

Covering the period 1st January to 31st March 2006

Comment

Such a shame.....

Londoners and their families look forward to the London Harness Horse Parade, which has run in London since 1885. This year they'll be disappointed as it moves from London to West Sussex after an impasse with Wandsworth Council, apparently over issues associated with the risk assessment (see News: London parade moves).

It has to be asked why, after running for 120 years, the health & safety risks are now considered to be so unacceptably high, and whether the principles of sensible health & safety were applied.

In the recently published Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales one of the aims is to increase participation in equestrianism and develop the social contribution of the Horse Industry. The spectacle and enjoyment provided by the London Harness Horse Parade to many non-horsey Londoners provides a wonderful showcase for the industry and may well stimulate increased participation.

Let's hope that the industry puts its full support behind the London Harness Horse Parade to overcome any future problems and return it to its rightful home next year.

Related information:

Sensible health and safety - HSE at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/sensiblehealthandsafety/index.htm>

British Horse Industry Council; Strategy for the Horse Industry; Aim 2 - Increase participation in equestrianism at: <http://www.bhic.co.uk/industry-strategy/aim2.php>

Special Feature – Will I be successfully sued?

Jane Phillips is the solicitor who acted for Dr. and Mrs. Henley in the infamous *Mirvahedy v Henley* case. The findings of that case have had ongoing significant legal liability and insurance implications for every horse owner in England and Wales.

In this special feature Jane exclusively provides Riding Safely with details of some of the cases she has been involved with over the last two years - brought in Negligence and under the Animals Act - winning 8 out of 9.

Jane told Riding Safely "It just shows that despite Henley and *Mirvahedy* we can still win cases!"

The cases are:

- Margaret Plum V Chorley Equestrian Centre (5th November 2004)
- Joyce Winkworth V Hargate Hill Equestrian Centre (18th November 2004)
- Dr Faith Holdsworth V Blewbury Riding & Training Centre (4th January 2005)
- Susan Dennett V Patricia Wain (18th March 2005)
- Jenny Royle V Matchmoor Riding Centre (15th June 2005)
- Hannah Sherridan V Glebefield Equestrian Centre (15 & 16 September 2005)

Full details can be found at: www.ridingsafely.net/legal_cases_pjmdp.html

What is *Mirvahedy v. Henley*? Find out more about the case, The Animals Act 1971 and a host of other related information at: http://www.ridingsafely.net/mirvahedy_v_henley.html

Safety Tip

In Case of Emergency (ICE).....

Over the next few editions Riding Safely will look at some of the more common things that can go wrong, and some simple steps to take that could help when they do.

This edition's tip is quite straightforward: if you go out hacking there's always the possibility that at some point you and your mount might become separated. Seeing your beloved four-legged friend disappearing into the distance is not a pleasant sight, but knowing you might get a call sooner rather than later telling you your mount is in safe hands can be reassuring. The problem for the person in possession of the runaway horse is who to contact. Marking an emergency telephone number on the bridle or saddle could be the answer - something as simple as a dog tag engraved with the contact details. But think carefully about the number you use. It shouldn't be your mobile - because it might become damaged or you might become incapacitated in the event of a fall - but rather the number of your yard or a friend. The one you give must be one that will always be answered and the person must be aware that you've nominated them in case of emergency.

News

National Equine Forum

The National Equine Forum held in London on Wednesday 22 March saw the launch of two important pieces of industry information:

It's time for action Minister tells The National Equine Forum

An action plan that sets out how the horse industry can further strengthen its valuable contribution to the economy and lives of people in cities and rural areas across England and Wales was launched at the National Equine Forum 2006.

The action plan supports the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales, published in December 2005, and sets out how all 50 of the strategy's action points will be implemented.

Minister for the Horse Industry, Jim Knight, and Chairman of the British Horse Industry Confederation (BHIC), Graham Cory, launched the Horse Industry Strategy's Action Plan.

Mr Knight said:

"The horse industry offers a multitude of social, educational and health benefits to the wider community, and the Government is committed to helping you promote and maximise these.

"I am continually encouraged by the productive relationship that exists between Defra and the horse industry.

"Defra is making some key commitments to the horse industry this year, including the improvement of access to the countryside, and reviewing the issue of insurance.

"We will explore, with Natural England, the possibility of establishing Access Enablers, to bring together and further the interests of people who want access to the countryside, including horse riders who need extra provision more than most. If the pilot is successful and brings real benefits, we will look at extending this around the country.

"The Prime Minister's Respect agenda is about investing in good behaviour by creating the right infrastructure of support and facilities and amenities that people can use in their community. Working with the horse industry is one of the ways we can take this forward."

Mr Knight said he was sympathetic to complaints from horse owners about the infamous Mirvahedy insurance case.

"I am keen to explore whether the effect of Mirvahedy on the 1971 Animals Act can be addressed. My officials are already working on this, with a view to possibly supporting an amendment to the 1971 Act. We expect to go out to consultation on this issue soon.

"We are also putting more funding into research – to explore and highlight evidence of what the horse industry can achieve."

Mr Knight made further commitments to raise horse industry issues to the attention of his Ministerial colleagues, to meet with the BHIC every six months, and he also pledged a further contribution from Defra towards the running costs of a newly developed BHIC website, which houses the action plan.

In launching this website and expanding on the horse industry's role in the action plan, BHIC Chairman Graham Cory, said:

"I can't think of a better example of government working productively, and to such good effect, with any other industry.

"A few years ago the strategy was little more than a pipe dream, a twinkle in the eyes of the BHIC. The fact that it exists today is a testament to what can be achieved when people set their minds to it. With the publication of the action plan, the strategy has metamorphosed from a collection of worthy aims into a challenge. Collectively, the various equestrian and equine organisations, and Defra, will be judged by their record of delivering against the various action points.

"By visiting the new BHIC website at www.bhic.co.uk, the development of which has been funded by Defra, you will be able to see how well – or otherwise - we are doing in delivering against the action plan. The website will also help us improve communications between organisations and with the wider community."

and.....

£4bn spent on horses, says BETA survey

Horse owners and riders spend around £4 billion per year on what has become a growing leisure activity, according to the National Equestrian Survey (NES) newly commissioned by the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA).

The second and final phase of the survey, in which BETA has invested more than £70,000, was launched at the National Equine Forum.

"The figures show that conventional wisdom may have underestimated just to what extent the industry has grown since BETA last reported in 1999," said BETA's executive director Claire Williams.

"The report's findings will contribute significantly to the debate surrounding the structure of the industry, its role in Britain today and its strategic development in the future."

The new survey reveals that the number of horses in Britain, including those kept by private owners and in professional establishments, has reached 1.35 million. They are owned or cared for by 720,000 people, or 1.2% of the UK population.

Around 2.1 million people ride at least once a month, with a further 2.2 million having done so during the last year, making a total of 4.3 million participants. The previous estimate was that 2.4 million people had ridden during the last 12-months.

"These figures are particularly encouraging, especially if infrequent riders can be persuaded to take to the saddle more often," said Ms Williams.

Research for the first part of the NES, published in February, found that a shortage of places to go riding and lack of opportunity were often-cited deterrents.

BETA, which represents about 800 manufacturers, distributors and retailers of equestrian goods and services, is currently promoting riding as a leisure activity that can be enjoyed by all ages and on a wide range of budgets.

When the trade association sought views on the coming of the Olympic Games to London in 2012, more than 90% of respondents believed that the 'Olympic effect' would raise the profile of horse sports and generate more interest in riding.

BETA also asked researchers to find out what the more dedicated riders and owners do with their horses.

Although leisure riding remains the main activity, up by 5% since the 1999 survey, the number of riders who school their horses has almost doubled. The amount of competition riding, both affiliated and unaffiliated, has also increased; while riding has become less seasonal with more riders remaining active all year round.

Hunting was also found to have attracted more followers, with the number of mounted participants increasing from 10% to 18% of regular riders over the last six years. Yet the number keeping horses mainly for hunting has gone down by around one third.

The National Equestrian Survey, with additional specialist sections, will be available to purchase. Contact BETA on 01937 587062 or visit www.beta-uk.org

Important Conference highlights the new nationally accredited Level 2 Award for Health & Safety in the Equine Industry

Warwickshire College's continued commitment to providing solutions for all areas of equine industry and education with regard to health and safety management and training was underlined by the staging of the 'Safety with Horses' Conference held at Moreton Morrell on Monday 20th February.

Equine Projects Manager Karen Tolley outlined the new, award winning equine health and safety training programme and accredited qualification, demonstrating the many ways in which it can be delivered, while Alastair Mitchell, HSE explained the new framework for Vocational Qualifications in health and safety for the land based industries.

Eleven colleges attended the full day event. Presentations were delivered by a range of speakers from both inside and outside the equine education sector and reflected the key aspects of this important qualification for delivery by equine programmes areas.

Alan Bingle, Expert Technical Witness highlighted common areas leading to litigation and Paul Reay from the major equine insurers SEIB discussed the ways in which the insurance industry was working to keep insurance premiums down.

Other contributors included Sue Evans of Willow Farm Riding & Livery Centre, Skegness who had travelled down from the North East to describe how well the programme had worked for her staff.

Alan Bingle said: "Horses can give a great deal of pleasure, create excitement and provide us with a worthwhile occupation or pastime. We owe it to the horses that we handle or ride to undertake any involvement we may have in an environment that is safe, controlled and where the risks involved have been reduced to a minimum".

Find out more about the Safety with Horses training programme at:

<http://www.warkscol.ac.uk/equistudy/equistudy/coursepage.asp?courseid=9>

Judges forced to wear hard hats

HARD hats are now compulsory for judges of ridden hunter classes. As of the start of this year, Sport Horse Breeding of Great Britain's (SHB(GB)) rules state: "Judges must wear a skull cap or hat and safety harness according to the current approved BSI or European standard."

"The change of rule was for health and safety reasons," explained Catherine Burdock, general secretary of SHB(GB). The changes have angered members of the showing community, who feel the introduction of hard hats with three-point harnesses will ruin the traditional spectacle of ridden hunter classes, in particular ladies' classes. Lynn Russell, who has judged ladies' hunter classes for the past 20 years, is outraged by the decision, stating: "I think it is dreadful - the dress code is part of English heritage and the changes will destroy the class from an elegance point of view."

Ms Russell feels wearing a hard hat will spoil the look of the traditional side-saddle habit.

"I'm very much a traditionalist and I'm vain, I like the look of the traditional dress, it's very feminine," she said, adding judges should have an opportunity to sign a disclaimer.

SHB(GB) considered extending the new rule to competitors as well as judges, but in the wake of negative feed back from members and consulting solicitors, decided it need apply only to judges and competitors under 18 (hats are strongly recommended for the over-18s).

SHB(GB) is aware the changes will meet with opposition, but remains determined judges should wear hard hats for insurance purposes.

