



# M.D.R.A

**Matfield and District Riders Association**

**Spring Newsletter 2020**

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## **Chat from the Chairs March 2020**

Water all around me and not a drop to drink.....name that famous person that made this quote!

This winter has sucked to be honest, never known it so wet and windy, not conducive to riding, field management or the will to live! Hoping we have turned a corner now it's March or the Met office need to give us the choice of names for the next batch of storms and they won't be pleasant me thinks.

You may think the MDRA goes into hibernation in the winter months, but we have still had clinics at Di's and your dedicated committee have been meeting at Terry and Caroline's to discuss the organisation of future events for you and of course partake in the splendid hospitality always on offer.

### **Events**

The Summer Show went well as always and we had some very lovely feedback but sadly ended up making a loss. It takes months of planning and the hard work of many to pull this event off. With this in mind we have decided to have a change this year. So we will hold the Challenge instead on Sunday 16 August. This was a great success when we ran it before and Anne and her crew did a great job. But this event requires a lot of helpers, not only to set up and take down but to marshal each section. So, if you know of anyone that can help, please persuade them to come and assist, they don't have to be horsey. We are finding it more difficult to get helpers, so we encourage you to get involved; you may even enjoy yourselves!

The Dressage that we held last year which was organised by Jayne and Celia was a great success and we hope to replicate this on Sunday 26 April at Sandhurst Farm. Once again we need helpers so if we have any writers out there that can jot down the judge's comments whilst sitting in the comfort of the judges car, please give us a shout.

There have been several clinics at Di's, which have all been good fun and a great learning experience. Kate White expertly tailors each class for all abilities; which is fabulous for me and the Nobby Cob! A big thank you to Di and John for letting us invade your lovely manege.

### **Newsletter**

Clare Sender has taken over the running of the newsletter, so thanks Jen for managing this alongside the website. Please send any interesting or informative articles or news to Clare Sender.

### **Permissive rides**

We did not formerly close Marshley Harbour in October last year as the ground was keeping remarkably good. We usually close from October to March but we kindly ask you not to even consider going in there until the ground has thoroughly dried out. This is a fabulous ride locally and we do not want anyone to spoil it for the rest of us.

### **Membership**

Don't forget this year's membership is due from Friday 3 April, the membership forms are on our website or you can email Di Miles [jpmiles@seedersti.co.uk](mailto:jpmiles@seedersti.co.uk) for a form.

**AGM Friday 3 April:** Don't forget to come and attend. We will be having points awards, most improved rider award, news, events and most importantly of all Caroline's mustard sausages...see you there and bring a million friends. Good riding and soft Landings Ribs

Don't forget our website: [www.mdra.info](http://www.mdra.info)

Have a look to download **membership forms** and schedules. Get your discounts with membership.



### The Nobby Cob becomes Noddy Cob.....

Me and H (H stands for Holmes, my Nobby Cob) had a mega falling out during December and January; but we are friends again now!

It all started in September, when I noticed he was slightly lame, only a minuscule amount, but I noticed.... I showed my farrier and he said most people wouldn't have noticed and to be fair he was still of the nuclear variety in all gaits. We literally plodded on but came back from hols in October and he was worse, so we planned a trip to Bell Equine for a lameness work up.

So, Marcia and I boxed him up and headed off. My biggest worry was knowing I would have to reverse the trailer into the allocated parking space! With Marcia flinging arms around and me taking no notice, we parked at a jaunty angle in vaguely the right spot. Oh, how I hate those ladies in their new 4x4's and sparkly trailers that make it look as stress free as drinking a G&T.



In reception I was told a nurse would be allocated to me and which was my trailer? I pointed out the window and said "the squiffy one" there were muted titters all-round the office.

The lameness work up went well until we got to the school and we were asked how well he lunged....I think you are about to find out was my first thought. H did me proud but after several circles, flexion tests and back checks I knew we were dealing with something a bit worrying and this was confirmed with x-rays.

Basically he is starting to show his age, mild age related degeneration in his hocks, spine and pedal osteoarthritis. He is pigeon toed and I am knock kneed, a right pair.

The treatment plan was to be painkillers, the services of my fabulous farrier, physiotherapy and then see how he goes.

H does not do slow! We had a few weeks of him being OK. Then just before Christmas he became lamer and then lamer still. We thought he had a small hole and the inevitable pus in his hoof. So I started poulticing as hot tubbing was not on his agenda. The Farrier came and went. He got better for a bit then worse, to the point of collapsing in my field at the farthest point and poor Marcia was deployed more than once to help me get him back to the stables.



Jen was having to help poultice as he had turned into a fire breathing dragon for me and we were not getting on at all. Another vet visited and despite him parring away more gunk and H nearly launching us both out through the stable wall he got no better. Antibiotics were prescribed as well as something for his respiratory infection. The requirement to give these to him orally coincided with me having dental implants with strict instructions not to have trauma to the head as I had stitches and posts rammed into my jaw. I was also supposed to avoid bending down....brilliant! H went into melt down at the mere sight of the syringes. He grew to 18hh, tossing his head, mainly at me..... He wouldn't let me touch his foot as every time someone had looked at it there had been pain.

