, we will be giving the same travel subsidy as last year. This will be explained on the Entry Forms enclosed with this Magazine. In addition, those keen to add Performance Points to their 2014 cards will achieve double points for even turning up at Ashby! There may be other classes your Caspian or part-bred Caspian can join, so it's worth checking on their website, <www.ashbyshow.com>

Let us once again make a great day of this show! I hope you are tempted to come and join us and **keep the Caspian in the public eye!**

Janet.

PUT ASHBY SHOW, 13th JULY, IN YOUR DIARY TODAY!

≈ ASHBY SHOW 2014 ≈

(THE 100th SHOW!)

**CATTOWS FARM, NORMANTON LANE,
HEATHER, LEICS. LE67 2TD
Sunday, 13th July 2014**

By kind invitation of Ashby Show Committee.

SPECIAL CASPIAN CLASSES, from 11.30 a.m.

*Open to members of any ICS member Caspian Society or registered Caspian or
Part-Bred. Double Performance Points*

Judge: Mr Christopher Porter

Class 1 - Licensed Caspian Stallion or Gelding 4 yrs. old & over

*Class 2 - Caspian Mare (4 yrs. & over) / Brood Mare / Mare with Foal -
Special rosette for Best Foal.*

Class 3 - Caspian Youngstock 1-3 years old, colt, filly, gelding

Class 4 - Part-bred Caspian (any sex, any age), Rosette to Best 3 yrs. old & Under

Class 5 - Mixed Ridden, any sex, any age. Rosette to Best Rider.

GRAND PARADE OF CASPIAN HORSES

With Commentary, including information on individual horses.

Main Ring (Approx. 2.45 p.m.) All entrants are welcome, including part-breds.
Persian rugs, bridles, costumes etc., may be worn by pure-bred Caspians

Schedules, Entry Forms, Directions –

from Janet Dedicoat (CHS members will automatically receive them.

0121 445 1984 or email <j.dedicoat14@gmail.com>

Entries close 21st June

Stabling can be arranged off-site by the Ashby Show Secretary,

Contact <info@ashbyshow.com> (first come first served)

100 YEARS!

**Ashby will be making a special effort this year to celebrate their 100th
Anniversary. We hope you will come, with or without your Caspian
(but preferably with) and help us to celebrate with them.**

The CHS is to make an appearance at the Emley Agricultural Show, West Yorkshire, HD8 9DT on Saturday, 2nd August. The showground is in the shadow of the Emley Moor Mast, with spectacular views over much of Yorkshire.

We shall be taking the CHS tent, with our photographic display and Caspians will, of course, be in attendance. Emley is near Barnsley, so we will be hoping to restore the reputation of the Caspian in that part of the country. I am told there are excellent hosteleries, B & Bs and restaurants in the surrounding area! Parking for caravans and horseboxes and a place to pitch tents have been offered a short distance away. Caspians can be accommodated overnight here, should owners and members wish to make a weekend of it.

As this is a new venture, we would welcome the support of as many members as possible and particularly anyone who feels they would like to bring a Caspian. Check the show's website at: **www.emleyshow.co.uk** to see if there other classes you can enter. Please come and help to make this a Caspian experience to remember! Ruth.

PEJE'S PROGRESS

Sarah Anderson

We have had a very wet winter - like everyone, I'm sure. At one point, PeJe's field was more like a lake, with only a small section to graze in. We were at the point of planning to move him elsewhere when the water was channeled onto a different route by the council so, thankfully, it returned to grass again.

We put on hold 'going to boot camp' for driving, as everywhere was so flooded. Roads were closed, ground was boggy and it wouldn't have been productive. Gradually, the water levels have lowered and the ground is drying out. I was giving him a good brush one day as he is very woolly right now, (he lives out with no rug) when I came across a lump. At first I thought it was mud, but on closer inspection, it was another sarcoid - right where the breast collar sits. The poor boy suffers with them and has already had some awkwardly placed examples removed. I called the vet and he began treatment.

We are now waiting for the treatment and recovery to be completed and then we'll be back on course. Fingers crossed for an exciting summer!

THE CASPIAN WELFARE FUND

The CHS Caspian Welfare Fund has recently been established to help rescue Caspians in current and future welfare cases: your Contact is Ruth Staines. We welcome any contributions to the fund – please write cheques to Caspian Horse Society, write 'Welfare Fund' on the reverse and sent it to Ruth (address on inside cover)

An Obituary by Elizabeth Webster

Mrs Pamela Thomas, a long-time member of CHS, passed away unexpectedly on 2nd March. Her funeral, which featured a horse-drawn carriage to convey her to the family church, was held on 20th March at Kilmeston, her home village.

Pamela's family has been among a small band of people who helped to spread Caspian breeding from the UK to several other parts of the world. When Pamela joined the Society in 1989, she was almost immediately pressed into service as our Membership Secretary. Then a theatre sister at Southampton Hospital, she was friendly and approachable, but brisk and business-like and she took on the job with zeal and efficiency. She was known for straight speaking when required.



Pamela was Chairman of the Caspian Pony Society (fore-runner of the CHS) between 1994 and 1995. She was always very supportive of the Society, often helping on our exhibition stand, sometimes with her husband Michael. When her daughter Naomi started breeding Caspians, Pamela could usually be found helping to show Naomi's horses in the show ring at our Breed Shows. Prince Philip was then a Caspian owner and in 1996, Pamela and Naomi were showing their recently imported Caspian stallion when Her Majesty the Queen presented the Championship Award at the Society's Breed Show in Windsor Park.

In 1999 Pamela became (in her own words) a 'Caretaker Chairman', to help the society through the change from being a charity to a 'charitable company limited by guarantee', a post she held until 2001. True to her word, she took good care of the society and helped to get it off to a good start.

Pamela bred Caspian foals under the 'Woodstock' prefix and one of her foals was subsequently exported to America. The filly was the last sired by our stallion Maroun, who had always been a favourite of Pamela's. When we closed our stud, he went to stay with Pamela and Michael on permanent loan, to grow old gracefully in good hands, and here he spent a happy last few years. Pamela gave an illustrated talk about her time with Maroun at an AGM after his death and her emotional and affectionate memories of him were just the way I'd hoped he would be loved.

Pamela was a considerable support to the organisation of the annual Caspian Breed Shows of the time. She and Michael would feed and water the judge and allow him to relax between classes, so I didn't need to worry about him and Michael spent many hours with a megaphone as Collecting Ring Steward.