"The downside of health and safety rules is that you risk losing tradition," said Ms Burdock.

Showing producer and judge Robert Oliver said the changes were a shame for spectators, but "a sign of the times", adding there was always a risk element when judges rode up to 60 unfamiliar horses at one time.

British Dressage recently opted to leave its rules unchanged - hard hats are "recommended" but not compulsory at affiliated competitions.

But the British Show Hack, Cob and Riding Horse Association could take SHB(GB)'s lead.

"We've noted the new rule with interest and will consider it at our board meeting (14February)," said its chairman, Brian Williams.

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 2 February 2006

UPDATE: Judges sign disclaimer to keep traditional hats

SHOWING judges who do not want to comply with a new Sport Horse Breeding of Great Britain (SHB(GB)) rule on hard hats (H&H news, 2 February) can opt to sign a disclaimer.

However, a warning has been given to any judge considering this route that he/she may not be covered by the society's insurance in the event of an accident.

"We have given people the option of signing a disclaimer stating that if they choose to wear hats other than those in the 2006 rules, then in the event of an accident they may not be covered," said Catherine Burdock, general secretary of SHB(GB).

"The emphasis is on 'may not': we are not saying they will not, because until a claim is made and all the circumstances are taken into account, we do not know what an insurer would decide."

The rule, which came in at the start of 2006, states that judges must wear a skullcap or hat and safety harness that meets the current approved BSI or European standard.

It means made-to-measure hats that do not meet current approval — in particular, bowlers and silk hats worn in ladies' hunter classes — are not deemed acceptable for judges in light of advice given by the society's insurance brokers.

Some judges asked the society to think again and welcomed the offer of a disclaimer. Lucy Killingbeck, a competitor and judge, said she could not wear standard safety headgear because an injury sustained in a car accident meant she suffers severe headaches if she wears anything other than made-to-measure hats.

Mrs Killingbeck said she had spoken to 90 out of about 120 judges on the SHB(GB) panel and found only one in favour of hats to BSI or European standards being mandatory, with the rest believing judges should be given a choice to assess risk factors for themselves.

"It isn't about vanity or arrogance, it's about freedom of choice and comfort," she said. "There have been no recorded incidents of judges sustaining head injuries in the ring in the UK."

"When you're judging, you can sometimes be in the ring for 3 hours or more, and safety hats aren't designed to be worn for such long periods."

Miss Burdock said judges who signed the disclaimer must realise they may still have to comply with individual shows' rules.

"If a show states that all judges must wear hats to approved safety standards, judges must comply even if they have signed our disclaimer," she said.

In the light of the SHB(GB) controversy, the British Show Hack Cob and Riding Horse Association has also looked at whether safety headgear should be made mandatory for judges, but has decided not to change its rules.

BSHCRHA board member Lynn Russell said: "The matter was brought up at the last board meeting but it was decided it should continue to be left to judges' discretion for the time being." But judges and competitors need to remember that individual shows and societies have different rules and they must make sure they comply with them."

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 2 March 2006

Horse & Hound columnist Katie Jerran added.....

Vanity over safety

.....Another subject that has stirred a lot of passion is that of judges and hats. Many were resentful of a new Sport Horse Breeding (GB) stipulation that safety hats become mandatory for judges — although this was partly defused by allowing those who wanted to continue wearing hats of their choice to sign disclaimers.

While agreeing that some traditions are important, I do wonder if some objectors are going to look back in a few years' time and wonder what all the fuss was about. When the BSJA decreed that riders had to wear hats with three-point harnesses, there was an outcry: now, everyone accepts it.

The horse world is notoriously reluctant to accept change, but, eventually, we get used to new things. After all, if we all look the same, does it matter if we don't look as elegant?

The Side Saddle Association already insists that its junior members wear safety hats, so as that generation comes through the ranks, perhaps the traditional silk hat will one day seem to be literally, old hat.

Although I've stuck to tradition when judging — and, having signed the disclaimer, will continue to do so — it wouldn't bother me if it reached the stage where safety headgear had to be worn. I always wear a crash hat at home and keep it on all day on the yard because I've had more potential accidents on the ground than when on the back of a horse.

Unfortunately, showing societies do have to worry about the possibility of being sued by a judge who has an accident in the ring. Litigation is now a fact of life — a few years ago, no one would have dreamed of suing after a horse-related accident, but that has changed dramatically, as riding schools know to their cost.

It will be interesting to see how many judges appear wearing hats with three-point harnesses and how many stick to beagle caps and bowlers. I think tradition will win out, but also hope those of us who follow it will be even more careful to send horses who behave badly out of the ring and will not be criticised when we do so.

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine - Horse & Hound columnist Katie Jerran - 2 March 2006

The only two letters published on the subject appeared in Horse & Hound – 16 February 2006, the first from a Doctor.

Rider safety before fashion, please

Sir - I was astounded by Lynn Russell's comments on the rule change that will force show judges to wear proper hats (news, 2 February).

It seems, as she admits with misplaced pride, that looking the part is far more important than being protected in the event of a fall.

When is the horse world going to grow up about this issue? I see adverts and training features regularly showing unsafe hats or no hats at all, and a friend tells me he believes his scores drop significantly if he wears a proper hat for affiliated dressage.

BSI hats save lives. They also prevent lives from being destroyed by brain injury, the reality of which is not in the least bit "elegant".

Even moderate brain injuries can change personalities and result in wrecked careers and lost marriages.

Sir—I am not surprised by the moaning and griping at the suggestion that showing judges should wear proper hard hats with safety fittings. It is hard to imagine any other sport where safety would be deemed of less importance than style or tradition.

Of course judges must wear modern safety headwear. If style is compromised in favour of safety, that is a price worth paying.

It won't be the same as in the old days, but were the old days really so great that we can't imagine improving on them?

Related information:

Get more information on riding hats and standards from the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) at:
Guide - <http://www.beta-uk.org/Safety/HatGuide.asp>
Standards - <http://www.beta-uk.org/Safety/HatStandards.asp>

London parade moves

FOR the first time since 1885, the London Harness Horse Parade will not take place in the capital. The parade has been at Battersea Park since 1995.

But following a disagreement between Wandsworth Council and the parade's organisers, the event will now take place at South of England showground, Ardingly, on Easter Monday, 17 April.

Wandsworth Council had requested organisers conduct risk assessment after a spectator was injured when a horse bolted at last year's event.

"Sadly, they were unable to provide answers," said a council spokesman. "It's a shame because it was a popular event, but we can't risk public safety."

Jackie Shearman, parade secretary, said: "Park and parade officials could not agree on certain matters so it had to be moved elsewhere."

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 16 March 2006

In a follow-up letter to Horse & Hound, W Gilbey, Chairman of the London Harness Horse Parade Society, London wrote:

Sir—I am writing in response to the news story regarding the withdrawal of the London Harness Horse Parade from Battersea Park (16 March).

Wandsworth Council requested that we consulted with independent safety consultants to ensure that our risk assessment met all the necessary requirements. This we did, but still the council was still not satisfied.

The committee finally had to take the decision to find another venue. The event will now take place on 17 April, at the South of England Centre, Ardingly, West Sussex.

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 23 March 2006

Police get expert equine help with strays

Police in Norfolk will now benefit from the expertise of Britain's largest horse charity when dealing with stray horses.

Norfolk Police have linked up with Britain's largest horse welfare charity, Redwings, in a pioneering initiative to deal with stray horses. A team of experienced horse handlers from Redwings Horse Sanctuary, Long Stratton will now be on-call round the clock to help police officers when a stray horse's owners cannot be traced.

Read more from Horse & Hound Online at:

<http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/article.php?aid=73875&cid=397>

Source: Horse & Hound Online (Anna Tyzack) 31 January 2006

Also reported in EDP24 - 30 January 2006

<http://new.edp24.co.uk/content/news/story.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=News&tBrand=edponline&tCategory=news&itemid=NOED30%20Jan%202006%2018%3A06%3A58%3A950>

Equestrian industry must get greener, says BETA

A campaign to make the equestrian industry one of the greenest in the country has been launched by the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA).

The introduction of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme will encourage companies that manufacturer, distribute and retail equestrian products and services to be more aware of issues such as recycling and ethical trading.

"There was a time when a company's main role was employing people and paying taxes. Although those functions remain crucial, the modern business needs to be seen to be doing more to lead the way on social and environmental issues," said BETA's executive director Claire Williams.

"These might include cutting down on wasteful packaging, encouraging the use of recyclable raw materials, reducing dependency on road transport, fostering ethical trading throughout the supply chain and helping reduce climate change."

BETA has drawn up a series of achievable initiatives to help members participate in the CSR Programme. The overall aim is to add value to the equestrian trade and enhance its reputation with both consumers and the wider commercial community.

Pledging the trade association's commitment to a CSR Programme, BETA chairman Monty Stuart Monteith said: "It can give businesses' employees a sense of belonging and a goal beyond the chores of a routine job, and allow companies to differentiate themselves from those who take no interest in the world around them. CSR is therefore a good thing."

The BETA-led CSR Programme also endorses the use of clear labelling on products, good business practice and the reduction of waste.

"The implementation of these core values could make the equestrian industry one of the greenest in the country," added Monty Stuart-Monteith.

The ten core values of the BETA CSR Programme are:

1. Greener supply chains - to encourage BETA members to develop sustainable supply chains for products.
2. Product information - to give consumers confidence that social and environmental issues are being well managed by our members.
3. Climate change - to reduce the trade's contribution to climate change by encouraging the reduction of energy usage. To promote the selling of products which are energy efficient both in their manufacture and use.
4. Packaging - to reduce the amount of packaging in our trade and encourage use of recyclable materials.
5. Product disposal - to encourage the production of products that are recyclable, bio-degradable or do not have to be thrown away at the end of their useful lives.
6. Transport - to reduce the dependency on road transport in our trade.
7. Waste - to reduce the amount of waste generated.
8. Ethical trading - to ensure that everybody in our supply chains benefits from trading with BETA members.
9. Community membership - to encourage BETA members to be good neighbours and good employers in the community.
10. Feeds - to follow relevant legislation and codes of conduct.

More details from BETA on tel 01937 587062 or info@beta-uk.org

The following exciting new developments will involve substantial design and building works which undoubtedly will be professionally undertaken. But remember if you are ever involved with a new facility on your premises - be it a small refurbishment or leading to a new major complex - potential accidents can be designed out by designing safety in at the earliest stage.

ILPH pledges £3m for new site

THE International League for Protection of Horses (ILPH) is willing to spend more than £3m in its quest to open a new recovery and rehab centre in the south-west of England. But first it needs to find a site.

The welfare group is on the look-out for a green field site or farm/equestrian set-up that is suitable for conversion.

"We would pay £700,000 for a green field site of about 200 acres of well-drained pasture, ideally with hedges or post-and-rail fencing," said ILPH secretary Richard Felton, adding more than £2.5m would then be invested in a rehabilitation centre.

