

# THE WHISPERER



**Winter  
2025**

# Chairman's Report

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Whisperer. Since our last edition we have held a riding and longlining event at Seecham Equestrian Centre that seemed to be very popular and we are hoping to hold another in early 2025; the committee team will keep our social platforms updated so watch this space for further news. In December we held our AGM and Christmas meal with some fabulous raffle prizes. There is a full update in this edition. I would like to give a warm welcome to our new committee members, Angela and James. we are already making plans for events in the New Year, and I look forward to seeing our members out and about.

*Kevin Morris*

## The first events of 2025

19th January Scropton Horse Centre near Derby. We will be holding an arena event from 10:00 to 15:00 offering the opportunity for members to use the arena for long reigning, riding, & practicing in hand and of course Moppy our plaiting horse will be available for practice. All welcome. Please book at

<https://link.webropol.com/s/MHHAEventRegistration>.

16th February 2025 will give members the opportunity to visit the yard of Kevin and Alison Morris where Sparky and the shires reside, as well as their horsedrawn vehicles and much more. Look out for further announcements!

## Notes from the Editors

Josie Shereston will be stepping down from the Whisperer as an editor in 2025 due to other commitments outside of the MHHA, Josie said, "It's been great to get involved – I've enjoyed helping our association and share your wonderful stories to showcase what the MHHA is all about!"

# Seechem Working Weekend

## 30<sup>th</sup> November, Lynne Allman

Our last working day of 2024 was indoors at Seechem near Alvechurch Birmingham. Many horses attended along with members without horses to find out more about what the club has to offer and / or just to have a go.

The day started an opportunity to ride before the obstacles were set out. Alison rode her Shires Max and King, and Suzanne Leckey rode her Suffolk Casper. In hand horses were then led in, which is sufficient for some of the youngsters (indeed it was the first time on the trailer & away from home for some), followed by slowly building up the obstacle course, adding bit by bit whilst the horses were in there.

Once the obstacle course was fully in place, members brought their horses in and others had a go at long reining with the more experienced horses, with new members opting for Anja's pony, Sparky.

Lunch time saw everyone gather at 'chef Jane's' table where the lovely winter veg soup was on offer, backed up with copious amounts of hot / cold drinks, cakes / biscuits etc.

Whilst all this was taking place in the arena, on the observation gallery, 'Moppy' our wooden horse (to the withers, who has a real horsehair mane) was showing new members how to plait giving a good handful of new members real experience.

Thanks to John, Andy and Nina for building the obstacle course & Pennie for adjudicating the friendly competition at the end.

The winner of the long reining (doing his best to run the whole course & beat his daughter Anja, as they're not competitive at all) was Kevin with Sparky the little pocket rocket, which gave us all a giggle, cheering everyone on who took part!



The aim of managing a worm burden is NOT to eradicate worms – this is an outdated way of thinking. All healthy horses will carry a small worm burden, the aim of management is to prevent worm related disease.

### **Managing the Worm Burden**

This is probably the most important part of worm control; eggs pass in droppings where they then hatch into the larval stages and migrate onto the forage and the surface of the soil to be eaten by horses. This doesn't happen in the stable as the conditions aren't right for it.

Removing droppings is the best way of decontaminating the pasture, reducing the number of infective larvae and therefore adult worms in the horses and number of eggs shed. Daily removal is ideal, but not always possible, twice a week can dramatically reduce the larval level on the pasture.

Rotating pastures, co-grazing with sheep/ cattle and resting pasture can all help but is not a substitute for physically removing droppings from the pasture. Harrowing is also not a substitute for poo picking as it just spreads the burden across the pasture!

### **Testing for worms**

Did you know that 80% of the herd's worm burden are carried by only 20-30% of the horses? Resistance to wormers, fueled by historic overuse, is now a real problem in the UK and worldwide, for this reason we need to be careful to protect the drugs we have and only treat horses when necessary. Faecal Worm Egg Counting should be done throughout the grazing season to identify horses requiring treatment. Antibody saliva tests should be used twice a year to detect tapeworm infestations and treat accordingly.

## Winter Worming

This should be done in January or February, NOT in the Autumn!