Most recently, after a long period of absence in my life, I was delighted to see Pamela again, with Naomi at our AGM held near Buckingham last August. She

told me that she had firmly decided to come and see her old friends and although she was in fact very ill, on that day you would have thought there was nothing wrong at all. She went around hugging people and showing her delight to be there, smiling broadly, enjoying her lunch and generally having a great time. That day, her friendship and all she did for the Caspians is how I will remember Pamela.

Memories of Pamela – Janet Dedicoat

I first met Pamela Thomas through the CHS in the 1980's and can remember what a strong, knowledgeable and interesting person she was in so many subjects. This opinion remained the same throughout time. Pamela was a loyal supporter of the Caspian and its survival and also to the endangered Cleveland Bay breed. She was very successful in the Show Ring with both and bred a delightful Arab x Cleveland that was innovative in its day. It was a pleasure to meet up at last year's AGM and once again have plenty of varied discussion. Pamela will be greatly missed by many.

From Brenda Dalton

Pamela served actively on the CHS Council for many years. She never sat on the fence. She was very much her own person with positive and valuable opinions but she would always go the extra mile to try to calm troubled waters. She was very experienced at showing and she was passionately involved with the Cleveland Bay. She had many strings to her bow apart from horses. Every Society should have a Pamela Thomas and the CHS will miss her.

From Vicki Shortis

Pamela will be much missed, as a valued friend and for her dedication to the Caspian and Society.

CASPIAN HORSE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

Farokh Khorrooshi

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As many of you know, 2015 will be the 50th anniversary of the rediscovery of the Caspian Horse in Northern Iran by Louise Firouz. The photographer Colin Barker and I have teamed up to produce a prestigious calendar depicting Caspians in different countries and different seasons.

The aims of this project at the outset were two-fold: First and foremost to raise the profile of the Caspian Horse throughout the world and secondly to increase the membership of the Caspian Horse Society (CHS). Colin and I hope to raise enough money to cover all the travel and production expenses and perhaps have enough money left over to finance a viable Gene Bank project.

This has turned out to be a huge task, involving a significant amount of research, planning and travel expense. So far, Colin and I have visited several Caspians in the U.K., Belgium, and Holland and clocked up well over 3000 miles between us in photographing these rare and beautiful horses.

(Photo shows Colin with Nanda Smit-le Poole and Caspian amidst the tulips)



We hope to visit Caspians in Switzerland, Sweden, France and the USA and Iran of course, later this year. The plan is to complete the photography in 2014 and produce the calendar by Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, in 2015.

Colin and I continue to be impressed by the generosity of the Caspian owners we have visited so far and wish to thank each and every one of you for giving up your valuable time to help with this great project.

NOTES FROM THE NORTH

From Bytham Orient (aka 'Fred'), in the Scottish Borders

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Well, I have to tell you that I might have hit on a second career after a visit from Farokh and Colin with their very sophisticated cameras and kit and a day on the hill showing my profile off to its best advantage, like a real pro! The photos shown below were taken by Farokh.

‘She’ had identified a stunning location and prominent landmark in the Scottish Borders called Smailholm Tower, *(right)* a 15th century peel tower surrounded by craggy rocks and gullies, just made for abstract photography.

So, after they all did a recce the day before to see which bits of rock I might perch on for maximum impact, I spent a whole day with my friend Duncan – with whom I sometimes go to stay to be ridden – who, dressed in the full Highland kit, stood in fancy poses while I was fed copious quantities of carrot from his sporran!



We have seen some of the stunning results of their work. One of them has gone out to the local paper and all the Scottish horsey magazines with a press release that ‘she’ knocked up, all about the 50th anniversary of Louise finding some Caspians and her work to re-establish the breed.

We are expecting it to appear in the Scottish Farmer, which has a huge circulation and also in the local paper - which covers the whole of the south of Scotland - any day now. They have both written lots about us before - as well as other magazines who might also come and see us to write a whole piece about Caspians.



The team behind the scenes

We have had a visit from a lady from the south who is new to the breed and full of enthusiasm and knowledge about blood lines. She is looking for a stallion for her recently acquired mare and seemed to like us. There has been other interest too, so we hope for a busy season.

Now that our thoughts have turned to Spring, it is time for 'her' to get out and probably re-order all the lotions and potions to deal with the things that make us rub and itch, before we start to do so. Normally we get a good shampoo with something insecticidal as soon as it is warm enough. I wish you all an itch-free Summer too!

Sapphire seems to be planning another good onslaught on the local shows – in fact I think she is getting a bit above herself. There is talk of her going to The Royal Highland – how grown up is that? Happy showing to you all too!



Maestro Colin Barker at work

AUTUMN QUIZ COMPETITION

Our Autumn Quiz on Caspian Connections and Horses in Fiction was not entered by any of our members! The sumptuous box of chocolates intended for the winner is therefore still unclaimed!

If you would like to have a go at the quiz, look in our Autumn 2013 issue or ask Vicki for a copy of the Quiz and send in the answers on a sheet of paper or by email by 1st July. Vicki's contact details are on the inside front cover of the magazine. Happy Quizzing!

The symptoms of Sweet Itch will be all too familiar to those whose horses are afflicted summer after summer. The condition is an acquired allergy (or hypersensitivity) to bites from *Culicoides* midges; tiny insects familiarly known in Canada as “no-see-ums”. It typically affects areas around the mane, tail, head and ears. The allergic response involves the release of inflammatory compounds, especially histamine, which provoke intense itching. The horse will then attempt to relieve the itching by rubbing, biting or rolling, which makes matters worse, leading to hair loss, broken skin and secondary bacterial infections. Because the condition is caused by a hypersensitive response of the immune system, only some horses exposed to midges will succumb to sweet itch. However, once established, it is likely to recur every summer during the midge season.

Unfortunately there is no sure-fire approach either to prevention or treatment. The aim of prevention is, of course, to keep the midges away from the skin. Midges are most prevalent round sites of static water, e.g. ponds and bogs. They tend to swarm around dawn and dusk, particularly in still air conditions. Some owners with lots of land can avoid high-risk areas but for most this is not an option. Stabling your horse from dusk to dawn, with a fine gauge insect shield over doors and windows can be effective. Specially designed, midge-proof rugs and face-masks work well but are probably uncomfortable in their own right during the summer season.

At present, there is no guaranteed effective treatment for sweet itch. Oils containing an insecticide such as benzyl benzoate can provide relief in some cases. In other cases they can themselves provoke a skin reaction and make things worse. Treatment with anti-inflammatory drugs such as antihistamines and corticosteroids should reduce the local inflammatory response but, through long-term use, can produce serious side effects such as laminitis.