If you can help, call Nick Burdttel: 01934 832 459).

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 16 March 2006

Champion news as the Amman Valley's £1.6m trotting track project gets off to a flying start

WORK has begun on a £1.6m project to create a championship harness trotting circuit and equestrian centre in the heart of the Amman Valley.

Read more from IC Wales Online at:

http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/farming/countrypursuits/tm_objectid=16754553&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=champion-news-as-the-amman-valley-s--pound-1-6m-trotting-track--project-gets-off-to-a-flying-start--name_page.html

Source: *IC Wales Online* 28 February 2006

RDA plans new centre

A Riding For The Disabled Group in Shropshire is aiming to raise £750,000 to build a new centre to satisfy soaring demand in the area.

The Perry Riding and Driving Group was set up more than 10 years ago from Jane Barker's home and private stables in Yeaton. It now runs six days a week for about 80 adults and children—with a waiting list that would fill a further three sessions.

"All our sessions are full," said Mrs Barker, "but it's very hard to turn people away. If we get enough people we try to form a new session, but we're running out of space."

The current location means riders must cross a busy main road to access the driving track and since the operation has expanded, so has the need for facilities. Plans for the new centre are yet to be drawn up, but it will include an indoor/outdoor school, driving track and a classroom.

"In building a new centre," said Mrs Barker, "we hope to ensure the future of riding, driving and vaulting for disabled people in Shropshire. We have many young children who ride here—who put their riding clothes on as soon as they get up— and it plays a huge part in their life."

The group has been turned down for grants from the SITA Trust and the Charities Aid Commission.

Fund-raising starts on 1 April at the Walford and North Shropshire College with Dancing With Horses, an afternoon of music, freestyle dressage, side-saddle and vaulting.

For details (tel: 0845 4506714) or visit www.perry-rda.org

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 16 March 2006

The difference a year makes

Cold conditions so far this March are in stark contrast to the warm weather many places across the UK experienced this time last year.

The first half of March 2006 has seen temperatures below average across the entire UK, with daytime values only reaching 3 or 4 °C in places and frequent overnight frosts.

Last year temperatures were considerably higher, with daytime highs in the mid to upper teens. The highest temperatures reported around Britain this time last year were:

- London 20 °C on the 18th;
- Trawscoed, Ceredigion with 21 °C (70 °F) on the 19th;
- Valley, Anglesey, 20 °C on the 20th;
- Guernsey 17 °C on the 21st;
- Edinburgh and Aultbea with 17 °C on the 22nd.

Met Office forecasters are expecting temperatures to remain generally below average over the next few days with a continued risk of frost at night.

Get the latest forecast for the UK at: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/europe/uk/uk.html>

Source: *Met Office* 17 March 2006 <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html>

Appointments

The British Horse Society promotes Henry Whittaker to Access Senior Executive

Henry Whittaker has been appointed Senior Executive in The British Horse Society's Access and Rights of Way Department.

Henry, who is a Bachelor of Law and has a post-graduate Master of Science, joined the Society almost two years ago as an Assistant Access and Rights of Way Officer and, after the 2005 reorganisation, was an Executive in the Access and Rights of Way Department.

Director of Access, Safety and Welfare Mark Weston said: "I am delighted that Henry has achieved this promotion. He is a hard-working and gifted member of the team. I have every confidence in him making a success of his new challenge."

Henry, 25, said he was "born in the saddle", having had his first riding lessons as a baby, and went on to show hunters at all levels, training with Lars Sederholm from the age of 13.

He said: "I grew up in the equestrian world and understand how vital the fight for better access and rights of way is for riders and drivers. My father is a rural rights of way contractor and I learnt a great deal from him about the practical right of way before I even started at the BHS.

"My priorities are to make the Access and Rights of Way Department more transparent and open and really promote what we are constantly striving to achieve."

Source: *British Horse Society* 16 January 2006

Roads, Byeways and Rights of Way

Highway Code Consultation

The Driving Standards Agency is consulting on the revision of The Highway Code. Now is your opportunity to comment on the contents.

The Driving Standards Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, is updating the Highway Code. Before finalising the revised Code, the agency wants to take account of the views of a wide range of those with an interest in road safety. Your comments are therefore invited on any of the proposed amendments, and on any other aspect of the Code, with the closing date for submission of any comments being 10th May 2006. The British Horse Society and the British Driving Society are the equestrian organisations being asked for their input during this period of external consultation.

What are the major changes that specifically affect horse riders?

New sections are included on:

- signal controlled equestrian crossings (section 25, page 11)
- horse-drawn vehicles used on the Highway (section 45, page 15)
- requirements to wear a helmet not applying to a child who is a follower of the Sikh religion while wearing a turban (section 46, page 15)
- wearing reflective clothing and carrying lights (white to the front, red to the rear) if riding/leading a horse at night (section 48, page 15)
- dismounting at level crossings where a horse rider dismounting sign is displayed (section 51, page 16)

Existing rules include 198, 208 & 209. Quiet lanes are now mentioned under 212.

The index lists horse riders under sections 45-52, 157, 181, 208 & 247. Horse-drawn vehicles are mentioned under section 45, with additional information on page 113.

Sheila Hardy, Senior Executive Safety for the British Horse Society, told Riding Safely that although this is an open consultation document, she would be grateful if you would copy any comments you might make to her at s.hardy@bhs.org.uk

The revised draft of The Highway Code can be accessed at www.dsa.gov.uk/highwaycode. It's available to download and print in sections, rather than as one complete document. (This is because the complete consultation document, including all the pictures, is too big to make available as a single download.)

Source: The Driving Standards Agency - 15 February 2006

Defra publishes advice on the management of byways and rights of way

Defra published on 19th January 2006 advice for Local Authorities, the Police and Community Safety Partnerships on the maintenance of byways and the illegal use of motor vehicles on rights of way.

Rural Affairs Minister, Jim Knight, said:

"It has become clear that many of those involved in enforcement are unaware of the significant range of powers that already exist to tackle the illegal and irresponsible use of motor vehicles on rights of way and in the wider countryside. There are others who have demonstrated, through imaginative and creative use of these powers, that they can be successful if used effectively.

"The aim of the guidance is to share this good practice with local authorities, the Police and Community Safety Partnerships and to encourage the formation of local partnerships to tackle the continuing abuse.

"We must ensure that our byways and rights of way are protected for the enjoyment of everyone who use these important parts of our countryside, now and in the future. "

'Regulating the use of motor vehicles on public rights of way and off road' is the first step in providing information to Local Authorities, the Police and Community Safety Partnerships on getting the most out of existing legislation, and to encourage the formation of local partnerships to tackle the continuing abuse.

'Making the Best of Byways' will provide a practical reference manual for authorities, land owners, contractors, volunteer groups, and others involved in the maintenance of unsurfaced vehicular routes. Among other things, it provides advice on dealing with: conflicts between users; poor surface conditions; and increasing pressure of use.

Both publications are available online at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/index.htm>

Be safe and be seen with BHS Herefordshire and Countrywide Stores' hi-viz competition

The BHS Herefordshire Committee has teamed up with Countrywide Stores to launch a contest in the county to promote safer riding on the roads.

All horse riders or carriage drivers need to do is wear hi-viz clothes while riding or driving out on the roads. Countrywide Stores is sponsoring the initiative and offering a prize package consisting of a voucher for a bag of Countrywide food for the winner, as well as a head collar and rope for their horse.

BHS Herefordshire will also give £5 to the lucky winner each month.

Wearing fluorescent and reflective clothing can give vital extra seconds to car drivers - time that can make the difference between life and death for you and your horse.

For more information, please contact Herefordshire Press Officer Jo Gardner on 01981 250137

Source: British Horse Society 23 March 2006

The BHS opens first Toll Ride in Ireland

Henrietta Knight, internationally renowned racehorse trainer, opened Ireland's first Toll Ride at The British Horse Society Ireland and The Countryside Access and Activities Network's (CAAN) official launch for The Grey Abbey Estates 6.5km Equestrian Toll in County Down on 1 March.

Working in partnership with CAAN and the BHS Ireland, Heather Hoffman, Northern Ireland's Off Road Horse Riding Development Officer, said: "As the volume of traffic increases, our roads are becoming too dangerous to ride on safely. We desperately need somewhere off-road to ride.

"We are very grateful to the Montgomery family for allowing access to their private estate. And we must say a big thank you to Ards Borough Council who backed the project along with East Border Region Partnership INTEREGG Illa funding."

Susan Irwin, BHS Ireland's Development Officer, said: "It has taken a lot of work over the past two years to get this trail off the ground, from the initial concept to the actual trail design and finally getting all the funding in place.

"We are very pleased that we can now offer a safe place for our members to ride. This is Ireland's first BHS Toll Ride and we hope the first of many to come. We've already received interest from several other private estates so it's all looking very positive."

The trail will open annually from March 1 to October 1 inclusive. However it will close every winter for the shooting season for health and safety reasons. It will be open seven days a week, closing only for Sunday mornings.

For more information please contact: Heather Hoffman on 028 9030 3934 or Heather@countriesiderecreation.com or Susan Irwin, BHS Development Officer on 028 9268 3801 or s.irwin@bhs.org.uk

Source: British Horse Society 3 March 2006

Shared Path for Pedestrians, Cyclists And Horse Riders at A27, Berwick Roundabout, East Sussex

A shared path on the A27 Berwick Roundabout, East Sussex, has opened today to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders.

The old combined footpath and cycle track was removed from the roundabout and has been replaced with a new, wider path creating a shared foot and cycle path, which can also be used by horse riders.

Simon Duke, the Highways Agency's area manager for Sussex said:

"The A27 is an important road and I am delighted that we have been able to provide this new path which will improve the safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders using the A27."

Source: Highways Agency (South East) 23 January 2006

Welsh routes improved

TWO access routes through forests in Wales are to be resurfaced and made safer for riders, cyclists and walkers, thanks to a grant by waste management services supplier Biffa.

The forests of Fawr and Ganol in Wales will benefit from a £4,438 grant, which has been given to Safety and Facilities for Equestrians, which aims to establish safe off-road riding in the Cardiff woodlands.

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 12 January 2006

'Horsecam' to catch bad drivers

Police say they will prosecute if offences are committed

Horse riders in Leicestershire have become so fed up with inconsiderate drivers that they have decided to catch them in the act - on film.

Read more from BBC News Online (2 February 2006) at:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/leicestershire/4675542.stm>

Riding Safely understands that Horsecam is not supported by the BHS Safety Advisory Committee for a number of reasons and that the Leicestershire group are aware of their concerns. It has also been reported that some mounted police officers have also voiced concern over this initiative.

Training Initiatives

The British Horse Society achieves automatic inclusion on the DfES Register of Learning Providers

British Horse Society 'Where to Train' Approved Establishments that offer training to students from outside the EU are to be automatically listed on the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Register of Learning Providers.

