

WINDY NAGS



Riding Horses in Thailand and outhr Windy Tales from the Nags Head



in association with
Bamboo Watch Foundation



"WINDY NAGS"

is published in association with

BAMBOO WATCH FOUNDATION

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by

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This book is dedicated to
The Carroll Family at N° 1.
without whose unstinting
friendship I, Like many an
old Nag, would have dropped
by the wayside long ago.



-- plus all the cats, ducks, voles
rabbits, collared doves and
stray anything's and any-ones
who have found refuge at
N° 1, or in the 'wooly' garden
outside.

Even the postman
enjoys calling

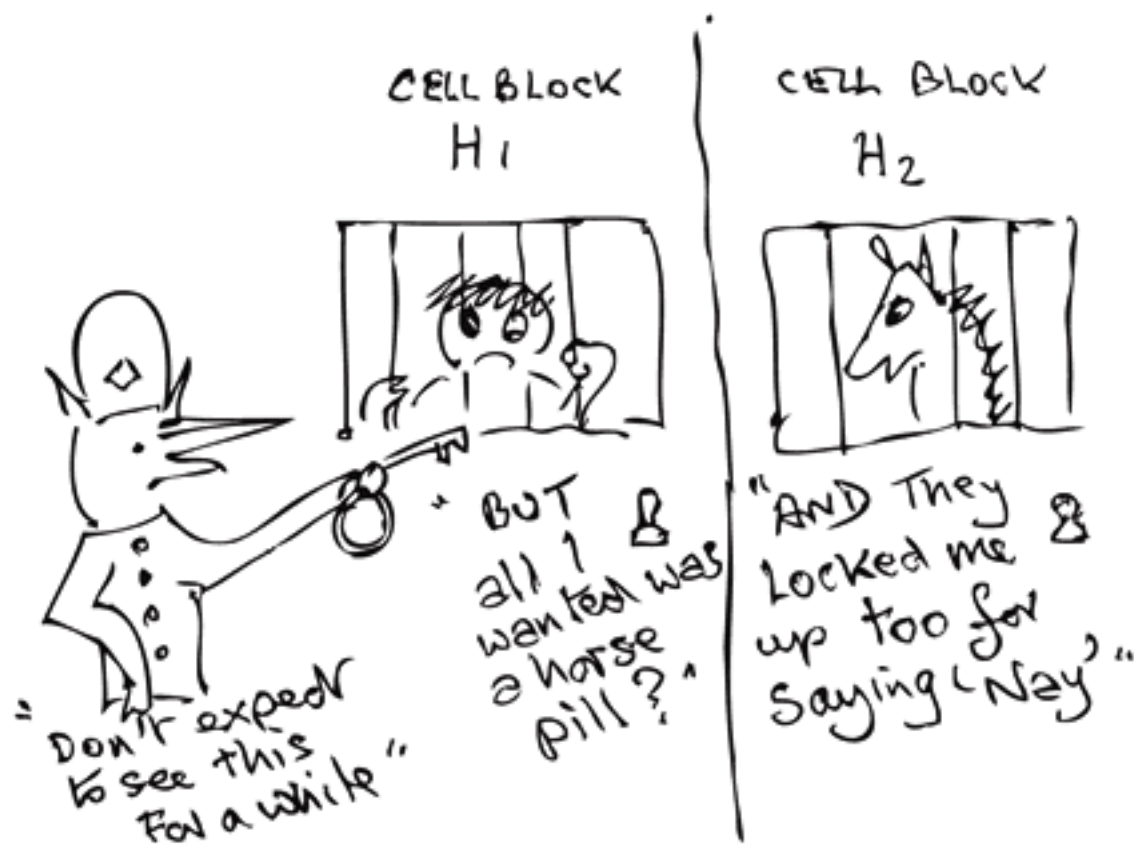
Getting Going



Pss... A word of caution when you are describing your equine exploits to their friends. Pronounce 'MAH' (HORSE) correctly. MAH also means Dog, and while you assume they picture you riding the range on 'Black Beauty' - they may be imagining you parading the pavement on top of the pet poodle



Mr. ---AND if you go in search of
horse medicine (YAA MAH), make
Sure you don't ask for YAA BAH
(crazy pills) - or the shop may
call the cops, and you'll end up
in the klink.





-- If you glance at the usual cross section of Thai nags, it's very understandable why HORSE and Dog are both MAH. There are Thai dogs that growl ferociously at passers-by behind barred gates and seem as big as a bear. And there are pony carts where you might think you were being pulled along by a greyhound.



The height of a horse being determined in HANDS - from front hoof to Lump at the end of the neck - choose someone with a tiny hand to do the measuring, then you will be able to truthfully declare that you have a stallion of 16 hands when in fact it might pass for a pit pony of 12.



But despair not. Consider polo ponies. You can impress the doubtful by saying that the rabby, hip poking, broken winded critter is just resting in between polo matches.



the Nag's Res.

Before acquiring Nag of your dreams —
Consider where it will live.



Nags being slightly larger than pet
hamsters will not fit easily into your
sitting room.



And unless in a former life both you
and it were a mounted police team you
won't like city life

A stable stable

So-head for the hills and find
a friendly
village,



where the people

understand your
aweful thai, and

rent a plot of land and have them build
you a bamboc-and-thatch Nag house.



Nice and
Roomy-

Plus all
mod cons-



Hire local boy scout
to look after it -
(his scout staff
can double as a
pitch fork)

And a meadow-

And a meadow



HORSE TRADING



A Chinese-Thai with a long wispy beard claimed to own horses near

Chiang Rai. I followed his clapped-out red pick-up until we stopped in a field of cut corn. We peered around until he finally spotted a pair of ears poking into the sky. Apart from possessing 4 legs there was not much to recommend it as a horse, and one didn't need to mount it - you just guided it between your legs and sat down. For this equine masterpiece he proposed the 'bargain' price of 20,000 Baht. 'Neigh' to that said I.





- I did buy a pony called Kwan who was employed keeping the grass nibbled on the Golf Course - for 4000 baht. It was only later we noticed how its hoofs (hooves?) slipped up sideways when it trotted. It would have made a fancy ballroom dancer.



And don't expect anyone else to measure anything count as I climb
in HANDS - even I lose up a Leg. who's Leg?

You could just hide behind a bush and watch proceedings, or pretend to be an innocent bystander. This way you'll see if it kicks when mounted. But perhaps you'd kick if someone hoisted a sack of cement on your back and expected you to run a mile



If you have gone to seed with a pot belly of Chang Beer and weigh over 15 stone - 90kg, I should forget Thai hill horses and try to sneak a Brewers Drey in your hand luggage next time you fly out.



Be carefull who you mention horses to. I had barely expressed an interest in quadrupeds when the Lahw high priest stopped lighting candles and thumping gongs, vanished over the hills and returned with a pair of nags - male and female complete with pack saddles. The male only kicked when you climbed aboard but the 'Lady' was so skittish she could have been a Thai Kick boxer.

Payment was 7,500 Br each - I assume DA Bo (priest) had included his own commission. The male took one look at me, broke free and galloped for



home. He was brought back lame - so lame that he hopped about on 3 legs or lay prone in the dust. It was hard to decide if his foot was broken or sprained. To be safe I put the front leg in plaster which surprised Nag and Neighbours no end





The man who built my bamboo hut told me of a huge horse - somewhere - far off. So I sent him off with details of a minimum height and a maximum price tag. He came back with two - reasoning that put together they did make up one HUGE horse. One was tough and 'moth-eaten'. The other - longer and taller, looked as if it had been on hunger strike. They didn't wait for introductions but proceeded to mount the lady in rapid succession. I'm never sure if one should watch

these proceedings or avert one's gaze. Not that the Nags care. It reminds me of an anecdote about Noel Coward when a small child asked him what was going on.

"Ah - now the horsey on top can't see and the kind horsey underneath is carrying it to the home for the blind."



I always know when the helper arrives at 6.30 am because the nags alarm bell rings - a throaty purr/ neigh in anticipation of their morning maize. I don't purr - but I just as eagerly await my morning 'cuppa'. As I sip it I listen to the nags grinding their molars on the maize. Meanwhile Helper goes to chop down some leafy bamboo shoots and drags them back. Pandas and hill horses thrive on bamboo and I'm sure it keeps their teeth sparkling.

P.S. --- put the horse feed in raised buckets to stop the 'piggies' noshing it all.



And then - making sure their 15 m of rope isn't frayed through - and is looped securely round their necks - it's off to the meadow for a long relaxing nibble.



THE STABLE



8000 Baht
AKA MAI
(CASANOVA)



6,500 Baht
AKA GOW
(speedy Gonzales)



7,500 baht
HANG SAN*
(short tail)



4000 baht
KWAM
(Twinkle Toes)



7,500
Poo Ying
(Lady)

* We called it Hang San after I cut its tail short without realising I was depriving it of its fly whisk

There's nothing to stop you naming the nag Bocephalus (Alex the Great's nag) or Rosinante (Don Quixote) or Red Rum (Grand National) - only their performance may not match their Title.

Naming & SHAMING



And now to get down to GRASS - if the village cows haven't nibbled all of it. Horses love grass - I mean the green stuff in the field, not the other you sieve and puff.



When I was 15 I went on a pony trek across Dartmoor organised by the Youth Hostel Association. One day our party of 5, fed ALL our date and cheese sandwiches to my grey mare which then swelled up like a balloon. We thought at any moment it would soar above our heads and explode. Instead it farted! I have never, before or since, witnessed such a prolonged and magnificent fart. If bottled it would have fed every fog horn on every lighthouse around the coast for a year at least.



-- And as it farted its size shrank back to normal and off we trotted -- to Widdicombe in pursuit of the

Legend of Tom Pierce. Rarely has a song brought such fame to so insignificant a place. Admittedly we arrived in dense mist and almost missed it altogether. Every mug, towel, thimble was Tom Pierce - but as I was riding a grey mare I felt part of the song

Tom Pierce, Tom Pierce
Lend me your grey mare ---



GRUB

So unless you are into farting don't feed Horsey - marmite, baked beans, chips or any other tit bits the dog loves to gobble. (Although leftover leaves from cabbages, or carrots won't go amiss.)

I first tried 'Race Horse Feed'. The sack displayed horses racing and an impressive list of contents. To horses used to a diet



of thin grass and the occasional rice hunk I thought the effect would be phenomenal - but to my surprise they didn't care for it. So we switched to corn and they purred in sheer pleasure.

Maize in the morning and a brown powder full of soy and bran for supper. You mix the powder with water into a porridge. It reminds me of



School - lining up to get out daily dollops of stodge - so cold and sticky that you could turn the bowl upside down and nothing fell out

THE NAGS DINER

PLAT du JOUR

- 1 Le Petit déjeuner (à six heures du matin)
un plat de MAÏS AVEC LES PETITS JEUILLES
(corn in a bucket) des bambous
(Bamboo shoots)
- 2 EN-CAS (Eleven-sees)
un fête champêtre en champagne
(scravage for a scrap of grass in the field)
- 3 Dejeuner
Continuez avec votre 'snack'
(Keep nibbling)
- 4 un mison sabut (a bite on the hoof)
un petit mison bouche
en gallop
(grab a leafy bite on the run)
- 5 Te' l'anglais (à seize
heure précisément)
Le petit maïs avec une verre de l'eau
frois (corn and water)
- 6 Le repas du soir (à dix-sept heure)
Cette purée est un-mélange délicieuse
des fruits orientaux avec Tes herbes select.
(soy stodge and grass)



GROOMING

A stiff brush used for scrubbing  clothes will do, but go easy on the face - Nags have eyes. And brush around the 'ankles' and while you are down there check the hoofs (hooves?) for stones. In fact check for wedged stones before, after and perhaps during a ride. Scrape  out the mud and if there's a stone stuck in, a bit of stick or a key will hoick it out.

