



The Equine Touch

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Hi Everyone,
Story time this issue. Tales of meeting up with old friends, tales of students putting their new knowledge to use, timely reminder to take care of saddle fit for your horse, and more.
Enjoy! And hopefully this will spark you into sending in your own stories.

Keep in touch, Janis, Ed

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ANZET NEWS

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They say "It's a small world" — the ET world is tiny!

"It's a small world" is a well-known quote; Jock and I always said that "The horse world is smaller" and now I can confidently say the Equine Touch (ET) world is incredibly tiny. For the last three years I have been living in New Zealand, in the north of the North Island in a little town. Hmm, Whangarei is actually the last "large" town on the way up to the Far North. I always thought I am in the middle of nowhere and too far from everybody, very often feeling isolated and of course very thankful for internet to keep up with my friends and civilization. And I always thought that I am fighting there on my own, to bring awareness there about the wellbeing of horses.

One day, to my surprise, I received an e-mail from an Equine Touch student from the UK. She has relocated from UK to NZ and now lives 30 minutes south of me. Wow! What a lovely surprise! We agreed to meet one day in the town for cup of coffee. Well, that never happened, because ET people do not meet for a cup of coffee, they meet at stables, or yards to do ET. So we did.

Lisa moved into a very horsey area and very soon she was drawn into "helping" friends with their troubled horses. Lisa did not want to practice now, as she has small kids, but as we know, it is very hard to resist when one sees that ET could be helpful.

Lisa was working on two horses and she wanted some second opinions of what to do and how to continue to make some improvements in those hard cases. Of course I was ready to go and take a look.

On my arrival I could see there is a group of people. I could recognize Jamie, one of our earliest qualified ET practitioners (here in New Zealand). He was the new trimmer for this horse and wanted to be there to take on board any of my advice. Jamie is still using the ET technique, sometimes as complete bodywork and sometimes as individual procedures in conjunction with his trimming as a tool to calm his horses and make the trimming easier on him and them. It was lovely to catch up and make some more arrangements to work together.

One of the ladies present knew everything about the Equine Touch and me, as her sister attended an ET class with me somewhere in South Island, NZ many years ago. She wanted her horse to be checked too as she knew about ET and had experienced how it works.

Wow! For me it was a lovely afternoon, finding that the ET extended family, is really everywhere! I am so glad that Lisa and Jamie are around; now I can ask them to help me with the local RDA. I have been visiting the centre for the last half a year and I have to say it is nice to see the changes in all of their horses. After the first sceptical month, when the changes were too subtle for people around to pick up, now they can exactly name what improved with each horse. I work there every week, on the horses' last day of work, so they can benefit from the session the most. I have to admit I don't do very much more than BBB and still see the vast improvements. At the start I had a hard time working on those horses. I was mostly covering myself against bites and kicks. Let me explain that, those horses are not bad horses, they are, they were, in pain. They had 4 hard days behind them, giving 3-4 lessons every day as the center has up to 90 clients from Monday to Thursday. Those horses were so sore and touchy that I had to work with such a light pressure, like a shadow on the wall. At the first session I needed a handler as I could not be safe on my own. Now the horses sleep in my arms, I am there on my own and sometimes I do not even bother to hold the lead rope. Shhh! You did not hear that from me!



(Continued on page 2)

Ivana's "tiny ET world" story continues...

(Continued from page 1)

I have one more story about another incredible "coincidence" to make you believe how small the ET world is. As you know I do pottery, when I have some free time or when I need the time off from ET and horses. So, I sit down and relax and....make horses from clay :-). Last year, my local pottery club had a sale exhibition at our Quarry and I submitted three horse statues. I sold all of them and did not think about it very much. Very soon after the exhibition I received a message on FB:

Hi Ivana, you don't know me personally but i had the pleasure of meeting you in England about 3 years ago when you and jock did a demonstration near to where Sue Grout lives and I subsequently did level 1 and 2 with Sue. What a brilliant teacher. I also had the privilege of having you demonstrate to me ET for people on my back. Am currently on holidays in Waipu and today I bought your lovely brown horse lying down, from The Quarry arts centre. It is beautiful. Thank you. You are a very talented lady as was Jock, you must miss him an awful lot

Regards

Annie f



To me this is unbelievable...so my horse (the clay one) lives at Annie's living room in the middle of UK now. Now I can say my work was sold internationally :-) and thank you Annie for making me feel this special way.