This will enable international students wanting to train in the equine industry to apply for visas, in order to train at a BHS Approved Establishment Chris Doran, Senior Executive in the BHS's Approvals Department, said: "This is a major step forward for BHS Approved Training Centres who wish to offer BHS training to international students. This, in turn, will broaden the outlets through which overseas candidates may access the BHS System."

The BHS is continually looking for ways to encourage establishments to develop and enhance the benefits of the Approvals Scheme.

For further information, please contact: Chris Doran, Approvals

Department, The British Horse Society, 01926 707794 / c.doran@bhs.org.uk

BHS - 3 February 2006

People Welfare**Horse world gets ahead on child protection**

New regulations stipulate stringent checks for instructors and volunteers in equestrian sport as ABIGAIL BUTCHER reported in Horse and Hound on 12 January 2006.....

ALL new volunteers and instructors to the equestrian industry who are likely to come into contact with children under the age of 18 will be subject to stringent "vetting" as part of a drive to increase child protection across the sport.

With effect from 1 January, a combined agreement between the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) and its member bodies means all newcomers will be subject to a disclosure check.

This is a referral to a list, held by the Scottish Criminal Records Office or the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in England and Wales, of people unsuitable and therefore disqualified from working with children aged under 18 or vulnerable adults.

"All new volunteers and trainers working with minors must be CRB-checked, and on an ongoing basis, existing trainers will be checked - although the priority is newcomers," said Helen Huggett, BEF executive officer.

"Everybody's really committed, it's such a hot topic, people want to make sure they're absolutely right in everything they do. They're thinking it's another level of bureaucracy but also that it's a very necessary one."

The move signals progression on behalf of equestrian sport, and has been supported by Sport England and its Child Protection in Sport Unit - a joint venture with the NSPCC.

As a Sport England and UK Sport funding requirement, all sports are required to reach a preliminary standard of child protection, but according to Sport England chief executive Roger Draper, the BEF is well ahead of deadline.

"Sport England is working to get more people involved in sport and is committed to providing quality opportunities for children to take part in safety," said Draper. "We are working with the governing bodies of sport through the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit to implement minimum standards across all sports. "The BEF has already achieved this. It has introduced a policy and has provided details of how this will be implemented, with details about training and education." The policy has been agreed by BEF's 13 member organisations, which include the Pony Club, British Horse Society (BHS), BSJA, Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS)

and Scottish Equestrian Association (SEA). Although each member has had some level of child protection code in place, individual approaches have varied until now.

The BHS has run child protection courses for its own staff, volunteers and individuals since January 2002. Along with SEA, it is facilitating disclosure checks with the CRB for the horse industry (see box below).

"It's law in Scotland and I think we're certainly pre-empting the fact that it will become mandatory here before long," said Christine Doran, manager of riding schools and approvals at the BHS. "We're here to facilitate checks for the BEF and its member bodies and for any instructor who wants to apply to join the BHS register.

"The BHS child protection courses have been very popular."

The BSJA already CRB-checks instructors and volunteers working with under-21 s, according to spokesman Jacky Knightly. "All our accredited coaches are checked already," she said. "We're not really a 'tactile' sport, but you do give leg-ups to children."

British Dressage, British Eventing and the Pony Club have sent instructors on the BHS's child protection courses since 2002, but are now also implementing the 1 January changes.

"Anyone who does anything for the Pony Club - new helpers at camp, District Commissioners, secretaries and so on - will be asked to undertake a check," said Pony Club chairman Mary Anderson. "We need to cover our backs - it will become law, I'm certain of that."

The ABRS requires riding school proprietors to ensure at least one member of staff has attended a child protection course. It has its own child protection code, which is sent to every member school. Proprietors then return a full staff list, complete with all qualifications. ABRS chairman Julian Marczak commented:

"We are wholeheartedly endorsing and supporting the BEF position."

In Scotland, all new volunteers and staff working with children have had to be checked by law under the 2003 Child Protection Act since March 2005.

"I was really worried about losing volunteers, but there hasn't been a drop-off at all," said Muriel Colquhoun, honorary secretary of SEA. "There are many benefits for employers - disclosure checks look at any criminal offence, so the employer knows the whole story.

"People have been absolutely fine about the checks - they are a pain because you have to supply all sorts of detail such as passport numbers, driving licences and past addresses."

But Colquhoun warns of a forthcoming glitch in the system: "At the moment the checks are only for new volunteers and employees. The problem I foresee is when we get into retrospective checking. I don't think the CDB has taken on board how many volunteers there are in equestrian sport - it's going to be a nightmare."

Disclosure checks: how and where?

- THE BHS (tel: 01926 707700 or www.bhs.org.uk) and SEA (tel: 01475 540687 or www.equinesport.org.uk/sea/web/) are both set up to facilitate disclosure checks
- THE BHS facilitates checks for both instructors and volunteers; SEA can facilitate volunteer checks for its members only
- THE costs of the checks are borne by the individuals, and from April 2006, these will be £40 for instructors and around £6 administration fee for volunteers. SEA can facilitate volunteer checks for free
- DISCLOSURE checks take about two to three weeks for paying individuals, and up to six weeks for volunteers
- VISIT www.crb.gov.uk or www.ccpr.org.uk for more information

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 12 January 2006

A call for help: vets top UK suicide rate

News that the suicide rate among vets is close to four times the national average has prompted the formation of an industry-specific prevention task force.

The move, driven by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), follows statistics published in *The Veterinary Record* (1 October 2005). According to Office for National Statistics data, vets are not only far more likely to take their own lives than the general population, but have a suicide rate more than twice that of the medical profession and almost double that of dentists.

"This is going to be a no holds barred look at how we can improve this tragic situation and reduce the suicide rate - to do nothing would be irresponsible," said Dr Wendy Harrison, an elected member of the RCVS and vice-chairman of its education committee, now charged with chairing the first working group of its kind within the industry.

After the first think-tank of representatives from veterinary charities, the Samaritans, a specialist in addictive diseases, vets and vet students, Harrison said one factor that separated vets from other professions was their view of death (euthanasia) "as a way to prevent suffering of animals on a daily basis".

Vet Helpline co-ordinator Austin Kirwan, a vet who focused his Masters degree on euthanasia, said vets applied the same thought process to human life - most notably their own - if suffering depression or stress.

Easy access to lethal substances was also a factor, evident in the fact self-poisoning by solid or liquid substances was the most common cause of death of 75 suicides recorded between 1979 and 2000. Dr Lydia Brown, a director of the Veterinary Benevolent Fund, said the challenge was to raise awareness -stretching to clients, whom she said often called support programmes when concerned about their vets.

"Fortunately or unfortunately, vets have a high IQ and, as a result, are the kind of people who set very high standards for themselves - it's when they fall short of these standards that a lot of stress-related illness and accidents occur," Brown said.

Working group recommendations cover workplace mentoring, an education strategy, central coordination of support networks and improving workplace standards.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 19 January 2006

Union turns sights to stable lads

The T&G union is launching a drive to improve pay and conditions for stable "lads and lasses" on the day the British Horseracing Board has its award ceremony for the industry's footsoldiers.

The media spotlight is on the industry after the suicides of a number of stable lads in the Suffolk racing town of Newmarket.

Read more from BBC News Online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4735460.stm>

Source: *BBC News Online* 21 February 2006

Horse Welfare

DEFRA pressed to keep faith with licensing

DON'T let the chance to license livery yards slip away," is the cry from the horse world following the Animal Welfare Bill's passage to the Lords.

There is currently no requirement for livery yards to be licensed in anyway, and the standards of care at DIY yards has been a growing cause for concern.

"DEFRA is still recommending livery yard licensing, but we must keep evidence for it coming forward while an assessment of the costs for the scheme is undertaken," Lesley Barwise-Munro of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) told H&H.

The Animal Welfare Bill of England and Wales is due an 18 April reading, having completed its passage through the Commons. Livery yard licensing is expected to form part of secondary legislation drawn up next year.

"DEFRA is talking about making exemptions to licensing—such as yards that have already sought BHS approval and Thoroughbred studs — but I worry about consistency. We must not have different levels of licensing," added Mrs Barwise-Munro.

Another aspect of the Bill that has been greeted with scepticism was a new clause on "improvement notices" added last week, to be served to horse owners suspected of neglect.

The notices would be served by an inspector from the state veterinary service or local authority on an animal owner failing to provide the Bill's duty of care. But specific failure to comply with a notice will not constitute an offence.

The International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH) is calling for the introduction of improvement notices and its veterinary advisor, Keith Meldrum, said: "I'm delighted the system has been introduced, but I'm concerned that it's not legally enforceable."

A DEFRA spokesman said the notices are intended to "educate the animal-keeping public", and that making non-compliance an offence would create further legal work and reduce the scope of the Bill.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 30 March 2006

Education is the key to animal welfare says British Horse Society Scotland

The key to protecting animals from unnecessary suffering is education, according to The British Horse Society Scotland (BHSS).

Welcoming the Stage 1 debate on the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill taking place in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday 23 February 2006, BHSS Development Officer Helene Mauchlen said: "The Scottish Executive has taken a well-informed, science-based approach to modernising animal welfare law by protecting animals for decades to come.

"However, we cannot rely on legislation and prosecutions to prevent suffering. We still need to educate the public about how to care for animals."

As an educational charity, BHSS stands ready to help deliver the essential information - at least as far as horses are concerned.

Mrs Mauchlen said: "We gave evidence to the Committee about our input to the training of local authority animal health officers, and the Executive has acknowledged our role in its response. We look forward to building on that."

The BHSS urged the Executive to bring out its codes of animal welfare (proposed under Section 34 of the Bill) as soon as practically possible.

Mrs Mauchlen said: "The key reform of the animal welfare part is the introduction of a duty of care for animals (Section 22). Those owners who don't understand the needs of their animals will have to learn - and those who should know about welfare, but disregard it, will be committing an offence. We strongly support that at the BHS.

"But enforcement of that provision will depend on the welfare codes as the blueprint for appropriate treatment. The BHSS is of course more than willing to help in the production of welfare codes for horses.

Mrs Mauchlen continued: "Not everyone is aware, for example, of the suffering that ragwort causes to horses. There is evidence that horses are dying because this poisonous weed is insufficiently controlled.

"We are glad that the Minister, Ross Finnie MSP, has confirmed that an owner who allows his horse to eat ragwort will be committing an offence under the welfare section. We would also like him to use the codes or the new regulation-making powers (under Section 24) to address the serious problem of ragwort infestation."

BHSS experience shows that horses have been failed by the current animal welfare legislation, the Protection of Animals (Scotland) Act 1912. Horses can be left in situations of neglect or risk for a considerable time before their condition provides the necessary evidence that they have suffered, and can legally be removed.

