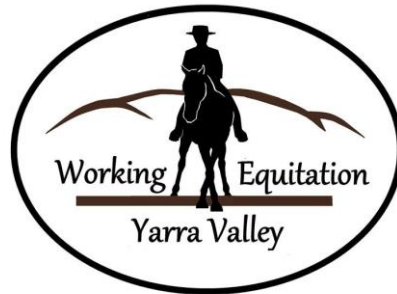


DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER



A MERRY HORSEY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND SAFE NEW YEAR TO
ALL OUR MEMBERS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS



PRESIDENTS PONDERINGS

Well, what can I say but where has the last year gone? I'm sure I'm not the only one to be saying this?

A warm welcome to rejoining members and committee and also to some new members as well. If you notice anyone wandering around looking a little lost at our next rally days please give them a warm WEYV welcome, show them the ropes and we hope that they have an enjoyable day.

Welcome to our newest members:-

Angie Lloyd and Kaileen Pearson.

The club has had 20 members re-join for the current financial year which is great, a few down on last year's numbers but it's still only early days.

This will be the last newsletter for unfinancial members.

Please note that the two February rallies will be at Gruyere then we will be back at Melrose Farm for the autumn.

NEW FINANCIAL YEAR

The HRCav new financial year started on 1st November and you must be a financial member to ride.

You will also need to bring your **GREEN** membership card to be stamped for the new year. You will not be able to ride or compete unless your cards have been officially signed and stamped.

The new membership forms for 2015/2016 financial year are now on our website. (Go to 'about', 'membership', 'joining process' - <http://www.workingequitationyarravalley.org/joining-process.html>)

It's still just \$70 to join our club – plus your HRCav insurance. We also welcome associate membership if you are already a member with another HRCav club and non riding associate membership is available also. The HRCav magazine Chaff Chat is optional.

Amongst the forms there is a member emergency information form. This only needs to be filled out and returned if any of the information required on the form has changed since you filled out the last one ie- new address, phone number, etc.

NEW RALLY FORMAT

As from the February rallies we will be starting a new lesson format. We will be offering a '4 group' lesson for 2 hrs, or a '2 group' lesson for 1 hour and if in the event that there are only 3 members available then there will be a '3 group' lesson for 1 ½ hour duration.

Cost per person will still be \$45 regardless of which group you are in as it all works out relative in the end. This also makes it easier for Lisa when members are paying lesson fees.

As a result of the above some rallies may have to start a little earlier, depending on numbers.

So, here it is again in (hopefully) a clearer format!:-

- 1 hour lesson x 2 people = \$45 each
- 1 ½ hour lesson x 3 people = \$45 each
- 2 hour lesson x 4 people = \$45 each

You will be able to state your preference upon booking and as usual payment will be required **AT TIME OF BOOKING.** No prior payment, no ride.

As well as the time duration change the lesson content will also be changing. WE will now be having the dressage lesson and including either 1,2, or 3 obstacles depending on what the instructor has planned. This should work well for our obstacle training as we can either go more indepth as to how to best ride the obstacle or alternately the obstacle will be used to hone in our dressage skills.

Probably every 3 or 4 rallies the whole course will be set up to give members the opportunity to ride the whole course. Also the course will be available on clinic days as required.

WE VICTORIA COMMITTEE FOR WORKING EQUITATION AUSTRALIA

Susie and Andrew recently attended the 1st AGM for WE Victoria and were elected onto the committee, Andrew as Treasurer and Susie as a general committee member.

On behalf of our members we thank these 2 dedicated people for volunteering on this committee, to represent our club and Victoria in this new and growing sport.

FACEBOOK and WEBSITE

Don't forget that our club has a Facebook page as well as a great website. If you are a Facebook member go to Working Equitation Yarra

Valley to get some great training articles by Susie along with lots of our general info re rallies and special events, photos etc.

The website is also great for more technical club info with HRCav links.
www.workingequitationyarravalley.org

COURSE BUILDING WORKSHOP

A few weekends ago Anna and Lindy attended a course building workshop hosted by WE Geelong, as well as riding in their open event the following day.

I think they both enjoyed the workshop and did us proud in the competition but I'm not sure of the placings.

Anna took quite a few notes at the workshop which I'm sure will be invaluable for our rally days and the next competition?

FUNDRAISING

Anna Gust has organised for the club to be involved in making some money on selling the Horseman's Diary calendars. No, not the naked Horseman type but of the REAL horsemen and women type. They are selling at a very good price of \$15 ea with \$10 going back to the Club so this is a great opportunity to not only get a really nice calendar for 2016 but to help YOUR club in it's fundraising ventures.

