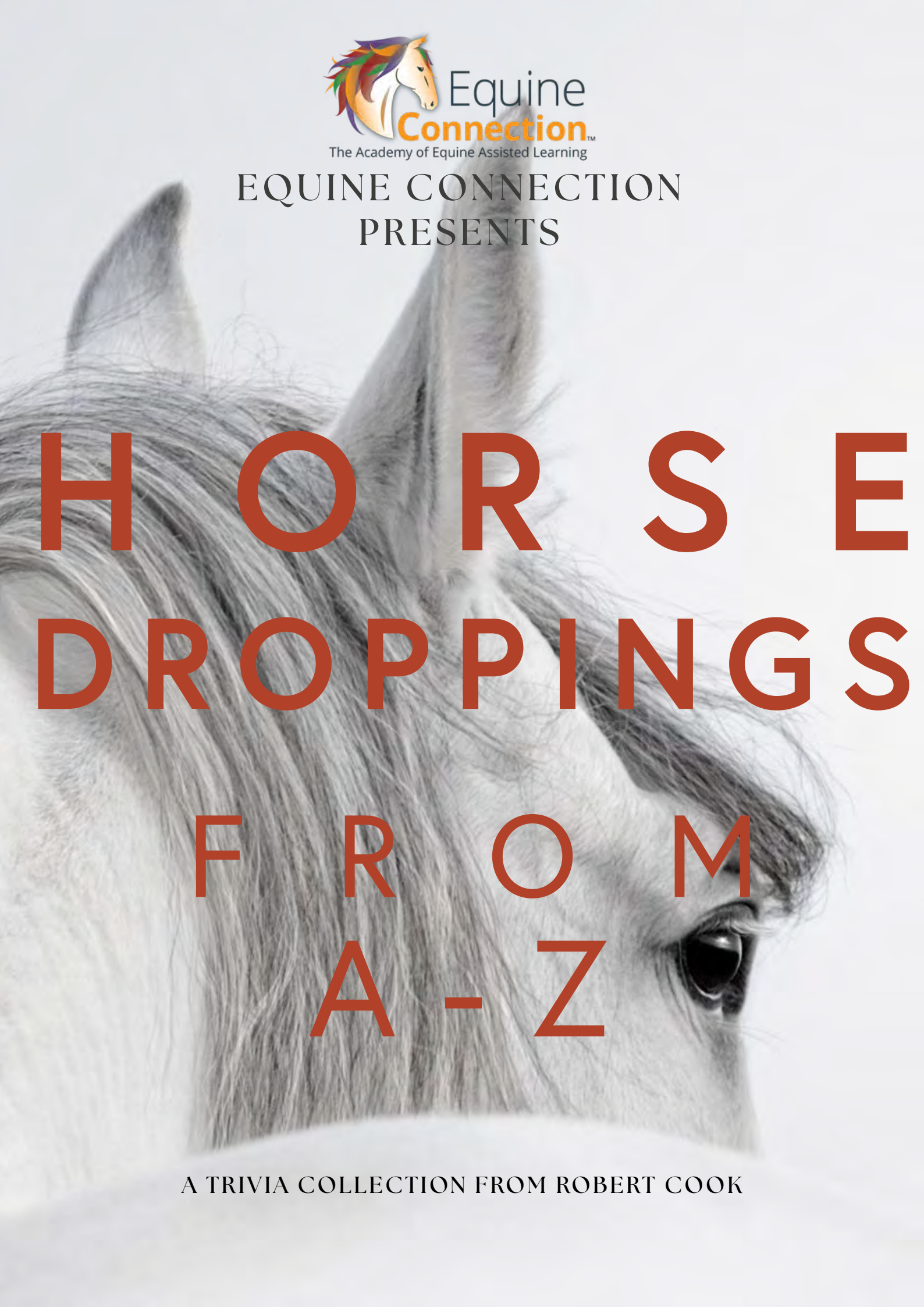
Equine Connection™
The Academy of Equine Assisted Learning

EQUINE CONNECTION
PRESENTS



HORSE DROPPINGS FROM A-Z

A TRIVIA COLLECTION FROM ROBERT COOK

THANK YOU

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO ROBERT COOK, FRCVS, PHD, FOR HIS GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO OUR PROJECT. HIS LIFELONG DEDICATION TO IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF HORSES, FROM HIS WORK AS AN EMERITUS PROFESSOR AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY'S CUMMINGS SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE TO HIS PIONEERING RESEARCH ON BIT-FREE RIDING, HAS BEEN TRULY INSPIRING.

WHEN HE LEARNED ABOUT OUR PLAN TO COMPILE A COLLECTION OF EQUINE TRIVIA IN 2023, HIS WILLINGNESS TO SHARE HIS OWN COLLECTION WITH US WAS INCREDIBLY KIND.

THANK YOU, ROBERT, FOR INVITING US TO TAKE OUR PICK AND FOR CONTINUING TO MAKE SUCH A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE EQUINE WORLD.

WARM REGARDS,
THE EQUINE CONNECTION TEAM

A

AGE:
A horse that is 'past his mark' is an old horse. i.e., when Galvayne's groove has disappeared on the upper corner incisors. It used to be thought that a year in a horse's life was equivalent to five years in a human life but three would be more accurate. Horses can live over 30. On this scale, a three-year-old horse is nine in human years and still very much a child in horse years.

ALBEITERAS:
The name of the Moorish 'Horse Healers' in Spain.

APPALOOSA:
The Canadian French referred to these distinctive horses of the Nez Perce Indians as being horses 'from the grassy plains." In time, and in English, the term became Appaloosa.

APRON:
The blacksmith's apron is a necessary garment especially if you are driving nails into horse's hooves to attach a metal clamp.

ARENA:
Dressage riders who perform in an arena may be unaware of the word's gory past. 'Arena' in Latin means sand. The floors of the amphitheaters of ancient Rome were covered with sand to absorb the blood spilt there during gladiatorial contests. This eventually became the name of the structure itself.

ARISINGS:
The word used, in the Royal Mews at Buckingham Palace for horse manure.

ANIMAL:
'A living creature corporeal, distinct, on the one side, from pure spirit, on the other, from pure matter.'

ASTRIDE:
Someone who has never ridden a horse is referred to by Shakespeare. It was masculine for ladies to ride.

ASVA:
Sanskrit for 'horse.'

ATHENA:
The goddess Athena, according to Greek mythology, invented the first bridle. She did this to help Belerophon master the winged horse Pegasus. According to historical research, the credit (or blame) for the first use of a mouth-guiding device on a headstall goes to the Scythians.

B

BACK:
A verb -
1. To mount on the back of a horse
2. To break a horse; to train him to bear upon his back

BALD:
The Old English word 'bald' for a white-faced horse, horse is used in American English for the name of the national bird, the American Bald Eagle. Nevertheless, a skewbald horse (brown and white) may have a brown face. A piebald horse is black and white.

