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Letters

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'BREEDING' MORE YOUNG JOCKEYS

Sir — I read with interest your article about parting with ponies (29 October).

As a mother of a 10-year-old, I have just let her dear lead-rein and first ridden pony, on whom she learnt to ride and competed for six seasons, go. It was a very sad day when he went.

However, I have an agreement with the new owners to have first refusal when their daughter outgrows him in two years' time. You see, I saw this coming and decided to "breed" more riders and I am now the proud "owner" of two more jockeys — one who will be making her showing debut in 2011!

All I need to do now is persuade my non-horsey husband that we need more — children, that is, not ponies!

Alex Aungier
Lingfield, Surrey

LET US PRAY FOR REPEAL

Sir — During his sermon, our vicar encouraged us all to pray a bit more every day. At the end, our vicar gave us about three minutes in which we should pray.

So I did. I prayed for another horse in my lifetime as good as the one I have at the moment. I prayed for my horse to stay sound all season. I prayed that I don't foolishly get him into trouble out hunting. I prayed for long hunts and the camaraderie shared by the few left in the field at the end of a long day.

I then thought how selfish I was and prayed for my family, friends, those in trouble, those who are sick and those fighting in war zones.

My three minutes were almost up, but I prayed very hard indeed for repeal

Letter of the week

WE SHOULD HAVE JUMPED-OFF FOR NATIONS CUP PLACE

Sir — I don't normally have time to write letters, but I am at home nursing a broken ankle and reading *H&H* (news, 29 October).

I find it hard to agree with Olga White's comments regarding the International Equestrian Federation's (FEI) decision to relegate Great Britain and Belgium from the Meydan top-level Nations Cup series 2010 (letters, 29 October).

Had we lost fair and square, I could have accepted that and gone down gracefully. But after our team's fighting spirit to finish equal second in Dublin, the FEI announced we had finished eighth and would be staying up. Then we were told they could not separate GB and Belgium, and both teams would be relegated.

This is not acceptable. There should have been a jump-off in Dublin there and then. I believe we should fight the FEI's decision for our rightful place.

We might not have the strength in depth of some countries, but it is improving. For various reasons, we have not always been able to field our strongest team in the Nations Cup series. It will be a pity if next year we are back to full strength but unable to participate. It is an honour to represent your country on a team, win or lose.

Some riders have to jump the same horse in both the Nations Cup and grand prix and Olga and Team Murka should not complain. They have had two top horses — one to jump the Nations Cup and a fresh one for the grand prix. This worked well at Hickstead, where Murka's Pall Mall won the latter [with Peter Charles].

If you should give this letter of the week, please donate the champagne to Olga to cheer her up.

John Whitaker

By email

The Editor replies: We are very happy to send your Taittinger on to Olga, John. You make a good point about a jump-off at Dublin; it could have yielded a clean, sporting solution. The tie could be avoided and clearly needs to be in future. Take care of that ankle so we can enjoy watching you again soon.

The writer of the letter of the week wins a bottle of Champagne Taittinger



of the Hunting Act.

I would urge anyone who cares about decency, democracy, about freedom to choose, about doing the right thing, about our countryside and our country, about our hounds and hunt servants, about all those things that people have died fighting for over generations and past wars to put your tools down and pray very hard indeed for repeal of this barmy Act. Anything less will not do.

Carina Evans

Maidenhead, Berks

A GREAT DAY INDEED

Sir — What a surprise it was to see a 35-year-old photo of my mother in your "Great Days and

Great Runs" (hunting special, 22 October). My mum, Lorraine Mallender, can recall that very day and can name the horse on the left as Welshman.

Getting my photo into *Horse & Hound* is an unfulfilled ambition, so Mum has taken great pride in framing the article and hanging it over our fireplace — show-off!

Many thanks for bringing back some wonderful memories for my mother.

