



Newsletter - February 2008

Dear all,

Today is one of those days where hibernation seems like the only sensible option, such are the weather conditions outside as storms once again lash the country. So, work cancelled for the day, scribbling a newsletter seems like the perfect excuse to bury myself deep in the sofa next to a roaring fire !

Over the Christmas and the new year we have been working hard to plan some exciting things for 2008. This has included slaving over a hot computer updating and remodelling the website and putting the finishing touches to our brand new 1 year part time Diploma in Applied Equine Behaviour.

Diploma in Applied Equine Behaviour

As regular readers will know I have been working with expert horse behaviour colleagues Sue Gardner and Lynn Henry to develop these courses and make them available in colleges. That work is going well and we now have the all important college support to progress the complicated and rather long-winded accreditation process for a national award. This all takes time....more time than you can imagine, but we are on track and will keep you posted. One of the things that has become clear is that for these courses to run in colleges around the country we will need to train trainers to teach them. So we are very pleased to announce the launch of this Diploma, which covers the horsemanship content you will need if you are interested in becoming an AEB coach.

The course will develop your understanding of horse behaviour and how to apply it to training and is open to all so whether or not teaching is one of your goals, this Diploma provides an opportunity for intensive study of theory and practical skills. It has been verified by an independent educational advisor and is arranged in modules with regular assessments to help you stay on target.

There are 8 modules of 3 days each which will run here at Oakwood at 5 week intervals. The **prospectus** is now available on the Events and Courses page of the website (www.oakwoodhorsemanship.com) where you will find all the details of module content and dates etc. If you have any questions please get in touch.

BHS TREC

Another thing that has been keeping me out of mischief over recent weeks is the discovery of TREC competitions. I decided it was high time I 'walked my talk' and put my performance preparation to the test by entering some of the BHS TREC Winter Series competitions.

To any of you thinking of doing the same I can only say 'Go for it ...its great !'

There are 3 phases to the full TREC competitions, which run in the summer months. These consist of Orienteering, Obstacles and Control of Paces. The indoor winter competitions consist of the latter two phases only and feature all sorts of obstacles and challenges you might meet when riding out in the country, such as opening gates, walking across a bridge, going under low branches, jumping and lots of twisty turns and narrow spaces that test your control in a horse friendly, low adrenaline sort of way. Don't think for one minute that means it is not challenging ! We had our work cut out. The courses are very well designed and some of the tasks are tricky and the scoring is quite tactical, so there is a lot to think about.

Esteem and I have done 4 classes now and had success with a 4th, two 2nds and a 1st...not a bad start at all and proves that the training we do is particularly good preparation for this discipline. I have also tried the orienteering phase on a 20km 'fun' ride.... which quickly brought me back down to earth as I failed miserably to juggle map, compass, pen and paper whilst riding my horse at speed (mostly in the wrong direction !) Far from being deterred I am now inspired to improve at this phase and, preparation being everything, Sue and I are deep into a fittening programme and are often to be seen riding out with map and stopwatch practicing getting our bearings and average speeds sorted out in time for the full competitions this summer.

The whole thing has added a new dimension and purpose to our riding and this year we will be offering training days dedicated to the TREC obstacles and control of paces phases so that if you also fancy having a go at competing you will have given yourself a great head start ! If you want to know more about the competition check out www.bhs.org.uk and the local South East Trec Group who are very active and extremely welcoming www.setrec.org.uk

Whether you are looking for a competition that is fun and interesting or want some confidence building and practical skills to make hacking enjoyable, do come along and join in the fun.

TREC training days here at Oakwood are on :- Sat 1st March, Sat 22nd March, Sat 19th April and Sat 31st May

Cost :- £30 per person for 2 hours. Please book in advance so we can work out times etc. 01243 574377

Road Map Weekends

Following on from the success of this format last year we will be running some more Road Map Weekends this spring. This is an opportunity for you to identify your own specific goals and get help to work out a route by which to achieve them. Again the website has more information on how the weekends are structured.

Dates :- 26th - 27th April and 17th – 18th May.

Cost :- £100 per day , including lunch and refreshments and horse pen.

Thought for the day

Somebody asked me the other day how or if horsemanship training can help with performance and it made me think about what the word performance really means. To me it is not only about winning prizes or getting the highest score for something, it is about accomplishing something you set out to do and the satisfaction of achieving a goal, whatever it may be. Sometimes it is something intangible like overcoming a fear, or making a connection and other times it is more measurable like teaching your horse to load confidently, or stand still when you get on, or stay calm in a scary situation.

There are lots of ways that horsemanship training can help you improve your performance, both in the competition ring or outside it and our aim is to help you get the most from your precious time together and to strive to do it in such a way that you win the respect and approval of the only judge who really matters... your horse !

Sincerely

Rio

Oakwood Horsemanship
Well Cottage, Chapel Lane, Oakwood, Chichester, Sussex PO18 9AW.
T: 01243 574377 M: 07802 785271 E: rio@oakwoodhorsemanship.com
www.oakwoodhorsemanship.com