

2010 Clicker Training Course at Oakfield Farm

Thursday June 10th 7pm to Sunday June 13th 2010

Alexandra Kurland is visiting the UK teaching a series of courses and we have been fortunate enough to get her to come to Oakfield Farm again. This year's course is a 3½ day course starting on the Thursday evening with the introductory "round the table" talk. This introduction gets more important each year as people progress in their journey through clicker training.

Alexandra was a pioneer of clicker training for horses and we have been lucky enough to do several courses with her over the last few years which has made a big difference to our communication with the horses we have been working with at Oakfield. Training becomes easier and quicker and problem horses become nice 4 legged people to be around. She has Icelandics and is used to working with them as well as all breeds of horses.

The big difference with clicker training is that it is all positive reinforcement based and there is no "punishment" involved at any stage, just a positive reward or the lack of that reward. The horses love it and end up wanting to be trained and wanting to be worked. The clicker is a marker signal that allows you to accurately say to the horse "yes, that was what I wanted" in far less time than it takes to say the word "yes". This precision of marking allows you to "capture" the exact behaviour that you want and then put it on cue.

Alex is teaching a "follow on" course at Oakfield this year but don't let this put you off, if you haven't worked with her before try and come along to Oakfield before she's here and we'll get you started with some of the work she teaches, there are a series of books and DVDs that she has produced, working through these will help get you up to speed.

This preparation will mean you get a lot more out of the course with her and don't get overloaded on the first day.

The course will start Thursday evening at 7pm with the introductory session where Alex will find out your starting points and you will get to know each other. Holding this session in the evening gives is another half day of time on the course to learn about clicker work and to work with the horses.

The 3 day "follow on" course, June 11th to 13th. **(Friday, Saturday, Sunday)**

This is where Alex will take you on into the more advanced exercises that she uses with the clicker. She has developed a programme of exercises that are "clicker compatible" and bases a lot of her ridden work on John Lyons's work. She also uses a lot of the body control/balance exercises taken from Tai Chi by James Shaw and others. This composite programme will allow you to train your horse to become a willing partner who wants to work with you and be ridden.

People on this course with horses have all previously worked with Alex, the horse places filled with the same people as last year so there is excellent continuity.

There are a number of dismounted places available however and you will be a course participant, not just a spectator. Alex teaches a lot of the exercises by getting people to practice the skills on each other and only taking it to the horse when they have the skills solid in their bodies.

The course is much more than "just clicker training", it encompasses a set of clicker compatible exercises that will allow you to improve the way your horse goes or train a young horse from scratch.

Numbers will be limited to 14 on this course (6 ridden places and 8 dismounted places). All the ridden places have gone to the people that rode last year and there are 7 dismounted places left which are open to anyone regardless of previous experience however, if you have been exposed

to Alex's work before, you will get a lot more out of this course and we are happy to help you get started beforehand at Oakfield.

Finally, for those of you who can't get enough while Alex is in the country, there is a course being run at the end of June (24th to 27th) in Yorkshire as a "follow on" course for those who have already been to (at least) one course in 2010. Contact Hilary on hilary@hcross.myzen.co.uk Cherrie and myself are going on this course again which was fantastic last year!

Please visit Alexandra's web site www.theclickercentre.com for more information.

The courses start at 9:00 a.m each morning. The full days run roughly to 5, but may go longer depending upon the size of the clinic, the of horses we have, and the questions that arise during the day.

To book places please e-mail nick@oakfield-icelandics.co.uk and then fill in the form and post it with a deposit cheque.

Nick