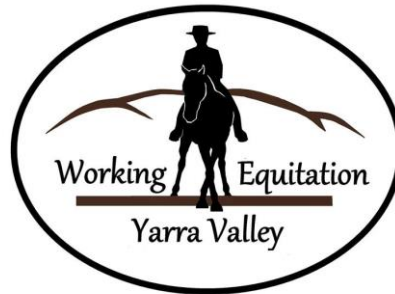


JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER



PRESIDENTS PONDERINGS

A belated Happy New Year to all members and their families.

Not much to report this month, all very quiet on the home front. With Christmas and the New Year over, and soon the school holidays as well, life may 'get back to normal' for some!

A few members have been on some trail rides together and we are all looking forward to starting back with our WE rally days in February. Feb will be the first of our new rally formats, hoping that all riders enjoy the different set-up. Please let Susie or a committee member know of your thoughts on how it went, things that may not/could have been done differently, enjoyed/didn't enjoy it etc.

Please note that the two February rallies will be at Gruyere then we will be back at Melrose Farm for the autumn. If you haven't already booked in don't delay – Lisa is waiting for your booking.

Welcome to our newest members:- Andrea Rourke from Mooroolbark and Anita Begg from Kilsyth.

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.

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

CLUB TRIP TO BANYANDAH

Anna Gust has organised a wonderful trip away for you and your horse. It has been planned for Friday 22nd of April 2016- Monday 25th, if you would care to come and join in the fun. Monday the 25th is Anzac day and a public holiday. You could come for 2, 3 or 4 nights.

You may recall some information about Banyandah in one of the newsletters from 2015. If you don't remember this then have a good look at the website.

<http://www.banyandahnaturally.com.au/home.html>. It is a wonderful 350 acre property on the banks of the Mighty Murray River. There are magnificent river red gums, safe trails along the river to ride on. There are amazing horse facilities, including arenas, round yards, an extensive outdoor horse playground and horse swimming beach on the river. It is very reasonably priced and is designed specifically for horse clinics and relaxing time away with your horse.

ACCOMMODATION Have a look at this on the website

There is space for 8 people to stay in the light house which is very luxurious, has a fully equipped kitchen, 2 bathrooms and wood fire. Doona's and pillows are provided but bring your own sheets. Don't wait too long or you might miss one of these beds. For those who would prefer or who miss out on staying in the light house, you can camp and use the cattleman's hut which has kitchen facilities, toilet and showers and is very nice too.

The Light House overnight per bed – your linen \$50
surcharge – our linen \$20

The Cattleman's Hut camp overnight \$15

Horses facility fee & horse day yard per day \$15

You can also bring your family if you are all happy to camp. The lighthouse will be reserved for riding members.

Please leave dogs at home.

In order to secure your booking you can pay for your accommodation and yard hire via direct transfer into the WEYV account. Don't forget to say that this deposit is for the Banyandah trip when you pay and put in your reference.

Bendigo Bank, Woori Yallock

BSB: 633000

Account No: 151477684

Account Name: Working Equitation Yarra Valley Inc.

You will need to email Anna at annagust37@hotmail.com

to let her know which nights you are planning to stay and whether you're booking in to the light house or camping.

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.

A Working Equitation Training Pattern

By Susie Walker

(photos for this article are at the end)

Riding with a plan can make a huge difference to our training.

Or can it? This is an interesting question. There is a saying: *"If you don't know where you're going, you will never know if you get there."* I find this to be true, and to be useful. But I also find something else to be truer. That is, if we are too task oriented, or single minded, we can easily miss the important stuff!

Being focused on the end goal is wise but it comes at a cost if we lose sight of the journey and the process. That is, if we stop perceiving, sensing and knowing in an intuitive and empathic way, and instead become mechanically driven to "complete" to "achieve" or to "succeed". If we are not fully alert and aware of what we are doing to our horse, then frankly we are working in the opposite direction to success.

Riding creates a good opportunity for us to fall into this trap. When we are focused on "the task at hand" - whether it's riding a dressage test, navigating an obstacle course, or loading a horse into a float - if we are not tuned in to the horse's needs and emotional reactions in these situations - we can miss the critical parts, and make life harder for both. Of course experience and knowledge helps, but being observant and present is just as important.

I'm say this before I share a "training plan" with you, hoping you keep this in mind as you play with it, and also, because over the years I've seen this as one of the greatest problems in schooling horses. Riders fail to connect with the animal they want to communicate with - simply by not being attentive or sensitive in the moment. They mean well, and want to do the right thing - but don't take the time to explore how to really "be" with a horse.

