

A Place in Italy

Some people have all the luck! In May this year, Christian Schwetz was invited to stay at an Italian castle. The real wonder is that he returned to tell us about it.

Half past May found me rather improbably in a small castle in Lazio, in an eighteenth-century painted salon, dining with Count Antonio Mancini Caterini and doing my best to impress him that I should be coming to teach landscape photography there next year. All was cordial and serene until we got onto the subject of hunting. As we know, Italians like nothing better than to blast away at any unfortunate animal no matter how small or insignificant. However, the subject of foxhunting produced an explosion of enthusiastic delight.

I spent the next few hours, increasingly lubricated, waxing lyrical on my experiences and the traditions and eccentricities of hunting. There is only one hunt in Italy, and it's very exclusive. Titles higher than Count are a requirement of entry. The proposed first day of photography was scrubbed as Antonello, as the Count now urged me to address him, decided that we simply must go riding in the morning.

Suddenly, my position was beginning to appear rather more interesting – and secure.



May is already hot in Lazio, so after breakfast by one of the 10 arenas, I was mounted on Moorella, a 16.2hh, dark bay aremara/Thoroughbred mare. Antonello took his gorgeous 'estphalian... and his groom Elvis, named for his ability to iake. The country was superb. Green rolling hills and ancient ak forest much like our beloved Bucks, except beautifully arm. Trots and canters through barrelled forest paths opened endless vistas of green pasture and distant peaks. After a 10-hour hack, we came to a restaurant beside a secluded lake. ith the horses in the corral, and after brief negotiations with e squiffy patron, we set out our picnic and tucked into the cal delicacies, all washed down with the local red.

Reclining in the grass and considering the return journey, I realised that there was something missing from our ride thus far. Something without which no ride in the English countryside would be complete. Roadwork! In over two hours we had only crossed two roads. Rather indignant, I demanded of Antonello how such unbridled pleasure could be allowed.

Apparently its normal there. In Italy the right to roam is taken seriously. One can ride round the perimeters of most fields, which are, in any case, seldom gated. Perhaps this reflects a more communal idea of land ownership or maybe we were merely following in the footsteps of the brigands. For this area is the border between Lazio and Tuscany. The former was a papal possession and the latter, republican. In the vacuum between, the brigands flourished. Much of our journey was along the 'Brigands' Way'. Such is the area at our disposal here that we could have gone for five days in a series of circular rides, always ending up back at the castle.

A welcome sight by late afternoon, we spied the castle through the trees. After a shower and a rest, supper was served on a long table in the cavernous, open-fronted cantina. More wine was supplied by Antonello and more hunting stories by me.

The morning after, I decided that it really was time for some work and captured some images for my website of equestrian portraiture, which is now up at www.4legsgood-photographic.com (15% donation to the OBH Club from all commissions received through the hunt). If anyone would like to find out more about a riding holiday at the castle, please feel free to contact me on 07808 721054 or at farenheight451@ntlworld.com.



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Pony Club Focus

THE OLD BERKELEY HUNT (NORTH) PONY CLUB

Georgie Clark, joint DC with Rosie Thornton, reveals a thriving, active club



Some of my most vivid and fond memories of my time as a Pony Club member were cubbing with the the Old Berkeley Hunt under the watchful and strict eye of Alan Wootton – woe betide any of us ‘out of control’ Pony Club kids who dared to overtake him!

Soon after, I joined the Old Berkeley Hunt North branch (the Chilterns branch was formed in 1968 to take in members from the Hemel/Chesham/Amersham borders). As I was then living in Bovingdon, I transferred and had many happy years with the OBH Chilterns under the DCship of Nene Darvell, who always followed the field in her Rover car accompanied by her father and two Sheltie dogs. Jim Randall contributed greatly to the branch and I remember his excellent instruction and guidance at many rallies. However, little did I know then that I would one day be involved in the running of the OBH North and, much less, married to an ex-member!

The OBH North was formed in 1957 and takes in the Kings Langley and Watford areas. At present the membership is 176; 27 of those being boys, ages range from 4–22 years. I don’t wish to sound biased but we love having a good number of boys in the branch as they are usually very natural riders and offer a good balance amongst the groups and teams and they too enjoy the boy/girl ratio! We like to feel we are an all-ability branch and therefore offer training in a wide

range of disciplines: show jumping, dressage, cross country, hound exercise, mounted games, tetrathlon, polocross, riding and road safety, quiz training, stable management talks and a new experience of le Trec. All training and activities in the holidays and evenings only happen thanks to the fantastic committee and parents we have, who manage to offer incredible support both physical and ‘emotional’ even though most are work.