Ivana Ruddock

Some thoughts re Saddle Fitting

As an Equine Touch Practitioner, I quite often see horses affected by poorly fitting saddles, sometimes it is due to ignorance on behalf of the owner, but some horses are just very hard to fit! This was brought home to me recently when I had my horse's saddle checked by a professional saddle fitter. We are very lucky that we have a professional saddle fitter who works for a shop not just one brand. She travels to our area 3 or 4 times a year and tows a trailer full of saddles with her. Last year I bought a new saddle after riding in 4 or 5 that she thought would fit him after the measuring. (One saddle was very uncomfortable for me and had my horse swishing his tail within 2 minutes of riding in it) –so even though the measurements said it should fit – it wasn't right for us.

The saddle I bought has an interchangeable gullet, and in less than a year he has gone from a medium to a wide fitting. My horse is a 7yr old Arab who has been in a lot more work this year than last, he has really built up in his back muscles recently.

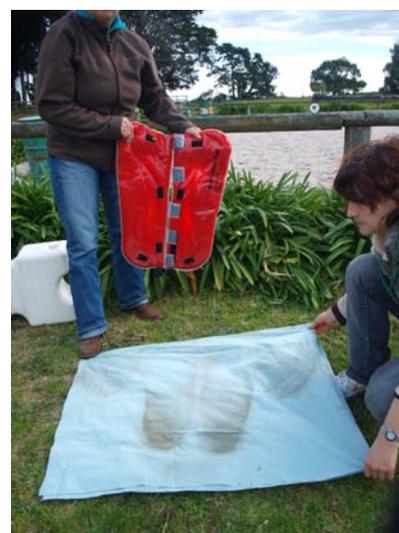
So please – check your saddle fit!

Some horses change shape a lot from summer to winter and it only takes a couple of weeks off work for the muscles to start atrophying. Sometimes it can just be a case of altering your saddle blankets, other times a repacking will help. There are some great websites that can show you how to check your saddle.

Another tip is to put a piece of old sheet or pillowcase under your saddle and ride until your horse is well warmed up. When you take the saddle off you should have EVEN grubby marks on the sheet; if you haven't, you have a problem.

Karen Burrows, ET Instructor, Invercargill, NZ

These photos were taken at a demonstration at a Level 3 course at Tooradin, VIC, Australia in 2011 when a Port Lewis gel pad was used to investigate possible areas of uneven pressure along with checking the sheet for sweat mark indications. The clear/lighter areas on the gel pad help identify areas of more pressure.



Your Say

NZ News

Michelle's Equine Touch Journey so far...

I came to my first ET course Auckland Anniversary weekend 2013 not knowing what to expect. A two hour drive became three as I quickly discovered one of my two horses (Joe) I was bringing could not handle corners, and being NZ, straight lines in the road soon lead into nasty corners. I did not have a real idea what ET did or how it could affect my horse but hearing Ivana talk to someone else at Equidays, I had this nagging feeling that this could be what my horses needed. Following my gut, I quickly made contact with Denyse and booked in.

The horses I chose to take to Tauranga with me were the most challenging. I seem to be specialising in TB's that no one can ride so naturally they have multiple issues going on that send us on courses like ET in an effort to help reduce their pain and ultimately make them comfortable in their own skin again. You always hear about so called "miracle stories" and you just sort of think 'Yeah, but that is one horse. It won't work on the rest.'

