

WES NEWS

December 2025

Issue 118



HORSEMANSHIP SHOWCASE

WES joins a weekend of expert-led horsemanship, education and inspiration



WISHING OUR MEMBERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Hello WES members! And a special welcome to all the new members that joined us at the Horsemanship Showcase and re-joined since the Annual Journal hit your doormats.

As they say, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas... I hope you're all looking forward to the Happy Holidays. As someone who has horses, some things don't (and can't!) stop for Christmas. But when all the feeding and mucking out is done it will be time for those festive treats and tipples.

As things slow down it's time to reflect on the year and plan for the year ahead. As I, the Council and the extended leadership of WES reflect on the year, I'm sure we will think it has been a good one for the Society and its members. We have, I believe, delivered on our plans for 2025 and brought more value to our members as we work on our objectives. As we signed up the 29th new member at the Showcase, we exceeded 500 members for the first time in a long while. Now, that'll dip again over December and January as memberships expire and people recover from the season's expenses, however, I'm confident it'll rise in quarter one of next year and continue as we roll-out the Youth Achievement Badges, the new Beyond the Arena programme, and all the Area Events and Trail Award activities.

To help underpin our activities in 2026, we have a WES Pros and Judges Seminar booked for



February. Overall, it's a 4-day event with the Pros getting together for the first 2 days to meet and share their knowledge and experience. Lee Rutter and I have been working with Pierre Ouellet (Italy) on this development event. Pierre will also support Mick Carder and Bob Mayhew on the Judges Seminar, which follows back-to-back. Many Pros will be staying on for that too and Council will be there as well. Plus we've just sent invites to the Area Reps as many of them wanted to learn more about the rules. I'm sure we'll have some great conversations over the 4 days.

Look out for other news via member emails, our website and Facebook over the coming weeks!

Finally, myself and your Council along with the Extended Council want to thank you for all your support and for working on being the best you and equine partners can be.

We all wish you a safe, fun, happy Christmas holidays, and a prosperous New Year!

Rob Painter
Chairman

DEADLINE

FOR THE NEXT ISSUE



Send your articles by Monday 23rd February 2026 to be featured in the next newsletter!

Email westernequestriansociety.editor@gmail.com with your word, text or pdf document (including pictures or graphics) to share your stories with the wider WES community.

If you are sending in an advertisement, please send it as a pdf, word or a graphic so it can be resized to fit the available space.

Feel free to submit your article as soon as it's ready (rather than waiting for the deadline).

We look forward to hearing from you!

ADVERTISING RATES

WES-approved events are free, as are “For Sale” and “Wanted” small adverts posted by current members.

Rates for the A5 digital newsletters are as follows:

Full page £30 (portrait 148mm x 210mm)

Half page £20 (landscape 148mm x 102mm)

Quarter page £12 (portrait 69mm x 102mm)

WES Members receive a £5.00 discount on the above rates.

These rates are per issue. Adverts should be relevant to Western riding or horses (e.g clothing or tack). Advertising copy should be in PDF, Word, Text or JPG format and sent to westernequestriansociety.editor@gmail.com

Payment should be made by BACS

Once accepted, advertisers will receive account details and a reference number to use to identify their payment.



UPCOMING

DATES

FOR YOUR DIARY



NATIONAL EVENTS

AGM

14/03/2026 WES AGM (All Areas)

The WES Annual General Meeting at Coventry Holiday Inn (and online)

Contact: Rob Painter - westernequestriansociety.chair@gmail.com

CAMP

02/04/2026 - 04/04/2026 WES Northern Camp

A weekend camp at Bishop Burton

Contact: Harry Scargill - harry.wes@outlook.com

CAMP

30/04/2026 - 02/05/2026 WES Scotland Camp

A weekend camp at Highfield Equestrian at Howe

Contact: Kayreen Jones - kayreenjones4@btinternet.com

CAMP

22/05/2026 - 24/05/2026 WES Southern Camp

A weekend camp at Oakridge Arena

Contact: Nikki Gwalter - nikki@happyontheplanet.com

CLINIC

13/08/2026 Youth Clinic (Pre-Nationals)

Pre-Nationals Youth Clinic with Lee Rutter at Oakridge Arena

Contact: Dani O'Brien - daniobrien1987@hotmail.com

SHOW

14/08/2026 - 16/08/2026 WES National Show

WES 2026 National Show at Oakridge Arena

Contact: Helen Payne - helenmpayne@outlook.com

AREA EVENTS

CLINIC

3/01/2026 Area 9 General Horsemanship Clinic

One day clinic with Lee Rutter at Anvil Park Stud, NR16 2QT

Contact: Rob Painter - westernequestriansociety.chair@gmail.com

CLINIC

31/01/2026 Area 13 General Horsemanship Clinic

One day clinic with Lee Rutter at Quob Stables, SO32 2AR

Contact: Anne Batley - a.batley@ntlworld.com

SHOW

27/06/2026 - 28/06/2026 Area 5 Approved Show & National Qualifier

Two-day show at Bishop Burton

Contact: Harry Scargill - harry.wes@outlook.com

CAMP

11/07/2026 - 12/07/2026 Area 7 Trail Camp

Two-day camp for trail riders at Collingham Horse Adventure Park

Contact: Claire Shepherd - claireshepherd101@gmail.com

As a WES member you are not restricted to your home area – you're welcome to travel and meet new people and horses at any WES event nationwide.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Annual General Meetings are for WES members in that particular area – they're a great opportunity to put forward your ideas for the upcoming year and find out more about events you can get involved with. Many are available to join via zoom.

