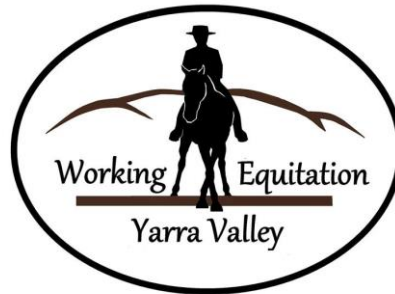


APRIL 2016 NEWSLETTER



PRESIDENTS PONDERINGS

Apologies for the lateness of this newsletter. I have just come back from 2 weeks annual leave and now I'm trying to catch up on general computer stuff – of all sorts!

Not much of real interest to report this month. The March rally on the Wednesday at Melrose was damp, I think the 1st lesson copped most of the rain and by the time Anna and I rode at 11am it was a fine but annoying drizzle. It remained of a similar nature throughout the rest of the day. It was a good opportunity to use the rain in a positive training way, ie for Dale and I our shoulder-in right can be more tedious than the left but when the rain is coming in towards your face – wow! How easy was that?

Quite a few cancellations which meant that Susie could go home early and get dry and warmed up! Thanks Susie for standing out in the weather for us, her coats were sodden by the time she left.

A big warm WEVY welcome to Jacqueline Buchanan this month.

NEW RALLY FORMAT

At the last committee meeting there was a discussion regarding grouping levels of riders and/or time preference. Sometimes the

schedule will not accommodate a riders preferred time with the level of that particular rider. This will happen if the times and levels are changed each month to share the early/late lesson times around.

Levels will take priority in all lessons.

- eg. if you can't ride at the time for your level then you will need to accommodate to the level that meets the time you can ride. While instructors will do their best to meet your needs also - please remember that for safety, the levels must take priority.

Example - If you are level 3/2 and that level is offered at 8.30am but you cannot ride till 2.30pm (the time slot for Level 5/4) then you can expect that the 2.30 lesson will be targeted at Level 5/4 activities, but where possible will also try to accommodate your specific needs.

4 riders at the same level - 2 hour lesson
3 riders at the same level - 1 & half hour
2 riders at the same level - 1 hour lesson
2 horses in hand - 1 hour lesson
1 horse/rider private lesson - 30 mins

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.

RALLY DUTY ROSTER

Please note that the original rally date in May was for Sunday 8th but was changed due to it being Mothers Day.

It will now be **Saturday 7th**.

Rally Duty this Month: May

Wednesday 4th Rally: Val Mackintosh / Angela Lloyd

Saturday 7th Rally: Kaileen Pearson / Karen Gillings

Remember it is your responsibility to arrange a replacement if, for whatever reason, you are not able to do your rally duty day.

CLUB FUNDRAISER

Carola received a few order forms for the Tesselaar Bulb fundraiser but I think she was hoping for quite a few more.

I look forward to receiving my bulbs, then I just have to get enthused to plant them!

Thankyou to Carola for organising this for the club. Not sure how much was raised but I'll report that next month.

I think Carola has another venture up her sleeve that may be particularly handy for those that enjoy a drop or two of the old vino! Details when they are at hand.

SKILL AT ARMS CLINIC

Thought I would leave this notice in for this month in case Anna is still looking for more participants. It promises to be a clinic with a bit of a difference and sounds like a lot of fun.

Contact Anna for more details.

This is a private clinic organised by Anna Gust and is not directly related to the club.

All members and friends are welcome to attend.

I have a few spots available for a private clinic at Gruyere in the Yarra Valley. I am taking a maximum of 8 people. I have not advertised yet but it is already half full. It will be first in best dressed. The cost for a full day is \$115 which is inclusive of venue hire.

Auditing spaces are limited but for those who are interested it will cost \$20 for the day.

If you are unfamiliar with skill at arms it has some similarities to working equitation. You ride your horse with a series of obstacles and as you progress in skill you ride one handed.

Here is a YouTube video giving you a sample. We will not be riding at the same level as the video and exercises will be tailored to the level of the riders who attend. Adaptions will be made to how obstacles are performed (e.g. no chopping cabbages in half with sharp swords)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm2p60w2-sY>

Date: May 21st

Time: 9 am start- All day

Our instructor for the day is experienced in skill at arms and is an international jousting competitor and winner. He currently lives and works at Kryal Castle just outside of Ballarat. He does regular demonstrations at the castle.

If you are interested in participating, first please contact Anna to ensure that there is a space for you at annagust37@hotmail.com

When your payment has been received your place is secured.

