



The Mane Bit

HARROGATE HILLS' MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1, 2024

The kindest treatment of the horse is gained through knowledge.

Welcome to our 2024, revived edition of The Mane Bit

We've decided to relaunch our monthly newsletter. It's been quite a few years! We started it back when Harrogate was in Gormley in the mid 80's. Back then, one of our students came up with the name "*The Chuckago Tribune*" which was pretty funny if you knew my old horse Chuck.

Once we moved to this location in 1995, it took us a few years, but we eventually revived it. We had a contest to think of a new name as we felt that very few of our new students would get the joke contained in the old title. The names were voted on and the winner was THE

MANE BIT (thanks, Maggie Gooding!).

This is our 2024 edition and hopefully, it will help keep you in the loop as to the goings-on at Harrogate. Every month, you can find some updates on the Harrogate horses, all information about upcoming events, and even some horse trivia!



TRIVIA QUESTION :

Who is currently Harrogate's most successful race horse?

The answer will be in next month's issue of The Mane Bit.

Calendar of EVENTS



Sunday, October 6

HUNTER SHOW AT HARROGATE

Monday, October 21

PA DAY CAMP

Sunday, October 27

HALLOWEEN EXTRAVAGANZA

Saturday, December 7

SANTA CLAUS PARADE IN MOUNT ALBERT

Sunday, December 8

HARROGATE POT LUCK CHRISTMAS PARTY

Friday, December 13

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES NIGHT

Monday, December 23 • Thursday, January 2

Friday, January 3

WINTER BREAK CAMP

Anecdotes from the show ground!

We took five students and horses to a Show in Pickering on Sunday, September 22 and it was quite an adventure! The horses were pretty surprised that they were being asked to do this and the riders were justifiably nervous as well.

We are super proud of all of them for rising to the challenge and maintaining their cheerful demeanor even when things weren't going perfectly. It was great to watch them problem solve in those moments when it was just them and their horse in the ring.

The whole day reminded me of a memorable show from

about 35 years ago. I will share the story here as evidence that we all survive, even when things don't always go as planned. And sometimes the memories get more hilarious as the years go by!

If I recall, it was our first attempt at an off-property horse show and I took the Harrogate Hills horses and riders to a facility in nearby King Township. There was quite a lot of excitement in the air as few of the horses and none of the students had ever shown anywhere but at our farm. Andy, one of our young students, had even purchased proper riding breeches for the occasion!

Andy was a bit self-conscious about the new, close fitting riding breeches and chose to keep his track pants on until the last possible minute. As his turn drew closer, he glanced furtively around,

... we all survive, even when things don't always go as planned!

removed his track pants, and climbed as quickly as possible onto Cheyanne. Cheyanne was a huge brown and white Clydesdale cross. While a lovely, kind horse, her idea of a good time would have had more to do with food than with work. But she



Jasmine Harding, Emma Riley, Mya Johnstone and Caitlin Pratt at Stonewood schooling show, Sept 22, 2024.



Caitlin Pratt on Spirit, Meredith Parker and Jasmine Harding on Jackson at Stonewood schooling show, Sept 22, 2024.

lumbered into the ring and her young rider began guiding her around the course. As she approached the line of jumps closest to the spectators her ears strained forward as she discovered that there were bales of hay being used as filler in one of the jumps. Despite Andy's enthusiastic over riding, Cheyanne

He had a great knack for jumping but a cheeky habit of always doing things his way.

couldn't pass up the opportunity to pause for a bite to eat. As she dropped her head and slid to a stop Andy kept going, landing rear end in the air, on her neck. Her head stretched across the rail of the jump and, as Andy slid down her neck, the pole creaked loudly and then cracked in two. All eyes were on him as he wiggled desperately around trying to get off Cheyanne's neck. This neck was of course attached to a head that was now buried in the hay bale. After what



Group shot at Stonewood Horse show, Sept. 22, 2024.

must have felt like an eternity for the bashful young rider, he managed to get his feet back on the ground. With a lot of fanfare, he finally convinced her to leave her feast and accompany him out of the ring, his new breeches exposed for all the world to see!

Next in the ring was Buster Keaton. He was the first school horse I ever purchased for Harrogate and he was a comical little 14.2 quarter horse Arabian cross. He had a great knack for jumping but a cheeky

habit of always doing things his way.

Keaton entered the ring with his usual swagger. Up the outside line, he was clear. Across the diagonal, he jumped clear. But as he soared over the two jumps in the outside line, he made the decision not to turn. Maybe it was his unerring sense of direction that reminded him where the horse trailer was parked or maybe it was simply because he knew he could do it. Whatever his reason, he left the ring with enthusiasm, galloped



Caitlin Pratt, Jasmine Harding, Karina Vorobey, Emma Riley and Mya Johnstone at Stonewood Horse show, Sept. 22, 2024.

straight up the hill and through a small group of spectators, stopping only when his plan was thwarted by a row of large trees.

Apologizing profusely and deeply embarrassed, Paul, his young rider, directed him back down the slope as the spectators on the hill retrieved their lawn chairs and settled back down to watch the rest of the show.

In the next class Keaton was back. Up the outside, clear. Across the diagonal, clear. He turned for the outside line and sailed over it all, clear yet again and then just as effortlessly galloped back up the hill scattering the increasingly wary spectators one more time.

After changing to a stronger bit (gently suggested by the proprietors of the show) Keaton was back in the ring. This time however it seemed everyone wanted to see the "Puissance Pony" jump. The announcer cheerfully introduced him saying "And now Ladies and Gentlemen here he is again: Buster Keaton, a real crowd pleaser!"

The people on the hill immediately grabbed their

lawn chairs and ran and hid amongst the trees.

I recall hoping no one knew which farm we were from.

It's interesting sometimes what stands out in your mind as the years go by. For example, I remember worrying about George, our Irish draft cross. He was generous but anxious horse, and he hadn't trailered well to the show and while the

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rest of the school horses had taken it all in stride, George was very anxious about the whole affair. I was torn because, although he was doing quite well in his classes, the day was running long, and he was getting tired. David, his young rider, approached me as the last class neared.

"I think George has had enough," he said.

Surprised, I asked David if he understood that he only

needed a 6th place ribbon in the last class to end the day as Reserve Champion.

"I know but that's okay" he said. "George has to be ridden at summer camp all next week and I just wouldn't feel right making him go back in the ring."

I guess it might seem strange to some but to me that spoke more of David's worth as a horseman than any ribbon ever could have. I was deeply touched that despite the excitement of the day and the pride of potentially winning, his primary concern was for his stressed and bewildered partner.

Our kids this year, at our first away show in quite a while, also put their horses first and I couldn't have been more proud of all of them.

When we stop to consider the needs of our equine partners it makes better horsemen (and I might even argue better people) out of all of us.

Congratulations to our Harrogate show team. It was a great day!



HARROGATE HILLS
est. 1985



SPECTATORS
WELCOME!

There is still time to register
for our final Hunter show of the
season on Sunday, October 6.

Registration forms are available in the lounge.



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