Area 5

11/01/2026 Area 5 AGM

Contact Harry Scargill on harry.wes@outlook.com

Area 3

18/01/2026 Area 3 AGM

Contact Ann Webster on annequus@aol.com

Area 4

19/01/2026 Area 4 AGM

Contact Harry Scargill on harry.wes@outlook.com

Area 8

21/01/2026 Area 8 AGM

Contact Nikki Gwalter on nikki@happyontheplanet.com

Area 11

25/01/2026 Area 11 AGM

Contact Kayreen Jones on kayreenjones4@gmail.com

Area 9

26/01/2026 Area 9 AGM

Contact Harry Scargill on harry.wes@outlook.com

Area 7

26/01/2026 Area 7 AGM

Contact Kate Wensley on k8st.km@icloud.com

Joe Midgley has generously offered WES members a big entry discount to his Horsemanship Demonstration in April.

Standard tickets are £15.95 including the booking fee and the discounted price for WES members is £10.70 including the booking fee!

[The discount is only for WES members via this link](#)

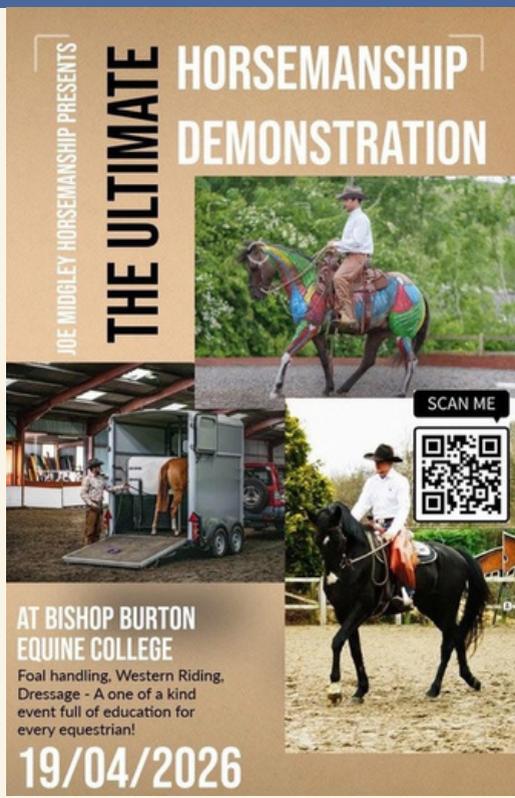
(If you scan the code in the image it will take you to the general public price).

We're very grateful to Joe and hope many members will be able to attend – it's sure to be a great day.

 Bishop Burton College, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 8QG



19 April 2026



JOE MIDDLEY HORSEMANSHIP PRESENTS
THE ULTIMATE HORSEMANSHIP DEMONSTRATION

AT BISHOP BURTON EQUINE COLLEGE

Foal handling, Western Riding, Dressage - A one of a kind event full of education for every equestrian!

19/04/2026

SCAN ME

YOUTH UPDATE

As we round off 2025 it's been a brilliant year for our WES Youth family. To see the improvement in the kids from on the lead rein to riding on their own; to others who are making great strides in their learning, is incredibly rewarding.

Our 'Learn to Show' zoom meetings are well-attended and everyone is joining in and showing off their knowledge. This will be complimented in person by a pre-national show clinic at Oakridge on the 13th August 2026 where riders will have the chance to look at scores sheets and be judges for the day. The emphasis will be on fun!

We also have a number of other dates for clinics and camps in the pipeline so watch this space.

All new for 2026 is our Achievement Badges Scheme where members will have the chance to work towards and collect badges similar to those of Brownies/Scouts and Pony Club. From daily care and grooming to groundwork and mentoring, there is something for everyone. The badges are being designed and the syllabus is in progress – it's a labour of love!

A few of us are rounding off the year with The Confidence for Kids course at the Centre of Horseback Combat on the 29th December followed by a Christmas meal at the Red Lion at Water End – if you'd like to join us for the meal please let me know.

Don't forget to send off those letters and presents to your 'Not So Secret Santa' and send in your points for the Youth Participation Award sponsored by Western Show Ready.

I hope you have a lovely Christmas and here's to a fantastic 2026!

Dani O'Brien
WES Youth Officer



Western Equestrian Society
WES YOUTH 2026 DATES
Contact daniobrien1987@hotmail.com

Spring 2026 - Launch of the Achievement Badges Scheme

- 28th March** - Easter Treasure Hunt begins
- 18th-19th April** - Youth Clinic with Sean Coleman, Towcester
- 24th-26th July** - Youth Summer Camp @ Oakridge Arena with Louise Mcknight and Jolie Cooper
- 24th July** - 6 Week Summer Challenge starts
- 13th August** - Youth Clinic Pre National Show @ Oakridge Arena with Lee Rutter and Kayreen Jones
- 14th-16th August** - WES National Show - Oakridge Arena

Scottish dates and additional fun to follow!



YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT BADGES

Western Equestrian Society
Horseman

Western Equestrian Society
Mentoring

Western Equestrian Society
Care and Welfare

Western Equestrian Society
First Aid

- 40 BADGES TO COLLECT!
- IN PERSON & ONLINE BADGE SESSIONS
- HANDBOOK WITH SYLLABUS

COMING SOON

Western Equestrian Society
WWW.WES-UK.COM

WES YOUTH LEARN TO SHOW

A series of monthly zoom meetings based around learning the rules, tack, attire and classes for western showing

Open to all WES
Youth members
and Parents or
Guardians

Hosted by WES
Youth Officer
Dani O'Brien

Thursday 6th November - 7pm

General youth rules, tack and
equipment

Tuesday 2nd December - 7pm

Showmanship and Horsemanship

Tuesday 6th January - 7pm

Trail and Ranch Trail

Tuesday 3rd February - 7pm

Pleasure and Working Western Rail

Tuesday 3rd March - 7pm

Ranch and Reining

Tuesday 7th April - 7pm

Ask the WES Professional with
Kayreen Jones



BEYOND THE ARENA

We're excited to share something new for 2026 - and something that represents a significant step forward for the Society.

Following approval from Council, we're launching a national programme called Beyond the Arena. Its purpose is simple: to give more to your membership, to work across the Society to create new and exciting opportunities, and to strengthen the connection between members, Areas, and Council.

"Beyond the Arena is about making belonging to WES feel more visible, more valuable, and more connected than ever before."

Over the next 12 months, Beyond the Arena will deliver a series of free and low-cost experiences that celebrate our members, showcase our Pros, and bring the community together between events. You can expect:

- Interactive Ask the Expert sessions with WES Pros and judges
- Member recognition features and spotlights
- Online challenges and initiatives open to all members nationwide
- Opportunities to share your own journey through #MyWESJourney
- A growing collection of digital learning and inspiration resources

This programme has been developed with Area Representatives firmly in mind. Many of these ideas will be delivered with Areas, not apart from them - supporting and amplifying the great work already happening locally.

Council has asked me to lead this programme because I want to take a more active, outward-facing role – focusing on member value, connection, and the visibility of what WES gives back. It's something I'm genuinely passionate about, and I believe it represents an important evolution in how we serve and support our members.

As we begin shaping the first activities, I'd love to hear your thoughts.

What kind of experiences or opportunities would you most like to see included? Get in touch and share your ideas directly with me.

Thank you for being part of this next chapter for WES.

Together, we can create something that truly reflects the strength, spirit, and sense of belonging that define our community.

Dan Gwalter
WES Secretary and Webmaster

A big welcome to our newest WES members

I'd like to welcome the following people who have joined us recently – these members have joined since the last magazine was published.

Area 1: Lucy Grant, Laura Taylor

Area 2: Joanna Middleton, Calladin Bailey, Liz Andrews

Area 3: Kelly Simpson, Agathe Jreiyiri

Area 5: Charleigh McCracken, Archie Hurtault, Katie

Hurtault, Alice Thomas

Area 6: Verity Rollinson, Rachel McIlroy, Becki

Dorman, Steven Young, Kate Massey, Honey Wylde

Area 7: Helen Taylor

Area 8: Lenka Sirova, Amber Kennedy

Area 9: Frances Lowe, Rosie Harford, Jo Summers, Karen

Shaw

Area 10: Niamh O'Connor, Christine Maharajh, Jennifer

Donnelly, Jane Gibbs, Melanie Bull,

Area 11: Jackie Taylor,

Area 12: Jane McCulloch

Area 13: Chantal Hewitt, Lydia Gould, Tara Chance and family,

If I've missed anyone profuse apologies! Please welcome the above members into your areas.

Best wishes,
Kayreen Jones
Membership Co-ordinator

The Horsemanship Showcase '25



WES was once again a main sponsor at the Horsemanship Showcase



WES was once again a main sponsor at the Horsemanship Showcase – it was our second year and our involvement has grown as has our visibility to a wider audience.

Ellen Arkle brought the idea to Council back in 2024 where it was unanimously agreed to since it supports our objective to promote Western Equitation to a wider audience. It also promotes the Society as a whole and importantly brings value to existing members via discounts for the event.

This year WES members were offered a 30% discount for VIP tickets until the end of Feb 2025 with a 20% discount for VIP tickets available thereafter plus a 10% discount on standard entry tickets.

Whilst Ellen has stepped down from her Council role as PR & Press Officer she was very much involved with the WES Team supporting this year's event along with her son, Quinn (aka Cowboy Q). Setting up and being on the stand to answer all sorts of questions were Ellen, Quinn, Kayreen Jones (wearing her Membership Secretary hat and her WES Pro Hat with a great presentation at the Talk Tent), Dani O'Brien our Youth Officer, who was showing of the new Youth Achievement Badge programme, plus some guy called Rob Painter.

This event just gets better and better. This year, via our Pros, we approached the organiser, Larisa, to see if WES could have its own specific demo.

To cut a long story short that went from being an idea to a "yes" to "can we do a demo in the main arena and a demo in the Interactive zone?" plus, of course, our Talk Tent spot. We said, "yes of course – what an opportunity!"