Mrs Mauchlen said: "It can be a fine line between irregular feeding and death from starvation, or between low-level neglect of a horse's hooves and grossly overgrown, painful, deformed feet. The new Bill takes away the need for welfare organisations to wait for the suffering to start, before they can act."

While welcoming the Bill, however, BHSS sounded a note of caution on certain aspects. Part 1 of the Bill (Animal Health) provides extensive powers for Ministers to order the slaughter of animals in the event of an outbreak of virulent disease.

"We are all aware of the devastating consequences of animal disease," said Mrs Mauchlen.

"But we do have a concern that slaughter powers should be used very sparingly, and then only for susceptible animals. Again, prevention is the key - so we welcome the proposals for bio-security codes and for licensing of livestock markets."

While welcomed by BHSS, the licensing of markets and other animal-related activities including the operation of livery stables, as well as the new welfare offence, will impose financial burdens on councils and welfare organisations charged with enforcement.

Mrs Mauchlen said: "A new approach to animal welfare is bound to cost money, but the BHS is sure that - with sufficient investment in public education and training of enforcement officers - it will pay dividends in the future."

For more information contact Helene Mauchlen, BHS Scotland: h.mauchlen@bhs.org.uk

Find out more about the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill from the Scottish Parliament:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/47-animalHealth/>

ILPH calls for tougher laws on abandonment

GREATER powers to deal with abandoned horses are being called for by a leading welfare organisation after the second reading of the Draft Animal Welfare Bill.

The International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH) is calling on the government to give welfare organisations more powers in abandonment cases and to make abandonment a specific offence.

"If someone can't afford to keep an animal or it has come to the end of its life and they can't afford to dispose of it, it may be abandoned. This is partially addressed, but there should be a wider provision that allows us to take over," said ILPH veterinary advisor Keith Meldrum.

"The issue is at what stage can we assume legal ownership? We would like a situation when, after three months of having an animal in our care, we can go to court to ask for transfer of ownership."

The ILPH, RSPCA and the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) welcomed wider aspects of the Bill, and support from within the House of Commons during the 6hr debate on 10 January.

"We're really pleased with the way the debate went," said an RSPCA spokesman. "There was cross-party support for the Bill and widespread support for the duty of care offence, which will help reduce neglect of all

animals - legally binding Statutory Improvement Notices (SINs). SINs give police and welfare officers the right to ensure immediate improvements can be made to substandard horses in particular."

In addition to the duty of care offence (a new legal requirement for the keeper of an animal to provide a level of care), the ILPH has called for welfare conditions.

"SINs are frequently used on farm animals [under the Animals Miscellaneous Act 1968], but that doesn't cover horses," explained Meldrum.

"If a horse is being neglected, you can either give advice or get it taken away. There's no halfway house where an inspector can serve a notice requesting that the animal be taken inside, given more food and so on, which will have an immediate remedial effect."

The support for licensing livery yards received full support, as did the government's plans to introduce registration of animal sanctuaries.

The British Horse Industry Confederation is producing a fact sheet detailing recommendations for licensing and its renewal, to advise the standing committee taking the Bill forward.

"We're recommending livery yards be checked on an 18-monthly basis, with a vet inspection every three years," said former BEVA president Lesley Barwise-Munro. "Riding schools shouldn't go beyond a year for both welfare reasons and public safety."

The Bill is not expected to become law until the end of July, after passing through committee sessions in the Commons and Lords.

A similar Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Bill was introduced north of the Border on 5 October 2005 to amend the Animal Health Act 1981. It is not expected to enter full parliamentary debate until the end of May.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 19 January 2006

Horses targeted in slashing attacks

POLICE investigating a spate of slashing attacks on horses in Wiltshire are baffled by the nature of the crimes.

"I fail to understand how anyone could deliberately injure a horse, which to most owners is part the family," said acting Sergeant Andy Sexton, of Marlborough Police.

His comments followed two recent attacks - both taking place on the full moon weekend of 14-15 January - adding to four similar attacks in the area last summer.

Police have not drawn a link between the incidents, but ask owners to "report anything suspicious".

The two recent attacks targeted a filly, slashed from the anus to vagina, at a property near Lockeridge, and a seven-year-old Welsh section D gelding at a Burbage property, who suffered a puncture wound to his off-side. Both are recovering.

Jean Stewart, owner of the gelding, Samahani, said her family had been shattered by the attack, discovered by her 16-year-old daughter Ginette.

"It was a dreadful shock as he's very much part of the family," Stewart said.

The filly's owner, who asked not to be named, said: "I don't understand how anyone could do this."

Last year, horse behaviourist Gary Witheford's Westcourt Stables in Burbage were targeted on four separate occasions in June, July, September and November.

Two fillies were slashed - both suffering the anus to vagina cuts - and a colt was slashed from the anus. One of the fillies was targeted a second time, suffering a cut to her ribs.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Marlborough Police, (tel: 0845 408 7000) or Crimestoppers (tel: 0800 555 111).

H&H vet Karen Coumbe advised horses could also suffer self-inflicted trauma (by rubbing against fences or barbed wire), adding it could be difficult to distinguish an attack from a normal accident or injury.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 26 January 2006

Ragwort conviction

HORSE industry leaders have applauded a rare ragwort poisoning conviction, reflecting danger wrought by the toxic weed, responsible for more than 1,000 horse deaths each year.

Appearing before Aberystwyth Magistrates Court on 14 February, a 53 year old man from Lampeter, admitted causing unnecessary suffering to his Welsh Cob mare, who died after eating ragwort in her field. He was sentenced to 200 hours of community service.

The conviction was welcomed by welfare groups and Liverpool University's Prof Derek Knottenbelt, who heads research into the development of a blood test to detect ragwort poisoning in live horses.

"It sends out the message that if your horse dies of ragwort poisoning in your own field, you are guilty of a crime and can be convicted," said Prof Knottenbelt, adding an accurate blood test would lead to more prosecutions.

Britain last year experienced its worst ragwort plague in more than 20 years — a problem linked to apathetic horse owners (news, 1 September 2005).

It is tipped to spread even further this year, prompting the BHS to schedule a Ragwort Awareness Week (3-7 April) and an industry conference (27 April).

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 23 February 2006

Stop the unnecessary suffering

Two emergencies have revealed disturbing variations in how police and firemen handle 999 calls involving horses as ABIGAIL BUTCHER reported in Horse and Hound on 2 February 2006.....

HORSE & Hound and the British Horse Society (BHS) have joined forces to help improve the way police and fire services deal with emergencies involving horses.

While the vast majority of correspondence received by H&H praises the way the emergency services deal with equine incidents — two recent issues (see below) investigated by H&H have highlighted a lack of nationalised guidelines.

"We don't for one minute question the professionalism and integrity of the police and fire services, but we want to help them put protocols or guidelines in place to achieve the right balance between the safety of officers and the public and the welfare of the injured animal," said BHS chief executive Graham Cory.

In one case, the South Wales Fire Service adhered too strictly to guidelines and a horse was eventually destroyed because of its delayed rescue from a cattle grid. In the other, Northumbria Police called a marksman, rather than a vet or hunt, to destroy a badly injured foal. Owners argue the marksman took too long to reach the scene, which caused the foal unnecessary suffering.

As a result, the BHS is aiming to set up a working group with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) with possible assistance from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA), International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH) and the RSPCA.

Mr Cory continued: "We're aiming to talk to the police and fire services nationally—or work with a local service to roll it out. We have already had very positive discussions with the Warwickshire Fire Brigade.

"We found working with the County Surveyors Society on SMA road surfaces, and with the RAF on low flying aircraft, extremely beneficial, and both groups were glad of our help."

Instead of national guidelines on dealing with emergencies, each fire authority or police force has its own standard, and while some have a proven system, with local agreements with vets, RSPCA officers and hunts, others do not.

"Animal rescue is an extremely complicated area," said Andrew Hargreaves, Wiltshire Fire Brigade assistant divisional officer.

"How we deal with an incident would depend on the nature of entrapment and the value of the animal involved, but the rules are not usually all that stringent, they're normally dabbed with a large dollop of flexibility.

"We wouldn't normally perform a rescue on an animal without an RSPCA officer being present."

In South Wales, protocol has already been changed as a result of Bomdidibom's incident (see box below — the cattle grid). But it was because the fire brigade's control room insisted on following too stringently the inflexible protocol — for an RSPCA inspector and then fire officer to assess the situation before an engine was sent out — that the horse had to be destroyed.

"It was a particularly unfortunate circumstance and we could have dealt with it better," said Andy Maries, deputy chief fire officer for South Wales.

"Our protocol was fixed with the RSPCA, and came from our experiences over time. We've been using it for six years, and in about 700-800 rescues this is the first time we've had a problem.

"One of the reasons we're cautious is that we've been out to incidents when the RSPCA is too busy, performed a rescue, called a vet and then get slapped with a bill several weeks later because the owners say they didn't call the vet."

Both Mr Maries and his chief fire officer have ensured protocols are more flexible and have passed on lessons learnt to the Mid and West Wales and North Wales — to the satisfaction of Bomdidibom's owners.

Mr Maries added: "We did stick too rigidly to protocol, and acknowledge we could have done better."

Police in Hampshire often deal with incidents involving New Forest ponies. According to equine liaison officer DI David Collings, local forces have "tried-and-tested arrangements with vets and [Forest] Agisters" — the latter being qualified to destroy injured ponies.

"But a vet will always be called over the RSPCA," he said. "If the animal has been struck by a car, the vet is going to have the necessary equipment — humane killers and so on."

But Northumbria Police, involved in the "road accident" (see box below), do not have a local agreement with vets and hunts on emergency callout, according to a force spokesman.

The spokesman said its procedures were "under constant review" but did not announce specific plans to contact vets.

"These incidents aren't a one-off, but it's not a common scenario," said Paul Teesdale, ILPH chief field officer and former chief inspector of Manchester Police mounted branch. "One of the big problems is that 99% of officers know nothing about horses and I think the equine public expects them to know everything."

He added: "The welfare of the horse should be a priority. You would hope sense would prevail and that a vet and hunt's number would be available in the control room so that something can be done very quickly. Putting a horse down is a job for an expert."

Lesley Barwise-Munro, former BEVA president, commented: "Police are often wary of economics — people always worry about who's going to pay the bill. But in critical situations, the overriding aspect should be the welfare of the horse."

"Part of the [999] process should be to call a vet — a vet can assess a situation accurately and we are trained to be able to sort out tricky situations."

The road accident

ON 3 January, a Thoroughbred mare was killed outright after a collision with a van on the A696 at Higham Dykes in Northumberland. Her foal was trapped beneath the van and a fence, still alive. It had two broken legs, a broken spine and was disembowelled.

The police accident log states that officers arrived on the scene at 6.08am and put a call out for a marksman at 6.09am. According to the log, the marksman arrived 40min later to dispatch the foal.

But there has been debate as to why the officer did not call a vet. The owners were not traced at the time, despite the mare being freeze-branded and the foal microchipped. Witnesses dispute the time it took for the marksman to arrive, and say repeated offers to contact local hunts and vets were ignored.

