



FORGE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH FARRIERS AND BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION



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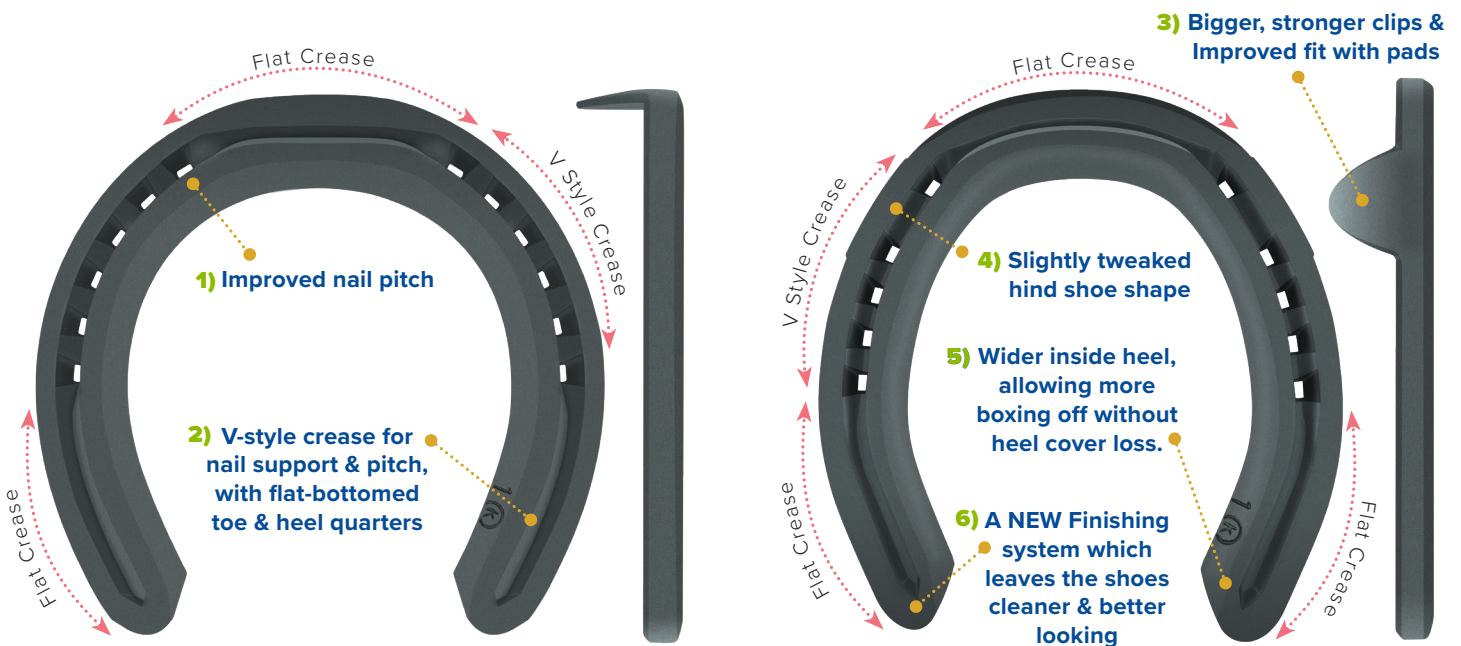


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BFBA farrier on FRC council

Jason Sim AWCf
Daniel Harman AWCf GradDipELR

WCF farrier on FRC Council

Robin P. May AWCf

The January 2025 issue of *Forge Knowledge* contains the articles:

- **The hoof capsule: function, physiology and anatomy**
By Ian Schofield FWCF
- **A unique look at the caudal structures of the hoof**
By Paige Poss



CPD Committee

Chris Linssner (Chair), Ben Benson, Abby Bunyard, Aaron Myall, Phoebe Colton, Daniel Harman, Alex Mercer, Stephen Britten, Jamie Hughes, Dan Stern, Iain Nixon, Jason Brown, Merv Allen and Doug Campbell.

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Contributions in the form of articles, reports, letters and photographs are welcomed.

President's address

What a rollercoaster of a year it's been! In the first six months of my term, it feels like our feet haven't even touched the ground - ironic, I know, for a farrier! None of this would have been possible without the incredible dedication of our volunteer team. To each and every one of you: I can't thank you enough - you've kept the wheels turning and the shoes on!

Liam O'Hara has courageously taken the wheel as the driver of the Forge editorial panel - a task far from menial and more akin to herding cats on hot coals! Meanwhile, Chris Linssner is taking the reins of the CPD committee with energy and determination, driving forward new ideas with the full support of his panel cheering him on. And let's not forget the EC members, who've gone all in (driving, flying, or even sailing!) to help, support, and build stronger connections within the farriery world. Strength, unity, and a touch of grit - when we come together, there's nothing we can't achieve!

The Craft Committee have been working tirelessly on Social Licence to Operate guidelines for horse shoeing competitions to protect the welfare of the equine and assist both organisers and volunteers. The BFBA are proactively safeguarding our competitive sport for the future - more on page 15.

In July, we proudly celebrated Farriers Week alongside the American Farriers Journal. The response was truly phenomenal, with incredible levels of positive engagement - some of our posts reached an astounding 200,000 views! Thank you to all who joined in to honour the craft of farriery.

The BFBA once again proudly exhibited at BEVA (British Equine Veterinary Association), further strengthening the vital relationship between our industries. BEVA dedicated an entire day to farriery, with outstanding farrier speakers - experts in our craft engaging with experts in theirs. This invaluable event is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of the BFBA calendar!

What can we say about Focus 2024? Absolutely incredible! This year's event was the biggest and best yet, and the International competition blew itself out of the water. With Mark Watson and Danny Bennett at the helm it was seamless - the best of the best in the world rocking to Danny's playlist! These are the true international world team championships and I can truly say how proud I was to watch it all unfold.

And Focus 2025 is already shaping up to be the event of the year! A huge thank you to Dan Harman for curating an incredible line-up of speakers, with demo area slots already filling up. Kirk Dexter has nearly filled the Bladesmithing competition, and tickets are flying out the door thanks to the early bird deals. This year, new companies are stepping up to sponsor the Members' Area, enabling us to give even more back to our valued Association Members. If you're not a member yet, now's the time to join - you can't afford to miss it!

In November, BFBA's Vice-President Phoebe Colton, Treasurer Aaron Myall, and Past President Craig D'Arcy proudly attended the Northern Ireland Veterinary Association's (NIVA) launch of the Equine Welfare Priorities Report in Belfast. Their presence highlighted the BFBA's unwavering commitment to supporting farriers and the equine industry in Northern Ireland, offering assistance and collaboration where needed.

Jason Sim, one of our EC members, represented the BFBA at the European Federation of Farriers Association's (EFFA) Annual General Meeting in Verona. The AGM brought home how important the collaboration between the associations is and that the industry is potentially stronger than we realise. Jason also attended an outstanding meeting in Scotland that sparked exciting possibilities for the future, including the potential reinstatement of a physical branch. To top it all off, Mustad and Richard Ash have generously agreed to support a spring meeting - fabulous news!

Behind the scenes, Jason has also taken a proactive approach to ensure Scottish farriers have access to the right expertise in moments of need. He has collaborated with Scottish-specific solicitors to create a trusted network of support for farriers, to ensure that whether it's contract disputes, liability issues,

or other legal challenges, farriers in Scotland can rely on professionals who understand their trade and the regional legal landscape. Jason's foresight and dedication reflect his commitment to safeguarding the interests of the farriery community.

For the first time, the BFBA proudly exhibited at the AFA Convention in Chattanooga, USA - a fantastic opportunity to showcase Focus, promote our Overseas Membership, and the Cultural Exchange program. I had the privilege of leading a two-hour roundtable discussion, armed with two thought-provoking questions. The first: the UK is governed by farriery legislation, while the USA is not. In your opinion, is this a positive or negative thing? And the second, "Remedial/Therapeutic shoeing—is it really a thing, or should we simply be shoeing what is in front of us, addressing the needs of the horse at that moment? Two lively, insightful debates ensued with incredible knowledge shown.

I then had the honour of stepping onto the main stage for an hour-long presentation, delving into the rich history of the BFBA and its enduring partnership with the AFA under the theme "Collaborations and Connections." It was a privilege to represent our association, support our American colleagues, and strengthen the invaluable bonds between our two organisations. We were thrilled to receive an invitation to the next convention - that said, if the invitation was based on my performance of the two-step, we might be in a bit of trouble!

Towards the end of November, we saw the BFBA National Championships take place at the Defence Animal Training Regiment in Melton Mowbray. Congratulations to Matt Randles who lifted the winner's trophy for the second consecutive year and his striker Gary Darlow who won best striker. Congratulations also goes to Matt England, this year's National Apprentice Champion. More on page 6.

BFBA's Team UK proudly represented the nation at the fiercely competitive EFFA European Farriery Championship in Spain. We're thrilled to say that Team UK claimed first place in the EFFA European Team Championships Shoeing Competition. Huge congratulations to Alex Collier, Lewis Balfour, George Rogerson, and Joe Whitehead for their skill and dedication in securing this remarkable victory! More on page 10.

The EC has been tirelessly working behind the scenes to create an all-singing, all-dancing, user-friendly website that brings the BFBA's branding and presence firmly into the 21st Century. This groundbreaking platform is set to launch in the new year, offering even more benefits to our members. Stay tuned!

With challenges in training, exams, retention, and recruitment, our industry finds itself in a precarious state. As the largest organisation outside of the register, it is our responsibility to take the lead and steer farriery back on track, averting the looming crisis we face. Our first task is to host David Hall, Chair of the Trailblazers on 5th February for a meeting on what will keep the farriery apprenticeship fit and relevant. To have your say, make sure you join us - it's open to all farriers.

As President, 2025 is the year to lead our association in making farriery great again - where tradition meets innovation and excellence becomes our everyday standard. Together, we'll forge a stronger, more united craft, setting new benchmarks for skill, unity and forward-thinking. Let's honour our past, elevate our present, and ensure a future where farriery truly shines - one hoof at a time!

Massive Happy New Year from us all.



**Abby Bunyard AWCF,
BFBA President**



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COMPETITION SPECIAL

Over the next eight pages, we're covering three recent competitions:
the BFBA National Championships, the European Championships
and the World Championships.



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BFBA National Championships

The BFBA National Championships took place on 23rd November 2024 at the Defence Animal Training Regiment in Melton Mowbray.

