



FORGE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH FARRIERS AND BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION



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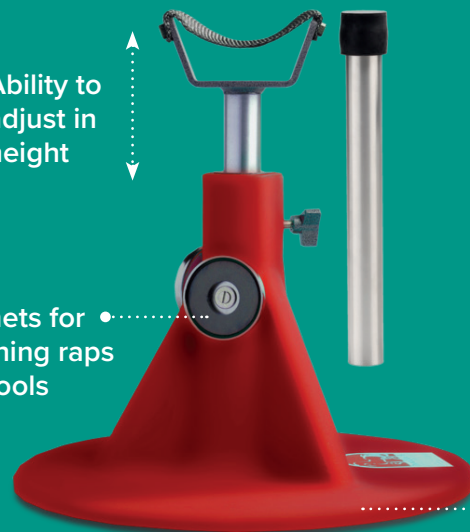
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The July 2025 issue of *Forge Knowledge* contains the article:

- **Effect of bilateral stud position on the duration of stride phases and length of stride in equine athletes**
By Abby Bunyard FWCF



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Farriers appointed to FRC Council

Farriers elected to FRC Council (four-year appointment)
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Mr B J Howson AWCF
Mr R A Kearn DipWCF
Mr C D McKell DipWCF

BFBA farrier on FRC council

Jason Sim AWCF
Daniel Harman AWCF GradDipELR

WCF farrier on FRC Council

Robin P. May AWCF

CPD Committee

Chris Linssner (Chair), Ben Benson, Abby Bunyard, Aaron Myall, Phoebe Colton, Daniel Harman, Alex Mercer, Stephen Britten, Jamie Hughes, Dan Stern, Iain Nixon, Jason Brown, Merv Allen and Doug Campbell.

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Contributions in the form of articles, reports, letters and photographs are welcomed.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

AGM Update

17th May marked my first AGM as President — and I'll admit, I didn't quite anticipate the weight of the role until I stepped up to the front of the room. But thanks to the strong foundations of the BFBA and the commitment of the team around me, it ran like clockwork.

Each member of the Executive Committee and our sub-groups delivered clear, confident updates that reflected just how much has been achieved in the past year. I've had the privilege of writing about it throughout the year, but hearing it all brought together in one room confirmed just how well this Association is working. We're in very capable hands — with dedication, direction, and genuine momentum.

My only disappointment? Liam O'Hara backed out of delivering the best joke of the day. We'll revisit that.

Congratulations to the Staffordshire branch for winning the Most New Members trophy and for marking the achievement in typical Staffordshire style, with maximum enthusiasm and minimum filter.

Livery Banquet

As President, I was honoured to be invited to the Worshipful Company of Farriers' Livery Banquet at the Mansion House in London. I've attended events in historic venues before — but this one stood apart.

From the artwork lining the grand staircase to the reception team flanking the hall with poleaxes, it was a reminder of the weight of our shared history. The sense of purpose and pride in the room was tangible, and it was a privilege to represent the BFBA there.

My thanks to Mr John Chillman for the invitation — and for the generous words during his address.

Edward Martin Cultural Exchange

This year's Edward Martin Cultural Exchange interviews have now taken place. We'll be sending a group of exceptional applicants overseas later this year and early next. They've got big boots to fill — our previous candidates set a very high bar — but I look forward to seeing how they represent the Association and share their experience.

CPD – Strengthening the Standard

This year the CPD Committee has gone above and beyond. We've delivered a programme with real weight behind it — practical, relevant, and driven by the same high standards we expect in the forge.

From early-career apprentices to FWCFs, we've aimed to offer something of genuine value to every corner of the profession. These aren't box-ticking days. They are opportunities to sharpen your thinking, challenge your methods, and leave better than you arrived.

Horses Inside Out

A standout this year was Horses Inside Out with Gillian Higgins.

It wasn't just educational — it was transformative. With smaller numbers, attendees got more from it than they bargained for. Gillian's ability to dive deep into anatomy, biomechanics, and the practical reality of our work made it

an exceptional day.

We overran because we didn't want it to end. That's a rare thing.

My thanks to Mark Humphrey for hosting, and to Gillian — who I sincerely hope we'll see again. If you missed it, you missed something that doesn't come around often.



Upcoming CPD

Hoof Boot Day – A hands-on clinic with expert fitters, helping farriers expand their services in the barefoot and remedial space. Smart, practical, and highly applicable.

Apprentice Foot Balance Day – Delivered by Chris Johnson AWCF, Rob Shave FWCF, and Stephen Hill FWCF. Education at the highest level. If you're committed to quality, this is a day worth attending.

FOCUS – The Pulse of Progress

The BFBA is the beating heart of farriery in the UK. Focus is its pulse.

Focus isn't just a trade show. It's where the profession connects, evolves, and sets the standard. It's where knowledge is challenged, ideas are shared, and farriery moves forward together.

Exhibitor spaces are already flying, and ticket sales are strong. The calibre of lectures, demonstrations, and conversations gets better every year. Whether you're just starting your journey or have decades under your belt, Focus delivers value you won't find anywhere else — because it's built by farriers, for farriers.

If you're serious about raising your game, or just keep a pinkie on the pulse — this is the place. Make the time. Be part of it. **You can't afford to miss it.**

New website

A new, user-friendly BFBA website is coming — clearer, faster, and built with members in mind. We'll keep you posted as it launches.

Farriers Week – Get Involved

We're collecting content now for next year's Farriers Week on 6th – 12th July.

Last year, one of our posts reached over 200,000 people. That's a huge platform — not just for promoting what we do, but for educating the public and showing the depth of our trade.

Get involved. Take pride in what you do. This is our opportunity to shape how farriery is seen — by the public, by our clients, and by the next generation.

In closing

This year has proven, more than ever, that farriery isn't just a job — it's a professional community, one built on shared standards, respect, and commitment to doing things properly.

Thank you to all who have supported and driven the BFBA forward. You've made a difference — and I'm proud to stand alongside you.

**Abby Bunyard FWCF,
BFBA President**



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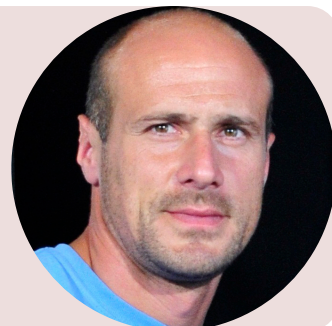


FOCUS SPEAKER TOPICS

DOMENICO CELLARO

Saturday: The effects of hard and soft surfaces on the deep and superficial digital tendons

Sunday: How the low heel and upright foot influence the whole limb in sport horses



ROBBIE MILLER AWCF CJF

Saturday: Management of lower limb deviations in foals, addressing angular, flexural and rotational limb deviations

Sunday: Can the frog stay and central sulcus be used as a viable reference to correctly determine mediolateral hoof balance?

ANDREW BOWYER FWCF GradDipELR

Saturday: Mechanical orientation and pathology of the navicular bone and podotricular apparatus. Formulating an appropriate shoeing plan

Sunday: Performance inhibitors associated with sidebone. How understanding mechanical loading of the foot can help us to formulate an appropriate shoeing plan



DR JENNY HAGEN DVM PHD CF

Saturday: The correlation between the function of the proximal locomotor system (neck, back, pelvis) on the motion quality and hoof conformation

Sunday: The impact of laterality and lameness on motion quality and hoof conformation – functional consequences of uneven feet and their management

PAUL HORNER DipWCF AWCF BSc (HONS) FWCF

Saturday: Shoeing the performance horse

Sunday: How posture helps us shoe the hind feet



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STAFFORDSHIRE BFBA BRANCH COMPETITION

At the end of May, the BFBA Staffordshire Branch Shoeing and Shoemaking Competition was held at Staffordshire County Show.

It was a fantastic few days of competition, which also included a Future Farrier class, where potential students from the blacksmithing course at Myerscough College competed with the view of finding an ATF.

Well done to everyone who took part! It was great to see and support new talent and enthusiasm.

Dorian Madin, tutor/lecturer at Myerscough said, "Well done to our BTEC Blacksmithing students who gave a good account of themselves today at Staffordshire Show. Three of the five who placed are actively looking for ATFs and are available to start as soon as their current course ends at the end of June.

The Blacksmithing Level 2 BTEC qualification includes technical drawing, metallurgy, equine biology, welding and thermal cutting as well as general blacksmithing, including shoemaking, and is the equivalent to five GCSEs.

It is an excellent course for prospective farrier apprentices as the equine biology counts as a Science GCSE. Myerscough also offers the option to do Maths GCSE alongside the course. Ultimately, it is the perfect farriery access course."

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS WHO MADE THE COMPETITION POSSIBLE...

- The Birmingham and Staffordshire Agricultural Society for providing the venue, marquee and generous prize money
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- Anvil Brand
- Colleoni
- Mustad
- Derek Gardner Tools
- Staffordshire Farm Supplies
- Little Rock Equine Vets





RESULTS

Class One - Open and Intermediate MNC Riding Horse Shoeing - Staffordshire Trophy

- 1st: Chris Hole and Ben Patrick
- 2nd: Gareth Thomas and Connor Thomas
- 3rd: Elgan Harries and Craig Williams
- 4th: Adam Bradley and Harrison Willets
- 5th: Alistair Smith and Ben McCredie
- 6th: Rob Duggan and Jamie Barnes

Class Two - Open and Intermediate Handmade Shoes Driving Horse Shoeing - Staffordshire Challenge Shield

- 1st: Sam Johnson and Oliver Arnold
- 2nd: Gareth Thomas and Connor Thomas
- 3rd: Elgan Harries and Craig Williams
- 4th: Rob Bryan and Anthony Beardsworth
- 5th: Alistair Smith and Ben McCredie
- 6th: Rob Duggan and Jamie Barnes

Class Three - Open and Intermediate NWT Horseshoes Shoemaking Class - EJA Frost Memorial Trophy

- 1st: Gareth Thomas and Connor Thomas
- 2nd: Sam Johnson and Oliver Arnold
- 3rd: Chris Hole and Ben Patrick
- 4th: Adam Bradley and Harrison Willets
- 5th: Elgan Harries and Craig Williams
- 6th: Rob Duggan and Jamie Barnes

Class Four - Stromsholm Apprentice Shoemaking Years 1 and 2

- 1st: James Adamson
- 2nd: James Lowe
- 3rd: Aiden McClury
- 4th: Max Shelmerdine
- 5th: Tom Gilbert
- 6th: Ollie Townend

Class Five - Stromsholm Apprentice Shoemaking Years 3 and 4

- 1st: Rhys Cantrill
- 2nd: Connor Thomas
- 3rd: Ben McCredie
- 4th: Molly Macgregor
- 5th: Luke Whitehead

View the full scores for each class online via the BFBA website.