Here's how Back legs: Facing back Press shoulder firmly against Nag's thigh, grasp 'ankle' - Lift and bend up. Scrape out inside of hoof

Front legs: Do This facing front or back. Same procedure but bend hoof back and up to examine. Don't try standing behind or in front as if Horsey decides



to kick - you'll get it in the chops. Don't worry - little girls are fearless with their shaggy Shetland ponies - and Horsey appreciates it - Well

wouldn't you if you had a sharp stone stuffed up your toes

I always wonder if the Bridegroom really is supposed to groom the Bride



I was once groomed with a stiff brush in a Thai massage parlour. I chose N°27 from the ladies lined up on the stage N°27 led me upstairs to a small room, ordered me out of my clothes and into a bath tub where she attacked my tender parts with a wire? brush yelping - I leaped out but N°27 hoicked me onto the bed and proceeded to jump up and down on my back as if I was a trampoline

I have avoided ^{LUCIENY} THE MESSAGE 27 ever since as it brings back crippling memories - and as Heinz baked beans has 27 varieties - I have switched allegiance to Cross and Blackwell



The only discussion I've ever had with a Prime Minister was over Baked Beans. This was in the Solomon Islands MAMOLULU the P M got off his bicycle dressed only in a Lava-Lava to do the family shop in Honiara's only Grocers Store. In front of the shelf of Baked Beans he asked my opinion, 'Which are better - Heinz or Cross and Blackwell?' the responsibility of deciding for a Prime Minister weighed on me but I gave my answer and I was grateful he didn't ask why?

BAKED BEANS
HEINZ
CROSS
BLACKWELL



Mamululu was the only P.M. I've ever met who rode an old sit-up-and-beg bicycle to do the shopping. He also rode the Islands' one and only horse. They said the Japanese had brought it there during their occupation and it certainly looked ancient enough. Someone had told Mamululu it would add dignity to his office, but he was so afraid of falling off - They tied his feet together underneath





once you have built your stable and acquired the Nags - you might want to nail up 'RANCH', above the gate or what was pinned to a beam in the FATTORIA (stables) 70 kms up the Via Flaminia from Rome where we used to ride Saturdays for 1000 Lire a day - galloping to remote villages - getting pissed on rough chianti, and have the nags carry us back - the notice said, 'Un Uomo Senza Cavallo - non e uomo' (A man without a horse is not a man) Well - the Italians are a 'macho' bunch and I could suggest other essentials without which you might not be considered 100% male - as any Thai Lady Boy will proudly tell you

Perhaps it's another 'macho' thing, but you don't find geldings in Italy or Thailand. Are the English sissies? - but I'd prefer to ride a calm gelding anyday rather than my horny nag who'll leap down a ravine without warning if Lady horse is wagging her rump the other side. I believe all the nags jumping in the Grand National are geldings. I was told it was too dangerous to risk thoroughbred stallions losing their precious and priceless nuts as they leap the fences. Personally if it was up to me whether to forsake my undercarriage in pursuit of sport I know I'd cry 'Neigh'.



And why not apply the same rule to Hurdlers?

or ---

or - take better precautions -

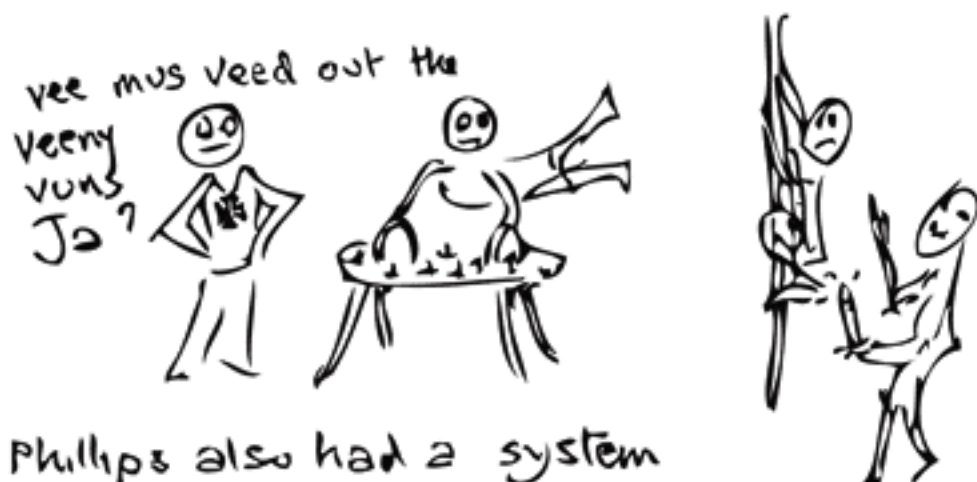
NAGS WEAR



or we could follow the example of Sumo wrestlers who are reputed to stuff their nuts up inside them during bouts



At school our sadistic gym teacher Herr Philips put tin Tacks on the 'horse' to encourage us to vault over and not become permanent castrato singers in a Verdi opera

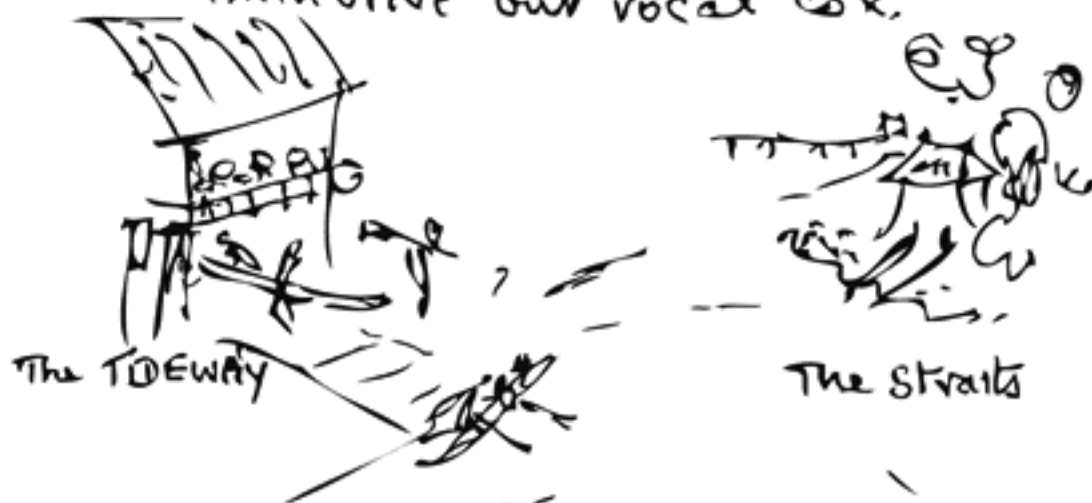


Phillips also had a system for making us climb ropes - He held a lighted candle under our bums. He's probably on the Olympic Selection Committee now - training High Jumpers. Perhaps Herr Philips was just promoting Darwin's 'Survival of the fittest' theory. And surviving Herr Philips probably helped me survive in the many remote and varied environments I have found myself. Even now riding my laden motorbike up the atrocious dirt track to the village I am never sure if I'll survive the journey. The track lies beside (and sometimes under) the Kok river, which always reminds me of rowing - for at school and University we rowed in Eights or Fours steered by a Cox, who is a vital part of the crew as he is the only one to face the way the boat is going - which helps when one is steering the thing.

At one regatta we had to borrow a lady cox. It was a disaster. She yanked the rudder this way and that, zig-zagging us all over the river. What we couldn't see was that a large bloated condom had got stuck on the rudderline and she was doing her best to dislodge it - to her the race was inconsequential.



on the verandah, rowing at Bangor (the only college to allow me in) came as a shock - or rather a shack on the shore of the Menai Straits where we rowed in coxed fours - 4 hefty rowers and a diminutive but vocal cox.



There were also certain tough moustached college ladies? who rowed in their own coxed 4. Our Club president Professor. Danby when ~~soured~~ liked to stagger along Bangor Pier and cheer on the ladies. 'Come on the Cocksless five' he would cry.



Our cox was an ex-flyweight boxer called Nev, who was training to be a clergyman. At the start of a race it is customary for the cox of one boat to call out 'Good Luck' to the other boat. But Nev would shout 'F... -... you b....s' - which so startled them it gave us a $\frac{1}{2}$ length advantage off the start. Nev was our secret weapon, and if our spirits flagged he would shout some imaginative phrases to spur us on. I am sure that by now he is a bishop or a Cardinal.





my pony
tail is
longer than
yours'



mine's
bigger!

A stiff brush
plus a weekly
douse with
flea/tick powder.

Before you trim horse's tail consider

1. You may be depriving it of a fly whisk.
2. Remember there's a bone inside the tail. I forgot and scissored away — the Nag missed a painful amputation by a millimetre!

When I was studying medicine (before they wisely decided for the safety of the population at large that I switch to Botany — plants being more stoic when it comes to suffering or mistakes) — we used to dissect old torsos that had been soaking for 100 years in tubs of formalin and already dissected by dozens of other would-be medics before us. We had one female student in our group. We were dissecting that organ of the male anatomy no male can do without when the girl called the instructor over 'I can't find the bone in it,' she declared. We all looked at her with a new respect as it was clear her only previous acquaintance with this appendage could be classified botanically as 'phallus impudicus!'



I am sure this female medical student did well in the freshmen's exam which had such historical questions as: Did Lady Hamilton have a hand in raising Nelson's Column? Other less ambiguous questions included 'When you came to University were you sorry to leave your friend's behind' - which made me wary of apostrophes ever

since. There was an anthropological question about the difference between an Eskimo and a Eunuch but I'd rather not expand on that at risk of offending either party. Oh - and there was an equine problem 'What is a pye bald pony?' Answer (in case you you have forgotten your school maths) - A pony with balls 3.142 inches in diameter. Food plus failure at football was the reason



I took up school rowing for in those days a good oar needed Beef and Beer. If you rowed you got an extra slice of meat for supper, while at Putney, before outings we got our $\frac{1}{2}$ pint ration of grog from the Star and Garter pub. If we ever capsized we were given rum as a restorative. It put me off rum for life.

NAGS AND FAGS



As a thoroughbred Arab - I prefer a hookah, old spot.

Fags at school were taboo - but that didn't stop us grinding down plug (chewing) tobacco. Inhale a whif and you don't stop spinning. I've long since kicked the habit (well almost), but I have doubts about Horsey. Whenever we trot past a field of big green 'baccy leaves Horsey dives straight in gobbling great mouthfuls. One night Horsey got out and was discovered dazed in what was left of a tobacco field. The owner was not happy and not was I having to pay for Nag's misdemeanors. Warning - other fields to keep Horsey out of include growing rice and corn.



I once slept in a barn in France stocked with curing tobacco leaves. I was driving my 1928 Austin 7, down to Spain. (We never made it) At les Sables d'Orlone on the Brittany coast I slept in this barn. The tobacco leaves were fed to the milking cows! I know the french love smoking - Mmm Gaulois, Gitanes.. but drinking nicotine laced milk in your Cafe au Lait - Wow!

'monsieur, vous bevez cafe avec ou sans nicotine?'