Deposit money into this account using your name as a reference

BSB 013313

Account 259009573

In order to keep the costs down we thought that it would be nice to all bring something for morning tea and lunch that we can share. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Here is some information on our instructor and Knight in shining armour.

<http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/country-living/all-in-a-knights-work-for-kryal-castles-phillip-leitch/news-story/4cbbb860a035c55c8103b264159689ad>

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



May -	Wednesday 4 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
	Saturday 7 th	Club rally	Melrose Farm
June -	Wednesday 1 st	Club rally	Gruyere
	Sunday 5 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

GIVING THE MOUTH.

Releasing, & relaxing the Jaw, Mobilising the Jaw, Tasting the bit, Giving to the bit, Accepting the Bit, and therefore relaxed "In the hand" ...

Why is this needed and what do these terms mean to you?

How do you know if your horse is accepting or avoiding the bit and the connection to your hands? Have you become the rider you dreamed of being?

I think it's fair to say that we all want to ride with ease and lightness. But for many it can be an ongoing and frustrating problem - one step forward, two steps back. And the resistances we find in the horse can create resistance and tension in us too. Why is it so difficult when horses are such sensitive animals?

Why does it take many riders so long to learn this? I think it's because many trainers, coaches and riders overlook the importance and simplicity of balance. The path to ease and lightness can be found on the path to balance. A horse in balance is light and easy to manoeuvre in any direction or pace. A horse in balance is a pleasure to ride.

A horse with imbalances - either laterally or longitudinally - is not a relaxed horse. It has tension in its mouth, and this tension creates a series of contractions and resistances through the jaw, poll, neck and spine, all the way to the tail. Lateral imbalance is felt in the contact. (eg. the horse grabs the bit on the side it falls into). Longitudinal imbalance is also felt in the contact, (the horse leans on the hand, or hides behind the hand, and behind the vertical)

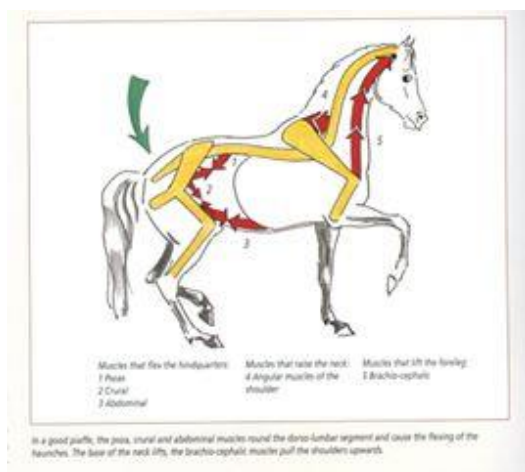
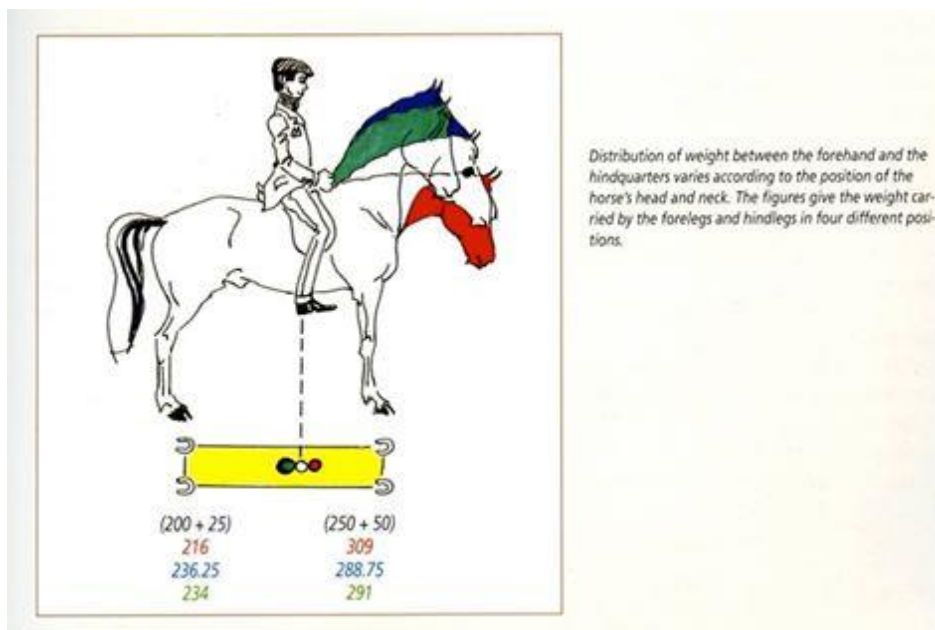
While most riders know that most horses are naturally asymmetrical - falling more to one shoulder than the other. Many don't know the time honoured remedies for helping the horse correct this and find symmetry in good balance.