BARBERI:
The annual race of the riderless horses on the Corso in Rome.

BARD:
From the French 'barde'; horse armour. A general term for a complete set of horse armour. More specifically, the term was used to describe the metal coverings for the horse's breast and flanks.

BAREBACK:
To ride without a saddle.

BAREBACK AND BRIDLELESS:
Carthaginians, Numidians, and Mauritanians rode without saddles or bridles. Their horses were guided by voice or by light wands in the hands of riders. The animal was tapped on the side of the face with the wand to turn him in the opposite direction and on the nose to stop him.

BARLEY-BROTH:
The name for a type of ale given to horses.

BARN:
Originally a closed place in which to keep barley.

BEANING:
A horse coper's trick, to lame a horse by placing a pebble between its shoe and the sole of its hoof.

BEARING REIN:
"Bear-up" is a phrase that may have its origin in carriage horse days. A horse that did not have its head held high would be thought of as being sad and depressed.

The term bearing rein is derived from the definition of "bearing" which means, 'the way one bears or conducts one's self; mien; behaviour, carriage' The reference suggested that high head carriage was a sign of nobility or pride.

An overcheck (bearing rein) was claimed to have a practical purpose. If a horse lowered its head too far when in a carriage or wagon, particularly when moving quickly, it could catch the bridle on the shafts of the carriage or wagon, risking an accident. However, its real purpose was to comply with the fashion for a high head carriage in the cab horse. This was regardless of the bit pain, neck ache, discomfort, and airway obstruction suffered by the horse. It was not until Anna Sewell in her book "Black Beauty" (1877) drew attention to the cruelty, that the iniquity of the bearing rein was recognized, and the device began to fall into disuse. Though Sewell's work is now seen as a landmark moment in the development of equine welfare studies, use

of the bearing rein has not been entirely discontinued. It is still 'alive and well' in the sport (?) of harness horse racing, where it is used in conjunction with an overcheck bit that applies pressure on the hard palate.

BEAST:
A noun - Mere animal.

BELL:
'Bell-mare': The lead pony of a train of pack ponies wore a bell and the remainder followed. The man in charge (the 'drover'), brought up the rear, riding the last pony.

Bells were hung around the necks of the (Bronze Age) Hittite chariot horses to drown out the spooking sounds of battle. The Hittites fought in their chariots, as the flat terrain country lent itself to this.

BILKING:
To bilk is to cheat. The practice of 'bilking' when horse cabs had a door in the back, gave rise to the need for a different design, with a door in the front.

BIT:
Bracy Clark, one of the first graduates c.1792 of my alma mater the Royal Veterinary College, London, in "A Treatise On The Bits of Horses (Chalinologia)" Second Edition, London, 1885 (reprinted by Scholar Select. Andesite Press) commenced his book with the following sentence:

"One of the greatest evils and abuses of the horse that still lies before me to treat of, is the biting; and which, considering how simple an object it is, surprises me has not been done long since: but somehow the subject of horse affairs, through the tyranny of those who are occupied with it, seems as it were beset round with some spell or enchantment, so great is the fear of the general public in intermeddling, as they would call it, in these matters; so that abuses are perpetuated before our eyes, and seen every hour of the day, yet none care to interfere."

Clark continues in this manner for several pages of small print. Writing about 'mouth irons,' 'wrenching irons,' and 'lever bits'. On the origin of the word bit, he concludes "It will be pretty evident that the term bit is derived from the active verb to bite." Later he writes about another 'instrument of torture' the bearing rein (see Sewell 1877). He refers to "This foul and unfair instrument, so easily abused..." and remarks "so usual has it become, and so cruelly misused, that it is, if possible, a greater evil than the whip, and the more grating because it passes unseen, and hardly obtains the least notice or commiseration."

Though Clark makes a passing reference to the Numidians and Parthians who "appear to have never soiled their horses' mouths with the iron" he finally recommended a chain bit of his own design. 120 years later, the first of two books on the penalties of bit usage were published (Cook and Strasser 2003, Nevzorov 2011) and a burgeoning • bit-free movement was underway among recreational riders.

BLABBER:
To blabber in the 18th century was "To whistle to a horse."

BLACKSMITH:
The two words are both of ancient origin and it is tempting to suggest that, collectively, their literal meaning is 'a smiter of iron.' Sadly, the etymological authority, Eric Partridge, provides different derivations for the words 'smite' and 'smith.'

Blacksmiths deal with black metal (iron) as opposed to silversmiths and goldsmiths.

BLACK HORSE:
In the days of the horse-drawn hearse, a black horse was needed for a funeral.

BLAZE:
The name for a particular marking on a horse's head, i.e., a broad, white marking from forehead to muzzle. The word comes from the Icelandic 'blesi', a white star. A horse so marked, is easy to see approaching, even when the light is poor, as in a forest. Hence, when bark was chipped off a series of tree trunks to indicate a path in the woods, the light-colored mark is known as a blaze, hence the phrase "to blaze a path."

BLINDERS:
It is believed that horse blinders were used in ancient Greece, to prevent horses from being distracted during chariot racing. Despite this long history, blinders weren't documented in more modern forms of horse racing until the late 1800s.

BLUE TONGUE:
At exercise and immediately after exercise, the tongue should be out of sight. A healthy tongue is a pink tongue. After exercise, a visible and cyanotic tongue (of any color other than pink) is a sign that normal blood flow to the tongue during exercise has been obstructed by the bit. Blue tongues were much remarked opon at the 2024 Paris Olympics (Cuckson 2024).

BOSAL:
From a Spanish word meaning 'muzzle.'

BOOT:
'Top boots' with a different color leather below the knee, came about as a development of the thigh boot from the Eighteenth century. Haute-Ecole (High School) riders rode with a straight leg and boots reached up to the lower thigh above the knee. When riders began to jump fences, with a bent leg, the high boot was folded down to expose the flesh side of the leather … a different color.

BOTS:
Stomach 'worms' of the horse. More correctly, these are the larvae of the parasitic horse bot fly (Gasterophilus) that develop into 'maggots' of a considerable size and number in the lining of the stomach.

BOTTLE:
The noun for a bundle or truss of hay.

BRAINS:
There was a time when it was thought by many that a horse had no brain. However, by the 18th century there was growing awareness that animals could feel pain. By the end of the century, most people agreed that they had both brains and feelings, and some that they even had souls.

BRANKS:
A Scottish name for the uncomfortable bridle originally applied to a bridle improvised from a halter with a wooden "cheek" each side to prevent it slipping. These cheeks were called the "branches" of a bridle. Branque is the Norman word for branch.

BREECHES:
Leather or skin trousers and boots of felt or leather were in use by the Asiatic horsemen from ancient times. They were one of the first innovations designed for more comfortable riding.

BREECHING STRAP:
A part of a driving harness. To assist in backing or going downhill.

