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Saddlery

Established 1981



Saddles

Saintwestwell saddles, girths and associated equipment are designed and made using only top quality materials. Our years of experience competing from novice to international level allows us to know what both horse and rider need.

Saintwestwell stocks , Endurance GP, Dressage, Event, Jumping, Showing, Working Hunter and Pony saddles.



Saintwestwell
Control Master
Saddles



The Control Master Saddle has a unique panel system, with adjustable panels ensuring close contact. Soft comfortable seat for superb security, stability and balance, wide gullet, wide weight bearing panels, stabilising girthing system, adjustable knee and thigh blocks and tree to suit the male or female physique.

Saintwestwell saddles are available in a variety of colours including the traditional black or brown.

Saintwestwell saddles are lightweight, extra weight can be added or removed with minimal fuss.

With all these features your Saintwestwell Control Master Saddle should stay with your horse throughout its competitive career, and in most cases can be easily adapted to fit your next horse.

Many of Britain's top endurance riders use Saintwestwell saddles and products.

Numnahs & Girths

Our exclusive range of made to measure numnahs and girths are available in a wide choice of colours.

All saddle shapes catered for.



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(by appointment only with our qualified professional saddler and professional horsewoman).

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exceptional. He was a high energy horse, a long distance animal in every sense, not like my laid back little Thoroughbred Melmott, who is a sprinter. Kaan had a mind of his own. He already knew how to pace himself, but was a powerhouse to ride. Kaan did not take prisoners. He was lovely to ride because he had so much energy. I sat atop a long distance tank. Kaan surveyed the landscape and said, 'Let's go'. We got onto bridleways flush with grass and we cantered. This horse really covered the ground. We flew when the ground was good and struck out in good heart at a good energetic walk the rest of the time. I was truly amazed by Kaan. But -and this is really what riding high is about - at no time was that horse my horse. He remained to the end of the ride a mystery to me. He remained Gill's horse. When he heard her voice on the phone he whinnied. He was never my horse. Nor was the horse I rode in Iran ever my horse. I liked the horse, I patted the horse, and I respected it. But it never became my horse.

Let me take you inside the psyche of the horse. A horse is like a friend. A good friend. Kaan was Gill's friend. He only really cared about Gill. He tolerated me. I loved riding him, but I made no impression on him at all. It was not until I took my own horse on a long distance ride from Epsom Downs to Chevening that I really began to understand the depth of the friendship a horse offers you.

I bought my Thoroughbred in 2003. I rescued him from Ascot Sales, a potential meat market horse. I put him back on the racecourse in 2005-6 and then I retired him. We have been together every day since. He is quirky and loves to gallop with another horse. On his own he is as quiet as a mouse. This year I decided we would try to ride to Canterbury from Epsom. I was to have friends travelling with me.

The day dawned and no other riders turned up. All were lame or had problems. I was on my own. Melmott and I set off across the expanse of Epsom Downs to Walton Downs and then to Rockshaw Road and the Pilgrims' Fort. The weather was hideous. It poured stair rods. I got soaked. Smelly did not seem to care. We got stuck on the North Downs Way, having taken a wrong turning, and had to go down steps to the road - now flooded and running like a river. My horse did all I asked and more. And on one country lane that had good visibility I got off him and left him with his reins tucked up and walked off. Soon I heard the clip clop of his little TB feet behind me and he nudged me with his head. "I'm not leaving you." He said. He is my friend. I love him.

When I finally arrived in Chevening I was wearied and wet and yet the whole ride came into focus as we rode across the ploughed fields behind the great mansion of Chevening Estate. I wrote this in my diary:

Our arrival at Chevening was for Smelly and me a moment I will never forget. I remember looking around me at the park and asking Smelly for a little canter which he was only too pleased to perform with that sense of joy and completion. The last bit of the ride across the ploughed fields was like being inside a painting. The sky full of darkening clouds, but small windows of light shining out from the setting sun. The rolling English farmland at its best with lines of stubble edged with thick hedges. The air full of bird song and the earth soft beneath my horse's feet. The last journey over the stubble seemed to last forever; it felt as if we had spent a lifetime getting there. I was full of joy and wonder and an overpowering sense of freedom that only a horse can give you. I was in those moments truly at peace.