Contact Anna or Fay for your copy.

There are still calendars available for last minute gift ideas should you be requiring one.

UNIFORMS

If you have any queries re uniforms or saddle blankets please contact Julia on 0437 741871 or on the email at the end of the newsletter.

We do have a small amount of embroidered short and long sleeved white tops available for purchase.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2016

For info and bookings email Lisa Saunders at lisandian@bigpond.com.au

Book early: Closing dates for bookings & payment is 5 days prior to event.

WEYV Calendar:

<http://www.workingequitationyarravalley.org/calendar.html>

2016 DATES



February -	Wednesday 3 rd	Club rally	Gruyere
	Saturday 6 th	Club rally	Gruyere
March -	Wednesday 2 nd	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 6 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Saturday 19 th	Clinic	TBA
April -	Wednesday 6 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 10 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
May -	Wednesday 4 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 8 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
June -	Wednesday 1 st	Club rally	Gruyere
	Saturday 4 th	Club rally	Gruyere
July -	Wednesday 6 th	Club rally	Gruyere
	Saturday 9 th	Club rally	Gruyere
August -	Wednesday 3 rd	Club rally	Gruyere
	Saturday 6 th	Club rally	Gruyere
September -	Wednesday 7 th	Club rally	Gruyere
	Saturday 10 th	Club rally	Gruyere
October -	Wednesday 5 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 9 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
November -	Wednesday 2 nd	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 6 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Wednesday 16 th	AGM	
December -	Wednesday 7 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Sunday 11 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm

GARROCHA WORK – ‘Pole dancing with horses’!!!!

Have you ever seen the Spanish riders with their Gareca pole? Do you know where it originates from – or why? Read on for some enlightenment:-

What is Garrocha?

(The following was obtained from www.garrocha.com.au Helen Morphet)

The **Garrocha** is a lance or pole, it comes in different lengths depending on what it is being used for. Centuries ago it was used as a weapon during the wars. In Spain it is used by the vaquero (cowboys) on farms to move cattle around rather than roping and to help bring stock in. It is used to keep the bulls of the horses while riding around the pastures stock checks.

The fighting bulls live in large paddocks. They are usually bred by very wealthy land owners – hence the reason why the riders carry the **Garrocha**. On occasions it is used in the bull ring as part of the performance.

It is also a competition where two men on horseback chase a bull and the rider with the **Garrocha** needs to get the bull with a single clean knock-over, as marks will be lost if more than one attempt is made. They also use this technique to test young stock for suitability as potential fighting bulls, the animal is bowled over, and a time is taken until it turns on its tormenters. It is then graded for its courage and resistance to this treatment.

It is also used as one of the obstacles to be scored on, in Working Equitation. Training for this part of the competition helps tremendously with rider skill, balance and seat.

It has now developed into an artistic skillful performance. The pole is made from different materials nowadays, originally it was made from wood, it is from 12 – 14 feet long depending on the height of the horse and is being viewed by audiences all over the world.

It takes years to train a horse to its full potential with the Art of **Garrocha** (likened to training for dressage, reining etc.). Without the horse having full fitness and correct alignment it will break down and will be unable to make the tight manoeuvres correctly and gracefully, which is Art of **Garrocha** – discipline.



I think a few members were keen to have a go with the Garrocha pole and once your horse has been introduced to the pole on the ground it becomes a great training tool. The pole can be sourced from a number of places. I have one at home that is actually an aluminium pool pole, the type that you put a net on and clean the leaves out of the swimming pool. It is fairly lightweight, can be left outdoors and its fully adjustable for transport as it screws out to 16ft or so but when screwed in is only about 7ft. A pole can be made from a heavy weight dowel and purchased from most hardware stores, I had trouble finding one long enough, Chris Millott makes Garrocha poles and sells them (he can be contacted below), or even a bamboo pole will suffice, they are light weight but the longest are only 2.4 mtrs.

On Facebook look up Garrocha Downunder and there are a few videos that are useful for training or if you Google 'Garrocha Riding' there are a host of links to various YouTube videos too.