It was a fantastic display of competition and we'd like to take the opportunity to congratulate the winners - especially to Matt Randles for retaining his title at the National Championships, and his striker Gary Darlow who took best striker (for the third time!)

In the qualified farrier competition, somebody worked out there were an outstanding 30 Championship titles held between the competitors, including the current National and current World Championship Farrier! It really was a competition for the best of the best.

The BFBA would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved with the 2024 BFBA National Championships, including the Army and the Defence Animal Training Regiment for hosting. Special thanks to Col Ian Moran, farrier Major Jones and team for putting on such a brilliant competition!



Right: Matt Randles, National Champion

Left: Matt England, Apprentice Champion

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THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS:

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We are very grateful to our sponsors for their support in running the National Championships. We simply couldn't run the competition without them.

PRIZES

Open Prizes

- 2024 National Champion: £500 Cash, The New Century Cup & BFBA Silver Medal
- 2024 Reserve Champion: £200 Cash & BFBA Silver Medal
- 2024 Best Shod Foot: The Frank Moorcroft Trophy
- 2024 Winning Striker: Derek Gardner Sledgehammer
- Prizes and cards down to 6th

Apprentice Prizes

- 2024 Apprentice National Champion: £100 Cash, J&A Ferrie WCF Shield & WCF Bronze Medal
- 2024 Apprentice Reserve Champion: £50 Cash & BFBA Bronze Medal
- Prizes and cards down to 6th

JUDGES

Open Class:

Dave Smith AWCF
(himself 6 times
National Champion)
Jim Balfour AWCF



Apprentice Class:

Lewis Balfour DipWCF
Andy Dryburgh



RESULTS

BFBA National Championships: Open Class

1st: Matt Randles (3 times National Champion)
2nd: Alex Collier
3rd: George Rogerson
4th: Ben Casserley
5th: Steven Beane (5 times National Champion)
6th: Ben Grange

Best Shod Foot:

Steven Beane

Best Specimen:

Matt Randles

Best Striker:

Gary Darlow (7 times National Champion)



BFBA National Championships: Apprentice Class:

1st: Matt England
2nd: Ben McCredie
3rd: Mathew Bradley
4th: Billy Machin
5th: Josh Jones
6th: Ethan Rolfe



LONGOTANO PHOTOGRAPHY

Longotano Photography were the official photographers for the 2024 BFBA National Championship competition. Find all the photos online here. Don't forget that BFBA members get 15% off photoshoots with Longotano Photography!



2024 Blacksmith World Championship Competition

A huge well done to British farrier George Rogerson DipWCF on taking home the World Champion title at the 2024 Blacksmith World Championship back in September 2024.

The Blacksmith World Championships was held at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Alberta, hosted by the World Championship Blacksmiths.

British farriers took three of the top five placings, with five-time World Champion and 2014 winner Steven Beane FWCF in second place and Alex Collier in fifth place.

George came in the top three end-of-day standings throughout all five days of the competition.

It's been a fantastic few months for George, who also came third in the Open Class at the BFBA National Championships as well as representing the British team at the EFFA European Farrier Championships (more on the next page!)

Photos and information courtesy of World Championship Blacksmiths on Facebook - visit facebook.com/worldchampionshipblacksmiths.



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EFFA EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

The EFFE European Farrier Championships 2024 took place from the 11th - 14th December in Catalonia, Spain.

Team GB were proudly represented by Lewis Balfour, Alex Collier, George Rogerson and Joe Whitehead, with the one and only Jim Balfour as team manager.

Huge congratulations go to the overall individual EFFE European Champion 2024 Sergio Perez Prieto from Spain who gave an exceptional performance and well deserved victory.

Team GB put in brilliant performances in for all the classes. The BFBA feel so lucky to have had you all on our team - thank you.

Despite being a fantastic event, the competition didn't come without its ups and downs!

Team GB were official EFFE European Team Champions 2024.

However, Team France had the overall highest team score, but as they are not members of EFFE their points did not qualify them in the team competition. The BFBA extend congratulations to the French team for a great performance.

Thank you to Team GB for their fantastic sportsmanship by volunteering their prizes to Team France in recognition of their achievements this competition.

Unfortunately, post event it was discovered an error had been made with the scores affecting the overall scores leading to Lewis Balfour missing out on his spot in the Finals.

Well done again to our wonderful Team GB. You all did us proud in this tough competition, and thank you for representing the BFBA so well.

Here is the official statement from the Associació de Ferradors de Catalunya:

"After revising the scores multiple times (even though we always double and triple check every single score before publishing results) we've realized that due to an unfortunate chain of events a couple of erroneous scores reached the secretary table and have been entered into the scoring system, affecting the overall scores of Lewis Balfour and Alex Collier. Due to this mishap, Lewis regrettably did not enter the Finals as he should have. We deeply apologize for this mistake and hope for your understanding."

The BFBA would like recognise Lewis' outstanding response to this news. Despite the understandable frustration and disappointment he showed true class in his response to the situation, accepting the organisers apology like the true sportsman he is. We can't wait to watch you get back in the competition ring in 2025 and celebrate your future successes with you.

John Ravanelli (EFFA President) also issued a statement apologising again for the mistake with the scores and thanking Lewis "for being the gentleman that you are." He went on to say: "While I cannot undo what happened, we are committed to making sure it never happens again."

At the EFFE AGM 5 delegates had already been tasked with reviewing and rewriting the competition rules for approval in 2025 ready for the next European Championships in Holland, 2026.

Whilst this error has highlighted the need for stronger safeguards, a simplification of the scoring system and a comprehensive review process - we also know events of this magnitude take incredible effort, dedication and passion for the craft to put on and despite inevitable human error everyone is working towards making these events the absolute best they can be in the future.

Competitors are invited to give their feedback and suggestions to raise with the committee.

TEAM GB FINAL STANDINGS

4TH - ALEX COLLIER

Alex was in the final, by far having the toughest feet. The task was a pair of fully fullered massolette straightbar shoes, and the judges specified no frog contact. Alex was the only finalist who needed to add set down bars into his time.

6TH - LEWIS BALFOUR

Lewis went into the semi finals in 5th place after strong scores in the qualifying classes. He also won Class 2.

7TH - GEORGE ROGERSON

George gained a third place in the surprise shoe class and into the semi finals. (Special thanks from Phoebe, BFBA Vice-President, for consistently pulling silly faces in ALL of the photos, too!)

14TH - JOE WHITEHEAD

Joe did a brilliant run after stepping in less than three weeks before the competition.



The BFBA were honoured to enter such a brilliant team. We were able to sponsor the team by covering entry costs, travel expenses and clothing for the competition including personalised embroidered BFBA hoodies, t-shirts and vests.

Field and Forge Ltd generously made the team look the part and kept them warm with sponsored Ariat Jackets, whilst Seren Handmade did a brilliant quick turnaround on all the embroidered personalisation for the team (BFBA Members' Discount available!)

Mustad and Danny Elliott kindly kitted the team out with new, bright blue chaps, nails and lots of sharp rasps for the all rounds.

Thank you also to Steffi Kersten at 4FootedPhotos for capturing and very kindly sharing some her amazing photos of Team GB in action.

As ever, these competitions wouldn't happen without the support and dedication from the wider industry.

The BFBA would also like to thank:

- The judges for the challenging class tasks: Austin Edens (USA) and Ludovic Mathieu (France)
- All the European competitors who took part - it was a great atmosphere!
- The European Federation of Farrier Associations (EFFA) - for sponsoring this fantastic championship and its member associations for embracing it whole-heartedly
- The Associacio de Ferradors de Catalunya and their amazing team of volunteers. The venue looked amazing, the horses were brilliant, the competition ran on time and their hospitality was second to none. Not only did they take on this huge task last minute, when errors in the scores were spotted they quickly and sincerely apologised.

Our special thanks go to Jim Balfour - the best manager a team can have! Jim kept everyone on task and herded the farriers fantastically.

Well done again to our wonderful Team GB. You all did us proud in this tough competition, and thank you for representing the BFBA so well.



A Behind-the-Scenes look at Focus 2024

Ever wondered what goes into the planning and delivery of a large-scale event like Focus? Certified Journeyman Farrier Brian Mullins, host of the Mullins Farrier Podcast, takes us behind the scenes at the UK's largest farriery event...

Before I became a farrier, I tried many different career paths. One of those was job as a sound and lighting engineer.

During my short foray in that field, I learned quickly that one of the perks of the job was unhindered access to all things behind the scenes. I was up in catwalks high above auditoriums, in secret passageways between walls, crawling around under stages running mic cables or operating spotlights. It always amazed me how easily I could get past a diligent security officer and behind stage at a large venue armed with only my black clothing and a mic cable.

As I took short cuts through the various rooms and halls at this year's Focus, moving my recording gear from one location to another, I was brought back to those days many moons ago.

The thing about being part of the crew behind the scenes is you get to see the inner workings of an event that the attendees never will. You become the proverbial fly on the wall that sees and hears all. In my former career you learned which performers were narcissistic jerks, which managers and event planners were good at their jobs, and which ones were phoning it in. I once got to watch a Head Chef order his cooks and servers around like a military general to successfully feed a crowd of some 300 hungry wedding goers while I ate a plate of their delicious meal on break. Gordon Ramsey would have been proud of the man; he was ruthless with his troops.

Over the past three years of coming to Focus and taking part in the days leading up to the event, I've had the unique vantage point to watch a keen group of folks bond together and pull off a top tier event. The main goal of everyone's efforts seems to be providing the most benefits possible to their fellow BFBA members.

Now, I've only been present for preparations at most a week before the main event but it's obvious that there had been numerous meetings, phone calls and email threads leading up to that point. From concept, to planning, to outcome, the process starts from the moment the doors close on the last day of the previous Focus.

A week out from the start of the International, people start to arrive at the old Forge on the grounds of Stoneleigh. Everyone seems to be seasoned veterans and know what they need to do or at least who to get their marching orders from!

In the middle of the flurry of activity is the Field General Holly Flack with a phone permanently to her ear putting out fires and managing the plethora of people with questions and concerns. All the while, she keeps her smile and sense of humour. Claire Whitehouse sits across from Holly at her post in the office quietly working away. Claire is one of those people who has perfected the art of seeming to be too engrossed in her work to be paying attention to what's going on. But then, whenever Danny makes one of his typical smart alec comments, a small smile will curl her lips as she continues to type away.



