

## WCF EVSA: Student Review 2023 Eve Magowan University of Surrey

Being selected for the Worshipful Company of Farriers' Equine Veterinary Studies Award 2023 provided a unique opportunity to understand more about the integral part farriers play in the equine industry while furthering my knowledge on soundness and improving my horsemanship. I was placed with Adam and Henry Young in Oxstalls – somewhere I had never visited before. Starting my week just after finishing 4<sup>th</sup> year summer exams, I was apprehensive about the early starts somewhere new, but it's safe to say I had a wonderful week and I am very grateful to Adam and Henry for the experience. Even though I have ridden horses for many years, having such an intensive insight into the knowledge, skill and craftsmanship it takes to be a farrier really highlighted to me the importance of good farrier-owner and vet relationships.

The week started with accompanying Adam on client visits and discussing the important physiological factors to consider when shoeing a horse. Seeing a variety of horses with different uses and ridden objectives really helped me apply my knowledge of hoof balance to how Adam was making adjustments by corrective trimming and rasping to benefit each horse. I was particularly interested in understanding more about weight distribution on the horses' feet as they move, and how what seem to be small alterations to a shoe can make a big difference in preventing excess strain being put through the flexor tendons. Adam showed me how he bevelled the toe of the shoe to create a rounder edge and bring the point of break-over further back, closer to the widest part of the hoof.

It was clear the only way to make these changes was to remove the horses' old shoes – and that's where my practical experience began. Initially the tools felt alien to me, and I found it tricky to balance the horse and apply enough pressure to remove the shoe smoothly, but by the end of the week I felt more confident with the tools and was grateful to have so much practice at taking off a range of shoes, including from a shire horse!



In the middle of the week, Adam and I headed into the forge where he helped me make a shoe from scratch. Adam showed me several shoes he had made for specific conditions and after having a go in the forge I could really appreciate the skill that was involved. It was a great accomplishment to make a shoe which now has pride of place at home, and it



reminds me of the great week I had learning with Adam and Henry.

When we headed back out on the road, I furthered my practical experience by burning on a hot shoe to a primed bare hoof. Adam explained the benefit of this in highlighting any uneven areas of the foot to facilitate corrective trimming.

By the end of the week, I had really developed what I'd learnt about hoof break-over point by seeing how setting the shoe further back on the foot to match the true hoof pastern axis would really reduce the load through the flexor tendons when the horse moved. I was quite shocked to see just how much toe length

could grow out between shoeing's and how much each cm of toe growth could increase the lever of force through the soft tissue structures of a horse's leg. It reminded me of riding and working with high level showjumpers and the struggle to maintain soundness. Seeing the changes made to the angles of the hoof really emphasised how important shoeing is in the overall care of horses and keeping them happy in their roles.

The Award is a wonderful initiative by the Worshipful Company of Farriers and I can recommend the experience to anyone. Thank you Lydia for administrating, and the biggest thank you to Adam and Henry for the opportunity.