The initial idea was to show to attendees how they could apply horsemanship skills in western riding, specifically Ranch disciplines. Then the three WES Pros: Lee Rutter, our Education Officer, Joe Midgely, at the time our latest recruit, and Sean Coleman came up with the genius idea to involve a member on a non-western horse. Step-up our secret demo super star, Charlotte Ruffet with her Welsh cross Cob, Harley Boy. Not forgetting her Mum, horse box-



HORSEMANSHIP

THE HORSEMANSHIP EVENT OF THE YEAR



SHOWCASE



driver and groom, Caroline (Cazza). It was if it was all planned, as Charlotte and Harley were also on the front cover of our annual journal. Charlotte had no idea about the Journal and we joked she may have to sign copies for new members!

The demos were very well received. Rob Painter, introduced the demo with some WES background and purpose to help answer “what is WES all about?” and handed to Lee who explained Working Western Rail as Charlotte, Joe and Sean rode the various gaits and transitions, plus Lee explained what a Judge would be looking for in the class. Lee passed over to Sean who explained Ranch Riding, as Lee, Charlotte and Joe rode a pattern.

Joe then explained Ranch Trail with the others demonstrating how to navigate various trail obstacles. Charlotte and Harley really were our secret weapon. So many people came to the stand to talk about how they didn't realise native types could be ridden western. It really opened eyes that Western Equitation is for all and that WES is an all-breed society! It took Charlotte and Cazza almost two hours to get from the demo back to the stable – stopping to answer questions and promoting WES.





After each demo our stand was full of people asking questions. The whole team was flat-out over almost all of the two days.

We wrapped up our demos on Sunday with Kayreen, giving a great presentation highlighting that all breeds and all ages (Kayreen has a video of a youth backing through a shoot) can embrace and enjoy western equitation.

The team and Council reflected on the difference this year compared to last year. Last year not many people knew about WES and came to the stand a bit curious and signed up to have a chance at winning our hamper of goodie whereas this year people came to the stand to sign-up and were pleased they also had the chance to win our hamper.

The team also reflected that many coming to WES were looking for something inclusive and supportive and “were done with” let’s say, other disciplines. We are glad WES are seen that way but the team and Council know that as we grow we need to work hard to maintain and build the supportive culture.

To round this off the team wanted to say a huge thanks to all members that came to say hello at the stand. Some of our other Pros and Council members also came to say hello and to give team members a coffee break which was much appreciated.

A huge thanks also to those that contributed to the raffle hamper, we estimated its contents was valued at around £600.

Congratulations to our new member Laura Taylor from Area 1 on winning the hamper.

Finally, this quote from Sean sums up what we tried to convey: “Most people in the horsemanship world are looking for a purpose for their partnership. WES is a supportive community to be involved in. Ranch events (and other western disciplines) are essentially a demonstration of a practical partnership with a horse. Ranch classes are a great way to apply your training, challenge your partnership and give yourself a goal to work towards. With WES you have an association that is willing to support you to make that happen.”

Here Here!

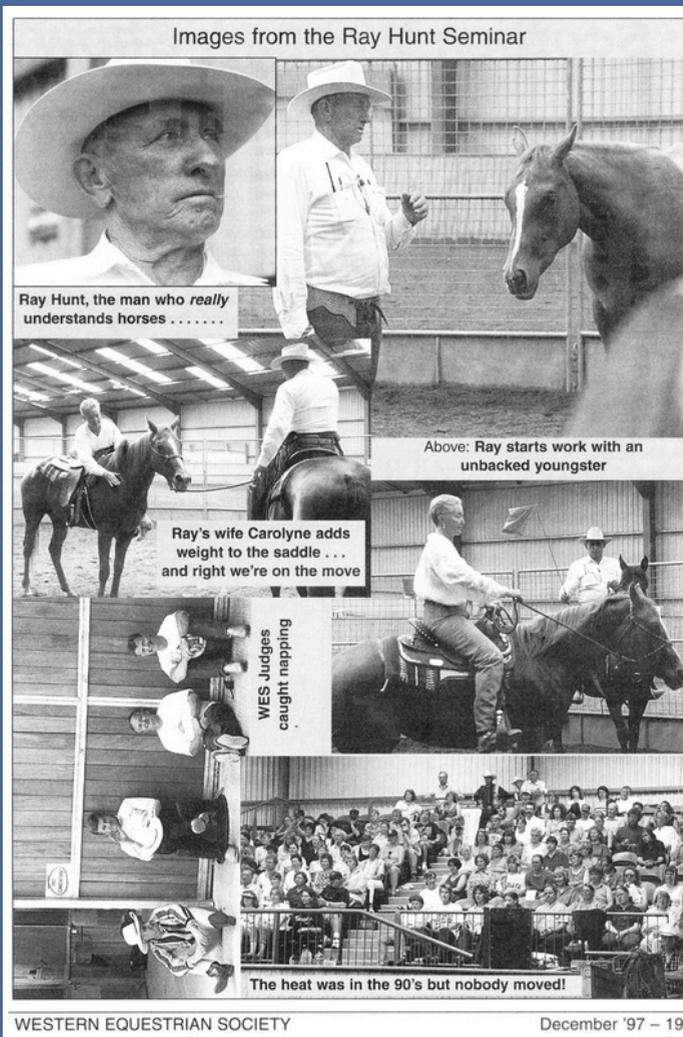
Blast from the Past

Ray Hunt (August 31, 1929 – March 12, 2009) was an American horse trainer and clinician of significant influence in the natural horsemanship field.