The aim of our winter worming is to target encysted redworms, these worms burrow into the lining of the gut when the temperature is consistently below 6°C. The emergence of these worms from the gut lining in the spring can cause severe and catastrophic disease, especially in young horses. To target these encysted worms we usually use moxidectin (Equest or Equest Pramox) as this is the only drug we have left that reliably targets this stage of the worm in the UK.

Giving moxidectin in the Autumn is not responsible use of this important drug, although it will work to kill all stages of the lifecycle, we should preserve its use for the important winter worming.

Not all horses will need to be wormed for encysted redworms, this is an important discussion to have with your vet to analyse the risk levels of your horse. See the below picture for a detailed risk analysis.

### Worming plans

Worming plans should be formulated for the yard/herd as a whole but should be targeted to treat only the individual horses who need treating. Worming plans will differ depending on age of horses and yard set up. It is important to note that foals and youngstock will need to be wormed more regularly and you should formulate a plan with your vet for this.



### Assessing Your Horse's Parasite Risk Profile

A range of factors influence a horse's parasite risk profile; remember them using the CANTER acronym and use this tool to discuss with your prescriber.



Risk Factor	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
<b>C</b> Clinical History	No history of worm associated (gut) disease	History of suspected subclinical worm associated (gut) disease or PPID	History of confirmed worm associated (gut) disease or PPID
<b>A</b> Age Profile	5-20 years old	5-20 years old, concurrent suspected worm associated (gut) disease or PPID	<5 years old*, >20 years old
<b>N</b> Number of Horses	Low stocking density >2 acres per horse	Medium stocking density 1-2 acres per horse	High stocking density <1 acre per horse
<b>T</b> Test Results	Individual: repeated low worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results Herd: low for worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results No history of wormer resistance by worm egg count reduction testing	Individual: low-moderate worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results Herd: low-moderate for worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results No history of wormer resistance by worm egg count reduction testing	Individual: high worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results Herd: high for worm egg count & tapeworm antibody results Wormer resistance identified on property by worm egg count reduction testing
<b>E</b> Environment	Closed herd or kept individually Horses with restricted grazing time Poo-picked more than once a week Effective quarantine procedures	Occasional newcomers Poo picked less than once a week Quarantine procedures inconsistent	Frequent movements in and out herd No poo picked or very infrequent No quarantine procedures
<b>R</b> Risk Profile	Calculate risk based on number of features that apply in each category; the more that apply in category low, the lower the risk, the more that apply in category high, the higher the risk of parasite infection and disease occurring.		

\*Note: speak to your prescriber about the approach to parasite control in foals  
Updated: September 2024

# Winter feeding

Emma Nissler

**Nutritional Manager, Dodson & Horrell**

## **DODSON & HORRELL**

ANIMAL HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WELL-BEING

**FEEDING SUCCESS**

Nutrition plays a vital role at any age; from foals to veterans, it is equally important to ensure individual requirements are met. With aging comes questions around the suitability of their current rations, taking into consideration their workload, health status, body condition and dental health in particular. Seasonal changes play a key role in re-evaluating rations and can often have a significant impact on product choice. This is especially important for older horses and ponies, as a number of things can change with age.

### **Body Condition**

Going into each new season is the perfect time to review your older horse or pony's body condition and bodyweight alongside their current ration, so that a proactive plan can be put in place to combat fluctuations in condition. Assessing body condition to determine if your horse or pony is at a healthy score, over conditioned, or under conditioned, helps guide seasonal product choices. Using targeted products is a good choice when a change of more than one body condition point on the five point scale is needed, because this will take more than one month to achieve. Keeping older horses at a healthy condition is important, as excess condition can put added strain on joints and losses can often take longer to overcome than they would have in younger years. As horses and ponies age, their digestive system becomes less efficient. Metabolic and hormonal changes start to affect and interfere with their ability to properly digest, absorb and utilise essential nutrients, in particular protein, phosphorus and fibre. Taking this into consideration, it is really important to make sure they have a suitable ration in place in preparation for any fluctuations in weight.