Polly Mallender

Barlborough, Derbys

Sir — Fancy staging a comeback and appearing in *H&H* after all these years (hunt rides, 22 October)! It was my good fortune to ride in 12 Melton

Hunt Club Rides, always completing the course and winning the heavyweight prize four times. What splendid fun it was, and my eternal thanks are due in particular to the splendid hospitality of Urky Newton and Tom Connors.
Captain Sandy Maxwell-Hyslop
Sherborne, Dorset

HAFLINGERS ROW RESOLVED?

Sir — I have to disagree with the Haflinger Society of Great Britain (HSGB) secretary's suggestion that Johannes Schweisgut, director of the mother studbook, the Haflinger Pferdezuchtverband Tirol (HPT), is unapproachable or

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Stable stereotypes

The delusional dad

AS Graham closes the yard gate and waves off the trailer carrying away the last of his offspring's horses, he gives a wistful sigh. Patting the substantial cheque in his pocket, he turns and surveys the empty stables, reminiscent of the empty bedrooms now the children have upped sticks for university.

No more weekends spent hanging on to a pair of reins by the ringside for them, no more holidays used up driving a horsebox around the country. Come to think of it, with just his wife Rosemary's old boy left in the field, it's time the horsebox went, too.

Whistling, Graham heads back to the house, now pondering exactly how to spend his newly liquified assets. Without a yard full of horses to attend to, a holiday is first on the list and he has always rather fancied the idea of a sports car. In fact, the old boy won't last forever, he thinks, wondering about the prospect of downsizing to a smart little apartment in the city.

Meanwhile, having cleared out the last of the boxes, Rosemary locks the tackroom and follows Graham indoors. No more Pony Club rallies, she muses, making herself a coffee and settling at the kitchen table. No more Pony Club mothers, she thinks, reaching for *Horse & Hound*. No more running around after children who, ultimately, would rather be going clubbing, she concludes, beginning to browse the broodmares for sale with a red pen in hand. **H&H**



refuses to speak to them.

He attended a meeting in October 2008, at the invitation of the HSGB, to discuss the matter of inspectors and the criteria candidates must meet to become and remain an inspector of the breed. He was quite clear at that meeting on what was expected of the society if they were to remain a "daughter" studbook.

In September, Mr Schweisgut hosted a World Haflinger Federation meeting and dinner in Austria, which the secretary, Carolyn Hallett, attended.

David Lister
Theale, Berks

Doug Seel of the HPT replies: At a recent committee meeting, it was agreed that the forthcoming inspections will comply fully with the ruling of the HPT. We thank you for the opportunity to pass this message to our members.

Top 5 H&H forum topics this week

- 1 Horses, kids and work? Insane or achievable?
- 2 Your biggest horsey humiliations
- 3 How much do you spend on your horses?
- 4 Do you have to be talented to reach the top level?
- 5 "Katie Price can't ride" claims Jodie Marsh

Join in at www.horseandhound.co.uk/forums

TAKE ACTION NOW AGAINST THEFT

Sir — Thefts have increased dramatically over the last few months, yet insurance companies are still paying out on property they know is not identifiable to the owner.

When issuing or renewing policies, all companies have to do is

ask their clients for a photo of insured property — horses, boxes, tack — with its identity mark. This makes it harder to sell on and less worth stealing.

I have contacted insurance companies and either had very little or no response, the excuse being "it will put customers off". No, it won't, not if they all get together and take action now.

The message is simple — mark it to keep it. My head is sore after 18 years of banging it against a brick wall — time for the wall to come down!

Helen Evans
Thames Valley Horsewatch

Something to say?

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Email: Hletters@ipcmedia.com
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Name and postal address must be included

The rider of 2009?

Oliver Townend talks to *H&H* about medals, money and the year he'll never forget

RACING

See how the British runners fare in the Breeders' Cup extravaganza



SHOWING

Stars of the future at the Welsh National Foal Show



WINTER HORSECARE

No hay or straw? What to do if you face shortages this winter



PLUS Tina Fletcher, national dressage convention and more. On sale 12 November

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