Now I know what Gill felt when she rode Kaan. Now I know why Kaan called when he heard her voice on the phone. Maybe his eagerness to see Gill at the end of every day was responsible for the speed at which he tackled the ride. The horse has the same ability to cherish as a person does. They are mammals after all. We share an almost identical skeleton except that the horse's skeleton is more evolved than ours.

The traveller and his horse are a family. They are a unit. They breathe the same air and see the same things. They feel the same emotions. They are one. Go long distance riding with your horse, and find out who you are, and who your horse is.

In memoriam

Pax

1995 – 2010

Freya and Stephanie Richards remember a very special horse

Pax was simply extraordinary. He was proud, temperamental and very arrogant, but he was also deeply loyal and very possessive of his own, be it human or his great friend Dusky. He was simply the horse of a lifetime.

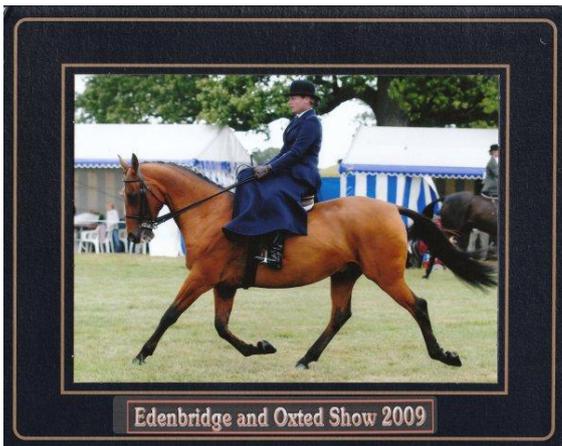
It was with a great deal of heartache that we had to make the decision towards the end of 2010 to put him down. He collapsed towards the end of May when being ridden and was subsequently diagnosed with degenerative joint disorder in both his spine and one of his hocks. The vets at this point were very hopeful that, although he would never compete again, he would be able to retire as a hack. Sadly on the morning he was due to return to the vets for the all clear he went completely lame in his hock and never recovered.

Pax was bred under the South Downs by Marina Bury and came to us when he was seven. He started his life with us competing at Pony Club level and quickly decided that show jumping was not really his thing! He preferred galloping at speed across country; he won several hunter trials and completed the big Firlie cross country course, although he was unplaced because he was too fast! He had the most amazing galloping stride and when you first asked him to go, it was though a turbo had cut in behind you. He was a very impressive sight once he was up on the Downs at full speed.

Hunting was his other great passion and he would get so excited when he heard hounds that you had to be very wary of his feet; a hoof would go whistling past your ear if you weren't paying attention! He would then stand rock solid at the meet as though butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. However once the hunt was under way Pax was always to be found at the front. The time came however when he seemed unable to control his enthusiasm and he was becoming a danger not only to himself but to other people, so he retired from hunting.

During this time he had begun to compete in dressage competitions and this became his forte. He joined Stephanie at Bedgebury School where they were lucky enough to be trained by Maryanne Horne; this gave them both a very good basic grounding. It was at about this point that Pax started competing in affiliated British Dressage competitions. He gained 34 BD points, qualified for the Winter Regional Championships and was on the winning Southern team at the British Dressage Inter-Regional dressage competition.

In 2007 he started to carry a side saddle and went on to compete at local agricultural shows in both equitation classes and classical classes. He went to the Royal International Horse Show at Hickstead in 2009 and although he was unplaced - there were thirty competitors in the class - he produced a lovely show and behaved beautifully on very slippery ground.