So off we went back to Bell Equine to see if they could see anything else. Nope, was the answer, he just had the foot abscess from hell.

This was a very dark time for me. I hate asking others for help, especially when they are all so busy, but I knew I couldn't manage my own horse without my imminent demise on the cards. At this time it was obvious to me that H hated me. I was now a creaky old wreck, that couldn't manage her own horse and thoughts of being an OAP rider were looking slim at this rate. Ten years ago I would have shrugged it off, but with a rubbish spine, arthritis, glasses that steamed up as I got myself all hot and bothered, I was a sad sight to behold. Thoughts of letting someone more able have him crossed my mind....

Dark times indeed. But I love this nobby cob to bits and the thought of someone else having him and him not being in my life was just too awful to contemplate. I had to man up, or woman up, or person up, whatever the correct term is nowadays, so I did. This short fat hairy cob was my life and he didn't hate me, he was in pain and I knew he would never intentionally do anything to hurt me, he just didn't understand and I was not being my usual me, hence we needed help from others.

This epiphany worked well, he became more sound, let me administer to his foot, and he even allowed me to get some oral meds in. So the dark clouds were lifting.....

Then we got the gang of four back together again and normality started to resume, apart from the outrageous amount of mud everywhere. There was company, coffees at the yard and The Boys are back in Town...you are singing, aren't you?

As he was clearly delighted to be back with his pals despite the hideous conditions, I decided that I would give him some pampering to celebrate, so we headed off to Rhoden Rehabilitation for the treadmill and wiggly plate treatment. I was a little concerned how he would react once on the treadmill. He is normally OK going through water, but this was basically the biggest hot tub in the world and yes, I admit part of the rationale for going was to clean out his feet and see his feathers for the first time since August!

The staff were lovely and took it all in their stride, introducing him to the treadmill, step by step. Once in, he started walking well. His face was a picture when the water started rising but he literally went with the flow. He got tired very quickly but was walking as sound as a pound. At times he just stopped, and it was like a Tom and Jerry cartoon, but he soon picked up his pace again. Marcia's face when this happened was hilarious and Jen and I just laughed. Needless to say Jen wants a treadmill now.

We then tried the wiggly plate thing and I couldn't fault him. I was invited to go on, and then nearly died as I realised it was weighing him and me, luckily there were no sirens or weight warning overload alarms. It was a weird experience for me as I have a metal hip and it wiggled it, a lot!

I can thoroughly recommend the treatment and the care we received, and we will go back, even if it is just to clean his legs off. They offer loads of other pamper sessions all managed by their team of qualified professionals. The only negative part of the day, was me trying to reverse the trailer out which I had to bow out of and accept the services of someone 30 years younger to handle it. When we got H back home, he walked over the stony car park sound - job done!

I began to get excited that I could slowly work him up again, but no the spate of recent storms has put pay to that.

What do people do who don't have horses? As I couldn't ride I actually had to do some house work. My lowest point came when I bought a window vacuum and cleaned 20 years of muck off my windows. This was a bad move in hindsight as the light that can now shine through shows up all the other failings I have in the domestic maintenance department.

But today in sunshine we did a road hack and it was just fab. Normal service has been resumed and all is almost right with the world.

A simple road hack at walk with a small trot, good company and I feel like me again. He is still a stiff hairy monster and he will still need careful maintenance to ensure he is comfortable, but we can grow old together disgracefully. I am sure and I hope, he will continue to manipulate me at every opportunity, but that's exactly why I love him. He knows my weaknesses and inabilities so well.

So, these are some of the things I have learned in the past couple of months:

- If you think there is a problem, go with your gut instinct and investigate it.
- If you are having problems managing something, ask for help, you are not a failure or a creaky old wreck. You would always help someone with pleasure, they would like to do the same for you, so don't feel like an independent Island about to be hit by a Tsunami.

- Horses are not naturally horrid. They are reacting to something or remembering something that hurt them or is hurting. As the owner, you may not be in the best place to manage it.
- Do not buy cheap gaffa tape, it's a waste of money and will come off and litter your fields.
- Tell your horse not to have a rampaging foot abscess whilst you are in the middle of months of dental surgery, its bad timing.
- Get someone to invent glasses that have a de-mist function.
- If we are due another storm, I want to name it, especially when we get to F....
- Probably learn to reverse your trailer for your own sense of pride.
- DO NOT buy a window vacuum, however depressed you feel!

So, Spring is here, we will all be moaning about flies, too much grass and horses shedding their own body weight in hair, and I can't bloody wait!

Good riding, soft landings, Ribs x

## Events 2020

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Info</u>
3 April	AGM and prize giving	Matfield Village Hall @ 8pm	There will be a light buffet and drinks
26 April	Unaffiliated Dressage	Sandhurst Farm, Clay Hill Road, Lamberhurst TN3 8AX	MDRA Members £10 Non members £15
16 August	MDRA Challenge	Fowle Hall Oast, Willow Lane, Paddock Wood, TN12 6PE	Dressage, Jumping, Le Trek. £15 MDRA members and £20 non members

[For upcoming clinic dates please look on our website or Facebook page](#)