Hunt is widely regarded as one of the original proponents of what became known as natural horsemanship. In the beginning, Hunt said, "I was working in the mind of a lot of people who didn't want to believe the horse had a mind. Get a bigger bit. Get a bigger stick. That was their approach."

Ray Hunt is said to be Tom Dorrance's best-known student.

They met around 1960, at a fair in Elko, Nevada. While Dorrance avoided media attention and clinics, by the mid-1970s, Hunt was giving clinics far and wide. Ray Hunt is famous for starting each clinic with the statement, "I'm here for the horse, to help him get a better deal." He also liked to say, "Make the wrong thing difficult and the right thing easy." His philosophy has been interpreted as, "If you get bucked off or kicked or bitten, you obviously did something wrong... the horse, on the other hand, is never wrong."



Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Hunt_\(horse_trainer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Hunt_(horse_trainer))

Reading the Silent Language of Horses

HOW UNDERSTANDING EQUINE BODY LANGUAGE TRANSFORMS SAFETY, TRUST AND COMMUNICATION

By Pauline Norton
WES Health and Safety Officer



Anyone who spends time around horses has wished, at least once, that they could talk. But the truth is, they're communicating constantly. Every flick of an ear, tightening of an eyelid, shift of weight or sweep of the tail forms part of an intricate, silent language—one that reveals how a horse feels long before it acts. To understand horses is to learn this language. It's the key to safety, good training, partnership and connection.

Horses are emotional, expressive animals. They experience joy, anxiety, confusion, frustration, fear and affection—they yet convey all of it without words. Interpreting those signals is vital for several reasons:

- **Safety:** Horses often show discomfort, fear or irritation before reacting physically.
- **Trust:** When a horse feels understood, they relax and become more willing to follow our lead.
- **Training:** Clear communication prevents mixed signals and reduces pressure or conflict.
- **Welfare:** Early recognition of pain or stress—including indicators on the Horse Grimace Scale allows for quicker intervention.
- **Bonding:** Understanding creates connection.
- **Enjoyment:** When communication flows, time with horses becomes more rewarding for both partners.

The Eyes: The Emotional Landscape

A horse's eyes are astonishingly expressive. Subtle variations can tell a handler whether the horse is calm, curious, uncertain or frightened.

Tension around the eye is one of the earliest signs of stress or discomfort. Wrinkles above the upper eyelid or tightness at the corners can indicate anxiety—even before the horse moves a muscle elsewhere. Look for that 'pinched' eyelid – like an upside down V which indicates a level of anxiety. Rapid, darting eyes suggest fear or panic. This is often a precursor to bolting, spinning or defensive reactions if the horse feels trapped. Visible

whites (sclera) can be trickier to interpret. Some breeds, like Appaloosas and paints with extensive white facial markings, show sclera naturally. In others, exposed whites usually signal alarm or surprise. The key is knowing what is normal for the individual horse.

The Ears: Clear, Constant Communication

A horse's ears are like signposts showing exactly where their attention (and often emotion) is directed:

- Ears gently out to the side: Relaxed or sleeping. Approach quietly and never startle.
- Ears turned back (but not pinned): Listening behind; assessing something out of sight.
- Ears rapidly swivelling: Heightened alertness, anxiety, or sensory overwhelm.
- Pinned ears: A clear warning—frustration, irritation or aggression.

The ears can rotate an astonishing 180 degrees thanks to ten dedicated muscles. They're one of the clearest indicators of a horse's internal state. They are like the horse's radar and when you ride this will often give you an early warning system of what is going on around you!

The Tail: More Than a Fly Swat

While the tail is essential for balance and insect control, it is also a powerful emotional barometer.

Tail swishing can signal irritation, discomfort or rising frustration. High carriage may indicate excitement—or simply reflect breed type, as seen in Arabians. Low, clamped tails often point to fear or pain.

The tail's 18 vertebrae offer surprising mobility, allowing for expressive, nuanced movement.

Again, it is important to pay attention to what is normal for your horse in order to be more attuned to what is 'not' normal.

Muscle Language: The Body Speaks Before the Horse Moves

Every piece of equine body language begins in the muscles. Even slight contractions can foreshadow a horse's next move:

- A tightening flank may precede a kick.
- A hardening jaw can signal pain, resistance or tension.
- With around 700 muscles working together, horses communicate continuously—even when standing still.

Reading these signals allows handlers to anticipate behaviour long before it escalates.

Communication Without Words: How Humans Respond

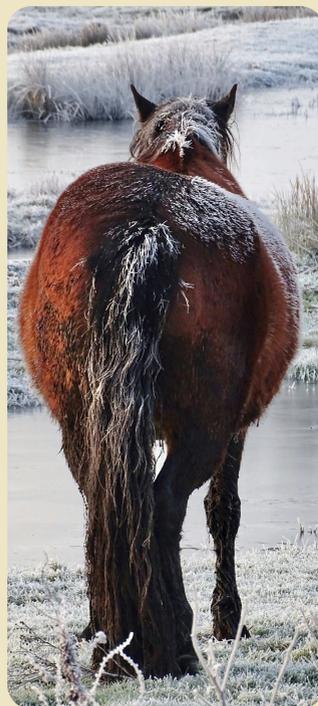
Humans often rely on verbal cues—“whoa,” “trot on,” “stand”—but although horses can learn these simple verbal cues, they read far more from posture, energy, space, and intent.