BROOD MARE: A FEMALE HORSE KEPT ESPECIALLY FOR BREEDING

BRIDLE BLING:
Gold and silver adornments have been used through the ages, but bright colors, sequins, rosettes, conchos and fancy nosebands are more common today on bridles. In the past, some Native American tribes hung scalps from their bridles.

BRIDLE PATH:
A trail for a horse.

BRONCO:
A Spanish word meaning 'rough' or 'rude.' So 'bronco busting' means the breaking and training of a mustang (Spanish 'mesteno' meaning 'wild'), or of a pony that has these qualities.

BUCEPHALUS:
The name of Alexander the Great's black stallion. The word means "bull-headed' and refers to a feature of the horse much desired by Greek horsemen of a broad head and small ears.

BUDWEISER HITCH:
The Budweiser eight-horse hitch is one of the world's most powerful advertising symbols.

BUGGY:
Two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a single horse.

BULLDOGGER:
Someone who takes part in steer-wrestling rodeo competitions. It involves throwing yourself off a horse onto the neck of a steer, then wrestling the steer to the ground by hanging on to the steer' s horns and twisting its neck so that it falls.

C

CANTLE:
The rear bow of a saddle.

CAREER:
A noun with several meanings from the French carriere, a highway, a running. (Eric Partridge 1958 "Origins: A short etymological dictionary of Modern English)
1. A horse in combat, charge, gallop, or course
2. Racecourse, horse-racing track. A racehorse used to be referred to as 'a courser.'

CAROSSE:
A large seventeeth century carriage driven by six horses and two coachmen, which transported eight passengers on a fixed route through Paris.

CARRIAGE:
Until the 1600s, wheeled conveyances were generally reserved for the very old or the infirm, with only a few exceptions. So powerful a symbol was the horse and rider to the royal class that Medieval Europe saw the enactment of laws that forbade a healthy man of nobility to ride in a carriage. They were designed for the nobility, and, as evidence of the Baroque and Rococo periods in which they were built, were outrageously ornate."

In the UK we still speak of a dual carriageway but in the USA it is called a 'divided highway.'

CARRIAGE PROTOCOL:
Governed by a strict rule of precedence over the size of the carriage and the number of horses that could be used to draw it, which varied according to the rank, status and sex of the occupancy.

CHAMFRON:
The name for the armoured helmet of a warhorse.

CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY:
The early pictograph (c. 6000 years old) from which the radical for 'horse' developed, shows a simple stick figure of a horse, complete with head, mane, hooves and tail. Interestingly, the horse is shown standing on its hind legs. By joining the radical for 'horse' to the character for 'strange' or 'marvellous' the verb 'to ride' is created: Riding a horse is a marvellous experience, but a strange one for those who have never tried it before. By adding the character for 'sage' after this composite, we get the word 'rider': a wise man on horseback. By joining the radical to the character for 'stream' the word 'docile' is obtained: a well-ridden horse is as docile as a flowing stream. With this radical inside the one for 'door' the word 'haste' or 'rush' is formed, reflecting the impetuosity of a horse leaving its stable.

CHIVALRY:
The word derives from the French cheval for horse. It refers to the gallantry of of its rider, the knight.

CLEVER HANS ERROR:
Clever Hans was the horse that alerted horsemen in general and behavioral scientists in particular to the fact that horses (and other animals too) can be better at observing human behavior than humans are at observing horse behavior.

CURLY HORSE:

The American Bashkir Curly or North American Curly Horse is a North American breed of horse, characterized by an unusual curly coat of hair.

COLT'S TOOTH:
The canine tooth that only develops to any size in the male horse. It erupts in a colt at four years old, an age at which an unschooled and entire horse is often at its most unruly. The term "colt's tooth," used metaphorically, signifies childish and wanton behavior.

COURSER:
A swift horse; a war horse.

COURBETTE:
The horse stands on both hind feet and waves its forelegs in the air. The same movement outside a dressage arena would be described as 'a rear.'

CRINET:
A piece of the bard (horse armour) for protecting the neck. Usually made of articulated plates. A 'closed' crinet also protected the throat and under part of the neck.

CROW HOP:
A horse that stops suddenly and throws its rider over its head. Today, we speak of a horse 'freezing.'

CRUPPER:
A leather strap passing under a horse's tail.

CURRY COMB:
Verb 'to curry' as in 'to curry a horse' - to comb. From Old French correer, to arrange or prepare; from Latin cor (with) and rei (order, arrangement).

D

DEAD HORSE:
A trainer's instruction to a jockey about to ride a horse suspected of laziness was to "wear him out with the whip."

DEATH TAX:
A medieval death tax in England required the family of every villain or serf that died to give his best animal to the local lord of the manor.

DERBY:
A race or contest open to all comers or to a specified category of contestants. The first of many Epsom Derbys in the UK (1870), it was so named by the UK Jockey Club in honor of the Earl of Derby. It became the first leg of the USA Triple Crown (Derby, Preakness and Belmont).

DEFINITION OF A HORSE:
A large, solid-hoofed, herbivorous mammal.

DEODANDS:
An Anglo-Saxon tax of interest here in relation to horse and cart accidents. Deodands comprised taxes paid to the Crown that were based on the financial value of the implement or object that had caused a person's unnatural death. If a person was run over by a cart, the cart or its value was forfeited to the Crown as a tax and the coroner was responsible for ensuring that the tax was paid.

DENTAL DISEASE: Bit usage is a common cause of bone spurs on the bars of the mouth and erosion of cheek teeth (Cook, 2011). Soft tissue damage to the lips and oral mucosa is also common (Tuomola et al 2020).

DESTRIER:
The French name for a war horse.

DIGGERS:
Cattle and sheep will starve in a snowstorm unless fed and watered by hand. Horses are independent of human help because they will dig to get at the grass and will also break the ice to drink.

DOBBIN:
A patient old farm horse.

DOUBLE BRIDLE:
Invented in Naples about the middle of the 16th century. A bridle with two bits (bridoon and curb) and four reins. As 'a bit-armed rein is a whip by another name', this is a bridle with two bits and four whips. The curb bit acts on the lower jaw like a vice.

DROPPINGS:
This horticultural treasure and delight of enthusiastic gardeners, euphemistically referred to as 'road apples,' rejoices in a bouquet that, in the study of comparative pongs, is almost regarded as socially acceptable. The physician George Cheyne in 1705 explained that the Creator made the horse's excrement smell sweet, because he knew that man would often be in its vicinity.

DUFTIN:
Suffolk dialect for the bridle of a draft horse.

E

EASEL:
This word for a wooden frame that supports the canvas for a painter, entered English from the Dutch word ezel: 'donkey' or 'ass.' It is akin to the German Esel. The essential meaning of Esel is 'small horse.'

ECUYER:
A Riding Master of the 18th century in France.