### **Dental Health**

Unfortunately, dental quality and their ability to chew can decrease with age. Regular dental checks by your vet or equine dentist are important, as problems left untouched can lead to more severe dental issues that aren't always able to be corrected. Horses' teeth erupt throughout their lives and tend to develop sharp edges in the absence of 24-hour grazing on more fibrous grass types, that aren't always available in the UK. These sharp edges can potentially lead to reduced range of motion whilst chewing, and ultimately, less ability to breakdown food and prepare it for swallowing, digestion, and nutrient absorption. In particular this can contribute to insufficient fibre being consumed and detrimental effects on their digestive health. As a non-ruminant herbivore, the horse has adapted to survive on a high roughage (fibre) diet. Throughout history, horses spent a great deal of time roaming poor quality grasslands and grazing throughout the day and night. Their large intestine, or hindgut, slowly adapted to be able to better process rough, low energy forage to fully harness the energy within it. To keep the microbial population working as it should, and to safeguard normal movement through the intestines, proper intake and digestion of forage is key.

Poor dentition can also predispose the horse to conditions such as choke and colic, due to the fibre not being efficiently mechanically digested. Regular dental check-ups are advised, often by the dentist, as a preventative measure; where dental quality is lost with age, hay replacements such as chopped forages and mashes can be utilised alongside their concentrate ration.

### **Exercise Regime**

Regardless of their age, when a horse is in a moderate to hard workload, they will need more calories to support energy expenditure. Moderate work is characterised by three to five hours a week of: 30% walking, 55% trotting and 15% cantering. Identifying trends in your horse's body condition throughout the seasons, will help flag when they need more or less energy in their diet; as will their general behaviour in hand and under saddle. It is highly recommended that joint health is supported, especially when they are still in regular work. Age paired with repetitive concussive forces that come with regular exercise, predispose the horse to joint issues such as arthritis; therefore, it is important to consider feeds with added joint support such as MSM, glucosamine and omega 3. Immune support is also recommended for those in work as antioxidants aid in reducing the effects of oxidative stress. Although aging paired with a heavier workload exposes them to possible joint issues, it is still important to ensure regular movement to support mobility.

### **Daily Diet**

If a change or adjustment in concentrate feed is needed, it is important to first consider their forage, as it is the mainstay of the equine diet. Because forage contributes the majority of calories to the daily diet, understanding how many calories, and other nutrients, it supplies by getting your forage analysed can help select the best products to complement it. When introducing a new feed, it is recommended to be done very gradually over a course of 10-14 days, alongside removing the appropriate product/s from their current ration, whilst regularly monitoring their condition. This is especially important for older horses as their digestive efficiency is often decreased with age, so sudden changes can cause digestive upset.

Article courtesy of Dodson & Horrell. Advice is available through their Nutritional Helpline by email on [helplineenquiries@dodsonandhorrell.com](mailto:helplineenquiries@dodsonandhorrell.com), by phone on 01270 782 223, or via LiveChat through the website <https://www.dodsonandhorrell.com/>.



# Cracker at Your Horse Live

Cracker and I had the privilege of being invited to Your Horse Live, to spend the weekend as part of the heavy horse village. We completed plaiting demonstrations and brought the horses out from their stables onto the yard to show the public and up-close view of the breeds. It was beautiful to see all of the horses plaited up in their poppies for remembrance Sunday, before entering the ring for the heavy horse parade which provided the opportunity for us to showcase each breed and demonstrate the versatility of the heavy horses in general.

Although Cracker has been in busy show environments, this was a completely new experience for both of us, with so much going on all weekend and being in closer contact with the public. Cracker took it all in his stride, he was settled and more than happy to accept love and scratches from anyone willing to supply them! I thoroughly enjoyed the whole weekend, being able to show our horses off, speak with people about the breeds and the societies and also representing MHHA! It was a brilliant experience for us and being relatively new to the game ourselves it was a great learning opportunity!

Boo Deakin





# Heavy Horse Village at Your Horse Live

Your Horse Live (YHL) is billed as the biggest equestrian shopping event in the country – run over 3 days at the NAEC in Warwickshire. The Midland Heavy Horse Association was well-represented in the Heavy Horse Yard, Denise Badger and the organising team, Helen Roberts, Boo Deakin, Rob Clarke and Nick Carter with horses, plus onsite support from Brett Masters, Josie Shereston, Carolyn Truss, Sam Wright and Jane Muntz-Torres (apologies if anyone has been left off this list!)