Also in 2009, he qualified for the National Side Saddle show where we spent the weekend competing in equitation and dressage classes. Although not placed individually he was part of the winning Area 8 dressage team who won the team competition. He achieved some good scores in the Equitation and was placed 12th in the very large novice equitation class.

During his life time Pax achieved an enormous amount and was a great ambassador for the breed. He competed at some of the biggest venues and was mentioned in Horse and Hound and British Dressage magazine. Pax had a huge personality and has left a very big hole in the yard. We are very proud of everything he achieved and although we miss him desperately we are very grateful that we were lucky enough to have him and to have enjoyed his enormous loyalty and sense of fun.



TRAINING THE AKHAL-TEKE

Dressage judge and trainer Barbara Leach makes some observations on the breed

Over a life of riding and training about twenty different breeds, I have during the past three years had the opportunity to work with the Akhal-Teke horses.

They are, of course, impressive and really beautiful to look at, but as I've got to know them what I really admire so much, apart from their naturally athletic movement, is their unusual ability to work. They seem to love and thrive on it, and in this they are similar to the Arab, but with much more scope in their movement.

At first some tend to have a rather high head carriage, even a swan neck with too much underneath, but this changes gradually and naturally with good riding. Their natural activity, and tremendously athletic hind quarters, plus superb backs, make it all fairly simple once they are given an allowing but consistent rein contact to encourage them to work through the entire muscle ring. This then results in a beautifully long neck with a strong top line which links up with the withers and flexible back and quarters. The perfect base for any performance.

It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that these unusually long horses could have a problem with collection. However, although we haven't yet got to the advanced work, I'm confident this will develop. The flexibility and strength in the back, aligned to a well-developed neck and quarters, plus their natural enthusiasm should ensure no difficulties.

Obviously with their outstanding ability to gallop and jump, they don't immediately offer collection to the degree of, say, the Iberian horses; but if trained to work correctly under the balance of a good rider, I'm tempted to guess (seeing their naturally balanced and light movement) that the advanced dressage could be mouthwatering.

As we all know, temperament is the second highest quality, after soundness, and with their intelligence and natural affinity with people, these horses are proving very rewarding for all disciplines. Perhaps a later start, with a good period of lungeing to prepare them for the rider, plus possibly longer for the riding out/hacking/jumping small jumps phase before serious schooling will achieve the best. This is, of course, a preference for most horses, but this breed could, I think, gain extra from such a beginning, particularly while adjusting to our climate, soil and food, etc.

I'm getting great pleasure working with the Akhal-Teke horse, and, in fact, have only one big disappointment, and that is that I didn't meet them thirty years ago!



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*For enquiries, contact Maria Baverstock on 01647 253 187 or
nigelandmaria@gmail.com*

For Sale Or Loan

Following a drastic downsizing and a house move a year ago we have two horses for sale, or loan with a view to purchase can be considered. Also a useful horsebox and a Series 3 Land Rover for sale. No reasonable offer refused.

Pharach Firebird Akhal Teke gelding, 2005, bright bay, 15.2hh. Professionally backed and ridden on but has not done anything for 18 months. Lovely nature. Needs a working home.



Pharach Raindance. Appaloosa x (Morgan x Anglo Arab) mare. 2007. Chestnut snowflake. 15hh. Well handled with lovely nature but has her moments and needs something to do. Known as "The Pink Pony" or just Pinky. See pink photo above.

Series 3 Land Rover. X reg. Blue/cream. Much loved and used but has been retired for about 10 years. Would be good for spares or a project for renovation.

Ford Cargo Horsebox. F reg. Basic living accom. and moveable partitions for up to 4/5 horses or ponies. Good runner but has been off the road for a year. Needs a bit of TLC. Offers.



Static caravan for rent in its own little garden next to the little River Meilwch, just in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Sleeps 4. Convenient for Llandeilo, Llandovery etc.

For further details contact:

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