HEAR FROM THE BFBA CULTURAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

KATHLEEN BEAMAN



Final Update:

"What a wonderful last week on my American journey! I was back in Rhode Island staying with Mike Paparo, who I had previously stayed with right at the beginning of my trip. We spent the week working in the wonderful sunshine along with Taylor!

Part way through the week, we headed to Connecticut for a shoe making workshop run by Nigel Fennell. What an amazing day, we really dissected the basics of shoe making as well as finding new tricks for fullering!

It was so lovely to be welcomed back into Mike's home and work with him again, a real treat for my last stop before heading home.

I just wanted to say such a big thank you to everyone who made the trip possible.

To all my hosts, the organisers and planners behind the scenes, what an amazing experience you all provided for me to expand my knowledge and experience of the profession.

I hope everyone enjoyed following along, it was great to meet so many new people and hopefully get people interested in what amazing chances our respective associations have to offer us!"

EDWARD BEESTON

15th May update:

Brilliant week with Kurt - he showed off Bend's impressive scenery, introducing me to the local blacksmith industries and shops as well as spending time in the forge. He helped me finish my hammer and made me one of his own for which I feel very lucky.

He also took me to the prehistoric hills and crater lake - two eye opening places that are worth a visit on their own. Thank you for giving me a great birthday over your way, and for introducing me to sushi - it was great experience!

22nd May update:

Another great week with Charlie Sayer CF. We took a road trip down to the redwoods on the California border, as well as spending lots of time in the forge. At the weekend we attended a certification at the Oregon farrier school - well done to everyone that attended. It was great to see everyone's enthusiasm towards the certification and the effort put on by those organising and examining.



**READ THE FULL UPDATES ON
THE BFBA FACEBOOK PAGE.**

MORE ABOUT THE EDWARD MARTIN CULTURAL EXCHANGE

The BFBA Edward Martin Cultural Exchange is organised by the British Farriers and Blacksmiths Association and the American Farrier's Association and offers graduate farriers the unique opportunity to represent their respective Associations on an educational three month trip to the USA and the UK, allowing them to travel and expand their farriery knowledge and skills whilst working with some of the most highly regarded farriers.



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00	124	4 3/4
00.5	130	5 1/10
0	134	5 1/4
0.5	138	5 2/5
1	142	5 1/2
1.5	146	5 3/4

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FAREWELL TO DAVID "SLIM" SYMONS FWCF HONS

Words by Daniel Bennett AWCF B1 Cert.Ed

The farriery industry was very saddened to learn of the recent passing of David "Slim" Symons FWCF Hons.

David was one of the legends of our industry, well known, respected and loved by many.

A pillar of farriery education from the 1960's through to the 2000's, he taught, mentored and above all inspired a whole generation of UK farriers.

Born in Manchester, during the Battle of Britain, he was the eldest of five siblings. He was an extremely hard worker and did his best in everything he turned his hand to - a work ethic he in turn instilled in his children at a young age. Chip boy, butcher's apprentice, slaughterman, soldier, milkman, blacksmith, farrier, falconer, dog breeder, rugby player, exotic podiatrist and teacher.

He left school with no qualifications, always interested in the outdoors and working with his hands. It was at school that he earned the name 'Slim', after playing the character of 'Slim Sam the Highwayman' in a school production.

Originally, he and his pals wanted to join the navy, but he was turned down because of an ear problem. He returned home disappointed, and his mother said, "I don't know why you would want to join the navy with all its low doorways. With your height why don't you try the guards?"

He went into the Lifeguards, part of the famous Household Cavalry to continue as a slaughterman, but once there he discovered there was only one place, and another guy had his heart set on it. Typically, he gave the other guy the place.

As there was a slot in farriery, which he found out through his troop leader, the then Lieutenant Andrew Parker-Bowles, he decided to give it a go, as the horses all looked amazing. So, farriery came about quite by chance.

Whilst in the guards he was very proud to have escorted the Queen during regular ceremonial duties: state visits, trooping of the colour and Princess Margaret's wedding to name a few. The only one he didn't do was a state funeral.

After four or so years he wanted to expand his knowledge of farriery and horses, so he transferred to the Royal Army Veterinary Corp at Melton Mowbray. A day after his arrival at the forge, a lifelong friend and fellow farriery legend David Gulley FWCF started as an RAVC farrier. Over the next 16 years, including two in Hong Kong, he worked his way steadily through the ranks, with his eye firmly set on becoming Farrier Sergeant Major.

In 1971 he became a Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Farriers, passing with Honours. Not bad, considering he left school with no qualifications.

He left the army when they wanted him to be a fully commissioned officer, as this meant him leaving his beloved forge and sitting behind a desk all day. He worked briefly for the Irish National Stud, eventually returning to Kent, where he set up a very successful business and achieved his lifetime goal, working out of a village forge. Personal

circumstances would see him return to the north, where once again he quickly established a flourishing business.

The next move was to Hereford to work at the School of Farriery. He had a unique way of teaching through stories and quickly established himself as a popular tutor. He made new lifelong friends and was instrumental in setting up the new site at Holme Lacy.

Slim started and ran the Hereford Master and Apprentice Competition. This was Slim's solution to the problem of the colleges, masters and apprentices not being allowed to directly communicate without the farrier training agency being involved. This worked very effectively and gave apprentices the rare opportunity to shoe a foot at a competition which was invaluable preparation towards their final exams. This was an example of Slim's outstanding problem-solving skills.

The Hereford Master and Apprentice competition continues and until this year Slim always attended and supported this competition. He loved learning and teaching and interacting with all the apprentices.

He also loved to compete and did so very successfully. As the years progressed, he would use this knowledge as he became the judge and the one handing out the prizes.

He loved to travel, visiting both Ethiopia and the Sudan supporting equine charities. Resources were scarce in those countries, and he helped to develop a shoe that could be made from old car tyres and nails from old coke cans - both of which could be found there, in abundance.

Slim was highly regarded by students, colleagues and farriers the world over. As a college lecturer and a competition judge he would always provide you with feedback which you took on board, understood and became a lifelong lesson. This is a skill which only a few master.

Married twice with 6 children, 13 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren; he was a very proud family man.

Slim will be missed by all that knew him. His legacy lives on as the School of Farriery Hereford at Holme Lacy and especially the Master and Apprentice Competition of which he was so proud of.

David "Slim" Symons was a shining beacon within farriery education and the wider industry. Although David's anvil has fallen silent, his legacy will live on in the people he taught, the people he inspired, and the friends he made spanning the generations of Farriers and Blacksmiths around the world.



Images of David throughout the years





ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

President's report to the AGM

The President, **Abby Bunyard FWCF**, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Chris Murden-Wade, who had recently been co-opted onto the Executive Committee. Abby thanked members of the EC and other BFBA committees for their dedication and hard work throughout the year.

Abby spoke about how savings in the region of £1,700 can be made from the membership benefits now available to BFBA members. Paying into membership enables a future where farriery continues to evolve, helps the BFBA to support apprentices and back initiatives that are focused on strengthening the profession.

Abby also shared how the BFBA is making the industry more accessible, creating a culture that it is there to support its members and show vets, clients and future farriers the depth of knowledge in the industry. Working with EFFA and the AFA, these relationships are also being built in Europe and across the pond. It's also growing its reach in Scotland, extending support where it is long overdue and much needed.

£185 is money well spent - enabling the fantastic work that the Association does for and on behalf of the membership to secure their future both within the industry and privately.

Annual Accounts

Due to a change of accountancy firm, the accounts presented were drafts and will be signed off in an extraordinary general meeting soon. The members' auditor Cliff Barnes gave a report, thanking the office staff and the EC for the positive work

they've done. Cliff informed the meeting that, if he is voted in again, this will be his last year as members' auditor and he looks forward to working with whoever is co-opted into the position. Abby gave a vote of thanks to the auditors and to the members' auditor.

Executive Committee Updates

Phoebe Colton, Vice-President, has completed her first year in the position. She has supported competitions including the European and National Championships, sourced sponsorship, attended the National Equine Show and BEVA, and has worked with NEWC. Phoebe also sits on the CPD Committee and is proud of the Donkey Mini-Series. She's also played a key role in the Members' Area at Focus, which improves every year.

Dan Harman sits on the CPD Committee. He is also the BFBA appointee on the FRC and attended three meetings last year. His main upcoming role is managing the Knowledge Zone at Focus, which he has done for three years.

Aaron Myall, Treasurer, sits on the Finance Committee. Aaron also sits on the CPD Committee. At the end of 2024, he went to a North of Ireland Veterinary Association event in Northern Ireland for talks on registering farriers there. He also attended the National Equine Show to educate the public about the role of farriers. Aaron was also involved in the Trailblazers, contacting ATFs to invite them to the meeting. He's also been involved in the new website, the charity application and the lease.

Huw Dyer has been working on the Charity application, and is hopeful that this will be approved. Huw has also attended the

Hoofcare Summit and continues to work with the Cultural Exchange Programme. He also attended BEVA.

Craig D'Arcy has been a huge practical help with the physical set up of Focus. He also attended the NIVA event in Northern Ireland, attended and supported the Trailblazers meeting, and has worked with the Staffordshire Show on a project called Farriers for the Future.

Sam Masters' main role has been working with the Focus team to ensure the events run smoothly, and looks forward to becoming more involved in the leasing project.

