

The kindest treatment of the horse is gained through knowledge.

PA Days report

It's been a great year for PA days at Harrogate. Starting in September and continuing through October and November we were joined by lots of enthusiastic students who were keen to have extra time to ride and learn about horses. We had our last PA day on January -30 and finally, Mother Nature decided not to cooperate. It was a blustery -30°C and besides riding, all the campers got the chance to learn about what it takes to keep horses happy and comfortable in the wintertime. Learning how to put blankets on horses, carrying heavy water



buckets, filling up hay nets, bringing the horses their hay; all things that are required as the temperature drops. We were really impressed with how all the campers just dug in and got to work with us to assist the horses. It's such a valuable thing for kids to learn to put the needs of others before their own, and we saw campers do just that on the January P.A. Day.

It would have been an easy day to just stay cozied up inside, and yet everyone came together and had an enjoyable day with one common goal... making sure the Harrogate horses were safe and warm.



FEBRUARY TRIVIA QUESTION:

*Along with growing a winter coat, what can horses do with their hair that helps insulate them?
What is this process called?*

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

Calendar of EVENTS



HELPER PARTY

Friday, February 20

MAKEUP LESSON NIGHT

Friday, February 27
Friday, March 6

MARCH BREAK CAMP

Monday, March 16 through
Thursday, March 19

READY, SET, SHOW WORKSHOP

Friday, March 20

SPRING IS HERE!

March 20

LESSONS FROM THE HORSES

It can be quite an overwhelming thing to look after horses... I think of this frequently, especially as the weather the last little while has made things just that little bit harder. Yet somehow despite the challenges, I find myself thinking of how good horses are for people, perhaps especially for young students. It's hard to imagine wanting to work so hard for a Nintendo game or a particular computer program. I think it's something about the immediate feedback that horses provide that inspires us. Even in the cold with frozen fingers and frostbitten toes, everyone just keeps going, ensuring that the horses are cared for and have a nice warm bed to sleep in.



I can't be sure but sometimes I believe that one of the most important things students learn with horses is how much strength students actually have. That need for resilience might go untapped under normal circumstances. We all have very easy lives relative to days gone by and yet finding these inner reserves of strength has great value in terms of character building, etc. I love

watching the Harrogate students as they problem solve and work out strategies for difficult circumstances. When the weather presents a challenge, no one retreats. Everyone digs in and contributes to the worthwhile project of seeing to the horses needs.

Walking up through the open fields to retrieve horses through the blinding snow and wind can be

daunting. There is something sobering about this experience and it can bring us back to a more basic view of life. No one wants to return to a time without electricity and central heating, but there is something to be said for gaining an appreciation for how easy our lives have gotten. Doing hard things and discovering it's possible, leads to questions about what else might be possible in one's life. In fact, we might never discover what we are capable of if we never challenge ourselves.

It's not only in the caring for horses that we rediscover resilience. It happens while riding horses as well. Horses are large and strong and have opinions about things... some have more opinions than others ☺. While they are easily bullied, there is no sense of reward for a rider who chooses to take that path. There are few better feelings than when the horse understands what it is that you want and willingly agrees to do that for you.



Finding a way to communicate without bullying is a wonderful life skill to learn. Because it's so rewarding, when students have that experience, it encourages them to try it in other aspects of their lives. They can learn to calmly and coherently explain what their needs are while taking into account the needs of others. There are so many skills that horses teach

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students and in my experience many of those skills are transferable to other aspects of life,



So many thanks to the hardy Harrogate students who have persevered through this brutal winter weather. We appreciate it very much and look forward to warm summer days when we reminisce about our experiences and regale each other with stories of surviving the winter of 2026.

UPCOMING MARCH BREAK CAMPS

Jumping Fundamentals Bootcamp *Monday March 16 – Thursday March 19*

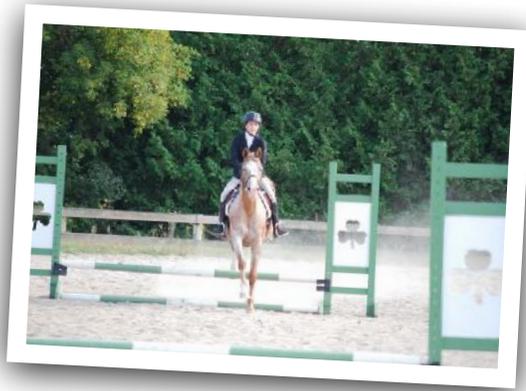
Jumping has often been compared to a symphony. The musical notes or the riding that takes place in between the jumps is the most important part, and the moment the horse is in the air over the fence is the silent pause within it. Silence on its own has little value but music without breaks doesn't work either.

Both are essential, and together they create harmony we're looking for over fences.

As all great riding masters understand, the hardest part of jumping isn't the moment in the air. Rather, it's making sure the horse gets to the fence correctly. Learning how to set your horse up for success is the focus of this week's camp.

The ability to maintain balance, rhythm, and identify and ride the correct track to a fence are the skills that matter most and they take years to develop. This bootcamp is designed to give riders the opportunity to build and strengthen those

skills until they become second nature. Even if you're not jumping yet, this intensive camp will provide the framework you need when you begin riding over fences.



Ready, Set, Show Workshop

Friday, March 20

Our Ready, Set, Show Workshop is designed to help riders practice and refine the skills they'll need for the upcoming show season.



Run as a mock horse show, riders will go through typical show events, from entering the ring to riding their courses, just as they would at a real show. After each round, participants will receive feedback, take part in group discussion about strengths and areas for improvement, and have the opportunity to try again and apply what they've learned.



We'll also focus on strategies to manage show nerves and build confidence, helping riders

feel prepared both mentally and physically. It's a valuable chance to gain experience and practice the "do-over" that real horse shows don't allow.

Safety Tips for Winter



- When horses come into the barn from being outside, they can be 'snow blind'. The horse's eyes take a long time to adjust to changes in light, sometimes up to 40 minutes. When we bring a horse inside after being out on a bright snowy day, don't assume they can see clearly and pay attention where you're leading them. Pay special attention in doorways, in the aisle, and make sure to clear away any tools or clutter wherever you're leading your horse.
- Horses can get a buildup of snow in their feet (especially horses with shoes). This means that when we bring them into the concrete barn, they have no traction and can slip easily. The 'snowballs' should be removed from the horse's feet before going down any ramps or passing through tight turns. Always walk the horse slowly when bringing them into the barn.



FUN FACT:

Horses start growing in their summer coat and shedding out their winter coat around January 15!

If you notice your horse is shedding a lot of hair, ask your instructor if you can use a shedding blade to help your horse with the process.



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The answer to January's Trivia Question is:

Q: Some Arabian horses have something quite different about them. What is it? (It has to do with bones, but it is not that distinctive concave facial profile.)

A: The Arabian horse tends to be short-backed and compact in structure. This is because usually, the Arabian has fewer bones than other horse breeds. Some of them can have one less rib, one less lumbar vertebrae and one less tail vertebrae.

Congratulations to **Alinka** for winning the January trivia! Alinka went above and beyond with her trivia answer and obviously did some in depth research. If anyone has questions about Arabian skeletons, they should ask her! ;)

She wins a \$25 gift card from Greenhawk.

TRIVIA GUIDELINES:

- Place your answer in the box found in the lounge and include your name and contact information.
- There will be a random draw from the correct submitted answers and one person will win a prize.
- The winner will be announced in the following month's Newsletter.