A handler who stands tall, focused

and calm communicates leadership. One who is tense, cowed or inconsistent sends mixed signals that confuse the horse. Understanding equine communication means being mindful of our own:

- Soften your body to soothe anxiety.
- Drop eye contact and round your shoulders.
- Reduce pressure to invite movement.
- Control your space with wide body language and standing tall to assert boundaries without force.
- Move deliberately to convey clarity and confidence.

Horses are experts at reading bodies. They learn far more from what we do than what we say.



Inside the Herd: The Social World of Horses

Equine body language makes perfect sense when seen through the lens of herd behaviour—a structure refined over millions of years.

A typical herd consists of a lead mare (an experienced, calm decision-maker responsible for movement and safety), a stallion (protector and breeding overseer), subdominant adults (maintaining their own mini-hierarchies), and foals and young horses (learning through observation and play). Communication in the herd is constant and multi-layered:

- Ear position and head height reflect status and intention.
- Hindquarter movements maintain personal space and resolve disputes.
- Mutual grooming strengthens bonds.
- Vocalisations (nickers, squeals, whinnies) complement visual cues.
- Spacing and pressure regulate the social “bubble” each horse maintains.

Understanding these dynamics helps handlers avoid conflict, approach groups safely and recognise when herd instincts influence a horse’s focus or behaviour.

The Takeaway: Listen to the Quiet Things

Horses rarely shout. They whisper first—through a flicker of tension, a turn of the ear, a shift of balance. When we learn to notice those whispers, everything changes. Training becomes smoother. Safety increases. Trust deepens. And the relationship becomes richer, more harmonious and profoundly more rewarding.

To understand horses is to listen to their silent language—and once you learn it, you’ll wonder how you ever missed it.



Wear The Darn Jacket

The jacket hangs in my wardrobe, untouched and unworn but very much loved! I bought it at least 20 years ago (possibly more) and it is my pride and joy. Tan suede with lots of fringes, I saw it on eBay when eBay was a new thing! It reminded me of John Wayne from she wore a yellow ribbon etc. (my favourite film) Many great memories of watching westerns with my Dad. The jacket epitomised the start of my western journey, my children (now grown) call it my John Wayne jacket. It sits there reminding me of how excited I was to find WES and Area 11 all those years ago and how much I wanted to be a better horse-person. Every time I open that wardrobe it is there between my sparkly show blouses looking at me reminding me of how excited I was. It is a constant reminder of how far I have come and how much I have grown and changed in my horsemanship over the years!



By Kayreen Jones
Membership Co-ordinator

People say that don't they? Good horse people change and adapt, grow and look at how they train and change practice accordingly. The basics are the basics are the basics but how we present them to the horse changes (or it should) as we learn more and become better. Ethically we need to change and morally we adjust to better education and better practice. However, that jacket reminds me of friends now gone as well as a time of struggling and learning. The mental competition between traditional English styles of training horses and riding to the differences of learning and finding a new way forward can be hard for us all changing disciplines. However the emotional rewards of developing that special partnership with your horse can be priceless or starting your horse in a kinder easier way for the horse to understand sets them up for a life well lived and being less likely to be passed around.



So back to the jacket that hangs as a reminder! Recently some events have happened that have made me take stock of what is important, what is not so important and what I can leave behind. I opened the wardrobe the other day when I was feeling low and there was the jacket! Hanging there in all its fringed glory, never worn, never competed in (we don't do fringes, do we?) reminding me of the excitement seeing this and importing it all the way from Mexico. I have kept it for "good" I didn't want to wear it out for fear of comments from people. It always felt too "out there" to wear it out, a bit like dressing up. I have never liked being "seen" preferring to help people rather than be out there, so the jacket represents a lack of confidence in myself and my abilities, hidden away in the wardrobe only brought out on special occasions!

Today, I took the jacket out and hung it on the outside of my wardrobe, sat on the bed and looked at it. Personally it now represents a lot more than being just a jacket. So today I made up my mind that no matter what is in front of me I need to be proud of what I have achieved, teaching people a way forward, having helped people realise their own abilities and helped them on their own horsey journey. Starting horses and enabling them to live a good productive life the best way that they can. Perhaps we all have that one piece of clothing that represents something so personal it is hard to talk about, hidden away to be looked at on occasion and "I'll wear that one day" comments thrown at it.

Well today is the day... Let's all wear the darn jacket and celebrate where we have come from/where we are going and how we are going to get there! Life is too short to be shut away in a wardrobe!

WES APPROVED

VENUES

INTRODUCING FALLOWBROOK



We have another WES approved Venue – Fallowbrook Western Riding Club!