A chronic, difficult to treat condition, such as Sweet Itch, that affects a well-loved animal such as the horse, is guaranteed to attract the entrepreneurs and generate a rash (no pun intended) of “cures” based on homeopathy, herbs or nutritional supplements. There is no convincing evidence that any of these are effective and no biological reason to suggest that they might be.

A more promising approach, in theory and in practice, is immunotherapy, a process of de-sensitisation through repeated, controlled exposure to the compounds that cause the allergies (i.e. allergens). Scientists at the University of Bristol have isolated allergens from the saliva of the *Culicoides* midge and concentrated them into capsules for regular oral administration to affected horses. It is too early to pass judgment on this approach, but early indications are promising. The most attractive thing about this approach is that it makes sense.

PULL YOUR HORSES' HAIR OUT FOR THE CHS CAMPAIGN!

Barbara Smathers

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Over the years we have collectively supported several research projects by supplying hair samples from our Caspian herd in the UK, but we have never collected DNA hair samples for both CHS and our own use.

Following discussion with breeders, it appears that there may be times when it would be useful to be able to verify parentage by way of DNA. These days DNA testing costs \$25 per horse, so an individual and both its' parents would cost \$75, or around £50, as and when required. There are no costs involved in storing DNA samples and it has been suggested that sponsorship could be sought to pay for testing over the coming years. In the meantime, the collection could be a valuable asset to us all. Can you and your Caspian Horses help again?

As we approach the Golden Jubilee of Louise Firouz' rediscovery of the Caspian horse, will you join us in gathering an all-inclusive DNA sample library of the current herd? Simply label a paper envelope with the registered name of the horse, and pull at least 40 mane hairs *with follicle attached* - from the underside of the mane is usually easiest, especially when the horse is warm. Seal well, sign and send to Ruth Staines, our Registrar, who already holds a number of hair samples.

If in doubt, do it anyway! Better to have two samples from a Caspian than none. If your vet is on the premises, you could ask them to pull the hair sample for you, but since this sample is not for registration purposes, you do not need to go to that expense unless you want to.

Please help us to gather a baseline DNA collection and enable us to build a DNA database which would be available to all. This project is on a voluntary basis, but added to the existing collection of DNA samples held in recent years, it does have the potential to be cohesive. Thanks to you for your time and your poor Caspians for losing more hair in the name of science!

VICKI'S HINTS & TIPS

- Water tanks and ponds are prone to toxic green algae during the summer. Try putting some barley straw in a carrot sack and immersing it in the water, but remember to change it regularly.
- If for some reason your horse will not drink water, soak some hay in it then give the water to your horse to drink.
- To freshen your stable after mucking out, sprinkle some Bicarbonate of Soda over the floor before replacing the bedding.
- Try the healing abilities of Aloe Vera for animals and humans, cuts, grazes, burns etc..
- Taking a daily garlic supplement, for horse and humans, helps to keep the midges at bay.

Is the predominant colour of the Caspian Horse becoming Bay?

By Elizabeth Webster

One of the first things I appreciated about the Caspian is that unlike the Welsh Cob, Fell, Dales, Friesian, Exmoor or Dartmoor, the breed is not dominated by one colour. Conformation, symmetry and height form the abiding image of the Caspian - colour variety is a wonderful bonus that we ought to preserve, although unless you know the individuals concerned, it can be a bothersome task to look up each horse's colour and bloodlines in the stud book. (Several have been exported and so we hope their colours will continue to feature in Caspians overseas.) It's now important to discover which colours are prevalent and which are slowly vanishing – and also because missing colours may be easier to spot than under-used bloodlines. Since both are vital to the overall and genetic health of the breed, I hope that those who properly understand colour genetics may be able to answer the question above properly. Bay is a great and varied colour, but we must not allow it to take over the breed.

Colour inheritance is a complex subject and I write as an amateur observer in a very limited space! However, I suggest that some Caspian coat colours – and especially rare bloodlines – require serious and prompt attention for one rather obvious and unfortunate reason...the formation of a second Caspian society in Britain in the late 90's. This undeniably split both the Caspian population and their breeders into different, usually opposing camps, allowing an imbalance of bloodlines and loss of colour variety to go on whilst our hearts and minds were pre-occupied with other things. Britain is not the only place this has happened, I'm sorry to say. Horse lovers are only human, I know, but saving the Caspian Horse is *so important* that now we need to put aside all other considerations. However vital they may have seemed at the time, those concerns must always be placed below the preservation of our breed. To use a Parliamentary expression, Caspian breeders should 'cross the floor', occasionally, in order to make the best use of all bloodlines. Rare breeds advisor Lawrence Alderson wrote "A Breeding Plan for Minority Breeds" to advise early Caspian breeders, which strongly recommends just that and should be required reading for anybody preserving a rare breed.



GREY – Greys which arrived in Britain during the 1970's were **Mehran** (*Left*); his daughter **Touran**; **Daria Nour***; his son **Amu Daria**; the mare **Doueez***.

The CHS Stallion and For Sale lists now show no grey stallions at all in the UK (but there are some grey mares for sale) and only *Rosmear Zal* (Smith-Boyes - France) and *Willesley Hero* (Gunborg Jonsson, Sweden) stand in Europe. Two

of Pandora Best's grey stallions, now deceased, were barely used in their lifetimes. On CBS website the grey stallion - *Henden Wenceslas*, (a grandson of Mehran) is photographed. All but two of his sire *Henden Stephen's* foals were born within the CBS orbit and all of Wenceslas' 20 foals within CBS. *Shepton Darius*, now deceased, sired two greys, technically available to both societies and Daria Nur's bay son *Forstal's Barewa*, was over-used, but almost entirely within the CBS. Colour is usually omitted on CBS lists, so careful study of the ICSB is needed when searching for a grey mare or stallion for breeding.