The EC welcomed **Chris Murden-Wade**, who looks forward to becoming more involved now he's been co-opted to the Committee.

Other Committee Updates

The Craft Committee

Jim Balfour thanked the Craft Committee for their work throughout the year, which has been a busy one with the International, the National Championships and the European Championships.

The International was a great success, and hopefully more teams will be taking part this year thanks to Danny Bennett. Jim thanked Mark and Danny for being joint Chief Stewards, and to Jed for doing the scores. Jim also gave an update on the National Championships, which will hopefully take place in the same venue again this year, and the Europeans, where he was Manager for Team GB.

Danny Bennett gave a comprehensive report on the International Championship 2024, thanking all who were involved.

The Craft Committee has also done a lot of work around equine welfare and social license, putting together a set of guidelines for any competition organiser to try and protect the horse, the competition organisers and the volunteers, as well as the future of live horseshoeing competitions. The Committee is also currently working on a package of information for competition organisers moving forward in the future to help them with health and safety rules, procedures and protecting the sport's future.

The Blacksmiths Craft Committee

Don Mallett from the Blacksmiths Craft Committee reported that he's been working to prepare the Forge at Stoneleigh to run blacksmithing courses.

Don has arranged sponsorship for this year's BFBA Team Blacksmithing Competition at Focus, where there will be six teams. Round 10 of the National Blacksmith Champion competition will also be run at Focus this year.

International Bladesmithing Competition

Kirk Dexter reported that he has been trying to increase interest in the competition, now in its third year. Two new sponsors have come on board as well as repeat sponsors continuing to support, nearly doubling the value of sponsorship. Kirk also thanked Merv Allen for his role as judge last year. This year's competition will include a top bladesmith as judge and a competitor with a microphone giving commentary as they compete. The Sharp Zone will return, and Kirk is hoping for more exhibitors in this area.

Editorial Committee Update

Liam O'Hara reported on his first year as Chair of the Editorial Committee for Forge Magazine, which also saw Sarah Shephard join as the new Editor at the same time. He thanked all the members of the Panel and the EC for their feedback and help.

The Committee has made changes throughout the year to manage the content in Forge, with new regular features delivering better content for our readers. Future plans include a regular historical feature.

CPD Committee Update

Chris Linssner gave an update on his first year as Chair on the CPD Committee. There has been a First Aid Day, a Donkey webinar series, a Fat Pony webinar, and two welding courses. The End-Point Assessment Days have proved to be very successful, and there are plans for a Foot Balance Course for apprentices. There have also been an Anatomical Painting Workshop and Hoof Boot Fitting Days.

Eastlake & Beachell Insurance Update

Beth Eaton said that there had been 31 claims in 2024, compared to 33 the previous year. 19 were injury to horse claims and 12 were property.

Eastlake and Beachell have seen four claims on the ARG legal side, but as some of the claims go straight to the legal expenses due to being confidential, there may be more.

The team have been going to colleges to talk to apprentices about what they need to think about in relation to insurance protection.

They currently have seven vehicle insurers available. Claims inflation is occurring due to rising costs. Particular claims of note this year include vehicle fires, which highlights the importance of being correctly insured for the carriage of gas.

E&B have also offered sponsorship and support this year, including contributing to the travel insurance of the Exchange candidates. The value of the contributions made to the BFBA by E&B this year total £13,295.

A discussion was held around young driver insurance, particularly for ATFs with young apprentices. E&B will try and get a quote for over 21s, but noted that the premiums were likely to be high. Under 20s were very unlikely to be insured.

Morrish Solicitors Update

Damian Kelly gave an update on behalf of Morrish Solicitors, the team who act for BFBA members in relation to FRC disciplinary matters. They also deal with personal injury, family, wills and probate, and conveyancing. There is a helpline number and an email for members. They also frequently get calls from farriers for general advice.

Over the past year, Morrish have had five instructions to represent members in relation to FRC cases that have reached the Disciplinary Committee, one of which is pending. Of the other four concluded cases, two were funded by ARAG.

Damian reminded members that if they need to contact Morrish, the earlier they do so the better so that they can either signpost to more support or deal with it.

Discussions were also held around whether the FRC send out reminders if the annual declaration hasn't been signed or received by post. The onus is on the farrier to make sure it's put in, and to send by registered post for a record.

Other Updates

A proposition for a new rule was put forward for any professional advice being sought by EC members on official BFBA business to be sent via Head Office. Any financial decision decided by the EC must be signed off by the treasurer. This process happens currently, but there is no formal rule around it. The proposition was put to members to vote and all voted in favour.

The **Derbyshire Branch** received the award for recruiting the most members in 2024.

The following members were voted in unanimously:

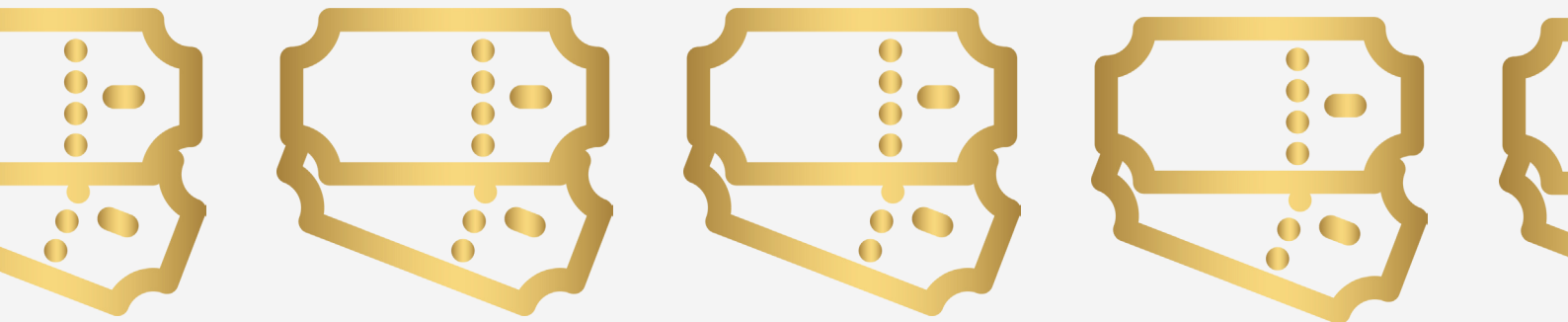
Abby Bunyard for President and Executive Committee

Craig D'Arcy for Executive Committee

Dan Harman for Executive Committee

Cliff Barnes for Association Members Auditor





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- **Members' Rate *Early Bird Pre-Registration*** Entry to BFBA Focus, International Team Horseshoeing Championship, International Bladesmithing Competition and International Blacksmithing Competition
- **FREE Delivery** on all BFBA merchandise
- **Discounted Members' Rate (on average 25%) for all BFBA courses** eg, AWCF/FWCF courses and all CPD courses
- **Bi-monthly Forge magazine**, keeping you up to date with the industry, and farrier science **Forge Knowledge**, bringing you educational content with technical articles, research articles and case studies, enabling you to gain CPD points
- Online access to American Farriers Association's **No Foot, No Horse magazine**
- **Access to the Members' Area** on our website which is rich in educational videos and articles, including past Focus lectures
- **AFA Members' Rate** to attend the American Farriers Association Annual Convention
- **12.5% OFF** Eastlake and Beachell Forge insurance, plus preferential rates on Pensions and Healthcare plans
- **25% OFF** retail at Red Horse Products Ltd plus email them to receive a FREE Farriers Sample Pack
- **10% OFF** Silverback Chaps with FREE embroidery (single name) plus a FREE Silverback T-shirt
- **10% OFF** Stromsholm Gibbins aprons with FREE embroidery (single name)
- **10% OFF** Handmade Shoes (UK) Ltd. HMS exclusive tools only to include: Beanie Tools, Ridolfo Tools and Kingery (Tosakay Forge) Tools
- **5% OFF** Londonderry Forge tool maintenance and knife sharpening kit and consumables, eg, buffing compound, expander wheels and belts etc.
- **FREE DELIVERY** at The Shoeing Lab on Werkman Ortho kit 1.0 and 2.0
- **BFBA EXCLUSIVE Embroidered Farrier Pack** from Giraffe Graphics for only £99.99 plus VAT
- **FREE** half-hour legal advice over the phone on any issue with Morrish Solicitors plus preferential rates on their other services
- **FREE initial consultation** with Scottish legal firm Balfour and Manson with a 12% discount on any chargeable work
- **The Edward Martin MBE Cultural Exchange:** unique opportunity to represent the Association on an educational 3-month trip to the USA. Travel and expand your farriery knowledge and skills whilst working with some of the most highly regarded farriers (for Graduates only), **or** the opportunity to be part of a growing list of hosts for an AFA American student on their visit to the UK
- **10% discount** at Federation of Small Businesses
- **FREE** half-hour consultation on dispute resolution with Venn Mediation
- **10% OFF** Hoofit farrier app subscription
- **One FREE** apprentice contract per year (for ATFs only)
- **30 minutes' free** HR/employment law advice with Raspberry HR (for ATFs only)
- **10% discount** on The Hoof Boot Shop fit kits at their workshops
- **Subscription discounts of between 12.5 - 25%** with Hoofflix.TV
- **Two free months** of access to the paid podcast 'Brian Mullins Farriery Podcast'
- **15% off** any photoshoot (business/pet/horse/competition/family) with Longotano Photography
- **10% off** individual orders at Seren Handmade (hoodies) - makers of the new BFBA longback hoodies and a Business Bundle for farriers



**EXISTING TO REPRESENT,
SUPPORT AND BE THE VOICE
OF OUR MEMBERS**



TEN YEARS OF THE BEST AT APPLEBY AWARDS

Taking a new approach at a very old Fair has created opportunities to better understand and support horse welfare in a uniquely challenging environment...

Appleby Horse Fair has been part of Redwings' calendar for many years. In addition to providing veterinary expertise and clinical support for equine welfare charities where necessary, other staff work as part of the team engaging visitors at the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) marquee. Since 2015, Redwings has also run the 'Best At Appleby' awards to celebrate the many examples of welfare-friendly horse care and handling spotted among the hundreds of horses present at the annual event.