ERASMUS (b. 1469):
In his book on civility, Erasmus made the differentiation from animals the very essence of good table manners. "Don't smack your lips like a horse", he warned. His rules for bodily comportment, on the same lines, show the same preoccupation. " Don't shake your hair like a colt; don't neigh when you laugh."

EQUERRY:
The evolution of the word arose from a blending of three other words, for stable, squire and horse. Originally a large stable, hence the officer in charge.

EQUESTRIAN ART:
Through the ages, artists have shown a preference for depicting the ridden horse with an open mouth (see the entry for 'foam.').

EQUESTRIAN STATUES:
A pretty but unfounded story has it that the position of the horse's legs can tell you something about the fate of the rider. Both front legs in the air means death in battle; one front leg up means wounded but not killed in battle; and all hooves on the ground means the rider died in peacetime.

EQUIPAGE:
The descriptive name for a horse and carriage with harness and human accessories such as coachman, guard, footmen and other liveried servants

EQUITES:
Latin word, derived from 'equus' (horse) for the middle classes of Ancient Rome (pronounced e-qui-tays) since being able to afford one's own horse required a certain amount of wealth.

ETHICS:
The word derives from the Greek word 'ethos' f o r 'custom.'

EUTHANASIA:
The practice of ending the life of a horse to limit the horse's suffering.

F

FARRIERY:
Latin ferrum (iron) gave French ferrer; to shoe a horse. The working smiths became the heirs, in the Dark Ages, for what passed as veterinary science in the 10th century and the word farrier, as late as the 19th century, described both the shoeing and the curing of horses, i.e., the whole Veterinary Art.

FARIS:
Arabic for 'horseman' from 'faras' for horse.

FASHIONS:
Regrettably, horses themselves and their equipment are also deployed as 'items of fashion.' Anna Sewell referred to this often in "Black Beauty."

FETLOCK:
That which a girl keeps in her locket is a lock of hair from her loved one. A lock of hair that droops over a man's forehead is known as a forelock, so also in the horse. The lock of hair that often grows on the back of a horse's leg, close to the ground was, in Middle English, known as the fetlock, i.e., the lock closest to the foot ('fet'). In time, this became the name of the joint on which the lock grew.

FLANCHARDS:
Originally referred to rigid defenses of leather, reinforced canvas or metal suspended from the top of a horse's back to protect its rear flanks. In 'modern' usage, a term used to denote elements of the bard suspended under the saddle to protect the parts of a horse between the peytral and the crupper.

FLAT RACING:
So-called because it was first developed on any flat piece of ground that provided straightaways without jumps. Not surprisingly, the upper classes who owned the land, had courses laid out all over (flat) East Anglia in the seventeenth century. Racing was quickly taken up by the Plains Indians, as soon as they had horses. Chariot wars too, of course, were possible in flat territories.

FLEHMEN:
The 'flehmen' response is a German word to describe the act of a horse (generally a stallion) assessing the 'bouquet' of a mare in oestrus. It can occur under other circumstances but less frequently.

FOAL:
A young, baby horse.

FOAM:
When a horse is eating, it should be salivating. When a horse is exercising, it should not be salivating. There should not be even the slightest "foaming at the mouth." The lips should be dry, sealed and airtight. The tongue should be out of sight. A horse is a nose-breathing animal. It cannot 'mouth-breathe'. In fact, unless prior to running a horse can seal its lips, swallow and create a negative atmospheric pressure in its mouth to seal the soft palate on the root of an immobile tongue and around the larynx (voice box), it cannot breathe properly. At every intake of air, the soft palate will elevate and constrict the throat airway. i.e., the horse is strangled. Sadly, for 6000 years, the lip seal has been broken by a bit (Cook 1999).

FORGING:
A gait defect, whereby the toe of the shoe on a hind leg, taps the toe of the shoe on the foreleg on the same side. Perhaps the name of the problem arises from the sound, reminiscent of the forge. Barefoot horses do not do this! .

FRENUM:
Latin for a bit. The Latin for bit-free would be efrenum.

FUZZOCK:
Yorkshire dialect for a donkey.

G

GALL:
A horse may be 'galled' at the withers by a badly fitting saddle. A principle of saddle-fitting that the saddle must never apply pressure directly on bone is transgressed by the bit applying point pressure on the jawbone at the bars of the mouth (the top surface of the jawbone at the so-called interdental space). The leveraged pressure of a double bridle's curb bit, with its curb chain, adds the action of a vice on the jawbone.

GALLOP:
There is a moment at each stride of the gallop when all four feet leave the ground at the same time.

GAS MASKS:
The Guernsey Museum displays a gas mask for a horse. In WWII, The Germans brought 700 horses to the island and some, if not all, were equipped with gas masks. The filter had two cones, one for each nostril. The gas masks were never needed but the horses were. At the end of the war, only 300 horses were left. The remainder had been eaten.

GEE-GEE:
Baby language for horse.

GEE & HAW:
A ploughman's verbal aids: 'Gee' = go right; 'Haw' = go left. Perhaps this is the origin of "gee-gee", the baby language word for horse.

GELDING:
A castrated male horse.

GLANDERS:
A contagious and fatal disease of the horse family transmissible to man It is caused by the bacterium Burkholderia mallei and characterized by the development of ulcerating growths in the upper respiratory tract, lungs, and skin.

GRIMACE:
The famous sculpture of a horse's head by Phidias, in the eastern pediment of the Parthenon, shows how a rider can pull a horse's mouth into a grimace with tension on the reins. The bit acts like a lip retractor and can stretch the lips painfully to twice their resting length.

GUINEA:
Twenty-one shillings in old UK currency. Horses were sold in guineas rather than pounds (20 shillings) and the extra shilling went to the auctioneer.

GUN-CARRIAGE:
A six-horse team of Artillery (the 'gunners')

H

HALTERS:
Thought to be the first item of tack to be developed. The original versions were probably made from plaited 'ropes' of plant material that encircled the muzzle. A plaited fiber mouthpiece would have been the next stage of development, followed by the metal mouthpiece in about 2300 B.C. Use of the bit became standard practice and was not questioned until the opening years of the present century (Cook 2000, 2005). Since then, a substantial body of evidence has been published, collectively indicating that the continued use of the bit cannot be justified for welfare reasons (see References).

HAND:
A horse's height is still measured in hands. One hand = 4 inches.

HAUTE-ECOLE:
Literally 'high school' riding. Haute-Ecole is to riding what ballet is to ballroom dancing.

HEAD-SHAKING: Bit-induced trigeminal neuralgia is an intensely painful and common disease of the bit-ridden horse. Removal of the bit is strongly recommended as a treatment to trial.

HIPPODROME:
The Romans and Greeks built hippodromes for chariot racing. The emphasis was on the skill and bravery of the drivers, not the horses.

