

# BALANCE SADDLE CONSULTATIONS AND OTHER NEWS



## My Boys

### North Light

The summer ended with a loss of a dear friend of many years, **North Light**. He and I were together for 23 years, and most of that time he was with my other two horses, Sir Henry and Tomcold. They both died at the age of 32 and 28.

North Light never got over his loss of these friends, so despite having Boris and Endzo, life was not the same for him. He and I were very close, and I could feel he was putting a brave face on.

Last summer he got ill, got treatment which his body responded well to, but I think he did not want to be here anymore. One Sunday morning in early September, he was gone forever, at the age of 25. Sadly missed, but I know he was done on this planet. For now.



*Spot the difference*

### Switzerland end of February?

I am looking forward to another Swiss adventure, and I have had some early requests for appointments. So if you are interested in a consultation or a follow up, please get in touch with me as soon as possible - [info@quila-balance.eu](mailto:info@quila-balance.eu) As long as you are not under thick snow up there, I can come towards the end of February.

Germany and the BeNeLux countries - to be confirmed but I guess it will be end of March or beginning of April.



## Boris

So now I got these two boys alone, North Light had been the one in between the two, friends with both. Boris had not really accepted Endzo into the herd, so it was kind of interesting how their relationship slowly changed. I am still not sure who of the two is the boss - Endzo is very independent, which Boris is not. But Boris is not the one to move for Endzo.

Boris and I had got that far that I was sitting on him in the spring last year. Then he got his 'funny turn' and got a wild look in his eyes, did not want to interact with humans - twitchy and tensed most of the time. So there wasn't any point to pursue with the riding. At about the same time I got to hear about Teressa's horse - Teressa works in the office at **BALANCE**. Her new horse had gone through a personality change to the worse, after she had had him for a short time. She was at loss with him for a long time, but then she learnt about magnesium - when grass grows in the spring and late summer, the magnesium levels are as good as depleted to nothing. She put her horse on a magnesium supplement, and he changed back to the horse she fell in love with.

This made me think about Boris' behaviour, and realised his pattern certainly was seasonal. Every spring and autumn he turned into a beast. Ok, so nothing to loose, I ordered supplements, and gradually Boris turned into a teddy bear.

The quality of his work has improved amazingly with this too, as he is now relaxed and trusting again. I can not wait to get on and ride him now. We are just waiting for Chris to make an extra high mounting block for us.

## A Weekend in Italy

**2017 was kick started with an invitation to come to Piemonte in Italy to do a saddle clinic. I adore Italy, it is such an vibrant place, old and new, beautifully blended in architecture, art and design. The love for food using local produce is another alluring aspect of the country. Not to forget the Italians themselves so welcoming and friendly.**

The clinic was held at Rolanda Quarter Horse, Bairo, near Turin, on the cold weekend of 13-15th of January. The weather offered bright sunshine, freezing cold at -7 one day, a dust of snow on the ground, and beautiful snow clad alps in the back ground. -7 is not that much if you come from the north as I do, but there is a reason why I left Sweden!!! I prefer warm weather.

Michelin style clothes, hat and gloves, and I was ready to tackle the task of assessing 14 horses. We started on the Friday afternoon with a theory session, with translation help from Roberto, one of the organisers. This was followed by the first horse trying the saddles in order to find what she needs.



## Endzo

Endzo has an awful lot to learn being a riding horse now. He is very clever and quick to understand. However, his body is still suffering from the past, there are a lot of blocks to get rid of.

So it is time for us to work with Dr Gavin Scofield again. Gavin is very happy with the progress Endzo has done up to date, but now is the time to give him more input. There are restrictions around his thoracic spine and sacrum, blocking full suspension and engagement. I am looking forward to see what Gavin has to say in a weeks time, to re assess the situation.

My school field is suffering from the rain, so Endzo and I are doing a lot of walk in hand at the moment. We have a 3km walk, with a strong uphill which is good. He does not remember how to push with his hind legs, but rather pulls himself up with the front legs. A good opportunity for him to play with this without a rider on top.



inspiring clinic. Everybody was so interested in learning, attentively listening to everything. I often come into situations where the audience is of a different 'school' than mine, so I am aware what I say might be challenging. No problems in Bairo, open minds and willingness to learn and to try something 'new' was the norm.

The two following days were filled with horses, saddles, talks about riding, feeding, remedial program.....and somehow we managed to have time to nip off to a local restaurant for lunch.

For me this was a very



The beauty with a clinic like this with so many horses and riders, is that every participant offers something new to talk about and learn from. Everybody comes away with far more information than what is possible in an individual consultation.

There is also more time to discuss different training methods, opinions about Equine Bio Mechanics etc.

I am not going to mention any names here, I am sure to miss somebody; so a big THANK YOU -Grazie Mille - to all of my new friends in Italy, for asking me to come. You took good care of me, and yes, I would like to come back!



A big thank you to **Mikey Wanzenried**, **Switzerland**, for encouraging these guys to find out about **BALANCE** Saddling System.

## Equine Massage for Horse Owners

A friend and newcomer in our area here in Lot, France, Kate Lockwood, offered a workshop recently for us horse owners to learn massage techniques for our horses. She is an Osteopath (MSc.B.Ost Med.) and worked a lot in the UK sharing her knowledge. I often suggest massage to clients I see, many horses needs this in the process of changing saddle, and it is a good way to deepen the relation with your horse.



It is a long time ago since I could participate in a work shop myself, but I was lucky enough to have a free slot in my schedule. So, I could be on the receiving end for a change. Kate started with a theory session, going through a few more muscles and bones than I normally do in my sessions. I think she would be a wonderful addition after a **BALANCE**

Saddle Consultation/Clinic, some of her information would be a reminder, plus some more deeper info as an addition.

