

Bitless Bridles

Huon Hoofbeats encourages diversity in pursuit of safe and kind approaches to training and riding. Ground work sessions are a regular feature of rallies and the club committee has carefully considered the issue of bitless riding over recent months.

Huon Hoofbeats held an “Introduction to Bitless Riding” with Cynthia Cooper and it has now been agreed that the club will offer the opportunity for members to ride without a bit under certain circumstances and conditions as follows:

1. Bitless bridles **utilising** a 'side pull' mechanism will be accepted - rope halters and 'natural hackamores' will not be permitted for riding at rallies or events.
2. Riders need to understand correct fitting and the aids applicable to the particular bitless bridle they have selected.
3. Horses also need to have been trained or 'transitioned' to a bitless bridle. This 'transitioning' process may include the use of a bit with a bitless bridle or bitless noseband for a period of time or for particular disciplines if the horse has previously been trained with a bit.
4. Instructors have the right to request that a rider put a bit on their horse if they consider that there are any safety or humanitarian concerns or if they feel that the horse would understand the aids better or be more comfortable in a bitted bridle.
5. Irrespective of whether a horse is ridden with or without a bit, safety and welfare of all horses and humans who are associated with the club is of paramount concern. All committee members have the authority to request that a rider make adjustments to their equipment or move to a ground work session if it will help the horse remain calm and safe.
6. Instructors may also request riders to perform a 'safety demonstration' to show that their horses understand the aids, especially when the level of energy is raised.
7. Equipment used in competitions run by the club under official rules needs to comply with the regulations set out for those events.