Fallowbrook is located in Tonbridge, Kent. In 2024, we launched the WES Approved Venue to recognise venues that align with and actively support WES primary objectives:

- Promote high standards of Western Equitation
- Stimulate growth of this riding discipline
- Encourage attendees to train their horses to a high standard whether for pleasure or competition
- Encourage tuition in all aspects of Western Equitation by means of demonstrations, lectures, training clinics and shows

In summary these venues are “WES and WES member Friendly”. Venues may apply directly for WES approval status or may be nominated by Area Representatives. In this case our Chair, Rob Painter, wrote a proposal for Council approval.



Those in the know will know that Fallowbrook is owned and run by Pauline Norton, our Welfare and Health & Safety Officer. However, the proposal was sent to Council but excluded Pauline so it was a complete surprise when she was presented with an Approved sign at the Horsemanship Showcase.

After the initial shock Pauline said “I was both surprised and delighted to receive the WES Approved Venue status! It is always a pleasure to host WES events and many Fallowbrook members have joined WES as a result.”

The basis of the proposal was all of the support the venue has given to WES and its members over the years. That included significant discounts for Venue hire, and for Pauline’s time. Examples include hosting WES Fun Shows and Youth Camps and offering any Fallowbrook shows and clinics to WES members at Fallowbrook member rates. Pauline is also an approved WES Judge and a WES Professional.

Fallowbrook and joins our 4 other WES approved venues:

- Burley Villa School of Riding, New Milton, Hampshire
- Vally View Ranch, Ullingswick, Herefordshire
- Oakridge Arena, Collingham, Newark
- Horse Creek Farm, Coldham Bank, March

WES Approved Venues can range from private livery yards, to riding schools with BHS approval. In addition to the criteria above, as a minimum, the venue must also comply with the WES Welfare and Health and Safety statements contained within its rule book.

Let us know if you know any Venues that might qualify!

JOIN THE WES TRAIL AWARD

The WES Trail Award is open to any WES member who trail rides with their horse.



Follow these simple steps to get started today:

- Sign up at www.wes-uk.com/trail-awards and make a one-off payment of £40
- Record your trail rides into a log sheet
- Send your stories, achievements, questions and photos to the WES Trail Award Facebook page or your WES Area Facebook page
- Submit your log sheet to westrailaward@yahoo.com before 1st February each year
- Remain a member of WES for the duration of your Trail Award

Record the time you spend on the trail and earn prizes for each milestone you hit:

- ★ On sign up – a hi-viz vest sponsored by Western Tack Trader
- ★ 50 hours – a certificate and first aid kit sponsored by Pauline Norton
- ★ 100 hours – a quality SOS saddle tag sponsored by Garrabeg Western Horsemanship
- ★ 250 hours – a special rosette and water bottle sponsored by LR Western Horses
- ★ 350 hours – a softshell jacket
- ★ 500 hours – an inscribed silver belt buckle by Montana Silversmiths sponsored by Cowgirl Like Me Media

There's also a special award for reaching 500 miles to celebrate the WES 40th Anniversary and a 1000 hours award if you've already completed the 500 hours award!

CONTACTS

COUNCIL

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Chairman: | Rob Painter | westernequestriansociety.chair@gmail.com |
| Secretary & Webmaster: | Dan Gwalter | dan@wes-uk.com |
| Treasurer: | Danielle L'Oste-Brown | danielleoste@hotmail.co.uk |
| Membership Co-ordinator: | Kayreen Jones | kayreenjones4@btinternet.com |
| Event Co-ordinator: | Helen Payne | helenmpayne@outlook.com |
| Area Rep Co-ordinator: | Harry Scargill | harry.wes@outlook.com |
| Health & Safety Officer: | Pauline Norton | chloe276@aol.com |
| PR & Press Officer: | Rob Painter (temporary) | westernequestriansociety.chair@gmail.com |
| Youth Officer: | Dani O'Brien | daniobrien1987@hotmail.com |

EXTENDED COUNCIL

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Trail Awards: | Claire Shepherd | westrailaward@yahoo.com |
| Education Officer: | Lee Rutter | westerntrainer82@yahoo.co.uk |
| News Editor: | Lydia Voice | westernequestriansociety.editor@gmail.com |
| Judges Committee Chair: | Mick Carder | mick@carder.me.uk |

WES PROFESSIONALS

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------|
| Bedfordshire: | Jolie Cooper | Level 2 | 07765 329563 |
| Cambridgeshire: | David Deptford | Level 5 | - |
| Cheshire: | Scherie Dermody | Level 2 | 07930 410128 |
| Denbighshire: | Tim Keeley | Level 2 | - |
| Dorset: | Martina Drabkova | Level 2 | 07775 729942 |
| Dorset: | Michael Langford | Level 3 | 07834 956900 |
| East Lothian: | Kayreen Jones | Level 2 | - |
| Hampshire: | Tammy Greaves | Level 4 | 07824 664795 |
| Herefordshire: | Bruce Lawrence | Level 5 | 07791 323192 |
| Kent: | Pauline Norton | Level 2 | 07860 868022 |
| Lincolnshire: | Joe Midgley | Level 2 | 07588 412702 |
| Lincolnshire: | Lee Rutter | Level 2 | 07736 430111 |
| Northamptonshire: | Sean Coleman | Level 2 | 07969 355149 |
| Oxon: | Catherine Wright | Level 2 | - |
| Surrey: | Kirsty Feist | Level 2 | 07961684201 |
| Surrey: | Janet Burwood | Level 3 | 07715 833349 |
| Worcestershire: | Louise McKnight | Level 2 | 07495195603 |
| Worcestershire: | Nicole Sherwood | Level 2 | 07731459908 |
| Yorkshire: | Emma Chapman-Lonie | Level 3 | 07964 932877 |
| Yorkshire: | Adam Yates | Level 2 | 07795 624074 |