The awards are a ground-breaking initiative to show that welfare organisations want to recognise and reward the positive alongside addressing cases of poor welfare when they arise. Enforcement teams, led by the RSPCA, will always have a vital part to play at the Fair, but Best At Appleby attempts to mitigate any 'them and us' feelings, and create opportunities to find common ground where people with a love of horses discover they always have plenty to talk about! The popularity of Best At Appleby demonstrates that by shifting our own approach, we can transform our ability to start conversations, build relationships and move beyond generalisation and assumption on both sides.

Best Hoof forward

The awards have evolved during the 10 years since they were first given out. An early development was the introduction of a specific Best Hoof Health award. Putting feet in the spotlight reflects the integral importance of appropriate hoof care and shoeing to support the type and amount of work many horses are undertaking at the Fair. Redwings works with farrier, educator and welfare advocate Dean Bland to identify and present the Best Hoof Health award at Appleby. With almost three decades of farriery experience to his name, including being part of the Equestrian Support Team at the Rio Olympics in 2016, Dean generously volunteers his time to support Best At Appleby each year and says that the conversations he has there are invaluable on many levels.



SUPPORTING HOOF HEALTH AT APPLEBY

DEAN BLAND, FARRIER, EDUCATOR AND WELFARE ADVOCATE

“My involvement with the Best At Appleby awards began in 2016 when I worked with Redwings' Campaigns Manager to conduct a Hoof Health Survey at the Fair. Collecting data on hoof health issues seen among horses at Appleby means that an objective, targeted approach can be applied to our subsequent outreach work.

The survey identified three prevalent hoof health challenges at the Fair:

- Evidence of hoof distortion associated with habitual neglect of farriery provision. With distortion believed to emanate from above the tip of P3, involving sensitive laminae and therefore relevant to Section 4 of the Animal Welfare Act.
- Evidence of horses shod with long toes and heavy-weighted shoes to generate an artificial gait characterised by a high knee action, an approach we describe as a vernacular shoeing style.
- Evidence of trotters and pacers being raced on the Flashing Lane with heavily worn shoes, increasing the risk of slipping, interference and strain injuries.

Our Best Hoof Health award at Appleby is more than just a prize for good shoeing, I am looking for evidence of three key elements when judging potential candidates:

- Regular hoofcare by the owner
- Regular hoofcare by a registered farrier
- The equine being trimmed and shod appropriately

In addition to supporting development of our

engagement work at Appleby, the survey also helped inform the creation of Forging Welfare Partnerships (FWP), a collaborative project designed to support farriers as professionals on the front-line of equine welfare, encourage better links and partnership working between farriers and equine welfare field officers and provide communication tools to help farriers raise or respond to welfare issues that may arise.

The survey also showed that farriers engaged by horse owners from the GRT community are often among the least experienced, with newly qualified and even apprentice farriers being commonly engaged for farriery services, meaning access to information and support such as that provided by FWP can be particularly beneficial.

The survey also contributed to the development of a Visual Grading Scale (VGS) for Hoof Distortion, supporting composite welfare assessments. The VGS has evolved with support from members of the National Equine Welfare Council, including Redwings.

Filmed footage of Best Hoof Health at Appleby is available at facebook.com/HappyHealthyHorses/videos/290435321833777/ and tiktok.com/@thebestatappleby/video/7512800330900458774. ”

Dean is founder of Well Equine, a farriery-centred welfare consultancy. For more information go to wellequine.co.uk.

A Fair like no other

The Fair is a huge spectacle, with around 10,000 horse owners and 30,000 visitors descending on the small town of Appleby in the beautiful landscape of Cumbria and Westmorland during the first week of June each year. It is not a formally organised or ticketed event and no-one has overall responsibility for it, instead being termed a 'gathering' to reflect the informal coming together to buy and sell horses that has been taking place for over 200 years. However, with so many people and animals attending, there are significant impacts and considerations to be managed, including safety, traffic control, parking and toilet facilities. The Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group brings together stakeholders including local community groups, Fairgoer representatives, local councils, police and the RSPCA, working together to help the Fair run as smoothly and safely as possible.

Appleby Horse Fair is steeped in Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Traveller traditions and brings together people from these distinct ethnic groups for what is often an annual family holiday. Many Fairgoers from all over the UK still make the journey to Appleby with a horse-drawn bowtop wagon, allowing several weeks to progress at a pre-mechanical pace and using traditional 'stopping places' where possible for safe breaks along the way.

The large numbers of people with Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage at Appleby is a rare chance for those of us from other ethnic backgrounds to mingle with and speak to people from often very private communities and discover more about their relationships with horses, and the cultural and social contexts within which their horse care practices are shaped.

One size doesn't fit all

The Fair is also complex. The sheer numbers of people and horses combined with cars, lorries, caravans and a range of horse-drawn vehicles means patience and agility are often key when getting around. The geography of the Fair also sees constant movement of people and horses over a mile-long stretch, from the 'flashing lane' where trotters are put through their paces on the outskirts of the town to the central bridge from where horses are seen being cooled, washed and rehydrated in the River Eden or rested outside the pubs.

With many hundreds of horses and their owners congregating in Appleby during the Fair it is unsurprising that a wide range of attitudes and practices around horse care and handling are evident. At any equestrian event on such a scale, incidents of poor welfare are likely to co-exist alongside examples of exemplary horsemanship and it is unsurprising that Appleby presents a broad spectrum.

Each year, conversations between enforcement agencies and Fairgoers are needed to uphold minimum welfare standards and a small number of serious, sometimes tragic incidents have blighted the reputation of the Fair over the years. However, these cases are often viewed with as much concern within the Fairgoing community as beyond. In 2024 a horse was overworked to collapse and died, prompting united condemnation from those within the traveller communities as well as welfare agencies and the police. The incident was caught on CCTV and an appeal for information launched. An active RSPCA investigation is on-going.

As with a serious welfare issue in any context, incidents are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the individual concerned is held responsible for their actions if appropriate and possible. Social, cultural or ethnic contexts are irrelevant to horses and the law. And if we need a reminder that disturbing and outdated attitudes to interacting with horses still exist at every level of the equestrian world, a recent story about an Olympic dressage rider's extreme and sustained use of the whip in 'the horse's best interests' shows yet again that horses can suffer at the hands of people from any walk of life.

It is also important to note that while Appleby is often hailed as the largest Gypsy Fair in Europe, not all Fairgoers have Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage. Horse owners from a far wider range of backgrounds are present at the Fair, meaning generalisations about ethnicity can be inaccurate and unhelpful.

Supporting welfare at Appleby

Appleby undeniably presents a challenge to equine welfare agencies on a range of levels. There are often competing motivations behind people's behaviour at such a public and highly-anticipated event that can affect interactions with horses. But there are also issues which arise simply from lack of awareness and updated knowledge. An example would be the view that offering a horse water immediately after being worked is dangerous as it risks colic. Vets and charities at the Fair are keen to find ways to reassure owners that watering after exercise is far less risky than persistent dehydration. Building trust is an important factor in how messages like this are received and acted on. In addition, seeing peers watering their horses after being ridden or driven is a far more effective way of encouraging a wider change in behaviour and influencing owners who may not wish to engage with welfare organisations at the Fair.

Finding partners to promote good equine welfare within the Fairgoing community has always been one of the goals of Best At Appleby. As humans, we are more likely to be influenced by messages from within our own networks than outside agendas. The Best At Appleby films were created to build on strong relationships created through the awards and explore some of the issues that may affect, not only horse welfare, but perceptions of horse welfare at the Fair and among Fair-going communities.

The films are produced in partnership with Fairgoers who we have met and built relationships with thanks to Best At Appleby. Without the awards, our ability to open discussions and work in partnership with members of relevant communities would be far more limited.

You can find the films by scrolling down Redwings' Appleby Horse Fair Welfare Awards and Advice YouTube

playlist. As well as celebrating the partnerships between horses and their owners, the films also address issues such as tethering horses safely, hoof health, monitoring a horse's weight and staying safe when on the Appleby flashing lane. The films also offer a unique and very personal insight into some of the stories of Fairgoers and the huge part horses play in their lives.

The Best At Appleby playlist is at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_4ZPA9xozaHr6P-wR2H5wgiRSMxzGpyl

A decade of Best At Appleby

Best At Appleby has made a significant contribution to welfare organisations' ability to engage with and learn about the many varied owners and their horses at the Fair. The conversations have potential not just to help influence welfare standards at the Fair itself, but also enable us to have discussions around broader horse care and handling with people who we are otherwise unlikely to have the chance to meet and get to know.

Reflecting on 10 years of the awards, there is always more that we want to do to support equine welfare at Appleby, as in many other areas of the equestrian world. In addition to the vital role of enforcement, using the awards as a tool for mutually respectful dialogue has opened up a new, more proactive and collaborative approach to working with many of the thousands of responsible, caring Fairgoers who share our own passion for horses and their wellbeing.



