

Have you thought about a career with horses?

British grooms are the backbone of the equestrian industry

By Joanne Hooker

The British Grooms Association (BGA) and was founded by former British Team groom Lucy Katan to give grooms a united voice and recognition they deserve.

The BGA strongly believes that grooms are the backbone of the equestrian industry and should be treated as industry professionals. Lucy was inspired to create the worlds only grooms association following a bad experience, "I really enjoyed my job and loved being part of the British Team, however unfortunately there was one particularly nasty employment situation where I was badly bullied at work. This brought to my attention that there was an obvious gap in our equestrian industry" explains Lucy.

Following years of hard work and a successful Grant Application to UnLtd (the Foundation of Social Entrepreneurs) Lucy launched the BGA at Badminton in May 2007. "There are literally thousands of grooms that care for our nations horses and before I formed the BGA they had no official voice and poor recognition for the excellent work that they do" says Lucy.

The mission statement is: "The British Grooms Association exists to enhance, promote and support the careers, working conditions and reputation of grooms both as individuals and as part of a respected profession."

The BGA offers numerous membership benefits but more importantly provides a united voice for grooms working in all disciplines. Among many of its services the BGA offers a free legal helpline courtesy of Morrish Solicitors LLP, something which has proved invaluable for many grooms.

The website is full of useful information about everything ranging from grooming tips and career choices to training and a help for parents page. Alongside this the BGA is continually offering direct support to grooms about a number of topics, including employment issues, an area which is extremely important to grooms welfare.

Lucy has also launched the Equine Skills CV, a record of achievement to document what skills grooms have, "I passionately believe that the job as a groom is one of great skill and knowledge. Any good groom will be a perfectionist,



have sky high attention to detail, be hard working, possess unique stamina and be dedicated to the horses in their care" says Lucy.

The Equine Skills CV is not a qualification, but a record of achievement which allows grooms to receive recognition for skills, achieve a recognised job title to match their experience and ability to identify areas where they excel and

areas they need to build skills. It also gives the employer a better understanding of the grooms skills and level they are working to. There are four levels, Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced and Elite.

In response to the number of grooms who work with no insurance three of the four membership options include SEIB Personal Accident Cover, "We have joined up with SEIB to tackle the worrying amount of grooms who work without any insurance, hence putting their livelihoods at risk. If they are self employed and get injured they will get no money at all" explains Lucy.

"It is so important that the industry begins to listen to grooms and hear their views, the BGA provides the opportunity for grooms to speak up with an educated voice" explains Lucy.

Be proud to be a groom and join your Association today.

Standard membership starts at just £17.50 per year. For more information and to join call 0845 331 6039 or visit www.britishgrooms.org.uk

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