(?)? France is the only place I ever ate horse. My Austin had been wrecked by a drunk 'frog' driver and I spent the summer at the Gulf of Archacon working on an oyster boat - eating oysters and sometime horse - those steaks were tender

and sweet - but don't worry Nags, you're not heading for the cookpot. Eating a pet would make me feel like a cannibal. Talking of which - when I helped on a leper colony in the Solomon Islands I mentioned cannibalism to the elderly bishop of Malaita. He beamed, 'if you ever get the chance - nibble the fingers - delicious!'



SADDLES
 Unless you are into bareback stunts
 Like Lady Godiva you may want a
 Saddle



So it's a choice between saddle or
 sore arse. It amazes me seeing
 those old 'Red Indian' films —
 Geronimo and Co all charging bareback
 Either they had balls of granite or
 were high on hernias.





My first bareback mount was a placid old cart horse mare belonging to my Uncle who had a large dairy farm near Uxbridge and a fleet of green and yellow milk floats to deliver the daily pints to the locals. This fat old mare only obeyed a milkman's command and although her idea of a gallop was a plod - the only way to stop her was to cry 'WOOAH!'

All Uncle's horses now were ladies. He said that previously small boys waited with leafy branches and when the milkman put on the brake, and got down to deliver the 'daily' - the leafy sprigs, were used to titivate the male horse's 'tititatie' causing all 5 legs to strain, the float to shake, milk bottles to rattle and the milkmen to run back shouting 'xx!!'

As a result he employed only mares
 He glared at me sternly 'You wouldn't
 behave like that, would you?'



But I was at that
 experimental age and
 as we had to cross

Ealing Common to school each day, and
 as there was always a United Dairies
 milkhorse moored up somewhere plus
 plenty of leafy branches from the corner
 trees - - - - - Gosh! We were astonished how
 the horse extended itself - and the new
 vocabulary we learned from the angry
 milkman. Naturally we tried the leafy
 branch experiment on each other but
 the result was less dramatic - still,
 what can you expect from 8 year olds

However it did increase my curiosity about the 'Birds and Bees' - though why it is called that I never understood. Certainly pigeons go and have a flutter - but the only passion from Bees seems to be when they sting you.

My aunt informed me that we were made from a piece of dough shaped like a body and baked in the oven.

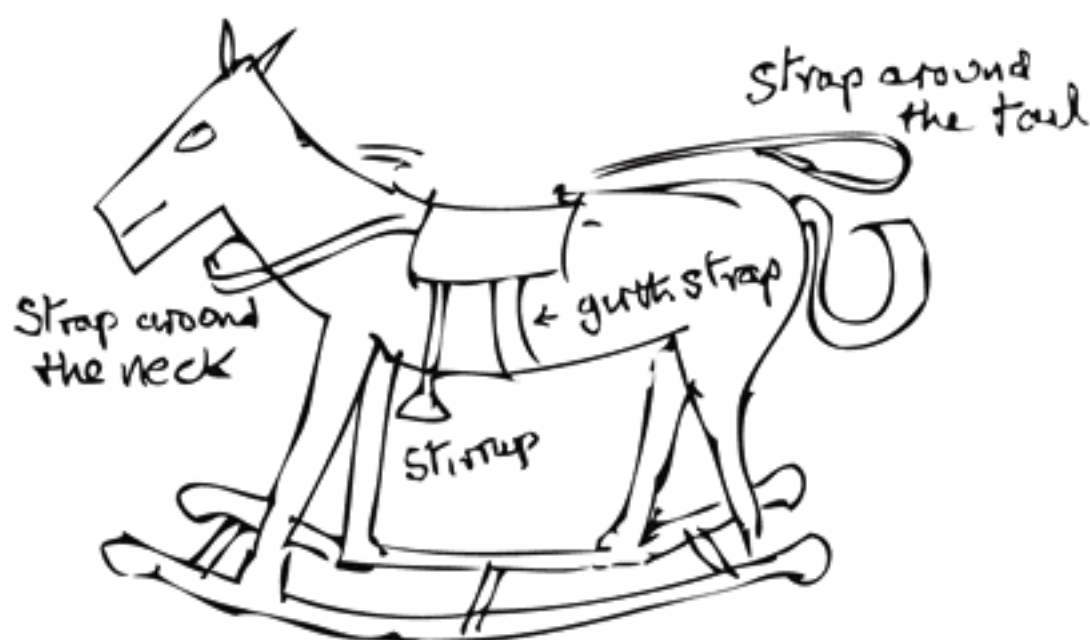


The only thing I ever baked in the oven was my pet tortoise as I thought it high time it woke up from its winter snooze. The result was not very good - at least from the tortoise's point of view, and my mother complained that Sunday roasts never tasted the same afterwards.

'For what we are
about to receive?'



I've tried making saddles from doormats and luggage straps and bent iron for stirrups but they never really work. However, a doormat - (not the coarse bristly mats - unless you like having your bum tickled) - plus a large sponge rubber pad, will soften your arse from the horse's spine. It will also convince you of the need to find a real saddle.



P.S. You need big fishermen's needles plus a pot of glue - (no, not to sniff - well, maybe to sniff.)

Unlike Saddles, Bits and Bridles
you can make.

The BIT - Buy a short length of chain
and cut to size.



Buy a couple
of rings
and
have them
Welded each
end of chain

if you don't know
the Thai for weld
point to the link and say 'ZzsZzs'

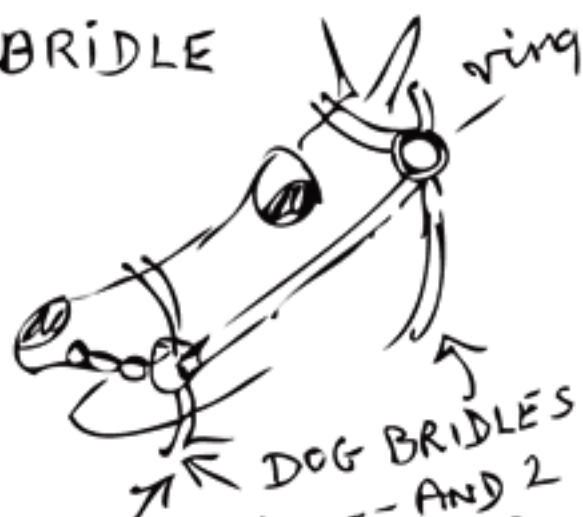
For the reins choose a nice bit of
soft rope about $2\frac{1}{2}$ metres long



After all that you
may need a can of
chang Beer Or ---



BRIDLE



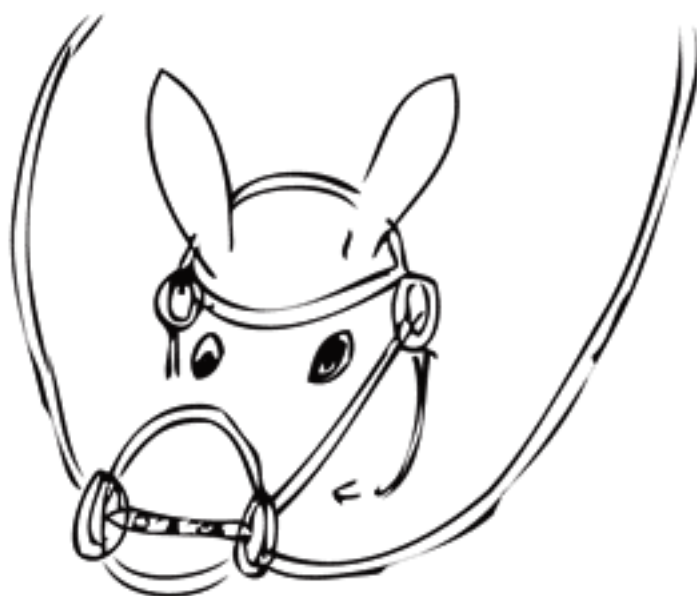
Dog bridles
from any pet shop



You'll need
2 here--

AND 2
here

So you join 2
bridles together
to make one long one.
stick (glue) and sew (Big needle).
Please don't make the bridle on
the horse - it won't appreciate a
needle in its eye



Buying a Saddle

If you live near Burma (Myanmar) and can pop over the border you may find on sale, or can order Burmese army saddles.



Tough, hard,
all leather
plus leather
bridles, bits,
reins

price 4,500 baht

The saddle is raised on a pair of padded 'ski' - supports that sit each side of the back bone

Thai army saddles are soft, padded with an iron frame inside. They are a bit small for the

brood of beam

price about 4,500 BT



unlike burmese saddle these sit snug on the Nag's back

'And there's always E' 



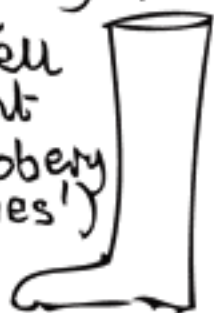
Stirrups must be BIG - so your foot can slip out when Horsey bolts, performs cartwheels as crazy motorbike rider roars past or fireworks are tossed - otherwise you'll be dragged - which may mean good business for the local skin-graft clinic, or a new shoulder AND please DON'T wear walking boots. They won't slip out of the stirrups in time.



That'll
Learn him



Boots: I used to try riding barefoot like the Somalis - but it didn't improve the longevity of my toes. Then markets sell Long, Light brown rubbery (NOT Wellies!) boots.



Not
exactly,
Brock's
old man



Usually brown they come in UK sizes and cost 150 baht (And you don't have to dry them out afterwards.)



And don't worry about jodpurs
- Just a tough pair of 'jeans'.
You'll probably need a tough
set of GENES too - to
survive. (Consult Darwin's
theory of evolution for that)

CLINIC

Spare parts
on request

I said JEANS
not GENES!



Something for après
mouse-traps?



Psst! "You can always stuff some
foam rubber down your pants
while getting used to your saddle



'Mmm - Now that's
what I call a real man'



P.S. ITALIAN youths
stuff socks down their
pants to impress!





Unless you intend to go prancing up and down proper roads you won't need them. After all people were riding horses for thousands of years before they were invented.

Bodacia and co Ltd (patriots)



I believe the Greeks first tried fitting Leather boots. They must have been more successful than me. Have you ever tried to get a horse to stay still while you fit on two pairs of booties - anyway I found they slipped on wet tracks



IN ENGLAND There's this whole folklore about honest black-smiths beating hell out of their

nagging wives - (mean, anvils In the Italian village where I lived in a leaky ruined tower Canzio (the only shop) had a tray of rusty old horse shoes of various sizes. He would choose ones that fitted (sort of) and bash 'em on with some equally rusty nails.



For some reason it always makes me squeamish seeing nails going into hoofs (hooves?) What if they are too Long - Ouch!

Anyway in the wilds you are as well off without them - so long as you do check the hoofs for stones

I've had this thing about thorns etc in the feet ever since I got verrucas as a kid. I think I got them from Ealing swimming pool where Herr Phillips used to fling us in the deep and once a week to teach us to swim. To cure my verrucas I had pellets of dry ice (carbon dioxide) stuffed into my soles at the local hospital but afterwards as the pellets thawed out it was agony to walk - I had to hop. As I hopped about on the underground-train people actually looked up from their newspapers (rare in tube trains). Once I took my pet duck

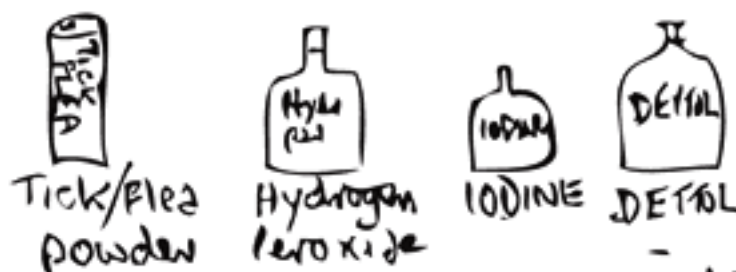


on the train to visit the P.D.S.A (free vet) Duck crapped its way through the paper carrier-bag and glapped up and down

the carriage - but nobody looked up. It took 2 guards to catch it. The vet did seem surprised - I think the biggest bird he had to deal with usually was a 'budgie



1 NAGS CLINIC



cotton wool



toilet paper



Bowl
DROPPER



SULPHANILAMIDE

'And now my young nag?'
- what can I do for you?



NEOMYCIN SULPHATE powder

'BANOCIN'

'I'll take the LOT'



'It's for my mum - honest - PLUS A packet of Nag Fags'

Don't forget soluble
TETRACYCLIN
'GENERMYCIN'
Mix it with corn
and water. they gobble it up!

Sprinkle Tick/PLEA powder once a week, - neck especially - when you brush. check Horsey for cuts. Usually a dab of dettol and Sulphur or anti-biotic powder is enough

Do check for wounds as Horsey won't tell you and your helper may miss it or think it doesn't matter,

Once helper told me of a 'small' wound on the lady it turned out to be a festering hole you could put your fist into, dripping pus and full of maggots. We flushed out the maggots with petrol (gasoline) and crushed Naphtha balls (Those little white balls in Urinals)

Then we washed that out, Squirted in Hydrogen peroxide followed by dil. Dettol. Another wash out and then

we sprinkled in some amoxycilin powder (break open some 500mg capsules of Amoxycilin)



Sewing up was the problem - or actually it wasn't - Lady horse must have sensed us trying to help as she stayed quite still when I did the needle-work. As my medical needles were too small I had to curve a sewing needle over a burner. The tricky bit was injecting a shot of procaine penicillin. At first jab she took off like one of those vertical take-off jets with the syringe still sticking out of her shoulder.

Next attempt I plunged in the needle and dived for cover, then when the dust had settled I returned to push in the plunger.



I hope he adopts a bit more finesse with his human patients

If in doubt consult the locals. They know how to deal with cows and you won't find a vet in a hundred miles

A few years back lots of horses died in the Lompagn area. Rumour had it they died of 'Equine Aids' (whatever that might be?) Most probably it was poor or wrong diet. And if you are half starved you can succumb to anything.

Unlike cows or water buffalos, horses need more than just grass - unless it's full of yummy seeds. A horse doesn't have the 4 stomachs of a cow. (No one has ever eaten horse tripe.) So you can't just park it in the field and

expect it to be full.



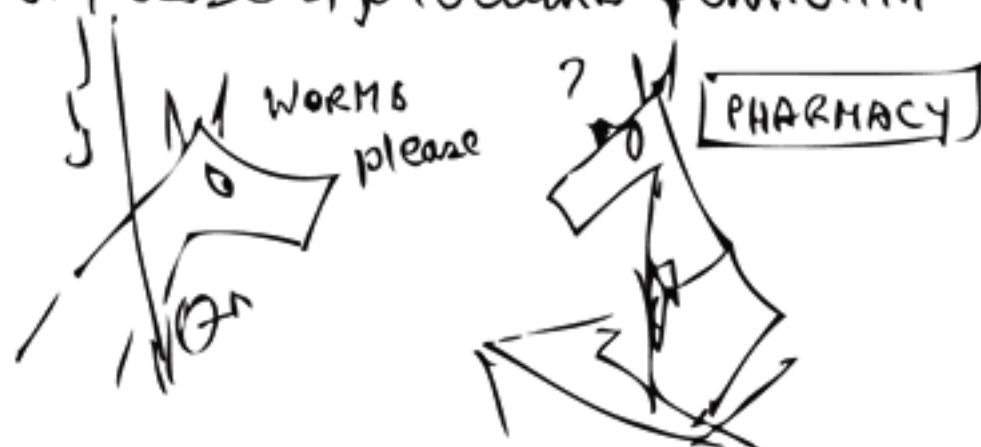
I expect he's been at the date an' cheese sandwiches again





if you spot little wormy things wriggling in the crap, de-worm

the nags. Any pharmacy will sell you worm pills. Double the dose for humans. You may have difficulty describing WORMS in Thai - I say 'SAI DUAN' - although I think these are really Lugworms that fishermen use as bait. Oh well! Do a weekly anal spray with dilute Dettol. If you see an anal boil, blood oozing out. Smear on antibiotic cream. Give a LOT of Antibiotic in the corn "Genarmycin" (soluble Tetracycline) - and - brave you - you may have to inject a big dose of procaine penicillin



In the hilltop village in Umbria where I lived in a ruined tower with Ronclimella - a mule (well, it's a $\frac{1}{2}$ horse), Nazarena ruled she kept the only village syringe in a blackened kettle. It was as warped as the heads of some of the babies she delivered. Village gossip claimed she was too heavy with the birthing tongs. Nazarena had



wearing the rest of the boots ever since.

'Hey Luv, remember me - eh?'



been dumped off an American army truck at the end of the war - together with a sack of army boots. Boots served as a dowry to secure Fiori (a tiny red-haired man) and the village had been



Nazarena claimed to have been an army nurse but English - limited to "Hey Luv, - come back see me soon yes" - made one wonder if she had 'un autre talent.'?

Nazarena volunteered to act as my nurse but I declined, although she would have come in useful in Rome where I had to inject daily my huge, overweight landlady. Spuria was so big she could no longer squeeze out of her door and had to deliver orders to shops in Via Colonna by yelling out of the window and lowering a basket on a string. Daily she thumped on my double door and strode in carrying an ancient syringe, lifted up her voluminous skirts, crouched over the end of my bed and cried 'Fai, Dottore, FAI!' ('Do it') Before I arrived various foreign lodgers had delivered the dose and on my first occasion she reached back and introduced me to her backside. 'I call it the Internazionale,' she told me, and gazing at it I wondered if I would discover messages and dates -- 'Gunter, 1943'

-- pricked out on the flabby acres of padded flesh.





If the nags are all colour - I crush up some paracetamol with a couple of 500mg Amoxycilin. We used to try mixing it with the feed but they got wise to that - so now we wipe it into their mouths - and a lot goes in. If they have taken a fall and have a leg swelling - give them a lick of crushed paracetamol and 20mg piroxicam. Rub in some strong linament (The sort boxers use) and cover with a tight-ish elastic tubular bandage. I need hardly tell



you that linament is for external use. On Simelev Island (off Sumatra) - where the local population had to endure my ministrations one old boy kept coming back for more of Sloane's Linament. 'What do you do - drink it?' I joked 'yes' he smiled. I only hope the Imam approved.

When I was little I was tempted to eat shoe polish - the smell was delicious - but the flavour failed to come up to expectations. Thus at an early age I learned that reality rarely comes up to expectation. It turned me into a pessimist, but then as T S Eliot says, 'pessimism is reality, optimism is speculation and speculation is a mere abstraction'. But then T.S. didn't ride horses. I only admire one poet who did - Byron. Byron has always been my hero - idealist, revolutionary, satirist, poet --- Byron rode everything on four legs and on two! - Yes, Lord B. was a real (w)hore-rider.



-- And if the leg seems seriously damaged inside wrap it in (soaked) Plaster of Paris bandage (Most towns have a pharmacy that supplies hospitals who sell this)

In general treat the nags as a larger version of yourself. If they are larger, that is.



snake bites and pesticides
Usually the snakes will get out of
the way but if they don't - well that's
a good reason for wearing boots. Not
that it'll help Horsey. All you can
do is give it some anti-histamine
pills and hope.

Spitting Cobras
are particularly
unpleasant to
encounter. Locals
call them the Two-Step
snake - Two steps later and you're dead.



And then there's the crop spraying
season when the locals spray with
gusto whole hillsides - using every
lethal chemical they can get hold of
So if Horsey munches something and
starts choking, fast breathing, eyes
wide --- try to get it to
drink and to swallow
some anti-histamine
pills. Horsey is a big
fellow and will usually
recover



WORDS OF COMMAND

I'm often astonished by the language used on horses (and other riders), by the most genteel ladies. My nag (admittedly with a bit of encouragement from moi, I overtook a very prim and proper Englishwoman on a sudden uphill track outside Rome. I couldn't believe the names she called me. Admittedly she got plastered all over with wet mud but I felt that hardly justified the abuse.



Disgusting
- The things
she calls
me!

the local word
among the hill
tribes to make
nag go faster -
is JAH! (that's
it - Like Jar)

This seems to get them
going but as yet they
haven't invented a

word to make them stop - so they don't!
Fortunately my nag has acquired a
limited understanding of English and
when the speedometer reads 45 and
there is a 60° downhill slope ahead and
I yell 'stop you f...., will you!' -
He obeys with amazing intuitiveness.

NAG ROMANCE

chere madame
permettez moi
un petit
embrace



oh, qui
monsier
vous êtes
très
Romantique



my!
oh my!

Sorry to dissappoint all you good folks but,
for 'equine romance' read 'P... in a Field.'
When I was a boy I had a pal whose
Dad managed a breeding stud farm for
Oppenheimer - the diamond magnate - near
Newmarket. the neatly fenced pastures
were full of beautiful mares either
pregnant or waiting to be
'embraced' by a champion thoroughbred
stallion. These horny Harry's had earned
the privilege of 'embracing' the Ladies
by winning the Cheltenham Plate or the
Derby.



'madam, permit me to
present my credentials'
oh - is that what
you call it'

These lusty lads also earned their owners a fortune for each privileged 'embrace' they undertook. However the young ladies had to be in the mood else they might land a damaging kick on the station's highly valued venerables

madame
I am
having
problems
with my
metal compass



Can it
still
point
north?

To minimize
this happening
an old lame,
half-blind pit
pony called

Taffy who had

spent his working life in the welsh coal mines now in retirement spent his days testing the romantic mood of the ladies; Taffy on one side of a fence, the mare on the other. should she back up against the rails and look coy - Taffy, by now 5 legged would attempt to battle his way through the railings to finally secure the only victory of his life. Alas - he performed his duty gladly but never recieved his reward,



Images of
an explicit
nature are
prohibited!

There is this story about King Edward 7th
and one of his mistresses, Lily Langtry

King Ed: 'I've
spent enough on
you to build a
battle ship,
Lily: 'You've
spent enough
in me to sink
one.'

EASY come
EASY go'



coming in
again
my dear.

So forget all this Beatrix Potter stuff -
there is no woo-ing, no sharing, no
caring, no kissing -- even swans and
orang-utans show more affection. I'm not
sure about fish?'

Or is it just my
horses. Perhaps
I don't show them
enough affection



Are they deprived of love? Oh, dear - it's
worse than dogs except horses don't do it
in the middle of the road or stay locked
together afterwards thinking "I wish it were over

and we
could get
back to
biting
postmen!"



should use
a zebra
crossing

they simply have
no road sense

Ah - yes -- that alluring verb 'EMBRACER'



when I lived in the ancient Moroccan city of Fez - in the lee of the Rif mountains, Rashid and I rode our horses over the 'bled' (the

plains) to the hot spring of Houlay Yacoub where in the steaming sulphurous waters the sick men of Fez came to be healed and to cry 'Allah Akbar' to the crescent moon. As we rode up, a wiry gypsy woman tattooed in henna, grabbed our reins and tried to lead us to some shacks crying,



"Vous aimez embracer les filles, j'ai tous, j'ai tous," and as Rashid protested we need a bath after our ride she persisted 'Embracer, embracer. APRES embracer vous baignez.' It was only as I swam in the hot sulphur waters I realised what she meant. Men swam here to be cured of the clap - or to stop them getting it. I tried not to swallow.

During my medical studies we were introduced to a Victorian scientist called Rottschild who dedicated his life to determining how much sperm various animals produced. (Perhaps he was kin to the banking family - and was making a sperm bank - ha ha!) Anyway his results included:- A cockerel .4cc, A human 4cc, A wild boar 250cc, A bull 1000cc --- the list went on. I don't think he ever got around to tigers, elephants, giraffes or gorillas - or perhaps he was killed in the attempt - but just how do you collect sperm from a wild boar?



'Now fill this
There's a good fellow'

Imagine being
confronted by
a pair of tusks
as sharp as
cut-throat
razors!

Can one stoop down, get to grips with the 'thing' and say 'Now then, please oblige me with a sample of your best triple AAA!'

Actually one of our more eccentric profs
did tell us how to act when charged by
a wild boar. During most of the lectures
he talked about Tiger hunting in the punjab
or playing polo but his instructions
re-wild boar were; - Lie flat on your
chest so it can't get its tusks under
to rip your guts open!

I nearly had to put this

to the test in

the Solomon Islands. We visited a
remote mountain village where a man
had just been slashed to death (in the
groin) by a huge wild boar. The village
insisted I join the hunting party out
for revenge. I wouldn't have minded if
someone had given me a suit of armour
and the hunters AK 47 ryles - but all
they had were wooden spears. When

the beast
charged,
tusks tossing
hunters leaping
spears thrusting
I looked for a
tree to climb
but there were
no branches.



Feasting on wild boar is not so tasty as you might assume. The hunters build a fire and toss a lot of stones in it to heat up. Meanwhile piggy is chopped into a million tiny bits each wrapped in a banana leaf, then these tidbits are cooked in the hot stones which means you sit around waiting for 12 hours before Lucky Dip time - you unwrap your banana leaf to find a splodge of yellow fat with a few spiky hairs. Pig eating is almost as bad in my Lahu village - a stew of greasy bony blobs. What we need is a good T.V celebrity chef to show them how to roast a pig properly. At the Leper colony we tried, teaching the cook how to dress a boar's head. We told him to put green stuff on its head and an orange in its mouth - but he got these directions a bit mixed up and put the grass on his own head, with an orange in his mouth.



NAGS AND The Soul

I once asked a buddhist monk if plants had souls. He didn't reply I thought it a reasonable question - after all forest trees are sometimes ordained and have saffron robes wrapped around them. So - if the trees are now monks - surely they must have a soul. On the other hand I once saw the monks ordaining a cement mixer during Temple renovations and I would hesitate before suggesting there was a spiritual side to cement mixers. Trees are different

Now I didn't see you in church today 😊 father?



Yes, Trees are different. In Nigeria the Yoruba tribe believe the spirits of unborn babies live in the trees and pregnant moms-to-be pray to the trees to send them a nice - not a naughty spirit for their baby.

While we are talking about trees - and perhaps I may be excused since my name Aikman means in Scottish OAK MAN or the more hearty 'Man of OAK' - but names can be misleading. Take my aunt's uncle, The Composer Edward German. One could be forgiven thinking he had been busy trotting out 'Deutsche Uber Alles,' instead, utterly english he wrote those patriotic songs we sang at school music lessons - 'Who were the yeomen, the yeomen of England - tra la la ..' Anyway - in the yard outside my hut stands a tree I name the Go-to-Bed tree (Leguminosae Nod-off) since its leaves all fold up precisely at 5.17 pm each day, which is the signal for me to crack open a can of Chang beer and raise it towards Nod-off



But how does it know it's 5.17? Tell me that Wikipedia I'm not sure when Nod-off wakes up in the morning and opens its leaves again as I am still snug in bed trying to locate BBC World Service on my Radio and only getting crackles.

Now when I was mis-diagnosing on Simelev Island and spied a queue of victims, (I mean patients), 30 yards long waiting for my morning surgery, I sometimes slipped out the back and fled to the beach where two trees stood entwined. One was a pandanus but the other dropped beautiful pinkish scented lily flowers in a carpet on the grass - like a votive offering of love. Only you never saw lilies growing on the tree - but there each dawn (No Kidding) they were covering the ground. There were no other trees nearby and unless water-buffaloes shit lilies where else did they come from.

The common name for pandanus is screw pine. Does this reflect its ability to screw or be screwed - Tell me, Wikipedia



the only official Divine Nag belonged to Emperor Caligula who also made him a senator - (so combining church and state). I'm sure dog lovers firmly believe in Poodle Paradise, and when I lived in Tangiers, Jim Wyllie the painter, showed me the Pets' Cemetery on the mountain - (actually a hill where all the snobs live) The cemetery had been started by Barbara Hutton the Woolworth heiress - who had 2 pet dogs to bury. As Wyllie and I surveyed the hill side of tiny tombs, he remarked 'I hear they are looking for a chaplain. I suggest a nice old non-denominational Cocker Spaniel.'



I've even heard of pet churches in California - but I think the congregations must be barking mad!

I've often heard riders refer to their nags in a divine-status sort of way - but if the accompanying threats were anything to go by I am not sure if serious worship was intended

IF there was a horse Jump you x.o!-!!- religion I expect

Caligula would be one of its Saints
After all he did make his Nag a God and a Senator



- a policy the British House of Lords might well adopt since most of the old buffers spend their time there asleep and only wake up to say Neigh (or Aye)

"the Neighs have it"



The only Nag I know of with political convictions was 'Snowball' in Orwell's 'Animal Farm,' and he was sent to the Gulag like a lot of other idealistic marxists in that Soviet utopia of socialism. I joined the party from more practical considerations - DA Pio's restaurant in Venice offered a 30% discount to party members. I once knew an East German student in Nicaragua - we were both working for the Sandinista revolution. He explained 'I used to be a marxist-leninist but that is too bourgeois'. If my Nag adopted a political label it would be 'opportunist.' But I doubt animals have political aspirations. Have you seen a fox on the board of the League against Cruel Sports or a consultant crow among the trustees of the R.S.P.B.? But I can imagine an indignant dolphin causing quite a splash among delegates to the International Whaling commission.



Once, penniless in Rome I briefly became personal Secretary to Count Ungaro - head of the Italian Monarchist Party which controlled all the bar fruit machines. Our first assignment was to interview the animals of the Rome Zoo for their political opinions. We caused the flamingoes to riot, escaped mauling from the Siberian Tiger, were ignored by the morose Gorilla, chased by zoo keepers and finally approached Big George, the baboon. Big George was



pulling at his orange 'a fro' as Ungaro passed his card through the bars with a written request for an interview. B G politely accepted the card, turned it over, studied it and proceeded to eat it slowly.

And if Emperor Caligula's Nag-Senator ever voted on anything while doing duty on the Forum it wasn't recorded in the Rome 'Hansard' of the time.



I've always had a 'soft spot' for Caligula
 as he liked to picnic in hollow trees
 Big Cal and Nag had a favorite tree
 near terracina. He even left a record
 of what he 'noshed on' No baked beans
 or Spam for Big Cal. He was a true Roman
 gourmet :- Dormice cooked in honey,
 parrots casseroted in their plumage. I
 don't know if he shared these arboreal
 feasts with his Divine Nag or if D.N.
 merely grazed outside while within
 Big Cal contemplated more exotic fun
 and games for the Coliseum - provided
 there were any Christian 'volunteers' not
 yet devoured by lions - to perform in the
 fun and games.



In the last - or rather, last-but-one century, Victorians liked to picnic in hollow trees - why, they loved them so much they even turned one into a railway ticket office for the Great Western Railway at Moreton-on-Lugg in Herefordshire - though sadly it was later downgraded to a potting shed where the station donkey dwelled.

I discovered this when my publisher asked me to write a book on tree houses. He said 'Since you write your books in them, you can write

a book on them. During my researches - or more truthfully my typist's researches we found out that Winston Churchill built one in a big Lime tree at Chartwell. He called



'We will fight them in the - -
we will never surrender!'

Good old Winnie



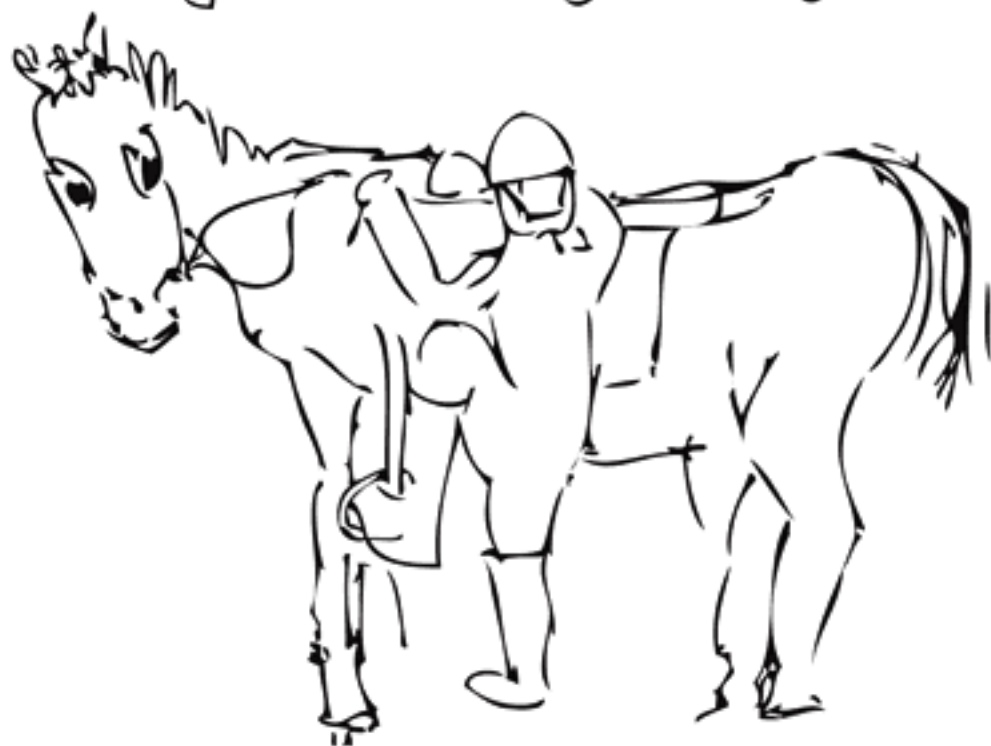
it has aerial study and wrote many of his patriotic speeches in it. The gardener told me that some of them were so fiery that if the pages fluttered to the ground they set the grass on fire!

Now we've already mentioned Pie-balled ponies - but what exactly is a 'Dark Horse' My mother referred to fellow lady golfers who played better than their handicap (and consequently) won tournaments) - as Dark Horses, and I never understood why. I studied them carefully. True, some of them sounded horsey And a few of them (on hot days) smelled horsey but they didn't have hoofs or a tail that I could see. But I was at the age when I believed everything I was told, (and probably still am) - and when my father explained that there was a little fellow living inside the wind up gramophone who sang all the songs, I used to wait for hours in case he came out



The Nag Drivers Manual

climbing aboard - sorry, Mounting the Nag



Grabbing the reins and thrusting your forward foot in the stirrup hoist yourself aboard - swinging the back leg over. And you should end up facing the nags ears and not its rear. If there is no head where you expect one to be - you've done something wrong - try again.

Bloody
beginners



or use a big
rock to stand
on



THE START

Your horse comes with an automatic start supplied. Usually a nudge is all that is needed or perhaps if Nag is in somnambulant mood - an encouraging word like 'Giddy-up'.

The Kick start

only for use in emergencies or on awkward Nags - but rarely advisable as Nag may use the kick start on you in reply.



Which brings me
(for no particular
reason) to a
nonsense rhyme
my mother taught me.
It goes like this.

" One fine day in the middle of the night
Two dead men got up to fight
Two blind men to see fair play,
Two dumb men to shout 'hurrah'.
A paralysed donkey passing by
Kicked the blind man in the eye
Kicked him through a six inch wall
And that's all - - - - - "

Getting into Gear

A horse has 5 gears

Gear 0. Neutral

In this gear the horse is in stationary mode (usually)

Warning: It can easily slip out of this gear!



Engage Gear 0 when climbing on board

And hope it doesn't switch gears in the process



GEAR 1 The Plod



All 4 legs
go into motion
- slowly
while you - -

-- sitting snug in the
saddle, reins loose
are idly watching
the country side
amble by ---



When suddenly

and without warning (apart from the
sound of a helicopter taking off - along
comes



the demon motor-
bike rider,
And Nag without
any consultation
with its trusty rider



goes into
orbit!



Great 2 THE TROT
 The Trot comes in 2 forms:-
 the jiggle-joggle, bone and arse shaker
 SLOW trot



And when you
 tire of having
 your stomach
 stuck in your
 throat - speed
 up just a fraction

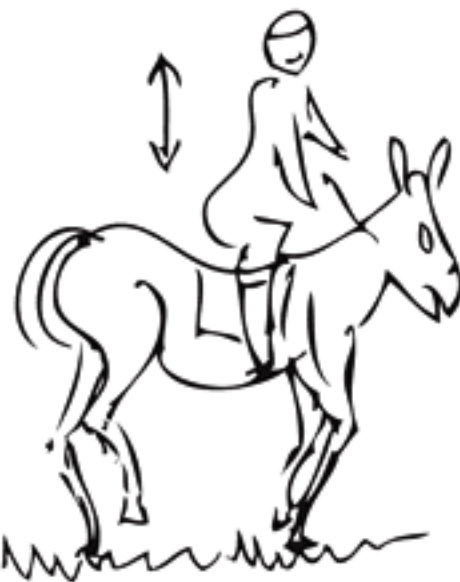
into the stately waltz of a trot where
 - pushing down on the stirrups and
 gripping nag with your knees - you
 rise UP and DOWN gracefully in the
 saddle (or try to)

chanting in rhythm

EinZ - ZveI

EinZ - ZveI

which sounds far
 classier than merely
 ONE-TWO, which
 perhaps explains
 why the Krauts
 always win at Dressage



Gear 3 The Canter

Don't - if you have any say in the matter
Switch into Gear 3 when you are going
down a 60° slope. On the Level or uphill
Canter to your hearts content or until
nag says 'Neigh' more.

The Charleston - anyone who has seen
the film 'The Great Gatsby' or cavorted
around the dance floors in the '20's,
will be familiar with the gymnastics
- Toes IN, Knees IN - Charleston! -
Charleston! Apply this to riding -
you may end up bow legged but it
should improve your grip



So, happy Cantering
And try to stay on
top of things --
-- Woops!

Gear 4 the Gallop

Just
forget
everything
and
HANG ON



And if you
can't and

The brakes fail - just hope for a soft
and friendly landing



Naturally, once rid of you the Nag will
switch to Gear 0 and resume its grazing
mode while waiting for you to decide
which part of your anatomy is hors
de combat!

he loves his
froggy expressions

WARNING: The Reverse Gear

Yes - there is a Reverse Gear which can 'Kick IN' unexpectedly. Don't mess with it.

Swimming: Nags like a dip too, and it's a good opportunity to scrub them down. Trouble is that after a good soak they ruin everything by getting out and rolling in the mud.

P.S. Please remember to take off their saddles



Brakes and Steering

Unfortunately the modern 4 gear model does not come supplied with either brakes or steering. Not - unless your nag is very short of stature can you put your feet down and DIG IN! No - you must brake by hauling in on the reins - which if successfully connected to the bit may bring horsey to a HALT (or may NOT) well - if you had 6" of chain stuffed up your jaws and someone yanked on it - I dare say you'd stop - sorry to object.



'xyz! - x!' steering

As long as your reins aren't crossed (which is confusing to Nag) - if you tug on the side you wish to go - it will usually head that

way. The only steering problem arises if it decides not to - And it has the advantage of having more feet on the ground, and being a lot stronger than you!



So if Nag wishes to dive down some side path throttled with bamboo or low boughs and you can't pull it back on course - you may be better off steering it around in a complete circle - this usually makes Horsey realise who is master and avoids you having your throat slit or eyes torn out by spiky bamboo shoots



Of course if a double-decker bus happens to be passing while you are navigating this intricate and unpredictable manoeuvre - well let's hope it isn't - eh which brings us on to the next topic 'First Aid'

First Aid + (For you not the Nag)
 It's when you haven't got your 1st Aid
 kit handy that you'll need it - SOB'S LAW

Iodine, plasters, a bandage, scissors
 anti-histamine cream for stings



You may want to take your mobile phone.
 I knew a girl in Italy who suffered a
 ruptured spleen from a fall. Her mobile
 phone saved her life (unfortunately
 up in these hills we are out of range)

Hallo - I'm phoning
 on behalf of my rider
 who appears to have
 fallen fast asleep



Riding TANDEM

Hill horses simply aren't designed to be Two SEATERS. Those of you who have seen the film 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid' may recall scenes when Redford and Newman (both big guys) ride, double-up for what seems days on one inexhaustable horse. It must have been a big horse - if you double-up on a Thai horse the one at the back is perched over the tail and the one at the front sits between its ears. And then there is the dilemma - who does the steering - the one at the front or the one at the back?



At Olgiata's - a fancy riding establishment outside Rome the instructor, a Hungarian ex-cavalry officer, Count Houdini, had escaped the Russian invasion in '56 with his one prized possession - his saddle.



He rode with a ramrod straight back and whenever he spied me in Gear 2 - he cried out 'Einz-Zwei, Einz-Zwei'. He told me I rode as if I was in an armchair and considering the horrendous obstacle courses he led us over an armchair seemed the safest bet.

The good Count would have regarded the Charge of the Light Brigade as a good afternoon's sport. I spent most of our rides with closed eyes not wishing to see depths of ditches, heights of tree trunks, gate bales or any other interesting obstacles he delighted in leading us over (or under).



onward the light
brigade, gallant
the charge they
made --
Noble
six hundred

Not me - shoot the
silly buggar on
my back --



Horses - they say - have remarkable memories. So do mules. When I bought my ruined tower in Umbria I also acquired Rondinella - my mule. (All mules in Italy seem to be called Rondinella.) Everyone in the village had a mule as there was no road to speak of, and mules came in handy to haul out timber, carry supplies etc. My particular needs included sand, cement, beams - which wasn't what Rondinella envisaged carrying when we first became acquainted.



In the winter evenings Ron and I ambled down to Montefranco for a few glasses of local plonk at Paolo's cafe. Time to go and all I had to do was stay in the saddle while R plodded up through the snow, and gaze at the star spangled sky.



There was another Rondinella who was the Post office mule. Three times a week the post office at Ferentillo in the valley far below, loaded Rondinella's saddle bag with mail, slipped its rump and the mule made its way up the mountain to our piazza where Canzio came out of his shop, took the mail, replaced it with outgoing mail, gave the mule a drink at the well and pointed it back downhill. When they finally turned the track into a road, Romy was replaced by Mario on his vespa but there was no marked improvement in reliability. I avoided Ferentillo Post Office for when I first arrived in the village, Mario - Mayor of Ferentillo came up for a visit. I was filthy, dust everywhere. Mario inquired after my 'Mezzè di vivere' (cash flow income)

Not wishing to give too much away I told him I was retarded. Unfortunately my Italian was not too good and by mistake I used the word RETARDED. 'Non, Non' said Mario, clearly alarmed. 'Si Si' I insisted unaware of my error. Mario



made a hasty exit, but word must have got around. On my very first visit to Ferentillo Post office I inquired if

There were any other foreigners in the area. The wry postmistress shook her head, then grabbing my wrist led me outside and pointed up the mountain to where my tower was clearly visible. 'But there is a crazy englishman living up there' she tapped her head 'Pazo (crazy), Pazo!'.

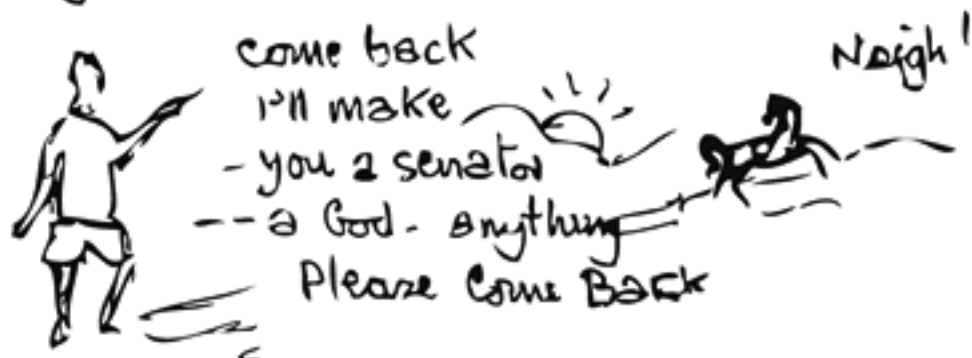


Setting off - and about time too, you'll say. But don't forget to offer a prayer to St Jude or appropriate deities on Mount Olympus - Legendary home of the God. As for an oblation to Big Cal? - I'm not sure if he actually made it to Olympus. There was a lot of competition to become a God in those days.

But wait - a word of warning about the dangers that may befall you. Low boughs for instance - they may be lower than they seem - so DUCK or you may become one of the legendary headless riders



And when you stop for a swim in some remote creek don't forget to tie up Nag's rope while he grazes or you may emerge dropping to discover a long walk home awaits you



Spooked!

The slightest sudden, unexpected movement
can spook horsey - a butterfly darting out
from a bush, a cat jumping onto the track

a ball thrown,
a firecracker

tossed - and
if you see a
'posse' of unruly
looking motor-
bike riders -

boozed-up
with the bikes

parked all over the place, waving their
arms and cheering as you approach -
remember this - they have no idea that
their efforts to spook you on are more likely
to have them end up in hospital with a worse

headache than
they'll get
from
swigging
meths

-- And you may
have to foot
their medical
bills!



No - you needn't worry about being waylaid by bandits - the greatest threats are western tourists on huge off-road motorbikes, making a noise like a helicopter gunship and speeding along without a thought for who or what may lie ahead - cows, kids or mounted Nags. All you can do is pull up at the side and whisper sweet nothings into Horsey's ear and hope he won't turn into a bucking bronco. Ah - but you do have a hidden weapon - Revenge! For these off-piste routes are often marked by green or red arrows on plastic cards so what's to stop you indulging in a little re-routing so the arrows point up perilous paths ending on precipitous cliff-tops - he he!!



It's when Horsey is performing
cartwheels you realise the advantage
of a Long mane. Something to grab
useful too when mounting a near
vertical bank.



And if you are
cantering over rough
ground - keep an
eye spying for holes
- Horsey will be sure
to spot them, but that
may mean an unexpected
SWERVE! woops!



And when you come
to the bank of a pretty
Stream - remember -
Stream can be deeper
than they appear



And although Nags are sure footed, stones in streams are slippery - so be careful; you don't want Nag to come a cropper! If in doubt - dismount.

My Nag likes an occasional swim and decided to join the rest of us in a deep pool one hot afternoon. But the strong current took it by surprise. Trying to get away it caught its hind foot in a stirrup and went under. We managed to drag it out onto a sandbank but it looked pretty far gone. This was the first time I performed a mouth to mouth job (Kiss of Life not Kiss of Love) - on a horse. And it's challenging trying to blow air into a set of clenched teeth or nostrils as big as tennis balls. Suddenly however its eyes focused and it broke into the most welcome Neigh I've ever heard - Hurrah for the Neigh!



P.S 'Lady' has had a 'little Lady' but we don't know who the Dad is? The Nag lab. is coming to do a DNA test - well, there are paternity obligations to consider. Meanwhile the local magistrate has ordered an identity parade - - - -



In Classical times they blamed it on the NORTH Wind, you know.



This book has
been passed by
the Equine Board
of Censors
'Neigh'

Published
Books by the
same author
include



Fiction:

Loaves of Segada
Eye of Itza
Brokers of Doom
The Pavang
Jim Tully

Medical:

Broken Guts

Film:

The Genesis Children

Non-Fiction:

Treehouses

Social Issues:

The Black Swan
Boy, Doc and the
GREEN Man

Religion:

Tea For Who

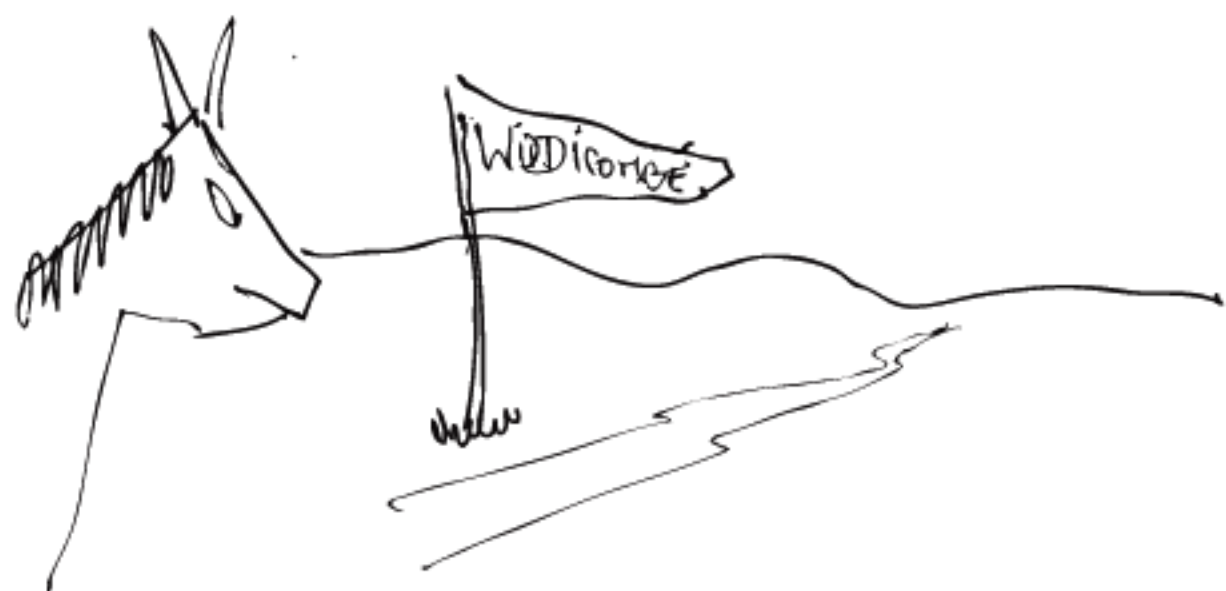
Radio:

The Firestarter etc

SCREENPLAY:

ByRON

Many of the published (and unpublished)
works can be read on screen or freely
downloaded from www.anthonysikeman.co.uk



Tom Pierce, Tom Pierce
Lend me your grey mare
All along, out along -
- down along Lee
For we're off to go to
Widdicombe fair

With George Bush, Bin Laden
John Gilpin, Clarke Gable,
Harold Wilson, Isaac Newton
Kit Marlowe - - - -

And Uncle Tom Cobby and all
And Uncle Tom Cobbley and all - - -



BAMBOO WATCH



Hi, I'm Joy

And I'm
Andrew



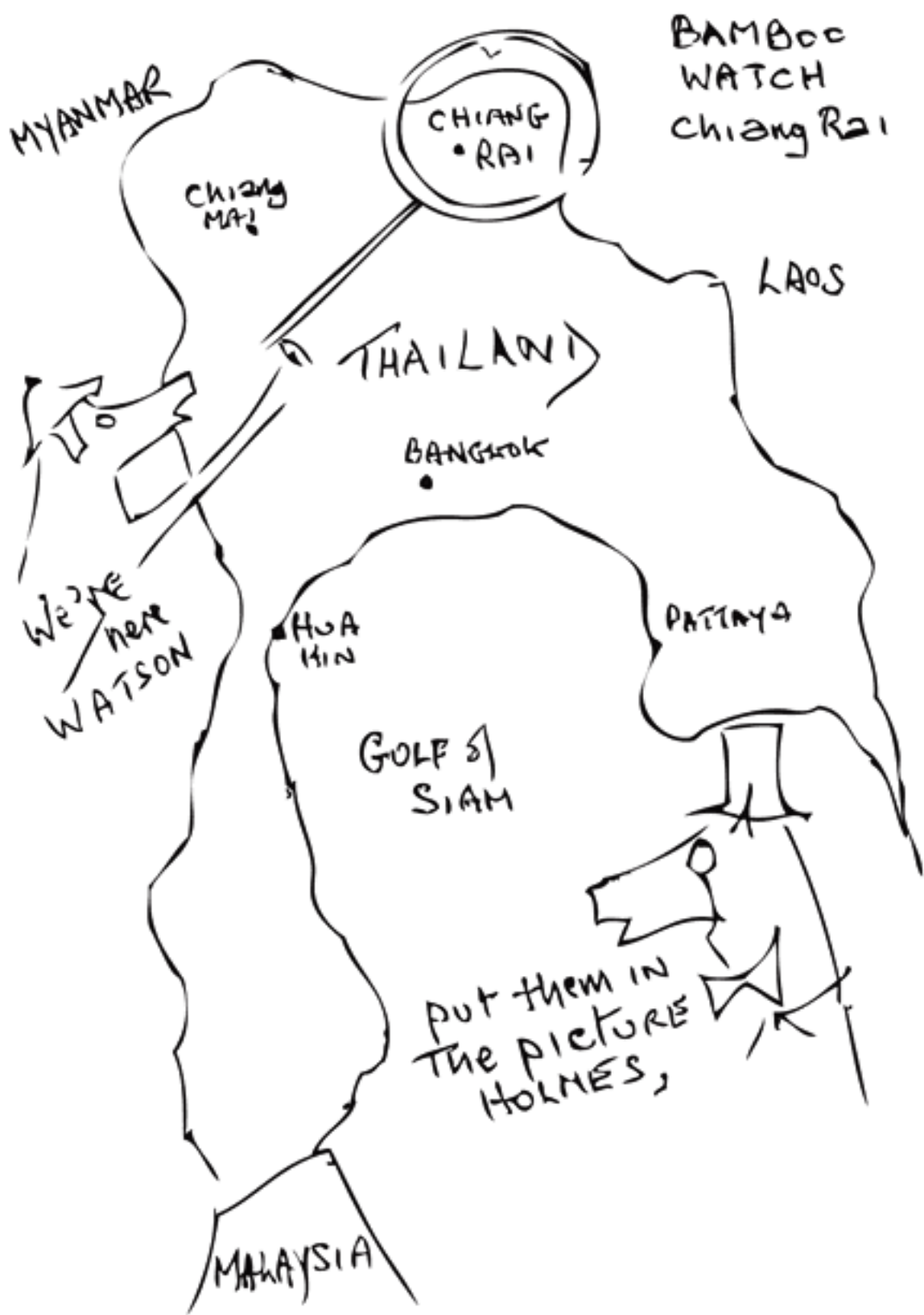
AND This is GRAN,

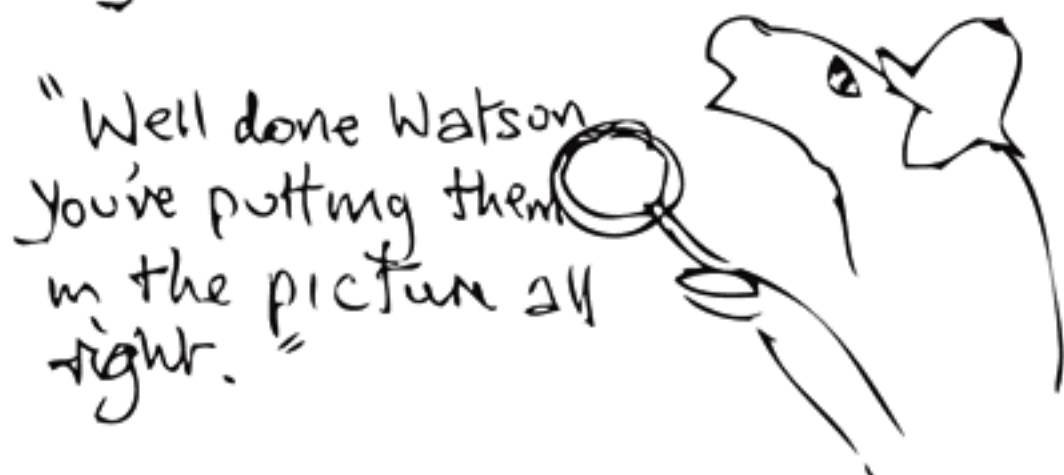


One of more than 100 Grannies
aunties, Grandpops - All Volunteers



who Look after our aids orphaned
Kids, all over, north Thailand







Who love
them, Who
feed them
and who
take them to school.



-- And who make sure they
take their medicine.



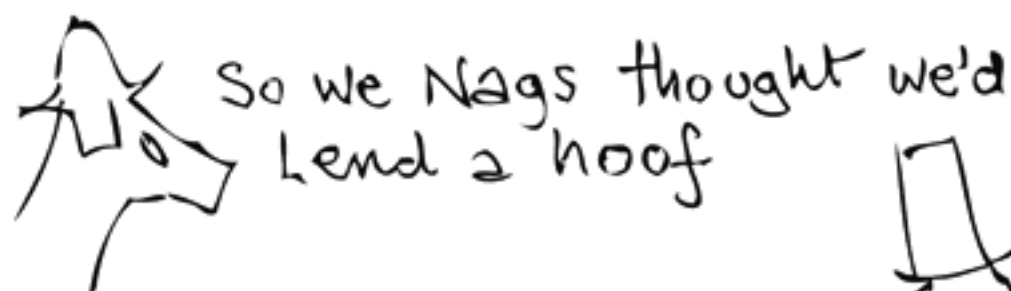
meanwhile back at
base in Chiang Rai

ANDREW AND JOY ---

Are busy working hard



or Joy IS.