The cattle grid

LAST November, 28-year-old Bomdidibom became stuck in a cattle grid on his owner Geoff Adams's farm. Mr Adams's son Tim, a vet, dialled 999. Control room staff could not mobilise a fire engine until the situation had been assessed by an RSPCA officer, followed by a fire officer.

Despite bypassing the RSPCA officer call-out (the officer relied on the vet's opinion) these procedures took 3hr to complete. When the engine arrived, officers removed the body of Bomdidibom, who had been relieved of his suffering.

Source: Horse & Hound Magazine 2 February 2006

UPDATE: Police and fire review emergency protocols

POLICE and fire services are looking at how they deal with emergencies involving equines following an H&H investigation.

The British Horse Society will work with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) to agree a new set of national equine emergency guidelines.

Representatives from the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA), RSPCA and International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH) will also lend their expertise.

"We already have a set of guidelines which were drawn up by the chairman of our welfare committee — which can serve as a starting point for discussions," said BHS chief executive Graham Cory. "Both ACPO and CFOA are very willing to cooperate."

Last month, H&H reported two incidents involving fire and police which led to prolonged suffering for a horse and a foal (Stop the unnecessary suffering, 2 February). In both incidents, the animals' owners raised concerns over a lack of protocol to help officers unused to dealing with horses in distress.

ACPO has now nominated North Yorkshire Police and the CFOA South Wales Fire Service to take part in talks. Mr Cory estimates there will be a period of consultation — by this summer — on resulting recommendations, before they are rolled out across the UK.

ILPH chief field officer Paul Teesdale said he is encouraged by the news.

"With increasingly centralised police control rooms, local knowledge has been lost," he said. "They need a list of phone numbers for hunts, slaughterhouses and vets who can get to the scene quickly."

BEVA's Lesley Barwise-Munro said the move was a positive step forward.

"We need the welfare of the animals to be a higher priority and for emergency services to see it's appropriate and important to contact a vet," she said.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 2 March 2006

Emergency funds target New Forest pony road toll

MORE than 130 New Forest ponies have been killed in single vehicle accidents in the past two years, prompting urgent funding for the placement of 40mph speed indicator devices (SID) on forest roads.

Sue Westwood, clerk to the Verderers of the New Forest—a statutory body sharing management of the forest with the Forestry Commission — said it was tragic that road fatalities involving ponies and livestock remained consistently high.

In 2005, 155 single vehicle accidents were recorded in the New Forest, killing 64 ponies, eight cattle and seven donkeys, compared with 167 accidents in 2004 (resulting in the deaths of 68 ponies, nine cattle and three donkeys).

In a bid to reduce the annual toll, Ms Westwood said the Verderers had initiated a £11,800 project to install SIDs, earmarked for seven different sites and encouraging motorists to reduce their speed.

The project was given the green light at the beginning of February, thanks to a European Union funded LEADER+ grant worth £4,200, with the remainder pledged by the Verderers, New Forest District Council, Hampshire Police, the Forestry

Commission and the New Forest Commoners' Defence Association. "As part of the project, we will also be obtaining some witness appeal signs, similar to those used by the police when seeking information on serious road traffic accidents," said Ms Westwood, adding that 20 of the 2005 fatalities involved hit-and-run accidents.

"We want to reduce the number of commoners' animals killed in road accidents—one is too many." According to 2005 statistics, the vast majority of accidents occurred at night (114), involving 132 private cars or vans and three heavy goods vehicles, with 84 of the drivers described as local.

New Forest Pony Breeding and Cattle Society chairman Gill Wright welcomed the SID initiative, stressing that anything that helped reduce speed across the open forest ultimately protected native ponies. "Normally speed is involved in the accidents," said Ms Wright. "We do put fluorescent collars on the ponies, but they still get hit."

Inspector David Collings, who heads Hampshire Police equine liaison officers' scheme, said the New Forest was a hot spot for accidents, prompting police to conduct driver education campaigns.

Last year, 4,300 ponies, 2,700 cattle, 100 donkeys and 197 pigs were turned out on the New Forest.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 9 March 2006

Private horses exempt in new laws

NEW animal transport regulations have come into force in Scotland, making it compulsory to disinfect a vehicle used to transport horses and other livestock after each journey. Privately owned horses are exempt.

"Cleansing and disinfection is necessary only where hooved animals other than horses, or fowl or poultry have been using the same trailer or lorry as horses or ponies," explained Helene Mauchlen, British Horse Society (BHS) development officer for Scotland.

For more details, e-mail: h.mauchlen@bhs.org.uk

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 23 February 2006

Horse ambulances called into question

The standard of horse ambulances is being questioned after the death of a winning novice hurdler.

Read more from Horse & Hound Online at: <http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/competitionnews/395/74667.html>

Source: *Horse & Hound Online (Racing Week)* 10 February 2006

Owners must plan horse's retirement

Redwings Horse Sanctuary is urging owners to prepare for their horse's retirement well in advance, and offers a number of solutions on its website.

Find out more about horse retirement from Redwings Horse Sanctuary and The International League for the Protection of Horses through the Horse & Hound online article at:

<http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/397/80887.html>

Source: *Horse & Hound Online (Anna Tyzack)* 24 February 2006

Breathing problems more common than ever

A new study has found that as many as one in six horses suffers from Respiratory Airway Obstruction (also known as COPD or heaves).

The research, funded by the Home of Rest for Horses, also established that many equines were kept in poorly ventilated stables surrounded by fodder and bedding — a challenge to the respiratory tract of any horse.

Read more at: <http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/397/73480.html>

Source: *Horse & Hound Online* (Holly Kirkwood) 25 January 2006

Fire**Horses injured in suspected arson attack**

TWO horses fighting for their lives after an arson attack will need weeks of treatment, according to vets.

Brassic, aged 22, and stablemate Jack suffered serious smoke inhalation in the blaze at Pumphouse Farm, Banwell, near Weston-super-Mare early on New Year's Day.

Both horses are being treated with antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs at Bristol University's equine hospital.

The animals are much loved in the village, where Brassic, in particular, has played a big role in the village carnival and charity fundraising.

Their owner, Chris Attwood, has spoken of his family's horror at the New Year's Day attack, which killed five pigs, two goats and six geese.

Vet Alison Talbot who, with fellow vet Louise Harvey, is caring for the two injured animals said: "We are giving them supportive care. It is going to be a prolonged business — I think they are going to be in for some weeks. Infection is the main problem to guard against."

Two men have been arrested on suspicion of arson and released on police bail.

Meanwhile, newsagent Ian Higbee is co-ordinating Banwell villagers' efforts to raise money for the horses' vet care, likely to run into thousands of pounds.

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 12 January 2006

Horses rescued from stables arson

Seventeen horses, one of them suffering from burns, had to be rescued after an arson attack at a farm in east Kent.

Read more from BBC News Online (6 March 2006) at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/kent/4779904.stm>

Australian Horse Industry Council re-releases fire alert

The Australian Horse Industry Council has today (26 January 2006) re-released to members on its Horse Emergency Contact Database an alert - "Bushfires are a threat to many horse properties. Are you prepared?" - first published 21 February 2005.

Go to the Alert at:

<http://www.horsecouncil.org.au/content.asp?z=14&c=126&p=324&x=2&id=531>

This item is included as Riding Safely has a global readership.

Fire Related Information:

Fire Safety - an Employer's Guide - published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/fire/index.htm>

The Arson Prevention Bureau provides advice and information to help tackle the problem of arson - <http://www.arsonpreventionbureau.org.uk/Default.aspx>

Fire safety law is changing in October 2006 - the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162101>

Cheshire Fire Service and the British Horse Society's Stable Safe scheme - <http://www.cheshirefire.co.uk/FireSafetyAdvice.asp?menuid=844>

The British Horse Society book - Guidelines for Fire Safety in Equine & Agricultural Premises <http://www.bhs.org.uk/content/Ods-More.asp?id=2596&pg=Information&spg=Publications&area=9>

Avoiding the risk of fire - Horse & Hound article - 24 March 2005 -

<http://www.horseandhound.co.uk/best/396/63405.html>

The prevention of arson on farms and in the countryside –

<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/an0407-table5.htm>

Fire Safety in Horse Stables - Penn State University -

<http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/freepubs/pdfs/ub034.pdf>

Halon Fire extinguishers no longer acceptable in UK

<http://www.dti.gov.uk/access/att.pdf>

Accidents

No one likes an accident. Those featured in this section come from media sources and often lack the detail of the circumstances that may have contributed to the tragic outcomes. Even so, by being aware of the types of accidents that have happened in the past may help to prevent similar accidents occurring in the future.

Girl, 11, kicked in head by horse

An 11-year-old girl had to be flown to hospital after being kicked in the head by her mother's horse.

Read more from BBC News Online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/hampshire/4704614.stm>

Source: BBC News Online 11 February 2006

Rider injured after horse rears

A horse rider suffered serious injuries when she was thrown from her animal on Berrow beach.

Read more from BBC News Online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/somerset/4733792.stm>

Source: BBC News Online 20 February 2006

Jockey Club to investigate deaths

Five horses died during racing on Thursday at Cheltenham

The Jockey Club is launching a review of safety procedures at the Cheltenham Festival after nine racehorses died during the four-day programme.

Read more from BBC News Online (17 March 2006) at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/horse_racing/4815804.stm

Related Article:

Head to head: horse race deaths

Some 370 horses die racing yearly, say campaigners.

Nine horses are dead after the final race at this year's Cheltenham Festival - the highest toll for 10 years.

Animal welfare campaigners want high risk races to be banned and are calling for the organisers to resign, but the racing industry insists horses are well-treated and enjoy the events.

Read more from BBC News Online (18 March 2006) at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4819716.stm>

Police warning after horses stray on roads

POLICE are warning owners to be extra vigilant following the deaths of three horses in road collisions in Kent and Devon.

Devon police are considering taking action against the owners of two horses killed in a collision with a car near Totnes last Thursday. The horses had strayed on to the A381 and were hit by a car at about 4.30pm. The driver escaped with only minor injuries.

Police are now considering whether to report the owners for allowing their horses to stray on to the highway.

PC Graham Temple, who attended the scene, said: "It is most unlikely that owners would deliberately allow their animals to stray, but they do have a responsibility for the safety of their animals and road users. In this instance, not only were two horses sadly killed, but the car driver was injured and distressed and her car written off.

"The accident also led to the A381 being closed for more than an hour at peak travelling time, causing chaos to road users and the small communities living off minor lanes, which became gridlocked."

At 6.40pm on 29 December, a pony was killed after being hit by a car on the A224 near Orpington in Kent, where it was running loose with six other horses. The car's three occupants sustained only minor injuries, but the pony was put down by a vet at the scene.