CHESTNUT - Karoun and the mares **Khorshid Kola*** and **Pari*** were chestnuts which arrived in Britain in the 70's. Hopstone Atesh was exported to NZ, others went to the US, but several chestnuts remained in the UK. *Miran Kazimir* (Pandora Best) and *Marida Manzel* (Naomi Thomas) are on both CHS and CBS stallion lists. No chestnuts are identified as such by CBS, though Barewa's dam was Pari* so she is over-represented in CBS circles. *Apadana Azmir* stands with Muriel Broer in Holland (CBS list)

On CHS Stallion list *Rosmeare Ashok* stands with Brian Smith-Boyes in France and *Parsagha Saadi* at NOVA Stables Stud in the Netherlands. The colt *Miran Kareem* is offered for sale by Pandora Best, along with *Miran Kazimir*. There seem to be more chestnuts in Europe, USA and Australia than in UK, so they need to be sought out by British breeders. *Above left – Miran Kareem, colt, is on CHS list for sale.*



CREAM/DUN – This colour originated with **Shirine***, who produced several foals in her image, but they're sometimes hard to identify as such in the stud book. The mare *Spark Zarrin Tara* was exported to Australia and very few horses of cream or dun colouring are identified as such on either CBS or CHS lists. Spark Tabriz, who stands at MCC Farms in America is producing duns, but he's a long way from European breeders.

Within CHS there are stallions which may be available to breeders when licensed. If so, I hope they will be used by breeders throughout UK to prevent these rare and attractive colours from disappearing.

BLACK: The stallion *Amu Daria* (iron-grey, later faded to white) sired *Hopstone Tochal*, who went to Australia and remained black. The black (or very dark brown/bay) stallion *Xerxes Zahir* (Eric and Pandora Best) is photographed on both CBS and CHS stallion lists.



The black imported stallion **Persicus Khuchek Khan** (*photo left*) who stands with Naomi Thomas, is on both lists and his black son *Sirhowy Sanjar*, (Smith Boyes, France) is on the CHS list.

Black Caspians are unusual and attractive – they should be used more to keep the colour alive.

CHS 'For Sale' list has greys, chestnuts and a black stallion at Rosmeare stud in France (Smith Boyes), but no greys in the UK and apart from Wenceslas, none are identifiable as such on the CBS list, though this has not been updated recently. NOVA Stud offers several colours. Some good bay and dark bay stallions are included on the CHS and CBS stallion lists. Penny Walster's *Bytham Justin Time*, a lovely dark bay, has not yet been used within CBS to my knowledge, although his sire Runnymede Felfel was by Forstal's Barewa, then standing at Henden and R. Felfel sired Henden Anti-Eda. There are several rare bloodlines featuring bay which are very under-used, mainly due to distance – e.g. Pandora Best's stud in South Devon. The main shock is that the vast majority of the greys in the UK have been bred within the CBS circle. This is something CHS breeders must take very seriously. ICS can provide colours if you are looking at several horses.

The recession has brought welfare issues and big problems for the horse market. Let's hope horse breeding will be more carefully planned and that value returns to breeding quality horses soon. We Caspian lovers need to work together from now on, to preserve all the characteristics of the breed we love – and make sure that every foal will have a useful and productive life. Unless we start thinking beyond the day-to-day and start planning for the future of the breed as Louise knew it, the Caspian will undoubtedly look very different, all too soon. Breeders and societies who have decided to go their own way should - *please* – reconsider. Outside the ICS umbrella, Caspians will not be bred in the same way as those in the ICS member societies, nor will their breeding records be available for any collective census or breeding plan of Caspians bred within the same standards for the world population. Those who use their stallions would be wise to register their foals within a member society to gain entry to the ICSB – in the UK that is the CHS.

I have barely touched on a big subject here, and I apologise to those people and horses that I have not mentioned. CHS has launched the Gene Bank Project to try to preserve all bloodlines around the world, but it's a big task and it may take some time. While we wait for the Gene Bank to get going, *please support* those stallion owners with the rare bloodlines and colours and carefully match them with the right mares. Buyers – seek out those special colours and bloodlines, wherever they are. Let's not lose the precious characteristics of our Caspians to carelessness.

DARKHORSE QARAMIR**Brenda Dalton**

When the Darkhorse Stud horses were sent in bulk to York Sales, we knew that we couldn't 'save' them all. My concern was for the older mares, who were unlikely to be purchased for performance or breeding, so when Barbara Smathers rang me to say that Darkhorse Qaramir was amongst the mares for sale, I asked her to bid on my behalf. Qaramir, (*photographed left, on arrival last August*), was born in 1995. Her mother was Hopstone Qara Su, a mare that I have always been very fond of. Qaramir was broken to ride in her younger days and had bred five foals, as had her mother.



She certainly needed to fill out a bit and was very happy to come in for food, although it took her a month or two to settle in the stable overnight. She had obviously not been mistreated, but she was nervous, which didn't improve with needing several bouts of tooth treatment.

She still has to have further correction, but she is now losing the nervousness and her shape has improved enormously (*lower photo, April 2014*). The only thing she won't tolerate is another horse attempting to follow her into her stable!

DARKHORSE ZARA (Lulu)**Helen Thirlby**

This is just a quick update on Lulu, as we call her. We have all had a horrendously wet winter, but Lulu coped with living in a sea of mud for four months remarkably well! At the end of last summer Lulu started losing weight again. We called out the dentist, who quickly realised that she had two extremely loose and painful back teeth. These were swiftly removed and Lulu went from strength to strength.

A few weeks ago we put her in a field with one of my son's Caspian mares, Henden Alima. Within about three days the girls had made a real bond and are now inseparable. They are living on a friend's paddocks with lots of grass while our summer paddocks recover. The girls will spend the summer

grazing with my son's Caspian yearlings and my youngsters. It has been lovely to watch Lulu return to full health again. The photo on the previous page shows the two girls in the same stable as they can't cope with being parted! Lulu is on the right.

Another rescued Caspian will be found on page 31.

A VISIT TO MCC FARM, TEXAS

Margareta Lindahl

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In February my Father and I went to Texas. We visited Joyce (*pictured with mares, left*) and Felix Covington, who took good care of us and also took us to Alamos stud, where we met Jane Macon.

It was fantastic to see all the Caspians that I only had been reading about and seen photos of. We looked at all the parents of my horses. I was very surprised that the

horses were so well behaved when they came in to the stables from being out in very big fields. We went out with the golf cart to look at the horses in the fields.

The mares were in separate fields (*right*) and the stallions were all together in another field. It was also fantastic to see so many Caspians at one time - I don't think there are any other Studs that have so many horses at one place. All the horses was in so perfect condition and when they came running together it almost took my breath away.



Texas was big and so were all the farms, the fields, the fences and the stables. The planning of the farm gave me a lot of new ideas and wishes of what I would love to have at my farm. I do hope the Americans will hold the next International Conference for us. I was not there the last time, I know we missed a lot.

I would once again thank Joyce and Felix Covington and Jane Macon for their hospitality and their kindness.