Above: Dean presents the 2024 Best Hoof Health award to Wilbur and his owner Rosie

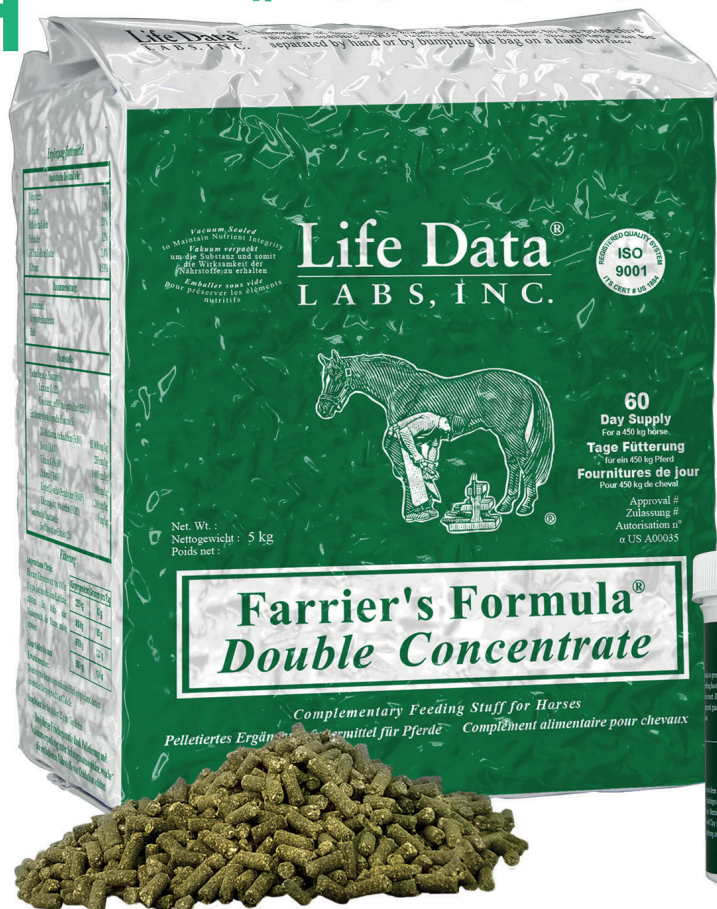
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HOOF INTEGRITY HOOF WALL STRENGTH
HOOVES TO HOLD A SHOE
HEALTHY FROG
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BUILD
HOOF
HEALTHIER FEET
HEALTHY
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TALES FROM INDIA

Jung Singh, a student from the Flying Anvil Foundation in India, sent us these images of a case study involving a mare who was suffering particularly badly. Jung worked to undo the effects of some incorrect treatment on the mare's damaged hooves and improve her condition, despite the obstacles to good farriery present in India including lack of access to materials and management conditions for the horses.

Thanks to Jung for sharing these pictures with us - it's a fantastic example of a farrier in India going the extra mile to help a horse.

WORDS FROM JUNG

“

I'd often been given photos of this mare. Many local products had already been used on her feet by the local people, but the problem was acute.

I visited the farm and after learning that the owner was desperate and tired of investing money, I bought the horse off him and took her to another farm to try and help her.

I then removed the incorrect work that had been done to her feet, and she was greatly relieved. She'd been very hot-tempered and was in pain.

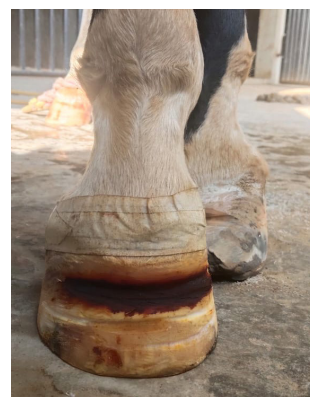
By gathering materials including glue, pads and some specific tools, I somehow managed to make a hoof that enabled her to walk, and also removed the bacteria that had built up. The previous incorrect work had increased the bacteria invasion in the hoof by putting nails in it, and had also disturbed the balance of the hoof.

There is no shop in the whole of India where you can easily buy farriery tools. If you order from outside, the shipping charges are very high. It's just not possible for everyone to access treatment - some people get upset even after paying money for normal hoof trimming.

When I next removed the scab, the growth was improving but another bacterial infection was developing - that's when I realised that the weather was not suiting this particular tape. Lack of maintenance on the farm meant there was a lot of mud and water spillage, which were not good for the hooves.

55 days later and things were greatly improved, the toes were aligning and her movement was much better.

”



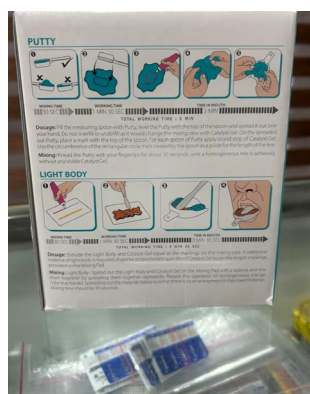
THE COST OF SHOEING IN INDIA

The costs to shoe a horse in India varies depending on the region and the farrier's skill level.

Trained farriers, such as those from the Flying Anvil Foundation, typically charge around £20 - £50. Specialist or corrective shoeing, especially if using imported materials, can increase to around £60 - £120.

Many farriers face challenges like lack of access to quality tools, shoes and forges, especially in rural areas. Occasionally, clients also refuse to pay the full amount following shoeing, or stop responding to calls or messages. This makes it even more challenging for farriers who already struggle with limited resources and who travel long distances for the job.

Untrained "street" farriers charge between £2 - £4 for a full set of shoes, depending on if it's a horse or a pony.



THE FLYING ANVIL FOUNDATION

According to the 2019 animal census, there are over 1.1 million equines in India. Equine ownership is an important source of livelihood for many families, and so maintaining the health of these animals is paramount.

India faces challenges in providing quality farriery due to a lack of formal training facilities, an informal workforce and lack of farriery regulations.

The Flying Anvil Foundation is a unique project in India to support the farriery profession and improve the welfare and wellbeing of equines throughout the country.

In 2013, Bernard Duvernay of Flying Anvil Foundation (FAF), Geneva, Switzerland set up the FAF Farriery Institute Dundlod in Rajasthan, India. A not-for-profit organisation Flying Anvil Foundation India (FAF-INDIA) was formed to manage the institute's operations, and to support the farriery profession in India. It is the first formal civilian farriery training institute in India.

FAF-INDIA's mission is to foster quality hoofcare and promotion of knowledge in farriery. It works with local partners to organise courses and workshops to raise the standard of farriery in India.

One such course is the Farrier Certificate Course. This is a two-module course of 3 weeks each conducted at the Foundation's institute in Dundlod, Rajasthan.

The course covers topics like anatomy, horse handling, trimming, cold shoeing, forging and hot fitting, liveness, corrective shoeing and more.

FAF-INDIA also runs short courses for equine vets, local street farriers and shoe making (forging).

They also support students into employment following the courses.

The Foundation's goal is to help communities and professionals improve and assure their own sustainable economic progress.

VISIT FLYINGANVILFOUNDATION.ORG TO LEARN MORE.



SHOEING FEI ELITE SHOWJUMPERS

Words by Richard Newbert DipWCF

Horses have always been a big part of my life. Coming from a multi-generational family of farriers, my earliest memories are of striking the anvil of my grandfather Frank's anvil with any old hammer or piece of steel, most likely just getting in the way at his forge in Tuxford, Nottinghamshire. I'm not sure how far back the trade tradition in my family goes, but the records on Google stop in the early 1800s. From there, I wasn't sure what to do when I left school, and since my brother Mark and father Paul were in the trade, I thought I'd give it a try.

In 2002 I was fortunate to have inside knowledge when it came to an apprenticeship given the family history and was lucky enough to be accepted to train in Hose Leicestershire, home of the legendary Hose competition, with Stuart Spence AFCL and Richard Spence AWCF where I had the opportunity to work with all disciplines of horses from riding schools to Olympic show jumpers and eventers, not to mention the various amounts of hunters and racehorses. You name it, we did it at some point! Back then we made all the shoes for the day before we got to the first yard, and then spent many hours in the forge

at night practising college shoes or competition shoes - mainly a lot of scrap. Still, we always managed to find a job for them.

I skipped the pre-farrier course, having worked alongside family and the Spence family, and took the entrance exam instead. From there, I enrolled at Hereford's Holme Lacy College under the watchful eye of Slim Symons and qualified in 2006 with a Diploma from the Worshipful Company of Farriers.

Since I qualified, I have been based near my home in north Nottinghamshire, serving the borders of South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire. Being so close to the A1, this area appears to be hugely popular among professional riders of all disciplines. I am fortunate to work with many of these riders, and I have expanded my knowledge and skills over the years.

My most significant achievement to date was having multiple horses compete at what was then the 4* Burghley Horse Trials. I had winners in the Burghley young event classes with Matthew Wright and Judy Bradwell that year.

After the COVID lockdowns, I attended a Dr. Mark Caudwell CPD clinic and subsequently enrolled in the AWCf course. With significant assistance from Sarah Logie FWCF and Mark Humphrey AWCf, I successfully passed the theory component and am now preparing for the practical portion.

As I progressed in my career, I began to specialise in shoeing elite showjumpers, a craft that demands both precision and a deep understanding of equine biomechanics. Working with top-tier competitors exposed me to the complexities of balancing performance with the health and well-being of the horse. This focus on meticulous care and innovation led me to explore various shoeing techniques and materials, always aiming to provide the best possible support for these extraordinary athletes. My journey ultimately led me to the FEI's rigorous standards for equine welfare and performance.



In 2014, the world's most extensive study into the effect of arena surfaces on the orthopaedic health of sport horses was published by the FEI.

The results of a four-year collaboration between eight experts from six universities, three equine and racing-specific research and testing centres, and horse charities in Sweden, the UK, and the United States. The white paper brings together the latest data and published scientific papers on arena and turf surfaces, as well as the effects these have on horses in training and competition.

Key properties of footing, and the effects of footing on horses' physiological and biomechanical responses, are described in the white paper, as well as the optimal composition, construction, and maintenance of arenas for maximising equine performance while minimising injury risk.

Current methods of measuring the physical properties of surfaces, as well as essential surface preparation and maintenance techniques, are also discussed in the white paper in terms that are easily understood by riders, trainers, course designers, and arena builders, to guide future progress in providing suitable competition and training surfaces for sport horses.

THE FÉDÉRATION EQUESTRE INTERNATIONALE

FEI stands for The Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI for short) and is the International Governing body of equestrian sports.