Above: Brian chats to Stuart Muir

Danny Bennett and Mark Watson, along with all the members of the Purple Army, start prepping and collecting the gear that needs to move from the storage at the forge to the competition tent (or marquee in Brit speak) being built outside the trade show hall. Danny always seems to have about 30 disparate tasks on the go at the same time and yet, by the time the manager's meeting starts he has them all squared away (high functioning ADHD at its finest).

As Danny flits about his multiple endeavours, Mark is always busy re-checking the things he has organized seemingly since the year before. Double checking that he hasn't forgotten a single detail despite the fact he's probably double checked them before. I secretly think he already knows everything is in perfect order, he just performs this bit of theatre to make everybody else feel better that they still have a long list of things to do before the day.

Jim Balfour the Chairman of the Craft Committee is usually one of the first of the Purple Army to arrive and start helping Danny and Mark. I believe he is so keen to be of assistance so that he can build up enough goodwill to ensure that when he turns into Scottish Team Manager Jim, they will still be friends by the Awards Assembly. It's a real-life Dr. Jekyll/ Mr. Hyde transition that occurs as soon as the Manager's meeting begins and is incredible to witness. He will go from the guy helping you hand bomb a skid load of bags of coke to the man willing to burn down the place to ensure his team has the best possible chance of going home with the International Title.

The Purple Army is a formidable crew. Everyone pitches in to ensure that the International runs smoothly and fair. Key to that is Jed Hallam who, along with his wife Ruth and Helen Bennett, ensures that the scores are recorded and tallied correctly. Chris Johnson and Brian Saunders monitored the gas forging this year. Siobhan Dillon and Dan Ravenscroft were the scribes. Dr. Kirsty MacGregor ensured that the horses were all happy, healthy and sound. Jackie Hickman was the equine welfare officer. Susie Watson ensured no-one was dehydrated. Chris Carrel was the paparazzi. And Byron Bennett, Che Broadley, Nick Cooper, Mark Humphrey, Mark White, James Todd, Brian Saunders, John Bolton, Adam Bradley, Russell Jones, Steve Griffin, and Matt Sole all did their part making sure the competition arena was clean, safe and operational.

Then when the final bell rings and the fires are extinguished, the Purple Army clears out the marquee and preps it for the next day's blade smithing competition.

"Witnessing the community and camaraderie of the BFBA was a refreshing glimpse into what is possible."



FOCUS

As soon as the competition marquee is up, Sam Masters (a fellow stage lighting tech alumni) shows up with his lights and cables to ensure the competition arena is amply lit. His good mate Jamie Hughes assists Sam by mocking his efforts and holding the occasional zip tie. No matter how early we arrive on the days of the competition, Jamie is always there with all the fires lit and the coke bags stacked up by the forging stations. He is also always the last person to leave each night (I often wonder if he doesn't sleep under a table in the judge's room).

When Jamie isn't busy showing us all up there, he also helps me gather guests to interview for the podcast. Danny had appointed Jamie as my personal assistant in 2023 when he was too busy with his role as the Chief Steward to introduce me to folks and lure them into the podcast room. As with all tasks Jamie undertakes, he went above and beyond, and I was never without a guest, a drink, or food. This year's Focus was no different and he kept the queue of guests steady. I think my final tally was a record 22 interviews, thanks to his brilliant efforts.

On day one of the competition, as things get underway under the marquee, Holly and the rest of the Executive Committee don their reflective gilets and start setting up the trade show hall for the Focus Convention. For anyone who walks through the doors when Focus is up and running, it would be hard to impress upon them how big the hall truly is when empty. The audio-visual company gets to work dividing the hall into its various parts, and the trade site employees begin to set up the necessary infrastructure for the trade show booths.



Above: Brian at Focus with BFBA President Abby Bunyard, Holly Flack from the BFBA Head Office team and others

This year, they had a large lecture hall aptly named the David Gulley Lecture Theatre, a demo area and a smaller breakout room. The breakout room was a new addition, and I had the great opportunity to interview Stuart Muir and Mac Head in that venue. Dan Harman, Aaron Myall, and Liam O'Hara helped me to line up the guests for that.

One of the differences I noticed at my first Focus was the Members Area - I had never seen one at a farrier event before. It is Vice President Phoebe Colton's pet project, and a testament to the BFBA's constant commitment to providing value to their members. With comfortable seating, snacks, and a full-service coffee bar run by the coffee kings Charlie Dyson and past

President Chris Linssner, it is quite the hot spot. As a nice added touch, there's a monitor displaying the live lectures from the David Gulley Lecture Theatre. So, you can watch the lectures from the comfort of a couch with a coffee in hand whilst you bring yourself to the verge of founder with the copious amounts of sweets and baked goods available.

There always seems to be at least one member of the Executive Committee in the Members Area to converse with the attendees including other past Presidents like Ben Benson, Huw Dyer, and current President Abby Bunyard. During Focus it is always full of folks, and I often ponder the incredible amount of knowledge that must be shared in that 300 square feet of space.

After the incredibly long queues in 2023, the BFBA streamlined the sign-in process and although the lines were still long, folks didn't have to wait very long to get in. Thanks to the efforts of Stephen Britten and Jason Sim, who were the primary gate keepers this year, the line moved at a steady pace.

The American Farrier's Association Cultural Exchange Guru Vern Powell was there this Focus. Vern, Craig D'Arcy and Phoebe Colton interviewed two candidates hoping to go to the US for the exchange. Both candidates were successful and I'm excited to read about their adventures in the land of the free.

I'm sure there are plenty of people I failed to mention in this, but everyone's efforts culminated in yet another successful Focus. Each year, it has been awesome to see how much more its international recognition has grown. Many of my North American peers came this year to attend this world class event. With a community of so many eager individuals all working together on a shared goal, this trajectory shows no sign of stopping.

When people ask me how my trip to England was, my response has been, "Amazing! It restored my faith in humanity."

When all you see on your newsfeed these days is division and us versus them, witnessing the community and camaraderie of the BFBA was a refreshing glimpse into what is possible. And while most people who attended this year's Focus only saw a professionally run farrier convention, I got to witness all the dedicated people working behind the scenes to ensure it went off without a hitch.

As I took a short cut through the Members Area and behind the curtain to my podcast studio, I was brought back to that food prep line for the wedding I was working so long ago. All those people working together to feed the wedding guests an incredibly delicious meal.

The only difference at Focus was that the Gordon Ramsey character wasn't there shouting orders at his underlings, because the dozens and dozens of BFBA volunteers were already on it.

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Social License to Operate (SLO) and Horseshoeing Competitions: A Guide

Social license is not a physical piece of paper. It is issued by public opinion, which in modern society means just one public incident can lead to an activity being cancelled.

The BFBA has compiled a common-sense list of guidelines to assist competition organisers. By abiding by these guidelines, we are cementing our freedom to operate and safeguarding the future of Farriery competitions.

What is Social License to Operate (SLO)?

Social license is increasingly important in horse sport and leisure. This is the general public's interpretation of equine welfare and professionalism. We must be seen to be always putting equine welfare FIRST. When a social license is lost, this is when the general public's opinion decides that the activity we are doing falls below their expectations of animal welfare and/or professionalism.

This means that the welfare of the horse must be put first, and be seen to be put first, all the time. It is the responsibility of everyone involved with equines to demonstrate this.

Sometimes, mistakes will be made. However, if all of those involved in horse sport and leisure can learn from these mistakes and demonstrate that they are always striving to do right by their horses, wider society is more likely to trust that equine welfare is genuinely being put first and it is more likely that equestrianism's social license will be maintained.

We have all seen the potential damage one video can make to a sport. During the build up to the 2024 Olympics, one video of one person connected to a sport, made headline news leading to a large swing in public opinion. This in turn reignited the question - should equestrianism be included as an Olympic sport? Worryingly, one public vote resulted in 49% of the voters being against. This is concerning and is evidence of what damage one viral video can do. The equestrian world needs to maintain and strengthen its social license for it to have a future.

Common sense, Planning and Guidelines to ensure survival of our sport...

Horseshoeing Competitions

As a competition, we must treat this activity as a sport utilizing the equine, and where live equines are used, their welfare MUST be the primary concern. Most horseshoeing competitions held within the UK are organised in conjunction with a bigger event, such as a county show. These are very public facing events and due to the nature of the spectacle provided, they are a huge crowd pulling part of the event.

We are exposed to many members of the public that may have little or no knowledge of what they are watching. Some of these spectators may also be members of organisations or have opinions opposed to the use of horses in sport and may be looking to publicly evidence this. To this end, we as organisers and competitors need to utilise this industry spotlight to educate, communicate, and actively promote best practice and professionalism.

The competition environment can be stressful for both equines and competitors due to several different factors, but with proper organisation, contingency planning and common sense, this can be kept to a minimum.

Risk Assessment

As a competition organiser, we must always have a written risk assessment constructed for that individual event. This will need to be updated for each future event. Risk assessments are commonly associated with the health and safety of the competitors and spectators but must also consider equines. Equine welfare must also be risk evaluated which should include protocols and contingency planning, floor planning, and general welfare needs i.e. forage, water and ambient temperature. Many events will have a human first aid kit, but an equine first aid kit is essential too.

Welfare Steward

Where equines are involved at an event, a designated welfare steward is a must. They must be suitably qualified to do the job, and this must be their sole responsibility for the duration of the event, particularly whilst the equines are in location. They must have a visible presence, so that we are publicly seen to be putting equine welfare at the forefront. They must at a minimum have access to an equine first aid kit, water and forage and have clear lines of communication with the chief steward and veterinary surgeon if necessary.





Equine Selection

It is increasingly hard to find suitable equines to be worked on at competitions. As an organiser it is advisable to visit the equines if they are not known to you before the event to assess their suitability. Communications with their primary farrier is also an important source of information. We must also, no matter how desperate, avoid selecting equines that already look like welfare cases. It is unfortunate that in these modern times that less people are prepared to bring horses without some sort of financial reward for their services, whereas in the past a free set of shoes and tickets to the show would have been enough. It is common sense to avoid mixing stallions and mares, and were applicable, when utilising horses from different suppliers, ensure companions are stood together. It is essential practice to get equine owners to complete a signed consent form as this is good practice, especially in cases where sedation may need to be used.

Equine Handling/Restraint

Events can be a stressful unfamiliar environment, which may lead to some equines behaving out of character. In today's world the use of physical restraints is unacceptable. Remember, at a public event most of the spectators have limited or no equine knowledge. Any type of physical or aggressive behaviour toward the equine can be interpreted potentially as animal cruelty in their eyes. The reality of this that only a small percentage of equines require any restraint, and by carefully selecting them at source this will reduce the numbers requiring it.