Steve Halfpenny and Gandalf about to do a Garrocha demo at Equitana 2014



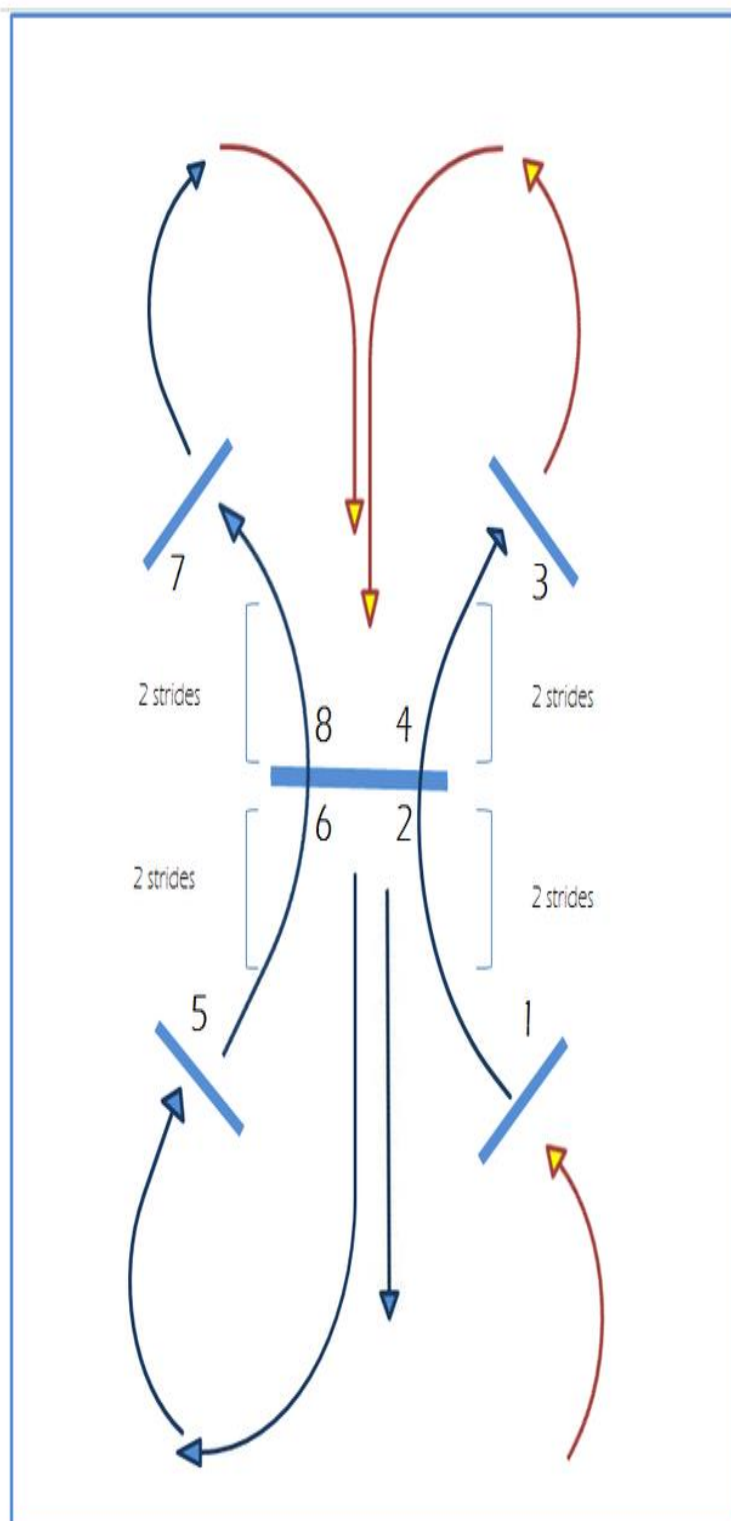
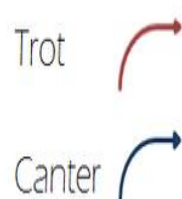
Steve and Manolo Mendez after their demo, Equitana 2014

TRAINING OVER POLES

Each month I will be printing out a pole exercise to help with your training and to maybe give you a focus for the coming month.

This is the first exercise- looks like a lot of fun.

HEARTS AND SPADES - JUMPING EXERCISE

Hearts &
Spades

Jumps should initially be set low, even poles on the ground, to focus on balance and suppleness.

This series of trot and canter jumps, setup in a series of bending lines, is designed to bring your horse between your hand and leg while remaining balanced and responsive, so effort should be placed on rhythm and consistency.

As you become comfortable with the course, jumps can be raised and the distance of the 2 stride can be compressed or extended to further challenge your horse's adjustability.

LARGE ANIMAL RESCUE BOOK

Further to my article re the large animal rescue service Carola has advised that there is a fantastic book around to have in your car / float at all times to assist if ever anything SHOULD happen. Most CFA's, as I mentioned, are not specifically trained in LAR and that can have quite drastic consequences in itself!

This is the link to the website

<http://www.equineer.com/shop/>

People can order the book there and also lots of other equipment, if they want.