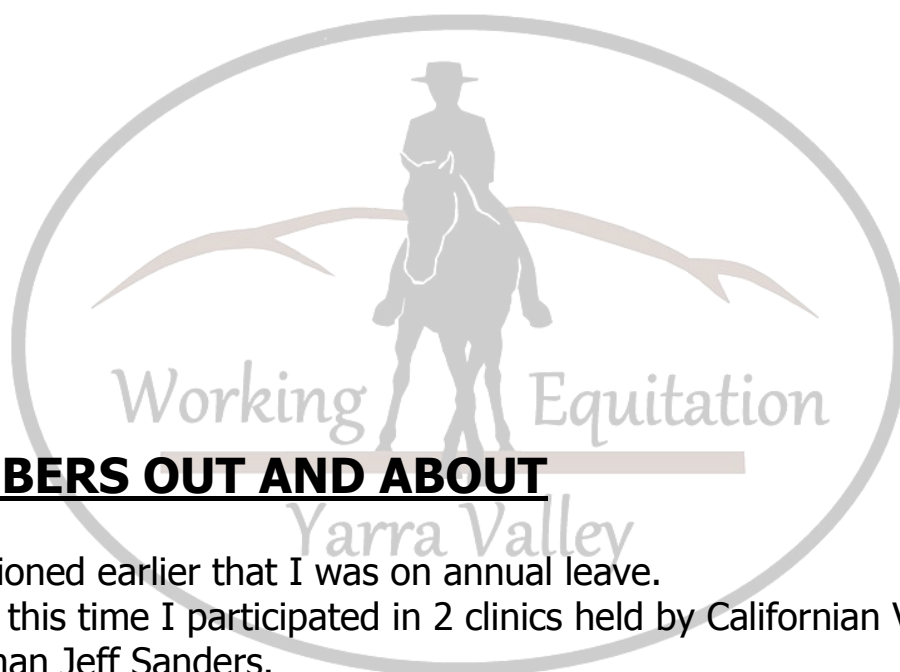
A horse that is not relaxed is not releasing and giving its jaw. Its weight is not balanced over its 4 legs, as there is an overburden of weight to either both forelegs (leaning on the hands / coming above the hands / hollowing the back) or one foreleg (leaning on one shoulder)

Solution: The hand is our main communication line to the mouth. And the mouth is the door to the whole horse. The key to this door is a relaxed and mobile jaw. Don't fool yourself into thinking the hands are not important, and that all you need is seat and legs! Yes, seat and legs are important. But you only need to try riding with no hands to test that one. If you think you are using just seat and legs to get your horse round - check that you are not just fixing and

blocking with your hands, expecting the horse to submit without dignity to a "hand held frame". If you have weight in your hands for longer than a few seconds - you may have fallen into the habit of carrying your horse in your hands. Similarly if you are see-sawing the reins left/right all the time - this is a terribly difficult thing for a horse to reconcile, and can create "heavy" over-bent horses

If you seek to release the jaw, relax the neck and chest muscles, maintain a steady and soft connection to the hand, encouraging the horse to raise the forehand and find good balance, you are on the path to achieving ease and lightness. Drawings by Philippe Karl from Philippe Karl's Book "Twisted Truths of Modern Dressage".





MEMBERS OUT AND ABOUT

I mentioned earlier that I was on annual leave.

During this time I participated in 2 clinics held by Californian Vaquero horseman Jeff Sanders.

The 1st one was at Monegeetta, just south of Lancefield, the 2nd clinic was at Steve Halfpenny's place in Blanchetown, SA.

Jeff has an amazing wealth of knowledge, both about the Vaquero style of horsemanship and of horses in general. He has a special interest in biomechanics and uses this to bring the best out of all horses and riders.

A few club members joined me in Monegeetta to watch for a few days.

Fay, Deb and Sue enjoyed their time up there immensely (as I enjoyed their company too) so thanks girls for making the trip up. They said they got a lot out of watching Jeff as it all blends in with what we do at WEYV.



Sue, Paul, Helen, Deb and Fay



Jeff Sanders, Helen and Dale, and Fay

Paul and I then drove to SA to do another 5 days with Jeff, staying with Steve Halfpenny who was hosting Jeff at Blanchetown. (Steve is a good friend and mentor who I met when I lived in SA).