The exercises here suit a range of skill and fitness levels. You may find that some are easy and others you get stuck on, and can only do them in walk, or maybe you'll find it easier to teach them in-hand first. It's not a prescription, play with the patterns and take time to work at the pace you and your horse are comfortable with, while at the same time testing your skills to gradually improve.

Training needs to be progressive and organic, remind yourself to keep checking for relaxation. Any tension in you or the horse will be counterproductive. If you feel the need for strength or force – then this is a sure sign that something is wrong. Either you or the horse are not understanding each other, or contracting against each other, or the horse is not capable of doing it at this time, or the horse does not have the right balance, position or contact to do the task. Be assured, if it doesn't feel nice, light and balanced, it's probably not right.

Sometimes I get lost in my own arena, well literally no, but also yes, if I don't know what to work on, or what the priority is for a particular day. But each time I come to this point, I know it's a good sign, as I'm about to learn something new.

When we know where we want to go, we make it easier for the horse to get there. How does this work in good practice without being too mechanical or task oriented? Specifically, its mindful sensing of the horse, riding is so much about 'feeling' with mind and body control, and precise visualisation of each movement prior to starting it.

To do this, we must be prepared to give the horse our full attention. We can't bring personal problems to the arena. Leave bad thoughts behind in the tack room, or don't ride. If you are having a bad day – never take it out on a horse. On days like this – go in the paddock with a few apples, a good book, a peaceful heart and just 'be' with your horse – calm, and free of expectations.

The mind is often neglected as a riding aid, but for the horse it's incredibly helpful if we know where we're going and focus our mind on that before we start using the reins or legs. The mind, the breath, the weight-balance of the seat, these are all coming into play before the hands and the legs. For example, if you think about turning right, and prepare your mind first - visualise a perfect turn, you already start to move your eyes, your head, change your balance, and shift your weight. If you can picture it – that's where you'll go. This is important in Working Equitation where there are many small turns and circles. This is what makes WE challenging, but also exciting.

It's often said the horse is a mirror, and I think so. Horses do sense our feelings, read our emotions, feel our fears, and frustrations. They also often tolerate our tactless demands, our conflicting aids, or careless whimsical desires – but only to a point. As a horse rider we can't forget that we are also horse trainers, as we *always* training the horse – good or bad – they are learning either to read and follow our actions, or ignore them. This is their journey along our shared path.

ARENA SET UP – TRAINING PATTERNS

The arena can be set up cheaply and easily with 1 barrel, 9 markers & 4 poles that lend themselves to many useful patterns and exercises for different skill levels at different gaits. I use standard 12' fencing poles, and plastic garden pots turned upside down.

The set-up in this layout is done in the following pattern (see photos):

- 4 poles in a square shape in the centre at X.
- Make the square larger than the poles so there are gaps at each corner big enough for a horse to walk through.
- Align 6 pots in a row, 3 metres in from each long side at V-E-S and P-B-R.

- Place 3 pots in a WE cloverleaf triangle (4 meters apart).
- 1 barrel (with a stick or Garrocha pole inside). On the centre line at D, between K & F.

There are many different ways to organize your arena for working Equitation. I've made a few suggestions for riding with this layout, there are many more and I'm sure you will discover some more as you play with different patterns.

WARM UP IN-HAND or LUNGING

This layout is useful for lunging and in-hand work. Experiment with different movements for different horses, depending on their needs.

- Keep it interesting for the horse. Rather than lunging in repetitive circles, lunge around each pot, and then go straight for a bit then lunge around another pot all the way down both long sides. This is a great test of shoulder control on the lunge, and it's a physical warm up for us too.
- Walking around the barrel, lunge a square, sending the horse's shoulders out around the markers at V & P.
- Or use the square. The 4 poles in a square are useful to stand in while the horse stays outside the poles, or outside the pots.
- Teach square halts on the ground over the pole
- Turns on the forehand inside and outside the poles
- Turns on the quarters in the corners
- Shoulder-in on the lunge outside the square
- Shoulder-in straddled over a pole or over all 4 poles
- Side pass in hand over a pole
- Rein-back parallel to a pole or around a corner

WARM UP RIDING

As there is a fair bit of turning involved here, it's important to warm up both on long straight lines and large circles in an active natural outline and in neck extension before starting tight turns.

- Going large in walk, trot and in canter in a soft contact with neck extension is good to relax the horse, and stretch the neck.
- Serpentine / circles in walk / trot. (inside flexion & long neck)
- Large Figure 8 in neck extension with a good inside neck bend
- Transitions within and between gaits on the short sides to test relaxation, balance and impulsion.
- Halt to trot or canter to test forward impulsion.
- Trot to halt to test balance and lightness. (Raising the poll for each downward transition)
- Halts in the square to be straight, balanced and light.
- Halts over the poles to test relaxation and lightness.
- Lengthen on long sides and shorten on short sides.
- Weave in and out of the pots – staying parallel to the long sides using balance and sideway neck reins to guide the shoulders

RIDING EXERCISES

There are many options with this layout, with or without the obstacles, these are a few I use, but you may like to design your own.