Joe, I feel, could be considered the poster child for ET. This is a horse that would try to eat you if you so much as looked at him, let alone touch him. We tried all the recommended supplements, bodywork treatments, riding styles, dentistry, barefoot trimming, training methods etc with no real result, making him the ideal horse to see what ET could do. And boy did it work! At the end of Day 1, he was almost constantly processing and by the end of the third day, we were scared he was going to fall over!

His entire demeanour had changed. You would not be able to put a finger on a single thing that did it but seeing how he was before and what he was like at the end of the weekend, solidified for me that ET is the way to go. I know that's cliché to say, however when you see a horse as stoic, proud and *in pain* as Joe, become so overwhelmed with the release of his body that he looks like he just aged 20 years (he was 11 at the time) it brought tears to my eyes and still does. All I could think when watching him was, and still is 'how has nobody thought to do this for you?'

And this is just one horse! My other horse that I took was Olli, who also accompanied me to the Level 2 clinic a few weeks ago with Denyse. On Olli's second trip to Tauranga, as soon as he saw Denyse's arena he started processing. He totally knew what was coming, the clever cookie. Seven years of racing has left its toll on Olli mentally and physically. After the Level 1 course Olli became freer and happier in his movement, and more so again since the Level 2. ET has allowed him to become more comfortable with his body, but to also let go of some of his baggage that he has collected over the years.

I have recently been to the USA to work at a stable as a Camp Counsellor for 3 months. I found it's often the little things you can do and it does not have to be a full bodywork session. Sometimes just a crest release is all you can do, and the thank you the ponies give you back is sometimes more gratifying than working on a horse that receives regular bodywork (although you always feel guilty for not giving them a full session). Something is always better than nothing is!

Reading this back to myself, I cannot believe and do not **want** to think what would have happened if I had not listened to that nagging feeling at Equidays. Equine Touch ET is now my first port of call and Denyse my second and I don't think my horses have ever been happier. Nevertheless, if you have read this far, you must be fairly if not completely hooked on ET's benefits so all I can say is,

Spread the word!

Michelle Bogaard, Level 2

P.S Denyse I will see you for the L3 weekend next year ;-)

From left

Hannah, Rebecca, Denyse Cambie (Ins), Michelle with Olli and Reese



Long Distance Travelers Return to Creswick, VIC for L2 Feb 1-3, 2014 Ins: Janis Hobbs

Here is dedication for you! Julia drove from NSW (10 hours?) and Victoria flew down from Queensland to return to Andi Tyndall's at Creswick, VIC for their Level 2 ET. They are commended for their dedication to progressing their ET skills, "going the distance", literally, and by persevering in quite uncomfortably hot conditions, (38 degrees C in the shade) to complete Level 2 ET. Well done, Julia & Victoria!



Your Say**Good result for Aston with L1—Victoria ready for L2**

Hello Janis,

I am working on about 4 horses a week at the moment, maintaining my riding school horses as well as my friend's show jumper, the BBB is coming to me very easily now, and though I am far from perfect in the AoC's, I am remembering almost all of them too. I haven't until a fortnight ago had need to put the throat procedure into practice, but my husband's mare had an attack of choke and I used it on her after the blockage had passed (I was a bit scared to touch her before that!) and the TMJ and she went off like a light - she has a lot of anxiety issues besides uneven hips and a bad back from racing so it is really nice to watch her after I've worked on her!

As for my endurance horse, well, he's an interesting pest that one! I purchased him in 2012 as an extremely overweight mental case. He was unriden for two years, had floating issues and I quickly found out that he was a rearer. At the time I wasn't looking at "why" he was rearing, and I didn't know why he was such a horror to float until the day we picked him up and the owners spent 45 minutes trying to get him loaded. As a 2 year old his breeders had hitched him to a car through the front door of the float and tried to haul him on - he reared up and cracked his head open between his ears. A charming training method, right?