The Swedish Caspian Horse Society will participate at the Sweden International Horse Show at Friends Arena, Stockholm 27-30 November 2014.

This will promote the breed in Sweden a lot. We will have a stand and a box and some show numbers, the kids who owns a Caspian are practicing a lot in Show jumping and Dressage. We are hoping that Hillevi Hansson will be driving her horse. This is for Horses bred in Sweden. <http://www.swedenhorshow.se/> There will be a lot of articles in Swedish horse magazines and on the internet all year long and the Caspians will be there.

Jenne Timbs - Jasenna Stud, Queensland, Australia.

jasennastud@bigpond.com



Since my last writing (*The Caspian, Autumn 2013*), Azadeh had been very up and down. She developed swellings near her front legs and pustules under her belly. We adjusted the homeopathics (to Mezereum & Ant Crudum), made a nosode from some pus and the pustules started to clear up again. Over the last few months her appetite decreased and her back legs were stiffer. She had this dust layer on her shoulders and top line which I suspected was coming up through her skin. She remained social with the other horses through the fences and was still bright in her eye and happy. Since the end of winter we had left her stable open so she could come and go as she pleased and make contact with most of the horses. We felt this was important as she had been one of our lead mares.

Azadeh, Qadash and Sienna

On Saturday 8th March, just after dark, Andrew called out that Azadeh was down. I had walked past her half an hour before and she had been fine. I found her lying in an awkward position, her rump slightly under the railing fence and her legs higher than her top line - possibly she had tripped on a long piece of pipe with a curved end as she manoeuvred to stand with her hind feet in a hole beside a fence post. Over the past month she had taken to standing in this hole during the evenings, possibly to take the weight off her front legs. We helped her to get up. She was a little unsteady in her back end, but otherwise seemed OK. Later I found her licking at a lick block. That night I had to drag her away from talking to my stallion Meshek, so I could let him out for his night in the paddock.

Next morning she was still unsteady and Andrew asked if it was time to have her euthanized. It was our monthly Harness Club meeting. Something nearly always happens to prevent me going, but Zerem needed a short float ride and I needed to ask if anyone knew of any grassy hay supplies (the drought has made hay very scarce). I decided to go, briefly. On the way, Andrew called to tell me Azadeh was down. While I was gone he gave her accident remedy and one for her breathing. I was home in two hours and after unloading the gelding, went straight to Azadeh. She sat up, but it didn't look good. I gave her Arsenicum Alb and next time I went in she was standing. Was it possible to pull her back again from the brink of death? I spent an hour making phone calls, some to see how else I could help her, others to find out when I could get an excavator, if worse came to worst and to find the cheapest price - not wanting to take from our hay budget which, in the drought, is way out of hand.

At 3 pm I found her still standing and I gave her Carbo Veg. I knelt down and stroked her cheek as I told her that she had been a wonderful horse and I would miss her, but if she wanted to die it was OK. With a tear in my eye, I also told her that I would look for her in the new earth, when all things were restored. She leaned her head onto my chest. I went to search my vet books for other remedies that might help her.

Just before 4 pm I checked her again and found her dead. Andrew was surprised, as at 3.30 pm he had found her alive and obviously waiting for my permission, having fought so long and hard to save her. I closed and weighted her eye and spread out her mane and tail like she was galloping. She'd always had the most thick, gorgeous tail. I pulled some mane hairs for DNA testing and then washed and cut her mane and tail hair in case I ever need to make a false tail. That way Azadeh can still participate in future shows. That night we piggy-backed Sienna down to see her, as she was sick and upset that she had been unable to say goodbye. Azadeh looked so peaceful, as if asleep. That night brought a gentle shower and in the early morning light her coat was clean and shiny – amazing, given the illness she had suffered. Thankfully an excavator came by 1pm. Sienna wants us to mark her grave.

I am grateful to Azadeh for teaching me the power of alternative medicine. The best veterinary know-how, relying on antibiotics, started with a relatively healthy horse and in four months, due to the bacteria developing resistance, had nowhere else to go but euthanasia. We started with a nearly dead horse and using alternatives, got her back to relatively good health in three months. The alternatives kept her going a further ten months. From first evidence of her disease, she lived a total of 16 months and almost made it to her 11th birthday. Had I continued my initial regime far longer, she may never have suffered setbacks. Sadly, her fall seems to have been the last straw.

Azadeh was an intelligent, compliant horse, gentle and very good around children. In the eight years we had her she exhibited no vices, except when she couldn't stand Sienna singing out of key (as a three year old) and nipped her on the bottom.

She had four colt foals, three surviving, and our most outstanding memory is of her dedication as a mother. Several years ago, when we were out, our main stallion Milad managed to lift and twist a 6ft cattle panel (which had one pin instead of two) and get out of his yard into the colts' paddock. Our two yearling colts were in the paddock, one being Zerem, Azadeh's first surviving colt. Milad must have chased the colts around until they opened the gate into the central area, where other horses were. This larger group managed to push over a temporary gate into the house area, joining all groups of horses together. We got home at dusk to find a herd of horses galloping around the house, with Milad in hot pursuit. We quickly caught Milad and put him back in his yard, (and tied up the faulty panel till the next day). Thankfully no mares had been in season.

Soon we realised that the two colts were not with the rest. We searched all over, imagining them bruised and beaten or with damaged legs from busting through gates. We found Meshek hiding near the river - a little worried, but otherwise fine,

so we put him away and continued to look for Zerem. Finally we found him. Azadeh had hidden him beside the granny flat, while the rest of the herd kept galloping round and round. What a clever girl she was. Even though her son had been weaned almost a year earlier, she used her wits and protected him when he needed it.

Rest in peace Azadeh, we will never forget you.

CHARLIE & KOPEK – SPRING 2014

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Kath Linacre



As much as we try not to be a fair weather horse family, the wet winter weather has really gotten in the way of many of the horse activities we planned. High up in Nottinghamshire, we are fortunate not to have suffered flooding like so many people have. However, the relentless wet weather has left our fields waterlogged and our horses more than a little muddy!

We've welcomed the arrival of spring with open arms. As Kopek has suffered from acute sweet-itch for the two summers since he arrived, we are keen to find a remedy which really brings him some relief. Following a lot of research and product trials, this year we've started to give Kopek Aloe Vera daily with the hope that it will help boost Kopek's immune system and overall health and wellbeing, therefore making him less likely to react so violently to the fly bites.