- Serpentine, circles and figure of eight around the obstacles.
- Zig Zag shoulder yields - on the long sides, riding straight in at one pot then send the shoulders back to the track before the next pot. This is very useful to help horses shift balance from one shoulder to another. Use neck reins and your weight to the direction you want to go. This corrects falling in / out.
- Neck extension on a circle around the barrel.
- Spiral out (neck reins) around the barrel
- Turns neck rein, in counter-bend, then back to the track straight in neck extension. This is another way to control the shoulders and balance.
- Transitions within the gaits: shorten and lengthen at each marker
- Small circles around the cloverleaf. Start in walk. Focus your eyes and balance to the marker. Go to the right first, then the middle marker, then the left, then exit where you came in. Aim for symmetrical circles.
- When training in trot, come back to walk as you change the bend. This prepares the horse for the next step of simple changes in canter. Only canter this pattern when the horse is established at simple changes of lead to either leg, on straight lines (ie. transitions: canter-walk-canter).
- Circle the barrel and collect the stick carefully to avoid touching the horse.
- Practice riding in walk with the stick in one hand and the reins in the other. Turn and face towards the barrel to help the horse turn smoothly. Have the inside rein shorter but keep most of the contact in the outside rein, and check your own balance and the line the horse is keeping in the circle. Spiral in, touch the barrel and spiral out.
- Take the stick down the long sides and touch the fence at 2-3 of the markers along the way (as if you were collecting a ring). Go back in a straight line past the barrel: drop the stick back in without changing rhythm.
- Try the last to points above in trot or canter.

I hope you have fun with these patterns.

Let me know how you go and what you invent for yourself!





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.

Listening with your seat *Anna Blake, Infinity Farm.*

How's your derrière? Is posterior a more delicate word than rump? Our culture has a lot of fanny chatter: too flat, too round, somehow sagging. Riders should care less about the superficial "do these white breeches make my butt look big?" and more about how does my backside feel...to the horse, obviously. We aspire to evolve our seat.

The dressage master, Nuno Oliveira had what some thought to be the most profound seat on a horse. He rode hunched over during the last years of his life and yet he became a better rider, his horses were also more relaxed and brilliant.

A profound seat... rather than controlling his horse, it unleashed brilliance. What an inspiration.

Gaining skill as a rider starts with acquiring some level of relaxation in the mind and then allowing that to spread through our body, eventually starting to put positive energy in the seat area to work toward a deeper seat.

A more sensitive seat is the crucial step between being a dominating rider and a perceptive, communicative rider.

We all start riding by wanting to make the horse do something, even if it's only walking away from the herd. We have a picture in our heads and we go to work--pushing, pulling, kicking. Maybe you think you are a quiet rider, whose hands don't jerk but instead you just pull, adding a pound of pressure as your horse does, until it's a full-out tug-o-war. Even if your pressure is passive aggressive, it's still adversarial. About then emotions get involved and things get worse. We are so focused on having our way that we don't listen. That's what domination is.

Listening to a horse, to be literal, does not involve your ears. Yes, they may snort or blow, but the larger area (no pun intended) of communication is always through the part of us most connected to the horse; our seat positions us spine to spine with the horse, nervous system to nervous system. In order to evolve a deeper, more aware seat while in the saddle, a rider must quiet the mental chatter, relax the actual gluteal muscles, and become internally aware of how the horse physically feels between our legs.

Put delicately, riding is the process of getting our brains out of our heads and into our behinds. It means less brain-thinking, even if it's about hand position and cuing transitions. We are searching for feel, for finesse, and that's a sensual awareness, not an intellectual opinion.

A mentally dominating rider uses a horse like a dirt bike, revving the engine and slamming the chassis to and fro attempting to meet a requirement. The rider is talking with herself about how to make the horse do something and leaving the most important thing out--the horse. Whether the rider is angry or just quietly frustrated, it's still a fight because it starts with two sides, each alone and distanced. It's like trying to learn the tango by counting the beat and looking down watching your tense, reluctant feet. When the dance happens through mental math, there is no fluidity. No romance.

Dressage riders can appear to have a glazed look sometimes. While a jumper is turning and looking for the next jump, a dressage rider seems almost in a trance of mental stillness, even as the horse performing shoulder-in or flying changes. They glide along effortlessly with no

resistance. The secret is that the more intense the work gets, the smaller the cues become, so the horse and rider seem to move as one.