We are very fortunate to have the use of Great Westwood Equestrian Park for our main training ground which is so easily accessible from the M25. Here we also hold



our Open Eventing day and Area Mounted Games and Tetrathlon competitions. For our annual daily camp (usually 80 children) we have a lovely secure site on a farm owned by an ex-member in Chipperfield. Our Open Summer show is held in Bovingdon. The senior group have a four-day residential camp at outside equestrian establishments. The visiting instructors come from a number of competitive backgrounds and are all well qualified and practised in teaching at Pony Club rallies. Our older members are involved in teaching and assisting younger groups and as a Junior Committee organise and run a few rallies where they raise money for their chosen charity. As we have a large number of under-12 members, we have formed ‘The

Thelwells’ group, who wear their own T-shirt designed by a young member, and we hold special Thelwell rallies just for them.

Every summer, teams are entered in the three Area levels of showjumping, eventing and dressage. Teams at junior and senior level compete at Area qualifiers at Mounted Games and Tetrathlon. This year, we have had considerable success, with two of our members qualifying for the championships in intermediate showjumping and dressage, and our intermediate boys Tetrathlon team won the Mitsubishi Motors National Championships at Hartpury College in August.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the OBH North branch, whether it be teaching, judging, competing, transporting members, scoring and admin work, first aid or just being there with a member, because without you there would be no Branch and nothing for Rosie Thornton (Joint DC) or me to do in the holidays and weekends!

TOP, L-R: The winning boys intermediate tetrathlon team, August ‘07: Oliver Bloom, Tom Clark and Tom Shephard
CENTRE: Some of our members and adult escorts out with the VAGSBH
BOTTOM: Summer Camp this year – the St. Trinians Musical Ride!



OBH (HUGHENDEN) DO THEMSELVES PROUD

Melanie Biswas, reports on the rigours and joys of Pony Club Summer Camp

Nothing kicks off the summer holidays better than junior camp week. Preparations start many weeks before, when the realisation hits that your child’s unfit, fat, hairy pony, blissfully unaware gorging in the field, must be transformed into a lithe, pristine well-oiled machine, capable of enduring the week’s activities and the strict morning turnout inspection from our PC instructors.

Thankfully, although standards are extremely high, the atmosphere at OBH Hughenden junior camp is wonderfully friendly and relaxed. The setting at Monkton in Speen is idyllic. John and Gillian Goodall have been so generous in allowing us to use their beautiful farm again this year and we were blessed with sunshine.

A record thirty-two children attended camp this year with an unprecedented number of boys. Monkton was able to cope with the onslaught perfectly with groups divided between XC, manège, gymkhana, show jumping and dressage arenas. While some members honed their riding skills, others joined their instructors for informative stable management sessions.

The cross-country course proved to be very popular. The children tackled every jump with great gusto, whoops of delight and a few yeehas. We did witness one loose pony galloping for home after ditching its rider, but to our great amusement was closely followed by one loose mummy who nearly out ran it! Hacking in Great Hampden woods with the kind permission of Lord Hollenden was an adventure for our young riders who picked wild raspberries and spotted wildlife during their ride.

The highlight of our week was a visit from the MFH, Huntsman and a selection of impressive and friendly hounds fresh from early morning exercise. As the Huntsman demonstrated the different commands on the horn the hounds responded perfectly on cue from the confines of the lorry. The ponies also reacted to the horn by growing in size from 12.2 hairies to 16hh hunters, breaking free from their tethers to join the hunt. The boys managed a few notes from the horn, despite it slowly filling with spittle. Strangely the parents declined the offer of a turn! The children were enthralled and bombarded us with requests to go hunting. Meanwhile we were busy mentally planning our horse’s fitness regimes. Should we get to ride them this summer, maybe we could have a go, too? A good PR exercise all round, I think.

The children became more ambitious during the week as their confidence grew and it was rewarding to see the improvement in their riding. Sadly it all came to an end too quickly, with a final day competition and prize giving. Two families won the turnout prize for the third year in a row; astonishingly one had two boys and a grey pony! We are planning sabotage for next year...

A comment made to our DC, Lindsey Abbott, gave her the best thanks she has ever had when a new member said he wished it wasn’t the last day. The junior members of the OBH (Hughenden) will undoubtedly have left camp with cherished memories, new friends and a more secure seat!



To join the Old Berkeley Hunt (North) Pony Club, call Georgie Clark on 01923 463333

From Skydiving to Dentistry, Leap by Dizzying Leap

Dorian Harwood, equine dentist, describes the tortuous path that has eventually led him to his most fulfilling career to date.