Within a week of starting this routine, Kopek seemed brighter in himself and his coat looked fantastic. Unfortunately, all of our paddocks back on to a lake so it's very difficult for Kopek to escape the flies. As the temperatures rise, so do the number of flies. So far so good, Kopek does not appear to be reacting to the flies like he has previously. Fingers crossed this continues into the summer. It would be fantastic to see his lovely mane and tail intact throughout the summer!

Our minds have also turned to getting Kopek ready for more handling and riding by Charlie. As part of this preparation, we were visited by a local McTimoney practitioner, Rachael Barker of Optimal Equine. Charlie really enjoyed watching the session and was the official photographer as well as asking lots of questions. Kopek passed his pre-season MOT with flying colours – it's great to see that our massage and stretches have kept him supple and loose through winter.



Charlie has recently been diagnosed as having dyspraxic tendencies, which affect his fine and gross motor skills, in particular his ability to balance and be co-ordinated. It's therefore essential that Kopek is fit and healthy enough to carry Charlie whilst Charlie works on improving his balance. Charlie has also started on a balance-improving programme, using our Nintendo Wii – it's much more fun than traditional physio exercises!

With the lighter evenings, Charlie has started his groundwork with Kopek ready for entering his next Horse Agility competition. As part of our lessons with our 'Think Like A Pony' instructor, Sophie Hildreth, we are starting to practice mounted games, as Charlie would like to enter the local show's lead rein classes this summer. But most of all, Charlie has just enjoyed spending more time with his best friend!

A CASE FOR NATURAL HORSEMANSHIP

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Chris Fluskey

Most current training methods have been derived from traditional methods, which involve a good deal of physical dominance or assertion. These methods are quick and generally reliable, but can cause the horse some form of distress and can eventually lead to an unstable mind (shown most often in ex-race Thoroughbreds). Whilst these methods are quick and effective in achieving a "trained" horse, all that is generally achieved is fear of not doing as they are told.

With Natural Horsemanship you communicate with the horse on the same level that they communicate with each other. By learning and teaching this method of subtle body cues and "language" in a calm and gentle manner, you achieve a more emotionally balanced horse. This leads to some interesting bi-products, which can include:

- Trust
- Respect
- Understanding
- Affection
- Balanced behaviour
- Confidence in own ability

During the process you will bond more with your horse and will come to a mutual understand and appreciation of each other.

Contrary to some beliefs, Natural Horsemanship is NOT horse whispering or Parelli. It is about working with, speaking to and importantly listening to your horse, effectively communicating in the language of "horse". These techniques can be used with *any* horse, regardless of the previous state of mind, but in extreme cases the process can be difficult if the horse shows a complete lack of respect to begin with.

A simple example: most horses are afraid of a particular object - perhaps a plastic bag. Most people will have come across an over-reaction. Using these methods, you gently and gradually (over several sessions) turn this “scary” thing into something that is not scary. By doing this your horse builds in confidence and also learns not to over react to other scary things either.



I am sure the riders amongst you will agree that this is of distinct advantage when you are out riding and you come across something scary. Instead of whipping your horse on, which then rushes past it - or worse, rears up and throws the rider - the horse will no longer associate these actions with the scary object, but will calmly walk on with little or no resistance. This is useful in situations beyond the rider's control. In a group ride, when a car suddenly appears and spooks everyone else, your horse is more likely to calmly walk on or simply stand still.

The methods are relatively simple and enable and empower the horse to feel confident with other scary things, calmer and more relaxed. This enables a better, more bonded ride, excellent for showing and, in particular, dressage. In my opinion this method is exceptional for bonding the horse and rider, so much so that if you practice the methods correctly over a longer period you should be able to perform well in an arena (even bitless and bareback).

The best known name in Natural Horsemanship has to be Monty Roberts, who incidentally works at her Majesty the Queen's private stud, with horses that are generally too unruly to be handled by her regular staff. Every Natural Horseperson will develop their *own* style, based on that of the person who teaches them. The most successful will follow the methods in all interactions with the horses, not just when it suits them. As time goes on the horse will require less and less “training” and a simple cue will be all that is needed to achieve the desired result.

My photos give an example of something that was scary enough for most horses to bolt. During this particular session, our ménage was over-flown by two RAF Merlin Helicopters, at below 500 feet. Every horse on the yard panicked apart from my own two.....

Thank you all for reading and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

OUR NEWSLETTER is sent out to members by email, between the twice-yearly magazines. If you have not received one, please contact y.shortis@sizzel.net to make sure that we have your current email address.



Katy is 18 and used to be a weekend helper at Monach Farm. Two years ago she became very ill. She is now on the road to recovery. At present she cannot walk or talk, but sent us this email recently and gave us permission to print it.

(Dreda Randall)

“I love helping out at Monach Farm, grooming and riding the horses. It helps me with my physiotherapy by working on my physical disabilities, building up the strength I lost from many hospital stays and builds up

my confidence by knowing that each horse I have groomed, not only have I achieved something but I have also been able to help someone and the horses by doing it. I know during my 6 ½ month hospital stay one of my physiotherapists and I were always coming up with ways to try and bring a horse or two into the gym for physiotherapy. We never managed it so we settled for a big cylinder with stirrups, and my other physiotherapist holding up the reins pretending to be the horse head as she was the one that nagged us! But we made a promise to each other that one day I would get back into the saddle and help out on a yard. Emily made our dream possible. Anyone else could have said “you can’t help us, it wouldn’t work” or “we’re not willing to take the risk”, but Emily agreed to let me help out by grooming the ponies once a week which has now progressed to twice a week and then when I was ready she agreed to let me ride my favourite Caspian, Oriole, despite the problems I faced.

Grooming the horses and just spending time with them is amazing. It makes me really happy and I think it helps me most because unlike some people horses don’t judge you. It doesn’t matter to them if you’re in a lot of pain so takes you longer than normal to groom them or have tubes or have physical disabilities. They accept you for who you are. I find that every time I go to the yard it boosts my confidence a bit more and gives me a sense of achievement seeing Oriole respond to the sign language that I taught her, and walking calmly and slowly beside my wheelchair without pulling me over or being naughty.

I think the riding also helps boosts my confidence knowing that each time I ride, I am one step closer to achieving the goal my hospital teams, physiotherapists, and occupational therapist set me. For a short period of time I can be just like anyone else but with a difference, because when I’m on horseback, Oriole and I work as a team and it’s a bit like she becomes my legs that don’t work.

Thank you, Oriole.

