

## HORSE WELFARE WEEK

# The public rightly expects racehorses to be treated with respect

*The Princess Royal, president of World Horse Welfare, reflects on the sport's work in the area*



**T**HE heart of horseracing lies in what distinguishes it from any other kind of race: the horse.

The way of life behind the sport is inspired by this most noble, powerful, loyal and sometimes confounding animal whose innate intelligence and sensitivity has the power to change our lives and sustain livelihoods, and indeed the global racing industry.

So it is axiomatic that the racehorse be given the highest levels of care, veterinary treatment and protection of their safety and welfare. Not only do we wish to race with strong, well-trained and well-conditioned horses but the public rightly expects that they are treated with the respect and care that befits what we ask of them and their contribution to society.

Historically, the British racing industry has understood this well. There is no question that the vast majority of racehorses have been, and continue to be, treated extremely well during their careers, even pampered.

The Horserace Betting Levy Board has also long helped to channel funds from racing into charitable works and vital veterinary research which benefits the entire horse population of Britain and beyond. This investment is right and commendable and should be a source of pride.

What should also be commended is that British racing has recognised that this is not enough. It is to their credit that they consistently seek to use evidence to understand the risks and improve health and welfare standards, welcoming independent challenge and support from independent advisers such as World Horse Welfare and the RSPCA.

As president of World Horse Welfare, which is an independent welfare adviser to the BHA, and as an equestrian and horse breeder in my own right, I have seen the full gamut



*The Princess Royal plays an active role as World Horse Welfare president*

of welfare problems that can occur from a horse's birth through training and career to post career and end of life, and I still own them! I also know that the training of the horse, the construction of the course and the quality and compassion of the jockey all have a big part to play in that horse's life.

Now more than ever, all equine sports' 'social licence to operate' is being challenged as the public questions whether any use of a horse is abuse.

In pursuing even better welfare standards in line with research, experience and public opinion, the BHA is now rightfully not only working to further improve safety and welfare on the course, but leading the global charge to meet increasingly greater demands for transparency and responsibility for racehorses throughout their lives.

Responsible breeding, selling, training, care, competition, retirement, rehoming and seeking equally responsible end-of-life options for racehorses is truly integral to the sport if it is to have a bright future.

I hope you will take pride in and encourage the BHA to continue to lead in welfare, and see sensible welfare organisations as 'critical friends' and 'principled partners' – rather than threats – in helping to support the racing industry ethically secure the future of the sport.

# How plight of National hero Hallo Dandy was a shocking wake-up call for us all



*Alastair Down talks to Carrie Humble, original driving force behind the Thoroughbred Retraining Centre*

**M**AKING assumptions about people is lazy, patronising and plain stupid.

On the very edge of Witney, Oxfordshire – once blanket capital of the world – Carrie Humble has a modest house looking out over a glorious wildflower meadow replete with stream and the obligatory ducks.

What is the founder and feisty driving force behind the Thoroughbred Retraining (originally Rehabilitation) Centre going to be like? I am expecting a sparky but mildly batty campaign veteran with a fondness for lentils and an obsessive streak.

But she turns out to be something not far removed from pure rock 'n' roll. The Rolling Stones have led much duller lives.

Humble trots out lines that would make a Peterhead trawlerman blush. And you know what you are hearing has about it not a trace of fabrication. It is shot from the hip, the plain, unvarnished truth, and you feel a pang of sympathy for those parts of the racing establishment who made the mistake of taking her on armed with

lofty patronage when what they needed was a Panzer tank.

At her first audience with members of the Jockey Club she was greeted with, "Well dear, what can we do for you?" File that under mistake – as in big mistake.

"My mum died young," she says. "I was 15 and my dad married my best friend."

Sounds simple, doesn't it? You can bet it wasn't.

She is 67. Her rafter-rattling days are behind her but, by god it has been some life. As a young woman of 23 she went off to the States armed with her art portfolio and a pair of nuts on her you would not find on a bull.

She says: "I started off in San Francisco. I have plenty of gay friends but for a young and lusty female it wasn't the best of hunting grounds, so I headed for Los Angeles."

"I was heavily involved in theatre and had some great connections in the movie industry. It's fair to say I had a very good time."

"I was in LA for four and half years and decided to head home via New York and stayed there for ten years. I love New Yorkers and think I picked up a lot of my ballsiness from them." It is a character trait that has not faded with the passage of time.

During her LA incarnation she spent a couple of years working for Sam and Larry. Pair of nice lads? Well, not particularly, as they were members of the Mafia. Not tourists either, but the real thing.

There is a definitive scene in the Godfather when the eventually doomed Pete Clemenza brings a package in to the soon-to-be-dead

### Calling all ex-racehorse owners

Share the tale of your equine partner and we'll publish the best on [racingpost.com](http://racingpost.com) on Friday

Email your story and photos to [editor@racingpost.com](mailto:editor@racingpost.com) or tweet us @RacingPost using #RPhorsewelfare