Police attending the scene called a local BHS welfare officer to assist with catching and containing the remaining six horses.

"We were able to get them into a nearby field. The owner said they had been let out of their field for the second time in a week," said the officer, adding: "I get called to about four or five incidents a week; loose horses on the road are quite a problem in Kent."

Straying animals are a particular problem in winter months, according to PC Temple.

"They look for greener pastures, and it takes up a lot of police time trying to locate owners and getting animals off roads back into fields," he said. "Owners must ensure that animals are properly secured and have adequate forage and water."

Source: *Horse & Hound Magazine* 12 January 2006

Mare and foal dead after accident

A horse has been killed and another had to be shot by police after they were hit by a van.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tyne/4576956.stm>

Source: *BBC News Online* 3 January 2006

Police recapture escaped horses

Five horses which went on the loose in Wiltshire at the weekend have been recaptured.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/wiltshire/4592298.stm>

Source: *BBC News Online* 9 January 2006

Horse rescued from swimming pool

A horse had to be rescued from a swimming pool after it wandered into a back garden in Cheshire.

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/4696758.stm>

Source: *BBC News Online* 9 February 2006

Horse rescued from slurry pit

FIREFIGHTERS won a two-hour battle early yesterday to free a horse from a slurry pit.

Crews had been called to the village of Llandrillo, near Corwen, Denbighshire, because the depth of the pit was not known. Using a harness the horse was pulled free apparently unharmed. It was later checked by a vet.

Original source: Madeleine Brindley, *Western Mail* – reported in IC Wales Online 6 March 2006 at:

http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=16777892&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=horse-rescued-from-slurry-pit-name_page.html

Trapped horse rescued

Firefighters came to the rescue of a 32-year-old horse when its leg became trapped.

The crew from Aberdare was called to a field in Abernant, Aberdare, yesterday afternoon after the owner had found the horse with one of its front legs stuck between the chassis and brake mechanism of a horse box.

Read more from IC Wales Online at:

http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0200wales/tm_objectid=16542447%26method=full%26siteid=50082-name_page.html

Source: *IC Wales Online* 3 January 2006

The following accident relates to the farming community rather than to the horse industry. However, tractors and ATVs (quad bikes) are frequently found around equestrian establishments and the advice provided by the Health & Safety Executive is equally applicable to those establishments.

Farming community warned about young peoples' safety after teenager loses limb

The Health & Safety Executive is warning the farming community to make sure young people on their farms are safe. This warning comes after an incident last year when a teenager lost his leg while riding on a tractor.

John Marshall, HSE's Principal Inspector Agriculture for Leicestershire, said:

"This was an horrific accident which has ruined a young man's life. Every year too many people, including children and young people, are either killed or seriously injured in appalling incidents involving transport on farms. Many of these tragedies could be easily prevented by sensibly managing risks. The people best placed to do that are farmers and their staff, working together to improve health and safety in this critical area."

At a Leicestershire farm on 1 September 2005, a 16-year-old boy slipped while trying to climb onto a tractor that was being driven by the farmer's 14-year-old son. He was caught in the power harrow being pulled by the tractor, and his leg was so badly damaged that it had to be amputated below the knee by surgeons. Inspectors from HSE's Agriculture Sector investigated this serious incident.

Today the farmer pleaded guilty to a breach of section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Magistrates at Leicester fined him £5,000 and allowed full prosecution costs of £1,200.

Transport activities account for the largest number of fatal accidents on farms, with two-thirds of such incidents occurring between May and October. Few tractor drivers have received proper instruction and training, despite the fact that tractors are involved in many fatal incidents on farms.

On the farm, many transport-related injuries could be prevented simply by ensuring that pedestrians and vehicles are separated. And it is especially important to keep children away from moving transport.

John Marshall added:

"Dealing with transport safety can seem quite daunting, but if you break it down into the three elements of "safe driver, safe vehicle, safe site", it becomes much more manageable. Many incidents are the result of a combination of factors, so it is important to consider them all.

"Some simple points to remember are:

- Ask yourself: Is it legal for my child to be on this vehicle? Children under thirteen must not drive tractors.
- Ensure that children are kept away from manoeuvring vehicles.
- Remind children that just because they can see a vehicle doesn't mean the driver can see them.
- Sit-astride ATVs must not carry passengers.
- Suitable helmets on ATV drivers can save lives.
- Is your child really capable of driving an ATV safely?"

Further Information

1. Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: "It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety."

2. Guidance on managing risks to child safety on farms, ATVs and other health and safety issues is available free from the HSE website at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture> or HSE's Infoline 0845 345 0055. The 'Child Safety in Agriculture' section of HSE's website is at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/survey2004>, and free publications on preventing accidents to children on farms are available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/agindex.htm>; this includes the leaflet 'Fatal traction: Practical advice on avoiding agricultural transport accidents' <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg279.pdf>

Source: Health and Safety Executive (East Midlands) 22 February 2006

*If you know of any equestrian related accidents or near-misses then please share them with Riding Safely
Doing so may save a life or a lifetime of incapacity*

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) news

Free advisory service on health and safety for small businesses goes live

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath today (27 February 2006) launched Workplace Health Connect, a new free advisory service on workplace health for smaller businesses: "This new confidential advisory service for small businesses offers cost-effective and simple solutions to help cut workplace injuries and ill-health. It is simply unacceptable that UK small businesses incur major costs because they are unaware of effective and efficient solutions to manage health and safety."

Delivered in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive, the service aims to reduce the incidence of workplace ill health, which leads to 28 million working days lost, at an estimated cost of £10 billion to the UK economy.

Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Executive, said: "Smaller businesses have always driven the UK economy forward and we want to give them every opportunity to continue this role. However, workplace ill health is costing small businesses up to 10% of their total payroll costs, which can put real downward pressure on their bottom line. We therefore want to help small business stop workers becoming ill at work and help them to get back to work as soon as possible, if they do, which is ultimately why we have launched Workplace Health Connect."

Workplace Health Connect will provide free, impartial and practical advice and support on health, safety and return to work issues. Small businesses in England and Wales can access the service via an Advice line (0845 609 6006). Where needed, this will be followed up by workplace visits from qualified Workplace Health Connect advisers. These visits are available in London, the North East, the North West, South Wales and the West Midlands. Whilst the Advice line will be available for any employer, manager or worker working for smaller business within England and Wales, workplace visits are only available in five regions for the present. These regions cover some 40% of smaller businesses. It is proposed to extend the service in early 2007 to provide service coverage for some two thirds of smaller businesses in England and Wales.

Workplace Health Connect advisers are able to advise on a range of issues that can affect workplace health including: poor manual handling technique, incorrect use of chemicals, poor hygiene in the workplace, working in dusty or noisy environments and working at a badly set up workstation.

The Workplace Health Connect service is designed to help tackle and reduce the incidence of work related ill-health in England and Wales and principally lead to a 6% reduction in the incidence rate of workplace related ill-health and a 9% reduction in the number of days lost due to injuries and ill-health. The service will be delivered in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive.

The Advice line, which covers England and Wales, will give free, detailed and tailored practical advice to callers - both smaller business employers and workers - on workplace health, safety and return to work issues. (Smaller businesses are defined as employing between five and 250 people.)

Healthy Working Lives (formerly Safe and Healthy Working) is available to smaller businesses in Scotland, offering a similar service to Workplace Health Connect. The service can be accessed on 0800 019 2211 - see <http://www.healthscotland.com/hwl>.

A Workplace Health Connect website explaining the service can be accessed at: <http://www.workplacehealthconnect.co.uk>.

The Advice line will encourage employers in the five regions to take up the offer of a workplace visit. Where employers want to take up the offer, they will be referred to the appropriate regional problem-solving service to make arrangements for the visit.

A key aim of the workplace visits will be to transfer knowledge and skills to employers. Advisers will spend time getting to know the business and identifying any potential health or safety issues in the workplace. They will provide advice on the best way of combating these and develop a plan with the employer for improving the way risks to health and safety are managed in the workplace. A written report will summarise findings and an action plan for resolving issues identified. Clients will also be offered a follow-up visit offering further support. Where necessary, employers will be signposted to specialist support.

Source: Health and Safety Executive (National) 27 February 2006

Accident Reporting

Confused about reporting work-related accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences under RIDDOR? (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations).

Well, help is at hand with a leaflet produced by the HSE which tells businesses which incidents they need to report and how to report them easily.

Find out more from the HSE at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/misc310.pdf>

Related Article:

Survey finds that most farm accidents are not reported to HSE

THE vast majority of accidents suffered while working on farms are never reported to the Health and Safety Executive, according to a new survey published.

While 40 per cent of farmers told the Farmers' Union of Wales survey that they had suffered an injury while working, almost 90 per cent said they did not report it to the HSE.

FUW President Gareth Vaughan commented that reporting accidents to the HSE (possibly via a third party like the union) could lead to detailed statistics being built up over a period of time to highlight the main danger areas for farmers, resulting in action being taken to minimise future risks.

More about the survey at: http://www.fuw.org.uk/press_releases/eng_press_releases_003.htm

Reporting accidents under RIDDOR is also important for equine businesses. Apart from being a legal requirement, reporting can identify where the key industry risks lay and lead to action to minimise those risks.

HSE Produces new guide to employers' liability cover

The HSE has produced a new guide explaining employers' liability insurance requirements (16 January 2006).

The new guide covers:

- What is employers' liability insurance?
- Do I need employers' liability insurance if my employees work abroad or my company is based abroad?
- Which insurance companies can sell me employers' liability insurance?
- Can my insurance policy contain conditions?
- Can the insurer make me pay part of any claim for compensation?
- How much cover will I need?
- Do I need to tell my employees that I have employers' liability insurance?
- Does the law apply to me?
- Do I need employers' liability insurance for all the people who work for me?
- Do I need to keep copies of certificates of insurance which are out of date?
- What happens if I do not have employers' liability insurance?
- Where can I go for further information?

Go to - HSE - Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 - A guide for employers at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hse40.pdf>

Legislation Update

Major fire safety reform - Government gives stakeholders more time to prepare

The Government is to give business and fire safety experts more time to get ready for new regulations.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has put back the coming into force of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, made in June 2005, which will affect all non-domestic premises in England and Wales. A new date will be announced as soon as possible. (This has subsequently been announced and will be 1 October 2006)

The ODPM Minister responsible for fire safety Jim Fitzpatrick said today (12th December) in a written statement:

"During the passage of the Order it was of concern to the House that business and enforcers should have adequate time to familiarise themselves with the new regime and the guidance that will accompany it and that the coming into force date should, so far as practicable, be timed to coincide as closely as possible with reform of fire safety laws in Scotland.

Despite extensive work with stakeholders it is clear that all the guidance documents will not be ready for a full 12 week gap between publication and coming into force on 1 April 2006.

In the light of the commitments we have given to the House and our commitment to ensuring this reform is properly backed, we have therefore concluded that the coming into force of the substantive provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order should be put back."