Katy”

By Nicola Chamberlain, FdSc, BSc(Hons), Clinical Animal Behaviourist

www.chamberlain-behaviourist.co.uk

Clicker training is just one way of training using appetitives, or things that your horse will love and work towards gaining, such as food rewards, or rubbing and scratches for some. Using rewards correctly can have a very special effect when training. They tap into the limbic system within the brain, releasing biochemical messengers which make the horse feel good. Tapping into this part of the brain can really change a horse's perspective in terms of not only how it feels about training, but the way horses feel about us, their human counterparts, and can also change the behaviour of members of a prey species - whose primary survival technique is flight - into calm, willing, emotionally stable partners who are genuinely invested in us and what we require of them.

Clicker training involves marking the exact behaviour in time and space that you want the horse to repeat with a bridging signal, which is commonly the 'click' sound from a small plastic box or 'clicker', followed by a reward. The click literally bridges the gap between the reward or treat being given and the behaviour it is intended to reward. We see the world in relatively slow motion compared to horses, so 1-2 seconds to us can feel more like 5-6 seconds to a horse. A lot can happen in that time. For example, if you want to reward a horse for standing still, by the time you've delivered the treat from your pocket, your horse may have taken a step towards you or noticed a distant sound and become nervous. These are all behaviours or states of mind that you do not necessarily want to train or reinforce! Using a clicker can avoid that confusion.

Using appetitives such as food rewards reduces the likelihood of problem behaviours occurring, reduces the amount of 'gadgets' such as bits, nosebands, martingales etc, increases the human/horse bond and improves learning and emotional control in the horse. By making you, as the handler/rider, a safe base from which the horse can explore its potentially scary environment, (because mainly good things happen when you are around) being with your horse will be safer, such as by reducing separation anxiety when taken away from its herd.

Training with rewards can make learning more permanent and solid in the horse than with some methods. A horse that has a specific fear of, say, motorbikes, will need careful consideration before being taken on roads. I often hear things such as 'my horse encountered tractors most days last year and didn't bat an eyelid, but since returning to work from his injury, he spooks at them'. This is because regular exposure to tractors may have 'habituated' the horse to them - so he perceived them as of no consequence but the subconscious brain is still alert to the fact that they could become of consequence, i.e., dangerous, at some point. Some training techniques merely habituate the horse to the fear-provoking stimuli. It works to start with, but it is fragile and can break down. Other techniques such as 'flooding', where the horse is forced to confront its fears and cannot escape or is corrected for showing flight or fear behaviour is not good for overall welfare and can be dangerous for all concerned.

Using rewards with a clicker in a systematic way - introducing small amounts of the fear-eliciting or aversive stimuli in a diluted form (i.e. introducing it at a sufficient distance so that the horse remains calm, but aware) and gradually increasing this whilst marking calm behaviour with the clicker and rewarding, will help to rewire the brain. This is called systematic de-sensitisation and counter-conditioning. Over time and repetition, the brain becomes re-wired so that the scary stimulus, such as a tractor, gets labelled by the brain as being associated with something good. This positive association is much more stable and the subconscious knows more readily how to deal with it.

Once your horse has learned a behaviour and can repeat it when asked, then the work of the clicker is done! Occasional rewards to tell your horse he has done well are all that is required thereafter. However, as with all training methods, you should always seek advice from a suitably qualified expert, especially when starting your horse with the clicker. Some important ground rules need to be learned at the outset, including teaching your horse how to be calm and polite around food. Once those ground rules are set, you and your horse are on your way to a true and fulfilling partnership – one that really does work *both* ways.

A PUPIL'S VIEW OF CLICKER TRAINING

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Elizabeth Pannett

I started Clicker training with Nicola Chamberlain knowing absolutely nothing about it, except that a friend in the States had said that it was wonderful.

My 15hh young gelding, Drum, became one of the subjects for a series of four group lessons, our first lessons being focused on Drum realising that he only got a Click and Treat (a piece of carrot or some nuts) when he was "calm and relaxed" and that any nudging or mugging behaviour was ignored. I also had to learn the signs of "calm and relaxed". In fact Clicker Training is teaching me to notice all the little signals and communications he is giving off every second.



The next amazing lesson was that at the command of "Touch" Drum could learn to go to an object or "target" and hold his nose on the exact spot on the target (*in the photograph left, a white band on a bottle*) that you wanted, for the immediate Click followed by a Treat. This was built up in very small steps over a number of days, rewarding the smallest move in the right direction first, until he would hold that position for as long as requested. In his field I would do two sessions of 5 - 10 minute each, with a gap for poo picking between, always ending each session on a really good

note. Although I might leave it for several days, when Drum came back to it he would remember better than before. "Latent Learning" had taken place during the gap.

I learned how tremendously clever horses are, and that given enough time, sometimes many minutes, they will remember the command and keep trying different attempts until they get it right and you "Click and Treat". It was difficult for me to wait patiently and watch him try, lose interest, come back and try again, without my interfering, but that way the horse starts listening to you and thinking



for himself. Drum now goes "from A to B" (left) where two people send him to and fro between them on the command of Touch. Next I shall put a pole and then a small jump between us, to start him free-jumping.

Clicker Training is now helping me to calm Drum when meeting new potentially scary objects, either brought into his field or out on a ride. Over four repeated half hour rides, he has virtually stopped shying or even looking at "scary things".

I love to see how, with patience and careful timing, Drum will work out things for himself, and how much he wants to get it right and enjoys doing it. I can show him the clicker from across his field and he will come trotting over to start! It is very rewarding for us both!

BOOK REVIEWS – Vicki Shortis

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‘TRIGGER IN EUROPE’, with William Holt. *An Equestrian Travel Classic*

I loved this book. William Holt, age 67, bought a grey horse from a rag & bone man, nursed the horse back to health and started riding him. The rides got longer. Eventually they travelled over 9,000 miles through France, Italy, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, eating and sleeping together in all weathers. They faced many hardships before returning home to Yorkshire. First published in 1966, as **Trigger in Europe** and later re-published as **Ride a White Horse**. To find a copy, Google either title.

PRACTICAL PICTURE GUIDES (published by Kenilworth Press)

These are 24 page booklets covering all sorts of horse information, very useful guides, well set out, with good illustrations covering many things you might find helpful, from manes and tails, how to look after horses, feeding, showing, jumping etc. - over 50 titles available.

THE ROAD TO BECOMING A FARRIER'S APPRENTICE

Chris Fluskey

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When I first got my own horse I began to take an interest in her wellbeing and wanting nothing but the best, I searched the internet for farriers. I telephoned a few and left messages asking them to get back to me and after a week of waiting, one eventually did.

