

The abiding impression is of someone labouring on a vast scale to produce something in which he and others believe strongly. Buried within this book are lots of activities which have value. How much better this publication could have been had David Selby engaged in the careful marshalling of a few concise arguments for his case aimed at those outside his world and world view, and established a more consistent style and layout for the activities, attractive to the eye. Thorough indexing is essential in such a resource, so that the odd one or two activities might be accessed quickly and added to the repertoire of any practising teacher. It is not a book for most teachers to spend £15.95 on for their personal use. It is worth borrowing it from a library and browsing, or maybe getting one school copy and circulating it amongst school curriculum developers as one further set of issues worthy of consideration.

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The Horse

Three out of a series of six books.

Book 1 *General Management* (1993) 150pp (ISBN 0 85131 588 7).

Book 2 *Physiology* (1995) 208pp (ISBN 0 85131 607 7).

Book 3 *The Foot, Shoeing & Lameness* (1995) 146pp (ISBN 0 85131 612 3).

Julie Brega (1993/95). J A Allen: London. Paperback. Obtainable from the publishers, 1 Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EL, UK. Price £7.95.

These three books are part of the *Open College of Equestrian Studies Progressive Series* of teaching texts. Their main object is to present the information needed by the equestrian enthusiast in a clear and logical manner. The material is invaluable to everyone interested in horses, whether in a professional capacity as a yard manager, or a student or as a private horse-owner.

Book one: *General Management*

The first book in the series covers the husbandry and behaviour of the horse. Chapter one deals with the construction and siting of stables, particularly with reference to ventilation and planning of stable yards.

Chapter two is an excellent section on the management of the horse at grass. There is an extremely valuable section on weeds and poisonous plants, but the absence of colour illustrations of poisonous plants is an unfortunate omission – perhaps this could be addressed in a future edition. Other useful subjects covered are fencing, and the making and storing of hay. Most usefully this chapter contains an overview of pasture management and pasture improvement – including a calendar for pasture management on a month by month basis.

Chapter three covers the physiology and anatomy of the digestive tract as an introduction to the principles of nutrition, balanced ration formulation and feeding, to be found in chapters four and five. Parasites, their life cycles and methods of control, including both grassland management and routine use of anthelmintics, are admirably addressed.

Finally there is a chapter on equine behaviour: a subject sadly missing from many texts on equine management. There is an explanation of some basic aspects of normal behaviour

in both wild and domestic equines. In turn, this is then used to explain some 'apparently' abnormal behaviours, such as crib biting, windsucking, box walking etc, their control, remedy and most importantly, their avoidance. An understanding of horse psychology enables a better appreciation of how to handle the difficult horse.

Good management of horses should be synonymous with good welfare, it is an understanding of and attendance to the physical and mental needs of horses, whether they are managed at grass or in a stable. The reader may well feel after reading this section that we should perhaps challenge the very concept of traditionally managing horses in stables. Physically we can provide the best and safest form of housing, a clean, comfortable, dust free environment, correct and regular diet and plentiful water. We can keep them warm, groomed regularly and attend to all their health needs. As the book clearly states, this alone is not enough; we must understand and satisfy the horse's mental needs also, by being aware of their instincts and natural desires, for example, for companionship. Loneliness is a very stressful state for a herd animal. We are asked to treat a horse firmly, fairly and with consideration, reduce boredom to a minimum, talk to him and keep to routines. Through this approach we provide trust, security and ensure mental contentment and a happier relationship.

Book two: *Physiology*

Book two has eight chapters and covers the anatomy, physiology and disorders of the horse.

The first two chapters deal with the skeleton, the structure and composition of bone, the major bones of the body and their joints, alongside the physiology of muscles, tendons, ligaments, their function and anatomical position. These two chapters form the background level of knowledge necessary for understanding and putting into practice the advice of the third chapter which covers conformation, the result of a horse's skeletal and muscular makeup.

Good and bad conformation is explained and then the long-term consequences of poor conformation are described.

Chapters four through to seven deal with the anatomy, physiology and disorders of nervous and endocrine systems; the circulatory and lymphatic system, including effects of and the monitoring of fitness, blood and heart disorders. Metabolic disorders, such as laminitis and azoturia are also covered in this section as are tissue respiration, the respiratory tract and the disorders of the respiratory tree, including infectious diseases of the upper and lower respiratory tracts. Finally the urinary system and its problems are covered.

The first seven chapters form a basis for understanding and applying the contents of the final chapter on 'The Sick Horse', which deals with the general causes of dysfunction, the body's defence mechanisms, including vaccination, and briefly how bacteria, viruses and toxins actually result in clinical disease. There is a good section covering the rather topical subject of equine viral arteritis (EVA) and the notifiable infectious diseases. Poisoning is touched upon only briefly in this section but is expanded on considerably in the first book in the series, *General Management*, where poisonous plants are dealt with at length. There is a most useful section covering the major groups of drugs used in veterinary practice to restore physiological performance, such as antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and those drugs which primarily alter performance, broadly categorized as stimulants, depressants and anabolics.

This book provides a sound basis for the selection and purchase of the right horse for a particular function and to minimize the likelihood of subsequent injury and disease. In addition, if problems do arise, then the owner/keeper is in a better position to report the problem to the vet, understand the vet's approach to diagnosis and prognosis, and to carry out the attending veterinary surgeon's instructions.

Book three: *The Foot, Shoeing & Lameness*

The third book in the series, *The Foot, Shoeing & Lameness* is in essence an expanded version of the ninth chapter of the second book, *Physiology*. It gives the space deserved to this most important part of the horse's anatomy, thus paying homage to the age old adage – 'No foot, no horse'.

The functional anatomy of the foot and lower leg, including the bones, vascular supply, nerve supply, tendons and ligaments is covered in some detail in the opening chapter, preparing the reader nicely for the next chapter, 'Care of the feet'. All aspects of shoeing, normal function of the foot, pastern/foot axis and action are covered. These two chapters are brought together by the next chapter on 'Corrective and therapeutic shoeing'.

Logically, the next step is to deal with the concept of lameness and the diagnostic approach to the lame horse and the causes of lameness. Chapter six introduces the reader to therapies available for the reduction of inflammation. Basic techniques such as cold/heat/hydrotherapy treatment, massage and support are explained. There is then a consideration of therapy machines, such as laser, ultrasound, faradism and magnetic field devices. Further, drugs, both steroidal and nonsteroidal, are discussed as well as recovery and rehabilitation. I was pleased to see that both blistering and firing of horses were described as 'so-called' therapies, but I think the author is wrong in stating that firing is now illegal in the UK. Firing was declared an unethical procedure by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on February 7th 1991. For a veterinary surgeon to continue firing would be considered *prima facie* evidence of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

The Open College of Equestrian Studies courses cover the theory of stable management aspects of the British Horse Society (BHS), Association of British Riding Schools (ABRS) and National Pony Society (NPS) courses. They enable study up to and including the BHS Stage IV, the Riding School Principals Diploma (ABRS), the Stud Managers Diploma (NPS) and the HND in Horse Studies – Management and Technology (BTEC). Clearly of enormous benefit to those training towards professional qualifications or preparation for a return to work in the horse industry. More importantly the three books reviewed would be invaluable to anybody working with or caring for horses. The series provides an up-to-date, fully detailed, comprehensive source of information on all aspects of horse management and introduces a high level of science into the 'art' of horsemanship. They are well written, in a clear, easy to read format, information can be accessed easily and there are few errors. In my opinion these books would be of benefit to all horse keepers, from the most novice parent of horse-mad children to the most experienced rider. At the end of the day the main beneficiary is the horse.

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