Throughout the 3 days the Heavy Horse Yard was open to show visitors, who were able to come and see the horses both in their stables and we had them out in the Yard doing various demonstrations. All the horse behaved impeccably throughout and said 'hello' to 100's if not 1,000's of visitors.

As it was Remembrance Sunday, the 4 breeds stood for the 2 minute silence in the stable yard, none of them moved a hoof throughout. We braided with poppies rather than flights and it was quite a moving experience to have the horses and show visitors all standing quietly.

On Sunday afternoon we had a heavy horse parade in the main arena. It was a great demonstration of the 4 breeds and their versatility, with driven, ridden, in-hand and decorated harness in the display.

I firmly believe there is considerable value in having the four breeds together in this way. So many of the conversations we had with show visitors were around the differences between the breeds and how to identify them. Together they are such an impressive sight, not least for their contrasting colours and conformation.

Helen Roberts



# Bonnie Rose attends South Derbyshire Poppy Display

Each November sees the Nation come together to remember the fallen from all conflicts. Many buildings & monuments commemorate the event with Poppy Cascades to raise much needed funds for the Royal British Legion. I asked Lullington Church if Bonnie Rose could attend and help support the commemoration, with her mane plaited in her own poppies from Heavy Horse Decorations.

The village called Bonnie their local 'War Horse' and were (in their words) 'in awe to see such a beautiful well-behaved horse' bringing a crowd in. Lullington being so close to Edingale and its history of the shires, saw many a person come to me and say how it brought back many memories for them, hearing shod feet and watching Bonnie come through the sleepy Derbyshire village and up to church. Indeed, one of them was a lady called Pauline Blake, who invited us to park off road in her yard. Being the small world it is, Pauline turned out to be a sister of our lovely member, Denise Badger!

The commemoration raised ~£2,000 over a couple of weeks, and Bonnie has already been invited back in 2025 to support the event.

Lynne Allman



# Sand casting our KB horse brasses

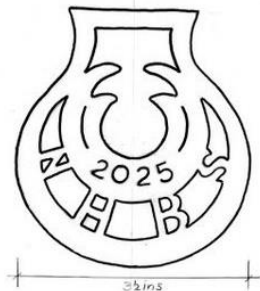
## by Alison Garbett

<https://www.heavyhorseenthusiast.com/>

The hanging horse brass was only introduced into Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The earliest were made of sheet or latten brass cut with hand tools and hammered into shape. They may have come over with the influx of Romanies around this time; they certainly would have had the tools and expertise to make them. This may account for the superstitions associated with the horse brass as a lucky charm, ward off the evil eyes. Although there is no hard evidence that the horse brass itself was used in this way it may account for the use of the ancient symbols of the Sun, Moon and Stars often incorporated into horse brass designs.

As the roads of Britain improved the gentry started to decorate their carriage harness with family crests, these would have first been made in Silver but later in Nickel or white metal. The first harness decorations used by the lower class of horseman the Carters and Waggoner's, were forms of ovals or shields perhaps to imitate the family Crests of the carriage horse. Early paintings show evidence of this type of harness decoration, but it is not until after 1850 that there are illustrations of the pendent horse brass. Horse brasses were known to exist before this date, it is only after that they become fashionable.

The earliest method of production of horse brasses in any form of quantity was sand casting. Liquid metal is poured into a mould shaped by use of a pattern. The first patterns were hand made in lead but today all our KB designs are cut into a pattern metal, either aluminium or brass, on a computerised machine. A drawing done in black fibre tipped pen on a white background can contain a lot of detail and is scanned into the computer so the machine can make a good pattern.



The bottom moulding box is filled with moulding sand - this is a fine sand mixed with a bonding agent usually a form of clay and rammed and compacted into the box. The pattern is then laid onto this sand and the top half of the box is attached. The sand is then compacted very firmly onto and around the pattern. The box is then turned over and split back into two halves and the pattern is carefully removed leaving a void/hollow in the sand. Channels called vents and gates are made so liquid metal can fill the void. The box is reassembled and the molten brass poured into the void to form. Pouring the metal is a them, you must have the right temperature and consistency of brass and a good knowledge on how fast to pour, too fast and the mould will be distorted or swilled away; too slow and the metal will cool before it fills all the void. If the sand is damp or the metal too hot the pattern boxes can blow apart leaving you with a lot of flash around the casting.