For more information on the WES Professionals requirements please visit www.wes-uk.com/wes-professionals

AREA REPS

Area reps are listed in **bold** and county reps are listed in plain text. For further details visit www.wes-uk.com/areas-and-reps

- Area 1: Grampians, Highlands **VACANCY**
- Area 2: Gwynedd, Clwyd, Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffs **Linda Clancy** - linda-clancy@btconnect.com
David Brindley - david.brindley1@outlook.com
- Area 3: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire **Anne Webster** - annequus@aol.com
Sara Brandolese - brandolesesara@gmail.com
Jane Brain - j1412b@hotmail.com
- Area 4: Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear **VACANCY**
- Area 5: Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Yorkshire **Harry Scargill** - harry.wes@outlook.com
Nickey Smith - nickeysmith.wes@gmail.com
Charlotte Madeley - madeleysrus@gmail.com
- Area 6: Avon, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Herefordshire, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Worcestershire **Tracy Haynes** - thaynes63@msn.com
Bruce Lawrence - office@valleyviewranch.co.uk
- Area 7: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire **Kate Wensley** - k8st.km@icloud.com
Stephanie Goodacre - stephaniegoodacre@btinternet.com
- Area 8: Berks, Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey, Sussex **Nikki Gwalter** - nikki@happyontheplanet.com
Alison Cheetham - alison.cheetham@yahoo.co.uk
- Area 9: Essex, Herts, Norfolk, Suffolk **VACANCY** (contact Rob Painter for enquiries on westernequestriansociety.chair@gmail.com)
- Area 10: Bedfordshire, Bucks, Cambs, Northants, Oxon, Warwickshire, West Midlands **Claire Shepherd** - claireshepherd101@gmail.com
Abbey Brotherton - brotherton499@btinternet.com
Melissa Packer - mpackervet@gmail.com
- Area 11: Borders, Central, Fife, Lothians, Tayside **Kayreen Jones** - kayreenjones4@btinternet.com
Seonaid Doherty - curly1508@gmail.com
- Area 12: Dumfries & Galloway, Strathclyde **Patricia O'Mitchell** - barbarelalababy@hotmail.com
- Area 13: Dorset, Hampshire **Yvonne Newbegin** - yvonnenewbegin@gmail.com
Anne Batley - a.batley@ntlworld.com

SOCIETY APPROVED JUDGES

JUDGES PANEL

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Michael Carder | Cambridgeshire | 07769 695361 |
| Johanna Cotton | Wrexham | 07984 141973 |
| Scherie Dermody | Cheshire | 01270 780620 |
| Tammy Greaves | Hampshire | 07824 664795 |
| David Hudspeth | Nottinghamshire | 07977 530954 |
| Bruce Lawrence | Herefordshire | 01886 830006 |
| David Lloyd | Hampshire | 01252 875896 |
| Pauline Norton | Kent | 07860 868022 |
| Lee Rutter | Lincoln | 07736 430111 |
| David Brindley | Wrexham | 07778 591196 |

JUDGES COMMITTEE

Mick Carder (chair), Bob Mayhew, David Brindley, David Lloyd, Scherie Dermody

For further details visit www.wes-uk.com/meet-the-judges

EXCITING NEWS FOR THE '26 NATIONALS

We are delighted to announce that we've engaged Eugenio Latorre as our Judge for the 2026 WES Nationals. Eugenio runs Latorre Performance Horses, based near Barcelona in Spain, and specialises in reining and cow horse training, breeding and selling, as well as competing himself at high levels in NRHA and NRCHA. He holds AQHA, NSBA (National Snaffle Bit Association) NRHA and NRCHA Judges Cards. Eugenio has judged once before in the UK at an Oakridge show in 2024.



A Note from Area 11 –

Welcome to all Area 11 members! Jing's we are almost at the end of the year! Our Area 11 AGM will be on the 25th of January 11.30am to 2.30pm at Kolas Corner Blackford Glen road, Edinburgh. A newsletter is currently being prepared and will be sent out along with last year's AGM minutes. A copy of the accounts will be available on the day. Can you please bring along something to eat/share and we can enjoy a buffet style lunch after the AGM. It would be nice to set up an Area 11 WhatsApp group so that communication between everyone can be continued speedily and new members added and made welcome. It will also allow new members to find people near to them for catching up/trail riding etc. We have been asked to do a demo at Houston Riding School near Broxburn in March so at the AGM we can discuss this and any volunteers who would be willing to take part.

I'd like to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2026! Happy Christmas everyone.

Kayreen Jones
Membership Co-ordinator

WES SPONSORS 2025-2026

Every year we are lucky enough to attract sponsorship from some fantastic organisations – click the images to find out more and discover exclusive WES member discounts.





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Photography by Alison James

Horse Trainer Quote of the Day

“Before asking more from your horse, ask more from yourself”
– Tom Dorrance