HIPPOTHERAPY:
The sensory stimulation that children with neurological disorders receive from riding a horse has been shown to provide benefits long after they get off the horse. It improves their ability to balance (vestibular stimulation and postural control) and there is a spillover benefit that goes well beyond these effects. It has often improved overall awareness, attention span, processing, and even language.

HOGGED MANE:
Pigs (hogs) have no mane, hence the term 'hogged' in reference to the mane. In Persia and Greece, the manes of horses used to be shorn as a sign of mourning.

HOLD YOUR HORSES:
An idiom meaning to wait and be patient.

HORSEBREAD:
A staple of diet for horses in Elizabethan times, made from bean and bran flour.

HORSE MEAT:
A widespread Western taboo against eating horse meat is not shared by the French. Their preference for it allegedly dates to the Battle of Eylau in 1807, when Napoleon's surgeon-in-chief advised the starving troops to eat the dead horses on the battlefield.

HORSE STEALING:
Ceased to be a capital offence in Britain in 1818.

HORSELESS CARRIAGE:
One of the early names for what we now call a car.

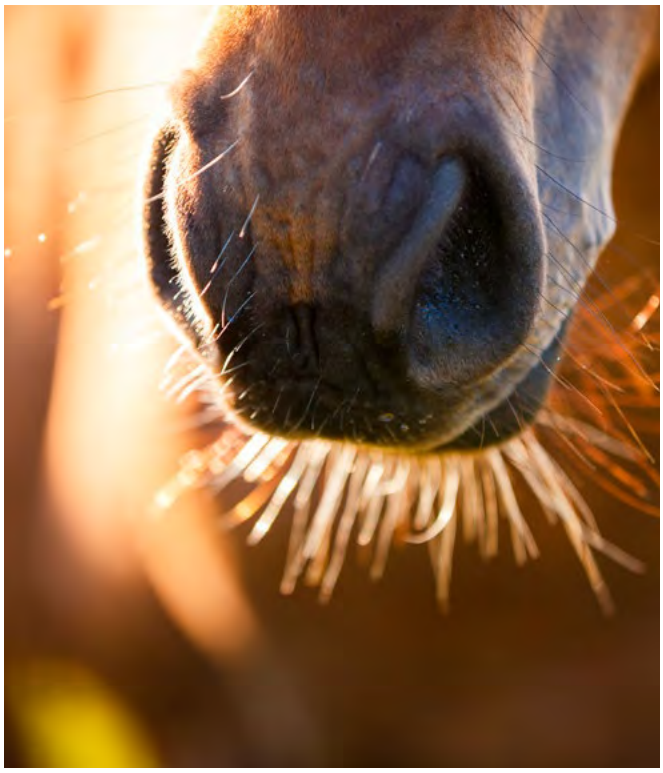
HORSE COLLAR:
In Europe, the rigid, padded horse-collar was developed in the 10th century AD, about the same time as the horseshoe.

HORSE FLIES ('gad flies'):
Can be more than an inch long, they're gray, black, or brown, with green or black eyes. Only the female fly attacks horses; their mouths are adapted to slashing open skin and sucking blood. Male flies drink nectar. Just seeing or hearing one close by can make a horse nervous or even uncontrollable under saddle. Pursuit by a couple of these monsters in the pasture can cause horses to abandon their grazing for flight. Deer flies are slightly smaller and prefer woodland, which is where their prey live.

HORSE TAILS:
The trade sign for a horse doctor in the UK used to be a horse tail hung under the eaves of his house.

HORSEHAIR:
Horsehair was (is) used to make paintbrushes, judge's wigs, historic train-carriage seats, the padding of saddles and, with the very finest quality of tail hair, musical bow strings. For a violin bow, 155 tail hairs are needed, for a viola 175, a cello 200 and a double bass 340.

Without the tail of a horse, a cello could not sing. The horse gives it voice.



I

ICELANDIC HORSE:
Icelandic's are small, generally pony-sized horses that became established in Iceland, having been brought there by Viking settlers. Together with their characteristic 'tolt' they are 5-gaited and have developed a two-layer coat, as found in other horse breeds adapted to cold, harsh climates.

INCISORS:
The front teeth, the biting teeth.

J

JACKBOOTS:
In the 17th century and the days of long stirrups and no jumping, riding boots reached above the knee. When the stirrup was shortened for jumping, the top section of the boot was folded over to show the flesh side of the leather. Hence the fashion for 'mahogany tops' or 'top boots.'

JARVEY:
Irish name for a coachman.

JENNET:
These days, the word is used to describe a female ass (donkey) but, in the past, it also described a small Spanish horse bred by the Berbers in the upland regions of Andalusia.

JIBBAH:
Arabic name for the convexity in the profile of some horse's skulls, e.g., some Arab horses.

JOCKEY:
'To jockey' when used as a verb is defined as

1. To jostle, by riding against one another, 'to jockey for position.'
2. Pejoratively, to cheat or trick.

K

KEHILAN:
An Arab word for a horse with the literal meaning, so important to an Arab owner, of a horse that i s 'pure-bred all through.' The meaning of 'through' and 'thorough' led to 'Thoroughbred.'

KAHYL:
Arabic word for 'horse;' khayl meaning 'to walk with pride.'

KNACKER YARD:
A repository for dead horses.

KORAN:
The Prophet encouraged his followers to make much of their horses and promised them a reward in heaven as an inducement.

KUTSUWAS:
A horse's bit in Japanese. A curb bit is known as a seme kutsuwas.

L

LAMENESS:
Lameness is a symptom that something within the limb, body, neck or head hurts and, as a result, the horse develops an abnormal gait. When lameness only occurs when a horse is ridden and there is no apparent abnormality of the limbs, the bit or the saddle are sources of pain to be considered. Of the two options, removal of the bit or replacement of the saddle, the bit option is the one to trial first, as it is the easier of the two but also the one most likely to be the source of the pain.

LAWN MOWERS:
The early lawn mowers were often drawn by horses wearing large leather boots to prevent damage to the grass.

LICKING INTO SHAPE:
Newborn animals were once thought to be formless and had to be 'licked into shape' by their mothers at birth.

LOFT:
Convenient though it is to store hay in a loft above the stable, the traditional plan can be the cause of poor ventilation and coughing in horses. It also constitutes a fire risk.

LOLLOP:
The word described a horse that was heavy on the forehand and leant on the bit.

LORINER:
The craft of making and selling bits, spurs, stirrups, saddle trees, and the minor metal items of horse harness such as buckles, rings and billet hooks. The word derives from the Latin 'lorum', a thong, bridle or rein. This seems to refer to the very earliest time in history when plaited vegetable material was used for making halters, reins and bits (see 'Halters').

LOOSE BOX:
In American English, a 'loose box' is called a stall. But in England, just as horses are transported in horse boxes (in Scotland, 'floats'), so are they stabled in loose boxes, often referred to in stable vernacular simply as 'boxes.'