Some of the old horse brasses were made with getts on the back, these were extra bits of brass usually about an inch long. It is believed this was to help hold the brasses in the vices while they finished them, but it is an antiquated method that we don't use today. A note of caution to the collector here, not all old horse brasses had getts and not all brass with getts are old.

The rough casting needs finishing. All the rough brass or flash is removed from around the casting and any and every hole in the pattern is meticulously drilled and cleaned of flash. The backs of the horse brass are then roughly sanded and finished judges will often check the back of our KB brasses adorning the beautiful harnesses shown in the rings up and down the country. We can also number the brass at this stage for a limited edition or for with the National Horse Brass Society number. The brass is also formed or dished at this stage if needed.

Finally, the horse brass is polished on a fast-spinning wheel. Too much pressure or too coarse a polish will remove the design; too little produces a poor finish.

A special thank you to the National Horse Brass Society for letting me plagiarise Mr S R Pink's article on the NHBS website.

[www.nationalhorsebrasssociety.org.uk](http://www.nationalhorsebrasssociety.org.uk)





# Meet a member

## Steve Ledsham

It is hard to believe I bought my first Shire over 45 years ago and “got the bug.” I’ve been feeding something called Twilight mix to my older horses for the last few years and thought it may well be for me when it arrived!

My first years with Shires involved training, showing and of course learning. I had a “normal job” at the time which paid for my “hobby.” In 1990 I went to work at Acton Scott Farm Museum as Wagonner, where I was being paid for something I loved. It was a dream come true! I was very fortunate in having some of the “old boys” still about who had done it for real. I learned all the skills involved with horses in agriculture. After a brief venture in setting up a farm Museum near Oswestry, I returned to Acton Scott in 1994 and stayed until 1999. I set up my Shire and Carriage Horse business in 1999 when I took on the contract to provide the horse and livestock interpretation at Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Blists Hill Victorian Town. Now coming up to 25 years, I still have the contract today.

Alongside the Ironbridge contract, I provide horses for promotional and film work, weddings and funerals. I regularly hold Shire Horse Experience Days from my base in the Shropshire Hills. I invariably purchase my horses as foals because I like to start with a blank canvas and do all the training myself (if something goes wrong, I only have myself to blame!). I have been very much involved with the Shire Horse Society to promote the breed, including assisting at Heavy Horse Camp and at Judges training days. I am pleased to be on the Official Judges Panel of the Shire, Suffolk, and Percheron Breed Societies. As well as regular judging appointments at many shows, I have judged at The National Spring Show on two occasions and had the honour of being asked to judge at The Royal Queensland Show in Brisbane in 2019.



Two other highlights of my career were representing The Worshipful Company of Carmen with a pair of horses and “horse bus” at their Cart Marking Ceremony at the Guildhall in the City of London in 2018, and a promotional job for the Blue Coat School in Liverpool. I would never have believed when growing up in the city that I would be driving horses along one of the main roads in the city centre.

My involvement on the Council of the Shire Horse Society could fill a whole book! Suffice to say, I have been less than popular with my views on shoeing practices and hock conformation. On shoeing, I believe I made a valuable contribution to the introduction of Shoeing Regulations. On hock conformation, I have made less progress, but my efforts will continue, and I’m a patient man! However, they did award me with a 40 years long eservice medal in 2023.

My horse career has almost come full circle in the last 12 months as I have returned to Acton Scott Heritage Farm to help with their open days prior to the full opening of the Farm in 2025. I am very pleased to be a member of the MHHA, where I hope I can help the newcomers to the job with some of my knowledge.







# The Boat Horse

**Jane Muntz Torres**



The boat horse worked in a different world from the other draught horses. His world was that of the tow-path and he was specially trained for that work.

The boat horse was a special kind of horse and yet it would be difficult to describe him. It would have been a rare sight to see a pure Shire, Clydesdale or Suffolk in the harness of a boat horse. A boater was limited in height to around 15.3 hands because of the heights of the bridges along the towpaths.

The boater had to be very strong, but it was not strength alone as the horse had to be trained to move the load in easy stages. The hardest part was to get the boat moving; then the job of keeping it going was much easier.