We learnt about

- Reasons to massage
- When not to massage
- Basic massage techniques
- In the afternoon it was hands on practice.

She is following up with a workshop about Pilates for horses, but that one I know I will have to miss, cause I will most likely be on a working trip myself. However, for this one she is going to spend 4 hours in preparation to paint her horse - she did some on the Massage workshop, but that was only the tip of the iceberg.

Kate is open to travel, so if you think there is interest for a weekend clinic with her, let me know and I put you in touch with her. She would then do both the Massage and Pilates in one clinic. I do not have any experience of Pilates, so I can not tell much about it.

Needless to say, Kate knows about **BALANCE** saddles. You can read her story on the next page.



*Kate and Max*

## Kate and Max's Story

Boy am I glad I found Birgitta and **BALANCE!** This is Max's story.....

Max is my 6 /2 yr old Hannoverian x Irish Sports Horse. He is currently 17.1hh and a very short coupled horse. He is a very kind and nice natured horse who is very willing to please, he loves his work and he loves to learn new things. He is however also a very sensitive horse and is very quick to tell me when something is wrong. Being a young horse this sensitive behaviour that I will explain shortly could have been misunderstood for a naughty horse. I knew however that Max is not a naughty horse by nature and that he was trying to tell me something.

The problem.... Because Max is young and tall we have taken his ridden education very slowly indeed. We started with a lot of basic training from the ground with in-hand work, this not only included classical in-hand work but I also take him in-hand hacking with the dog too. Both love it, it is good mental stimulation and it is great for building muscle without the interference of a rider (plus it is good fitness training for the rider too! ha ha).

Max is very good at the classical in-hand work, he has naturally very big and free paces and finds the lateral work very easy - almost too easy that he doesn't use himself properly. Walk trot and canter were all good on the lunge and no problem.

When it came to ridden work again we started very slowly building up gradually. (I focus mainly on dressage these days, and was trained by a fantastic classical dressage trainer). The problem initially started when we introduced ridden canter work. He struggled to get a correct lead and would always buck a few times in canter then go disunited. He also disliked being girthed with a traditional dressage girth - so we changed lots of these too, and often disliked even just having the saddle placed on his back - he would tuck his back legs underneath himself and just look worried. (I should have mentioned that I am an Osteopath (for people and horses) so myself and the vet had checked him out for any musculoskeletal issues and found none). Sometimes the bucking would be quite extreme and on 2 occasions he acted like an un-backed bucking bronco (and yes had me off). This bucking behaviour was very out of character and never ever seen on the lunge or at liberty.

So we changed saddles - I had a very good traditional saddler who came with lots of different varieties of saddles and girths to try. Some I barely even got out of walk as Max would tell me he hated it, through subtle behaviour or through his way of moving (or should I say not moving)... eventually we found one that seemed to suit. It was ok for a month or so - then the bucking returned and I never felt that he was moving to his full potential. We changed saddles again and again and always the same things occurred... we eventually settled on one that was "reasonable". I knew that I was moving to France shortly after this so I decided to keep this one for now and see how we got on over here.

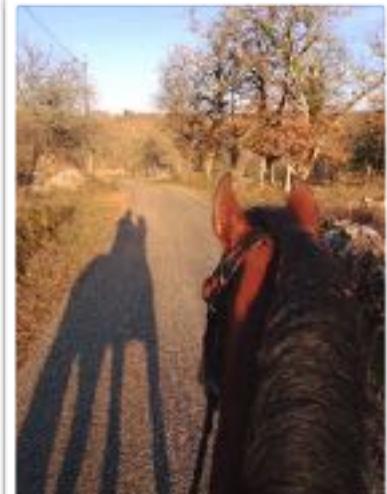
Through the power of Facebook I met the wonderful Birgitta - we got talking - became friends - and she told me all about **BALANCE** Saddles. I have to confess that I am ashamed to say I had not heard of them. After reading up on Balance saddles and lots of conversations with Birgitta I decided that they sounded exactly like what both I and Max needed - and WHY had I not heard of them before!!

So we had a consultation with Birgitta - she bought several different styles of **BALANCE** saddles with her...again Max was very quick to tell me which ones he liked and didn't like - but there was ONE in particular that OH MY GOODNESS!!!! he LOVED!! I have never felt him move like that under saddle before. Birgitta described it as someone finally taking the brakes off and that is

exactly what it felt like. His walk was suddenly huge, free, loose and relaxed - stretching forwards and down like never before.

So we took it for a trial. (*Birgitta's note; luckily there was one she could have on trial!*) Every time I rode in it I almost cried with happiness. Max felt amazing! Eventually we built up to a canter over a period of weeks of getting used to the saddle. I have to say the first time I was apprehensive due to the bucking episodes with the previous saddles. I needn't have worried! Max again felt fantastic - the canter was loose, free, relaxed and very uphill. His ears and feel said it all to me - he was almost as surprised as me I think that he could finally MOVE and boy could he move now! So over the next few weeks we both got used to riding in the saddle. It feels very different to a "traditional" saddle because the horse can MOVE! He also has to get used to this feeling as it feels odd to them to begin with. Now 3 months down the line he is already putting on muscle in all the right places, looking fantastic and continues to move wonderfully...and I am pleased to report that we haven't had a single buck and are now cantering and galloping along the tracks and in the school like a pro!

I can't tell you how pleased I am to have found **BALANCE** saddles and I know that Max will agree with me! Thank you Birgitta and **BALANCE**!



*Kate Lockwood*



**Endzo**



**Boris**