Always ensure you have a vet in direct line of communication at the event, and before the event, discuss and agree a contingency plan with them, in case sedation is required. As part of this contingency plan, you should think about not having horses injected in front of a public audience, as this could cause concerns to the uneducated public, especially if blood is present (as can sometimes happen). Having a safe area planned out of the public line of sight is recommended. To this end, Chief Stewards may want to stop the time for competitors whilst this is carried out safely. It is important once again that an owner consent agreement is in place.

Communication

All public facing horseshoeing competitions must have a commentator to communicate to the public, to explain and educate them. The first question the non-equine person always asks us is, "does that hurt?" One would assume by the question that they may think it does hurt the equine. It is our responsibility to answer these questions, and the only way to do this is with a well-informed, confident commentator. This is also a good opportunity to reinforce our priority to the equine's welfare.

Professionalism

Farriery in the UK is a regulated profession. At a public facing event all involved are representing the profession and the industry. We must represent ourselves accordingly:

- HASAW including appropriate PPE
- Appearance
- Avoid drinking alcohol during the event. This includes competitors, judges and stewards
- Active competitors, stewards and judges only on the shoeing floor during rounds
- Outwardly promote best practice
- Respect.

Social Media and Marketing

This is an opportunity to highlight our approach to equine welfare and to showcase best practice and promote professionalism. Careful selection of photographs and videos to avoid compromising any of the above. Remember, once it is in the public domain it will never go away. We should capitalise on these events as an opportunity to educate members of the public, horse owners and other farriers. The way we communicate can optimise the value of this.



Organisation and Planning

Competitions are fast paced, complicated events. Careful planning and robust organisation will ensure a smooth-running event and reduce the risk of incident.

Contingency planning and having standardised operating procedures in place will minimise the chances of mistakes being made, and in the event of an incident, will ensure the public awareness of the incident in question is kept within a realistic and accurate perspective.

Having written risk assessments for both equine welfare and Health & Safety will reduce the risk in these areas, and be the basis for any contingency planning in the event of any incidents. This should include a common-sense floor plan and the safe positioning of equines, ensuring protection from heat and sparks when necessary.

All stewards must be properly briefed before the event and ideally have experience with farriery competitions and/or equines.

Rules and conditions for competitions need to encapsulate all the above information, and competitors must read and understand the rules and conditions before competing. We all need to be accountable for the part we play.

BFBA Guidelines for SLO at Horseshoeing Competitions

- Equine Welfare must be the primary priority.
- We must be transparent and publicly promote our Equine Welfare policy.
- Must have a dedicated Equine Welfare Steward
- Having contingency planning in place should an equine become fractious, or an equine welfare matter should arise.
- Communicate to the public audience via a commentator.
- Work determined to be detrimental to be halted at point of judging, and time to be made to correct any issues before the equine departs the event.
- Having clear rules and guidelines for all competitors, ensure they understand them and enforce them!
- Ensure a professional public spectacle. We are showcasing the profession!



BFBA Membership benefits

Do you know the benefits of being a member of the BFBA?
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- **FREE discount fuel card** from UK Fuels, guarantees a 3p per litre saving off the pump price for standard diesel at selected forecourts across the UK. Call UK Fuels on 0330 311 2962 or visit ukfuels.co.uk/bfba
- **Members' Rate *Early Bird Pre-Registration*** Entry to BFBA Focus, International Team Horseshoeing Championship, International Bladesmithing Competition and International Blacksmithing Competition
- **FREE Delivery** on all BFBA merchandise
- **Discounted Members' Rate (on average 25%) for all BFBA courses** eg, AWCF/FWCF courses and all CPD courses
- **Bi-monthly Forge magazine**, keeping you up to date with the industry, and farrier science **Forge Knowledge**, bringing you educational content with technical articles, research articles and case studies, enabling you to gain CPD points
- Online access to American Farriers Association's **No Foot, No Horse magazine**
- **Access to the Members' Area** on our website which is rich in educational videos and articles, including past Focus lectures
- **AFA Members' Rate** to attend the American Farriers Association Annual Convention
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- **The Edward Martin MBE Cultural Exchange:** unique opportunity to represent the Association on an educational 3-month trip to the USA. Travel and expand your farriery knowledge and skills whilst working with some of the most highly regarded farriers (for Graduates only), or the opportunity to be part of a growing list of hosts for an AFA American student on their visit to the UK
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- **15% off** any photoshoot (business/pet/horse/competition/family) with Longotano Photography
- **10% off** individual orders at Seren Handmade (hoodies) - makers of the new BFBA longback hoodies and a Business Bundle for farriers



HEADLINES FROM THE NEW BUDGET

Following the announcement of the new budget, the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) have summarised some points which may affect the equestrian industry.

DOUBLE-CAB PICKUP VEHICLES

Employer-provided Double-Cab Pickup Vehicles (DCPUs) over one tonne will no longer be taxed as company vans from 6 April 2025, which will automatically significantly increase the tax burden for the employee and also the National Insurance Contribution (NIC) for the employer. Transitional rules will be in place to protect the tax treatment of DCPUs provided, or ordered, before 6 April 2025 for a maximum period of four years.

ELECTRIC COMPANY CARS

It was altogether better news for employees driving electric company cars. Minimal increases to benefit in kind tax charges for such vehicles were confirmed for 2028/29 and 2029/30 rising to a 9% charge by 2029/30 to encourage more drivers shifting to such vehicles.

PAYROLLING OF BENEFITS IN KIND

From April 2026, it will become mandatory to report benefits in kind via payroll software. However, loans and accommodation will remain voluntary for payrolling and will be reviewed. The technical specifications for this change will be available in March next year, leaving employers with limited time to prepare. This shift aims to provide more detailed data through Real-Time Information (RTI), but it may pose challenges for employers.

Visit gov.uk for more information on the budget and how it may affect you or others you know working in the equestrian industry.

DONKEY SANCTUARY WEBINAR MINI-SERIES

All starting at 7.30pm

5th February: Case Studies - Marta Ferrari

12th February: Managing donkeys on box rest - Marta Ferrari and Head Nurse

19th February: Behaviour - Ben Hart (TBC)

26th February: Donkey nutrition and metabolic syndrome - Marta Ferrari

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SCOTTISH FARRIER CONFERENCE

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Brad Greenham FWCF

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STARTING THE CONVERSATION

THE REALITY OF BEING SELF-EMPLOYED IN A PHYSICAL JOB DURING PREGNANCY

In recent years, the farriery industry has seen an increase in the number of female farriers qualifying and setting up their businesses. However, there are still certain gender inequalities that exist - and these are particularly apparent when farriers begin to start their families.

Self-employed farrier Rebecca Jobson talks about the extreme financial impact she suffered as a result of having her son, and some of her ideas to continue to positively address the gender gap in farriery.

At a time when there are more and more women coming into the world of farriery, it seems prudent to discuss the support given to self-employed women in physical jobs while pregnant. From personal experience there is a lot to be done to help in many aspects of this subject.

There is a period of about six months where it can be physically not safe or possible for women to work while they are pregnant. Personally I stopped working full time when I was six months pregnant. This was for two reasons: the first being that I was struggling to breathe, and the second was that I didn't feel it was fair on my clients for me to continue as I felt they were fearful that I may get injured and I didn't want them to worry.

Financially, it cost me somewhere in the region of £20,000 to be off while having my son. This was due to loss of earnings, and I also paid a good friend to fly up and stay with us to work for four days every month to look after my clients closest to me geographically so I knew I would have a business to go back to. The rest of my clients were looked after by some of the fantastic farriers in our area. There was also loss of revenue after my son was born due to losing some business to other farriers, and me also not being able to work the long late days I did pre-child.

This brings me onto another point that our code of conduct should be amended to look after farriers who are off due to pregnancy, and make it clear that poaching work is not cool.

Obviously business is business and you would expect to lose the odd client for whatever reason, but in my case there was one farrier who cherry-picked a lot of the clients he wanted to keep and had done deals with them to support his own hobbies.

With regards to financial help, I am hoping for some feedback and to kind of brainstorm with our farrier community on what would work. Pregnancy is not something you can insure against so you can't create a policy that pays out. However, I do think that some sort of savings policy pitched at apprentices (both male and female) may be beneficial, like paying in £20 per week that could pay out should you start a family?

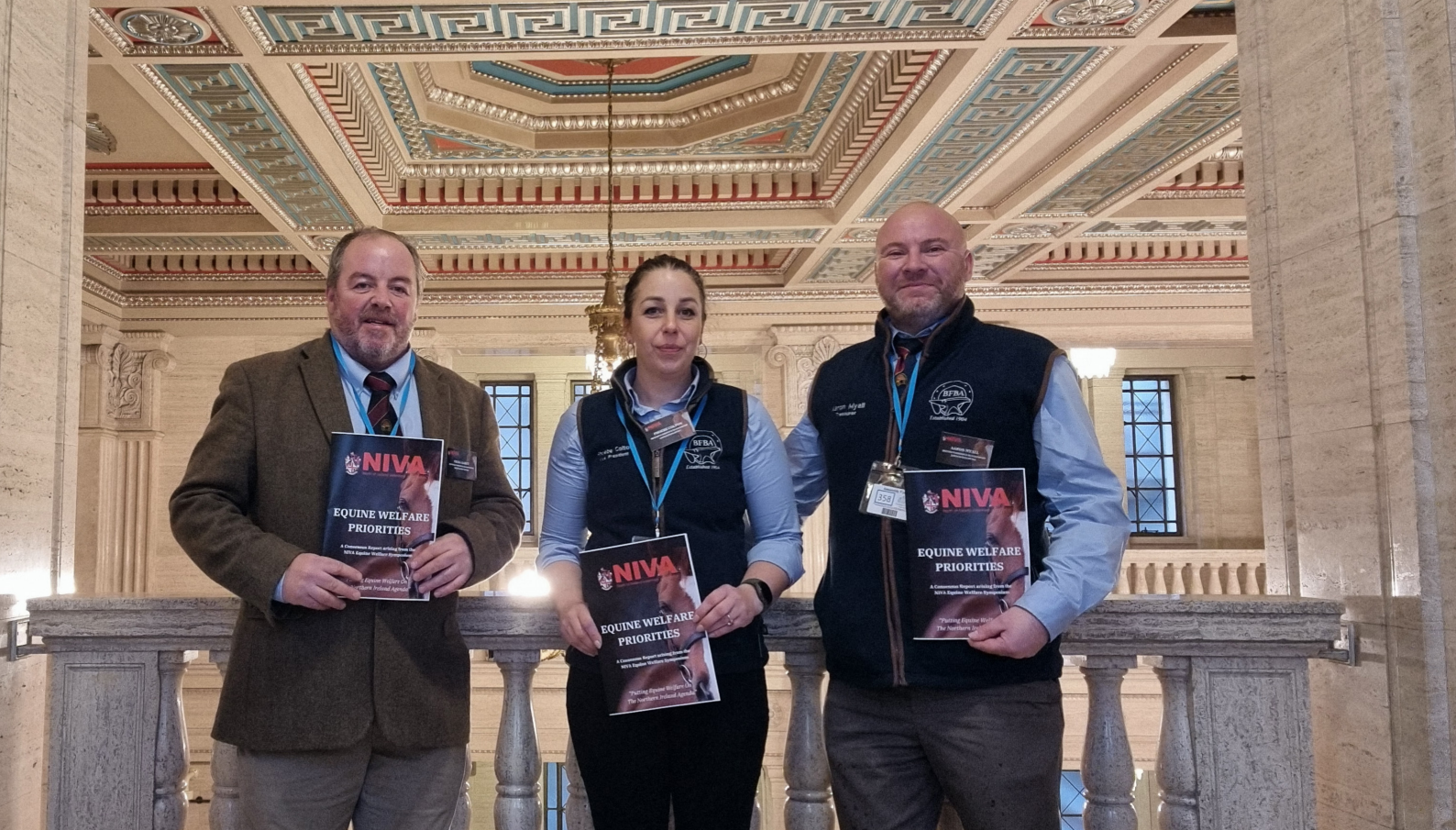
I also think that there could be some help at government level, it seems that self-employed women in physical jobs are discriminated against when it comes to help. For example, a friend of mine is a self-employed translator and she could work right up until her due date and pretty soon after her baby was born. As farriers, we are physically unable due to safety to work for a number of months, that coupled with the pitiful maternity allowance could push people into vast amounts of debt at a time when you should be able to relax and enjoy bringing your new human into the world.