M

MANE:
The hair that grows from the top line of a horse's neck.

MARSHALL:
Before the days of veterinarians, the word 'marshall' denoted a 'horse doctor' and was synonymous with 'farrier.'

MAT:
To be 'on the mat' comes from the U K Jockey Club (which has not yet admitted a jockey to its membership) where, when a jockey was to be disciplined by the stewards for an infringement of the rules of racing, h e was stood on a mat in front of the stewards' table, where he might be given a 'dressing down.'

METTLE:
A 'high-mettled' horse was regarded as a desirable feature, alert and spirited. Much of this should be attributed to the sheer nervousness triggered by the bit. My advice is that by taking the metal out of a horse's mouth, you restore a horse's spirits.

MEWS:
The name of the stables at the back of, or alongside, a large town house.

MOUNTING:
Fidgeting when being mounted is often caused by a horse anticipating the pain of the bit.

MUSHROOMS:
There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a mushroom

MUSTANG:
The word is derived from the Spanish word mesternos meaning 'wild,' hence the name for the horses that the Spaniards brought and lost or turned loose in the American southwest in the 1500s.

MUZZLE:
There was a time when horse breeders thought it good to breed horses with a muzzle so petite that they could drink out of a pint pot. Sadly, such narrow muzzles were probably accompanied by narrow jaws and a nar row throat a i rway that hindered the ability of such horses to breathe freely and be successful racehorses.

Muzzles were first used on stalled, intemperate stallion war horses, to prevent the handler from getting bitten.

N

NAG:
In Shakespeare's day, the word meant simply a riding horse, without any negative connotation.

NESTOR:
The tamer of horses.

NOSEBAGS:
Pigeons learn that if they fly at the head of a cab horse feeding out of a nosebag, the horse will toss i t s head in fright and scatter the oats to the pigeon's benefit.

NOSE RING:
Egyptian graphics show that horses and quaggas used to be controlled by means of a nose ring, as are bulls to this day and camels.

O

OATS:
In his famous dictionary, Samuel Johnson defined the word 'oats' as, "A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

"OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF MIND"
That may be so for a rider and even for a veterinarian but not for a horse. From the moment that a metal foreign body is strapped in a horse's mouth, it will be very much on the horse's mind. If riders could see the bit in their horse's mouth, as in an X-ray, many would have second thoughts about the safety and humanity of a method of communication that, for a racehorse being asked for peak performance, can include mouth pain, suffocation, chest pain, and physical exhaustion.

OVERSHOT JAW OR OVERJET (PARROT MOUTH)
A horse with an overshot jaw has a lower jaw shorter than the upper one, causing a malocclusion of the teeth. The nipping teeth (incisors), but not the cheek teeth (molars) are affected. The condition appears genetic and becomes noticeable as a young horse's jaw develops. It presents problems nipping grass and results in poor nutrition.

OXYGALA:
The Greek name for fermented mare's milk.

P

PACK HORSE:
In Elizabethan times, the bulk of goods was carried by packhorse trains. A gang (this was the original use of the word) of ten packhorses were needed to move a ton of goods. Packhorses had the advantage over wheeled vehicles because they moved in single file. When a road was too narrow for a cart, they could get by.

PARLIAMENT HORSE:
At one period in the history of UK coaching, the law required at least one horse to stay in trot for the safety of passengers. To comply, one fast trotting horse would be included in a four-in-hand team. This one became known as ' the parliament horse', obeying the law while the others cantered to keep time.

PASTERN:
The part of a horse's leg that is nearest the pasture. In his dictionary, Samuel Johnson defined 'pastern' as the knee of a horse. When he was asked by a woman how he made such a mistake, he famously replied "Ignorance, madam."

PECK:
A measure of grain.

PEYTRAL:
Armor for the protection of the horse's forelegs and chest.

POLE POSITION:
The term comes from racing. The horse in the #1 position in the starting gate is closest to the pole and has an opportunity to benefit from the inside track, the shortest of the many tracks on a racetrack. The term is now used to describe all sorts of advantages when someone 'gets and edge.'

POLO:
Marco Polo (late 13th century) mentions seeing a game called bouskasshis being played by the Hunza, on the upper Indus River in Karakorum. The first recorded history of polo comes from Persia. It died out in the 1500s but was revived

in Bengal in 1854. The native princes of India introduced it to the British, who carried it home to Britain and Ireland in 1869. The first organized tournament took place at Hurlingham in 1876. James Gordon Bennett took it that same year to the United States. Polo has been played longer than any other game known to man.

POMMEL:
The front bow of the saddle.

POWPYGEE:
Yorkshire dialect word for a child's horse. Perhaps a variation on 'puppy horse.'

PREY:
The horse is a prey animal and, though the domestic horse is relatively safe from predators such as lions and wild dogs, it is not free of predation by man.

PROPHET:
An interesting cleft that occurs occasionally in the brachiocephalic muscle on the side of a horse's neck used to be referred to by horsemen as 'The Prophet's thumb mark.' The legend behind the name is that if Mohammed approved of a foal at birth, he would press his thumb into the foal's neck. Since then, horses so marked have always been considered likely to be good horses.

PSALIA:
The cheek pieces of a bit.

Q

QUADRIGA:
A word for the chariot with its four horses or a team of horses.

QUARTER HORSE:
The name of the breed derives from the favorite Sunday pastime of farmers and plantation owners, ' match racing' their horses down the main streets of the Southern towns in Virginia and the Carolinas. It was a rare town that could boast a street longer than a quarter of a mile.

R

RACE:
From the Old English term that meant "hurry" or "rush."

RADMEN:
A term translated from the medieval Latin of the Domesday Book as 'riding men.' To own a horse in the England of 1085 indicated wealth and carried obligations.

RAWHIDE:
Used by the Tartars, Kalmucks, and Turks to protect a few horse's feet when they found it necessary.

REIN
Derived originally from the Latin retinere, to hold back, hence etymology of retina and all words derived from TENABLE. When the rein is attached to a bit, this does not give the rider security of TENURE.

The rein does not act like a brake on a car. A rider can no more slow or stop a horse mechanically by simply pulling on the reins than a man can elevate himself by tugging on his bootstraps.

With the rider's hands on one end of the rein and a bit on the other, the rein is frequently misused to produce poll flexion and false connection. Similarly, the bearing rein of the carriage horse was used to produce what was thought of as a high and proud position of the horse's head.

The suffocation and pain caused by bit-induced poll flexion cannot be recommended as a method of control.

REJONEADOR:
A horse trained for Portuguese bull fighting.

REMUDA:
The name given by Western horsemen in the USA to the morning 'sun-up' task of gathering the saddle horses from pasture and bringing them into camp. On cattle ranches in the Southwest (Great Basin) it is also referred to as "jingling" the horses. In buckaroo country (California, Nevada and Oregon), the same task is called "wrangling." The term 'remuda' is derived from the Spanish word remuder, which means "to exchange." The rancher's string of saddle horses is also referred to as the cavvy.