You probably think that equine dentists are very boring people on the career line somewhere between accountants and actuaries, don't you? Well, people who stare into horses' mouths all day, getting slobbered and trampled on by indignant equines not much taken with having the teeth closest to their (tiny) brains rasped with something that wouldn't look out of place in a medieval torture set, can't be the sharpest knives in the set, can they? Well, we defy you to call Dorian Harwood, rider, skydiver and equine dentist extraordinaire, *boring*. Anything but!

I left school aged 16 with not much. I was already involved with horses and riding for Kim Barzilay, who was starting her business as a dealer. I met Kim at my local riding school and at 14 became her milk boy as she was a milk woman doing a round for Express Dairies in Amersham. When I left school I became a groom which, what with riding for Kim as well, took the fun out of the horses so I gave it up after a year. After that, I worked for a building firm for seven years and learnt to do most things.

When I was 26, a good friend of mine whose wife was riding my Anglo Arab, asked me if I fancied doing a parachute jump for charity. Why not? And so started my next passion. In the meantime I sold the Arab to my friend's wife, which gave me free weekends for skydiving. In 1997, the club I was jumping at came up for sale so I and my new business partner bought it and ran

BELOW: Skydiving in California, 2007



ABOVE: Dorian being slobbered on by an very patient patient

it for two years before I sold my share and went to work at my current club. I have done over 2,000 jumps and now work as a cameraman at weekends filming people doing Tandem Skydives. I am also part of a four-way formation skydiving team, working as their cameraman. My camera work has been on the TV and I've been in the Guinness Book of Records for the British record of 16 skydivers jumping out a hot air balloon at the same time. I have been fortunate to get my trips paid for by the teams I work with and I've made three trips to California in the last three years. The first time I managed to get cut up on landing by another skydiver and ended up with a dislocated shoulder, a broken arm at the shoulder socket and two fractured vertebrae. I flew home early, saw an orthopaedic surgeon on the Tuesday and was back doing dentistry the following Tuesday... Ah, the joys of being self-employed! My physio told me I had the worst dislocation you could get and should forget about skydiving for at least a year and a half, but four months later I was jumping again.

Back in 1993 I found myself out of work after the recession hit the building trade, so the father of the girl I was dating asked if I could give him a hand in his workshop for a few weeks where he made road-marking equipment; I'm still there today.

My boss is a cool and laid-back guy who lets me work whatever hours I like as long as there is stock to sell, which fits in great while I build up my equine dentistry business.

And in 1994 I qualified as a fitness instructor. How did I get into dentistry? Well, after coming out of a longish relationship I had a bit of spare time on my hands... One afternoon I was walking my dogs and popped in to see my old friend Kim.

'Just had the horse dentist in,' she said. 'You'd make a good dentist.' I spent that evening searching the web and, in August 2003, I went to West Virginia for a course in Equine Dentistry.

Trying to get a start when I came back was hard: most people either already had a dentist or just didn't bother with them. Luckily, Kim had a never-ending supply of horses and was happy for me to practise on them free of charge.

The person who is responsible for my ongoing training and development is Ivan Stockdale, brother of showjumper Tim. I met Ivan at Shardeloes Farm a month before I went to the States and he tried to put me off dentistry but, on my return, the yard manager, a good friend, would let me know when Ivan was due and I'd make sure I was there. Finally, he gave me his tools and told me to show him what I could do. I must have done something right as he took my number and asked me to give him a hand next time.

From there, the long path to taking the British Equine Veterinary Exam started. To be a 'horse dentist' in the UK you don't actually need any formal training – anyone can start up – but now BEVA are trying to change the Veterinary act and make some procedures illegal for non-qualified persons to perform, hence the exam. To be able to take the exam, you have to first

do an Advanced course, and to be accepted for that course you need two references from two vets who have seen your work and are happy with it.

From there you put yourself forward for the final exam, for which you must have two references, 300 dental charts with 40 advanced procedures overseen and signed by a vet and to have spent at least five days working with a Dental Technician who has already passed the exam. BEVA will ask them if they think you are ready to sit the exam. It's a tough process. I've spent the last three years working with Ivan at every possible opportunity and in September 2006 I joined the ranks of the very few BEVA qualified Equine Dental Technicians.

The great thing about being an EDT is that I'm making a difference to every horse I get to see: even if the owners don't notice, the horses certainly will. I'm lucky to have done a wide variety of things in my life but the two I enjoy the most are the dentistry and the skydiving. I still ride regularly but just for fun. It took a while to find my vocation in life but it was worth it.