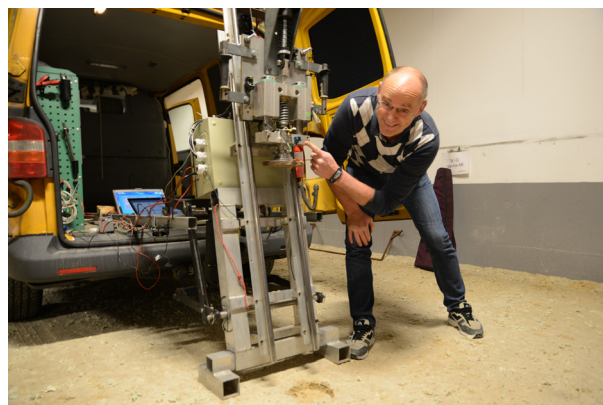
Very simply, they are the highest authority in Equestrian Sport, responsible for developing the sport globally, and tasked with refining and improving the rules and regulations, and codes of conduct. This includes areas such as horse welfare, establishing rules and regulations, and approving equestrian schedules for Championships, Continental and Regional Games, as well as the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"The Equine Surfaces White Paper is the biggest international collaboration of its kind and is vital to understanding how surfaces work to reduce injury risks to horses," said John McEwen, FEI 1st Vice President and Chair of the FEI Veterinary Committee. "Now, thanks to scientific research, we can fully understand how the right surfaces, with the necessary preparation and ongoing maintenance, can extend the working lives of sport horses and produce the best performances."

Under the new FEI's team studies, led by Swedish professor Lars Roepstorff, DVM PhD, a mechanical hoof called the Orono biomechanical surface tester was developed to evaluate surfaces, ensuring they are consistently and safely graded between 1 and 5, with 3 being the optimum condition.

A sand mix of both fibre and textile, with the exact amount of water, is what Lars is trying to repeat across all FEI arenas. He believes grass has 3-4 decimeters (a metric unit of length equal to one-tenth of a meter) underground. This is how far the power is spread out, which helps to take the maximum load off the horse.

These advancements highlight the importance of a holistic approach to equine welfare, where scientific research and practical applications converge to enhance safety and performance. The FEI's commitment to collaborating with experts from around the world has set a new benchmark in understanding the intricate relationship between surfaces and the biomechanics of sport horses. This endeavour not only benefits professional riders and horses but also contributes to the education of those involved in equestrian sports, fostering a culture of informed decision-making.



FINDINGS

On a temporary surface/arena, there is a depth of 12-14 centimetres of surface, meaning the amount of water is critical to create the optimum surface.

Not too hard to create shock waves in the lower limbs

Not too soft that the hoof rotates excessively into the surface ^{2,3}

CUSHIONING

At gallop, you have 1.5 – 2 times the body weight in peak force on each limb.

At canter, you have up to 1.5 times the body weight in peak force on each limb ⁴.

The role of surface testing and maintenance extends beyond the mechanics of equestrian arenas. It integrates deeply with horse management strategies, including adjustments to training regimens and equipment. By understanding the interaction between surfaces and equine biomechanics, trainers, farriers, and veterinarians can refine their approaches to enhance both performance and health. This collaboration of scientific innovation and equestrian expertise ensures that horse welfare remains at the core of competitive sport.

Proper surface maintenance is only one part of a broader framework. Shoeing plays an equally significant role in achieving the delicate equilibrium between performance demands and the physical well-being of the horse.

In the landing phase after a jump, it can be up to 4 times the body weight, so it's essential when considering the correct shoeing plan for each horse that we try to compromise between performance and welfare.

GRIP

As part of the horse's natural shock absorption mechanics, during the first phase of landing, the hoof slides on the surface. If you look at high-speed videos, this becomes clear.

Shoeing elite horses is always a balancing act between performance and minimising the risk of injury.

On hard ground, it is possible to achieve greater jump height, although this places significant stress on the horse during both take-off and landing. The same goes for grip. To be able to ride as fast as possible in the turns, but at the same time, you get increased loading through the hoof capsule, as it's not able to glide in its natural way. Therefore, we need a shoe that allows for a slight glide but not so much that it causes a slip, while also creating stability and distributing load during mid-stance and reducing lever arm forces during breakover.

This intricate balance between cushioning and grip underscores the importance of tailoring shoeing plans to the unique needs of each horse. Factors such as the type of ground they traverse, their discipline, and their physical build must all be carefully weighed. For show jumpers, the surface on which they compete can significantly impact their performance and safety, necessitating a meticulous selection of shoe materials and design.

Due to the standardisation of surfaces worldwide, I can create a shoeing plan for a surface that can be repeated regardless of its location.

SHOEING

The horse-hoof-ground interaction is influenced by the structure and material properties of the contacting surface of the hoof. This includes the way the hoof is balanced, choice of shoes or no shoes, type of shoe, the current condition of the shoe, the structure of the solar surface of the foot, and current hoof growth (Harvey et al., 2012; Parks, 2011).

As riding and sports horses are expected to compete on a variety of surfaces and under different conditions, these choices are essential to help the horse perform to the best of its ability. Changing this interface will primarily affect performance in relation to friction, traction, and damping during the loading phase of the stride, as well as the resistance to propulsive effort in the unloading phase.

Currently, studies have focused on the effect of changing the foot or shoe whilst standardising the surface. Often, the standard surface is a hard surface, such as concrete, asphalt or a rubberised runway, and this limits the generalizability of the information to locomotion on arena surfaces that have different physical properties, as the contact area and surface deformation are quite different.

Shoeing with steel shoes was found to increase the maximal vertical force compared to barefoot (Roepstorff et al., 1999), but maximum deceleration and vibration frequency may be reduced by using light shoes made of polymers and pads made of synthetic rubber (Benoit et al., 1993). These differences may be less pronounced on surfaces with superior damping characteristics, but little information is currently available.

A gradual palmar/plantar shift in the centre of pressure (COP) due to hoof growth (van Heel et al., 2006) and backwards tilting of the foot in unshod hooves (Roepstorff et al., 1999) may influence the depth of penetration of the heel into a compliant surface during loading.

Long toes are also reported to prolong breakover timing, and due to an increase in the length of the resistance arm, there is an increase in tension on the DDFT to initiate breakover (Clayton 1988), and toe penetration depth is likely to increase.

Hoof pitch rotation during early stance due to the heel sinking into the surface has been reported (Chateau et al., 2006), but the magnitudes may vary considerably on softer surfaces.



Shoes with wider heels, such as rolling reversal shoes, are reported to reduce penetration into the ground at the heels and therefore DDFT extension (Denoix and Crevier-Denoix, 2007). Although this is a remedial shoe, it highlights the changes in the hoof-ground interaction and limb loading patterns that can occur due to shoe design.

Sports horses may be shod with a variety of shoe types or may be unshod, depending on their individual needs.

Further studies are needed to quantify the effects of these variables on horses working on compliant surfaces. It is important that shear properties of the surface are known to make the most appropriate decision (Peterson et al., 2012). However, to date, there is no literature reporting on their effects during sport-specific movement.

Unfortunately, inappropriate choices can lead to excessive concussive forces and strain on the limbs.

FRONT SHOE SPECIFICS

My personal choice is the aluminium Blacksmith Italia CAKLB roller shoe.



Lightweight, its large surface area is inclined from the upper edge outside to the lower inside edge that extends from quarter to quarter.

The flat heels support the back of the hoof on penetrable surfaces.

For horses on tight turns, the facilitation of the roll produced by the shoe reduces asymmetric pressures on the joints and sprains on collateral ligaments.

The facilitation of the dorsal and diagonal roll reduces the peak of tension of the deep digital flexor tendon (DDFT) in the navicular region.

The addition of pads to the front shoes helps catch the frog and prevent prolapse (the "toilet seat effect"), while retaining some natural hoof health and reducing shock. I recommend a 4–5-week cycle mainly because these horses are on a high-performance feed and grow a ton of hoof all year round.

Shoe fit for me is nothing fancy or complicated, just good proportions with a centre of section heel fit, no more, no less. I feel that although support is a huge factor in keeping the horse sound, it's of no use if the shoes are too long and wide and fall off at the most crucial time, when every second counts, the blame trickles down the chain of command.

HIND SHOES

Simple concave shoes with a bold toe something like the Vulcan shoes from MNC shod with length and width to the bulbs of the heels I believe allows the rider to push the horse deeper and closer in to a fence without the risk of crashing through it. The length provides a stable platform and prevent reverse rotation into the surface as the horse articulates its limbs and pushes off to jump, the added grip from a concave shoe provides stability through a tight turn.



Hind shoes serve a complementary role to the front shoes, focusing on stability and balance during high-performance movements. Concave shoes with a balanced design and reinforced quarters are a popular choice as they provide durability without burdening the horse with unnecessary weight. The design features slightly bevelled inner edges, which better manage strain during sharp turns and uneven terrain, while promoting a natural gait.

Unlike the front shoes, hind shoes are less about reducing deep digital flexor tension and more about facilitating efficient energy transfer through the limbs. Proper fitting is paramount, ensuring adequate support across the heels and quarters while avoiding overextension, which could compromise speed and traction.

Pads are rarely added to hind shoes but can be considered for horses facing added stress due to frequent, intense training schedules. Like front shoes, a timely replacement cycle is crucial for maintaining optimal performance and preventing hoof growth from interfering with shoe fit. Ensuring balance and proportionality in the hind shoe setup provides a seamless connection between all aspects of hoof mechanics, contributing to enhanced locomotion and better recovery after jumps.



I stumbled upon this preferred method after a particular horse had an unknown lameness issue which had both veterinarians, and myself puzzled.

It was only after browsing the stalls at BFBA Focus that I came across the blacksmith shoes and had an eureka moment, which turned out to be a success for me and the horse. It was after this that we began using them for a performance advantage, rather than just when horses were lame.

RIDERS' THOUGHTS

When asked about the riders' thoughts, they responded that it's like running in a pair of old boots, then swapping to the latest pair of Nike Air trainers. However, they added that they only felt it was worth the transition to the current setup on high-level horses jumping 130cm and above classes.

I asked why they wouldn't consider this setup for lower-level horses. They explained that cost was a significant factor, but also noted that the horse's technique was different. The horses tend to stand off the fences more often because they're young and immature, requiring some speed to ease propulsion rather than raw power.

With the aluminium, they have more confidence in a fence, and in turn, the horse moves more freely and straight during locomotion.

The trainer says the horses have less delay on landing, and breakover appears to happen faster, setting the horse up for the next fence off the turn and allowing the front feet to get out of the way of its hind feet.