RETROMINGENT:
The mare, unlike the stallion or gelding, is a retromingent mammal. When a mare urinates, the flow streams backwards rather than forwards.

RHINOTOMY:
Slitting of the false nostril. One of the earliest known operations on the horse. Mistakenly thought to be a treatment for a horse that was 'unsound of wind.'

RIDER BONE:
A medical term, referring to a bony deposit in the muscles of the upper and inner part of the rider's thigh due to the pressure and irritation caused by the saddle in riding.

RISK OF RIDING:
It is widely recognized in law that to ride a horse is an inherently dangerous practice and that those who ride must do so at their own risk.

ROLLKUR:
A German word describing bit-enforced flexion of the horse's head and neck at exercise; a painful 'rolling in' so that the nasal plane is behind the vertical. A cause of pain, open mouth, salivation, obstruction of the airway, and 'blue tongue.' In extreme hyperflexion, the horse's head is held in a distorted position with the chin nearly touching the chest.

ROMAN RIDING:
Trick riding as for circuses and rodeo stunts, whereby a rider controls a pair of horses by standing with one foot on each back.

S

SCYTHIANS:
Preferred mares to stallions for riding. Perhaps this was because a mare was less likely to whinny and spoil a surprise attack. Mares were also chosen because of being less likely to cause delays while urinating during battle.

SHANK'S PONY:
To 'hoof it' (walk).

SHOW JUMPING:
The sport had its start in Ireland, in 1865, when the Royal Dublin Show staged 'leaping contests.' A sport where the intent is to cleanly jump over a set course within an allotted time.

SCRATCH:

THE PHRASE ‘STARTING FROM SCRATCH’ WAS ORIGINALLY COINED TO INDICATE THAT A RIDER WAS BEING HONEST IN A HORSE RACE BY MAKING SURE THAT HIS HORSE’S FRONT FEET WERE JUST BEHIND A LINE SCRATCHED IN THE DIRT ROAD THAT MARKED THE RACE’S START. TO ‘START FROM SCRATCH’ IS A TERM TO DENOTE THAT SOMEONE STARTED IN LIFE WITH NOTHING OR WITH NO PARTICULAR ADVANTAGES, UNLIKE THOSE WHO WERE FAVORED AND GIVEN A HANDICAP AND AL-LOWED TO START THE RACE SEVERAL LENGTHS AHEAD.

SHABRACK:
The name for a blanket under the saddle. Ornamental ones in the colors of the Grenadier Guards are part of the saddlery when the Colonel of the regiment is on parade.

SHEDROW:
American term for the corridor in a horse barn at a racetrack.

SHOE:
The so-called 'horseshoe' is not analogous to the sort of shoe we wear ourselves. It is a nailed-on iron clamp that interferes with the normal expansion of the hoof when weight-bearing. The natural horseman's boot for a barefoot horse is analogous to the human shoe.
890 AD: First firm evidence of nailed on shoes
973 AD: Shoes habitual for long journeys

SMELL OF THE STABLES:
The smell of the stables is largely attributable to the smell of ammonia from horse urine, coupled with poor ventilation.

SNAFFLE: The word may owe its origin to a Medieval Dutch word snavel, meaning 'mouth.'

SPORT: By a process of contraction, the word 'sport' comes from the archaic English verb disport, to make merry and play games. The first two letters of the Latin element 'dis' (meaning 'apart' or 'away') were dropped. I posit that 'sport' (noun and verb) became a divergence away from business and gravity. Over the years, horse sport has become 'big business'. This makes it difficult, but not impossible, to change.

SPURS:
A spur is a metal tool designed to be worn in pairs on the heels of riding boots for the purpose of directing a horse to move forward or laterally while riding.

SPUTTERING:
A common TV film caption for when a horse is 'high blowing'

STABLE:
The word derives from the Latin 'stabulum' for a dwelling and it, in turn, from a word for 'stand.' It is sadly true that a stabled horse is stabilized and unable to keep on the move and fulfill its evolutionary need.

STALE:
Horses are said to stale rather than urinate. The word comes from the Italian stallare to urinate.

STALLION:
The stalled one.

STAR, STRIPE AND SNIP:
Names for various types of white markings on the head of a horse that used to be a necessary means of identification. A star in the middle of a horse's forehead used to be regarded as a positive feature but these days we no longer allude to the negativity of its absence.

STIRRUP:
Meaning 'mount rope' or 'climb rope', from its first use as an aid in mounting.

T

TAIL:
The trade sign for a horse doctor in the old days used to be a horse tail hung under the eaves of the horse doctor's house, facing the street.

TERRET RINGS
The two rings on the top of a driving saddle through which the reins pass. In the 19th century, it was the terret ring to which the bearing rein was attached. Anna Sewell (1877) in her book, "Black Beauty," drew attention to the iniquity of the bearing rein and the fashion (painful for a horse) for a high head carriage.

TOUCH & GO:
A saying from the days of the horse and carriage. If the wheel of one carriage glanced against another but without becoming snarled up and causing a major accident, the moment of crisis was referred to as a 'touch and go.'

TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA: Bit-induced pain (neuralgia) in the Trigeminal nerve, the largest sensory nerve in the horse's head is the common cause of headshaking (head tossing) and extreme nervousness in the bitridden horse. In man, the pain is likened to an electric shock. Diagnosis and treatment by removal of the bit is strongly recommended.

TRAVOIS:
An early type of sled for a horse to pull loads.

TREKKING:
Long before it became known as trail riding, pony trekking was common in Britain.

U–V

UNSOUND:
This term refers to a horse that has a physical issue or condition that affects its ability to perform or be ridden comfortably.

VAGABONDS:
The 16th-century name for horse thieves, when they weren't called 'priggers' and 'prancers'.

"VENTRE-A-TERRE":
'Flat out' and 'belly to the ground'. The supposed action of a galloping horse as depicted by artists before the age of photography.

VIBRISSAE:
A name descriptive of the function of the long sensory hairs around a horse's muzzle and eyes. These sense organs are infinitely more sensitive than a human 'whisker.'

W

WAIN:
A wain is a wagon. It has four wheels, as opposed to a 'cart' with two.

WAGON:
Wheeled vehicles, early wagons (4 wheels) and carts (2 wheels), were introduced in the Asian Steppes, about 3300 BCE.

A 'station wagon' was originally a horse drawn vehicle used by hotels to collect guests from the station. Hence the 'wooden' construction of the car by that name.

WALER:
An Australian b r e e d o f horse.

WALK OVER:
A one-horse race.

WELFARE OF THE HORSE:
A mismatch between the fundamental physiological needs of a horse and what, under the conditions of domestication we provide, results in poor welfare. The word domestication, derived from the Latin domus meaning 'house', draws attention to a non-trivial problem that needs attention, horses being herd animals, unadapted to solitary confinement in a stable.