That being said, we are very fortunate that we can take our children to work with us from a few weeks old. But just because we can, does it mean we should?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM OTHER FARRIERS - WHAT ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES OF BALANCING PARENTHOOD WITH YOUR JOB, AND WHAT SUPPORT COULD EXIST TO MAKE THINGS EASIER?

EMAIL FORGE.BFBA@GMAIL.COM



EQUINE WELFARE FOCUS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The BFBA recently attended a dedicated stakeholder meeting to address training and potential regulation of farriery in Northern Ireland.

After an invite from Northern Ireland Veterinary Association (NIVA) to support Northern Ireland Farriers Association (NIFA) and farriers in discussions prior to the official launch of equine welfare strategy, Phoebe Colton, Craig D'Arcy and Aaron Myall travelled to Belfast on 21st November 2024.

Key industry stakeholders discussed and agreed steps to work together to improve the situation for the industry, and ultimately for the horse.

TRAINING

Currently, Northern Ireland needs an EPA/exam for its trainees to resume training, which will certainly become a welfare issue in the near future.

Trainees who had been attending a farriery upskilling programme at CAFRE's Enniskillen Campus previously worked towards taking the DipWCF.

When the EPAO delivered by the WCF was suspended, it left a number of students unable to sit an exam to complete the course. They are also unable to use Vetskills as an alternative, as their training programme is not an apprenticeship.

To find a solution for these students, Craig D'Arcy offered support to the CAFRE trainers and college to find ways to

map across units to Vetskills or alternative. The potential to utilise the CJF exam as a route to qualification was also explored, as the FRC list it as a recognised qualification alongside 2 years' farriery experience and references.

For the future of farriery training in Northern Ireland, an 'industry standard' would first need to be agreed before a qualification and training course can be implemented.

How this system would look should be shaped by the industry - would it be modelled on the mainlands apprenticeship system or college based?

NIFA will have discussions with farriers to identify key needs, structure and continue to put on CPD to encourage future generations have the opportunity to keep on upskilling.

The availability of higher farriery qualifications and potential training farriers were also identified as areas to be included in the discussion. CAFRE stated it was still committed to continue farriery training. They have been the training provider for the previous 20 years.

The need for education before legislation was emphasised but would make the route to future registration easier to achieve.

REGULATION

The potential for future regulation of farriery in Northern Ireland was also on the table for discussion. Northern Ireland does not come under the Farrier Registration Act 1975 that the rest of the UK does, and farriers are not required to be registered to practice - although several do.

Legislation could ensure a 'minimum standard' of farriery, provide recognition of Farriers' skills, protect the training systems, improve confidence in the industry and ultimately lead to better horse welfare.

If regulation of farriery was wanted there would be several things that would need to be in place. Firstly, a training system with an agreed industry standard, a qualification to assure that standard and a course to ensure the standard.

Secondly, legislation to regulate farriery in Northern Ireland would need political will from MPs to pass through parliament. Interested parties would need to demonstrate there was a need for regulation to improve equine welfare in Northern Ireland. This could include gathering views and information from farriers, vets, insurance companies and horse owners writing to MPs demonstrating the benefits.

Thirdly, discussions and an agreement around how legislation would look. Options include creating their own legislation tailored to Northern Ireland's specific needs, similar to the process RAMP are aiming for in the UK. Alternatively, join the UK regulation system, similar to the vets, with an amendment to the Farriers Registration Act 1975. This would perhaps be the most straightforward route - however, it could be slow to implement so it's important to have the system structure in place.

In the meantime, NIFA will be holding an AGM on 21st January 2025, where farriers will discuss how they want it to look.

Above left: (L-R) Craig D'Arcy, Phoebe Colton and Aaron Myall

Below: (L-R) Caolan Kelly, Aaron Myall, Phoebe Colton, Craig D'Arcy and Lee Johnston



KEY STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

Northern Ireland Farriers Association

- Hold discussions with NI farriers, get a census of farrier numbers, qualifications and rounds. Reassure established farriers
- Decide details of what the farriery system in Northern Ireland would look like, put the plan in writing and work with CAFRE to develop
- Provide evidence of problems to show a need for change in current system and engage with MPs
- Aim to improve the standard and keep encouraging upskilling and continue to lift the industry together by holding a variety of CPD events and record points that prove standard.

CAFRE

- Committed to support farriers, add more structure to upskilling training, exam, and infrastructure.

Farriers Registration Council

- What needs to be in place before regulation (standard, qualification, training)
- Steps that would help achieve these
- How Farriers Act could be amended.

World Horse Welfare

- As there's no timetable for legislation, he urged for a creation of a voluntary, working, self regulation system, so when ready to legislate all systems run smoothly - similar to RAMP style
- Gather data on numbers of farriers in Northern Ireland and qualifications.

Agria Insurance

- Said farriers play an essential role in horse health
- Having registered farriers would make insurance payouts more straightforward - remedial farriery is currently on a vet recommended basis, making the process longer
- Will provide commercial support and data to demonstrate need for farriery training and regulation change.

RAMP

- Discussed how and why RAMP were aiming for legislation. In 2016 began a voluntary self registration system, providing evidence that meeting the new standard is being met
- Regulation needs a lot of effort from industry but believes it gives commercial value.

The BFBA is fully available to help NIFA in any way they need; be it training system expertise, support with infrastructure, access to extra CPD or simply more farrier voices behind the association.



Above left: Roly Owers from World Horse Welfare delivers his presentation

Bottom: All stakeholder meeting attendees

TOP PRIORITIES FOR EQUINE WELFARE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Veterinary Association (NIVA) produced a report from the NIVA Equine Welfare Symposium in February 2024 which identifying the need for an Equine Strategy in Northern Ireland to protect the horse. The target audience will include all members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, government officials, academics and a broad range of key stakeholders from across the equine industry and from the UK and Ireland.

Farriery was the third recommendation in this report: "That the Northern Ireland Assembly should legislate to regulate farriery in Northern Ireland, ensuring that all farriers operating in Northern Ireland are qualified, registered and regulated."

"Good farriery is essential for good welfare. Unlike Great Britain, there is no legal requirement for farrier registration in Northern Ireland, which has negative implications for both short and long-term welfare. NI legislation that covers both farriers and barefoot trimmers would undoubtedly improve welfare."

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The need for an equine strategy in Northern Ireland
- The continued supply of essential veterinary medicines following the implementation of the Windsor Framework
- Legislation to ensure the regulation of farriery
- Appropriate enforcement of current welfare legislation
- Equine traceability
- The adequacy of current regulations regarding transportation of horses
- The educational requirements for horse ownership

"What an important milestone for Northern Ireland having everyone sitting around the table for talks on legislation. It's come at a very important time with CAFRE college currently not being able to operate under the current criteria with the change in examinations on the mainland. Without education there is no way to legislate, and I feel everyone saw the importance of reaching a solution for the welfare of the horse and standards within the industry. We ourselves see the need to improve, and with setting up NIFA to make clinics and education more accessible for farriers here I feel a lot of positive things came out of the meeting.

It was nice to chat with BFBA representatives and know we have help, support and guidance available when we need it. I'd like to thank Esther and NIVA for highlighting how important this issue is and bringing it to the table."

Lee Johnston Dip WCF

The BFBA would like to say thank you to NIVA's Senior Vice-President Esther Skelly-Smith for raising awareness of the need to address key concerns about equine health and welfare in Northern Ireland.