The 90-foot towing line ran from the horse's harness to a 4 ft high mast about a quarter of the length of the boat from the bow. The harness is known as boat gears in the Midlands. At one time chain traces were used, but in later years rope traces covered with wooden spoles, or bobbins, came into general use. The bobbins, each about four inches long and resembling large wooden beads, prevented the ropes chafing the horses. The traces were attached to a spreader bar. The towing line was attached to a pegging noose with a short chain at either end to join it to the spreader bar.

The bridle was blinkered or open .. it has been said that boat people preferred to work their horses in open bridles so they could see where the water was and hopefully not fall in.

Although many 'shut up' collars were worn it was more usual to find open collars with a big brass buckle on top.

The hames, to avoid them catching on the arches of the bridges, were cut down as low as possible.

A very essential item of the horse's gear was its nose tin, from which it was fed, usually while it was walking along at an easy pace. The nose tin was decorated in the traditional painted designs of the canal people, who like to use bold colours.

The strong colours were also used for painting the bobbins so they resembled giant necklaces of coloured beads. The spreader bar was also painted in strips of contrasting colours and often the hames were similarly 'painted like a barber's pole'. The horse would also wear the traditional ear-caps so loved by the boatmen. They were usually crocheted in different colours and would keep the flies off the ears.



When preparing the boat horse for work the collar is put on first followed by the rest of the harness ... all in one go! It is easy to get confused and in a tangle if you are unsure at first!

N.B. Most of this information has come from Terry Keegan's book, *The Heavy Horse – Its Harness and Harness Decoration*. 1973 edition. (Chapter 12 – The Boat horse available on Amazon



# Auction of Mike Clarke's collection

Regular visitors to Holbeache will have seen the stunning collection of horsedrawn vehicles and agricultural implements accumulated over many years. Sadly, the storage buildings were reclaimed by his landlord necessitating their sale. A wet day in October did not dampen the enthusiasm of buyers from far and wide and all lots were sold along with a few more from fellow MHHA member Jane Muntz Torres. Photos by Les Key.



# AGM News

MHHA members gathered on 8th December for the AGM and Christmas meal. The chair, Kevin Morris, welcomed everyone who attended and thanked the committee and those present and absent for their contributions. MHHA is widely regarded as the most active regional heavy horse association in the country. The introduction of arena events has been very successful and more opportunities will be sought for 2025. However, MHHA would welcome suggestions for new locations for working weekends.

In other news, the Treasurer reported a healthy financial situation and sustained membership levels enabling subscriptions to be pegged at their current levels. The committee was re-elected and James Griffiths and Angela Spatcher joined. New editors for the Whisperer are being sought as Josie Shereston is standing down and Harry Ziman confirmed that 2025 would be his last.

## Raffle donors

**MHHA would like to thank the extraordinary generosity of everyone who donated raffle prize.**

Michael White, Anglian Water Tanker Drivers, Stone End Shires, Heavy Horse Decorations, Hungry Horse, Lochbroom Heavy Horses, Mike Huddart, Matthew Burks, Heavy Horse Power Harness, Phil Goodchild, Alison Garbett, Sabrina McClumpha EDT, Claire Kilburn, Lynne Allman, Mike Clarke, Jane Muntz Torres





Photos: Nina Roberts

# Chairman's Cup Winner Anya Morris



Photo: Alison Morris

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## Many Thanks to Josie Shereston

Josie is an exceptional ambassador for heavy horses who is active in several organisations. Sadly, the huge voluntary workload has taken its toll, and the time has come to step down from the Whisperer editorial team. We thank her for her perpetual good cheer and significant contributions.