This was a similar clinic but with friends that I've known for years so it was great to be able to catch up with them and see the progress in them and their horses from previous clinics.

The 5th day was a working cow day so we loaded the horses into the floats and drove to another friend's place. He has about 40 head of cattle that he kindly offered to us for training purposes.

First job of the day was to go and actually find them! So after a short debriefing 8 of us headed off into 100's of acres of paddocks. It was fabulous to be able to ride in such a big wide open space. This was all about tactics, not hooning or scaring the cattle but bringing them in quietly by using brains and knowhow (of which Jeff is a master).

Once in the smaller paddock we gradually, over the course of the day, worked them and honed in on the skills that Jeff had been teaching us throughout the clinic. Some of the cattle were going to market so had to be cut out, the rest were returning to the paddock, the bulls were staying in!

Jeff and Steve also gave us a roping demo, finishing by castrating and ear tagging one of the young boy calves. Then a few of us took the rest of the herd back out to pasture. They knew where they were going so it wasn't hard to just have the gates open and follow them through.

It was a wonderful experience. Dale was fabulous, his first time on cattle and apart from wanting to eat one of them (a big no no!) he took to it

like a duck to water. Though he did get a bit antsy when the bull was 'sharing the love' a little more than necessary!



Where are those cows?



In the thick of it all! With Steve Halfpenny



Waiting for the action to start



3 amigos after a hard day

CLUB TRIP TO BANYANDAH

This club outing to Banyandah is on as I write this.
Hoping to get the nitty gritty on their trip for next month.

The Schedule of Growth Plate Conversion to Bone (Carola thought this may be of interest to members)

The process of growth plates converting to bone goes from the bottom of the animal up.

The growth plate at the top of the coffin bone, the most distal bone of the limb, is fused at birth. This means it gets no taller after birth but

does get larger around, through another mechanism. After that the growth plates fuse as follows:

Short pastern - top and bottom between birth and 6 months.

Long pastern - top and bottom between 6 months and one year.

Cannon bone - top and bottom between 8 months and 1.5 years

Small bones of the knee - top and bottom of each, between 1.5 and 2.5 years

Bottom of radius-ulna - between 2 and 2.5 years

Weight-bearing portion of glenoid notch at top of radius - between 2.5 and 3 years

Humerus - top and bottom, between 3 and 3.5 years

Scapula - glenoid or bottom (weight-bearing) portion – between 3.5 and 4 years

Hind limb - lower portions same as forelimb

Hock - this joint is "late" for as low down as it is; growth plates on the tibial and fibular tarsals don't fuse until the animal is four (so the hocks are a known "weak point" - even the 18th-century literature warns against driving young horses in plow or other deep or sticky footing, or jumping them up into a heavy load, for danger of spraining their hocks).

Tibia - top and bottom, between 3 and 3.5 years

Femur - bottom, between 3 and 3.5 years; neck, between 2.5 and 3 years; major and 3rd trochanters, between 2.5 and 3 years

Pelvis - growth plates on the points of hip, peak of croup (tubera sacrale), and points of buttock (tuber ischii), between 3 and 4 years.

The vertebral column is last. A normal horse has 32 vertebrae between the back of the skull and the root of the dock, and there are several growth plates on each one, the most important of which is the one capping the centrum. These do not fuse until the horse is at least 5 1/2 years old. The taller the horse and the longer its neck, the later the last fusions will occur. Fusions in male horses generally take up to an additional 6 months.

The Significance of Too Much Too Soon.

What will happen if you put a young horse to riding much too early?

Two important things - and probably not what you're thinking of. What is very unlikely to happen is that you'll damage the growth plates in his

legs. At the worst, there may be some crushing of the cartilages, but the number of cases of deformed limbs due to early use is tiny. Legs can be damaged much quicker and more seriously by over feeding a young horse.

Structural damage to the horse's back from early riding is somewhat easier to produce than structural damage to his legs. There are some bloodlines that are known to inherit weak deep inter vertebral ligament sheathing; these animals are especially prone to the early, sudden onset of "saddle back". However, individuals belonging to these bloodlines are by no means the only ones who may have their back "slip" and that's because, as mentioned above, the stress of weight bearing on the back passes parallel to its growth plates as well as parallel to the inter vertebral joints. However, the frequency of slipped backs in horses under 6 years old is also very low.

When trying to explain the justification and common sense of waiting until at least 3 years of age to introduce a horse to light work under saddle and incrementally increasing that workload over the next year to a competitive/ performance level by age four, I am almost always inevitably confronted with an impatient disapproving owners condescending response in notifying me that race horses have been started early for centuries and are already often competing at age two.