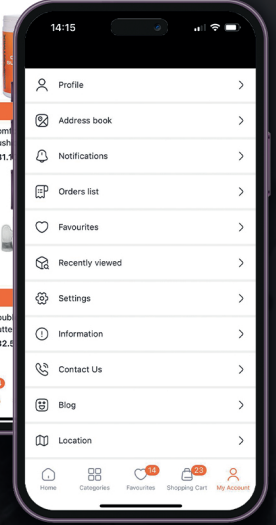
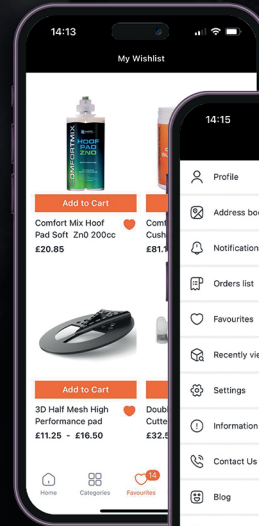
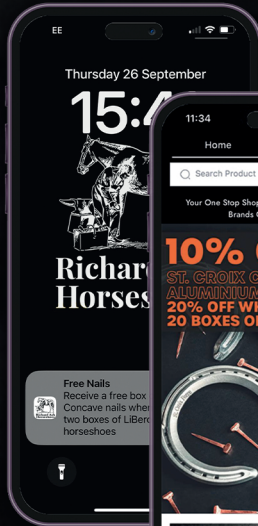
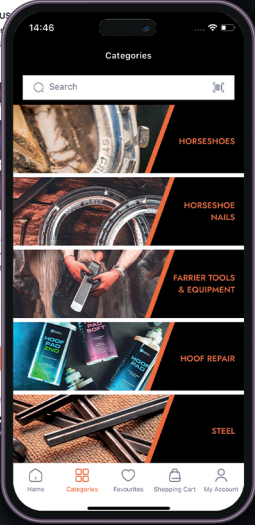
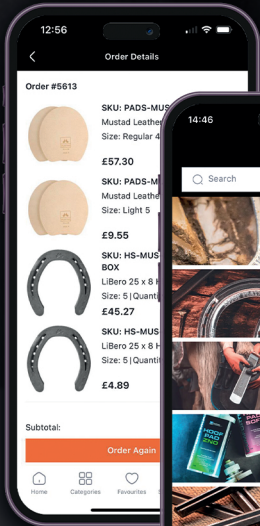


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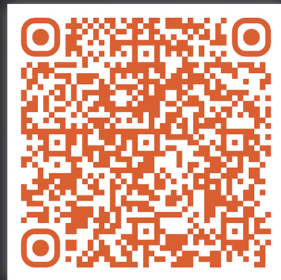
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BESIDE THE FIRE

WITH ANDREW CASSERLY FWCF



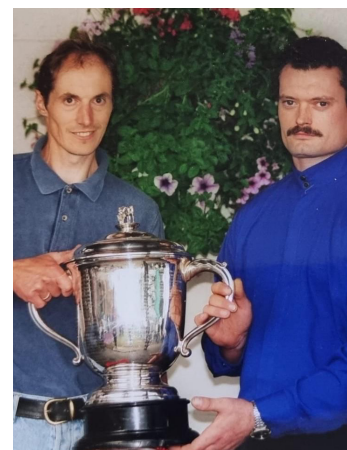
In this edition of Beside the Fire, we hear from Andrew Casserly FWCF. Based in Sussex, Andrew founded his farriery business Casserly and Sons which is now run by his sons Ben Casserly Dip WCF and Jack Casserly Dip WCF. Andrew has had an illustrious career including competing, judging and as a WCF examiner.

I started my apprenticeship in 1974 with Michael Cerullo RSS in Westerham, Kent. We made all our shoes and shod horses for a multiple of disciplines, all cold shod. I continued to work for Michael for another two years.

I passed my RSS in 1978, my AWCF in 1984 and my FWCF in 2018 (with a great deal of help from Jay Tovey FWCF!)

We then moved to East Sussex in 1980. It was here where I set up my own business in 1982, which I ran until 2020. It's now run by my two sons Ben and Jack. We've trained 18 apprentices at our forge where I continue to give the occasional clinic.

I've been a keen competitor over the last 50 years and still really enjoy competing with my sons, although I'm probably more of a nuisance to them now! I am also a WCF company judge and WCF examiner. The profession of farriery has taken me all over world and I have been very fortunate to make many friends.



Q+A WITH ANDREW CASSERLY FWCF

How did you get into farriery?

My father was a gamekeeper, and we lived down a long dead-end country lane which passed through an old farm. One day when returning from school, I heard this noise coming from a small building. I slowly walked in to see what was going on, and there was Michael Cerullo making horse shoes! 50 years later, here I am!

Who influenced you?

There's been so, so many! Definitely Michael Cerullo, David Smith and Gary Darlow. Also my two sons and all of my fellow competitors/friends - I've learned something from every one of them, and I thank them all!

If you had not become a farrier/blacksmith, what do you think you might be doing instead?

I think I would have joined the Army.

What was your proudest moment of your career?

Seeing my two sons succeed as farriers, as well as all of the apprentices I've trained.

What other interests do you have?

Spending time with my wife and family, grandparenting, gardening, classic cars and blacksmithing.

What is the secret to a perfect fire weld?

Set the scarfs up... build up the fire... and let it soak!

Of all the farriers dead or alive, who would you like to spend some time with?

Probably those farriers that served in World War One.

What's your top tip for other farriers?

Don't complicate it! Start it off right and every thing will follow. Step one, foot dressing, two, fitting, three, nailing and four, clenching.

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

For there to be peace in the world.

What would you still like to achieve?

Help my sons to become World Champion!

CALLING ALL ATFS: TRAILBLAZERS FARRIERY STANDARD REVIEW

5th February 2025
BFBA HQ, Stoneleigh Park
10.30am

ATFs are invited to join the Trailblazers Farriery Standard Review taking place on 5th February 2025 at the BFBA headquarters in Stoneleigh Park.

The current Trailblazer Apprenticeship was first introduced in 2013, with phase two being implemented in 2014. Farriery commenced its first cohort in 2019 under the new system.

The apprenticeship is typically 48 months in length, with the gateway at 42 months. The standard was scheduled, on the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) website, for a review after 3 years (2022).

It was however thought sensible to allow the completion of the initial cohort to occur before conducting the first review.

As Chair of the Trailblazers, Dave Hall has spent the last two years completing a comprehensive look at the apprenticeship, liaising with Government departments and stakeholders to see what is working well and what is causing problems. Part of that process, importantly, is identifying what will keep the farriery apprenticeship fit and relevant in to the 21st Century.

As Trailblazers is employer-led, any changes made must first be approved by ATFs.

If you are an ATF and would like to attend the meeting to be part of the review, then please email Dave directly.

Email: davehall.dh67@gmail.com

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BFBA END-POINT ASSESSMENT DAY

The BFBA held an End-Point Assessment Day on Saturday 26th October. The day is designed to give the upcoming candidates an insight to the Vet skill EPA examination, and help them to be more prepared for the real thing.

Words by Alex Mercer AWCF

The session was concentrated on two aspects of the four sections which apprentices have to achieve on completing the EPA. These aspects were the written examination (farrier questions only) and the two hour live horse shoeing practical test.

On the day the candidates were very lucky to have two Vet skill examiners. These were Mr Stephen Hill FWCF and Mr Robert Shave FWCF. They were also accompanied by myself, Warwickshire College lecture Mr Alex Mercer AWCF. All three of us are working Farriers and are very passionate about passing on knowledge to improve the trade. We also want to give each individual candidate the best chance of passing their own individual end point assessment examination.

The day was attended by 12 budding apprentices from all over the country and from all three colleges. The majority of the candidates were about to take the EPA examination in November, but there was a small handful who are trying to get an insight to the examination day and gain as much knowledge as possible. They had just completed block 5, 6 and 7. This was very encouraging as it showed that these candidates were very proactive and switched on when it came to achieving the knowledge and insight as to what may be

needed when the time came.

The day started at 8:30am where a brief was given on how the day was going to pan out. It also gave the candidates opportunities to ask any questions which would help them ease into the sessions. The whole day was run in a format so it would allow each candidate to gain the most help on what they would require on an individual basis.

The 12 candidates were split into two groups of six. This allowed a more industry-required format when it came down to the shoeing, which on the day was three students to one examiner/lecturer. (The industry guide line is four to one.)

The first group of six completed their written examination in the morning, and the second group of six did the live horseshoeing practical test. Then in the afternoon after lunch, the groups swapped over and did the opposite task.

Prior to both exams starting, we trotted the horses up which again allowed candidates to ask any questions or raise any concerns that they may have when shoeing the horse.

The practical mock exam had candidates make and fit a concave front shoe and a 3/4 fullered hind shoe to a live horse within a time of two hours.

After both groups of candidates had completed their mock examination, the horses were trotted up and feedback and constructive criticism was given to all candidates. This feedback allows them to focus on any aspects they may need to improve before their big day.

The written mock examination was one hour long and concentrated on two Farrier questions. We felt that as a team that we could not fulfil a full 2 1/2 hour written paper as we weren't qualified to give feedback and advice on health and safety and business questions, and did not want to give unrealistic feedback which may prevent the candidates from not fulfilling the required standard when it came to this area. We therefore felt it was paramount to concentrate on the Farrier aspects within the written examination.

After the written paper was completed, the examiners went through each question with a fine tooth comb and gave feedback. We discussed openly with the group where things could be improved and points could be gained.

Once the day was coming to a close around 4:30pm, the horses were trotted up in front of all 12 candidates. They themselves gave each other constructive feedback and criticism, which showed how the group of candidates had grown throughout the day. It was very encouraging to see and listen to! The examiners and lecturers also gave their feedback and constructive criticism as and when needed.

The day was received very well and the team only received positive feedback from all candidates. We would like to thank all those who attended for their hard work and cooperation, and take this opportunity to encourage other apprentices that are at the stages of block 6-8 to attend the next day which will take part in March 2025.

Next End-Point Assessment Day: March 2025

Keep your eye on forgeandfarrier.co.uk for more details when they are available!



WHAT DID YOU THINK?

The National Equine Welfare Council's recent farrier surveys have revealed some interesting insight on current issues and opportunities within the industry...



There's nowhere like BFBA Focus for sharing information, experiences and ideas from across the profession and putting a finger on the pulse of current challenges, concerns and opportunities affecting UK farriers.

Being able to chat directly with farriers of all ages, experiences and locations makes BFBA Focus a key event for members of the National Equine Welfare Council. Under the familiar red marquee, the team are keen to know how the welfare sector can better support those who play such a pivotal role in horse health and wellbeing.

NEWC regularly conducts projects to gather data that provide objective insights into key issues. A survey carried out at Focus in 2023 explored a range of factors affecting farriers in the challenging climate of rising living costs and a post-covid world, along with questions around apprenticeships, qualification processes and current challenges. The survey was subsequently run online in spring 2024.

One theme which emerged from this research was concern around unwanted equine behaviour during farrier visits, and reports that challenging behaviour was increasing.

The data collected on the NEWC stand at BFBA Focus 2024 was centred on gaining more evidence of farrier experiences of horse behaviour and reflections on factors influencing how horses respond to leg-handling and hoof care interactions.

2023 Survey Findings

Initial analysis of the 253 responses to the online survey revealed the level of passion and commitment from across the UK sector. The financial, physical and emotional investment farriers bring to the table also tends to generate considered and candid reflections on their evolving professional environment.

