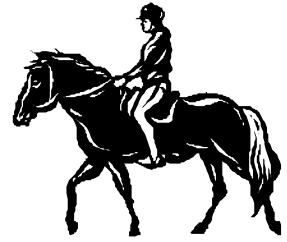


# TRAIL

A publication of the  
North Shore Horse and Pony Association  
Autumn 2006

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## NPWS & RYLANDS TRACK

The NPWS have advised that they have been working on the Rylands Track side of the Neverfail-Cooyong Track that will link us safely through to the St. Ives Showground. We will advise more information once received but for now they have asked us not to use this track until further notice, so thanks for your assistance.

## IRG – WORKING BEE

Also good news for the Ingleside Riders Group with a working bee held one Sunday in March where they had a great turn up to the block and were able to relocate a lot of discarded mulch into the dips and ruts etc. After the last trailer load arrived, council trucks with earth movers appeared and were kindly persuaded to level out 2 huge mounds of dumped soil and scatter it over the mulch so a very rewarding day and a great effort. Please keep us posted on your progress!

## FROM CLIP CLOP TO PAT PAD

**By Ros Holder**

Deciding to take your horse's shoes off is not done lightly. It is a courageous thing to do. Most people have horses to go riding, which is the fun of it, but if the shoes come off then what happens?

We decided to give it a go. Not because it is "natural". If someone could demonstrate to me that having metal shoes on the end of a horse's leg improved the function, comfort and long term usefulness of the animal, then I would be the first to have them. But the latest literature is saying that the shoes compromise the function of the leg and hoof which can cause damage in the long term.

Some traditional farriers strongly recommend regular periods without shoes, especially for young horses.

My take on it is that the shoes prevent the shock absorption mechanisms from working properly, particularly the digital cushion which is inside the heel area and activated by the frog pushing up into it. In its normal role, once the digital cushion is compressed it is also involved in facilitating the pumping of blood from the hoof to the leg. There are other reasons but I will keep them for next time.

One of the up sides of barehoof is getting to know the horse's beautiful, wondrous, amazing feet. It is no longer acceptable to me to just have someone else "supposedly" taking care of them every 6 weeks or so. It is incredibly rewarding getting to know each hoof by nurturing, caring and now gingerly starting to rasp and carve. I have always wished that I could draw or paint or sculpt but now I have found my medium: creating form and life out of hoof.

As for the riding in Terrey Hills, well, the Arab mare that I am involved with has had her shoes off for 3 months. We have a well known barefoot trimmer tending to her for now. I have always thought of the bitumen road as the enemy. At an early age I was taught to limit trotting on the road because the jarring caused concussion. Now, the bitumen has become part of the playground. Our barefoot horse seems to be able to go forever on the smooth bitumen and apparently this was to be expected. There are sections in the back streets where you can have a decent canter and plenty of places to practice your shoulder-in and piaffe. Terrey Hills abounds in grassy edges which I had never noticed before. I am doing regular work in a

grass arena which is also stimulating the new hoof growth and pumping the blood.

The enemies are stones and small rocks. She just doesn't want to go on them and she is mainly used as a trail horse. The going on "rocks" is the elusive goal we are aiming for. It is very early days yet and so far we are thrilled with what's happening and the fact that we can still get out and about on her, and, are losing weight getting off and leading her over the stony sections.

If I haven't seen her feet for a few days then I can't wait to get up to Terrey Hills to examine and fondle them! And to reassure myself that I didn't make her sore by over doing it on the last ride.

Stay tuned for the next update. I am not expecting much change in the way she goes until 8 months have passed. However we are seeing dramatic changes in the way her hoof is growing.

It would be interesting to compare progress between my horse and with any other horse owners who are going through the same transition to barefoot, drop us a line or an email, see top page for our details.

### **SAND COLIC**

**by Terry Hills Animal Hospital**

Colic is the number one cause of death in horses today. Verminous colics caused by parasites or worms used to be the most common form, but now sand is a major cause of colic in horses in some areas.

As we keep our horses in a sandy area they will inadvertently eat sand. This consumption is amplified by feeding directly off the ground. New growth on sparsely vegetated pasture is also a source of sand, as often "roots and all" are ingested.

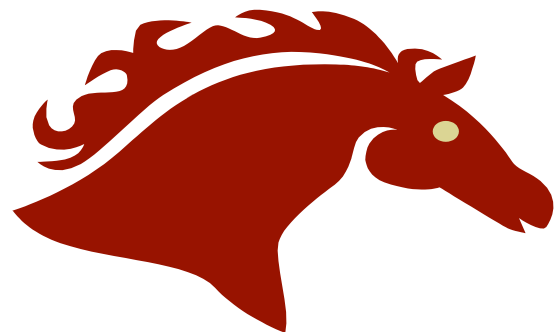
Sand tends to accumulate in the caecum, settling in the lowest portions of the large intestine, (tens of kilograms can accumulate in the bottom of a horse's belly!!). This sand causes irritation and erosion of the lining of the intestines and in some cases may impact causing a blockage or obstruction.

Signs of sand colic can range from poor weight gain or weight loss, to intermittent diarrhoea with or without frequent and often severe episodes of colic, (restlessness, rolling, pawing, sweating, kicking the belly etc.). Sand can build up to a point where it totally blocks a loop of intestine. This becomes very painful and can lead to rupture of the intestine and death. Treatment consists of pain killers, paraffin drench(s), bran mashes, and in some cases IV fluids and surgery.

Sand takes months to build up in the average horse, therefore the measures outlined below will help to prevent the build up of sand to levels that cause a problem.

- Feed in non sandy areas if possible. Place a large rubber mat under feed bins to prevent feed being scattered over sandy ground. Feed in a stable or on a concrete floor.
- Allow horses to graze sandy pastures only when the grass is thick and well rooted.
- Regular exercise helps to "break up" and eliminate sand and prevent boredom. Bored horses may actually eat sand.
- Adult horses that overtly eat sand may have a mineral deficiency, so a mineral salt block may be of benefit in reducing the ingestion of sand.
- Paraffin drenches help to "float out" excess sand. Plant oils, (vegetable, corn, safflower etc) are digested and absorbed before they reach the sand and are of little value. Mineral oil, (paraffin) is not digested and is poorly absorbed but is not very palatable in large quantities.
- Regular doses of Psyllium in the feed, (1/2 – 1 cup 2-3 times a week) is beneficial in preventing sand build up. Psyllium, made from the seed of the fleawort plant, swells and becomes gelatinous when moist. It is the best feed stuff known to help prevent the accumulation of small amounts of sand.

Although bran is a good laxative it is not very good in removing sand.



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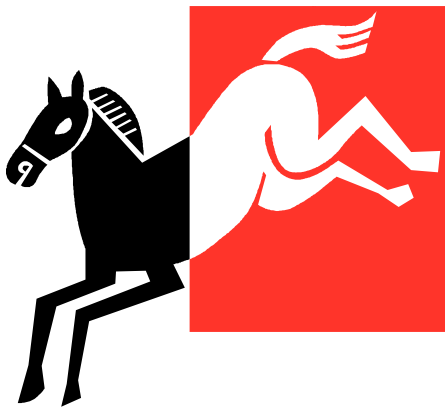


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participate in working bees!

Yes..... No .....

As most people are aware, we are constantly forced  
to protect our right to ride in the National Parks.  
NSHPA needs your support with membership if we  
are to have a louder voice when lobbying to keep  
trails open in the National Parks and the local  
horse facilities maintained.

**Save our trails, help to keep the roadways safe for  
us and our children when on horseback.**

**Meetings are held 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month  
all members are encouraged to attend.**