Photo: Josie Shereston



# Shows with Heavy Horse sections

Compiled by Pennie Barker

## MARCH

7-9th National Shire Show, Stafford

## MAY

10th Nottinghamshire County Show

25th Shropshire County Show

25th Heathfield Show

26th The Cheshire Horse Show

28th & 29th Staffordshire County Show

28th & 29th Suffolk County Show

29th to 31st Royal Bath and West Show

31st Kenilworth Show

31st May & 1st June tbc Midland Counties Show

## JUNE

1st Rutland County Show

7th Aberystwyth & Ceredigion Show

14th Caerwys Agricultural Show

14-16th Royal Three Counties Show

18-19th Royal Cheshire County Show

19th-20th Lincolnshire County Show

19th - 22nd Royal Highland Show

22nd Derbyshire County Show

25th & 26th Royal Norfolk County Show

28th June Sioe Llanwrst Show

## JULY

5th July MHHA at Hanbury Countryside Show

5th July Goosnargh & Longridge

5th-6th Hollowell Steam & Heavy Horse

5th & 6th July Winterton Show

8th - 11th July Great Yorkshire Show

## **JULY**

**12th July**

Newport Show

**12th July**

Harthill Heavy Horse Show

**13th July**

Ashby Show

**13th July**

Bakewell Country Festival

**13th July**

Spilsby Show

**19th July**

Alrewas Show

**21st-24th July**

Royal Welsh Show

**26th July**

Leek Show

**26th/ 27th July**

Heckington Show

**26th July**

Mid-Devon Show

**30th July**

Nantwich Show

## **AUGUST**

**2nd August**

Brecon County Show

**2nd August**

Tenbury Show

**3rd August**

Derbyshire Shire Horse Society Show

**7th August**

Burwarton Show

**9th August**

Canwell Show

**9th August**

Halifax Show

**9th August**

Manifold Valley Agricultural Show

**12th August**

Anglesey County Show

**13th August**

Ashover Show

**16th August**

Ashbourne Show

**23rd August**

Poynton Show

**23rd August**

Ipstones Show

**25th August**

Hope Show

## **SEPTEMBER**

**26th September**

Flintham Show and Ploughing Match

**27th September tbc**

Midland Shire Foal Show

## **OCTOBER**

**8th to 12th October**

The Horse of the Year Show

**18th October tbc**

North West and Wales Shire Foal Show

# Bathing my Suffolk Horse

## Sue Merrill

He fills the eye, my Suffolk Punch, All chesnuttly & round,  
A horse of immense stature from his eyeballs to the ground.  
He is brave, he is courageous, indeed, he has no fear,  
Until it comes to bath time, then - he doesn't volunteer.

He doesn't like the running hose, he doesn't like shampoo,  
And expresses his displeasure - by going to the loo.  
Yes, I know I should have cleaned it up, but I was in a rush  
To get this horse all spruced and clean, besides -  
I couldn't find a brush.

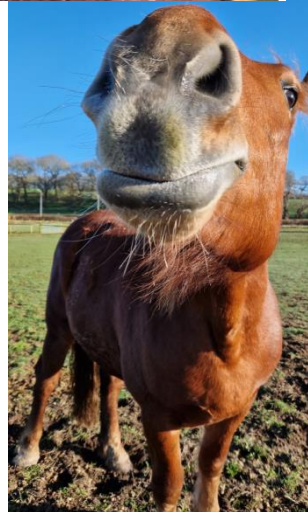
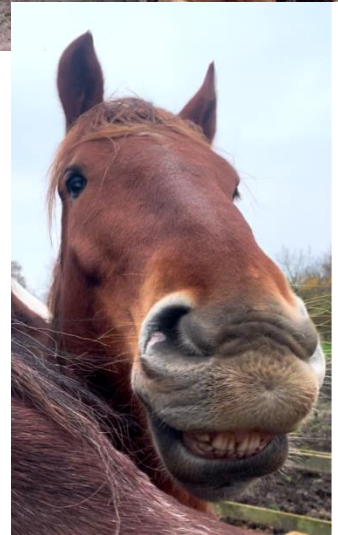
So, standing on a milk crate, to reach his upper parts,  
Balanced all precarious, when suddenly he darts  
forward, and then sideways, while I'm wobbling aloft  
Until I lose my footing, - though where I fell was soft!

Using steps, which were more stable, I wedged him to the wall,  
The suds slid down his golden sides while I tried not to fall,  
I washed his rump, his neck, his withers, and his tail and mane,  
Approvingly I stroke his sides, fond of him again.

And then I soaped his legs down and scratched away the grot,  
He didn't care for that bit much and jumped around a lot,  
He stamped his legs, he cow kicked, he trampled on my toe,  
But I had to get him looking good 'Cos we were at a show.

And how they all admired my horse, it made me very proud,  
To escort him round the Grande Parade and delight  
the watching crowd.

His behaviour was impeccable, and I gave everyone a smile  
Then I secretly admitted that the effort was worthwhile.



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