Another welfare problem when domesticated (ridden or driven) is that the horse is a nose-breather. To run, a horse needs to breathe rapidly and deeply. To do this the respiratory tract is dilated (nostrils flared and head/neck position extended);
the digestive tract is closed (the lips are sealed, and the oral cavity emptied of food and air Use of a bit opens the digestive tract (unseals the lips); reduces the size of the respiratory tract; and is the cause of mouth pain, breathlessness and a cascade of problems that include approximately 30 bit-induced diseases and 70 diseases (conflict behaviors). This is not the place to provide a full account of the published evidence. References include Cook and Strasser (2003), Mellor (2012, 2020a), Mellor and Beausoleil (2017). Significantly, a method has been developed and widely adopted for assessing horse welfare – the Five Domains Model (Mellor et al, 2020). Based on the model, the bit is the probable cause in racing of:

'bleeding' (exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage)

'waterlogging' of the lung (negative pressure pulmonary edema)

physical exhaustion, stumbling, falls, catastrophic accidents and sudden death (Cook 2022).

The current competition rules prevent the theory from being tested until bit-free racing is allowed. The same rule barrier applies for dressage. Yet, when four mature school horses were given a simple four-minute dressage test, with and without a bit, the riders improved their score from 34% to 67% in the first ever four minutes of their horses being bit-free (Cook and Mills 2009). Mitzi Summers, the independent Central Horsemanship Association's judge, identified 56 behavioral problems when the horses were 'bitten' that had either disappeared or were much reduced a few minutes later when they were bit-free.

Similar improvements in performance can be anticipated in all horse sports, once rule changes are made to permit bit-free competition.

There seems to be 'a bit of a problem' about the role of veterinarians on the topic of the bit and equine welfare (Mellor (2020b), Harvey (2023). I understand this only too well as, graduating in 1952, I had myself been a 'blind-to-the bit' veterinarian for 45 years (Cook 1998,1999) before recognizing the bit as inhumane, counterproductive, and unnecessary.

The horse is an animal that, by means of natural selection, has evolved to survive in many different climates. During a mere moment in evolutionary time, selective breeding of the horse has developed different breeds of horse to serve man's needs rather than those of the horse. The Thoroughbred has had a closed Stud Book since 1791. Inbreeding over the past 233 years has been long enough for the present generation of Thoroughbreds to develop hereditary diseases, both known and unknown. In addition, there will be diseases caused by horses being used for man's purposes (e.g., riding and traction) under conditions (e.g., flexed at the poll and with one or more painful foreign bodies in their mouth) for which neither natural nor artificial selection has prepared them.

Horses in the wild:

- Live in herds and have freedom to roam. Domestication has resulted in horses living in solitary confinement.
- Eat fresh and succulent grass and are 'trickle feeders', spending many hours of each day grazing.
- Are prey animals. Their first line of defence is to run at speeds over distances long enough to outpace predators. They do this with sealed lips and a negative pressure in the oral cavity that stabilizes the soft palate and maintains an open airway in the throat.
- Are nose-breathers. Prior to running, horses need to close their mouth, seal their lips, and swallow. This creates a vacuum in their oral cavity that stabilizes their throat airway and enables them to breathe rapidly and deeply. Horse sport rules mandating or requiring use of a bit, deny this physiological necessity, with the result that horses experience mouth pain, suffocation and a cascade of problems that, in the racehorse particularly, are the likely cause of 'bleeding', exhaustion, stumbling, falls, catastrophic accidents, and sudden death (Cook 2024).

They are on the move much of the day, either grazing or searching for water. At each step their hooves expand when weight-bearing. As first noted by Strasser and Kells in "A Lifetime of Soundness." (1998), lameness is uncommon compared with the stabled and shod horse. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, all the bit-ridden horses were bit-disabled horses, ridden by able-bodied riders. At least five dressage horses were observed to develop cyanotic 'blue tongues', a sign of abuse (Cuckson 2024). At the Paris Paralympics, disabled riders were required to ride disabled horses.

An animal's welfare used to be considered in terms of the Five Freedoms:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst
2. Freedom from Discomfort
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury and Disease
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress.

In so far as the Five Freedoms focused on minimizing negative experiences, the system was helpful. In practice, it has been found insufficient as it failed to maximize positive experiences, and in addition, it was biologically inaccurate and misleading. In the last 20 years it has been superseded by The Five Domains model for assessing the welfare of the horse (Mellor et al 2020), based on the domains of:

1. Nutrition
2. Physical Environment
3. Health
4. Behavioral Interactions with the environment; other animals; and humans.
5. Mental state

The Five Domains Model has been adopted as the standard of animal welfare by a long list of organizations, including – for example, New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing (NZTR), and the International Federation of Horseracing Authorities (IFHA). The racing industry has not yet taken steps to implement the policies that, on paper, they support. The FEI (International Equestrian Federation) has not adopted the Five Domains Model, but it is to be hoped that they are considering this, albeit 'behind closed doors.' Without such steps, horse sports are likely to lose their social license to operate.

For the last ten years, the Royal Dutch Equestrian Federation has set a good example by allowing bit-free virtual dressage competition. My expectation is that the average scores for bit-free competitors will have risen. My hope is that the data has been collected so that, in due course, the results of this valuable trial can be published. Luke et al (2022) reported that "horses with better welfare perform fewer hyperreactive behaviours and their riders have
fewer accidents and injuries."

Early in 2024, following the advice and recommendation of Dr. Andrew McLean, Pony Club Australia took an important step forward by allowing members, on application, to compete bit-free. This example has already been followed by many Pony Clubs around the world.

X, Y, Z

XENOPHON:
A General in the Greek army (c. 430-356 BC), renowned for his work "On the Art of Horsemanship", described a progressive system of training horses t h a t became the basis for classical riding as we know it today.

XILINGOL HORSES:
Xilingol horses are a light horse from central Inner Mongolia, used both for riding and for draft purposes. In the 1960s, they were developed by breeding the Russian Thoroughbred, Akhal-Teke, Sanhe, and Chinese Mongolian, after which Kabarda and Don were introduced into the breed.

YAMS:
The name of the riders in Genghis Khan's pony express. They were required to ride day and night, covering two to three hundred miles at a stretch. The horses were unshod.

YOKE:
An ancient word that derives from Indo-European language roots. Yoke harnesses for horses were a development of those for theox . T hey worked less well in the horse because the horse's trachea was compressed by the yoke pressure and its airway obstructed. Many centuriespassed before the padded collar's
development enabled the horse to replace oxen as the preferred animal for traction.

ZEBRA:
A member of the family Equus, characterized by its striped coat pattern.

ZONY:
A hybrid between a zebra and a pony.

ZORSE:
A hybrid between a zebra and a horse.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS BOOK AND THE EQUINE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE!