



## IN THIS ISSUE:

**Ireland – from the back of a horse**

**New equipment now available from [whisperingacres.com](http://whisperingacres.com)**

**"Like" Carlos on Facebook and check it for the latest news**

## The world looks better from the back of a horse

And grand that view is in Northern Ireland, where the hills seem just a wee bit greener and the skies that bit more blue (when it's not drizzling or misty). With the highest per capita horse ownership in Europe, the Irish passion for all things equine is clearly evident.

Not surprisingly, the issues the horses face there are the same as those Carlos sees in Australia. So, look out Australia – Ireland has discovered Carlos and they want him back!

So much happened over the 10 days – so many lovely people, so many horses, so many stories – that we thought it best to share a few of the highlights...

**But most importantly...what did most of the horses think of Carlos' visit...**



## Our hosts at Diamonds Lane Equestrian

Judy, Eamon and Leo Braniff, along with Kia, Ria, Jo and Deva (their horses), four dogs and a couple of cats were our wonderful hosts outside Portaferry (about an hour out of Belfast). The logistics of organising two weeks of demos, talks, private lessons and clinics is a huge undertaking. But as a new mum, with six-week-old Leo, and the Equestrian Centre to run, Judy really had her hands full. But thanks to her meticulous planning and organization, Eamon's hard work to get the facility ready for all who came, and some special help from friends and family, it was a wonderfully successful two weeks. Facebook ran hot with excited participants sharing their success stories and pictures after having worked with Carlos.



New herself to working with Carlos, Judy (left) had a few nerve-wracking moments watching Carlos do those miraculous things that those of us who are privileged to see him more often have become more accustomed to (although those instances never cease to be emotional and amazing).

Eamon (right) even got called up for desensitising duty at the young horse starting clinic, helping Deva to become familiar with little Leo's pram.



Nicola and Casey (left) were indispensable when it came to crowd management and looking after Leo!



## Just landed...

...and the next day, you got it, Carlos needed a horse fix after a 26-hour flight!



Here, he's working with Judy's rescue horse Jo, who at four, was recovering from a severe leg injury and neglect. On top of that, Jo has only partial vision in his left eye, which made working with him even more of a challenge, as Carlos had to rely on his right eye, which Carlos has found is the eye horses use to determine whether to stand or flee. (If you think about your own horse, have you noticed that it is often much more difficult to present new things – especially spooky things – on the right side? More about that in an upcoming article!) Until that day, Jo had never been backed – and Judy had one of her first nerve wracking moments!

Jo would star again, during the clinic, when Carlos did more work with him. You'll be pleased to know that Judy has continued to work with Jo and has now herself been on him bareback – and bitless, of course!

Kia and Ria, Judy's other horses, were also in line for a bit of special attention. Only Deva (see below) who was the star of the young horse clinic, had to wait to get that special attention!



## Cloughy Riding Club talk

Delores Robinson, and her husband Ian, hosted Carlos for a sensational evening talk and raffle for the Cloughy Riding Club in their beautifully restored stone barn/stable. There were plenty of questions, following Carlos' introduction to the way that he works, from some very traditionally-oriented riders, many of whom later found themselves in lessons or the clinic doing some very non-traditional things like riding bitless and bareback, of course!





It was at this evening that we met Sarah Gordon and her mum and first heard about Codie, Sarah's highly aggressive thoroughbred. Although she was truly frightened of Codie, whose behaviour was worsening to the point where he would rear and strike and bite at her face, they weren't prepared to pass him on to someone else to deal with. After speaking with Carlos, reading his book, and coming to the clinic, Sarah gathered her courage and decided to try what she had learned on Codie.

Want to know what happened? Read about Sarah and Codie (and Carlos' youngest student to date!) later in this newsletter!

### Old Mill Saddlery demo

Just a couple of days after arriving, we travelled to the other side of Belfast where Robert Patton warmly welcomed us to his Old Mill Saddlery shop, Northern Ireland's largest saddlery. Here, Carlos held a packed demo, on busy Larne Road, in a large paddock with lush, ankle deep grass and a handful of sheep who wandered in and out. The girl, who had volunteered to have Carlos work with her horse, was having difficulty catching him. But as you might have guessed, that was a symptom of more fundamental issues – and a lack of groundwork! As the demo progressed, you could see people doing a lot of nodding, and a bit of licking and chewing, as they related to the issues and could see the dramatic change in the horse and his handler.

A book and DVD signing followed, with people patiently queuing up for the chance to speak with Carlos and book for the weekend clinic and private lessons. Thanks to the amazing word of mouth (and Facebook activity) that followed Carlos wherever he went, bookings for the limited times and spaces quickly filled up.



Top row (left to right) – Those attending the Old Mill Saddlery demonstration may not have known what to expect, but they were keen to hear more and to speak with Carlos afterwards. Bottom row (left to right) – One of the demo 'drop ins'; Carlos with Judy and Dolores Robinson.

## The coverage

Thanks to some hard work by Judy to get the word out, and the amazing word-of-mouth excitement that surrounded Carlos' visit, not only did Carlos make the front page of the *Belfast Telegraph*, he got a two and a half page feature, along with a segment on 'Daybreak', Northern Ireland's most popular morning program and another feature in the *Newtownards Chronicle & Co. Down Observer*. If that wasn't enough for just two weeks, Judy was interviewed about Carlos' visit by a top rating local radio personality who was intrigued by what she had heard and read about Carlos and had to find out more.



Aside from the fact that Carlos never calls himself a horse whisperer because, as he says, 'you can only imagine what gets whispered to a horse when he doesn't do as asked!', the media couldn't help themselves and labelled him just that. But Carlos was able to explain that what really matters is what the horse thinks of him – they don't care what he's done, but they *do* care what he can do for and with them.

The pdfs of the *Belfast Telegraph* article is already on Facebook and the website, and when the *Chronicle* arrives we'll let you know.

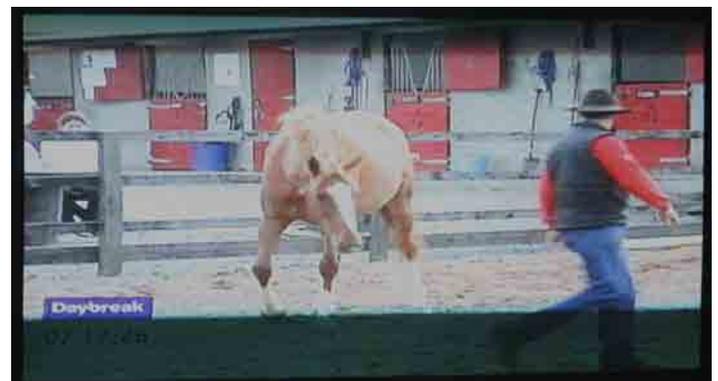
← Check out the front page blurb!

And the lengths their photographer went to for the photos! →



← The *Chronicle* photographer and journalist with Judy, Carlos and Kia.

And then there was the triple *Daybreak* feature. *Daybreak* is the most popular morning program in Ireland (below left and below). ↓



## The clinics and lessons

Over the four days of clinics, and many more days of individual lessons, participants had a really good opportunity to sample the way that Carlos works with horses – and they developed a real taste for it!

Carlos came to Ireland not to compare himself to other trainers or to compete with other approaches, but because he had been asked by Judy to come and share his horsemanship approach with the Irish people. As you have heard him say, he has borrowed his approach from the horses themselves, and always gives them the credit. While recognising the proud and long traditions of Irish horsemanship, Carlos was able to explain to his captivated groups why traditions don't make things right.

What people saw was Carlos at his best, helping them to develop for their horses the PhD for which he is so well known – Passion, heart and Dedication – and to be a voice for their own horses.

Not surprisingly, the issues that people had with their horses there were no different than those Carlos sees regularly – and many of those start right on the ground. Many of the horses were described as being 'fine under saddle', but pushy, unable to stand still, even aggressive on the ground. Many had been taught to lead at the shoulder on a tight rope, held under the chin, and to stand at a distance, usually because of the pushiness.

Circling was a challenge for many, as was working with feet and even trailer loading. And then there were the issues with scary things that included the plastic, ropes and stock whip you know so well, to spray bottles, brollies, baby prams and...yep...riding bareback! As you can imagine, many of the horses had not been exposed to bareback riding, so Carlos put a lot of energy into 'checking out' the horses for some very relieved owners! It is always amazing, and wonderful to report that those 'issues' disappeared very quickly – as usual!! The other fantastic news to come out of the clinic was that a few of the horses were there 'on their last chance' due to their behavioural issues. By the end of the clinic, Carlos' predictions at the that their owners would no longer want to part with those horses came true. It was simply amazing to see the transformations that occurred.





**And some of the stories...**

I thought about just heading this part of the newsletter 'Carlos backs Ireland' because, once word got around about the amazing results Carlos was achieving with the horses, it seemed that almost every second horse was being backed and started. Just look – and this isn't all of them!!



It's no wonder he was stuffed by the time we got back!  
But there were some very special stories that stood out – here are just a few.

## Jill and Melody

Melody, a rescue horse, was one of the most extreme and explosive cases Carlos saw in Ireland. She was extremely pushy on the ground, coming on top of anyone brave enough to work with her on a lead. She was extremely well-practised at rearing, as you can see, so Carlos had real concern for Jill's safety. As always, Carlos never gives up on a horse and you can see why word about his ability spread rapidly. Jill and Melody have a lot of work ahead of them, but she is dedicated and we wish them all the best!



## Dolores and Bess

Dolores, who was our wonderful host for the Cloughy Riding Club talk, regular clinic attendee throughout Carlos' visit and lovely travel companion to the Dublin Horse Show (deviously good at 'I spy' games in the car and finding top Irish pubs) rescued an older mare, Bess, who (at about 20 years old) hadn't been ridden in at least 15 years. Dolores herself had never been on her, let alone bareback and bitless, but with a lot of courage, trust in Bess and Carlos and encouragement from her friends, she did it! Afterward Dolores saw Carlos ride Bess bitless – and bridleless, Dolores said she'd never felt safer. She had had a bad accident when she was a teenager, where her foot was caught in the stirrup and she was dragged, and being on Bess bareback, without that risk, was a liberating feeling!





### **Toni and Indy**

Toni and Indy came for two lessons during Carlos' stay and left more excited and inspired after each one. Toni was interested in trying a more 'natural' approach, and wanted to experience riding Indy bareback and bitless to get the 'full' experience. Given the look on her face, it's pretty safe to say she got it!



### **Christine and Fleurry**

Christine, herself an instructor, asked Carlos to come and work with her young thoroughbred Fleurry. A few furry spectators stayed to watch! While actually 'starting' Fleurry wasn't an expectation at the time, well, you guessed it, Fleurry had a great 'start'. Christine was thrilled and is looking forward to working with Carlos when he returns (along with many others!).





### **Jackie and Daisy Mae**

Jackie, a new horse owner, decided she wanted to make the most of Carlos' time in Portaferry, and had several two-hour lessons with Carlos while he was there. Daisy Mae, an 18-month-old with plenty of personality, had a lot to learn as she had had minimal handling. Haltering and leading were issues as were feet, but not for long, as Daisy Mae proved herself to be a quick learner, along with Jackie.



### **Stephanie and Copey**

Stephanie's big boy Copey was a handful for her and she had real issues with him going forward and being very heavy on the forehead. Coming from a traditional equestrian background, Stephanie was still very open to Carlos' approach. Following the clinic, she booked a lesson and worked with Copey and Carlos bitless. The change was nothing short of amazing. Between her first and second lesson, Stephanie took Copey to the beach and galloped him bitless –

something she had never thought she would do – and the two were working beautifully together.



### **Sarah and Codie...**

Codie was on his last chance, when Carlos got to Ireland. On talking with Carlos, reading his book and coming to the clinic, Sarah liked what he was doing – it made sense to her. Well, it made sense to Codie, too, because after backing him up when he came in biting, Sarah waited for the striking to start. It didn't. When she stopped, Codie stopped and, for the first time in two years, Sarah sent Codie out on a circle without coming face to face with his feet as he reared. Carlos put a huge smile on her face then, and it's still there as they have progressed even further.

Sarah now rides Codie bitless after he had not been ridden in over a year (right) and is enjoying bitless and bareback with Strider, her other horse (left).

Said Sarah, "I am having such fun with the groundwork and the riding. You have opened my eyes so much to how fun your horse can be and of the bond you can have with your horse. Thank you so so so much!"



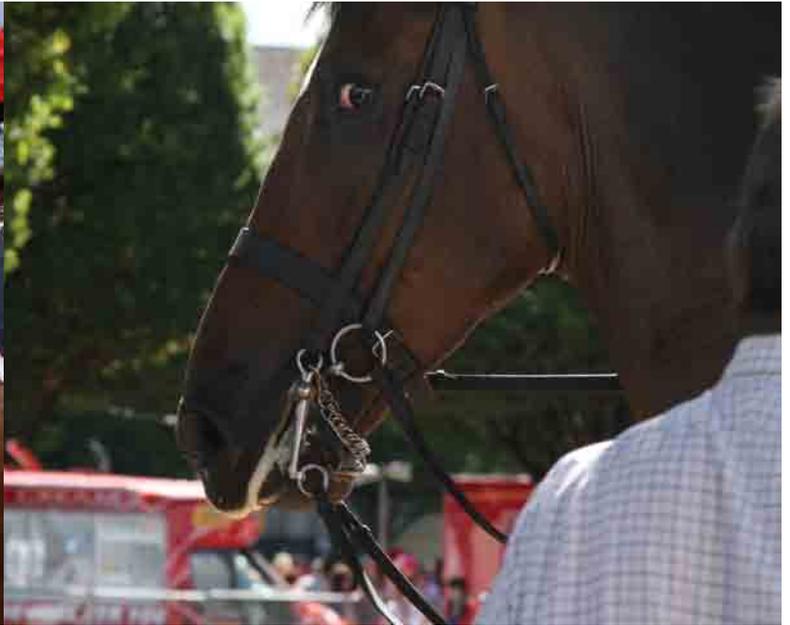
### **...and then there is Sarah's two-year-old niece Hayleigh (with Barney)**

Sarah thought she would show us how Hayleigh, who had been watching her work with Codie, is using it with Barney. Barney, by the way, will only work for Hayleigh, says Sarah. He has no interest in adults!



## Out and about...to the Royal Dublin Horse Show

If ever you wonder why you've committed to riding bitless and seeking out the very best for your horse, here are a few images from the RDS to remind you...



### **New equipment available on the website!**

After many pleas for Carlos to make available some of the equipment he uses, you can now buy the halter he designed and recommends, along with the reins and leadropes he uses. Made by Nungar Knots in the best quality double braided yacht rope, they're designed to give you the softest connection to your horse. If you want to order, just go to [www.whisperingacres.com](http://www.whisperingacres.com) and click on the link on the home page. It will take you straight to the descriptions and colour choices. Ordering is simple and you will clearly see the prices and cost of postage and handling. If you're in the UK/Ireland, don't forget that you can order this new equipment, as well as Carlos' book and DVDs from our Northern Ireland host, Judy Braniff, at [www.diamondslaneequestrian.co.uk](http://www.diamondslaneequestrian.co.uk).



### **"Like" Carlos on Facebook and keep up with the latest!**

That's right! You're not seeing things! Carlos – and Whispering Acres – is on Facebook. We decided that would be the best way for you to keep up with Carlos and all he does.

We'll still put all the information you've come to rely upon on the website, but we'll let you know on Facebook when we add new information, clinics, photos and anything else that we think will help you and your horse.

So please! Head to Facebook and 'LIKE' our page – it's YOUR page for the latest on Carlos!