Unsurprisingly, the cost of living has had widespread impact on the sector. Three-quarters of survey respondents stated that rising prices had negatively impacted their business. Yet, demand for farriery services appears to be rising, with more than 40% having seen an increase in enquiries.

However, more than half of those who completed the survey also reported clients increasing intervals between routine visits. This tallies with the findings of NEWC's 2022/3 horse owner survey¹ looking at the impact of the rise of living costs, where one in six owners (16.5%) said they had already increased intervals between farrier visits, and a further 14.2% were considering doing the same. A second cost-of-living survey in 2024 found similar numbers of owners extending the time between farrier visits².

High level, professional hoof care is critical to good equine welfare, and more than a third indicated they were aware of cases where a lack of good farriery had already led to welfare issues. NEWC's work to monitor and improve horse welfare makes understanding and helping to address issues within the farriery sector an important part of ensuring the framework to support both routine and emergency horse health provision is in good shape.

The continued need for qualified farriers makes reports of low numbers of new farrier apprentices and falling numbers of Approved Training Farriers a significant concern³.

The NEWC survey found that more than half of respondents felt that a financial incentive would be an effective way to encourage more farriers to become an ATF.

Despite concerns evidenced by the survey, the love many people expressed for the job and desire to find practical solutions to current challenges was also clear.

The full survey report is due to be shared before the end of 2024.

Survey views...

"I love shoeing and caring for horses."

"Farriery means so much to me."

"Still love the job."



Top Behavioural Issues

| Behaviour | n= | % |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Not standing still | 64 | 63.4% |
| Biting or threatening to bite | 49 | 48.5% |
| Leaning | 42 | 41.6% |
| Kicking or threatening to kick | 36 | 35.6% |
| Not holding feet up | 34 | 33.7% |
| Not picking feet up | 32 | 31.7% |
| Rearing or threatening to rear | 19 | 18.8% |

Focus on Equine Behaviour

Following concerns raised in the 2023 survey around equine behaviour during farrier visits, the NEWC team wanted to look at this issue in more detail. Unwanted behaviours around leg-handling and farrier processes can have multiple impacts, from compromising farrier safety and increasing the time taken to complete a visit to raising questions around appropriate handling and impacting equine welfare.

With new research shedding more light in recent years on the most ethical and effective training practices, NEWC is keen to support better understanding of the role of training in achieving successful farriery visits and therefore optimum hoof care.

For this autumn's BFBA Focus, the NEWC team brought a twist to data collection by asking farriers to take the 'Tin Can Alley' challenge in order to indicate which behaviours they would most like to see owners addressing in their horse. Seven behaviour options were given and farriers were asked to 'target' their top three.

All behaviours were noted as being an issue farriers face to some extent, but the data (shown in Figure 1.) shows that horses simply not standing still was a significant source of frustration and concern.

All participants were offered a prize to thank them for their involvement, regardless of their accuracy in Tin Can Alley. In fact, only one participant achieved a three-out-of-three strike rate over the whole weekend!

Many farriers felt that they were seeing more unwanted horse behaviours. When asked for reasons behind the increase, the most common cause given was lack of owners providing horse training and handling, followed by lack of owner knowledge and experience. Other factors included horses being underworked and/or overfed, horse stress and possible underlying pain issues.

Additional insights on the topic were invaluable to the NEWC team. Several farriers said they simply won't keep clients on their books if their horse isn't trained to behave well for the farrier. More than one farrier mentioned owners laughing off potentially dangerous behaviours, such as biting, rather than addressing the issue.

Supporting owners to better appreciate the need for horses to understand and be comfortable with what is required of them during farrier visits is something NEWC is keen to help with. Unwanted behaviours are naturally not limited to hoof care practices, and horses' ability to stand when asked is a basic requirement in many aspects of their management and care. Not only farriers, but vets⁴, saddle fitters, equine dental technicians and physios will all benefit, not to mention owners themselves.

NEWC would like to thank all farriers who took the time to chat to the team at BFBA Focus 2024 and inform ways the welfare sector can target efforts in areas where a clear need has been identified such as horse behaviour and training.



References: 1 <https://newc.co.uk/equine-col-surveys/>

2 <https://newc.co.uk/equine-col-survey-2024/>

3 Butler. S. (2023) 'The future of farriery. What does it mean for the profession and equine welfare?' *Forge* (July 2023), pp14-18

4 See the British Veterinary Association's 'Don't Break Your Vet' campaign at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZLor1Klzk19X1UpvbOxwllS1BN0LvcmR>

EFFA AGM 2024

This year, the Annual General Meeting for the European Federation of Farriers Associations (EFFA) was hosted by the Unione Nazionale Operatori Mascalcia (UNOM) of Italy. The meeting saw representatives from 21 member associations travel to the beautiful and historic city of Verona.

EFFA Registrar Chris Linssner shares an overview of the AGM, which included a variety of discussion points and plans for the future.

Verona has the Fieracavalli, an annual horse fair which is one of the most renowned international equestrian fairs with a history spanning 126 years.

This was running over the AGM weekend and many of the delegates were able to attend the fair during their visit.

This year there was a full house of 74 delegates attending from 21 member associations and a first representation from The Icelandic farriers association president, Sigurgeir Jóhannsson who were in attendance to join EFFA.

The President gave a minute's silence for absent friends which was all the more poignant this year with the passing of Past President and founding father David Gulley, and our accountant, Marianne Gullbrand from Denmark.

An accountant had proven to be a difficult post to replace, but one has been found from the UK. This of course throws up some interesting cross border dilemmas with different currencies, but with careful banking EFFA actually made some interest on their accounts.

However, having an account in the UK has its own tax conundrums for an association (or federation), and EFFA CIC has had to be the result of this with the federation becoming a community interest company (CIC). So, after thirty years EFFA has had to change its name to comply with UK law. But as a non-profit company it's a small price to pay.

The Registrar reported that due to a busy year the accreditation board has now almost caught up with pre-covid visits, with five schools being re-accredited this year and one new school achieving accreditation for the first time in Slovenia.

I think sometimes that the UK has been incredibly lucky to retain an education (apprentice) system for farriery. Across the eastern Europe countries particularly, farriery education is not high on the agenda or indeed animal welfare. With industrialisation, all the old trades have been ignored and nothing has been left for the smaller crafts. The old teachers were not replaced and many skills are having to be re-learned including the setting up of schools. It's a pleasure to be a small part of this and the people who drive for their farriers education.

That leads me to a man from Poland. A vet in fact, who has been instrumental in pushing for farriers

education, the setting up of a school and teaching there as well. As a man in his eighties still working as a veterinary surgeon, Dr Okonski has an enthusiastic energy of a younger man that is infectious. He has been put forward to the EFFA Hall of Fame by Tomasz Banaszewski, who states that the new forge and training would not have been possible without Dr Okonski's hard work and skill. A worthy nominee for next year.

My good friend Pavel Komarek from the Czech Republic has been working on a new website for EFFA so as soon as it is completed, this coming year I will advertise it so you can see what is happening.

The EFFA Education Event is coming to Stoneleigh this March (2025) and it is hoped to have apprentices or farriery students from all member associations within EFFA. There is expected to be between 50 or 60 attendees and I will be looking for four candidates from the UK, so drop a line to Holly or Claire at HQ if it sparks an interest in any first to fourth year apprentices.

The hot topic this year has been the EFFA Eurochamps and the BFBA brought forward a proposal that past winners of the event be given an automatic entry.



Above: the AGM in progress



Top left: A group photo of the EFFA AGM delegates

Left: A close up of the representatives from the EFFA Executive Board

Above: EFFA Registrar Chris Linssner with Roger Solar Pont from Catalunya, Spain

The President explained that there is a rule in the championships that states each team of four be made up from a member country no matter how many associations are in that country. For instance, Italy, Spain, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany etc. have two associations, and must work together to build a team of four comprised from the country associations.

This has caused some confusion amongst members, and for several years the associations holding the competition have just accepted any teams which is fine but what was an exemption to the rules have now become the expected norm. EFFA sponsors the competition with members' money and so preference must be given to member teams. Of course, if there is room after a cut-off date the organisers should have a holding list of waiting teams.

One problem for the United Kingdom is that there are teams from England, N Ireland, Scotland and Wales but only the one association (BFBA) is a member of EFFA. In fairness to all, a team has been taken from each of the comprising British countries in the past and that is how the team from the UK has been chosen this year. If it was open door there could be a dozen teams coming from the UK, which is unfair.

This debate ran for quite some time and John Ravanelli ended it by stating that it's obvious that the rules written by the founders of EFFA need some updating. He has tasked five delegates who have competed nationally to take the rules and re-write them to then bring them back to the AGM next year. There will be contact with

the board throughout the planning stages.

The President asked Jason Sims, the UK delegate, if the BFBA would be willing to hold their proposal to be thought about in the new rules and decided at the next AGM. He said that speaking for the BFBA, that would be quite acceptable.

The next EFFA Championships are to be in Holland in 2026.

The World Cultural Exchange run by Alex Wurch and Hans Meier from Switzerland was reported to be going well, with European students going to many countries and the USA and vice versa. If you want to try the European exchange, then contact Stoneleigh for contact details.

There is a part of the AGM where the delegates give a quick appraisal of their association and what they have been up to the past year. Well, it's not usually very quick, but it's great to see all the associations running examinations, training days, demonstrations and competitions. So much is going on for farriers in their own countries.

The President closed the meeting stating that next year's AGM is being held by his own association, the Erster Deutscher Hufbeschlagschmiede Verband (EDHV) of Germany. Time and place to be announced.

He thanked Guiseppa Gandini, the UNOM president for their hospitality and said it had been a busy AGM with some good business being done.

About the European Federation of Farriers Association

www.eurofarrier.org.uk

EFFA has brought together farriery associations across Europe in order to develop a common basic standard of competence in farriery. It does this by providing a forum for discussion and spread of knowledge, arranging educational events and competitions, and much more.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF THE FARRIER'S FOUNDATION

The Farriers Foundation has been set up to provide financial and practical support to farriers, and their families, in times of injury or illness. The team behind the Foundation share some insight into running the charity and introduce some new faces...

2024 was a landmark year for the Farrier's Foundation, which reached its tenth anniversary. The charity was the brain child of Jon and Sara Nunn, who have put their heart and soul into making the charity the success that it is today.

The wonderful late Richard Ellis DipWCF was the original inspiration for Jon and Sara to start the Farrier's Foundation. All those years ago, the kindness and generosity of the farrier industry pulled together raising funds which made life a little bit easier for Richard and his family as they went through an incredibly tough time battling with a terminal illness.