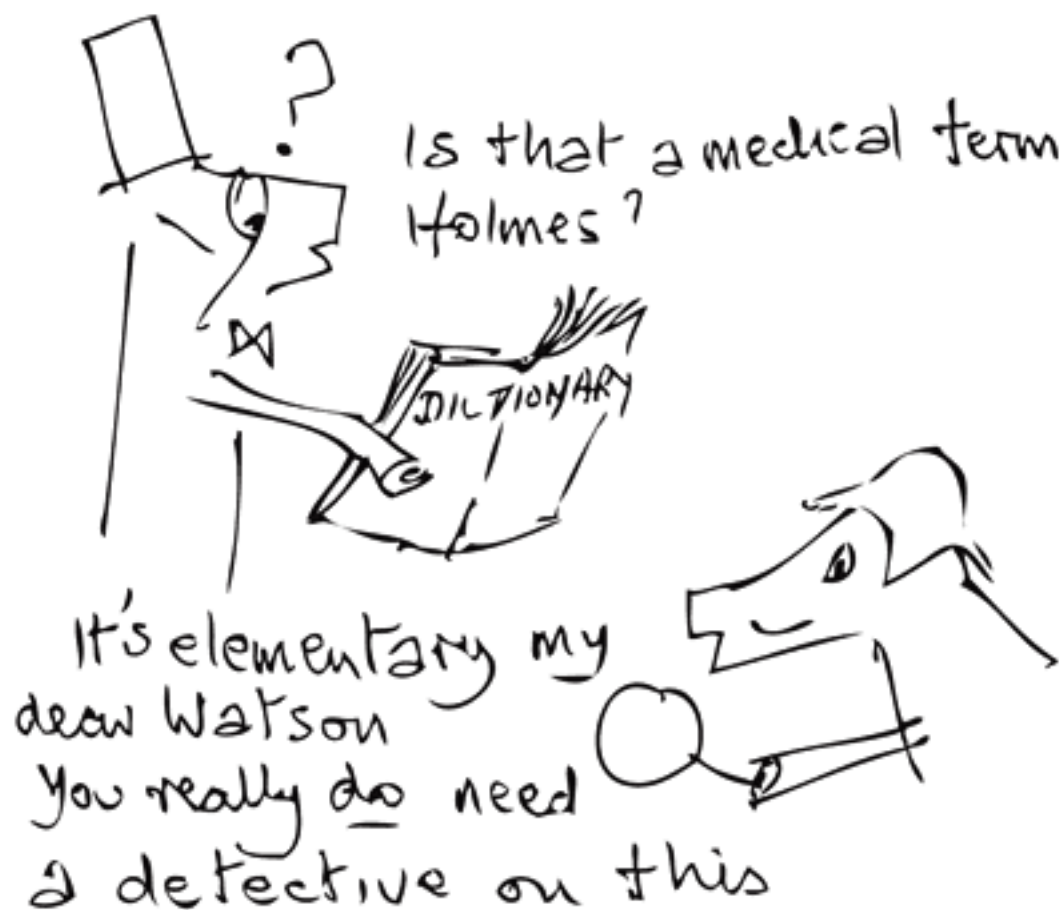
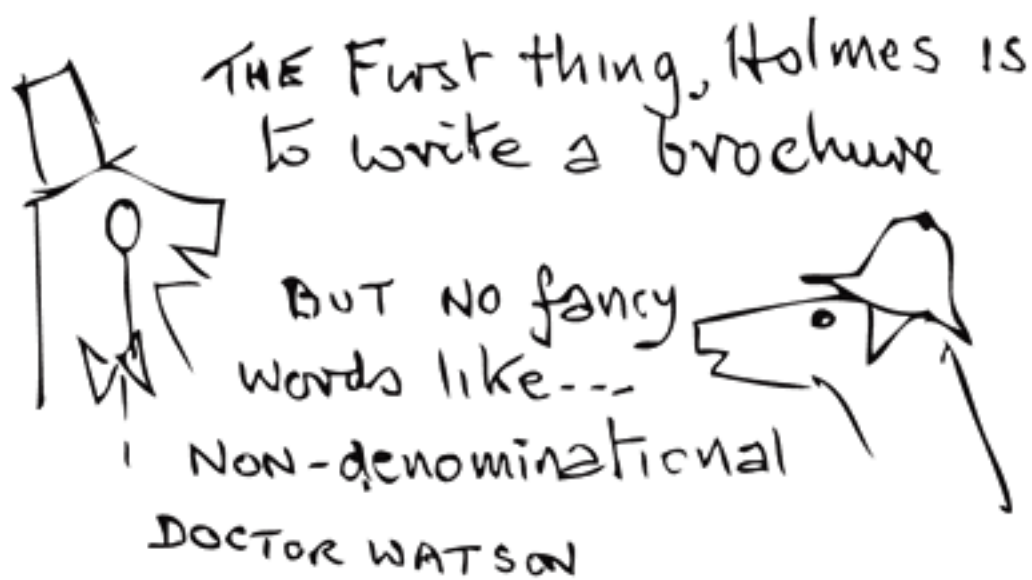


So we Nags thought we'd
Lend a hoof

All those in favour
Say 'Neigh'

Neigh Neigh Neigh.







you see we nags wear
ALL hats

Even toppers and deerstalkers



But it all costs
money, Holmes

DON'T WORRY
WATSON...
I'm onto it



After all I've solved
trickier cases
Than this

You see, Holmes

The Grannies
need money

for food,

clothes for the

kids, school uniforms, books,
sweets...



We'll send out an
appeal Watson

TA - We'll get

all the WINDY NAGS

To help -- "BAMBOO WATCH"

Joy



ANDREW

GRANNIES



KIDS





It's elementary dear
Watson,

Anyone who
buys Windy NAGS



or downloads it from the
web can contribute just a bit.



And all those little bits
add up -- eh so write
down the following:-

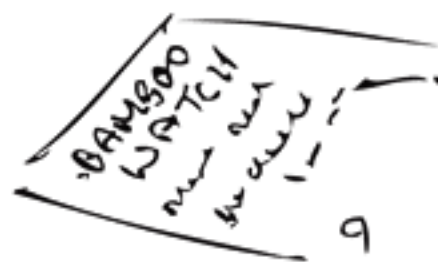
How to Contact BAMBOO WATCH,

How to buy a copy of Windy NAGS,

How to download Windy Nags,

How to contribute to BAMBOO
WATCH ---

Steady on,
Holmes



"Windy Nags" is published in association with
Bamboo Watch Foundation



www.bamboowatch.org

Bamboo Watch is a foundation registered in Thailand.
Registered number: 114/2552 & CR 009/2551



If there was ever a horse for a thrillingly delightful course, then Anthony Aikman is probably it!

Doctor, author, humanitarian, linguist, traveler, raconteur and equestrian. As particular breeds go I fear the line from which Anthony comes is gradually petering out - that of old school selfless values, honour and mild eccentricity. Through the writings of Austin, Byron, Trollope, RS Surtees, Conrad and the like, we have often been introduced to an Anthony - well, this is a live one!

This dotty little book is not only a fun-reflection upon his love of horses, but also allows us to peek into his paddock where we find him grazing on modestly, humour and gentle humility.

That Anthony is also an Associate Trustee of Bamboo Watch, (aka, a 'BAT') gives us all great pleasure.

Andrew Preston
Bamboo Watch Foundation
Chiang Rai - May 2009.

Bamboo Watch Foundation (BWF)

First established in 2006, Bamboo Watch received official Thai government foundation status in January 2009.

BWF is providing scholarship-education and practical local-support to underprivileged HIV/AIDS infected or effected children within the Chiang Rai Province.

The number of children sharing in BWF programmes is currently 216; the youngest 5 years old - the oldest 19.

Children usually live in their family villages with surviving relatives, most often grandparents; they attend local or nearby schools and grow up with their childhood friends.

BWF operates throughout all 18 of the Chiang Rai municipal districts and works with over 100 schools.

Committed to working closely with the region's social, economic and environmental fabric, BWF's admin and study-centre nestles amidst rolling farmlands six kilometers north west of Chiang Rai City.

BWF funding relies entirely upon the generosity of donations and sponsorship.



Covering an area of 11,700 sq km Chiang Rai is the 12th largest and most northerly of Thailand's 76 provinces. Population: 1.5 million approx.

The Province is almost entirely rural and rich in cultural diversity. The economy and general way of life is geared to farming and agriculture.

For all its gentle charm and natural beauty the province has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Thailand; a legacy inherited by ever more children.

The exact number of HIV/AIDS infected or effected children within the province is currently unknown.

Jatiya Honrachaiya (Khun Joy) - Director BWF



Originally from Phetchburi Province, Khun Joy worked in design and advertising for a number of years before joining an HIV/AIDS NGO in Phuket - she took over day-to-day management of the fledgling Chiang Rai project in early 2006. She is a founding trustee of BWF.

Andrew Preston - Stable-lad and panhandler.



Andrew came a cropper off a motorbike just outside Chiang Rai during a wander of Asia in January 2008 - avoiding a dog! During the month it took him to recover his dignity he met Khun Joy and learned of her wonderful work. Andrew has been mucking-in, and out, ever since. He is a founding trustee of BWF.

How to receive a copy of "Windy Nags."

The book or CD :

1. email to: windynags@bamboowatch.org
2. provide your name and postal address.
3. request book or CD.
4. your request will be acknowledged.
5. send a donation to BWF of not less than GBP10 - EUR 15 - USD 20 : postage is inclusive.
6. email us advising that your donation along with the amount has been made.
7. your copy of "Windy Nags" will be dispatched by registered post within 28 days.
8. a receipt for your donation will be issued by electronic mail.

How to make a donation to BWF?

1. email to: ap@bamboowatch.org
2. please provide your name and postal address.

How to fund a Bamboo-shoot.

A Bamboo-shoot parent, (BSP) will provide annual support and school scholarship funding for one or more particular children for the duration of their education. BWF will propose the Bamboo-shoot, yet it is left entirely to the individual child to decide what level of contact they wish to have with their BSP. This includes whether or not a photograph of the child is provided. For more information please contact: jatiya@bamboowatch.org

BAT for Bahts - what is a BAT and how to become one.

A 'BAT' is a Bamboo-Watch Associate Trustee - who within their social and business environment will help raise awareness of, and funding for, Bamboo Watch Foundation. aka - a networking thing. For more information on how 'BATS for Bahts' works please contact: ap@bamboowatch.org

Thanks for wading through all this !

Bamboo Watch general information:

Foundation registered number:

114/2552 & CR 009/2551

Registered office:

590/3 Pahonyotin Road.,
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Chiang Rai 57000
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Aree Imratanaruk
Andrew Preston
Jatiya Honrachaiya (Director)

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P.O. Box 29
Chiang Rai 57000
Thailand

Banking:

Bank name: KASIKORNBANK

Bank address: Chiang Rai, 57000, Thailand

A/C name: Bamboo Watch Foundation

A/C number: 154-2-97891-7

Swift code: KASITHBK

Anthony Aikman



Dotty, fun, anecdotal and informative - "Windy Nags" is a tale of equestrian adventures from the author of "Broken Guts".

"Windy Nags" is published in association with the Bamboo Watch Foundation.

Requeste to author are wlcome at www.anthonyaikman.co.uk

Horse photos have been taken from the internet and every endeavor has been made not to infringe copyrights - thanks in advance to the photographers and our apologies if we have.