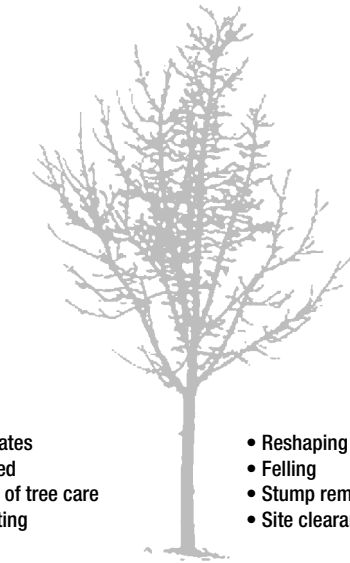
To contact Dorian, either to arrange a skydive or some tooth work for your horse, call him on 01494 816512 or 07967 662779, or you can e-mail him at dorzharwood@btinternet.com. He is BEVA/BVDA approved and a member of the BAEDT. To find out more about equine dentistry or look for an equine dentist in your area, visit <http://www.equinedentistry.org.uk>.



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ALL ABOUT WORMS

Adrian Farrington BVSc MRCVS from Baskerville, Horgan and Partners, talks about the hidden dangers of worms.



Every horse owner has heard about the danger of worms but without some knowledge it is hard to understand the full impact of a worm infestation. Intestinal worms can seriously damage your horse and in some circumstances can kill it – even if the burden is not life-threatening your horse may lose condition. Implementing an effective worm control programme is one of the greatest responsibilities of a horse owner.

Why should we worm our horses?

Worms are parasites living in the intestines of the horse. Mild infestations may just cause a loss of condition, whilst large burdens can cause a variety of more serious health problems including: diarrhoea, weight loss, and colic. In severe cases this ultimately proves fatal.

By implementing an effective worm control programme, you can help protect the health of your horse. With a little knowledge, it is an area of care that is easy to take control of.

How does my horse catch worms?

Your horse will get worms if it grazes pasture contaminated with eggs or larvae, passed in the droppings of infected horses and donkeys. Pastures can remain contaminated for up to 2-3 years once horses are removed, so even if your horse is turned out alone it could still be at risk. Horses most at risk from heavy worm infestations are young or older animals,

due to a weakened immune response, or those in grazing paddocks with a high stocking density.

The most common types are small and large redworm, large roundworm, tapeworms, and the insect larvae, bots. Of the parasites that affect your horse, the most common and harmful parasite today is the small redworm.

Worms Common to Foals

1. *Parascaris Equorum* (large roundworm): This is limited to foals and yearlings as older animals develop immunity. Larvae are eaten and then migrate through the liver and lungs, causing a nasal discharge or coughing in severe cases. Adults mature in the intestine.

Problem: May cause ill-thrift, colic or rupture of the guts as adults can measure 20cm plus and in large numbers can cause a blockage in the intestines.

Treatment: Most wormers are effective. Worm and groom mare prior to foaling, and clean the foaling area (the eggs are very hardy and also stick to the mare's coat). Foals between 2-9 months should be treated monthly.

2. *Strongyloides Westeri* (Fig 1): This is limited to foals under six months.

Problem: Large numbers may cause persistent diarrhoea.

Treatment: Ivermectin is effective (table 2).

Worms common to adult horses

1. *Strongyles* (large red worm):



Three major species affect the horse: *S. vulgaris*, *S. equinus*, and *S. edentatus*. Larvae are eaten and then migrate through internal organs for 6-10 months, before returning to the intestine.

Problem: Larval migration may cause blood vessel lesions (thrombosis, aneurysm or infarction), colic, liver damage, or peritonitis (infection of abdomen lining).

Treatment: Larvae are susceptible to ivermectin and moxidectin (see table 2).

2. *Cyathostomes* (small red worms, Fig. 2): These are the most common and frequently account for over 95% of the worm burden. Larvae are eaten and burrow into lining of the intestine, where they can encyst and 'hibernate' for the winter.

Problem: Mass reactivation and emergence of larvae in early spring causes significant damage to the intestinal lining and consequent diarrhoea.

Treatment: Adults are susceptible to most wormers, but encysted larvae are best killed by moxidectin (see table 2).

3. *Anoplocephala perfoliata* (tapeworms, Fig. 3): Segments containing eggs are passed in droppings. The eggs are then eaten by an intermediate host (a mite living in the environment). Larvae develop inside these mites which are eaten by horses as they feed. The larvae then develop into adult worms and attach to the horse's large intestine.

Problem: The greater the burden, the greater the risk of colic.