The Government will now bring an Order, under article 52 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, to amend the coming into force date of the new regime before the House as quickly as possible.

Recently, the Scottish Authorities announced that more time should be allowed for reform North of the Border and the new rules in Scotland are now expected to come into force in October 2006 at the earliest.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Health and Safety Spokesperson, Mary Boughton, said:

"This is an important reform and it is therefore vital that it is implemented successfully. People's lives could depend on it. Many of our members will be ready for the original date, which will mean that they will be compliant well in advance, but it also allows those that are coming to terms with this reform on top of their everyday business concerns more time to comply and to seek advice where necessary."

The ODPM is working with stakeholders on a publicity strategy to raise awareness of the new laws amongst those affected. There will also be a series of guides published to assist those preparing fire risk assessments. More information is available at <http://www.firesafetyguides.odpm.gov.uk>

Explanatory Notes:

1. As part of the Government's commitment to reduce death, injury and damage caused by fire, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has reviewed current fire safety law; and is making a number of changes through the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (RRFSO).
2. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 was approved by Parliament on 7 June 2005.
3. The main effect of the changes will be a move towards greater emphasis on fire prevention in all non-domestic premises, including the voluntary sector and self-employed people with premises separate from their homes.
4. Fire certificates will be abolished and will cease to have legal status.
5. The Fire Safety Order will apply in England and Wales. Northern Ireland and Scotland will have their own laws.
6. Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order will rest with the 'responsible person'. In a workplace, this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises will be responsible.
7. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises, all must take all reasonable steps to work with each other.
8. If you are the responsible person you will have to carry out a fire risk assessment which must focus on the safety in case of fire of all 'relevant persons'. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as the disabled and those with special needs, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance likely to be on the premises.
9. Your fire risk assessment will help you identify risks that can be removed or reduced and to decide the nature and extent of the general fire precautions you need to take to protect people against the fire risks that remain.
10. If you employ five or more people you must record the significant findings of the assessment.
11. The new rules are based on the 1997 document "Fire Legislation for the Future" and were developed with stakeholders from the fire industry, unions, business interests and others. A consultation took place in June 2002 with documents being sent out to around 10,000 businesses, government departments, unions, trade bodies and other interested parties.
12. Responsibility for enforcement of the new rules will be with the local fire and rescue service authority who will carry out regular inspections with top priority going to those premises presenting most risk to the community. They are able to do this within the context of the new Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP), part of the Government's modernisation agenda for the FRS.
13. For more than 40 years, the fire and rescue service provided cover for fires according to recommended standards. These standards dated back to 1947 and were based on property types within a given area.
14. Integrated risk management has shifted the focus in planning to put people first, looking at the risks arising from all fires and other emergency incidents, and at the options for reducing and managing them.
15. Before making each change, fire and rescue authorities have undertaken, and will continue to do so, wide consultation with their local communities.

Issued on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 12 January 2006

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Website: <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

Legal Cases

Some may find the following case amusing in context...

But it certainly wasn't amusing for the injured employee who suffered pain and loss of earnings. Equally it wasn't amusing for her employer who suffered the visible compensation payout, the hidden costs and associated stress and the potential negative publicity.

Although this case is not directly equestrian related, it could happen anywhere where there are office staff and that could well be in the equestrian industry.

The HSE in their Better Business campaign reiterate "Good health and safety in the workplace is good business. Accidents and ill health caused by work cost time and money. A good health and safety regime for your business ensures your hard earned profits stay in the bank and are not spent on accident or illness related problems, each time they happen. This means more money for you."

How is this possible? Find out more from the HSE at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/betterbusiness/index.htm>

Insurance damages for form trip

An insurance worker from Fife has won compensation after she tripped and fell over a pile of accident claim forms. She claimed her employer, Norwich Union had a duty to provide a safe system of work and the untidy files presented a danger.

Read more from BBC News Online (25 January 2006) at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/4647678.stm

Looking Forward - Diary Dates

The British Horse Society targets major landowners in campaign to raise ragwort awareness

The British Horse Society is to launch its 2006 Ragwort Awareness Campaign at a Ragwort Awareness Conference - featuring keynote speakers Professor David Bellamy and Professor Derek Knottenbelt - in London on Thursday 27 April.

The conference will aim to educate local authorities and other major owners of land about the existing laws and the dangers that ragwort, a poisonous weed, poses to grazing animals and human health.

The day is to feature informative presentations from leading experts including well-known botanist and conservationist Professor David Bellamy and the UK's leading ragwort expert Professor Derek Knottenbelt.

The BHS was instrumental in the formation of the Ragwort Act 2003 and the codes of practice introduced alongside the legislation, which amended the existing Weeds Act. However the number of calls from the public about the spread of ragwort in their counties has made the BHS's Welfare Department recognise the need for a conference on this issue for major landowners.

BHS Chairman Patrick Print said: "Education is our main weapon in fighting the scourge of ragwort. For this vital conference to have maximum impact, we would like to encourage members of the public to urge their local councillors, MPs and major landowners in their counties to attend to learn more about ragwort."

Professor Knottenbelt said: "The burgeoning of ragwort across the UK is not only a hazard for horses and other grazing animals. It has potentially serious human implications and is an environmental disaster in the making."

The conference is by invitation only. However, interested parties are welcome to apply for a place - by emailing h.owens@bhs.org.uk or contacting the Welfare Department on 01926 707839.

Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come basis. Tickets are free and lunch will be provided for delegates.

For further information, please contact: Helen Owens, Senior Executive Welfare, The British Horse Society, 01926 707804 or h.owens@bhs.org.uk

The British Horse Society lets grooms have their say

The British Horse Society is launching a new initiative giving grooms the opportunity to voice their opinions and discuss the direction their profession is taking.

The idea was developed after the BHS was approached by a number of grooms wanting to express their views and ways to move forward.

Margaret Linington-Payne, the BHS's Director of Standards, said: "We are delighted to have been approached to host this forum. Grooms are vital to the equine industry and many feel they are undervalued. If we can do anything to help raise their profile and support them in moving forwards we will be happy to assist."

The BHS will be hosting the forum at their headquarters at Stoneleigh Deer Park, Warwickshire, on June 1.

There are limited spaces available and early application is advisable. Grooms, and those who employ and/or train grooms are welcome to apply for a place at the forum. Entry is free and light refreshments will be provided. Applications can be sent to training@bhs.org.uk

The day will give grooms and those closely involved with them the chance to discuss the current position of the profession and how it could move forward.

For further information, please contact the BHS Training Office on 01926 707799 or email training@bhs.org.uk

BHS Fire Risk Assessment Day - Region: South

Date: Monday 5 June

Venue: Berkshire College of Agriculture, nr Maidenhead

Costs: Proprietors of BHS Approved establishments - £25.00, Proprietors of Non-approved establishments - £30.00, BHS Members - £30.00, Non-members - £35.00.

For further details please ring Andrea Jackman on 01525 288484 or email: a.jackman@bhs.org.uk or see the BHS website at: <http://www.bhs.org.uk/content/Ods-EvtMore.asp?id=4809&pg=Competitions&spg=Events&area=7>

Association of British Riding Schools Annual Conference

The ABRS will be holding their annual conference in London on 16 & 17 October 2006.

For more details contact the ABRS at office@abrs-info.org

If you know of any forthcoming equestrian safety related events please contact Riding Safely

Ongoing.....

BETA's Body Protector Survey Continues.....

If you own a body protector then BETA (the British Equestrian Trade Association) want to hear from you!

BETA are still conducting a survey to obtain information regarding the use and effectiveness of body protectors which in turn will be used to assist their continued development and promotion.

Help now by getting more details from BETA and take part in the survey at: <http://www.beta-uk.org/Safety/safety.asp>

Responses to the BETA survey have already highlighted body protector issues - read the interim report from BETA at: http://www.ridingsafely.net/beta_survey_interim.html

Featured Website

Each month Riding Safely features a website that contains health, safety or environmental information that may be useful.

This month the focus is on the Leaflets Section of the BHS website. With the recent launch of their redesigned website the BHS has now made available for download many of the leaflets that were only available in paper format. Here you'll find over 50 downloadable leaflets on everything from road safety and horse welfare all the way through to wind farms.

Well worth a look!

Go to the Leaflets Section of the BHS website at:

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/Content/leaflets.asp?id=25&page=Information&area=9>

The following leaflets were added during January and February 2006:

- Starting to ride - 16 Feb 2006
- Horses and Highway Surfacing - A Guidance Note for Highway Authorities - 10 Feb 2006
- Bedding for horses - 25 Jan 2006
- Colic - 25 Jan 2006
- Pasture Management - 25 Jan 2006
- BHS TREC - An Introduction - 24 Jan 2006

News of other Websites

Association of British Riding Schools - ABRS

The ABRS have a new website address <http://www.abrs-info.org/> and a new email address office@abrs-info.org

Ministry of Defence moves military low flying information

The Ministry of Defence website has recently undergone modernisation which has resulted in the Military low flying information being moved to a new page. The new address is:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Issues/ContributingToTheCommunity/LowFlying>

(18 February 2006)

Business Essentials

Need to know if you're doing enough to comply with health, safety and environmental requirements? Then this section is for you. The information in this section will be repeated and updated each month with the latest updates highlighted in yellow.

What you must do

The Health and Safety Executive list 10 key things you must do if you are in business. Are you doing them all? Check them out and get further help from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/smallbusinesses/must.htm>

Reference Essentials

With so much information around it's sometimes difficult to know what to keep on your bookshelf. Riding Safely helps by bringing you some of the most useful health, safety, environmental and welfare information freely available. The information in this section will be repeated and updated each month with the latest updates highlighted in yellow.

Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium

The Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium is the first document of its kind to set out the minimum standards of care required to appropriately look after a horse.

The Compendium does not form a statutory code but is agreed by the industry to be the recommended best practice and where relevant legislation is applicable, it is highlighted in shaded boxes.

It has assisted many groups of people including prospective horse owners, horse owners / keepers, veterinary surgeons, police officers, welfare inspectors and trading standards inspectors in achieving high standards of horse care, husbandry and welfare.

The Compendium has been successfully used in Court as a legal referral document to aid those who are prosecuting people for neglect or cruelty to the horse by clearly identifying the industry agreed best practice.

The Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium can be downloaded from:

<http://www.newc.co.uk/codes/industry.php>

and finally....

It's a good job horses aren't required to have number plates.....

Apology over 'speeding' tractor

A farmer from Wiltshire has received an apology after he was accused of doing 85mph on his tractor in South Wales.

Read more from BBC News Online (19 January 2006) at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/south_west/4626952.stm

Let Riding Safely know.....

If you have any safety related equestrian Press Releases or News stories then please share them with Riding Safely.

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This newsletter should be read in conjunction with some Important Information to be found at:

<http://www.ridingsafely.net/important.html>