The transition to using aluminium shoes in high-performance settings was not without its learning curve. Early trials required careful monitoring to ensure the horses adapted seamlessly, particularly during abrupt changes in footing or weather conditions. Riders and farriers alike collaborated extensively, fine-tuning the fit, angle, and weight distribution to achieve optimal results. Over time, a pattern emerged: horses not only demonstrated improved control and propulsion but also appeared to recover faster after intense training sessions or competitions.

This revelation opened the door to further experimentation, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern engineering principles. For instance, the integration of shock-absorbent materials beneath the shoes has been explored to mitigate the impact on joints during repeated landings, particularly when jumping over higher fences. This evolving partnership between rider intuition and technological innovation continues to redefine what is possible in equestrian sports.

Vet inspection confirms horses have more energy about them and are more willing to jump.

The combined advancements in shoe design and fitting strategies ultimately demonstrate how precision engineering improves equine performance. From aluminium front shoes that aid stability on tight turns to concave hind shoes that enhance propulsion, every aspect of the setup aims to fine-tune movements and maximise efficiency. This setup has particularly resonated with riders and trainers operating at higher levels of competition, where the stakes demand every possible edge.

Such innovations are not without their challenges, however. The costs associated with premium materials and custom fitting are significantly high, often limiting accessibility to elite horses and riders. Despite these limitations, the gains in competitive performance and the reduction in physical strain on horses emphasise the importance of tailoring equipment to suit the unique demands of equestrian sports.

The feedback highlights the transformative impact of modern shoeing techniques, which align the biomechanics of both horse and rider to achieve seamless synergy. Horses fitted with these advanced setups perform with greater agility, confidence, and consistency, navigating complex courses with precision - a testament to the role of science and craftsmanship in pushing the boundaries of equestrian excellence.

The introduction of these advanced shoeing techniques has sparked interest beyond the confines of competitive arenas. Researchers are investigating the broader implications of precision-engineered equestrian equipment on equine health and longevity. Preliminary studies suggest that the reduced physical strain and improved locomotion associated with these innovations could lower the incidence of joint injuries and musculoskeletal stress.

As equine sports continue to evolve, the integration of cutting-edge technology may redefine the standards of care and performance, paving the way for a new era in horse riding.



DERBYSHIRE BRANCH RECRUIT THE MOST NEW MEMBERS

We're thrilled to announce that the Derbyshire branch of the BFBA has been awarded for recruiting the most new members in 2024!

This achievement reflects the enthusiasm and dedication of our branch, as well as the warm and welcoming atmosphere we strive to cultivate.

Over the past year, we have focused on hosting a variety of engaging CPD events, competitions - both competitive and charitable - and lively meetings, often accompanied by drinks, food, and plenty of banter. Through these activities, we have highlighted the numerous benefits of being part of the BFBA and aimed to inspire individuals to join our association while encouraging them to share their ideas for our future direction.

Receiving this award is a fantastic recognition of our collective efforts and motivates us to continue promoting the values of the BFBA. We are incredibly grateful to our existing members for their unwavering support and enthusiasm, which have been pivotal in welcoming new faces to our branch.

As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to further expanding our branch and recruiting additional members. This growth will bring fresh ideas and perspectives, helping us enhance our operations and offerings. Our goal is to reach out to more farriers and share the many advantages of being a BFBA member, ensuring that the Derbyshire branch remains a thriving hub of creativity and camaraderie.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey. We are excited about the future and eager to welcome even more new members into our branch!

Martha Cooling DipWCF, BFBA Derbyshire Branch



STATEMENT FROM THE BFBA

Following the sad news that the Farrier Foundation's services are on hold due to an ongoing investigation, their goals remain our priority.

The Foundation's cause is close to every farrier's heart. With the Trustees' blessing, our focus is to continue to ensure help is available to farriers when it is needed most until the ongoing investigation is resolved.

There are several ways we can help, depending on individual situations. Please reach out so we can find the best solution together.

We have also been working hard behind the scenes to ensure help is available for farriers. Unfortunately, getting everything in place correctly cannot happen overnight.

In the meantime, as we continue to work on the best solution, please know we are available and able to help.

If you or someone you know has any questions or requires support, please reach out to headoffice@bfba.co.uk or 024 7669 6595.

A DISCUSSION WITH DAVID NICHOLLS AWCF BEM

Words by Harry Spinks DipWCF

David Nicholls. BEM. AWCF and International Hall of Fame farrier has dedicated his life to helping horses with their lameness problems. For the King's birthday this year he was awarded the Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM).

I sent David a Facebook message out of the blue about five days before our editorial deadline asking for an interview about his BEM achievement and his life's work. By 10pm that evening I had a reply, "I could have a telephone call tomorrow (Wednesday) around 4pm if that works?" I jumped at the chance.

On one of the hottest days of the year to date I managed to catch David for a phone call about his life and the farrier industry, in the way that most working farriers do their phone calls, not in a swanky coffee shop or even (sadly), a pub, but in a service station on his way back from shoeing for the day (shoeing horses is glamorous, right?)

As a child I never knew what I wanted to be, fireman, farmer, Jedi, the list goes on, however from the age of eight David was set on being a farrier and in September 1968 he started his apprenticeship with Howard Cooper FWCF (Hons). After his apprenticeship (apparently following my childhood dream and slightly disillusioned with the trade), he became a fireman in the City of London. Fire fighters do shift work and for David it was two days and two nights on and then four off. "There was only a year that I didn't really do any horse shoeing at all" say David, and when the fire service started to cut hours it was a natural progression to fall back into shoeing, which he did by starting off back in the forge and then moving back under horses.

Working for Liphook Equine Hospital was a large part of David's career starting in 1982 and spanning 25 years. Being a referral hospital and laminitic centre gave David a unique insight and understanding on helping these horses. David says that "it led to new products like the heart bar, through the late Bernie Chapman and the Equine Digital Support System." It was also during this time that he started using the Natural Balance style of shoeing.

David goes on to say that "an interesting thing that happened, because one of the interns had put a spreadsheet together, and this intern said "I've been following this for about a year, Dave, and what I notice is we do all these other things, and we all end up doing this "Natural Balance" stuff, or variants of so why do we bother? Why do we bother doing all the other stuff?" and that made a whole shift in the hospital to where we didn't bother doing the other stuff anymore."

In 1990 he was part of a four-man team that started a group practice that has now grown to six farriers. David says that amalgamating four separate business into one could have proved difficult, but as they all kept their original business structures it worked. "We were all logoeed up, but we all operated our own business. Whatever the problem,





we could sort the problem out in house. It meant that we kept all of our own work, because we could offer a service."

During this time, with his partners Mark Spriggs and Michael Williams, he helped to set up Total Foot Protection Ltd as a farrier supply centre, to help other farriers as well as the team that was around him.

We started to discuss the Equine Lameness Prevention Organization (ELPO), David having a membership number of 001 and a lifetime membership to the organisation. Through this organisation he has been instrumental in helping farriers around the world and although they are not running any courses in the UK at the moment, this will hopefully be changing in the future.

I couldn't talk to David without having a conversation about the Centre Fit and Avanti style of horseshoes which were developed due to the ELPO hoof mapping system, allowing the shoe to be placed accurately around the centre of the coffin joint, with David very quick to point out that he wasn't the sole driving force behind the Centre Fit. "The Centre Fit was actually designed on a flight to Germany with Gene (Ovnicsek), Mark Spriggs and me." Showing the large co-operative side of farriery, he later went on to stress how "the Centre Fit shoes are a collaborative project between Equine Digital Support System, Total Foot Protection and MNC Ltd, Gene Ovnicsek's idea, named by Mark Spriggs."

On a personal note, I got to talk to David about the business of farriery and how farriers can update their prices to be more in line with continental Europe and the USA. One of David's ideas is to have a better business course at college, but David also stresses the importance of being professional and part of this is note taking. "I think it would be a good starting point to bring the profession up to the same expected levels as other professions. They're expected to keep records." This isn't just so that we can liaise in a better fashion with other professionals, it is also important so that we can cover ourselves in the event of something going wrong. "I always say to the youngsters, if there's an incident write it down."

David goes on to say that "it may be a nothing event" but if the "physiotherapist comes out and says has your horse had a problem..." We can all imagine how that goes with the client if the farrier hasn't kept notes and informed them of a problem.

Having been luckily enough to travel around the world shoeing I was keen to find out where David's favourite place to shoe has been, but unsurprisingly, from a man that is incredibly down to earth and humble, he says "England and not a top sports horse, a scruffy pony when you manage to fix it... and a child can ride it, and a child comes up and gives you a big hug and say thanks uncle Dave!"

My last question to David is with all your years in the profession, have you got any advice for newly qualified farriers? He doesn't hesitate when he answers, saying to get out there and work for older farriers. David says that at the International Hall of Fame dinner at the International Hoof Care Summit every year everyone says the same thing; "pass the information on... young farriers, turn up and wrench and clench for a guy for a day and discuss things and ask them about problems... and also don't be afraid to pick up the phone!"

We are in an industry where we work hard, with the smell of horse, smoke and sweat clinging to us even on our days off, where there are days that we can't stand upright and our hands don't work, but in this industry, we are all together. Throughout my interview with David and having spoken to people about David through the years that highly praise him, I feel that he epitomises our hard yet dedicated life. Through the love of what he does he has spent a lifetime educating and helping, not just the horses but also anyone that wants to reach out to him for advice and inspiration.

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"This is a good chance for Farriers to explain to their clients that having cover from Equine Rescue Service allows them to transport their horses with complete peace of mind, knowing that if they do break down just one call will mean that help is on the way and that if it

can't be fixed at the roadside, their vehicle and horses will be recovered and transported to the destination of their choice.

"Farriers will be able to offer a 15% discount on membership to their clients and earn a 15% commission on all new memberships that they sell.

"We look forward to working with a good number of BFBA members and will supply a kit that includes Briefing notes, A3 posters for the inside door of your vehicle and leaflets to hand out which will feature your unique code to track conversions and payments." says Debbie Macmorran, Managing Director.