In the last ten years, the charity has raised a staggering £130,000 and supported a total of 43 farriers and their families when life has taken a devastating u-turn through ill health and life-changing injuries.

One of the most amazing things about the Foundation is that most of the funds are raised by you - UK farriers! It's impossible for us to personally know each other but somehow, we have this connection through the Foundation raising funds in many different ways. There have been charity balls, CPD events, competitions, Fishing for Farriers, Tour de Farrier, donating the

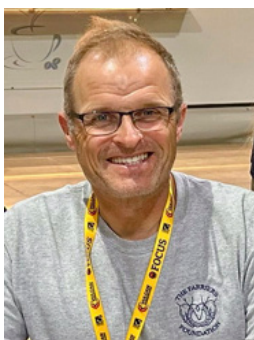
profits of shoeing a horse (to name a few!), as well as just kind people looking out for each other and giving donations.

The charity is currently supporting five farriers; some of whom are on the road to recovery and back to the only profession they have ever known, and others that will sadly not be able to use the skills they spent a lifetime learning.

The day-to-day running of the Foundation is looked after by seven trustees. There are many areas of expertise that are required to run a charity, from admin and processing applications to accounts, liaising with applicants, media, and coordinating events.

Some of the trustees have been there from the very start: Jon, Sara, Mick, and Clive. Grant Moon and Mike Randles have recently stepped back from the Committee, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work and support that they brought with them.

Some new faces have joined forces with the long timers, and we would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and share a few reasons why we are all involved in this incredible charity!



JONOTHAN NUNN FWCF APPLICANT LIASON AND EVENTS COORDINATOR

I live in Staffordshire and I am a working farrier in the Midlands. My wife Sara and I co-founded The Farrier's Foundation after we realised there was a growing need for a specialist charity supporting farriers.

I have been a farrier for almost 40 years, and the charity has been my focus for the past 10 years. I am inspired by those around me, and the generosity of the industry towards our charity is very special to me.

I hope that farriers continue to support each other in the future, as it's a tough profession which is getting financially more difficult and increasingly dangerous.

SARA NUNN, ADMIN AND FAIRY GODMOTHER TO THE FARRIER INDUSTRY!

Sara initially registered The Farrier's Foundation as a charity in 2014 and she does much of the clerical administration, processing applications and authorising payments to beneficiaries. Alongside her husband Jon they are passionately committed to supporting farriers and their families with the help of the charity.



About the Farrier's Foundation

To find out more information or ways to donate, go to www.thefarriersfoundation.co.uk

The Farrier's Foundation is living proof that we are one big family of farriers always willing to help each other out.

If any of you have any ideas for fundraising or have an event in mind that you would like to run please get in touch with either Jon, Chris or Andrew.

MICK HANDLEY RSS, APPLICANT LIAISON

I've been a Blacksmith and Farrier in the family business for 50 years. I have been a trustee for the charity from the start which is a role I'm very proud of. My role is to support others who are in need is quite simple.

At the age of 42 I was diagnosed with Stage Five Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Without my transplant I would not be alive today. At that time there was no help or assistance, and so that is my reason to help others and support the future of the farrier industry.



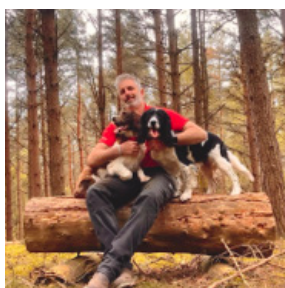
CLIVE WATTON, BUSINESS DEVELOPER

I've been a very good friend of Jon and Sarah and always supported the charity with prizes and raffles at the Farrier's Foundation Ball. I was asked to be a Trustee as I'm not involved in the the industry, for a different point of view. I have owned and worked Shire horses my whole life. I have much respect for the hard work and dedication of the industry and am very proud to be a Trustee.

MARK TRUSSLER FWCF, CHAIRMAN

I've been involved with the Farriers Foundation for a few years now but have recently taken on the role of chairman. I live in central Scotland with my wife and two children enjoying all that the Scottish landscape offers in terms of outdoor activities and stunning scenery.

Initially, I was invited by Jon after having a conversation either at a competition or some farrier event we were at. I liked the ethos behind the Farriers Foundation and its mandate of "providing financial and practical support to farriers, and their families, in times of injury or illness." It is very rewarding to be part of this charity and able to help farriers and their families in times of need.



CHRISTOPHER CARREL AWCF, MEDIA AND EVENTS COORDINATOR

I served 10 years in the Blues & Royals of the Household Cavalry in Knightsbridge, London doing ceremonial duties. During my time in the Army I trained and worked as a Military Farrier for 8 years - qualifying with Honours in 1998 and then attaining the AWCF in 2001. Leaving the Windsor area almost 4 years ago, I moved to the North of Scotland to start a new business and enjoy what the Highlands has to offer with my two spaniels.

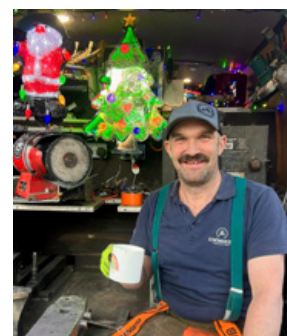
I have been a Trustee of the Farriers Foundation for 4 years after being inspired by volunteering as part of the Support Crew with my camera covering the Tour de Farrier cycle events in 2017 and 2018 through Wales. I think it's so important to put something back into the industry that's been so good to me and my family over the years. If the Foundation can help other farriers during times of hardship then that has to be a positive change.

ANDREW BOWYER FWCF, GRAD DIP ELR, MEDIA AND EVENTS COORDINATOR

I've now been shoeing for 26 years and have enjoyed everything the farriery industry has had to offer. I feel so incredibly lucky to have experienced so many aspects of the industry in this country and abroad.

In the earlier days, every 6 weeks myself and friend Andrew Nicholls would go and spend a day with Richard Ellis in his forge to make shoes, tools, chat about shoeing and other common outdoors interests. It was our day away from our businesses where we could unwind and learn new skills. I often reflect on those treasured days; we loved them. Richard was not only a mentor but also a friend.

Myself and Andrew were involved in raising funds for Richard, which helped adapt his home so his family could care for him. Since then I've been an active fundraiser for the foundation but until now I've been unable to commit to being a Trustee because of other commitments. Although I'm the newest edition to "Team Farriers Foundation" I've seen first hand how the Foundation can bring people together and help those in need. I'm looking forward to the next chapter!



The New Generation

Jemma: Redefining Farriery with Hoof Boots and Innovation

With a fresh perspective and a passion for innovation, Jemma is one of the new faces transforming the UK farrier industry. As a young professional, she's embraced modern trends like hoof boots and barefoot trimming while also staying true to the foundations of farriery. In this interview, Jemma shares her journey into the trade, the growing popularity of Scoot Boots, and how she's leveraging new technologies to enhance horse care. Join us as we explore how Jemma is blending tradition with innovation in her farrier practice and helping to shape the future of hoof care.

What key trends are you seeing in the UK farrier industry?

I'm definitely hearing more farriers suggesting Hoof Boots as a great alternative, as well as the development of more plastic and glue-on shoes. With the 3D printer in play, I'm keen to see what manufacturers and farriers come up with next!

Would you say the industry is evolving?

New technology is really keeping the industry moving in an interesting direction. On the Hoof Boot front, it's going to be interesting to see more farriers get involved with development.

Do you think the barefoot movement is encouraging more farriers to expand their barefoot services, in to Hoof Boot fitting and trimming?

The barefoot movement has been around for a long time, but the

reason I was recently drawn to Hoof Boot fitting is because the range of options has really developed in the last few years. They're close contact, with a Hoof Boot to suit almost all hoof angles. Customers response to them has been so positive, and being there to help and support with my Hoof Boot fitting service has really given them the confidence to take the leap.

As for the trimming, most of the farriers I know do a great barefoot trim, we just sometimes lack the sales techniques! But that's where The Hoof Boot Shop comes in, to manage the marketing and retail side of things.

What is your experience with Scoot Boot?

Scoot boots are one of the most popular on the market. I find them easy to fit, light weight without compromising on the longevity of the boot. My customers often refer to Scoot Boot as their preferred option and they love the range of accessories and colours.

How beneficial has starting your own Hoof Boot fitting service been?

It's been really useful having Hoof Boots as an added 'tool' in the box. My customers could be described as happy hackers to grassroots, which are the perfect market for Hoof Boots.

I've been fitting for a few local farriers too, from behavioural issues to shoe pullers. Hoof Boots can

really get you out of a bad situation.

Do you find your customer relations have improved, with the ability to pivot between iron shoeing and your Hoof Boot fitting service?

Definitely, it has worked amazingly for my customers. I was finding that, when my customers wanted to go barefoot, the stumbling block was always the boots being right. My fitting service removes that uncertainty and guesswork for them, and they can be assured they have the best Hoof Boots for their requirements.

Do you find that your Hoof Boot fitting service allows you to fit more customers in each day?

Shoes need to be fitted and attached each time you visit. I find that a comprehensive Hoof Boot fitting and trim probably takes the same amount of time, but the fit won't need to be checked as often, so the focus shifts more to a regular trimming cycle.

Does working with Hoof Boots mean you're encountering pathology issues less frequently?

I find the majority of feet have some sort of pathology, whether they're shod or barefoot. The advantage of barefoot is that they can be trimmed more regularly to maintain pathologies, and then use Hoof Boots for protection.

Do you also find the work easier and safer, as you're not positioned under the horse as often?

Definitely - the physical work of fitting Hoof Boots is much easier.

Shop Scoot Boot, and start your own hoof boot fitting service by joining The Hoof Boot Shop trade membership for free at thehoofbootshop.co.uk.

Learn more at scootboots.com.



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If you are a New Generation Farrier and interested in accreditation and training for barefoot, enter our competition now. The Hoof Boot Shop, in conjunction with Scoot Boot, is giving away free clinics for three lucky farriers in the UK! Enter via website or scan the QR Code.



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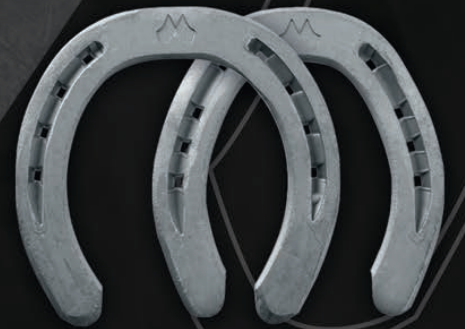


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