

UNITED KINGDOM NEWS

By: Katherine Harberd

Searching for Solutions ...

With the help of Sharon May-Davis Dissections

Who would have thought that looking at the inside of a dead horse might improve the management, handling and training of live horses? Sharon May-Davis may have anticipated the wealth of knowledge she would discover from dissection as her equine therapy work led her to becoming “the Bone Lady”. I was curious to learn more when I joined the Equine Podiatry Association dissection 21-23 October and luckily found my squeamishness quickly dissipated. Sharon’s team worked with passion and dedication; a fitting tribute to the noble horses from whom we were learning. I was fortunate to be able to attend the second dissection 25-27 October, as did Connected Riding practitioner in training Sara Udal.

Under Sharon’s guidance, the two horses taught us well and led us down some unexpected paths. Specifically with regard to Connected Riding, both horses showed us unequivocally how:

- A horse’s hind leg movement is impeded by the application of any pressure on the jaw or poll; and

- Every individual part of the horse affects the movement of the whole and the fascia is tremendously strong and connective throughout; and
- The funicular, or chord-like, part of the nuchal ligament has to flip over the upper cervical vertebrae when the horse turns from left to right or vice versa (unless they have sufficient support at the base of the neck).

Connected Riding vindicated again! The flipping funicular explains why many horses have difficulty in moving their head smoothly across their midline without raising their head at the mid-point (and again justifies the Connected Riding focus on ‘raising the base’ and exercises working across the midline).

A fortuitous comment about scar tissue during the first dissection (further analysed during the second), has opened a new door to identifying the primary cause of problems that have plagued my horse Kizmet for more than 5 years (and been brewing for as many as 13). We have been managing his chronic suspensory ligament and urinary tract conditions but only now do I wonder whether these are actually secondary issues. A trip to the osteopathic vet at the end of this month will hopefully cast more light on what is primary and maybe even effect a cure ... all thanks to Sharon’s dissections. Kizmet will let me know if he is happy to share his journey in another Connected Riding newsletter.

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