Disclaimer: Moving as one sounds mystical, but it isn't. It's a give and take of perception between partners. It isn't about right or wrong, but rather a physical awareness of a small tension in the neck, or a slight lean of a shoulder. It could be either the horse or the rider, but when noticed so early, the partner's response can be a small, subtle suggestion--peaceful and rhythmic. In other words, it looks like a dance. Maybe when our lumbering and hyperactive brain gets out of the way, our soul can come forward to elevate the connection. You know this is right because horses don't inspire our minds, but our hearts. It's where they live and we have to make our way there to be a partner.

Remember, the only means horses have of communicating with us is through their bodies. We are too quick to judge their actions negatively. We correct them when they tell us how they feel. Their feelings are not any more open to debate than ours are. They are eloquent and honest, but our seats must learn to listen and become more responsive. That desire for an enlightened kind of soulmate connection with a horse is never a mental transaction. It's beyond pretence and words, deep in our spines, where truth and spirit are all that matters.

A deep seat means that physically we aren't stiffly perched, but rather relaxed and plugged in, responding fluidly to our horse. Beyond that, deep also means thinking less and feeling more. It's being introspective, discerning, esoteric, and if you rest in that silence long enough, even profound.

My first trainer, who absolutely hated dressage, always told me to "take a deep seat and a faraway look." It's cowboy talk for the same thing.

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

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.

OUR SPONSOR

Woori Yallock
& District
Community Bank®
Branch



OUR SUPPORTERS



Eastside Mitsubishi
"We're on your side at Eastside"

303 Whitehorse Rd, Nunawading, Vic, 3131

Ph: (03) 9878 7333 - Fax: (03) 9878 6149

**Noysworks**

Unit 1/114 Warren Road,
Mordialloc,
Vic 3195

T: 03 9588 1230

F: 03 9588 0408

M: 0418 988 600

E: peter@noysworks.com

**17 Lawler Lane**

Coldstream 3770

PH: 03 9739 1669

www.horseinthebox.com.au



Delivering a healthy future

www.organicorigins.com.au

Ranger Floats

<http://www.rangerstockfloats.com.au/>

**Horseland Lilydale**

476 Maroondah Hwy, Lilydale, Vic 3140

Tel 03 9739 6822, Fax 03 9739 6823



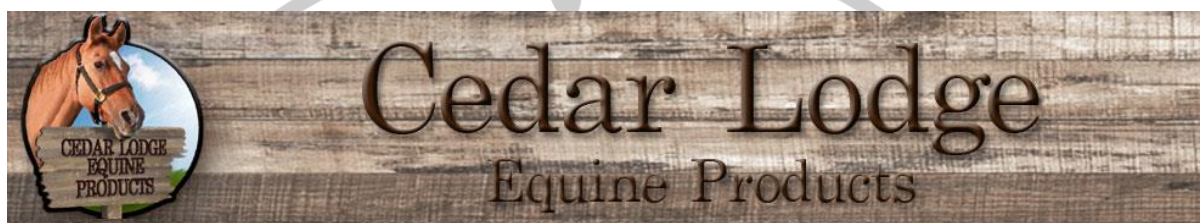
"HANDFORGED WROUGHT-IRON"

Factory 3/ 39 Power Road,

Bayswater

Gary Butters 0402 657 793

For all structural steel/aluminium welding and quality handcrafted iron products.



Working Equitation
Yarra Valley

CLUB POSTAL ADDRESS

:- PO Box 394 Panton Hill 3759

WEBSITE www.workingequitationyarravalley.org

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President – Helen Sharp helenjsharp@bigpond.com

Vice President - Vacant

Newsletter – Helen Sharp helenjsharp@bigpond.com

M'ship Secretary – Susie Walker walker.susieg@gmail.com

Treasurer – Kerry Pitcher kerry.pitcher@gmail.com

Rallies – Lisa Saunders lisaandian@bigpond.com.au

Instructors & Venues – Anna Gust annagust37@hotmail.com

Uniforms – Julia Colman colmanj@southernphone.com.au

Obstacles - Julia Colman

Fundraising – Fay Diamantakis fdiamantakis@optusnet.com.au

Risk M'ment – Fay Diamantakis

Fundraising – Carola Sahler carolasahler@optusnet.com.au

Minutes Secretary – Carola Sahler

Events – Lindy Whitfort lindy.whitfort@bigpond.com

Website Consultant – Denise McKay Denisemckay76@hotmail.com

General Committee – Debrah Clow alfranzpark@bigpond.com

General Admin - Andrew Feher feher.andrew@gmail.com

