

## *Discussion of Cheek Types.*

LOOSE RINGS--- This bit encourages more movement and play than Eggbutts or Fullcheeks. It discourages blocking, fixing and leaning, also it encourages mouthing allowing the mouthpiece more movement and to follow the angle of the tongue.

EGGBUTTS---- A fixed cheek, so everything is more still in the mouth. If a horse is lacking confidence in the contact, this will encourage him to stretch into the feel and can be beneficial.

D RINGS---- Also a fixed cheek, it can help in turning. Fixed cheeks should be fitted more snugly than loose rings to reduce friction back and forth across the mouth. The advantage of a “D” over the Full cheek is there is no Protrusion to catch on clothes or other horse equipment.

FULL CHEEKS---- This reinforces the turning aids, and provided it is the correct fit (snug) will not allow the mouth piece to be pulled or slide through the mouth. If used with a keeper to the cheek piece of the bridle, the action will be fixed in one position in the mouth and give some poll pressure. Used for starting babies as it has a direct steering effect, though at this stage it is not fixed as we wish to encourage mouthing and acceptance.

HALF CHEEK (TRANZ)--- Another way of reinforcing the turning aids, without the bottom protrusion to catch on things, usually used in conjunction with keepers to give a little poll pressure.

BAUCHER---- (or Hanging snaffle) This bit gives poll pressure and lowers the head, when the contact is taken up the arm is moved forwards causing the mouth piece to lift, then any further action is designated by the type of mouth piece. From February 2005 the legal length of the total arm (not just the upper arm) will be 12cm, FEI rules.

UNIVERSAL--- This bit has a mild gag action, as any extension above the mouth piece will cause poll pressure (head raising), and any below will cause leverage (head lowering) this is why this bit is so unique, it can give the refinement of each type of action while allowing the rider to change the focus of the pressure as it has 4 separate settings to use. As with the other bits further action will be designated by the mouth piece chosen.

BEVAL--- This bit has two settings, and like the Universal has a dual action of just the Baucher type (poll Pressure) or the second of a gag action with flexion and raising. This bit is a favourite with ponies as it gives the child more control without being severe.

NEUESCHULE JUMPER--- Another unique and interesting bit, which offers a cross between a Gag and an Elevator. Very effective cross-country and in show jumping as it offers more control and precision, with it's lifting effect in front it lets the rider sit the horse back and turn quickly. Again this bit has several separate settings to give a different emphasis as needed.

GAGS--- These bits suit strong horses that bear down and pull into fences, as it raises and flexes the carriage enabling the rider to stop with more control. They should be used with two reins for safety and to help the horse, as often with a Gag the horse will start off well then end up over bent as the effect of the single rein pressure becomes too much. This bit needs specific cheek pieces to run through the rings of the bit, the rolled leather look great, but runs slower through the rings than the rope variety so giving a slower response. Rope cheeks available.

PELHAMS---- The Pelham is a compromise bit between the snaffle and the Curb, and as with all compromises it has it's pit falls. However it has been in existence for very many years and has proved successful. It works by exerting pressure on the poll, curb groove and mouth and is very comfortable for horses with short wide mouth conformation, it is not really effective in it's true action on horses with narrower , long mouths. Many horses find pelhams too strong when they jump so try a round of fences in one before you buy one. The Pelham group of bits include Kimberwicks.

CURBS---- Weymouth's should fit snugly, the curb is the lowering part of the double bridle, while the snaffle/bradoon is the raising element. A curb's lever arm should be measured from the base of the mouth piece to the end and legal length is 10cm. Always buy your Bradoon ¼" bigger than the Curb, sometimes a single jointed Bradoon may need to be ½" larger depending on the action of the mouth piece you use.