Being new to the world of shoeing horses I began to question what he was doing to my horse and why and thus began my interest in hoof care and the world of the farrier. To cut a long story short, I got fed up of telling my farriers what I wanted and having to pay for it, so I decided I could do better!!

Last year I applied to the college for the Farrier Access course. This is a year's course that teaches many things as well as farriery. You are taught Basic English and Maths skills (again) and some basic computer skills are required for the course itself. You are also taught Equine Psychology. Some of the theories don't go hand in hand with my own thoughts and experiences, but it's an insight, if nothing else.

The other thing they teach is equine biology. By the time I finish and qualify I feel I will know more about the anatomy of a horse's leg and leg functions than a fully qualified vet!!

We are also taught the forging and welding theory behind the practical knowledge. Welding is harder than one may think. To arc weld, patience, knowledge and skill are needed. Understanding the correct welding rod for the job is half the battle, but it is great fun to learn and a real skill. Why teach welding on a farrier course? I hear you all ask. Simply to be able to create hard facing and lateral extensions for shoes - and it comes in handy in other aspects of rural life - repairing gates, for example.

The bulk of the course (8 hours a week) is made up of learning to forge; everything from how to set a proper fire, making sure it lights and stays alight, is a good size and has the potential to heat metal to an average 1000 degrees. There are so many things to learn that when we first started we couldn't light the fires. It's simple, I hear you say and in response I simply add 'it's no barbeque'!!!

We are taught to heat the metal to a set colour, as opposed to temperature (it's easier to see) and on reaching the right colour we remove the work from the fire and begin to hammer it. It's hard at first to know how hard to hit the work, where and consistently, so that one does not end up with something of a rather odd shape. With time this skill is honed. We are taught to make different shapes and objects, from a wood splitter to an un-welded eye. Of course when we start off, everything is rubbish, no one can make the shapes they want, but by a few



weeks of this it all changes.

At the end of the course not only do I need to pass all my theory and welding exams, but I have to create 14 different shapes to be placed on a wooden board for an examiner to check. These must be as close to perfect as they can be or I will fail. The Final (for this year) is a live forging exam. The examiner will choose one of the 14 shapes and ask us to re-create it in a set time - again this has to be near perfect to pass.

I will let you know how I get on. If I pass, I attain a Forging Certificate, which allows me to go on to the Farrier Apprenticeship for a further three years, when I will learn to shoe many different horses, breaking every six weeks for a few days in college to be assessed further on the quality of my work.

Some of you may ask why, at this time of my life (nearly mid 30s) I would want to go back to college. I have one answer (other than the money) - I simply believe I can make a difference

DARKHORSE RAJESH

Another rescued Caspian

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New member Julie Laurenti rescued Rajesh from York market, although she did not go with the intention of buying one. He was very undernourished. According to the sales catalogue, he had been professionally broken to harness and competed lightly, although she has not witnessed this herself. He is quite timid, but with more handling she thinks he would do very well. Since she's had him he's mainly been turned out, but he does go out on the lead rein occasionally and leads very well.



His condition has improved greatly since Julie has had him, (*photo, right, was taken in April*) but he's done very little and she thinks it is a waste of a potentially good pony for him not to be usefully employed. She's joined the CHS in order to find someone who is interested in this particular breed who might want to bring him on as a project and provide a loving home.

Julie's priority is to find Rajesh a good home where he can be used to his full potential. Details of Darkhorse Rajesh will be found on the For Sale list enclosed with this magazine.



SHOP TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CHS – WITHOUT SPENDING AN EXTRA PENNY!

Going to **easyfundraising.org.uk** to raise funds for CHS projects is (nearly) as easy as shopping online for yourself! Literally thousands of well-known stores are signed up to it and several also run additional offers to save *you* money too.

Once on the website, select CASPIAN HORSE SOCIETY as your cause, click on Find and Remind and the website will confirm that your visit has been logged. Each purchase you make thereafter from participating stores will earn a percentage towards our funds, at no extra cost to you! The Autumn 2013 issue of 'The Caspian' had detailed instructions but it's a helpful website.

Happy fundraising!

MEMBER'S RECIPE

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SPECIAL OCCASION PUDDING

Submitted by Vicki Shortis

1/4 Pint water	2 tablespoons brown sugar
4 ozs Caster sugar	2 ozs butter
6 tablespoon Rum	4 eggs
4 ozs dark chocolate	Sponge fingers
1/4 pint coffee	whipped cream.

Boil water, caster sugar & rum together for 3 - 5 minutes to make a syrup.

Melt the chocolate in saucepan, add the coffee and cook for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat, add brown sugar, butter & egg yolks.

Mix well, then add stiffly beaten egg whites.

Line a dish with sponge fingers which have been sprinkled with the rum syrup. then pour in the chocolate mixture, add more sponge fingers to the top. Chill for 12 hours and serve with the whipped cream.

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WEBWISE & USEFUL CONTACTS

www.laminitisclinic.org This is a very informative and helpful site for anyone with a laminitis problem.

www.sweet-itch.com For useful advice and information to help overcome Sweet Itch.

www.grasssickness.org Hopefully you will never come across this problem, but it's worth visiting this site to learn more about this very distressing disease.

www.ragwort-ulk.com **www.ragwort.com** Two sites for advice about ragwort.

www.yourhorseshealth.com/health_care/colic For help with colic. (Note: health_care)

www.bhs.org.uk The BHS site covers a wide range of issues affecting horse and rider and related subjects on a daily basis.

www.riding-for-disabled.org.uk Where disabled people can obtain information.

www.pcuk.org The site where you can learn all about the Pony Club in the UK.

www.nntta.co.uk Useful site if you tow a trailer. Ever wondered where you could find the spare part you urgently need, or needed some advice on how to tow with a trailer?

www.stolenhorseregister.com Tel 0870 870 7107
Horse stolen/missing? Contact the Stolen Horse Register.

www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk offer a voucher for free ACTH blood test to diagnose Cushing's Disease, lab fees are covered but you pay vet call out charge.

www.caspianhorsesociety.org.uk Our own website with associated links, now updated with more photographs and information.

www.caspianhorses.org The website of the International Caspian Society. There is a lot of information here, plus links to other sites. If anyone would like to add a link, contact the Registrar, Kay Taplin <icsregistrar@hotmail.com>
This site enables e-registration by national Registrars.

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