It of course follows that he has other issues created by that incident - just by looking at him I knew he was heavy on the forehead and he has a "created" ewe neck, which means that conformationally he was not always built that way. As a consequence, he is always tripping over and he is an "upward" thinking horse (he rears to escape everything ie floats, uncomfortable bits etc)

This is all before I ever learned ET myself, I knew the basics of Bowen and the fundamentals of equine musculature, but I didn't know how far *Aston's* issues would extend. So I used training techniques to lighten his forehead, Join Up to help him think "down" and connect with me, but there was only so far I could go.

Aston's first 40km ride was at Widgee on the 27/7/13 and he passed with flying colours. We planned our next ride to be at Biggenden, eight weeks later. on the 21/9/13. We had only trained very lightly in between the rides as I had skipped down to Creswick, VIC and spent a weekend learning Level 1 Equine Touch. I spent much of my time with *Aston* using the Basic Body Balance on him before the ride. Without realising it though, I was drawing out problems I was not aware of. At the ride, during the initial "vet in", one of the vets pulled me aside and suggested that I go and ride my horse for half an hour before I come back into the vet ring as he thought he could see something odd in *Aston's* hind movement.

I was shocked. *Aston* had never been lame once, and my experience with him all suggested he was not only sound but very strong of leg! I took him back to camp and my husband trotted him out for me over and over again while I looked and looked for this irregularity. I couldn't see it, but I felt him all over and noticed his hamstrings and loins were a little tighter than usual. I did a quick BBB and then focused on his hind end and within 20 minutes we were back in the vet ring. The vet saw me, called two of his colleagues over, and asked me to trot *Aston* out. After I had done so, *Aston* and I stood off to the side of the ring to wait for the vet's decision. They passed us. The head vet came to me and said that although we were being passed with a B for gait, he wanted me to take *Aston* very easy over the course just in case. He could tell I hadn't saddled up, *Aston* didn't have a pinch of sweat on him and it was a hot day, so he asked what I had done to loosen him up. So I explained my use of ET. He was thrilled! He said he was so happy that there were riders getting into alternative therapies and wished us luck on our ride.

Apparently *Aston* didn't hear the part about taking it easy. From start to finish he refused to slow down and I was forced to get off him four times to walk him - I even used a few ET moves on him throughout the ride! But I noticed something strange about his stride. I am used to switching leads at a trot every five or ten minutes to keep my horse fresh, but every time I tried to change leads *Aston* would step a canter stride and flick me back over! After 40kms of rising with my weight on my left foot, it was well and truly twisted! When we got back to base and got our time slip, we had 30 minutes to present to the vets. I knew something was not right, so we went straight back to camp and my husband and I strapped *Aston* down. We trotted him out and I could still see nothing wrong, but I knew it couldn't be, so I went over him with the worlds fastest BBB and hamstring moves. I was still fiddling with him as we walked to the vet ring. We trotted out once, and the vets sent us out again. The head vet shook his head at me, and my heart fell, and all he said was "I told you to take it easy, missy!" I nodded and looked at my time sheet - and saw all A's barring the one B for our gait. We had passed! Then I saw our time. We were only 8 minutes slower than our last ride and we were 4th across the line. So much for taking it easy..!

Aston is now on a three month break over summer, waiting for next year's season. There is no way we would have made it through the Biggenden ride without ET and without it I wouldn't know where *Aston's* troubles are. To add to his numerous problems, he also has very weak loins. He now has a new, better fitting saddle and ET each week to prepare him for the new season - I hope it will be a great one!

I can't thank you enough for what you've taught me, *Aston* and my other horses have done a complete turn around. I have a 23 year old Palouse pony with pinched withers, a rolled hip and arthritis in her shoulder who was lame for three months - she is now running and jumping and back to her old self. I also have my 22 year old Stock horse gelding that I learned to ride on as a child who had terrible back pain and hind end lameness that is now moving willingly and without a hitch in his movement. My oldies aren't feeling their years nearly as much as they were six months ago and I couldn't be happier with how they have improved!

Thank you so much!

Regards,

Victoria Clarke, Level 1

(Another big trip from QLD—Victoria returned to Creswick, VIC to attend Level 2 ET in Feb 2014. Ed.)