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THE TRUE COST WE FACE WITH EVERY DECISION

In both business and life, every decision we make comes with a cost; not just in terms of money, but also in time, energy, and foregone alternatives. This idea is one of the most powerful (and often overlooked) ideas in personal finance, economics and decision making.

There is a real price to every choice you take; this is called Opportunity Cost and it is something I have recently had my eyes opened to as part of business coaching.

What exactly is Opportunity Cost?

Opportunity cost is the value of the next best alternative that you give up when you make a choice. You may choose to work late to make a few extra pounds, but you have sacrificed time with your family; you might choose to invest in a new van rather than employing a farrier to work alongside you and grow your business.

Understanding opportunity cost means understanding what you could have done with the same resources - time, money, emotions etc - I want to stress its not just about the financial cost, although that is often the easiest one to figure out.

Financial examples in farriery

- Saying yes to every new customer who calls, resulting in you not being able to keep all of your customers happy - you might lose some that are regular clients just to keep a new customer happy.
- Holding on to cash to avoid tax - resulting in you struggling to get a mortgage and get on the property ladder.
- Not raising your prices due to fear - resulting in you missing out on the increased profit margin (we will come back to this one later!)
- Choosing to not conduct an assessment of a horse so you can squeeze another in - this might mean you miss something and upset a customer.

These are all examples of how a choice might end up costing you. If we are honest we have all made decisions in the heat of the moment that, upon reflection, might have cost us more than we are willing to acknowledge or admit.

The personal side of opportunity cost in farriery

It's not just the financial cost that can be useful to calculate when it comes to decisions and choices we make, I am increasingly aware of the personal costs that might arise too. There are decisions that we might make that are good for the financials, but terrible for our personal lives. Some examples might include:

- Not taking a holiday because you want to make sure you make as much money as possible - the physical and mental stress of not having a break or holiday will eventually take its toll on you, meaning you don't function well at all.
- Working weekends and evenings to take on extra clients, resulting in you missing time with your partner, children, friends and loved ones. You might suffer burnout, poor physical health too.
- Choosing to stay 'comfortable' and not raise prices rather than pursuing that higher profit margin that would allow you to achieve so much more.

How to use opportunity cost to aid better decision making

Being aware of opportunity cost certainly doesn't mean we need to paralyse ourselves with fear or not make a choice for fear of getting it wrong - after all, choosing to not make a choice is, in fact, making a choice!

There are probably complex equations and algorithms that can figure out the opportunity costs around all decisions, but for us farriers just trying to manage as best we can there are a few simple questions we can ask ourselves when looking at a decision:

1. Ask yourself "what am I giving up?"

Nearly all decisions that you make might mean giving something up. Its not necessarily a bad thing but make sure you are aware of the 'costs'.

2. Think long term!

It is easy to see the very short term gains but they can mask or lead to longer term costs. Particularly in farriery we need to consider the future impact of decisions we do or don't take, financial, personal and emotional!

3. Try to put a figure on it when possible...

If you can quantify the returns, time saved or emotional cost it might really help highlight the best opportunities to take.

4. Don't neglect your personal values!

You must factor in your time, energy, mental health and very importantly your relationships. So often we don't realise what we have lost until it has gone - acknowledge and value your loved ones in your decision making.

Is Forge Smart an opportunity cost you have not considered?

The concept of bringing farriers together, raising standards and prices simultaneously has been around for a

few months now. There has been a lot of interest and discussion - including opportunity costs in this might be something new to consider.

The profession, made up of us as individuals, needs to consider if this opportunity has a greater cost of getting involved, or not getting involved. Using what we have learned in this article it might be useful to think of the points above:

1. "What am I giving up?"

By joining the Pricing Programme at Forge Smart you are giving up the unique position of an increasingly low income as a British farrier. If you are dashing about you will be giving up working weekends or evenings to exchange them for more family time.

2. "Think long term"

The pricing programme intends to put farriers back on track with pricing and enable inflation price rises in the future. The short term fear some people are feeling will be mitigated with education, planning and working together.

3. "Try to put a figure on it"

The cost of joining the programme is £500 (plus VAT). The potential cost of not joining is almost unmeasurable, farriery will be less and less valued, we will continue to train very small numbers of farriers and the provision of farriery in Britain will reduce in quantity and possibly quality too.

4. "Don't neglect your personal values"

It is so easy to neglect your friends, family, hobbies and yourself. The cost of doing this might not be obvious but it is common throughout farriery at the moment. If you truly value working to the highest standards, seeing your family, not damaging your body so quickly and being paid enough to save for your future then the cost of not joining the Pricing Programme might be greater than you are willing to believe or think.

To conclude, I think it is sensible to highlight the truth around opportunity costs:

Every 'yes' is a 'no' to something else - or maybe every 'no' is a 'yes' to something else!

Saying yes to Forge Smart's Pricing Programme on 1st July is the profession coming together and saying 'no' to low prices, poor value, poor physical health and most importantly 'no' to working in what is a physically demanding job for little meaningful profit!

Content supplied by Forge Smart



Calling all farriers to take your skills further with barefoot trimming

Are you a UK farrier wanting to learn more about servicing barefoot horses?

Scootboot is giving away 8 free spots in the upcoming clinic hosted by the HoofBoot Farriers. The clinic is aimed at showing farriers and hoof care providers firsthand how to use Scootboot hoof boots to treat all types of hoof conditions, and transition effectively.

The clinic will be held this August at Stoneleigh Park in Kenilworth, UK.

Enter today for your chance to win! Simply scan the QR code, answer a couple of questions and you're in the draw to win. Winners will be announced on August 10.

Clinic includes: • Intense Barefoot Farrier training • Fully catered lunch • 50% off Scootboot Fit Kits • Official Registered Scootboot Fitter (RSF) Certification • Accommodation discounts if required

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HOOFBOOT FARRIERS

THE BLACKSMITH'S FUEL: KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE WITH ANVIL FORGE COKE

In the blacksmithing world, few fuels hold the reputation and reliability that British coke once did. For generations, the UK's own Monckton coking works in South Yorkshire had supplied blacksmiths, farriers, and solid fuel merchants with some of the finest blacksmith's coke available.

But in 2014, this era came to an end, as Monckton ceased operations, marking the close of a legacy that left many in the trade searching for an alternative fuel source to match its quality and consistency.

Since then, the UK's fuel suppliers have had to look beyond their borders to meet demand. Sourcing blacksmith coke now means turning to European producers, particularly in Poland and Italy.

Thankfully, CPL - a historic name in solid fuels since the 1800s - was ready to adapt to this changing landscape. With a network of reputable partners across Europe, CPL moved swiftly to provide British smiths and farriers with a premium-quality coke that lives up to the legacy of Monckton's fuel. Enter Anvil Forge Coke, a product that has quickly become a mainstay for blacksmiths seeking a reliable, clean, and high-performance fuel.

Anvil Forge Coke is well-regarded for its high consistency, low ash content, and hard, compact clinker. This means blacksmiths can enjoy a fire that remains clean and hot for extended periods, without the fuss of frequent clean-ups. Size has always been a key focus, with many customers requesting a more uniform, smaller product. We listened closely, and since launching our improved, consistent sizing, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This refined size offers better temperature control and enhanced heat transfer, delivering a more efficient and reliable performance every time. Its quality has earned it high praise across the trade, with many blacksmiths and farriers now considering it the go-to fuel for their forges.

Anvil has been part of several showcases across the UK, which have been great for highlighting traditional craftsmanship and innovation in blacksmithing. CPL contributed by donating their Forge Coke, providing superior quality and consistent sizing for optimal forge performance.

The production of blacksmith coke, also known as metallurgical coke, involves a process called dry distillation. Bituminous coal undergoes heating in the absence of air, driving off gases and liquids, which are then utilised in other industries like gas, oil, and power generation. What remains is a solid material—coke—that serves as an invaluable fuel source for industries reliant on high-heat, clean-burning fuel.

Though global efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels are ongoing, CPL's suppliers have invested significantly in meeting rigorous environmental standards, ensuring that Anvil Forge Coke can continue to meet demand for years to come.

Established working relationships with producers ensures the long term supply of Anvil Forge Coke. Whether in convenient 25kg bags or full, loose loads, Anvil is readily accessible for collection or delivery throughout the UK.

Ready to place an order? You can receive a 5% discount on your order placed before 31st July 2025 using discount code ANV2025.

Just call our Heritage Fuels Team on 0345 450078 to place an order and enjoy reliable, high-quality fuel at a competitive price.

For blacksmiths, farriers, and traditional craftsmen across the UK, Anvil Forge Coke represents the best of both worlds: a premium fuel with the legacy of the past, made ready for the future.



ADVERTORIAL SUPPLIED BY CPL INDUSTRIES

SCOOTBOOT COLLABORATION TO EQUIP UK FARRIERS WITH NEW TOOLS

Farriers looking to expand their toolkit to service barefoot clients can now gain new knowledge and skills with the HoofBoot Farriers.

The HoofBoot Farriers, better known as Mark Johnson and Robbie Richardson, have been working with Scootboots for several years to find the best solution for all types of hoof conditions.

Now, after establishing their training course, they are inviting farriers across the UK to enter a competition to win a place on their upcoming course, which will see all attendees officially titled Registered Scootboot Fitter.

There are eight places to give away for the course being held this August at the BFBA Centre in Stoneleigh.

Their intensive two-day course culminates years of research and experimentation.

Mark and Robbie - both former farriers - have found new innovative ways of using Scoots to reproduce orthotics where they previously used steel.

This involves sizing and fitting correctly, heat stretching, wedge making and fitting, welding, and altering to assist breakover, along with many other skills, utilising multiple tools and readily available materials.



The competition is being held in collaboration with Scootboot, which supplies premium hoof boots for horses across 110 countries.

The UK and European markets are amongst their biggest customers as more owners and riders turn to barefoot as the healthier option for their horses.

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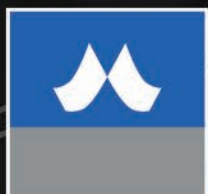
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