Calming Signals and Equine Gastric Ulcers - by Anna Blake

As someone who has been through the wringer with a horse with gastric ulcers, I thought this article may be of interest to some of you. - Helen

These are two of my favourite topics and I write about them often, but this post is about how calming signals and gastric ulcers can relate to each other.

First, are you informed about gastric ulcers? Its knowledge that every horse owner should have--no different from hoof care or dental floats) Horses have a rather delicate digestive system and when a certain series of events happens (it's different for each horse) gastric ulcers can form. Causes include trailering, unnatural feeding and management, training stress, or even a change in the herd. Worst of all, 50% of the diagnosed ulcers were found on horses *who showed no symptoms*. There's a proven link between ulcers and colic, and sadly, the conditions have too many things in common--like extreme pain. It's no surprise that ulcers are usually first recognized as a negative change in behaviour.

First we must resolve the ulcers. Get veterinary help and adjust to more natural ways of keeping horses: less stall time and more social time, free feeding to mimic grazing, and digestive supplements and ulcer remedies when needed.

Then evaluate the training side. If our handling of horses can cause ulcers, then is it possible that positive training could help alleviate them as well? When your horse struggles, does your presence support him or do you reprimand him for telling you he has a loss of confidence?

No one proudly admits that they train with violence and intimidation; we all use the same positive words, but our actions don't necessarily match. Too many horses that are fearful and stressed terribly are then forced to submit to training aids that cause panic, while their owners refer to them as *hot*. Or lazy or crazy or just bad.

This week a new client complained that after years of working with trainers, no one had ever taught her methods to actually communicate with her horses. How is that even possible?

Some of us treat our horses as if we're drill sergeants at a military school, barking out orders and demanding immediate obedience. Others behave like indulgent parents of a toddler crying in the candy aisle of the grocery store--whining, cajoling, and nagging endlessly. Both approaches are alike: they both attempt to dominate the horse into submission with no real understanding of the horse. Both ends of the continuum need to find a listening middle ground. (Yes, I think both methods, in the extreme, are equally cruel. Killing a horse with kindness is just as crazy-making to a horse as badly used whips and spurs.)

Can we just be real? Horses are honest for the most part and giving the best answer they know. Can we lay down our egos long enough to connect with our horses; instead of barking out a lecture, can we just have a conversation? Can we give them a chance to volunteer? Maybe we would get more respect if we offered some trust first.

Mutual peace and partnership depends on our understanding of horse's [calming signals](#). Calming signals are the way horses (and dogs, the term coined by Turid Rugaas, refers to both species) communicate. Most of us know what ears pinned flat means, but just like us, horses have plenty of feelings before they reach anger.

The horse in the photo is looking away. She isn't bored or distracted; she's telling me that she needs a moment. That I'm being a bit loud in my body language and I don't need to push since she isn't resisting. She's giving me a cue to go slower; be more polite. Is civil herd behaviour too much to ask?

When your horse turns his head away, do you pull it back? That can be the same as answering his request for peace by starting a fight. Remind yourself, for the millionth time, that horses have much keener senses than we do, that they react 7 times faster than we do. What we mistake for dullness is actually them asking us to use our indoor voice and if we want better relationship with our horses, we need to pick up our game.

We must improve our listening skills because our horse's well-being and health are at stake. We may not be able to end the natural causes for ulcers, but we can mitigate them. We can train relaxation and confidence--and be rewarded with a smooth canter depart as a by-product. Too many of us train for result and not relationship.

Whether his physical discomfort is from extreme weather changes or moving to a new barn or trailering to a show, it's your job to help him. And as the supposedly evolved species, it's up to us to be worthy--not the other way around. Leadership and confidence requires us offering to listen and then negotiating the best answer for everyone. If you want to be a dictator you'll limit yourself to fighting and never get to dance; you'll never get his best ride.

If you do aspire to better communication, it can be a slow process to wait and allow horses to volunteer, especially if it hasn't been encouraged in the past.

Want to know a secret shortcut; a way to listen to calming signals even if you aren't sure what your horse's resistance is saying? The secret is that you don't have to know each intellectual detail; you don't have to define each signal in human terms to acknowledge it. Just slow down, judge less, and keep an open mind. Then take the advice of Maestro Nuno Oliveira, *"Ask often, be content with little, and reward greatly."*

And when your horse finally offers you his full heart, when you finally gifted with his honest trust and confidence at last, know that he benefits physically, mentally, and emotionally, even more than you. The other word for that is leadership.

Anna Blake, Infinity Farm. (annablakeblog.com)

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