Why then is it such a big deal to start my trail/pleasure horse before three? The answer to that is simply; because most of us would like our trail/pleasure horses to live and prosper longer than race horses do. In the U.S., around 5,000 horses leave racing every year, the same numbers who enter it. A recent study showed that for every 22 races, at least one horse suffers an injury severe enough to prevent him or her from finishing a race.

Race horses frequently suffer injuries because they are forced to train and race before their skeletal system has finished growing.

Also, the problems associated with jumping too young & early breaking don't manifest themselves until later in life. A lot of people have arthritic 15-year-old horses and think, "oh, he's old, that's normal for a 15-year-old"... but if you look back, it's really his hard use as a youngster that did it to him. Studies have shown this again and again- the older a horse was when broken (up to age 5, after that risk basically stops increasing), the longer it stays sound for, the longer it competes for, and the longer

it lives. Of course the risk of breaking a 4-year old is very, very slightly increased, risk of a 3-year old is very slightly increased, risk of a 2-year old is highly increased, and if you're breaking a one-year-old you might as well save yourself some time and whack its legs with a crowbar!

All this information is even more prevalent within certain breed groups! It has been found that some DRAFT breeds have not fully developed by age 6! And that jumping a horse before it is fully developed is just asking for early onset of things like arthritis.

IN SUMMARY :

The more we know, the more we realise waiting for the horse's bones to mature just makes good common sense! Believe it or not.....if you study the history of horse training...we used to know this! Back before the advent of the automobile and horses were needed to be kept sound and working longer, this all was common knowledge. But we lost a bit of wisdom somewhere along the line there that we need to regain and many of us in the natural horsemanship training field (which is dedicated to healthy equine/owner education) are working to get people better informed in this regard. It never hurts to wait longer before riding, but it can hurt if done too early, and that's the bottom line.

If you start a horse off well, respecting what nature has in place already in the horse, you have a better chance of riding that horse, soundly, well into their 20's and 30's even.

So...as we say in natural horsemanship: the long way is the short way. The time you take to get it right, patiently, the far more it will serve well for your horse, and in the end: you.

Some of this is my own writing and bits are from various VET sites . Jenya Dillon (from CCSHA)

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.

MEMBERS CLASSIFIEDS

If members have anything that you would like to sell or advertise please let the editor know and I can arrange to put it in the newsletter for you.

FOR SALE



Zaldi 18 inch Grand Prix 2000 All Purpose Saddle.
Fully mounted, includes stirrup leathers and irons
Good used condition. Does not fit my young horse. \$200
Debrah Clow. Ph.0458 651 957

WANTED

Carola is looking for her next equine partner. If you know of a suitable horse please let her know.

For lease or lease with option to buy would be great, but if THE ONE comes along, I'll consider purchasing straight out.

I am an experienced horse woman and intermediate rider - just not as fit and 'gung-ho' as I used to be in my teens and twenties. I am also an RDA coach.

My current horsey mate has some soundness issues which unfortunately requires him to be spelled for the rest of the year and then I still don't know if he'll be sound. So I'm looking for a new riding partner who is ready to go.

I'm interested in dressage (School of Lightness - Legereté, Philip Karl philosophy), Working Equitation, trail and beach rides, groundwork and play and just hanging out.

Looking for a real partner. My philosophy is love, respect and kind assertiveness. The welfare of the horse is always my first concern. The horse I'm looking for needs to be safe, can be forward but absolutely no buck, bolt etc. And sound. I've had too much bad luck with unsound horses in the last year or so. Looking for 15.2hh plus (must be chunky at that height), 6-13 yrs. I like Clydies, Percherons, etc and their Xxs, Cobs, etc. No TB OTT or STB.

If you think you might have something that fits the bill, I'd love to hear from you. My mob is 0400584467. Cheers Carola

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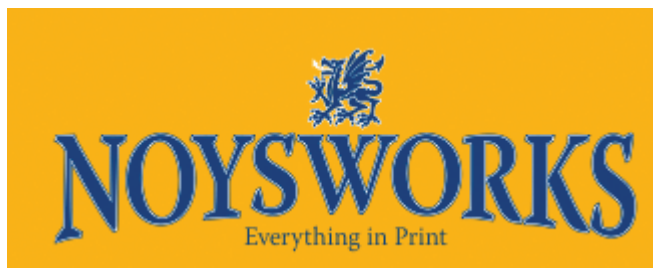


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